

annual diversity report

2015–2016

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Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (ED&I) are at the heart of everything we do at Notting Hill Housing (NHH). From our roots in ethnically and culturally diverse west London, where we bought our first five properties in 1964, we have grown into an organisation with more than 30,000 properties across every borough in the capital.

In a city with a vast assortment of housing needs, we offer an array of

quality homes with various tenancy and ownership models to a wide cross-section of Londoners. Our residents reflect the diversity of our capital and we are proud that representatives of this rich mix of people call an NHH property home.

Our Annual Diversity Report is our opportunity to review progress against our ED&I action plan, celebrate our achievements, and reflect on what more is still to be done.



Our residents

Notting Hill Housing's mission is to provide good quality homes to those who could not otherwise afford them. We want our residents to love where they live and to receive a service that matches their expectations. Our Altogether Better model, under which every tenant has one named point of contact for all issues, allows us to get to know our residents and to respond to their needs as individuals.

As well as providing this personalised service through our housing and property management officers, we use what we know about our residents' characteristics or demographics to plan services for the future. As part of this, we are looking at how to increase and improve our digital services, which will allow us to offer greater choice to our residents in how they interact with us, and increase the scope for more personalised services.

Improving our residents' experiences of our services is at the forefront of any developments, so we scrutinise our customer satisfaction data every year to monitor our services' impact on different groups of residents to ensure that we tailoring services successfully.

Residents in permanent rented housing (PRH)

Permanent rented housing is our name for social or general needs housing. We provide more than 17,000 of these homes to single people, couples and families across London.

Two thirds of our PRH households are headed by women, a sector-wide trend that reflects the priority given to homeless families with children, who are nominated to homes through local authorities.

Six out of 10 PRH residents are aged 45 or older, so it's essential that we anticipate changes in their needs as they age. So, we are reviewing our housing for older people to find out whether our current homes will be fit for purpose and meet the needs of future generations of older residents. As part of this review, we will seek to better understand the needs and aspirations of our older residents so that we can ensure our service to them is tailored appropriately and that satisfaction – which fell from 84% to 78% between 2014/15 and 2015/16 among this group – can increase.

Changes to welfare benefits will adversely affect PRH residents

under the age of 35, meaning that younger residents who need housing benefit to support them in paying their rent may no longer be able to sustain a tenancy. Using our Altogether Better approach, our housing officers and welfare benefits advisers can offer individualised advice and support to these vulnerable individuals.

We have recently seen an increase in the number of households declaring a member with a disability. As we have historically had significant gaps in the disability data we hold on residents, this increase in reporting represents a welcome move towards a greater understanding of our residents' individual needs.

Residents in extra care homes

Our extra care housing provides residents – who are mainly older people – with tailored care and support so they can live as independently as possible.

"I noticed that something didn't feel quite right when I was visiting one of my residents to discuss his rent account. He had severe learning difficulties and through speaking to him I discovered that he was being financially exploited by people he thought were his friends. It was clear that he was not receiving the professional support he needed so I made a safeguarding referral for him. Unfortunately, my initial referral was rejected by social services, who said they would not be able to offer support. I was firm in my belief that this man qualified for assistance, so I pushed back and am very happy to say that my persistence paid off. I managed to instigate a safeguarding conference for my resident and he now has the support in place to help him make the right decisions about his finances and can manage his tenancy more effectively."

– Housing officer

Satisfaction among residents aged 65 or older increased again in 2015/16, which is a strong positive endorsement of our work in the past year to improve services at our extra care schemes. We have specifically addressed issues that disproportionately impact older people so that we can continue to have a positive effect on these residents' satisfaction levels.

Just 2% of residents in our extra care homes tell us that they identify as LGBT+. This figure is very low compared to the population as a whole, but higher than data recorded across the other types



of tenancy covered in this report – probably due to the high number of data gaps for this strand.

It is also possible that extra care residents are under-declaring their LGBT+ status as part of a trend among LGBT+ people to go back in the closet in older age, or when in a care and support environment. This finding, highlighted by the National Housing Federation’s recent report, *Out and Included*, underlines the need for us to maintain a culture of openness and acceptance across our extra care schemes, so that residents feel able to be themselves and don’t find it necessary to hide any part of their identity. To help us promote such a culture, all extra care support staff have received specific training on working with LGBT+ residents in our schemes.

Sadly, many older people experience loneliness and isolation, which can have a significant negative impact on their quality and enjoyment of life. One way in which we try to address this is by offering a programme of social activities for residents who would like to get involved. In partnership with the Mental Health Foundation, we ran group activities at three of our extra care schemes, specifically aimed at reducing loneliness. These proved popular and successful, so we are

introducing similar activities at three further schemes.

Some of our extra care schemes also act as social hubs for the wider community, offering activities to non-residents. The Mildmay Collective and artist studios at our Mildmay extra care scheme enables residents to develop and express themselves through art and to be part of a community of people who share this interest.

A surprisingly low level of our extra care residents and community customers report that they have a disability. We know this is an issue of under-reporting as our staff provide individualised care in response to each resident’s needs through their care plan. This underlines the need for us to improve the data we hold centrally, in this case perhaps by pulling together what we know about our individual residents from their care plans.

“Since moving into Conrad Court I have felt so welcome and it didn’t take long for the place to feel like home. When I moved out of my own home and into shared accommodation, I was worried that I would just be another old person in a sea of elderly people; that I would be lost and lonely. But here I am treated like an individual and the staff and other residents are always really friendly. There are so many opportunities to get involved in activities – I’ve already made some lovely friends, which at my age is really scary especially after losing my wife of many years. I am really happy that I moved here and can call it my new home.”

– Extra care scheme resident

Just fewer than six in 10 households living in our temporary homes are headed by women, mirroring the trend seen in permanent rented housing.

It is also a continuing trend that, of the 42% of households for which we have religious belief data, residents are more likely to be Muslim than from any other religious group.

Knowing that we have a large Muslim population in our temporary homes means we can ensure that colleagues who work in this sector are aware of customs and etiquettes specific to that faith, without making assumptions about the practices of individuals.

We use the available skills and resources flexibly to improve services for residents. For example, to help overcome language barriers that were inhibiting our ability to provide the best possible service, we deploy a Portuguese-speaking housing officer in an area with a large Portuguese community. This has allowed us to foster closer relationships with the local community, as well as improving our capacity to communicate with our residents.

Residents in temporary homes

We work with local authorities and private landlords to provide temporary homes for people in housing need.

The more transient nature of residents in temporary homes makes it somewhat more challenging to maintain up-to-date diversity records. That said, the reality of temporary accommodation means that many residents stay with us for long periods, so we have been able to identify some trends in the diversity of this group.

"My dad is Turkish and we spent a lot of time in Turkey when I was younger, so I was able to learn the language as a teenager. Notting Hill Housing has a large population of Turkish residents living in north London and although my role is office-based, I often go out with housing officers to act as a translator between them and a resident. I enjoy having the opportunity to use my language, to stay fluent and to get out and about among the community. Sometimes I am needed for general updates only, sometimes to explain a complex anti-social behaviour or arrears issue. I know my colleagues appreciate me making time to assist them with residents who struggle to understand or speak English. It is very important to find the balance between those who really need me to translate and those who become complacent with trying to learn English themselves. I think that it's great to be able to use the skills our workforce already have rather than hiring in an external agency."

*– Credit controller,
temporary housing*



"One of the highlights of my estate inspections is to pop in to see one of my older residents, who is 79 and living alone. When I first took over the patch, she asked me to come to see her and introduce myself. We ended up chatting for ages about all sorts of things – her daughters, knitting, issues on the estate and much more. As time went on, it became a regular occurrence; I would call to let her know when I was carrying out the inspection on her estate, and she would have the kettle on ready. Although she has family, they don't live very close and have grown-up families of their own, which means she can get a bit lonely. It only takes 15 minutes out of my month to stop and have a chat with her and I know that she values my time. She is also really helpful and insightful about issues on the estate and, a few times, she's been involved in coming up with ideas to tackle them."

– Property management officer

Residents in shared ownership homes

The split between male and female residents is much more even in this group than in other areas of our business. We are still addressing some gaps in our data, but we know that homeowners are typically our least diverse resident group. Positively, there are no notable differences in satisfaction levels between any groups in this area, but the overall satisfaction levels of our homeowners are lower than in other parts of our business – 51% for 2015/16 in comparison to 80% for residents in our permanent rented homes.

This discrepancy reflects a trend towards lower homeowner satisfaction across the sector. We have identified multiple causes, including a desire for improved communications from us, dissatisfaction around transparency and cost of service charges, and the quality of the services provided. We plan to make improvements in these areas in 2016/17 and we hope to see an increase in resident satisfaction in consequence.

Involving residents

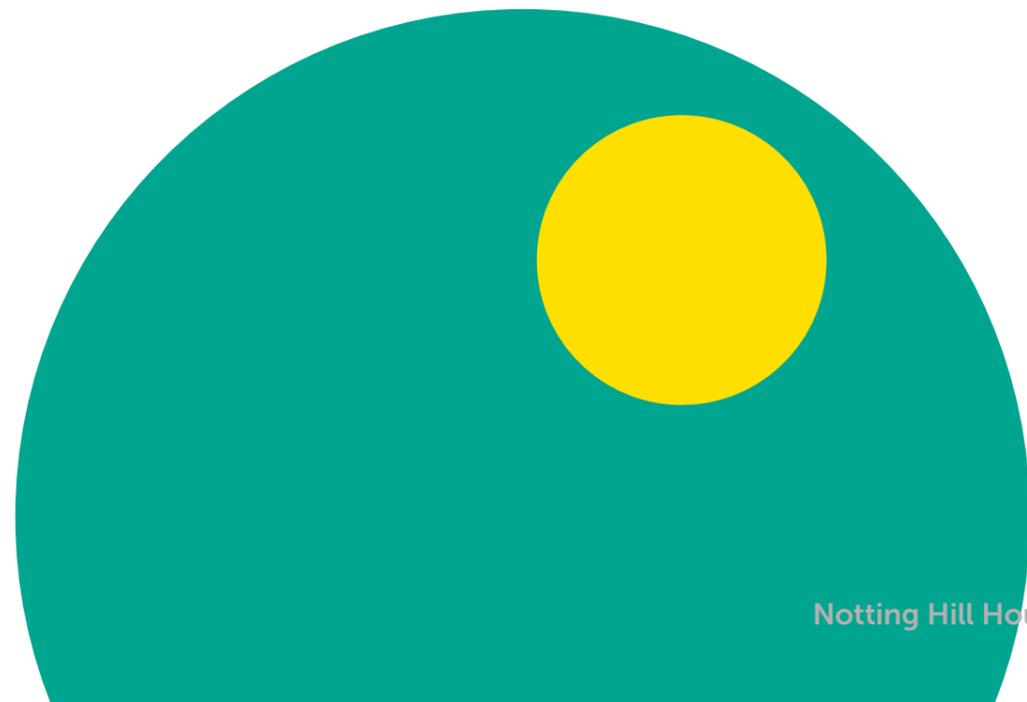
Notting Hill Housing's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Forum is made up of 17 residents, who represent diverse customer profiles. The forum has been working hard to help us improve access to our services. Achievements this year include:

- Using *The Resident* newspaper to promote free services available across London for vulnerable residents in their communities.
- Giving us their expert insight to help us improve the advice we give to residents around welfare benefits, especially about Personal Independence Payment (PIP) changes and how residents could get further help from our welfare benefits advisers.

- Raising awareness about safeguarding and analysing our complaints and disability data, which has helped us to focus on gathering accurate and up-to-date data and has supported training to frontline staff on how they use and update resident data.

Such achievements combine to show really positive strides towards understanding our residents and how best we can support them with their individual needs in the future.

Members of the ED&I Strategy Group, which is responsible for leading on ED&I for colleagues and residents, have joined the forum as staff attendees to increase dialogue between residents and the staff who implement ED&I initiatives.

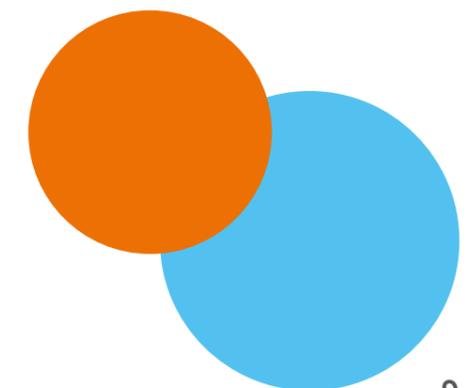


A data-driven organisation

In the ever-changing and challenging housing environment, it is more important than ever that we know our residents. Having up-to-date diversity data will enable us to provide increased support to those who need it most, and tailor services according to how government changes impact our different resident groups. To this end, we are working towards becoming a more a data-driven organisation so that we can support our decisions and future planning.

This year, we created a data quality manager role to focus on improving the quality of data that we hold about our residents. Great work has already taken place and staff are working hard to update our data and ensure it is complete and correct through speaking to residents.

Our new customer app makes it easier for staff to update diversity data about our residents, which is especially helpful for strands where we have not collected data historically, such as sexuality and gender reassignment, as well as those that are more likely to change over time, such as marital status.



Our people



In 2016, Notting Hill Housing gained the Investors in People Gold Award, recognising that “employees at all levels are proud of their organisation and what it stands for”. We recognise the nine strands of diversity and understand that those with multiple minority statuses often face complex issues that may contradict or exacerbate each another. As an organisation, we must highlight the idea that ED&I means taking into account a person’s diversity status at the same time as treating them as an individual rather than as a tick in various boxes.



Equal pay for equal work

In 2015/16, we completed our triennial pay review and equal pay audit, neither of which revealed any issues connecting pay to diversity. Our equal pay audit concluded that: ‘Overall, the evidence presented in the report demonstrates that NHH is successfully delivering equal pay for work of equal value.’

Staff satisfaction

Our 2015 staff satisfaction survey revealed no issues of concern in relation to any specific diversity status. Although this is positive news, we know that ED&I must be approached proactively to ensure that no problems arise in future. We found generally lower rates of satisfaction among respondents who “prefer not to say” when asked for diversity information. It’s possible that discrepancies in satisfaction levels between groups are masked by those who prefer not to say, but this is impossible to know for sure. This issue underlines the need to increase the amount of data we hold, which we aim to do with an awareness campaign to promote understanding of the importance of data collection among colleagues.

Fair selection and representation within the workforce

An audit of our recruitment practices found that our processes are robust in their approach to selection. The decision on whether a candidate has been successful at each stage of the process is based on merit alone and there is very little room for subjectivity or personal preference to influence the outcome. Separately, we investigated the representation of diversity at senior levels of the organisation. Here, we found that NHH is a diverse workforce at all levels, although this is not readily apparent due to the hidden nature of some diverse characteristics, such as sexuality and the vast majority of disabilities. We need to continue to raise awareness of the many diverse ways in which our staff and residents identify themselves so that there is an appreciation of diversity even when it is less visible.

We also analysed the representation of our Emerging Leaders development programme and found that, even with a small number of participants, the successful applicants continue to be roughly representative of the wider workforce.

Staff engagement

One of the significant decisions made in relation to ED&I in 2015/16 was to embed ED&I at all levels across the organisation. After consultation with the Training and Development team, researching e-learning and face-to-face training options and investigating best practice, we decided not to introduce additional one-size-fits-all ED&I training. Instead, we are pursuing a programme of awareness-raising with the aim of engaging staff in ED&I issues on an ongoing basis. As attitudes and legislation around ED&I continue to evolve, so must our approach. For this reason, ours will be an ongoing and continuously evolving approach.

Our awareness-raising programme has seen colleagues from across NHH contributing articles to our intranet in which they shared their experiences of and perspectives on ED&I issues. These articles have had a wide reach and have been very well received, opening up topics for discussion among staff and attracting more readers and generating more comments than other articles. Those where the writer shares a personal story have been especially well received and staff have expressed support for colleagues who discuss sensitive issues such as mental health and discrimination.

LGBT+ staff

Our 2013 staff satisfaction survey revealed that LGBT+ staff were less satisfied than their heterosexual colleagues. We took action to address this discrepancy, which resolved the issue in the 2014 staff satisfaction survey. The consistency in satisfaction between LGBT+ and heterosexual staff remained in the 2015 staff satisfaction survey.

In 2015/16, we created an LGBT+ staff network, which aims to ensure that sexual orientation issues are addressed in the development of corporate diversity and employment policies. Members include staff who

represent a variety of sexual and gender identities and who want to show support for the rights of their LGBT+ colleagues. The NHH group is part of the wider HouseProud network of LGBT+ staff. Working across the housing sector, it provides a supportive environment for LGBT+ staff to meet with others at peer organisations.

NHH's LGBT+ staff network hosted HouseProud's Faith, Sexual Orientation and Social Housing event during the year. Our Chief Executive Kate Davies joined a panel of diverse speakers to discuss the topic of faith, sexuality and gender identity.



CEO Kate Davies speaking at International Women's Day event

Women at NHH

Business leaders Lynda Hart and Annemarie Fenlon facilitated an evening of discussion around Sheryl Sandberg's famous book *Lean In*, which offers advice to women seeking to overcome gender barriers as they pursue their career. The event was well attended by colleagues and highlighted an appetite for further engagement.

In partnership with women's and LGBT+ networks at Circle and Metropolitan housing associations, we celebrated International Women's Day 2016 with Parity and Beyond, a panel event discussing empowering women in the workplace and the progress towards gender parity. The event was attended by 90 men and women from the three host organisations and others across the sector.

ED&I in 2016/17



In 2016/17, we will continue to implement our ED&I action plan. We will continue and expand our programme of engagement activities and have identified specific issues that have become priorities to be addressed.

Workforce diversity

The under-representation of individuals with disabilities in our workforce has been a persistent issue at NHH and is one that we now need to address. We will seek to identify potential barriers to employment at NHH for people with disabilities and explore working with specialist organisations to increase the proportion of applicants and appointments from this group.

Our apprentice programme was established in early 2016. It has introduced further diversity to our workforce by providing a new entry point for a career at NHH. We hope that the expansion of the programme in the coming year means that we will continue to increase the diversity of our workforce and provide opportunities for Londoners from a variety of backgrounds.

Staff engagement

To celebrate the significance of NHH's own black history, we will be celebrating Black History Month 2016 with a programme of events, including film screenings, a facilitated discussion, and a panel event organised in partnership with other housing associations, focusing specifically on issues facing black women

NHH's LGBT+ staff network will lead colleagues, friends and family members in the 2016 Pride in London Parade. This will be the first year that NHH joins organisations from across the sector to march alongside the HouseProud float in London's annual celebration of sexual and gender diversity.

Our new intranet will provide a platform for increased staff engagement with the ED&I Strategy Group and an opportunity for staff to take the lead in promoting and discussing issues of significance to them.

If you need any of this information in large print, Braille, an audio format or in your own language, please contact your housing officer.

إذا كنت تريد أيًا من هذه المعلومات مكتوبة بحروف أكبر، بلغة برايل للمكفوفين، مسجلة صوتياً أو بلغتك فالرجاء أن تتصل مع الموظف المسؤول عن منزلك.

আপনার যদি এই তথ্যের মধ্যেকার কোন কিছু বড় হরফের ছাপায়, ব্রেইল-এ, কোন কানে শোনার ব্যবস্থায় অথবা আপনার নিজের ভাষায় দরকার হয়, তাহলে দয়া করে আপনার হাউজিং অফিসারের সাথে যোগাযোগ করবেন।

اگر مایل به داشتن هر بخش از این اطلاعات با چاپ بزرگ، خط بریل، نسخه صوتی و یا به زبان خود هستید، لطفاً با مأمور امور مسکن خود تماس بگیرید.

Se gostaria de receber esta informação em letras grandes, Braille, formato audio ou traduzida para a sua língua, contacte por favor o seu Housing Officer

Haddii aad u baahan tahay in warbixintan qayb ka mid ah aad ku hesho far waaweyn, farta Braille ee dadka indhaha la', nuskhadda dhegeysiga ama luqaddaada gaarka ah, fadlan la xiriiir Sarkaalkaaga Guryeynta (Housing Officer)

Bu bilgilerin herhangi birini büyük baskı, görme özürülere mahsus kabartma Braille alfabeti, ses kaydı veya kendi lisanınıza çevrilmiş olarak istiyorsanız, lütfen Konut memurunuz ile temasa geçiniz

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