

Equality Status Report

30 April 2015

Introduction

The Royal Blind Group, comprising Royal Blind and Scottish War Blinded, is an organisation that promotes the inclusion and empowerment of people with visual impairments, and as such regards equality in all its respects as something that should be inherent in our service delivery, our staffing and our management and governance.

The Equality Act 2010 introduced a public sector equality duty in order to ensure that public authorities and those carrying out a public function consider how they can positively contribute to a more equal society through advancing equality and good relations in their day-to-day business.

The establishment of Specific Duties under the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations in relation to the Board's role as the manager of the Royal Blind School, a grant aided school, provides a framework for the setting and monitoring of formal aspirations for the continual improvement of our performance in attaining equality in all our functions and our employment practice.

These reports are written so as to transparently fulfil our obligations under the Regulations. They also serve the function of monitoring, managing and improving our equalities performance across our whole organisation.

This report is divided into three sections:

- Mainstreaming the equality duty – this section outlines how we make the equality duty integral to the exercise of our functions. It covers what we do and how we integrate equality into our employment practice and our service provision. Specific examples are provided from each of our services.
- Employee information – this section includes details of:
 - the composition of our employees broken down by protected characteristic
 - recruitment, development and retention of employees broken down by protected characteristic
 - information on progress made in gathering and using employee information to better meet the equality duty
 - gender pay gap information.
- Progress towards achieving our equality outcomes.

MAINSTREAMING THE EQUALITY DUTY

This section of the report provides information on how we make the equality duty integral to the exercise of our functions. It covers what we do and how we integrate equality into our employment practice and our service provision. Specific examples of how we meet the different needs of the duty in the services we provide are included.

What we do

Royal Blind cares, educates and employs blind and partially sighted people from across the UK. We support people of all ages - from babies and toddlers at our pre-school play group, children and young people at our grant aided special school (The Royal Blind School), after school club (Kidscene) and young adults service (Forward Vision), to elderly people in our care home (Braeside House).

We run the Scottish Braille Press, which produces books and magazines in braille and transcribes any document for individuals and businesses into braille, large print or audio format.

Scottish War Blinded supports veterans with a visual impairment from across Scotland through an outreach service and the Linburn Centre in West Lothian.

We have also committed to establish two new services in Paisley, West of Scotland. The new services will include a nursing home specialising in the care of visually impaired older people and a Scottish War Blinded day centre for visually impaired veterans of the armed services.

How we integrate equality into the exercise of our functions

Our vision is that we will make a significant contribution to building a community in which blind and partially sighted people, including those who also have other disabilities, are fully included and lead fulfilling lives.

Our mission is to:

- empower young people to become confident individuals, successful learners, effective contributors and responsible citizens
- enrich education and care provision in all education sectors in Scotland and beyond, improving the effectiveness of inclusion of visually impaired and multiply disabled pupils and students
- respect the rights of individuals, and develop people's skills and resources for independent living
- support and provide care for people when they need it
- provide written and spoken text in accessible formats
- involve blind and partially sighted people as leaders, employees and supporters
- be innovative and add to the diversity available services.

Equality is at the heart of everything we do. It is inherent to our vision, mission, our governance and management as well as our day-to-day work.

Our Board and Committees include members who are visually impaired and ensure appropriate representation of our service users' interests in all our governance decisions. We employ a number of staff with visual impairment. All new employees receive Visual Impairment Awareness Training, with more in-depth specialised training provided regularly within the relevant services.

Equality is part of our organisational culture. Throughout all our activities we aim to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited practices
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

How we integrate equality into our employment practice

We are committed to the principle of equal opportunities in employment and are opposed to any form of less favourable treatment through direct or indirect discrimination accorded to employees or job applicants, on the grounds of sex, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), religion or belief, age or disability (the 'protected characteristics').

We strive to create a productive working environment which is representative of and responsive to different cultures and groups, and where everyone has an equal chance to succeed.

We are committed to embracing and supporting equality and diversity and challenging behaviour and attitudes that prevent this achievement. Using fair and objective employment practices, our aim is to ensure that all employees and potential employees are treated fairly and with respect at all stages of their employment.

• Our policies and procedures

Our policies and practices are reviewed regularly, and their impact on equalities is assessed at all stages of the review process. In 2015 we updated our Equal Opportunities Policy to ensure that it remains comprehensive and that it accurately reflects our current practice around equal opportunities.

The revised policy applies to all aspects of our relationship with staff and to relations between staff members at all levels. This includes job advertisements, recruitment and selection, opportunities for promotion, training and development, terms and conditions of work, performance management, pay and benefits, termination of employment, any references issued and to every other aspect of employment. We are committed to taking appropriate steps to accommodate the requirements of different religions, cultures, and domestic responsibilities.

To raise staff awareness around what constitutes discrimination, the policy now also includes definitions of the different forms of discrimination, including direct, indirect, associative and perceptive discrimination, harassment and third party harassment and victimisation. We also have a separate Dignity at Work Policy which covers harassment, victimisation and bullying in more detail. Any allegations of potential breaches of our equal opportunities policy are treated very seriously and dealt with under our grievance or disciplinary procedures.

- **Recruitment and selection**

We aim to ensure that no job applicant is subject to discrimination because of any of the protected characteristics. Our recruitment procedures are reviewed regularly to ensure that individuals are treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities.

Job advertisements avoid stereotyping or using wording that may discourage groups with a particular protected characteristic from applying. We advertise all our external vacancies to a diverse labour market and all job adverts include an appropriate short policy statement on equal opportunities. Shortlisting of applicants is done by more than one person to avoid unconscious bias.

- **Training, promotion and conditions of work**

Staff training needs are identified through regular staff appraisals. All staff are given appropriate access to training to enable them to progress within the organisation and all promotion decisions are made on the basis of merit and suitability for the promoted role.

We operate a pay scale system which ensures that the salary and conditions of each job relate to the title and description of that job and not to any characteristic of the person carrying it out. Our conditions of work, benefits and facilities are reviewed regularly to ensure that they are available to all staff who should have access to them and that there are no unlawful obstacles to accessing them.

- **Termination of employment**

We ensure that redundancy criteria and procedures are fair and objective and are not directly or indirectly discriminatory. We also ensure that disciplinary procedures and penalties are applied without discrimination, whether they result in disciplinary warnings, dismissal or other disciplinary action.

- **Disability**

We encourage our staff to talk to us about their disability so that we can support them as appropriate. This often involves making reasonable adjustments to accommodate the specific needs of the employee, and is normally supported by occupational health recommendations.

We monitor the physical features of our premises to consider whether they place disabled workers, job applicants or service users at a substantial disadvantage compared to other staff. Where reasonable, we take steps to improve access for disabled staff and service users.

- **Part-time and fixed-term employees**

We monitor the terms and conditions of work of fixed-term and part-time employees, to ensure that they are being offered appropriate access to benefits, training and promotion. We ensure that all requests to alter working hours are dealt with appropriately. Where relevant, we also monitor the progress of fixed-term employees to ensure that they are accessing permanent vacancies.

How we integrate equality into our service provision

- **The Royal Blind School**

We aim to ensure that our pupils with visual impairment, including those with additional support needs, have a range of opportunities and experiences to enable them to become successful learners, responsible citizens, confident individuals and effective contributors to society.

Our curriculum is tailored to suit the needs of individual pupils in a learning and living environment which is appropriate to each pupil's needs and potential. All our teachers either have or are working towards the Post Graduate Qualification in Education Support, Visual Impairment. This means our teachers are better able to raise our pupils' academic attainment as well as a whole range of their other achievements, including mobility, communication and life skills.

We adapt a range of print materials to alternative and accessible formats including braille, audio, large print and tactile diagrams. We provide formal mobility, orientation and life skills sessions which facilitate independence. Our building is purpose built and the environment is designed to encourage as much independence as possible at the appropriate level for each pupil. Our facilities include outdoor multi-use games area, sensory garden, hydrotherapy pool, visual and sensory stimulation room, visual assessment suite or soft play area.

By providing a diverse curriculum and a range of activities and support adapted for our pupils, we help our pupils to develop skills which equip them for life in a fast-changing society and contribute to advancing equality of opportunity for children with visual impairment and other disabilities.

The Royal Blind School plays an important part in the national and international development of services for children and young people with visual impairments and works closely with universities, local authorities, the Scottish Government and other service providers to ensure an effective range of high quality services is available to children and young people and their families. This includes support for children attending mainstream or other special schools across the United Kingdom, and support for teachers in mainstream schools that have pupils with a visual impairment. Through this work we promote equality on a national scale and contribute to meeting all the needs of the equality duty: eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

We are currently developing a national education resource centre which will help streamline high calibre specialist support resources and training in order to bridge gaps in the national provision for learners who have visual impairments. Our ambition is for the centre to become a hub and one-stop shop for professional training and development providing customised and bespoke training programmes for individuals, teachers, schools and other professionals.

- **Kidscene**

Our after-school and holiday club welcomes children with and without disabilities. We find that all of the children are able to learn from each other, they learn to respect one another and appreciate that we are all different and that we all need support in different way with aspects of our lives. By attending Kidscene, children grow up knowing that disability is not a barrier to friendships.

The service has a very positive aspect for families who have children with and without disabilities as they can access the same Club.

Kidscene enables children of all backgrounds to be able to play and socialise together and all our activities are adapted to ensure accessibility for all children. Our activities include arts and crafts, outdoor play, group games or baking as well as various trips. Some of our outings are to places which would usually only be used for children with disabilities such as The Yard. This enables children without disabilities to appreciate how difficult it can be for example to ride a bike if you have a disability, however, sometimes with very minimal intervention or adaptation anything is possible.

- **Forward Vision**

Forward Vision enables young adults with visual impairment and other disabilities to spend time with their peers and to develop life skills as much as they are able.

Young adults are supported in developing independence through practicing daily tasks such as menu planning, grocery shopping, laundry and household tasks. They are encouraged to develop new interests and hobbies, and to participate in a wide range of community and in-house activities as well as supported college or work placements.

We arrange activities such as swimming, cinema, theatre trips, holidays, skiing, dining out, library visits, outings to coffee shops and cafes. We ensure that any potential barriers are removed by adapting activities to ensure all young adults (who choose to) are able to participate. Our community based activities (such as trampoline sessions at Gracemount leisure centre or Ceildhi at Dance Base) help to change the public perception of what young adults with significant complex needs can achieve.

Our young adults also work in our developing social enterprise 'The Cranberry Tearoom' on a weekly basis. Their tasks include welcoming guests, taking orders, home baking, not forgetting the socialising and undertaking the domestic chores.

All our activity is aimed at preparing young people with visual impairment and other disabilities for the next stage of adult life beyond the age of 25.

We have identified a gap for provision of this type of service for adults leaving Forward Vision (aged 25 and over). In our 2015-16 business plan we therefore committed to developing community based accommodation and support services for adults with visual impairments and complex needs leaving Forward Vision and possibly others with similar needs.

- **Braeside House**

The care home is purpose built to meet the needs of those with a VI and other disabilities. Our approach focuses on ability and promoting independence. All residents are encouraged to take part in the life of the home and make new friends. However if they choose not to then this is respected – we ensure freedom of choice for all and respect individual decision making even for those with limited capacity. By seeing the person we avoid ‘one size fits all’ approach to care, and we encourage families to be involved and included. We have a shared set of values in place which looks at the needs of the residents, the families and the staff.

Our activities are tailored appropriately and based on the residents’ interests and requests. Some examples include:

- bowling tournament using an adapted technique
- activities based on verbal communication such as quizzes, crosswords, games, debates and discussions
- outings to places with opportunities to use other senses – garden centres, beach, museums which offer interactive events
- opportunities to attend concerts/recitals.

- **Scottish Braille Press**

At Scottish Braille Press we promote equality through producing documents in accessible formats to ensure that blind and partially sighted people can independently and accurately read the information they receive. This helps advance equality of opportunity between people who have a visual impairment and those who do not.

We have a wide range of clients, from individuals to banks, the public sector and exam boards. We support our clients in ensuring their compliance with the Equality Act 2010 by transcribing their documents, such as bank statements and exam papers, into alternative formats based on the customers’ personal preferences.

By providing documentation in braille, large print and audio formats we help remove barriers to accessing services and information that blind and partially sighted people often face. By giving people a choice of accessible formats they can request their documentation in, we take account of the specific impairments and ensure that needs of different groups are met. It helps remove social isolation and allows people with visual impairment the same access to information and services.

We provide supported employment opportunities for disabled people, in particular those with a visual impairment but also other disabilities. We employ a dedicated Employment Support Worker who works specifically with our disabled staff. This includes more intensive support for employees taken on through the government Work Choice scheme, which exists specifically for people who are disabled and their disability means

that they face significant barriers to work. As at 31 March 2015 we had 17 people employed under the scheme (11 of these are on permanent contracts and 6 on fixed-term contracts). Out of the 17 employees, 3 were physically disabled, 4 had mental health problems, 6 were blind/visually impaired, 2 had learning disabilities and 2 were on the autistic spectrum. Our Employment Support Worker has regular meetings with these employees to check that they're happy and well supported in their work. She also discusses their future goals and is there to help them with career advice and planning.

- **Scottish War Blinded**

The **Linburn Centre** has been specially designed for people of all ages who have lost some or all of their sight. We offer a range of activities and support in daily living skills, which are aimed at supporting veterans to build their sense of confidence in living with a visual impairment. Our members are predominantly male, but we provide activities suitable for all genders. Some of our activities include:

- skills kitchen supporting members in cooking and life skills
- art room which incorporates painting, pottery, model building, embroidery, sewing, flower arranging (supported by a wide range of assistive technology such as LED magnifiers or floodlights lamps)
- gardening (we provide raised beds for members who use a wheelchair and wish to participate in gardening)
- woodwork workshops
- computer skills, including training on how to use specialist software for visual impairment as well as specialist keyboards and touch screen technology
- experiences such as white water rafting, tank driving, 4 x 4 driving, motor biking, abseiling, gliding or acoustic shooting, which our members never dreamed of being able to do when they lost their sight
- community based activities including visits to theatre, museums and art galleries, special exhibitions including our upcoming foreign trips to the battlefields in Europe.

Our **outreach team** work across Scotland helping reduce social isolation caused by visual impairment and other disabilities. Examples of the specific impact of the work of our outreach workers on equality are listed below:

- We use venues that are open to the general public for our reunions, lunches and member conference. We share our knowledge and skills with the venues to give them the confidence to treat our members well and to be welcoming with other blind people in the future.
- We advocate on behalf of members to ensure they are treated with respect.
- We give regular talks to the general public about our services, showing how people with a sight loss are still able to lead full lives. The feedback from the public is often astonishment at what our members achieve.
- We ensure that our activities are suitable for members with and without care needs. Our members with physical and mental disabilities are able to socialise with others with our support.

EMPLOYEE INFORMATION

Introduction

This section of the report contains details of:

- the composition of our employees broken down by protected characteristic
- recruitment, development and retention of employees broken down by protected characteristic
- information on progress made in gathering and using employee information to better meet the equality duty
- gender pay gap information.

Gathering and using employee information

Since the 2013 report we have taken steps to ensure that the equal opportunities data we hold about our employees and job applicants is representative. This helps us ensure that our equal opportunities approach and practices are effective and allows us to identify groups that may be underrepresented or disadvantaged in our organisation.

All job applicants are asked to fill in the equal opportunities form when they apply for a position with us. Provision of this information is voluntary and it does not adversely affect an individual's chances of recruitment or any other decision related to their employment. The information is removed from applications before shortlisting, and kept solely for the purpose of equal opportunities monitoring and positive action to recruit disabled persons under Two Ticks Scheme (more details about the scheme can be found in section 'Progress towards achieving equality outcomes' below).

If the successful candidate didn't provide equal opportunities information with their application, he or she is asked for it again on commencement of employment.

Our Equality Status Report published in April 2013 had a lot of 'unknown/not stated' records for our existing staff. We have therefore reviewed the equal opportunities information we hold for our existing employees and sent requests for information to the employees that we had no data for. This helped us reduce the proportion of unknown data compared to our last equality status report. For example, our employee ethnic origin data for the whole organisation in 2013 included 23.94% of unknown records, compared with 7.39% in 2015. Within the School, the proportion of unknown records for this characteristic was 28.73% in 2013, compared with 8.13% in 2015.

In the past two years, we have begun to gather equal opportunities data relating to recruitment, retention and development, and have included this information for the first time in this report.

Analysing this data helps us take appropriate steps to avoid discrimination and improve equality and diversity across all our employment practices.

The composition of our employees

As at 31 March 2015, we employed a total of 460 staff, out of whom 229 (49.78%) worked full time and 231 (50.22%) worked part time.

Within the Royal Blind School, we employed 160 staff, out of whom 83 (51.87%) worked full time and 77 (48.13%) worked part time.

Sections below outline employee information under the following protected characteristics: gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, religion and belief, marriage/civil partnership.

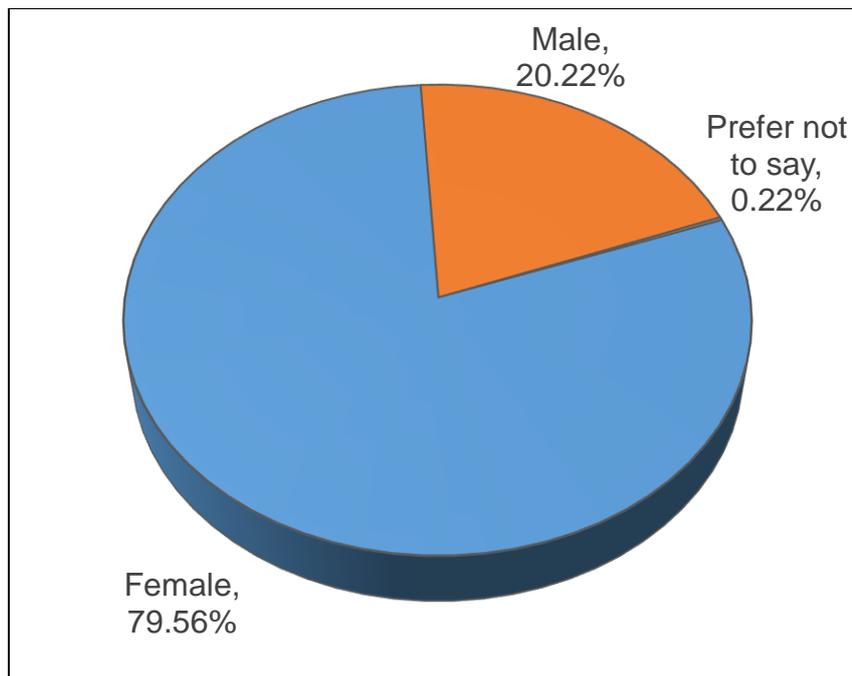
The employment information presented in this report covers the last 2 years since our last Equality Status Report was published in April 2013. Under each protected characteristic, we have provided the following information:

- the overall composition of our employees as at 31 March 2015
- comparison with the 2013 report, where information relating to the particular characteristic was included in the previous report
- new employees appointed between 1 April 2013 and 31 March 2015
- job applicants between 1 April 2014 and 31 March 2015 (we introduced a new system in April 2014 that allows us to collate and analyse equal opportunities data about our job applicants)
- leavers between 1 April 2013 and 31 March 2015
- employees promoted internally between 1 April 2013 and 31 March 2015.

We have provided information relating to the whole organisation, and additionally about the Royal Blind School taken alone in order to meet our regulatory requirements.

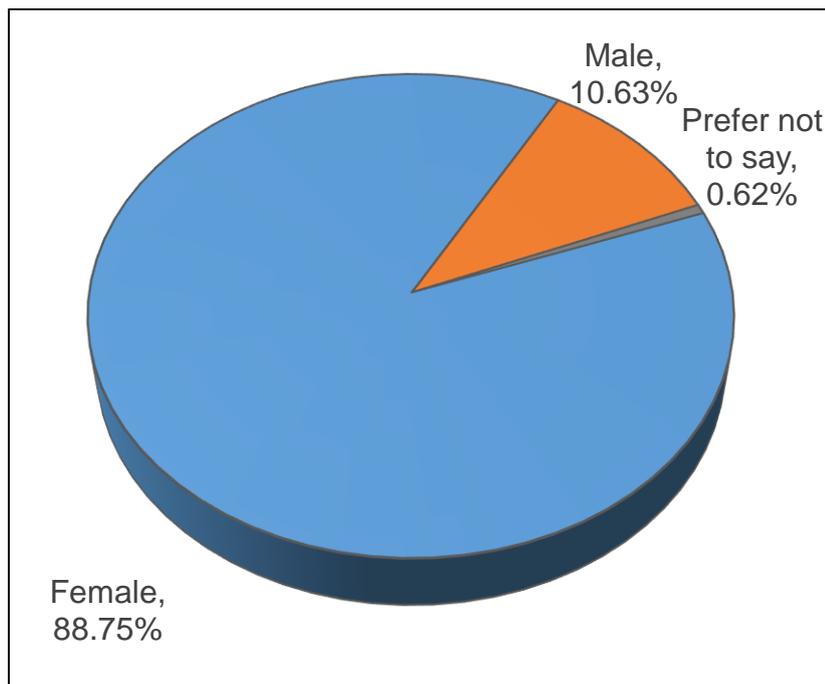
Gender

- The whole organisation as at 31 March 2015:



| Gender | 2015 report | 2013 report |
|-------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Female | 79.56% | 80.54% |
| Male | 20.22% | 19.46% |
| Prefer not to say | 0.22% | - |

- The Royal Blind School as at 31 March 2015:



| Gender | 2015 report | 2013 report |
|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Female | 88.75% | 92.27% |
| Male | 10.63% | 7.73% |
| Prefer not to say | 0.62% | - |

- **Recruitment**

New employees appointed between 1 April 2013 and 31 March 2015:

| Gender | The whole organisation | The Royal Blind School |
|---------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Female | 75.00% | 81.58% |
| Male | 25.00% | 18.42% |

Job applicants between 1 April 2014 and 31 March 2015:

| Gender | The whole organisation | The Royal Blind School |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Female | 73.26% | 78.00% |
| Male | 24.48% | 19.00% |
| Prefer not to say | 2.26% | 3.00% |

- **Leavers** between 1 April 2013 and 31 March 2015::

| Gender | The whole organisation | The Royal Blind School |
|---------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Female | 76.80% | 90.38% |
| Male | 23.20% | 9.62% |

- **Employees promoted internally** between 1 April 2013 and 31 March 2015:

| Gender | The whole organisation | The Royal Blind School |
|---------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Female | 71.43% | 88.24% |
| Male | 28.57% | 11.76% |

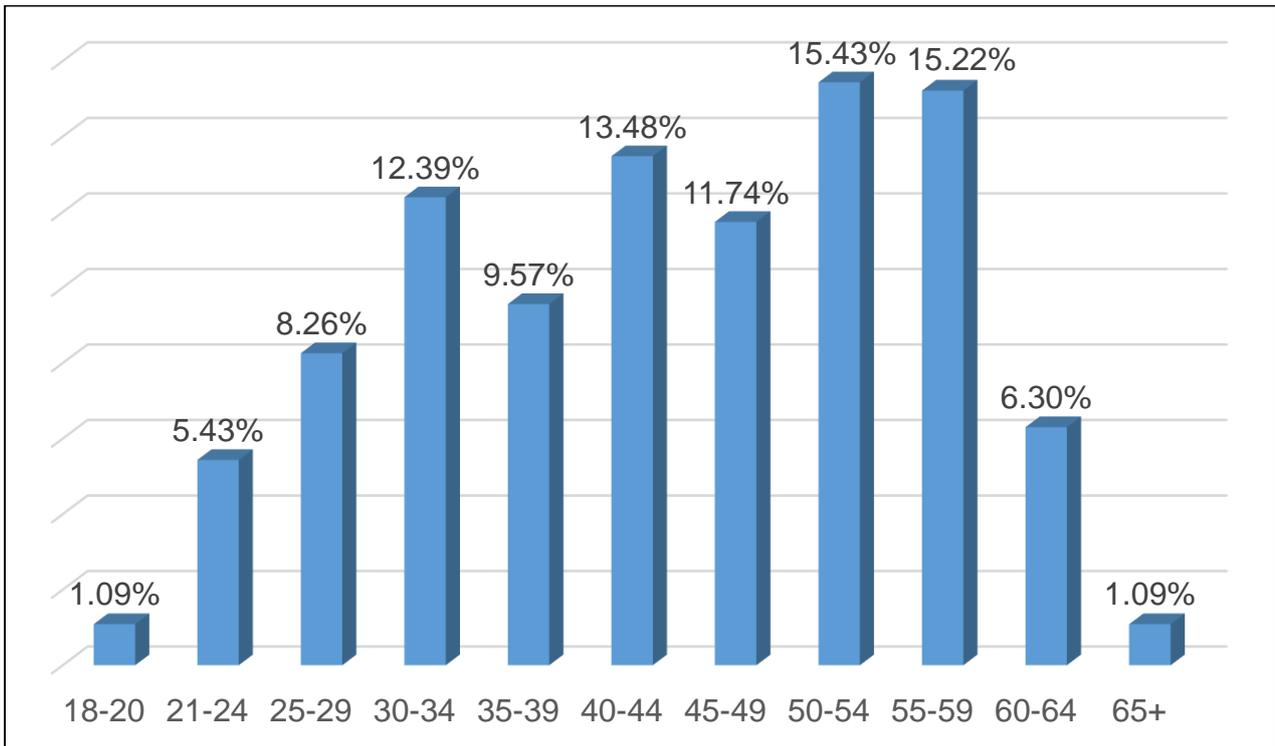
A vast majority of our employees are female. This reflects the typical gender mix in the activities we operate, which are mostly care and education sector. The overall gender split in the care sector, as reported by SSSC, was 85% female and 15% male in 2013.

The gender mix for the whole organisation is at a similar level as in April 2013, with a slightly higher proportion of men working for the organisation (19.46% in 2013 compared with 20.22% in 2015). In terms of the School specifically, the proportion of male employees compared to female staff changed from 7.73% in 2013 to 10.63% in 2015.

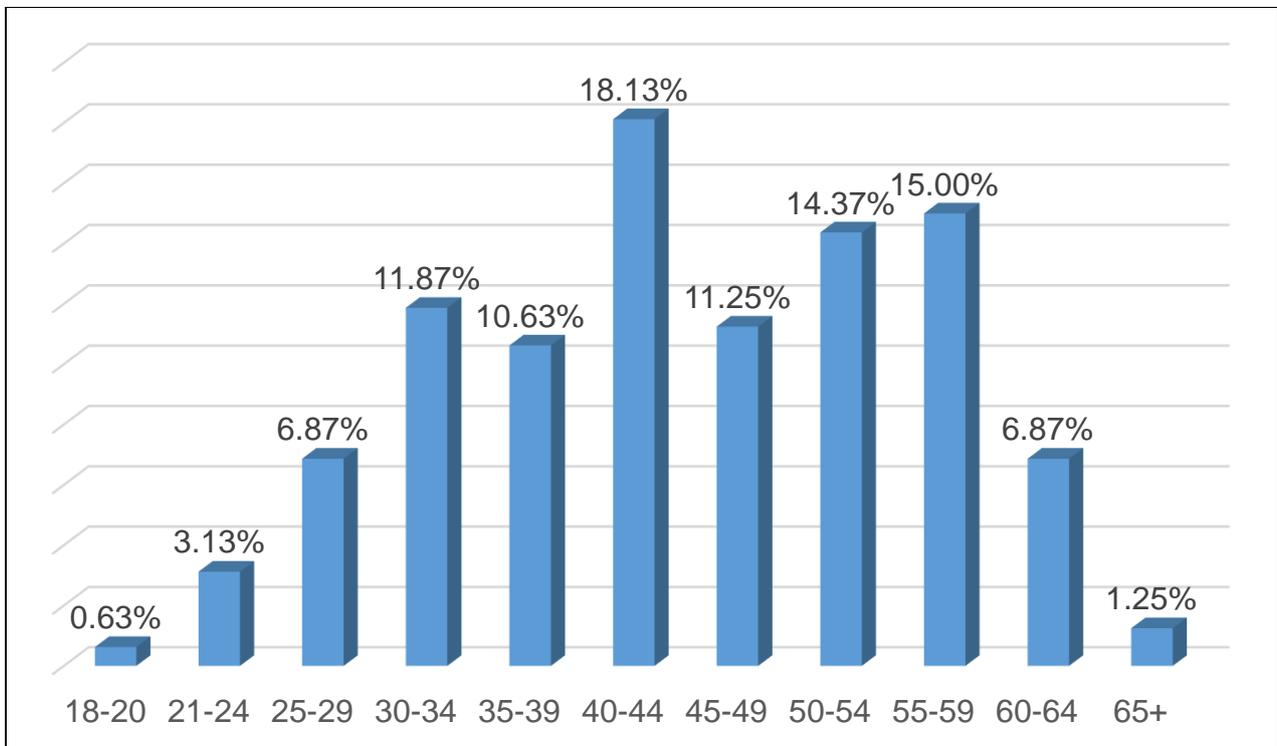
We believe that the recruitment, retention and development data outlined above is consistent with a fair and equal approach to our employment practices.

Age

- The whole organisation as at 31 March 2015:



- The Royal Blind School as at 31 March 2015:



- **Age at recruitment**

New employees appointed between 1 April 2013 and 31 March 2015:

| Age | The whole organisation | The Royal Blind School |
|------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 18-20 | 4.29% | 10.53% |
| 21-24 | 13.56% | 10.53% |
| 25-29 | 20.00% | 26.32% |
| 30-34 | 12.14% | 13.16% |
| 35-39 | 10.00% | 13.16% |
| 40-44 | 12.86% | 7.89% |
| 45-49 | 12.86% | 5.26% |
| 50-54 | 7.86% | 7.89% |
| 55-59 | 4.29% | 2.63% |
| 60-64 | 2.14% | 2.63% |

Job applicants between 1 April 2014 and 31 March 2015:

| Age | The whole organisation | The Royal Blind School |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 18-20 | 6.08% | 5.00% |
| 21-24 | 16.49% | 20.00% |
| 25-29 | 16.32% | 22.00% |
| 30-34 | 13.37% | 12.00% |
| 35-39 | 7.29% | 6.00% |
| 40-44 | 11.46% | 11.00% |
| 45-49 | 10.59% | 10.00% |
| 50-54 | 8.51% | 6.00% |
| 55-59 | 5.56% | 4.00% |
| 60-64 | 1.74% | 1.00% |
| 65+ | 0.17% | - |
| Prefer not to say | 2.42% | 3.00% |

- **Leavers** between 1 April 2013 and 31 March 2015:

| Age | The whole organisation | The Royal Blind School |
|------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 18-20 | 3.20% | 5.77% |
| 21-24 | 5.60% | 1.92% |
| 25-29 | 8.00% | 3.84% |
| 30-34 | 18.40% | 19.22% |
| 35-39 | 8.80% | 9.62% |
| 40-44 | 8.00% | 7.69% |
| 45-49 | 4.80% | 5.77% |
| 50-54 | 8.80% | 9.62% |
| 55-59 | 6.40% | 9.62% |
| 60-64 | 17.60% | 17.31% |
| 65+ | 10.40% | 9.62% |

- **Employees promoted internally** between 1 April 2013 and 31 March 2015:

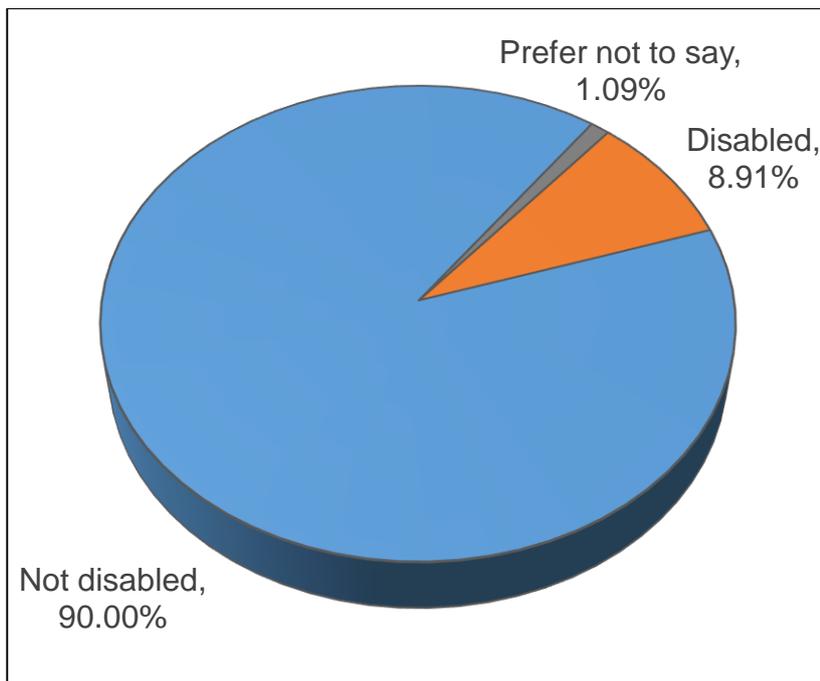
| Age | The whole organisation | The Royal Blind School |
|------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 18-20 | 2.04% | 5.88% |
| 21-24 | 8.16% | - |
| 25-29 | 10.20% | - |
| 30-34 | 16.33% | 23.54% |
| 35-39 | 4.08% | - |
| 40-44 | 12.24% | - |
| 45-49 | 16.33% | 17.65% |
| 50-54 | 6.12% | 11.76% |
| 55-59 | 20.41% | 35.29% |
| 60-64 | 2.04% | - |
| 65+ | 2.04% | 5.88% |

We have a balance of employees of different ages across the organisation. The lower representation of the 18-24 age group is influenced by the qualification requirements for a lot of our positions, dictated by the sectors we operate in.

The slightly higher proportion of leavers aged 55 and over is influenced by staff retirements. Our long serving employees have a generous final salary pension scheme which allows for early retirements from the age of 55. Within this reporting period we adopted a voluntary redundancy policy and a number of our staff below state pension age have decided to take up their pension and retire early.

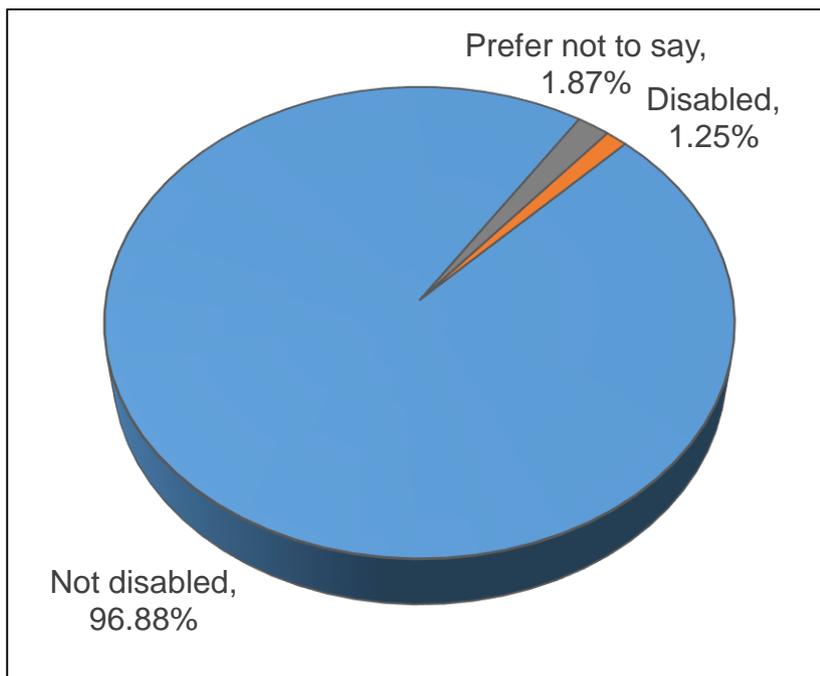
Disability

- **The whole organisation as at 31 March 2015:**



| Disability status | 2015 report | 2013 report |
|-------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Disabled | 8.91% | 6.04% |
| Not disabled | 90.00% | 93.96% |
| Prefer not to say | 1.09% | - |

- **The Royal Blind School as at 31 March 2015:**



| Disability status | 2015 report | 2013 report |
|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Disabled | 1.25% | 1.10% |
| Not disabled | 96.88% | 98.90% |
| Prefer not to say | 1.87% | - |

- **Recruitment**

New employees appointed between 1 April 2013 and 31 March 2015:

| Disability status | The whole organisation | The Royal Blind School |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Disabled | 11.43% | - |
| Not disabled | 87.86% | 100.00% |
| Prefer not to say | 0.71% | - |

Job applicants appointed between 1 April 2014 and 31 March 2015:

| Disability status | The whole organisation | The Royal Blind School |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Disabled | 7.29% | - |
| Not disabled | 88.02% | 98.00% |
| Prefer not to say | 4.69% | 2.00% |

- **Leavers** between 1 April 2013 and 31 March 2015:

| Disability status | The whole organisation | The Royal Blind School |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Disabled | 7.20% | - |
| Not disabled | 92.80% | 100.00% |

- **Employees promoted internally** between 1 April 2013 and 31 March 2015:

| Disability status | The whole organisation | The Royal Blind School |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Disabled | 14.29% | - |
| Not disabled | 83.67% | 100.00% |
| Prefer not to say | 2.04% | - |

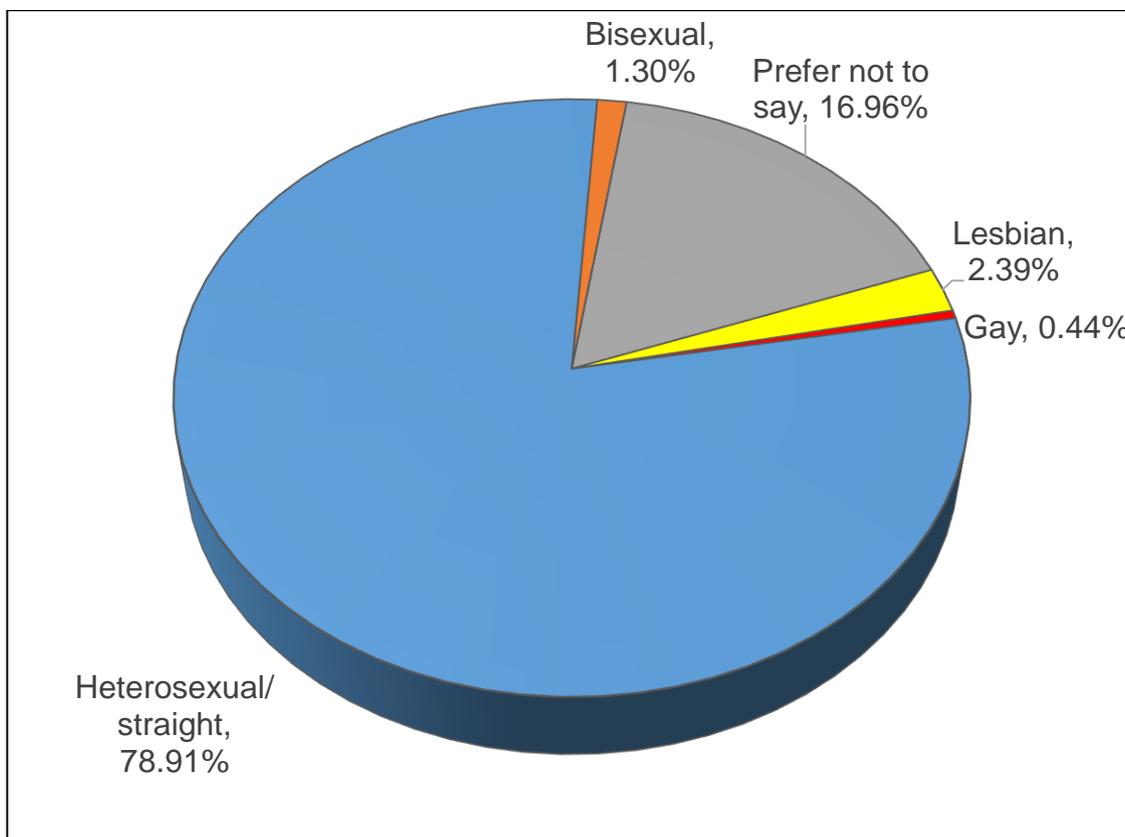
We have succeeded in increasing the proportion of people with disabilities that we employ across the whole organisation compared to our 2013 report. In 2013, 6.04% of our staff were disabled, compared with 8.91% in 2015. The proportion of disabled employees we recruited (11.43%) and promoted internally (14.29%) over the past 2 years is higher than the general proportion of disabled staff working for the organisation, which is consistent with our commitment to recruiting, developing and retaining disabled

employees. This was supported by Royal Blind adopting the principles of the Positive about Disabled People Two Ticks accreditation, which is covered in more details under 'Progress towards achieving equality outcomes' section below.

Within the School, we have the same number of disabled staff as in April 2013. We had no disabled employees within the School leaving their employment over the last two years. We did not receive any applications for School roles from candidates with a declared disability over the past 2 years, and we therefore did not appoint any new disabled employees within this period.

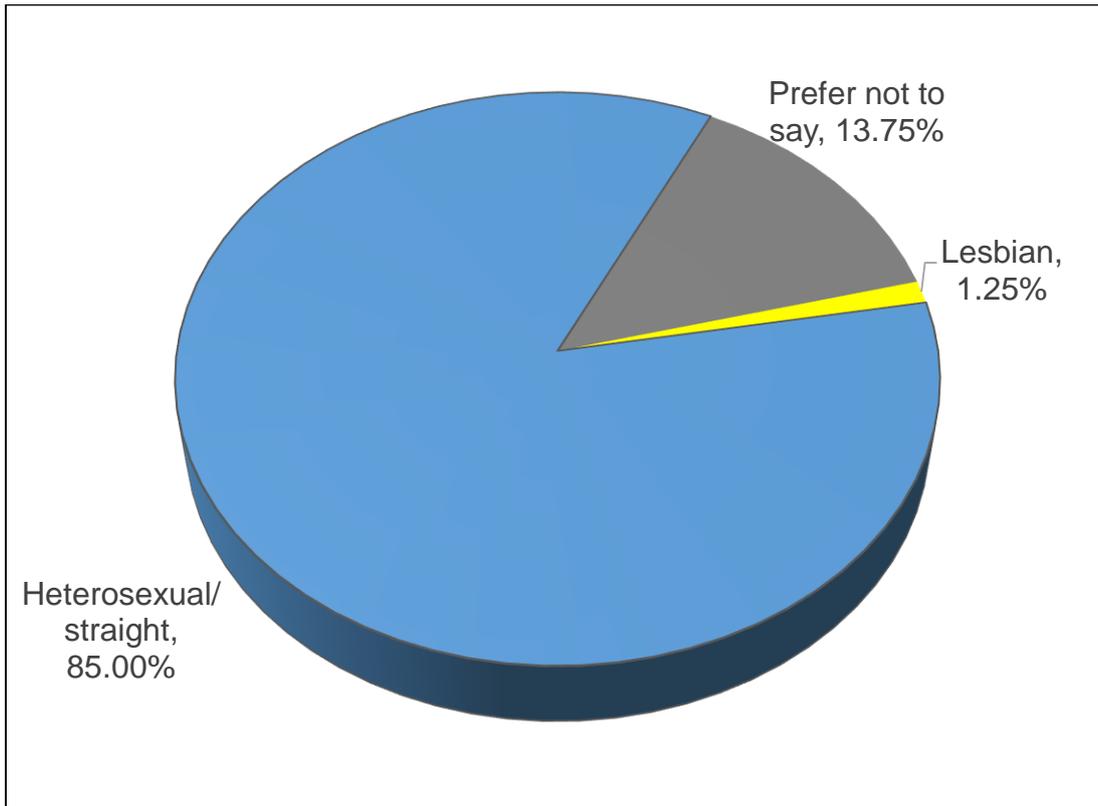
Sexual Orientation

- The whole organisation as at 31 March 2015:



| Sexual orientation | 2015 report | 2013 report |
|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Bisexual | 1.30% | 1.12% |
| Gay | 0.44% | 0.22% |
| Lesbian | 2.39% | 1.34% |
| Heterosexual/straight | 78.91% | 64.65% |
| Prefer not to say | 16.96% | 32.66% |

- **The Royal Blind School as at 31 March 2015:**



| Sexual orientation | 2015 report | 2013 report |
|---------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Lesbian | 1.25% | 0.55% |
| Heterosexual/straight | 85.00% | 64.09% |
| Prefer not to say | 13.75% | 35.35% |

- **Recruitment**

New employees appointed between 1 April 2013 and 31 March 2015:

| Sexual orientation | The whole organisation | The Royal Blind School |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Bisexual | 0.71% | - |
| Gay | 0.71% | - |
| Lesbian | 3.58% | 2.63% |
| Heterosexual/straight | 84.29% | 92.11% |
| Prefer not to say | 10.71% | 5.26% |

Job applicants between 1 April 2014 and 31 March 2015:

| Sexual orientation | The whole organisation | The Royal Blind School |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Bisexual | 1.74% | 2.00% |
| Gay | 2.26% | 1.00% |
| Lesbian | 2.95% | 1.00% |
| Heterosexual/straight | 86.63% | 93.00% |
| Prefer not to say | 6.42% | 3.00% |

- **Leavers** between 1 April 2013 and 31 March 2015:

| Sexual orientation | The whole organisation | The Royal Blind School |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Bisexual | 1.60% | - |
| Heterosexual/straight | 65.60% | 65.38% |
| Prefer not to say | 32.80% | 34.62% |

- **Employees promoted internally** between 1 April 2013 and 31 March 2015:

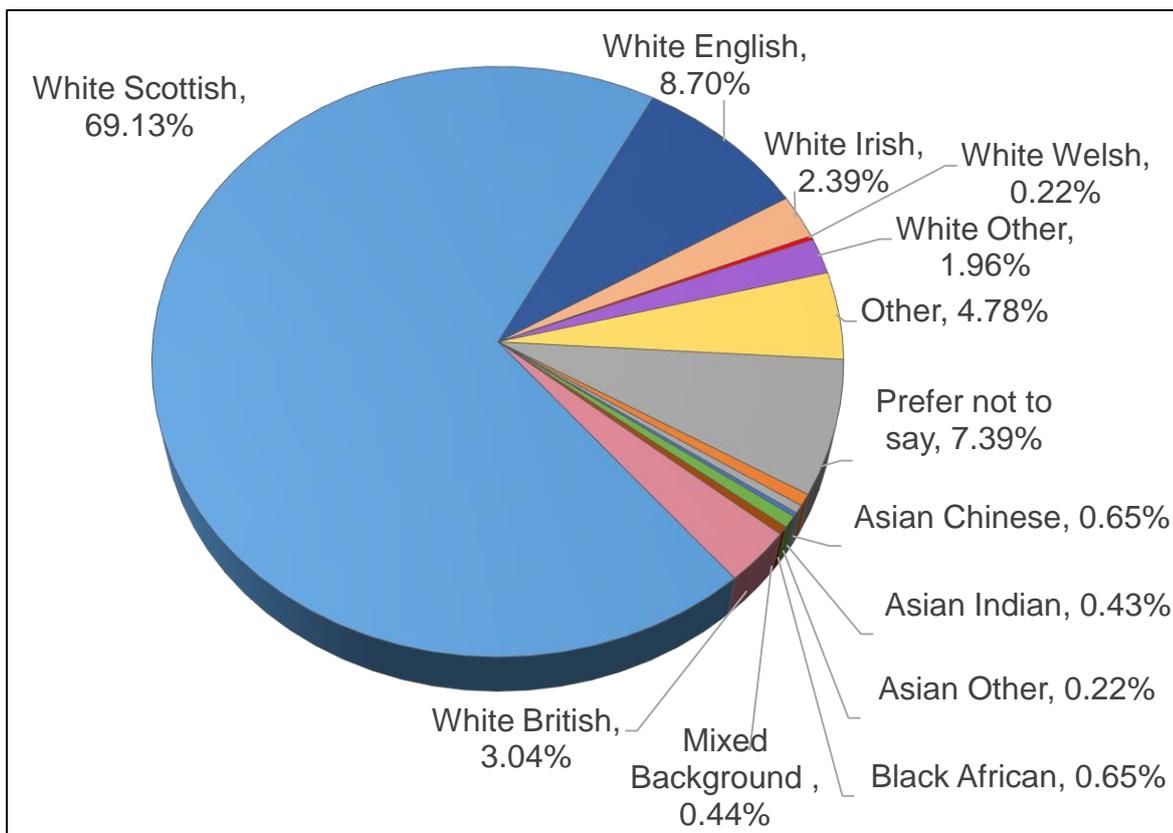
| Sexual orientation | The whole organisation | The Royal Blind School |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Bisexual | 4.08% | - |
| Gay | 2.04% | - |
| Lesbian | 2.04% | - |
| Heterosexual/straight | 83.68% | 100.00% |
| Prefer not to say | 8.16% | - |

The general make-up of our staffing split by sexual orientation corresponds to the data presented under recruitment, retention and development practices.

There is still a relatively high proportion of staff who prefer not to declare their sexual orientation, but this proportion decreased from 32.66% in 2013 to 16.96% in 2015 for the whole organisation and from 35.35% in 2013 to 13.75% in 2015 for the School. This indicates that some progress has been made with people feeling more comfortable disclosing this information, which is linked to broader societal trends as well as our own initiatives.

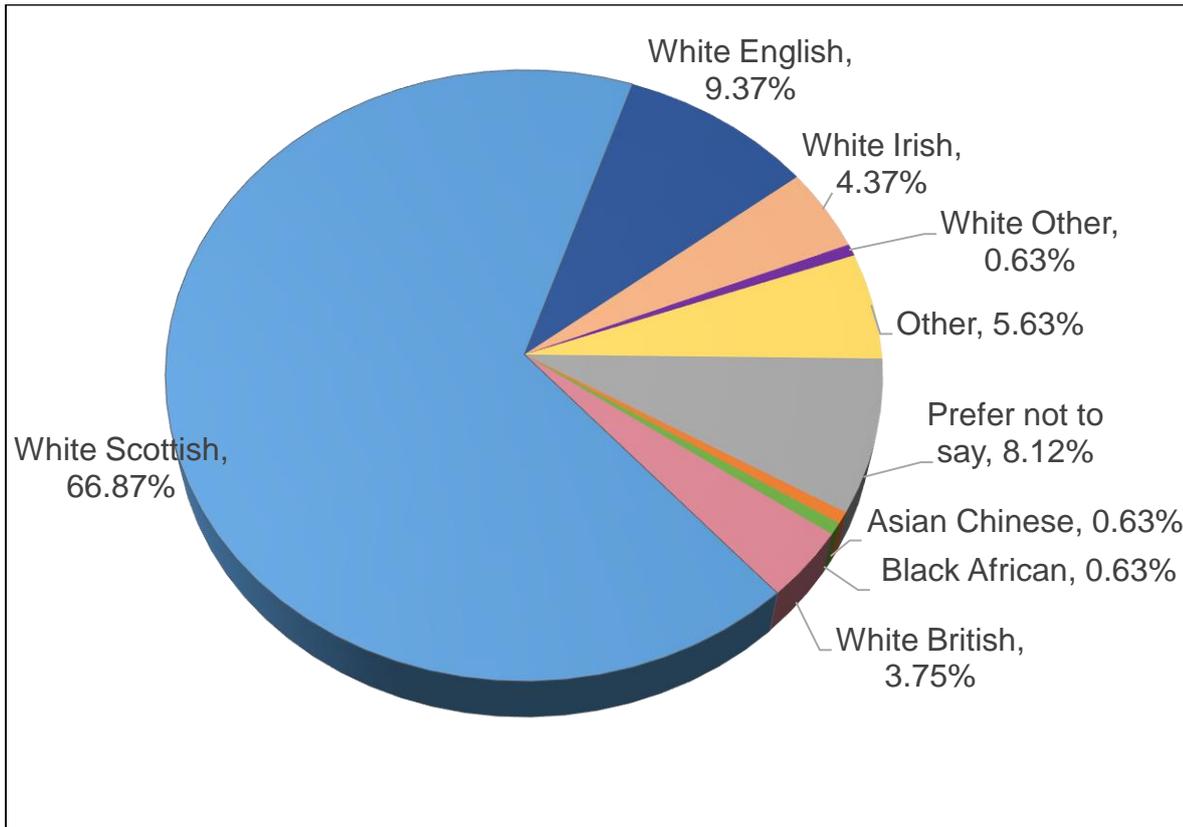
Ethnic Origin

- The whole organisation as at 31 March 2015:



| Ethnic origin | 2015 report | 2013 report |
|-------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Asian Chinese | 0.65% | 0.67% |
| Asian Indian | 0.43% | 0.45% |
| Asian Pakistani | - | 0.22% |
| Asian Other | 0.22% | 0.22% |
| Black African | 0.65% | 0.22% |
| Black Caribbean | - | 0.22% |
| Mixed Background | 0.44% | 0.45% |
| White British | 3.04% | - |
| White Scottish | 69.13% | 60.18% |
| White English | 8.70% | 6.49% |
| White Irish | 2.39% | 3.13% |
| White Welsh | 0.22% | - |
| White Other | 1.96% | - |
| Other | 4.78% | 3.80% |
| Prefer not to say | 7.39% | 23.94% |

- **The Royal Blind School as at 31 March 2015:**



| Ethnic origin | 2015 report | 2013 report |
|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Asian Chinese | 0.63% | - |
| Asian Pakistani | - | 0.55% |
| Black African | 0.63% | 0.55% |
| Black Caribbean | - | 0.55% |
| White British | 3.75% | - |
| White Scottish | 66.87% | 52.49% |
| White English | 9.37% | 7.73% |
| White Irish | 4.37% | 5.52% |
| White Other | 0.63% | - |
| Other | 5.63% | 3.87% |
| Prefer not to say | 8.12% | 28.73% |

- **Recruitment:**

New employees appointed between 1 April 2013 and 31 March 2015:

| Ethnic origin | The whole organisation | The Royal Blind School |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Asian Indian | 0.71% | - |
| Black African | 2.15% | - |
| Mixed Background | 0.71% | - |
| White British | 0.71% | - |
| White Scottish | 65.00% | 78.95% |
| White English | 12.86% | 7.89% |
| White Irish | 2.15% | 5.26% |
| White Welsh | 0.71% | - |
| White Other | 4.29% | - |
| Other | 10.71% | 7.89% |

Job applicants between 1 April 2014 and 31 March 2015:

| Ethnic origin | The whole organisation | The Royal Blind School |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Asian Chinese | 0.17% | 1.00% |
| Asian Indian | 1.22% | - |
| Asian Pakistani | 0.35% | - |
| Asian Other | 1.04% | - |
| Black African | 1.39% | - |
| Mixed Background | 1.39% | 1.00% |
| White Scottish | 65.1% | 61.00% |
| White English | 12.15% | 17.00% |
| White Irish | 1.74% | 2.00% |
| White Welsh | 0.17% | - |
| White Other | 13.72% | 16.00% |
| Other | 0.69% | - |
| Prefer not to say | 0.87% | 2.00% |

- **Leavers** between 1 April 2013 and 31 March 2015:

| Ethnic origin | The whole organisation | The Royal Blind School |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Asian Chinese | 0.80% | - |
| Asian Indian | 0.80% | - |
| Asian Pakistani | 0.80% | 1.92% |
| Black African | 1.60% | - |
| Black Caribbean | 0.80% | 1.92% |
| Mixed Background | 0.80% | - |
| White Scottish | 55.20% | 53.85% |
| White English | 8.00% | 7.69% |
| White Irish | 4.00% | 7.69% |
| White Other | 0.80% | 1.92% |
| Other | 6.40% | 1.92% |
| Prefer not to say | 20.00% | 23.08% |

- **Employees promoted internally** between 1 April 2013 and 31 March 2015:

| Ethnic origin | The whole organisation | The Royal Blind School |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Mixed Background | 2.04% | - |
| White British | 6.12% | 5.88% |
| White Scottish | 73.48% | 70.59% |
| White English | 6.12% | 5.88% |
| White Irish | 4.08% | 5.88% |
| Other | 4.08% | 11.76% |
| Prefer not to say | 4.08% | - |

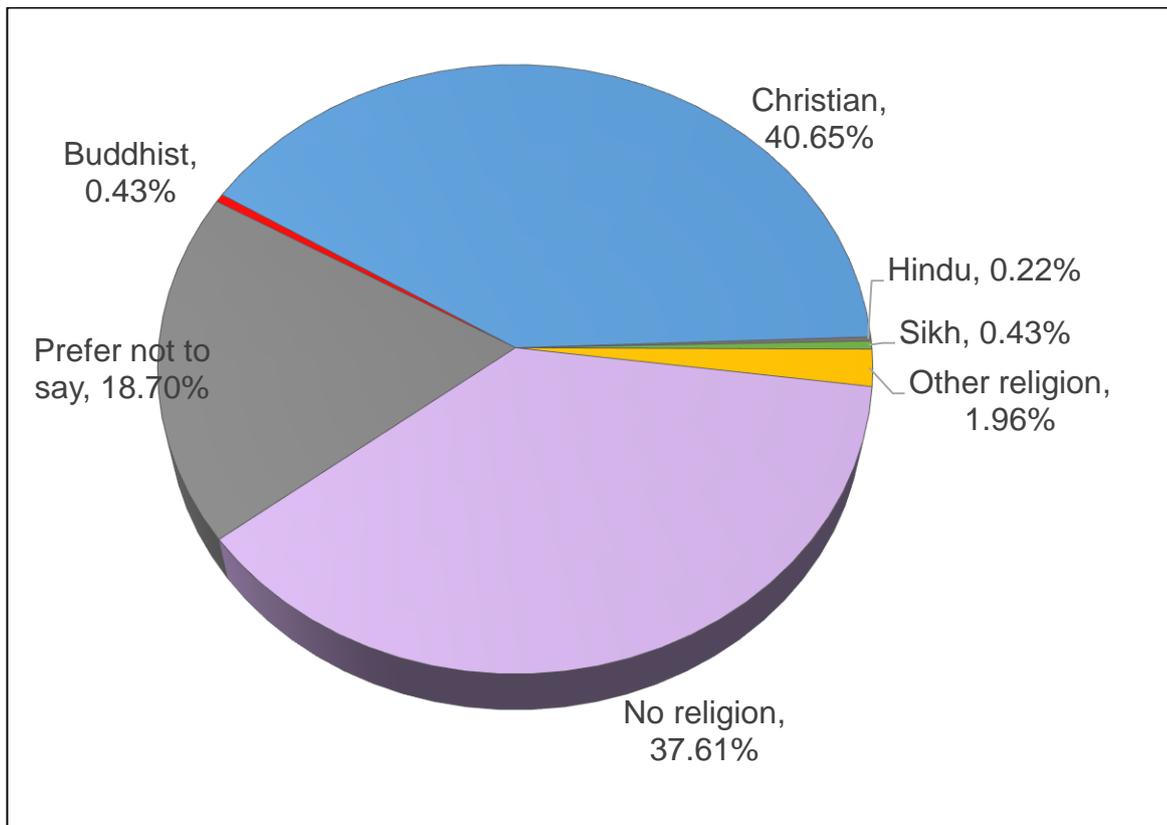
A vast majority of our employees are 'White Scottish', which reflects our location. The proportion of 'Unknown/Prefer not to answer' records decreased from 23.94% in 2013 to 7.39% in 2015 for the whole organisation and from 28.73% in 2013 to 8.12% in 2015 for the School, which means that our current figures are more representative.

The current figures show that we now have staff representation from the 'White Other' ethnic background (1.96%) which was not present in the last report. We also had a slight increase in the proportion of employees from 'Other' and 'Black African' ethnic backgrounds which contributes to improved ethnic diversity across our staffing.

The ethnicity mix within recruitment, retention and development practices closely reflects the overall make-up of our staffing, which is consistent with a fair and equal approach to our employment practices.

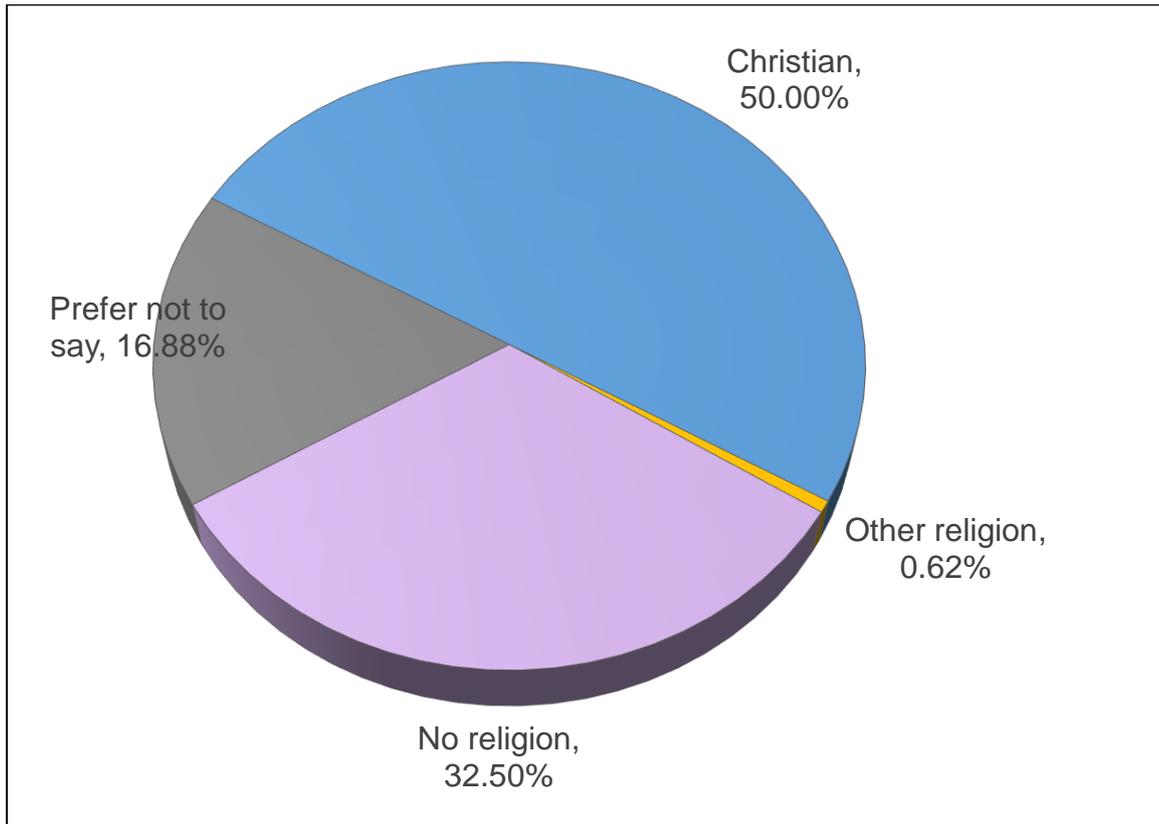
Religion and Belief

- The whole organisation as at 31 March 2015:



| Religion/belief | 2015 report | 2013 report |
|-------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Buddhist | 0.43% | 0.22% |
| Christian | 40.65% | 39.59% |
| Hindu | 0.22% | 0.22% |
| Jewish | - | - |
| Muslim | - | 0.45% |
| Sikh | 0.43% | 0.22% |
| Other religion | 1.96% | 0.67% |
| No religion | 37.61% | 25.50% |
| Prefer not to say | 18.70% | 33.11% |

- **The Royal Blind School as at 31 March 2015:**



| Religion/belief | 2015 report | 2013 report |
|-------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Buddhist | - | 0.55% |
| Christian | 50.00% | 43.10% |
| Hindu | - | - |
| Jewish | - | - |
| Muslim | - | 1.10% |
| Sikh | - | - |
| Other religion | 0.62% | - |
| No religion | 32.50% | 19.34% |
| Prefer not to say | 16.88% | 35.91% |

- **Recruitment**

New employees appointed between 1 April 2013 and 31 March 2015:

| Religion/belief | The whole organisation | The Royal Blind School |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Buddhist | 1.43% | - |
| Christian | 31.43% | 23.68% |
| Hindu | 0.71% | - |
| Jewish | - | - |
| Muslim | - | - |
| Sikh | 0.71% | - |
| Other religion | 3.57% | 2.63% |
| No religion | 48.57% | 63.16% |
| Prefer not to say | 13.58% | 10.53% |

Job applicants between 1 April 2014 and 31 March 2015:

| Religion/belief | The whole organisation | The Royal Blind School |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Buddhist | 1.39% | - |
| Christian | 34.37% | 30.00% |
| Hindu | 0.87% | - |
| Jewish | 0.17% | - |
| Muslim | 0.87% | - |
| Sikh | - | - |
| Other religion | 1.74% | 2.00% |
| No religion | 52.60% | 62.00% |
| Prefer not to say | 7.99% | 6.00% |

- **Leavers** between 1 April 2013 and 31 March 2015:

| Religion/belief | The whole organisation | The Royal Blind School |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Buddhist | - | - |
| Christian | 36.00% | 34.62% |
| Hindu | 0.80% | - |
| Jewish | - | - |
| Muslim | 1.60% | 3.85% |
| Sikh | - | - |
| Other religion | 0.80% | - |
| No religion | 29.60% | 32.69% |
| Prefer not to say | 31.20% | 28.85% |

- **Employees promoted internally** between 1 April 2013 and 31 March 2015:

| Religion/belief | The whole organisation | The Royal Blind School |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Buddhist | - | - |
| Christian | 48.98% | 70.59% |
| Hindu | - | - |
| Jewish | - | - |
| Muslim | - | - |
| Sikh | - | - |
| Other religion | 2.04% | - |
| No religion | 40.82% | 29.14% |
| Prefer not to say | 8.16% | - |

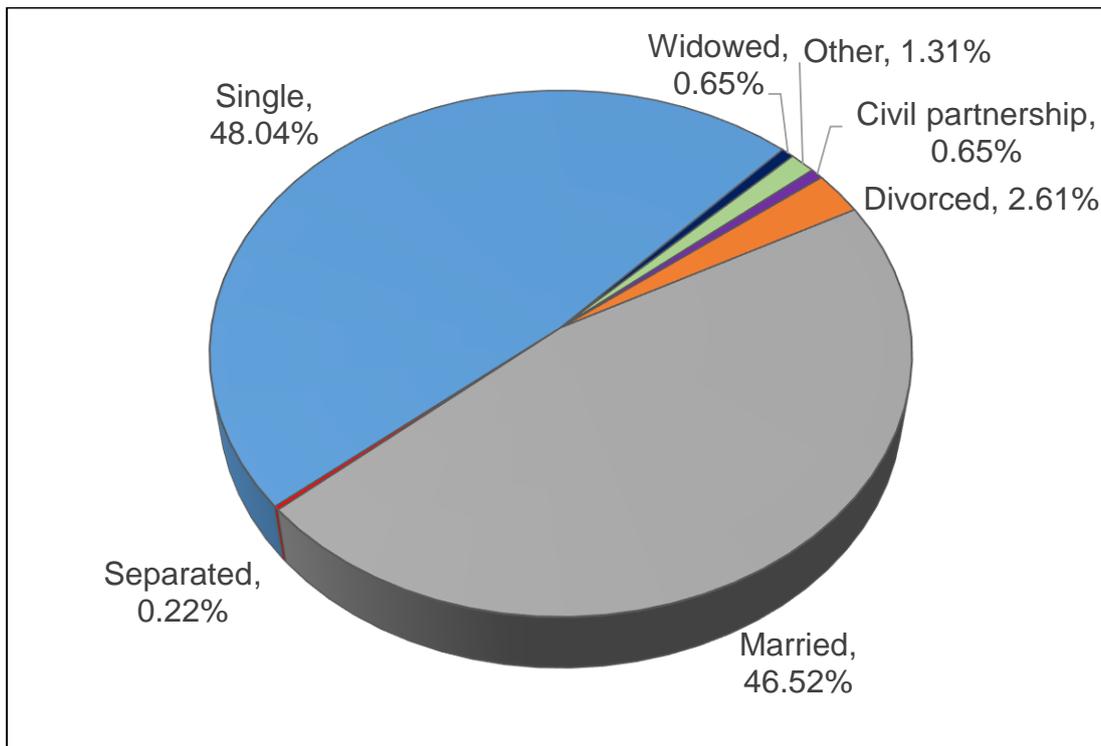
The make-up of our staffing is dominated by 'Christian' and 'No religion', and this spread is similar across all our employment practices. These proportions are similar to the figures presented in our 2013 report.

There is still a relatively high percentage of employees who prefer not to disclose their religion, but this appears to be less of an issue with job applicants, and we hope that with time people will feel more open about disclosing this information.

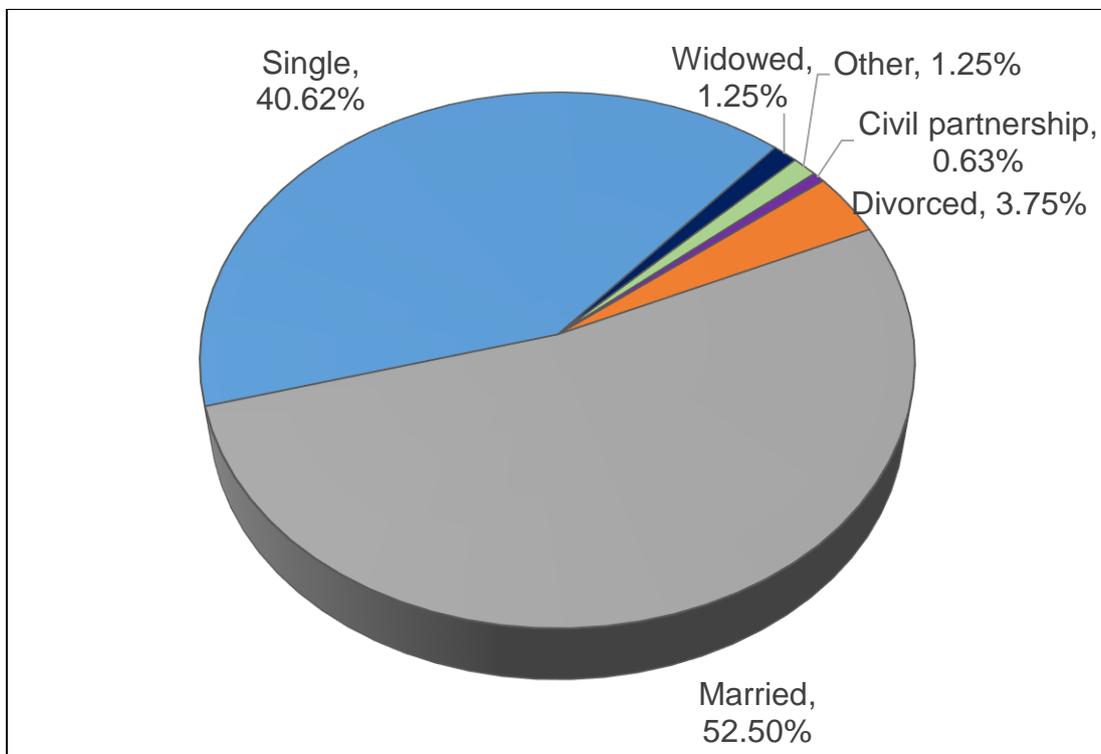
The employee data split by religion or belief under recruitment, retention and development practices broadly corresponds to the overall make-up of our staffing.

Marriage/Civil Partnership Status

- The whole organisation as at 31 March 2015:



- The Royal Blind School as at 31 March 2015:



- **Recruitment**

New employees appointed between 1 April 2013 and 31 March 2015:

| Marriage/civil partnership status | The whole organisation | The Royal Blind School |
|--|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Civil partnership | 1.43% | - |
| Divorced | 0.71% | - |
| Married | 29.29% | 23.68% |
| Single | 68.57% | 76.32% |

Job applicants between 1 April 2014 and 31 March 2015:

| Are you married or in civil partnership? | The whole organisation | The Royal Blind School |
|---|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Yes | 33.16% | 33.00% |
| No | 60.76% | 60.00% |
| Prefer not to say | 6.08% | 7.00% |

- **Leavers** between 1 April 2013 and 31 March 2015:

| Marriage/civil partnership status | The whole organisation | The Royal Blind School |
|--|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Divorced | 0.80% | 1.92% |
| Married | 41.60% | 44.23% |
| Single | 56.00% | 51.92% |
| Widowed | 1.60% | 1.92% |

- **Employees promoted internally** between 1 April 2013 and 31 March 2015:

| Marriage/civil partnership status | The whole organisation | The Royal Blind School |
|--|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Married | 38.78% | 58.82% |
| Single | 59.18% | 41.18% |
| Widowed | 2.04% | - |

A vast majority of our staff are either 'Married' or 'Single'. We believe that the data above relating to recruitment, retention and development of our employees corresponds with fair and equal employment practices in relation to the marriage and civil partnership status.

Gender Pay Gap

- **The whole organisation as at 31 March 2015**

The average hourly rate for the whole organisation was £12.31 per hour. This was split by gender as follows:

- female employees: £12.32 per hour
- male employees: £12.27 per hour.

Our female staff were therefore paid on average more than men. The difference is however only 0.4% which does not give cause for concern.

- **The Royal Blind School as at 31 March 2015**

Within the Royal Blind School, our overall average hourly rate was £14.17 per hour. This was split by gender as follows:

- female employees: £14.02 per hour
- male employees: £15.35 per hour.

We have a very low proportion of male employees within the School (10.63%), and the average pay difference of around 9.5% is related solely to the types of roles men are employed in. The table below shows a split across different staff categories of our female and male employees within the School:

| | Female employees | Male employees |
|------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Domestic Staff | 12.86% | - |
| Classroom Assistants | 18.57% | 11.76% |
| Nursery Nurses | 7.86% | - |
| General Staff | 5.71% | 23.53% |
| Residential Care Staff | 32.14% | 35.29% |
| Nurses | 5.00% | - |
| Teachers | 17.86% | 29.42% |

Teachers are our highest paid staff group within the School. 29.42% of our male employees are employed in teaching roles compared with 17.86% of our female employees. Our Residential Care staff are paid around or above the average hourly rate (depending on where they are on the pay scale range) and we have similar proportions of male and female staff within these roles. Classroom Assistants, Domestic Staff and Nursery Nurses are paid below the average hourly rate. 39.29% of our female employees are employed in these roles compared with only 11.76% of our male employees. The hourly rate for Domestic Assistants, for example, as at 31 March 2015 comprised 46.79% of the overall average hourly rate at the School. These factors impacted on the gap in average hourly rates of pay between male and female employees.

It is expected that this pay gap will reduce with the adoption of Living Wage by the Royal Blind Group with effect from 1 April 2015. The hourly rates for our lowest pay staff, including domestic staff who within the School are solely female, will increase by a higher proportion than the remaining staff groups.

PROGRESS TOWARDS ACHIEVING EQUALITY OUTCOMES

In our Equality status report published in April 2013 we have specified 5 main outcomes we would like to achieve. This section of the report outlines the progress we made towards achieving each of our aspirations.

- 1. We will work towards our vision to make a significant contribution to building a community in which blind and partially sighted people, including those who also have other disabilities, are fully included and lead fulfilling lives.**

We work towards fulfilling our vision, empowering blind people to achieve their potential and a brighter future. This vision is at the core of all our activities and decision making. Specific details of how we achieve this are outlined under 'Mainstreaming equality duty' section of this report.

- 2. We would like to be more diverse than we are at present, particularly in terms of ethnicity.**
- 3. We would like to see more disabled people involved on our staff beyond the Scottish Braille Press, which exists partly to provide employment for those with visual and other impairments and therefore employs many in these categories.**

Our employee information shows an increased mix of ethnic backgrounds, and we also employ a higher proportion of disabled employees compared to April 2013. Further information about our progress in these areas can be found under 'Employee Information' section of this report and under point 5 below.

We are committed to continuously improving our performance in attaining equality in our employment practice. We have taken steps to raise staff awareness around equal opportunities and gather staff feedback on what we can do to continuously progress in this area.

We have run briefing sessions around the Public Sector Equality Duty with management staff at the School. The briefings additionally created a forum for discussion and feedback around ensuring consistent application of the duty to all our activities within the School, and this information was cascaded as appropriate to the rest of staff.

We have set up an Equality Forum with representatives from various minority backgrounds. The aim of this forum is to act as a reference panel to assess our policies, progress against our aims and to bring forward ideas which will help us improve equality in our employment practice. The forum for example fed into the updated equal opportunities policy described under the 'Employee information' section of this report.

We have also introduced a new staff feedback mechanism to give everyone an opportunity to share their suggestions around equality in our employment practice more broadly. In early 2015 we have gathered staff feedback around recruitment and what we could do to attract more candidates from minority backgrounds to apply for jobs at the

Royal Blind Group. The minority backgrounds we are looking at specifically include ethnic minorities, male candidates, candidates with disabilities and candidates with minority sexual orientation (bisexual, gay, lesbian). This feedback is currently being collated and the suggestions will be taken forward by the Equality Forum.

4. We aim to move gradually towards having a more ethnically diverse Board with a more even gender balance.

In April 2013 we had 11 male and 6 female Board members. As at 31 March 2015 we had 9 male and 7 female Board members, which improved the gender balance of the board from 65% male and 35% female in 2013 to 56% male and 44% female in 2015.

Board appointments are made on the basis of skills, experience and knowledge needed to complement the existing Board membership. We aim to ensure that the Board is strong in business experience, that it has expertise in the required principal professions of education, social care and nursing and that it includes members with experience and expertise in sight loss. The appointment process and role requirements are reviewed each time a vacancy arises to ensure that the Board is well equipped to discharge its charitable duties.

5. We are currently considering adopting the two-tick symbol 'Positive about disabled people' in our recruitment practice, and applying for Investors in People status.

We have been accredited with the **Positive about Disabled People Two Ticks Symbol** in recognition of our commitment to good practice in employing and retaining disabled people.

This symbol shows that Royal Blind has agreed to meet five commitments in its role as an employer:

- recruitment - to interview all disabled applicants who meet the minimum criteria for a job vacancy and consider them on their abilities
- consultation - to ensure there is a mechanism in place to discuss, at any time, but at least once a year, with disabled employees what can be done to make sure they can develop and use their abilities
- retention – to make every effort when employees become disabled to make sure they stay in employment
- development – to take action to ensure that all employees develop the appropriate level of disability awareness needed to make these commitments work
- review – to review annually the five commitments and what has been achieved, plan ways to improve on them and let employees and Jobcentre Plus know about progress and future plans.

We have put processes in place to ensure that these commitments are met on an ongoing basis and that they are embedded on our normal processes and day-to-day operations. This is supported by the annual renewal of our accreditation.

We place the Two Ticks symbol on all of our recruitment advertisements, application form and other relevant publications. All applicants applying for a job with Royal Blind under the scheme are guaranteed and interview if they meet the essential criteria for the job, as defined in the person specification (this also applies to internal vacancies).

All disabled staff are provided with opportunities to discuss what can be done to make sure they develop and use their abilities, through regular supervision/one-to-one meetings and annual appraisals.

For our employees who become disabled or whose level of disability changes in the course of their employment, and there are aspects of their present role that make it difficult for them to carry on the same work, we do all we can to make sure these employees can stay in their job.

Further implementation and monitoring

We will continue to:

- apply the principles of equality to all our activity including our service delivery, our staffing and our management and governance
- monitor and use employee information to ensure improved equality and diversity across the organisation
- work towards achieving our key equality outcomes over the next two years with the support of the Equality Forum.

The next Equality Status Report will be published in April 2017. The report will include similar information to this report, as well as a fresh set of equality outcomes.