

The Pioneer Housing Group

Annual Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report

2024-2025

Introduction

The Pioneer Group's latest Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) report highlights the work we did over 2024-2025 as we strive to further embed equality, diversity and inclusion in all our activities, both with our customers and our employees. Our goal is to ensure our services are accessible to all and that every individual feels included and valued.

The Pioneer Group developed an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy for 2021-2025. The purpose of this strategy was to ensure that:

- That our commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion informs all our operating processes
- That our services are accessible and available to all
- That our workforce and leadership mirror the diversity of our City
- That as an anchor organisation we are supporting inclusive communities across our core neighbourhoods

This means understanding individual circumstances, choices and needs, and tackling all forms of discrimination.

Under the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard registered providers set by the Regulator for Social Housing we are required to respond to the diverse needs of customers, and to:

- **Treat all customers with fairness and respect**
- **Demonstrate that they understand the different needs of their customers**
- **Identify customers with additional support needs in relation to the equality strands**

All data collected is used to support ensuring that tenants have access to accessible information, services delivered are transparent, fair and equitable and to enable Pioneer to tailor its services to individual needs.

Progress against 2021-2025 Actions

Leadership and Governance	Update on progress 2024-25
Ensure that appropriate management and operational support is in place.	Complete - The EDI work of the group is supported by a cross-departmental EDI Forum
Ensure arrangements are in place to facilitate the work of the Diversity Advisory Group	Complete - The Diversity Advisory Group is supported by the People Team. The Group has broken down the Diversity Advisory Group into five key focus groups: 1. LGBTQIA 2. Gender 3. BAME 4. Health 5. Neurodiversity.
Build an appropriate schedule of EDI activities into the marketing and communications work plan	This activity will form part of the updated Communications Strategy. EDI activities are shared and communicated with staff.
Explore signing up to other initiatives e.g adoption of Race Code, participation in Birmingham Race Impact Group	We are active participants in the Birmingham Race Impact Group. The Pioneer Group has signed up to the Housing Diversity Network's (HND's) Board Trainee Programme. The aim of this programme is support Board diversity within the housing sector. The Pioneer Group currently has three Board Trainee's.
Employees	Update on progress
Understand our city demographics for benchmarking purposes	This is complete. The Pioneer Group uses the latest Census data.
Draw upon experience of relevant sector benchmarks	Complete - We participate in regional HDN Forum and National NHF Forum to enable us to draw on best practice
Develop approach towards talent spotting and mentoring	Complete - Our Management Development and Aspiring Leaders Programmes are the foundation of our talent spotting approach
Service Delivery	Update on progress
Ensure that we understand our community demographics	Complete - We have used 2021 Census data to understand the demographics of our communities
Develop framework to monitor customer satisfaction for EDI indicators, to include: customer satisfaction with CVCH and Compass services; monitoring of complaints; feedback through resident engagement	The approach to monitoring feedback is ongoing. We collect some demographic data as part of our surveys and we are looking at how to develop this further in relation to complaints and other customer touchpoints The Pioneer Group is required to collect Tenant Satisfaction Measure's by the Regulator of Social Housing. As part of this data collect the Group monitors satisfaction by age and gender.

Engagement with communities	Update on progress
Draw up programme of celebratory events that can be rolled out internally and with our communities	A formal calendar is being developed during 2025.
Ensure that Strategy is well publicised in accessible format for tenants & residents, staff and stakeholders	Complete - The strategy is available on our website and now that we have a communications team in place we will look at how to further publicise
Ensure our publications celebrate differences and embrace all communities	Complete - This has always been part of our approach and we are currently commissioning new photography which will reinforce this approach

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2025-2028

Our vision is to build places where people feel safe, connected, and belong. Within our organisation, we're committed to developing a workplace where everyone can be their authentic selves and feel valued for the unique perspectives they bring.

This strategy is a key part of delivering our Corporate Plan. It helps us respond to the challenges and opportunities we face as both a landlord and an employer, ensuring our services reflect the diverse needs of the communities we serve.

Over the past five years, we've made real progress in embedding EDI into our culture. This strategy builds on that foundation, supporting our continued growth and evolution as an organisation.

The existing Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy ended in 2025 and the Pioneer Group Board approved a new strategy that will run between 2025 and 2028.

The new strategy sets out the Group's key goals which is supported by an associated action plan. Progress against the action plan will be reported in September of each year.

Our Customers and Community

Our goal is to gain a deeper insight into our community and customers to enhance their experience with our services and engage with them more inclusively.

An important aspect of this is a clear and targeted focus on data – the collection of customer data, management and maintenance and using this knowledge it gives us. This will help us to gain the insights needed to understand our communities better, plan and deliver our services, and increase customer satisfaction.

We will offer a variety of ways for customers to engage with us, co-design, and review our services.

Our People and Workplace

We strive to foster a workplace culture where everyone feels respected, valued, and included. We want to ensure that our colleagues are genuinely engaged and that we are creating an inclusive and flexible workplace.

To achieve this, it is important to us that our workforce and Board reflects the diverse demographic of Birmingham, creating an environment where colleagues from different backgrounds can thrive. A key component of this is ensuring diversity at Senior Leadership level as well as at our Group Board.

Our Actions for 2025-2028

Age and Gender

Area of focus	Activity/Action	Timeframe
Reduce gender pay gap There is currently an 18% gender pay between which needs to be reduced.	Focus on recruitment and training to increase the number of women in leadership roles.	2028
Workplace Support for Pregnancy/Baby Loss Raise awareness about the need for pregnancy or baby loss to be recognised as an important workplace wellbeing issue.	Develop an organisational framework to support employees. Equip managers to support people with empathy and understanding with support tool kits and training	2026/2027
Increased awareness and support for Men's Mental Health Suspected suicide rates in males (15.2 per 100,000) remain higher than females (5.3 per 100,000), therefore awareness and focus on male mental health would be key	Workshops and talks from experts to break the stigma and to promote understanding and an open dialogue. Creation of support groups (such as walking/football groups) could be developed.	2025

Race and Religion

Area of focus	Activity/Action	Timeframe
Training and Education Raising awareness about BAME issues and challenges as well as celebrations to highlight the importance of BAME backgrounds	A variety of different activities such as lunch and learns, workshops and presentations.	2025
Celebrating diversity and providing colleagues with the opportunity to get involved with the BAME activities	Calendar of events to celebrate with posts on the intranet and social media along with presentations from colleagues and external speakers.	2025
Representative and Inclusive hiring practices	Look to create more diverse interview panels and content/ advertising of jobs.	2025 – ongoing
Leadership	Continue the Aspiring Leadership programme	2025 (Date TBC)

Health

Area of focus	Activity/Action	Timeframe
Menopause/Menstruation Awareness & Advocacy	Menopause/Menstruation Policy – Advocating for reasonable adjustments for those going through menopause and to provide a guideline for managers and employees to navigate menopause within a working environment.	
Raise Awareness and support for Mental Health	Provide staff support by having trained staff across the group through Mental Health First Aiders/Wellbeing Reps support Have guest speaker and share information during Mental Health Awareness week	
Suicide Prevention Awareness	Include all Customer Facing Teams into the training schedule to attend the Suicide Prevention Training through HQN – C1st and Hubs Teams to be included	
Resident and Staff Health Awareness/Promotion drop in session re Blood Pressure, Diabetes checks and health and well being advice to create better Health outcomes for staff and residents	In Partnership with local Primary care Trust and Partners such as Mind, Age Concern Impact	March 2026
Deep Dive into our customer Data to understand more around those who are living with disabilities and how we can better support these customers.		Review of processes in Summer 2025
Review current processes around our Disability Confident Accreditation and provide training to Line Managers to embed this		Training to be developed Q3 2025/26 and rolled out Q4 into Q1 26/27

LGBTQIA+

Area of focus	Activity/Action	Timeframe
Training and Education	Regular training sessions/ workshops/ presentations to education colleagues about :LGBTQIA+ issues - focus on inclusive language and understanding challenges	Ongoing
Mentorship	Creation of mentorship opportunities that connect LGBTQIA+ colleagues and mentors who can provide support and guidance.	2025/26
Celebrating Diversity and creation of allyship	Recognise and celebrate LBGTQIA+ events such as Pride to raise awareness	Ongoing - see calendar of events
Representation in our Committees, Board and Leaderships Teams		2028

Neurodiversity

Area of focus	Activity/Action	Timeframe
Inclusive recruitment and onboarding processes	Review and propose changes to policy regarding recruitment and approach to onboarding to accommodate Neurodiversity	June 2025
Increase knowledge and understanding of neurodiversity across the organisation	Sharing information on intranet regards to Neurodiversity, talks and workshops to help create better understanding across the organisation	
Focus on the strengths and unique skills of neurodivergent employees, creating an environment and opportunities for them to excel and thrive in	Training for Line Managers on how best to support neurodivergent employees.	
Creating a more equitable working environment	Review of best practice approaches to ensure that our day to day working practices are inclusive. For example, limiting side chat in online meetings, sharing agenda and documents ahead of meetings, ensuring different formats are available to ensure understanding, not all meetings have to be seated etc	

Data Collection

Area of focus	Activity/Action	Timeframe
Focus on collection of customer and colleague data to inform EDI led activities	Working with colleagues to map customer touch points and identify areas for data collection. Training/ workshops to be run with colleagues to create better understanding of why it is important for us to collect this data, what we will do with the data and how they can help	April 2025 – ongoing
Review of BAU processes to maximise opportunities for collecting and validating data as part of every day contact with customers	Following touch point mapping, review areas where other teams can get involved if appropriate in collecting and validating data as part of our every day working processes rather than this being a 'project' and to stop us being in similar position in future.	August 2025

Data Insight

Area of focus	Activity/Action	Timeframe
Creation of EDI specific dashboards	Use of Power Bi to create specific EDI related dashboard to monitor our data collection enabling us to make informed decisions around the services and support we provide.	April 2026
Analysis of data around EDI characteristics to continue to inform our work with colleagues and customers	Following data collection exercise, deep dive into specific characteristics to better understand our colleagues and customers which may lead to further actions being added to this plan.	July 2026 – onwards

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Data

The below provides a comparison between Pioneer Group staff, Board Members and the profile of the Birmingham City. It also shows the movement in categories from one year to the next.

As show below The Pioneer Group has seen a slight increase in younger Board Members over the past year. The Pioneer Group is working with the Housing Diversity Network (HDN) and has recruited three new trainees. The trainees will be observing the Board and Committee meetings, alongside training provided by HDN with a view to them joining Pioneer's governance structure once fully trained (Fig 1).

Fig 1

Age	Board Members 2023-24	Board Members 2024-25	Birmingham City	Movement
16-24	0%	0.00%	15.69% *	
24-40	25%	26.32%	21.66%	
41-65	62.5%	57.89%	28.58%	
65+	12.5%	15.79%	13.15%	

* 2021 Census data. Age band 15-24

The Pioneer Group has seen a decrease in ages 16-24 but an increase in 24-40 aged members of staff. This is linked to the Group's turnover (Fig 2).

Fig 2

Age	Staff 2023-24	Staff 2024-25	Birmingham City	Movement
16-24	7.2%	5.30%	15.69% *	
24-40	36.8%	37.88%	21.66%	
41-65	55.2%	55.30%	28.58%	
65+	0.8%	1.52%	13.15%	

The number of male Board Members has increased over the course of the past year. This has been due to recruitment with an increasing number of male applicants (Fig 3). Since March 2025 the Group has recruited two new female Board Members and one female Committee member and this will be reflected in the 2025-26 annual EDI report.

Fig 3

Gender	Board Members 2023-24	Board Members 2024-25	Birmingham City	Movement
Male	54%	68.42%	49%	
Female	46%	31.58%	51%	

There has been an increase in female staff over the course of the past year due to the recruitment within the Group. The Group is still reflective of the wider Birmingham City EDI profile in line with its Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy (Fig 4)

Fig 4

Gender	Staff 2023-24	Staff 2024-25	Birmingham City	Movement
Male	40.8%	37.12%	49%	
Female	59.2%	62.88%	51%	

The diversity within the Group's governance structure has improved and is now more reflective of the wider Birmingham City ethnicity programme. This is due to the Group's approach to recruitment and ensuring that we are reaching as wide and diverse range of applicants as possible (Fig 5)

Fig 5

Ethnicity	Board Members 2023-24	Board Members 2024-25	Birmingham City	Movement
White: British	79.17%	73.66%	53%	
White: Irish	4.16%	10.53%	2%	
White: Other	0%	0%	3%	
Mixed	0%	0%	4%	
Asian/Asian British: Indian	4.16%	5.26%	6%	
Asian/Asian British: Pakistani	0%	0%	14%	
Asian/Asian British: Bangladeshi	0%	0%	3%	
Asian/Asian British: Other	0%	5.26%		
Black/Black British: Caribbean	4.16%	0%	4%	
Black/Black British: African	8.33%	10.23%	3%	
Black/British: other	0%	0%		
Chinese/Other: Chinese	0%	0%	1%	
Other	0%	0%	7%	
Prefer not to Say	0%	0%		
Not known	0%	0%		

* 2011 Census

The Pioneer Group has recruited and retained a diverse workforce which is reflective of the wider Birmingham City demographics (Fig 6).

Fig 6

Ethnicity	Staff 2023-24	Staff 2024-25	Birmingham City	Movement
White: British	51.2%	52.27%	53%	
White: Irish	3.2%	3.79%	2%	
White: Other	1.6%	3.03%	3%	
Mixed	2.4%	3.03%	4%	
Asian/Asian British: Indian	8.8%	7.58%	6%	
Asian/Asian British: Pakistani	4%	5.30%	14%	
Asian/Asian British: Bangladeshi	0.8%	0.76%	3%	
Asian/Asian British: Other	1.6%	1.52%		
Black/Black British: Caribbean	2.4%	4.55%	4%	
Black/Black British: African	2.4%	3.79%	3%	
Black/British: other	0%	0.00%		
Chinese/Other: Chinese	0%	0.00%	1%	
Other	0.8%	1.52%	7%	
Prefer not to Say	0.8%	1.52%		
Not known	20%	11.36%		

The Pioneer Group's governance structure currently has no Members with a declared disability. The Group is committed to being a diverse organisation and ensure that its Board and Committees are accessible to all (Fig 7).

Fig 7

Disability	Board Members 2023-24	Board Members 2024-25	Birmingham City	Movement
Yes	0%	0%	-	
No	100%	100%	-	
Not Known	N/A	N/A	-	
Prefer not to Say	N/A	N/A	-	

The Group has a diverse workforce with 4.55% of staff stating that they have a disability, although this is a decrease of 1.05% on last year. The Group strives to ensure that its workplaces are accessible to support staff, customers and visitors (Fig 8).

Fig 8

Disability	Staff 2023-24	Staff 2024-25	Birmingham City	Movement
Yes	5.6%	4.55%	-	
No	56.8%	62.88%	-	
Not Known	37.6%	32.58%	-	
Prefer not to Say	0%	0%	-	

The Group's governance structure is varied and diverse as show below (Fig 9).

Religion	Board Members 2023-24	Board Members 2024-25	Birmingham City	Movement
Christianity	29.16%	31.58%	59%	
Buddhism	0%	0	0.4%	
Hinduism	4.16%	5.26%	2%	
Judaism	0%	0	0.2%	
Muslim (Islam)	0%	0%	21%	
Sikhism	0%	0%	3%	
None	50%	42.11%	19%	
Prefer not to say	16.66%	21.05%	-	
Not Known	0%	0%	-	
Other	N/A	0%	0%	

Below shows the breakdown of staff religious beliefs over the past two years (Fig 10). It is pleasing to see that the number of "not known" data has decreased by 11.16% and Pioneer is committed to filling the gaps in our EDI data.

Fig 10

Religion	Staff 2023-24	Staff 2024-25	Birmingham City	Movement
Christianity	32%	35.61%	59%	
Buddhism	0%	0.00%	0.4%	
Hinduism	1.6%	1.52%	2%	
Judaism	0%	0.00%	0.2%	
Muslim (Islam)	8%	9.09%	21%	
Sikhism	4.8%	4.55%	3%	
None	23.2%	29.55%	19%	
Prefer not to say	2.4%	3.79%	-	
Not Known	24.8%	13.64%	-	
Other	3.2%	2.27%	0%	

The below table (Fig 11) shows a breakdown of the governance structure's sexuality. The Group has seen a decreased in Board Members "prefer not to say" their sexuality and is a positive move in the right direction. Pioneer is considering more ways to support and understand why Board Members do not want to provide this information.

Fig 11

Sexuality	Board Members 2023-24	Board Members 2024-25	Birmingham City	Movement
Gay Women/man	0%	0%	1%	
Heterosexual/Straight	58.33%	63.16%	94.8%	
Bisexual	0%	0%	1.0%	
Other	0%	0%	1%	
Prefer not to say	41.66%	36.84%	3%	
Not Known	N/A	0%	-	

Whilst the number of staff stating “prefer not to say” has increased this has a direct correlation to the number of “not known” statistics which has decreased by 8.93% (Fig 12). The Group is looking at ways to encourage staff to provide this data.

Fig 12

Sexuality	Staff 2023-24	Staff 2024-25	Birmingham City	Movement
Gay Women/man	0.8%	1.52%	1%	↑
Heterosexual/Straight	70.4%	77.27%	94.8%	↑
Bisexual	0.8%	1.52%	1.0%	↑
Other	0%	0.00%	1%	→
Prefer not to say	2.4%	3.03%	3%	↑
Not Known	25.6%	16.67%	-	↓