



# Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion annual report 2022-23

# Introduction

Welcome to our second Equality, Diversity and Inclusion annual report. The report provides an overview of our progress towards meeting our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) strategy objectives over the past year, including an update on our workforce profile and gender pay gap.

We are delighted to report we have made further significant progress in a number of key areas, including:

- Increasing the diversity of our workforce.
- Introducing new policies and procedures to promote inclusion.
- Working with our colleagues to create a more inclusive culture.
- Ensuring our services are accessible and providing support to our customers.
- Measuring our progress and setting new goals.

The report is an opportunity for colleagues to share the work they are undertaking, and the focus being given, to driving cultural change. To bring this to life we have included case studies and comments from customers and colleagues to show the real impact of these changes.

We are proud of the progress we have made, but we know that there is still more work to be done. The tragic death of Awaab Ishak, in Rochdale, highlighted the inequalities that still exist in both the quality of housing and access to services for some social housing customers. We are therefore even more committed to continuing our work on EDI and to building homes and communities, and creating a workplace, where everyone feels welcome, valued, and respected.



**David Davies**

Chair of EDI group,  
Head of Supported  
Housing



**Jennifer Pulsford**

Inclusion and Reward  
Manager

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# Our Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion strategy

Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) strategy sets out the steps we will take, to continue our journey to becoming a more diverse and inclusive organisation. Our aim is to have highly satisfied customers and highly engaged colleagues, who feel respected regardless of their backgrounds.

To achieve our aim, our strategy focuses on a number of core priorities, which we call our ‘Six Pillars’.



**Growth** – We recruit from a diverse pool of candidates and promote talent within the organisation, through career development and educational opportunities.



**Accessibility** – We make our services accessible to everyone.



**Belonging** – Colleagues and customers feel they are valued, and their voices are heard.



**Individuality** – We embrace and celebrate each other’s differences.



**Trust** – We are honest and transparent with customers, colleagues and partners. Relationships are based on mutual trust and respect.



**Challenge** – We are comfortable to challenge, including unconscious bias, and we do the right thing.



We recognise delivering this strategy is crucial to our success as a business. We review and publish our progress towards achieving our goals in an annual report each year.

Now in its second year, our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy continues to drive the positive changes that make a real difference in our workplace and communities, helping us to become the fully inclusive organisation we want to be.

# Growth

Increased colleague diversity helps us better represent our communities and provides us with a wider range of perspectives and lived experiences.



## Our vision

We always recruit from a diverse pool of candidates and promote talent within the organisation, through career development and educational opportunities.

- To support our commitment to increasing diversity, we require all colleagues involved in recruitment to attend our recruiting manager workshops. These sessions help our colleagues to:
  - Increase their awareness of unconscious bias.
  - Understand the importance of diverse recruitment panels.
  - Be fully aware of the positive action we take to ensure a fair and inclusive recruitment process.

By taking these steps, we are committed to creating a workplace where everyone feels welcome and valued, regardless of their background or identity.

“

When I applied for my role at LiveWest, they changed their approach to support me and I was provided with the interview questions in advance. I feel it benefitted all parties. The interviewee can properly assess what's going to take place. The interviewer has the opportunity to see if the candidate is able to research and apply knowledge. From an EDI perspective, I think it creates a more level playing field overall.”

– Zak, Supported Housing

“

I work Monday to Thursday due to my on-going health issues and my mother being a four-hour drive from home, who has been in poor health. My managers have been very supportive and helped in every way they can. The 32-hour working week has also helped with my mental health and wellbeing to perform my work duties to the best of my abilities.”

– Electrician, IMS team

- We understand everyone's personal commitments are different, so we want to support our colleagues in balancing their work and home life. We have introduced more opportunities for part-time working, which has allowed a number of colleagues to change their working patterns to support childcare or caring responsibilities, as well as their own wellbeing. We are committed to providing our colleagues with the flexibility they need to succeed both at work and at home.

“

I have been working part-time (four days a week) for about five years now and it's the best decision I've ever made. I have Friday, Saturday and Sunday to recharge my batteries. By Monday morning I'm ready for the challenges that come my way. I would highly recommend to anyone that's struggling with stress in the workplace. Even my wife enjoys having me under her feet for the extra day!”

– Bob,  
Multi Skilled Technician



“

Reduced hours working for me means I am less stressed, well rested, more positive and a better, happier colleague. I'm very appreciative that LiveWest recognises the benefits of work-life balance, which in turn creates an incentive for me to work to the best of my ability.”

– Dean,  
Multi Skilled Technician



# Our partnership with the GEM programme



We are committed to building a diverse leadership team, and we are proud to partner with the GEM programme to help us achieve our goal.

GEM is a self-development and career-building programme that combines real-life job experience, and personal development including leadership development, with a professional qualification accredited by the Chartered Institute of Housing. We secured six places on the programme which started in January 2023. In a drive to increase leadership diversity and representation from underrepresented groups, we ring-fenced two places for applicants who are from an ethnic minority group and/or living with a disability.

“

For years I've always worried about 'the struggle of the juggle' finding the balance between a profession I love and parenting my two daughters of seven and nine.

My experience with LiveWest has been really positive. I've been actively encouraged and supported to participate in the GEM programme knowing that flexible working means I can meet my workplace objectives, further my professional development and still be there for the school run.

The GEM programme is equipping me with a set of skills for life and, as a result the benefits extend far beyond my role and team, to teaching my daughters what gender equality in the workplace looks like and how you can strive to be both a great parent and professional at the same time. Thank you LiveWest.”

– Sophie,  
GEM programme participant





# Accessibility

Delivering excellent services to our customers and creating a great place to work, regardless of protected characteristics, will benefit our colleagues and customers as well as improve our satisfaction levels.



## Our vision

We make our services accessible to everyone

- We are gathering more data on our customers' demographics and support needs. This information helps us to understand the challenges our customers face and ensure that our services are accessible to everyone. For example, if a customer is living with a long-term illness or disability, they may need support to access our services. Knowing this information will help us to provide the right level of support so that our customers can get the most out of our services. Since the initiative began, we have collected support needs information from an additional 6,558 customers.

“

I just wanted to write regarding the visit of your operative, with regards to the fitting of my new smoke alarm system for the deaf... He did a really super job and always made sure I could hear or lip-read him.”

– Barbara, Cornwall



“

Thank you to the two gentlemen who came today to repair my window. They were on time and respectful of my household. I have an autistic son and they allowed me to take the time to deal with him before they started working. I felt completely at ease while they were in the house. I was very grateful because it can be a little awkward sometimes when there are workers in the house. I let them do their thing and never had any concerns with them being in the house leaving them to it to carry out the repair. They are a credit to LiveWest.”

– Tara, Bristol



- Following the tragic death of Awaab Ishak, we have reviewed our customer data to identify homes where there may be unreported disrepair or damp and mould. We know some customers may not speak English as their first language, or may find it difficult to contact us for other reasons. We arranged to visit these homes through our “You and Your Home” visit programme to ensure customers are aware of and are accessing the services they need.
- We held **15 roadshows** across our geography to promote our adaptations service and supported our customers to access over **2,000** individual adaptations to their homes.

	Cornwall	Devon	Somerset	Total
Minor adaptations	559	656	372	1,587
Cost	£127,074	£153,562	£110,771	£391,408
Major adaptations (funded through disabled facilities grants)	165	224	123	512
Cost	£692,460	£1,084,168	£332,314	£2,108,943

“I wanted to thank LiveWest for helping my mum. When she was discharged from hospital, I raised a request to have the front door threshold repaired as it caught in her newly acquired walking frame and dislodged. You fixed it the next day. Then at the beginning of this month the fire system at her sheltered scheme was reviewed and your officer identified that due to mum’s deafness she needed a fire pillow and flashing light. These are things I have been trying to acquire for a few years from DCC and the RNID without success! You had them fitted within a couple days of the officer’s visit!”

– Antoinette, Devon



- In September we published our Accessible Information Standard. This standard outlines our commitment to ensuring all of our communications are accessible, and to using accessibility features where they support accessibility for those living with a disability.
- We held successful Suicide Awareness training with our Customer Services team to support and provide valuable tools to use when answering difficult calls from customers in their role.

“The suicide intervention training session provided me with a wealth of knowledge that I can use both professionally and personally. The training helped me to understand the importance of building a connection with the caller from the start, and it gave me guidance on how to do this. I also learned how to effectively communicate with callers in crisis, which has given me the confidence to handle these calls in a calm and supportive manner.”

– Susan, Customer Services Advisor





## Our vision

Colleagues and customers feel they are valued, and their voices are heard.

# Belonging

When colleagues feel appreciated and valued at work, they are more likely to be engaged, satisfied, and motivated. This leads to higher levels of performance, as they are more motivated to do their best work. Valuing and listening to our customers helps us to provide services in the ways that they need, which increases their satisfaction.

Over the last year:

- We have increased the diversity of our customer scrutiny group, InFocus, to ensure more of our customers' voices are heard. This wider representation will enable greater scrutiny of our services and ensure they are shaped around the needs of everyone.



- The Chair and Vice Chair of InFocus were invited to join Board members and colleagues on our annual stock tour, and now attend our Customer Service Committee providing constructive feedback on the customer experience and service delivery.
- Our three colleague network groups:
  - Race and Ethnicity Equality Network (REEN);
  - Sexuality and Gender Equality group (SAGE);
  - Disability and Equality Awareness Network (DEAN);

have met regularly throughout the year to provide valuable insights into

how our colleagues are feeling. They have made recommendations and led many of the awareness activities we hold across the business over the year to provide valuable insights into how our colleagues are feeling.

- Each of our colleague network groups now has a reserved place on our colleague consultative body, Our Team Voice. This ensures all of our colleagues' voices are heard when we discuss organisational issues, challenges and changes.





- We recognise that colleagues, who are facing challenges at work, can benefit from easy access to colleagues who can empathise, share their own experiences, and offer practical advice.

That's why we've supported colleagues in creating several informal communities on our Viva Engage social network. These communities allow colleagues to connect and support each other on topics such as:

- Forces and families;
- Parents and carers;
- Menopause support.

“

Diversity culture is championed at LiveWest, which enables me to feel comfortable, empowered, and valued as my true self. I am made to feel that I matter and have a strong sense of belonging here. The workplace has clear policies that are regularly reviewed and carefully thought out to ensure that my needs as an LGBTQIA+ colleague are met. We don't just report on statistics as a business—we really put our all into providing a better and more inclusive environment”

– Lauren, Aids and Adaptations Coordinator

**80% of  
colleagues feel  
they belong at  
LiveWest**

“

InFocus ran a recruitment campaign to attract new members from a more diverse background to ensure that we share the views from all of the communities LiveWest serve. We made a short video to explain what we did as a group and why it's important that customers have a voice. The campaign went out via social media and on the LiveWest website. As a result of the campaign we have managed to increase our membership from minority ethnic communities. We felt that it is very important to have a more diverse scrutiny group so that we and the business can better understand the issues we all face in our communities.”

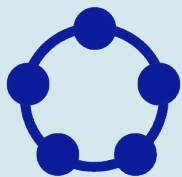
– James, Chair of InFocus





# Individuality

The individuality of our colleagues brings different approaches, experiences and skills. Having members of our team who have different perspectives brings fresh ideas and a new way of looking at things. When people feel they must hide or hold back what makes them who they are, this impacts on wellbeing and they are less likely to flourish in the workplace.



## Our vision

We embrace and celebrate each other's differences.

- From Faith to Family Focus, Carers Month to Pride, we have continued to celebrate each other's differences through a calendar of regular awareness campaigns. In September we launched our very own Neurodiversity month, an opportunity for colleagues to learn more about the support we provide and launch our introduction to neurodiversity workshops.
- We recognise the importance of reflecting the diversity of our colleagues and customers through inclusive imagery. This year we have continued to improve the diversity of the imagery we use for our recruitment advertising, news articles, on our website, colleague portal and other communication materials.
- As our colleague network groups have grown, they have begun to build relationships externally. Our REEN group linked up with Curo Housing's Racial Equality colleague network to share best practice and during Black History Month, held a joint networking event for minority ethnic colleagues to discuss how organisations could improve race equality.
- We are now members of two networks that promote equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) in the housing sector: the National Housing Federation National Network for EDI and the Housing Quality Network EDI group. Our involvement in these networks helps us to improve the experience for our customers and colleagues, and it also helps us to play an active part in developing EDI thinking across our sector.



**88% of colleagues feel LiveWest embraces and celebrates diversity**

“There’s much more to having dyslexia than people think. I think outside the box and I’m creative, I think a lot differently to others which I believe is a strong part of my personality. My manager is amazing and so supportive ...For most my life I have kept having dyslexia and dyspraxia to myself, until I started my role at LiveWest. As an organisation, they encourage you to speak up and not be ashamed.”

– Paul, Agency and Lease team



# Trust

Trust is built by delivering on our promises and monitoring and reporting on progress. Customers and colleagues will trust us when they see high levels of satisfaction, engagement and progress against our goals.



## Our vision

We are honest and transparent with customers, colleagues and partners. Relationships are based on mutual trust and respect.

- We've supported our customers to join and play an active part in the "Stop Social Housing Stigma" campaign. This campaign is run by customers and sponsored by housing organisations across the UK supporting their customers to have a voice against stereotyping.
- Each year we survey our colleagues to find out how we are performing against our EDI objectives. Over 1,100 colleagues responded to our survey with over 88% telling us LiveWest is an employer that embraces and celebrates diversity.
- Creating an inclusive environment is everyone's responsibility at LiveWest. To support with this, we have launched a clear process for colleagues to follow if they see or experience something they don't feel is acceptable. By having support in place for raising concerns related to equality, diversity and inclusion, we can work to help people understand the impact of their behaviour and stop any further issues arising.

“

Whilst we always want to get it right and don't want to offend customers or colleagues, sometimes we are just not sure of the right words to use, the inclusive language guide has provided guidance, clarity and helped build confidence.”

– Sarah, Head of Customer Experience



- The language we use to describe people's identity can help create a more welcoming and trusting environment. This year we updated our tone of voice guidance for colleagues to include a new section on inclusive language. We want to make sure we use appropriate terminology without making assumptions about people or excluding them.
- In the UK, social background still impacts opportunities in life. We believe everyone should be able to achieve their full potential, regardless of their background. To help us understand leadership representation in our business, we are collecting social mobility data for our executive directors and senior management team and benchmarking our results with others through the National Housing Federations EDI data survey.

“

I am a committee member of Stop Social Housing Stigma (SSHS) which is wholly customer-lead group. The group's aim is to ensure customers have more say around their homes and challenge stigma. We have been successful in helping to shape the legislation and expectations of consumer regulation now going through Parliament. I am pleased LiveWest is one of a few who are supporting rolling out this vital programme and have actively facilitated my involvement in the group. We will continue our efforts to bring all to understand stigma and its deleterious effects on people.”

– Colin, LiveWest customer and SSHS committee member





# Challenge



## Our vision

We are comfortable to challenge, including recognising unconscious bias, and we do the right thing.

We have an opportunity to be a force for positive change. By working together to counter inequalities we can help build stronger communities for our customers and a better place to work for our colleagues.

### During the year

- We asked our internal auditors to review our EDI strategy and its delivery. They said “as result of our audit, we are able to provide substantial assurance over both the design and operational effectiveness of the controls in relation to LiveWest’s EDI strategy, the arrangements in place to implement the strategy and the steps it has taken to promote a culture of diversity and inclusion across its workforce”.
- The members of InFocus, our customer scrutiny group, attended workshops to learn about unconscious bias. They were then encouraged to challenge us on how we can be more inclusive for our customers.
- We have held a series of internal diversity webinars to provide valuable learning opportunities for our colleagues. Linked to our awareness months, the webinars covered a range of topics, from neurodiversity and living with dyspraxia to faith at work and starting a family in the LGBTQIA+ community.
- We continue to encourage more women to pursue a career in trades and have welcomed even more women in to our In-House Maintenance Service team, increasing the percentage of women in the team from 1.6% in March 2021 to 4.2% in 2023.

In our December culture survey, when colleagues were asked to rate 25 culture descriptors, two of the most popular were:

“We are proud to recognise and celebrate diversity, providing a supportive environment in which everyone can thrive.”

“We recognise that everyone has their own story. We do not judge without evidence, we are all human.”





# Our colleague network groups

We understand the value of involving our colleagues in everything we do and still have colleague groups in place to provide us with valuable insight and support.

Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) group consists of colleagues from across our organisation who are passionate about equality. They challenge what we do and how we do it, recommend priorities and targets and are always pushing to deliver positive change.

We continue to work closely with our colleague network groups who act as critical friends, helping us to improve our understanding of these areas and supporting us to deliver positive change. In this section of the report we share some of their recent achievements.

## Race and Ethnicity Equality Network

The Race and Ethnicity Equality Network (REEN) played a key role in helping us make our recruitment processes more inclusive. They provided valuable feedback to our resourcing team and helped to shape our recruitment training sessions. They have also supported us to increase the diversity of our recruitment panels.

Throughout October the group helped us celebrate Black History Month. This year we focused on celebrating the black history of the South West region.

In the coming year, REEN plans to continue with helping bridge the gap of racial inequality for colleagues, helping us to embrace and understand racial equality and fairness.

## Disability and Equality Awareness Network

The Disability and Equality Awareness Network (DEAN) raises awareness of disability and long-term health conditions, and encourages greater support for people who experience these.

In August, colleagues shared their stories of being carers. Sarah told us how she cared for her mother with early onset dementia, and Helen shared her story of caring for her daughter who has a learning disability.

In September, the group coordinated our first Neurodiversity Month and celebrated neurodiversity in the workplace by hosting a webinar with Inclusive Employers. Paul shared his

story of living with dyslexia and Lisa shared her experience of supporting her son with ADHD.

During Disability Awareness Month, Laura and Amanda, who are the joint chairs of DEAN, opened the conversation with colleagues hosting “Ask us anything” and answering colleagues questions on living with a disability and long-term health conditions.





# Sexuality and Gender Equality group

Our Sexuality and Gender Equality group (SAGE) are a group of colleagues who wish to improve our understanding and awareness of the LGBTQIA+ community.

This year, SAGE worked to review and improve our family leave policy. We have made it gender-neutral to better reflect the diversity of our workforce. We have also removed the limit on how many appointments both parents can attend, as each pregnancy is unique.

Our “I won't assume your gender” campaign promoted the use of

pronouns across LiveWest. By sharing our pronouns, we are working towards creating a safe workspace, so everyone can be their whole self at work. During June the group raised the profile of the LGBTQIA+ community celebrating Pride Month through sharing their own experiences and hosting the annual Pride tea party for colleagues.

The group’s focus will continue to be on raising the profile of the LGBTQIA+ community, providing support for colleagues and making inclusive policy recommendations to the business.

“

The SAGE group has been a great success over the past 12 months. We have raised awareness of the importance of LGBTQIA+ inclusivity in the workplace. We have held webinars and Pride tea parties to increase the visibility of the group. We look forward to continuing our hard work by sponsoring Weston-super-Mare Pride in September. LiveWest has been extremely supportive of our efforts to create an inclusive workplace for all.”

- Charlotte, Chair of SAGE



## How we are measuring our progress

Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion goals for 2021-24 include colleague representation levels to be achieved by the end of 2024.

These goals are based on current levels of representation and external benchmarks. They have been set to tackle underrepresentation of women and people from minority ethnic backgrounds, people living with a disability and those who identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual.

Our goals focus on how we ‘attract and recruit’, ‘engage’, ‘develop and progress’ and ‘deliver services’.





# Attract and recruit

Our workforce should be representative of the South West region. We know some areas of our business have exceptionally low numbers of colleagues with protected characteristics. For this reason, we have set specific goals for our trade colleagues.

## Colleague representation

	Female	Black, Asian and Minority ethnic	Living with a disability	LGBQA+
March 22	52.0%	2.4%	7.0%	2.9%
March 23	49.0%	3.7%	7.1%	5.2%
Strategic goal	50.0%	2.5%	10.0%	2.9%

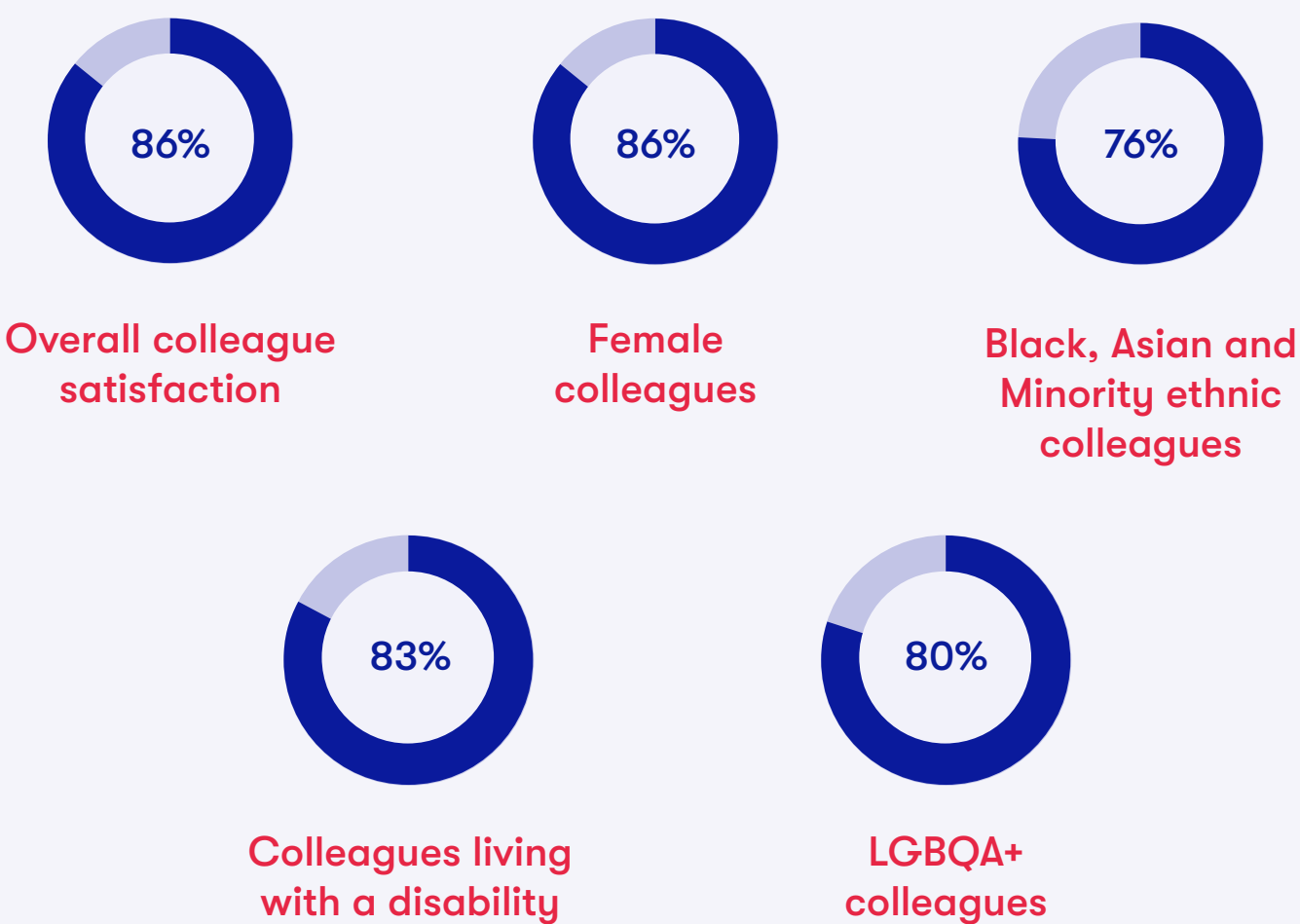
## Trade colleague representation

	Female	Black, Asian and Minority ethnic	Living with a disability	LGBQA+
March 22	4.5%	1.3%	3.9%	1.9%
March 23	4.2%	2.2%	3.5%	4.1%
Strategic goal	5.0%	3.0%	5.0%	3.0%

# Engage

Our objective is to have equal levels of engagement and colleague satisfaction, regardless of any protected characteristics and will work to maintain these.

## Colleague satisfaction





# Develop and progress

Our leadership teams and Board should be representative of the South West region, and ethnic minority groups, females and colleagues living with a disability are currently under-represented.

## Board and committees’ representation

	Female	Black, Asian and Minority ethnic	Living with a disability	LGBQA+
March 22	32.0%	17.0%	5.0%	10.0%
March 23	38.0%	17.0%	5.0%	10.0%
Strategic goal	50.0%	6.7%	14%	6.7%

## Senior management representation

	Female	Black, Asian and Minority ethnic	Living with a disability	LGBQA+
March 22	39.0%	0.0%	4.0%	4.0%
March 23	46.0%	0.0%	2.0%	4.0%
Strategic goal	45.0%	2.5%	7.0%	4.0%

## Management representation

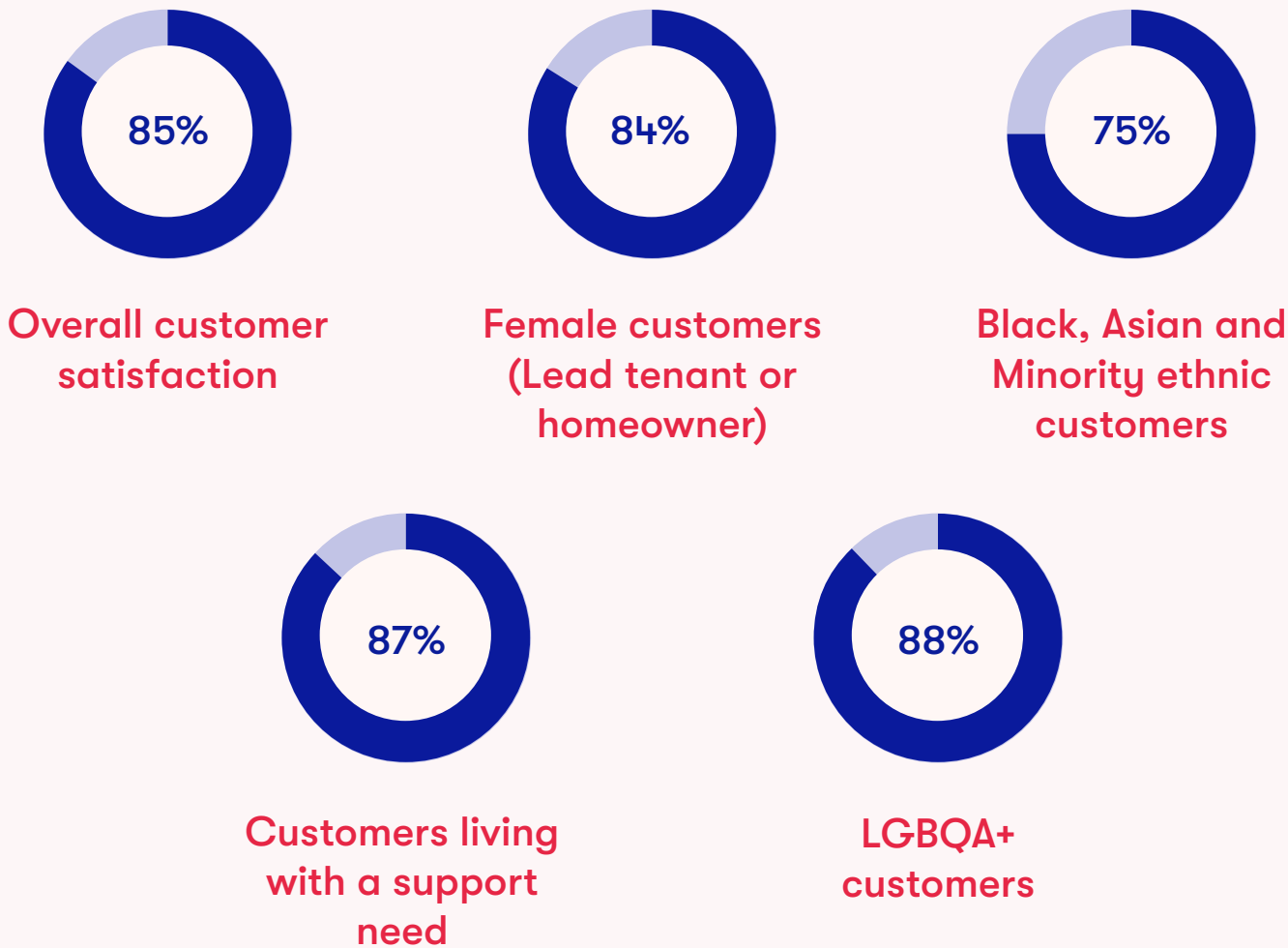
	Female	Black, Asian and Minority ethnic	Living with a disability	LGBQA+
March 22	51.0%	1.6%	4.2%	4.0%
March 23	49.0%	2.6%	4.2%	4.6%
Strategic goal	50.0%	4.5%	5.0%	4.0%

Our long-term target is for 50% of senior management positions to be held by women. This target reflects our commitment to gender equality and belief in a diverse leadership team. We set a target of 45% of senior management positions held by women for the three year strategy period. This was an ambitious target, but we are pleased to have already exceeded it.

# Deliver services

Our services should deliver equal levels of customer satisfaction regardless of protected characteristics.

## Customer satisfaction



Our customer satisfaction stats are taken from our Tenancy Satisfaction Measures (TSM) perception survey. This year we noticed a small drop in customer satisfaction for customers from Black, Asian and Minority ethnic backgrounds. The data suggests the results are due to a combination of small sample sizes and geographic location. We are talking with customers to fully understand the reasons for this difference.



# Gender pay gap

We are committed to gender equality and fair pay for all our colleagues. We believe a diverse and inclusive workforce is essential for our success, and we are working hard to create a workplace where everyone feels valued and respected.

Over the last year both our mean and median gender pay gap reduced marginally falling below 12.0% to 11.8% and 11.7% respectively. Our 2022/23 gender pay gap figures are set out in the table below.

## The distribution of men and women in our workforce by quartile

		2022/23 %	2021/22 %
Q1*	Male	30%	31%
	Female	70%	69%
Q2*	Male	51%	53%
	Female	49%	47%
Q3*	Male	56%	56%
	Female	44%	44%
Q4*	Male	54%	50%
	Female	46%	50%

**\*Key:**

Q1 = Quartile 1 (lower) - Q2 = Quartile 2 (lower middle) - Q3 = Quartile 3 (upper middle) - Q4 = Quartile 4 (upper)

\*We divide our colleagues into four quarters (or 'quartiles') according to how much they earn.

### What is gender pay gap reporting?

Gender pay gap reporting is about the difference between the average pay of men and women working at LiveWest. It isn't the same as equal pay; which is a legal obligation to ensure that men and women doing the same or similar jobs are paid the same, we have embedded this in our job evaluation processes.

# What is the gender pay gap?

The gender pay gap is the difference between the average hourly earnings for men in an organisation and the average hourly earnings for women.

For example, a 10% gender pay gap shows that women earn 10% less per hour, on average, than men. A negative -10% gender pay gap shows that women earn 10% more, on average than men.

The average is calculated as both mean and median. Mean earnings are calculated by adding up all hourly earnings and dividing them by the number of colleagues.

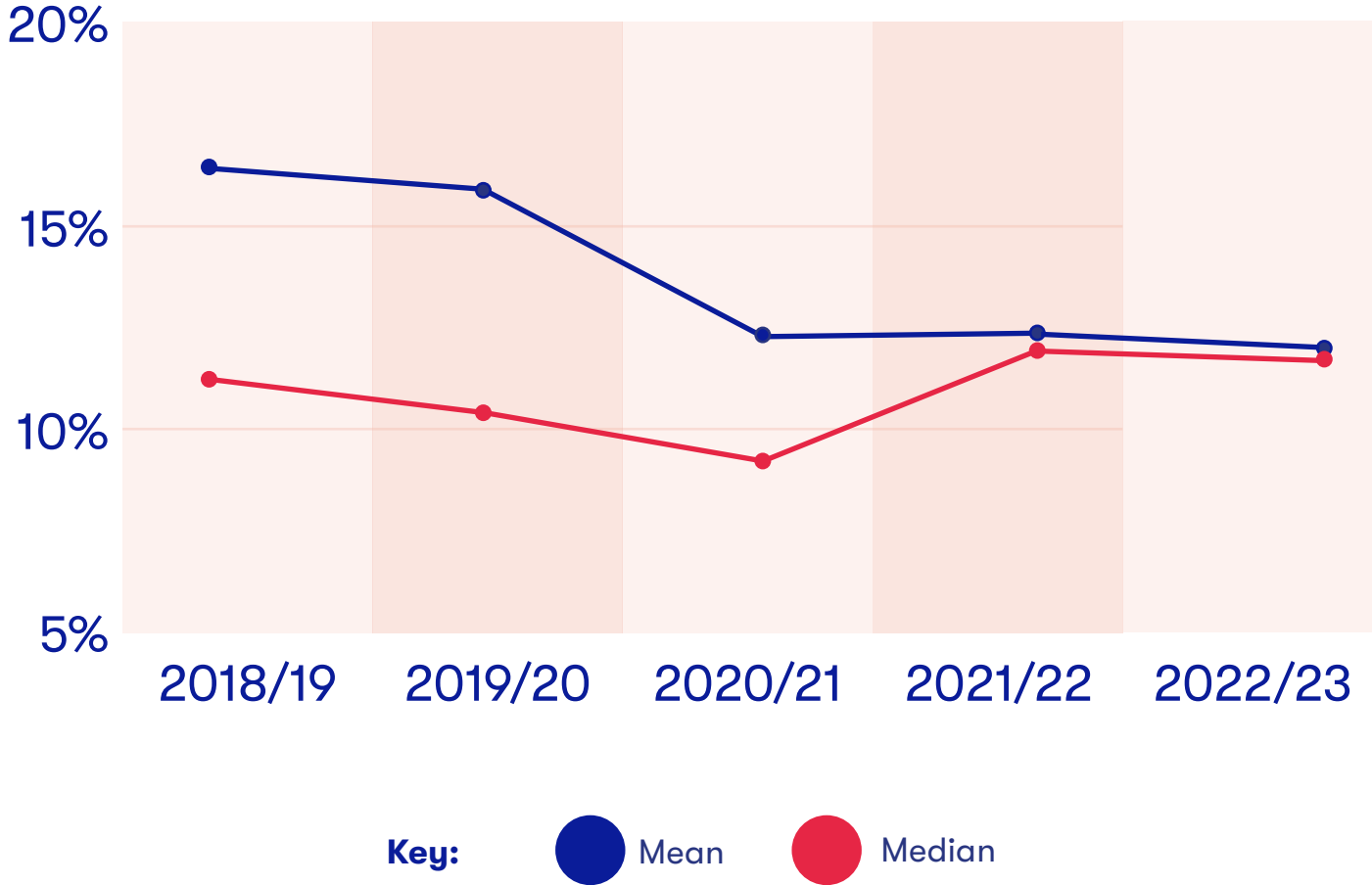
Median earnings come from ranking all earnings from lowest to highest and identifying the colleague in the middle of the list.

The mean (simple average) is preferred to the median as it gives a better measure of pay across the organisation.





Our gender pay gap median and mean 2018-2023



The graph shows our mean and median gender pay gap. Over the last year our mean gender pay gap reduced from 12.4% to 11.8% and our median gender pay gap from 12% to 11.7%.