As one of the most diverse universities in the UK, Brunel University of London is committed to providing our students and staff with a safe and respectful place to study, work and live. That means creating an environment which gives everyone the opportunity to thrive as they should and in so doing, unlock the innovation, creativity and energy that comes from the diversity of our community. That is why being "powered by diversity" is a central pillar of our university strategy. However, if these bold ambitions are to be more than just words, we need to work hard to ensure that we develop the right strategies and actions to make the advances we need in an increasingly complex and challenging context. We must therefore carefully monitor our progress and collect the right data to evidence where we are making real change, but also to challenge the status quo by highlighting areas where we are not yet living up to our own stated ambitions.

The University has undergone considerable change in the past 12 months that has affected both professional services and academic staff, with the introduction of a new operating model and a resizing of our academic staff body, work which is still underway. The external environment has also presented fresh challenges to our staff and student communities to which we must respond by upholding both our values and responsibilities as a University. It is in this context that I especially wish to thank all those who have contributed to our ongoing HR and equity work at Brunel in the past year.

This report contains not just the data to inform and focus our future actions, but also outlines the new groups and structures that will help develop and deliver our strategy. Our shared challenge in the next 12 months is to ensure that, working with a clear and focussed approach, we deliver our goals on behalf of the entire Brunel community.

Prof Jonathan Wastling
Deputy Vice-Chancellor

Introduction

Welcome to Our Colleague Equity Annual Report and Equity Monitoring Workforce Data 2024. This report highlights the progress we have made in advancing equality of opportunity, celebrating the diversity within our community, and fostering a cohesive, inclusive culture. We are committed to empowering our growing Staff Networks, recognising their integral role in driving positive change across the University.

With the introduction of the Associate Pro Vice Chancellor for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion role, a collaborative effort with the EDI team has been instrumental in reviewing and enhancing our Equity Governance structure. This partnership reflects our continued commitment to embedding equity at the heart of Brunel's mission and values.

The report outlines the work carried out during the 2023/24 academic year to advance equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) within our workforce community at Brunel, highlighting our ongoing efforts and commitment to fostering an inclusive workplace.

The data utilised in this report and the appendices was sourced from our HR System in November 24 and largely covers the three-year period from 21/22 to 23/24. It encompasses all existing colleague members on both permanent and fixed-term contracts, whether full-time or part-time. Although we've shared headcount data for all colleagues' members, it's important to recognise that the colleagues count used throughout the report is based on Full-time Equivalent (FTE). This methodology provides a more accurate measure of the workload handled by colleagues. Unlike

headcount, which treats colleagues on fractional contracts the same as those in full-time roles, FTE indicates the proportion of the university's paid work carried out by individual colleague members. This nuanced approach offers a more comprehensive understanding compared to headcount, which simply counts the number of colleagues regardless of their individual work contributions.

In the report, the term "colleagues" the word 'staff', however, there are instances where the term 'staff' is utilised when it refers to a Staff Network Group.

<div style="background-color:#c00000;color:white;padding:6px;font-weight:bold;">University initiatives and events</div>

The Equity Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Collective is working towards a holistic approach to equity, diversity, and inclusion focusing on governance, support structures, and strategic alignment. Key initiatives include establishing a cohesive governance structure with EDI steering groups, committees, and Staff Networks.

EDI Strategy

We are currently reviewing our EDI Strategy (2025–2029) to ensure it aligns with our organisational values and drives meaningful change. As part of this work, we are also enhancing the visibility and influence of our staff networks, involving them as key partners in shaping and informing EDI-related decision-making. Additionally, we are aligning our charters and markers, including Disability Confidence Leader and Stonewall Workplace Equality Index, and collaborating with the Graduate School to integrate the Researchers Concordat action plans.

Mentoring

For the first time, Brunel has joined a group of UK higher education institutions to participate in the London Higher Global Majority Mentoring Programme. This initiative is designed to support the growth and career development of colleague from Black and Racially Minoritised Ethnic backgrounds across London's higher education sector. The programme invites academic and professional services colleague from member institutions of London Higher to participate as mentors or mentees, facilitating cross-institutional mentoring relationships for colleagues from the global majority community.

Apprenticeship

The Apprenticeship scheme at the university offers valuable opportunities for colleagues, particularly those from protected characteristic groups and lower socio-economic backgrounds, to develop new skills and advance their careers. The scheme provides a pathway for professional growth, contributing to greater diversity, inclusion, and social mobility within the institution.

Development programs

As part of our ongoing commitment to fostering equity, diversity, and inclusion, the university is excited to introduce the *Confidence and Clarity in the Workplace* development programme. This four-session programme is designed to empower women in the workplace by helping them develop crucial skills for professional success. The programme offers a fantastic opportunity for personal and professional growth, and we are committed to supporting our colleague in enhancing their confidence and leadership capabilities.

Condition E6: Harassment and sexual misconduct

On 31 July 2024, the Office for Students (OfS) published a new ongoing condition of registration (E6) to better protect students from harassment and sexual misconduct. Effective from August 2025, with specific measures on non-disclosure agreements active since September 2024. Brunel has formed a working group, comprising of key staff from across the university, along with representation from the Union of Brunel Students, to ensure compliance with condition (E6) with an aim to foster a safer environment for both colleagues and students.

Anti-Racism Steering Group

In April 2024 an open call invited expressions of interest from Brunel's colleague and student community for membership of the university's Anti-Racism Steering Group. With the help of a panel of independent colleagues, the membership of the steering group was confirmed in June. The members represent UG students, academic colleagues across two colleges, and professional service colleagues with anti-racism research/activism expertise and/or lived experience as racially minoritised individuals. They represent different racialised groups and intersectional identity positions.

From September 2024 the Steering Group established its Terms of Reference, an Anti-Racism Strategy and Delivery Plan (seeking approval from the relevant committees). Members of the committee advocating for anti-racist approaches at monthly Equity Meetings with Senior Leaders. The next academic year's focus will be on specific projects that join up efforts with other areas of the institution on the awarding gap, designing on curriculum and justice, and developing institutional guidance on anti-racist and equity centred language.

Staff Networks

Access & Disability Staff Network

The Disability Inclusion Network has grown in numbers over the past year and has focused on fostering a supportive environment through drop-in sessions and individual support. As part of Disability History Month, the Network held two drop-in sessions, providing members with a space to discuss challenges, which has been positively received. The Network also collaborated with the Student Union on employability event. Looking ahead, plans include additional drop-in sessions and ongoing collaboration with the EDI team to review and improve reasonable adjustment practices.

Armed Forces Staff Network

The Armed Forces Network continues to provide an engaging space for colleague and students through its vibrant Teams chat group, fostering discussions and connections on Armed Forces matters. In May 2024, the Network held a well-attended working lunch on campus. Members actively participated in charitable initiatives, including the 13 Bridges Challenge in June to support SSAFA and the Poppy Appeal in November. For Brunel's Remembrance event, members collaborated with the Meeting House team on the Order of Service and the delivery of readings. Additionally, the network contributed to Brunel's successful re-accreditation of the Ministry of Defence's Gold Employer Recognition Scheme award.

Beyond Support Group (Childless not by choice)

The Beyond group has held monthly in-person meetings throughout the year, fostering regular engagement and collaboration. Additionally, the group maintains connections with an external network comprising representatives from other universities, an NHS trust, and a local council. This

growing network provides valuable insights into practices and initiatives undertaken by other CNBC support groups, offering opportunities to share knowledge and strengthen support strategies.

Black Colleagues Staff Network

This academic year marked the official launch of the Black Colleagues Network (BCN), with the first staff network meeting held in September to outline objectives and facilitate introductions. In October, the network celebrated its launch with a vibrant Launch Party and contributed to the Black History Month spotlight series, with members sharing articles for the "Reclaiming the Narrative" initiative, featured on the university colleague intranet.

The network hosted its first social event, a Christmas dinner at the Lancaster Hotel on campus, fostering a sense of community. The BCN aims to continue building community and promoting cultural inclusivity in 2025.

Brunel Race Equality Staff Network

The former BAME Staff Network has undergone significant transformation, including a change in name, leadership, and membership. This evolution reflects a renewed focus and commitment to advancing race equality within the institution. The newly formed Brunel Race Equality Staff Network is set to officially launch in January 2025, marking an exciting new chapter in fostering inclusivity and representation.

LGBTQIA+ Staff Network

This academic year, the networks hosted a welcome-back lunch in September to share updates and reconnect with members, followed by an informal drop-in session in November to provide support and community engagement.

Additionally, the networks worked closely with Stonewall, contributing to Brunel's significant achievement of rising to 43rd place in Stonewall's Top 100 Employers, up from 88th in the previous year. This progress underscores the ongoing commitment to fostering an inclusive environment for LGBTQIA+ colleague and students.

Menopause Support Group

In 2024, the group provided opportunities to support members by organising informal networking and discussion sessions. Additionally, a webinar run by the NHS was hosted, offering valuable insights and support to colleague and students. The Group is currently reviewing its status to transition from a support group to a formal staff network, considering recent changes in law regarding menopause. Brunel is actively working towards attaining Menopause Friendly Accreditation.

Neurodivergent Staff Network

The Network has met termly to discuss current and future activities, as well as hosting several informal meetings, such as "Neurodivergent Lunch Breaks," where colleagues can share experiences. Initially held without a specific topic, these meetings later focused on key issues, including "Managing ADHD" and "The Menopause and Neurodiversity." Several articles have been shared on the Colleague Intranet, covering a range of topics such as neurodiversity in the workplace, dyspraxia, autism, and the Neurodiversity Employers Index (NDEI).

A significant milestone was the appointment of the first Senior Neurodiversity Champion. The network also participated in the inaugural NDEI, which resulted in a detailed report and recommendations to help Brunel become more inclusive.

In collaboration with our Human Resources department, the Associate Pro Vice Chancellor (EDI), and the EDI team, the network is working towards creating neurodivergent-friendly election processes.

Postdoc and Research Fellows Network

Future projects include the Postdoc Networking Lunches, which will be held on the third week of every month, and the Researcher Summit with The Welding Institute (TWI) in Cambridge, scheduled for Summer 2025. Additionally, the Annual Research Staff Conference is set for April 2025.

The Network remains committed to addressing the inequities faced by postdoctoral researchers, and efforts in this area are already underway and will continue throughout the year. Network members have also taken a proactive approach by establishing a WhatsApp group for social activities, contributing to the wider cultural transformation they seek to achieve in collaboration with the Graduate School and other University stakeholders.

Wellbeing Staff Network

We are pleased to announce the launch of the Wellbeing Champions (WB Champions) staff network and support group. This aims to create a supportive community focused on promoting the health, happiness, and wellbeing of all Brunel colleagues.

The group consists of trained volunteers who work collaboratively to:

- Raise awareness of the importance of mental and physical health, encouraging employees to prioritise their wellbeing.

- Provide support through wellbeing conversations, offering a listening ear and guiding colleagues to appropriate resources when needed.

- Organise wellbeing activities and initiatives to enhance engagement and contribute to a positive workplace culture.

- Reduce the stigma surrounding mental health, ensuring colleagues feel comfortable seeking help and supported in their roles.

The group meets regularly throughout the year, with all WB Champions attending at least one Continuing Professional Development (CPD) session. The most recent CPD session, hosted by Care First, aimed to raise awareness of the free resources available to Brunel colleagues to support all aspects of their wellbeing.

Women's Support Network

As a relaunched group, the Women's Support Network held a relaunch lunch, followed by a coffee morning last week. These events provided an opportunity for members to reconnect, share ideas, and discuss the network's future activities, reinforcing the commitment to supporting and empowering women within the Brunel community.

Working Families Staff Network

The Working Families group was relaunched in the summer of this year with two new leads. The group is actively working towards the Working Families Best Practice Awards in 2025, aiming to enhance support and recognition for working families at Brunel.

2023/24 Workforce snapshot demographics

The report provides the university's figures to:

- Evaluate the diversity and inclusivity of its workforce
- Monitor progress and consider changes required to promote a positive and equitable work environment.

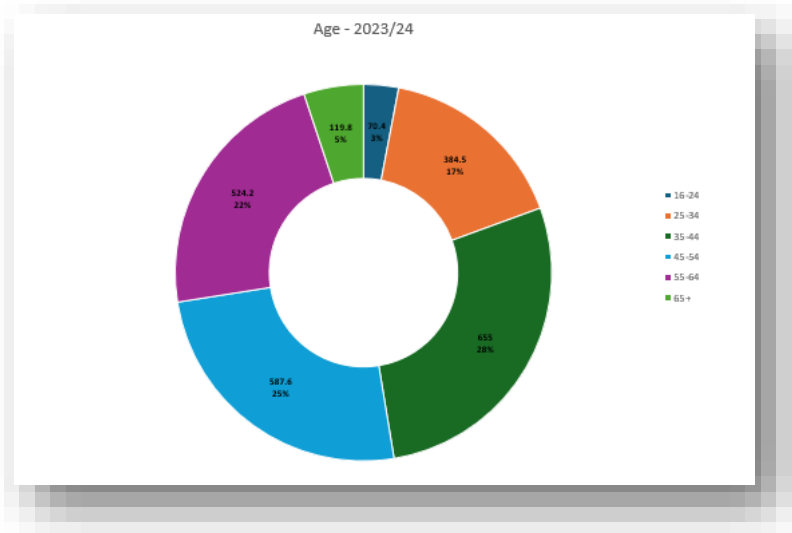This year we have included carers, full and part time 23/24 data in this section of the report.

Age

Table 1

For 2023/24, the majority of the workforce falls within the age range of 35 to 64, with 28% of colleague aged 35-44, 25% aged 45-54, and 22% aged 55-64.
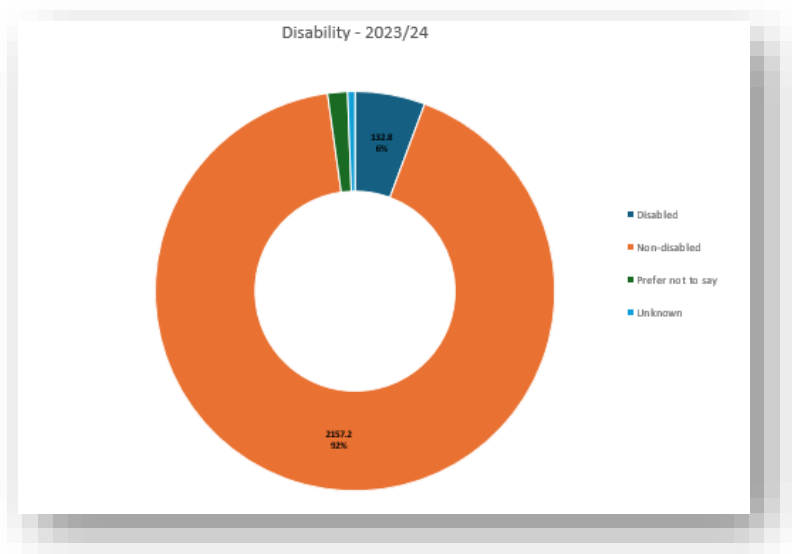
Disability

Table 2

In 23/24, 6% of the workforce declared a disability.

Ethnicity

Ethnicity - 2023/24

472.2
20%

147.8
6%

277.8
12%

85.0
4%

1344.6
57%

- Asian
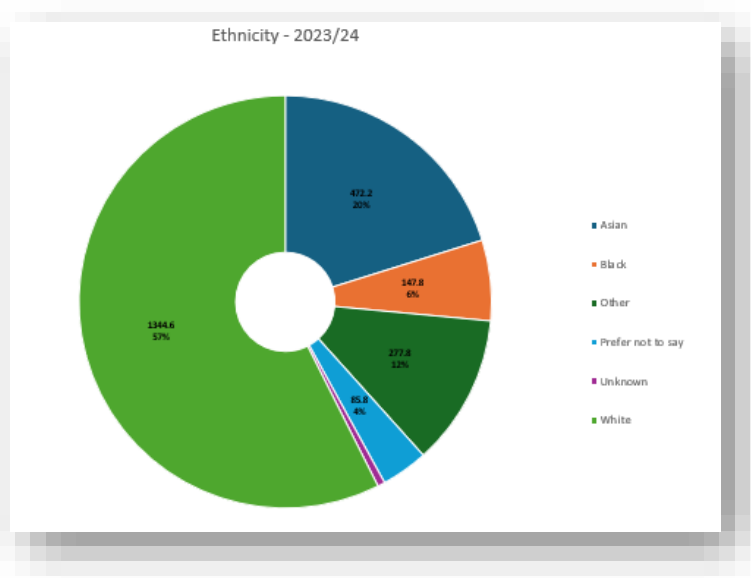- Black
- Other
- Prefer not to say
- Unknown
- White

Table 3

The majority of the workforce in 23/24 are of White ethnicity (57%), followed by Asian (20%), Other (12%), and Black (6%).
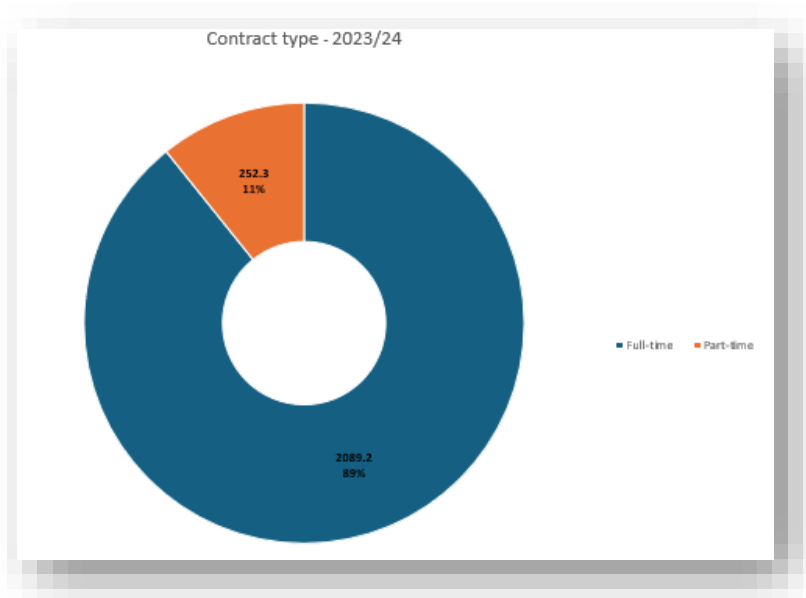
Full-time/Part-time

Contract type - 2023/24

252.3
11%

2089.2
89%

- Full-time
- Part-time

Table 4

11% of the workforce work part-time.

Gender

Gender - 2023/24

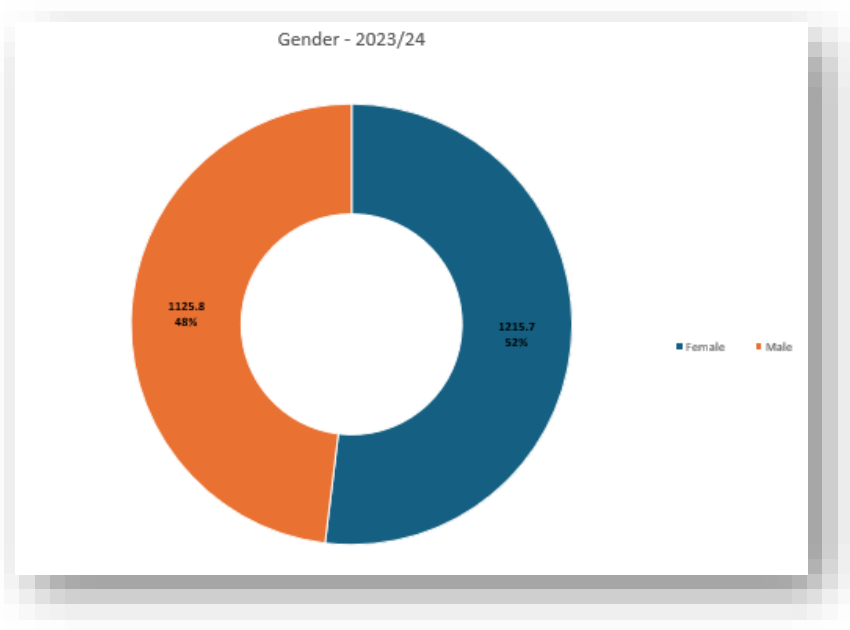*Table 5*

In 2023/24, the gender split is relatively even, with women constituting 52% and men 48%.

Nationality
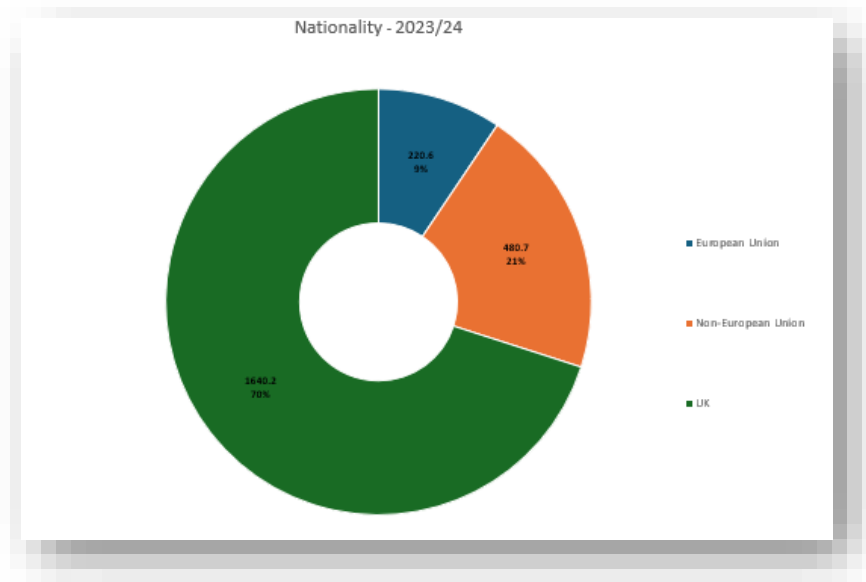

Nationality - 2023/24

Table 6

The majority of the workforce in 23/24 are UK nationals, with 20% from Non-European Union countries and 9% from the European Union.
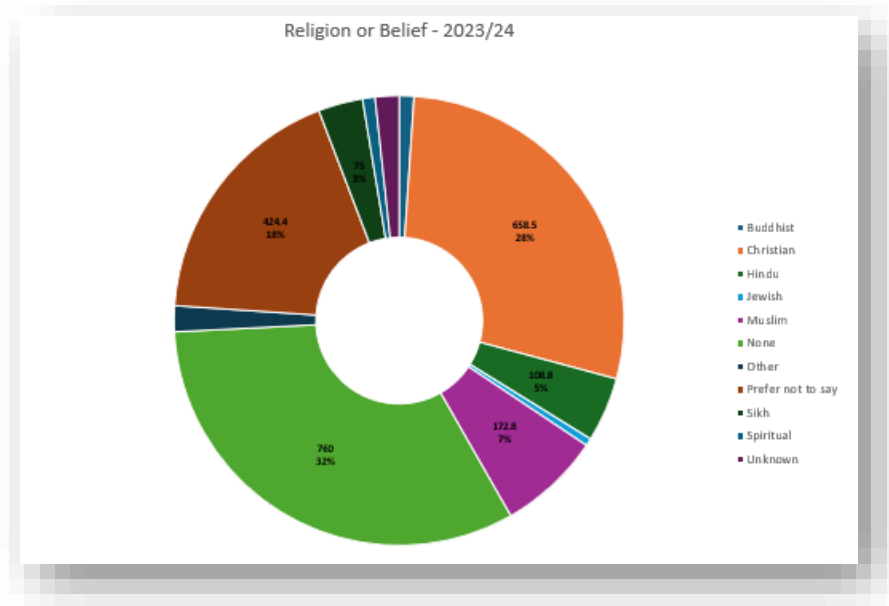
Religion or Belief

Religion or Belief - 2023/24

- Buddhist
- Christian
- Hindu
- Jewish
- Muslim
- None
- Other
- Prefer not to say
- Sikh
- Spiritual
- Unknown

658.5 28%
108.8 5%
172.8 7%
760 32%
424.4 18%
75 3%

Table 7

32% of the workforce have declared not having any religion, followed by Christians at 28% in 23/24.

Sexual Orientation

Sexual orientation - 2023/24

- Heterosexual
- LGBTQ+
- Prefer not to say
- Unknown
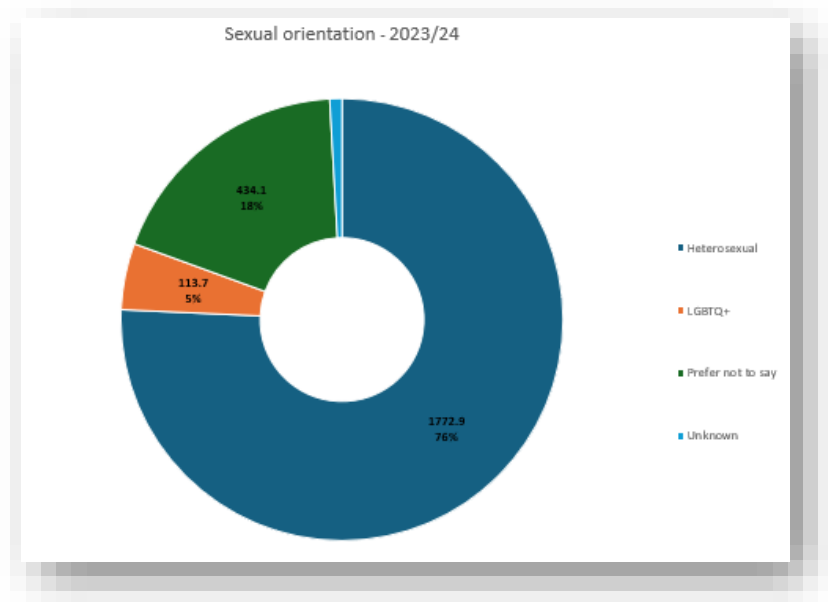
434.1 18%
113.7 5%
1772.9 76%

Table 8

In 23/24, the majority of the workforce identify as heterosexual (76%).

Report and support

We use the Culture Shift platform to provide a safe, confidential way for students and staff to report experiences of bullying, harassment, or misconduct. The platform allows for both anonymous and named reporting and helps ensure concerns are heard and recorded. This tool plays a key role in helping us listen, respond, and offer appropriate support, while also identifying patterns that inform our preventative work.

Between March 2023 and January 2025, we received 30 reports related to harassment, bullying, or misconduct. Of these, 14 were submitted anonymously, and 15 came from individuals who chose to identify themselves.

This is the first time we're sharing this kind of information in our EDI report. By including this data, we're taking a step toward greater transparency and accountability. Understanding the number and nature of these reports helps us see where change is needed.

Exit interviews

The Jisc exit interview survey, launched in August 2024 to understand colleagues' departures, has received 11 responses as of 14 January 2025. Although the response rate is low, the data collected between September 2024 and January 2025 offers valuable insights when reviewed alongside Report and Support trends.

Commitment to change and improvement

Our commitment to meaningful change and action is embedded across the institution and is reflected in the action plans within the Equity Strategy, as well as in the Awards and Chartermark initiatives and our ongoing Pay Gap actions, ensuring a cohesive and aligned approach where all efforts contribute toward a shared goal of equity, inclusion, and systemic improvement.

Our key priority areas for improvement are as follows:

- Ensure that the Brunel community feel safe and confident to seek support and report unacceptable behaviours. Continue to implement and embed initiatives addressing sexual violence and gender-based violence, aligning with new conditions of registration. Strengthen university complaints processes to ensure they are robust, accessible, and transparent; holding individuals accountable for discriminatory behaviour while ensuring support for those affected.
- Ensure robust data collective systems are in place to collect and analyse disaggregated equity data and strengthen the use of data to identify disparities, inform fair decision-making and ensure systems are in place for accuracy, accessibility and ongoing monitoring
- Continue to collaborate with staff networks and support groups to review and improve language used in equality monitoring; particularly in relation to disability, gender identity, and sexual orientation. Co-develop and maintain a targeted communications campaign to build trust and confidence in voluntary disclosure, emphasising the confidentiality and purpose of data collection to encourage greater participation.
- Explore the use of positive action measures to support the recruitment and progression of marginalised groups, specifically women, Black and Racially Minoritised staff, and disabled colleagues within Colleges and Departments where their representation remains

significantly low. This should include targeted outreach, inclusive recruitment practices, and tailored development opportunities, aligned with legal frameworks and best practice.

- Provide equity-focused learning and development opportunities for all staff, covering key topics such as equality legislation, inclusive recruitment practices, and the use of respectful, inclusive language. These sessions should aim to build confidence, challenge bias, and embed equity principles into everyday practice.
- Promote a culture of equity and inclusion by embedding clear communication and awareness into staff and student inductions, policies, and processes. Support culture change through consistent messaging and education. Actively implement and role model the Brunel Values across the University to foster collegiate, respectful, and constructive behaviours and expectations.
- Review the equity impact of all university policies, regulations, and processes by conducting robust, evidence-based equality impact assessments. This will help identify and reduce disproportionate disadvantage to minoritised and disadvantaged communities. Provide regular feedback to key stakeholders and committees on any emerging issues, reinforcing the University's commitment to meeting its legal and moral obligations.