



More people
More active
More often

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion 2025



Progressing the equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) agenda

*ukactive's role to drive the development of
the physical activity sector to provide a more
inclusive service.*

Strategic Partners for EDI:

FUTURE FIT



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ukactive is the UK's trade body for the physical activity sector, bringing together around 4,000 member organisations and partners in our shared ambition to get More People, More Active, More Often.

From gyms, leisure centres, fitness studios, sports bodies and other activity providers, to major health bodies, consumer brands, tech firms and equipment manufacturers, our community collaborates across the private, public and third sectors. ukactive facilitates high-impact partnerships, conceives and drives breakthrough campaigns, conducts critical research and lobbies the Government to recognise the power of the physical activity sector to address today's biggest issues – including reducing the burden on the NHS and social care, supporting workforce health to grow the economy, reducing crime, revitalising our high streets, and tackling loneliness.

We are committed to:

- Improving the health of the nation
- Supporting organisations that promote physical activity
- Helping to reduce the pressure on our NHS – where physical activity can play an instrumental role

Our responsibilities are:

- To protect, inform and advise our members
- To represent and champion our members
- To help our members grow

Our mission and values

Our long-standing and uncompromising vision is to get More People, More Active, More Often. We are committed to improving the health of the nation through promoting active and healthy lifestyles.

We provide a supportive, professional and innovative platform for our partners to succeed in achieving their goals and create conditions and opportunities that help our sector grow.



What do we mean by EDI?

Equality is about ensuring that there is fairness, that everyone has the same opportunities and that no one is treated differently or discriminated against because of their personal characteristics. There are nine 'protected characteristics' enshrined in UK law under the Equality Act of 2010 which include:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marital or civil partnership status
- pregnancy and maternity
- race (including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins)
- religion or belief (including lack of belief)
- sex
- sexual orientation

Equality is not about treating everyone 'the same' – sometimes equality of outcomes requires action, such as positive action or removing barriers that some groups, individuals or characteristics may face in society.

Diversity is about our differences and the recognition that everyone is different in a variety of ways. These differences are to be recognised, respected, valued, and celebrated. They include the protected characteristics as listed in the Equality Act, and include interests, socioeconomic status, culture and geographic background, beliefs, experiences and more.

Inclusion is when people are treated fairly and differences between people are valued – ensuring that everyone is empowered, has a sense of belonging, are enabled to be themselves and can achieve their full potential and thrive.

Why does this matter, and what are the advantages of EDI?

- For moral and societal good – it is the right thing to do
- We have a legal obligation to ensure equality for all
- Demonstrating a commitment to EDI is increasingly recognised as an industry standard and is often required for the purposes of contracts, regulators or funders
- Our workforce and customers increasingly expect us to promote and commit to EDI and have the agenda embedded into our values

EDI also makes good business sense:

- To attract, recruit and maintain a talented workforce
- Inclusion and associated feelings of belonging aid retention and increase productivity
- Diverse teams make better decisions, produce better results and aid progression
- Proactive and anticipatory action across EDI can reduce or eliminate any issues which may later arise
- To make products, provision and services more appealing and successful
- To attract new audiences and provide better customer service

Sometimes the definition of inclusion can be left to interpretation and there can be doubt or a lack of clarity as to what it means, in principle or practically. Clear definition and purpose encourage a shared understanding, eliminates miscommunication, and means that progress can be evaluated and aids accountability.

What do some of the leading gym, fitness, leisure, and physical activity organisations state about EDI?

The Gym Group



"Being a diverse and inclusive business matters. It's not just because it's the right thing to do or even because it makes commercial sense. It means so much more than that. We believe diversity and inclusion needs to be at the heart of everything we represent – our purpose, our values and our behaviours.

At The Gym Group we celebrate our people! Their individuality, their perspectives, their strengths, their passions... all of this is what makes them unique and what makes The Gym Group such a great place to be.

We are raising awareness, creating safe spaces, opening up discussions and influencing positive change with the support of our amazing employee led inclusion groups. They work tirelessly with enthusiasm, perspective, drive and passion to identify and tackle barriers to ensure The Gym Group is accessible for all."

Everyone Active



"Everyone Active believe that opportunities should be open to all and is committed to providing services which embrace inclusivity, diversity and promote equality of opportunity. Our goal is to ensure that these commitments reinforced by our values are embedded into our day to day working practices with all our customers, colleagues and partners."

The Swimming Teachers' Association



"We are committed to inclusiveness. We respect people, value diversity and are committed to equality. Our mission is to ensure everyone has an opportunity to learn to swim – no matter their age, location or ability – and to increase the number of qualified swimming teachers to offer a skill which lasts a lifetime."

ukactive commitment and support for EDI

To our members and the physical activity sector:

ukactive aims to help our members create a sector that is accessed, available and utilised by all, enabling everyone to be active and participate in whatever capacity they wish.

We recognise our unique potential and position to showcase and inspire equality, diversity and inclusion across the sector.

We will play a key role in supporting the sector to make positive changes to better support people of all backgrounds, ages and abilities.

Our objective: We want the physical activity sector to be seen and recognised as the most welcoming and most inclusive industry.



In our mission to get More People, More Active, More Often, ukactive has established a clear role in helping the sector to provide a more inclusive service. We set this out clearly within our [Vision 2030](#) strategy which outlines the ambition for fitness and leisure facilities to engage more than five million new members from a greater diversity of backgrounds, by 2030.

To deliver on this strategy, we support our membership by:

1. Catering for day to day enquires from membership on topical, operational matters relating to EDI

2. Protecting the industry by utilising EDI across our Risk and Standards work, such as the ukactive Risk Register and The Active Standard

3. Representing the industry publicly on matters relating to EDI

4. Monitoring and responding to societal and topical trends that have an impact on the physical activity sector and facilities directly

5. Informing our membership with webinars and briefing notes on guidance and/or recommendations

6. Providing consumer data and insights with accompanying analysis and tangible recommendations

7. Representing the industry by engaging proactively with specialist and campaign groups

8. Delivering thought leadership and expertise at events, conferences and summits

9. Hosting task forces and steering groups on specific agendas and feeding updates back into our membership

10. Consultancy and bespoke support for ukactive members who wish to address specific EDI challenges or opportunities



In addition, EDI is celebrated by ukactive with its own award category at the annual ukactive Awards, where the physical activity sector demonstrates its commitment to the EDI agenda. From across the sector, entries for the highly competitive EDI Award showcase the full breadth of campaigns, programmes and strategies proactively targeting groups and communities within our sector. This award exhibits the high impact of our members who are supporting those who have the most to gain from physical activity and participation in accessible and inclusive provisions.

ukactive also hosts a wide suite of EDI resources, guidance, insight and campaigns which include:

- **Everyone Can**, a programme that aims to narrow the disparities facing **disabled people within the physical activity sector**
- The collaboration with This Girl Can, an initiative **helping to engage more women and girls** in physical activity and creating safer spaces for them to be active
- **Life In Our Years**, a programme that identifies **what over-55s want from the fitness and leisure sector** with recommended steps to promote their participation
- The **musculoskeletal (MSK) health hubs programme**, a pioneering programme transforming leisure centres and facilities into health hubs for those with MSK conditions
- Guidance for **transgender access**, and providers of **single sex services and spaces**
- Guidance for **Children and Young People** in gym, fitness and leisure facilities

ukactive's role in progressing the EDI agenda

The physical activity sector plays an essential role in narrowing the disparities and inequalities faced by people today, no matter their age, ability, or background. Our role at ukactive is to best support the industry's growth and ensure the sector can provide services that are accessible to all members of society. For this to happen, we must ensure our services and provisions are equally accessed, enjoyed and participated in by all so that the benefits of physical activity are felt across the entire population.

However, historical and current ukactive inclusion work has focussed on specific reports, insight, programming or campaigns – for example older adults, children and young people, disability, women and girls (participation, and safety). This work attracts those who have a particular interest in the specific workstreams – and they are already aware, being supportive or are committed – and are advocates of EDI.

Our challenge

- Many organisations within the sector require a coherent and authentic response to the question of their commitment and responsibility to EDI (the agenda now accepted as 'standard practice')
- How can we attract the attention of the rest of the sector, especially those that are unaware, don't know where to start or have low confidence on the agenda?
- There is a myth that solid EDI practice is costly or requires significant investment

Our opportunity

- Reaching those members of the sector that are anxious, not interested, unaware or sceptical about EDI
- Creating an easy-to-access 'entry point' into EDI – free of jargon, judgement and suitably supportive and celebratory
- Utilising EDI to protect the industry (including cross-referencing with ukactive's Sector Risk Register and as part of the syllabus for The Active Standard)
- Utilising EDI to drive development and deliver shared ambition of growth
- EDI embedded into and enabling strategic and transformational change across the industry
- Increased understanding and awareness of EDI across the sector
- Improving the perception of EDI within the sector
- The sector being supported in its improvement of accessible and inclusive facilities, services and provision
- Allowing operators and providers to reflect on their own commitment to inclusion
- Focusing EDI efforts into strategy, business and operational planning
- Unearthing examples of good practice, celebrating and championing the work of the sector
- Fostering a culture of inclusion through leadership, collaboration, self-examination and aspiration



The development and introduction of the EDI self-assessment

We want the physical activity sector to be recognised as the most welcoming and the most inclusive industry.

To achieve this, ukactive developed a self-assessment toolkit for organisations, to understand the sector's relationship with inclusion by asking: "How are we doing? How inclusive are we? And what more can we do?"

Working with ukactive Strategic Partners, Future Fit and Swimming Teachers' Association, we launched the self-assessment tool to support ukactive members to improve their services for all users.

It was open to organisations from across the sector and involved answering 40 questions focused on current practices relating to equality, diversity and inclusion. After completing the assessment (which takes about 15–20 minutes), facilities, providers, and suppliers received an instant score to show how inclusive they are. They were then signposted to recommendations to help improve EDI practices.

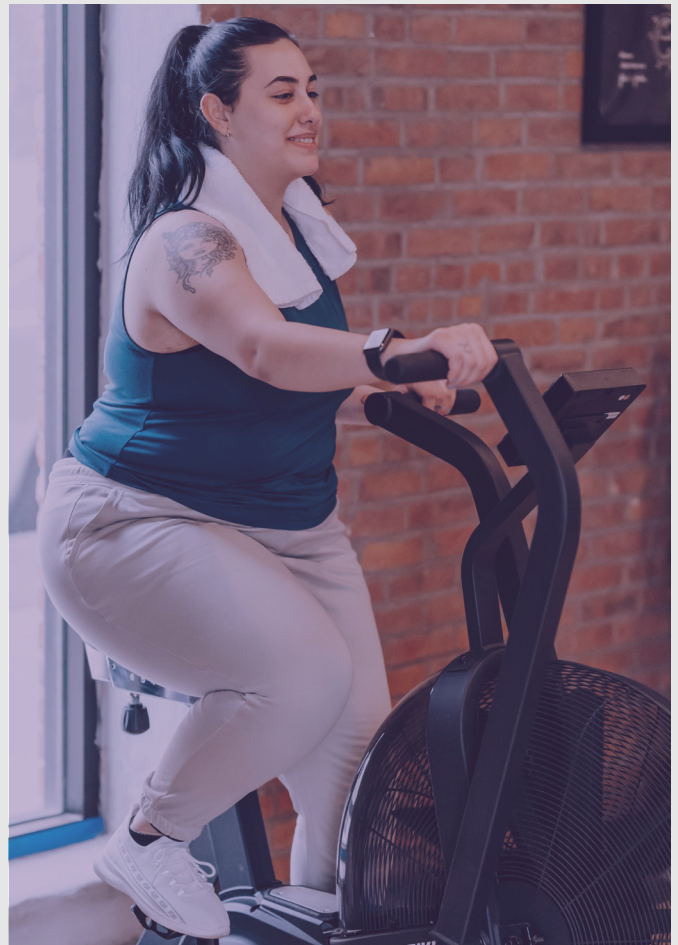
The scores were created through a weighting and ranking of key criteria which included:

Governance and leadership: relating to policies, strategy, decision making and how responsibility is owned and shared.

Programming, provisions and partnerships: the delivery of initiatives that target certain groups, engagement with stakeholders and communicating to external audiences.

Workforce and training: understanding the diversity of the workforce, training and development, recruitment and the promotion of EDI amongst the workforce.

Data and insight: usage and collection of EDI data, understanding the requirements and experiences of existing and target customers, progressing the EDI agenda across the industry.



These scores (returned to the inputter, directly and instantly and not shared with anyone else) were then categorised into a number of levels:

EDI Aware	<p>'The start of the EDI journey'.</p> <p>This organisation has demonstrated awareness of EDI, but a focus on people, processes and policies can put them on the path to success and align with other organisations.</p>
EDI Foundations	<p>'Laying EDI foundations'.</p> <p>There are some elements of EDI in place but to align more with other similar organisations the main recommendation is to review the organisation's EDI strategy to identify where it is heading and where best to focus attention next.</p>
EDI Activator	<p>'Activating on EDI'.</p> <p>This organisation is already making some great advances in EDI. A committed and ongoing investment in EDI from the top will accelerate business performance and put it ahead of other organisations.</p>
EDI Established	<p>'Established in EDI'.</p> <p>This organisation is already proficient and benefiting from operating EDI successfully. It is practicing EDI more than most other organisations but there are still opportunities to stand out, deliver more return and lead the way.</p>
EDI Leader	<p>'The EDI leader'.</p> <p>Accomplished and making EDI deliver significant business performance and setting the benchmark for other organisations to follow. As EDI continues to evolve, should continue to integrate EDI into your processes and practice.</p>

To benefit the wider sector, aggregate scores were then compiled to seek to provide a sectoral view* of 'how inclusive' this sample of the industry currently is and to:

- Increase understanding and insight into the sector's relationship with inclusion
- To identify where improvements need to be made and where requirements for support lie (at a sectoral level) and
- To recognise and share of examples of good practice

These findings will now help ukactive provide leadership and support in line with the Vision 2030 plan to 'drive the development of the sector to be more inclusive' and for the fitness and leisure sector to be recognised as the most welcoming and most inclusive Industry.

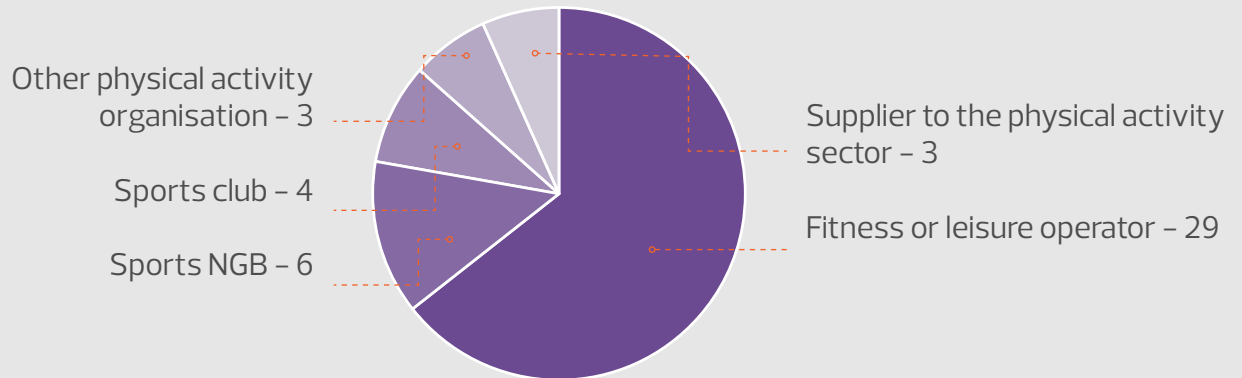
**note: To provide a true sectoral understanding of the inclusiveness of the industry, ukactive seeks further participation from all segments of the sector to provide a more accurate and representative sample size.*

The EDI self-assessment: 2023/24 results

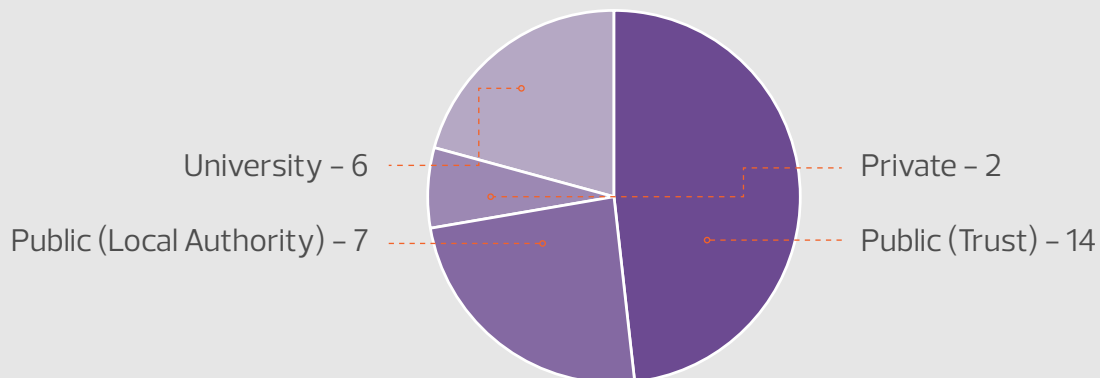
What sort of organisations took part?

The toolkit opened in November 2023 and 46 organisations from across the UK physical activity sector completed the self-assessment to receive their own EDI score. For the purposes of this report, submissions that were completed by the end of November 2024 were analysed – however the toolkit remained open for organisations to take part and self-assess.

Organisation type

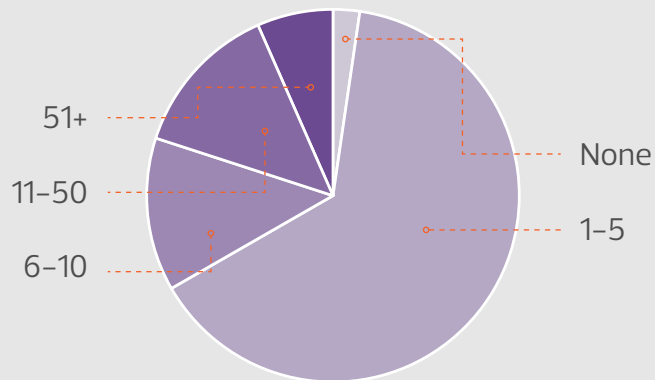


Fitness & leisure segments

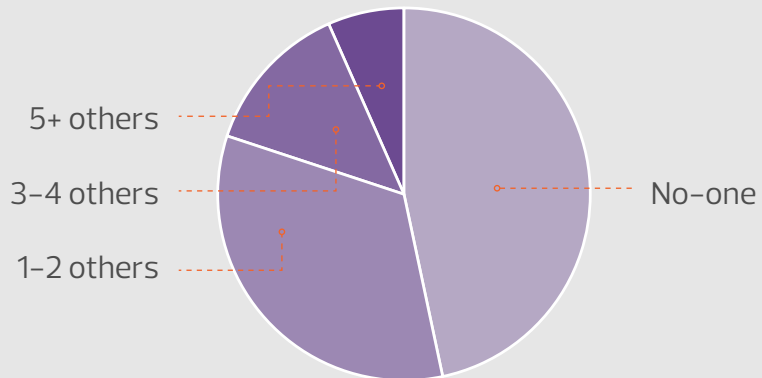




Number of physical venues



People consulted

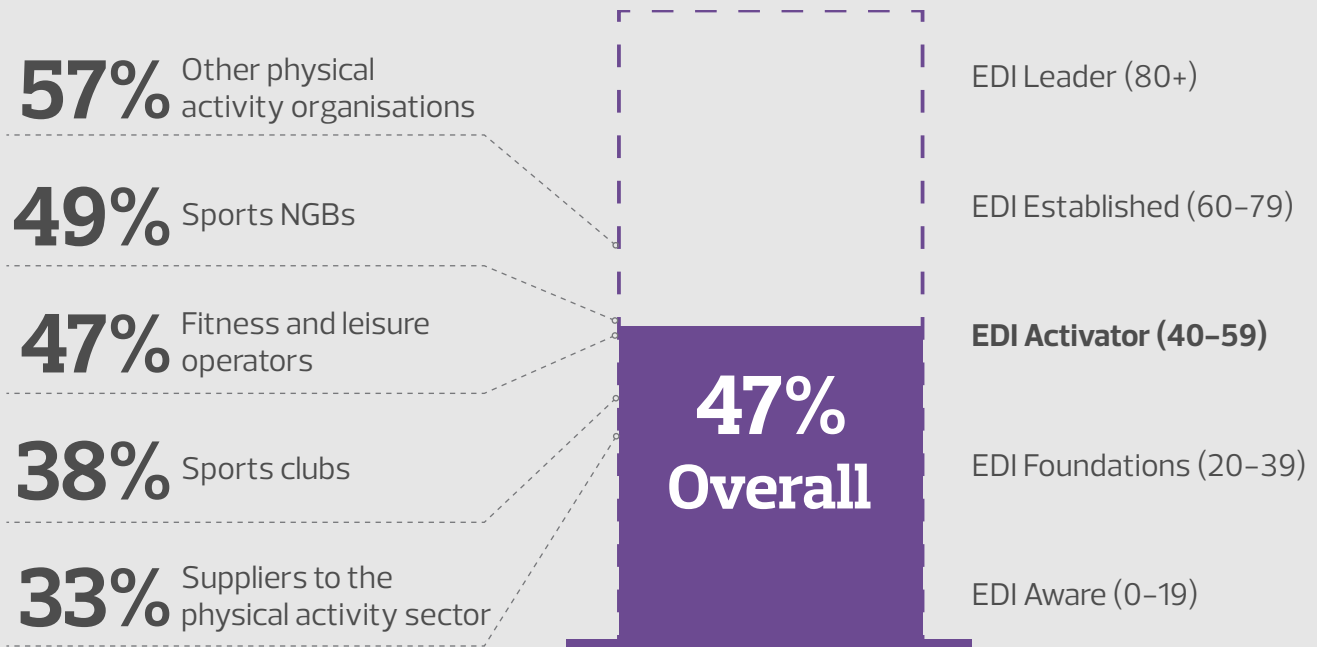


Total Submissions: 46 organisations
 Average Overall Score: 47% (The 'EDI Activator' level)

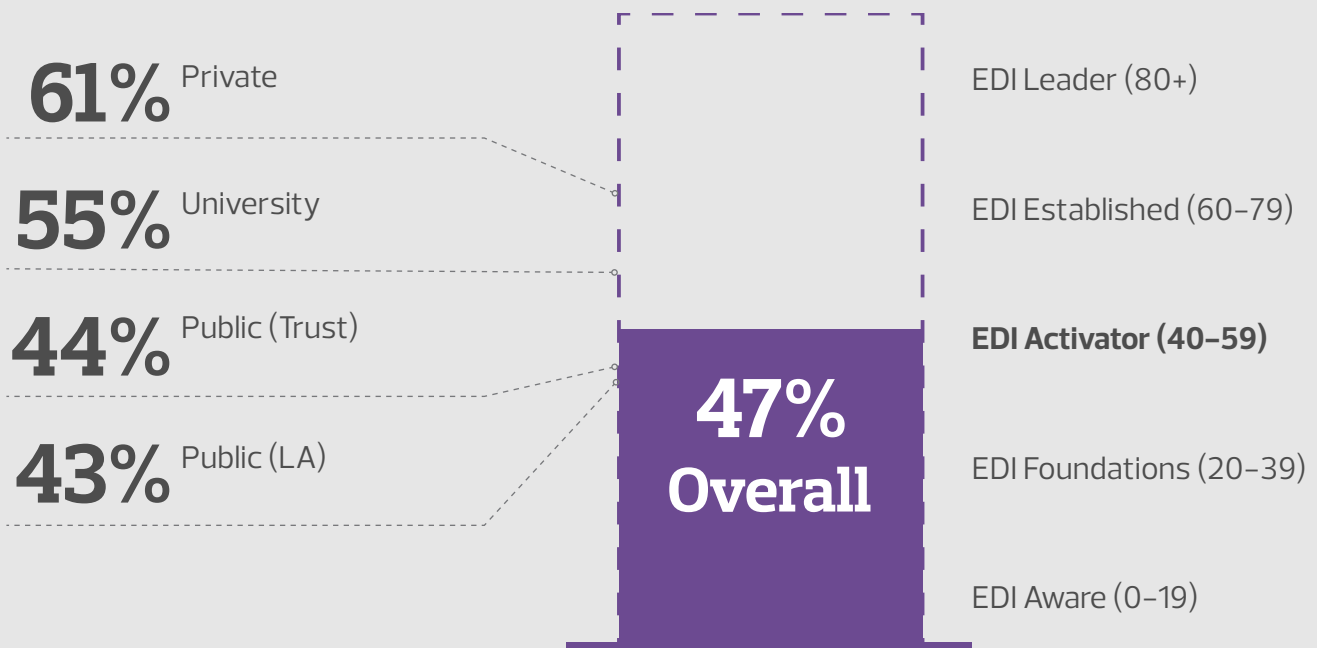
Overview of scores

The data from the self-assessment tool was then collected and analysed.

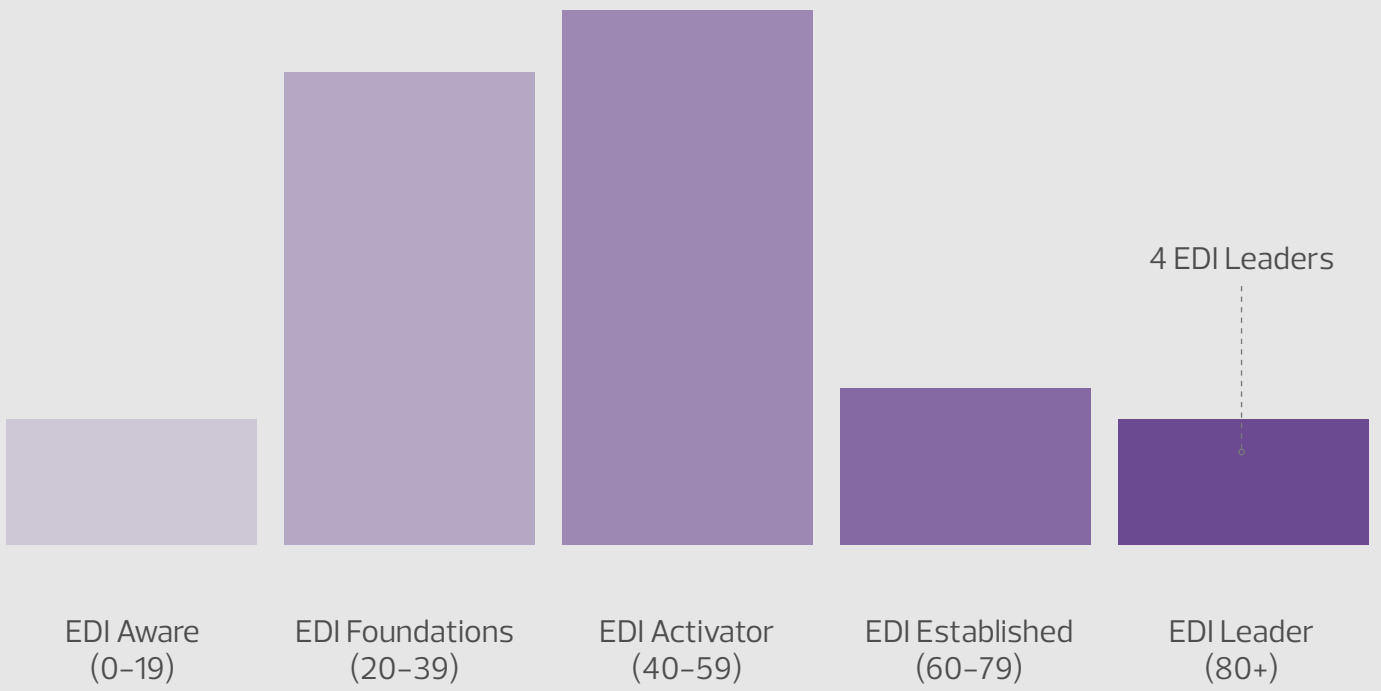
2023/24 scores



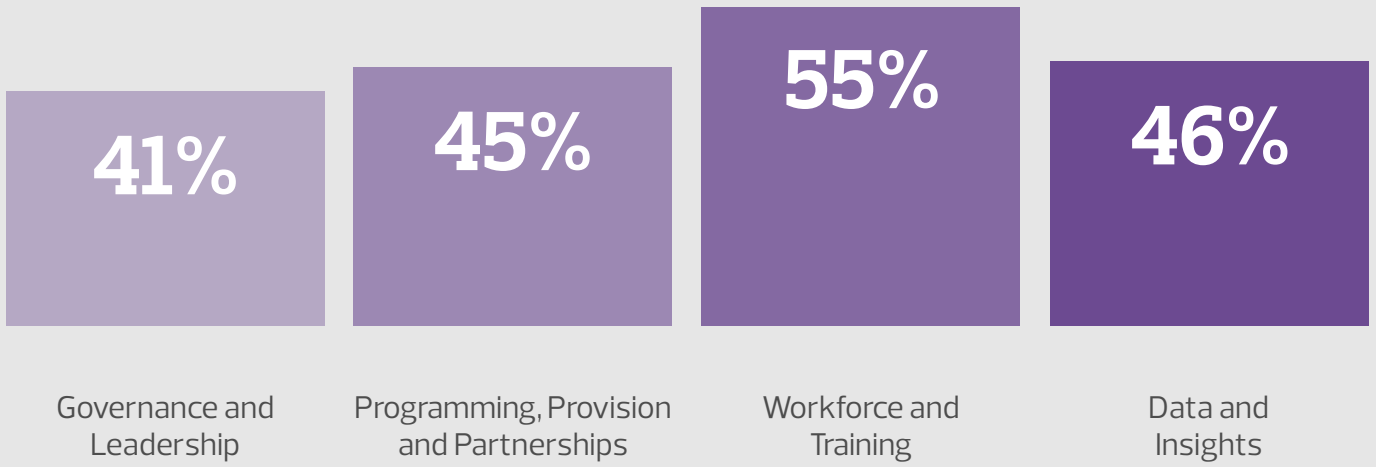
2023/24 scores (fitness and leisure operators)



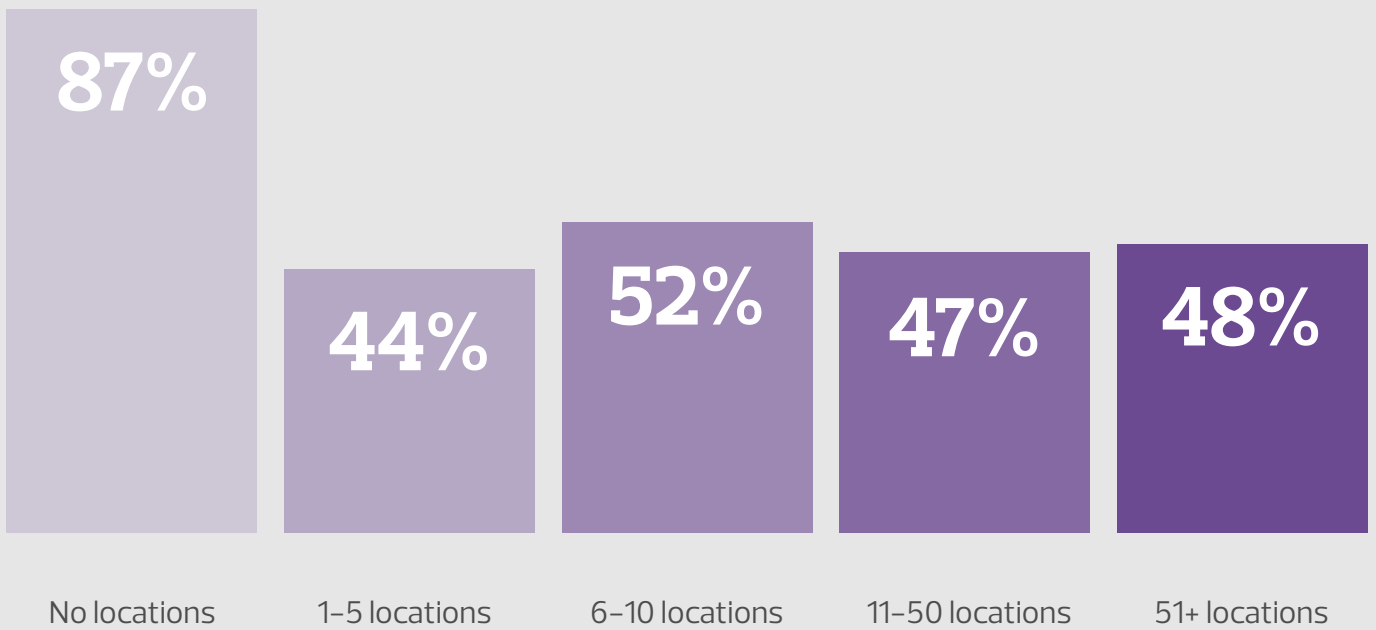
Score distribution



Score by area of EDI

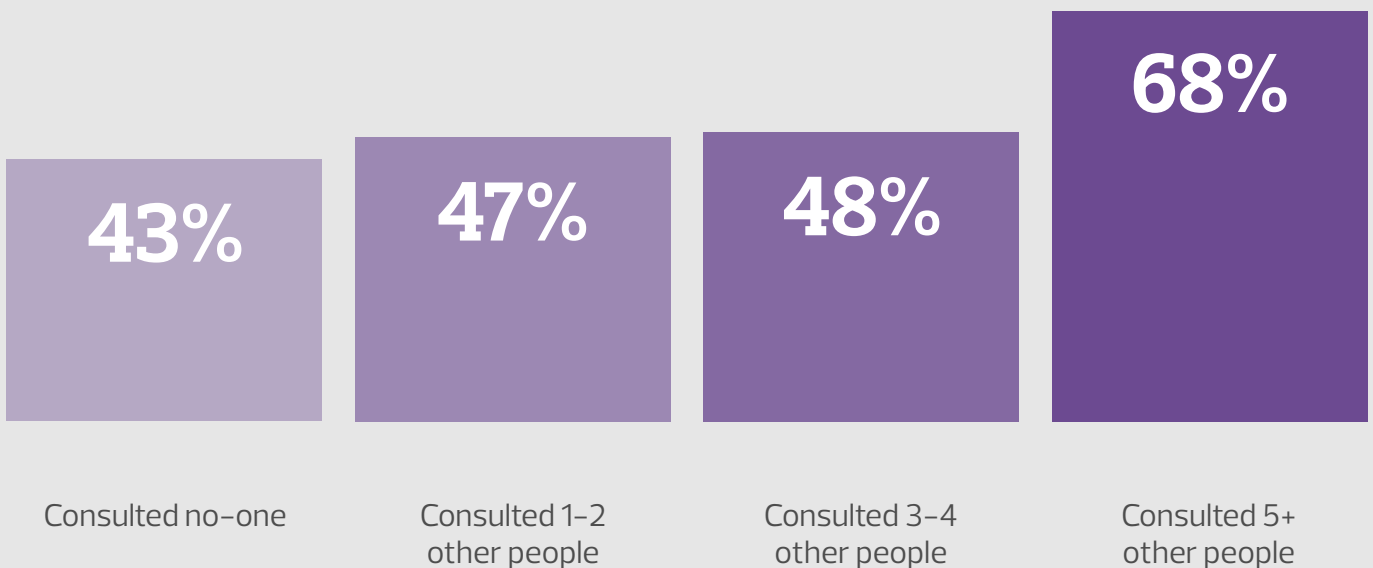


Score by number of physical locations





Score by people consulted



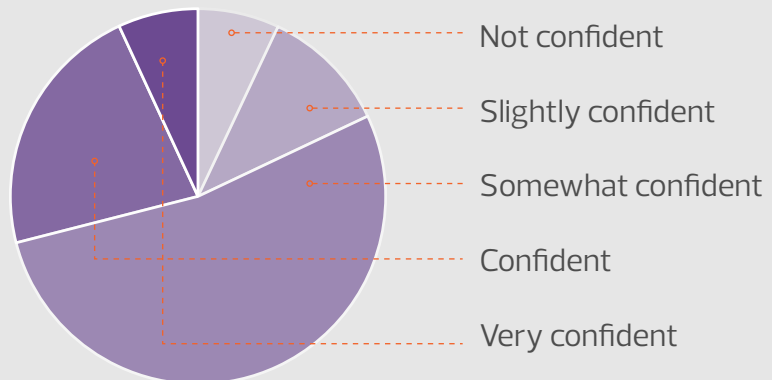
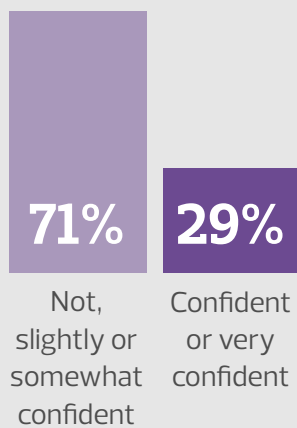
- 'EDI Foundations' and 'EDI Activator' were the most common scoring categories
- The average for fitness and leisure operators sits at 47%, putting them into the EDI Activator level, **suggesting that the sector is already making some great advances in EDI**
- There were no distinct trends in score across how many physical locations were managed by the submitting organisation
- 'Workforce and training' was the highest (average) scoring category across the self-assessment submissions, **suggesting a knowledgeable and capable workforce are influencing the EDI agenda**
- **Scores were higher among the submissions where more people were consulted** – this may be due to higher-performing organisations sharing the responsibility of EDI across the workforce and not being reliant on one person – as well as having a solid governance structure (such as senior leader buy-in or an EDI advisory group), a wider pool of insight and/or EDI embedded across the organisation (including job roles, functions and responsibilities)

Confidence, capability, success with EDI

Confidence with EDI

How would you rate your organisation's confidence with EDI?

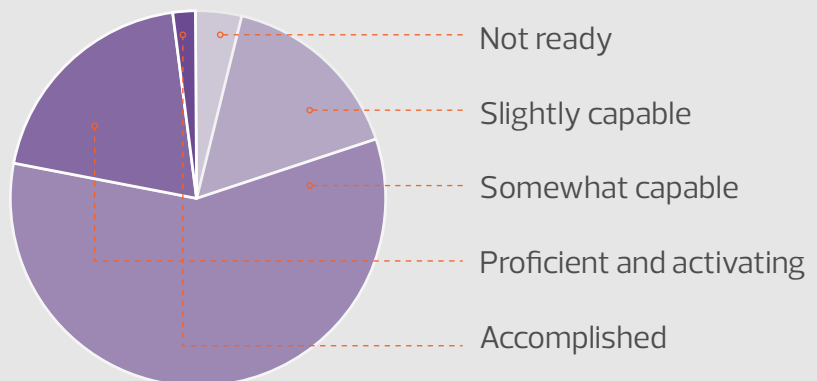
Scoring by confidence rating



Capability to activate on EDI

How would you rate your organisation's capability to activate on EDI?

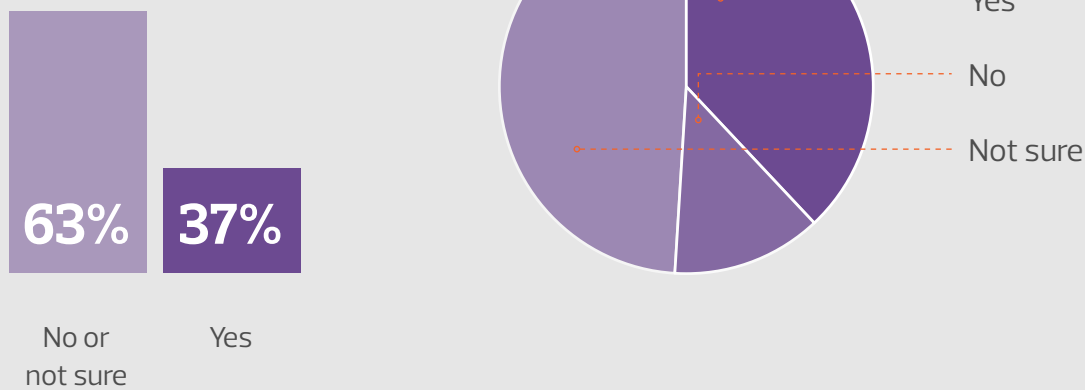
Scoring by capability rating



Success of EDI efforts

Would you consider your EDI efforts to be a success?

Scoring by success rating



It should be no surprise that for the organisations that were more confident in their organisation's capability to activate on EDI, these reported feeling more capable and considered their EDI efforts to be a success. These respondents, therefore, scored more highly.

The EDI self-assessment toolkit was introduced to allow benchmarking, scoring and recommend some next steps to aid improvement – especially for those organisations with lower confidence and perceived capability or success levels surrounding their EDI capabilities.



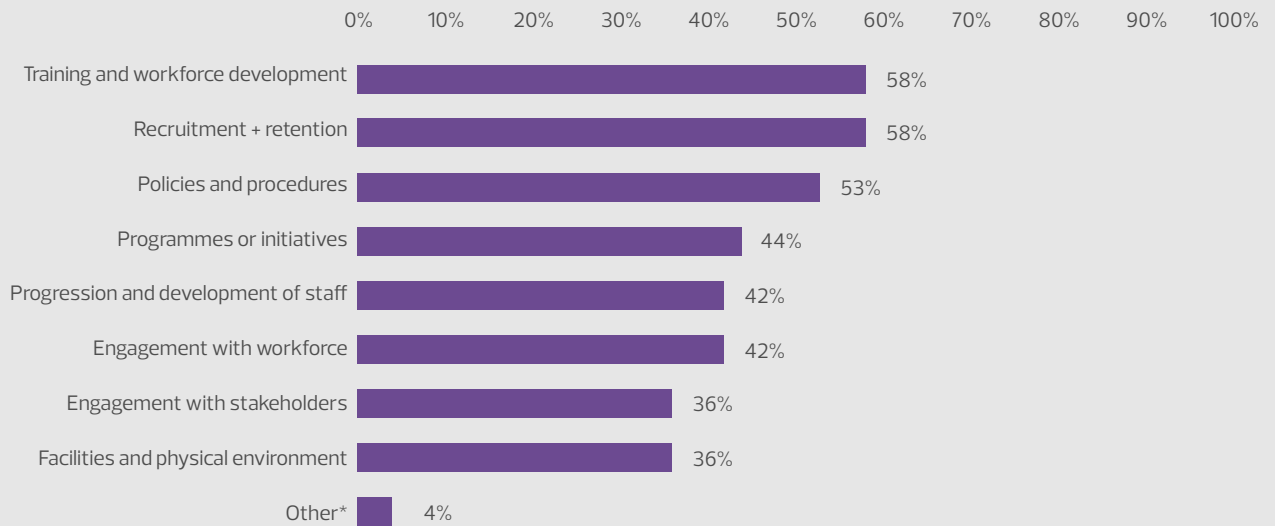
Governance and Leadership

Organisations submitting their self-assessment were scored on:

- Having EDI and associated policies in place
- Developing a commitment to EDI in the form of a clearly defined statement with a strategy and plans
- Embedding and integrating EDI into wider strategies and decision making
- How EDI is governed and how responsibility for EDI is owned and shared
- Leaders giving significance to EDI and being supportive and celebratory

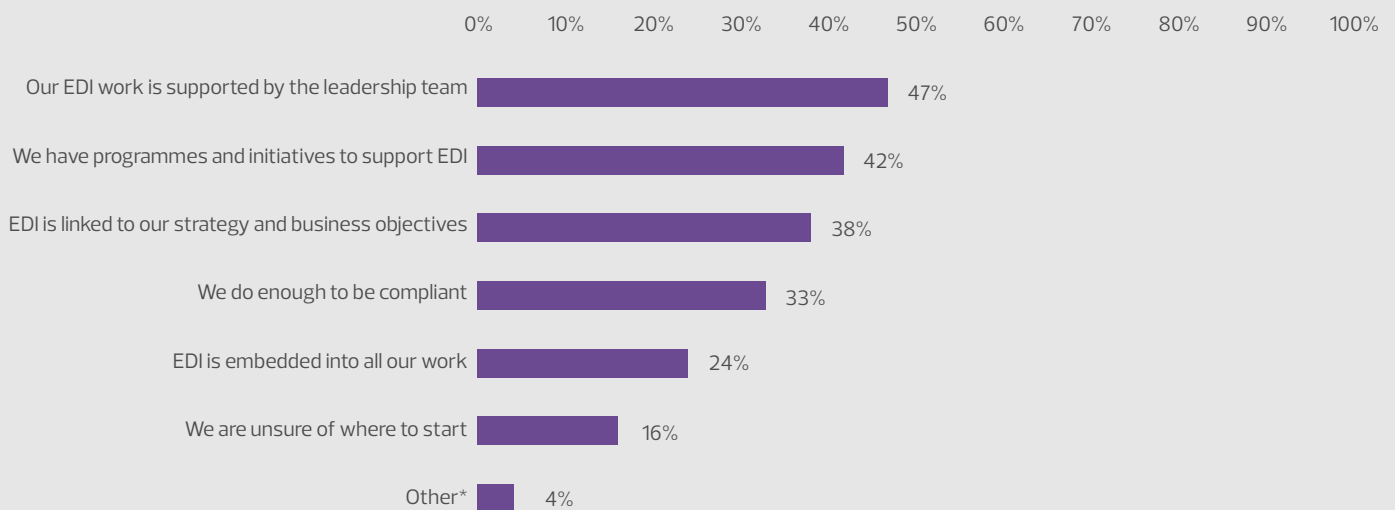
The average score for the Governance and Leadership section was 41%.

Does your EDI plan or Strategy have any priority areas?



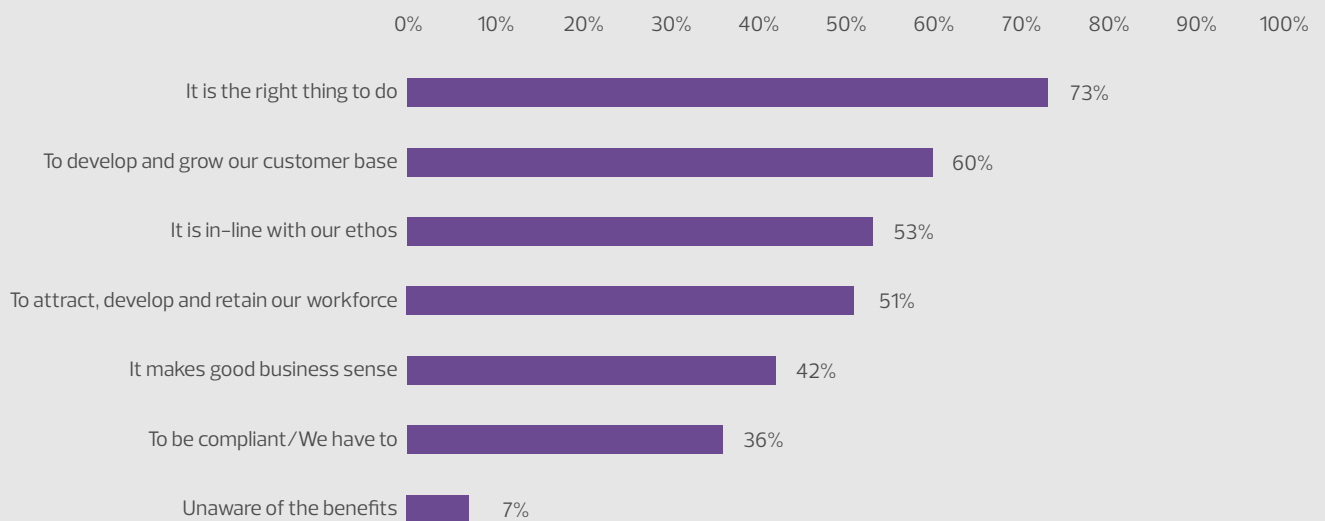
*We do not have a plan; In the process of adding to Changing places facilities

How would you describe your organisation's approach to EDI?



*Lack of cohesive approach

How would you describe your organisation's motivation and incentives towards EDI?



The Governance and Leadership results revealed that:

71% say their organisation's business plan or strategy contains references to EDI

38% do not have an EDI plan or strategy and **7%** have an EDI plan or strategy that's up to date, complete, ambitious and supported with a roadmap

29% say their organisation doesn't have a shared purpose with EDI and **18%** have a clear, published statement with ambitions and goals

42% say no one is responsible for EDI at their organisation and **24%** say they have EDI champions at junior, senior leader and at board level

9% say senior leaders highlight and celebrate EDI and act as EDI role models

38% say there is a group or committee responsible for EDI

How can an organisation improve in this area?

- **Develop a shared purpose for EDI** – this could be a clear, coherent statement or policy
- **Create a strategy** that is ambitious but achievable and contains achievable milestones
- Focus your EDI strategy on several key priority areas that **supports your wider business strategy**
- Ensure that your **business strategy references EDI priorities**
- **Consider and rationalise your organisation's relationship with EDI** – why do you practice inclusion?
- Ensure there are EDI champions and sponsors **from across all levels** of the organisation
- **Empower senior leaders to act as EDI role models** – to champion and celebrate inclusion
- **Establish and maintain a group or committee responsible for EDI** – comprising members from across the organisation and with good governance (such as a regular meeting rhythm, collecting meeting minutes with clear and accountable actions)

Going beyond policy and being proactive



The perspective of a leader:
Dave Candler
CEO of Swimming Teachers' Association

Dave Candler has been involved in teaching swimming and leisure management for over 25 years. Before becoming STA's CEO in April 2016, he worked for 10 years as the Operations, Swimming, and Training Manager at Inspire Leisure, one of the largest providers of swimming lessons in the UK. In 2001, he was named as one of the 'Top 20 Dynamic CEOs' in the UK and won ukactive's 'Outstanding Leadership Award' following his work to support the aquatics industry through the pandemic. Here, he explains his organisation's approach to EDI.

STA is a UK registered educational charity that for the last 92 years has worked to create and deliver the highest standards of swimming teaching in line with our charitable objective; 'The preservation of human life through the teaching of swimming and lifesaving'. The STA was awarded 'Education Provider of the Year' by ukactive in 2022, and received the 'Innovation of the Year' at the 2023 Federation of Awarding Bodies (FAB) awards for the charity's STAnd Up for Swimming campaign.

Underpinning all of this is STA's commitment to delivering quality aquatic services; and as a not-for-profit organisation with a clear charity aim and social responsibility, our goal is to deliver these services so that they positively benefit and meet the needs of the leisure market are inclusive for all.

STA cares passionately about giving people of all ages and abilities, and from all backgrounds, the opportunity to learn how to swim and enjoy the water safely. It's our mantra and it's embedded into the cultural fabric of our organisation. For me, as the CEO, this means a lot more than just policy, or a 'tick box' exercise, which is why we wholly support ukactive's EDI self-assessment toolkit because it's about being proactive and taking the lead so that real positive changes can happen.

When I became STA's CEO I wanted to effect change in grassroots swimming by ripping up the rule book and not wait for someone or something to happen. The pandemic was a great example of this. In aquatics we had a very





serious swimming teaching shortage, which meant tens of thousands of people were missing out on the opportunity to learn how to swim. We couldn't wait for a government handout, so we created STAnd Up for Swimming, and used our charity funds to train more than 900 new swimming teachers for free, of which two-thirds were new to the leisure industry and 86% found immediate employment. The award-winning campaign – using insights from the industry-first Inclusion Study we carried out with ukactive in 2021 also provided us with a unique opportunity to create inclusive, culturally impactful projects around the UK – and help break down barriers in communities that were most in need.

I've strongly believed for years that partnership working is the key to success, which is what I set out to do as CEO. Our specialist EDI partners now include Autism Swim, CP Sport, Level Water, Sporting Equals and LGBT Foundation, and together we have created and opened up lots of new accessible learning opportunities for our members and swim school partners – among many things this also included a new BSL CPD and many free webinars.

Aligned with this is our strategic partnership with ukactive, and our involvement with the Everyone Can Task Force, which provides a forum for us to share our expertise and insights on disability swimming at a grassroots level. By working together as a cross-sector leisure group I believe we can achieve so much more to make sure swimming and all sports are inclusive for all disabled people. The EDI self-assessment toolkit is a perfect example of this.

Alongside our work with the Task Force, we also did further independent research on the disability swimming teaching workforce, which resulted in STA launching another proactive charity campaign, called STARLIGHT, in 2023 – this was designed to upskill swimming teachers for free and qualify them as specialist disability swimming teachers. The campaign lasted six months, and in this time 500 swimming teachers successfully gained the STA Award in Aquatic Teaching – Disability Swimming (STA DS) qualification endorsed by CIMSPA. As a result, an overwhelming majority of the teachers (86%) confirmed that they would be adapting all their swimming lessons to be more inclusive, with more than three-quarters saying they now have the confidence to teach swimming to participants of all ages with all ranges of disabilities.

Swimming is my lifelong passion, and it is my responsibility as CEO to lead by example and use this platform to voice my opinions, share my expertise, and represent the needs of our members and swim partners. To be able to drive change over the last few years and be in a position where we can act quickly to proactively effect change is what I'm most proud of as CEO. An important part of this is listening, because by listening you can start having conversations, and you can start educating and creating practical solutions to age-old – and new – challenges, and thus ensure no one misses out on all the incredibly inclusive benefits of swimming.

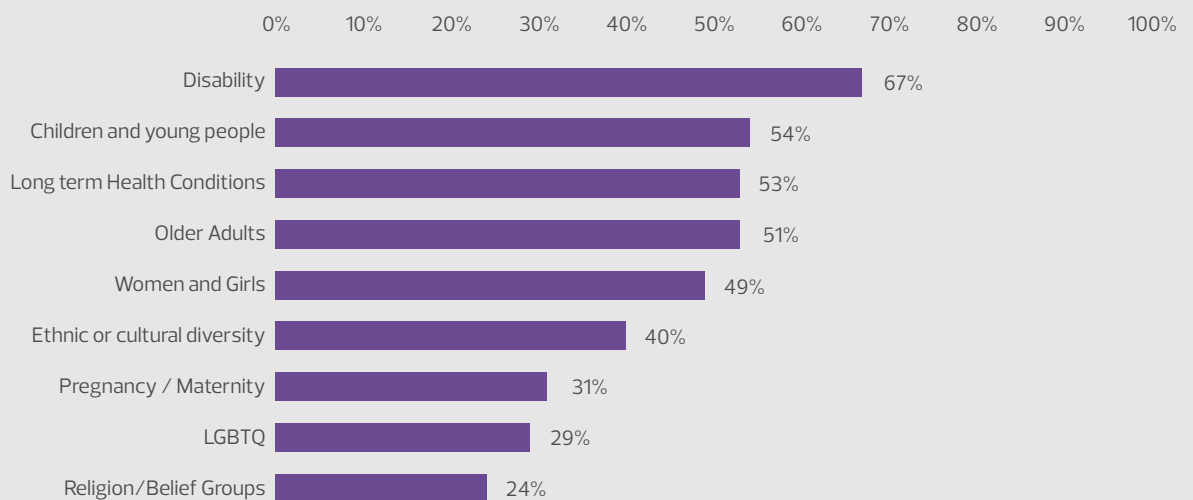
Programmes, Provision and Partnerships

Organisations submitting their self-assessment were scored on:

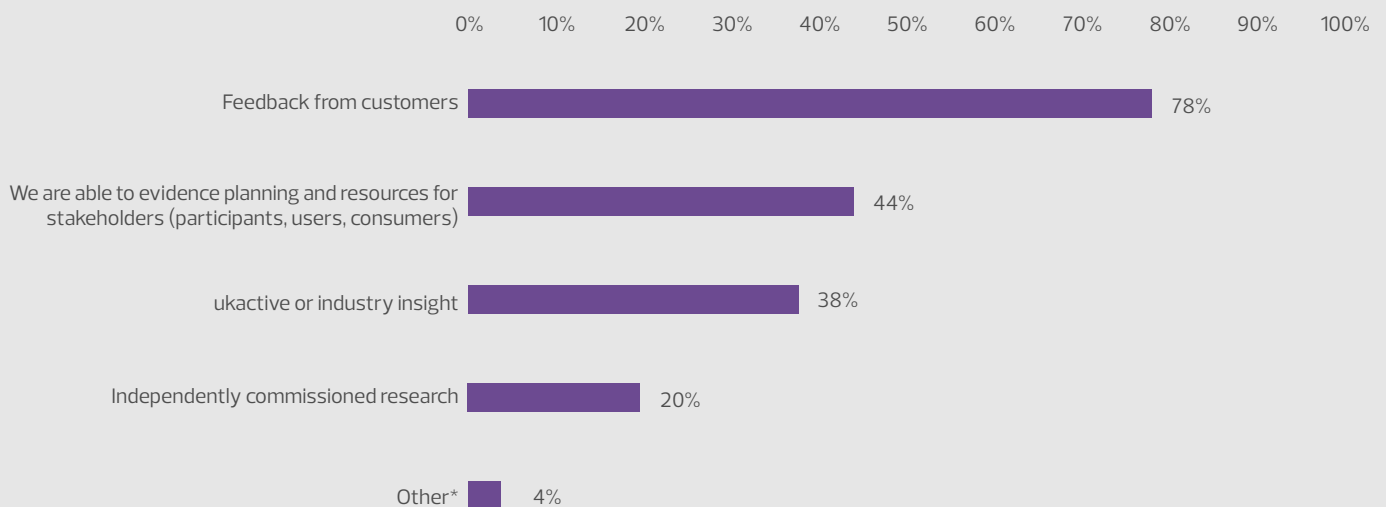
- Delivering and supporting initiatives that target certain groups, communities or characteristics
- Identification of gaps or barriers to provision and services
- Engagement with underrepresented groups and stakeholders
- The communication and promotion of EDI to external audiences

The average score for the programmes, provision and partnerships section was 45%.

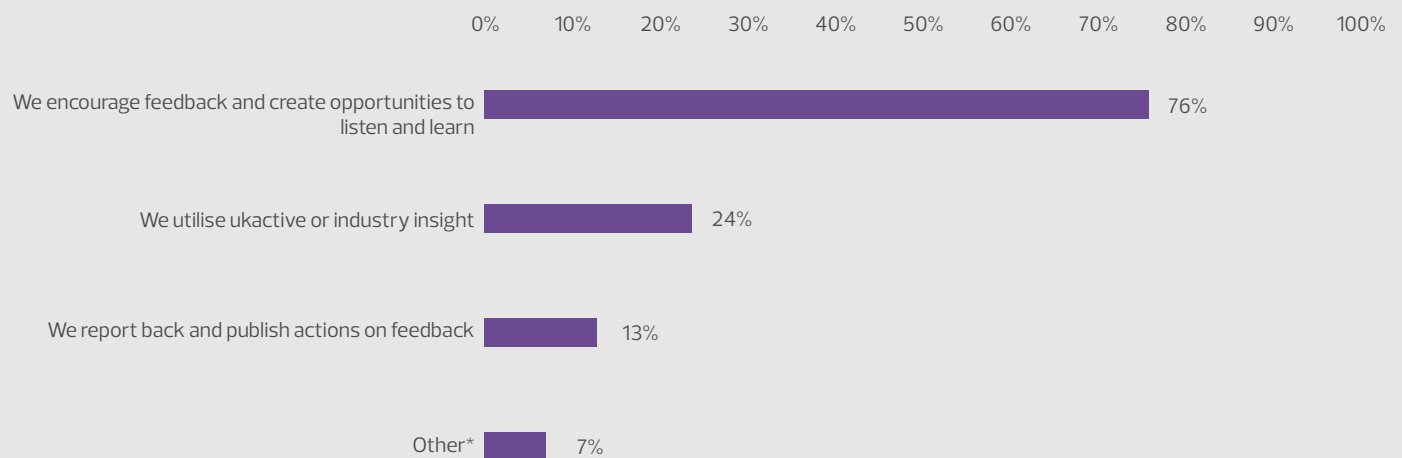
How would you describe your organisation's motivation and incentives towards EDI?



How do you identify barriers and trends to access your provision or services?



How do you identify barriers and trends to access your provision or services?



*Only in our partnerships; we don't do enough

The Programmes, provision and partnership results also told us:

76% say EDI helps in some way to influence participation or engagement growth with their products, provision and services

51% say they partner with specialist groups or organisations to improve their EDI function

80% can identify gaps in their provision for underrepresented or underserved groups

82% say they'd like to do more to reach new and target audiences

87% say they'd like to do more to be welcoming and supportive to anyone new to the sector

62% actively promote and celebrate inclusion to external audiences

How can an organisation improve in this area?

- **Develop initiatives and/or programmes** that target underrepresented or underserved groups or communities
- **Monitor and evaluate your programming** to ensure effectiveness and impact
- **Utilise insight** from national bodies such as ukactive and Sport England
- **Encourage feedback**, create opportunities to listen and learn and publish actions on feedback
- Consider the role that EDI can play in **increasing participation** (and/or usage or demand for products and services)
- Consider **partnering and/or utilising specialist knowledge and services** from groups and organisations with a specific EDI remit (or provide key insight for key groups)
- Ensure that your provision **welcomes and supports** anyone who is new to the sector
- **Promote and celebrate inclusion**, make proactive efforts to communicate to underrepresented or underserved groups, and reach new and target audiences
- Identify ways to enhance how **EDI is used to increase participation in physical activity, increase customer retention and make a positive social impact**



Jules Twells
National Inclusion & Wellbeing Manager
Everyone Active

Everyone Active is the country's longest-established leisure operator, having been founded in 1987. We're also one of the biggest, running in excess of 240 sites on behalf of more than 65 local authorities. Jules Twells is National Inclusion & Wellbeing Manager and responsible for leading the Diversity, Equity, Inclusivity & Belonging (DEIB) ambitions within the organisation. Jules provides some insight into how EDI is embedded into organisation.

Community is at the heart of everything we do and our overarching aim is to improve the health and wellbeing of the communities we serve by providing high-quality, engaging activities and providing inclusive and accessible opportunities for everyone to be active.

Delivering an inclusion strategy across such a large organisation isn't easy and although we have national priorities as an organisation to support everyone to be active, we also need to consider our local authority clients and their ambitions, the local/regional demographics and customer needs. My first message was that EDI had to be everyone's business and a thread through everything we do.

The five main things that have proved successful in delivering this message have been:

1. Forming an Inclusive Advisory Group of senior managers representing each area of the business alongside support from external partners to set priorities for DEIB and a strategy for the organisation.
2. Setting up a Diversity & Inclusion Champions Network to give our colleagues a voice through their lived experience and allyship, to advise and hold the senior management team accountable in delivering the strategy.
3. We developed a Diversity & Inclusion Calendar to share across all our sites which gave a focus to different EDI topics and started conversations around mental health, menopause, Black History Month as examples. This provides structure for awareness and celebration internally and it also provides an opportunity for our facilities to engage in activities to support under-represented groups in their local communities and share this information in communications.
4. Being data driven to make decisions and being able to benchmark where we are in terms of inclusion. This began by improving systems and processes to collect more data around protected characteristics from both our colleagues and customers to analyse where gaps exist and where we needed to set priorities to reach under-represented groups.
5. We carried out development analysis to identify key EDI themes and topics that our colleagues needed further training and support with. Having reviewed our training methods, we explored other means to raise awareness. These included online and face to face training, colleague newsletters, 'lunch and learns' and briefings to meet the business needs to support inclusion for both our colleagues and customers.

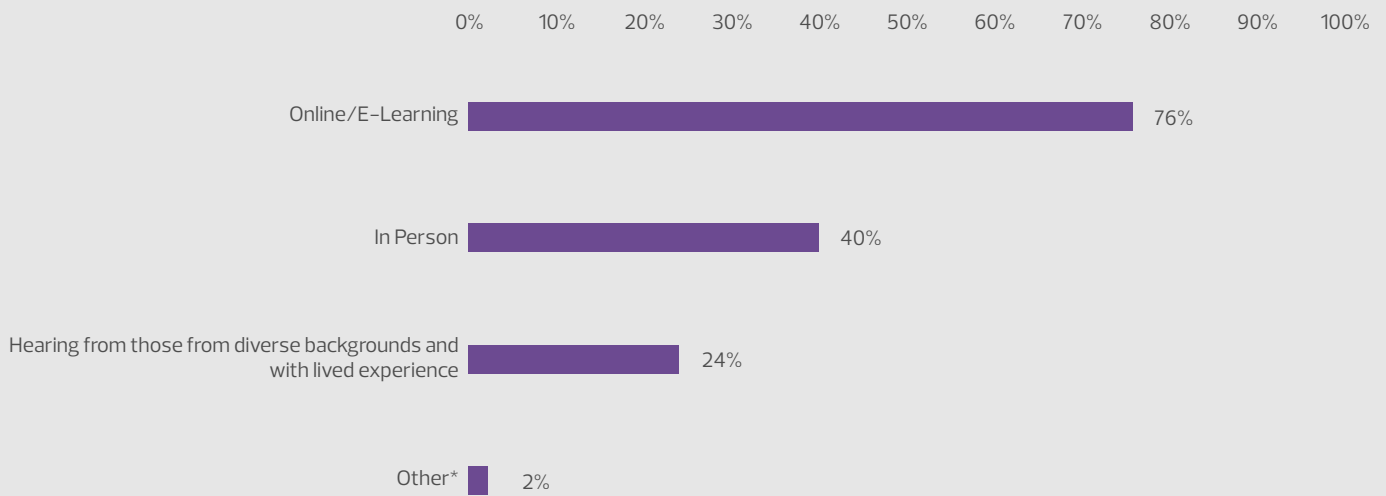
Workforce and training

Organisations submitting their self-assessment were scored on:

- Understanding the diversity of their workforce
- Offering training and development on EDI
- The workforce's relationship with EDI
- Inclusive recruitment practices and methods

The average score for the workforce and training section was 55%.

How do you identify barriers and trends to access your provision or services?



*Small section in the induction process

The Workforce and Training results also told us:

64% understand the diversity of their workforce

76% say feel that they have at least some diversity in their workforce

78% are aware of barriers or required adjustments for those in their workforce

27% offer no training in EDI / **29%** provide training that's optional

84% consider their recruitment of new staff to be inclusive, attracting diverse backgrounds, fair and free of bias

36% have initiatives to support the attraction, retention or development of a diverse workforce

33% have EDI or employee resource groups or networks

67% say EDI is actively promoted and celebrated within their organisation and across the workforce

89% say their workforce is supportive of EDI, with participating organisations reporting that their workforce is:

- Unaware about diversity (**2%**)
- Knowledgeable about diverse individuals or groups (**68%**)
- Able to see, recognise and appreciate diversity (**16%**)
- Able to recognise and proactively cater for and support diversity (**13%**)

How can an organisation improve in this area?

- Conduct equality monitoring to **understand the diversity of your workforce** (and associated requirements for them to fulfil their roles and succeed)
- Seek to **encourage a diverse workforce that is representative** of the communities that the organisation or product serves
- **Offer training in EDI to all staff**, and supplement development with in-person training and hearing from those with lived experience and from diverse backgrounds
- **Encourage the workforce** to proactively learn and **take personal responsibility for EDI**
- **Understand the training needs and requirements of the workforce**, asking: "How can they be supported?"
- Ensure that recruitment processes **encourage and support all** to apply and are fair and free of bias
- Consider the establishment of networks and groups to support those from similar backgrounds and with shared experiences
- **Ensure employees are given opportunities to feedback** and that their views are actively sought
- Encourage and celebrate diversity across the workforce
- **Establish and promote policies** amongst the workforce



Supporting the workforce



Tom Godwin
Group Operations Director
Future Fit

As the most trusted provider of health, wellbeing and personal trainer courses across the country, Future Fit is committed to assist everyone who has the ambition and dream to start their career in the sector and support them to make it a reality. With more than 30 years of providing world-class education, the Future Fit Group has established a reputation for excellence and innovation, not only with individuals but also supporting a wide range of corporate clients to develop the sector's workforce of tomorrow. This includes always looking to provide dynamic training and explore how it can fully support its learners to be the best practitioners they can be.

Group Operations Director Tom Godwin is passionate to contribute to the next generation of fitness, health and well-being professionals in the UK. He wants to make sure our sector is welcoming and inclusive to all both in terms of workforce and participation. He firmly believes in Future Fit's ability to aid developing a workforce that is fully equipped with a comprehensive understanding on how to incorporate EDI into daily working practice, enabling them to identify and provide equal access and opportunities to all in their communities. He expands on how this is currently being achieved.

As an organisation, Future Fit is involved with a range of projects that are supporting it to remain an inclusive employer and training provider, as well as their work supporting others with the same mission via meaningful workforce development programmes.

Key aspects of this include:

- Performing a comprehensive review of our organisation as a learner and employee which has been driven by passionate members of our teams from across the organisation and externally facilitated by experts. This has allowed us to create an action plan and review process to ensure we are constantly improving what we do to ensure we are always open to all.
- Developing our learning to ensure that accessibility to our resources is constantly improving – this is an exciting and most likely never-ending journey as we progressively harness ever improving technology, ways of working and action feedback from our learners and team.
- Providing a variety of techniques which have equipped our tutors nationally with the skills needed to ensure inclusive teaching and assessment practices are used. Particularly how learners can be assisted with implementing inclusive strategies which will help promote access to learning and development opportunities.
- We have launched a series of courses that support those working in our sector to support more inclusive delivery and participation. These have been built to current specifications as set by CIMSPA and referencing the work done by ukactive to better understand the sector's approach to inclusivity. We have also recently launched the first of a series of training courses, 'Supporting Visually Impaired (VI) Participants'. This was created with the team at Accessercise and in conjunction with members of the VI community. The aim of these courses is to increase understanding of the needs of VI participants and enhance the skills needed in the workforce to drive participation by the VI community.

-
- We are continually exploring how we can extend our scope to include and assist all groups in their fitness and health journey. An example of this is the recent award of being Disability Confident across the Group.
 - Most importantly, we have made the supporting of individuals and encouraging wide and varied participation in our courses as a whole company focus. We have empowered our teams to identify any situations where they feel we could do better to support specific communities and take action to make that support happen. This is then represented at board level, with EDI being a key area of discussion as a standing agenda point.



Data and Insight

Organisations submitting their self-assessment were scored on:

- Collecting suitable EDI data and using it in an efficient and useful manner
- Understanding who the existing and target audiences are
- Understanding the requirements, needs and satisfaction of existing and target customers
- Active participation in the progression of EDI agenda across the industry

The average score for the data and insight section was 46%.

38% collect data relating to the characteristics of their users

29% use data to continuously improve their business, products and services

42% know about the needs and expectations of their current audience / **20%** know the same about their target audience

67% run regular audience satisfaction surveys

73% say their own EDI work supports the sector in some way to grow its awareness and usage of EDI

9% actively drive EDI change for the sector

How can an organisation improve in this area?

- **Review data collection from customers and service users**, and consider if equality or characteristic monitoring is necessary or useful
- Ensure that the data collected is **necessary and relevant** for its purpose
- **Utilise data and insight to improve** customer service, tailor communications and develop services and products to existing and potential audiences
- Seek an understanding of satisfaction levels from existing users
- Seek to understand the preferences and motivations of those who are **new to the sector, are underrepresented or underserved.**
- **Utilise EDI related insight** from national bodies such as ukactive and Sport England
- **Proactively support the sector and contribute** to industry initiatives that support EDI
- Build data and insight into **strategic decision making**
- **Engage and consult** with key stakeholders and user groups
- **Gather and share** case studies, examples of good practice and role models

Data and insight to inform EDI



Alex Lucas
Research Manager
ukactive Research Institute

Alex Lucas is the Research Manager for the ukactive Research Institute, responsible for managing a portfolio of ukactive's research and evaluation, and data and insight projects. She has been involved in the data collection and reporting across a variety of ukactive's EDI work, including Everyone Can, Life in our Years, MSK Hubs, and Safer Spaces to Move. Here, she explains the value of data for improving EDI.

Data can provide a clear rationale on which to base important strategic decisions. Often, we can make decisions based on what we feel we know, which can be misguided by the natural biases we all have. Using data to inform decisions ensures that we use evidence based on others needs to drive customer experience, instead of our own perceptions of what is needed. It sometimes brings up truths we may wish didn't exist – a natural part of the process – but it ensures we move in a direction that is more inclusive for a wider range of people.

However, knowing where to start and how to use data to inform decision making isn't always easy. Here are five sequential tips to start using data to understand EDI in your organisation.

1. Begin by assessing the current ways you receive feedback and the types of data being collected – including if the data is useful and being used. If it's not, that's when changes can be made. The benefits of data collection come when the type of data being collected are fit for purpose rather than being collected without a use.
2. Get your customers involved. You wouldn't be able to collect data without them, and they are likely who you are trying to cater better towards, so look at 'co-designing'. This is involving customers from the onset in curating the feedback process, from getting their input on what methods to use, to getting their thoughts on ideas before you implement them. Co-design is a great way of testing if the type of data you collect, and your interpretations of the data are accurate and fit their needs.
3. Recognise where your limitations lie. We are not all data experts, and you don't have to be. If you don't know where to start, you can seek out those who can support you. A great start is to utilise the ukactive Research Institute services. We can help you understand what data metrics to capture and how, and upskill you on how to read your data and use those findings in the future.
4. If you are pressing ahead with data collection, be able to explain why it's being collected and ensure that individuals' data remains anonymous and confidential. This involves upskilling on basic data protection and understanding customers data rights. At first this might seem daunting, however from our experience individuals are more receptive to providing personal feedback and data when they remain informed (one of the customer data rights). Individuals want to understand how and why their data is being used and to remain informed of what is tangibly going to happen because of their input – so keep open lines of communication around data usage.
5. Understand that your data and insights only form one part of the puzzle. Where data has been used to inform wide scale change, it has been because of the aggregation of multiple sources of data from multiple organisations – the phrase 'the whole is greater than the sum of the parts' is particularly true here. When shared properly, data does not give away confidentiality but can contribute to shaping good practice and providing insights that help the entire sector grow, so we encourage you to remain open to sharing and collaborating your data.



Participating organisations were asked 'What areas of EDI are your main priority for the next 12 months?'

Responses (in alphabetical order):

- Accessibility
- Accessibility for older people and those with a disability or long-term health condition
- Recruitment of instructors with lived experience
- Workplace flexibility to ensure we can employ people with a disability or restriction
- Accessible Changing
- Accessible user groups in particular age related, health interventions and recruitment diversity
- Diversity and Inclusion Action plan
- Age-related programming and initiatives
- All areas, but an improvement in the strategic adoption of EDI as a priority for customers and staff team
- Analysis of data with an EDI focus
- Increase the awareness of where we are and how to access us
- To be more user friendly to those who have sight issues.
- 'Changing Places' accessible toilets
- Continue to grow our inclusion initiatives
- Create an EDI roadmap
- We want to use this survey as a start point to truly understand where we are and look to implement recommendations
- Data-driven decisions
- Development of inclusive & diverse staff base via training and workforce development
- Diversity and inclusion action plan
- Disability
- Establishing a thriving disability section.
- Diversity of workforce
- EDI focus/working group
- EDI plan
- Embed EDI in new strategy
- Employability (disabled people in the workforce)
- Ensure programmes and packages are inclusive to all customer needs
- Expansion of Inclusive Summer Scheme
- Facilities Upgrade
- Female initiatives including, female night safety
- Female participation levels
- General awareness and upskilling for EDI
- Improve our EDI induction training for new starter
- Improve outdoor sports facilities to be more accessible for all sports users
- EDI Improvement plan
- Improving representation across our workforce
- Increase diversity of audiences and customers



- Increase the number of swimmers from all backgrounds and abilities
- EDI policy / commitment
- Looking at increasing the opportunities for people with long term health conditions and disabilities to attend our sessions.
- More representative workforce
- Offering our videos in other languages
- Improve our recruitment processes
- Partnership working with specialist organisations
- Programmes for disabled people, families, elderly, children, long term health conditions
- Programming- catering more for sensory needs
- Promote and celebrate successes consistently
- Recruitment and widening audience participation
- Review of EDI training
- Disability swimming lessons for children
- Sensory spaces
- Sourcing EDI training for our board and leadership team
- Staff awareness training at all levels
- Staff training and development – sign language and autism awareness
- Workforce – understanding staff diversity in its entirety
- Support diversity growth across customer base
- To become more aware and implement changes where required to ensure we support our employees in all areas of EDI
- To increase understanding of the barriers to low participation groups, communicate our offer to them, including targeted marketing
- To ensure the members of our gym service, sports clubs and other programmes and initiatives are reflective of our student body
- To increase reporting and highlight the work we do in EDI
- Trans and non-binary facility access
- To produce an equality policy
- Updated EDI policy
- Use data to gain insights and address inequalities within the workplace.

Submitting organisations were asked 'What is your overall ambition for EDI?'

Responses (in alphabetical order):

- Be seen as a creator and deliverer of best practice
- Cater for everyone – somewhere they feel safe
- Continue championing inclusion and non-discriminatory access for everyone
- Raise awareness and be an ambassador for change
- For all our facilities to be fully accessible and supporting our whole community
- Fully inclusive and equitable environment
- Have a move inclusive offering for both staff and customers
- Inclusion at every level
- Inclusive sporting community - removing barriers and seeking transformational change
- Increase attendance/engagement of underserved and underrepresented residents/communities



- Increase diversity of our workforce
- Develop and embed an EDI strategy
- Provide inclusive activities that are attractive to low participation groups
- Representative of our diverse community, going beyond statutory requirements and ensuring policy and practice meets current and future needs
- The overall ambition for EDI is to become more inclusive so everyone has equal opportunity within our organisation, whether it is to work for us or to access our services.
- To attract more customers from diverse groups
- To be a more inclusive and diverse employer
- To be a place where everyone feels comfortable and welcome, and our facilities are accessible and barriers are reduced
- To be a totally inclusive club representing all sections of society
- To have an inclusive club environment
- To be more inclusive and for the profession as a whole to be more supportive
- To be the most inclusive sports club / charity

in the UK

- To create a diverse, inclusive organisation where EDI is embedded in everything we do
- To embed EDI into everything we do
- To embed EDI within our culture and offer something for all
- To have a diverse workforce representative of the borough's community
- To have a happy, productive and workforce that understands the benefits of EDI
- To have an embedded EDI focus across the strategy and business planning; ensuring

staff training and recruitment is free from all bias and staff are aware of how to be allies within the EDI space

- To integrate EDI fully into the business so it's in the DNA of what we do
- Where every individual can feel safe and a sense of belonging, and is empowered to achieve their full potential



Review and comment from ukactive's Strategic Lead for EDI



Timothy Mathias
Strategic Lead – Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
ukactive

There is one place to start in the analysis of the first year of the EDI self-assessment toolkit – and that is by congratulating the organisations across the physical activity industry that took part. By participating, they have made the crucial first step to understand how well they are performing and gathered insights into their own organisation's relationship with inclusion. Also, by contributing, they have benefited the wider sector, allowing us at ukactive to collate the data and begin to get an idea of how well the industry as a whole performs with regards to EDI.

For an industry as technical as ours, and one with such diverse operating models across a range of services, provision and activities, plus reaching so much of the population and communities within it, there is of course no 'one size fits all' or 'cookie cutter' model for EDI. And since we are not a regulatory or governing body, our unique asset as a trade body is to work with, and support our members – our ambition is for every organisation across this marvellous industry, to develop their own thinking and own approach with regards to inclusion.

That is why we launched the self-assessment toolkit – allowing those across gyms, fitness and leisure to reflect on their EDI process and in a completely non-judgemental manner, understand '*how inclusive are we?*' and '*what more can we do?*'

Above and beyond the support we provide; the day-to-day enquiries, and the suite of resources, insight, guidance, programmes and campaigns – we launched the self-assessment toolkit following feedback from members indicating a clear gap in the provision of EDI support. This is best exemplified by 71% reporting feeling '*not,*

slightly or somewhat confident' with EDI, and 63% answering '*no or not sure*' when asked if they felt that their EDI efforts were a success.

We wanted to cut through the clichés and non-specificity and offer a tool that was an easy entry point into the subject matter and form the basis of a discussion to progress the EDI offer. After all, EDI is a broad, wide-ranging, ever developing and sometimes confusing and overwhelming agenda... where does one start or begin? And even if an organisation has begun to work on EDI, how does it know if it is doing well?

The overall picture

It should be no surprise that the average score among the submissions was particularly good at 47% – what we term 'the EDI activator', demonstrating a commitment to the agenda.

We are, after all, a 'people' industry – invested in helping people be healthier, feel better, and live longer and happier lives. Many of the responses showed that they are able to identify gaps in provision, report that EDI helps to influence participation and engagement with a view to growth and many actively promote and celebrate inclusion to external audiences.

This is an area in which this sector really excels – and for which we should be particularly proud. We are excellent at offering targeted programmes to specific groups and communities who are able to reap the benefits of physical activity in a safe and welcoming environment.

But there is more to EDI than the programmes that are delivered – and the self-assessment toolkit is intended to encourage organisations

to progress their EDI work and be more efficient and high performing on the agenda. The toolkit, and this 'year one' report, is intended to provide a suitable reference point, an indication as to how well their organisation is doing in comparison to the rest of the sector plus encouragement to set out a vision for how advancing EDI efforts can further the aims of their organisation, the sector and the health of the nation. We do, however, encourage more submissions and utilisation of this toolkit, in order for us to be able to report on a truly representative and accurate 'view' of how well the industry is doing, and how inclusive we are.

A clear vision and ambition

In our mission to get 'More People, More Active, More Often' we have established our role in helping the sector to provide a more inclusive service. We set this out clearly within our Vision 2030 strategy which outlines the ambition for fitness and leisure facilities to engage more than five million new members from a greater diversity of backgrounds, by 2030.

The first clear observation from the results of the self-assessment is that we want all organisations to have a clear, coherent statement and ambition with regards to EDI. This means that there is a shared vision, with clarity and it can be communicated more easily, and with it, achieved across the whole organisation. Better still, is an organisation's business plan or strategy referencing EDI.

Put simply, no credible business is successful without a plan, ambition and strategy – and EDI should be no different. But having a standalone EDI strategy is irrelevant unless it contributes to

the wider ambition and plan of the organisation. Integration is key – and a clear published statement of ambition with a plan towards its goals is ideal.

The role of senior leaders

In the realm of EDI, high-performing organisations have inclusive leaders. These leaders are committed, and they take personal responsibility to set the tone and act as role models. They celebrate the inclusion agenda and understand the relevance and contribution to the organisation. They recognise their own strengths and depth of understanding – inviting thoughts, ideas and contributions from others who offer differing experience, skills and knowledge. There is a curiosity and genuine interest in others and a willingness to adapt. Inclusive leaders may not have all the answers, but they are willing to listen, learn, act and empower. They can build a team around them and offer up opportunities for knowledge exchange and collaboration.

Governance – putting a structure in place

We have to appreciate that EDI is a broad topic, and it will continue to evolve and progress. Organisations should be ready to adapt, be agile and correspondingly develop. In order to suitably react, and work towards a proactive approach to inclusion, it is highly recommended to build an internal advisory group. This group can consolidate breadth of knowledge, experience, passion and interest in the agenda.

Far too often EDI is the responsibility of one person – someone with a particular interest, passion or experience (and also carrying a certain amount of, at best some strong sentiment or



even trauma relating to what they have lived through). A group with representation across departments and seniority coupled with good governance can keep the agenda on track and can ensure that plans are delivered and ambitions are realised.

Furthermore, a group can be agile to manage risk and respond to any reactive issues – as the saying goes, 'a problem shared is a problem halved'. An internal advisory group, or having EDI on the agenda of senior leadership teams or at board level (at best, all three!), can maximise the opportunity through collective contribution and vision. It also allows a key opportunity for feedback and communication up and down the organisation across various levels of seniority.

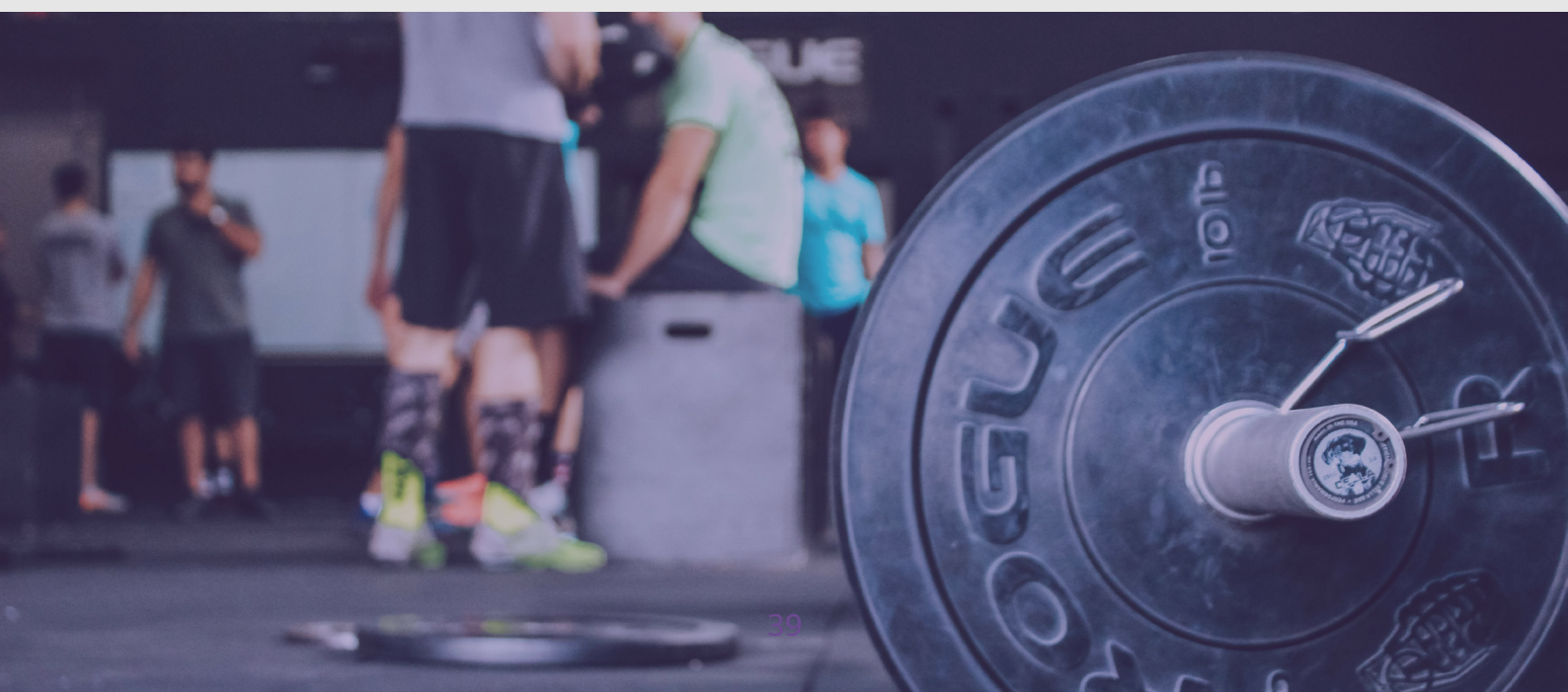
Priorities and ambition

I have a particular interest in two of the questions in the self-assessment, which to me are by far the most revealing sections of the toolkit. We asked, 'What are your priorities in the next 12 months?' and 'What is your overall ambition for EDI?' The responses, published in this report, offer a compendium of intention, mission, vision, purpose and intent. These two, very simple questions have provided responses that exemplify the intent and appetite that this sector has for EDI.

The words 'imbed' and 'integrate' feature on a number of occasions in the responses – and

this is exactly where our EDI efforts should be heading. As an industry, we have a product, service, facility or activity for everyone. If we can, as one response stated, 'integrate EDI fully into the business so it's in the DNA of what we do', imagine our potential for what we can achieve. Society will develop and evolve, there may be some new and emerging trends – and our industry will be required to adapt. With EDI integrated into our work, and with our colleagues taking personal responsibility on the agenda, we will be more agile, aware and stronger, meaning we are better placed to continue our offer for everyone.

ukactive will continue its support for members across the physical activity sector, so that our members are equipped to progress the EDI agenda. And the principles will remain the same – useful, relevant, clear, supportive and completely free of judgement. We look forward to collaborating with you.



ukactive and its support to members for EDI in 2025

How will ukactive supports its members this year across EDI? In line with its Vision 2030 business strategy to ‘drive the development of the sector to provide a more inclusive service’:

Continued engagement and support for members on day-to-day enquiries, and political, societal and topical matters relating to EDI and affecting fitness, gym and leisure facilities – this will take the form of member network sessions, online webinars and guidance notes and briefings.

A revised **Children and Young People in Gyms and Group Exercise Guide** – featuring updates, an FAQs and case studies of fitness, gym and leisure centres engagement with children and young people.

A revised ‘year two’ of the **EDI self-assessment toolkit** with updated questions, areas of focus and a series of masterclasses aid the progression of the toolkit criteria and scoring.

An evolution of the **Everyone Can agenda to support disability inclusion access and inclusion** – including engagement with the sector’s senior leadership via the Everyone Can disability inclusion Task Force, an updated online ‘hub’ to host resources and insight, and an update to the ‘Experiences and expectations of the 1 in 5’ research focusing on the requirements of disabled people in their use of fitness, gym and leisure centres.

Working with specialist organisations to explore the relationship that fitness, gyms and leisure centres hold with those from **ethnic and culturally diverse backgrounds** – with a view to publishing key insights and a resource in the form of a ‘playbook’.

Building on the work of ‘How to improve your services for women and girls: As told by the 51%’ and the Safer Spaces to Move project. This project, in partnership with Sport England’s This Girl Can, explores the barriers women can face when taking part in physical activity within fitness and leisure facilities.

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion category at the annual ukactive Awards will celebrate the utilisation of an inclusive and diverse mindset to welcome, celebrate and support members’ customers and colleagues.

The **appointment of an EDI sponsor to the ukactive board** to enhance and embed the agenda at the highest level

ukactive’s EDI function will be supported via the ukactive membership, key stakeholders from specialist organisations and those with lived experience – in the form of the Everyone Can (disability) Task Force, Safer Spaces to Move Task Force and Children, Young People and Families steering group, plus the ukactive Governance structure comprising the Member Councils (Private, Public and Supplier) plus the Wider Activity Forum

With thanks

Sport England

For their commitment to the systems partnership with ukactive, supporting the sector's growth and to reduce inequalities in physical activity.



EDI Strategic Partners

For their continued support of, and contribution towards the EDI agenda



Authors

Tom Godwin, Dave Candler, Jules Twells, Rachel Shinn and Alex Lucas for their insights, recommendations, collaboration and leadership.

To the physical activity sector

For their participation in surveys, interviews, steering groups and task forces, and contribution to the EDI agenda

Rewrite Digital



REWRITE DIGITAL

[Rewrite Digital](#) is a strategic consultancy that helps organisations keep the pace of digital change. Its comprehensive framework for measuring digital maturity and effectiveness enables organisations and sectors to see where they are now, where they need to head and benchmark themselves with peers and over time.

Rewrite Digital has partnered with ukactive and the Digital Futures programme since 2021 to conduct annual digital reviews of the fitness, leisure and sport sector, report on the findings and support the sector and individual organisations to grow their use of digital. In 2023, ReWrite Digital partnered with ukactive to apply EDI criteria to develop an inclusion maturity and effectiveness framework for the physical activity sector.

In 2024, Rewrite Digital introduced a new service, [Room 42](#), using Design Thinking approaches to facilitate change and innovation, further supporting organisations in the sector to grow their digital maturity and effectiveness.