



**REC**

Recruitment  
& Employment  
Confederation



# UK Recruitment Diversity & Inclusion Index

by the REC and APSCo



“ More than any other sector, recruitment sits at the heart of workplace diversity and inclusion. As an industry, we occupy a position of great power, opening up opportunity to millions of people every year.

### Foreword from **Neil Carberry**, CEO of the Recruitment & Employment Confederation

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And in these talent short times, closing off avenues for talented candidates is bad business - but it is always coming up short on our social and ethical responsibilities.

Many in the industry are already making a difference - from individual firms to collaborative efforts, the number of people taking action is rising. The REC will be there to support the industry on this journey: for what we do for clients, but even more what we do in our own businesses. Our own firms being examples of good practice is central to making progress. That's why the REC and Apsco chose to work together on this issue.

The glaring finding of this report is a lack of effective diversity monitoring in many firms. As the old saying goes, what gets measured gets managed, so effective data collection needs to spread more broadly across the industry and with some urgency. This will help us comply with likely

legal changes – such as ethnic pay gap reporting – but more importantly, it will help us broaden the reach of our industry and the huge opportunity working in it offers.

A focus on inclusion and diversity now is another step to delivering the hugely successful, professional services industry we want to be. The REC will be there to help. It is a core part of our business plan, as reflected by our signing up to the Race at Work Charter last year, and our role as a Disability Confident business. REC channels, like our podcast, are full of content designed to help recruitment businesses make a start on getting this right, and our advice service is always available to members. There is more to come later this year. But for now – start thinking about your part in all this, and collecting data now to underpin a plan for the next stage of your inclusion journey.”



“ When APSCo and the REC first embarked on this collaborative research, our hope had been to identify what the current make-up of the recruitment sector looked like, any discrepancies between corporate and individual views, and where diversity may be ‘lacking’.



**Introduction from Ann Swain,  
CEO of the Association of Professional Staffing Companies (APSCo)**

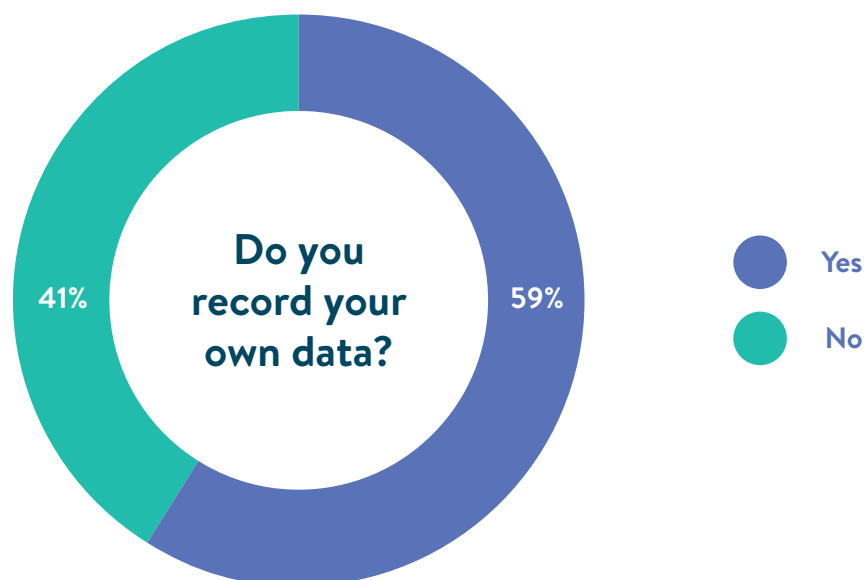
What we found, though, was a more pressing issue: a lack of information.

While the results in this document might not surprise you, they certainly highlight a trend: demographic data isn't being recorded by the vast majority of staffing companies. Before we can design any diversity plans for the recruitment sector, we need to get the foundations in place to accurately measure and track equality. As the adage goes, “you don't know what you don't know” and without a clear and honest picture of your workforce, it is impossible to identify where there are gaps or what demographics are under-represented in your organisation.

However, while we might not be where we'd like to when it comes to being able to identify the demographic balance in the recruitment world, now the time to commit to driving true diversity – starting with accurate and essential record-keeping.

There are restrictions on what employers can and can't ask staff and how recruitment businesses approach the tracking of sensitive personal data will require careful management and guidance. Through APSCo Embrace - an all-encompassing Equality, Diversity & Inclusion campaign which includes a number of different strands to support recruitment firms with their own ED&I approaches – we will be working closely with our members to help them navigate the diversity landscape.

As a profession that holds the future careers of others in its hands, it's crucial that the recruitment sector itself reflects the diversity of today's world – and we aim to be at the helm of the recruitment sector's ED&I agenda, guiding and advising our members every step of the way.”



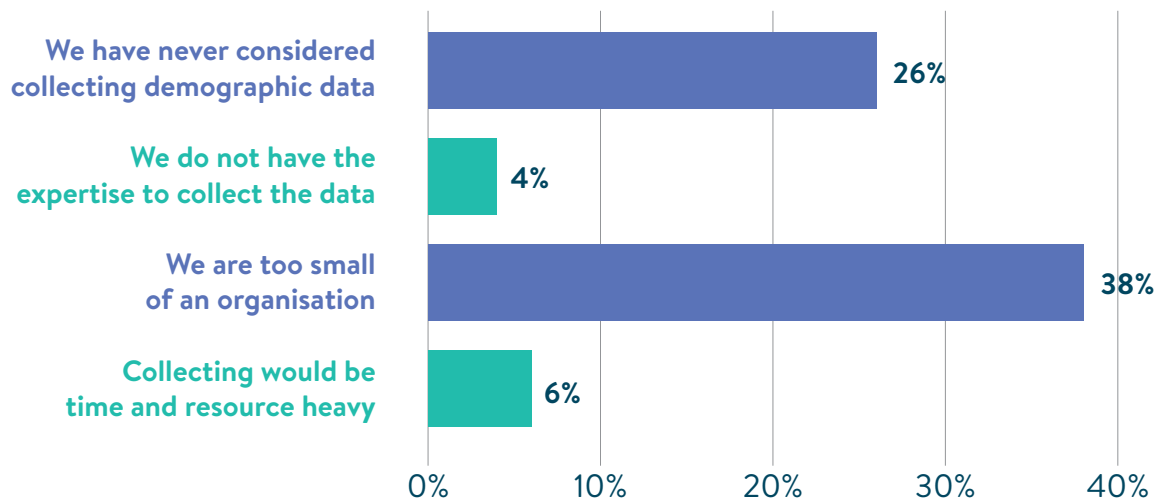
The results of the corporate survey highlight that **two in five** recruitment businesses **do not record** demographic data on their own workforce and leadership teams.

This certainly explains some of the discrepancies that we can see between the corporate and the individual results on the current make-up of the sector's workforce.

## DATA RECORDING

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### Reasons for not collecting



Looking at the reasons why, **38%** of respondents cited that their organisation was **too small** to need to record this information – the most common reason noted by respondents.

What is most concerning, is the second most common reason was that collecting demographic data wasn't considered in the first place. It could be argued that addressing this issue could be relatively simple but further qualitative insight is needed to fully understand the underlying reasons behind why recruitment businesses do not record any data.

In fact, just 4% of those surveyed suggested that they didn't have the expertise to collect the data.

# While males appear to have greater representation in the workforce according to the corporate respondents, the balance is tipped more towards women in the eyes of the individual respondents.

Although females were seen to make up the majority of the current workforce according to the gender of individual respondents, it could simply be the case that more females took part in the individual survey, which highlights the need for recruitment businesses to accurately and consistently record this data.

Interestingly, there is a fairly even balance between men and women at a senior level, according to the corporate survey. This suggests that development opportunities are potentially equal for both genders, though again, the possibility that more women simply took part in the survey could skew these results.

There is, a significant under-representation of other genders, including transgender, agender and genderqueer that is echoed by both the corporate respondents and individual survey participants. However, with data currently unavailable regarding the breakdown of gender-representation across the UK (beyond male and female) it is difficult to say if this is in line with the wider balance of genders.

## SEXUALITY

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While both the corporate and individual surveys found that the majority of the recruitment workforce is heterosexual, more than half of businesses indicated that this information isn't being recorded.



**42%**

of corporate respondents said that all their SLT members were heterosexual.

**55%**

of corporate respondents said they did not record any sexual orientation data on SLT.

**24%**

of corporate respondents said that all their workforce were heterosexual.

**64%**

of corporate respondents said they did not record any sexual orientation data on their workforce.

**94%**

of individual respondents said that they are **heterosexual.**

**4%**

of individual respondents said they were **gay/lesbian.**

## ETHNICITY

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Both surveys show that the **over 75%** of the recruitment workforce is **White British.**

The corporate survey suggested slightly greater representation of other ethnicities when compared to the individual respondents. This is perhaps due to the number of businesses indicating that they do not record this data for their workforce (46%).

**49%**

of corporate responses indicated that more than half of their workforce was **white/British.**

46% do not record.

**40%**

of corporate responses indicated that all their SLT members were **white/British.**

42% did not record.

**77%**

of individual respondents answered that they were **white/British.**

**90%**

of individual respondents said they were of **British nationality.**



## DISABILITY

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### Corporate and individual respondents both indicated that a small proportion of recruiters have disabilities.

However, with only 4% of individuals reporting that they have a disability, the fact that 14% of businesses stated that up to half of their workforce has a disability suggests there are some discrepancies between the corporate and individual perception of the current representation of those with disabilities.

According to individual respondents, more recruiters would describe themselves as neurodiverse or neuro-atypical than would classify themselves as having a disability.

# 4%

of individual respondents reported that they have a disability.

# 33%

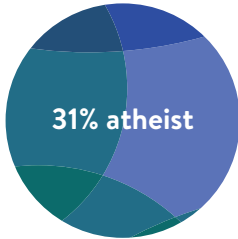
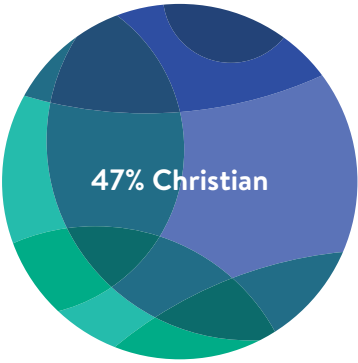
of corporate respondents said up to a quarter of their workforce have a disability.

# 47%

of corporate respondents don't record disability data about their workforce.

# RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

Whilst 90% of businesses reported that they don't record any data about the religious beliefs of their workforce (including SLT), the individual responses reported the recruitment industry is made up of **47% Christian, 31% atheist, 13% agnostic and 7% spiritual.**



## AGE

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Interestingly, recruitment businesses indicated that they were more likely to record the age of their senior leadership team than the workforce as a whole, with just 29% reporting that they don't record the age of the senior leaders compared to 40% failing to collect this data for the wider workforce.



## QUALIFICATION

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### On the whole, both the corporate and individual respondents indicated a greater representation of staff with a University degree.

While this appears to have continued at a senior level, the number of recruitment businesses with members of the senior leadership team with either a GCSE level education or no formal qualification is slightly higher when compared to the rest of the workforce.

This suggests that either a more senior level experience is valued slightly higher than education, or the focus on education in the last 25 years is impacting the lower levels of companies.

It's interesting to note that the individual respondents indicated significant differences in their parent's education when compared to their own.

While 44% of recruiters surveyed had a University degree, just 22% reported their parents were educated to the same level. In comparison, only 2% of individuals have no formal qualification, compared to 17% of respondents' parents.

This suggests to some degree that qualification expectations and standards are being driven by generational differences.

# 20%

of corporate responses indicated that **all their SLT members were degree qualified.**

67% do not record the data.

# 15%

indicated that **all the staff in their workforce were degree qualified.**

73% do not record the data.

**There's a general agreement across the board, from both sets of respondents, that a culture of inclusivity and diversity exists within recruitment.**

Both groups remained on the fence about staff having access to equality, diversity and inclusion training.

This suggests that while recruitment businesses intend to create inclusive workplaces, few have implemented the training needed to turn sentiment into tangible results.

Interestingly, while the corporate respondents were undecided on whether or not the business has an active and evidenced diversity and inclusion programme, individual respondents were more positive that this was the case.



## CONCLUSION

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### It's clear that there are some discrepancies when it comes to the corporate and individual views on the diversity of the workforce that were to be expected

– indeed, this is one of the reasons that APSCo and the REC launched this research campaign.

However, with a lot of data not currently being recorded, the findings suggest that the recruitment industry needs to put in more groundwork in reporting on diversity in their own workforces. This should allow the sector to better judge its own diversity and become more inclusive over time.

#### Key Findings:

- **Two in five (41%) recruitment businesses do not record demographic data on their own workforce nor leadership teams**
- **40% of staffing companies don't record the age of their workforce**
- **Almost all – 90% - of those surveyed don't record the religious beliefs of their staff**
- **73% do not record staff qualifications**
- **65% of corporate respondents said they did not record any sexual orientation data on their workforce**

## NEXT STEPS

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**Accurately recording sensitive data and the legal processing and storing of this information is a challenging task, so it is perhaps understandable that many recruitment businesses do not currently record a lot of information.**

However, without an accurate picture of the current workplace, it's impossible to identify where groups are under-represented and may, perhaps, be facing a barrier at work.

APSCo and the REC will be working with members to provide best practice and legal guidance on recording demographic data to ensure recruitment companies can better identify where improvements to diversity and inclusion strategies may be required for their business.



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