

ADCS Diversity and Inclusion

In 2023, the Association established a Diversity and Inclusion Working Group to lead the work of the Association in identifying what more can be done to ensure that ADCS is an inclusive and diverse Association. This focus was reflected in the Association's priorities for 2024/25 and continues into 2025/26.

ADCS undertakes annual equality monitoring across the whole membership to ensure the Association has an understanding of the characteristics of members and to ensure that impact in relation to diversity can be measured over time. The most recent equality survey suggested that there had been some small but significant changes in the diversity of the membership which is welcome.

The development of a new membership system will also contribute to this understanding by allowing all members to share their diversity profiles at their convenience rather than via a time limited annual survey.

ADCS leadership

Over the last 18 months, ADCS has adopted an explicit focus on work to develop our own leadership, recognising that having visible diverse leadership across the Association will have a positive impact across the wider sector and beyond. ADCS has created vice chair positions for each of the six policy committees, ringfenced for non-DCS members. These new leadership roles are also part of the ADCS Council of Reference. Recognising that the level of diversity is greater in our second and third tier members, the creation of these roles ensures that there is an opportunity for members at this level to contribute to the leadership of the Association while also supporting succession planning. These roles were initially established for an 18-month pilot period, however, have recently been established on a permanent basis. Elections for the Vice Chair roles, with a 3-year term of office, will take place over the summer period. As part of the election process, our communications for all positions now explicitly encourage nominations from ADCS members from black and minoritised communities.

These measures have had impact, with the latest data on diversity showing that two-thirds of the Board of Directors identify as non-white and a third of the Council of Reference identifying as non-white. This compares to the wider ADCS membership where around one in ten identify as non-white.

This focus has extended to all events that ADCS delivers solely or in partnership. A description of the Association's commitment to equality and diversity is now included on all event materials which are shared with both delegates and those who are contributing to events. This sets out the Associations values and beliefs and sets an expectation that speakers reflect these within their contribution to events. In planning for events, ADCS is clear about need for diversity across both the programme content and amongst speakers in all sessions. In addition, a range of measures have been introduced to the ADCS annual conference to ensure that it a welcoming and inclusive event.

ADCS leadership survey

In spring 2025, ADCS issued a survey to all members of the ADCS Council of Reference, which comprises the Board of Directors, policy committee chairs and vice chairs, regional

chairs and representatives and the chair of the Associates network. This survey sought to capture an overview of the age, gender and ethnicity of those in leadership roles for the Association. As this is a smaller cohort, and to avoid individuals being identified, broader protected characteristics were not requested.

32 out of a possible 40 members of Council of Reference responded to the survey, a response rate of 80%.

Age: 77% of respondents were aged between 50 and 59 and 16% aged between 40 and 49. The remaining 7% were aged 60-65, 65+ or had preferred not to say

Gender: 69% identified as female, 31% as male.

Ethnicity: 69% respondents identified as being white British, whilst 31% identified as other ethnicities including Asian / Asian British: Bangladeshi, Asian / Asian British: Indian, Black / African / Caribbean / Black British: African, Black / African / Caribbean / Black British: Caribbean, Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Groups: White and Asian, and White: Other White.

Board of Directors

Focussing on the Board of Directors, all 9 members responded to the survey.

Age: 89% were aged between 50-59, 11% preferred not to say

Gender: 66% identified as female and 33% as male

Ethnicity: A third identified as White British, whilst two thirds identified as Asian, Black or multiple/mixed ethnicities.

ADCS membership survey

Over a 6-week period in September/October 2024, ADCS issued an anonymous survey to gather insights into the diversity of the Association's membership on gender, ethnicity and broader protected characteristics.

674 responses were submitted from a total of 1915 members (as of October 2024), which equates to 35.2% of the total membership. This is approximately a 5% reduction in the response rate compared to 2023.

Of the 674 responses, 109 were from DCS/trust chief executives, 222 from assistant directors or equivalents, 268 from heads of service or equivalents, 75 from Associate members.

The response rate across the membership makes it difficult to make assumptions and it is unlikely that the results of the survey are reflective of the actual picture of diversity across the entire membership. The response rate from the DCS / trust CEO cohort is more proportionate and therefore provides a more robust data set.

The 2024 survey responses revealed the following demographic details, shown in percentages with actual numbers in parenthesis:

- **Ethnicity:** 86% (573) identified as White, 6% (41) as Black, 4% (29) as Asian, 3% (22) as Mixed/Multiple Ethnicity, and 1% (8) preferred not to state or identified as "Other."

- Of those who identified as White, 87% identified as White English/Northern Irish/Scottish, Welsh; 7% as Other White; 5% as White Irish and 1% as Gypsy/Irish Traveller.
- Of those who identified as Black, 56% identified as Caribbean, 32% as African and 12% as Any other Black/African/Caribbean.
- Of those who identified as Asian, 55% identified as Indian; 24% identified as Pakistani; 14% identified as Bangladeshi and 7% identified as Chinese.
- Of those identified as Mixed/multiple ethnicity, 32% identified as White & Asian; 32% identified as White & Black Caribbean; 23% identified as Other; and, 14% identified as White & Black African.
- There were single responses for other ethnicities – they were Greek Cypriot, Hispanic/Latin American, Irish/Asian, New Zealander, White European and other. Two respondents opted not to state their ethnicity.
- **Gender:** 70% (474) identified as female, 29% (198) as male and 1% (2) preferred not to say.
- **Age:** 51% (345) of respondents were aged between 50 and 59, 26% (177) were aged between 40 and 49; 16% (108) were aged between 60 and 65; 3% (18) were aged above 66 and 3% (21) were aged between 30-39. Five respondents preferred not to state their age.
- **Religion or Belief:** 44% (297) identified as Christian and 46% (307) identified as having no religion or belief. The other religions by which members identified included Muslim 2% (16) and Hindu 1% (9). All other religions/beliefs identified were less than 1%.
- **Sexual Orientation:** 86% (583) identified as heterosexual, 5% (32) identified as gay, 4% (26) as lesbian and 3% (18) bisexual. 1 respondent identified as Queer; 14 preferred not to say.
- **Disability:** 14% (95) members considered themselves to have a disability and/or health condition. 12 respondents preferred not to say.

Comparison of 2023 and 2024 data

While recognising the differences in response rates across 2023 and 2024, a comparison of the two data collections reveals the following trends:

1. **Ethnicity:** There was no change in the proportion of members identifying as White in 2023 and 2024 (86%). There has been a slight increase of 2% of those identifying as Black.
2. **Age:** There was a decrease in the percentage of members aged between 40 and 49 (26% in 2024 compared to 29% in 2023), alongside a slight increase in those aged between 50 and 59 (51% in 2024 compared to 48% in 2023).
3. **Religion or Belief:** A slight increase in those identifying as having no religion or belief (46% in 2024 compared to 43% in 2023).
4. **Sexual Orientation and Disability:** There were almost identical responses across the two years regarding sexual orientation and those considering themselves to have a disability and/or health condition.

DCS/Trust CEOs

A total of 109 DCS/Trust Chief Executives responded to the 2024 survey, compared to 115 in 2023. Of these, the following changes were identified:

- **Ethnicity:** There has been an increase in the number identifying as Black (5% in 2024, compared to 2% in 2023) and a decrease in those identifying as White (88% in 2024, 90% in 2023). There were no changes with those identifying as Asian nor those identifying as Mixed/Multiple ethnicity.
- **Gender:** There has been a small increase in the number of females
- **Age:** There has been a slight increase in the age profile, with 10% aged 40-49 (compared to 12% in 2023), 67% aged 50 – 59 (compared to 69% in 2023) and 21% aged over 60 (compared to 17% in 2023).
- **Sexual Orientation:** There was a slight increase in the number identifying as gay, lesbian, or bisexual (17% in 2024, compared to 16% in 2023).
- **Religion or Belief:** The proportion of DCS members with no religion or belief decreased to 48% in 2024, from 51% in 2023, while the percentage identifying as Christian increased to 39% in 2024 from 35% in 2023. There was an increase in those identifying as Hindu (from 1% in 2023 to 2% in 2024) and Jewish (from 1% in 2023 to 2% in 2024).
- **Health and/or disability:** there was a 3% increase in those identifying as having a health issue and/or disability compared to 2023.

2nd tier /assistant directors

223 2nd tier members responded to the survey; a slight decrease compared to 241 in 2023.

- **Ethnicity:** In 2024, 82% identified as White, 6% as Asian, 6% as Black and 5% as Mixed/Multiple Ethnicity. Compared to 2023, this shows a slight decrease in those identifying as Asian and a slight increase in those identifying as Black.
- **Gender:** 72% identified as female – a slight decrease from 74% in 2023. The remainder identified as male.
- **Age:** There was an increase in 2nd tier officers aged between 50-59, up to 55% from 46%, and a decrease in all other age brackets.
- **Religion or Belief:** In 2024, 44% identified as being Christian and 41% as having no religion. 2024 saw a 1% increase in those identifying as Jewish and Quaker and a 1% decrease in those identifying as Sikh. In 2024, 1% identified as atheist and 2% as Buddhist, neither had been identified in 2023.
- **Health and/or disability:** 13% identified as having a health condition and/or disability in 2024 – a slight decrease from 14% in 2023.
- **Sexual orientation** remained almost identical between 2023 and 2024, with 90% identifying as heterosexual and 3% identifying as bisexual. There was a small increase in those identifying as gay, up to 3% from 1.5% and small decreases in

those identifying as lesbian 6% in 2023 to 3% in 2024, and those who preferred not to say – 6% to 1%.

3rd tier / Heads of Service or equivalent

In 2024, there were 268 responses from 3rd tier officers, down from 290 responses in 2023.

- **Ethnicity:** In 2024, 85% identified as White, 8% as Black, 4% as Asian and 2% as Mixed/Multiple ethnicity. Compared to 2023, there has been no change in the number identifying as White. There was a 3% increase in those identifying as Black and a 1% increase in those identifying as Asian. There was a 3% decrease in Mixed/ Multiple ethnicity.
- **Gender:** 74% identified as female, the same as in 2023. 26% identified as male, which is a slight increase of 1% from 2023.
- **Age:** In 2024, 48% stated they were aged between 50-59 and 36% stated they were aged between 40-49. These figures are almost identical to 2023. 9% were 60-65 which was a slight reduction of 2% from 2023.
- **Religion or Belief:** In 2024, 43% identified as Christian and 50% as having no religious beliefs. These figures are almost identical to 2023, as was those identifying as Sikh (1%). There was an increase in those who identified as Muslim (from 1% to 2%) and a lower number of people identifying as Hindu (from 2% to 1%). Single respondents identified as being Humanist and Rastafarian in 2023, neither were identified in 2024.
- **Sexual Orientation:** In 2024, 85% identified as being heterosexual, a slight decrease from 88% in 2023. Those who identified as bisexual and lesbian remained the same (2% and 3% of respondents respectively). There was a slight increase in those identifying as gay, up to 4% from 6%. One respondent identified as being Queer.
- **Health and/or disability:** In 2024, 16% stated they had a health issue and/or disability, a slight increase from 14% in 2023.