
To: Housing and Community Safety

On: 08 November 2016

Report by: Director of Development and Housing Services

Heading: Housing Equalities Annual Monitoring Report 2015/16

1. Summary

- 1.1 The Council is committed to promoting equal opportunities. This report provides housing equalities monitoring information for the financial year 2015/16 and outlines recent activity within Housing Services to ensure equality in service delivery.
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2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Policy Board:

- 2.1 Notes the content of the Housing Equalities Monitoring Report for 2015/16 (attached as Appendix 1) and the action taken by Housing Services to ensure equality in service delivery as outlined in section 4 of this report
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3. Background

- 3.1 Celebrating and being responsive to the diversity and needs of our customers and employees is a fundamental value of the Council. The Equality Act 2010 enshrines in law a specific duty for the public sector to 'have due regard to the need to':
- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
 - advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and
 - foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 3.2 The Act streamlines and strengthens previous equality legislation and ensures everyone has the right to be treated fairly and protected from discrimination. In particular, the Act describes 9 'protected characteristics' – age, disability, gender

reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership.

- 3.3 In addition to the general duties set out in the Act, the Scottish Government published specific duties in May 2011. As well as contributing to these, Housing Services have additional responsibilities through the Scottish Social Housing Charter, which requires all social landlords to demonstrate that service users are ‘treated fairly and with respect, and receive fair access to housing and housing services’. Equalities information on service users was collected and submitted as part of Renfrewshire Council’s submission to the Scottish Housing Regulator for 2015/16.
- 3.4 The Scottish Housing Regulator published a thematic inquiry “Use of Equality and Diversity Information by Scottish Social Landlords” in June 2016. A number of Housing Services’ established practices are identified as good practice such as developing tools and processes to overcome language barriers in service delivery and supporting staff training and awareness. Moving forward, the service will continue to examine the findings and recommendations and consider how equalities information can be further used to drive service improvements.
- 3.5 Housing Services work to ensure that all customers are able to access our services and that our activities do not have a negative impact on any particular customer (or potential customer) groups. The collection and analysis of equalities monitoring information is an important tool to identify opportunities to promote equalities and to inform future service planning. The Equalities Monitoring Report, attached as Appendix 1, provides the detailed equalities information for 2015/16 to inform this.

4. Equalities Activity during 2015/2016

- 4.1 In the last year, in order to promote equalities and ensure an accessible service for our customers, Housing Services has taken action across the following four broad areas.
- 4.2 Information, translation and accessibility:
- Continued use of translation and telephone interpretation services by Housing Services through ‘Language Line’ (18 telephone interpretations in 2015/16 for 3 different languages) and provided support for wider use within the Council to assist customers accessing through other services (e.g. Customer Contact Centre).
 - Set up a dedicated translation service to assist the Refugee Resettlement team.
 - Information continues to be offered in a variety of languages and formats, including large print, audio and Braille. We have also produced the council tenants’ newsletter in audio format when asked. Portable hearing loops, access to the translation helpline and instructions on how to book a British Sign Language Interpreter are available for all staff.

- Council tenants (including sheltered housing residents) were consulted during the production of the service's Tenant Report on Scottish Social Housing Charter performance on the report's content and layout. The final version of the report reflected their comments on font size and colour schemes to help those with partial sight loss. We also produced this report in an audio format.
- Ongoing use of the updated equalities monitoring forms with response rates showing improvements year on year.
- Ongoing use of language cards which enable officers to communicate with customers using 11 different languages.

4.3 Staff awareness and development

- Continued promotion of staff training opportunities covering a range of equalities issues.
- A guide on Equalities and Human Rights Assessments is available for Development and Housing Services staff to complement the corporate guidance.
- Development and Housing Services actively contribute to the Council's Equality Week activities, promoting service specific equalities advice and information to our staff and customers.

4.4 Aids, adaptations and older people

- Advice and assistance is provided to Council tenants with disabilities and older people who may require adaptations to enable them to remain safely in their own home and maintain their independence.
- Help with the funding and promotion of the Care and Repair service (provided by Bridgewater Housing Association in partnership with the Council) which provides advice and assistance to older and disabled owners and private sector tenants.
- The Health and Well Being Coordinator initially funded by the Change Fund has been established as a permanent post funded by HRA due to the high participation rates and positive impact on older tenants' lives. Working with a range of partners, the Health and Wellbeing Co-ordinator has developed a broad programme of new activities and health initiatives for older tenants. On average, over 1715¹ people participated in monthly activities (an increase from last year's figure of 1410) with more than 99% participants over the age of 60.

Families

- Continued provision of emergency accommodation and support to women and children who have experienced domestic violence.

¹ number may count service users more than once where they participated in multiple events

- Foundations First, an initiative delivered by Shelter Scotland and funded by the STV Appeal and the Hunter Foundation, was introduced in Renfrewshire to support vulnerable families with the aim of preventing homelessness from occurring or reoccurring. This proactive approach in tackling child poverty in Renfrewshire links closely with Renfrewshire's Tackling Poverty Strategy.
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Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** - None
 2. **HR & Organisational Development** – None
 3. **Community Planning** – This report outlines the steps Housing Services (part of Development and Housing Series) are taking to ensure equality of access to its services.
Empowering our Communities – Development and Housing Services empowers communities by treating everyone with respect and ensuring that customers are aware of the services regardless of their characteristics.
 4. **Legal** - The equality monitoring statistics included in this report help inform discussions on how well Housing Services is discharging its responsibilities in relation to the Equality Act 2010.
 5. **Property/Assets** - None
 6. **Information Technology** - None
 7. **Equality & Human Rights** -
Since this report makes reference to actions that took place last year and reports on data only performance, there is no need to have an Equality Impact Assessment.
 8. **Health & Safety** – None
 9. **Procurement** – None
 10. **Risk** - None
 11. **Privacy Impact** - None
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List of Background Papers

- (a) Background Paper 1 Report to the Housing and Community Safety Policy Board 08 November 2016 'Housing Equalities Monitoring Report 2015/16.'

The foregoing background papers will be retained within Development and Housing Services for inspection by the public for the prescribed period of four years from the date of the meeting.

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APPENDIX 1

Housing Equalities Monitoring Report 2015/16

Introduction

2015/16 was the fourth year that the Equalities monitoring form was used to collect equalities information across Housing Services' main customer groups: tenants; new tenants; housing applicants; homelessness applicants; and private sector grants customers. This provides us with valuable information on the customer base to inform future planning and improve service delivery.

Response rates have been steadily increasing year-on-year but there is still limited information on pregnancy, sexual orientation and gender reassignment due to low disclosure rates.

Summary of Key Points

- **Age:** Almost one third of the tenants and applicants are over 65 years old (27.5% for the tenants and 28.9% for the people in the waiting list). The figures are higher for the private sector grants with over 36% from the 65+ age group.

The profile is different for new tenants with half under the age of 35 years. Homeless applicants are predominantly younger people - people under 35 years old account for over 60% of homeless applicants in 2015/16 with almost half (27.1%) being under 24 yrs old. (Table 1 and Chart 1)

- **Gender:** The majority of existing tenants (56.6%), applicants (60.5%) and private sector applicants (54.5%) are women. In sharp contrast, 60% of homeless applicants are men. (Table 2 and Chart 2)
- **Religion:** Information on religion or belief is only available for a small percentage of customers due a low response rate in this area and should therefore be treated with caution. Of those who did provide information, the majority described themselves as having no religion. Where respondents identified as having religious belief, Roman Catholic and Church of Scotland were the predominant choices. More than half (52.4%) of Private Sector customers who provided information identified Church of Scotland as their religious belief (Table 3 and Chart 3).
- **Race:** The majority of customers in all groups are 'White' with most identifying as 'White Scottish'. The most diverse customer base appears to be homeless customers with 2.1% identifying as another ethnicity followed by new tenants where the corresponding figure was 1.75%. Chart 4 shows the graphical representation of the responses without taking into consideration the percentage of non responses. (Note: Private Sector customer data seems to show a comparatively high ethnic diversity (4.55%) but the figure corresponds to one customer and the increased percentage is due to the relative low number of service user respondents, i.e. Private sector responses: 22, New Tenants 1554 and Tenants 13635).
- **Disability:** Physical disability was the most frequently reported disability across all customer groups (7.2% of existing tenants, 8.2% of housing applicants, 11.6% of

new tenants, 11.5% of homeless applicants) with hearing impairment the second more frequent response. Within the private sector, visual and hearing impairments were the 2 most common disabilities with 9% each. Learning disabilities were most often reported by homeless applicants (1.8%) and new tenants (2.3%). (Table 5 and Chart 5)

- **Marriage and Civil Partnership:** The most popular status across all customer groups is “single” (over 70% of existing tenants and around 90% of homeless service users). Although this is higher than last year’s figure, this reflects the trend for smaller households across Scotland and is not unique to Renfrewshire. The option “married/civil partnership” is the second most frequently reported status (Table 6 and chart 6).
- **Pregnancy and Maternity; Sexual Orientation; and Gender Reassignment:** The last three questions of the Equalities monitoring form are the ones with the highest level of non-responses. Although the response overall in equality related questions has been improved, we still encounter difficulty in trying to collect this sensitive information. Given the low response rate, it is not possible to draw reliable conclusions for the customer groups on these issues (Tables 7- 9).

Note: *The figures shown in the tables and charts below represent the service users in each customer group so they may appear different than the year-end figures reported elsewhere. For example, the “tenant” figures include all tenants shown on the tenancy document (including joint tenants) and as a result will be higher than the number of actual tenancies.*

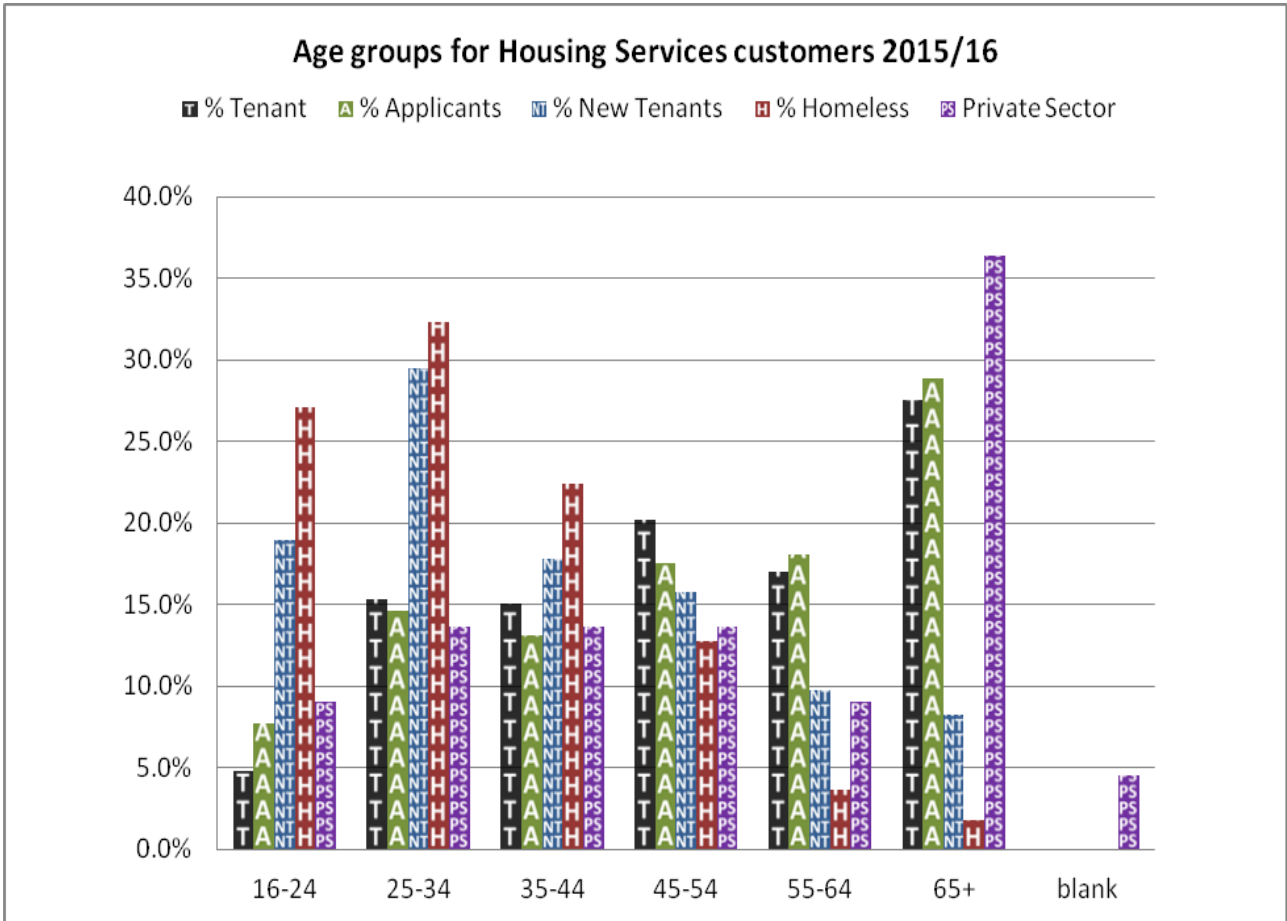


Chart 1: Age groups for Housing customer groups 2015/16

Age Group	Tenants	Applicants	New Tenants	Homeless	Private Sector
16-24	4.8%	7.7%	19.0%	27.1%	9.09%
25-34	15.4%	14.7%	29.5%	32.3%	13.64%
35-44	15.1%	13.1%	17.8%	22.4%	13.64%
45-54	20.2%	17.5%	15.8%	12.8%	13.64%
55-64	17.0%	18.1%	9.7%	3.6%	9.09%
65+	27.5%	28.9%	8.2%	1.8%	36.36%
Prefer not to answer					4.55%
Total	100% (13635)	100% (6894)	100% (1554)	100% (941)	100% (22)
Average Age (years)	52.4	52.9	39.23	33.1	55.1

Table 1: Age groups for Housing customer groups 2015/16

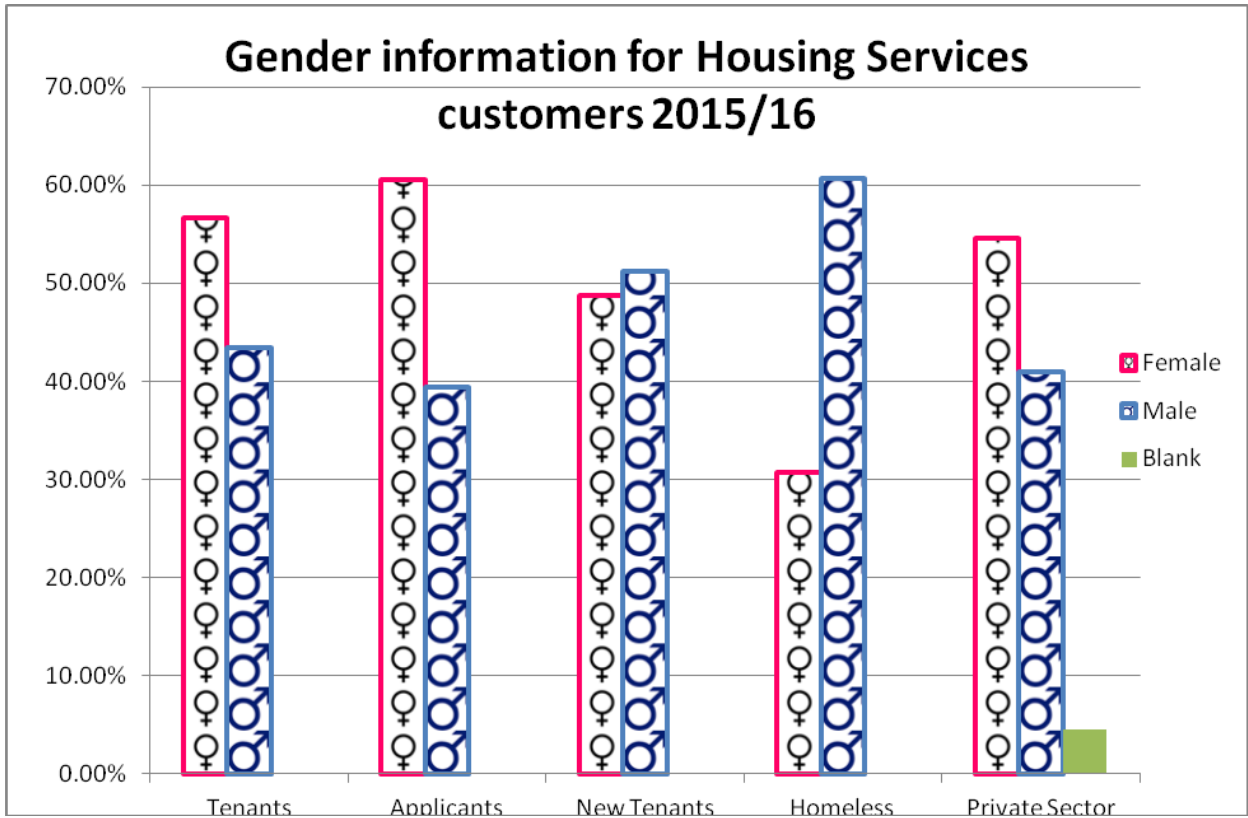


Chart 2: Gender information for Housing customer groups 2015/16

Gender	Tenants	Applicants	New Tenants	Homeless	Private Sector
Female	56.60%	60.55%	48.8%	30.7%	54.55%
Male	43.41%	39.35%	51.2%	60.7%	40.91%
Prefer not to answer	0.00%	0.00%	0.0%	0.0%	4.55%

Table 2: Gender information for Housing customer groups 2015/16

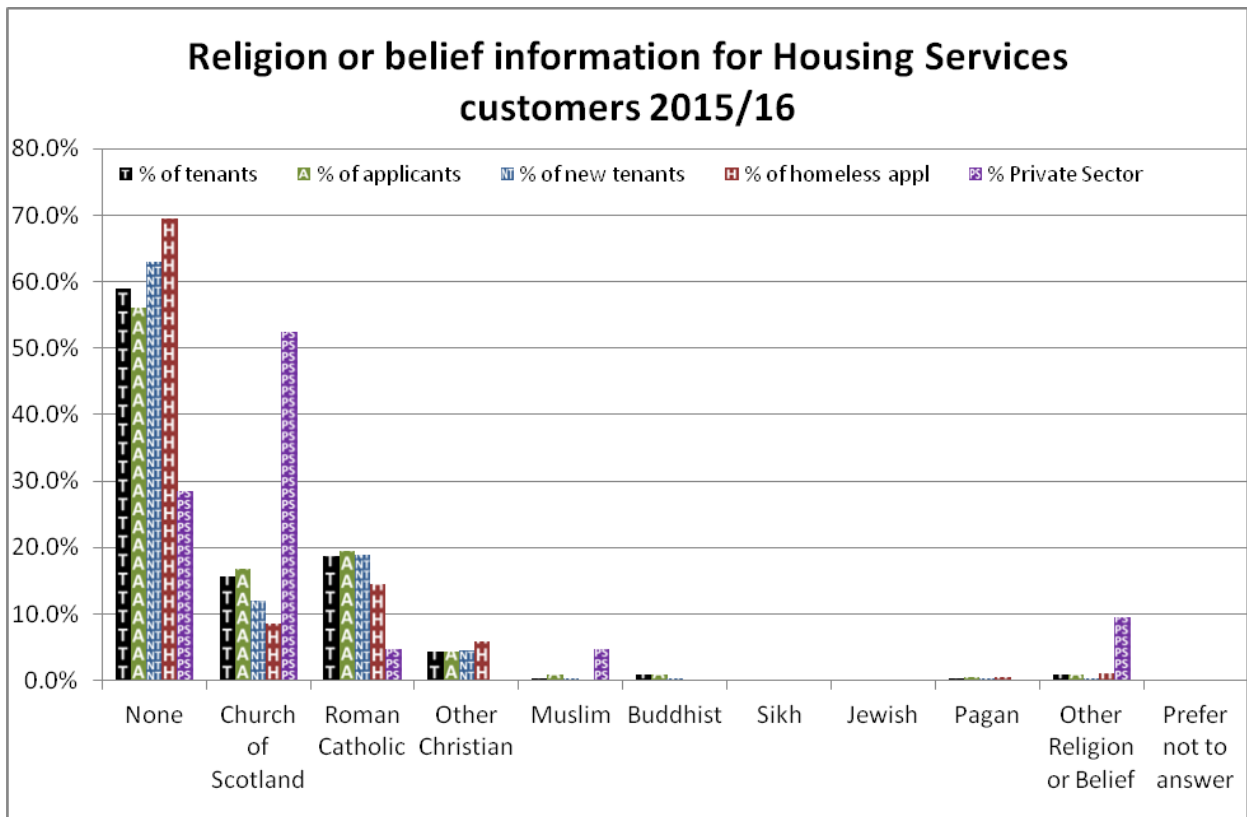


Chart 3: Religion or belief information for Housing customer groups 2015/16

Religion or belief	Tenants	Applicants	New Tenants	Homeless	Private Sector
None	59.0%	56.2%	63.0%	69.5%	28.6%
Church of Scotland	15.7%	16.8%	12.0%	8.6%	52.4%
Roman Catholic	18.7%	19.5%	19.0%	14.4%	4.8%
Other Christian	4.3%	4.2%	4.6%	5.9%	
Muslim	0.3%	0.9%	0.3%	0.0%	4.8%
Buddhist	0.8%	0.9%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Sikh	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Jewish	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Pagan	0.3%	0.4%	0.3%	0.5%	0.0%
Other Religion or Belief	0.9%	0.8%	0.3%	1.1%	9.5%
Total	100% (13635)	100% (6894)	100% (1554)	100% (941)	100% (22)

Table 3: Religion or belief information for Housing customer groups 2015/16

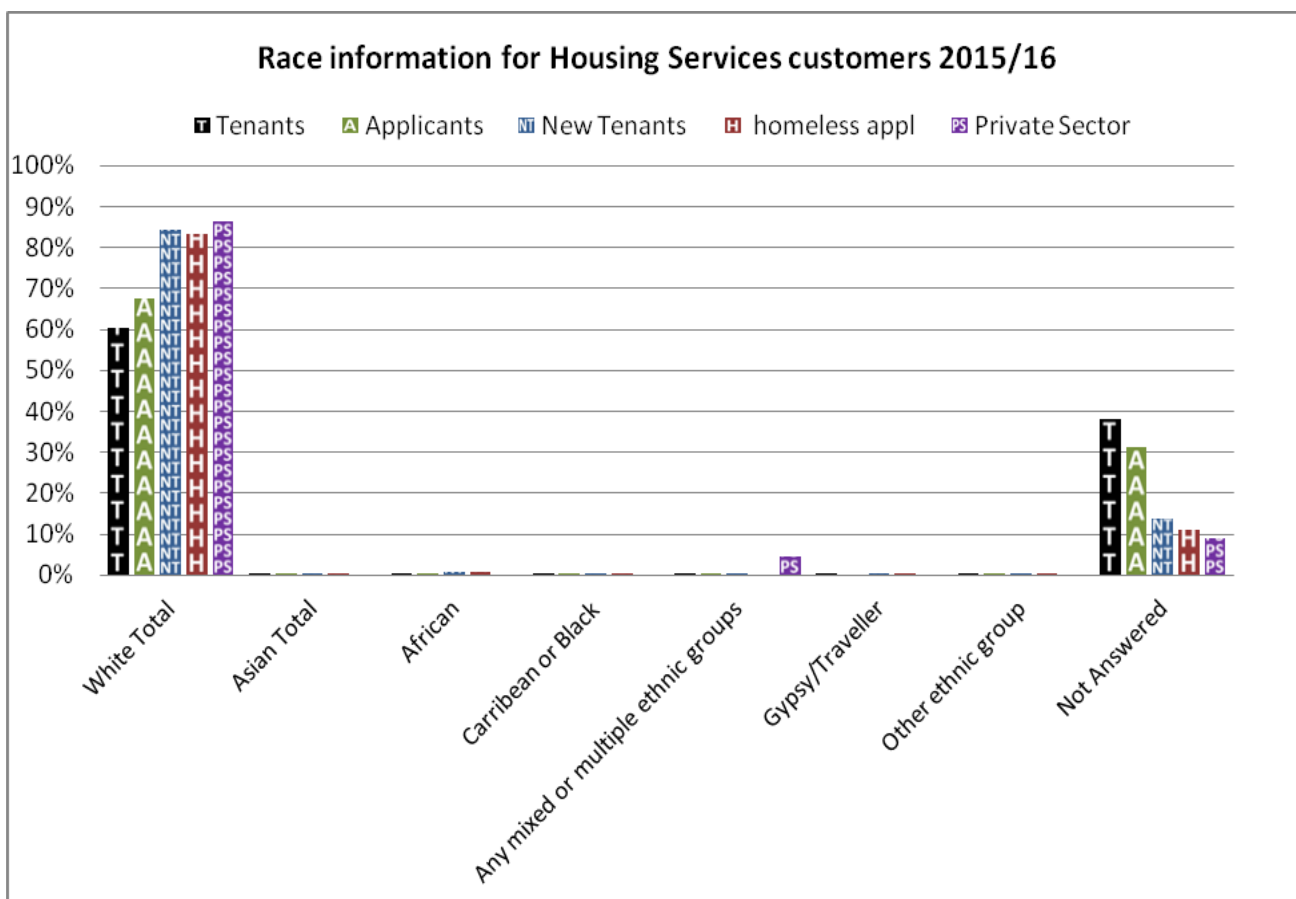


Chart 4: Race information for Housing customer groups 2015/16

Race	Tenants	Applicants	New Tenants	Homeless	Private Sector
White Total	60.45%	67.65%	84.43%	83.21%	86.36%
Asian Total	0.20%	0.45%	0.26%	0.43%	0.0%
African	0.39%	0.35%	0.71%	0.85%	0.0%
Caribbean or Black	0.1%	0.1%	0.3%	0.4%	0.0%
Any mixed or multiple ethnic groups	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	4.55%
Gypsy/Traveller	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.2%	0.0%
Other ethnic group	0.3%	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	0.0%
Not Answered	38.01%	31.27%	13.84%	10.95%	9.09%
Total	100% (13635)	100% (6894)	100% (1554)	100% (941)	100% (22)

Table 4: Race information for Housing customer groups 2015/16

Impairments and difficulties of Housing Services customers 2015/16

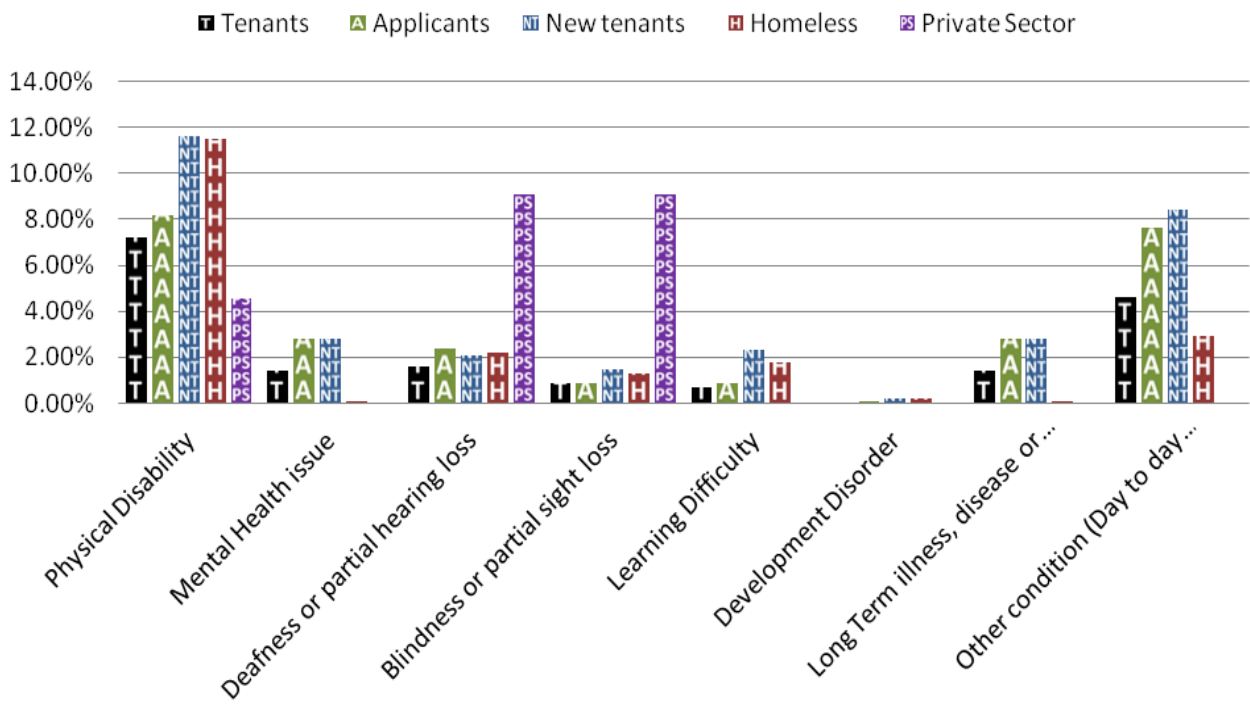


Chart 5: Impairments and difficulties for Housing customer groups 2015/16

Disability	Tenants	Applicants	New Tenants	Homeless	Private Sector
Physical Disability	7.2%	8.2%	11.6%	11.5%	4.55%
Mental Health issue	1.4%	2.8%	2.8%	0.1%	
Deafness or partial hearing loss	1.6%	2.4%	2.1%	2.2%	9.09%
Blindness or partial sight loss	0.9%	0.9%	1.5%	1.3%	9.09%
Learning Difficulty	0.7%	0.9%	2.3%	1.8%	
Development Disorder		0.1%	0.2%	0.2%	
Long Term illness, disease or condition	1.4%	2.8%	2.8%	0.1%	
Other condition (Day to day difficulties)	4.6%	7.6%	8.4%	2.9%	
Prefer not to answer					4.55%
Total who reported a disability	17.80%	25.70%	31.70%	20.10%	22.73%

Table 5: Impairments and difficulties for Housing customer groups 2015/16

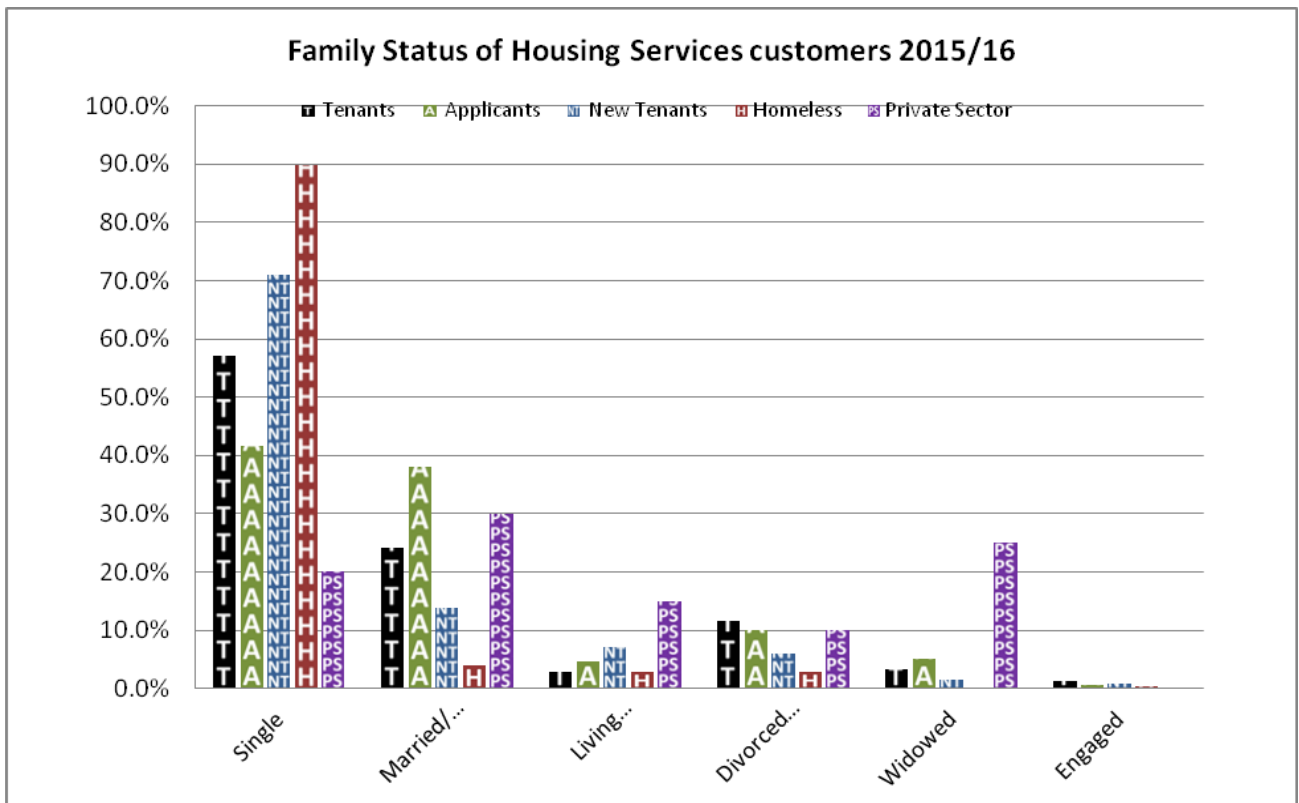


Chart 6: Family status for Housing customer groups 2015/16

Marriage & Civil Partnership	Tenants	Applicants	New Tenants	Homeless	Private Sector
Single	57.1%	41.7%	71.1%	89.8%	20.00%
Married/Civil Partnership	24.0%	38.1%	13.7%	4.1%	30.00%
Living with Partner	2.9%	4.6%	7.2%	2.9%	15.00%
Divorced/Separated	11.5%	10.0%	5.9%	2.9%	10.00%
Widowed	3.3%	5.0%	1.4%	0.0%	25.00%
Engaged	1.2%	0.7%	0.7%	0.3%	
Not Given	8.71%	11.18%	17.63%	23.27%	8.71%
No response	16.41%	1.83%	3.67%	3.51%	16.41%
Total	100% (13635)	100% (6894)	100% (1554)	100% (941)	100% (22)

Table 6: Family status for Housing customer groups 2015/16

Pregnancy and Maternity	Tenants	Applicants	New Tenants	Homeless	Private Sector
Pregnant	0.98%	1.44%	2.12%	0.96%	4.55%
On maternity leave	0.42%	0.59%	0.58%	0.21%	0
Neither	8.93%	14.78%	20.66%	7.23%	27.27%
Prefer not to answer	0.39%	0.51%	0.77%	0.85%	13.64%
Not applicable	6.26%	12.08%	14.99%	7.97%	50%
No response	83.02%	70.60%	60.88%	82.78%	4.55%
Total	100% (13635)	100% (6894)	100% (1554)	100% (941)	100% (22)

Table 7: Pregnancy and maternity of Housing customer groups 2015/16

Sexual Orientation	Tenants	Applicants	New Tenants	Homeless	Private Sector
Bisexual	0.12%	0.25%	0.39%	0.43%	0
Gay	0.21%	0.33%	0.71%	0.11%	0
Heterosexual/straight	15.01%	26.23%	34.81%	15.41%	77.27%
Lesbian	0.07%	0.10%	0.00%	0.00%	0
Other	0.12%	0.09%	0.26%	0.00%	0
Prefer not to answer	1.80%	2.86%	3.73%	1.38%	18.18%
No response	82.68%	70.15%	60.10%	82.68%	4.55%
Total	100% (13635)	100% (6894)	100% (1554)	100% (941)	100% (22)

Table 8: Sexual orientation of Housing customer groups 2015/16

Gender Reassignment	Tenants	Applicants	New Tenants	Homeless	Private Sector
Yes	0.04%	0.07%	0.26%	0.00%	0%
No	15.91%	27.76%	37.19%	16.37%	86.36%
Prefer not to answer	1.34%	1.91%	2.45%	1.06%	4.55%
No response	82.71%	70.25%	60.10%	82.57%	9.09%
Total	100% (13635)	100% (6894)	100% (1554)	100% (941)	100% (22)

Table 9: Gender reassignment of Housing customer groups 2015/16