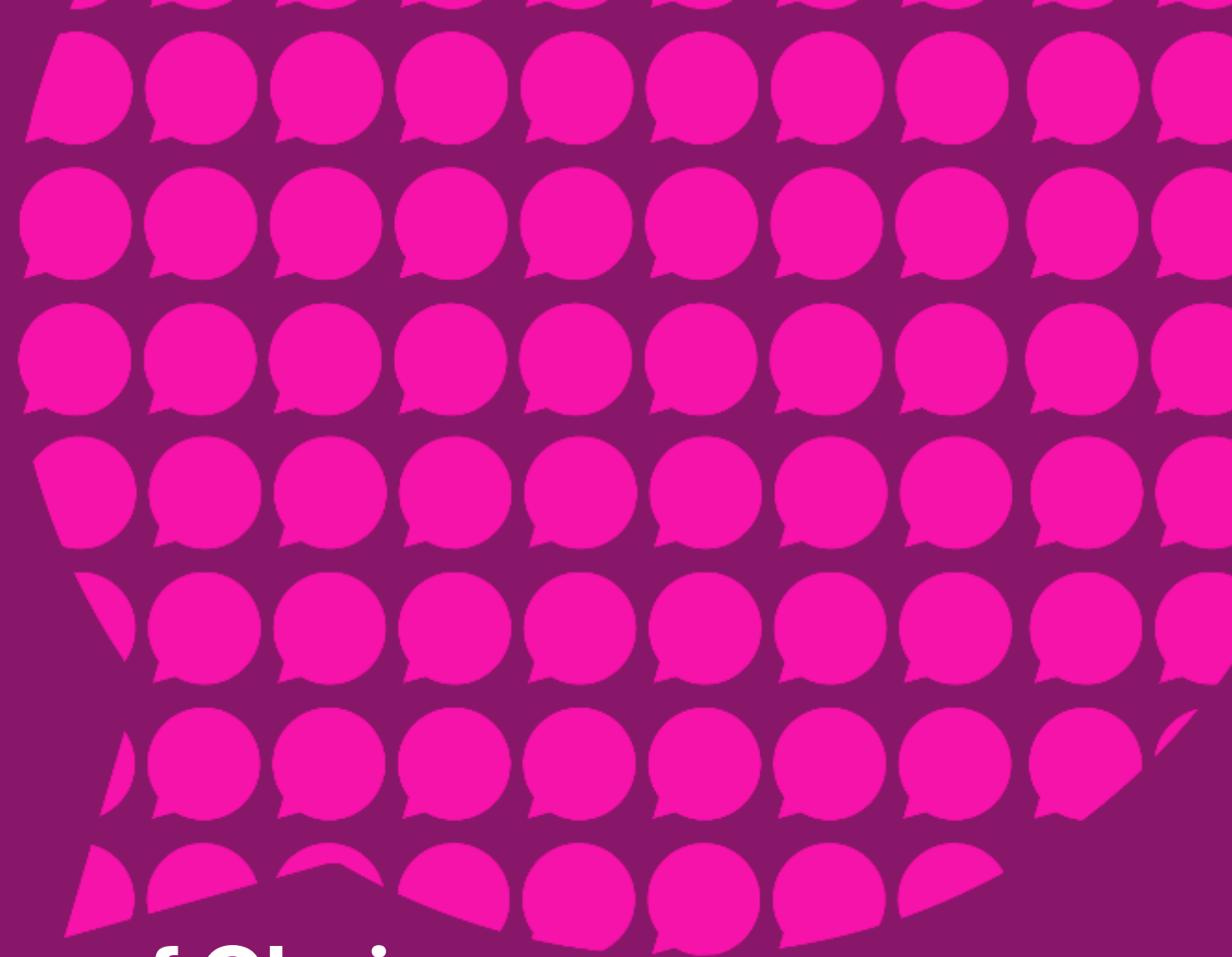




**Association
of Chairs**

Effective chair
Effective board
Effective non-profit



Results of the Association of Chairs governance strategy consultation

November 2025

Introduction

- These are the results of our consultation on governance and non-profit boards which was open for responses in February, March and April 2025.
- We had just over 600 responses, though not everybody answered every question.
- A full set of data tables is available for those who are interested.
- Respondents rated different areas of improvement for charity boards by priority.

Greens: The four statements with the highest scores – 8 or more: diversity, learning, principles and having a plan

Do you think it is useful to create an overall strategy for improving trustee boards and governance in the charity sector?



How important is diversity and inclusion in any charity governance strategy?



How high a priority is it to develop a learning culture for trustee boards?



How high a priority is it to have a set of principles that frame and guide the behaviour of individual board members?



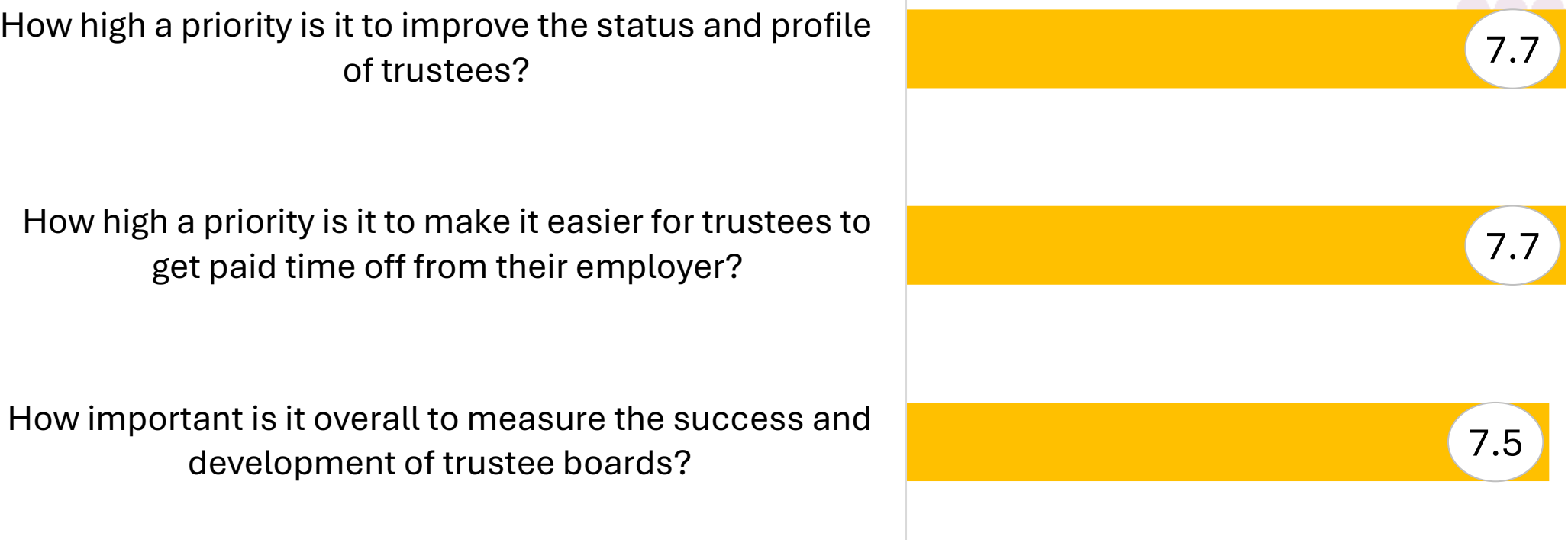
Average generated:
High (10 to 8)

Medium (7 to 5)

Low (4 to 1)

Oranges: The three statements with the medium scores – 7s:

status, time and measurement of success



Average generated:

High (10 to 8) Medium (7 to 5) Low (4 to 1)

Pinks: The second lowest-ranked statements – 6s: infrastructure, benchmarks and co-ordination

How high a priority is it to have an infrastructure body supporting trustees, chairs, treasurers, and non-profit boards in general?

6.8

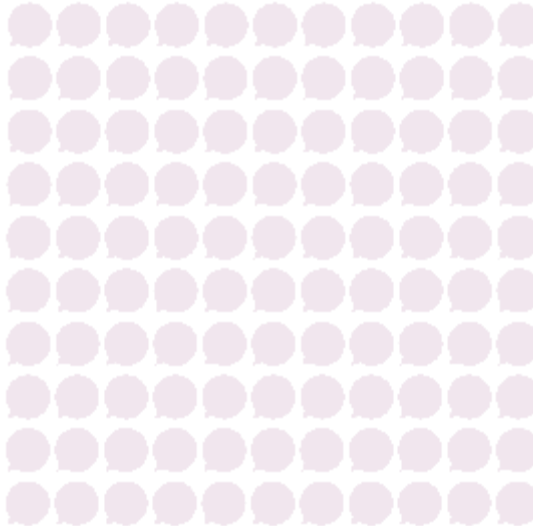
How high a priority is it to have an agreed benchmarking and/or accreditation process for assessing the performance of a charity board?

6.5

How high a priority is it to create a formal coordinating group for organisations that support and develop trustee and non-profit boards?

6.4

Reds: The bottom four – 5s or below: paying trustees, qualifications and chartered trustees



Are you in favour of making it easier to pay trustees?



5.6

How high a priority is it to develop qualifications for trustees?



5.3

How high a priority is it to try and make it easier for trustees to be paid?



5.2

How high a priority is it to formalise the development of qualifications to the level of having chartered chairs, treasurers, and trustees?



4.2



The story so far – part 1

- The results show a clear difference between the priorities for the different areas.
- The highest priorities (the greens) are having a strategy, diversity and inclusion, a learning culture, and board principles.
- The medium priorities (the oranges) are raising the status of trustees, making time to be a trustee, and measuring success.
- The lowest priorities (pinks and reds) are paying trustees, infrastructure, qualifications and chartered trustees.

The results in more detail

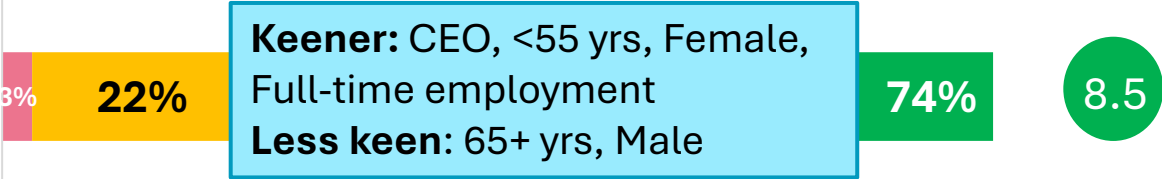
Green scores: the highest priorities and the number who gave them an 8, 9 or 10

Low (1 to 4) Medium (5 to 7) High (8 to 10)

Do you think it is useful to create an overall strategy for improving trustee boards and governance in the charity sector?



How important is diversity and inclusion in any charity governance strategy?



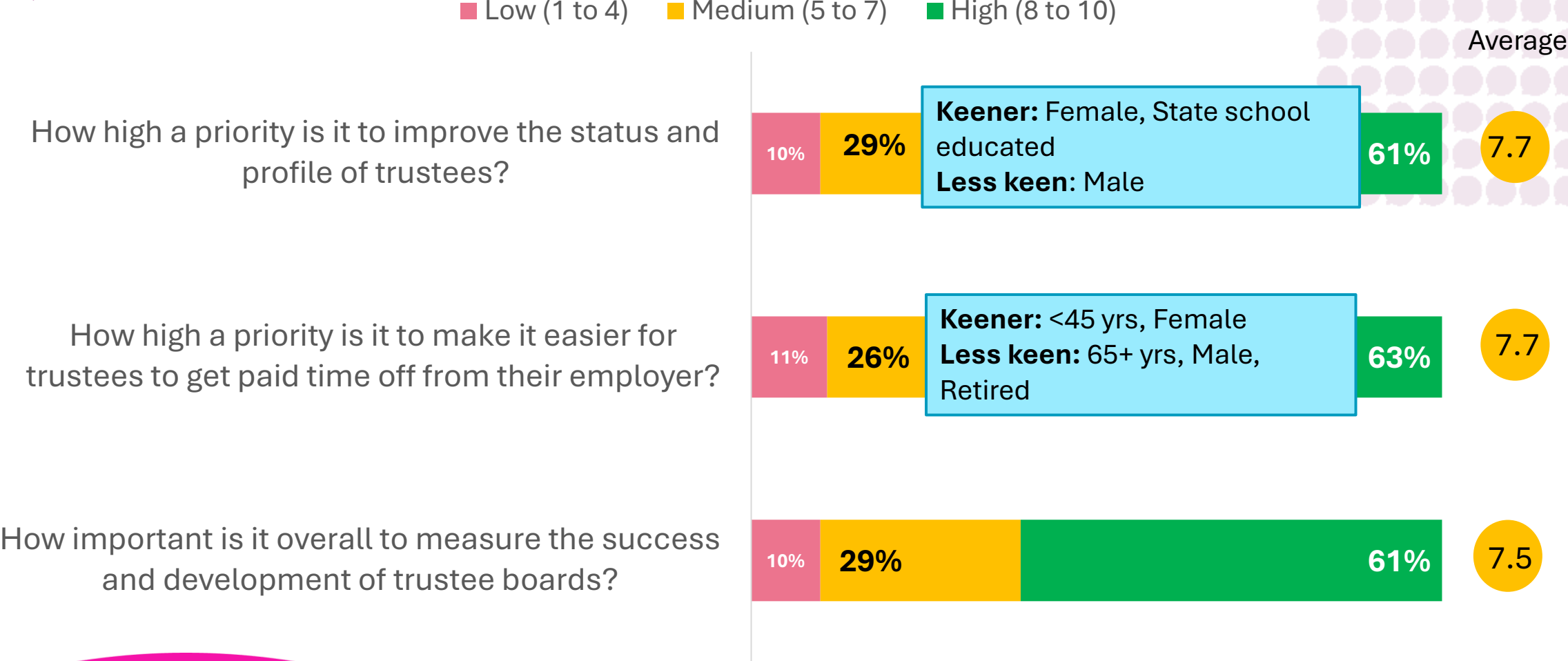
How high a priority is it to develop a learning culture for trustee boards?



How high a priority is it to have a set of principles that frame and guide the behaviour of individual board members?



Orange scores: the medium priorities and the number who gave them an 8, 9 or 10

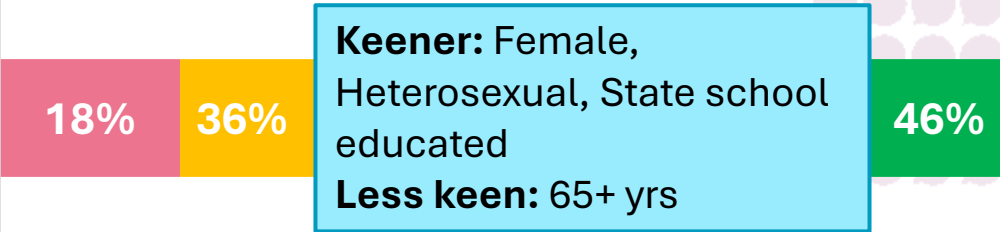


Pink scores: the lower priorities and who gave them an 8, 9 or 10

Low (1 to 4) Medium (5 to 7) High (8 to 10)

Average

How high a priority is it to have an infrastructure body supporting trustees, chairs, treasurers, and non-profit boards in general?



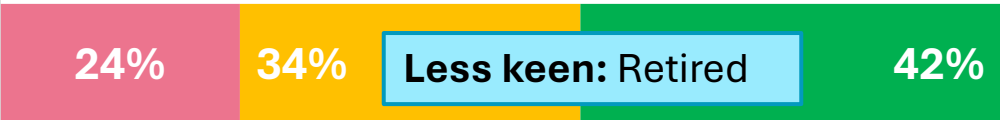
6.8

How high a priority is it to have an agreed benchmarking and/or accreditation process for assessing the performance of a charity board?



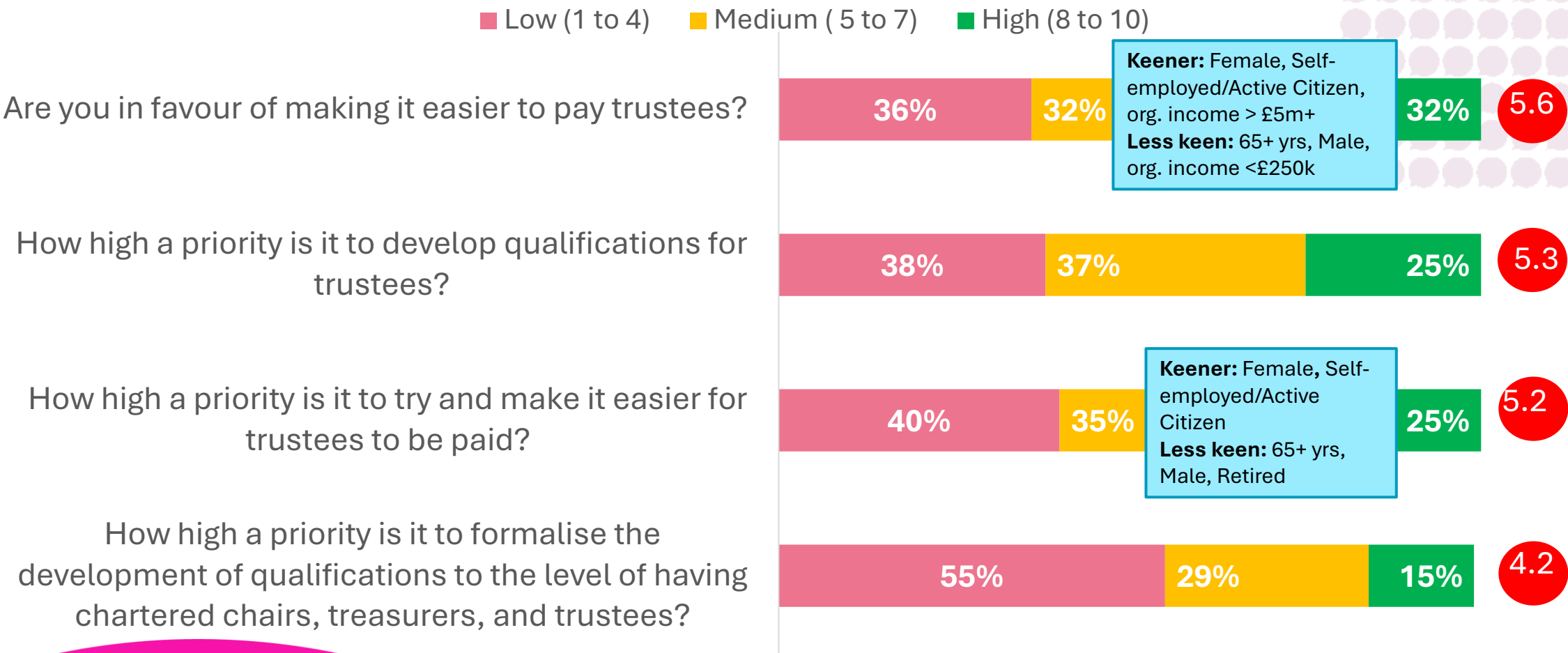
6.5

How high a priority is it to create a formal coordinating group for organisations that support and develop trustee and non-profit boards?



6.4

Red scores: the lowest priorities and the demographic differences



The story so far – part 2

- Some parts of a governance strategy seem to have universal support: having a strategy, developing a learning culture and creating a set of principles.
- And some demographics are keener than others: women and younger respondents tend to be keener, and older respondents and men tend to rate many areas lower in priority.
- Paying trustees comes low down the list of priorities and also is uniquely divisive. It has lower numbers in the middle band of scores (5 to 7) and greater differences on the demographics.

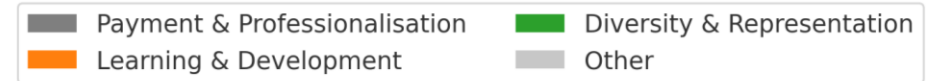
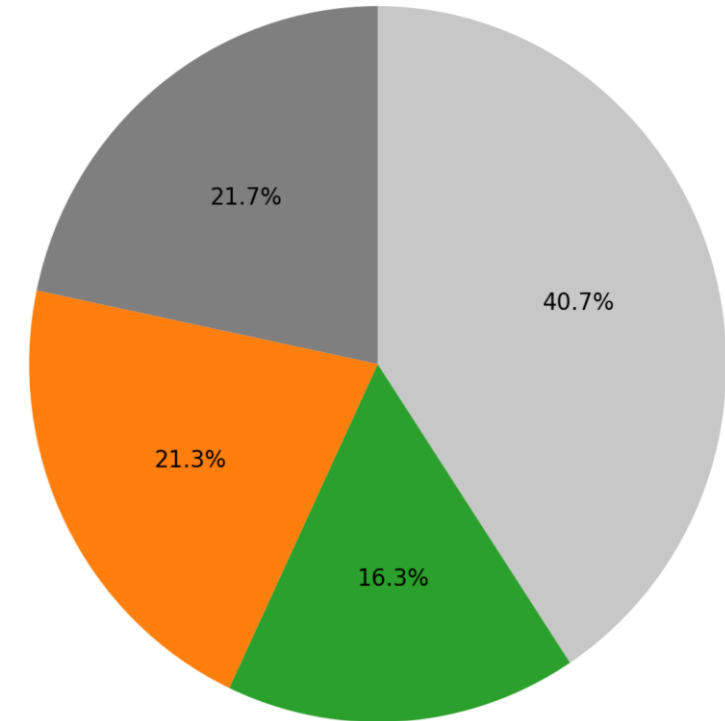
Analysis of the 3500 comments

(if you'd like to know the methodology, please ask for our separate presentation)

**And our thanks to Datasparkconsulting for doing this analysis
pro-bono**

Do you think it is useful to create an overall strategy for improving trustee boards and governance in the charity sector?

- **Develop shared national governance guidelines**, ideally co-produced with the Charity Commission.
- Create a single, **accessible online resource** consolidating all best practice and trustee guidance.
- Align any strategy closely with the **Charity Governance Code as a common framework**.
- Ensure strategies are **relevant and scalable for charities of all sizes**.
- **Clarify the key questions and objectives** an overall strategy is meant to answer.

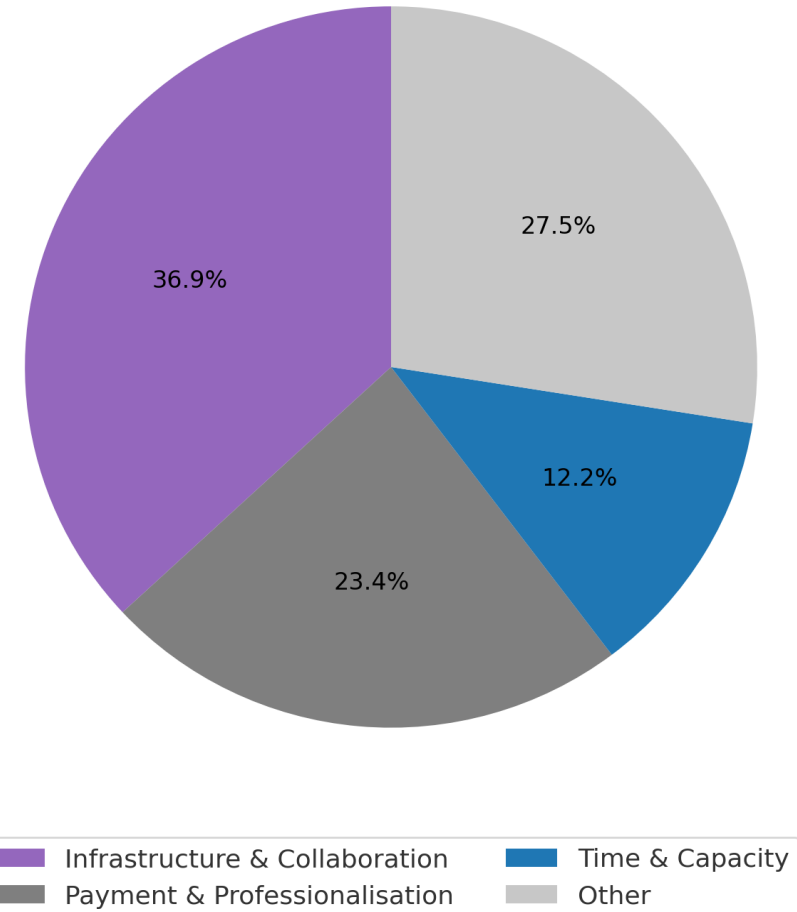


Avg relevance score: **14%**

Avg sentiment score: **51%**

How important is diversity and inclusion in any charity governance strategy?

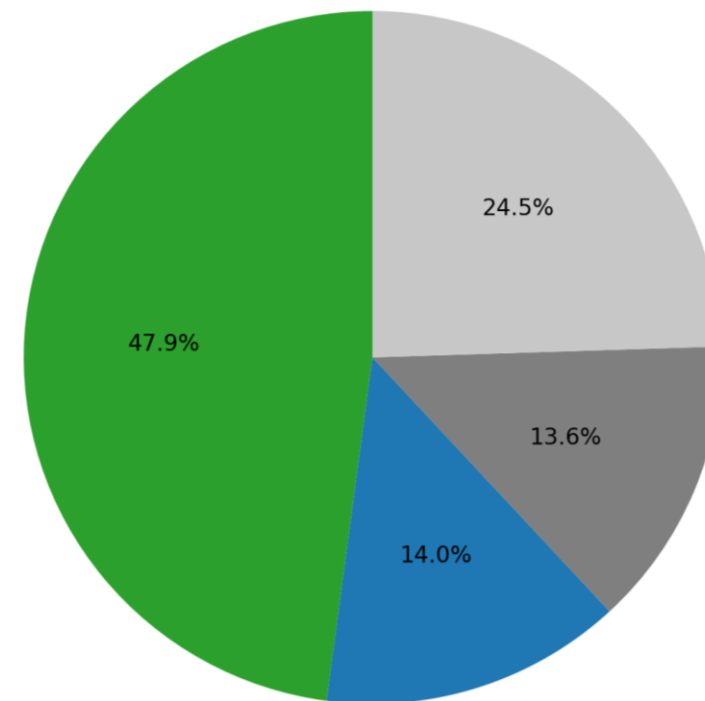
- Embed diversity and inclusion as **core elements of governance strategy**.
- **Ensure boards reflect the communities and causes** they serve.
- **Promote diversity** of thought, background, and lived experience **on boards**.
- **Include service users or beneficiaries** directly in governance.
- Partner with initiatives that **expand trustee recruitment** pipelines.



Avg relevance score: **14%**
Avg sentiment score: **49%**

How high a priority is it to develop a learning culture for trustee boards?

- **Set expectations for trustees** to undertake ongoing learning and development.
- **Promote a culture** where trustees see learning as part of their role, not an added burden.
- **Provide essential training on key governance topics** such as safeguarding and data protection.
- Ensure chairs and specialist roles **receive targeted training**, including EDI.
- **Foster trust and openness** so boards feel safe to admit knowledge gaps and learn.

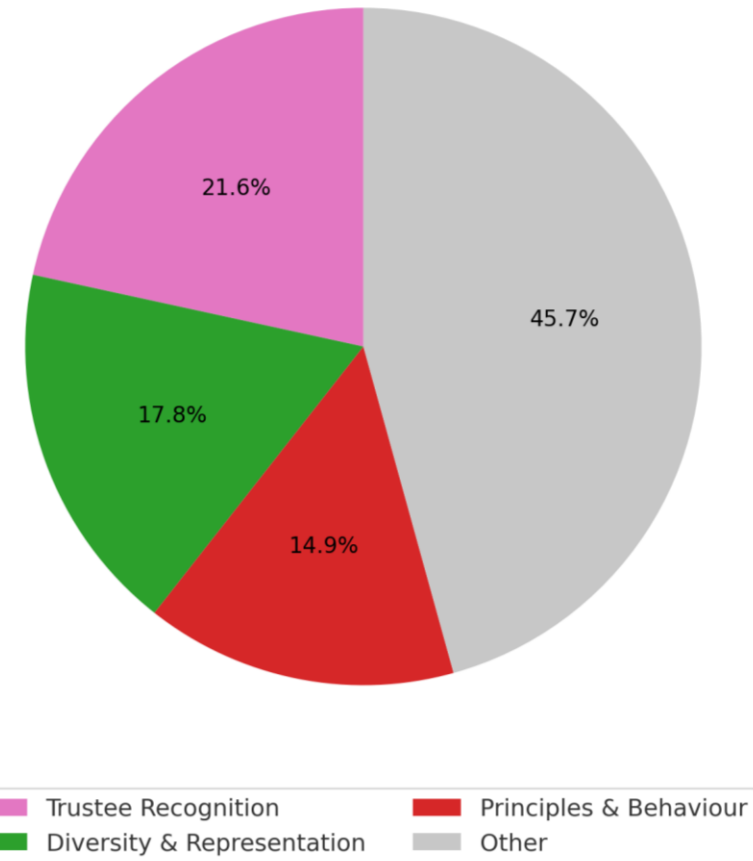


Avg relevance score: **16%**

Avg sentiment score: **47%**

How high a priority is it to have a set of principles guiding individual board members?

- Create clear, practical principles to complement the Charity Governance Code.
- Apply principles consistently across all trustees and roles.
- Base new guidance on existing frameworks such as the Nolan Principles.
- Link a trustee code of conduct to appraisals and recruitment.
- Encourage each charity to adapt shared principles into its own code.

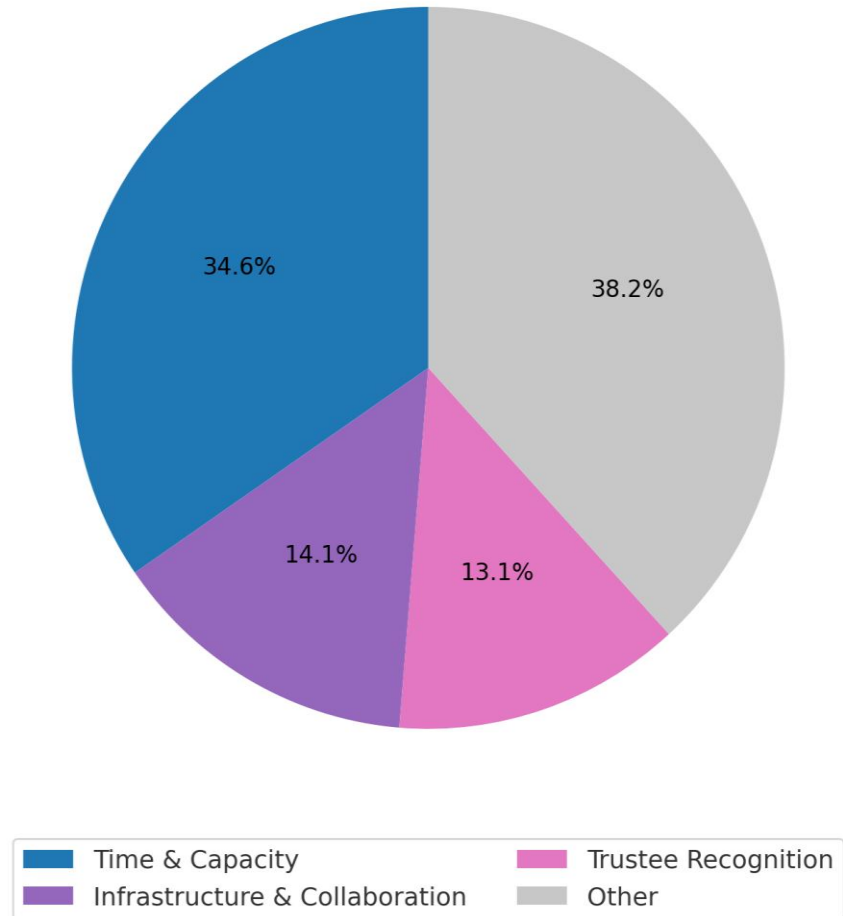


Avg relevance score: **16%**

Avg sentiment score: **43%**

How high a priority is it to make it easier for trustees to get paid time off from employers?

- Encourage employers to **offer paid or flexible time** off for trustee duties.
- **Normalise paid volunteer leave** as part of standard employment practice.
- Mandate **minimum paid time off** to broaden trustee diversity.
- Promote policies that **balance volunteer opportunities** with **employer capacity**.
- Integrate trustee volunteering into **workplace wellbeing and development plans**.



Avg relevance score: **14%**

Avg sentiment score: **50%**

What will the Association of Chairs do based on these results?

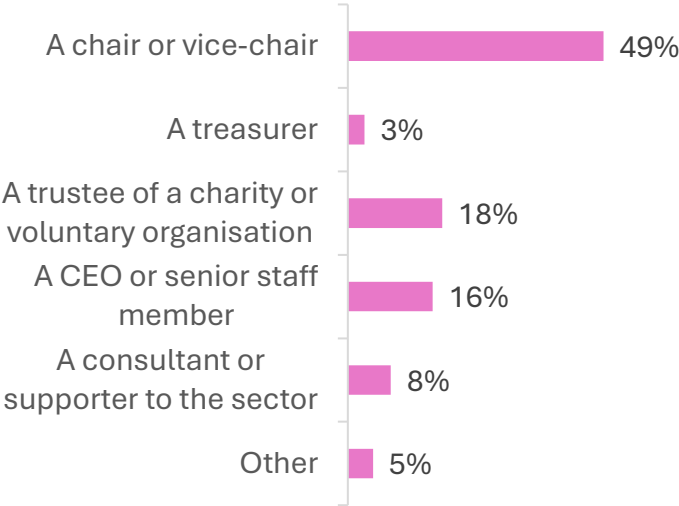
How AoC will take forward the highest priority areas (the greens):

- **Recommendation 1:** Diversity and inclusion - We will collaborate with others, such as Board Racial Diversity UK, to develop a plan to ensure that trustees are more representative of the UK population as a whole.
- **Recommendation 2:** Learning culture – We will work with others to build stronger support for personal and organisational development for trustees and boards.
- **Recommendation 3:** Board values and behaviours – We will connect with others, including The Charity Commission, to take forward work in this area.

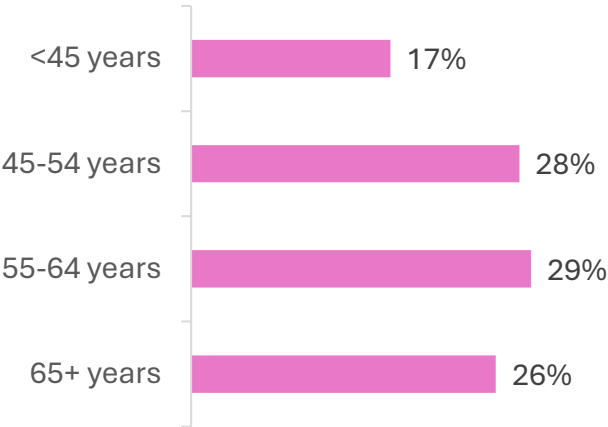
The demographics of who responded

Demographics

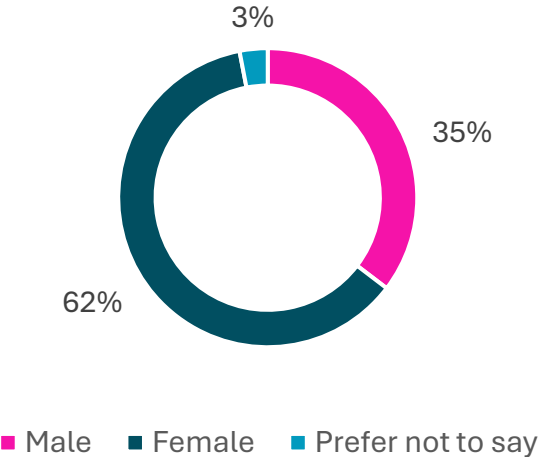
Level



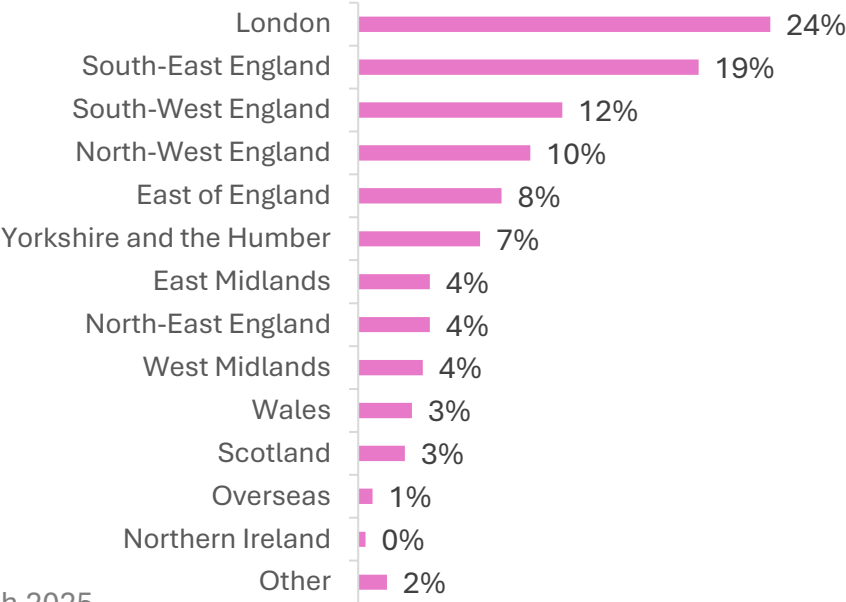
Age



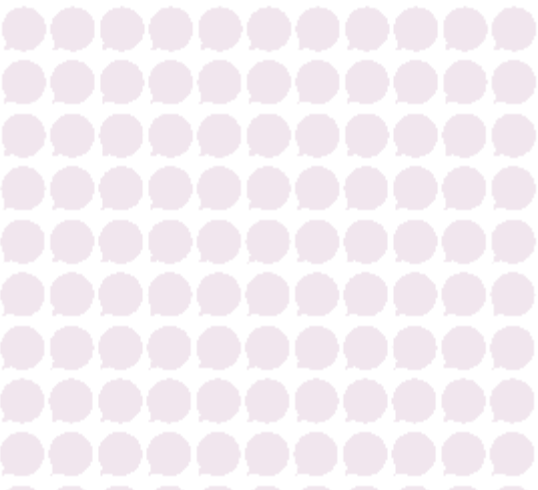
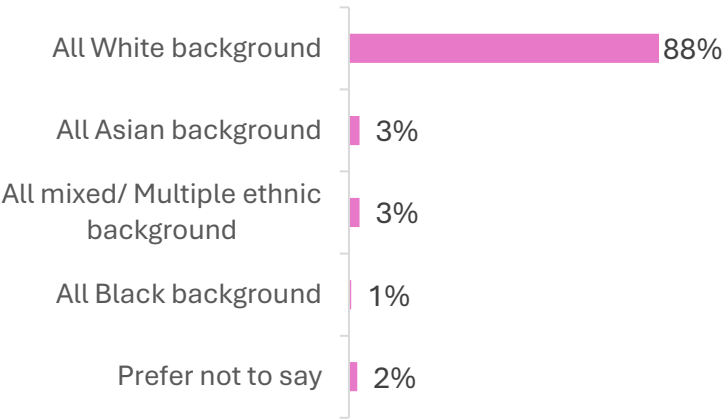
Gender



Region live

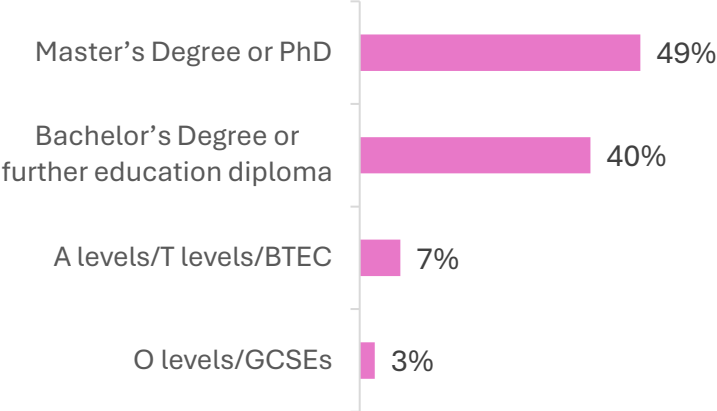


Ethnicity

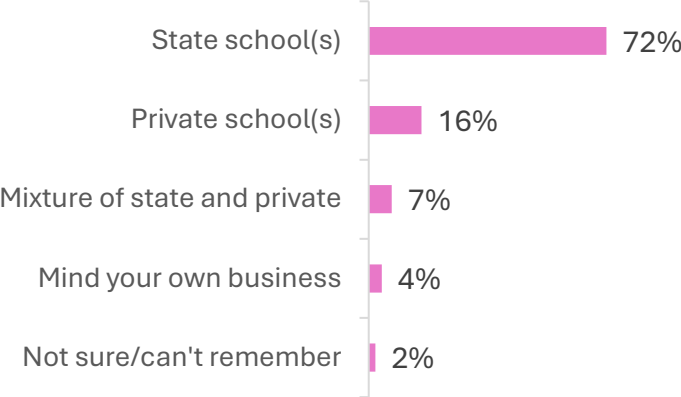


Demographics

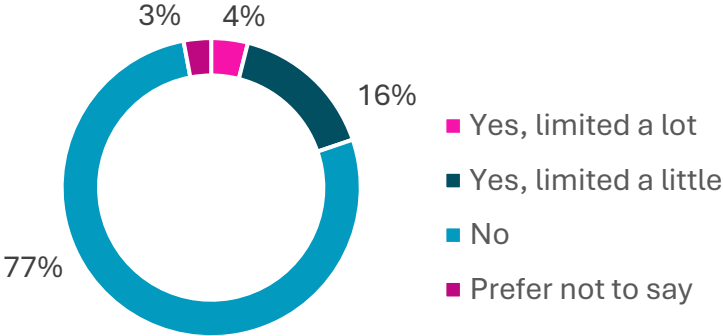
Highest level of education



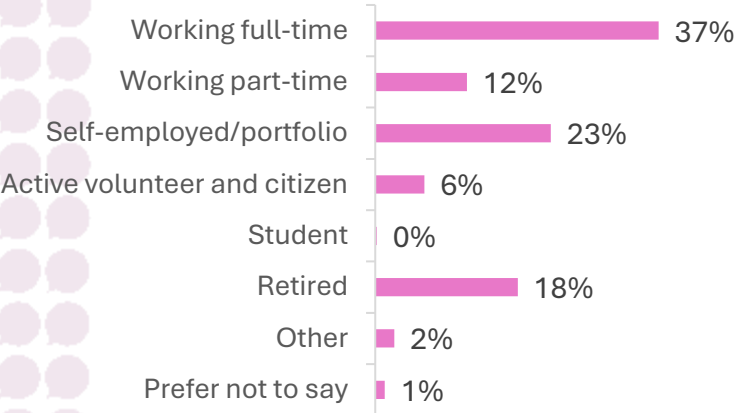
Secondary school education



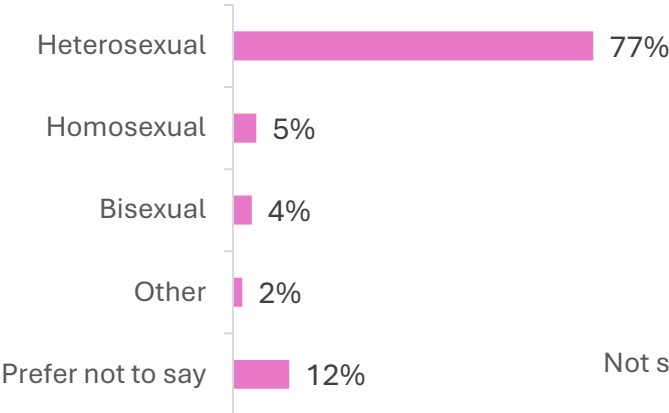
Day-to-day activities limited due to health/disability



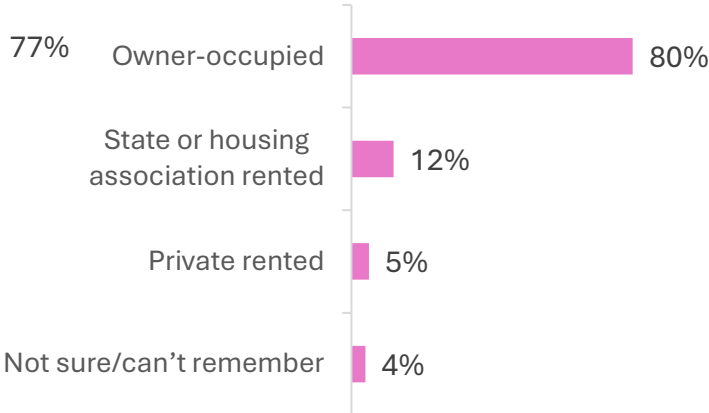
Working status



Sexual orientation

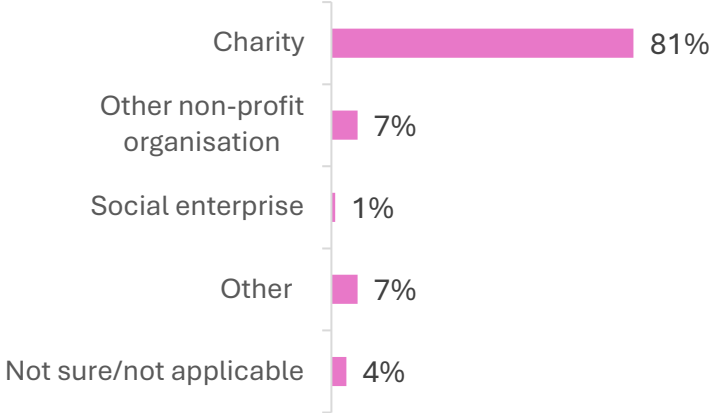


House grew up in

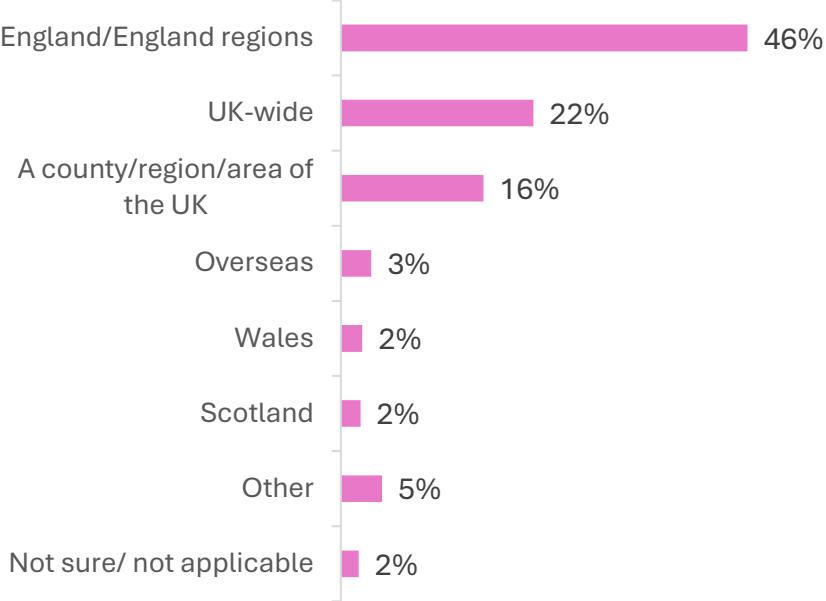


Demographics - Organisation

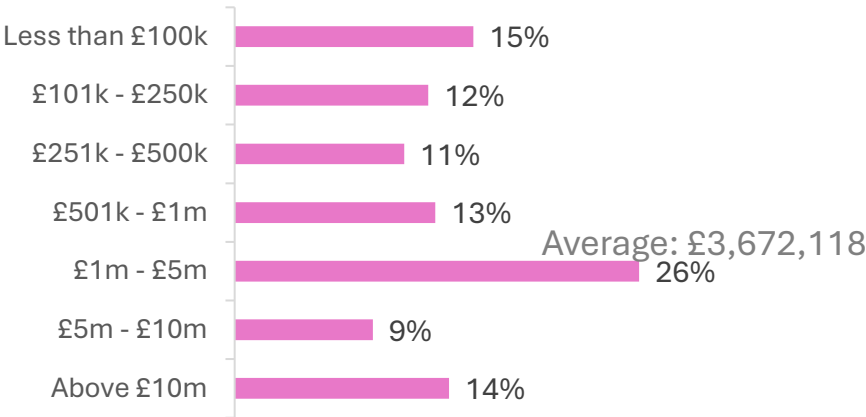
Organisation type



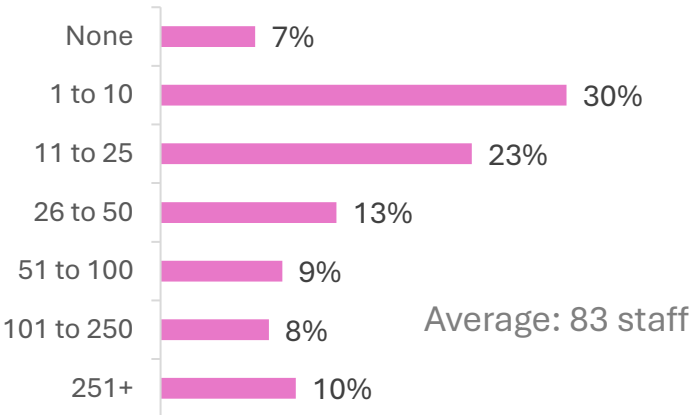
Primarily operate



Annual income



Number of staff



**If you have any questions please get in touch
with us on info@associationofchairs.co.uk**

www.associationofchairs.co.uk

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