



Equality Impact Assessment 2025–2026

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Equality Impact Assessment 2025-2026 – Headlines

Healthwatch Brighton and Hove regularly evaluates its projects and reviews of health and care services to assess how effectively we have engaged with the general population of the city and its diverse communities. This Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) provides detail on the extent to which this was achieved in the last year. This EIA uses data from all projects and reports published, as well as analysis of our homecare project and helpline data between April 1st 2025 and March 31st 2026, where demographic data (age, ethnicity, etc) were collected.

Equalities data is compared to the previous 2024-2025 review and to findings from the city-wide census (2021) and the more recent Health Counts survey (2024)¹.

We present equalities data captured from **19 projects**. These comprise a total of **3,127 responses**, which is an increase from 2,174 last year.

Note that Healthwatch has engaged people through other activities where equalities data was not captured, including face-to-face events. For 2025-26, a further **140** people were engaged in this manner.

The 19 individual projects, reports and activities we have reviewed where there is equalities data, in chronological order, are (dates refer to date of publication, not when the activity was carried out) :

1. [Your Experiences of Vaccinations](#) – Healthwatch in Sussex Poll. April 2025. 566 responses (84 Brighton and Hove – equalities data for polls applied to Brighton and Hove only).
2. [NHS Satisfaction in Brighton & Hove and Sussex-wide](#) – Healthwatch in Sussex poll. May 2025. 615 responses (135 Brighton and Hove).
3. [Homecare Check Summary Report](#). May 2025. 225 people.

¹ The Health Counts survey with a sample of 16,729 people (or 7% of the resident population in Brighton and Hove aged 18 years or over). The Health Counts data is unweighted in this report (the analysis of Health Counts 2024 uses weighted data to bring it in line with the population profile of the city as a whole).

4. [Poll results: supporting carers to attend their own healthcare appointments.](#) Healthwatch in Sussex poll. June 2025. 179 responses (26 Brighton and Hove).
5. [Patients' views about Woodingdean Medical Centre Part 2.](#) July 2025. 1,612 people.
6. [Enter and View Report: The Emergency Department at the Royal Sussex County Hospital, April 2025.](#) July 2025. 31 people.
7. [Helpline enquiries to Healthwatch Brighton and Hove: April 1st 2024 – March 31st 2025.](#) July 2025. 228 people.
8. [HWiS poll results: how do your nutritional and dietary needs affect you? – Healthwatch in Sussex poll.](#) August 2025. 166 responses (35 Brighton and Hove).
9. [Enter and View Report: The Sussex Kidney Unit at the Royal Sussex County Hospital.](#) August 2025. 14 people.
10. [Improving outcomes for people at risk of hypertension – Evaluation Report.](#) September 2025. 91 people.
11. [Trans & Non-binary Experiences of GPs in Brighton & Hove.](#) September 2025. 34 people.
12. [A report on vaping and children & young people with special educational needs.](#) October 2025. 52 people.
13. [HWiS poll results: recent changes to GP practices.](#) October 2025. 599 responses (82 Brighton and Hove).
14. [Understanding the experiences and inequity of refugees and asylum seekers in accessing health services and receiving care.](#) November 2025. 49 people.
15. [HWiS poll results: NHS support for children's learning needs in Sussex.](#) December 2025. 100 responses (8 Brighton and Hove).
16. [Homecare Check – Annual Report 2024–25.](#) January 2026. 211 people – 12 new people not included in earlier Homecare report (report number 3).
17. [HWiS poll results: Pharmacy First.](#) February 2026. 548 responses (99 in Brighton and Hove).
18. [A Healthwatch in Sussex report on Non-Emergency Patient Transport Services.](#) February 2026. 151 responses.
19. [Your views on the creation of a new NHS Online Trust \(a virtual hospital\).](#) March 2026. 159 responses.

Our approach

The report outlines the aggregated equalities data from these 19 sources. We compare the proportions (or percentage) of people engaged compared to the census proportions, for example, of those we heard from, 26.4% were LGBTQ+ compared to the census proportion of 11.0%). We derive these proportions from those that provided an answer to demographic questions asked, because some projects recorded a greater range of equalities data than others.

As a caveat to these results, our engagement activities (projects, events and wider engagement) do not all strive to achieve a city-wide representative sample which is often dependent on the engagement activity. Some of our projects and activities target specific communities and cohorts of people that we wish to engage with on given topics, identified through our planning and prioritisation process or in response to an emerging issue or concern. For example, our homecare project is heavily weighted to an older sample and we had a specific project looking at Trans and Non-Binary people's views about GP services.

As an outcome from last year's report, we have used more standardised definitions for disability and age groups.

We are pleased to report that this past year's activity has effectively engaged with greater numbers of people with protected characteristics compared to last year.

Overall, in 2025-2026, Healthwatch was **effective in hearing the views from:**

- People who said that their gender did not match their sex assigned at birth: this was 10.1% of our sample, which exceeded the census proportion of 1.1% for the city and the 3.2% from Health Counts.
- People who identified as LGBTQ+: 26.4% of our sample, compared to the census figure of 11.0% and the Health Counts figure of 20.8%.
- People who said that they had a disability: 41.6% of our sample, compared to the census figure of 18.7% and 35.0% from Health Counts.

- People who were a carer for someone else: 23.9% of our sample, compared to the census figure of 7.9% and 20.5% from Health Counts.

Where we like to improve:

- 38.7% of people we heard from self-described themselves as being a man/male². This has increased since last year and is the highest proportion engaged since 2021-2022. Nevertheless, our 2025-2026 figure is less than the census figure of men comprising 48.9% for the city's population but similar to the Health Counts figure of 38.0%
- Our engagement data shows a low proportion of young people with 3.8% aged under 25. This is lower than the census figure of 15.3% aged 15-24 and 5.9% from the Health Counts survey aged 18-24. Those aged 65 and older comprise over 45% of people we hear from.
- Although the proportion of ethnic minority groups is similar to last year (at 20.0%), we are still lower than the census figure of 26.1% but slightly more than the Health Counts figure of 18.7%.

Overall, we are achieving well in the majority of the protected characteristics but there is a need to reach more men, more younger people, and people from ethnic minorities. Nonetheless, the trend has been promising over this last year seeing a slight increased proportion of men (a 4 percentage point increase on last year and the highest proportion since 2021-2022) with similar figures from last year for younger people and ethnic minority groups. The proportions of people we hear less from are broadly similar to the data from Health Counts (2024), suggesting that these issues are not unique to Healthwatch.

² The 'self-description' of man or male would include trans men/males. Same for trans women/females.

Equality Impact Assessment 2025–2026 – Full report

Introduction

Healthwatch Brighton and Hove gathers patient opinion on health and social care services from across the community and uses this information to recommend improvements and escalate concerns. To be effective, it is vital that the patient opinion we gather is accurate and reflects all parts of the community.

As part of this commitment, we annually evaluate our activities to determine how effectively we have engaged with the population of the city and its diverse communities. This Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) provides detail on the extent to which this has been achieved.

More specifically, the EIA presents the degree to which our projects, reports and range of activities reached out to the ‘protected characteristics groups’ specified in the Equality Act 2010. This EIA report includes data on age, sex, gender identity, ethnicity, disability, and sexual orientation.

This EIA uses data from all activities published by us between April 1st 2025 and March 31st 2026 as well as an analysis of our homecare project and helpline where demographic data (age, sex, etc.) were collected. A total of **3,127** people provided this data from **19 projects**.

The equalities data from our engagement activities will be underestimates (numerically) due to the fact that not all equality questions were asked during every engagement activity. This was particularly so when speaking to people face-to-face or when it was not suitable for our surveys to include all the protected characteristics questions.

For example, our monthly polls are usually limited to asking six questions and it would not be appropriate (or may be off-putting to respondents) to ask a large number of demographic questions. To illustrate, our equalities data showed that we heard from 106 people (from 5 studies) who identified as LGBTQ+. If we had asked this question as part of every engagement activity the numbers would likely be higher.

We engaged a further **140** people in 2025–2026 where no equalities data was recorded – via face-to-face engagement where questionnaires were not used).

Taken collectively, we have heard from **3,267** people during 2025–2026.

Calculating the data

The aggregated data includes the numbers of people engaged according to each protected characteristic. We compare our data to the city population and how we fared in last year’s review (2024–2025).

As our numbers will always be lower than the local population data (from a city of 280,000 people), we use percentages or proportions to see where we are being effective, compared to city-wide data, in capturing people who have protected characteristics.

We calculate percentages from all those who provided a valid answer to the demographic questions asked (i.e. excluding those who did not provide an answer or who preferred ‘not to say’). For example, if a study asked people if their gender was the same as that assigned at birth, the percentage would be all those that provided an answer (‘yes’ or ‘no’) and excluded those who did not provide an answer.

19 sources of equalities data reviewed

	Project	Equalities data
1.	Your Experiences of Vaccinations . April 2025. Healthwatch in Sussex (HWiS) poll ³ . 84 people.	Sex: Female: 56; Male: 23; Non-Binary: 2. [From 61] ⁴ . Age: 0 aged under 18; 0 aged 18–24; 1 aged 25–34; 4 aged 35–44; 10 aged 45–54; 12 aged 55–64; 22 aged 65–74; 27 aged 75–84; 2 aged 85 or older. [From 78].

³ The numbers provided are from Brighton and Hove and exclude those in the remainder of Sussex.

⁴ These numbers are those who provided a valid answer i.e. those that answered a question from which the percentage responses can be calculated.

Project	Equalities data
	<p>Ethnicity: White-British: 70; not White-British: 10. [From 80].</p> <p>‘Please select any of the following that apply to you’:</p> <p>I have a disability: – 23 [From 60]. I have a long-term condition: – 47 [From 60]. I am a carer: – 12 [From 60].</p>
<p>2. NHS Satisfaction in Brighton & Hove and Sussex-wide. May 2025.</p> <p>HWiS poll. 135 people.</p>	<p>Sex: Female: 91; Male: 33; Non-Binary: 2. [From 126].</p> <p>Age: 0 aged under 18; 0 aged 18-24; 1 aged 25-34; 9 aged 35-44; 23 aged 45-54; 43 aged 55-64; 23 aged 65-74; 21 aged 75-84; 3 aged 85 or older. [From 123].</p> <p>Ethnicity: White-British: 102; not White-British: 26. [From 128].</p> <p>‘Please select any of the following that apply to you’:</p> <p>I have a disability: – 33 [From 86]. I have a long-term condition: –61 [From 86]. I am a carer: – 24 [From 86].</p>
<p>3. Homecare Check Summary Report. May 2025.</p> <p>227 people.</p>	<p>Sex: Female: 138; Male: 86; Non-binary: 0. [From 224].</p> <p>Age: 0 aged under 18; 2 aged 18-24; 4 aged 25-34; 3 aged 35-44; 16 aged 45-54; 35 aged 55-64; 30 aged 65-74; 78 aged 75-84; 58 aged 85 or older. [From 226].</p>

	Project	Equalities data
4.	<p>Poll results: supporting carers to attend their own healthcare appointments. June 2025.</p> <p>HWiS poll. 26 people.</p>	<p>Sex: Female: 21; Male: 3; Non-binary: 0. [From 24].</p> <p>Age: 0 aged under 18; 0 aged 18-24; 0 aged 25-34; 3 aged 35-44; 4 aged 45-54; 4 aged 55-64; 9 aged 65-74; 5 aged 75-84; 0 aged 85 or older. [From 25].</p> <p>Ethnicity: White-British: 16; not White-British: 6. [From 22].</p> <p>‘Please select any of the following that apply to you:’</p> <p>I have a disability: – 11 [From 24]. I have a long-term condition: – 14 [From 24]. I am a carer: – 21 [From 24].</p>
5.	<p>Patients’ views about Woodingdean Medical Centre Part 2. July 2025.</p> <p>1,612 people.</p>	<p>Sex: Female: 880; Male: 565; Non-binary: 6. [From 1,451].</p> <p>Age: 0 aged under 18; 60 aged 18-24; 61 aged 25-34; 121 aged 35-44; 217 aged 45-54; 378 aged 55-64; 323 aged 65-74; 219 aged 75-84; 50 aged 85 or older [From 1,429].</p> <p>Ethnicity: White-British: 1,176; not White-British: 211. [From 1,387].</p> <p>‘Please select any of the following that apply to you:’</p> <p>I have a disability: – 204 [From 735]. I have a long-term condition: – 573 [From 735]. I am a carer: – 117 [From 735].</p>

Project	Equalities data
<p>6. Enter and View Report: The Emergency Department at the Royal Sussex County Hospital, April 2025. July 2025.</p> <p>31 people.</p>	<p>Sex: Female: 12; Male: 14; Non-binary: 1 [From 27].</p> <p>Age: 0 aged under 18; 1 aged 18-24; 3 aged 25-34; 3 aged 35-44; 3 aged 45-54; 2 aged 55-64; 4 aged 65-74; 6 aged 75-84; 4 aged 85 or older. [From 26].</p> <p>Ethnicity: White-British: 18; not White-British: 9. [From 27].</p> <p>‘Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?’ Yes, a little – 8 Yes, a lot – 10 No – 10 [From 28].</p> <p>‘Do you look after or give unpaid help or support to anyone (as in a Carer)? This could be because they have long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses, or problems related to old age.’ Yes – 8 No – 10 [From 18].</p>
<p>7. Helpline enquiries to Healthwatch Brighton and Hove: April 1st 2024 – March 31st 2025. July 2025.</p> <p>228 people.</p>	<p>Sex: Female: 96; Male: 48; Non-Binary: 2. [From 146].</p> <p>Do you identify as the sex you were assigned at birth? Yes 117; No 2. [from 119].</p> <p>Age: 1 aged under 18; 6 aged 18-24; 10 aged 25-34; 11 aged 35-44; 24 aged 45-54; 27 aged 55-64; 24 aged 65-74; 29 aged 75-84; 0 aged 95 or older. [From 132].</p> <p>Ethnicity: White-British: 99; not White-British: 23. [From 122].</p>

Project	Equalities data
	<p>Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer people (LGBTQ+): Yes: 24; No: 72. [From 96].</p> <p>‘Seldom-heard - includes particular ethnic minority groups, carers, people with disabilities, LGBTQ+ people, refugees/asylum seekers, people who are homeless, younger people and people with language barriers.’ Yes: 55; No: 87. [From 143].</p> <p>New Q⁵ – ‘Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?’ Yes, a little – 29 Yes, a lot –15 No – 16 [from 60]</p> <p>Former Q – ‘Please select any of the following that apply to you’: I have a disability’ Yes 22; No 33. [From 55]. I have a long-term condition 21. [From 78].</p> <p>New Q – Are you a refugee or asylum seeker – 0 yes, 56 no. [From 56].</p> <p>New Q – Do you look after or give unpaid help or support to anyone (as in a Carer)? This could be because they have long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses, or problems related to old age. Yes 8; No 46 [From 54].</p> <p>Marital status (old Q): 6 married; 14 not known; 7 single; 1 widowed; 1 divorced. [From 29].</p>

⁵ Partway through the year we undertook a review of the equalities questions in the helpline, hence some new ones added and former ones no longer used.

Project		Equalities data
		Pregnancy status (old Q): 1 currently pregnant; 1 currently breastfeeding; 1 given birth in last 6 months. [from 126].
8.	<p>HWiS poll results: how do your nutritional and dietary needs affect you? – Healthwatch in Sussex poll. August 2025.</p> <p>HWiS poll. 35 people.</p>	<p>Sex: Female: 23; Male: 7; Non-binary: 2. [From 32].</p> <p>Age: 0 aged under 18; 1 aged 18-24; 2 aged 25-34; 5 aged 35-44; 6 aged 45-54; 9 aged 55-64; 7 aged 65-74; 3 aged 75-84; 0 aged 85 or older. [From 33].</p> <p>Ethnicity: White-British: 21; not White-British: 11. [From 32].</p> <p>‘Please select any of the following that apply to you’: I have a disability: – 14 [From 29]. I have a long-term condition: – 28 [From 29]. I am a carer: – 6 [From 29].</p>
9.	<p>Enter and View Report: The Sussex Kidney Unit at the Royal Sussex County Hospital. August 2025.</p> <p>14 people.</p>	<p>Sex: Female: 2; Male: 9; Non-Binary: 0. [From 11].</p> <p>Age: 0 aged under 18; 1 aged 18-24; 0 aged 25-34; 2 aged 35-44; 1 aged 45-54; 3 aged 55-64; 0 aged 65-74; 4 aged 75-84; 0 aged 85 or older. [From 11].</p> <p>Ethnicity: White-British: 9; not White-British: 1. [From 10].</p>
10.	<p>Improving outcomes for people at risk of hypertension – Evaluation Report. September 2025.</p> <p>91 people.</p>	<p>Sex: Female: 54; Male: 33; Non-Binary: 0. [From 87].</p> <p>‘Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?’ – Yes: 91; No: 1. [From 92].</p> <p>Ethnicity: White-British: 54; not White-British: 35. [From 89].</p>

Project	Equalities data
	<p>'Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?'</p> <p>Yes, a little – 21 Yes, a lot – 27 No – 43 [from 91].</p>
<p>11. Trans & Non-binary Experiences of GPs in Brighton & Hove. September 2025.</p> <p>34 people.</p>	<p>Sex: Trans feminine: 10; Trans masculine: 13; Non-Binary: 11. [From 34].</p> <p>Sex same as assigned at birth: Yes 0; No 34. [From 34].</p> <p>Age: 5 aged under 18; 5 aged 18-24; 21 aged 25-34; 7 aged 35-44; 0 aged 45-54; 0 aged 55-64; 1 aged 65-74; 0 aged 75-84; 0 aged 85 or older. [From 39].</p> <p>Ethnicity: White-British: 22; not White-British: 12. [From 34].</p> <p>LGBTQ+: Yes 32; No 1. [From 33]</p> <p>Carer: Yes 5; No 29. [From 34].</p> <p>'Please select any of the following that apply to you:'</p> <p>I have a disability: - 18 [from 34]. I have a long-term condition: - 15 [From 34]. I am neurodivergent (Autistic, ADHD/ADD, Dyslexic, Tourette's etc.): - 20 [From 34].</p>
<p>12. A report on vaping and children & young people with special educational needs. October 2025.</p> <p>52 people.</p>	<p>Sex: Female: 30; Male: 8; Non-Binary: 1. [From 39].</p> <p>'Do you identify as the sex you were assigned at birth?' Yes: 41; No: 1. [From 42].</p>

Project	Equalities data
	<p>Age: 14 aged under 18; 2 aged 18-24; 1 aged 25-34; 5 aged 35-44; 10 aged 45-54; 7 aged 55-64; 1 aged 65-74; 1 aged 75-84; 0 aged 85 or older. [From 41].</p> <p>Ethnicity: White-British: 30; not White-British: 14. [From 44].</p> <p>LGBTQ+: Yes: 13; No: 24. [From 37].</p> <p>'Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?' Yes, a little: 8 Yes, lot: 8 No: 22. [From 38].</p> <p>'Do you look after, or give any help or support to, anyone because they have a long term physical or mental health condition or illness or problems related to old age (as in a carer)? Please exclude anything you do as part of your paid employment': Yes: 30; No: 5. [From 35].</p>
<p>13. HWiS poll results: recent changes to GP practices. October 2025.</p> <p>HWiS poll. 82 people.</p>	<p>Sex: Female: 53; Male: 28; Non-Binary: 0. [From 81].</p> <p>Age: 0 aged under 18; 1 aged 18-24; 3 aged 25-34; 5 aged 35-44; 15 aged 45-54; 17 aged 55-64; 13 aged 65-74; 16 aged 75-84; 2 aged 85 or older. [From 72].</p> <p>Ethnicity: White-British: 64; not White-British: 16. [From 80].</p> <p>'Please select any of the following that apply to you:' I have a disability: – 27 [From 51]. I have a long-term health condition: – 32 [From 51]. I am a carer: – 15 [From 51].</p>

Project	Equalities data
<p>14. Understanding the experiences and inequity of refugees and asylum seekers in accessing health services and receiving care. November 2025.</p> <p>49 people.</p>	<p>Sex: Female: 23; Male: 15; Non-Binary: 0. [From 38].</p> <p>Age: 0 aged under 18; 0 aged 18-24; 8 aged 25-34; 5 aged 35-44; 7 aged 45-54; 9 aged 55-64; 5 aged 65-74; 1 aged 75-84; 0 aged 85 or older. [From 35].</p> <p>Ethnicity: White-British: 0; not White-British: 49. [From 49].</p> <p>‘Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?’</p> <p>Yes, a little – 12 Yes, a lot – 8 No – 29 [From 49].</p> <p>‘Do you look after, or give any help or support to, anyone because they have a long term physical or mental health condition or illness or problems related to old age (as in a carer)? Please exclude anything you do as part of your paid employment’: Yes: 13; No: 36. [From 49].</p>
<p>15. HWiS poll results: NHS support for children’s learning needs in Sussex. December 2025.</p> <p>HWiS poll. 8 people.</p>	<p>Sex: Female: 4; Male: 1; Non-Binary: 0. [From 5].</p> <p>Age: 0 aged under 18; 0 aged 18-24; 0 aged 25-34; 2 aged 35-44; 1 aged 45-54; 2 aged 55-64; 0 aged 65-74; 0 aged 75-84; 0 aged 85 or older. [From 5].</p> <p>Ethnicity: White-British: 5; not White-British: 0. [From 5].</p> <p>‘Please select any of the following that apply to you:’</p> <p>I have a disability: – 0 [From 6]. I have a long term health condition: – 2 [From 6].</p>

Project	Equalities data
	I am a carer: – 3 [From 6].
16. Homecare Check – Annual Report 2024-25 . January 2026. 12 people not included in previous Homecare report.	Sex: Female: 10; Male: 2; Non-Binary: 0. [From 12]. Age: 0 aged under 18; 0 aged 18-24; 0 aged 25-34; 0 aged 35-44; 3 aged 45-54; 4 aged 55-64; 2 aged 65-74; 1 aged 75-84; 2 aged 85 or older. [From 12].
17. HWiS poll results: Pharmacy First . February 2026. HWiS poll. 99 people.	Sex: Female: 65; Male: 27; Non-Binary: 1. [From 93]. Age: 0 aged under 18; 1 aged 18-24; 3 aged 25-34; 7 aged 35-44; 12 aged 45-54; 24 aged 55-64; 18 aged 65-74; 19 aged 75-84; 8 aged 85 or older. [From 92]. Ethnicity: White-British: 74; not White-British: 18. [From 92]. ‘Please select any of the following that apply to you:’ I have a disability: – 27 [From 68]. I have a long-term health condition: – 47 [From 68]. I am a carer: – 24 [From 68].
18. A Healthwatch in Sussex report on Non-Emergency Patient Transport Services . February 2026. 151 people.	Sex: Female: 76; Male: 63; Non-Binary: 3. [From 132]. Age: 0 aged under 18; 0 aged 18-24; 1 aged 25-34; 5 aged 35-44; 15 aged 45-54; 21 aged 55-64; 32 aged 65-74; 35 aged 75-84; 17 aged 85 or older. [From 126]. Ethnicity: White-British: 104; not White-British: 25. [From 129]. LGBTQ+: Yes: 6; No: 111. [From 117].

Project	Equalities data
	<p>‘Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted or is expected to last, at least 12 months?’</p> <p>Yes, a little – 42 Yes, a lot – 69 No – 15. [From 126].</p> <p>‘Do you look after or give unpaid help or support to anyone (as in a carer)? This could be because they have long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses or problems related to old age?’ Yes – 25; No – 99. [From 124].</p>
<p>19. Your views on the creation of a new NHS Online Trust (a virtual hospital). March 2026.</p> <p>159 people.</p>	<p>Sex: Female: 82; Male: 41; Non-Binary: 6. [From 129].</p> <p>‘Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex register at birth?’ Yes: 125; No: 4. [From 129].</p> <p>Age: 0 aged under 18; 1 aged 18-24; 4 aged 25-34; 11 aged 35-44; 17 aged 45-54; 25 aged 55-64; 35 aged 65-74; 35 aged 75-84; 2 aged 85 or older. [From 130].</p> <p>Ethnicity: White-British: 102; not White-British: 26. [From 128].</p> <p>LGBTQ+: Yes: 31; No: 88. [From 119].</p> <p>‘Please select any of the following that apply to you:’ I have a disability: – 42 [From 91]. I have a long-term health condition: – 68 [From 91]. I am a carer: – 39 [From 91].</p>

Aggregated data for 2025–2026

During 2025–2026, we engaged a total of **3,267 people** (compared to 2,587 last year) – **3,127** provided equalities data and a further **140** were engaged but did not provide equalities data.

The aggregated numbers and proportions engaged across the 19 projects are as follows:

Sex

All of our 19 projects recorded data on sex. We engaged 1,726 people who self-described themselves as women or female⁶, 1,109 people who self-described themselves as men or male, and a further 33 people who self-described themselves as non-binary. This equates to 60.0% women, 38.7% men and 1.2% non-binary⁷.

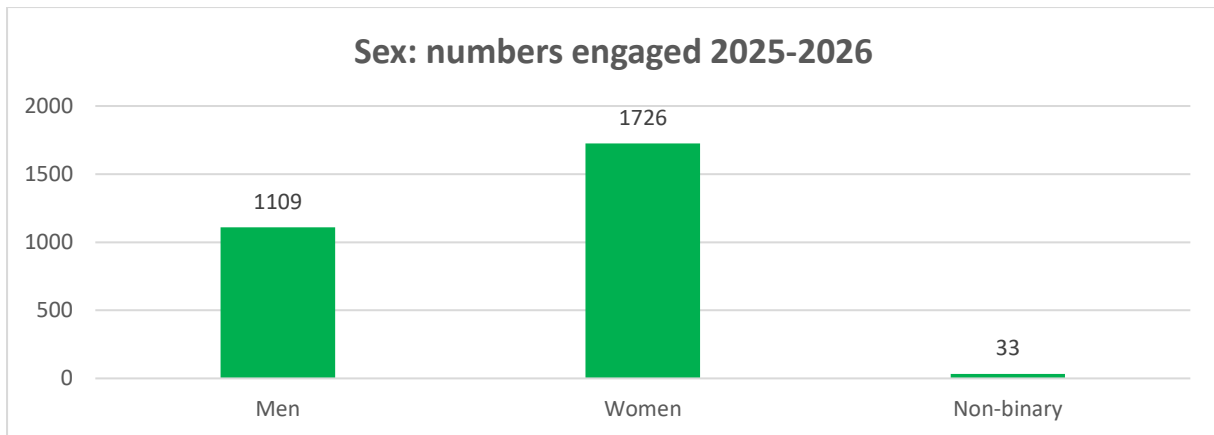
For the 19 sources of data that provided data in sex, all except three had a greater proportion of women engaged – the exceptions being our two Enter and Views (Emergency Department and the Sussex Kidney Unit) and the study into Trans & Non-binary experiences of GPs in Brighton and Hove.

Although the gender gap is closing (see later) this is consistent with our previous reports and activities and may reflect the wider acknowledgment that a greater response rate from women is seen in respect of health-related information⁸.

⁶ The 'self-description' of woman or female would include trans women/females. Same for trans men/males.

⁷ Percentages may not total 100.0% due to rounding up or down decimal points.

⁸ Wang Y, Hunt K, Nazareth I, et al Do men consult less than women? An analysis of routinely collected UK general practice data. *BMJ Open* 2013;3:e003320. doi: 10.1136/bmjopen-2013-00332



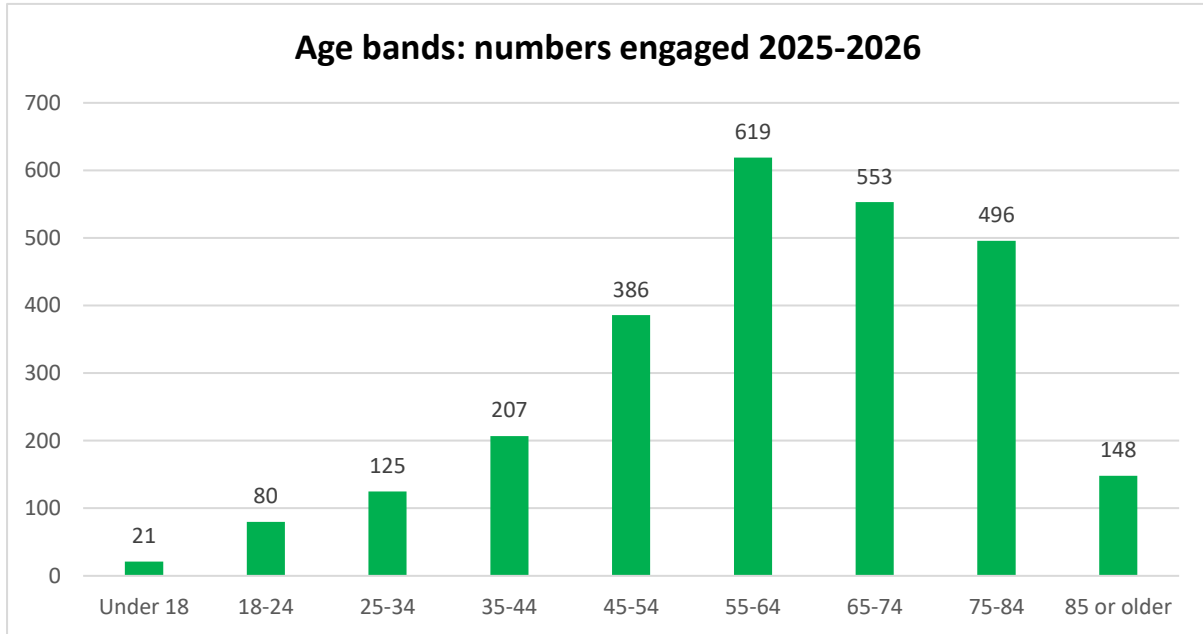
Age

A total of 2,635 people provided data about their age from 18 of our 19 sources of data. This year, we have fulfilled last year's aim of reporting data in the same age bands. This has been helped by asking precise age in many of the projects.

From 19 combined sources of age data:

- The ages of people we engaged have been dominated by the 55s and over, comprising 1,816 people or 68.9% of the overall sample. 45.4% were aged 65 or older.
- The most represented age groups were those aged 55-64 comprising 619 people or 23.5% of the sample. This compares to 433 people or 16.4% of the sample aged under 45.
- Only 101 (3.8%) people were aged under 25 from these combined sources of data.

This age representation may be a product of older people having more time to discuss and share their experiences, or of having health and care issues to discuss. Also, some of our projects were naturally overrepresented by older people such as our Homecare project where people are assessed about the quality of care they are receiving in their own home.



Gender identity

From 5 out of the 19 sources of data, 42 people said that their gender differed to their sex assigned at birth. This represents 10.1% of all the 415 people who were asked that question in 2025–2026, and is partly reflecting the Trans and Non-Binary work we delivered last year. This question was also asked more regularly compared to last year.

Sexual orientation

We engaged with 106 people who identified as LGBTQ+ (from 5 data sources). From the number of people who answered this question (402), this amounts to 26.4% of our sample.

Disability

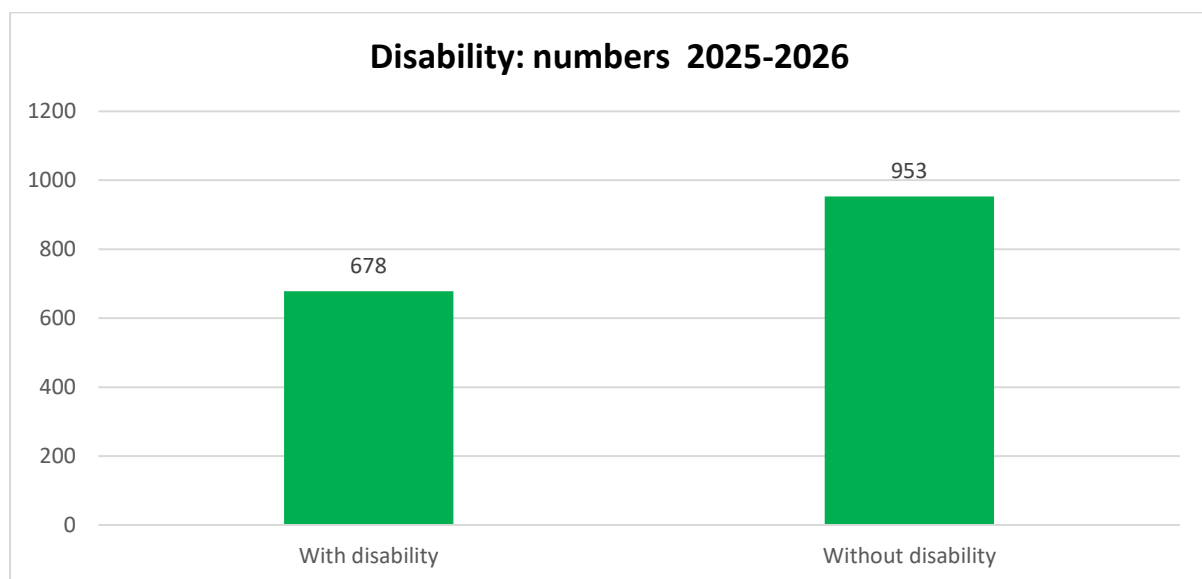
There was some inconsistency in how this question was asked. Of the 17 data sources that assessed this, 6 used 'Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months' (usually being separated into 'a little' and 'a lot'). A further 11 recorded disability in a binary manner: 'Please select any of the following that apply to you: I have a disability'.

There is still scope for us to be more standardised in the way disability is asked.

For the 6 data sources that used ('day-to-day activities...'), this showed that 257 or 75.3% reported a disability. Within this measure, 35.1% of the total sample defined this as limiting them 'a little' and 40.2% 'a lot'. This level of disability may be partly explained by our studies on Homecare (where people are assessed about the quality of care they are receiving in their own home) and Non-Emergency Patient Transport where 111 people from the sample of 126 reported a disability.

The 11 further questions used a tick-box (yes/no) where 421 or 34.5% of people reported having a disability.

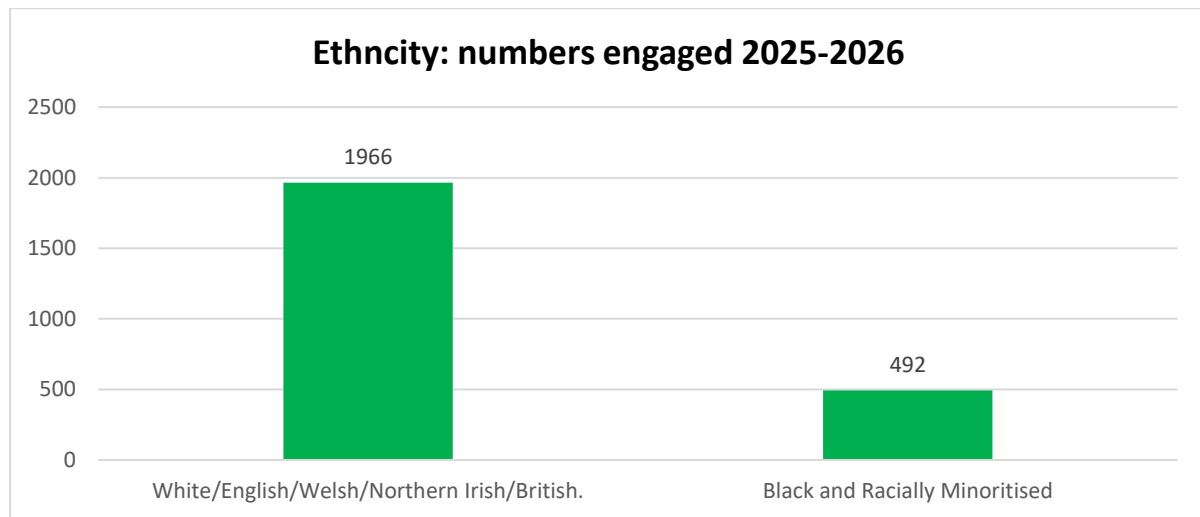
In combining these data, 678 (41.6%) people reported having a disability, from the 1,631 who answered this question.



Eleven data sources asked if people had a long-term condition. 908 people said they did from a total of 1,262 who were asked the question (71.9%). This is likely to reflect the age profile of the sample and our projects on Homecare and Non-Emergency Patient Transport.

Ethnicity

Seventeen of our 19 projects held data on ethnicity. In total, we engaged 492 people who were Black and Racially Minoritised⁹ which equates to 20.0% from the 2,458 who provided a response to this question. We engaged 1,966 people who were White/English/Welsh/Northern Irish/British.



Carers

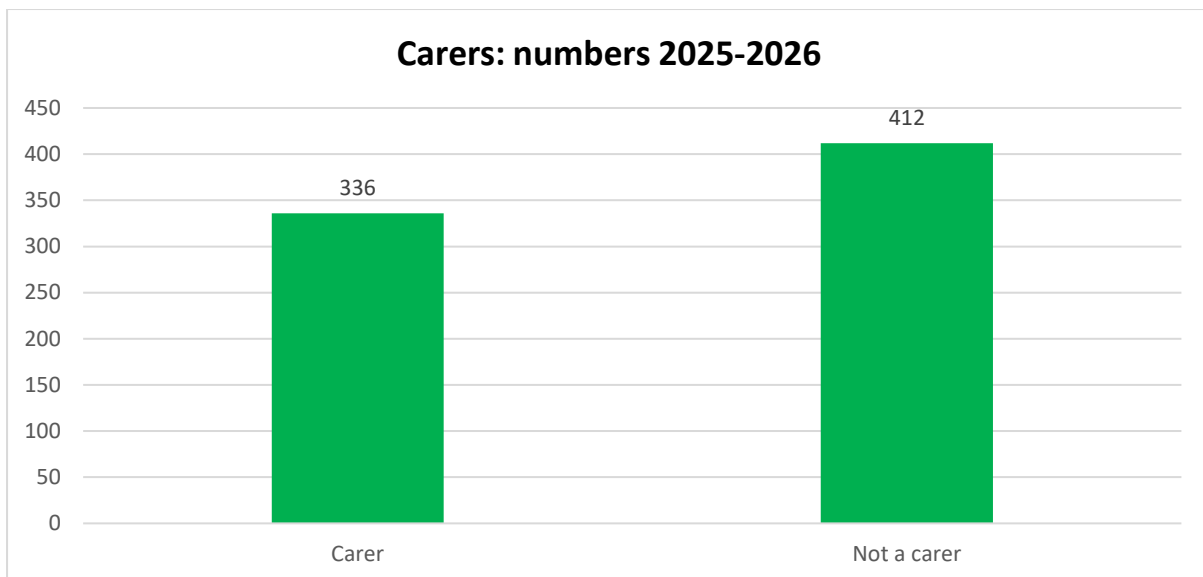
Fifteen data sources asked about whether people were carers. This question was asked in different ways. Most questions (9/14) were tick-boxes of 'Please select any of the following that apply to you: I am a carer', and the remaining were in response to: 'Do you look after, or give any help or support to, anyone because they have a long term physical or mental health condition or illness or problems related to old age (as in a carer)? Please exclude anything you do as part of your paid employment'.

There is a need for a standardised definition as they could mean slightly different things. Although not specified, it was assumed that the majority were 'unpaid' carers.

⁹ Black and Racially Minoritised refers to all ethnic groups except the White British group. Ethnic minorities include White minorities, such as Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller groups.

The carer's centre has created a new definition of: "Do you support someone who would struggle without your help?", in recognition that many people do not identify themselves as a carer.

In combination, a total of 350 people were carers, equating to 23.9% of the total sample of 1,464 who provided a response. The figure was partly the product of the study of vaping among young people which involved hearing from their parents/carers – 30 out of 35 were carers.



Other equalities data

There were a number of additional equalities data that were reported on just one occasion and so are not used in this report to compare to previous years or to city-wide data:

From the Helpline

Marital status (question no longer asked): 6 married; 14 not known; 7 single; 1 widowed; 1 divorced [From 29 people responding to this question].

Pregnancy status (question no longer asked): 1 currently pregnant; 1 currently breastfeeding; 1 given birth in last 6 months. [From 126].

'Seldom-heard - includes particular ethnic minority groups, carers, people with disabilities, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer people, refugees/asylum seekers, people who are homeless, younger people and people with language barriers.' Yes: 55; No: 87 [From 143].

I am a Refugee/Asylum Seeker: 0 yes, 56 no. [From 56].

From the Trans and Non-Binary project

'Please select any of the following that apply to you:' I am neurodivergent (Autistic, ADHD/ADD, Dyslexic, Tourette's etc.): - 20 [From 34].

Employment status: Working full time (employed or self-employed), 16 people; Working part time (employed or self-employed), 5 people; Unable to work due to health issues or a disability, 4 people; Student, 4 people; Other, 5 people. [From 34].

Current financial situation: Very comfortable, 2 people; Quite comfortable, 13 people; Not very comfortable, 11 people; Not at all comfortable, 6 people; Other, 2 people. [From 34].

Conclusion and comparisons to city-wide data

In this section we look at where we are doing well, as well as areas we would like to improve. This comparison is made to the 2021 city-wide census data and to our equalities data from last year (2024-2025).

We will also compare our data to the 2024 Health Counts survey in Brighton and Hove, which had a sample of 16,729 people (or 7% of the resident population aged 18 years or over). The Health Counts data is unweighted in this report (the analysis of Health Counts 2024 uses weighted data to bring it in line with the population profile of the city as a whole).

We will refer to the proportions (%) of our samples rather than numbers for these comparisons (because the city numbers will always be higher than those engaged by Healthwatch).

As a caveat to these results, our engagement activity does not always strive to achieve a city-wide representative sample which is often dependent on the engagement activity e.g. Non-Emergency Patient Transport is likely to be overrepresented by people with disabilities.

At the outset, we have made progress on some of last year's recommendations by using precise age, with all data being able to be grouped into the same age bands. We are working to address:

- Having a single definition of disability including whether people are affected 'a little' or 'a lot'.
- Capturing types of disabilities people may have.
- Clarifying the term 'carers' to refer to informal, unpaid care.
- Consider whether to record questions about religion, the Armed Forces, and other characteristics where we have only reported them on one occasion i.e. marital status, pregnancy status, seldom heard groups, refugee/asylum seekers, neurodivergence, employment status and financial situation,

Also, we have recorded equalities data from more people this year (3,267 people compared to 2,174 last year) and across more studies (19 compared to 15 last year).

Where we are doing well

We have compared this year's data with our results from last year (2024-2025), national census data and Health Counts data and the tables show where we have exceeded these proportions. Please note that the highest proportions in these tables are shown in green.

We were effective in engaging people **who said that their gender did not match their sex assigned at birth**, with 42 people or 10.1% agreeing to this statement from the 415 who were asked this question.

Q: 'Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?'			Q: 'Do you consider yourself to be trans, or have a trans history?'
Healthwatch Equalities data 2025-2026	Healthwatch Equalities data 2024-2025	Brighton and Hove census data (2021)	Health Counts data (2024)
10.1% (no)	1.5% (no)	1.1% (no)	3.2% (yes)

Compared to the census data, we engaged a much higher proportion of **people who said they had a disability**. In total, we heard from 678 people (41.6%) who reported having a disability, from the 1,631 who answered this question. This is a higher proportion than last year (39.1%) and the census (18.7%) and Health Counts figures (35.0%). A total of 71.9% reported a long-term condition.

Q: Disability – 'Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?' Or, 'Please select any of the following that apply to you:' I have a disability.			
Healthwatch Equalities data 2025-2026	Healthwatch Equalities data 2024-2025	Brighton and Hove census data (2021)	Health Counts data (2024)
41.6%	39.1%	18.7%	35.0%

We were also effective in reaching the **LGBTQ+ community**. We engaged with 106 people or 26.4% who identified as LGBTQ+ from the 402 people who answered this question. This is much greater than last year's proportion (10.9%), the local census data (11.0%) and Health Counts figures (20.8%).

Q: 'What is your sexual orientation?'			
Healthwatch Equalities data 2025-2026	Healthwatch Equalities data 2024-2025	Brighton and Hove census data (2021)	Health Counts data (2024)

26.4% (LGBTQ+)	10.9% (LGBTQ+)	11.0% (LGBTQ+)	20.8% (LGBTQ+)
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A further area where we are engaging effectively concerns (unpaid) **carers**. Of those who answered the question, 350 people were carers, equating to 23.9% of the total sample of 1,464 who provided a response. This was higher than last year’s proportion of 17.9% and the city-wide census figure of 7.9%.

Q: ‘Do you look after, or give any help or support to, anyone because they have a long term physical or mental health condition or illness or problems related to old age (as in a carer)?’ Or, ‘Please select any of the following that apply to you:’ I am a carer.

Healthwatch Equalities data 2025-2026	Healthwatch Equalities data 2024-2025	Brighton and Hove census data (2021)	Health Counts data (2024)
23.9%	17.9%	7.9%	20.5%

Where we would like to improve

We continue to engage more people who are women, from older age groups and who are White-British people. However, although our results are still disproportionate to the local census data, there has been some promising progress made.

This year, we engaged with more men with 38.7% of those we heard from **self-describing themselves as being a man/male**. This is greater than last year's proportion of 34.4% and close to the highest ever proportion of 41.4% in 2021-2022. Nevertheless, our 2025-2026 figure is less than the census figure of men, comprising 48.9% for the city's population. Our proportion is however similar to the Health Counts data (38.0%) which supports the notion that men, in general, are less responsive to health and social care surveys.

Q: 'What gender are you?' Or 'what sex are you?'			
Healthwatch Equalities data 2025-2026	Healthwatch Equalities data 2024-2025	Brighton and Hove census data (2021)	Health Counts data (2024)
38.7% (man)	34.4% (man)	48.9% (man)	38.0% (man)

We were effective in hearing from **Non-Binary people** with 33 people or 1.2% of those who responded to this question (0.4% in the census and 1.4% in Health Counts, 2024).

We would like to make further progress in reaching a wide range of **age groups**. Over the last year, the ages of people we engaged have been dominated by the 55s and over, comprising 1,816 people or 68.9% of the overall sample. 45.4% were aged 65 or older, whilst 3.8% were aged under 25. The most populous age group we engaged with were 55-64 year olds (23.5%).

Compared to last year, we showed similar proportions of under 25s and a slightly higher proportion of over 65s, suggesting our age bands are fairly similar to previous years.

Age	Q: 'What is your age'? ¹⁰			
	Healthwatch Equalities data 2025-2026	Healthwatch Equalities data 2024-2025	Brighton and Hove census data (2021)	Health Counts 2024 data – over 18s only
65s or older	45.4%	42.6%	14.1%	35.6%
Under 25s	3.8%	3.9%	15.3% ¹¹ (15-24)	5.9% (18-24)
Most populous age group	55-64 year olds (23.5%)	55-64 year olds (21.4%)	25-34 year olds (16.3%) ¹²	55-65 year olds (24.2%)

In total, we engaged 492 people who were **Black and Racially Minoritised (BRM)** which equates to 20.0% of the 2,458 who provided a response to this question. This is similar to the 21.0% for last year. This represents stability in this proportion relative to the lower proportions recorded for previous years, but still lower than the city-wide census figure of 26.1%, although higher compared to Health Counts.

Q: 'How would you describe your ethnic origin?'			
Healthwatch Equalities data 2025-2026	Healthwatch Equalities data 2024-2025	Brighton and Hove census data (2021)	Health Counts data (2024)
20.0% (BRM)	21.0% (BRM)	26.1% (BRM)	18.7%

¹⁰ Cannot compare to Health Counts (2024) as this survey was eligible for over 18s.

Aged under 15-24¹¹ <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/files/sites/bhconnected/files/3.1%20Our%20population%20FINAL.pdf>.

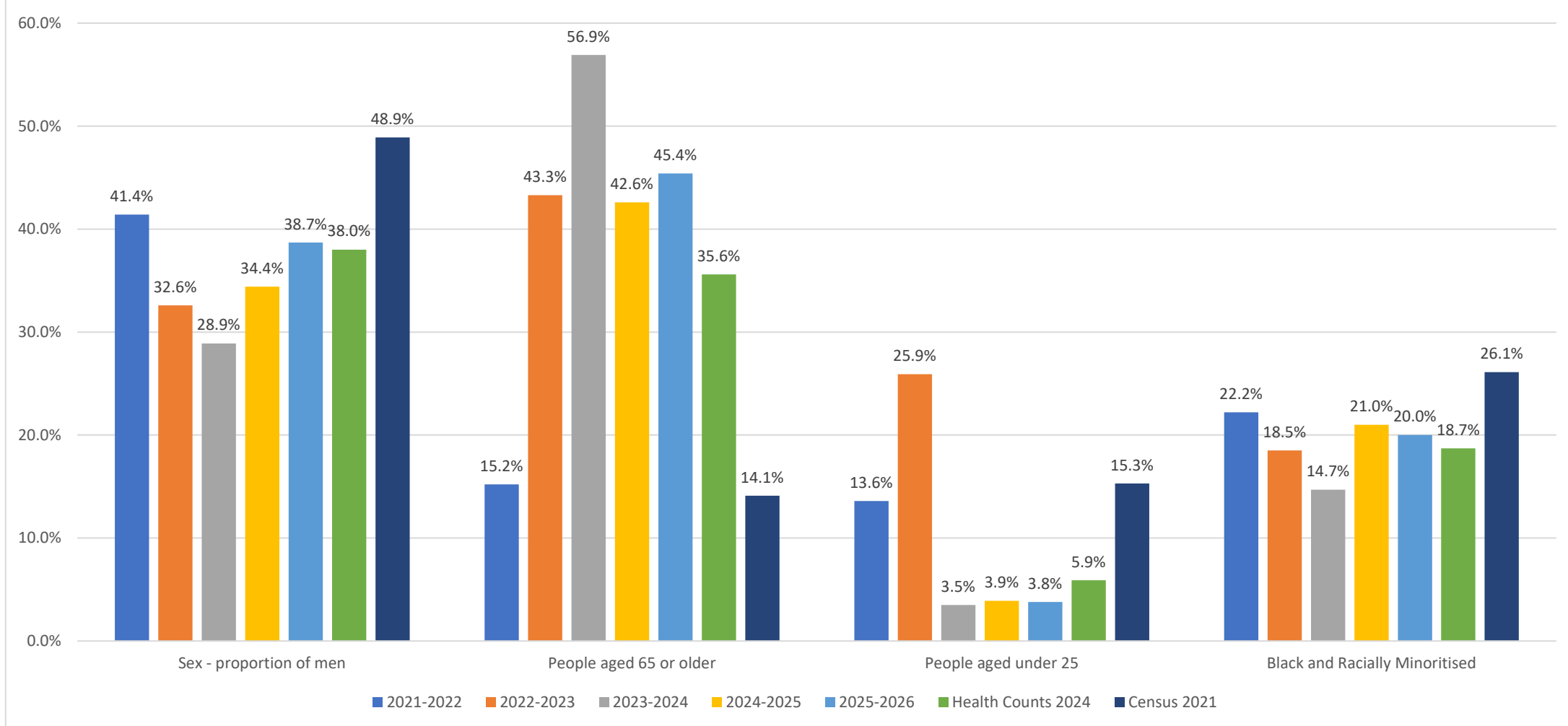
¹² <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/files/sites/bhconnected/files/3.1%20Our%20population%20FINAL.pdf>

Overall, we are achieving well in the majority of the protected characteristics, but we would still like to improve our engagement with men, younger people, and people who are Black and Racially Minoritised.

Nonetheless, the trend has been promising over this last year and we have seen a slightly increased proportion of men and a stable proportion of people who are Black and Racially Minoritised. Engaging younger people under the age of 25 continues to be an area of focus for us. Overall, these data are similar to the Health Counts 2024 proportions.

Progress in the areas requiring further improvement are shown below, relative to Health Counts (2024) and the 2001 census:

Diversity trends: 2021/22 to 2025/26 and relative to city-wide census 2021 and Health Counts 2024



This shows that the proportion of men has increased and the BRM has remained relatively stable. However, increasing the proportion of young people is the area where we would like to make progress to ensure we hear from all population groups across the city (note increase to 25.9% of younger people in 2022-2023 was due to this being calculated as under 30).

These issues are not unique to Healthwatch, with the Health Counts (2024) survey of 16,729 people also having difficulties in hearing from men, BRM people and younger adults. Our figures for LGBTQ+ (26.4%) are closer to the Health Counts proportions (20.8%) and have been considered to be a more accurate reflection due to possible underreporting in the census (11.0%).

We are continuing to take steps to address these trends by partnering with other voluntary and charity organisations to diversify the people we hear from, collaborating on projects that help us reach people facing health inequalities and challenging ourselves with innovative ways to hear from people who we currently hear less from.

Finally, agreeing a standardised measure for disability and a clear definition of carers will complement the work we have done this last year to agree a standardised measure of recording age. We are also considering whether to record data on marital and civil partnerships, employment status, financial situation, pregnancy and maternity and the Armed Forces.

Your voice matters

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Email: office@hwbh.co.uk

Click here to share your experiences and feedback with us, or if you need help or advice. **Thank you!**

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