



Inclusion and Representation Action Plan 2026

BONNIER
Books UK

Introduction

At Bonnier Books UK, we believe that publishing is for everyone. It's our responsibility to ensure that the voices on our lists and the talent in our offices truly and authentically represent the wider society around us – so that every reader can see themselves reflected within the books we share with the world.

We have become known for our efforts in pushing forward inclusion and representation in the publishing industry in recent times, recognised at both the LBF International Excellence Awards and the IPG's Alison Morrison Diversity and Inclusivity Award.

This is our third I&R Action Plan, having first launched in 2021, and they have served as a compass for the way ahead – identifying the areas in which we must focus our attentions and move further, and acting as a launchpad for inclusive industry-leading policies from equal parental leave to robust anonymised recruitment.

We were delighted to work in partnership with Creative Access – the UK's leading inclusivity organisation in the creative industries – on this year's plan and want to give a sincere thanks to all those who took the time to take part and share their story. The results of our latest survey have helped us build a clearer picture of our progress as an organisation to date and informed our Action Plan for the next phase in our journey.

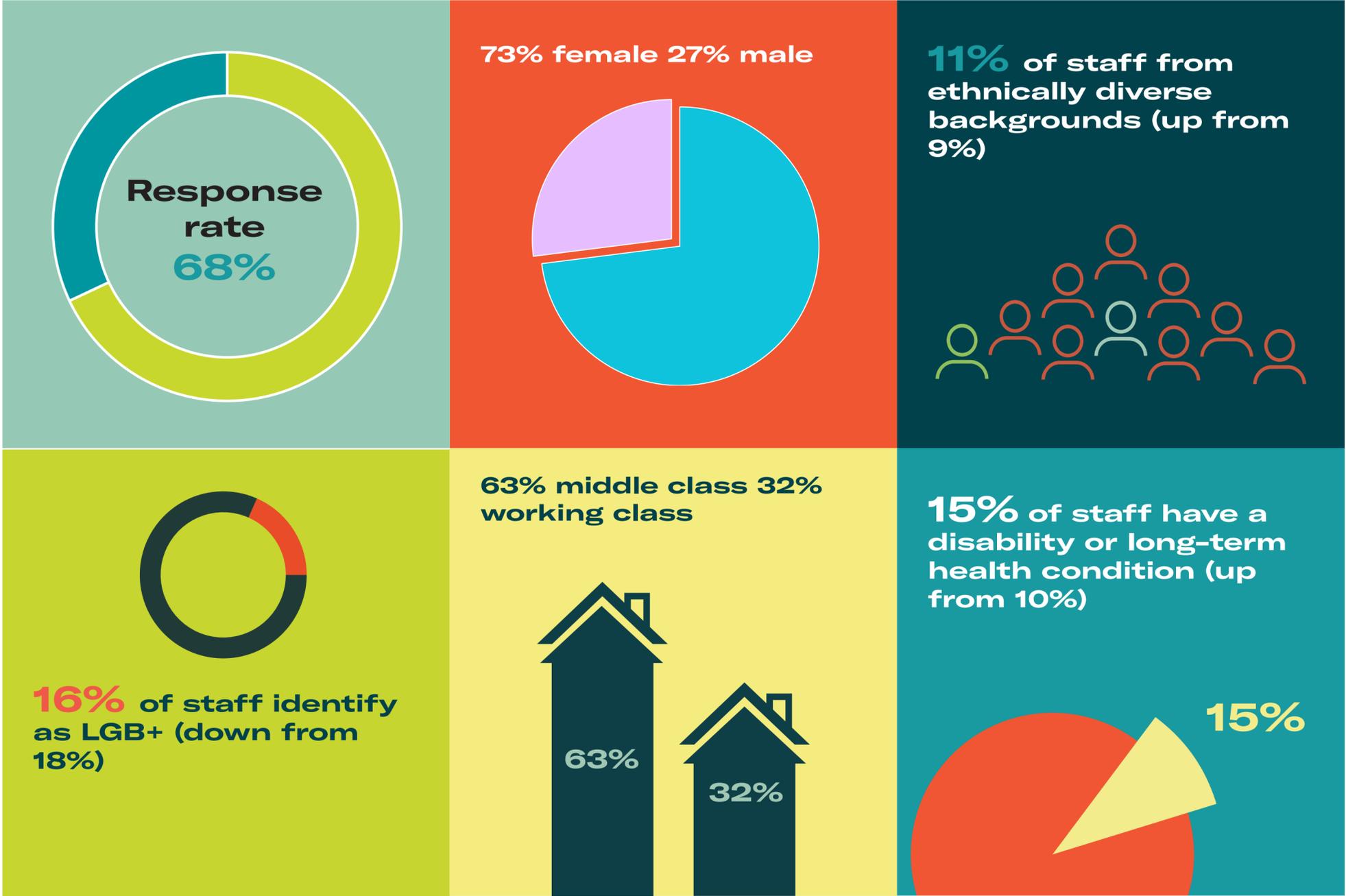
Diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives have become subject to increased scrutiny and vocal criticism from some quarters. We remain convinced of the value of this work, committed to its importance and determined to accelerate our efforts. We believe that inclusion and representation matters – perhaps now more than ever – and it continues to be integral to our values as an employer, creative partner and publisher.

Jonathan Perdoni & Sarah Benton
co-CEOs, Bonnier Books UK



Insights

Our workforce and candidate pool

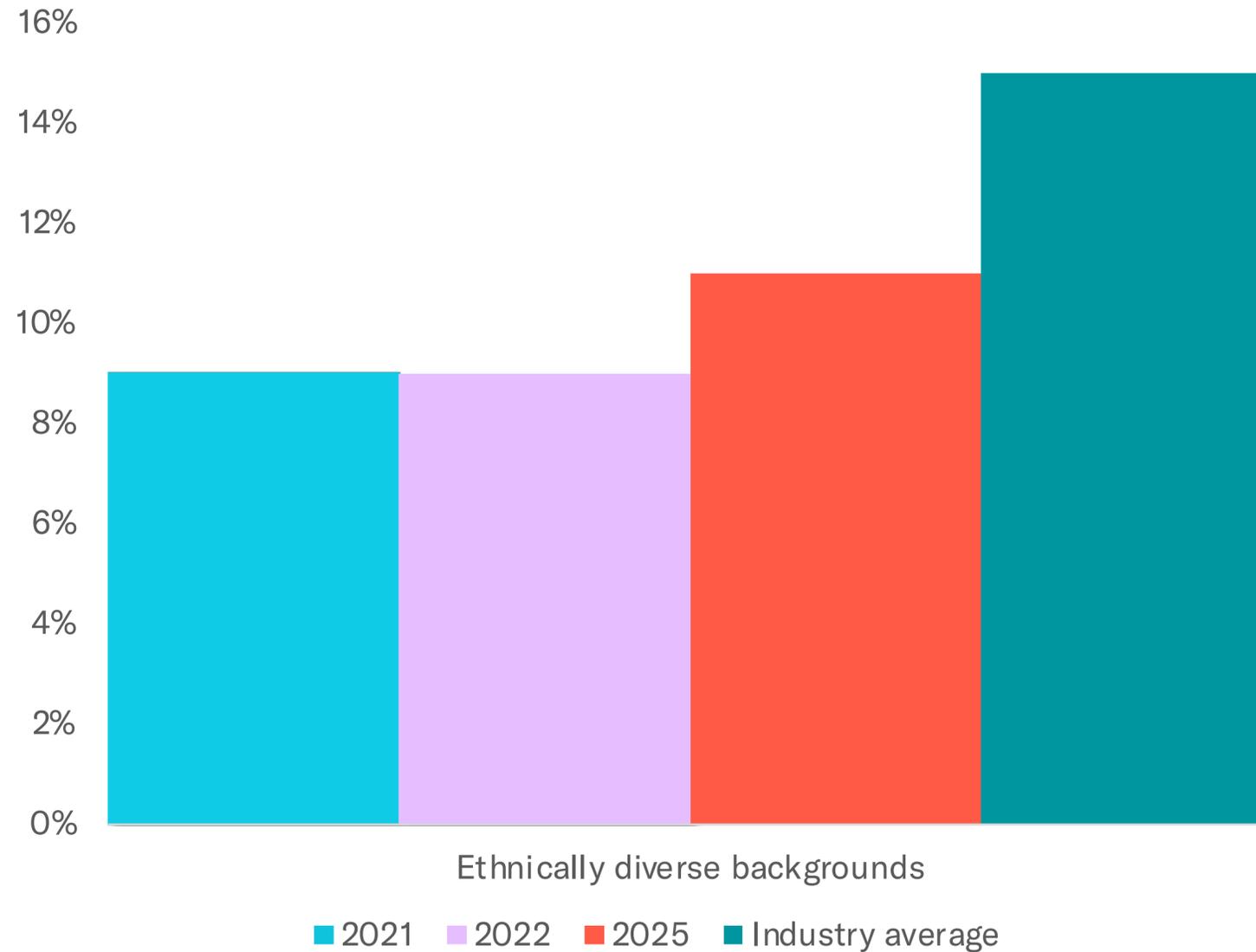


“We’ve been pleased to partner with Bonnier Books UK since 2018 to support talent from historically underrepresented groups to access career opportunities and thrive in new roles within the publishing industry. Forging a creative career has never been an easy road to travel. And for people from marginalised or underrepresented communities - it’s toughest of all. We are thrilled to have such a long-standing relationship with Bonnier Books UK who are genuinely dedicated to driving positive change in the sector. Last year, Creative Access was commissioned to offer an independent review of the company’s workforce and publishing, analyse the survey data and provide recommendations to help inform the company’s Action Plan. This work will support Bonnier Books UK – and in turn the wider industry – in the next phase of its ongoing commitment to building an inclusive workplace representative of the society it serves.”

Josie Dobrin OBE, Founder & Chair, Creative Access



Staff – ethnicity

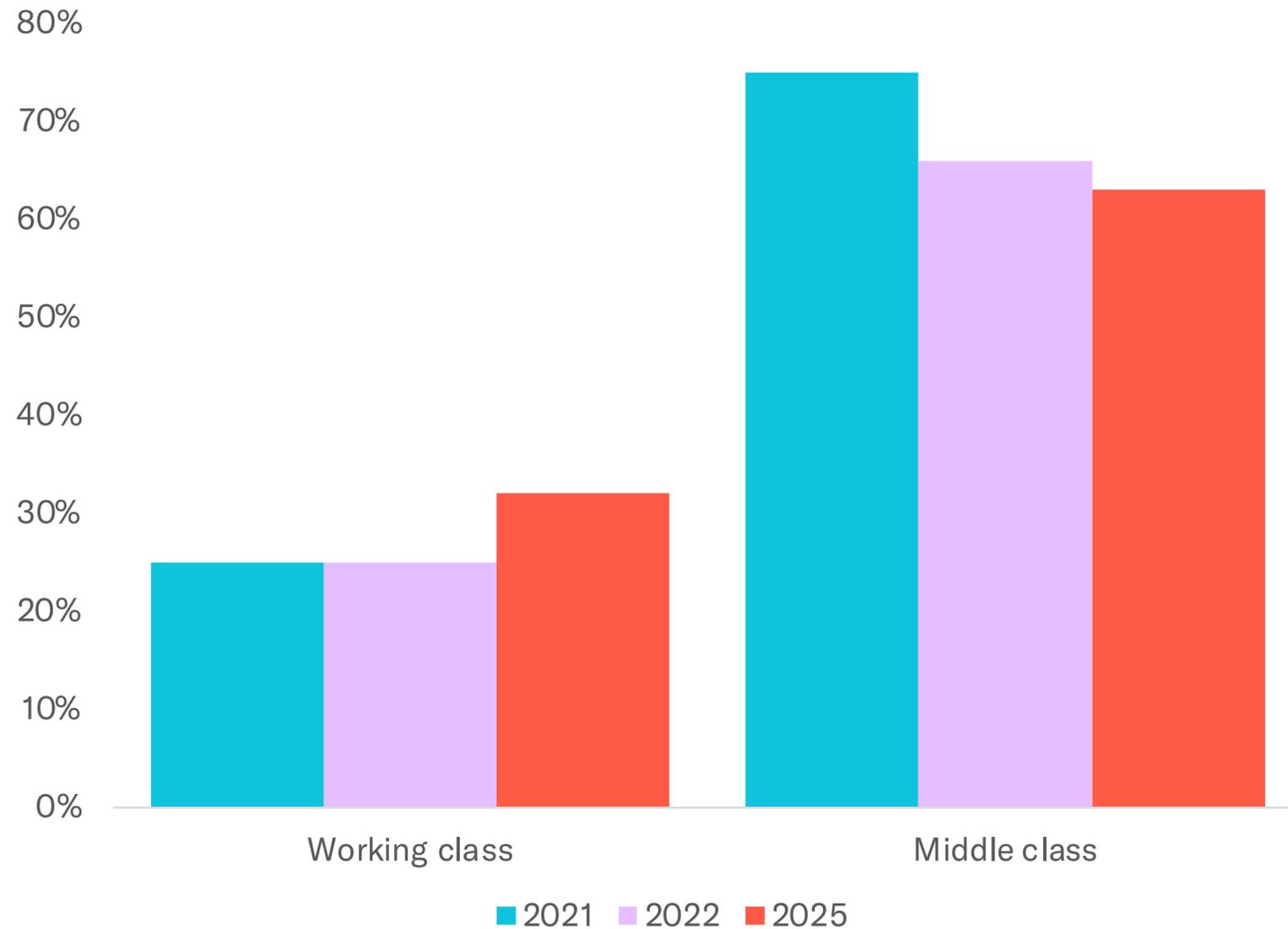


11% of UK employees were from ethnically diverse backgrounds (up from 9% in 2022. Industry average of 15%)

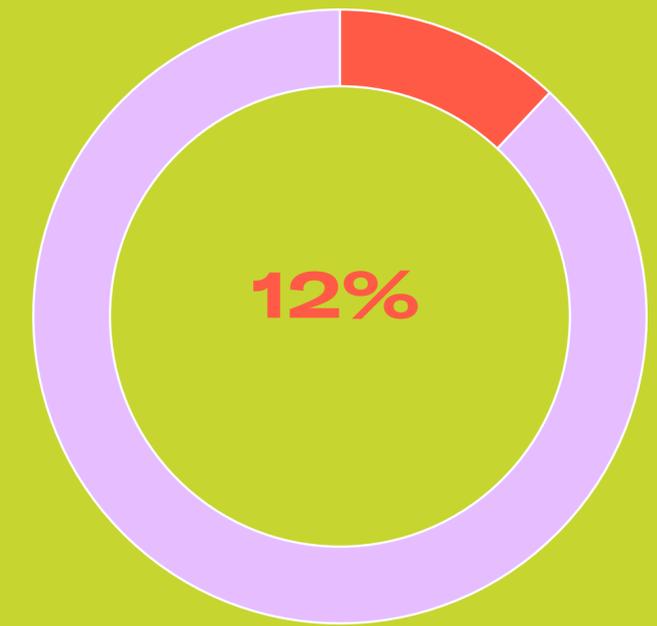
“Having worked for a number of publishers, I think Bonnier Books UK tries to be much more diverse in its workforce than any other publisher I’ve worked for before. There appears to be a wider mix of people from different cultures, backgrounds and ages generally.”



Staff – class identity



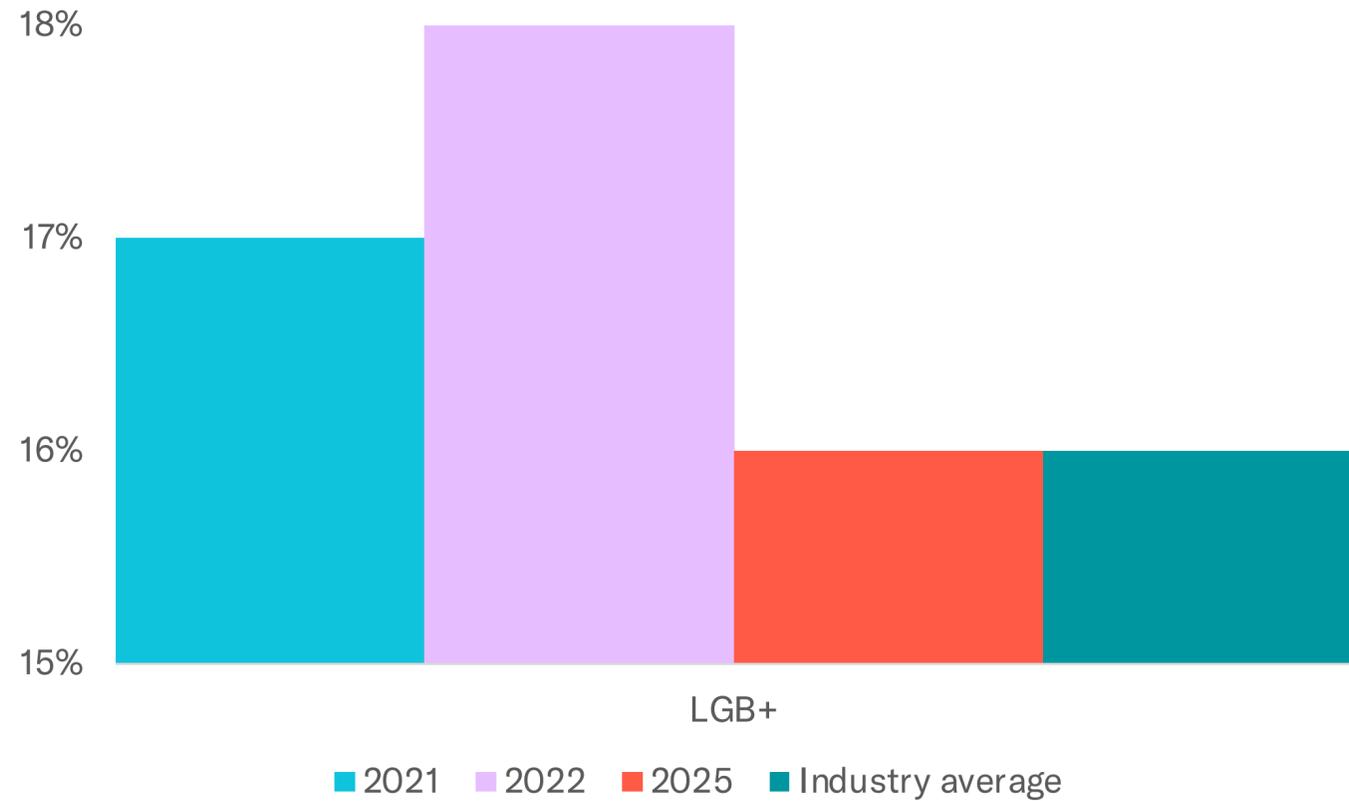
When asked to define their class identity, **32%** of our colleagues identified as working class, with **63%** identifying as middle class.



12% were privately educated – against an industry average of 16%.



Staff – sexual orientation



The percentage of colleagues identifying as LGB+ is **16%** marginally down since the last survey, though exactly in line with the industry average.

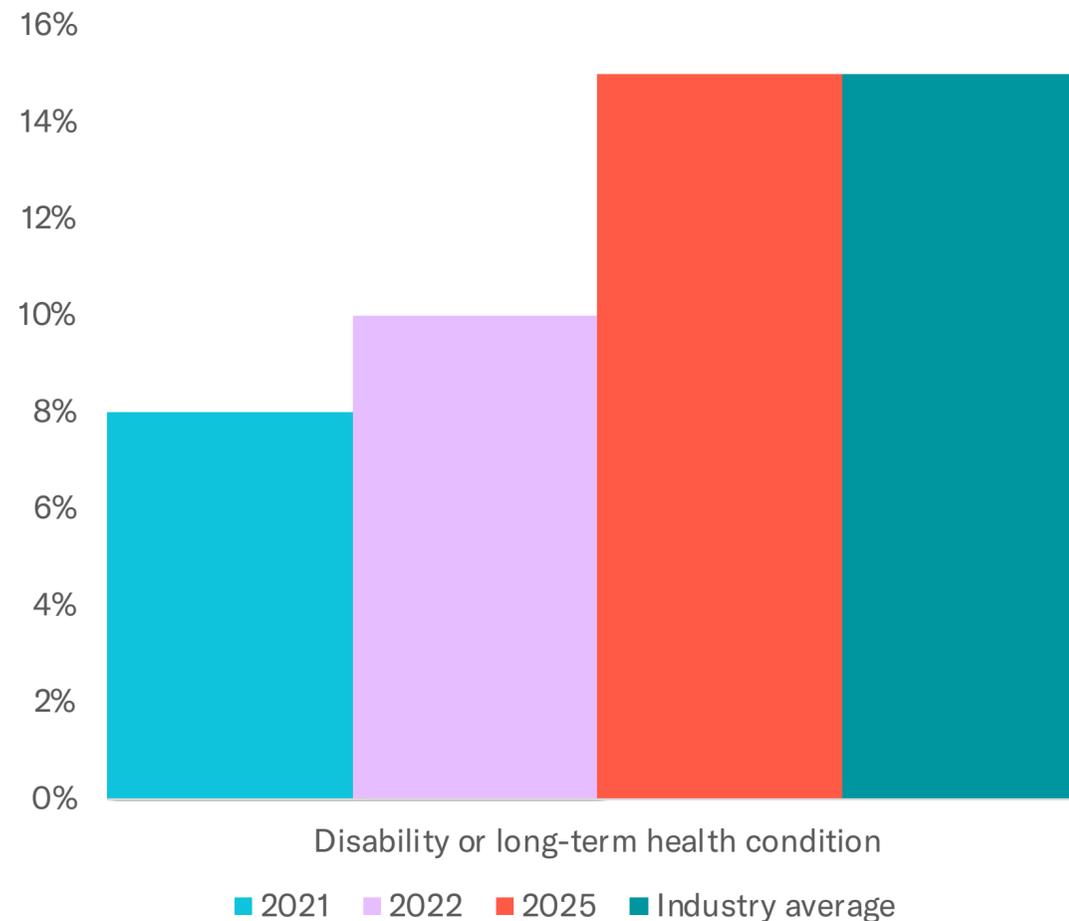


- Heterosexual – 83%
- Bisexual – 9%
- Lesbian / Gay – 4%
- Other – 3%
- Prefer not to say – 1%

“I love how inclusive and open-minded BBUK is! I don’t feel like I have to hide my sexuality here and feel there are plenty of opportunities to hear other perspectives on ethnicity, disabilities, sexualities and gender”



Staff – disability & long-term health conditions



There was a significant increase in representation since the last survey – up from **10%** to **15%**, with our numbers now in line with the industry average.

Of our colleagues who have identified as disabled or having long-term health conditions, **40%** are neurodivergent, a large uplift from the previous survey.

Among those surveyed who did identify as disabled or having long-term health conditions, three quarters said they felt that every effort had been made by the company to support them in their working life.

“Bonnier Books UK offers the flexible working culture that is needed for people with ADHD, as we are trusted to work at our own pace”

“The support and inclusion I have received at Bonnier has been really appreciated and everyone has made an effort to understand my disability and provide adjustments where needed”

“The flexibility to work remotely is a huge contributing factor to being able to manage my condition and my symptoms without impacting/minimising the impact on my work”



Gender pay gap

23.3%

Mean Pay Gap

▲ Increased from 19.1%

17.9%

Median Pay Gap

▼ Improved from 32.5%

22.8%

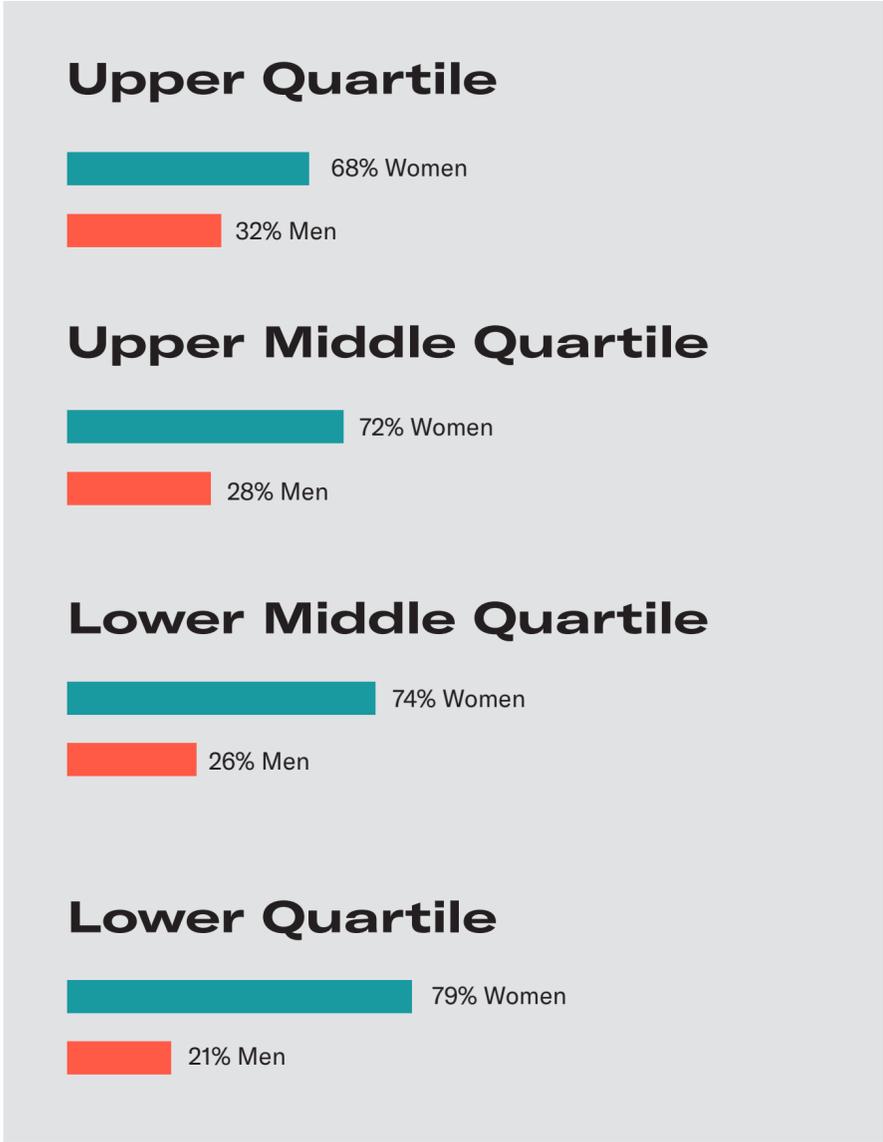
Mean Bonus Gap

▼ Improved from 42.3%

67.9%

Median Bonus Gap

▲ Increased from 0%



Overall gender split



73% Workforce Female

Leadership team



60% Leadership Team Female

The gender pay gap remains a significant area to confront within UK publishing. In our case, **representation across pay quartiles, rather than unequal pay, is the primary cause.** The size of our business is also a factor – with just a few people leaving or joining potentially having a significant effect on our results.

What the data shows

- We continue to have more women than men in our workforce; however, men remain disproportionately represented in the highest pay quartile relative to the overall gender balance of the business.
- The percentage of women in the upper middle quartile has increased since the last survey, suggesting positive progress in the pathway towards leadership positions.
- The median pay gap is narrowing, while the mean pay gap has widened.* This reflects the higher proportion of female employees in the lower two pay quartiles compared with the overall workforce, alongside the continued under-representation of men in entry-level and junior roles.
- The mean bonus gap has decreased, as the highest bonus payments were more evenly distributed between men and women. In contrast, the median bonus gap has increased, driven by a higher proportion of women in more junior roles receiving bonuses across the business.

We recognise that there is still much work to be done to address the underlying issues and support women’s continued career trajectory at BBUK – and it will form a key area of focus for 2026 and beyond.

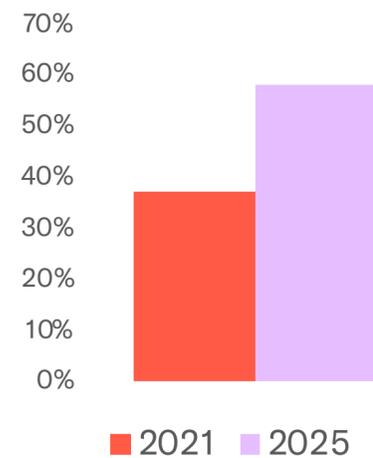
*Mean and median are two commonly-used different types of averages. The mean is the sum of all values divided by the number of values. The median is the middle value when the data is arranged in numerical order. They can differ due to skewed distribution of data.



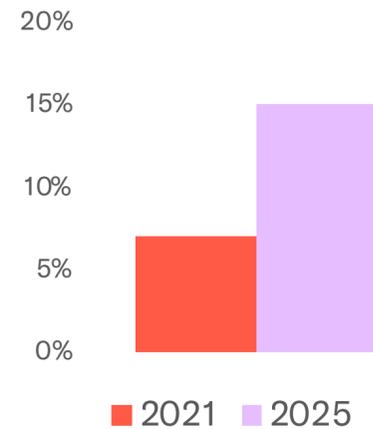
Candidate pool

We've been determined to broaden access and remove barriers to the publishing industry – partnering with inclusive job boards and organizations such as Creative Access to ensure that our roles reach communities traditionally underrepresented within the industry. Our anonymous recruitment policy has been woven into our hiring processes for a number of years, with hiring managers offered further training to reduce bias and promote inclusive hiring – methods that are bearing fruit as we welcome a more diverse candidate pool.

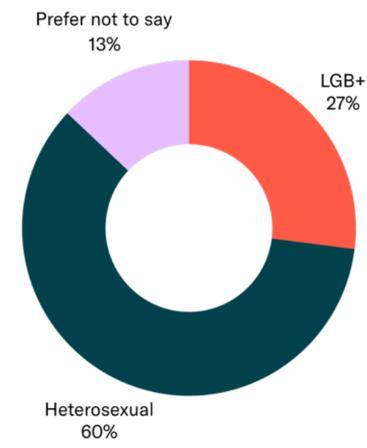
Our recruitment data was drawn from an analysis of over 10,000 candidates, who have voluntarily provided data to our applicant tracking system over the last 44 months.



Ethnically diverse backgrounds



Disability or long-term health condition



Sexual orientation

“We now take everyone at (anonymous) face value and the recruitment process feels wide open compared to before.”



Our publishing

We celebrated Nathanael Lessore winning the prestigious Jhalak Children's & YA Prize last year, taking home the award spotlighting extraordinary new books by writers of colour for his acclaimed *King of Nothing*. This follows Maisie Chan's win in the same category for *Danny Chung Does Not Do Maths*. A number of our Children's titles have also landed on the Diverse Book Awards shortlists in the last few years – with Lessore's *Steady for This* winning the YA category in 2024 and A.S. Hussain's *Desi Girl Speaking* selected as the 2025 Readers' Choice YA winner.

On the adult side, imprints Eriu and Black & White Publishing, based in Dublin and Edinburgh respectively, have also brought a greater regional breadth to our lists, ensuring that we're spotlighting the best in Irish and Scottish literary talent. Footnote Press – founded to centre marginalised stories and perspectives – has also gone from strength-to-strength, resonating with readers the world over and landing awards recognition including The Dylan Thomas Prize for Yasmin Zaher. The 2026 Footnote x Counterpoints Prize for Fiction will celebrate writers from refugee and migrant backgrounds telling stories centred around themes of displacement, courage and belonging.

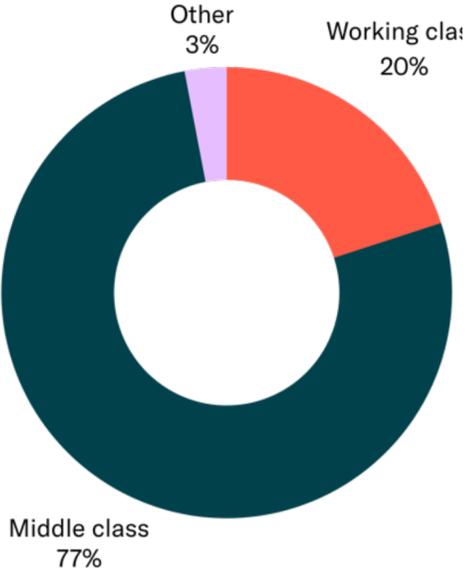


“Audiences are diverse and I love that voices and stories that years ago would have gone untold are finally getting heard. As an author from a background traditionally underrepresented in publishing, who spent most of my life feeling that becoming a published author is the sort of thing that doesn't happen to someone like me, it is so important to me to be published and to work with and collaborate with a publisher who really gets it, whose values align with my own, and who has ambitions to do better and better in terms of representation”

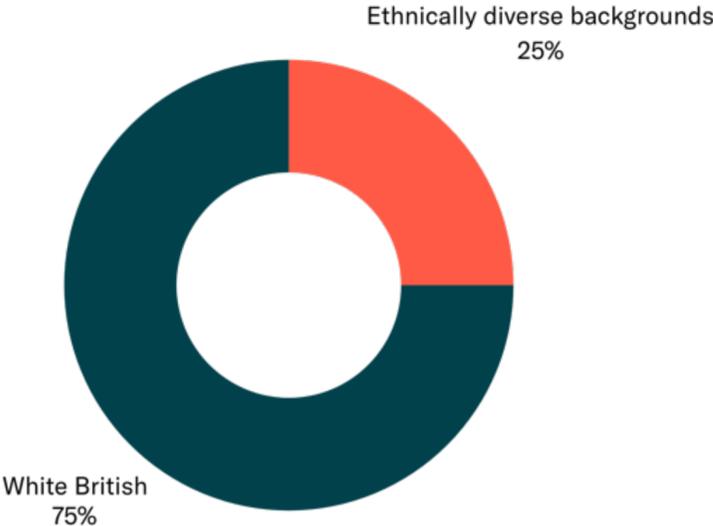
– Anonymous



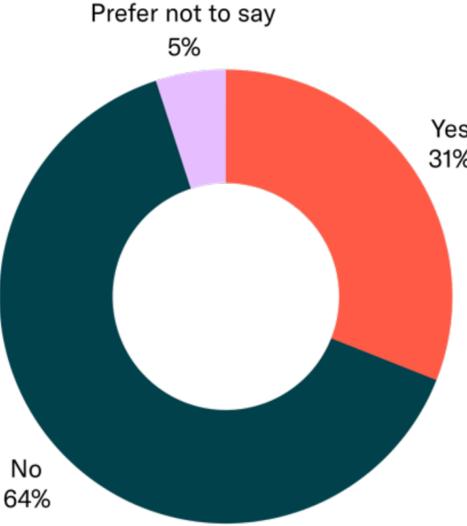
Authors/illustrator snapshot



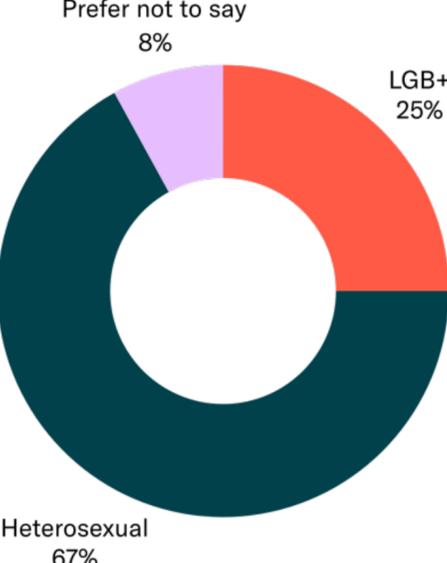
Class identity



Ethnicity



Disability/long-term health condition



Sexual Orientation



Though our author & illustrator survey doesn't present the full picture – limited by a lower response rate and restrictions around surveying those living outside of the UK – the results identify clear areas of future focus nonetheless. While we are publishing more authors and illustrators with disabilities/long-term health conditions and those from the LGB+ community than ever before, the proportion who identify as working class or come from ethnically diverse backgrounds is down on the previous survey – areas we will need to address to ensure our publishing continues to best represent our readers and reflect the society we all live in.



Recent developments

Since our last survey, we've embarked on a comprehensive programme of tangible, concrete actions for positive change.

Initiatives launched since our last survey include:

- **Introduction of enhanced equal parental leave** for all new parents regardless of gender or how they became parents
- **Interview shadowing programme** to introduce new voices and perspectives to the interview panel, and provide candidates with a more insightful interview experience
- **Staff mentorship programme**, pairing colleagues from across the business and open to all
- **Rebranding our internal I&R network as Empower and the creation of several dedicated break-out groups** to provide advocacy and peer-to-peer support on topics such as mental health, neurodiversity and disability, working parents, and promoting literacy
- **Dedicated menopause policy** to raise awareness around the workplace and better support affected employees
- **Partnerships with a number of charities**, including the donation of over 150k books and volunteering with the Children's Book Project, mentoring with Arts Emergency, and opening our office doors to school children with the National Literacy Trust's Words for Work campaign



Future areas of focus

Neurodiversity and accessibility

With 40% of our colleagues with disabilities or long-term health conditions identifying as neurodivergent, we're focusing on bolstering our support within the workplace through training and further concrete steps to ensure an inclusive workplace where all can thrive. Actions to include: neurodiversity awareness training for all staff; dedicated quiet space for staff at all BBUK offices.

Addressing the gender pay gap

Our gender pay gap shows that there is still progress to be made in achieving proportional representation across pay quartiles, both by encouraging men into the sector and supporting women in their development into senior roles. Actions to include: coaching programme to support working parents returning from parental leave, targeted outreach to increase number of male candidates applying for junior roles, development of leadership programme aimed at boosting career development among junior and mid-level female colleagues

Removing barriers to entry

Data from our candidate pool demonstrates that we're making tangible progress in broadening our recruitment and reaching underrepresented groups, but we must go further to ensure this is reflected in our staff demographics. Actions to include: further investment in our internship programmes with Creative Access; commitment to Real Living Wage and transparent salary bandings for all roles; broadening Get Into Publishing initiatives and outreach via Empower

Career development & training

We're committed to empowering our people, fostering a culture where every voice is heard and individuals can flourish. We're rolling out comprehensive training and mentoring programmes, revamping our appraisal systems, and opening new avenues for feedback. Actions to include: leadership training programme; annual training programme, including antisemitism training via Educating Matters; expanded staff mentorships, including a new Reverse Mentoring programme; new appraisal system showcasing visible career paths; regular anonymous staff surveys

Support for our creatives

We're determined to offer a best-in-class experience for our authors, illustrators and creatives – supporting them throughout their publishing journey, being transparent and trusted partners, and bringing their stories to the world with integrity and impact. Actions to include: new Author Pack to help demystify every stage of the publishing process

