



**NHS Shetland Equality Outcomes &
Mainstreaming Update Report
2023-2025**

April 2025

This report is also available in large print and other formats and languages, upon request. Please call NHS Shetland on (01595) 743060 or email: shb.nhs.uk/contactus.asp

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1. Purpose of this Report

The Equality Outcomes and Equality Mainstreaming Reports (EO&MR) were published in 2021, setting out our objectives to advance equality and tackle inequalities for the period of 2021-2025. An interim progress report was published in April 2023. This Progress Report covers activity towards our equality outcomes, and mainstreaming progress in the last 2 years.

Progress has been made internally as an organisation and a wider approach taken across Shetland as a whole, to ensure work continues towards achieving equality. Moving forward, we will build on initiatives that have demonstrated a positive impact, ensuring they are further integrated into existing structures for sustained progress and progress anticipated will be reflected in actions in the Shetland Equalities Outcomes and Mainstreaming Report for the 2025-2029.

2. Legal Context

The Public Sector Equality Duty, referred to as the 'General Equality Duty,' is set out in the Equality Act 2010. Under The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012, public authorities are also covered by specific duties, which are designed to help listed authorities meet the General Equality Duty.

2.1 The General Equality Duty

The General Equality Duty requires public authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010;

Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant Protected Characteristic and those who do not; and

Foster good relations between people who share a Protected Characteristic and those who do not.

The public sector equality duty covers the following protected characteristics:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation.

The public sector equality duty also covers marriage and civil partnerships, with regard to eliminating unlawful discrimination in employment.¹

¹ <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/essential-guide-public-sector-equality-duty-scotland.pdf>

2.2 The Specific Duties

As well as the General Duty, the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) regulations set out additional Specific Duties that apply to Scottish public authorities listed in the Schedule to The Equality Act (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012, as amended.

All listed authorities are subjected to the following Scottish specific duties, and are required to:

- report on mainstreaming the equality duty
- publish equality outcomes and report progress
- assess and review the equality impact of policies and practices
- gather, use and publish employee information
- use information on the characteristics of members or board members gathered by the Scottish Ministers
- publish gender pay gap information
- publish equal pay statements
- consider award criteria and conditions in relation to public procurement
- publish in a manner that is accessible.²

3. Workforce

3.1 Equal Pay Statement

NHS Shetland reviewed and published an Equal Pay Statement and Equal Pay Policy 2025 on the website. This is consistent with the national stance for NHS Scotland and the local context.

3.2 Equal Pay Monitoring Report

The latest Equal Pay Monitoring Report 2025 is published on the NHS Shetland website. The report in line with compliance of the Public Sector duty shares

- Gender pay gap between men and women ,
- Pay gap between people who are disabled and those who are not
- Pay gap between people who fall into a minority racial group and those that do not ,

The variance in data is presented by different terms and conditions of employment which are Agenda for Change,(AFC) Medical and Dental and Senior Manager Grades. The variance of the total overall workforce position and median pay analysis is also shown on basic hourly rate and percentage pay gap.

Analysis of basic hourly rates across AFC Job Family groups enables further assessment of segregation anomalies by Gender, Ethnicity and Disability.

3.3 Workforce Monitoring Report

The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 require public bodies in Scotland to produce an Annual Workforce Monitoring Report covering all 9 of the “protected characteristics”, as defined in the Equality Act 2010.

The Regulations require that the Workforce Report must include details of:

- The number of staff and their relevant protected characteristics
- Information on the recruitment, development and retention of employees, in terms of their protected characteristics.

² [Public Sector Equality Duty: specific duties in Scotland | EHRC](#)

- Details of the progress the public body has made to gather and use the above information to enable it to better perform the equality duty.

NHS Shetland has completed and published a Workforce Monitoring Report on an annual basis. This report compares the workforce diversity profile data against the Scottish census information held for Shetland to establish if representative of the local community or not.

The report also reviews completion rates of diversity information during the recruitment process and through the on boarding process for employment but acknowledges that staff have the legal right not to disclose information about their protected characteristics, if they so choose. The data sets are restricted to what current systems can provide and the information staff supply is on a purely voluntary basis. Due to the size of our workforce we present small numbers as less than 5 to help maintain anonymity.

The Workforce and Equal Pay Monitoring Reports:

- Demonstrates the willingness of NHS Shetland to comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012.
- Enables the NHS Shetland Health Board and others, to gauge whether NHS Shetland employees and prospective employees are being treated fairly. Any anomalies or inconsistencies highlighted by the report are looked into and any appropriate follow up action taken.
- Gives reassurance to NHS Shetland staff that they are working in an environment free from prejudice or discrimination.
- Gives the population of Shetland and any prospective employees, reassurance that NHS Shetland treats its staff in a fair and equitable manner.
- Enables external monitoring bodies such as the Equality and Human Rights Commission for Scotland and the Scottish Human Rights Commission to monitor our compliance with current equality and diversity legislation and good practice guidelines.

The report is presented to the Staff Governance Committee and are Area Partnership Forum for discussion and approval, prior to widespread distribution including being published on the NHS Shetland website, as required by the Regulations.

3.4 Equality and Diversity Training

Staff of NHS Shetland have access to online learning materials through national system TURAS Learn. Mandatory training for all staff includes eLearning module 'Introduction to equality, diversity and human rights', this covers the protected characteristics and the law and is required to be refreshed every 3 years by all staff in post. Various other eLearning modules for specific protected characteristics are also available, alongside role / registered body related learning that is provided. This includes, 'Preventing and Responding to Sexual Harassment. However we are currently working on developing local version to supplement workplace training materials. Other training has been progressed and will continue to be promoted for example; Bystander training.

Recruitment and selection training focuses on equity and fairness in application of procedures and includes activity on unconscious bias. Job Evaluation training is focussed on understanding equal pay and equal value concepts, and the prevention of discrimination when evaluating responsibility factors. Unconscious bias training is also incorporated within training modules. Unfortunately TURAS, our training recording system does not link with workforce system to enable reporting on diversity data.

A review and roll out of Equality and Diversity Impact Assessor Training is planned for 2025/26 in conjunction with local partner Shetland Island Council. NHS Shetland commits to continue seeking improvement to the data sets collected and how the information is utilised.

4. Mainstreaming Challenges

There are current challenges with workforce and clinical systems in respect of availability of relevant data sets that support consistent reporting. We hope that planned developments for both national workforce and clinical systems will address these issues for the future. Focus for patients is to ensure any adjustments required are recorded

Implementation of Job train has supported the improvement of recruitment related diversity data-sets, however challenges remain in respect of filtering invalid automated applications which distorts equality and recruitment application data sets. Self-service modules in eESS workforce system have also enable staff to view and update their personal diversity information held. We promote self-service approach to maintain up to date personal data but have found limited uptake to vary information collated through on-boarding. The workforce systems do not interface well which provides challenges for reporting.

Patient systems across primary and secondary are also inconsistent. We hope for similar improvements to be achieved for data sets for patient systems.

In the last 12- 24 months the Public Health team have been engaging with local community groups in order to collate information to gain a wider broader understanding of perceptions and patients experience regarding access to local health services. This was joint project with Health and Local Authority colleagues to establish a more rounded and informed view of protected characteristic profiles alongside census information. This intelligence has helped shape a Shetland Equalities Mainstreaming and Outcomes action plan for 2025 – 2029. The Public Health Annual report sets out current challenges and identifies pockets of deprivation which aren't necessarily concentrated in one specific area.

4. Equality Outcomes: Progress

An equality outcome is an impact that NHS Shetland aims to achieve to further one or more of the needs mentioned in the General Duty: eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations.

Outcome One: meeting the communication and health care needs of our local ethnic communities and the promotion of good health. This outcome will advance equality of opportunity, specifically equality of access to health care and health care information.

The ability of all members of our local ethnic communities to communicate clearly and effectively their healthcare needs is essential if we are to achieve equality in healthcare. Hence the importance of interpretation services

Supporting Actions in 2021/25 Outcomes Report	Progress as at March 2025
a) Continue to make the “Language Line” telephone interpretation service	a)

<p>available wherever non-English speaking patients require to access healthcare on Shetland.</p> <p>b) All NHS Shetland, strategies and re-organisational proposals will continue to contain the offer at the front to make the document available in any other language or format upon request. All requests will be met promptly.</p> <p>c) Continue to meet the healthcare needs of our local ethnic communities. NHS Shetland will promote positive health and well-being within our local ethnic communities and also our own workforce. NHS Shetland will continue to do health promotion work in co-operation with Shetland CHSSCP.</p>	<p>The “Language Line” telephone interpretation service continues to be utilised.</p> <p>Patients identify at registration if they may need support from the service. In addition to requirements from the local community, from May onwards Shetland is a popular cruise destination. The number of cruise ship passengers disembarking can exceed 4,000 a day which can have a significant impact on emergency care services.</p> <p>Requirement is for both verbal interpretation and translation of medical documents, however translation of medical records is the greatest demand</p> <p>b) All NHS Shetland policies, strategies, formal documents continue to offer the document available in any other language or format upon request, however the main requirements remains translation of medical records in range of languages not only from patient’s resident in the local community but also from the transient population visiting Shetland accessing services during their visit.</p> <p>c) In addition to the updated community profile census data 2022, the Public Health team have been engaging with local focus groups in the community to create a protected characteristic profile with both national and local information.</p> <p>The Local feedback described Shetland as becoming more diverse, and easier to mix with people of races here, than when in England. However not free from experiences of race/religion discrimination. Participants perceived ‘Shetlanders’ were more likely to be believed / taken seriously and listened to when accessing services.</p> <p>The term “sooth moother” or “incomer” is frequently used to describe people who have relocated e.g. who were not born in Shetland / or have a Shetland heritage regardless of ethnicity. This can be perceived as a derogatory term, even if not intended.</p>
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Outcome Two: Ensuring there is race equality within NHS Shetland. Any discriminatory conduct will be eliminated.

Supporting Actions in 2021/25 Outcomes Report	Progress as at March 2025
<p>a) Production of Annual Equality and Diversity Workforce Monitoring Reports</p> <p>Detailed information on the ethnic make up of the NHS Shetland workforce and other monitoring data is contained in the annual NHS Shetland Equality and Diversity Workforce Monitoring Reports. The NHS Shetland Workforce Monitoring Report for 2016/17 is available on the NHS Shetland website at: www.shb.scot.nhs.uk</p>	<p>A workforce monitoring report is provided on an annual basis. The reports are widely circulated within NHS Shetland and posted on the NHS Shetland website at: www.shb.scot.nhs.uk to allow public scrutiny.</p> <p>There continues to be challenges with the Job Train recruitment system accepting automated responses that are incomplete / invalid. This distorts equality recruitment data sets as the number of invalid applications are disproportionately represented.</p> <p>NHS Shetland has been successful in engaging international applicants to relocate to Shetland through international recruitment campaigns and developed pastoral and professional support framework for new staff from out with the UK.</p> <p>We continue try to reduce incomplete data for ethnicity from the workforce data and have strengthened and improved discrimination and harassment reporting mechanisms through updates to the whistleblowing procedures and developing staff whistleblowing champions from across the organisation.</p> <p>An online learning module for Equality and Diversity is now a mandatory part of our corporate induction training, this needs to be refreshed every 3 years.</p>
<p>b) Complaints and investigations</p> <p>Any issues or complaints raised by members of staff with a racial discriminatory element will be promptly and thoroughly investigated and appropriate follow up action taken if required. This will involve other bodies and agencies, where necessary.</p>	<p>All complaints are progressed through the Once for Scotland investigation policy.</p> <p>During 2021/25 * less than 5 complaints were made that involved a racial element. Where appropriate referrals to registered bodies and / or Disclosure Scotland are progressed</p> <p>The Whistleblowing champions in place, completed additional training to be able to signpost and support staff with concerns</p>

	We aim to ensure that all colleagues feel confident in being able to access internal support when needed and/or raise concerns
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6. Disability Equality Outcomes

The main disability equality outcomes are:

Outcome One: Communication support. This will advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.	
Supporting Actions in 2021/25 Outcomes Report	Progress as at March 2025
<p>a) British Sign Language (BSL) Services</p> <p>There is no on-Island British Sign Language interpreter. NHS Shetland will continue to explore Video BSL alternatives.</p>	<p>NHS Shetland is currently rolling out a new website. This has an Accessibility section that provides guidance and links to support available to access services.</p> <p>Feedback from local focus groups indicates the main challenge is reliance on transport services. A Transport group has been established and working through action plans that include improving patient access to services. This will support ability to attend health appointments promptly when required and return home and enable people with a disability to be more independent</p> <p>NHS Shetland promote the National Contact Scotland Video Relay Service is a Scottish Government funded tool which enables deaf patients to contact landlines through an online interpreter from their mobile device. This is also available to support staff to make a call to a deaf patient using this tool.</p> <p>Health Improvement Health Literacy work in partnership with Scottish Government, aiming to improve access to Primary Care for people who use British Sign Language –<u>A local Shetland BSL Plan 2024-2030 has been developed.</u></p> <p>The number of BSL users currently living in Shetland is relatively low. Living on a small island has its challenges, but we want to make sure that those who live here, can “thrive and reach their full potential” <i>Shetland BSL plan 2024-30</i></p>

	<p>To help towards this vision, we recognise the need to provide equitable health care: everyone has a right to feel heard, understood, and have the confidence, knowledge and skills to make informed decisions about their health.</p> <p>The healthyshetland website promotes awareness and shares local BSL experiences</p>
<p>b) Portable Induction Loops and fixed induction loops</p> <p>Fixed inductions loops are available to assist patients who use a hearing aid.</p>	<p>This availability has continued.</p> <p>We then have a secondary form, which asks if patients are carers, if they are hearing impaired and require additional assistance. If a patient requests assistance / supportive adjustments this is noted e.g. don't telephone - send letters only. This is on request, some patients have a hearing impairment but require no additional assistance at this time, so it won't be recorded on EMIS.</p>
<p>c) Information in other formats</p> <p>NHS Shetland will provide any of its published material in any other format or language, upon request. Our leaflets, booklets and other published material contain this offer at the front of each document, together with information on who to contact to obtain this.</p>	<p>This offer is at the front of our published material. All requests have been met within a reasonable timeframe.</p> <p>General communication improvements achieved</p> <p>A structure of corporate communications have been implemented including – Organisation wide weekly communications an monthly Newsletters; TEAMS monthly organisational brief by Chief Executive with guest presenters; Loop app is now in place for corporate comms messages; Social media is actively used for recruitment advertising and NHS promotions and public engagements. Actions address challenges feedback through iMatter staff survey and learning gained from public engagements.</p>

d) Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) “Good Practice” Guidelines

Most people with a sight problem can read written material without adaptation, if it is written clearly. All of our new information leaflets, booklets and published material complies with the requirements of the RNIB publication: “See it right, making information accessible for people with sight problems”. For example:

- All material should be in a sans serif font, minimum font size 12.
- There should be a good colour contrast between the print and the background
- Text should be justified left, this gives a jagged edge at the edge of the right hand side of the page which helps people with a sight problem to see where the next line begins
- Text should not be in all capitals, often the shape of a word helps a person to identify the word. Capitals remove the recognisable shapes.
- Emboldening should be used to give emphasis rather than underlining. Underlining masks the shape of words.

Standard letter and report templates are provided by Corporate Services in order to maintain consistency of our published material to comply with the RNIB “Good Practice Guidelines”.

RNIB compliance forms part of our Equality and Diversity Impact assessment process.

In addition there has been ongoing improvements to the access and signage within NHS Shetland buildings and primary care practices when changes occur

Outcome Two: Supporting national and local mental health initiatives. This will advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Supporting Actions in 2021/25 Outcomes Report	Progress as at March 2025
a) NHS Shetland will continue to support both national and local mental health initiatives, such as the “Butterfly Scheme” for people with	NHS Shetland has supported these campaigns and worked closely with local voluntary and other organisations MH to update

dementia and the “See me” campaign to help overcome the stigma often associated with mental ill health.

b) NHS Shetland will continue to work closely with local partners and NHS Grampian to address mental health issues in the wider community which may have been caused or exacerbated by the COVID-19 lockdowns.

c) The mental health and wellbeing of NHS Shetland staff is also a priority. COVID-19 has placed many staff under extreme pressure.

Good Mental Health for All project underway locally – funding secured and recruitment completed early 2022/23 for Health Improvement Advisor. Aims to establish mental health for all steering group to draft revised MH strategy and establish partnership to lead implementation. Deliverables: strategic mapping, asset mapping, dataset development (Health Improvement team sits within IJB, but within NHS Public Health team).

In the last 2 years focus has been building capacity for health literacy within services working with people who have Learning Disabilities.

During Covid a number of additional support mechanisms were put in place to support staff wellbeing group was established to review what worked well and what was valued by staff. More recently a Spiritual Care Lead has been appointed who will support the development of a wellbeing action plan that identifies the ongoing needs and the support required to sustain the general wellbeing of the workforce his work will be in conjunction with other workforce support services leads from Occupational Health, Safety, Risk, and HR and Development, that will allow triangulation of data and action plans.

Sickness absence rates are consistently around 4% however, highest hours lost to absence relates to mental health. We have confidential contact support; workplace mediation; TRIM a peer review support check in, as first response to workplace traumatic incidents; self & Management referrals into Occupational Health; access to Silver cloud, online CBT; access to staff Psychology support services in NHS Grampian or Practitioner Support Help Line. MSK is secondary reason for sickness absence or adjustments; we have implemented PHIO app and will track frequency of utilisation by staff

The Equality and Diversity Workforce Monitoring Reports have been published annually on NHS

	<p>Shetland’s website, the latest 2025 www.shb.scot.nhs.uk</p> <p>Less than 5 formal concerns / complaints relating to disability issues have been raised by staff in the last 4 years. Reasonable adjustments to maintain staff in the workplace or support return to work from sickness absence are agreed with the individual and line manager in conjunction with Occupational Health Services and HR guidance where required. Workforce policies including flexible working policies are available https://workforce.nhs.scot/</p>
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7. Age

The disability equality work described above has applicability to older people in Shetland. In addition, the main additional age related equality outcomes are set out below.

<p>Outcome One: Implementing the Scottish Government Policy “Getting it Right for Every Child” (GIFREC) This will advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.</p>	
<p>Supporting Actions in 2021/25 Outcomes Report</p>	<p>Progress as at March 2025</p>
<p>Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC)</p> <p>GIRFEC is a Scottish Government initiative to support children and young people. It is designed to ensure agencies supports families by making sure children and young people receive the right help, at the right time, from the right place</p> <p>NHS Shetland will continue to support this multi-disciplinary multi-agency approach and participate in multi-agency training.</p>	<p>NHS Shetland have continued to support this multi-disciplinary multi-agency approach and will continue to do so. We also participated in multi-agency training.</p> <p>NHS Shetland has participated in work through the Shetland Children’s Partnership. Areas of focus include the involvement of children and young people in decision making about their own care and decisions in the community. We have asked children and families about their experiences of neurodevelopmental care in Shetland, we are working closely with young people who are care experienced who are leading change to services. ‘Who Cares Scotland’ programme included young people. We have asked young people for their views on the clinical and care strategy w</p>

	<p>Connecting with Parents' Motivations (CwPM) is training in strength-based communication skills. It is aimed to enhance the abilities of the early years, and wider children and families, workforce to have conversations about change and towards support.</p> <p>The training encourages greater use of strength-based communication skills, drawing on best practice to incorporate strategies from motivational interviewing, solution-focused and person-centred approaches.</p>
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<p>Outcome Two: Continue to support the national “Childsmile” initiative. This will advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.</p>	
<p>Supporting Actions in 2021/25 Outcomes Report</p>	<p>Progress as at March 2025</p>
<p>“Childsmile”</p> <p>This is a national programme designed to improve the oral health of children in Scotland and reduce inequalities both in dental health and access to dental service. NHS Shetland will continue its active involvement in “Childsmile”.</p> <p>The target for Scotland is to have 60% of primary 7 age children with no dental decay.</p>	<p>2021/22 focussed on covid and adjustments to service provision and support. The focus of the Childsmile team was to reinstate the programmes to support return to service which also included home visits. There was no meaningful or comparable National Dental Inspection Programme data for this period.</p> <p>To date the Childsmile programme, has achieved excellent results in the National Dental Inspection Programme (NDIP). Shetland has maintained a high level of decay-free children of Primary 1 age. The average figure of 80.4% decay-free has been consistent for a number of years and is evidence that the strong emphasis we put on oral disease prevention is working.</p> <p>Childsmile within Network Enabled Care approach in HSCP is part of Shifting the Balance of Care programme to increase accessibility of service by delivering outwith Lerwick, within local Health Centre. Linked to scoping of “Oral Health Advice Clinic” model currently active working with Recovery Hub that should help overcome parental barriers to accessing dental services</p>

Outcome Three: Promote Independent Living for Older People. This will advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Supporting Actions in 2021/25 Outcomes Report	Progress as at March 2025
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Promote Independent Living for Older People

Since 2012, the Scottish Government have promoted Intermediate Care Services to patients, usually older people, after leaving hospital or when they are at risk of being sent to hospital.

The service offers a link between places such as hospitals and people’s homes, and between different areas of the health and social care systems. The three main aims of intermediate care are:

- To avoid unnecessary admissions to hospitals
- To help people be as independent as possible after a stay in hospital
- Prevent people having to move into a care home until absolutely necessary
- the immunisation and vaccination screening programmes where implemented in phases prioritising those at greater risk, this will be repeated as part of winter planning

NHS Shetland has continued its active involvement in this national initiative. This work will continue, on a joint basis with Shetland Islands Council.

NHS Shetland and Shetland Islands Council work collaboratively in line with the joint “Discharge Protocol for Hospital Patients in Shetland

Multi-agency working is effective in Shetland, an example is discharge planning where success is demonstrated by Shetland’s low readmission to hospital rates.

Discharges are managed by a multi-agency group, including acute ward staff, pharmacy and social work to ensure appropriate effective discharge. On discharge some people will be supported by the Intermediate Care Team or other Community Nursing or Primary Care colleagues.

Evidence of effectiveness here is reflected in Shetland’s low readmission rates, which have continued to improve: (Re-admissions within 28 days of discharge, per 1000 discharges)

	2015/16	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Scotland	98.1	106.7	102.2	103.9
Shetland	79.9	73.2	68.2	76.1
Comparable family Group Average	90.1	95.6	90.7	96.1

In 2022/23 **Social care** there were:

- 9 elderly care homes with capacity for 147 residential and 98 day care places for older people
- 40 supported living placements and 77 day care places for adults with learning disabilities
- 12 places in children’s and young people’s residential care

- 5 respite care places for mentally/physically disabled children
- 667 care at home clients
- 698 homes connected to the community alarm system

Evidence of local care home use shows we are maintaining people well at home, data shows a low median length of stay for long term residents compared to Scottish average..

Shetland Islands Council uses the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) to assess and compare the performance of its services, including care homes. The LGBF provides a standardized approach to comparing local authority performance across various indicators, allowing councils to identify areas for improvement and share best practices. Shetland's performance in the LGBF has been relatively strong, with a significant portion of indicators in the top two quartiles.

Three key indicators below:

%who agree they are supported to live as independently as possible:

	2015/16	2021/22	2023/24
Scotland	82.7%	78.8%	72.4%
Shetland	74.5%	89.8%	95.4%
Family Group Average	81.7%	82.9%	79.7%

% of people with long term care needs who are receiving personal care at home:

	2015/16	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Scotland	60.7%	61.9%	61.7%	62.6%
Shetland	72.1%	75.3%	76.7%	75%
Family Group Average	60.4%	61.5%	61.1%	62.8%

% of people who feel services and support helped maintain or improve their quality of life:

	2015/16	2021/22	2023/24
Scotland	84%	78.1%	69.8%
Shetland	83.6%	93.6%	70.7%

	Family Group Average	83.7%	80.8%	75.7%
In addition Workforce updates related to AGE	<p>The focus on falls prevention, the Otago programme provides a strength and balance exercise class with educational talks. The 12 week programme is held in locality based leisure centres throughout Shetland. The programme has multiple benefits: it aims to reduce falls, keep >65 active, improve confidence and improve social connection</p> <p>The Equalities Workforce Monitoring Report published annually sets out the age profile of the workforce in comparison to the local population of which is broadly similar in that the workforce and population are aging. NHS Shetland have been engaging with the local Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) to promote NHS Careers in schools / school leavers and the local college to assist in providing work experience and promoting vacancies. We continue to review opportunities for Modern Apprenticeships, and provide work experience to school, college and university students.</p> <p>NHS Shetland has a flexible working policy in place and also introduced a 'Retire and Return policy' which supports retention of skills and experience</p> <p><5 formal complaints have been received in between 2021 – 2025 relating to age.</p>			

8. Sex (male or female) equality outcomes

The main sex equality outcomes are:

Outcome One: Continue to identify and provide targeted healthcare to patients who are victims of gender based violence such as rape, sexual abuse or who have been trafficked. This will help to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited under this Act.	
Supporting Actions in 2021/25 Outcomes Report	Progress as at March 2025
NHS Shetland has developed and implemented a number of policies and strategies to address this issue. The work undertaken includes:	This work has continued and is ongoing.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The routine inquiry of gender based violence in priority areas. • Providing training for front line NHS Shetland managers and staff to recognise the signs of gender based violence and to have the knowledge and skills to respond. • Producing information on the sources of help and support and making these readily available. 	<p>NHS Shetland is a key partner in the Domestic Abuse Partnership (via Public Health). https://www.safershetland.com/web-safety</p> <p>The local Community Partnership group doesn't specifically focus on a single gender, however Women's Aid is a key service provider who does focus on a service to women. https://www.shetlandwa.org/</p> <p>Other support resources promoted are: https://www.compasscentre.org/</p> <p>NHS Scotland launched consultation on the Gender Based Violence policy in 2024 https://www.gov.scot/publications/consultation-nhsscotland-once-scotland-workforce-policies/pages/4/</p> <p>The Equality and Diversity training for staff covers gender based violence. Additional online learning is available via the Equality and Diversity zone in TURAS Learn</p>
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<p>Outcome Two: Improving the uptake of health care by men. This will advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.</p>	
<p>Supporting Actions in 2021/25 Outcomes Report</p>	<p>Progress as at March 2025</p>
<p>GPs on Shetland offer a range of health checks specifically for men. However, men still visit their GP on average 33% less than females. In addition, on average, 65% of men are overweight or obese, compared to 60% of women.</p> <p>Over the next four years, NHS Shetland will continue to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mount men's health awareness campaigns • Promote the Healthy Workplace Initiative • Promote health care services through the "Know Who To Turn To" campaign • Supported National Health promotion initiatives 	<p>The initial work focussing on men's health was completed. Most promotional activity has moved to social media - including prostate cancer (promotion for Movember, men and eating disorders, plus men and HPV .</p> <p>AAA screening is spherically for men (one off at aged 65/66) - Uptake in Shetland is high at 89.2 % compared with Scotland 72.6 %</p> <p>Primary care have been implemented the Advance Nurse Practitioner (ANP) service to improve access to healthcare services for those who experience inequalities and those who find it hard to access services for a variety of reasons.</p> <p>This involves outreach work with other departments, ie sexual health and wellbeing, SMRS, Mental Health, Drugs and alcohol hubs, 3rd sector organisations to reach across all Mainland GP practices.</p>

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Outcome Three: Ensure there is gender equality within NHS Shetland. This will eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited under this Act.	
Supporting Actions in 2021/25 Outcomes Report	Progress as at March 2025
<p>In 2016/17, NHS Shetland produced an Annual Equality and Diversity Workforce Monitoring Report covering all of the 9 “protected characteristics”, as defined by the Equality Act 2010. The Workforce Report contains information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The sex, female/male make up of the NHS Shetland workforce • Information on the sex of new starts and leavers • The sex of staff promoted • The sex of staff applying for training and receiving training • The sex, female/male, make up of NHS Shetland Senior Managers <p>Any anomalies highlighted by the Report are followed up appropriate action taken if required.</p> <p>Any complaints and alleged incidents with a sex equality element, is promptly investigated and appropriate follow up action taken, involving other agencies, as appropriate.</p>	<p>The NHS Shetland Equality and Diversity Workforce Monitoring Report is published annually.</p> <p>The reports are widely circulated within NHS Shetland and posted on the NHS Shetland website to allow public scrutiny: www.shb.scot.nhs.uk.</p> <p>NHS Shetland continue to encourage and improve the collection of Equality and Diversity data sets so that they can monitor and review data to identify any anomalies and promote safe working practices and prevent discrimination. Workforce monitoring reports are published annually.</p> <p>Complaints relating to sex discrimination in the last 4 years total less than 5.</p>

Outcome Four: Production of Equal Pay Reports: Compliance with the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012. This will eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited under this Act.	
Supporting Actions in 2021/25 Outcomes Report	Progress as at March 2025
<p>The equal pay part of the Regulations is designed to monitor public bodies to ensure that there is no gender inequality in their pay rates.</p> <p>The measures include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A requirement to publish every two years information on any Gender Pay Gap. This information should be shown as any 	<p>NHS Shetland Equal Pay Statement and Equal Pay Report were published in 2021, 2023 and again in 2025</p> <p>Reports are widely circulated within NHS Shetland and posted on the NHS Shetland website at: www.shb.scot.nhs.uk to allow public scrutiny.</p>

<p>difference: "... between the men's average hourly pay (excluding overtime) and women's average hourly pay (excluding overtime)."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The information published must be based on the most recent data available. • Public bodies, must publish every four years a statement on equal pay. From 2017 onwards, the equal pay statements must also specify: “(a) The authorities policy on equal pay amongst its employees between – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) men and women; (ii) persons who are disabled and persons who are not: and (iii) persons who fall into a minority racial group and persons who do not, and <p>(b) occupational segregation amongst its employees, being the concentration of –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) men and women; (ii) persons who are disabled and persons who are not: and (iii) persons who fall into a minority racial group and persons who do not, in particular grades and in particular occupations.” <p>The information published must be based on the most recent data available.</p> <p>Any anomalies highlighted by the Report will followed up appropriate action taken if required.</p> <p>Any complaints and alleged incidents with a sex equality element, will be promptly investigated and appropriate follow up action taken, involving other agencies, as appropriate.</p> 	<p>This includes analysis broken down by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender • Disability • Ethnicity <p>Providing comparisons of rates of pay for different terms and conditions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agenda for Change • Medical and Dental • Senior Management <p>In the last 4 years there were <5 formal grievances received from staff that included an equal pay element</p>
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9. Sexual orientation outcomes

There is one main sexual orientation outcome. This is:

<p>Outcome one: Meeting the specific healthcare needs of our local LGBT communities. This will advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.</p>	
<p>Supporting Actions in 2021/25 Outcomes Report</p>	<p>Progress as at March 2025</p>

<p>a) Men who have sex with men</p> <p>NHS Shetland will continue the safe sex awareness campaign.</p> <p>b) Blood Borne Virus (BBV) testing</p> <p>NHS Shetland will continue its BBV testing campaign and carry out further outreach initiatives.</p> <p>c) Increase the availability of information</p> <p>Over the next four years, NHS Shetland will continue to provide healthcare information of particular interest to our LGB and T communities. Work will also continue to identify and meet any new information needs.</p>	<p>A campaign was run in late 2018/early 2019 in co-operation with NHS Grampian Sexual Health Services. The campaign was designed to raise awareness about Hepatitis C. The testing process will also indicate the presence of Hepatitis A and B.</p> <p>Particular work by Community Nursing Advanced Nurse Practitioner with special interest in Public Health working with Recovery Hub to support access to and uptake of testing. This specific work was targeted for men via the sexual health clinic with promotion of PEP for prevention of HIV, HPV, Hep B and Mpox vaccines.</p> <p>Sexual health clinics are now open to all with outreach to areas groups identified as experiencing difficulties in access</p>
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<p>Outcome Two: Commence a “Rainbow Campaign” within NHS Shetland. This will advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.</p>	
<p>Supporting Actions in 2021/25 Outcomes Report</p>	<p>Progress as at March 2025</p>
<p>a) Make available NHS Shetland Rainbow Lanyards and Rainbow Badges to staff to make explicit to patients and staff that NHS Shetland is LGBT friendly.</p> <p>b) LGBT awareness is already an integral part of our Equality and Diversity Training Seminars</p>	<p>a) Initial launch was successful and is now ongoing</p> <p>b) The healthcare needs of our local LGBT communities are an integral part of the new NHS Shetland Equality and Diversity Training Seminars</p> <p>Additional online EDI training materials are now available via Turas Learn.</p> <p>NHS Shetland staff supported the first local PRIDE March in 2022. Shetland Pride 2025 is scheduled for Saturday, June 14, marking the fourth annual celebration of LGBTQIA+ pride in the Shetland</p>

10. Gender Reassignment Outcomes

The main gender reassignment outcome is:

Outcome: The provision of a comprehensive gender dysphoria service. This will advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Supporting Actions in 2021/25 Outcomes Report	Progress as at March 2025
<p>NHS Shetland contracts with NHS Grampian for the provision of a gender reassignment service. NHS Grampian provides the full range of 22 elements recommended by the Department of Health as comprising a gender dysphoria service.</p> <p>NHS Grampian has committed over the next four years to redesign the service to give improvements in all areas. The users of the service will be closely involved in the redesign process.</p>	<p>NHS Grampian provide service, we work with them to comply with</p> <p><u>Gender identity Healthcare Protocol for Scotland publication 2024</u></p> <p>Equality and Diversity Training</p> <p>Equality and Diversity Training provided covers the topic of trans and transgender in detail. The publication:</p> <p>“Guide for Staff to help them meet the needs of Trans Patients attending for Hospital Care” is readily available</p> <p>In respect of our own staff Following the Supreme Court judgment in relation to the definition of sex in the Equality Act 2010 last month, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has confirmed that it will update its Code of Practice about single and separate sex facilities and services by the summer.</p> <p>The EHRC is currently in discussions with Scottish Government following the interim update it issued in late April. NHS Shetland will review our local guidance and communicate this to staff as soon as the situation is clearer. In the interim, it is essential that we are guided at all times by our organisational values so that everyone is treated with dignity and respect.</p>

11. Pregnancy and Maternity

The main pregnancy and maternity equality outcomes are:

Outcome One: Continued development of sex education services for teenagers This will advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.	
Supporting Actions in 2021/25 Outcomes Report	Progress as at March 2025
<p>Sex education for teenagers</p> <p>Teenage pregnancy rates in Scotland have been falling for several years. Over the last two years, the successful sex education campaign for teenager in Shetland has continued. Island Health boards now have the lowest rate of teenage pregnancy in Scotland.</p> <p>However, there is no room for complacency. The sex education initiative will be continued and enhanced over the next four years, working closely with Shetland Islands Council Education Department.</p>	<p>Island health Boards have the lowest pregnancy rates in Scotland for the under 16's under 19's. They also have the lowest termination rates in Scotland for women aged 15-44.</p> <p>(The above Statistics were taken from publications by the Information Services Division of NHS National Services Scotland.)</p>

Outcome Two: Making sure pregnant staff receive their full maternity leave entitlements. This will advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.	
Supporting Actions in 2021/25 Outcomes Report	Progress as at March 2025
<p>NHS Shetland will ensure that pregnant staff receive their full maternity leave and pay entitlements. In addition, NHS Shetland will respond positively to requests from staff for amended working hours and flexible working for staff with babies or young children.</p>	<p>In the period 2021/25 all pregnant staff received their full entitlement to maternity leave and pay entitlements. KIT days are offered and encouraged but not enforced. Time off for antenatal appointments is also provided.</p> <p>In addition, NHS Shetland has responded positively to flexible working requests to amend working hours. The work life balance policy in place provides of a period of paid and unpaid parental leave, paid paternity leave, carers leave and time off for emergencies is also in place.</p>

12. Marriage and Civil Partnership

The main equality outcome is:

<p>Outcome: Train staff to be aware of the possibility of undisclosed same sex marriage or civil partnerships and the needs of the partners of patients. This will advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.</p>	
Supporting Actions in 2021/25 Outcomes Report	Progress as at March 2025
<p>All NHS Shetland Equality and Diversity staff training to include information on the need for staff to be aware of the possible existence of an undisclosed same sex marriage or civil partnership.</p> <p>Of necessity, healthcare staff focus on the needs of the person receiving care. However, sometimes the needs of spouses, civil partners, same sex marriage partners and common law partners can be great, especially if one partner is a carer for the other. It is important for staff to keep partners fully informed and involved in the provision of care. This message is an integral part of our Equality and Diversity Training for staff.</p>	<p>This is included in all staff training from 1st April 2021 onwards</p> <p>Awareness work has continued and is ongoing. Additional on line learning available via Turas Learn</p> <p>Includes: Completion of mandatory elearning module for EDI for every new start and complete refresher every 3 years</p>

13. Religion or Belief Outcomes

There is one main religion or belief equality outcome. This is:

<p>Outcome: Continue to ensure that patients and staff who wish it, have access to spiritual care of their choice; provide educational resources for staff to enhance their awareness of the specific religious and spiritual needs of patients in the healthcare setting. This will advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.</p>	
Supporting Actions in 2021/25 Outcomes Report	Progress as at March 2025
<p>NHS Shetland has in place a Spiritual Care Lead. Their role is to lead the development of spiritual care for both patients and staff, in liaison with volunteers, colleagues and senior managers. They have developed spiritual</p>	<p>The Head of Spiritual Care for NHS Shetland I has moved from a part time to a full time post in 2025, covering Shetland only.</p> <p>2021/24 the post holder worked to enhance, expand and develop the chaplaincy services on Shetland and build strong relationships with local religious and belief groups. This work will continue with replacement in 2025 who will</p>

<p>care networks and close links with other denominations and faith groups.</p> <p>The Spiritual Care Lead works with staff to enhance their knowledge of religion and spiritual care.</p> <p>NHS Shetland continues to provide educational resources for staff to enhance their awareness of the specific religious and spiritual needs of patients in the healthcare setting</p>	<p>shape services to align with the national spiritual care framework and also lead on workforce wellbeing</p> <p>The Spiritual care service is also supported by volunteers from the local community.</p> <p>The post holder leads on the delivery of VBRP (Values Based Reflective Practice) to Health and Social Care staff</p> <p>In addition to mandatory Equality and Diversity Training the Head of Spiritual Care has worked with staff to enhance their knowledge of religion and spiritual care.</p> <p>The “religions and Cultures” booklet is made widely available to staff and includes local contact details</p>
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14. Monitoring and Review

NHS Shetland will continue to take a holistic approach to our workforce and the community in which we live and the multi-faceted elements that impact on individuals and prioritise their needs as appropriate. We want Shetland to be a welcoming community where you either a Shetlander or an incomer we are determined to ensure that staff based groups have the opportunity to feel involved and engaged This report will be shared with NHS Shetland Staff Governance committee and Area Partnership Forum and be published on the NHS Shetland website in the Equality and Diversity section. A joint approach has been taken to review population profiles. The Shetland Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Report 2025- 2029 should be referenced for updated outcomes planned. We will publish a progress report every two years detailing achievements and timescales of projected outcomes.

Appendix A: Protected Characteristics Profiles



Shetland Protected Characteristics Profiles 2024

Information gathered to inform equality outcome and mainstreaming actions

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Protected Characteristics Profile: Age

Purpose

This profile is one of nine, presenting quantitative (mainly through the Census) and qualitative (through locally run focus groups) data alongside desktop research. The purpose is to inform discussions about our local community.

Background

The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination and unfair treatment in Britain; this is because of the Protected Characteristics they have. The Protected Characteristics are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation.

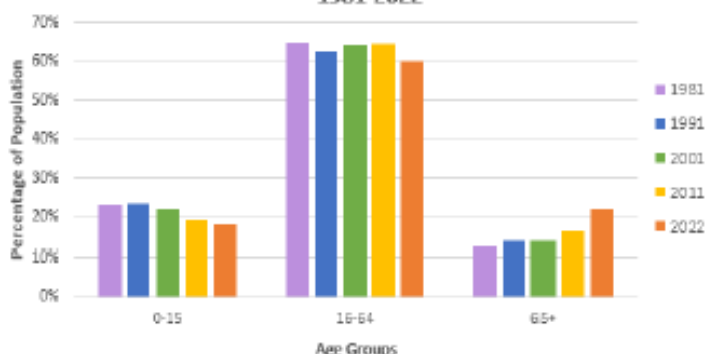
It is against the law to discriminate against someone because of a Protected Characteristic. Age discrimination is when a person is treated differently because of their age, in one of the situations that are covered by the Equality Act.¹

Key Points

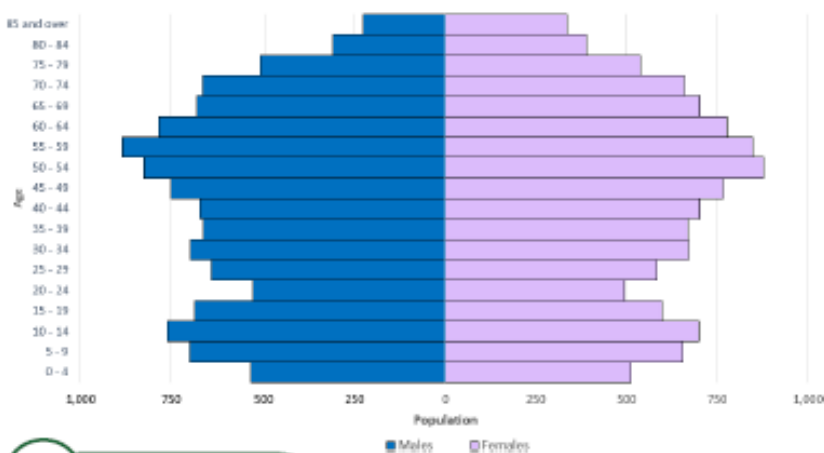
1

Since 1981, in Shetland, the 65+ age group has increased each year, whilst the younger age groups have gradually decreased, particularly in 2022. This trend is similar to Scotland and other rural areas.

Percentage of Shetland Population by Age Groups 1981-2022



Shetland Population by Age and Sex in 2022



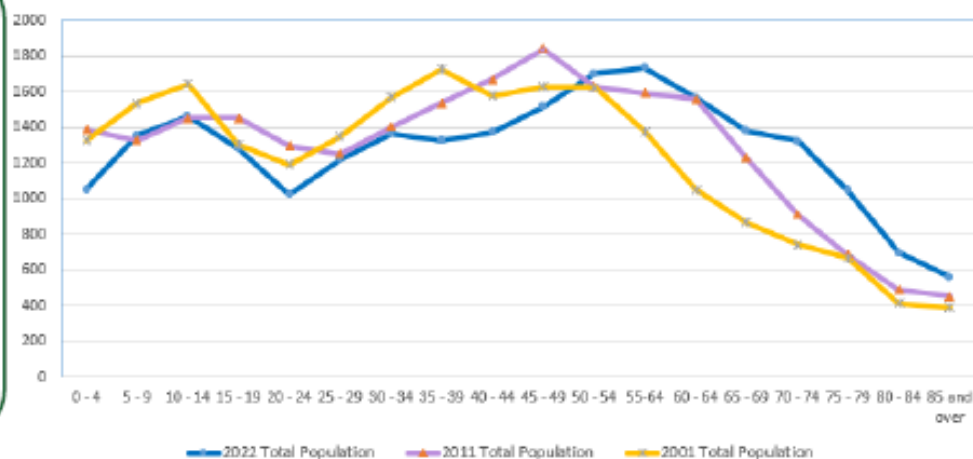
2

In 2022, there were notably more males in age groups 0-34 & 55-64 than females, whilst there are more females than males in age groups 35 – 54 & 65-85 and over. This pattern is similar in Orkney, the Western Isles and Scotland, although the Highlands, as a whole, has more females across most age groups.

3

Since 2001, Shetland's older generation (aged 50+) has increased, whilst the number of younger people overall (35 and under) has declined. This trend reflects patterns throughout Scotland and other rural areas.

Shetland Population by Age in 2001, 2011 and 2022



¹ [Age discrimination | EHRC](#)

Data Sources: Scottish Census (2022, 2011 & 2001)

Summary of Other Publications

Desk-top research of discrimination faced by individuals who due to their age highlights several key findings:

Employment

Research from the Older People and Employment Scotland 2017 Report, reveals that perceived ageism in the labour market leads participants to believe that older individuals may be forced to accept lower-level jobs, if they need to seek new employment. Ageist and sexist attitudes among employers can interact, particularly disadvantaging older women. As a result, these women often end up in roles for which they are overqualified and underpaid, exacerbating gender inequality in later-life employment opportunities.

Health Disparities

In 2018, FeelsFM launched a campaign alongside young people across Scotland to hear views on mental health. They found that stigma is a significant barrier to young people opening up about their mental health as they feared not being listened to, believed or taken seriously by adults.

Crime

Research from Youth Justice, Keep the Promise Care Review 2020 Report reveals that in Scotland care-experienced children are over represented in the youth criminal justice system, with those in residential care expressing to the Care Review that they had too often had police involvement for behaviour that other families would accommodate within the family.

Summary of Feedback from Local Focus Groups

Older People

The following summarises the main findings of relevance to this Policy area for Older People.

Access to Services

The main challenges are:

- Accessing buildings, facilities and / or public transport;
- Navigating complex processes and technology systems, such as booking appointments or applying for benefits;
- Relying on others to assist in accessing support and services.

Suggestions for improvement are:

- More flexible service hours, particularly for health services (e.g. evenings or weekends);
- Personalised support, such as a single point of contact;
- Easier to understand services, with clear instructions and support on what to expect and when;
- Greater variety for services to be provided at home; and
- Improved transport reliability and connections, for health appointments.

Health and Care

Positive feedback was provided about health and care professionals and local care homes.

Suggestions for improvement are:

- Increased GP availability and out-of-hours doctor coverage;
- Expanded local treatment options to reduce travel;
- Simplified processes for making appointments, collecting prescriptions, and accessing home adaptations; and
- Improved recruitment and training for health and care staff, to enable older workers to enter the workforce.

Community and Society

Most participants felt the community understood them and there is good support, from family and friends, support groups and local charities. Many felt they could ask for and receive help and feel safe in the community. However there does, now, seem to be less kindness and respect in society and apportioning of blame.

Data Sources: [Older People and Employment in Scotland 2017](#); [See Me Scotland, 2020](#); [Youth Justice 2020](#).

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Suggestions for improvement are:

- More training on dignity and respect, to support a shift from blame to kindness, in services and society;
- More training on menopause awareness; and
- Expanding preventative health initiatives.

Cost of Living and Healthy Living

The main challenges are:

- The financial strain of caregiving, ageing and living with health conditions, particularly on a low-income; this can limit access to healthy food and necessities.

Digital and Technology

Opinions are mixed; some prefer digital solutions whilst others find them challenging. There are concerns about online and phone scams and data-sharing, particularly ones targeting older people.

There was positive feedback about services supporting digital access.

Suggestions for improvement are:

- Simplifying online health systems and expanding teleconsultations; and
- Addressing concerns about scams and data privacy.

Communication and Information Sharing

Concerns were raised about the rapid shift to digital systems, leaving some unable to adapt.

Suggestions for improvement are:

- Accessibility for all communication channels (e.g., phone, email, in-person); and
- Transparency in how feedback is addressed.

Young People

Young People in Shetland highlighted the following issues and challenges:

- Adults are frequently suspicious of young people, thinking they are going to cause trouble, particularly if they are in groups of more than 3 – this is stopping young people going to certain places, and being able to ‘just hang out’;
- They can all be penalised for something only one person has done (one young person’s actions don’t represent the motives / actions of all young people) – they point out that this wouldn’t happen to adults with another Protected Characteristic;
- In general, Shetland is old fashioned and prejudiced;
- The wider population associates them with drinking or vaping;
- An assumption that young people make choices (e.g. religion, sexual orientation, disability) for attention;
- Social media exacerbates stories and ‘news’ about young people;
- Young people are paid less for the same job;
- Some employers won’t employ anyone under 18; and
- NHS don’t take young people seriously and mental health services don’t listen or take young people seriously.

Young People in Shetland highlighted the following opportunities:

- There is a need for education and activity to reduce stigma and discrimination: there needs to be greater respect for young people, with no labelling (labelling impacts on mental health) and a consistent approach across all school years and all school settings;
- There are a lot of activities for young people, but nowhere to just hang out – especially without drawing suspicion from wider society, as a group of young people. They would like to meet with businesses and services to discuss the challenges, and seek to find solutions, so that not all young people are banned.
- Explore Shetland minimum wage for young people.

Data Sources: [Older People and Employment in Scotland 2017](#); [See Me Scotland, 2020](#); [Youth Justice 2020](#).

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Protected Characteristics Profile: Disability

Purpose

This profile is one of nine, presenting quantitative (mainly through the Census) and qualitative (through locally run focus groups) data alongside desktop research. The purpose is to inform discussions about our local community.

Background

The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination and unfair treatment in Britain; this is because of the Protected Characteristics they have. The Protected Characteristics are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation.

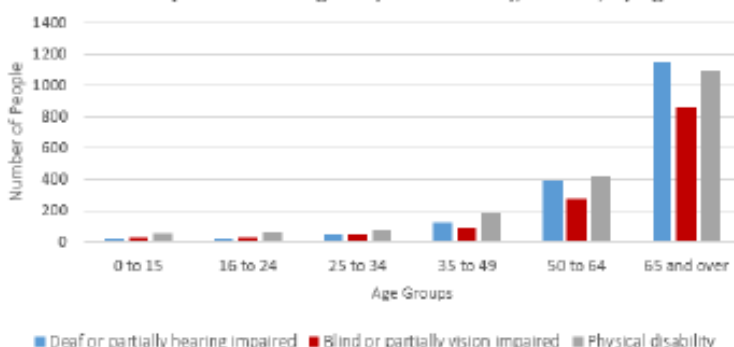
It is against the law to discriminate against someone because of a Protected Characteristic. Disability discrimination is when a person is treated less well compared to others or is put at a disadvantage for a reason that relates to their disability in one of the situations covered by the Equality Act.¹

Key Points

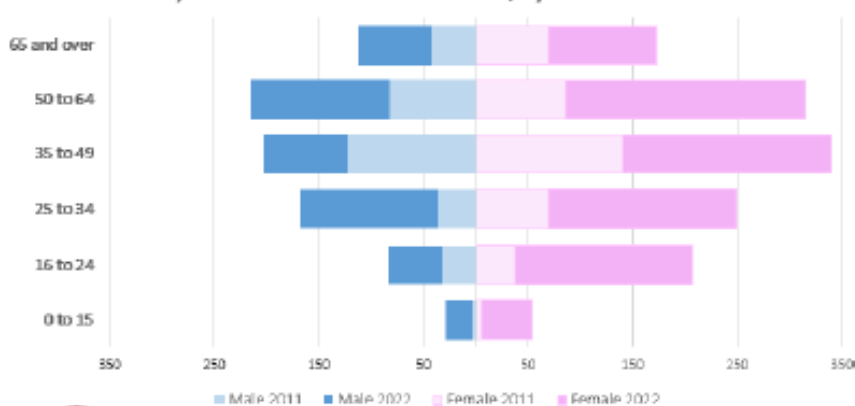
1

In 2022, the majority of those who responded to the Census as having a long-term health condition (Deaf or partially hearing impaired, Blind or partially vision impaired or having a physical disability) were aged 65 and over. This trend is similar to Scotland, the Highlands, the Western Isles and Orkney.

Number of people in Shetland who reported in the Census as being Deaf or Partially Hearing Impaired, Blind or Partially Vision Impaired or having a Physical Disability, in 2022, by Age



Number of people in Shetland who reported in the Census that they had a Mental Health Condition, by Gender in 2022 vs 2011



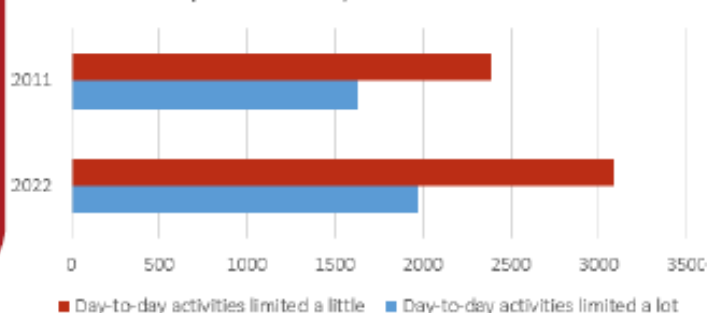
2

In 2022, Shetland, like Scotland, had more females (62%) than males (38%) respond to the Census, that they had a mental health condition, compared to 2011 when the figures were 56% for females and 44% for males. Whereas Orkney, the Western Isles, and Highland had more males in 2011; this trend changed to more females in 2022.

3

Since 2011, there has been an increase in the number of people reporting their day-to-day activities are limited due to a health problem or disability lasting 12 months or more. Additionally, the number of people reporting their day-to-day activities are not limited has decreased. This trend is consistent across Scotland and the Highlands; however, the opposite is true for Orkney.

Number of people who reported in the Census that their day-to-day activities are limited due to a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months



¹ [Disability discrimination | EHRC](#)

Summary of Other Publications

Desk-top research of discrimination faced by individuals who have disabilities highlights several key findings:

Employment

Statistics from the DWP: Employment of Disabled People 2022 reveals that one in five working-age individuals are classified as disabled, with the number steadily rising, driven by increased reporting of mental health conditions. Nearly one-third of those classified as disabled in one year are no longer classified as such the following year. There has been a strong growth in the number and rate of disabled people in employment and a narrowing of the gap between the rate of disabled and non-disabled people in employment (the disability employment gap).

The disability employment gap is notably wider among disabled men, older disabled individuals (aged 50–64), those with no qualifications, White people, and disabled individuals in Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and the North West and North East of England.

Disability Hate Crimes

In 2023/24, the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service Report details 903 disability aggravated charges in Scotland, an increase of 22% from the previous year. This is the highest annual number of charges in relation to this crime reported since the legislation (creating this aggravation) came into force in 2010. Since then, it has been an almost unbroken upward trend.

Economic Disparities

A rapid evidence review by the Scottish Centre for Social Research states that compared to non-disabled people, disabled people are more likely to live on low incomes and nearly one-half of people in poverty live in a household where someone is disabled. Deep poverty, defined as a household income 40% below the national median, is nearly twice as prevalent among working-age disabled people compared with non-disabled working-age people.

Population

Nearly one in four of the working-age population in the UK, in 22/23, are classed as disabled based on an analysis from the Department for Work and Pensions' family resources survey. Amongst disabled working-age adults, the most prevalent impairment type reported was mental health impairments at 47%.

Mental Wellbeing

Scotland's Wellbeing – Measuring the National Outcomes for Disabled People research report, from 2019, states that disabled people have lower average mental wellbeing scores than non-disabled people (45 compared to 52 on a scale of 14 to 72).

Lack of Data and Understanding

Frontline staff from local authorities report that disabled victims often lack access to advocacy and consequently do not receive necessary support in dealing with and reporting discrimination and hate crime. Being Disabled in Britain: a Journey Less Equal, 2017 Report, also emphasises the lack of data available to monitor, such as for disabled employees and employers to recruit disabled staff.

Discrimination & Harassment in Scotland

The Scottish Household Survey 2023 states that 11% of disabled adults in Shetland have experienced discrimination and/or harassment in the last 12 months. This places it as 15th of 32 Local Authorities in Scotland, with the Scottish national average of 11.37%.

Summary of Feedback from Local Focus Groups

The following summary highlights the main findings from two disability groups run by local services.

Access to Services

Many of those who responded rely on transport services. This means that information about services, links between different services, punctuality and easy access to public transport, is important. There is a desire for more public transport, including links to work, education, health appointments and leisure and particularly where there are unsafe walking routes in rural areas, so that people with a disability can be more independent.

Data Sources: [Hate Crime in Scotland 2023-24](#) | [COPFS: Scotland's Wellbeing – Measuring the National Outcomes for Disabled People 2019: Understanding the drivers of food insecurity among disable people: A rapid evidence review \(natcen.ac.uk\) 2023](#); [Employment of disabled people 2022 - GOV.UK](#); [Supporting documents - Discrimination and Harassment in Scotland, results from the 2023 Scottish Household Survey - gov.scot](#); [12. Poverty - Scotland's Wellbeing: national outcomes for disabled people - gov.scot](#); [Being disabled in Britain: a journey less equal | EHRC 2017](#).

Respondents highlighted the cost of external travel, particularly as cheaper options, such as the pods on Northlink, are not an option for many of those with a disability. The challenges and stresses of external travel mean that some would prefer healthcare appointments to be in Shetland.

Other suggestions for improvement are:

- Better designed ramps and access to buildings and shops to enable wheelchair users to move around;
- More disabled parking across Shetland;
- Better provision and accessibility of public toilets;
- More opportunities to retain independent living whilst having more activities at Supported Living and Outreach;
- Greater choice of communication methods to contact services, such as BSL and Makaton;
- Services open outwith current normal office hours, including EGRC;
- More compassion and understanding from bus drivers of blue buses and public buses towards bus users; and
- More local amenities to support those with specific disabilities.

Health and Care

Some respondents shared information about facing discrimination accessing health services, requesting that NHS staff have training in disability awareness, negative language and being more sensitive.

There was a request to make healthcare appointments less scary and quieter.

Employment

It is important to feel independent in the working environment, but there is acknowledgement of the need for support in certain areas. Support staff are valued, but some participants would like to earn more by working in mainstream employment.

Discrimination when applying for jobs is experienced, with employers stating they cannot employ because of the participant's disability.

Suggestions for improvement are:

- Opportunities for skills development and support to move into mainstream employment opportunities; and
- More opportunities to learn to drive.

Community and Society

Most participants feel they are treated well in the community and are understood. However, there was mention of stigma, as a result of disability.

Suggestions include:

- More opportunities for volunteering such as at polycrubs;
- More outreach from support groups, for example, in halls, and more information about what community groups are already doing;
- Increased awareness and protection from discrimination in Shetland;
- More promotion of advocacy services; and
- Share resources to support those with a disability, within the community.

Safe Places

Most participants feel safe in Shetland, but additional street lighting along the main roads in Lerwick would help to feel safer at night. Improved road safety measures at the junction near COPE would support greater independence for those commuting to and from work.

Active and Sociable Life

Participants would like to walk more often and be able to walk to work but cannot, as it is too far away.

Suggestions include:

Data Sources: [Hate Crime in Scotland 2023-24 | COPFS](#); [Scotland's Wellbeing – Measuring the National Outcomes for Disabled People 2019: Understanding the drivers of food insecurity among disabled people: A rapid evidence review \(natcen.ac.uk\) 2023](#); [Employment of disabled people 2022 - GOV.UK](#); [Supporting documents - Discrimination and Harassment in Scotland, results from the 2023 Scottish Household Survey - gov.scot](#); [12. Poverty - Scotland's Wellbeing: national outcomes for disabled people - gov.scot](#); [Being disabled in Britain: a journey less equal | EHRC 2017](#).

- More social activities such as discos, karaoke, dance lessons and gigs in Shetland;
- More physical activities such as more boccia sessions, ability sports sessions, more walking and joining a football club and female football team; and
- More walking paths in local villages and planting of trees for people to enjoy.

Cost of Living

There is a lack of financial support for homeowners with disabilities, preventing adaptations to these properties, which in turn disqualifies them from receiving housing-related financial assistance.

Financial resources to assist with off-island travel and availability, particularly in emergencies, would be beneficial; those with a disability need to pay for a support worker, to travel with them.



Protected Characteristics Profile: Gender Reassignment

Purpose

This profile is one of nine, presenting quantitative (mainly through the Census) and qualitative (through locally run focus groups) data alongside desktop research. The purpose is to inform discussions about our local community.

Background

The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination and unfair treatment in Britain; this is because of the Protected Characteristics they have. The Protected Characteristics are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation.

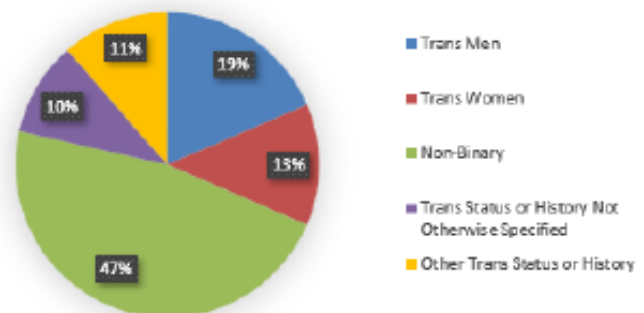
It is against the law to discriminate against someone because of a Protected Characteristic. Gender reassignment discrimination is when a person is treated differently because they are trans in one of the situations covered by the Equality Act.¹

Key Points

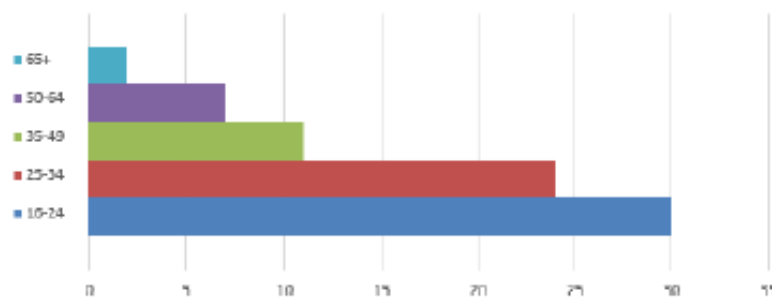
1

In 2022 in Shetland, 47% of those who responded to the Census to say they were trans or have a trans history, were non-binary. Of the remaining respondents 19% were trans men, 13% trans women, 11% other trans status or history and 10% not otherwise specified. This trend is similar to Scotland, the Highlands, the Western Isles and Orkney.

Percentage of people who said yes to Trans Status and History in Shetland



Number of people who answered yes to Trans Status and History, by Age in Shetland



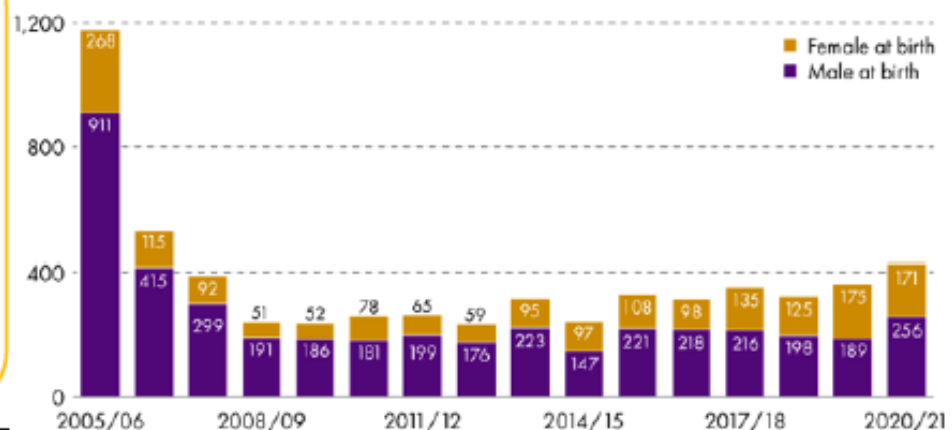
2

Among those who answered yes to trans status and history in the Census, most were aged 16-34, with the numbers gradually decreasing with age. Compared to Scotland and other rural areas, Shetland had the highest percentage of those aged 25-34 to confirm their trans status.

3

Since 2005, in the UK, there have been 6010 Gender Recognition Certificates granted, of which 4226 were male at birth (70%) and 1784 were female at birth (30%). The legislation created a process to enable trans people to change their sex on their UK birth certificates.¹

Gender Recognition Certificates (GRC) granted, by gender at birth in the UK, 2005-2021



¹ Gender reassignment discrimination | EHRC (equalityhumanrights.com)

Data Sources: Scottish Census (2022);

Summary of Other Publications

Desk-top research of discrimination faced by individuals who identify as transsexual highlights several key findings:

Health Disparities

Research explained in the Herald, Scotland, explains that trans people experience disproportionately poorer health than those who fit their assigned birth gender. They are more likely to suffer from mental health issues and be victims of crime and, where their transgender status is known, be subject to bullying and harassment. Additionally, 37% of trans people avoid seeking healthcare for fear of discrimination from staff.

Workplace Discrimination

LGBT Health and Wellbeing research report reveals that employees may experience disadvantage due to their trans identity such as: experiences of trans identity negatively impacting on their job prospects, workplaces not being trans inclusive, harassment and unfair treatment at work impacting negatively on their mental health.

Hate Crimes

There were 84 charges reported to the Crown Office in Scotland in 2023/24, with an aggravation of prejudice relating to transgender identity. This is the second highest annual number of such charges recorded since 2010, two fewer than the 21/22 figure of 86.

Education Barriers

Research into the experience of trans and gender diverse applicants, students and staff in Scotland's colleges and Universities by TransEdu Scotland found that students often face significant barriers in education settings related to their trans status such as: provision of gender-neutral facilities, navigating administrative processes and feeling unsafe or unwelcome on campus. The biggest challenge concerned peer relationships with colleagues and students, with many experiencing ignorance and hostility.

Lack of Data and Understanding

Whilst there are no exact figures, SPICe Research that contributed to the Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill reveals there are approximately 200,000 – 500,000 trans people in the UK based on the prevalence range of 0.35% and 1% of the population. This is based on work carried out by the Gender Identity Research and Education Society.

Summary of Feedback from Local Focus Groups

A number of conversations were held with people in the local community, including members of the Pride Committee. To date, there has not been an opportunity to receive formal feedback.



Protected Characteristics Profile: Marriage and Civil Partnership

Purpose

This profile is one of nine, presenting quantitative (mainly through the Census) and qualitative (through locally run focus groups) data alongside desktop research. The purpose is to inform discussions about our local community.

Background

The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination and unfair treatment in Britain; this is because of the Protected Characteristics they have. The Protected Characteristics are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation.

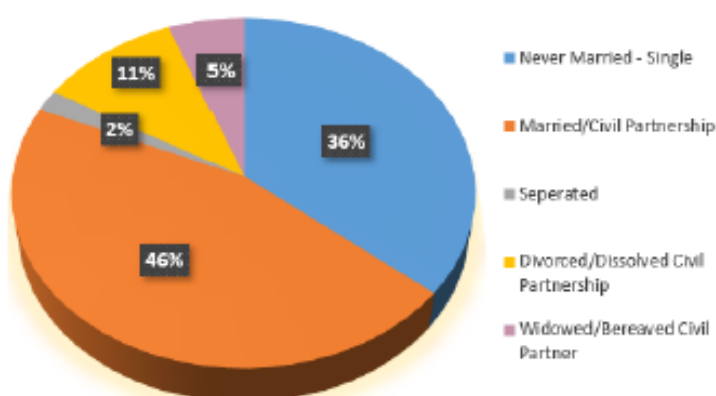
It is against the law to discriminate against someone because of a Protected Characteristic. Marriage and civil partnership discrimination is when a person is treated differently at work because they are married or in a civil partnership.¹

Key Points

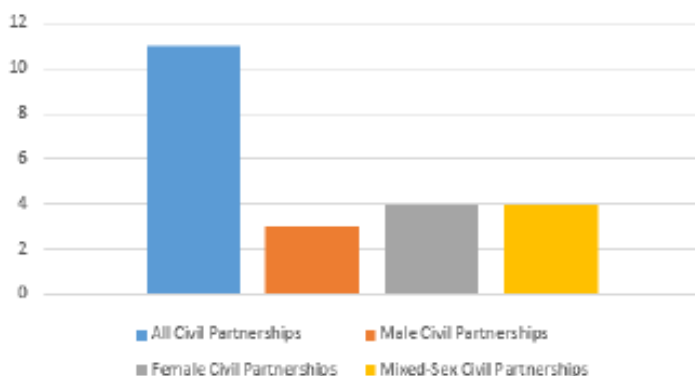
1

In 2022, 46% of Shetland's population who responded to the Scottish Survey Core Questions were married or in a civil partnership, with 36% single, 11% divorced, 5% widowed and 2% separated. This trend is similar for Orkney, the Western Isles, Highland and Scotland overall.

Marital and Civil Status in Shetland in 2022



Civil Partnerships in Shetland from 2005 - 2023



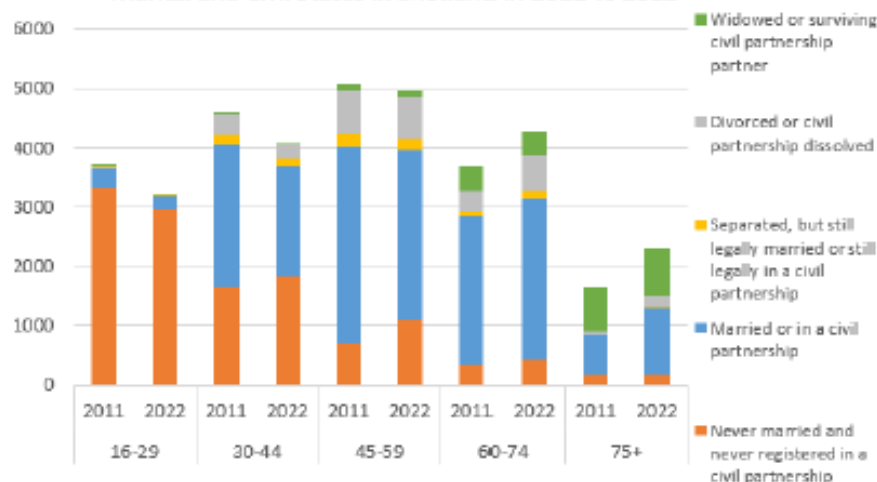
2

In Shetland, most registered civil partnerships through National Records Scotland are female or mixed-sex, with fewer male partnerships. This trend is similar to Scotland overall and Highland, but Orkney and the Western Isles have more mixed-sex and fewer male partnerships.

3

There has been a decline in those who are married or in civil partnerships, across most age groups between 2011 and 2022. There is an increase in those never married or registered in a civil partnership among younger groups. As expected, the number of people married, in a civil partnership, separated, or divorced increases to the 45-59 age range.

Marital and Civil Status in Shetland in 2011 vs 2022



¹ [Marriage and civil partnership discrimination | EHRC \(equalityhumanrights.com\)](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/marriage-civil-partnership-discrimination)

Summary of Other Publications

There is a lack of focused research on marriage and civil partnership discrimination at work in Scotland and Britain. While there is some research on same-sex couples and transgender individuals within the marriage and civil partnership framework, these studies are part of the broader discussions on LGBTQ+ rights.

Summary of Feedback from Local Focus Groups

Efforts were made to engage with individuals by inviting all Council staff to participate in a Focus Group or 1-1 discussion; to date, no one has made contact wishing to discuss issues.



Protected Characteristics Profile: Pregnancy and Maternity

Purpose

This profile is one of nine, presenting quantitative (mainly through the Census) and qualitative (through locally run focus groups) data alongside desktop research. The purpose is to inform discussions about our local community.

Background

The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination and unfair treatment in Britain; this is because of the Protected Characteristics they have. The Protected Characteristics are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation.

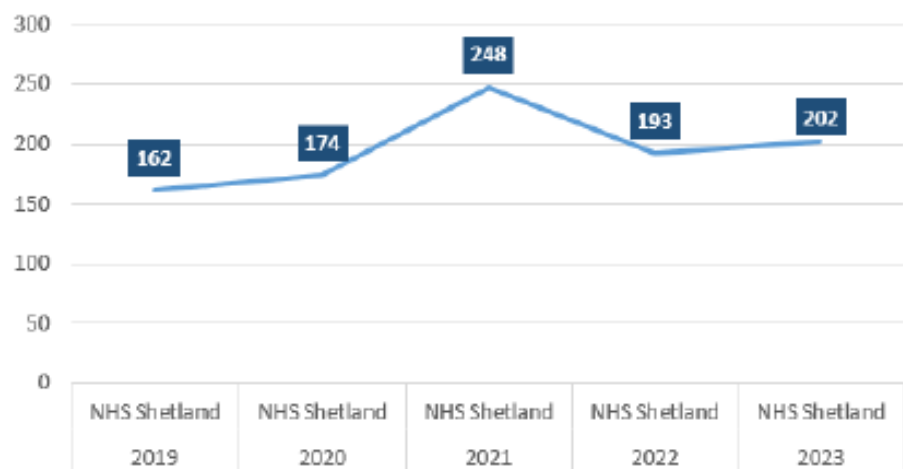
It is against the law to discriminate against someone because of a Protected Characteristic. Pregnancy and maternity discrimination is when a person is treated unfavourably (differently) because they are pregnant, breastfeeding or they have given birth, in one of the situations that are covered by the Equality Act.¹

Key Points

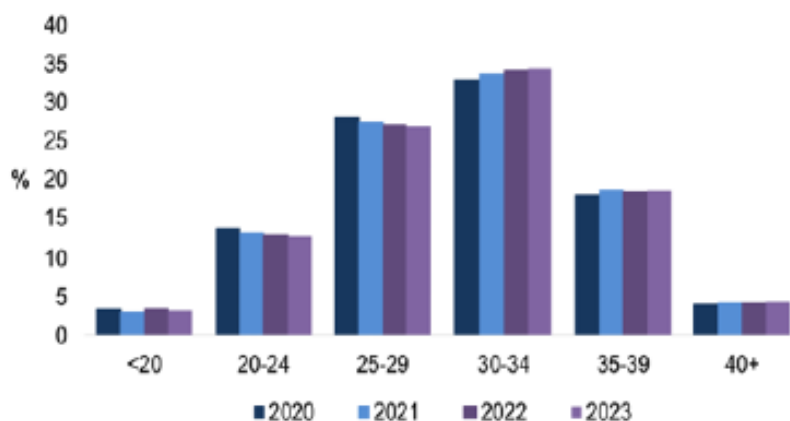
1

In 2021, NHS Shetland experienced a notable increase in the number of pregnancies booked. While this trend was consistent across most Scottish health boards, Shetland saw the largest percentage increase in booked pregnancies in 2021.

Number of booked pregnancies at NHS Shetland



Percentage of pregnancies booked, by age



2

Across Scotland, between 2020-2023, there has been an increase in pregnancies booked by women aged 30 years and older, with a decrease in pregnancies booked by younger women. Booked is defined by the first midwife appointment before 10 weeks of pregnancy.

¹ [Pregnancy and maternity discrimination | EHRC \(equalityhumanrights.com\)](https://www.ehrc.org.uk/en/our-work/areas-of-work/pregnancy-and-maternity-discrimination)

Data Sources: Public Health Scotland (2019-2024); Public Health Scotland. (2024). Percentage of pregnancies booked, by age. In: *Antenatal Booking in Scotland*. [online] Public Health Scotland, p. 8. Available at: <https://publichealthscotland.scot/og/> [Accessed 1 August 2024].

Summary of Other Publications

Desk-top research of discrimination faced by individuals during pregnancy and maternity highlights several key findings:

Workplace Discrimination

Research from the Equality and Human Rights Commission found that 73% of Scottish women had a negative or possibly discriminatory experience at work while pregnant, on maternity leave or on return to work; one in five mothers experienced harassment or negative comments related to pregnancy or flexible working from their employer and /or colleagues. The study showed there are barriers to raising complaints about discrimination in the workplace due to fears of negative consequences and not being taken seriously.

Mental Health and Disability

Evidence from the SG Equality Outcomes: Pregnancy and Maternity Review suggests women with mental health issues or learning disabilities suffer discrimination during pregnancy within the health system in the UK. This negatively impacts on pregnant women's engagement with healthcare.

Pre & Post Natal Care

Evidence from the SG Equality Outcomes: Pregnancy and Maternity Review showed that when using the healthcare services in Scotland, teenage mothers often face negative stereotypes during prenatal and postnatal care in relation to their parenting abilities. Young expectant fathers were more likely than expectant mothers in the same age-range to report negative experiences of healthcare. Research from the SG Equality Outcomes: Pregnancy and Maternity Evidence Review.

Health Disparities

Research from the SG Equality Outcomes: Pregnancy and Maternity Evidence Review shows that obese women experience discrimination accessing maternity and post-natal care. There is an identified stigma associated with obesity in pregnancy which impacts negatively on maternal healthcare experiences.

Unfair Dismissal

In 2017, the Power to the Bump campaign research showed that young mothers are significantly more likely to experience pregnancy and maternity discrimination, with mothers under 25 years old, six times more likely to report they were dismissed at some point between informing their employer of their pregnancy and participating in the survey.

Migrant & Asylum Seeker Status

Research from the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists found that Migrant pregnant women often face multiple barriers to care, such as language barriers, trauma from previous experiences, and lack of knowledge about their rights and the healthcare system; they are more likely to access antenatal care later than recommended.

Ethnic Minority Background

Pregnant Minority Ethnic women are subjected to discrimination throughout the UK healthcare service. Research from BMC Public Health shows that discrimination is often rooted in stereotypes, cultural insensitivity and inequalities in healthcare treatment with significant disparities in quality of care compared to others.

Education Barriers

Research from the SG Equality Outcomes: Pregnancy and Maternity Evidence Review Studies of the experiences of pregnant students show learning environments can be unsupportive and discriminatory. Teenage pregnancy can have a severe impact on the education of mothers, possibly hindering returning to school or continuation on to post-school education.

Summary of Feedback from Local Focus Groups

A focus group facilitated by colleagues from Shetland Islands Council's Community Planning & Human Resources departments took place in December, with participants able to attend in person or online.

However, as the findings specifically relate to Council staff and issues of discrimination within the Council, the Focus Group findings are not relevant to these profiles.



Data sources: [Pregnancy and Maternity Discrimination Working Group, 2021. Final Report](#); [Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2016](#); [Scottish Government Equality Outcomes: Pregnancy and Maternity Evidence Review, 2013](#); [Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, 2023. Position Statement: Equitable access to maternity care for refugees, asylum seeking and undocumented migrant women: Inside the 'imperfect mosaic': Minority ethnic women's qualitative experiences of race and ethnicity during pregnancy, childbirth, and maternity care in the United Kingdom 2023](#)

Protected Characteristics Profile: Race

Purpose

This profile is one of nine, presenting quantitative (mainly through the Census) and qualitative (through locally run focus groups) data alongside desktop research. The purpose is to inform discussions about our local community.

Background

The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination and unfair treatment in Britain; this is because of the Protected Characteristics they have. The Protected Characteristics are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation.

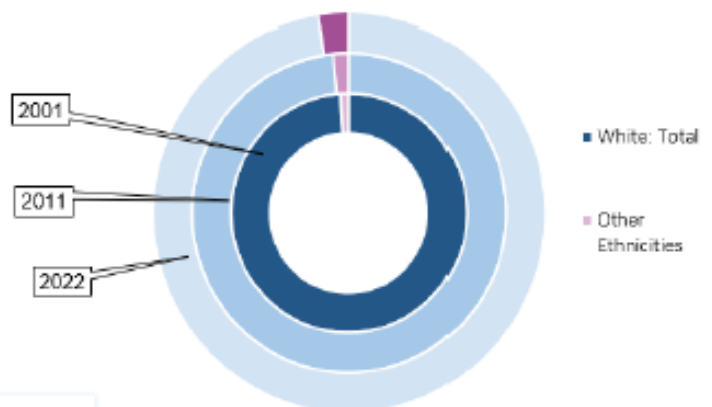
It is against the law to discriminate against someone because of a Protected Characteristic. Race discrimination is when a person is treated differently because of their race in one of the situations covered by the Equality Act.¹

Key Points

1

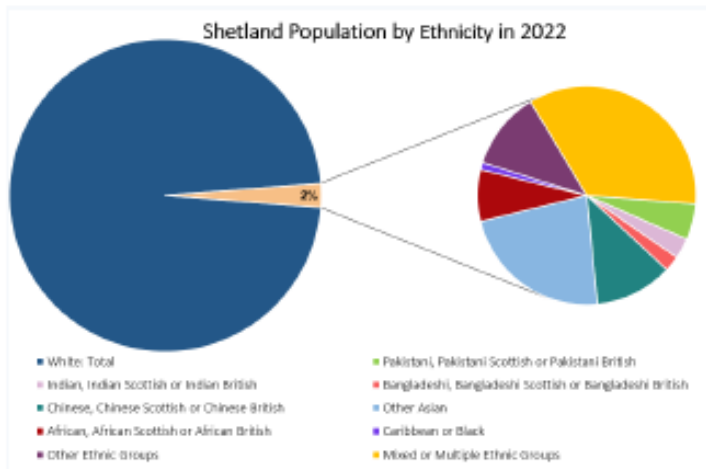
In 2001, 2011 and 2022, a majority of the Shetland population (98-99%) responded to the Census to describe their ethnic group as White, with Other Ethnicities making up 1%-2% of the total population. There has been a gradual increase in diversity, consistent with the trend across Scotland.

Shetland Population by Ethnicity in 2001, 2011 and 2022



2

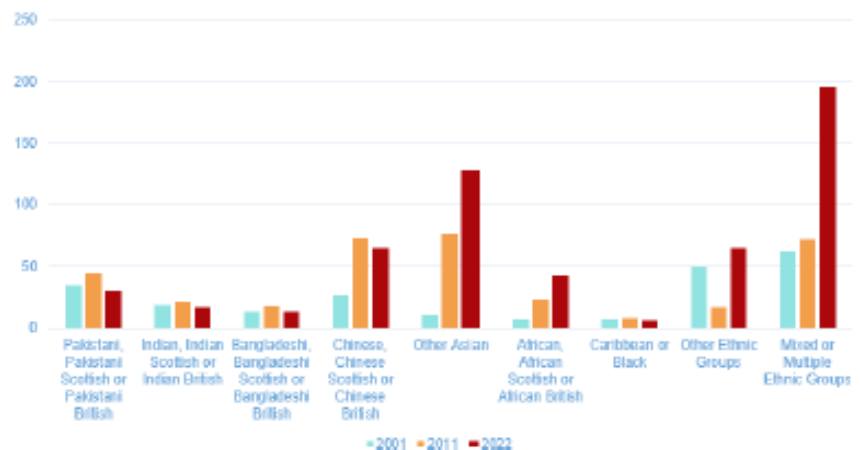
In 2022, the Other Ethnicities groups (2%) accounted for 563 people in Shetland, according to the Census. The highest number of people (196) described their ethnic group as mixed or multiple ethnic groups; 128 people responded as other Asian; 65 people responded as other ethnic groups; 65 Chinese, Chinese Scottish or Chinese British, with all other ethnic groups ranging from 6-43 people per group.



3

This graph shows an increase in Shetland's diversity over time, specifically among those who responded to the Census to describe their ethnic group as Other Asian, African, African Scottish or African British, Other Ethnic Groups and Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups. Some group respondents, like the Pakistani, Indian and Bangladeshi communities grew, until 2011, but declined by 2022.

Population by Ethnicity in Shetland (by Census year)



¹ [Race discrimination | EHRC \(equalityhumanrights.com\)](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/what-we-do/our-work/anti-discrimination-law)

Data Sources: Scottish Census (2022, 2011 & 2001).

Summary of Other Publications

Desk-top research of discrimination faced by individuals who are of race in Britain highlights several key findings:

Health Disparities

Research from the Healing a divided Britain review into race inequality reveals there are stark health inequalities, particularly in mental health settings; not only do Ethnic Minorities suffer poorer health, they also suffer from poorer access to healthcare compared to the White population. In Britain, Black people will have longer stays and higher rates of re-admission in mental health settings, and studies report lower access to palliative end of life care services for Ethnic Minorities compared with White British people. Black British women are four times more likely to be detained under the mental health legislation than White British women, and Mixed Ethnicity women almost seven times more likely.

Crime

Race report statistics published by the Equality and Human Rights Commission in 2020, reveals that the rates of prosecution and sentencing for Black people are three times higher than for White people in Britain; 18 people per thousand of the population compared to 6 people per thousand for White

Education and Learning

The YMCA's Young and Black report found that 95% of young Black people in the UK have heard or witnessed racist language at school; with findings showing that 49% feel that racism is the biggest hurdle to academic achievement and 50% saying that teacher perceptions are the biggest barrier to educational success. These experiences of young Black people in the UK mirrors that of their peers in other countries, such as the US and Australia. Research from the Healing a divided Britain review into race inequality reveals just 6% of Black school leavers attended a Russell Group university, compared with 12% of Mixed and Asian school leavers and 11% of White school leavers.

Living Standards

In Scotland, Ethnic Minority households are more likely to experience overcrowding; 11.8% for Ethnic Minority households compared to 2.9% for White households, according to the Race Report statistics published by the Equality and Human Rights Commission in 2020.

Employment

Research from the Healing a divided Britain review into race inequality reveals that race inequality impacts on employment and income. For example, unemployment rates are higher for people of all other ethnic minorities compared to white people in Britain. Black workers, with degrees, earn 23.1% less on average than their white counterparts, and there is a considerable gap in the percentage of White (89%) and Ethnic Minority (2-5%) people starting apprenticeships in Britain.

Summary of Feedback from Local Focus Groups

"Shetland has become more diverse; it can be easier to mix with people of other races, here, than in England. However, it's important to go out to meet people, and start becoming part of the community."

Some people have faced discrimination when coming to Shetland from elsewhere and being termed a "Sooth Moother", stating they are not believed, included or taken seriously and are often dismissed compared to Shetlanders.

People face verbal abuse because of the colour of their skin and their religion, and this can go unreported.

Suggestions for improvement:

- Creating safe, open and honest spaces to encourage discussion, learning and understanding about different backgrounds, cultures and identities;
- Opportunities to welcome more refugees in Shetland and how to support them; and
- Resources to feel safer, in Lerwick and Scalloway on the main streets, particularly in the evenings.



Data Sources: [Equality and Human Rights Commission \(2016\) Healing a divided Britain: the need for a comprehensive race equality strategy](#); [Marchant, N. \(2020\) Study: Almost all Black British children have experienced racism at school](#); [Equality and Human Rights Commission \(2020\)](#)

Protected Characteristics Profile: Religion

Purpose

This profile is one of nine, presenting quantitative (mainly through the Census) and qualitative (through locally run focus groups) data alongside desktop research. The purpose is to inform discussions about our local community.

Background

The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination and unfair treatment in Britain; this is because of the Protected Characteristics they have. The Protected Characteristics are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation.

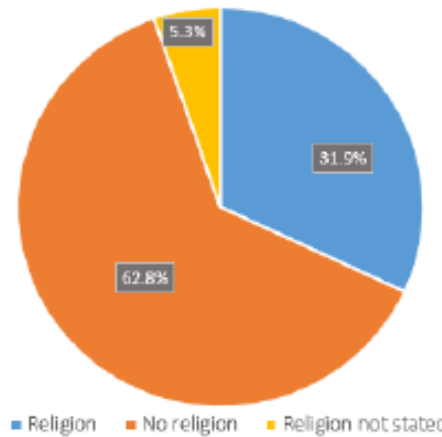
It is against the law to discriminate against someone because of a Protected Characteristic. Religion or belief discrimination is when a person is treated differently because of their religion or belief, or lack of religion or belief, in one of the situations covered by the Equality Act.¹

Key Points

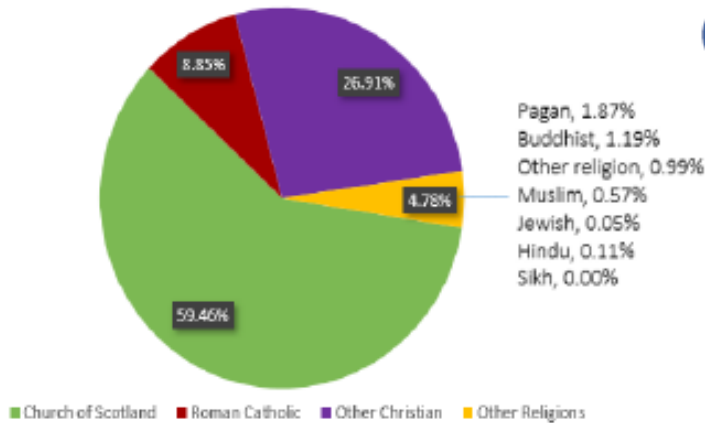
1

In 2022, 31.9% of those who responded to the Census stated they were religious, with 62.8% of respondents stating they were not religious. Shetland has the highest percentage of non-religious people, and the lowest percentage of religious people compared to other rural areas and Scotland overall.

Percentage of Shetland Population by Religion



Percentage of People Practicing each Religion, by Religious Group, against Total Number of Religious People



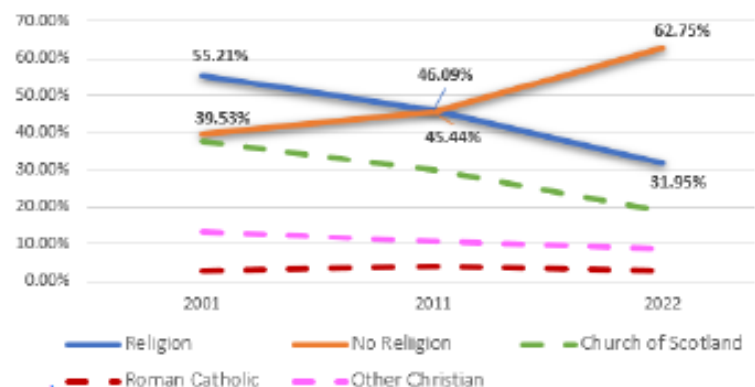
2

Among Shetland's religious population, 59.46% responded they follow the Church of Scotland, 8.85% Roman Catholicism, 26.91% other Christian denominations, and 4.78% other religions. This pattern is similar in Orkney, the Western Isles, and the Highlands, though Scotland as a whole has a higher percentage of Roman Catholics (31%) and other religions (9%), but fewer other Christians (12%).

3

Since 2001, the percentage of people who stated in the Census they were religious has decreased in Shetland. Religion as a whole has declined across Scotland, with the number of people identifying as non-religious increasing by over 20% from 2001 to 2022.

Percentage Practicing a Religion or no Religion in Shetland (by Census year)



¹ Religion or belief discrimination | EHRC (equalityhumanrights.com)

Data Sources: Scottish Census (2022, 2011 & 2001); Scottish Survey Core Questions.

Summary of Other Publications

Desk-top research of discrimination faced by individuals who have a religion or belief highlights several key findings:

Religion in the Workplace

Research from Religion at Work 2023 Survey reveals that 47% of 6,315 workers in the UK and US, feel uncomfortable discussing their religious festivals at work, 64% of respondents did not feel comfortable wearing religious dress or symbols at work, and 38% felt their organisation could do more to make employees feel comfortable wearing religious dress.

Lack of Understanding in Religious Education (R.E)

There are frequent instances where those of particular religions face discrimination due to a lack of understanding of their religious practices. Evidence shows that this is exacerbated by reduced provision of R.E in schools, which limits school leavers' abilities to have respect for and tolerance of people with different religious beliefs in their own communities. This was highlighted during a parliamentary debate on Religious Education in Modern Britain.

Religious Hate Crimes

Research from Stop Hate UK reveals in 2021/22, there were 8,730 religious or other faith Hate Crimes in the UK, an increase of 37% from the previous year. Religious or faith-based Hate Crimes have increased for the last 5 years and are one of the most common Hate Crimes according to Stop Hate UK.

Potential for Healthcare Discrimination

The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities published Guidance in 2017 that recognises the differences in cultural, spiritual and religious beliefs alongside other factors can limit the success of healthcare provision. Other factors include language barriers, insecure immigration status and housing, discrimination, lack of trust between patients and healthcare professionals, and the time and cost of attending appointments.

Summary of Feedback from Local Focus Groups

People with different faiths highlight that they generally feel that Shetland is a peaceful and friendly place, and that the community is non-judgemental, with a healthy scepticism, respect and cultural understanding. However, pockets of prejudice remain.

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Provision of religious premises to worship and meet for prayer, particularly for smaller religious groups;
- More accessible women-only sessions and healthcare provision, including gender-specific leisure activities;
- More opportunities for alcohol-free events to reduce social pressures and misuse of alcohol in Shetland; and
- More conversations about faith, where honesty and openness are key, including in schools and communities, to improve understanding about religious groups and cultural differences.



Data Sources: The UK in the World Values Survey (WVS) (1981-2022); [Stop Hate UK 2022](#); [Religious discrimination in Britain: A review of research evidence, 2000-10](#); [Religion at Work 2023](#); [Hansard, 2022. Religious Education in Modern Britain](#)

Protected Characteristics Profile: Sex

Purpose

This profile is one of nine, presenting quantitative (mainly through the Census) and qualitative (through locally run focus groups) data alongside desktop research. The purpose is to inform discussions about our local community.

Background

The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination and unfair treatment in Britain; this is because of the Protected Characteristics they have. The Protected Characteristics are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation.

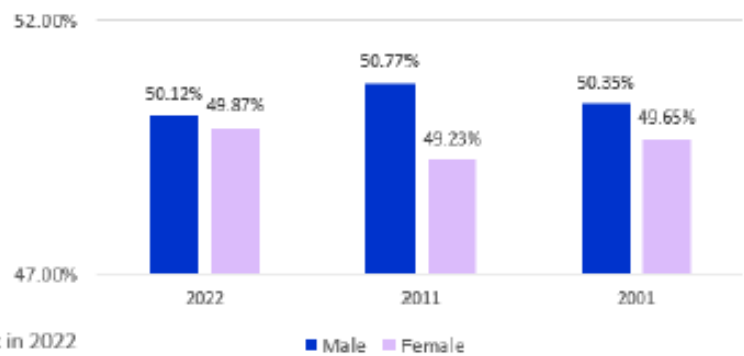
It is against the law to discriminate against someone because of a Protected Characteristic. Sex discrimination is when a person is treated differently because of their sex, in one of the situations that are covered by the Equality Act.¹

Key Points

1

The population in Shetland, by sex, has remained stable over time, with a slight male majority across all Census years. In contrast, Scotland has consistently had more females than males every Census year.

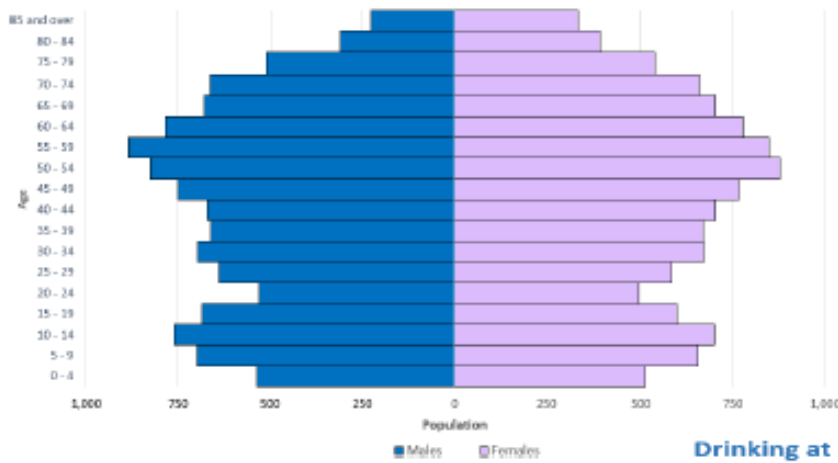
Percentage of Population in Shetland, by Sex, in 2022, 2011 & 2001



2

In 2022 there were more males in age groups 0-34 & 55-64 than females, whilst there are more females than males in age groups 35-54 & 65-85 and over. This pattern is similar in Orkney, the Western Isles and Scotland, although the Highlands, as a whole, has more females across most age groups.

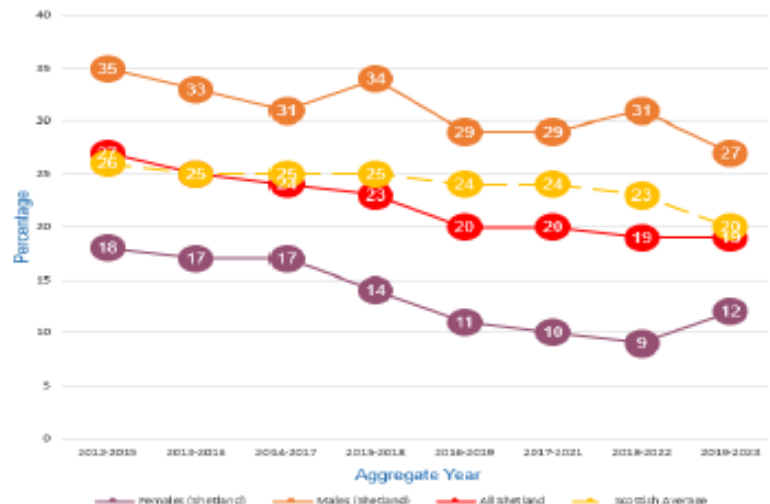
Shetland Population by Age and Sex in 2022



3

Over time, males in Shetland have consistently consumed alcohol at harmful levels more than females. However, since 2012, the overall average in Shetland has remained lower than the Scottish average and has declined over time.

Drinking at Harmful Levels Over Time by Sex



¹ <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/equality/equality-act-2010/your-rights-under-equality-act-2010/sex-discrimination>

Data Sources: Scottish Census (2022); National Records Scotland (2022); Scottish Household Survey (2023).

Summary of Other Publications

Desk-top research of discrimination faced by individuals who due to their sex highlights several key findings:

Employment

Research from the Older People and Employment Scotland 2017 report, reveals that there is evidence to suggest that ageist and sexist attitudes among employers can interact, particularly disadvantaging older women. As a result, these women often end up in roles for which they are overqualified and underpaid, exacerbating gender inequality in later-life employment opportunities.

Workplace Discrimination

Research from the National Institute of Economic and Social Research found that women aged over 50, in Scotland, face significant barriers such as ageism, gender discrimination, and limited access to career advancement opportunities. Women in this demographic often face lower wages, reduced job security, and are under-represented in leadership roles.

Education

In the UK, there is a higher percentage of men than women who are not in education, employment or training (NEET). This has been the case since 2001.

Summary of Feedback from Local Focus Groups

This is a summary of the key issues, challenges and opportunities for women living in Shetland, provided through an online survey promoted by Shetland Women's Aid.

Living with Fear and Insecurity: a recurring theme is the fear of violence and harassment that women in Shetland experience. This includes sexual assault and harassment, with several women recounting personal experiences ranging from inappropriate comments and groping to violent assaults and rape. This fear is amplified by the understanding that perpetrators are rarely held accountable. One respondent shared how the perpetrator of her assault was only convicted after he went on to commit even more serious crimes, suggesting a reluctance to believe victims and take action against abusers. This lack of accountability can leave women feeling vulnerable and unprotected.

Navigating a Culture of Silence: the Shetland community can be a double-edged sword for women experiencing abuse. The fear of social repercussions, judgment, or retaliation from the abuser or their network of family and friends is described by some respondents as a significant deterrent to reporting abuse or seeking help. Some describe the pressure to conform to traditional norms and maintain a facade of harmony, even at the expense of personal safety and well-being.

Confronting Endemic Sexism and Misogyny: some respondents describe a culture of sexism and misogyny that permeates everyday life. The Up Helly Aa festival was often cited as a stark example of male entitlement and the acceptance of double standards. Some describe how men are seemingly given a free pass to engage in infidelity during the festival, while women are expected to tolerate this behaviour, with no consideration of women's feelings and boundaries.

This ingrained sexism extends beyond the festival, manifesting in the prevalence of sexist and misogynistic language, particularly in social settings like pubs, where women are expected to endure "sexual jokes and harassment". This normalisation of disrespect contributes to a hostile environment where women feel uncomfortable and unsafe. Respondents also describe a persistent "boys' club" mentality in business and community organisations, which excludes women from decision-making positions and leadership roles. This exclusion perpetuates a power imbalance, reinforcing the idea that men are more capable and deserving of authority.

Struggling with Limited Support and Resources: the geographical isolation of Shetland presents a significant barrier for women seeking help and support. Respondents describe long waiting lists for counselling and limited access to specialised services, such as trauma therapy. The high cost of living and travelling south further restricts options for women seeking to escape abusive situations or access resources available on the mainland. This lack of accessible and

Data Sources: [Older People and Employment in Scotland 2017](#); [Fair Work Convention, 2022](#); [Office for National Statistics \(ONS\), 2024](#).

affordable support leaves women feeling trapped and isolated, exacerbating their sense of vulnerability and hopelessness.

Suggestions for Improvement include:

- **Challenging Cultural Norms:** support to create a shift in attitudes and beliefs through open dialogue, education, and a willingness to confront harmful behaviours and attitudes;
- **Strengthening Support Systems:** improving access to support services for women experiencing abuse or other challenges, including ensuring that specialised services, such as trauma therapy, are readily available;
- **Promoting Gender Equality:** breaking down the "boys' club" mentality and promoting gender equality in all aspects of Shetland life. For example by encouraging women's leadership and participation in decision-making roles, promoting equal opportunities in the workplace, and challenging traditional gender roles that limit women's choices and aspirations; and
- **Holding Perpetrators Accountable:** a zero-tolerance approach to violence and harassment against women, that believes and supports victims, holds perpetrators accountable for their actions, and sends a clear message that such behaviour will not be tolerated.



Protected Characteristics Profile: Sexual Orientation

Purpose

This profile is one of nine, presenting quantitative (mainly through the Census) and qualitative (through locally run focus groups) data alongside desktop research. The purpose is to inform discussions about our local community.

Background

The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination and unfair treatment in Britain; this is because of the Protected Characteristics they have. The Protected Characteristics are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation.

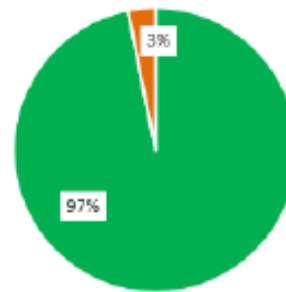
It is against the law to discriminate against someone because of a Protected Characteristic. Sexual orientation discrimination is when a person is treated differently because of their sexual orientation in one of the situations covered by the Equality Act.¹

Key Points

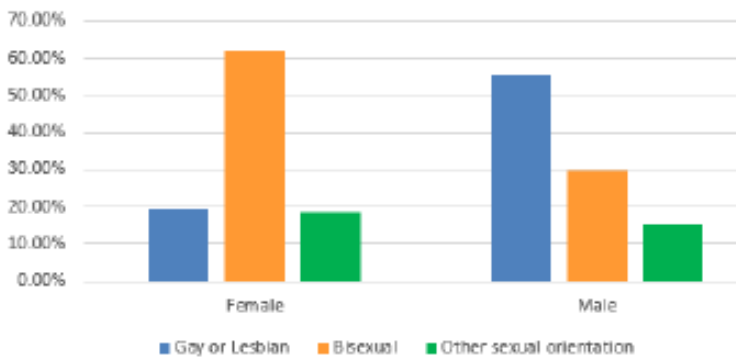
1

In 2022, in Shetland, the majority (97%) of those who responded to the Census, stated their sexual orientation as heterosexual/straight, with 3% of respondents as gay or lesbian, bisexual, or another sexual orientation. This data is similar for Orkney, Western Isles, Highland, and Scotland as a whole.

Sexual Orientation of all People Aged 16 and over in Shetland



Percentage of people who reported in the Census as being Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual or Other Sexual Orientation, in 2022, by Gender in Shetland



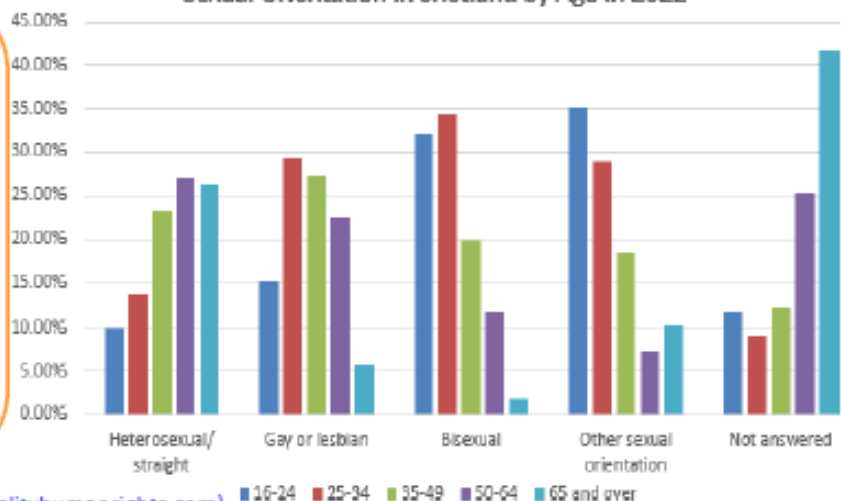
2

In Shetland, among the gay or lesbian, bisexual and other sexual orientations, most females who responded to the Census said they were bisexual (62%), with most males (54%) stating that they were gay. This is similar to other rural areas and Scotland overall.

3

In 2022, younger generations in Shetland were more likely to identify as LGBTQ+ in the Census, whereas older generations tended to identify as heterosexual or chose not to respond. While Scotland's highest percentage of bisexual individuals is in the 16-24 age group, Shetland's peak occurs in the 25-34 age group. Similarly, the 25-34 age group has the highest percentage of gay or lesbian individuals in both Shetland and Scotland.

Sexual Orientation in Shetland by Age in 2022



¹ [Sexual orientation discrimination | EHRC \(equalityhumanrights.com\)](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/sexual-orientation-discrimination)

Data Sources: Scottish Census (2022);

Summary of Other Publications

Desk-top research of discrimination faced by individuals as a result of their sexual orientation highlights several key findings:

The UK is the 15th most inclusive country for LGBTI in 2024

In 2024, ILGA-Europe's Rainbow Map ranked the UK 15th out of 49 countries, assessing laws and policies affecting LGBTI human rights. The UK scored well in family rights and civil society space but performed less strongly in areas like equality, hate crime, legal gender recognition, intersex rights, and asylum policies.

Hate Crime

Research from LGBT in Scotland: Hate Crime and Discrimination report by Stonewall Scotland 2017, reveals 20% of all LGBT people experienced a hate crime or incident due to their sexual orientation and / or gender identity; with almost half of trans people having experienced a hate crime or incident because of their gender identity. 13% of LGBT people who visited a café, restaurant, bar or nightclub in the last 12 months stated they have experienced discrimination based on their sexual orientation and / or gender identity. 87% of those who experienced hate crime, or an incident did not report it the police.

Discrimination and Less Fair Treatment at Work

Research from the Scottish LGBT Equality Report 2015 reveals 24% of respondents had personally experienced discrimination or harassment (22%) at work because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Fear of Prejudice

The Scottish LGBT Equality Report 2015 states that the majority of LGBT people in Scotland still never or only sometimes feel able to be open about their sexual orientation or gender identity with their own family (52%), at work (60%) or when accessing services (71%), for fear of the prejudice.

Health Disparities

Research from the Equality and Human Rights Monitor: Is Scotland Fairer report, reveals 69% of 289 trans and non-binary respondents had not been to a sexual health clinic in the last 2 years; 24% of this group said this was due to fear and anxieties relating to their gender identity. The report details that gay, lesbian and bisexual women face barriers accessing sexual health services; a health needs assessment of LGBT people found gay and lesbian women felt health professionals saw them as low risk and reluctant to do full sexually transmitted infection screenings; some bisexual women encountering staff making biphobic assumptions.

Employment

Research from LGBT in Scotland: Work Report by Stonewall Scotland, reveals one in six LGBT employees in Scotland in 2016 were subjected to negative comments or conduct from work colleagues in the previous year because they were LGBT. This increased to two in five trans-employees in 2017. One in seven (14%) LGBT employees in Scotland were excluded by colleagues for being LGBT, doubling to a third (32%) for trans employees and 20% for LGBT disabled employees.

Summary of Feedback from Local Focus Groups

A number of conversations were held with people in the local community, including members of the Pride Committee. To date, there has not been an opportunity to receive formal feedback.



Data Sources: [ILGA-Europe. \(2023\) Rainbow Europe Map: United Kingdom](#); [Stonewall Scotland \(2017\) LGBT in Scotland: Hate Crime](#); [Equality Network \(2015\) The Scottish LGBT Equality Report](#); [Equality and Human Rights Commission \(2023\) Equality and Human Rights Monitor 2023: Scotland – Fairer Scotland Duty](#); [Stonewall Scotland. \(2018\) LGBT in Scotland: Work Report](#).