



Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy 2026–30

Foreword

ISHA was founded on the belief that safe, affordable housing is a cornerstone of a good life and that access to it should not depend on who you are, where you come from, or what you look like. We cannot deliver on that belief without equity, diversity and inclusion at the foundation of everything we do.

We have laid foundations and made substantial progress in previous years. We committed to becoming an anti-racist organisation, established an EDI council, and prioritised collecting more employee and resident data. We were ambitious with our goals but acknowledge that in some areas we fell short of reaching all of them. Critically, we still do not know enough about our residents. Without reliable data we cannot know whether our services are working equitably, if we are making progress, or for whom they are failing. This strategy is designed differently. It sets out what we want to achieve and uses three external pledges and a new employee forum to hold us to it.

We want to be an equitable organisation for everyone. For our colleagues, that means every person can access the right support at every stage, from recruitment through to development and progression. We aim to continue cultivating a culture where employees feel celebrated and supported for who they are, not despite it.

For our residents, it means knowing who they are, understanding their needs, giving them a genuine voice in shaping their services, and being able to evidence that those services are working equitably for everyone.

SHARP, Disability Confident, and the LGBTQ+ Housing Pledge provide the framework for how we get there. We have chosen them because they are structured, credible and demanding. Each requires self-assessment, public commitment and demonstrable progress. They are not badges. They are the accountability we are inviting.

Finally, we are launching an employee forum: a peer support and advocacy body for all colleagues, and a space where the work of this strategy can be felt in day-to-day working life.

What follows sets out what each pledge requires of us, what ISHA commits to, and how we will deliver.

Pippa Fleetwood-Read, Chief Executive

1. Who we are: purpose, mission and values

Our purpose	Our mission
To provide safe, affordable homes across north and east London	To provide high-quality homes and services and contribute to thriving communities

Our values

Professional	Motivated to deliver	People focused	Compassionate
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These values are the foundation for how we deliver this EDI strategy. Being professional means applying the same rigour to inclusion as any other business priority. Being motivated to deliver means setting ambitious goals and following through. Being people focused and compassionate means understanding the real experiences of our residents and colleagues and responding with empathy.

ISHA's history also includes the legacy of Lien Viet Housing Association, established in 1988 to serve Vietnamese refugees and merged with ISHA in 2019. We continue to house more than 80 Vietnamese households, and the commitment to culturally sensitive services that Lien Viet embodied remains live throughout this strategy.

Our EDI vision

EDI vision: A diverse and inclusive organisation that meets residents where they are and supports colleagues to do their best work.

This is an equity strategy, not just an equality strategy. Equality means treating everyone the same. Equity means recognising that people start from different places and need different things to achieve fair outcomes. That distinction matters to us.

Term	What it means for ISHA
Diversity	Valuing the uniqueness of every individual: their background, identity, experience, and perspective. Diversity is a strength, not a challenge to be managed.
Inclusion	Creating conditions in which people genuinely feel respected, valued, and able to contribute fully as a resident or a colleague.
Anti-racism	An active, ongoing commitment to identifying and dismantling the systems, processes and behaviours that produce racial inequity, not merely avoiding discrimination.
Intersectionality	Recognition that identities are multi-faceted. Race, gender, disability, class and other characteristics interact in ways that shape lived experience and life chances.
Equity	Recognising that people start from different places and need different things to achieve fair outcomes.
Equality	Giving everyone the same treatment, resources, and opportunities.

2. Our commitments

ISHA is making five commitments in this strategy: three external pledges on race, disability and LGBTQ+ inclusion, a resident data improvement initiative, and the launch of the ISHA employee forum. Together they address ISHA's EDI priorities and hold us accountable for progress.

The sections below set out what each commitment requires, what ISHA commits to, and how we will deliver.

2.1 The ISHA Employee Forum: advocating for every colleague

ISHA is launching an employee forum: a peer support and advocacy body open to all colleagues, regardless of role, background or identity. This space enables employees to raise concerns, access support, and hold the organisation accountable from the inside. Whether that is a question about a workplace process, a concern about discrimination, or support navigating a difficult situation, the forum is where colleagues can go.

The EDI council ran well-attended events, but its support mandate was narrow. Many employees did not feel it was a place they could turn to with workplace concerns. The forum is designed to fill that gap. It has an explicit anti-racist mandate and engages with all three EDI pledges, but its purpose is broader: to make ISHA a genuinely inclusive place to work for everyone.

Employees told us that socioeconomic background and social mobility matter to them, and the forum is a space to raise those concerns. ISHA is committed to being an organisation where your background does not limit your progression. We already recognise demonstrated relevant experience as an appropriate alternative to formal education requirements, and the forum builds on that commitment by providing a space for colleagues to name and address barriers that are not always visible in conventional EDI frameworks.

2.2 SHARP: becoming an anti-racist organisation

SHARP: Social Housing Anti-Racism Pledge. Developed by BME London Landlords, delivered in partnership with the Housing Diversity Network and BME National. It was developed in direct response to evidence that racism is systemic in social housing, in recruitment, in service delivery, in procurement and in governance.

Our vision

An anti-racist ISHA is one where global majority employees are represented at every level, not just in front-line roles, and where the ethnicity pay gap has closed because progression is transparent and equitable. Employees can name racism when they experience it and trust that it will be taken seriously. Conversations about race are not exceptional and leaders visibly model anti-racist behaviour. Services are checked against ethnicity data routinely so that differential experiences are identified and addressed. Finally, ISHA is known in the sector not just as a SHARP signatory but as an organisation that holds itself publicly accountable and shares its learning.

Where we start from

Approximately 54% of ISHA employees identify as global majority, which reflects the communities we serve and is a genuine strength. But that diversity is not yet reflected at management and senior leadership level, where only 25% of employees identify as global majority.

At Board level, 37.5% of members are from a global majority background, above the NHF sector average, but declining since our previous strategy. Improving Board diversity is an ongoing priority and is explicitly considered in all Board recruitment.

For a housing association rooted in north and east London, local connection matters too. Through our Associate Board Member programme, we are building a pipeline of Board members who know and reflect the communities we serve. The programme has already demonstrated its value: an ISHA resident from the global majority, who joined as an Associate Board member, has since been elected to the full Board.

We last collected ethnicity pay gap data in 2022 and published it but did not use it to set targets or drive action. That data is also too dated to be representative of our current workforce. We have committed to reporting pay gap data annually from this strategy period and using it actively to monitor progress.

We have not yet formally assessed our position on the anti-racist organisation continuum. The SHARP self-assessment in Year 1 will establish that baseline, and this strategy finishes what we started.

Since our previous strategy, ISHA established an EDI council focused on celebrating cultural events and supporting global majority employees. Though our cultural celebrations are well attended, a strategic EDI programme was not established, and the SHARP self-assessment was never completed.

The pledge

What the scheme requires

Level 1

Sign up, complete an online self-assessment across six principles, and commit to developing an anti-racism action plan.

Level 2

Undergo an external audit of progress against the action plan, with focus on diversity targets in recruitment and leadership, and how ethnicity data is being disaggregated and used.

Level 3

Demonstrate a genuine shift in organisational culture, evidenced by how board, executives and senior management have promoted inclusion and created clear pathways for Black, Asian and global majority employees and residents to raise concerns about race.

What ISHA commits to

- Assess ISHA on the anti-racist organisation continuum and SHARP assessment
- Publish and embed an anti-racism action plan
- Strengthen inclusivity at interview and assessment stage of recruitment
- Invest in progression pathways for global majority employees
- Monitor pay gap data.

How we'll deliver

Goal	Measure	Timeline	Owner
SHARP self-assessment complete and anti-racism action plan published	Action plan published	Year 2	EDI Lead
Set baseline ethnicity pay gap	Pay gap report	Year 1	People Team
Strengthen inclusivity at interview and assessment stage of recruitment	Annual board report	Year 1	People Team
Hold training for board on EDI	Annual board report	Year 1	Head of Governance
Continue training for employee on EDI	IHASCO training record	Ongoing	People Team
SHARP Award Level 1 achieved	SHARP confirmation	Year 4	EDI Lead
Improve by 1 point on the anti-racist organisation continuum	Mid-point and end-point self-assessment	Years 2 and 4	EDI Lead
Ethnicity pay gap reduced by 5%	Annual pay gap report	Year 4	People Team

Governance: The Chief Executive owns this commitment. Progress is reported to the Board annually and reviewed by the Leadership Team quarterly.

2.3 Disability Confident: becoming genuinely inclusive of disability

Disability Confident: Government scheme run by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). It was developed to help employers remove the barriers that prevent disabled people from getting into and staying in work. For housing associations, it is also relevant to service delivery, how we communicate with disabled residents, respond to their needs and collect meaningful data about their experiences.

Our vision

A Disability Confident ISHA is one where disabled colleagues are recruited, retained and progressing at every level. Reasonable adjustments are made promptly and without awkwardness, and managers are confident having conversations about disability and health. Employees who acquire a disability are supported to stay and thrive. For residents, ISHA knows which of its roughly 6,000 residents are disabled, understands their needs, and can evidence that repairs, adaptations and services respond to those needs equitably.

Where we start from

At the time of developing this strategy, among our employees, 9% consider themselves disabled, well below the national average of around 23-25% of working age people who identify as disabled. No Board member is disabled. We have mechanisms in place for reasonable adjustments to be made but do not yet know enough about the experiences of disabled colleagues, whether they feel supported, whether adjustments are perceived to be made readily, or whether disability is felt to be a barrier to progression at ISHA.

Just 7% of residents have disability data recorded, against a higher prevalence in our communities (e.g. 16-17% in Islington). We cannot carry out meaningful needs assessments; target adaptations work or understand whether disabled residents are receiving equitable services without it.

Since the previous strategy, ISHA has achieved Disability Confident Committed status at Level 1. This strategy builds on that foundation and takes us further.

The pledge

What the scheme requires

Level 1

Committed: Sign up and commit to five core actions around inclusive recruitment, guaranteed interviews where appropriate, reasonable adjustments, and supporting employees who acquire a disability.

Level 2

Employer: Self-assess against two themes: getting the right people for the job and keeping and developing your people. Includes evidencing guaranteed interviews, a reasonable adjustments process, and disability reporting.

Level 3

Leader: Obtain independent validation of the Level 2 self-assessment and demonstrate active championing of Disability Confident beyond your own organisation.

What ISHA commits to

- Report to the Board annually on disability inclusion progress
- Launch a sustained resident disability data collection programme
- Achieve Disability confident level 2 status by the end of this strategy.

How we'll deliver

Goal	Measure	Timeline	Owner
Disability Confident Employer (Level 2) achieved	DWP accreditation confirmed	Year 4	People Team
Resident disability data completeness improved from 7% to 30%+	Housing management system (Rubixx) report	Year 4	Housing Team

Governance: The Director of People and Performance owns this commitment. Progress is reported to the Board annually and reviewed by the Leadership Team quarterly.

2.4 LGBTQ+ Housing Pledge: becoming actively affirming

LGBTQ+ Housing Pledge: Developed by HouseProud and the University of Surrey, delivered by Stonewall Housing. It was developed in direct response to the No Place Like Home? research, which found that LGBTQ+ people in social housing experience significantly higher rates of isolation, discrimination and fear than the general population.

Our vision

An actively affirming ISHA is one where LGBTQ+ residents feel safe being themselves in their homes and confident that ISHA will respond if they experience discrimination or harassment. LGBTQ+ residents have a genuine voice in shaping decisions about their homes and services. LGBTQ+ colleagues can bring their whole selves to work without self-censorship. And ISHA holds meaningful data on LGBTQ+ residents that enables it to understand their experiences rather than assuming they are the same as everyone else's.

Where we start from

9% of ISHA employees identify as LGBTQ+, close to national estimates and a meaningful baseline. But we know little about our residents: sexual orientation is recorded for just 26%, making it difficult to understand LGBTQ+ residents' experiences or identify whether our services are reaching them equitably.

LGBTQ+ inclusion has not been a formal focus of previous strategies. We have not consistently marked LGBTQ+ events or created the kind of visible signals that tell residents and employees that ISHA is a safe and affirming place. The No Place Like Home? research found that many LGBTQ+ social housing residents do not feel comfortable being open with their landlord. We want to be an organisation where they do.

The pledge

What the scheme requires

Pledge Pioneer

Evidence three core commitments: LGBTQ+ resident input at executive or strategic level; increased LGBTQ+ visibility across the organisation; and a programme of employee training. Accreditation is assessed by Stonewall Housing with direct involvement of LGBTQ+ residents.

Pledge Pioneer Plus

Go further by co-producing goals with LGBTQ+ residents and evidencing an action plan developed with their input.

What ISHA commits to

- Sign up to the LGBTQ+ Housing Pledge with sign-off from the Chief Executive as senior signatory
- Deliver LGBTQ+ inclusion training to all employees
- Establish a mechanism for LGBTQ+ residents to feed into strategic decisions
- Improve LGBTQ+ data collection for employees and residents
- Participate in LGBTQ+ events such as Pride with employees and residents annually.

How we'll deliver

Goal	Measure	Timeline	Owner
Sign up to LGBTQ+ Housing Pledge	Sign-up confirmed by CEO	Year 1	EDI Lead
LGBTQ+ inclusion training delivered to employees	Training completion records	Year 2	EDI Lead
Mechanism for LGBTQ+ resident input established	Mechanism documented and active	Year 4	EDI and Resident Involvement leads
Pledge Pioneer accreditation achieved	Stonewall Housing confirmation	Year 4	EDI Lead

Governance: The Chief Executive owns this commitment. Progress is reported to the Board annually and reviewed by the Leadership Team quarterly.

2.5 Data: knowing who we serve

We can only deliver equitable services by understanding who our residents are. We can only measure whether our EDI commitments are making a difference with data to measure against.

Resident data: Where we start from

Our roughly 6,000 residents are majority female (women hold 61% of lead tenancies) and span a wide age range, with significant representation across all adult age groups. Our ethnicity data, where held, reflects the diverse communities of north and east London: most residents whose ethnicity is recorded identify as Black, Asian or from another global majority background. This is consistent with the areas we serve and reinforces why an anti-racist, culturally sensitive approach to service delivery is a baseline requirement.

Beyond that, our data position is mixed. Disability data is held for just 7% of residents, sexual orientation for 26%, and religion for around 30%. Employment status is almost entirely unknown. The resident insight strategy, a commitment in ISHA's corporate plan, is the vehicle through which we will address these gaps and build a more systematic understanding of who our residents are and what they need.

Disability data is our most urgent priority, with direct implications for the RSH consumer standards and our Disability Confident commitments.

What we commit to

- Review how and when we collect resident data, with a focus on disability, sexual orientation and religion
- Ensure residents understand why we collect data and how it is used
- Improve resident disability data completeness from 7% to 30%+
- Disaggregate resident satisfaction data by protected characteristic and publish annually.

How we'll deliver

Goal	Measure	Timeline	Owner
Move towards resident satisfaction data being disaggregated by protected characteristic and published annually	Annual TSM report	Year 2	Performance Team
Resident disability data completeness improved from 7% to 30%+	Rubixx report	Year 4	Housing Team
Resident sexual orientation data completeness improved from 26%	Rubixx report	Year 4	Housing Team

Employee data: Where we start from

Our employee data is in a stronger position. Following a sustained push, 100% of employees have now responded to the EDI data collection, giving ISHA a complete and reliable workforce baseline for the first time. We commit to maintaining that 100% completion rate.

Our last formal pay gap analysis was carried out in 2022. We recognise that was too long ago to represent our current position, and that collecting data once without following through falls short of the transparency we aspire to. From this strategy period, we commit to reporting pay gap data annually and using it actively to monitor where gaps are widening or closing.

What we commit to

- Maintain 100% employee EDI data completion across all characteristics
- Report pay gap data annually and use it actively to monitor progress.

How we'll deliver

Goal	Measure	Timeline	Owner
100% employee EDI data completion maintained	Annual HR data audit	Ongoing	People Team
Pay gap data reported annually	Annual pay gap report published	Year 2 and ongoing	People Team

Governance: The People and Culture team leads on data quality and collection for employees. Progress is reported to the Leadership Team annually and published in our Annual Report.

Appendix: Data tables

Our Board

Our Board currently has eight members. The table below shows the current composition across protected characteristics. There were 12 members in 2023, when we previously measured so please note figures are not directly comparable. A Board recruitment process was completed in June 2026, and updated data will be reflected in the first annual review of this strategy.

Characteristic	Current position	Assessment
Gender	62.5% male / 37.5% female	Was 42% female in 2023.
Ethnicity	62.5% White British; 25% Black/Caribbean; 12.5% Asian/Indian. BME: 37.5%	Was 42% BME in 2023.
Disability	0% disabled	19.5% of local population is disabled. Unchanged since 2023.
Age	0% under 35; 25% aged 35–44; 37.5% aged 45–54; 12.5% 55–64; 25% aged 65+	No member under 35. Succession planning in place.
Religion	50% no religion; 37.5% Christian; 12.5% Muslim	Broadly representative of communities we serve.
Sexual orientation	100% heterosexual	Gap on a small Board.
Local connection	25% live/work in area; 0% are residents	Actively addressing through Associate Board Member Programme.

Board diversity by gender and ethnicity has declined since our previous strategy, and gaps remain in LGBTQ+ and disability representation. We undertook to use the 2026 recruitment as an opportunity to address this directly. The local connection gap is also notable: we are actively addressing this through our Associate Board Member Programme, which cultivates local talent and resident voices at governance level.

Our employees

Following a sustained push over the past year, 100% of employees have now responded to the EDI data collection, giving ISHA a complete, reliable workforce baseline for the first time.

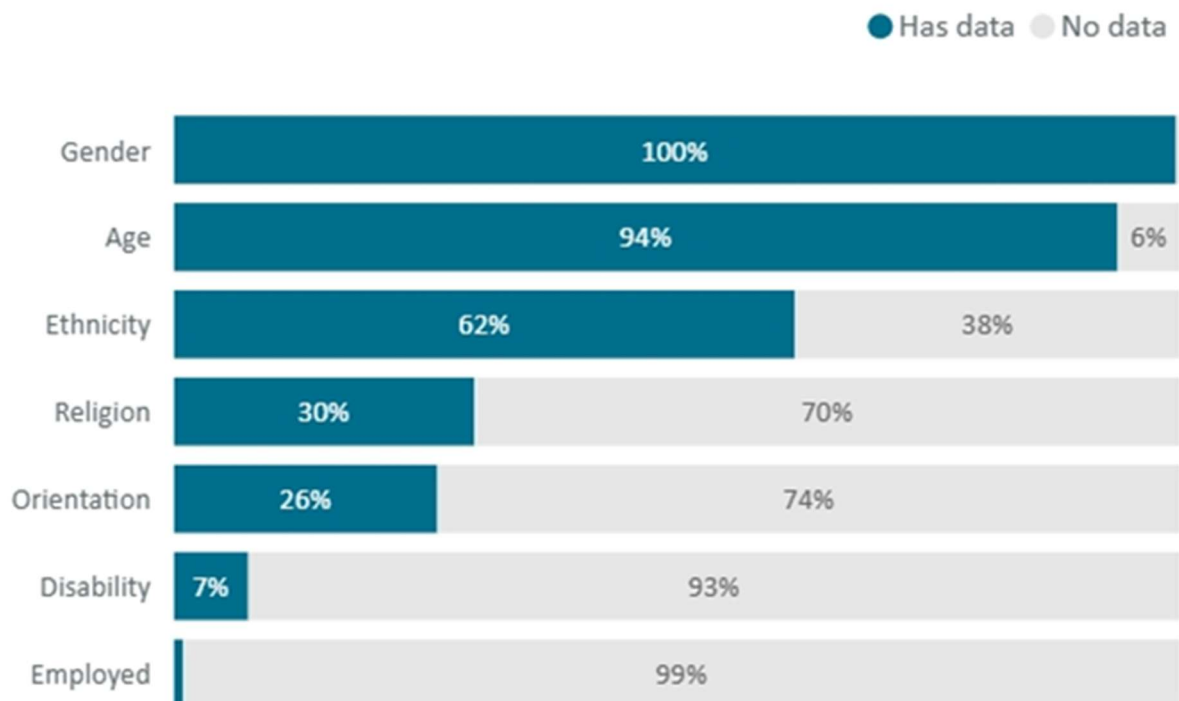
Characteristic	Current position	Assessment
Gender	57% female / 43% male	Majority female workforce. Men concentrated in higher-paid roles.
Ethnicity	Global majority (Black + Asian): 54%; White: 39–41%	Reflects communities we serve, but pay gap shows concentration in lower-paid roles.
Sexual orientation	84% heterosexual; 9% LGBTQ+; 7% prefer not to say	9% close to national estimates. Good baseline to monitor against the LGBTQ+ pledge.
Religion or belief	Christian: 39%; No religion: 28%; Muslim: 14%; Other: 9%	Diverse workforce by religion. Prayer facilities in place.
Disability	9% consider themselves disabled	Below national workforce average of ~16–17%.

Our residents

We collect data across all tenancy types including general needs, supported, shared ownership and leasehold tenures. We have roughly 6,000 residents.

% of Resident by Demographic Data Point Held

% of all residents



Pay gap data

The figures below reflect our 2022 baseline, the last time pay gap data was formally collected and analysed. From this strategy period, we commit to annual reporting.

	Oct 2022 median hourly pay	Current year median hourly pay	Pay gap
Ethnicity, all employees	White: £26.25 / Global majority: £18.94	To be collected	27.85%
Ethnicity, Leadership team	White: £55.46 / Global majority: £53.71	To be collected	3.16%
Ethnicity, Management Team	White: £32.97 / Global majority: £38.55	To be collected	-15.5%
Gender, all employees	Male: £20.58 / Female: £18.94	To be collected	7.97%
Gender, Leadership Team	Male: £55.46 / Female: £53.71	To be collected	3.16%
Gender, Management Team	Male: £38.26 / Female: £32.97	To be collected	13.83%

The nine protected characteristics

Characteristic	Notes for ISHA
Age	Resident base spans 0–80+; workforce skewed to 45–54; no Board members under 35.
Disability	Most significant data gap: disability data held for just 7% of residents. Year 1 priority.
Gender reassignment	Limited data.
Marriage and civil partnership	Relevant to HR policies.
Pregnancy and maternity	Relevant to HR policies and to residents with young children.
Race	Central focus. Anti-racism is a named commitment. SHARP provides the framework.
Religion or belief	Around 30% of residents are Christian; nearly 10% Muslim.
Sex	Workforce 57% female; resident base 61% female (lead tenancies). Pay gap monitored.
Sexual orientation	Very limited resident data. LGBTQ+ Housing Pledge will drive improvement.

This strategy was approved by the ISHA Board on 29 July 2026.

Next review: December 2027