

# Staff at the Office for Students

**Equality, diversity and inclusion statistics 2022** 

Reference OfS 2022.44

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## **Key findings**

The Office for Students (OfS) is the independent regulator of higher education in England. We employ a workforce of approximately 400 people.

This report describes the makeup of our staff split by six protected characteristics and caring responsibilities:

- Age. The staff employed by the OfS are relatively young, with a median age of 39.
- **Disability.** Fourteen per cent of OfS staff have reported they have a disability.
- **Ethnicity.** Seven per cent of OfS staff have declared they are from an ethnic minority background (excluding white minorities).
- **Religion or belief.** A little under half of OfS staff (45 per cent) have declared that they do not have a religion or belief.
- Sex. Two-thirds of OfS staff are female and one-third are male.
- **Sexual orientation.** Eight per cent of OfS staff have declared they are lesbian, gay, bisexual or other.
- Caring responsibilities. Over a quarter of OfS staff (30 per cent) have reported they have caring responsibilities.

We compare our staff with Civil Service staff as a whole and with other public sector organisations responsible for regulation. This report also includes discussion of our appointments and leavers and our progress against our equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) targets.

### Introduction

- 1. The Office for Students (OfS) is the independent regulator of higher education in England. We are publishing this data in the interests of transparency, to inform our work on improving the diversity of our workforce, to demonstrate our commitment to diversity and openness, and to contribute to our compliance with having regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty. This forms part of wider activities within the OfS equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) workforce strategy, which sets out in more detail our plans for delivering our internal equality and diversity objectives.<sup>1</sup> This report is an update to the version published in June 2021 (OfS 2021.17).<sup>2</sup> This data does not constitute Official Statistics but was produced following the principles of the Code of Practice for Statistics.<sup>3</sup>
- 2. The OfS employs around 400 staff and so is considerably smaller than the majority of Civil Service departments and many other public sector regulators.<sup>4</sup>
- 3. The OfS staff profile data in this report covers all those employed by the OfS including permanent staff, fixed term staff and sandwich year placement students. It does not include members of our board, our committees, our student panel or contractors/agency staff.
- 4. As part of our Public Sector Equality Duty, OfS staff profile data is presented by reference to the following six protected characteristics:
  - age
  - disability
  - ethnicity
  - religion or belief
  - sex
  - sexual orientation.

We also include data on the caring responsibilities of OfS staff.

- 5. The OfS collects data on the gender identity of staff. However, because fewer than six staff have reported that their gender identity is different from their sex registered at birth, we have decided not to publish this data.
- 6. OfS staff profile data is presented based on the following five annual census points to show the current composition of the OfS and how this has changed in the last four years. The total count of OfS staff at these census points is as follows, rounded to the nearest 10:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See <u>www.officeforstudents.org.uk/about/equality-and-diversity/objectives-for-staff-equality/.</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See <u>www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/staff-at-the-ofs-equality-diversity-and-inclusion-statistics/</u>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> See https://code.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/the-code/.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Civil Service statistics: 2022, available at www.gov.uk/government/statistics/civil-service-statistics-2022.

- 1 April 2018: 380 staff
- 31 March 2019: 350 staff
- 31 March 2020: 420 staff
- 31 March 2021: 400 staff
- 31 March 2022: 400 staff.
- 7. Around three-quarters of OfS staff work full-time and a quarter work part-time.
- 8. To help put our staff profile data in context, throughout this report we provide comparisons between our staff and Civil Service employees. We use the Civil Service National Statistics 2022, which represent the makeup of the Civil Service as of 31 March 2022.<sup>5</sup> We make these comparisons because the OfS is a public sector organisation and they allow us to see how we compare with other public sector organisations.
- 9. In additional to the Civil Service as a whole, we compare OfS staff with other public sector organisations responsible for regulation. The organisations we make comparisons with are:
  - Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted)
  - Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual)
  - Competition and Markets Authority (CMA)
  - The Charity Commission
  - Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (Ofgem)
  - The Water Services Regulation Authority (Ofwat).
- 10. Where comparisons are made, we include proportions for all characteristic categories, including 'prefer not to say' and non-completion. It is important to consider the size of 'prefer not to say' and non-completion when making comparisons between other categories.
- 11. This publication also includes data on the number of the appointments made to the OfS, including progress against our six EDI targets. We also include some high-level data related to the number of staff that have left the OfS in recent years.
- 12. To allow a consistent approach to visualisation, the staff profile charts present the categories for which the characteristic is known in alphabetical order. Where relevant, these are then followed by 'prefer not to say' and 'not completed'. The only exception to this is age group, which is presented in ascending order.
- 13. To protect individuals' data, we have rounded counts to the nearest 10 and proportions to the nearest one percentage point. Furthermore, counts and proportions for categories that apply to five or fewer staff are suppressed. For the data on appointments and leavers, counts are

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Civil Service statistics: 2022, available at <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/civil-service-statistics-2022">www.gov.uk/government/statistics/civil-service-statistics-2022</a>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/about/equality-and-diversity/objectives-for-staff-equality.

rounded to the nearest five. This is because the data is not split by personal characteristics so the disclosure risk is much lower.

- 14. The data associated with this report can be found in Annex A published alongside this report.<sup>7</sup>
- 15. In April 2021 we changed our collection of staff profile data so that it is more in line with the Government Statistical Service harmonisation standards. This updated recording and categorisation of staff characteristics has helped us to have a better understanding of our staff and will allow direct comparisons to census data when available. However, this change has led to a reduction in disclosure rates for several characteristics when comparing March 2022 with disclosure in March 2021. As a result, interpreting time series trends by comparing data for March 2021 and March 2022 should be avoided.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> See <u>www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/staff-at-the-ofs-equality-diversity-and-inclusion-statistics-</u> 2022/.

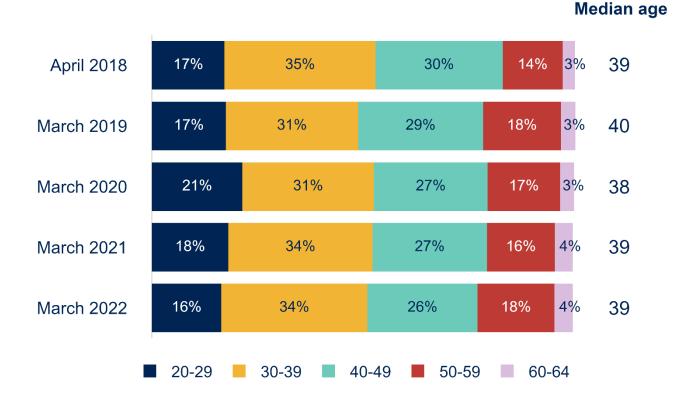
#### Staff characteristics

#### Age

The staff employed by the OfS are relatively young, with a median age of 39.

16. Figure 1 shows the current age profile of OfS staff and how it compares with earlier years. Age is known for all members of staff given that birth date must be provided as part of the application process to our pension scheme.

Figure 1: OfS staff by age group



**Note:** Ages have been grouped in the same way as the Civil Service National Statistics, to allow comparison. Bar labels show proportions rounded to the nearest 1 per cent. As a result of this rounding and our suppression criteria, bar labels will sometimes sum to less or more than 100.

- 17. Table 1 shows the proportions of OfS staff in the different age groups are markedly different from the Civil Service.
- 18. The OfS staff had a median age of 39 as of 31 March 2022. The median age of the Civil Service on this date was five years older, at 44 years. The median age is the 'middle' number when the ages of all staff are listed in ascending order.
- 19. Table 1 also shows how the age profile of the OfS compares with Ofsted, Ofqual, the CMA, the Charity Commission, Ofgem and Ofwat.

Table 1: OfS staff, Civil Service staff and staff at other public sector organisations responsible for regulation, by age group

Age group	OfS	Civil Service	Ofsted	Ofqual	СМА	Charity Commission	Ofgem	Ofwat
16-19	-	0%	0-1%	0-1%	0-0%	0-1%	0-0%	0%
20-29	16%	17%	7%	9-12%	17-18%	14-16%	28-29%	17-21%
30-39	34%	22%	22%	29-33%	34-36%	22-25%	35-36%	21-25%
40-49	26%	23%	30-31%	32-36%	25-26%	28-31%	21-22%	36-41%
50-59	18%	28%	30-31%	19-22%	18-19%	22-25%	11-12%	17-21%
60-64	4%	8%	7%	2-5%	2-3%	5-7%	2-3%	2-5%
65 and over	-	2%	2%	0-1%	1-2%	1-3%	0-1%	0%
Total staff	400	510,080	1,830	290	860	470	1,350	260

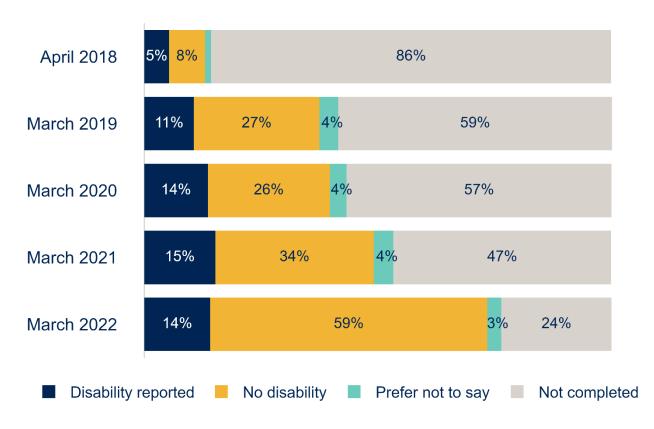
**Notes:** A dash indicates the proportion has been suppressed due to small numbers. Proportions for organisations other than the OfS were calculated using the rounded counts provided in the Civil Service National Statistics. Ranges of proportions are provided when a precise proportion could not be calculated with these rounded values. The precise proportion will be found in this range.

### **Disability**

Fourteen per cent of OfS staff have reported they have a disability.

20. Fourteen per cent of OfS staff have reported they have a disability.

Figure 2: OfS staff by disability



**Note:** Bar labels show proportions rounded to the nearest 1 per cent. As a result of this rounding and our suppression criteria, bar labels will sometimes sum to less or more than 100.

- 21. As noted in paragraph 15, in April 2021 we changed our EDI data collection processes, leading to an increase in completion in March 2022 when compared with March 2021. Differences between the disability groups when comparing these two years will likely in part reflect this change in data collection. For example, the large increase in the proportion of staff declaring 'No disability' between March 2021 and March 2022 will primarily have been driven by this change in collection.
- 22. Table 2 shows a smaller proportion of Civil Service staff have declared a disability when compared with OfS staff: 11 per cent. A larger proportion of Civil Service staff have declared they have no disability (66 per cent). Five per cent of Civil Service staff chose not to provide an answer and 18 per cent have not reported their disability status.
- 23. Table 2 also shows how the disability profile of OfS staff compares with Ofsted, Ofqual, the CMA, the Charity Commission, Ofgem and Ofwat.

Table 2: OfS staff, Civil Service staff and staff at other public sector organisations responsible for regulation, by disability

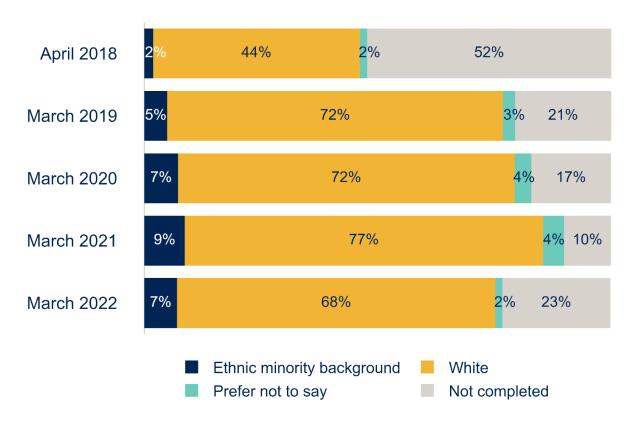
Disability status	OfS	Civil Service	Ofsted	Ofqual	СМА	Charity Commission	Ofgem	Ofwat
Disability reported	14%	11%	8%	9-12%	5-6%	5-7%	6%	2-5%
No disability	59%	66%	83-84%	63-68%	84-86%	47-50%	87-88%	78-84%
Prefer not to say	3%	5%	0%	2-5%	1-2%	0%	0%	2-5%
Not completed	24%	18%	8-9%	19-22%	8-9%	43-46%	6-7%	13-17%
Total staff	400	510,080	1,830	290	860	470	1,350	260

## **Ethnicity**

Seven per cent of OfS staff have declared they are from an ethnic minority background (excluding white minorities).

- 24. Figure 3 shows the ethnicities of OfS staff. Seven per cent of staff have said they are from an ethnic minority background (excluding white minorities). In this report, any member of staff who has identified as any ethnicity other than white is considered to be from an ethnic minority background. Staff who have selected any white ethnicity, including white minority groups, are part of the white group. As such, throughout this report, where we refer to staff from an ethnic minority background this excludes white minorities.
- 25. The proportion of staff declaring they are from an ethnic minority background has increased from 2 per cent in April 2018. However, given the proportion of staff answering the question has increased considerably since 2018, much of this increase is likely related to the increase in reporting. As noted in paragraph 15, in April 2021 we changed our EDI data collection processes, leading to a decrease in completion in March 2022 when compared with March 2021. Differences between the ethnicity groups when comparing these two years will likely in part reflect this change in data collection.

Figure 3: OfS staff by ethnicity



**Note:** Bar labels show proportions rounded to the nearest 1 per cent. As a result of this rounding, bar labels will sometimes sum to less or more than 100.

- 26. As of 31 March 2022, 12 per cent of Civil Service staff were from an ethnic minority background, 70 per cent were white, 4 per cent chose not to disclose their ethnicity and 14 per cent had not completed the question (see Table 3).
- 27. Table 3 also shows how the ethnicity profile of OfS staff compares with Ofsted, Ofqual, the CMA, the Charity Commission, Ofgem and Ofwat.
- 28. However, there are regional differences in ethnicity. The vast majority of OfS staff (over 90 per cent) are based at our office in Bristol (we also have a small office in London). Of our Bristol based staff, 6 per cent have declared they are from an ethnic minority background, 70 per cent that they are white, 2 per cent prefer not to say and 23 per cent have not completed the question. For Civil Service staff employed in the South West of England, 5 per cent have declared they are from an ethnic minority background, 81 per cent that they are white, 5 per cent prefer not to say and 9 per cent have not completed the question.

Table 3: OfS staff, Civil Service staff and staff at other public sector organisations responsible for regulation, by ethnicity

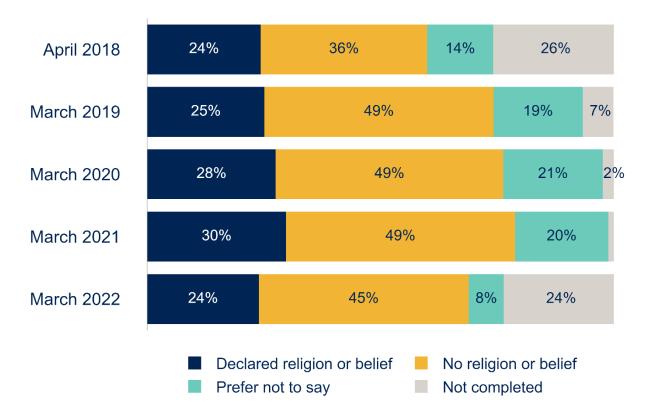
Ethnicity	OfS	Civil Service	Ofsted	Ofqual	СМА	Charity Commission	Ofgem	Ofwat
Ethnic minority background	7%	12%	10-11%	15- 19%	23- 24%	3-5%	22- 23%	17- 21%
White	68%	70%	85-86%	77- 82%	67- 68%	66-70%	68- 69%	70- 76%
Prefer not to say	2%	4%	1-2%	2-5%	3-4%	1-3%	0%	2-5%
Not completed	23%	14%	3-4%	0%	5-6%	26-29%	8-9%	2-5%
Total staff	400	510,080	1,830	290	860	470	1,350	260

## Religion or belief

A little under half of OfS staff (45 per cent) have declared that they do not have a religion or belief.

29. Figure 4 shows the religion or beliefs of OfS staff. 45% of OfS staff have declared that they do not have a religion or belief.





**Note:** Bar labels show proportions rounded to the nearest 1 per cent. As a result of this rounding and our suppression criteria, bar labels will sometimes sum to less or more than 100.

- 30. As noted in paragraph 15, in April 2021 we changed our EDI data collection processes, leading to a decrease in completion in March 2022 when compared with March 2021. Differences between the groups when comparing these two years will likely in part reflect this change in data collection.
- 31. Table 4 shows that as of 31 March 2022, 29 per cent of Civil Service staff declared they do not have a religion or belief and 41 per cent declared that they do. Nine per cent chose to not disclose their religion or belief and 22 per cent had not completed the question.
- 32. Table 4 also shows how the religion or belief profile of OfS staff compares with Ofsted, Ofqual, the CMA, the Charity Commission, Ofgem and Ofwat.

Table 4: OfS staff, Civil Service staff and staff at other public sector organisations responsible for regulation, by religion or belief

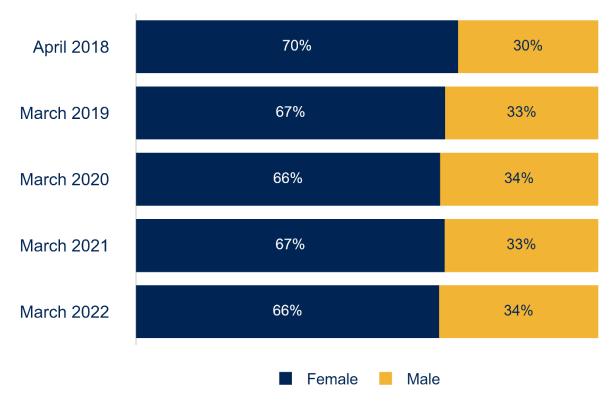
Religion or belief	OfS	Civil Service	Ofsted	Ofqual	СМА	Charity Commission	Ofgem	Ofwat
Declared religion or belief	24%	41%	50-54%	33-46%	41-48%	30-36%	27-31%	35-53%
No religion or belief	45%	29%	38-39%	36-40%	39-40%	22-25%	29-30%	28-33%
Prefer not to say	8%	9%	4%	5-8%	8-9%	1-3%	6%	6-9%
Not completed	24%	22%	6%	12-15%	9-10%	39-42%	35-36%	21-25%
Total staff	400	510,080	1,830	290	860	470	1,350	260

#### Sex

Two-thirds of OfS staff are female and one-third are male.

- 33. Figure 5 shows the sex of OfS staff. Two-thirds are female (66 per cent) and one-third are male (34 per cent). We have sex data for all members of staff as it must be provided as part of the application process to our pension scheme.
- 34. The proportion of female staff at the OfS is over ten percentage points higher than the proportion of female staff working at the Civil Service (55 per cent on 31 March 2022).
- 35. Table 5 also shows how the sex of OfS staff compares with Ofsted, Ofqual, the CMA, the Charity Commission, Ofgem and Ofwat.

Figure 5: OfS staff by sex



**Note:** Bar labels show proportions rounded to the nearest 1 per cent. As a result of this rounding, bar labels will sometimes sum to less or more than 100.

Table 5: OfS staff, Civil Service staff and staff at other public sector organisations responsible for regulation by sex

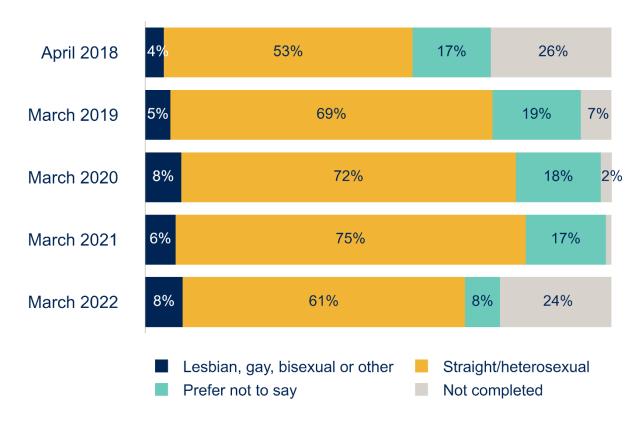
Sex	OfS	Civil Service	Ofsted	Ofqual	СМА	Charity Commission	Ofgem	Ofwat
Female	66%	55%	67%	61%	50%	61%	46%	52%
Male	34%	45%	33%	39%	50%	39%	54%	48%
Total staff	400	510,080	1,830	290	860	470	1,350	260

#### Sexual orientation

Eight per cent of OfS staff have declared they are lesbian, gay, bisexual or other.

36. Figure 6 shows the sexual orientations of OfS staff. Eight per cent of staff have declared they are lesbian, gay, bisexual or other.

Figure 6: OfS staff by sexual orientation



**Note:** Bar labels show proportions rounded to the nearest 1 per cent. As a result of this rounding and our suppression criteria, bar labels will sometimes sum to less or more than 100.

- 37. As noted in paragraph 15, in April 2021 we changed our EDI data collection processes, leading to a decrease in completion in March 2022 when compared with March 2021. Differences between the sexual orientation groups when comparing these two years will likely in part reflect this change in data collection.
- 38. As of 31 March 2022, 4 per cent of Civil Service staff declared they are lesbian, gay, bisexual or other and 67 per cent that they are straight/heterosexual (see Table 6). Eight per cent chose not to disclose their sexual orientation and 21 per cent did not answer the question.
- 39. Table 6 also shows how the sexual orientation profile of OfS staff compares with Ofsted, Ofqual, the CMA, the Charity Commission, Ofgem and Ofwat.

Table 6: OfS staff, Civil Service staff and staff at other public sector organisations responsible for regulation, by sexual orientation

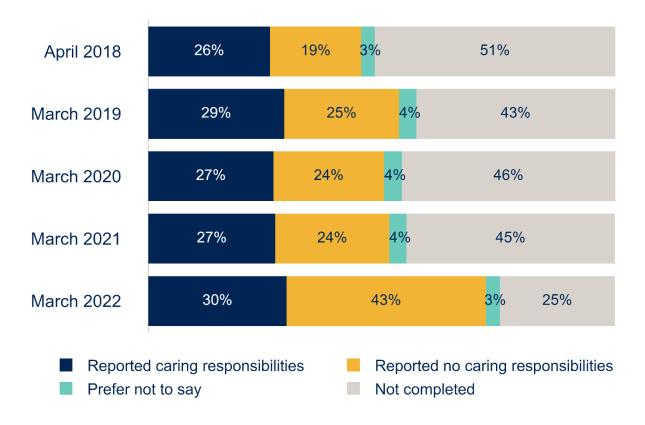
Sexual orientation	OfS	Civil Service	Ofsted	Ofqual	СМА	Charity Commission	Ofgem	Ofwat
Lesbian, gay, bisexual or other	8%	4%	6-7%	2-6%	6-8%	2-6%	6-8%	4-13%
Straight/ heterosexual	61%	67%	82- 83%	66- 72%	80- 82%	50-52%	51- 52%	59- 64%
Prefer not to say	8%	8%	5-6%	9-12%	8-9%	1-3%	6%	6-9%
Not completed	24%	21%	5-6%	19- 22%	3-4%	39-42%	34- 35%	21- 25%
Total staff	400	510,080	1,830	290	860	470	1,350	260

## **Caring responsibilities**

Over a quarter of OfS staff (30 per cent) have reported they have caring responsibilities.

- 40. Caring responsibilities are not a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010. However, at the OfS it is important to us that our employment policies do not discriminate against people with caring responsibilities. Further, in the case of employees who are carers for disabled people, the Equality Act protects them from discrimination by association. Caring responsibilities include the following: primary carer of a child or children, primary carer or assistant for a disabled adult, primary carer or assistant for an older person or people and/or secondary carer.
- 41. Figure 7 shows that over a quarter of staff (30 per cent) have reported they have caring responsibilities and 43 per cent have said they do not.
- 42. As noted in paragraph 15, in April 2021 we changed our EDI data collection processes. Previously, staff completed this data in a different section of our internal reporting system leading to lower disclosure. As anticipated, our change in collection led to an increase in disclosure, especially for staff with no caring responsibilities.
- 43. There is no available Civil Service data related to caring responsibilities to allow comparison with OfS staff.

Figure 7: OfS staff by caring responsibilities



**Note:** Bar labels show proportions rounded to the nearest 1 per cent. As a result of this rounding, bar labels will sometimes sum to less or more than 100.

## **Appointments**

44. The OfS made 80 staff appointments between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022 (see Table 7). Of these, 55 were new starters who have joined the OfS, while 25 were internal appointments of staff already working at the OfS, which will include promotions. In addition to these 80 appointments we also made 25 temporary promotions during the year. Due to small numbers we do not include data on appointments split by staff characteristics.

**Table 7: Appointments to the OfS** 

Type of appointment	1 April 2019 – 31 March 2020	1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021	1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022
External	110	35	55
Internal	20	15	25
Total	130	50	80

#### Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) targets

- 45. In 2020 the OfS put in place six EDI targets to help diversify the workforce at the OfS and lead to a step change in the way we work and ultimately lead to better outcomes. These targets are outlined in Table 8. Staff turnover at the OfS has been relatively low, and as a result the number of appointments each year is likely to be low. Further, some of the characteristics considered in our EDI targets have low proportions in the general population. As a result, targets for these characteristics are lower and detecting a change in the staff population will take time. For these reasons, Targets 2 to 6 were set for rolling periods of various lengths (see Table 8) and were put in place to allow a gradual change in the OfS workforce. Success against these rolling targets is being recorded for appointments made after 31 March 2019. As of 31 March 2022, all targets except Target 6 have reached their minimum rolling periods. Target 6 is currently considered an interim measure.
- 46. Roles in the OfS are assigned to pay bands, which relate to levels of responsibility and salary. EDI Target 2 concerns appointments at the level of pay bands 11 and above, while Targets 4 and 6 concern appointments to pay bands 10 and above. These pay bands were chosen to increase representation, in the most senior roles at the OfS, of female staff, staff from ethnic minority backgrounds, and lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender staff or those of other minority sexualities and gender identities (LGBT+). Staff at pay band 10 and above have the most responsibility at the OfS and, as per our scheme of delegation, are the only staff who are authorised to make decisions regarding functions and to act as the Relevant Director where needed. OfS pay band 10 is roughly equivalent to Civil Service pay grade 6, while pay band 11 and above is roughly equivalent to the members of the Senior Civil Service (SCS). As of 31 March 2022, 10 per cent of staff were in pay band 10, 7 per cent were in pay band 11 and 4 per cent were pay band 12 and above.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> See 'Annual Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Report 2019-20' at <a href="www.officeforstudents.org.uk/about/board-papers/ofs-board-meeting-2-july-2020/">www.officeforstudents.org.uk/about/board-papers/ofs-board-meeting-2-july-2020/</a>.

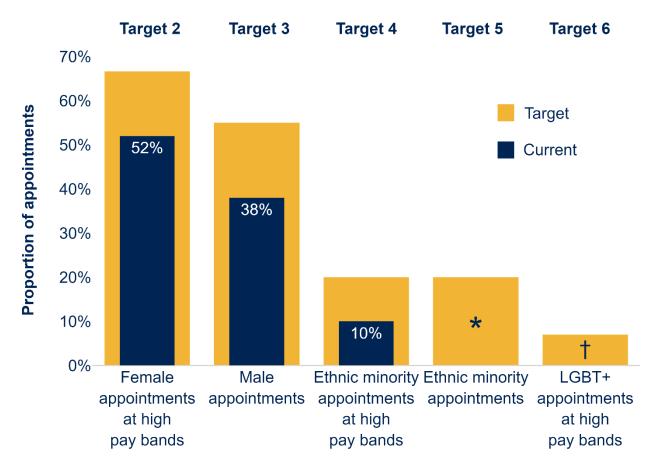
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> The Office for Students Scheme of delegation (22 September 2020) is available at www.officeforstudents.org.uk/about/who-we-are/our-board-and-committees/.

**Table 8: OfS EDI recruitment targets** 

Target	Description	Rolling period	Minimum rolling period reached?
1	80 per cent disclosure rate for all protected characteristics by March 2022	N/A	N/A
2	Approximately two-thirds of appointments at pay band 11 and above should be women	Three-year	Yes
3	Approximately 55 per cent of appointments should be men	Three-year	Yes
4	Approximately 20 per cent of appointments at pay band 10 and above should be people from black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds	Three-year	Yes
5	Approximately 20 per cent of appointments throughout the organisation should be people from BAME backgrounds	Yearly	Yes
6	Approximately 7 per cent of appointments at pay band 10 and above should be LGBT+	Four-year	No

- 47. As of March 2022, Target 1 was close to being achieved, standing at over 75 per cent for all the protected characteristics for which we collect data. Our change to the collection of OfS staff profile data (see paragraph 15) led to a drop in disclosure for some characteristics but an increase for others and disclosure is now consistent across characteristics.
- 48. Our current progress against Targets 2 to 5 is visualised in Figure 8.
- 49. As discussed above, our change in staff EDI data collection led to a drop in disclosure for most characteristics. As a result we are not confident that the value we calculate for Target 5 accurately represents our appointments between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022, so the value for this target is not presented this year. Targets 2 and 3 use our pension data so are not impacted by this change. While the drop in disclosure impacts Target 4, the longer rolling period for this target than Target 5 (three years as opposed to one year), and disclosure tending to be better for higher pay bands, allows us to be more confident that the value represents our appointments. However, there is potential that the true value is different to that in Figure 8.
- 50. When compared with the other EDI targets, Target 6 has a lower target percentage and a longer rolling period. This is because the proportion of the population who identify as LGBT+ is low, as is our recruitment of staff at high pay bands. To reduce the risk of identifying individuals, we will not be publishing our progress against Target 6 until it has reached at least its minimum four-year rolling period. When Target 6 has reached the minimum four-year rolling period (April 2023), we will assess whether we can safely publish this data.

Figure 8: Progress against EDI targets



<sup>\*</sup> See paragraph 49.

<sup>†</sup> See paragraph 50.

## Leavers

51. Between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022, 60 staff left the OfS (see Table 9). These leavers comprise both staff on permanent contracts and those who have reached the end of fixed term contracts (including our sandwich year placement students). Due to these small numbers we do not include data on staff that have left the OfS split by characteristic.

Table 9: Staff who have left the OfS

Type of contract	1 April 2019 – 31 March 2020	1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021	1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022
Permanent	40	35	45
Fixed term	10	15	15
Total	50	50	60

