



TENANT

ED&I REPORT

December 2024



Foreword

By **John Lewis** Tenant 10 years

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is an important aspect of life for me. I see the value of it in every part of our society and culture and I have been delighted to help oversee the process with Midland Heart over the past 4 years. It's not surprising to know EDI touches on every aspect of what Midland Heart does, from who and how they hire staff to every interaction with tenants; ensuring fair and equitable treatment is essential. There are the obvious and well-regulated aspects of equality, including a requirement to not let age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, disability and more impact decision-making by anyone, but I've also seen Midland Heart make decisions and policy changes while thinking about lifestyle, education and personal preference as well, always in an effort to deliver their services in a way that is fair and respectful for all.

This past year I've seen more impressive engagement in several aspects of the business; tenants have been asked to input on the corporate plan, tenants have participated in the hiring of executives, board members and senior management, tenants have been asked to provide feedback on who Midland Heart should contract to deliver external services and tenants have been key members involved with training staff and promoting the business's hard work. The diversity of the tenant panels is shown in our different perspectives, and yet those differences have always amounted to the best possible decisions for as many people as possible.

The report ahead has been produced to highlight not only Midland Heart's

responsibilities under law but also to lay out their intention for further progress and improvements on this front. Tenants and staff all know that there are things which could be better or need significant changes to work for everyone.

I want to highlight the work being done on collecting demographics data. The only way that Midland Heart can prove the work they're doing is fair, respectful and equal for all people is to be aware of how their work impacts different groups. If you're worried you have been or may be discriminated against, you need to not only highlight that treatment but ensure Midland Heart know about all your diversities. No one can improve if they don't know what mistakes

they've made, and this is just as true for organisations like Midland Heart.

The work I've seen and been a part of has, in no small way, reassured me that the direction Midland Heart is travelling is a good one. We may see small steps and huge strides of improvements as each of their plans are completed but, the hope is that many of the positive changes they make should improve satisfaction and service delivery overall but actually be unnoticeable for many of us. I deeply encourage anyone who has an interest in improving things for Midland Heart tenants to engage not only with this report but with the work of the Tenant Scrutiny Team as a whole, and if you're a tenant you can participate in any of our tenant groups. [Find out how you can get involved.](#) ✨

Key principles

Our approach to equality, diversity and inclusion is centred on making sure that we listen to our tenants and that we use the information they tell us about themselves to design and deliver services that are adapted to meet their needs. We've developed a number of key principles that underpin our approach, which can be seen throughout this report:



1

We'll make sure we increase our understanding of who our tenants are, to help understand the different needs and expectations of our tenants.

2

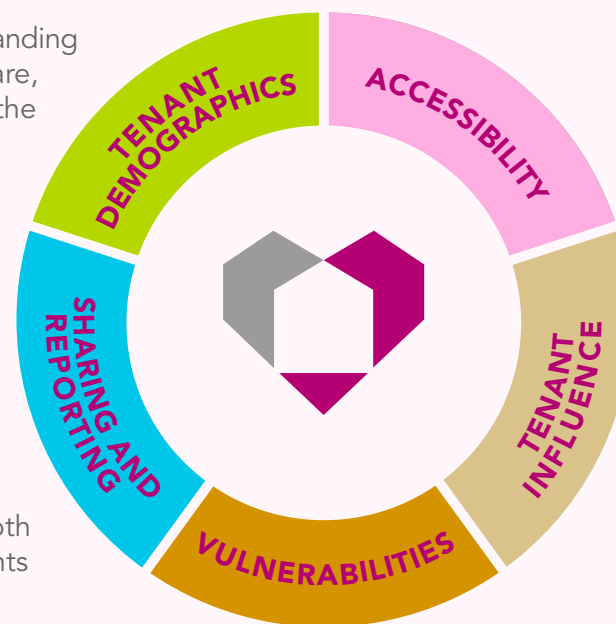
We take action to ensure access to our services is fair and equal for all tenants and that they deliver outcomes that are fair for all.

5

We'll share progress on our plans with both our Board and tenants to make sure we're accountable to deliver on what we say we will.

3

We'll use tenant data and the trends we see in access, satisfaction and outcomes to influence, shape and improve services.

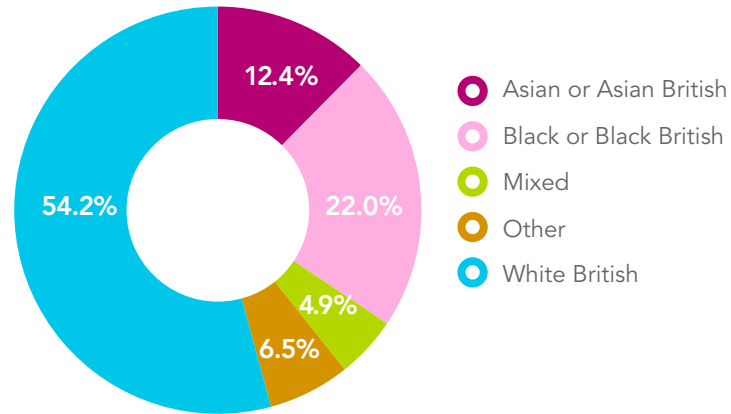


4

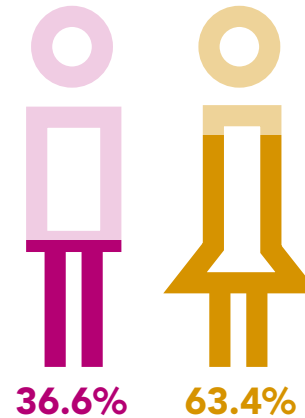
Where tenants tell us they have additional support needs we'll make sure we understand what they need us to do to support them to use our services.

Tenant demographics December 2024

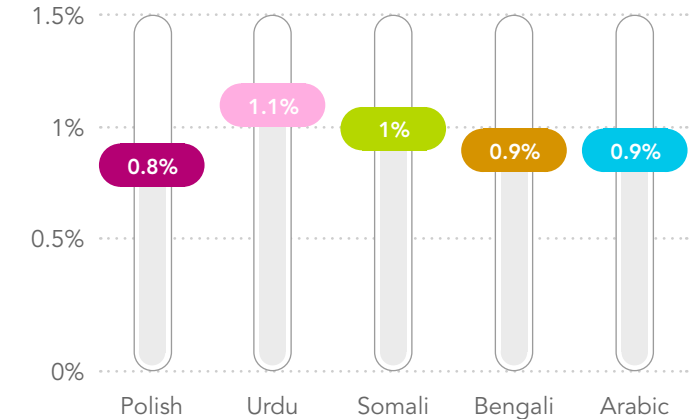
Ethnicity



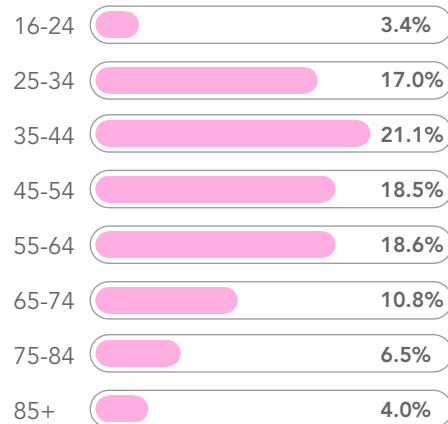
Gender



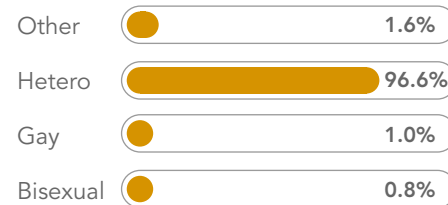
Top 5 additional languages



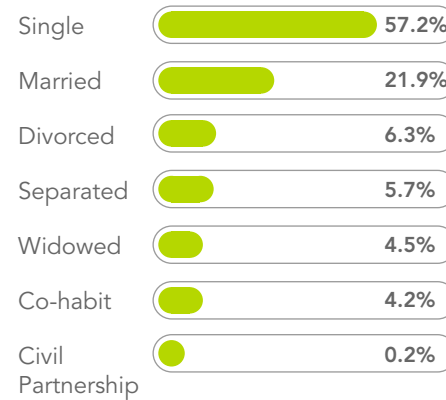
Age



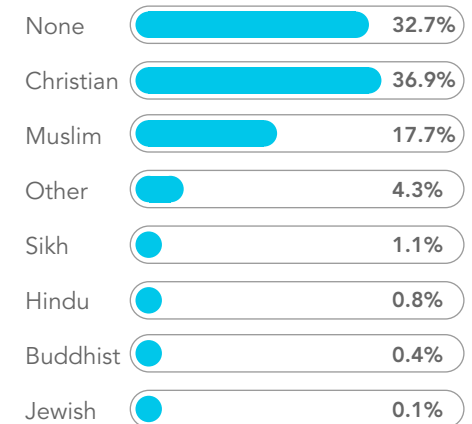
Sexual orientation



Marital status



Religion



Closing the gap

Whilst we have a really good understanding of who our tenants are, we also know that for some of our tenants we may not have all the information about them that we would like.



Total Number of Customers	Date of Birth Missing	Gender Missing	Ethnicity missing	Marital Status Missing	Sexual Orientation Missing	Religion Missing	Language Missing
30582	334	59	5110	21571	8829	6485	5923

How we're filling the gaps

Building trust

To close the gap in some of our data it is important we keep building trust with our tenants, so they feel confident to provide us with sensitive information about themselves. Understanding why we ask for this information is key, and we've got plans to share more about how we use tenant information to shape services.

Our recent Successions project is an example of this:

→ [Scrutinising our Successions process - Midland Heart](#)

Mutual exchange

Our Mutual Exchange process previously didn't collect the same data from incoming tenants as we would through the usual sign up process for new tenants. Over the last year we have aligned our processes across our Lettings and Tenancy Services teams to make sure that all tenants have the opportunity to share their information with us as soon as they begin their tenancy.

Raising awareness

Making sure we keep accurate records has been a key theme across our organisation this year, and this also extends to the records we keep about our tenants. We've undertaken lots of work to ensure we raise awareness amongst our colleagues of the importance of knowing our tenants, including why we collect information, what we need it for and where to store it. Our goal is to be in a position where the only unknown data we have is recorded as 'refused'.

Using tenant demographics

Knowing who our tenants are is important, but it's even more important that we use this information to understand how our services impact different tenant groups.

We regularly review data from across our services, looking at the different tenant groups who may have accessed them and those who may be less likely to access them. This helps us to see if there are changes we can make to ensure access to these services is more inclusive for all tenants.

When tenants do access services, we also look to make sure that they have positive interactions with us throughout the process. By looking at our satisfaction levels across different ages and ethnic groups, for example, we can understand if there are specific services that lead to higher tenant satisfaction or dissatisfaction, and the reasons behind this. This helps us to make specific, tailored changes to services that make a real difference.



Tenant satisfaction

This year we have noticed that within our General Needs homes, Black or Black British Caribbean lead tenants are less satisfied with many of our services than other tenant groups. They are also more likely to tell us that they have had to report a complaint to us.

Now we know this information it's important that we understand more so over the next few months we'll be engaging with these tenants to understand why our services aren't meeting their needs and how we can take action to improve this.

If you would like to be part of helping us review these changes we'd love to hear your views. You can contact our Tenant Insight and Scrutiny Team at customerscrutiny@midlandheart.org.uk or by calling 0345 60 20 540.



Area	LCRA	LCRA	
Ethnicity	*	Black or Black British Caribbean	▲ ▼
Interviews	3330	426	Difference
Valid responses to TP01	3309	422	
Overall satisfaction	77.2%	70.9%	▼ -6.33
Reported a repair in last 12 months	70.9%	71.1%	▲ 0.20
Repairs satisfaction	79.1%	74.2%	▼ -4.91
Timeliness of repairs	77.1%	73.5%	▼ -3.57
Home well maintained	77.0%	72.8%	▼ -4.20
Home safe	81.6%	78.8%	▼ -2.79
Views listened to / acted on	67.8%	61.2%	▼ -6.59
Kept informed	75.2%	69.8%	▼ -5.37
Treated fairly & with respect	81.6%	72.8%	▼ -8.81
Reported a complaint in last 12 months	30.5%	36.9%	▲ 6.37
Complaints handling	37.1%	40.6%	▲ 3.54
Communal areas well kept	74.1%	71.6%	▼ -2.48
Neighbourhood contribution	70.0%	64.5%	▼ -5.57
ASB handling	67.6%	61.6%	▼ -5.98

Vulnerability

We know many of our tenants have additional support needs. This could be related to a medical condition or disability, or might just mean they need us to do something slightly different when we visit or communicate with them.

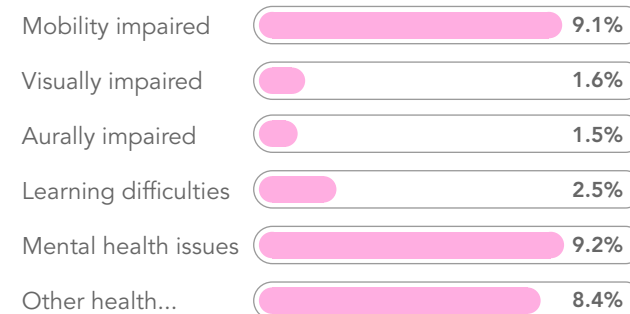


It's important that when tenants tell us about their vulnerability, we can be flexible in our approach to make sure we take this into account when making a decision or supporting a tenant to access a service.

We've recently revised our approach to ensure that we are empowering all our colleagues to put tenant needs at the heart of all decision-making. Sometimes that means going outside of our usual process. Where this is the case we will make this clear and record our decision but, most importantly, we'll make sure it's the right decision for the tenant.

We've also launched a new Additional Needs policy for our staff to help them to understand our expectations in making reasonable adjustments for tenants. We will be launching a new e-learning module which shares experiences from one of our tenants about what it means to be vulnerable and how we can better support tenants with additional needs.

Support Needs / Disabilities



"I have a range of different needs and the way that my home is set up might not be ideal to somebody coming in but it is set up that way so that I can live in it.

My vulnerability may not be evident to someone opening the front door.... I have a different ability and a vulnerability, but I also have ability.

What I need is respect, I need understanding, and I need courtesy".

Juliet, Tenant

Shaping services to meet tenant needs

Last year we launched our Equality Testing programme, designed to ensure we have no areas of possible unintentional bias or exclusion in our services and ensure we deliver services that meet tenant needs.

Our first review was of our Aids and Adaptations Service and has led to some key changes:



We've worked with our involved tenants to review our aids and adaptations policy and procedure, taking on board our research, complaints around the service, and a survey sent to tenants who have used the service.



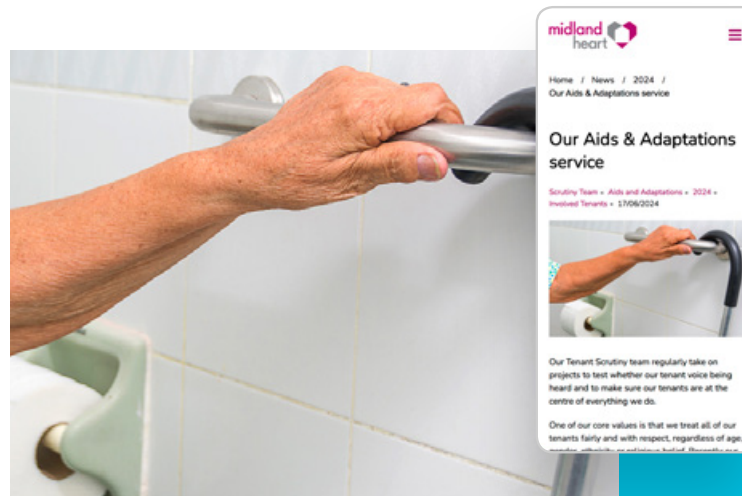
We've made the application process more accessible for everyone and are improving the communication throughout the aids and adaptations process including updates to our website to make the information easier to understand.



We are reviewing all the information that our Hub has so that we can make sure everyone is given the same opportunity to apply for aids and adaptations when they first get in touch.



We're also planning further improvements to speed up the process for minor adaptations and are expanding the team to include a dedicated Officer to support tenants through the aids and adaptations process.



Spotlight on Aids and Adaptations

[Read more](#) about our Equality Review of the Aids and Adaptations Service



Gary's story

Click on this video to hear how we adapted Gary's home to help him to live independently.



<https://youtu.be/PMRpn-mlPEw?list=PLHofIID-M-fXeHobhD1FOloO1kQO0lp4E>

Tenant influence

We recently undertook a review of our Tenant Support Fund (Hardship fund) to ensure there is no bias or inequity for those who are able to access this fund.



We reviewed insight from almost 200 tenants who had accessed the fund and found that:

- Ethnically diverse tenants are much more likely to access the fund when they are already in rent arrears, compared to a higher proportion of White British tenants who access the fund prior to being in arrears.
- Older tenants (65+) are much less likely to access the fund than those aged under 34.
- Ethnically diverse tenants are more likely to access fuel vouchers than White British tenants.
- Access to the fund by other tenant groups (eg domestic abuse victims), could be explored further as there are indications that the fund is being under-utilised for these tenant groups.



How is this influencing our service?

We've used this feedback to identify ways in which we can promote the service to different tenant groups. For example:

- Targeted promotion of the hardship fund to tenants aged 65+ would help increase access to the service from this age group.
- Promotion of the hardship fund to ethnically diverse tenants would ensure that the fund is accessible for tenants prior to them reaching the point of rent arrears. This should also be done by making sure all teams who have contact with tenants outside of income related issues are aware of the referral routes.

Our findings also reinforced the need for our homes for modern living programme which targets our oldest, coldest homes and provide further assurance that the programme will positively impact our ethnically diverse tenants.



Spotlight on Staff recruitment

We know that the behaviours of our staff strongly affect how our tenants feel they have been treated. In our 'What Matters Most' Survey, a fifth of our tenants told us that **how** we are delivering our services, as opposed to **what** we are delivering, is most important.

Having the right people with the right behaviours in our roles is crucial and we'll be launching a new My Team tenant group. This group will help us review our recruitment processes to ensure we recruit the colleagues with the behaviours our tenants expect.

This year we've also had a number of tenants on the interview panel for key posts including new Board Members, members of our Executive Team and a number of frontline Officer roles.



Treating tenants fairly and with respect

It's important to us that we deliver services that make tenants feel listened to and respected, and so last year we undertook a review from an equality perspective of the complaints that we've received.

1,749

Complaints Reviewed

9%

Linked to perceived discrimination

0

Upheld as a direct result of discrimination

78.1%

Tenants felt they were treated fairly and with respect (TSM 2023/24)



- Complaints cases were analysed over the last two years, factoring in protected characteristics discrimination and other examples of bias, such as not listening to or believing tenants.
- The insight demonstrated that 9% of complaints cited these kinds of issues but none were proven to be upheld as a direct result of discrimination or othering, giving us a good level of assurance that we are treating tenants fairly.
- The research also indicated outcomes of upheld vs not-upheld do not differ when crosscut with protected groups, i.e. ethnically diverse tenants or those in younger or older age categories are having the same percentage of upheld or not-upheld outcomes as those from white British background and those in the 35 – 55 age ranges.
- We understand that a tenant's perception of how they are treated can be influenced by other service failures, such as not getting repairs completed on the first visit. As a result of learning from this review, we're launching a new e-learning training module about getting it right first time.
- Our new e-learning will focus on the root causes of complaints and reference specifically the importance of treating tenants with dignity and respect throughout service delivery and a section on othering, showing empathy and listening.

Key priorities for 2025



Communication

Making sure our communication to tenants is accessible with a focus on how we communicate to tenants with sensory impairments.



Data

Closing the gap in our missing data so we have the best view of our tenant's needs as possible.



Attitudes, Rights & Respect

Working with our tenants to ensure we have adopted the recommendations from the Housing Ombudsman Spotlight Report and testing the impact this has had.



Accessibility

Using our tenant data to make sure our services are fair, accessible and have equitable outcomes for all tenant groups.

How will we measure the success?

This year is the first year we've shared our specific plans for equality, diversity and inclusion to tenants. We'll continue to publish this report to tenants each year as well as sharing regular updates with tenants and our internal governance groups throughout the year.

By sharing more about our plans, we hope to provide reassurance to tenants that we understand the importance of treating them fairly and with respect, and that they can see the changes we've made as a result of listening to their feedback and understanding their needs.



Our longer term vision is to be able to understand the widest range of needs our tenants have and use this to shape our services.

Delivering on our plans Next 6 Months

	Quarter 4 (2024/25)	Quarter 1 (2025/26)	Quarter 2 (2025/26)
Tenant Demographics	<p>Training for frontline teams on capturing tenant data</p>	<p>Closing the Gap Pilot</p>	
		<p>Resident of the Future Forecast review</p>	<p>Tenant Case Study / Blogs on updating personal information</p>
Accessibility	<p>Equality Testing begins – Tenant Communication Needs</p>	<p>Review of progress against actions arising from Equality Impact Reviews</p>	
Tenant Influence	<p>Complaints Spotlight Report Published</p>	<p>Launch 2025 programme of spotlight reports</p>	
Vulnerabilities	<p>Tenant led scrutiny – Do our staff effectively identify additional needs at the first point of contact?</p>	<p>Embedding an enhanced Safeguarding & Vulnerability Champions programme</p>	<p>Tenant Led Audit Tenant review of adherence to attitudes, rights and respect HOS report</p>
	<p>Vulnerability E-Learning Launched</p>		





midlandheart.org.uk

 @midlandheart

 @midhearhelp

 @midlandheartltd

 20 Bath Row, Birmingham, B15 1LZ
0345 60 20 540

midland
heart 