

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION ACTION PLAN

April 2026 – March 2027

Opening Statement

The DIAP and the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) working group continue to drive positive change across Energize STW through changes in policy, process and crucially culture. Inclusive practices are commonplace across the organisation and internally the team continue to improve their knowledge and understanding of EDI.

We can confidently say that EDI is now embedded into the majority of our workstreams and is a core foundation of both our Systemic and Place-based work. Significantly staff are feeling more confident to challenge how we operate, ensuring that any policy and process decisions are appropriately scrutinised for fairness and inclusivity. As such, amendments have been made to maternity and leave policies, the Chair's concessionary leave day has become more inclusive, and agreements are in place with our office landlord to ensure that our premises have improved accessibility.

Across our programmes we continue to invest time and resource into those individuals and communities who need it the most. This includes greater focus on less active children and young people, supporting older people to remain active, working with social care teams to embed physical activity and reducing barriers to activity for residents in areas of high deprivation.

We must now consider our role externally. We will work across the system to better influence others to progress and embed equity and inclusion into their everyday business. We will continue to encourage best practice and be brave enough and intentional, in challenging inequitable processes and behaviours. We must use our existing programmes and the relationships we have established with key stakeholders and local organisations to build a culture of inclusion to ensure everyone can lead a healthy and active lifestyle.

Pete Ezard
Energize Chief Executive Officer

Kal Parkash
Energize Trustee and EDI Champion

Movement is the foundation of good health, wellbeing, and thriving, sustainable communities. But right now, movement, physical activity, and sport isn't accessible to everyone. We're working to change that. We want to help everyone move more.

Energize Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin is one of a national network of more than 40 [Active Partnerships](#) funded to influence and deliver systemic change so that together we can create the conditions for every single person to be active. We want to better understand local people, local barriers, and local opportunities so we can influence and make change happen, to enable better physical health, mental health, and quality of life.

As a strategic organisation, our purpose is to improve the quality of life through the benefits of physical activity and, through our current [2022-27 strategy](#), we are striving to tackle the barriers to an active lifestyle and as such, eliminate inactivity across Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin.

We know we can't do it alone and our role is to champion the life changing impact of an active lifestyle and ensure that everyone across our area can benefit from it. There are many within our communities who face barriers to benefitting from an active lifestyle and Energize is committed to empowering our local sector and beyond, to provide inclusive, diverse, safe and equitable opportunities, so that everyone has a choice to be active.

As the Active Partnership for Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin, it is important for us to be aware of the geography and demography that shape the area we serve. The following information provides a brief overview to help outline the two differing areas of Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin.

Shropshire:

- 98% of the county is classified as rural and 57% of the population living in rural settlements. (*source: 1*).
- On the Index of Multiple Deprivation, Shropshire was ranked 101st out of 153 local authorities in England (with 1 being the most deprived), making it one of England's lesser deprived areas, however, there are pockets of deprivation and rural isolation within the county (*source 1*).
- Shropshire has an ageing population with 41.2% over the age of 55, compared to 28.1% nationally (*source 2*).
- 93.3% of the population are White British (*source 3*).
- 22% of the adult population (16+) are classified as inactive (less than 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity each week) (*source 4*) with 29% of children and young people aged 5-11 classified as less active (less than 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity each day) (*source 5*).

Telford and Wrekin:

- Telford and Wrekin is a rapidly growing, diverse borough with a population of approximately 196,000 as of the 2021 Census.
- As the population grows, Telford and Wrekin has become more diverse with both the population of under 16's (18.8%) and over 55's (30.5%) being more than national average, 15.5% and 28.1% respectively (*source 2*).
- Parts of Telford and Wrekin are amongst the most deprived in England, with 36.4% of the population living in the top 30% most deprived areas compared to the national average of 30.1% (*source 6*).
- 17.1% of the population are non-White British, more than double that of Shropshire (*source 3*).

- 28% of the adult population (16+) are classified as inactive (less than 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity each week) (*source 4*) with 32% of children and young people aged 5-11 classified as less active (less than 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity each day) (*source 5*).

Sources of information:

1. <https://www.cqc.org.uk/care-services/local-authority-assessment-reports/shropshire-0225> (Feb 2025)
2. ONS (2025) – small area population estimates mid-2024. Last updated: Dec 2025.
3. ONS (2022) – census 2021. Last updated: Aug 2024.
4. Sport England (2025) – Adult small area estimates Nov 23-25. Last updated: Dec 2025.
5. Sport England (2024) – Children and young people small area estimates Nov 21-22. Last updated: Aug 2024.
6. Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2025) – English indices of deprivation 2025 aligned to source 2.

Progress made from our 2025/26 DIAP

Our 2025/26 DIAP continued from the previous year to have actions that supported internal development, ensuring that all our people, who are passionate and driven to improve and develop how they think, behave and act were provided the opportunities to gain and improve their knowledge, confidence and competence with regards to EDI. Our internal processes also continued to be improved through learning gained.

Areas of progress to highlight from 2025/26 include the following:

1. **Governance:** *Ensure accountability to enhance trust and confidence, demonstrating our commitment to drive, progress and embed EDI across all our work.*
 - Diversity Equality Inclusion and Belonging monthly surveys were implemented internally through our online system and reviewed quarterly through the EDI working group and People sub-committee
 - We have signed up to the following charters: Sporting Equal's Race Equality Charter – bronze member, Disability Confident Committed employer and Mindful Employer Charter.
 - We completed all 5 pillars of the Moving to Inclusion Framework. This supported us to identify areas that may benefit from allocated mentor time and resulted in an Inclusive Leadership training session with our SLT and Board members.
2. **Learning:** *Increase awareness, understanding, knowledge, courage, and confidence across the team.*
 - The team completed quarterly 'Book Club' sessions which included training on Anxiety, Disability in the Workplace and Mental Health. There was also a team session linked to the 'My Whole Self' national day focused on Psychological Safety run through Mental Health First Aid England.
 - An online survey was distributed to external stakeholders to gain feedback on our website and communications to help us understand how we could improve our communications to be more inclusive.
3. **Supporting:** *Understand our communities to improve inclusivity and accessibility for people from diverse backgrounds both internally and externally.*
 - We created a new Inclusion webpage which outlines our 'why' and our commitments to inclusion, along with information and guidance for stakeholders.
 - We invested in the ReciteMe tool which is embedded into our website to ensure better inclusivity.
 - Training offered and delivered to activity providers and healthcare paid and unpaid carers around co-production linked to the Get Yourself Active programme.

- Training around older and old LGBTQ+ people was recorded and has been sent out externally to activity instructors and club welfare officers.

4. Influencing: *Proactively engage stakeholders to support, influence and champion positive change.*

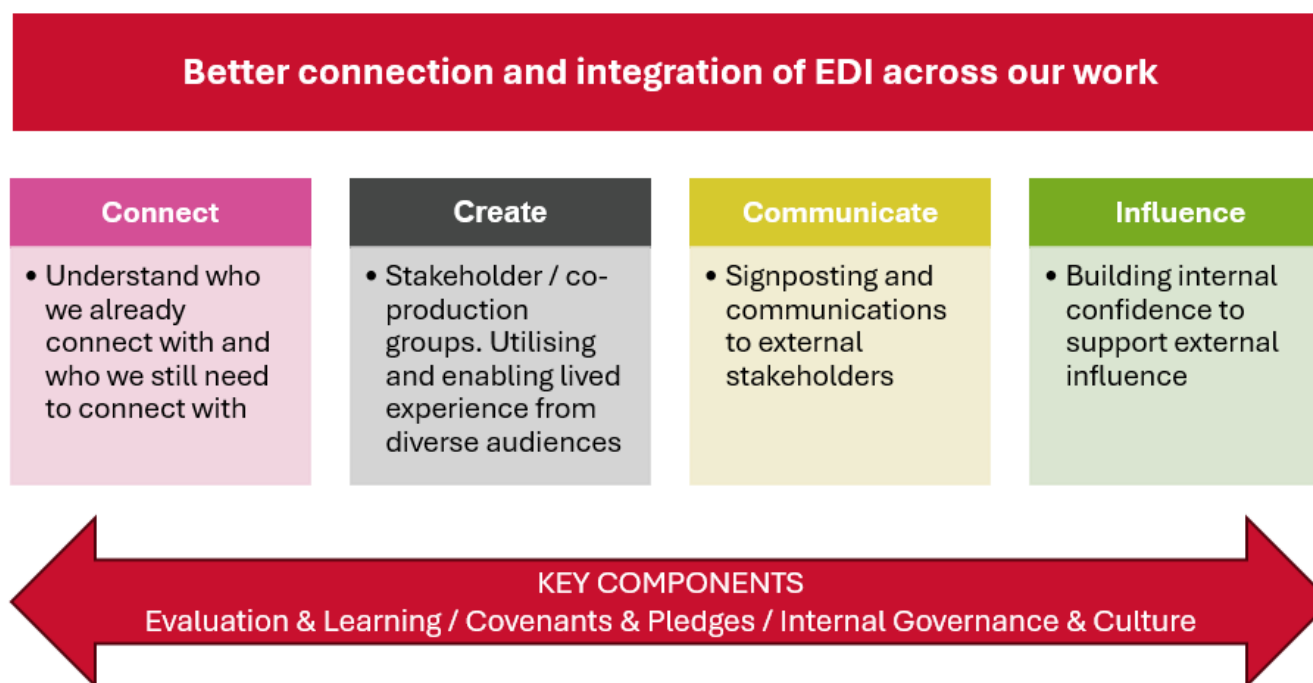
- Marketing and communications were used throughout the year to highlight various national/international days which support diversity and inclusion.
- Utilised our work within the Get Yourself Active programme and the Sport Welfare programme to support and influence external stakeholders, including the delivery of training opportunities such as Active Bystander and Neurodiversity Inclusion

Moving into 2026/27 we will continue to further develop and embed our inclusive and equitable culture within our organisation but to also have more focus on how we can best support and influence our stakeholders to develop and improve their approaches to EDI.

Our EDI Ambitions for 2026/27

During the previous 2 annual iterations of our DIAP we have mainly focused internally - creating, and further developing our own understanding, competencies, systems and processes. For our 2026/27 DIAP we are wanting to increase our focus externally through our work and influencing role we play. We want to ensure the actions within our DIAP are not seen as 'add on' but fundamentally part of the work we are doing, helping to ensure EDI becomes a golden thread throughout our organisation.

The graphic below outlines our approach to delivering against a more purposeful two-way external influencing role, along with continued internal components.



Our Action Plan

Our action plan outlines what we are wanting to achieve during 2026/27 aligned to our approach summarised in the graphic above.

What success looks like	Actions that will help achieve success	How we will measure success / progress	Timing / Lead
CONNECT Clear understanding of current relationships and where the gaps are. New relationships established with individuals and/or organisations representing underserved communities.	Reviewing current connections; mapping & gapping.	HubSpot dashboard: Enabling us to identify contacts, maturity of relationships and any changes across the organisation	Quarterly Director of Engagement
	All staff to regularly go through their contacts, updating changes to contacts and relationship maturity, identifying any gaps aligned to their roles and establish new relationships where identified gap/need.	HubSpot contacts: Everyone in the team can identify their individual contacts, maturity of relationships and any changes.	Quarterly All staff
	Connectivity with Telford & Wrekin VCSE Alliance 'Mapping Tender' to ascertain other organisations we could/should be engaging with	Report produced by the tender: Enabling cross referencing with HubSpot data we have	July 2026 onwards Strategic Lead for Place / all staff

What success looks like	Actions that will help achieve success	How we will measure success / progress	Timing / Lead
CREATE Diverse thinking and lived experience meaningfully shape our work, especially in areas where we lack this internally	Mapping existing stakeholder groups and co-production groups, understanding who we are connected with and identifying our gaps.	Mapping taken place with all staff. Gaps identified and further relationships established where appropriate. Increase in the number of new relationships established with diverse community groups and individuals with lived experience or organisations that support them.	September 2026 EDI Working Group & all staff
	Create a new co-production policy for working with individuals with lived experience.	A new policy in place and signed off by trustee board.	August 2026

			Programme Manager – Communities, Health & Social Care Director of CYP & Inclusion
	Create a structured process for gathering insights and feeding them into project design and decision-making.	Evidence showing how lived experience shaped decisions or project design.	October 2026 EDI Working Group
	Recruit and enable participation in stakeholder / co-production groups from individuals representing underserved communities.	Notes / minutes of stakeholder / co-production group meetings. Number and diversity of participants involved.	Ongoing Programme leads

What success looks like	Actions that will help achieve success	How we will measure success / progress	Timing / Lead
COMMUNICATE External partners and communities can easily access and understand our resources, learning, and messages. Our communications effectively reach underserved groups and support our influencing role.	Storytelling of our external training and work	Communication shared via website, colleagues, social media and in an EDI-based Energize email newsletter. Analytics regarding views, shares, replies, interactions	As & when any learning, training or projects take place with beneficial output to share Programme Manager – Marketing & Communications
	Annual EDI communications survey to stakeholders with any relevant actions undertaken from the feedback gained.	More responses than last year (27) and that actions were completed based on feedback provided. Relevant actions completed from the feedback for this year too.	September 2026 Director of CYP & Inclusion / EDI Working Group with support from: Programme Manager – Marketing & Communications

	Create a centralised resource area/hub that is accessible to external stakeholders and kept up to date.	Storage area created on website. Engagement data of the new area/hub. Gain feedback from stakeholders on the usefulness of the information/resources	By March 2027 Programme Manager – Marketing & Communications
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What success looks like	Actions that will help achieve success	How we will measure success / progress	Timing / Lead
INFLUENCE Our staff have the confidence, skills, and competence to embed EDI in all partnership work. EDI conversations become standard practice across our work, influencing partner organisations and sector behaviour.	Internal self-assessment survey created and completed to identify training needs	Development needs highlighted with training opportunities undertaken. Increase in knowledge, confidence and competence across all staff. Improved ability of staff to share knowledge externally.	By September 2026 Director of CYP & Inclusion / EDI Working Group
	Introduce regular internal reflection sessions through 1:1's (or wider team opportunities) to share examples of where our input linked to EDI has shaped external work.	Officevibe capturing the 1:1 reflections. Examples provided where partner actions or decisions were influenced by our EDI input shared through staff communication tools and externally through case studies/social media.	Quarterly / 6-monthly All staff
	Build EDI prompts or checkpoints into partnership processes (e.g., project planning tools, agendas, SLA's/funding criteria).	Evidence of EDI being discussed with partners (meeting notes, emails, project documentation).	Ongoing All staff

Internal Key Components

Evaluation & Learning	Ensure that EDI is incorporated into our ongoing evaluation & learning and it enables us to better understand the difference we are making.
Covenants & Pledges	Continue to undertake our work aligned to the covenants and pledges we have signed up to: - Armed Forces Covenant - Disability Confident Committed - Mindful Employer Charter - Race Equality Charter

	- SAND Covenant And where applicable, complete necessary actions and aim to progress our work against the covenants and pledges (e.g. work towards achieving level 2: Disability Confident Employer).
Governance & Culture	Continue to undertake and develop practices and approaches we have embedded internally, most of which have become 'business as usual' (e.g. more inclusive recruitment processes, annual staff & board diversity surveys and inclusive behaviours self-assessments).

Appendices

Appendix 1: Composition of Energize Staff and Board.

Appendix 2: Energize Staff and Board Data in comparison to Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin demographics.

Appendix 3: Energize Staff and Board: Results from an Inclusive Behaviours self-assessment & comparison to the previous results.

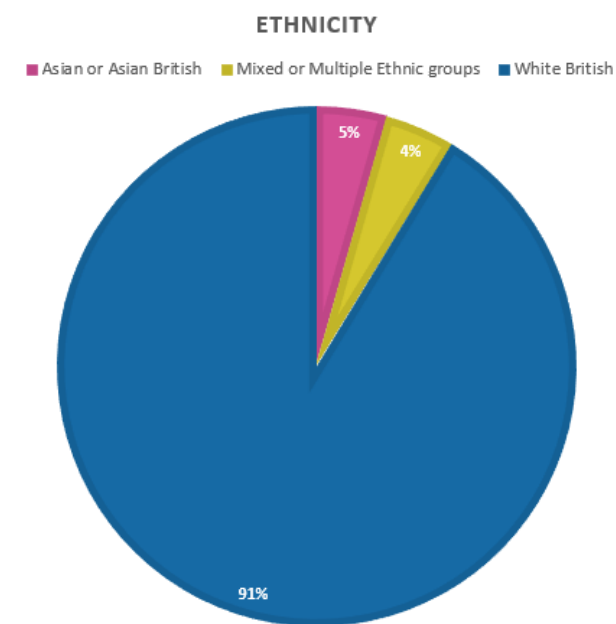
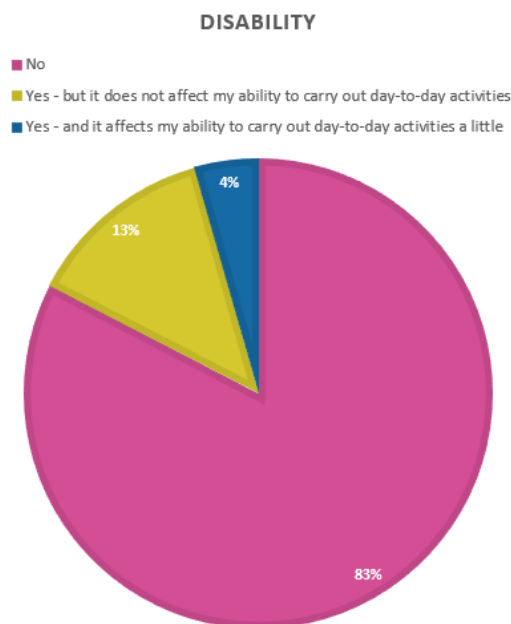
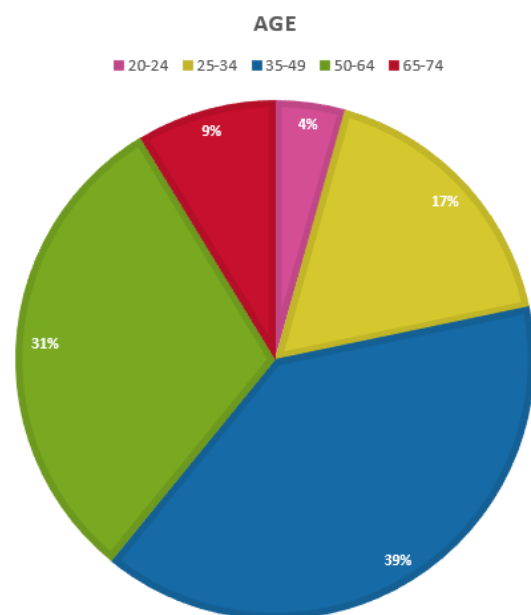
Composition of Energize Staff and Board

Energize collect data on the make-up of our staff and board. The following data was collected in March 2026.

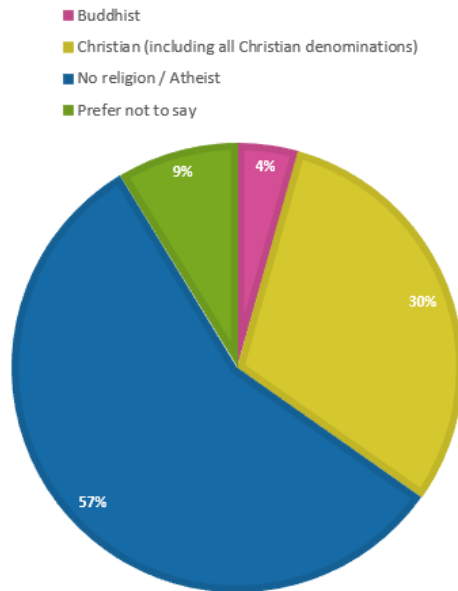
Our data focuses on six protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010: age, disability, race (ethnicity), religion, sex (gender) and sexual orientation. We also collect data on 3 additional aspects:

- Type of school attended for the most time between the ages of 11 and 16
- Eligible for free school meals at any point during school years
- Highest level of qualification held

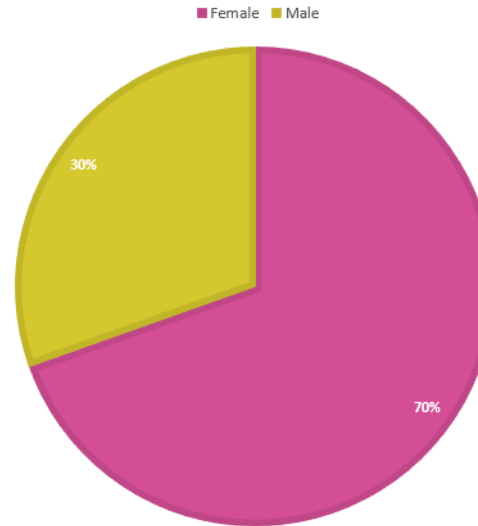
The data collected in March 2026 comprised of 14 staff members and 9 board members. The staff and board data have been combined to provide an overview of the organisation as a whole.



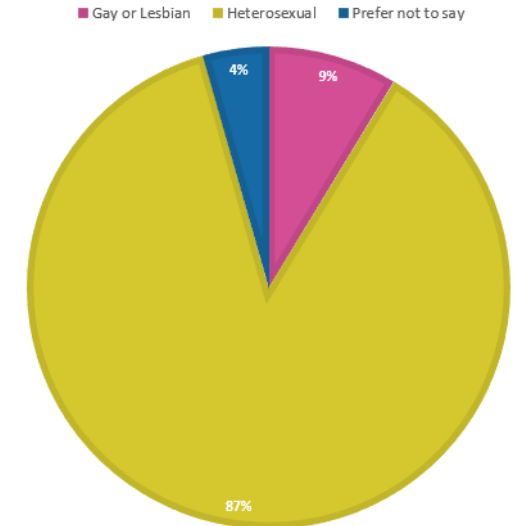
RELIGION



SEX

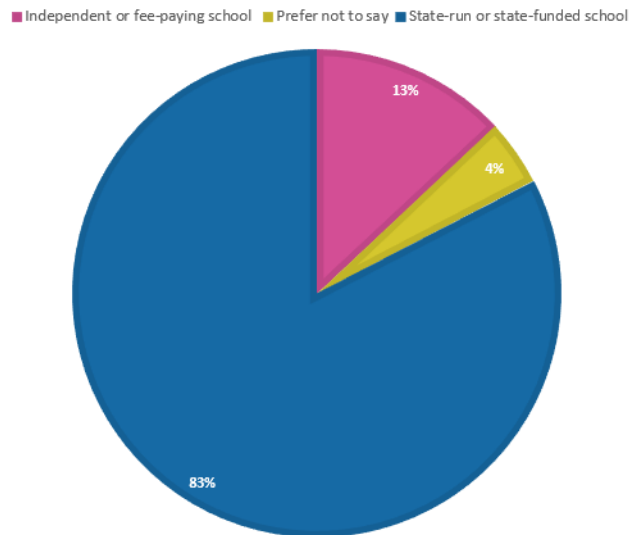


SEXUAL ORIENTATION

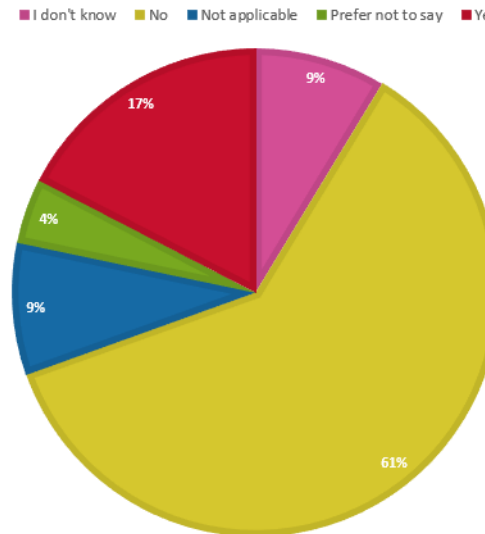


*All responses were 'Yes' to the question: 'Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?'

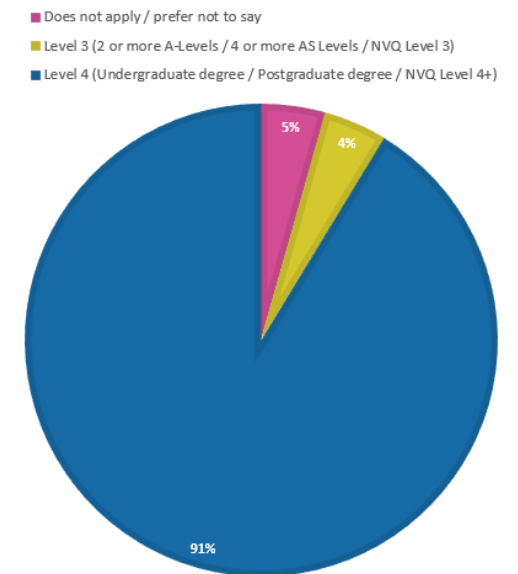
TYPE OF SCHOOL ATTENDED FOR THE MOST TIME BETWEEN THE AGES OF 11 TO 16



ELIGIBLE FOR FREE SCHOOL MEALS AT ANY POINT DURING SCHOOL YEARS



HIGHEST LEVEL OF QUALIFICATION HELD



Outline comparison information between 2025 and 2026 data:

2025 = 23 responses (13 staff & 10 board members)

2026 = 23 responses (14 staff & 9 board members)

- **Age:** decrease of 50-64 year-olds from 48% to 31%
- **Disability:** no change
- **Ethnicity:** slight decrease of White British from 96% to 91%
- **Religion:** decrease from 44% to 30% for Christian and an increase from 48% to 57% for no religion/Atheist
- **Sex:** slight increase of males from 26% to 30%
- **Sexual orientation:** only change is now 4% prefer not to say
- **Type of school:** only change is now 4% prefer not to say
- **Free school meals:** slight decrease from 22% to 17% of responses who were eligible for free school meals
- **Qualifications:** slight increase in Level 4 qualifications from 87% to 91%

Energize Staff and Board Data in Comparison to Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin Demographics

The following comprises of data collected in March 2026 regarding the make-up of Energize staff and board members in comparison to the national 2021 census data for the population of Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin (STW).

The data used focuses on six protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010: age, disability, race (ethnicity), religion, sex (gender) and sexual orientation.

Please note:

The Energize data collected in March 2026 comprised of 14 staff members and 9 board members. The staff and board data have been combined to provide an overview of the organisation as a whole.

Disability	Energize	STW	Difference	Notes
Yes	17.4%	18.9%	-1.5%	
No	82.6%	81.1%	1.5%	
Prefer not to say	0.0%	*NC		*Not collected

Ethnicity	Energize	STW	Difference	Notes
Asian & Asian British	4.3%	2.8%	1.6%	
Black or Black British	0.0%	1.2%	-1.2%	*Census 2021 collates: Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African
White British	91.3%	93.6%	-2.3%	
Chinese or other ethnic group	0.0%	0.6%	-0.6%	*Census 2021 collates: Other ethnic group
Any other mixed	4.3%	1.7%	2.6%	*Census 2021 collates: Mixed or Multiple
Any other white				

Gender	Energize	STW	Difference	Notes
Female	69.6%	50.7%	18.9%	
Male	30.4%	49.3%	-18.9%	
Indeterminate or Intersex	0.0%	*NC		*Not collected

Age	Energize	STW	Difference
16-19 years	0.0%	4.4%	-4.4%
20-24 years	4.3%	5.3%	-1.0%
25-34 years	17.4%	12.0%	5.4%
35-49 years	39.1%	17.9%	21.2%
50-65 years	30.4%	21.1%	9.3%
65-74 years	8.7%	11.6%	-2.9%
75-84 years	0.0%	7.3%	-7.3%
85 years +	0.0%	2.6%	-2.6%

Religion	Energize	STW	Difference
No religion / Atheist	56.5%	38.95%	17.6%
Christian (incl. all christian denominations)	30.4%	51.55%	-21.2%
Buddhist	4.3%	0.30%	4.0%
Muslim	0.0%	1.60%	-1.6%
Hindu	0.0%	0.45%	-0.5%
Sikh	0.0%	0.85%	-0.9%
Jewish	0.0%	0.05%	-0.1%
Other religion	0.0%	0.50%	-0.5%
Prefer not to say	8.7%	5.75%	3.0%

Sexual Orientation	Energize	STW	Difference
Heterosexual	87.0%	90%	-3.5%
Lesbian, gay, bisexual or another sexual orientation	8.7%	4%	4.7%
Prefer Not to Say	4.3%	11%	-6.9%

Energize Staff and Board: Inclusive Behaviours self-assessment

The following comprises information collected in March 2026 from individual self-assessments completed by Energize staff and board regarding inclusive behaviours.

Please note:

The Energize data collected below in March 2026 comprised of 14 staff members and 9 board members.

To support our individual and collective understanding of our inclusive behaviours as a board and team, individuals completed a self-assessment which outlined 5 specific areas of focus. Individuals used the descriptors within each area to self-assess and score themselves across the behaviours. A score of '10' implies they are a consistent role model of this behaviour, and a score of '0' that they never display that behaviour.

Please see the areas and descriptors within the self-assessment tool below:

1. Authenticity and humanness

Invest time, consistently, getting to know your colleagues, their motivations and purpose, and generating trust

Listen to what is being said, not to respond

Demonstrate a caring attitude; ask 'How can I help?'

Speaks from the heart and shares personal experience and failures with colleagues, reflecting on learning and insights

Seeks advice when unsure

2. Courage

Engages in open and honest conversations, speaking up and hold others to account if their behaviour or actions do not support inclusion

Challenges organisational attitudes and practices that promote homogeneity or exclusion

Spots conflict/inappropriate behaviour and intervenes to resolve

Shares and asks for candid and ongoing feedback on work quality and style

3. Transparency and clarity

Proactively follows work-related policies and practices

Employs transparent, consistent, and evidence-based decision-making in regard to work-related processes rather than basing on intuition

Provides unambiguous and thoughtful feedback to colleagues where needed

4. Respect and value difference

Actively seeks, listens to, and incorporates contributions and opinions of others, ensuring they feel heard and valued

Understands and values the unique contribution of team members

Works to build trust with team members and challenge any out-groups/cliques

Develops greater awareness of personal biases, through feedback and reflection

5. Leveraging diversity to drive productivity, creativity & innovation

Understands and can articulate the commercial and moral case for inclusion and the relationship to business objectives

Takes responsibility for embedding inclusion into own areas of responsibility

Encourages debate and challenge

Consistently acts as a team player and collaborates with colleagues

Is open to adopting divergent thinking and problem solving that challenges the status quo, supports innovation and drives business priorities

Seeks out opportunities to work with diverse people

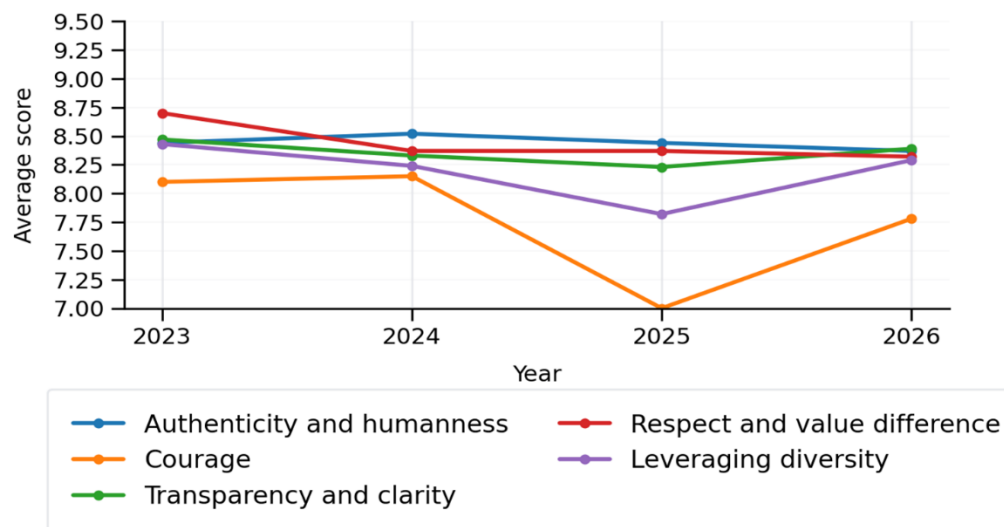
Sponsors, or mentors, colleagues from other backgrounds to support them with career aspirations and learn from their experiences (e.g. reverse mentoring)

Role models flexibility and adaptability and engages and empowers others to be resilient and agile in changing circumstances

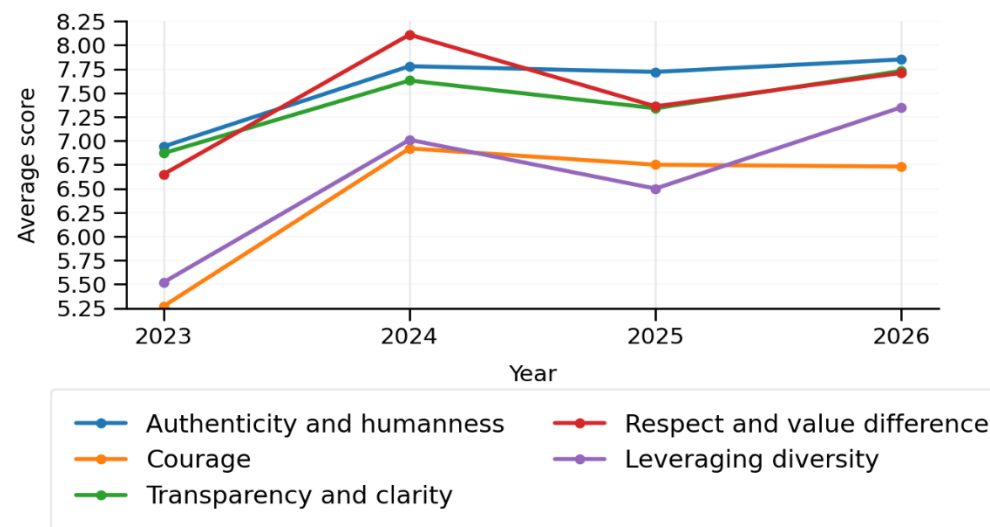
The results of the self-assessments were amalgamated to provide combined average scores for the staff team and board members. These scores along with the data in Appendix 1 are shared with staff and trustees, allowing the whole organisation to acknowledge where we may have particular strengths or areas where there are gaps which we may want to focus on as part of our ongoing EDI work.

The graphs below show average self-assessment scores. Please note the board and staff charts use the same scoring scale and quarter-point increments. Axis ranges differ to reflect the true distribution of scores and avoid compression or clipping of data.

Board Self-Assessment Average Scores



Staff Self-Assessment Average Scores



Overall trends (2023–2026)

- Both board and staff show overall improvement across most categories since 2023, with sharper gains visible within the staff group, reflecting progress from a lower starting point.
- Board scores remain consistently higher than staff scores across all categories and years, though the gap has narrowed slightly in some areas over time.
- The greatest volatility over time is seen in 'Courage', particularly among staff, while other dimensions show steadier trajectories.

Board self-assessment – key observations over time

- Board scores are generally high and stable, remaining within a relatively narrow range across all five categories from 2023 to 2026.
- 'Courage' shows a dip in 2025 followed by a recovery in 2026.
- 'Authenticity and humanness' and 'transparency and clarity' remain consistently strong, with only minor year-to-year variation.
- 'Leveraging diversity' shows a clear rebound in 2026 after a lower point in 2025, suggesting renewed focus or confidence in this area.
- Overall, board trends suggest maturity and consolidation rather than transformational change.

Staff self-assessment – key observations over time

- Staff scores show stronger upward movement over the period, particularly from 2023 to 2026, indicating progress as experience, confidence, and shared language have developed.
- 'Courage' remains the lowest-scoring dimension for staff, despite improving since 2023, highlighting this as a continuing development priority.
- 'Transparency and clarity' and 'respect and valuing difference' have strengthened steadily, with noticeable improvements by 2026.
- 'Leveraging diversity' shows one of the largest absolute improvements, rising meaningfully from its 2023 baseline.
- Wider ranges in staff scores suggest differing stages of confidence and capability, consistent with workforce change.

	Board combined average responses	Staff combined average responses		The range for Board responses	The range for Staff responses
Authenticity and humanness	8.37 (2025 = 8.44) (2024 = 8.52) (2023 = 8.44)	7.85 (2025 = 7.72) (2024 = 7.78) (2023 = 6.94)		7.0 - 9.6 Range = 2.6 (2025 = 6.8 - 10)	6.2 - 9.6 Range = 3.4 (2025 = 6.6 - 8.6)
Courage	7.78 (2025 = 7) (2024 = 8.15) (2023 = 8.1)	6.73 (2025 = 6.75) (2024 = 6.92) (2023 = 5.27)		6.75 - 9.5 Range = 2.75 (2025 = 7 - 9.5)	4.5 - 9.0 Range = 4.5 (2025 = 4.25 - 8.5)
Transparency and clarity	8.39 (2025 = 8.23) (2024 = 8.33) (2023 = 8.47)	7.73 (2025 = 7.34) (2024 = 7.63) (2023 = 6.87)		6.3 - 10 Range = 3.7 (2025 = 6 - 10)	5.6 - 9.3 Range = 3.7 (2025 = 5.33 - 8.33)
Respect and value difference	8.32 (2025 = 8.37) (2024 = 8.37) (2023 = 8.7)	7.71 (2025 = 7.36) (2024 = 8.11) (2023 = 6.65)		7.0 - 9.5 Range = 2.5 (2025 = 5.75 - 10)	6.0 - 9.25 Range = 3.25 (2025 = 6.0 - 8.25)
Leveraging diversity to drive productivity, creativity & innovation	8.29 (2025 = 7.82) (2024 = 8.24) (2023 = 8.43)	7.35 (2025 = 6.5) (2024 = 7.01) (2023 = 5.52)		7.37 - 10 Range = 2.63 (2025 = 6.0 - 10)	5.0 - 9.0 Range = 4.0 (2025 = 5.25 - 8.1)

Taken together, the charts indicate a stable, high-performing Board and a steadily strengthening staff cohort, with 'courage' emerging as the key shared priority for further development.