

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION ACTION PLAN 2024 – 2027

Tackling Inequalities

RISE.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S WELCOME

Tackling inequalities is a key principle of our Rise Together Strategy. We want what we do to have a transformational effect on the lives of communities who need our support the most across Northumberland and Tyne & Wear. Therefore equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) must underpin our work in order to achieve our vision and enable everyone to have fair access to the amazing benefits that moving more brings.

We are very conscious that EDI cannot be the responsibility of one person or group within the Rise team. EDI must be embedded in the thinking and actions of everyone associated with Rise. This will be a challenge; it is all too easy to get caught up in the busyness of our day-to-day work without appreciating that EDI is our day-to-day work and that unless we collectively recognise and action this, we will fall short of being the best we can be and delivering our strategic vision. It is therefore my role as CEO to ensure that we embed and reinforce EDI across the whole team and help to influence our partners and stakeholders.

We do also recognise that we are a medium-sized charity (turnover of £1.5m in 2022–2023; headcount of 27 in March 2024), and so our commitments and actions must be proportionate to our capacity to deliver. We feel that through this Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP), we have struck the right level of ambition and realism, but we commit to being honest in our assessment of that as we move through the next few years.

Clare Morley

**Chief executive officer
Rise**



BOARD OF TRUSTEES EDI LEAD STATEMENT

Inequity in access to physical activity is a complex issue influenced by many factors including socioeconomic status, gender, race, disability, cultural factors, financial constraints and much more. This can result in reduced access to sports facilities, recreational programmes and opportunities for physical activity and these disparities can result in unequal health outcomes and exacerbate existing health inequity. When we collectively address inequities in physical activity, we can reduce disparities in health outcomes, particularly amongst marginalised groups who face barriers of access, but we also improve quality of life. Regular physical activity is linked to improved mental health, improved physical health, better cognitive function and recognises when we foster increased social connections and community cohesion, we are strengthening social bonds.

Rise are working collaboratively with the aim of achieving positive impact on the lives of those across Northumberland and Tyne & Wear. This work is significantly important in both the short and long term in developing healthier communities, improving access, reducing preventable disease and improving overall wellbeing.

I'm passionate about making a difference



and proud to be part of a Board committed to taking a wider population health approach. A board and wider team that's committed to creating supportive environments for physical activities with a focus on improving the health of entire communities, rather than individuals. Working collaboratively as an active partner across healthcare, urban planning, recreation and many other sectors, Rise are striving to actively encourage and support population level interventions, environmental modifications and community programmes to have a sustainable and lasting impact on the health of communities.

Too many people face continued barriers and exclusion from participation in sport and physical activity and I am delighted to be working as part of an organisation implementing systematic changes, trying to create a representative workforce and applying an equality lens to decision making to support a truly inclusive environment. Rise is committed to the removal of barriers and embedding equality, diversity and inclusion across all its activities both internally and externally and is committed to communicating that message in the widest sense. Rise continues to make progress in these areas, and we look forward to sharing our journey.

Karen Pearce

Trustee (EDI lead)
Rise

INTRODUCTION

HOW DID WE GET HERE?

Our journey to develop this Diversity & Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) has involved considerable amounts of research and consultation, both internally with the Board and staff team, and also externally with some key stakeholders and community groups. Internally we have engaged our Board of Trustees and encouraged them to consider what changes we could and should make to truly embed EDI across our organisation and the work that we do. We have also run sessions with the staff team, enabling them to consider their work through an EDI lens and identify the actions needed to embed EDI and bring the greatest outcomes for those communities that need it the most. It has been critically important that our Board and wider staff team inputted their thinking and experiences into the process, as ultimately, the Board hold accountability for the delivery of the plan, and the staff will be at the front line ensuring we stay true to our commitments.

We undertook research to understand the demographics of our population at a sub-region wide and local authority level, and presented this information to the team and Board of Trustees to help them to understand local EDI related issues and where focusing their energies could make the greatest

difference to our local communities. We also engaged and consulted with a broad variety of local organisations that focus on supporting people from diverse communities e.g. people with disabilities and people from ethnically diverse communities, and they kindly shared their insight to help inform our thinking. From written surveys to discussions over a coffee, we want to thank everyone who has opened up to us about their experiences of sport, physical activity and movement; they have trusted us with their openness, honesty and candour, and now it is our responsibility to translate that into positive actions that make a real difference.

Following on from the development of the initial draft DIAP, our Board of Trustees and wider staff team were again consulted to further input into the process. Both are firmly committed to doing, not just talking, which will help to ensure that we hold ourselves to account for the actions we have committed to undertaking.

WHY IS EDI IMPORTANT TO US?

Our strategy, Rise Together, places the tackling of inequalities at the very heart of it. We want everyone across Tyne & Wear and Northumberland to be able to enjoy the wide ranging benefits that being active bring, and to lead happier and healthier lives. We recognise that stubborn inequalities exist in our society but we are committed to tackling these inequalities to create a fairer society and one where your gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, disability, long-term health condition, or where you live does not determine how active you are. Sport and physical activity must be accessible to all.

However, this plan is not just about increasing activity levels, it's about equality, diversity and inclusion being embedded across our organisation. It's about our workforce and Board being more representative of our local community, to give us a more diverse school of thought to improve our decision-making. We want people from diverse communities to be attracted to working for us, and with us, and a culture to be embedded where everyone respects and values differences, and people feel valued and included. Our People Plan supports this vision as it aims to embed an inclusive, supportive culture. This will help us to better meet the needs of the communities we serve, and ultimately better progress towards achieving our vision of creating a higher quality of life for our communities that need it the most, using the power of physical activity.

PROGRESSES

HOW WILL WE SHARE OUR EXPERIENCES AND PROGRESS?

Our EDI journey is important for Rise, but it is also important for the wider sport and physical activity landscape, and for anyone who is impacted by our work. We are therefore committed to publicly reporting back on our achievements, experiences and learnings each year through a yearly action plan cycle through to 2027. We will share both qualitative and quantitative information on our various platforms as we progress in order to both hold ourselves accountable, but also share our experiences so that others can learn from our achievements as well as those areas that have been more challenging.

We will be honest about our progress; we are not going to change the world through a series of short-term plans, but we are going to move forward so that when we reflect in 2027 on the duration of this plan, we can see a positive change and a real momentum behind EDI.

In addition, internally, we will ensure that our Board and staff team are regularly informed of progress through both Board meetings and staff updates.



OUR PLAN

SO WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?

We have set out within Appendix 1 our Year 2 Plan for 2025–2026. However, within that is a commitment to review and reflect on progress ahead of setting further plans that ultimately guide us through to March 2027, which is the end of our current Sport England System Partner funding cycle. We feel this is an appropriate way to ensure that our approach is relevant and contains up to date actions set within a broader strategic context. Our EDI Sub-Committee will be responsible for reviewing updates to the Year 2 Plan and subsequent annual plans, and reporting back to the Board of Trustees.

Our Year 2 Plan is broken down into three sections – we have referred to these as our Ambitions. We have chosen these Ambitions as we believe they are absolutely fundamental to progressing our EDI agenda, and hence they need to be the main priorities we focus upon first. We firmly believe that we need to be more diverse and more representative of our local community, both from a staff and Board perspective, to form the foundations of embedding EDI across the organisation. We recognise that our staff are our greatest asset, and hence we understand that their knowledge and skills are critical to the success of our EDI journey, hence education and learning also features as a key Ambition. Finally, it is the work that we do which matters the most and which will make the biggest difference to the communities we serve, hence enabling inclusive access is the third key Ambition.



AMBITIONS

01.

ATTRACTING AND RETAINING DIVERSE TALENT

Fundamental to ensuring that we are able to meet the needs of the communities across Northumberland and Tyne & Wear is the attraction and recruitment of talent that reflects the breadth of our society. If we are a diverse employer, we will be better able to understand our communities and meet their needs; this is fundamental if we are to tackle inequalities. Within this section are also aspirations around leadership and policy as we recognise the synergy between these two elements and the ability to attract and retain diverse talent.

02.

LEADING AT EDUCATION AND LEARNING

The world is a constantly evolving place, and communities are evolving with it. Unless we remain committed to a continuous cycle of learning and development in the EDI space, we will be left behind, and in the process, will let down our beneficiaries.

In addition, we have a responsibility to help our partners to develop their own understanding and awareness around EDI issues, as we are not a frontline deliverer, but a strategic agency working with and through our partners and stakeholders; we cannot achieve our vision without them.

03.

ENABLE INCLUSIVE ACCESS

Critical to the Government's 'Get Active' strategy is an increase in physical activity participation in under-represented groups, including women and girls, those from ethnically diverse backgrounds, people with a disability or long-term health condition, and those from lower socio-economic groups. This mirrors our own aspirations to tackle inequalities using the power of sport and physical activity. We should therefore have a razor-sharp focus on enabling access for these underrepresented groups, and others, through our core work.

We believe these Ambitions will endure throughout the lifecycle of this 2024-2027 DIAP, but remain open to adapting the sections in future years based on learning, intelligence and progress. Within the Ambitions are a number of Aspirations for the Year 2 Plan.

APPENDICES:

1. Year 2 Action Plan 2025–2026
2. Previous Progress (last EDI Action Plan)
3. Staff and Board Composition

APPENDIX 1

YEAR 2 ACTION PLAN 2025–2026 **AMBITION 01: ATTRACTING AND RETAINING DIVERSE TALENT**

ASPIRATION NUMBER	ASPIRATION	ACTION POINTS	BY WHEN	MEASURED BY
1	Ensure our Board of Trustees is more reflective of the local Northumberland, Tyne & Wear and County Durham community across a range of demographic statistics.	1(a) Gather the updated profiles of trustees following recent recruitment rounds and add data to the wider trustee data pool.	As required in 2025	HR dashboard
		1(b) Update ONS or similar data profiles to include County Durham data and compare the trustee profile to the latest data. Keep under annual review.	June 2025 and annually thereafter	HR dashboard
		1(c) Seek to replace any outgoing trustees in the year based on areas of representation where we are below the local community data.	As required in 2025–26	Reported to EDI Sub-Committee and Board
		1(d) Conduct a training needs analysis with our Board to identify any gaps in knowledge or awareness on EDI topics. Provide training, if required.	Winter 2025	Reported to EDI Sub-Committee and Board
2	Ensure we are moving towards having a staff team that is more reflective of the local Northumberland, Tyne & Wear and County Durham community across a range of demographic statistics.	2(a) Continue to gather the updated profiles of staff following recent recruitment rounds.	July 2025 and ongoing	HR dashboard
		2(b) Update ONS or similar data profiles to include County Durham data and compare the staff profile to the latest data. Keep under annual review.	August 2025 and ongoing	HR dashboard
		2(c) Following the review of the whole recruitment process from an EDI perspective, implement actions found.	Sep 2025	Half yearly reporting to EDI Sub-Committee
		2(d) Continue to collate EDI information on all applications and compare over time to see if changes in where and how we advertise increase the diversity of applicants.	Ongoing through 2025–26	Number of diverse applicants
		2(e) Consider ways to demonstrate our commitment to EDI throughout the recruitment process to attract a diverse range of applications.	Sep 2025	Number of diverse applicants
		2(f) Review the organisational People Plan to ensure our commitment to EDI is clearly demonstrated.	Sep 2025	People plan

APPENDIX 1

YEAR 2 ACTION PLAN 2025–2026 **AMBITION 01: ATTRACTING AND RETAINING DIVERSE TALENT**

ASPIRATION NUMBER	ASPIRATION	ACTION POINTS	BY WHEN	MEASURED BY
3	Ensure all external facing communications proactively convey an inclusive culture and champion diversity whenever possible in order to reinforce our commitment to EDI to prospective staff and Board members, as well as to existing/potential partners and stakeholders.	3(a) Continue to ensure the Rise website is fully accessible (e.g. via the use of tools such as Recite me).	Summer 2025	External accessibility assessment
		3(b) Ensure the Rise website promotes EDI and demonstrates the values and ethos of the organisation e.g. it clearly highlights that we are an anti-racist organisation, a disability friendly employer, signing up to the City of Sanctuary pledge etc.	Summer 2025	External accessibility assessment
		3(c) Capture the range of awareness days/weeks that support diverse communities within our social media comms plan for the year.	Jun 2025	Comms plan
		3(d) Improve the diversity of our image library for online and offline comms use.	Oct 2025	Image library
4	Ensure we capture, understand and react to employee experience and voice.	4(a) Continue to review the various formats through which we receive staff feedback to ensure that we capture employee experience and voice, particularly around EDI aspects. Compare and analyse responses throughout the year, identifying areas for improvement.	Nov 2025	Staff engagement surveys
		4(b) Measure the EDI experiences of staff leaving the team through the offboarding/exit process paperwork. Compare and analyse responses to understand what changes may be needed to improve EDI practices and/or aid retention.	Jun 2025	Offboarding paperwork
		4(c) Leaders and Managers to demonstrate zero tolerance to harassment and bullying.	Ongoing	Staff surveys and offboarding paperwork
5	Keep our EDI Policy and Commitment Statement up to date and relevant.	5(a) Review and consult with staff on the EDI Policy and Commitment Statement biannually.	Oct 2025	Staff engagement surveys

APPENDIX 1

YEAR 2 ACTION PLAN 2025–2026

AMBITION 01: ATTRACTING AND RETAINING DIVERSE TALENT

ASPIRATION NUMBER	ASPIRATION	ACTION POINTS	BY WHEN	MEASURED BY
6	Ensure governance structures and processes prioritise the importance of EDI	6(a) EDI Board Sub-Group to remain in place and meet 2 – 3 times per year to oversee the DIAP and check and challenge the EDI agenda.	Ongoing through 2025 – 26	Minutes and agendas
		6(b) EDI Board Champion to remain in place to ensure EDI is considered across all operations and decision making.	Ongoing through 2025 – 26	Minutes and agendas
		6(c) EDI to become a standing item on Board Meeting and Senior Management Team Meeting agendas.	Ongoing through 2025 – 26	Minutes and agendas
7	Leaders publicly support EDI and take relevant action in this space throughout the year.	7(a) Senior leaders to continuously reinforce the importance of EDI via blogs, huddles, staff and partner updates etc.	Ongoing through 2025 – 26	Various



APPENDIX 1

YEAR 2 ACTION PLAN 2025–2026 **AMBITION 02: LEADING AT EDUCATION AND LEARNING**

ASPIRATION NUMBER	ASPIRATION	ACTION POINTS	BY WHEN	MEASURED BY
8	Give all staff the tools to understand EDI and feel confident around the topic. 2025–26 PROGRESS 'Stand by Me' - unconscious, allyship & active bystander training provided to staff July 2025	8(a) Continue with rolling programme of equality training identified in compulsory training matrix for all staff to increase awareness, reduce bias and build inclusive skills.	Yearly	Staff engagement surveys
		8(b) Continue to respond proactively to further EDI training requirements (beyond the compulsory aspects) highlighted in Personal Development Plans.	Oct 2025	Personal Development Plans
		8(c) Be alert to new trends/issues in the EDI space in order to proactively respond to new and emerging training needs.	Yearly	EDI Sub-Committee / Board EDI Champion
		8(d) Develop a training needs analysis for staff to identify gaps and knowledge of the under-represented groups we work with and the barriers to participation they face.	Oct 2025	Training needs analysis
		8(e) Undertake an end of year training needs analysis to review whether the existing rolling programme is meeting staff and programme needs.	Oct 2025	Training needs analysis
9	Be viewed as a leading source of EDI knowledge support for the VCSE sport and physical activity sector in our region.	9(a) Review how we support groups that we onwardly fund to access EDI education and learning.	Nov 2025	Signposting information on the website
		9(b) Develop an easy to access suite of resources, tools and/or onward signposting messages to support VCSE education and learning around EDI in the physical activity space, focusing specifically on any gaps that are not being filled by existing offers.	Mar 2026	Partner survey
		9(c) Ensure SLAs / support agreements are highlighting our EDI "asks" of our partners in order to "flow down" the focus on this topic.	Sep 2025	External SLAs / Onward Funding

APPENDIX 1

YEAR 2 ACTION PLAN 2025–2026 **AMBITION 03: ENABLING INCLUSIVE ACCESS**

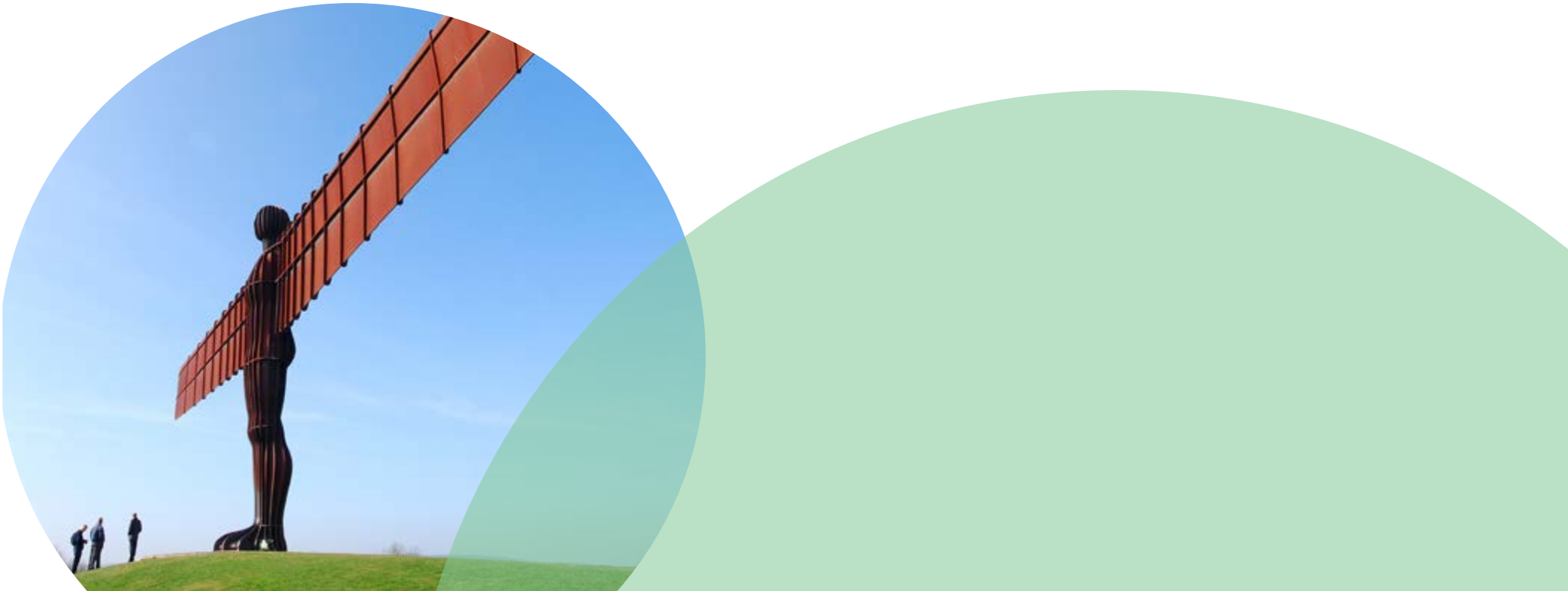
ASPIRATION NUMBER	ASPIRATION	ACTION POINTS	BY WHEN	MEASURED BY
10	Be part of the local and regional movement to be Anti-Racist.	10(a) Continue membership of the North East Anti Racism Coalition, learning from the group, implementing actions off the back of our learning, and cascading the learning throughout the Rise team.	Throughout the year	EDI Sub-Committee and Sport Welfare Managers
11	Ensure there is a clear drive across all staff work programmes to tackling inequalities and supporting those communities most in need (examples contained in the actions)	11(a) Provide leadership to ensure the Sport England Place Based work drives system change and clearly focuses on tackling inequalities by engaging more people from lower socio-economic groups to become more physically active	Mar 2026	Implementation Plan
		11(b) Deliver a project in Berwick to support young vulnerable men who face severe mental health challenges and multiple risk factors to improve their physical and mental wellbeing	Mar 2026	Implementation Plan
		11(c) Linked to the North East Combined Authority Child Poverty Action Plan, deliver project work to improve the overall wellbeing of children and young people and help to tackle child poverty	Mar 2026	Implementation Plan
12	Be better at recognising, and therefore promoting and raising the profile of, the EDI aspects to the majority of our external work.	12(a) Complete an organisation strategy refresh and ensure that EDI is embedded throughout.	Jun 2025	Strategy
		12(b) Following the organisation strategy refresh, review the organisation Implementation Plan and highlight the EDI aspect within each project to support us to both ensure that EDI remains a core priority in all of our work and also to identify the breadth of our work that has an EDI focus so that we can shout more about it.	Ongoing	Implementation Plan
		12(c) Ensure the monitoring and evaluation of projects considers the collection of demographic data.	Ongoing	Data Collection
		12(d) Share best practice from internal programmes / projects that are working well to increase activity levels in under-represented and inactive communities alongside reflections and learnings to help identify areas for improvement.	Oct 2025	Meeting agenda and minutes

APPENDIX 1

YEAR 2 ACTION PLAN 2025–2026

AMBITION 03: ENABLING INCLUSIVE ACCESS

ASPIRATION NUMBER	ASPIRATION	ACTION POINTS	BY WHEN	MEASURED BY
13	Get better at using EDI-related data to drive the focus locations/ communities for our work.	13(a) Continue to supplement the Sport England Place Needs Classification tool with additional localised data to work up the detail of the Place Universal Offer areas.	Oct 2025	Place Universal Offer Monitoring and Evaluation Systems
		13(b) Where possible, take a place-based / community-based approach to new work programmes, ensuring tackling inequalities is the driving ambition.	Throughout the year	Implementation Plan



APPENDIX 2

PREVIOUS PROGRESS

Our EDI Action Plan 2021-2023 had four key areas of focus: recruitment, policies and procedures, research and community engagement, and training. It was an internally-developed plan that relied on our own awareness of our shortcomings, rather than taking input from a broader range of sources. However, it did enable us to achieve a strong foundation for EDI from which the current DIAP has been launched.

Our key achievements from the 2021-2023 plan were:

RECRUITMENT

Maintaining a good gender balance on our Board of Trustees, as per the previous iteration of the Sport England Code of Good Governance, as well as improving the ethnic diversity of our Board;

Appointing a Board champion for EDI whose role is designed to ensure that EDI is always on the agenda and is prioritised across all operations and decision making; and

Improving our recruitment practices to try to reach a more diverse audience and therefore improve the diversity and calibre of our job applicants.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Built EDI requirements into our service level agreements when we are granting onward funding to community groups and organisations;

Updated our Equality Policy and Commitment to Equality Statement, in line with best practice; and

Undertaken an Equality Impact Assessment on all of our policies and procedures.

RESEARCH AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Collated a bank of data and research about the demographic make-up of the Northumberland and Tyne & Wear population in order to better understand our communities;

Presented up to date information on our demographics to both the Board and our staff team to ensure that they are aware of the data and understand trends and shifts; and

Better engaged with a wider variety of community organisations serving a more diverse range of communities in order to support them to introduce physical activity into their work, often through onward grant funding (e.g. the Together Fund).

TRAINING

Supported staff to undertake a broad range of training opportunities linked to the EDI agenda (e.g. cultural competency training; bystander and allyship behaviours; understanding micro-aggressions); and

Utilised the lived experience of Board members and staff colleagues to share experiences and raise awareness of daily realities for particular communities.

Since the 2021-2023 plan ended, we have been focusing on the development of the 2024-2027 actions and broader DIAP in line with the amended Sport England Code of Good Governance requirements.

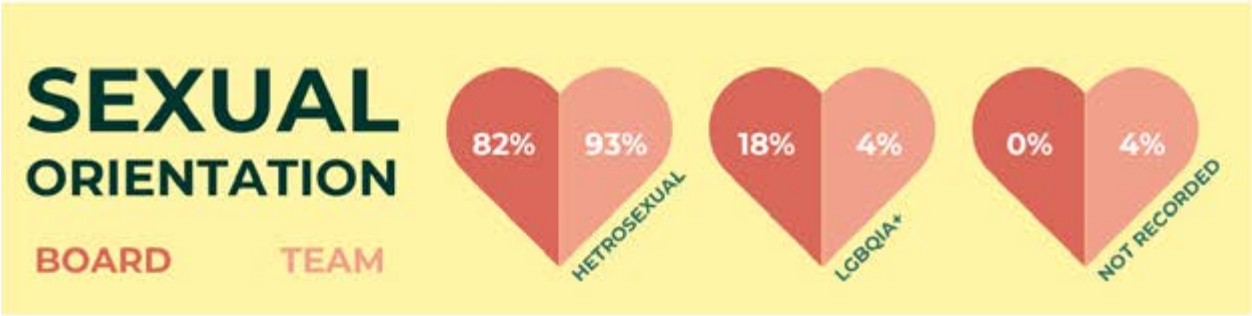
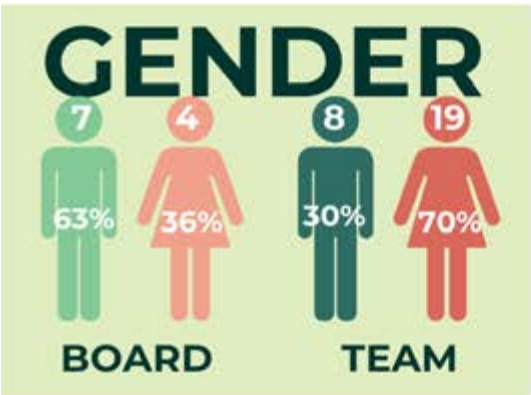
APPENDIX 3

STAFF AND BOARD COMPOSITION

We have previously reviewed the composition of our staff team and Board of Trustees in order to understand our diversity, but the current data is not up to date for our Board of Trustees. The data below is at December 2022 for the Board of Trustees and February 2024 for our staff. We have put the staff and executive team data together, rather than separating this out, as our executive team constitutes less than 10 people and so we are unable to report their diversity breakdown due to UK General Data Protection Regulation principles.

We have not previously compared this data with the latest available ONS data for our region, but this forms part of our action plan for Year 1 (see Appendix 1 above) and future years' action plans will have this data available.

AGE	18 – 24	25 – 29	30 – 34	35 – 39	40 – 44	45 –49	50 – 54	55+
BOARD	0	0	0	1	3	5	1	1
	0%	0%	0%	9%	27%	45%	9%	9%
TEAM	3	2	5	3	8	2	3	1
	11%	7%	19%	11%	30%	7%	11%	4%



RISE.

📍 Royal Quays Business Centre | Coble Dene | Royal Quays | North Shields | Tyne & Wear | NE29 6DE

🖱️ RiseNorthEast.co.uk

☎️ 07973 786 310

✉️ info@RiseNorthEast.co.uk

🌐 [in](#) [yt](#) [fb](#) RiseCharityNE

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