



**ADVERTISING DIVERSITY TASK FORCE**

**WHO ARE WE?**

—  
**2018**



# Foreword

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**'If a story is not about the hearer, he will not listen. And here I make a rule—a great and interesting story is about everyone or it will not last.'** – John Steinbeck

It is not often that I quote a Nobel Prize Winner, but these words are particularly pertinent to our industry. Our job is to understand our clients' customers, and I mean really understand them. People are busy living their own lives, so busy they do not have time to stop and hear our brand stories or actively absorb our message. But, by reflecting their story in our brand story we can be heard, we will be listened to.

Hence, surely it's a pretty good idea to have a workforce that knows how to build empathy with diverse target audiences? First, because the UK is a brilliant fruit salad of people. And secondly because, post-Brexit, our ability to further drive economic growth for the UK will depend on future trading with markets we may have only dabbled in before now. Having a workforce familiar with these new markets and economies makes perfect business sense.

Diversity brings other benefits too. Diversity of thought is a vital spark to creativity – the magic that our industry provides to clients that can help brands grow, drive sales, change behaviour and ultimately deliver profit.

Also, we should always remember that we have a huge responsibility. We set the cultural norms through the content that we create. Diversity isn't just good for business, it will also help us to do work that makes people feel that they belong, it's good for the soul. Perhaps this isn't something that our industry has to do; but I believe it is something we should do.

Our industry needs to evolve if we want to survive - and to play our fullest role in society. This report shows we have some way to go.

I believe in the power of advertising. I believe in our industry. Do you? Our future is in our own hands.

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**Karen  
Blackett** OBE

WPP UK Country Manager





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# Introduction

Formed in 2017, the Advertising Diversity Taskforce is a coalition of the most progressive agencies united around a single goal; identifying the barriers and creating solutions for the recruitment and retention of diverse talent.

As well as supporting existing initiatives, the Advertising Diversity Taskforce has been developing a number of programmes – including this, the first ‘Who are we?’ report.

Working with Opinium, MediaCom has collected and

analysed data from the largest self-competition survey ever conducted across our industry, because we need to truly understand what the problem is before we can try to fix it. It covers a number of areas of diversity, including some that haven’t been measured before, providing an invaluable snapshot that can act as a benchmark to measure future progress.

Next year we want even more agencies to pledge to take part in the ‘Who are we?’ survey.

Since 2016, the IPA has conducted a survey of its member agencies to reveal the extent of ethnic and gender diversity in adland. However, as our surveys are completed by the agency rather than individuals themselves, there are a number of areas that we are unable to report on, namely around the topics of social mobility, disability and

sexual orientation. That’s why we are delighted that these issues have been covered in this new piece of research. These insights will help the industry continue to improve the diversity agenda and create a more inclusive and representative workforce.

**Leila Siddiqi,**  
**Head of Diversity, IPA**



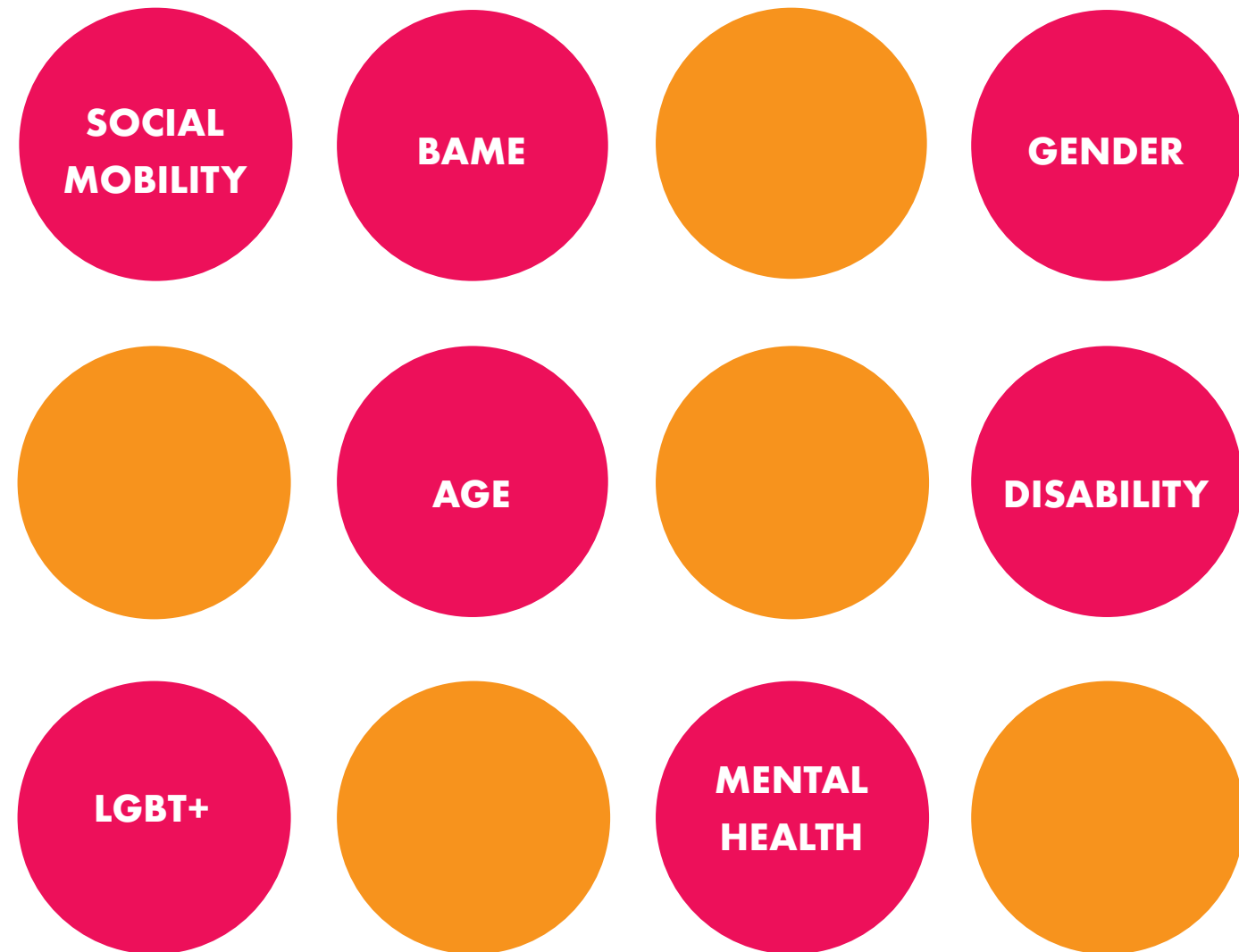


About

**We've carried out the biggest ever self-completion census of the media and advertising industry**

Covering a number of diversity areas, including some we haven't measured before...

**15** companies **2589** respondents



Fieldwork 22nd January to 31st March 2018





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## Headlines

1

Social mobility remains a significant problem; Nationally 1 in 14 people are privately educated, in our industry it's 1 in 5. At leadership level it's 1 in 3.

2

Ethnic diversity at entry level is starting to improve, but we still have a long way to go before the industry reflects London. BAME representation at senior level is only 8%

3

There is still a lack of senior women within the industry – women are out-numbered 2:1 by men when it comes to leadership.

4

We need to do more to ensure our industry is open to disabled employees; 1% of our sample are registered disabled, compared to a national average of 7%

5

The mental health of minority groups remains an area needing attention. 28% of those surveyed who identify as LGBT+ said they've been diagnosed with a mental health illness, compared to 13% of the general sample





## Recommendations

# What should we all be doing?

We believe change must start at the top. Leadership have the influence, the vision, the budgets to shift the diversity dial. If you are the leader of any organisation, there are a number of things you can do to make change a reality. If you are not a leader but are committed to change, make your leadership accountable. We all have a part to play to keep diversity on people's to do lists.

1

### Take personal responsibility – particularly if you are a leader.

Whether you're the CEO, a middle manager, in HR or an entry level creative – everyone has a role to play in seeking out diverse talent and ensuring more diverse output. However, change is hard and has to be CEO led - or at least have

a clear executive management sponsor - to ensure it is driven with the authority, momentum and budgets you only get from the top of an organization.

2

### Know your agency

Look around your meetings. Who do you see? Where are the gaps? How can you commit to the solution if you don't understand what areas need your attention? If you are a CEO or HR Director and want to understand your agency better, sign

up and commit to an annual diversity audit to track your progress. To join the next census and receive your own confidential agency dashboard, email [Pauline.robson@mediacom.com](mailto:Pauline.robson@mediacom.com)

3

### Learn from people who are different from you.

During your day are you spending all your time with people like yourself, or are you making time for new conversations? What you learn from these could give you the inspiration and knowledge to drive change and revolutionise the

experience of diverse groups. Be a mentor or find a mentor. Seek allies in your organisation who you can work with to create change. Identify experts you can work with to understand diverse talent and their needs better.

## Recommendations

4

### Make your space inclusive.

Be aware of making your organisation as open and inclusive as possible. Do you call out and then proactively manage the bad behaviour, misplaced language, throwaway comments that would make people feel less welcome?

Do you have full wheel-chair access, prayer rooms or suitable furniture? Do you celebrate the LGBTQ+ community or just rainbow-wash in the run up to Pride?

5

### Set policy to drive accelerated change

You may not be able to change people's attitudes, but you can change behaviour. Put in place the guard rails that will ensure your agency or organisation are forcing action. Work with your HR partners to ensure all managers have

diversity and inclusion training. Insist on genuinely diverse recruitment lists. Put in place mandatory reverse mentoring for your senior leadership team.

6

### Make commitments public and act on them

Know what success looks like. Set targets and tell your agency to hold you to account. Demonstrate you have made talent a strategic imperative and ask to be bonused against what you achieve. Actively work with everyone in your company who manages a team and ensure they have in

place development plans for all their talent – make clear what you expect of them to ensure progression. Focus your future. Sign up to join the Advertising Diversity Taskforce and make a genuine difference through the power and action of an industry collective.

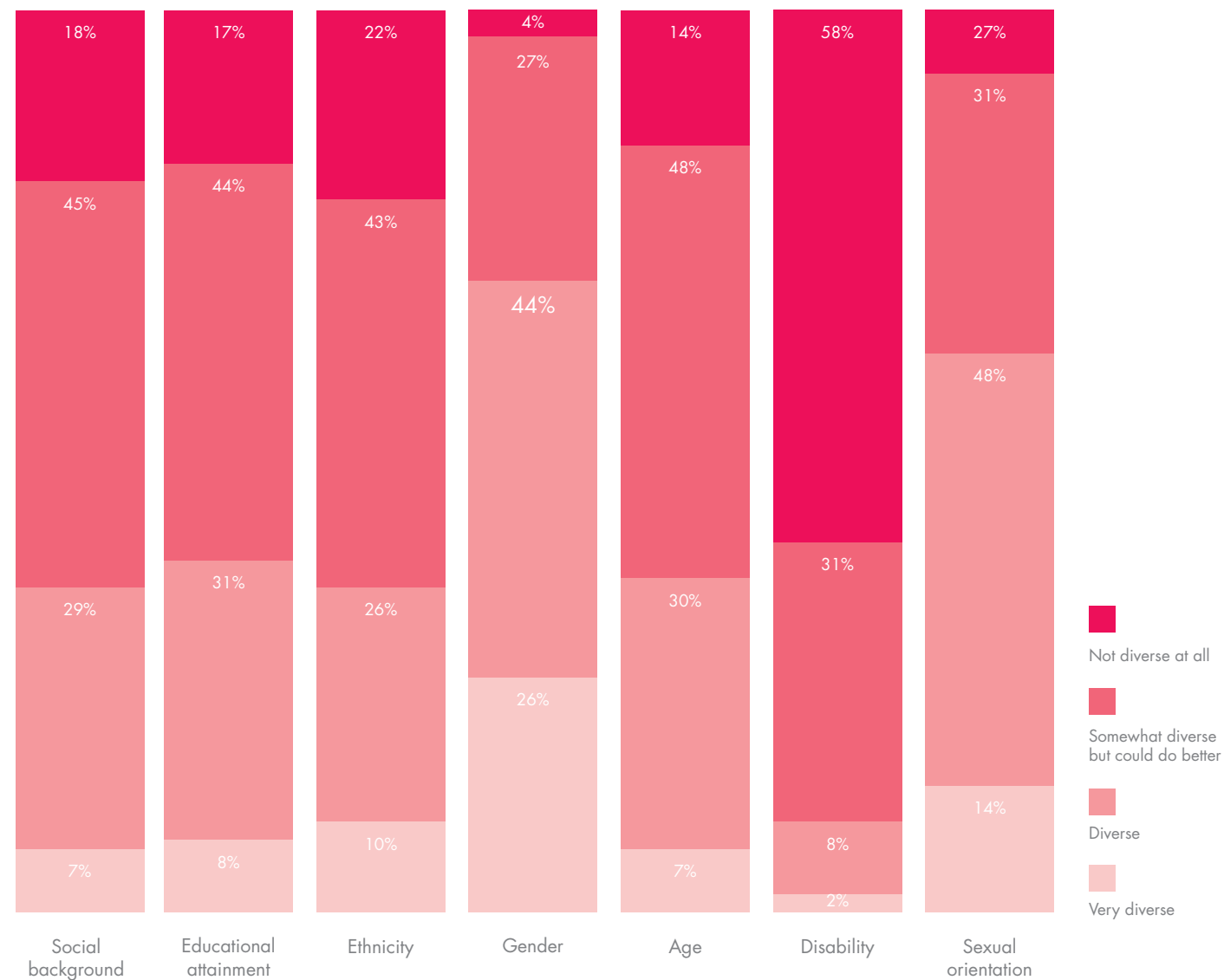


## Overview

Within the industry there is a feeling that we can do better

This is particularly the case for:

- Disability
- Ethnicity
- Social background
- Age



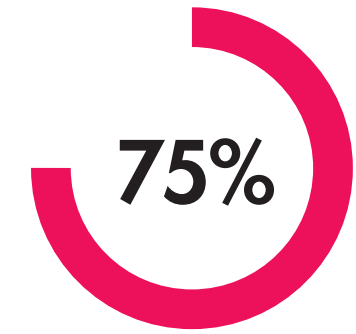
Source: Media & Advertising Industry Diversity Census  
Q42 How diverse do you feel the media and advertising industry is in the following areas? N=2589

## Overview

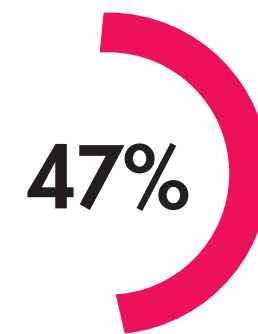
Whilst organisations foster a positive culture, this is not translating into action



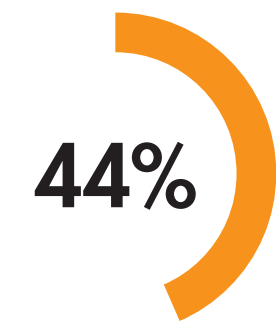
Agree that the best creative environments include people from all backgrounds



Agree that their company promotes free and open expression of ideas, opinions and beliefs



Say their company goes out of its way to hire a diverse workforce



Agree that everyone in their organisation is remunerated based on ability without gender or other bias

Source: Media & Advertising Industry Diversity Census  
Q41 Tell us how much you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding your current company. N=2589



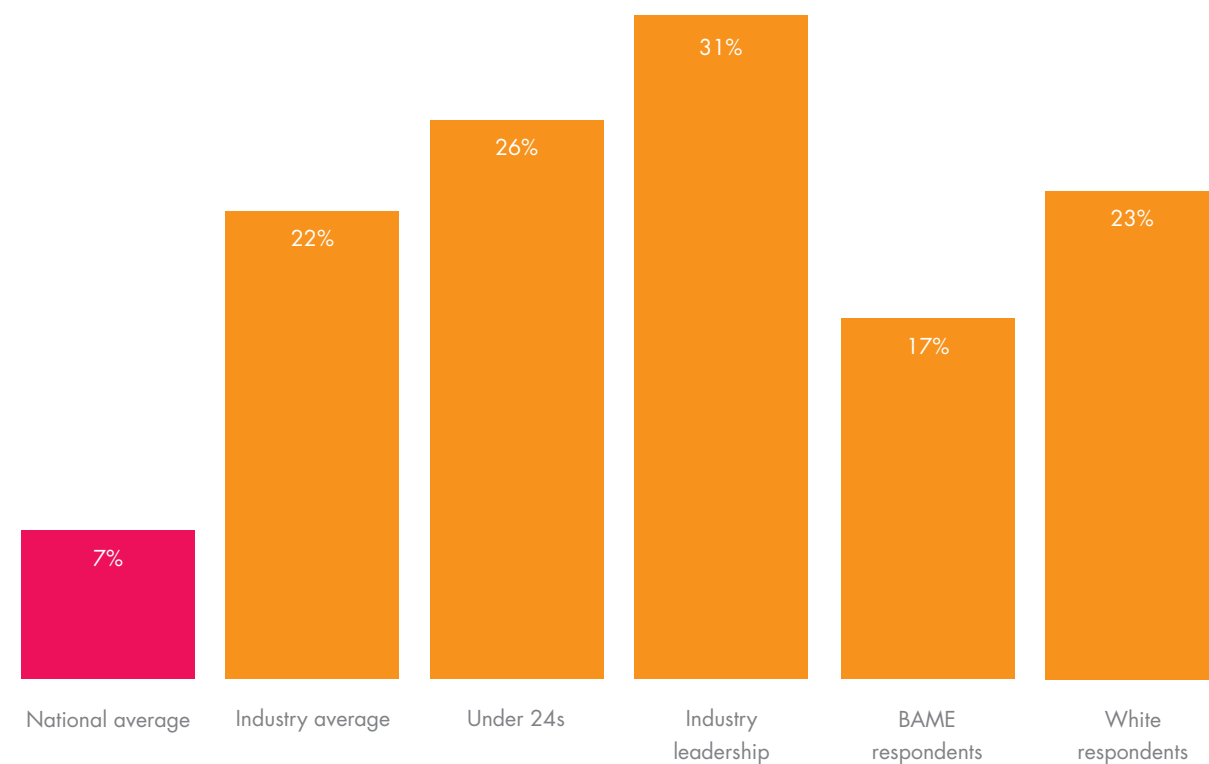
## Social Mobility

Privately educated people are hugely over-represented within the industry

This is most acutely seen at leadership level.

We see very little difference between the under 24s and the industry average. This would suggest that initiatives aimed at improving social inclusion are still not cutting through.

% of people who were privately educated

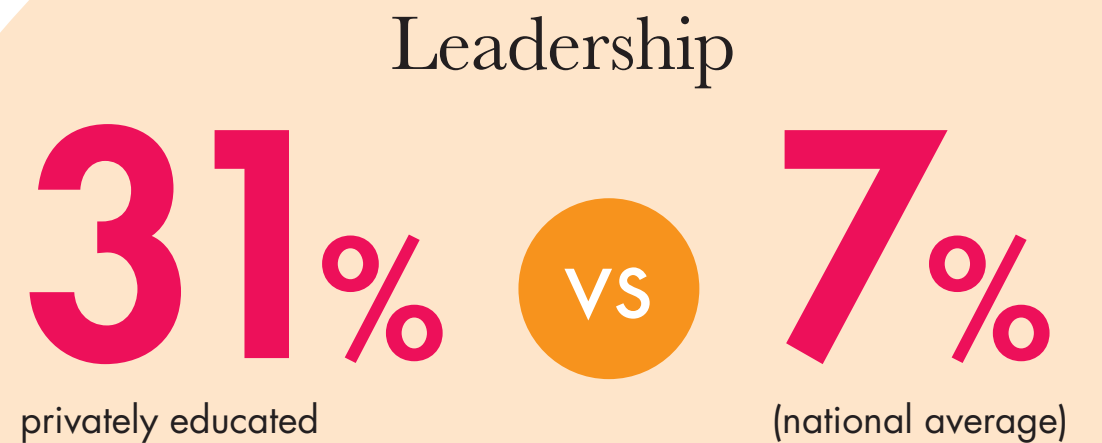


Source: Independent Schools Council  
Media & Advertising Industry Diversity Census

## Social Mobility

BAME respondents are also more likely than average to have been privately educated

Whilst respondents from a BAME background are less likely to have been privately educated than white respondents, they are still more than twice as likely to have been privately educated as the UK average. This is primarily driven by respondents from mixed backgrounds. BAME respondents are also less likely to have received an assisted place than white respondents (13% vs 27%).



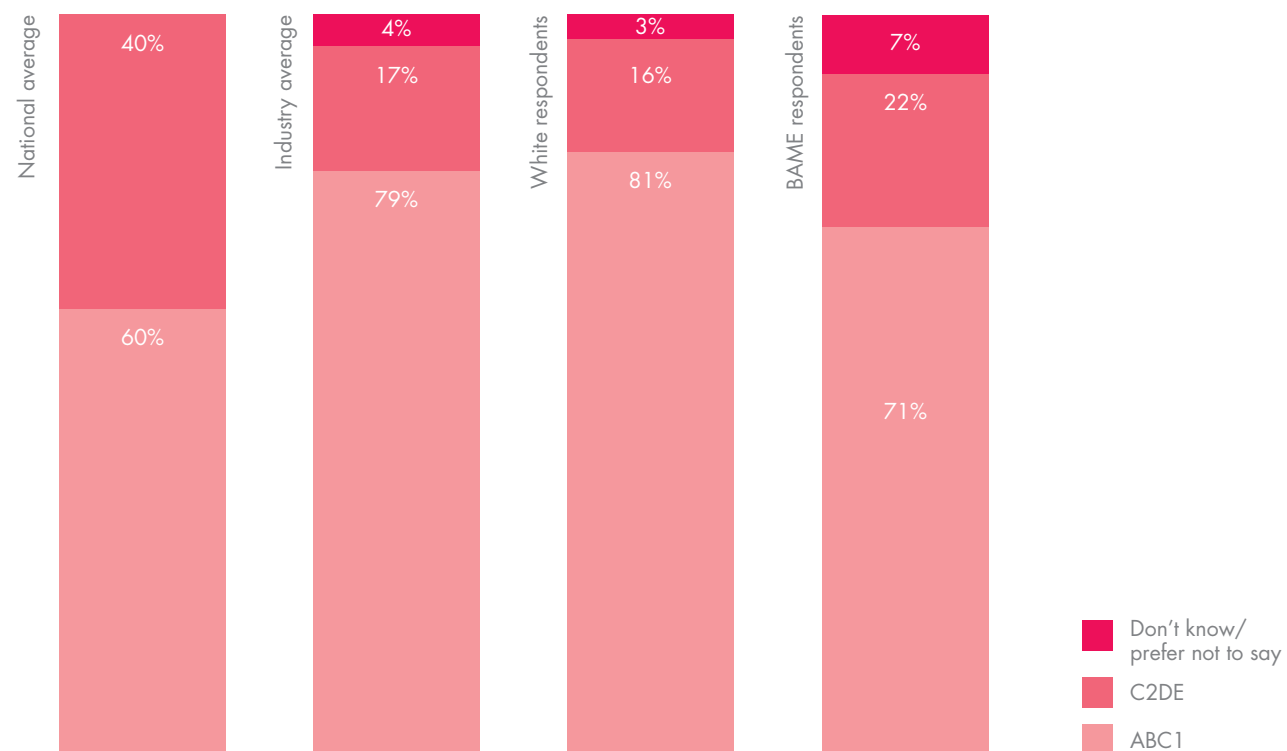
## Social Mobility

# The overrepresentation of the privately educated is underpinned by a lack of social inclusion

BAME respondents are more likely to be from a C2DE background and to have come from a family that received income support while at school. **78%** of respondents come from social grade ABC1, vs **60%** of the general population. It is worth pointing out that the national average figure we have used for comparison is based on

current social grade statistics, whereas we are looking at the social grade of people's parents whilst they were at school. We know that the proportion of ABC1s has been increasing over time, ie the proportion of ABC1s in the present day is higher than it used to be, so this comparison somewhat masks the true picture of lack of social mobility.

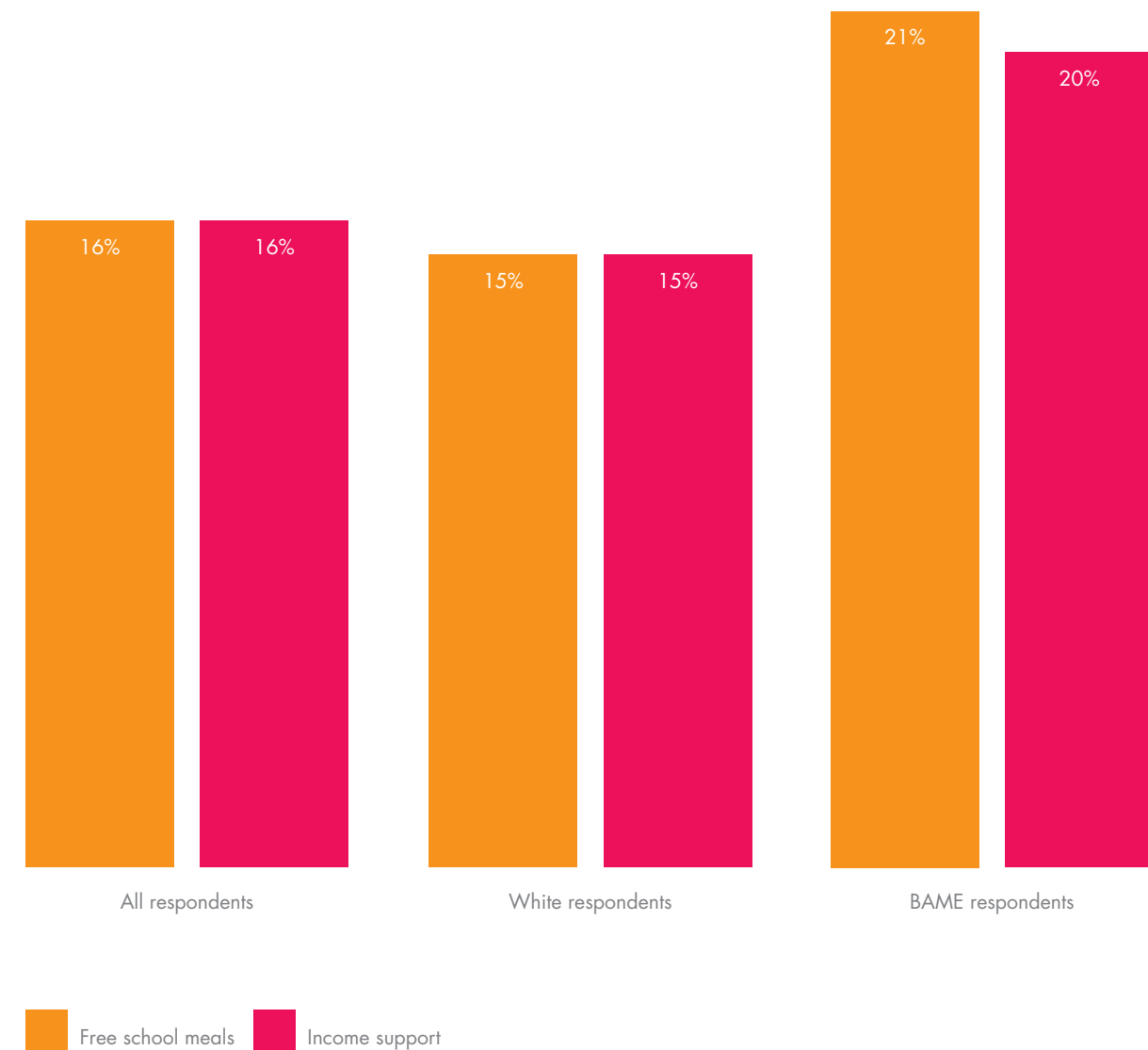
### Social grade of parents



Source: Advertising & Media Industry Census, N=2589  
 Q38 Which of these best describes the main occupation of your highest earning parent or guardian when you were at school?  
 Q36. Were you eligible to receive free school meals throughout any of your education?  
 Q39. Did your household receive income support during your school years?

## Social Mobility

### Benefit received while at school





## BAME

# BAME (Black, Asian and minority ethnic) representation in the industry does not reflect the population of London

### 16% of our sample are BAME.

Whilst this is in line with the national figure (13% at the 2011 census and 12% in the national workforce), BAME people within the industry are under-represented vs the London population (40% BAME).

All but 2 of the companies participating in the research are London-based. All are based in urban centres where the BAME population is higher than the UK average.

BAME respondents are more likely to agree that the industry is not at all diverse when it comes to ethnicity. There is a clear difference in the proportion of BAME employees by age and we are seeing a higher proportion of BAME people in the under 24 age group.

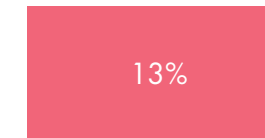
This suggests that diversity initiatives are starting to have an impact when it comes to entry level talent. These positive steps show we are heading in the right direction. Critically this data gives us the key metric for comparison and to measure progress against. However, stopping the churn of young talent is crucial to avoid creating an ethnicity glass ceiling.

23% of BAME people in the industry are under 24. It is vital that this young talent receives the support they need to remain and progress within the industry. Lack of visible role models and perceived lack of action in driving diversity pose a challenge to retention of BAME employees

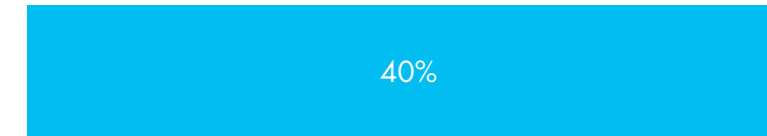
Source: Media & Advertising Industry Diversity Census  
Q42 How diverse do you feel the media and advertising industry is in the following areas? N=2589

## BAME

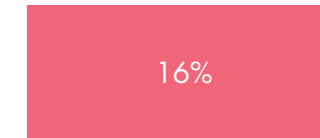
UK



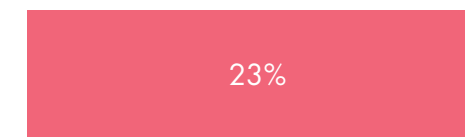
London



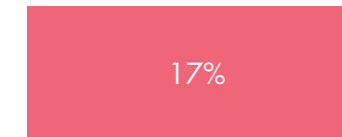
Industry



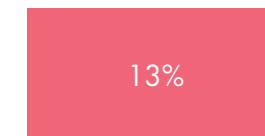
Under 24



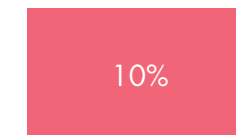
25-34



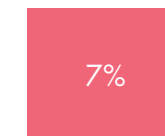
35-44



45-54



55+



Source: Media & Advertising Industry Diversity Census  
Q42 How diverse do you feel the media and advertising industry is in the following areas? N=2589

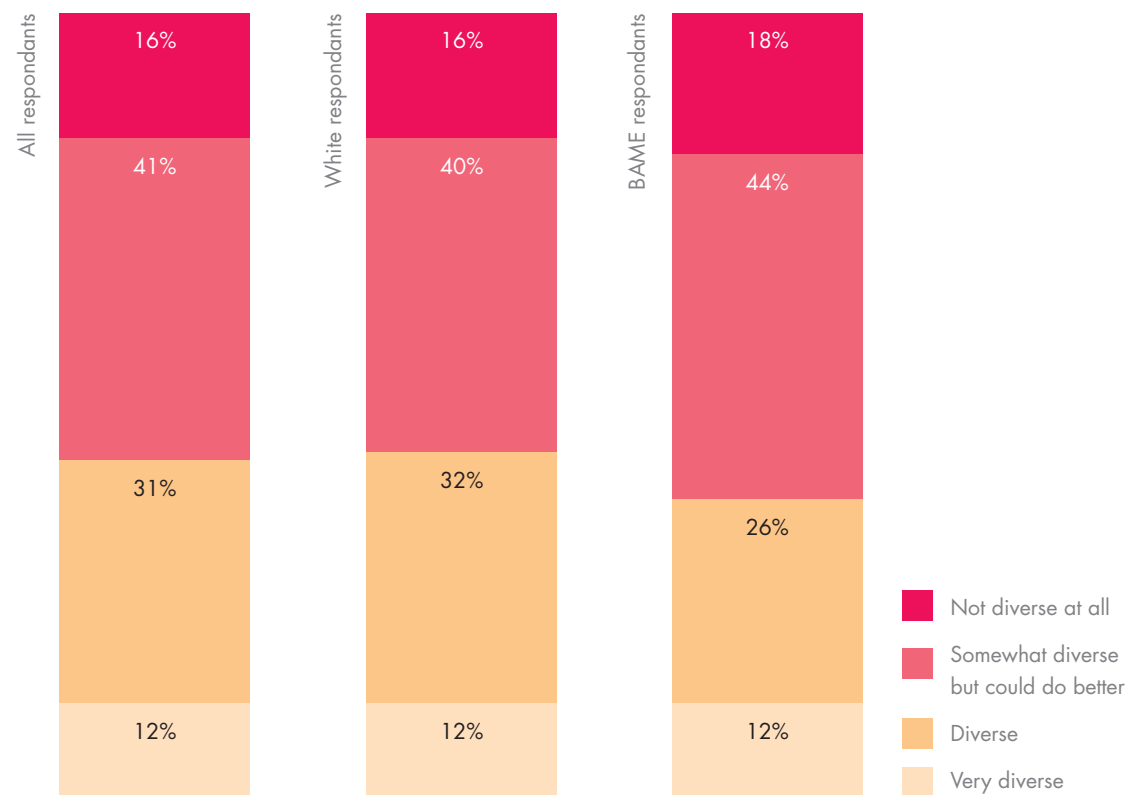
# BAME

## People feel that their own company is doing better at ethnic diversity

When asked about their own organisations, only **18%** of BAME respondents feel that their organisation is not diverse at all (vs 16% for white respondents).

Only **12%** of respondents think that their organisation is very diverse

However, **44%** of BAME people feel that their organisation could do better when it comes to ethnic diversity.



Source: Media & Advertising Industry Diversity Census  
Q43 How diverse do you feel your company is in the following areas? N=2589





# Gender

## The glass ceiling still exists

Women outnumber men within the industry until Director level, at which point the gender ratio starts to reverse.

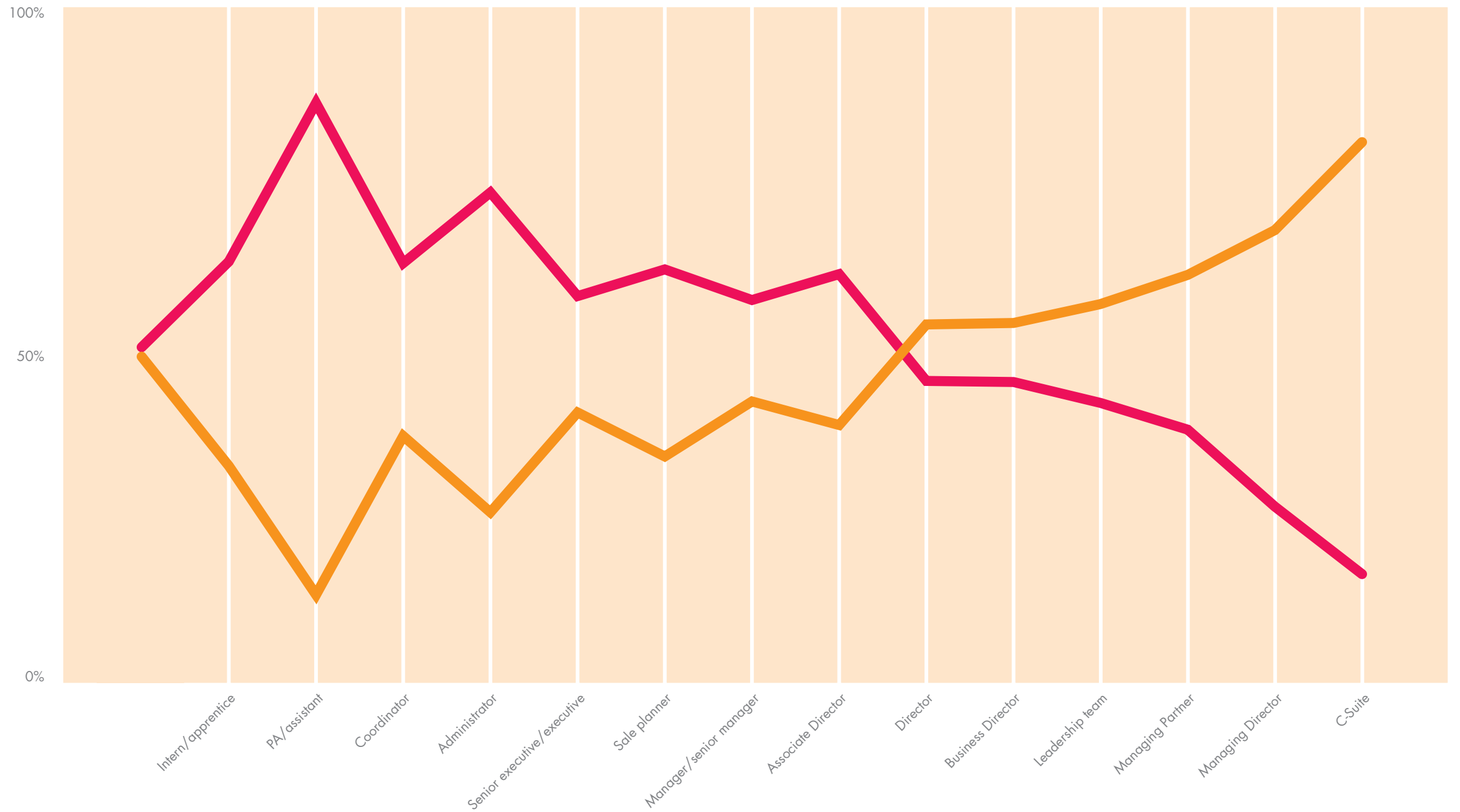
And the gender pay gap is a problem.

Only **44%**, of our sample agree that everyone in their organisation is remunerated based on ability without gender or other bias.

Women are less likely than men to agree with this (**39%** vs **49%**).

It's worth noting these questions were in the field before the release of the UK Gender pay gap information in April 2018.

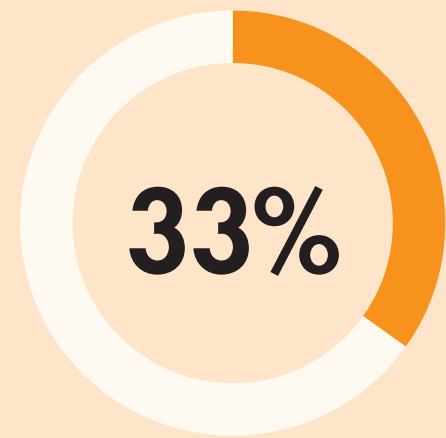
■ Women  
■ Men



Source: Media & Advertising Industry Diversity Census  
Q3 Which of the following best represents your job title? N=2589

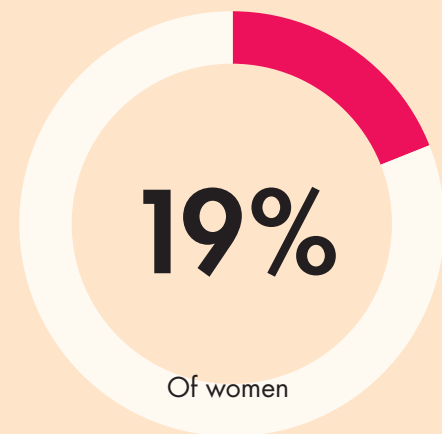
## Gender

There are more men with children than there are women with children



Of men in the industry have children or dependents

VS



Of women

Source: Media & Advertising Industry Diversity Census  
Q3 Which of the following best represents your job title? N=2589

## Gender

A key challenge for women is combining work with family

This suggests that many women are leaving the industry once they start a family and points towards a lack of compatibility with family life.

80% of working mums have flexible working arrangements, vs 43% of working dads.

Despite changes such as the introduction of shared parental leave, primary care for children is still largely carried out by women and in many cases it is either ending or curtailing their careers in the industry.

Family friendly policies and better support for returning mums are crucial to allow women to achieve their full potential.

Only 54% of mums have returned to work at their current company after taking maternity leave.



## Age

The industry has an age problem – where are the over 45s?

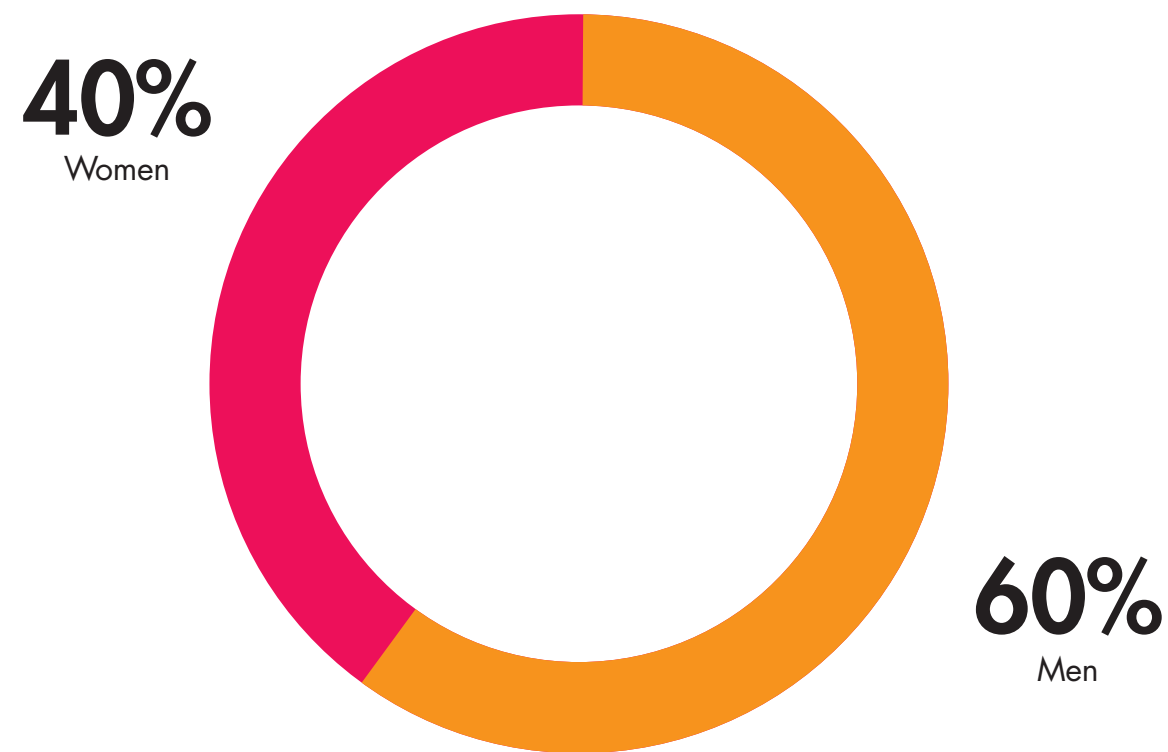
Only **10%** of our sample were aged 45 and over (**45%** are under 30)

And only **2%** were 55+

By comparison, **29%** of the UK workforce is aged 50+ according to the ONS

This problem is particularly acute amongst women

% of over 45s by gender



Source: Media & Advertising Industry Diversity Census  
Q10 Please state your age. N=2589

## Age

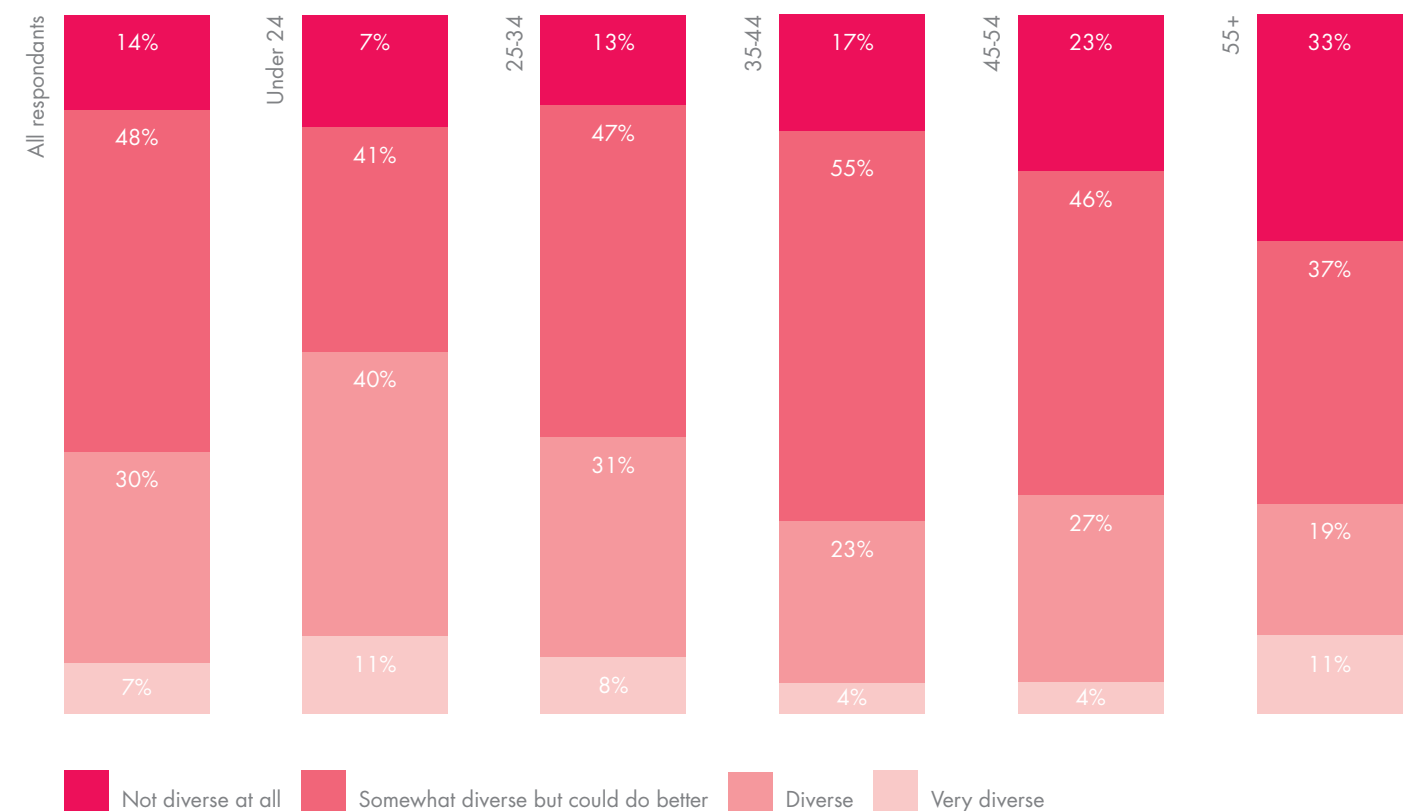
Older people don't feel that the industry is diverse enough when it comes to age

**62%** of the total sample say that we could do better on age diversity (ie they agree that we are somewhat diverse but could do better or we are not diverse at all)

This rises to **69%** of 45-55 year olds

And **70%** of those aged 55+

How diverse do you feel the media and advertising industry is in the following areas: Age?



Source: Media & Advertising Industry Diversity Census  
Q42 How diverse do you feel the media and advertising industry is in the following areas? N=2589

## Disability

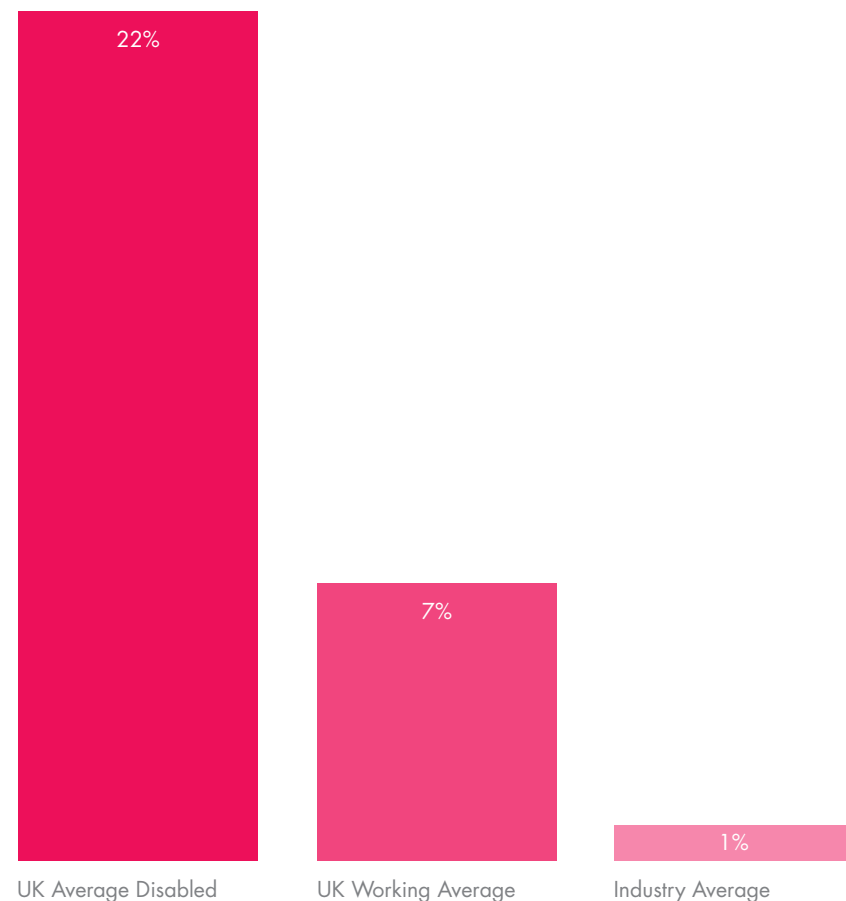
# There is a big gap when it comes to disability within the industry

There is recognition that disabled people are under-represented within the industry.

Only **1%** of our sample are registered disabled.

What's more, **38%** of people who are registered disabled have not declared their disability to their employer.

### Percentage of people registered disabled.



Source: Media & Advertising Industry Diversity Census  
Q42 How diverse do you feel the media and advertising industry is in the following areas? N=2589

## LGBT+

# More can be done to support LGBT employees

**91%** of people in our survey identify as heterosexual vs **93%** in the general population

According to the ONS 2% of the UK population identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual.

### Sexual orientation

Total sample



Men



Women



■ Lesbian or gay ■ Bisexual

On the face of it the findings suggest LGBT+ representation is in line with the national average. However, many LGBT+ organisations question the official 2% ONS figure.

YouGov research found 23% of people chose something other than 100% heterosexual when asked to plot themselves on a sexuality scale, rising to 49% among 18-24 year olds, which suggest the ONS figures may not represent the true picture.

If people don't feel comfortable declaring their sexuality in a work environment, it could also impact on how they identify in self-completion surveys.

Mark Runacus at Pride AM says, "I agree that government figures significantly under-represent the LGBT+ population of the UK, simply because too many people are still scared to come out – even in an anonymous survey. I would therefore expect LGBT+ representation in our youthful and London-centric advertising world to be significantly higher. I'm particularly worried about the apparent lesbian and bisexual under-representation as it suggests we haven't yet created the most inclusive environment where everyone feels comfortable being their true authentic selves."

This could explain why a smaller percentage of women identified as LGBT+ in our findings, and suggests there may be a visibility problem within the industry.

Media & Advertising Industry Diversity Census, Q13 How do you define your sexual orientation? N=2589





## Mental Health

Mental health is an area where the industry is making good progress, although there's still work to be done

Half of respondents

**51%**

would feel comfortable disclosing difficulties relating to their mental health to their manager

This compares favourably to BITC's Mental Health at Work Report 2017, which found that only **13%** of employees in the UK would feel comfortable disclosing mental health difficulties to their manager.

This data is positive for the industry, but there is certainly room for improvement. Currently fewer than one in two respondents (**46%**) believes that there is enough awareness and support around mental within their organisation. This number is particularly low amongst LGBT+ respondents – **36%**

The survey found that LGBT+ respondents are significantly more likely to have been diagnosed with a mental illness, highlighting an area where more support could be needed in the workplace.

**24%** of gay & lesbian respondents and **39%** of bisexual respondents have been diagnosed with a mental illness, versus **13%** of the general sample. And LGBT+ individuals are less likely to feel comfortable disclosing difficulties relating to their mental health to their manager. **39%** of bisexual respondents and **39%** and of lesbian respondents would feel comfortable talking to their manager in this way, vs **51%** of the total sample.



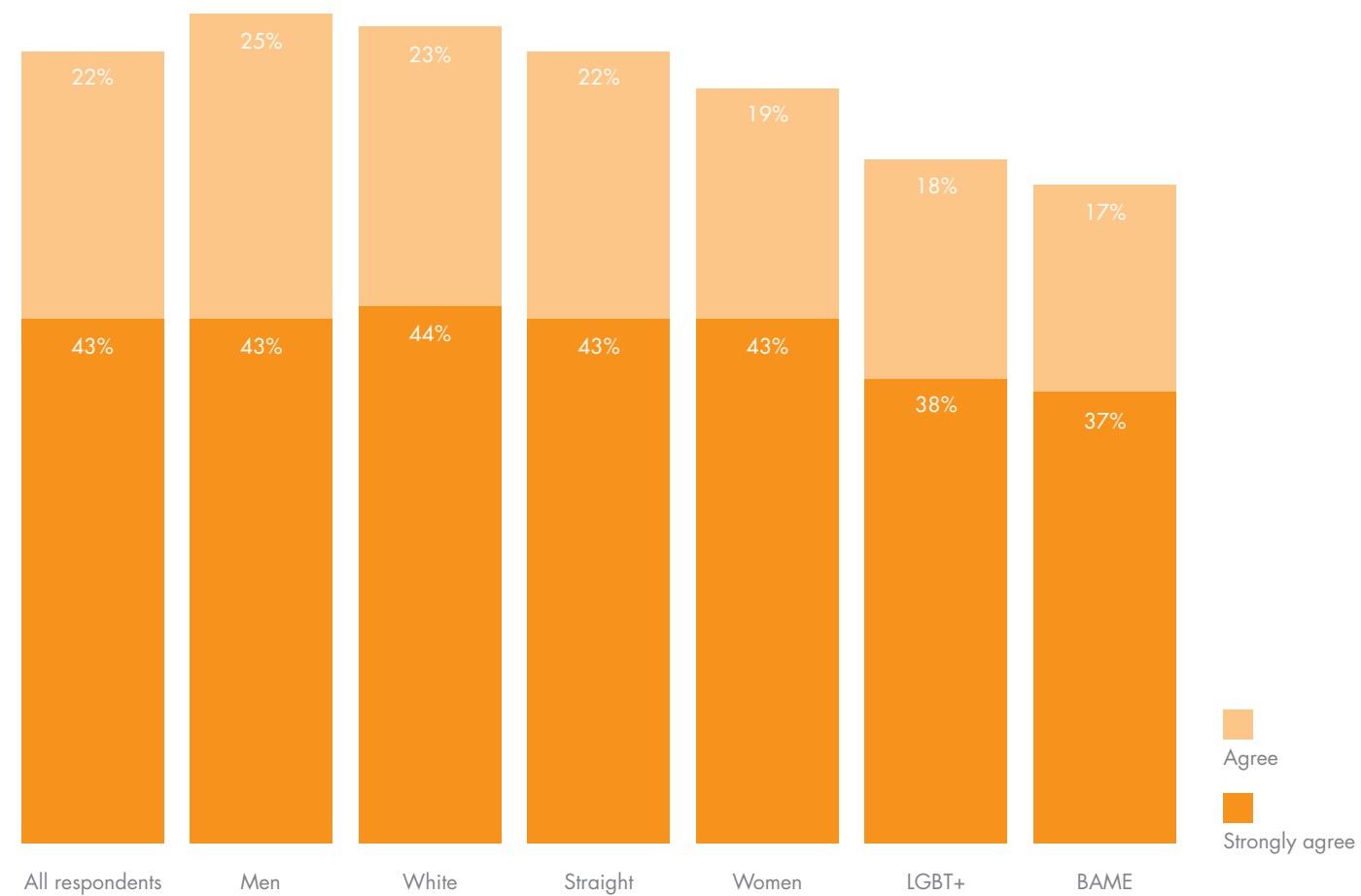
## Leadership

# The problem starts at the top

There is still a lack of women in senior roles. Whilst women outnumber men in the industry overall, two thirds of leadership roles are occupied by men

Only **8%** of people in leadership positions are BAME. And senior leaders are far more likely to have been privately educated than the general population.

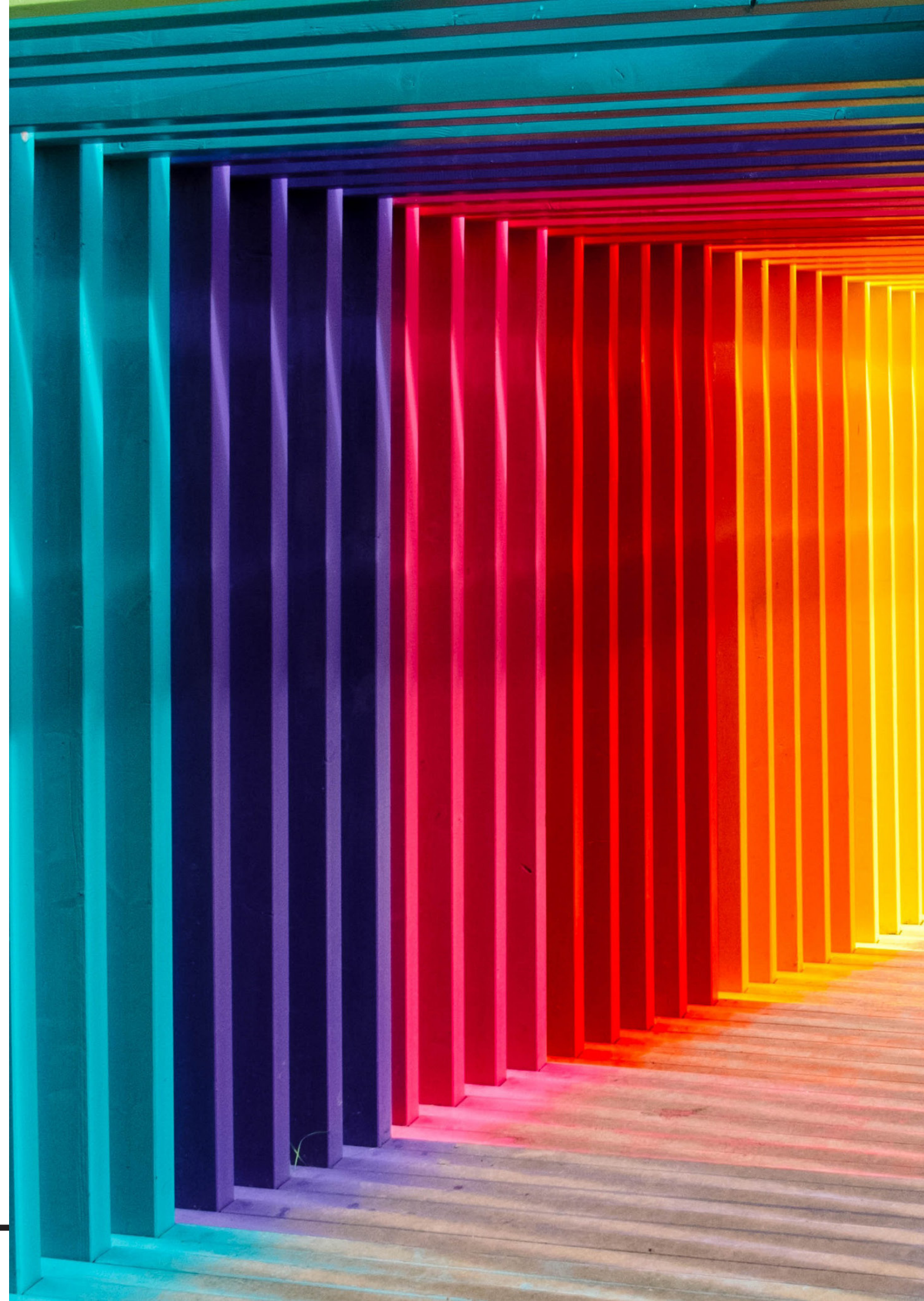
**This is reflected in how much different groups feel that management within their organisation encourages diversity**



**The leadership team here really encourages diversity**

Source: Media & Advertising Industry Diversity Census N=2589

Source: Media & Advertising Industry Diversity Census  
Q41 Tell us how much you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding your current company. N=2589





## Leadership

What do you think is the biggest barrier to attracting and retaining diverse talent in the industry?

*Middle management aren't diverse enough. When prospective employees come to interview... there are not enough senior women (in some departments) or people of ethnicity or with a disability (in all departments) in these positions, and perhaps people can't see their career progression here because of this lack of representation in management.*

*No visibility of role models from diverse backgrounds ... most senior agency positions are held by white, middle aged men that are not representative of a diverse work force.*

## Leadership

*Realising that those who make it to senior management are still the same institutional characters - top managements are not diverse themselves so how true is the cause really?*

*We've only really started our diversity journey in the last few years, but it could be 10+ years until we start to see employees from a range of backgrounds in senior leadership positions. Senior figureheads bring people into your business, and without diverse leadership we will struggle to keep bringing in/retaining diverse talent.*

*There is also the problem of when these people get into the industry not to feel marginalised or as if they don't belong - and this starts at the top. More diversity in the management team and senior positions would definitely help feel people from diverse backgrounds feel like they belong in advertising.*

## Diversity Barriers

Respondents identified a number of barriers to diversity



Lack of awareness of the industry

This is a key challenge to us attracting diverse talent – young people have very little awareness of the industry and what it involves. This means that people tend to find out about it via people they know and our network of talent attraction remains small.

‘Outside of the industry the general population know little about what we do and hence the pool is smaller to attract talent. We rely on word of mouth and friends of employees, family, etc and hence diversity suffers’

‘A better awareness of what ‘media planning & buying’ actually is would really help at a grass roots level particularly!’



Low wages/cost of living

There is recognition that salaries in the industry are not competitive vs other industries. This combined with the London-centric nature of the industry means that entry level roles are often financially out of reach for people from poorer backgrounds.

‘Low starting salaries for a Central London office make it difficult for those from poorer backgrounds able to afford to live and work here’

‘When Aldi are offering £40k to grads, how do we compete?’



Long hours

This aspect of the industry is seen as off-putting for younger candidates who are looking for greater work life balance and are seen as a key barrier to people with children working in the industry, particularly so for women.

‘The extremely long working hours and demands of our industry do not lend it to working families... This in turn leads to a flight of older people from agencies and therefore especially in client service, less older women at the top.’

‘Long hours, high expectation on commitment, for little remuneration. There are easier jobs with a better work life balance.’



Lack of diverse role models

There is a lack of diversity at senior level meaning diversity is not always as high up the agenda as it should be. It also means that talent don’t see anyone in senior positions that they can relate to or aspire to be.

‘People don’t really see others like themselves in senior leadership positions’

‘It’s lacking at senior levels and as a result seems unattainable to those at junior levels. Initiatives that are implemented are created by people that are somewhat so far removed from the talent that they are trying to attract and retain that they may not sometimes work.’



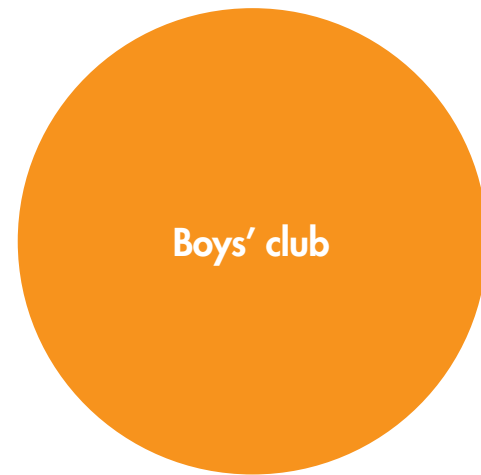
## Diversity Barriers

Respondents identified a number of barriers to diversity



This was seen as a barrier particularly for people from some BAME backgrounds. However there is also a feeling that media and advertising has lost its allure as a profession and that it is seen as less relevant and important by younger people.

'Many parents from an ethnic background are less likely to see this industry or company as a desirable or sustainable career, and thus this affects many of those young individuals when they think about what sort of career they would like to forge.'



With senior roles still largely dominated by men, there is a feeling that advertising is still viewed as a bastion of white middle class men with good connections. This is not helped by the fact that many people enter the industry because of someone they know who works in it.

'Advertising is still seen as three different types of boys' club: posh Oxbridge ones in creative and planning, blokey ones in investment and activation, uber-nerds in data and tech. We need to do way more to show how specialisms are made better by diversity - it's not enough for the agency to be diverse, individual teams have to be too.'

## Diversity Barriers



There's a recognition that as an industry we haven't been casting our net wide enough. Always looking in the same place for talent means that we end up with a workforce that looks the same and does not bring in a different perspective

'If you only source from the same unis or have candidates who all have mates in the agency/industry, then you end up recruiting the same type of people.'

'Our criteria for what makes someone a great candidate, too often draws on educational attainment which is inherently discriminatory/biased to white middle class people. We don't recruit based on potential. We should.'



The lack of diversity at senior levels raised concerns about recruitment and career progression. There is a view that without challenging these unconscious biases, familiar patterns of behaviour will result in the same type of people advancing which will fail to drive diversity and underrepresentation in our industry's leadership.

'Individuals hiring in their own image too much - not intentionally discriminating, but tending toward people who think like them'

'Leaders are basically white, middle class, wealthy men who feel comfortable hiring white, socially acceptable men'

'Our criteria for what makes someone a great candidate, too often draws on educational attainment which is inherently discriminatory/biased to white middle class.'

Attraction Bad Practice

Source: Media & Advertising Industry Diversity Census  
Q44 What do you think is the biggest barrier to us attracting and retaining diverse talent to the industry?



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**Thank you**  
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