



# Diversity In Interior Design Survey



# Contents

Introduction	4
Q1 Are you a member of the British Institute of Interior Design (BIID)?	5
Q2 What best describes your current role?	6
Of those who stated their current position is head of a studio or senior level position the ethnicity breakdown is as follows:	7
Q3 Please indicate how long you have worked in interior design.	8
Q4 Do you work full or part time?	9
Q5 How many people (including you) are in your current place of work?	10
Q6 In which region is your office/practice located?	11
Q7 How old are you?	12
Q8 Gender. How would you describe your gender?	13
Q9 Gender Identity. Do you identify as trans?	14
Q10 Sexual Orientation. What is your sexual orientation?	15
Q11 What option best describes your background or ethnic group? Ethnic origin is not about nationality, place of birth or citizenship. It is about the group to which you perceive you belong. The ethnic origin categories below are based on the Census 2011 categories and recommended by the Commission for Racial Equality.	16
Q12 Religion. What is your religion or belief?	18
Q13 Disability. Do you consider yourself to be disabled under the Equality Act 2010? The Equality Act 2010 defines a person as disabled if: they have a physical or mental impairment; the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to perform normal day-to-day activities.	19
Q14 Education. I would describe my highest level of academic educational attainment as:	20
Q15 Social Mobility. Do one or both of your parents have an undergraduate or post-graduate degree?	21
Q16 Socio-economic background. Do you consider yourself to be from a disadvantaged socio-economic background?	22
Q17 I feel comfortable in my current work environment.	23



Q18	I feel my race/ethnicity has created barriers to progression in interior design.	24
	Of those saying they Agree/Strongly Agree that race has created barriers to their career progression the ethnic breakdown was as follows:	25
Q19	I think I am the only Black, Asian and/or Minority Ethnic employee in my organisation.	26
Q20	I have been the victim of discrimination in my profession and/or place of work. If 'yes' please tick the type of discrimination. If 'no' please tick 'No'.	27
	For those who state they have been discriminated in their profession of place of work because of gender, the breakdown of their gender is as follows:	28
	For those who state they have been discriminated in their profession of place of work because of race/ethnicity, the breakdown of their race/ethnicity is as follows:	29
	For those who state they have been discriminated in their profession of place of work because of age, the breakdown of their age is as follows:	30
Q21	Please tell us about any incidents of discrimination you have been involved with or witnessed, or to express your views on issues of discrimination in the workplace.	31
Q22	Please share any additional thoughts you have on diversity, inclusion and discrimination in interior design.	33



# Introduction

In 2020, the BIID launched the UK interior design industry's first ever Diversity In Interior Design Survey. Historically there has been very little evidence on the demographic make-up of the UK's interior designers, design practices and students. This data deficit has arisen from both a lack of statistics published by the UK government on interior designers, and a lack of research commissioned by the profession itself, including the BIID. Anecdotally, many designers have shared their view that UK interior designers tend to be whiter and more socio-economically privileged than the wider UK population.

In an effort to redress this historical lack of data, understand more about the diversity of UK interior design (or lack of it), and provide a foundation for a more diverse and inclusive profession, in 2020 the BIID undertook 3 pieces of research:

- 1) An analysis of the diversity of interior design BA and MA students at UK educational institutions
- 2) An analysis of the diversity of the post-graduate employment patterns of interior designers
- 3) A Diversity In Interior Design Survey aimed at currently practising interior designers to gain insights into diversity and potential discrimination in the wider profession.

The first two pieces of analysis are available to view on the BIID website.

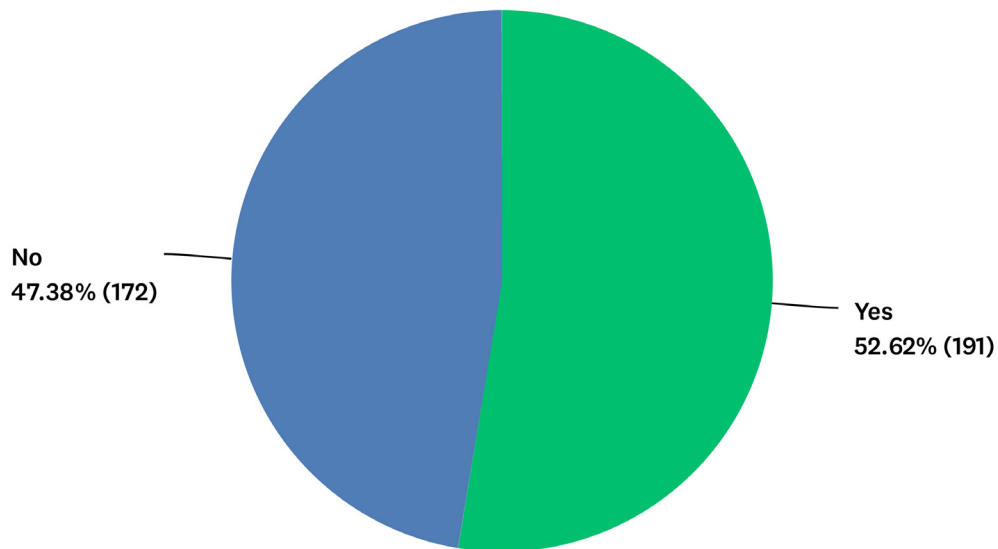
The results of the Diversity In Interior Design Survey are published below. The survey was created by the BIID and publicised on our website and communication channels. We encouraged designers to share it widely to try and secure as high a response rate as possible in order to get useful insights into our industry. It was completed by 363 designers of which 53% are members of the BIID.

In order to enable respondents to speak frankly about their experiences and protect privacy, the survey was entirely anonymous. Of course this does mean that we were unable to verify the identity of respondents.

We must also emphasise that given that this survey was entirely voluntary and based on a small self-selecting sample size, it cannot necessarily be used to extrapolate for the entire UK interior design profession.



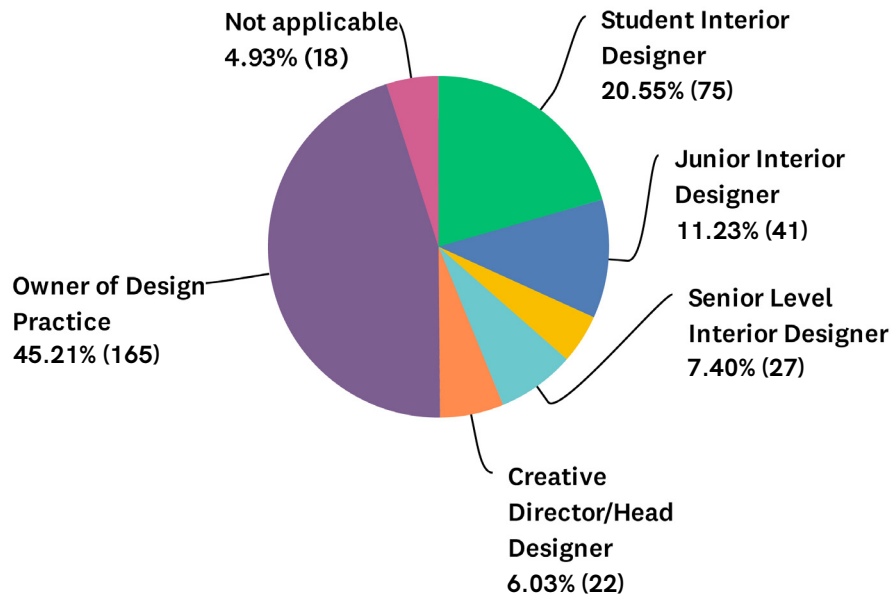
## Q1 Are you a member of the British Institute of Interior Design (BIID)?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes (1)	52.62% 191
No (2)	47.38% 172
TOTAL	363



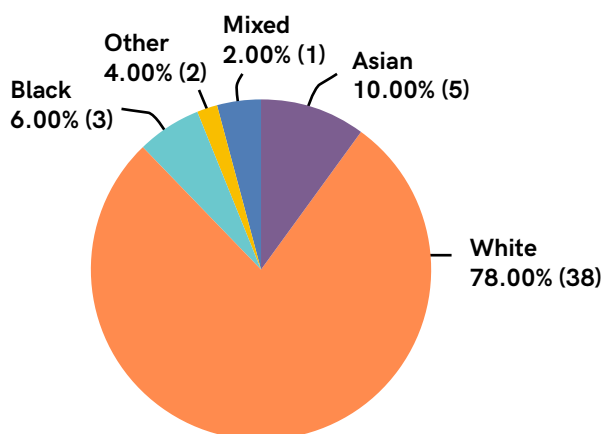
## Q2 What best describes your current role?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Student Interior Designer (1)	20.55%	75
Junior Interior Designer (2)	11.23%	41
Mid Level Interior Designer (3)	4.66%	17
Senior Level Interior Designer (4)	7.40%	27
Creative Director/Head Designer (5)	6.03%	22
Owner of Design Practice (6)	45.21%	165
Not applicable (7)	4.93%	18
TOTAL		365



## Of those who stated their current position is head of a studio or a senior level position the ethnicity breakdown is as follows:



ETHNICITY/RACE	RESPONSES	
Asian	10.00%	5
White	78.00%	38
Black	6.00%	3
Mixed	2.00%	1
Other	4.00%	2
TOTAL		49

When breaking questions down to examine diversity in further depth, the numbers were significantly lower than the overall survey. Due to this we have grouped ethnicities in umbrella terms in order to make it easier to identify trends.

The groups are made up as follows:

**Asian includes:** Asian (Asian/Asian British), Asian (English), Asian (Bangladeshi), Asian (Indian), Asian (Pakistani) & Asian (Other Asian Background)

**White includes:** White (British), White (English), White (Gypsy or Irish Traveller), White (Irish), White (Scottish) White (Welsh) & White (Other)

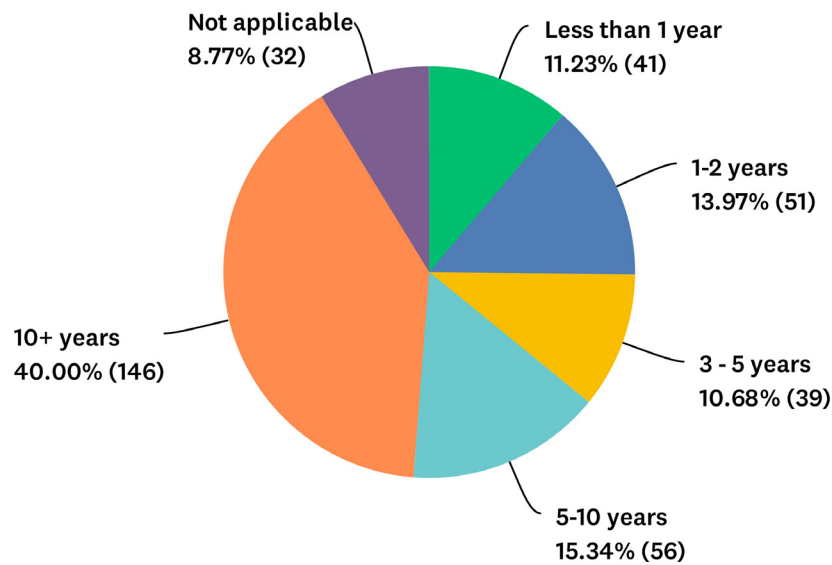
**Black includes:** Black (African), Black (Caribbean) & Black (Other black background)

**Mixed includes:** Mixed (White and Asian), Mixed (White and Black African), (White and Black Caribbean) & Mixed (Other mixed background)

**Other includes:** Other (Arab) & Other (Other ethnic group)



## Q3 Please indicate how long you have worked in interior design.

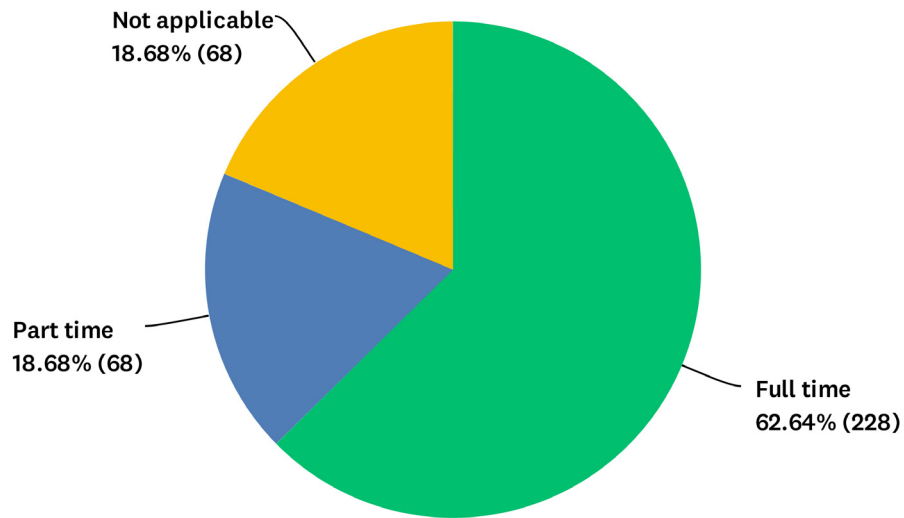


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Less than 1 year (1)	11.23%	41
1-2 years (2)	13.97%	51
3 - 5 years (3)	10.68%	39
5-10 years (4)	15.34%	56
10+ years (5)	40.00%	146
Not applicable (6)	8.77%	32
TOTAL		365





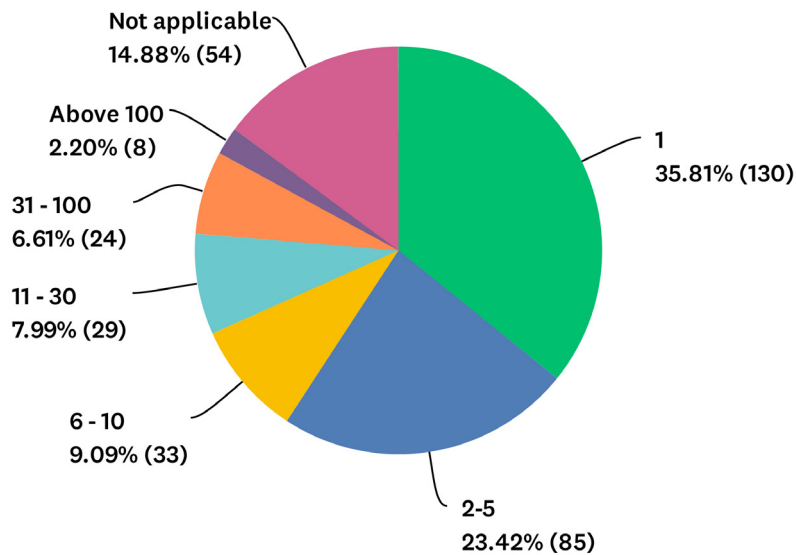
## Q4 Do you work full or part time?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Full time (1)	62.64%	228
Part time (2)	18.68%	68
Not applicable (3)	18.68%	68
TOTAL		364

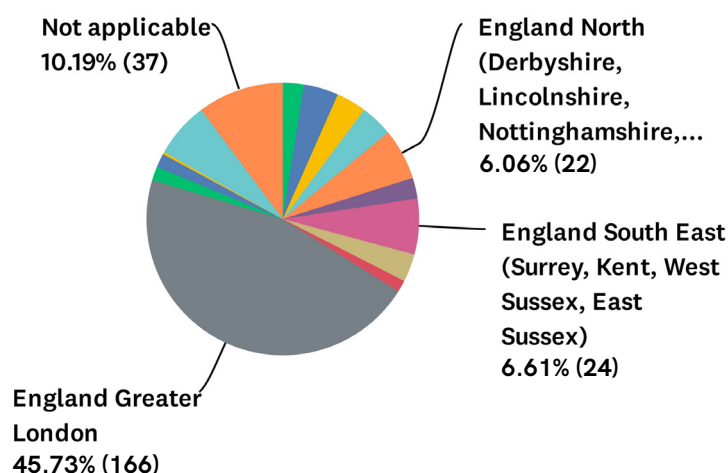


## Q5 How many people (including you) are in your current place of work?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 (1)	35.81%	130
2-5 (2)	23.42%	85
6 - 10 (3)	9.09%	33
11 - 30 (4)	7.99%	29
31 - 100 (5)	6.61%	24
Above 100 (6)	2.20%	8
Not applicable (7)	14.88%	54
TOTAL		363

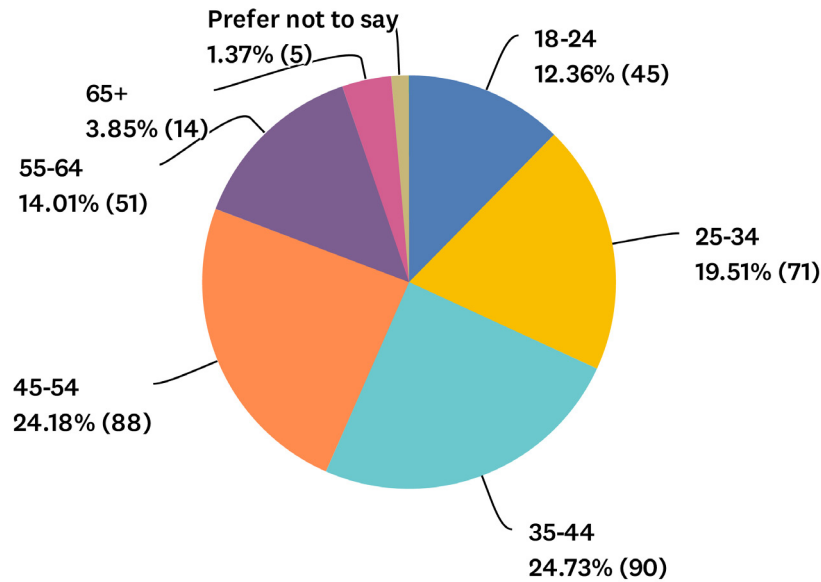
## Q6 In which region is your office/practice located?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
England North West (Cumbria, Lancashire, Merseyside, Greater Manchester, Cheshire) (1)	2.48%	9
England North East (Northumberland, Tyne and Wear, Durham, Yorkshire) (2)	4.13%	15
England East (Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex) (3)	3.58%	13
England West (Staffordshire, Shropshire, West Midlands, Herefordshire, Gloucestershire, Warwickshire) (4)	3.86%	14
England North (Derbyshire, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire) (5)	6.06%	22
England Central (Northamptonshire, Bedfordshire, Herfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire) (6)	2.48%	9
England South East (Surrey, Kent, West Sussex, East Sussex) (7)	6.61%	24
England South (Somerset, Dorset, Wiltshire, Hampshire and Isle of Wight) (8)	3.31%	12
England South West (Devon and Cornwall) (9)	1.38%	5
England Greater London (10)	45.73%	166
Wales (11)	1.65%	6
Scotland (12)	1.65%	6
Northern Ireland (13)	0.28%	1
Overseas (14)	6.61%	24
Not applicable (15)	10.19%	37
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>363</b>



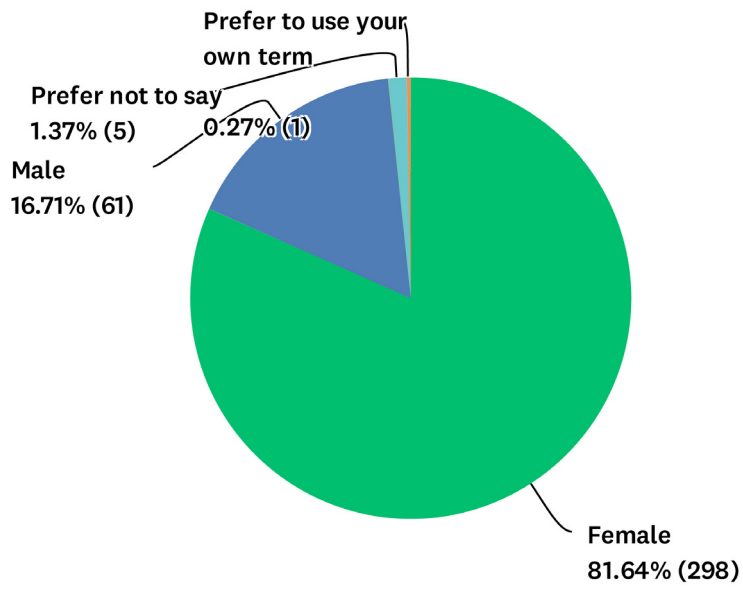
## Q7 How old are you?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Under 18 (1)	0.00%	0
18-24 (2)	12.36%	45
25-34 (3)	19.51%	71
35-44 (4)	24.73%	90
45-54 (5)	24.18%	88
55-64 (6)	14.01%	51
65+ (7)	3.85%	14
Prefer not to say (8)	1.37%	5
TOTAL		364



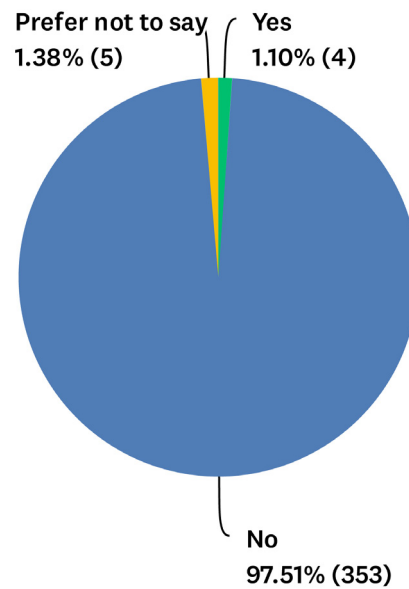
## Q8 Gender. How would you describe your gender?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Female (1)	81.64%	298
Male (2)	16.71%	61
Non-binary (3)	0.00%	0
Prefer not to say (4)	1.37%	5
Prefer to use your own term (5)	0.27%	1
TOTAL		365



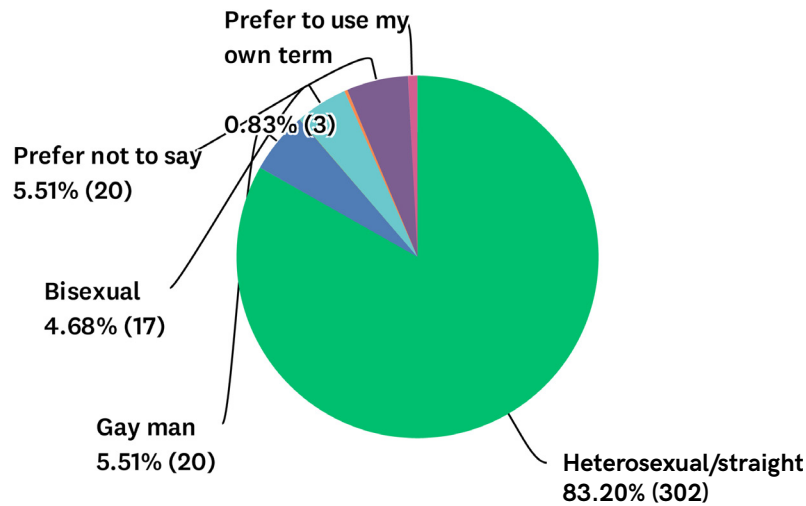
## Q9 Gender Identity. Do you identify as trans?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes (1)	1.10%	4
No (2)	97.51%	353
Prefer not to say (3)	1.38%	5
Prefer to use my own term (4)	0.00%	0
TOTAL		362



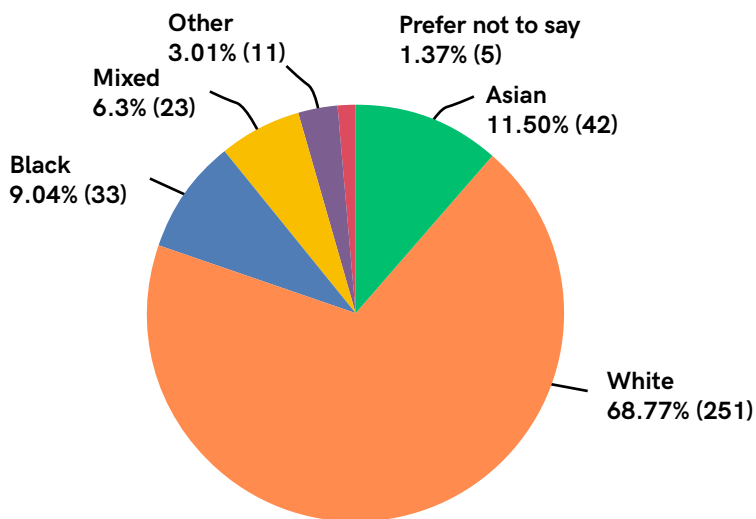
## Q10 Sexual Orientation. What is your sexual orientation?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Heterosexual/straight (1)	83.20%	302
Gay man (2)	5.51%	20
Gay woman/lesbian (3)	0.00%	0
Bisexual (4)	4.68%	17
Queer (5)	0.28%	1
Prefer not to say (6)	5.51%	20
Prefer to use my own term (7)	0.83%	3
TOTAL		363



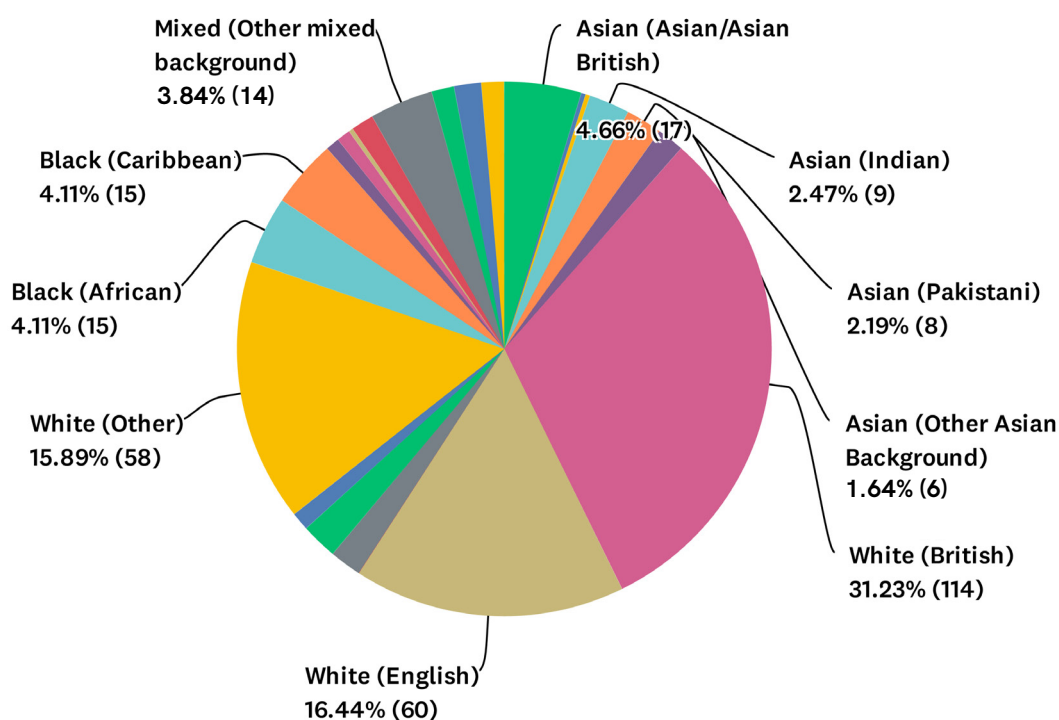
**Q11 What option best describes your background or ethnic group? Ethnic origin is not about nationality, place of birth or citizenship. It is about the group to which you perceive you belong. The ethnic origin categories below are based on the Census 2011 categories and recommended by the Commission for Racial Equality.**



ETHNICITY/RACE	RESPONSES	
Asian	11.50%	42
White	68.77%	251
Black	9.04%	33
Mixed	6.3%	23
Other	3.01%	11
Prefer not to say	1.37%	5
TOTAL		365



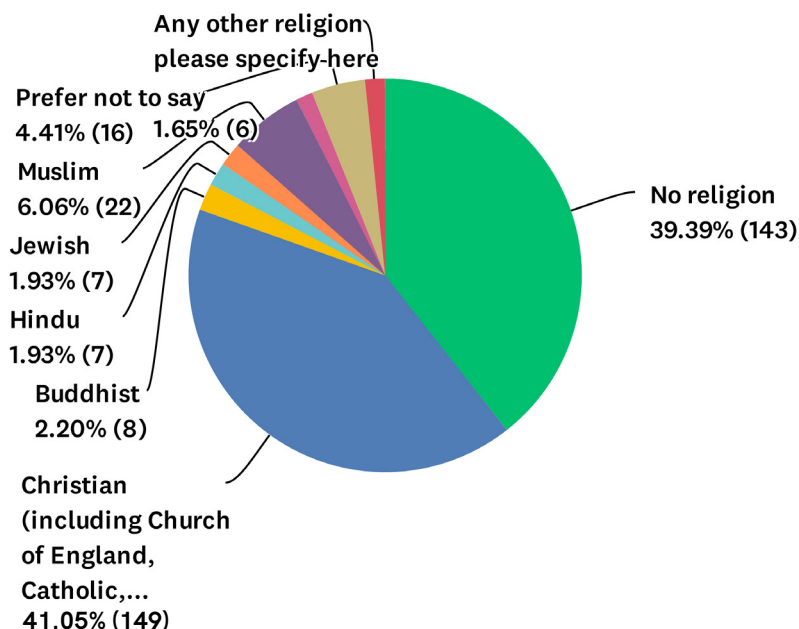
## Summary chart



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Asian (Asian/Asian British) (1)	4.66%	17
Asian (English) (2)	0.27%	1
Asian (Bangladeshi) (3)	0.27%	1
Asian (Indian) (4)	2.47%	9
Asian (Pakistani) (5)	2.19%	8
Asian (Other Asian Background) (6)	1.64%	6
White (British) (7)	31.23%	114
White (English) (8)	16.44%	60
White (Gypsy or Irish Traveller) (9)	0.00%	0
White (Irish) (10)	1.92%	7
White (Scottish) (11)	2.19%	8
White (Welsh) (12)	1.10%	4
White (Other) (13)	15.89%	58
Black (African) (14)	4.11%	15
Black (Caribbean) (15)	4.11%	15
Black (Other black background) (16)	0.82%	3
Mixed (White and Asian) (17)	0.82%	3
Mixed (White and Black African) (18)	0.27%	1
Mixed (White and Black Caribbean) (19)	1.37%	5
Mixed (Other mixed background) (20)	3.84%	14
Other (Arab) (21)	1.37%	5
Other (Other ethnic group) (22)	1.64%	6
Prefer not to say (23)	1.37%	5
TOTAL		365



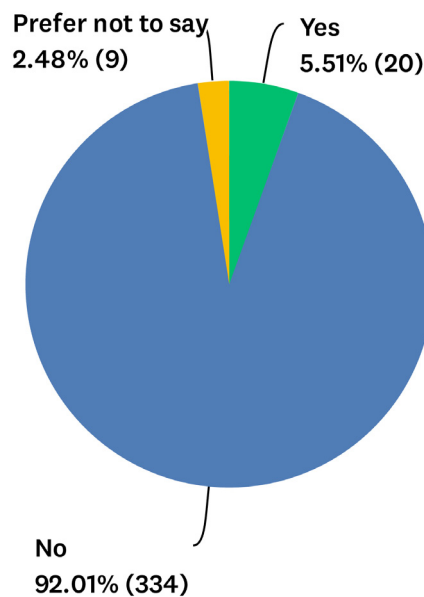
## Q12 Religion. What is your religion or belief?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
No religion (1)	39.39%	143
Christian (including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations) (2)	41.05%	149
Buddhist (3)	2.20%	8
Hindu (4)	1.93%	7
Jewish (5)	1.93%	7
Muslim (6)	6.06%	22
Sikh (7)	1.38%	5
Prefer not to say (8)	4.41%	16
Any other religion please specify here (9)	1.65%	6
TOTAL		363



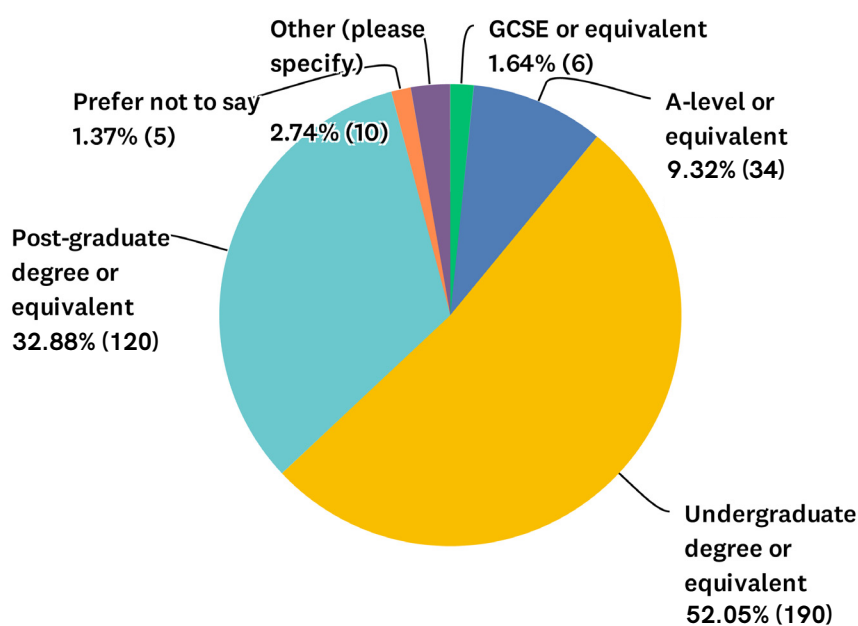
**Q13 Disability. Do you consider yourself to be disabled under the Equality Act 2010? The Equality Act 2010 defines a person as disabled if: they have a physical or mental impairment; the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to perform normal day-to-day activities.**



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes (1)	5.51%	20
No (2)	92.01%	334
Prefer not to say (3)	2.48%	9
TOTAL		363



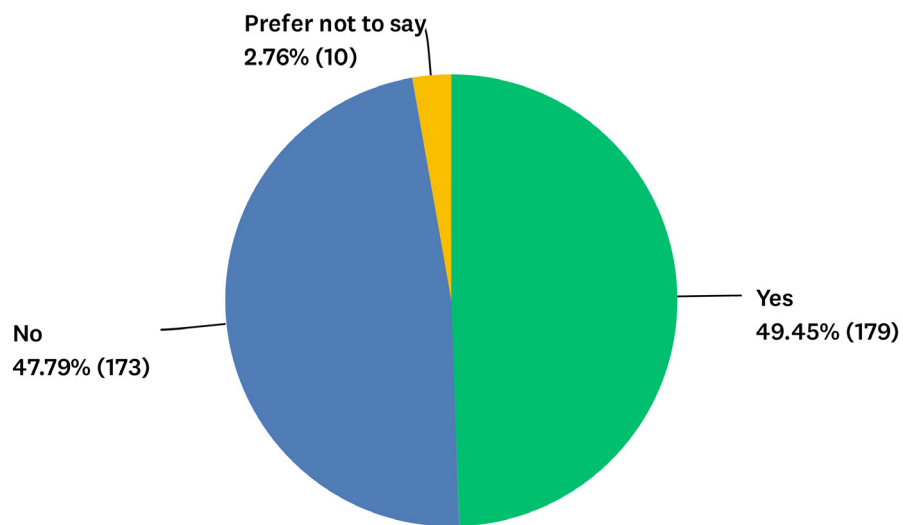
## Q14 Education. I would describe my highest level of academic educational attainment as:



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
GCSE or equivalent (1)	1.64%	6
A-level or equivalent (2)	9.32%	134
Undergraduate degree or equivalent (3)	52.05%	190
Post-graduate degree or equivalent (4)	32.88%	120
Prefer not to say (5)	1.37%	5
Other (please specify) (6)	2.74%	10
TOTAL		365



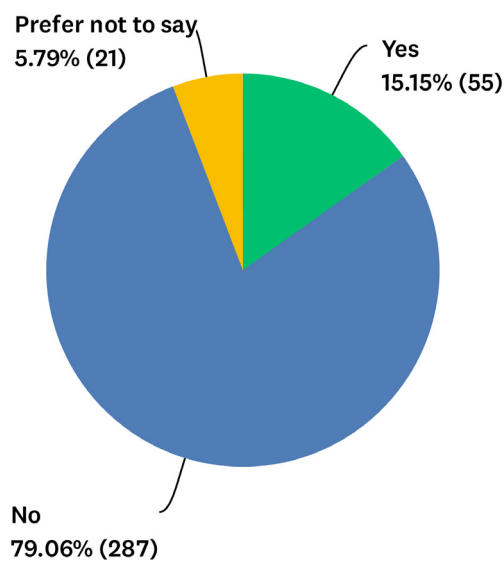
## Q15 Social Mobility. Do one or both of your parents have an undergraduate or post-graduate degree?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes (1)	49.45%	179
No (2)	47.79%	173
Prefer not to say (3)	2.76%	10
TOTAL		362



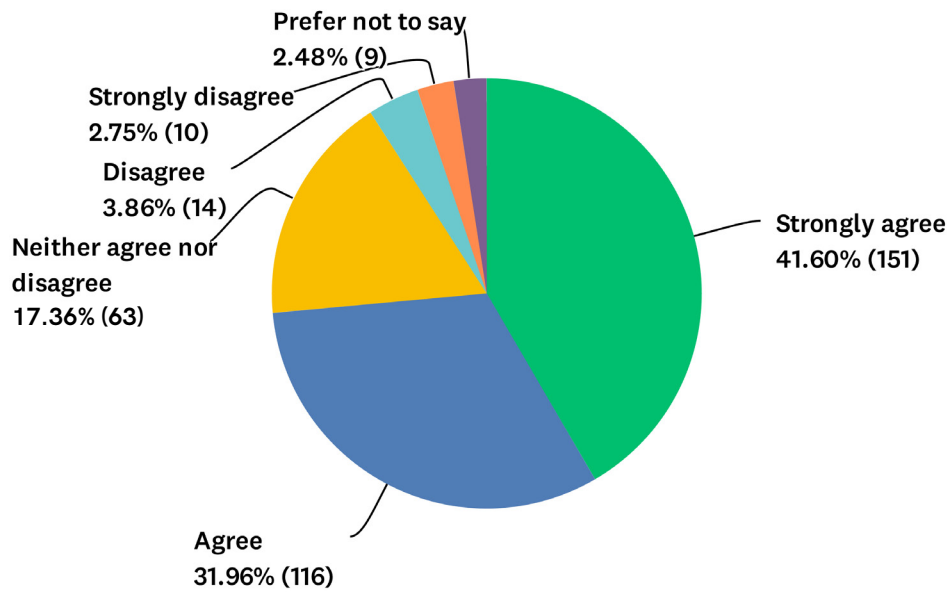
## Q16 Socio-economic background. Do you consider yourself to be from a disadvantaged socio-economic background?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes (1)	15.15%	55
No (2)	79.06%	287
Prefer not to say (3)	5.79%	21
TOTAL		363



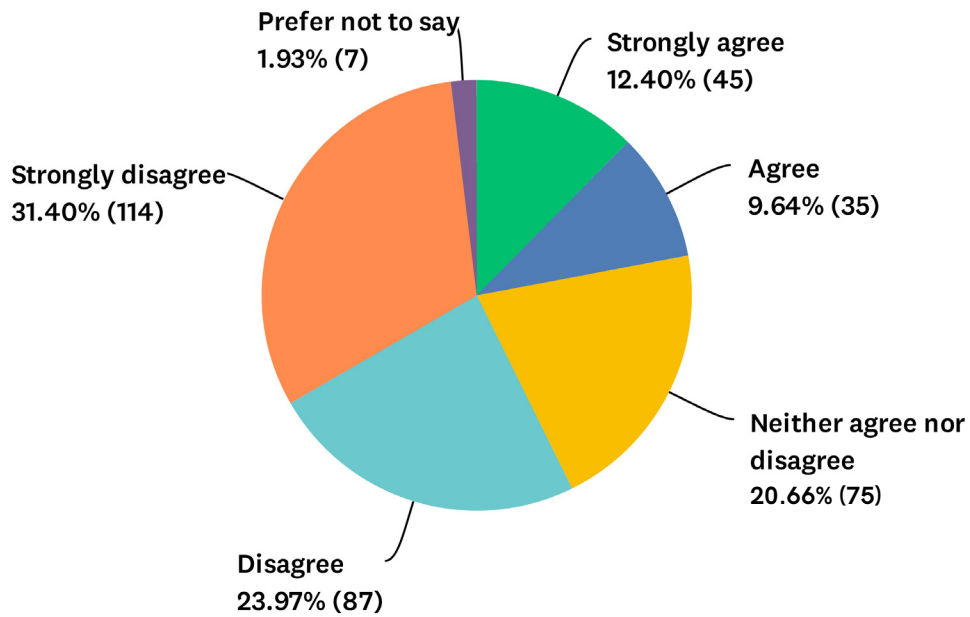
## Q17 I feel comfortable in my current work environment.



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree (1)	41.60%	151
Agree (2)	31.96%	116
Neither agree nor disagree (3)	17.36%	63
Disagree (4)	3.86%	14
Strongly disagree (5)	2.75%	10
Prefer not to say (6)	2.48%	9
TOTAL		363



## Q18 I feel my race/ethnicity has created barriers to progression in interior design.

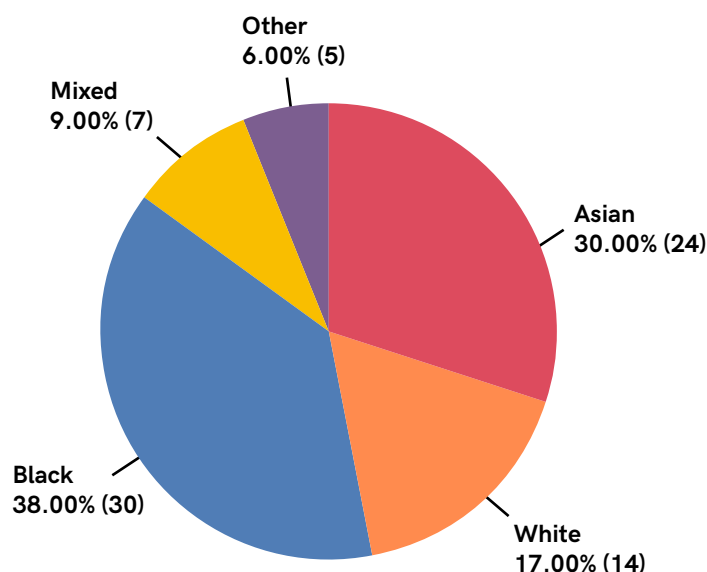


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree (1)	12.40%	45
Agree (2)	9.64%	35
Neither agree nor disagree (3)	20.66%	75
Disagree (4)	23.97%	87
Strongly disagree (5)	31.40%	114
Prefer not to say (6)	1.93%	7
TOTAL		363





## Of those saying they Agree/Strongly Agree that race has created barriers to their career progression the ethnic breakdown was as follows:



ETHNICITY/RACE	RESPONSES	
Asian	30.00%	24
White	17.00%	14
Black	38.00%	30
Mixed	9.00%	7
Other	6.00%	5
TOTAL		80

When breaking questions down to examine diversity in further depth, the numbers were significantly lower than the overall survey. Due to this we have grouped ethnicity in umbrella terms in order to make it easier to identify trends.

The groups are made up as follows:

**Asian includes:** Asian (Asian/Asian British, Asian (English, Asian (Bangladeshi, Asian (Indian, Asian (Pakistani) & Asian (Other Asian Background)

**White includes:** White (British), White (English) , White (Gypsy or Irish Traveller), White (Irish), White (Scottish) White (Welsh) & White (Other)

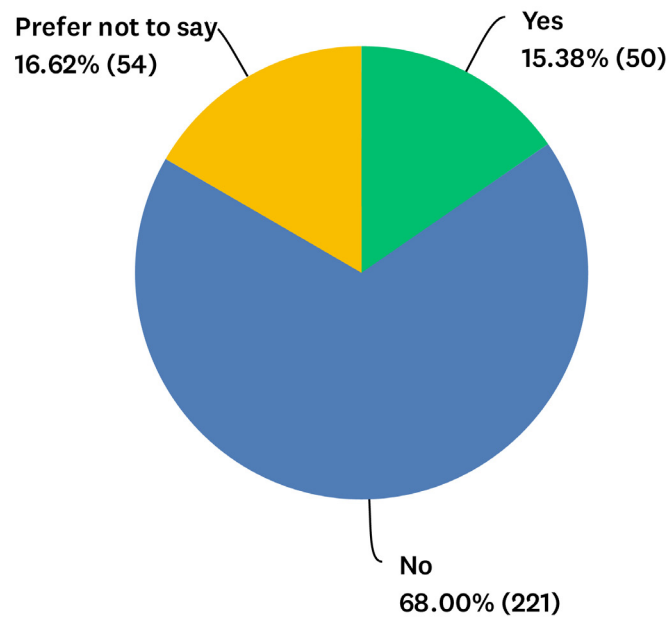
**Black includes:** Black (African), Black (Caribbean) & Black (Other black background)

**Mixed includes:** Mixed (White and Asian), Mixed (White and Black African), (White and Black Caribbean) & Mixed (Other mixed background)

**Other includes:** Other (Arab) & Other (Other ethnic group)



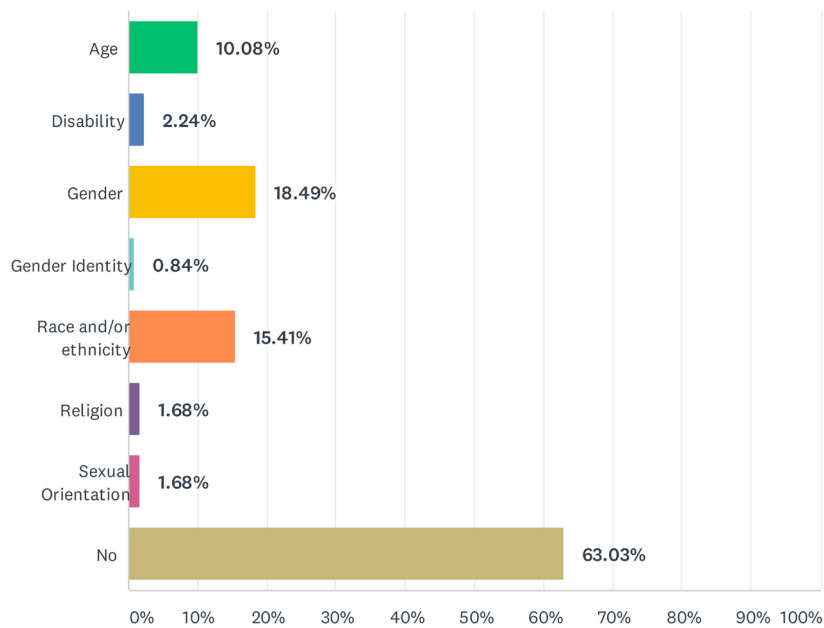
## Q19 I think I am the only Black, Asian and/ or Minority Ethnic employee in my organisation.



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes (1)	15.38%	50
No (2)	68.00%	221
Prefer not to say (3)	16.62%	54
TOTAL		325



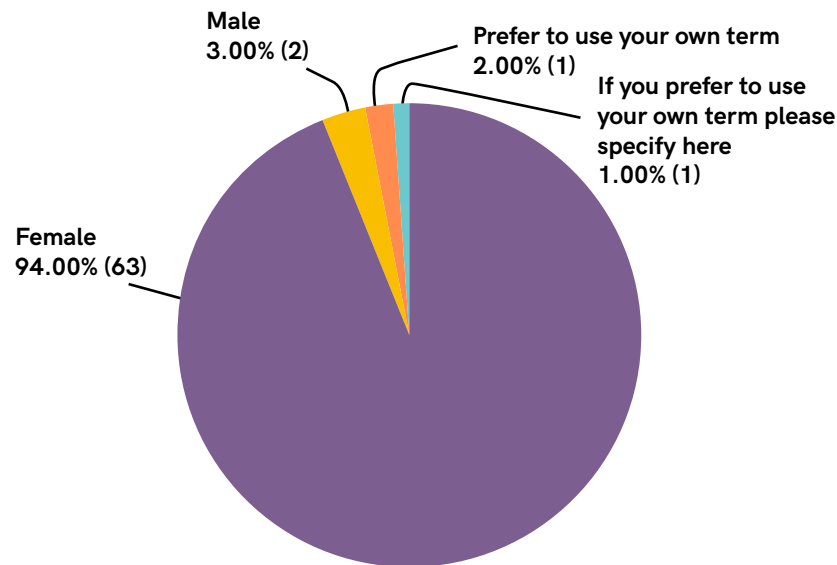
## Q20 I have been the victim of discrimination in my profession and/or place of work. If 'yes' please tick the type of discrimination. If 'no' please tick 'No'.



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Age (1)	10.08%	36
Disability (2)	2.24%	8
Gender (3)	18.49%	66
Gender Identity (4)	0.84%	3
Race and/or ethnicity (5)	15.41%	55
Religion (6)	1.68%	6
Sexual Orientation (7)	1.68%	6
No (8)	63.03%	225
TOTAL		357



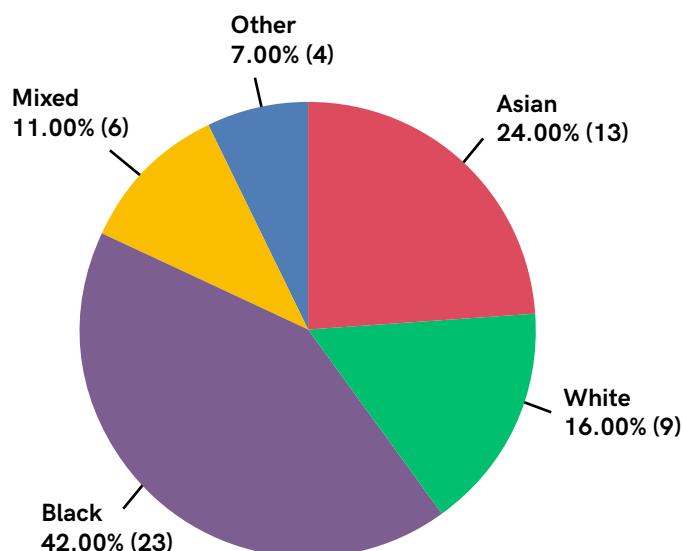
**For those who state they have been discriminated in their profession of place of work because of gender, the breakdown of their gender is as follows:**



GENDER	RESPONSES	
Female	94.00%	63
Male	3.00%	2
Non-binary	0.00%	0
Prefer not to say	0.00%	0
Prefer to use your own term	2.00%	1
If you prefer to use your own term please specify here	1.00%	1
TOTAL		66



**For those who state they have been discriminated in their profession of place of work because of race/ethnicity, the breakdown of their race/ethnicity is as follows:**



ETHNICITY	RESPONSES	
Asian	24.00%	13
White	16.00%	9
Black	42.00%	23
Mixed	11.00%	6
Other	7.00%	4
TOTAL		55

When breaking questions down to examine diversity in further depth, the numbers were significantly lower than the overall survey. Due to this we have grouped ethnicity in umbrella terms in order to make it easier to identify trends.

The groups are made up as follows:

**Asian includes:** Asian (Asian/Asian British, Asian (English, Asian (Bangladeshi, Asian (Indian, Asian (Pakistani) & Asian (Other Asian Background)

**White includes:** White (British), White (English) , White (Gypsy or Irish Traveller), White (Irish), White (Scottish) White (Welsh) & White (Other)

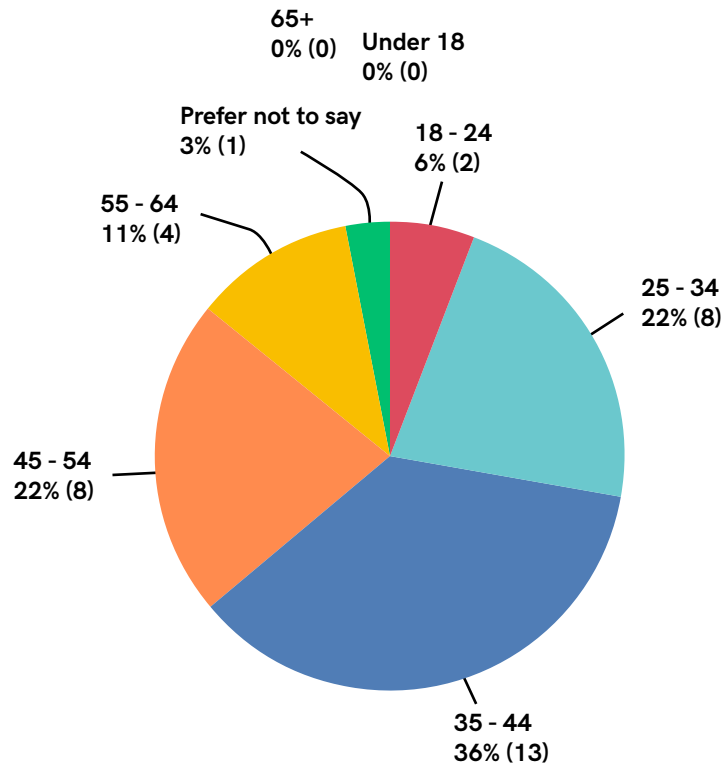
**Black includes:** Black (African), Black (Caribbean) & Black (Other black background)

**Mixed includes:** Mixed (White and Asian), Mixed (White and Black African), (White and Black Caribbean) & Mixed (Other mixed background)

**Other includes:** Other (Arab) & Other (Other ethnic group)



**For those who state they have been discriminated in their profession of place of work because of age, the breakdown of their age is as follows:**



AGE	RESPONSES	
Under 18	0.00%	0
18-24	6.00%	2
25-34	22.00%	8
35-44	36.00%	13
45-54	22.00%	8
55-64	11.00%	4
65+	0.00%	0
Prefer not to say	3.00%	1
TOTAL		36



## Q21 Please tell us about any incidents of discrimination you have been involved with or witnessed, or to express your views on issues of discrimination in the workplace.

“

At interior design trade shows walking with my 'white' designer friend, traders always handed their cards to him or engaged with him in conversation not realising that I too have an interior design practice. My clients I have had to date are all non white clients. Perhaps there is a perception that only white designers can design as there are no non-white designers featured in magazines, on public platforms, panels, judges etc. Creating this perception with the general public.

“

I have been discriminated against by a housing company I used to work for because of my educational background and financial family environment. It has decreased since becoming independent. I dare not talk about my educational background.

“

Examples of discrimination:  
Assumptions from co-workers that I must know drug dealers because I am black. Assumptions that I must be poor. Assumptions that I must live in deprived areas of the city.

“

I was getting 3 times more work than my colleagues and I wasn't complaining because I know being black, you have to do way more work than someone who is white to get any recognition and even when I have done all that work it would be my friends given the credit for it.

“

I am an interior design student so have yet to work in the industry. I do however work in the construction industry as a Senior Building Surveyor I have experienced sexism among white men in the work place asking questions like what its like to be a black woman to which I replied Human! Another question was how do you do that whilst pointing to the braids on my hair to which I replied Google it!

“

I was at a design event in 2019 and most of the suppliers were not taking me seriously because I'm the only brown person at the event. I also experienced discrimination during the job interview as a designer, and even though I'm fluent in English they told me I am still Asian.



““

Builders being rude and dismissive of a pregnant woman on a building site.  
Sexual comments on building sites.

““

Comments guessing that my partners name is 'Ali' or 'Mohammed' which are popular Muslim names and does not apply to me as I'm not Muslim and my partner is black.

““

I am mixed raced and have a crown of curls. Everyone is always intrigued by my hair, which I appreciate. There was an incident that happened & I was referred to as having dreadlocks to some guests as I wasn't in the office to do a presentation in the design studio that I usually do . There was no harm meant by this comment, but when I was told by a colleague it made me feel upset because it highlighted the divide between cultures in the workplace. I was also asked to tone down my accent as I have a Yorkshire accent. I work for a Yorkshire based company who pride themselves on being a Yorkshire company however the owners are affluent and don't speak with a Yorkshire accent. This was the first time in my life at the age of 31 that I ever was discriminated against because of my class. As a mixed race woman I always feel that I have to stand tall in my skin, but my accent was never a question until this point.

““

In my previous role received inappropriate texts from senior management.

““

I am freelancer with a disability, I specialize in 3D visualising consultancy across interior design and architecture...I get approached by clients after they have looked at my 3D work portfolio impressive and eager to get in touch with me for 'upcoming' projects to be involved in on a freelance basis, ..... But, suddenly they realise that I have a disability and decide not to hire me just because of their assumption that it is difficult to work me....and saying "Oh, I didn't realise you have a disability.... I will contact you again if there is any work coming up in the near future".

““

Work colleagues using derogatory descriptions of people, or laughing at clients behind their backs due to their race.

““

I have been an interior designer for over 20 years and have had hundreds of sexist remarks made to me over the years.

““

Whilst I worked for other designers and architects: Racist jokes in offices that I have worked in ; Less qualified colleagues being promoted above me ; Less pay compared to colleagues who do same work ; Better projects being given to other colleagues ; Shouted at on site for no obvious reason ; Being overly qualified but still in more junior roles so I have had to start my own business.





## Q22 Please share any additional thoughts you have on diversity, inclusion and discrimination in interior design.

“

Diversity and inclusion is extremely poor within the industry. You will find that brown people with degrees are more like to be working in a showroom position as opposed to a design studio. This is not because they are not applying. The design studios hire staff that look like them. Had I have known of the terrible barriers that exist I may have chosen a different industry when choosing my degree. I was fortunate to get a job with a Chelsea design studio but was the only black person for the entire 5 years.

“

In London the interior design practices I experienced and worked for were very diverse, it didn't even feel like they were employing actively to fill these roles in positive discrimination, they were truly bringing in the best and it was simply a diverse crowd. When I moved to Bristol however (same company) it was a different story, I was considered different because I didn't have a Bristolian accent. Bear in mind I'm from Somerset originally so I'm hardly far from Bristol! I think I can recall one black guy who was an electrical engineer, a Greek descended architect and I think that was it. The rest were all white British, far more men. I left because they weren't accepting of interior design, felt that I was there to pick colours, there was zero respect.

“

Not all disabilities are visible and people can be quick to judge. People should be put into roles they are good at rather than be expected to be an all rounder.

“

We need to see more designers from ethnic backgrounds in Interior design magazines. We need to see more interior designers AS JUDGES from ethnic backgrounds on TV shows such as 'The Great Interior Design Challenge', 'DIY SOS', Interior Design Masters etc . Not only as participants but as judges, guests etc.

“

I believe the design industry as a whole to be extremely diverse. I have studied and have worked with all cultures and genders, in many different countries but whether it is viewed as such is debatable. Certainly the interior design industry could go further as I think the perception is (wrongly) of a white, predominately female work culture.

“

Much more needs to be DONE in terms of race. Saying it is not the same as doing it and we have much further to go. It is a very female-dominated industry but still very male dominated on site, I wish to see a future where there are more women on building sites and to normalise this.



“

Starting from BILD and all other companies, magazines, trade shows, organizers and everybody involved in interior design has to take part and make the interior design industry more inclusive, so people, whatever their background, can feel welcome, that they belong and that interior design is for everyone, no matter what ethnicity or social-economic background they are.

“

Working as a self employed designer, the industry is difficult to penetrate for minority groups. An antiquated idea of a successful interior designer pervades and is based on class, culture and colour of skin. Snobbery is rife.

“

We have to look at educational and socio-economic factors... interior design is a luxury. Taking the risk of training to become an interior designer is both costly and high-risk, with no instant financial reward. The perception is that interior designers at the higher end of the industry have had some sort of 'lucky break' based on connections, which then sets them up in terms of more connections and a portfolio to build on.

“

Birmingham is rich in culture and diversity my company has employed people from the Irish, polish, black Asian Sikh and Asian Muslim background who collectively worked brilliantly together. A blend of male and female.



[biid.org.uk](http://biid.org.uk)