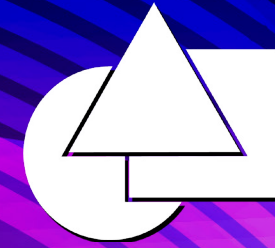


**Business  
Working  
Together  
for Inclusion**



**Elevate**  
The Inclusive  
Workplace Pledge

The Elevate Pledge 2024 Annual Report  
**Bridging The Inclusion Gap**

**BUSINESS  
IN THE  
COMMUNITY  
IRELAND**

# Contents



# Glossary of Terms

**ACCESSIBILITY** is ensuring that everyone can access places, opportunities, resources, and support no matter their physical or mental abilities. Designing for use by all ensures no one is excluded. This involves considering who may not be able to access or use something, physically, online, visually, and ensuring it is designed so everyone can benefit.

**ALLYSHIP** is about recognising personal privilege or power and using it to advocate for people in under-represented groups.

**DIVERSITY** is understanding and recognising difference. A diverse workforce is one with a range of people from different backgrounds, generations, ethnicities, races, cultures, accessibilities, sexual orientation, beliefs, ideologies and more.

**EQUALITY** means ensuring that everyone has the same opportunities and receives the same treatment, resources, and support. Inequality is used to describe a lack of equality.

However, **EQUITY** recognises that individuals have different circumstances and may require different types of treatment, resources, and support. It is about giving people what they need, to make things fair, rather than giving everyone the same. This is not the same as equality, nor is it the same as inequality. **RACE** is defined based on people's shared distinctive physical traits, such as skin, hair and eyes. Race and Ethnicity are a similar concept, however ethnicity also includes cultural characteristics such as those outlined in the definition below.

**ETHNICITY** is a broader concept than race and includes or combines nationality, citizenship, race, colour, language, ancestry, religion, and customs of dress or eating.

**ETHNIC MINORITY** refers to racial and ethnic groups that make up a smaller proportion of the population of a particular country or group. Minority ethnic groups vary in each country.

**GENDER IDENTITY** refers to an individual's personal sense of their own gender. It encompasses how a person perceives themselves in terms of being male, female, a combination of both, or neither male nor female.

**GENDER PAY GAP** primarily refers to differences in earnings based on biological gender (i.e., male or female). It reflects the average wage disparity between men and women in the workforce. However, it's important to recognise that the concept of gender is multifaceted, and discussions around the pay gap often intersect with gender identity. The gender pay gap is different to equal pay which ensures equal pay for equal work regardless of gender.

**INCLUSION** An inclusive working environment is one in which everyone feels that they belong, that their contribution matters, and they are able to perform to their full potential, no matter their background, identity, or circumstances. It is about ensuring that everyone in society is represented, and that people's differences are valued, ensuring there are equal opportunities for everyone to thrive in the workplace.

**INTERSECTIONALITY** refers to a way of seeing people's experiences as shaped by (but not limited to) their generation, race, socio-economic background, sex, gender, and sexuality all at the same time. This overlap or combination of differences makes up a person's unique identity.

**LGBTQIA+** stands for: lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and asexual with the + encompassing any sexual orientations or gender identities that do not correspond to heterosexuality.

**UNDERREPRESENTED GROUP** refers to a population of people who are insufficiently or inadequately represented compared to their actual proportion of the general population. Terms such as underrepresented ethnic groups, underrepresented communities, and underrepresented cultures are also used to describe these groups.

**SOCIAL COHESION** can be defined as the glue that holds communities together. It encompasses various elements such as trust, shared values, and social interactions, which contribute to a sense of belonging and solidarity among community members. The importance of social cohesion cannot be overstated, as it fosters cooperation, empathy, and resilience in the face of adversities.

With thanks to Signatory Company SSE Airtricity for the use of glossary – adapted from Driving Inclusion Powering Change Report.



# Context

Business in the Community Ireland (BITCI) is a movement for economic, environmental and social good. Every day we deliver programmes to tackle inequality and disadvantage in communities right across Ireland. We continuously strive for inclusion, active participation and positive social impact all of which contribute to stronger, fairer, more inclusive society.

Ireland in 2024 is experiencing a multitude of complex social issues. From rising health inequalities to housing shortages, a cost-of-living crisis and increasing demands of immigration – the fabric of our society is being put under huge pressure and divisions are growing. Communities are being pitted against each other in a bid for scarce resources. We're seeing hate speech on the rise and genuine social issues being used to stoke anger and cultivate resentment.

Large employers are effectively microcosms of wider society. Bridging inclusion gaps within the workforce not only benefits the business but has a ripple effect out into the community leading to greater social cohesion.

It is within this context that we present the third annual Elevate Report. Elevate, The Inclusive Workplace Pledge is a public commitment from employers to actively strive towards building a workforce that reflects the diversity within society. This report presents a diversity profile of the collective Elevate workforce based on 60 Signatory companies representing over 150,000 employees. The report also explores inequality in Irish society and presents key data points describing the scale of these inequalities.



# Foreword

Our third annual Elevate Report shows that we have achieved a lot but there is plenty more to do in the years ahead.

In 2018, BITCI first convened the Leaders' Sub-Group on Social Inclusion to examine the role of business in tackling inequality and building fairer, more inclusive societies. The immediate challenge was making the area of diversity and inclusion tangible for businesses. What did it mean? Why was it important? What should businesses do?

In February 2019, we launched the [Inclusive Employer Blueprint](#), a practical guide to creating inclusive workplaces and reducing social inequality in Ireland. It was designed to be a starting point for any employer interested in building an inclusive society starting with their own company. It helped businesses to understand what it means to be truly diverse.

In 2021, three years after the establishment of the Social Inclusion Sub-Group, [Elevate: The Inclusive Workplace Pledge](#) was formally launched. Elevate is a natural successor to the Inclusive Employer Blueprint in that it is based on gathering concrete data to track progress. Having data allows us to celebrate success but also, importantly, to highlight gaps.

We have 60 companies signed up to the pledge, representing over 150,000 employees across sectors such as financial services, professional services, pharmaceuticals, food and beverage, retail, transportation and construction – a real cross section of the Irish economy. Almost 60% of Signatory companies have an existing voluntary disclosure campaign or plan to have one in 2024. 33 companies are partnering with employment support organisations to increase their talent pool. Disclosure rates in indicators such as ethnicity, disability and sexual orientation are steadily increasing.

Of course we must do more. The challenge we all face is moving from one of improving social inclusion to improving social cohesion. At times it can feel like we live in a more divided society. Business has an important role to play in meeting this challenge. Employment is a key mechanism to tackle inequality. Having a workforce that reflects our whole society helps create better, more inclusive, cohesive communities.

The success we have had since the launch of Elevate is down to the Signatory companies seeing the importance of having a more inclusive workforce, carrying out actions to increase diversity and reporting on their progress annually. As the old adage goes, 'measure what matters', and the role played by each business in enabling social cohesion matters. Our annual report will, we hope, inspire all 60 Signatories to keep doing what they are doing and will inspire other companies to join us and pledge to increase diversity and inclusion in their organisations.

Our main ask of any company reading this report, that hasn't signed our pledge, is please do so. We need more Signatories, we need more data and more importantly we need more companies working together towards a more inclusive Ireland.



**Tomás Sercovich**

CEO, Business in the  
Community Ireland



**Sinéad Patton**

Chief Finance and Commercial  
Officer – Ireland and Nordics,  
Finance Director – Industrial,  
Water & Energy UK  
Veolia



**Harry Goddard**

CEO, Deloitte Ireland LLP





**VISION:** To build an **inclusive workforce** that reflects all of our society, starting now.

Workplace inclusion is about valuing people from different backgrounds, creating a strong sense of connectedness and belonging. It is the recognition that diversity of experience and thought can benefit business productivity and the ability to connect with customers. It is about doing business better. It is about creating equity of opportunity regardless of background or personal circumstances.

Business in the Community Ireland has been working in the sustainability space for 25 years and our purpose is to “Inspire and enable businesses to bring about a sustainable, low carbon economy and a more inclusive society where everyone thrives.”

Simply embracing the diversity in society is not enough for businesses anymore. Now is the time to innovate and create a culture of equity and inclusion. It is not good enough to take a passive approach to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DE&I); active participation and genuine actions are not only a demand from investors and peers but also from the workforce. The constant fight for talent is not a new phenomenon, and attraction strategies have to go beyond career growth opportunities and lucrative financial packages. The worker of today challenges the employer to have an organisational culture where they can bring their whole selves to work every day. No one likes to be burdened with the baggage of hiding their identities or compromising their value system because they are different to their colleagues.

**Elevate** is Business in the Community Ireland’s Pledge to support businesses to **build more inclusive workplaces**. The ultimate ambition of this initiative is for a workforce that is representative of all members of Irish society. Over the last 3 years, the pledge has signed up 60 employers representing a workforce of over 150,000 employees across 18 different industry sectors. Our Signatory companies are at different stages in their journey of making their workplaces more diverse, equitable and inclusive – some are starting out and others are showcasing what success looks like. Regardless of their maturity on DE&I, the pledge supports Signatories in translating their ambition into accountability, which will actively contribute towards building a more cohesive society.



# The Business Case for Inclusion

Making a commitment to inclusion, promoting equal access to opportunity for all, regardless of background or personal characteristics is the right thing to do. However, it has also been widely recognised as being a key factor in stronger business performance. The benefits have been well documented and they extend from individuals to their employers and into wider society.

## Return on Investment

In a climate of competing resources it is useful to understand the return on investment in DE&I activities. In the 2023 report we highlighted the idea that organisations need to shift their focus away from inputs and towards outcomes.

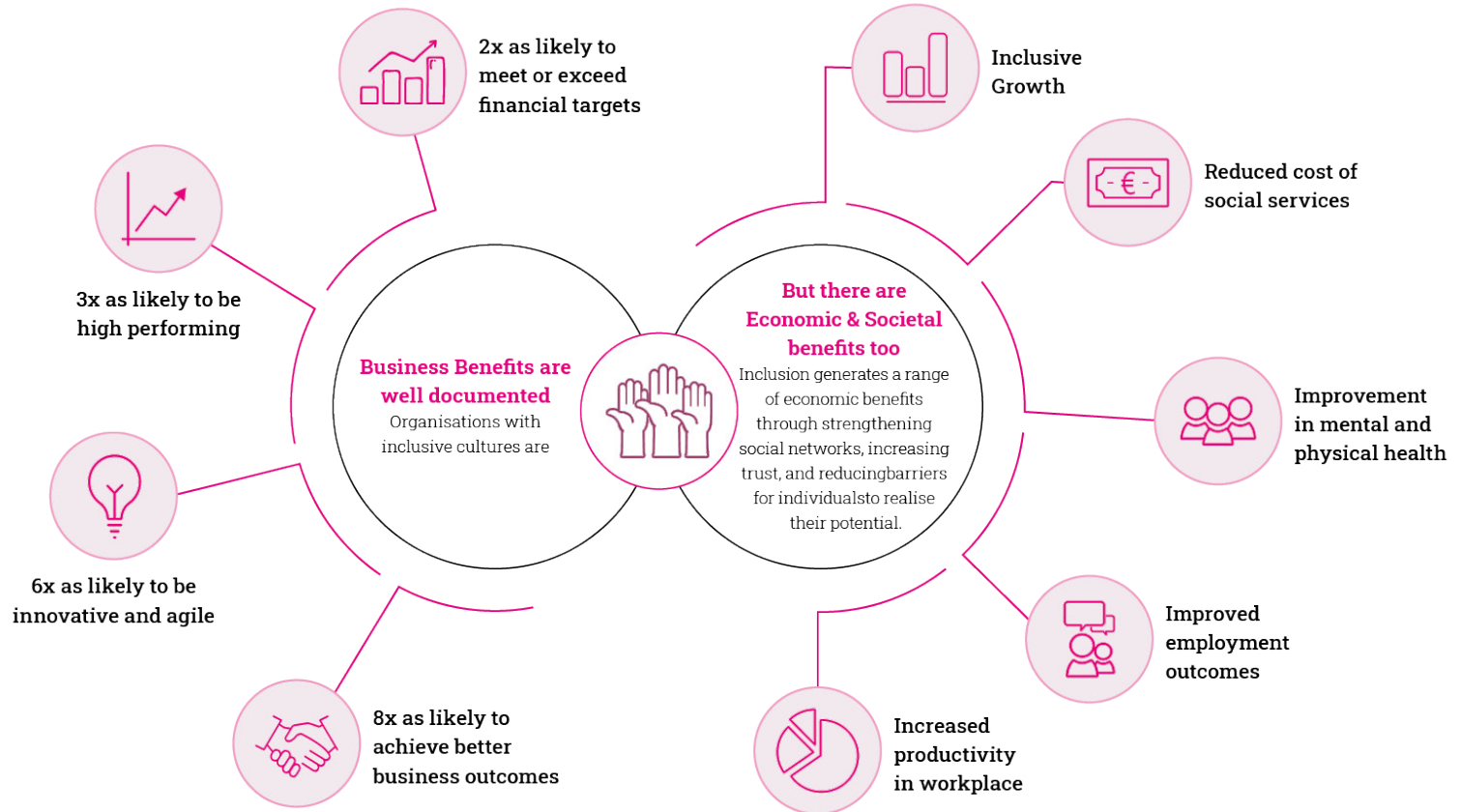
Adopting an outcomes approach, examines what is actually changing as a result of your DE&I activities. This approach, underpinned by data, allows organisations to see if they are making progress on their DE&I ambitions and to identify the activities achieving the desired results and having the greatest impact. Equally it will facilitate identifying those activities that are not contributing adequate outcomes.

Building an evidence bank of what works and what doesn't will enable strategic decision-making, advancing the business strategy which in turn delivers value. Clearly rating inputs against resulting outcomes helps build out a true picture of the investment made and the return observed. This is invaluable for building a business case for future DE&I activities.

## Ensure Authenticity

Organisations who make DE&I claims to win business or to attract talent run the risk of being called out as in-authentic if such claims are not backed up by robust policies, year round practices and transparent reporting. This can lead to erosion of brand trust and reputational damage if called out for social-washing.

Similarly, DE&I strategies should encompass wider social inequalities that can have a material impact on the business. Failure to address societal inequality can lead to a breakdown in social cohesion and a rise in civil unrest. Ultimately this could impact on economic competitiveness which in turn can negatively affect the bottom line.



Source: Deloitte Diversity & Inclusion Report 2020 & Deloitte Economic Benefits of Improving Social Inclusion Report



# Elevate Pledge Signatories

## A&L Goodbody

David Widger (Managing Partner)

## ABM

Ian Anderson (Managing Director – All Ireland)

## Accenture

Hilary O'Meara (Country Managing Director)

## Actavo

Brian Kelly (CEO)

## AIB Group

Colin Hunt (CEO)

## Aldi

Niall O'Connor (Group Managing Director)

## Allianz plc

Phillip Gronemeyer (CEO)

## An Post

David McRedmond (CEO)

## Aviva Life and Pensions

Dave Swanton (CEO)

## Aviva General Insurance

Declan O'Rourke (CEO)

## Bank of Ireland Group

Myles O'Grady (CEO)

## Bidvest Noonan

Cormac Sheils (COO)

## Breedon Group Ireland

Rob Wood (CEO)

## Britvic Ireland

Kevin Donnelly (Managing Director)

## BT Ireland

Shay Walsh (Managing Director)

## Bus Eireann

Stephen Kent (CEO)

## Cairn

Michael Stanley (CEO)

## Calor

Duncan Osborne (CEO)

## Central Bank of Ireland

Gabriel Makhlouf (Governor)

## Coillte

Imelda Hurley (CEO)

## Compass Group Ireland

Deirdre O'Neill (Managing Director)

## Cook Limerick

Bill Doherty (Executive Vice President)

## Cork Chamber

Conor Healy (CEO)

## Deloitte Ireland LLP

Harry Goddard (CEO)

## DHL Supply Chain

Patrick Corbett (Managing Director)

## Diageo Ireland

Barry O Sullivan (Managing Director)

## Eason

Liam Hanly (Managing Director)

## eir

Oliver Loomes (CEO)

## EirGrid plc

Mark Foley (CEO)

## Energia Group

Ian Thom (CEO)

## Enterprise Rent-a-Car

Brendan Grieve (CEO)

## ESB

Paddy Hayes (Chief Executive)

## ESW

Eric Eichmann (CEO)

## Gas Networks Ireland

Cathal Marley (CEO)

## Glennaveagh

Stephen Garvey (CEO & Co-Founder)

## Grant Thornton

Stephen Tennant (Managing Partner)

## HEINEKEN Ireland

Sharon Walsh (Managing Director)

## HSBC Ireland

Laura Trimble (CEO)

## Iarnród Éireann

Jim Meade (CEO)

## IBM Ireland Ltd.

Deborah Threadgold (Country General Manager)

## Janssen Sciences Ireland

Dana Daneshvari (General Manager)

## Janssen Pharmaceutical Sciences

Andrew Flynn (General Manager)

## KPMG Ireland

Seamus Hand (Managing Partner)

## KSG

Michael Gleeson (Managing Director)

## Lidl Ireland

John Paul Scally (CEO)

## Marks & Spencer (Ireland) Ltd

Eddie Murphy (Country Director – Ireland and Northern Ireland)

## Musgrave

Noel Keeley (CEO)

## Ornua

Donal Buggy (Interim CEO)

## PTSB

Eamonn Crowley (CEO)

## PwC

Enda McDonagh (Managing Partner)

## Roadstone

Donal Rigney (Managing Director)

## RSA Insurance Ireland and 123.ie

Kevin Thompson (CEO)

## Servier (Ireland) Industries Ltd.

Pascal Baraffe (General Manager)

## Sky Ireland

JD Buckley (CEO)

## Sodexo Ireland

David Fox (Managing Director)

## SSE

Klair Neenan (Managing Director, SSE Airtricity)

## Sumitomo Mitsui Trust (Ireland) Limited

Keji Nakamura (Chief Executive Officer)

## Sysco Ireland

Mark Lee (CEO)

## Tesco Ireland

Natasha Adams (CEO)

## Uisce Éireann

Niall Gleeson (CEO)

## Veolia

Sinéad Patton (Chief Financial and Commercial Officer – Ireland and Nordics, Finance Director – Industrial, Water & Energy UK)

## William Fry

Owen O'Sullivan (Managing Partner)





# Insights from Deloitte Human Capital

Deloitte has proudly been a long-time member of BITC and holds the Business Working Responsibly Mark. Through the work of the Social Inclusion Sub-Group, co-chaired by our CEO, Harry Goddard, the BITC Leaders Group has targeted innovative responses to build a more inclusive society such as the Elevate Pledge. Deloitte has also been a Knowledge Partner within the Elevate Pledge report and has been providing insights on the emerging DE&I trends since the inaugural report in 2022.

Historically, organisations have sought to unlock the value in and power of their workforce by implementing structures, processes, technologies, and systems meant to make humans better at work. In more recent years, those efforts have expanded to include attempts to make work better and add value for workers. However, achieving this goal requires more than just lip service or surface-level initiatives. It requires a fundamental shift in how organisations approach their culture, their people, and their practices.

Added to this, Businesses face heightened pressure for transparency on strategy and on risk reporting. Stakeholders demand clarity on current status and future plans, with sustainability data now held to financial standards. Irish firms, impacted by advancing EU ESG regulations like the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive, must improve reporting. Organisations will need to report on different metrics starting this year, including topics and sub-topics related to social responsibility. For instance, these metrics may gauge equal treatment and opportunities across the entire value chain, spanning both internal workforce dynamics and the broader community's economic, social, and cultural welfare. Such requirements underscore the increasing importance of robust data collection mechanisms to accurately measure and communicate a company's social impact.

In this report, we explore the key elements of inclusive workplaces and the importance of embedding DE&I across the employee lifecycle. We also provide practical guidance for organisations looking to act on their DE&I journey with regards to gender, ethnicity, disability, socio-economic status, and sexual orientation. The guidance provided in this report is underpinned by the importance of data, which is evident throughout the report in understanding indicators and driving decision making.

The data provided by Elevate Pledge Signatories supported identification of areas where diversity, equity, and inclusion are lacking, and provides insights into the experiences of different groups within society. By collecting and analysing data, organisations can make informed decisions about where to focus their efforts and measure the impact of their initiatives. Ultimately, data-driven decision making is essential for creating truly inclusive workplaces that value diversity and provide equal opportunities for all employees.

Embedding an inclusive culture within organisations creates a sense of belonging for employees, and helps employees feel a sense of trust, security, and loyalty. This directly impacts how employees feel and bring themselves to work. Prioritising DE&I is essential for organisations to ensure everyone has equal opportunities to join, develop, grow, and feel valued in the organisation. This will result in creating an enhanced experience for all employees, regardless of their identity, and result in improved performance for the organisation.

The road to truly embed DE&I is a long and continuous one that will bring benefits to employees and employers alike. The key to its success is not considering it as a tick-box exercise, but consciously focusing on embedding it across the entirety of the employee lifecycle. Over 90% of CEOs have built DE&I into their strategic priorities/goals, but many have not committed to the bold actions necessary to achieve equitable outcomes. To get started on delivering equitable, diverse, and inclusive experiences for all employees, organisations should ask themselves these critical questions before taking steps to action on their continuous pathway:

- What does DE&I look like in your organisation in practice?
- What changes do you need to make? Why now?
- What are the key barriers to change?
- What is at stake if you do not act?
- What do you want the end-to-end experience to feel like for all employees, regardless of role or identity?
- Who are the key stakeholders you need to commit and drive your DE&I agenda forward?

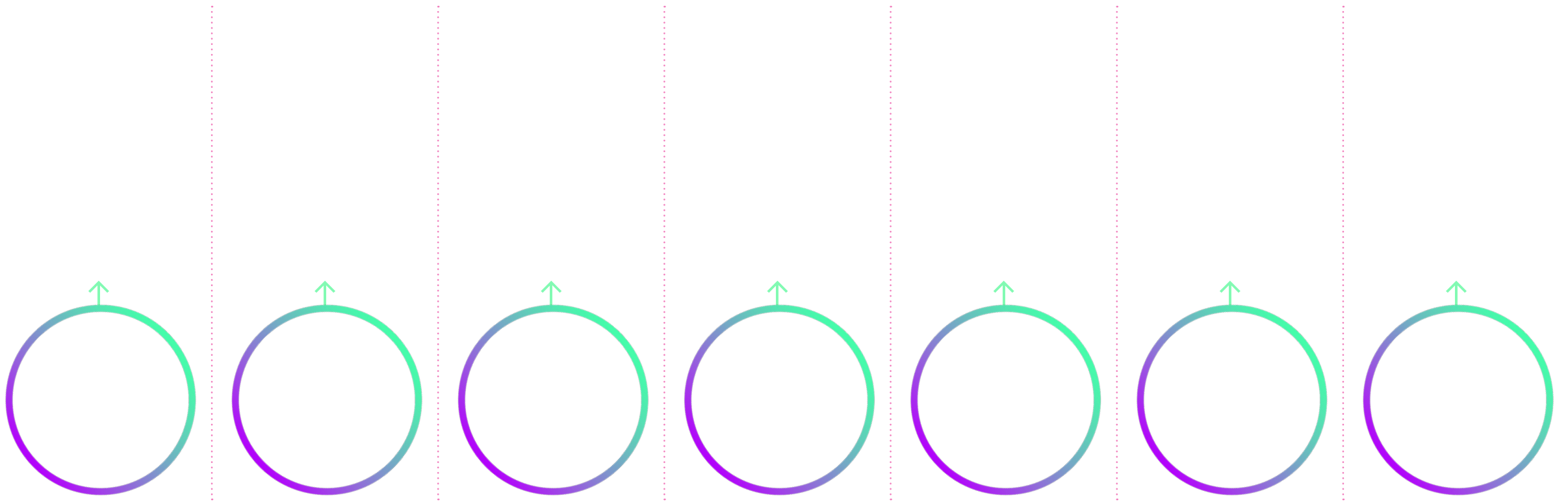


# Signatory Diversity Profile

A cornerstone of The Elevate Pledge is the presentation of a diversity profile of the collective workforce of Signatory companies. To create this diversity profile Signatories were asked to submit a dataset with their organisation's diversity profile in as much detail as they could provide. 60 companies provided anonymised data of their workforce. These datasets were aggregated to create one Elevate Workforce profile.

In addition to diversity demographic data, Signatories also completed a short survey which captured characteristics of their approach to managing Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. The summary findings of this survey are also presented in this section.

# Elevate Workforce Data Disclosure

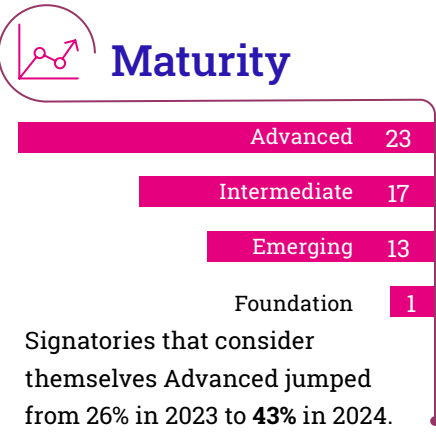


← Click on the icons to view Elevate Workforce Data Disclosure details... →

■ No. Signatories who provided information      ■ No. Employees Information Declared on      ■ % of Total Workforce



# Signatory Approach to DE&I at a Glance



## Female Representation

Women represent **40%** of the Elevate workforce at Executive levels. More than 60% Signatories have Gender representation targets at Senior Level and many of them are developing tailored Leadership Programmes for Women to provide them with opportunities for career growth. Almost all Signatories are implementing family friendly policies with 1 in 3 having at least 1 such formal policy at workplace.

## Partnerships

EMPLOYMENT	EDUCATION
Programmes – 75%	85% – DEIS schools

**75%** of Signatories who focus their actions on recruitment have engaged in specific partnerships to address diversity.

**85%** of Signatories have partnered with a local DEIS School, which include BITCI's school programmes for DEIS Schools.

## Training

Signatories are conducting tailored and generic Inclusive Leadership trainings for their people managers. We are also witnessing a shift from mandatory DE&I trainings towards a culture of awareness building and allyship.

## Inclusive Hiring Practices

**50%** of Signatories have DE&I targets around Recruitment. Two third of those with targets have reviewed the job descriptions for use of neutral language and are listing only the necessary skills and requirements. Signatories are recording an increase in the application numbers when they focus only on essential skills or experience required.

## Employee Resource Groups

Setting up Employee Resource Groups (ERG) continues to be a key DE&I action amongst the Signatories. **74%** of the companies confirmed at least one ERG in place. The role of ERGs is getting more strategic with defined structures, ways of working charters and formal governance procedures in place.

## Socio Economic Status

10 out of 60 Signatories collect information on Socio Economic Status. Overall 8% workforce has declared Socio Economic Status, with **less than 1% coming from a disadvantaged background.**

## Diversity Demographics

This year almost **60%** Signatories are currently gathering or plan to gather diversity profile data through Voluntary Disclosure campaigns. Gender and Age continue to be the highest measured demographics although the maturity in this space is increasing with many Signatories moving towards Gender Identity instead of Biological Gender.



## Culture of Zero Tolerance

More than **50%** of Signatories have a specific campaign showcasing zero tolerance to exclusion. Many Signatories are developing novel programmes to create a culture of allyship and ambassadorship, supporting anyone who finds it difficult to raise a concern or becomes a victim of casual discrimination at work.




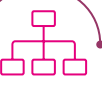







# Exploring Key Indicators

In this section of the report we take six indicators of diversity that featured in the overall Elevate Diversity Profile and examine each of them in greater detail. For each of the indicators featured we present topline data insights. We then look at the current situation in Ireland for people matching the profile and where possible we compare experiences within the Elevate workforce. We also identify various actions that can make a difference in enhancing employment representation. Data presented in this section is drawn from the CSO census 2022 as well as other reports and publications and of course the Elevate workforce data. The six indicators we focus on in this year's report are: Gender, Disability, Ethnicity, Traveller Community, Socio Economic Status and Sexual Orientation.



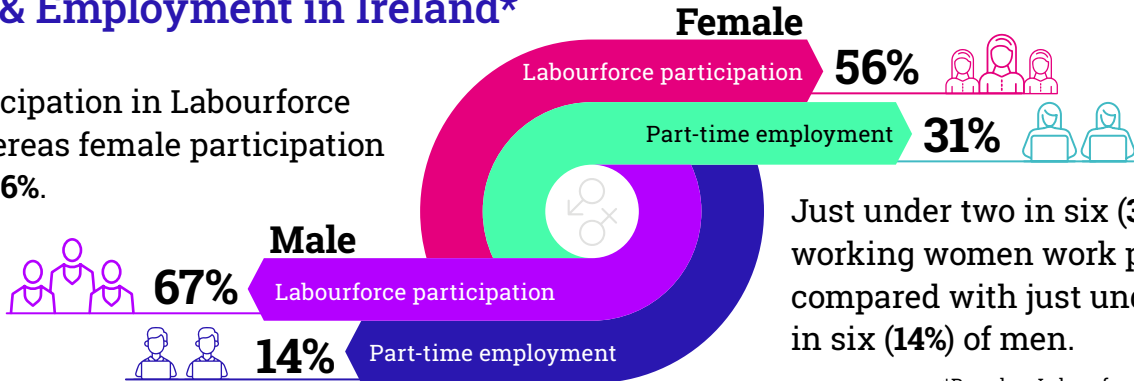
# Focus on Gender (Female Representation)

## Data Insights

-  **43%** of roles in the Elevate Workforce are held by Females
-  **4 in 10** of **Senior Executive Positions** are held by females
-  **6 in 10** Signatories set targets for **Female Representation** at Senior Level
-  **51** Signatories provided **Gender Demographics by Seniority**
-  **33** Signatories have a **Gender Related Employee Resource Group**
-  **15%** of Elevate Signatories have a **Female CEO**
-  **75%** Signatories have **formalised flexible working** practices
-  **60%** of Signatories offer **paternity leave** over and **above statutory requirements**
-  **10** Signatories offer **equivalent maternity** and **paternity** paid leave

## Gender & Employment in Ireland\*

Male participation in Labourforce is **67%** whereas female participation rates are **56%**.



Just under two in six (31%) of working women work part-time, compared with just under one in six (14%) of men.

\*Based on Labourforce and CSO data.

“Third largest category for those who are outside the workforce is people who “Looking after Home/Family”. 9 in 10 people in this category are females. “Retired” and “Student” are the top two categories but there is no difference in gender representation of either of these categories.”



# Focus on Gender (Female Representation)

## Gender And Seniority

Within the Elevate workforce females account for 43% of all roles. This is lower than the wider Irish workforce at 49% but is explained by the number of Signatories who have traditionally attracted a predominantly male workforce. 18 of the 60 companies have less than 30% female representation across all employees. These are largely drawn from Construction, Utilities and Transport sectors. Given the overall representation is lower than that of the total labour force, Elevate Signatories are performing on average better than their peers in wider industry. A **40% representation at senior management and executive levels** is impressive and indicative of the successful approaches the Elevate Signatories are taking to achieve gender parity.

Gender Balance in Business	Female Representation	Elevate Signatories
25%	Members of Boards of Directors	37%
14%	Chairpersons	33%
19%	CEOs	15%
30%	Senior Executives	40%
24.7%	Companies with at least 40% female representation on Boards of Directors	54%
40%	Companies who set targets for gender representation in Senior Executive roles	60%
9.6%	Gender Pay Gap	9.3%

## Achieving Gender Parity

In 2023 Claudia Goldin won the Nobel Prize for Economics for her study of income inequalities between men and women. Her description of societal dynamics where “in all too many households it may still happen that a husband prioritizes his career whilst a wife prioritises her family” might seem simple but is based on detailed research indicating that the bulk of the earnings difference between men and women in the same occupation arises largely when they have children.

This assertion is borne out when we consider the overrepresentation of working women in part time roles and, as mentioned above, based on CSO census 2022 data on principal economic status, the main reason females are outside of the Labour Force (other than being students or retired) relates to looking after home or family. Mapping the Elevate workforce by age category, it is clear to see a participation gap increasing with Age. The data also points to a very stark difference between genders when it comes to part time working.

Please click on the below images to enlarge

← Click on the icons to read gender inclusion in action →



# Focus on Gender (Female Representation)

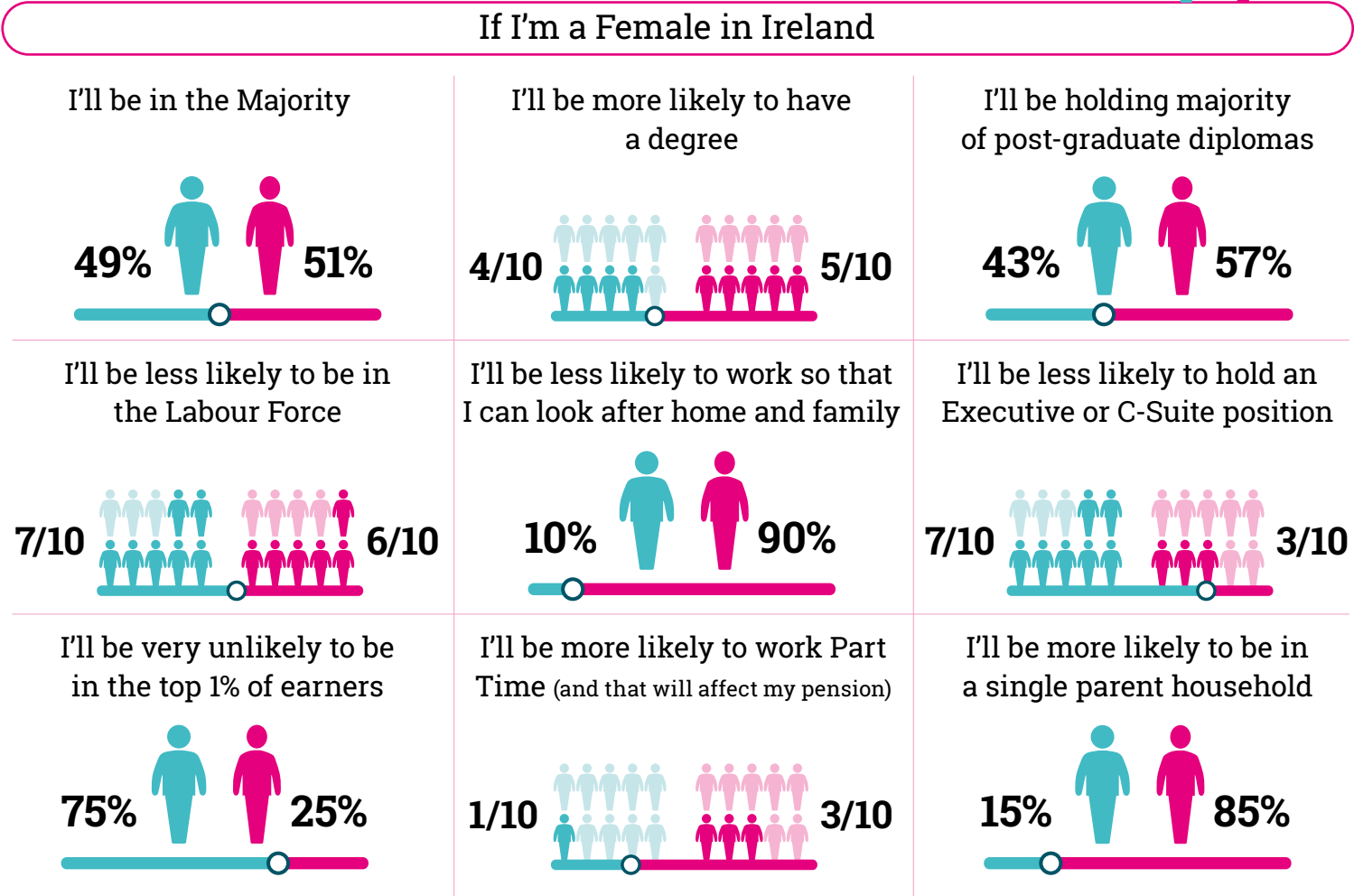


## Taking Action

Employers that are intent on addressing gender inequality need to consider a number of strategies. In the first instance employers they should set targets for female representation at all levels of seniority within the business. Secondly employers should cultivate family friendly workplace policies that encourage men to share parenting responsibilities. Family friendly policies such as flexible working hours, enhanced parental leave and childcare provisions enable parents to manage their work and family responsibilities more effectively.

Accommodating the needs of working mothers encourages greater female participation in the labour force. Equally when family friendly polices allow fathers to share parenting responsibilities they help challenge stereotypes and contribute to reducing stigma associated with men prioritising family.

**BITCI's Women@Work** programme is designed to support women to identify their career goals to achieve meaningful and sustainable employment in their lives. It uses peer support as well as business mentors to equip women with the confidence and knowledge they need to reach their potential.



I'll generally earn less over the course of my career – Average Gender pay gap in Ireland 9.6%







# Focus on Disability


## Data Insights


 Data on Disability captured for **20,703** employees. **14%** Disclosure rate


 **28** Signatories have an **Ability Related Employment Resource Group**


 **10** Signatories provide a **Sensory Room**


 **18** Signatories **provided data** on Disability

 **27** Signatories provide **Disability Confidence Training**. **4** Signatories have made Disability awareness training mandatory for **All Colleagues**

 **11** Signatories operate an **Inclusion Passport**

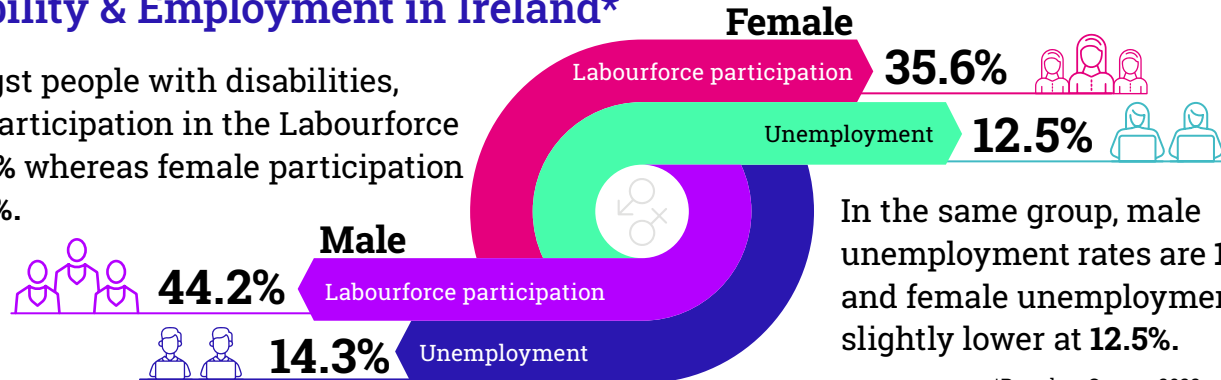
 **6% of employees** who disclosed information identified as **having a disability**

 **40** Signatories provide **Mental Health First Aid Training**

 **5** Signatories have set specific **targets to increase representation** of colleagues with a disability

## Disability & Employment in Ireland\*

Amongst people with disabilities, male participation in the Labourforce is **44.2%** whereas female participation is **35.6%**.



In the same group, male unemployment rates are **14.3%** and female unemployment is slightly lower at **12.5%**.

\*Based on Census 2022

“ To comply with the EU Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive that came into effect in January 2023, **employers will be required to disclose the percentage of their workforce that has a disability**. They will also have to provide detail on how the data was gathered and what policies and practices they have in place to promote diversity and inclusion for people with disabilities. ”



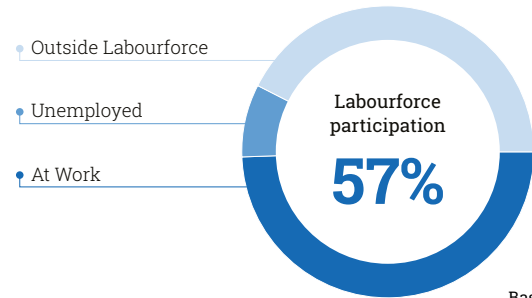
# Focus on Disability

## Disability and Employment Participation

The census labour force participation rate is calculated as the proportion of persons aged 15 and over who are economically active (i.e. working, looking for their first regular job or unemployed) among the entire population over the age of 15. The general participation rate in Census 2022 was 61%. Among the 1,010,758 people aged 15 years and over who experienced at least one long-lasting condition or difficulty to any extent, 400,639 were in the labour force, meaning a 40% participation rate.

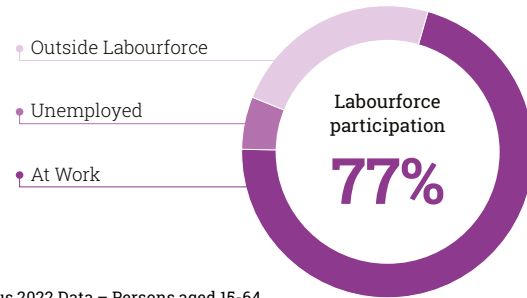
However, the proportion of the population with a disability varies significantly by age. The proportion under 65 with a disability is 22% whereas the proportion over 65 is 45%. Reviewing labour force participation rates just for the population aged between 15 and 64 shows a much more favourable participation rate of 57%. Whilst this is a big improvement on 40%, there is still a significant participation gap between people with disabilities and those without.

### People with Disabilities



Based on Census 2022 Data – Persons aged 15-64

### People without Disabilities



Please click on the below images to enlarge

Click on the icons to read disability inclusion in action

## Disability Representation in Elevate Workforce

Signatories continue to make progress on tracking whether employees have disabilities. Disclosure rates have improved. In total 20,703 employees disclosed information on disability status and of these 1,222 employees identified as having a disability. The 1,222 employees represent 6% of employees that disclosed and just under 1% of the total Elevate workforce.

Representation rates vary between 0% and just over 8% for those Signatories that provide disability data. For 7 of the Signatories who provided information the percentage representation of people with disabilities exceeds 3%.

Census 2022 indicates that 16% of the labour force identify as having a disability. So even if we are to take 6% as an indicative figure for representation within the Elevate workforce this still implies a representation gap of 10%. This gap could be down to true under-representation or it could be explained by under-reporting. Either way, the Elevate workforce has a long way to go to become representative of the wider labour force in Ireland.



# Focus on Disability

## Taking Action

### Setting Targets

The Disability Act of 2005 obliges public bodies to meet targets in relation to the employment of persons with disabilities. Initial targets were set at a minimum of 3%. Since 2011 this minimum target has been met and in 2022 for the first time the number of employees reporting a disability passed 4%. This target is set to increase to 4.5% in 2024 and 6% in 2025.

This requirement of public sector bodies to employ persons with disabilities and the mandated reporting of same, appears to have driven progress on the employment of people with disabilities in the public service. The private sector can be guided by the experience of the public service sector and begin to set clear targets for greater representation of people with disabilities at all levels of seniority.

### Capturing Data

Although the number of Signatories providing data has increased this year, there are still more than half of Signatories not tracking this data for their own workforce.

Collecting and analysing data supports identification of areas where focused interventions are required. Businesses need to build a relationship of trust with their staff and encourage them to declare the diversity data. Showcasing how that data is used to drive decisions for creating more inclusive workplaces for people with disabilities is key to building trust resulting in higher disclosure rates.

### Disability and Age

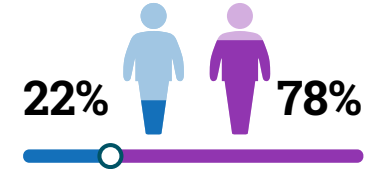
As stated above disability rates increase with age largely because the majority of disabilities are acquired. A 2021 study on Acquired Disabilities conducted by the National Disability Authority found that only a minority of respondents (37%) returned to work or started work after acquiring their disability. It is significant that of those who did not return to work, over half of them said they would have liked to. Having proactive conversations on the supports and accommodations that are required, together with clear policies and practices such as flexible working, phased return etc. will actively support colleagues who have acquired a disability to return to work.

The [BITCI EmployAbility service](#) has expanded in 2024 and will work with approximately 200 jobseekers with disabilities or health issues per annum. The EmployAbility team can support diverse hiring by providing access to a pool of genuine jobseekers. The team also provide in-work supports to benefit both the employer and the employee and support the onboarding and integration process.

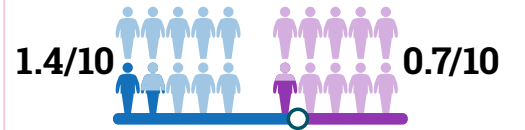


### If I have a disability or health issue in Ireland

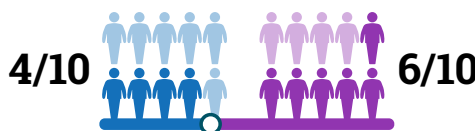
I'll belong to a minority



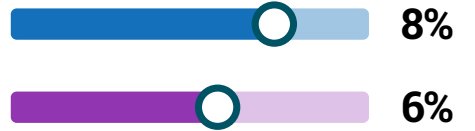
I'll be less likely to continue education beyond primary level



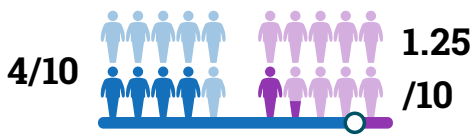
I'll be less likely to be in the labourforce



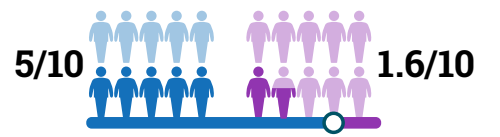
I'll be more likely to be unemployed



I'll be more at risk of poverty



I'll be more likely to struggle to buy essentials



# Focus on Ethnicity and Citizenship

## Data Insights



Data on Ethnicity captured for **30,539** employees –  
**20% Disclosure rate**



**28** Signatories have an **Ethnicity related Employment Resource Group**



Since the war in Ukraine started in February 2022, Ireland has given **temporary protection to over 104,870 Ukrainians**.  
Almost 70% of whom are 20 years of age or over



**28** Signatories **measure** ethnicity demographics while **21** Signatories **provided** data. **>20%** of the employees who **disclosed ethnicity** are non-white **making up 4.8%** of the entire Elevate Workforce

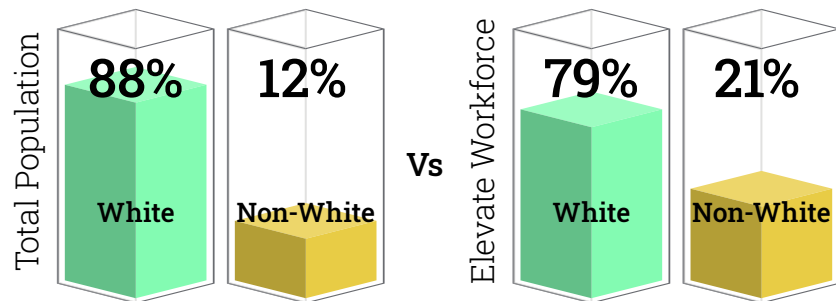


An increasing number of Signatories are introducing **flexible leave policies** allowing colleagues choose when to take public holiday



After Ukrainians, **economic migrants** account for **most of immigration** with India, Brazil and Spain being the top 3 countries of origin

## Reflecting Irish Society\*



The Elevate Workforce has higher Ethnicity representation of Non-White population at **21%**, in comparison to **12%** Non-White population in Ireland.

\*Based on Census 2022

“

Migrants contribute to economic growth by filling labour market shortages and are vital for ongoing success. Employers can play an important role in tackling dis-information and mis-information arising from anti-immigrant sentiment. In doing so they will not only foster more inclusive workplaces but will also contribute to greater social cohesion in local communities.

”



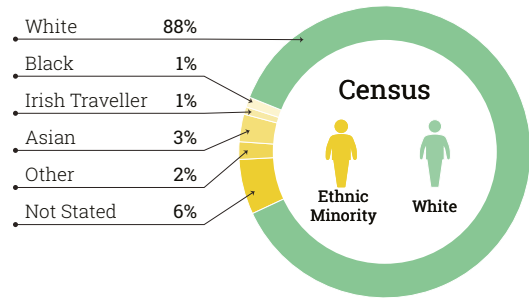
# Focus on Ethnicity and Citizenship

## Ethnicity in Irish Labour Force

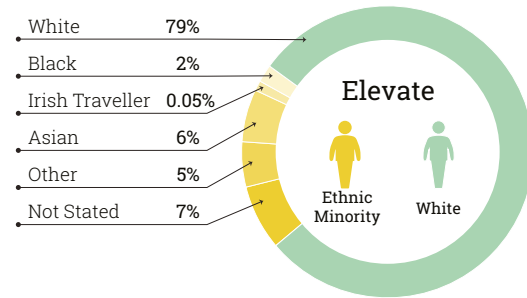
Census 2022 indicates that 12% of the population living in Ireland were non-Irish citizens. Nearly half of these were citizens of European Union countries and just over 13% of them were UK citizens. In the year prior to the 2022 census almost 90,000 people moved to Ireland. A quarter of these were Irish citizens. India, Brazil, and Spain were the top three countries of origin for non-Irish citizens.

Just under 3.9 million or 77% of people identified their ethnic group or background as White Irish. The next largest ethnic group was Any Other White background at 10%, followed by Indian/Pakistani/Bangladeshi at 2%, and Black or Black Irish at 1%.

**Ethnicity (All persons aged 15 and over)**



**Ethnicity in Elevate Workforce**



## Ethnicity Representation in the Elevate Workforce

Signatories continue to make progress on tracking ethnicity. Just over one third of Signatories provided data on ethnicity within their workforce. Disclosure rates have improved. In total 30,677 employees disclosed information on ethnicity. Compared to the Irish Labour Force, the Elevate Workforce has an over representation of Asian, Black and Other ethnicities. However this over-representation doesn't translate across all levels of seniority within the Elevate Workforce. Of those that disclosed Ethnicity at Executive/C-Suite level 86% are white, 3% are Asian, 3% are Other and 8% Prefer Not to Say. The graphics below show the percentage breakdown by organisational level and for each ethnicity.

Almost 30,000 employees provided information on working hours and ethnicity. There are variations across ethnic groupings. Asian people have the lowest level of part-time working at 10%, White people have an 18% part-time working rate compared to Black people at 25%. Those that indicated an ethnic group of Other or Prefer Not to Say have part time working rates of 40% and 50% respectively. Looking at ethnicity against length of service shows greater representation rates for both Asian and Black employees that have less than a 3 year service history. This could indicate that a greater focus on ethnic minority recruitment in recent years has been impactful.

Please click on the images to enlarge

Click on the icons to read ethnicity inclusion in action



# Focus on Ethnicity and Citizenship

## Taking Action

The Elevate workforce has strong representation of ethnic minority groups. However, representation decreases with seniority. Investigating the underlying cause for this should reveal valuable insights into whether or not there are particular barriers in place preventing minorities progress. These insights can then be turned into actions to address gaps. As with gender and disability setting targets for ethnic representation can be helpful in driving action.

While Ireland has historically had very positive attitudes towards immigration and immigrants, there is a fear that the recent increase in migration, coming at a time of perceived strains on services, is leading to increasingly hostile attitudes towards immigrants and immigration. Research published in 2024 by the ESRI on attitudes towards immigration and refugees found that although people's positivity towards immigration remains relatively high, over the period June-November 2023 these rates had started to decline. Recent incidents support this finding, including protests relating to accommodation centres for asylum seekers and the November 2023 riot in Dublin city centre.

Our communities – particularly those that experience high levels of disadvantage are becoming increasingly divided. Communities are competing against each other for scarce resources. This creates ideal conditions for mis-information and dis-information to spread and for anti-immigrant rhetoric to take hold.

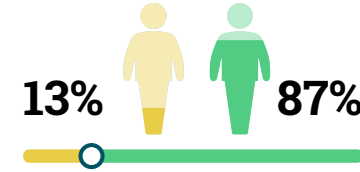
Large workplaces are a micro-cosm of society. As such employers have a role to play in challenging mis-information, based on stereotypes and invalid perceptions, whilst at the same time cultivating an environment where genuine concerns can be aired and discussed. This will help to create more inclusive workplaces but also contribute to wider social cohesion.

**BITCI'S EPIC Programme** supports migrants (primarily asylum seekers, refugees and recently arrived Ukrainians) to integrate and gain employment in Ireland. We have delivered the programme since 2008 and have a strong track-record of successful outcomes. We create new opportunities for these jobseekers every day as they start a new life in Ireland.

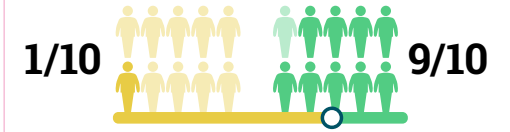


### If I'm not white

I'll be in a minority



Less likely to hold an Executive or C-Suite position



I'm **3 times more likely** to experience **discrimination** both in the workplace and in accessing services



If my name suggests I'm from an ethnic minority I'll receive about **half as many positive responses** to my job applications compared to those with more common names



I'm more likely to live in rented accommodation



I'm more likely to live in over-crowded accommodation



# Focus on The Traveller Community

## Data Insights

**12** employees from the Elevate Workforce of 150,000+ disclosed their ethnicity as **Irish Traveller**

**3** Signatories have committed to the Irish **Traveller Movement Apprenticeship scheme**

**Census 2022 recorded an increase** (+6% since 2016) in the number of Travellers at 32,949

**Unemployment rates** within the Traveller community are at 80%, **17 times** that **of the general population**

12 Signatories engaged with the **BITCI Traveller Employment Programme** in 2023

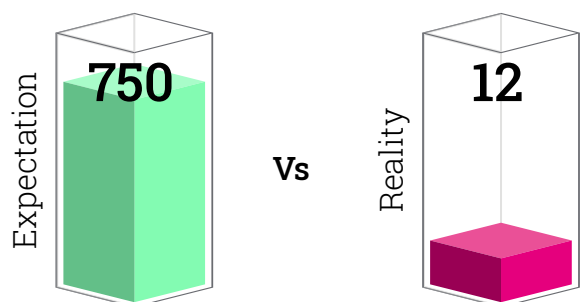
In census 2022 the **CSO gathered** data on the **Roma** Community for the first time, recording 16,049 Roma in Ireland

Travellers are **10 times more likely to experience discrimination** than a white Irish person, this rises to 22 times in a shop, pub or restaurant

Only **5% of The Traveller Community are over 65**, compared to 15% of the total population

**Suicide rates** are **7 times higher for men** and **6 times higher for women** than their settled counterparts

## Reflecting Irish Society\*



If the Elevate Workforce reflected Irish Society we would expect **750** employees identifying as Irish Traveller. The current disclosure in Elevate Workforce is **12**.

\*Census data relies on self-identification and this can lead to under reporting

Travellers are among the most disadvantaged and marginalised groups in Irish society. They face disparities in unemployment, poverty, health status, education, and training levels. By welcoming Travellers as employees and customers, fostering knowledge of Traveller culture, and promoting an inclusive workplace, businesses can contribute to creating a safer space where Travellers can share their culture and identity.



# Focus on The Traveller Community

## The Traveller Community and Employment in Ireland

Travellers are amongst the most disadvantaged and marginalised groups in Irish society today, if not the most. As a community, they fare badly on every indicator used to measure disadvantage; unemployment, poverty, social exclusion, health status, infant mortality, life expectancy, illiteracy, formal education and training levels. Unemployment rates within the Traveller community are at 80% and have been so for decades.

The number of Irish Travellers living in the State and counted in Census 2022 was 32,949, an increase of 6% from 30,987 in the 2016 census and making up 0.7% of the population. The increase is attributed to Travellers becoming more confident with self-disclosure and trusting of the Census and ethnic identifiers. Children under the age of 15 made up 36% of Irish Travellers compared with 20% of the total population. At a national level, 15% of the total population was aged 65 years and over while for Irish Travellers, the equivalent figure was just 5%. The population aged 15 years and over of Irish Travellers is 21,087. Irish Travellers make up less than 1% of the population so, for comparison purposes, it can be helpful to use rates per 1,000 of the population. This shows that in Census 2022, five out of 1,000 people in the State aged 15 years and over were Irish Travellers.

Irish Travellers have the highest rates of acute poverty, the lowest employment rates and face some of the worst discrimination of six Traveller and Roma communities across Europe according to a 2020 report from the EU's Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA). The report shows that while Irish Traveller children experience significant levels of bullying and harassment in school, they have one of the higher participation rates across the six communities. However, this does not translate into participation in wider society for most.

There were 29,900 Irish Travellers living in private households in Census 2022. The majority were living in permanent housing, while 2,286 people were living in temporary housing units such as caravans and mobile homes. The proportion of Irish Travellers living in private households who were living in caravans, mobile homes or other temporary accommodation was 8% in 2022, down from 12% in 2016.

Many of these families are living on temporary sites which generally lack access to water, sanitary and electrical facilities. Overcrowding and homelessness as well as lack of culturally appropriate housing can impact significantly on mental and physical health. This in turn affects capacity to participate in education and employment but also contributes to rising suicide rates – with a staggering 1 in 10 Irish Travellers dying by suicide.

## Elevate Workforce

The interest amongst Elevate Signatories in employment of members of the Traveller Community has significantly increased since the Elevate Pledge was launched. This year of those that disclosed their ethnicity status, 12 employees identified as Irish Travellers, a further 9 identified as Roma. This is up from 3 last year. This increase might be explained by more Travellers being employed in the Elevate workforce or it could be down to greater rates of disclosure. Both explanations point toward greater trust levels between The Traveller Community and employers.

If the Elevate workforce was to reflect the diversity within society then we'd expect it to include 750 Irish Travellers. This huge gap in representation can largely be explained by the extremely high levels of unemployment in The Traveller Community but may also in part be explained by under-disclosure with individuals not feeling safe to identify as a Traveller. These disclosure rates whilst still far from being a true representation of the number of Travellers in the wider labour force indicate that progress is being made in trying to address the high rates of unemployment for this community.

To support employers, BITCI hosted a business Peer Circle on engaging with the Traveller community. This was attended by 7 Signatories. Both the BITCI Traveller Employment Programme and Exchange House presented information and participated in a very open discussion with the businesses attending on possible blocks to the recruitment of Travellers. Insights from this session were used to design interventions to tackle misconceptions and overcome barriers to recruitment.

← Click on the icons to read Traveller Community inclusion in action →





# Focus on The Traveller Community

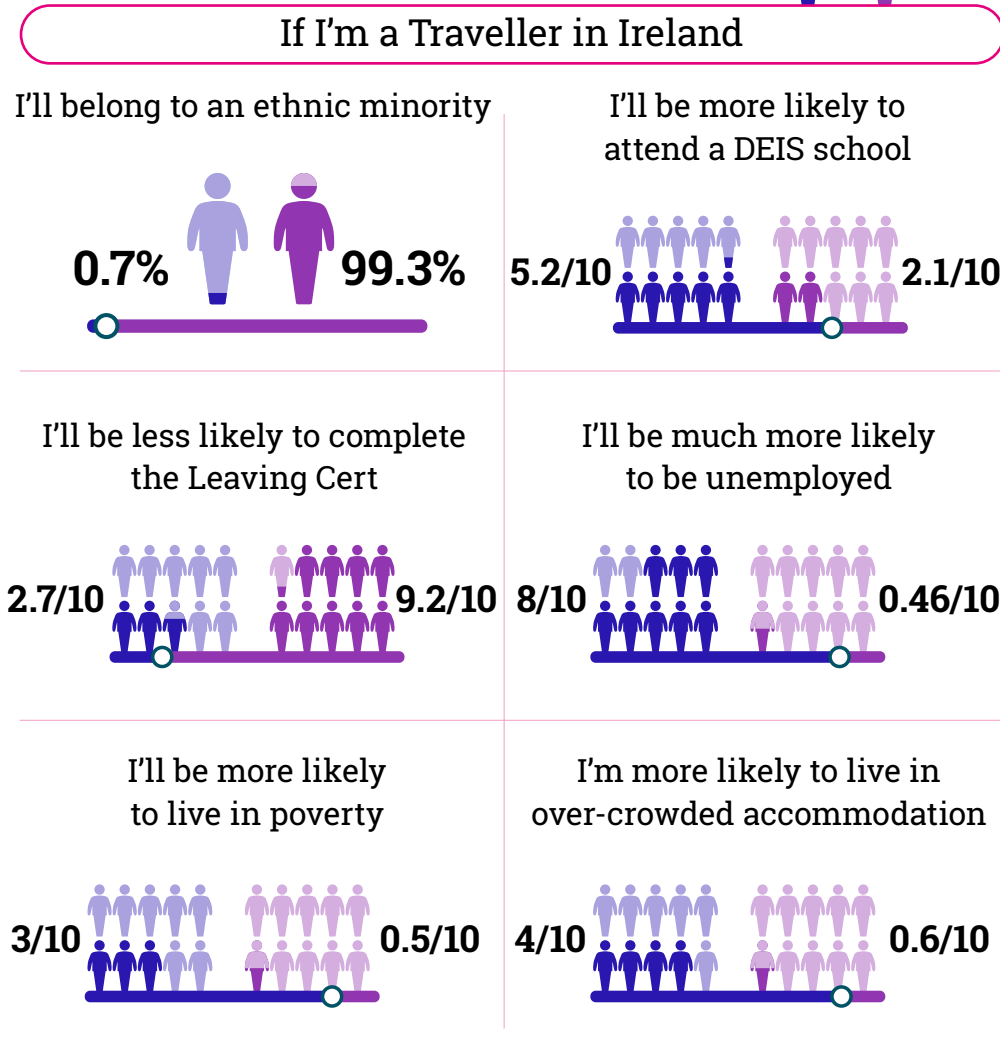
## Taking Action

The Traveller community remains one of the most discriminated against communities in Ireland. Deep rooted discriminatory behaviour can be based on perceptions and a low level of understanding of Traveller culture. Employers can help to tackle this by organising education and awareness programmes for colleagues. Putting a focus on understanding the aspirations of Travellers regarding employment, the challenges they face and the necessary steps to support their inclusion can be hugely impactful.

Creating safe workplaces where there is zero tolerance for micro-aggressions, casual racism or jokeism is also critical. This sends a very strong message that discriminatory behaviour will not be tolerated. It establishes a safe and respectful environment where Travellers can work without fear of prejudice or mistreatment.

Clear signs and communication that your business welcomes Travellers as both customers and employees helps build trust with the community. This can include undertaking Traveller Cultural Awareness training, advertising in the Traveller Voice magazine, flagging open roles with local Traveller projects and running Traveller specific recruitment drives.

**The BITCI Traveller Employment Programme** is a tailor-made programme that helps participants identify their career plans and it supports Travellers to gain and sustain meaningful work over the long term. The programme follows a flexible and supportive approach, shaped by the goals and circumstances of individual participants.

# Focus on Socio-Economic Inclusion

## Data Insights



**10** out of 60 Signatories have started to **track data on socioeconomic status**



**5** Signatories **provided data** on socioeconomic status



**Disclosure rates** account for **only 8%** of Workforce. And within that Don't Know or Prefer Not To Say account for 94% of responses



**36** Signatories **pay the Living Wage** but only **22** Signatories **expect contractors** to pay the Living wage



**49** Signatories **provide financial wellbeing support** to employees



**35** Signatories **partner with DEIS schools**



**34** Signatories have **partnered with Employment Support Organisations**



**6%** of the Elevate Workforce with Permanent, full time positions are **earning below the Living Wage**



**35** Signatories **engage with Local communities for recruitment**

## Poverty Levels in Ireland\*



\*CSO Survey Income and Living Condition 2022

“

People with a lower socio-economic status have **less access to financial, educational, social and health resources** than those with a higher socio-economic status. Employers who actively work to improve education and job opportunities for people with a lower socio-economic status contribute to levelling the playing field and ensuring everyone has a fair chance to succeed, regardless of their background.

”



# Focus on Socio-Economic Inclusion

## Socio-economic Status and Employment in Ireland

This year for the first time, we included socio-economic status as one of the indicators of diversity for the Elevate workforce.

Socio-economic status refers to an individual's income, education and occupation or type of job. People with a lower socio-economic status usually have less access to financial, educational, social and health resources than those with a higher socio-economic status.

In 2015 Ireland adopted the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development ("Transforming our World"). Signing up to this agenda was effectively saying No to poverty in all its forms and Yes to equal opportunities for all.

Progress towards this ambition is slow. In Ireland in 2024 over 14,000 of us are homeless.

Unemployment or inability to work, single parent households and lack of home ownership are the biggest contributors to an individual or household's risk of poverty. Getting caught in a poverty trap greatly limits a person's opportunities. It can take generations for those starting out in poverty to even reach an average income level. Education and employment provide the key. Getting a good education opens up job and career opportunities which in turn influences income levels and overall quality of life.

## Elevate Workforce

10 Elevate Signatories have already begun to build socio-economic status into their diversity profiling activities. In this, our first year of asking for data on socio-economic status, 5 of those Signatories provided information. Disclosure rates are quite low, so it is difficult to draw any particular insights on representation from the current dataset.

While Signatories are just at the starting point when it comes to collecting data on socio-economic status most of them have strategies in place to try to tackle socio-economic disadvantage

35 Signatories are partnered with DEIS schools opening up the world of work to students who might not otherwise be aware of the range of career options available to them and the pathways to take them there. Classroom support on literacy or numeracy can help to address gaps in educational attainment between schools in disadvantaged areas compared to more advantaged areas.

34 Signatories have partnered with employment support organisations. Employment support organisations work with jobseekers that are either unemployed or are under-employed because there are barriers preventing them getting a job that matches their potential.

38 Signatories have started to review job descriptions to ensure only necessary requirements or skills are listed. Re-working job descriptions in this way helps remove unintentional barriers that an employer may have created. For example asking for Leaving Certificate results can exclude early school leavers, regardless of whatever further education they may have gone on to achieve.

Just over 5% of people living in poverty are employed. These are the working poor. Building an inclusive workforce is about ensuring representation for minority groups. However, it should also consider pay and conditions. 36 Signatories pay the Living Wage but only 22 Signatories expect contractors to pay the Living wage. Looking at the data provided on employment terms, working hours and salary band, 6% of the Elevate workforce, or just over 9,000 employees are reported as earning below living wage. This figure is based on those that are directly employed in full time, permanent roles. The vast majority of these work in sectors where employment regulation orders apply.

← Click on the icons to read social mobility in action →



# Focus on Socio-Economic Inclusion

## Taking Action

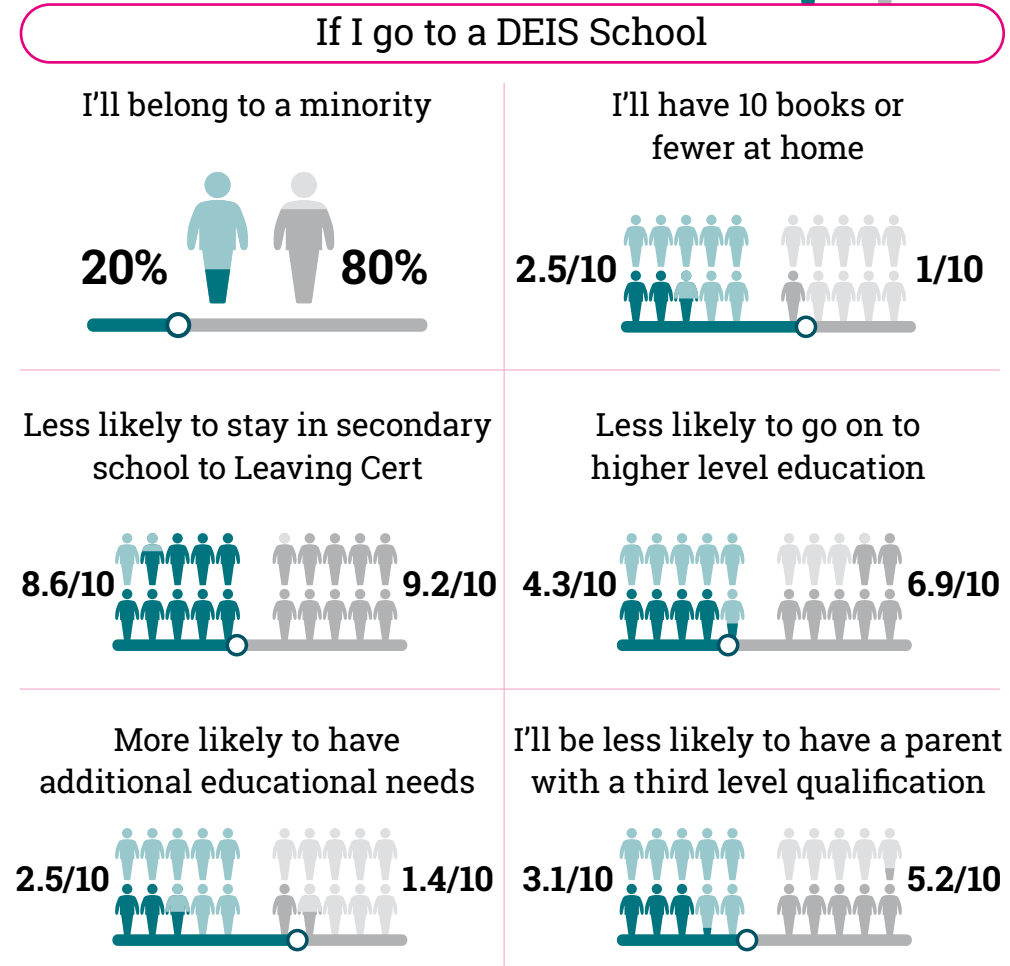
Building socio-economic status and background into diversity strategies is essential if we are to make real progress on tackling poverty and creating equal access to opportunity. However, it is a challenge. Unlike other indicators of diversity it is not currently considered as one of the grounds for discrimination. It is also trickier to ask people to self-identify their socio-economic status.

Socio-economic status can be considered in its own right as a diversity indicator, but it can also be an outcome based on other indicators. A female in a single-parent household is at a greater risk of poverty than a female in a two parent household. A person with a disability is more likely to be unemployed than someone without a disability. Certain diversity characteristics will impact on education or rates of employment participation which in turn will impact on the socio-economic group a person can find themselves in.

DEIS schools are situated in communities of high socio-economic disadvantage. To present an indication of the inequalities faced by people with lower socio-economic status, BITCI used enrolment in a DEIS school as a proxy for socio-economic disadvantage. The resulting graphic shows clear differences between the educational attainment and subsequent employment opportunities for those that attend DEIS schools versus those that attend a non-DEIS school.

Employers who actively work to improve education and job opportunities for people with a lower socioeconomic status contribute to levelling the playing field and ensuring everyone has a fair chance to succeed, regardless of their background. Enhancing educational attainment through partnerships with a DEIS school is a hugely impactful activity for an employer to take. The impacts will be long term and have the power to be transformational for young people.

**Business in the Community Ireland (BITCI)** has a [suite of education programmes](#) that aim to develop mutually beneficial partnerships between schools and business in Ireland and which support the Government's overall strategy on educational inclusion.




DEIS schools are situated in communities of high socio-economic disadvantage. To create this scorecard we are using enrolment in a DEIS school as a proxy for socio-economic disadvantage.




# Focus on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

## Data Insights




**15** Signatories **disclosed data** on Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity




Disclosure rates for sexual orientation for overall **Elevate Workforce** at **16%**




**Disclosure rates** for individual Signatories range from **1%** disclosure to **85%** disclosure




**33** Signatories have an **LGBTQIA+** related **Employment Resource Group**



**92%** of **LGBTQIA+** are **“out”** at work, although only 34% are out to everyone while 57% disclosed only to those they trusted at work




An estimated **1%** of the population will experience some form of **gender variance**



More than **1 in 3** members of LGBTQIA+ community have reported feeling **personally discriminated** against because of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity

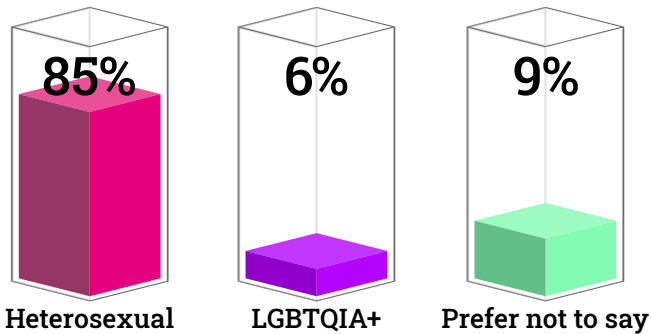


**60%** of participants reported that they had experienced **microaggressions** in the workplace due to their LGBTQIA+ identity



**82%** expressed confidence that **action would be taken** if they reported discrimination they faced to their employers

## Elevate Workforce



The CSO plans to include questions on sexual orientation and gender identity for the first time in census 2026.

“The workplace can sometimes be a challenging place to be LGBTQIA+. Some individuals feel that they have to **hide their sexual orientation, gender identity or trans history to enter or retain employment**, and sometimes even to ensure their personal safety.”



# Focus on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

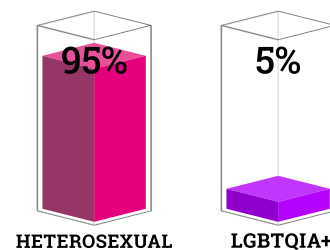
## Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Irish Labourforce

Sexual orientation refers to sexual and romantic attraction to other people. Gender identity is about personal sense of one's own gender. It's an internal experience of gender, which may or may not align with the sex assigned at birth. Gender identity includes being male, female, genderqueer, and more. Being transgender (feeling that your assigned sex doesn't match your true gender) is distinct from being gay, lesbian, or bisexual. While sexual orientation is about who you want to be with, gender identity is about who you are.

Data on sexual orientation and gender identity in the labour force is not readily available. A statistical profile created by the Oireachtas library and research service in 2019 includes an estimate that the LGBT+ proportion of the Irish population, aged 15 years and older, is between 5 and 7%. A study by the Transgender Equality Network of Ireland in 2017 reported that Transgender and gender variant people are active members of Irish society and play an important role in organisations across the country. The report suggests an estimated 1% of the population will experience some form of gender variance. This estimate is based on a 2009 UK Study on Gender Variance. In an Irish context, this means roughly 50,000 people.

**Note:** The current acronym widely used to represent the non-heterosexual community is LGBTQIA+.

**This is a crude estimate based on dated survey data.**



← Click on the icons to read LGBTQIA+ community inclusion in action →

## Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity in the Elevate Workforce

Only a quarter (25%) of Signatories provided data on sexual orientation within their workforce. These Signatories accounted for 38,218 employees of the Elevate Workforce. The sexual orientation disclosure rate for these employees was 34%.

Considering the workplace in general, the split of employments at each of the four organisational levels is **shown in the figure below**.

Of those that disclosed sexual orientation and organisational level, representation at Executive level for both heterosexual colleagues and colleagues that identify at LGBTQIA+ mirrors the wider Elevate Workforce at 1%. However, disclosure rates for sexual orientation vary across organisational level. Those at Middle Manager level are most comfortable disclosing at 20%. The disclosure rate for Entry Level employees is at 16%. For Senior Managers it drops to 11% and only 6% of Executives or C-Suite colleagues disclosed their Sexual Orientation.

Elevate data on gender identity accounts for only 309 employees (0.2%) of all Elevate Workforce employees. Of these 278 have not indicated a gender identity and 31 have identified as non-binary or other. A quarter of Signatories provide data on gender identity with the remainder providing data on biological gender or sex.

As employers mature in their DE&I efforts, we are seeing an increase in the number of employers capturing gender identity of colleagues.

Please click on the image to enlarge

# Focus on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity



## Taking Action

The workplace can sometimes be a challenging place to be LGBTQIA+. Some individuals feel that they have to hide their sexual orientation, gender identity or trans history to enter or retain employment, and sometimes even to ensure their personal safety. A lack of awareness and understanding around the specific issues that the LGBTQIA+ community face in the workplace can lead to employers failing to adequately support colleagues.

Supporting colleagues starts with an employer's overall approach to inclusion, including strong policies on anti-bullying and discrimination and a culture that values people from different backgrounds. In work supports that have been specifically identified as being of importance to the LGBTQIA+ include training on inclusiveness and LGBTQIA+ issues for all staff, employee resource groups for LGBTQIA+ community members and allies and active celebrations of events such as Pride.

Celebrating Pride without policies and culture that demonstrate support to the LGBTQIA+ community year round can come across as in-authentic or rainbow washing.

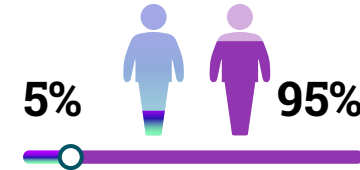
As with other indicators of diversity, data monitoring is an integral tool. It gives organisations a deeper insight into the impact of their work practices and policies. Some employers have been reluctant to gather this information and question if they should ask for it and if so, how should they ask. Data can reveal what work life is like for LGBTQIA+ people and identify the hidden barriers they may face. Data capturing exercises can also send powerful signals of alliance with your LGBTQIA+ colleagues.

### Measures identified by members of the LGBTQIA+ community contributing to a sense of support at work:

- Strong policy on anti-bullying or discrimination (50%)
- An open and inclusive team that values people from different backgrounds (43%)
- Training on inclusiveness and LGBTQIA+ issues for all staff (42%)
- An employee group for LGBTQIA+ community members and allies (35%)
- Active celebration of events such as Pride (33%)

## If I'm a member of the LGBTQIA+ Community in Ireland

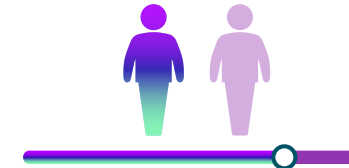
I'll belong to a minority



A quarter of LGBTQIA+ young adults go back into the closet after starting work



I'm more likely to be the target of a hate crime



Very likely to have experienced micro-aggressions in the workplace



May hide my identity in the workplace



Will face more struggles for their identity to be recognised



Data relating to sexual orientation and gender identity is scarce, the characteristics listed above are drawn from a comprehensive review of available reports and studies from the LGBTQIA+ community. All reports linked in reference section.



# Progress Against Commitments

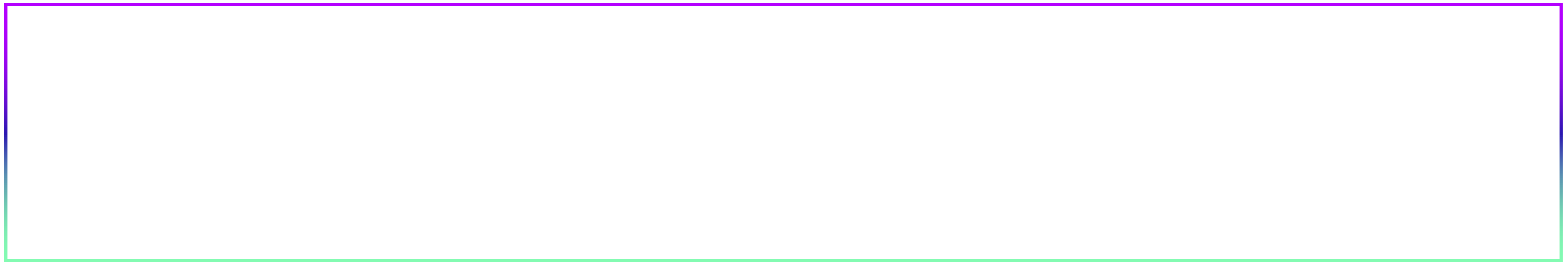
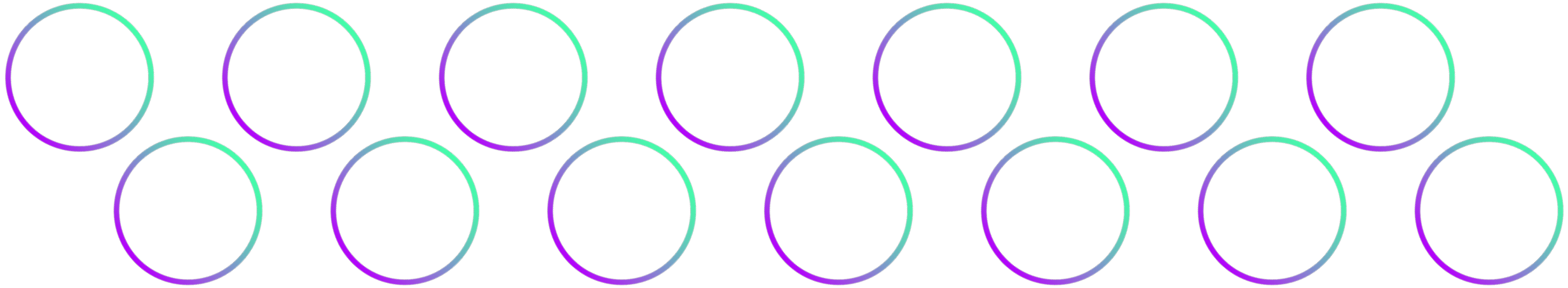
Employers have well understood that incorporating Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in all aspects of business is the way forward. The Elevate Pledge asks Signatories to commit to tangible actions on DE&I and it has been established that goals and commitments support in keeping a sharp focus on our ambition. The 2023 Elevate Report called out a few areas of focus and encouraged Signatory companies to direct their energies on these specific topics within their own workplace. Most of the Signatories have addressed at least one focus area and many have started work on all of them. Irrespective of the maturity level of any organisation, simple steps taken to address DE&I go a long way in defining the culture and business ethos.

This section will provide an overview of the actions and achievements from Elevate Signatories.



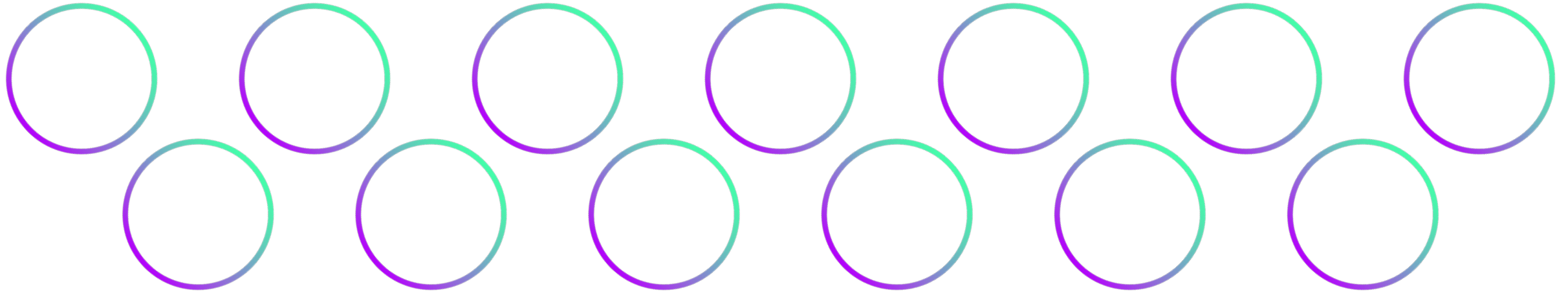
# Improving Diversity Metrics

In business, goals and ambitions are supported by clear and measurable metrics. Measurement is a cornerstone that helps identify the progress of actions and initiatives. The section below showcases the Elevate Signatories who have committed to Improving Diversity Metrics within their organisations.



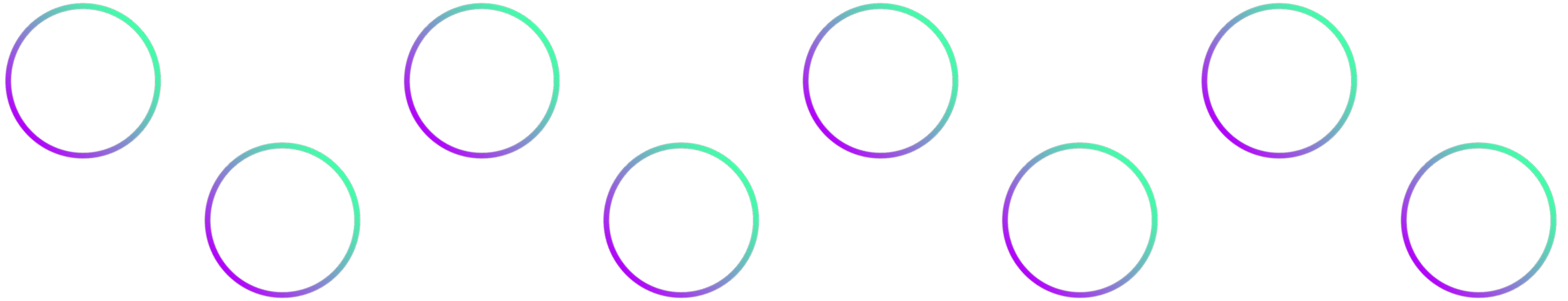
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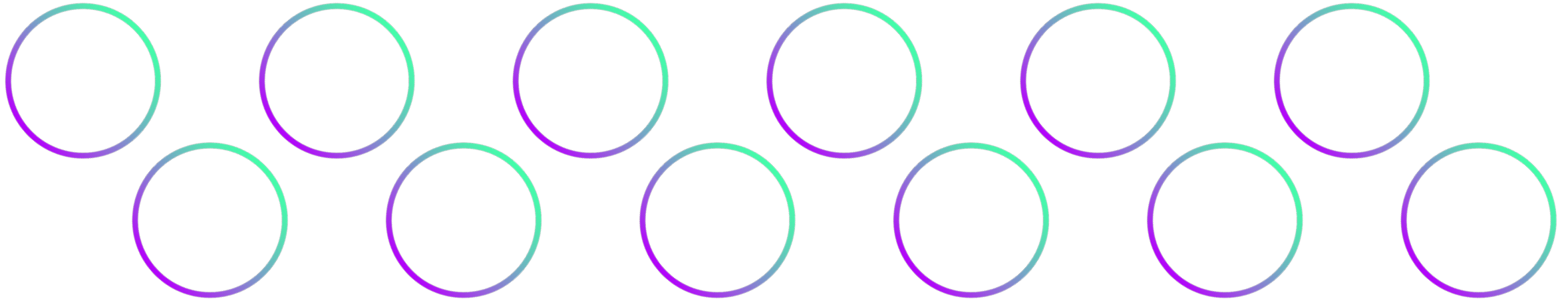
# Increase Voluntary Disclosure

The Elevate Pledge asks Signatories to gather diversity data of their staff via voluntary disclosure programmes. Many Signatory companies have set targets to increase voluntary disclosure.



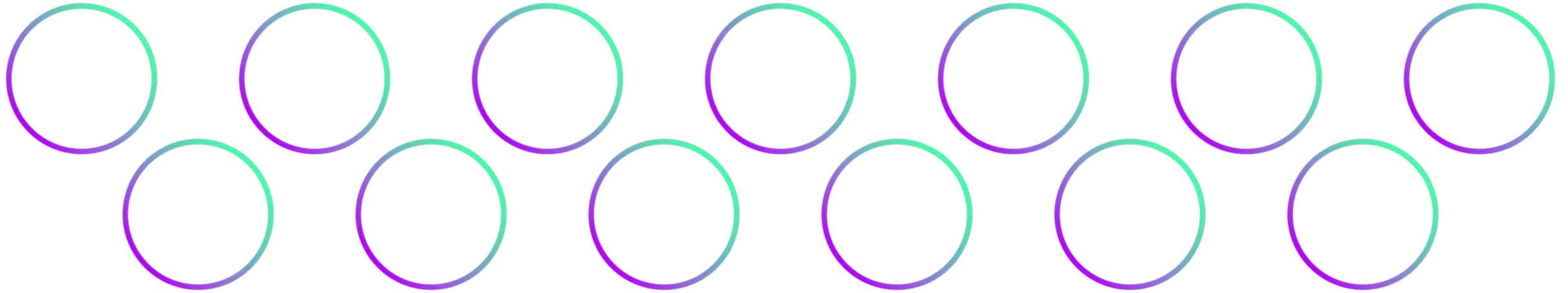
# Widen Recruitment Channels

Employment offers the single biggest opportunity for individuals to move out of a cycle of poverty and become active participants in society. Opportunities to allow active participation of people from all backgrounds in economic activities is a progressive step for the society as a whole. In this section, we have highlighted the Signatories who work with partners to widen recruitment channels.



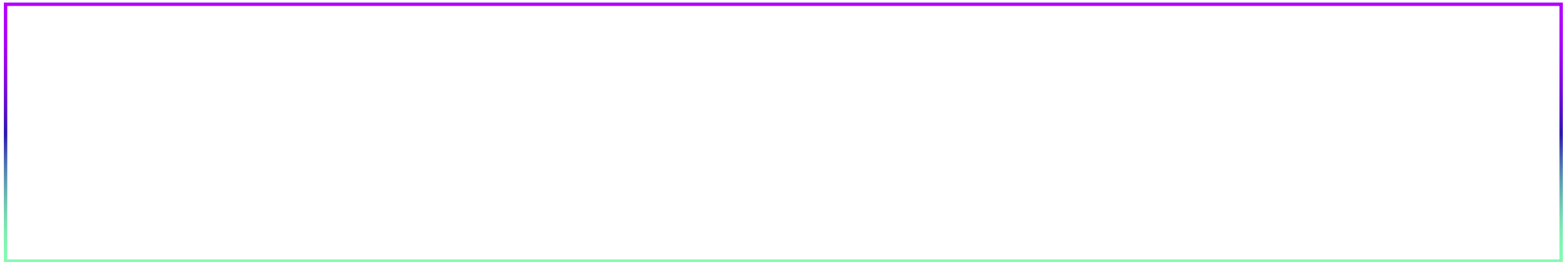
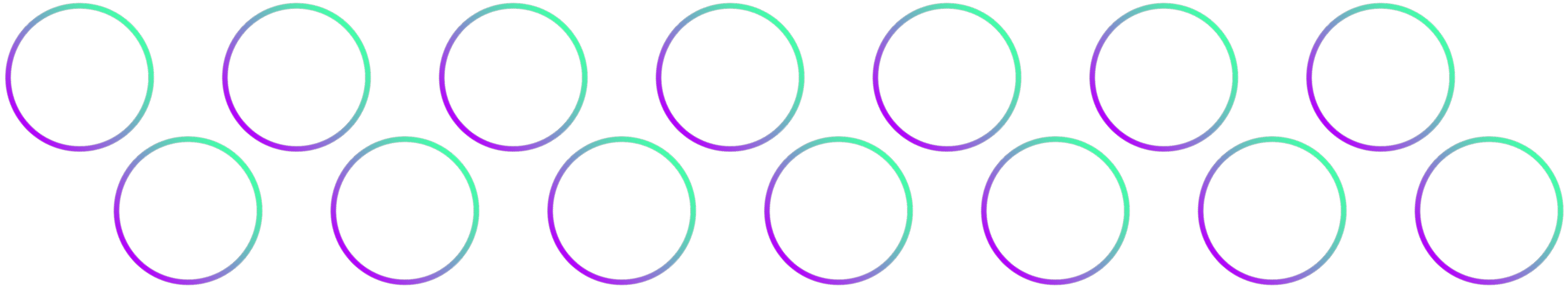
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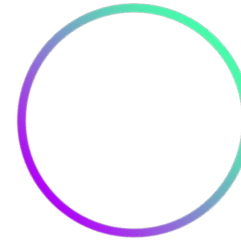
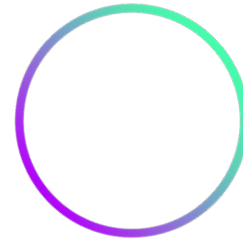
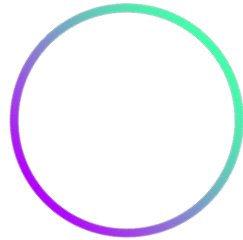
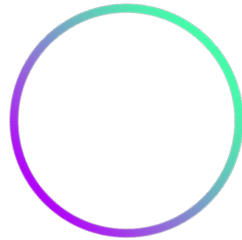
# Engage with DEIS Schools

The consequences of early school and educational disadvantage is well documented and can lead to issues such as unemployment and poverty. We know that the right to education has fundamental social purposes and yet is distributed by the lottery of birth. We encourage Signatory companies to engage with DEIS schools to break cycles of exclusion from early on.



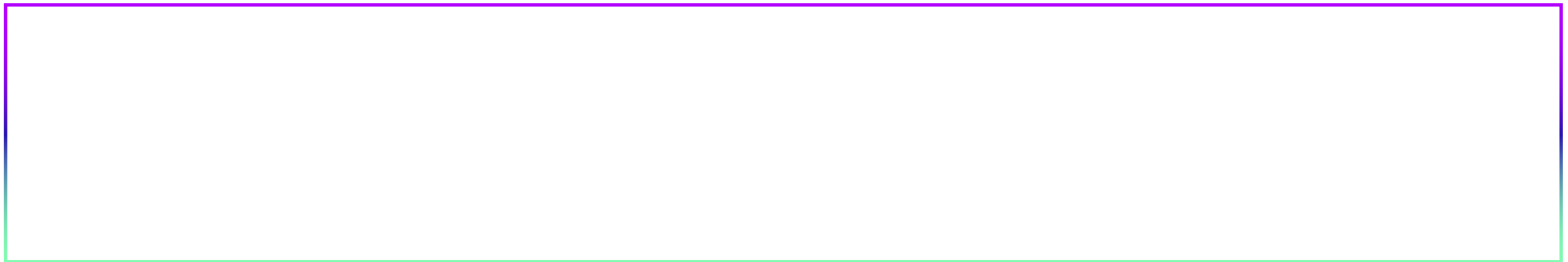
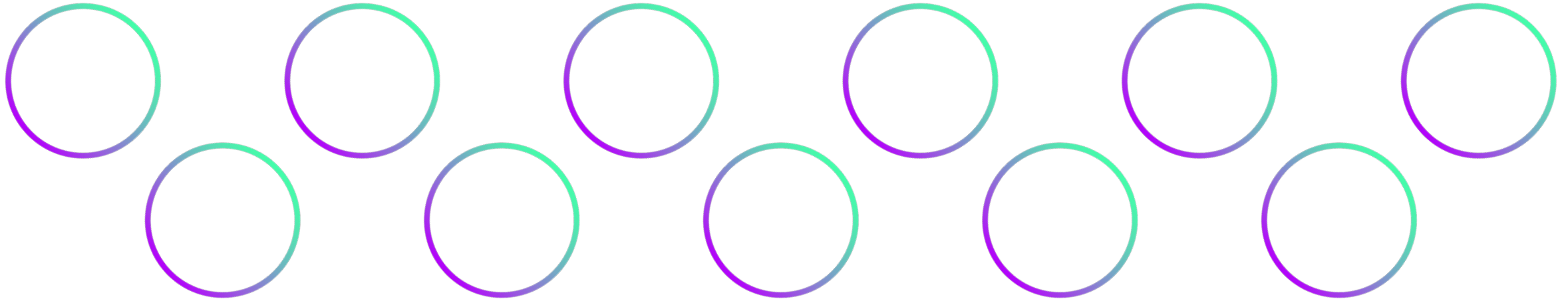
# Build Trust with Traveller Community

Travellers have experienced high levels of racism and exclusion over the years. Business and society must move to create a space that is safe for Travellers to share their culture and identity. We encourage Signatory companies to take one simple action to build trust with the Traveller Community.



# Build Capacity and Confidence on DE&I

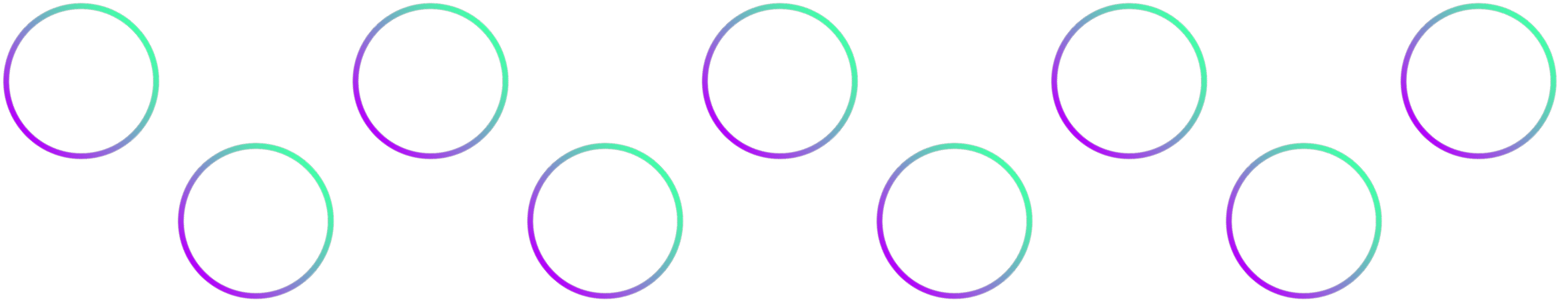
To achieve progress in DE&I, it is essential to have a strategy that the whole business can align to. When starting to look at particular aspects of DE&I, it is important to ensure we have the basic knowledge and understanding of who we are and what we intend to achieve. Elevate Signatories have adapted various approaches to build their capacity and confidence with internal and external stakeholder.





# Be Pro-Active on Culture

A successful DE&I strategy is fundamentally about cultural change. Employers need to cultivate inclusive practices throughout the organisation and unless actively managed the culture of an organisation can allow unintentional biases to flourish. Elevate Signatories have committed to work on the culture of their workplaces.



# Future Progress

Elevate Signatories are making a public commitment to building inclusive Workforces. But they are going beyond that. They are holding themselves accountable for their claims on equity, diversity and inclusion. They are measuring their performance and they are taking action to improve. This report presents a diversity profile made up of a collective workforce of over 150,000 employees from 60 leading employers. This final section of the report summarises key observations from the Elevate data collection exercise and includes a call to action for continued progress.

# A Metrics Based Approach to DE&I

Employers increasingly recognise that DE&I is both a **moral imperative** and a key to **stronger business performance**. However, simply claiming to be inclusive without taking a metrics based approach makes it difficult to support such claims or demonstrate accountability. Data and metrics are necessary to identify problems, establish baselines, and measure progress. [By collecting data, organisations can track outcomes and adjust their strategies accordingly.](#)

The first demand on Signatories to the Elevate Pledge is to provide a diversity profile which is anonymised and aggregated into the collective Elevate workforce. Signatories are asked to provide as complete a dataset as possible. However, the ask is made recognising that there is no Signatory yet in a position to provide a 100% complete dataset. In reality most Signatories are still relatively new to collecting this level of data for their workforce.

Historically employers have shied away from capturing diversity data, given that much of it is protected characteristic data and as such there is no legal right to demand the information. Employers have to rely on voluntary disclosure which in turn relies on high trust levels within the organisation. Over the last three years we are seeing a growing confidence in employers in rolling out voluntary disclosure campaigns and as such the quality of the data is growing year on year. This confidence, together with Gender Pay Gap reporting as well as new requirements for diversity disclosures coming through the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) will require companies to improve the quality of their diversity profiling.

Collecting diversity data is one thing, using it to design evidence based interventions to address gaps is the next step. However, setting DE&I targets hasn't matured to any great extent beyond gender. Only a very small number of Signatories have set targets to increase representation of other underrepresented groups such as ethnic minorities or people with disabilities. As the quality of data collection improves, we hope to see a corresponding increase in target setting to address inequality.



# From Workplace Inclusion to Social Cohesion

Ireland of 2024 is becoming increasingly divided. Increasing rates of poverty, a cost of living and a housing crisis alongside the pressures of immigration are leading to deepening fractures in our society.

Employers committed to inclusion should consider the impact of wider social discourse on topics related to inclusion, or more likely exclusion, and the impact these can have on colleagues. For example, the recent rise in hate speech against migrants and gender identity will have a greater effect on colleagues from ethnic minorities or the LGBTQIA+ community. Large employers effectively have a microcosm of society within their own workplace. When employers know the composition of their workforce and actively engage to understand the experiences, needs and challenges of different communities of colleagues they are well placed to foster a culture that is safe, welcoming and supportive to all. Tackling mis-information and challenging perceptions and stereotypes within the workplace will have a ripple effect out in to the wider community.

At BITCI we understand the significant role that business can play in shaping the communities in which we live and work. We also know that Business is regarded as one of the most trusted institutions to drive change in society. Elevate Signatories are already working towards positive social impacts from the perspective of building inclusive workforces. Linking DE&I efforts to address wider social issues of fragmentation, discrimination and racism is a real leadership opportunity for Elevate Signatories.



# Actions for Impact

In the 2023 report we encouraged Signatories to make a commitment to tackling under-representation in their own workplaces and in so doing address some of the wider societal inequalities. We provided a set of actions that we felt could have strong impact and encouraged Signatories to consider these when designing activities for 2023/2024.

Many Signatories made multiple commitments. However, each was asked to choose just one commitment to report progress against in this publication. Individual progress against those commitments is presented in Section 4 of this report. However collective progress can be summarised as follows:

## **Improving Diversity Metrics**

There has been an increase across the board in the reporting of diversity profile data from the Signatories. Gender and Age continue to be the most comprehensively reported indicators. However, the rate of increase is not as high as between year 2 and 3 as it was between year 1 and 2. For the 2025 report we encourage all Signatories to enhance their diversity profiles. This will benefit the collective Elevate dataset, but more importantly will lead to evidence based insights for individual Signatories which can be used to drive future inclusion strategies and interventions.

## **Increase Voluntary Disclosure**

As with the number of diversity indicators that Signatories are reporting on, there is also an increase across the board on rates of disclosure. 60% of Signatories have already, or plan to introduce voluntary disclosure campaigns in 2024. There is a growing level of confidence amongst Signatories that not only is it possible to ask colleagues for diversity detail, but that this data is essential in order to build strategies towards achieving DE&I ambitions.

## **Widen Recruitment Channels**

A majority of Signatories committed to widen their recruitment channels in order to improve diversity. The most popular approach is to partner with one or more employment support organisations in order to reach a wider range of diverse candidates. Other activities include, advertising open roles through diverse channels and improving the employee value proposition.

## **Engage with DEIS schools**

As outlined in the focus on socio-economic status earlier in the report educational attainment and access to employment are lower for children who attend DEIS schools, often making it harder to move out of socio-economic disadvantage. Almost half of Signatories are actively engaging with DEIS schools, either on ongoing programmes such as literacy, numeracy or student mentoring whilst others focus on access to employment with work placements, career days and so on. The most impactful partnerships with schools will combine ambition for community outreach or social impact with DE&I ambitions.

## **Build trust with the Traveller Community**

Almost one quarter of Signatories committed to building trust with the Traveller Community. This marks a big step up in action to address inequalities facing the Traveller Community. Activities included offering work placements, providing specific education and awareness training for colleagues on Traveller culture, making a commitment to the Irish Traveller Movement to ringfence apprenticeship roles for Travellers and ultimately to increasing the representation of Travellers in the workforce.



# Call to Action

The vision of the Elevate Pledge is to build a workforce reflective of the diversity within Irish society. To achieve this vision we need strategic, targeted action.

Throughout this 2024 report we have highlighted inequality and the challenges we face as a society. If as a collective we are committed to an ideal of building fairer more inclusive societies where everyone has the chance to thrive then we must increase our rate of progress and our overall impacts.

Drawing from actions we know make a positive difference we again present a range of options for Signatories to consider as they build out their DE&I action plans for the next 12 months. They include:

- **Improve Diversity Metrics**
  - Build a diversity profile of the organisation by capturing data across a range of indicators
  - Increase the completeness of employee data through a voluntary disclosure campaign
  - Set targets for representation e.g. Females at Senior and Executive Level or Number of people with a disability hired
- **Review Recruitment and Progression Practices**
  - Monitor job descriptions, short lists, applications, hires etc. through a DE&I lens
  - Widen recruitment channels through partnerships with employment support organisations
  - Introduce talent development programmes for under-represented groups
  - Ringfence roles for under-represented groups
- **Strengthen Practices that Promote Inclusion**
  - Review policies on anti-bullying and discrimination
  - Implement zero-tolerance for micro-aggressions, casual racism or jokeism
  - Promote family friendly workplace policies that encourage men to share parenting responsibilities
  - Promote the range of supports available for employees requiring accommodations
  - Enhance training to raise awareness across differences
- **Build Socio-economic Status into DE&I Strategies**
  - Capture data
  - Engage with DEIS schools to enhance educational attainments and access to opportunity
  - Build trust with the Traveller Community

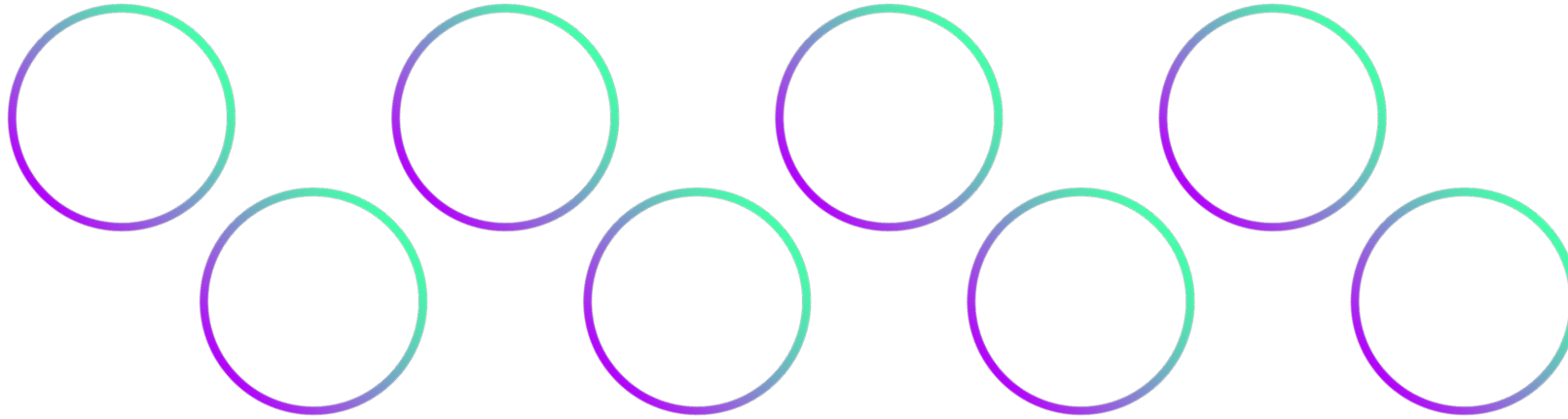
**The Elevate Signatories and our collective workforce represent over 150,000 employees. As a collective we are strong, we are growing and we share a common vision. Working together we can make significant progress in bridging the inclusion gap.**



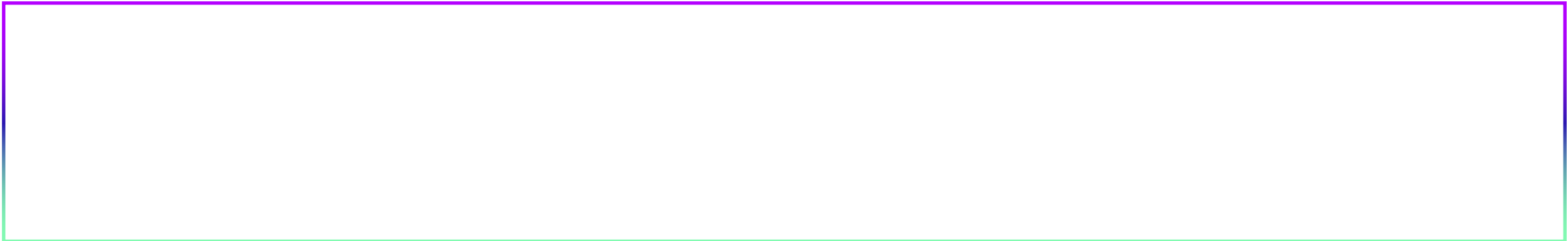
# Appendices

# BITCI Leaders' Group on Social Inclusion

The Elevate Pledge is an output of BITCI's Social Inclusion Leader Group. This group is made up of representatives from BITCI member companies.



## Knowledge Partner





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- [WORK AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES](#)
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- [European comparative data on persons with disabilities](#)
- [EXPERIMENTAL TESTS OF PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR DISABILITY POLICY](#)
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For more information on Business in the Community in Ireland: [www.bitc.ie](http://www.bitc.ie)

For more information on The Elevate Pledge: <https://www.bitc.ie/the-leaders-group-on-sustainability/inclusive-workplace-pledge/>

For any queries on this publication please write to [elevate@bitc.ie](mailto:elevate@bitc.ie)

Business in the Community Ireland is a movement for sustainable change in business. In a dynamic and changing environment, sustainable businesses are successful businesses. Our purpose is to inspire and enable businesses to bring about a sustainable, low carbon economy and a more inclusive society where everyone thrives. We act as trusted advisers in sustainability and corporate social responsibility. We provide access to best practice and support businesses with practical management and monitoring systems. By facilitating forums for reflection and action, we ensure that businesses anticipate and are ready to meet the current, pressing challenges of climate change, the pipeline of talent as well as the issues of social inclusion, diversity and accountability.

Thank you to the team at Deloitte Ireland for their support on insights, design and layout of this publication.

