

The past, present and future of workplace inclusion

In March 2021, Inclusive Employers ran a 10 Years of Inclusion survey to understand the past, present and future of workplace inclusion. Our findings highlight how far we've come and what's next for inclusion; while there is still a long way to go for I&D, our collective achievements are symbolic of a growing shift towards happier and more successful inclusive workforces.

The Past

In 2011, I&D was non-existent or minimal in

81%

of organisations.

Activity in 2011 was driven by legislation, with disability, race and ethnicity and sex at the top of the agenda.

49%

said **disability** was on their I&D agenda

43%

said **race and ethnicity** was on their I&D agenda

39%

said **sex** was on their I&D agenda

The Present

100%

of people surveyed said their organisations now have some I&D initiatives in place.

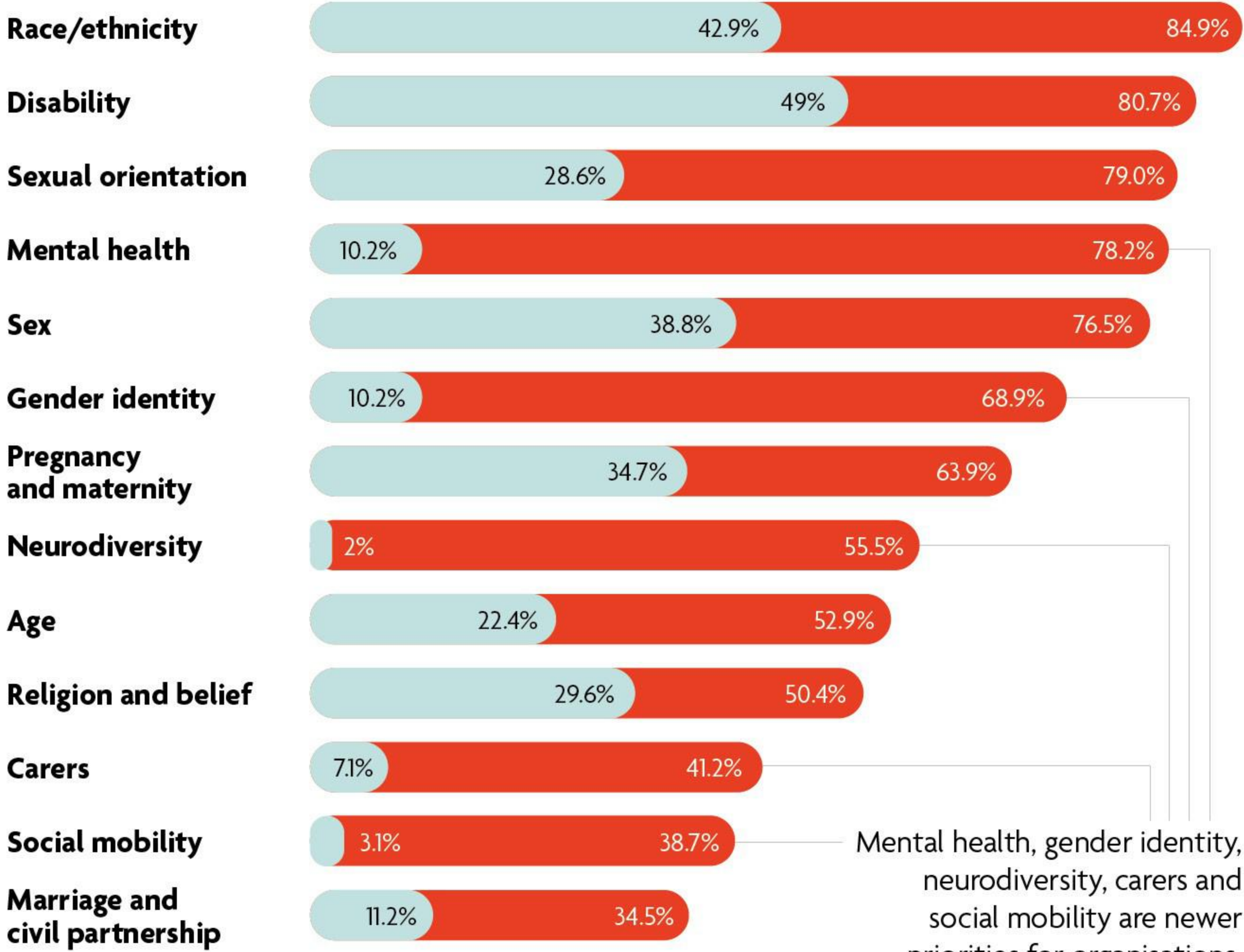
In 2021, I&D has grown dramatically in scale and scope. While disability, race and ethnicity, and sex are still high on the agenda, we can see growth in other strands of inclusion and diversity, including sexual orientation and mental health.

2021

At present, which of these strands are on your I&D agenda?

2011

Looking back 10 years, which of these strands were on your I&D agenda?



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People spend 40+ hours a week at work. If a workplace is cultivating and supporting D&I, this will leak into people's individual values and practices and get people on board.

86%

said that I&D work by employers is having a positive impact on the wider world.

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By starting the conversation with senior leaders, it has a visible impact on their thought process, and they are consciously thinking about how they can be more inclusive in their actions.

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The effect of some of the bigger movements, such as Black Lives Matter, has also accelerated the rate of change.

26%

cited discomfort of managers and resistance from company leaders as barriers to positive I&D change.

51%

said Covid has accelerated their organisation's I&D progress.

63%

said that employees' mental health has been impacted most by the pandemic.

The Future

98%

of those surveyed expect I&D to have a positive impact in the workplace in the next ten years.

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Changing people's thinking and sharing new perspectives is easier to do in workplaces than other environments. The continued focus on this agenda can only drive future positive change.

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Making diversity and inclusion the norm in workplaces will affect parents/carers and then how they inform and educate their children. The next generation will be a reflection of what we do now.

Ten years from now, I&D in the workplace will be...

... so completely integrated that there will be no requirement for a person or department to drive it.

... fair and equal for everyone, a place where you can bring your whole self to work and are judged solely on your actions and nothing else.

... something every employee and leader has at the forefront of their minds in every decision and action they take.

... a part of general policy and seen to be essential to the success of a business.