

# ARCHITECTS TODAY

Analysis of the architects' profession 2022



# ARB, architects and EDI

# ARB, architects and EDI

**As the statutory regulator for the architects' profession, the Architects Registration Board (ARB) ensures only those who are suitably competent are allowed to practise as architects.**

We do this by approving the qualifications required to join the Register of Architects. We set the standards of conduct and practice the profession must meet and take action when any architect falls below those standards. You can search the Register to find out whether someone is an architect at: <https://architects-register.org.uk/>.

Architects play a crucial role in creating a built environment that is safe, sustainable and where everyone in society can live well. If the architects' profession is drawn from and representative of different types of communities and lifestyles, it will be better equipped to design environments for different types of communities and lifestyles.

A key part of our [corporate strategy](#) is therefore to foster a culture of

[www.arb.org.uk](http://www.arb.org.uk)

equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) in our own organisation, and to take action to ensure change occurs in architecture. In order to do that and to shape our regulatory activities, we need to understand the profession, how it is now and how it might be changing.

**The Register of Architects is the only complete and authoritative source of information about all architects qualified to work in the UK.** This report uses data we hold on the Register along with other sources to analyse the profession. It covers:

1. The makeup of the architects' profession in 2022;
2. The makeup of new architects joining the profession each year between 2016 and 2021;
3. How the makeup of the profession compares to the UK population at large.

# How we gather data from architects

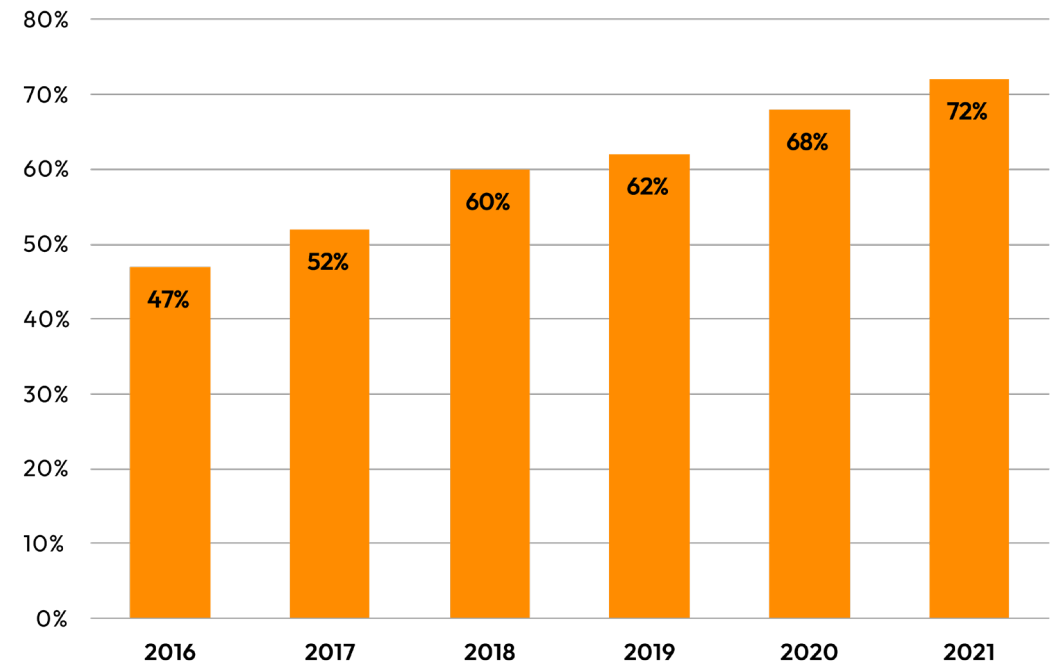
## Architects share information with ARB in the following ways:

**Architects must give us some basic information about themselves to be able to join the Register.** This includes their date of birth, binary gender\* and the location where they are based.

**Architects can also complete our optional EDI survey** in which they can give us information about their ethnicity, gender (including non-binary options), sexuality, religion, disability and their socio-economic background. Each question includes a 'prefer not to say' option so architects can choose what information to share.

The percentage of those who have voluntarily completed this survey has increased since 2016 and now over 70% of architects do so (see Fig 1).

Fig 1: Percentage of architects who have voluntarily provided their EDI data from 2016-2021



\* In December 2022 we changed the gender option on the application portal to include an 'other' category. This report uses data captured before that change.



# The architects' profession: key insights

# Architects Today: key insights from ARB's analysis

## Gender:

- Women are underrepresented in the architects' profession. Only 31% of architects are female, which is significantly lower than the UK population.
- Representation is improving over time: in 2021, almost half the new architects joining the Register were female. More younger architects joining the Register are women.

## Ethnicity:

- White people are overrepresented in the profession, accounting for 88% of architects but only 83% of the UK population.

- Black or Black British people are underrepresented on the Register, accounting for 1% of architects but 4% of the UK population. Asian or Asian British people are slightly underrepresented, accounting for 8% of architects but only 9% of the UK population.
- White men comprise a third of the Register, and White women a fifth. By comparison, 3% of architects on the UK Register are Asian or Asian British men, and 2% are Asian or Asian British women. Men and women of every other ethnic group each comprise less than 1% of the Register.
- Representation is improving over time. For example, in 2021, 77% of new registrants were White and 2% were Black or Black British.

# Architects Today: key insights from ARB's analysis

## Location:

- The architects' profession is not evenly distributed across the UK. Half of all architects are based in London and the South East, compared to 27% of the UK population.
- The second most common location is outside the UK.
- Representation is not improving. From 2016 to 2021, over 60% of architects joining the Register have been based in London and the South East.
- Whilst 50% of all architects on the Register are based in London and the South East, this region accounts for a higher proportion of architects of minority ethnicities. London and the South East is the location for 70% of Black or Black British architects; 64% of architects of a mixed ethnicity; and 58% of Asian or Asian British architects.

## Sexual orientation:

- The majority (78%) of architects identify as heterosexual or straight. Excluding those who prefer not to say, 96% of architects identify as heterosexual, compared to a national estimate that 89% of the UK population are heterosexual. This means that other sexual orientations are potentially underrepresented in the profession.
- Architects' sexual orientation – and whether they are comfortable sharing it – varies significantly across different ethnic groups.

# Architects Today: key insights from ARB's analysis

## Religion:

- Architects are less likely to be religious than the UK population at large: 41% of architects are non-religious and 34% are Christian. In comparison, 37% of the UK population say they are not religious and 48% describe themselves as Christian .
- The proportion of architects who say they are Christian increases with age: 47% of architects aged 51-70 are Christian; this drops to 34% in architects aged 30 or younger.
- Conversely, the proportion who are non-religious decreases: 43% of architects aged 30 or under are non-religious; this drops to 27% in architects aged 51-70.

## Disability:

- Only 1% of architects on the Register report that they have a disability. This is likely to be an area of underrepresentation.
- According to the latest census data, 17.7% of people in England report that they have physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting 12 months or more.

## Socio-economic mobility:

- Although our EDI survey asks a question to help us monitor the socio-economic background of the profession, we do not have enough data to analyse any trends. This is because most architects (96%) answer 'prefer not to say'.



Gender

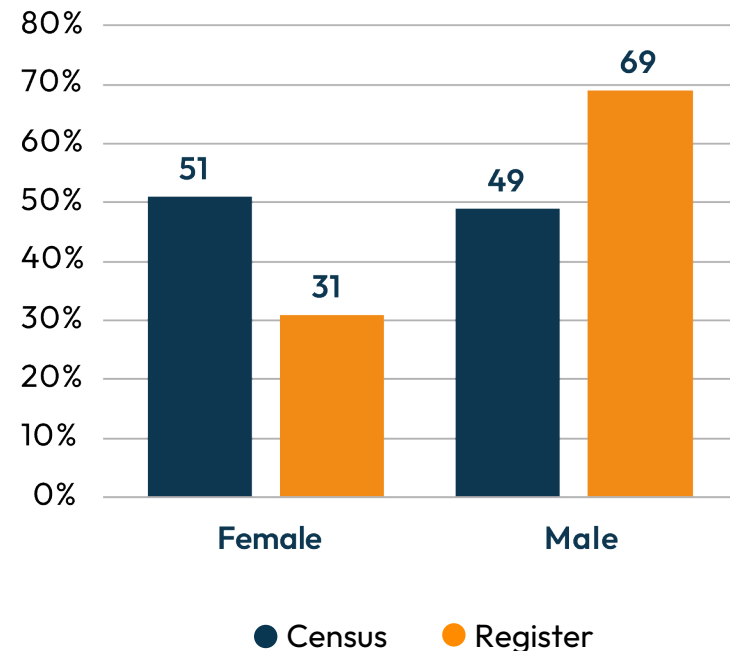
# Gender: all architects on the Register

Only 31% of architects are female, which is significantly lower than the UK population at 51%. Women are therefore underrepresented within the profession.

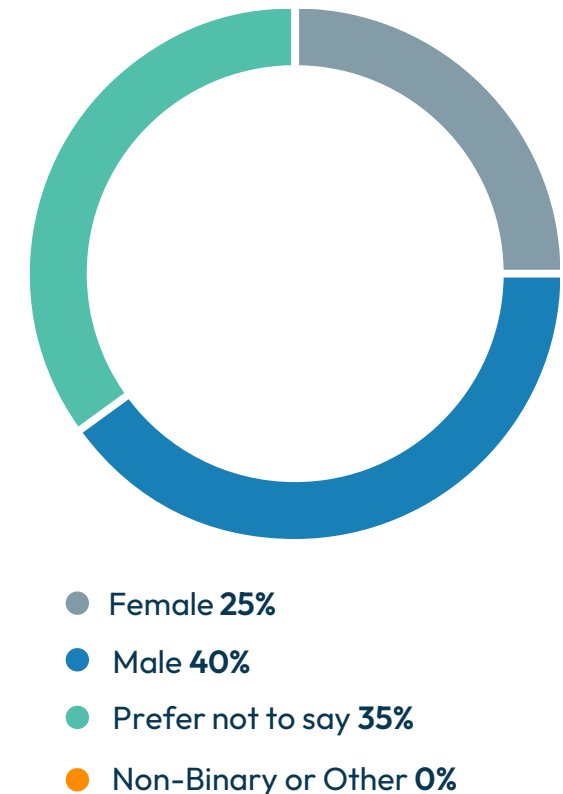
Figures for gender identity from our EDI survey also show underrepresentation.

Over a third of architects prefer not to say their gender identity, and 15 individuals identify as non-binary or other.

**Fig 2: Binary gender of UK population and architects**



**Fig 3: Gender identity of UK architects**



**Source:**

Architects – Binary gender: all 43,327 architects on the Register on 31 July 2022.

Architects – Gender identity: 30,447 architects had completed the EDI survey on 31 July 2022, equating to 70.27% of all UK architects.

UK population: Census data for England and Wales, [2 November 2022](#).

# Gender: new architects joining the Register

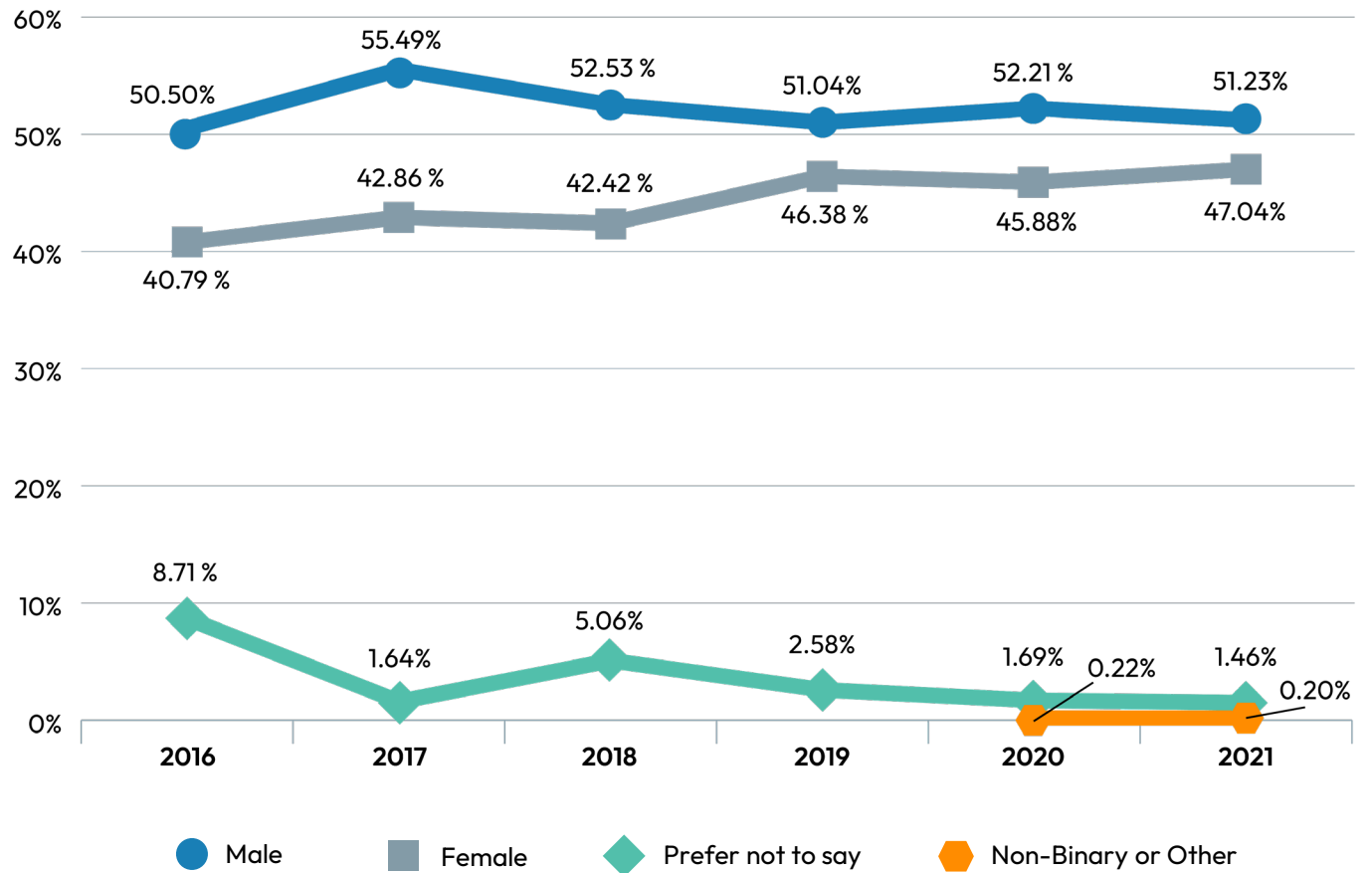
Across all age groups, the majority of those joining the Register from 2016 to 2021 identified as male.

The proportion of newly registered architects identifying as female has increased, from 41% in 2016 to 47% in 2021.

This trend has not been consistent but the increase has continued. In 2021, the difference between the male and female gender identity of architects joining the Register was about 4%, which was the lowest over the six-year period.

We first included 'non-binary' as an option on our EDI survey in 2020.

Fig 4: Gender identity of architects joining the Register 2016-2021



**Source:**

Gender identity of new architects joining the Register each year who have completed the EDI survey. Between 2,503 and 1,503 depending on the year.

# Gender: new architects joining the Register

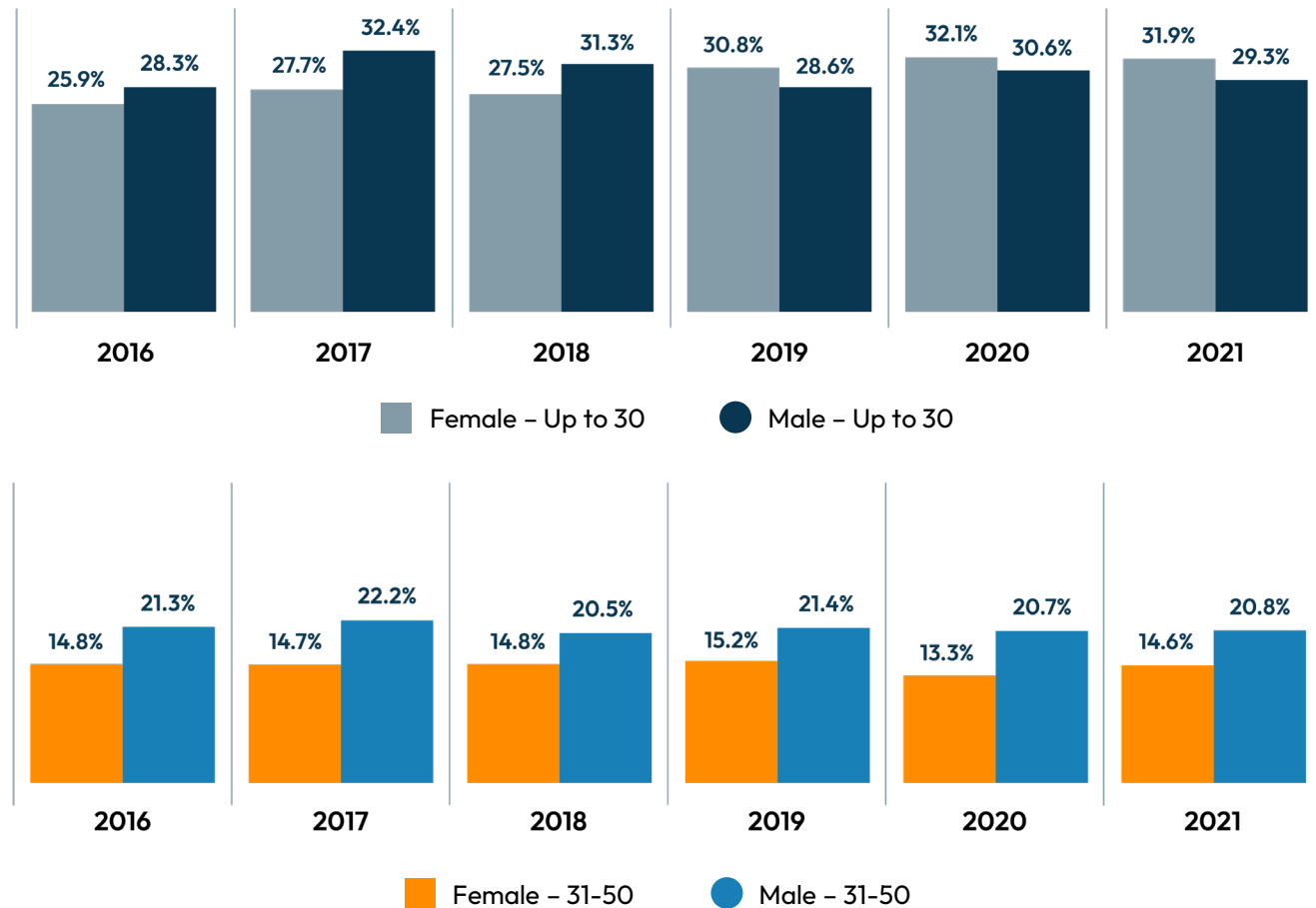
More younger architects joining the Register are women.

In 2016 a higher percentage of new architects were men under 30 than were women under 30. This changed from 2019 onwards.

By 2021, 31.9% of new architects were women under 30, compared to 29.3% being men under 30.

Men remained a higher percentage of older new joiners.

Fig 5: Age and gender of architects joining the Register 2016-2021



**Source:**

Gender identity and age at point of joining for new architects joining the Register each year who have completed the EDI survey. Between 2,503 and 1,503 depending on the year.

# Gender: students

UCAS data shows that more women apply, receive offers, and are accepted onto undergraduate courses to study architecture. Over 53% of applicants are now women, compared to just under 50% in 2016. During the same period, acceptance rates have also increased from 48.7% in 2016 to 51.5%.

This contrasts to 51% of qualifying architects who go on to join the Register being male and 47% female, which suggests that more women drop out of architecture between those points. However we do not have data to fully understand the point at which they leave or why.

Source:

Sources: [UCAS undergraduate end of cycle data](https://www.ucas.ac.uk/undergraduate-end-of-cycle-data) (up to the 2021 cycle)

Fig 6: Applications made to study architecture

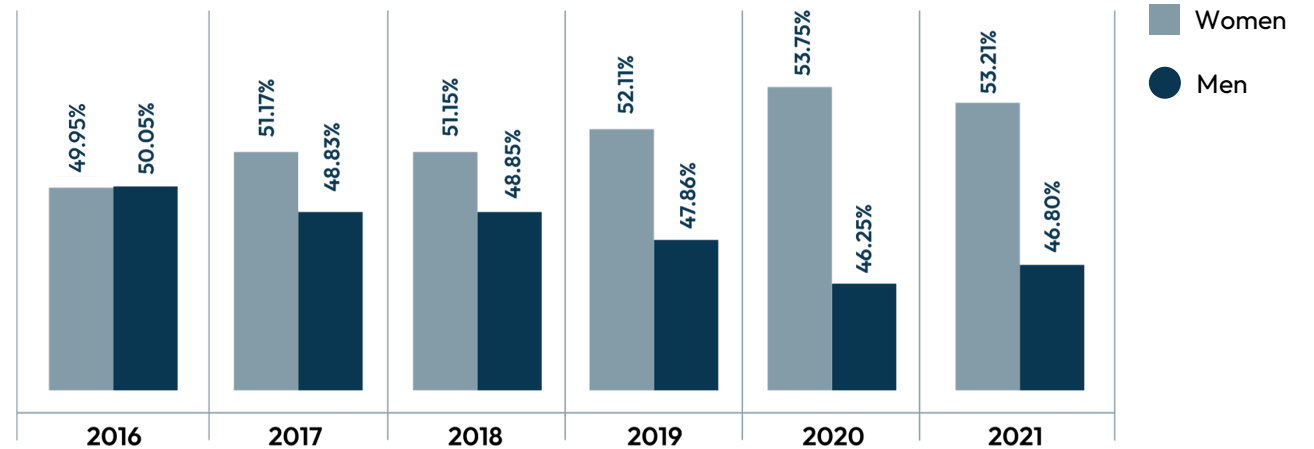
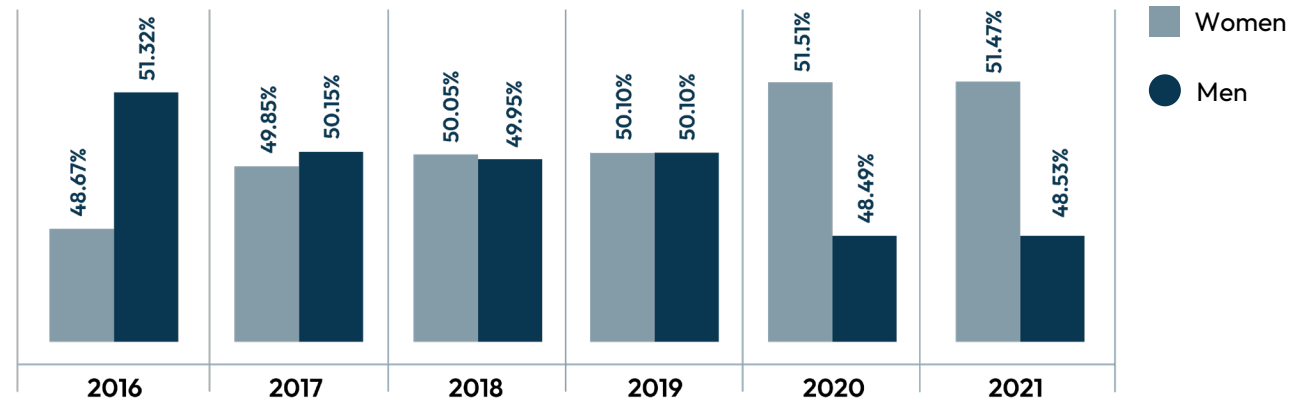


Fig 7: Applications accepted to study architecture



The background features a dark maroon color with several overlapping circles of varying sizes and opacities. A large, semi-transparent circle is centered in the middle, with the word "Ethnicity" written in white text inside it. Other circles are positioned to the left, right, and top, some overlapping the central one.

Ethnicity

# Ethnicity: all architects on the Register

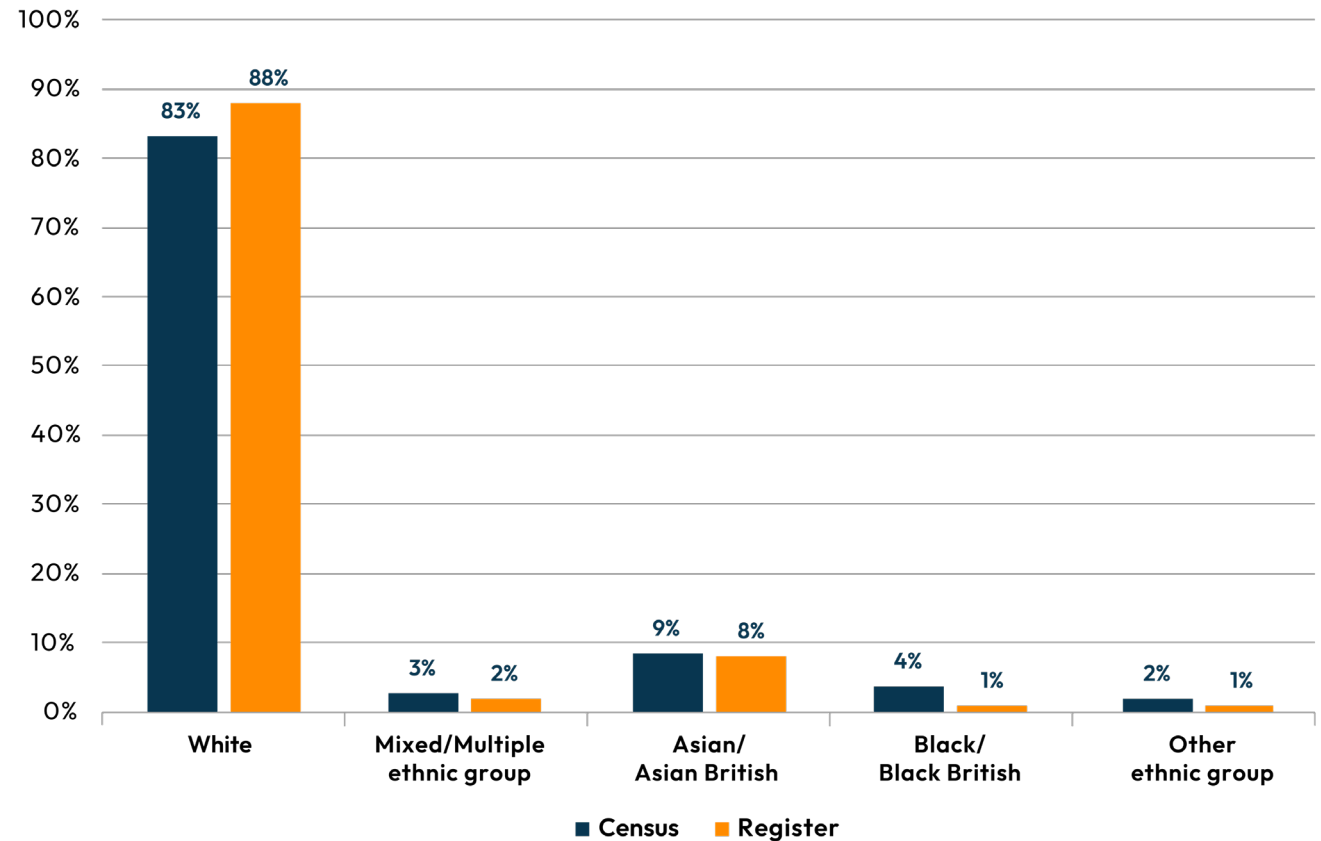
White people are overrepresented on the Register and most other ethnic groups are underrepresented.

88% of architects are White in comparison to 83% of the UK population.

Black or Black British people are underrepresented on the Register: 4% of the UK population are Black or Black British but only 1% of the Register. Asian or Asian British people are slightly underrepresented, accounting for 8% of the Register but 9% of the UK population.

Mixed and Other ethnic groups account for 2% and 1% of the Register respectively, but 3% and 2% of the UK population.

Fig 8: Ethnicity of UK population and architects



**Source:**

Architects: 30,448 architects had completed the EDI survey on 31 July 2022, equating to 70.27% of all UK Registered architects. Percentages calculated excluding 'prefer not to say'. UK population: Census data for England and Wales, [29 November 2022](#); Scotland, [2011](#); and Northern Ireland, [22 September 2022](#)

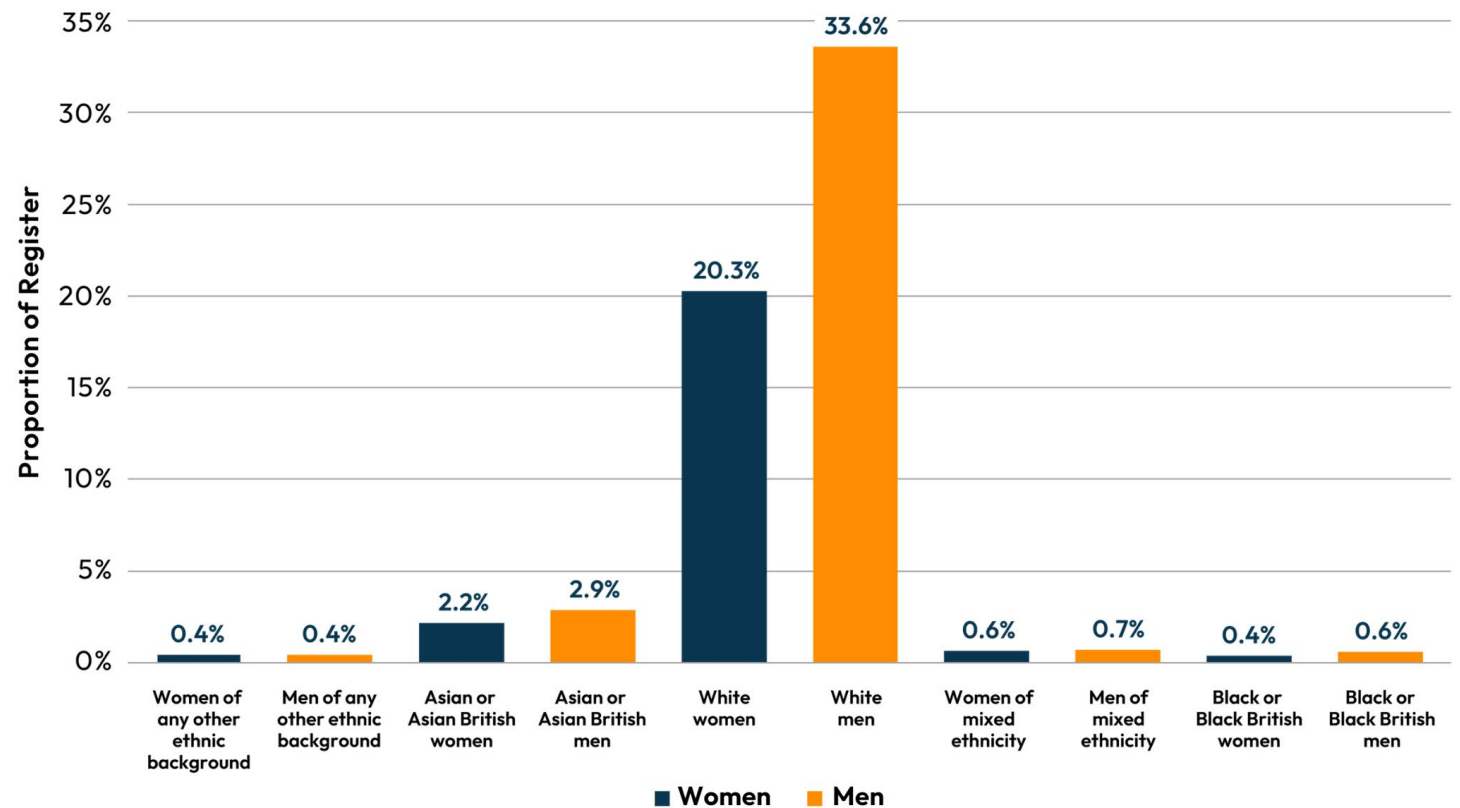
# Ethnicity and gender: all architects on the Register

White men comprise a third of the Register, and White women a fifth.

By comparison, 3% of architects on the UK Register are Asian or Asian British men, and 2% are Asian or Asian British women. Men and women of every other ethnic group each comprise less than 1% of the Register.

In addition, 7% prefer not to say their ethnicity.

Fig 9: Composition of Register by gender and ethnicity



**Source:**

Architects: 30,447 architects had completed the EDI survey on 31 July 2022, equating to 70.27% of all UK Registered architects.



# Ethnicity: new architects joining the Register

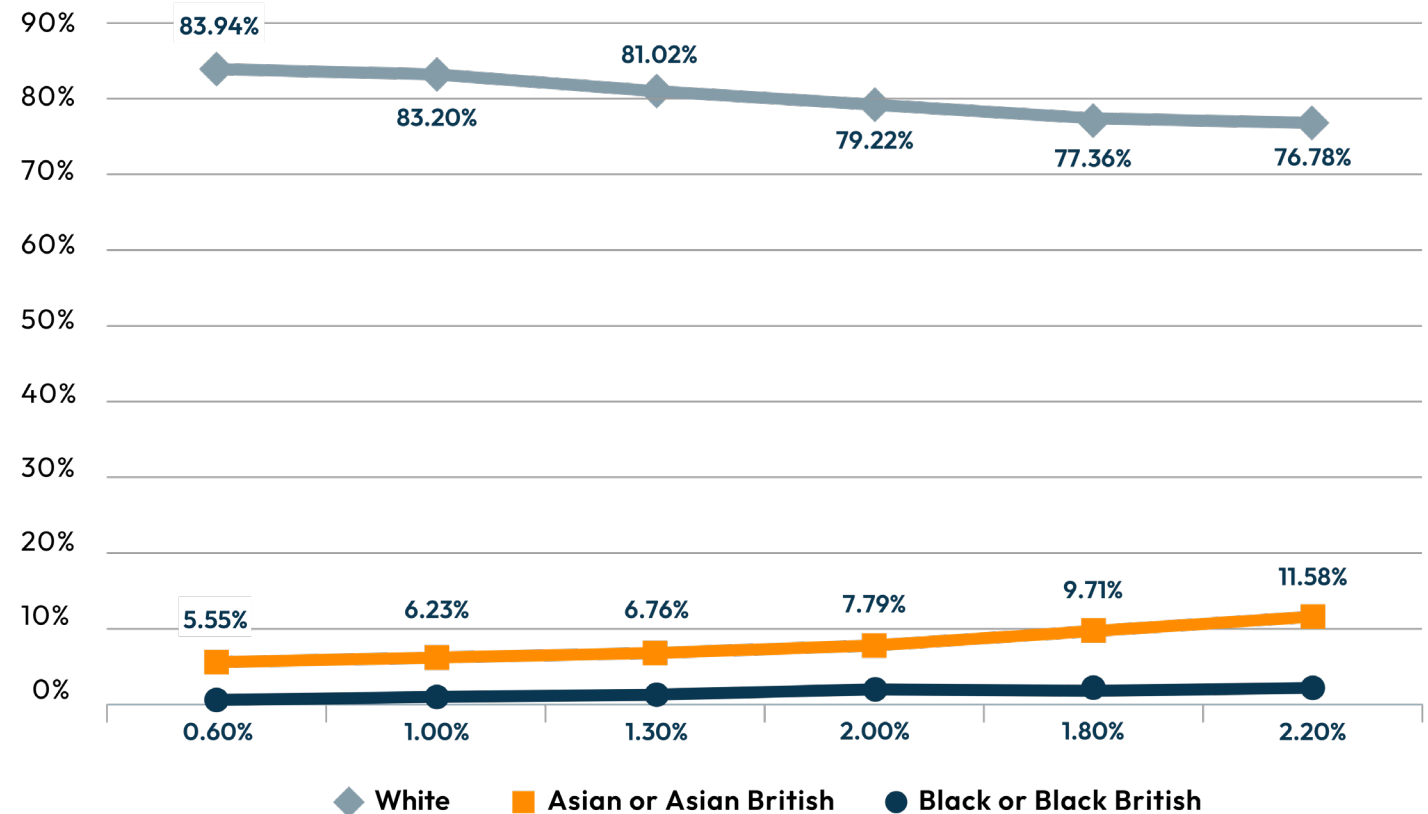
The proportion of new registrants who are White reduced consistently from 2016 to 2021. Conversely, the proportion of new registrants who are Asian or Asian British and Black or Black British rose.

83.94% of new registrants in 2016 were White. This dropped to 76.78% in 2021.

5.55% of new registrants in 2016 were Asian or Asian British. This rose to 11.58% in 2021.

0.60% of new registrants in 2016 were Black or Black British. This rose to 2.20% in 2021.

Fig 10: Ethnicity of architects joining the Register 2016-2021



**Source:**

Ethnicity of new architects joining the Register each year who have completed the EDI survey. Between 2,503 and 1,503 depending on the year.

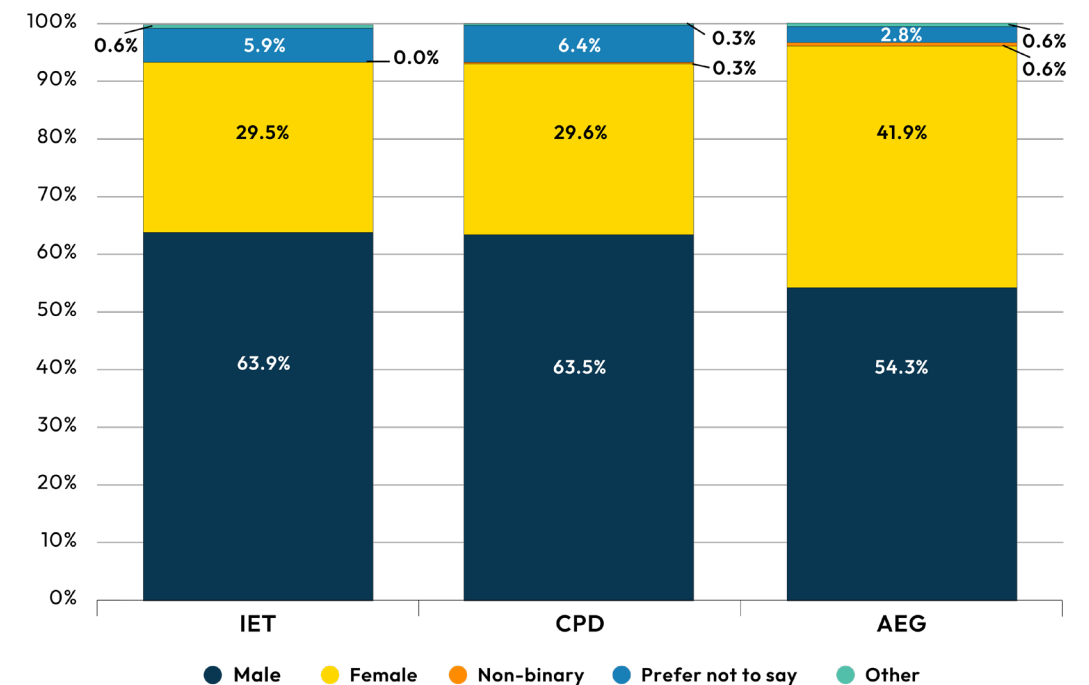
# Gender and ethnicity of stakeholders engaging with us

Our engagement reaches a more diverse cross section of the profession, slightly closer to the profile of the UK population, than the Register as a whole. We know this from our analysis of respondents to our surveys on CPD and initial education and training (both in 2021), as well as membership of our ongoing Architects Engagement Group.

Fig 11: Ethnicity of ARB stakeholder respondents



Fig 12: Gender of ARB stakeholder respondents



Source:

Respondents to our surveys on our [CPD](#) and [education](#) proposals, and membership of the Architects Engagement Group (the latter is unpublished).

# Location

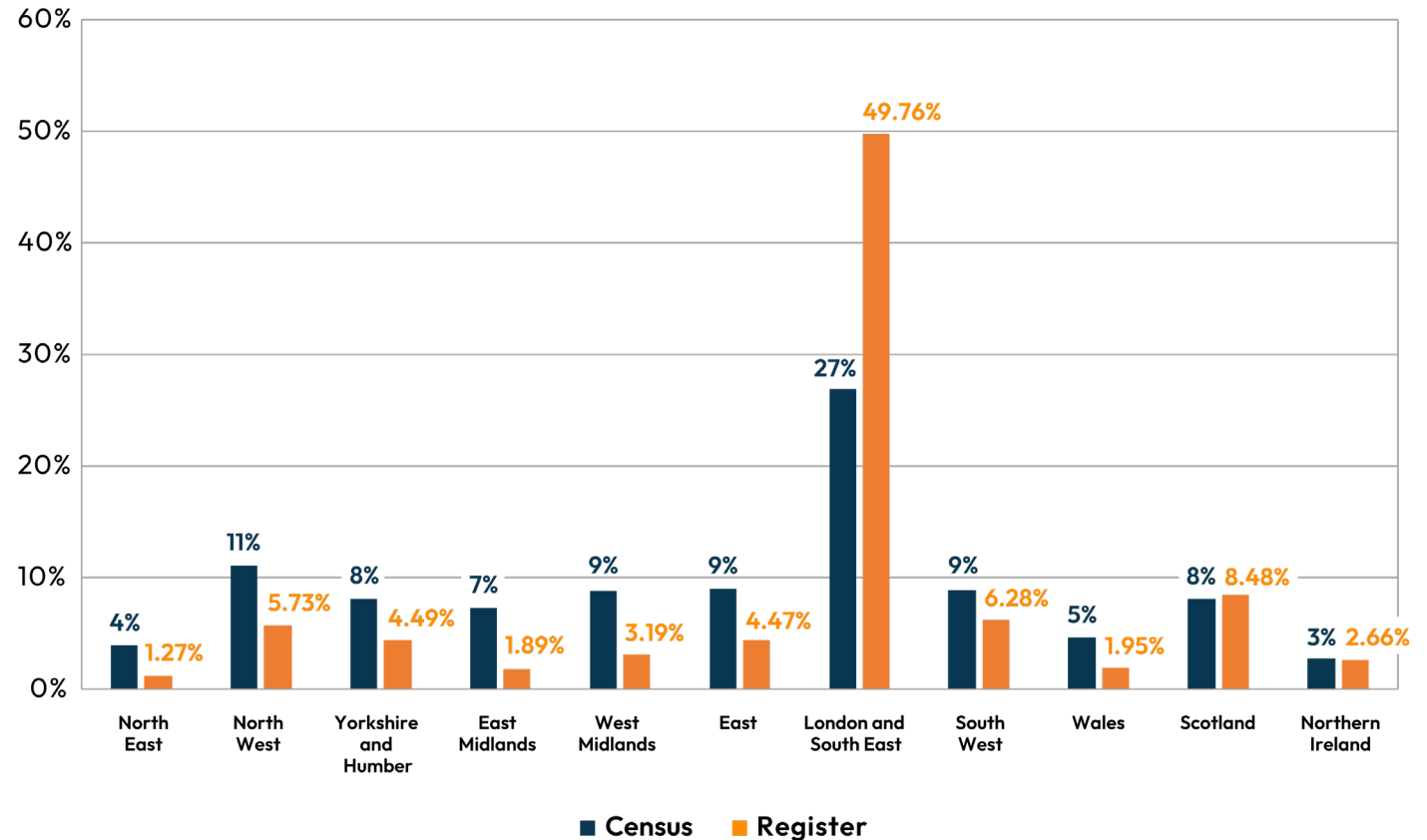
# Location: all architects on the Register

Half (50%) of all architects are based in London and the South East, compared to 27% of the UK population. This demonstrates a lack of geographical spread of the profession, with many regions of the UK underrepresented.

The second most common location is outside the UK. Scotland is the third most common location (8%), which also has a slightly higher proportion of architects compared to the UK population.

All other regions are underrepresented.

Fig 13: Location of UK population and architects



**Source:**

Architects: location is derived from the address of all 43,327 architects on the Register on 31 July 2022.

UK population: Census data for England and Wales, [28 June 2022](#); Scotland, [13 July 2022](#); Northern Ireland, [22 September 2022](#)

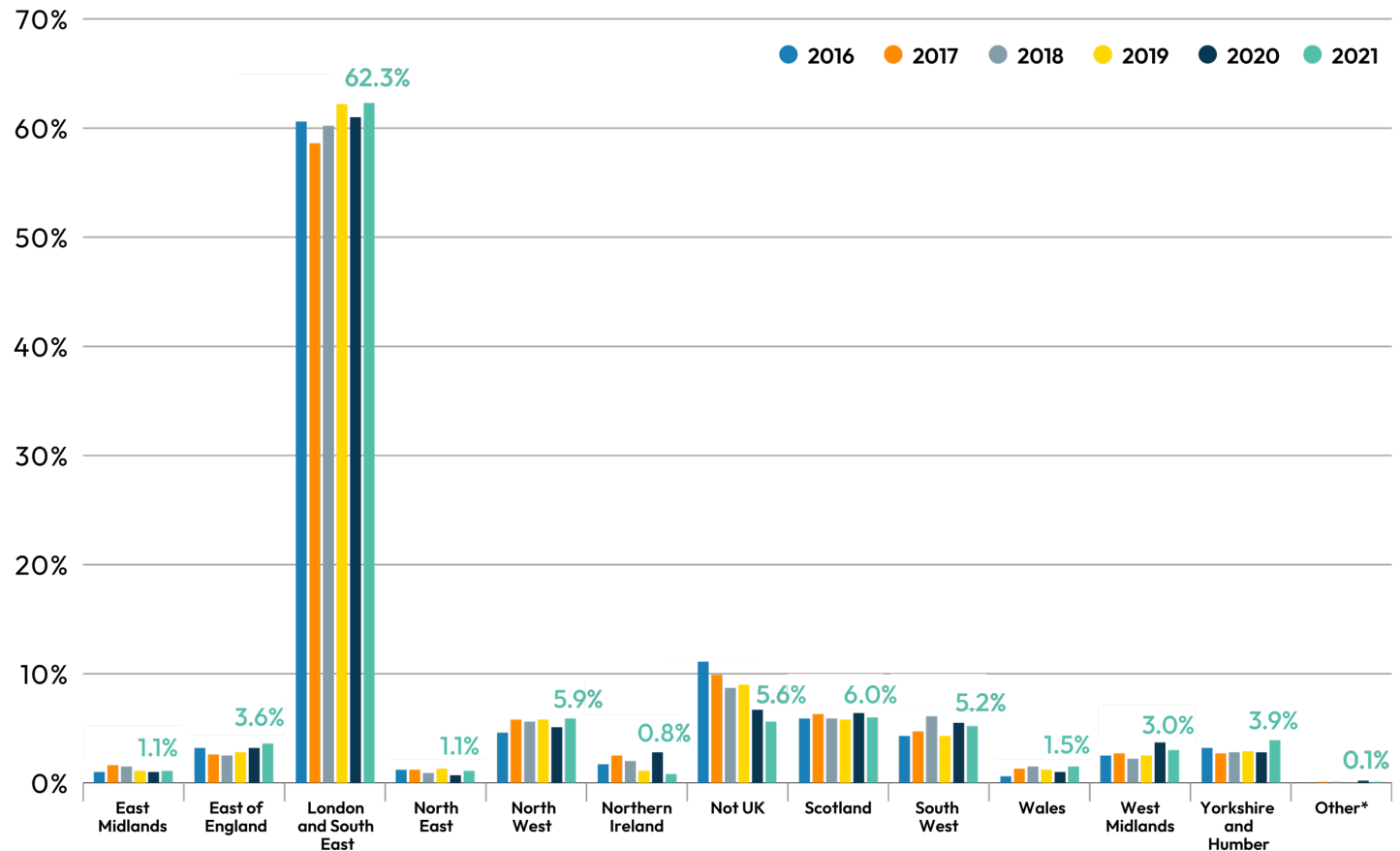
# Location: new architects joining the Register

From 2016 to 2021, over 60% of architects joining the Register have been based in London and the South East.

The second most common group is architects located outside the UK, although the proportion of newly registered architects outside the UK has decreased over the six year period of this study.

There is no consistency in regards to incline or decline in numbers for any region from 2016 to 2021 as the numbers fluctuate.

Fig 14: Location of architects joining the register



**Source:** Addresses of new architects joining the Register each year. Between 2,503 and 1,503 depending on the year.

\*Other includes the Channel Islands, Jersey and Isle of Man

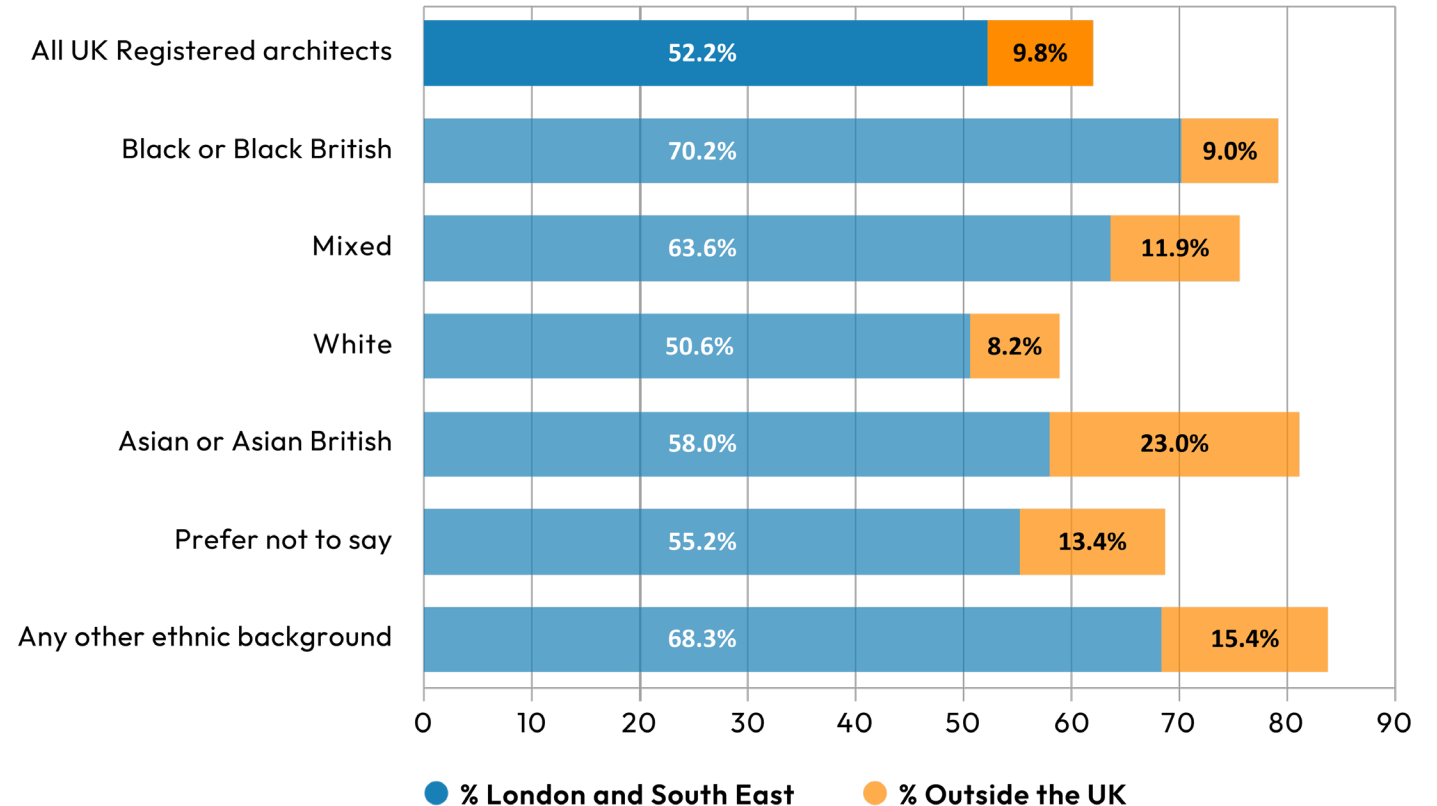
# Location and ethnicity: all architects on the Register

There is regional variation by ethnicity. London and the South East has:

- 70% of Black or Black British architects
- 64% of architects of a mixed ethnicity
- 58% of Asian or Asian British architects.

Almost a quarter (23%) of Asian or Asian British architects are based outside the UK, compared to 10% of all registered architects.

Fig 15: Ethnicity of architects in London and the South East or outside of the UK



Source: Architects: 30,447 architects had completed the EDI survey on 31 July 2022, equating to 70.27% of all UK Registered architects.

# Sexual orientation

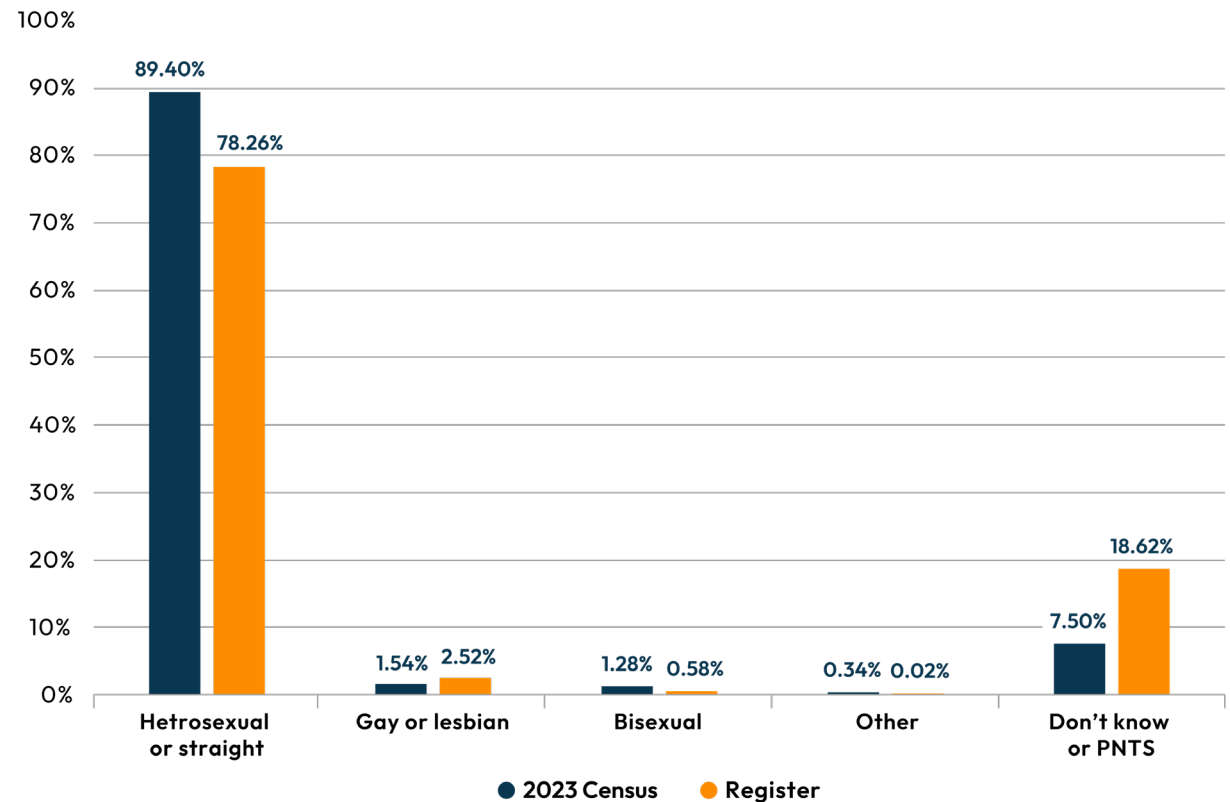
# Sexual orientation: all architects on the Register

The majority of architects identify as heterosexual: 78% of all architects are heterosexual or straight and 19% prefer not to say.

Excluding those who prefer not to say their sexual orientation, 96% of architects identify as heterosexual, compared to a national estimate that 89% of the UK population are heterosexual. This means that other sexual orientations are potentially underrepresented in the profession.

Architects' sexual orientation – and whether they are comfortable sharing it – varies significantly across different ethnic groups. For example, 84% of White architects are heterosexual and 13% prefer not to say, whereas 90% of Black or Black British architects are heterosexual and 8% prefer not to say.

Fig 16: Sexual orientation of UK population and architects



**Source:**

Architects: 30,447 architects had completed the EDI survey on 31 July 2022, equating to 70.27% of all UK Registered architects.  
UK population: 2021 census data for England and Wales [published 6 January 2023](#).



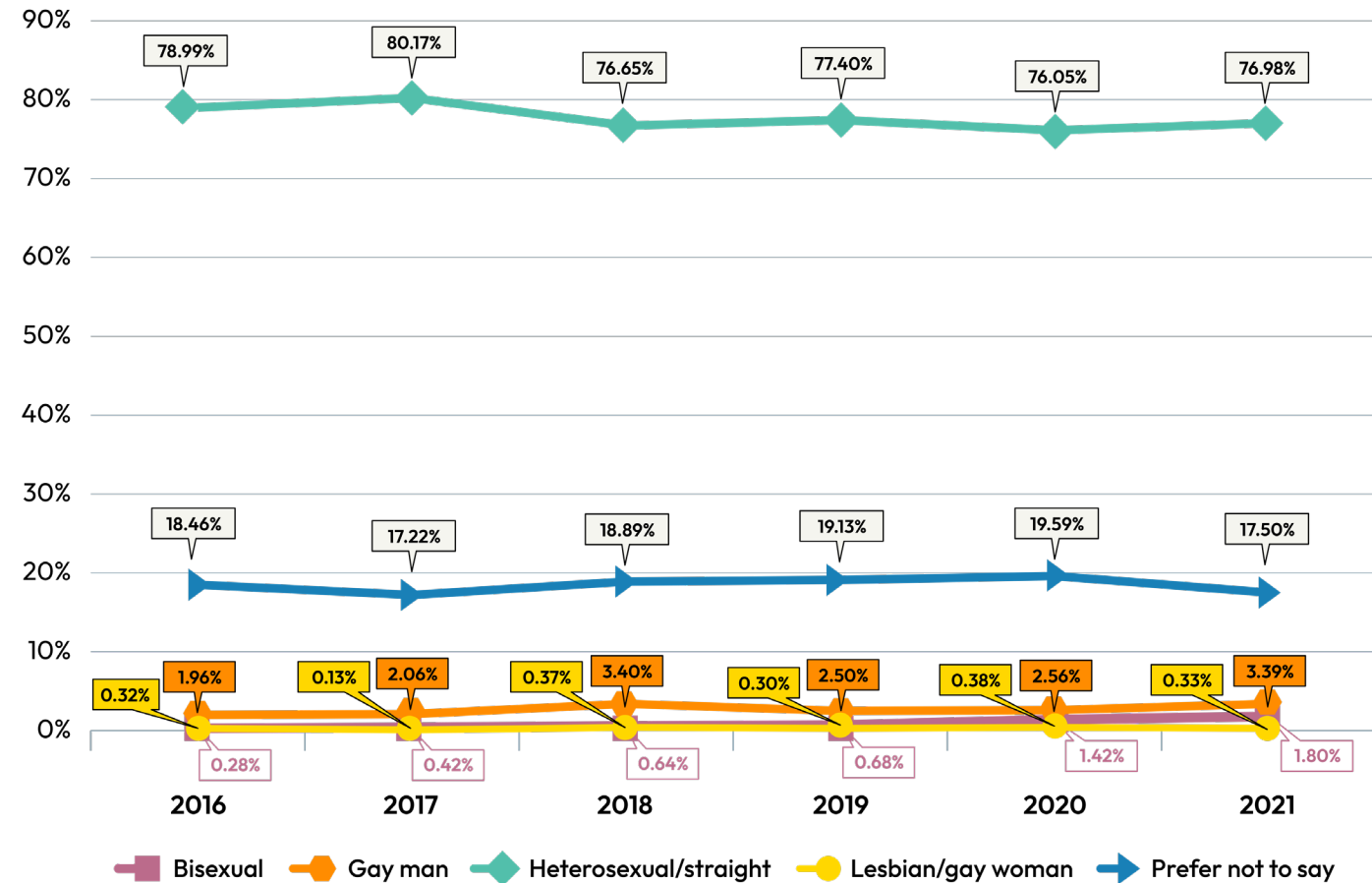
# Sexual orientation: new architects joining the Register

The majority of new registrants identified as heterosexual or straight.

A large proportion of architects preferred not to say, with an average of 18% doing so over the six years.

These percentages remained consistent throughout the six year period.

Fig 17: Sexual orientation of architects joining the Register in 2016-2022



**Source:**

Sexual orientation of new architects joining the Register each year who have completed the EDI survey. Between 2,503 and 1,503 depending on the year.

The background features a dark blue field with several overlapping circles of varying shades of blue and white. A thin white line curves across the scene, passing through the center where the word 'Religion' is located.

Religion

# Religion: all architects on the Register

Architects are less likely to be religious than the UK population at large: 41% of architects are non-religious and 34% are Christian. This compares to 37% of the UK population saying they are not religious and 48% describing themselves as Christian and

The proportion of architects who say they are Christian increases with age.

Conversely, the proportion who are non-religious decreases:

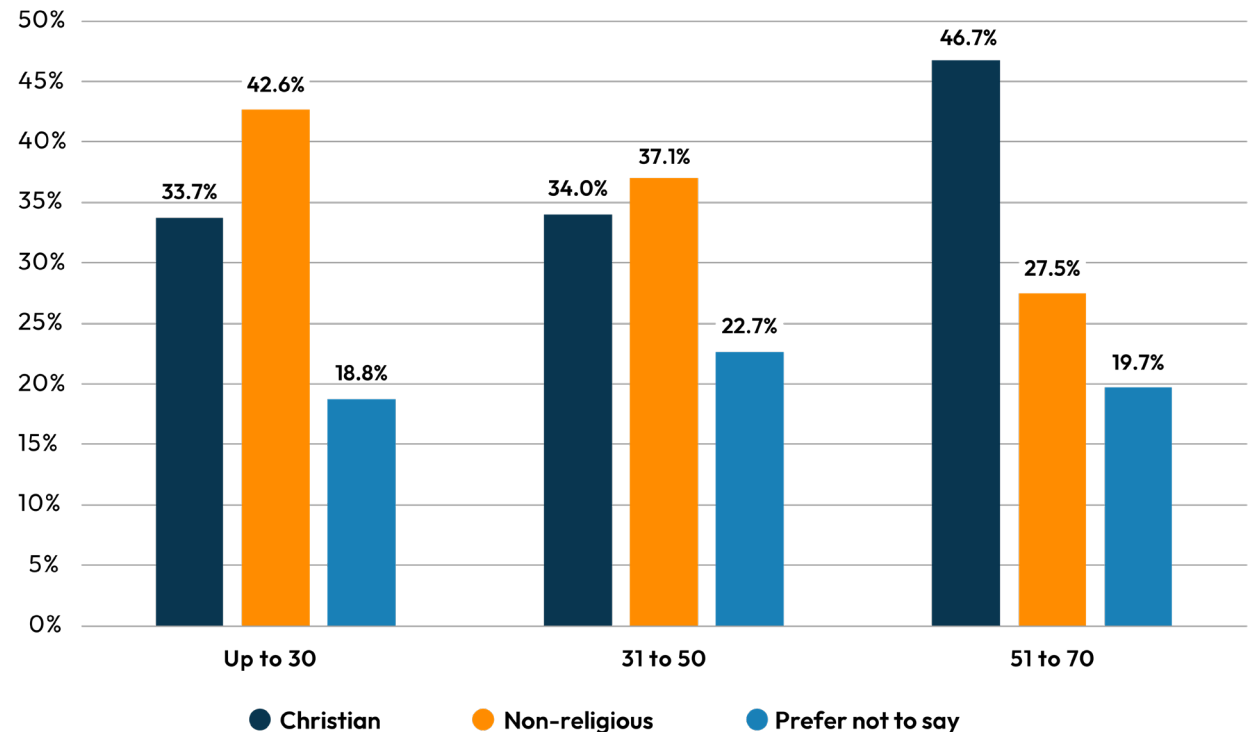
- 47% of architects aged 51-70 are Christian; this drops to 34% in architects aged 30 or younger
- 43% of architects aged 30 or under are non-religious; this drops to 27% in architects aged 51-70.

#### Source:

Architects: 30,447 architects had completed the EDI survey on 31 July 2022, equating to 70.27% of all UK Registered architects.

UK population: 2021 census data for England and Wales, [29 November 2022](#); Scotland, [2011](#); and Northern Ireland, [22 September 2022](#)

Fig 18: Religion and age of architects





Disability

# Disability: all architects on the Register

People with disabilities are potentially\* underrepresented on the Register. In England, in 2021, 17.7% of people were disabled and in Wales, 21.1%. Only 1% of architects on the Register report that they have a disability. We cannot analyse any trends in a group so small as 1% of the Register, and would like to improve our data.

Fig 19: UK architects

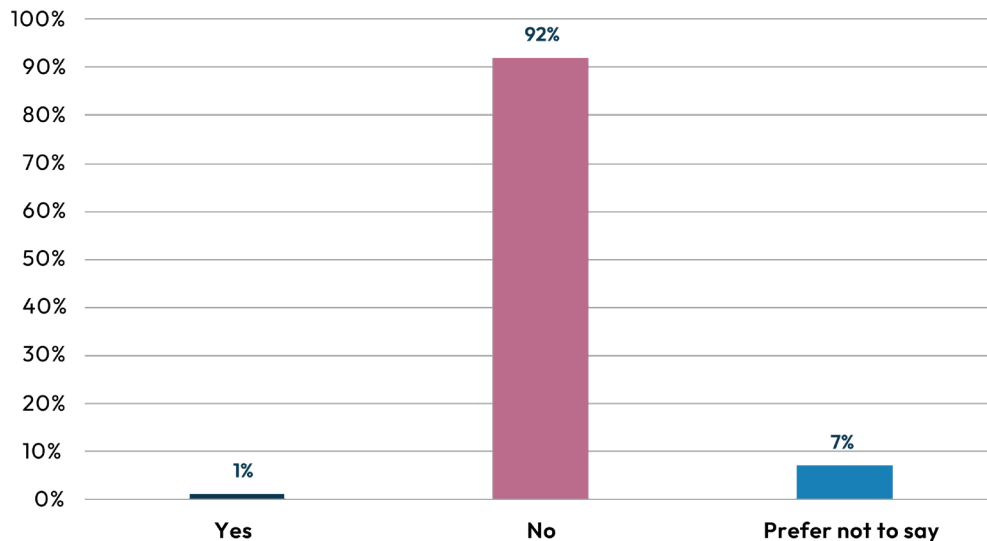
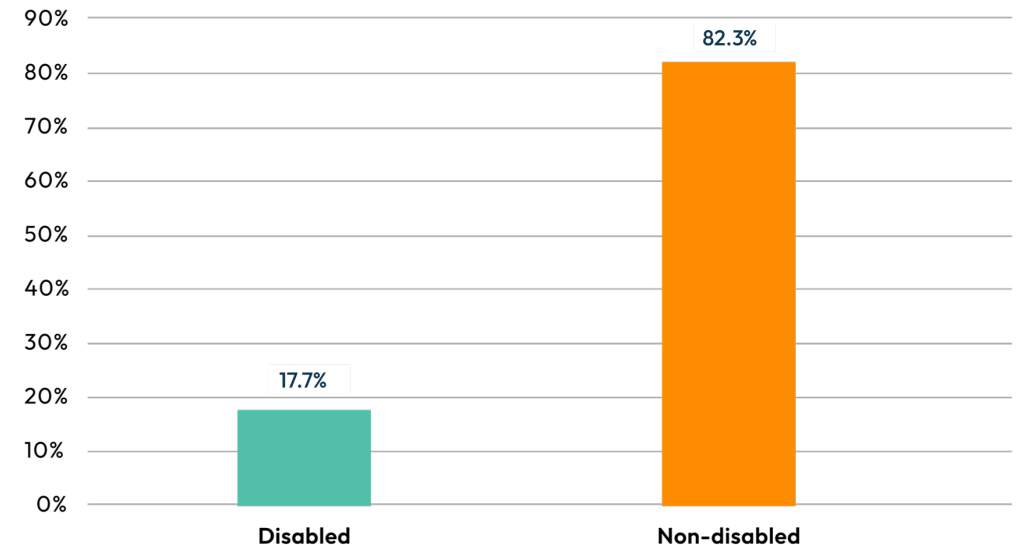


Fig 20: England



**Source:**

Architects: 30,447 architects had completed the EDI survey on 31 July 2022, equating to 70.27% of all UK Registered architects.

UK population: 2021 census data for England and Wales, [19 January 2023](#).

\*: Our EDI survey and the census ask different questions. Our survey asks "Do you consider yourself to have a disability?" The census asks "Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more?" with follow up questions about day to day limitations for those who answer yes.

The background features a dark blue field with several overlapping circles of varying shades of blue and white. A thin white line curves across the scene, passing through the center where the text is located.

Socio-economic mobility

# Socio-economic mobility: all architects on the Register

To help us understand social mobility into the profession, we ask:

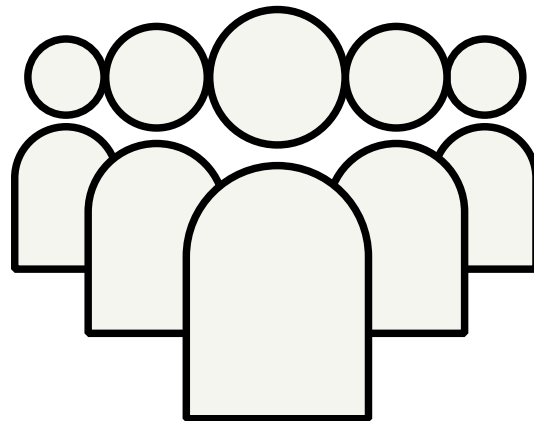
By the time you were 14 years old, had one or more of your parent(s) or guardian(s) completed a university degree course or equivalent (e.g. BA, BSc, or higher)?

The majority (96%) of architects answering the this question chose 'prefer not to say'.

Of those who gave a response to this question, the figures were very similar:

- 535 (1.76%) said their parents did not have a degree, and
- 565 (1.86%) said their parents did.

We cannot analyse any trends due to the limited information we have, and would like to improve our data.





# Conclusions and ARB's actions



## The architects' profession does not reflect the makeup of society:

- Women are underrepresented on the Register.
- White people are over represented on the Register.
- Heterosexual or straight people are potentially over represented on the Register; we say 'potentially' because a significant proportion of architects (19%) prefer not to say.
- The profession is not evenly dispersed across the country.
- Gender and ethnic diversity are improving year on year, but the geographical spread across the UK is not.

## We would like to improve our data and understanding of:

- The gender and ethnic representation of those in initial education and training, and the points at which some groups drop out of the profession;
- Why so few architects state that they have a disability compared to national trends;
- Why some people choose to 'prefer not to say' and how we can improve our data on certain characteristics of the profession, including sexual orientation and socio-economic mobility.

# What will ARB do to help improve representation?

## We will take action through our education review to:

- collect additional data from institutions to help us better understand how students progress through initial education and training;
- set clear expectations of learning providers in relation to EDI, and test through accreditation whether they are meeting their stated commitments;
- develop the academic and practice outcomes a professional must achieve in order to join the Register, to more explicitly signal the importance of respect, and advocating for equality, diversity and inclusion.

## We will:

- Use our planned review of the **Architects Code of Conduct** to reinforce that architects should treat each other, clients and communities with the professionalism and respect they deserve, and advocate for equality, diversity and inclusion. This will also include looking at the expectations of how those in leadership roles can support students on placements and architects early in their careers.

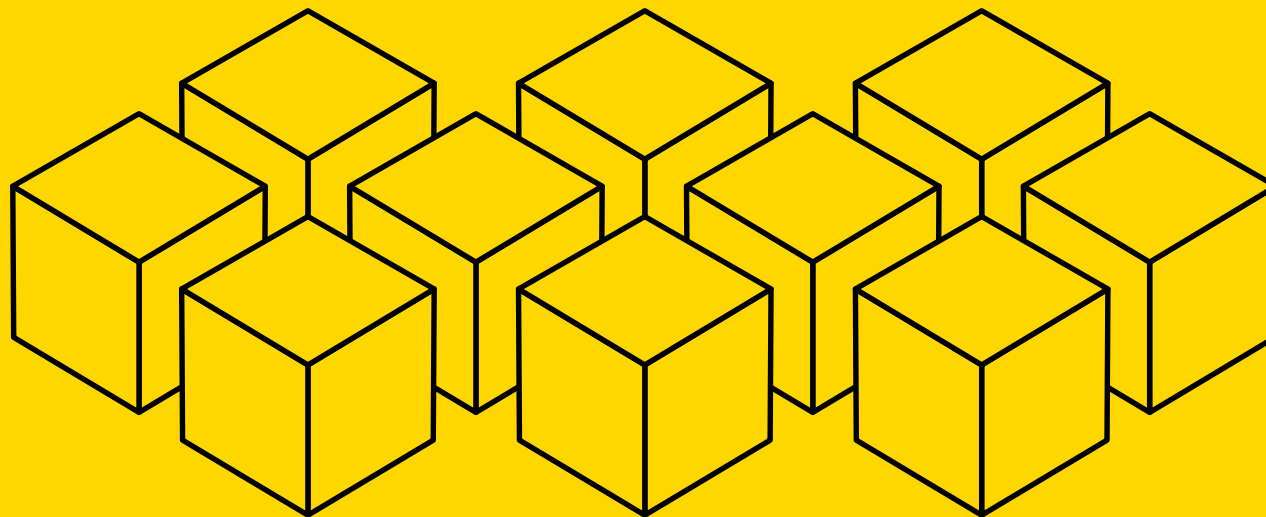
# What will ARB do to help improve representation?

## We will update our EDI survey so that it reflects more modern approaches to language and research. In particular we will:

- change the Registration process so that people only answer one question on their gender, and ensure that question includes multiple (not binary only) options, drawing on the format in the census;
- change our question on disability to better match the census format, and promote awareness of different forms that disability can take, to help people answer our question on it;
- change our question(s) on social mobility and better explain how we will use responses.

## We will:

- **continue to analyse and publish** the characteristics and makeup of new architects joining the profession each year (in the same format as our analysis of new registrants between 2016 and 2021) to understand whether the profession is changing.
- **continue to capture information through our consultations** so we can know whether we are getting a proper and wide range of views on our policy proposals, and so that we can understand whether those proposals are inclusive.
- **work with other organisations** in the profession and across the built environment industry to find out more about what they're doing, what they think we could do more of, and what insight they might have for our own work so that we can address the issues together.



# WORK WITH US



Architects  
Registration  
Board

To stay in touch with ARB, or to work with us to help shape our regulatory approach:

Email us at [communications@arb.org.uk](mailto:communications@arb.org.uk)

Join the Architects Engagement Group or follow us on social media: all links available at [arb.org.uk/talk-to-us/](http://arb.org.uk/talk-to-us/)