

Office for
Students



Staff at the Office for Students

Equality statistics 2024

Reference OfS 2024.38

Enquiries to DFA@officeforstudents.org.uk

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Contents

Key findings	2
Introduction	3
Staff characteristics	5
Working pattern	5
Appointments	5
Leavers	5
Age	6
Disability	7
Race	7
Religion or belief	8
Sex	9
Sexual orientation	10

Key findings

The Office for Students (OfS) is the independent regulator of higher education in England. We employ a workforce of approximately 490 people.

This section describes the makeup of our staff population split by six protected characteristics. Key findings are:

Age – The staff employed by the OfS have a median age of 39.

Disability – 14 per cent of OfS staff have reported that they have a disability.

Race – 15 per cent of OfS staff have declared they are from an ethnic minority background.

Religion or belief – 25 per cent of OfS staff have a declared religion or belief.

Sex – Approximately two-thirds of OfS staff are female and one-third are male.

Sexual orientation – 6 per cent of OfS staff have declared they are lesbian, gay, bisexual or other.

Introduction

1. The Office for Students (OfS) is the independent regulator of higher education in England. We are publishing this data in the interests of transparency, and to contribute to our compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty. This data is used internally to understand the impact of our policy decisions, for example in relation to pay and benefits.
2. This report is an update to the version published in September 2023 (OfS 2023.50).¹ This data does not constitute Official Statistics, but was produced following the principles of the Code of Practice for Statistics.²
3. The OfS employs around 490 staff and so is considerably smaller than the majority of Civil Service departments.³
4. The OfS staff profile data in this report covers all those employed by the OfS including permanent staff, fixed-term staff and sandwich year placement students. It does not include members of our board, our committees, our student panel, contractors or agency staff.
5. As part of our Public Sector Equality Duty, OfS staff profile data is presented by reference to the following six protected characteristics:
 - age
 - disability
 - race⁴
 - religion or belief
 - sex
 - sexual orientation.
6. The number of staff reporting gender reassignment (that their sex is different from their sex registered at birth) does not meet our threshold for inclusion of this data.⁵
7. We do not report on the protected characteristic of marriage and civil partnerships, as we do not currently collect this data.

¹ See OfS, [‘Staff at the Office for Students: Equality statistics 2023’](#).

² See Code of Practice for Statistics, [‘About the code’](#).

³ See Goc.UK, [‘Civil Service statistics: 2023’](#).

⁴ Note that staff are asked the question ‘What is your ethnic group?’. The Equality Act 2010 states that race includes ‘ethnic or national origins’.

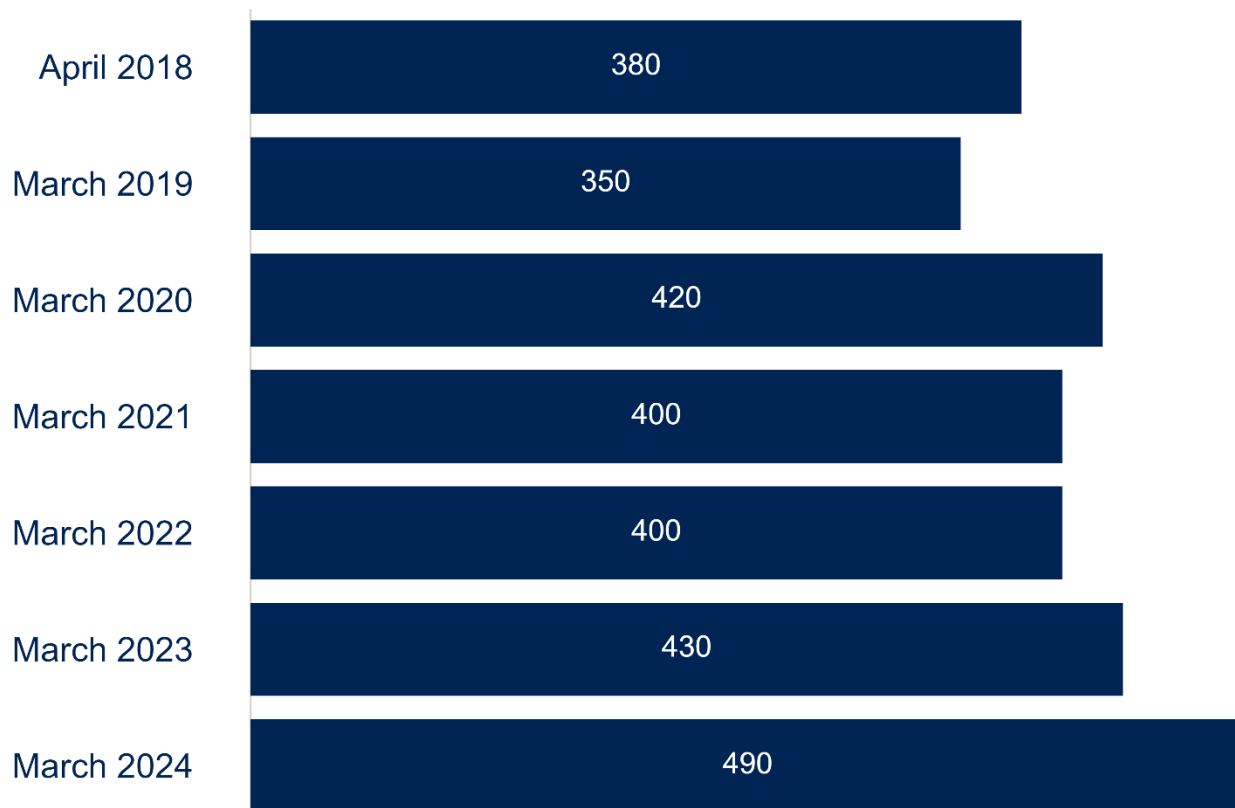
⁵ Data is suppressed where the group represents five or fewer responses.

8. We do not report on the protected characteristic of pregnancy or maternity, as this may vary during the reporting period.
9. OfS staff profile data is presented based on annual census points, to show the current composition of the OfS and how this has changed. Figure 1 shows the total count of OfS staff at these census points, rounded to the nearest ten.
10. We include proportions for all characteristic categories, including 'prefer not to say' and noncompletion. It is important to consider the size of 'prefer not to say' and noncompletion when making comparisons between other categories.
11. This publication also includes data on the number of the appointments made to the OfS, and some high-level data related to the number of staff who have left the OfS in recent years.
12. To allow a consistent approach to visualisation, the staff profile charts present the categories for which the characteristic is known in alphabetical order. Where relevant, these are then followed by 'prefer not to say' and 'not completed'. The only exception to this is age group, which is presented in ascending order.
13. To protect individuals' data, we have rounded counts to the nearest ten, and proportions to the nearest one percentage point. Furthermore, counts and proportions for categories that apply to five or fewer staff are suppressed. For the data on appointments and leavers, counts are rounded to the nearest five. This is because the data is not split by personal characteristics, so the disclosure risk is much lower.
14. The data associated with this report can be found in Annex A published alongside this report.⁶
15. In April 2021 we changed our collection of staff profile data so that it is more in line with the Government Statistical Service harmonisation standards. This updated recording and categorisation of staff characteristics has helped us to have a better understanding of our staff. However, this change has led to a reduction in disclosure rates for several characteristics. As a result, interpreting time series trends by comparing data before and after March 2021 should be avoided.

⁶ See OfS, '[Staff at the Office for Students: Equality statistics 2024](#)'.

Staff characteristics

Figure 1: OfS staff totals



Working pattern

16. Around 77 per cent of OfS staff work full-time and 23 per cent work part-time.

Appointments

17. The OfS made 206 staff appointments between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024. Of these, 133 were new starters and 56 were internal appointments for staff already working at the OfS. The other 17 appointments were temporary promotions for current staff. Because the numbers are small, we do not include data on appointments split by staff characteristics.

Leavers

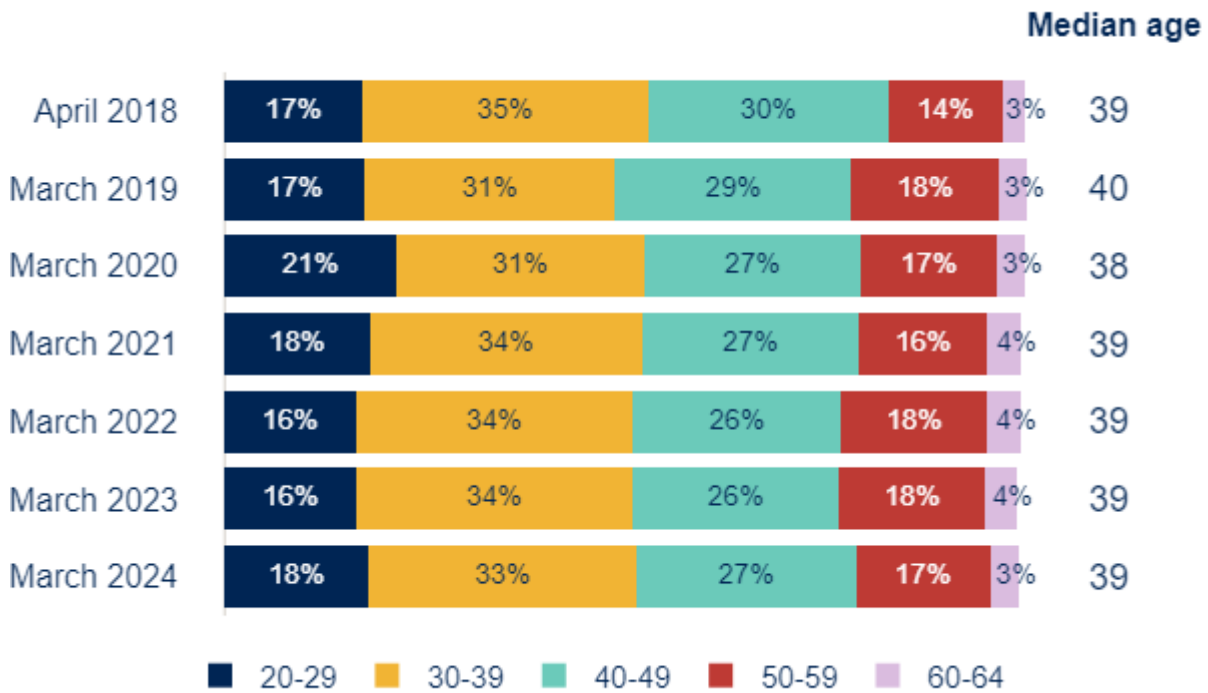
18. Between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024, 68 staff left the OfS. These leavers comprise staff on permanent contracts and those who have reached the end of fixed-term contracts (including our sandwich year placement students). Because these numbers are small, we do not include data on staff who have left the OfS split by characteristic.

Age

The staff employed by the OfS have a median age of 39.

19. Figure 2 shows the current age profile of OfS staff and how it compares with previous years. Age is known for all members of staff because their date of birth must be provided as part of the application process for our pension scheme.

Figure 2: OfS staff by age group

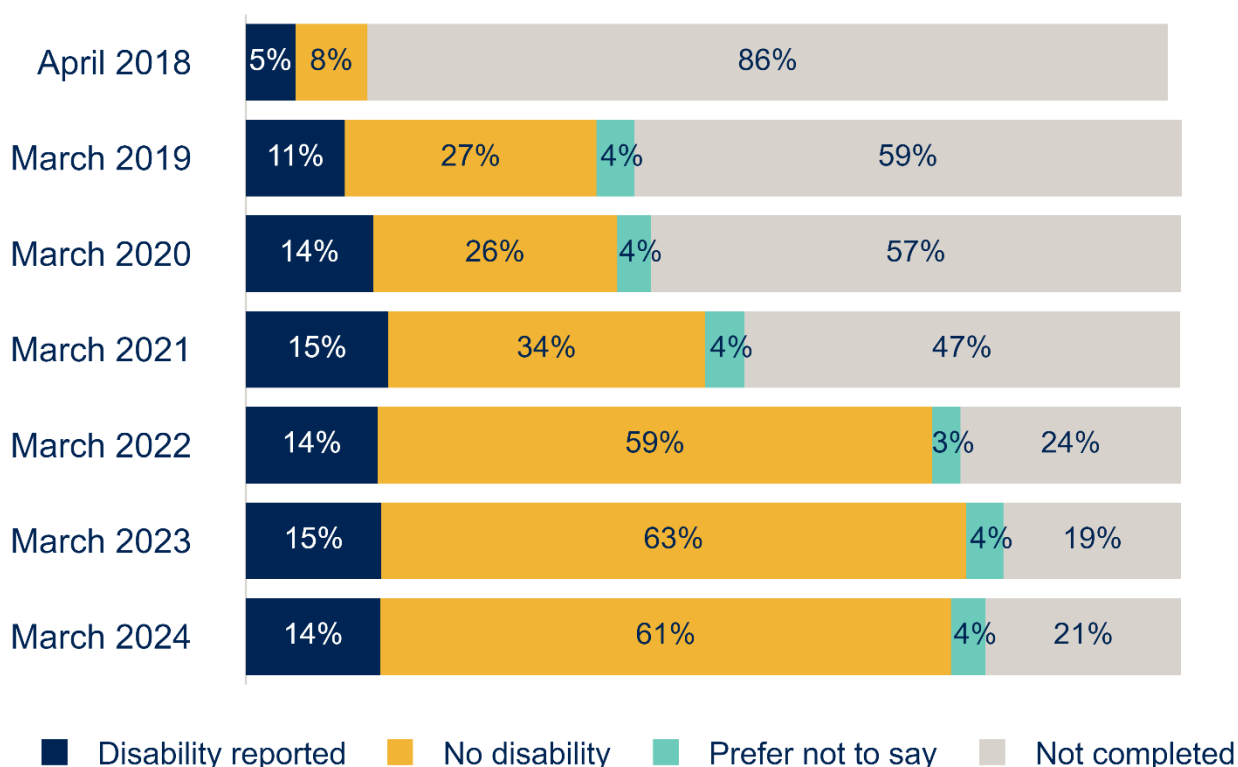


Note: Ages have been grouped in the same way as in the Civil Service National Statistics, to allow comparison. Bar labels show proportions rounded to the nearest 1 per cent. The OfS employs staff aged 65 and over, but this number of staff was not above the reporting threshold until March 2024, when it was 1 per cent. We have excluded this from the chart. As a result of the rounding and our suppression criteria, bar labels will sometimes sum to less or more than 100.

Disability

14 per cent of OfS staff have reported they have a disability.

Figure 3: OfS staff by disability



Note: Bar labels show proportions rounded to the nearest 1 per cent. As a result of this rounding and our suppression criteria, bar labels will sometimes sum to less or more than 100.

20. As noted in paragraph 15, in April 2021 we changed our data collection processes, leading to an increase in completion in March 2022 compared with March 2021. Differences between the disability groups when comparing these two years are likely in part to reflect this change in data collection. For example, the large increase in the proportion of staff declaring 'No disability' between March 2021 and March 2022 will primarily have been driven by this change in collection.

Race

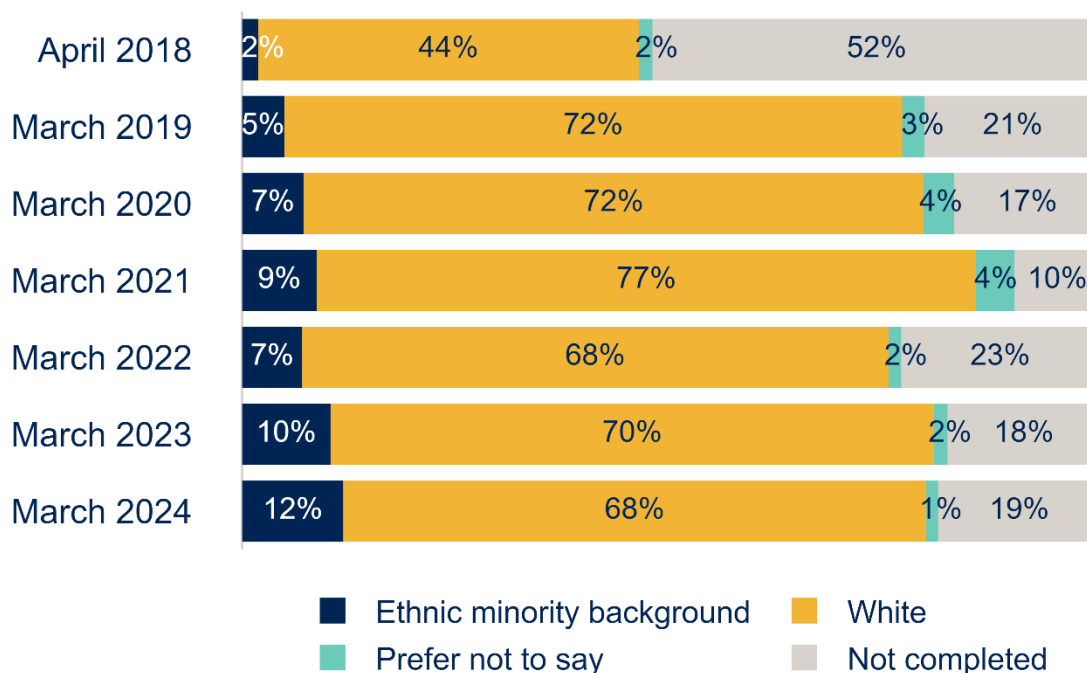
12 per cent of OfS staff have declared they are from an ethnic minority background.

21. This data is collected using the question 'What is your ethnic group?' and is related to the protected characteristic of race.

22. Figure 4 shows the ethnicities of OfS staff. 12 per cent of staff have said they are from an ethnic minority background.

23. The proportion of staff declaring they are from an ethnic minority background has increased from two per cent in April 2018. However, given that the proportion of staff answering the question has increased considerably since 2018, much of this increase is likely to be related to the increase in reporting. As noted in paragraph 15, in April 2021 we changed our data collection processes, leading to a decrease in completion in March 2022 compared with March 2021. Differences between the ethnicity groups when comparing these two years are likely in part to reflect this change in data collection.

Figure 4: OfS staff by ethnicity



Note: Bar labels show proportions rounded to the nearest 1 per cent. As a result of this rounding, bar labels will sometimes sum to less or more than 100.

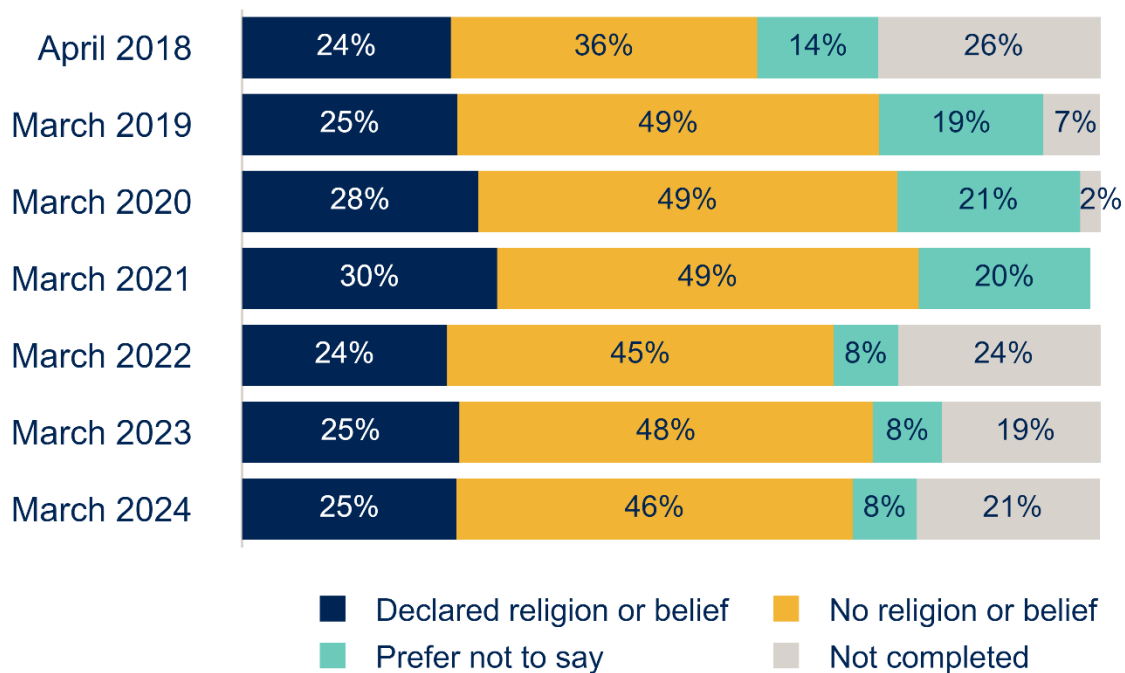
Religion or belief

25 per cent of OfS staff have a declared religion or belief.

24. While this category relates to the protected characteristic of ‘religion or belief’, the question from which we draw the data asks specifically about ‘religious belief’.

25. Figure 5 shows the responses to this question for OfS staff.

Figure 5: OfS staff by religion or belief



Note: Bar labels show proportions rounded to the nearest 1 per cent. As a result of this rounding and our suppression criteria, bar labels will sometimes sum to less or more than 100.

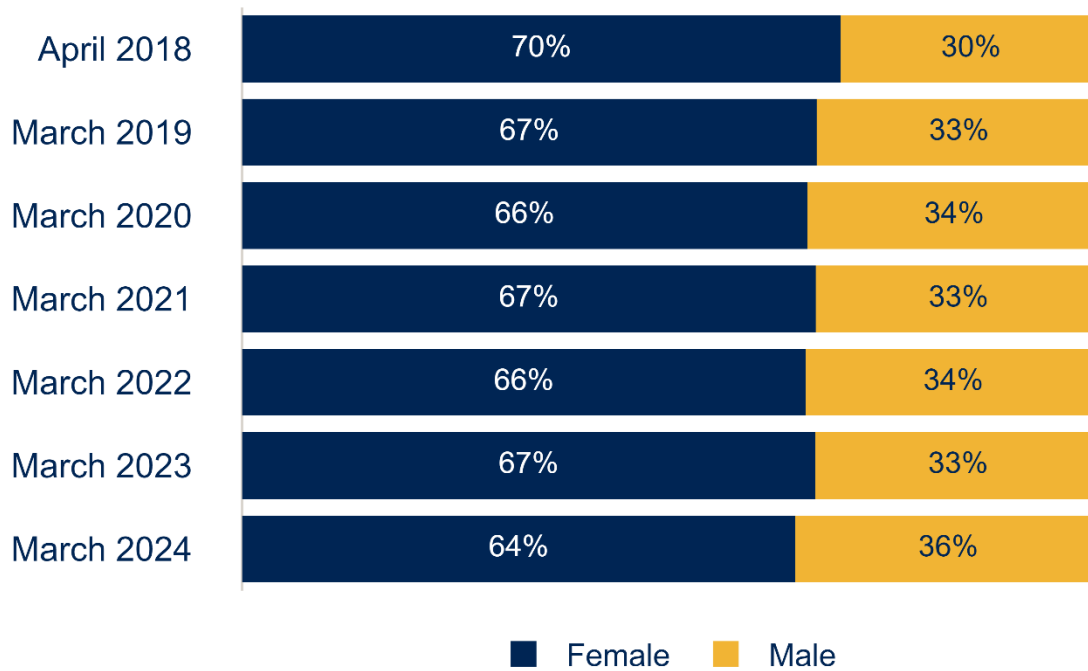
26. As noted in paragraph 15, in April 2021 we changed our data collection processes, leading to a decrease in completion in March 2022 compared with March 2021. Differences between the groups when comparing these two years are likely in part to reflect this change in data collection.

Sex

Approximately two-thirds of OfS staff are female and one-third are male.

27. Figure 6 shows the sex of OfS staff. Approximately two-thirds are female (64 per cent) and one-third are male (36 per cent). We have data relating to sex for all members of staff, as it must be provided as part of the application process for our pension schemes.

Figure 6: OfS staff by sex



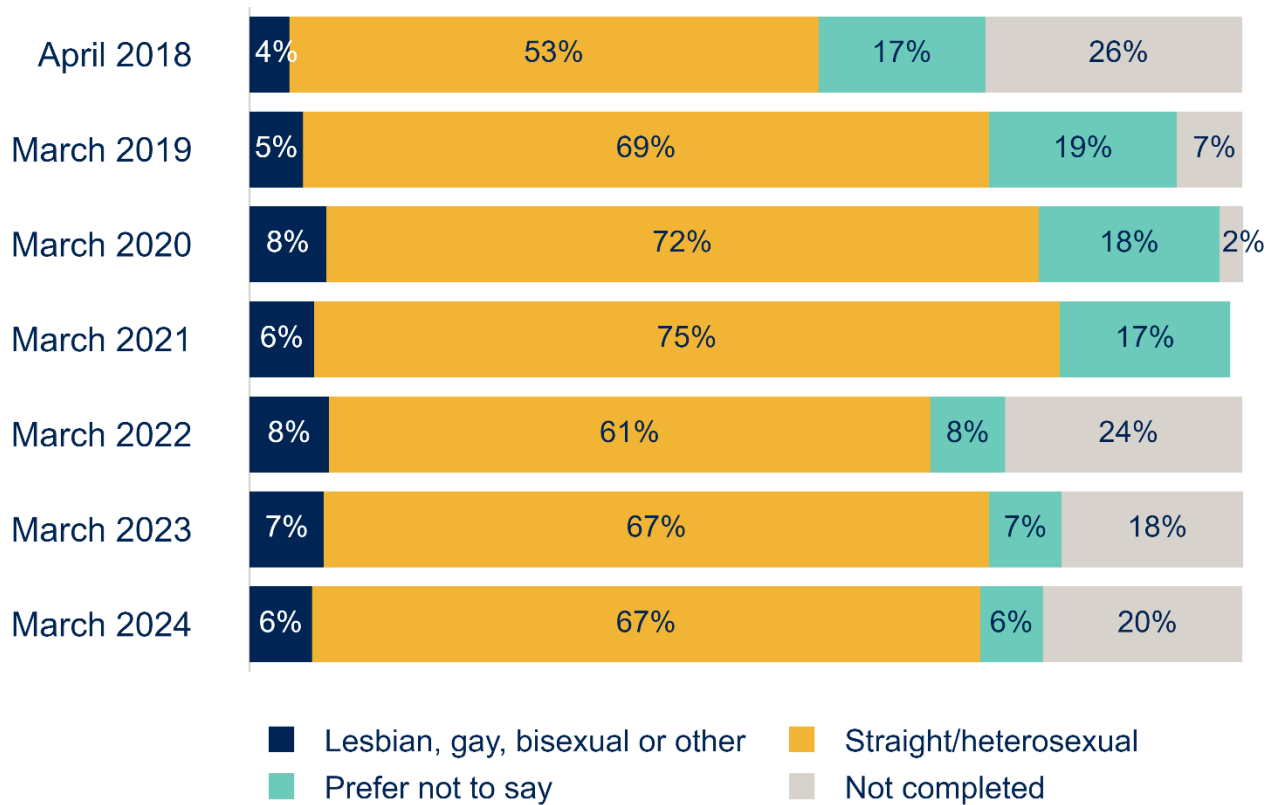
Note: Bar labels show proportions rounded to the nearest 1 per cent. As a result of this rounding, bar labels will sometimes sum to less or more than 100.

Sexual orientation

6 per cent of OfS staff have declared they are lesbian, gay, bisexual or other.

28. Figure 7 shows the sexual orientations of OfS staff. 6 per cent of staff have declared they are lesbian, gay, bisexual or other.

Figure 7: OfS staff by sexual orientation



Note: Bar labels show proportions rounded to the nearest 1 per cent. As a result of this rounding and our suppression criteria, bar labels will sometimes sum to less or more than 100.

29. As noted in paragraph 15, in April 2021 we changed our data collection processes, leading to a decrease in completion in March 2022 compared with March 2021. Differences between the sexual orientation groups when comparing these two years are likely in part to reflect this change in data collection.



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