



Research  
UK | 2025

# Building for the Future:

Socio-economic diversity and inclusion in UK Real Estate

Bridge  
Group  
research  
action  
equality

JLL UK  
Foundation

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This research has been undertaken by the Bridge Group, supported by the JLL UK Foundation.

It has been undertaken in partnership with thirteen organisations, each of which we commend for their participation and commitment:

CBRE, Colliers International, Cushman & Wakefield, Gerald Eve LLP, Grosvenor, JLL UK, Knight Frank, Landsec, LaSalle Investment Management, Savills UK, SEGRO, The Crown Estate and Turley.

We are also grateful to Real Estate Balance for their advice and advocacy.



# Introduction

The real estate sector was recently identified as the industry that contributes most to the UK economy, accounting for 13.1% of gross value added (GVA). Nearly 400,000 people are employed in ‘real estate activities’, with leaders shaping the places where we live, work, and play.<sup>1</sup>

Despite this central role in our society, the prominent real estate organisations in this study face a stark lack of socio-economic diversity (especially in senior roles). The impetus to address this disparity is not only about equity and fairness; it is also about unlocking commercial and societal opportunities – and building a workforce that is fit for the future.

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If opportunities for innovation were seized then social mobility would be enhanced, opportunity would be opened up, the country as a whole would be more productive – many, many more people would lead more fulfilling and productive lives.

**Sir Michael Barber KB**  
*Prime Minister’s Adviser on  
Effective Delivery*

## *This research explores:*

- How diverse are participating organisations by socio-economic background (SEB)?
- What are the factors contributing to the different levels of diversity?
- What actions can be taken to advance SEB diversity in real estate?

We have adopted a mixed-methods approach,<sup>2</sup> engaging directly with the participating organisations to secure and analyse data:

- Semi-structured interviews with 20 senior people, who shared strategic priorities, the extent to which they are focused on SEB, and actions they are taking (and the effect of these).
- Quantitative analysis of 10,829 anonymised employees, including SEB, other diversity characteristics, occupational area and seniority.
- Relevant contextual information, including reports on the sector, the findings and recommendations from the 2020 Bridge Group report on the real estate sector, and practices observed in parallel sectors including financial services, law, accountancy and advisory.

The government-commissioned ‘Socio-economic Diversity Taskforce’ recently outlined the benefits of SEB diversity, emphasising five key points.<sup>3</sup>

### **1. Urgency for action**

Career outcomes remain strongly linked to socio-economic starting points.

This entrenched inequality is evident in financial services and highlights the need for immediate action.

### **2. The cost of wasted talent**

Organisations that neglect socio-economic diversity risk losing out on critical talent and competitive advantage.

### **3. Licence to operate**

In a fragmented world, businesses must play a role in bridging divides and rebuilding trust.

### **4. SEB as a multiplier**

Socio-economic diversity enhances other diversity characteristics, such as gender and ethnicity, due to the intersectionality of disadvantages.

### **5. Driving innovation**

Diverse environments foster creativity and innovation, enabling organisations to develop products and services that meet the needs of all society.

Research across sectors allied to real estate shows that SEB diversity can drive productivity and innovation. Talented people from Lower SEBs often face barriers to professional sectors and, even when they outperform peers, they are often paid comparatively less and progress more slowly.

Our report in 2020 on SEB diversity in real estate<sup>4</sup> identified barriers such as informal recruitment practices, reliance on social networks, and dominant cultures in the workplace that often perpetuate exclusion, including ‘lad culture’ and microaggressions relating to SEB. It emphasised the importance of fostering inclusive workplace cultures and highlighted the persistent reliance on familial and social connections for career advancement, which disadvantaged people without these networks.

In recent years, the real estate sector has faced a barrage of challenging external forces, including the pandemic, rising costs, inflation, and geopolitical tensions. It is nonetheless striking that since our 2020 report, the sector has been largely outpaced by peer industries in this area. For example, leading firms in law, financial services and accountancy have acted collaboratively within their sectors to understand and unlock the advantages of increased SEB diversity.

In this research, we discovered many examples of committed leadership and positive practices in real estate – but progress remains worryingly slow.

Real estate has an opportunity to match sectors allied to real estate. Moreover, the pragmatism and collaborative nature of the real estate sector, combined with the sheer range of roles (and entry routes), suggest that real estate can lead the way. The rewards would be significant. Through sustained cultural change, the real estate sector can become more responsive to the communities it serves, unlocking vital commercial and societal value, and the talents of a wider range of people.

“

Let's start to think differently about how we can shift the industry in a positive way... that is authentic, not a way that is tokenistic. I see a lot of tokenism.

**Interviewee**  
*from this research*

<sup>1</sup> Data from the Office for National Statistics (October 2024). GVA is a measure of economic output that measures the value of products and services produced minus the costs incurred in production, not including labour costs. (GDP is GVA plus taxes and minus subsidies on products) | <sup>2</sup> Further details on the methodology are available on the Bridge Group website, and this has been shared in detail in the full report shared with participating organisations | <sup>3</sup> [www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/supporting-businesses/business-support-and-advice/socio-economic-diversity-taskforce](http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/supporting-businesses/business-support-and-advice/socio-economic-diversity-taskforce) | <sup>4</sup> [www.thebridgegroup.org.uk/research](http://www.thebridgegroup.org.uk/research).

“

Our biggest strength is always our people. Everything that we do in real estate is about relationships.

**Interviewee**  
*from this research*

# Findings from the workforce data

## Overall diversity by SEB

Across the participating organisations (with workforces based disproportionately in London compared with the wider sector), an average of only 22% of employees are from Lower SEBs. This compares with 39% of the UK workforce, 29% in law, and 33% in financial services, as illustrated in Figure 1 opposite.

Data from the 2020 Bridge Group report is also included, but with a cautionary note about comparing this with the latest dataset. There are significant differences between these two datasets, in terms of the volume, distribution and completeness of data.

The benchmarks include data from: the Labour Force Survey (LFS, a UK-wide household survey conducted quarterly by the Office for National Statistics)<sup>5</sup>, the regulator in the legal sector (SRA)<sup>6</sup>, and data from Progress Together (the consortium of financial services firms that benchmark and share data annually).<sup>7</sup>

We also explored data on school type (i.e. whether an employee attended an independent or state school).<sup>8</sup> Figure 2 opposite compares the data from the participating organisations with relevant benchmarks, including from the Department for Education.<sup>9</sup> We also include the percentage of those from 'The Elite' who are from an Independent School, as defined in the Sutton Trust's most recent report on this topic.<sup>10</sup>

On average, 31% of employees from participating organisations attended Independent Schools, compared with 6.8% nationally.

Returning to the key measure of SEB (occupation of main household earner), within the overall average there are significant differences between organisations.

Figure 3 opposite, using pseudonyms, illustrates these differences among nine organisations who have collected data using this metric. There is significant variation, from almost one third of employees from a Lower SEB (29% at 'Katrine') to around one in ten (12% at 'Padam').

### Contextual factors:

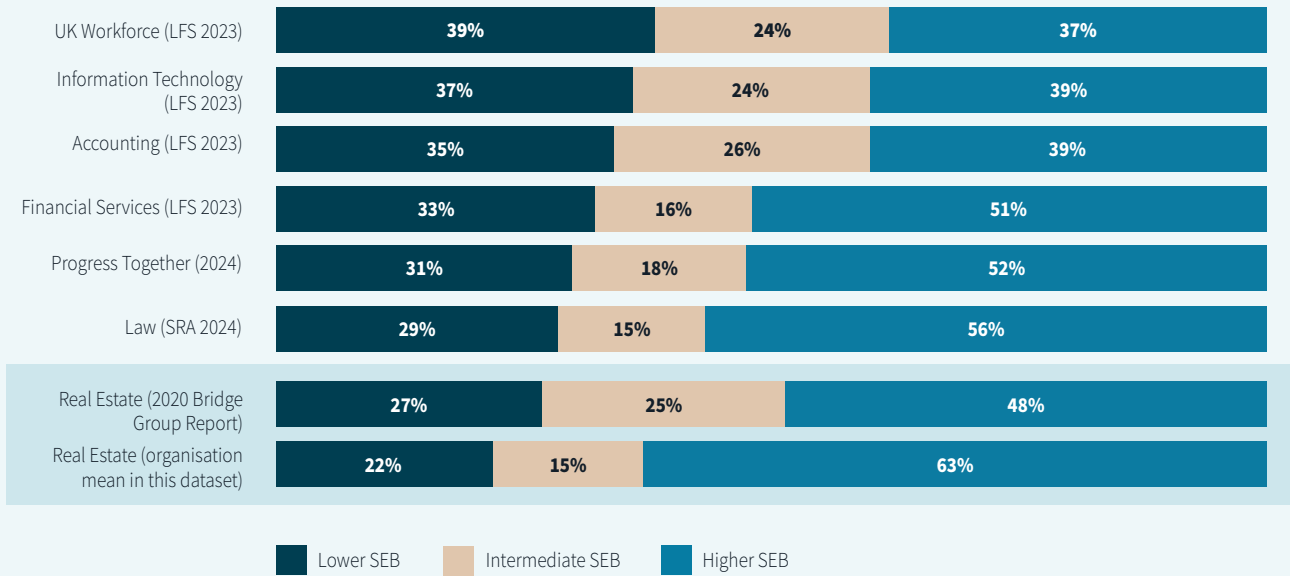
There is a range of contextual factors that are correlated with lower levels of SEB diversity, including:

- Main organisational business focus, i.e. those primarily or wholly involved in investment management are less diverse compared with those primarily involved in real estate agency.
- Size, i.e. smaller firms are generally less diverse by SEB.
- Geographical location, i.e. those with a footprint mainly or only in London are less diverse by SEB.

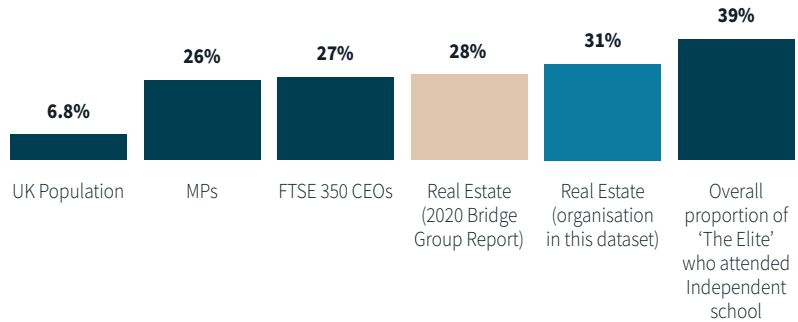
<sup>5</sup> [www.ons.gov.uk](http://www.ons.gov.uk) | <sup>6</sup> <https://www.sra.org.uk/solicitors/resources/equality-diversity/law-firm-diversity-tool/> | <sup>7</sup> We make various references to this initiative, and further information is available on their website: [www.progresstogether.co.uk/shapingthesector/](http://www.progresstogether.co.uk/shapingthesector/) | <sup>8</sup> Note that the published guidance on this question recommends also providing options for people to indicate if they attended a 'selective state school' and whether they were in receipt of a significant bursary to attend an Independent School. However, the majority of participating organisations asked only about state or independent schooling | <sup>9</sup> <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-pupils-and-their-characteristics> | <sup>10</sup> [www.suttontrust.com/our-research/elitist-britain-2019/](http://www.suttontrust.com/our-research/elitist-britain-2019/) | <sup>11</sup> The disaggregated data on organisational diversity by school type is available on the Bridge Group website.

## Building for the Future

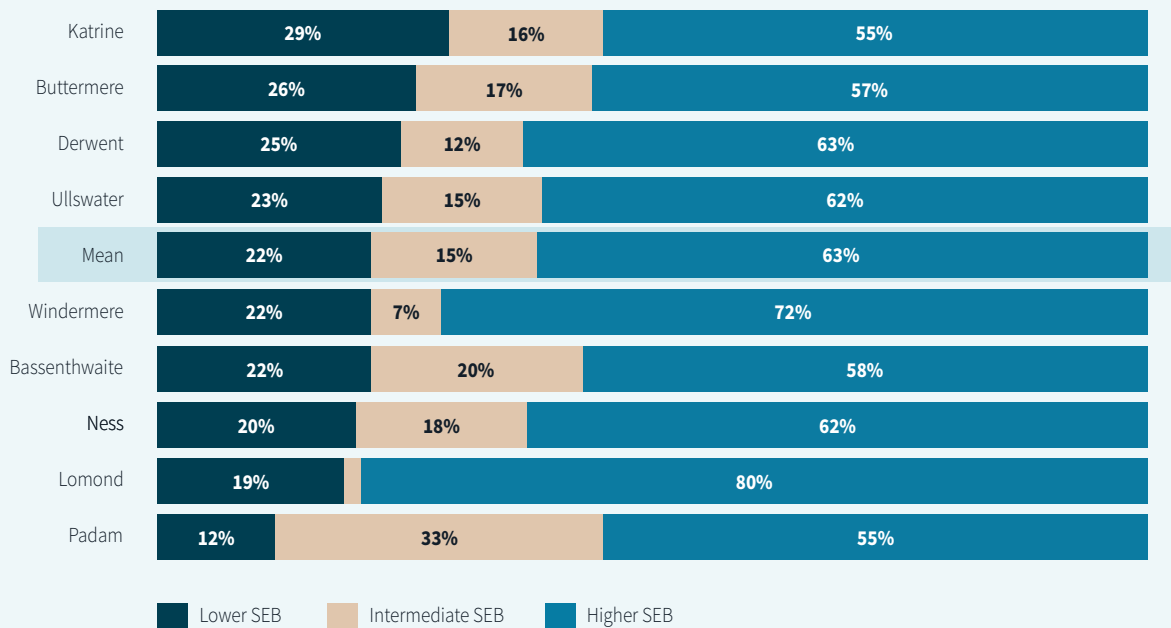
**Figure 1:** Overall SEB diversity (occupation of main household earner) among participating organisations and including benchmarks.



**Figure 2:** Percentage of employees educated at an independent school (of those who were educated in the UK), data from participating organisations against relevant benchmarks.<sup>11</sup>



**Figure 3:** SEB diversity by participating organisation (occupation of main household earner).



## *SEB diversity by seniority and occupation type*

As we have observed in similar sectors, as seniority increases SEB diversity decreases. This is represented in Figure 4 below, which shows that almost three quarters of senior people at the participating organisations (69%) are from a Higher SEB (compared with 37% of the UK workforce as in the bar on the left).

At junior levels there is a lack of diversity compared with the UK workforce (the bar on the left). This counters a narrative that diversity challenges will simply be resolved over time, echoing an important finding in financial services, in the recent Progress Together report.

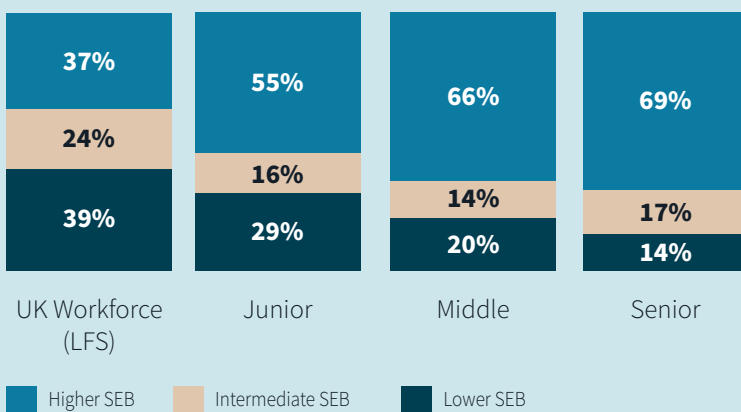
Where possible, people’s roles were labelled as ‘front office’, ‘back office’ or ‘hybrid’. As illustrated in Figure 5 below, there is a much greater SEB diversity among those in ‘back office’ roles compared with those in ‘front office’ roles (25%

are from a Lower SEB in the former, compared with 17% in the latter).

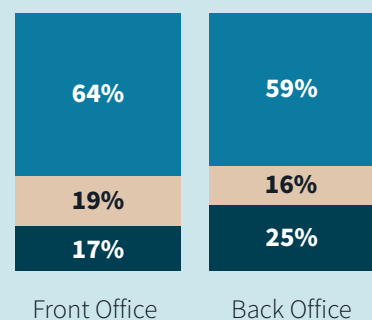
This mirrors our findings in other sectors, including law and financial services. Bridge Group research has highlighted how hiring practices for front office positions often favour candidates from elite universities and professional networks, disproportionately excluding those from Lower SEBs.

These roles are typically associated with cultural capital, polished soft skills, and a degree of social confidence often cultivated through private education or affluent upbringings.<sup>12</sup> In contrast, back office roles (e.g., operations or IT) are more likely to recruit based on technical skills and qualifications, reducing the reliance on social factors.

**Figure 4:** SEB diversity at participating organisations by level of seniority, compared with the UK workforce (from the Labour Force Survey).



**Figure 5:** SEB diversity by occupation type.





## *Intersections with gender and ethnic background*

We explored the relationship between SEB diversity and the two other main diversity characteristics in the dataset: gender identity (henceforth gender) and ethnic background.

Females are moderately more likely to be from a Lower SEB compared with men, as illustrated in Figure 6 below. This finding can be partly explained by the uneven distribution of gender by seniority; however, even when comparing the SEB distribution by gender within levels of seniority, a higher proportion of females are from Lower SEBs compared with males.

This difference between males and females is most striking at senior level. Females are much less likely to be found at senior level compared with males, but senior females are much more likely to be from Lower SEBs compared with

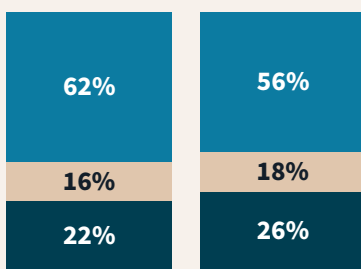
senior males (17% vs 12%), mirroring our findings in financial services.<sup>13</sup>

As illustrated in Figure 7 below, a higher proportion of people from minority ethnic groups are from Lower SEBs. This generally mirrors the UK working population, but contrasts with the data findings we have observed in other sectors (where a higher proportion of those from White ethnic backgrounds are from Lower SEBs).

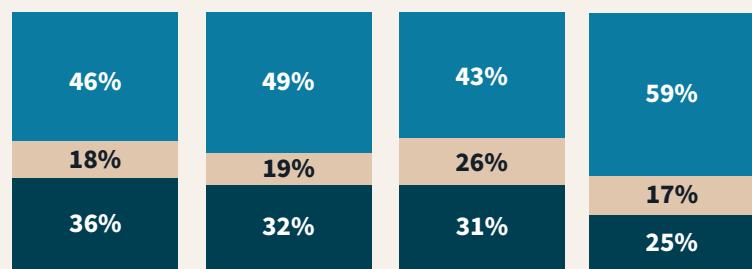
We have explored the intersection between these three diversity characteristics. A standout finding from this analysis is that, among those in senior roles, more than half (51%) are White males from a Higher SEB.

<sup>12</sup> [www.thebridgegroup.org.uk/research](http://www.thebridgegroup.org.uk/research) | <sup>13</sup> [www.thebridgegroup.org.uk/news/progress-together-launch-data-report-shaping-the-sector-636b4](http://www.thebridgegroup.org.uk/news/progress-together-launch-data-report-shaping-the-sector-636b4).

**Figure 6:** SEB and gender diversity at all levels.



**Figure 7:** SEB and ethnic diversity at all levels.



Higher SEB Intermediate SEB Lower SEB

“ I am very aware that I am from a different background. But I’m vocal about who I am and where I’m from. Maybe it’s because I don’t want to slip into someone I am not. I could almost get away with not letting anybody know about my background, but I am not going to be ashamed of it. I am proud of where I am from.

**Interviewee**

*from the 2020 Bridge Group report  
on SEB in Real Estate*



# Findings from the interviews

The 2020 Bridge Group report explored people's lived experiences of working in the sector, through more than 150 interviews across occupational areas and seniority. Many of the findings in the report remain important and valid and are the foundation for this research.

“

We used the [2020 Bridge Group] report to clearly outline that social mobility was an issue. That gave us a clear business case to show why we needed to focus on social mobility and intersectionality. It drove attitudinal change in terms of how the organisation was thinking and acting.

**Interviewee**  
*From this research*

In this research, we explored the approaches and practices (current and aspirational) of the participating organisations relating to SEB diversity and inclusion. Interviews were

undertaken with 20 senior representatives across the organisations, exploring views on strategic priorities, the extent to which there is a focus on SEB, and practical actions that are being taken.

We have not directly reviewed the policies of the organisations; rather we have summarised interviewees' accounts of how organisations approach SEB diversity and inclusion, the challenges they perceive, and whether their organisations collect evidence on effective practice. As outlined above, details on our methodology including interview topic guides are available on the Bridge Group website.

## **Growing Awareness and Persistent Barriers**

Interviewees report increased awareness of SEB diversity since the 2020 report, noting that it provoked meaningful discussions and emphasised the business case for focusing on SEB diversity. There is greater recognition of the challenges faced by individuals from Lower SEBs, particularly regarding educational and financial barriers and access to influential networks. Employees have begun actively sharing personal experiences about how SEB impacts confidence and career progression, further illuminating systemic issues.

Despite heightened awareness, change has been slow, with organisations acknowledging the need for practical action and sector-wide cultural shifts. Interviewees highlight the absence of robust evidence to measure the effectiveness of initiatives, reflecting insufficient investment in data collection and analysis. It is noteworthy that among the participating organisations, employee response rates to SEB questions vary from 4% to 81%.

Client pressure to enhance diversity, while present, is considered less significant compared to sectors such as law or finance, with internal drivers playing a larger role in shaping organisational priorities. The pandemic has also influenced SEB diversity, exposing disparities in socio-economic conditions while fostering some progress, such as increased acceptance of remote working. These changes prompted renewed focus on employee well-being and the structural challenges faced by those from Lower SEBs.

### **Outreach, Recruitment, and Organisational Change**

Diversity and inclusion are increasingly central to organisational strategies, with a broadened focus that now typically considers neurodiversity alongside protected characteristics and SEB.

Outreach and entry-level recruitment dominate SEB-related efforts. Firms are building stronger relationships with local schools, targeting disadvantaged areas, and collaborating with external partners to offer internships and work experience opportunities. These initiatives aim to

inspire interest in real estate careers and improve access for underrepresented groups. However, decisions about work experience placements often highlight tensions between inclusivity and client demands, revealing ongoing challenges in embedding transparent and fair practices.

Apprenticeships have emerged as a key driver of SEB diversity, allowing organisations to attract talent from varied backgrounds and challenge traditional recruitment pathways. Some firms have also removed requirements for specific degrees or grade thresholds, focusing instead on skills and their potential to expand talent pools.

While progress is evident in entry-level recruitment, interviewees acknowledge the need to address diversity across the employee lifecycle. Retention, career progression, and senior-level hiring require greater focus, with organisations increasingly recognising the importance of equipping managers to support diverse teams. Some firms are introducing strengths-based assessments, targeted training, and work allocation algorithms to promote inclusion and address biases.

### **Challenges and Opportunities for the Sector**

Although some firms are beginning to collect SEB-related metrics, response rates and the quality of insights remain inconsistent. Quantitative data is often prioritised, but interviewees highlight the value of qualitative interview insights in understanding workplace culture and employee experiences.

## Building for the Future

Interviewees also recognise the need for a cohesive sector-wide narrative on SEB inclusion, balancing its focus with other diversity priorities, such as ethnicity and gender. Concerns about tokenism and narrow representations of SEB disadvantage underscore the importance of cultural change over isolated initiatives. The concept of ‘belonging’, where employees feel valued regardless of their background, is increasingly central to efforts, but practical evidence-based actions to foster this remain limited.

There is increasing awareness across the participating organisations about the ‘double disadvantage’ faced by people from minority ethnic groups who are also from Lower SEBs, and about the intersectional nature of disadvantage. This aligns strongly with the call in the 2020 Bridge Group report to take intersectionality seriously and move beyond siloed approaches to diversity. Such emphasis on multiplicative disadvantage, is a key shift and a crucial area for action – as the Bridge Group has researched in parallel sectors including law, accountancy and financial services. Many interviewees also recognise that a focus on SEB diversity and inclusion can also have a positive effect in relation to other diversity characteristics.



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People are really starting to feel a lot more confident and able to talk about their background, what it meant to them, how it felt and all those kinds of things to really inspire change.

**Interviewee** *from this research*

“

People are a lot more aware now and catch people out. Some things are no longer acceptable. It’s getting better, but there’s more to do. We need more evidence, more data, to inform and evaluate what’s happening.

**Interviewee** *from the 2020 Bridge Group report on SEB in Real Estate*

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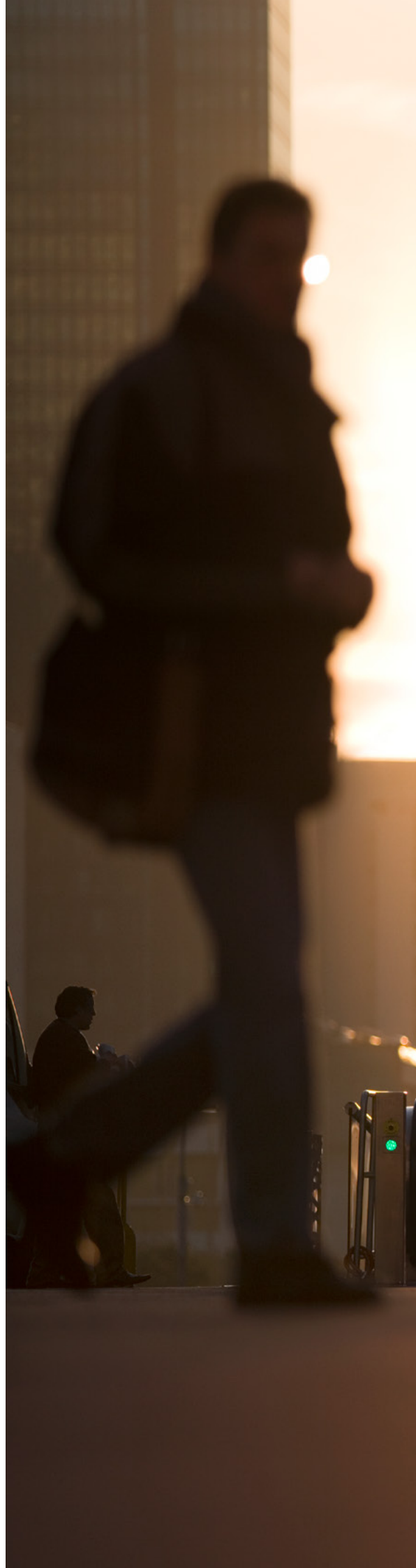
Diversity and inclusion is like the golden thread that runs through all areas. To ensure that we reward and recognise our people, to ensure that we have the right systems and processes in place, to ensure that we’re enabling our people.

**Interviewee** *from this research*

## **Collaboration and Cultural Transformation**

The sector's traditional image, dominated by White males from Higher SEBs, presents ongoing challenges in attracting and retaining diverse talent. However, interviewees express optimism about the potential for collective action. Industry bodies (including Real Estate Balance) and cross-sector collaboration are viewed as key enablers, fostering knowledge sharing and unified approaches to outreach and talent development. Learning from other sectors, such as finance and law, could accelerate progress by adopting proven strategies and setting SEB-specific targets.

As the real estate industry seeks to become more representative of the communities it serves, interviewees emphasise the need for sustained, long-term commitment. By embedding inclusivity across the employee lifecycle, leveraging data to shape policy, and fostering a culture of belonging, the sector can address structural barriers and unlock its full potential. This collective effort requires a shift from isolated initiatives to transformative change, underpinned by evidence, collaboration, and a shared vision for diversity and inclusion.





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If we mature our work around social mobility, we'll have a positive impact on the other dimensions of diversity in a greater way.

**Interviewee**

*From this research*

# Recommendations

## *Ten recommendations to share*

We share ten recommendations, some of which naturally echo and build on those from the 2020 report. Many require cross-sector collaboration, and some will be delivered most effectively in partnership with leaders in other relevant sectors.

There is an increasingly strong evidence base, bolstered by this research, that shows that advances in SEB diversity and inclusion will also have a positive effect on diversity by gender and ethnicity. Across the participating organisations a higher proportion of females are from a Lower SEB compared with males, and this difference is greatest at more senior levels.



**I.**  
**Launch a campaign to build awareness about the important business and societal benefits of advancing SEB diversity and inclusion, including the associated benefits for equity by gender and ethnicity.**

Increasing awareness of individuals' lived experiences can foster a more inclusive and open workplace culture, leading to improved leadership, higher employee satisfaction, and, ultimately, greater profitability. It is important to have a unifying narrative about the motivation and benefits of focusing on SEB diversity and inclusion, based on robust evidence. This can be achieved in various ways within organisations and across the sector, including:

- Disseminating this research, and associated discussions.
- Every organisation developing its own local narrative about why this agenda matters and how strategic approaches will be developed and measured.
- The establishment of (or increased investment in) employee resource groups (ERGs) dedicated to advancing SEB diversity and inclusion, including the connection of these groups with relevant other ERGs to promote discussions about intersectionality.
- Drawing on the wider evidence base and activity in other relevant sectors, primarily law, accountancy and financial services.



**II.**  
**All organisations in real estate should collect SEB workforce data consistently and more comprehensively.**

This should be a priority for all real estate organisations. There has been detailed guidance on SEB data collection available since 2018, including how this data can enable insights to inform action.<sup>14</sup> In similar sectors, including financial services and law, data is routinely used to focus, inform and evaluate strategies to support SEB diversity and inclusion. There is also guidance available on our website on how to encourage high response rates to the key SEB questions, and advice about how to analyse the data.<sup>15</sup>

Once an organisation has a sufficient response rate from employees, (ideally between 60% and 75%), they should:

- Set targets for SEB diversity, including at senior levels. Guidance on how to approach this was published by Slaughter and May in 2023.<sup>16</sup> Progress Together also has an online toolkit that supports members to establish targets. These materials should be adapted for the real estate sector.
- Follow the best practice guidance to assess and report on pay gaps by SEB.<sup>17</sup>
- Publish SEB data externally and routinely report data at board level.



<sup>14</sup> <https://socialmobility.independent-commission.uk/resources/recap-data-what-why-and-how/> | <sup>15</sup> <https://socialmobility.independent-commission.uk/resources/socio-economic-diversity-and-inclusion-employers-toolkit/> | <sup>16</sup> [www.thebridgegroup.org.uk/news/laughter-and-may-publishes-report-defining-social-mobility-targets](http://www.thebridgegroup.org.uk/news/laughter-and-may-publishes-report-defining-social-mobility-targets) | <sup>17</sup> [www.thebridgegroup.org.uk/news/guide-for-closing-your-pay-gap](http://www.thebridgegroup.org.uk/news/guide-for-closing-your-pay-gap).

### III.

#### **Establish a real estate consortium model focused on advancing SEB diversity and inclusion.**

This approach is well-established in many other sectors, including law, real estate, accountancy and financial services. These models are highly effective at driving change through:

- Data collection to benchmark individual organisations, and changes over time.
- Sharing of effective practice, including exploring the relationships between different organisations' policies, practices and approaches – and how this correlates with organisations' data.
- Collaborating on programmes, e.g. work experience and campaigns to raise awareness of opportunities, routes to progress careers, and to support advice and guidance for young people.

There is obviously the foundation for a consortium approach established through this research and in programmes such as Real Estate Balance.

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### IV.

#### **Commission a social mobility toolkit tailored for real estate, building on those developed for similar sectors.**

The cross-sector toolkit developed by the Bridge Group in 2020 enabled organisations to quickly access key information about SEB diversity and inclusion. It outlined specific practices across the employee lifecycle.<sup>18</sup>

Subsequently a range of industry-specific toolkits have been developed, including for retail, professional services and specifically for apprenticeships.<sup>19</sup> However, there is no such toolkit for real estate, and the development of this (in partnership with employers from the sector) would catalyse engagement, and make it easy for leaders to identify priorities.

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## V.

### **Develop a cross-sector initiative to raise early awareness of the eclectic range of careers in real estate.**

Real estate firms should collaborate to develop a suite of online materials for pupils, parents / carers and teachers which should support awareness of careers in real estate and the associated entry routes.

In other areas, including the Civil Service and in retail and logistics, a case study approach has been adopted. This has involved identifying a case study that is engaging and relevant for young people – and exploring the way in which people from different occupations within a sector have contributed to making it happen.

These resources can be used in schools, enabling teachers to explore real estate in the classroom, including real life examples and games to explore the skills needed to succeed. They should align with learning objectives at each Key Stage and reinforce curriculum content.



## VI.

### **Community and early outreach programmes should be based on a clear theory of change and evaluated robustly – to understand their impact and encourage investment in the most effective practices.**

These practices are important, especially in the context of the lack of awareness among young people of the diverse range of careers available in real estate. The impact of this activity could be significantly increased with greater clarity about the purpose of specific programmes, and associated frameworks to evaluate impact – not least to encourage organisations to invest in effective practice.

There are many models of evaluation that have been developed in the university sector to assess the impact of outreach work that are transferable.<sup>20</sup> These include the Monitoring Evaluation Framework, which provides useful guidance on proportionate (i.e. it is robust but not overly resource intensive) evaluation for outreach programmes.



<sup>18</sup> <https://socialmobility.independent-commission.uk/find-resources/for-employers/> | <sup>19</sup> <https://socialmobility.independent-commission.uk/find-resources/for-employers/employer-toolkits/> | <sup>20</sup> See for example, <https://taso.org.uk/insights-and-evaluation/our-approach-to-evaluation/#types-of-evaluations>.

### VII.

**Recruitment practices should draw on evidence-based guidance proven to be effective across various sectors to ensure fairness and inclusivity.**

Hiring and promotion processes can often be unnecessarily opaque, creating barriers for some groups. Addressing these barriers requires practical steps that make recruitment more open and equitable.

- **Ensure internships and entry-level jobs are openly advertised.** Many such roles, while often paid, are currently filled through informal networks, excluding talented individuals without the right connections.
- **Job descriptions should be crafted with inclusion in mind.** This means using inclusive language, avoiding unnecessary jargon, and focusing only on essential qualifications and skills. Overly complex or restrictive job descriptions can discourage applications from capable candidates.
- **Standardised screening processes are critical to inclusive recruitment.** Using structured criteria for reviewing CVs and conducting interviews helps to minimise unconscious bias and ensures all candidates are evaluated consistently and fairly.
- **Contextual recruitment practices support diversity by considering candidates' achievements against their backgrounds.** For example, considering experiences such as attending underperforming schools or living in disadvantaged areas can help identify high-potential candidates who may have overcome significant challenges.
- **Recruitment data should be regularly tracked and analysed to identify trends, measure progress against diversity goals, make evidence-based adjustments, and ensure accountability.**

### VIII.

**Equip and incentivise team leaders to better engage with diversity and inclusion and to understand how SEB affects people in the workplace – including how this relates to performance and progression.**

Drawing on some practices already adopted by some real estate firms, and looking to other sectors, effective practices include:

- **Linking incentives to D&I outcomes:** Connect financial or career progression incentives for team leaders to measurable improvements in diversity and inclusion. Make D&I performance a key component of leadership evaluations.
- **Setting clear expectations:** Define D&I responsibilities, including SEB awareness, as core aspects of leadership roles. Clearly communicate performance objectives tied to fostering inclusive team cultures.
- **Providing targeted training:** Offer comprehensive D&I training specifically addressing SEB issues – and raise awareness on intersectionality and multiplicative disadvantage. Training should include real-world scenarios and examples.
- **Providing practical resources:** Supply team leaders with toolkits and guidelines to recognise and address SEB impacts in areas like work allocation, feedback, and promotions. (This relates to our recommendation on developing a social mobility toolkit for real estate). Provide structured mentoring frameworks to support colleagues from less-advantaged backgrounds.
- **Fostering leadership role models:** Highlight senior leaders who actively champion D&I and SEB equity as role models for team leaders. Encourage these leaders to share their experiences and learning journeys.

**IX.**

**Engage search firms and head-hunters and encourage them to consider SEB diversity in appointing senior leaders.**

There is the opportunity to collaborate within real estate and across other relevant sectors. The data in real estate is incomplete, but we have demonstrated across financial services that this aspect of recruitment risks undermining the gains realised in entry-level hiring. Progression is key, but so too is engaging executive search firms to ensure diversity among appointments and putting together diverse shortlists by SEB. Progress Together has a toolkit for members on talent acquisition and a resource for engaging executive search firms, which could be adapted for real estate.

**X.**

**The stage is set for a group of real estate firms to lead the way in advancing SEB diversity and inclusion, and to inspire wider change across the sector.**

We have observed in parallel sectors that a small number of organisations have initially pioneered approaches – which have then been widely adopted across a sector. While change is needed across the sector, the stage is now set for a group of firms to distinguish themselves as leaders in advancing SEB diversity and inclusion in real estate.





## About JLL UK Foundation

The JLL UK Foundation aims to raise awareness and address barriers relating to socio-economic background to facilitate fair access and career progression within the real estate sector. Focusing on long-term systemic change, the Foundation's work has included collaborating with the non-profit consultancy the Bridge Group to undertake research on socio-economic diversity within real estate, the first of its kind in the sector.

### Mark Stupples

*Chair, JLL UK Foundation*

mark@jmarkconsultants.co.uk

+44 (0)7801 505 282

## About The Bridge Group

The Bridge Group is a non-profit consultancy which supports organisations of all kinds with independent expertise, research and practical know-how to enable them to make a real and lasting impact on socio-economic diversity and social equality. It conducts rigorous, evidence-based research to ensure that policymaking and practice are built on sound and sustainable principles. The charity works with a broad range of clients including employers, professional organisations, membership bodies, foundations and not-for-profit organisations, and academic institutions.

**[www.thebridgegroup.org.uk](http://www.thebridgegroup.org.uk)**

### Nik Miller

*Chief Executive, The Bridge Group*

nicholas.miller@the-bridgegroup.co.uk

+44 (0)7717 727 068

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