



# Equity and Inclusion review

Institute of Development Studies

3 March 2023

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# 1 Executive summary

Nous Group (Nous) was commissioned by the Institute of Development Studies (IDS or the Institute) to conduct an independent review of equity and inclusion at the Institute.

The purpose of this independent review is to inform the IDS Board of Trustees and Institute's staff community of the Institute's progress towards creating and sustaining an equitable and inclusive workplace. This review aims to highlight the current experiences of staff at the Institute and make recommendations for improvement related to Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI). Nous' review was underpinned by IDS' terms of reference (ToR) which outlined the key aims. This is detailed in Section 2.

This report does not provide a comprehensive review of the experience of all staff and, therefore, cannot claim to be fully representative of IDS' workforce. However, engagement has been relatively strong with over 25% of staff engaged via consultations (one-to-one interviews and focus groups) and over 37% of staff engaged via an all-staff survey. Additionally, the mixed-method approach provided the opportunity for broad institutional themes to be captured in addition to more nuanced and detailed experiences. The review has not attempted to investigate or verify any of the experiences outlined by staff, the focus is the perspectives and experience of staff only.

Participants in this review have shared their experiences at the Institute with the expectation of anonymity. The report uses anonymised quotes to provide contextual evidence.

This report outlines the key findings from this review, highlighting both areas of strength and areas for improvement. It includes a set of recommendations for the Institute to support IDS in its ambition to become a more equitable and inclusive workplace. This review highlights some major challenges at the Institute, but it also identifies a willingness to confront these issues and improve the experience for all. The recommendations provided indicate some immediate actions for the Institute and some areas that should be introduced over a longer timeframe.

## 1.1 Key findings

This review has uncovered that most staff feel that IDS creates a respectful and inclusive working environment and that colleagues and leaders, on the whole, strive to ensure this is the case. However, younger staff, more junior staff and those from racially minoritised backgrounds demonstrated the greatest discontent in both survey findings and consultations, demonstrating the need for a continued focus on EDI. The research uncovered several challenging issues that inhibit a sense of belonging, equity and inclusion. The most pressing issues include the following:

- asymmetries of power, with a minority of senior academics exhibiting non-inclusive and bullying behaviour

- unclear routes for reporting and limited repercussions for poor behaviour
- a lack of clear lines of accountability and limited action relating to EDI
- limited diversity in some parts of the Institute with a tendency to recruit 'in its image' both with domestic and international hires
- organisational structures that leave staff with limited support and advocacy, including within research projects that often function in silos.

The review also identified some of the positive experiences and initiatives designed to advance EDI. This includes the willingness to engage in discussions on EDI topics, the receptiveness of senior leadership, and the role of networks and groups. These are all built on the foundation of the positive shared purpose of the Institute.

The findings are summarised below and provided in more detail in the report.

### **Most staff shared positive experiences, but some highlighted significant challenges relating to EDI**

Overall, many of the staff engaged in the review shared positive experiences of working at IDS. Colleagues noted that the Institute's commitment to international development provides a shared focus for common good and that most staff espouse these values in their day-to-day actions. However, staff highlighted three key areas where they felt that IDS has not made robust progress:

- asymmetries of power, with a minority of senior academics exhibiting non-inclusive and bullying behaviour, despite their commitment to advance equity and inclusion internationally
- a lack of diversity in terms of race and ethnicity in some parts of IDS, including in the Senior Leadership Group (SLG), limiting the representation of different experiences, and inhibiting a sense of belonging,
- class elitism.

These issues contribute to feelings of division between some junior and senior staff, professional services and academics, and those with different educational and ethnic backgrounds. While the instances of bullying and microaggressions are not widespread, staff believe they are persistent and that little is done to mitigate and discipline the individuals responsible.

### **Staff identified some of the key issues impacting recruitment and progression at the Institute, but acknowledged that there have been improvements**

Staff reported mixed experiences of opportunities at IDS. Several consultees acknowledged improvements in equitable recruitment practices, such as removal of a message discouraging applicants requiring Tier 2 visas. However, many staff reported concerns regarding equitable and inclusive progression opportunities. Survey results demonstrated that only a minority of staff think that IDS offers the same opportunities to progress professionally, regardless of background. Staff, again, cited power dynamics, a lack of diversity, and class elitism as being

major contributors to this. Many staff also spoke of their hindered opportunity to progress due to commitments within and outside of work, such as caring responsibilities, part-time studies, or hours spent supporting senior researchers before pursuing their own opportunities. This is exacerbated by the limited number of positions available at IDS, many of which are typically only available to those with a PhD. This was a particular issue for academic colleagues.

### **Many were unaware of the reporting processes and support mechanisms, and some identified issues which create a lack of confidence**

Many staff do not have a good understanding of the formal and informal reporting mechanisms available at the Institute. An even greater proportion do not feel confident that their concerns would be acted upon fairly. Underlying this is the perception that some powerful senior staff disregard the workplace behaviours set out within IDS' Code of Conduct with little repercussion. A lack of transparency in reporting and disciplinary processes further contribute to a lack of confidence.

### **Leaders are viewed positively in terms of their values regarding EDI, but diversity at the top is limited and values often fail to translate to practical action**

Staff spoke positively about the SLG and their efforts to progress inclusivity at the Institute. This extends to managers more widely, with 92% of staff believing their manager cares about creating an inclusive and respectful workplace. However, many staff feel that leaders do not always take action where it is needed and are unable to appropriately discipline staff with poor behaviour. This results in a perception that there is a lack of practical change seen at the Institute in relation to equity and inclusion. This is exacerbated by the view that decision-making and operations are opaque. Several staff feel that they would appreciate having greater input into decision-making, or at least an understanding of how leaders have arrived at certain conclusions. Furthermore, limited diversity in the SLG impacts confidence that the Institute can act in the best interest of all staff who are underrepresented.

### **IDS creates the space for open discussion about EDI, but academic discourse can limit participation**

Staff recognise IDS' strides towards making the Institute an inclusive and equitable place to work. However, many consultees observe a culture of allowing senior academics to ignore the principles and policies put in place to promote fairness. Furthermore, some staff believe that the consistent intellectualisation of discussion impacts inclusion. This exacerbates colleagues' feelings of there being strong class divides and power dynamics present at the Institute. While staff acknowledge that EDI is on the agenda at IDS, many feel that the topic of race is avoided or not discussed constructively because issues of terminology derail the discussions.

### **Networks and groups contribute positively to IDS, but their purpose can be unclear**

Staff believe the networks and groups at IDS are valuable contributors to promoting inclusivity and contributing to the Institute's EDI goals. However, many staff are not clear on how they collectively contribute to institutional change and decision-making. Some staff who are not part



of the groups believe that routes to participation should be made clearer. However, this is hindered by the significant time-constraints many staff feel that they are under and, therefore, cannot participate despite the intent.

## 1.2 Recommendations

This section outlines a set of recommendations which aim to address the challenges identified throughout this report. It draws on the input of those who took part in consultations as part of this review, Nous' expertise in this space, research and knowledge of industry practice.

Each high-level recommendation is accompanied by a set of proposed actions that will help IDS to achieve a more inclusive and equitable workplace. The actions are for IDS to consider as it develops an action plan to tackle the issues raised in this review. Included with each recommendation is a suggested timeframe for implementation.

High level recommendation	Actions for consideration	Timeframe
1. Provide transparency on the outcomes of this review and the actions IDS will take forward.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publish this review to the IDS community.</li> <li>• Undergo a period of staff consultation to reflect on the findings of this review and refine the recommendations to best suit IDS' context. This will include prioritising the recommendations for what is most important to the Institute.</li> <li>• Create an action plan for the Institute following that consultation period.</li> <li>• Publicly publish both the review and action plan.</li> </ul>	Within the next 3 months
2. Continue to consider IDS' position and identity as a British vs global institute to ensure that it can operate most effectively externally and internally to achieve its goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain active discussion about IDS' identity as a British vs. global institute for development and consider for the new strategy. Engage staff and partners in this discussion.</li> <li>• Develop a workstream for creating fair practices when working with overseas partners and link this closely to the new strategy formulation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage partners and staff in a listening exercise to understand what</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Ongoing in preparation for the new Strategic Plan post 2025

	<p>practices are working well and less well.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Put into place practical policies and processes to ensure local knowledge and expertise is leveraged in all projects and working practices are fair.</li> <li>• Regularly communicate the outputs and outcomes from this work – and its links to – but also distinction from - the academic debate around decolonising.</li> <li>• Make the ToR for the current Decolonising group clear to the wider community.</li> </ul>	
<p>3. Strengthen accountability for EDI at senior levels to improve and maintain a respectful and inclusive culture</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assign overall accountability for the delivery of the EDI action plan to the Board of trustees, with regular updates on progress at Board meetings.</li> <li>• Identify an accountable Board member to regularly review IDS' action plan and provide feedback to the Board.</li> <li>• Assign responsibility for delivery of recommendations to the most relevant SLG members, to include monitoring of progress.</li> <li>• Integrate issues of poor behaviour, bullying and discrimination into the Institute's risk register.</li> <li>• Improve monitoring and reporting of staff data based on EDI demographics (e.g. recruitment, progression, ethnicity pay gap) and report to the Board, noting that some of this work is already underway.</li> <li>• Make accountable and responsible roles clear to staff within IDS.</li> </ul>	<p>Within the next 6 months</p>



<p>4. Develop stronger management and support structures to support staff development and wellbeing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assign every staff member a line manager (or equivalent role) responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• pastoral and career development support</li> <li>• facilitating 360-degree feedback reviews</li> <li>• redressing unacceptable behaviour.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Management roles could be assigned within the cluster structures or else span across IDS, but individuals should be at a senior level to their reports.</li> <li>• Train managers on policies and processes.</li> <li>• Implement mandatory 360-degree feedback processes which gather feedback (open to the individual but with an option of having private feedback just for their manager). The feedback process should include an assessment of collegiality – conceived as respectful and inclusive behaviours.</li> <li>• The outcomes of the review process should link to the formal FRPB outcomes, for example, achieving a fellowship should be contingent on the demonstration of collegiality within appropriate timeframes (where this is an outstanding concern).</li> </ul>	<p>Over the next 12-18 months</p>
<p>5. Strengthen reporting processes, follow-up support and disciplinary action to manage poor behaviour and improve the culture</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce route for anonymous reporting including a webform which provides both anonymous and open reporting lines. Reports should go to HR in the first instance with managers/coaches and individuals notified.</li> <li>• Evolve the disciplinary policy to include a route to Board and a subcommittee. The policy should include an allowance</li> </ul>	<p>Within the next 12 months</p>

	<p>to discipline members of staff with multiple reports through the reporting line (either anonymously or open).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clearly communicate escalation processes beyond individuals' managers in accessible policies.</li> <li>• Communicate any disciplinary action in writing to the individual with Board oversight.</li> <li>• Train all staff on new policies and procedures and improved signposting on IDS' intranet to improve awareness. The processes for reporting should be explicit, transparent and easily available for staff.</li> </ul>	
<p>6. Introduce training and discussion forums, and conduct further work, to improve awareness of issues, including race and racism, and foster a sense of inclusion at the Institute</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roll out mandatory training for staff and the Board, including issues relating to race and racism. It should include the following topics (which may be delivered in combination or separately): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unconscious bias in recruitment</li> <li>• Anti-racism, including having constructive conversations about race</li> <li>• Micro-aggressions</li> <li>• Workplace bullying.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Use the IDS staff retreat/strategy days to deliver formal training and/or more informal discussions and consider the use of external facilitators.</li> <li>• Alongside the outcomes of this review, produce communications about addressing poor behaviour and creating a culture of zero-tolerance to bullying to strengthen IDS' culture of respect and inclusivity.</li> <li>• Review staff experience, particularly relating to race and whiteness, in 6-8</li> </ul>	<p>Immediate and ongoing</p>

	months to understand the impact of changes made to date.	
7. Strengthen distributed decision-making to increase buy-in and make better informed decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop an elected advisory group made of different grades/roles across IDS to report to SLG/Director and provide remuneration.</li> <li>• Provide remuneration for Equalities Champions Group and other groups which are sponsored by IDS to support decision making and influence practices.</li> <li>• Provide transparency on decision making processes, including justification of decisions, where appropriate.</li> </ul>	Over the next 12-18 months
8. Improve, uphold and better communicate IDS-wide policies, including recruitment and progression, to ensure IDS is following best practice and attracting and supporting staff from diverse backgrounds.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clearly communicate HR policies to staff, particularly those relevant to EDI e.g. visa and citizenship policies.</li> <li>• Set out guidelines relating to work-life balance and expectations on hours worked.</li> <li>• For academic roles, re-evaluate criteria to ensure that IDS considers local field-experience, candidate potential, and culture fit, in addition to research output.</li> <li>• Introduce minimum applicant pool targets to improve representation.</li> <li>• Ensure recruitment policies, such as requirements relating to panel diversity, are upheld by all. Recruitment of candidates should only proceed if there is adherence to these practices.</li> <li>• Develop proactive recruitment campaigns to attract a diverse applicant pool for positions at IDS, including when hiring for positions in SLG.</li> <li>• Consider the use of targets to ensure that diversity is built into the workforce over a suitable time period (e.g. over the</li> </ul>	Within the next 3 months

	<p>next 5 years) and monitor and report progress at different grades for all staff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop an in-house leadership programme for staff from diverse backgrounds to support their progression.</li> </ul>	
<p>9. Set up more inclusive and developmental project team practices to improve project experiences and support staff development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build into research project processes space to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore strengths and development goals of each team member</li> <li>• Build in specific actions to support colleagues to achieve their development goals and build on their strengths</li> <li>• Assess progress at the mid-point and at the project close.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Link these processes to annual 360 reviews – i.e. make project feedback available to managers/coaches.</li> <li>• Better outline the responsibilities of team members, including what their contribution to projects should be.</li> </ul>	<p>Within the next 2 months (noting some links to 360 reviews could be longer)</p>

## 2 Context and approach

This section outlines the IDS context which brought about this review. It also highlights the approach followed, the levels of engagement received, and the limitations through the process.

### 2.1 IDS sits within a broader context of higher education and international development with systemic challenges

In recent years, higher education institutions, research institutes and organisations involved in international development have increased their focus on issues of inequity and exclusion. These relate both to external practices such as research partnerships and policy development, as well as internal issues around staff and student experience. Both higher education and international development have grown from a system in which privileged individuals, nations and continents have the greatest access to opportunities and a claim to the knowledge that is most valuable. This has led to a system today which still sees researchers and students in the global North, and from privileged backgrounds in the UK, with greater relative access to education and research and development funding.

There has been a growing recognition that to tackle these issues, clearly defined actions and accountability are needed. IDS is one of many institutions exploring its past and seeking to redress systemic challenges through exploring issues of colonialism externally as well as practice internally.

### 2.2 This review builds on IDS' ongoing commitment to EDI at the Institute

The Institute of Development Studies is built on the foundations of delivering world-class research, learning, and teaching that is needed for more equitable and sustainable development globally. Over recent years, the Institute has undertaken a period of reflection to investigate its own history, practices, and structures and understand how it can be a more equitable and inclusive workplace.

In this context, the IDS Board of Trustees commissioned Nous Group to conduct an independent review of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion at the Institute. The review aims to inform the IDS Board of Trustees and the wider staff community on the Institute's progress towards creating and sustaining an equitable and inclusive workplace for all. It also seeks to identify positive and constructive actions to support this at the individual, interpersonal and organisational level. This aims to accelerate IDS' progression towards eliminating discrimination and embedding Equality, Diversity and Inclusion among IDS' workforce, and in all of the Institute's work and activities.

The review considers the extent to which:

- IDS' values inform experiences at work, are translated into meaningful actions, and inform a supportive and inclusive culture
- working practices across the employee life cycle are designed and applied equitably
- members of the IDS community know how to seek support and raise concerns and feel comfortable to do so
- informal groups and networks are inclusive and foster a sense of belonging
- interpersonal relationships and behaviours support a sense of inclusiveness and belonging.

This review builds on the work of a wide range of colleagues dedicated to supporting IDS' core EDI values, including the exploration of decolonisation in the Institute's work, teaching, and curriculum. The Board established a Review Steering Group, that included members of the Equality Champions Group, the Decolonisation Group, and SLG. The steering group developed clear terms of reference for this review, carried out a tender process and selected a provider.

The review considers the differential experiences of staff at IDS across intersecting protected characteristics, while also attending to questions and relations of power and other characteristics, such as educational background and nationality.

More widely, IDS' EDI group action plan outlines several current and planned initiatives to create a more equitable and inclusive environment. These include the launch of the EDI policy, the recent gender pay gap report and the piloting of the reverse mentoring scheme. The plan also highlights current work into ethnicity pay gap reporting.

## **2.3 This review has engaged staff from across the Institute in a mixed-methods approach**

This section outlines the approach undertaken through this review, the levels of engagement received, and the limitations encountered.

### **2.3.1 This review was conducted using a multi-method engagement approach**

Nous used a multi-method engagement approach to explore IDS' progress towards creating and sustaining an equitable and inclusive workplace for all. This comprised of one-to-one interviews, focus groups, an all-staff survey and a series of steering group meetings. In addition, Nous conducted an in-depth review of existing documents and data, including previous EDI work, current demographic data and existing policies relating to EDI.

This method allowed for the capture of broad institutional themes, through the all-staff survey, but also enabled staff to share more detail to inform the findings, through consultations. It is worth noting that the findings in this review represent, by design, the lived experiences of those that have participated and do not attempt to verify issues or challenges raised by staff.

### 2.3.2 This review has received strong engagement from staff across the Institute

All staff were invited to participate in the review on a voluntary basis through three forums; an online survey, one-to-one interviews and pre-arranged and self-arranged focus groups. The online survey received 98 complete responses. This represents over 37% of IDS' workforce and a statistically significant response. Additionally, Nous engaged with 66 staff through a series of one-to-one interviews and focus groups, representing over 25% of IDS' workforce<sup>1</sup>.

**Table 1 | Breakdown of individuals engaged in the review**

Engagement type	Individuals engaged	Proportion of IDS staff <sup>2</sup>
One-to-one interviews	18	6.8%
Focus groups	55	21%
<b>Total unique interview and focus group engagements</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>25%</b>
Survey respondents	98	37%

The review engaged a representative portion of employees across the breadth of different levels, roles and personal characteristics to ensure an accurate representation of the IDS staff body. The survey respondents alone represent ~37% of IDS' workforce (Table 1). Respondents to the survey are broadly representative of the IDS staff profile in terms of ethnicity, gender, and age, however, Professional Services (PS) staff are overrepresented in the survey results by 20%. Relative to similar reviews conducted by Nous, this level of engagement is relatively strong.

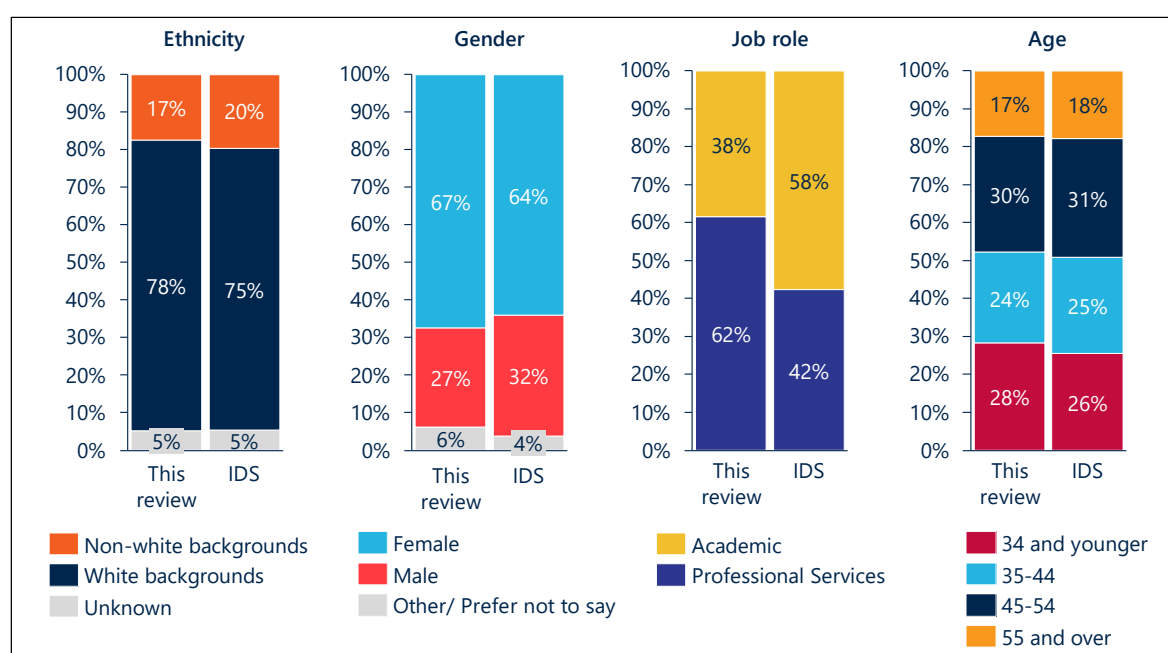
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<sup>1</sup> Note it is not possible to identify the unique number of staff engaged through both consults and survey responses due to the anonymity of the survey.

<sup>2</sup> Proportion calculations are based on a total staff number of 262, provided December 2022.



Figure 1 | Demographics of those engaged in this review against IDS' staff profile



### 2.3.3 There are several limitations that should be considered in this review

As outlined above, the review received good engagement, however, it is not without its limitations. These are outlined below:

- **Broad focus:** This review had a broad scope spanning the full breadth of equity and inclusion at IDS giving equal weighting to several issues, including race and whiteness, which was slightly different to an initial proposed focus on race and whiteness (within this broad review). This broad scope enabled us to explore challenges beyond protected characteristics, including power dynamics, class, and educational background. However, this limited the depth to which any one particular question/focus issue could be explored and, instead, reflects equity and inclusion at the Institute more broadly.

Additionally, the broad scope limited the level of deep focus that was available for any particular characteristics. Instead, those who engaged were given the opportunity to provide their experiences on issues that they had faced. As such, the findings presented in this report do not relate specifically to gender, sexuality, or disability, as these were not raised widely by participants. This is not to say that there are no issues relating to these characteristics at the Institute, rather that they did not come across over the course of this review.

- **Self-selection bias:** In order to provide a safe and supportive environment for all IDS' staff to feel able to contribute, all participation in the review was on a wholly voluntary basis. This naturally means that findings are skewed toward those who have something to say, and also means the review is not comprehensively inclusive of all stakeholders' perspectives.
- **Focus group dynamics:** Some focus groups were conducted as teams, which included managers, which may have curtailed their contribution to this review. To best mitigate any

bias, the team triangulated multiple sources of evidence across interviews, focus groups, survey data and document review.

- **Categorisation and terminology:** Survey analysis primarily looks at differences in responses between those who are white and those who are not, professional service staff and those who are academics, and different age categories. The terms 'racially minoritised' and 'non-white' (in relation to survey findings) are used throughout this report to refer to individuals racialised as non-white, and who define into communities which have historically and currently experience racism. These terms have significant limitations; they increase the risk of homogenising the experience of individuals and communities who experience racism in different ways, and people are more likely to define as a particular ethnic group or race, rather than into an overarching identity. This report is written and should be read fully cognisant of these limitations. Experiences highlighted should not be assumed as applicable to all people that fall within a certain grouping.
- **Intersectionality:** A thorough analysis of the intersectionality of different characteristics on staff experience at IDS has not been presented in this report. The small sample sizes of these groups within our review and across the Institute create the potential for the results to be identifiable and subsequently this has not been included in detail.

## 3 Findings

This section sets out the findings from the review. It covers staff experience, opportunities across the employee lifecycle, reporting processing and support mechanisms, leadership, culture, and networks and groups. The section is followed by Nous' recommendations for the Institute.

### 3.1 Most staff shared positive experiences, but some highlighted significant challenges relating to EDI at the Institute

This section outlines the findings regarding staff experience at IDS in relation to equity and inclusion. It covers the detail of some of the positive experiences of staff and challenges relating to diversity and inclusion, bullying and microaggressions, and asymmetries of power.

#### 3.1.1 Most staff shared positive experiences of inclusion at the Institute, but some identified challenges around diversity and inclusion

A significant proportion of IDS colleagues engaged in this review shared positive experiences of equity and inclusion at the Institute. Some highlighted that the shared purpose of the Institute, to deliver research, learning and teaching aiming to achieve more equitable and sustainable development globally, provides a common foundation for interaction between staff.

However, some highlighted the lack of diversity at the Institute as an issue. The make up of IDS is comparable to the UK in terms of ethnicity<sup>3</sup> and more diverse than the higher education sector (Figure 2). However, consultations highlighted the following issues with diversity:

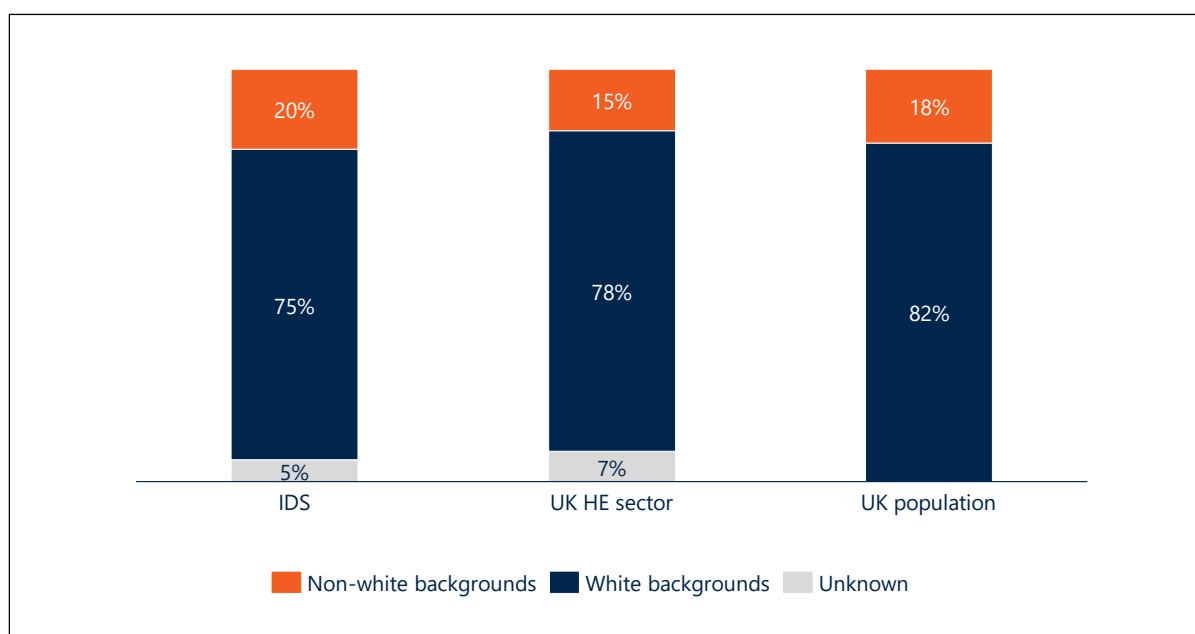
- The Institute works across the world in countries that have a much more ethnically diverse make up than the UK.
- Staff in some PS teams highlighted the over-representation of white and female staff.
- There is no ethnic diversity in the SLG.

In addition, the Institute is currently not collecting and monitoring some of the important EDI data points, such as information on progression by staff demographics.

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<sup>3</sup> Gov.uk. Population of England and Wales, 2023, <https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/uk-population-by-ethnicity/national-and-regional-populations/population-of-england-and-wales/latest#by-ethnicity>

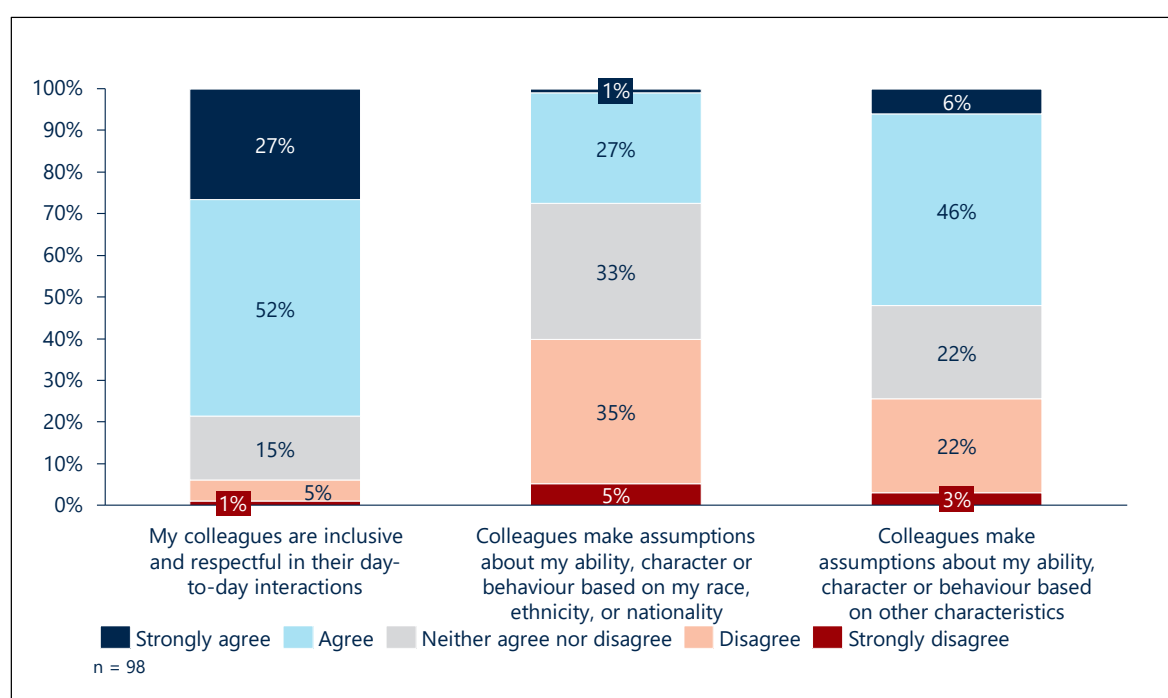
Figure 2 | IDS staff breakdown by ethnicity vs UK HE sector<sup>4</sup>



The majority of staff who responded to the survey (78%) agreed or strongly agreed that colleagues at IDS are inclusive and respectful in day-to-day interactions (Figure 3). However, the survey responses also indicate that there is a perception of prejudice at the Institute. 27% of staff who responded agreed or strongly agreed that colleagues make assumptions based on their race, ethnicity or nationality, while 51% of staff agree or strongly agree that assumptions are made about them based on other characteristics.

<sup>4</sup> HESA. Who's working in HE? All staff by equality characteristics, Academic years 2020/21, 2023, <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/staff/working-in-he/characteristics>  
Gov.uk. Ethnicity facts and figures, 2021  
<https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/>

**Figure 3 | Level of agreement with statements on staff experience**



Some staff engaged in this review highlighted that colleagues are judged on their social class and educational background, noting that IDS attracts the top researchers in the field, educated at the most prestigious institutions. Individuals spoke of instances of discrimination at the Institute due to accent and economic background, which impacted progression and opportunities.

### Quotes from interviews and survey responses

*"We all wouldn't be here if we didn't believe in inclusion and having in common that we care about each other."*

*"There is a huge power imbalance between professional services and research staff... sometimes it has played out in class dynamics - I feel there is a class gap between research and PS staff."*

*"There's class elitism at IDS – lots of Oxbridge-educated, middle class, well-off individuals... We tend to get people who come from the more well-off or connected or better-educated aspects of societies. Inevitable due to nature of work.. it does mean some people are discriminated against unconsciously by virtue of class due to accent, economic background."*

*"IDS tries very hard to be inclusive in terms of race, gender, sexuality. Outward facing, it seems to be trying very hard. Institutionally – the academic hierarchy and intellect of fellows versus everyone else doesn't feel inclusive at all. It doesn't feel transparent or equitable or any of those kind of words that IDS would like to be."*

### 3.1.2 Staff highlighted instances of bullying as broadly accepted at the Institute

This review has uncovered reported instances of bullying at IDS from a minority of staff at senior levels. Although staff raised issues relating to bullying from only a minority of staff, they highlighted that this behaviour is broadly accepted and unchallenged at the Institute. Staff raised that there has been a lack of action taken against these individuals, with mitigating actions including warning junior staff about working with challenging colleagues. A key issue is that the structure of IDS around project teams means that this behaviour is hidden from wider view with no obvious line manager route to seek support.

Additionally, engagement with staff uncovered that, for racially minoritised staff, micro-aggressions are currently an issue at the Institute. These staff members have often felt unable to discuss and communicate these behaviours due to their subjective interpretation and a lack of representation and understanding within IDS, including amongst those they might report to.

However, some staff engaged in this review also highlighted the challenges faced in addressing issues relating to poor behaviour. A lack of evidence of poor behaviour and a lack of comfort to formally report instances have been cited as a contribution to these challenges. Levels of awareness and comfort of reporting are discussed in more detail in section 3.3. In addition, some raised that addressing these incidents will not always take place in a public forum, so it may be the case that staff at IDS are understandably unaware of what has been done to resolve issues.

#### Quotes from interviews and survey responses

*"Group of mostly senior academics - mostly white men, but not always - feel the ability to behave and communicate in ways that are pressurising and insensitive"*

*"Who you are reporting to is important. There are people in the (HR) team who don't get it. Micro-aggressions are so hard to show, prove and explain."*

### 3.1.3 Funding pressures and asymmetries of power at the Institute create challenges between staff members

Staff highlighted the asymmetries of power that exist within project teams with more senior staff having disproportionate influence over those at more junior levels in the team. Junior staff reported being given menial tasks and put under pressure to work long hours during the week and over the weekend to meet the needs of senior staff in the team. This is exacerbated by a lack of monitoring and oversight of conduct at a project level and limited awareness and confidence to report such behaviour. However, senior academics have also highlighted the pressure they are under to secure research funding to continue in their post, which may contribute to the pressure felt amongst more junior staff.

Additionally, throughout this review, professional service staff have expressed views of a disconnect between academic staff and themselves, noting an 'us and them' culture at the

Institute. This is the case for some teams more than others, due to the nature of their work and the level of overlap with academic teams.

#### **Quotes from interviews and survey responses**

*"Sometimes feel the separation is between us and the middle floor... I get the sense that they think they can survive without us."*

*"There is division between admin and academic staff - academics think they generate the capital for IDS and admin are slowing down the work."*

*"I have a permanent contract. The pressure to bring in funding is high, which brings the pressure to work and put pressure on others."*

*"The history of academia is very hierarchical, which creates big power inequalities. Senior fellows demand RAROs work over weekends and Christmas. On one hand I can understand it: 'if I don't win this proposal I can be fired'."*

### **3.1.4 A majority-white workforce means structural and individual issues regarding race and racism can feel sidelined**

Some staff engaged in this review felt that race and racism were not widely discussed topics at IDS due to the low proportion of the workforce who are directly affected by this type of discrimination and systemic disadvantage. As a result, related issues are not picked up. Some perceive IDS colleagues to 'hire in their own image', as discussed in Section 3.2.1. Some colleagues think the lack of discussion about issues of race has resulted in senior staff members refusing to acknowledge the current challenges at the Institute. Subsequently, the issues are not actively addressed. The scope of the review has always been broad, looking at issues of equity and inclusion at the institute with a focus on race and whiteness. However, through the course of developing the approach, the questions posed to IDS staff were adapted to ensure that there was a focus on the experiences of all staff. This has its merits but was highlighted by some staff as reflecting a tendency to avoid tackling issues regarding race and racism head-on.

#### **Quotes from interviews and survey responses**

*"I can't recall any discussions around race."*

*"Because we are a very white group - there will be a lack of people talking about race - it doesn't get talked about and it's not an issue."*

*"There's a challenge in getting people who think they are inclusive to recognise they're not - there's some self-blindness. People fail to recognise what's going on - they point the finger but don't see themselves as contributing this problematic culture."*



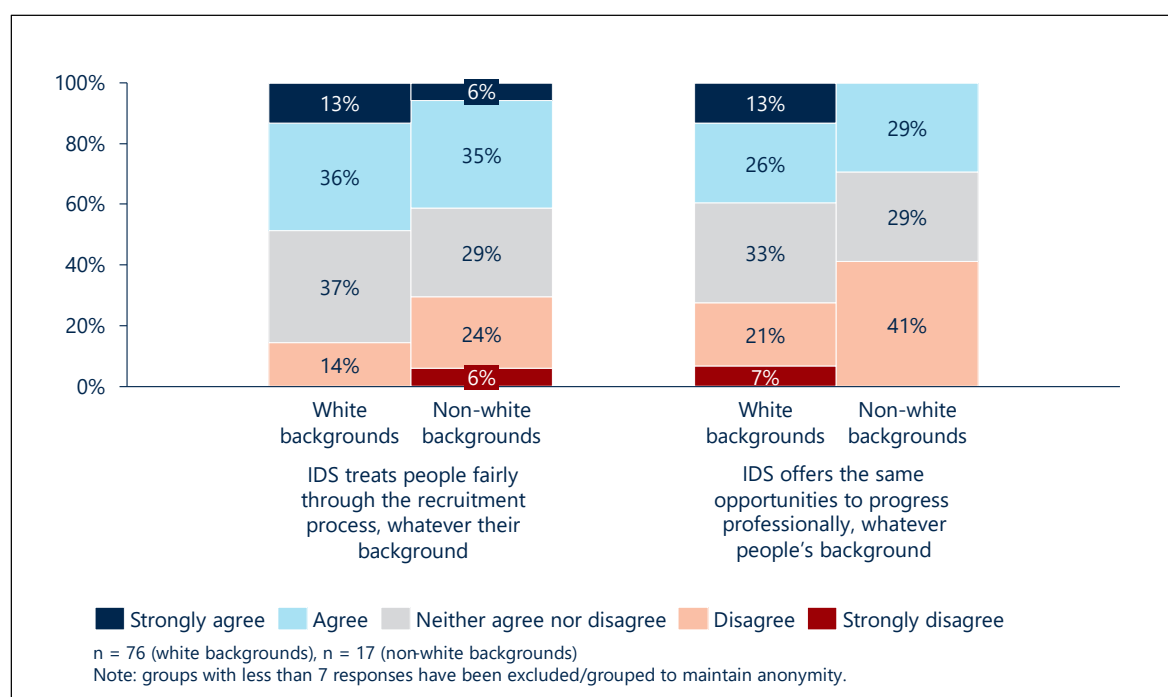
## 3.2 Staff identified some of the key issues impacting recruitment and progression but acknowledged improvements

This section explores staff perception of opportunities across the employee lifecycle, including details on recruitment, progression, management structures and the impact of asymmetries of power.

### 3.2.1 Some feel IDS needs to go further to hire a more diverse workforce

Most staff surveyed felt that recruitment practices at IDS are fair. Less than 19% of staff surveyed disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement IDS treats people fairly through the recruitment process, whatever their background. Racially minoritised staff were less likely to agree that recruitment and progression is equitable. 14% of white staff who completed the survey disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement whilst 30% of non-white staff disagreed or strongly disagreed (Figure 4).

**Figure 4 | Levels of agreement of statements on recruitment and progression by ethnic background**



In interviews and focus groups, a small number of staff raised the issue of bias in recruitment practices, with a tendency for the Institute to hire in its image. In practice, staff noted this means that IDS hires mostly white staff or those trained in western institutions. Consultees highlighted the missed opportunities to gain valuable insights from people in the local communities internationally as well as failing to provide opportunities to a more diverse group of people.

Several staff acknowledged positive steps in fair recruitment, including:

- Improvements to job advertisement descriptions, which no longer discourage those who require sponsorship to work in the UK from applying.
- More equitable processes outlined in the Recruitment and Selection Policy, including:
  - a requirement for hiring panels to reflect a balance of gender, ethnicity, and staff roles.
  - a requirement for individuals on hiring panels to undergo recruitment and selection training.
- A requirement for some roles to be advertised internally for a week first, before external candidates are added to the applicant pool. It is worth noting that, whilst this is positive for progression, this does not necessarily help to improve diversity in recruitment.

However, staff felt that senior colleagues can circumvent these processes. Some suggested that this is due to a belief that being an expert in the field of equity internationally exempts them from professional standards and processes.

#### **Quotes from interviews and survey responses**

*"Even when non white/non-European people are hired – we all have degrees from the UK or US. Recruitment panels equate this with some kind of competence. Non-western institutions/degrees are not recognised."*

*"We talk about diversity, but we hire in our image – we go to Africa and Asia and pretend that we are experts. We ignore that these groups are systematically behind in terms of qualifications and experience – in the end we hire people who are white and much older, or has a PhD, because you can't compete with that. Even if a PhD isn't required for the role, we'll hire someone with it because we want everything to be shiny, we go with the best."*

*"We don't have nearly enough people from different countries in Africa compared to how many countries in Africa we work with. We have colleagues from South Asia but no other regions in Asia."*

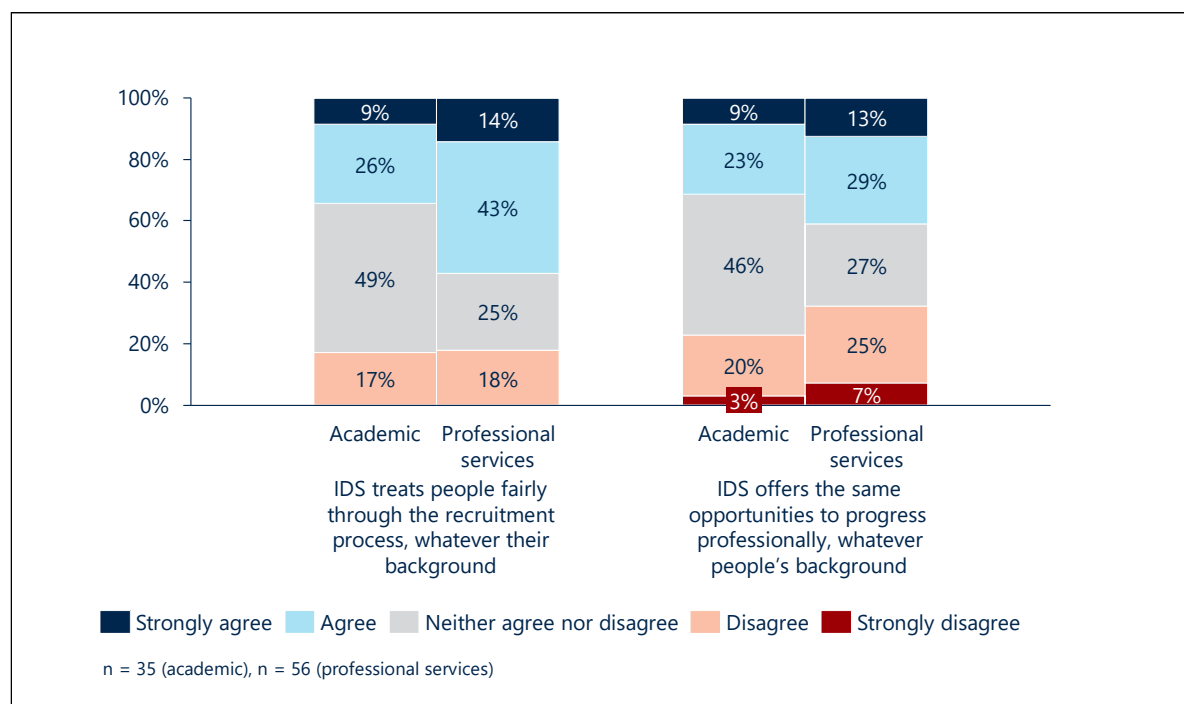
### **3.2.2 Colleagues raised limited progression opportunities as a significant challenge and highlighted areas for improvement**

The survey results demonstrate that more racially minoritised staff feel that progression opportunities at IDS are inequitable. 28% of staff from white backgrounds felt that progression opportunities were unfair and biased based on colleagues' backgrounds, compared with 41% of staff from non-white backgrounds (Figure 4). Staff pointed to tier 2 visa requirements as limiting progression for non-UK nationals. The requirements mandate a minimum number of working hours per week, limiting time to pursue progression via further education.

There is a perceived gap in opportunities for professional service staff and academic staff. The survey results show that there is a greater polarisation in the perception of opportunities amongst professional service staff than academic staff (Figure 5). The range of types of professional service teams could be a cause of this due to the varying nature of work and

subsequent opportunities for progression. Feedback from PS staff in interviews and focus groups demonstrated that progression opportunities are limited. Some staff felt that they had been, or would one day be, held back by the Institute's incremental pay bands system because they find it difficult to progress once they have reached the top of their band.

**Figure 5 | Level of agreement with statements on staff experience by job role**



Amongst academic staff who engaged with interviews and focus groups, there was a large concern about the progression opportunities for Research Assistants and Research Officers (RAROs), a group without any clearly defined career path. Barriers listed included inconsistent management, reinforcing the idea that 'who you know' determines your progress at IDS.

Additionally, there were multiple references to the limitations faced by those without PhDs and the barriers that prevent some staff from gaining these. Holding a PhD or an equivalent level of fieldwork is required to progress to a junior research fellow and, therefore, a key enabler for progression at the Institute. Staff reflected that there has been increasing support to gain a PhD through fee payment contributions or via publications. However, staff recognised the additional barriers in place that prevent some staff from gaining this qualification, including:

- tier 2 visa holders dependent on their working status to remain in the UK
- those with caring responsibilities unable to manage a PhD on top of this or reduce their working hours to part time.

For this latter group in particular, progression was reported to be tricky as gaining the equivalent amount of experience via fieldwork or publication was seen to be dependent on working beyond paid hours.

It is worth noting that this Institute is currently undertaking a pay and reward review. This review will include the evaluation of all current job roles at the Institute and will determine the

appropriate grading system. Part of this review may look at progression from one role to another.

#### **Quotes from interviews and survey responses**

*"I'm at the top of my scale. To progress you have to apply for it. I'm supposed to show that I've done something fantastic. I feel like I haven't so I'm never going to be able to progress. There's no opportunity for me to do anything extra."*

*"English RAROs can start a PhD on the side. But the people on the Tier 2 visas can't do that because they need the visa requirements. It's not always clear to people in their team that they don't have the family support mechanisms that British people have."*

*"It's who you know – this has a huge opportunity on your time here."*

*"If you have a fellow championing you, you're ok... It's luck of the draw – if you find the person you work well with, you can get support".*

### **3.2.3 There is a lack of line management within academic teams, which creates challenges for career development**

Throughout this review, consultees have spoken of the absence of accountability for managers to manage people, rather than just projects. This is a particular issue for academic teams where line management responsibilities appear to sit at the cluster leader level. The absence of appropriate line management results in staff depending heavily on relationships within teams for career development. Whilst this works well for some, the lack of defined line management creates inequality in the opportunities and support given to staff. These challenges are exacerbated by a lack of line management training, including on their responsibilities to those that they oversee. Some at the Institute are happy to perform line management responsibilities, whilst others are less comfortable with the additional workload.

Staff feel that the line management of RAROs, especially Portfolio RAROs, is particularly unclear and unstructured, and highlights difficulties for RAROs in finding project roles. Many staff noted that the introduction of a new RARO Convenor will be positive, but the role must be suitably senior to have any sway. Some staff feel that this role should be used as an opportunity to better understand the skills and experiences of RAROs so that they can be appropriately matched to projects of interest that support their professional development, and access training opportunities.

#### **Quotes from interviews and survey responses**

*"I will go to a different person depending on issue. It's down to personal network rather than professional link. They might not be responsible for me but they might be a senior fellow who I trust. I don't know the formal route."*

*"We're supposed to have a line manager to meet this target... I have five line managers, who do I go to? It's a bit of a mess in how its organised."*

### 3.2.4 Issues of recruitment and progression are exacerbated by asymmetries of power

Within academic teams, staff raised that power dynamics can significantly hinder their opportunities for recruitment and progression due to the following issues:

- Senior colleagues circumventing equitable recruitment practices and introducing bias to the process.
- A fear that upsetting senior colleagues could have repercussions for an individuals' career, due to their networks across the sector and role on external recruitment panels.
- A lack of recognition of the work of professional services staff and junior academics in research outputs, with the role of research fellows taking precedence.

IDS' Code of Conduct states 'when carrying out IDS' mission I understand that it is important not to abuse my own position of power/unequal power relationships in any way, including with students'. However, from this review, it is clear that some senior individuals at IDS are able to circumvent the rules without repercussion.

#### Quotes from interviews and survey responses

*"Academic highflyers are perceived to be untouchable ... There's a perception of academics get what they want."*

*"Projects are very important at IDS and there is a lot of hierarchy within them. There aren't accountability methods for what goes on within projects. There is no monitoring. I have seen instances of racism and sexism in projects but there's no mechanism to report this."*

*"These academics lead projects with massive amounts of money attached to them. Heard from HR that fellows do not feel obligated to manage people. They also feel they do not have to be accountable. It's an issue of accountability and what they see as part of their role."*

*"Managers are sympathetic but are not able to take action. It is difficult to take action against employees who are more powerful or bring in lots of funds."*

## 3.3 Limited awareness of, and confidence in the complaints reporting process is a challenge

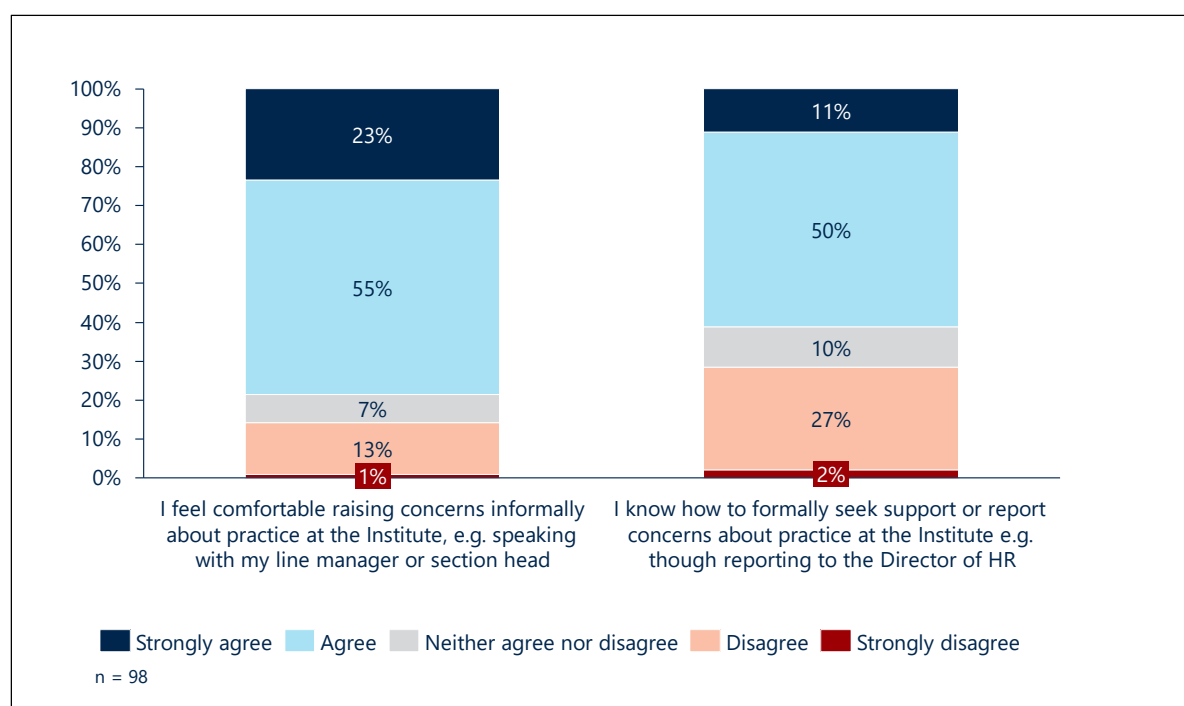
This section highlights some of the strengths and weaknesses of IDS' processes for reporting complaints and grievances regarding practice and related support mechanisms. It discusses the levels of awareness of the support available, the reasons why staff may be uncomfortable to report, and the role of HR.

### 3.3.1 There are varying levels of awareness of the formal and informal reporting processes and support mechanisms for staff

There is limited awareness of the different reporting mechanisms available at the Institute. While some staff are fully aware and comfortable with both the formal and informal reporting processes, many others have limited knowledge of who to speak to when challenges arise. Many staff engaged in this review indicated they have seldom interacted with HR and are unaware of what HR can do to address their issues. This is particularly an issue for staff who face difficulties with their line manager, who they directly report to and, therefore, are uncertain how to navigate the situation. This is illustrated in the staff survey results (Figure 6), which indicates only 60% of staff agreed or strongly agreed that they know how to formally seek support or report concerns about practice at the Institute.

In addition, line managers that have engaged in this review have highlighted that they are unaware of how to escalate issues reported by their direct reports. Similarly, individuals who have experienced a colleague making a formal report against them feel that they lacked support, experienced poor communication on the process, and felt like they were treated as guilty until proven innocent.

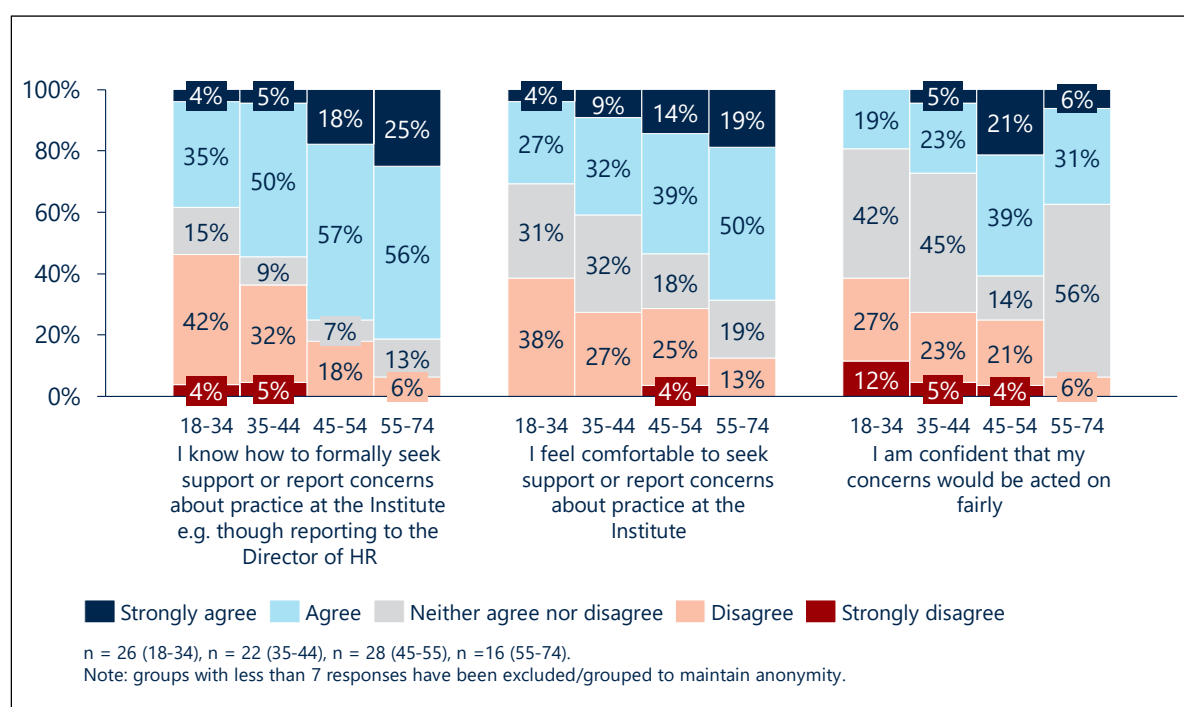
**Figure 6 | Level of agreement with statements on reporting and seeking support**



Compared to their older colleagues, younger staff members consistently reported feeling less knowledgeable, confident, and comfortable seeking support or reporting concerns about practice at the Institute (Figure 7). This difference in response by age was seen most greatly in response to the statement, 'I know how to formally seek support or report concerns about practice at the Institute'. 80% of those aged 55-74 agreed or strongly agreed. However, only 40% of those aged 18-34 agreed or strongly agreed. Remote working may be a contributing

factor to the lack of awareness of reporting mechanisms, particularly those which are informal, due to the reliance on relationship building which is more difficult whilst working remotely.

**Figure 7 | Level of agreement with statements on reporting and seeking support by age**



### Quotes from interviews and survey responses

*"I don't know what the reporting mechanisms are. I don't know who sees what or what the confidentiality is."*

*"It would be good to refresh on what the actual reporting routes are. We've lost a bit of faith - we think that SLG will side with the person in power - we've lost a bit of trust in things being addressed formally and transparently."*

*"If I have an issue, I'd be worried to talk to HR because don't I want to formalise it."*

### 3.3.2 Some staff feel uncomfortable reporting instances of poor behaviour

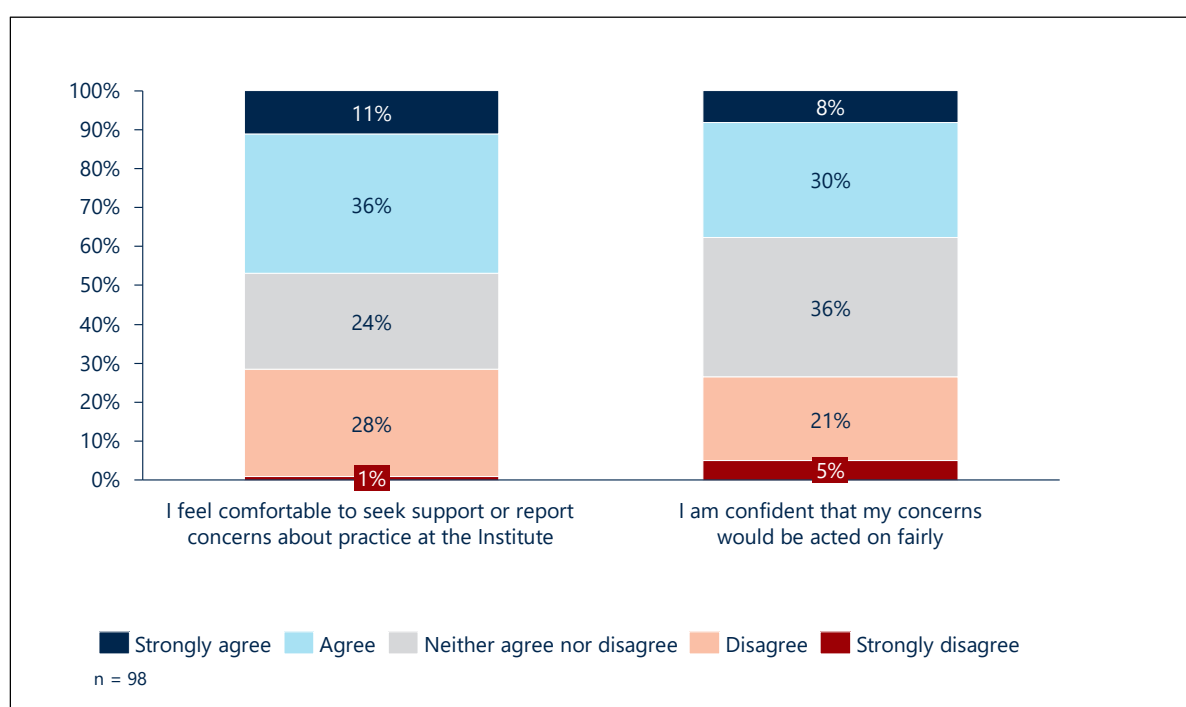
Only 47% (Figure 8) stated that they felt comfortable reporting instances of poor behaviour and only 38% were confident that their concerns would be fairly acted on. Consultations identified four key challenges which are outlined below:

- **Risks to career:** development studies as a career field are perceived to be relatively small, with senior academics at IDS also a part of other institutions and their respective hiring panels.
- **Risks to residency:** those that are on working visas worry that jeopardising their job could threaten their residency status in the UK.



- **Lack of representation:** racially minoritised staff members indicated that they would feel uncomfortable at the prospect of reporting instances of racism to a white staff member but had few alternative options.
- **Lack of clarity and confidence in the process:** many staff are not clear on how decisions are determined and where complaints go, or if they are addressed at all. For example, upon raising a complaint, multiple staff members felt shut down by more senior staff, or told that it wouldn't be taken further, without explaining why. This leaves staff feeling like the operations of the Institute can be very 'opaque' and 'mysterious'.

**Figure 8 | Level of agreement with statements on reporting and seeking support**



Additionally, several staff mentioned that the poor behaviour is often very subtle, despite its continuous nature. This causes the individuals to question their experience. Others claim that they do not believe individuals intend to behave in a discriminatory or non-inclusive manner and, rather, that it is the individual's poor managerial style.

### Quotes from interviews and survey responses

*"Negative behaviour is not reported because our industry is so small – academics are on the recruiting panel of another organisation."*

*"Representation (race, background) is really important. Especially because they may understand it due to development work, but that doesn't mean they actually relate to people's experience. Having representation makes people feel more included and able to escalate certain situations"*

*"No one wants to complain formally. Those on lower grades e.g. BME staff will say things informally but won't email or report it... They see their managers go through the same thing and not report it."*

*"(There was) someone who left but still didn't want to put a complaint forward. They probably don't trust that anything would change or that they wouldn't get retribution."*

### 3.3.3 There is a perception that HR do not have the authority to discipline senior staff

Many staff engaged in this review feel that the central HR team is not an active part of addressing instances of inequality at the Institute. Staff from across the Institute spoke of how this is largely due to the perceived lack of power HR has over senior staff. This is exacerbated by the view across more junior staff and professional services that senior academics are not held to the same standards as everybody else at the Institute due to their status and the funding they bring in. As demonstrated in Figure 7 above, younger staff reported feeling less confident that their concerns would be acted upon fairly. It is worth noting that although the younger group of staff in this review are more ethnically diverse than older staff, there is no significant fluctuation in response based on ethnic background. This adds to the argument that junior, and often younger, staff members are very live to the perceived power dynamics in the Institute. This viewpoint extends to mitigation of exclusionary behaviour. While the IDS Code of Conduct states 'I will undertake any training required by IDS to enable me to fulfil the expectations of this code of conduct', it is acknowledged that senior staff often do not complete the appropriate training, such as anti-bullying training. Throughout the review, individuals pointed to the greatest need being culture change in relation to power dynamics. However, it was consistently stated that this must be led by those at the top of the Institute to make real change.

#### Quotes from interviews and survey responses

*"HR needs to introduce more accountability mechanisms for managers and senior staff across IDS who are in leadership positions. I think we need more transparency."*

*"There is a huge power imbalance between professional service and research staff. When there are instances of bad behaviour e.g. disrespectful – you can raise it to your managers and they can raise it higher up – but there is never accountability and follow up."*

*"It has been difficult at times to challenge bad behaviour by senior academic staff. We know bullying has taken place and exists – often between senior academics and junior professional staff but the academics are seen as too valuable to really take on."*

*"A few years ago there were a few instances that got escalated – then there was bullying training but it was not mandatory – it still wasn't taken up by everyone."*

### **3.4 Staff see that leaders care about equity and inclusion, but feel practical action on internal matters is lacking**

This section discusses the role of senior leaders in driving EDI at the Institute. It details the perception of leaders at the Institute, the awareness of past EDI initiatives, and the approach to disciplining poor behaviour at the Institute.

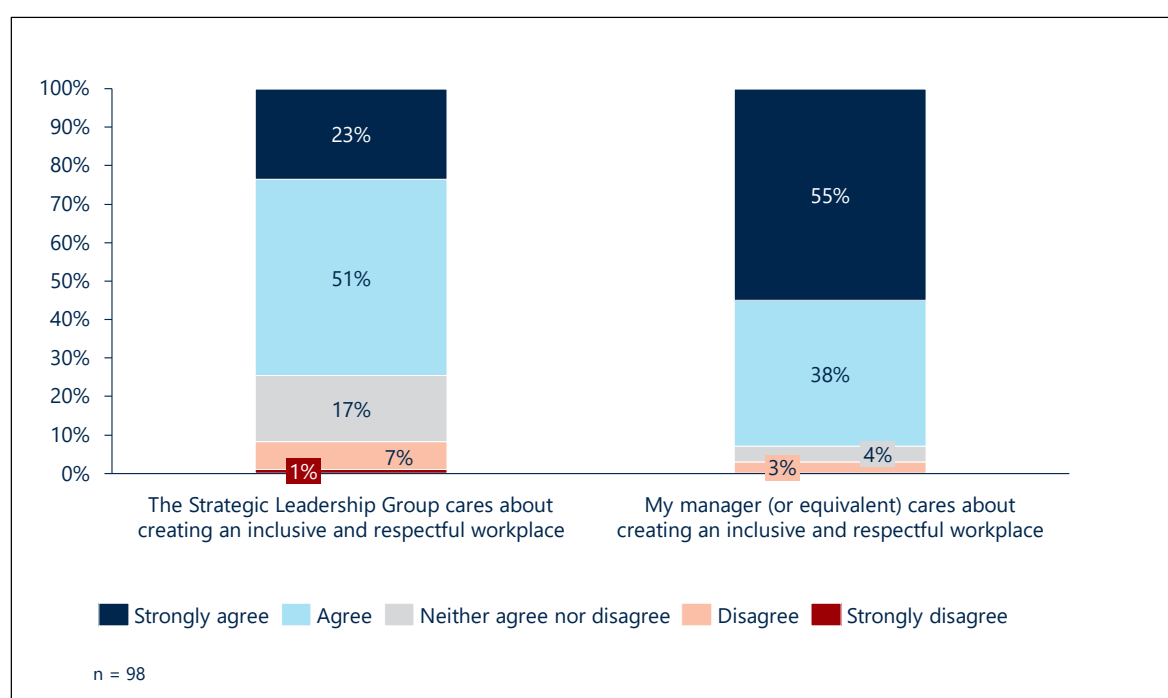
#### **3.4.1 Leaders embody the values of equity and inclusion at IDS, but younger staff particularly are frustrated by limited diversity and a perceived lack of action**

The Senior Leadership Group is broadly viewed positively across the Institute; 75% of survey respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that the group cares about creating an inclusive and respectful workplace at IDS (Figure 9). However, the biggest level of disagreement with this statement came from those between the ages of 18 and 34, with 19% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing that this was the case.

Younger colleagues were more likely to point to the overrepresentation of White staff in SLG and a lack of resulting advocacy for issues regarding race and racism. The higher proportion of those from non-white backgrounds within this group, than amongst older colleagues, could be contributing factor to these outcomes. Several staff noted that IDS often signposts the Board as being a diverse group as an antidote to representation issues, despite Board engagement on internal cultural issues feeling limited. The level of discontent about the overall leadership and culture of the Institute was stronger among younger staff, echoing a misalignment in perceptions between generations in broader society. SLG and the Board have reflected on IDS' role and identity as a British Institute engaged in international development as part of its strategy and continue to do so ahead of the new Strategic Plan.

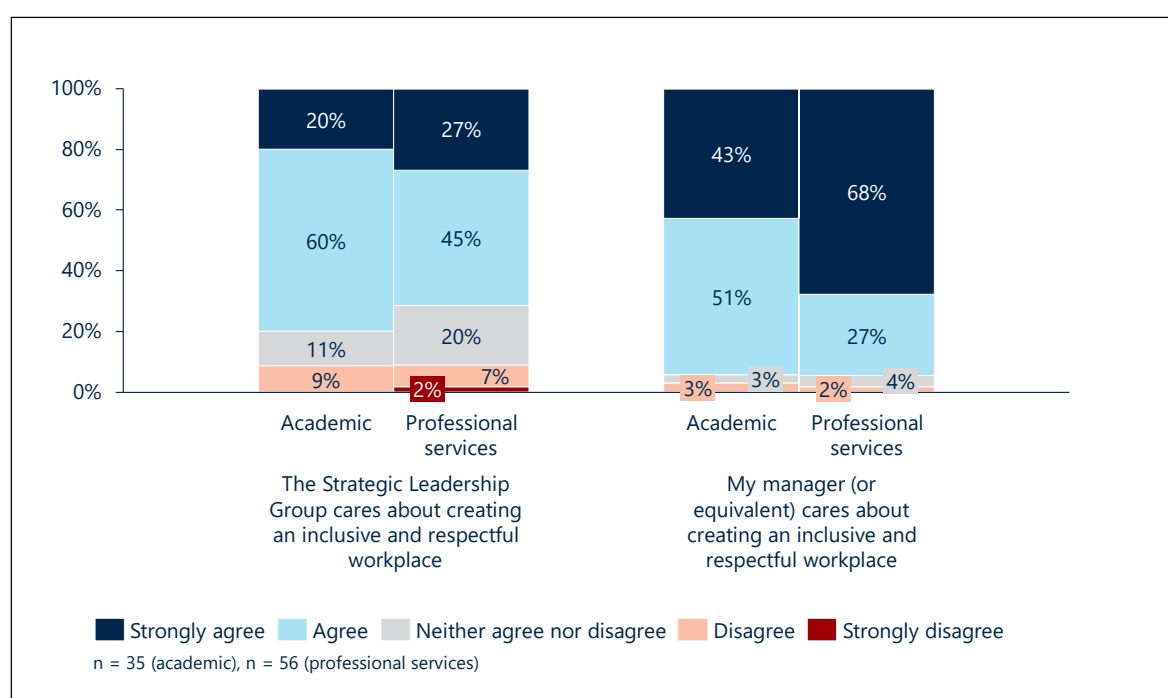
Several staff commented on the lack of transparency around decision-making at the Institute and a lack of clarity about accountability for EDI at SLG and Board level. Related to this, staff commonly felt that SLG has struggled to successfully translate some of the discussions about EDI into meaningful action, citing democratised decision making as a potential carrier.

**Figure 9 | Level of agreement with statements on leadership**



Perception of managers at the Institute is positive with 92% of those who responded to the survey agreeing or strongly agreeing that their manager (or equivalent) cares about creating an inclusive and respectful workplace (Figure 9). Figure 10 shows that this sentiment was felt most strongly by professional service staff with 68% strongly agreeing with this statement, compared with 43% of academic staff. It is worth noting that the percentage of those who answered positively to this question is consistent at 92%. This difference could indicate stronger relationships between managers and staff in professional service teams than in academic teams. This is supported by engagement with staff which highlighted the lack of appropriate management for academic staff.

Figure 10 | Level of agreement with statements on leadership by job role



### Quotes from interviews and survey responses

*"Day to day, there's a sense of inclusion (pleasant working environment, colleagues are welcoming) but in terms of policies they're not apparent and I'm unsure sure how they are enacted. Other policies are clear, but not those around equity."*

*"Despite the board being quite racially diverse, there are minimal chances for interactions with them and they seem a bit remote to the day-to-day operating realities of the institution. The SLG is glaringly white and, while excellent and certainly not personally responsible for perpetuating racial inequality, perhaps a shorter-term span could ensure a more regularly reconstituted and diverse SLG?"*

*"There is policy around EDI but no one speaks to it – you just hear about it in the induction... Leaders don't really understand EDI...if leaders don't understand, how can the rest of staff?"*

### 3.4.2 Leaders fail to implement a zero-tolerance culture for bullying

A theme shared consistently throughout this review is that some academic colleagues at IDS are above the rules and treat their colleagues poorly. Participants shared that when behaviour is challenged, it is usually escalated to SLG due to lack of middle management but SLG has often struggled to discipline staff.

### Quotes from interviews and survey responses

*"They will say 'I know about diversity (with regards to research) and I know what's important and what's important is that we hire the best people because this makes the project better.'"*

*"Rules are meant to be broken. Academics don't feel they need to abide by the rules... They don't want to be inequitable, they just want to bypass the rules."*

### **3.5 IDS creates the space for open discussion about EDI, but academic discourse can limit participation**

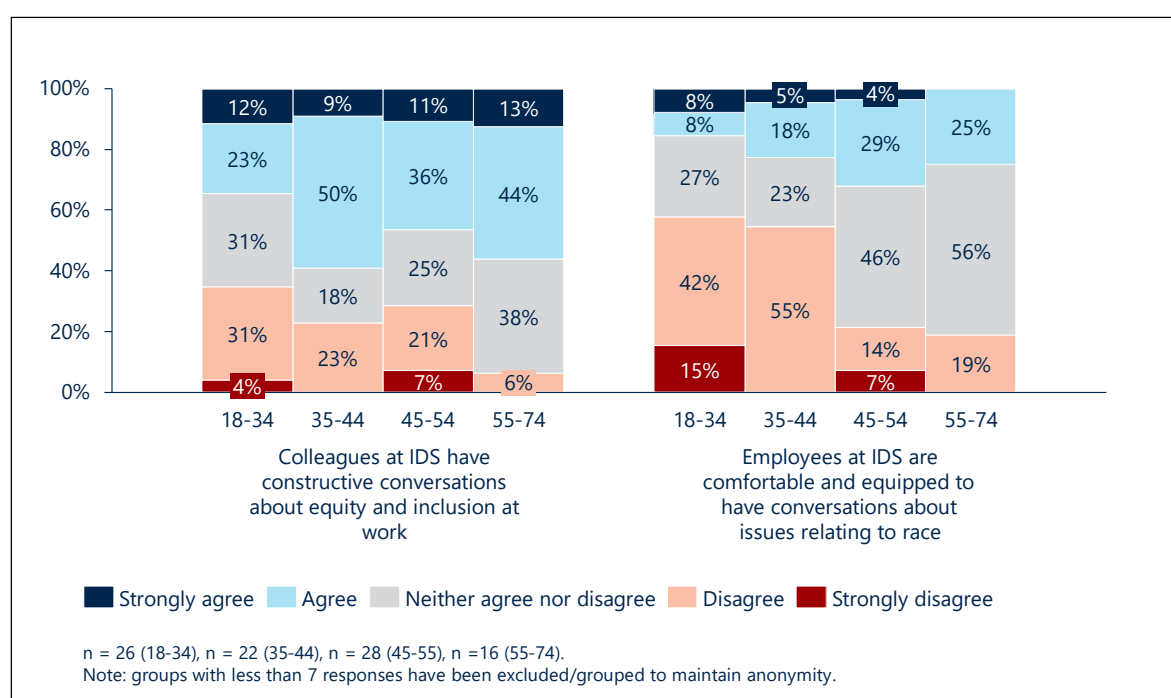
This section outlines the strengths and weaknesses of IDS' Institutional culture. It highlights IDS' willingness to discuss topics relating to EDI, but flags areas of frustration around the level of academic discourse.

#### **3.5.1 Staff appreciate the willingness to discuss EDI, but see the Institute as less equipped to talk about issues relating to race**

Staff broadly appreciate the culture within IDS and a willingness to discuss issues of equity and inclusion. Some survey respondents referenced positive leadership within the Institute or their team regarding this. However, staff felt that the Institute is more comfortable talking broadly about issues relating to equity and inclusion than focusing in on specific challenges, such as those around race and racism. This is shown clearly in Figure 9 with around 50% of staff agreeing or strongly agreeing that colleagues have constructive conversations about EDI, but only 25% responding in the same way about conversations relating to issues of race.

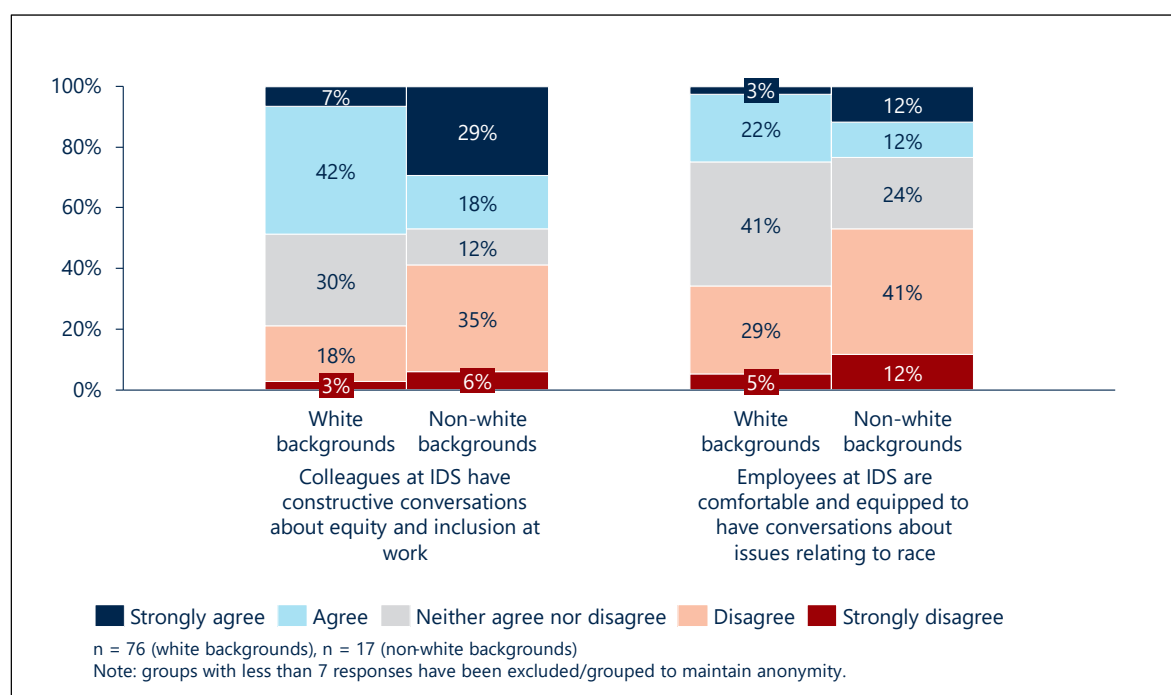
Figure 11 shows that there is a stark difference in the responses to the statement about conversations relating to race based on the age of the respondent. Between 55% and 57% of younger staff (aged 44 and below) disagree or strongly disagree that IDS is comfortable and equipped to have conversations about race. For older staff at the Institute (aged 45 and above), this figure sits between 19% and 21%. The significantly higher proportion of younger staff disagreeing with this statement may indicate that there is a divide between what is considered to be a constructive discussion about race between different age groups at IDS. It is worth noting that younger staff who participated were a more ethnically diverse group than older staff, as discussed above.

**Figure 11 | Level of agreement with statements on IDS culture by age**



In addition, the survey highlighted the differences in opinion around conversations relating to EDI for staff of white and non-white backgrounds. Figure 12 shows that a much higher proportion of staff from non-white backgrounds (53%) disagree or strongly disagree that the Institute is equipped to have constructive conversations about equity and inclusion or issues relating to race than staff from white backgrounds (34%).

**Figure 12 | Level of agreement with statements on IDS culture by ethnic background**





#### Quotes from interviews and survey responses

*"Generally, very friendly colleagues make it easier to discuss potentially difficult things. Melissa being open to this review and other initiatives and emphasising their importance in all-staff meetings etc (as well as generally promoting a culture of understanding and kindness) has been positive for IDS."*

*"I think people feel more comfortable talking about bullying than they do about race."*

*"Stop talking around the issue of race and confront it head-on, call it racism instead of colonialism. Colonialism is an important issue, but we need to talk about racism."*

### 3.5.2 The academic nature of discussions at IDS creates frustration amongst staff and limits participation

The academic nature of equity and inclusion discussions at IDS was a consistent theme from staff in this review. Staff shared that equity and inclusion discussions at IDS often morph into academic discussions and debates rather than focused conversations that lead to action. Additionally, the academic nature of some discussions has resulted in the exclusion of some staff from the conversation. Engagement with staff indicated that there is a lack of clarity around what discussions hope to achieve: whether they are designed to drive improvements internally at IDS or whether they are to influence the work at the Institute and the teaching delivered. This has been a criticism levelled at the Decolonising Group, which is explored in more detail below.

#### Quotes from interviews and survey responses

*"There are those that have more idea of the academic world and those that don't."*

*"It's about how you relate to people - it's not a study, it is an emotional human issue."*

*"I avoid (group discussions) because I don't know how safe those spaces are... they become too intellectualised."*

### 3.6 Networks and groups contribute positively to IDS, but their purpose can be unclear at times

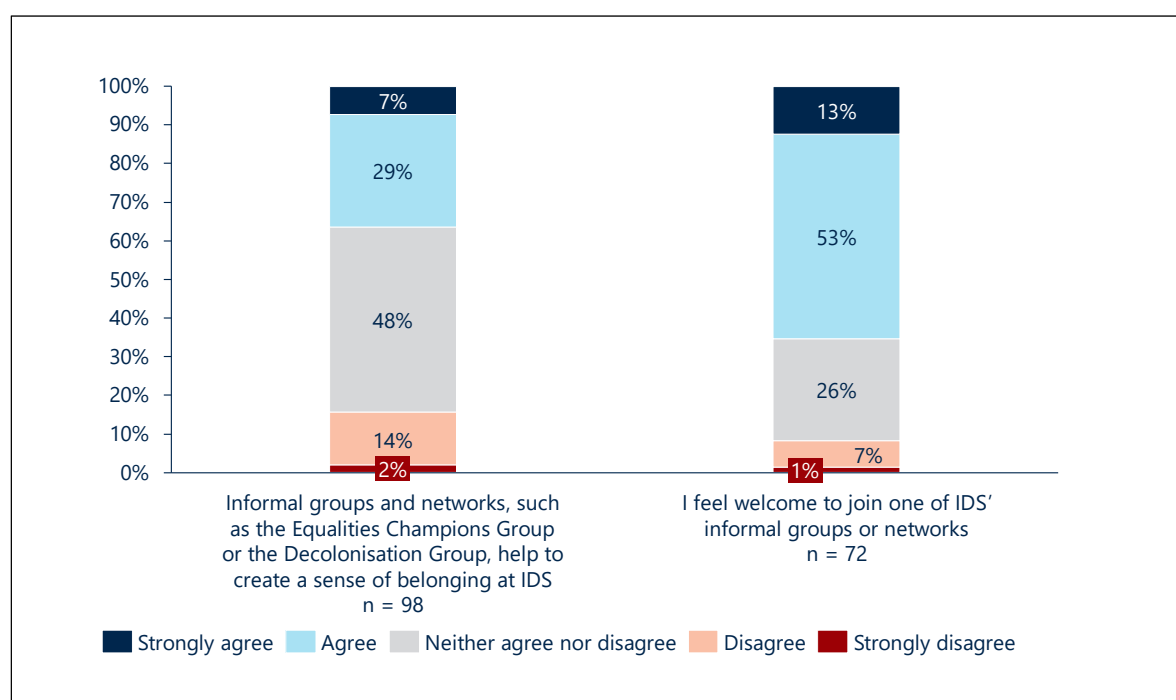
This section outlines staff perceptions of the networks and groups at the Institute.

#### 3.6.1 Networks and groups have contributed positively to EDI goals, but some are frustrated due to confusion around their purpose

Colleagues highlighted the positive work of networks and groups in promoting a sense of belonging and inclusion at IDS. This included Institute-led groups, such as the Equalities Champions group and more informal employee groups and networks, such as the Decolonisation group and the RAROs network. As illustrated in Figure 13, 35% of staff agreed or

strongly agreed that the informal groups and networks help to create a sense of belonging at the Institute.

**Figure 13 | Levels of agreement with statements on networks and groups**



The Equalities Champion Group is an HR-led group, formed by members from across the Institute. The group was set up as an opportunity to progress IDS' EDI efforts and it has successfully introduced a number of positive initiatives to further this agenda. These include an accessibility review, shared parental pay, and a reverse mentoring scheme pilot. However, some staff have criticised this group due to its lack of decision-making abilities, resulting in limited change at the Institute. The democratised nature of decision-making at the Institute and a lack of agreement over the group's recommendations to SLG have been blamed for this. Some colleagues cited the recent halting of EDI training due to disagreement over the choice of training provider as an example.

The Decolonisation group is a staff-led group, created to discuss decolonising efforts in an academic context. However, its purpose is not clear across the Institute, which has left some staff feeling frustrated at the lack of decolonisation action within IDS. Consultations with members of the group confirmed the group's purpose as a forum for academic discussion to influence teaching and research.

Staff at IDS are generally comfortable to join the informal groups and networks (Figure 13). Over 60% of survey respondents agree that they are comfortable to join, compared with only 13% who disagree. However, a concern expressed by many staff was that participation in these groups is in addition to their day-to-day jobs. This can exclude some staff members who have commitments outside of work, such as part-time studies or caring responsibilities. Some staff shared their disappointment in the unfunded nature of these groups, especially in cases where these groups are asked to input into IDS' policies and practices and to advise SLG.

### **Quotes from interviews and survey responses**

*"The groups don't feel exclusive. Equality Champions group has been very vocal about having people to join them."*

*"These things are initiated by people/self-organised and then management say 'look we are doing this'. This takes time and this time not recognised. Give fellows, who run these and have targets, more time to manage them."*

*"I'm not a part of these groups. I can't afford to go to these groups because I am so busy. These groups don't have decision-making responsibility. They inform SLG, but that's it."*



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