



OUR PEOPLE

Our employees are integral to achieving our business objectives. We believe engaged employees are vital to achieving our aims and we recognise that helping to support their health and wellbeing is a priority. We strive to create a diverse workplace in which everyone is treated with dignity and respect

Highlights

- NEXT employs over 44,000 people globally
- 40% of NEXT plc Board directors are female
- Employee-led networks celebrate the diversity of cultural backgrounds and wellbeing across NEXT
- Signatory to BITC's Race at Work Charter
- Around 9,700 employees held options or awards in over 5.9 million NEXT plc shares

Aligned SDGs



Our Approach

To encourage a successful business, it is important to create an environment that enables us to attract and retain the right people to work at every level throughout NEXT. These are people who are committed to working together and who support our business approach of honesty, respect and encouragement.

Our priority is to provide an environment where our workforce is:

- Safe, supported and respected
- Treated fairly and taken care of
- Listened to
- Motivated to achieve their full potential

We are committed to achieving excellence in the areas of:

- Health, safety and wellbeing
- Equality, diversity and inclusion
- Training and development
- Reward, fair pay and employee share ownership

Find out more [here](#)

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

NEXT is an equal opportunities employer and we offer career opportunities without discrimination. Job vacancies are filled by the candidates who have the most relevant skills and competencies to succeed. We treat all employees fairly and equally regardless of gender, sexual orientation, marital status, race, colour, nationality, religion, ethnic or national origin, age, disability or union membership status.

We believe that having a diverse and inclusive working environment is vital to supporting the health and wellbeing of our employees. Full consideration is given to applications for employment from disabled persons, having regard to their particular aptitudes and abilities. NEXT continues the employment wherever possible of any person who becomes disabled during their employment with us, and opportunities for training, career development and promotion do not operate to the detriment of disabled employees.

We are signatories to the Disability Confident Scheme which supports employers to make the most of the talents that disabled people can bring to the workplace and during 2021/22 we achieved Level 2: Disability Confident Employer status.

Project SEARCH is a programme to provide a year-long work experience for young adults with learning difficulties which we support within NEXT UK Distribution sites. During 2021, despite challenges from the pandemic, we have introduced a new group of students. This programme is supporting students to build skills and experience in NEXT whilst continuing to study their school curriculum to give the students the skills they need to obtain paid employment. Now in its eighth year, the programme is aimed at 17-24 year olds. Through the programme we have been able to support 70% of these young people into permanent roles with NEXT, compared to the national average of 6%.



Our Commitment



To ensure we attract, retain and develop the very best people to build a diverse and talented team recognising that every individual's unique background, experience and ability collaborates and contributes to our future success.

We want to create an inclusive and inspiring environment where individuals feel valued and respected and where people can belong, thrive, achieve their full potential and be their very best; whoever they are.

We Create

an inclusive environment where everyone is welcomed and valued and feel they belong.

We Recognise

that diversity of talent makes us more innovative, more competitive and more creative.

We Promote

a team culture that's open and transparent and where we treat everyone fairly and with respect.

We Encourage

a workspace where everyone can feel supported to be themselves whoever they are, so they can succeed and thrive to do the best work of their lives.

We Ensure

everyone is aware of and empowered to fulfil their personal responsibility to question discriminatory or inappropriate behaviours.

We Uphold

a commitment of zero tolerance towards unacceptable behaviour, harassment, discrimination, bullying or victimisation.



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The gender mix of the Group's employees at the end of the financial year is set out in the table below.

	2022		2021	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Directors of NEXT plc	6	4	6	4
Operational directors and other senior managers ¹	25	16	33	13
Total employees	13,851	30,775	12,976	27,891

1. At January 2022, senior managers comprised 17 males and 14 females and their direct reports consisted of 77 male employees and 99 female employees.

Although we do not set specific targets for diversity, women currently represent 40% of our Board and the table above shows the gender mix of the Group's employees at the end of the financial year. In relation to our senior management and their direct reports, NEXT was ranked first in the 2022 FTSE Women Leaders Review: Achieving gender balance.

Our annual Gender Pay Report can be found at nextplc.co.uk

NEXT Pension Arrangements

As at January 2022, active members of the 2013 NEXT Group Pension Plan stood at:

Number of Employees	Final Salary Section*		Money Purchase Section*	
	2022	2021	2022	2021
NEXT UK Pension Scheme	636	690	3,761	4,072

* Pensions data relates to NEXT plc operations in the UK, excluding NEXT International and NEXT Sourcing

NEXT has implemented the UK's auto enrolment pension scheme. This is provided by The Peoples' Pension/B&CE.

At January 2022, 15,235 (2021: 13,722) employees were also participating in the Group's auto enrolment defined contribution scheme.

Rewards and Benefits

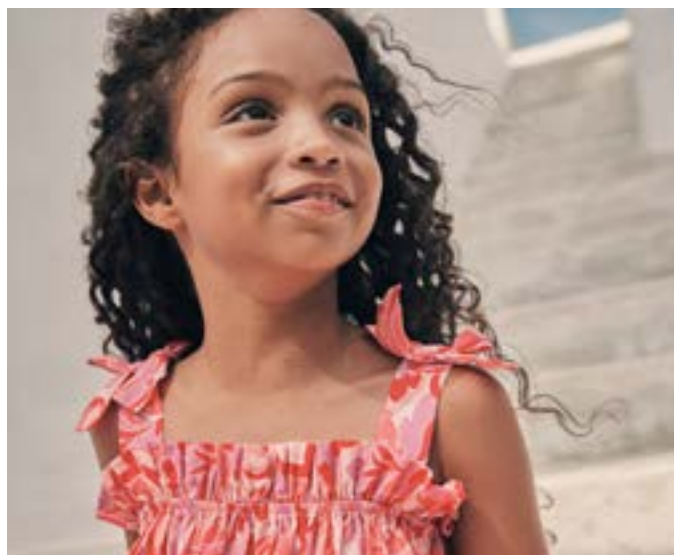
We believe in rewarding all employees with fair and competitive salaries, along with the opportunity to gain additional pay in the form of a bonus depending on the Company (or in some cases store or individual) performance.

Sharesave: We operate a Sharesave scheme to encourage employees to own shares in NEXT. All UK and Eire employees have the opportunity to save money over three or five years to buy NEXT plc shares at a discounted price. At the end of the savings period, the participant has the opportunity to buy the shares at a price fixed at the start of the scheme, usually at a 20% discount to the share price at the time of grant. We also operate a share option scheme which extends to more than 1,700 participants.

At end January 2022, approximately 9,700 employees (circa 25% of our total UK and Eire employees) held options or awards in respect of 5.9m shares in NEXT, being 4.4% of the total shares then in issue.

NEXT Steps - our workplace nursery: Our purpose-built Head Office Child Care Nursery continues to flourish with an "Outstanding" OFSTED rating. It currently has over 200 children registered to attend. This is part of our on-going commitment to supporting our employees with their pre-school childcare arrangements.

Find out more [here](#)



NEXT Mental Wellbeing Charter



When we talk about mental wellbeing we mean:

"Where you are able to achieve your potential, cope with normal day to day pressures, thrive and be productive in all aspects of your life".

Find out more [here](#)

Health, Safety and Employee Wellbeing Strategy and Objectives

Our goal is to make NEXT a healthy and safe place for everyone with a culture that enables all our employees to maintain positive mental wellbeing. Our Mental Wellbeing Charter encourages an environment where mental wellbeing is discussed openly, improving how we can identify and help those suffering from mental ill-health, ensuring people are treated fairly and with care and compassion.

NEXT reviews its Company safety statement and safety objectives every three years, which also includes safety programmes and objectives for each division of the business. These are reviewed regularly at divisional safety meetings by relevant divisional directors and twice a year by our Chief Executive.

Due to our continued focus on COVID security in 2020 and 2021, we temporarily paused the development of new Company safety objectives for 2022-2025. The new objectives have been developed during 2021/22 for the next three years and will be launched in early 2022, focusing on three pillars:

- Health, Safety and Wellbeing Engagement and Communication
- Developing our Health and Wellbeing offer for our employees
- Ensuring a Safe Workplace, with a focus on key risks



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The three pillars are designed to ensure we have a culture which ensures that there is effective safety culture leadership; that our management teams give clear direction and manage health and safety every day and that our employees know what the right thing to do is and engage in everything they do to manage all aspects of our business safely.

Find out more [here](#)

Our Wellbeing Actions

The Wellbeing Programme is embedded across the business and we continue to provide employees with a range of support, events, guidance and activities which is making a difference by improving employees' general wellbeing as well as the way we identify and help those suffering from mental ill-health.

NEXT believes it is important for employees and their managers to work together to improve overall wellbeing and helping them to become more resilient as well as knowing who to reach out to if they need help or feel unable to cope.

Maintaining a regular flow of communication with our employees to keep them safe and well has been more important than ever during the pandemic. During the year we have:

- Continued to update our employee wellbeing hub to provide support, health and wellbeing advice, useful information, hints, tips and monthly initiatives
- Raised awareness of the support services available to employees should they need them. For example, during World Mental Health Day we featured THRIVE, a free NHS-approved app and a free digital GP service, giving all employees free and quick access to an online doctor
- Expanded our Mental Health First Aider employee led network and upskill them through our network group 'Open Minds'
- Continued to support employees with access to financial wellbeing sessions to help manage debt and assist with financial planning
- Offered the seasonal flu jab to all employees
- Agreed discounts on fees for several gyms, personal training sessions, nutrition sessions and wellbeing apps to encourage employees to take care of themselves, be active and healthy

We continue to work with external stakeholders to inform and develop our approach to support employees or the wider community. Examples include raising awareness about the NHS campaign to increase the level of blood donation and those on the organ donation register, or providing support for challenging issues such as domestic abuse, suicide or bereavement.

Case Study: We are on a mission with GenM

We are one of 48 founding partners with GenM to make the menopause a more positive experience for everyone. We have worked with our employees to widen the conversation around menopause and raised awareness of GenM's ongoing groundbreaking research, knowledge and experience to better understand the 48 symptoms, provide better support to all those in menopause and signpost them to products and services that already exist.

Find out more [here](#)

Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Actions

In 2021/22 we have continued to develop our approach to diversity and inclusion in the business to ensure we continue to attract, retain and develop the best talent for NEXT as well as create an environment where individuals feel welcomed, respected and supported.

A number of HR supported employee-led networks have now been established within the business to enable employees to work collaboratively with NEXT to deliver positive outcomes:

Pride@Next: an LGBT+ network which works to raise awareness of LGBT+ issues at NEXT and helps shape our policies. For example, with input from Pride@Next we developed a policy to support transgender employees

Unity: a network created with the purpose to champion, connect and celebrate the cultural diversity represented at NEXT. This included working within the business to champion talent and provide more career opportunities for under-represented backgrounds

Diversity in Tech: working to champion the attraction and development of female talent in IT including a Returners Scheme to attract talent back into IT for individuals who may have been out of the industry for a number of years. It also includes a mentoring scheme to support female talent to develop their skills to be our future leaders.

Other initiatives include:

- Continued to work with our partner, Business in the Community (BITC), on the Mentoring Circles programme which offers young people from ethnic minority backgrounds the chance to connect with mentors in their chosen industry and to share their experiences of the workplace and help mentees with their own career progression
- Partnered with an external training provider to create a diversity and inclusion awareness training session for managers. We conducted an extended pilot before rolling out the training in December 2021, with accompanying e-learning sessions for the non-management population
- Partnered with a Race Advisor from BITC to support our journey. During 2021/22, we signed up to BITC's Race at Work Charter and the BRC's Diversity and Inclusion Charter to support and underpin the work of Unity and our wider approach to equality, diversity and inclusion
- Continued support for pregnant employees and those returning from maternity leave at Head Office by partnering with an external organisation to offer a programme of pregnancy yoga alongside maternity coaching. We also launched support for pregnancy loss
- Partnered with Carers UK by signing up to the Employers for Carers digital platform to provide access for our employees to dedicated resources for carers, including e-learning modules on resilience and managing finances
- Membership of Stonewall's Global Diversity Champion network and in 2020 we formed a charity partnership with The Terence Higgins Trust



OUR PEOPLE CONTINUED

Accident Reporting

We report work-related accidents in accordance with the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrence Regulations (RIDDOR) per 100,000 hours worked for employee accidents, and per 100,000 transactions for customer accidents.

	RIDDOR accident rate	
	2022	2021
Employees in Retail Stores/100,000 hrs worked	0.23	0.22
Customers in Retail Stores/100,000 transactions*	0.003	0.01
Employees in Warehouses/100,000 hrs worked	0.35	0.34
Employees in Regional Service Centres/ 100,000 hrs worked	0.24	0.20

* Transactions include customer parcel collections where the customer collects from a Retail Store.

Our focus remained in maintaining a safe place for our employees to work and our customers to shop, with appropriate COVID safety measures in place.

Retail Stores: Whilst the number of RIDDOR reportable accidents remained low, due to the reduction in hours worked in store during the previous year we have seen a small increase year on year.

Warehouses and Distribution Locations: Our warehouses are highly automated and primarily reliant on our team of expert engineers to ensure they run smoothly and safely, whilst our Regional Service Centres are more traditional warehousing operations where the key risks relate to workplace transport, MHE (Material Handling Equipment) movement as well as manual handling.

During the year we saw our RIDDOR accident rate in Distribution centres increase slightly year on year, but it is still significantly lower when compared to our rate in the last full trading year of 2019.

Ambitions@NEXT - Distribution Apprenticeship Programmes

Our Apprenticeship programme has grown in size and scope, with a dedicated Apprenticeship team who deliver the programme across Distribution. It offers employees great opportunities to gain recognised qualifications at Entry Level 2 and Higher Level 3 and our apprenticeships achieve a 98.5% retention rate. Currently we have over 126 apprentices across 11 programmes including:

- Furniture manufacturing within our own onsite factory
- Engineering and maintenance
- Transport including light goods vehicle drivers
- Operational management and IT
- Business improvement techniques and business administration
- Coaching, Mentoring and Human Resources
- Loss prevention
- Warehouse operatives

Training and Development

Our employees are able to access a range of development tools or job-specific training appropriate to their needs through the focused and integrated training teams within each area of the business. We believe that offering learning and development opportunities will help to ensure our employees feel supported and equipped to carry out their role to the best of their ability.

Our integrated training teams ensure relevant and appropriate training and development is provided by supporting:

- Job role-specific training covering technical, operational and skills training
- Individually tailored training to address both an employee's individual needs and specific business requirements
- Training in areas such as health and safety, first aid and manual handling to ensure our employees work in a safe environment

Employee Engagement

It is important that we have an open and honest culture, communicating effectively with our employees and providing opportunities for them to interact and feedback ideas and views which are captured and considered in our decision making. Employees are kept informed of performance and strategy through regular presentations and updates from members of the Board. NEXT has a number of effective workforce engagement mechanisms in place across the Group. This includes an employee forum made up of elected representatives from Head Office who attend meetings at least twice a year with directors and senior managers. These forums encourage open discussion on business issues, policies and the working environment.

In 2021/22, we conducted our first company wide engagement survey, where all employees were invited to provide feedback and suggestions on their employment at NEXT. The results, focusing on all matters relating to employee engagement, provided the basis of discussions within the Group's Recruit Reward Retain and Workforce Focus forums attended by workforce representatives, our Chief Executive, a non-executive director and our group HR Director. The meetings allow effective engagement and open discussion on key business issues, policies and the working environment in different parts of the business, with actions agreed on issues raised.

Looking ahead - we will:

- Work with external organisations to offer summer internships to students from disabled, ethnic minority or less advantaged backgrounds
- Enhance our mental wellbeing programme through identification of trends to develop support
- Further develop our workforce engagement
- Continue to identify opportunities to develop safe working conditions for our employees