

# **Workforce Equality Report 2023-24**

**March 2025**

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## Introduction

Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (the Public Sector Equality Duty) and the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017, the Council is required to publish equality information to show our compliance with the general equality duty. The Council must also publish information on pay for employees. This Workforce Equality Report forms part of our response to the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Bedford Borough Council is proud of the diversity of its staff. We seek to achieve equality of opportunity in all aspects of employment which is outlined in our Workforce Strategy 2022-2026.

***'Bedford Borough's population is diverse, and so too are the Council's employees. We want to continue to build an inclusive and diverse workplace where everyone is welcomed and feels a sense of belonging. Only together can we create an environment where staff feel able to speak up and are listened to, where they are respected and valued and can be themselves every day, regardless of individual circumstances and background.'***

## Data Reporting and Interpretation

Our workforce monitoring data is collected, monitored, and published to help us understand who our workforce is; and to show the impact of our employment policies and practices and how we are meeting our responsibilities as an employer regarding equality. Our information on pay is analysed to help us understand any pay differences between men and women working for the Council.

Much of the information in this report relies on employees self-reporting and providing their information through the Council's 'My View' system - an integrated Human Resource and Payroll system that is used to collect and record data on protected characteristics.

Unless otherwise stated, analysis presented in this report is based on 'known data.' This means only data that employees<sup>1</sup> have self-disclosed and therefore is held on the Council's integrated information system is included.

The prevalence of unknown data undermines equality analysis by creating incomplete and potentially misleading representations of workforce diversity. When employees from certain groups are less likely to self-disclose, analysis may underrepresent these populations, masking real inequalities. This data gap leads to ineffective equality initiatives, prevents accurate measurement of progress over time, and ultimately compromises the Council's ability to create a truly inclusive workplace environment.

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<sup>1</sup> The report does not include school-based staff and agency, even where the Council is the employer

## Local Information

To understand the impact of employment policies and practices, our workforce data is compared with the local census data<sup>2</sup> 2021. Data comparison with local data will be based on working age population (16-74 years). In the 2011 census it has shown that:



Between 2011 and 2021, Bedford's population grew by 17.7%, significantly outpacing the East of England's overall growth of 8.3%, making Bedford one of the fastest-growing areas in the region.



Working age population (16-74 year) is 133,828, an increase by 9.08%.



Limited long-term illness health problems and disability is 15.28%, an increase of 3.88%.



Unpaid care giving, 8.5% provide unpaid care, an increase of 1.7%.



Black, Asian, ethnic minority, 35.67%, an increase of 6.67%



Religion or belief, 62.89%, a decrease of 6.91%.

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<sup>2</sup> Further information about Bedford Borough is on the Council's statistics and census website page.

## Our Workforce

The Council is committed to upholding its equality duty, ensuring fairness, respect, and inclusion across its workforce. By fostering an equitable and supportive workplace, the Council aims to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and promote good relations among employees. This commitment includes actively reflecting the diversity of the community it serves, providing equal access to opportunities, and creating an environment where everyone can thrive regardless of their background, characteristics, or circumstances.

The data presented below is based on a snapshot data of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023, agency workers are not included.

### Overview of our workforce

**Table 1: Types of contracts.**

Type of contracts	2023	2024	2023	2024
Fixed Hour contracts	1808	1851	92.48%	92.04%
Relief Workers	78	76	3.99%	3.78%
Casual Workers	69	84	3.53%	4.18%
Total	<b>1955</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

- In 2024, we had 2011 employees, an increase of 56 employees compared to 2023. The types of contracts and fixed hours contracts remain proportionately the same.

**Table 2: Contracted Hours**

Fixed hour contracts	2023	2024	2023	2023
Full time Fixed Hours	1168	1232	64.60%	66.56%
Part Time Fixed Hours	640	619	35.40%	33.44%
Total Fixed Hour contracts	<b>1808</b>	<b>1851</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

- Figures are based on fixed hour contracts only.

## Graph 1: Number of Leavers and Starters



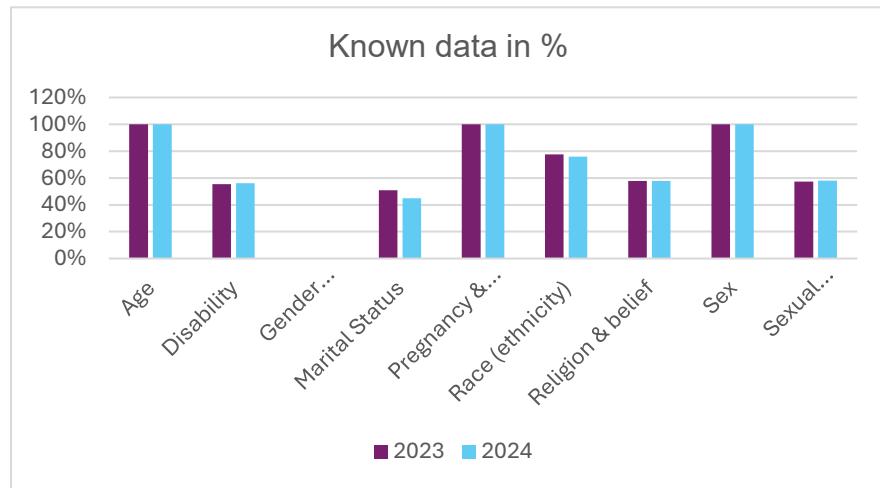
- 305 people were offered a job with the Council, and
- 250 people left Council employment.

Table 3: Headcount by Protected Characteristics

Protected Characteristic	Head Count			
	Known data		Unknown data	
	2023	2024	2023	2024
Age	1955	2011	0	0
Disability	1082	1128	873	883
Gender reassignment	0	0	1955	2011
Marital Status	997	903	958	1108
Pregnancy & maternity	1955	2011	0	0
Race (ethnicity)	1519	1526	436	485
Religion & belief	1132	1163	823	848
Sex	1955	2011	0	0
Sexual orientation	1123	1167	832	844

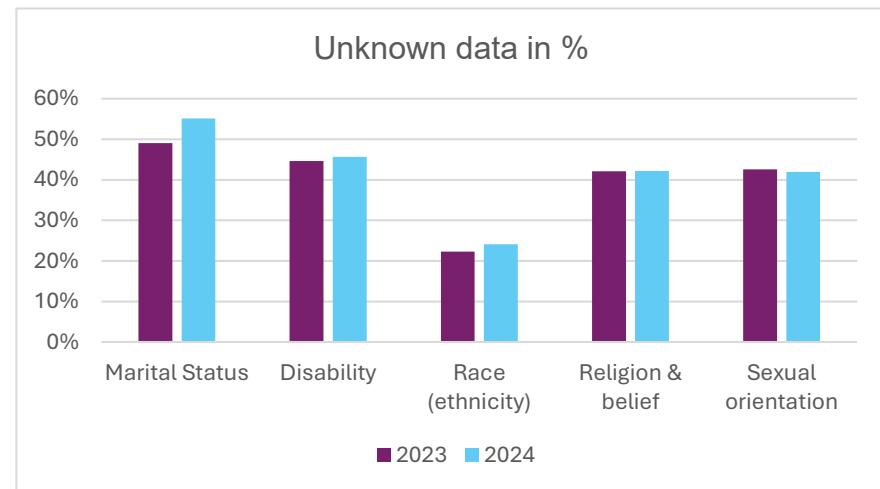
It is compulsory for employees to report on sex, age, pregnancy and maternity for pension and benefit related purposes. Employees reporting on other equality data is optional, and many opt out in completing this information for various reasons.

## Graph 2: Protected Characteristics Known Data



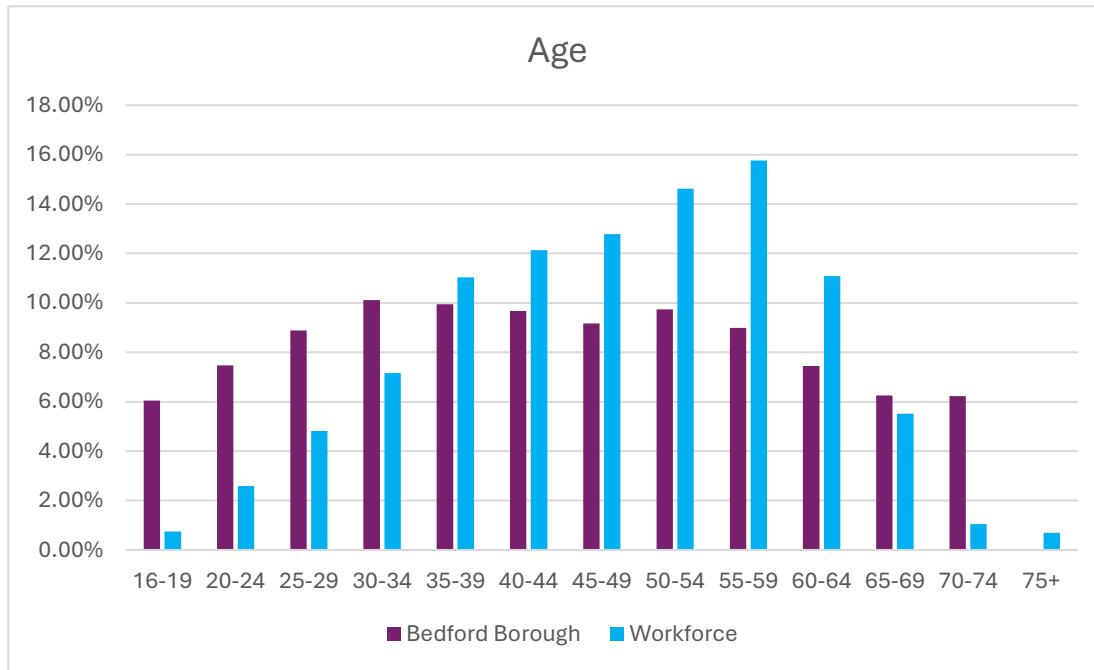
- At the time of reporting, gender reassignment data was not available. This has been included in 2024 and should be available when reporting for 2024/25.

## Graph 3: Protected Characteristics Unknown Data



- Staff were encouraged through internal communications to complete their equality data. Despite this, unknown data for sexual orientation, disability, marital status, religion, and belief remains high.

**Graph 4: Workforce by Age**

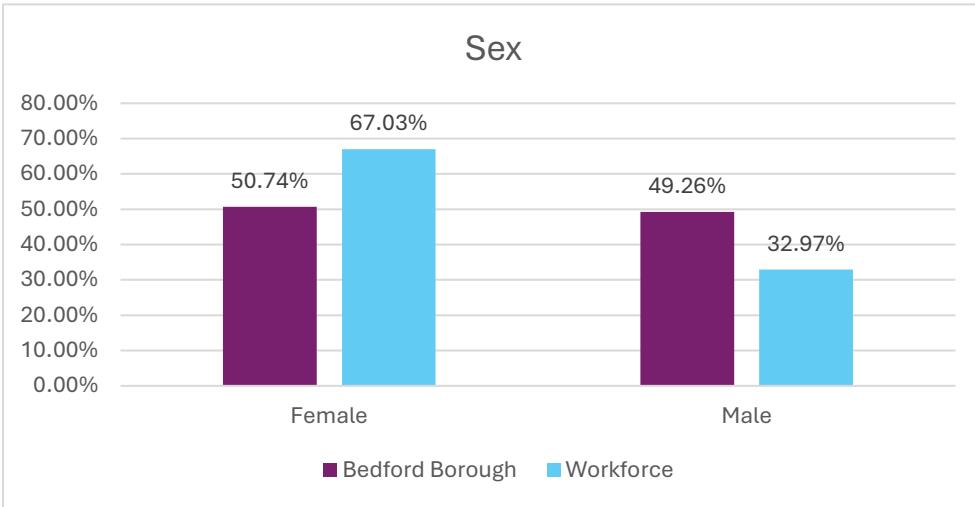


**Table 4: Working Age Population.**

Age Range	Bedford Borough 16-74 Years old census figures		Bedford Borough Council Employees	
	Number	%	Number	%
16-19	8090	6.05%	15	0.75%
20-24	9997	7.47%	52	2.59%
25-29	11884	8.88%	97	4.82%
30-34	13548	10.12%	144	7.16%
35-39	13313	9.95%	222	11.04%
40-44	12954	9.68%	244	12.13%
45-49	12267	9.17%	257	12.78%
50-54	13033	9.74%	294	14.62%
55-59	12036	8.99%	317	15.76%
60-64	9971	7.45%	223	11.09%
65-69	8379	6.26%	111	5.52%
70-74	8339	6.23%	21	1.04%
75+			14	0.70%
Total	<b>133,811</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

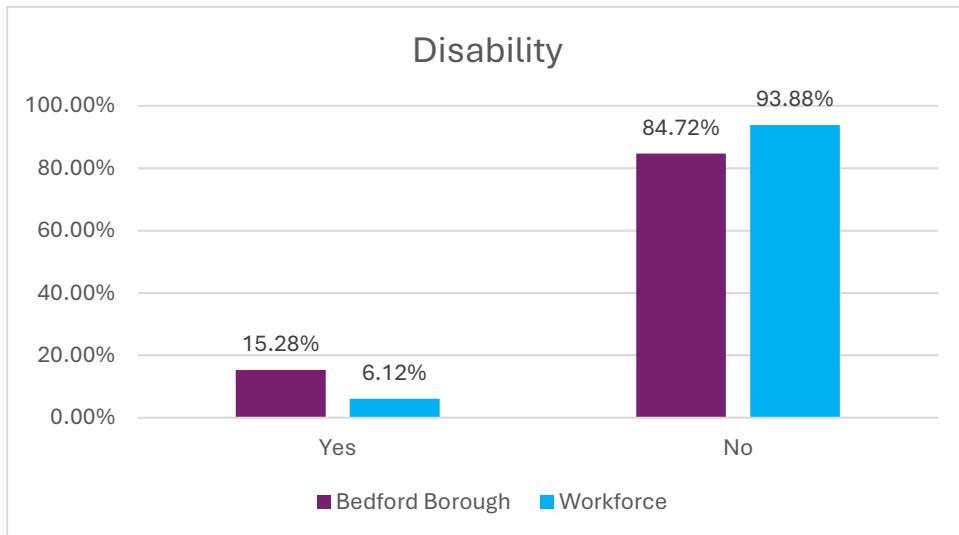
- Under 35 years old are underrepresented in the workforce.
- Over 65 years old are underrepresented, this is in line with economic activity trends.
- Employees aged 50-64 years are well represented.

## Graph 5: Workforce by Sex



- The profile of the workforce is presented in Graph 4 with the split remaining unchanged.
- Males are unrepresented in the workforce and has remained similar to 2023 (33.30%), however, this split is typical for upper tier local authorities.

## Graph 6: Workforce by Disability



- Unknown data on disability is 45.65%,
- Data shown in Graph 17 indicates that disabled employees are under-represented in the workforce.
- The percentage of disability declared remains lower than the local population.
- The target set by the Council's HR Best Value indicator is 6.00%. Graph 5 shows the workforce by disability is 6.12%, which means the target has been met.

**Table 5: Workforce by Marital Status**

Marital Status	Bedford Borough Census Figures		Bedford Borough Council Employees	
	Number	%	Number	%
Married or in a registered same-sex civil partnership	61724	46.13%	620	68.90%
Divorced or formally in a same-sex civil partnership which is now legally dissolved	12720	9.51%	46	5.11%
Separated (but still legally married or still legally in a same-sex civil partnership)	3482	2.6%	11	1.22%
Single (never married or never registered in a same-sex civil partnership)	52572	39.29%	217	24.11%
Widowed or surviving partner from a same-sex civil partnership	3312	2.48%	6	0.66%
Prefer not to say/Unknown			169	
Unknown			942	
<b>Total (known data)</b>	<b>133,810</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2,011</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

- Unknown data for marital status is 55.10%, an increase from 51.15% in 2023.

**Tabel 6: Workforce by Sexual Orientation**

Sexual Orientation	Bedford Borough 16-74 Years		Bedford Borough Council Workforce	
	Number	%	Number	%
Heterosexual	120,424	97.19	1131	96.92%
LGB	3,483	2.81	36	3.08%
Prefer not to say	-	-	482	
Unknown	-	-	362	
<b>Total (known data)</b>	<b>123,907</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2,011</b>	<b>100%</b>

- There has been no significant change in data reporting for sexual orientation compared to 2023.
- Compared to 2023, unknown data has increased from 57.45% to 58.03%.

**Table 7: Workforce by Race/Ethnic Groups**

the Race/Ethnic Groups	Bedford Borough 16-74 Years Census Figures		Bedford Borough Council Employees (Total Workforce)	
	Number	%	Number	%
White British	86085	64.33	1104	72.35%
White non-British	17018	12.72	102	6.68%
Mixed/Multiple ethnic	4152	3.1	34	2.23%
Asian or Asian British	16883	12.62	153	10.03%
Black or Black British	7196	5.38	120	7.86%
Arab or Other Ethnic Group	2494	1.86	13	0.85%
Prefer not to say			421	
Unknown			64	
<b>Total</b>	<b>133,828</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

**Table 8: Workforce by Religion and Belief.**

Religion and Belief	Bedford Borough 16-74 Years Census Figures		Bedford Borough Council Employees (Total Workforce)	
	Number	%	Number	%
Christian	62998	49.92%	607	52.19%
Buddhist	534	0.42%	6	0.52%
Hindu	2295	1.82%	23	1.98%
Jewish	168	0.13%	4	0.34%
Muslim	8565	6.79%	46	3.96%
Sikh	3146	2.49%	41	3.53%
Other Religion	1659	1.31%	35	3.01%
No Religion	46831	37.11%	401	34.47%
Prefer not to say			494	
Unknown			354	
<b>Total</b>	<b>126,196</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>100%</b>

- The Council's HR Best Value Performance Indicator set for 2024 is 28.00%, and performance against the indicator is 27.65%. Although the performance target has improved from 2023, it has still not been met.
- Due to high percentage of unknown data in most areas, an accurate analysis cannot be made. The Council will continue to encourage and emphasise the importance of reporting on equality data, as it influences on the development of policies and meets need of the workforce

## Top 5% Earners

The Council reports quarterly in the Key Performance Business Support Report on:

- BV11a - the percentage of top 5% of earners that are female.
- BV11bi - the percentage of top 5% of earners from an ethnic minority background.<sup>3</sup>
- BV11c - the percentage of top 5% of earners who have a disability.<sup>3</sup>

**Table 9: The year-end 2023-24 targets and outturn.<sup>4</sup>**

Indicator	BV11a Female	BV11bi Ethnic Minority	BV11c Disability
Target	50.0%	15.0%	5.0%
Outturn	56.6%	15.5%	6.7%
RAG / DOT 2023-24	 G	 G	 G

The RAG (red, amber, green) rating is against the target and the DOT (direction of travel) is compared against the previous outturn.

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<sup>3</sup> The definition of top 5% earners is in keeping with guidance on benchmarking by taking the top 5% identified by ranking staff according to their gross full-time equivalent pay and including any individuals on an identical salary at the bottom end of the 5% threshold.

<sup>4</sup> The Council has HR targets in regards, to disability, ethnicity, and gender as part of the Best Value Performance Indicators (BV11). Caution is required in interpreting the BV11 percentages (outturn) as this involves low numbers.

<sup>3</sup> The top 5% and mainstream local authority employees from minority ethnic communities are in-line with the Equalities Duty Classifications Monitoring Scheme (i.e., this includes White Irish and White Other in the numerator for White).

Based on known data, the outturn reported shows that the top 5% targets in regard to female and ethnic minority were above previous performance.

**Table 10: Targets for 2025-25**

Indicator	<b>BV11a</b> <b>Female</b>	<b>BV11bi</b> <b>Ethnic Minority</b>	<b>BV11c</b> <b>Disability</b>
Target	50.0%	15.0%	5.0%

## Pay Gap Reporting 2024

As an organisation with 250 or more employees<sup>5</sup> the Council is required to calculate and publish six specific measures regarding the pay gap between men and women. Relevant public sector organisations are required to annually collect data on a snapshot date of 31 March and publish the metrics before 30 March of the next year. The six metrics required by the regulations are:

1. The difference in the mean hourly rate of pay.
2. The difference in the median hourly rate of pay.
3. The difference in the mean bonus pay.
4. The difference in the median bonus pay.
5. The proportion of male and female employees who were paid bonus pay.
6. The proportion of male and female employees according to quartile pay bands.

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<sup>5</sup> The definition used for 'employee(s)' is the wider definition under S.83 of the Equality Act 2010 and includes casual workers.

This identified 2011 employees in scope of the Gender Pay Gap analysis, 136 employees were not 'full pay' employees and were removed from the analysis making a total of 1875 employees used in the calculation of the metrics of which 1237 (65.97%) were female and 638 (34.03 %) were male.

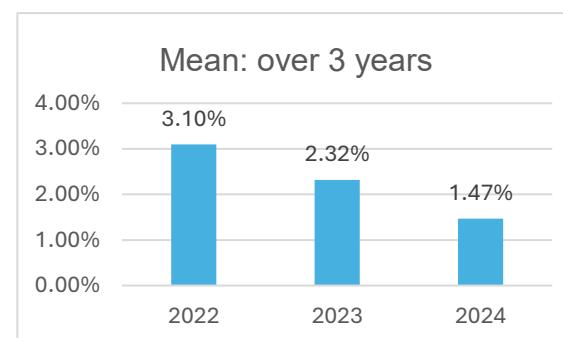
## Gender Pay Gap

Bedford Borough Council's gender pay gap is significantly below the national public sector<sup>6</sup> 12.9 % mean and 13.1% median. The mean gender pay gap has decreased from 2.32% to 1.47%, and the median from 3.48% to 2.75%.

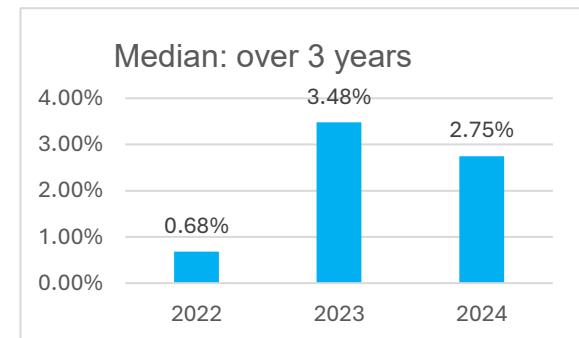
**Table 11: Mean and Median Metrics**

Difference between males and females	2022	2023	2024
Gender Pay Gap, Mean (Average)	3.1%	2.32%	1.47%
Gender Pay Gap, Median (Middle)	0.68%	3.48%	2.75%

**Graph 7: Mean Gender Pay Gap**



**Graph 8: Median Gender pay Gap**

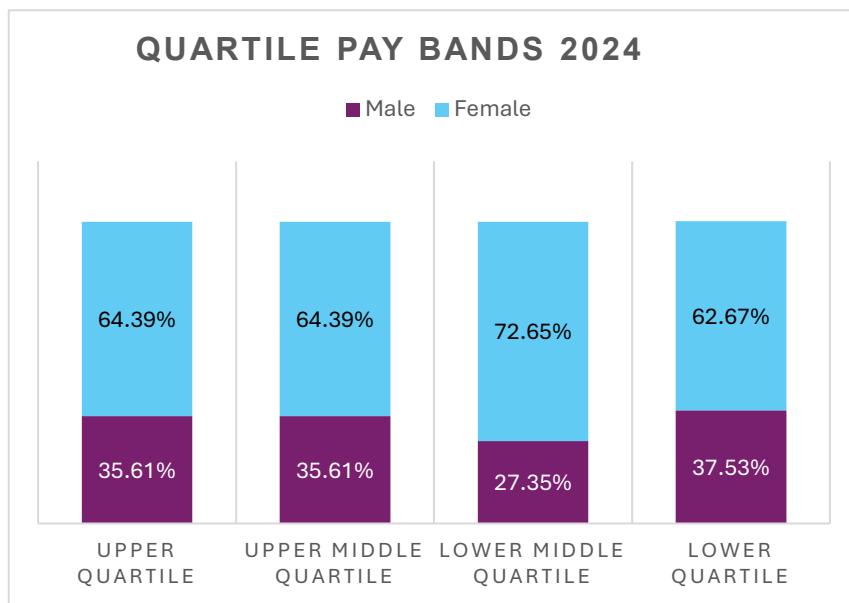


<sup>6</sup> [Gender pay gap - Office for National Statistics](#). Table 13.12

The table and graph above shows that the mean gender pay gap improved by 1.85 %. This means the average hourly rate male employees were paid was £18.74 per hour, and female employees on average were paid £18.46. The median gender pay gap has improved by 0.73%, compared to 2023.

## Quartile Bands

**Graph 9: Quartile Pay Bands 2024**



**Table 12: Quartile bands.**

	Male		Female	
	2023	2024	2023	2024
Upper Quartile	35.14%	35.61%	64.86%	64.39%
Upper Middle Quartile	36.15%	35.61%	63.85%	64.39%
Lower Middle Quartile	28.20%	27.35%	71.80%	72.65%
Lower Quartile	36.01%	37.53%	63.99%	62.67%

The pay quartile analysis identifies the proportions of male and female full-pay relevant employees in each of the four quartile bands<sup>7</sup>. It shows the distribution of male and female employees through the pay bands does not reflect the precise composition by sex of the employees used in the calculation of the gender pay gap albeit close in value: 67.03 % female and 32.97% male.(Graph 4)

<sup>7</sup> To calculate the relevant proportions, all male and female full pay relevant employees are ranked by hourly rate of pay. This list is then divided into four sections (quartiles) with equal numbers of employees in each

Although women are over representative in the workforce, they are proportionally slightly higher represented in the lower middle quartile which is similar to last year. It was noted in 2023 that the high representation in the lower middle quartile could be due to the intake of a number of female apprentices that are paid at the national minimum wage.

Compared to 2023, the total number of employees composition in each quartile remains the same. We will continue to monitor our pay gap and take action to maintain and improve our performance.

### **Gender Bonus Pay Gap**

While the Council does not operate a traditional bonus scheme, welcome payments and retention payments meet the definition of bonus pay gap calculations<sup>8</sup> and are paid to a small number of hard to fill roles mainly in Social Work.

During this reporting period, 13 male employees and 53 female employees received a relevant 'bonus' payment. This relates to 0.64% of male employees receiving a bonus and 2.63% of female employees receiving a bonus.

The Gender Bonus Pay Gap does not measure differences in hourly rates but rather examines the total bonus payments made during the reporting period. Due to the diverse nature of these payment types and the varying circumstances under which they are awarded, multiple factors influence both the proportional value of these payments, and the resulting Gender Bonus Pay Gap figures.

### **Non-Statutory Measures**

#### **Ethnicity**

The Council voluntarily calculates the pay gap for ethnicity (Table 5). There are 1149 (61.28%) White British employees, 289 (15.41%) Non-White British employees and 437 (23.30%) Unknown Ethnicity employees in the scope of the analysis.

**Table 13: Bonus Pay Gap**

<b>Difference between males and females</b>	<b>2024</b>
Gender Pay Gap, Mean	0.89%
Gender Pay Gap, Median	0.00%

<sup>8</sup> [Preparing your data - GOV.UK](#)

**Table 14: Ethnicity Mean and Median**

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Mean (Average)</b>		<b>Median (Middle)</b>	
	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>
Ethnicity	12.21%	11.12%	11.00%	10.34%

- The ethnicity mean and median pay gap has slightly decreased from last year.

### **Disability**

The Council voluntarily calculates the pay gap for disability. There are 990 (43.68%) employees who declared no disability, 66 (3.52%) employees who declared a disability and 819 (43.68%) employees choosing not to specify. In 2023, 45% of employees chose not to specify which represents a slight decrease of employees who are choosing to withhold this information.

**Table 15: Disability Mean and Median.**

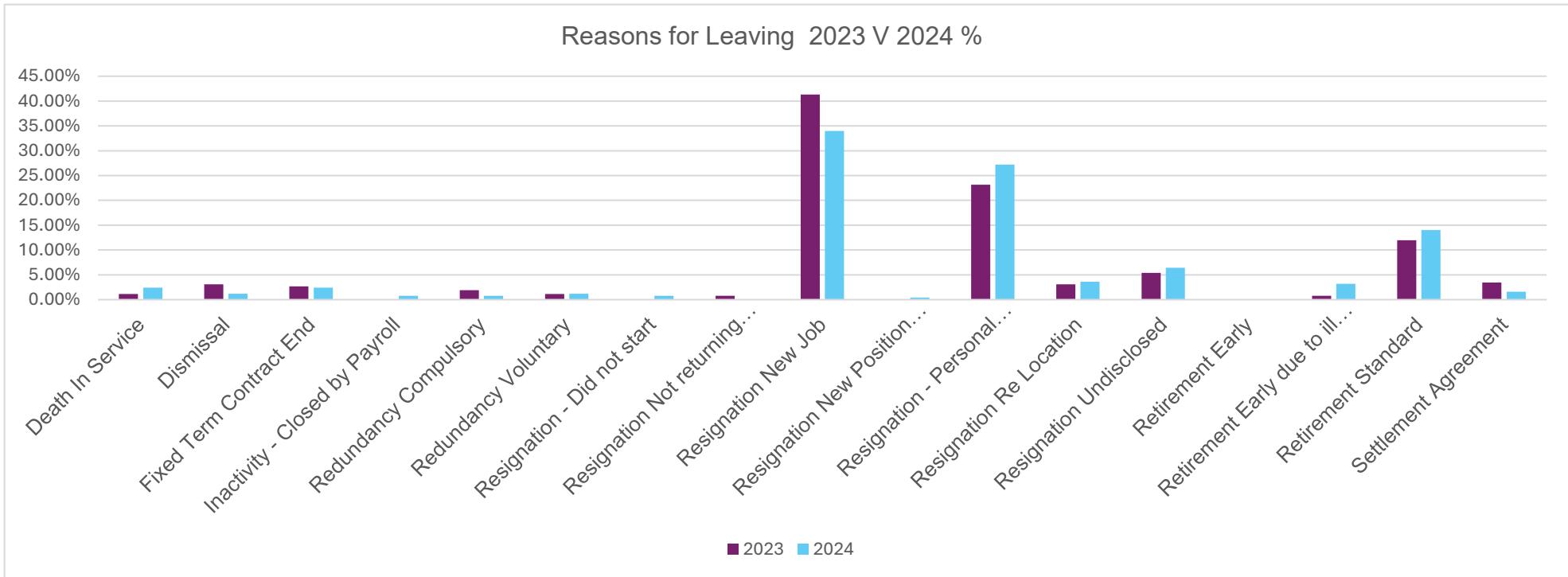
<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Mean (Average)</b>		<b>Median (Middle)</b>	
	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>
Disability	4.64%	5.29%	5.96%	6.52%

- Disability pay gap is 4.64% (mean) and 5.96% (median), with both widening.
- Disabled staff earn approximately £0.82 less per hour on average.
- 43.68% did not specify disability status (decrease from 45% in 2023)
- Only 3.52% of employees declared a disability, creating reliability concerns on the data.

## Employees Leaving the Council

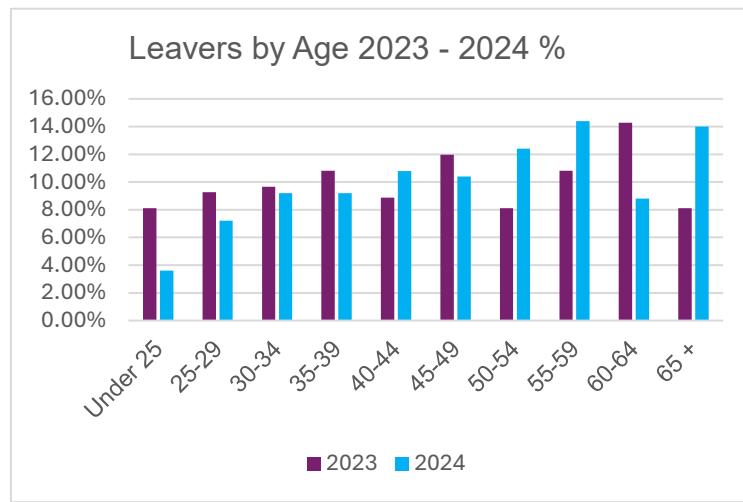
The information below is based on known data.

**Graph 10: Reason for Leaving by %.**



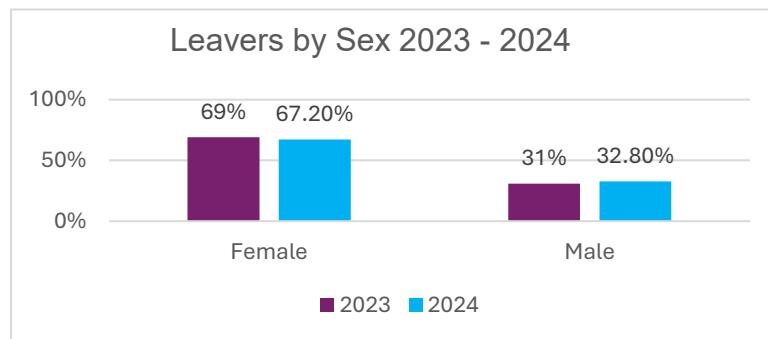
- The proportion of staff leaving for personal reasons increased from 23.17% to 27.20%, while resignations for new employment opportunities decreased from 41.31% to 34%. The rise in 'personal reasons' as a departure cause may conceal underlying equality concerns particularly affecting caregivers and parents, while the simultaneous reduction in employees leaving for alternative employment could reflect both market shifts and possibly uneven access to career advancement opportunities across demographic groups. Without demographic breakdowns of these resignation categories, it is difficult to determine if these trends affect all employee groups equally.

**Graph 11: Leavers by Age 2023 - 2024 %**



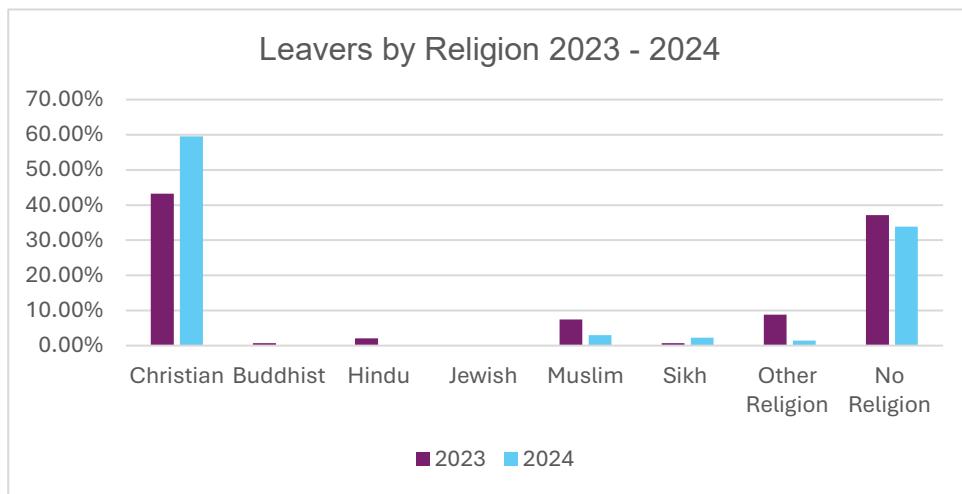
- Under 35 years old remain the highest age group leaving the Council. However, there has been a **decrease** from 27.03% to 20%. This is partly due to a number of employees on the National Graduate Scheme and apprenticeships who typically fall within this age bracket securing ongoing employment within the Council.
- There has been an increase in the number of leavers between 50-59, from 18.92% to 26.80%. Despite the increase, Graph 15 shows the workforce is overrepresented compared to local demographics.
- The percentage of employees aged 65 and older who left the Council increased from 8.11% to 14.00%. The Council does not have a standard retirement age, but the workforce for this age group is still representative of the local population (6.26% Graph 3).

**Graph 12: Leavers by Sex 2023 - 2024 %**

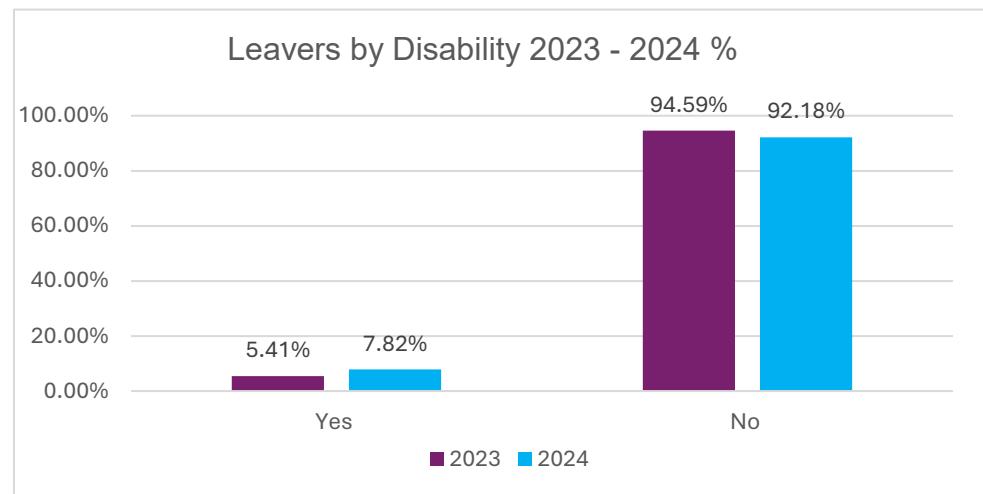


- The number of females leaving the Council is proportionate to the overall number of females in the workforce.

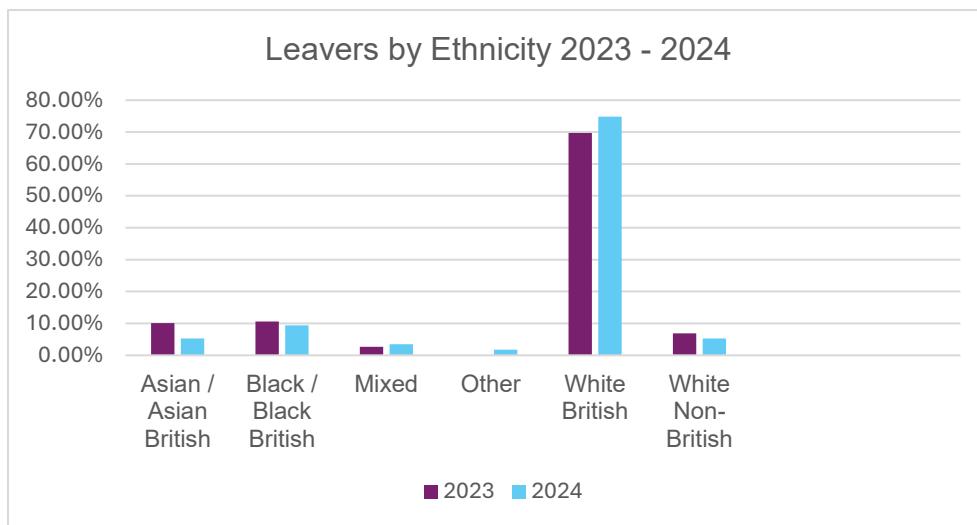
**Graph 13: Leavers by Religion %**



**Graph 14: Leavers by Disability %**



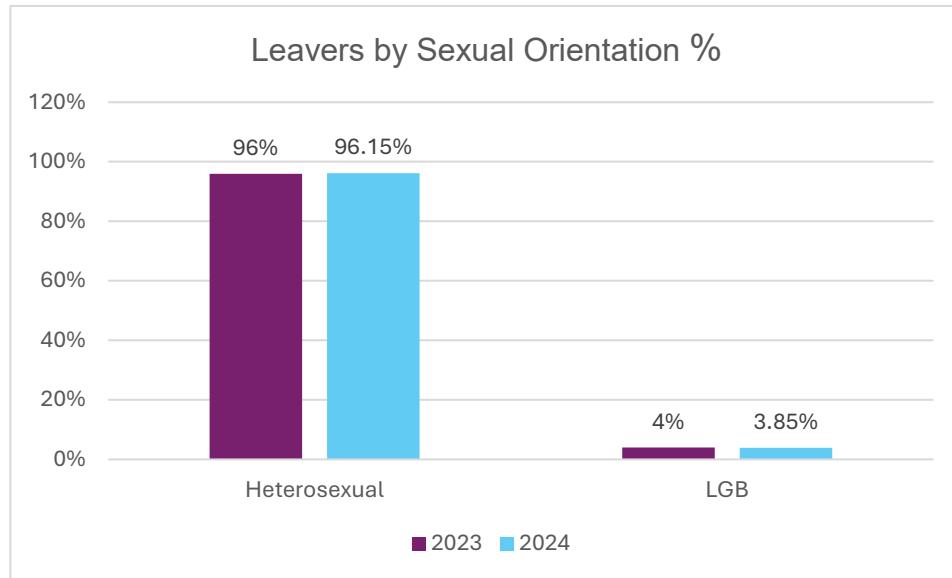
**Graph 15: Leavers by Ethnicity %**



- Compared to 2023, the percentage of employees of Christian faith leaving the Council increased by 16.32%. Although Christians represent 52.19% of the workforce, which proportionately reflects the local population (49.92% as shown in Table 13), the substantial gap in religious declaration data (45.60% undeclared) prevents drawing reliable conclusions about equality implications in this departure trend.

- Unknown or prefer not to say data for leavers by disability and ethnicity remain high and increased in these areas compared to 2023.

### Graph 16: Leavers by Sexual Orientation %.



- There has been no significant change in the number of employees leaving in this category, however unknown data for sexual orientation has increased from 42.47% to 48.00 %.

An increase in "unknown" data can undermine data analysis by reducing statistical reliability, potentially masking important patterns, or disparities, compromising year-on-year comparisons, and limiting the ability to identify specific groups that may be experiencing disproportionate outcomes or requiring targeted support. To further understand the reasons for leaving by protected characteristic, the Council will consider further analysing other available information to identify any disparities, e.g., job bands, types of jobs.

## Recruitment

The recruitment analysis has focused on the likelihood of applicants who share a protected characteristic being offered a position of employment. For each protected characteristic, the recruitment analysis has considered the percentage of applicants for that protected characteristics who have applied, been shortlisted, and subsequently offered a post. Data will be compared with the previous year to identify areas of improvement and disparity. The annual period for each year is from 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> March.

Between April 2023 and March 2024, the Council received 5546 job applications. 923 of these applicants were shortlisted for interview. Following the interview process, 391 applicants were offered a job. It is mandatory for all managers leading on recruitment to undertake 'Unconscious Bias' training before the start of the process.

Please note: the data used is for all applications received between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024. Some of the applications may have led to start dates outside of the financial year 2023/2024, which is why the number of starters shown in the tables below may differ from data elsewhere.

**Graph 17: Number of applications received, shortlisted, and appointed.**



- Purchase of LinkedIn Recruiter licence was made in 2022/2023 to reach out to a wider recruitment market
- Streamlined application process. Candidates only submit their CV and complete a simple yes/no questionnaire, eliminating the previous requirement to prepare a separate document addressing the selection criteria for the position.
- This resulted in an increase of 3342 applications, (60.25 %).

## Recruitment by Age

Applicants in the lower age brackets (under 35) were well represented at the application stage (over 55 % of all applications), but less so at the shortlisting and appointment stages, suggesting potential barriers to progression through the application process. The age brackets over 35- 59 years old showed a higher proportion at the shortlisted and appointment stages compared to the number of applications. Factors to take into consideration are the type of jobs advertised, and the experience required which may partly explain some of these disparities.

**Table 18: Recruitment by Age 2023 v 2024**

Year	2023			2024		
	Application %	Shortlisted %	Appointed %	Applications %	Shortlisted %	Appointed %
under 25	17.56	11.79	11.56	19.08	13.22	9.46
25-29	16.65	11.13	8.89	18.48	10.83	9.21
30-34	15.97	13.95	13.33	16.86	13.54	13.81
35-39	12.43	12.62	13.33	13.69	13.87	12.02
40-44	10.66	11.13	12.89	11.16	13.54	17.65
45-49	8.53	11.30	11.11	8.22	10.73	11.99
50-54	9.21	12.96	12.89	5.70	10.40	11.76
55-59	5.26	9.14	8.89	4.38	8.34	9.97
60-64	3.18	4.82	5.33	1.89	4.23	3.07
65+	0.54	1.16	1.78	0.54	1.30	2.05

## Recruitment by Sex

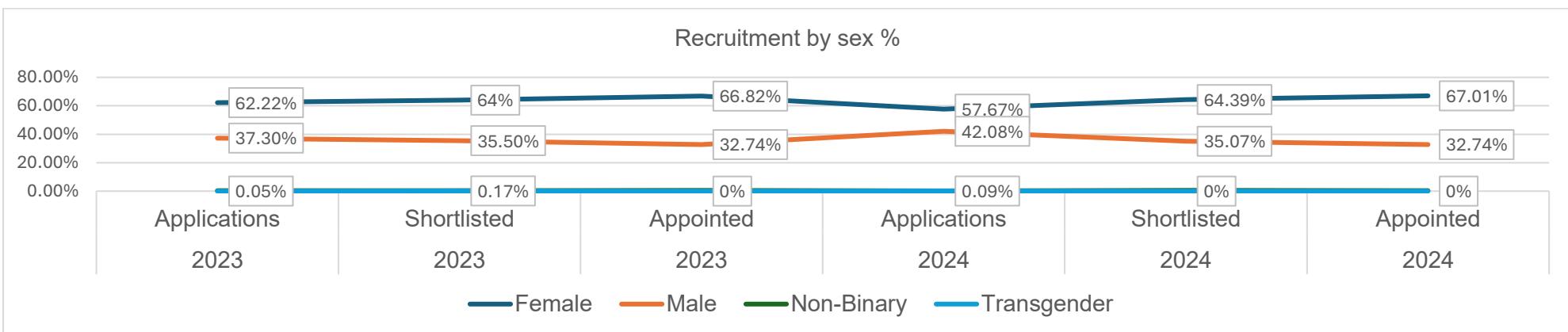
57.67% of all applicants and 67.01% of all appointments were women; 8.2% of female applicants were appointed (262/3188) compared to 5.5% of male applicants (128/2326). A higher representation of female applicants and appointments reflects the wider national trend for local authorities having a female workforce. The data also shows that male applicants were underrepresented in the Council's recruitment process.

It however continues to be the case that the roles that were advertised during 2023/2024 included a high number of part time roles in residential homes which historically have a significantly higher proportion of female applicants.

**Table 17: Recruitment Numbers by Sex**

	<b>2023</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2024</b>
<b>No.</b>	<b>Applications</b>	<b>Shortlisted</b>	<b>Appointed</b>	<b>Applications</b>	<b>Shortlisted</b>	<b>Appointed</b>
<b>Female</b>	1365	384	149	3188	593	262
<b>Male</b>	819	213	73	2326	323	128
<b>Non-Binary</b>	9	2	1	9	5	1
<b>Transgender</b>	1	1	0	5	0	0

**Graph 18: Recruitment by Sex by %**



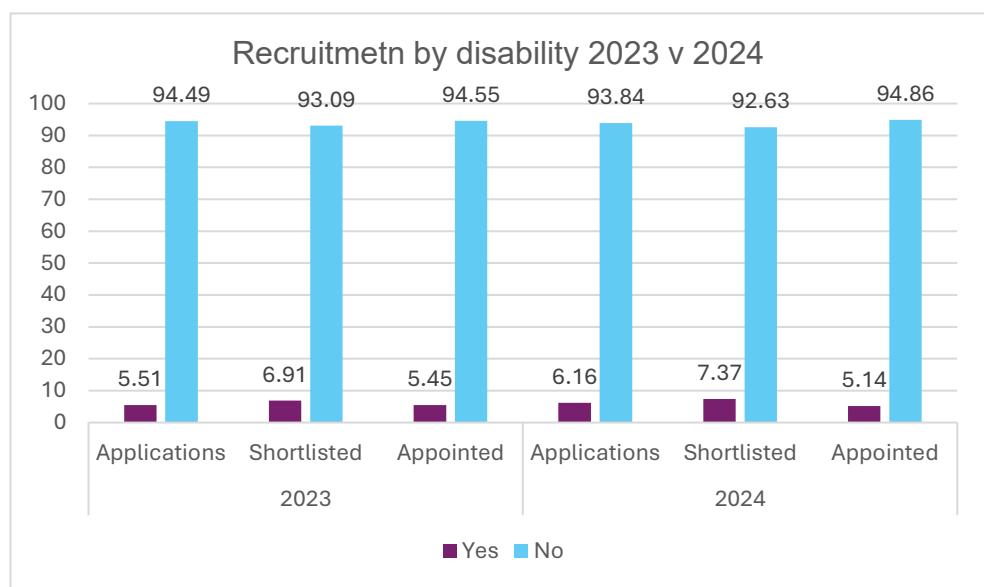
## Recruitment by Disability

Based on known data, applicants with disabilities were underrepresented in the number of applications received by the Council (6.16%) and throughout the recruitment process, in comparison to the percentage of the working age population in Bedford Borough (11.4%).

18.8% of applicants with a disability were successful in being shortlisted for interview (63/335), compared to 15.5% of applicants without a disability (792/5107).

5.1% of applicants with a disability were appointed to a role (17/335), compared to 6.1% of applicants without a disability (314/5107).

**Graph 19: Recruitment by Disability by %**



## Recruitment by Ethnicity

**Table 18: Recruitment by Ethnicity by %**

%	Applications		Shortlisted		Appointed	
	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024
White British	45.76	32.63	62.76	52.63	70.05	58.93
White other	10.83	7.82	8.97	7.37	7.25	7.73
White non-British	54.24	67.47	37.24	47.37	29.95	41.07
Mixed-Multiple ethnicity	4.68	7.06	3.28	4.58	1.93	3.47
(Asian or Asian British	22.37	24.86	14.83	15.87	10.63	10.67
Black or Black British	14.91	25.03	8.97	17.54	9.18	15.73
Arab or another ethnic group	1.90	1.88	1.21	1.01	0.97	1.60

- The ethnic minority working age population of Bedford Borough is 35.67% (Table 5). Total number of applications received from ethnic minority backgrounds was 67.37%. The percentage drops at the interview stage to 47.37%, and again at the appointment stage 41.07%, proportionate to the local population.
- For White British, the percentage at appointment stage is proportionate to the local working age population, (64.33% Table 5).
- An increased number of applications were received from White Non-British, Asian/Asian British, and Black or Black British background.

**Table 19: Recruitment by Religion by %**

	2023			2024		
	Applications	Shortlisted	Appointed	Applications	Shortlisted	Appointed
Christianity	41.99	42.83	41.71	48.06	48.26	47.49
Buddhist	0.83	0.74	1.07	0.44	0.36	0.29
Hindu	4.97	3.54	2.67	6.54	2.04	2.06
Jewish	0.15	0.00	0.00	0.11	0.24	0.29
Muslims	13.64	8.38	5.35	14.44	9.58	6.78
Sikh	2.97	1.86	2.14	2.74	3.23	2.65
No religion	32.83	40.04	43.85	25.04	32.57	36.87
Other	2.63	2.61	3.21	2.63	3.71	3.54

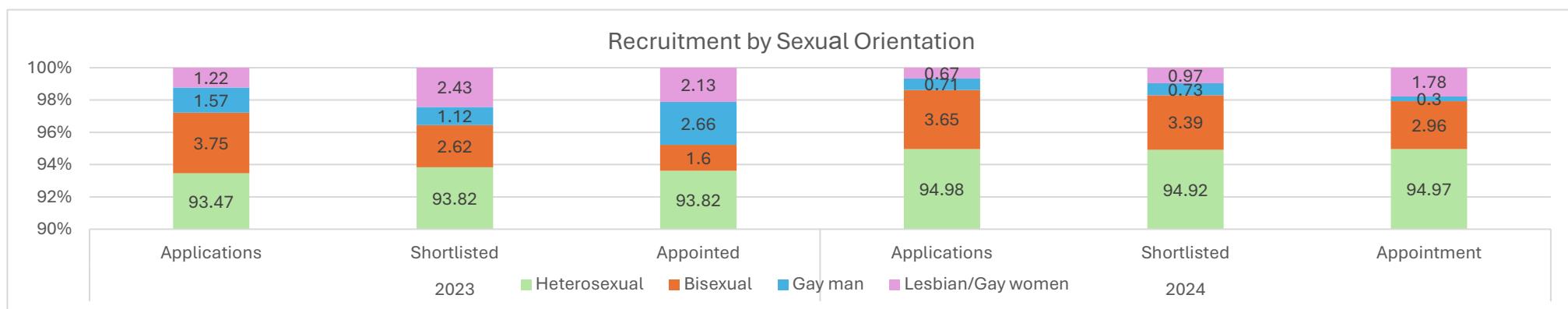
Applicants who have declared as 'Christians' has increased compared to 2023 in each stage of the recruitment process. This is proportionate to the local working age demographics 49.92% (Table 6)

Compared to 2023, applicants declaring 'No religion' has decreased at the first 2 stages of the recruitment process. However, at the appointment stage this is in line with the local working age population of 37.11%.

### Recruitment by Sexual Orientation.

Based on known data, 5.02% of applicants, 5.08% of shortlisted applicants and 5.03% of applicants appointed were LGB, which is consistent across each stage. Again, there was a significant number of applicants that did not provide information on their sexual orientation as part of the recruitment process, although a higher proportion did provide details than the previous year (8.04% of unknown data compared to 10.39% unknown data in 2022/2023).

### **Graph 20: Recruitment by Sexual Orientation**



## Training

During 2023-2024, 1398 employees accessed 262 different training courses, an increase of 21 courses compared to last year. The main course categories accessed include corporate induction, wellbeing, personal development, and social care training. Most of the training undertaken was e-learning courses via the Council's Online Learning and Training Portal BBOLT and in addition some virtual and in-person training. Service specific training organised by and recorded within individual Council directorates is not included in this data.

**Table 20: Training by Age.**

Age	Headcount	%
Under-25	58	4.15%
25-29	70	5.01%
30-34	120	8.59%
35-39	144	10.31%
40-44	188	13.46%
45-49	174	12.46%

**Table 21 Training by Sex**

Age	Headcount	%
50-54	207	14.82%
55-59	210	15.03%
60+	227	16.17%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1398</b>	<b>100</b>

Sex	Headcount	%
Female	1002	71.75
Male	395	28.25
<b>Total</b>	<b>1398</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 22: Training by Disability**

<b>Disability</b>	<b>Headcount</b>	<b>%</b>
No	695	94.7
Yes	39	5.3
<b>Total (known data)</b>	<b>734</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 23: Training by Ethnic Group**

<b>Ethnic Group</b>	<b>Headcount</b>	<b>%</b>
White British	733	70.49
White non-British	79	7.59
Asian or Asian British	102	9.80
Black or Black British	94	9.04
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups	24	2.31
Arab or another ethnic group	8	0.77
<b>Total (known data)</b>	<b>1040</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Unknown Data</b>	<b>358</b>	

**Table 24: Training by Religion or Belief**

<b>Religion/belief</b>	<b>Headcount</b>	<b>%</b>
Christian	417	52.81
Buddhist	5	0.63
Hindu	16	2.02
Jewish	1	0.12
Muslim	29	3.63
Sikh	30	3.80
Other religion	23	2.91
No religion	269	34.09
<b>Total (known data)</b>	<b>789</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 25: Training by Sexual Orientation**

<b>Sexual orientation</b>	<b>Headcount</b>	<b>%</b>
Heterosexual	781	96.90
LGB	25	3.10
<b>Total (known data)</b>	<b>806</b>	<b>100</b>

- The number of male and female employees accessing training are proportionate to the makeup of the workforce. (Female 67.03%, Male 32.97)
- Age, disability, ethnicity, religion, and sexual orientation data for employees accessing training is proportionate to the workforce demographics.

## Disciplinary and Grievance

Between April 2022 and March 2023, the Council dealt with 24 disciplinary and 9 grievances cases. This data relates to employees who have been subject to formal disciplinary procedures and employees who raised a grievance under the Council's formal grievance procedure.

### Disciplinary

24 cases in this reporting year, a decrease of 57.14%. 42 cases were reported in 2022/23.

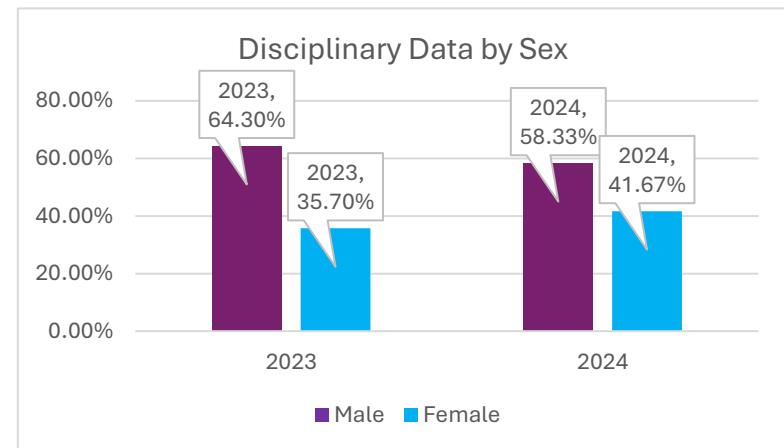
### Sex

Male employees made up 58.33% of all disciplinary cases and females 41.67% of the workforce. Compared to last year, the number of female cases increased from 35.7% to 41.67 %.

### Ethnicity

Based on known data, 64.70% of cases concerned Non-White British, an increase from 34.50% in 2023.

**Graph 21: Disciplinary Data by Sex**



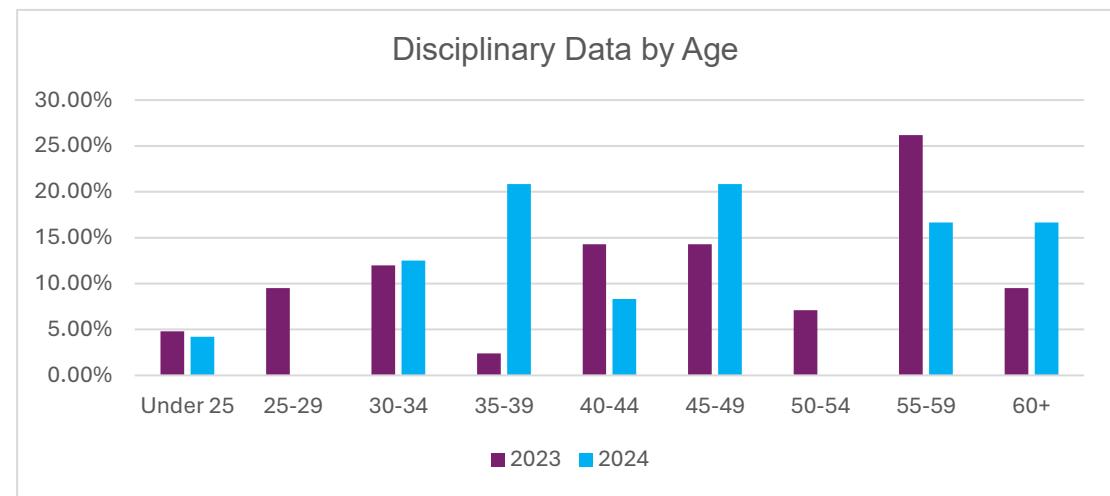
## Age

There has been an increase in the number of cases for 35-39 years old, and a decrease to nil for 25-29 and 50-54 years old.

## Religion and Belief

Christian employees make up 52.19% of the overall workforce, and they account for 53.84% of all disciplinary cases. However, it's important to note that 45.83% of the disciplinary case data is unknown, which significantly limits the reliability of these comparisons.

**Graph 22: Disciplinary Data by Age**



The disciplinary data reveals some gender differences with female employees now comprising 41.66% of cases compared to 35.70% last year. For Ethnicity, there has been an increase of 30.20% concerning Non-White British employees. This pattern may benefit from some exploration to understand any contributing workplace factors.

The substantial overall reduction in disciplinary cases (57.14% decrease) represents a positive trend.

## Grievances

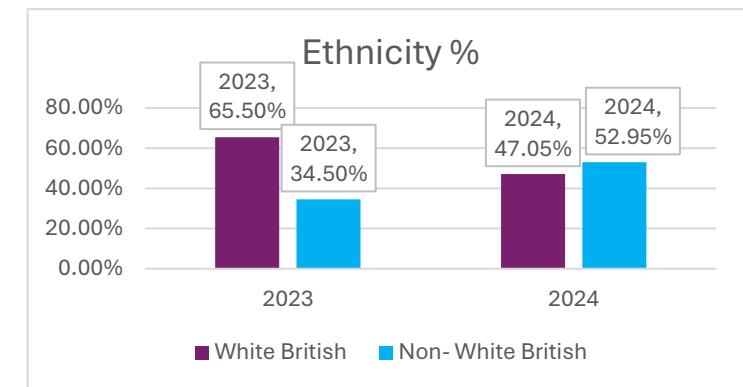
During the period 2023/24 a total of 9 grievances were submitted by employees through the formal grievance procedure, however as with previous years, it is expected that a number of grievances would have been resolved informally prior to invoking the Council's formal procedure.

As the total number of grievances is low, it is not considered statistically significant as the percentages can vary without implying significant differences.

Based on known data, 100% of grievances were submitted by heterosexual employees. A noted change from previous years (50/50 split between men and women) is that grievances were split with 33.34 % submitted by male employees and 66.66 % submitted by female employees which is representative of the make-up of the Council.

An increase of cases of Non-White British has increased by 18.45%. Further exploration will need to be undertaken to understand these disparities.

**Graph 23: Grievance data by Ethnicity**



## Achievements

<b>Policy and Guidance</b>	<p>Implementation of the Diversity Calendar.</p> <p>Introduction of the Transgender Guidance for Managers and Staff.</p> <p>Review of the Equality Analysis Guidance.</p> <p>Set up of the regional Equality Impact Assessment Forum.</p>
<b>Data Improvements</b>	<p>My View updated to collect more comprehensive equality data of employees.</p> <p>Encouraged staff to complete their equality data, reducing unknown Marital Status data from 55.1% to 40%.</p> <p>The mean gender pay gap decreased from 2.32% to 1.47%.</p>
<b>Recruitment &amp; Retention</b>	<p>Purchase of LinkedIn Recruiter licence and the introduction to a streamlined application process, resulted in receiving an increase in applications (60.25%).</p> <p>Under 35 year olds demographic is well represented at application stage.</p> <p>Number of under 30 year olds leaving the Council has decreased.</p>
<b>Learning and Development</b>	<p>Introduction of quarterly Welcome Sessions for New Starters, with EDI as an agenda item.</p> <p>A session was held for new Tier 3 and 4 Managers that included dedicated EDI agenda items.</p> <p>Introduction of Personal Progress Discussion (PPD) guidance and process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Making performance reviews more flexible, user-friendly, and engaging.</li><li>○ Embedding EDI as an objective for all staff.</li></ul> <p>Increased number of EDI e-learning courses available via BBOLT from 17 to 30 courses.</p>

## Actions

### Policy Development, Implementation and Data Collection

Actions	Outcome
Implementation and update of the equality actions identified in the Workforce Strategy Report 2022-26	Successful implementation and self-accountability.
Continue to develop policies that promote inclusion, e.g., Menopause Guidance for Managers	Meeting and supporting the needs of the workforce.
Explore creating an Inclusive Language Guide for the Council	Foster respectful communication, reduce unintentional harm, create a more welcoming environment for diverse employees and communities, and demonstrate commitment to equality values in both internal operations and public-facing services
Introduce EDI Champions to help advise on equality analyses and champion EDI within their directorates	Increase resource and support for staff in completing robust equality analyses, promoting EDI within the organisation and influencing policies.
Policies, strategies and reports that are easily accessible for all	Equal access to information for all staff, including those with visual impairments, reading difficulties, while demonstrating commitment to workplace inclusion and accessibility compliance.
Work towards decreasing unknown data  Further explore areas where there is an increase of data that shows disparity	Reducing unknown data enables fair comparison and analysis of data. Will help better understand the makeup of the workforce when making decisions and developing policies to support staff.  More accurate analysis.

## Recognition and Inclusion Initiatives

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
Continue to celebrate key events in the Diversity Calendar	Celebrate the diversity of the workforce, promoting inclusion.
Encourage and support staff networks	Promote a more inclusive workforce allowing employees to create a safe space to share lived experiences and influence workforce policies.
Introduction of a formal staff recognition scheme	Recognise and celebrate diverse contributions that will help foster an inclusive workplace.

## Collaboration and Accreditations

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
Sign up to the Care Leaver Friendly Employer Charter	Work towards becoming an inclusive employer and show commitment to supporting care leavers.
Explore becoming a Disability Confident Leader	Work towards becoming an inclusive employer and demonstrate commitment to supporting staff with disabilities.
Continue to network with others, both internally and externally to keep up-to-date and share EDI related learning and best practices	Commitment to advancing in EDI.
Work in collaboration with other organisations in tackling inequality, racism, and discrimination	Combine diverse perspectives, resources, and expertise, creating a more powerful collective impact, innovative solutions, sustainable efforts, and greater influence on systemic and policy change.

## Protected Characteristics

Under the Equality Act 2010, the following nine characteristics are protected:

<b>Age</b>	Age encompasses both younger and older individuals. Recognising the unique needs and perspectives of different age demographics can help create a more inclusive environment.
<b>Disability</b>	Disability includes a wide range of conditions, such as physical disabilities, sensory impairments, unseen disabilities, mental health issues, learning difficulties, and neurodiversity.
<b>Gender Reassignment</b>	Gender reassignment refers to individuals who identify as transgender, those who are transitioning, or those who are contemplating transitioning from one gender to another. This category also includes non-binary individuals who do not identify with traditional gender labels.
<b>Pregnancy and Maternity</b>	Pregnancy, including pregnancy-related illnesses and maternity leave.
<b>Race</b>	Nationality, skin colour, native or first language, culture, and geographic origin. This category includes specific groups such as Gypsies and Travellers.
<b>Religion/Belief</b>	Religion or belief includes various faiths, as well as the absence of religion and philosophical beliefs.
<b>Sex</b>	Male or female
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	Gay, lesbian, bisexual, and straight individuals, as well as those whose orientation may be known or perceived.
<b>Marriage and Civil Partnership</b>	Between a man and a woman or same-sex couples.

## Terminology

This glossary explains what we mean in this report when we use certain words or phrases.

<b>Casual Workers</b>	Casual workers are engaged without 'mutuality of obligation' and are therefore not employees, but workers with statutory rights only.
<b>Employees</b>	An employee works to the terms within a contract of employment and has contractual entitlements.
<b>Ethnic Minority</b>	All ethnic groups except the white British group. Ethnic minorities include white minorities, such as Gypsy, Roma, and Irish Traveller groups.
<b>Full-time Equivalent (FTE)</b>	A Full-time Equivalent of 1 is equivalent to a full-time employee. Hours worked by part-time employees are pro-rated accordingly.
<b>PGP</b>	Gender Pay Gap
<b>Headcount</b>	The number of Council employees regardless of full or part-time hours, this includes fixed contracts, relief, and casual workers
<b>Known Data</b>	Information reported by employees on their protected characteristics and recorded on the Council's information systems.
<b>LGBTQ+</b>	Refers to lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer/questioning and more.
<b>Relief Workers</b>	Relief workers are individuals engaged on zero hours contracts, but with employee status and contractual entitlements.

<b>Unknown Data</b>	Employee information not recorded on the Council's information systems. This includes instances where employees have actively chosen not to self-report information on their protected characteristics by selecting 'prefer not to say.'
<b>Working Age Population</b>	The Office for National Statistics defines the working-age population as those aged 16-64 years. It is the same for both men and women to reflect the increasing age at which women will be eligible for the State Pension. This report considers working age population to be 16-74 year olds. This age range has been set to allow for the inclusion of apprentices under 18 years who are in compulsory education and employment. The maximum age range is 74 years because this is the maximum age for joining the workplace pension.

## Appendix A

<b>Sickness Absence Policy and Manager's Guide</b>	The Sickness Absence Policy and Managers' Guide ensures managers are aware of their responsibilities to support employees, through reasonable adjustments as required, to return to work after a period of sickness absence relating to their disability.
<b>Recruitment Guidelines</b>	The Recruitment Policy outlines the Council's commitment to undertake recruitment in accordance with the Government's disability confident scheme as a Disability Confident employer.
<b>Flexible Working Guidelines</b>	The Flexible Working Guidelines are produced as part of the Council's commitment to providing flexible and family friendly working policies. The Flexible Working Guidelines outline an employee's legal right to apply for flexible working. It also outlines a manager's responsibility to consider applications for flexible working seriously.
<b>Maternity/Adoption Guidance and Support Leave</b>	These guides ensure managers and employees are aware of and understand the Council's maternity/adoption and support leave provisions.
<b>Paternity and Parental Leave Guidance</b>	These guides ensure managers and employees are aware of and understand the Council's paternity and parental leave provisions.
<b>Redundancy Procedure and Guidelines</b>	<p>The Redundancy Procedure ensures that in any selection criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• An employee's genuine long term sickness absence must not be considered to ensure no disadvantage to employees with a disability.</li><li>• Assessing experience must be based on an employee's ability rather than the number of years they have undertaken such activities to ensure that there is no age discrimination.</li><li>• Consideration of flexibility must not be used in a way that disadvantages female employees or carers who are more likely to work flexibly due to caring responsibilities.</li></ul>
<b>Domestic Abuse Support Guidelines</b>	The Council acknowledges that domestic abuse can occur in all areas of society, and it will treat this with the same degree of seriousness as any other form of harassment, violence or abuse and is not to be tolerated. The Council will strive to create a working environment that promotes this principle

	and supports those experiencing or are involved in domestic abuse. Support guidelines are in place for this purpose which will ensure that any employee who is experiencing or has experienced domestic abuse can raise the issue in the knowledge that the matter will be treated sympathetically and in confidence.
<b>Agile Working Policy</b>	Agile Working is about encouraging and supporting smarter working by allowing flexibility around how and where Council employees can carry out their work, enabling employees to maximise their productivity and performance. The Agile Working Policy sets out the key elements of managing and supporting an agile approach to work. The aim of the policy is to ensure fair and consistent processes are followed and employees know what is expected of them when working in such a manner.
<b>Bullying and Harassment Guidance</b>	The Bullying and Harassment Guidance outlines the behaviour expected of Council staff and the procedures and support which are available to raise any concerns of bullying and harassment in the workplace.
<b>Shared Parental Leave Policy and Guidance</b>	The Shared Parental Leave Policy and Guidance outlines employees' right to take Shared Parental Leave (SPL) to care for a child due to be born, or placed for adoption, on or after 5 April 2015. SPL gives employees with caring responsibilities for babies or newly adopted children the opportunity to share up to 50 weeks' leave should they wish to do so.
<b>Time Off for Dependents</b>	Time off for dependants is a right which allows employees to take a reasonable amount of time off work to deal with certain unexpected or sudden emergencies and to make any necessary longer-term arrangements.
<b>Transgender Guidance for Managers and Staff.</b>	Guidance for managers and staff, to support staff who are transitioning at work and how best to support the Council can support them