



WORKFORCE EQUALITY REPORT 2024-2025

March 2026

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Introduction

Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and Specific Duties and Public Authorities, Regulations 2017, the Council is required to publish equality information, including workforce pay data. This Workforce Equality Report forms part of our response to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).

Bedford Borough Council values the diversity of its workforce¹ and is committed to equality of opportunity in all aspects of employment. Our workforce monitoring data is collected, analysed and published to help us understand the composition of our workforce and assess the impact of our employment policies and practices. This includes reviewing pay information to identify any differences, enabling us to report on gender, ethnicity and disability pay gaps and demonstrate how we meet our responsibilities as an employer in relation to equality. We also compare workforce data with the local population to understand how representative the organisation is of the community it serves. This helps the Council identify under-representation, potential barriers and areas for targeted action.

This evidence-based approach strengthens compliance with equality legislation and supports the development of an inclusive workforce that is well placed to deliver fair, accessible and responsive services to all residents.

This report covers the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.

¹The report does not include agency or staff or school-based staff.

Data Reporting and Interpretation

Data is presented in tables, graphs, or both, depending on the volume of information and the format that provides the clearest and most accessible analysis.

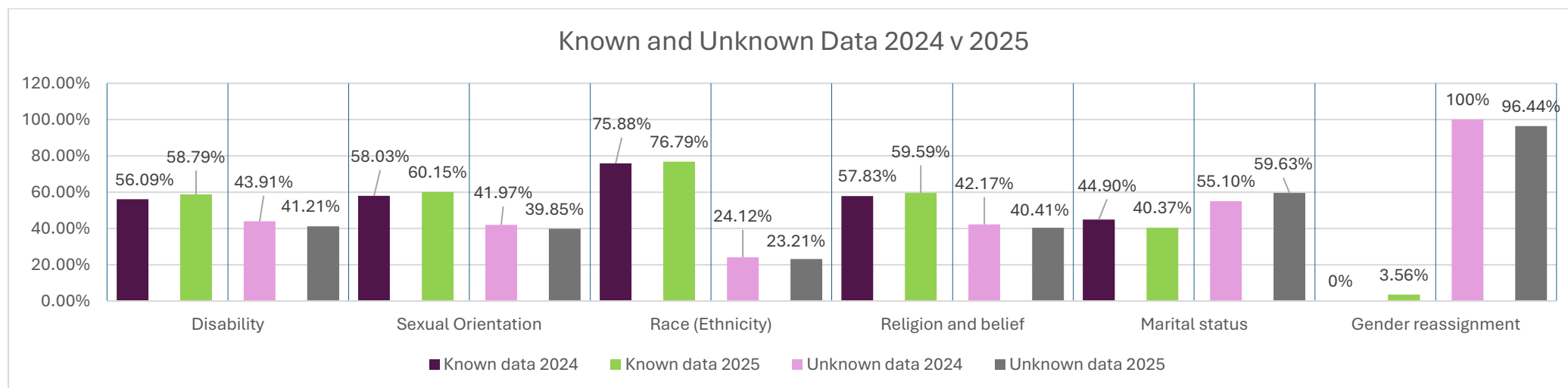
Much of the information in this report is based on employees' self-reporting their details through the Council's 'My View' system—an integrated HR and payroll system used to collect and record data on protected characteristics. Unless otherwise stated, the analysis presented is based on *known data*, meaning only information that employees have voluntarily disclosed and is held within the Council's HR system. The data presented in this report is based on a snapshot taken on 31 March 2025, unless otherwise stated.

Table 1: Known Equality Data for Workforce:

Protected Characteristic	Head Count							
	Known data				Unknown data			
	2024		2025		2024		2025	
Age	2011	100%	2133	100%	0	0%	0	0%
Sex	2011	100%	2133	100%	0	0%	0	0%
Pregnancy and Maternity	2011	100%	2133	100%	0	0%	0	0%
Disability	1128	56.09%	1254	58.79%	883	43.91%	879	41.21%
Sexual Orientation	1167	58.03%	1283	60.15%	844	41.97%	850	39.85%
Race (Ethnicity)	1526	75.88%	1638	76.79%	485	24.12%	495	23.21%
Religion & Belief	1163	57.83%	1271	59.59%	848	42.17%	862	40.41%
Marital Status	903	44.90%	861	40.37%	1108	55.10%	1272	59.63%
Gender Reassignment	0	0%	76	3.56%	2011	100%	2057	96.44%

- Reporting on sex, age and pregnancy/maternity is mandatory for pension and benefits requirements.
- Reporting on disability, gender reassignment, marital status, race/ethnicity, religion/belief and sexual orientation is voluntary.
- Due to improvements in data collection, gender reassignment data is reported for the first time this year, with a total of 76 employee responses.

Graph 1: Comparison of Known Data and Unknown Data



(Age, Sex and Pregnancy and Maternity are not shown in the above graph as the dataset contains 100% declared information for these characteristics)

Staff were encouraged to update their equality data, which resulted in:

- Improved known data for disability, race/ethnicity, religion/belief, and sexual orientation.
- However, known data for marital status has slightly decreased.

The significant proportion of *unknown data* reduces the reliability of our workforce analysis and can obscure the Council’s true diversity. When some groups are less likely to disclose information, they may appear under-represented, making it harder to identify inequalities or target action effectively. Improved disclosure rates will enhance the quality of our evidence base, allowing the Council to identify structural barriers more effectively and implement actions that promote a fairer and more representative workforce.

Local Information

To understand the impact of employment policies and practices, the Council compares its workforce data with the Census 2021². Comparisons are based on the working age population (16-74 years). The 2021 census showed that between 2011 and 2021:



Bedford's population grew by 17.7%, significantly higher than the East of England's overall growth of 8.3%, making Bedford one of the fastest-growing areas in the region.



Working age population increased by 9.08%, (to 133,828).



Limited long-term illness health problems and disability increased by 3.88%, (to 15.28%),



Unpaid carers increased to 8.5%, an increase of 1.7%.



Black, Asian and ethnic minority groups increased by 6.67%, an increase to 35.67%



Religion or belief decreased to 62.89%, down by 6.91%.

². [Further information is available on the Council's statistics and census webpage](#)

Our Workforce

The Council is committed to upholding its equality duty, ensuring fairness, respect, and inclusion across its workforce. We aim 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.

Workforce Overview

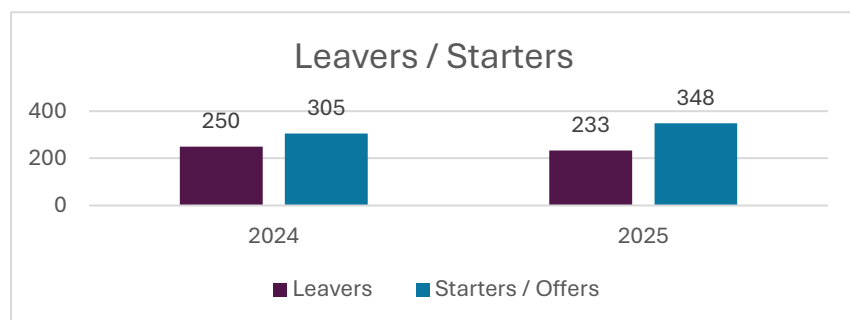
Table 2: Fixed Hours/Relief/Casuals

Overview	2024	2025	2024	2025
Fixed Hour contracts	1851	1955	92.04%	91.65%
Relief Workers	76	93	3.78%	4.36%
Casual Workers	84	85	4.18%	3.98%
Total	2011	2133	100.00%	100.00%

Table 3: Full-time/ Part-time

Fixed hours	2024	2025	2024	2025
Full-time Fixed Hours	1232	1347	66.56%	68.90%
Part-Time Fixed Hours	619	608	33.44%	31.10%
Total Fixed Hour contracts	1851	1955	100.00%	100.00%

Graph 2: Numbers of Leaver and Starters



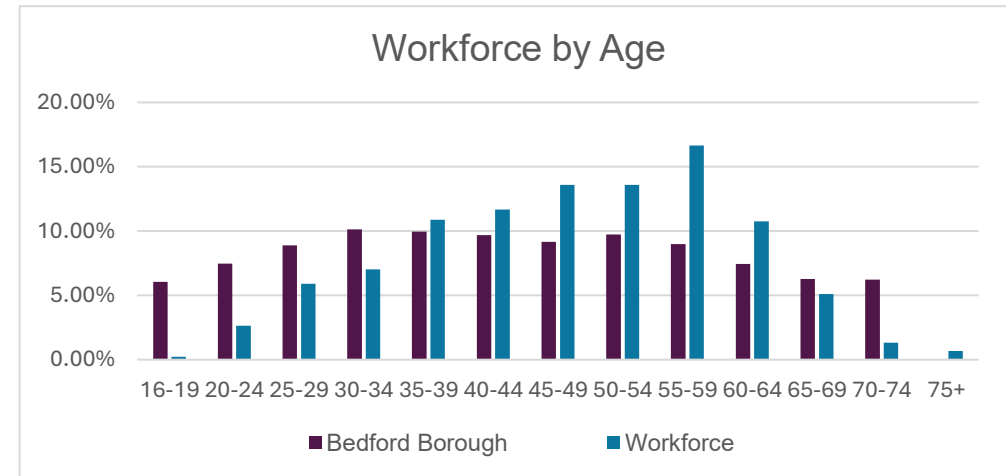
- On 31 March 2025, the Council employed 2133 staff.
- 91.65% were on fixed hours contracts, and 68.90% of these contracts were full-time
- 348 people were offered employment with the Council
- 233 people left Council employment

Workforce by Protected Characteristics

Table 4: Workforce by Age

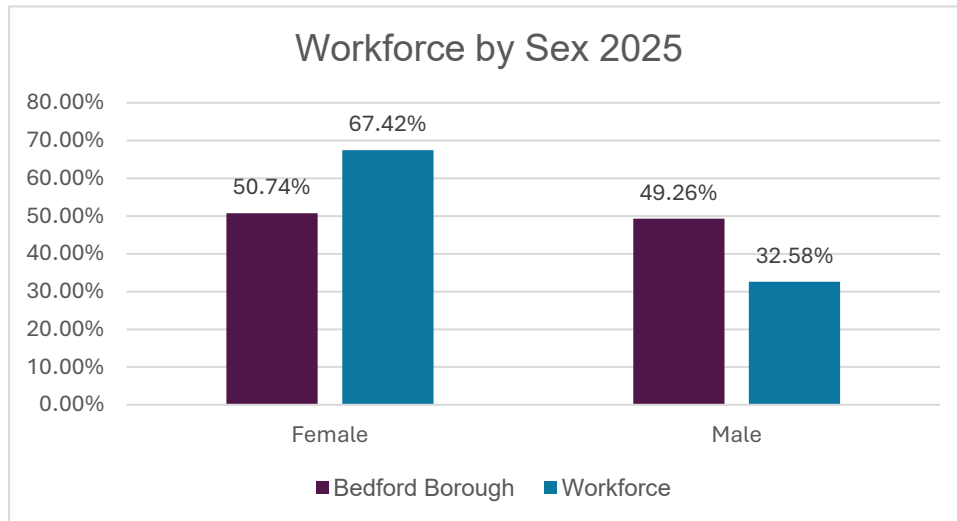
Age Range	Bedford Borough 16-74 Years old census figures		Bedford Borough Council Employees	
	Number	%	Number	%
16-19	8090	6.05%	5	0.23
20-24	9997	7.47%	56	2.63
25-29	11884	8.88%	126	5.91
30-34	13548	10.12%	150	7.03
35-39	13313	9.95%	232	10.88
40-44	12954	9.68%	249	11.67
45-49	12267	9.17%	290	13.60
50-54	13033	9.74%	290	13.60
55-59	12036	8.99%	355	16.64
60-64	9971	7.45%	229	10.74
65-69	8379	6.26%	109	5.11
70-74	8339	6.23%	28	1.31
75+			14	0.66
Total	133,811	100	2133	100.00%

Graph 3: Workforce by Age:



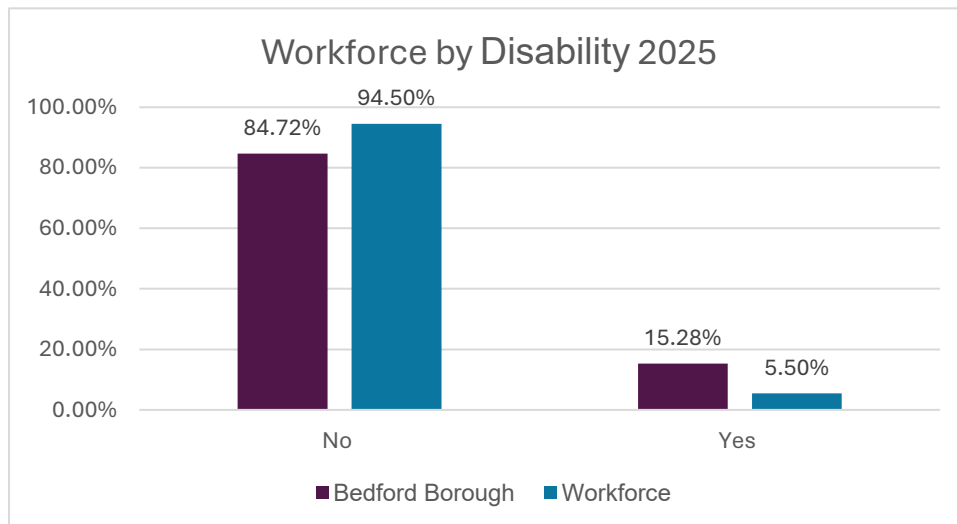
- Employees aged under 35 years old are under-represented in the workforce compared to the local population.
- Employees aged 50-64 years are well represented.
- Employees aged 65+ years are under-represented. This is in line with economic activity trends.

Graph 4: Workforce by Sex



- The workforce remains predominantly female. The split remains unchanged from the 2023-2024 reporting year. (Male 32.97%, Female 67.03%).
- Local population: approximately 50/50 split between males and females.
- Male employees continue to be under-represented, although this pattern is typical for upper tier local authorities.

Graph 5: Workforce by Disability



- 5.50% of employees declared a disability. This is significantly below the local population figure of 15.28%. This figure is consistent with trends across other local authorities, where disability disclosure rates are typically lower.

- The Council did not meet its 6.00%³ declared disability workforce target in the reporting year 2024–2025.
- 41.21% of disability data is unknown.

Marital Status	Bedford Borough Census Figures		Bedford Borough Council Employees	
	Number	%	Number	%
Married or in a registered same-sex civil partnership	61724	46.13%	586	68.06
Divorced or formally in a same-sex civil partnership which is now legally dissolved	12720	9.51%	47	5.45%
Separated (but still legally married or still legally in a same-sex civil partnership)	3482	2.6%	9	1.05%
Single (never married or never registered in a same-sex civil partnership)	52572	39.29%	215	24.97%
Widowed or surviving partner from a same-sex civil partnership	3312	2.48%	4	0.66%
Total (known data)	133,810	100%	2133	100.00%

³ Best Value Performance Indicator (BV16a)

Table 5: Workforce by Marital Status:

- Known data shows higher proportions of married employees compared to the local population
- High levels of unknown data (59.63%) limits the reliability of this comparison.

Table 6: Workforce by Sexual Orientation

- There has been no significant change in data reporting for sexual orientation compared to the reporting period 2023-2024 and the LGB representation in the workforce is 3.08%, proportionate to the local population figure of 2.81%.
- Unknown data for sexual orientation is 39.85%.

Sexual Orientation	Bedford Borough 16-75 years old		Bedford Borough Council Workforce	
	Number	%	Number	%
Heterosexual	120,424	97.19%	1240	96.92%
LGB	3,483	2.81%	43	3.08%
Total (known data)	123,907	100%	2133	100%

Table 7: Workforce by Ethnicity

Race/Ethnic Groups	Bedford Borough 16-74 Years Census Figures		Bedford Borough Council Employees (Total Workforce)	
	Number	%	Number	%
White British	86085	64.33%	1132	69.11%
White non-British	17018	12.72%	116	7.08%
Mixed/Multiple ethnic	4152	3.1%	41	2.50%
Asian or Asian British	16883	12.62%	172	10.50%
Black or Black British	7196	5.38%	163	9.95%
Arab or Other Ethnic Group	2494	1.86%	14	0.85%
Prefer not to say			438	
Unknown			57	
Total	133,828	100%	2133	100.00%

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%	637	50.11%
Buddhist	534	0.42%	5	0.39%
Hindu	2295	1.82%	27	2.12%
Jewish	168	0.13%	5	0.39%
Muslim	8565	6.79%	61	4.80%
Sikh	3146	2.49%	44	3.46%
Other Religion	1659	1.31%	32	2.52%
No Religion	46831	37.11%	460	36.19%
Prefer not to say			528	
Unknown			334	
Total	126,196	100%	2133	100%

Ethnicity and Religion/Belief: Although some minority faith and ethnic groups are under-represented, the workforce overall broadly reflects the local population, and the trends are consistent with the 2023-2024 reporting period.

The Council's target for 2024-2025 was set to achieve a workforce with at least 28.00%⁴ staff from ethnic minority groups and this has been met.

⁴ Best Value Performance Indicator (BV17b)

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.³
- BV11c - the percentage of top 5% of earners who have a disability.⁵

Table 9: The year-end 2024-25 targets and outturn⁶:

Indicator	Female (BV11a)	Ethnic Minority (BV11bi)	Disability (BV11c)
Target	50.00%	15.00%	5.0%
Outturn	58.9%	16.5%	3.8%
RAG/ DOT 2024-2025	↑ _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. Based on known data, the outturn reported shows that the top 5% targets for female and ethnic minority has been met. Disability representation in the top 5% remains below target. Caution is required when interpreting percentages, due to low numbers

⁵ 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.

³ 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).

⁶ The Council has HR targets in regard 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.

Pay Gap Reporting

As an organisation with 250 or more employees⁷ the Council is required to calculate and publish six specific measures relating to the pay gap between men and women. Relevant public sector organisations must collect data on a snapshot date of 31 March each year and publish the metrics by 30 March of the following year. The six metrics required under 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.

A total of 2133 employees were within the scope of the gender pay gap analysis. Of these, 141 were not 'full-pay' employees and were removed from the calculation. This resulted in 1992 employees being included of whom 1325 (66.52%) were female and 667 were male (33.48%)

⁷ The definition used for 'employee(s)' is the wider definition under S.83 of the Equality Act 2010 and includes casual workers.

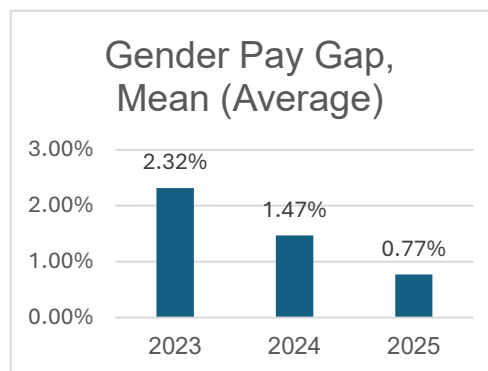
Gender Pay Gap

Bedford Borough Council's gender pay gap remains significantly below the national public sector⁸ figures of 12.3% for the mean and 13.5% for the median.

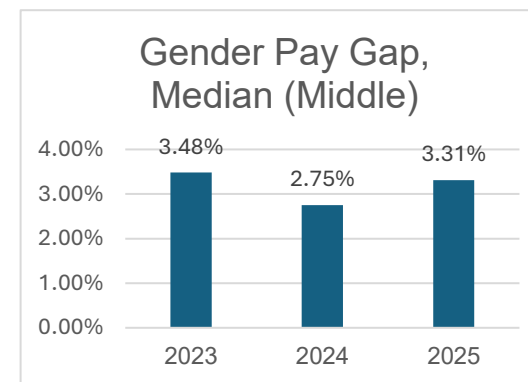
Table 10: Mean and Median Metrics

Difference between males and females	2023	2024	2025
Gender Pay Gap, Mean (Average)	2.32%	1.47%	0.77%
Gender Pay Gap, Median (Middle)	3.48%	2.75%	3.31%

Graph 6: Mean Gender Pay Gap



Graph 7: Median Gender Pay Gap



The table and graph above show that the mean gender pay gap decreased by 0.7 %. The average hourly rate for male employees was £19.44 and the average hourly rate for female employees was £19.29.

The median gender pay gap has widened by 0.56% to 3.31%, compared to 2.75% in the 2023-2024 reporting period. The median hourly rate for male employees was £16.93 and the median hourly rate for female employees was £16.37.

⁸ [Gender pay gap - Office for National Statistics](#). (2025 provisional edition: Table 13.12)

Gender Bonus Pay Gap

Table 11a: Bonus Payments by Gender

2024-2025	Payments received	Payment Range	Mean (Average)	Median (Middle)
Male	3	£236.04 - £2500	£995.35	£250
Female	26	£125.00 - £7617.28	£4111.62	£4000

Table 11b: Gender Bonus Pay Gap Comparison

Difference between males and females	2023-2024	2024-2025
Mean Gender Bonus Pay Gap	0.89%	-313.08%
Median Gender Bonus Pay Gap	0.00%	-1500%

The Council does not operate a traditional bonus scheme, however in this reporting year some payments met the definition of bonus pay⁹ for Gender Pay Gap reporting. These were retention payments used in hard to retain areas, welcome payments to support Social Worker and Occupational Therapist recruitment and payments made through a pilot Refer a Friend scheme for Care Workers. Eligibility for payments varies each year because welcome payments depend on new starters and retention payments fall on a two year or a four year anniversary of the start date. As a result, the group in receipt of qualifying payments varies each year.

During the reporting period 3 male employees and 26 female employees received a payment counted as a bonus (details are in Table 11a). This represents 0.43% of male employees and 21.81% of female employees. Of the 29 recipients 18 were Social Workers, 1 was an Occupational Therapist and 4 were in Legal roles and all of these roles were held by women. This shows that, in this reporting year these payments were received in service areas where the workforce is mainly female, which shapes the overall pattern of recipients and reflects the gender mix of these professions rather than any difference in access to payments.

⁹ [Preparing your data - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/preparing-your-data)

The Bonus Pay Gap reflects the total value of qualifying payments made in the reporting year and does not measure hourly pay. This year a larger share of recipients were women and the higher value payments also fell in roles held mainly by women. At the same time the number and value of payments to men were lower. The groups receiving these payments were small and the values ranged widely. In groups of this size, both the mean and the median can change materially when payment values differ significantly. These factors produced a large negative bonus pay gap (as shown in Table 11b), which shows that women received higher bonus values overall during the reporting year. The median is larger than the mean because the middle payment for women was much higher than the middle payment for men. The mean is however also large, because the total value of payments received by women was much higher than the total for men.

The Council will continue to monitor these payments to ensure fairness and transparency.

Quartile Bands

Graph 8: Quartile Pay Bands 2024-2025

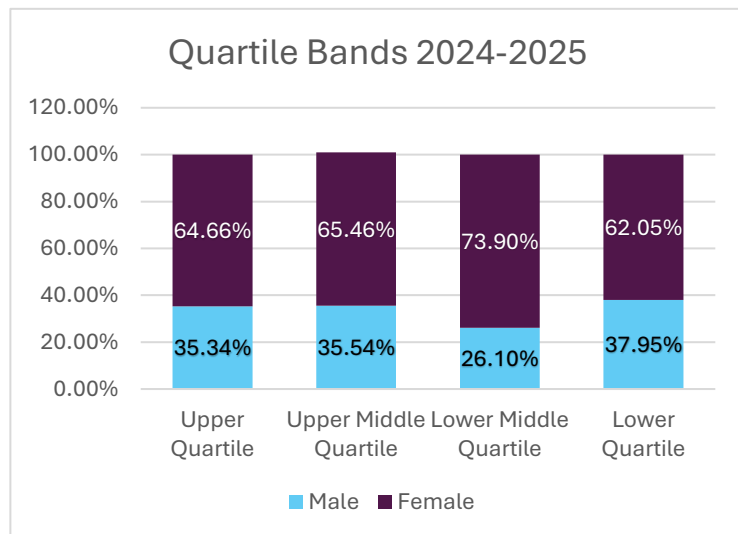


Table 12: Quartile bands

	Male		Female	
	2024	2025	2024	2025
Upper Quartile	35.61%	35.34%	64.39%	64.66%
Upper Middle Quartile	35.61%	34.54%	64.39%	65.46%
Lower Middle Quartile	27.35%	26.10%	72.65%	73.90%
Lower Quartile	37.53%	37.95%	62.67%	62.05%

The quartile analysis shows the proportions of male, and female ‘full-pay’ employees within each pay quartile¹⁰. The distribution does not match the overall workforce composition of 67.42% female and 32.58% male (Graph 6). exactly, although the values remain close:

Women continue to be over-represented in the lower middle quartile. The overall pattern is similar to the previous year. Compared to 2023-2024, the overall composition of employees in each quartile remains the same. The Council will continue to monitor the pay gap and take action to maintain and improve performance.

¹⁰ 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

Non-Statutory Measures: Ethnicity and Disability Pay Gap

The Council voluntarily calculates the pay gap for ethnicity and disability, and 1992 employees were included in this scope.

Ethnicity: There are 1191 (59.79%) White British employees, 352 (17.67%) Non-White British employees and 449 (22.54%) employees with unknown data

Disability: There are 1109 (55.68%) employees who declared no disability, 64 (3.21%) employees who declared a disability and 819 (41.11%) employees with unknown data.

Table 13: Ethnicity and Disability Mean and Median

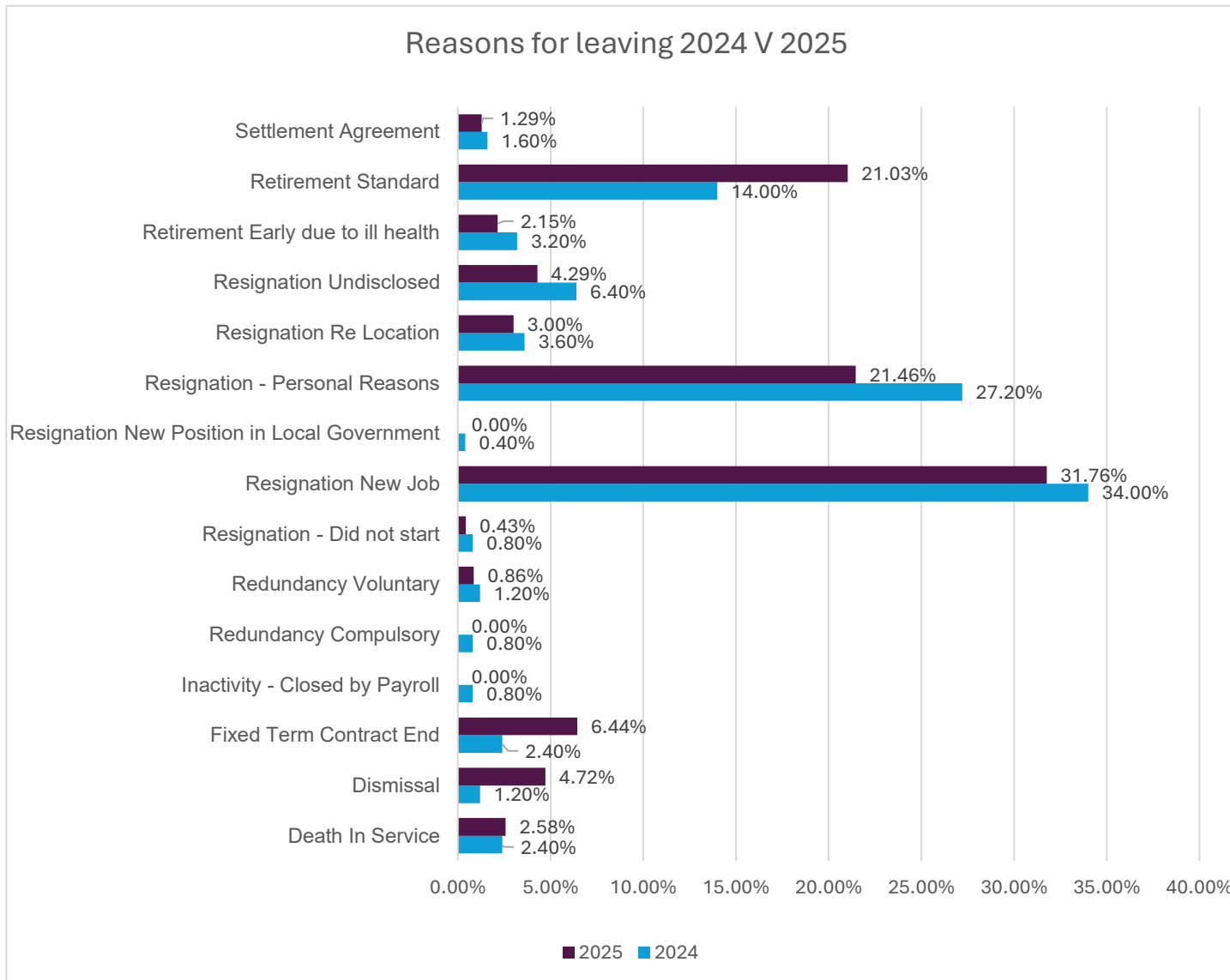
Characteristic	Mean (Average)			Median (Middle)		
	2023	2024	2025	2023	2024	2025
Ethnicity	12.21%	11.12%	9.03%	11.00%	10.34%	9.60%
Disability	4.64%	5.29%	5.82%	5.96%	6.62%	4.83%

- The ethnicity pay gap has decreased in the reporting year 2024-2025 by 2.09% (mean), and 0.74% (median).
- The disability mean pay gap has widened by 0.53%, while the median pay gap has decreased by 1.79%.

Employees Leaving the Council

The information below is based on known data.

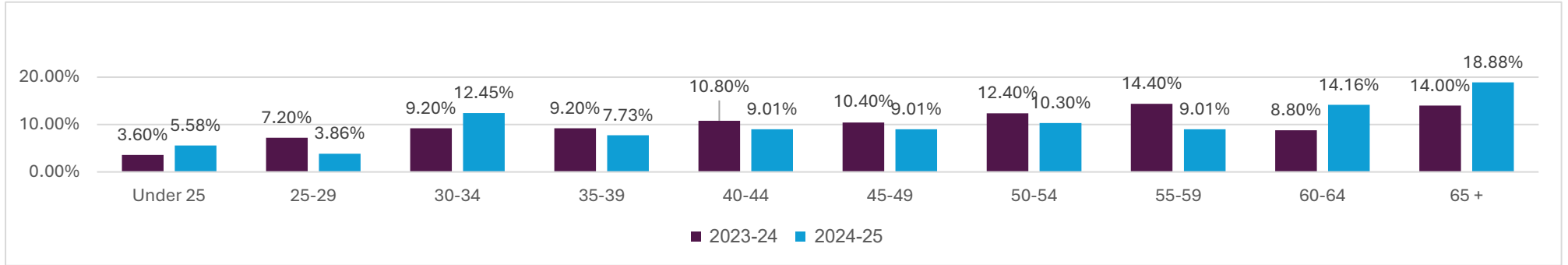
Graph 9: Reason for Leaving 2024 v 2025



- The proportion of staff leaving for personal reasons decreased from 27.20% to 21.46%, and resignations for new employment opportunities also decreased from 34.00% to 31.76%. This is a positive trend and will continue to be monitored.
- The proportion of fixed-term contracts ending in 2025 increased from 2.40% to 6.44%.
- The number of dismissals has increased from 1.20% to 4.72%.

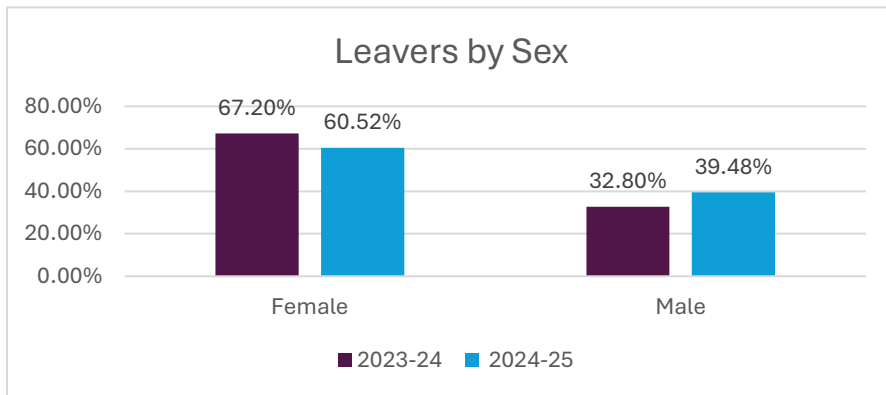
Without further breakdowns of protected characteristics of these respective leavers categories, it is difficult to determine if these trends affect all groups equally.

Graph 10: Leavers by Age

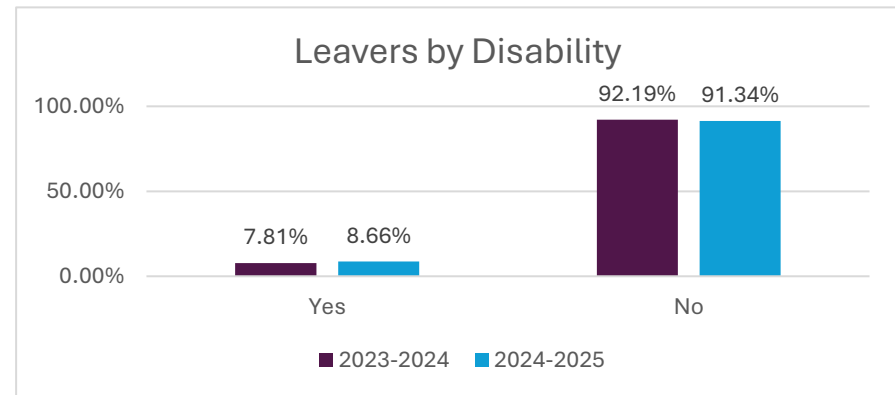


- Employees under 25 and 30-34 years old remain one of the highest age groups with slightly higher proportion leaving the Council.
- The number of leavers for the age categories 25-29 and 35-59 years have decreased compared to last year.
- The percentage of employees aged 65 and older who left the Council increased from 14.00% to 18.88%. The Council does not have a standard retirement age, and the workforce for this age group is still representative of the local population (6.26%).

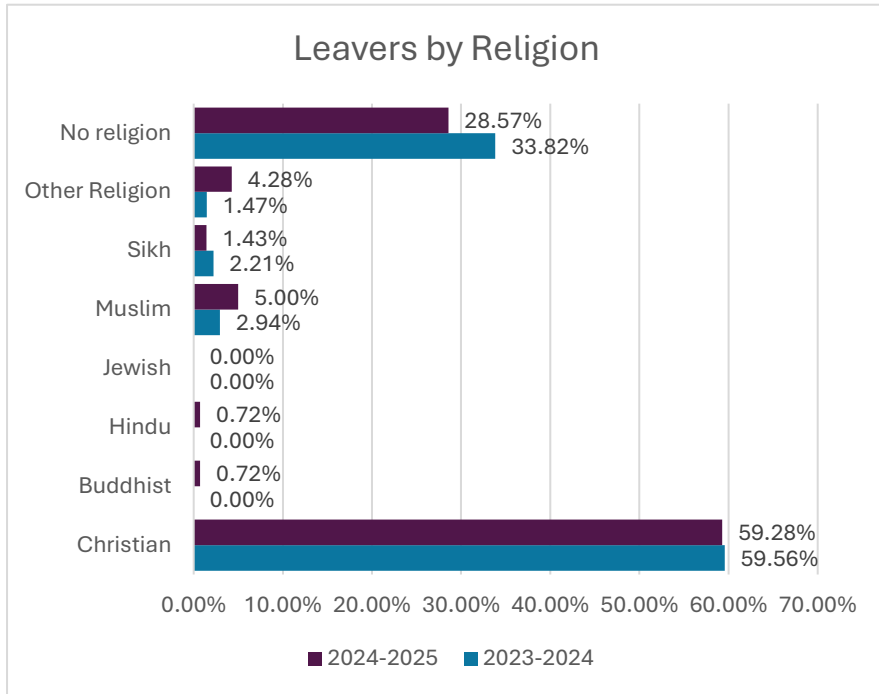
Graph 11: Leavers by Sex



Graph 12: Leavers by Disability



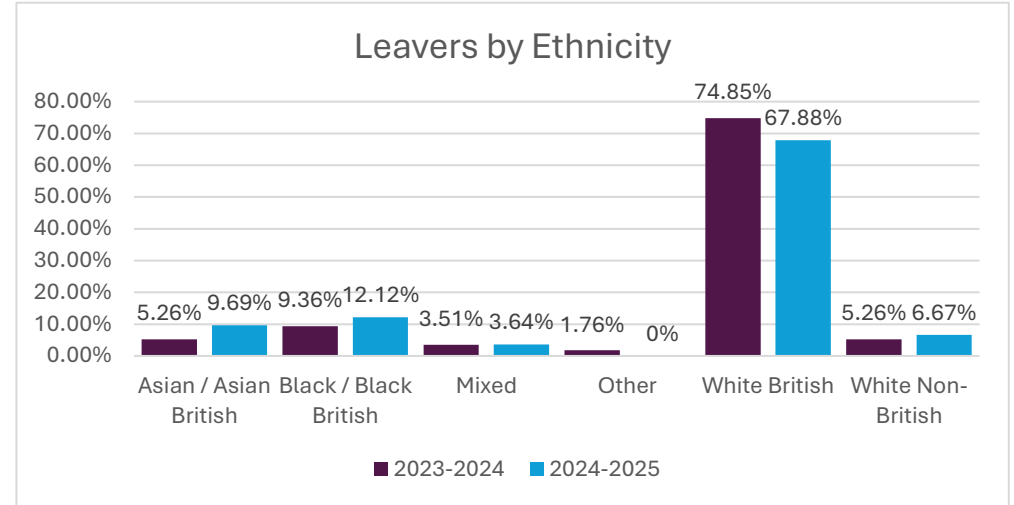
Graph 13: Leavers by Religion



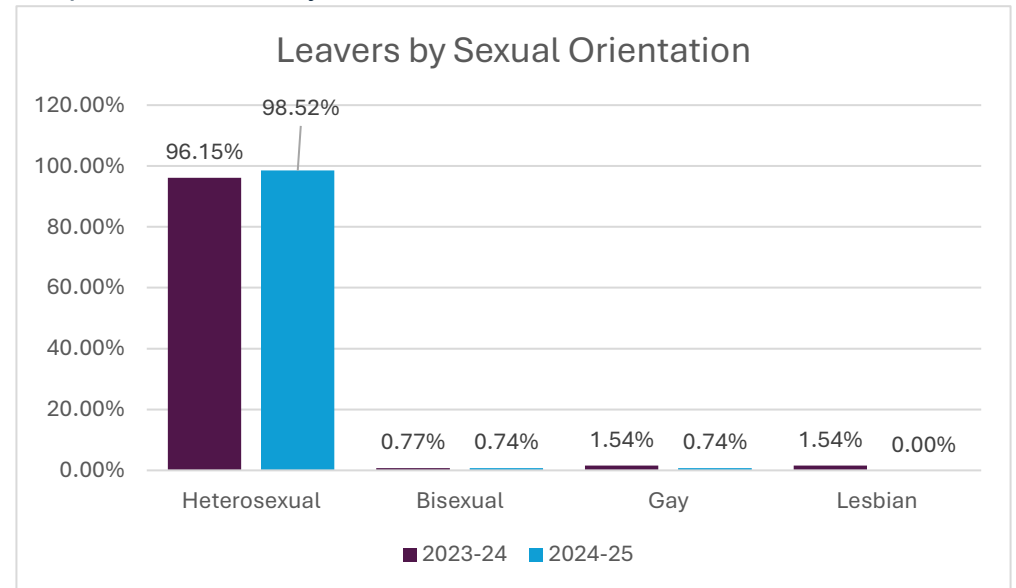
Compared to 2023-2024

- Male leavers increased by 6.68%. However, overall representation of sex has not changed significantly compared to 2023-2024 (32.97%)
- Leavers from ethnic minority groups increased by 6.97% but remains proportionate to the local population (Table 7).
- More detailed data on leavers by post and grade is needed before drawing conclusions about potential disparity.

Graph 14: Leavers by Ethnicity



Graph 15: Leavers by Sexual Orientation

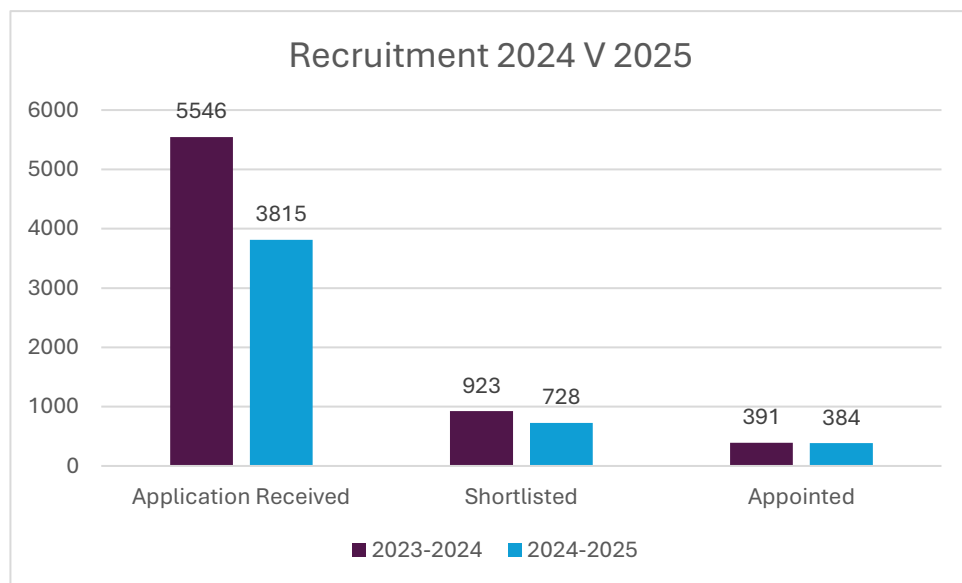


Recruitment

The recruitment analysis aims to understand how fair and inclusive the recruitment process is for applicants who share a protected characteristic. It assesses the proportion of applicants who applied, were shortlisted and were appointed, allowing the Council to identify disparities or positive trends at each stage. The results are compared with the previous year to highlight areas where outcomes have improved and areas where further action may be needed.

Please note: the data used is for all applications received between 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025. Some of the applications may have led to start dates outside of the financial year 2024-2025, which is why the number of starters shown in the tables below may differ from data elsewhere.

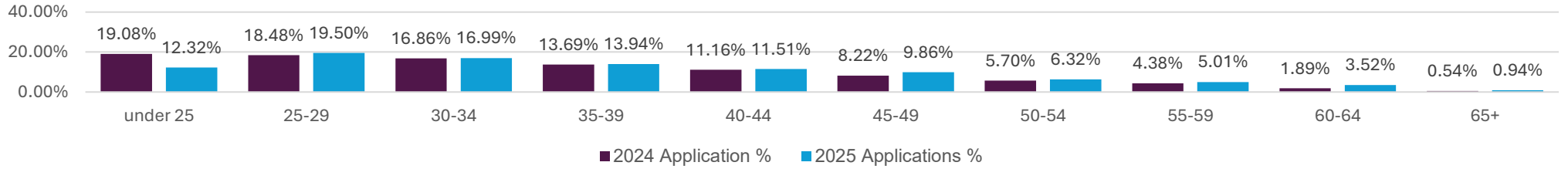
Graph 16: Number of Applications Received, Shortlisted and Appointed



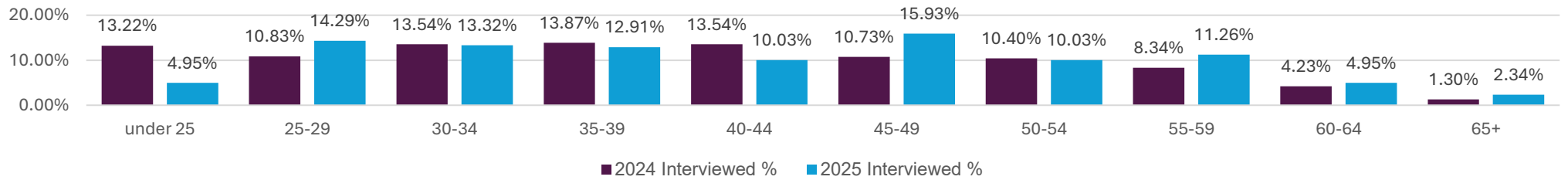
- It is mandatory for all managers leading on recruitment to undertake 'Unconscious Bias' training before the start of the process.
- A streamlined application process allows candidates to only submit their CV and complete a simple yes/no questionnaire.
- A reduction of applications was seen in 2024-2025. This was due to a recruitment freeze implemented from 2 December 2024 to 31 March 2025, as part of measures to achieve in-year budget savings.
- The data may include multiple applications from an individual, where they chose to apply for.

Graph 17: Recruitment by Age 2024 v 2025

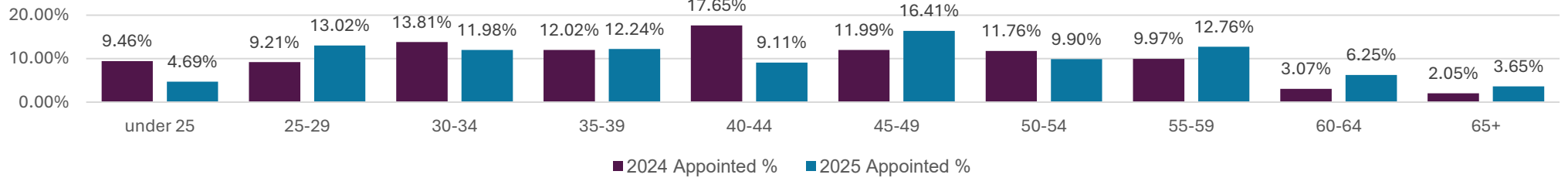
Applications 2024 V 2025



Shorlisted 2024 V 2025



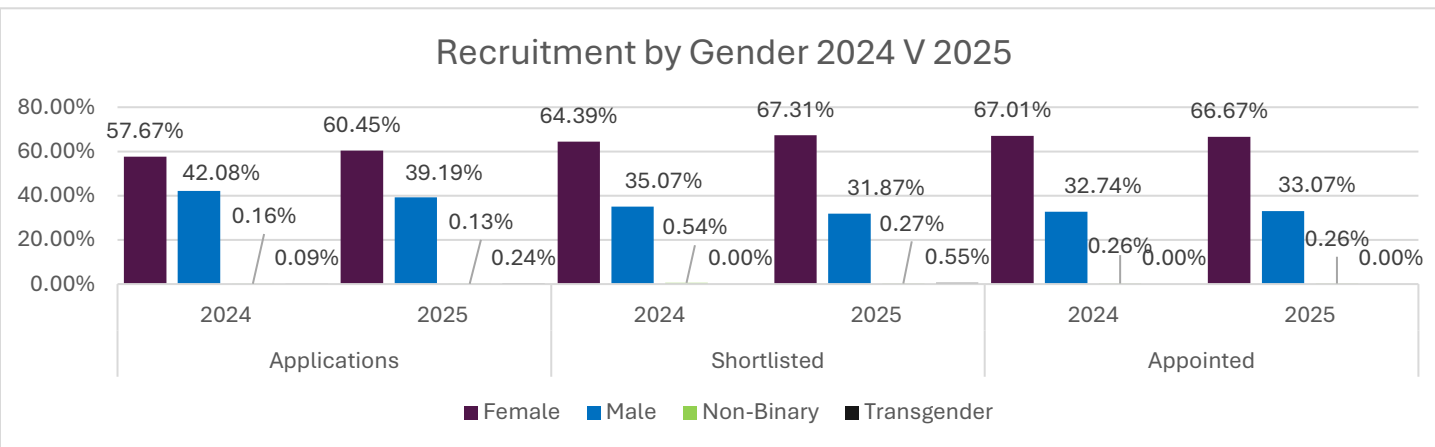
Appointed 2024 V 2025



- In this year reporting year 2024-2025, applicants under 25 received the highest no of applications, but their representation drops to appointment stage. Applicants aged 45–49 progress through the recruitment process at a proportionately higher rate than their representation at application stage.

These disparities may reflect that the roles advertised were at higher pay bands requiring specialised or extensive skills that some age groups are less likely to have. A further breakdown of the pay grades advertised would support a more robust analysis.

Graph 18: Recruitment by Gender



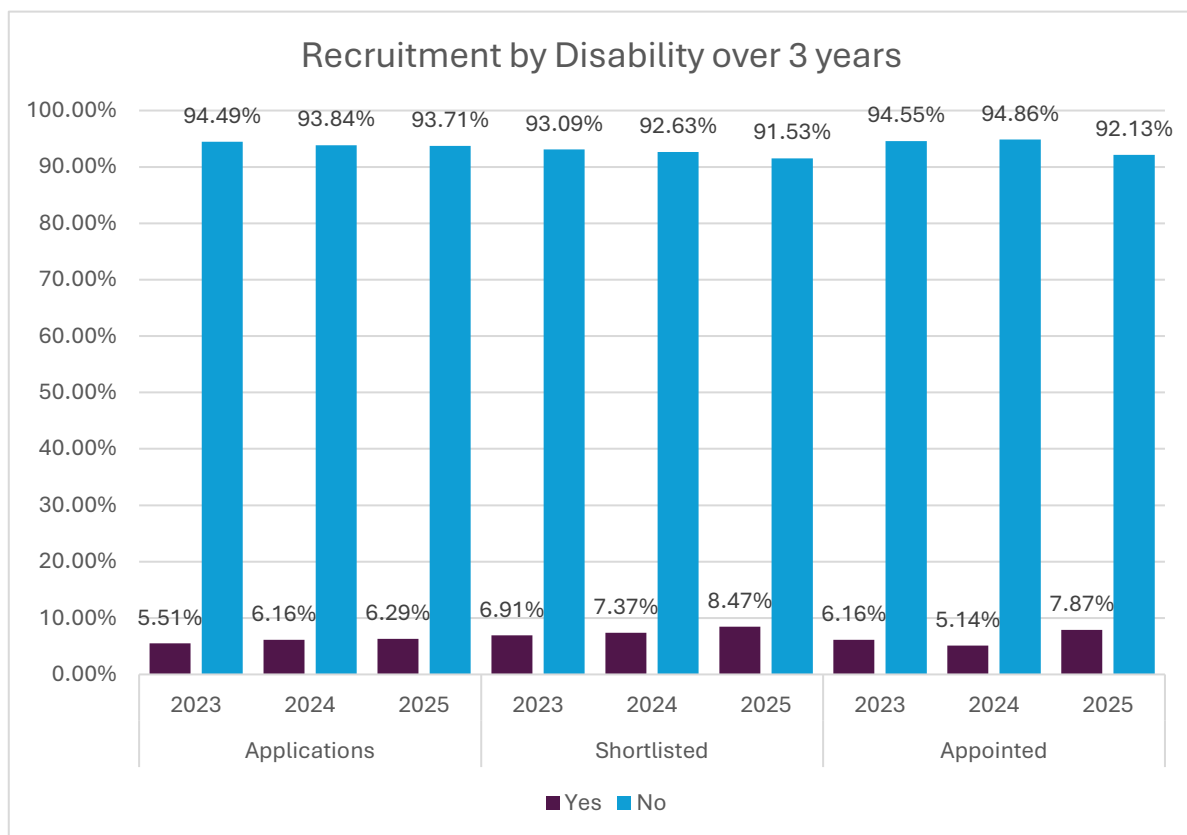
- In the reporting year 2024-2025, women accounted for 60.45% of applicants and 66.67% of appointments.
- 11.1% of female applicants were appointed (262/3188) compared with 5.5% of male applicants (256/2300).
- This pattern aligns with the national trend of a predominantly female local authority workforce.

Table 14: Recruitment Numbers by Gender

Numbers	Applications		Shortlisted		Appointed	
	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025
Female	3188	2300	593	490	262	256
Male	2326	1491	323	232	128	127
Non-Binary	9	5	5	2	1	1
Transgender	5	9	0	4	0	0

- Male underrepresented in the Council’s recruitment process, this reflects the overall representation of the workforce.

Graph 19: Recruitment by Disability



- In the reporting year 2024-2025, 6.29% of applicants declared a disability. This is significantly lower than the 15.28% of the working-age population who identify as disabled.
- 24.8% of applicants with a disability (58 out of 234) were shortlisted for interview compared to 18.0% of applicants without a disability (627 out of 3,484).
- 12.0% of applicants with a disability (28 out of 234) were appointed to a role compared to 9.4% of applicants without a disability (328 out of 3,484).
- Disabled applicants were proportionally more likely to progress to interview and to succeed in securing employment.
- Unknown data was low at 2.54 per cent, indicating good levels of disclosure.

Applicants with a disability are proportionally more successful once engaged in the recruitment process, with shortlisting outcomes rising from 6.91% in 2023 to 8.47% in 2025, and appointment outcomes improving to 7.87% in 2025 after a dip in 2024. These figures suggest fairer outcomes within the process itself, demonstrating that disabled applicants who apply are more likely to progress and secure roles compared to non-disabled applicants.

Table 15: Recruitment by Ethnicity

- In 2024-2025, the total number of applications received from ethnic minority backgrounds was 67.47% which is a positive sign of widening reach.
- This proportion drops at both shortlisting and appointment stage to 41.07%.
- However, despite the drop, at each stage there is proportional representation compared to the working age ethnic minority local population (35.67%).
- White British applicants (58.93%) are slightly underrepresented compared to the local population (64.33%), and the proportion stays about the same through shortlisting and appointment, with 57.18% appointed. However, the current workforce is 69.11% White British, which is broadly in line with the local population.

	2024			2025		
	Application	Shortlisted	Appointed	Application	Shortlisted	Appointed
White British	32.63%	52.63%	58.93%	31.62%	51.53%	57.18%
White Other	7.82%	7.37%	7.73%	6.85%	8.22%	8.09%
Mixed / Multiple Ethnicity	7.82%	4.58%	3.47%	6.37%	4.04%	3.31
Asian or Asian British	24.86%	15.87%	10.97%	23.30%	15.18%	10.97%
Black or Black British	25.03%	17.54%	19.58%	30.58%	20.19%	19.58%
Arab or Other Ethnic Group	1.88%	1.01%	1.04%	1.28%	0.84%	1.04%

Table 16: Recruitment by Religion

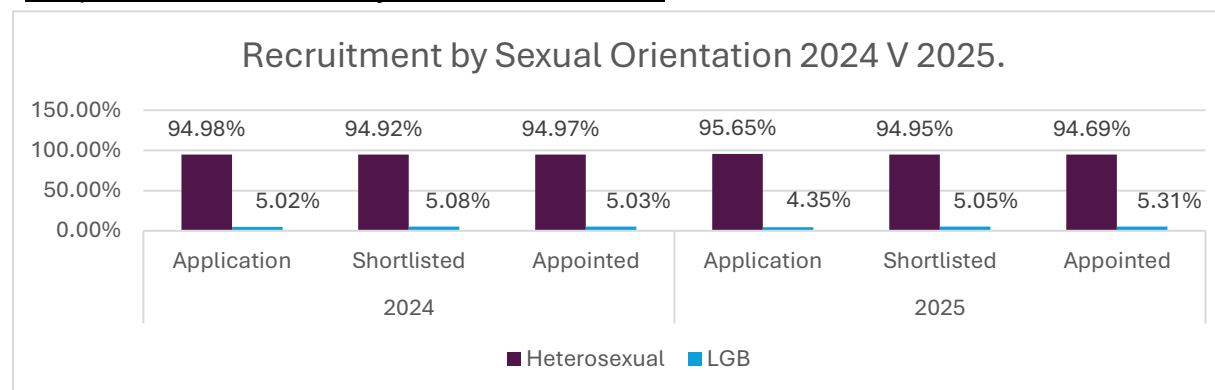
	2024			2025		
	Applications	Shortlisted	Appointed	Applications	Shortlisted	Appointed
Christianity	48.06%	48.26%	47.49%	51.68%	46.01%	46.18%
Buddhist	0.44%	0.36%	0.29%	0.59%	0.16%	0.00%
Hindu	6.54%	2.04%	2.06%	6.38%	3.60%	1.91%
Jewish	0.11%	0.24%	0.29%	0.20%	0.31%	0.64%
Muslims	14.44%	9.58%	6.78%	12.84%	9.70%	6.05%
Sikh	2.74%	3.23%	2.65%	2.43%	1.88%	1.91%
No Religion	25.04%	32.57%	36.87%	24.08%	36.31%	41.08%
Other Religion	2.63%	3.71%	3.54%	1.82%	2.03%	2.23%

Figures are broadly consistent with 2023-2024, but the overall percentage of applicants at each stage declaring no religion has increased from 36.87% of appointments in 2023-2024 to 41.08% in 2024-2025.

Applicants and appointments of candidates who were Christian have dropped slightly in 2024-2025. 46.18% of appointments in 2024-2025 compared to 47.49% of appointments in 2023-2024. The local population people declared Christianity as their religion is 50.12%. (Table 6)

Based on known data in 2024-2025 for LGB in 2024-2025, 4.35% of applicants, 5.05% of shortlisted applicants and 5.31% of applicants appointed were LGB. This shows consistency across each stage and is higher than the 2.81% of the local population who declared they are LGB.

Graph 20: Recruitment by Sexual Orientation



Training

During 2024-2025, 1536 employees accessed 292 different training courses, an increase of 30 courses compared to last year. The main course categories accessed include corporate induction, wellbeing, personal development and social care training. Most training undertaken was via e-learning courses on 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 17: Training by Age

Age	Headcount	%
Under-25	54	3.52%
25-29	95	6.18%
30-34	99	6.45%
35-39	204	13.38%
40-44	178	11.59%
45-49	210	13.67%

Age	Headcount	%
50-54	233	15.17%
55-59	235	15.30%
60+	228	14.84%
Total	1536	100%

Table 18: Training by Sex

Sex	Headcount	%
Female	1134	73.83%
Male	402	26.17%
Total	1538	100%

Table 19: Training by Disability

Disability	Headcount	%
No	848	94.43%
Yes	50	5.57%
Total (known data)	898	100%

Table 21: Training by Religion or Belief

Religion/belief	Headcount	%
Christian	474	51.58 %
Buddhist	5	0.54%
Hindu	16	2.50%
Jewish	1	0.22%
Muslim	29	5.00%
Sikh	30	3.05%
Other religion	23	2.28%
No religion	269	34.83%
Total (known data)	919	100%

Table 20: Training by Ethnicity

Ethnic Group	Headcount	%
White British	801	68.63%
White non-British	89	7.62%
Asian or Asian British	107	9.18%
Black or Black British	123	10.55%
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups	36	3.08%
Arab or another ethnic group	11	0.94%
Total (known data)	1167	100%

Table 22: Training by Sexual Orientation

Sexual orientation	Headcount	%
Heterosexual	887	95.79%
LGB	39	4.22%
Total (known data)	806	100%

- The number of male and female employees accessing training are similar to the reporting year 2023-24 (Female 71.75%, Male 28.25%).
- Age, disability, ethnicity, religion and sexual orientation profiles for employees accessing training is also proportionate to the workforce demographics.

Disciplinary and Grievance

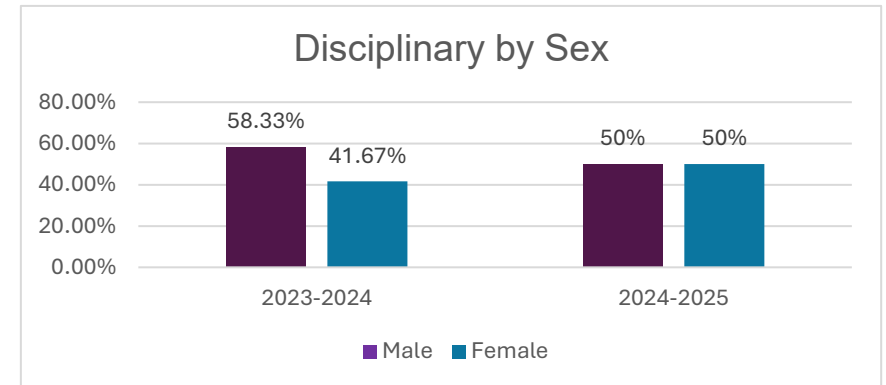
Between April 2024 and March 2025, the Council dealt with 28 disciplinary and 12 grievances cases. This data relates to employees who have been subject to formal disciplinary procedures and employees who raised a grievance under the Council's formal grievance procedure.

Disciplinary

The 28 cases in this reporting year indicates an increase of 4 cases, compared to 24 cases reported in 2023/2024.

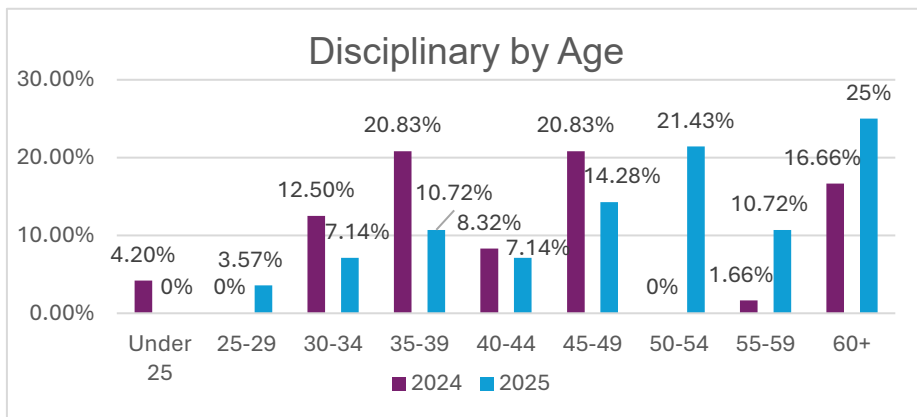
Sex: Cases are evenly split between males and females (50% each). Compared to last year, female cases have increased from 41.67% to 50%, while male cases have decreased from 58.33% to 50%. When viewed against the wider workforce, the proportion of male cases is disproportionately high. We will continue to monitor this distribution to identify any emerging patterns or trends.

Graph 21: Disciplinary Data by Sex



As the number of cases are low (1.31% of the workforce), it is not considered statistically significant as the percentages may vary without implying significant difference in numbers.

Graph 22: Disciplinary Data by Age



Age: There has been an increase in the number of cases for 50- 65+years old, and a decrease to zero for under 25 years old, 35-49 years old.

Ethnicity: Based on known data, 62.22% of cases concerned White British, remaining 34.78% from all other groups. This is proportionate to the workforce (69.11%) and local demographics (64.33%)

Grievances

During the period 2024-2025 a total of 12 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.

Due to the very small number of cases reported in each category, any breakdown of this data by protected characteristic should be interpreted with caution, as low counts may present an unreliable or potentially misleading picture of under- or over-representation. 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. Grievances were split with 33.33 % submitted by male employees and 66.67 % submitted by female employees which is representative of the make-up of the Council. This figure is the same for 2023-2024 and proportionate to the workforce, female 67.42 %, male .32.68%. (Graph 5)

Based on known data for ethnicity, White British employees raised 72.73% of grievances, Non-White British was 27.27%. Unknown data was 8.33%.

Achievements (within the reporting period)

Workforce growth and stability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resignations for personal reasons and moving to new jobs both have decreased.
Improved data quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved equality data disclosure for disability, race/ethnicity, religion/belief, and sexual orientation. Gender reassignment data is available for the first time.
Representative workforce profile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HR Best Value indicator for ethnic minority exceeded its target, showing positive representation and progress.
Gender pay gap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved, narrowing to 0.77%.
Ethnicity and disability pay gap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ethnicity mean gap improved by 2.09%. Ethnicity Median improved by 0.74%. Disability Median gap improved by 1.79%
Top 5% earners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender and ethnic minority targets met.
Recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment process demonstrate fair outcomes for disabled applicants.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Despite the recruitment freeze with fewer applications, appointment outcomes remained proportionate compared to 2023-2024.
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training accessed by the workforce remains proportionate to previous the reporting year.
Equality Analysis (EA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11 EDI Champions in place to support service areas to undertake robust EAs.
Partnership and Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key co-partner for the EQIA Forum with Local Government East. • Established the Bedfordshire Cross-Sector Race Equality Forum with the University of Bedfordshire.

Actions

Workforce equality data	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue targeted campaigns to inform staff of the importance of updating their equality data.
Workforce representation and progression	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deliver targeted training for recruiting managers and implement consistent, inclusive recruitment processes, including clear job descriptions, objective evidence-based selection criteria, and diverse shortlisting and interview practices to ensure fair, transparent and consistent recruitment decisions and improve workforce diversity.
Disability Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourage the establishment of a staff network inclusive of all disability groups, with representation across physical, sensory, neurodivergent, mental health and long-term health conditions.
Staff leaving the Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review the exit interview process to enable staff to share honest feedback, ensuring we fully understand the reasons for leaving to improve retention.• Analyse leavers by job role, grade, and service to identify trends.

Recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further analyse drop-off rates for marginalised or under representative applicants between application to appointment stage.
Disciplinary and grievances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake a more detailed review of disciplinary cases over a 3-year period on protected characteristics. Monitor and identify trends and disparities.
Pay gaps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a gender pay gap action plan aimed at achieving a 0% gap. • Look to improve ethnicity and disability pay gap. • Monitor bonus payments to ensure fairness, transparency and consistency.
Equality Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain training opportunities for EDI Champions to strengthen their knowledge to help advise their directorates on how to undertake robust EA. • Recruit and train new EDI Champions as required. • Review EA reporting and guidance form to ensure it remains fit for purpose, and staff can complete it confidently and consistently.
Culture and Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote inclusive leadership training for all managers.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase visibility of staff networks and lived-experienced voices.
Strategic direction	<p>Implementation of the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council’s Equality Objectives and Action Plan. • People Strategy, ensuring its commitments translate into measurable improvements in culture, capability, and employee experience. <p>Collectively, these strategies will enhance the Council’s ability to advance equality of opportunity, eliminate discrimination, and foster an inclusive culture that reflects our diverse workforce and communities. Taken together, they reinforce the Council’s commitment to fairness, inclusion and improved workforce representation. Progress will be driven by defined actions and monitored through regular updates to ensure meaningful, measurable and sustained change.</p>

Protected Characteristics

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

Age	Age encompasses both younger and older individuals. Recognising the unique needs and perspectives of different age demographics can help create a more inclusive environment.
Disability	Disability includes a wide range of conditions, such as physical disabilities, sensory impairments, unseen disabilities, mental health issues, learning difficulties, and neurodiversity.
Gender Reassignment	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 can also include non-binary, gender fluid, gender free individuals who do not identify with traditional gender labels.
Pregnancy and Maternity	Pregnancy, including pregnancy-related illnesses and maternity leave.
Race	Nationality, skin colour, native or first language, culture, and geographic origin. This category includes specific groups such as Gypsies and Travellers.
Religion/Belief	Religion or belief includes various faiths, as well as the absence of religion and philosophical beliefs.
Sex	Male or Female.
Sexual Orientation	Sexual orientation towards people of the same sex, people of the opposite sex; people of either sex or any other sexual orientation.
Marriage and Civil Partnership	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.

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

Working Age Population	<p>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.</p>
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