

Bracknell Forest Council

Annual Workforce Equality Monitoring Report 2025



Inclusive
Ambitious
Always learning

Being Bracknell Forest

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Executive summary

Bracknell Forest Council is committed to being an employer of choice by embodying its values of inclusivity, ambition, and continuous learning. This annual workforce equality report for 2024-2025 highlights the significant strides we have made in promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion over the past year. It serves as a testament to our ongoing efforts to ensure that these principles are integral to our decision-making, policy development, and staff support at every stage of their journey with us.

Our collaboration with local organisations, particularly in health and social care, has been instrumental in sharing best practices and learning from each other. While we are optimistic about the future impact of our current initiatives, we acknowledge that there is still much work to be done. Strong and visible leadership is crucial to embedding equality across the organisation and within the wider community. The council is dedicated to ensuring that its leaders not only support this agenda but also actively drive change and champion equality at every level.

Our commitment extends beyond statutory obligations, reinforcing our corporate priority to place equity, diversity, and inclusion at the heart of everything we do. We will continue to use a cycle of data analysis, action, and impact assessment to keep learning and improving. Our goal is to build and sustain a diverse and resilient workforce that reflects the communities we serve. By collaborating with staff, relevant groups and our partners from the Frimley Integrated Care Board (ICB), we aim to celebrate diversity and promote fair, inclusive, and equitable treatment for all.

This report provides an annual analysis of workforce equalities from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025. We collect, publish, and monitor diversity data to demonstrate our commitment to the Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010. This also supports pay gap reporting, helps us assess how representative we are compared to the local population, allows us to evaluate the impact of our employment policies and practices, and enables us to identify opportunities to further embed equality, diversity, and inclusion across the organisation. The statistics are primarily sourced from our human resources and payroll information system, iWork, which allows for comprehensive reporting and analysis of our workforce data.

While we have made progress in encouraging employees to disclose their personal information, gaps in our data remain due to non-disclosure. We recognise these limitations and have introduced measures to remind staff to update their details. Our efforts to improve data collection and foster an inclusive work environment where all employees feel comfortable disclosing their information are ongoing.



Summary achievements

In the past year, our organisation has made significant strides in promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) across various aspects of our workforce. Here are the key achievements for 2024/25:

Our workforce retention and recruitment programme had several key objectives, including increasing the number of apprenticeships, interns, and work experience placements, and developing progression routes and step-up opportunities through the development of an academy model. We also focused on leadership and management development to realign the skills, knowledge, and behaviours we expect from our managers with the organisation's values.

The report highlights significant progress in promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion within the workforce. However, there are still areas that require targeted interventions and support systems to address the specific needs and challenges faced by various employee groups. The council's commitment to fostering an inclusive and supportive work environment is evident in the positive trends observed in workforce composition, employee relations, pay gap reporting, and turnover rates.

Over the past year, we have progressed on actions in the following areas:

- reviewed and refreshed our digitalised managers behaviour framework to align with our organisational values
- developed and digitalised a wellbeing toolkit to support both staff and managers
- extended our recruitment activities to attract and retain a diverse range of staff
- developed an Interactive EDI dashboard to provide timely insights into our progress
- scoped and designed a framework for the academy model, produced an intranet hub, and established a network of academy model champions
- produced a series of handbooks outlining career progression routes for key council areas
- reviewed our 1:1 and appraisal process to ensure alignment with organisational goals
- refreshed existing EDI learning packages and introduced new ones
- commenced scoping for neurodivergent training
- provided support in partnership with our local health colleagues to affected staff during the civil unrest in August 2024
- adopted the UNISON Anti-Racism Organisation Charter
- held workshops for staff and partner agencies to draft the Equality Objectives for 2025-29
- developed cultural humility and competency training for children's social care, which is being rolled out to the organisation over 2025/26
- continued monthly meetings of the disability and neurodiversity staff forum
- conducted an external review to explore the experiences of and support for LGBT+ staff
- maintained an EDI and wellbeing calendar
- ran a consultation on accessibility in Bracknell Forest
- started a reciprocal mentoring pilot
- undertook an ongoing review of our exit interviews process to understand the reasons for leaving, improve our retention strategies, and enhance our support systems, fostering an inclusive environment for all employees

- extended the visibility of wellbeing champions, mental health first aiders role, and menopause network
- continued review of our disciplinary and grievance process
- established a bullying and harassment policy and associated training
- reviewed our induction and onboarding process and included a greater focus on supporting applicants who require reasonable adjustments
- embedded reasonable adjustments within policy and process to support our employees where these are required
- built on the existing apprenticeship schemes and continued to work with local schools and colleges to offer work experience placements
- established project groups to co-design the cultural celebration day and Bracknell Forest Pride events with partners and VCFS groups

These achievements reflect our ongoing commitment to creating a diverse, inclusive, and supportive workplace for all our employees. We look forward to building on this progress in the coming year.



Summary of key findings

The report highlights significant progress in promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion within the workforce. However, there are still areas that require targeted interventions and support systems to address the specific needs and challenges faced by various employee groups. The council's commitment to fostering an inclusive and supportive work environment is evident in the positive trends observed in workforce composition, employee relations, pay gap reporting, and turnover rates.

Workforce composition

- the council employed 1,322 employees (excluding school staff) from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025
- the workforce shows a stable age distribution with a slight increase in younger employees aged 30-39 and those nearing retirement age (60-64)
- the percentage of employees who have declared a disability has slightly increased from 5.5 per cent in April 2024 to 5.9 per cent in April 2025
- the proportion of the workforce identifying their ethnic origin as Black, Asian, or from other ethnic backgrounds (excluding white) collectively increased from 12 per cent in 2024 to 15 per cent in 2025
- female employees consistently represent around three-quarters of the workforce
- the percentage of employees identifying as heterosexual/straight increased from 72.4 per cent in 2022 to 75.0 per cent in 2025

Employee relations (ER)

Disciplinary and grievance cases

A total number of 11 disciplinary and 15 grievance formal ER cases were dealt with over the year. Serious misconduct (other) and serious misconduct (safeguarding), each accounting for 20 per cent (3) of the total disciplinary cases.

- **Bullying and harassment:** is the most prevalent grievance category, representing 36 per cent (4) of the total number of grievance cases.
- **Ethnicity:** Employees from Black, Asian, and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds collectively account for 20 per cent (3) of the disciplinary cases and 27 per cent (3) of the grievance cases. The majority of the BFC workforce is composed of white employees, who make up 77 per cent of the staff in post, account for 64 per cent (10) of the disciplinary and 64 per cent (7) of the grievance cases.
- **Disability:** Employees who have declared a disability represent 5.9 per cent of the workforce, with disciplinary cases accounting for 6.7 per cent (1) and grievance cases accounting for 36 per cent (4).
- **Sex (gender):** Female employees constitute 78 per cent of the workforce, account for 60 per cent (9) of the disciplinary cases. Conversely, male employees, who make up 22 per cent of the workforce, are responsible for 40 per cent (6) of the disciplinary cases. Similarly, male employees are slightly overrepresented in grievance cases (27 per cent) (3) relative to their presence in the workforce (22 per cent).

Pay gap reporting

Employers with 250 or more employees are required by law to publish their gender pay gap each year on their own and on the government's website.

It is important to note that the gender pay gap is not the same as equal pay. Gender pay gap is the difference between the average pay of all men compared to the average pay of all women in an organisation. The gender pay gap is generally defined as the difference between the median hourly earnings of men and of women, as a percentage of men's earnings. Equal pay means that men and women in the same employment performing equal work must receive equal pay, as set out in the Equality Act 2010.

Our report has been run on figures based on 1322 employees. The report was prepared in line with the Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017 and Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017.

For example: If most women are in junior roles and most men in senior roles, the average pay for men will be higher, even if men and women in the same role are paid equally. While a pay gap analysis looks at broad averages and can reveal systemic issues, equal pay analysis examines specific cases of pay equity for equal work, ensuring that individuals performing the same or similar work receive the same pay, regardless of gender or other characteristics in compliance with the Equal Pay Act.

- the mean average rate difference between men and women has shown a consistent decline over the five-year period, from 15.90 per cent in 2021 to 10.51 per cent in 2025
- the median (mid-point) rate difference also reflects a positive trend, decreasing from 11.70 per cent in 2021 to 10.33 per cent in 2025
- the ethnicity pays gap shows fluctuations, with minority ethnic employees earning more on average compared to their white counterparts
- the first year of reporting the disability pay gap reveals that the mean (average) bonus pay gap for disabled employees is 62.6 per cent. This indicates that, on average, disabled employees receive 62.6 per cent less in bonus pay compared to their non-disabled colleagues. It should however be noted that this information is based on a small sample size, with only 5.9 per cent of the workforce indicating that they have a disability or long-term condition, as captured on our HRIS (iWork) system.

Workforce turnover

- the voluntary turnover rate decreased from 10.62 per cent in 2024 to 8.91 per cent in 2025
- the turnover rate for male employees decreased from 16.10 per cent in 2024 to 8.7 per cent in 2025
- the turnover rate for Asian employees decreased dramatically from 16.4 per cent in 2024 to 2.3 per cent in 2025
- the turnover rate for employees under 19 years old decreased dramatically from 78.40 per cent in 2024 to 20.0 per cent in 2025

Data monitoring

This Equality in Employment Monitoring Report 2025 provides an annual analysis of workforce equalities from 1 April 2024 to 31st March 2025. We collect, publish, and monitor diversity data to:

- demonstrate our commitment to the public sector equality duty under the Equality Act 2010, which includes advancing equality of opportunity, eliminating discrimination, harassment, and victimisation, and fostering good relations
- assess how representative we are compared to the local population
- evaluate the impact of our employment policies and practices, identifying areas where there may be a disproportionate effect on specific groups of employees
- identify opportunities to further embed equality, diversity, and inclusion across the organisation, ensuring all employees feel included, heard, supported, and empowered to reach their full potential

The statistics are primarily taken from the human resources and payroll information (HRIS) system, known as iWork. iWork provides us with comprehensive reporting, allowing a full analysis of our workforce data to be undertaken.

While we have the capability to undertake reporting, we rely on individuals to disclose their personal information to us for meaningful reporting. When employees choose not to disclose this information, it creates gaps in our data. We recognise the limitations of this system, which depend on individuals sharing their personal information, and we have introduced measures to remind staff to update their details.

Use of acronyms and terminology

Ethnicity reporting:

The acronym BAME (Black, Asian, and minority ethnic) is often used to refer to all ethnic groups except the white British ethnic group. However, using this acronym as a word can be problematic because it assumes that all marginalised people are a homogeneous group, without recognising the uniqueness of individual ethnicities.

Using these terms acknowledges the harm caused and provides context in many instances where a collective term is needed. For example, given the changing demographic trends in the United States and the UK, the word minority no longer accurately reflects the four primary racial/ethnic groups. Other terms like emerging/global majority, racialised, minoritised, and people of colour have become popular substitutes to challenge the idea that the dominant ethnicity is white.

BAME became more frequently used than BME (Black and minority ethnic) to acknowledge the significant and distinct Asian population in the UK.

Both BAME and BME are often used when compared with the white population in the UK and are common ways to collate statistics, for example, by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and in company diversity monitoring.

We use the ONS terminology to align our results to other comparable data. This ensures we can accurately understand how we compare to other organisations and what we need to do to improve. The use of BAME (Black, Asian and minority ethnic) or racially marginalised is considered appropriate for statistical analysis comparisons or reporting, while acknowledging that this is not a single or homogeneous group. We are committed to providing a detailed breakdown where possible, while ensuring anonymity.

Group full meaning	
Asian	Asian, Asian British
Black	Black, Black British Caribbean or African
Mixed race/heritage	Mixed race/heritage or multiple ethnic groups
Other	Any other ethnic groups
Not provided	Ethnicity not known or prefer not to say
White	White, white British or white other

It should also be noted that the Asian category used by the ONS includes South Asian ethnicities (for example, Indian, Bangladeshi, and Pakistani) and East Asian ethnicities (such as Chinese).

While data reporting and analysis naturally involve some degree of generalisation, it is crucial to remember that each of us is a unique individual, not solely defined by our gender, race, sexuality, income, or other categories. Making careless generalisations, especially about race, is unlikely to advance racial equality.



Sex terminology

The language around sex and gender identity is always changing, so it's important to understand the differences between them.

People often mix up sex, gender, and gender identity, but they are different:

- **sex** (or biological sex as assigned at birth) is a label given by a doctor at birth based on anatomy, chromosomes, and hormones
- **gender** is mostly determined by culture and is assumed from the sex assigned at birth
- **gender identity** is a person's own sense of their gender whether male, female, or non-binary, which may or may not match the sex assigned at birth
- **binary gender** terms (man/woman, girl/boy) are traditionally linked to sex. However, we now recognise that some people identify with a gender different from the one assigned at birth (transgender), and others do not identify as either men or women (non-binary or genderfluid)

In this report, based on the sensitive information provided by employees on the iWork system and to match the ONS 2021 census description, male and female will be categorised under sex. We will interchangeably also use gender terms woman/women and man/men.



Workforce and local population profile

The council continues to aim for its workforce to broadly reflect the local community's demographics.

Below is a summary of the workforce analysis and the council's actions to contribute to a more inclusive and representative workforce.

Workforce composition:

- the report covers the period from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025
- the council employed 1,322 employees (excluding school staff)
- not all workforce sections have complete data due to staff not recording

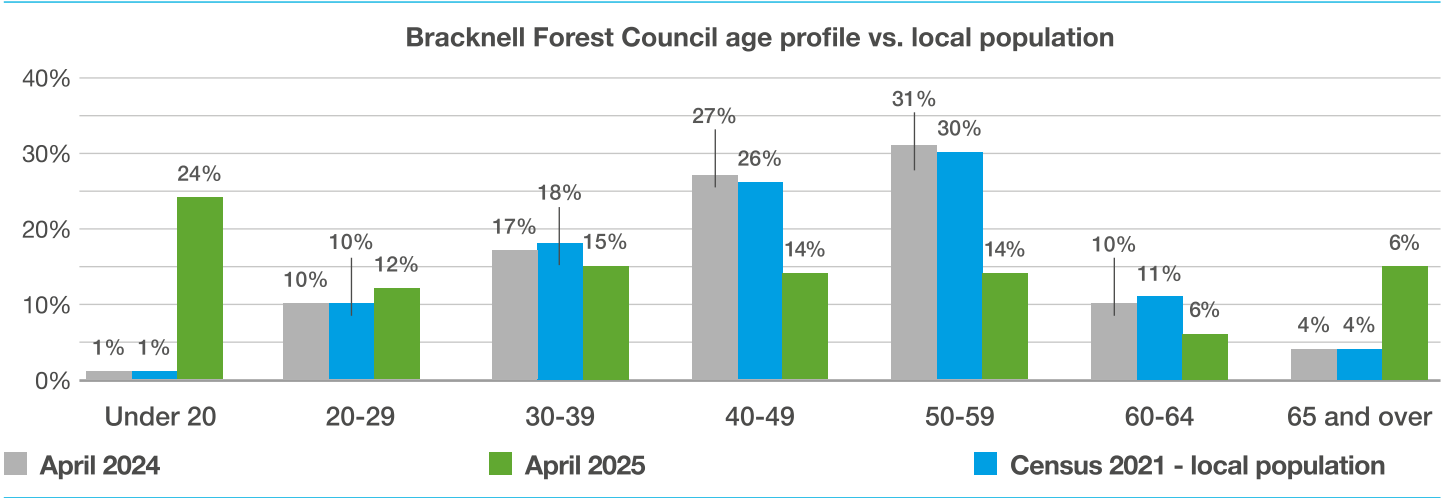


Age profile

Below chart is a summary of the age distribution of the council’s workforce from April 2024 to April 2025 compared to the local population census 2021. The average age for the council’s workforce is 46.5.

- The council’s workforce shows a stable age distribution with a slight increase in younger employees aged 30-39 and those nearing retirement age (60-64). The percentage of employees aged 20-29 has slightly increased (9.5 per cent to 9.9 per cent) but remains below the local population percentage of 12 per cent.
- The 30-39 age group has grown, indicating a higher representation within the council compared to the local population.
- The 40-49 and 50-59 age groups have seen slight decreases but still represent a significant portion of the workforce.
- The 60-64 age group has increased, while the percentage of employees aged 65 and over has slightly decreased, remaining significantly lower than the local population percentage as would be expected as this would include retired members of the community.

Overall, the workforce is predominantly composed of employees aged 30-59, with notable trends towards an increase in younger and nearing-retirement employees.



Age distribution workforce implications and actions

- **Workforce stability:** There is a slight decrease in the percentage of employees aged 40-49 and 50-59. As these age groups often hold significant institutional knowledge and experience, the reasons behind the decrease need to be understood, to ensure that stability and continuity of the workforce is not negatively impacted.
- **Younger workforce:** The increase in the percentage of employees aged 30-39 indicates a trend towards a younger workforce. This can bring fresh perspectives and new ideas to the organisation, potentially driving innovation and change. However, it may also require additional training and development to ensure these younger employees are fully equipped to take on more senior roles in the future.
- **Succession planning:** With a stable percentage of employees aged 20-29 and an increase in those aged 30-39, it is crucial for the council to focus on succession planning. This involves identifying and developing future leaders from within these younger age groups to ensure a smooth transition as older employees retire.
- **Retention strategies:** The data shows that the proportion of employees under 20 (1 per cent) and those aged 65 and over has remained constant. This suggests that the council needs to continue focusing on targeted retention strategies to keep younger employees engaged and motivated, as well as to support older employees who may wish to continue working beyond traditional retirement age.
- **Diversity and inclusion:** The slight increase in employees aged 60-64 highlights the importance of fostering an inclusive work environment that supports employees of all ages. This will include offering flexible working arrangements, promoting work-life balance, and providing opportunities for continuous learning and development.

Overall, the age distribution changes indicate a need for the council to continue to focus on workforce planning, retention, and development strategies to ensure a diverse, stable, and resilient workforce that can meet the council's future needs. The workforce retention and recruitment project includes making the employer more attractive to those early in their careers so there are some positive signs of success.



Disability profile

The Equality Act 2010 defines an individual as disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term negative effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. We are committed to including people with disabilities in the workplace. We make sure disability is not a barrier to career growth.

As a Disability Confident employer, we continue to guarantee interviews for people with disabilities who meet the essential job criteria. We also support hiring managers by giving them guidance on job descriptions and person specifications to focus on what the job requires and prevent discrimination.

The disability profile of the council's workforce from April 2024 to April 2025 shows some notable trends. The percentage of employees who have declared a disability has slightly increased from 5.5 per cent in April 2024 to 5.9 per cent in April 2025. However, this is still significantly lower than the local population percentage of 14.0 per cent to the 2021 Census with combined categories of day-to-day activities limited and a little or a lot.

Internal feedback aligns with external research indicating that this is a national issue to disclose disability status due to:

- fear of stigma or discrimination, particularly for hidden disabilities
- lack of trust in how employers will respond, with concerns about whether support or adjustments will follow disclosure
- uncertainty about legal definitions, where individuals may not realise their condition qualifies under the Equality Act 2010
- perceived irrelevance, where employees delay disclosure until their condition worsens or job demands change



The proportion of employees who have not provided their disability status has decreased from 43.8 per cent in April 2024 to 40.2 per cent in April 2025. This indicates some improvement in data collection and a greater willingness among employees to disclose their disability status.

Links to external research:

- [Scope UK](#) – employee retention report
- [Deloitte UK](#) – disability inclusion report
- [Celebrating Disability](#) – disclosure support
- [Inclusive Employers](#) – disclosure stigma

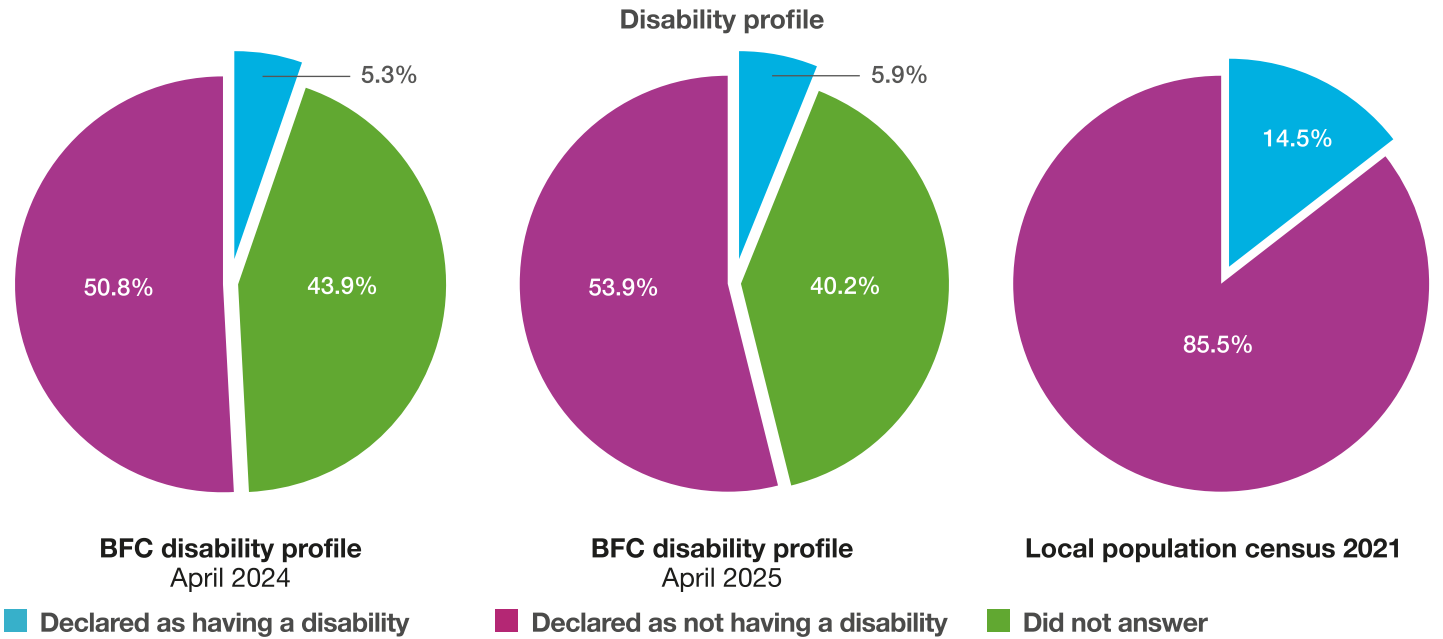
Overall trend: gradual increase in disability disclosure

Across the last five years, there has been a steady increase in the proportion of staff declaring a disability:

- **2021:** 4.6 per cent
- **2022:** 4.3 per cent
- **2023:** 4.9 per cent
- **2024:** 5.3 per cent
- **2025:** 5.9 per cent

This upward trend suggests growing confidence among staff in disclosing disability status, likely due to improved internal culture, inclusive practices, and targeted campaigns like “Check Your Data.”

Meanwhile, the percentage of employees who have declared that they do not have a disability has increased from 50.7 per cent to 53.9 per cent, which is still below the local population percentage of 85.5 per cent.



Workforce implications and actions:

- **Data collection improvement:** Improvement in data collection suggests that employees are becoming more comfortable disclosing their disability status, which is crucial for accurate reporting and support.
- **Underrepresentation of disabled employees:** Despite a slight increase in the percentage of employees who have declared a disability, from 5.3 per cent to 5.9 per cent, as recorded on iWork this figure remains significantly lower than the local population percentage 2021 Census of 14.0 per cent. Interestingly, 13 per cent of respondents in our previous Employee Experience Survey 2023 and headline analysis (at the time of writing) of our recent Staff Experience 2025 – Inclusion and Culture Survey indicated 14 per cent of respondents reported having a disability or long-term condition. This indicates that continued efforts are needed to ensure that staff formally record their disability on iWork.
- **Support and inclusion:** The data suggests that while there has been progress in encouraging employees to disclose their disability status, there is still a significant portion of the workforce whose disability status is unknown. This underscores the importance of fostering an inclusive work environment where all employees feel comfortable disclosing their disability status and receiving the necessary support.
- **Retention and recruitment:** The increase in the percentage of employees who have declared that they do not have a disability from 50.7 per cent to 53.9 per cent indicates a growing number of non-disabled employees. This trend, coupled with the underrepresentation of disabled employees, suggests a need for targeted recruitment and retention strategies to ensure a diverse and inclusive workforce.
- **Policy and practice review:** The council will continue to review its employment policies and practices to identify and address any barriers that may be preventing employees with disabilities from joining or staying with the organisation. This includes providing reasonable adjustments, promoting disability awareness, and ensuring that hiring practices are inclusive.

Overall, the data suggests that while there has been some progress in encouraging employees to disclose their disability status, there is still a significant portion of the workforce whose disability status is unknown. This highlights the need for our continued efforts to improve data collection and ensure that all employees feel comfortable disclosing their disability status, support employees with disabilities, and create an inclusive work environment that reflects the diversity of the local population.

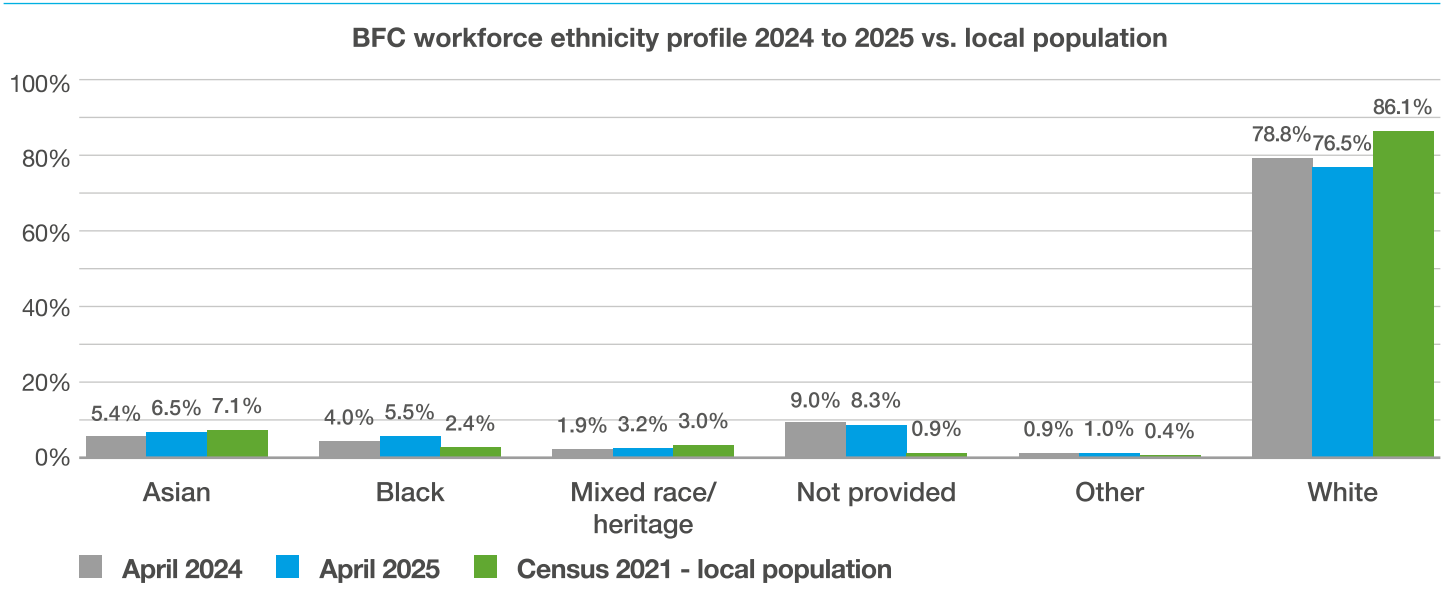


Workforce ethnic origin profile

Within this report, for comparison purposes, we use the ONS Census 2021 classification, categorising individuals as Black, Asian, mixed race/multiple heritage, other, and white. It is important to acknowledge that these ethnic groups are not single or homogenous entities and are not treated as such.

The workforce ethnicity profile for the council has shown notable changes between April 2024 and April 2025. It is important to note that 8.3 per cent of our staff have not declared their ethnic origin.

The data indicates a positive trend towards increased diversity within the organisation. The proportion of the workforce identifying their ethnic origin as Black, Asian, or from other ethnic backgrounds (excluding white) increased from 12 per cent in 2024 to 15 per cent in 2025. This figure is slightly above the local population percentage of 14 per cent.



Workforce implications and actions:

Based on the provided ethnicity dataset, there are several workforce implications for the council:

- Increased diversity:** The data indicates a positive trend towards increased diversity within the organisation. The percentage of employees identifying as Asian has risen from 5.4 per cent in April 2024 to 6.5 per cent in April 2025, and those identifying as Black have grown from 4.0 per cent to 5.5 per cent over the same period. This increase in diversity can bring a range of perspectives and experiences to the workforce, fostering innovation and creativity. This aligns with our broader efforts to create a more inclusive and diverse workplace.
- Improved data collection:** The decrease in the percentage of employees who did not provide their ethnicity from 9.0 per cent to 8.3 per cent suggests improved data collection and reporting. This improvement is crucial for accurate workforce analysis, planning and monitoring together with targeted actions to address diversity gaps. This means that it is not possible to give an accurate representation against the local population.

- **Representation compared to local population:** When compared to the Census 2021 data for the local population, the workforce shows a higher representation of Black employees (5.5 per cent vs. 2.4 per cent) and a lower representation of employees with mixed race/heritage (2.2 per cent vs. 3.1 per cent). The percentage of Asian employees in the workforce (6.5 per cent) is slightly lower than the local population (7.1 per cent), and the percentage of white employees in the workforce (76.5 per cent) is lower than the local population (86.1 per cent).
It is recognised that the 2021 Census data may have changed over the four-year period so that should be considered with this dataset.
- **Inclusive policies and practices:** The council's efforts to enhance equality, diversity, and inclusion in the workplace are continuing to be reflected in the data. For example, the slight increase in the representation of employees with mixed race/heritage and those identifying as 'other' suggests that inclusive policies and practices are starting to have a positive impact. Continued development and promotion of inclusive policies and practices that support the retention and advancement of employees from diverse ethnic backgrounds will lead to ensuring that diversity and inclusion goals are being met.
- **Targeted recruitment efforts:** The increase in the representation of various ethnic groups indicates that the council's targeted recruitment efforts are beginning to be effective. Working with local faith and community groups to raise awareness of employment opportunities within the council will continue to contribute to this positive trend.
- **Ongoing commitment to diversity:** Ongoing engagement with employees from diverse backgrounds to understand their experiences and provide support through mentorship programs, staff network focus groups, and diversity and cultural awareness training.

Overall, the data suggests that the council is making significant strides in increasing workforce diversity and improving data collection. However, there is still work to be done to continue with our efforts to promote inclusive behaviours, policies and practices, targeted recruitment, and ongoing monitoring and evaluation will be essential in achieving this goal.

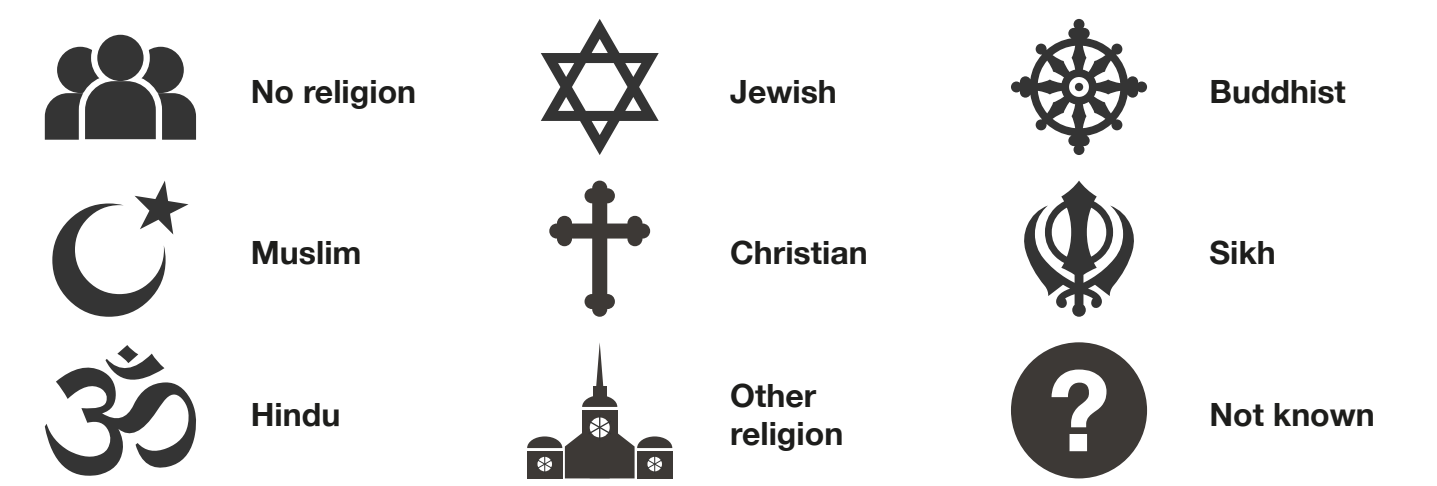


Religion and belief profile

The religious composition of the council’s workforce has shown slight changes between 2024 and 2025. The data provides insights into the diversity of religious beliefs within the organisation and how it compares to the local population and national figures.

Approximately 19.4 per cent of our employees have not declared their religion, separate from those who either do not hold a religion or prefer not to state it. This figure remains consistent with previous years, suggesting that religion is a deeply personal and private matter for most employees.

The 2021 Census data show a significant increase in the number of people in the borough stating they have ‘no religion’, rising from 30.4 per cent in 2011 to 40.4 per cent in 2021. This increase corresponds with a similar reduction in those identifying as Christian. This shift continues to be reflected in the workforce demographic.



Religion	BFC workforce 2024	BFC workforce 2025	2021 % of local population	2021 nationally (England)
Not known	19.4%	19.2%	5.6%	6.0%
No religion	31.5%	32.2%	40.4%*	36.7%*
Buddhist	0.2%	0.1%	0.8%	0.5%
Christian	41.3%	41.1%	47.5%	46.3%
Hindu	1.6%	1.8%	2.4%	1.8%
Jewish	0.2%	0.1%	0.2%	0.5%
Muslim	1.5%	1.7%	1.8%	6.7%
Sikh	1.3%	1.2%	0.8%	0.9%
Other	2.6%	2.5%	0.6%	0.6%

In April 2024, 19.4 per cent of the workforce did not declare their religion, which slightly decreased to 19.2 per cent in April 2025. The percentage of employees with no religion increased from 31.5 per cent in April 2024 to 32.2 per cent in April 2025, still below the local population percentage of 40.4 per cent but above the national average of 36.7 per cent.

Implications for workforce diversity

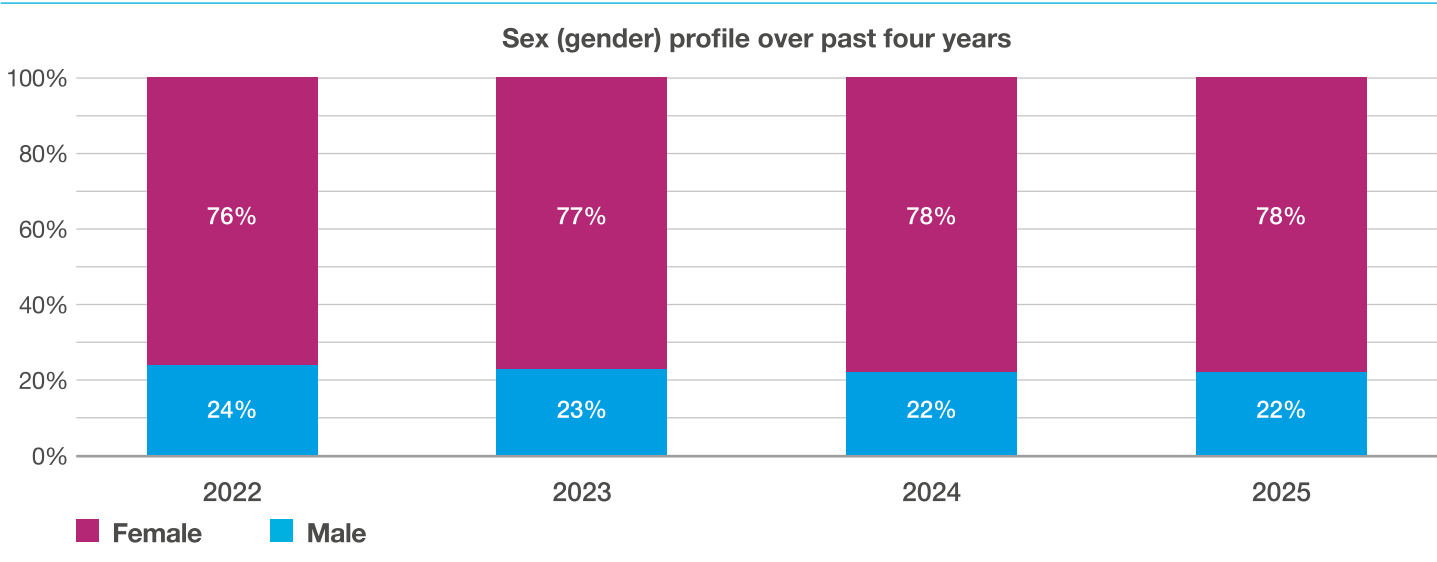
- The data suggests that while there has been progress in encouraging employees to disclose their religious beliefs, there is still a significant portion of the workforce whose religion is unknown. This underscores the importance of fostering an inclusive work environment where all employees feel comfortable disclosing their religious beliefs and receiving the necessary support.
- The slight increase in the representation of Hindu and Muslim employees indicates positive trends towards religious diversity within the workforce. However, the underrepresentation of Buddhists and the high percentage of employees with unknown religious beliefs highlight areas for improvement.



Sex (gender)

The sex (gender) composition of the council’s workforce remained stable in 2024 and 2025, with male employees constituting 22 per cent and female employees making up 78 per cent of the workforce. Males and females are roughly equal 49 per cent males, 51 per cent females of the local population in Bracknell Forest.

The consistency of the workforce suggests that the council has maintained a balanced gender ratio over the years. Female employees consistently represent around three-quarters of the workforce, aligning with historical trends in the public sector where women often outnumber men. Staff were invited to describe their gender identity if they wished, but due to the small number of responses, the figures only reflect sex (female/male) to maintain confidentiality.



Workforce implications and actions:

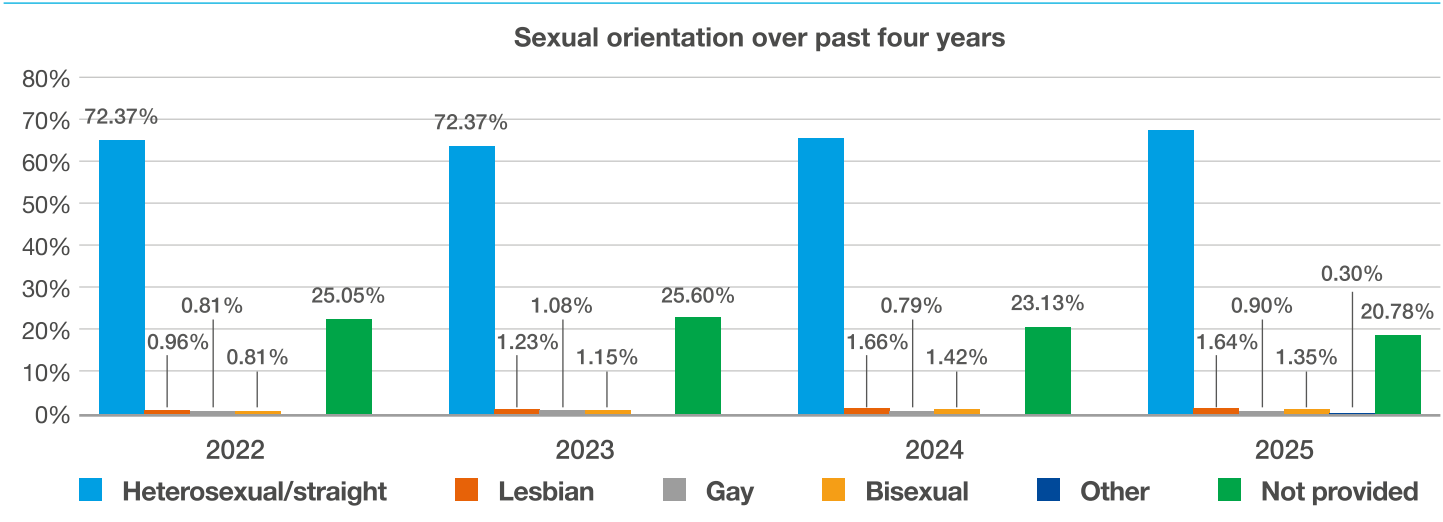
The council’s commitment to promoting gender equality and inclusiveness is evident in the stable gender composition. Efforts to support and retain our employees, as well as to encourage male participation, have contributed to maintaining this balance. Overall, the gender profile data indicates that the council continues to maintain a stable and inclusive workforce, with a consistent representation of male and female employees over the past four years.



Sexual orientation

Our vision is for everyone, regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity or sex characteristics, to be able to work in a safe, happy, and healthy environment where they can be their authentic selves without fear of discrimination.

The consistency of the workforce suggests that the council has maintained a balanced gender ratio over the years. Female employees consistently represent around three-quarters of the workforce, aligning with historical trends in the public sector where women often outnumber men. Staff were invited to describe their gender identity if they wished, but due to the small number of responses, the figures only reflect sex (female/male) to maintain confidentiality.



The sexual orientation composition of the council’s workforce has shown notable changes over the past four years. The data indicates a positive trend towards increased disclosure and diversity within the organisation.

The percentage of employees who did not provide their sexual orientation decreased significantly from 25.05 per cent in 2022 to 20.78 per cent in 2025. This improvement in data collection suggests that employees are becoming more comfortable disclosing their sexual orientation, which is crucial for accurate reporting and support.



Workforce implications and actions:

- **Promote inclusivity:** We will continue to promote inclusive policies and practices that encourage employees to disclose their sexual orientation. This includes providing a safe and supportive environment where employees feel comfortable sharing their personal information.
- **Targeted recruitment efforts:** Development of targeted recruitment strategies to attract a diverse pool of applicants, including those from underrepresented sexual orientation groups. Collaborating with LGBTQIA+ organisations and community groups can help raise awareness of employment opportunities within the council.
- **Ongoing training and development:** Implement ongoing training and development programs to educate employees about the importance of sexual orientation, diversity, and inclusion. This will help create a more inclusive workplace where all employees feel valued and respected.
- **Support LGBTQIA+ staff network:** Strengthen the LGBTQIA+ staff network to provide support and resources for employees. This can include mentorship programs, employee resource groups, and diversity training.
- **Celebrate diversity:** Continue to celebrate Pride month with staff, communities, and partners to promote awareness and inclusivity.



Workforce retention and recruitment

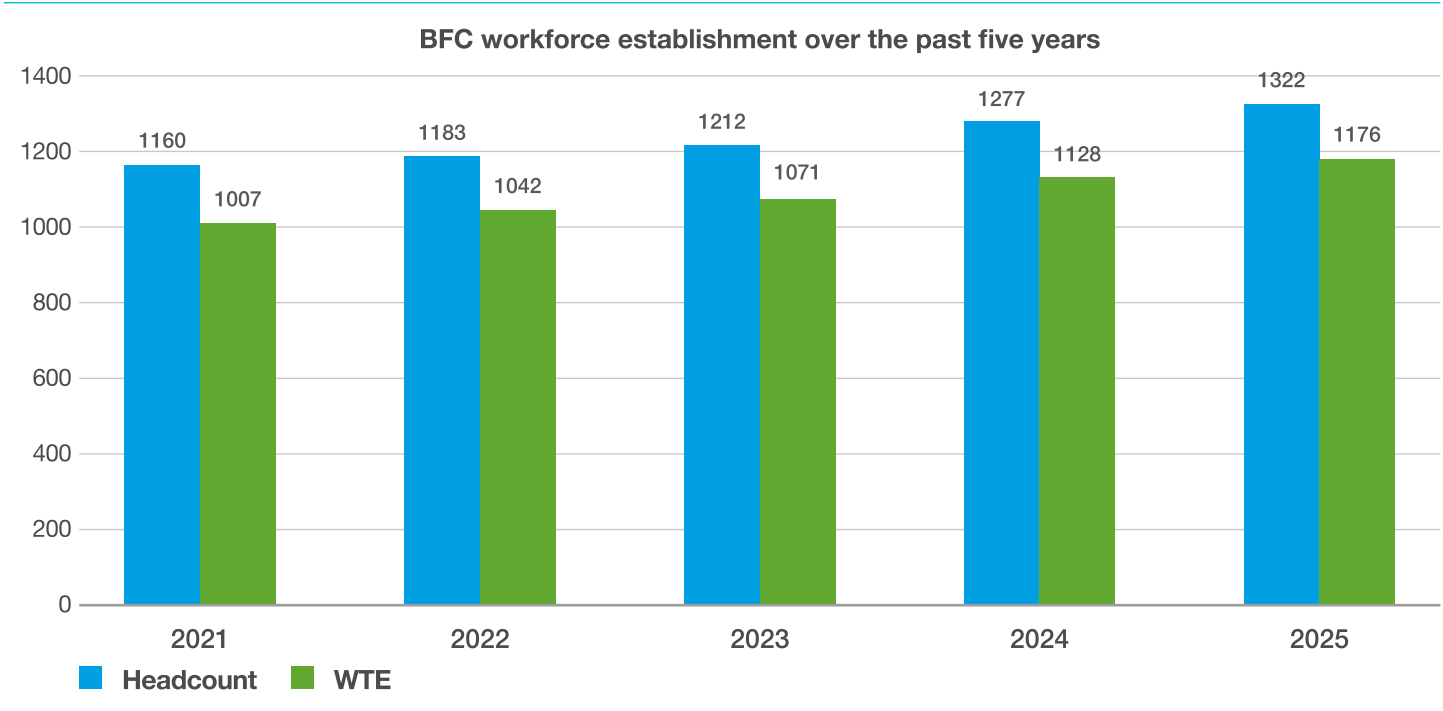
The following report section will cover permanent and temporary staff employed by the council excluding schools (1322 employees), with a focus on:

- Recruitment activity: New starters between 1st April 24 and 31st March 25
- Turnover activity: Leavers between 1st April 24 and 31st March 25
- Workforce pay analysis: Gender equality pay gap
- Workforce pay analysis: Ethnicity equality pay gap

Our ambition is to be an employer of choice, ensuring all staff thrive, feel valued, and respected. We aim to make the council a place where people are inspired to join and excited to be part of the ‘one council,’ with access to the best support, tools, opportunities, and development. We are committed to fostering a diverse workforce that grows, develops, thrives, and remains resilient.

The council faces challenges similar to the rest of the UK, with high demand for social care and difficulties in supply and retention. This year, we have decided to focus our attention on retaining our staff whilst welcoming new employees who bring the benefit of new insights and ideas.

Keeping and hiring talented employees is crucial for our financial health, retaining knowledge and experience, and boosting employee morale and productivity. High turnover rates lead to inflated costs for hiring, training, and onboarding new staff. A stable workforce improves workplace culture, boosts morale, and attracts talent. By focusing on these areas, we aim to create a more stable and engaged workforce, benefiting our organisation in the long run.



Workforce establishment

Over the past five years, the council has experienced steady growth in its workforce. The headcount and whole-time equivalent (WTE) figures indicate a consistent increase in the number of employees, reflecting the council’s commitment to expanding its workforce to meet the growing demands of its services.

In 2021, the council employed 1,160 staff members, with a WTE of 1,007. This number increased to 1,183 employees and a WTE of 1,042 in 2022. The upward trend continued in 2023, with the headcount rising to 1,212 and the WTE reaching 1,071. By 2024, the workforce had grown to 1,277 employees, with a WTE of 1,128. In 2025, the council employed 1,322 staff members, with a WTE of 1,176.

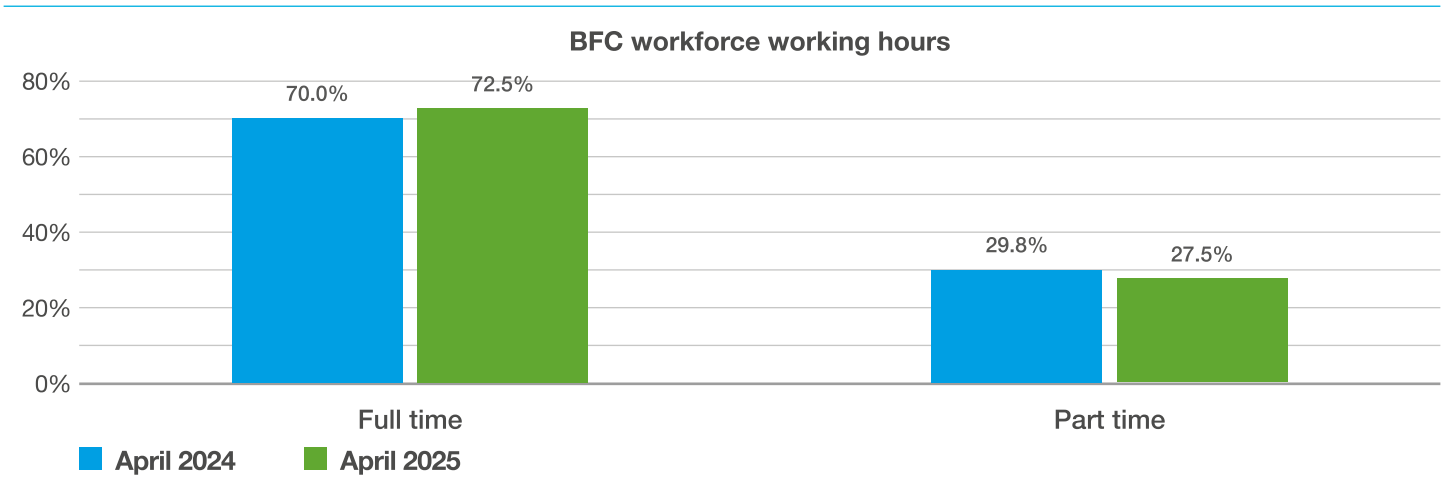
This steady increase in workforce numbers highlights the council’s efforts to enhance its capacity and capability to deliver services effectively. The growth in headcount and WTE figures suggest that the council is continuing in its efforts to retain and attract employees, contributing to a more stable and resilient workforce.

Overall, the data indicates a positive trend in workforce composition, with consistent growth over the past five years. This expansion reflects the council’s ongoing commitment to meeting the needs of its community and ensuring that it has the necessary resources to provide high-quality services.

Workforce working patterns

The working patterns of the council’s workforce have shown slight changes between April 2024 and April 2025. The data indicates a shift towards an increase in full-time employment and a corresponding decrease in part-time employment.

In April 2024, 70.0 per cent of the workforce were employed on a full-time basis. This figure has risen to 72.5 per cent in April 2025, reflecting a notable increase in full-time employment. Conversely, the percentage of employees working part-time has decreased from 29.8 per cent in April 2024 to 27.5 per cent in April 2025.



This shift towards full-time employment suggests that the council is focusing on enhancing its capacity to deliver services effectively by increasing the number of full-time employees. The increase in full-time employment may also indicate a growing demand for more comprehensive roles that require full-time commitment. Additionally, the increased use of flexible working patterns, such as a 9-day fortnight, may also contribute to the rising demand for full-time roles.

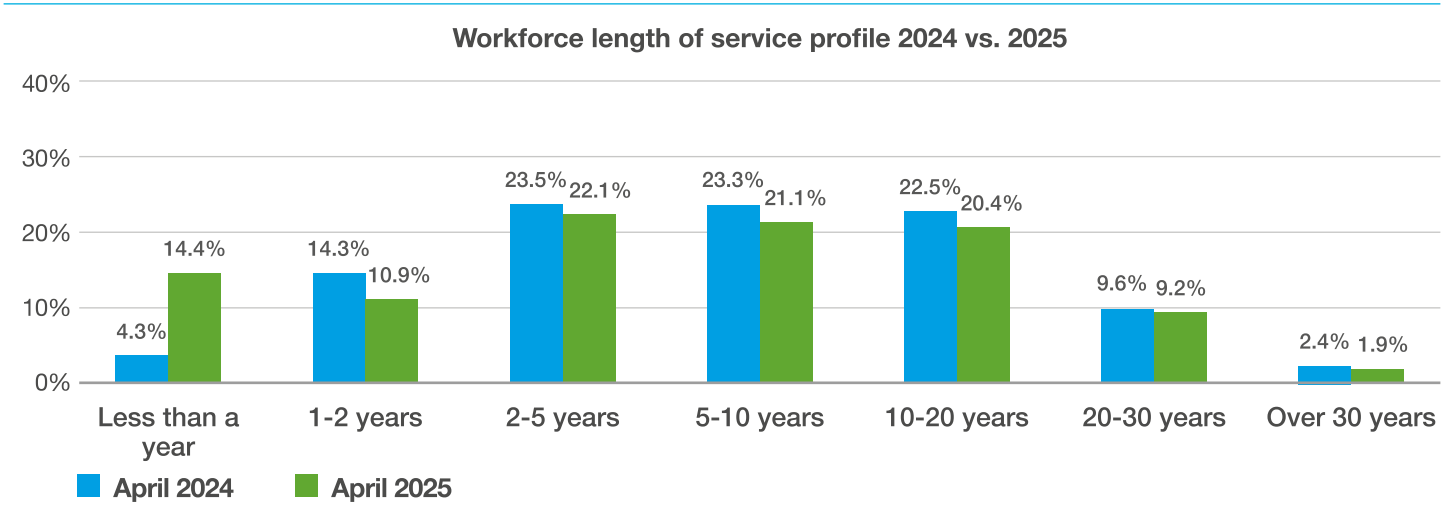
The decrease in part-time employment could be attributed to several factors, including changes in workforce needs, organisational restructuring, or a strategic decision to prioritise full-time roles. It is essential for us to as a council to continue monitoring these trends to ensure that the workforce remains flexible and responsive to the needs of our community.

Overall, the data highlights the council's ongoing efforts to adapt its workforce composition to meet the evolving demands of its services. The increase in full-time employment and the corresponding decrease in part-time employment requires reflection of our strategic approach to workforce planning and development.



Workforce retention

In summary, the data highlights a dynamic workforce with a significant influx of new employees and a stable core of mid-tenure employees. The slight decreases in longer service categories suggest a need for continued focus on retention strategies to ensure that experienced employees remain with the council. Additionally, the increase in new employees presents an opportunity to integrate fresh perspectives and ideas into the organisation, contributing to its growth and development.



Workforce implications and actions

Increased recruitment: The significant increase in employees with less than a year of service suggests successful recruitment efforts. However, it also indicates a need for effective onboarding and integration processes to ensure new employees are well-supported and can quickly become productive members of the workforce.

Overall, the data highlights a dynamic workforce with a significant influx of new employees and a stable core of mid-tenure employees. The slight decreases in longer service categories suggest a need for continued focus on retention strategies to ensure that experienced employees remain with the council. Additionally, the increase in new employees presents an opportunity to integrate fresh perspectives and ideas into the organisation, contributing to its growth and development.



Workforce turnover

Monitoring turnover rates within an organisation is essential for its overall health and success. Turnover rates give valuable insights into various aspects of the workforce, such as employee satisfaction, organisational culture, and financial stability. By tracking these rates closely, we can spot patterns and trends that may reveal underlying issues, like low employee morale or poor management practices.

Understanding turnover rates helps in creating strategies to improve employee retention. This leads to a more stable and experienced workforce, which is crucial for maintaining high productivity and ensuring services continue smoothly. Additionally, reducing turnover can significantly lower the costs associated with recruiting, hiring, and training new employees, thus improving the council’s financial health.

Monitoring turnover rates also allows us to plan better for the future. By analysing turnover data, where we can anticipate staffing needs, allocate resources more efficiently, and take proactive measures to address potential challenges. This strategic approach not only enhances workforce planning but also strengthens the BFC’s ability to retain and attract top talent.

In 2024, a total of 155 employees left the organisation, while in 2025, this number slightly increased to 160. The notable reasons for leaving in 2025:

- 1. Personal reasons/resignations:** In 2025, the reasons for leaving the organisation have shown some notable shifts compared to the previous year. The most significant change is observed where employees are leaving due to personal reasons or voluntary resignations has decreased from 53 per cent in 2024 to 45 per cent in 2025. This decline in this category may be due to better understanding of the reasons behind leaving, and possible indication of improved job satisfaction.
- 2. End of fixed-term contract:** This reason accounted for 10 per cent of departures in 2025, up from 5 per cent in 2024. The increase may be attributed to the completion of specific projects or funding cycles.
- 3. Retirement:** Retirement was the fourth most common reason for leaving, with 11 per cent of employees retiring in 2025, up from 8 per cent in 2024. This increase may reflect an aging workforce reaching retirement age.
- 4. Private company:** The fifth leading reason for leaving was moving to a private company, which accounted for 9 per cent of departures in 2025, up from 5 per cent in 2024. This may suggest a growing trend of employees moving to the private sector, possibly attracted by better compensation or career opportunities.

Reason for leaving	2024 percentage	2025 percentage
Personal reasons/resignations	53%	45%
End of fixed- term contract	5%	10%
Retirement	8%	11%
Private company	5%	9%

Overall, the data suggests a dynamic shift in the reasons for employee departures, with a notable decrease in personal resignations and increases in fixed-term contract completions, retirements, and transitions to private companies. These trends continue to provide valuable insights to address retention strategies and workforce planning.

Workforce diversity turnover

In the years 2024 and 2025, the council experienced a notable shift in voluntary turnover rates. In 2024, the voluntary turnover rate stood at 10.6 per cent, indicating that a significant portion of employees chose to leave the council on their own accord. However, in 2025, this rate decreased to 8.9 per cent, reflecting a positive trend towards improved employee retention. This reduction in voluntary turnover suggests that the council's efforts to enhance employee satisfaction, engagement, and overall work environment may be yielding positive results. Continued focus on these areas continues to be crucial in maintaining and further improving retention rates in the future.

Sex/gender turnover

In 2024, the turnover rate for male employees was significantly higher at 16.1 per cent compared to 8.7 per cent in 2025. Female employees had a turnover rate of 11.4 per cent in 2024, which slightly decreased to 8.8 per cent in 2025. This indicates a notable reduction in turnover for both genders, with males experiencing a more substantial decrease.

Ethnicity turnover

The turnover rates for different ethnic groups showed significant changes between the two years. The turnover rate for Asian employees decreased dramatically from 16.4 per cent in 2024 to 2.3 per cent in 2025. Black employees also saw a significant decrease in turnover, from 25.0 per cent to 9.7 per cent. Mixed race/heritage ethnicity employees experienced a slight increase in turnover from 8.3 per cent to 10.0 per cent, while white employees saw a decrease from 11.1 per cent to 9.1 per cent. The turnover rate for employees who did not declare their ethnicity also decreased from 18.3 per cent to 9.7 per cent.

Black, Asian, and minority ethnic (BAME)

The turnover rate for employees from Black, Asian and other minority ethnic backgrounds (BAME) employees decreased significantly from 16.7 per cent in 2024 to 6.0 per cent in 2025.

Disabled turnover

For employees with disabilities, the turnover rate increased from 7.7 per cent in 2024 to 14.8 per cent in 2025. In contrast, the turnover rate for non-disabled employees decreased from 13.6 per cent to 7.6 per cent. Employees who did not declare their disability status saw a slight decrease in turnover from 11.6 per cent to 9.2 per cent.

Age band turnover

The turnover rates across different age bands showed notable changes. The turnover rate for employees under 19 years old decreased dramatically from 78.4 per cent in 2024 to 20.0 per cent in 2025. The 20-29 age group experienced a slight decrease from 20.20 per cent to 16.9 per cent. The turnover rates for the 30-39 and 40-49 age groups decreased to 7.9 per cent and 6.2 per cent, respectively. The 50-59 age group saw a slight decrease to 6.0 per cent, while the 60-64 age group experienced a decrease to 6.9 per cent. The turnover rate for employees aged 65 and over increased from 24.1 per cent to 30.8 per cent.

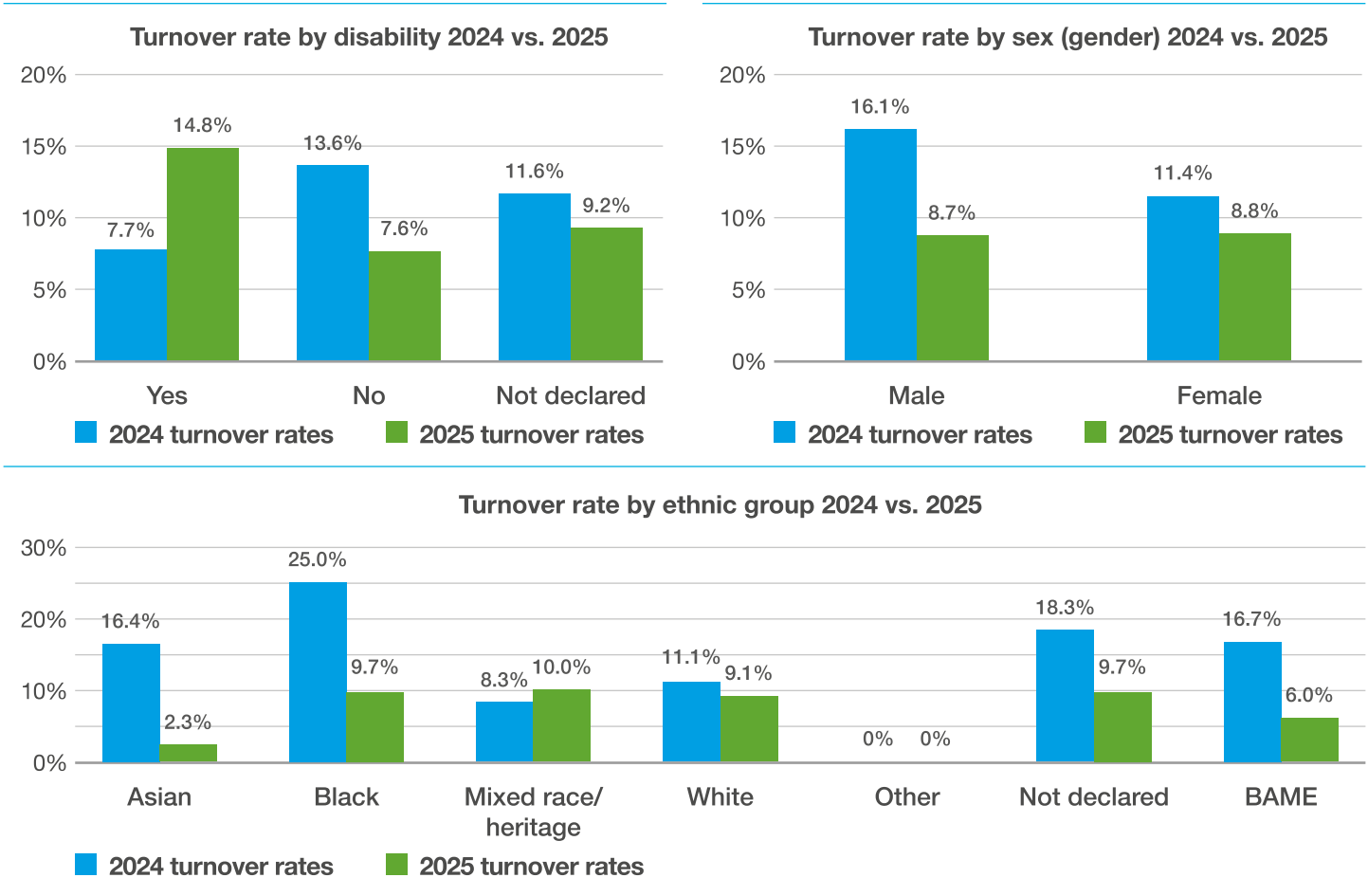
Religion turnover

The turnover rates for different religious groups showed significant changes. The turnover rate for Buddhists remained at 0 per cent for both years. Christians saw a decrease from 11.50 per cent in 2024 to 8.9 per cent in 2025, while Hindus experienced a significant decrease from 22.20 per cent to 4.0 per cent. The turnover rate for Muslims decreased dramatically from 42.1 per cent to 0.0 per cent. Employees with no religion saw a decrease from 11.40 per cent to 8.7 per cent, and those who did not declare their religion saw a decrease from 14.20 per cent to 10.4 per cent.

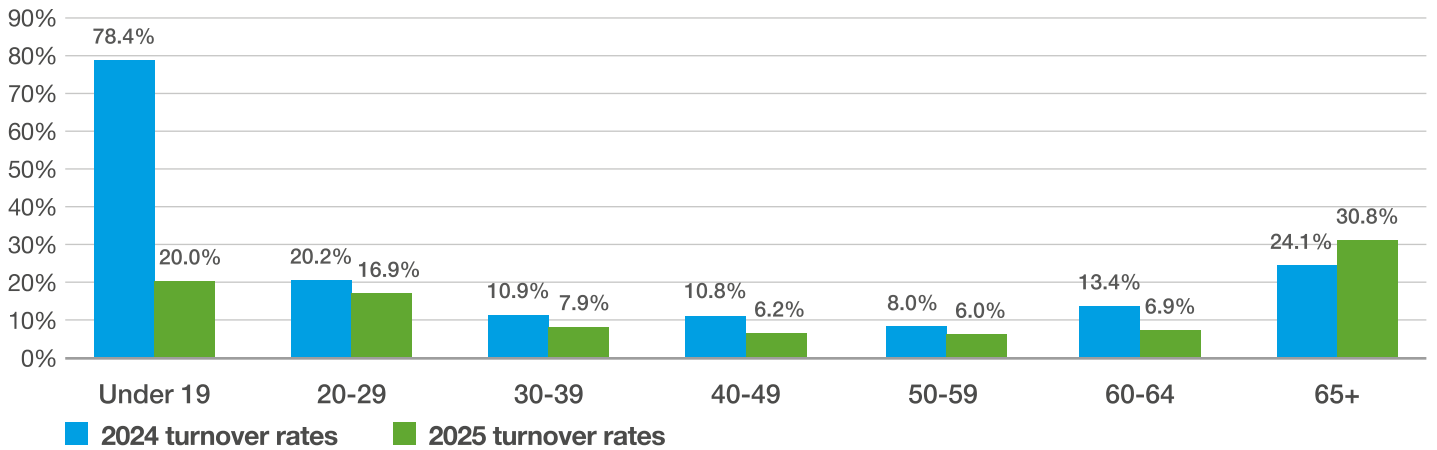
Sexual orientation turnover

The turnover rates for different sexual orientations showed significant changes. The turnover rate for heterosexual employees decreased from 11.7 per cent in 2024 to 8.0 per cent in 2025. Employees who identify as gay saw a significant decrease from 28.6 per cent to 8.3 per cent, while the turnover rate for lesbian employees increased from 0 per cent to 4.5 per cent. Bisexual employees experienced an increase in turnover from 22.20 per cent to 27.8 per cent. Employees who did not declare their sexual orientation saw a decrease from 13.9 per cent to 10.6 per cent.

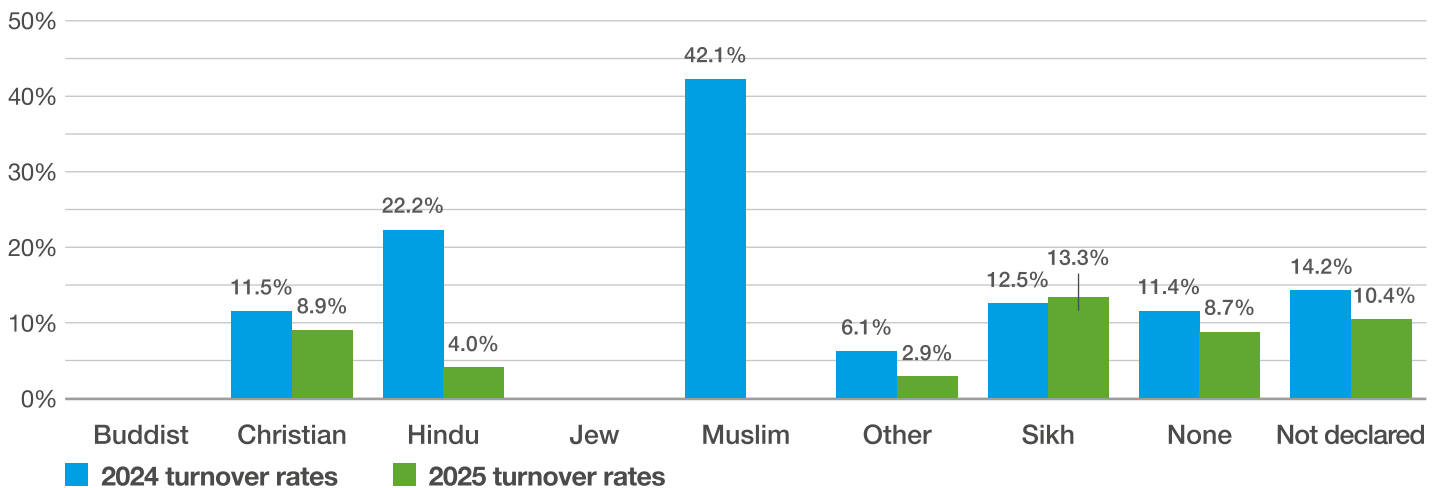
These changes in turnover rates across various categories highlight the need to understand the underlying causes and develop targeted strategies to improve employee retention and well-being.



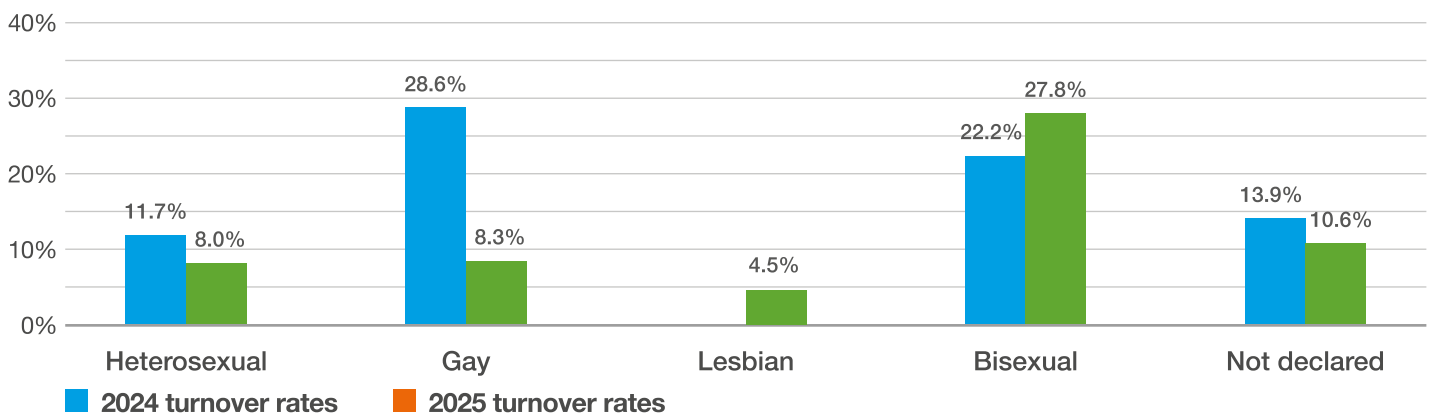
Turnover rate by age 2024 vs. 2025



Turnover rate by religion 2024 vs. 2025



Turnover rate by sexual orientation 2024 vs. 2025



Recruitment – starters

Monitoring turnover rates within an organisation is essential for its overall health and success. Turnover rates give valuable insights into various aspects of the workforce, such as employee satisfaction, organisational culture, and financial stability. By tracking these rates closely, we can spot patterns and trends that may reveal underlying issues, like low employee morale or poor management practices.

Applications, shortlisting, and starters

From 2024 to 2025:

- disabled applicants rose by 3.9 per cent (from 307 to 319), while starters increased by 63.6 per cent (from 11 to 18), indicating improved conversion rates
- shortlisting for disabled applicants dropped by 18 per cent, suggesting a potential area for review in the recruitment pipeline

Compared to earlier years, the 2025 data show a stronger alignment between declared disability in staff establishment figures and recruitment outcomes, though the shortlisting dip is a new concern.

Continuing recruitment disability workforce actions:

1. Review and refine selection criteria

Ensure that job descriptions and person specifications are inclusive and do not unintentionally disadvantage disabled applicants. This includes:

- removing unnecessary physical requirements unless essential
- using plain language and avoiding jargon
- ensuring essential criteria are clearly distinguished from desirable ones

2. Inclusive recruitment training

Provide targeted training for hiring managers on:

- recognising and mitigating unconscious bias
- understanding reasonable adjustments during the recruitment process
- applying inclusive shortlisting practices consistently

3. Targeted outreach and support

- continue and expand targeted recruitment campaigns that have already shown success in attracting disabled applicants
- Partner with disability-focused employment services and networks to reach a broader talent pool

4. Data transparency and monitoring

- regularly monitor shortlisting rates by disability status to identify patterns or disparities
- use this data to inform adjustments in recruitment practices and to hold teams accountable for inclusive outcomes

5. Improve disability disclosure confidence

- foster a culture of openness and trust to encourage applicants to disclose disabilities
- communicate clearly how disclosed information will be used to support applicants, not disadvantage them

6. Accessible application processes

- ensure all recruitment platforms and materials are fully accessible (for example, screen reader compatible, adjustable font sizes)
- offer alternative formats and application methods where needed

7. Reasonable adjustments at shortlisting stage

- proactively offer reasonable adjustments during the shortlisting and interview stages
- include a clear statement in job adverts encouraging applicants to request adjustments

The ethnicity dataset for the council reveals several notable trends between 2024 and 2025. The data provides insights into the applications, shortlisting, and starters for various ethnic groups, highlighting changes in diversity and representation within the council's workforce.

Applications:

- **Asian:** The number of applications from Asian candidates increased slightly from 980 in 2024 to 1011 in 2025, representing a 3.2 per cent increase.
- **Black:** Applications from Black candidates decreased from 894 in 2024 to 725 in 2025, showing a 18.9 per cent decrease.
- **Mixed race/heritage:** Applications from mixed race/heritage ethnicity candidates remained relatively stable, with a slight decrease from 147 in 2024 to 144 in 2025.
- **White:** Applications from white candidates remained almost unchanged, with a slight decrease from 2309 in 2024 to 2308 in 2025.
- **Other:** Applications from candidates of 'other' ethnicities decreased slightly from 45 in 2024 to 44 in 2025.
- **Not provided:** Applications where ethnicity was not provided increased from 282 in 2024 to 302 in 2025, representing a 7.1 per cent increase.

Shortlisting:

- **Asian:** The number of Asian candidates shortlisted decreased significantly from 263 in 2024 to 196 in 2025, showing a 25.5 per cent decrease.
- **Black:** Shortlisting for Black candidates decreased slightly from 184 in 2024 to 173 in 2025, representing a 6.0 per cent decrease.
- **Mixed race/heritage:** Shortlisting for mixed race/heritage ethnicity candidates decreased from 44 in 2024 to 39 in 2025, showing an 11.4 per cent decrease.
- **White:** Shortlisting for white candidates decreased from 823 in 2024 to 683 in 2025, representing a 17.0 per cent decrease.
- **Other:** Shortlisting for candidates of 'other' ethnicities decreased from 15 in 2024 to 10 in 2025, showing a 33.3 per cent decrease.
- **Not provided:** Shortlisting where ethnicity was not provided increased from 75 in 2024 to 84 in 2025, representing a 12.0 per cent increase.

Starters:

- **Asian:** The number of Asian starters increased significantly from 15 in 2024 to 24 in 2025, showing a 60.0 per cent increase.
- **Black:** Starters from Black candidates increased from 17 in 2024 to 32 in 2025, representing an 88.2 per cent increase.
- **Mixed race/heritage:** Starters from mixed race/heritage ethnicity candidates increased from 7 in 2024 to 8 in 2025, showing a 14.3 per cent increase.
- **White:** Starters from white candidates decreased from 146 in 2024 to 133 in 2025, representing an 8.9 per cent decrease.
- **Other:** Starters from candidates of 'other' ethnicities decreased from 2 in 2024 to 1 in 2025, showing a 50.0 per cent decrease.
- **Not provided:** Starters where ethnicity was not provided decreased significantly from 15 in 2024 to 8 in 2025, representing a 46.7 per cent decrease.

Overall trends:

- the total number of applications decreased slightly from 4657 in 2024 to 4534 in 2025
- the total number of shortlisted candidates decreased from 1404 in 2024 to 1185 in 2025
- the total number of net starters in post increased from 202 in 2024 to 206 in 2025

BAME (Black, Asian, and minority ethnic):

- the percentage of BAME applications decreased from 46.3 per cent in 2024 to 44.4 per cent in 2025
- the percentage of BAME shortlisted candidates decreased from 38.2 per cent in 2024 to 37.0 per cent in 2025
- the percentage of BAME starters increased significantly from 22.3 per cent in 2024 to 32.5 per cent in 2025

These trends indicate a positive shift towards increased diversity among starters, particularly for Asian and Black candidates. However, there is a notable decrease in shortlisting across most ethnic groups, which may require further investigation and targeted interventions to ensure equitable representation throughout the recruitment process.



Workforce grade and pay gap reporting

Grade group distribution

The workforce is categorised into several grade groups and salary bands, with the following distribution:

- **Admin grade (BG H-K: £23,656 to £34,314):** This group constitutes the largest portion of the workforce at 40 per cent.
- **Officer grade (BG G-F: £35,235 to £45,718):** Comprising 33 per cent of the workforce, this group is essential for executing day-to-day operations.
- **Middle management (BG D-E: £46,731 to £58,139):** Representing 16 per cent of the workforce, this group plays a crucial role in bridging the gap between senior management and operational staff.
- **Senior management (BG A-C and Sen salaries: £59,197 to £78,741 and above):** This group, responsible for strategic decision-making, makes up 9 per cent of the workforce.
- **Other*:** This category includes 2 per cent of the workforce. (This category includes other miscellaneous grades who are not within the standard BFC pay-scales).

Grade Distribution	% Share
Admin graded (BG H-K) (£23,656 to £34,314)	40%
Officer graded (BG G-F) (£35,235 to £45,718)	33%
Middle management (BG D-E) (£46,731 to £58,139)	16%
Senior management (BG A-C and Sen salaries) (59,197 to £78,741 and above)	9%
Other miscellaneous grades	2%

Below is a comprehensive analysis of the grade groups providing valuable insights into the workforce's composition, highlighting diversity in age, ethnicity, disability, religion, sexual orientation, and sex (gender). This information is crucial for understanding the current state of the workforce and identifying areas for improvement in diversity and inclusion initiatives.

Pay gap reporting

What is the gender pay gap?

In 2017, the government mandated gender pay gap reporting for organisations with 250 or more employees. This report highlights the average earnings difference between men and women, which is influenced more by the types of industries and jobs available to women than by pay practices.

Organisations must publish statistics on:

- the difference in mean and median pay rates between male and female employees
- the difference in mean and median bonus payments between male and female employees
- the proportion of male and female employees who received bonus pay in the twelve months preceding the snapshot date. The proportion of employees in each quartile of the organisation's pay distribution

Note: We do not pay bonuses to staff. We do, however, have other payment elements that include retention payments, honoraria payments, merit awards and golden hellos.

The difference between the mean (average) and median (mid-point) pay gap

When talking about the gender pay gap, it is best to talk about the median figure rather than the mean. The means are calculated by adding up all the wages of employees and dividing that figure by the number of employees. This means the final figure can be skewed by a small number of highly paid individuals.

The median is the number that falls in the middle of a range when everyone's wages are lined up from smallest to largest and is more representative when there is a lot of variation in pay. It is preferred to the mean (simple average) as a better measure of pay of the 'typical' employee; otherwise, results may be affected by a small number of people on very high levels of pay.

Pay quartiles are calculated by listing all pay rates in order and dividing them into four equal sections, each containing the same number of individuals.

Gender pay gap

This gender analysis highlights the trends and progress in closing the gender pay gap over the past five years, from 2021 to 2025 for all non-school staff. The gender pay gap is measured by the difference in mean and median average rates between men and women.

The analysis of the gender pay gap from 2021 to 2025 demonstrates a positive trend towards closing the gap between men and women in both mean and median average rate, with a reduction of 5.39 percentage points over the five-year period. While there has been significant progress, particularly in the mean average rate, continuous efforts are necessary to maintain and further this progress. Addressing the factors contributing to the gender pay gap will be crucial in achieving gender pay equity in the future.

Gender pay gap	Difference between men and women	
	Mean (average) rate	Median (mid-point) rate
2021	15.9%	11.7%
2022	13.5%	11.7%
2023	11.0%	10.0%
2024	10.6%	8.4%
2025	10.5%	10.3%

Analysis of median (mid-point) rate

The median average rate difference also reflects a positive trend:

- **2021:** the median average rate difference was 11.7 per cent
- **2022:** the gap remained the same at 11.7 per cent
- **2023:** the gap decreased to 10.0 per cent
- **2024:** the median average rate difference further reduced to 8.4 per cent
- **2025:** the gap slightly increased to 10.3 per cent

Despite a slight increase in 2025, the overall trend shows a reduction in the median (mid-point) rate difference by 1.37 percentage points over the five-year period.

Gender bonus gap

The bonus pay gap is measured by the difference in mean and median rates between men and women. This analysis aims to highlight trends and progress in closing the bonus pay gap.

Analysis of mean (average) rate

The mean average rate difference between men and women has shown significant fluctuations over the three-year period:

- **2023:** the mean average rate difference was 38.3 per cent
- **2024:** the gap reduced to 33.1 per cent
- **2025:** the gap reduced further to 27.7 per cent

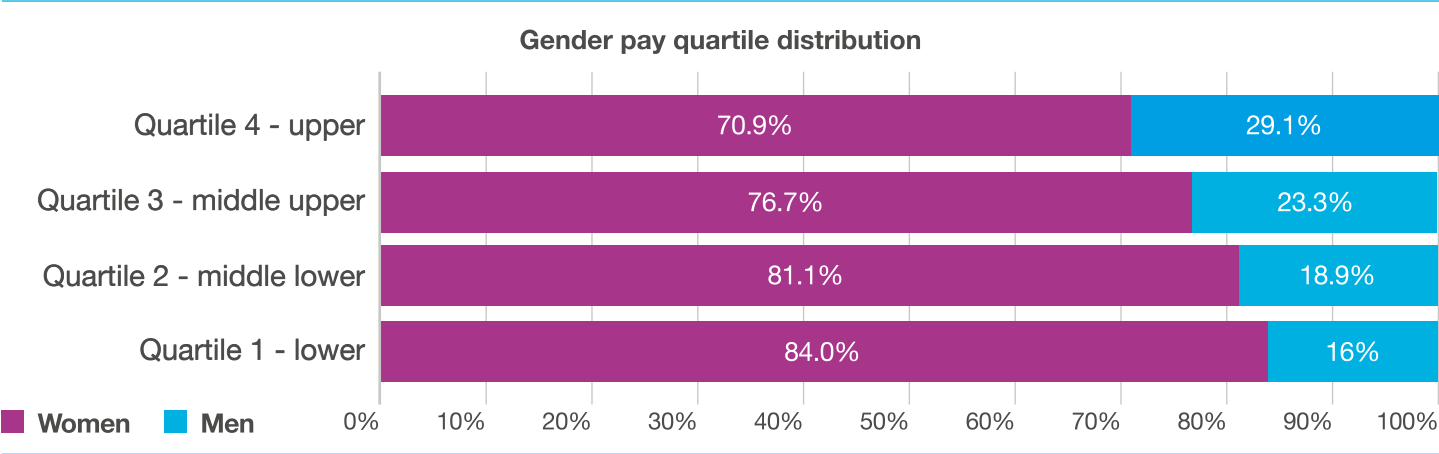
Over the past three years, the mean average rate difference between men and women has exhibited notable fluctuations. In 2023, the mean average rate difference stood at 38.3 per cent, indicating a significant disparity. However, in 2024, there was a positive shift as the gap reduced to 33.1 per cent, suggesting some progress towards gender pay equality. This trend continued to 2025, with the gap reducing further to 27.7 per cent. This consistent reduction highlights ongoing efforts to address gender pay disparities.

The table below shows the figures for the past three years:

Gender bonus pay gap (includes: retention payments, honoraria payments, merit awards and golden hellos)	Difference between men and women	
	Mean (average) rate	Median (mid-point) rate
2023	38.3%	40.1%
2024	33.1%	2.4%
2025	27.7%	1.3%

Gender pay quartile distribution

The chart analysis below of the gender pay quartile distribution highlights a clear trend of women being predominantly represented in lower-paying roles, with their representation gradually decreasing as we move up the pay scale. Conversely, the representation of men increases in higher-paying roles, although women still maintain a majority in all quartiles. This data underscores the need for continued targeted initiatives to address gender imbalances and promote equal opportunities for career advancement across all pay levels.



Ethnicity pay gap

As part of our action plan over the past four years, we have recalculated our ethnicity pay gap. We have used the same assumptions as last year to ensure a consistent comparison.

It is important to note that ethnicity pay gap reporting is not a specified requirement under the Equality Act 2010, unlike gender pay gap reporting. However, the government now plans to extend this obligation to ethnicity and disability pay gaps through the proposed [Equality \(Race and Disability\) Bill](#). A consultation has been launched to determine the framework for implementation, running until 10th June 2025 at the time of running the report.

Reporting ethnicity gaps using white/Black, Asian, and minority ethnic (BAME) binary data may not be helpful given the multiple categories of ethnicity. The benefits of analysing ethnic pay disparities are considered to be worth the effort where the employee pool is sufficiently large for the data to be valuable.

The ethnicity pay gap should not be confused with unequal pay. The ethnicity pay gap represents the difference between the average pay of our (BAME) employees and our white employees within the organisation.

Among those who have declared their ethnicity, 77 per cent are from a white ethnic background, while 15 per cent are from an ethnic minority background.

The table below provides an overview of the ethnicity pay gap in the UK from 2022 to 2025. The ethnicity pay gap is measured as the difference in mean (average) and median (mid-point) rates between employees from minority ethnic backgrounds and those from white ethnic backgrounds. A negative percentage indicates that minority ethnic employees are paid more on average compared to their white counterparts.

Ethnicity pay gap	Difference between employees from BAME backgrounds and white ethnicity backgrounds	
	Mean (average) rate	Median (mid-point) rate
2022	-3.2%	-10.6%
2023	-2.7%	-3.3%
2024	-5.6%	-8.9%
2025	-3.0%	-5.2%

Nationally, the ethnicity pay gap still tends to favour white employees, especially when unadjusted. Whilst internally, the council is consistently to be ahead of national trends, with minority ethnic employees consistently earning more on average. This suggests that staff from minority ethnic backgrounds although proportionally small in numbers are on average occupying more senior pay roles.

The data shows fluctuations in the ethnicity pay gap over the years. In 2022, minority ethnic employees earned 3.20 per cent more on average, with a median difference of 10.6 per cent. The gap narrowed in 2023, suggesting a move toward parity, but widened again in 2024. By 2025, the gap had reduced once more, though minority ethnic employees continued to earn more on both mean and median measures.

The analysis of the ethnicity bonus pay gap which includes elements of retention payments, honoraria payments, merit awards and golden hellos payments, from 2022 to 2025 reveals a dynamic landscape with significant fluctuations in both mean and median rates. While the salary analysis above shows that BFC diverges from national trends in terms of basic earnings, the opposite is true for bonus payments.

The analysis below of the broad ethnicity group bonus pay gap reveals significant disparities in bonus pay between employees from minority ethnic backgrounds compared to employees from white ethnic backgrounds. It is, however, encouraging to observe a narrowing of the median (mid-point) bonus pay gap over the past year, suggesting that our workforce recruitment and retention strategies may be having a positive impact. Understanding the underlying factors driving these changes is crucial for developing effective strategies to address and mitigate the ethnicity bonus pay gap.

Ethnicity bonus pay gap (includes: retention payments, honoraria payments, merit awards and golden hellos)	Difference between employees from BAME backgrounds and white ethnicity backgrounds	
	Mean (average) rate	Median (mid-point) rate
2022	10.1%	12.4%
2023	18.6%	12.8%
2024	7.1%	8.2%
2025	15.3%	5.2%

We acknowledge that no ethnic group is homogeneous. This year, to gain a deeper understanding and ensure continued clarity of our data, we have categorised the staff into key broad ethnic groups.

Broad ethnicity groups pay gap	Difference between employees from minority ethnic backgrounds and white ethnicity backgrounds	
	Mean (average) rate	Median (mid-point) rate
Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME)	-3.0%	-5.2%
Asian	-5.7%	-5.2%
Black	-6.5%	-13.2%
Mixed race/heritage	9.2%	-0.3%
Other	9.9%	-0.3%

Broad ethnicity groups pay gap (includes: retention payments, honoraria payments, merit awards and golden hellos)	Difference between employees from minority ethnic backgrounds and white ethnicity backgrounds	
	Mean (average) rate	Median (mid-point) rate
Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME)	15.3%	5.2%
Asian	25.2%	31.9%
Black	-6.5%	2.8%
Mixed race/heritage	15.3%	2.4%
Other	12.7%	-9.8%

The analysis highlights the varying degrees of disparity in bonus pay among different ethnic groups. While Black employees benefit from a higher mean average rate in bonus pay, other minority ethnic groups, particularly Asian employees, the bonus pay gap is significant for larger.

Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME)

Employees from Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds experience a mean average rate bonus pay gap of 15.3 per cent, indicating that, on average, they receive 15.3 per cent less in bonus pay compared to their white colleagues. The median (mid-point) rate gap is slightly lower at 5.2 per cent, suggesting that the middle value of bonus pay for employees from BAME backgrounds is 5.2 per cent less than that for white employees.

Asian

Asian employees face the most significant bonus pay gap, with a mean average rate difference of 25.2 per cent. This indicates that, on average, Asian employees receive 25.2 per cent less in bonus pay compared to their White counterparts. The median (mid-point) rate gap is even higher at 31.9 per cent, reflecting a substantial disparity in bonus pay distribution for Asian employees.

Black

In contrast, Black employees benefit from a negative mean average rate gap of -6.5 per cent, indicating that, on average, they receive 6.5 per cent more in bonus pay compared to their white colleagues. However, the median average rate gap is positive at 2.8 per cent, suggesting that the middle value of bonus pay for Black employees is 2.8 per cent less than that for white employees.

Mixed race/heritage

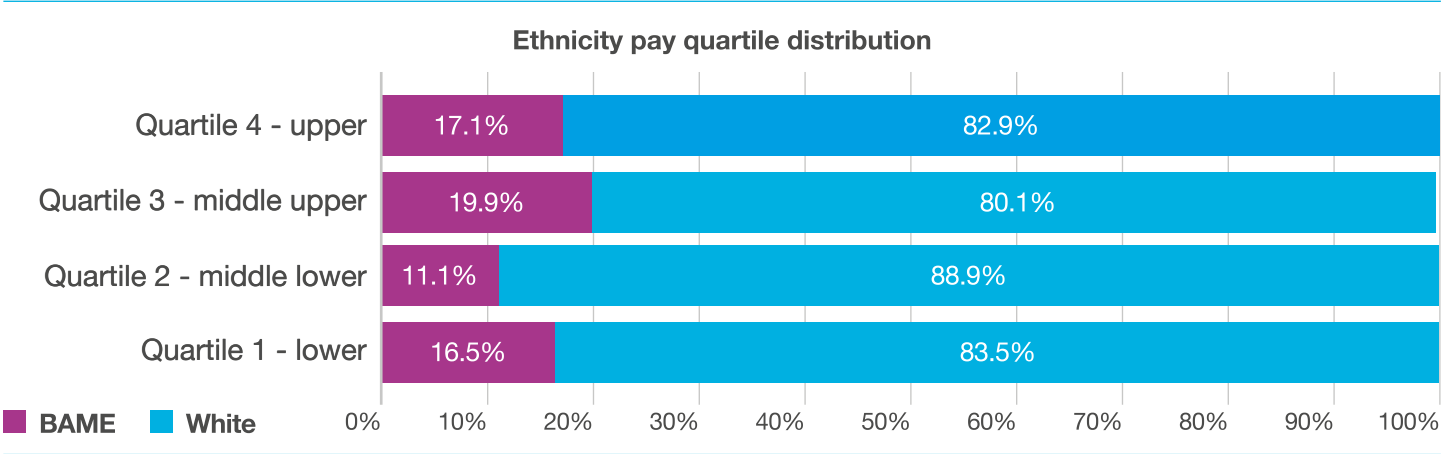
Employees of mixed race/heritage backgrounds experience a mean average rate bonus pay gap of 15.3 per cent, indicating that, on average, they receive 15.4 per cent less in bonus pay compared to their white colleagues. The median average rate gap is slightly lower at 2.4 per cent, suggesting that the middle value of bonus pay for mixed race/heritage employees is 2.4 per cent less than that for white employees.

Other

Employees from 'other' ethnic backgrounds face a mean average rate bonus pay gap of 12.7 per cent, indicating that, on average, they receive 12.7 per cent less in bonus pay compared to their white colleagues. Interestingly, the median average rate gap is negative at -9.8 per cent, suggesting that the middle value of bonus pay for employees from other ethnic backgrounds is 9.8 per cent more than that for white employees, and it is the only group showing this gap disparity.

Ethnicity pay quartile distribution

The chart analysis below of the gender pay quartile distribution highlights a clear trend of women being predominantly represented in lower-paying roles, with their representation gradually decreasing as we move up the pay scale. Conversely, the representation of men increases in higher-paying roles, although women still maintain a majority in all quartiles. This data underscores the need for continued targeted initiatives to address gender imbalances and promote equal opportunities for career advancement across all pay levels.



Disability pay gap

We are pleased to be reporting for the first time this year on disability pay gap, while acknowledging that the grouping is binary and the numbers are from a small sample dataset, due to the high number of non-declarations on our iWork system. This analysis begins to provide insights into the average differences in pay between disabled and non-disabled employees, highlighting areas where disabled employees either benefit or face disadvantages in pay and bonus pay.

Disability pay gap	Difference between disabled and non-disabled employees pay	
	Mean (average) rate	Median (mid-point) rate
Disabled pay gap (based on all staff)	-5.4%	-3.2%
Disabled pay gap (based on staff declarations)	-4.2%	-2.3%
Disabled bonus pay gap (based on all staff) includes: retention payments, honorary payments, merit awards and golden hellos	62.6%	52.2%
Disabled bonus pay gap (based on staff declarations) includes: retention payments, honorary payments, merit awards and golden hellos	59.2%	52.2%

Mean average rate

The mean (average) rate pay gap for disabled employees, based on all staff, is -5.4 per cent. This indicates that, on average, disabled employees receive 5.4 per cent more in pay compared to their non-disabled colleagues. When considering only staff declarations, the mean average rate pay gap is slightly lower at -4.2 per cent, suggesting that declared disabled employees receive 4.2 per cent more in pay compared to non-disabled employees.

Median average rate

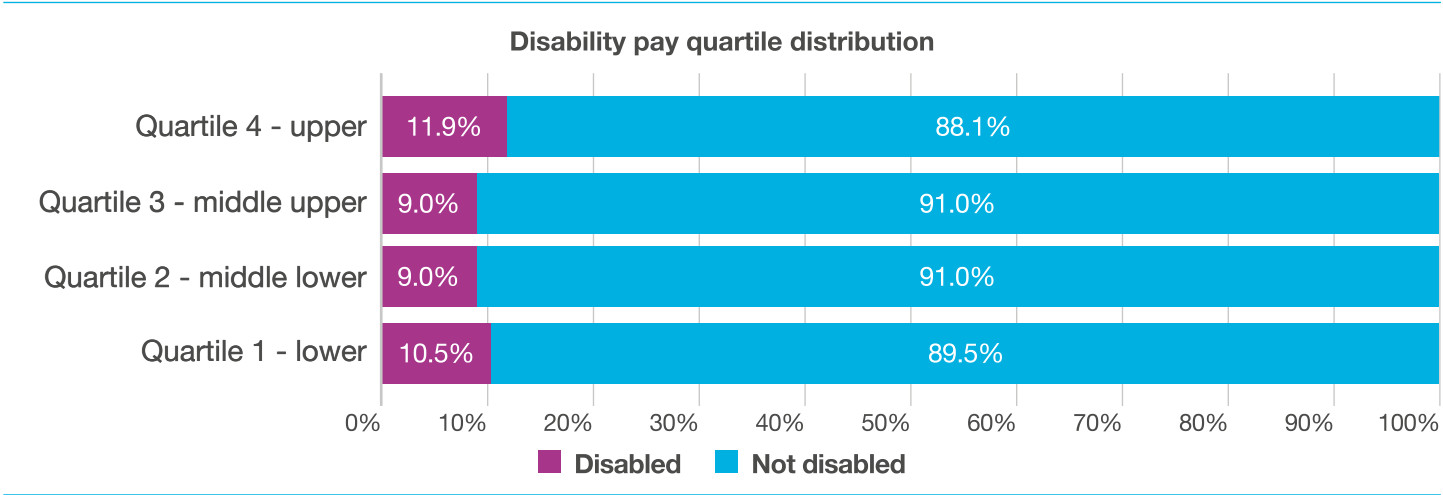
The median (mid-point) average rate pay gap for disabled employees, based on all staff, is -3.2 per cent. This indicates that the middle value of pay for disabled employees is 3.2 per cent more than that for non-disabled employees. When considering only staff declarations, the median average rate pay gap is -2.3 per cent, suggesting that the middle value of pay for declared disabled employees is 2.3 per cent more than that for non-disabled employees.

Mean bonus pay gap

The mean bonus pay gap for disabled employees, based on all staff, is 62.6 per cent. This indicates that, on average, disabled employees receive 62.6 per cent less in bonus pay compared to their non-disabled colleagues. When considering only staff declarations, the mean bonus pay gap is slightly lower at 59.2 per cent, suggesting that declared disabled employees receive 59.2 per cent less in bonus pay compared to non-disabled employees.

Median bonus pay gap

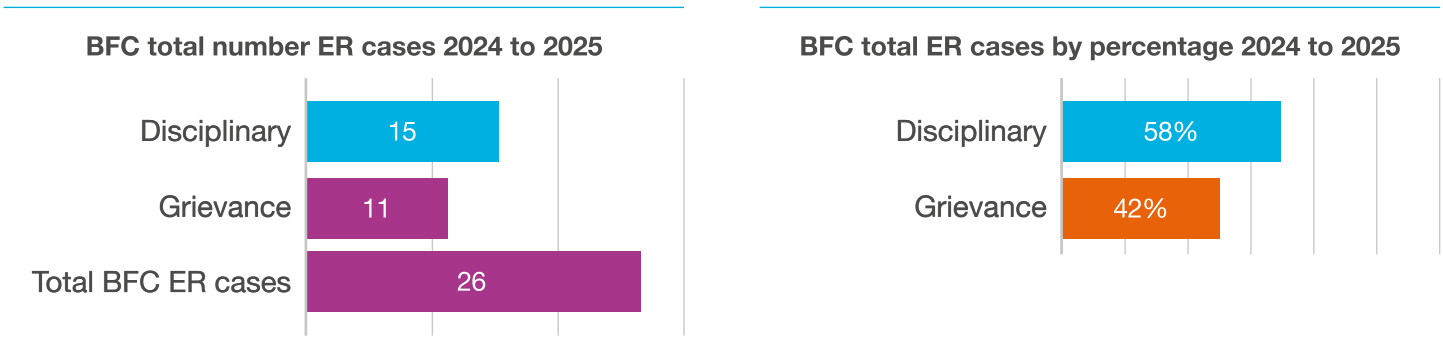
The median bonus pay gap for disabled employees, based on all staff, is 52.2 per cent. This indicates that the middle value of bonus pay for disabled employees is 52.2 per cent less than that for non-disabled employees. The median bonus pay gap remains the same at 52.2 per cent when considering only staff declarations.



Workforce employee relations: disciplinary and grievance

Employee relations cases:

This charts below provide an analysis of the twenty-six employee relations (ER) cases within our organisation over the last year. The data highlights two primary types of ER cases: disciplinary and grievance. The dataset reveals that disciplinary cases constitute the majority of ER cases, accounting for 58 per cent of the total, with 15 cases reported. On the other hand, grievance cases make up 42 per cent of the total ER cases, with 11 cases reported.



The dataset reveals that the majority of disciplinary cases fall under the category of serious misconduct (other) and serious misconduct (safeguarding), each accounting for 20 per cent of the total disciplinary cases. This is followed by disciplinary – capability and disciplinary – serious misconduct (Unacceptable Conduct), each constituting 13 per cent of the disciplinary cases. Other categories such as Gross Misconduct (Inappropriate Sexual Behaviour), Gross Misconduct (Other), Minor Misconduct, Serious Misconduct (Breach of Confidentiality), and Serious Misconduct (Discrimination) each account for 7 per cent of the disciplinary cases.

ER case: disciplinary	Disciplinary	Disciplinary %
Disciplinary – capability	2	13%
Disciplinary – gross misconduct (inappropriate sexual behaviour)	1	7%
Disciplinary – gross misconduct (other)	1	7%
Disciplinary – minor misconduct	1	7%
Disciplinary – serious misconduct (discrimination)	1	7%
Disciplinary – serious misconduct (other)	3	20%
Disciplinary – serious misconduct (safeguarding)	3	20%
Disciplinary – serious misconduct (unacceptable conduct)	2	13%
Disciplinary – serious misconduct (breach of confidentiality)	1	7%
Total ER disciplinary cases	15	100%

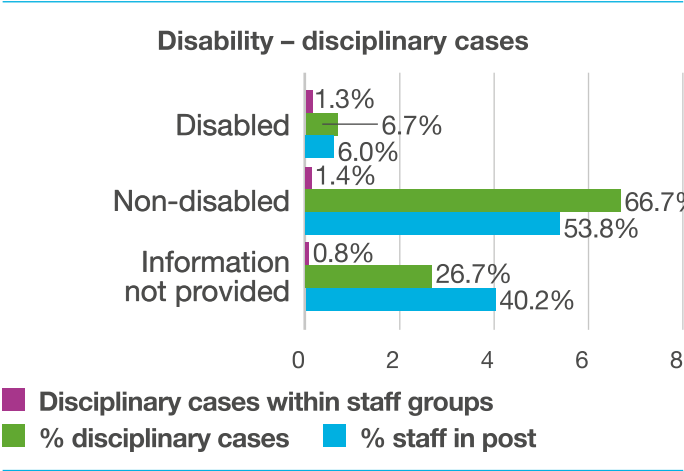
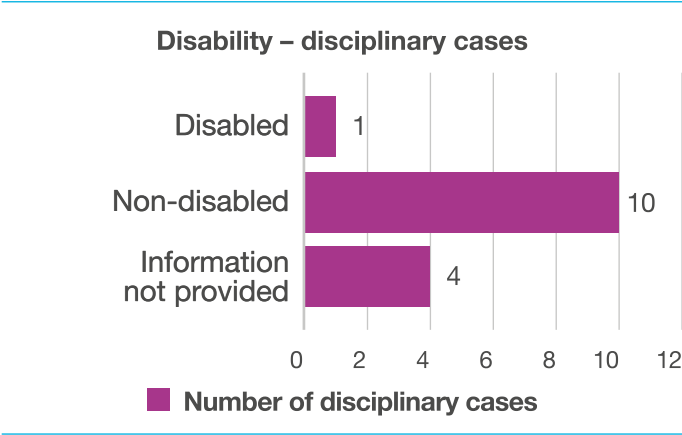
Employee relations cases:

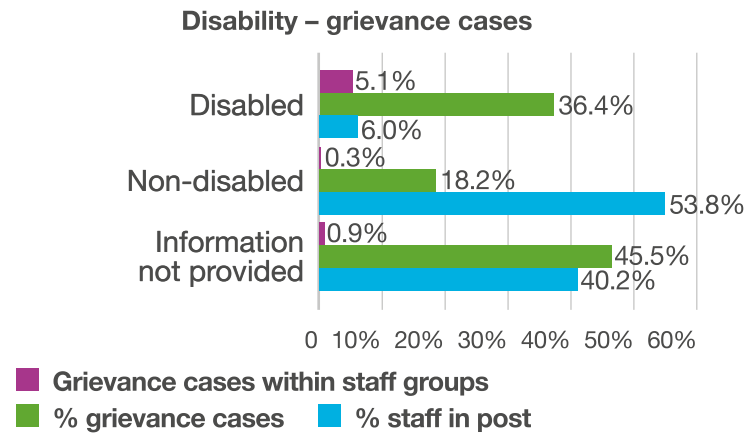
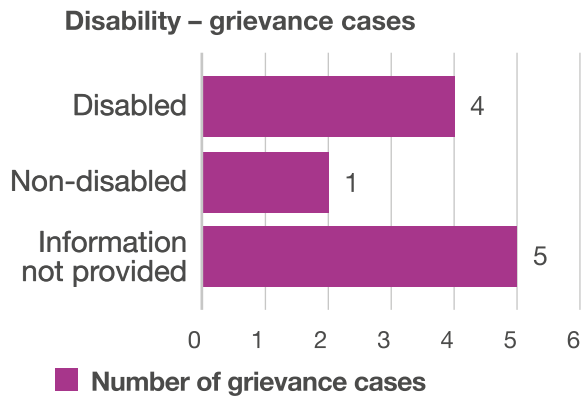
Bullying and harassment is the most prevalent grievance category, representing 36 per cent of the total grievance cases received. This highlights the continued need for robust anti-bullying policies and support systems. Discrimination accounts for 27 per cent of grievance cases submitted, indicating a significant concern that requires targeted interventions. Unfair treatment represents 18 per cent of grievance cases, suggesting the need for fair and transparent processes. Other categories such as grievance – other and grievance – pay each account for 9 per cent of the grievance cases.

ER case: grievance	Disciplinary	Disciplinary %
Grievance – discrimination	3	27%
Grievance – other	1	9%
Grievance – pay	1	9%
Grievance – unfair treatment	2	18%
Grievance – bullying and harassment	4	36%
Total ER grievance cases	11	100%

Employee relations analysis by protected characteristics

Disability:





The analysis reveals that a significant portion of the workforce, 40.2 per cent, did not provide their disability status. Within this group, disciplinary cases account for 26.7 per cent (4) and grievance cases account for 45.5 per cent (5). This lack of disclosure can pose challenges in accurately assessing and addressing the specific needs of different staff groups within the organisation. It underscores the importance of fostering an environment where employees feel comfortable disclosing their personal information.

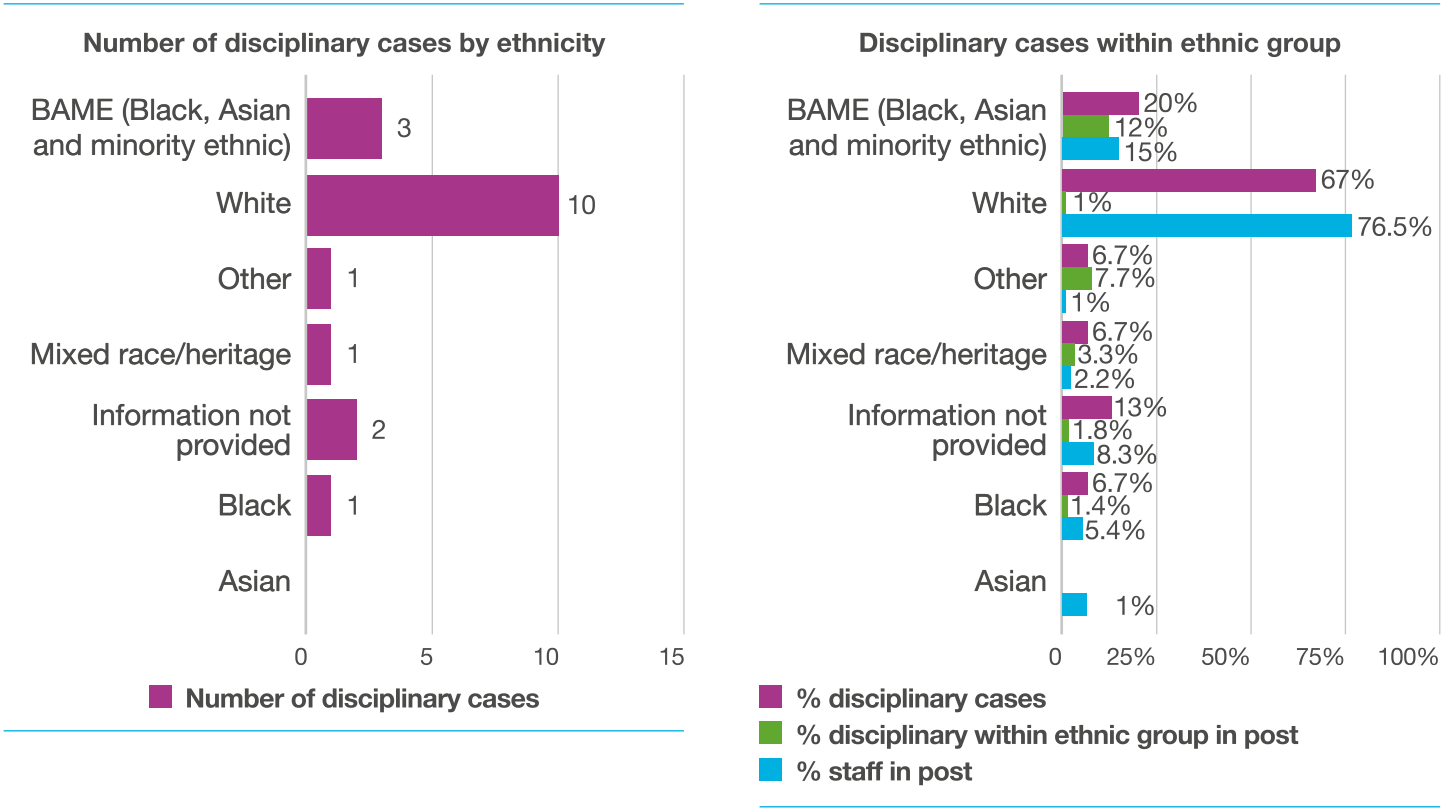
Employees who have declared that they do not have a disability on our iWork system make up 53.8 per cent of the workforce. Within this group, disciplinary cases account for 66.7 per cent (10), and grievance cases account for 18.2 per cent (2).

Employees who have declared a disability represent 6.0 per cent (79) of the workforce. Within this group, disciplinary cases account for 6.7 per cent (1), and grievance cases account for 36.4 per cent (4). The sample set although small indicate that proportion of grievance cases among disabled employees indicates that there are notable concerns related to workplace conditions or treatment that need to be addressed to improve overall workplace satisfaction and morale.



Ethnicity:

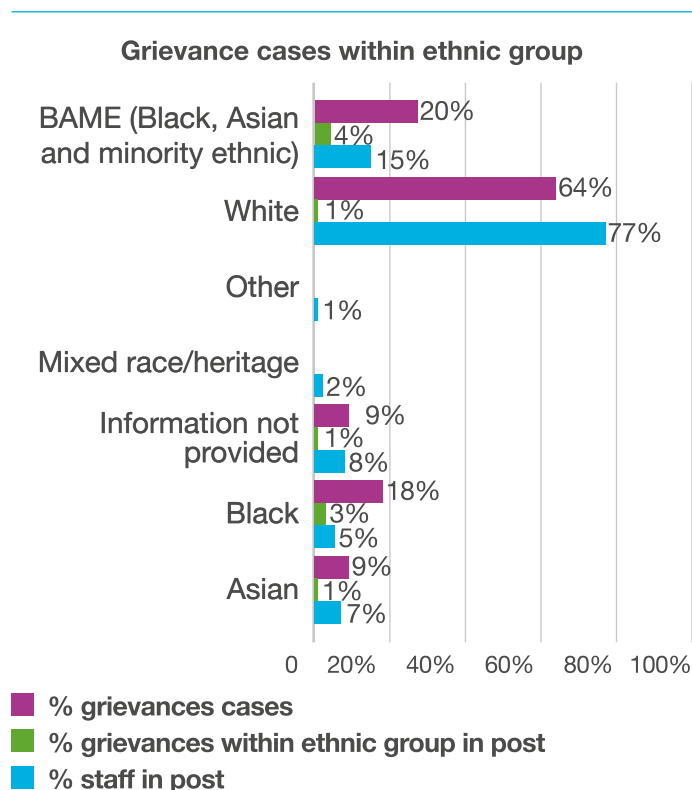
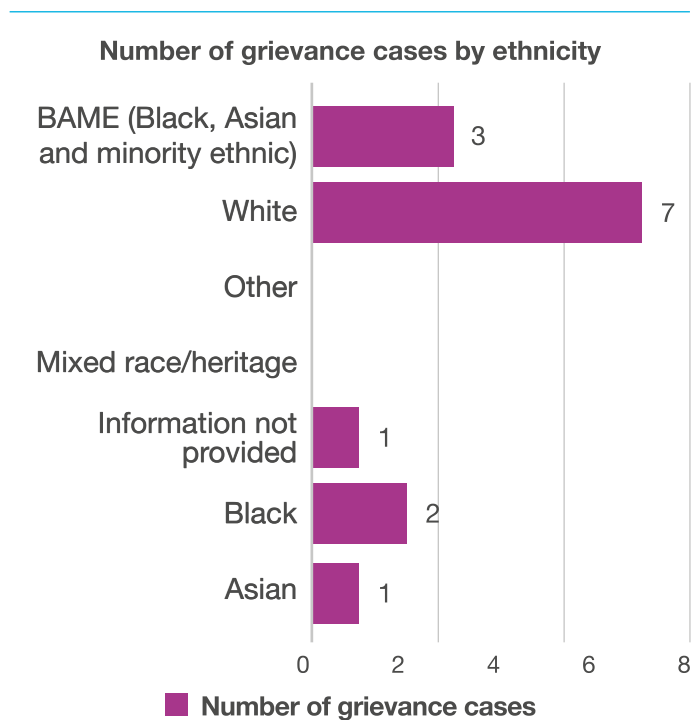
The below charts provide a visual analysis of the employee relations (ER) disciplinary cases within our organisation, focusing on the distribution of cases by ethnicity. As mentioned previously, it should be noted that although the dataset is relatively small (26) understanding the distribution of these cases is essential for identifying areas where targeted interventions may be necessary to improve employee relations and foster a more inclusive work environment.



Employees from Black, Asian, and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds collectively account for 20 per cent (3) of the disciplinary cases. This includes Black employees 7 per cent (1), mixed race/heritage employees 7 per cent (1), and employees from Other ethnic backgrounds 7 per cent.

Additionally, 13 per cent of the disciplinary cases involve employees who did not provide their ethnicity information. This lack of disclosure can pose challenges in accurately assessing and addressing the specific needs of different ethnic groups within the organisation. It underscores the importance of fostering an environment where employees feel comfortable disclosing their personal information.





Employees from Black, Asian, and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds collectively account for 15 per cent of the staff in post. Within this group, grievance cases are significantly higher, 27 per cent of the total grievance cases. Further analysis shows that Black employees who represent 5 per cent of the total workforce account for (18 per cent) of the total grievances.

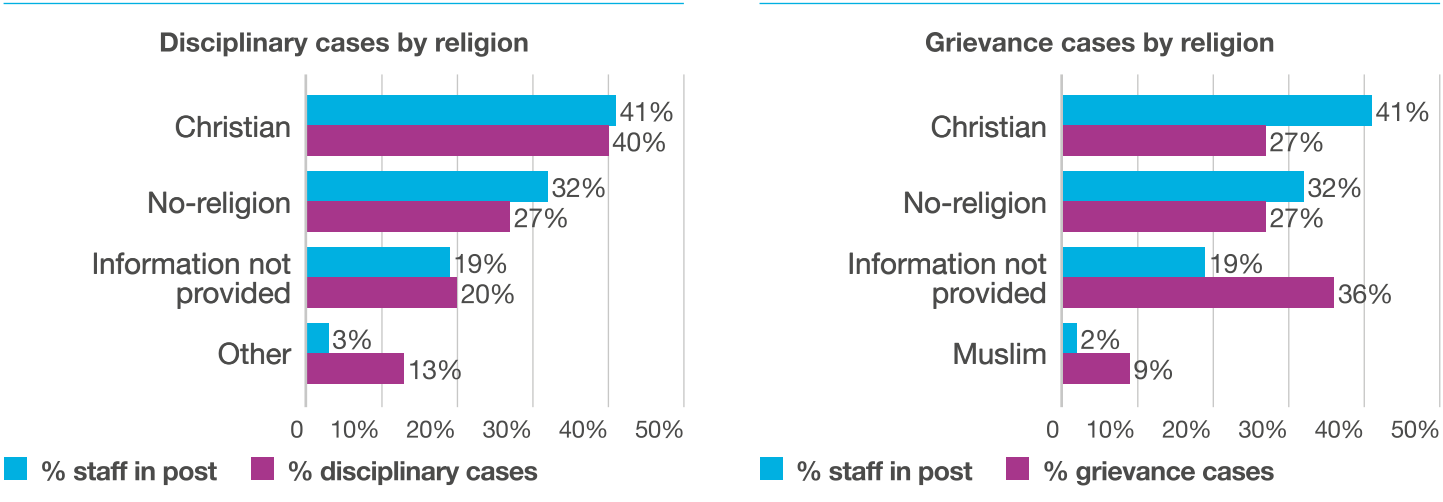
The above analysis reveals whilst the majority of the workforce is composed of white employees, who make up 77 per cent of the staff in post, both disciplinary and grievance cases are relatively low, each accounting for 1 per cent of the total cases. This indicates that white employees are less likely to be involved in ER cases compared to their representation in the workforce.

The representation of BAME employees in grievance cases highlights the need for continued efforts to ensure that the workplace is inclusive and supportive for all ethnic groups.

Additionally, 8 per cent of the workforce did not provide their ethnicity information. Grievance cases involve 9 per cent employees who did not provide their ethnicity information. Within this group, disciplinary cases account for 2 per cent and grievance cases account for 1 per cent of the total cases.

Religion

The chart below suggests that Christians and employees with no religion are proportionately represented in disciplinary cases relative to their presence in the workforce. However, employees from other religions are significantly overrepresented in disciplinary cases compared to their workforce representation. Christians constitute 41 per cent of the workforce and account for 40 per cent of the disciplinary cases. Employees with no religion make up 32 per cent of the workforce and are responsible for 27 per cent of the disciplinary cases. Employees who did not provide their religion information represent 19 per cent of the workforce and account for 20 per cent of the disciplinary cases. Employees from other religions, who make up 3 per cent of the workforce, are responsible for 13 per cent of the disciplinary cases.

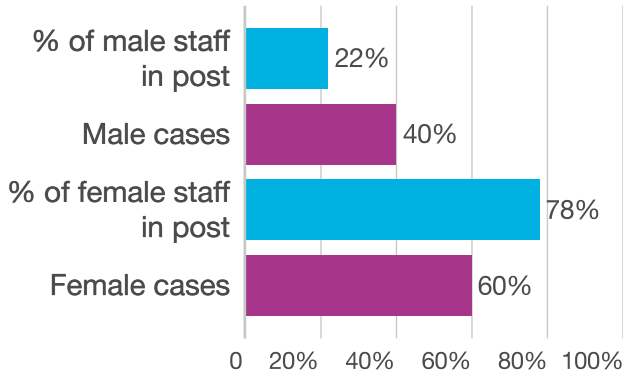


The distribution of the 11 grievance cases among different religious groups suggests that Christians and employees with no religion are proportionately represented in grievance cases relative to their presence in the workforce. Christians constitute 41 per cent of the workforce and account for 27 per cent (3) of the total number of grievance cases. Employees with no religion make up 32 per cent of the workforce and are responsible for 27 per cent (3) of the grievance cases. Employees who did not provide their religion information represent 19 per cent of the workforce and account for 36 per cent (4) of the grievance cases. Employees from the Muslim faith, who make up 2 per cent of the workforce, are responsible for 9 per cent (1) of the grievance cases.

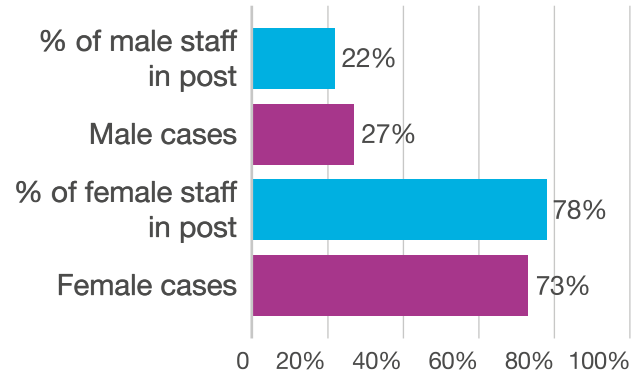
Sex (gender)

The analysis reveals a notable disparity in the distribution of disciplinary cases between female and male employees. Female employees constitute 78 per cent of the workforce, yet they account for 60 per cent of the disciplinary cases. Conversely, male employees, who make up 22 per cent of the workforce, are responsible for 40 per cent of the disciplinary cases. This discrepancy suggests that male employees are disproportionately represented in disciplinary cases relative to their presence in the workforce. Specifically, while female employees are involved in disciplinary cases at a lower rate than their representation in the workforce.

Disciplinary cases by sex (gender)



Grievance cases by sex (gender)

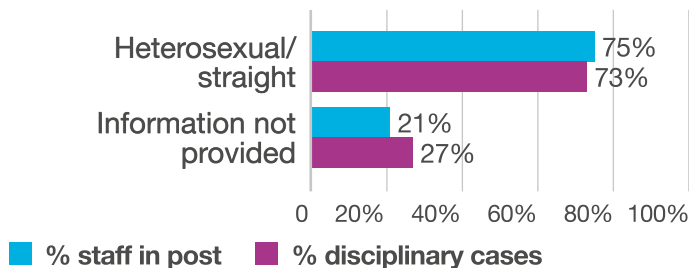


Similarly in line with disciplinary cases, male employees are slightly overrepresented in grievance cases 27 per cent relative to their presence in the workforce 22 per cent. Specifically, female employees are involved in grievance cases at a rate slightly lower 73 per cent than their representation in the workforce 78 per cent.

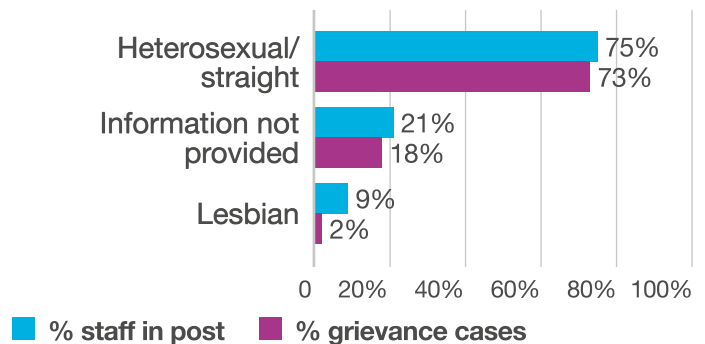
Sexual orientation

Heterosexual/straight employees represent the highest percentage of employee relations cases, with 42 per cent disciplinary and 31 per cent grievance cases, totalling 73 per cent. Lesbian employees account for 4 per cent of disciplinary and grievance cases. Employees who did not specify their sexual orientation represent 15 per cent of disciplinary and 8 per cent of grievance cases, totalling 23 per cent.

Disciplinary cases by sexual orientation



Grievance cases by sexual orientation



For disciplinary cases, the majority of cases involve staff who identify as heterosexual/straight, accounting for 73 per cent of the cases. This is closely aligned with their representation in the overall staff population, which stands at 75 per cent.

In terms of grievance cases, heterosexual/straight staff again represent the majority, with 73 per cent of the cases, matching their 75 per cent representation in the staff population. Interestingly, staff who identify as Lesbian, who make up only 2 per cent of the staff population, account for 9 per cent of the grievance cases. Additionally, 18 per cent of grievance cases involve staff whose sexual orientation information was not provided, which is lower than their 21 per cent representation in the staff population.

Staff promotions

To understand and improve our career progression data reporting, we have actively tracked the promotion rates across the key workforce demographics this year.

The promotion dataset provides insightful information on the workforce promotion ratios across different age groups.

Age group	Promotion ratio (%)	One in X (promotion ratio)
20 – 29	10.69%	1 in 9.4
30 – 39	4.13%	1 in 24.2
40 – 49	4.41%	1 in 22.7
50 – 59	3.51%	1 in 28.5
60 – 64	2.78%	1 in 36.0
65 and Over	3.92%	1 in 25.5

In summary, the promotion ratios indicate a higher likelihood of promotion for younger employees, with a gradual decline as age increases. This trend reflects the council’s focus on nurturing young talent while also recognising the contributions of experienced employees.

Promotion analysis by disability

The promotion dataset provides insightful information on the promotion ratios across different disability profiles within the organisation.

Disability profile	Promotion ratio (%)	One in X (promotion ratio)
No	4.08%	1 in 24.5
Yes	3.80%	1 in 26.3
Not provided	5.08%	1 in 19.7



Promotion analysis by ethnicity

The promotion dataset provides insightful information on the promotion ratios across different ethnic groups within the organisation. Below is a summarised analysis:

Ethnic group	Promotion ratio (%)	One in X (promotion ratio)
Asian	5.75%	1 in 17.4
Black	2.78%	1 in 36.0
Mixed race/heritage	3.45%	1 in 29.0
Information not provided	3.64%	1 in 27.5
Other	7.69%	1 in 13.0
White	4.65%	1 in 21.5

Summary

The promotion ratios indicate a higher likelihood of promotion for employees from 'other' ethnic groups, followed by Asian and white employees. Black and mixed race/heritage ethnicity employees have the lowest promotion ratios, highlighting the need for the organisation to focus on improving support and opportunities for these groups to ensure equitable career advancement for these groups.

Promotion analysis by sex (gender)

The promotion dataset provides insightful information on the promotion ratios across different sex (gender) profiles within the organisation.

Sex (gender)	Promotion ratio (%)	One in X (promotion ratio)
Female	1 in 21.1	4.74%
Male	1 in 26.3	3.81%

Summary

The promotion ratios indicate a higher likelihood of promotion for female employees compared to male employees. This trend highlights the council's focus on supporting employees, while also recognising the need to address the challenges faced by male employees in career progression.



Next step strategies and actions

To address the workforce implications identified above, the council will consider implementing the following strategies and actions. These recommendations aim to create a more inclusive, supportive, and diverse work environment.

By implementing these strategies, the council can address the various disparities and improve employee retention and well-being:

- continual review of employment policies and processes to address any disproportionate impact on specific employee groups using equality impact assessments
- compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010)
- enhance equality, diversity, and inclusion in the workplace, ensuring all employees feel supported, that they belong, and can reach their full potential
- enhance employee satisfaction and engagement by focusing on initiatives such as flexible working arrangements, promoting work-life balance, and providing opportunities for career development and progression
- promote gender equality by developing targeted recruitment strategies to attract more male applicants to roles traditionally dominated by females and ensuring gender equality is embedded in all aspects of the council's operations
- support ethnic diversity by implementing inclusive policies and practices that support the retention and advancement of employees from diverse ethnic backgrounds and collaborating with local faith and community groups
- enhance support for disabled employees by providing comprehensive health and wellness programmes, offering reasonable adjustments, and ensuring access to mental health support
- focus on succession planning by developing and reviewing initiatives to identify and develop future leaders from within the workforce, ensuring a smooth transition as older employees retire
- promote religious inclusivity by encouraging employees to disclose their religious beliefs and providing a safe and supportive environment
- support LGBTQIA+ employees by strengthening the LGBTQIA+ staff network, providing mentorship programmes, celebrating Pride month, and implementing ongoing training and development programmes



- enhance policies and training with regular workshops on ethical behaviour, safeguarding protocols, and the consequences of serious misconduct
- implement anti-bullying measures by creating a safe reporting mechanism, providing support, and conducting awareness campaigns
- promote diversity and inclusion by developing targeted interventions to support underrepresented groups, providing diversity awareness training, and creating an inclusive environment
- ensure fair treatment by reviewing and updating policies, providing training on fair treatment, and establishing mechanisms to address grievances promptly and effectively
- support systems for employees by reviewing established support systems for employees facing disciplinary or grievance issues, providing access to counselling services, creating peer support networks, and offering training on conflict resolution and stress management
- retention of tacit knowledge and experience through knowledge sharing platforms, training and development programmes, succession planning, coaching and mentorship, and creating a supportive culture
- data collection and analysis by improving data collection for workforce demographics, rolling out bullying and harassment training, mapping and improving the reporting process, using feedback from staff surveys, and embedding reasonable adjustment guidance

