Bracknell Forest Council

Bracknell Forest Council

Annual Workforce Equality Monitoring Report 2026



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Executive Introduction

This Annual Workforce Equality Monitoring Report sets out what Bracknell Forest Council's workforce data tells us about equality, diversity and inclusion during 2025 to 2026. As a public-facing document, it is intended to provide a clear, honest and accessible account of the council's workforce profile, the progress being made, the areas where further improvement is needed and the actions being taken in response.

The report brings together information on workforce representation, recruitment, retention, progression, pay, employee relations, wellbeing and staff experience. It supports transparency and accountability by showing how workforce evidence is being used to understand employee experience, inform fair employment practice and strengthen inclusive organisational culture.

Purpose and public accountability

Bracknell Forest Council has responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty. This means having due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different groups. This report helps demonstrate how the council is using workforce data and staff insight to understand where progress is being made, where inequalities may remain and where further action is required.

What the evidence shows

The overall picture is one of progress alongside areas that need continued focus. The workforce has grown, representation has improved in several areas, and recruitment remains comparatively positive, particularly in relation to ethnicity. Pay gap outcomes show measurable improvement in some areas, including reductions in the gender hourly pay gap. However, the data also highlights continuing challenges. Retention, progression and reward outcomes require further scrutiny, disabled leavers remain above workforce representation, ethnically diverse turnover worsened during the reporting period, and promotion activity softened despite workforce growth.



Partnership, anti-racism and staff voice

Progress during the year has been supported by stronger partnership working, staff voice and shared ownership. Since signing the UNISON Anti-Racism Charter in June 2025, the council has worked with UNISON, staff networks, managers and service leads to translate commitment into practical action. Participation in the Social Care Workforce Race Equality Standard (SC-WRES) has added a national improvement framework for understanding and addressing race inequality in social care. Staff networks and forums, including the Unison Black Members Self-Organised Group (BMSOG), Disability and Neurodiversity Staff Forum and Pause for Menopause network, have also strengthened the role of lived experience in shaping improvement activity.

Fairness, wellbeing and everyday experience

The report shows that equality is about more than workforce representation. It is also about the everyday experience of staff: whether people feel respected, supported, listened to and able to contribute fully at work. Evidence from employee relations, wellbeing activity, staff survey insight and reporting routes reinforces the importance of fair processes, psychological safety, confidence to speak up and consistent support for reasonable adjustments. The council's work on the Wellbeing and EDI Toolkits, My Wellbeing Passport, wellbeing champions-MHFAiders, Achievement and Development conversations, anti-racism and menopause policy development, and staff-led forums is helping to create a more joined-up approach to inclusion, wellbeing and support.

Progress has also continued in relation to LGBTQ+ inclusion. This includes the external LGBTQ+ review undertaken during the year, ongoing work to better understand employee experience, and continued visibility through Pride Month. Together, these activities have helped keep inclusion, staff voice and organisational learning in focus. They also show where further work is needed, particularly to strengthen evidence, build confidence in disclosure and deepen understanding of the lived experience of LGBTQ+ colleagues.

Using evidence to drive improvement

A key strength of the year has been the growing use of data and insight to guide improvement. Workforce equality monitoring, SC-WRES analysis, Staff Experience Survey – Inclusion and Culture findings, dashboard reporting and peer review feedback have created a stronger evidence base for understanding what is changing and where action is needed. This helps the council move beyond headline measures by connecting workforce data with what staff say about their everyday experience.

Peer review and external challenge

As part of the council's commitment to transparency, accountability and continuous improvement, the development of this report has been informed by peer review and external challenge. The purpose of this review is to test whether the evidence, analysis and conclusions are clear, balanced and useful for decision-making, and to identify where the council can strengthen the way workforce equality information is presented and acted on.

Peer review feedback has helped sharpen the report's focus on practical improvement, including the need to connect workforce data more clearly with staff experience, service-level ownership, inclusive management practice and measurable action. It has also reinforced the importance of explaining data limitations openly, particularly where small numbers, non-disclosure or system categories affect the strength of the conclusions that can be drawn.

The peer review process does not replace the council's own accountability for workforce equality. Instead, it provides an additional source of constructive challenge to support better reporting, stronger governance and clearer priorities for action. The feedback will be used alongside workforce data, staff voice, equality governance and partnership discussions to shape delivery priorities for 2026 to 2027.

The year ahead

The focus for the next phase is to turn this evidence into clear, owned and measurable improvement. This will include strengthening data quality and declaration confidence, improving retention and progression outcomes, embedding inclusive management practice, using intersectional analysis more consistently, and ensuring that equality, wellbeing, psychological safety and anti-racism commitments are reflected in everyday working life.

Commitment to inclusive public service

As a council serving a diverse and changing borough, Bracknell Forest Council recognises that an inclusive workforce supports better decision-making, stronger public service and greater trust. The aim is to build a workplace where people feel able to belong, contribute, develop and thrive, and where the council's values of being Inclusive, Ambitious and Always Learning are visible in both policy and practice.

Inclusive language and terminology

This report aims to use language that is respectful, accurate and inclusive. Language evolves over time, and the terms used in equality monitoring are not always the same as the language individuals use to describe themselves. In this report, terminology is used carefully to support both respectful communication and consistent statistical analysis.

In relation to ethnicity, the council recognises that the acronym BAME (Black, Asian and minority ethnic) is widely used in workforce reporting and is still used in some national and comparative datasets. However, it can be problematic because it groups together a wide range of ethnic identities and experiences, which are not homogeneous. For that reason, this report uses more specific ethnic categories wherever possible, such as Asian, Black, mixed race or heritage, other ethnic background and white. Where the acronym BAME is used, it is only for statistical comparison, consistency with existing datasets, or where the underlying data has already been grouped in that way. Ethnically diverse is also used in this report as a practical and accessible umbrella term where grouped analysis is needed, while more specific ethnic categories are used wherever possible to avoid masking different experiences.

The report also recognises that a range of wider terms may be used in equality, anti-racism and workforce reporting, including Global Majority, racialised communities, minority ethnic and under-represented ethnic groups. These terms are not interchangeable. Global Majority is sometimes used to recognise that people of Black, Asian, Arab, mixed heritage and other non-white backgrounds make up the majority of the world's population, although it may not be familiar to all audiences and should be used with context. Racialised highlights that race is socially constructed and that people may experience unequal treatment because of how they are perceived, categorised or treated within society and organisations. The council will continue to review terminology in line with national guidance, staff feedback and lived experience, ensuring that language remains clear, respectful and appropriate for both public reporting and workforce analysis.

In relation to LGBTQ+ terminology, this report uses LGBTQ+ to refer to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning people, with the plus sign recognising other sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions that may not be specifically named in the acronym. The council recognises that language and identity are personal and can change over time, so terminology should be used with care, respect and openness to individual preference. Where workforce data refers to sexual orientation or gender identity, this reflects the categories available within current monitoring systems, and the report acknowledges that disclosure levels, small numbers and system limitations can affect the depth of analysis. Using LGBTQ+ consistently supports visibility, inclusion and respectful reporting, while reinforcing the council's commitment to a workplace where colleagues feel safe, recognised and able to be themselves.

In relation to disability, this report uses the term disabled people or disabled employees in line with the social model of disability, which recognises that people are disabled by barriers in society rather than by their condition or impairment alone. References to disability declaration in the workforce data reflect the categories recorded in the council's HR and payroll systems and align with the Equality Act 2010 definition where relevant. The report also recognises that some colleagues may identify with terms such as long-term condition, neurodivergent, or impairment, and that language should always be guided by respect, context and individual preference where known.

In relation to sex and gender, this report mainly uses sex categories where data is drawn from workforce monitoring systems and aligned to external statistical sources such as the Office for National Statistics. In that context, sex usually refers to categories recorded as male or female.

The report may also use the words women and men in narrative sections where this helps readability. The council recognises that sex, gender and gender identity are not the same, and that some colleagues may identify in ways that are not fully reflected in binary workforce datasets.

Where data is limited by system categories or small numbers, this is acknowledged, and the council remains committed to using language that is respectful, accurate and inclusive.

Using inclusive terminology matters because language shapes how equality issues are understood and discussed. Throughout this report, the council seeks to balance clarity, analytical consistency and respect for lived experience. This means being transparent where terms are used for reporting purposes, while continuing to improve the way we describe and understand the diversity of our workforce.



Methodology and data limitations

The workforce data in this report is drawn from the Human Resource Information System (HRIS) iWork and reflects the council's workforce profile and employment activity for the reporting period from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026, unless otherwise stated. Where trend analysis is included, this is based on comparable annual snapshots and workforce data from earlier reporting periods to show movement over time.

Some equality datasets are affected by disclosure and non-disclosure rates. Where staff choose not to declare information, this can limit the completeness of the data and reduce confidence in interpretation, particularly for smaller staff groups or more detailed breakdowns. For example, higher non-disclosure in areas such as sexual orientation or religion means that visible trends may under-represent the true diversity of the workforce, while incomplete disability declaration can make it harder to assess the scale of reasonable adjustment need or whether retention outcomes are improving equitably.

Disclosure patterns can also be shaped by trust: if staff are uncertain how personal or confidential information will be used, they may be less likely to update their records, which in turn weakens the quality of the council's equality evidence base. Improving declaration confidence therefore remains an important part of strengthening the council's equality evidence base.

Percentages in this report are rounded in the majority of cases, which means totals may not always add exactly to 100 per cent. Some datasets also involve small numbers, particularly for smaller staff groups or more detailed breakdowns. In these cases, percentage changes should be interpreted with caution, as small numerical changes can produce larger proportional shifts and may reduce the reliability of year-on-year comparison.

Key Workforce Insights

This report provides an updated overview of Bracknell Forest Council's workforce equality position for 2025 to 2026. Overall, the data shows a positive direction of travel. The workforce is growing, representation has improved in several areas, and equality governance is becoming more structured and evidence led. However, progress is not yet consistent across all staff groups or across the full employee life cycle, which means continued focus is needed to translate data, policy and engagement into sustained workforce outcomes.

In 2026, the council employed 1,340 people across 1,210 whole-time equivalent posts, continuing the workforce growth seen since 2022. This growth appears reflect the successful recruitment into previously agency-covered and vacant roles, with increased permanent staffing, a lower vacancy rate and reduced agency use strengthening overall workforce capacity. Representation has also strengthened. Ethnically diverse representation increased from 12 per cent in 2024 to 16 per cent in 2026, declared disability rose from 5.29 per cent to 6.60 per cent, and sexual orientation disclosure improved. These changes indicate progress in attraction, representation and confidence to share personal data. However, declaration gaps remain material, particularly for disability, religion and sexual orientation, and continue to limit the depth of equality analysis.

Workforce Insights Overview

Movement, progress and priority signals of workforce equality data

Workforce scale	Diversity profile	Retention risk	Pay gap progress
1,340 Headcount in 2026 **+157 since 2022**	**16%** Ethnically diverse workforce **up from 12% in 2024**	**9.4%** Disabled leavers in 2026 **above workforce representation**	**8.7%** Mean gender pay gap **down from 10.5% in 2025**

Progress and momentum	Watch points	
Workforce growth: headcount and WTE have increased steadily since 2022, creating a stronger baseline for workforce planning. **Declaration confidence:** disability and sexual orientation declaration have improved, supporting richer analysis. **Anti-racism infrastructure:** monitoring, dashboards, staff voice and governance are more developed.	**Age profile:** the workforce remains weighted towards mid-to-late career staff, with retirement-related exits increasing. **Progression:** promotions reduced from 59 to 49, lowering the overall promotion rate from 4.5% to 3.7%. **Reward distribution:** hourly pay gaps improved, but bonus outcomes remain uneven for some groups.	**Retention:** turnover worsened for several ethnic groups and remains less favourable for disabled staff. **Early-career and retirement exits:** attrition is heightened at both ends of the age profile. **SC-WRES:** race equality in social care requires ongoing focus action on representation, appointment outcomes and leadership pathways.

Movement summary	Direction	Executive interpretation
Headcount and WTE	**Improving**	Growth is controlled and provides a stronger planning base, with WTE growth outpacing headcount growth.
Ethnically diverse representation	**Improving**	Representation has increased, and recruitment remains more diverse than the current workforce profile.
Disability declaration	**Improving**	More staff are declaring disability, but this must be matched by stronger retention and adjustment support.
Voluntary turnover	**Deteriorating**	Retention outcomes are less favourable for several groups and require targeted service-level action.
Promotion rate	**Deteriorating**	Internal progression has softened, increasing the need to review pipelines, acting-up opportunities and succession planning.
Gender pay gap	**Improving**	Mean and median gaps reduced, although grade distribution and additional payment outcomes still require scrutiny.
Ethnicity pay gap	**Mixed**	Hourly pay outcomes remain favourable overall for the combined ethnically diverse groups, but trends are mixed. Improved workforce representation and diverse recruitment have not yet fully translated into consistent reward outcomes across ethnicity categories, and additional payment outcomes remain uneven.
Speaking up and staff voice	**Developing**	Policy, governance and reporting routes are strengthening, but confidence and consistency now need to be embedded.

The data highlights clear strengths alongside areas requiring targeted action. Recruitment remains comparatively positive, particularly in relation to ethnicity, with starters continuing to be more diverse than the workforce baseline. Retention is less consistent. Disabled leavers remain above workforce representation, ethnically diverse turnover worsened in 2025 to 2026, and leavers aged 65 and over increased sharply. These patterns create risks around retention, succession planning and knowledge transfer.

Progression and reward also require continued scrutiny. Promotion activity softened despite workforce growth, suggesting the need to strengthen progression routes, leadership pipelines and acting-up opportunities. Gender pay gap measures improved, with reductions in both mean and median hourly gaps, but grade distribution and bonus outcomes show that structural issues remain. Ethnicity and disability pay data are more mixed, reinforcing the need to examine how opportunity, reward and progression are distributed across different staff groups, rather than relying only on headline averages.

Although there is no legal requirement to publish ethnicity or disability pay gap information, Bracknell Forest Council has, for the past three years, voluntarily produced an ethnicity pay gap analysis as a matter of good practice. The council has also included disability pay gap analysis, strengthening transparency and supporting a broader understanding of how pay, progression and workforce representation may differ across staff groups. This voluntary reporting reflects the council's commitment to using workforce evidence to identify potential disparities, inform targeted action and support fair and inclusive employment practice.

Bonus clarification

Bracknell Forest Council does not pay bonuses to staff. The council does, however, make other additional payments, including retention payments, honoraria, merit awards and golden hellos. Where statutory pay gap reporting categorieses these payment elements as "bonus pay", the term reflects the reporting definition and does not mean that the council operates a traditional performance-related bonus scheme.

Progress and achievements in 2025 to 2026

During 2025 to 2026, Bracknell Forest Council strengthened the foundations for more consistent, evidence-led equality practice. Key achievements include:

- **Stronger equality governance and accountability:** the council strengthened oversight through the annual equality report, corporate EDI dashboard, bi-monthly Equality Objectives review and clearer links between evidence, governance and delivery.
- **Improved workforce diversity and disclosure:** ethnically diverse representation increased, declared disability rose, sexual orientation disclosure improved, and the "Stay Connected" video guide supported staff to update personal and confidential records.
- **Progress on Unison anti-racism Charter and SC-WRES:** continued delivery of the Unison Anti-Racism Charter commitments and action plan, SC-WRES submission and action planning, alongside learning on anti-racism, cultural humility, line of privilege, bullying and harassment.
- **Greater focus on staff voice and psychological safety:** development and relaunch planning for the Speak Up and Health and Safety reporting portal, combined with staff experience survey – culture and Inclusion insight and network engagement, helped strengthen reporting culture and confidence in speaking up.
- **Re-introduction of structured 1:1 and development conversations:** the review and re-introduction of regular 1:1 conversations and Annual Achievement and Development Review conversations, formally known as appraisals, strengthened the framework for meaningful manager-employee dialogue, performance support, wellbeing check-ins, personal development and inclusive career planning.
- **Expanded wellbeing and inclusive support:** promotion of the Wellbeing Toolkit, My Wellbeing Passport, Wellbeing Champions and Mental Health First Aiders supported a more joined-up approach to wellbeing, reasonable adjustments and inclusive management.
- **Policy and practice development:** progress on the Anti-Racism Policy, Menopause Policy and Action Plan, Integrated EQIA Tool, and equality and dignity at work activity strengthened expectations, practical support and organisational accountability.
- **Visibility and engagement:** activity across Pride Month, Black History Month, Race Equality Week, leadership briefings, staff networks and discussion spaces helped maintain inclusion as an active, visible and shared organisational priority.

Summary of key risks

Alongside the progress made in 2025 to 2026, the data highlights a number of risks that require continued senior oversight and targeted action:

- **Data quality and declaration confidence:** incomplete declaration data may limit the council's ability to identify inequality accurately, particularly in relation to disability, religion and sexual orientation.
- **Retention and employee experience:** higher levels of disabled leavers and worsening ethnically diverse turnover may indicate uneven employee experience, support or progression opportunities.
- **Succession planning and knowledge transfer:** the increase in leavers aged 65 and over creates potential risks around continuity, future capability and the transfer of organisational knowledge.
- **Progression and leadership pipelines:** softening promotion activity may slow progress on representation at different grades and weaken leadership pipeline development.
- **Pay, reward and structural barriers:** mixed ethnicity and disability pay outcomes suggest a continuing need to examine structural barriers to progression, reward and opportunity.
- **Consistency of inclusive practice:** if staff voice, reporting routes and reasonable adjustment processes are not embedded consistently, there is a risk that policy progress will not translate into everyday employee experience.

Priorities for the next phase

The priority now is to convert stronger data, governance and staff voice into consistent day-to-day impact. This means improving data quality, increasing trust in declaration, targeting retention and progression risks, strengthening leadership pathways for under-represented groups, improving consistency in reasonable adjustments and embedding inclusive management practice across services.

This next phase will support delivery against the Equality Objectives, Unison Anti-Racism Charter and SC-WRES commitments. It will also help the council demonstrate due regard under the Public Sector Equality Duty, reduce the risk of discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. The aim is to ensure that BFC's values of being Inclusive, Ambitious and Always Learning are experienced in everyday workforce practice, not only reflected in policy and reporting.

Executive takeaway: The workforce equality picture is one of improving representation, stronger data and better governance, alongside clear warning signs on retention, progression and consistency of staff experience. The next phase focus on turning insight into measurable action through service-level ownership, inclusive management practice, stronger succession planning and quarterly monitoring of disparity.

Delivery Priorities 2026 to 2027

This dashboard provides a concise view of the key workforce equality delivery priorities for 2026 to 2027. It is designed to support senior leadership oversight by showing where the main risks, actions and expected outcomes sit at a glance.

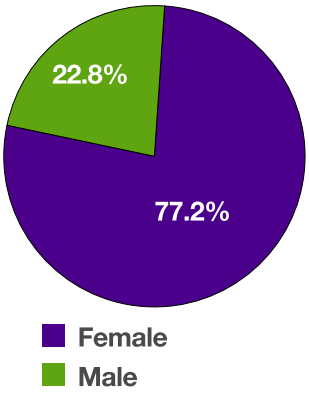
Priority Area	RAG	Why it matters	Delivery focus	Expected outcome	Immediate next step
Data quality and disclosure confidence	**Amber**	Declaration gaps across disability, religion and sexual orientation limit confidence in analysis and reduce the ability to identify and act on inequality.	Improve declaration completeness and trust in personal data use.	Stronger evidence base and more reliable equality insight.	Launch refreshed disclosure and confidentiality campaign with quarterly monitoring.
Retention and staff experience	**Amber**	Turnover is less favourable for disabled staff, ethnically diverse staff and at key career stages, creating risks to inclusion, service stability and workforce sustainability.	Target turnover hotspots and understand lived experience across groups.	Reduced avoidable turnover and clearer insight into experience by service and group.	Combine exit, survey and turnover data to identify priority interventions.
Service-level equality delivery	**Red**	Without clear ownership, Equality Objectives, Anti-Racism Charter and SC-WRES commitments will not translate into measurable impact.	Convert priorities into SMART, owned service-level plans.	Clear accountability and measurable progress across services.	Agree leads, milestones and success measures through governance.

Priority Area	RAG	Why it matters	Delivery focus	Expected outcome	Immediate next step
Progression and leadership pipeline	**Amber**	Softer promotion rates and uneven representation risk limiting diversity in senior roles and weakening leadership pipelines.	Strengthen progression pathways, succession planning and acting-up opportunities.	More inclusive and visible leadership pipeline.	Review promotion and grade data to identify barriers.
Inclusive management and reasonable adjustments	**Amber**	Staff experience, wellbeing and retention depend on consistent manager practice and access to adjustments.	Embed inclusive behaviours and consistent reasonable adjustment practice.	Improved staff confidence and more consistent experience.	Refresh manager guidance and promote adjustment tools.
Intersectional insight and governance	**Amber**	Single data views can mask overlapping inequalities, limiting targeted action.	Combine workforce, survey, pay gap and SC-WRES data.	Earlier identification of disparity hotspots and risks.	Introduce quarterly cross-data equality review.
Wellbeing, psychological safety and staff voice	**Green**	Inclusion, wellbeing and speaking up are interconnected drivers of trust, engagement and retention.	Align equality, wellbeing and staff voice activity.	More joined-up organisation-al culture and response.	Maintain alignment across networks, wellbeing and Speak Up activity.

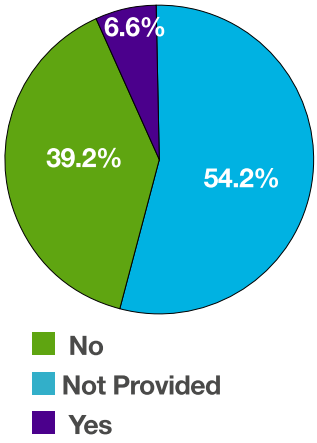
Executive conclusion: Bracknell Forest Council has a stronger platform for workforce equality improvement than in previous years. The priority for 2026 to 2027 is to sustain momentum by turning insight into practical, measurable action: improving retention, strengthening inclusive progression, building trust in data and reporting, and ensuring that inclusion is experienced consistently in day-to-day working life.

Employee Diverity Equity and Inclusion Statistics

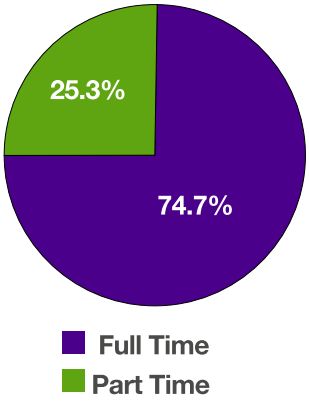
Employees by Sex



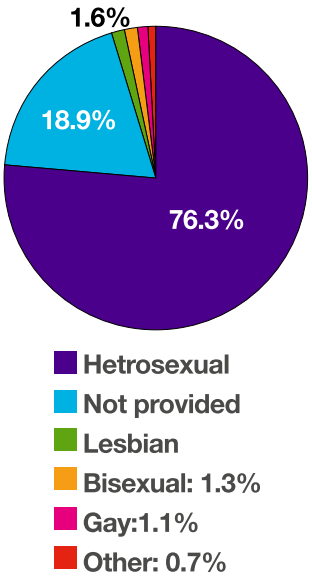
Employees by Disability



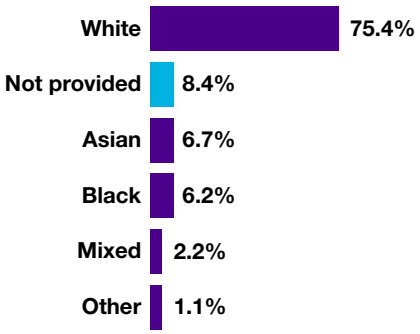
Employees by Hours



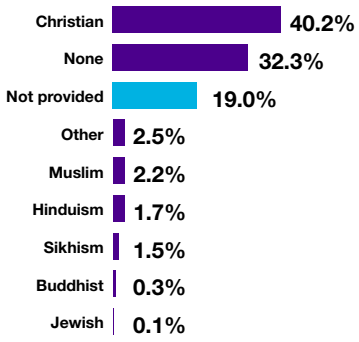
Employees by Sexual Orientation



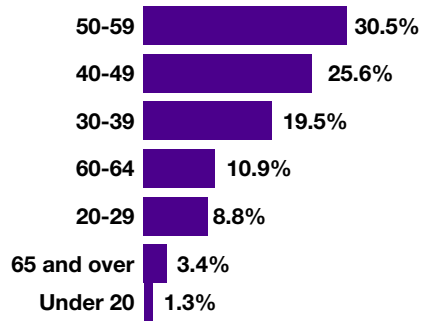
Employees by Ethnicity



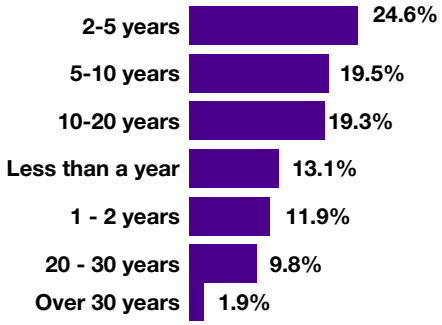
Employees by Religion



Employees by age group



Employees by length of Service



The employee data does not include Agency Worker/Consultants who are not on the BFC payroll

Annual Workforce Equality Monitoring Report: Detailed Analysis

This 2026 Annual Workforce Equality Monitoring Report provides a data-led assessment of workforce equality across Bracknell Forest Council. It builds on the 2024 to 2025 baseline and shows measurable progress in workforce growth, ethnic diversity, disability declaration and the council's infrastructure for equality improvement. It also highlights where disparities remain, particularly in relation to turnover, declaration gaps, leadership representation and consistency of staff experience. The report should therefore be read both as a record of progress and as an evidence base for further targeted action.

Workforce Establishment Summary (2026)

Headcount and Whole Time Equivalent (WTE) trends for the most recent five-year period (2022–2026).

Key insights

Between 2022 and 2026, the establishment expanded steadily, with headcount increasing from 1,183 to 1,340 employees (+157, 13.3%) and WTE rising from 1,042 to 1,210 (+168, 16.1%). This shows that workforce growth has strengthened overall capacity, not just increased the number of employees.

Growth has remained positive year on year, with the largest increases in both headcount and WTE occurring in 2024. Across the five-year period, the compound annual growth rate was 3.2% for headcount and 3.8% for WTE, indicating broadly consistent expansion across both measures.

The recent increase appears to reflect successful recruitment into roles previously covered by agency staff. Permanent staffing has increased by around 50, while the vacancy rate has reduced from 13.2% to 9.5% and agency use has fallen by 42. The rise in temporary posts mainly relates to grant-funded roles, workload cover and some additional cover for establishment posts, including maternity, sickness and higher long-term sickness absence.

The WTE-to-headcount ratio also increased from 88.1% in 2022 to 90.3% in 2026. This suggests that average contracted hours have risen slightly, with WTE growth outpacing headcount growth over the period.

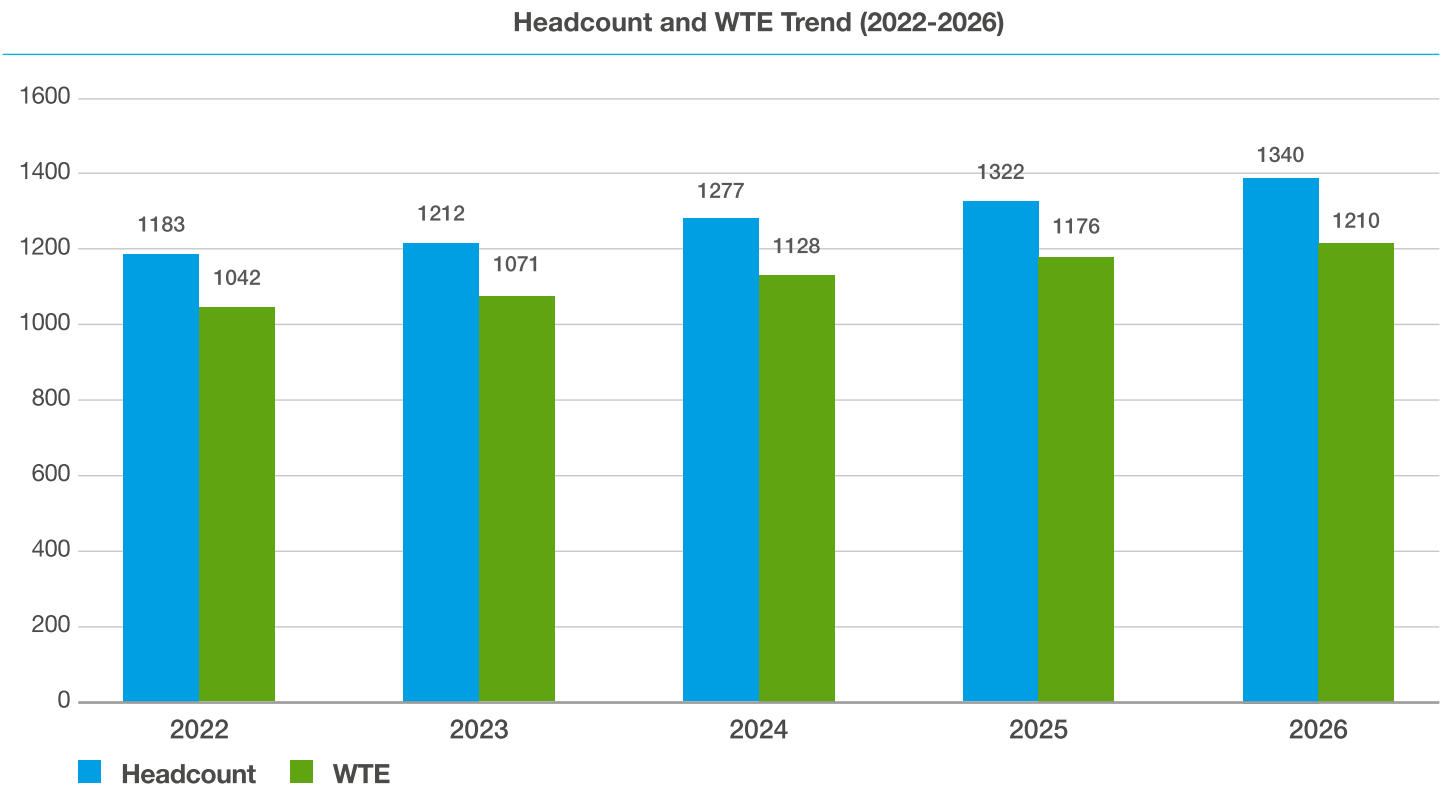
Overall, the pattern points to measured and sustained workforce expansion rather than volatility, supporting workforce planning assumptions of steady growth in funded establishment and improved capacity across the organisation.

Annual Headcount and WTE Trend (2022-2026)

Year	Headcount	WTE	YoY Headcount Δ	YoY Headcount %	YoY WTE Δ	YoY WTE %	WTE as % of Headcount
2022	1183	1042					88.1%
2023	1212	1071	29	2%	29	3%	88.4%
2024	1277	1128	65	5%	57	5%	88.3%
2025	1322	1176	45	4%	48	4%	89.0%
2026	1340	1210	18	1%	34	3%	90.3%

Key establishment metrics (2022–2026)			
Headcount change (net)	WTE change (net)	157	168
Headcount % change	WTE % change	13.3%	16.1%
Headcount CAGR (p.a.)	WTE CAGR (p.a.)	3.2%	3.8%
Avg. annual headcount change	Avg. annual WTE change	39.3	42.0
WTE/Headcount ratio change	Highest headcount growth year	2.2%	2024

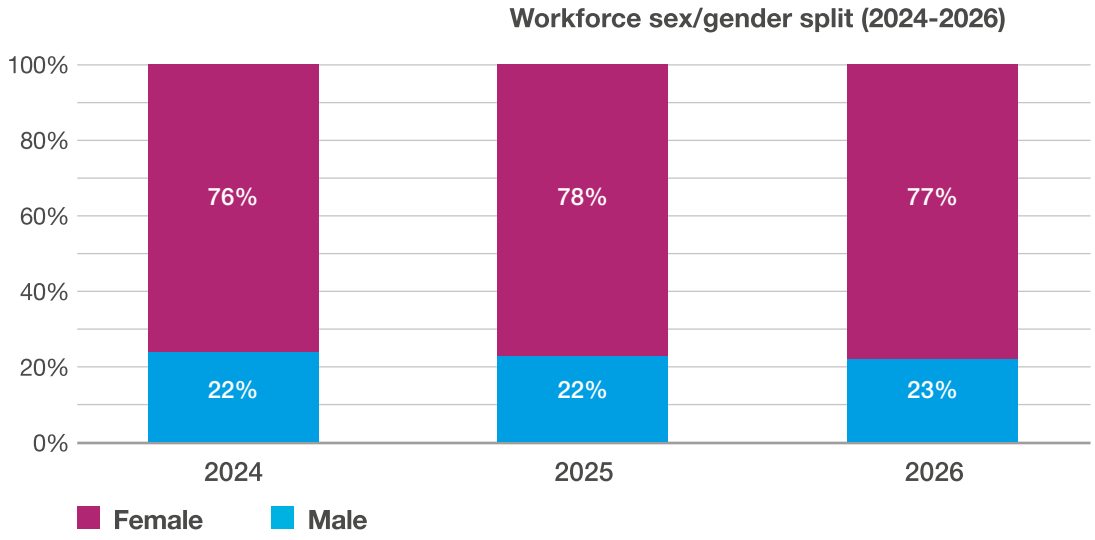
CAGR= (Compound Annual Growth Rate)



Workforce sex profile, 2024 to 2026

Based on the Sex/Gender dataset (workforce profile, starters and leavers).

Metric	2024	2025	2026	Change (pp) 2024 - 2026
Workforce % Male	22%	22%	23%	+1.0%
Workforce % Female	78%	78%	77%	-1.0%
Starters % Male	20%	24%	28%	+8.0%
Starters % Female	80%	76%	72%	-8.0%
Leavers % Male	29%	24%	22%	-7.0%
Leavers % Female	71%	76%	78%	+7.0%



Key insights

Female staff remain the majority of the workforce. In 2026, they accounted for 77 per cent of employees, while men accounted for 23 per cent. The overall sex profile has changed only slightly since 2024, but recruitment data suggests a gradual shift in the incoming workforce. The proportion of male starters increased from 20 per cent in 2024 to 28 per cent in 2026, while the proportion of female starters reduced from 80 per cent to 72 per cent. Leaver data is more mixed: the share of male leavers reduced from 29 per cent to 22 per cent, while the share of female leavers increased from 71 per cent to 78 per cent. Taken together, these trends suggest that the workforce remains predominantly female, but changes in recruitment and retention are gradually influencing the balance.

- Female staff remain the majority. In 2026 they make up 77% of the workforce (–1.0 pp vs 2024).
- Male staff are 23% in 2026 (+1.0 pp vs 2024).

Recruitment (starters):

- The share of male starters rose from 20% in 2024 to 28% in 2026 (+8.0 pp). This suggests recent hiring is becoming more gender balanced.
- Female starters fell from 80% to 72% (–8.0 pp).

Retention (leavers):

- Male leavers dropped from 29% in 2024 to 22% in 2026 (–7.0 pp).
- Female leavers increased from 71% to 78% (+7.0 pp). This could mean women are leaving at a higher rate, or men are being retained more effectively.

Overall impact:

- If these patterns continue, the organisation will slowly move towards a more even gender split. Progress will depend on keeping recruitment fair and tackling any retention issues for women.

Actions

1. Continue inclusive recruitment practices, including balanced panels and gender-neutral wording, and monitor shortlisting trends to test whether the improving starter profile is sustained.
2. Review whether women are leaving for avoidable reasons by analysing exit themes, workload, pay and progression, and access to development.
3. Strengthen flexible and family-friendly working arrangements to support retention and career sustainability.
4. Analyse sex patterns by grade and service area to identify where imbalances are greatest and where targeted action may be needed.
5. Continue improving data quality and consider how non-binary or other identities can be captured and reported more inclusively over time.

    - Check whether women are leaving for avoidable reasons: review exit interview themes, pay/grade progression, workload and access to development.
    - Strengthen flexible and family-friendly options (hybrid working, job-share, predictable hours) to support retention.
    - Break the figures down by grade and service area (use the Gender Grades view) to spot where imbalances are highest and target actions.
    - Improve data quality and inclusion: encourage staff to update records and consider how non-binary/ other identities are captured and reported.



Workforce age profile, 2024 to 2026

Based on the Age dataset (workforce profile, starters and leavers).

	2024	2025	2026	Change (pp) 2024 - 2026
Workforce % Under 30	10%	11%	10%	-0.2 pp
Workforce % 30–39	17%	18%	20%	+2.9 pp
Workforce % 40–49	27%	26%	26%	-1.7 pp
Workforce % 50+	46%	45%	45%	-0.9 pp
Workforce % 65+	4%	4%	3%	-0.9 pp
Starters % Under 30	26%	26%	27%	+1.2 pp
Starters % 30–39	19%	29%	23%	+3.4 pp
Starters % 50+	28%	20%	27%	-0.6 pp
Starters % 65+	4%	1%	1%	-3.5 pp
Leavers % Under 30	22%	20%	18%	-3.8 pp
Leavers % 50+	39%	43%	45%	+5.6 pp
Leavers % 65+	8%	12%	15%	+6.7 pp

Key insights

The workforce remains predominantly mid-to-late career in profile. In 2026, around two thirds of employees were aged 40 to 64. The most notable shift over the period is the growth in the 30 to 39 age group, which increased by nearly three percentage points since 2024. This suggests that the workforce is becoming slightly younger in the middle of the age profile rather than only at entry level. Although the share of employees aged 65 and over remains small and reduced slightly within the workforce overall, the proportion of leavers aged 65 and over increased sharply in 2026, indicating a retirement-related spike that warrants attention.

Context

Across UK local authorities, the workforce is generally older than in many other sectors. Local government data indicates that around two thirds of staff are aged 40 to 64, and recruitment and retention challenges remain particularly acute in specialist and hard-to-fill roles. In this context, Bracknell Forest Council's age profile is not unusual, but the increase in leavers aged 65 and over highlights the need to retain experience where possible while also strengthening early-career and mid-career talent pipelines.

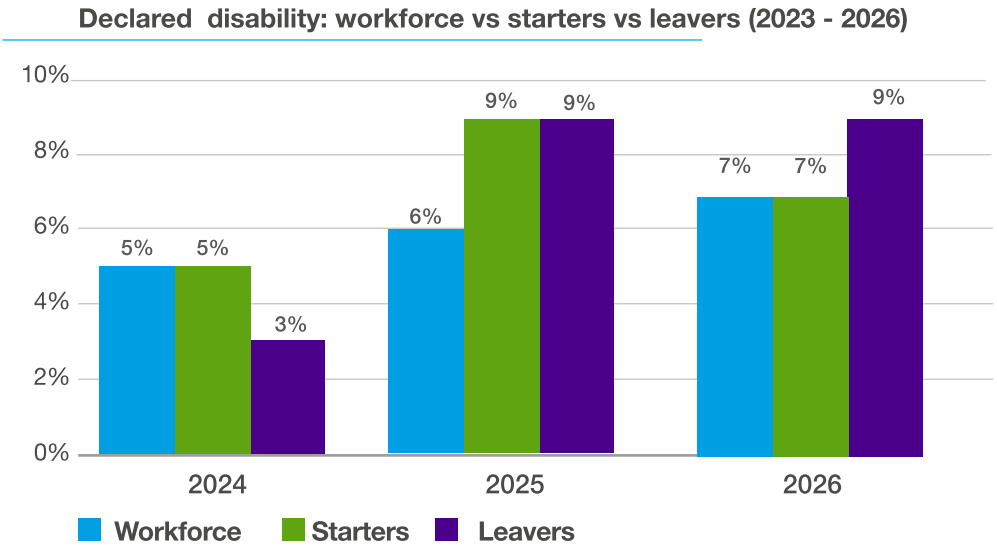
1. Plan proactively for retirements by using the increase in leavers aged 65 and over as an early warning indicator and mapping critical roles, handovers and succession requirements.
2. Strengthen the talent pipeline through apprenticeships, internships and entry routes, and track the under-30 starter profile regularly.
3. Retain experience where possible by supporting flexible working, part-time options and phased retirement approaches in roles where skills are hard to replace.
4. Build on the growth in the 30 to 39 cohort by promoting development, progression and family-friendly policies that support mid-career attraction and retention.
5. Analyse age patterns by service area to identify where retirement risk, recruitment pressure or leadership gaps are most acute.

Sources: LGA workforce summary data (Nov 2025) and DWP 50+ labour market statistics (Sep 2025).

Workforce disability profile, 2024 to 2026

Based on the Disability dataset (workforce profile, starters and leavers).

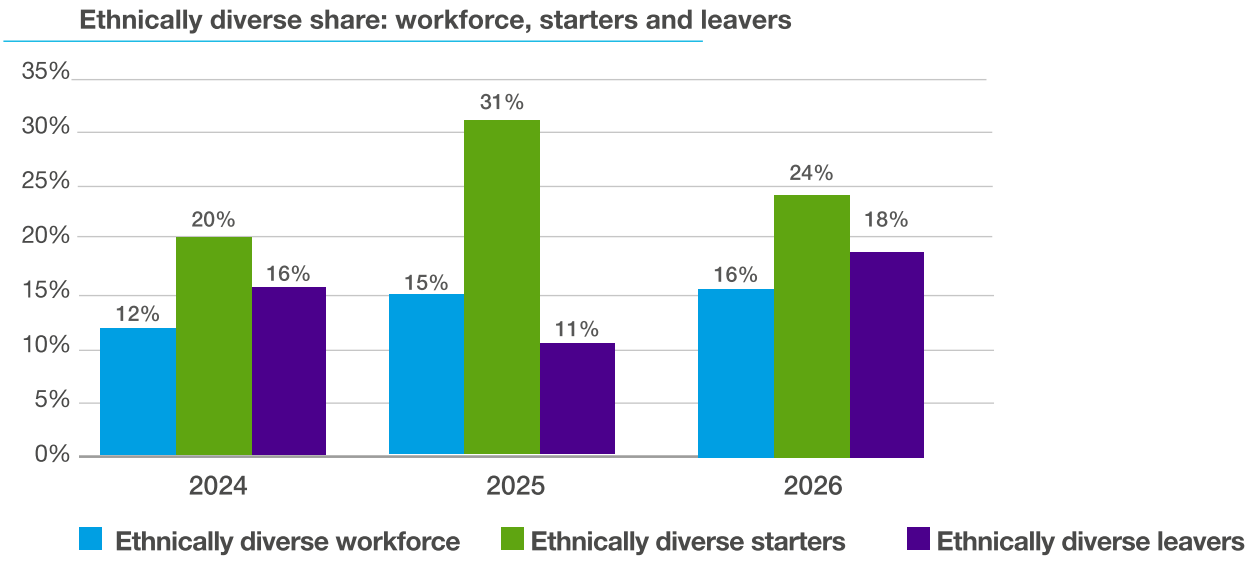
Disabled metrics	2024	2025	2026	Change (pp) 2024 - 2026	Notes	Year	Workforce	Starters	Leavers
Workforce % disabled (declared)	5%	6%	7%	+1.3 pp	Steady increase in declared disability	2024	5%	5%	3%
Starters % disabled (declared)	5%	9%	7%	+1.4 pp	2025 spike; 2026 remains above 2024	2025	6%	9%	9%
Leavers % disabled (declared)	3%	9%	9%	+6.1 pp	Leavers higher than workforce share by 2025–26	2026	7%	7%	9%



Key insights

Overall, declared disability increased from 5.29 per cent in 2024 to 6.60 per cent in 2026, indicating gradual improvement in workforce visibility and possibly greater confidence in declaration. Recruitment also showed some positive movement. The proportion of disabled starters rose from 5.47 per cent in 2024 to 6.90 per cent in 2026, although results fluctuated during the period and are not yet fully consistent. The sharper concern is retention. Disabled leavers rose from 3.27 per cent in 2024 to around 9.40 per cent in both 2025 and 2026. By the end of the reporting period, the proportion of disabled leavers was higher than the declared disability share within the workforce, suggesting a material retention risk. While small numbers may contribute to year-on-year variation, the overall pattern indicates a need for closer attention to workplace adjustments, day-to-day inclusion, and the experience of disabled employees across the employment cycle.

Workforce Ethnicity Profile, 2024 to 2026



Measure	2024	2025	2026	Change 24 - 26 (pp)	Executive read-across
BAME ethnically diverse workforce (Asian + Black + Mixed + Other)	12.1%	15.0%	16.2%	4.1	Representation is rising and is now slightly ahead of the Bracknell Forest resident profile.
White workforce	78.7%	76.5%	75.4%	-3.3	White share is reducing gradually as the workforce becomes more diverse.
Not provided	9.2%	8.5%	8.4%	-0.8	Unknown data is improving but remains material enough to affect confidence.
BAME ethnically diverse starters	20.4%	31.4%	23.9%	3.5	Starters remain more diverse than the existing workforce, supporting future representation.
BAME ethnically diverse leavers	16.2%	10.8%	17.6%	1.4	Leavers rose slightly by 2026; monitor for retention or experience differences.

Category	2024 Workforce	2025 Workforce	2026 Workforce	Change 24 - 26 (pp)	2026 Starters	2026 Leavers	What it suggests
Asian	5.4%	6.4%	6.7%	1.3	8.2%	6.3%	Largest ethnic minority category locally; steady growth in workforce share.
Black	4.0%	5.6%	6.2%	2.2	11.4%	8.2%	Strongest proportional growth across the period; starters remain above workforce share.
Mixed / Multiple heritage	1.9%	2.2%	2.2%	0.3	3.8%	3.1%	Small but stable group; recruitment is slightly ahead of current profile.
Other ethnic group	0.8%	0.8%	1.1%	0.3	0.5%	0.0%	Still small but increasing; small numbers may move percentages quickly.
White	78.7%	76.5%	75.4%	-3.3	65.8%	73.6%	Majority workforce group, but share is reducing gradually.
Not provided	9.2%	8.5%	8.4%	-0.8	10.3%	8.8%	A persistent gap; work is needed to improve declaration confidence.



Key insights

The workforce is becoming more ethnically diverse, and the direction of travel is positive. The ethnically diverse workforce share increased from 12.1 per cent in 2024 to 16.2 per cent in 2026, a rise of 4.1 percentage points. This is a meaningful shift over a relatively short period and suggests that recruitment, labour market change and improved declaration are beginning to reshape the workforce profile.

The strongest category movements are in Asian and Black representation. Asian colleagues increased from 5.4 per cent to 6.7 per cent, while Black colleagues increased from 4.0 per cent to 6.2 per cent. Mixed or multiple heritage also increased modestly, and the 'Other ethnic group' category, while still small, rose slightly. Over the same period, the White workforce share reduced from 78.7 per cent to 75.4 per cent, consistent with a more diverse overall workforce.

Recruitment continues to be a key driver of change. In 2026, ethnically diverse starters accounted for 23.9 per cent of all starters, well above the 16.2 per cent workforce profile. This means the intake remains more diverse than the existing workforce and, if retention and progression are strong, should continue to improve representation over time. However, starters were even more diverse in 2025 at 31.4 per cent, so the 2026 position will be kept under review to understand whether this is a temporary fluctuation or the start of a different recruitment pattern.

Leaver data requires careful monitoring. Ethnically diverse leavers accounted for 16.2 per cent of leavers in 2024, fell to 10.8 per cent in 2025 and rose to 17.6 per cent in 2026. The 2026 figure is slightly above the workforce profile, which does not in itself prove a problem, but it does indicate the need to test whether turnover differs by ethnicity, grade, service, length of service or reason for leaving. The remaining data-quality issue is non-disclosure. Although the 'not provided' category improved in the workforce profile, reducing from 9.2 per cent to 8.4 per cent, it remains high enough to affect confidence in the full picture. The increase in non-disclosure among starters in 2026 also suggests that new-joiner declaration confidence needs further attention.

Context

The local context reinforces why this matters. Census 2021 shows that Bracknell Forest is becoming more diverse, with the ethnically diverse resident population increasing over time. The workforce's 2026 ethnically diverse share is now slightly above the local resident aggregate, although the profile differs across ethnic groups. For workforce planning, the key issue is not only overall representation but whether diversity is sustained through recruitment, retention, progression and senior leadership. The current data is encouraging on recruitment, but the next phase should focus more clearly on retention, progression, disclosure confidence and inclusive culture across the employee life cycle.

The local population trend is important for workforce planning. Bracknell Forest's BAME / ethnically diverse population increased from 9.4% in 2011 to 13.9% in 2021, and the borough's population grew faster than England and the Southeast. Local government workforces need to keep pace with changing communities, particularly in visible, resident-facing and leadership roles.

For councils, the key question is no longer only "is the workforce diverse?" but "is diversity flowing through recruitment, retention, progression and senior decision-making?" The current data is encouraging on recruitment, but the next phase should focus on retention, progression, and reducing the unknown / not provided rate and most importantly embedding an inclusive culture across the employee life cycle.

Actions

1. Protect recruitment gains by continuing to review inclusive shortlisting, structured interviews and panel diversity, particularly where starter profiles are more diverse than the overall workforce.
2. Test retention more closely by comparing turnover, exit themes and first-year leavers by ethnic group, grade and service, prioritising any areas where ethnically diverse leavers are above workforce representation.
3. Strengthen progression analysis by reviewing representation across grades and leadership pipelines, recognising that diversity at entry level does not automatically translate into senior representation.
4. Improve declaration confidence by making ethnicity updates easier in self-service systems, explaining why the data matters, and linking disclosure clearly to workforce planning and inclusion rather than compliance alone.
5. Use local context by comparing the workforce with both the Bracknell Forest resident profile and the wider regional labour market, particularly for professional and hard-to-fill roles.
6. Report consistently by using the ethnically diverse aggregate for the headline narrative while also showing Asian, Black, Mixed or Multiple heritage and Other ethnic group categories beneath it so that different experiences are not obscured.

Sources

Source context: ONS Census 2021 Bracknell Forest area profile and Bracknell Forest Council Census 2021 analysis. In this section, “ethnically diverse” refers to Asian, Black, Mixed or Multiple heritage, and Other ethnic group categories. “Not provided” is reported separately and is not allocated to any category. Percentage point change is shown as 2026 minus 2024.



Workforce religion and belief analysis, 2024 to 2026

Based on the highlighted Religion dataset (Workforce profile, Starters and Leavers). Percentages show the share within each group for each year.

Measure	2024	2025	2026	Change 24 - 26 (pp)
Workforce – Christian	41%	41%	40%	-1.1 pp
Workforce – No religion	31%	32%	32%	0.8 pp
Workforce – Other faiths (combined)	7%	7%	8%	0.9 pp
Workforce – Not provided	20%	19%	19%	-0.8 pp
Starters – Christian	38%	42%	34%	-4.6 pp
Starters – No religion	32%	31%	30%	-1.9 pp
Starters – Other faiths (combined)	7%	8%	11%	3.9 pp
Starters – Not provided	22%	19%	25%	2.6 pp
Leavers – Christian	38%	42%	42%	3.6 pp
Leavers – No religion	29%	29%	32%	2.7 pp
Leavers – Other faiths (combined)	10%	6%	5%	-5.4 pp
Leavers – Not provided	22%	23%	21%	-0.8 pp

Category	2024	2025	2026
Christian	41%	41%	40%
No religion	31%	32%	32%
Other faiths	7%	7%	8%
Not provided	20%	19%	19%

Breakdown of other faith groups, 2024 to 2026

Faith group	2024	2025	2026	Change 24 - 26 (pp)
Buddhist	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%	6.0%
Hinduism	1.6%	1.8%	1.7%	12.0%
Jewish	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%	-14.0%
Muslim	1.5%	1.7%	2.2%	70.0%
Sikhism	1.3%	1.1%	1.5%	24.0%
Other	2.6%	2.5%	2.5%	-10.0%

Quick read: In the workforce profile, the clearest growth is in 'Muslim' and 'Sikhism'. Most other faith groups are very small, so a change of a few people can move the % noticeably.

Starters – other faiths breakdown (2024–2026)

Faith group	2024	2025	2026	Change 24 - 26 (pp)
Buddhist	0.00%	0.00%	0.50%	0.50
Hinduism	1.49%	2.90%	1.10%	-0.39
Jewish	2.49%	0.00%	0.00%	-2.49
Muslim	0.00%	2.42%	4.90%	4.90
Sikhism	1.99%	0.97%	2.70%	0.71
Other	1.49%	1.93%	2.20%	0.71

Quick read: Starters show the biggest swing in 'Muslim' by 2026. Hiring numbers are small hence the big swing

Leavers – other faiths breakdown (2024–2026)

Faith group	2024	2025	2026	Change 24 - 26 (pp)
Buddhist	0.00%	0.60%	0.00%	0.00
Hinduism	2.61%	1.30%	1.30%	-1.31
Jewish	0.00%	0.60%	0.00%	0.00
Muslim	5.23%	0.60%	1.30%	-3.93
Sikhism	1.31%	1.30%	0.60%	-0.71
Other	1.31%	1.90%	1.90%	0.59

Quick read: Leavers for minority faith groups fluctuate year to year. This is treated as an early warning indicator, requiring monitoring the underlying numbers and any themes from exit feedback.

Key insights

The council's religion and belief profile remained broadly stable between 2024 and 2026, while continuing a gradual shift away from Christian affiliation and towards no religion. Christian representation reduced slightly from 41 per cent to 40 per cent, while the proportion reporting no religion increased from 31 per cent to 32 per cent. Other faiths increased overall from 7 per cent to 8 per cent, although changes within individual faith groups should be interpreted cautiously because small numbers can produce marked percentage movements.

Non-disclosure remains the main limitation. Around one fifth of employees have not provided religion or belief information, reducing confidence in detailed comparisons and making it harder to assess whether recruitment, retention or employee experience differs by faith group. Non-disclosure is also higher among starters than across the workforce overall, indicating a need to strengthen declaration confidence during onboarding.

The practical implication is the need for consistently inclusive language, respectful management and reasonable flexibility for faith-related needs. The data does not currently support firm conclusions about differential outcomes by religion or belief; percentages should therefore be considered alongside underlying headcounts and wider staff insight.

Context and impact

These patterns broadly reflect wider national and local trends. Census 2021 showed a continuing reduction in Christian affiliation and growth in the proportion of people reporting no religion. Religion and belief also remains one of the equality characteristics with lower workforce disclosure, so improving trust in how personal information is collected, protected and used is essential before stronger conclusions can be drawn.

A more varied religion and belief profile reinforces the importance of inclusive everyday practice. Managers should be equipped to respond consistently to requests relating to prayer, dress, personal protective equipment, diet and flexibility around religious observance. Staff voice should also be used alongside workforce data to identify practical barriers that may not be visible in the headline figures.

Actions

1. Improve declaration confidence by explaining why religion and belief data is collected, how confidentiality is protected and how the information supports inclusion.
2. Provide managers with practical guidance on faith-related adjustments, for example including prayer, dress or diet and flexibility around key festivals where appropriate.
3. Continue monitoring workforce, starter and leaver patterns by religion and belief, using underlying headcounts and treating small-number changes cautiously.
4. Use staff voice and listening activity to identify practical barriers affecting colleagues of different faiths or no religion.
5. Review whether non-disclosure is concentrated in particular services or employee groups so that engagement can be targeted where appropriate.

Sources:

ONS – Religion, England and Wales (Census 2021): https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/religion/bulletins/religionenglandandwales/census2021

Example council equality report on religion disclosure (Southend-on-Sea City Council): https://www.southend.gov.uk/equality-diversity-0/equality-report/6

Workforce Sexual Orientation – Narrative Summary (2024–2026)

Based on Workforce Profile, Starters and Leavers from the Sexual Orientation dataset.

Key numbers (shares of total)

Measure	2024	2025	2026	Change 24 - 26 (pp)
LGBTQ+ (workforce)	4%	4%	5%	1%
Not provided (workforce)	23%	21%	19%	-4%
Declaration rate (work-force)	77%	79%	81%	4%
LGBTQ+ (starters)	6%	6%	5%	-1%
Not provided (starters)	13%	8%	11%	-2%
LGBQ+ (leavers)	5%	4%	3%	-3%
Not provided (leavers)	25%	23%	20%	-5%

Trend (LGBTQ+ share)

Year	Workforce LGBTQ+	Starters LGBTQ+	Leavers LGBTQ+
2024	4%	6%	5%
2025	4%	6%	4%
2026	5%	5%	3%

Key Insight

Overall picture: the visible LGBTQ+ share of the workforce has risen from 3.9% in 2024 to 4.8% in 2026 (0.9pp). Much of the movement looks driven by improved disclosure rather than a sudden shift in who works here.

Disclosure is improving: “Not provided” has fallen from 23.1% to 18.9% (-4.3pp). Even so, around 1 in 5 colleagues still don’t record their sexual orientation, which limits how confidently we can interpret small movements year to year.

Recruitment pipeline: LGB+ starters sit around 6.0%–6.3%, ending at 5.4% in 2026. This is higher than the overall workforce mix, suggesting new joiners are slightly more diverse (or more willing to disclose).

Retention signal (handle with care): LGBTQ+ leavers fall from 5.2% in 2024 to 2.5% in 2026 (-2.7pp). This could be positive on retention and inclusion, but these groups are small so percentages can swing with a few leavers.

Benchmark sense-check: among colleagues who have declared, the LGB+ share rises from about 5.0% (2024) to 5.9% (2026). For context, ONS estimates around 3.7% of UK adults identify as LGBTQ+ in 2024, and the Civil Service reports 7.2% LGBTQ+ among declared staff (31 March 2025). [See Sources below]

UK public sector / local authority context

UK public sector context:• ONS estimates suggest the share of people identifying as LGB is rising over time, especially among younger adults. This matters for councils because early career recruitment is key to long term workforce sustainability.• Public sector bodies that actively improve disclosure and inclusion tend to report higher declaration rates (for example, the Civil Service reports a 74.1% declaration rate for sexual orientation in 2025).Bracknell Forest context (local baseline):• Census 2021 provides sexual orientation breakdowns by local authority area (including Bracknell Forest) via ONS tools. Use this as a sense-check for how well your workforce reflects the community you serve.

Actions

- Make it easier (and safer) to declare: run a short “why we ask” campaign, include privacy wording, and make self-service updates simple.
- Focus on line manager confidence: practical guidance on inclusive language, dealing with inappropriate behaviour, and supporting people who are not “out”.
- Use joiner/leaver insight: add an optional question in exit and induction surveys about inclusion and belonging (anonymous, with small-number safeguards).
- Strengthen visible allyship: support an LGBT+ staff network (or link into regional networks), and encourage senior sponsors and Pride activity.
- Track what matters: monitor “Not provided” regularly and by service area/grade to spot pockets where confidence to disclose is lower.

Sources

1) ONS – Sexual orientation, UK: 2024 (APS estimates): https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/sexuality/bulletins/sexualidentityuk/2024

2) Cabinet Office – Civil Service Statistics 2025 (sexual orientation section): https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/civil-service-statistics-2025/statistical-bulletin-civil-service-statistics-2025

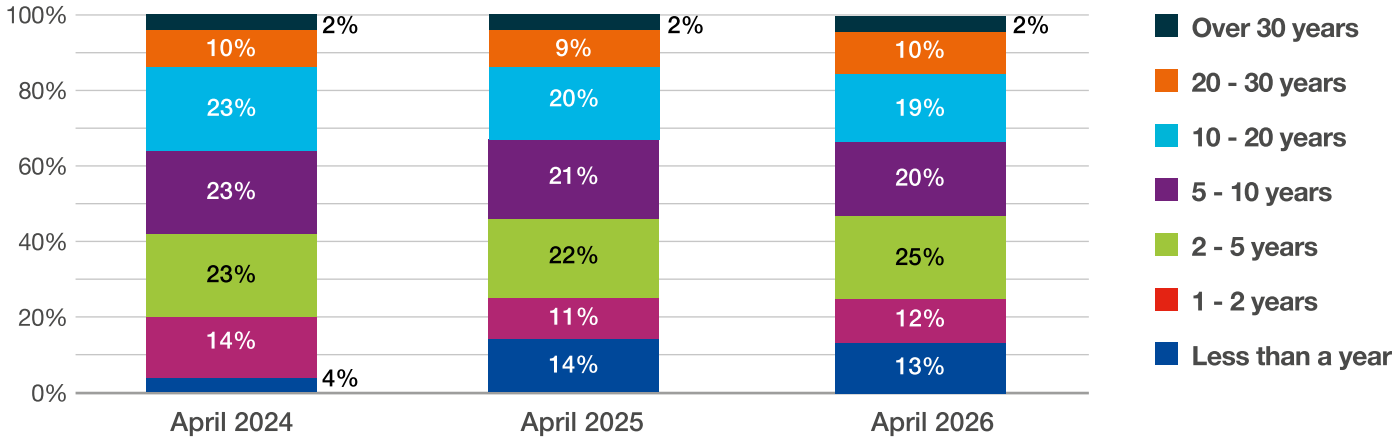
3) ONS – Census 2021 maps (Bracknell Forest local authority)

Length of Service (LoS) – Workforce profile (Apr 2024 to Apr 2026)

Snapshot of how long colleagues have been with BFC, showing the last 3 April snapshots and how the mix is shifting.

Service length	Apr-24	Apr-25	Apr-26	Change 24-25 (pp)	Change 25-26 (pp)	Change 24-26 (pp)	Trend
Less than a year	4%	14%	13%	10.1%	-1.3%	8.8%	▲
1 - 2 years	14%	11%	12%	-3.4%	1.0%	-2.4%	▼
2 - 5 years	23%	22%	25%	-1.4%	2.5%	1.1%	▲
5 - 10 years	23%	21%	20%	-2.2%	-1.6%	-3.8%	▼
10 - 20 years	23%	20%	19%	-2.2%	-1.1%	-3.2%	▼
20 - 30 years	10%	9%	10%	-0.4%	0.6%	0.2%	→
Over 30 years	2%	2%	2%	-0.5%	0.0%	-0.5%	▼

LoS distribution (share of workforce) – Apr 2024 to Apr 2026



Key Insights

Over the last three years the workforce has become noticeably newer. Short tenure (under 2 years) rose from 18.6% in Apr 2024 to 25.0% in Apr 2026 (+6.4% points).

The biggest shift happened between Apr 2024 and Apr 2025, when the 'less than a year' group jumped from 4.3% to 14.4%. It stayed high in Apr 2026 at 13.1%.

Longer service (10+ years) has reduced from 34.6% to 31.0% over the period (-3.6% points), which can increase pressure on knowledge transfer and mentoring.

The 5–20 year groups have shrunk the most, suggesting we may be losing experienced colleagues faster than we are replacing that experience.

Likely impact

- More new starters means more time needed for induction, training and supervision.
- A smaller long-service cohort can mean less corporate memory and fewer experienced mentors. If mid-tenure continues to fall, succession planning and service resilience become harder.

Actions (practical next steps)

1. Strengthen onboarding: a consistent 30/60/90-day plan plus buddying for every starter.
2. Protect experience: introduce knowledge-capture for key roles (especially where 5–20 year tenure is falling).
3. Retention focus on mid-career staff: career pathways, development offers, and "stay interviews" before people decide to leave.
4. Workforce planning: identify teams with high churn and prioritise targeted retention and recruitment there.
5. Keep listening: use exit themes + pulse surveys to spot pressure points early (workload, progression, pay, management support).

Executive Summary – Turnover Rates

Comparison of 2024-25 and 2025-26 voluntary turnover rates across protected characteristics

Overview Narrative

Voluntary turnover in 2025-26 shows a broadly less favourable pattern than in 2024-25 across several protected characteristics. The clearest areas of concern are age and ethnicity, where multiple groups recorded materially higher turnover rates year on year.

The most significant increase in turnover was seen in the under-19 age group, where turnover rose from 20.0% to 52.9% (+32.9 percentage points). This is partly explained by the seasonal nature of roles within the Look Out service, where a number of short-term summer employees left at the end of their contracts or to take up university places. Turnover also increased among employees aged 65 and over, rising from 30.8% to 43.4% (+12.6 percentage points), highlighting higher levels of attrition at both the early-entry and later-career stages of the workforce.

Ethnicity results also worsened overall. BAME ethnically diverse employee's turnover increased from 6.0% to 11.8% (+5.8 pp), with notable increases for Asian (2.3% to 11.1%), Black (9.7% to 13.1%) and Mixed employees (10.0% to 16.1%). This suggests a continued need to review inclusion, progression and employee experience for minority ethnic groups.

Sex/gender turnover remained relatively stable at around 10% for both male and female employees.

Disability turnover remains a concern: the rate for disabled employees improved slightly from 14.8% to 13.5%, but still sits above the rate for non-disabled employees at 9.8% in 2025-26.

Some demographic categories show volatile results, including bisexual employees (27.8% to 22.2%) and religion categories such as Muslim employees (0.0% to 6.7%). These movements should be interpreted with caution where underlying staff numbers are small, but they are still important signals for targeted follow-up.

Key insights

- Biggest increase: Under 19 turnover rose by +32.9 pp.
- Older-worker attrition also worsened: 65+ increased by +12.6 pp.
- Ethnicity disparities widened, especially Asian (+8.8 pp), overall BAME ethnically diverse employees (+5.8 pp), Black (+3.4 pp) and Mixed (+6.1 pp).
- Disability gap persists disabled employee turnover remains above non-disabled turnover despite a modest improvement.
- Highest current reported rates include Under 19 (52.9%), 65+ (43.4%) and Bisexual employees (22.2%).
- Some reductions were recorded, notably Sikh (13.3% to 5.0%) and Bisexual employees (27.8% to 22.2%), although the latter remains high.
- Religion results were mixed: Muslim, Other, Hindu and Not Known increased, while Sikh reduced materially year on year.

Local Authority + national context (benchmarks and insights)

- Local Authority context: councils report persistent recruitment and retention pressure, which can amplify turnover risk in hard-to-fill roles (LGA workforce survey).
- National comparator: large public-sector employers publish headline turnover and leaver statistics (e.g., UK Civil Service) that can be used as a high-level benchmark when sense-checking churn.
- Equity lens: national equality reporting highlights persistent gaps in staff experience and progression for some ethnic minority groups — known contributors to avoidable attrition if unaddressed.

Sources (links): LGA Workforce Survey | Civil Service Statistics | NHS WRES / Ethnicity Facts and Figures

https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/LG%20Workforce%20survey%202024-25%20report%20-final%2020250609.pdf | https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/civil-service-statistics-2025/statistical-bulletin-civil-service-statistics-2025 | https://www.england.nhs.uk/2023/02/new-figures-show-nhs-workforce-most-diverse-it-has-ever-been/ | https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/workforce-and-business/workforce-diversity/nhs-workforce/latest/

Section	Group	2024-25	2025-26	Change (pp)
Sex/Gender	Male	9%	10%	1%
Sex/Gender	Female	9%	10%	1%
Age Band	Under 19	20%	53%	33%
Age Band	65+	31%	43%	13%
Ethnicity	BAME	6%	12%	6%
Ethnicity	Asian	2%	11%	9%
Ethnicity	Black	10%	13%	3%
Ethnicity	Mixed	10%	16%	6%
Disabled	Yes	15%	14%	-1%
Sexual Orientation	Bisexual	28%	22%	-6%
Religion	Buddhist	0%	0%	0%
Religion	Christian	9%	10%	1%
Religion	Hindu	4%	9%	5%
Religion	Jew	0%	0%	0%
Religion	Muslim	0%	7%	7%
Religion	Other	3%	9%	6%
Religion	Sikh	13%	5%	-8%
Religion	None	9%	10%	1%

Action

1. Undertake a retention review for the highest-risk groups, particularly Under 19, 65+, BAME and Mixed/ Black/Asian employee groups. (Large swings can reflect small base sizes, cohort effects, or local hotspots (team/location/grade)).
2. Segment exit interview themes, tenure data and manager/team data by protected characteristic to identify the main drivers of voluntary turnover.
3. Review onboarding, early-career support and line management for younger staff, where turnover has increased sharply.
4. Undertake a focused inclusion and employee-experience review for minority ethnic groups to understand whether progression, belonging or workplace culture are contributing factors.
5. Continue targeted support for disabled employees and test whether reasonable adjustments, wellbeing support and manager capability are affecting retention outcomes.
6. Strengthen monitoring for small or unknown populations so that high or zero rates can be interpreted alongside headcount and leaver volumes, not percentages alone.
7. Introduce quarterly dashboard monitoring with escalation thresholds for any protected group whose turnover exceeds the organisational norm or shows a sharp year-on-year increase.



Reasons for Leaving Insights:

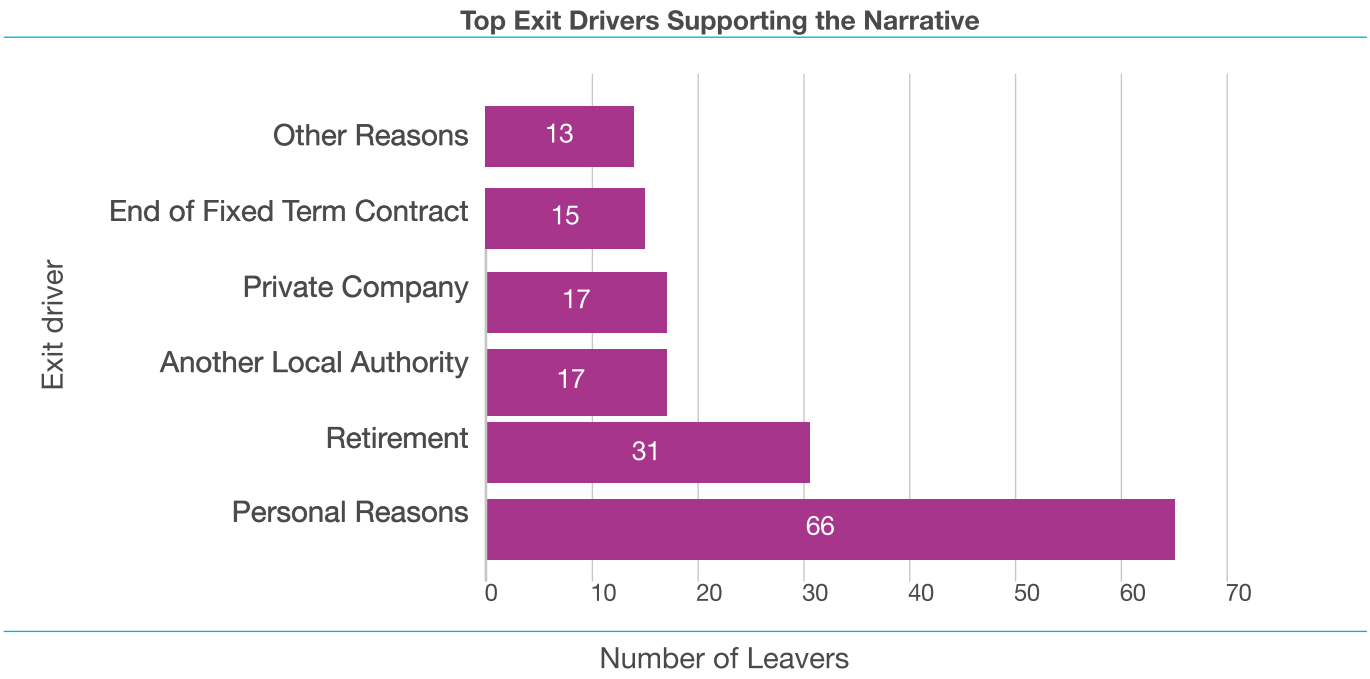
Reason for Leaving – Exit Drivers and Leaver Mix

Total Leavers	Voluntary	Involuntary	Top Driver
159	135 (85%)	24 (15%)	Personal Reasons

Exit Driver	Count
Personal Reasons	66
Retirement	31
Another Local Authority	17
Private Company	17
End of Fixed Term Contract	15
Other Reasons	13

Leaver Type	Count
Voluntary	135
Involuntary	24

Key message: exits are overwhelmingly voluntary, and Personal Reasons is the largest driver. This supports the report's focus on retention conversations, retirement planning, and fixed-term contract management.



The data insights shows 159 leavers in total, with 135 voluntary exits (85%) and 24 involuntary exits (15%). Overall attrition is therefore primarily employee-led, with voluntary departures accounting for the clear majority of movement across the period.

Primary drivers of exit
Voluntary turnover is concentrated in a small number of categories. Personal Reasons is the dominant driver with 66 cases (49% of voluntary exits), followed by Retirement with 31 cases (23%). Another Local Authority and Private Company each account for 17 cases (13% each). Together, these four reasons explain 131 of 135 voluntary exits, indicating that most voluntary loss is linked to personal choice, retirement, or external career moves.

Involuntary profile
Involuntary exits are far more concentrated. End of Fixed Term Contract accounts for 15 of 24 cases (63%), making it the principal driver by a wide margin. Retirement - Ill Health contributes 4 cases (17%), while Failed Probation contributes 2 cases (8%). This suggests the involuntary profile is driven more by contract endings than by disciplinary or capability-related issues.

Demographic insights
Among voluntary leavers, women account for 106 of 135 exits (79%) and men 29 (21%). White employees represent 97 of 135 voluntary leavers (72%), while Black and Asian employees each account for 10 cases. Where sexual orientation is recorded, Heterosexual / Straight employees represent 98 of 114 voluntary leavers (86%). Among involuntary leavers, women account for 18 of 24 cases (75%) and White employees 20 of 24 cases (83%).

Age pattern
Voluntary exits are spread across working-age groups, but the heaviest concentration sits in the 30-39, 40-49, and 50-59 bands, each with 25 exits (19% each). Personal Reasons is the leading factor across mid-career bands, while Retirement is concentrated in the 60-64 and 65+ groups, where it becomes the main driver of exit.

Disability and religion context
For records where disability status is captured in the highlighted summary, 71 of 86 voluntary leavers are recorded as not disabled (83%) and 12 as disabled (14%). In the religion-based voluntary summary, Christian employees account for 51 of 113 recorded cases (45%) and those with no religion account for 44 (39%), with Personal Reasons and Retirement dominating both groups.

Overall summary interpretation
The data points to a workforce story shaped mainly by voluntary attrition rather than organisationally managed exits. The retention focus remains reducing Personal Reasons turnover in the core 30-59 age bands, while workforce planning should anticipate ongoing retirement-related exits. For involuntary movement, monitoring fixed-term contract design, renewal planning, and succession cover would likely have the greatest impact.

Actions
1) Target retention interviews in teams with high Personal Reasons exits. 2) Build retirement and succession plans for older age bands. 3) Review fixed-term contract conversion and renewal pathways. 4) Continue improving completion of demographic fields so future insight is based on a fuller evidence set.

Workforce Grade Summary Analysis

Grade	Headcount	Female %	Male %	BAME Ethnically diverse %	White %	Ethnicity not provided %	Declared disabled %	Disability not provided %	LGB+ %	Sexual Orientation not provided %
Admin Graded (BG H-K) - (£24,413 to £35,412)	549	80.9%	19.1%	13.7%	76.1%	10.2%	6.6%	40.1%	4.9%	20.7%
Officer Graded (BG G-F) - (BG G-F (£36,363 to £47,181)	444	78.8%	21.2%	17.1%	75.7%	7.2%	5.9%	38.3%	5.6%	18.9%
Middle Management (BG D-E) - (£48,226 to £59,999)	225	69.8%	30.2%	20.4%	71.1%	8.4%	8.0%	39.6%	3.1%	25.2%
Senior Management (BG A-C and Sen Salaries) - (£61,091 to £81,261 and above)	113	66.4%	33.6%	16.8%	78.8%	4.4%	7.1%	33.6%	2.7%	16.1%
Other	22	90.9%	9.1%	18.2%	72.7%	9.1%	9.1%	50.0%	10%	0%
Grand Total	*1,353	77.3%	22.7%	16.3%	75.3%	8.4%	6.7%	39.0%	5.3%	18.9%
*the total includes 13 parttime individuals occupying dual grades.										

Ethnic origin breakdown by grade	Asian	Black	Mixed Heritage	Other	White	Not Provided	Total
Admin Graded (BG H-K) - (£24,413 to £35,412)	4.9%	5.1%	2.6%	1.1%	76.1%	10.2%	549
Officer Graded (BG G-F) - (BG G-F (£36,363 to £47,181)	6.1%	6.8%	2.9%	1.4%	75.7%	7.2%	444
Middle Management (BG D-E) - (£48,226 to £59,999)	10.7%	8.0%	0.9%	0.9%	71.1%	8.4%	225
Senior Management (BG A-C and Sen Salaries) - (£61,091 to £81,261 and above)	10.6%	6.2%	0.0%	0.0%	78.8%	4.4%	113
Other	0.0%	4.5%	9.1%	4.5%	72.7%	9.1%	22
Grand Total	6.7%	6.2%	2.3%	1.1%	75.3%	8.4%	1,353
*the total includes 13 parttime individuals occupying dual grades.							

Key insights

The 2026 grade profile shows a workforce that is strongly female overall, increasingly ethnically diverse in key grade bands, and still carrying sizeable gaps in declaration data. The strongest inclusion story is ethnic diversity: Asian, Black, Mixed Heritage and Other ethnic groups account for around 16.3% of staff.

Middle Management has the highest ethnically diverse representation (20.4%), followed by Other (18.2%), Officer Graded (17.1%) and Senior Management (16.8%).

This suggests progression into management is present, but will be monitored to ensure it is sustained and visible across all services.

Female representation remains high at 77.3% overall. It is strongest in Admin Graded roles (80.9%) and remains high in Officer and Middle Management roles. Senior Management is still majority female (66.4%), but the drop from the wider workforce mix suggests there may be a senior progression gap to watch, particularly for talent pipelines and succession planning.

Declared disability is 6.7% overall. Middle Management (8.0%) and Senior Management (7.1%) are above the overall rate, which is positive. However, disability declaration quality is weak: 39.0% of staff are recorded as 'Not Provided'. This limits confidence and means the council should be cautious about drawing firm conclusions until disclosure improves.

Sexual orientation data is the least complete. Around 18.9% is 'Not Provided', and visible LGB+ representation in the grade dataset is low at 0.9%. This grade view should be treated as a data quality signal as much as a representation signal.

Overall impact: the grade profile points to a broadly positive direction on ethnic diversity and visible representation in management, but also highlights two practical risks: senior progression for women and under-declaration in disability and sexual orientation. Better data, structured progression checks and inclusive recruitment panels will make the next report more robust and actionable.

UK Local Authority + Bracknell Forest context

Local government workforce diversity matters because councils deliver universal services and need staff insight that reflects the communities they serve. LGA workforce data and wider EDI research emphasise better data completeness, transparent reporting and practical action on recruitment, progression and retention.

Bracknell Forest Census 2021 context: 86.1% White, 7.1% Asian, 2.4% Black, 3.1% Mixed and 1.3% Other ethnic group. The grade dataset's overall ethnically diverse collegues share is 16.3%, which is above the broad local population aggregate of 13.9%, but representation varies by grade and should not be read as a reason to stop action.

Sources: ONS Census 2021 Bracknell Forest; Local Government Association workforce data; Shared Intelligence / Solace local government EDI research.

Action

1. Keep ethnic diversity moving through the pipeline: Middle and Officer grades show strong representation. Use shortlisting, interview and promotion checks to keep this feeding into senior roles.
2. Review senior progression: women remain a majority in Senior Management, but the proportion is lower than the wider workforce. Review talent pools, acting-up opportunities and leadership development by sex/gender and ethnicity together.
3. Improve declaration confidence: disability and sexual orientation fields have high ‘Not Provided’ rates. Run a short, reassuring communications push explaining why data is collected, how it is protected and how staff can update it.
4. Use intersectional checks: look at grade plus ethnicity, sex/gender and disability together, not only one characteristic at a time. This will help identify whether barriers sit in particular services, grades or progression routes.



Promotions Insights Report

Year-on-year narrative review of promotions by gender, ethnicity, age and disability using worksheets Promotions analysis 24-25 and Promotions analysis 25-26

Headline metric	2024-25	2025-26	Change	Themed Insights	Narrative
Staff in post	1322	1340	18	Overall trend	Promotions softened in 2025-26 despite a slightly larger workforce. Total promotions fell from 59 to 49 while staff in post increased from 1,322 to 1,340, reducing the overall promotion rate from 4.5% to 3.7% and moving the overall ratio from 1 in 22 to 1 in 27.
Promotions	59	49	-10	Gender	Women continued to account for most promotions, but the female promotion rate fell from 4.6% to 3.6% as promotions declined from 48 to 37. Male promotions rose slightly from 11 to 12 and the rate edged up from 3.8% to 3.9%, narrowing the gender gap.
Promotion rate	4%	4%	-0.8%	Ethnicity	Ethnicity outcomes were mixed. Black colleagues improved from 2.8% to 3.6%, Asian colleagues were broadly stable at around 4.5%, and White colleagues declined from 4.6% to 3.7%. BAME overall moved from 4.0% to 3.7%, so the overall slowdown was not evenly shared across groups.
Promotion ratio	1 in 22	1 in 27	Weaker overall	Age	Promotions became more concentrated in younger employees. The 20-29 group remained strongest and improved from 10.7% to 11.9%, while 40-49 increased slightly from 4.4% to 4.7%. Rates weakened for 30-39, 50-59 and 60-64, with the sharpest fall in 50-59 from 3.5% to 2.2%. No promotions were recorded for under-20s in either year, and none were recorded for 65 and over in 25-26.
Promotion ratio	1 in 26	1 in 30	Weaker overall	Disability	Known disability outcomes were stable to slightly weaker. Employees with no recorded disability stayed close to 4.0%, while employees declaring a disability moved from 3.8% to 3.4%. The unknown / not provided group fell from 5.1% to 3.2%, which may reflect both lower promotion rates and better coding of employee records.

Recommended actions

1) Review progression pathways for women and older age cohorts where rates weakened most. 2) Investigate the White and overall BAME decline by service area and grade to test whether opportunity mix or pipeline strength is driving outcomes. 3) Improve data completeness and consistency for categories recorded as Not Known / Not Provided, especially where 25-26 age rows show blanks that appear to represent zero promotions.

Interpretation note

Small cohorts such as Mixed, Other, Under 20 and 65 and over should be interpreted cautiously because one or two promotions can materially change the rate.

Category comparison	Segment	Promotions 24-25	Rate 24-25	24-25 Ratio 1 n SIP	Promotions 25-26	Rate 25-26	24-25 Ratio 1 n SIP	Change (pp)	Executive read
Gender	Female	48	5%	1 in 22	37	4%	1 in 28	-1.1%	Main contributor to the overall decline
Gender	Male	11	4%	1 in 26	12	4%	1 in 26	0.1%	Slight improvement and smaller gender gap
Ethnicity	Asian	4	5%	1 in 22	4	4%	1 in 23	-0.2%	Broadly stable
Ethnicity	Black	2	3%	1 in 36	3	4%	1 in 28	0.8%	Improved year on year
Ethnicity	Mixed	1	3%	1 in 29	1	3%	1 in 30	-0.1%	Stable but based on very small numbers
Ethnicity	Other	0	0%	1 in 13	1		N/A		
Ethnicity	White	47	5%	1 in 22	37	4%	1 in 27	-1.0%	Largest absolute fall in promotions
Ethnicity	BAME	8	4%	1 in 25	8	4%	1 in 27	-0.3%	Volume flat, rate slightly down
Age	20 - 29	14	11%	1 in 9	14	12%	1 in 8	1.2%	Strongest promotion rate in both years
Age	30 - 39	10	4%	1 in 24	8	3%	1 in 33	-1.1%	Noticeable softening
Age	40 - 49	15	4%	1 in 23	16	5%	1 in 21	0.3%	Slight improvement
Age	50 - 59	14	4%	1 in 29	9	2%	1 in 45	-1.3%	Biggest decline among main age cohorts
Age	60 - 64	4	3%		2	1%	1 in 73	-1.4%	Lower progression rate
Age	65 and Over	2	4%	1 in 36	0	0%	N/A	-3.9%	No promotions recorded in 25-26
Age	Under 20	0	0%		0	0%	N/A	0.0%	No promotions recorded in either year
Disability	No	29	4%	1 in 25	29	4%	1 in 25	-0.1%	Stable outcome
Disability	Yes	3	4%	1 in 26	3	3%	1 in 30	-0.4%	Slightly weaker rate
Disability	Unknown / Not provided	27	5%	1 in 20	17	3%	1 in 31	-1.8%	Sharpest disability-related decline; also impacted by coding quality

Comparative Pay Gap Report Across Demographics

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 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.

Executive summary

Between 2025 and 2026, the gender pay gap improved on both hourly pay and bonus measures, with mean hourly reducing from 10.5% to 8.7% and mean bonus reducing from 33.7% to 18.3%. Ethnicity hourly pay remained favourable to ethnic minority colleagues in both years, but the median bonus gap worsened from 5.3% to 23.6%. Disability bonus outcomes improved materially on both reporting bases, although 2026 still shows bonus gaps favourable to non-disabled colleagues. Overall, the broad direction of travel is positive, but bonus allocation and progression into higher-paid roles remain the main executive priorities.

Cross-demographic comparison

Demographic	2025 mean hourly	2026 mean hourly	Change (pp)	2025 median hourly	2026 median hourly	2025 mean bonus	2026 mean bonus	2025 median bonus	2026 median bonus
Sex/Gender	10.5%	8.7%	-1.8%	10.3%	8.3%	33.7%	18.3%	2.4%	0.0%
BAME (declared)	-3.0%	-4.0%	-1.0%	-5.2%	-9.1%	15.4%	-0.9%	5.3%	23.6%
Disability (all staff)	-5.4%	-1.7%	3.7%	-3.2%	-2.0%	62.7%	7.6%	52.2%	11.8%
Disability (declared)	-4.3%	-1.3%	3.0%	-2.4%	-6.1%	59.3%	3.9%	52.3%	11.8%

Key insights

- Gender improved year on year across all headline measures, with the biggest improvement in mean bonus outcomes.
- Ethnicity hourly pay continues to favour ethnic minority colleagues, but the 2026 median bonus gap moved materially against them, pointing to weaker bonus outcomes for the typical ethnic minority employee.
- Disability showed the strongest year-on-year improvement in bonus pay, especially from the very high 2025 starting point, but residual positive bonus gaps remain in 2026 on both reporting bases.
- Across demographics, hourly pay positions are generally closer to parity in 2026 than bonus outcomes, so bonus design and award governance remain the clearest control priority.

Representation and structural view

Measure	2025	2026	Change (pp)	Insight narrative
Women in lower quartile	84.0%	79.3%	-4.7%	Lower quartile became less female-heavy in 2026
Women in upper quartile	70.9%	70.2%	-0.8%	Upper quartile representation changed very little
Men in lower quartile	16.0%	20.7%	+4.7%	Male share increased in the lower quartile
Men in upper quartile	29.1%	29.8%	0.7%	Male share increased slightly at the top

Actions

1. Review bonus criteria, moderation and approval controls with immediate focus on ethnicity and disability outcomes, especially where median bonus results remain adverse.
2. Run a targeted review of the roles, grades and functions contributing most to the remaining gender mean pay gap and convert findings into pay progression and hiring actions.
3. Strengthen succession planning and talent development into higher-paid roles to improve movement in upper-quartile representation.
4. Track mean and median gaps quarterly so leadership can distinguish broad-based improvement from changes driven by a small number of high earners.
5. Improve declaration confidence and data quality for ethnicity and disability so executive decisions can rely on a stronger evidence base.



Ethnicity category breakdown

Category	2025 mean hourly	2026 mean hourly	Change (pp)	2025 median hourly	2026 median hourly	2025 mean bonus	2026 mean bonus	2025 median bonus	2026 median bonus
Asian	-5.7%	-7.4%	-1.7%	-5.2%	-6.7%	25.2%	-34.1%	32.0%	-0.6%
Black	-6.5%	-7.4%	-0.9%	-13.2%	-14.5%	-6.6%	20.7%	2.9%	-0.7%
Mixed	9.3%	10.5%	1.2%	-0.4%	2.3%	15.4%	27.5%	2.4%	-0.8%
Other	9.9%	9.9%	0.0%	-0.4%	0.4%	12.7%	17.5%	-9.9%	-12.0%
BAME (combined declared)	-3.0%	-4.0%	-1.0%	-5.2%	-9.1%	15.4%	-0.9%	5.3%	23.6%

Ethnicity category summary notes

Asian and Black colleagues remained ahead of the White benchmark on hourly pay in both years, with Asian bonus outcomes improving markedly in 2026. Mixed colleagues remained the clearest hourly pay concern, with the mean hourly gap worsening year on year and bonus outcomes still adverse on the mean basis. The Other category stayed adverse on mean hourly and mean bonus measures, although median hourly moved close to parity and median bonus remained favourable. The combined highlighted BAME ethnically diverse employee's dataset remained favourable on hourly pay overall, but its 2026 median bonus gap worsened sharply, showing that the aggregate BAME ethnically picture can hide uneven bonus outcomes across and within categories. This breakdown shows that actions should be targeted at category-level drivers while still monitoring the combined BAME ethnically position.

Combined BAME dataset analysis

The highlighted combined BAME ethnically diverse employee dataset shows that hourly pay remained favourable to ethnic minority colleagues in both years and strengthened overall in 2026, with mean hourly moving from -3.0% to -4.0% and median hourly from -5.2% to -9.1%. Bonus outcomes were more mixed: the mean bonus gap improved sharply from 15.4% adverse in 2025 to -0.9% in 2026, but the median bonus gap worsened materially from 5.3% to 23.6%, indicating that while aggregate bonus distribution improved, the typical BAME ethnically diverse employee received a weaker bonus outcome in 2026. This contrast between mean and median suggests that gains may have been driven by a smaller number of higher bonus awards rather than broad-based improvement across the BAME ethnically diverse population.

Formal Employee Relation Cases

Year-over-year summary review of the formal ER case summaries, highlighting case volumes, case mix, demographic patterns, and the most notable emerging themes.

FY24-25 26 cases	FY25-26 11 cases	YoY change -58%	FY25-26 top theme Serious Misconduct (unacceptable conduct)	Female share 64%

1. Formal ER case volume fell from 26 in FY24-25 to 11 in FY25-26, a reduction of 15 cases or 58%, indicating a materially smaller formal caseload in the latest year.
2. The balance between case types remained relatively stable: disciplinary cases moved from 58% to 55% of all cases, while grievance cases moved from 42% to 45%.
3. Female representation was steady at roughly two-thirds of all formal cases in both years: 65% in FY24-25 and 64% in FY25-26.
4. Data completeness improved for disability status: unknown or not provided disability records reduced from 35% of cases in FY24-25 to 27% in FY25-26.
5. FY25-26 themes were more concentrated. Serious Misconduct (unacceptable conduct) alone accounted for 3 of 11 cases (27%), while Bullying and Harassment remained the largest grievance theme with 2 cases.
6. Interpret ethnicity comparisons with caution: the FY25-26 pivot uses overlapping labels such as BAME and Black, so it should be treated as reported categories rather than a clean mutually exclusive split.



Metric	FY24-25	FY25-26	Abs Change	% / pp Change
Total Cases	26	11	-15	-58%
Disciplinary Cases	15	6	-9	-60%
Grievance Cases	11	5	-6	-55%
Female Share	65%	64%	-2%	
Disabled Share (Yes)	19%	27%	8%	
Unknown Disability Share	35%	27%	-7%	
Sexual Orientation Unknown/Not Stated Share	23%	9%	-14%	

Profile / Theme	FY24-25	FY25-26	Insight Narrative
Dominant case mix	58% disciplinary / 42% grievance	55% disciplinary / 45% grievance	Mix is steady year over year; no major swing between disciplinary and grievance routes.
Top grievance theme	Bullying and Harassment (4 cases)	Bullying and Harassment (2 cases)	Bullying and Harassment remains the clearest repeating grievance issue across both years.
Top disciplinary theme	Serious Misconduct (Other) and Safeguarding (3 each)	Serious Misconduct (unacceptable conduct) (3 cases)	The latest year shows stronger concentration into one conduct-related issue.
Gender profile	17 female / 9 male	7 female / 4 male	Female cases remain around two-thirds of the formal caseload.
Disability recording	35% unknown/not provided	27% unknown/not provided	Recording quality appears to have improved in the latest year.
Sexual orientation recording	23% unknown/not stated	9% unknown/not stated	Disclosure/recording appears more complete in FY25-26.
Ethnicity comparability	Mutually exclusive groups shown	Overlapping categories shown	Use caution when comparing ethnicity across years; latest grouping is not like-for-like.
Overall assessment	Broader mix of themes across more cases	Smaller caseload with more theme concentration	The latest year is lower volume but more concentrated in a few named themes.

Priority action plan 2026 to 2027

The table below translates the report priorities into a practical RAG-style action plan. Ratings reflect the level of urgency and strategic importance indicated by the report findings: Red = immediate priority requiring focused action, Amber = important priority requiring planned delivery, and Green = continue and embed.

Priority	RAG	Why this matters	Suggested next steps
Improve workforce data quality and declaration completeness	Red	Declaration gaps remain significant across disability, religion, sexual orientation and some ethnicity data, limiting confidence in analysis and action.	Refresh disclosure communications, improve manager messaging, simplify staff self-service prompts, and track declaration rates quarterly.
Build trust and confidence in workforce data	Red	Without trust in how personal data is used and protected, staff may continue not to disclose, weakening the council's evidence base.	Develop a clear confidentiality message, link data collection to visible outcomes, and reinforce GDPR-aligned handling of personal information.
Target retention risks for priority groups	Red	Disabled leavers remain above workforce share, ethnically diverse turnover worsened in 2026, and retirement-related exits increased sharply.	Use exit data, turnover analysis and staff experience findings together to identify hotspots and create targeted retention responses by group and service.
Strengthen progression and leadership pathways	Amber	Promotion rates softened overall and SC-WRES highlights under-representation at senior level in some areas, particularly within social care.	Review grade and promotion patterns, expand leadership pipeline activity, and use succession and acting-up data to identify barriers.
Use intersectional analysis to identify hotspots	Amber	Headline trends can mask different experiences across grade, service, ethnicity, disability, sex and age.	Combine workforce, survey, pay gap and SC-WRES insight to identify where disadvantage may overlap and where targeted intervention is most needed.
Translate Unison Anti-Racism Charter, SC-WRES and Equality Objectives into SMART delivery plans	Red	There is strong strategic intent, but impact now depends on clear ownership, milestones and measurable outcomes at service level.	Produce service-level action plans with leads, milestones, success measures and reporting routes through existing governance arrangements.
Embed reasonable adjustments, accessibility and inclusive management practice	Amber	Day-to-day staff experience depends on how consistently inclusive practice is applied by managers and teams.	Strengthen manager guidance, promote the wellbeing passport and adjustment tools, and monitor consistency of support through staff feedback.
Review reward, bonus and progression governance	Amber	Although some pay gap measures improved, uneven outcomes remain in parts of reward and progression data.	Review governance and assurance around bonuses, progression and access to opportunity, and test whether additional transparency is needed.
Strengthen quarterly monitoring and governance	Green	Governance has improved, but regular review is needed to spot changes earlier and maintain accountability.	Embed quarterly reporting on recruitment, retention, progression, declaration and staff experience through existing equality governance routes.
Connect workforce equality with wellbeing, psychological safety and staff voice	Green	The report shows that inclusion, reporting culture, wellbeing and speaking up are closely linked and should continue to be treated as connected agendas.	Continue aligning equality work with staff networks, wellbeing activity, speaking up initiatives and wider organisational development programmes.



Annual Workforce Equality Monitoring Report 2025-2026

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