

Our people

Annual People Report 2024 to 2025

“Serving the people of Hampshire with purpose and pride to improve lives today and for tomorrow.”

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Welcome back to our Annual People Report, this time for the financial year ending 31 March 2025. This year, I've switched the language from 'workforce' to 'people' to better reflect the humanity, individuality and person-centric nature of our work and our values.
- 1.2 I'm now in my sixth year at the County Council and I still love my role here! I have said before, and I'm unashamed to repeat myself - I have never worked in an organisation where the values and behaviours espoused, so closely align to those I experience daily in my work. It remains an honour to be the Director of People and Organisation in Hampshire County Council, working with the range of people that I do.
- 1.3 Again, at the risk of repeating myself, my sense of pride in the people who work for me, and beyond my directorate across of the whole of the authority, is massive. The work that our people do is as important as ever, and they continue to perform to their normal high standards, in some cases 24 hours a day!
- 1.4 All of this is despite of the well-publicised financial pressures and significant change being faced across the whole organisation.
- 1.5 As in previous years, I hope the heart behind this report is evident. As an organisation, I and my Corporate Management Team colleagues are ever cognisant of the fact that it is our people that make everything we deliver possible. With such a critical role in the success of our organisation, it is right that we take some time to focus on them, not just to understand the past but to ensure that we are learning for the future too.
- 1.6 The key features of our story for this reporting year, that you'll see referenced within the report have been:
- An Independent Panel Review – designed to help us identify any further areas for improved efficiency and effectiveness without impacting on the delivery of our core purpose.
 - The design and implementation of a Mutually Agreed Resignation Scheme (MARS) - a first for the council.
 - Further work to Redesign the organisation, linked to the Independent Panel Review, MARS and broader savings plans and organisational improvements.
 - A review of our management tiers, to support further efficiencies and to better understand the differing nature of the roles our most senior managers perform.
 - More latterly, the commencement of work towards Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) as one of 21 councils on the priority list across the country.

- 1.7 As always, you will continue to see throughout this report reference to the diverse nature of our workforce and a considerable thanks should be expressed to our staff networks and trade unions for the ongoing role that they play to support and enable our people to be at their best.
- 1.8 I hope you find the report useful and appreciate the improvements we made to support our own renewed focus on our 'core purpose' and transformation to continue high quality services and resilience for the future.
- 1.9 Once again, the final few words, must be in thanks of colleagues across directorates who continue to go above and beyond to deliver critical services and supporting the delivery of those services, to the people of Hampshire.

Jac Broughton FCIPD, Director of People and Organisation

2.0 Context

- 2.1 This People Report for the period April 2024 to March 2025 explores our priorities, successes, challenges and changes relating to our people.
- 2.2 The report includes a high-level overview of key people data (including our people on Employment of Hampshire County Council (EHCC) and Soulbury terms and conditions). It reports the relevant trends to inform the County Council's future people strategies and priorities. In addition, it:
- Forms part of the corporate 'Performance Assurance Framework' which provides our elected Members with a robust framework of assurance against which the overall performance of the County Council can be demonstrated.
 - Provides an overview of initiatives and strategies that have been put in place to meet our organisational people needs and ensure performance assurance.
 - Is a means for us to publish information publicly as part of our Public Sector Equality Duty.
 - Supports communication of future strategies and key people priorities for the organisation
 - Helps us to attract a large and diverse candidate pool.
- 2.3 As in previous years, the report is split into two parts – Our Organisation, and Our People and follows an 'employee lifecycle' as reflected on page 13.

PART 1 OUR ORGANISATION

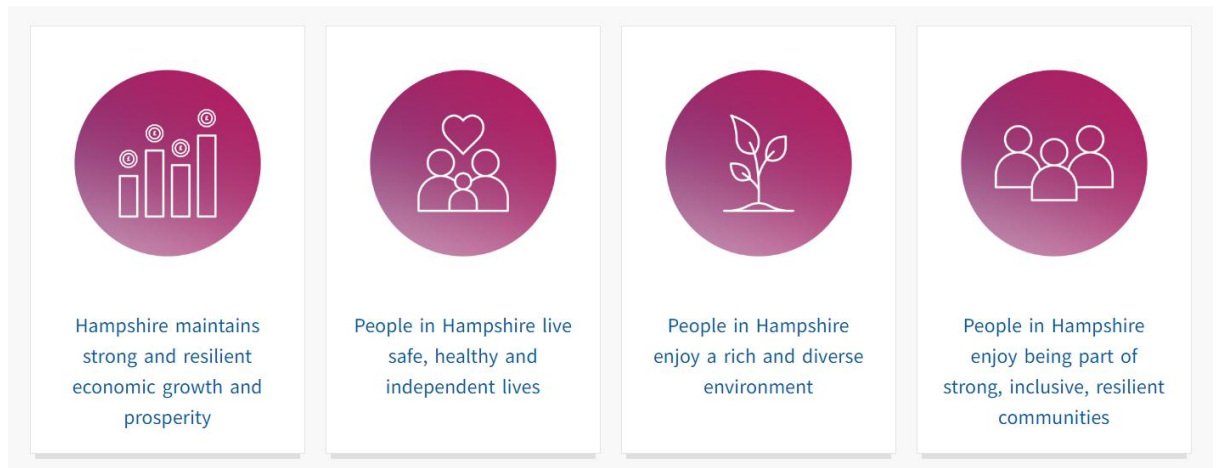
3.0 Our purpose, vision, values and brand

- 3.1 Hampshire County Council is a high performing democratic body that serves the residents and businesses of Hampshire.
- 3.2 We are responsible for a wide range of services across the whole county. Its role is to act strategically and implement policy as determined by our local Cabinet. This means delivering services to the people of Hampshire (and sometimes beyond) in an open and cost-effective way.

Our purpose

- 3.3 Our purpose is articulated through our [Strategic Plan 2021 to 2025](#), and was updated as part of [a mid-term review in 2023](#):

Figure 1 Our purpose



Our vision, values and behaviours

- 3.4 We continue to deliver against our vision on behalf of those who live, work and play in Hampshire:

“Serving the people of Hampshire with purpose and pride to improve lives, today and for tomorrow”.

- 3.5 Along with the vision, we also have the following values and behaviours as an organisation, which guide everything we do:

Working as one organisation Nurturing an environment where everyone, regardless of their role, works together towards a common goal.	Integrity and respect Being honest, reliable and showing consideration for others.	Professionalism Taking pride in delivering the best service we can and in working well with our team.	Making a difference Having a positive impact on people's lives.	Continuous improvement Committing to ongoing learning and innovation to deliver the best possible services.
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4.0 Our progress in 2024 to 2025

- 4.1 During 2024 to 2025, we have once again seen changes in our people profile.
- 4.2 Key highlights are a decrease in headcount and an increase in external leavers, a more detailed explanation of why we are seeing these changes is referenced throughout the report.
- 4.3 A summary of changes is shown in the table below:

Figure 2 An overview of changes to our data for 2024 to 2025

Metric		Mar-24	Trend	Mar-25
Headcount		13,472	▼	12,438
Full-time equivalent		10,837	▼	10,086
Headcount	Male	3,249	▼	3,053
	Female	10,223	▼	9,385
Part-time headcount	Male	765	▼	749
	Female	5,618	▼	4,978
Under 25 headcount		467	▼	366
Over 55 headcount		3,609	▲	3,611
Declared ethnicity %		99%	=	99%
% in senior roles (H+)	Females	56%	▲	57%
	Ethnically diverse	3.67%	▲	3.89%
	Disability	9.22%	▼	7.89%
Minority sexual orientation		5%	▼	3%
Gender pay gap %		15.9%	▼	12.8%
Overall external turnover % (Annual)		14%	▲	19%

5.0 Our Corporate Management Team (CMT)

- 5.1 The Corporate Management Team (CMT) consists of seven chief officers and is led by the Chief Executive. The role of CMT is to give direction to the County Council as one organisation, determining its strategic objectives and policies. It is also jointly accountable for the County Council's activities to third parties and stakeholders, taking decisions on behalf of the whole organisation.

Carolyn Williamson, Chief Executive

- 5.2 The Chief Executive leads Hampshire County Council's staff and the strategic vision set out by the County Council's elected Leader, mobilising strategies, plans and policies to ensure it is successful. The Chief Executive holds the responsibility for major organisational decisions, an expenditure budget of

£1.83 billion and circa 12,500 employees (excluding school staff) who deliver a wide range of services to the community.

Stuart Ashley, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Children’s Services

- 5.3 The Director of Children’s Services is responsible for the leadership, strategy and effectiveness of Children’s Services. They are responsible for securing the provision of services which address the needs of all children and young people, including the most disadvantaged and vulnerable, their families and carers.

Gary Westbrook, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Hampshire 2050

- 5.4 The Director of Hampshire 2050 and Deputy Chief Executive is responsible for leading the development of Hampshire County Council’s strategy in relation to the regeneration and growth of Hampshire, focusing on the ambitions for Hampshire 'as a place'. This includes protecting and growing Hampshire’s strong, vibrant, and successful local economy, and ensuring the County remains a place where residents and businesses can flourish now and into the future.

Patrick Blogg, Director of Universal Services

- 5.5 The Director of Universal Services is responsible for leading the delivery and development of Hampshire County Council’s services which are accessible to all residents of Hampshire, as well as those which directly support the delivery of these and our broader public facing services (Adults’ Health and Care and Children’s Services).

Jac Broughton, Director of People and Organisation

- 5.6 The Director of People and Organisation is responsible for enabling frontline services and employees across Hampshire County Council and Shared Service partners. They lead on planning and delivering the people and organisational strategies across the council.

Jess Hutchinson, Director of Adults’ Health and Care

- 5.7 The Director of Adults’ Health and Care is responsible for enabling the people of Hampshire to stay well and live independently, providing support to the most vulnerable within our communities.

Andy Lowe, Interim Director of Corporate Operations and Chief Finance Officer (CFO)

- 5.8 The Director of Corporate Operations is responsible for the technical and financial infrastructure that supports and protects frontline services and employees across Hampshire County Council. This role is also responsible for the delivery of services under the Shared Service Partnership, where transactional activities such as payroll and finance are provided jointly to a

wide group of public service organisations to maximise efficiency for all partners. The services in Corporate Operations play a key role in all of Hampshire County Council's partnerships.

Changes to the Corporate Management Team from 1 April 2025

- 5.9 Carolyn Williamson retires in July 2025 and recruitment is underway to recruit a new Chief Executive. Rob Carr retired as Director of Corporate Operations and Deputy Chief Executive on 31 March 2025 and Stuart Ashley has been appointed Deputy Chief Executive in addition to his role of Director of Children's Services. Andy Lowe has been appointed temporary Director of Corporate Operations.

Our Chief Officers Group

- 5.10 Our Chief Officer Group includes our Chief Executive, Directors and Senior Officers, who provide support to CMT. Details of our Senior Officers can be found here:
<https://www.hants.gov.uk/aboutthecouncil/governmentinhampshire/seniorofficers>

Our Senior Managers

- 5.11 This year we have started to categorise our Senior Managers by the 'tier' at which they operate, with the Chief Executive being Tier 0 and Directors Tier 1. This is to begin to build a shared understanding of the nature of our work, the various leadership and management roles that our people perform and ultimately to ensure we are organised as efficiently as possible.
- 5.12 All our people fall into one of 7 tiers of management. Within the first 6 tiers, most people undertake some form of line management responsibility as part of their role, however, in a minority of instances a person is employed at a tier of management due to their specialist professional expertise and without line management responsibilities. Whilst this work is still in development, we are beginning to categorise the tiers as follows:
- Tier 0 – CX
 - Tier 1 – Directors
 - Tier 2 – Deputy Directors and Assistant Directors
 - Tier 3 – Senior Leaders or Principal Specialists where no line management responsibilities are held (typically K and J grades)
 - Tier 4 – Service Managers or Senior Specialists where no line management responsibilities are held (typically H and I grades)
 - Tier 5 – Team Managers or Specialists where no line management responsibilities are held (typically F and G grades)
 - Tier 6 – Supervisors or Junior Specialists where no line management responsibilities are held (typically C, D and E grades)

- Tier 7 – Team Members all of whom have no line management responsibilities (typically A and B grades).

5.13 We will not report on any further details in this year's report; however, we hope that it will play a more significant part in future reporting years.

6.0 Changes to our operating model – our extended organisation

6.1 Hampshire County Council has a number of income generating partnerships. Our extended organisation can be viewed at: <https://www.hants.gov.uk/aboutthecouncil/extended-organisation> as we continue to evolve. This shows the range of organisations that the County Council works with, partners with, provides services to and supports in a strategic or operational capacity.

7.0 Strategic planning

7.1 Going forward we know we will need to be a smaller and leaner organisation due to the financial restrictions that we face. Changes to directorate operating models (how we organise the work we do) and structures (how we organise our people to deliver that work) will enable the continued service delivery as a high performing organisation. Becoming leaner involves us streamlining processes and optimising efficiency, reducing headcount in areas where this can be done without impacting core services. Through this transformation we continue to provide high quality services and resilience for the future.

Our Independent Panel Review

7.2 We recognise the benefits of having an independent panel of subject matter experts identify how else we can reduce spending and deliver our core purpose (i.e. provide those services that we must deliver by law). An external team of Local Government Experts were invited into the organisation, by CMT, during this reporting year to scrutinise our services 'as if' they were 'commissioners' authorised by Government due to our inability to report a balanced budget. Our financial challenges, and those of other local authorities, have been well publicised over recent years and whilst we have so far been able to report a balanced budget through our strong financial management, we know that this is not a sustainable position over the next few years.

7.3 This work has supported our efforts to move increasingly towards the provision of services that support our core purpose only. Part of the process has included the categorisation of our services into:

- Statutory (those we are legally required to deliver)

- Discretionary preventative (those which are not legally required but which prevent an increase in demand for statutory services).
- Discretionary (those which are not legally required and have no direct correlation with demand for statutory service delivery).
- Enabling (those corporate functions that all large organisations require to run effectively i.e Finance, IT and HR amongst others).

7.4 This work has led to various action and improvement plans to support changes in our people plans and strategies and ultimately to lead to increased financial savings.

7.5 What is clear in the 2025 to 2026 budget report is that everyone across the organisation, whether through the Independent Panel Review or via other means, has worked extremely hard to help drive down our overall spending.

Implementation of a Mutually Agreed Resignation Scheme (MARS)

7.6 In support of further efforts to reduce spend, we designed and implemented a Mutually Agreed Resignation Scheme (MARS) which was opened to the whole organisation (excluding schools) for a short window in November 2024. This led to 782 applications and 354 approved exits from the organisation at the end of January 2025.

7.7 MARS was a transformational resourcing strategy, designed to provide additional options to our people at the same time as playing a really important part in our financial planning. It helped the County Council to realise a £13.959m reduction in salary spend from 25/26, of which £4.504m was new cash limit savings. By giving people, a choice to leave in return for a payment, we aimed to minimise the number of compulsory redundancies that might be needed later, as we reduce the size of the organisation.

Organisation Wide Redesign

7.8 Linked to the findings of the Independent Panel and our overall Savings Programme for 2025, across the whole organisation our directorates are reviewing and redesigning their services with inevitable implications for the people strategies and plans. This design work started in this reporting year and will continue throughout 2025 to 2026 meaning that organisational change continues to be a feature of the County Council and particularly for our people over the year ahead.

Devolution and local government reorganisation

7.9 This is very much a chapter of our people story that features towards the end of this reporting year, but which will feature more significantly in future years

reporting. The specific impact of Local Government Reorganisation for our people is unknown but we do know that in the future the critical services we provide to the people of Hampshire will continue, albeit delivered through different employment arrangements.

7.10 In December 2024, central Government announced a significant reform programme for local government.

7.11 The programme includes two main initiatives:

Devolution

7.12 Transferring powers and funding from Whitehall to local areas by creating regional Strategic Authorities with an elected Mayor, covering populations of over 1.5 million in all areas of England that don't already have them.

Local Government Reorganisation

7.13 Ending the two-tier county and district council system by forming new unitary local authorities with populations of at least 500,000. At the time of writing, the impacts of Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation, on the County Council's staff, remain unclear. It is likely that services will continue under the stewardship of new organisations, and that many staff from councils in Hampshire will be transferred to these new organisations. This will involve bringing together the different terms and conditions and pay and grading arrangements. We continue to monitor the progress of the government's plans, and the proposals being put forward by local authorities.

7.14 To find out more about devolution and LGR visit www.hants.gov.uk/devolution

8.0 Our employee lifecycle

8.1 The next stage of the report follows our diagram of the employee lifecycle as shown below:

Figure 3 Our employee lifecycle



**Attract –
Being an inclusive
employer of choice**



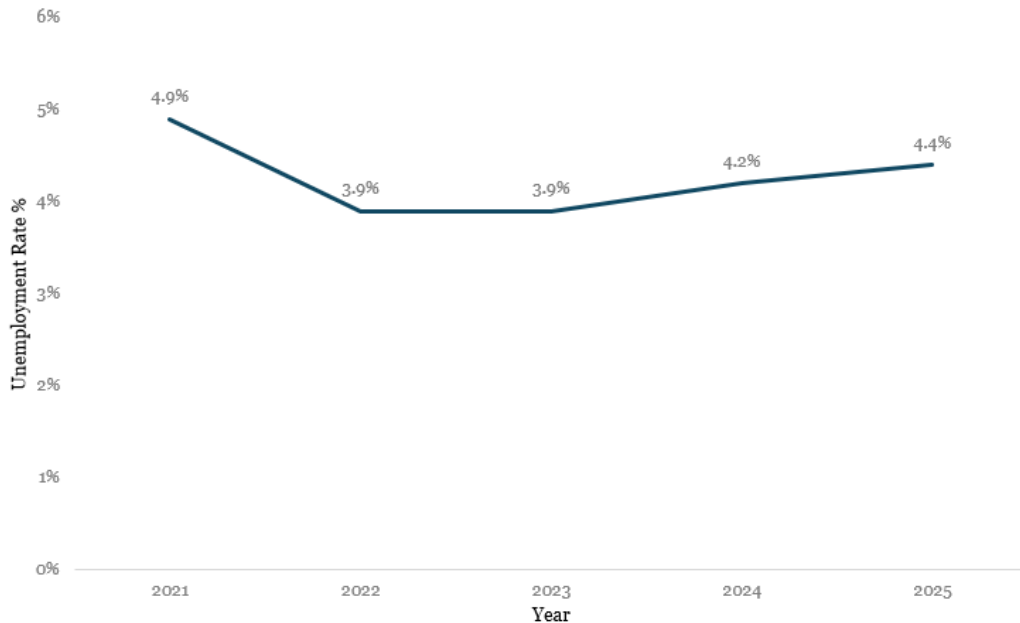
9.0 **Attract – Being an inclusive employer of choice**

- 9.1 Recruitment challenges continue to remain widely acknowledged in the public sector, reflecting skills shortages, cost of living challenges and post pandemic trends. Effective recruitment is critical if the County Council is to ensure it has the people in place it needs.
- 9.2 During 2024 to 2025, in support of our increasing efficiency, we have implemented cost-control measures that mean that whilst directors have continued to prioritise recruitment into critical vacancies (particularly in front-line roles), there is now additional scrutiny about whether to replace colleagues who are leaving or to fill new or changed posts.
- 9.3 It should be noted that in some service areas, recruitment and retention challenges remain. The focus has continued to be on recruitment and retention of business-critical roles and addressing recruitment hot spots as highlighted through the report.

The recruitment landscape

- 9.4 The economy grew strongly at the start of 2024 but flattened out in the second half, narrowly avoiding a technical recession with slight growth in the last quarter of the year. The Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) predicts slower labour supply growth due to an aging population. However, the rise in employer National Insurance contributions will have a negative effect on employment with employers potentially reducing hours or headcount.
- 9.5 Unemployment rose and job vacancies fell throughout 2024. The OBR expects the labour market to weaken and decline slightly in 2025, with unemployment forecasted to average around 4%. Local unemployment benefit claims in Hampshire have been rising, but the employment rate in Hampshire remains relatively high.

Figure 4 National unemployment rates in the UK April 2025, Office for National Statistics



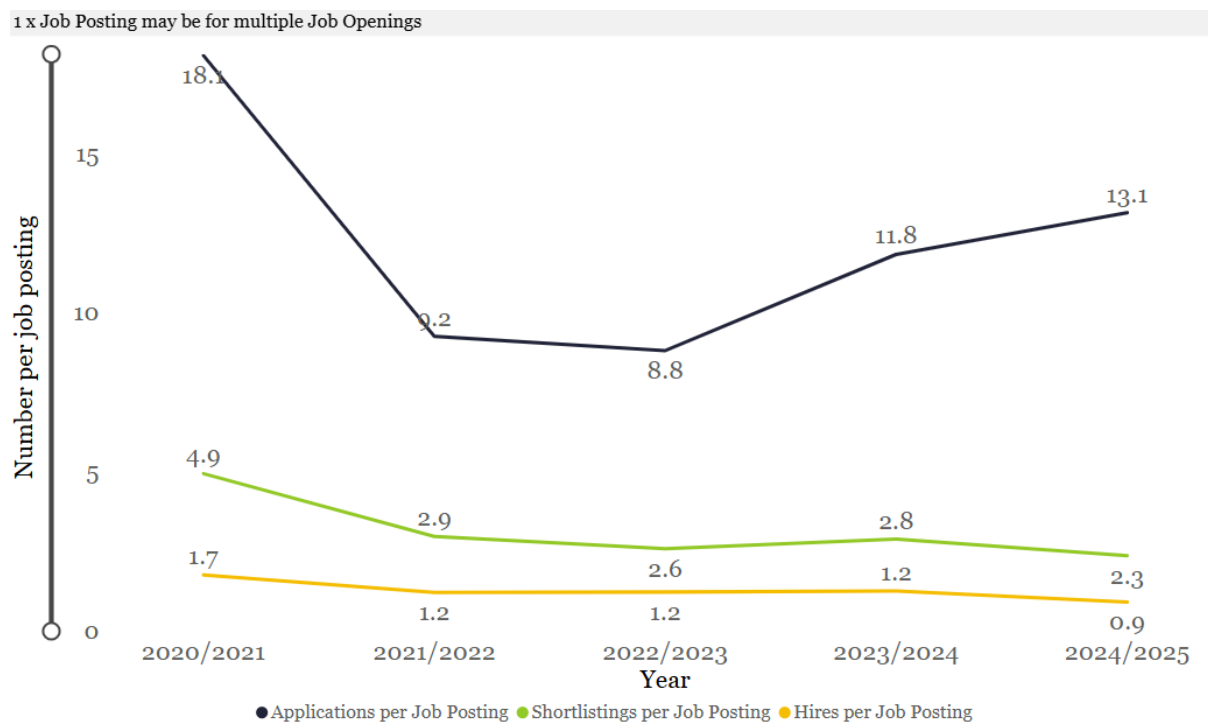
County Council recruitment

- 9.6 The number of roles the County Council advertised for appointment on employment contracts (excluding recruitment through agencies) in 2024 to 2025 (1,221) was 33% lower than the previous year (1,832). However, the range of roles advertised has continued to reflect the full range of core services the County Council delivers. This reduction of roles being advertised can be attributed to the additional spend controls measures we have put in place.
- 9.7 Directorate people data tells us that the profile of recruitment ‘hot spots’ (roles which have a lot of vacancies, a high turnover and may be hard to fill) remains the same as in recent years, including, for example, care assistants, nurses, cooks, catering assistants and social workers. However, in terms of vacancies we are in a better position than in previous years due to recruitment and retention initiatives put in place.
- 9.8 We continue to ensure that our adverts are as attractive as possible, particularly to the under 25s, and use multiple different media to attract applicants. Likewise, we are in the process of updating our webpages to ensure they are modern and easy to navigate for candidates. We recognise that as we look to the years ahead, we will need to consider whether there are specific resourcing strategies that we can deploy in support of increasing our attractiveness to younger applicants.

9.9 Candidates are choosing to apply for County Council roles through several channels. In the last 12 months, similar to the previous year, most applicants applied for our roles through external career websites (45%) such as Indeed, and the County Council's own website (29%). Analysing which routes our candidates apply through provides us with added insight to determine our future advertising strategies.

9.10 The number of applications (16,006) decreased from 19,734 last year, however, the average number of applications per role (13.1) increased across this reporting year from 11.8 last year as shown in figure 5. This is because the proportions of the decreases of applications and roles advertised are at different rates and so there is still an average increase on applications per roles advertised.

Figure 5 The number of applications/short listings/hires over time



9.11 The proportion of applicants shortlisted for assessment or interview in 2024 to 2025 decreased to 18%, from 23% in the previous year.

9.12 Of the 2,849 applicants shortlisted, 37% (1,064) were hired which is a decrease from 1,695 last year which could be attributed to less roles being advertised.

9.13 Additional recruitment guidance has been published to support external applicants with providing the information required in the recruitment

application. This can be viewed at:

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/jobs/jobapplication/jobapplicationguide>

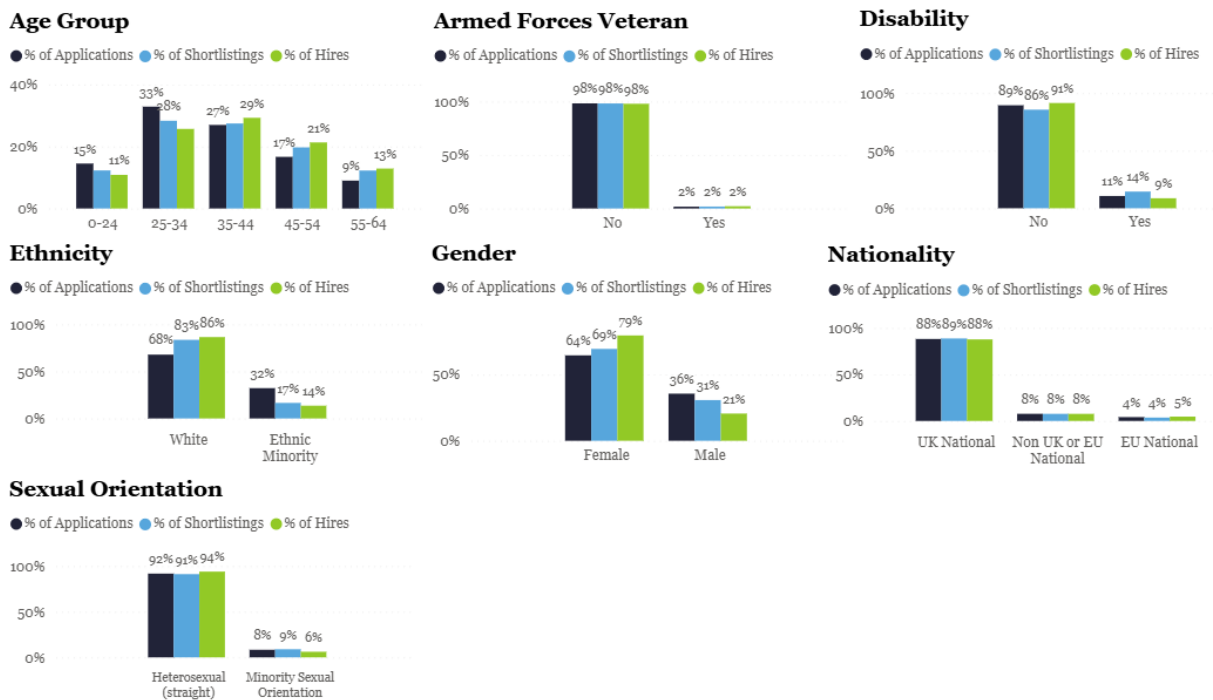
Recruitment profile

9.14 The recruitment profile of data provided by our applicants is as follows:

- **Age** – 60% of applications are from applicants aged between 25 and 45. Applicants aged 35 to 44 are more likely to get hired (29%) than other age groups. This is a change from last year where we were more likely to hire applicants over 45 years of age than other age groups.
- **Armed Forces Veterans** – We have had 2% of applications from Armed Forces veterans which is the same as last year. 2% have also been shortlisted and then hired for roles.
- **Disability** – 11% of applicants declared a disability. 14% were shortlisted and 9% were hired which is a slight increase from 8% last year.
- **Ethnicity** – 32% of applicants were ethnically diverse, which is an increase from last year (29%). In addition, the number of applicants hired this year (14%) increased from 13% last year.
- **Gender** – The applicant split this year is male 36% and female 64%. Although females continue to dominate, the proportion of male applicants has increased from 31% in 2023 to 2024.
- **Nationality** – approximately 88% of applicants this year were UK nationals, 4% were EU nationals and 8% were other non-UK nationals
- **Sexual orientation** – minority sexual orientations make up 8% of applicants, 9% of those shortlisted (up from 7% last year), and 6% of hires. Hires remain the same as last year.

9.15 Hiring managers do not have access to equalities data through the recruitment process.

Figure 6 The profile of our applicants across applications, shortlisting and hires

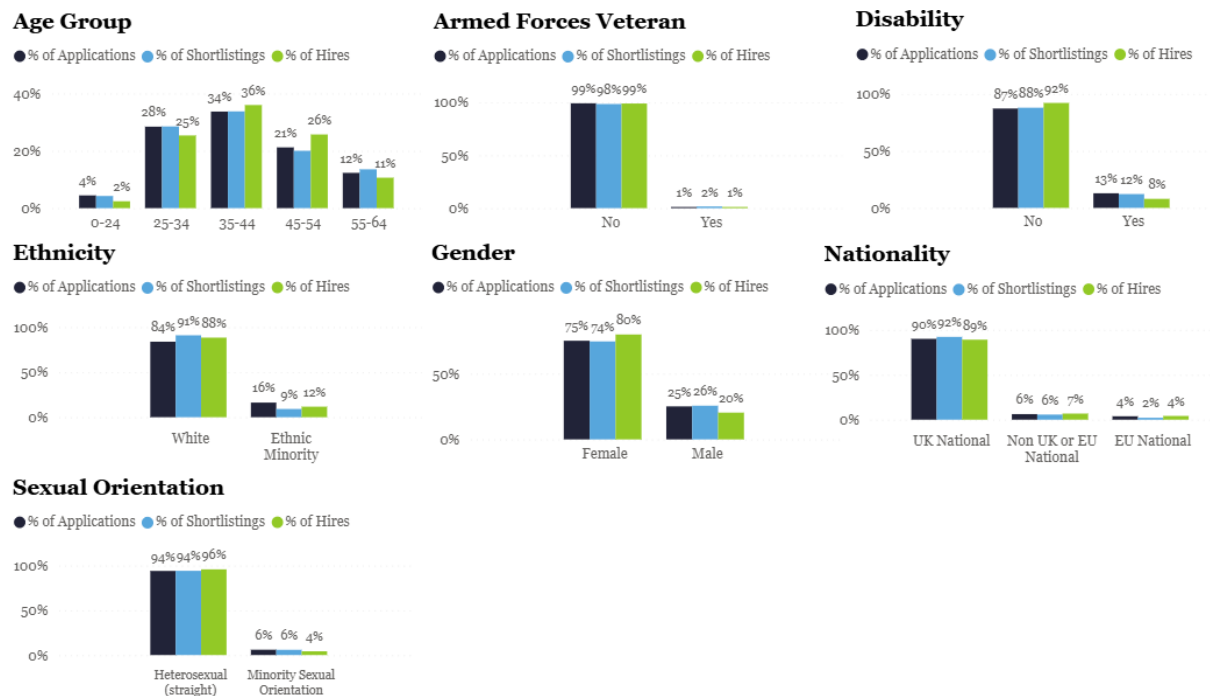


Internal versus external applications

- 9.16 Of the 16,006 applications received in 2024 to 2025, 10% (1,613) were from internal employees, slightly higher than 9% last year. This is unsurprising in the current operating climate where some areas of the organisation are subject to greater degrees of uncertainty or change.
- 9.17 Internal applicants make up 17% of those shortlisted (505), an increase on last year (15%). Internal applicants continue to be around 3.5 times more likely to be hired than external applicants.
- 9.18 The highlights of the internal recruitment profile are on par with the full applicant profile (figure 6), key highlights from the data provided by applicants are as follow:
- **Age** – Applications are highest from employees aged 35 to 44 (34%) rather than 25 to 35 last year, and hires are highest for employees aged between 35 to 44 (36%) which remains the same as last year.
 - **Disability** – 13% of employees applying have declared a disability (the same as last year) and they made up 8% of hires, an increase from 7% last year.

- **Ethnicity** – 16% of internal applicants and 12% of hires were from an ethnic group. These figures are similar to last year.
- **Gender** – More females (75%) than males (25%) have applied for roles and 80% of internal hires are female, therefore 20% of hires are male. These figures show an increase in hires of male employees this year.
- **Sexual orientation** – 6% of applicants, the same as last year, and 4% of our hires, an increase from 3% last year, are from people declaring a minority sexual orientation.

Figure 7 The profile of our internal applicants across applications, shortlisting and hires



Resource

- Facilitate all available talent to apply**



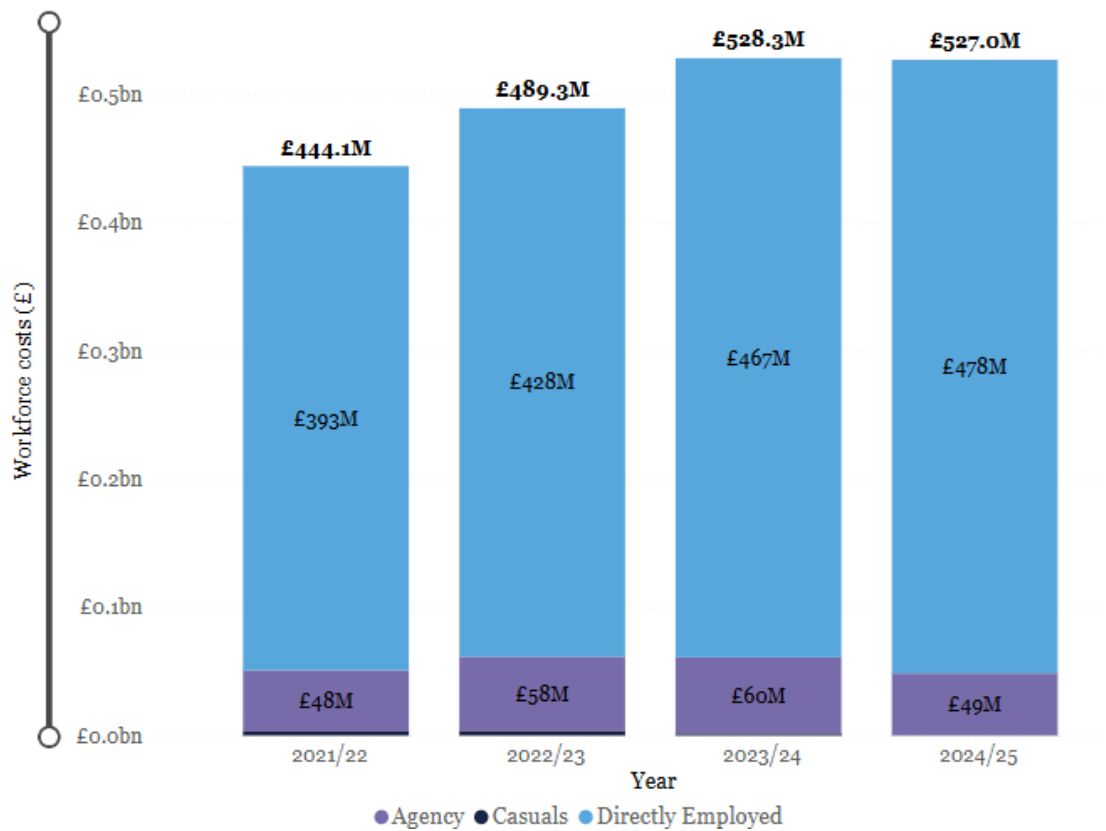
10.0 **Resource – Facilitate all available talent to apply**

- 10.1 As with many large organisations, our workforce strategies enable the effective deployment of a range of resourcing options, recognising that no one option would work across the breadth of services we deliver.
- 10.2 We continue to offer a range of contracts, opportunities for progression and flexible working options to consider individual and market circumstances and ensure that all our roles are fully resourced with the best available talent.

Our people

- 10.3 Our people comprise of permanent and temporary employees, agency workers, sponsored overseas workers and external contractors or consultants.
- 10.4 The chart below shows our total people costs, split by 'resource' type:
- directly employed (permanent / temporary)
 - agency (Connect2Hampshire - our main supplier of agency and contractor workforce and other contractors / consultants, where agreed in line with internal governance and procurement processes)
- 10.5 At the end of March 2025, 91% of our people costs were for directly employed staff an increase from 88% in 2023 to 2024.
- 10.6 The overall cost of people working at the County Council is shown in Figure 8. The increase in people costs can be attributed to annual pay awards. In April 2024 there was an increase of £1,290 (pro-rata for part-time employees) on salaries up to and including £51,445, which equates to staff on Grades A – G and 2.5% on salaries above this paid across all staff on EHCC terms and conditions.
- 10.7 9% were agency workers reducing from 12% in 2023 to 2024 which is a deliberate action to reduce our reliance on the use of agency workers in some service areas, which has also reduced costs.
- 10.8 Using an agency enables flexible management of resource, risk and costs to meet demand across services and allows us to take advantage of specialist expertise.

Figure 8 Total people costs £m



Headcount and full time equivalent (FTE) changes

10.9 There has been an 8% decrease in headcount and a 7% decrease in FTE across 2024 to 2025 which can be attributed to spending controls in place, MARS and organisational change programmes referenced within the report.

10.10 The main changes to headcount and FTE summarised above are shown in Figure 9, represented across grades.

Figure 9 Workforce headcount and full-time equivalent (FTE) changes

Grade	Headcount			FTE		
	2023/24	2024/25	Change	2023/24	2024/25	Change
Other	475	449	-5%	347	325.7	-6%
K	12	10	-17%	12	10.0	-17%
J	89	85	-4%	87	83.1	-4%
I	230	201	-13%	217	188.3	-13%
H	386	361	-7%	374	352.4	-6%
G	1,009	944	-6%	933	875.2	-6%
F	1,784	1,767	-1%	1647	1634.2	-1%
E	2,354	2,266	-4%	2,158	2081.4	-3%
D	2,244	2,094	-7%	1,817	1704.6	-6%
C	2,698	2,387	-12%	2,097	1835.5	-12%
B	1,141	1,054	-7%	669	614.8	-8%
A	1,050	820	-22%	480	380.9	-21%
Total	13,472	12,438	-8%	10,838	10,086.2	-7%

*note changes in total HC and FTE figures from those reported in last year's report, this is due to adjustments made to the HR system across the year as detailed further in section 19.0. 'Other' refers to staff who are not on EHCC T&Cs.

Recruitment costs

10.11 The average total cost of hiring and onboarding a new employee (including advertising, selection, induction, and initial development etc.), is estimated to be in the region of £2,500 per candidate. This enables us to measure our recruitment costs against our spend on market supplements and recruitment and retention payments.

Market supplements

10.12 Where appropriate the County Council will consider market supplements to ensure key roles are appropriately resourced. Market supplements are monthly temporary payments that take account of published market pay, turnover data and other evidence to support them. Reviews of market supplements are undertaken by directorates and CMT to help identify and address specific pressures in recruitment and retention.

10.13 There are 58 roles which are receiving market supplements where it is particularly difficult to recruit and retain employees. We are collectively

reviewing all current market supplements, recruitment and retention payments.

Recruitment and retention payments

- 10.14 Recruitment and retention payments were launched in 2023 to aid the effective resourcing of directorates where there are specific roles which have been difficult to recruit to and/or retain employees in post.
- 10.15 Recruitment and retention payments are one-off payments and can be made to new and/or existing employees where the directorate is experiencing sustained and evidenced difficulties in recruiting and retaining employees, but where there is no strong market data/evidence that suggests there is a wider market pressure like with a market supplement. These difficulties may result in skills/capacity shortages that will have, or are having, a significant impact on service performance.
- 10.16 Four role profiles have been approved for recruitment payments and six for retention payments. Payments have been predominantly used in Children's Services and Adults' Health and Care. They have proved to be successful with roles in social care, children's residential and special educational needs, facilitating an increased number of applications leading to the appointment of high calibre candidates who remain committed to working with the County Council.

Connect to Hampshire (C2H)

- 10.17 Connect2Hampshire is a joint venture partnership between Hampshire County Council and Commercial Services Kent Ltd (a wholly owned subsidiary of Kent County Council) which performs a fundamental role in sourcing temporary workers to supplement and support the County Council's permanent workforce.
- 10.18 Connect2Hampshire has now completed its sixth year of trading. During 2024 to 2025, overall performance of the agency has continued to strengthen, demonstrating their ability to successfully support the County Council with the vast majority of our temporary workforce needs, either through directly sourcing workers or by providing workers through their contracted supply chain. This includes both agency workers covering vacant roles, as well as bank workers recruited by Connect2Hampshire to work as required for particular services. We continue to work closely with Connect2Hampshire to further develop our combined approach and to improve the attraction, recruitment and retention of our agency workforce pipeline, considering the current market challenges.

- 10.19 A key priority for Connect2Hampshire has been to build its ‘directly sourced’ candidate workforce – this essentially means providing their own workers to the County Council for available roles, rather than relying on their supply chain of third-party agencies to fill these, which contributes toward service improvement, quality, and resilience. Good progress continues to be made in this space.
- 10.20 Connect2Hampshire also provides an effective pipeline into the County Council for permanent recruitment. Where Connect2Hampshire directly source an agency worker, the joint agreement between the County Council and the agency allows for (and encourages) a worker to transfer from an agency placement into a permanent contract (where this is appropriate), at any point after they are engaged and at no additional cost.
- 10.21 During 2024 to 2025, the County Council made requests to Connect2Hampshire for 556 different roles, reflecting the broad range of job types that Connect2Hampshire have been able to provide. During the year, there were 1,142 agency workers with the County Council, filling 2,488 vacancies (for varying lengths of time), as well as covering 17,153 shifts within the council’s various Adults’ Health and Care and Children’s Services residential services. Whilst this is an anticipated reduction on the previous year, demand for Connect2Hampshire services remains strong.
- 10.22 Requests for agency placements are predominantly in the following areas due to the challenges directorates face in filling these types of roles:
- Qualified Social Workers particularly within Children’s Services but also Adults’ Health and Care.
 - Special Education Needs (SEN) case workers, Educational Psychologists
 - Non-qualified roles within our residential care settings within Adults’ Health and Care and Children’s Services.
 - Catering Assistants and Passenger Assistant
 - Business Office Administration roles predominantly in Children’s Services.
- 10.23 Connect2Hampshire has seen a stable number of candidates applying to register with them over the year. There have been challenges in sourcing some of our harder to fill roles, such as Educational Psychologists and SEN case workers, however this has steadily improved over the year. Demand for chefs and non-qualified roles such as care assistants has fallen due to the success achieved in our permanent recruitment.
- 10.24 The overall financial performance of Connect2Hampshire during this year continued to grow compared to the previous year. However, in view of improvements in some areas of the County Council’s permanent recruitment, along with the financial challenges faced, and forecasted changes in employment markets, it is anticipated that there will be a reduction in expenditure by the County Council through Connect2Hampshire during 2025 to 2026.

Apprenticeships

- 10.25 Maximising apprenticeships enables the County Council to recruit, retain and develop employees so that they can provide the highest quality service to our residents with the upmost skill and professionalism. Since the introduction of the apprenticeship levy in 2017 the County Council has consistently maintained its position in the top quartile of highest performing national and regional local authorities. This is according to the Local Government Association Apprenticeships Survey 2023 to 2024 – based on the number of new apprenticeships across the financial year. We work with high quality providers that are procured in line with procurement regulations.
- 10.26 Apprenticeships continue to be an integral part of our workforce strategy. Apprenticeships enable us to ensure employees have the necessary skills and capability to perform their current and future roles, raise aspirations, and attract and retain talent to the workforce. Our aim remains to provide high-quality apprenticeship opportunities, increase participation, drive high completion rates, and ensure we as an organisation and our employees benefit from new learning and skills developed in the workplace. We achieve this by proactively identifying apprenticeship opportunities, engaging with managers and employees, and raising awareness through communication activities.
- 10.27 The County Council’s apprenticeship programme continued to perform strongly across 2024 to 2025, with 556 apprentices enrolled across 64 different apprenticeship pathways. At the end of March 2025, there were 961 employees participating in high quality work-based learning using an apprenticeship. The high level of enrolments and participation across the organisation is indicative of the County Council’s commitment to developing its employees, and maximising usage of the apprenticeship levy as a sustainable funding source.
- 10.28 Level 6 and 7 degree apprenticeships provide the County Council with the opportunity to develop expertise at the very highest level. We are taking advantage of the national drive to expand degree level programmes enrolling apprentices on over 18 different pathways in fields such as town planning, civil engineering, data, digital and technology solutions, improvement leaders, nursing, teaching and social work to name a few. Our Social Worker Degree Apprenticeship is one of the largest in the country with over 100 apprentices currently on programme. The 76 apprentices who have completed the programme so far are now newly qualified social workers ready to assume their place working with children, families and in adult care across the county.
- 10.29 Based on information in the Skills England white paper there is intent to defund the level 7 apprenticeships. This could have impact skills in our most senior specialist and higher tier leaders, as well as the removal of an effective

employee retention lever. That being said we do not expect the impact to be large.

Sponsorship of overseas workers

- 10.30 Sponsoring workers gives them the right to work in the UK if they do not have an alternative route to do so. Sponsorship is more expensive than standard recruitment, however, it can be necessary to fill our hard to fill roles. We have sponsored circa 1.5% of our workforce an increase from 1.0% last year, most of whom are concentrated in roles related to social work predominantly in Children's Services and in caring roles in Adults' Health and Care.
- 10.31 This increase can be attributed to the changes we made in 2022 to allow the sponsorship of overseas workers in a greater number of roles, which is the impact that we wanted to see. We will continue to monitor this data, particularly as changes to immigration laws in April 2024 (increases in baseline salaries to be a sponsored worker) did not seem to cause a reduction in us sponsoring workers. We will continue to monitor our policy on sponsorship of overseas workers, particularly as this is an area of focus for the government which may see increases in costs to employers.
- 10.32 Earlier this year, the Government announced new rules on overseas care worker recruitment found at: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-rules-to-prioritise-recruiting-care-workers-in-england?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery. This means that we will be required to prioritise recruiting international care workers already in England before recruiting from overseas, including a need to focus on current sponsored workers who need new to extend their sponsorship. We will continue to monitor the impact of these rules on our overseas recruitment.

**Onboard –
Making sure people are
welcomed and inducted**



11.0 **Onboard – Making sure people are welcomed and inducted.**

- 11.1 This continues to be a crucial time for both the new starter and the organisation as it covers the initial welcome and introduction of new employees into the organisation. It goes beyond the first day and week and involves activities and processes that help new starters become familiarised, productive, and engaged in their roles.
- 11.2 **Onboarding** - Covers the whole process from a candidate's contact with the County Council during the hiring process, being offered the role, starting the role, understanding the ways of working and getting up to speed in their role.
- 11.3 **Induction** - Is the process through which employees start at the County Council, the first few weeks are key in ensuring they settle in well and feel supported. Through their induction they are equipped with all the information, training and knowledge required to do their job to a high standard.
- 11.4 We know from the feedback we receive from our new starters that a positive introduction sets the stage for a successful employee journey by fostering engagement, productivity, retention, and cultural alignment while also ensuring compliance with legal requirements. It is an investment in the long-term success of both the individual employee and the County Council as a whole. It helps new employees' transition smoothly into their roles, align with our values, and feel a sense of belonging.
- 11.5 In 2024 to 2025, we welcomed 1,273 people into the County Council. All new permanent and temporary staff who join the County Council are inducted into the County Council through a formal induction process that is led and facilitated by their new line manager. This remains the case whether the induction is conducted virtually, in person or a hybrid of both. It is recommended that the first week of induction is in person. We know from the feedback we receive from the Chief Executive new starter meetings that in person time really helps people to embed themselves within the County Council and get up to speed in their role more quickly than just meeting virtually.
- 11.6 Our Leadership and Management Behavioural Framework, discussed further in the Perform section, is another resource for managers to use to support new starters, helping them set expectations in line with our values (shown on page 6).
- 11.7 The 'Welcome to Hampshire' e-learning module of the corporate induction reflects the current culture of the organisation and its corporate priorities, helping new staff to understand how their individual contribution will support the work of the County Council. In addition to specific role induction,

directorates have also continued to provide information and context in respect of their specific service and directorate. In addition to this there is learning on key topics which are important to a new starter's early experience of working with us.

Face to face feedback

- 11.8 Regular check-ins are an expectation of managers and are scheduled with new starters to gather feedback, address any concerns, and ensure that they are adapting well to their new roles. This helps in identifying and addressing potential issues early on.
- 11.9 The Chief Executive continues to meet with new starters and the following feedback was provided in March 2025:
- Everyone was keen to help
 - Colleagues are “can do” people and approach work with “let’s find a solution and get things going”.
 - I was made to feel so welcome into the team.
 - As a home worker, I don’t come into the office, however, everyone ensures we are there for each other, meet up on MS Teams or in person, we keep in contact.
 - I feel trusted to work flexibly
 - It is helpful and motivating to have the support around me.
 - Working for the council far exceeded what I expected it to be like.
- 11.10 This insight is shared with managers and we continue to support new starters effectively.
- 11.11 Directors have been heartened by the enthusiasm of new colleagues who had recently joined the directorates. It is clear that we continue to be an organisation that people want to work for in order that they can make a difference to the lives of others.

Perform –

**Having regular robust
conversations about
performance to support
growth and meet the
needs of the business**



12.0 **Perform – Having regular robust conversations about performance to support growth and meet the needs of the business.**

12.1 The “Perform” part of the employee life cycle primarily focuses on the ongoing management, development, and evaluation of employees’ performance within the organisation. This phase is crucial for aligning individual contributions with the County Council’s vision and values, providing feedback, and fostering continuous improvement.

12.2 As a high performing local authority, it is imperative that our people are all clear about what is expected of them, including both what they do and the behaviours they exhibit whilst at work. A clear performance management framework underpinned by strong leadership and management capability helps the workforce to feel more engaged, improves morale and retention and underpins the County Council’s ambition to be a ‘learning organisation’ committed to continuous improvement.

12.3 Our objectives are to:

- Set expectation and build desire for managers to manage performance and attendance in their team or service areas.
- Enable managers to take appropriate action based on relevant people data and business insight.
- Build confidence and capability (skills and knowledge) to improve performance and attendance.
- Provide effective policies and procedures that best enable the organisation to improve performance and attendance.

12.4 Improvements in data led insight have provided visibility across a range of performance management areas to ensure directorates continue to proactively manage performance and sickness absence. Quarterly workforce reports ensure that directorate management teams understand trends across their workforce. However, due to upcoming changes in our operating models—specifically, the shift to management-led casework being handled locally within directorates— in future casework data will no longer be reportable at the organisational level in the same way.

12.5 There has been a significant investment in on-line resources to support managers manage performance and attendance and improve their confidence and capability to manage issues, supplemented with access to specialist professional HR advice in complex cases.

12.6 Whilst the programme of work continues, to date it has delivered the following:

- A review of existing resources that set expectations and support managers to effectively manage performance
 - Implementation of an updated Managing Sickness Absence policy (September 2024) with fewer formal steps and improved content to enable managers to make reasonable decisions in the management of absence
 - Implementation of an updated Managing Performance policy (February 2025) aligning with the amended Managing Sickness Absence policy. In addition, this policy is the first to be reworked as a single combined policy and 'How To' guide, reducing the number of places managers need to look to understand what is required of them
- 12.7 The Valuing Performance framework supports our people (managers and staff) in having meaningful conversations about performance.
- 12.8 In a high performing organisation such as ours we would not expect to see high numbers of formal performance management cases and our policies support the informal resolution of issues, including performance, where it is possible and appropriate to do so.
- 12.9 Where there are instances of underperformance, we deal with this through management measures, which include support and development. However, incremental salary progression can also be withheld where appropriate.

Performance

- 12.10 Whilst the County Council seeks to support an employee to improve their performance, it recognises that in some situations this may not be achievable.
- 12.11 There were 3 dismissals due to performance during 2024 to 2025, consistent with numbers in the previous year.
- 12.12 The County Council's Managing Performance Policy allows for a contract of employment to be ended by mutual agreement between the employee and Hampshire County Council. This is most likely to be reached where an employee is unlikely to achieve the required standards for their role, or unlikely to achieve the required standard in a reasonable time frame and the employee does not wish to participate in a formal process.
- 12.13 In 2024 to 2025, 4 employees left by way of a mutual/settlement agreement or resignation mid-way during the performance review process.
- 12.14 In April 2025, 9 employees out of the 22 not meeting expected standards of performance were not already at the top of their pay grade had their incremental salary progression withheld whilst their performance was being formally managed. Last year, 17 employees did meet the expected standards.
- 12.15 This links to paragraphs 12.2 and 12.3, where we provide a clear performance management framework, and we are committed to our organisational culture of continuous improvement.

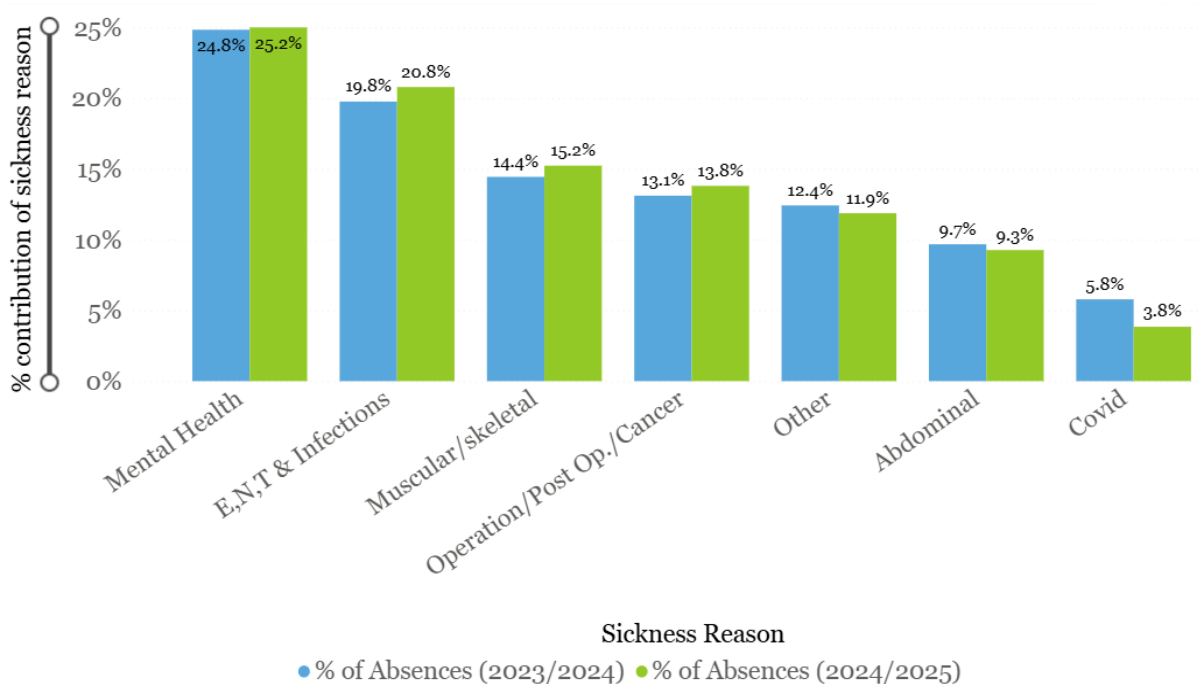
Misconduct

- 12.16 Of the 107 new misconduct cases in 2024 to 2025, the largest proportion were due to 'behavioural reasons' (37%) and 'failing to follow instruction, policy, procedure or a professional code of conduct' (38%).
- 12.17 109 misconduct cases were resolved in 2024 to 2025. In 12% of cases the individual resigned or left under a settlement agreement. 55% of cases resulted in informal action. 19% of cases resulted in the employee's dismissal and the remaining 14% resulted in a formal warning being issued.

Attendance management

- 12.18 The County Council's average absence rate for 2024 to 2025 has remained consistent with last year at 4%.
- 12.19 The total estimated productivity cost of sickness absence has increased from last year from circa £12.1m to circa £13m.
- 12.20 Mental Health (Anxiety, Stress, Depression, and Mental Health) remains the top reason for absence in this reporting year. This is consistent with last year.
- 12.21 The other most common reasons for absence remain consistent with previous years, as follows:

Figure 10 Top sickness reasons



- 12.22 In respect of tackling absence and attendance issues, managers work in accordance with the County Council's attendance management policies. Managers only receive support from HR in the most complex of cases, or if ill health retirement, or dismissal of an employee is contemplated.
- 12.23 Absence and attendance cases which had direct HR support in this reporting year have been a mix of long term (64%), short term (25%) and health cases where the employee is not absent from work but where action and/or adjustments are required to sustain their attendance (10%).
- 12.24 Of the HR-supported absence cases concluded in 2024 to 2025, 58 cases (36%) resulted in the employee's employment with the County Council ending.
- 12.25 This includes 23 dismissals, 4 employees who left by way of a mutual/settlement agreement, 24 resignations as employees made the decision to leave the County Council rather than undergo the full formal attendance management process, and 7 retirements.

Resolving workplace issues

- 12.26 No matter how successful the organisation is, there are issues that prompt an employee to submit a 'grievance' through the County Council's Resolving Workplace Issues Policy.
- 12.27 We recognise that from time to time, conflict may arise in the workplace and that it is important for all involved to be able to access the right information and support for issues to be addressed and resolved.
- 12.28 In most cases a workplace issue will be raised with the employee's line manager, or grandparent manager. However, in exceptional cases, employees can raise issue to HR. HR will ensure an appropriate person is identified to be responsible for the issue:
- within the line management chain, or
 - within the directorate but outside the line management chain, or
 - in another directorate.
- 12.29 During 2024 to 2025, there were 50 new resolving workplace issue cases across County Council directorates, a decrease to the number of cases (59) in the previous year. Not all 'resolving workplace issue' cases that are raised proceed to formal resolution. Some are dealt with informally and of these:
- The majority (24) related to working relationship issues with colleagues and management. This is a slight increase on the previous year when there were 23 cases of this nature.
 - 10 cases were categorised as related to bullying or harassment compared to 12 cases last year.

- 9 cases were categorised as related to discrimination compared to 10 cases last year

12.30 There were 53 resolving workplace issue cases that were resolved within 2024 to 2025 of which 21% were upheld or partially upheld. 40% were not upheld, 23% were dealt with informally and 9% were withdrawn.

Compassionate leave

12.31 Another element of support we provide employees to help them perform well in their roles is offering compassionate leave. This allows our people to take time off to deal with personal or family emergencies, illness, or bereavement without the stress of worrying about work obligations. We believe that this helps in maintaining their mental and emotional well-being during challenging times.

12.32 The purpose of compassionate leave is to offer immediate paid time off to our people to support them at the time of the death or serious illness of a close relative. A close relative is a parent, child, sibling, grandparent or spouse/partner, this may also apply to relatives 'in law'. Over the last 12 months compassionate leave was taken by 1,165 employees, this totalled 3,420 days, these figures are similar to the last reporting year.

**Develop and progress –
Supporting our people to
grow, develop and learn**



13.0 **Develop and progress – Supporting our people to grow, develop and learn**

Leadership and Management Development

- 13.1 A key priority for Hampshire County Council is ensuring our leaders, managers and aspiring managers have the skills and behaviours to shape and improve the future organisation in accordance with the County Council's strategic objectives and intent.
- 13.2 We use the Leadership and Management Behavioural framework (figure 11) along with making support and guidance available for people to develop the required behaviours.
- 13.3 The framework comprises of:
- **Leading self and others** – A self-aware leader who leads by example and role models' credibility and reliability to create a climate of trust
 - **Business and commercial** – Able to demonstrate commercial behaviours and thinking to most effectively balance delivering public value and organisational objectives.
 - **Optimising digital** – Be curious in exploiting digital opportunities, whilst positively empowering and inspiring others.
 - **Enabling change** – Actively seeks ways to embrace change by enabling and empowering a climate that supports innovation and continuous improvement.
 - **One organisation approach** – Collaborate and connect widely to positively influence and deliver outcomes.

Figure 11 The Leadership and Management Behavioural Framework



13.4 Along with online support and guidance we ensure that we have a sustainably funded Leadership and Management programme available. We have been working with an award-winning supplier that are able to provide a Hampshire County Council Leadership and Management Development Programme. This will be funded through the apprenticeship levy. We currently have 135 delegates on the first cohort (24% of the total 556 apprenticeships) with another cohort launching in May 2025.

Secondments / acting up arrangements / promotions

13.5 Across directorates, another way in which we resource our workforce is to provide 'acting up' roles, secondments, and promotions for County Council employees. These offer a flexible solution to staffing needs whilst simultaneously developing staff skills which benefit both the employee and the Council. During the last 12 months there have been approximately 900 employees securing such roles which is a reduction from approximately 1,200 last year. This decrease is likely to be due to a reduction in the number of vacancies advertised due to the recruitment freeze, compared to last year.

**Reward and Recognise –
Ensuring the efforts of
our people are
recognised**



14.0 **Reward and Recognise – Ensuring the efforts of our people are recognised**

14.1 In today’s fast-paced work environments, we recognise that fostering a sense of belonging and appreciation is more critical than ever. By understanding the psychology behind acknowledgment, it is important that our employees feel seen, heard, and valued. Saying thank you is a very important starting point as our employees’ dedication, talent, and commitment drive our success.

14.2 We continue to reward our employees both formally and informally. Our Employee Value Proposition includes the following:

Why choose us?

14.3 Hampshire County Council aims for people in Hampshire to live safe, healthy and independent lives; enjoy a rich and diverse environment; be part of thriving, inclusive communities, and benefit from strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity. To support this, we strive to remain a diverse and inclusive employer, recruiting the very best people to work for us – from a wide and diverse pool of talent.

14.4 Along with our vision detailed in section 3.0:

“Serving the people of Hampshire with purpose and pride to improve lives, today and for tomorrow”.

14.5 Our values and behaviours as an organisation guide everything we do.

The benefits of working for Hampshire County Council

14.6 Our benefits package shown at: <https://www.hants.gov.uk/jobs/whychooseus/benefits> is split across four areas:

- Money matters:
- Work-life balance:
- Health, wellbeing, and inclusion:
- Learning and development:

Rewards and recognition

14.7 The performance of staff across the organisation continues to be high, with 99.82% of HCC employees meeting expected standards of performance during 2024. Less than 1% of staff have been rated as poor performers. 22

employees were noted as not meeting expected standards of performance during 2024 which equates to 0.18% of the County Council workforce.

- 14.8 Our employees' performance continues to be measured and reviewed on an individual basis using the valuing performance framework, which links to our values and behaviours and our Leadership and Management Behavioural framework, with regular discussions taking place between managers and employees throughout the year. The focus of these discussions includes performance against targets, constructive conversations about areas of required improvement, career development, aspirations, health, wellbeing, and resilience.

Special Recognition Payments (SRPs)

- 14.9 Special Recognition Payments (SRPs) have been formal means by which we have recognised exceptional performance. However, in December 2024, CMT ceased the practice of In Year SRPs to ensure it was subject to robust moderation in accordance with the end of year valuing performance framework. In early 2025, CMT took the further decision to temporarily suspend the use of End of Year SRPs. This is reflecting that during a time of exceptional financial pressure, all resources must be dedicated to delivering the County Council's core purpose and ensuring that all spend is focussed on keeping vital services running and protecting the most vulnerable.
- 14.10 CMT has committed, particularly but not exclusively, because of the above, to pay special attention to the recognising of 'in the moment' exceptional performance outcomes or behaviours and to 'call out' that performance or behaviour verbally or in written form throughout the year. CMT have likewise committed to encouraging all senior leaders to do the same.
- 14.11 Due to the In Year SRP process being permanently stopped and the End of Year SRP scheme being temporarily paused, there is no data available to show how many employees delivered exceptional performance during 2024.

Gender Pay Gap

- 14.12 The Gender Pay Gap report published in March 2025 for 2023 to 2024 shows an overall mean gender pay gap of 12.8% in favour of men. This is a decrease from 15.9% reported for 2022 to 2023.
- 14.13 The gender pay gap of 12.8% is not as a result of paying men more than women for the same or equivalent work. The County Council continues to deliver services that other equivalent organisations have either outsourced or no longer provide e.g., catering in schools. If these services were excluded from the data, the County Council would have a mean gender pay gap of 9.4% and a median gender pay gap of 5.1%. As such, the gender pay gap exists as a result of the workforce profile – the roles which men and women undertake within the County Council, and the salaries that these roles attract.

- 14.14 The County Council aims to achieve equality in its pay and reward arrangements. It ensures that employees are paid the correct salary and allowances in accordance with the Employment in Hampshire County Council (EHCC) 2007 Agreement and subsequent variations. The Korn Ferry Hay job evaluation scheme provides an objective and gender-neutral framework to evaluate the jobs that are carried out within the County Council.
- 14.15 Within our [Gender Pay Gap Reports](#) we have reported how we continue to work to reduce our gender pay gap.
- 14.16 The County Council's gender pay gap figures 2023 to 2024 are set out as follows:

Figure 12 Gender pay gap overview

Pay	
Mean gender pay gap in hourly pay (men currently earn more)	12.8%
Median gender pay gap in hourly pay (men currently earn more)	13.4%
Bonus	
Mean bonus gender pay gap (men currently earn more)	-17.5 %
Median bonus gender pay gap (men currently earn more)	23.1%
Proportion of males receiving a bonus payment	8.8%
Proportion of females receiving a bonus payment	6.7%

**Retain –
Encouraging our people
to stay**



15.0 Retain – Encouraging our people to stay

- 15.1 We recognise that there needs to be a balance between retaining employees and employees leaving. Having new employees allows us to develop and grow. However, there are direct and indirect costs associated with external turnover. Direct costs include recruitment and whilst we welcome new employees and see the benefits of new insight and ideas, recruitment can be a time consuming and costly activity, along with the costs of training new employees. Indirect costs include losing knowledge, skills, experience, and employee morale. All of these can have a significant impact on the performance of the organisation. Therefore, it is important that we monitor the number of leavers we have to ensure we have this balance. We also want to understand why people are choosing to leave the County Council so that we can identify if there are any common trends which we have the ability to influence and develop strategies to increase retention.
- 15.2 As with all organisations we know there are several factors as well as reward, benefits and development opportunities, that impact on employee retention, to name a few:
- **Employee engagement** – ensuring that our people are engaged and listened to on the full range of organisational issues.
 - **Inclusion, diversity and wellbeing** – ensuring our people feel valued and treated fairly and creating a healthy, supportive, engaged and productive workforce.
 - **Zero tolerance** – treating each other with respect and kindness and we expect this from our colleagues, partners and customers.
 - **Flexibility and agility** – equipping our employees with the skills needed for a rapidly changing work environment and enabling flexible working where appropriate that aligns with business needs to support an agile workforce.

Employee engagement

- 15.3 Employee engagement is intrinsic to our ambition to remain a high performing organisation, that continues to grow and develop using employee feedback to help inform future strategies and ensure that employees feel their contributions are valued and recognised.
- 15.4 We understand that engaged employees are less likely to leave their jobs, reducing turnover and associated costs for recruitment and training. We aim to create a culture of engagement that promotes trust, transparency, and open communication, creating a positive work environment where employees feel valued and respected. Engagement takes place in multiple ways, such as

regular Chief Executive and director blogs, all staff briefings and team meetings. At the County Council we conduct a staff survey every two years to engage with our people asking for their views on issues such as wellbeing at work, inclusion, leadership and management, the organisations culture and other aspects of working here.

- 15.5 It is important that we hear from as many people as possible. Survey results help shape decisions about which priorities and improvement projects.

Employee Wellbeing Pulse Survey

- 15.6 To track the wellbeing of colleagues during the COVID-19 pandemic we began surveying a sample of our workforce each month. This project has continued beyond the initial recovery phase and currently reports monthly to CMT, directorates, and staff networks.
- 15.7 Each month, one twelfth of the organisation is asked to take part in this study, which means all employees are invited to participate once per year. Respondents are asked to identify which things have the most influence on their wellbeing, so that the County Council can ensure that the support provided is suitable for its employees.
- 15.8 4,224 responses were received across 2024 to 2025 to the employee wellbeing pulse survey. All factors asked around wellbeing have remained generally consistent over the past year, with the exception of a 6% reduction in people feeling optimistic about the future (from 40% to 34%). However, following its lowest result of 31% in January 2025 there has been a small improvement over February and March.
- 15.9 From the survey results on where colleagues would look for wellbeing support, we can see colleagues would generally first seek wellbeing support for themselves outside the Council, although there remains a role for line managers, particularly when looking for support for other colleagues. Line managers would be the first channel for those seeking any type of wellbeing support at work, indicating that a particularly effective way to promote wellbeing at work is through upskilling management and leadership, rather than by directly signposting staff to wellbeing support resources.

Inclusion, Diversity and Wellbeing

- 15.10 Recent inclusion work has helped us to ensure that our services are relevant to, and effective for, those who use them. Our efforts have led to improvements in processes, culture, and policies. Colleagues tell us that they have appreciated the work we've done. We are very proud to be respectful and understanding of people's differences, not only among the staff that work for us, but also among the residents for whom we work.

- 15.11 We continue to monitor our progress and report on the inclusivity of our workforce because our people and our service users, tell us that it matters to them for us to do so.
- 15.12 Throughout each year we mark various commemorative dates by holding awareness sessions, sharing resources and highlighting case studies. Those we have marked during 2024 to 2025 include Black History Month, Disability History Month, International Women’s Day and National Inclusion Week, among many others. To ensure that our people can have a baseline of knowledge and understanding of inclusion, our inclusion and diversity eLearning module has been updated to reflect a more modern approach to learning and to include up to date content and signposting.
- 15.13 The three key aims in the Wellbeing Programme have continued to be our focus in this area, they include:
- embedding health and wellbeing in the organisation.
 - progressing the wellbeing session schedule.
 - continuing to provide manager support and toolkits.
- 15.14 Our aims include helping to create a culture in line with our vision and values, where employees feel confident and comfortable to speak about their wellbeing and know how to seek help, if required. We want to empower colleagues to learn for themselves, explore creating healthy habits and/or share tips and techniques to support wellbeing. We do this through raising and increasing awareness of the resources available and relevant signposting.
- 15.15 The past year has seen the delivery of over 30 wellbeing sessions on a variety of topics which were informed by our employees. The sessions around pensions, understanding wills, the menopause, physical health and sleep have been particularly popular. Wellbeing sessions are recorded where possible and are included as part of the growing collection of recordings which continue to be made accessible to our people through the relevant online portals. These are signposted to colleagues for them to continue to access and benefit from.
- 15.16 We are also continuing to support managers to embed health and wellbeing in the County Council. Over 800 managers in the reporting period have completed Connect 5, a mental health and wellbeing training. The evaluation data from the pre and post surveys which managers have completed have shown an increase in skill, confidence and capability in having effective conversations about mental wellbeing as well as having the resources and tools to hand to support those conversations. Following the success of the manager training, we have continued to deliver a smaller programme of Connect 5 training which is open to all staff. Again, there has been strong participation and initial feedback continues to be positive.

Zero tolerance

15.17 We believe in treating each other with respect and we expect this from our colleagues, partners and customers at Hampshire County Council. This matters because it is simply the right thing and because our organisation functions at its best when everyone feels respected, in line with our vision and values.

Our Zero Tolerance Statement:

15.18 Hampshire County Council is a diverse organisation. We take pride in promoting, valuing and celebrating diversity as an inclusive employer. As a public body serving Hampshire, we seek to ensure zero tolerance of harassment, discrimination, bullying and abuse and will respond promptly to any incidents of these.

15.19 We are committed to advancing equality and inclusion in all our responsibilities – as an employer, as a provider and commissioner of services, and as a partner in the local economy. All County Council staff, as well as staff delivering services we have arranged, are entitled to be treated with respect by those they work with or for. Unacceptable behaviour towards any member of staff will not be tolerated, and all incidents reported will be taken seriously.

Flexibility and agility

15.20 The County Council remains committed to the benefits of flexible working for individual employees and the organisation, with a range of formal and informal arrangements that support work life balance, as well as recruitment and retention. For example, use of part-time or condensed working and other flexible working arrangements are supporting the resilience and retention of a variety of critical roles across the County Council.

15.21 No member of staff is paid a full-time salary for working part-time hours.

We aim to provide modern, efficient, and productive ways of working to better support the needs of the County Council and our people. Our open workplace policy, which supports managers to agree role-appropriate alternative working locations, is now embedded across directorates. Although services delivered directly to the people of Hampshire continue to be conducted primarily face to face, many office-based employees work flexibly between home and office locations, with careful consideration being given to working from the office 'with a purpose'. For example, teams working in the office on the same days, or for face-to-face development sessions and collaboration events. The hybrid way of working continues and is an asset in our recruitment and retention space. In addition, we are seeing other benefits as an organisation such as the review and consolidation of our office accommodation which is providing savings from reduced running costs and capital receipts from sale of surplus assets.

**Leave –
Learning from those
who leave**



16.0 **Leave – Learning from those who leave**

- 16.1 There are a range of reasons why people leave an organisation. The profile of people leaving the County Council is shown within this section. It is important for us to understand why people leave so that we can identify if there are any improvements that can be made to the working environment.
- 16.2 Learning from those who leave is an ongoing process, integrated into our organisational culture of continuous improvement. By regularly seeking feedback from both current and departing employees and taking proactive steps to address issues identified, we aim to create a positive and supportive work environment that fosters employee engagement and loyalty.
- 16.3 Equally, it is important that the County Council has appropriate mechanisms in place to support our people to move on when performance does not meet organisational expectations. Data is shown within 'Perform'.
- 16.4 As well as looking at annual turnover and the reasons for leaving, it has been beneficial to identify the number of employees leaving in their first 3 and 12 months of employment.

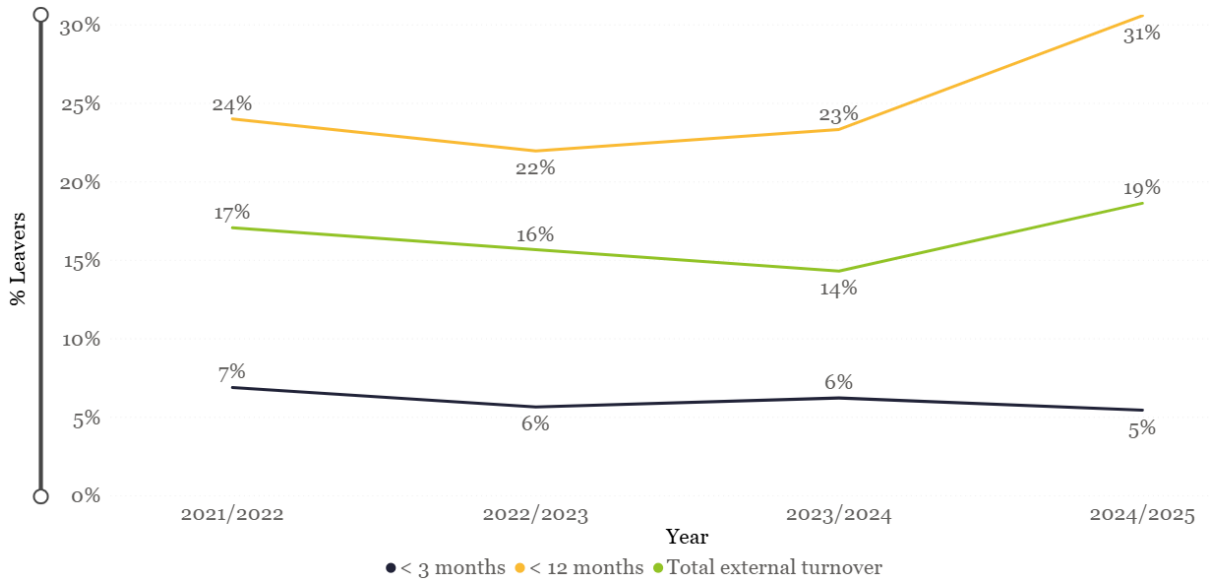
Leavers in the first three months of employment

- 16.5 2,393 people left our employment last year. 5% of these left the County Council in the first three months of employment, a decrease from 6% last year. This remains consistent with a 1 to 2% variance over recent years shown in figure 13. The latest HR Metrics Survey in March 2023 results show an average 90-day turnover of 9.09% which is consistent with overall industry averages. This shows the County Council remains below these figures.
- 16.6 The main roles that employees leave within their first 3 months of employment are Catering assistants, Residential care workers, Administrative assistants and Care assistants.

Leavers in the first twelve months of employment

- 16.7 The number of leavers in their first 12 months of employment has increased to 31% from 23% last year (figure 13). The main roles that employees leave within their first twelve months of employment are similar as at three months, namely School crossing patrol, Catering assistants, Administrative assistants, Residential care workers and Care assistants.

Figure 13 External starters leaving within 3, 12, and 12+ months service across the last 4 years – moving annual turnover (MAT)



Turnover

- 16.8 Our overall external annual turnover, as expected, has increased from 14% to 19%.
- 16.9 The increase in turnover can be contributed to the following:
- 348 employees (14.5%) left through MARS, these figures are shown within voluntary resignations in figure 14.
 - 118 employees (5%) left through redundancy
 - 247 employees (10%) left through Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment rights (TUPE) arrangements to Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary and Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service as part of services returning to our partners.
- 16.10 Dismissals have also been higher (255 which includes 118 redundancies) in 2024 to 2025 than during the previous year (131 with 23 due to redundancy).

16.11 Reasons for leaving are shown in the table below:

Figure 14 External leaver reasons

External leaver reasons	Headcount
Involuntary	531
Death in Service	15
Dismiss – Redundancy	118
Dismiss	137
Mutual/Compromise Agreements	13
TUPE Transfer	247
Voluntary	1,862
Resign	1633
Retirement	229
Total	2,393

Mutually agreed resignation scheme (MARS)

16.12 As referenced in paragraphs 7.6 and 7.7, Directorate Management Teams considered each application against the same set of criteria, to make robust decisions that balance the need for savings, and the choice of the individual concerned, with the needs of the service. 354 applications were approved and 348 staff left on 31 January 2025 and are included in the resignation figures in figure 14.

Gaining insight from our leavers

16.13 We continue to encourage our leavers to complete the leaver questionnaire and review different ways to capture more information from them. Data from our leaver questionnaire is provided to directors on a quarterly basis.

Conclusions

17.0 Conclusions

17.1 Throughout this report we have highlighted the challenging financial environment that we are working in and the work that we are doing to limit the impact of this.

17.2 We have made reference to key pieces of work:

- Our Senior Manager review.
- Independent panel review.
- Implementation of a Mutually Agreed Resignation Scheme (MARS).
- Organisation Wide Redesign.
- Devolution and local government reorganisation.

17.3 Attract:

- We have advertised 33% fewer roles this year. However, our recruitment adverts have continued to generate more applications to our vacancies, which similar to last year may be linked to us advertising less vacancies and may be because levels of unemployment in Hampshire and nationally are increasing.
- We continue to be more attractive to the female labour market. The applicant split this year is male 36% and female 64%, although male applications have increased on par with previous years. 32% of applicants were ethnically diverse, which is an increase from last year (29%).
- As in previous years, internal applicants are more likely to be hired than external applicants.

17.4 Resource:

- We continue to fill our roles through a multitude of means such as directly employed staff, agency workers and contractors.
- Our Headcount and FTE have both decreased from last year, however, our workforce costs have increased which can be attributed to annual pay awards.
- We continue to work closely with Connect2Hampshire to further develop our combined approach and to improve applicant attraction, recruitment, and retention considering the current market challenges.

17.5 Onboard:

- We welcomed 1,273 people into the County Council, with induction remaining critical to the way we welcome and familiarise them with the business.

17.6 **Perform:**

- We remain a high performing local authority with a clear performance management framework underpinned by strong leadership and management capability.
- We have a strong focus on building a performance culture that:
 - Sets expectation and builds desire for managers to manage performance and attendance in their team or service areas.
 - Enables managers to take appropriate action based on relevant people data and business insight.
 - Builds confidence and capability (skills and knowledge) to improve performance and attendance.
 - Provides effective policies and procedures that best enable the organisation to improve performance and attendance.
- We continue to manage attendance, performance and misconduct cases as appropriate and necessary and our sickness absence rate remains consistent with last year at 4%.

17.7 **Develop and progress:**

- Our Leadership and Management Behavioural framework continues to be embedded.
- Our commitment to apprenticeships has continued into 2025 with another strong performance. We enrolled 556 employees into 64 different apprenticeship pathways and continue to expand our programme of apprenticeships.

17.8 **Reward and Recognise:**

- The performance of our people across the County Council continues to be high.
- Our mean Gender Pay Gap has decreased to 12.8%.

17.9 **Retain:**

- We know 37% of current employees have been with the County Council for longer than 9 years. We have introduced a range of retention strategies to support directorates in retaining our people.

17.10 **Leave:**

- Organisationally, turnover has increased from 14% to 19% and we know that in directorates retention challenges are still being faced in specific roles, and in particular geographical locations across the county.

- A total of 2,393 employees left the County Council, an increase of 555 leavers from last year. The increase in turnover can be contributed to the following:
 - 348 employees (14.5%) left through MARS.
 - 118 employees (5%) left through redundancy
 - 247 employees (10%) left through TUPE transfer to Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary and Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service.
- The percentage of employees that leave within their first 12 months of employment remains consistent with previous years.

Our people

PART 2 OUR PEOPLE

18.0 An overview summary of our people data

18.1 We continue to explore different ways to analyse our people data to understand more about our people. In this reporting year, we continue to analyse our people data across grades to show how our diversity is distributed across the County Council's pay structure.

Equality Act 2010

18.2 The Equality Act 2010 (Specific duties) Regulations 2011 requires listed public authorities to publish equality information on an annual basis. The diversity information contained within this report complies with those regulations and the legal requirements to support the building of valuable insight that will support us to become even more inclusive.

18.3 We are required to have due regard to the need to achieve the objectives set out under s149 of the Equality Act 2010 to:

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

18.4 We support the aims of the Equality Duty by seeking to:-

- ensure that services are inclusive and diverse, proactively increasing understanding between and within communities.
- attract and retain a diverse workforce, with equal opportunities for career progression.
- ensure zero tolerance of harassment, discrimination, bullying and abuse, dealing effectively with incidents when they occur.

Confidentiality and employee data

18.5 Personal data is treated confidentially. Personal information relating to sexual orientation and gender identity is not seen by managers or administrators. This data is on personal records but securely hidden and access restricted to those in a few specific roles for reporting purposes.

18.6 Data is not and will not be published in any way that allows an individual to be identified. Line managers are not able to access this information or run diversity reports that include this data for their teams.

Intersectionality

18.7 We remain conscious that whilst we report about our people in specific communities, for example our 'ethnic minority community', or our 'female community', we are in fact all unique. Many of us will associate with more than one of these communities at any given time. 'Intersectionality' refers to the fact we all have multiple identities which shape our life experiences. We are therefore seeking not only to understand the different employee communities that exist, but also how these overlap for individuals, to shape each separate employee's experience within the County Council.

Staff Networks and Trade Unions

18.8 Our Staff Networks continue to make a valuable contribution to inclusion at the County Council by supporting the delivery of our action plan and undertaking their own specific awareness raising and activities. Staff Networks remain a critical part of our organisation. They are made up of people who identify with a minority group and/or have an interest in matters relating to diversity strands.

18.9 Our staff networks are:

- Black and Minority Ethnic Network (BME)
- Carer and Working Parents Network
 - Disability Network
 - Auto-immune Support Group
 - Neurodiverse Staff Group
- LGBT+ Network
- Women's Network
 - No Kidding Group

18.10 Trade Unions continue to play a valuable part within the County Council, working closely with managers in the shared best interest of our service users and the employees who provide those services.

18.11 Our Unions and professional bodies:

- Association of Educational Psychologists
- GMB
- Prospect
- Royal College of Nursing
- UNISON

- Unite

Our people

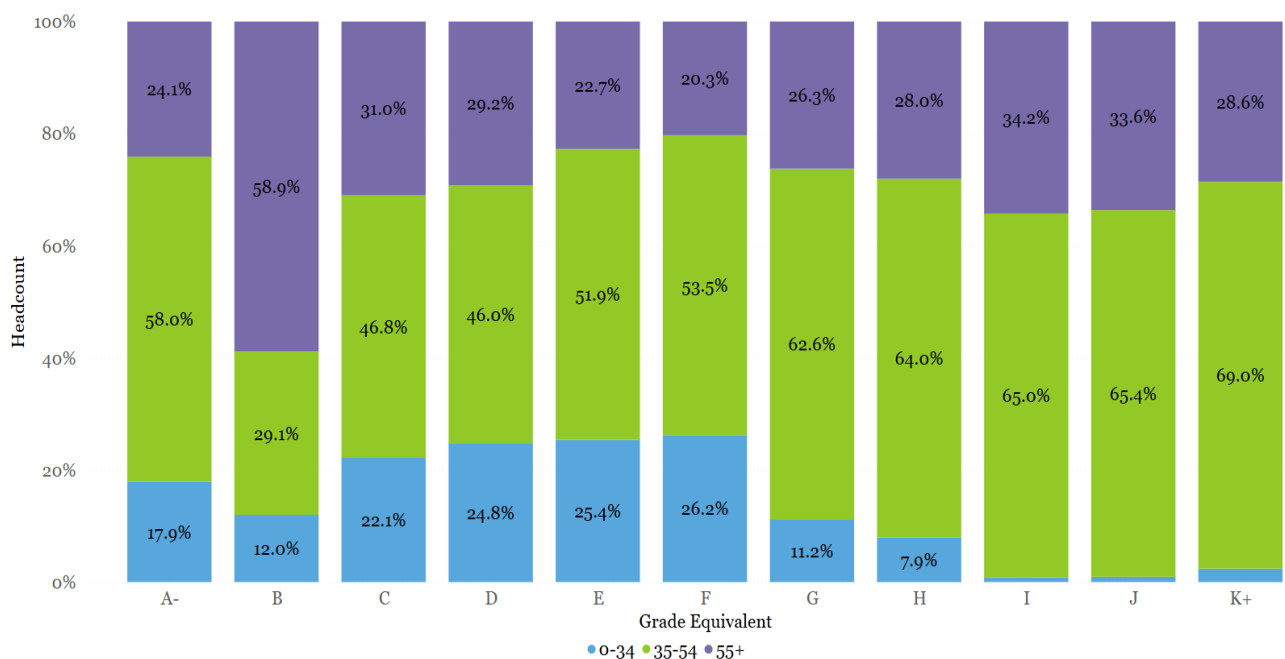
Age

18.12 Overall, the mean average age of our people remains the same as last year at 46.

18.13 We continue to be underrepresented amongst employees under the age of 25, this year the under 25 headcount has decreased from 636 in the previous year to 366.

The age profile of the County Council across grades is shown in figure 15.

Figure 15 Age across grade



Armed Forces

18.14 Our commitment to the county's Armed Forces community is ongoing and is reflected in both the delivery of our statutory responsibilities (as defined by the Armed Forces Act 2021 and referred to as "The Covenant Duty") and a number of discretionary responsibilities that we are committed to enabling in support of our "Covenant Pledge".

18.15 For Hampshire County Council, our "Covenant Duty" is limited to healthcare and education. These Covenant Duties are fulfilled through the relevant

service Directorates, namely Adults' Health and Care for the 'Healthcare' duty and Children's Services for the 'Education' duty.

18.16 Further to the provision of our statutory duties, in October 2023, the Leader of Hampshire County Council re-signed the Armed Forces Covenant "pledge" reinforcing our commitment to the Armed Forces communities of Hampshire.

18.17 As part of our responsibilities under the Armed Forces Covenant, we recognise that attracting more armed forces veterans to apply for our roles has the potential for:

- Bringing varied skills, knowledge, and experience.
- Adding to the different lived experiences, and perspectives in the County Council
- Increasing the skills available in languages, handling hazardous substances, HGV driving, engineering, first aid and catering to name a few.
- Supporting our Inclusion and Diversity strategy more generally.

18.18 We are keen to attract Armed Forces applicants to our roles as the skills they bring are transferable and many of these skills are required in the roles in our recruitment 'hot spots'. 1% of our people have advised us that they are armed forces veterans.

Carers

18.19 16% (768) of our people look after or give help or support to someone because they have any long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses, or problems related to old age. This is made up of 15% full-time employees and 18% of part time employees. 18% of females have caring responsibilities, versus 13% of males. However, we recognise that not all our people have shared this information with us.

Disability / Any physical or mental health conditions or illness lasting or expected to last for 12 months or more

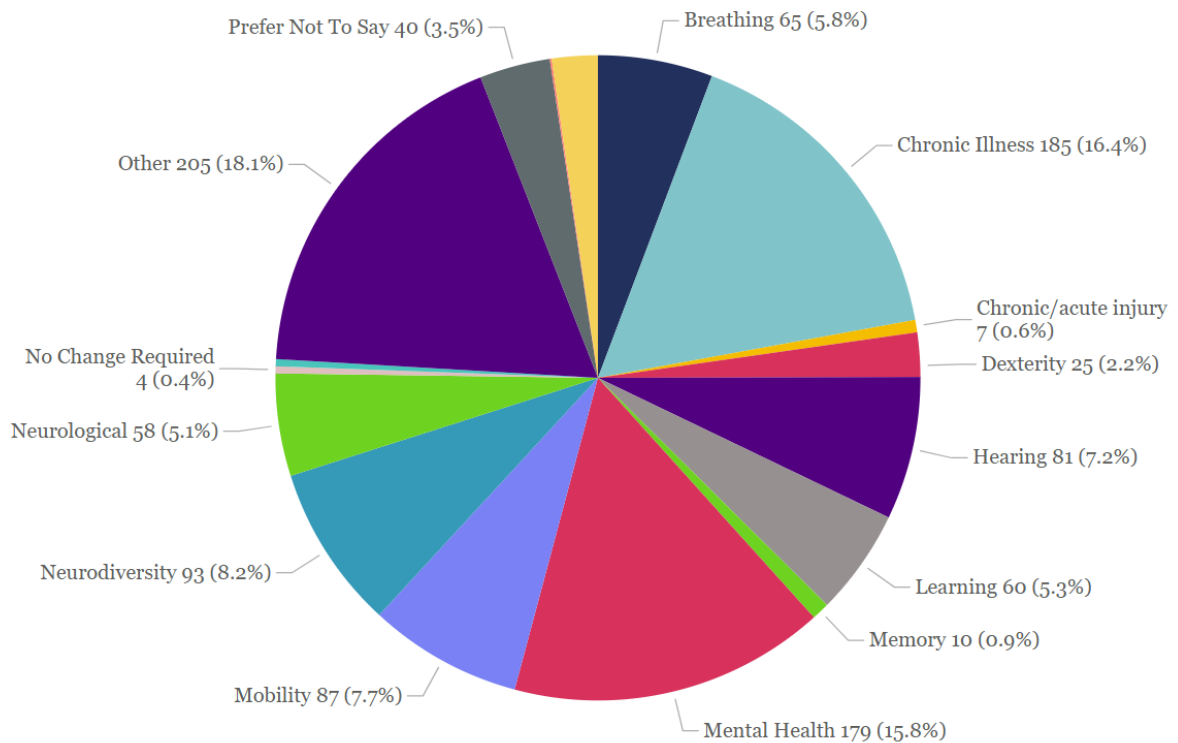
18.20 The number of people declaring their data has increased over time, this year 12% (1,161) of our people recorded themselves as having physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last for 12 months or more, compared to 10% last year. Employees are encouraged to talk to their manager if they need support.

18.21 However, we still recognise that not all our people have shared this information with us.

18.22 In our workforce, 9% (894) of females and 9% (305) of males have recorded a disability and our data shows that this year those declaring a disability are evenly represented across all ages.

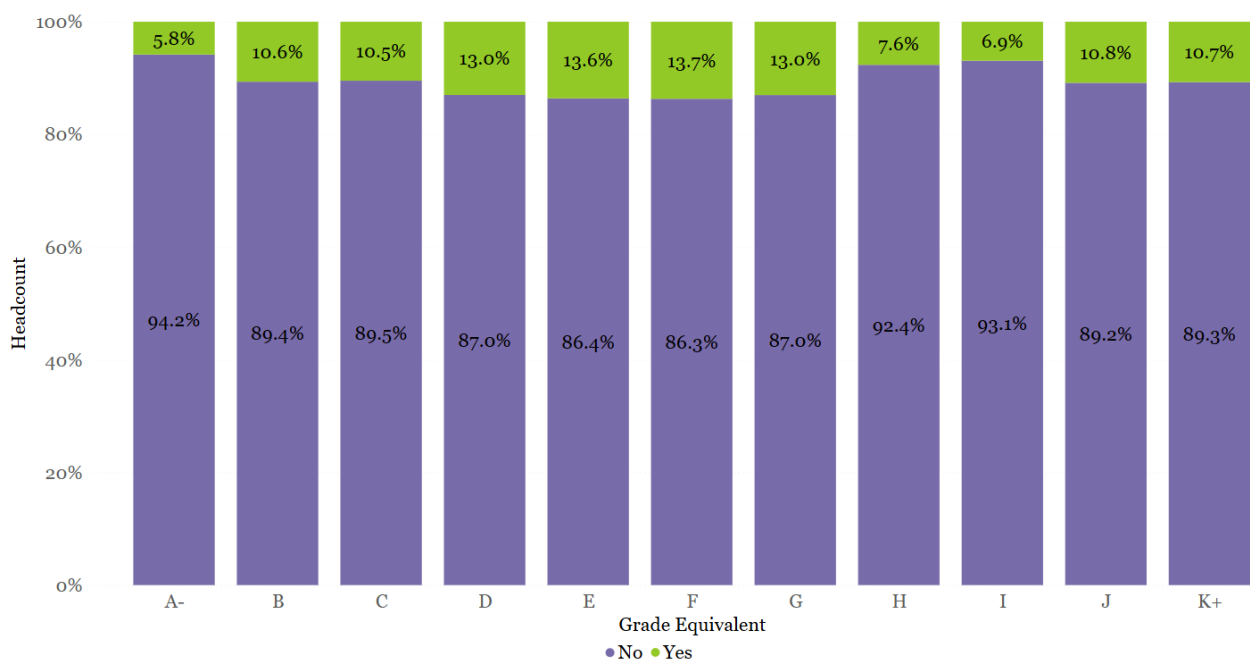
18.23 A breakdown of this data shows the following responses by employees to the types of disabilities that they have recorded.

Figure 16 Types of disabilities and physical and mental health conditions



18.24 The graph below shows the representation of employees declaring a disability by grade.

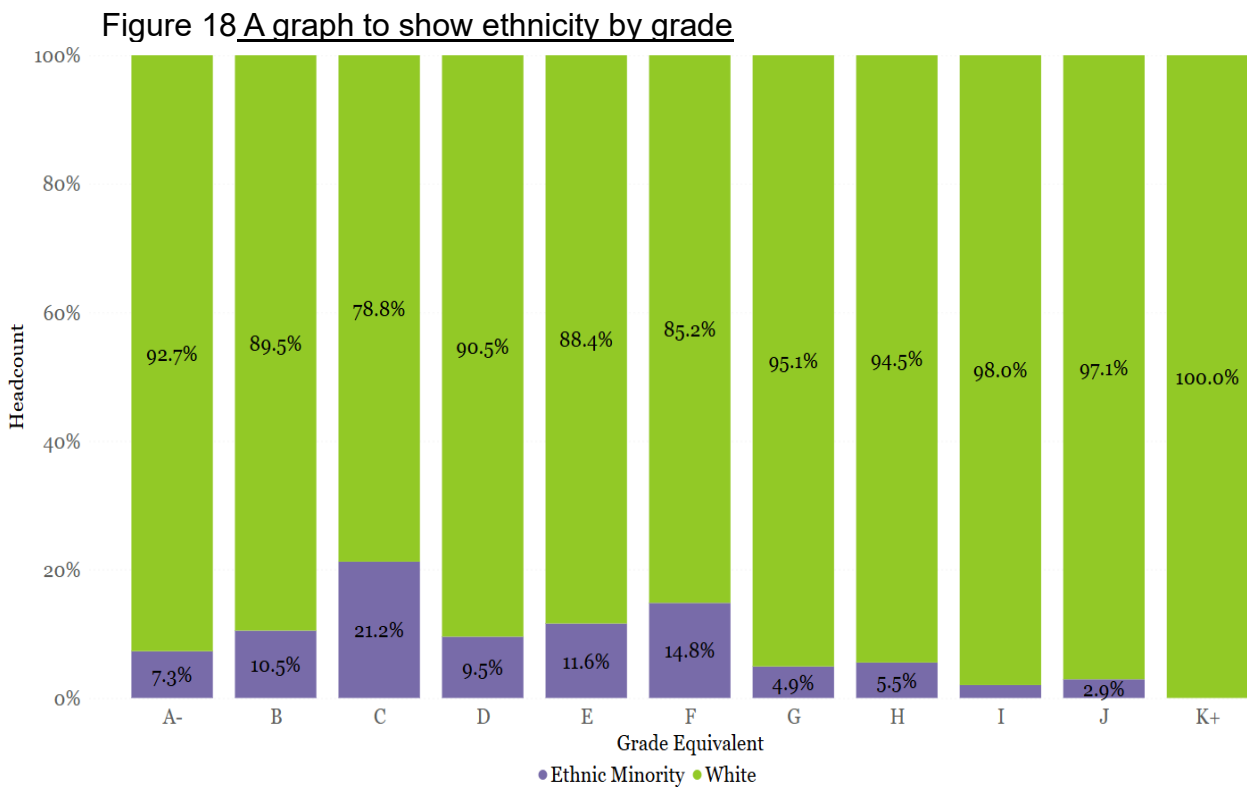
Figure 17 A graph to show disability by grade



Ethnicity

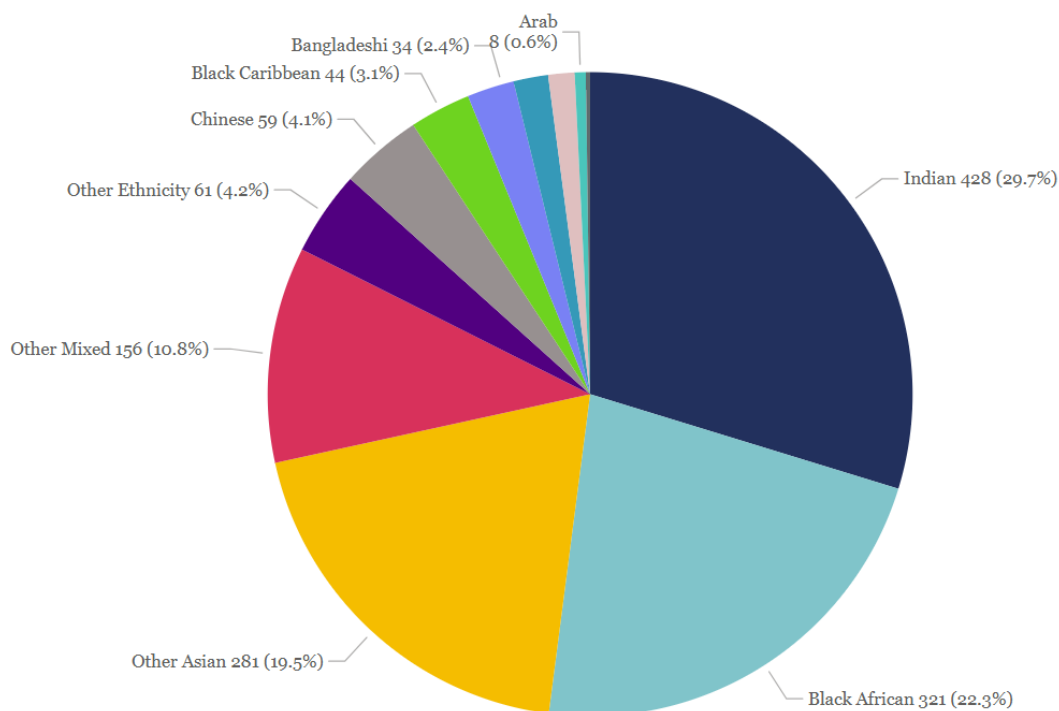
18.25 Reflected below we can see that 88% of our people classify themselves as white and 12% classify themselves as from an ethnic minority. This is an increase in employees from an ethnic minority from last year, which may be due to an increase in staff declaring this information.

18.26 The graph below reflects how ethnicity is broken down across grades. Ethnic minority employees are concentrated predominantly in grades C followed by F and E grades.



18.27 The 12% of ethnic minority employees can be further broken down as follows:

Figure 19 Minority ethnicities



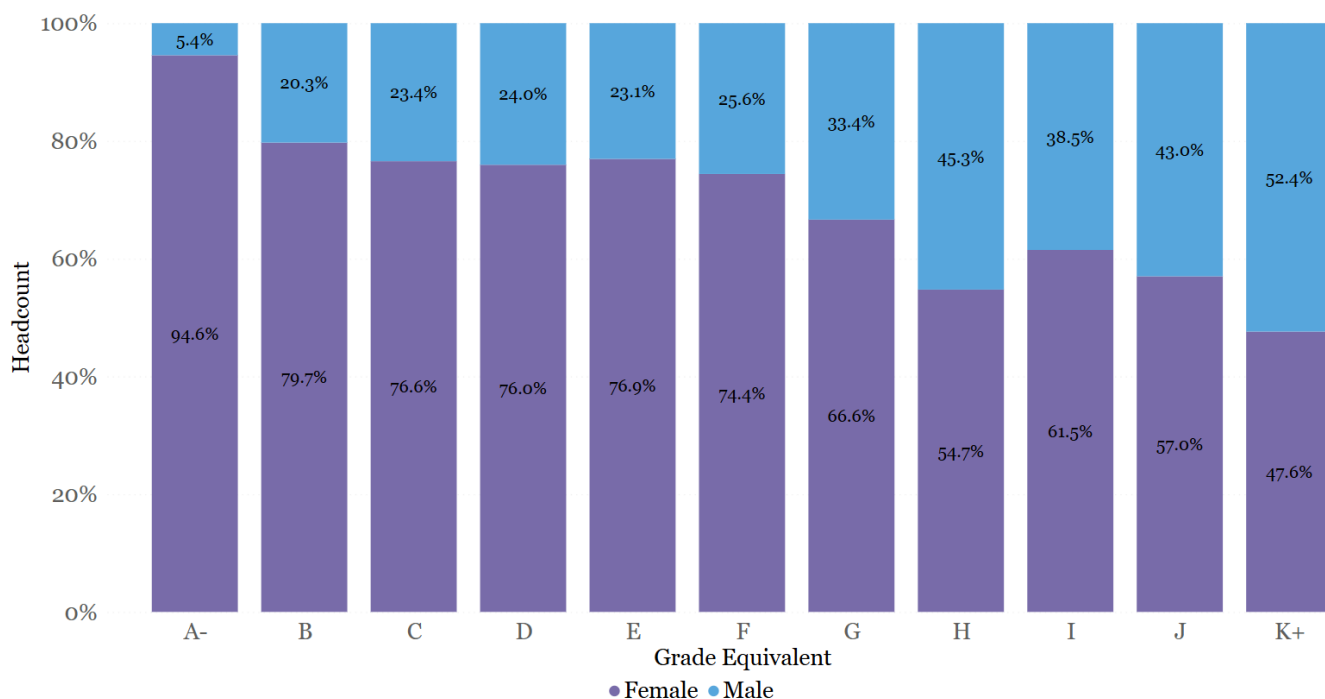
18.28 There is a higher representation of males than females amongst ethnic minority employees (15%).

Gender

18.29 Figure 20 reflects our headcount by gender and full/part time working profile as of 31 March 2025. As previously reported our people are predominantly female with a significant proportion also being part-time.

18.30 The below graph shows the gender representation across grades:

Figure 20 Gender by grade

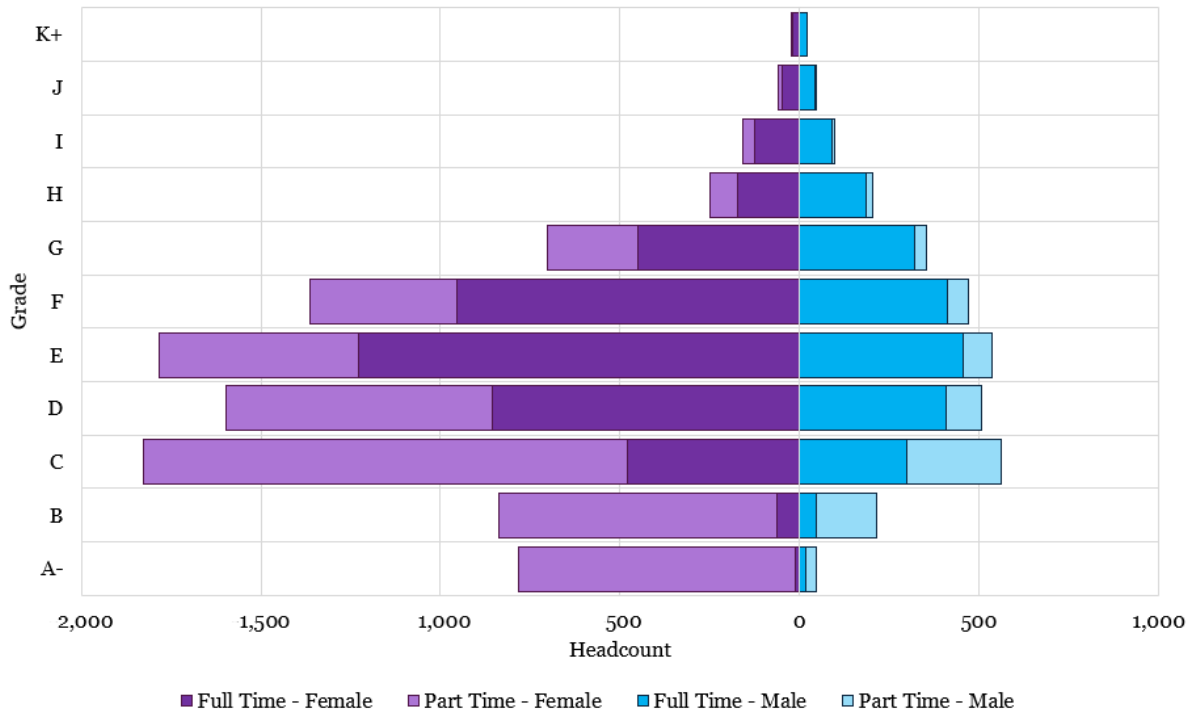


18.31 This data also shows that half of our people work part-time (Figures 21 and 22).

Figure 21 Gender representation across grades, full-time and part-time roles

Gender Grade	Female			Male		
	Full Time Headcount	Part Time Headcount	Total Headcount	Full Time Headcount	Part Time Headcount	Total Headcount
K+	45%	2%	48%	52%		52%
J	45%	12%	57%	40%	3%	43%
I	48%	13%	61%	35%	4%	39%
H	38%	16%	55%	41%	4%	45%
G	43%	24%	67%	30%	3%	33%
F	52%	22%	74%	23%	3%	26%
E	53%	24%	77%	20%	3%	23%
D	41%	35%	76%	19%	5%	24%
C	20%	57%	77%	13%	11%	23%
B	6%	74%	80%	4%	16%	20%
A-	1%	93%	95%	2%	3%	5%
Total	35%	40%	75%	19%	6%	25%

Figure 22 Gender representation across grades, full-time and part-time roles



Gender identity

18.32 In addition to gender, an employee can choose to record their gender identity by answering the question ‘is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth? 31% have stated ‘yes’ and less than 1% have reported ‘no’, 68% of our people have not declared this data.

Nationality

18.33 The nationality profile of the County Council is presented below.

Figure 23 Nationality profile

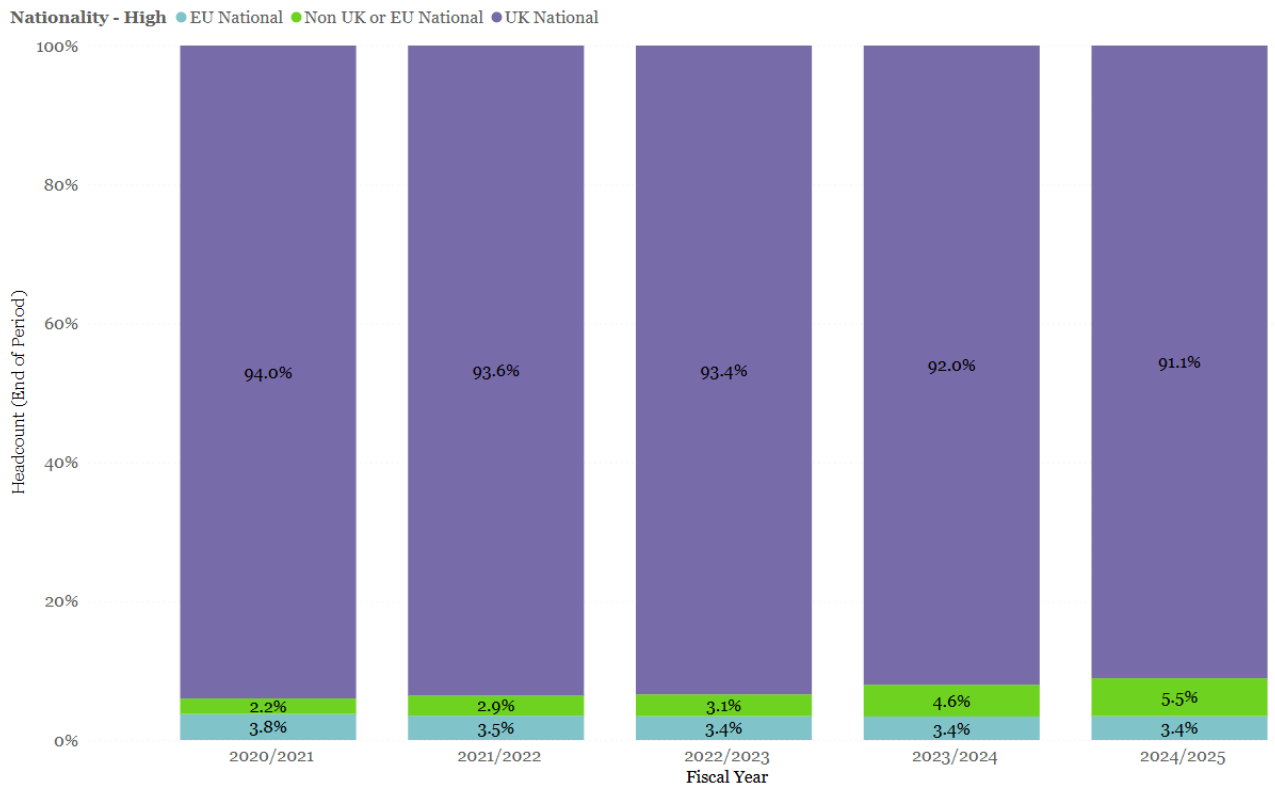
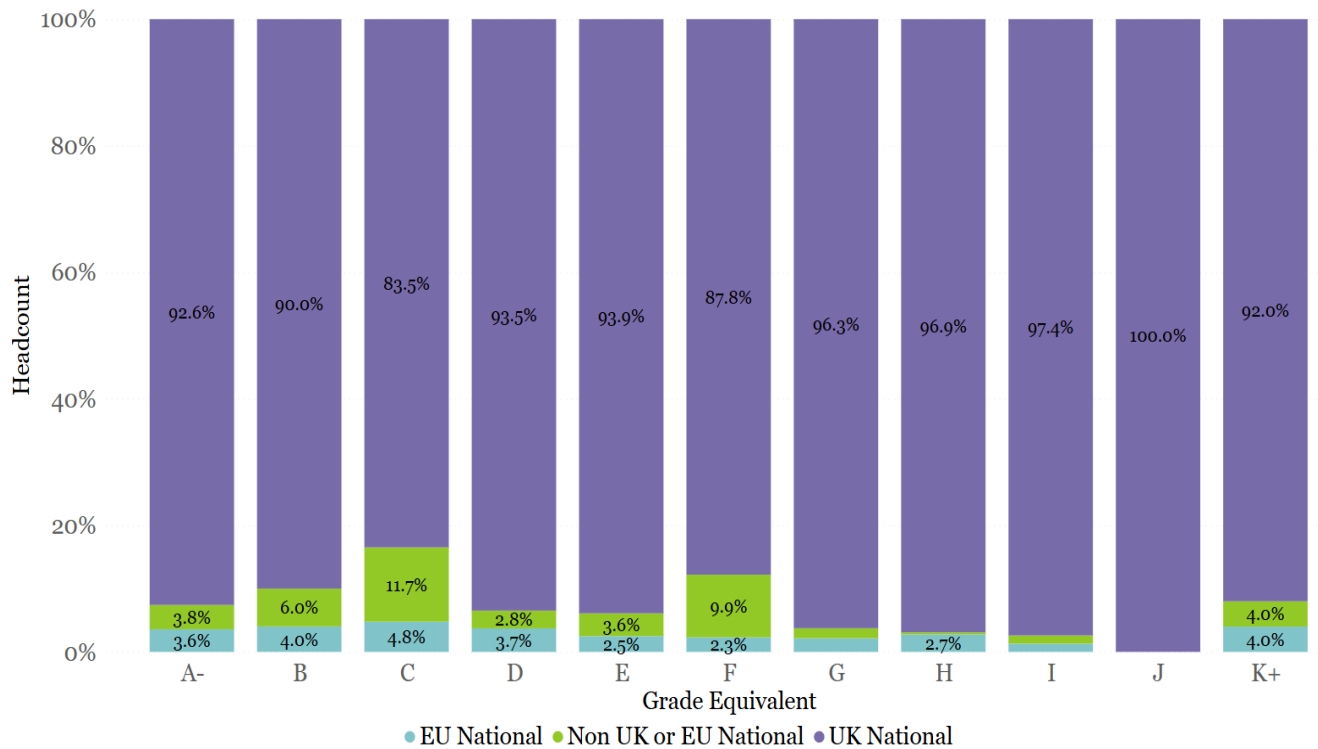


Figure 24 Nationality by grade



Pregnancy and maternity

18.34 The below table shows the number of employees who started, or were on maternity leave, in the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025. It also shows us the number of employees (headcount) who have taken shared parental leave, adoption leave and paternity leave.

Figure 25 Types of leave

Types of leave	Headcount
Maternity leave	392
Paternity leave	59
Shared Parental leave	7
Adoption leave	8
Keep in touch days	Average 3 days per employee on maternity leave

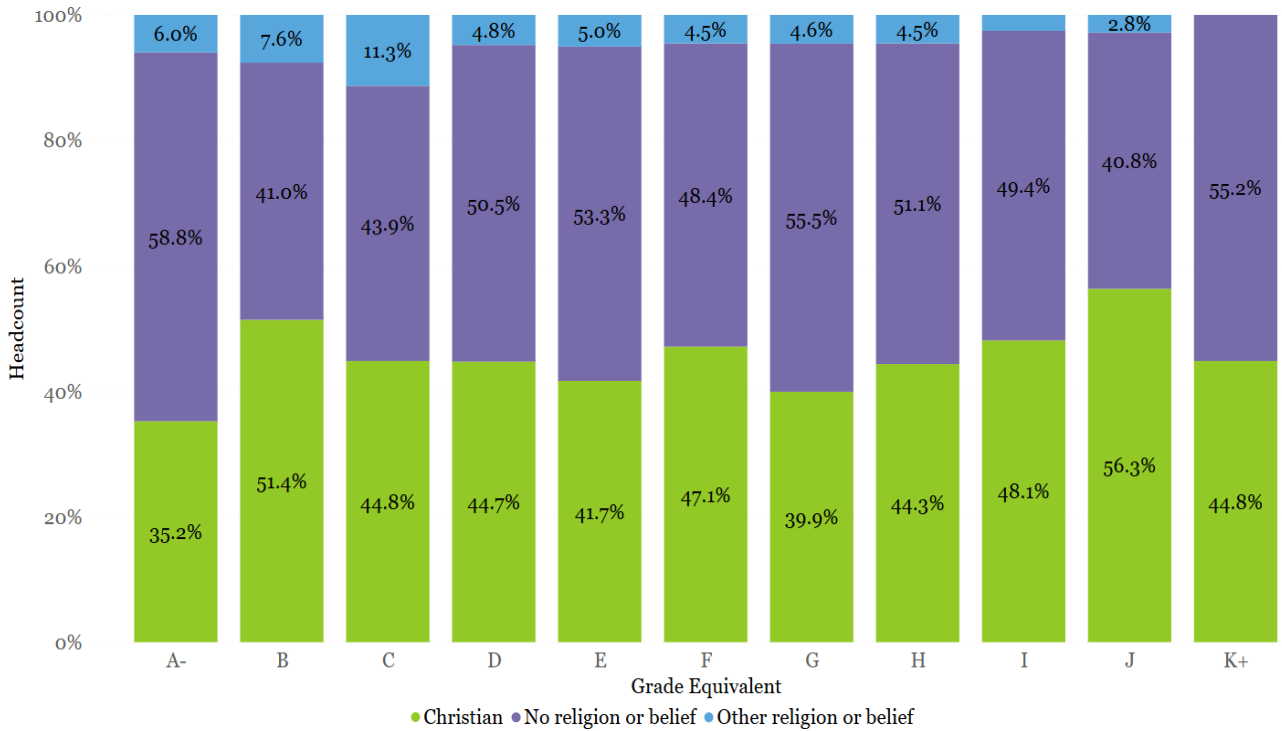
18.35 More maternity leave was taken in comparison to the last reporting period as well as an increase in the number of Keeping In Touch (KIT) days taken. There has been a slight reduction in the number of employees taking paternity leave from last year.

Religion and belief

18.36 It is important for us to understand and be sensitive to the religious beliefs of our people to help promote an inclusive working environment. We encourage employees to share information with colleagues around religious festivals and celebrations that they are involved in, to help educate and inform others.

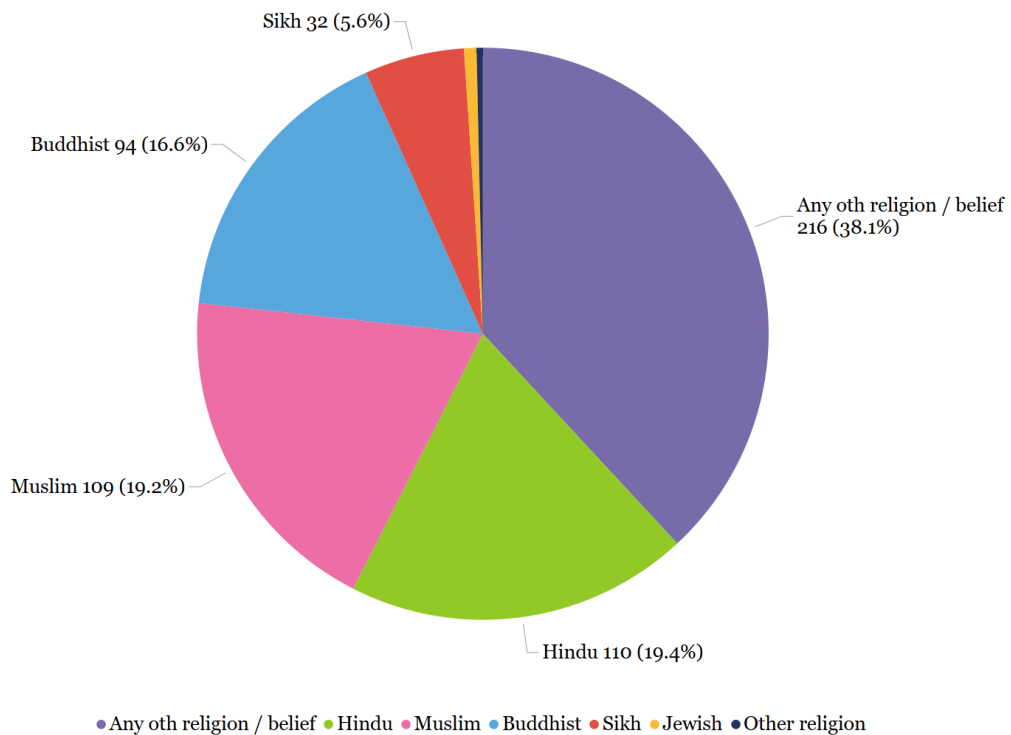
18.37 Consistent with last year 73% of employees have declared their religion or belief. The religious profile across our grades is as follows:

Figure 26 Religion and belief by grade



18.38 The religion and belief profile is broken down into more detail and is shown below:

Figure 27 Minority religions and belief representation

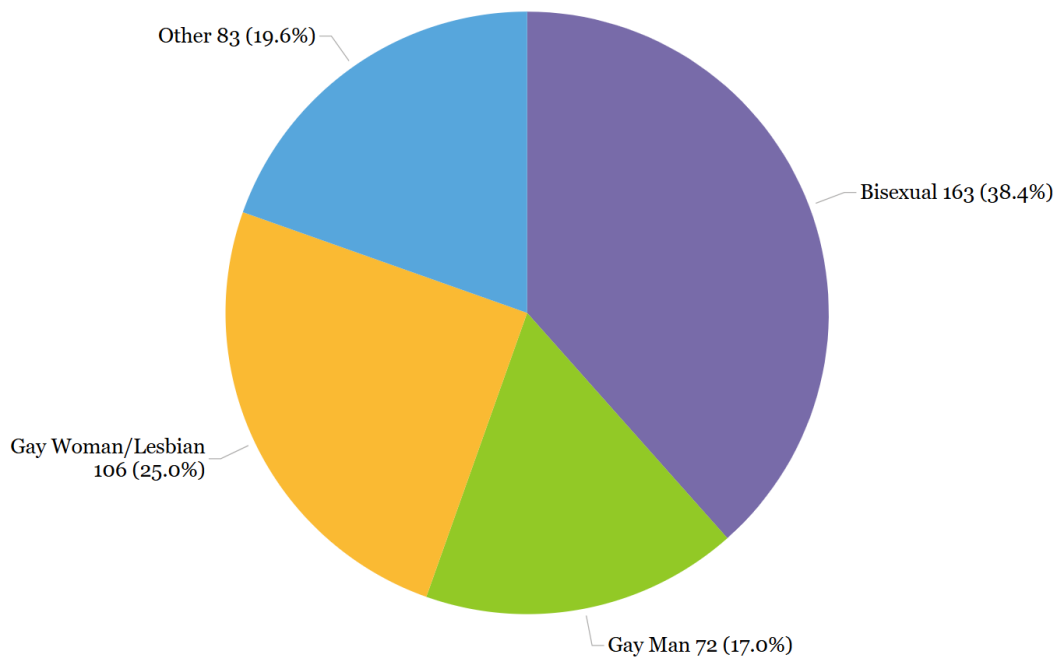


Sexual orientation

18.39 56% of employees have provided their information. It is important to acknowledge the trust that has been placed in the organisation by our people who have chosen to do so. Whilst we can provide a high-level organisational report on this data, it is NOT information that can be accessed by individual line managers to protect anonymity. The purpose of reflecting it here is to help us inform our strategies and target initiatives to improve the workplace for LGBT+ employees in making the County Council an even more inclusive place to work.

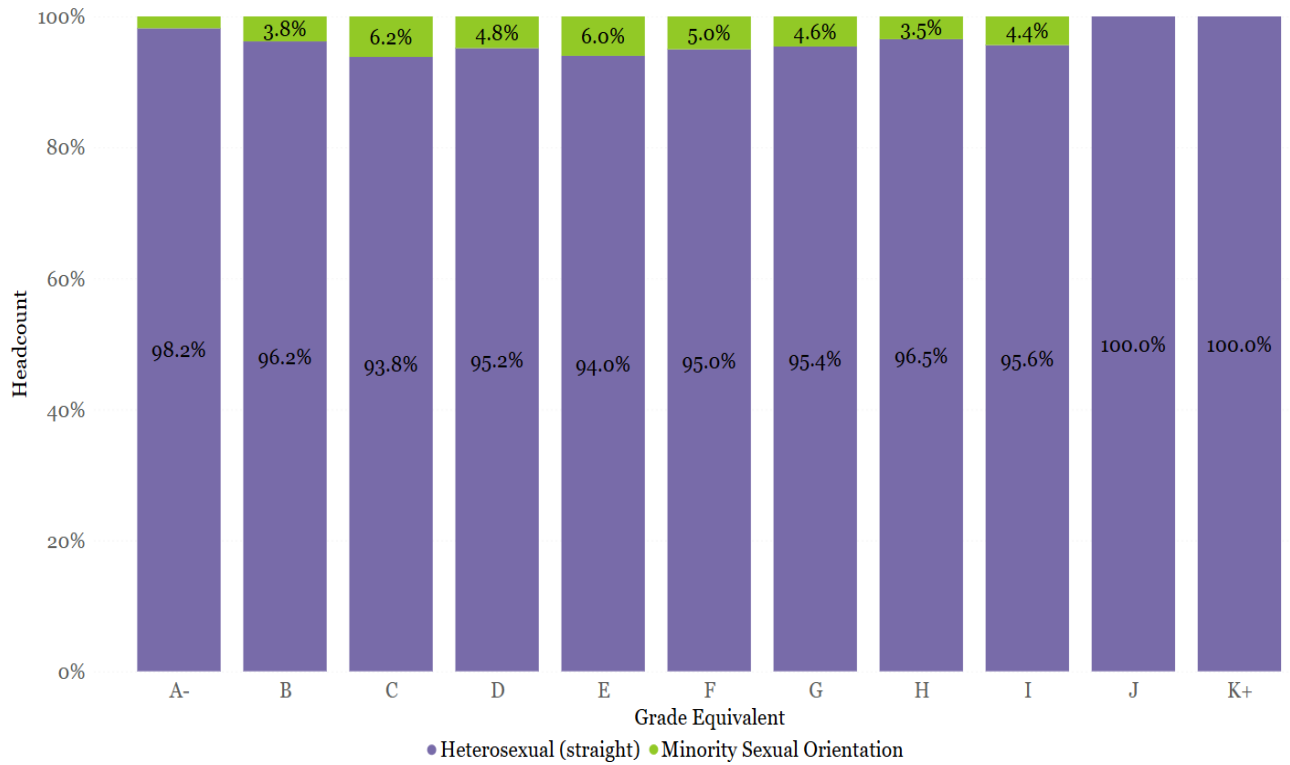
18.40 The minority sexual orientation profile is shown below:

Figure 28 Minority sexual orientation representation



18.41 Figure 29 shows our sexual orientation representation across grades, minority sexual orientations are shown more in lower to middle grades, and this may be largely due to the greater representation of younger workers in these grades, who may have a higher likelihood of declaring a minority sexual orientation.

Figure 29 Sexual orientation across grades



19.0 Data assumptions and limitations

19.1 The data comparisons used in this report show either trends over previous years or are at a specific point of time (i.e., 31 March 2025):

- Categorisations may change between reports e.g. the groupings of individual ages into age groups. This can happen when categorisations change, and we have to amend past data.
- Figures may differ from previous year reports as past data can change. For example someone's leaving date could be changed, which would change when they became an external leaver. Data used in this report is as we currently hold it, to ensure we have the latest "version of the truth".
- Variations to data year on year might be as a result of changes in business process or changes to how data has been recorded.
- We exclude employees with undisclosed personal characteristics from any analysis referencing the percentage of employees who are in certain personal characteristics groups.
- We include our people on Employment of Hampshire County Council (EHCC) and Soulbury terms and conditions and do not include teachers or staff in schools, councillors, casual workers, contractors, and agency workers from all analysis of personal characteristics.
- Grades referenced may vary. On some graphs and tables, we have not converted employee salaries that are non EHCC for example Soulbury, redeployees on protected salaries and those that have TUPE transferred to us, these will be shown as "Other". This is because for data over time people can move between grades, and this is to avoid double counting.
- All data has been rounded to the nearest decimal place.

19.2 We continue to explore how we can make better use of our data through data cleansing to improve the accuracy of our insight.

