



James Ellis
Head of Legal and Democratic
Services

MEETING : HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE
VENUE : COUNCIL CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD
DATE : WEDNESDAY 13 SEPTEMBER 2023
TIME : 7.00 PM

PLEASE NOTE TIME AND VENUE

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<https://www.youtube.com/user/EastHertsDistrict>

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Councillor Rachel Carter (Chairman)
Councillors M Connolly, T Deffley, D Hollebon, V Smith, M Swainston
and D Willcocks

Substitutes

Green Group: Councillors J Dunlop and G Hill

Conservative Group: Councillor R Buckmaster

Liberal Democrat
Group: Councillor S Marlow

Labour Group: Councillor D Jacobs

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- must not participate in any vote taken on the matter at the meeting;
- must disclose the interest to the meeting, whether registered or not, subject to the provisions of section 32 of the Localism Act 2011;
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AGENDA

1. Apologies

To receive apologies for absence.

2. Minutes - 15 February 2023 and 21 June 2023 (Pages 6 - 36)

To receive the Minutes of the meetings held on 15 February 2023 and 21 June 2023.

3. Declarations of Interest

To receive any Member's Declaration of Interest.

4. Chairman's Announcements

5. Safety Committee Minutes - 9 May 2023 (Pages 37 - 40)

Minutes of the Safety Committee - 09 May 2023

6. Human Resources Q1 Statistics 23/24 (Pages 41 - 48)

7. Annual Equalities Report (Pages 49 - 86)

8. Urgent Business

To consider such other business as, in the opinion of the Chairman of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration and is not likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information.

Agenda Item 2

HR

HR

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD IN
THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS,
HERTFORD ON WEDNESDAY 15 FEBRUARY
2023, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor Rosemary Bolton (Chairman)
Councillors A Alder, S Bull, J Dumont,
M McMullen, S Newton and P Ruffles

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Michele Aves	- Democratic Services Officer
Peter Dickinson	- Health and Safety Officer
Simon O'Hear	- Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development

350 APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

351 MINUTES - 23 NOVEMBER 2022

It was moved by Councillor Bull and seconded by Councillor Ruffles that the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 23 November 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED. It was noted that Councillor Newton abstained from the vote as she

was not present at the meeting on 23 November 2023.

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 23 November 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

352 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were rolling declarations of interest from Members of Parish/Town Councils which are receiving services from East Herts Council's Human Resources Department.

353 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman reminded Members to use their microphones when speaking as the meeting was being webcast.

The Chairman said that the meeting was the last of the current administration and extended her thanks to Members and Officers for their contributions and hard work in association with the Committee. She said that Officers rarely received praise and requested that her thanks be passed on to all of the staff within the Human Resources and Democratic Services Department.

The Chairman said that many Members of the Committee had served as Councillors for many years, and that some may not be returning after the Elections in May. She thanked these Members for their years of selfless commitment, giving both their time and skills

so generously and acknowledged that the residents of East Herts had benefited from this, receiving high quality services.

Several Members of the Committee then extended their thanks to the Chairman for the way she had conducted the meetings of the Committee over her tenure.

354 HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE: MINUTES - 8 NOVEMBER 2022

The Chairman thanked the Health and Safety Officer for the Minutes from the Health and Safety Committee meeting held on 8 November 2022.

The Health and Safety Officer confirmed that a meeting of the Health and Safety Committee was held on 7 February 2023, but that the Minutes of this meeting had not been available in time to also be included on the agenda.

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Health and Safety Committee held on 8 November 2022 be received.

355 HEALTH AND SAFETY QUARTERLY REVIEW - QUARTER 3, OCTOBER 2022 - DECEMBER 2022

The Health and Safety Officer introduced the report and asked Members if they had comments or questions. There were no Members comments or questions.

The Chairman thanked the Health and Safety Officer for his report.

RESOLVED – that the Health and Safety Quarterly Review – Quarter 3, October 2022 – December 2022 be considered and received.

356 HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT STATISTICS - QUARTER 3, OCTOBER 2022 - DECEMBER 2022

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development introduced the report and asked for Members' questions.

The Chairman referred to page 37 of the report and asked for further information pertaining to the large number of job vacancies which were outstanding within the Planning Department.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that thirteen of the job vacancies had gone live on 3rd February 2023. He said that the closing date for these vacancies was 3rd March 2023, but that consideration to shortlist potential applicants before this date was being given.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that measures to help recruit to the Planning vacancies included a Planning banner on the East Herts website, a powerful recruitment campaign video and job adverts appearing on both the Public Sector Today and the South East Times.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational

Development said that to further aid recruitment and retention twelve of the Planning job vacancies also included market supplements.

The Chairman asked for clarification of market supplements. The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that market supplements were additional payments on top of a post's basic salary which are awarded where market pressures would otherwise prevent the recruitment and retention of staff. He said that market supplements were only be applied to posts where recruitment for the role had already been unsuccessful, and that this was why the Enforcement Officer vacancy did not include such a payment.

Councillor Alder asked if it was correct that those who expressed an interest in the Planning vacancies could arrange to be shown around the Department in person. The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that the recruitment video on the website did say 'come and see us' and so he assumed arrangements for such visits could be made. He reiterated that positive applications could be interviewed prior to the vacancy closing date to avoid losing good candidates.

Councillor Dumont asked if the Grants Officer role was to be recruited to. The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that the Grants Officer role was currently frozen as part of the Transformation agenda, with the role's duties moved to another area.

Councillor Dumont referred to page 43 of the report

and asked when the census figures used would be updated. The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that the new figures were released approximately two weeks ago (after the report was written) and would therefore be used in the next report.

Councillor Dumont referred to page 42 of the report and asked how often staff were required to undertake cyber training and if there were any plans to increase the frequency of the training as cyber threats increased. The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that cyber training was IT led, but he would make enquires regarding such training.

Councillor Ruffles referred to page 40 of the report and asked if there was a common cause for staff who were long term absent, and if the council should be doing more. The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that such staff were referred to Occupational Health as standard. He said that those suffering from stress were risk assessed and signposted towards specialists with managers made aware.

Councillor Newton asked how the council were able to assess the working environment of those staff who were working from home. The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that all such staff had undergone a Display Screen Equipment Assessment (DSE). He said that any specialist equipment required by staff had been allowed to be taken home by those working in both blended and full time from home patterns.

Councillor Newton asked if any analysis had been done in regard to the stress of working from home. The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that 160 responses had been received in response to the Blended Working Review, which showed that most staff wanted to work from home.

It was moved by Councillor Alder and seconded by Councillor Ruffles that the recommendations, as detailed be approved. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that the Human Resources Management Statistics – Quarter 3, October 2022 – December 2022 be considered and that any comments provided to the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development.

357 GENDER PAY GAP REPORT 2022

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development introduced the report and highlighted the two recommendations for the Committee. He said that the report had already been considered by Leadership Team, resulting in the action plan being strengthened.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that the gender pay gap had increased, but this was due to the lack of men in the lowest pay quartiles at the Council. He explained that the council's waste and leisure services were

outsourced, and so these generally male dominated lower paid roles were not included, causing disproportion to the mean figures.

Councillor Dumont referred to page 51 of the report and asked if other local authorities had a similar female gender dominance. The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that all local authorities had more female staff. He said that this was due to the flexibility of the roles which local authorities offered, for example, part time admin jobs which appealed to women as the traditional main childcare providers.

The Chairman referred to the investigations which were being made into enabling the name blinding of CV's submitted to the Council via the Applicant Tracking System (ATS). She said that it was disappointing that this was not currently possible without losing other key data from CVs. The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that it was evident that there was not a male bias, and that the Council did not have a problem with recruiting women. He said that the Council had received a good deal with ATS which was still being developed.

Councillor Newton said that the bottom line was that applicants should be given jobs because they can do them, by whatever means of application. The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development agreed with Councillor Newton and said that he was confident that the Council was a merit-based organisation, with no issues regarding equal pay.

Councillor Dumont referred to page 43 of the report and said that there was no evidence of any employee bias, adding that the Council had done a good job in ensuring this.

It was moved by Councillor Dumont and seconded by Councillor McMullen that the recommendations, as detailed be approved. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that (A) the Gender Pay Gap Report 2022 be noted.

(B) that the Action Plan 23/24 be considered, and any further suggestions be added where appropriate.

358 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2023/2024

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development introduced the report. He said that the report had not changed significantly since last year but had been updated to include the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 pay awards. He referred to paragraph 3.4 of the report which detailed these awards and included the additional day of annual leave awarded to National Joint Council (NJC) posts with effect from 1 April 2023.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development drew Members' attention to Section 7 of the report which gave clarification on Market Supplements, and paragraph 5.12 which gave detail on the spread of East Herts Council's pay grades, which start from spinal point 4. He said that Payroll had now processed the pay awards for 2021-2022 and 2022-

2023, which staff had received.

Councillor Alder asked if there was any indication of what the pay award for 2023-2024 would be. The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that the Trade Unions had made a request, but with the council's budget and savings requirements negotiation would be required.

It was moved by Councillor Bull and seconded by Councillor Alder that the recommendations, as detailed be approved. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that the Pay Policy 2023/2024 be recommended for approval by Council.

359 HUMAN RESOURCES AND PAYROLL TEAM UPDATE REPORT
- QUARTER 3

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development introduced the report, noting that the last such report to the Committee had been a verbal update.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that the lean process review had identified an over reliance on the Payroll Manager. He said that administration back-up for this position was in place and that future payroll provision was being reviewed, to include the option to outsource the service.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational

Development said that the external Human Resources support which was being provided to Broxbourne Council had ceased, as Broxbourne now had staff in place.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that East Herts Council did not operate a blanket annual leave year for all staff. He said that instead each staff member's annual leave year aligned with their start date. He said that the pay award which gave an extra day of annual leave to staff members effective from 1 April 2023 had therefore been administered on a pro rata basis.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that the ATS system was not currently being used for onboarding as a more personal approach for new starters was preferable at this time.

Councillor Alder applauded the council's approach to having a non-fixed leave year and said that this was very sensible.

Councillor Dumont asked for more detail regarding the Payroll problems identified by the lean process review. The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that efficiency was being looked at within Payroll. He said that a heavy reliance upon one individual within the Payroll team meant that back-up and an effective use of the system was necessary.

Councillor Dumont said that he had experience of using an outsourced payroll provider and warned of the mistakes and stress which can occur. He said that

the council therefore needed to be sure that the outsourcing of payroll was the right decision.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development agreed with Councillor Dumont and said that he had been asked to make exploration into the option of outsourcing payroll. He said that any decision regarding such outsourcing would not be taken lightly, with costs, quality of service and in house requirements considered. The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development added that any provider would need to have local authority experience and supply case studies.

Councillor Dumont said that the purpose of the Committee was to give steer, and he wished to express strong caution to the outsourcing of the Payroll Department.

The Chairman referred to paragraph 4.10 of the report and said that it was good to see the two elements of the Management Development Programme. The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development thanked the Chairman for this and confirmed that the Interim Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development had led on the first element of the programme, known as First Step, and that he had developed the five- day programme for the second element, known as Blueprint.

RESOLVED – that the Human Resources and Payroll Team Update Report be noted and received.

There was no urgent business.

The meeting closed at 7.50 pm

Chairman

Date

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD IN
THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS,
HERTFORD ON WEDNESDAY 21 JUNE 2023,
AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor Rachel Carter (Chairman)
Councillors M Connolly, T Deffley, V Smith,
Swainston, D Willcocks and R Buckmaster
(substitute for D Hollebon)

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors A Daar

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Michele Aves	- Democratic Services Officer
Emily Cordwell	- Human Resources Officer
Simon O'Hear	- Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development

58 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

It was moved by Councillor Smith and seconded by Councillor Connolly, that Councillor Swainston be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Human Resources Committee for 2023/24. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that Councillor Swainston be appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Human Resources Committee for 2023/24.

59 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the new administration and thanked officers for their work in the preparation of the papers.

60 APOLOGIES

There was an apology of absence from Councillor Hollebon. It was noted that Councillor Ruth Buckmaster was substituting for Councillor Hollebon.

61 MINUTES - 15 FEBRUARY 2023

The Chairman said that as there were no Members from the previous administration present, the Minutes from the meeting of the Committee held on 15 February 2023 would be resubmitted for approval once she (and Members) had watched the webcast.

62 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

63 SAFETY COMMITTEE MINUTES - 9 MAY 2023

The Chairman said that it would be beneficial for new Members to be given an outline of the Safety Committee from the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that the Safety Committee was set up as per Health and Safety Executive law. He said that he was the Chair of the Safety Committee, whose membership comprised of both officers and union members.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that the Human Resources Committee received the Minutes from each of the Safety Committee meetings as they had responsibility for providing focus and monitoring the Council's health and safety matters.

Councillor Connolly referred to paragraph 6.2 of the Safety Committee Minutes and expressed her concerns regarding Marshgate Bridge. She asked if action regarding the bridge would be trackable via future Safety Committee Minutes.

Councillor Smith said that Marshgate Bridge was a very busy bridge which was very important to the community, and she asked if an update would be available at the next meeting of the Committee.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that Marshgate Bridge had been identified as a potential concern, which the Council wished to get ahead of as it was the only access to Hartham. He said that the Assets Team were to confirm ownership of the bridge, and that the owner would then be contacted regarding a structural survey.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that as Marshgate Bridge was an action in the Safety Committee Minutes, the Human Resources Committee would see any updates in the next Minutes of the Safety Committee. He said that the Safety Committee met quarterly, and he would also arrange for Members of the Human Resources Committee to receive an email update on Marshgate Bridge.

Councillor Buckmaster referred to paragraph 13.3 of the Safety Committee Minutes and expressed her concerns regarding the long hours which some employees had worked on the District Elections day.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that concerns from employees had been raised with the Returning Officer and the Monitoring Officer. He said that the Council attempted to not employ staff for both polling station and count duties on the same day, and that there was an option to delay the count until the day after polling, which several authorities had adopted.

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Safety Committee held on 9 May 2023 be received.

64 HEALTH AND SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT 2022/2023
INCLUDING Q4 SUMMARY

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development introduced the report in the absence of the Health and Safety Officer.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that there had been no reportable accidents, no serious non reportable accidents and no on-site serious accidents. He said that the Lone Working Contract had changed from Skyguard to Peoplesafe and explained how the lone working devices gave security to council staff working in the field, to include being able to tracked if necessary.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that home working staff had completed Display Screen Equipment Assessments. He said that council vehicles had been badged to make them more visible and that consideration was being given to adding a van to the vehicle fleet for the transportation of dogs.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that there were some increases in non-reportable accidents at Quarter 4 of the report, but these were due to an increase in footfall at the Council's leisure facilities due to Covid-19 restrictions lifting and Hartham and Grange Paddocks reopening.

The Chairman thanked the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development and asked if all the council's chairs had been replaced following a recent inspection.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that the council had only replaced those which were no longer fit for purpose. He said that the replacement chairs were both better quality and good value.

The Chairman asked if the condemned chairs had been recycled.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that some chairs were offered to staff for a token gesture, but that the majority had been taken for recycling.

Councillor Connolly referred to paragraph 9.1 of the report (which reported no incidents or accidents for the period by the council's grounds maintenance contractor, Glendale) and sought clarification as this appeared to contradict paragraph 6.2 of the Safety Committee Minutes, in which the incident was detailed.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that the incident in question did not cause any harm or injuries but required remedial action to ensure that all cables were clearly marked. He said that therefore this incident would not be recorded as an accident.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said the Health and Safety Annual Report covered the period to March 2023, and that the Safety Committee meeting was held on 9 May 2023, and this may have caused the omission of the incident from the report. He said that he would flag this to the Health and Safety Officer for an update in his Quarter 1 report, which would be on the agenda at the next meeting of the Committee.

It was moved by Councillor Buckmaster and seconded by Councillor Swainston that the recommendations, as detailed be approved. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that the Health and Safety Report 2022/23, including the Quarter 4 statistics be considered and that any comments/ amendments be provided to the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development and the Health and Safety Officer.

65 HR QUARTERLY STATISTICS REPORT Q4 2022-2023

The Human Resources Officer introduced the report. She said that the Council currently had thirty-one vacancies, twenty-two of which were within the Planning Department.

The Human Resources Officer said that turnover and staff absence had increased from Quarter 3 and explained the acronyms used within the report; RIPA – Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000, and PACE – Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984.

The Human Resources Officer referred to paragraph 3.5 of the report and highlighted that the comparison data had been updated to that from the 2011 Census to the 2021 Census. She drew Members' attention to an error in paragraph 4.0 of the report, where the total figure for disabled comparison should read as 13.7% and not 13.6%.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational

Development said that the 2021 Census question relating to disability asked respondents to choose from two options, and that it was worth noting that those who said that their activities were limited 'a lot' may be unable to work.

The Chairman thanked the Human Resources Officer for her report.

Councillor Deffley asked if the offer of fixed term contracts had been used to attract recruits to the vacancies within the Planning Department.

The Human Resources Officer said that the council had offered fixed term and permanent positions, and that in the interim agency staff had been used to fill these vacancies. He said that there was a national shortage of Planning officers, and that generally people wanted permanent contracts. He said that in an attempt to be more attractive, Planning vacancies were career graded and had market supplements awarded.

Councillor Smith asked how the vacancies impacted the workload and stress for staff.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that the council was currently heavily reliant on agency staff within the Planning Department. He said that it was a challenge to try and convert officers from being agency to permanent members of staff, as agency remuneration was so attractive.

Councillor Connolly asked how much stress was

related to long term staff absence.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that staff received regular 1-2-1's with their line managers and had access to employee support. He said that there was a Stress Risk Assessment in the Council's Sickness Policy, and where staff were absent for four weeks or more, they were referred to Occupational Health. He said that Human Resources would continue to look at the results from the staff wellbeing survey for patterns.

Councillor Connolly said that this would be a useful exercise. Councillor Deffley asked if the council had insurance against employment tribunals.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that the council did not have insurance against employment tribunals. He said that this was considered but such insurance was very expensive and it was felt that the Council could defend itself.

It was moved by Councillor Connolly and seconded by Councillor Buckmaster that the recommendations, as detailed be approved. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that the Human Resources Management Statistics for Quarter 4 (January – March 2023) be considered and any comments provided to the Human Resources Officer/Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development.

66 LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT REVIEW 2022/23

The Human Resources Officer introduced the report which gave a breakdown of training budgets and detailed the courses delivered in 2022/23.

The Human Resources Officer said that the council had launched its e-learning programme which provided staff with mandatory learning modules to complete, and that consideration was being given to adding modules on climate change and display screen equipment (DSE) to this programme. She said that the council continued to fund apprenticeships and staff degrees in Planning.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that the number of courses delivered referred to the number of in-house events which the Human Resources Department had delivered, and that therefore external courses attended by individual staff would increase this number. He said that the e-learning programme gave a rich tapestry of training.

The Chairman thanked the Human Resources Officer for her report. She asked which departments had apprentices, and if they lived locally.

The Human Resources Officer said that there were apprentices in Customer Services, Planning and Strategic Finance and Property. She said that she herself had completed an apprenticeship within the

Human Resources Department.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that adverts for apprentices were placed on the website, but that applicants tended to be local. He said that under the Transformation Programme there was no longer an automatic apprentice budget for each department.

It was moved by Councillor Smith and seconded by Councillor Willcocks that the recommendations, as detailed be approved. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that the Learning and Development Review for 2022/23 be considered and any comments be provided.

67 ANNUAL TURNOVER REPORT 2022-23

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development introduced the report which looked at the council's employee turnover. He said that as earlier highlighted by the Human Resources Officer, the report did have some crossover of information with other reports which were on the agenda.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that staff turnover was down and that the reasons given for staff leaving were consistent and of no concern. He said that in line with savings, ten posts had been deleted and that there were four posts on hold.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that the Applicant Tracking System (ATS) from Webrecruit had improved a candidate's experience and enabled the hiring manager to see job applications before the closing date. He said that the onboarding of new employees was still however being undertaken by Human Resources as the ATS did not allow for the approval and manipulation of contracts.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that 'name blind' recruitment had not progressed as wanted as this also removed an applicant's qualifications from view. He said that the council was not paying to use ATS, but that a fix for this was being sought. He reassured Members that statistics did not show any recruitment bias.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development drew Members' attention to an error in section 11 of the report, which should read 2023/24 and not 2022/23. He said that there had been improvements to both the job section on the council's website and the staff recognition scheme.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that the Human Resources Department had undergone a review by the council's Lean Six Sigma team. He said that the recommended process changes from this review have been implemented, which included the inclusion of interview dates on job adverts.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that the council's induction process had moved more on-line and that the reasons for successful

candidates declining job offers or not commencing a job were to be investigated further.

The Chairman thanked the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development for his report.

Councillor Smith asked if the deleted posts were removed to make savings or because they were not required.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that in line with the Transformation Programme the posts were deleted for a combination of these reasons. He said that any vacancies now went before a panel before being recruited to, and that fixed term contracts were being used in some circumstances.

Councillor Smith asked how deleting posts effected those remaining staff's workload and expressed her concerns regarding these workers and stress.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that some staff embraced the opportunity to develop new skills and that some stress was unavoidable.

It was moved by Councillor Buckmaster and seconded by Councillor Swainston that the recommendations, as detailed be approved. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that the Annual Turnover Report 2022/23, including the actions in section 11.0 planned for 2023/24, be considered and any comments be provided to the Head of Human

Resources and Organisational Development.

68 EMPLOYEE HEALTH AND WELLBEING REPORT 2022-2023

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development introduced the report and gave credit to its author. He said that staff sickness levels had increased, but levels remained lower than the sector average.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that staff were keen on the blended working model and that a policy was being drafted. He said that staff felt supported and that a range of resilience workshops were available on the intranet.

The Chairman thanked the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development for his report.

Councillor Connolly asked if the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development was confident that staff absence for minor illnesses was not stress related.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that this was a hard question to answer, but that he had to accept what staff put on their self-certifications. He said that some stress was personal, and that during 1-2-1's staff were asked how they were. He said that staff were given tools and signposted to resources were appropriate.

Councillor Willcocks asked if a year-on-year

comparison was available for the reasons relating to long term absence.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that previous year's reports would have this information. He said that this was an area which Leadership Team were to look at.

Councillor Smith said that 41% of respondents to the staff wellbeing survey had said that a demanding workload was their biggest challenge and asked why addressing this was not in the report's actions for next year.

The Human Resources Officer said that responses to staff exit questionnaires were fed back to Heads of Service and Line Managers.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that respondents to the staff wellbeing survey were asked what their biggest challenge was and were given multiple choice answers. He acknowledged that a demanding workload was commonplace but said that when asked elsewhere in the survey if they felt supported staff had replied 'yes'.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that it was unaffordable to employ extra staff and that supervision and support was in place for staff. He said that this was why it did not appear as a specific action within the report, but that he was open to any suggestions Members may have.

Councillor Smith asked for further information

regarding Mental Health First Aid training.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that Mental Health First Aiders were volunteer members of staff who were visible to others. He said that the council needed to train more staff to add to the current number.

Councillor Connolly asked if there were indicators on how far the council could go in relation to reducing staff.

Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that front line services needed to be protected, but due to finances it was now not always possible to afford a gold standard of service. He said that the Council had several shared services, and that service reviews and business cases would suggest required staffing levels.

Councillor Connolly asked if there were any indicators for how reductions were impacting staff health, and if the reduction process contained a risk assessment question relating to the impact on staff.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that the service review in Planning did not lead to any reductions and that the Corporate Support Sub review was currently being worked on. He said that the review in Finance did result in some redundancies, but the process set out how the service would work without the redundant positions. He said that it was a balance for managers as the Council had to make savings.

Councillor Connolly asked if the Committee could be provided with data relating to staff stress going forward.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that he would include the analysis of staff stress and mental health in the Quarter 1 report, which would be on the agenda at the next meeting of the Committee.

Councillor Willcocks asked if staff were obligated to work from home.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said an offer of blended working was made to all staff (where their job allowed), and that staff who wanted to work in the office, could do so. He said that home workers had to confirm that they had the appropriate equipment to work from home.

The Chairman asked what opportunities there were for informal social networks for home workers.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that the council advocated a 50/50 blended working pattern to ensure interaction between staff. He said that home workers needed to be fully contactable and in the case of new starters supported by colleagues in office.

It was moved by Councillor Buckmaster and seconded by Councillor Willcocks that the recommendations, as detailed be approved. After being put to the meeting

and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that the Annual Employee Health and Wellbeing Report 2022/23, including the actions in section 8.0 planned for 2023/24, be considered and any comments be provided to the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development.

69 URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

The meeting closed at 8.37 pm

Chairman
Date

Minutes of Safety Committee
Wednesday 9th May,
Meeting Room Lea/ Microsoft Teams

Present: Peter Dickinson (PD), Steve Whinnett (SW), Paul Thomas-Jones (PTJ), Jackie Bruce (JB), Ian Sharratt (IS), Emily Tickridge (ET),

Apologies: Simon O’Hear (SOH), Rowan Perrin (RP), Chloe Hipwood - Norton (CH-N), Dominique Kingsbury (DK), Jennifer Frances (Unison), Jeanette Lowden (JL) Waste Team, Geoff Hayden (GH),

1.0 Minutes of the last meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 8th February 2023 were agreed as an accurate record.

Action: None

2.0 Matters Arising from the minutes

None

3.0 Coronavirus / Office Housekeeping update

Nothing to report.

Action: None

4.0 Accidents, Incidents and Near Misses

The Health and Safety Officer can report that there have been no safety incidents/Near misses or accidents reported in relation to staff.

C H-N reported a vehicle near miss incident at Buntingford Depot and will be following this up with the Shared Waste Service Contractor.

Action:

- C H-N to discuss with Urbaser

5.0 Regulatory and Legislative changes (Verbal report)

There have been no regulatory or legislative changes.

Action:

- None

6.0 Health and Safety Inspections and Contract Compliance

6.1 Shared Waste Service – Buntingford Depot

Nothing further to report in addition to the vehicle incident.

6.2 Parks, Open Spaces and Play Areas

IS reported that there were no safety related issues across the districts parks, open spaces and play areas.

6.3 Parking Services

Nothing to report.

Action: none

7.0 Capital Project updates/contractor Health & Safety Compliance

There were no reports received in respect to Capital Projects

Action: None

8.0 Property – Premise’s Maintenance and Repairs

SW advised H&S Officer that there were no health and safety related issues to report.

Action: None

9.0 Facilities Management

There were no Facilities Management issues reported.

Action: None.

10.0 List of Issues

10.1 Employee side (UNISON)

- JB raised a point in regard to the level of cover/advice and support in regard to insurance and risk related matters e.g., procedures, contact details etc.

Action:

- PD to send e-mail to Head of Strategic Finance and Property for information.

10.2. Management side

Concerns were brought to the attention of the Health and Safety Officer by staff who provided time during the elections to run polling stations and attend the count about the number of hours worked and undertaking count duties without a break. Some staff explained that they felt exhausted and were forced to stop driving.

Action:

PD to raise with the Heads of HR, Legal and Democratic Services and Elections Manager.

Action: None

11.0 Health and Safety Training

PD Working with Licensing and Enforcement Team on Community Safety Accreditation Scheme (CSAS) training.

Action:

-PD to provide update at next committee meeting

12.0 AOB

None.

Date of Next Meeting: 19th September 2023 @ 14:00pm

Location: Mimram Room, First Floor
Old Building – Wallfields

Teams: Join on your computer, mobile app or room device

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 389 859 903 86

Passcode: QYiRzL

East Herts Council Report

Human Resources Committee

Date of meeting: Wednesday 13 September 2023

Report by: Elaine Starling – Interim Head of HR and OD

Report title: Human Resources Q1 Statistics 23/24

Ward(s) affected:

Summary – Human Resources Management Statistics for Quarter 1 (April - June 2023)

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR Human Resources Committee:

- a)** To consider the Human Resources Management Statistics for Quarter 1 (April - June 2023).
- b)** To agree the move to a dashboard approach for HR statistics with exception reporting only.
- c)** To agree that non-staff Health & Safety issues are reported through Safety Committee meeting with minutes being sent to HR Committee.

1.0 Proposal(s)

- 1.1 Members to consider the Human Resources Management Statistics for Quarter 1 (April - June 2023).

2.0 Report

- 2.1 In the past the HR function has produced very lengthy reports of up to 200 pages for HR Committee. This

requires an enormous amount of officer time out of what is a very small team **and** takes an enormous amount of time for committee members to read. This also means that finding relevant information is difficult.

- 2.2 Moving to a dashboard approach with exception reporting seems to be a sensible way forward and is adopted by many councils. Between the members of the team, we have identified what we believe to be the key indicators regarding staff in EHC. The dashboard highlights where we are not on track (in red) and the following page explains what we know about the variance and what we are planning to do to bring the indicator back in line with our target.
- 2.3 The final page gives you a flavour for what we have achieved over the past quarter and are planning to achieve over the next (in addition to business-as-usual activity). The officers in attendance can give more detail verbally on areas of interest.
- 2.4 This recommended approach has been shared with Cllrs Carter and Dumont who can see the merit in moving to this type of reporting and have agreed that it would be good to produce a dashboard with real figures for the HR Committee to discuss.
- 2.5 We would like to know:
 - If you believe this approach is a positive move forward
 - Do the indicators we have included give you the information you would like to see?
 - Are you happy with exception reporting rather than reporting on everything even if it is on track?

- Do you agree the approach to sharing high level activities completed and planned?
- If you are supportive on non-staff Health & Safety issues being reported through Safety Committee meeting with minutes being sent to HR Committee

Community Safety

No

Data Protection

No

Equalities

As detailed in the report

Environmental Sustainability

No

Financial

No

Health and Safety

As detailed in the report

Human Resources

As detailed in the report

Human Rights

No

Legal

No

Specific Wards

No

3.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material

Appendix A - Human Resources Committee – Dashboard Quarter 1
23/24

Contact Officer

Elaine Starling

Interim Head of Human Resources and
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Report Author

Claire Kirby, Human Resources Officer

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Appendix A

Human Resources Committee – Dashboard Quarter 1 23/24

	Target 22/3	Actual 22/3	Target 23/4	Predicted for 23/4 **	Q1 (22/23)	Q1 (23/24)	Q2	Q2	Q3	Q3	Q4	Q4
All sickness (Absence per FTE)	6	7.5	6	7	1.25	1.76						
Sickness (ex long term > 3 months) (Absence per FTE)	4	4.7	4	3.3	1.08	0.83						
Turnover rate (%)	14%*	11.8%	14%*	7.6%	3.5%	1.9%						
*** Vacancies (Average No. / %)	17%*	11.9%	17%*	13.9%	31 (9.8%)	44 (14.3%)						
New Starters (No.)	n/a	30	n/a	20	8	5						
6H&S Employee Work Related Accidents (Not reportable to the HSE under RIDDOR 2013) (No.)	0	5	0	0	0	0						
7H&S Employee Work Related Accidents (Reportable to the HSE under RIDDOR 2013) (No.)	0	0	0	0	0	0						
8H&S Employee Work Related Incidents and Near Misses (No.)	0	2	0	1	0	1						

1. All figures in black are under target or within 5% tolerance over target. Anything over target we will monitor with no specific action needed at this point.
2. Figures followed by * are local government targets. Due to the transformation programme and other impacts on recruitment and retention targets had not been set at start of the year so we are using the local government targets this year.
3. ** predictions for year-end are based on previous quarter figures
4. *** Predicted vacancy rate for the year is based on the average vacancy for April, May and June.
5. Figures in red are outside of tolerance and will be looked at, comments on next page.
6. Accidents that are not reportable e.g., minor cuts, falls, contact injuries not requiring medical treatment or intervention.
7. Accidents that are reportable to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) under the Reporting of Injuries Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR)
8. Incidents and Near Misses - An unplanned event that did not result in injury, damage, or illness, but could have done so. An incident / near miss may often leave the employee shaken up, or shocked, but they were not actually injured.

Exception report

8H&S Employee Work Related Incidents and Near Misses (No)

This was an incident involving a member of the public who attempted to gain access to reception when this was closed three members of staff were involved and deescalated the situation.

Achievements in Q1 23/24 (additional to Business-as-Usual activity)

- H&S policy reviewed to ensure that we are up to date with best practice and compliant with the law
- New lone working equipment contract secured
- New learning management system (LMS) is live, it has far more functionality than our previous system and will help develop the organisation
- A new development programme for aspirant managers called First Step Programme was launched including mentor support
- First Step Cohort 1 – 2 Day Leadership and Management workshop run
- Planning jobs microsite and ongoing recruitment campaign developed
- Service review of Strategic Finance and Property was completed as part of East Herts Transformation Programme
- Election payroll supported for outgoing, incoming and existing members plus staff involved in supporting elections
- General support and advice to the people workstream of the Transformation Programme

Planned for Q2 23/24 (not an exhaustive list)

- First Step phase 2 of programme – 2 Bite sized modules will be run, and projects established
- Launch the next phase of LMS, this involves releasing new eLearning courses and functionality
- Further development of the strategic approach to planning recruitment with LinkedIn partnership and The Planner advertorials
- Proposals for changes to HRC reporting developed and presented for consideration
- Annual Staff Awards delivered, and a review of the awards programme has begun, the initial phase is an all-staff survey
- Complete elections related payroll
- Identify and contract new Occupational Health and Employee Assistance Programme providers through approved frameworks - both are out of contract
- Support the people workstream of the Transformation Programme
- Launch 'The Next Step' Leadership Programme for Service Managers, first workshops planned for end September
- Start the development of Team Leader / Middle Manager training programme
- Support the service review of Legal and Democratic Services and subsequent staff consultation and implementation
- Support the development of the Customer Support Hub and subsequent staff consultation and implementation
- **Start** a root and branch review of policies that support Blended Working (involving key stakeholders)
- Plan / review of the payroll system and processes including changes to our IT systems

East Herts Council Report

Human Resources Committee

Date of meeting: Wednesday 13 September 2023

Report by: Head of Human Resources and OD

Report title: Annual Equalities Report

Ward(s) affected: None

Summary – Annual report reporting on protected equalities characteristics against EHC workforce profile including prospective employees

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR Human Resources Committee:

- a) The Annual Equalities Report 2022/23 be noted.
- b) The recommendations set out in the 2023/24 action plan are considered and approved

1.0 Proposal(s)

- 1.1 Members are invited to consider the Annual Equalities Report 2022/23 and approve the 2023/24 action plan.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Human Resources produce an annual equalities report which provides a detailed analysis of the council's workforce and external applicants applying for jobs, by the protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010.

- 2.2 The Equality Act protects people from discrimination on the basis of protected characteristics, which include age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation, and marriage and civil partnership.
- 2.3 Public sector bodies with more than 150 employees are required to publish data on equality in their workforces annually.
- 2.4 Leadership Team approved the report and action plan on 1 August 2023.

3.0 Report

- 3.1 Please see Appendix A for the full report.

4.0 Implications/Consultations

Community Safety

No

Data Protection

No

Equalities

As detailed in the report

Environmental Sustainability

No

Financial

No

Health and Safety

No

Human Resources

As detailed in the report

Human Rights

No

Legal

No

Specific Wards

No

5.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material

Appendix A – Annual Equalities Report 2022/23.

Contact Officer

Elaine Starling

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Report Author


Claire Kirby, Human Resources Officer

claire.kirby@eastherts.gov.uk


Staff Annual Equalities Report

2022/23



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Introduction

This report provides a detailed analysis of the council's workforce and external applicants applying for jobs, by the protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010. This report relates to staff and employment only. The council's responsibility for wider equalities issue sits under the Communications, Strategy and Policy service.

The Equality Act (2010) consolidated the legislation for groups protected by previous equalities legislation. Everyone has the right to be treated fairly and the Equality Act protects people from discrimination on the basis of protected characteristics.

The Act sets out the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex (gender), sexual orientation, and marriage and civil partnership.

The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 require public sector bodies with more than 150 employees to publish data on equality in their workforces annually.

The council is committed to complying with the Equality Act across all its services and continues to increase awareness and understanding through its policies, training and staff groups.

This report provides a detailed analysis of the available monitoring data for 2022/23.

It covers five areas:

- Employee Profile
- Recruitment
- Discipline and Grievance
- Training
- Leavers

Executive Summary

Employee Profile

The council's employee profile as at the end of March 2023 is broadly reflective of the profile of the working population in East Hertfordshire and the East of England in terms of ethnic origin, religion and belief, disability and sexual orientation. The areas where the employee profile is not as closely reflective are sex (gender), age and disability.

The council has a considerably higher percentage of females than males (73%:27%) compared to the working population of East Hertfordshire (51.6%:48.4%), however this is common in the public sector and is further impacted at East Herts by many of the more traditionally male areas of work such as refuse, and grounds maintenance being contracted out.

The council has a considerably higher proportion of employees aged between 50 and 64 compared to East Herts residents. The size and structure of the council means that there are a limited number of entry level posts meaning that the majority of posts require experience and are likely to be filled by older individuals who have the required experience. In recent years the council has introduced more trainee and career graded posts which require less experience and support staff developing in the role to both increase the younger age profile and provide succession planning but these posts can also be filled by career changers. The council also has a significant number of long serving employees which also impacts on the workforce age profile. There are currently no employees under the age of 20 which is lower than East Herts residents in this age group (5.7%) however it must be noted that it is compulsory to remain in full time education or training until the age of 18.

5% of employees at the council have a disability, which despite being one percentage point higher than 2021/22, it is significantly less than the East Herts residents with a disability (13.6%). It is worth noting however that people with disability may be unfit to work.

Recruitment

In 2022/23 the council was successful in attracting a diverse range of external applicants in terms of most of the protected characteristics. The council was particularly successful in attracting applicants from the 20-29 age group, from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic

(BAME) groups and applicants who are lesbian, gay or bisexual, when compared with the overall East Herts population.

At the shortlisting stage, the conversion from application to shortlist is closely aligned for males (42% to 43%) and increases slightly for females (51% to 50%). There is an increase in the percentage of white applicants from application to shortlisting (52.7% to 64.9%). For applicants from BAME groups, there is an increase from application to shortlisting (11.3% to 24.3%). For the 30-39 and 40-49 age groups the percentages of those applying compared to those shortlisted stayed fairly closely aligned. For the Under 20 and 60-64 categories the percentage decreased to 0%. In 202/23, there were 9 applicants (1.9%) who stated that they have a disability. Of these, 3 met the essential criteria and were shortlisted for interview. 4.4% of applicants in 2022/23 were lesbian, gay or bisexual and 4.5% were shortlisted.

At the interview stage, there is an increase in 4 percentage points between the number of females being shortlisted to appointed and a reduction of 12 percentage points between the number of males being shortlisted to appointed. The conversion from shortlisting to appointment increases for white applicants (64.9% to 76.9%) and drops for BAME applicants (24.3% to 0%). However there are 23.1% of unknowns. In terms of age, from the shortlisting to appointment stage the percentage increased in the 20-29 age category and decreased in all of the other age categories. The number of 'Unknowns' doubled from shortlist to appointment. Of the 3 disabled applicants who met the essential criteria and were shortlisted for interview, one disabled candidate was appointed. The percentage of lesbian, gay or bisexual applicants decreases from 4.5% at shortlist to 3.8% at interview stage.

Discipline & Grievance and Training

There was one formal disciplinary case and one formal probation case in 2022/23. We are unable to report on equality data due to the possibility of the individuals being identifiable.

We are satisfied that training and development is provided on a fair and equal basis across the council and allows all employees to take advantage of the opportunities.

Leavers

The report found that there were no concerns regarding leavers in terms of gender, ethnic origin, religion and belief, sexual orientation or disability.

There were 4 times the percentage of leavers in the 65-75 age group but this is due to employees in this age group taking retirement. The percentage of leavers in the 20-29, 30-39 and 40-49 age groups were higher than the percentage of employees in these age ranges. This is most likely to be for career progression and due to the small teams at the council employees may have to seek this progression outside of the council. This is an area the council continually tries to address but is ultimately limited by the overall size and structure.

Action plan

All actions in the 22/23 action plan have either been progressed or rolled forward into the 23/24 action plan.

Achievements against July 2022 – June 23 staff & employment equality action plan

Action	Progress
Employee Profile	
To complete the required annual Gender Pay Gap report for 2022.	This was published in March 2023
Develop guidance on supporting employees who are changing gender so that best practice is available to both staff and managers where required. This will be supported by the HCC Equalities Officer.	This has not been progressed due to other work priorities and staff shortages within the HR team. This will be carried forward to the action plan for 23/24.
Send all staff a reminder to check and update their personal details on MyView ahead of the data being analysed for the next annual equalities report to ensure we have fuller rather than partial data (especially religion, sexual orientation and disability) reminding staff that we are not interested in their individual data but global percentages.	This was unfortunately missed this year. We will ensure it takes place before the next report.
Recruitment	
Continue to require managers to return all recruitment paperwork before an offer letter can be sent out to ensure HR have full shortlisting data to be able to report on	We have been using our Applicant Tracking System (ATS) since August 2022. The system allows managers to move candidates through the various stages and invite them to interview etc. Managers no longer have to complete paper shortlisting, it is all done on the system. We are able to report on this from the system so this has meant we now have a much fuller data set.

Each interview panel chair to give consideration to the diversity of the interview panel and where possible try to ensure the panel is as diverse. Where this is not possible try to ensure that other elements of the panel show staff diversity, for example 'meet the team' sessions to demonstrate the diversity at East Herts and to appear as welcoming as possible to applicants of all backgrounds.	The HR team have been encouraging managers to try to ensure that interview panels are as diverse as possible and some 'meet the team' sessions have taken place. Ultimately some teams are limited in terms of how diverse they are so it is not always possible to demonstrate a full range of diversity in every recruitment process.
Work with Shaw Trust to advertise our jobs with them to attract more disabled applicants.	This has not been progressed due to other work priorities and staff shortages within the HR team and will be carried forward to the action plan for 23/24. We will investigate the ways in which we can collaborate with the Shaw Trust but it needs to be in proportion with the size of our organisation and the Transformation Programme
Continue to investigate with the ATS provider how to name blind CVs without losing key data	The ATS provider has procured a new system for name blinding applications. It is currently undergoing testing but the results look promising and we hope it will be in place by the end of 2023.
Discipline, Grievance and Probation	
Continue to monitor equalities data for all disciplinary, grievance and formal probationary cases.	This data has been collected and is contained within this report.
Training	
Continue to ensure that all staff complete the equality and diversity module as part of the mandatory e-learning training programme. Offer further equalities-based training as identified by annual training needs analysis undertaken by the OD and HR Co-ordinator.	All staff were expected to complete the equality and diversity module by the end of June 2023 as part of the mandatory e-learning programme. Due to the OD and HR Co-ordinator leaving and the post not yet being filled, no further equalities based training has been arranged.
Continue to ensure that managers are briefed in the PDR process and that effective and appropriate personal	Managers are provided with guidance on the PDR process and HR Officers provide a briefing to new managers in the service

<p>development plans are put in place for all employees, including those rated as 'exceeding expectations' and above.</p>	<p>areas they support. PDR training for all managers has been delivered. The HR team reviews PDRs to inform the annual training plan. The deadline for PDRs to be completed for 22/23 was extended to the end of June 23 due to an updated process and forms being put in place. Therefore the 22/23 PDRs have not yet been reviewed.</p>
<p>Continue to develop both wellbeing programmes/guidance and maintain sufficient Mental Health First Aiders to support staff experiencing mental health issues.</p>	<p>Due to staff who had previously delivered the Council's wellbeing programme leaving and not being replaced, the programme had to be reduced accordingly in 22/23.</p> <p>No refresher training was delivered in 22/23 for Mental Health First Aiders but this will be carried forward to the action plan for 23/24, alongside seeking new volunteers.</p>
<p></p>	<p></p>
<p></p>	<p></p>
<p></p>	<p></p>

Employee profile

Introduction

This section provides information on employees employed by the council as at 31 March 2023. Casual employees, agency workers and contractors are not included. The total number of employees employed by the council as at 31 March 2023 was a headcount of 303. This has decreased from 313 in the previous year.

The data has been analysed using 6 of the 9 protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 as follows:

- Sex (Gender)
- Ethnic origin
- Age
- Religion or Belief
- Disability status
- Sexual orientation

Although marital status data is recorded this is not reportable from the HR system.

Pregnancy is not a permanent characteristic but a state in time. 3 employees took maternity leave in 2022/23 and it should be noted that no concerns have been raised regarding this protected characteristic.

Although the HR system has capacity for employees to indicate if they are transgender the new starter forms do not request this and instead the council has focused on the current gender and not the past in line with our recruitment forms. It is worth noting there have never been any complaints in this area. The council does employ staff who have changed gender without any complaints being made and HR are going to develop guidance on supporting employees who are changing gender so that best practice is available to both staff and managers where required.

Various comparison data has been used to understand how the employee profile of the council compares to the wider context in which it operates and to identify whether there are any areas of concern which the council needs to take action on. Comparisons have been made at the most local level (i.e. with East Herts residents) using the 2021 Census data.

Sex (Gender)

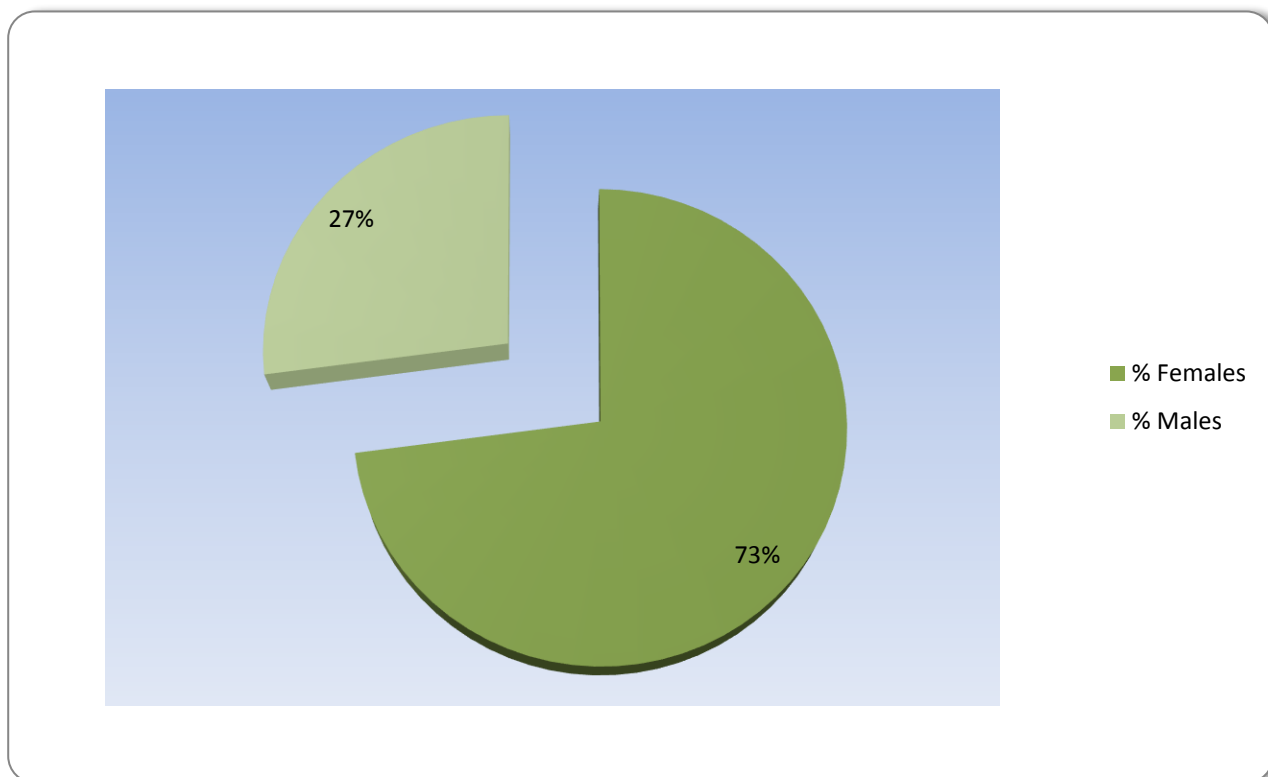


Figure 1.0 Employee profile by sex

Figure 1.0 shows the sex profile of employees at the council. The profile does not closely reflect that of the East Herts working population. The council has a considerably lower percentage of male employees (27%) compared to the overall male population in East Herts (48.4%) (Census 2021).

A high female to male workforce ratio is common in public sector with 68% being female and 32% being male (ONS: Public sector employment by gender (2015)). In addition, the council has contracted out many of the more traditionally male dominated areas of work such as refuse, grounds maintenance and IT which has affected the male to female ratio further.

Ethnic origin

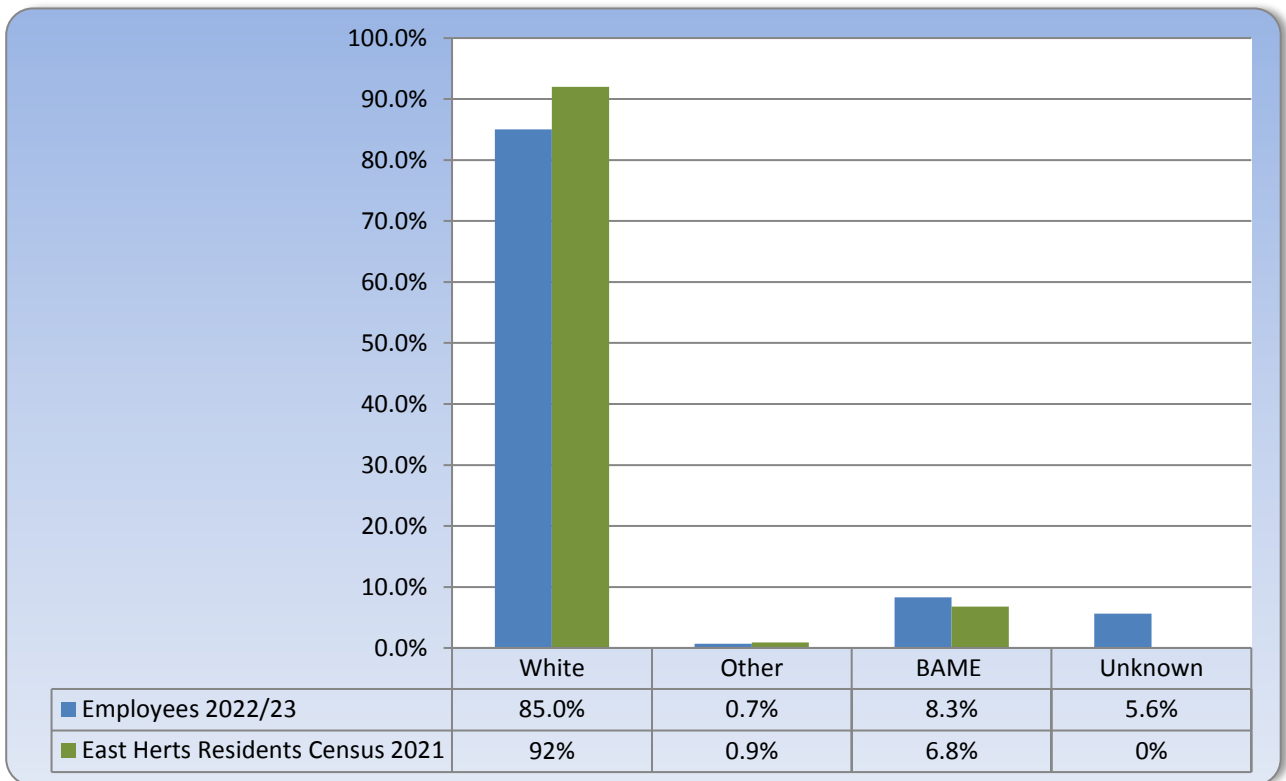


Figure 2.0 Employee profile by ethnic origin

Source: ONS Census 2021 - Ethnic Group by Measures

Figure 2.0 shows that the percentage of black and minority ethnic employees is above that of East Herts residents as at the Census in 2021. The percentage of white employees is 7% less than the Census but 5.6% of staff are unknown which will account for some of this. The total percentage of BAME employees in 22/23 has stayed the same as last year at 8.3% and is higher than the BAME residents in East Herts (6.8%).

Age

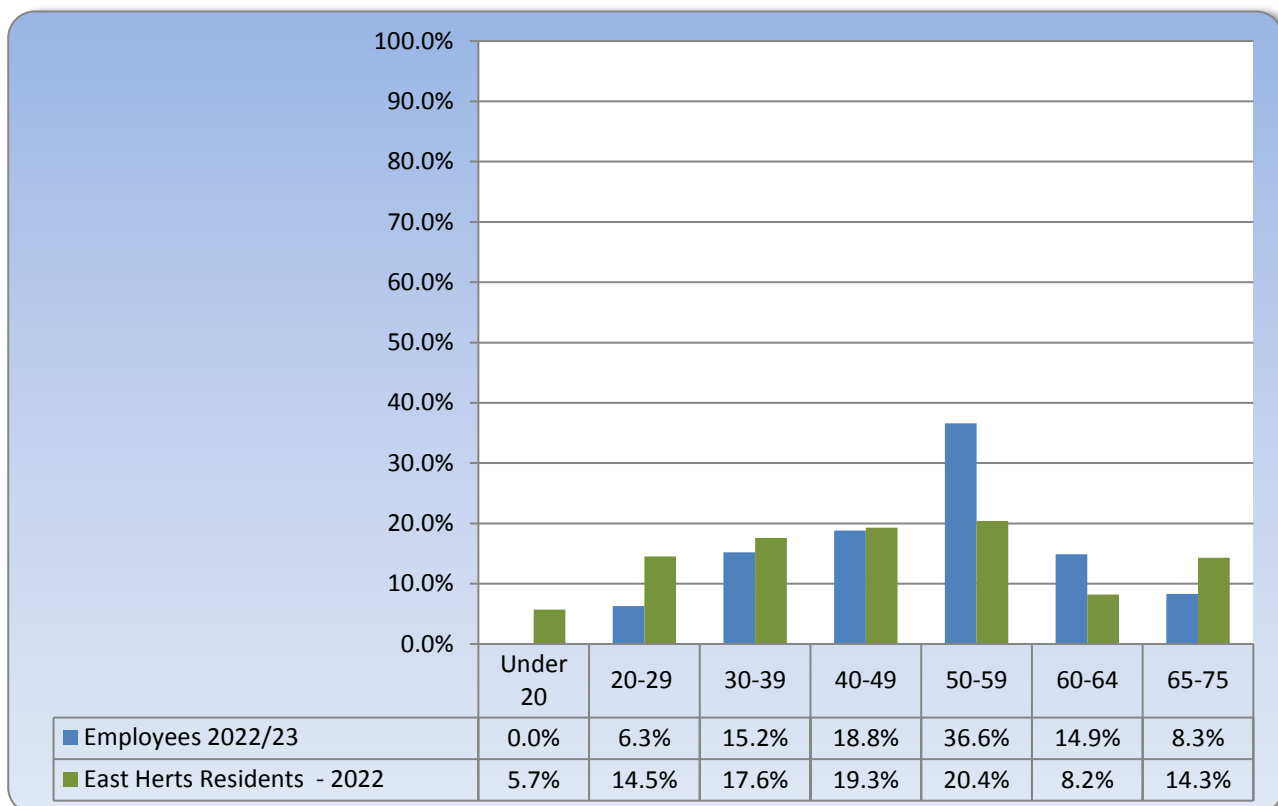


Figure 3.0 Employee profile by age

Source: Nomis Official Labour Market Statistics – Population Estimates in East Herts (2022)

Note: The percentages shown for East Herts residents are the percentage of 16-75 year olds, not the total population.

Figure 3.0 shows that the council has a considerably higher proportion of employees aged between 50 and 64 compared to East Herts residents. 51.5% of employees are in the 50-59 and 60-64 age groups compared to 28.6% of East Herts residents in these age groups. The size and structure of the council means that there are a limited number of entry level posts meaning that the majority of posts require experience and are likely to be filled by older individuals who have the required experience. The council has introduced more trainee and career graded posts in recent years which require less experience and support staff developing in the role to both increase the younger age profile and provide succession planning but these posts can also be filled by career changers with appointment based on merit. The council also has a significant number of long serving employees which also impacts on the workforce age profile.

The council has no employees under the age of 20 and this is lower than East Herts residents in this age group (5.7%) however this is likely to be due to it being compulsory

to remain in full time education or training until the age of 18. The percentages of staff in the different age groups has not substantially changed from 2021/22.

Although there are differences in the age profile of the workforce to that of the East Herts residents there are no significant concerns or evidence of discrimination or bias.

Religion and Belief

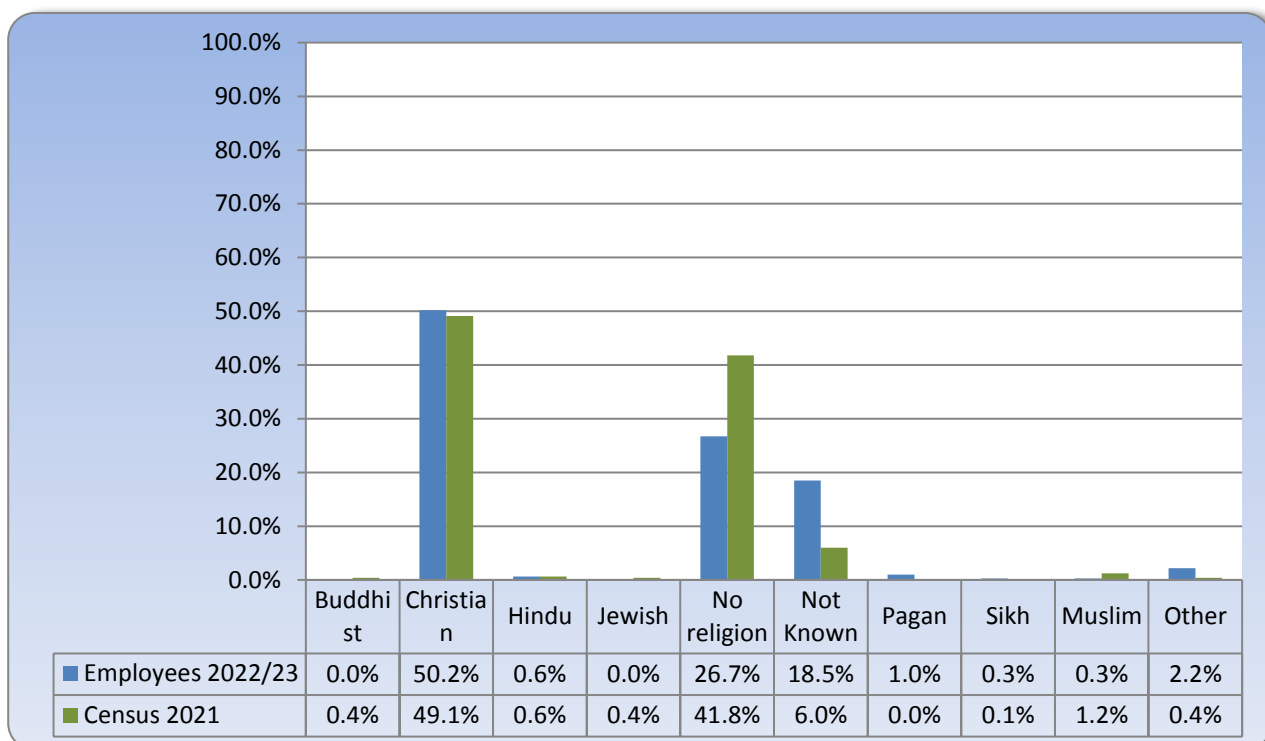


Figure 4.0 Employee profile by religion and belief

Source: ONS Census 2021 - Religion

Figure 4.0 shows that the religions and beliefs of employees are generally reflective of East Herts residents and therefore there are no suggested concerns in this area. As is common with employment data on Religion (staff often do not wish to state) a significant amount of staff (18.5%) have not stated or have indicated they do not wish to. The percentages of staff under each religion remain similar over the past few years.

Disability

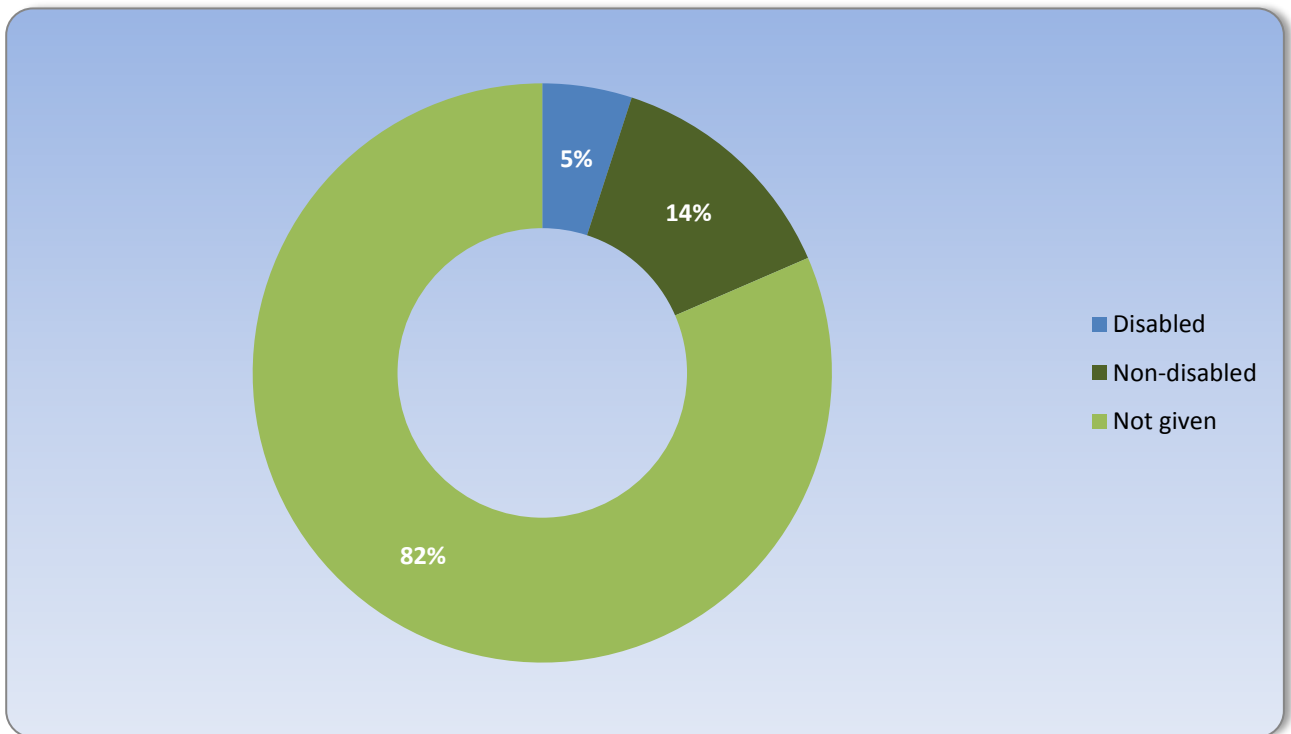


Figure 5.0 Employee profile by disability status

Figure 5.0 shows that as at 31 March 2023, 5% of employees had a disability, which is one percentage point higher than 2021/22. This is significantly less than the East Herts residents with a disability (13.6%) (ONS Census 2021). It is worth noting however that people with disability may not be able to undertake meaningful employment in light of their disability.

Sexual Orientation

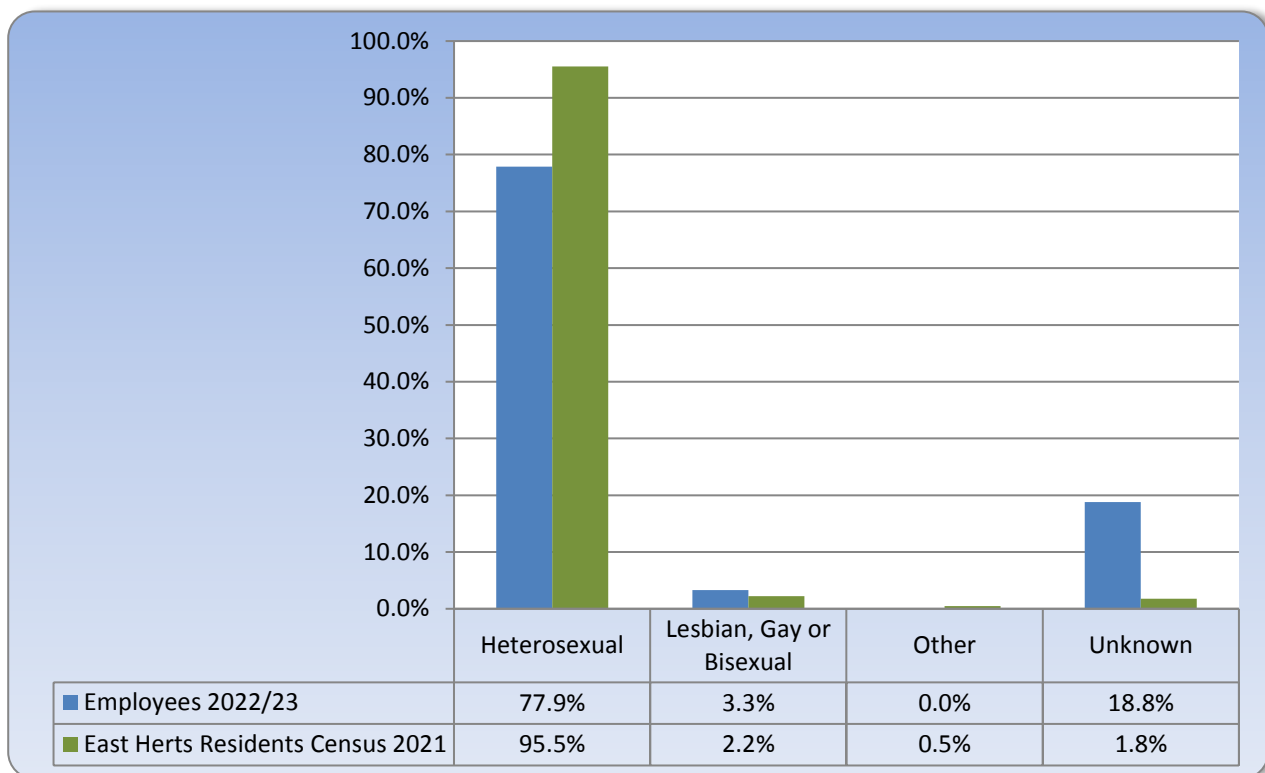


Figure 6.0 Employee profile by sexual orientation

Source: ONS Census 2021 – sexual orientation

Figure 6.0 shows that there are no indicated concerns with regard to the council’s employee profile in terms of sexual orientation when compared to the Census 2021 data. The council has less heterosexuals in terms of percentage but has a higher unknown percentage which would close the gap. The council has a higher percentage of lesbian, gay and bisexual employees (3.3%) compared to residents in East Herts (2.2%). The percentage of lesbian, gay and bisexual employees has increased slightly from 2.9% in 2021/122 to 3.3% in 22/23.

Recruitment

Introduction

This section provides information on external applicants who applied for jobs at the council between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023. Data has been collected at the application, shortlist and appointment stages. There were 62 external recruitment campaigns between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022. A total of 478 external applicants applied for jobs with the council.

Recruitment data has been analysed using 5 of the 9 protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010:

- Sex (Gender)
- Ethnic origin
- Age
- Disability status
- Sexual orientation

The council's position is that Transgender people should be respected as part of the gender they have chosen and therefore does not monitor separately in terms of their past gender or transition they have undertaken.

In terms of pregnancy and marital status these are not asked for at the recruitment stage. Regarding pregnancy, individuals may not wish to disclose this and by asking the wrong message maybe given to potential candidates and this also applies to a lesser extent to marital status (this is also a protected characteristic that can change and again could cause concern for candidate if asked based on previous discrimination in the employment market to newly married women re potential pregnancy/maternity in the future).

Although data is collected for religion or belief, this has not been reported on due to the low number of applicants reporting a religion other than Christian or not stated.

Due to the small numbers in each of the individual BAME groups, they have been combined and include:

- Mixed/Multiple Ethnic – includes White & Black Caribbean, White & Black African, White and Asian, Other mixed.
- Asian/Asian British – includes Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Chinese, Other Asian.

- Black/African/Caribbean/Black British – includes African, Caribbean, Other Black.
- Other – includes Arab, Any other ethnic group.

'White' includes English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish, British, Irish, Gypsy or Irish Traveller, Other White.

(Definitions of Ethnic Groups taken from the 2021 Census)

The data has been collected from the Equalities Monitoring Forms which are part of the application form. From 1 April – 31 July the equalities monitoring form was a separate form to the application form which many candidates chose not to complete or missed. From 1 August onwards we implemented an ATS which has the equalities form as a mandatory part of the application form. Whilst candidates can still say 'prefer not to say', this has improved recruitment equalities data for part of the data for this report. The percentage of 'Unknowns' was as high as 49% in some areas in the 21/22 report but the highest is 26.9% in this report.

Although equalities data is mostly known for appointees we have chosen not to populate the data with this known data on our HR system for appointees and have used the original equalities monitoring forms for applicants. By adding data in for appointees this can distort the data when looking at the conversion of applicants from application through to interview and then appointment.

Comparisons have been drawn to the profile of the working population of East Herts to understand whether the council has been successful in attracting a diverse range of applicants that are reflective of the local population. Comparisons have been made at the most local level (i.e. with East Herts residents) using the 2021 Census data.

The equalities data of applicants reaching the shortlisting and appointment stages has been compared to the data of all applicants to understand whether certain groups are being disadvantaged and at what stage of the recruitment process. At the application stage applicants will drop out of the process where they do not meet the required criteria and at this stage in the process the recruiting manager does not have any equalities information regarding the applicants. Therefore, it is particularly important to note the shortlisting to appointment data as it is at this point that there is more opportunity for bias to occur once the recruiting manager has met the applicants.

Sex (Gender)

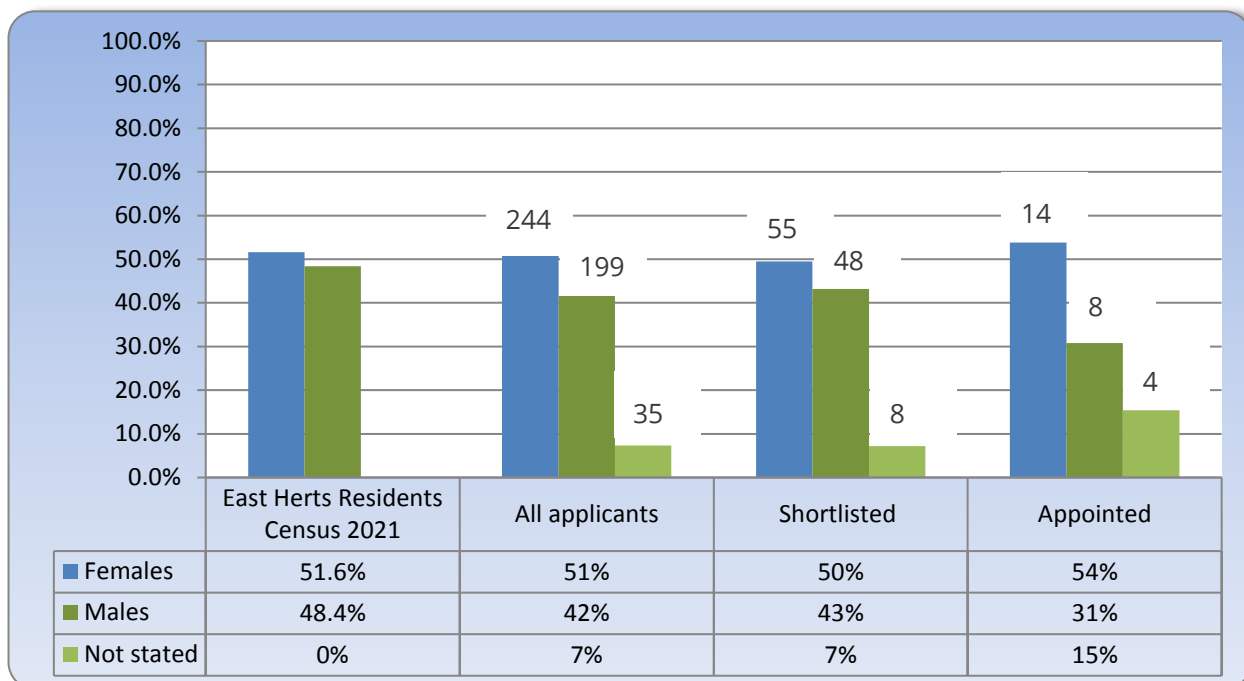


Figure 7.0 Applicant profile by sex compared to the population of East Herts

Source: Census 2021

Figure 7.0 shows that in 2022/23, of those that completed the equalities monitoring form, there was a higher proportion of female applicants than male applicants: 51% (244) of applicants were female and 42% (199) were male compared to the profile of the working population of East Herts (51.6% and 48.4% respectively). However, as can be seen from the data, 7% of applicants either did not complete the equalities form or did not disclose their data.

Figure 7.0 also shows that of the 111 applicants shortlisted for interview, 55 (50%) were female and 48 (43%) were male, with 8 (7%) unknown. Figure 7.0 shows that of the 26 applicants appointed, 14 (54%) were female and 8 (31%) were male. However with 4 (15%) of 'Unknowns' it is quite likely that the percentage gap between male and female appointees will be smaller in reality.

The conversion from application to shortlist are closely aligned for both females (51% to 50%) and for males (42% to 43%). There is an increase in 4 percentage points between the number of females being shortlisted to appointed and a reduction of 12 percentage points between the number of males being shortlisted to appointed. This may indicate some potential bias, however the change is based on just 26 appointments and the gender of 15% of the appointees is unknown. Although equalities data is mostly known for appointees we have chosen not to populate the

data with this known data on our HR system for appointees and have used the original equalities monitoring forms for applicants. By adding data in for appointees this can distort the data when looking at the conversion of applicants from application through to interview and then appointment.

Ethnic origin

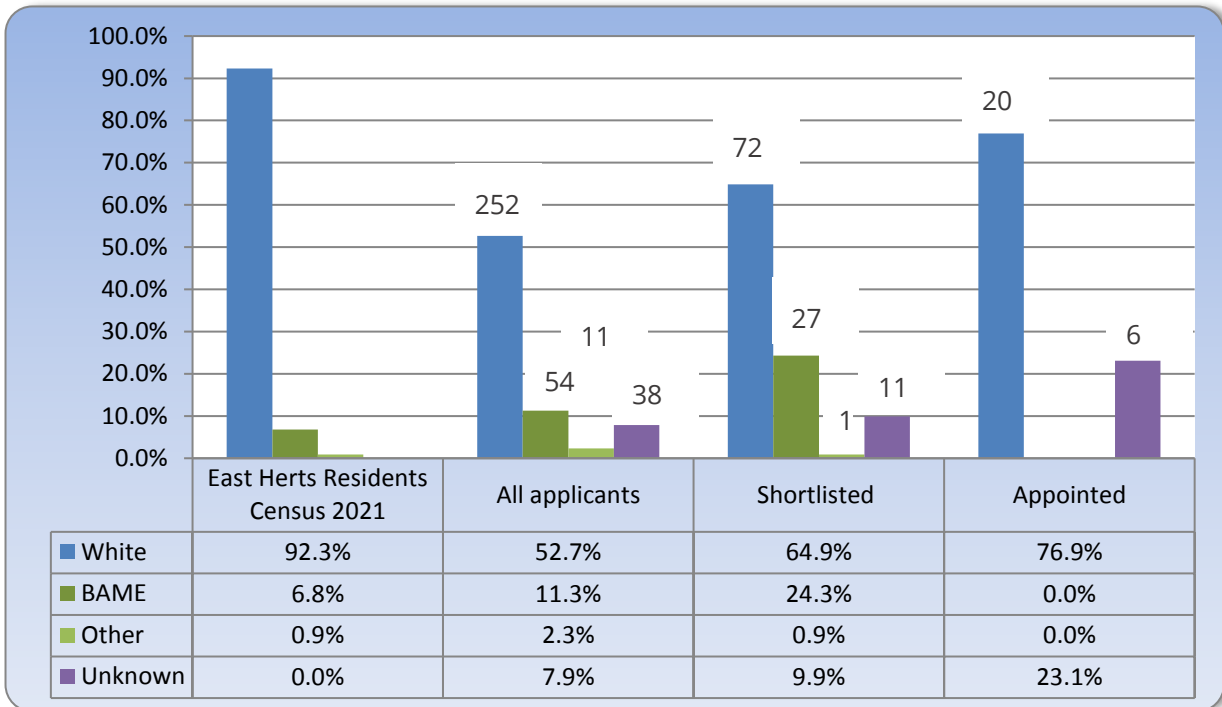


Figure 8.0 Applicant profile by ethnic origin compared to the population of East Herts

Source: ONS Census 2021 - Ethnic Group by Measures

Figure 8.0 shows that in 2022/23 the council attracted applicants from a diverse range of ethnic origins reflective of those of East Herts residents; 54 applicants (11.3%) were from BAME groups which is significantly higher than the percentage of East Herts residents in these groups (6.8%). The figure is however lower than 2021/22 where 14/3% applicants were from BAME groups.

There is an increase in the percentage of white applicants from application to shortlisting (52.7% to 64.9%) but between shortlisting and appointment it increases again (64.9% to 76.9%). For applicants from BAME groups, there is an increase from application to shortlisting (11.3% to 24.3%) and then drops back down to 0% at appointment. However, there are 23.1% of unknowns. As reported, equality data is removed from applications, names are shared as the HR system cannot 'blind' these, managers are trained in equality and avoiding bias so there are sufficient measures in place.

It should also be noted that East Herts has not had challenge from a candidate suggesting any bias or discrimination over a shortlisting or appointment decision. The

shortlisting and interview processes involve a panel scoring candidates against the job person specification criteria and the scores are collected by HR to evidence the merit based scoring undertaken.

Age

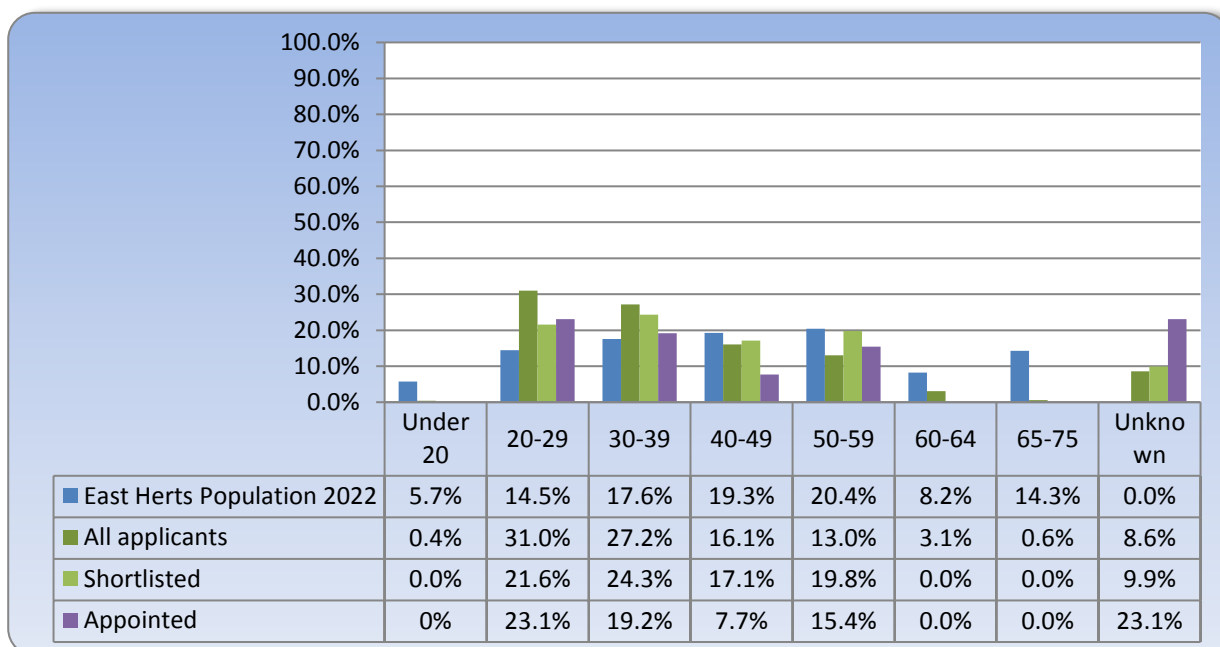


Figure 9.0 Applicant profile by age compared to the working population of East Herts

Source: Nomis Population estimates - local authority based by single year of age (2022).

Note: The percentages shown for East Herts residents are the percentage of 16-75 year olds, not the total population. Numbers could not be added to this chart due to the size of the columns.

Figure 9.0 shows that the council attracted applicants from a wide range of age groups. However, the percentages do differ from the East Herts residents in these age groups. Percentages of applicants in the 20-29 and 30-39 age groups are higher than the percentage of East Herts residents in these age groups. This is not unexpected as people in this age group are more likely to be applying for jobs and looking to progress in their careers. In the other age groups the percentage of applicants is lower than the percentage of East Herts residents in these age groups. However there are 8.6% of applicants whose age group is unknown as they either did not complete the equalities form or did not disclose their data. In the older age groups it is likely to be due to people taking retirement. There were fewer applicants under the age of 20 (0.4%) compared to East Herts residents in that age group (5.7%), however this is likely to be due to it being compulsory to remain in full time education or training up to the age of 18.

There is some variation in the percentages of applicants at the various age groups and the percentage of those shortlisted. For the 30-39 and 40-49 age groups the percentages of those applying compared to those shortlisted stayed fairly closely aligned. For the Under 20 and 60-64 categories the percentage decreased to 0%.

From the shortlisting to appointment stage the percentage increased in the 20-29 age category and decreased in all of the other age categories. The number of 'Unknowns' doubled from shortlist to appointment. Despite the slight variation at the different stages there are no obvious areas for concern.

Disability status

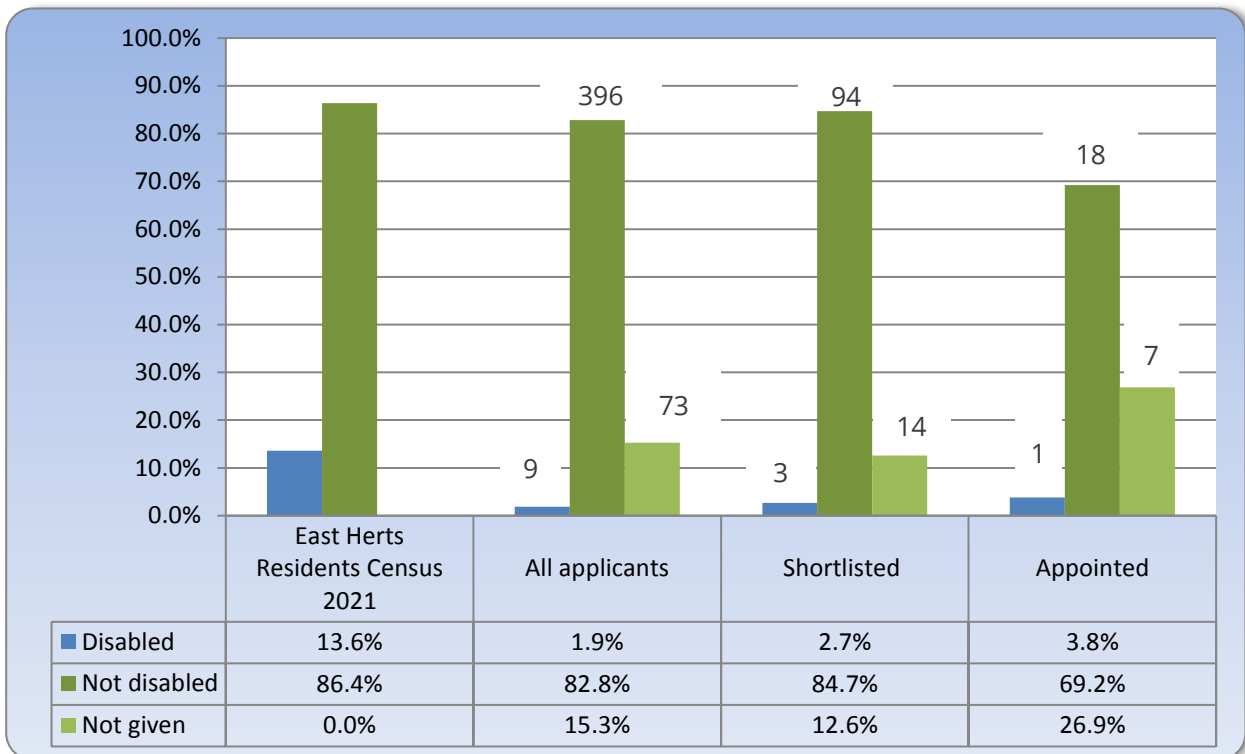


Figure 10.0 Applicant profile by disability compared to the working population of East Herts (Disability status)

Source: ONS Census 2021 - Disability

Figure 10.0 shows that, of those that completed the equalities monitoring form, 1.9% of applicants had a disability in 2022/23 which is lower than East Herts residents with a disability (13.6%) and is a slight decrease from the 2021/22 figure of 2.7%. It is worth noting when comparing the figure to that of East Herts residents that people with a disability may be unable to work. In addition, the disability status of 15.3% of applicants was unknown.

The council would like to attract more applications from disabled people. The council guarantees that disabled applicants under the Disability Confident Scheme will be invited for an interview if they meet the minimum essential criteria for the role (the Symbol is displayed on our recruitment messages and our website to help attract disabled candidates). In 202/23, there were 9 applicants (1.9%) who stated that they have a disability. Of these, 3 met the essential criteria and were shortlisted for interview and one disabled candidate was appointed.

Sexual orientation

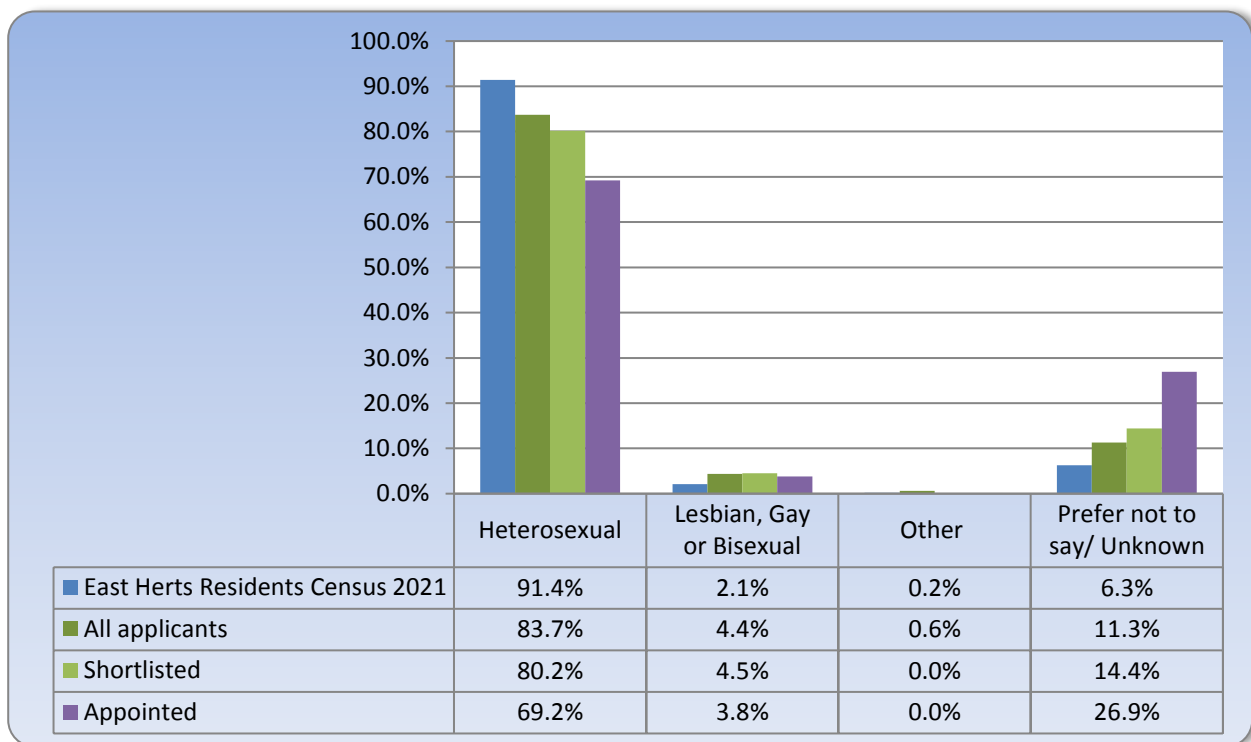


Figure 11.0 Applicant profile by sexual orientation compared to the East of England

Source: ONS Census 2021 - Sexual orientation

Note: Numbers could not be added to this chart due to the size of the columns.

Figure 11.0 shows that 4.4% of applicants in 2022/23 were lesbian, gay or bisexual, this is higher than the percentage for the East of England population (2.1%) and is higher than 2021/22 (3.9%). It is positive to see that this rises to 4.5% at shortlisting, dropping back down slightly to 3.8% at appointment.

Disciplinary, Grievance and Probation

(Grievance includes Bullying & Harassment complaints)

There was one formal disciplinary case and one formal probation case in 2022/23. We are unable to report on equality data due to the possibility of the individuals being identifiable.

Training

The 2022/23 Learning and Development Programme offered a range of learning and development opportunities designed to meet corporate, service and individual needs. Development needs were identified corporately and through individual PDRs. The delivery of development opportunities available for staff was adjusted to align with the move to hybrid working. Most training was delivered via facilitated virtual events, virtual coaching, webinars and e-learning. All employees were trained in equality and diversity, safeguarding, health and safety and data protection as part of the council's annual mandatory training programme.

Corporate training events are advertised to all staff via email bulletins or employees are contacted directly for specific events. Attendance is subject to manager approval and places are offered on a first come first served basis. Requests for funded professional and vocational training are approved by Leadership Team. No formal requests for professional or vocational training were refused in 2022/23.

We are satisfied that the training and development opportunities at the council are made available on a fair and equal basis cross the council which enables all employees to take advantage of the opportunities.

Leavers

Introduction

This section provides information on employees who have left the council (both voluntarily and involuntarily) between the period 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023. The figures exclude casual employees who have left the council and those who are on a career break.

The total number of leavers during the period is 36. Of these, 31 left voluntarily and 5 left involuntarily. The involuntary leavers include those whose temporary contract had come to an end, dismissal, ill health retirement or redundancy. Please refer to the Annual Turnover Report for 2022/23 (Human Resources Committee June 2022) for full details in terms of reasons for leaving, leavers by length of service, leavers by service area etc. This section looks at leavers in terms of equalities and protected characteristics but does not go in the same details as the Turnover Report.

Leaver data has been analysed using 5 of the 9 protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 as follows:

- Sex (Gender)
- Ethnic origin
- Age
- Religion or Belief
- Disability

Sexual orientation was not provided due to the small numbers of employees in some categories which may identify individuals. There are no concerns in this area.

Although marital status data is recorded this is not currently reportable from the system.

Pregnancy is not a permanent characteristic but a state in time. 3 employees took maternity leave in 2022/23 and it should be noted that no concerns have been raised regarding this protected characteristic.

Although the HR system has capacity for employees to indicate if they are transgender the new starter forms do not request this and instead the council has focused on the current gender and not the past.

Sex (Gender)

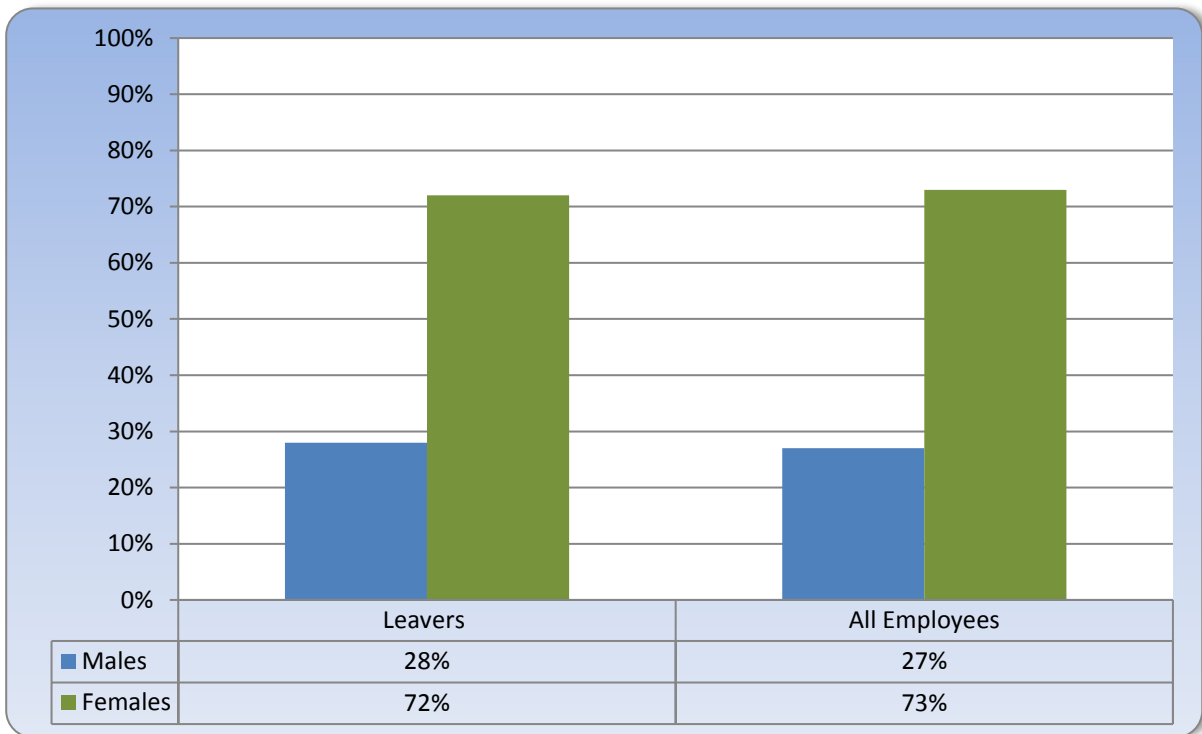


Figure 12.0 Leavers by sex

There are no concerns in this area, the gender of leavers in 2022/23 was generally reflective of the overall employee profile.

Ethnic Origin

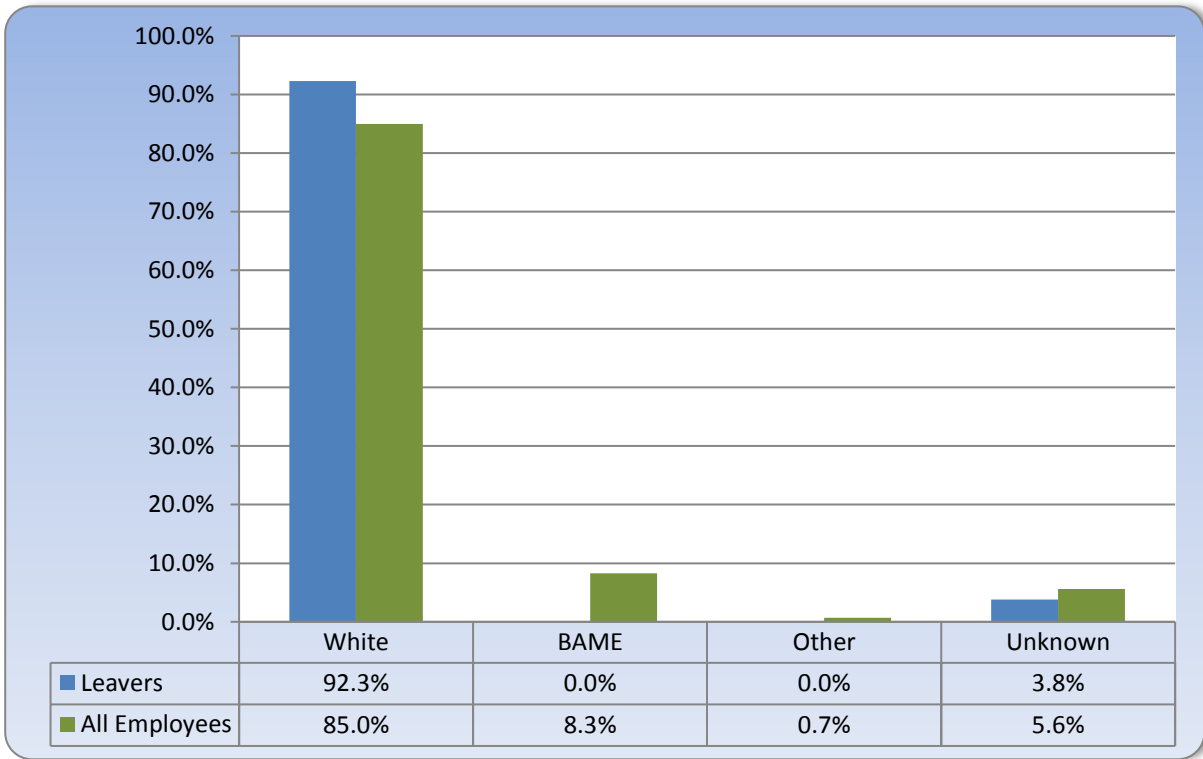


Figure 13.0 Leavers by ethnic origin

Figure 13.0 shows that there was a lower percentage of BAME leavers when compared to the percentage of BAME employees and the percentage of white leavers was higher compared to the percentage of white employees; no leavers were from BAME groups and 92.3% were white compared to the employee profile of 8.3% BAME and 85% white. HR have reviewed exit questionnaires which has also not indicated any concerns regarding ethnic origin.

Age

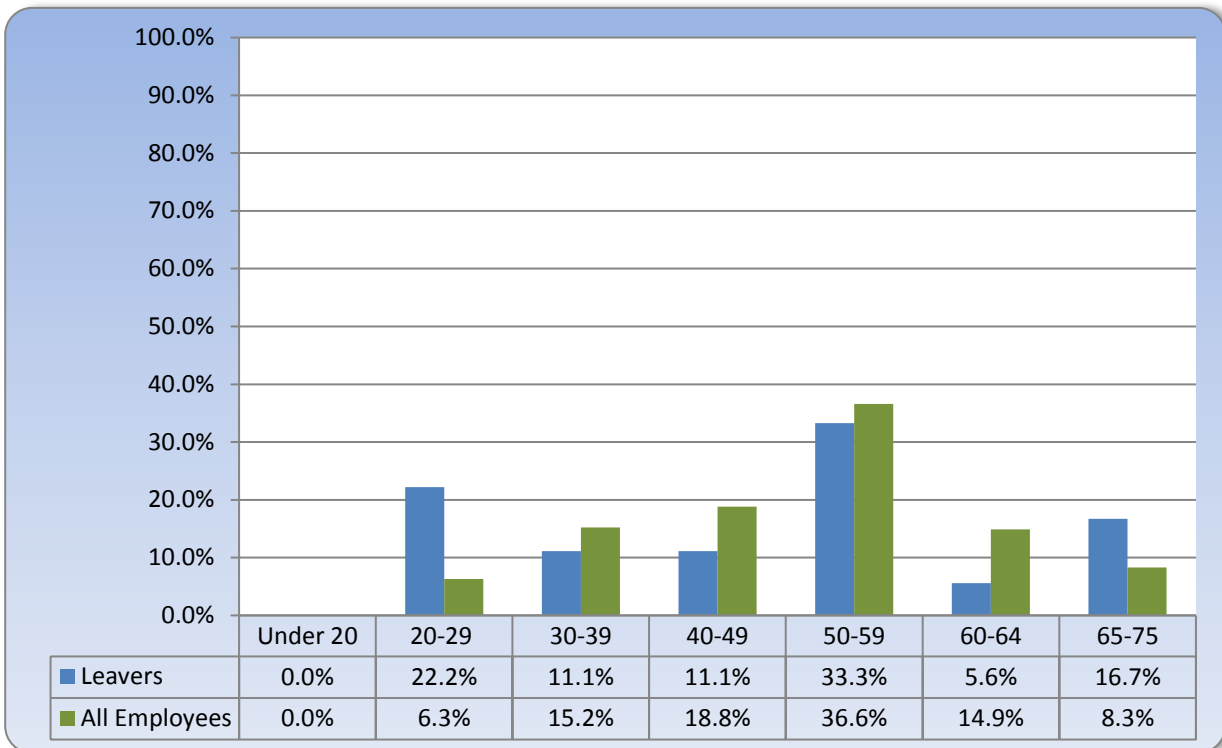


Figure 14.0 Leavers by age

Figure 14.0 shows that there was twice the percentage of leavers in the 65-75 age group but this is due to employees in this age group taking retirement.

The percentage of leavers in the 20-29, 30-39 and 40-49 age groups were higher than the percentage of employees in these age ranges. This is most likely to be for career progression and due to the small teams at the council employees may have to seek this progression outside of the council. This is an area the council continually tries to address but is ultimately limited by the overall size and structure.

Religion or Belief

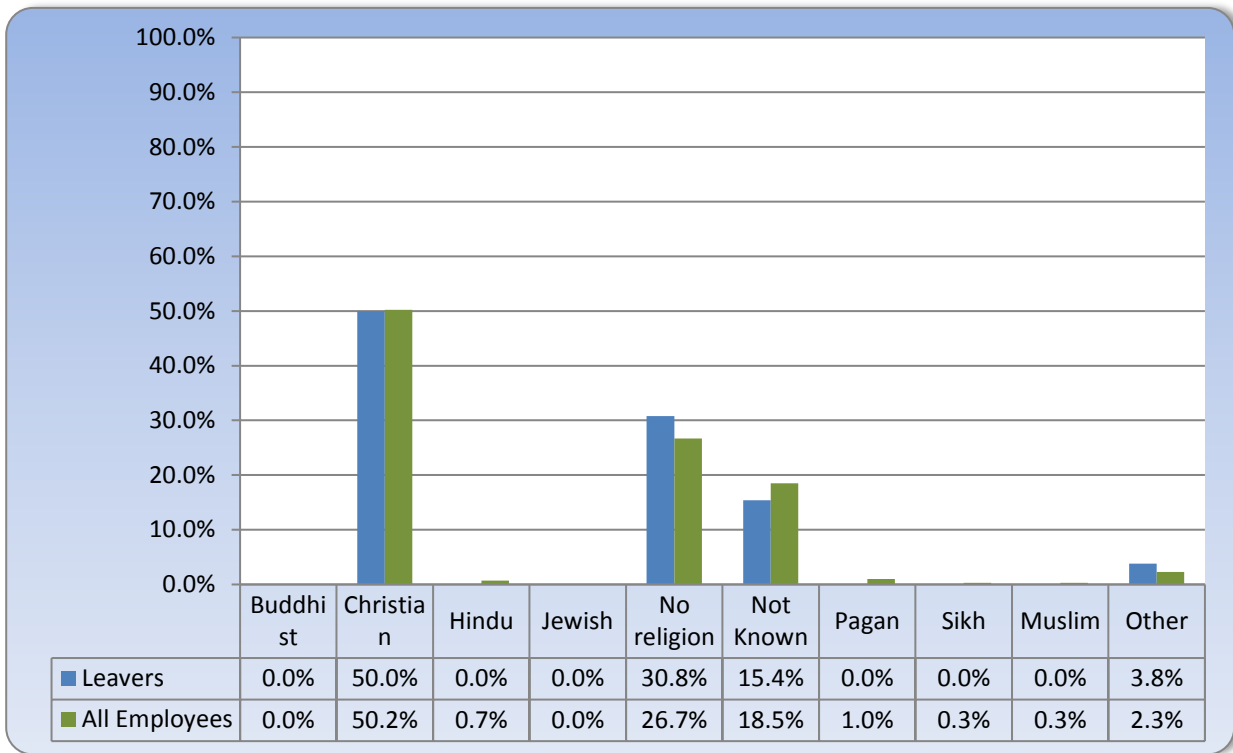


Figure 15.0 Leavers by religion

There are no concerns in this area, the religious belief of leavers in 2022/23 were generally reflective of the overall employee profile given the small numbers involved.

Disability

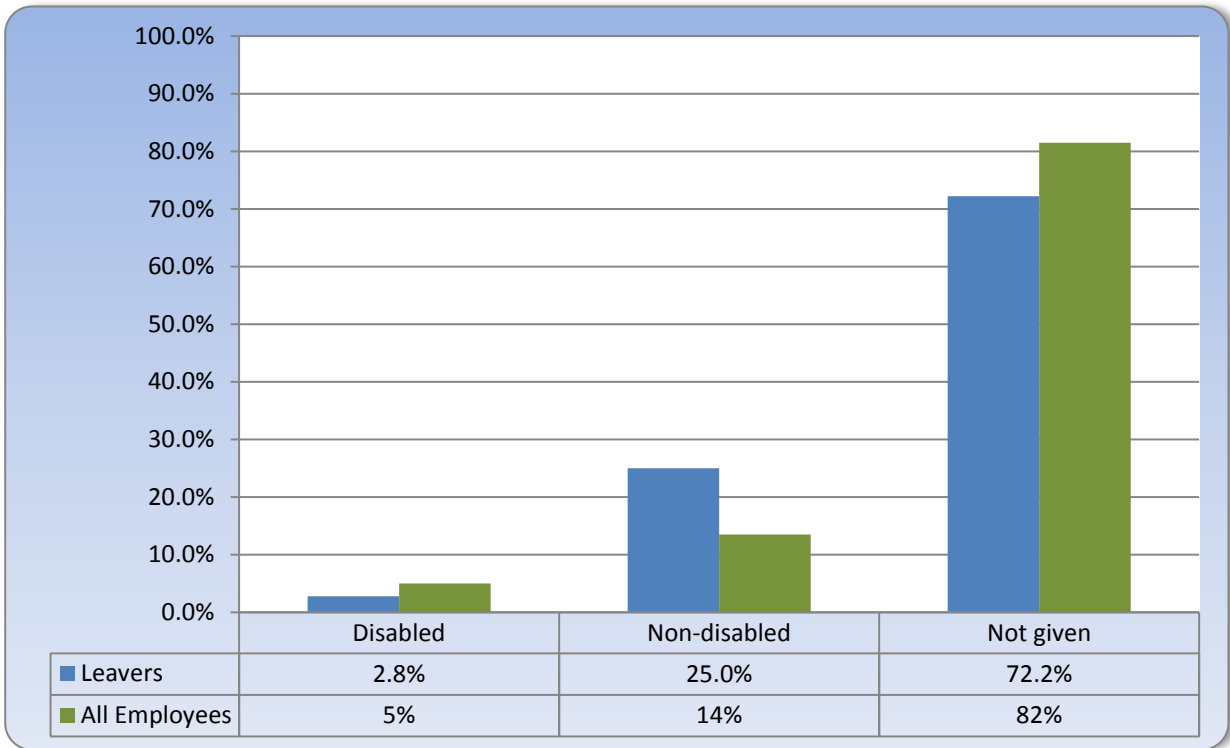


Figure 16.0 Leavers by disability

Figure 16.0 shows the percentage of leavers with a disability (2.8%) was lower than the percentage of employees with a disability (5%). HR have reviewed exit questionnaires which has also not indicated any concerns regarding disability.

Staff and Employment Equality Action plan 1 July 23 – 31 June 24

The actions listed below refer to staff and employment only.

Action	Timescale
Employee Profile	
To complete the required annual Gender Pay Gap report for 2023.	Published by March 2024
Develop guidance on supporting employees who are changing gender so that best practice is available to both staff and managers where required.	We need to scope out the best way of approaching this piece of work and would recommend a small task and finish group to develop this.
Send all staff a reminder to check and update their personal details on MyView ahead of the data being analysed for the next annual equalities report to ensure we have fuller rather than partial data (especially religion, sexual orientation and disability) reminding staff that we are not interested in their individual data but global percentages.	All user email to go out in the Autumn inviting staff to review their information and encourage them to update their status. Further reminder in February 2024
Recruitment	
Each interview panel chair to give consideration to the diversity of the interview panel and where possible try to ensure the panel is as diverse. Where this is not possible try to ensure that other elements of the panel show staff diversity, for example 'meet the team' sessions to demonstrate the diversity at East Herts and to appear as welcoming as possible to applicants of all backgrounds.	Ongoing

Work with Shaw Trust to advertise our jobs with them to attract more disabled applicants.	We will investigate the ways in which we can collaborate with them but it needs to be in proportion with the size of our organisation and the Transformation Programme.
Implement new name blinding technology on the ATS.	In line with Web Recruit's timescales
Undertake manager / HR audit of recruitment documentation and decision making	This will help us understand if final decisions are being made objectively and fairly and take any remedial actions necessary
Discipline, Grievance and Probation	
Continue to monitor equalities data for all disciplinary, grievance and formal probationary cases.	Ongoing
Training	
Continue to ensure that all staff complete the equality and diversity module as part of the mandatory e-learning training programme. Offer further equalities based training as identified by annual training needs analysis.	Ongoing
Continue to ensure that managers are briefed in the PDR process and that effective and appropriate personal development plans are put in place for all employees, including those rated as 'exceeding expectations' and above.	Ongoing
Continue to develop both wellbeing programmes/guidance and maintain sufficient Mental Health First Aiders to support staff experiencing mental health issues.	Ongoing
Other	
Sign up to Unison's Anti-Racism Charter	Recommendations regarding this year long joint programme of work going to LT

