



**MEETING** : HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE  
**VENUE** : COUNCIL CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD  
**DATE** : WEDNESDAY 24 SEPTEMBER 2025  
**TIME** : 7.00 PM

**PLEASE NOTE TIME AND VENUE**

This meeting will be live streamed on the Council's Youtube page:  
<https://www.youtube.com/user/EastHertsDistrict>

**MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE**

Councillor Rachel Carter (Chair)

Councillors M Butcher, M Connolly, T Deffley, A Holt, M Swainston (Vice-Chair) and D Willcocks

**Substitutes**

Conservative Group: Councillor R Buckmaster  
Green Group: Councillors J Dunlop and G Hill  
Labour Group: Councillor D Jacobs  
Liberal Democrat Group: Councillor S Marlow

*(Note: Substitution arrangements must be notified by the absent Member to Democratic Services 7 hours before the meeting, i.e. by midday on the day of the meeting)*

**CONTACT OFFICER:**  
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## **Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

A Member, present at a meeting of the Authority, or any committee, sub-committee, joint committee or joint sub-committee of the Authority, with a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) in any matter to be considered or being considered at a meeting:

- must not participate in any discussion of the matter at the meeting;
- 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;
- if the interest is not registered and is not the subject of a pending notification, must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest within 28 days;
- must leave the room while any discussion or voting takes place.

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Visit <https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/article/35542/Political-Structure> for details.

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## **AGENDA**

1. Apologies

*To receive apologies for absence.*

2. Minutes - 4 June 2025 (Pages 5 - 17)

*To receive the Minutes of the meeting held on 4 June 2025*

3. Chairman's Announcements

4. Declarations of Interest

*To receive any Member's Declaration of Interest.*

5. Human Resources Quarter 1 Statistics (Pages 18 - 37)

6. Annual Equalities Report 2024/25 (Pages 38 - 72)

7. 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.*

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD  
IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,  
WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON  
WEDNESDAY 4 JUNE 2025, AT 7.00 PM

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PRESENT: Councillor Rachel Carter (Chair)  
Councillors M Connolly, M Swainston and  
D Willcocks

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Michele Aves	- Committee Support Officer
Peter Dickinson	- Health and Safety Officer
Elly Starling	- Human Resources Strategic Lead

60 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR FOR 2025/26

It was moved by the Councillor Connolly and seconded by Councillor Willcocks that Councillor Swainston be appointed as Vice -Chair of the Human Resources Committee for 2025/26. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** – that Councillor Swainston be appointed as Vice -Chair of the Human Resources Committee for 2025/26.

61 APOLOGIES

There were apologies for absence from Councillor Butcher and Councillor Deffley.

62 MINUTES - 5 FEBRUARY 2025

It was moved by Councillor Swainston and seconded by

Councillor Connolly that the minutes of the meetings of the Human Resources Committee held on 5 February be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** – that the minutes of the meetings of the Human Resources Committee held on 5 February 2025, be confirmed as a correct record, and signed by the Chair

63 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting, including the officers who were present.

64 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

65 HEALTH AND SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25

The Health and Safety Officer introduced the report which gave an overview of all aspects of health and safety for the council over the past year. He said that there was nothing of any real significance to note, and that he was happy to take any Members questions.

Councillor Connolly referred to paragraph 3.2 of the report and said that she was pleased to see that a review of contract management, inspection regimes and compliance monitoring was to be undertaken. She asked if the leisure contractor (SLM) would be included in this process and requested that Members receive feedback on the outcomes of the review.

The Health and Safety Officer said that SLM would be included in the review – with any unusual patterns investigated. He confirmed that Members would receive such feedback.

Councillor Connolly referred to paragraph 5.24 of the report which referred to the work undertaken to encourage colleagues to report incidents and near miss events. She noted that the incidents and near misses, as listed on page 148 of the report, were quite significant and included harassment. Councillor Connolly and asked if these were downplayed, and if data from reporting was used to aid the prevention of such events.

The Health and Safety Officer said that the council was mindful of the impact which such incidents had on staff, and that measures were in place to help. He said that everybody's tolerance was different, with more experienced officers able to filter out, and that certain service areas, such as Benefits and Planning, tended to evoke the more emotive/ extreme reactions from customers. He said that such events should be reported to enable the data to be used to mitigate offender's impact on staff.

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

**RESOLVED** – that (A) the Annual Health and

Safety Report 2024/25 be considered, and

(B) any comments/amendments provided to the Service Manager of Human Resources and Organisational Development and the Health and Safety Officer.

## 66 POLICY UPDATES

The Human Resources Strategic Lead introduced the report which detailed the update of four policies, as part of the ongoing wider policy review. She said that the policies which were used most frequently would be reviewed first, using best practice and input from Unison to make them more user friendly and remove repetition.

The Human Resources Strategic Lead said that the reviewed policies had already been before the Local Joint Panel and had now come to the Committee for approval. She said that changes had been made to the Sickness Policy to enable earlier support to be given to staff and that the Expenses Policy had been updated in line with HMRC rates.

The Chair thanked the Human Resources Strategic Lead for the report and sought confirmation that the reviewed policies formed part of an ongoing body of work. She also asked how many policies required review.

The Human Resources Strategic Lead said that this was correct, and that all policies were to be reviewed with a



full retention schedule. She said that there were approximately 20 policies, with 10 which were used regularly. She reiterated that Human Resources would work alongside Unison to review these before they come before Members.

Councillor Connolly said that she appreciated the simplification of the policies. She referred to paragraph 6.3 of the Sickness Policy and questioned why a reason and estimated duration of absence needed to be given should it be less than 7 days (thus self-certificated), noting that a staff member may be anxious about the nature of their absence, for example, should they be undergoing fertility treatment.

The Human Resources Strategic Lead said that this may require review post road testing of the policy, and that there were always exceptions. She said that staff could contact Human Resources for advice and/or request private conversations should they be uncomfortable with their manager.

The Chair asked if managers were trained on how to implement the revised policies.

The Human Resources Strategic Lead said that sessions with managers would to be arranged, with surgeries offered for tricky cases. She added that flow charts were included in each of the revised policies.

Councillor Swainston said that it was important that the policies were easy to follow and asked how this would be reviewed.

The Human Resources Strategic Lead said that managers performance would be monitored. She said that most managers followed the processes and should they not this would be escalated to Human Resources and/or the relevant Director.

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

**RESOLVED** – that A) the revised Sickness Absence Management Policy (Appendix 1) be approved; and

(B) that the revised Grievance Policy (Appendix 2) be approved.

(C) that the revised Expenses Policy (Appendix 3) be approved; and

(D) that the revised Appeals Policy (Appendix 4) be approved.

67 EMPLOYEE HEALTH AND WELLBEING REPORT 2024/25

The Human Resources Strategic Lead introduced the report which detailed the changes seen in employee health and wellbeing over the past 12 months. She drew Members attention to the key issues within the report, to include the council's ageing workforce and an increase in

serious staff illnesses (which was mostly made up of short-term mental health issues).

The Human Resources Strategic Lead said that mental health first aid staff had now attended their 13-week training, and a room was being converted for staff to use as a 'safe space' – being furnished with recycled furniture from disused council offices.

The Human Resources Strategic Lead said that a new employee assistance provider was in place, which gave staff a fuller experience, and schemes such as 'should I stay, or should I go?' were being developed to help those employees who were contemplating leaving the council. She said that Human Resources understood the issues at East Herts, and that compared to other local authorities the council was in a good position.

The Chair thanked the Human Resources Strategic Lead for the report.

Councillor Swainston said that the report was thorough, and the comparisons within it reassuring.

Councillor Connolly referred to paragraphs 5.5 and 5.6 of the report and asked how the categories of stress and mental health were defined.

The Human Resources Strategic Lead said that stress was defined as an employee feeling overwhelmed, and unable to cope day to day, whereas mental health was usually a medical condition.

Councillor Connolly asked if the definition came from the employee.

The Human Resources Strategic Lead said that it came from the employee, their primary physician or occupational health.

Councillor Willcocks asked if the mental health boot camp

mentioned in the report was full time.

The Health and Safety Officer said the 13-week duration was not full time and consisted of 3.5-hour online sessions, with a 1-day meet for participants. He added that the council's new employee assistance scheme also offered counsellors who could help with all issues, to include money and family pressures.

Councillor Willcocks asked if there would be a list made available of the mental health first aiders. He noted that in his workplace such staff also wore an easily identifiable lanyard.

The Human Resources Strategic Lead said that as agreed with Leadership Team, a list would be available to staff, and that communications would be used to promote this. She said that the scheme would be reviewed and may grow in line with local government reform.

Councillor Connolly asked if mental health first aiders would be offered counselling/ debriefings themselves.

The Human Resources Strategic Lead said that Human Resources were consulting with other local authorities about this. She said that larger authorities (such as County Councils) had such specialists, but as East Herts did not options were being explored, such as using occupational health. She added that staff with deep seated issues would not be offered help via a mental health first aider.

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

**RESOLVED** – that (A) the annual Employee Health and Wellbeing Report 2024/25 including the actions (in section 8.0) planned for 2025/26 be considered; and

(B) any comments be provided to the Strategic HR Lead.

68 LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT REPORT 24 - 25

The Human Resources Strategic Lead introduced the report which gave detail on the learning and development undertaken in 2024/25. She said that due to budget restraints training remained self or e-learning where possible.

The Human Resources Strategic Lead said that a learning and development specialist was wanted for the vacant management post within Human Resources, with plans for train the trainer and knowledge exchange sessions planned to enable upskilling internally.

The Human Resources Strategic Lead said that Human Resources wished to run a 2-day team manager module, and that they intended to review the future manager's programme. She added that information from staff PDR's would be used to identify what learning employees required.

The Chair thanked the Human Resources Strategic Lead for the report and asked for further information regarding council apprenticeships.

The Human Resources Strategic Lead said that there were currently 4 apprentices at the council. She said that there had been changes to apprenticeship funding and so new ways of working would be explored, to include 'piggybacking' with other local authorities where possible.

Councillor Willcocks asked if the cyber training was funded by IT.

The Human Resources Strategic Lead said that this training was funded via the IT shared service, and that other partnerships such as the Shared Anti-Fraud Service

(SAFS) also gave learning opportunities. She said that other such joint working initiatives may also open up under local government reform.

The Chair asked if the use of AI had affected job applications.

The Human Resources Strategic Lead said that it was easy to spot an application which had used AI. She said that the use of this technology was detrimental to a person's application as it did not allow them to showcase their attributes.

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

**RESOLVED** – that (A) the Learning and Development Report for 2024/2025 be considered; and

(B) any comments be provided to the Strategic HR Lead.

## 69 ANNUAL TURNOVER REPORT 24 - 25

The Human Resources Strategic Lead introduced the report which gave detail on staff turnover for the year 2024/25, including any trends identified and the findings from leaver's exit interviews. She said that vacancies within Planning remained difficult to recruit to, with many staff staying for approximately two years before leaving to work for a bigger authority – which the council could not compete with monetarily.

The Human Resources Strategic Lead said that in the last quarter of the year 6 people had been lost from Planning

which was unusual, and that Human Resources had lost 2 people, 1 retiring and the other leaving due to personal circumstances. She said that 2% of leavers had been via dismissal which showed that policies were being used.

The Human Resources Strategic Lead said that staff's behaviour may change with local government reform – with many choosing to stay in their current positions. She said that recruitment was expensive, with some vacancies being held due to restructure and to avoid redundancies. She added that 'killer questions' had now been added to the beginning of job application forms to weed out overseas applicants looking for sponsorship.

The Chair thanked the Human Resources Strategic Lead for the report.

Councillor Swainston said that the information from exit interviews was very encouraging.

The Human Resources Strategic Lead said that over 80% of leavers said they liked working at East Herts in their exit interviews. She said that the results of the staff survey would be brought before the Committee at the next meeting.

The Chair asked for further information on the use of agency staff.

The Human Resources Strategic Lead said that the use of agency staff was higher in Planning, with jobs having to be covered. She said that it would be good to have a memorandum of cooperation with other local authorities to enable costs to be capped across the region and understand the future footprint.

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

**RESOLVED** – that (A) the Annual Turnover Report 2024/2025, including the actions (in section 11.0) planned for 2025/26, be considered; and

(B) any comments be provided to the Strategic HR Lead.

70 HR QUARTER 4 STATS 23/24

The Human Resources Strategic Lead introduced the report which echoed the previous agenda items and subsequent debates.

The Chair thanked the Human Resources Strategic Lead for the report and asked for further information on Martins Law.

The Human Resources Strategic Lead said that Martins Law came in the wake of the Manchester bombings and aimed to strengthen public safety by requiring premises with over a 200 occupancy to take measures to reduce the vulnerability of terrorist attacks. She said that BEAM, previously Hertford Theatre, already had such a policy in place and was also connected to the town link.

The Chair asked the Health and Safety Officer if there was anything of any significance within the Minutes of the Health and Safety Committee.

The Health and Safety Officer said that High Oak had now taken on the tenancy of the old building at Wallfields, with access to zone B in the staff car park and their own representative on the Safety Committee.

Councillor Willcocks asked if the council had any internships or placements for 16 – 21year olds.

The Human Resources Strategic Lead said that such placements raised issues relating to safeguarding and managed supervision, and that more thought would be given to this area as the new organisation was built.



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

**RESOLVED** – that (A) the Human Resources Management report for Quarter 4 (January – March 2025) be considered; and

(B) any comments provided to the HR Officer/Head of HR and OD regarding the content or formatting of the report.

71 URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

The meeting closed at 8.30 pm

Chairman .....
Date .....

# Agenda Item 5

## **East Herts Council Report**

### **Human Resources Committee**

**Date of meeting: Wednesday 24 September 2025**

**Report by:** Emily Cordwell, HR Adviser

**Report title:** HR Q1 Stats 25 -26

**Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);**

**Summary** – For members to consider the Human Resources Management Report for Quarter 1 which covers April – June 2025

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HR Committee**

- a) To consider the Human Resources Management report for Quarter 1 (April– June 2025) and provide any comments to the HR Adviser regarding the content or formatting of the report.**

#### **1.0 Proposal(s)**

- 1.1 Members are invited to consider the Human Resources (HR) Management report for Quarter 1 (April– June 2025)

#### **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 Revised format following recommendations of HRC

#### **3.0 Reason(s)**

- 3.1 For members to consider the quarterly statistics on:
  - Sickness
  - Vacancies
  - Recruitment and Retention
  - Learning and Development
  - Health and Safety

#### **4.0 Implications/Consultations**

## **Community Safety**

No

## **Data Protection**

No

## **Equalities**

The data shows that East Herts Council employs a diverse workforce with some areas of overrepresentation.

## **Environmental Sustainability**

No

## **Financial**

No

## **Health and Safety**

Health and Safety statistics and safety committee minutes provided.

## **Human Resources**

## **Human Rights**

No

## **Legal**

No

## **Specific Wards**

No

## **5.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material**

## **Contact Member**

**Councillor Joseph Dumont**

Executive Members for Corporate Services

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**Report Author**

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# HR Committee Report for Q1 2025/26

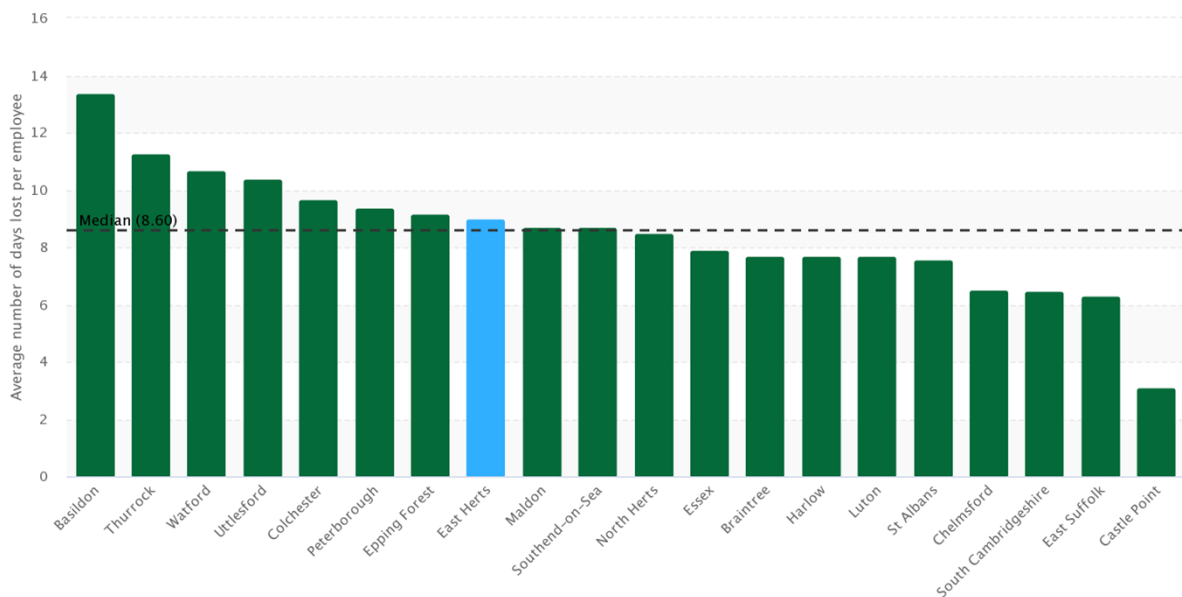
Note: As of 30 June 2025, East Herts Council employed 278.14 fte and had a headcount of 311.

## 1.0 Sickness Absence

At the end of Quarter 1, the total number of sickness days taken was 742.15 full time equivalent (FTE) days. Of these, 257.7 FTE days (34.7%) were due to short term sickness and 484.45 FTE days (65.3%) were due to long term sickness. The percentage of time lost due to short term sickness is 4.6% and the percentage of time lost due to long term sickness is 8.7% which equates to a total percentage lost time of 13.3%.

At the end of Quarter 1, the number of FTE days absent per FTE was an average of 0.93 days.

The benchmarking data for Q1 is not currently available. See graph below which compares average number of days lost per employee up to 31 March 2025.



## Short term sickness

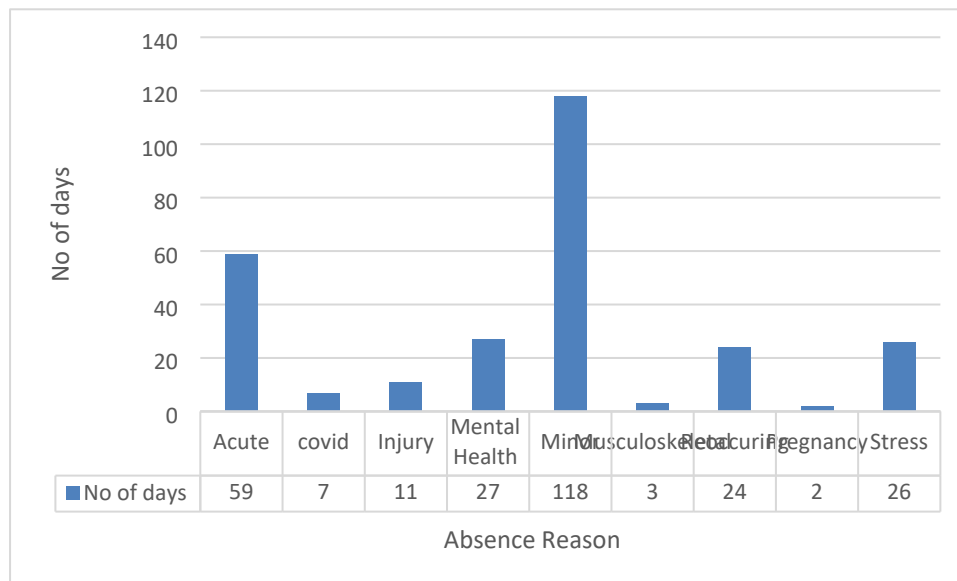
Absences of less than four weeks are considered to be short term sickness absence.

51 employees (16% of the total headcount) had short term sickness absence during Q1 totalling 257.7 FTE days.

At the end of Q1, the number of short-term FTE days absent per FTE was an average of 0.93 days.

Short term absences that meet out trigger points are handled through our Absence Management Policy processes.

See graph below that highlights the number of days recorded by absence reason:



## Long term sickness

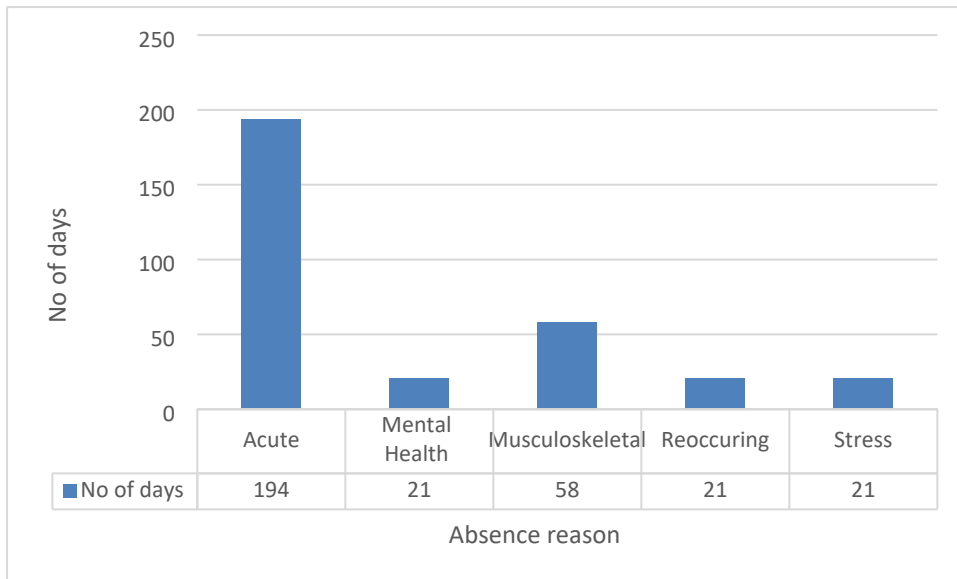
Absences in excess of 4 weeks / 28 consecutive calendar days are considered to be long term sickness absence.

9 employees (2.9 % of the total headcount) had long term sickness absence during Q1 totalling 484.45 FTE days.

At the end of Q1, the number of long-term FTE days absent per FTE was 0.93 days.

All long-term absence is being managed with HR staff supporting the employee and manager to help get the member of staff back to work. We use our Occupational Health Service and Employee Assistance Programme to support this process, they provide helpful guidance and recommendations to help us accommodate return to work for the member of staff.

See graph below that highlights the number of days recorded by absence reason:



## 2.0 Recruitment and Retention

### Recruitment

Our biggest recruitment challenge this quarter were qualified Environmental Health Technical Officers. The team are currently reviewing the structure, with a focus on developing career progression opportunities to both attract new talent and retain staff. We are also reviewing the new environmental health apprenticeships that are being developed by East Suffolk Council as a possible future avenue for recruitment.

We have an agreement with LinkedIn to market our top 5 roles, and boost any roles that are difficult to recruit, this has helped with attraction. We continually review our offers against the market and adapt what we can given our financial constraints.

All recruitment requests must be accompanied by a business case and signed off by a panel. This ensures that we challenge ourselves to consider if we need to replace roles like for like, should we use the opportunity to reshape roles, do we really need the role etc.

There have been 9 new starters in quarter 1:

- 5 in BEAM
- 1 in Leadership Team (Finance)
- 2 in Revenue & Benefits
- 1 in Legal

## Vacancies

As of 30 June 2025, we had 56 posts unfilled for a variety of reasons. This represents 15.3% of posts.

These are the main reasons posts are vacant:

- Being held as a service review pending (*29 posts*)
- To be deleted following service review (*3 posts*)
- In the process of being recruited to (*21 posts*)
- Recruitment successful, job offer out but new member of staff has not yet started. (*3 posts*)

It takes almost twice as long to recruit to a post as it takes for someone to resign and work their notice which often account for the high vacancy number. Business critical posts get covered by agency / interim staff or through acting up arrangements that also offer staff development opportunities.

## Retention – Turnover

There were 8 leavers in Q1 giving a turnover rate for the quarter of 2.6%. The turnover rate predicted for the annual period 2025/26 is 10.3%. This is lower than our target of 14% and the national average across all sectors of 15%.

Reasons for leaving in Q1 included: To achieve promotion, retirement, changes in career, and for personal reasons.

The leavers were in the following teams:

1 in Beam  
2 in Revenue and Benefits  
2 in Communications, Strategy and Policy  
1 in Legal and Democratic services  
2 in Planning

## Recruitment and retention related activity planned for Q2

- We will be reviewing our Market Forces Supplement taking into account salary survey data, information from relevant professional organisations
- We will be looking at utilising the levy to support level 7 apprenticeships before the funding ends in 2026.

## 3.0 Learning and Development

The learning needed in our organisation is delivered by e-learning, one to one training or group-based learning remotely or in person.



HR is responsible for the corporate training budget, including professional training. We have created a training needs analysis which highlights Statutory learning, CPD requirements and skill/knowledge development which has been used to scope the annual training plan.

We are utilising the apprenticeship levy, with 3 officers currently completing a level 7 qualification, 1 officer completing level 4 qualification and 1 officer completing a level 3 qualification.

The annual mandatory e-learning training programme has continued for employees to complete in line with their performance review. These courses include Data Protection, Health and Safety, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion and Safeguarding. A mandatory course on preventing sexual harassment has now been added to ensure compliance with the new statutory requirements and increase the safety of all of our staff at work and in work related activities.

In addition to our mandatory programmes there are many other programmes that our staff can access to increase their knowledge and skills. We have renewed our contract with our e-learning provider for a further year.

#### **Learning and Development planned for the next quarter:**

- Start to develop a simple train the trainer workshop for subject matter experts to enable them to develop their colleagues.
- We will be running a workshop for Neurodiversity in the workplace, covering what neurodiversity means, sensory processing and functioning differences and provide managers with practical adaptations they can implement.
- We will have further Mental Health First Aid refresher training to those who wish to continue in their MHFA role

## **4.0 Health and Safety**

### **Accidents, Incidents and Near Misses**

#### **Background Information**

Accidents are classified into two categories:

#### **Non-Reportable Accidents**

These are minor accidents such as cuts, minor contact injuries e.g., walking into the corner of a desk etc, slips, trips. Staff are encouraged to report these and can use the online self-service portal MyView or completing an accident report from the accident report pad. These are designated form BI510 accidents.

East Herts Council operates predominately back-office functions in a low-risk environment, the determination of low risk is based on the Health and Safety Executives definition, therefore, a high rate of accidents is not expected to occur.

## **Reportable Accidents**

The **Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013**, often known by the acronym **RIDDOR**, is a 2013 statutory instrument of the Parliament of the United Kingdom. It regulates the statutory obligation to report deaths, injuries, diseases and "dangerous occurrences".

Types of incidents that are reportable under RIDDOR?

- accidents resulting in the death of any person.
- accidents resulting in an absence from work over 7 days (excluding the day of the accident) e.g., degloving injury.
- non-fatal accidents requiring hospital treatment to non-workers. E.g., anyone not employed by the council.
- dangerous occurrences e.g., collapse, overturning or failure of any load-creating part of lifting equipment, failure of any closed vessel or associated pipework forming part of pressure systems, collapse of scaffold this is not a definitive list.
- Reportable diseases under RIDDOR are listed in regulations 8 and 9 of the regulations. Types of occupational diseases include occupational dermatitis, hand-arm vibration syndrome, occupational cancer etc.

Any reportable accident, incident or near miss arising from construction work e.g., building sites, new builds, demolition work or developments fall under the purview of the Health and Safety Executive.

## **Incidents and Near Miss Events**

An incident is a broader term for any event, planned or unplanned, positive, or negative, that may or may not result in harm, damage, or injury. In essence, an accident is a specific type of incident that leads to a negative outcome.

Examples of incidents include, but are not limited to the effects of abusive, threatening behaviours, receiving obscene, aggressive, or threatening phone calls, correspondence, effects on the health of an individual arising from illness, health exacerbated by environmental factors e.g. excessive heat, air quality, extremes of temperature.

Colleagues are encouraged to report incidents and near misses in order to identify patterns and themes that allow the organisation to implement measures and controls to protect employee health and wellbeing. A new table has been introduced to report the number of Incident and Near Miss events occurring.

The Council also has the Employee Assistance scheme that offers confidential counselling, advice and support for any person affected by an incident, accident or near miss event.

Further support will also be available through the re-launched Mental Health First Aid provision following the successful participation in a 13-week Mental Health skills bootcamp.

### Work Related Accidents

	Q4 24/25	Q1 25/26	Target 25/26
H&S Employee Work Related Accidents ( <b>Not</b> reportable to the HSE under RIDDOR 2013)	1	0	3
H&S Employee Work Related Accidents (Reportable to the HSE under RIDDOR 2013)	0	0	0

### Work Related Incidents, Near Misses

	Q4 24/25	Q1 25/26	Target 25/26
H&S Employee Work Related <b>Incidents</b> ( <b>Not</b> reportable to the HSE under RIDDOR 2013)	4	0	3
H&S Employee Work Related <b>Incidents</b> (Reportable to the HSE under RIDDOR 2013)	0	0	0
H&S Employee Work Related <b>Near Miss</b> Events	0	0	0

### Contract Management and Responsibility

The Council have outsourced a number of high-level services from waste collection and recycling, street cleansing, grounds maintenance and leisure services and employs contractors for capital projects.

However, health and safety responsibilities cannot be passed from one party to another by a contract. If something goes wrong the Council can and will be held accountable by the HSE and the Courts.

The Council therefore ensures that contractors have appropriate health and safety policies in place, monitor contractor performance and safety standards. In order to ensure that services are delivered safely the officers with contract oversight:

- Convene meetings to review performance.
- Monitor complaints received and undertake investigations.
- Undertake onsite inspections and reviews.

Heads of Service with responsibility for these functions are responsible for ensuring that effective management controls are implemented



**Minutes of Safety Committee**  
**Wednesday 07<sup>th</sup> May 2025**  
**Meeting Room 1.15 / Microsoft Teams**

**Present: EHDC** Peter Dickinson (PD), Jackie Bruce (JB), John Earley (JE), Dominique Kingsbury (DK), Emily Tickridge (ET), Paul Thomas-Jones (P T-J), Ezra O'Neill (E O'N),

**Present: High Oak Business Centre** Emily Pomroy (EP)

**Apologies:** Ian Sharratt (IS), Rowan Perrin (RP), Chloe Hipwood-Norton (C H-N), Jeanette Lowden (JL), Ben Wood (BW), Geoff Hayden (GH), Laura Lightfoot (LL), Steve Sargent (SS)

**Introductions / Announcements:**

(PD) Welcomed Emily Pomroy from High Oak Business Centre and invited the Committee to introduce themselves.

**1.0 Minutes of the last meeting**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 05<sup>th</sup> February 2025 were agreed as an accurate record.

**Action:** No action required.

**2.0 Matters Arising from the minutes.**

**6.3 Parking Services**

(DK) / (E O'N) reported that modifications at Northgate End have been made and that there haven't been any recent episodes of anti-social behaviour.

**Action:** No action required.

**3.0 Regulatory and Legislative Changes**

There have been no regulatory or legislative changes.

Several changes are expected in October 2025

**Action:** Brief next Safety Committee on the introduction of the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025 (Martyr's Law)

#### 4.0 High Oak

(EP) explained High Oaks operating model to the rest of the Committee and that the move into old Wallfields has been successful with expected IT snagging issues.

(PD) asked (EP) to advise users of Old Wallfields to direct smokers to the designated smoking area.

(EP) asked how responses are made from the Facilities Management Helpdesk.

High Oak will provide first aid supplies and materials. (EP) informed the Committee that users of old Wallfields are given an induction and information pack explaining evacuation procedures, routes and assembly points.

Committee have requested details of the terms of the lease to understand what access has been agreed with High Oak and what they cannot access.

**Action:** (PD) to re-send request for safety information to High Oak, enquire about details of the lease and speak to FM Helpdesk.

#### 4.0 Accidents, Incidents and Near Misses

There was 1 non-reportable, minor accident reported between 08<sup>th</sup> February and 02<sup>nd</sup> May 2025, this was not related to any system or procedural failure and no further action was required.

6 Incidents were reported in this period relating to feeling unwell due to poor air quality in the ground floor office space occupied by Planning and Housing and Health with high CO2 levels being recorded.

**Action:** (GH) to update Committee on ventilation work progress

## **5.0 Health and Safety Inspections and Contract Compliance**

### **5.1 Shared Waste Service – Buntingford Depot**

Due to the new shared waste service contract commencing on the 01<sup>st</sup> May the Contract Managers were unable to attend.

Veolia are now the sole occupant on site with Glendale and APCOA relocating to new premises.

(PD) advised that (GH) will be arranging a deep clean of the tipping hall as part of the dilapidation handover to Veolia.

**Action:** No action to be taken.

### **5.2 Parks, Open Spaces and Play Areas**

(IS) and (RP) unable to attend. No update.

Glendale have now occupied Amwell End site.

**Action:** No action required.

## **6.0 Parking Services**

(DK) presented a sample of car park inspection reports undertaken by (E O’N) highlighting repair, maintenance and street cleansing items, some of which are outstanding actions to be undertaken.

(DK) expressed concerns that the Parking Team are not receiving updates on the status of these repair items from Property Services or Facilities Management and questioned if the inspections are being read.

(DK) emphasised the need to have repairs undertaken in a timely manner and the consequences of not carrying out repairs could lead to liability claims, reputational damage escalated through social media and financial damages.

(PD) and (E O’N) are working on improving the inspection process.

The process currently follows the following stages:

- Parking carries out inspections, recording faults, defect, damage etc. Unsafe areas are identified using barriers, cones and barrier tape.
- Reports are circulated to Property, Operations, Insurance, Health and Safety and others.
- If it is identified that the cause for the fault or defect is a tree root causing surface displacement what is the next step?
  - The Operations Team and Property Team should attend the site to obtain advice on the best approach to rectify the fault, defect etc.
  - If any action to remove the root is likely to cause harm or damage to the tree an action plan and costs needs to be drawn up, especially if the cost of carrying out repair work exceeds the budget available to Property.

(DK) advised that the top level of Gascoyne Way, Multi-Storey car park has a degrading surface and water ingress that affects the lower levels, long term this could lead to structural integrity issues and an unsightly appearance.

(DK) suggests having a structural integrity survey carried out.

(DK) has also advised that Kibes Lane needs resurfacing

(E O’N) Reported that the testing of the fire alarm system at Northgate End is now undertaken and scheduled, having spoken to the contractor monitoring the site he has been informed that the fire control panel equipment is faulty and not the correct equipment for the car park. When the alarm panel shows as out of service any fault disables the system.

(E O’N) Reported that water ingress from the commercial premises above Jackson Square car park has eroded the fireproof paint on the support columns

(DK) also raised concerns regarding the level of cleanliness in the car park and does not feel that the Council are getting a good level of service.

Committee agreed that this issue needs to be escalated.

**Actions:** Agreed that an action plan needs to be produced to identify solutions after specialist advice has been sought.



Communication between Parking, Property and Parks and Open Spaces need to be improved so issues are not overlooked, all decisions must be recorded, especially if a decision is taken to withdraw an area or take no action.

Committee recommends having a process flow chart to identify who deals with what aspect of car park repairs and maintenance.

Committee recommends that due to funding elements it may be useful for the Heads of Service responsible for the car parks and finance to convene a meeting with the relevant officers to discuss funding for large scale works. This would include the officers from Parking, Property, Operations, Health and Safety and Section 106 funding officer.

(DK) to report any issues concerning cleaning to the Shared Waste Service Contract Manager.

(E O’N) to discuss with Jackson Square Management and the Councils Estate and Asset Management Team on the responsibilities for the fabric and structure of Jackson Square car park.

## **7.0 Capital Project updates/EHC Contracts - Health & Safety Compliance and Management**

### Swimming Pools and Gyms – Sport and Leisure Management (SLM)

(ET) Reported that contracts are now in the process of being terminated in respect to Leventhorpe and Fanshawe Pools with Ward Freman to follow.

No safety concerns or issues raised.

**Action:** None

### BEAM Hertford

(LL) sent the following:

- We are now underway with a Venue Security RA – part of compliance with the new Martyn’s Law – Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025.
  - Meeting with Peter & Steve to review next steps.
- Fire Service have attended for two team training sessions to support FOH/tech/volunteers with existing knowledge.
  - Gerda box has been updated with revised contact details and site plans.
- Any accident reports have been sent to Peter – no major injuries.

**Action:** None

Old River Lane, Bishop’s Stortford

(BW) – Nothing to report.

Glendale – Grounds Maintenance

**Action:** No action required.

Contract Compliance

**Action:**

## **8.0 Property – Premise’s Maintenance and Repairs**

(JE)

**Action:** (GH) / (JE) to arrange for adjustment to be carried out. CO2 levels will be monitored and if levels are not reducing it may be necessary to retrofit the passive air vents.

(GH) Advised that the following will be undertaken.  
Install 3 x inline extractor fans and 6 lengths of worm ducting that will connect to the vents either end of the corridor that will extract fresh air and recirculate into the office area.

Quote received for work and in the process of appointing contractor to undertake.

## **9.0 Facilities Management**

Furniture and equipment from the Rivers Suite has been relocated to the second floor, East wing.

Old files and plans have been brought over from Buntingford Depot for checking and disposal.

There are plans to reinstate the IT training room, East wing, second floor as a meeting room once it has been cleared and cleaned.

There are two new meeting rooms available on the first floor, west wing.

**Action:**

## **10.0 List of Issues**

### **10.1 Employee side (UNISON)**

**Action:** None

### **10.2. Management side**

(PD) advised Committee that the Access Audit of Wallfields was carried out

**Action:** Update Committee on progress.

(PD) advised Committee that the new inspection forms are ready for testing, and he will be speaking to respective teams to arrange for the forms to be tested. He has spoken to the Parking Team initially and will be helping to test the forms.

(PD) updated Committee on the completion of the first stage of Mental Health First Aid training and plans to embed a re-launch of the mental health support at East Herts.

One of the issues is the provision of a 'safe space' in which colleagues can discuss any mental health concerns with a mental health first aider, it is therefore essential to accommodate this provision when looking at how we manage and utilise space at Wallfields.

## **11.0 Health and Safety Training**

PD has been asked to consider options for arranging training for managers on the process of preparing and implementing Risk Assessments.

**Action:** Update Committee on progress.

## 12.0 AOB

(DK) Raised a matter concerning an Ice Cream Van operating at Hartham – He expressed concern that the vehicle idles continually expelling fumes and this is not a good advert for the Councils environmental agenda. (DK) believes this was an arrangement managed by Operations Parks and Open Spaces Team.

**Action:** As an Operational matter, Committee has referred to (IS) for attention. (IS) to provide feedback.

(DK) advised the Committee that APCOA have requested if it is possible to have additional space for one of their officers to carry out administrative tasks. They asked if it is possible to have additional space in reception exclusively for their use. Committee advised (DK) that Customer Services are unlikely to agree due to restricted space, Committee advised (DK) that interview room 2 in lower reception could be used by APCOA when not in use. (GH) may have alternative suggestions.

**Action:** (PD) to discuss with Customer Services / (GH) to comment.

(PD) advised Committee that the Access Audit of Wallfields has taken place and the report from the assessor received. The report included Old Wallfields building and a separate report produced for High Oak which has been sent to them.

The rest of the report is being reviewed by the HR Strategic Lead and the Health and Safety Adviser.

**Action:** The report will be submitted to Leadership Team for consideration and will then be shared with Safety Committee.

**Meeting ended:** 12.00pm

**Date of Next Meeting:** 06 August 2025

**Time:** 10.00am

**Location:**

**Meeting Room 1.15**

**Microsoft Teams:**

**[Join the meeting now](#)**

**Meeting ID:** 396 937 865 237 4

**Passcode:** Sw3g7TL3

# Agenda Item 6

## **East Herts Council Report**

### **Human Resources Committee**

**Date of meeting:** Wednesday 24 September 2025

**Report by:** Human Resources Adviser

**Report title:** Annual Equalities Report 24/25

**Ward(s) affected:** None

### **Summary**

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR** Human Resources Committee

- (a) The Annual Equalities Report 2024/25 be noted.
- (b) The recommendations set out in the 2025/26 action plan are considered and approved.

#### **1.0 Proposal(s)**

- 1.1 Human Resources Committee are invited to consider the Annual Equalities Report 2024/25 and approve the 2025/26 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 9 September 2025.

### **3.0 Reason(s)**

3.1 This report underscores the council's legal obligation under the Equality Act 2010 and the Specific Duties Regulations 2011, which require public sector bodies with over 150 employees to publish annual data on workforce equality. Compliance with these regulations is crucial for several reasons:

- Regular publication of equality data ensures that the council's commitment to diversity and inclusion is visible to all stakeholders, fostering trust and confidence in its operations.
- By publishing detailed equality data, the council can be held accountable for its performance in promoting equal opportunities and addressing inequalities within its workforce.
- The report aims to identify and address any disparities in the workforce, ensuring that all employees have equal access to opportunities and are treated fairly, regardless of their protected characteristics.

### **4.0 Options**

4.1 By implementing improved data collection and analysis methods, the council can ensure accurate and comprehensive data that inform better decision-making. Alongside this, developing and implementing targeted initiatives will address identified inequalities, enhance recruitment processes, and provide necessary training to promote an inclusive culture. This integrated approach will not only meet legal compliance but also actively support and enhance workforce diversity and inclusion.

### **5.0 Risks**

- 5.1 Non-compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and the Specific Duties Regulations 2011 could lead to legal sanctions, financial penalties, and damage to the council's reputation.
- 5.2 If the council fails to collect and analyse equality data effectively, it may miss critical insights needed to address disparities and promote inclusion. Inadequate data can result in ineffective equality initiatives, perpetuating existing inequalities and undermining the council's commitment to fairness.
- 5.3 Inadequate handling of equality issues can damage the council's reputation, both internally among staff and externally among the public and stakeholders. Demonstrating a strong commitment to equality through robust data collection and proactive measures is essential for maintaining a positive reputation.

## **6.0 Implications/Consultations**

### **Community Safety**

No - No implications for community safety have been identified. The report's focus is on workforce equality, which does not directly impact community safety measures.

### **Data Protection**

Yes – the report contains sensitive personal data. To protect individuals' privacy, data has not been included in sections where small sample sizes could lead to the identification of individuals. This approach ensures compliance with data protection laws while maintaining the integrity of the report.

### **Equalities**

Yes – the whole report is dedicated to equalities. It provides a comprehensive analysis of the council's workforce in terms of the protected characteristics defined by the Equality Act 2010. The report



aims to identify any disparities and recommend actions to promote equality and diversity within the council.

### **Environmental Sustainability**

No - No implications for environmental sustainability have been identified. The report's focus is on workforce equality, and it does not address environmental sustainability issues.

### **Financial**

No - No additional major financial implications have been identified. The report focuses on the analysis of workforce equality data and does not propose actions that would have a direct financial impact on the council's budget outside of staff development and training budgets and benefits from operational upgrades to systems and processes.

### **Health and Safety**

No – No implications for health and safety have been identified. The report does not address health and safety issues directly, as its primary focus is on workforce equality

### **Human Resources**

Yes – the report includes detailed information on equalities relating to staff. This encompasses recruitment, training, disciplinary actions, and staff turnover, providing insights into the council's efforts to promote diversity and inclusion within its workforce. The findings can inform HR policies and practices to enhance equality and support for all employees further.

### **Human Rights**

No direct implications for human rights have been identified. However, promoting equality within the workforce supports the broader human rights principle of non-discrimination

### **Legal**

Yes – public sector bodies with more than 150 employees are required by law to publish annual data on workforce equality. This legal requirement is intended to ensure transparency and accountability in promoting equality and diversity within public sector organisations.

### **Specific Wards**

No specific wards are affected by the report.

## **7.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material**

7.1 Please see Appendix A for the full report.

### **Contact Officer**

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### **Report Author**

Claire Kirby, Human Resources Officer


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# Staff Annual Equalities Report

2024/25



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# Contents

# Page

1.	Introduction	1
2.	Executive summary	2
3.	Achievements against July 2024–June 25 recommendations	5
4.	Employee profile	7
5.	Recruitment	14
6.	Disciplinary, grievance and probation	21
7.	Training	21
8.	Leavers	22
9.	Recommendations	28

# 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 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 2024/25.

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 2025 is broadly reflective of the profile of the working population in County 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 (72%:28%) compared to the working population of County (51.6%:48.4%), however this is common in the public sector and is further impacted at Council 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 Council 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 fewer employees under the age of 20 (0.3%) compared to Council residents (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 is significantly less than the Council residents with a disability (13.6%). It is worth noting however that people with a disability may be unfit to work.

## Recruitment

In 2024/25 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 and 30-39 age groups, from minority ethnic groups and applicants who are lesbian, gay or bisexual, when compared with the overall Council population.

The conversion from application to appointment is closely aligned for both females (54.5% to 57%) and for males (39.5% to 36.7%). There is an increase in the percentage of white applicants from application to appointment (64% to 86.1%) and a decrease in applicants from the 'Black African/Caribbean/Black British' (11.3% to 2.5%) and 'Asian/Asian British' ethnic groups (14% to 3.8%). However this is most likely due to the fact that we do get a significant number of applicants from abroad who not have the right to work in the UK so

their applications are automatically rejected. Despite this, the percentage of appointees in all of the ethnic minority groups is higher than the percentage of Council residents in these groups. In the 30-39 age group the percentage of applicants to appointees reduced whereas it stayed broadly the same or increased for the other age groups. 5% of applicants had a disability but none of the appointees had a declared disability (they were all unknown or declined to answer). The percentage of lesbian, gay or bisexual applicants increased from 6.8% at application to 8.9% at the appointment stage.

## **Discipline & Grievance and Training**

There were 2 formal probation cases, 1 grievance and 2 disciplinary cases in 2024/25. We are unable to report on equality data due to the possibility of the individuals being identifiable.

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

## **Leavers**

There was a higher of proportion of male leavers when compared to the overall employee profile. The percentage of leavers with a disability (7.1%) was also slightly higher than the percentage of employees with a disability (5%). There was a slightly higher percentage of leavers from the 'Asian/Asian British' group when compared to the percentage of employees from that group. The percentage of leavers in the 65-75 age groups was much higher than the percentage of employees in this age group but this is due to employees in this age group taking retirement. HR have reviewed exit questionnaires which has not indicated any concerns in any of these areas.

## **Recommendations**

All recommendations for 24/25 have either been progressed or rolled forward into 25/26.

## Achievements against July 2024 – June 25 staff & employment equality recommendations

Recommendation	Progress
<b>Employee Profile</b>	
To complete the required annual Gender Pay Gap report for 2025.	This was published in March 2025
Work collaboratively with colleagues in Housing & Health on the refreshed Equalities Strategy to ensure a best practice approach connecting staff and residents.	Due to staff absence in Housing & Health the Equalities Strategy has not progressed but HR will support this at the appropriate time.
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.	A message regarding this was included in Team Update.
<b>Recruitment</b>	
To work with the new ATS provider regarding the reporting options with the aim of getting equalities data at the shortlisting stage.	It is possible to get this data from the new ATS however we haven't been able to use it in this report as we only started using the new system in February 2025 and its not been possible to merge the data from the two systems in order to report on it. Therefore only the data from the old system is included in this report. For the 25/26 report it will be possible to include shortlisting data.
<b>Discipline, Grievance and Probation</b>	
Continue to monitor equalities data for all disciplinary, grievance and formal probationary cases.	This data has been collected and is contained within this report.
<b>Training</b>	



<p>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.</p>	<p>Staff are automatically reminded 12 months after they last completed the mandatory equality and diversity module to go back into the system and refresh their training. Service managers are currently completing a training needs analysis for their service areas. On the back of that analysis we will be prioritising statutory training needs in the first instance.</p>
<p>The HR &amp; OD Service manager is developing a strategy to further leverage our apprenticeship levy pot to grow our own approach with professional training and the development of officers into specialists or aspirant leaders. This will address both skills gaps and some equity gaps in the workforce.</p>	<p>We continue to use the levy pot to fund professional training and have employees in Revenues &amp; Benefits, Finance, and Planning accessing it currently. We are also looking into utilising level 7 apprenticeships before the funding ceases in January.</p>
<p>Continue to promote equalities-based events such as International Women’s Day. Maintain a sufficient bank of Mental Health First Aiders to support staff experiencing mental health issues and run refresher training.</p>	<p>We have continued to promote equalities-based events where possible.</p> <p>Refresher training for Mental Health First Aiders was delivered in February 2025.</p>

# Employee profile

## Introduction

This section provides information on employees employed by the council as at 31 March 2025. Casual employees, agency workers and contractors are not included. The total number of employees employed by the council as at 31 March 2025 was a headcount of 315. This has decreased slightly from 317 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

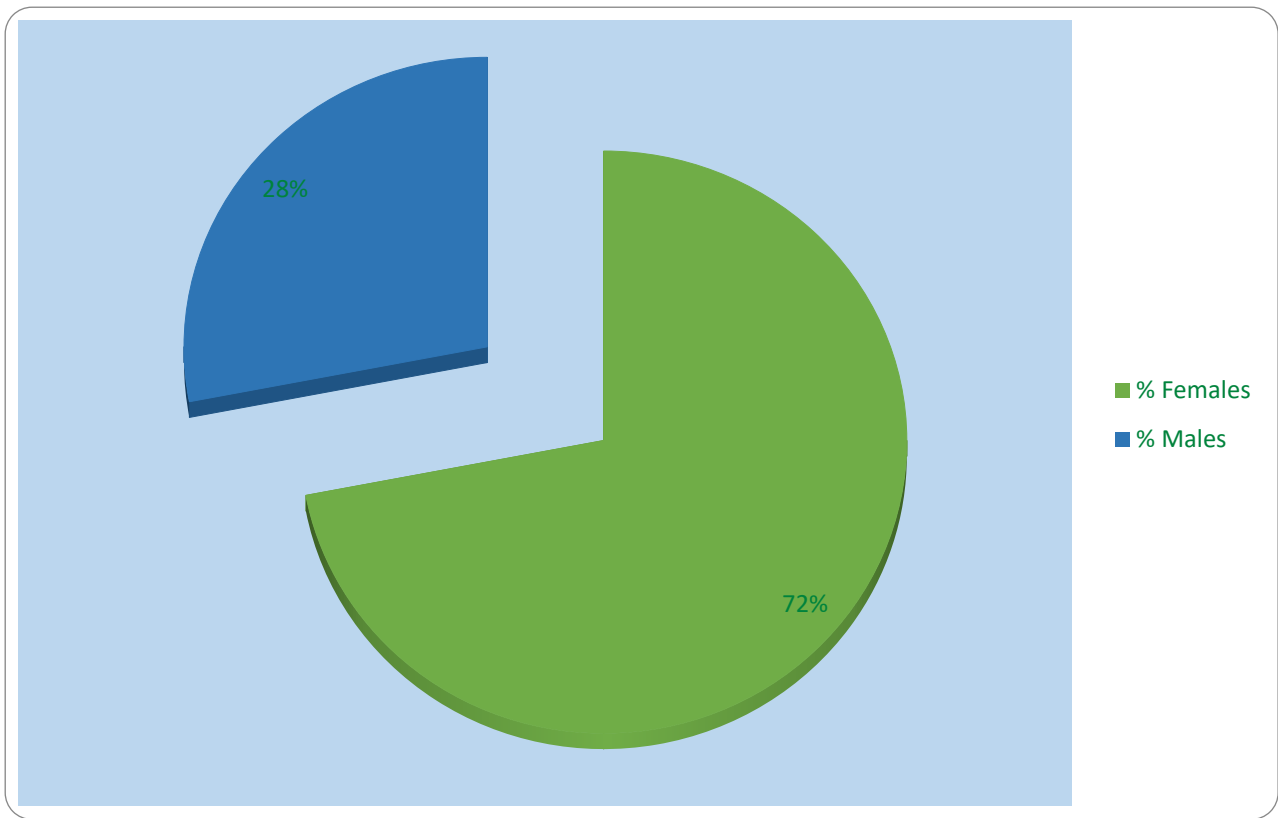
Although marital status data is recorded this is not reportable from the HR system.

Pregnancy is not a permanent characteristic but a state in time. 5 employees took maternity leave in 2024/25 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 has employed staff who have changed gender without any complaints being made.

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 Council residents) using the 2021 Census data.

## Sex (Gender)

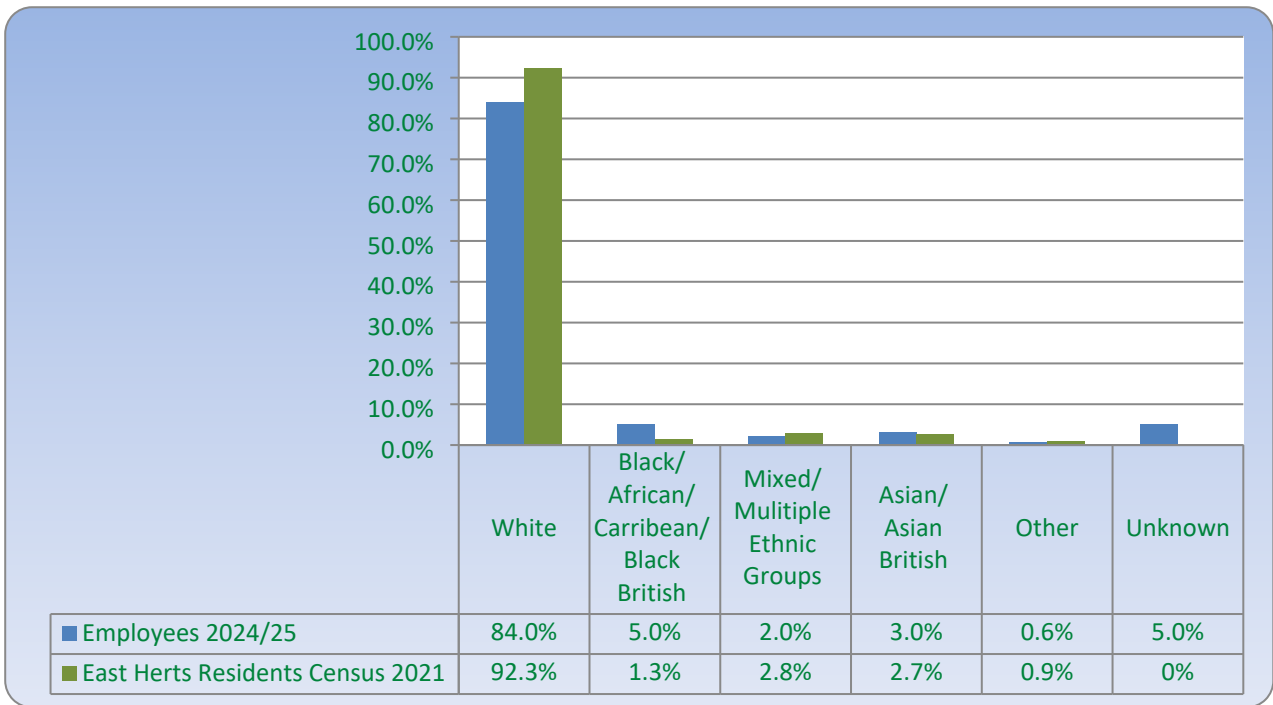


**Figure 1.0 Employee profile by sex**

Figure 1.0 shows the sex profile of employees at the council. The profile does not closely reflect that of the Council working population. The council has a considerably lower percentage of male employees (28%) compared to the overall male population in Council (48.4%) (Census 2021). The percentage of male employees has decreased slightly from 30% in 2024/25.

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

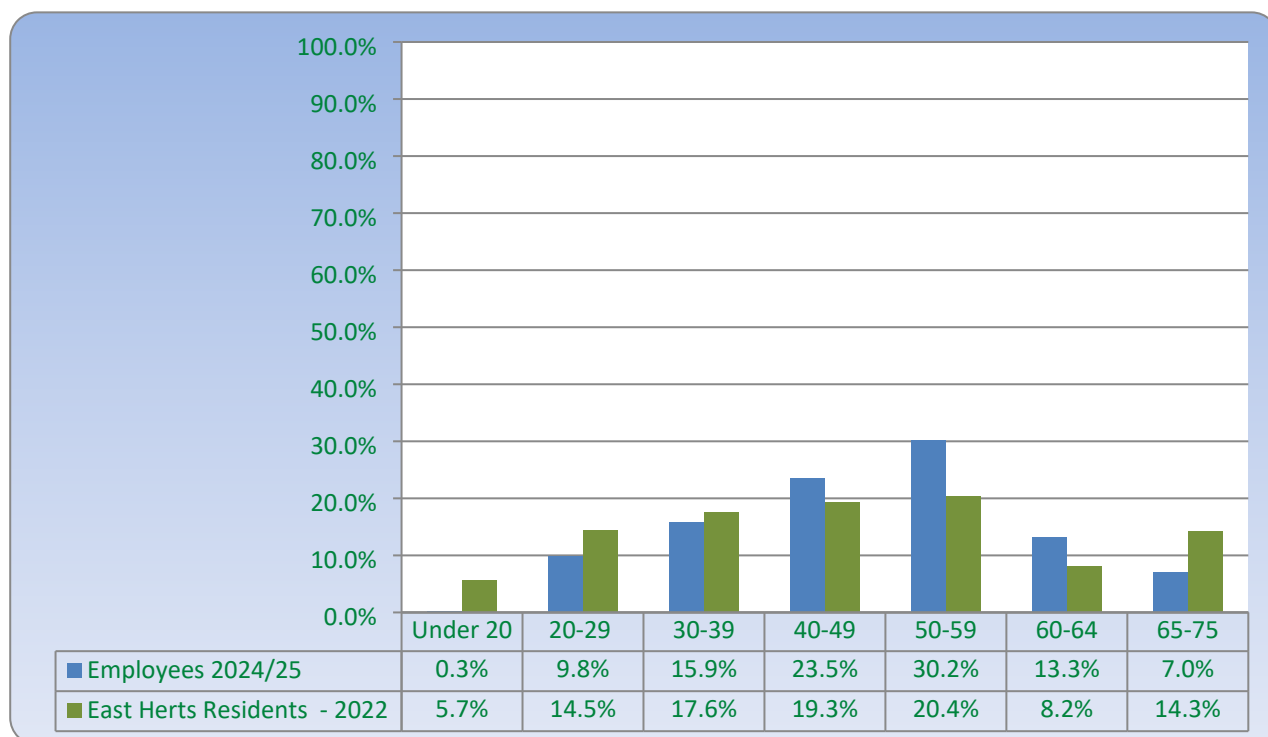


**Figure 2.0 Employee profile by ethnic origin**

Source: ONS Census 2021 - Ethnic Group by Measures

Figure 2.0 shows that the percentage of employees from most of the minority ethnic groups are above that of Council residents as at the Census in 2021. The percentage of white employees is 8% less than the Census but 5% of staff are unknown which will account for some of this.

## Age



**Figure 3.0 Employee profile by age**

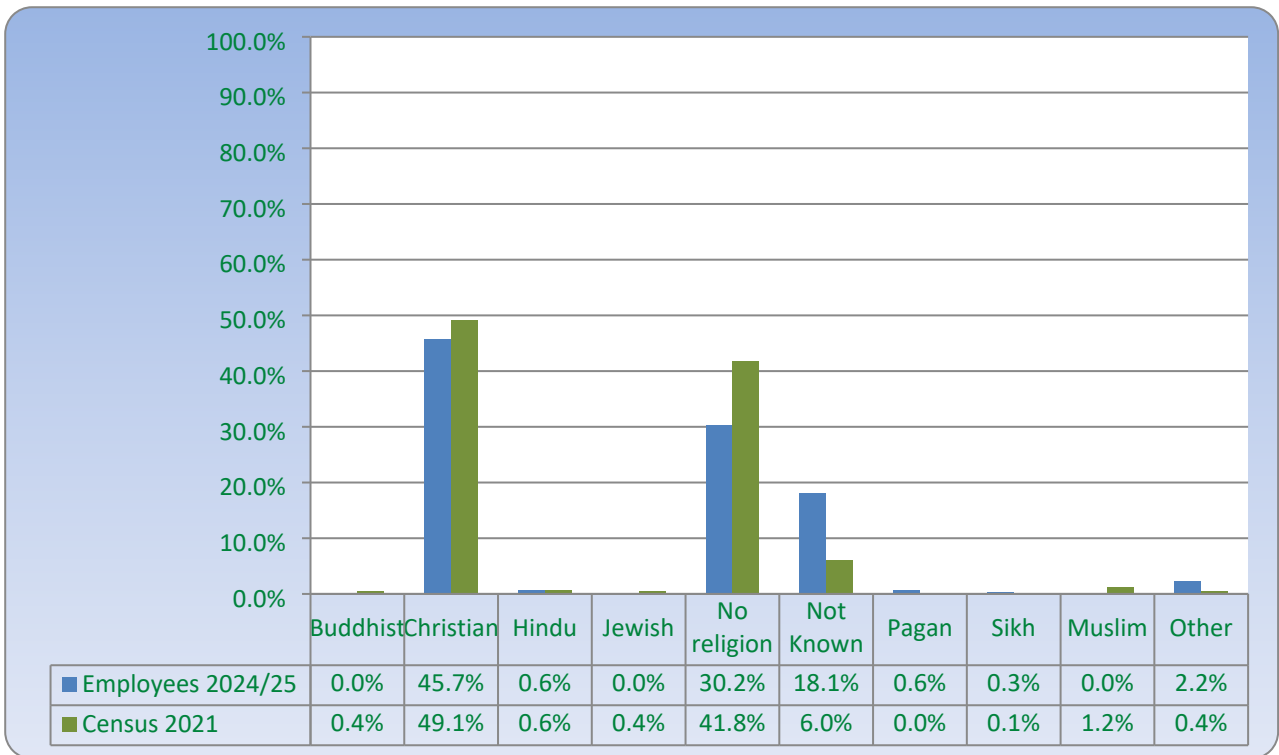
Source: Nomis Official Labour Market Statistics – Population Estimates in Council (2022)

*Note: The percentages shown for Council 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 Council residents. 43.5% of employees are in the 50-59 and 60-64 age groups compared to 28.6% of Council 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 percentages of staff in the different age groups has not substantially changed over the past 5 years.

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

## Religion and Belief

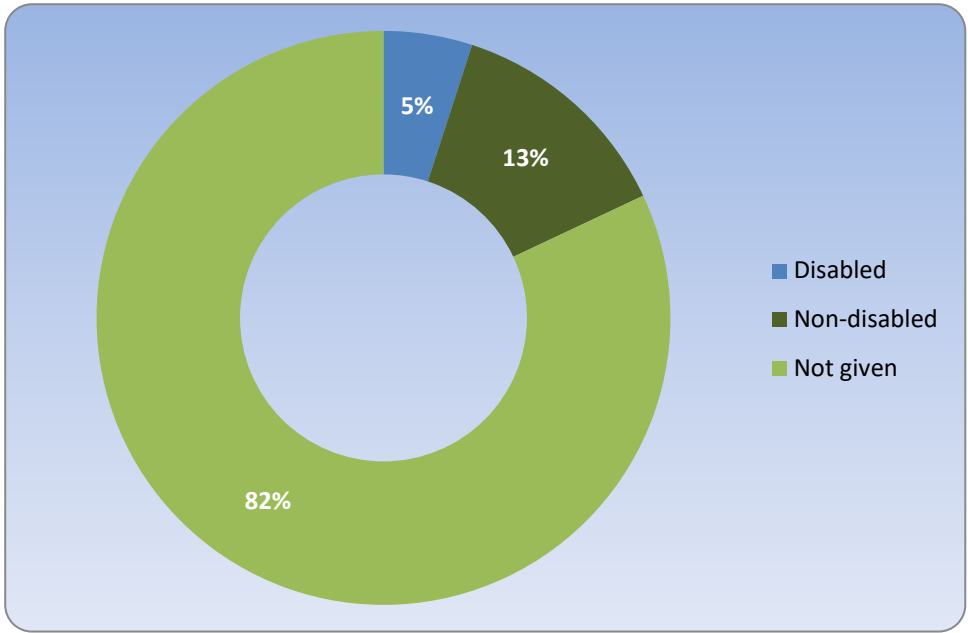


**Figure 4.0 Employee profile by religion and belief**

Source: ONS Census 2021 - Religion

Figure 4.0 shows that the religions and beliefs of employees are generally reflective of Council 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 (18.1%) 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.

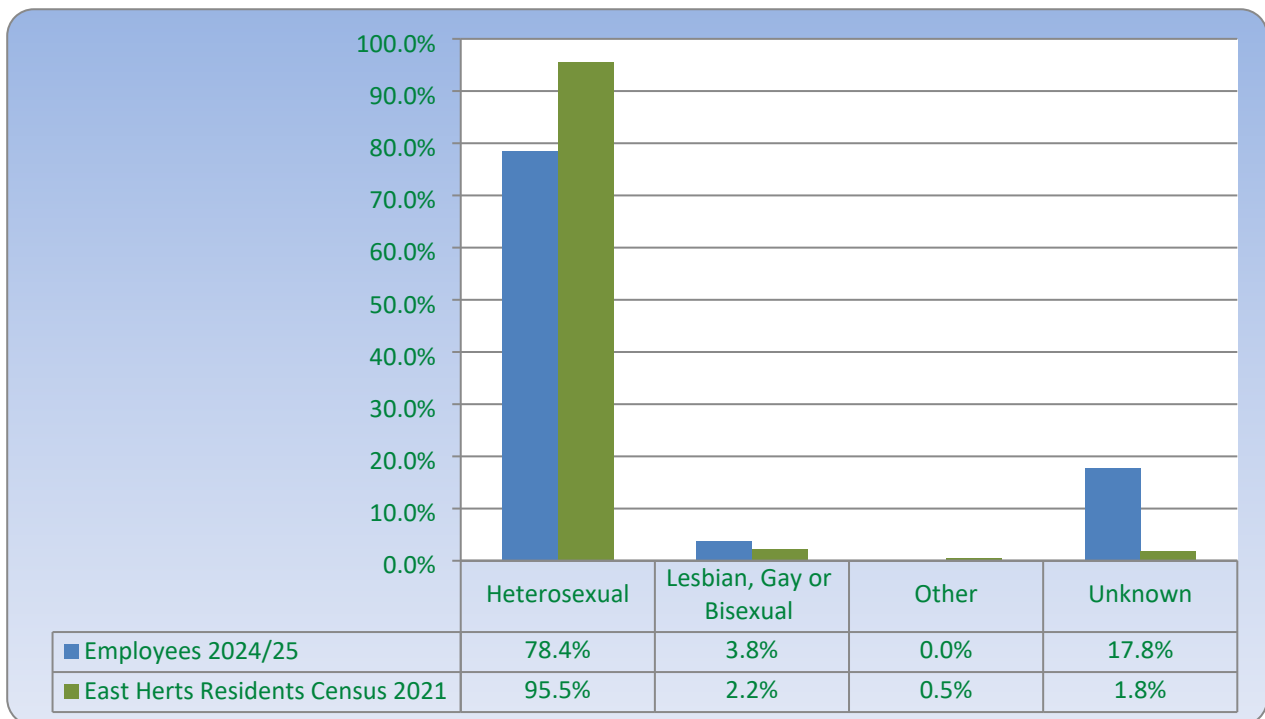
## Disability



**Figure 5.0 Employee profile by disability status**

Figure 5.0 shows that as at 31 March 2025, 5% of employees had a disability, which is one percentage point lower than 2023/24. This is significantly less than the Council 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 could close the gap. The council has a higher percentage of lesbian, gay and bisexual employees (3.8%) compared to residents in Council (2.2%). The percentage of lesbian, gay and bisexual employees has decreased slightly from 4.1% in 203/24 to 3.8% in 24/25.



# Recruitment

## Introduction

This section provides information on external applicants who applied for jobs at the council between 1 April 2024 and 31 January 2025. We moved to a new Applicant Tracking System (ATS) in February 2025 and it has not been possible to merge the data from the two systems in order to analyse due to there being different parameters (age groups for example) and descriptors (ethnicity groups for example). Therefore, we have only analysed the data from the old ATS (10 months' worth) and in 2025/26 we will have a full year's worth of data from the new system.

Data has been collected at the application and appointment stages. The council's old ATS did not allow us to report on equalities data for applicants at the shortlist stage as it only allows us to report on the stage that applicants are in at the point of running the report, and not the history. As stated above, we have now procured a new ATS which has better reporting functionality so from 25/26 we will be able to report on the shortlisting stage too. A total of 1612 external applicants applied for jobs with the council between 1 April 2024 and 31 January 2025 and 79 appointments were made.

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 may be 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.

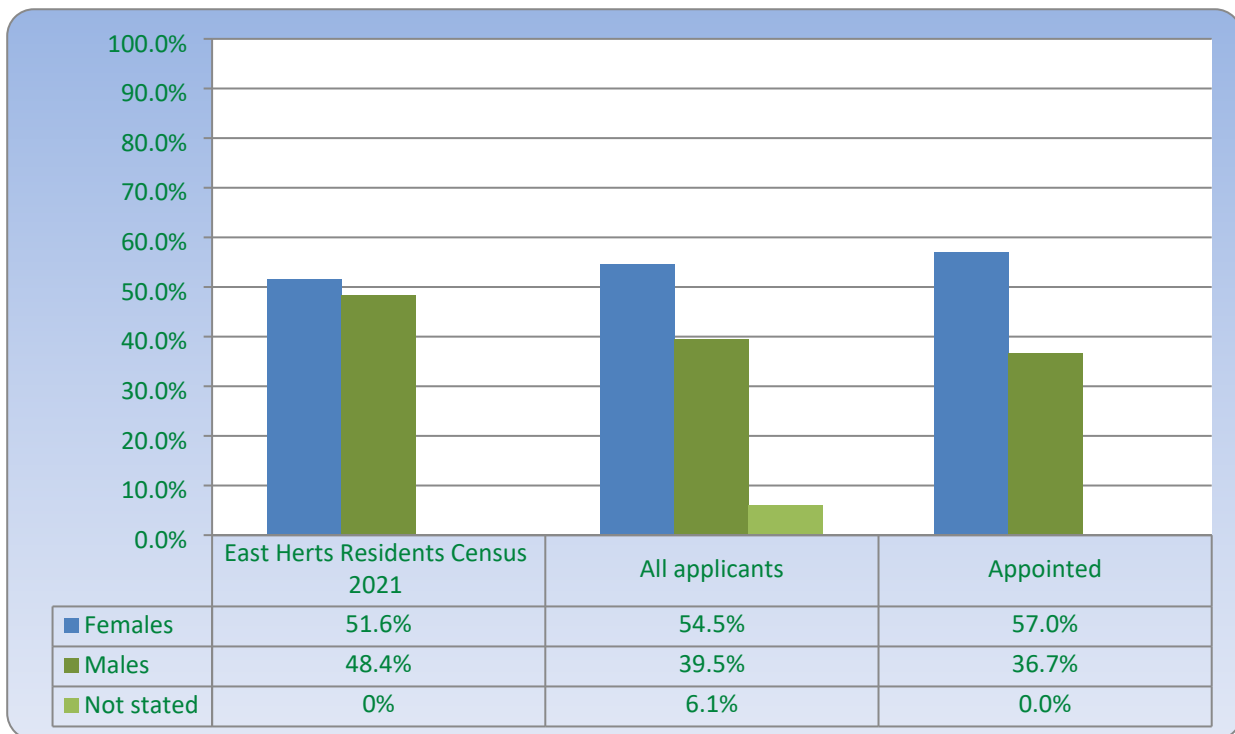
The data has been collected from the Equalities Monitoring Forms which are part of the application form. Although equalities data is mostly known for appointees we have chosen

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 appointment.

Comparisons have been drawn to the profile of the working population of Council 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 Council residents) using the 2021 Census data.

The equalities data of applicants being appointed has been compared to the data of all applicants to understand whether certain groups are being disadvantaged. The data will include applicants without the right to work in the UK and speculative applicants who do not meet the person specification. The ATS auto rejects applications who do not have the right to work so they are rejected at the application stage.

## Sex (Gender)



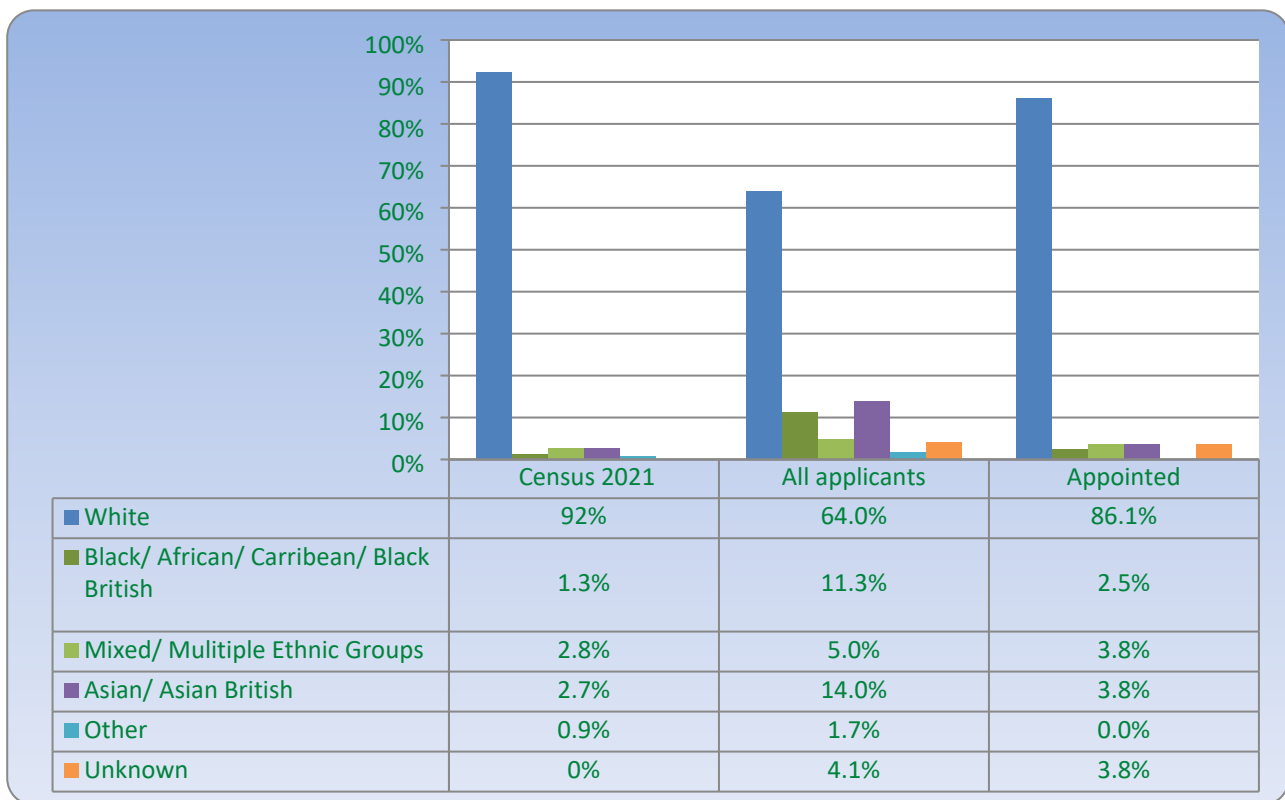
**Figure 7.0 Applicant profile by sex compared to the population of Council**

Source: Census 2021

Figure 7.0 shows that in 2024/25, there was a higher proportion of female applicants than male applicants: 54.5% of applicants were female and 39.5% were male compared to the profile of the working population of Council (51.6% and 48.4% respectively). However, as can be seen from the data, 6.1% of applicants did not disclose their gender.

Figure 7.0 shows that of the 79 applicants appointed, 57% were female and 36.7% were male. The conversion from application to appointment are closely aligned for both females (54.5% to 57%) and for males (39.5% to 36.7%).

## Ethnic origin



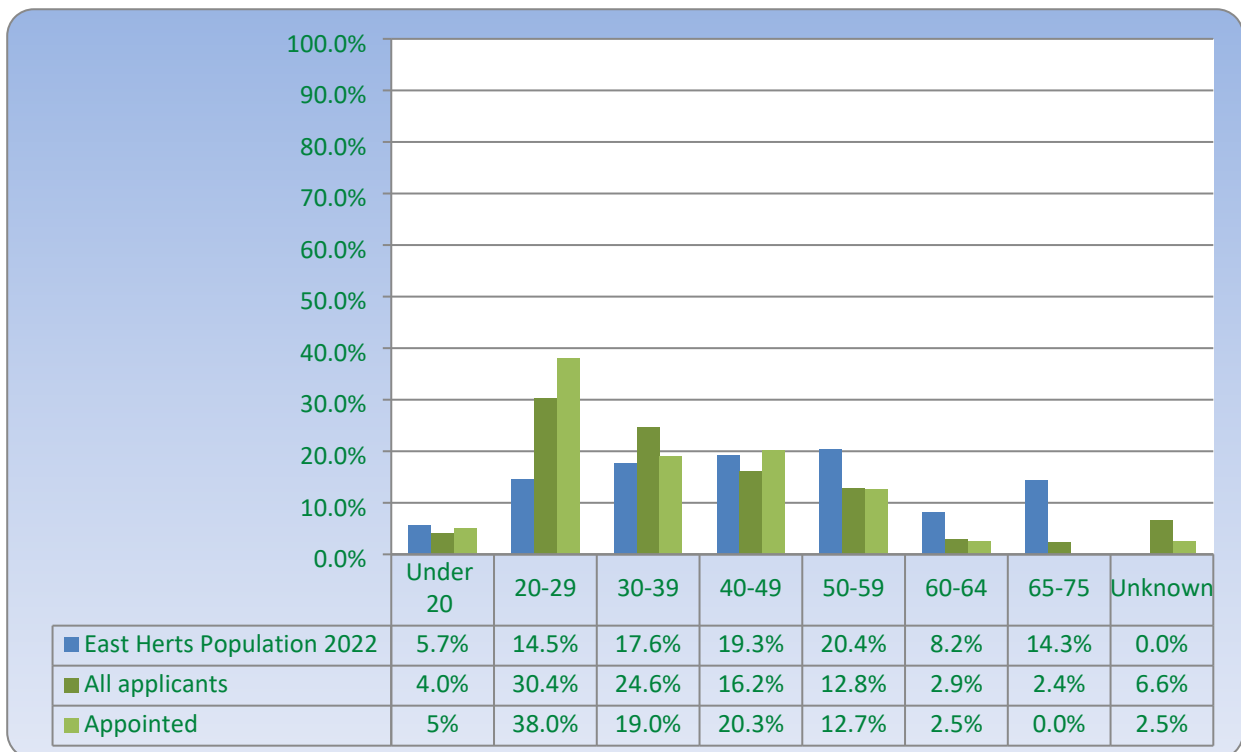
**Figure 8.0 Applicant profile by ethnic origin compared to the population of Council**

Source: ONS Census 2021 - Ethnic Group by Measures

Figure 8.0 shows that in 2024/25 the council attracted applicants from a diverse range of ethnic groups. There is an increase in the percentage of white applicants from application to appointment (64% to 86.1%) and a decrease in applicants from the 'Black African/Caribbean/Black British' (11.3% to 2.5%) and 'Asian/Asian British' ethnic groups (14% to 3.8%). However this is most likely due to the fact that we do get a significant number of applicants from abroad who do not have the right to work in the UK so their applications are automatically rejected. Many of these were from the Asian/Asian British ethnic group, which accounts for the bigger percentage drop in the number of applicants to appointments in this ethnic group. We do state clearly on our application form that we do not offer sponsorship for overseas applicants. Furthermore, the percentage of appointees in all of the ethnic minority groups is higher than the percentage of Council residents in these groups.

It should also be noted that Council 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 Council**

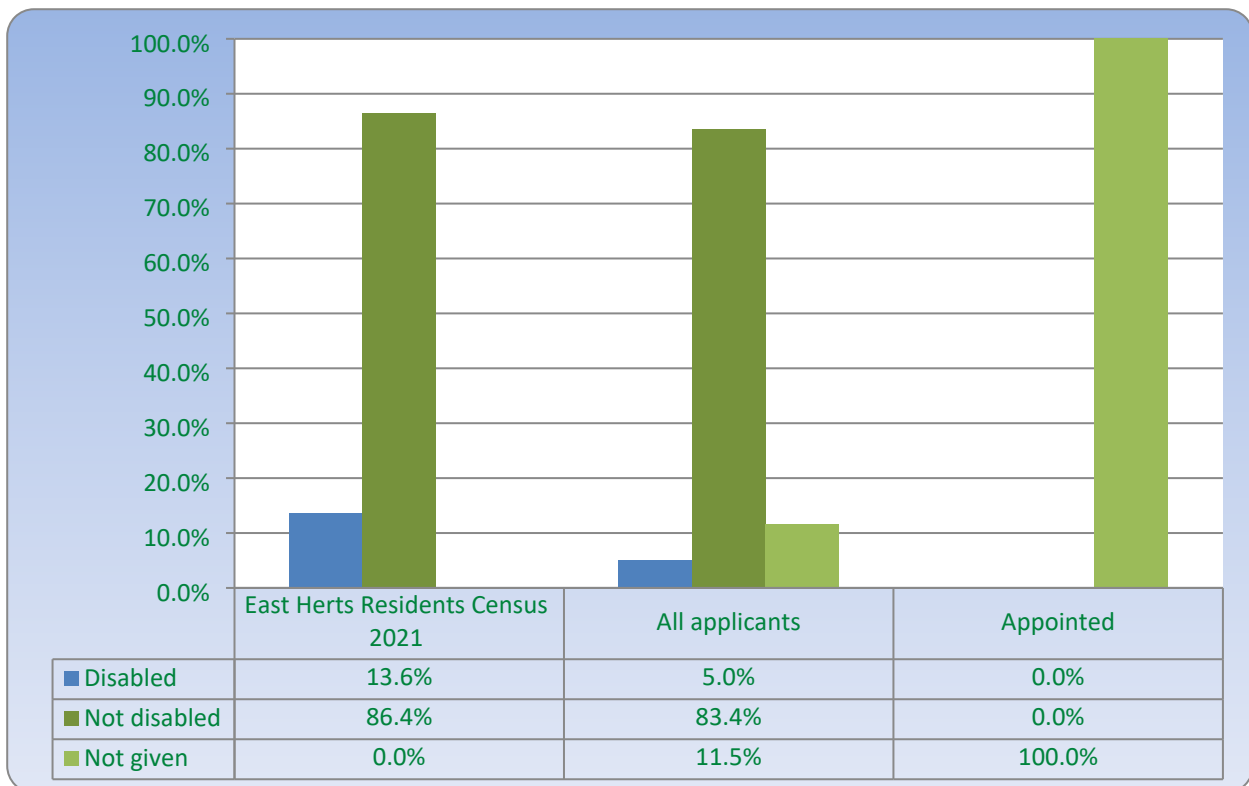
Source: Nomis Population estimates - local authority based by single year of age (2022).

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

Figure 9.0 shows that the council attracted applicants from a wide range of age groups. However, the percentages do differ from the Council residents in these age groups. Percentages of applicants in the 20-29 and 30-39 age groups are higher than the percentage of Council 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 Council residents in these age groups. In the older age groups it is likely to be due to people taking retirement. The percentage of applicants under the age of 20 has increased since 23/24 (0.5% to 4%) which is positive and brings the percentage closer to Council residents in that age group.

There is some variation in the percentages of applicants at the various age groups and the percentage of those appointed. In the 30-39 age group the percentage of applicants to appointees reduced whereas it stayed broadly the same or increased for the other age groups. Despite the slight variations there are no obvious areas for concern.

## Disability status



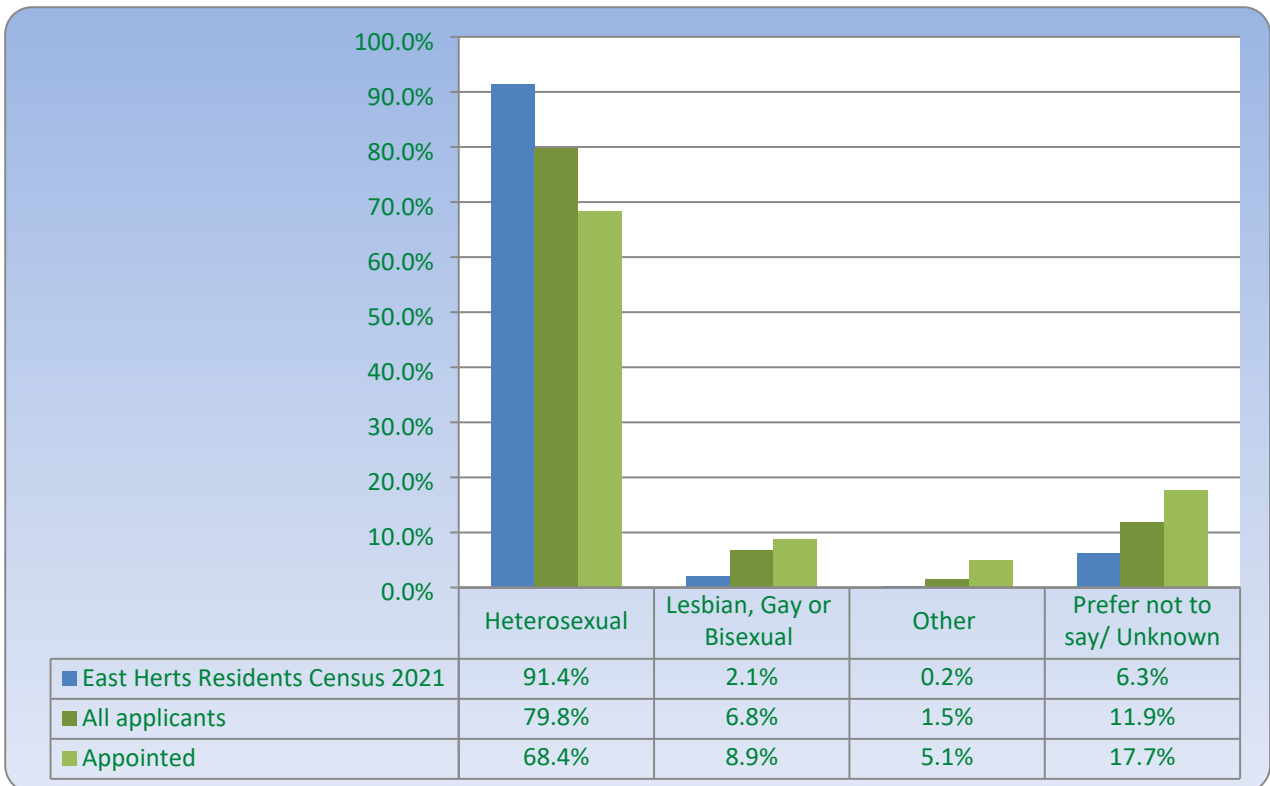
**Figure 10.0 Applicant profile by disability compared to the working population of Council (Disability status)**

Source: ONS Census 2021 - Disability

Figure 10.0 shows that 5% of applicants had a disability in 2024/25 which is lower than Council residents with a disability (13.6%) but is an increase from the 2023/24 figure of 3.8% which is positive. The council would like to attract more applications from disabled people but it is worth noting when comparing the figure to that of Council residents that people with a disability may be unable to work.

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). 5% of applicants had a disability but none of the appointees had a declared disability (they were all unknown or declined to answer). This is a concern and is lower than the percentage of disabled appointees last year (3.8%). However it is possible that some of the appointees were disabled but chose not to answer the question on their application form. It should also be noted that Council has not had challenge from any candidate suggesting any discrimination over a shortlisting or appointment decision

## 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 6.8% of applicants in 2024/25 were lesbian, gay or bisexual which is higher than the percentage for the East of England population (2.1%) This increases to 8.9% at appointment which is a significant improvement when compared to 2023/24 (0%).

## Disciplinary, Grievance and Probation (Grievance includes Bullying & Harassment complaints)

There were 2 formal probation cases, 1 grievance and 2 disciplinary cases in 2024/25. We are unable to report on equality data due to the possibility of the individuals being identifiable.

## Training

The 2024/25 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. Training was delivered via facilitated virtual events, virtual coaching,

webinars, face to face sessions and e-learning. All employees were trained in equality and diversity, sexual harassment, 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 the intranet 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.

For 2025, to ensure training and development opportunities at the council are made available on a fair and equal basis, we will be prioritising statutory training needs in the first instance. These will be identified by all service areas by completing a training needs analysis.



# Leavers

## Introduction

This section provides information on employees who have left the council (both voluntarily and involuntarily) between the period 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025. 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 56. Of these, 44 left voluntarily and 10 left involuntarily. There were also 2 deaths in service. 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 2024/25 (Human Resources Committee June 2025) 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 going 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

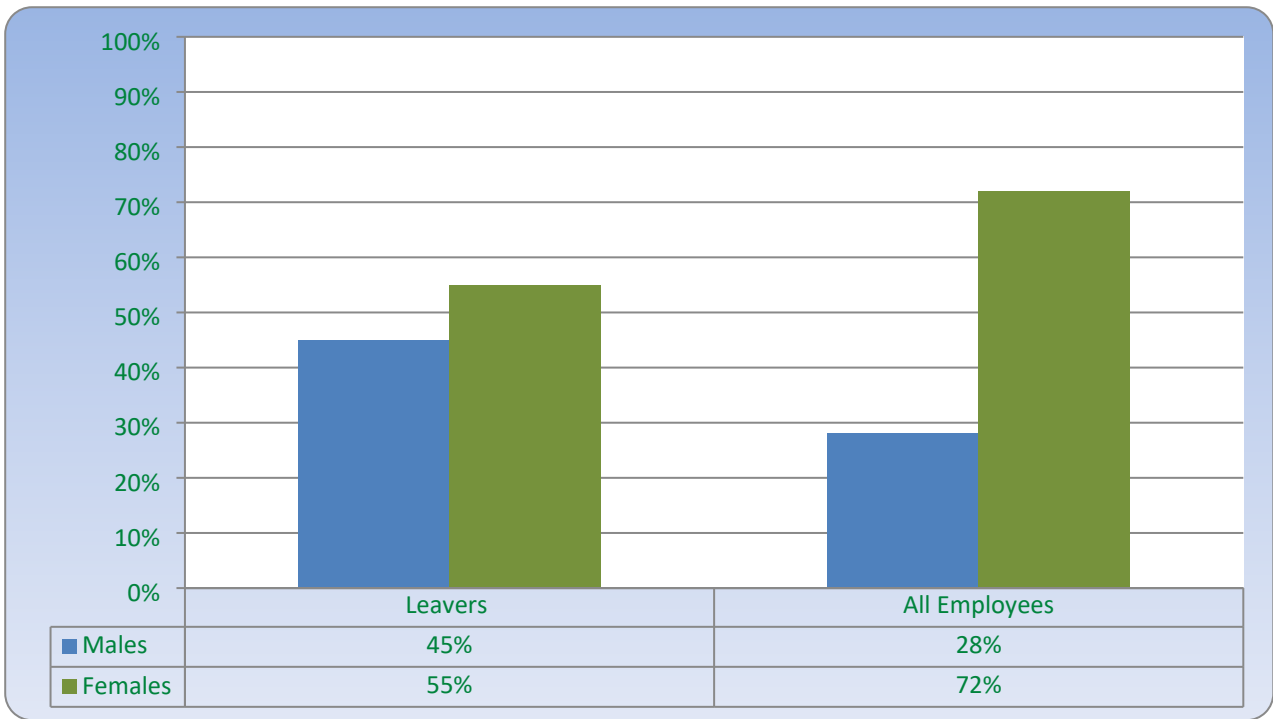
Sexual orientation was not provided due to the small numbers of employees in some categories which may identify individuals. There are no concerns in this area.

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. 5 employees took maternity leave in 2024/25 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.

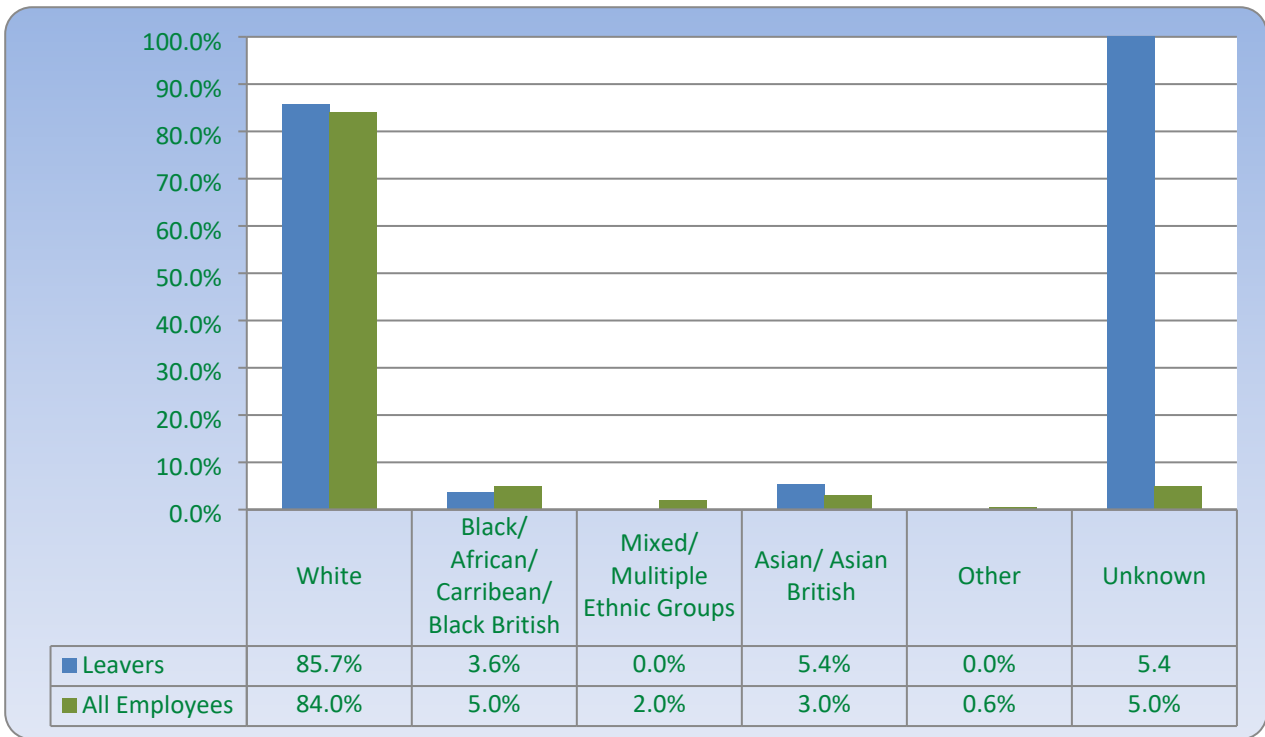
## Sex (Gender)



**Figure 12.0 Leavers by sex**

There were a higher of proportion of male leavers when compared to the overall employee profile. HR have reviewed exit questionnaires which has not indicated any concerns regarding gender.

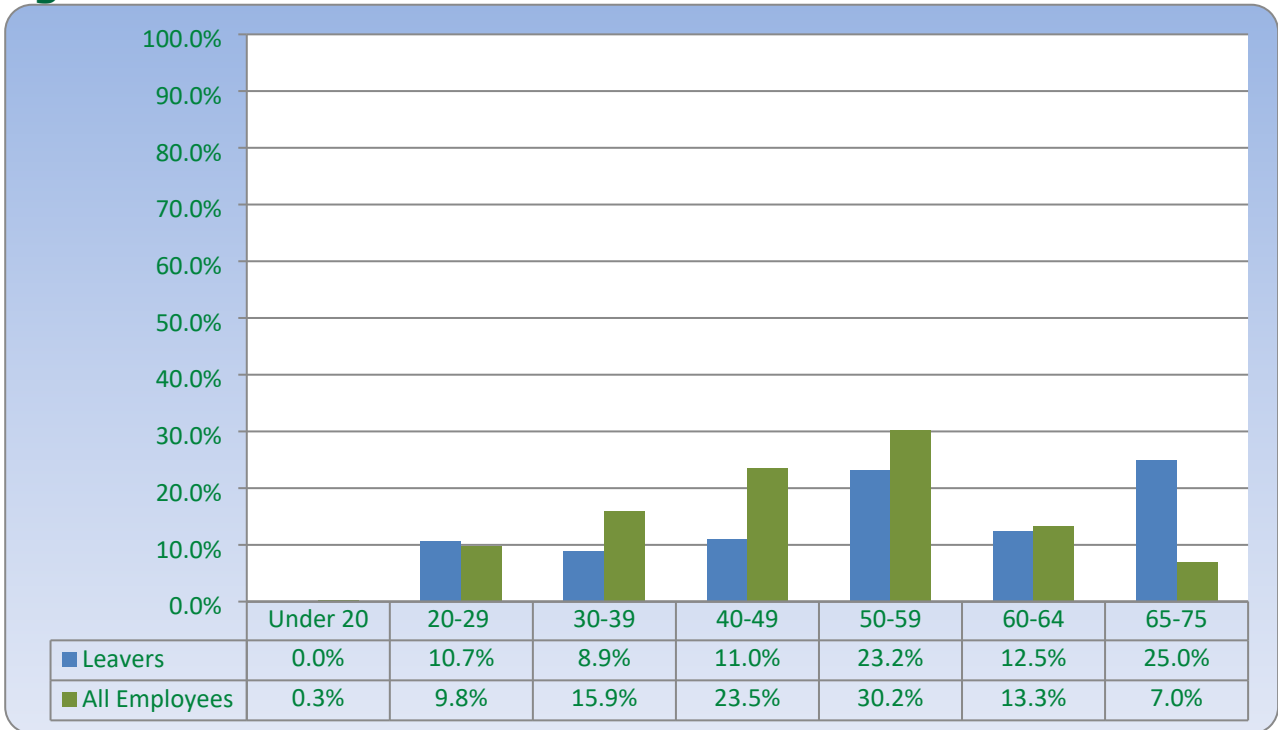
## Ethnic Origin



**Figure 13.0 Leavers by ethnic origin**

Figure 13.0 shows that there was a slightly higher percentage of leavers from the 'Asian/Asian British' group when compared to the percentage of employees from that group. There were no leavers from 'Mixed/Multiple Ethnic' or 'Other' groups. HR have reviewed exit questionnaires which has also not indicated any concerns regarding ethnic origin.

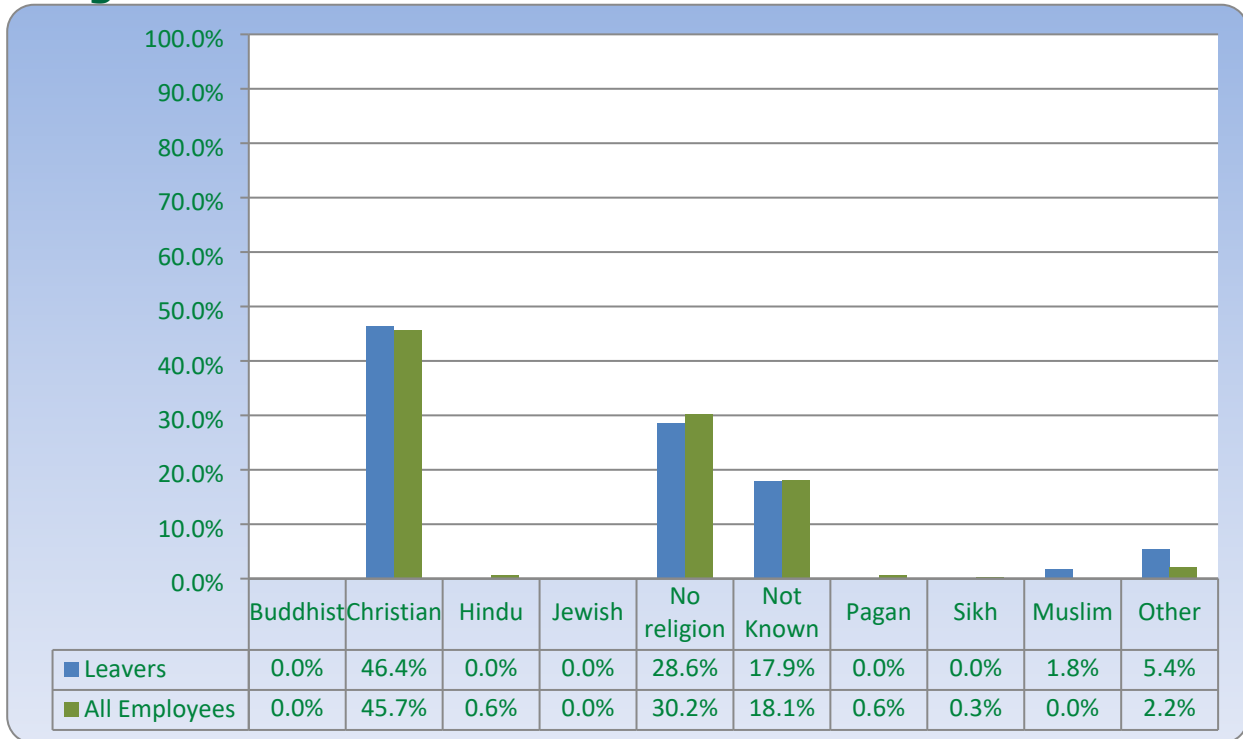
## Age



**Figure 14.0 Leavers by age**

Figure 14.0 shows that the percentage of leavers in the 65-75 age groups was much higher than the percentage of employees in this age group but this is due to employees in this age group taking retirement. The percentage of leavers in the 20-29 age group was very slightly higher than the percentage of employees in this age group but this is in part due to employees in this age group leaving the council to seek promotion. The percentage of leavers in the other age groups were all lower than the percentage of employees in these age range.

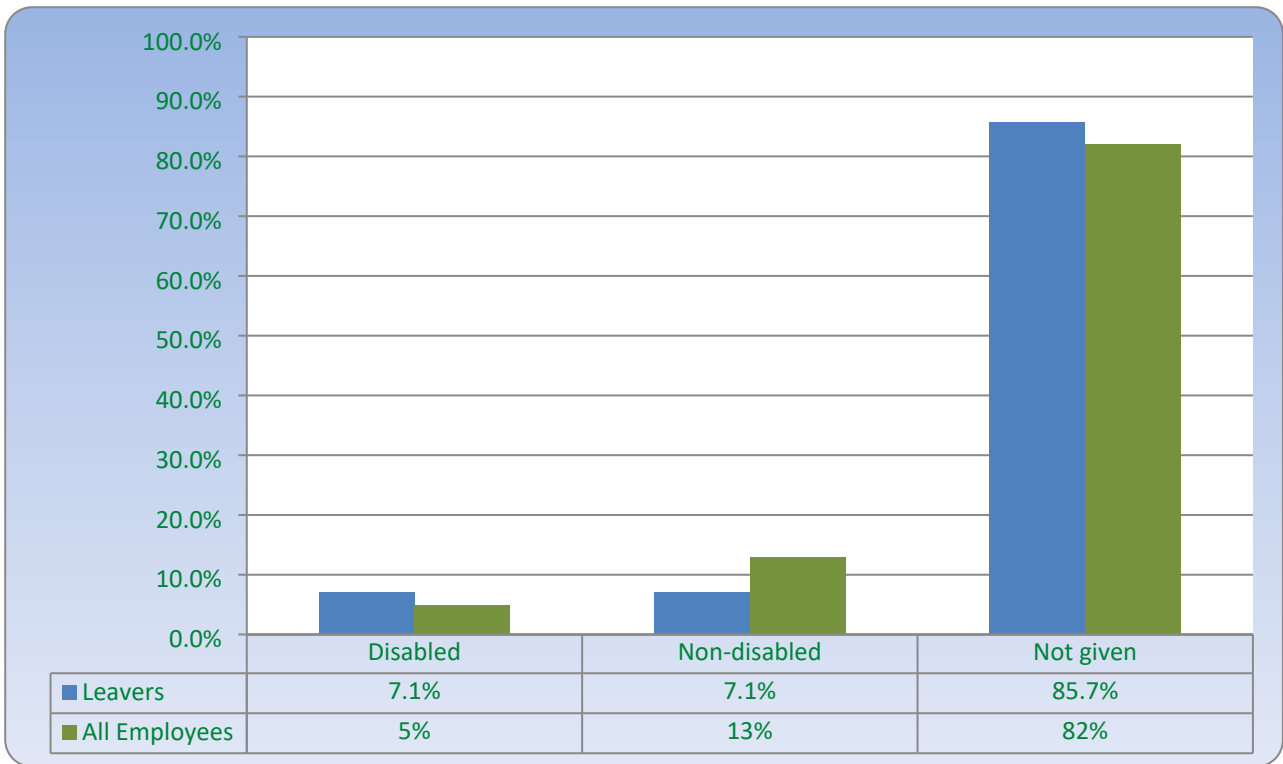
## Religion or Belief



**Figure 15.0 Leavers by religion**

There are no concerns in this area, the religious belief of leavers in 2024/25 were generally reflective of the overall employee profile given the small numbers involved. The 'all employees' data is from a single date – 31 March 2025 whereas the leaver data is from 1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025. This is why it shows 0% for Muslim employees but 1.8% for leavers, i.e. they left the council before 31 March.

## Disability



**Figure 16.0 Leavers by disability**

Figure 16.0 shows the percentage of leavers with a disability (7.1%) was slightly higher 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 Recommendations 1 July 25 – 31 June 26

The recommendations listed below refer to staff and employment only.

Recommendation	Timescale
<b>Employee Profile</b>	
To complete the required annual Gender Pay Gap report for 2025.	Published by March 2026.
Work collaboratively with colleagues in Housing & Health on the refreshed Equalities Strategy to ensure a best practice approach connecting staff and residents.	HR will support this work as and when required.
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.	Reminder to go out in Team Update in February 2026.
<b>Recruitment</b>	
To ensure equalities data at the shortlisting stage is included in next year's report.	August 2026.
<b>Discipline, Grievance and Probation</b>	
Continue to monitor equalities data for all disciplinary, grievance and formal probationary cases.	We will continue to collect this data for any disciplinary, grievance and formal probationary cases.
<b>Training</b>	
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.	Staff are automatically reminded 12 months after they last completed the mandatory equality and diversity module to go back into the system and refresh their training. Directors were asked to complete a training needs analysis for their services in August 2025.
Continue to promote equalities-based events such as International Women's Day. Maintain a sufficient bank of	Equalities-based events will be promoted as and when they are relevant. Refresher training for Mental Health First Aiders has already

Mental Health First Aiders to support staff experiencing mental health issues and run refresher training.	been delivered in 2025 but will be arranged again as and when necessary.
The East Herts Together Group's remit is being expanded to ensure minority groups are represented and celebrated	The group will be run by staff and, as well as suggesting improvements following the staff survey, they will produce plans to celebrate religious festivals, learning at work, black history, Pride etc.