



Staff Annual Equalities Report

2020/21



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 EastHertsDC

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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 was produced by Human Resources and relates to staff and employment only. The council's Equalities Officer sits outside of HR and has responsibility for wider equalities issues, of which this is just one element.

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 2020/21.

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 2021 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) and age. The council has a considerably higher percentage of females than males (72%:28%) compared to the working population of East Hertfordshire (51%:49%), 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 apprenticeships and trainee 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. The percentage of employees under the age of 20 (0.3%) is lower than East Herts residents in this age group (5.9%) however it must be noted that it is compulsory to remain in full time education or training until the age of 18.

Recruitment

The report identifies an issue with the recruitment data for 20/21 in that equalities data for approximately 50% of applicants is unknown as they either did not complete the equalities monitoring form (this the main reason) or chose not to disclose their equalities data. This is most likely to be due to the fact that the council previously had an online application form which took candidates straight to the equalities form after completing the application form. This was no longer supported by IT and they had no replacement available so we moved to a Microsoft Word application form and separate equalities monitoring form which many candidates now either choose not to complete or miss (despite prompting to complete). In the 2019/20 report in some

equality areas the percentage of 'Unknowns' was as high as 29% but in 2020/21 it is as high as 55% in some areas. This makes the data analysis much less reliable and not statistically significant. We are in the process of procuring an Applicant Tracking System (ATS) which will allow us to include the equalities form as an automatic (mandatory) next step on from the application form to improve recruitment equalities data.

From the data that we do have however, in 2020/21 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 females (31% to 36%) but reduces for males (24% to 16%). There is an increase in the percentage of white applicants from application to shortlisting (32.8% to 40.7%) but for applicants from BAME groups, there is a drop from application to shortlisting (13.8% to 7%). For the 20-29 and 30-39 age groups the percentages of those applying to those shortlisted dropped. For all other age groups the percentage of applicants increases at the shortlisting stage. This is most likely due to older applicants having more experience than younger applicants, however as previously mentioned the very high level of 'Unknowns' makes data analysis unreliable. In 2020/21, there were 14 applicants (2.9%) who stated that they have a disability. Of these, 6 met the essential criteria and were shortlisted for interview. 2.5% of applicants were lesbian, gay or bisexual and 3.5% were shortlisted.

At the interview stage, there is an increase in 5 percentage points between the number of females being shortlisted to appointed and a reduction of 5 percentage points between the number of males being shortlisted to appointed. For white applicants the conversion from shortlisting to appointment stays almost the same (40.7% to 40.9%) whereas there is a drop for BAME applicants from 7% to 4.5%. In terms of age, from the shortlisting to appointment stage the percentages are fairly closely aligned for most age groups. Of the 6 disabled applicants who met the essential criteria and were shortlisted for interview, unfortunately none were appointed. The percentage of lesbian, gay or bisexual applicants increases from 3.5% at shortlist to 4.5% at interview stage. It is also worth noting that in the Staff Survey run in December 2020 that 97% of responses agreed that the council welcomes and supports equality and diversity and addresses inequality/unfair practice and discrimination against staff.

Discipline & Grievance and Training

There were no disciplinary or grievance cases in 2020/21.

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 with regard to leavers in terms of religion and belief, disability, ethnic origin and sexual orientation.

There was however a disproportionate percentage of male leavers (46%) when compared to the percentage of male employees (28%). HR have reviewed exit questionnaires which has not indicated any gender related points. It is worth noting that the council in part has more female employees due to the flexible working arrangements offered and whilst this can also benefit men it does tend to mean female employees stay longer whereas men in predominately full-time roles are more able to move on to similar full-time roles in various sectors.

There was five times the percentage of leavers in the 65-75 age group and twice the percentage of leavers in the 60-64 age group than employees in this age range but this is due to employees in this age group taking retirement. The percentage of leavers in the 20-29 age group (11.5%) was slightly higher than the percentage of employees in this age range (9%). 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.

Action plan

All actions in the 20/21 action plan have either been progressed or rolled forward into the 21/22 action plan.

Achievements against July 2020 – June 21 staff & employment equality action plan

Action	Progress
Employee Profile	
To complete the required annual Gender Pay Gap report for 2020.	This was published in March 2021
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 also the Equality Officer's availability. This will be carried forward to the action plan for 21/22.
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 carried out in February 2021 ahead of the report being run.
Review the exit questionnaire with the intention of including equalities based questions going forward.	The new exit questionnaire, which includes equalities based questions, has been in place since April 2021.
Review the questions in the next staff survey to include a range of equalities questions and analyse these in future equalities reports as data becomes available.	The staff survey was sent out to staff in December 2020 and included equalities based questions. The survey was run in-house to support further analysis and follow up.
Recruitment	
Continue to require managers to return all recruitment paperwork before an offer letter can be sent out to ensure HR	This has been in place since October 2019 and has improved the shortlisting data. However despite data now being

<p>have full shortlisting data to be able to report on</p>	<p>consistently collected from shortlisting panels, a significant number of candidates are still choosing not to complete the equalities form or choosing 'Prefer not to say'. We previously had an online application form which took candidates straight to the equalities form after completing the application form. This was no longer supported by IT and they had no replacement available so we moved to a Microsoft Word application form and separate equalities monitoring form which many candidates now choose not to complete or miss. However, we are now in the process of procuring an ATS which will allow us to include the equalities form as an automatic next step on from the application form to improve recruitment equalities data.</p>
<p>Investigate whether a link can be added to the new Application form that takes candidates straight to the Equalities Monitoring Form. If this is not possible look at setting up an auto reply on the HR inbox reminding candidates to submit their Equalities Monitoring Form if they have not already done so.</p> <p>HR will ensure that new recruitment (ATS) system spec will include an online form that can automate the separation of the equalities form to increase completion rates as well</p>	<p>It was not possible to add a link taking candidates straight to the equalities form. An auto reply was set up on the HR inbox reminding candidates to submit their Equalities Monitoring Form if they have not already done so but completion rates are still every low. However, we are now in the process of procuring an ATS which will allow us to include the equalities form as an automatic next step on from the application form.</p>
<p>Arrange for all recruiting staff to complete further mandatory unconscious bias training, this will be a joint task for the OD&HR Co-ordinator and the new Equalities Officer and will build upon the guidance already provided and the elements already covered by the current recruitment training. EHC will either source a suitable provider or develop a suitable in-house course which will</p>	<p>The annual equalities e-learning that all staff do has been developed to include unconscious bias training and this has been completed by staff this year. The equalities work continues to be developed across the authority. Equality Impact Assessment bitesize training will be delivered in September by the New Equalities Officer.</p>

be made mandatory for recruiters.	
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 virtually (due to the pandemic) as part of recruitment processes in the past year. 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.
Continue to develop links with Disability Advisors at the Jobcentre to make them aware of our vacancies. Promote agile working practices where relevant.	This has been difficult to progress as all contact with the Jobcentres has been directed through the website (possibly due to the pandemic) and so making direct contact and building links with Disability Advisors has not been possible. However initial discussions have taken place with Shaw Trust (Disability Organisation) about advertising our vacancies with them instead to encourage more disabled applicants.
Work with Communications to build a set of varied staff case studies that demonstrate diversity in our workforce and use them as part of our recruitment literature.	This is in progress but has taken longer than planned due to the Communications team being unable to assist HR with the process. Of the 6 members of staff initially approached, 5 agreed to be involved. 3 of them have returned their responses so far and the others have asked for more time. This will be carried into the 21/22 action plan to finalise.
HR have secured a refund for the recruitment module of the HR system and hope to invest this money into an Applicant Tracking System (ATS) that will include an electronic application form and enable name blind recruitment	We are currently in a joint procurement process with Stevenage Borough Council to purchase an ATS.
Discipline and Grievance	
Continue to monitor equalities data for all disciplinaries and grievances. Extend this to include 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.	The mandatory training was revised in December 2020 and now includes unconscious bias and is currently being reviewed with support from the Equalities Officer.
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.	Managers are provided with guidance on the PDR process and HR Officers provide a briefing to new managers in the service areas they support. PDR training for all managers has been delivered. The OD and HR Co-ordinator reviews PDRs to inform the annual training plan. PDRs for 20/21 have been recorded and the training plan is in development.
Continue to develop both wellbeing programmes/guidance and maintain sufficient Mental Health First Aiders to support staff experiencing mental health issues.	The Live Well Work Well Programme for 2021-22 includes support for staff in relation to mental health. Training and refresher training will be delivered in September 2021 for new and existing Mental Health First Aiders.

Employee profile

Introduction

This section provides information on employees employed by the council as at 31 March 2021. Casual employees, agency workers and contractors are not included. The total number of employees employed by the council as at 31 March 2021 was a headcount of 333. This has decreased from 339 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 2020/21 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 and the Equalities Officer 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.

Where possible, comparisons have been made at the most local level (i.e. with East Herts residents) and using the most recent data available. However where this data has been unavailable at this level, comparisons have been made with East of England residents. Most of the comparison data has been taken from either the Nomis or Office for National Statistics (ONS) websites. It is noted that the Census data is now almost 10 years out of date but we have been unable to source more up to date data for religious belief, ethnic origin and disability. It is hoped that some provisional data will be available from the 2021 Census for the next report although the finalised data will not be published until 2023.

Sex (Gender)

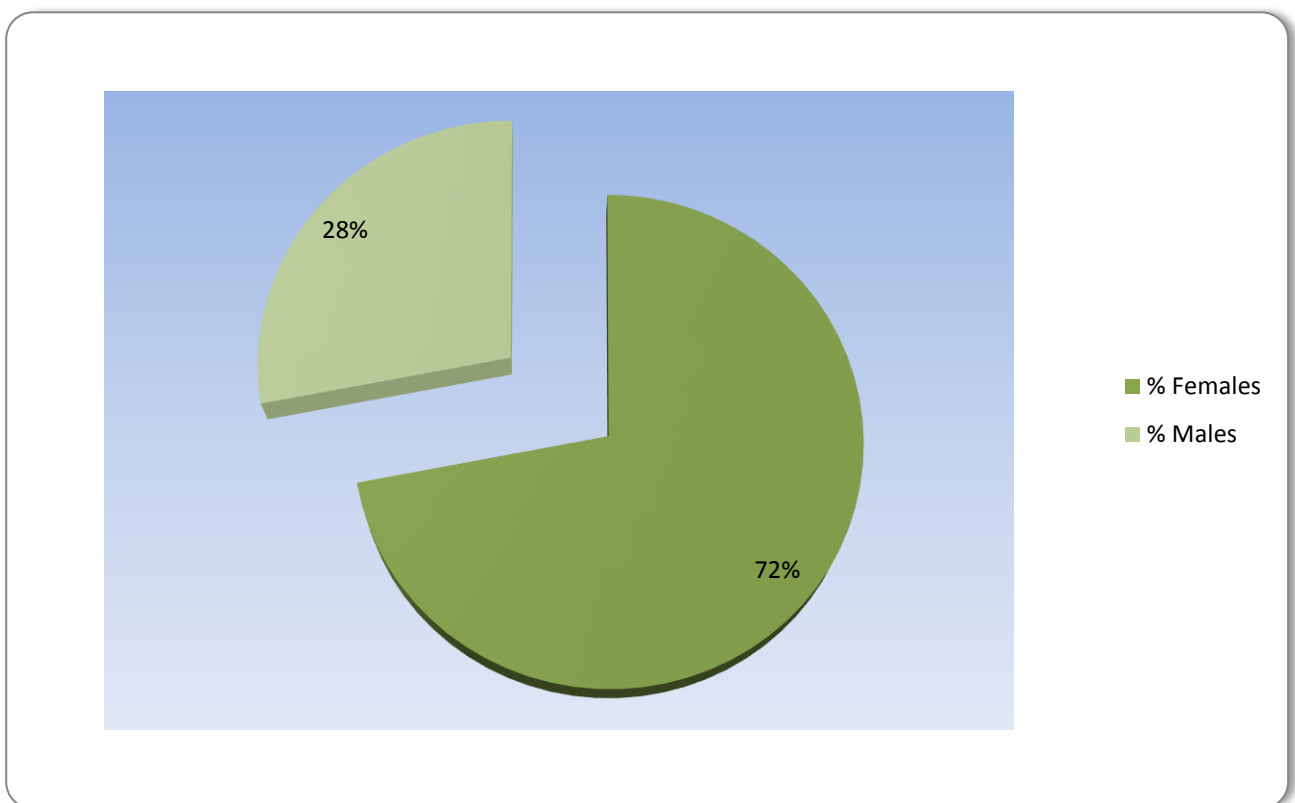


Figure 1.0 Employee profile by sex

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 (28%) compared to the overall male working population in East Herts (49%) (Nomis Official Labour Market Statistics (East Herts residents 2020)).

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. The percentage of males working at the council has remained the same since 2019/20.

Ethnic origin

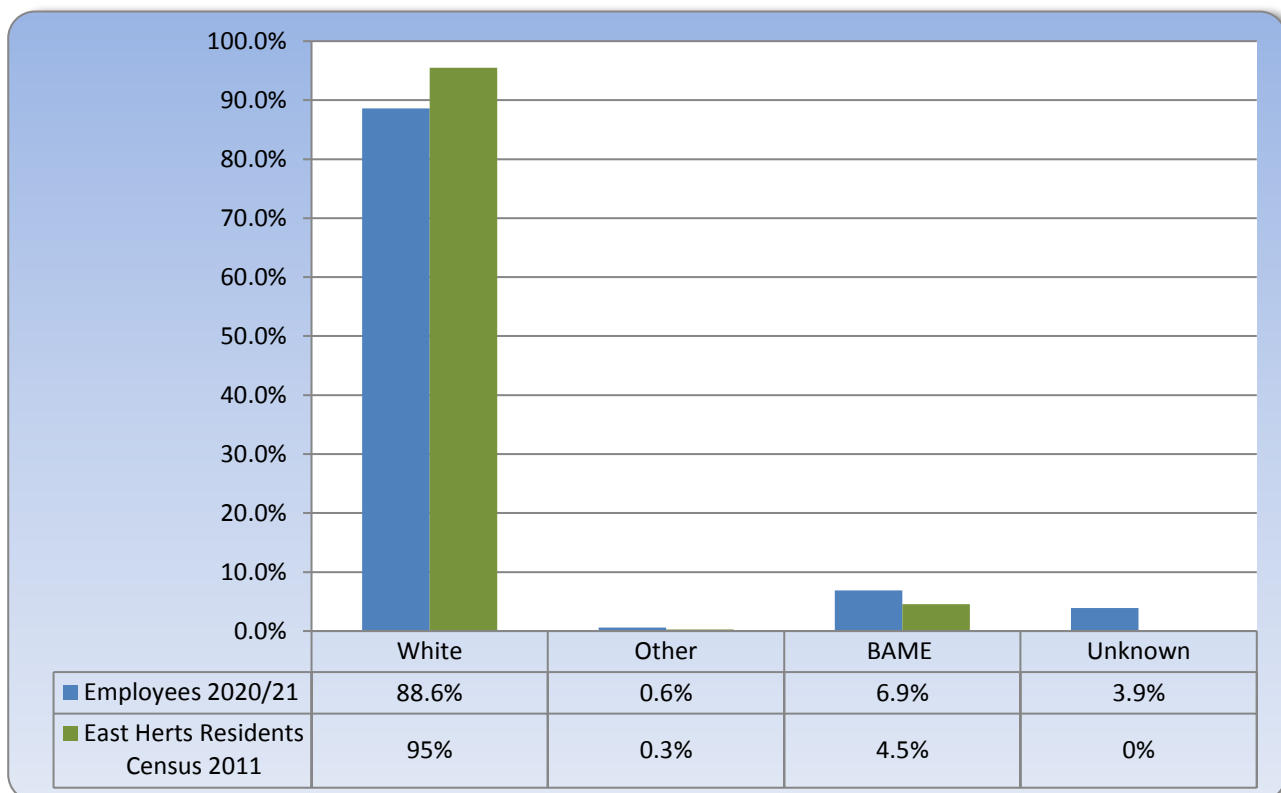


Figure 2.0 Employee profile by ethnic origin

Source: ONS Census 2011 - Ethnic Group by Measures

Figure 2.0 shows that the percentage of black and minority ethnic employees is slightly above that of East Herts residents as at the Census in 2011. The EHC White origin compared to the census is 6 percentage points down, 3.9% of staff are unknown, unfortunately this has not improved since last year despite asking staff to refresh their equalities data in February 2021. There is no more recent data available from ONS for East Herts, Hertfordshire or the East of England for comparison purposes. The census has been re-run in 2021 and it is hoped that some provisional data might be available from that when the next report is run. The total percentage of BAME employees increased from 6.4% in 2018/19 to 7.1% in 2019/20 but has dropped

slightly to 6.9% in 2020/21 however this relates to just 1 employee. The figure is still higher than the BAME residents in East Herts (4.5%). It is positive to see that the council is attracting and retaining a wider diversity of staff in terms of ethnicity.

Age

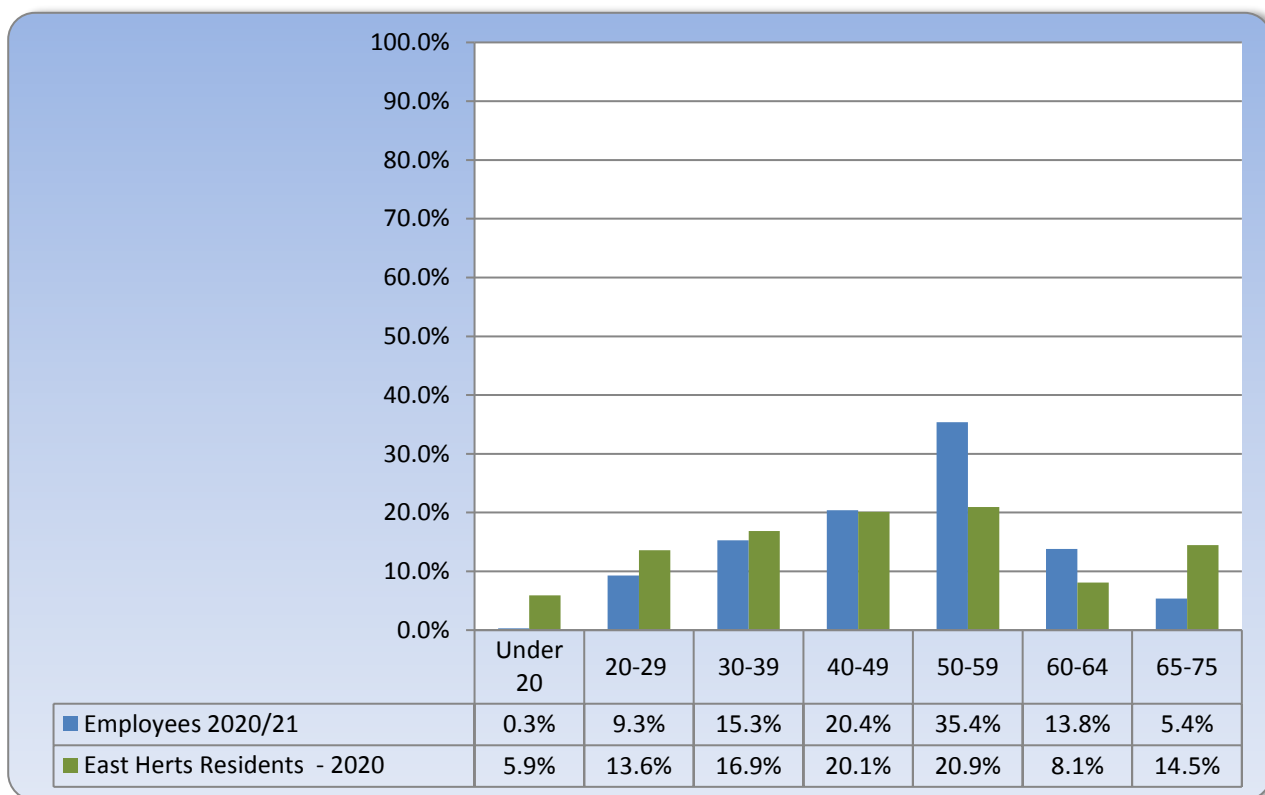


Figure 3.0 Employee profile by age

Source: Nomis Official Labour Market Statistics – Population Estimates in East Herts (2020)

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. 49% of employees are in the 50-59 and 60-64 age groups compared to 29% 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 apprenticeships and trainee 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 percentage of employees under the age of 20 is lower than East Herts residents in this age group (5.9%) 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 2019/20.

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

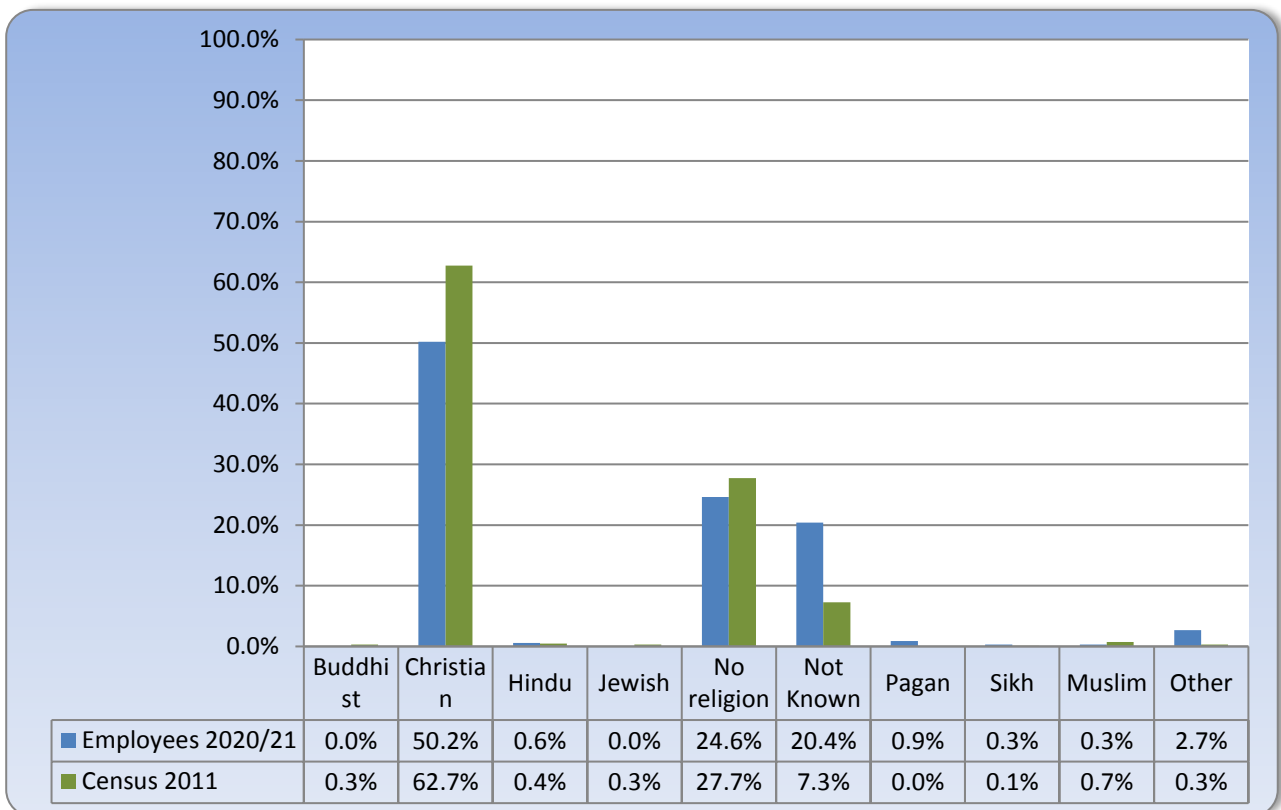


Figure 4.0 Employee profile by religion and belief

Source: ONS Census 2011 - 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, although it should be noted that the census data is somewhat out of date. As is common with employment data on Religion (staff often do not wish to state) a significant amount of staff (20.42%) have not stated or have indicated they do not

wish to. The percentages of staff under each religion remain similar to the past two years. 1 Buddhist and 1 Jewish member of staff have left the council, bringing down the percentage from 0.3% in 2019/20 to 0% in 2020/21.

Disability

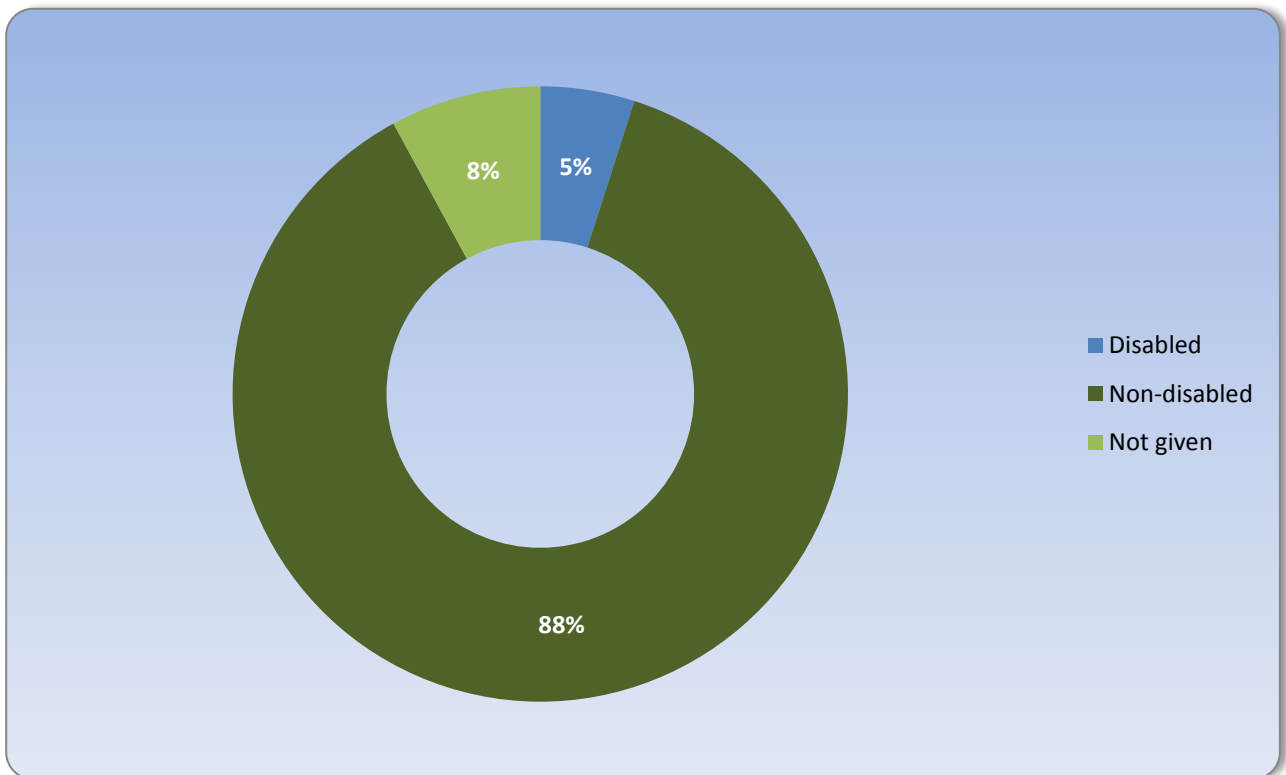


Figure 5.0 Employee profile by disability status

Figure 5.0 shows that as at 31 March 2021, 5% of employees had a disability, which is one percentage point higher than 2019/20 and 2018/19. This is the same as the East Herts residents with a disability (5%) (ONS Census 2011 - Long Term Health Problem or Disability). It is worth noting however that the 2011 Census data was household based (not individual) and in addition people with a long term health problem may be unfit to work.

Sexual Orientation

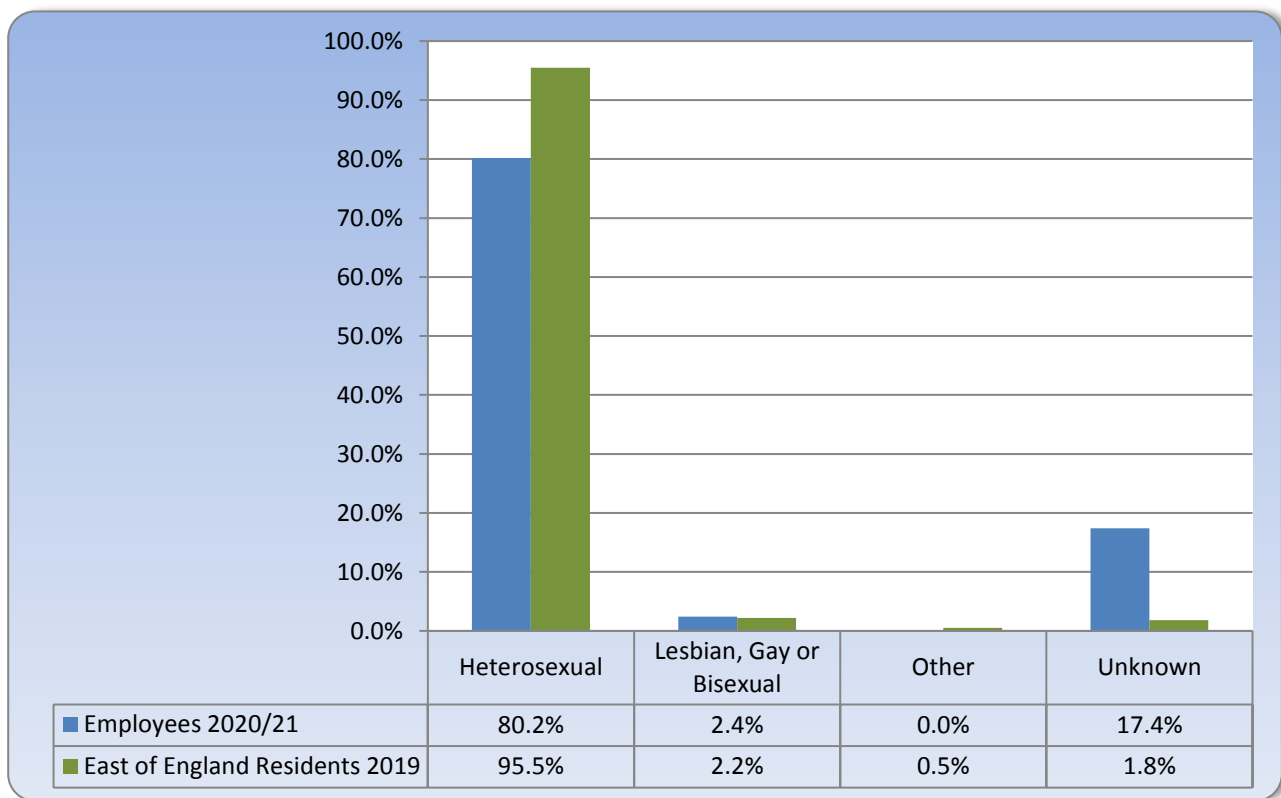


Figure 6.0 Employee profile by sexual orientation

Source: ONS – Sexual Identity by Region (East of England) – 2019

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 much more recent 2018 data. The council has less heterosexuals in terms of percentage but has a higher unknown percentage which would mostly close the gap. There is close alignment with lesbian, gay and bisexual employees where EHC had a very slightly higher percentage of 2.4% compared to residents in the East of England in 2018 (2.1%). The percentage of lesbian, gay and bisexual employees has remained the same since 2019/20.

Recruitment

Introduction

This section provides information on external applicants who applied for jobs at the council between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021. Data has been collected at the application, shortlist and appointment stages. There were 29 external recruitment campaigns between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021. 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 (4% in total across all other religions).

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 2011 Census)

The data has been collected from the Equalities Monitoring Forms which are part of the application form and are detached before sending to managers. In the 2019/20 report equalities data for candidates that were appointed was taken from their new starter forms to ensure we had a full data set for those who were appointed. However this distorted the data when looking at the conversion of applicants from application through to interview and then appointment, so has not been done this year, particularly because the number of 'Unknowns' has increased significantly this year. We previously had an online application form which took candidates straight to the equalities form after completing the application form. This was no longer supported by IT and they had no replacement available so we moved to a Microsoft Word application form and separate equalities monitoring form which many candidates now either choose not to complete or miss. In the 2019/20 report in some equality areas the percentage of 'Unknowns' was as high as 29% but in 2020/21 it is as high as 55% in some areas. This makes the data analysis much less reliable and not statistically significant. We are in the process of procuring an ATS which will allow us to include the equalities form as an automatic next step on from the application form to improve recruitment equalities data.

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. Where possible, comparisons have been made at the most local level (i.e. with East Herts residents) and using the most recent data available. However where this data has been unavailable at this level, comparisons have been made with East of England residents. Most of the comparison data has been taken from either the Nomis or Office for National Statistics (ONS) websites. It is noted that the Census data is now almost 10 years out of date but we have been unable to source more up to date data for religious belief, ethnic origin and disability.

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 potentially 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)

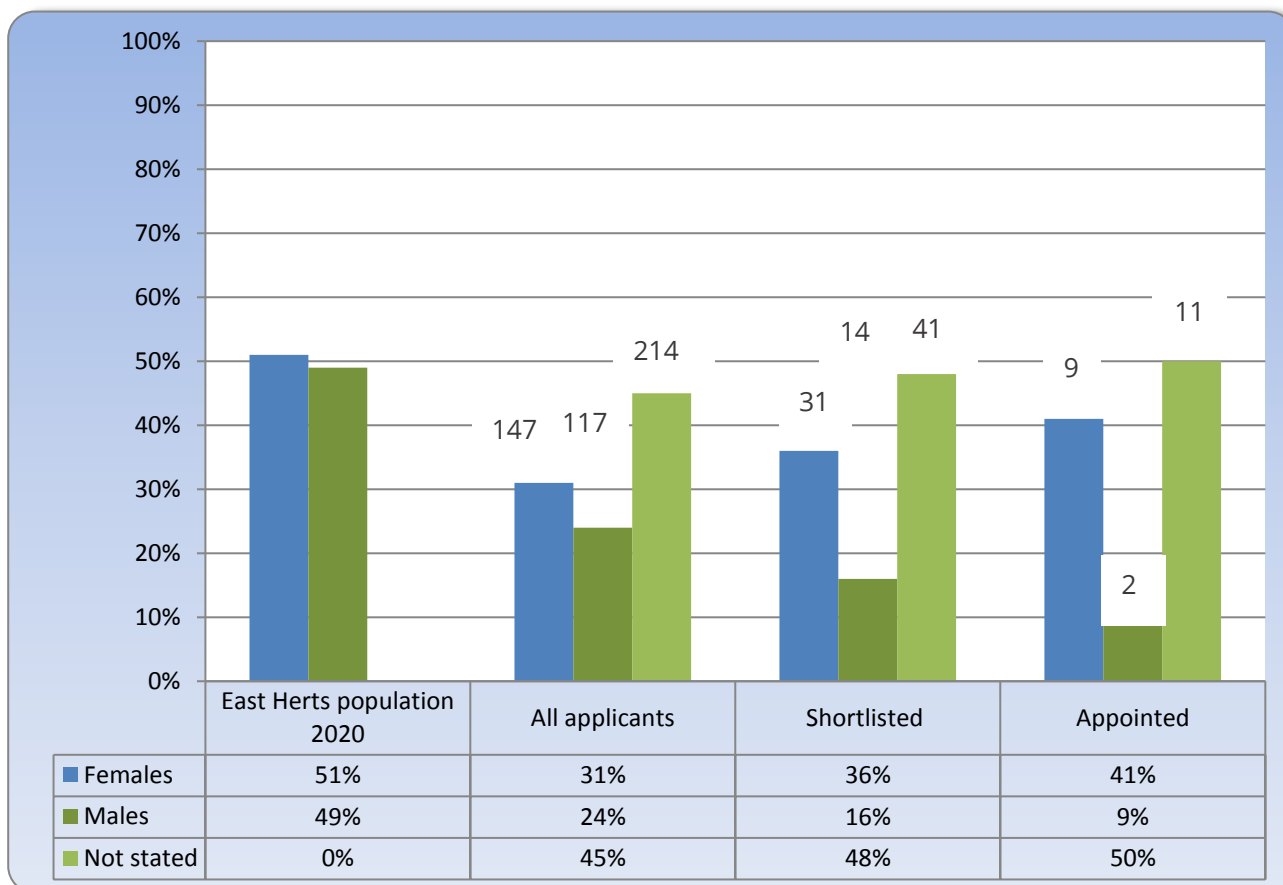


Figure 7.0 Applicant profile by sex compared to the population of East Herts

Source: Nomis Official Labour Market Statistics (East Herts residents aged 16-64 (2020))

Figure 7.0 shows that in 2020/21, of those that completed the equalities monitoring form, there was a higher proportion of female applicants than male applicants: 31% (147) of applicants were female and 24% (117) were male compared to the profile of the working population of East Herts (51% and 49% respectively). This is a change from 2019/20 where 58% of applicants were female and 35% were male. However, as can be seen from the data, 45% of applicants either did not complete the equalities

form or did not disclose their data. As this is almost half of the applicants, this makes the data analysis and comparison to 2019/20 data very unreliable.

Figure 7.0 also shows that of the 86 applicants shortlisted for interview, 31 (36%) were female and 14 (16%) were male, with 41 (48%) unknown. Figure 7.0 shows that of the 22 applicants appointed, 9 (41%) were female and 2 (9%) were male. However with such a high percentage 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 females (31% to 36%) but reduces for males (24% to 16%). There is an increase in 5 percentage points between the number of females being shortlisted to appointed and a reduction of 5 percentage points between the number of males being shortlisted to appointed. This may indicate some potential bias, however the change is based on just 22 appointments and the gender of 50% of the appointees is unknown. As discussed in the 'Introduction' section above, 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, so has not been done this year, particularly because the number of 'Unknowns' has increased significantly this year.

Ethnic origin

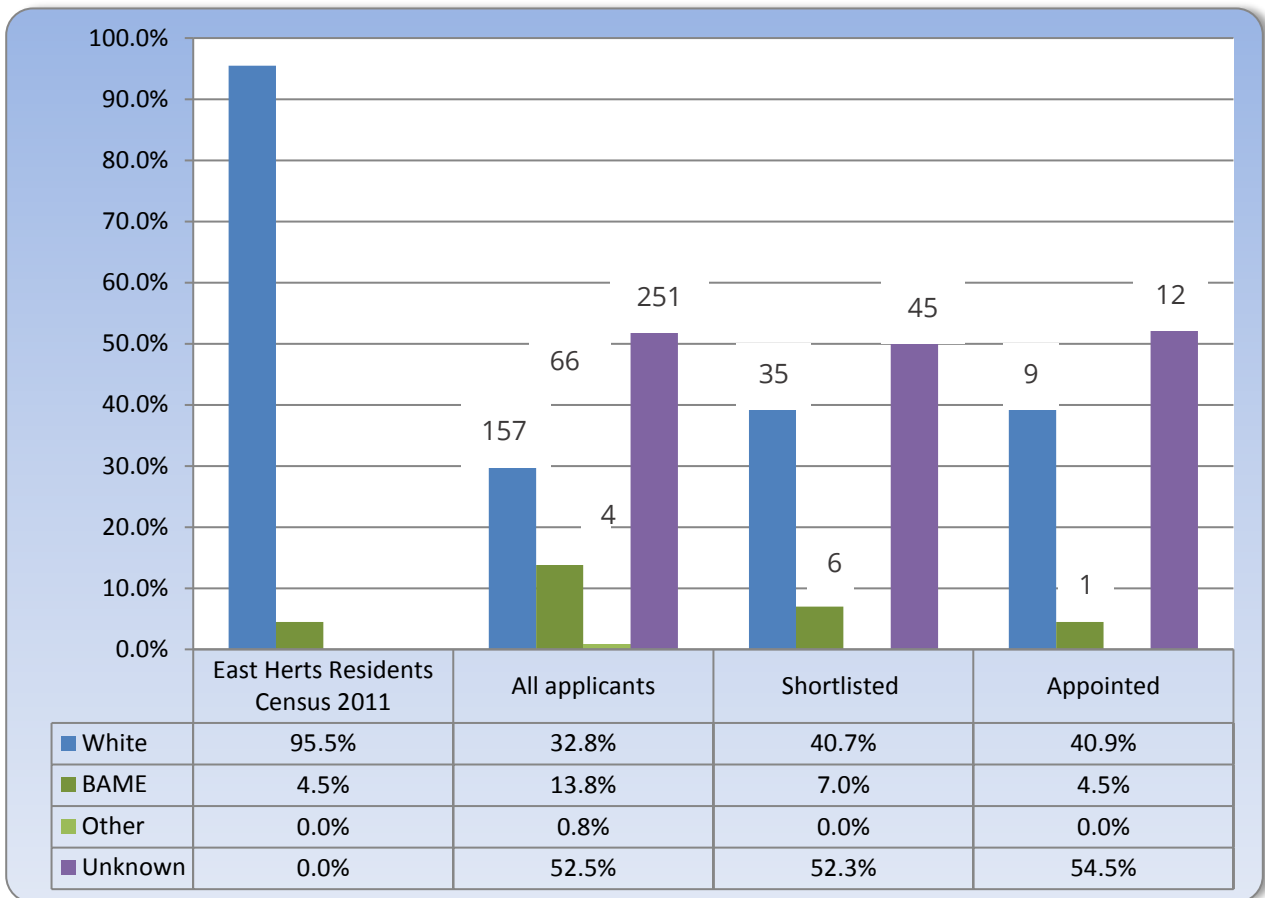


Figure 8.0 Applicant profile by ethnic origin compared to the population of East Herts

Source: ONS Census 2011 - Ethnic Group by Measures

Figure 8.0 shows that in 2020/21 the council attracted applicants from a diverse range of ethnic origins reflective of those of East Herts residents; 66 applicants (13.8%) were from BAME groups which is significantly higher than the percentage of East Herts residents in these groups (4.5%). However the figure is slightly lower than 2019/20 where 18.3% applicants were from BAME groups. However, the number of 'Unknowns' has significantly increased to over 50% of applicants which makes data analysis and comparison to 2019/20 data very unreliable.

There is an increase in the percentage of white applicants from application to shortlisting (32.8% to 40.7%) but between shortlisting and appointment it stays almost the same (40.7% to 40.9%). For applicants from BAME groups, there is a drop from application to shortlisting (13.8% to 7%) and a further drop at appointment stage (4.5%). This does indicate some bias, particularly as the number of 'Unknowns'

remains stable from application right through to appointment. 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 decision. The shortlisting process involves a panel scoring candidates against the job person specification criteria and these forms are collected by HR to evidence the merit based scoring undertaken.

A further exercise has been undertaken to look at a sample of two recruitment campaigns chosen at random during the period August 2020 – March 2021 (application forms prior to August had been destroyed after 12 months has lapsed in line with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)). The application forms of those BAME candidates who were not shortlisted for interview were compared with the application forms of those candidates' who were shortlisted. The exercise found that those candidates who were shortlisted for interview had addressed the person specification more closely than those BAME candidates who weren't shortlisted. Also of note is that in one of the samples, one of the shortlisted candidates who had not completed the equalities monitoring form at the time and was therefore recorded as 'unknown' in the report was an existing employee who, on checking his employee records, is from the BAME group. In the other sample, three of the eight candidates shortlisted had applied under the Disability Confident Scheme which guarantees them an interview if they meet the minimum criteria in the person specification.

Age

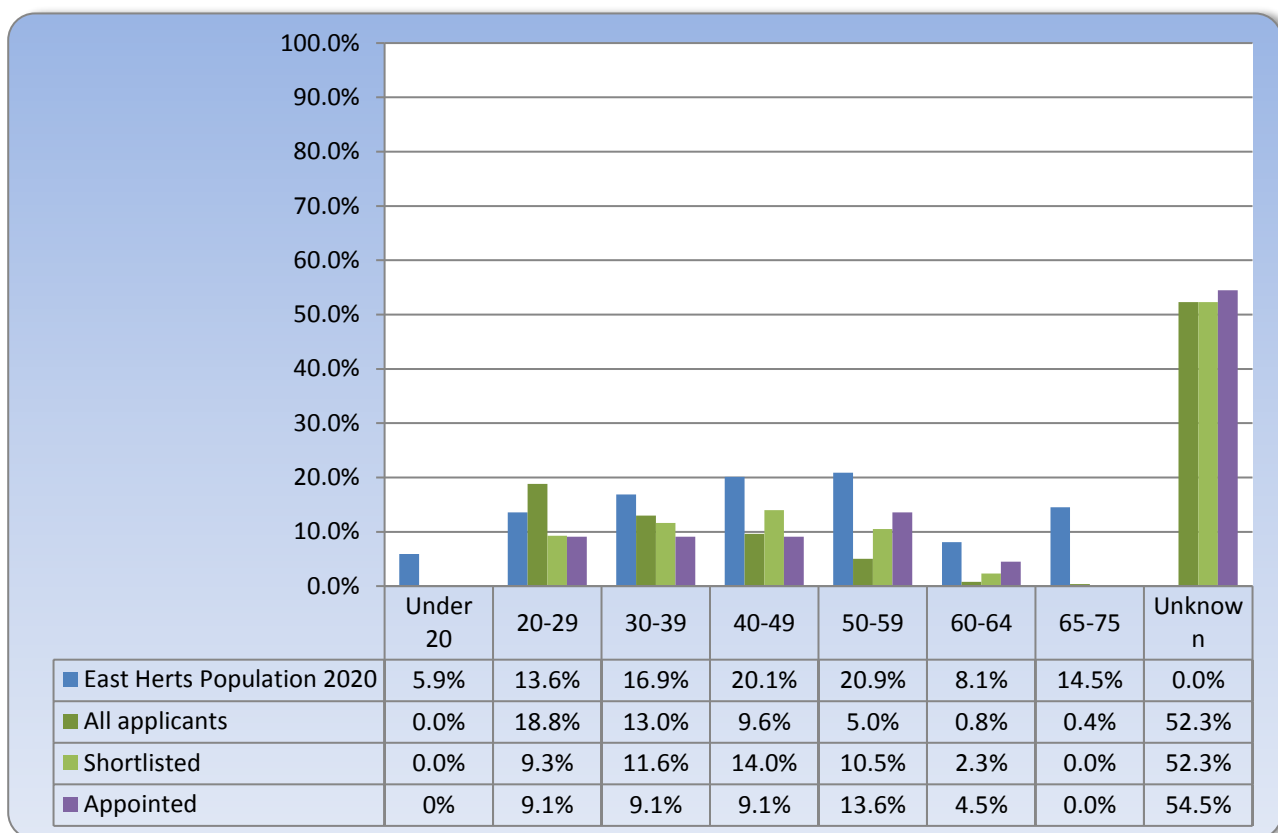


Figure 9.0 Applicant profile by age compared to the working population of East Herts

Source: Nomis Population estimates - local authority based by single year of age (2020).

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 broadly reflective of those of East Herts residents in the 20-29 and 30-39 age groups. Percentages of applicants in the other age groups are lower than that of East Herts residents, however the age of over 50% of applicants was unknown as they either did not complete the equalities form or did not disclose their data. This makes the data analysis very unreliable and it is likely that if the full data was known, the percentage of applicants in those underrepresented age groups would be higher. In the older age groups it is likely to be due to people taking retirement. There were no applicants under the age of 20 compared to East Herts residents in that age group (5.9%), 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 20-29 and 30-39 age groups the percentages of those applying to those shortlisted dropped. For all other age groups the percentage of applicants increases at the shortlisting stage. This is most likely due to older applicants having more experience than younger applicants, however as previously mentioned the very high level of 'Unknowns' makes data analysis unreliable. The number of 'Unknowns' remains closely aligned from application to shortlist.

From the shortlisting to appointment stage the percentages are much more closely aligned for most age groups. Again, the number of 'Unknowns' remains closely aligned from shortlist to appointment. Despite the slight variation at the different stages there are no obvious areas for concern.

Disability status

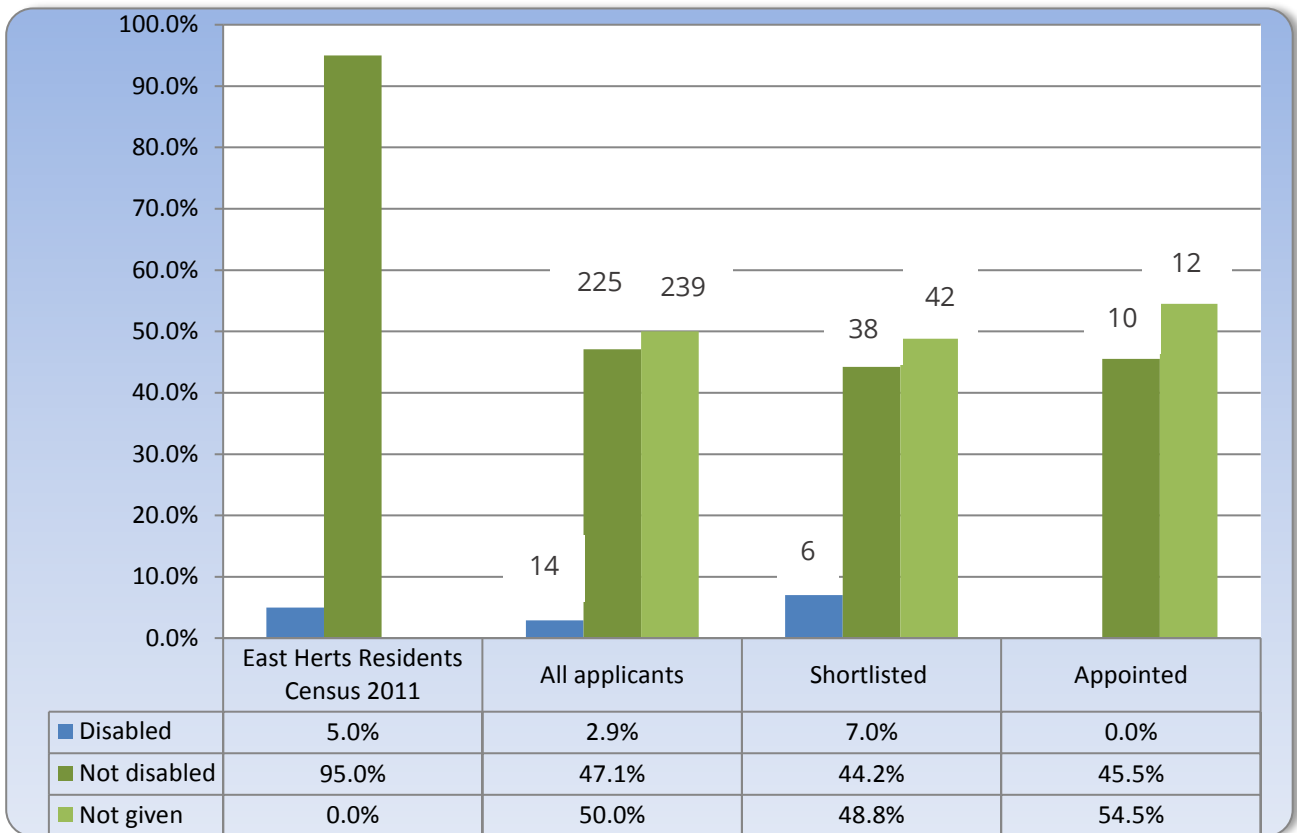


Figure 10.0 Applicant profile by disability compared to the working population of East Herts (Disability status)

Source: ONS Census 2011 - Long Term Health Problem or Disability

Figure 10.0 shows that, of those that completed the equalities monitoring form, 2.9% of applicants had a disability in 2020/21 which is lower than East Herts residents with a disability (5%) but is a slight increase from the 2018/19 of 2.7%. It is also worth noting the figure for East Herts residents includes those with a long term health problem which may mean they are unfit to work and is based on households rather than individuals. In addition, the disability status of 50% was unknown.

The council would like to attract more applications from disabled people. A move towards blended working as a result of the pandemic may help to attract more 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 2020/21, there were 14 applicants (2.9%) who stated that they have a disability. Of these, 6 met the essential criteria and

were shortlisted for interview but unfortunately no disabled people were appointed. As previously mentioned, the disability status of over 50% of applicants was unknown as they either did not complete the equalities form or did not disclose their data which makes the data analysis unreliable.

Sexual orientation

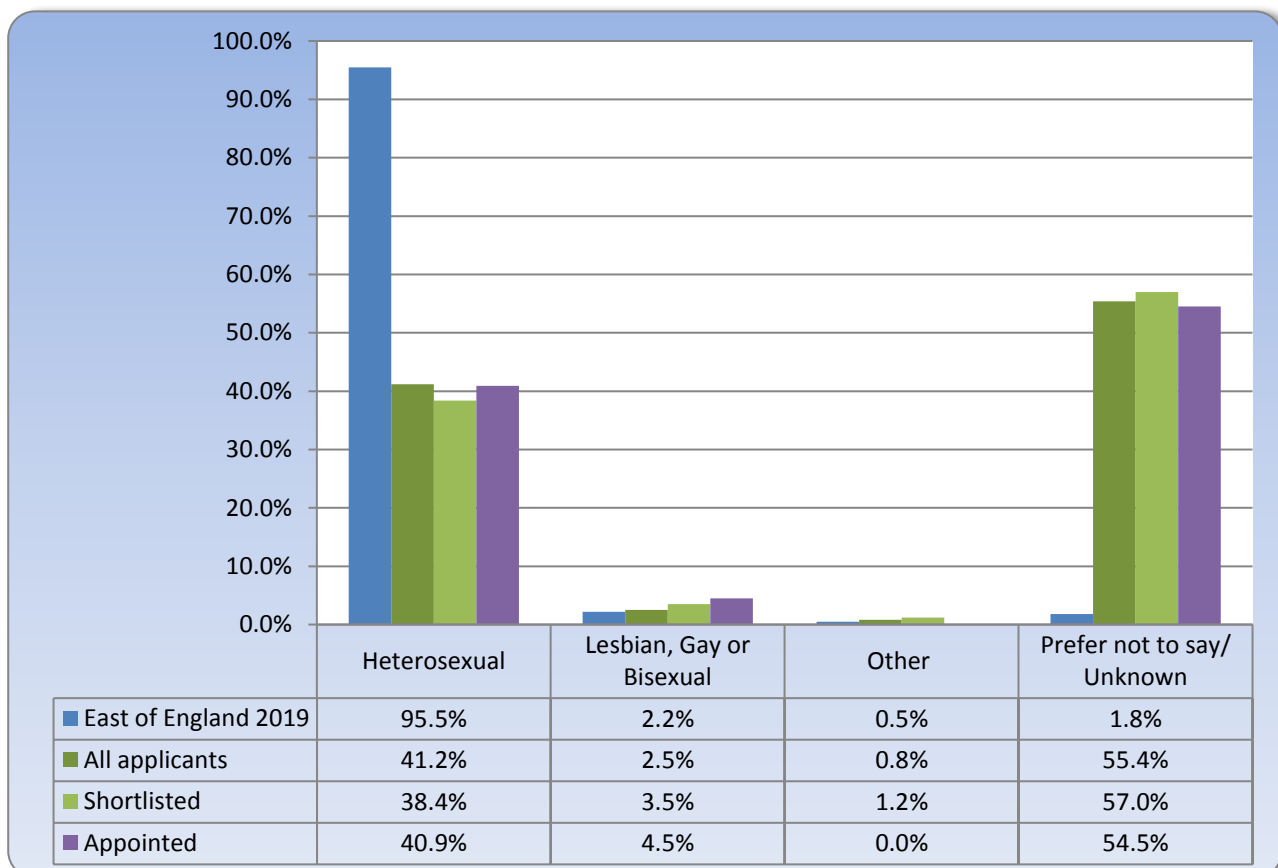


Figure 11.0 Applicant profile by sexual orientation compared to the East of England

Source: ONS – Sexual Identity by Region (East of England) – 2019.

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

Figure 11.0 shows that 2.5% of applicants in 2020/21 were lesbian, gay or bisexual, This is slightly higher than the percentage for the East of England population (2.2%) and is higher than 2019/20 (2.2%). It is positive to see that this rises to 3.5% at shortlisting and 4.5% at interview stage. This is an improvement on 2019/20 where of the 2.2% lesbian, gay or bisexual applicants, 0.8% were shortlisted and none were appointed.

Disciplinary, Grievance and Probation

(Grievance includes Bullying & Harassment complaints)

There were no formal disciplinary, grievance or probation cases in 2020/21.

Training

The 2020/21 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 comply with the COVID restrictions. 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 2020/21.

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 2020 and 31 March 2021. 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 26. Of these, 22 left voluntarily and 4 left involuntarily. The involuntary leavers include those temporary contract had come to an end or redundancy. Please refer to the Annual Turnover Report for 2020/21 (Human Resources Committee May 2021) 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. 3 employees took maternity leave in 2019/20 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)

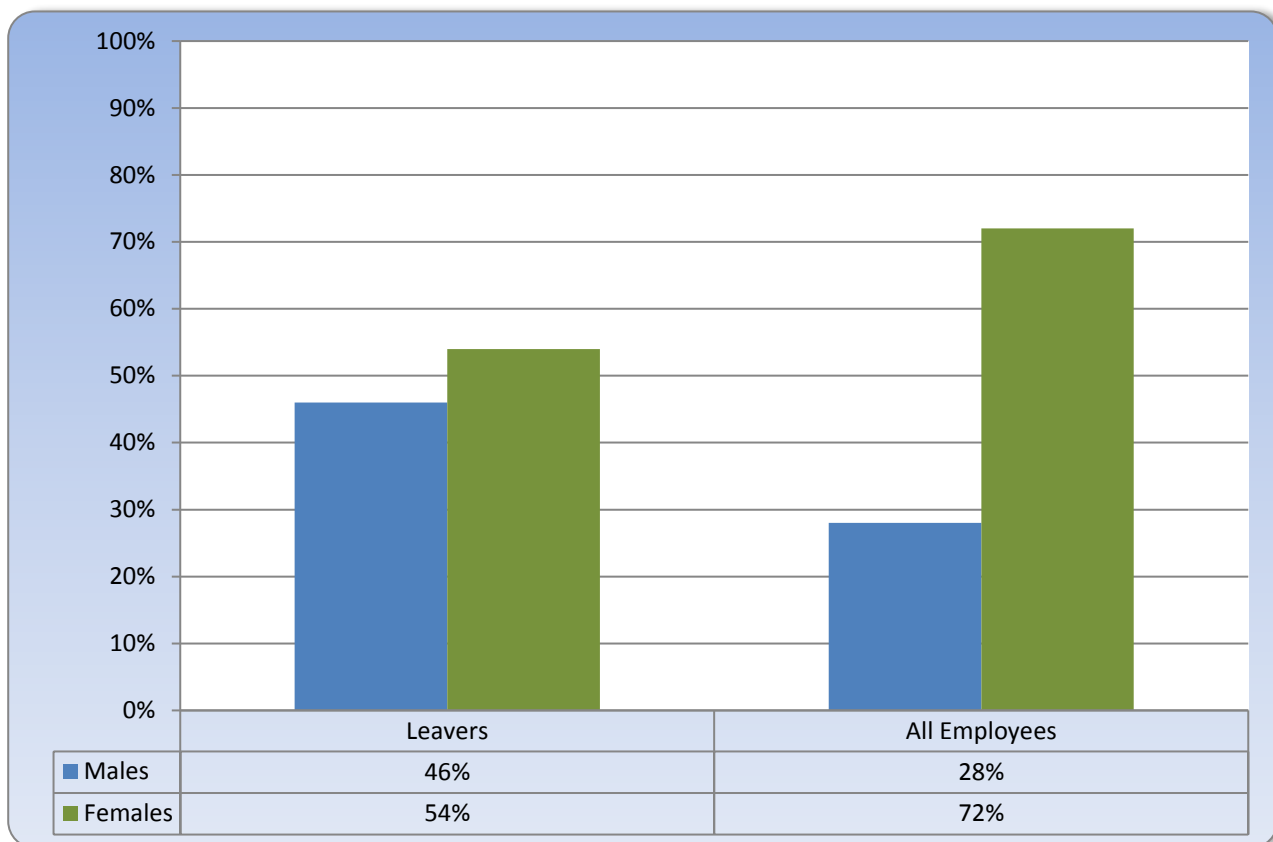


Figure 12.0 Leavers by sex

Figure 12.0 shows that there was a higher percentage of male leavers when compared to the percentage of male employees; 46% of leavers were male and 54% were female which is not reflective of the current employee profile (28% and 72% respectively). The percentage of male leavers has increased slightly since 2019/20, where 39% of leavers were male.

HR have reviewed exit questionnaires which has not indicated any gender related points, however it is also worth noting that the council in part has more female employees due to the flexible working arrangements offered and whilst this can also benefit men it does tend to mean female employees stay longer whereas men in predominately full-time roles are more able to move on to similar full-time roles in various sectors.

Ethnic Origin

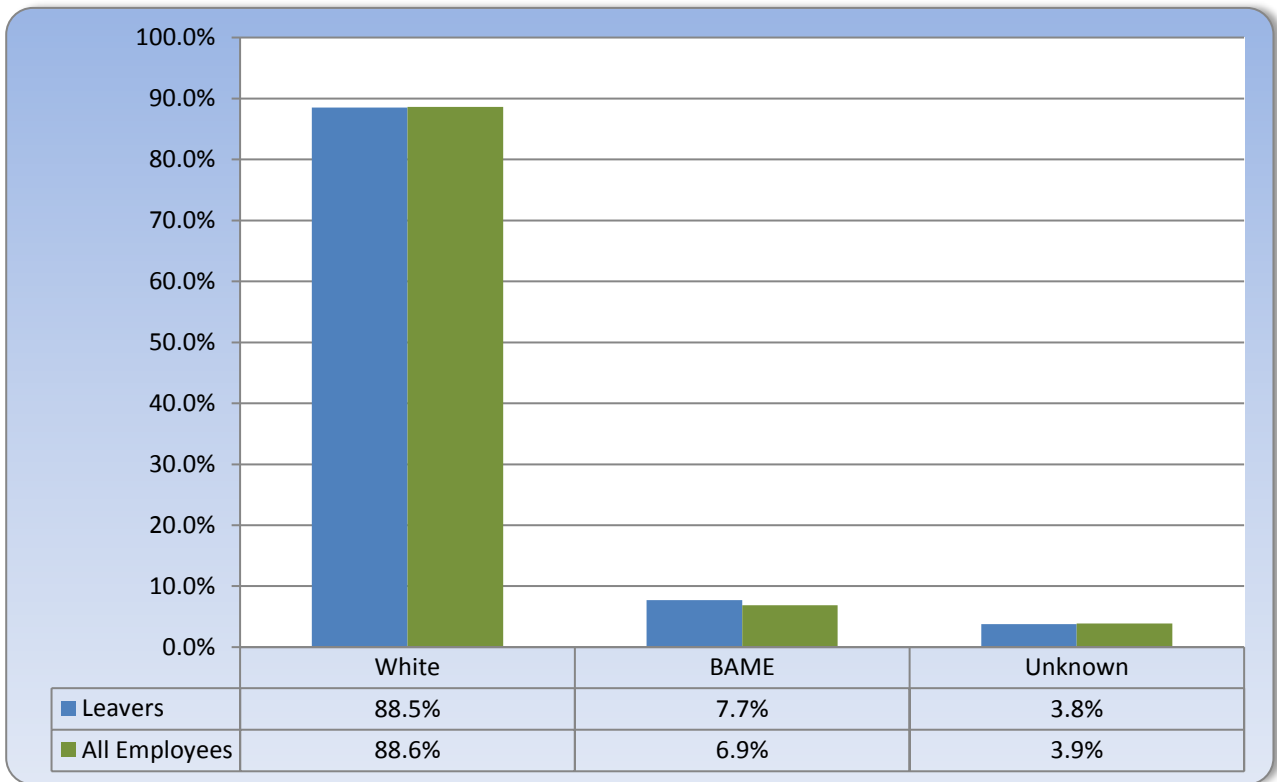


Figure 13.0 Leavers by ethnic origin

Figure 13.0 shows that there was a close alignment in the percentage of white and BAME leavers to the percentage of white and BAME employees; 7.7% of leavers were from BAME groups and 88.5% were white compared to the employee profile of 88.6% white and 6.9% BAME. This is positive when compared to the 2019/20 when 18.2% of leavers were from BAME groups and 69.7% were white. HR have reviewed exit questionnaires which has also not indicated any concerns regarding ethnic origin. It is also worth noting that in the Staff Survey run in December 2020 that 97% of responses agreed that the council welcomes and supports equality and diversity and addresses inequality/unfair practice and discrimination against staff.

Age

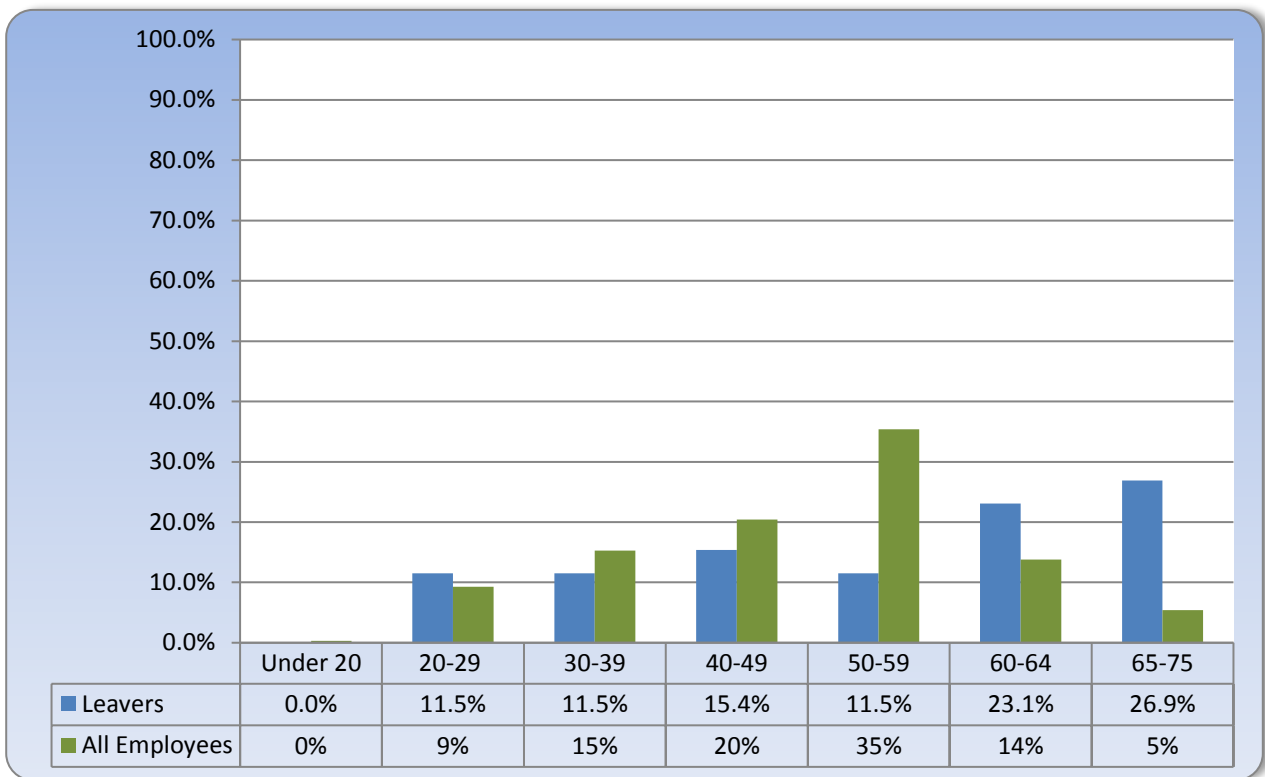


Figure 14.0 Leavers by age

Figure 14.0 shows that there was five times the percentage of leavers in the 65-75 age group and twice the percentage of leavers in the 60-64 age group than employees in this age range but this is due to employees in this age group taking retirement.

The percentage of leavers in the 20-29 age group (11.5%) was slightly higher than the percentage of employees in this age range (9%). 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

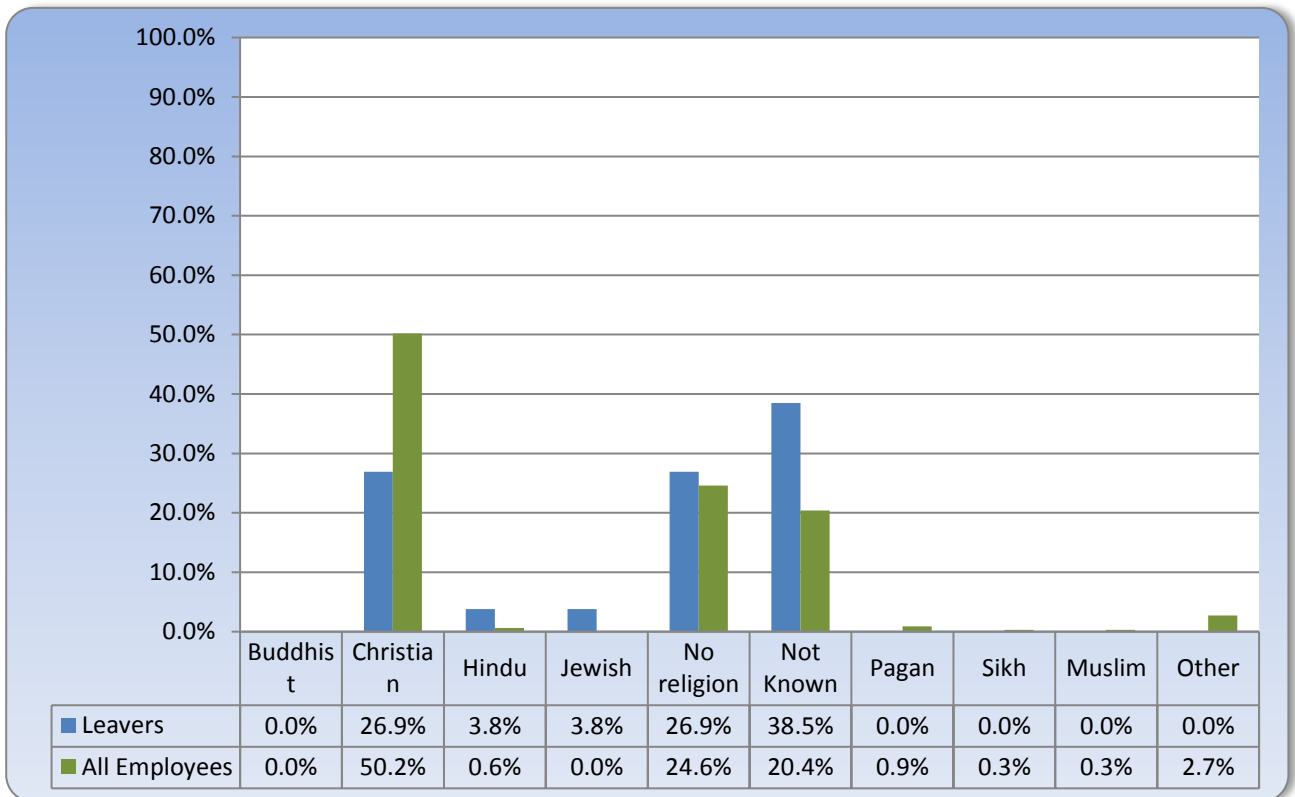


Figure 15.0 Leavers by religion

There are no concerns in this area, the religious belief of leavers in 2020/21 were generally reflective of the overall employee profile given the small numbers involved.

Disability

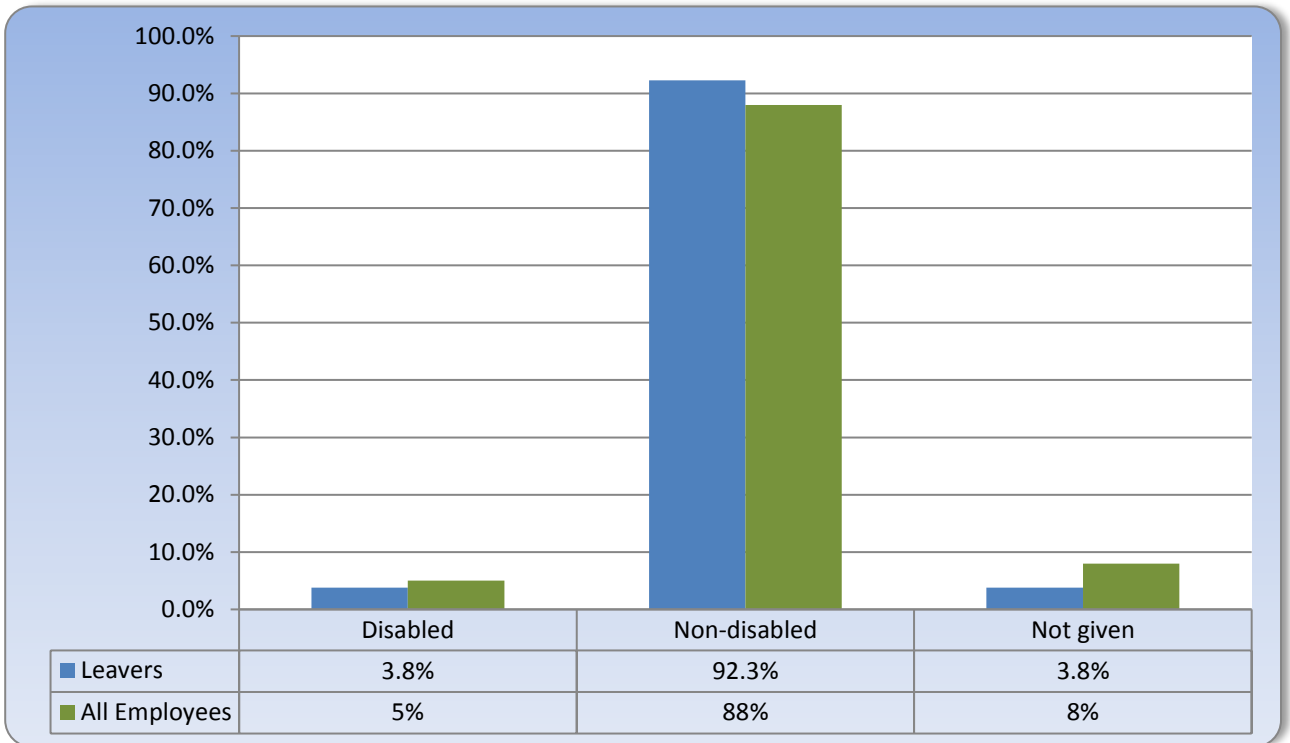


Figure 16.0 Leavers by disability

Figure 16.0 shows the percentage of leavers with a disability (3.8%) was slightly lower than the percentage of employees with a disability (5%). Therefore there are no indicated concerns in this area.

Staff and Employment Equality Action plan 1 July 21 – 31 June 22

The actions listed below refer to staff and employment only. The Council’s Equalities Officer will be responsible for generating a general equalities action plan.

Action	Timescale
Employee Profile	
To complete the required annual Gender Pay Gap report for 2021.	Published by March 2022
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.	January 2022
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.	February 2022
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	Ongoing.
Each interview panel chair to give consideration to the diversity of the interview panel and where possible try	Ongoing

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.	
Work with Shaw Trust to advertise our jobs with them to attract more disabled applicants.	November 2021
Finalise staff case studies that demonstrate diversity in our workforce and use them as part of our recruitment literature	November 2021
Implement an ATS that will include an electronic application form which automatically directs applicants to the equalities monitoring form and also enables name blind recruitment	October/November 2021
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 undertaken by the OD and HR Co-ordinator.	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
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