

# AGENDA

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**Meeting:** Staffing Policy Committee

**Place:** [Join the On-Line meeting here](#)

**Date:** Thursday 11 March 2021

**Time:** 10.30 am

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Please direct any enquiries on this Agenda to Kevin Fielding, of Democratic Services, County Hall, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge, direct line 01249 706612 or email [kevin.fielding@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:kevin.fielding@wiltshire.gov.uk)

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## Membership:

Cllr Richard Clewer

Cllr Mike Hewitt

Cllr Hayley Illman

Cllr Tony Jackson (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr Carole King

Cllr John Smale

Cllr Stuart Wheeler (Chairman)

Cllr Philip Whitehead

Cllr Ricky Rogers

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## Substitutes:

Cllr Fleur de Rhé-Philippe MBE

Cllr Peter Evans

Cllr David Halik

Cllr Bob Jones MBE

Cllr Gordon King

Cllr Ian McLennan

Cllr Jo Trigg

Cllr Tony Trotman

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Please see the agenda list on following pages for details of deadlines for submission of questions and statements for this meeting.

For extended details on meeting procedure, submission and scope of questions and other matters, please consult [Part 4 of the council's constitution](#).

The full constitution can be found at [this link](#).

For assistance on these and other matters please contact the officer named above for details

# AGENDA

## PART I

### Items to be considered while the meeting is open to the public

1 **Apologies for absence**

2 **Minutes of Previous Meeting** (*Pages 7 - 12*)

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 6 January 2021

3 **Declarations of Interest**

To receive any declarations of disclosable interests or dispensations granted by the Standards Committee

4 **Chairman's Announcements**

5 **Public Participation**

The Council welcomes contributions from members of the public.

#### Statements

If you would like to make a statement at this meeting on any item on this agenda, please contact the officer named on the front of the agenda for further clarification.

#### Questions

To receive any questions from members of the public or members of the Council received in accordance with the constitution.

Those wishing to ask questions are required to give notice of any such questions in writing to the officer named on the front of this agenda no later than 5pm on **Thursday 4 March 2021** in order to be guaranteed of a written response.

In order to receive a verbal response questions must be submitted no later than 5pm on **Monday 8 March 2021**. Please contact the officer named on the front of this agenda for further advice. Questions may be asked without notice if the Chairman decides that the matter is urgent.

Details of any questions received will be circulated to Committee members prior to the meeting and made available at the meeting and on the Council's website.

6        **Covid Response**

Verbal update – Jo Pitt

7        **OR programme**

Overview and then focused presentations on:

Career step roles (agile workstream) - Paula Marsh

Evolve programme update (high performance workstream) - Stuart Honeyball

Inclusion strategy and action plan (inclusion workstream) - Tamsin Kielb

8        **Gender Pay Gap** (*Pages 13 - 18*)

Catherine Coombs – HR Consultant, Diversity and Inclusion

9        **Diversity and Inclusion** (*Pages 19 - 44*)

Catherine Coombes

10       **Amendments to Eyecare Policy** (*Pages 45 - 54*)

Paula Marsh

11       **Amendments to Purchase of Annual Leave Policy** (*Pages 55 - 68*)

Paula Marsh

12       **Quarterly Report Oct - Dec 2020** (*Pages 69 - 74*)

Michael Taylor

13       **Urgent Items**

Any other items of business which, in the opinion of the Chairman, should be considered as a matter of urgency. Urgent items of a confidential nature may be considered under Part II of this agenda.

**PART II**

**Items during whose consideration it is recommended that the public should be excluded because of the likelihood that exempt information would be disclosed**

**None**

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### Staffing Policy Committee

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#### MINUTES OF THE STAFFING POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 6 JANUARY 2021

#### ON-LINE MEETING

#### Present:

Cllr Stuart Wheeler (Chairman), Cllr Tony Jackson (Vice-Chairman),  
Cllr Richard Clewer, Cllr Mike Hewitt, Cllr Hayley Illman, Cllr Carole King,  
Cllr Ricky Rogers, Cllr John Smale and Cllr Philip Whitehead

#### Also Present:

Jo Pitt - Director – HR & OD, Paula Marsh - HR & OD Strategic Delivery Manager,  
Michael Taylor – Workforce Insight Analyst, HR, Mike Osment – Branch Secretary,  
UNISON and Kevin Fielding - Democratic Services Officer

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#### 42 Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

#### 43 Minutes of Previous Meeting

#### Resolved:

- To confirm and sign the minutes of the last meeting held on  
Wednesday 4 November 2020

#### 44 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

#### 45 Chairman's Announcements

There were no Chairman's Announcements made at the meeting.

46 **Public Participation**

No statements or questions were received.

47 **Health and Safety Policy**

Paula Marsh outlined the written report contained in the agenda pack.

Points made included:

- That the local authority was required by the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 to set out its policy on health and safety.
- That the policy statement should set out a statement of intent from the most senior person(s); should set out the organisation that exists to carry out the policy; and make reference to the detailed arrangements for specific risks.
- That it was the responsibility of the Head of OH&S to keep this policy under review and to revise wherever necessary.
- That the paper outlined the latest revisions to the policy for consideration and agreement by Staffing Policy Committee.
- The changes in this revision were principally to reflect changes to the senior management structure. Wording had been amended to refer to the new Chief Executive post and to the Corporate Leadership Team, as the respective parties with primary responsibility for the health and safety of employees and others affected by the work undertakings of the local authority.
- In addition, the opportunity had been taken to streamline the responsibilities set out for each of the roles of:
  - Cabinet and Portfolio holder
  - Chief Executive
  - Directors and the Director of Public Health specifically
  - Heads of Service and the Head of Occupational Health and Safety specifically
- The detailed arrangements for the management of risk in regard to specific work tasks and settings were set out in policy/guidance documents that could be found on [HR Direct](#). Each of these sections was kept under review by the H&S team and they were updated as and when necessary due to changes in legislation or HSE guidance, or because of any internal accident or liability history.



- At this stage there were no significant changes to these parts of the corporate policy.

### **Decision**

- **That the Staffing Policy Committee noted the changes outlined in the report and agreed the revised Health and Safety Policy**
- **That following agreement at the Staffing Policy Committee the updated policy would be brought to the attention of all managers and employees**

*Note: Following comments from Cllr Clewer it was agreed that the wording in the updated Health and Safety policy should say:*

*“Members of the Cabinet and the portfolio holder for Public Health and Public Protection will”*

The Chairman thanked Paula Marsh for her report.

### 48 **Pay Policy Statement**

Paula Marsh outlined the report that was contained in the agenda pack.

Points made included:

- The pay policy statement set out the council’s approach to pay and reward for senior managers and the lowest paid employees for the financial year 2021-22.
- Its purpose was to provide a clear and transparent policy, which demonstrated accountability and value for money. The policy also met the council’s obligations under the Localism Act 2011 and the Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency.
- The pay policy was applicable to council staff and did not include schools support staff or teachers.
- The pay policy statement was first published in February 2012 and was updated on an annual basis. It had now been updated for the financial year 2021/22.
- The pay policy statement set out the pay policies which apply to both the lowest paid and highest paid employees within the council.

*Note; Cllr Clewer asked whether it was standard practice to exclude apprenticeship rates from ratios? It was confirmed this was standard*

*practice in local government where apprentices were paid on spot salaries.*

## **Decision**

- **That the Staffing Policy agreed and noted the report**

The Chairman thanked Paula Marsh for her report

## 49 **Quarterly Workforce report (Q2 July - Sept)**

Michael Taylor outlined the written report contained in the agenda pack including information relating to the attached staff wellbeing survey corporate results (Oct 2020).

Points made included:

- That the COVID-19 pandemic continued to impact how and where the council and its staff delivered services. During the July – September quarter, nationally we saw the first lockdown ease as numbers testing positive reduced over the summer months, although uncertainty around further restrictions remained.
- During this quarter the council moved from response to recovery phase and commenced planning and implementation of an Organisational Recovery Programme whilst allowing more staff to return to the office for specific business requirements or for wellbeing reasons. However for a large proportion of staff working from home continued during this quarter, evidenced by 82% of staff who responded to the wellbeing survey (conducted at the end of September 2020) identifying that they had been working from home for most or all of their time. As the pandemic continued to require different ways of working, it was critical to continue to monitor the affect on the workforce.
- Records showed that the coronavirus illness had very little impact on sickness absence this quarter, contributing only 1 absence spanning 3 working days (0.1% of the total absence days lost in the quarter). However during this time new absence codes were introduced to monitor staff who were self-isolating (but where this was not counted as “sickness” absence). Throughout the quarter there were a further 39 staff self-isolating where it impacted their ability to do their job and were therefore unable to work. A further 21 in the quarter were required to self-isolate however were still able to work from home.
- These figures compared to 253 days lost in the previous quarter (April – June) - however this previous figure encompassed all of the different absence reasons covered above.

- Through the response phase of the pandemic Wiltshire Council were monitoring the impact of COVID-19 on team capacity on a daily basis, and in the July – September quarter only 1% of the workforce were impacted to the point that they weren't able to perform the duties of their role, and therefore it had had little direct impact.

Points and comments made by the Committee included:

- That it was important that office equipment which staff needed to work from home was available, and that some may not have the space to work from home.
- That the Q3 report should be circulated to Staffing Policy Committee members when it became available.

### **Decision**

- **The Staffing Policy Committee noted the report**

## 50 **Organisational Recovery Programme**

Jo Pitt and Paula Marsh gave a verbal update.

A power point presentation was shown, this presentation was circulated to the Staffing Policy Committee members for their information.

Points made included:

- In March, as part of Covid response Wiltshire Council had set up an organisational resilience cell.
- As Wiltshire Council moved into recovery it had set up an internal organisational recovery programme – which looks at its workplaces, workforce and the way it works.
- This was a large internal programme but it was important that the council align work happening in OR with work in external recovery themes and also with other major programmes of work happening internally.
- That there are good links across these programmes, both through HR business partners and also through the programme office / systems thinking team who support across all these programmes of work.
- The programme feeds up through the board (chaired by the senior responsible officers – Jo Pitt and Andy Brown) to CLT and messages are cascaded out from CTL through ELT and via forums such as the managers forum, through SMTs to staff.

- In the New Year the programme would have a page on the new intranet which would make regular communication and information sharing with staff and managers easier.
- Wiltshire Council were also using staff engagement groups such as its EPIC group and Digital Champions to communicate key messages and get feedback
- Wiltshire Council provided monthly updates to the unions and they had been involved in relevant task groups.
- The aim of the programme was to learn from the response to Covid and to use what had been learned to emerge leaner and stronger. It was a wide ranging programme and had got input from across the council.

Other points made included:

- That HR were working with staff who may need to be re-deployed over the coming weeks.
- That, amongst other things, Wiltshire Council staff could help to provide transport for people struggling to be vaccinated if required
- That some furloughing of Wiltshire Council staff might need to happen once options for redeployment had been exhausted.
- That staff had been advised not come into hubs unless really needed – director approval was required.
- That HR would be issuing guidance to managers of staff who were working at home whilst looking after children regarding the need to be flexible.

The Chairman thanked Jo Pitt and Paula Marsh for their updates.

51 **Close**

(Duration of meeting: 10.30 - 11.20 am)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Kevin Fielding of Democratic Services, direct line 01249 706612, e-mail [kevin.fielding@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:kevin.fielding@wiltshire.gov.uk)

Press enquiries to Communications, direct line (01225) 713114/713115

## Gender pay gap reporting

### **Purpose**

1. The purpose of this item is to present the gender pay gap data and report required to be published on behalf of Wiltshire Council for the reference date of 31 March 2020.

### **Background**

2. Gender pay gap reporting came into effect from April 2017 and requires organisations with 250 or more employees to publish and report specific figures about their gender pay gap – the difference between the average earnings of men and women, expressed relative to men’s earnings.
3. These obligations have been introduced alongside the public-sector equality duty’s (PSED) existing publishing requirements for public bodies.
4. Public Sector organisations must publish a set of figures via the government’s online reporting service each year. For Wiltshire Council, the figures must be based on the reference date of the 31 March to be published by 30 March the following year. Due to the impact of the covid pandemic, the EHRC recently announced a six month extension to the deadline for employers to report their gender pay gap data this year. The council will aim to report its gender pay gap figures by 30 March as usual.
5. The set of figures required include:
  - mean gender pay gap in hourly pay
  - median gender pay gap in hourly pay
  - mean bonus gender pay gap
  - median bonus gender pay gap
  - proportion of males and females receiving a bonus payment
  - proportion of males and females in each pay quartile
6. The figures required by the government cover the mean and median gender pay gap figures. The mean provides an average figure which can capture where men and women are in terms of earning distributions and the labour market. The median provides a mid-point figure which is not affected by extreme values including, small numbers of very high or low hourly pay rates.

7. These figures must also be published on the council's external website to ensure accessibility to employees and the public and must remain for a period of 3 years from the publication date.
8. A narrative in the form of a report is usually published to support the data and this year the format for this has been revised into a new info-graphic format (see attached) which will be published. This type of format has been adopted by many other organisations and it is hoped that the shorter and more visual style of the report will make it more accessible and engaging.
9. All relevant employees are included in the data. Agency workers and contractors are not included.
10. For schools, the governing body is responsible for publishing gender pay gap data if they have more than 250 employees. As a result of this, the majority of schools are not affected by the obligations.

### **Key findings**

11. The key data and proposed actions are set out in the gender pay gap info graphic report attached.
12. The report notes that the median rate has decreased slightly this year and the mean rate has increased and explains the reasons for this in the section under gender pay gap changes.
13. The action plan included in last year's report contained actions to continue to promote flexible working and family friendly policies and to promote senior female role models as part of an international women's day in March, and this work continues to take place. We also continue to monitor a variety of data related to female staff to help us understand if further action is required which may have an impact on the gender pay gap, including: starters and leavers by pay quartiles, access to training opportunities and apprenticeships, and take up of flexible working and family friendly policies. This data will continue to be monitored as part of the new inclusion and diversity strategy.
14. The council is committed to reducing the gender pay gap and improving inclusion, diversity and accessibility, and providing equality of opportunity for all. This has been identified as a priority under the Council's Organisational Recovery programme, with a workstream focused on strategic development of this area, and ensuring links are made between this and other workstreams under the programme. Inclusion has also been identified as a key element of 'Our identity' at the council and this reflects that inclusion and equality underpin the services which the council delivers to the community and sets out expectations about how all staff are expected to work to deliver our vision of building stronger communities.
15. As part of this work the council is in the process of producing a new inclusion strategy which will include actions to improve inclusion, diversity and accessibility for all staff and which we hope will also have a positive impact on our gender pay

gap in support of the actions identified in last year's gender pay gap report which are included in the report.

16. It is positive that the council's gender pay gap continues to be well below the national gender pay gap and public sector gender pay gap, however it is recognised that we have a lower percentage of women in the upper salary quartile and that this has decreased slightly further this year. There are likely to be a variety of reasons for this including social factors, some of which may be outside the council's sphere of control or influence. The council is not complacent and will continue to monitor the figures and take the actions indicated on the infographic report.

### **Environmental Impact of the proposal**

17. None.

### **Equalities impact of the proposal**

18. None.

### **Risk Assessment**

19. None

### **Financial Implications of the proposal**

20. None

### **Recommendations**

21. It is recommended that Staffing Policy Committee note the contents of the gender pay gap infographic report and action plan and the obligations placed on the council with regards to the publication of gender pay gap data.

**Joanne Pitt**  
**Director - HR&OD**

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*Report author: Catherine Coombs, HR Consultant – Diversity and Inclusion*

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# Gender pay gap report

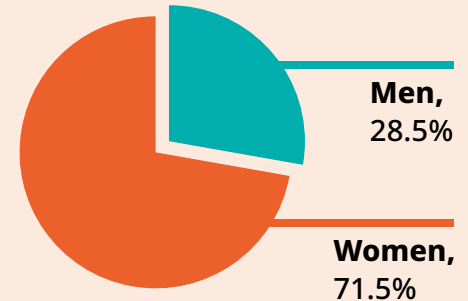


Wiltshire Council (based on data from 31 March 2020)



Under the Equality Act 2010 (specific duties and public authorities) regulations 2017, gender pay gap reporting requires organisations with 250 or more employees to publish a gender pay gap report.

**Headcount: 4493**  
**3214 women, 1279 men**



The headcount figures are based on the [GPG reporting requirements](#)



## Mean Gap\*

Men's mean hourly rate is **9.8%** higher than women's  
Compared to **9.4%** in March 2019 this gap has increased.

## Median Gap\*\*

Men's median hourly rate is **5.5%** higher than women's  
Compared to **6.1%** in March 2019 this gap has decreased.



## Average hourly rate

**Men:** Mean hourly rate of **£16.11**  
Median hourly rate of **£14.42**

**Women:** Mean hourly rate of **£14.53**  
Median hourly rate of **£13.63**



# £ = £

The gender pay gap is different to equal pay. The council is committed to the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment for all employees. It has a clear policy of paying employees equally for the same or equivalent work and has appropriate job evaluation, processes, pay audits and gradings structures in place to support this.

## Gender pay gap changes

The median hourly rates for both male and female staff have risen this year, with female pay increasing slightly more, causing a slight decrease (improvement) in the median pay gap. This was influenced by a slight adjustment as a result of new pay scale ranges. We note the slight change to the mean and will continue to monitor this.

## Gender bonus payment gap

The mean and median bonus pay gap is 0.0%. 0.2% of males received a bonus and 0.4% of females received a bonus. These all relate to bonus payments and are the result of 16 women and three men receiving the Long Service Award of £150.

Our gender pay gap is less than both the national gender pay gap figures for the whole economy (ONS ASHE provisional figures 2020), and the national public sector figures.

**Wiltshire Council**  
gender pay gap  
Mean: **9.8%**  
Median: **5.5%**

**National Public Sector**  
gender pay gap  
Mean: **14.5%**  
Median: **15.8%**

**National Economy**  
gender pay gap  
Mean: **14.6%**  
Median: **15.5%**

\* Mean – the average of a set of numbers. This is achieved by adding up the values and then dividing by the number of values.  
\*\* Median – the middle number in a ranked list of numbers. The median is used to determine an approximate average.

# Pay Quartiles

## Upper



## Upper middle



## Lower middle



## Lower



## Our workforce demographics:



The quartile split for each of the four pay quartiles is broadly in line with our workforce demographics of 71.5% female and 28.5% male. However, there are proportionately slightly more females in the first three quartiles and fewer females in the upper pay quartile (highest pay). This is a key factor for the gender pay gap, as (proportionately) more women at lower grades and fewer women at higher grades affects the mean and median pay for the female workforce, as shown in the data to the left. For there to be no gender pay gap, you would expect to see the workforce demographics (71.5% female and 28.5% male) reflected in each of these quartiles. The data indicates that there has been a 1.2% decrease in female staff in the upper pay quartile since 2019. However, female staff also saw a 0.5% decrease in the lowest quartile compared to last year.

Further analysis of our pay scales indicates women are represented proportionately to our workforce demographics up to grade K (currently up to £34,728) after which point the proportion of women across the more senior grades is less than the proportion of women in the workforce as a whole. There are likely to be a variety of reasons for this, including social factors and the council seeks to remove any organisational barriers wherever possible. We recognise, however, that we need to carry out more work to support women into senior roles.

## Actions to support gender pay equality

Continue to offer and promote a range of flexible working options, including improving our offering at senior level.

Launch a reverse mentoring pilot.

Encourage and promote participation and membership of our staff networks.

Develop a new inclusion and diversity strategy to include actions to support women as well as other minority groups.

Rollout diversity and inclusion training to senior managers and councillors.

Embed inclusive practice into our policies and procedures.

Highlight senior role models through events and communications to help break gender stereotypes.

Introduce inclusion and diversity champions from across the organisation and the leadership team to support the delivery of the inclusion strategy.

Promote leadership, development coaching and mentoring opportunities to under-represented groups.

## Inclusion and Diversity Monitoring Report

### Purpose of Report

1. To present the updated annual inclusion and diversity employment monitoring report. The council is required to produce this information annually as part of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) in line with the Equality Act 2010.

### Background

2. In March 2020 Wiltshire Council published its [inclusion and diversity employment monitoring report 2018/19](#) on the Wiltshire Council website.
3. The council is required to publish the updated inclusion and diversity employment monitoring report for 2019/2020 by the 31 March 2021. The headcount figures in this report have been based on workforce data as at 1 October 2020 or, where monitoring information is reviewed over a year, the reference period used is 12 months up to 1 October 2020 (for recruitment, leavers etc). There is no set reference date for the collection of workforce data as there is for the gender pay gap.
4. This year the format for the report has been revised and includes a new info-graphic style format for presenting the data. It is hoped that the shorter and more visual style of the report will make it more accessible and engaging.
5. The report contains whole council workforce data and then a breakdown of this information by each of the protected characteristics where information is available. The headcount figures in this report are collected from the equality monitoring exercises which have been carried out annually over the last few years (detailed below in para. 12). Where figures are low for particular groups, the data has not been included where this might lead to individual staff being able to be identified or, where possible, has been aggregated to protect individual confidentiality.
6. This report previously contained some gender pay gap information in line with the requirements of the PSED, but this information is now contained in a separate gender pay gap report which is also being presented to this committee.
7. This year the council has produced figures for the ethnicity and disability pay gap for the first time and these are included in this report (pages 8 and 10) The government has carried out consultations on the potential requirement for organisations to produce ethnicity pay gap figures and the outcome is still awaited. This report also contains information on the council turnover rate, which is new to this report.
8. It is noted that some of the data in this report has been impacted by the Covid 19 pandemic. In particular, this can be seen in the recruitment figures which have significantly reduced in this report.
9. As part of our PSED, the council is required to publish equality objectives. The council has identified several service and workforce (HR) related equality objectives and these have been subject to public consultation and are regularly reviewed. The equality objectives are monitored by the corporate equality and inclusion steering group. Full details of the council's equality objectives and how these link to the Wiltshire Council business plan are set out on the [Wiltshire Council website](#).

10. Also, as part of our PSED the council is also required to publish data on service users. This information will continue to be collected and published by the executive office support team. These are available on the [Wiltshire Council website](#).

## Data Monitoring

11. Historically the council has collected, monitored and published data on sex, disability, ethnicity and age in relation to our current workforce, leavers and applicants for employment. The council now collects equalities monitoring on all the protected characteristics - this includes religion and belief; sexual orientation; marriage and civil partnerships; and gender reassignment. In addition, we also collect data on caring responsibilities.
12. Collecting this additional information has made our data more accurate and robust in terms of meeting the requirements of the PSED and will help to inform the work on the council's people strategy. Data collection also assists the council in assessing the impact of its policies and practices on different groups within the workforce and enables the council to identify and take positive steps to address gaps. Members of staff are asked to complete an equalities monitoring questionnaire to enable the collection of this data. Improving data collection forms part of the council's equality objectives.
13. The use of a regular equalities questionnaire to collect data has led to a reduction in the unstated figures over past years. There was a slight decrease in the number of applicants completing the equalities monitoring form as part of the recruitment process this year. Completing the equalities monitoring questionnaire is optional for staff and applicants. We will continue to review this and undertake equalities monitoring exercises periodically to ensure that we continue to improve our data gaps and the council continues to work on building an inclusive culture to create a working environment where staff and applicants feel confident to share their equalities data.
14. In general, the data contained in the report shows an increase in the number of staff who have provided us with equalities monitoring information and therefore a decrease in the unstated figures (data gaps). The report did see a reduction in the number of under 25's working for the council. The under 25's represent 5.54% of the workforce compared to 7.24% in the last report. It was noted that the recruitment figures have significantly reduced this year due to the response to the pandemic and financial restrictions and it is likely that the range of posts has also been impacted. The turnover rates for the under 25's are also higher than the council average. The council has set up a number of initiatives in relation to increasing the numbers of under 25's and this forms one of the council's equality objectives.
15. Two areas which we continue to monitor are BME recruitment and the percentage of females in the top salary band. The percentage of BME applicants increased slightly to 12.04% compared to 9.84% in the last report and appointments increased to 5.17% from 4.43% in the last report. This continues to be below the level of appointments which would be expected and the council will continue to monitor this and take action as required. The percentage of females in the top salary band has slightly decreased. Further information about remuneration for females in the top salary band is set out in the gender pay gap report which is presented as a separate report for this committee.
16. The council is committed to improving inclusion, diversity and accessibility, reducing our pay gaps and providing equality of opportunity for all. This has been identified as a priority under the Council's Organisational Recovery programme, with a workstream focused on strategic development of this area, and ensuring links are made between this and other workstreams under the programme.

17. Through this workstream the council is in the process of producing a new inclusion strategy which will include actions to improve inclusion, diversity and accessibility for all staff. Outcomes relating to this will be measured and will be reflected in future reports.
18. A focus of the workstream is on developing the positive actions outlined in the monitoring report, including the continued promotion and development of the three staff networks.
19. Inclusion has also been identified as a key element of 'Our identity' at the council and this reflects that inclusion and equality underpin the services which the council delivers to the community and sets out expectations about how all staff are expected to work to deliver our vision of building stronger communities.

#### **Environmental Impact of the Proposal**

20. None.

#### **Equalities Impact of the Proposal**

21. As set out in the report.

#### **Risk Assessment**

22. This is a statutory requirement to comply with the PSED.

#### **Options Considered**

23. None.

#### **Recommendation**

24. That the Committee note the contents of this report and that this information will be used to support the development of an action plan linked to the new Inclusion strategy

**Joanne Pitt**  
**Director – HR&OD**

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*Report Author: Catherine Coombs and Leire Fernandez, HR&OD Strategy and Insight team*  
**The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this Report:** None

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**Wiltshire Council**

**Inclusion and Diversity Employment Monitoring Report**

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## Introduction

As a public body, Wiltshire Council is required to publish workforce data to demonstrate our compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) (Equality Act 2010). The PSED places a specific duty on the council to publish information about its employees and service users broken down by relevant protected characteristic to show how the council is having due regard to:

- Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advancing equality of opportunity
- Fostering good relations between people

This report forms part of this duty and is based on all non-school workforce figures for 1 October 2020 or, where monitoring information is reviewed over a year, the reference period used is 12 months up to 1 October 2020 (for recruitment, leavers etc). The report does not include casual staff.

It is recognised that this year the council, like many organisations, has felt the impact of the coronavirus pandemic and that this has had an impact on some of the figures in this report, including recruitment and training.

## Equality objectives

As part of the public-sector equality duty the council is required to identify equality objectives. These include service equality objectives and objectives relating to the council's workforce. These objectives are reviewed regularly and have been subject to public consultation. The information set out in this report is used to identify and inform the council's equality objectives. Our objectives in relation to workforce are:

1. Improving our workforce data
2. Reducing bullying and harassment in relation to staff with protected characteristics
3. Increasing the number of under 25's in the council workforce
4. Ensuring staff with protected characteristics feel more supported and recognised in the council

Further details of the council's equality objectives can be found on the [council website](#).

## Development of a new Inclusion and Diversity (I&D) strategy

The council is in the process of reviewing our policies and practices against the Local Government Equality Framework. The outcome of this review will inform our inclusion and diversity strategy and action plan as part of the Organisational recovery programme.

Some of the actions we have already identified include:

- Ensuring that senior managers attend face to face inclusion and diversity training and that this is cascaded to directorates.
- Continuing to improve awareness of bullying and harassment and improve staff confidence in reporting bullying and harassment. This includes further work on a trial staff conflict resolution (mediation) scheme.
- Promoting development, coaching and mentoring opportunities to under-represented groups.
- Building staff confidence in disclosing information regarding their protected characteristics to decrease unstated figures.

## Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) steering group

As part of the new strategy, the existing corporate EDI steering group has been reorganised. It will be chaired by a Director I&D sponsor and will include I&D champions from across the leadership team as well as representation from across the organisation and the staff networks. Their aim will be

to act as a voice for inclusion both in the organisation and in the community; role model inclusive behaviour and provide strategic oversight in relation to:

- Ensuring the council's compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty
- Agreeing the council's equality objectives (to be published every 4 years)
- Overseeing the delivery of the equality objectives and action plan
- Supporting the delivery of the council's Inclusion Strategy

### **Continuing good practice**

The council is committed to continuing good practice in relation to creating an inclusive environment for all employees. We demonstrate this commitment via the following:

#### **1. Supporting the work of the Staff networks**

The council has three staff networks which staff can choose to join. The networks offer mutual support, raise awareness and give advice on specific equality issues and act as a consultative voice to the council. The staff networks are:

- Carers and disability network
- Black and minority ethnic (BME) network
- LGBT+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans) network (this is open to anyone working in the public sector, including the local authority area of Swindon).

#### **2. Engaging with trade unions**

We regularly engage with the trade unions via informal meetings and discussions and more formal meetings including the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC). Trade unions are regularly consulted on new and updated policies and projects, engaged in equality analysis panels and take an active role as members of job evaluation panels.

#### **3. Developing Human resource policies and procedures**

The council has a range of suitable policies which have been put in place to address equality concerns. HR policies and procedures are widely consulted on, written to comply with the Equality Act 2010 and other appropriate legislation and are also equality impact assessed.

This year the council has created a range of policies, toolkits and guidance to support staff in response to the challenges brought by the Covid pandemic, including guidance to support staff with homeworking, caring responsibilities, and mental health support. The Covid pandemic has also meant that a much higher proportion of staff have been working from home. The council has set up two working groups to look at ways to become more agile in our ways of working, redesign our workspaces and be more flexible in the way the council uses its buildings.

#### **4. Having due regard and carrying out Equality Impact Assessments**

Equality impact assessments are carried out to ensure that due regard is given to the aims of the general equality duty when we plan, deliver and make decisions about the work of the council. Regular equality analysis panels are set up to consider the impact of new and modified policies and procedures on diversity and inclusion and the three general equality duties. Representatives from HR&OD, trade unions and members of our staff networks attend the panels to ensure a breadth of perspective.

The corporate diversity and inclusion steering group continues to promote and provide support on equality impact assessments across services and provide workshops to improve skills in this area. Further information on Equality Analysis can be found on our [website](#).

## 5. Benchmarking and sharing good practice

The council belongs to the South West Equalities Network (SWEN) and regularly attends meetings with colleagues from other local authorities to share information, benchmarking and best practice. The council is also part of a newly formed local public EDI leads network.

The council is a member of the government's Disability Confident scheme and the Employer's Network for Equality and Inclusion (ENEI). ENEI provide advice and support on equality issues related to all the protected characteristics.

### Methodology

#### How we collect equality information

The monitoring information set out in this report has mainly been collected from the council's management information system (SAP), our recruitment system (Talentlink), and from monitoring information collected by HR&OD. The council also collects additional anonymous equality and diversity data through the staff engagement survey. During the last year the council has also conducted two well-being surveys to understand the impact of the pandemic on our workforce.

An equality monitoring questionnaire was also sent out to provide staff with the opportunity to update their equality and diversity information and to help reduce any data gaps. The equalities monitoring questionnaire was supported with clear information about why we were collecting the information and how it would be used. Staff were encouraged to complete as much of the questionnaire as possible but could opt to state 'prefer not to say', if they did not feel comfortable sharing their information.

#### What data we collect

We collect data on all the protected characteristics in addition to caring responsibilities at different stages of the employee lifecycle. This enables the council to analyse and assess the impact of policies, procedures practices and decisions on specific groups and to identify where action is required to remedy any disadvantage and promote equality of opportunity for all.

#### Data gaps

Overall, the unstated figures in all areas continue to improve year on year although it still remains high in some areas. This has meant that where the figures are low for particular groups the data has not been included or has been aggregated to protect individual confidentiality. The council will continue to seek to readdress this gap in data and reduce the unstated figures by building confidence amongst staff in sharing this information.

#### What information is included in this report

This report sets out data based on the key areas of the employee lifecycle which the council currently monitors. These are:

- **Recruitment:** We monitor the protected characteristics of all applicants who apply for roles through our e-recruitment system and this report looks at the overall applications received, the number of shortlisted applicants and successful/appointed applicants. This year the council has applied a recruitment freeze due to financial restrictions linked to the Covid pandemic.
- **Internal appointments and promotions:** We monitor applications for internal appointments and promotions. The information presented in this report relates to jobs advertised internally

and includes all positions regardless of whether that job represents a promotion or a sideways move within the council.

- **Turnover and leaver information:** This is the first time that the council has included turnover figures in this report. Turnover refers to the proportion of employees that leave within a time period, expressed as a percentage of total workforce numbers. The report provides a breakdown of turnover rates by protected characteristics and compares this to the whole council turnover average. The report also includes information about the main reason for leaving employment for different protected characteristics.
- **Disciplinary and grievance:** The report includes a count of all staff that have raised grievance procedures or are the subject of disciplinary procedures. The figures reflect the number of cases that resulted in a formal outcome and excludes cases which were not completed or resulted in informal or no action. Figures tend to vary from year to year and represent low numbers. The number of grievances this year was particularly low, and this may have resulted in higher percentages for smaller groups.
- **Remuneration:** The data contained in the report includes a breakdown of our pay grades against some of the protected characteristics to show the distribution of staff across the different pay grades. For ease of presentation we have not included unstated figures in the charts. The council has also produced figures for the ethnicity pay gap and the disability pay gap for the first time this year as set out in the ethnicity and disability sections. Our gender pay gap figures are covered in another report which can be [found here](#).
- **Training:** The report includes attendance figures for the Wiltshire Leadership programme which is a programme aimed at developing future leaders.
- **Actions:** The report includes information about the actions we have taken in the last twelve months to drive inclusion and some of the initiatives we will be implementing in the future.

The council also monitors data relating to formal requests for flexible working. However, due to the low numbers of flexible working requests this year, the data has not been included in this report due to data protection and the need to protect staff confidentiality.

# ORGANISATIONAL OVERVIEW

The total headcount of staff in post as of 1 October 2020 was 4605. This has decreased from 4744 in 2019. The figures exclude our schools' workforce. The headcount figures used in this report are different to the [gender pay gap](#) report figures which are based on gender pay gap reporting requirements.

## TOTAL COUNCIL WORKFORCE



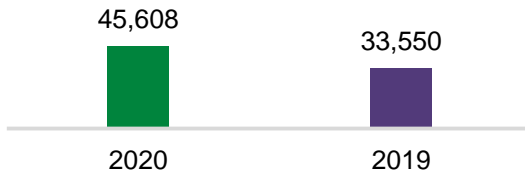
## TOTAL RECRUITMENT



## INTERNAL RECRUITMENT



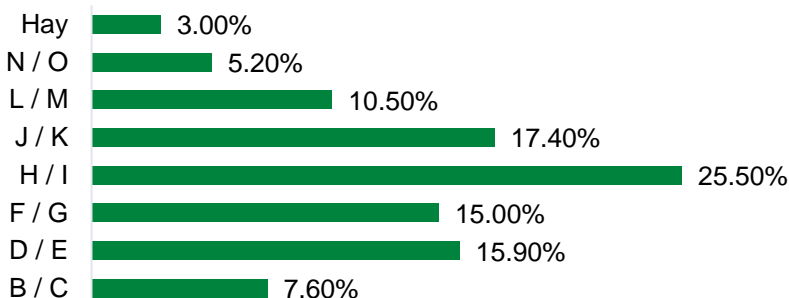
## TRAINING ATTENDANCES



## TOTAL LEAVERS



## PAY GRADES



## HEADCOUNT BY PART-TIME AND FULL-TIME



Applicants recruited and appointed

580

Leavers

633

Internal transfers or promotions

212

Council turnover

11.96%

Learning and development event attendances

45,608

Wiltshire Leadership Programme attendances

252

Total council non-schools' workforce

4605

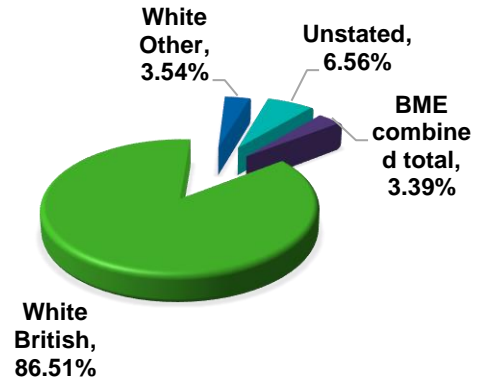
# ETHNICITY

The figures from the Wiltshire census 2011 indicate that 3.56% of the working population in Wiltshire have a BME background.

3.39% of the workforce indicated that they have a BME background compared to 3.04% in 2019. This increase brings the council closer to the Wiltshire census figure for the BME working population in Wiltshire.

93.44% of staff have disclosed their ethnicity. This is an improvement on the figures for 2019 where 91.38% of staff disclosed their ethnicity.

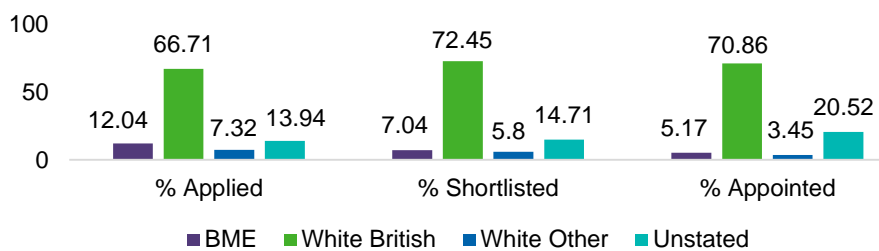
## % HEADCOUNT BY ETHNICITY



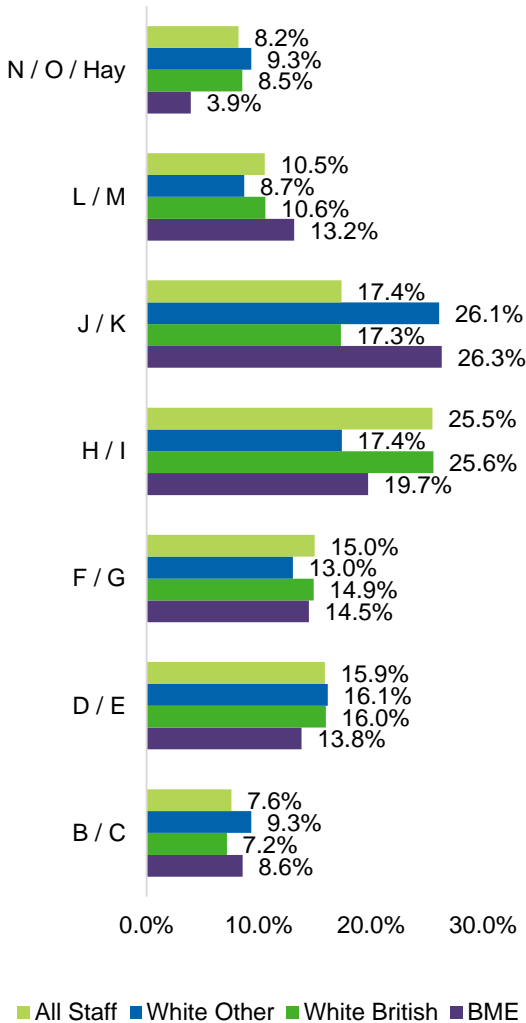
## TOTAL RECRUITMENT

A lower proportion of people appointed were BME and white other compared to the proportion of total applicants who were from those groups. This is also the case for internal recruitment and promotions

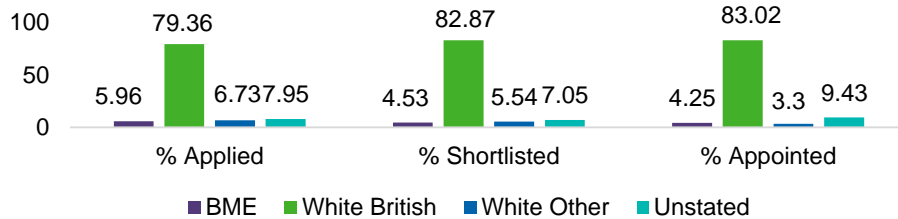
## % TOTAL RECRUITMENT BY ETHNICITY



## % GRADE BY ETHNICITY



## % INTERNAL RECRUITMENT BY ETHNICITY

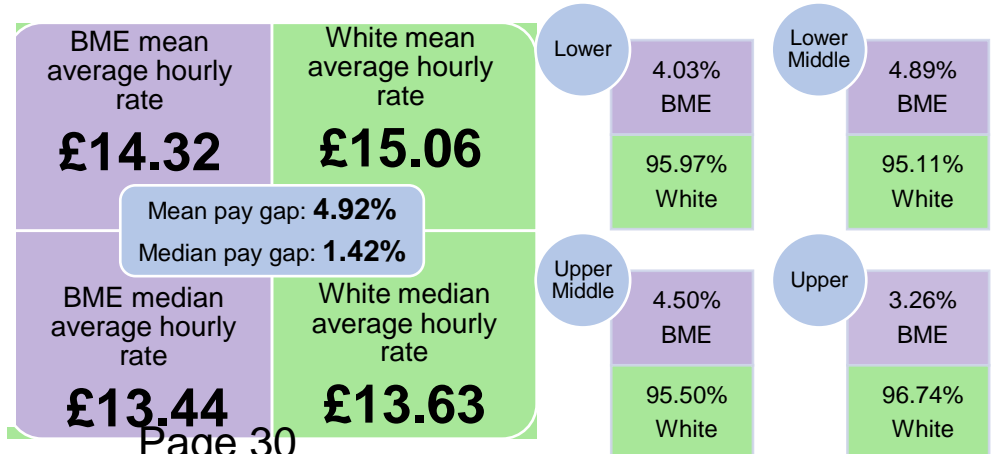


## REMUNERATION

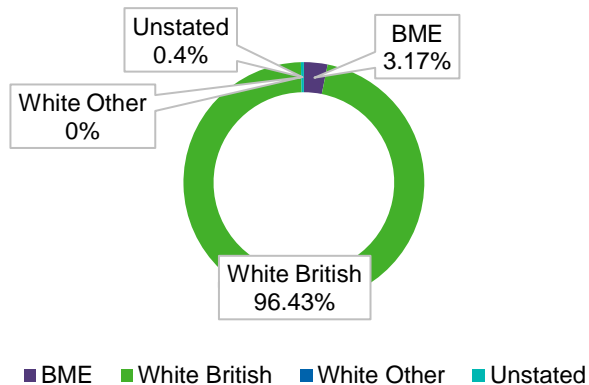
The largest representational proportion of BME staff is concentrated in the salary grades J- M but begins to decrease in the higher grades.

## PAY GAP AND PAY QUANTILES

The council produced figures relating to the ethnicity pay gap for the first time this year. The ethnicity pay gap is lower than the council's gender pay gap although it is still significant. The ethnicity pay quartiles indicate that there is a lower proportion of BME staff in the upper quartile.



### % WILTSHIRE LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME



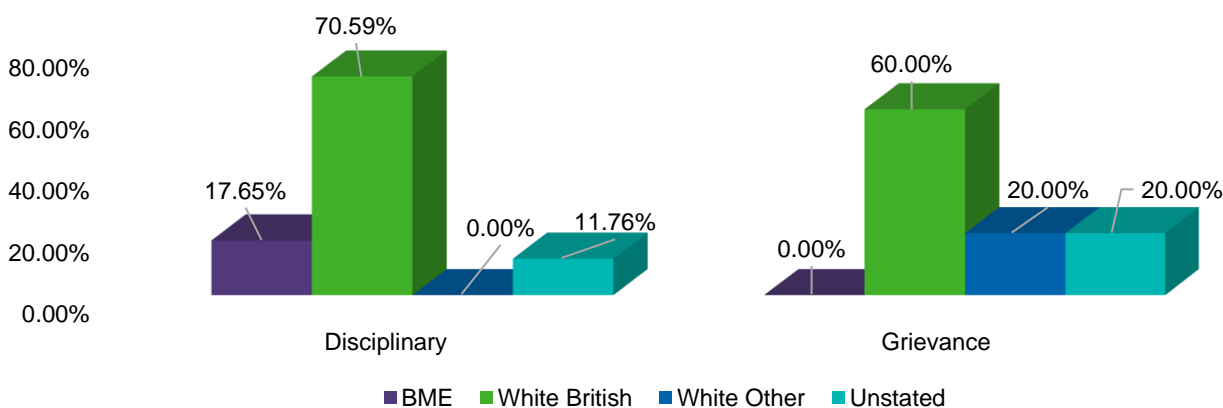
### WILTSHIRE LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME

Participation in the Wiltshire leadership training by BME staff was 3.17% which is broadly in line with the workforce percentages. There were no 'white other' participants.

### DISCIPLINARY AND GRIEVANCE

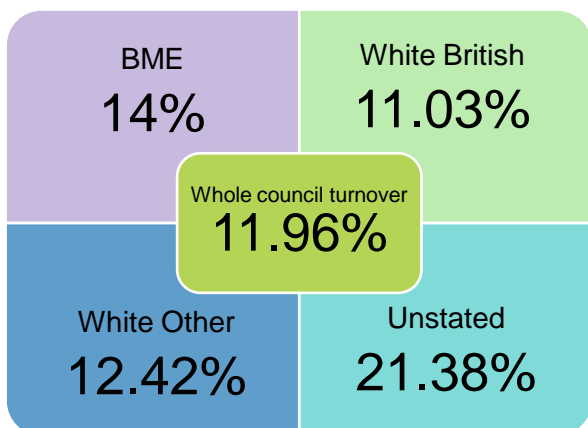
There were no grievances raised by BME staff in this period. 20% of grievances were raised by White Other members of staff and the proportion of disciplinaries for BME staff was 17.65%. Both figures are proportionally higher than the workforce figures for White Other and BME staff. The figures represent small numbers.

### DISCIPLINARY AND GRIEVANCE CASES BY ETHNICITY



### TURNOVER AND LEAVERS

This is the first time that the council has included turnover figures in this report. The turnover rate for BME staff (14%) and white other staff (12.42%) were slightly higher than the whole council turnover average (11.96%). The main reason for leaving for all groups was resignation.



### ACTIONS

- Continue to encourage staff to disclose their ethnicity.
- Continue supporting the BME staff network. In October 2020 the staff network organised a Black history month event in collaboration with Wiltshire Police which included high profile speakers and was attended by 600 people from both the workforce and the public.
- The council released a statement to condemn the killing of George Floyd and provide solidarity and support to the campaign to against racism.
- The BME staff network provided advice to staff and schools during the Black Lives Matters protests
- The BME staff network collected the 'lived experience' stories of BME staff and these were shared with the senior manager team. These are a key part of the evidence basis for the new inclusion and diversity strategy.

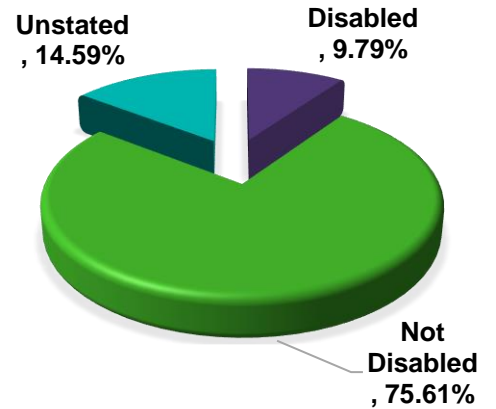
# DISABILITY

The figures from the Wiltshire census 2011 indicate that 10.63% of the working population have their day to day activities limited a little or a lot because of a health problem or disability.

9.79% of the workforce has declared a disability compared to 8.96% in last year's report. 85.41% of staff have disclosed whether they consider themselves to have a disability or not, compared to 83.01% in the last period.

Long standing illness or health condition and physical or mobility impairment made up the highest proportion, which is similar to last year's report. Mental health increased slightly, 14.39% compared to 13.31% in last year's report.

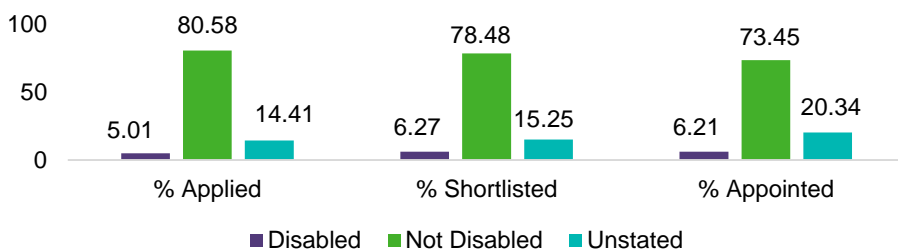
## % HEADCOUNT BY DISABILITY



## TOTAL RECRUITMENT

A slightly higher proportion of people appointed were disabled compared to the proportion of total applicants who were disabled. The figures represent an improvement compared to last year's report.

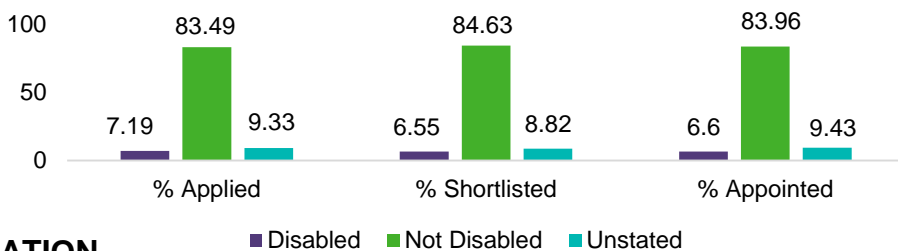
## % TOTAL RECRUITMENT BY DISABILITY



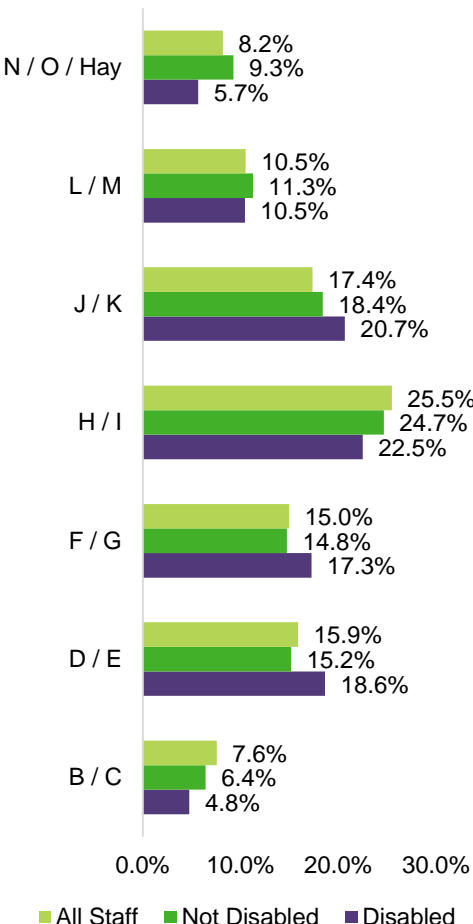
## INTERNAL RECRUITMENT AND PROMOTIONS

A slightly lower proportion of people appointed internally were disabled compared to the proportion of total applicants who were disabled.

## % INTERNAL RECRUITMENT BY DISABILITY



## % GRADE BY DISABILITY

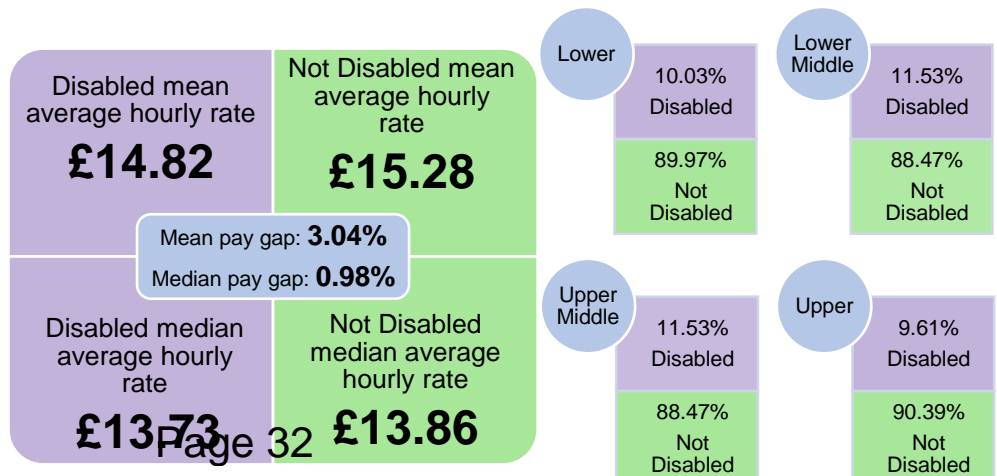


## REMUNERATION

Staff with a disability are represented at all levels of the grading structure but are proportionally less represented in the highest and lowest grades. The largest proportion of staff with a disability are concentrated in the salary grades H – K.

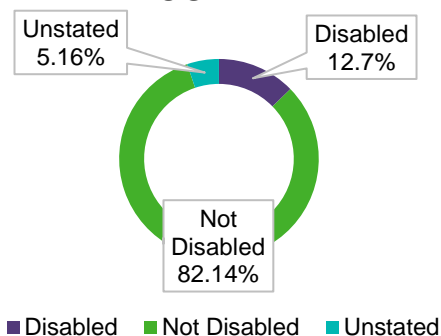
## PAY GAP AND PAY QUANTILES

The council produced figures relating to the disability pay gap for the first time this year. The figures are lower than the council's gender pay gap and show the proportion of disabled staff in the upper quartile is broadly in line with the proportion of disabled employees in the workforce.





### % WILTSHIRE LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME



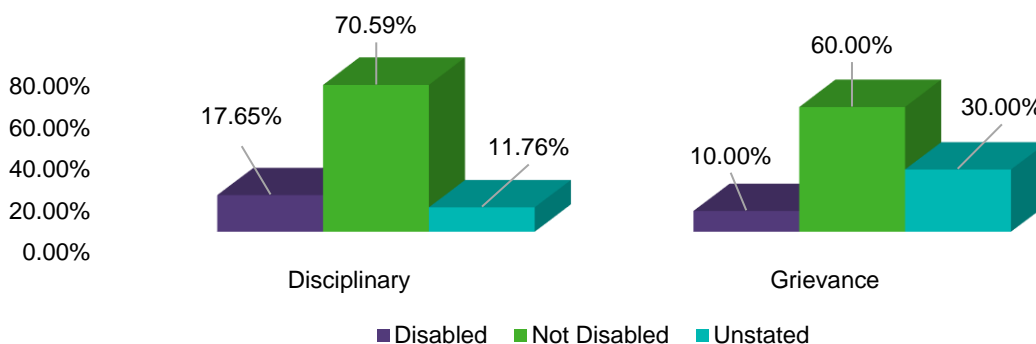
### WILTSHIRE LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME

Participation in the Wiltshire leadership training by disabled employees was 12.70% which is slightly higher than the proportion of disabled employees in the workforce.

### DISCIPLINARY AND GRIEVANCE

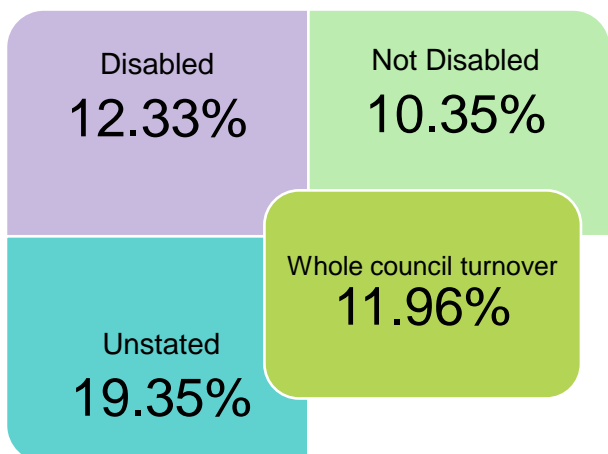
10% of grievances were raised by disabled employees and 17.6% of disciplinary cases related to disabled employees. The percentage of disciplinaries for disabled employees is slightly higher than the workforce figures although the figures represent small numbers. The percentage of grievances raised by disabled staff is less than last year and slightly higher for disciplinaries.

### DISCIPLINARY AND GRIEVANCE CASES BY DISABILITY



### TURNOVER AND LEAVERS

This is the first time that the council has included turnover figures in this report. The turnover rate for staff with a disability is 12.33% which is slightly higher than the figure for all staff (11.96%). The main reasons for leaving for disabled employees was resignation followed by ill-health retirement.



### ACTIONS

- Continue offering a guaranteed interview to disabled applicants who meet the minimum criteria for the post as part of our Disability Confident employer status.
  - Provide an annual reasonable adjustment budget
  - Promote support available to staff through the carers and disability staff network.
  - Continue membership of the employer's network for equality and inclusion (ENEI) which provide advice on disability and other equality issues.
  - Improve processes and initiatives which support the wellbeing of employees through the organisational recovery programme.
  - Increase information and support on mental health through our confidential wellbeing help line; Flourish, our health and wellbeing website; and the provision of online and interactive courses such as personal resilience, stress management, mindfulness and managing anxiety.
  - Continue providing employees with access to counselling.
  - Provide training to managers to support mental health conversations with staff.
- Page 33  
 a pilot to introduce 'mental health first responders'

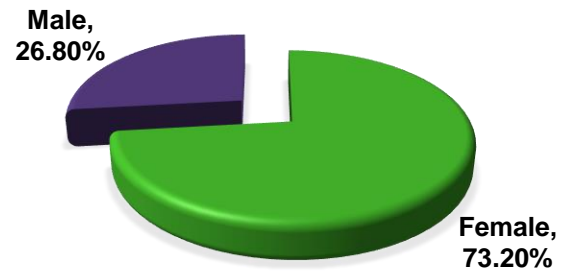
# GENDER

The percentage of females is 73.20% and males 26.80% and these remain similar to the figures in last year's report which were female 72.68% and male 27.32%.

Staff were invited to self-describe their gender identity if they wished to. However, as the number of staff using this category was small, the figures only reflect gender (female/male) to maintain the confidentiality of staff.

Across the workforce 52.30% of women work part-time and 26.34% of men work part-time.

## % HEADCOUNT BY GENDER



## % GRADE BY GENDER

Full or Part-Time

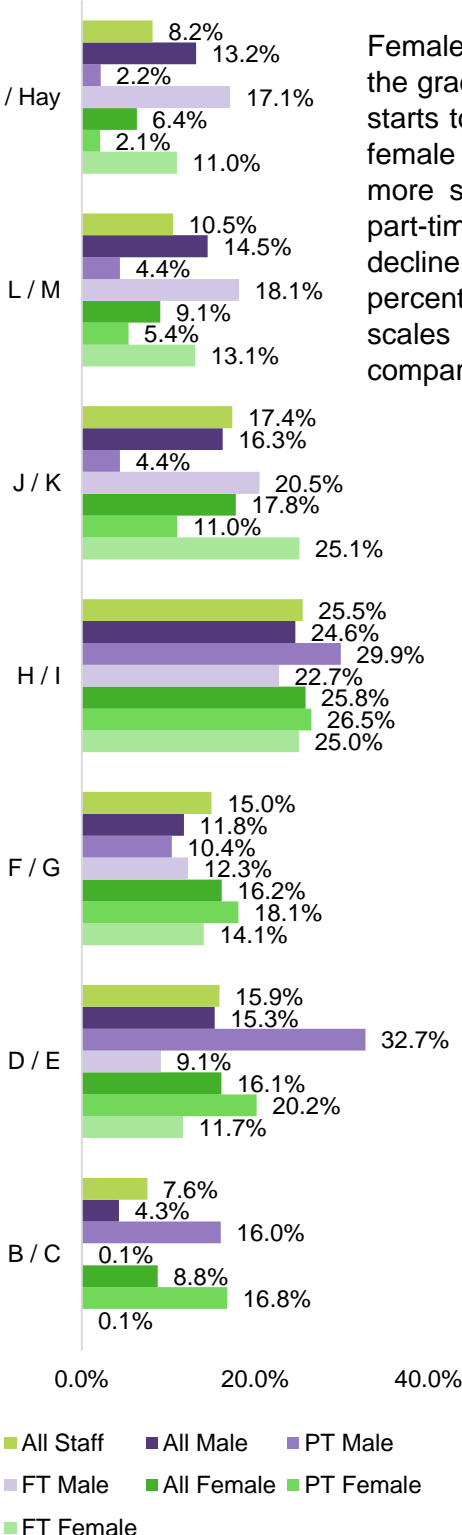
## REMUNERATION

Female staff are represented at all levels of the grading structure, but this representation starts to decrease after grade K for full-time female staff. The downward trend is even more significant for both male and female part-time employees, with a considerable decline in representation after grade H/I. The percentage of female staff in the upper pay scales is less than would be expected in comparison to the workforce percentages.

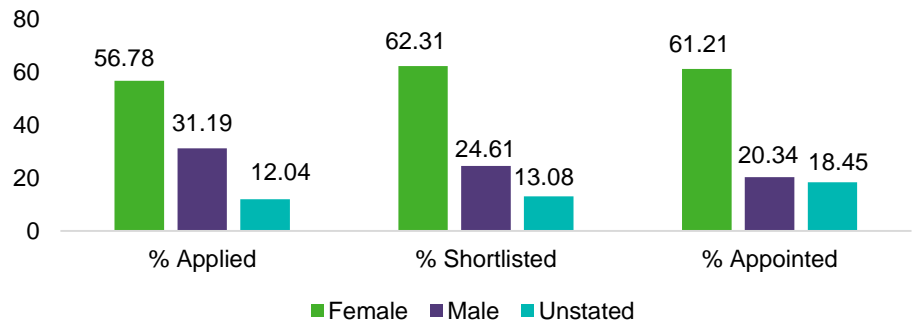
## GENDER PAY GAP

The council is required to report details of its gender pay gap. For further details please refer to our [gender pay gap report](#). The council's gender pay gap remains lower than the national gender pay gap and gender pay gap for the public sector.

N / O / Hay



## % TOTAL RECRUITMENT BY GENDER



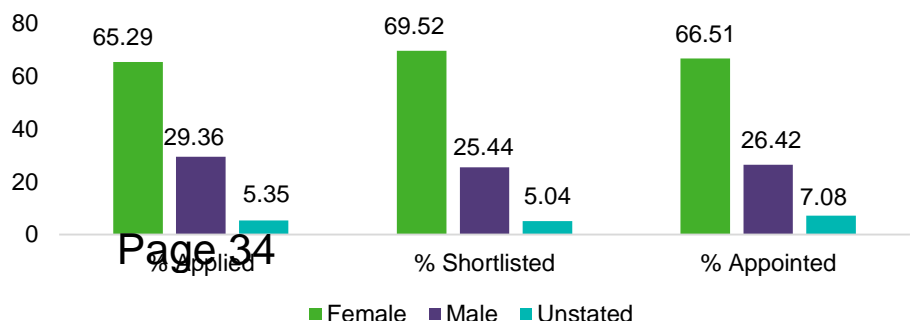
## TOTAL RECRUITMENT

56.78% of applications received by the council were from female applicants and 31.19% were from male applicants. 61.21% of posts were filled by female applicants, with 20.34% filled by male applicants.

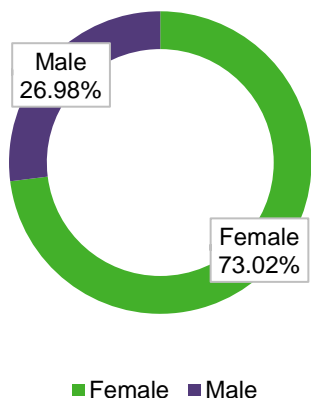
## INTERNAL RECRUITMENT AND PROMOTIONS

66.51% of internal appointments were female and 26.42% for male appointments which is broadly reflective of our work workforce figures.

## % INTERNAL RECRUITMENT BY GENDER



## % WILTSHIRE LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME



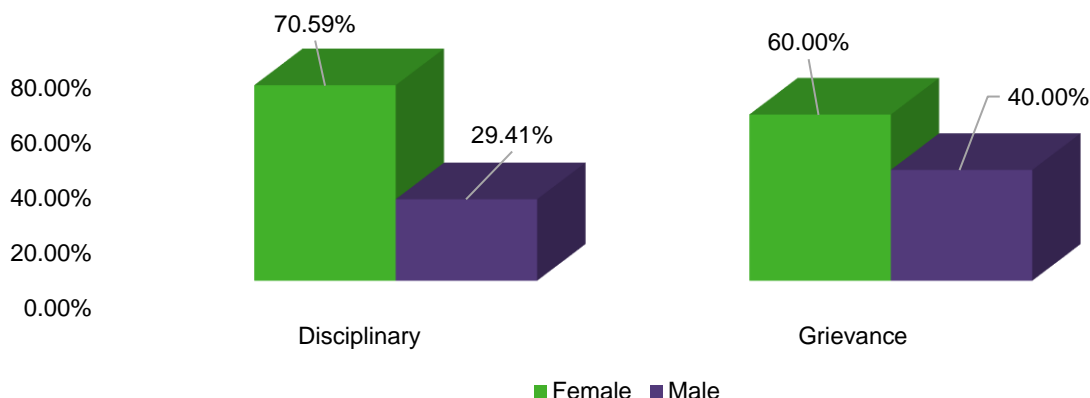
### WILTSHIRE LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME

Participation in the Wiltshire leadership programme was 73.02% and 26.98% for male staff which is broadly reflective of our workforce figures.

## DISCIPLINARY AND GRIEVANCE

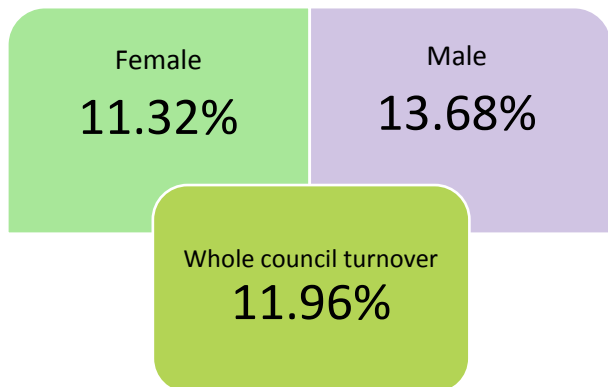
The number of disciplinaries and grievances remains broadly reflective of the male and female workforce percentages although slightly higher for male staff.

### DISCIPLINARY AND GRIEVANCE CASES BY GENDER



## TURNOVER AND LEAVERS

The turnover rate for female staff is 11.32% which is broadly in line with the council total turnover rate, the male turnover rate is slightly higher at 13.68%. The main reasons for leaving was resignation followed by end of contract and voluntary redundancy for both female and male staff.



### ACTIONS

- Continue promoting the use of flexible working options including job sharing, term time only and annualised hours.
- Continue celebrating International women’s day and highlighting female role models and challenging gender stereotypes.
- Launch of the ‘Are you safe working from home’ campaign to support victims of domestic violence during the pandemic. The campaign has involved regular communications, providing telephone support via our Occupational health team and the creation of a dedicated page on our intranet where staff can access further information and support.

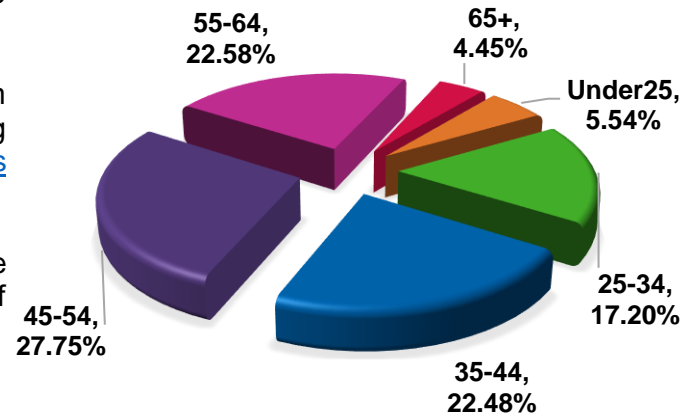
# AGE

The largest group within the workforce are in the age range 45 – 55, 27.75%.

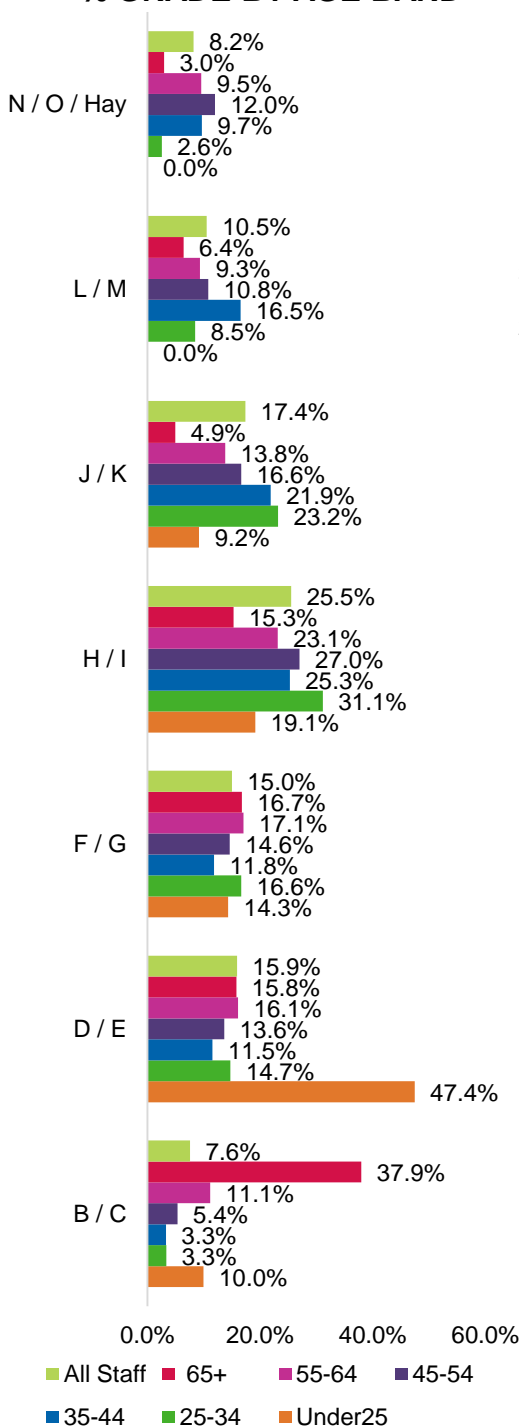
Under 25's make up 5.54% of the workforce (a decrease from 7.23% in 2019) and this compares to 14.14% in the working population of Wiltshire ([Source: ONS Mid-Year Estimates 2019](#)).

The proportion of part-timers is higher than full-timers for the age ranges, under 25's and over 55's. A high proportion of under 25's who are on part time contracts work in leisure.

**% HEADCOUNT BY AGE**



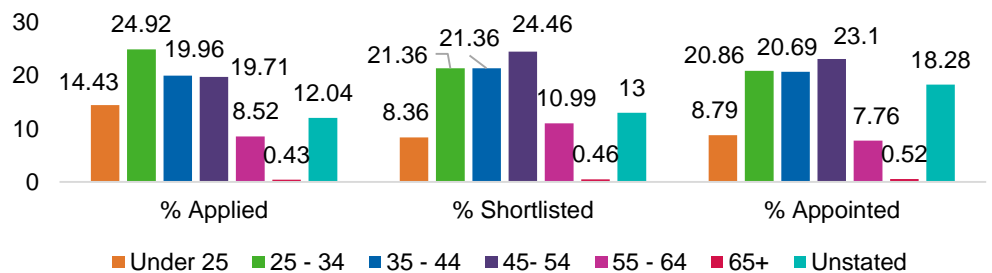
**% GRADE BY AGE BAND**



## REMUNERATION

Staff representation is lower for the under 34's and over 65's in the highest salary scales. There are no under 25-year olds represented in grades L and above and the largest proportion is concentrated in the D/E salary scales.

**% TOTAL RECRUITMENT BY AGE**



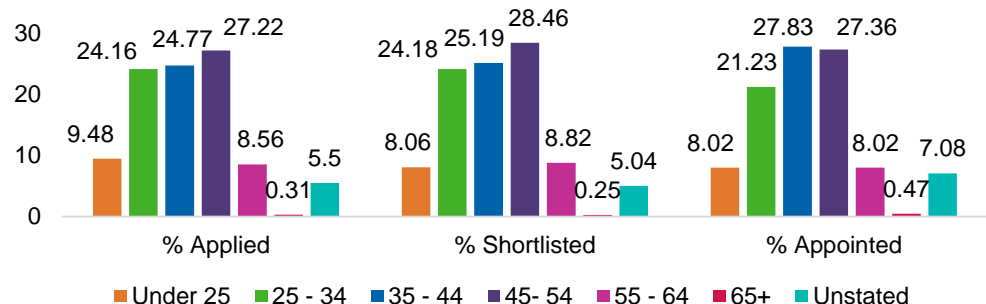
## TOTAL RECRUITMENT

The highest proportion of applicants appointed was the age group 45-54. The highest number of applications received was from the age group 25-34. The under 25's represented 8.79% of all appointments and this was lower than last year.

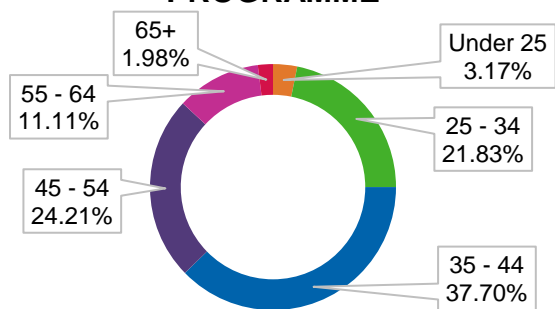
## INTERNAL RECRUITMENT AND PROMOTIONS

The proportion of applicants appointed in the under 25 and 25-34-year-old groups was slightly lower compared to the proportion of applicants that applied in the same age groups.

**% INTERNAL RECRUITMENT BY AGE**



### % WILTSHIRE LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME



Under 25 25 - 34 35 - 44 45 - 54 55 - 64 65+

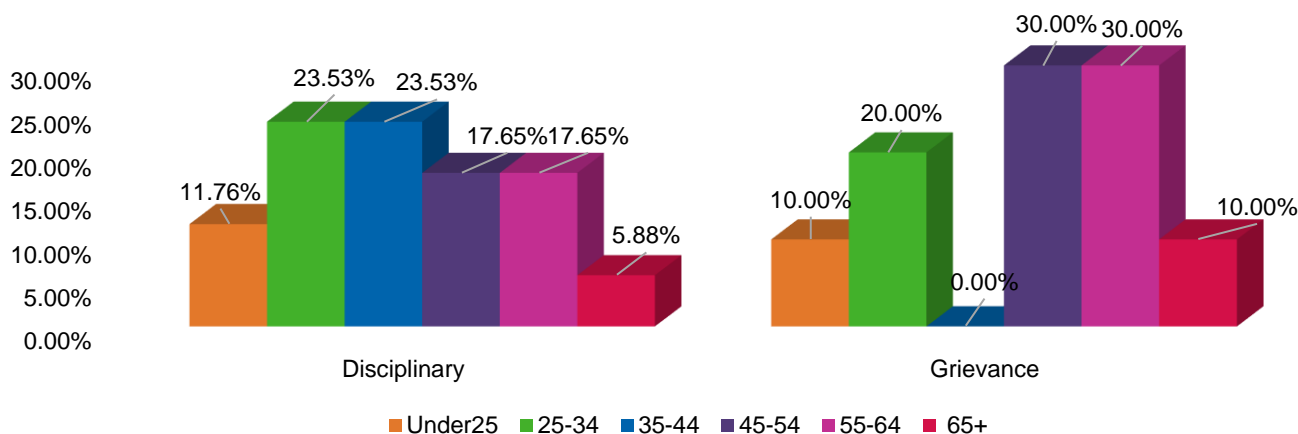
### WILTSHIRE LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME

Participation in the Wiltshire leadership training was lower than expected compared to the workforce figures for under 25's and over 55's.

### DISCIPLINARY AND GRIEVANCE

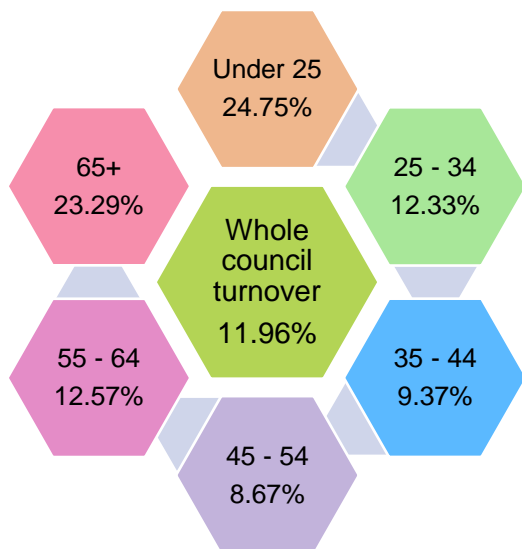
The number of disciplinaries and grievances remains slightly higher for staff under 34 and over 65.

#### DISCIPLINARY AND GRIEVANCE CASES BY AGE



### TURNOVER AND LEAVERS

The turnover rate was considerably highest for staff under 25 (24.75%) and over 65 (23.29%) compared to the whole council turnover rate (11.96%).



### ACTIONS

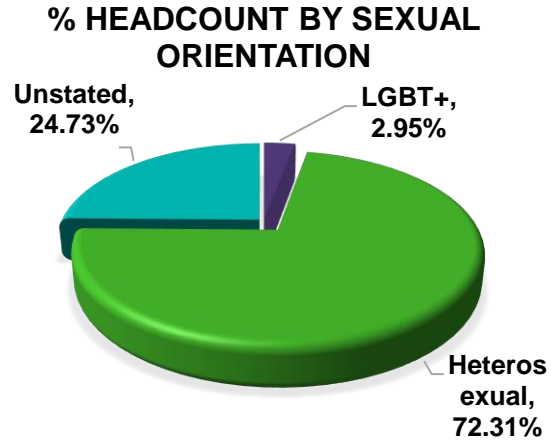
- Continue supporting employees who wish to continue working beyond the age of 65 through the provision of flexible retirement.
- Develop our employee brand to help attract the under 25's age group.
- Improving the engagement of under 25s through use of social media particularly in relation to recruitment.
- Increase the level of apprenticeships provision and work experience with a focus on increasing recruitment of under 25s.

# SEXUAL ORIENTATION

75.27% (compared to 69.1% in 2019) of employees have stated their sexual orientation. The figures are increasing but are still relatively low and this might reflect the sensitive nature of this data and the fact that some staff might not have felt comfortable providing it.

The ONS latest data on sexual orientation 2018 for the UK indicates the following estimates for sexual orientation – heterosexual 94.6%, gay or lesbian 1.4%, bi-sexual 0.9%, other 0.6%. Our workforce figures are slightly above the national average for the combined estimate for gay or lesbian and bi-sexual.

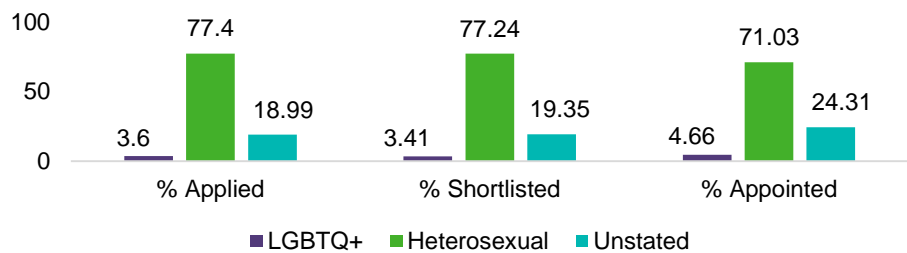
Staff are offered the opportunity to self-describe their sexual orientation and this year we have seen an increase in staff reporting this category. This figure will be reviewed annually, and the figures will only be included in future reports where the number of staff expressing this option is high enough to protect the confidentiality of staff.



## RECRUITMENT

Recruitment figures indicate that the recruitment of LGBT+ staff is broadly in line with the total for all staff.

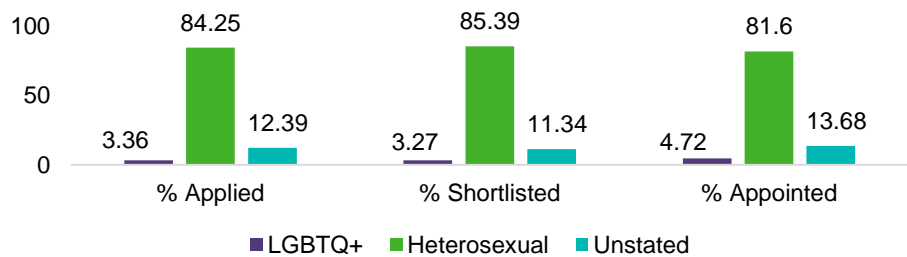
% TOTAL RECRUITMENT BY SEXUAL ORIENTATION



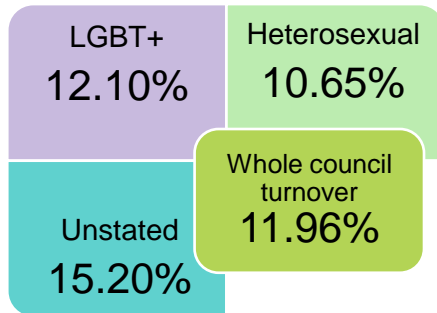
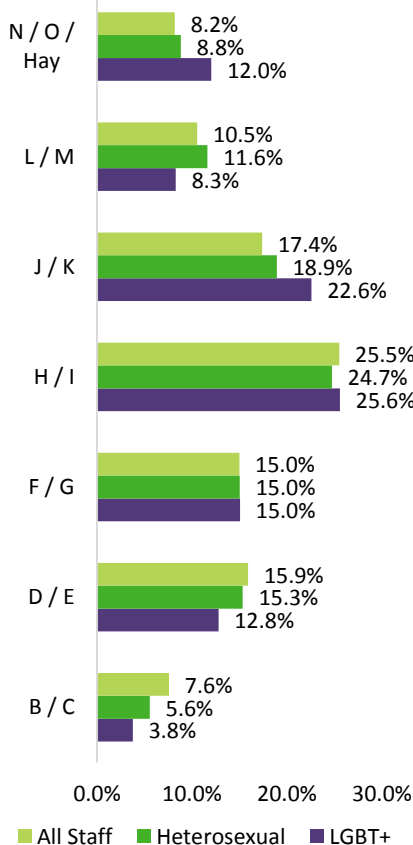
## REMUNERATION

LGBT+ staff are represented at all grades, including the highest salary grades.

% INTERNAL RECRUITMENT BY SEXUAL ORIENTATION



% GRADE BY SEXUAL ORIENTATION



## TURNOVER AND LEAVERS

The turnover rate for LGBT+ staff is broadly in line with the total workforce turnover rate at 11.96%.

## ACTIONS

- Continue to support the LGBT+ staff network.
- Celebrating LGBT+ history month.
- Sharing stories and lived experiences off members of the LGBT+ community to raise awareness about the prejudices and struggles members of the community face.
- Continue to encourage staff to disclose their sexual orientation and take steps to collect equality data from staff.

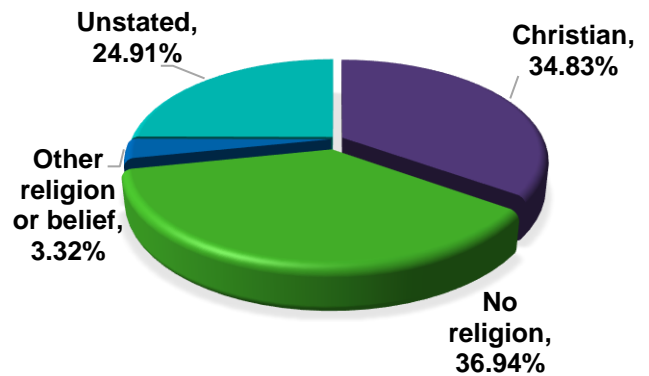
# RELIGION AND BELIEF

75.09% (compared to 68.53% in 2019) of employees have stated their religion and belief. The figures are increasing but still relatively low and this might reflect the sensitive nature of this data and the fact that some staff might not have felt comfortable providing this data. We will continue to work to build staff confidence in providing data for this purpose and decreasing the unstated figure.

Our data indicates that we have higher percentages in comparison to the Wiltshire census data 2011 in relation to Buddhist, Christian, Muslim and no religion.

Low figures in a number of categories has meant that we are not able to include all data due to confidentiality reasons.

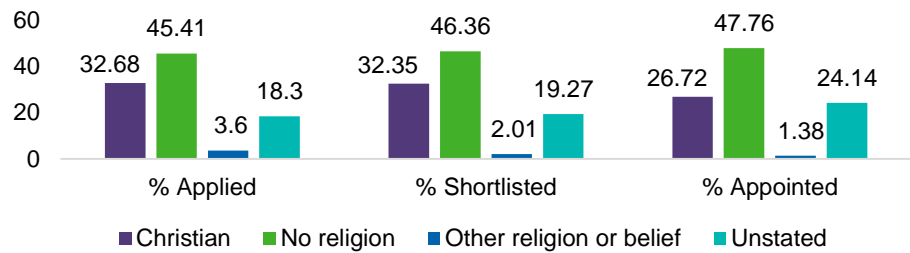
**% HEADCOUNT BY RELIGION AND BELIEF**



## RECRUITMENT

A lower proportion of people appointed where Christian and applicants from other religion or beliefs compare to the proportion of total applicants who were from those groups.

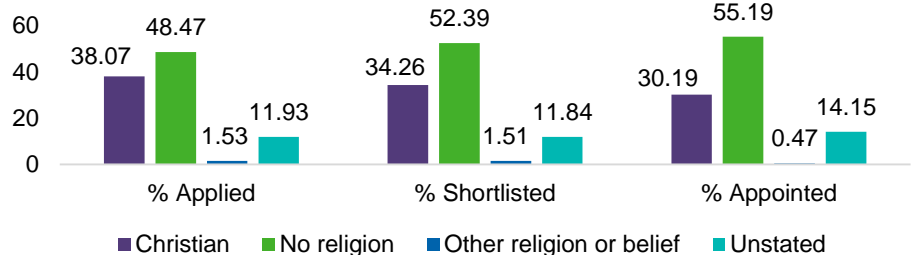
**% TOTAL RECRUITMENT BY RELIGION AND BELIEF**



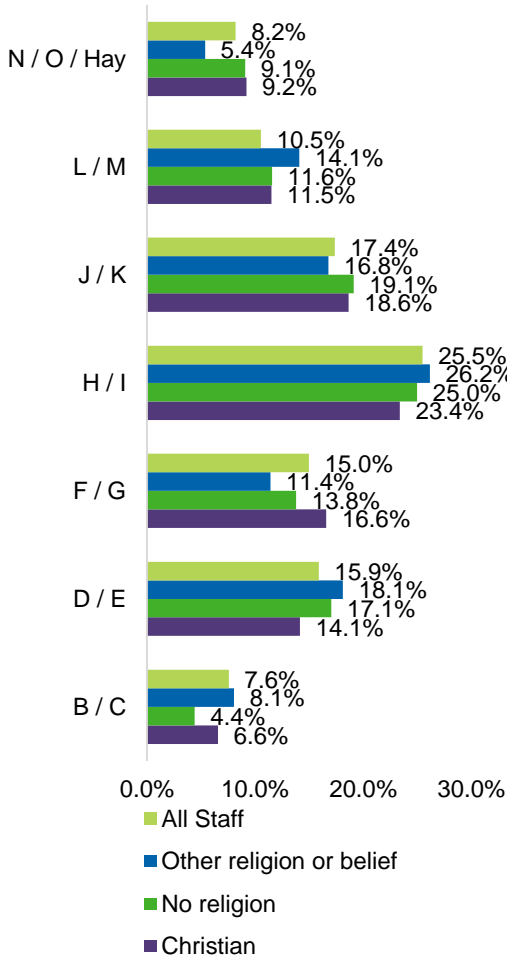
## REMUNERATION

There is less representation of staff from 'other religion or beliefs' in the top pay grades.

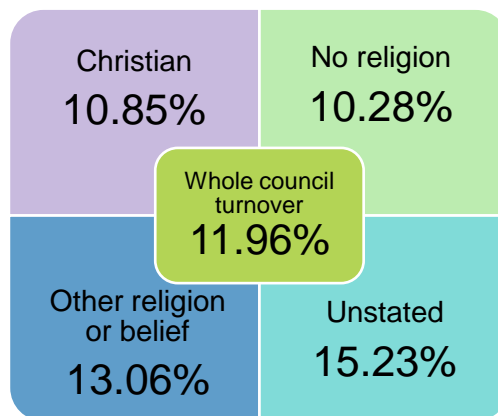
**% INTERNAL RECRUITMENT BY RELIGION AND BELIEF**



**% GRADE BY RELIGION AND BELIEF**



**% INTERNAL RECRUITMENT BY RELIGION AND BELIEF**



## TURNOVER AND LEAVERS

The turnover rate for staff from 'Other religion or belief' was 13.06% which is slightly above the total workforce at 11.96%.

## ACTIONS

- Continue providing quiet facilities for prayer where possible.
- Raising awareness and celebrating notable dates via regular communications and events.
- Promoting education of different religions. In 2021 we will deliver our first workshop to raise awareness

# CARING RESPONSIBILITIES

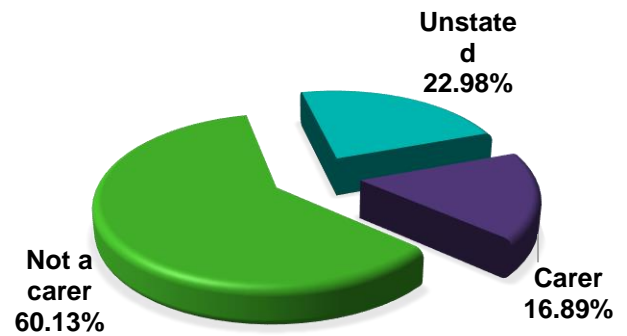
The definition of unpaid caring responsibilities is giving help or support to family members, friends, neighbours or others because of a long term physical or mental health or disability, or problems relating to old age.

16.89% (compared to 13.87% in 2019) of the workforce indicated that they had unpaid caring responsibilities, and this compares with 10.1% of the Wiltshire population in the 2011 census.

60.13% indicated that they had no unpaid caring responsibilities compared to 89.9% of the Wiltshire population in the 2011 census.

77.02% (compared to 70.64% in 2019) of employees have stated whether they have caring responsibilities. The figures have increased but are still relatively low and this might reflect the sensitive nature of this data and the fact that some staff might not have felt comfortable providing this data.

**% HEADCOUNT BY CARING RESPONSIBILITIES**



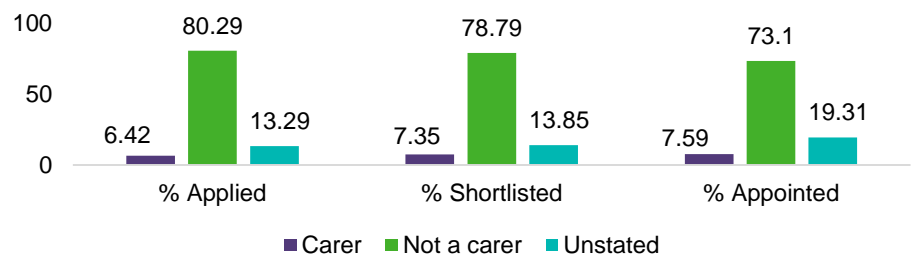
## RECRUITMENT

Internal recruitment figures indicate that staff with caring responsibilities were less successful at appointment than non-carers.

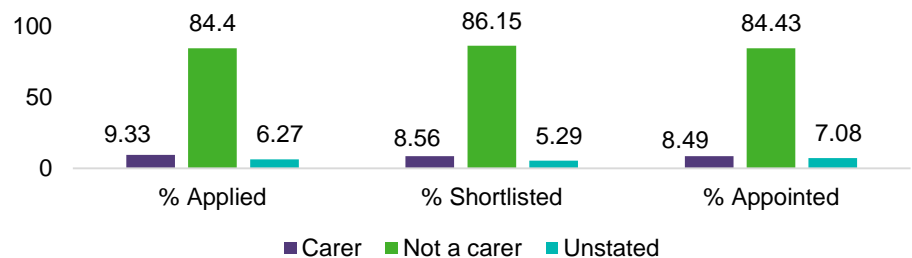
## REMUNERATION

Staff with caring responsibilities are represented at all grades, including the

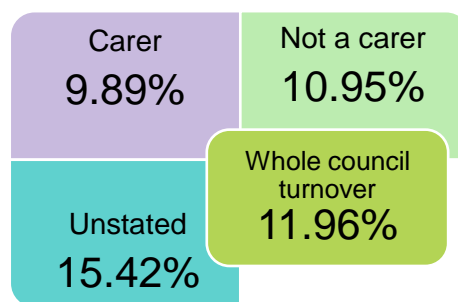
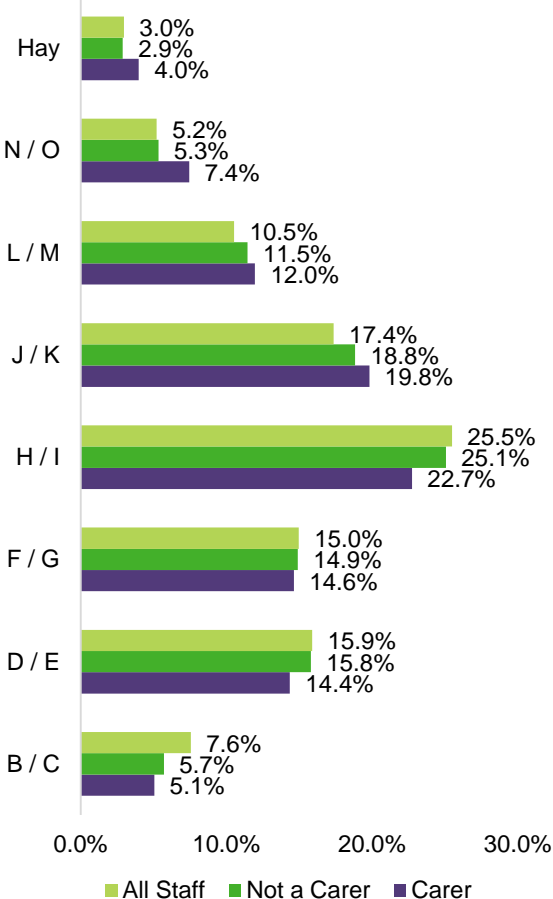
**% TOTAL RECRUITMENT BY CARING RESPONSIBILITIES**



**% INTERNAL RECRUITMENT BY CARING RESPONSIBILITIES**



**% GRADE BY CARING RESPONSIBILITIES**



## TURNOVER AND LEAVERS

The turnover rate for carers is below the whole council average.

## ACTIONS

- Continue to build staff confidence to disclose information regarding their caring responsibilities and decrease the unstated figure.
- Continue to support managers and staff who are carers through the provision of leave for carers, flexible working, and manager support and guidance.
- Work in partnership with Carer Support Wiltshire to provide information and support to carers and managers.
- Promote support available to staff through the carers and disabled staff network.
- Highlight specific support to staff who are carers during the pandemic.



# MARITAL STATUS

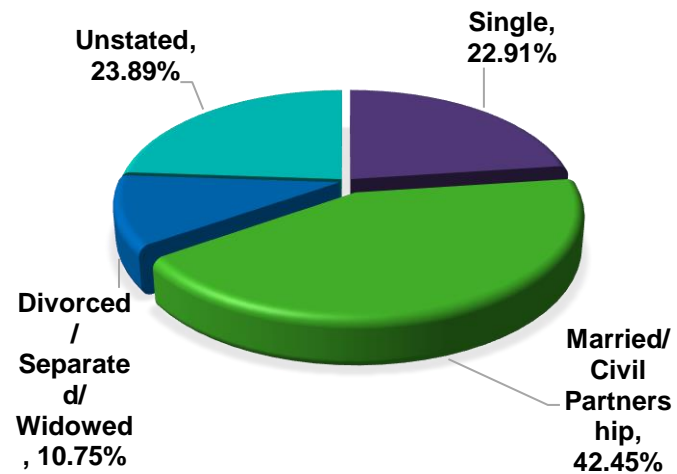
76.11% (compared to 69.62% in 2019) of employees have disclosed their marital status. The figures are increasing but are still relatively low.

The Wiltshire census data 2011 indicates:

- Divorced or formerly in a civil partnership which now legally dissolved 7.7%
- In a registered civil partnership 0.1%
- Married 43.2%
- Separated (but still legally married or still legally in a civil partnership) – 1.9%
- Single (never married or never registered a civil partnership) – 22.1%
- Widowed or surviving partner from a civil partnership – 5.6%

Our data indicates percentages above the Wiltshire census data for divorced, civil partnership, and single but it is recognised that there is still a high unstated figure.

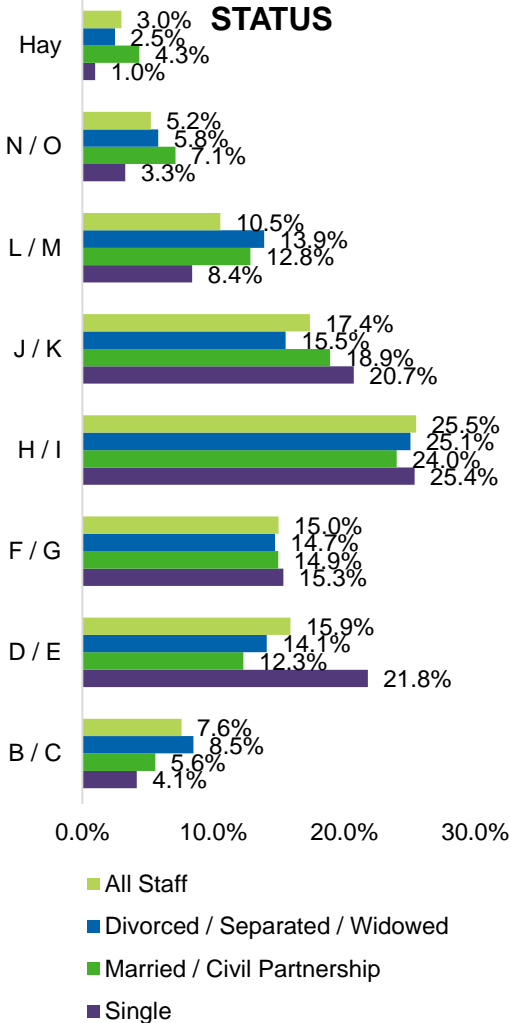
**% HEADCOUNT BY MARITAL STATUS**



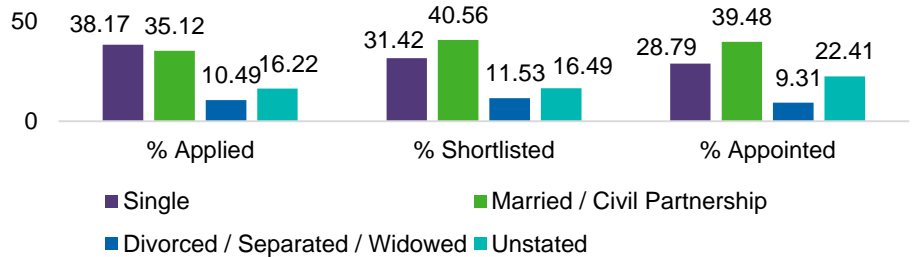
## REMUNERATION

Representation of staff who are single starts to decline considerably after grades J/K.

**% GRADE BY MARITAL STATUS**



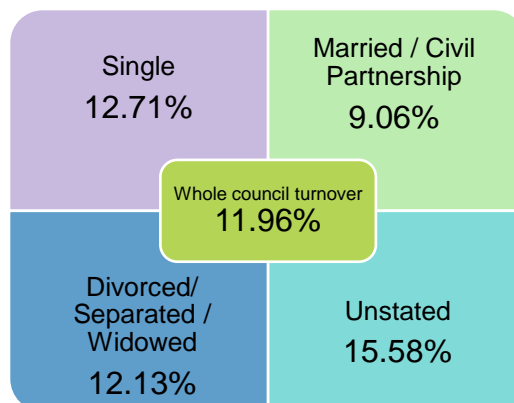
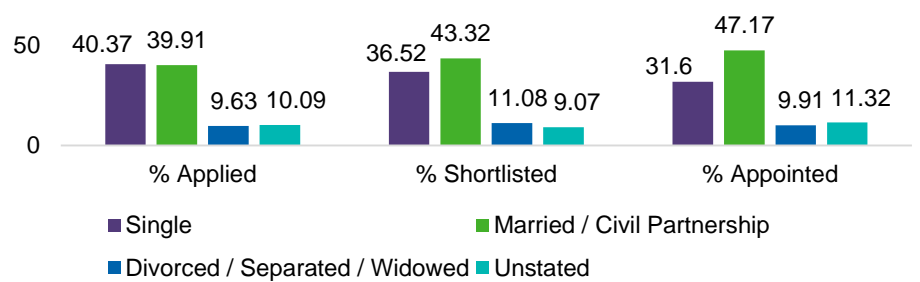
**% INTERNAL RECRUITMENT BY MARITAL STATUS**



## RECRUITMENT

A slightly lower proportion of people appointed were single compared to the proportion of total applicants who were single.

**% INTERNAL RECRUITMENT BY MARITAL STATUS**



## TURNOVER AND LEAVERS

The turnover rate for single and divorced/separated/widowed staff is slightly higher than the whole council turnover rate.

# MATERNITY

The council had 77 employees on maternity leave who returned or left during the period 1<sup>st</sup> October 2019 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020, of these employees, 70 returned to work after maternity leave and 7 people did not. The figures for the non-returners are low so a further breakdown has not been included.

The council offers a period of enhanced maternity pay to employees who return to work for a period of at least three months following maternity leave in line with the national local government scheme. The council also has a shared parental leave policy, ordinary parental leave policy and flexible working policy which can provide further flexibility.

# GENDER RE-ASSIGNMENT

Due to low numbers, we have not included specific figures for this protected characteristic to ensure that we protect employee confidentiality. Our data did increase this year and we will continue to keep this under review.

GIRES - the gender identity research and education society estimate that 1% of the UK population has experienced some degree of gender non-conformity. Most of them are as yet invisible. The council figures have increased but continue to remain below this estimate.

## **ACTIONS**

- Continue to build staff confidence to disclose information regarding their gender identity and gender re-assignment.
- Continue to engage with staff through the LGBT+ staff network to understand the needs of our transgender staff and raise awareness.
- Continue supporting transgender employees and promote our 'Transitioning at work' guidance to managers.

**Further information**

This document can be made available in a number of accessible formats. If you do need this information in an alternative format, or have any other queries, please contact us:

**By Post:** Human Resources  
Wiltshire Council  
County Hall, Bythesea Road  
Trowbridge  
Wiltshire BA14 8JN

**By Email:** [policyandreward@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:policyandreward@wiltshire.gov.uk)

**By Telephone:** 01225 756161

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**WILTSHIRE COUNCIL**

**AGENDA ITEM NO.**

**Staffing Policy Committee**

**11<sup>th</sup> March 2021**

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## **Amendments to Eyecare Policy**

### **Purpose**

1. To seek approval on proposed changes to the corporate eyecare policy, with the intention to implement this with effect from 1 April 2021

### **Background**

2. In accordance with relevant health and safety regulations, employers must pay for an eye test for DSE users, if requested, and provide suitable eyewear if an employee needs them only for DSE use. If an ordinary prescription is suitable, employers do not have to pay for eyewear
3. The corporate eyecare policy explains how and when employees can claim reimbursement for eyecare expenses. In our current policy, employees are entitled to claim reimbursement for eye test expenses up to £19.95 and up to £55 for eyewear, once every two years. In 2019, we received 219 claims: 162 for eye tests costing £2,845 and 158 for eyewear costing £8,550. The total claims under this policy in 2019 were £11,394.

### **Main Considerations**

4. Health and Safety legislation outlines that the Council must cover the full cost of the eye test for DSE users. The average eye test (based on a survey of four major providers across Wiltshire) costs between £20-£25 and therefore our maximum claim amount of £19.95 does not cover the full eye test cost from regional providers. To ensure the Council meets its statutory requirements we would need to increase our maximum claim amount to £25.
5. Where an employee does require special corrective vision lenses for DSE work, the requirement is to pay for basic spectacles; for example, the Council is not expected to pay for designer frames or scratch free lenses, and only for single vision lenses for DSE work. As above, information obtained from a survey of providers across Wiltshire shows that basic spectacles with single vision lenses could be obtained for £40 from any of these providers (lower in some cases). These costs are all under the maximum claim cost of £55 in the current policy and therefore it is recommended to reduce the maximum claim cost to £40 for eyewear. This measure complies with statutory requirements and off-sets the impact of increasing eye test payment.
6. The changes to payment levels in the policy will better align with other Local Authorities in the region

## **Amendments proposed**

7. In line with the main considerations identified above, the updated policy will:
  - a) increase the maximum claim amount for eye tests to £25;
  - b) reduce the maximum claim cost to £40 for eyewear specifically required for VDU use.

## **Reasons for changes to the policy**

8. The payment for eye tests needs to be increased to ensure it covers the full cost. The Council only has a legal obligation to pay for basic spectacles and therefore the eyewear payments can be reduced to align with the current costs of basic frames and single vision lenses
9. Feedback from staff suggested that our eye test reimbursement does not cover the full cost of an eye test. This was verified through a review of providers and costs. Further information was collected from South West Councils, which identified Wiltshire Council eye test payment is lower than the average; however, our eyewear payment is higher than average
10. Although the Eyecare Policy is designed to meet a Health and Safety requirement, reviewing and revising the amounts that can be claimed ensures we are supporting the wellbeing of DSE users
11. There is an opportunity to promote this wellbeing aspect as part of the communication of the revised policy.
12. The recognised trades unions have agreed in principle with the changes to the policy; we will work with them to finalise the policy wording and communications to staff.
13. We intend to give staff reasonable notice of the change to the policy, with an aim to implement in May 2021.

## **Environmental impact of the proposal**

14. It is anticipated that this policy will have a neutral environmental impact, unchanged from the current policy

## **Equalities impact of the proposal**

15. An Equalities Impact Assessment will be carried out on the new policy once it has been drafted. Trade union representatives will be invited to attend and contribute to this assessment.

## **Risk Assessment**

16. If the Council fails to cover the full cost of eye tests, then we will not be fulfilling our legal obligation as an employer.
17. Occupational Health and Safety advice is to meet the requirement to cover the eye test and eyewear costs as set out above.

## **Financial Implications of the proposal**

18. Increasing the level of reimbursement of eye test payments whilst reducing the amount for eyewear payments would result in a financial saving. For example, if the proposed amounts are applied to the claims in 2019 the total cost would be £10,370 which is a reduction of £1,024.
19. It may be that promotion of the revised policy will increase take up, which could result in a small increase in overall costs.

## **Recommendations**

20. It is recommended that Staffing Policy Committee confirm their agreement to the proposed changes to the Council's Eyecare policy

**Joanne Pitt**  
**Director HR&OD**

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Report Author: Jan Juillerat, HR & OD Strategy and Insight Manager

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## Eyecare policy and procedure

This policy can be made available in other languages and formats such as large print and audio on [request](#).

### What is it?

This policy explains how and when employees can claim reimbursement for eyecare expenses.

### Who does it apply to?

This policy applies to all Wiltshire Council employees, unless a separate contractual policy applies to a transferred employee to whom separate TUPE terms and conditions of employment apply. This policy also applies to agency workers who meet the relevant criteria for being a regular user of display screen equipment (DSE) as outlined below.

### When does it apply?

In accordance with the Health and Safety (display screen equipment) regulations 1992, this policy applies when an employee regularly works with display screen equipment:

- for continuous periods of more than one hour; and
- for more than 3 hours per day;

and who also meets most of the following criteria:

- has no discretion as to whether the DSE can be used to do the job;
- requires particular skills in the use of DSE;
- has fast transfer of information between user and the screen as an important requirement of the job;
- a high level of attention and concentration is required by the user.

### What are the main points?

#### Entitlement

1. Qualifying employees are entitled to reimbursement for eye and eyesight test expenses up to a limit of **£25.00** once every two years, except where it is stated by an optician that more frequent tests are required for reasons relating to DSE use.
2. Qualifying employees are also entitled to reimbursement for lenses prescribed to correct vision defects at the viewing distance specified for display screen work (including basic frames) up to a limit of **£40.00** once

every two years. An exception to this timeframe is also applicable where a change of prescription for DSE use is made by an optician.

3. If an employee elects to purchase spectacles which exceed their minimum requirement for DSE use, the council's liability for reimbursement will be limited to a proportion of the cost equivalent to that of a basic pair of spectacles. This will be disclosed by your optician in your optician in your Eyecare Reimbursement Form (ERF).
4. To qualify for reimbursement, the eye and eyesight test must be carried out by a 'competent person' (i.e. an optician).
5. There is no requirement for an employee to have completed their probation period or any particular length of service in order to qualify for reimbursement.

### Procedure for claiming

#### Non-schools employees

6. Before undergoing treatment of any kind, employees should download and print out a copy of the ERF from [HR Direct](#). Employees should also inform their manager that they are planning to claim eyecare expenses before any treatment is received.
7. Employees must hand the ERF to their optician to complete after treatment has been received. If prescription lenses are required for DSE use then they must be obtained from the optician who prescribed them.
8. Employees can make their claim once their eye and eyesight test, and any eyewear prescribed to them, has been paid for. These should be re-claimed for separately through the SAP employee self-service (ESS) portal.
9. To make your claim, go to the SAP Employee Self Service portal and following these steps:
  - 'Travel and Expenses'
  - 'My trips and expenses'
  - 'Create new expense report'
  - 'Trip Schema' select 'Domestic Trip'
  - 'Apply'
  - the date of eye test
  - 'Record expense receipt'
  - Select your 'Expense type', this will either be 'Eye and eyesight test' (up to a limit of £25.00) or 'Basic corrective eyewear' (up to a limit of £40.00). If you need to apply for both, you will need to first add your test expense, and then select 'New Entry' to add your eyewear expense.
  - Review
  - Select 'Save and send'
  - Save

10. Once employees have submitted their claims through the ESS portal, they must email their ERF to their line manager along with a scanned copy of their receipt, so that they may approve their claim. Once approved, their line manager should email the ERF and accompanying receipt to [hrpayroll@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:hrpayroll@wiltshire.gov.uk).
11. Once the reimbursement request has been approved employees will be reimbursed through their monthly salary.

### Schools employees

12. Before undergoing treatment of any kind, employees should download and print out a copy of the eyecare reimbursement form (ERF). Employees should also inform their manager that they are planning to claim eyecare expenses before any treatment is received.
13. Employees must hand the ERF to their optician to complete after treatment has been received. If prescription lenses are required for DSE use then they must be obtained from the optician who prescribed them.
14. Employees can make their claim once their eye and eyesight test, and any eyewear prescribed to them, has been paid for. In order to do this, the completed ERF should be sent to [HRSchools@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:HRSchools@wiltshire.gov.uk) along with a scanned copy of their receipt.
15. Employees will then be reimbursed through monthly salary.

### Opticians

16. The cost of eye and eyesight tests as well as prescription lenses vary widely. As you may have to wait up to a month for reimbursement through your salary, it's worth comparing your options to help reduce the amount which you have to spend initially. You should also bear in mind that there are claim limits of £25.00 for eye and eyesight tests and £40.00 for eye wear when considering your choice of optician.
17. Money off vouchers are also frequently available through Wiltshire Rewards, and these can be found by searching 'Eyecare' on the [Wiltshire Rewards website](#).

## Roles and responsibilities

### Employee responsibilities

18. Employees are responsible for ensuring that they qualify as a regular DSE user under the criteria outlined in the 'When does it apply' section before making a claim for eye expenses.

19. Employees are also responsible for ensuring that the amount claimed is below the established limits and reflects only the amount required to fill their prescription for DSE use and include no additional extras (such as lens coatings or upgraded frames).

#### Line manager responsibilities

20. To ensure that employees provide the ERF completed by their optician and that they have claimed the correct amount before approving their reimbursement request.
21. To ensure that claims are only approved that meet the eligibility criteria stated above.

#### Frequently asked questions

22. Can I use any optician?

Yes, your entitlement will be reimbursed after treatment at any optician. If you are prescribed lenses for DSE use, you should purchase these from the same optician who has provided you with your prescription. You must be aware that if your optician's eye test or eye wear costs are above the set limits of **£25.00** and **£40.00** respectively, you will only be able to claim part of the cost.

23. What if my eyesight test and prescription are above the reimbursement limit?

As eyecare provision covers basic frames and lenses only, most cases will fall within the limits. However if this is not the case, and the cost is entirely a consequence of your use of DSE required for your job, then this will need to be logged with [hrpayroll@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:hrpayroll@wiltshire.gov.uk) as an exceptional circumstance to be processed as an exceptional circumstance.

24. I need an eyesight test more frequently than once every two years. What should I do?

If this is the case, and it is related to your use of DSE then your optician will be able to make this clear in your Eyecare Reimbursement Form which can then be processed by HR as an exceptional circumstance.

25. What if I claim for bifocal or varifocal lenses and they exceed the claim limits?

According to the relevant legislation, eyecare provision covers lenses to correct vision at the standard distance for using display screen equipment. On this basis, only single vision lenses are included in the offer for reimbursement. If you purchase other types of lenses such as bifocals, you should ask your optician to quote the price of single vision lenses plus basic frames on your reimbursement form. Basic frames are always included in the reimbursement offer.

#### Legislation

*Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 as amended by the Health and Safety (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2002.*

### **Advice and guidance**

If you require help in accessing or understanding this policy or completing any of the associated forms you should contact your line manager or trade union representative if you are a member.

If, due to the nature of your query, it is not appropriate to contact your line manager you should contact your head of service who will nominate an appropriate manager or colleague to help you.

### **Further information**

For further information please speak to your supervisor, manager, service director or contact your [HR case adviser](#).

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**WILTSHIRE COUNCIL**

**AGENDA ITEM NO.**

**Staffing Policy Committee**

**11<sup>th</sup> March 2021**

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## **Amendments to Purchase of Annual Leave Policy**

### **Purpose**

1. To seek approval of proposed changes to the scheme for Purchase of Annual Leave, which will extend the opportunities for employees to purchase additional annual leave throughout the year and increase the number of days that can be requested, with the intention to implement this with effect from 1 July 2021.

### **Background**

2. Purchase of Annual Leave (PAL) was implemented in May 2016. The introduction of this scheme was agreed as part of negotiations on terms and conditions of service between management and trades unions, to support work/life balance for staff.
3. In the period July 2016 to December 2020 1,362 applications for purchase of annual leave were approved. In 2020, as part of the council's response to the Covid pandemic an additional PAL window was communicated, to support staff with childcare responsibilities to cover the school summer holidays, due to a lack of other childcare options.
4. In the period of operation (to December 2020), the scheme has returned savings of £906,132.66. This saving is taken by Finance from service budgets.

### **Main Considerations**

5. PAL can enable services to make temporary, short-term reductions to staffing where this does not adversely impact service, supporting workforce flexibility as identified in the Organisation Recovery Programme objectives.
6. The purchase of additional annual leave reduces the people resource available to deliver services; however, purchase of annual leave is subject to approval of managers, who must take into consideration any adverse impact on service requirements.

### **Amendments proposed**

7. In summary, the amendments proposed are:
  - a) Increasing the application 'windows' for employees to request purchase of annual leave from two to four per year.
  - b) Increasing the number of days available for employees to purchase additional annual leave from ten to twenty per year.

- c) Allow employees to request purchase of annual leave in blocks of 5 or 10 days in any application period, subject to a maximum of 20 days in any leave year.
8. All of the above are subject to individual approval by managers and in accordance with operational need.
  9. The proposed periods for purchase of annual leave are: January, April, July and October. Lead times for requesting PAL remain as current policy.
  10. Payment for purchase of annual leave would be spread across the remaining months available in the relevant leave year (calendar year), starting in the month of the period of the request, as below:
    - a) PAL approved from January would be deducted each month January – December;
    - b) PAL approved from April would be deducted each month April – December;
    - c) PAL approved from July would be deducted each month July – December;
    - d) PAL approved from July would be deducted each month July – December<sup>1</sup>.
  11. Consideration has been given to extending the period of payback across leave years. This would require considerable additional administration and therefore the proposal is to keep payment within leave years as above.
  12. The processing of requests for PAL requires HR administration and payroll resource. Should the number of requests approved remain as is, there is no impact on the HR resource required (even if the number of days for each request increases). If the number of requests approved increases, there will be a proportionate increase in the resource administration and processing of these<sup>2</sup>. The usage and HR resource will be monitored at each period.

### **Reasons for changes to the policy**

13. Staff will be able to make multiple requests for PAL and at any or all of the four request opportunities. Requests are only approved subject to service need. More frequent opportunities for staff to request PAL and the increase in potential number of days that can be requested can further support employee wellbeing and engagement by enabling work-life balance. Staff inclusion can also be supported through this additional opportunity to work flexibly. The data show this is an approach that employees use and value.
14. The proposals will allow staff to request PAL at four points in the year, which means decisions about resource needs for services can be made in a more timely manner, i.e. over a three-month period, if needed.
15. Maintaining specific application points ensures equal consideration is given by managers to all applications. This supports consistency and perceptions of fairness in the approval of purchase of annual leave, and balance with approval of contractual leave allowance.

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<sup>1</sup> The number of days available for purchase in this shorter pay-back period would be subject to the individual's pay not falling below National Living Wage/National Minimum Wage

<sup>2</sup> Each request requires a calculation of Additional Pension Contributions for employees wishing to make up contributions for PAL.



16. Increasing the frequency and number of days available to purchase as additional annual leave may bring additional financial savings. This is based on usage data, which show some staff requesting and using the full current 10-day limit, and staff also took the opportunity to purchase further additional leave when this was offered in 2020, therefore there is potential take up beyond the current maximum. In addition, communication and promotion of the PAL scheme throughout the year raises awareness and therefore potential take up.
17. The recognised trades unions have agreed in principle with the changes to the policy; we will work with them to implement the policy and communications to staff.
18. We intend to give staff reasonable notice of the change to the policy, with an aim to implement in July 2021.

### **Environmental impact of the proposal**

19. It is anticipated that this policy will have a neutral environmental impact, unchanged from the current policy.

### **Equalities impact of the proposal**

20. An Equalities Impact Assessment will be carried out on the new policy once it has been drafted. Trade union representatives will be invited to attend and contribute to this assessment.

### **Risk Assessment**

21. The main considerations are identified above, and the risks associated with these are controlled by the existing scheme approval and administration processes and proposed scheme changes.
22. Compliance with National Living Wage/National Minimum Wage regulations are noted in paragraph 10 above.

### **Financial Implications of the proposal**

23. The proposals provide an opportunity for additional salary savings, above those created by the current scheme. The savings are monitored regularly.

### **Recommendations**

24. It is recommended that Staffing Policy Committee approve the proposed amendments to the PAL Scheme and Policy to increase the number of opportunities to four for employees to purchase annual leave across the year and increase the maximum number of days available to purchase to twenty in any leave year.

**Joanne Pitt**  
**Director HR&OD**

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## Purchasing Annual Leave policy and procedure

This policy can be made available in other languages and formats such as large print and audio on [request](#).

### What is it?

This scheme gives employees of Wiltshire Council the opportunity to purchase **four** weeks additional leave each year (pro-rata for part-time employees). It is aimed at providing greater work/life balance for employees and allow for events such as a special occasion or trips or taking extra leave for personal or family reasons.

### Go straight to the section:

- [Who does it apply to?](#)
- [When does it apply?](#)
- [When does it not apply?](#)
- [Application period](#)
- [Amount of additional leave that can be purchased](#)
- [Application process](#)
- [Recording of annual leave and purchased annual leave](#)
- [Cost of your additional leave](#)
- [Commitment](#)
- [Sickness](#)
- [Maternity, adoption & paternity](#)
- [Redundancy](#)
- [Pension implications](#)
- [Roles & responsibilities](#)
- [Frequently asked questions](#)

### Who does it apply to?

The policy applies to all Wiltshire Council employees except centrally employed teachers, Youth and Community employees and teaching and non-teaching staff employed in maintained schools or academies. It also does not apply to an employee who has transferred under TUPE terms and conditions of employment.

### When does it apply?

The scheme runs from 1 January – 31 December alongside the normal annual leave year but it will be administered separately.

It is a discretionary scheme and will be reviewed each year. It is not a term and condition of your employment.

## When does it not apply?

The policy will not apply to:

- employees in their probationary period
- fixed term or temporary contracts with less than 12 months left to run
- teaching and non-teaching staff employed in maintained schools or academies.
- centrally employed teachers
- youth and community employees
- staff on term time only contracts
- zero hours casual workers

## What are the main points?

### Application period

1. The maximum amount of additional leave you can apply to purchase in a leave year is **20 days** (pro-rata for part time employees) to be taken in one-week blocks.
2. There will be **four** application windows each year. The first application window will be 1 – 30 November for applications in the following year during which you can apply to purchase additional annual leave of up to 10 days for full-time employees, pro-rata for part-time employees. The additional annual leave must be taken in the leave year 1 January to 31 December<sup>1</sup>.
3. **The second application window will be 1 – 28/29 February in the current leave year when you can apply to purchase up to 10 days' additional leave for full-time employees, pro-rata for part-time employees, to be taken from 1 April during the remainder of the current leave year.**
4. The third application window will be 1 May – 31 May in the current leave year when you can apply to purchase up to **10 days' additional leave for full-time employees, pro-rata for part-time employees, to be taken from 1 July during the remainder of the current leave year.** If you have already purchased **20 days' additional leave** (pro-rata for part-time employees) in the first two application windows, then you cannot apply for any further PAL in the third or subsequent application window periods.
5. The fourth application window will be 1 August – 31 August in the current leave year when you can apply to purchase up to **10<sup>2</sup> days'**

<sup>1</sup> Subject to paras 31-39 below.

<sup>2</sup> The number of days' additional annual leave may be limited where this would mean the employee's income would fall below National Living Wage/National Minimum Wage due to the shorter period for payback.

additional leave for full-time employees, pro-rata for part-time employees, to be taken from 1 October during the remainder of the current leave year. If you have already purchased 20 days' additional leave (pro-rata for part-time employees) in the first three application windows, then you cannot apply for any further PAL in the fourth application window periods.

6. Managers should also ask all employees for their standard annual leave requests for the year so these can be agreed and take precedence over requests for additional purchased annual leave.

#### **Amount of additional leave that can be purchased:**

7. Full-time employees are able to purchase a maximum of 20 days' additional leave each year to be taken in one-week blocks. A week is based on the employee's working week pattern and must be a normal working week even if some of these days are non-working days.
8. Part-time employees can purchase the equivalent of 20 days' pro-rata leave each year to be taken in one-week blocks. A week is based on the part time employee's working week pattern and must be a normal working week even if some of these days are non-working days.
9. You are able to request to take two one-week blocks consecutively.

#### **In each window of application:**

10. Full-time employees are able to purchase up to 10 days' additional leave to be taken in one-week blocks, i.e. 5 days or 10 days. A week is based on the employee's working week pattern and must be a normal working week even if some of these days are non-working days.
11. Part-time employees can purchase the equivalent of 10 days' pro-rata leave to be taken in one-week blocks. A week is based on the part-time employee's working week pattern and must be a normal working week even if some of these days are non-working days.
12. If you applied for 10 days' additional leave (pro-rata for part-time employees) during the first window application period and this was approved then you can only apply for 5 or 10 days' additional leave (pro-rata for part-time employees) during the subsequent windows of application, to a maximum of 20 days (pro-rata for part-time employees).
13. In accordance with the [Annual leave and bank holiday entitlement policy](#) the maximum amount of leave that can be taken at any one time by combining annual leave with carry-over of annual leave, accrued banked leave, unpaid leave and purchase of annual leave is 40 days (pro-rata for part time staff). This is subject to the approval of your manager.

### Application process

14. Make sure you have read this policy, including the FAQs, before applying for PAL so that you fully understand that by making an application you are committed to the scheme.
15. To request PAL complete the Request to Purchase Annual Leave form detailing the amount of leave you are requesting and send it electronically to your manager for their approval by the deadline of the application window that you are applying in.
16. If you have more than one job at the council you can apply for a maximum of 20 days' additional leave (pro-rata for part time staff) in total, and not for each job. If you are requesting leave from all your jobs at the same time you will need to get the approval of each of your managers.
17. Your manager will assess all applications received for purchased annual leave at the end of the application window period and will take into account that standard annual leave booking takes precedence over purchased annual leave.

### Approval of purchase of annual leave

18. If your manager approves the leave they will complete the application form and send it to [Policyandreward@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:Policyandreward@wiltshire.gov.uk).
19. When the approved application is received by HR, the team will carry out eligibility checks to make sure you have sufficient pay after deductions to meet the legal minimum requirements for the national minimum wage. Providing this is satisfactory your request will be actioned and you and your manager will receive an email of confirmation.

### Refusal of purchase of annual leave

20. As with any other leave request managers have the right to refuse requests in full or part (e.g. one week instead of two) because of service delivery reasons such as the leave request is over a busy period or other employees have already booked leave for the same time.
21. If your manager cannot agree to your request they will discuss with you the potential for agreeing alternative dates.
22. Managers can discuss with their team if there are a number of requests for the same period to see if someone is prepared to alter their dates or if there can be a compromise.

23. Managers need to ensure consistency in their decisions to decline purchase of annual leave requests as with any other leave requests.
24. If your manager is unable to approve your request or agree alternative dates they must still complete the application form and send to [Policyandreward@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:Policyandreward@wiltshire.gov.uk). They will need to give reasons on the form as to why they have been unable to approve your request and to add notes from the meeting they had with you to discuss your application. There is no right of appeal against the manager's decision.

### Recording of annual leave and purchased annual leave

25. Annual leave and purchased additional annual leave must be recorded and processed separately. There is no change to the way annual leave is requested and recorded.

### The cost of your purchased annual leave

26. You are able to calculate the estimated cost of your annual leave by using the purchase annual leave calculator.
27. Deductions for the purchase of annual leave will be taken from your salary as below:
  - a) PAL approved from January will be deducted each month January – December
  - b) PAL approved from April will be deducted each month April – December
  - c) PAL approved from July will be deducted each month July – December.
  - d) PAL approved from October will be deducted each month October – December<sup>3</sup>.
28. The cost of your annual leave is based on your contractual hours and salary at the time of the application window closing date, unless you change your contractual hours and this will take effect on or before the first day of the period in which you have approved additional annual, in which case the cost is based on these contracted hours. It will include all regular contractual payments you receive such as unsocial hours allowance.
29. The cost of your purchased annual leave will be deducted from your gross salary prior to deductions for tax, national insurance and pension.
30. A request for purchased annual leave will be declined if after deductions your hourly rate is lower than the national minimum wage.

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<sup>3</sup> See footnote 2 above

## **Commitment**

31. Once your application to purchase annual leave has been agreed you are committed to the scheme. If you fail to take the leave at the agreed time the leave will be lost with no reimbursement unless you are able to agree with your manager a mutually convenient time to take the leave within the leave year.
32. By completing and submitting an application for the purchase of annual leave you are agreeing to deductions for the purchase of your leave from your salary.
33. Purchased annual leave cannot be carried over from one leave year to the next. If it is not used within the 12-month annual leave year in which it was purchased it will be lost. The annual leave year runs from 1 January to 31 December.
34. In exceptional circumstances if your manager requests that you do not take the leave because of urgent service needs and you agree to the request, you will be reimbursed the amount that you have paid for the additional purchased leave which has not be taken. Alternatively you may be able to agree with your manager a mutually convenient time to take the leave at a different time within the leave year.
35. If you leave the council you will be reimbursed for any outstanding additional annual leave purchased and not taken. For any purchased leave taken but not yet paid for the amount will be reclaimed from your final salary.

## **Sickness**

36. If you are unable to take your purchased annual leave due to sickness a discussion will need to take place with your line manager to agree whether the leave can be taken at a different time or whether you can be reimbursed.
37. If it is not possible for you to take your purchased annual leave at another time the deductions will stop and you will be reimbursed for the deductions taken to date.

## **Maternity/adoption and paternity leave**

38. In the case of maternity/adoption or paternity leave if you have purchased annual leave and payments have been deducted for leave not yet used you will be reimbursed. For purchased annual leave taken but not yet paid for the amount will be reclaimed from you. You will not be able to carry additional leave forward to when you return from maternity / adoption / paternity leave.



## Redundancy

39. If you are made redundant you will be reimbursed for any purchased leave not taken for which deductions have already been made. For any purchased leave taken but not yet paid for the amount will be reclaimed from your final salary.

## Pension implications

40. Purchase of annual leave is treated as unpaid leave for pension purposes and will result in a loss of pension unless you make an election to pay additional pension contributions (APCs).
41. If you wish to make up the lost pension via an APC, Wiltshire Council will fund  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the cost and you will be required to pay  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the cost of the APC.
42. Payroll will send you a quote for the cost of the APC and you will have 30 days to decide if you want to proceed with the deductions being made. If you do not notify payroll within 30 days that you want to proceed with the deduction the council will not pay the  $\frac{2}{3}$  cost and you will be responsible for the full cost.
43. Once confirmation is received that you want to proceed with paying the APCs the deductions will be taken from your salary in the next appropriate payroll month.
44. You must state on your application form for purchase of annual leave whether you intend to purchase APCs for the period of your unpaid leave.
45. If you choose not to purchase an APC then this period of service will not count as qualifying and reckonable service for pension purposes.

## Roles and responsibilities

46. **Employee responsibilities**
- Discuss your request for purchased additional leave with your manager prior to submitting an application form.
  - Submit the application form to your manager before the closing date of the application window.
  - Note that by requesting the purchase of annual leave you will have deductions from your salary for the cost of the leave.
  - Take responsibility for managing your own leave to ensure that all your leave, additional purchased leave and annual leave, is taken before the end of the leave year.

- If applying for another job with the council inform the recruiting manager that you have an arrangement for additional leave in place.
- Ensure you fully consider the financial implications of the monthly deductions from your salary.
- Ensure you fully consider the implication for your pension and make sure you understand the options to buy back lost pension entitlement.

#### 47. **Line manager responsibilities**

- Ensure employees have been given the opportunity to request their standard annual leave prior to agreeing any purchases of annual leave. This means that the booking of standard annual leave takes precedence over purchased annual leave.
- Assess the request taking into account service needs and the ability for additional leave to be accommodated within the employee's leave year.
- Discuss the application with your employee and if necessary discuss the possibility of alternative dates.
- Assess all applications at the end of the application window period. If there is a difficulty with requested dates discuss the possibility of alternative dates with individual employees.
- If a number of your employees want the same periods of leave you could discuss the situation with your team to see if a compromise can be reached.
- Treat all applications equally. On HR Direct there is guidance and information on [Equality and diversity](#)
- Ensure proper management of the employee's leave throughout the year in order to ensure that all leave including additional purchased leave is taken prior to the end of the leave year.
- If you are unable to approve the request explain the reasons to your employee and clearly outline these on the application form.
- Complete the application form whether the request is approved or not and send to [policyandreward@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:policyandreward@wiltshire.gov.uk)

#### 48. **HR responsibilities**

- Provide guidance to line managers on queries relating to this policy.

- Carry out eligibility checks to ensure employees earn at least the national minimum wage after the deductions for annual leave.
- Monitor all applications and complete the spreadsheet with information on whether applications have been approved or not and detailing reasons for non-approval.
- Email the manager and the employee to confirm if they meet with the minimum requirements and their application can proceed or not.
- Forward approved applications to payroll for processing.

## Definitions

### Equal Opportunities

This policy has been [Equality Impact Assessed](#) to identify opportunities to promote equality and mitigate any negative or adverse impacts on particular groups.

*If appropriate:*

Managers will make any necessary adjustments to ensure that all employees are treated fairly. For further information see the [guidance on equal opportunities](#).

### Legislation

This policy has been reviewed by an external legal organisation to ensure compliance with (the above legislation and) our statutory duties.

### Advice and guidance

If you require help in accessing or understanding this policy (or completing any of the associated forms) you should contact your line manager or trade union representative if you are a member.

If, due to the nature of your query, it is not appropriate to contact your line manager you should contact your head of service who will nominate an appropriate manager or colleague to help you.

See [guidance for managers – giving advice on policies](#).

### Further information

There are a number of related policies and procedures that you should be aware of including:

- [Annual leave and bank holiday entitlement policy](#)

For further information please speak to your supervisor, manager, service director or contact your [HR case adviser](#).

# Quarterly Workforce Report



October - December 2020

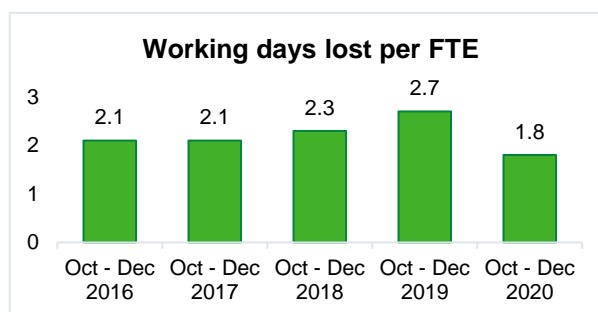
## Observations and exceptions

As COVID-19 cases rose during the October – December quarter, nationally we saw a tier system introduced and a second lockdown imposed. As a result, the changing COVID-19 situation continued to impact the council’s workforce and service delivery throughout the autumn months.

The COVID-19 virus had a greater impact on sickness absence during this quarter in comparison to quarter 2, contributing 36 absences totalling 217 working days. This is a notable increase from the last quarter (July – September), which saw only 1 COVID-related sickness absence; this increase was aligned with a rise in cases seen nationally in the same period. It should be noted that COVID-19 related sickness absence amounts to just 3.3% of the total absence days lost in the quarter, and, in addition, the 31 members of staff affected by the virus during this quarter represent less than 0.7% of our workforce, which is well below a figure of around 2.1% nationally based on data from the Office of National Statistics (ONS). This indicates that the restrictions implemented in relation to staff accessing workplaces, as well as the social distancing measures in place for staff who did require access, are likely to have contributed positively.

Over the course of the pandemic, the council has also monitored the impact of COVID-19 on team capacity, and during this quarter only 2.4% of the workforce were impacted to the point that they were unable to perform the duties of their role, i.e. they were either unwell with the virus, or were self-isolating and unable to work. This is up from 1% in quarter 2, however is associated with the increase in spread experienced nationally during this period.

During this quarter, sickness absence amounted to 1.8 working days lost per FTE. Despite the increase in COVID-19 related sickness absences, this figure is still significantly lower than that of the same quarter in previous years, with working days lost per FTE climbing to 2.7 during October – December 2019.



It is likely that this deviation from the trend is a result of the increased COVID-19 restrictions and the national 4-week lockdown imposed during November 2020. The increased restrictions during this quarter, as well as a high proportion of staff working from home, reduced opportunities for the transmission of stomach-related illness as well as colds and flu. Compared to the same quarter in 2019, cold/flu and other infections are down 72%, whilst stomach-related illnesses are down 34%. This is significant as, historically, Wiltshire Council have experienced a very clear seasonal increase in sickness absence during the autumn/winter months. In 2019 the sickness absence rate increased by almost 30% from 2.1 to 2.7 between quarter 2 and quarter 3. However, in 2020 Wiltshire Council only experienced

a 6% increase from 1.7 to 1.8 days lost per FTE between the same period. In addition, the stricter measures during this quarter have greatly limited the delivery of services requiring manual tasks (such as Leisure and Passenger Transport), thus reducing absences related to musculo-skeletal issues by 23%.

During the previous quarter (July – September), the council saw stress-related absence increase, returning to a level in line with the normal trend. This quarter, however, has seen a reduction of 7% in stress-related absence, predominantly from non-work stress-related absence. This reduction could be in part due to the increased focus the council has placed on Wellbeing throughout 2020, with regular activity on the wellbeing resources page of the EPIC Hub, weekly wellbeing-focused internal comms emails, regular council-wide Wellbeing surveys, and a dedicated Wellbeing and Engagement workstream within the Organisational Recovery programme. In addition, schools reopened nationally in September and remained open throughout this quarter, which may also have contributed to the reduction in non-work stress-related absence.

As part of our endeavours to improve the financial situation of the council following the impact of COVID-19, the council introduced recruitment controls in June 2020. These controls prohibited contract extensions for agency staff, resulting in a decrease in agency costs to less than £670k this quarter, a steady reduction of over £1m since the January – March 2020 quarter. The Agile Workforce workstream within the Organisational Recovery Programme will focus on creating and encouraging an internal flow of staff, making it easier for managers to source internal applicants for roles previously filled by agency staff or requiring external recruitment.

With the COVID-19 pandemic continuing into 2021, the direct impact of the COVID-19 virus on our workforce remains minimal. A significant impact on our workforce that is emerging is the need to remobilise our workforce to resource areas with an increase in demand or latent demand, requiring a more agile workforce. However, work on our Organisational Recovery programme continues to address this, and our council is dedicated to emerging from the pandemic leaner and stronger. Monitoring the impact on staff mental health and wellbeing remains critical, however the vaccination rollout, commencing in December 2020, has been a success so far, with the government aiming to offer all adults in the UK the first dose of the vaccination by July 2021, offering an end in sight.

# Workforce Demographics



Current quarter	<b>4482</b>
Jul-Sep	<b>4610</b>
Apr-Jun	<b>4680</b>
Jan-Mar	<b>4723</b>



FTE

Current quarter	<b>3453.8</b>
Jul-Sep	<b>3496.3</b>
Apr-Jun	<b>3545.7</b>
Jan-Mar	<b>3560.8</b>



Disability

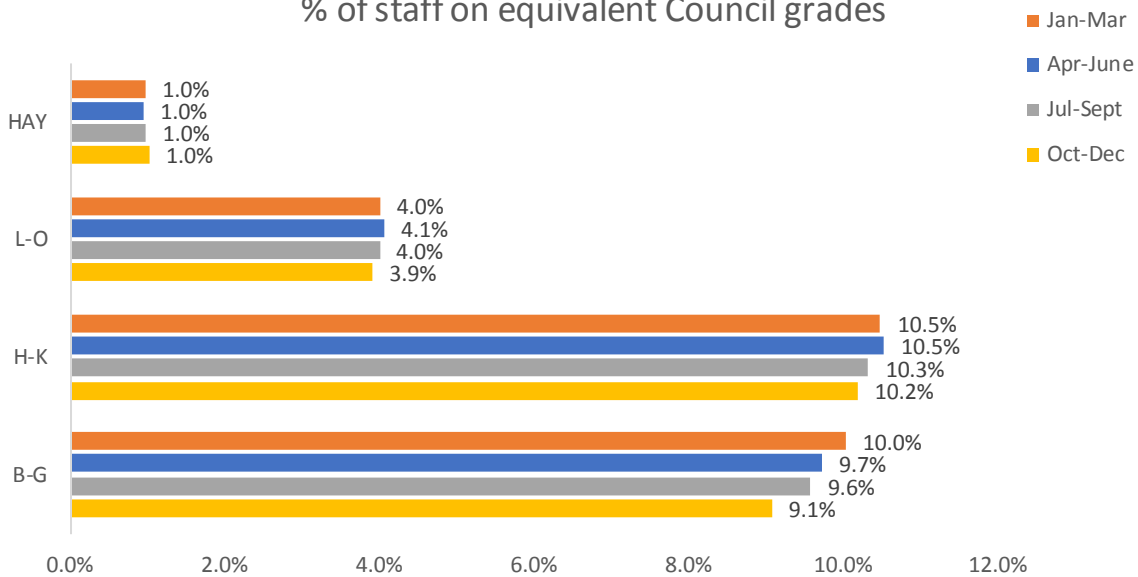
Current quarter	<b>8.0%</b>
Jul-Sep	<b>8.0%</b>
Apr-Jun	<b>8.1%</b>
Jan-Mar	<b>8.2%</b>



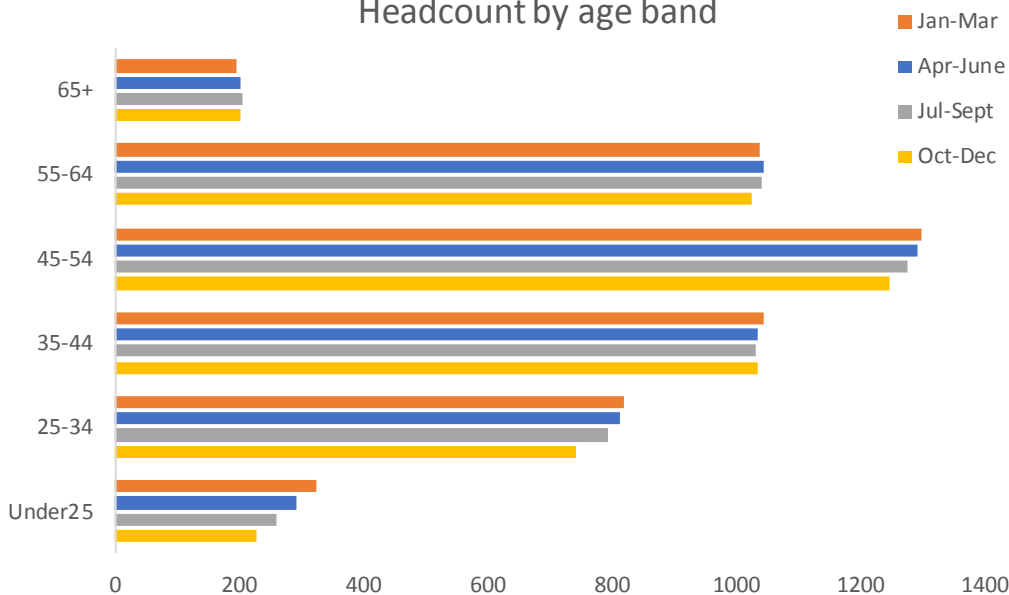
Ethnicity (BME)

Current quarter	<b>3.1%</b>
Jul-Sep	<b>3.0%</b>
Apr-Jun	<b>3.0%</b>
Jan-Mar	<b>3.0%</b>

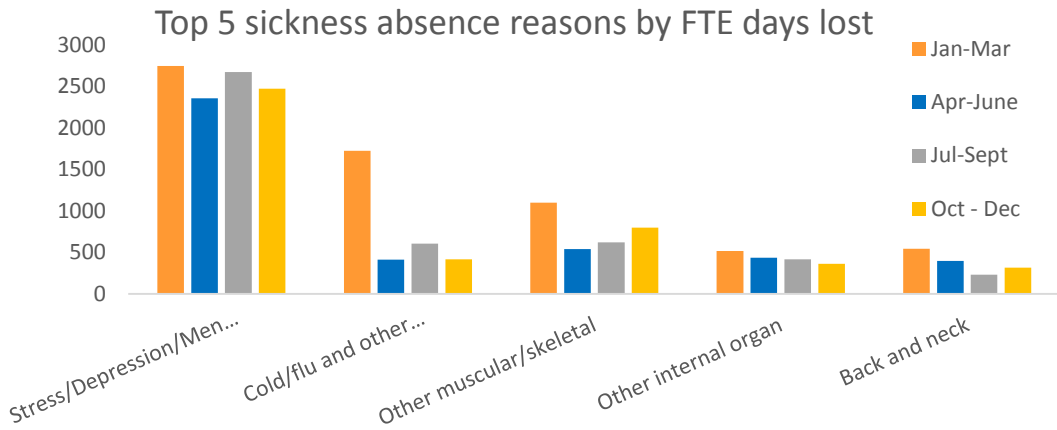
% of staff on equivalent Council grades



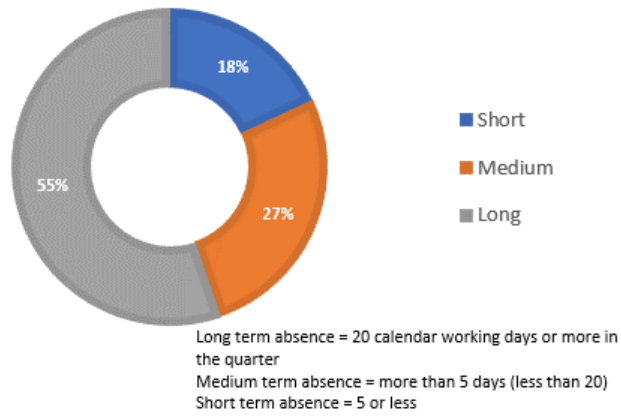
Headcount by age band



# Sickness Absence



Sickness absence breakdown Oct - Dec 2020



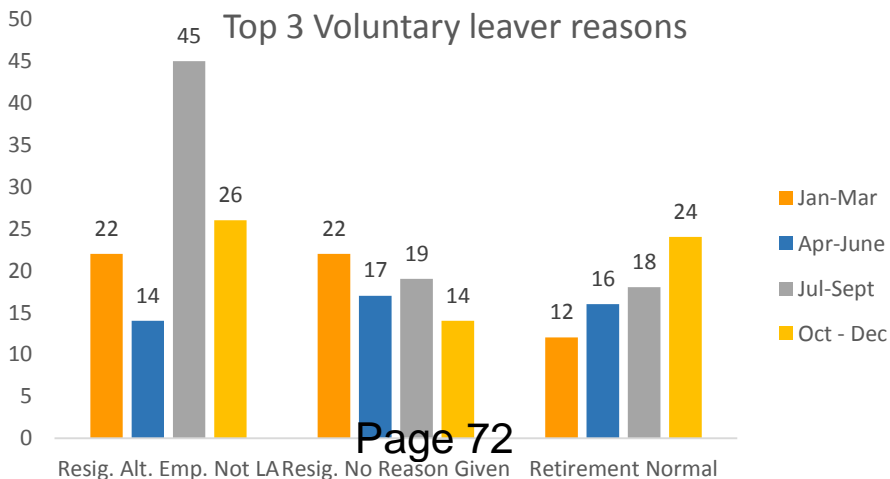
# Turnover

**Leavers 'under 25 years old'**

Current quarter	<b>8</b>
Jul-Sept	<b>18</b>
Apr-June	<b>13</b>
Jan-Mar	<b>15</b>

**Leavers with less than 1 years service**

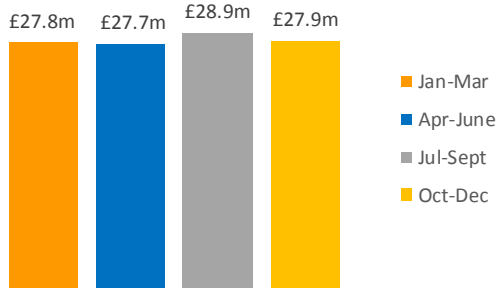
Current quarter	<b>13</b>
Jul-Sept	<b>14</b>
Apr-June	<b>14</b>
Jan-Mar	<b>22</b>



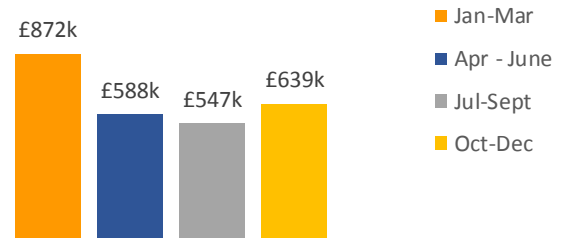


# Employee costs

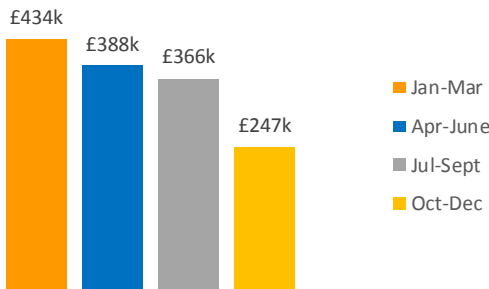
Permanent employee salary costs



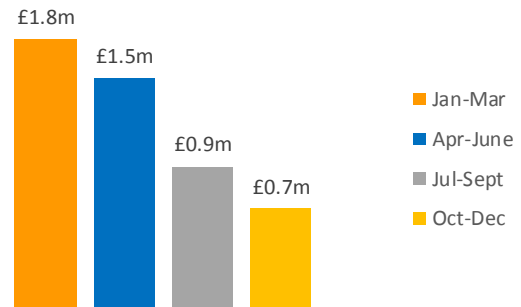
Sickness Absence Costs



Casual employee salary costs



Agency Costs



# Advisory Cases

Disciplinarys

	new cases this quarter	Variance from previous quarter
Current Quarter	11	1
Jul - Sept	10	-2
Apr - Jun	12	2
Jan-Mar	10	-5

Absence & Health

	new cases this quarter	Variance from previous quarter
Current Quarter	153	21
Jul - Sept	132	38
Apr - Jun	94	-75
Jan-Mar	169	-7

Grievances

	new cases this quarter	Variance from previous quarter
Current Quarter	4	-4
Jul - Sept	8	6
Apr - Jun	2	-4
Jan-Mar	6	0

Improving work Performance

	new cases this quarter	Variance from previous quarter
Current Quarter	1	-3
Jul - Sept	4	2
Apr - Jun	2	-6
Jan-Mar	8	4

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