Oxford City Council
Workforce Equalities Report
2024-2025

Oxford City Council Workforce Equalities Report 2024-25

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Introduction – Message from Chief Executive

An engaged and committed workforce is the foundation of effective service delivery to Oxford's citizens, businesses and communities. An inclusive and diverse workforce is not just a moral imperative, it is a business necessity. By improving workforce diversity, investing in inclusive leadership and building equality policy and management practices, Oxford City Council will remain a well-run, efficient organisation that delivers maximum value for money and, crucially, better represents our diverse, local communities.

I am proud that we have made significant strides in building a more inclusive workplace. We have launched a Positive Action policy to guide managers and officers in building an inclusive culture and improving workforce representation of the communities we serve. Our Aspiring Manager Programme is a positive action initiative with half of the participants from cohort 1 progressing into higher-graded roles and the second programme is underway. Positive action will help us to recruit and retain diverse talent, strengthening both decision-making and service delivery.

Focusing on broader leadership, we launched Equality Impact Assessment training to equip senior managers with the tools to consider equality implications in their work. We need to make sure that every policy and project considers the needs of our citizens, reduces risk and improves outcomes.

As well as an internal focus, we are working with local communities, hosting students from our target schools to support work experience and delivering interview techniques workshops to support career readiness. This helps in building thriving communities and in fostering a strong and fair economy.

In partnership with Oxfordshire County Council, we welcomed two students from the University of Oxford to undertake research and analysis around pay gaps to improve our understanding and inform actions.

The annual staff engagement survey shows 94% of respondents agreeing with the statement "At the Council, I think differences are respected, irrespective of things such as ethnicity, gender, disability, age and sexual orientation". There was an increase of 4% in results for "I feel like I belong here at the Council" with 88% agreeing with this statement, compared to 84% last year.

Our approach is about creating a diverse, progressive, agile and motivated workforce that can adapt to financial pressures, embrace digital transformation and deliver services efficiently. In a time of constrained budgets and rising demand, this focus helps us to balance our resources while improving citizen experience and building resilience for the future.

Caroline Green

Chief Executive

The purpose of this report is to help the Council understand its workforce and use the information to develop policies and measures to eliminate discrimination, and advance equity and inclusion.

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About the Data:

Sources of Data

- The demographic data from the 2021 Census is used in this report.
- The Council is analysing data collected from applicants and employees over a rolling three-year period to enable greater insight into trends and to confirm the relevance of the current equality action plan and identify any new approaches.

Who the report includes:

- The report includes all directly employed Council staff, including OX Place. Agency staff and contractors are not included, nor are Oxford Direct Services (ODS). ODS is a wholly owned company, a separate entity from Oxford City Council and not a public body. Therefore, the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) to report on equalities information does not apply to ODS.

Provision of equality data

- The Council asks job applicants and employees to provide data on certain characteristics for statistical monitoring purposes. They are informed that the data provided will only be used in an anonymised way for these purposes. The data is provided on a voluntary basis using our Human Resources Information Management System (iTrent). Employees can amend or remove their information at any time.
- All employees are required to provide data in relation to sex (as assigned at birth) for HMRC purposes, and this is used for monitoring purposes in relation to gender.
- Data definitions for each group by protected characteristic are in Appendix 1.

Non-reporting

- We strongly encourage completion of non-mandatory equality data (all data except sex) and provide assurances in relation to confidentiality and use of the data. However, as provision of the data is entirely voluntary, we do not have a full picture for the whole of our workforce and integrity of the data analysis is affected.

Presentation of data

- For most of the information presented in the report, percentages have been used. When information has been broken down further, data has been presented in number format due to the small numbers involved.
- Data is either for the whole years of 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023, 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 and 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 or on specific dates as of 31 March in 2023 and 2024 and 2025.

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Headlines

Total Workforce: The number of people employed by the Council increased from 803 on the 31 March 2024 to 837 on 31 March 2025. During 2024/25, employee turnover was 11% on average, which is lower than 13.5% for the previous year. There were 123 new starters compared to the 135 in the previous year.

Gender: Over half of the workforce are women (60.90%) which is around 10% above that of the population of Oxford at 50.1%. This year, the proportion of women in senior roles has increased by 4% to 52%, which is still not representative of the total workforce. We do collect data on non-binary and trans staff, but believe not all will feel comfortable sharing this data and this is backed up by employee feedback.

Ethnicity: Data indicates an increase from 14.8% to 16.5% in the representation of employees from minority ethnic groups in the workforce. The current target is 17%. The proportion of people from minority ethnic groups applying for jobs has increased from 39.8% to 41%. The proportion appointed has increased from 18.5% last year to 24% this year. Ethnic minority representation in management roles has decreased from 10% to 6% (22% managers have not declared their ethnicity). Census data puts the economically active population from ethnic minority groups at 27.7%.

Disability: 11.5% of the workforce declared a disability, an increase from last year at 10.2%. This compares well to the local population of 9.2%. Employees with a disability are well represented at lower grades and at senior grades representation has increased from 5% in 2024 to 7% in 2025.

Age: The average employee age of employees remains at 45, the same as last year and. In the local population, 34% of the total population is in the 35-49 age band, the largest age band. The largest employee group is the 51-60 age band.

Sexual Orientation: 4.8% of the workforce identifies as bisexual, lesbian or gay. The 2021 census data indicates that 4.7% of economically active residents in Oxford identify as bisexual, lesbian and gay.

Religious Belief and Non-Belief: 34% of the workforce has declared as Christian compared with 41% in Oxford. 30% is atheist/humanist/no belief compared to 40% in Oxford and 26% of employees have not provided information. 4.1% of the workforce has chosen other, 2.7% is Muslim (Oxford 7.2%) and 0.47% Sikh (Oxford 0.4%).

Staff living within Oxford: the proportion of staff living in Oxford City is 29.1% which is on par with the previous year.

Oxford City Council Workforce Profile: Trends

	2023	2024	2025

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Total Workforce	777	803	837
New Starters	98	135	123
Leavers	75	122	96
Average Age of Total Workforce	45	45	45
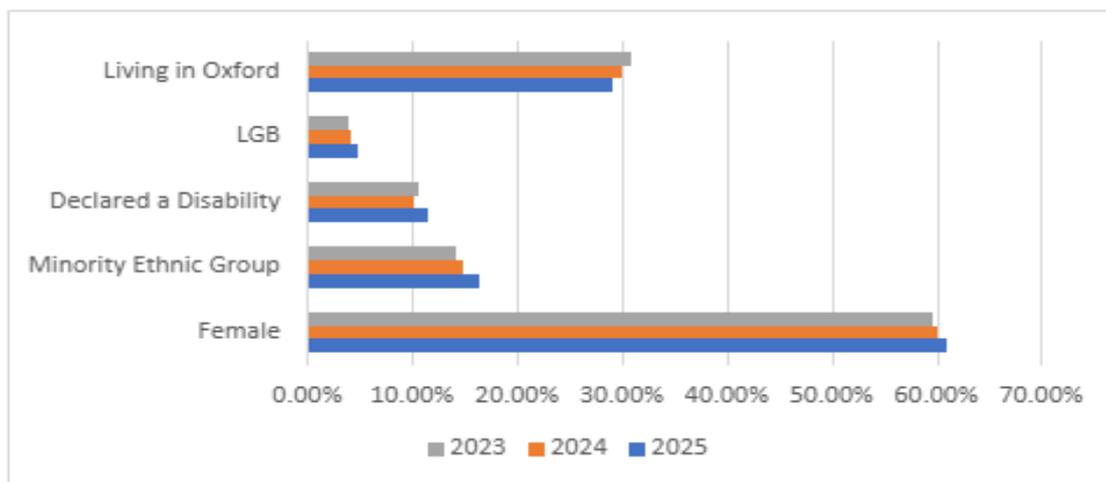
Year	Female	Minority Ethnic Group	Declared a Disability	LGB	Living in Oxford
2025	60.90%	16.50%	11.50%	4.80%	29.10%
2024	60%	14.80%	10.20%	4.20%	30%
2023	59.70%	14.20%	10.70%	4.00%	30.90%

## Oxford City Council Workforce Profile: Analysis

The Table below shows the proportion of males and females employed by Oxford City Council compared with economically active females in Oxford.

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Gender in Oxford and OCC Workforce (%)
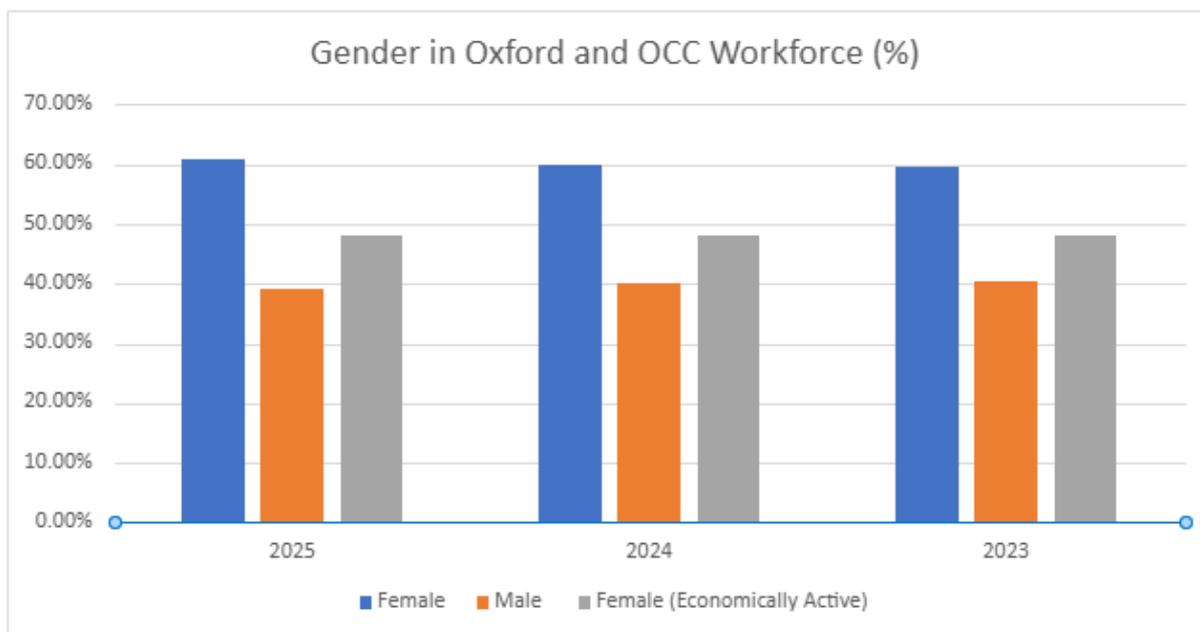
Gender	2025	2024	2023
Female	60.90%	60%	59.70%
Male	39.10%	39.98%	40.30%
Female (Economically Active)	48.20%	48.20%	48.20%

The table below shows the proportion of Oxford City Council employees declaring themselves to be from a minority ethnic group compared with the economically active population in Oxford declaring themselves to be from a minority ethnic group from the 2021 Census data.

Minority Ethnic Group	2025	2024	2023
Council Staff	16.5	14.8	14.2
Economically Active	27.7	27.7	27.7

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Minority Ethnic Groups in Oxford and OCC Workforce (%)

Disability in Oxford and OCC Workforce (%)
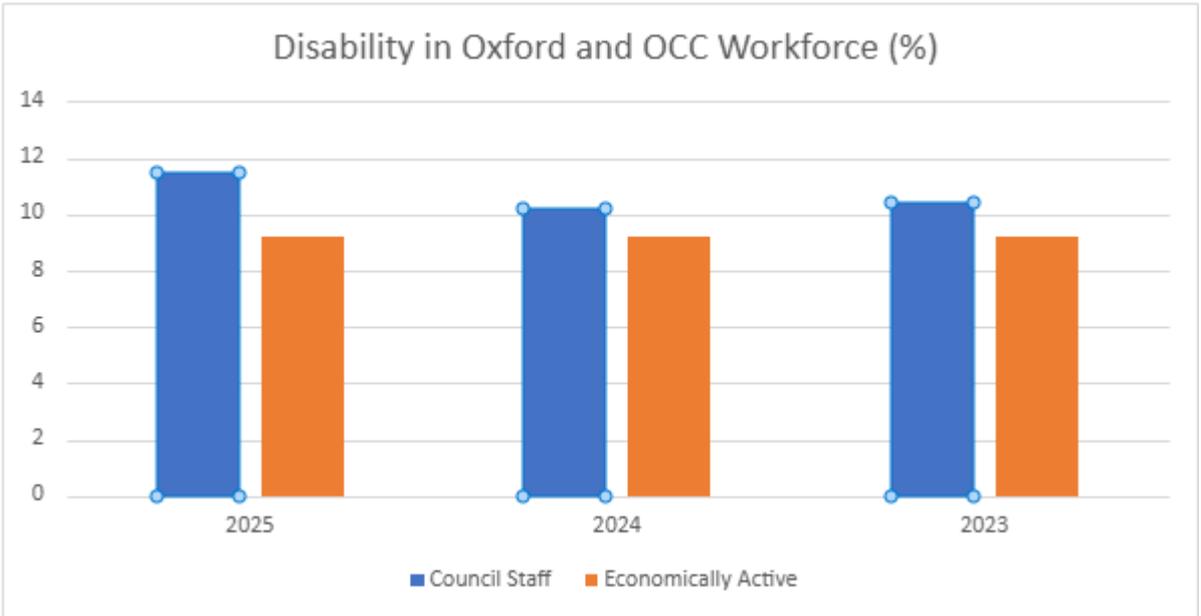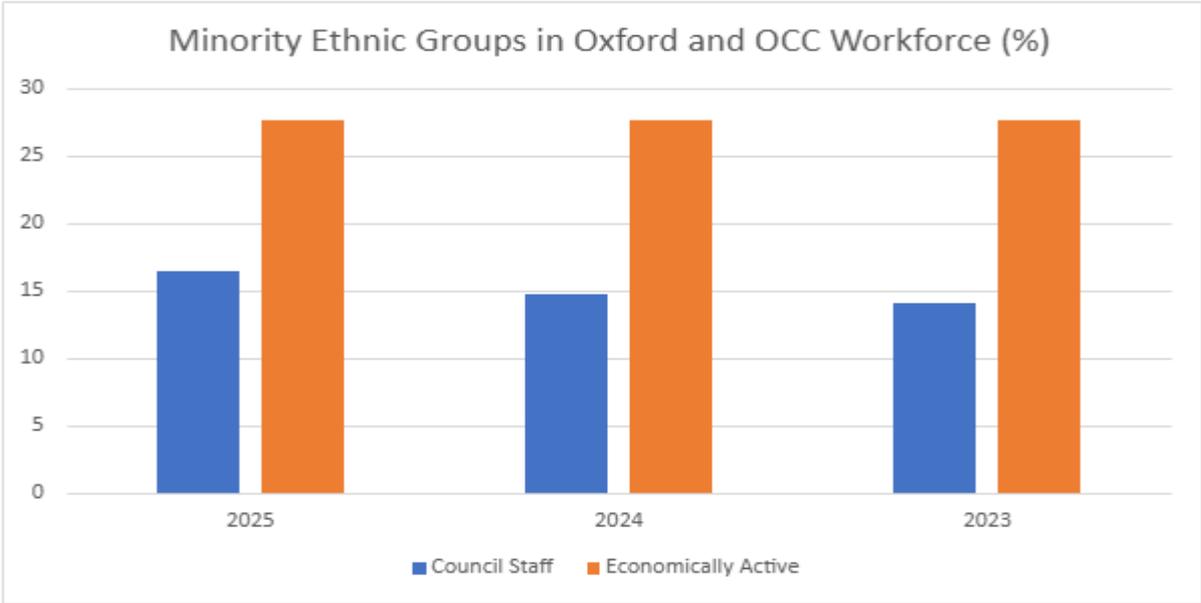
| Disability	2025	2024	2023
Council Staff	11.5	10.2	10.4
Economically Active	9.2	9.2	9.2

For sexual orientation, the table below shows the proportion of Oxford City Council employees declaring themselves as LGBQT+ compared with the economically active LGB population in Oxford. Note, scale on graph expanded to fit data – difference is small as shown in the table below

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Sexual Orientation in Oxford and OCC Workforce (%)
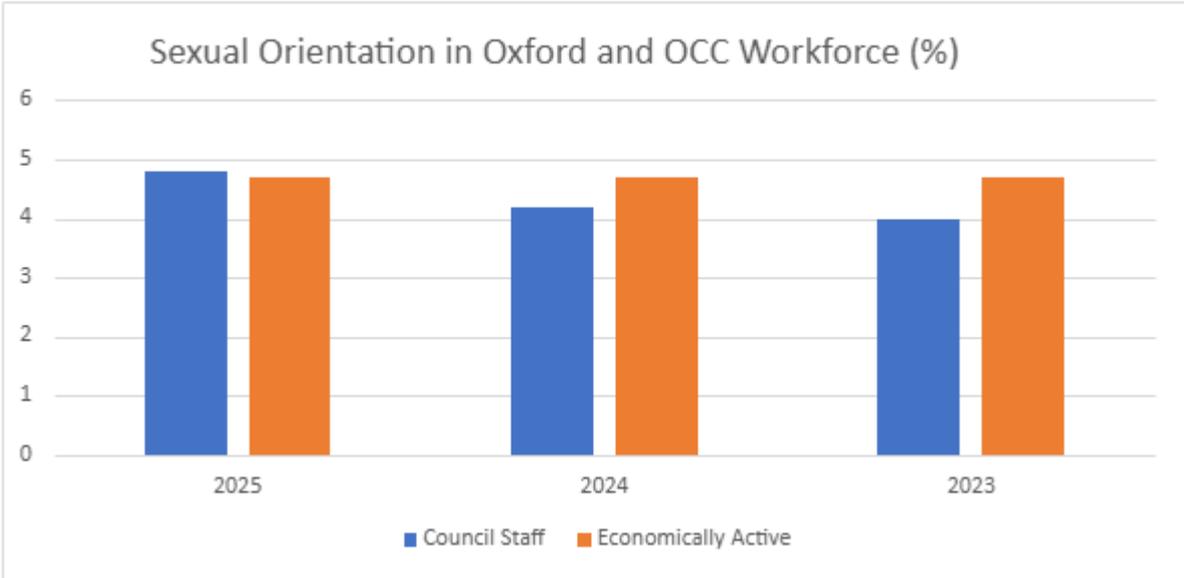
LGBQT+	2025	2024	2023
Council Staff	4.8	4.2	4
Economically Active	4.7	4.7	4.7

The table below shows Oxford City Council's workforce profile by religion/belief or non-belief.

Oxford City Council Workforce Profile Religion/Belief & Non Belief (%)
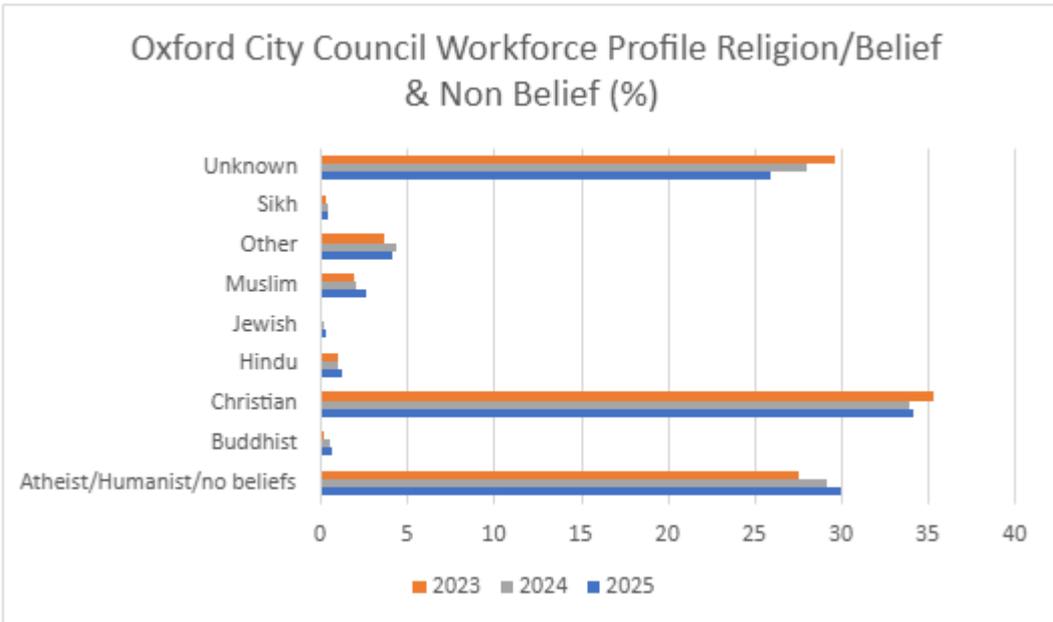
Religion/Belief & Non Belief	2025	2024	2023
Atheist/Humanist/no beliefs	30	29.14	27.54
Buddhist	0.7	0.62	0.26
Christian	34.2	34.00	35.39
Hindu	1.3	1.00	1.03
Jewish	0.3	0.25	0.13
Muslim	2.7	2.12	1.93
Other	4.1	4.36	3.73
Sikh	0.47	0.50	0.39
Unknown	26	28.02	29.6

The table below shows Oxford City Council's workforce profile by age band
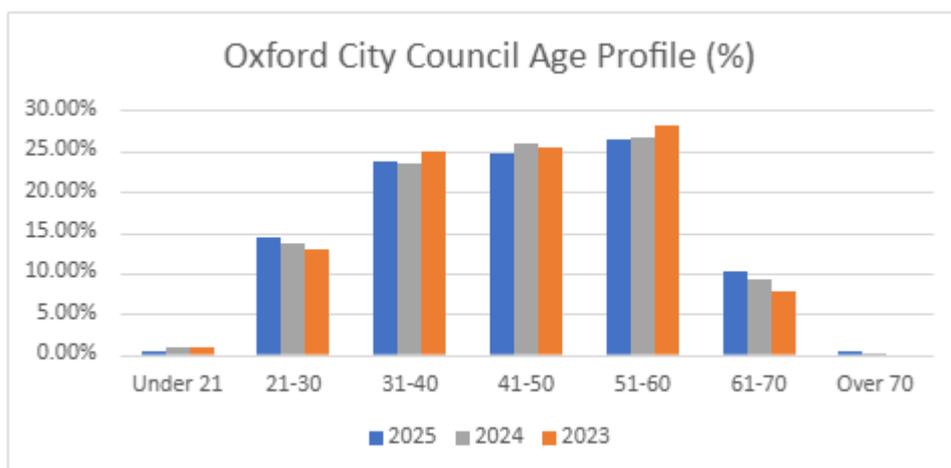
Age Band	2025	2024	2023
Under 21	0.35%	0.87%	0.77%
21-30	14.40%	13.57%	12.87%
31-40	23.63%	23.41%	24.84%
41-50	24.60%	25.90%	25.48%
51-60	26.48%	26.77%	28.19%
61-70	10.21%	9.34%	7.85%
Over 70	0.35%	0.12%	0

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The table below shows Oxford City Council's workforce profile by where they live.
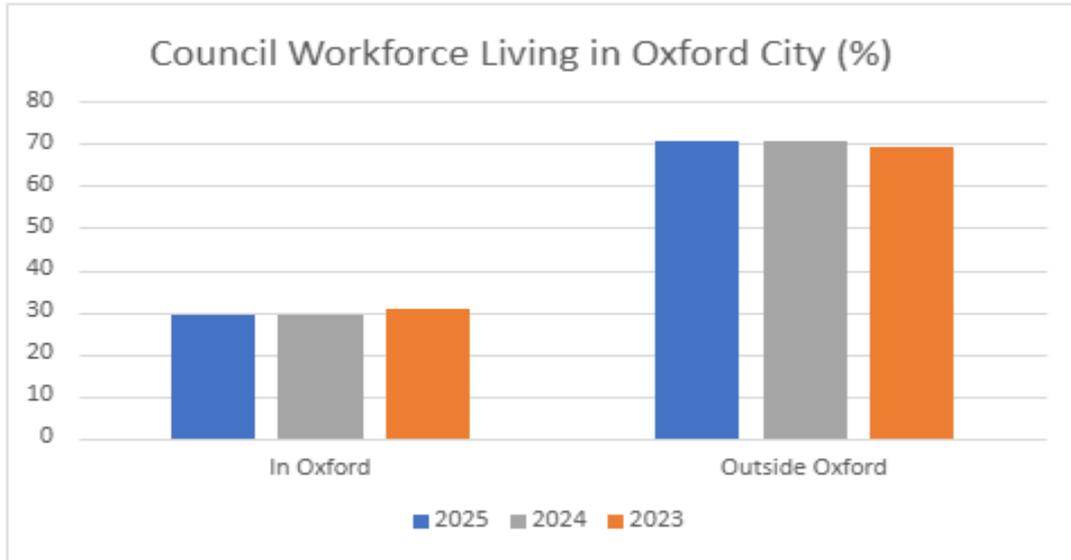
Location	2025	2024	2023
In Oxford	29.1	29.51	30.89
Outside Oxford	70.9	70.49	69.11

The table below shows the proportion of Oxford City Council employees who have not declared information by each personal characteristic.
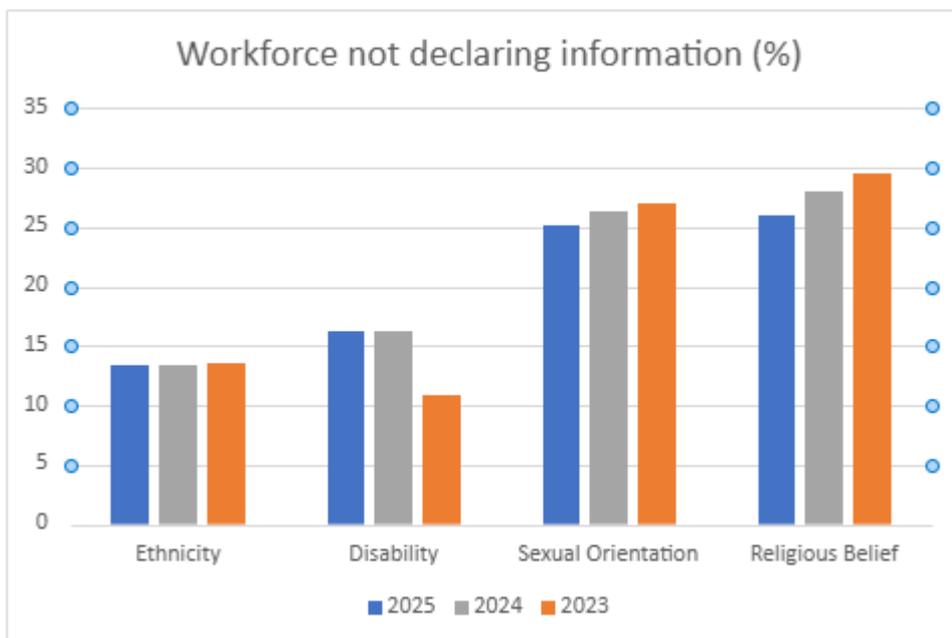
| Characteristic Not Declared	2025	2024	2023
Ethnicity	13.4	13.45	13.51
Disability	16.3	16.19	10.88
Sexual Orientation	25.1	26.40	26.96
Religious Belief	26	28.02	29.6

Grade	Female Full Time	Female Part Time	Female Total	Male Full Time	Male Part Time	Male Total	Grand Total
Apprentice Rates	3		3	2		2	5
Business Lead	6	2	8	7		7	15
Chief Executive	1		1				1
Deputy Chief Executive				2		2	2
Grade 03	4	6	10	2	3	5	15
Grade 04	13	19	32	12	5	17	49
Grade 05	56	51	107	44	8	52	159
Grade 06	69	27	96	41	7	48	144
Grade 07	94	36	130	54	5	59	189
Grade 08	38	15	53	61	10	71	124
Grade 09	23	9	32	21		21	53
Grade 10	10	8	18	24		24	42
Grade 11	14	2	16	16		16	32
Service Director	4		4	3		3	7
Service Head	1		1	2		2	3
Service Manager +	1	1	2.00				2
Grand Total	**337**	**176**	**513.00**	**291.00**	**38**	**329**	**842**

Note: some employees occupy more than one role at different grades

Workforce Profile by Grade and Employment Type (full or part time)

Employees by employment type, grade and gender (count)
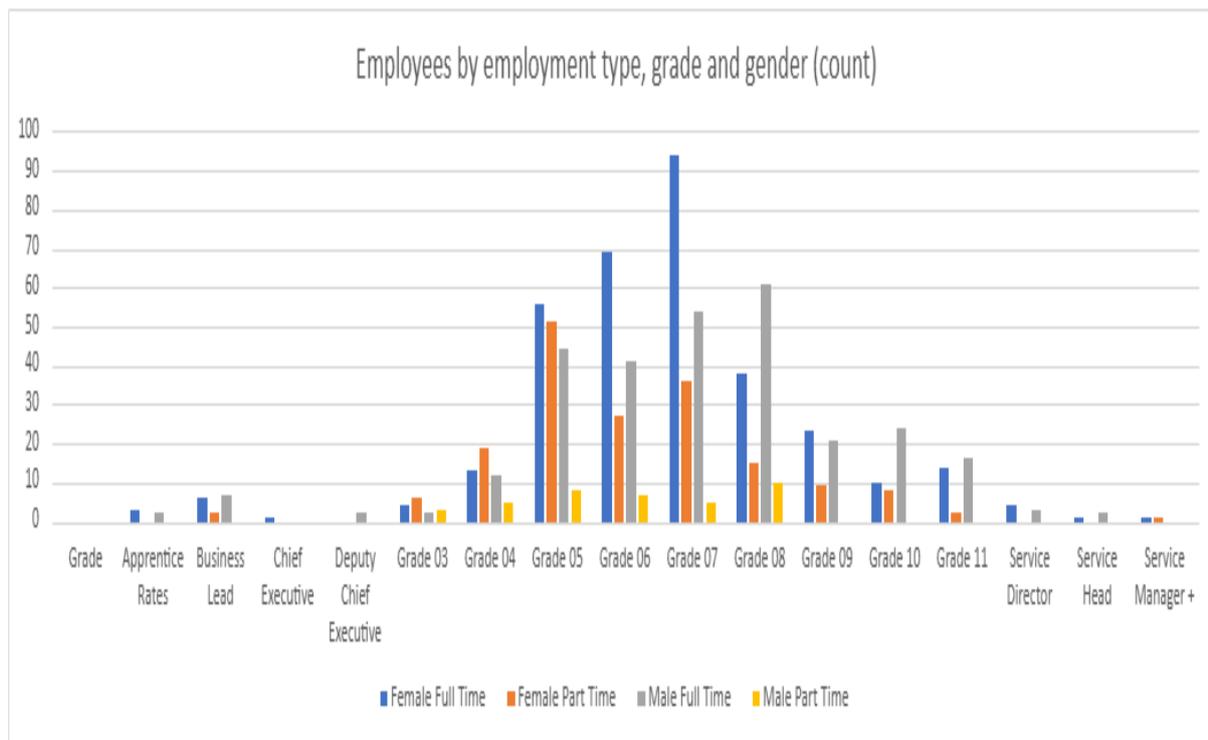
Workforce Profile Summary

- The total workforce number has increased since March 2024 from 803 to 837 The proportion of women employed by Oxford City Council is 60.9% and compares favourably with Oxford demographic data of 48.2%.

- The proportion of the workforce that has not declared their sexual orientation has reduced by 1% and religion/ belief or non-belief has reduced by 2%, whilst disability stays the same at 16%. For ethnicity there is no real change in those choosing not to provide this information. This impacts the overall integrity of the data.

- Minority ethnic groups represented 16.5% of the Council's workforce on 31 March 2025. Based on the 2021 Census, the economically active minority ethnic population of Oxford is 27.7%.

- The proportion of economically active residents in Oxford who considered themselves to have a disability in the 2021 Census was 9.2%. The proportion of staff who consider themselves to have a disability remained steady for the previous two years at 10.4% and 10.2% with an increase this year to 11.5%. This is greater than the proportion of economically active individuals in Oxford.

- The average age of the workforce is 45. There is little change year on year. Around 75% of the Council's workforce is evenly split between the three-decade groups within the 30 to 60 age range. The population of Oxford has its largest group as the 35 to 49 years group.

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- The number of staff who identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual has increased slightly to 4.8%. The proportion of economically active residents in Oxford who identified as lesbian, gay or bisexual in the 2021 Census was 4.7%.

- The proportion of employees who consider themselves to be atheist or have no religion has increased from to 29.1%, to 30% which compares to 40% of the population in Oxford. The number of staff who consider themselves to be Christian has remained the same at 34%. The number not declaring their religion has decreased from 28% to 26% however this is still high compared to the Oxford population where 7.3% of religious belief is unknown.

- The proportion of staff living outside the city centre has remained the same at 70%. In previous years we have seen a slight increase which is likely to be a result of home working and therefore enabling the Council to attract staff from a wider geographical area. This is also likely to be related to the fact that Oxford remains the most expensive place to live in the UK outside London. We have set a target to increase our workforce who live in Oxford by 5% within our People Strategy.

- The Council employs more women than men with women making up 60.9% of the workforce. Women are employed in bigger numbers in grades 5 to 7. In senior grades, apart from grade 9, women are under-represented compared with the overall representation at 60%. In senior roles there are 27 women and 28 men.

- Almost quarter of the Council's workforce is part time, the majority working part time are women at 176, with only 38 men working less than full time hours. There is a slight peak at Grade 5 but a more even spread of part time workers across in all other grades up to grade 10, but fewer in management roles at or above grade 11. Full time staff can work flexibly, and this is generally appreciated as a good benefit

## Oxford City Council Management Profile

For the purposes of this report, senior managers are defined as those in the following positions:

- Chief Executive
- Executive Directors
- Heads of Service
- Business Leads
- Service Managers
- Grade 11

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Management Profile (%)
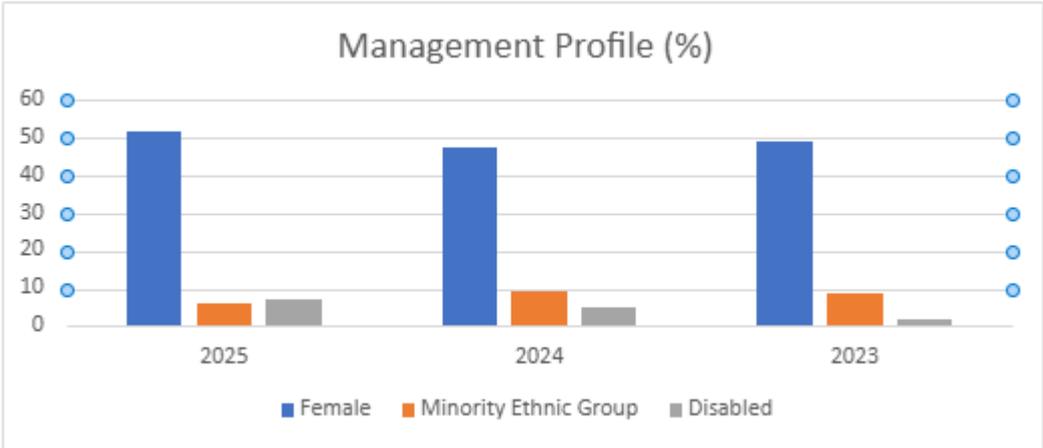
Characteristic as a %	2025	2024	2023
Female	52	48	49
Minority Ethnic Group	6	10	9
Disabled	7	5	2

Information Not Declared as a %	2025	2023	2024
Ethnicity	22	26	21
Disability	26	32	24

Management Split by working pattern (%)
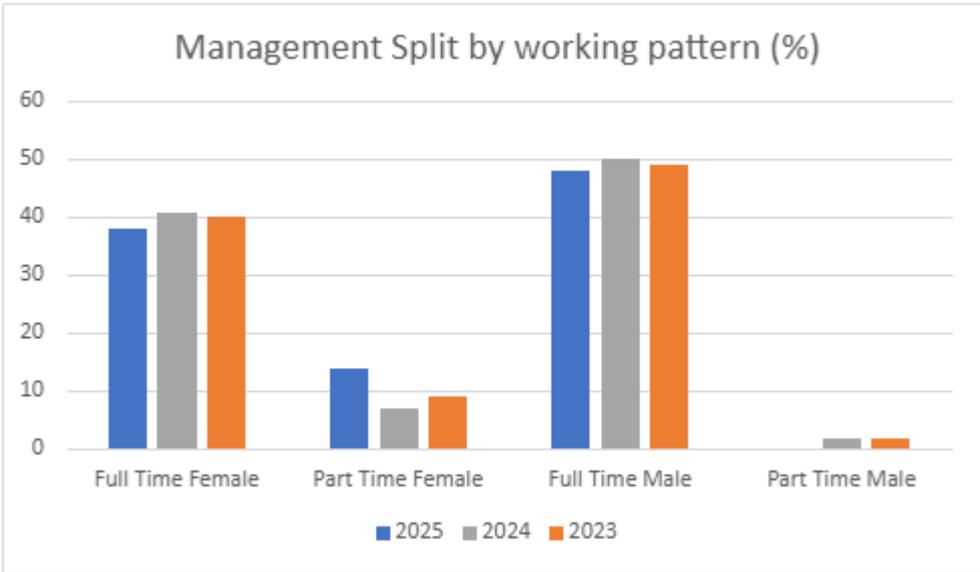
| Working Pattern as a %	2025	2024	2023
Full Time Female	38	41	40
Part Time Female	14	7	9
Full Time Male	48	50	49
Part Time Male	0	2	2

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Summary of Management profile

- Since the last report the number of women in management roles has increased by 4% to 52%, however, this is not reflective of the total representation of the women in the council which is 60%.
- The proportion of the managers from minority ethnic groups has decreased by 4% and is now 6%. It must be noted that a significant proportion of employees (22%) has not declared their ethnicity, so we do not have an accurate picture.
- There has been an increase in people in management roles declaring they have a disability from 5% last year to 7%. The number who have not declared personal data is 26%, an increase from last year by 2%.
- The proportion of managers who are part time has increased from 9% to 14%, all of which are female. We do not have data on all flexible working patterns open to staff.

Attraction, Recruitment and Onboarding
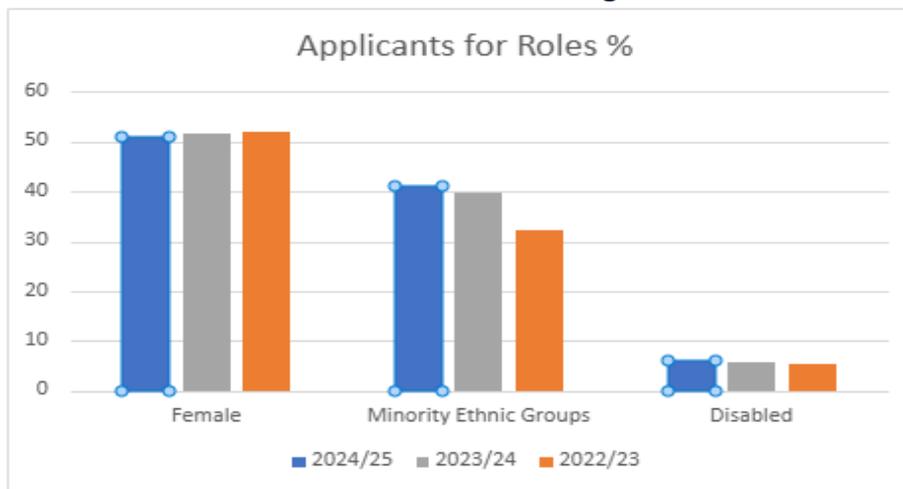
Characteristic as a %	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23
Female	51	51.54	52.01
Minority Ethnic Groups	41	39.76	32.21
Disabled	6	5.63	5.23

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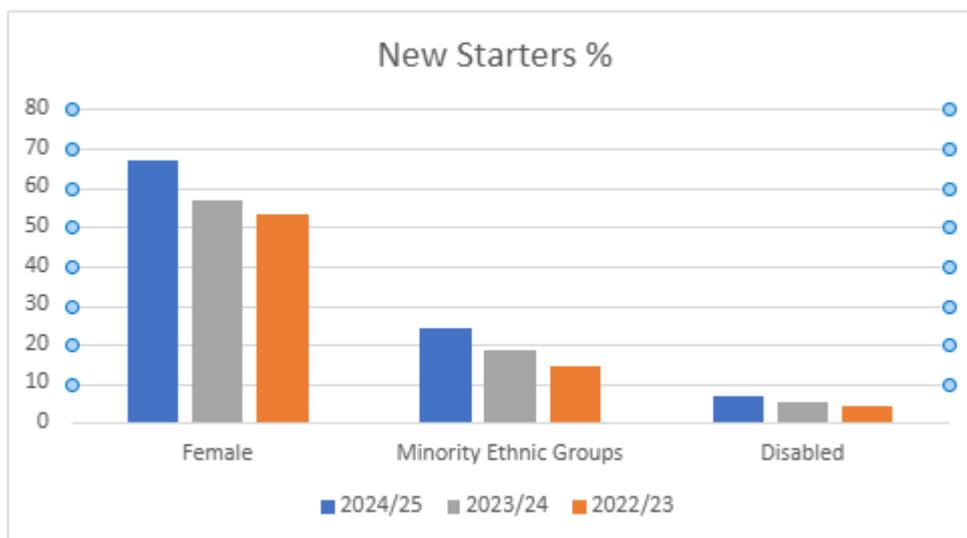
New Starters %

| Characteristic as a %	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23
Female	67	57.04	53.06
Minority Ethnic Groups	24	18.52	14.29
Disabled	7	5.19	4.08

Summary of Attraction, Recruitment and On-Boarding

- Over the reporting period, the total number of new starters joining Oxford City Council was 98 in 2022/23 and 135 in 2023/24. For 2024/25 the number is 123. This slight decrease is reflective of a reduction in employee turnover.
- The data shows that the proportion of female applicants has stayed the same as the previous year at around 51% but the proportion of female applicants appointed has increased by 10% from 57% to 67%.
- There was an increase of 2% of applicants from minority ethnic groups and 24% of new starters were from minority ethnic groups. This is a higher figure than the previous year of 18.5%.
- There has been a small increase of 1% in applicants declaring a disability and a 2% increase in new starters declaring a disability.
- Data covers recruitment activity captured for applications though the Council's Human Resource Management Information System (HRMIS). A number of new starters will not have come through this route.

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Leavers
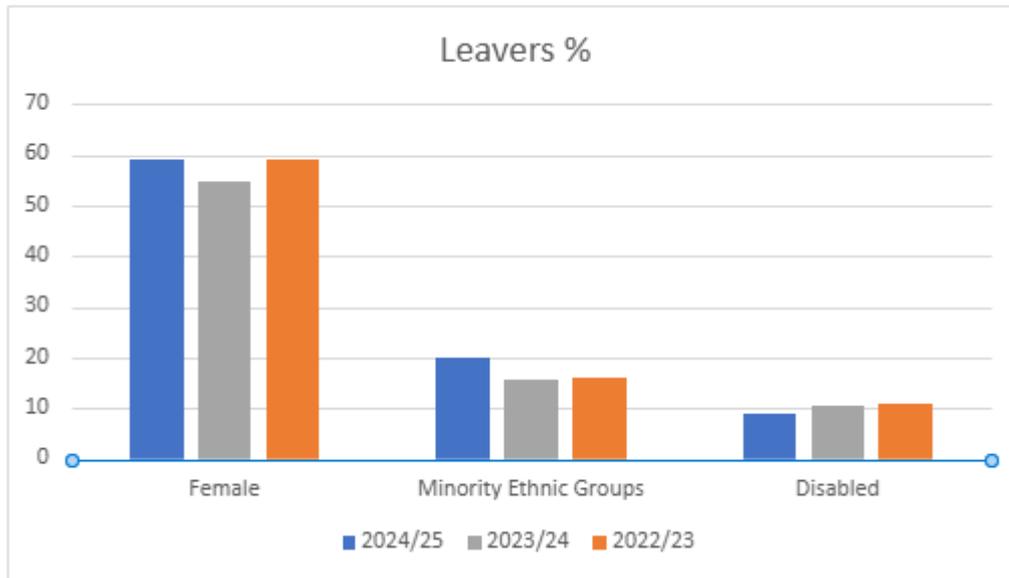
Characteristic as a %	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23
Female	59	54.92	59
Minority Ethnic Groups	20	15.57	16
Disabled	9	10.66	11
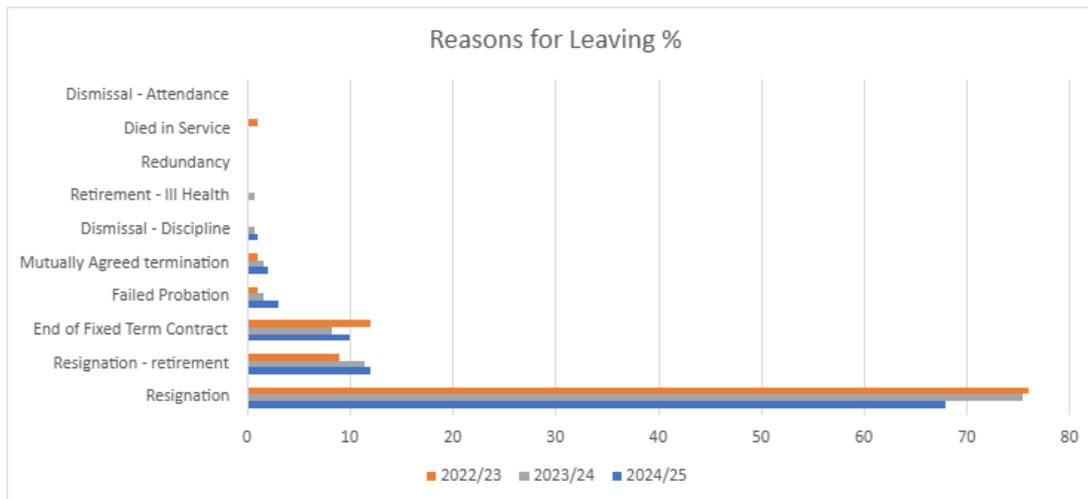
Leaving Reason	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23
Resignation	68	75	76
Resignation - retirement	12	11	9
End of Fixed Term Contract	10	8	12
Failed Probation	3	2	1
Mutually Agreed termination	2	2	1
Dismissal - Discipline	1	1	0
Retirement - Ill Health	0	1	0
Redundancy	0	0	0
Died in Service	0	0	1
Dismissal - Attendance	0	0	0

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Leavers by Month
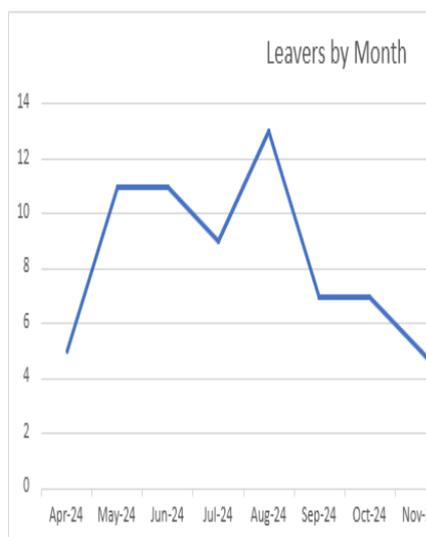
Month	Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24	Jan-25	Feb-25	Mar-25	Grand Total
Number of Leavers	5	11	11	9	13	7	7	5	3	7	7	11	96

Leavers' summary

- The average turnover at 31st March 2025 was 11% which is a decrease from 2024 at 13.5%.
- Overall, the proportion of female leavers has increased from to 54.92% to 59%. The proportion of leavers from minority ethnic minority groups has changed from 15.56% to 20%, and those with a declared disability have changed from 10.66% to 9%. We collect data from exit interviews but take up is relatively low and there is no data to suggest there are any specific problems to address. For resignations, career progression and pay are the most frequent reasons for leaving.
- The number of leavers who voluntarily resigned has decreased from 75% to 68% and the retirements have increased by 1% of leavers.
- The top 3 reasons for leaving remain the same: voluntary resignation, retirement and end of fixed term contract.

Note that full data for comparison for the last two reporting periods for applicants, starters and leavers are shown in Appendix 2.

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Priority Actions – 2025-2026

Future Commitments to Diversity and Inclusion

The Council remains committed to improving the diversity of its workforce and fostering an inclusive culture. Our upcoming initiatives will focus on inclusive recruitment, leadership development, and deeper understanding of employee experiences.

Inclusive Recruitment Practices

To attract and retain a more diverse pool of candidates, we will:

- Monitor our newly implemented anonymised applications, aimed to reduce unconscious bias in recruitment.
- Continue to strengthen inclusive hiring practices across departments by analysing data, reporting and continuing to train managers in inclusive recruitment practices.

Leadership Development, Practices and Culture

Building on our existing EDI training, we are:

- Designing and delivering tailored Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion training for senior leaders to embed Inclusive Decision making at the highest levels.
- Deeper understanding of workforce experiences via our new EDI survey
- Reporting on EDI workforce data by service area on a quarterly basis including a comparison with the overall workforce and making recommendations.

To better understand and support our workforce, we will:

- Enhance the collection of personal data through improved people processes, ensuring data is used ethically and transparently.
- Conduct ongoing staff surveys and rigorously evaluate the results to inform future actions and improvements.
- Work closely with Union colleagues and their equality and diversity lead.
- Raise awareness and understanding of the lives of transgender and gender non-conforming people and the challenges they face.
- Monitor the impact following the launch of our Positive Action Policy

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Appendix 1

Definitions

Minority Ethnic Groups

- People declaring themselves as Asian or Asian British (Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Chinese, Any other Asian background); Black, Black British, Caribbean or African (Caribbean, African, Any other Black, Black British or Caribbean background); Mixed or multiple ethnic Groups (White and Black Caribbean, White and Black African, White and Asian, Any other mixed or multiple ethnic background); Other ethnic group - Arab, Any other ethnic Group.

Sex

- The UK Government defines sex as the biological aspects of an individual as determined by their anatomy, which is produced by their chromosomes, hormones and their interactions; something that is assigned to an individual at birth and is generally female or male. For HMRC purposes all staff are recorded as either male or female. Where this report refers to gender in respect of employees it usually categorises according to this.

Gender

- The UK Government defines gender as a social construction relating to behaviours and attributes based on labels of masculinity and femininity: gender identity is a personal, internal perception of oneself and so the gender category someone identifies with may not match the sex they were assigned at birth.

- Individuals may see themselves as a man, woman, as having no gender, or as having a non-binary gender – where they identify as somewhere on a spectrum between a man and a woman. Our job application allows applicants to self-identify as male or female or not declare this information. Employees can change their personal data to when they join, with transgender and non-binary options.

Disability

- People who consider themselves to have a disability/long term impairment. Sexual Orientation Sexual orientation is an enduring pattern of romantic or sexual attraction which may be to the opposite sex or gender, same sex or gender or to both sexes and more than one gender.

LGBQT+

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- Lesbian, gay and bisexual, Queer and Trans (LGBQT+).

White

- People declaring themselves as White English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British; Gypsy or Irish Traveller; Roma; Any other White background.

Appendix 2

Data Tables for job applicants, new starters and leavers for last two years of 2023/2024 and 2024/2025

Job applications in 2023/24

Characteristic	Number	Percentage
Female	1007	52
Male	816	42
Sex Not Declared	131	7
Minority Ethnic Groups	777	40
White	1004	51
Ethnicity Not Declared	173	9
Not Disabled	1558	80
Disabled	110	6
Disability Not Declared	286	15
Total Applications	1954	100

Job applications in 2024/25

Characteristic	Number	Percentage
Female	1156	51
Male	901	40
Sex Not Declared	224	10
Minority Ethnic Groups	929	41
White	1081	47
Ethnicity Not Declared	271	12
Not Disabled	1742	76
Disabled	145	6
Disability Not Declared	394	17

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Total Applications	2281	100
Disabled	4	4
Disability Not Declared	49	50
Total Starters	98	100

Starters in 2023/24

Characteristic	Number	Percentage
Female	77	57
Male	58	43
Minority Ethnic Groups	25	19
White	76	56
Ethnicity Not Declared	34	25
Not Disabled	85	63
Disabled	7	5
Disability Not Declared	43	32
Total Starters	135	100

Starters in 2024/25

Characteristic	Number	Percentage
Female	83	67
Male	40	33
Minority Ethnic Groups	29	24
White	60	49
Ethnicity Not Declared	34	28
Not Disabled	75	61
Disabled	8	7
Disability Not Declared	40	33
Total Starters	123	100
Disabled	8	11
Disability Not Declared	12	16

Total Leavers	75	100

Leavers in 2023/24

Characteristic	Number	Percentage
Female	67	55
Male	55	45
Minority Ethnic Groups	19	16
White	78	64
Ethnicity Not Declared	25	20
Not Disabled	75	61
Disabled	13	11
Disability Not Declared	34	28
Total Leavers	122	100

Leavers in 2024/25

Characteristic	Number	Percentage
Female	57	59
Male	39	41
Minority Ethnic Groups	19	20
White	53	55
Ethnicity Not Declared	24	25
Not Disabled	56	58
Disabled	9	9
Disability Not Declared	31	32
Total Leavers	96	100