Reading Borough Council
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To: Councillor McEwan (Chair)
Councillors Brock, Lovelock, Page and Skeats

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8 March 2022

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NOTICE OF MEETING - PERSONNEL COMMITTEE 16 MARCH 2022

A meeting of the Personnel Committee will be held on Wednesday, 16 March 2022 at 6.30 pm in Committee Room 1, Civic Offices, Reading. The Agenda for the meeting is set out below.

CIVIC OFFICES EMERGENCY EVACUATION: If an alarm sounds, leave by the nearest fire exit quickly and calmly and assemble on the corner of Bridge Street and Fobney Street. You will be advised when it is safe to re-enter the building.

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PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MINUTES – 18 NOVEMBER 2021

Present:	Councillor McEwan (Chair)
	Councillors Ayub (in place of Councillor Page), Leng (in place of Councillor Brock) and Skeats.
Also Present:	Kieran Magee, Alison McNamara (via Teams), Miriam Palfrey (via Teams) (for items 7 and 8) and Shella Smith.
Apologies:	Councillors Brock, Lovelock and Page.

7.   MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 July 2021 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

8.   REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

Further to Minute 2 of the meeting held on 15 July 2021, the Assistant Director of HR and Organisational Development submitted a report, presenting the Committee with six Employment Policies which had been reviewed jointly and agreed with the Joint Trade Unions. The following documents were attached to the report:

Appendix A   DBS Policy;
Appendix B   Grey Fleet Policy;
Appendix C   Time Off for Public Duties Policy;
Appendix D   Flexible Workstyles Framework;
Appendix E   Overtime Policy;
Appendix F   Performance Management Framework.

The report explained that the policies had been reviewed because they did not reflect current best practice or were out of date and hence put the Council at risk, were due to be reviewed in line with the two-year review schedule and had been updated with current job titles and gender-neutral language. The remaining new and residual policies which required review would be brought forward for approval by the end of March 2022.

The report set out the principles that had been in mind when the policies had been written and stated that in future, all employment policies would be reviewed every two years or sooner if legislation required it.

The report also included a table which set out in summary terms for each of the revised policies the issues which had been addressed together with additional key changes that had been agreed with the Joint Trades Unions. Once the policy review had been completed, hyperlinks would be added to the policies where they were cross referenced with other policies. The process for agreeing the policies with the Joint Trade Unions was set out in a table and a communications plan had been put in place to communicate the revised policies to managers and employees.

Resolved:

(1)   **That the following revised/new HR policies, as set out in in Appendices A to F attached to the report, be approved:**

- **Appendix A   DBS Policy;**

- **Appendix B   Grey Fleet Policy;**
- **Appendix C   Time Off For Public Duties Policy;**
- **Appendix D   Flexible Workstyles Framework;**
- **Appendix E   Overtime Policy;**
- **Appendix F   Performance Management Framework;**

9.   EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved -

That pursuant to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) members of the press and public be excluded during consideration of the following items, as it was likely that there would be disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) to that Act.

10.   REDUNDANCY AND EARLY RETIREMENT COSTS - 1 APRIL 2021 TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2021

The Assistant Director of HR and Organisational Development submitted a report, which provided a monitoring statement of all termination costs that had been incurred due to employees leaving the Council on either early retirement or redundancy grounds between 1 April 2021 and 30 September 2021. There had been no early retirements on the grounds of efficiency during this period. Termination costs that had been incurred due to employees leaving the Council on redundancy grounds between 1 April 2021 and 30 September 2021 were attached to the report at Appendix 1.

Resolved   That it be noted that the total termination costs incurred due to employees leaving the Council on redundancy grounds between 1 April 2021 and 30 September 2021 was £26,206.48.

(Exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1 and 2).

(The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and closed at 6.52pm).

PROCEEDINGS OF THE LOCAL JOINT FORUM – 24 FEBRUARY 2022

Present:

Councillors Brock (Chair), McEwan and Stanford-Beale

P Kenny	Unison
M Palfrey	Unison, Branch Secretary
A Solera	Unison
S Smith	Assistant Director of HR and Organisational Development
R Woodford	Committee Services

Apologies:

Councillor Page

K Magee	Unite
A McNamara	National Education Union (NEU)

1.   **PROCEEDINGS OF THE LOCAL JOINT FORUM MEETING HELD ON 25 FEBRUARY 2021**

The Proceedings of the Local Joint Forum meeting held on 25 February 2021 were confirmed as a correct record.

2.   **PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2022/23**

The Assistant Director of HR and Organisation Development submitted a report, that would be submitted to Personnel Committee on 16 March 2022, providing a Pay Policy Statement, attached at Appendix 1, for 2022/23 for approval by Council on 22 March 2022.

The report stated that the Pay Policy Statement for 2022/23 had been updated with the following changes:

- Paragraph 5.2 had been updated to reflect the current status of the national pay negotiations for 2021;
- Section 7 had been updated to reflect the new Living Wage Foundation hourly rate which had increased to £9.90. It would be implemented at the Council from 1 April 2022. It might be necessary to pay a Living Wage supplement to staff below this rate, depending on the outcome of the national pay negotiations for 2021/22 and 2022/23;
- New pay multiples in Section 8;
- Annex D (Council employees in salary bands) had been updated with data from 1 April 2021 and Section 10 (Pay Profile) had been updated to reflect this.

The report stated that the majority of employees had not received a cost of living increase since April 2020 as the national pay negotiations for 2021/22 and 2022/23 were ongoing. The National Employers had made a full and final pay offer in July 2021 for a 1.75% increase for Local Government Services staff and Craftworkers and 1.5% to the Chief Executive and Chief Officers. The increases would be backdated to 1 April 2021.   The three local government unions (UNISON, GMB and Unite) had conducted consultative ballots on the employers' offer which had run through to the beginning of October 2021; all three unions had received resounding majorities in favour of rejecting the employers' final offer. In mid November 2021 UNISON had

announced it would be conducting a formal national strike ballot that would close in mid January 2022. GMB had announced it would be conducting another consultative ballot (in order to determine whether there was support for a subsequent strike ballot) that would close in mid December 2021. Unite had announced a later timetable: its formal strike ballot would close on 25 February 2022. The result of UNISON's ballot had been 70% in favour of strike action. However, turnout had been 14.5%, short of the minimum 50% required for any industrial action to be lawful. GMB had not proceeded to a formal strike ballot. Unite was still conducting its ballot. In February 2022, the joint Negotiating Committees for Chief Executives and Chief Officers had announced that they had reached agreement to award a 1.5% increase from 1 April 2021.

The delay in agreeing the cost of living pay award for 2021/22 would also impact on the timetable for the 2022/23 pay talks. The three unions were not expected to begin to consult their members on the content of their 2022/23 pay claim until at least March 2022, which meant it was not expected to be tabled until at least April 2022, which would be beyond the usual pay award implementation date of 1 April 2022.

The report explained that the Pay Policy Statement for 2022/23 would need to be updated once the pay negotiations had been conducted for 2021/22 and updated again when they were concluded for 2022/23. The report sought delegated authority for the Assistant Director of HR and Organisational Development, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Corporate and Consumer Services, to update the Pay Policy Statement which would require changes throughout to reflect the pay awards in addition to: paragraph 8 to show the new pay multiples and Annex F, the new pay scales.

The Forum discussed the report and specifically the delay in agreeing the cost of living pay award for 2021/22 and in respect of recruitment it was suggested that the Council need to be better at emphasising the benefits of working for the authority such as the local government pension, holiday entitlement and terms and conditions.

AGREED –   That, subject to Personnel Committee's consideration of the report at its meeting on 16 March 2022, the draft Pay Policy Statement for 2022/23 would be recommended to Council on 22 March 2022 for approval, be noted.

3.   EQUALITIES, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION UPDATE

The Assistant Director of HR and Organisation Development submitted a report for onward submission to Personnel Committee on 16 March 2022, providing an update on the work being done to advance Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at the Council since the previous update that had been submitted to Personnel Committee in March 2021. A copy of the Business in the Community (BITC) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Audit report – October 2021 was attached to the report at Appendix 1 and the BITC Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Audit recommendations which had been implemented or were in progress as at February 2022 was attached to the report at Appendix 2.

The report detailed the findings of an Equality, Diversity and inclusion Audit which had been carried out for the Council by BITC and the work that was being done to implement their recommendations. It also provided an update on the Healthy and

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Ethical Workplace programme which was being delivered in the Directorate of Adult Social Care and Health, in partnership with Ethical Reading which had focused on achieving a vibrant, values based and ethical culture.

The report explained that the findings from the BITC Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Audit would be used alongside the findings of the Gender and Ethnicity Pay Gap reports for 2021 and the Workforce Profile for 2020/21 to inform the development of an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy for the Council. It would be co-created with input from a range of stakeholders, with support from an external partner who would be appointed soon.

The Forum discussed the report and Councillor Brock asked that any thoughts on how to advance Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at the Council be shared.

AGREED –

(1) **That the report be endorsed for onward submission to Personnel Committee;**

(2) **That any thoughts on how to advance Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at the Council be shared.**

4. **GENDER AND ETHNICITY PAY GAP REPORTS FOR 2021 AND WORKFORCE PROFILE REPORT FOR 2020/21**

The Assistant Director of HR and Organisation Development submitted a report for onward submission to Personnel Committee on 16 March 2022, presenting the Council's Gender and Ethnicity Pay Gap reports for 2021. A copy of the Gender Pay Gap Report for 2021 was attached to the report at Appendix 1, a copy of the Ethnicity Pay Gap Report for 2021 was attached at Appendix 2 and a copy of the Workforce Profile Report for 2020/21 was attached to the report at Appendix 3.

The report explained that the mean gender pay gap was 2.06%, meaning that women earnt 2.06% less per hour, on average, than men. The median gender pay gap was 4.91% and the mean ethnicity pay gap was 4.26%, meaning the Black. Asian and Minority Ethnic employees were paid 4.26% less per hour, on average, than White employees. The median ethnicity pay gap was 5.69% and the report provided a further breakdown of ethnicity pay gaps for different ethnic groups.

The report also presented the Workforce Profile for 2020/21 which provided a summary of equalities monitoring data and trends over time. It covered data on the protected characteristics of the current workforce and job applicants in 2020/21 and compared it to the previous two financial years (2018/19 and 2019/20) where relevant.

The findings from the Workforce Profile for 2020/21 and the Gender and Ethnicity Pay Gap reports for 2021 would be used alongside the findings of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Audit that had been carried out by BITC to inform the development of an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy for the Council. This would be covered in a more detail in a separate report submitted to Personnel Committee on 16 March 2021 which would provide an equality, diversity and inclusion update.

The Forum discussed the report and specifically the growing number of people who did not want to disclose their ethnicity or if they had a disability. S Smith reported this was a particular issue around job applications where someone who had a disability, but met the requirements of the job, would be guaranteed an interview and yet people were still not making the declaration. An explanation was now being given as to why this information was needed. The need to do more training in respect of neurodiversity had also been identified, explaining what this meant and the positive benefits of employing someone who was neurodivergent.

AGREED – **That the report be endorsed for onward submission to Personnel Committee.**

(The meeting opened at 5.00 pm and closed at 5.34 pm).

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READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOR HR AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

TO:	**PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**
DATE:	**16 MARCH 2022**
TITLE:	**EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION UPDATE**
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	**CLLR MCEWAN** **PORTFOLIO:** **CORPORATE AND CONSUMER SERVICES**
LEAD OFFICER:	**SHELLA SMITH** **TEL:** **0118 937 4697**
JOB TITLE:	**ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF HR AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT** **E-MAIL:** Shella.Smith@reading.gov.uk

1.   PURPOSE AND SUMMARY OF REPORT

1.1   This report presents an update on the work being undertaken to advance Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at the Council since the last update to Personnel Committee in March 2021.   It details the findings of an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Audit which was undertaken for the Council by Business in the Community (BITC) and the work being done to implement their recommendations.   It also provides an update on the Healthy and Ethical Workplace programme which is being delivered in the Directorate of Adult Care and Health (DACHS), in partnership with Ethical Reading, which is focused on achieving a vibrant, values based and ethical culture.

1.2   The findings from the BITC Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Audit will be used alongside the findings of the Gender and Ethnicity Pay Gap reports for 2021 and the Workforce Profile for 2020/21 to inform the development of an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy for the Council. It will be co-created with input from a range of stakeholders, with support from an external partner who will be appointed shortly. A further update on progress will be presented to Personnel Committee on 14 July 2022.

1.3   <u>Appendices</u>

Appendix 1: BITC Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Audit report – October 2021
Appendix 2: BITC Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Audit recommendations which have been implemented or are in progress – February 2022

It is recommended that Personnel Committee notes:

2.1 The progress made to advance Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at the Council since the last update on 17 March 2021.

2.2 That a progress update on the development of an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy for the Council will be presented to Personnel Committee on 14 July 2022.

3. ADVANCING EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION AT THE COUNCIL

3.1 On 17 March 2021, Personnel Committee received a report on progress made towards meeting the requirements set out in the 'Tackling Employment Inequality' Motion agreed by Council on 20 October 2020.

3.2 Since this time, the following activity has taken place to advance Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at the Council.

3.3 **Business in the Community (BITC) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Audit**

3.3.1 BITC was commissioned to review the Council's approach to equality, diversity and inclusion. They have reviewed our policies, processes and initiatives, as well as sought insights into employees' experience across seven key areas: Strategy, Leadership, Recruitment, Staff, Employee Engagement, Pay Gaps and Life Balance. The key objectives of the research were to:

- Review relevant workforce data and pertinent policy documents;
- Uncover employee perceptions and experiences in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion at the Council; and
- Provide recommendations for next steps and considerations for driving inclusion in the workplace.

3.3.2 During the first stage of the audit, BITC met with the following stakeholders:

- Cllr Brock, Leader of the Council
- Cllr Emberson, formerly Lead Councillor for Corporate and Consumer Services
- Cllr Barnett-Ward, Lead Councillor for Neighbourhoods and Communities
- Peter Sloman, Chief Executive
- Jackie Yates, Deputy Chief Executive
- Frances Martin, Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services
- Seona Douglas, Executive Director of Social Care and Health
- Shella Smith, Assistant Director for HR and Organisational Development
- Trade union leads from GMB, NEU, Unison and Unite

3.3.3 BITC then ran five staff focus groups; each providing an opportunity for 10-12 colleagues to come together to discuss their perceptions and experiences of inclusion at the Council. Each session was facilitated by BITC experts and was a confidential 'safe space'. One of the groups was for staff who work in frontline roles in the community. There were two sessions for staff from ethnically and culturally diverse backgrounds. The other two sessions were for anyone to come along to.

3.3.4 The first draft of the report was shared with the Corporate Management Team, Senior Leadership Group, the Joint Trade Union Committee and the Cultural Unity, Diversity and Inclusion Network and their feedback was invaluable in shaping the final version of the report which was received in October 2021 and is attached as Appendix 1. Anonymized quotes from focus groups or interviews are included where it helps the reader contextualise the findings to the Council, and to demonstrate the value of having direct access to employees with lived experience of the issues presented. Primary recommendations outline the actions that BITC believe will have a significant impact on progress for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) at the Council. Primary actions outline the actions that BITC believe will kick start change and demonstrate that the Council is taking action.

Key findings

3.3.5 There were many positive comments about working for the Council expressed by people who contributed to the audit, but the findings focus manly on those areas requiring improvement. During the focus groups, particularly those for colleagues from ethnic minority backgrounds, it was expressed that the organisational commitment and strategy relating to EDI was not clearly communicated throughout the organisation. All focus groups identified that there is a lack of diversity in the senior leadership team, and that this was something that should be addressed to enact change and make progress. The Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic focus groups vocalised that there was a lack of awareness amongst the senior leadership team around cultural issues and barriers that ethnic minority employees face. Though efforts were recognised to address issues such as bullying and harassment, there was a consistent feeling that not enough action has been taken to back up any commitment to EDI expressed by leadership. It was expressed that greater engagement and visibility from senior leaders would be appreciated.

3.3.6 Across all focus groups, there was a consistent feeling that most recruitment is internal and based on existing relationships, which is a blocker to fostering a more diverse and inclusive workforce, and there were concerns about the lack of transparency regarding promotion decisions. There was a common opinion that opportunities were given according to networks and cliques; this was felt more strongly by the ethnic minority focus group. The Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic focus groups reported a lower sense of inclusion than others. Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic employees offered examples of microaggressions such as comments around accents and hair, mispronouncing names and unequal distribution of work and opportunity. Many white colleagues expressed that they felt that they could bring their whole selves to work but this was not the case for many Black and Asian colleagues.

3.3.7 All focus groups identified that incidents of bullying exist within the organisation. Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority employees believed that racism was not always

taken seriously within the Council. The words used to describe the culture were mixed as well as dependent upon directorate and team. This is reflected in the popularity of the word "inconsistent" to describe the Council's culture.

Next steps

3.3.8 There is clearly much work to be done and the Corporate Management Team acknowledges that it is not currently where it wants to be in terms of EDI. The next stage is to review the recommendations and actions proposed by BITC and co-create an action plan for implementation and embedding, with input from senior leaders, Trade Unions and staff representatives. The Assistant Director for HR and Organisational Development held follow-up discussions during November and December 2021 with the following groups:

- Senior Leadership Group
- Trade Unions
- LGBT+ Network
- Staff who attended a BITC focus group and who volunteered to continue to be involved
- Team Reading Delivery Group

3.3.9 Many of the recommendations made by BITC have already been implemented or are in progress; these are summarised in Appendix 2. However, it has become apparent that the development of an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy needs to be the priority focus as many of the recommendations will flow from this (e.g. setting targets for more diverse representation at senior levels, introducing a reverse mentoring scheme for senior leaders and junior staff from diverse backgrounds, targeted training and awareness raising for staff, managers and senior leaders covering issues like unconscious bias, microaggressions, how to be a good ally etc). The EDI Strategy will set out the Council's aims and ambitions for becoming a more diverse and inclusive organisation, our priorities for achieving this over the short, medium and long term, and how progress and success will be measured.

3.3.10 The Assistant Director for HR and Organisational Development is seeking support from an external consultant with expertise in this area to assist with the strategy development as there is currently no specific EDI resource within the Council. They will support this by working with the stakeholder groups listed above as well as key elected members. Personnel Committee will be provided with a further update on progress at the next committee on 14 July 2022.

3.4 **Healthy and Ethical Workplace programme within the Directorate of Adult Care and Health**

3.4.1 Seona Douglas, Director of Social Care and Health, has instigated a culture change programme running over two years within the Directorate of Adult Care and Health (DACHS).   The programme aims to address several issues around behaviours, including presenteeism and absenteeism. The Organisational Development and Learning team within HR is supporting the roll out of the programme which is called "DACHS Energise – It starts with me". We are working in partnership with Ethical Reading on an intervention based on achieving a Healthy and Ethical Workplace. The vision for the programme is to achieve a vibrant, values based and ethical culture:

"Where everyone is respected, treated fairly and with compassion. Everyone accepts their responsibilities whilst acting with integrity in a spirit of collaboration. People understand how their role fits into the overall purpose of the department."

3.4.2 The programme involves every member of the directorate and started with a benchmarking survey which was carried out in March 2021 to assess current state. Regular 'pulse surveys' will be carried out throughout the programme to check progress; the next one is planned for March 2022. There will be Core Healthy and Ethical Workplace training, together with mental health awareness training for all staff; which started with the senior management team and management layer. Delivery of the training element of the programme began in May 2021 and is due to complete in March 2022.   Feedback from both manager and non-manager participants has been very positive with comments such as:

"Very inspiring, absolutely can see how embedding a culture of inclusion and respect will help us all be happier in our work. Thank you"

"I think it was the best equity, diversity and equality workshop ever and it has really helped me to think differently. Thanks"

3.4.3 Members of the HR and OD team are receiving training and support from Ethical Reading to be able to co-deliver the Healthy and Ethical Workplace workshops and programme in other directorates. The work in the Directorate of Adult Care and Health could therefore also be a 'pilot' for a wider roll-out in the Council, subject to evaluation of the programme demonstrating that it is achieving its objectives and financial considerations.

4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

4.1 Advancing equality, diversity and inclusion within the Council's workforce enables moving to a position where our workforce represents the community it serves and ensuring a Council that is fit for the future.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None.

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

6.1 The BITC report has been shared with Trade Unions and all staff who participated in a focus group, who were invited to a meeting with the Chief Executive and Assistant Director for HR and Organisational Development in November 2021, to discuss the report and their views on its findings and next steps.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not required for the issues covered by this report.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;

b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;

c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

This report assists the Council to fulfil this duty.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There will be a cost to engage an external partner to assist with the development of an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy. Proposals and costs are being sought currently from suitably qualified and experienced partner organisations to undertake this work. The financial implications are therefore currently unknown but will be met from within the existing HR and Organisational Development service budget.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS
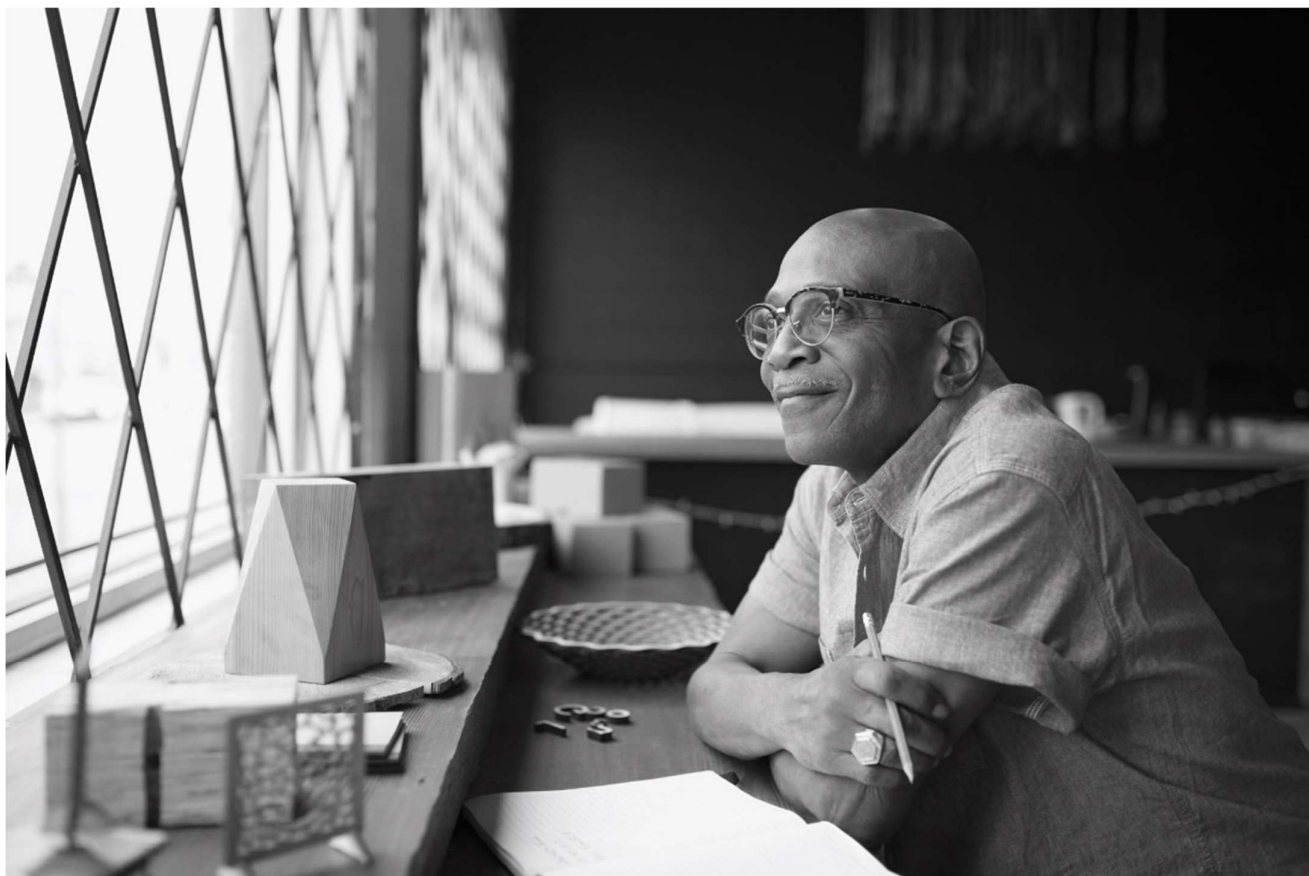
Personnel Committee report - 17 November 2021 – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Update

Personnel Committee report – 16 March 2022 – Gender and Ethnicity Pay Reports for 2021 and Workforce Profile for 2020/21

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

MAY 2021

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Contents

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FOREWORD

Business in the Community's Inclusion Advisory Services team guide employers to ensure they are compliant with the UK's Equality legislation as well as support them in creative inclusive workplace cultures, going beyond statutory requirements for EDI. The Equality Act 2010 is the UK's main anti-discrimination law applicable in the workplace, covering nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

BITC are aware that all employers are at different stages of their journey to become more inclusive places to work, action in this area creates a need to address organisational culture and culture change takes time. Therefore, BITC tailor our advice and recommendations to that which is most appropriate and can have the greatest impact right now, whilst always keeping the long-term ambition in mind.

It is worth noting that the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact all our lives. The pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on different groups, including for women and for people from Black, Asian and ethnic minority communities. Whilst the scope of the audit did not explicitly explore the impact of COVID 19, or indeed the impact that the murder of George Floyd has had on Black colleagues in particular, given the timeframe of the project, they were both reflected on in the focus groups and interviews.

BITC were invited by Reading Borough Council to review key information and evidence and provide recommendations about areas for development and recommended priorities to inform Reading Borough Council's Equality, Inclusion and Diversity strategy.

Equality, Inclusion and Diversity is a key strand of the People Strategy delivery programme. Reading Borough Council's People Strategy seeks to enable the Council and its workforce to fulfil the vision to help Reading realise itssential and to ensure that everyone who lives and works in Reading can share the benefits of its success.

Thanks......

BITC would like to acknowledge the many individuals who contributed to the success of this audit: Shella Smith, (Assistant Director for HR and Organisational Development) who led and coordinated the project on behalf of RBC; the Executive Team and Elected Councillors at RBC who gifted their time to provide opinions and insights based on their experiences through the interviews we undertook; focus group participants who also provided valuable insights into organisational culture as well related their experience as and other EDI stakeholders who provided additional insight into the EDI landscape at RBC.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the findings of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and Diversity (EDI) Audit (the audit') carried out in 2021 by Business in the Community (BITC) for Reading Borough Council (RBC). The objectives for this audit were to provide a snapshot view of the organisation with an equality, diversity and inclusion lens with recommendations for next steps.

The research finds the following main drivers and main blockers with respect to RBC's work on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI):

Drivers	Blockers
Commitment from the organisation to drive change on the EDI agenda including commitment to publish ethnicity pay gap.	This commitment to EDI is not understood by all employees, and employees do not feel they have a route to feed into the EDI agenda.
Commitment to sign up to the BITC Race at Work Charter confirms that Reading Borough Council's Senior Leaders are focused on race quality.	The role for leadership to implement change on the EDI agenda and leadership accountabilities are not yet defined.
Regular feedback surveys, with good engagement and growing ethnicity declaration rates.	Each survey needs to be followed up with commitment to take action with timescales, accountabilities and expected outcomes.
A clear set of Team Reading Values to build on and embed throughout the organisation.	Different employees are having different experiences at work. To drive culture change and workplace inclusion for all Reading Borough Council colleagues, these experiences need to be understood and addressed.

INTRODUCTION

This report presents the findings of the EDI audit carried out in 2021 by Business in the Community for the Reading Borough Council, in its role as an employer and in its mission to attract, retain and develop a diverse workforce that understands and represents the community it serves.

The key objectives of the research are to:

- Review relevant workforce data and pertinent policy documents;
- Uncover employee perceptions and experiences with relation to EDI at RBC; and
- Provide recommendations for next steps and considerations for driving inclusion in the workplace.

The research was conducted with the objective of providing recommendations that will reinforce the Team Reading values and drive consistency in culture and values across the organisation. It compliments work supported by *Ethical Reading*, who were commissioned by the Council to collaborate with the Directorate of Social Care and Health to create a healthy and ethical workplace.

The following sections in this report outline BITC's methodology for the research, detailed findings and recommendations. Appendices with further details of the audit are also included.

BITC EDI AUDIT RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In line with best practice for diversity and inclusion research, and to create a holistic picture of EDI at RBC, the EDI Audit takes a mixed methods approach.

The research requires a deep-dive data collection exercise to determine the EDI landscape at RBC. This is performed using an analysis of employee data, survey data, policies and procedures supplied by RBC across six key themes:

- Strategy and leadership
- Recruitment
- Progression
- Employee engagement
- Bullying and Harassment
- Culture and behaviours

Additional qualitative research and data collection is then undertaken to probe and understand key themes that the desk-top research has uncovered. This method allows for an exploration of the reasons behind many of the employee engagement scores suggested by employee survey. It is important to highlight that as this further stage of research involves potential sensitive conversations with RBC staff, confidentiality is of utmost importance. Sessions were therefore not recorded or transcribed. All comments have been recorded anonymously and any comments used in the report will be paraphrased and will not be attributed to individuals, roles or divisions.

Our recommendations are based on examples of the positive action employers can take to increase diversity and create inclusive workplaces. **Positive action** means the steps you can take to 'level the playing field' for people from groups with different needs, with a past track record of disadvantage, or with low participation or representation. This is distinct from **positive discrimination**, which

is the practice or policy of favouring individuals belonging to groups who may suffer discrimination. Positive discrimination is unlawful in the UK.

In the RBC EDI Audit, two types of qualitative data collection were used: individual interviews and focus group discussions. An interviewer and notetaker were present for virtual interviews with the key stakeholders suggested by RBC, including elected members and employee Union representatives. All interviews followed the same format[1], exploring topics such as overall understanding and perception of EDI, leaderships role within EDI and insights into organisational culture. These interviews with the executive team gave insight into RBC's leadership and their aspirations in relation to EDI.

Details of the interview structure and guiding questions can be found in Appendices.

Focus groups investigated employee perception with respect to the EDI landscape at RBC. The topics addressed in the focus groups included: culture, authenticity, line manager support, employee voice, bullying & harassment, and progression. Approximately 50 employees attended five virtual focus groups, two groups were Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic only, one was for 'front line' employees only.

Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic only focus groups were facilitated by a BITC issue area expert and note taker who is also from a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic background. The focus of the discussions was adjusted to enable deeper discussions on race and ethnicity. This approach, which is based on best practice helps create a 'safe space' for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic employees who otherwise may not feel able to speak their truth and share experience. Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic employees may otherwise feel inhibited to share this information due to societal racism and associated power systems.

BITC also undertook a review of select policy documents that we determined most pertinent to other areas of focus. This included the RBC recruitment and selection policy, the learning and development policy and a review of documentation relevant to bullying and harassment.

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[1]We agreed with RBC that all interviews would be conducted individually with exception of the interview with Union representatives which was a group interview and feedback session.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The thematic areas below are based on key areas of examination and BITC methodology for EDI research, as well as insights gained from discussions about the culture at RBC.   We confirm why each area of focus is pertinent for EDI then review evidence from our research to guide our conclusions, which are defined as primary recommendations and primary actions.

Anonymized quotes from focus groups or interviews are included where it helps the reader contextualise the findings to RBC, and to demonstrate the value of having direct access to employees with lived experience of the issues presented.

Primary recommendations outline the actions that BITC believe will have a significant impact on progress for EDI at RBC. Primary actions outline the actions that BITC believe will kick start change and demonstrate that you are taking action because of this (and other) review(s).

STRATEGY

An EDI strategy should align to organisational vision and be accompanied by a clear plan to achieve stated EDI goals and objectives. It should be designed in a way that builds employee trust and promoted to recruit and retain diverse talent. It should be integral to your organisational strategy and embedded across the organisation.

While 100% of senior management state that they understand what the council's priorities are and that they know what the organisational values of Team Reading are; these figures are slightly lower for the general employee population, at 80.6% and 80.8% respectively.[2]

During the focus groups, particularly those for colleagues from ethnic minority backgrounds, it was expressed that the organisational commitment and strategy relating to EDI was not clearly communicated throughout the organisation and that some Black and Asian participants were surprised to hear that an ambition existed.

An elected member confirmed that "it is very clear that there is scope to improve communications across the organisation about the Race at Work Charter and this project and of course what comes next".

The aspiration for an integrated and embedded EDI strategy is there, was shared by your senior leaders, and one interviewee confirmed that the organisation "needs to think about how to mainstream the activity and prioritise it as a part of what we do".

EDI is not a core value for the organisation. What has been done? It seems like a token gesture.

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[2] RBC 2021 staff survey

Primary Recommendations

- Prioritise the development of an EDI strategy that aligns to your People Strategy and which reflects the recommendations in this report.
- Work with your internal comms team, ethnic minority network and directorate stakeholders to create a communication campaign that cascades your EDI strategy and targets to the wider organisation.
- Create innovative ways to disseminate your strategy to all corners of your organisation, with regular reminders, discussion and feedback channels that are designed to reach all staff, including those that are not office based.
- We also recommend that your EDI strategy is regularly discussed and reviewed at your Senior Leadership Group meetings.

Primary actions

- Publicise this report and recommendations on your website alongside your People Strategy and other related information such as your Equality Audit, Gender Pay Gap and Ethnicity Pay Gap.

LEADERSHIP

In addition to the makeup of a leadership team, individual leaders, and their involvement with EDI work are crucial to the success of EDI in any organisation. EDI should be built into leadership frameworks, processes and business as usual, so that senior managers and those above are supported to lead inclusive teams and deliver on EDI objectives. To drive this, **leaders must be accountable** for EDI initiatives, and responsibility must be linked to pay and reward.

We asked RBC's executive team about their role in progressing EDI, responses were varied and occasionally vague. Some senior leaders talked about the importance of role modelling values and behaviours, others felt it remained the role of Human Resources to tackle issues such as diversity in recruitment. One senior leader did confirm that they felt their role was to "*challenge behaviours which don't support the agenda*".

Accountability for EDI must start at the top, this should be understood across your senior leaders and they should have clear roles and responsibilities for implementation across the organisation. One of the elected members confirmed that they would welcome clear articulation of their role in respect to EDI and culture at RBC.
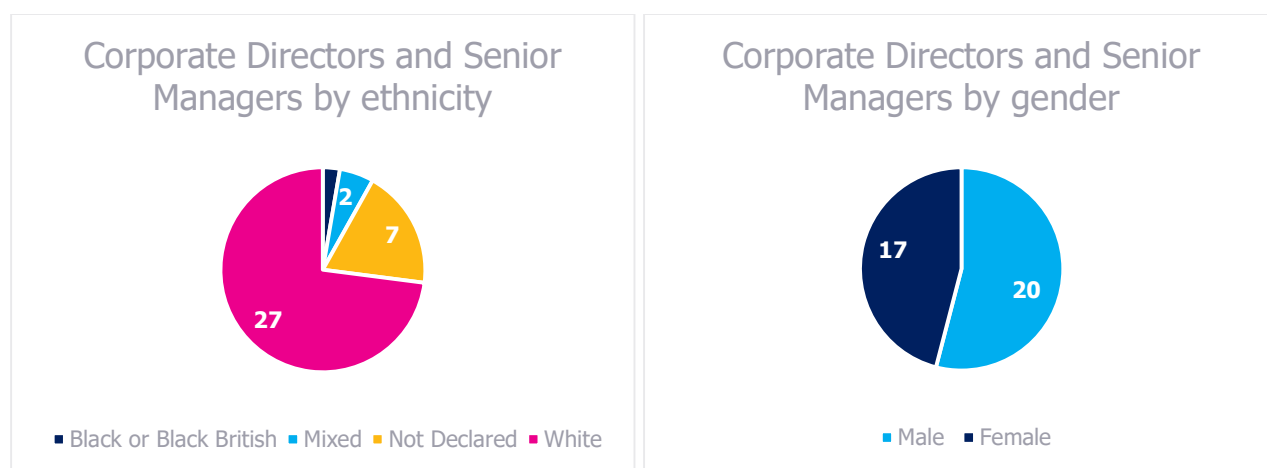
The 2021 staff survey points to confidence in leadership at Reading Borough Council having greatly improved since the 2019 survey. In 2019 45.2% of staff had confidence in the Senior Leadership Team to

lead the organisation, and 42.7% of staff stated that leadership by the Corporate Management Team is positive and supportive. The 2021 survey sees these figures improve to 62.2% and 61.1% respectively.[3]

While progress has been made, this still indicates that there is clear opportunity for clarification about the role of leadership in progressing and embedding EDI strategy and targets and for regular reporting on action taken and progress. This will help increase trust and understanding about the role of leadership.

Role modelling

It appears that the Executive team are on the path to progress but there is still a substantial gap with respect to gaining colleague trust and transparency on EDI leadership.

Corporate Directors and Senior Managers by ethnicity

2
7
27

Black or Black British Mixed Not Declared White

Corporate Directors and Senior Managers by gender

17
20

Male Female

All focus groups identified that there is a lack of diversity in the senior leadership team, and that this was something that should be addressed to enact change and make progress.

Organisations set targets and metrics to measure progress in key areas of the business and to drive change. Setting targets for ethnic minority representation should be no different. Clear targets set the timeline and pace of change required and focus activity to deliver the desired outcome. Without the use of targets to drive change, there is a risk that organisations will not increase representation, and will lose the trust of employees with regards to its ambition to drive diversity and inclusion. In top management roles across private sector organisations just 1.5% are black, an increase of 0.1% per cent since 2014. Public sector leadership remains static at 1% and 62% of charity boards are all-white[4].

The timeline upon which targets are set will depend on how quickly the organisation is expecting to enable change and we would recommend timelines between 5 and 10 years to enable achievement of targets in a measured and sustained way. Targets should be supported by regular reporting of progress against them

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[3] RBC 2019 staff survey, RBC 2021 staff survey
[4] BITC's Race at the Top research: https://www.bitc.org.uk/news/black-livelihoods-matter-less-than-2-in-top-management-roles-are-black/

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to enable prompt remedial action if progress is not at the required level. Targets should be applied across the employee life cycle including for recruitment, progression and retention.   We have suggested how action can be taken to progress against targets in these areas in related sections in this report.   Further case studies about organisations who are setting ethnicity targets can be found in BITC's toolkit: How to Set Ethnicity Targets (https://www.bitc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/bitc-race-toolkit-racecatworkexecutivesponsorethnicitytargets-feb20.pdf) and in BITC's member area on its website.

The Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic focus groups vocalised that there was a lack of awareness amongst the senior leadership team around cultural issues and barriers that ethnic minority employees face. Though efforts were recognised to address issues such as bullying and harassment, there was a consistent feeling that enough action hasn't been taken to back up any commitment to EDI expressed by leadership. It was expressed that greater engagement and visibility from senior leaders would be appreciated. Targets are a clear representation of what needs to be achieved and by when, so that leaders in the organisation can understand and engage.   Organisations should be transparent about its commitment to drive change and share its diversity targets with employees.

When I took on management responsibility I was not equipped and supported to work with so many different cultures and communities – we need a depth of consciously thinking about inclusion to be able to do our jobs properly.

I am tired of entering rooms where I am the only person of colour in a sea of white people who are making decisions for a diverse group of people.

Primary Recommendations

- Find effective ways to make senior leaders more visible overall and specifically with how they are engaging with topics of EDI.
- Provide one-to-one coaching on inclusive leadership to all executive and directors. One-to-one coaching on these topics enables leaders to expand and embed their understanding of sensitive, sometimes personal topics. One way of enabling this learning by coaching is through reverse or reciprocal mentoring schemes.
- Set diversity requirements for succession plans for senior roles.

Primary actions

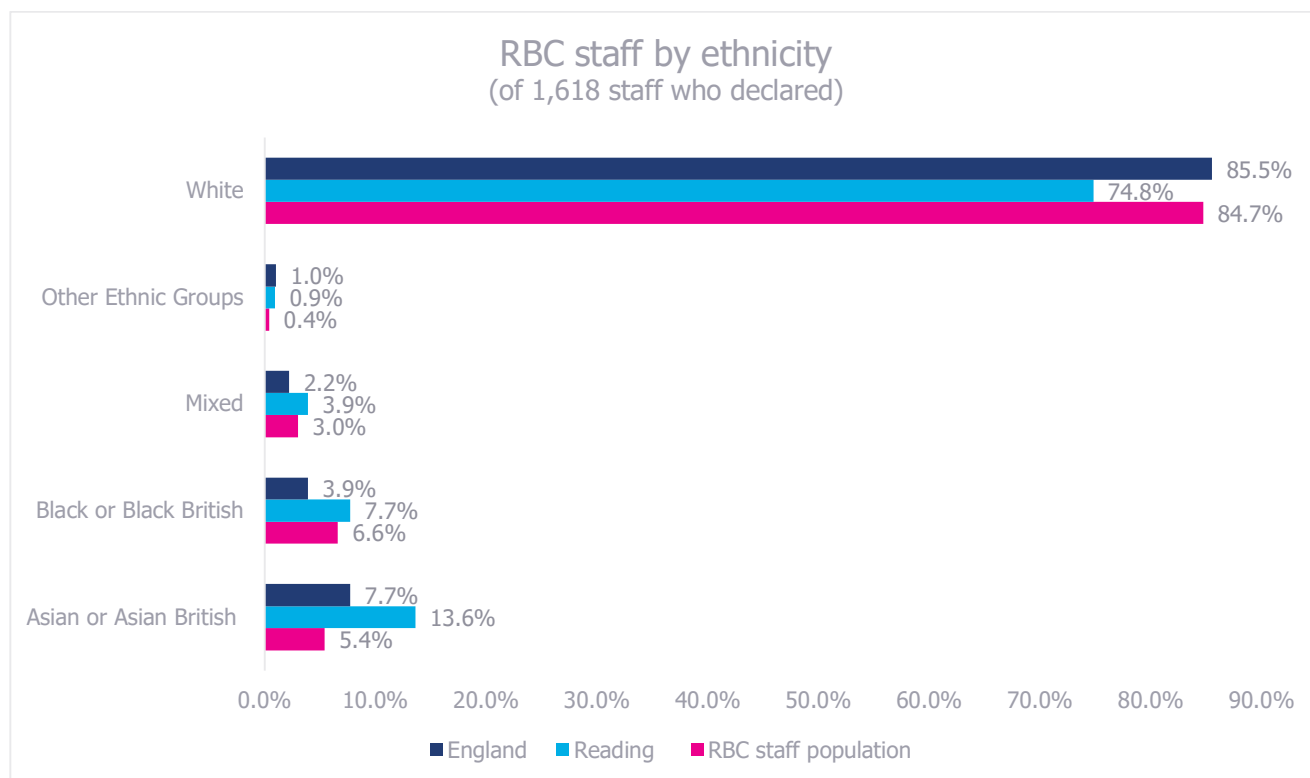- Set representative diversity targets at senior levels.
- Offer additional, targeted training for line managers. We would advise that this targeted training is ongoing and enables line managers to understand best practice for inclusive leadership including discussion and reflection on their own barriers such as perceptions, biases and to deepen their understanding about the strengths of diversity and change.

RECRUITMENT

According to a 2015 McKinsey study, diverse companies perform at least 35% better than their homogeneous counterparts. Not only is it beneficial for your bottom line to recruit a diverse team, it is common sense in our growingly diverse nation. A focus on diversity in recruitment and progress will enable RBC to move towards its aspiration to represent the communities it serves.

The Council's Recruitment and Selection Policy recognises that "it is crucial to recruit the right people with the right skills and values to the right job and that these individuals should reflect, as far as possible, the diversity of the local community it serves." Below we can see how the diversity of RBC's employee population compares with that of Reading and England. The graph below suggests that the employee team at RBC are not dissimilar to the population of England. However, compared to the population of Reading White people are significantly over represented whilst Black and Asian people are underrepresented

RBC staff by ethnicity
(of 1,618 staff who declared)

	England	Reading	RBC staff population
White	85.5%	74.8%	84.7%
Other Ethnic Groups	1.0%	0.9%	0.4%
Mixed	2.2%	3.9%	3.0%
Black or Black British	3.9%	7.7%	6.6%
Asian or Asian British	7.7%	13.6%	5.4%

N.B. this analysis uses data on the general population from the 2011 census. We recommend that this analysis is carried out again when ethnicity data from the 2021 census is released in 2023.

It was recognised in the Senior Leader interviews that recruitment will play a key role in enabling a more diverse workforce, and that inclusive recruitment is a key priority, and that several initiatives are underway to attract a more diverse workforce. For example, running job fairs in community centres, apprenticeships that target candidates from particular areas and engagement with local schools and colleges.

We would recommend building on these initiatives with a detailed review of your recruitment processes. This will support the objective to increase diversity throughout the organisation, not just in entry-level positions or into certain teams.

The focus groups highlighted the fact that all recruitment processes may not be aligned with best practice for inclusivity. For example, including criteria for jobs which are not essential for the role can exclude certain groups of potential candidates. It was also mentioned that marketing materials and communications don't always reflect the diversity that the organisation is aiming for. Furthermore, across all focus groups there was a consistent feeling that most of the recruitment is internal and based on existing relationships, which is a blocker to fostering a more diverse and inclusive workforce.

We heard from your Senior Leaders that "*BAME people tend to be funnelled into certain areas*", which may explain a lack of representation in certain functions.

Diversity through RBC's recruitment stages

White applicants are more likely to progress through each stage of RBC's application process, while Asian and Black applicants are less likely to progress through each stage.[5]

The data and analysis below contradicts the perception from one of your elected members that "*there is no discrimination at interview, its about a lack of applications from ethnic minorities*".

Proportion of applicants at each stage by ethnicity
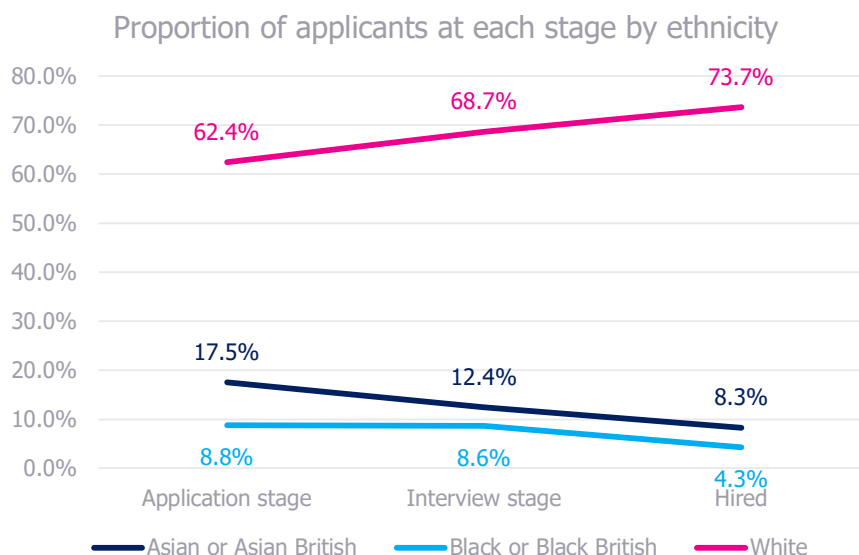
In 2020, White applicants invited to interview were **more than twice as likely to be appointed** as Black applicants. [6]

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[5] RBC 2020 recruitment data
[6] RBC 2020 recruitment data

	NUMBER INVITED TO INTERVIEW	OF THESE, NUMBER APPOINTED	% CHANCE OF AN INTERVIEWEE BEING APPOINTED
White applicants	890	241	27.1%
Black applicants	112	14	12.5%
Asian applicants	160	27	16.9%

RBC's recruitment policy states that "*The process should be undertaken by competent managers who have received appropriate training*" and that Recruiting Managers are responsible for "*Maintaining their technical knowledge and skill levels by undertaking recruitment and selection training, including refresher courses, as required*", however, in 2020 1,291 interviews for 203 roles were carried out but only 34 staff completed either the 2016 (10) or updated 2020 (24) Recruitment and Selection e-learning training. [7]

The removal of bias is key to achieving fairness and equality in recruitment. An important component of removing bias is by ongoing and continued awareness raising and training for hiring managers and recruitment professionals about conscious and unconscious bias. However, this change will not happen overnight and it's important to supplement with other measures such as ensuring diversity in decision making including in interview panels. A larger panel will increase the diversity in thinking and will also help diverse candidates feel more comfortable as well as demonstrating that your business is inclusive and welcoming. BITC has worked with organisations that have implemented diverse panels into its recruitment process, via working with the ethnicity employee resource groups and working with independent consultants. For example, the Cabinet Office introduced mandatory diverse recruitment panels for senior roles, which has now been rolled out across other government departments.

A critical factor for this is the ensure all panel members have an understanding of their roles and understand the role of each panel member so that decisions are made collaboratively and with equal weighting on inputs from different panel members.

There is a lot of internal recruitment involving people who are friends with the manager ... these people then tend to be just like that manager.

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[7] RBC 2020 learning pool data, RBC 2020 recruitment data

Priority Recommendations

- Currently only those managers who, as a minimum, have undertaken the Council's recruitment and selection and equalities training can be involved in the recruitment and selection process. Given the above apparently low take-up of recruitment and selection training, consider monitoring this more closely and/or requiring staff to complete this training every 12 months.
- Ensure your recruitment panels should be diverse or, where that is not possible, that diverse observers are present and included in the decision-making process.
- Standardise values assessment questions in interviews, assessing all candidates against the Team Reading values.
- Currently recruitment and selection statistics are collected for the purpose of equalities monitoring by HR. Consider creating an action plan to address the imbalances outlined in the table above, setting accountability and targets with regular reviews of data feeding into this.
- Perform regular recruitment audits to ensure you have diversity at each stage of recruitment for all levels.
- Review recruitment processes to ensure consistency in terms of inclusive practices.
- Review internal talent in a transparent manner for senior vacancies as a default before recruiting externally.

Primary actions

- Create a system to ensure that all managers are receiving and disseminating information about internal vacancies.
- Ensure that marketing and branding of RBC is diverse and inclusive.

CAREER PROGRESSION

Career progression is an essential pillar to the employee lifecycle, affecting how diversity moves up through the organisation as well as impacting employee engagement. Women and minority groups face many barriers to progression in the workplace due to for example, bias around pay and promotion, difficult workplace cultures (i.e. sexual harassment), tensions between balancing work with care and a shortage of quality part-time work with a good wage potential.

Across all focus groups, a concern was raised around the lack of transparency regarding promotion decisions. There was a common opinion that opportunities were given according to networks and cliques; this was felt more strongly by the ethnic minority focus group. Another area of concern was highlighted related to training opportunities. Here, similarly, it was felt that opportunities were not open to everyone, and communication around training and what is available is not clear. There was a comment that training was provided "*if your face fitted*".

One of your elected members confirmed that they had noticed "*an issue around the career development of staff from non-white backgrounds*".

Data supplied indicates that only seven promotions were recorded in 2020, which does not give enough information to draw any trends by protected characteristics. [8]

The 2021 staff survey indicated that satisfaction rates with learning and development opportunities were relatively consistent across gender and ethnic groups. Overall staff satisfaction with learning and development opportunities was 71.8%, and this figure was higher for Asian and Black staff (87.9% and 82.1%). [9]

There were no significant disparities between the population of leavers in 2020 when compared with the overall employee population by gender, ethnicity or disability, Of 167 leavers in 2020, 7 were known to have a disability (4.1%), compared with the wider employee population of 1,713 employees, 63 of whom are known to have a disability (3.7%). [10]

People get shoehorned into jobs based on who you know rather than what you know, sense of roles even being created for some people.

Training is only given if your face fits.

I do not see the diversity every day in my work. There is not as much diversity at senior levels. When I am with senior people I am often the only ethic minority person.

Primary Recommendations

- Continue to monitor progression data and consider implementing succession plans internally which consider diversity in succession plans.
- Consider monitoring decisions on progression within grades by ethnicity and gender, as part of your strategy to address any gender and ethnicity pay gaps.
- Consider setting targets for diverse representation at senior levels, monitoring progress against these.
- Explore talent-spotting and/or sponsorship programmes to accelerate progress towards diverse representation at senior levels.
- Conduct an Equality Impact Assessment for your Learning and Development policies and interventions to make sure they are fit for purpose in terms of content and to ensure all staff and managers can access these without barriers.
- Create a colleague sponsorship/advocacy programme in addition to internal and external mentoring initiatives.

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[8] RBC 2020 promotion data
[9] RBC 2021 staff survey
[10] RBC 2020 leavers data

- Consider implementing a reverse mentoring programme, with senior leaders being mentored by a more junior colleague who, from a diversity and inclusion perspective, is different from them in some way. Reverse mentoring is an effective way to build genuine awareness of the barriers faced by Black, Asian and minority ethnic employees and improves employee engagement and retention.

Primary actions

- Hold weekly or bi-weekly line manager surgeries on a different HR policy, L&D or progression topic, ensuring line managers are using these as consistently as possible across the organisation.

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Employee engagement encompasses multiple factors, including employee consultation, volunteering, network activity and workplace culture and reflects experiences of and perception of workplace bullying and harassment.

An essential component to enhancing employee engagement is the **employee network**, or the employee resource group.

You should engage with your staff to identify areas of priority for these networks and ensure the networks are accompanied by senior level sponsorship, a clear strategy and are accessible to all staff.

We heard that there is a perception that the recent Diversity and Inclusion forums "*never really took off*", so reflecting on that and identifying lessons learned will be important in planning for network launch/relaunch.

We recommend that you review the success of your LGBT+ staff network to inform how you develop, grow and embed further employee resource groups.

Consider creating a platform for additional staff networks to emerge if there is appetite, for example for employees with disabilities, and of different faiths.

EMPLOYEE NETWORKS
- Provide an open and honest platform for raising issues and sharing ideas
- Help the company understand the challenges employee groups are facing
- Be the voice of employees to inform strategy and policies
- Help employees take steps to achieve their career ambitions
- Offer an opportunity for social connection to enhance employee health and wellbeing
- Offer opportunity for networking

Another important aspect of employee engagement is **consultation**. Businesses can consult employees across a variety of business considerations, including policies, restructures, values and organisational

culture. For example, one of your Executive team acknowledges the positive outcomes for service delivery to residents when involving staff.

We heard from your senior leaders that there is a gap in understanding of the needs and potential limitations to engagements with more junior teams: "*senior leadership doesn't understand the barriers fully, which makes it difficult to engage*".

Methods of consultation should vary (roundtables, open forums, anonymous surveys) according to the subject matter and timeframe for the issue resolution or change, but the overall goal of consultation is to gather as much employee insight pre-decision and to ensure business decisions do not negatively impact one group over another.

In addition to creating staff networks and consulting with these networks, another method for enhanced employee consultation and engagement is via all-staff surveys. The RBC 2021 staff survey had a 58.6% completion rate. The average satisfaction rate ("*I enjoy my job*") for employees in the 2021 annual staff survey was 87.3%. The fact that you have been able to disaggregate by some strands of protected characteristics is promising. We recommend that you repeat this survey, with a real focus on improving disclosure around ethnicity via meaningful communications strategies. This will enhance the robustness of your data and enable you to establish trends. Drawing insights from the data you have now may not yield reliable results. For example, the distribution of satisfaction scores across ethnicity scores ranges from 72.3% - 100%, although 18% of survey respondents did not disclose their ethnicity.[11]

ETHNICITY	TOTAL	TOTAL %	I ENJOY MY JOB	I FEEL RESPECTED AND VALUED
Asian or Asian British	33	3.3%	100.0%	100.0%
Black or Black British	28	2.8%	92.9%	85.7%
Don't know/ not answered	184	18.3%	72.3%	52.7%
Mixed	19	1.9%	94.7%	84.2%
Other	5	0.5%	80.0%	80.0%
White	735	73.2%	90.1%	78.9%
Total	**1004**		**87.3%**	**75.1%**

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[11] RBC 2021 staff survey

In order to maintain high overall ethnicity declaration rates[12], and to encourage staff to share personal data, RBC should consider creating a campaign for Self ID, the issue of trust, and improve transparency of how the data will be used. Employees who participated in the focus groups highlighted a potential lack of trust for some, alongside the need for clarity around intentions when collecting personal data and the intentions for employee engagement survey data. There is uncertainty about how the data will be used and what actions will be taken following analysis of this data.

Employee **retention and turnover** is also an important indicator for engagement, this is discussed earlier in this report.

When we apply an ethnicity lens, it appears that leavers, both voluntary and involuntary, are representative of their overall ethnicity cohorts.

4.1% of leavers identify as having a disability, while 3.7% of staff overall have a disability. Rates for disability declaration are exceptionally low and it is difficult to draw meaningful conclusions.

Ideas seem to disappear into a black hole … nobody really cares what I think.

Primary Recommendations
- Develop a strategic approach to forming and supporting employee networks. BITC's factsheet 'Steps to Set and Run an Employee Network' provides recommendations that are best practice for building sustainable and impactful employee networks[13].

Primary actions
- Share findings and insights from employee surveys and focus groups (where possible and while remaining anonymous).

BULLYING, HARASSMENT AND MICROAGGRESSIONS

In all organisations formal grievances and recorded incidences tend to only represent a small proportion of what is experienced by minority groups. A term for these often more subtle incidences of bullying and harassments is 'microaggressions'. Microaggressions tend to be more common than overt bullying in workplace settings and have detrimental impacts to employee experience.

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[12] Ethnicity data declaration is relatively high (only 5.5% not declaring), however this is much lower in recent employee engagement surveys (increases to 18%).
[13] https://www.bitc.org.uk/fact-sheet/steps-to-start-and-run-an-employee-nework/

The Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic focus groups reported a lower sense of inclusion than others. Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic employees offered examples of microaggressions such as comments around accents and hair, mispronouncing names and unequal distribution of work and opportunity. Whereas Respondents explicitly linked the "othering" impact of microaggressions to their levels of engagement and motivation.

Many white colleagues expressed that they felt that they could bring their whole selves to work, this was not the case for many Black and Asian colleagues. All focus groups identified that incidents of bullying exist within the organisation. Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority employees believed that racism was not always taken seriously within the council.

Whilst Union representatives were unable to share information about specific cases, they did confirm the sense that they continue to respond to cases that "*can't be anything but bullying",* reporting incidences where staff are asked to report and give account for every hour of every day, including notifying line managers when they take toilet breaks.

The Union reps also reported that when they review their cases, all staff that are currently under investigation are either Black or "*European*" – that they rarely see investigations into white British staff.

34.4% of those responding to the RBC 2021 staff survey said they had experienced or seen bullying or harassment at work. There was negligible difference in the responses reported by men and women and no clear trends in the experiences across age groups. [14]

RBC's Equal Opportunities in Employment Policy states that employees have the right:

- To challenge all discrimination and bullying, including abusive and offensive language/behaviour and to bring this to the attention of the Council; and

- For their culture and identity to be respected and valued

Victims of microaggressions are often labelled 'sensitive' or 'lacking a sense of humour' and the policy above only names the more visible traditional aggressions such as harassment and bullying. However, these larger, more overt instances of bullying often arise from a culture of disrespect, exclusion, and 'othering' which is symptomatic of larger society. If RBC can develop the culture of respect and inclusion outlined in the policy, employees are less like to experience overt bullying and harassment.

We have reviewed the RBC Bullying and Harassment Policy (2018). We would recommend reviewing this and building out guidance about accepted behaviours and making reference to microaggressions. This could include:

- Review of examples of behaviour that the policy would cover
- Examples of how to challenge these behaviours, including how to call-out microaggressions and the organisation's support for this

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[14] RBC 2021 staff survey

- Reporting channels – including alternatives to raising with Line Managers internally and confirming confidentiality for victims
- Consequences for perpetrators
- Commitment to monitor reporting incidents based on characteristics to identify any groups who are experiencing this more acutely and take targeted action

People are allowed to get away with bad and unacceptable behaviour for such a long time that it's empowered them as nothing ever happens. People get worn down and leave.

My hair is a CONSTANT source of microagression!

There's a lack of faith that senior leadership will do anything at all. People will always find a way to dismiss your experience.

My white colleagues are seen as assertive, but as a black woman I fear being seen as aggressive so do not speak.

I feel that my opinion is ignored, but when a white man says the same thing then they are heard.

I recommended someone to be employed with an Indian name and the response from my colleague was "why can't they have a normal name?"

Primary Recommendations

- Ensure your bullying and harassment policy covers microaggressions alongside more explicit behaviours.
- Monitor instances of bullying and harassment by protected characteristics.
- Reiterate that RBC has a zero-tolerance approach to bullying and harassment and set targets to reduce reported incidents.
- Roll out training to educate employees on microaggressions and provide guidance on how to call these out.

Primary actions

- Draw explicit links between Team Reading Values and microaggressions.

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WORKPLACE CULTURE

An inclusive workplace culture indicates a climate in which people can bring their whole selves to work and where all employees can thrive. An examination of workplace culture is as an essential component to any organisation's EDI journey and BITC investigated this via the focus groups and stakeholder interviews.

The words in the diagram below represent a 'word cloud' of words used to describe RBCs culture by focus group participants. Those words that are larger appeared more frequently.

The words used to describe the **culture were fairly mixed** as well as dependent upon directorate and team, this is reflected in the clear popularity of the word "*inconsistent*". This inconsistency, or lack of confidence in consistency was shared by your executive team:

"*I'm not sure that the culture here is consistent. I have seen evidence of teams working well together but little evidence of cross team collaboration and lots of siloed working*".

During focus group discussions, there was a clear sense that the culture is heavily dependent on team and line manager. Employees that have worked at RBC for a long period have described how the organisation has been changing but at a slow pace. Many focus group participants, especially new joiners agreed that colleagues have been welcoming, friendly and supportive towards them. However, it was universally acknowledged that cliques did exist within the council. A lack of education and awareness around certain issues, particularly race, were highlighted as a cultural concern by many.

This lack of awareness/confidence to talk about race was not shared by some of your senior leaders who felt broadly confident to talk about race and did not identify any areas of D&I where they were felt discomfort. Other senior leaders demonstrated more awareness of their lack of lived experiences which contributed to their levels of discomfort.

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During focus groups, line managers were cited as often being perpetrators of microaggressions and other unwanted behaviour. Although not all line managers have been identified as blockers to inclusive culture, the role of the line manager in employee wellbeing and development should not be overlooked. It is advisable to provide training for line managers on inclusive behaviours, including recognising and reporting/calling out microaggressions.

In the 2019 RBC staff survey, 78.9% of staff agreed that they cope well with the current pressure of work. In the 2021 survey, only 67.4% of staff agreed that they felt the pressure of work was manageable. While the question was worded slightly differently, this appears to be a downward trend and is potentially attributable to the COVID-19 pandemic.[15]

Supporting staff with stress management and their health and wellbeing is a critical element of maintaining an inclusive workplace. We did not explicitly examine this during the focus groups, but a lack of support was cited and Union representatives also raised their perception of a stigma around mental health and room for further work around employee wellbeing.

I feel the pressure of work is manageable

24 and under	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
87.9%	77.7%	73.8%	64.8%	67.7%	81.0%

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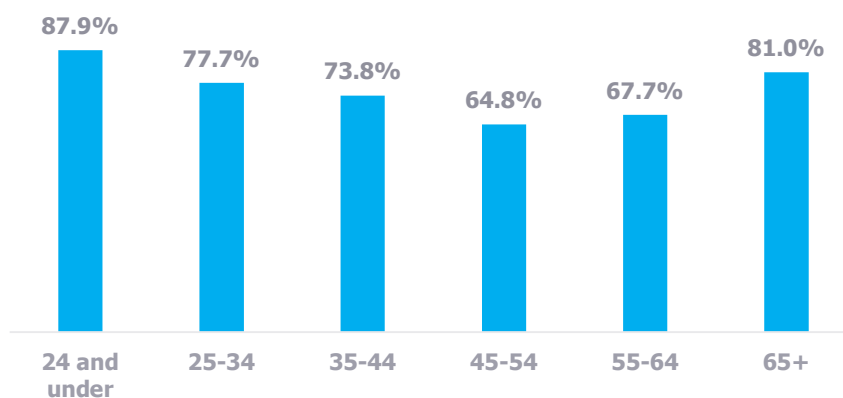
[15] RBC 2019 staff survey, RBC 2021 staff survey

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> ### BITC REPORT 'WHAT REALLY WORKS?' WHEN DEVELOPING INCLUSIVE WORKING CULTURES – KEY RECOMMENDATIONS
>
> **Initiatives to foster greater inclusion will not work, and could even be counter-productive, if they do not include a focus on behaviour change, active learning, and promote dialogue between different groups.** Formal diversity training or other programmes designed to support inclusion must include supporting trainees to break habits that show unconscious bias. For example 'perspective taking' where they learn about others' lives, should expect proactive participation from attendees, such as group discussions, and do best when they foster 'intergroup dialogue' – interaction between people who might normally not connect.
>
> **To enable employees to confront non-inclusive behaviour, explain that this is a 'community responsibility' – that as an organisation you believe respect is everybody's business and support your staff to become active bystanders.** Individuals face a lower bar when it comes to challenging poor behaviour if they feel the organisation expects the community to stand up. Enable your staff to act on this through providing training in how to 'calmly confront' incidents, highlighting the powerful role allies can play.

There is a great opportunity to describe the workplace culture that supports the RBC EDI ambitions by expanding on the Team Reading initiative. The values under T can only be fully realised if there is an inclusive culture that empowers all individuals to play their part.

Feedback from participants consistently highlighted the **hierarchical nature** of the organisation. According to employees, the hierarchy at RBC is the **main impediment to trust**. When asked if RBC was a safe space for people to speak up, many employees disagreed.

Many employees were also able to point to hierarchy as a prime ingredient of many organisational problems such as poor communication, racism or a lack of employee engagement.

The purpose of this report is not to advise on organisational structure, but we do note that hierarchies can create power dynamics that are easily exploited. This can lead to a lack of psychological safety across teams and a lack of trust across the organisation. Research from PWC[16] and Deloitte[17] finds that values such as trust, diversity and inclusion are increasingly important to the workforce. In the interest of creating a healthy organisational culture, we recommend that RBC explore how to implement a flatter organisational structure, and/or drive greater trust across its current structure. Flatter organisational structures can also help tackle issues such as unconscious bias and microaggressions within organisational culture, as employees will feel more empowered to call-out behaviours and question processes that undermine organisational values, including equality, diversity and inclusion.

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[16] Millennials at Work, Pwc.
[17] 2018 Deloitte Millennial Survey

Conversations generated in focus groups and stakeholder interviews also exampled siloed cultures and ways of working that exist at RBC as well as the differences in leadership styles from individual executives. These, more general organisational challenges will certainly affect the way EDI is viewed and experienced by individuals in different locations and teams. The scope of this research does not allow for a discussion around these organisational aspects but we have suggested some recommendations and primary actions, recognising the impact these could have on your organisational culture.

I am a muslim and the organisation does not get my culture.

I am fed up of people giving me wishes for festivals that I do not celebrate – people who have worked with me for years … people don't listen to me or show an interest in who I am.

Primary Recommendations

- Ensure that your organisational structure and levels of hierarchy comply with your organisational design principles throughout.
- Build a campaign about the Team Reading initiative to confirm your organisational values and expected behaviours.
- Continue to support the wellbeing of your staff, with line management training and adherence to initiatives such as the Mental Health at Work Commitment. (https://www.mentalhealthatwork.org.uk/commitment/).
- Find creative ways to 'flatten' the RBC hierarchy in day-to-day business, improving rapport between senior leaders and junior staff. This will improve communications, leadership visibility and employee engagement.

Primary actions

- Raise awareness of religious festivals by commemorating key events from all religions and advising on how these may affect work routines.
- Profile junior staff in internal communications, for example include a 'get to know your colleagues' section of a regular newsletter, update, blog post, etc.

APPENDICES

Interview questions

1. What does D&I at RBC mean to you? Why is it important to the organisation and to you as a leader?
2. What role do you see yourself and other senior leaders having in driving change on the D&I agenda within RBC?
3. How comfortable do you feel talking about D&I at RBC? Are there areas of D&I that you are more/less comfortable talking about?
4. What would you want employees to say about the organisation's commitment to D&I? What is the ambition?
5. How would you describe the organisational culture at RBC? Is this culture consistent across the council?
6. What are the most pressing D&I challenges in your business/division?
7. Are you confident you know how the organisation is feeling? What channels do you use to hear feedback from employees?
8. How active are you in engaging with D&I at RBC?
9. How do you see the D&I agenda being implemented and how does it fit with the business strategy and future focus?
10. How do you role model D&I across RBC?
11. What further training / guidance do you (or your leadership teams) need to be an effective D&I ally?

Focus group questions

QUESTIONS

1. What is getting in the way of RBC realising the ambition to reflect the community it serves at every level?
2. Do you feel comfortable disclosing personal information to your employer?
3. Do you feel comfortable bringing your whole self to work?
4. Do you trust your line manager to do the right thing?
5. Can you speak up if you have any concerns or ideas? Is your opinion valued?
6. 12% of colleagues experienced bullying or harassment – what does this look like for you?
7. Who gets jobs and opportunities at RBC?
8. What promotion and development opportunities are open to you? Are you treated fairly?

The Prince's Responsible Business Network

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Appendix 2 - BITC Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Audit

Recommendations which have been implemented or are in progress – February 2022

THEME	RECOMMENDATION	REPONSE	LEAD OFFICER(S)	DUE DATE
RECRUITMENT	**Primary recommendations**			
	Currently only those managers who, as a minimum, have undertaken the Council's recruitment and selection and equalities training can be involved in the recruitment and selection process. Given the above apparently low take-up of recruitment and selection training, consider monitoring this more closely and/or requiring staff to complete this training every 12 months.	All line managers are required to complete the Recruitment and Selections eLearning course which includes a module on unconscious bias and an explanation of the relevant legislation on discrimination. Staff will be unable to join a panel unless they have completed the module.	Resourcing Manager/AD for HR&OD	31 March 2022
	Standardise values assessment questions in interviews, assessing all candidates against the Team Reading values.	Already included in the Team Reading Delivery Plan for 2022/23. An Interview Question Library is already available for managers which includes example interview questions for each TEAM value. Assessment against the Team Reading values has already been included within our new Performance Management	Resourcing Manager/AD for HR&OD	

		process which was launched in December 2021. The Team Reading values will also be included in all new job descriptions and person specifications from April 2022.		
	Currently recruitment and selection statistics are collected for the purpose of equalities monitoring by HR. Consider creating an action plan at senior level to address the imbalances above, setting accountability and targets with regular reviews of data feeding into this.	Recruitment and selection statistics are already included in the Workforce Profile Report which is published annually. Further detail will be provided within the quarterly HR management information reports which are provided to Corporate Management Team and other managers every quarter (next report is April 2022)	Resourcing Manager/AD for HR&OD	30 April 2022
	Perform regular recruitment audits to ensure you have diversity at each stage of recruitment for all levels.	The first audit began in November 2021 and is being conducted by the Resourcing Manager. 10 posts will be tracked from application to appointment stage to review how applicants with protected characteristics progress through each stage of the process.	Resourcing Manager	31 March 2022
Primary actions				
	Create a system to ensure that all managers are receiving and disseminating information about internal vacancies.	A link to www.reading.gov.uk/jobs has been added to the corporate	Resourcing Manager	Complete

				signature template and all staff will be encouraged to download it. A Resourcing Adviser works from Bennet Road 1 day per week to give advice and support on jobs available, how to do a good application etc. They will also ensure vacancy lists are available on staff notice boards and refreshed weekly. We will promote regularly the jobs page and where to find it.		
	Primary actions					
	Hold weekly or bi-weekly line manager surgeries on a different HR policy, L&D or progression topic, ensuring line managers are using these as consistently as possible across the organisation.			We are already holding lunch and learn sessions for managers on attendance management and workshops on the new Performance Management process. Further sessions are being planned on managing employees with long term health conditions, neuro-diversity etc.	HR Services Manager	Ongoing
	Primary actions					
	Share findings and insights from employee surveys and focus groups (where possible and while remaining anonymous).			Staff survey results are already shared with all staff. The next Staff Survey is in April 2022 and we plan to share the results with staff in June 2022. The BITC report and	AD for HR&OD	30 June 2022

		recommendations were shared with staff who attended the focus groups in November 2021 and a wider communication to all staff is planned for March 2022.		
BULLYING, HARASSMENT AND MICRO-AGGRESSIONS	**Primary Recommendations**			
	Ensure your bullying and harassment policy that covers microaggressions alongside more explicit behaviours.	Amended policy has been agreed with Trade Unions. It will be presented to Personnel Committee for approval on 17 March 2022 and then communicated to all staff and managers.	HR Services Manager	31 March 2022
	Monitor instances of bullying and harassment by protected characteristics.	This is already in place and the data is included within our annual Workforce Profile report (see Equality, Diversity and Inclusion page on the Council's website for the 2020/21 report. The 2021/22 will be reported to Personnel Committee in July 2022	HR Services Manager/ Resourcing Manager/AD for HR&OD	Complete
	Reiterate that RBC has a zero-tolerance approach to bullying and harassment and set targets to reduce reported incidents.	To be completed when the revised policy is communicated to staff	Teresa Kaine	31 March 2022
WORKPLACE CULTURE	**Primary Recommendations**			
	Ensure that your organisational structure and levels of hierarchy comply with your organisational design principles throughout.	Already being progressed through the Redesigning Reading reviews in each directorate which are underway	DDs/ADs/ Strategic HR&OD	Ongoing

		as part of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, supported by the Strategic HR and OD Business Partners.	Business Partners	
	Build a campaign about the Team Reading initiative to confirm your organisational values and expected behaviours.	Included within the Team Reading Programme Plan for 2022/23	OD & Learning Manager	
	Continue to support the wellbeing of your staff, with line management training and adherence to initiatives such as the Mental Health at Work Commitment. (https://www.mentalhealthatwork.org.uk/commitment/)	Already underway and a key activity within the Team Reading Programme Plan for 2022/23. Progress was reported to the Team Reading Board in October 2021 against the Thriving at Work/MIND standards for mental health. A monthly Wellbeing Newsletter is sent to all staff which includes advice and guidance on managing wellbeing and links to sources of support and advice, including the Employee Assistance Programme which is available 24/7.	HR Services Manager/AD for HR&OD	Ongoing
	Find creative ways to 'flatten' the RBC hierarchy in day-to-day business, improving rapport between senior leaders and junior staff. This will improve communications, leadership visibility and employee engagement.	Already being progressed through the Redesigning Reading reviews in each directorate which are underway as part of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, supported by the Strategic HR and OD Business Partners.	DDs/ADs/ Strategic HR&OD Business Partners	Ongoing
	Primary actions			

		Raise awareness of religious festivals by commemorating key events from all religions and advising on how these may affect work routines.	This is already being done through the Staff Newsletter. It will continue on a more regular basis.	Internal Communications Manager	Ongoing
		Profile junior staff in internal communications, for example include a 'get to know your colleagues' section of a regular newsletter, update, blog post, etc.	This is already planned for inclusion in the Staff Newsletter. It will continue on a more regular basis.	Internal Communications	Ongoing

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOR HR AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

TO:	PERSONNEL COMMITTEE
DATE:	16 MARCH 2022
TITLE:	GENDER AND ETHNICITY PAY GAP REPORTS FOR 2021 AND WORKFORCE PROFILE REPORT FOR 2020/21
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	CLLR MCEWAN	PORTFOLIO:	CORPORATE AND CONSUMER SERVICES
LEAD OFFICER:	SHELLA SMITH	TEL:	0118 937 4697
JOB TITLE:	ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF HR AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT	E-MAIL:	Shella.Smith@reading.gov.uk

1. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY OF REPORT

1.1 This report presents the Council's Gender and Ethnicity Pay Gap reports for 2021. The mean gender pay gap is 2.06%, meaning that women earn 2.06% less per hour, on average, than men. The median gender pay gap is 4.91%. The mean ethnicity pay gap is 4.26%, meaning that Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic employees are paid 4.26% less per hour, on average, than White employees. The median ethnicity pay gap is 5.69%. The report provides a further breakdown of ethnicity pay gaps for different ethnic groups.

1.2 It also presents the Workforce Profile for 2020/21 which provides a summary of equalities monitoring data and trends over time. It covers data on the protected characteristics of the current workforce and job applicants in 2020/21 and compares it to the previous two financial years (2018/19 and 2019/20) where relevant.

1.3 The findings from the Workforce Profile for 2020/21 and the Gender and Ethnicity Pay Gap reports for 2021 will be used alongside the findings of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Audit undertaken by Business in the Community (BITC) to inform the development of an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy for the Council. This is covered in more detail in a separate report to Personnel Committee on 16 March 2022 which provides an equality, diversity and inclusion update.

1.4 Appendices

Appendix 1: Gender Pay Gap Report for 2021
Appendix 2: Ethnicity Pay Gap Report for 2021
Appendix 3: Workforce Profile Report for 2020/21

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

It is recommended that Personnel Committee note:

2.1   **The Gender Pay Gap report for 2021 in Appendix 1 and Ethnicity Pay Gap report for 2021 in Appendix 2.**

2.2   **The Workforce Profile Report for 2020/21 in Appendix 3.**

2.3   **That an updated Workforce Profile Report for 2021/22 and updated Gender and Ethnicity Pay Gap reports for 2022 will be presented to Personnel Committee on 14 July 2022.**

3. GENDER PAY GAP REPORT 2021

3.1   The gender pay gap is calculated as the difference between average hourly earnings (excluding overtime) of men and women as a proportion of average hourly earnings (excluding overtime) of men's earnings. For example, a 4% gender pay gap shows that women earn 4% less per hour, on average, than men. Conversely, a negative 4% gender pay gap shows that women earn 4% more, on average, then men.

3.2   An employer must comply with the regulations for any year where they have a 'headcount' of 250 or more employees on the 'snapshot date'. For local authorities the snapshot date is 31 March each year.

3.3   Organisations must publish the following information:

- Their mean gender pay gap
- Their median gender pay gap
- Their mean bonus gender pay gap
- Their median bonus gender pay gap
- Their proportion of males and females receiving a bonus payment
- Their proportion of males and females in each quartile pay band

3.4   The information must be published on both the employer's website and on the Government Equalities Office website. An employer should then use that information to help understand any underlying causes for their gender pay gap and take suitable steps to minimise it. Benefits will differ between employers but can include developing a reputation for being a fair and progressive employer, attracting a wider pool of potential recruits for vacancies and the enhanced productivity that can comes from a workforce that feels valued and engaged in a culture committed to tackling inequality.

3.5   Appendix 1 shows the Council's gender pay gap information for 2021. The mean gender pay gap is 2.06% and the median is 4.91%. This is based on data at the snapshot date of 31 March 2021. They have remained broadly comparable to 2020, when the mean was 4.71% and the median was 2.53%. A mean average is calculated by totaling all the values in a dataset; this total is then divided by the number of

values that make up the dataset. The median of a group of numbers is the number in the middle, when the numbers are in order of magnitude.

3.6 The Council is in a good position. Most organisations have a much larger gender pay gap, with a mean for the whole economy of 15.4% for 2021 (up from 14.9% in 2020). This reflects the Council's aspiration to be a fair and inclusive employer, making best use of its talent regardless of gender.

4. ETHNICITY PAY GAP REPORT 2021

4.1 Unlike the gender pay gap, large organisations are not yet legally required to publish their ethnicity pay gap, but the Council has chosen to voluntarily publish its data for the second year.

4.2 The ethnicity pay gap is the percentage difference in the average hourly rate of pay of White employees and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic employees. We have calculated our ethnicity pay gap using the same methodology set out in the Government regulations for calculating the gender pay gap. However, unlike gender, our ethnicity disclosure rate is not at 100% (currently it stands at 94.4%). Any individuals with undisclosed ethnicities have been excluded from the calculations in line with the Government regulations for gender pay.

4.3 The Council's Ethnicity Pay Gap report is attached at Appendix 2. It is based on data at the snapshot date of 31 March 2021. The mean pay gap for is 4.26% and the median is 5.69%. In 2020, the mean was 6.88% and the median was 0.28%. This year we have provided a further breakdown for employees from different minority ethnic groups compared to their white colleagues. The pay gap is largest for employees who identify as Black or Black British. There is a negative pay gap for employees who identify as Asian or Asian British, who are paid more on average than White employees for both the mean and median pay gaps.

4.4 Nationally, in 2019 (the latest data available[1]), the median hourly pay for those in White ethnic groups was £12.40 per hour compared with those in ethnic minority groups at £12.11 per hour – a pay gap of 2.3%, its narrowest level since 2012. The median pay gap was at its largest in 2014, at 8.4%.

4.5 Long service awards are the only payments made at the Council which qualify as bonus pay. Thirty employees received long services awards in 2021, one Black or Black British employee and 29 White employees, and in all but one case, this was a one-off award of £1,000. One White employee chose to trade in some of their pay for extra leave and received a payment of £500. This translates into a negative mean bonus pay gap of -1.75%, or put more simply, bonuses for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic employees are 1.75% higher than for White employees. There is a 0% median bonus ethnicity pay gap.

4.6 The majority of full-pay relevant employees[2] at the Council (84.85%) are White. There are more White employees in every quartile and the proportion increases as pay increases, from 82.76% in the lower quartile to 86.45% in the upper quartile.

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[1] Source: Office for National Statistics - Annual Population Survey 2019
[2] See the Gov.uk website for a definition and examples of full-pay relevant employees (FPREs)

4.7   The report in Appendix 2 provides a more detailed breakdown of employees by ethnic group by pay grade. 56% of employees from Mixed Ethnic Groups and 55% of Black or Black British employees are employed on grades RG2 to RG4 (the lowest pay grades in the pay structure, excluding apprentices). 39% of Asian or Asian British employees are employed on grades RG2 to RG4.   At the highest paid end of the pay structure, there are no Asian or Asian British employees or employees from Other Ethnic Groups paid on Reading Senior Manager grades. Employees on Reading Senior Manager grades are largely White employees with a small proportion from Mixed Ethnic Backgrounds or Black or Black British (4 employees in total). Eight employees on Reading Senior Manager grades have not disclosed their ethnicity.

5.   WORKFORCE PROFILE REPORT FOR 2021/22

5.1   Public authorities have specific duties under the Equality Act 2010 to help them comply with the public sector equality duty. They must:

- publish equality information at least once a year to show how they have complied with the equality duty
- prepare and publish equality objectives at least every 4 years

5.2   The Workforce Profile in Appendix 3 is a key component of meeting the duty, and the Council's own Equal Opportunity in Employment Policy. It covers data on the protected characteristics of the current workforce and job applicants in 2020/21 and compares it to the previous two financial years (2018/19 and 2019/20) where relevant. The data is also intended to provide an equalities context and focus for ongoing discussions with internal and external stakeholders. The Workforce Profile will be published on the Council's website on the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policies page.

5.3   All job applicants are asked to provide data on their protected characteristics, or they can select a 'prefer not to say' option. In August 2019, the Council agreed to accept CV applications, however, candidates must complete a short application form prior to submitting a CV which includes equalities monitoring data.

5.4   The Workforce Profile includes data on:

- Vacancies, applicants, starters, leavers and maternity leave
- Demographic characteristics of the workforce by gender, ethnicity, age disability, full and part time working, length of service and pay grade
- Staff engagement and employment procedures

5.5   The audit does not include data for sexual orientation or religion or belief. This data is available but approximately 50% of job applicants and current employees select the 'prefer not to say' option for these protected characterises so there is concern about the validity and reliability of the data.

Key findings

5.6   The Workforce Profile in Appendix 3 includes data for all Council employees. It excludes schools' staff and casual workers.   The overall number of employees

included in the report is greater than for the gender and ethnicity pay reports where only full-pay relevant employees (FPREs) are included. FPREs exclude employees who are not in receipt of full pay, like those on maternity pay, unpaid leave, furlough etc. See the Gov.uk website for a definition and examples of full-pay relevant employees (FPREs)

5.7   Ethnicity

5.7.1   In 2020/21, 79.8% of the Council's workforce describe their ethnicity as White English/Welsh/Scottish /Northern Irish/British or White Other. This percentage has remained roughly the same over the last three years. The percentage of the workforce in minority ethnic groups has remained relatively stable in the last two years and stands at 14.6% in 2020/21. The proportion of staff who identify as Black/Black British has shown a decrease from 6.9% in 2018/19 to 6.0% in 2020/21. More leavers (16.9%) in 2020/21 were from non-White British ethnicities than the proportion in the existing workforce (14.6%). The proportion of staff who 'prefer not to say' or who have not declared their ethnicity has increased to 5.7%.

5.7.2   The proportion of job applicants from minority ethnic backgrounds has increased to 32.6% in 2020/21 compared to 30.9% in 2019/20. The number of White British applicants has reduced slightly in 2020/21 compared to the last two years. 17.6% of new starters appointed in 2021 were from non-White British ethnicities, compared to the percentage of non-White British ethnicities in the general workforce (14.6%). The number of job applicants who 'prefer not to say' or who have not declared their ethnic origin has increased over the last three years to 6.4% in 2020/21.

5.7.3   There is a higher proportion of staff within the lower pay grades 1-6 for almost all minority ethnic groups compared to White British staff. The only exception is for Asian or Asian British staff where there is a lower proportion in Grades 1-6 compared to White British staff. For the highest pay grades (Reading Senior Manager grades and above) there are no Asian or Asian British staff or staff from Other Ethnic Groups. 7.1% of staff at RSMD or above prefer not to say or have not declared their ethnicity.

5.8   Gender

5.8.1   The Council employs more women - 58.7% of employees are women and 41.3% are men. The proportion of men applying for jobs at the Council (43.1%) has increased slightly in the past three years. 54.9% of new starters in 2020/21 were women which is lower than the proportion of women in the existing workforce (58.7 %). A slightly lower proportion (57.1%) of leavers in 2020/21 were women.

5.8.2   A much greater percentage of women work part-time than men (86.3% compared to 13.7%). There is a higher proportion of women in all pay grade categories which largely reflect the proportion of women in the existing workforce (58.7 %), except for Reading Senior Manager grades where the percentage of women reduces to 46.2%.

5.9   Disability

5.9.1   In 2020/21, 3.8% of the workforce declared a disability. This is in line with previous years. 2.9% of the new starters during 2020/21 reported themselves as being

disabled. Due to the small number of staff that identify as having a disability it is not possible to carry out any meaningful analysis of disability related to pay grades.

5.9.2   A lower percentage of job applicants' state that they have a disability (0.8%) than the existing workforce (3.9%). Applications from employees with a disability are positively encouraged through the Disability Confident scheme, which guarantees an interview for applicants who declare a disability if they meet the minimum criteria for the job they are applying for. The percentage of applicants who prefer not to say or who have not declared if they have a disability has increased significantly in the last 12 months to 80.9%.

5.9.3   The actual proportion of staff and job applicants who meet the legal definition of disabled within the Equality Act 2010 (i.e. a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term negative effect on a person's ability to do normal daily activities) is likely to be far higher than the number who have declared a disability.

5.10   One of the actions for the year ahead is to address the increasing numbers of staff and job applicants who 'prefer not to say' or who decline to respond in relation to the equalities monitoring data that we collect. Low equalities monitoring disclosure rates are a problem for many employers, but the information is vital to help address issues accurately and for producing effective action plans. For example, one of the BITC audit recommendations is to increase representation at senior management level for more diverse groups, but disclosure rates for ethnicity are low for this group of staff.   We will therefore seek to encourage greater disclosure by explaining how we use intend to use this data.

6.   CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

6.1   Advancing equality, diversity and inclusion within the Council's workforce enables moving to a position where our workforce represents the community it serves and ensuring a Council that is fit for the future.

7.   ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

7.1   None.

8.   COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

8.1   We will continue to use the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion page on the Council's website to set out our approach and enable access to key information about our workforce, including the Workforce Profile report for 2020/21, the Gender and Ethnicity Pay Gap Reports for 2021, and the People Strategy.

8.2   The following steps will be taken to publish the Council's Gender and Ethnicity Pay Gap Reports:

- Published on the Council's website
- Published on the Government Equalities Office website (Gender Pay only)
- An item will be included in the staff newsletter to highlight the gender and ethnicity pay gap information in a proactive way to staff

- The reports will be presented to Personnel Committee on 16 March 2022 for members to note
- A press statement will be issued to bring the report to the attention of local media, residents and businesses.

9. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

9.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not required for the issues covered by this report.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;

b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;

c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The Council has a duty to publish workforce and employment information to demonstrate compliance with this duty. This report supports the Council to fulfil this duty.

11. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 None.

12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Personnel Committee report – 16 March 2022 – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Update

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READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

GENDER PAY GAP REPORT 2021

1   PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1   Under the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017, employers with 250 or more employees must publish gender pay gap information every year.

1.2   To make the calculations, data must be gathered from the Council's payroll from a specific date. This date is called the 'snapshot date', which is 31 March for public sector organisations.

1.3   The calculations for 31 March 2021 will be published on the Council's website and the Government Equalities Office website by 30 March 2022. This report sets out the figures that will be published and an action plan for improving the Council's small gender pay gap.

2   INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

2.1   This report will be published on the Council's website on the equality, diversity and inclusion policies page. The averages used are mean and median. A mean average is calculated by totaling all the values in a dataset; this total is then divided by the number of values that make up the dataset. The median of a group of numbers is the number in the middle, when the numbers are in order of magnitude.

Mean gender pay gap	The difference between the mean hourly rate of pay of male full-pay relevant employees (FPREs)[1] and that of female full-pay relevant employees.
Median gender pay gap	The difference between the median hourly rate of pay of male full-pay relevant employees and that of female full-pay relevant employees.
Mean bonus gap	The difference between the mean bonus pay paid to male relevant employees and that paid to female relevant employees.
Median gender pay gap	The difference between the median bonus pay paid to male relevant employees and that paid to female relevant employees.
Bonus proportions	The proportions of male and female relevant employees who were paid bonus pay during the relevant period.

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[1] See the Gov.uk website for a definition and examples of full-pay relevant employees (FPREs)

Quartile pay bands	The proportions of male and female full-pay relevant employees in the lower, lower middle, upper middle and upper quartile pay bands.

2.2 The workforce at the 'snapshot date' of 31 March 2021 was 1721 full-pay relevant employees (FPREs), which is made up of 1011 (58.7%) women and 710 (41.3%) men. The proportion of men has slightly increased (from 39.5%) since the last Gender Pay Gap report.

2.3 In accordance with Government guidance, data for school staff is not included, nor is the children's services workforce which transferred to Brighter Futures for Children (BFfC) on 1 December 2018. BFfC report their gender pay gap separately.

2.4 In relation to gender identity, if an employee does not self-identify as either male or female, the individual would be omitted from the calculations in accordance with the Government's guidance. At the Council's, 100% of employees had disclosed their sex so there was no requirement to omit any data for this reason.

Table 1 - Mean and median gender pay gap

	Men	Women	Women's earnings are:
Mean Hourly Rate	£16.68	£16.33	2.06% lower
Median Hourly Rate	£15.12	£14.38	4.91% lower

Table 2 – Mean and median gender pay gap in bonus payments

	Men	Women	Women's bonuses are:
Mean amount of bonus	£1,000	£972.22	2.78% lower
Median amount of bonus	£1,000	£1,000	0% lower

Table 3 - Proportion of men and women who received a bonus

	Men		Women	
FPREs Total	710		1011	
Proportion of all those receiving a bonus	12	1.69%	18	1.78%

3   ANALYSIS

3.1   The Council's mean (2.06%) and median (4.91%) gender pay gap (as shown in **Table 1**) have remained broadly comparable to 2020, when they were 4.71% and 2.53%. The key difference is that the mean is the lower figure this year whereas the median was the lower figure in 2020.   They also compare favourably with the national average gender pay gap figure for full and part time employees which is 15.4% for 2021 (up from 14.9% in 2020)[2].

3.2   **Tables 2 and 3** reflect a small group of employees who received "bonuses" in the relevant period. These are exclusively long service awards in the form of money, which meet the government's definition of "bonus". The Council does not pay any other type of bonus.

3.3   Long service awards are in recognition of achieving 20 years' continuous service. The Council is currently running two long service schemes with varying cash values:

  ▪ A one-off money award of £1,000 for those achieving long service with either the Council or a combination of the Council and Berkshire County Council, with the provision for employees to "trade in" all or part of the award for additional days' leave, currently at the rate of £100 per day; or;

  ▪ £573 plus double leave for achieving 20 years' service for employees appointed by the Council before 1 April 1999.

3.4   Thirty employees received long services awards, 12 men and 18 women, and in all but one case, this was a one-off award of £1,000. One woman chose to trade in some of her pay for extra leave and received a payment of £500. This translates into a 2.78% mean bonus gender pay gap and a 0% median bonus gender pay gap, as shown in **Table 2**.

3.5   The Council's workforce is predominantly women (58.7%). There are more women than men at every pay quartile, and the number of women in each quartile is very similar (see **Figures 1 and 2** below).

3.6   **Figure 3** illustrates the breakdown of men and women in each pay band. Pay band RG10 has the greatest proportion of women (83.3%), which is higher than the overall proportion of women employed at the Council. Job roles that fall into this pay band are primarily service managers, solicitors and business partner roles. Most women in this pay band are full-time.

3.7   The proportion of women above RG10 (i.e. earnings above £53,291 per annum) is 46.34% which is lower than the overall proportion of women at 58.7%. This is largely where the Council's gender pay gap comes from. The Sex and Power Index 2022[3], published by The Fawcett Society, is a breakdown of percentages of women in power across UK politics, business and public life. Women's representation across all sectors is a vitally important step to advancing gender equality.   The latest survey found that women are under-represented and outnumbered by men at a ratio of 2:1 in the positions that shape politics, laws and culture. Encouragingly, 112 of 228 councils (49%) are now run at the officer

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[2] ONS data – Gender pay gap in the UK: 2021
[3] The Fawcett Society - Sex and Power Index 2022

level by women – a considerable jump from 34% in 2019. An action plan for improving the Council's gender pay gap is included in Section 5 of this report.

Figure 1 - Proportion of men and women in pay quartiles on 31 March 2021

Men ☐ Women ☐

Lower Quartile

41%
59%

Lower Middle Quartile

38%
62%

Upper Middle Quartile

43%
57%

Upper Quartile

44%
56%
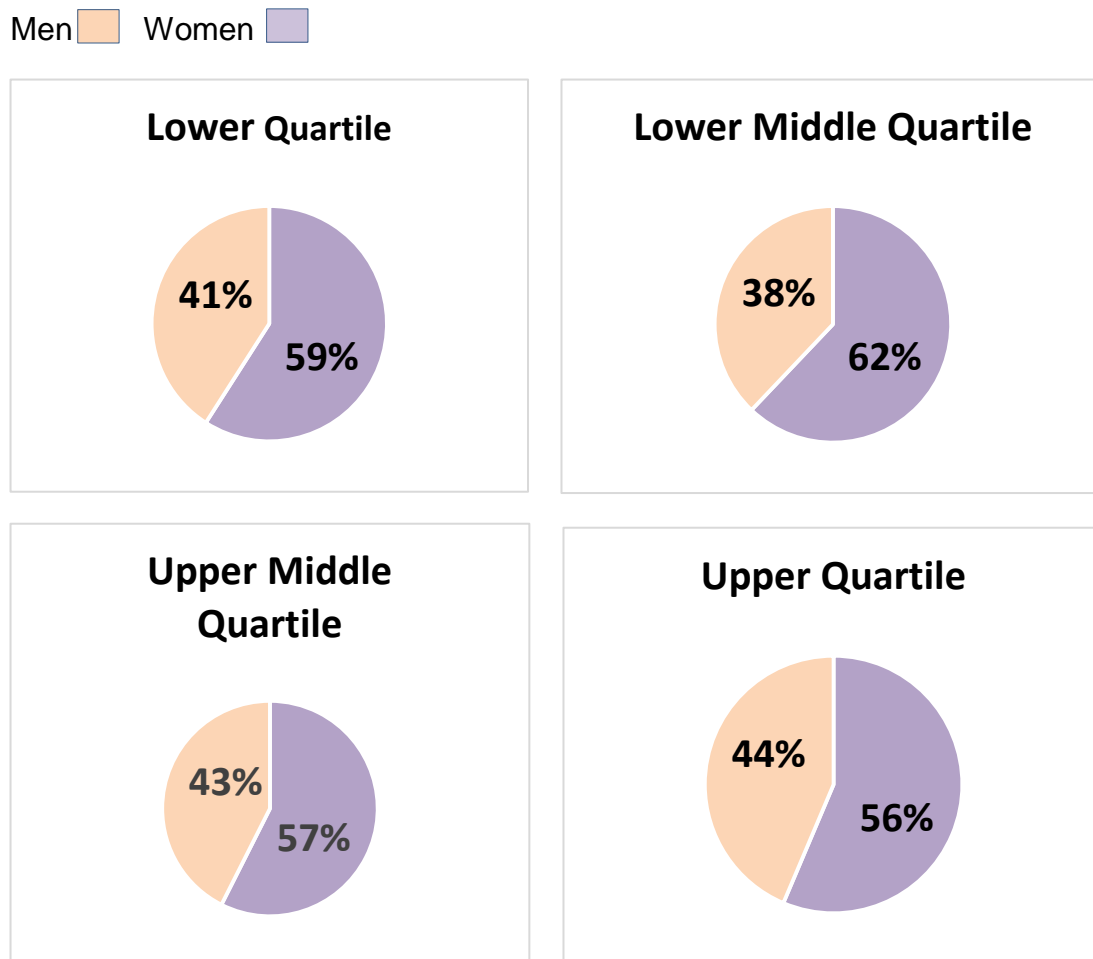
Figure 2 - Number of men and women in each pay quartile on 31 March 2021

Men ☐ Women ☐

Quartile	Women	Men
Upper Quartile	243	188
Upper Middle Quartile	247	183
Lower Middle Quartile	267	163
Lower Quartile	254	176

0   50   100   150   200   250   300   350   400   450   500
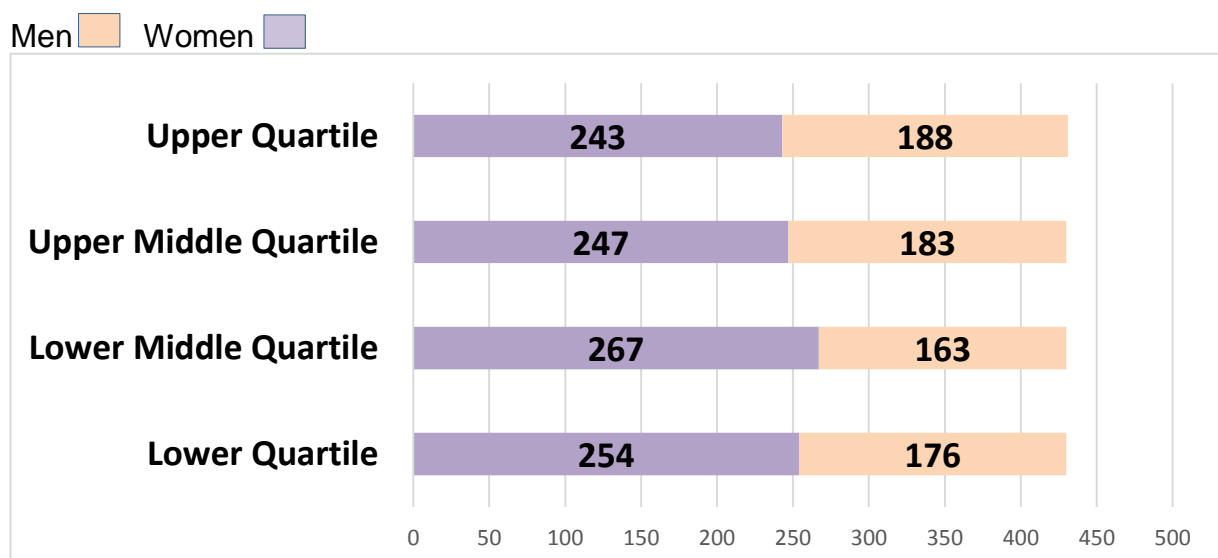
Figure 3 - Proportion of women in each pay band on 31 March 2021

Pay Band	Proportion of women
Above RG10	46.34%
RG10	83.33%
RG9	46.15%
RG8	56.82%
RG7	54.68%
RG6	62.03%
RG5	63.16%
RG4	56.61%
RG3	68.00%
RG2	57.69%
Apprentice	7.69%
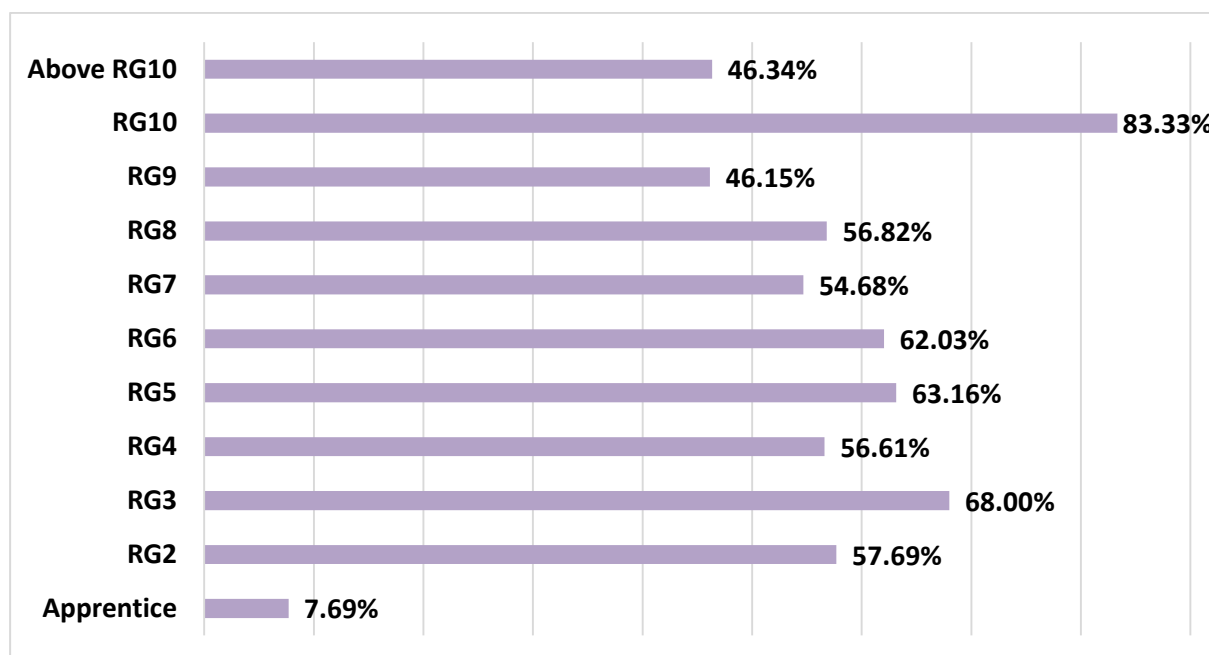
4 CONCLUSIONS

4.1 The **small gender pay gap** at the Council, which is much lower than the national average, is the result of the long-term effort that the Council has invested to ensure fair pay for all staff, including:

- Promotion of the Council's low gender pay gap through posts on the Council's social media channels.
- Promoting and supporting flexible working policies for all employees, irrespective of gender, including job share, part time working and term time working. This also includes the new Flexible Workstyles Framework which is focused on giving our staff the flexibility to choose, where feasible, where they do their work, whether that's in the office or working remotely.
- Promoting the Council as a great place to work by running workshops and drop-in clinics in local job centres and schools.
- Having a clear policy of paying employees equally for the same or equivalent work, regardless of gender, and carrying our equality audits every year to check this is happening.
- Having an objective job evaluation scheme to ensure pay fairness.
- Formal authorisation process for any changes in pay, including accelerated increments, market supplements and pay at starting appointments.
- Offering the right to request flexible working to all staff with no qualifying length of service required.
- Enhanced Shared Parental Pay to mirror contractual Maternity Pay.
- Became an accredited "Living Wage Employer" in 2014.
- Engaging with working parents who are home-schooling during the pandemic, to reinforce the Council's flexible working approach.

5   ACTION PLAN

5.1   The Council commissioned Business in the Community (BITC) to review our approach to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in 2021. They reviewed our policies, processes and initiatives, and gained insights into the experiences of our employees across seven key areas: Strategy, Leadership, Recruitment, Staff, Employee Engagement, Pay Gaps and Life Balance. The insights and recommendations from the audit, as well as the Equality Audit 2020/21 findings, and Gender and Ethnicity Pay Gap reports for 2021, are being used to create a Team Reading Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, which will be monitored regularly by the Corporate Management Team and Personnel Committee.

5.2   Promote the benefits of working for the Council both internally and externally, such as apprenticeship opportunities, flexible hours and hybrid working arrangements, our diversity commitments etc.

5.3   Continue to require recruiting managers to attend the Council's recruitment and selection training which highlights the issue of unconscious bias during recruitment and interview processes.

5.4   Continue to ensure that recruiting managers use structured interviews as this is more effective at guarding against unconscious bias by ensuring that all candidates are asked the same questions and are assessed using pre-specified, standardised criteria.

5.5   Increase awareness about apprenticeship schemes to encourage more employees to enhance their skills and qualifications, giving them greater opportunities to progress their careers.

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

ETHNICITY PAY GAP REPORT FOR 2021

1   PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1   Reading Borough Council is voluntarily publishing its ethnicity pay gap for the second year, using an even greater range of data to explore our ethnicity pay gap and the reasons for it, so that we can take action to reduce the gap.

1.2   The ethnicity pay gap is the percentage difference in the average hourly pay rate for employees from minority ethnic groups compared to the average hourly pay rate for white employees. We calculate our ethnicity pay gap using largely the same methodology as set out in the Government regulations for calculating the gender pay gap, which means that we exclude any individuals with undisclosed ethnicities from our calculations. Unlike for gender, our ethnicity disclosure rate is not at 100% (currently it stands at 94.4%).

2   INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

2.1   This report will be published on the Council's website on the equality, diversity and inclusion policies page. The averages used are mean and median. A mean average is calculated by totaling all the values in a dataset; this total is then divided by the number of values that make up the dataset. The median of a group of numbers is the number in the middle, when the numbers are in order of magnitude.

Mean ethnicity pay gap	The difference between the mean hourly rate of pay of white full-pay relevant employees (FPREs)[1] and that of FPREs from minority ethnic groups.
Median ethnicity pay gap	The difference between the median hourly rate of pay of white FPREs and that of FPREs from minority ethnic groups.
Mean bonus gap	The difference between the mean bonus pay paid to white FPREs and that paid to FPREs from minority ethnic groups.
Median ethnicity pay gap	The difference between the median bonus pay paid to white FPREs and that paid to FPREs from minority ethnic groups.
Bonus proportions	The proportions of white FPREs and FPREs from minority ethnic groups who were paid bonus pay during the relevant period.
Quartile pay bands	The proportions of white FPREs and FPREs from minority ethnic groups in the lower, lower middle, upper middle and upper quartile pay bands.

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[1] See the Gov.uk website for a definition and examples of full-pay relevant employees (FPREs)

2.2   For the purpose of this report, the workforce profile at the 'snapshot date' date of 31 March 2021 was 1,624 full-pay relevant employees (FPREs). Data for schools' staff is not included, nor is the children's services workforce which transferred to a separate company, Brighter Futures for Children (BFfC), on 1 December 2018. Table 1 shows the make-up of the workforce by ethnic group.

Table 1 – Workforce profile as at 31 March 2021 by ethnic groups

	Number	Percentage
Asian or Asian British	89	5.48%
Black or Black British	103	6.34%
Mixed	48	2.96%
Other Ethnic Groups	6	0.37%
White	1,378	84.85%
Total	**1,624**	**100%**

Table 2 – Overall mean and median ethnicity pay gap and bonus pay gap for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Employees

	Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Employees	White Employees	Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Employees' earnings are:
Mean hourly rate	£15.81	£16.51	4.26% lower
Median hourly rate	£14.02	£14.86	5.69% lower
Mean amount of bonus	£1,000	£982.76	1.75% higher
Median amount of bonus	£1,000	£1,000	0% lower

Table 2a - Mean and median ethnicity pay gap and bonus pay gap for Asian or Asian British Employees

	Asian or Asian British Employees	White Employees	Asian or Asian British Employees' earnings are:
Mean hourly rate	£17.32	£16.51	4.87% higher
Median hourly rate	£16.25	£14.86	9.33% higher
Mean amount of bonus	£0	£982.76	100% lower
Median amount of bonus	£0	£1,000	100% lower

Table 2b - Mean and median ethnicity pay gap and bonus pay gap for Black or Black British Employees

	Black or Black British Employees	White Employees	Black or Black British Employees' earnings are:
Mean hourly rate	£14.50	£16.51	12.21% lower
Median hourly rate	£13.63	£14.86	8.31% lower
Mean amount of bonus	£1,000	£982.76	1.75% higher
Median amount of bonus	£1,000	£1,000	0% lower

Table 2c - Mean and median ethnicity pay gap and bonus pay gap for employees from Mixed Ethnic Backgrounds

	Employees from Mixed Ethnic Backgrounds	White Employees	Employees from Mixed Ethnic Backgrounds' earnings are:
Mean hourly rate	£15.82	£16.51	4.17% lower
Median hourly rate	£14.02	£14.86	5.69% lower
Mean amount of bonus	£0	£982.76	100% lower
Median amount of bonus	£0	£1,000	100% lower

Table 2d - Mean and median ethnicity pay gap and bonus pay gap for employees from Other Ethnic Groups

	Employees from Other Ethnic Groups	White Employees	Employees from Other Ethnic Groups' earnings are:
Mean hourly rate	£15.85	£16.51	4.01% lower
Median hourly rate	£13.73	£14.86	7.60% lower
Mean amount of bonus	£0	£982.76	100% lower
Median amount of bonus	£0	£1,000	100% lower

Table 1 – Overall proportion of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Employees and White Employees who received a bonus

	Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Employees		White Employees	
FPREs Total	246		1,378	
Proportion of all those receiving a bonus	1	0.97%	29	2.10%

Table 2a –Proportion of employees in each ethnic group who received a bonus

Ethnic Group	Asian or Asian British		Black of Black British		Mixed Ethnic Backgrounds		Other Ethnic Backgrounds		White	
FPREs Total	89		103		48		6		1,378	
Proportion of all those receiving a bonus	0	0%	1	0.97%	0	0%	0	0%	29	2.10%

3 ANALYSIS

3.1 **Table 2** shows that the Council's mean pay gap for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic employees for 2021 is 4.26% and the median is 5.69%. In 2020, the mean pay gap was 6.88% and the median pay gap was 0.28%. Nationally, in 2019 (the latest data available [2]), the median hourly pay for white ethnic employees was £12.40 per hour compared to those in minority ethnic groups at £12.11 per hour – a pay gap of 2.3%, its narrowest level since 2012. The pay gap was at its largest in 2014, at 8.4%.

3.2 **Tables 2a to 2d** show this data broken down further for employees from different minority ethnic groups compared to their white colleagues. The pay gap is largest for employees who identify as Black or Black British. There is a negative pay gap for employees who identify as Asian or Asian British, who are paid more than their white colleagues on average for both the mean and median pay gaps.

3.3 **Tables 2 and 2a to 2d and Tables 3 and 3a** show employees who received "bonuses" in the relevant period. The Council does not pay bonuses within its terms and conditions. However, long service awards in the form of money meet the Government's definition of "bonus" for this report.

3.4 Long service awards are in recognition of achieving 20 years' continuous service. The Council is currently running two long service schemes with varying cash values:

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[2] Source: Office for National Statistics - Annual Population Survey 2019

- A one-off money award of £1,000 for those achieving long service with either the Council or a combination of the Council and Berkshire County Council, with the provision for employees to "trade in" all or part of the award for additional days' leave, currently at the rate of £100 per day; or;

- £573 plus double leave for achieving 20 years' service for employees appointed by the Council before 1 April 1999.

3.5 Thirty employees received long services awards in 2021, one Black or Black British employee and 29 White employees, and in all but one case, this was a one-off award of £1,000. One White employee chose to trade in some of their pay for extra leave and received a payment of £500. This translates into a negative mean bonus pay gap of -1.75%, or put more simply, bonuses for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic employees are 1.75% higher than for White employees. There is 0% median bonus ethnicity pay gap.

3.6 **Figures 1 and 2** illustrate the breakdown of employees by ethnic group in each pay quartile. There are more White employees in every quartile and the proportion increases as pay increases, from 82.76% in the lower quartile to 86.45% in the upper quartile.

3.7 **Figures 3a to Figure 3d** illustrate the breakdown of employees from each minority ethnic group compared to White employees by pay grade. 56% of employees from Mixed Ethnic Groups and 55% of Black or Black British employees are employed on grades RG2 to RG4 (the lowest pay grades in the pay structure, excluding apprentices). 39% of Asian or Asian British employees are employed on RG2 to RG4.

3.8 At the highest paid end of the pay structure, there are no Asian or Asian British employees or employees from Other Ethnic Groups paid on Reading Senior Manager grades. Employees on Reading Senior Manager grades are largely White employees with a small proportion from Mixed Ethnic Backgrounds or Black or Black British (4 employees in total). Eight employees on Reading Senior Manager grades have not disclosed their ethnicity.

Figure 1 - Proportion of employees in each pay quartile by ethnic group on 31 March 2021
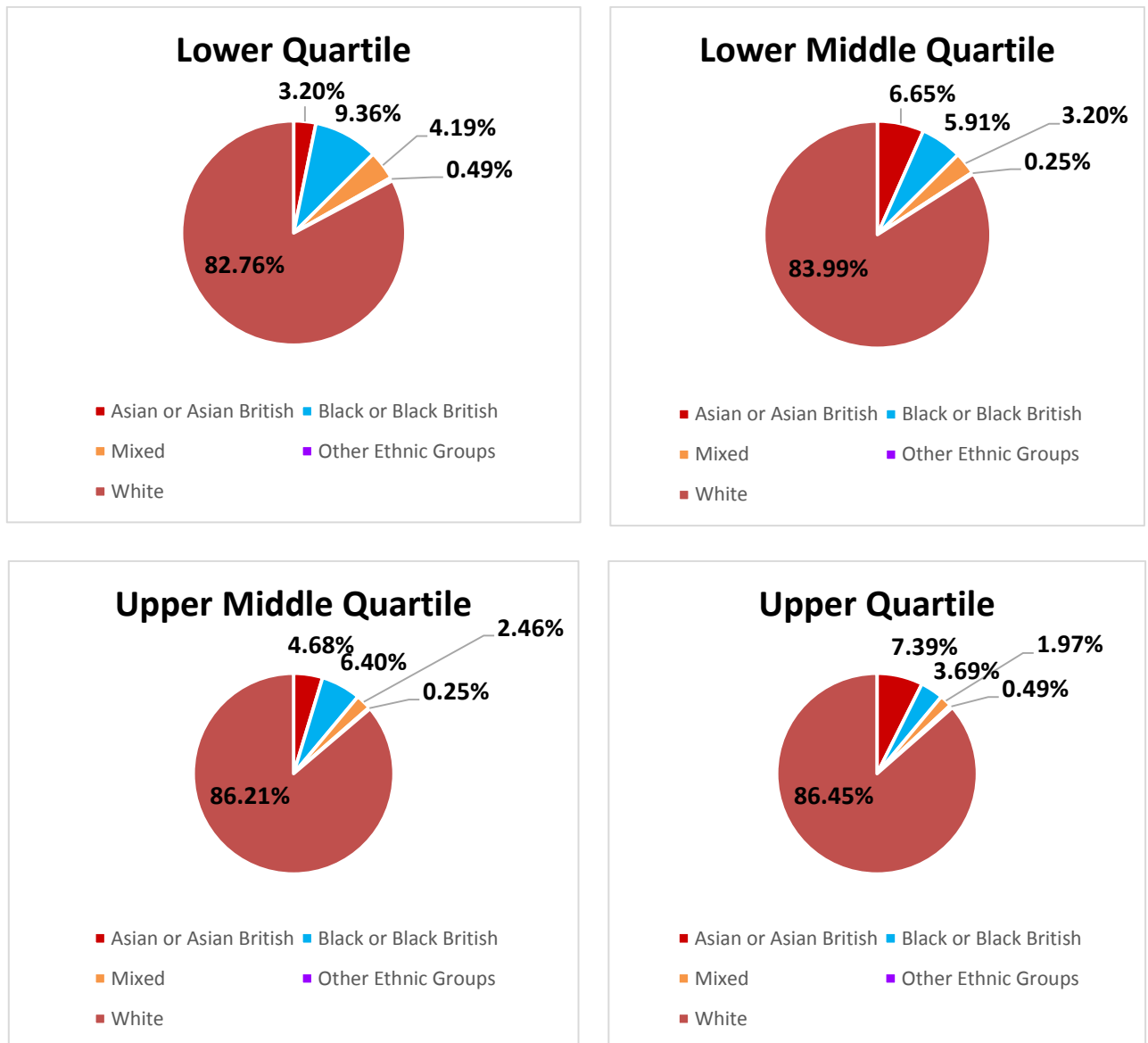
Lower Quartile

3.20%
9.36%
4.19%
0.49%
82.76%

- Asian or Asian British
- Black or Black British
- Mixed
- Other Ethnic Groups
- White

Lower Middle Quartile

6.65%
5.91%
3.20%
0.25%
83.99%

- Asian or Asian British
- Black or Black British
- Mixed
- Other Ethnic Groups
- White

Upper Middle Quartile

4.68%
6.40%
2.46%
0.25%
86.21%

- Asian or Asian British
- Black or Black British
- Mixed
- Other Ethnic Groups
- White

Upper Quartile

7.39%
3.69%
1.97%
0.49%
86.45%

- Asian or Asian British
- Black or Black British
- Mixed
- Other Ethnic Groups
- White

Figure 2 - Number of employees in each ethnic group on 31 March 2021

Quartile	Asian or Asian British	Black or Black British	Mixed	Other Ethnic Groups	White
Upper Quartile	30	15	8	2	351
Upper Middle Quartile	19	26	10	1	350
Lower Middle Quartile	27	24	13	1	341
Lower Quartile	13	38	17	2	336

- Asian or Asian British
- Black or Black British
- Mixed
- Other Ethnic Groups
- White

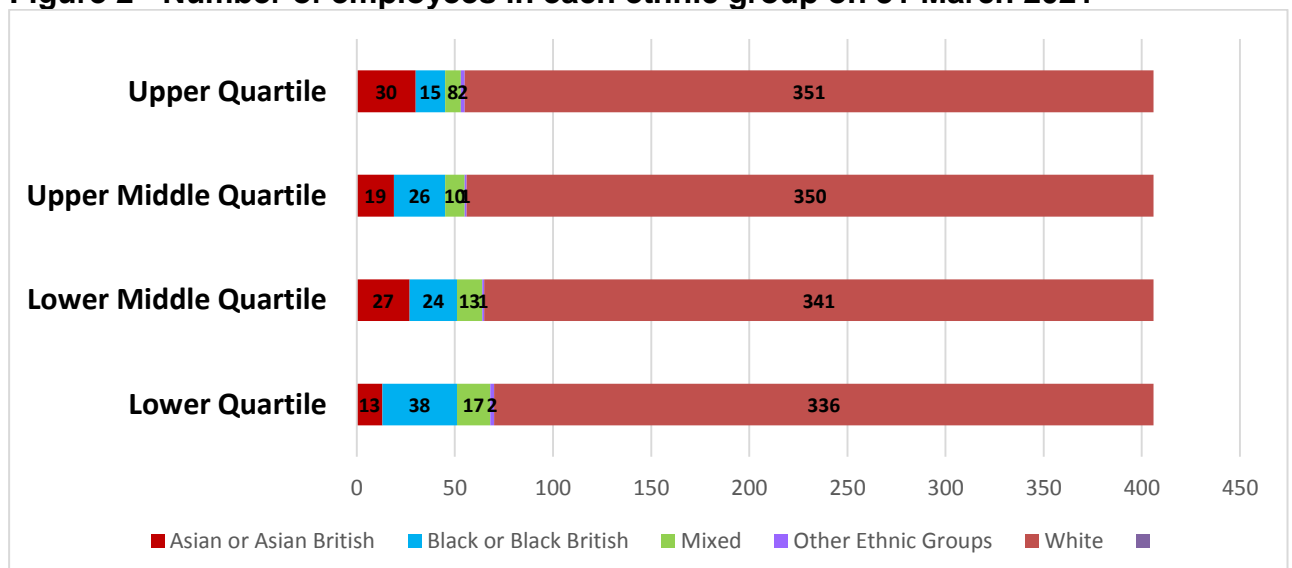**Figure 3a - Proportion of Asian or Asian British employees compared to White Employees in each pay band on 31 March 2021**
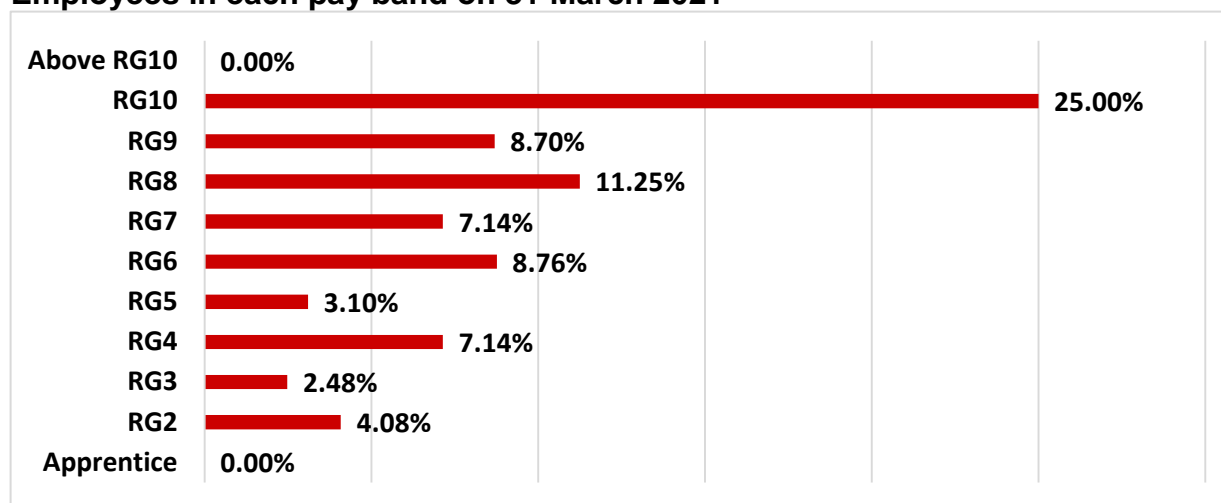
Pay band	Percentage
Above RG10	0.00%
RG10	25.00%
RG9	8.70%
RG8	11.25%
RG7	7.14%
RG6	8.76%
RG5	3.10%
RG4	7.14%
RG3	2.48%
RG2	4.08%
Apprentice	0.00%

Figure 4b - Proportion of Black or Black British employees compared to White Employees in each pay band on 31 March 2021

Pay band	Percentage
Above RG10	3.33%
RG10	0.00%
RG9	0.00%
RG8	2.74%
RG7	2.50%
RG6	8.76%
RG5	5.30%
RG4	5.94%
RG3	7.94%
RG2	26.56%
Apprentice	0.00%

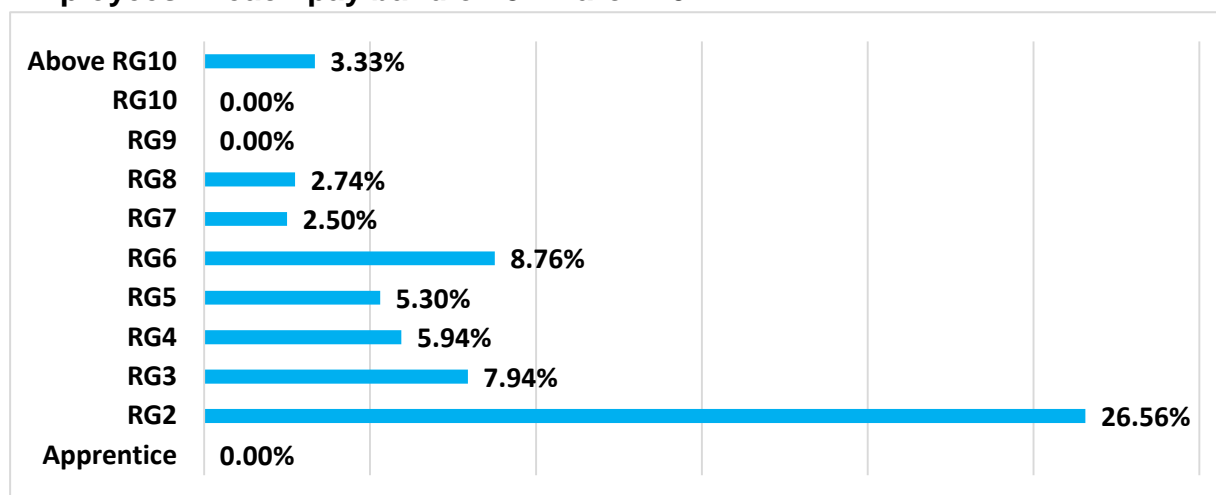**Figure 5c - Proportion of employees from Mixed Ethnic Backgrounds compared to White Employees in each pay band on 31 March 2021**

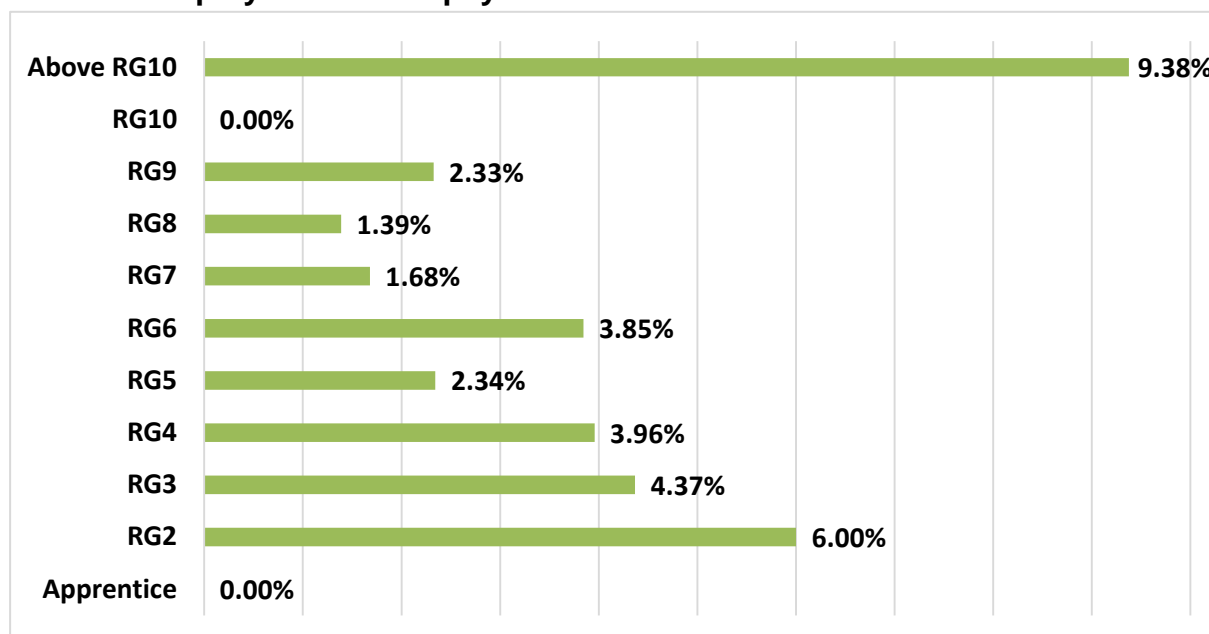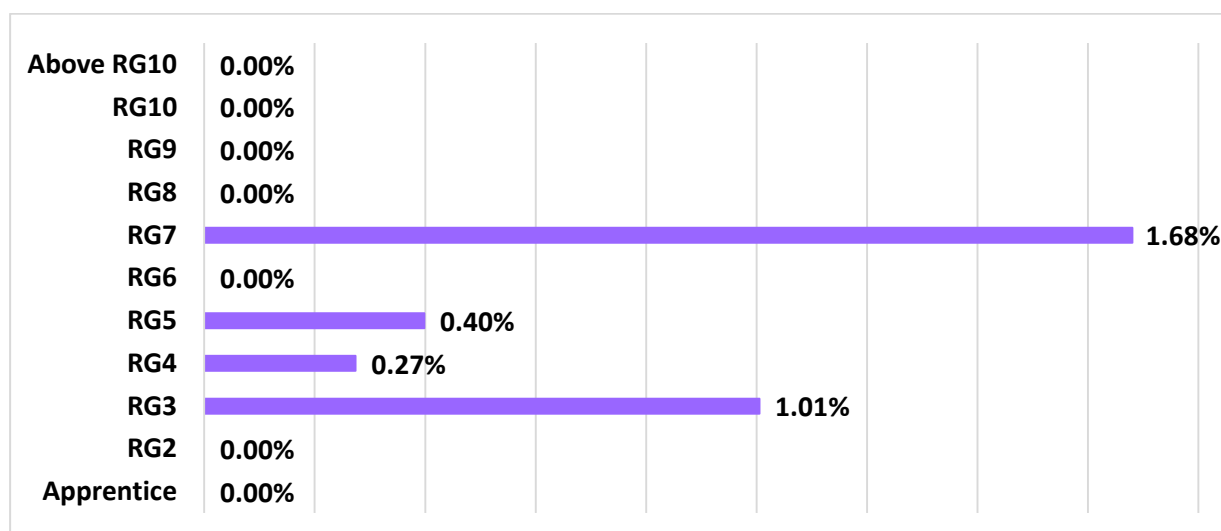| Pay Band	Percentage
Above RG10	9.38%
RG10	0.00%
RG9	2.33%
RG8	1.39%
RG7	1.68%
RG6	3.85%
RG5	2.34%
RG4	3.96%
RG3	4.37%
RG2	6.00%
Apprentice	0.00%

Figure 6d - Proportion of employees from Other Ethnic Groups compared to White Employees in each pay band on 31 March 2021

Pay Band	Percentage
Above RG10	0.00%
RG10	0.00%
RG9	0.00%
RG8	0.00%
RG7	1.68%
RG6	0.00%
RG5	0.40%
RG4	0.27%
RG3	1.01%
RG2	0.00%
Apprentice	0.00%

4   ACTION PLAN TO REDUCE THE ETHNICITY PAY GAP

4.1   The Council commissioned Business in the Community (BITC) in 2021 to review our approach to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. They reviewed our policies, processes and initiatives, and gained insights into the experiences of our employees across seven key areas: Strategy, Leadership, Recruitment, Staff, Employee Engagement, Pay Gaps and Life Balance. The insights and recommendations from the audit, as well as the Equality Audit 2020/21 findings, and Gender and Ethnicity Pay Gap reports for 2021, are being used to create a Team Reading Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, which will be monitored regularly by the Corporate Management Team and Personnel Committee.

4.2 There is a small proportion of employees (5.6%) who have either not been asked to provide their ethnicity or have chosen a 'prefer not to say' response. Low ethnicity disclosure rates are a problem for many employers, but the information is vital to help address any ethnicity pay gaps accurately and for producing effective action plans. We will therefore seek to encourage all employees to disclose their ethnicity, explaining how we use this data.

4.3 Promote the benefits of working for the Council both internally and externally, such as apprenticeship opportunities, flexible hours and hybrid working arrangements, our diversity commitments etc.

4.4 Continue to require recruiting managers to complete the Council's recruitment and selection training which highlights the issue of unconscious bias during recruitment and interview processes.

4.5 Continue to ensure that recruiting managers use structured interviews as this is more effective at guarding against unconscious bias by ensuring that all candidates are asked the same questions and are assessed using pre-specified, standardised criteria.

4.6 Increase awareness about apprenticeship schemes to encourage more employees to enhance their skills and qualifications, giving them greater opportunities to progress their careers.

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Reading Borough Council

Workforce Profile

2020 – 2021

1

Contents

1 Overview

Reading Borough Council strives to be an inclusive and fair employer. The analysis of our workforce profile in relation to equalities is central to making sure that this happens. This report provides an overview of the range of people in the Council and serves as an evidence base to inform the Council's equalities objectives, which form part of the Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010). The information contained in this document is also reported to the Council's Personnel Committee.

The Council actively encourages individuals from all protected characteristics' groups[1] to be part of its team and highly values people's individual skills and talents. The information included in this report is used to understand whether the Council's workforce reflects the demographic of the wider community and, if not, how inroads can be made to achieve this over time. Understanding the profile of employees also means that appropriate support and solutions can be delivered.

This report will be updated on an annual basis and the information provided is based on the last complete financial year (2020/21), unless otherwise indicated. Where relevant and helpful, comparisons with data for previous years has been included to show trends over time.

2 Vacancies, applicants, leavers and maternity leave

2.1 Vacancies and applicants

The average number of vacancies advertised per month has increased in the last two years. The number of applicants has increased significantly over the last 3.

Vacancies and applicants	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Average number of vacancies advertised per month	14	25	21
Number of applicants	2339	5433	7564

The number of job applicants who have chosen not to state their ethnic origin has increased over the last three years to 6.4% in 2020/21. The proportion of applicants from minority ethnic backgrounds has increased to 32.6% in 2020/21 compared to 30.9% in 2019/20. The number of White British applicants has reduced slightly in 2020/21 compared to the last two years.

Ethnic origin	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
White: English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	53.4%	53.5%	50.9%
White Other	8.7%	10.3%	10.1%
Mixed/multiple	4.0%	4.5%	4.0%
Asian/Asian British	18.0%	15.5%	18.4%
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	12.4%	9.6%	9.2%

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[1] Equality Act 2010 – The 'protected characteristics' include: race, age, disability, religion and belief, sexual orientation, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity and marriage and civil partnership.

Other ethnic group	0.7%	1.3%	1.0%
No value (Prefer not to say)	2.7%	5.2%	6.4%

The younger ages of applicants reflect that people in these age group are more likely to be looking for work and that older people tend to be more settled in their working life. The increase in younger applicants is also reflected in the staff that have recently joined the Council.

Age range	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
16 to 29	30.8%	35.0%	36.5%
30 to 44	41.3%	37.5%	35.6%
45 to 59	22.6%	19.6%	18.4%
60 to 64	4.1%	2.6%	1.9%
65 to 74	0.5%	0.6%	0.4%
75 and over	0.0%	0.0%	0.03%
No value (Prefer not to say)	0.7%	4.7%	7.1%

The Council still attracts more applications from women than men, although the proportion of men applying has slightly increased compared to 2018/19.

Gender	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Women	62.3%	52.5%	55.2%
Men	37.2%	46.1%	43.1%
No value (Prefer not to say)	0.51	1.4%	1.6%

A lower percentage of applicants' state that they have a disability (0.8%) than the existing workforce (3.9%). Applications from employees with a disability are positively encouraged through the Disability Confident scheme, which guarantees an interview for applicants who declare a disability if they meet the minimum criteria for the job they are applying for. The percentage of applicants who prefer not to say or have not declared if they have a disability has increased significantly in the last 12 months.

Do you consider yourself to be disabled?	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Yes	4.8%	3.9%	0.8%
No	91.2%	84.9%	18.4%
No value (Prefer not to say)	4.0%	11.2%	80.9%

2.2 New Starters

Some demographic characteristics of new starters vary from the existing workforce:

- 2.9% of the starters during 2020/21 reported themselves as being disabled compared to 3.8% amongst the workforce.
- 17.6% of new starters were from non-White British ethnicities compared to the percentage of non-White British ethnicities in the general workforce (14.6%).
- A much lower percentage of starters are aged 45 and over (37.7% compared to 54.5% amongst the workforce).

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- 54.9% of starters are women which is lower than the proportion of women in the existing workforce (58.7 %).

2.3 Leavers

Labour turnover has decreased in 2020/21 compared to the previous two years. This is highly likely to be due to the Coronavirus pandemic and is a trend that has been seen by many employers nationally.

Rate	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Labour turnover rate (all reasons)	14.9%	16.7%	11.0%
Labour turnover rate (voluntary resignation)	8.5%	10.7%	8.4%

Further information on the reasons for staff leaving employment is shown below. Voluntary resignation is the main reason, followed by retirements and the expiry of fixed term contracts.

Reason for leaving	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Death in Service	2	2	4
Dismissal	12	3	5
Dismissal – Ill Health	5	2	3
Efficiency of Service	1	0	0
End of Fixed Term Contract	16	16	19
End of Temporary Contract	1	0	0
Mutual Agreement	8	6	9
Redundancy	33	13	6
Resignation	197	146	108
Retirement	22	20	26
Retirement – Ill Health	1	3	3
Retirement- Redundancy	2	4	0
Early Retirement	0	1	2
Settlement Agreement	0	1	1
TUPE Transfer	891	1	0
Unsuccessful Probation	0	8	3
Total	**1193**	**226**	**189**

The significantly higher number of leavers in 2018/19 is largely due to the TUPE transfer of 876 staff from Children's Services to Brighter Futures for Children (the wholly Council-owned children's company) on 1 December 2018.

Some demographic characteristics of leavers vary from the existing workforce:

- More leavers (16.9%) in 2020/21 were from non-White British ethnicities than the proportion in the existing workforce (14.6%)
- A higher percentage of leavers in 2020/21 are aged 55 and over (39.7%) compared to 26.0% amongst the workforce

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- A slightly lower proportion (57.1%) of leavers in 2020/21 were women compared to 58.7% of the workforce who are women.

2.4 Maternity leave

All the women who went on maternity leave during 2020/21 returned to work at the Council.

3 Demographic characteristics of the workforce

3.1 Disability

To ensure that our employment opportunities are accessible to people with a disability, we fully commit to be a 'Disability Confident Employer[2]'. We actively promote employment opportunities to applicants with a disability, providing information in Plain English and offering accessible formats where necessary to facilitate the recruitment process. As part of our standard practice for staff, we offer specialist support such as Occupational Health advice and access to free, confidential counselling.

In 2020/21, 3.8% of the workforce declared a disability. This is in line with previous years. The actual proportion of staff who meet the legal definition of disability within the Equality Act 2010 is likely to be far higher than the number who have declared a disability (i.e. a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term negative effect on a person's ability to do normal daily activities).

Disability	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
No	87.6%	86.9%	80.8%
Yes	3.8%	3.7%	3.8%

3.2 Ethnicity

In 2020/21, 79.8% of the Council's workforce describe their ethnicity as White English/Welsh/Scottish /Northern Irish/British or White Other. This percentage has remained largely the same over the last three years. The percentage of the workforce in minority ethnic groups has remained relatively stable in the last two years and stands at 14.6% in 2020/21. The proportion of staff who identify as Black/Black British has shown a decrease from 6.9% in 2018/19 to 6.0% in 2020/21. The proportion of staff who 'prefer not to say' or have not declared their ethnicity has increased to 5.7%. This is also reflected in increasing numbers of job applicants who prefer not to say or have not declared their ethnicity (see 2.1).

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[2] As a Disability Confident employer, we have made specific commitments regarding the employment of disabled people. As part of this, a disabled person is guaranteed an interview if they meet the essential criteria for the job vacancy. See www.gov.uk/government/collections/disability-confident-campaign for more information

| Ethnicity	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
White: English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	77.3%	76.7%	75.4%
White Other	4.0%	4.3%	4.4%
Black/Black British	6.9%	6.3%	6.0%
Asian/Asian British	4.8%	4.9%	5.3%
Mixed ethnic background	2.3%	2.7%	2.8%
Other ethnic groups	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%
Prefer not to say	4.4%	4.9%	5.7%
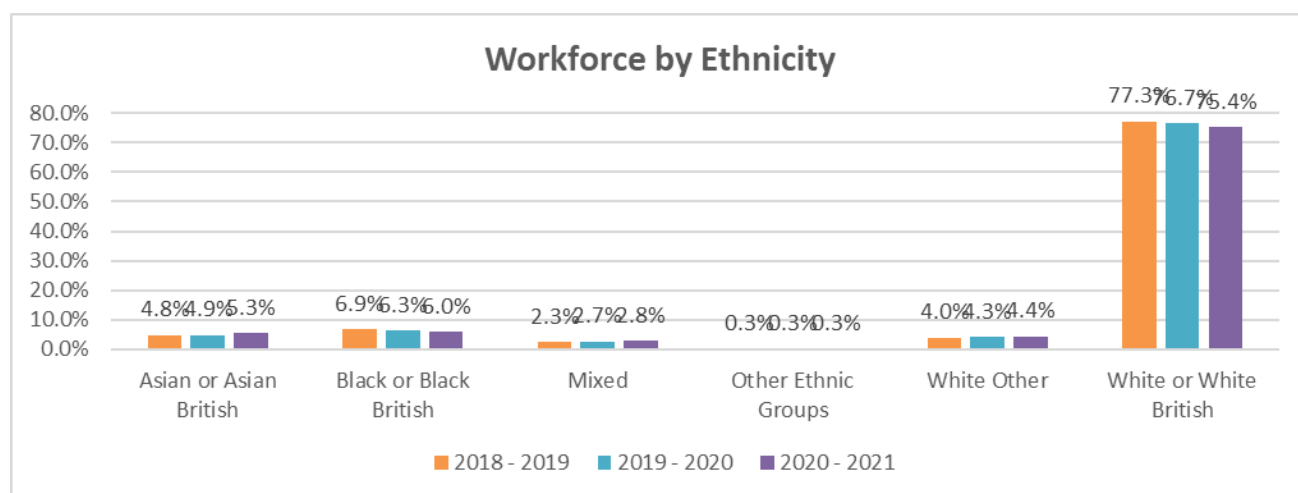
3.3 Age profile

The workforce age profile has remained relatively stable over the last three years. A low percentage of the workforce is aged 16 to 24 (4.5%) compared to the percentage of staff aged 55 to 64 in employment (22.8%).

The Council is pro-actively working with local schools and colleges to promote employment opportunities. This aims to encourage young people to take up work at the Council.

The percentage of the Council's workforce aged 55 and over is 26.0% which is slightly higher than the number of staff aged 35 to 44 (23.6%). As more of the workforce moves into the 55 and over age range there is an increased importance on ensuring that in addition to retention initiatives to retain older workers, a robust succession planning mechanism is embedded to deliver business continuity, top talent, and leaders and managers of the future.

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| Age	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
16-24	5.2%	4.7%	4.5%
25-34	16.6%	17.1%	17.4%
35-44	22.8%	23.3%	23.6%
45-54	28.9%	28.6%	28.5%
55-64	23.2%	23.0%	22.8%
65+	3.3%	3.3%	3.2%
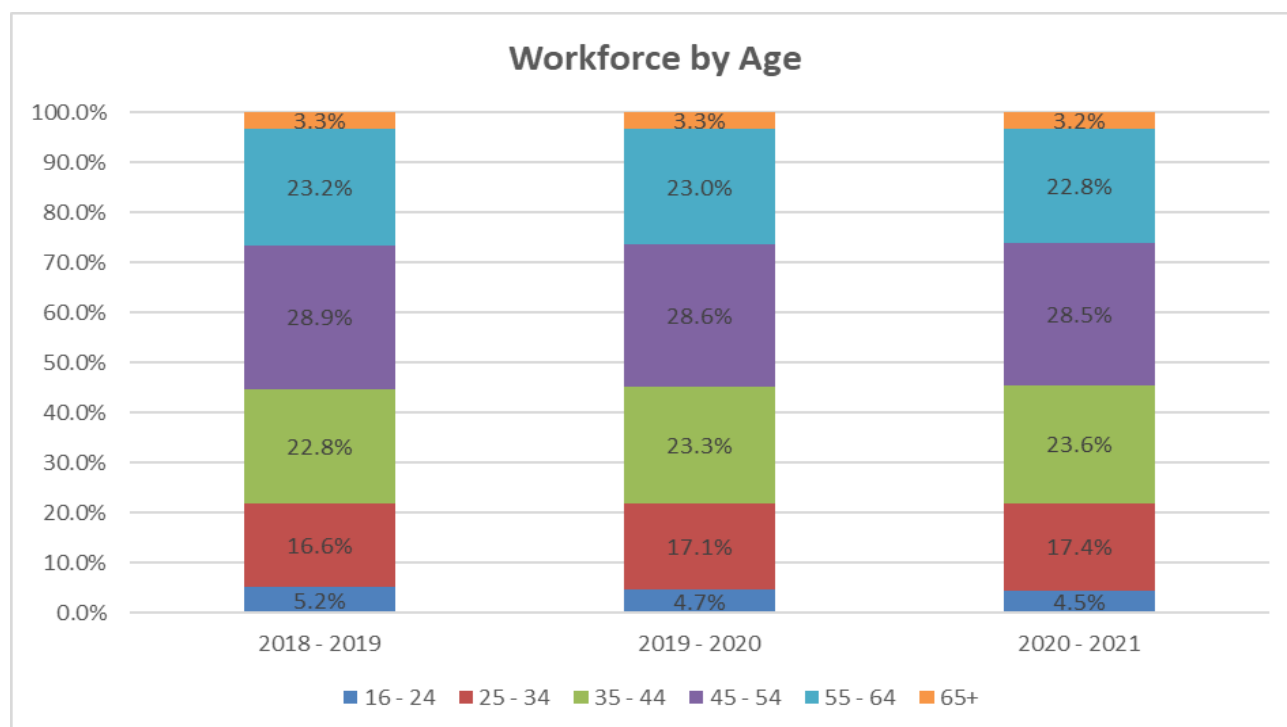
3.4 Gender

The Council employs more women. 58.7% of employees are women and 41.3% are men. The proportion of men has increased slightly in the past three years as shown in the table below.

The gender split by age in 2020/21 shows a predominantly larger percentage of women in all age groups but is particularly high in the 45 to 54 range (62.5%) and the 65 and over range (63.6%).

Year	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Women	59.5%	59.1%	58.7%
Men	40.5%	40.9%	41.3%

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Age Group	Women	Men
16 to 24	39.7%	60.3%
25 to 34	59.3%	40.7%
35 to 44	58.5%	41.5%
45 to 54	62.5%	37.5%
55 to 64	56.7%	43.3%
65+	63.6%	36.4%
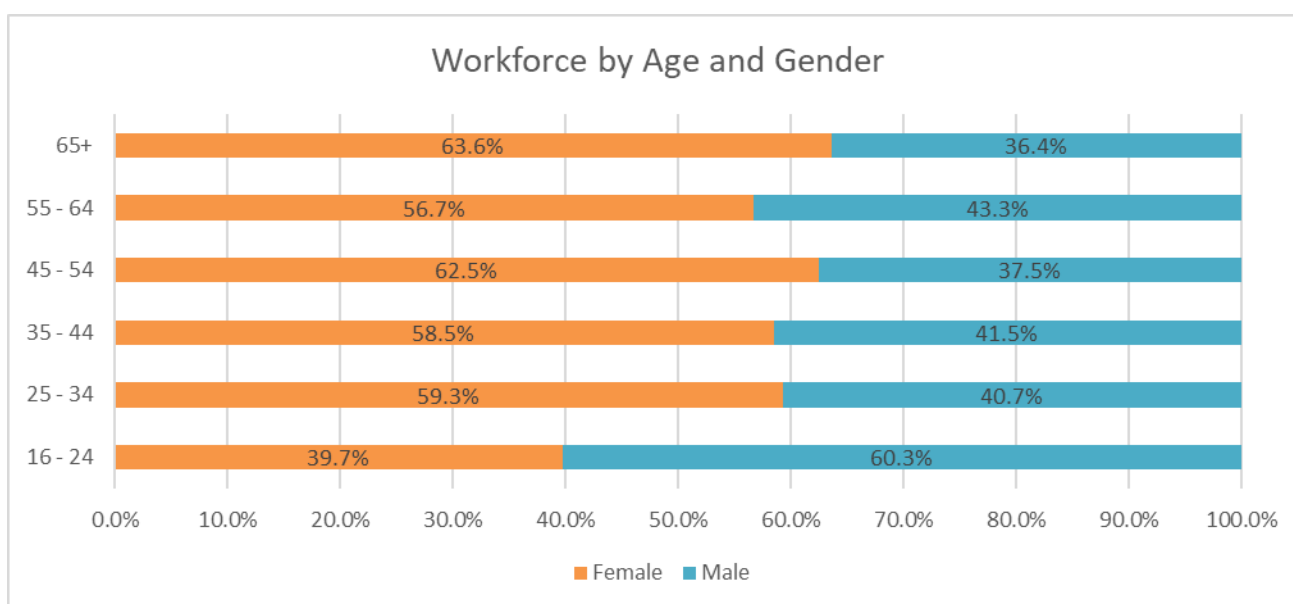
3.5 Full-time and part-time

About three quarters of employees work full-time, and a quarter work part-time. There has been a steady increase of staff in full-time work compared to part-time. Both full-time and part-time staff are afforded the benefit of a wide range of flexible working options, such as working compressed hours or working remotely, which benefit both the individual and the organisation.

Contract type	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Full time	71.6%	73.6%	75.4%
Part time	28.4%	26.4%	24.6%

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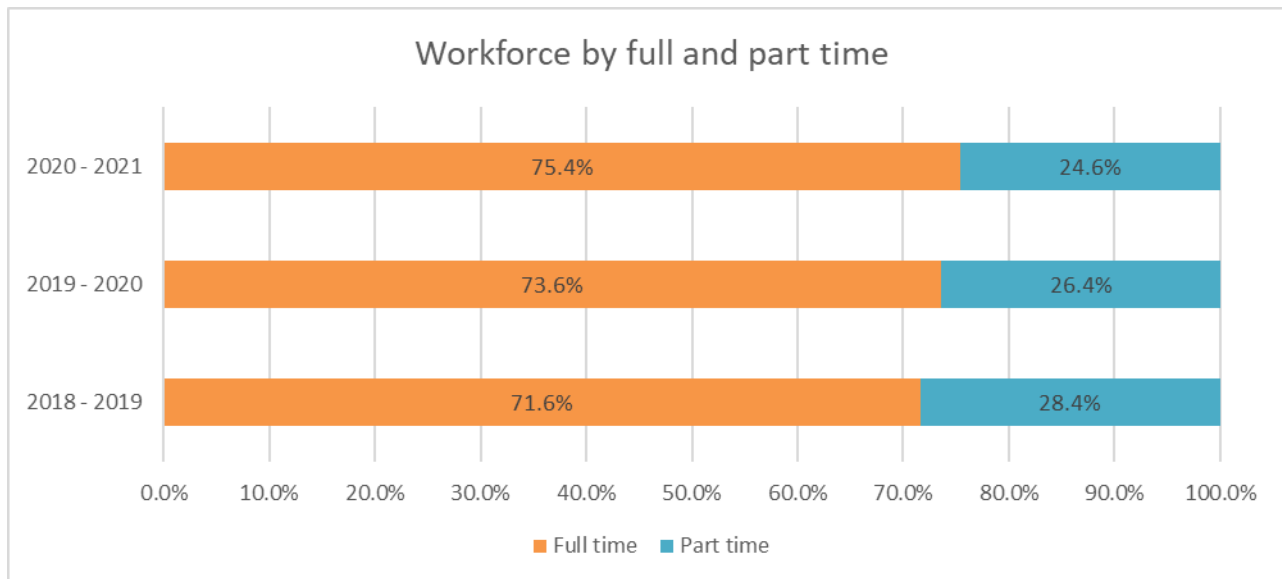
3.6 Full-time and part-time by gender

A much greater percentage of women work part-time than men (86.3% compared to 13.7%). The percentage of men and women working full or part-time has remained relatively stable over time
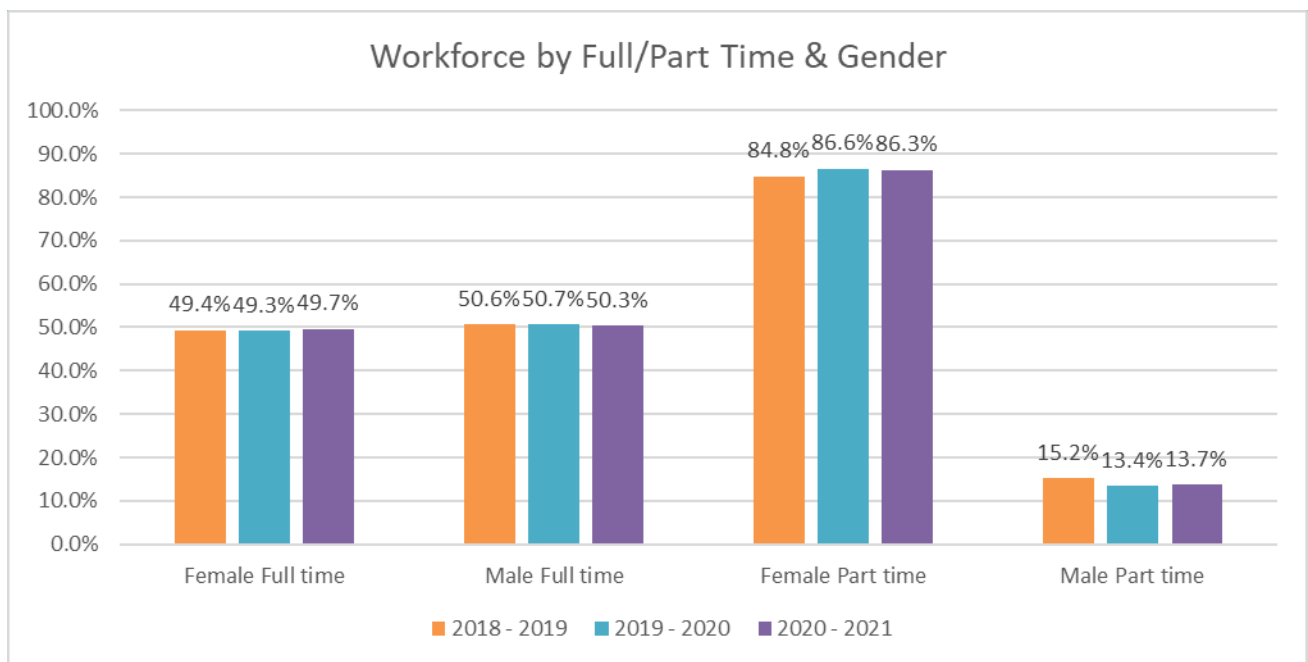
Gender	Contract type	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Women	Full time	49.4%	49.3%	49.7%
Men	Full time	50.6%	50.7%	50.3%
Women	Part time	84.8%	86.6%	86.3%
Men	Part time	15.2%	13.4%	13.7%

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3.7 Full-time and part-time by gender and age

A high percentage of women aged 16 to 24 (80.6%) and 25 to 34 (78.1%) work full-time. This then falls for those aged 35 to 44 (60.1%) and then rises again for women aged 45 to 54 (64.2%). Fewer than half of women aged 65 and over work full-time (34.3%), which is potentially due to flexible working and/or retirement and pension options.
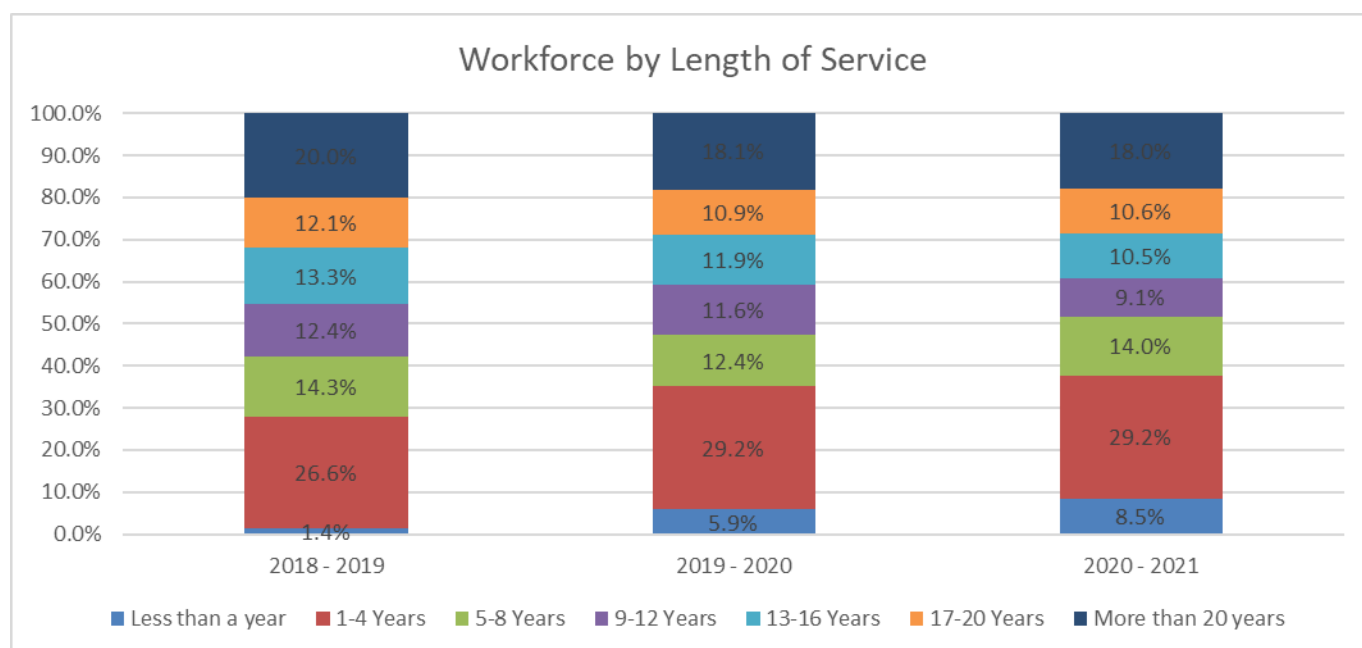
More than 90% of men between the ages of 25 to 64 work full-time, and in the 16 – 24 age group 87.2% work full time, while in the 65+ category 65.0% work full time. Again this is likely to be due to flexible retirement/working arrangeemnts which enable employees to have a gradual route into retirement if they wish.
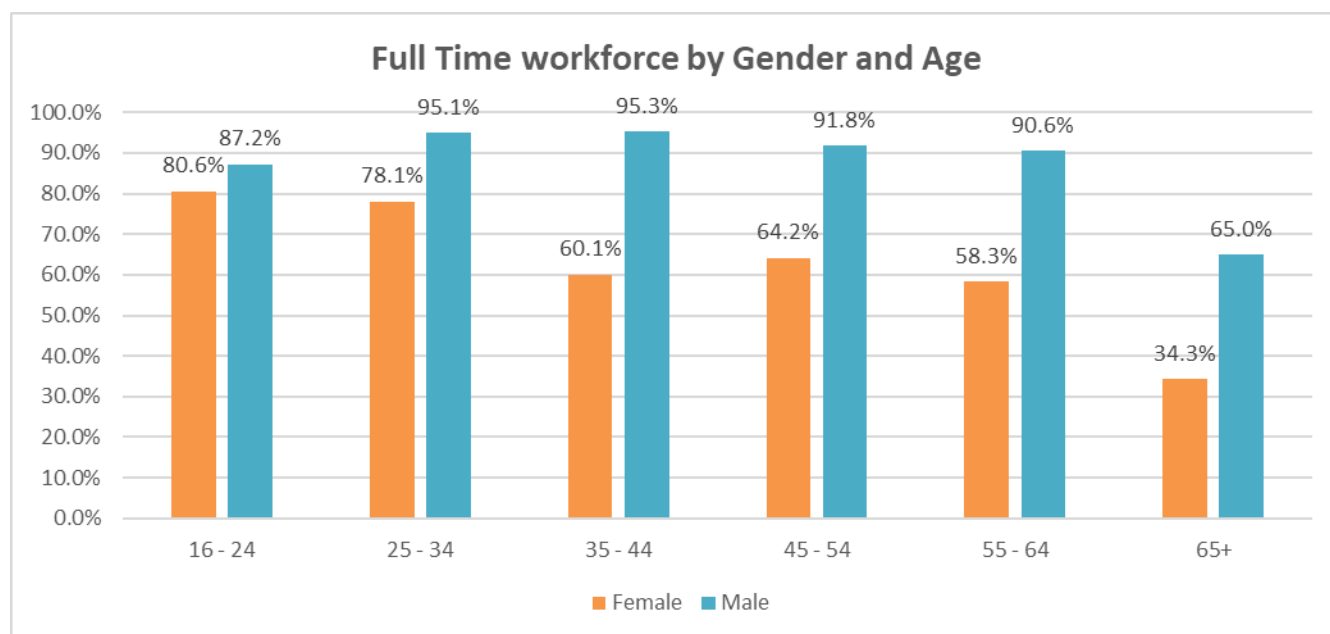
3.8 Length of service

The length of service band with the greatest proportion of staff is for those with service of between one to four years (29.2%). Almost a third of staff (28.6%) have worked at the Council for at least 17 years.

Length of service	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Less than a year	1.4%	5.9%	8.5%
1 to 4 years	26.6%	29.2%	29.2%
5 to 8 years	14.3%	12.4%	14.0%
9 to 12 years	12.4%	11.6%	9.1%
13 to 16 years	13.3%	11.9%	10.5%
17 to 20 years	12.1%	10.9%	10.6%
More than 20 years	20.0%	18.1%	18.0%

Workforce by Length of Service

Workforce by Length of Service — stacked bar chart showing percentages for 2018-2019, 2019-2020, and 2020-2021.

2018 - 2019: Less than a year 1.4%, 1-4 Years 26.6%, 5-8 Years 14.3%, 9-12 Years 12.4%, 13-16 Years 13.3%, 17-20 Years 12.1%, More than 20 years 20.0%

2019 - 2020: Less than a year 5.9%, 1-4 Years 29.2%, 5-8 Years 12.4%, 9-12 Years 11.6%, 13-16 Years 11.9%, 17-20 Years 10.9%, More than 20 years 18.1%

2020 - 2021: Less than a year 8.5%, 1-4 Years 29.2%, 5-8 Years 14.0%, 9-12 Years 9.1%, 13-16 Years 10.5%, 17-20 Years 10.6%, More than 20 years 18.0%

Legend: Less than a year, 1-4 Years, 5-8 Years, 9-12 Years, 13-16 Years, 17-20 Years, More than 20 years

3.9   Length of service by disability

Due to the low numbers of employees who declare a disability, it is difficult to note any trends pertinent to their length of service. The data is potentially disclosive and so is not shown here.
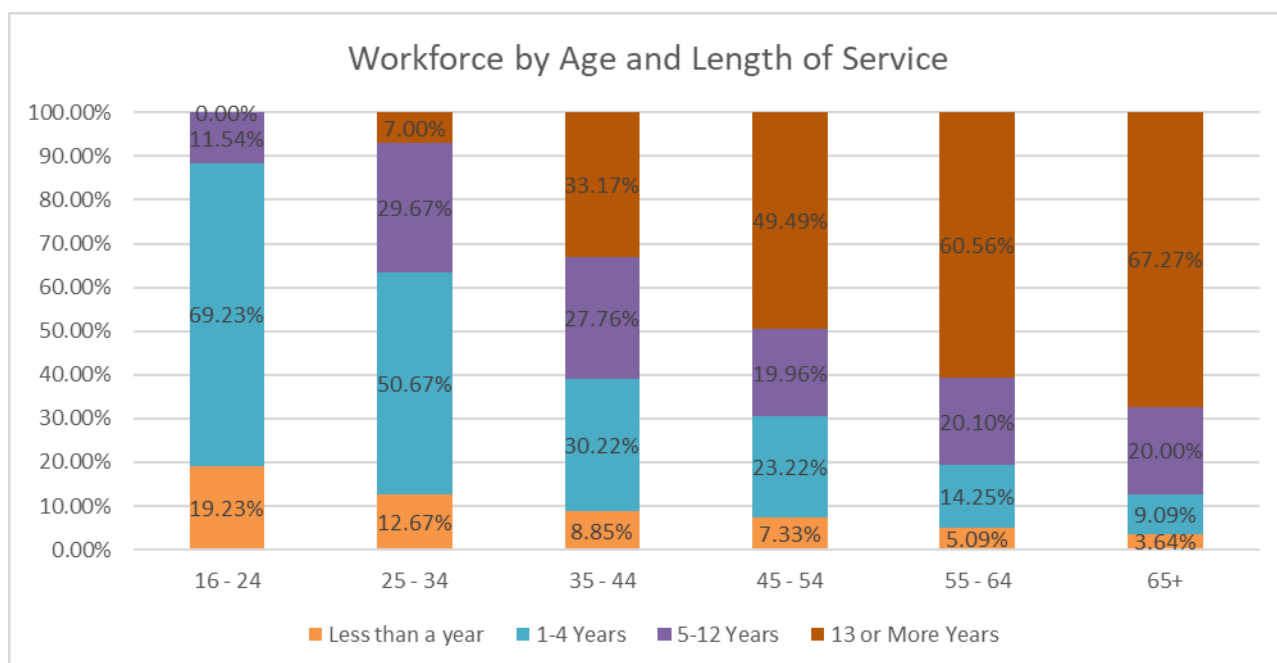
3.10   Length of service by ethnicity

The only trends of note for length of service by ethnicity is that staff who identify as White tend to have longer service then staff in most other minority ethnic groups.

Ethnicity	Less than a year	1 to 4 years	5 to 12 years	13 +
White British	6.7%	27.0%	23.9%	42.4%
White Other	14.7%	37.3%	21.3%	26.7%
Black/Black British	9.6%	28.8%	22.1%	39.4%
Asian/Asian British	13.0%	40.2%	23.9%	22.8%
Mixed	6.1%	40.8%	14.3%	38.8%
Other ethnic group(s)	33.3%	16.7%	0.0%	50.0%
Prefer not to say	22.4%	37.8%	20.4%	19.4%

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Workforce by Length of Service and Ethnicity

	Less than a year	1-4 Years	5-12 Years	13 or More Years
White Other	14.7%	37.3%	21.3%	26.7%
White British	6.7%	27.0%	23.9%	42.4%
Other Ethnic Groups	33.3%	16.7%	0.0%	50.0%
ND	22.4%	37.8%	20.4%	19.4%
Mixed	6.1%	40.8%	14.3%	38.8%
Black or Black British	9.6%	28.8%	22.1%	39.4%
Asian or Asian British	13.0%	40.2%	23.9%	22.8%
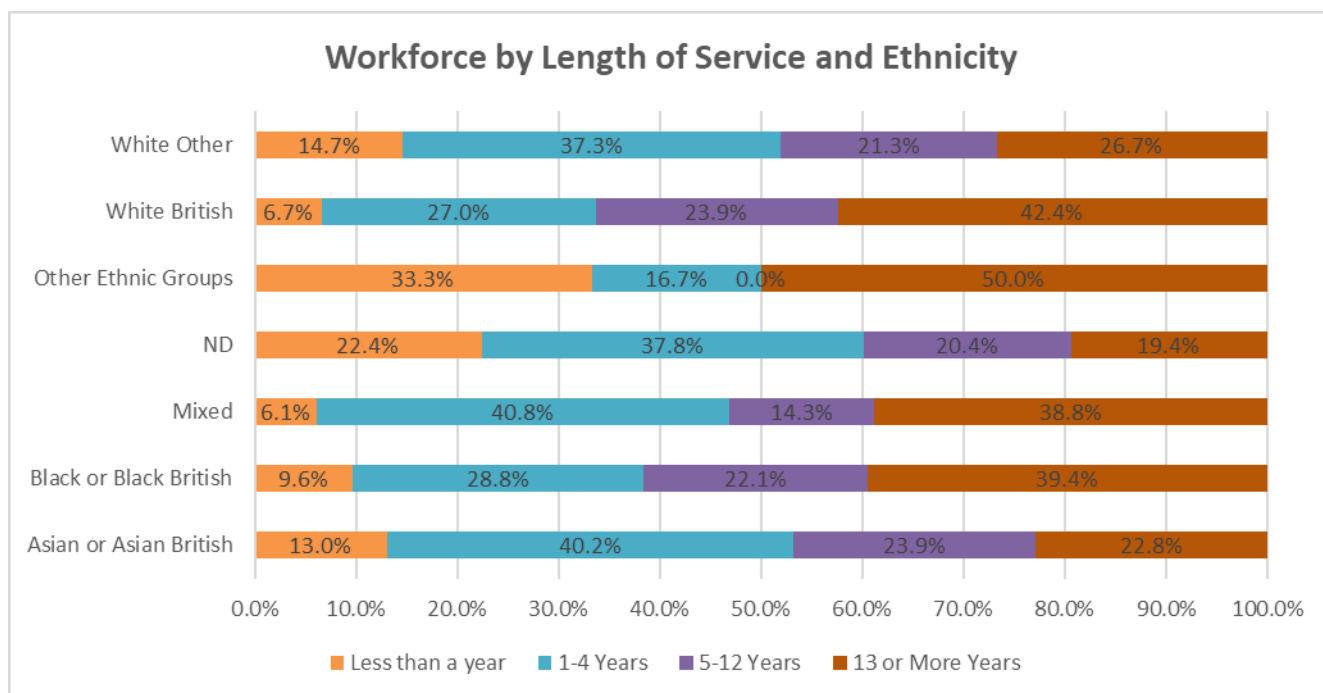
## 3.11 Length of service by age profile

There is, unsurprisingly, a correlation between age and length of service.   The proportion of staff with longer service tends to increase as age increases.

Workforce by Age and Length of Service

	Less than a year	1-4 Years	5-12 Years	13 or More Years
16 - 24	19.23%	69.23%	11.54%	0.00%
25 - 34	12.67%	50.67%	29.67%	7.00%
35 - 44	8.85%	30.22%	27.76%	33.17%
45 - 54	7.33%	23.22%	19.96%	49.49%
55 - 64	5.09%	14.25%	20.10%	60.56%
65+	3.64%	9.09%	20.00%	67.27%

3.12 Length of service by gender

The percentage of staff by gender is similar across the different service lengths, and largely reflects the overall proportion of men and women employed.

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Ethnicity	Less than a year	1 to 4 years	5 to 12 years	13 +
Women	56.5%	56.9%	58.6%	60.5%
Men	43.5%	43.1%	41.4%	39.5%

Workforce by Length of Service and Gender
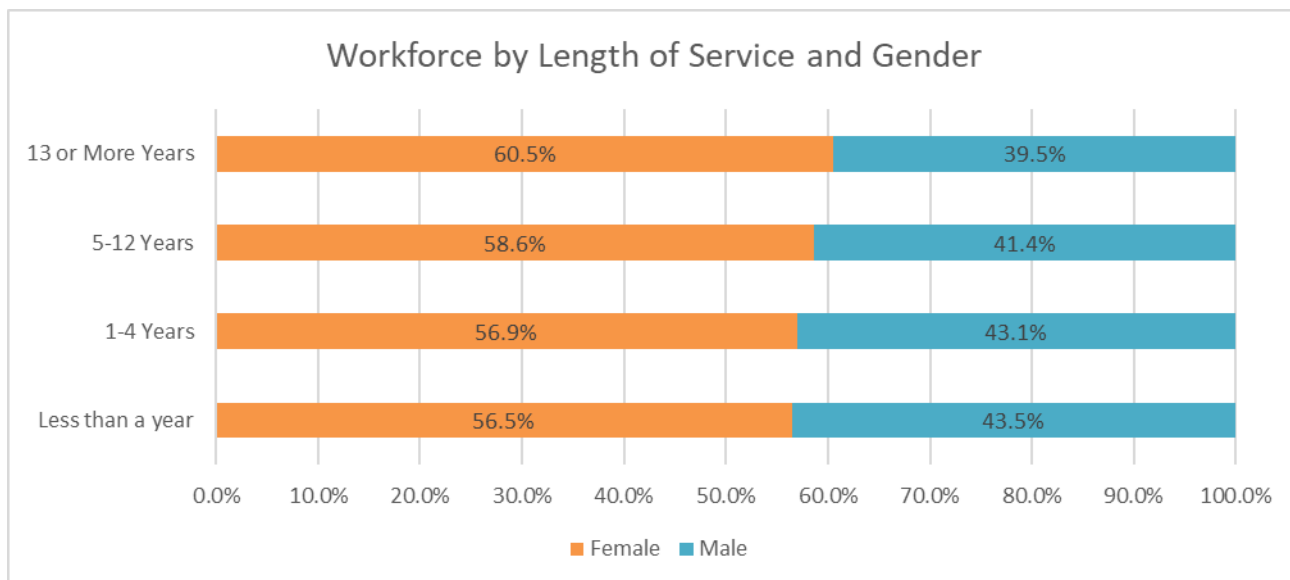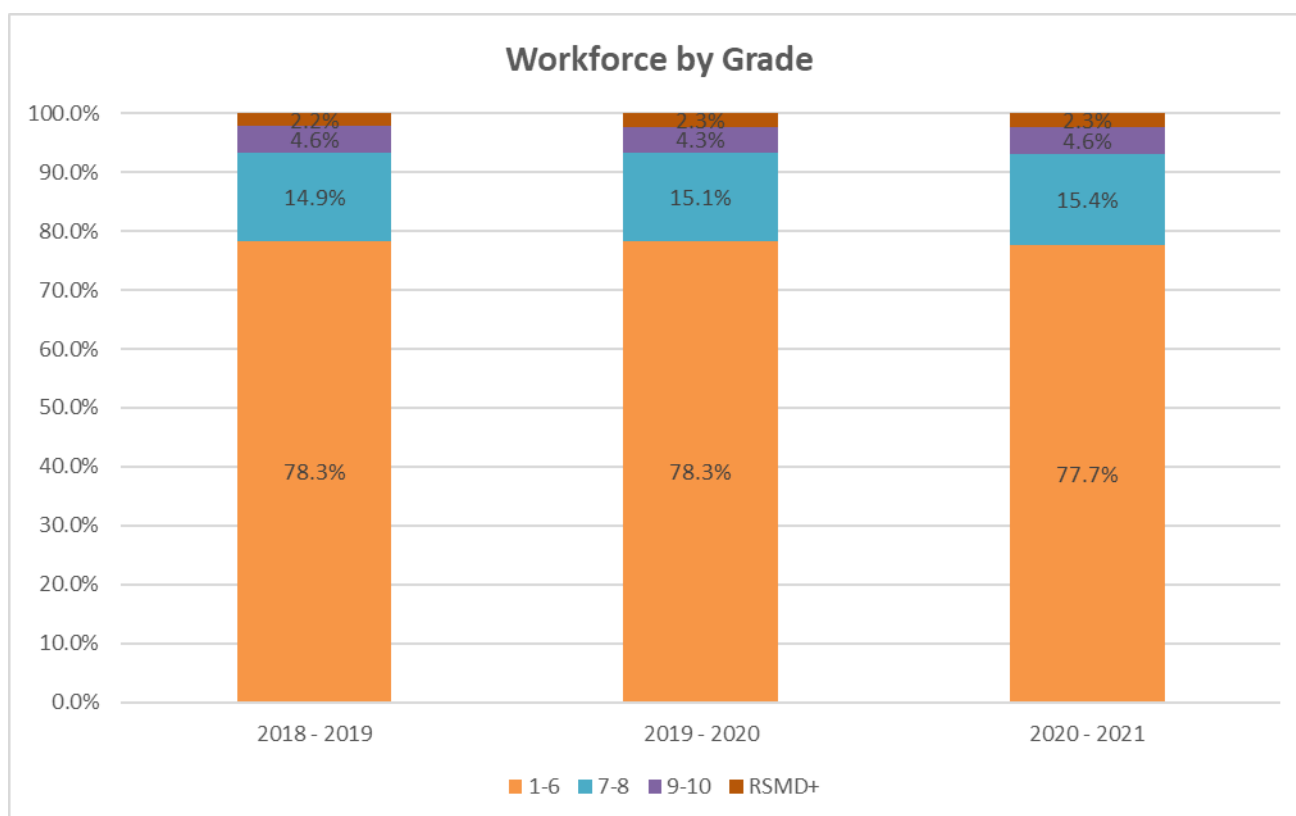
3.13 Pay grade

This section features information broken down by salary grades.

Grade explanation

- **RG1 to RG6** cover a wide range of administrative, technical, clerical and manual roles. For the purpose of this report these grades also include apprentices, for whom there are separate pay arrangements.
- **RG7 to RG8** cover a range of professional and first line manager / supervisory roles.
- **RG9 to RG10** cover a range of senior professional and middle manager roles.
- **RSMD and above** cover senior managers, Coroners, Deputy and Assistant Directors, Executive Directors, the Deputy Chief Executive and the Chief Executive,

The percentage of staff within each pay grade has remained relatively stable over time as shown below.

Grade	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Grades 1 to 6	78.3%	78.3%	77.7%
Grades 7 to 8	14.9%	15.1%	15.4%
Grades 9 to 10	4.6%	4.3%	4.6%
Grades RSMD and Above	2.2%	2.3%	2.3%

Workforce by Grade

Bar chart titled "Workforce by Grade" showing percentages for 2018-2019, 2019-2020, and 2020-2021 by grade categories (1-6, 7-8, 9-10, RSMD+).

Period	RSMD+	9-10	7-8	1-6
2018 - 2019	2.2%	4.6%	14.9%	78.3%
2019 - 2020	2.3%	4.3%	15.1%	78.3%
2020 - 2021	2.3%	4.6%	15.4%	77.7%

Legend: ■ 1-6 ■ 7-8 ■ 9-10 ■ RSMD+

3.14   Grade by disability

Due to the small number of staff that have declared a disability in each grade group, the data is potentially disclosive and so is not presented here. The Council continues its commitment to be a Disability Confident Employer to encourage applications from candidates with a disability and to promote development for existing members of staff with a disability.

3.15   Grade by ethnicity

There is a higher proportion of staff within the lower pay grades 1-6 for almost all minority ethnic groups, compared to White British staff. The only exception is for Asian or Asian British staff where there is a lower proportion in Grades 1-6 compared to White British staff. For the highest pay grades (RSMD and above) there are no Asian or Asian British staff or staff from Other Ethnic Groups. 7.1% of staff at RSMD or above prefer not to say or have not declared their ethnicity.
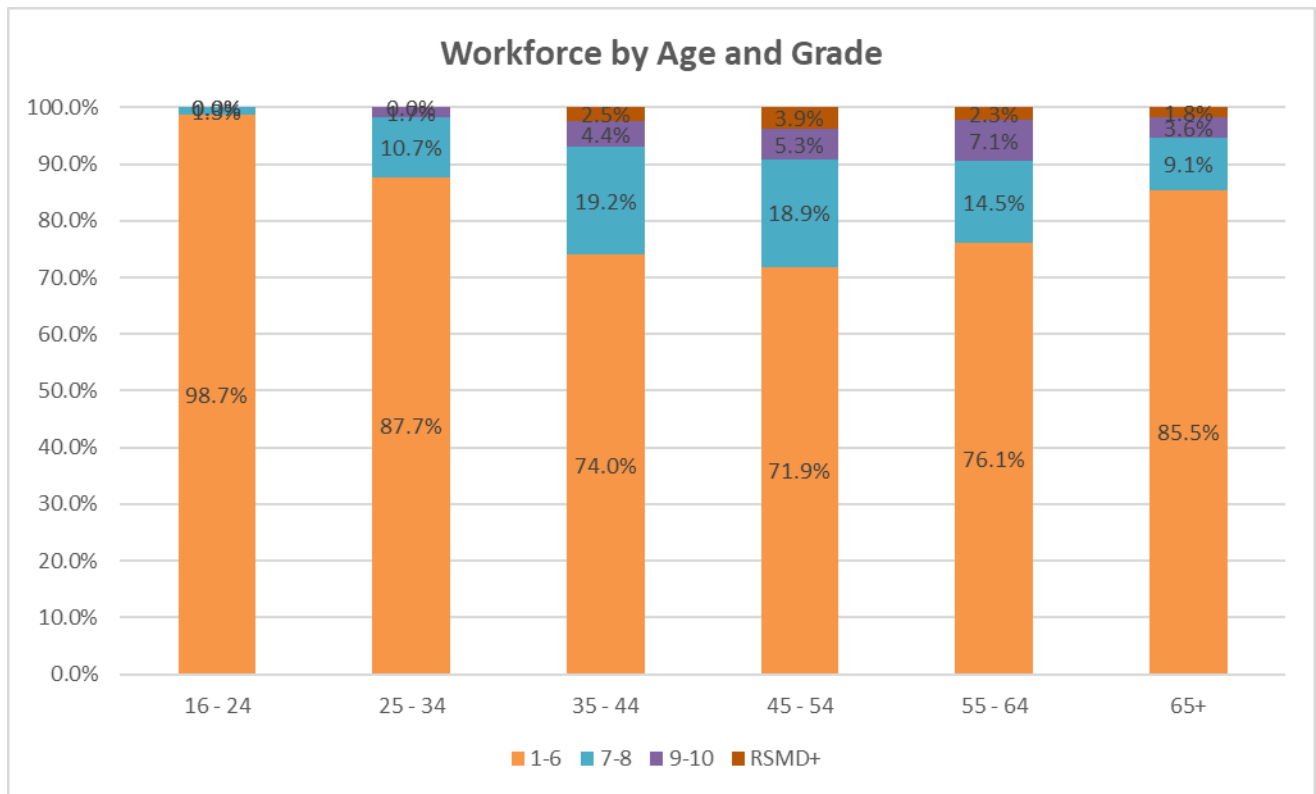
Ethnicity	Grade 1- 6	Grade 7-8	Grade 9-10	RSMD and Above
White British	76.9%	16.2%	4.8%	2.2%
White Other	85.3%	12.0%	2.7%	0.0%
Black/Black British	91.3%	6.7%	1.0%	1.0%
Asian/Asian British	66.3%	25.0%	8.7%	0.0%
Mixed	85.7%	6.1%	2.0%	6.1%
Other ethnic group(s)	66.7%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%

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Workforce by Ethnicity and Pay Grade
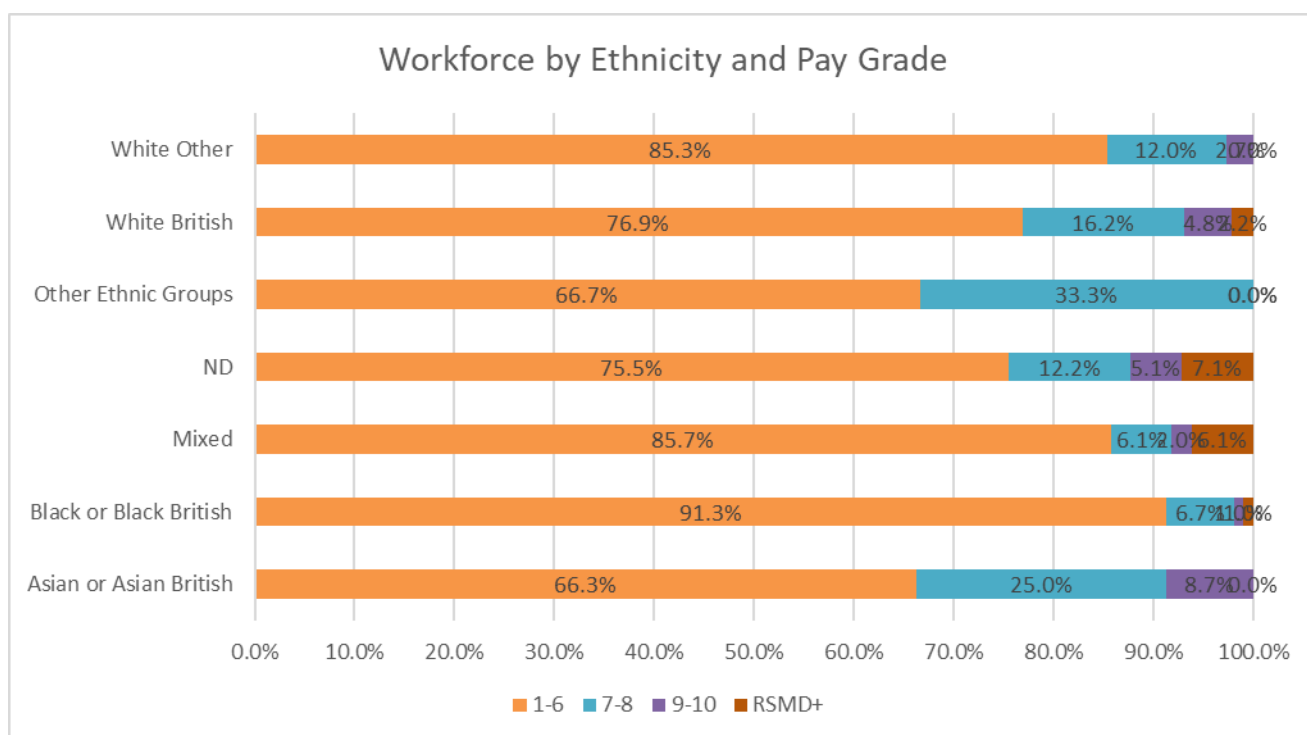
3.16 Grade by age profile

The pay grades of staff aged under 35 are lower than the older age groups, up to age 64. This is expected as in most cases younger staff are in the earlier stages of their careers. A larger percentage of those aged 45 to 54 are in the highest pay grades than any other age group.

Age	Grades 1-6	Grades 7-8	Grades 9-10	RSMD and Above
16 to 24	98.7%	1.3%	0.0%	0.0%
25 to 34	87.7%	10.7%	1.7%	0.0%
35 to 44	74.0%	19.2%	4.4%	2.5%
45 to 54	71.9%	18.9%	5.3%	3.9%
55 to 64	76.1%	14.5%	7.1%	2.3%
65+	85.5%	9.1%	3.6%	1.8%

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Workforce by Age and Grade

3.17   Grade by gender

There is a higher proportion of women in all grade categories except for the highest grades.

Gender	Grade 1-6	Grade 7- 8	Grade 9-10	RSMD and Above
Women	58.7%	59.8%	60.8%	46.2%
Men	41.3%	40.2%	39.2%	53.8%

Workforce by Gender and Grade
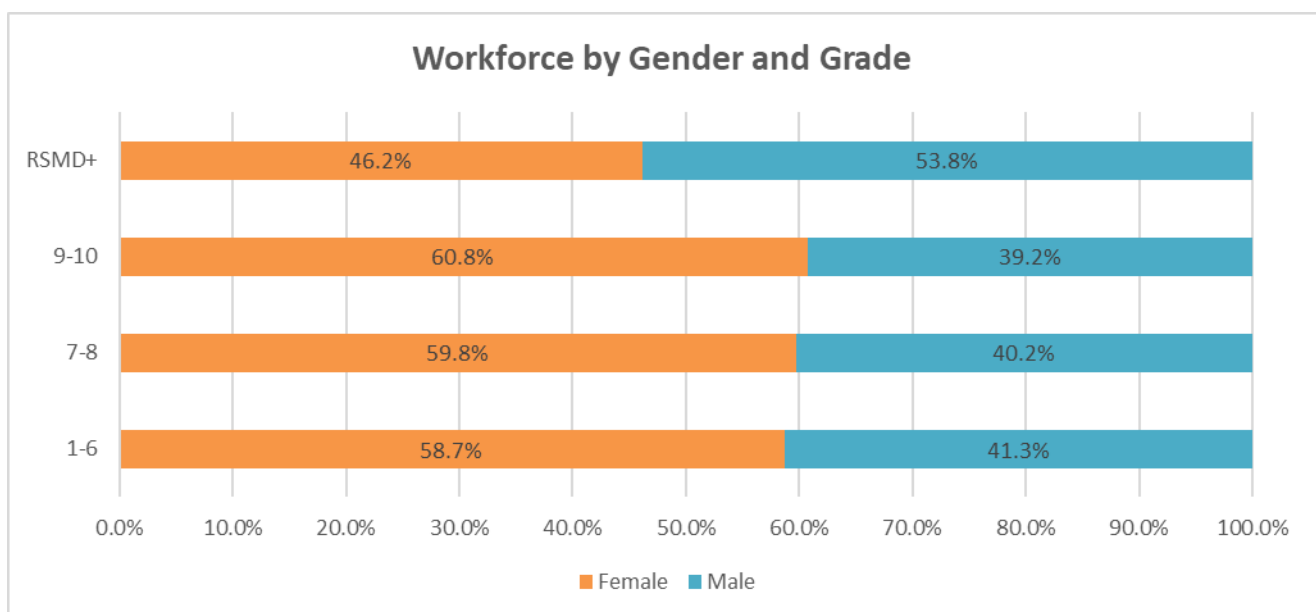
4   Staff engagement and procedures

4.1   Quantitative and qualitative research with employees

An engagement survey for staff was carried out in April 2021 and the results were considered by some of the protected characteristics covered in this report. Overall, 58% of the workforce completed the survey. For age, disability and ethnicity, approximately 15 – 20% of staff declined to answer or chose the 'prefer not to say' option for the demographic questions, despite assurances about the confidentiality of the data and an explanation of how it would be used. This meant that it was not possible to carry out any meaningful analysis of the results by these characterises. The next engagement survey will be carried out in April 2022.

4.2   Due regard to the aims of the duty in decision-making

Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) are carried out on employment-related policies and procedures and general employment issues are discussed with Trade Unions.

4.3   Staff complaints

There were no staff complaints recorded as instances of discrimination during the period which this report covers.

4.4   Engagement with trade unions and staff

The Council has a strong and positive relationship with Trade Unions and places great value on their contribution towards making the Council a great place to work. This includes helping to build trust with the workforce, ensuring workplaces are safe, promoting equality, improving working conditions and staff retention as just a few examples. The Council meets formally with Trade Unions on a regular basis through the Local Joint Forum which includes elected members, Joint Trade Union Committee, Directorate Joint Forums and Schools Joint Forum. In addition, regular informal meetings take place which provide a valuable forum for working in partnership on a range of issues.

Some directorates have a forum where ideas, issues, and suggestions for making the Council a better place to work are discussed openly and in a spirit of free exchange of views. Trade Union representatives are also invited to attend these forums. They are not a substitute for Trade Unions and management continue to consult and negotiate with recognised Trade Unions on matters that directly affect local working at the Council.

4.5   Policies and programmes to address equality concerns

The Council has a range of policies to address equalities issues. Some examples of these include:
- Equal Opportunities in Employment Policy
- Recruitment and Retention of People with a Disability
- Whistle-Blowing Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Bullying and Harassment Policy

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4.5.1 HR Casework

In April 2021, a new Case Management module was implemented within the Council's HR system, iTrent. This enables more accurate recording of HR casework against the protected characteristics recorded for everyone within iTrent. Prior to this, cases were recorded manually and not in a central system, meaning that data was sometimes inaccurate or incomplete. This report therefore includes casework raised within the new Case Management module between 1 April 2021 and 30 September 2021.

HR Casework – Use of Formal Procedures – 1 April 2021 to 30 September 2021 - Analysis by Employee Protected Characteristics

Case Type	All Cases	Women		Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Employees		Employees with a Disability	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Capability – Ill Health	31	21	67.7%	4	22,6%	1	3.2%
Capability – Performance	6	5	83.3%	1	16.7%	1	16.7%
Disciplinary	18	5	27.8%	8	44.4%	0	0.0%
Grievance	5	2	40.0%	2	40.0%	0	0.0%
Whistle-blowing	2	2	100%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	**62**	**35**	**56.5%**	**15**	**24.2%**	**2**	**3.2%**

The Council has a Flexible Working Policy that welcomes formal requests from employees who meet the necessary criteria. We recognise the importance of a work-life balance for all staff and will consider flexible working requests on an informal basis, accommodating these where they meet business needs.

4.6 Learning and development opportunities

The Council recognises that our staff are our greatest asset and is committed to training and personal development. Our staff are central to achieving our vision to help Reading realise its potential and to ensure that everyone who lives and works here can share the benefits of its success. The Team Reading People Strategy sets out how we aim to achieve this and create an organisation that provides excellent services to Reading.
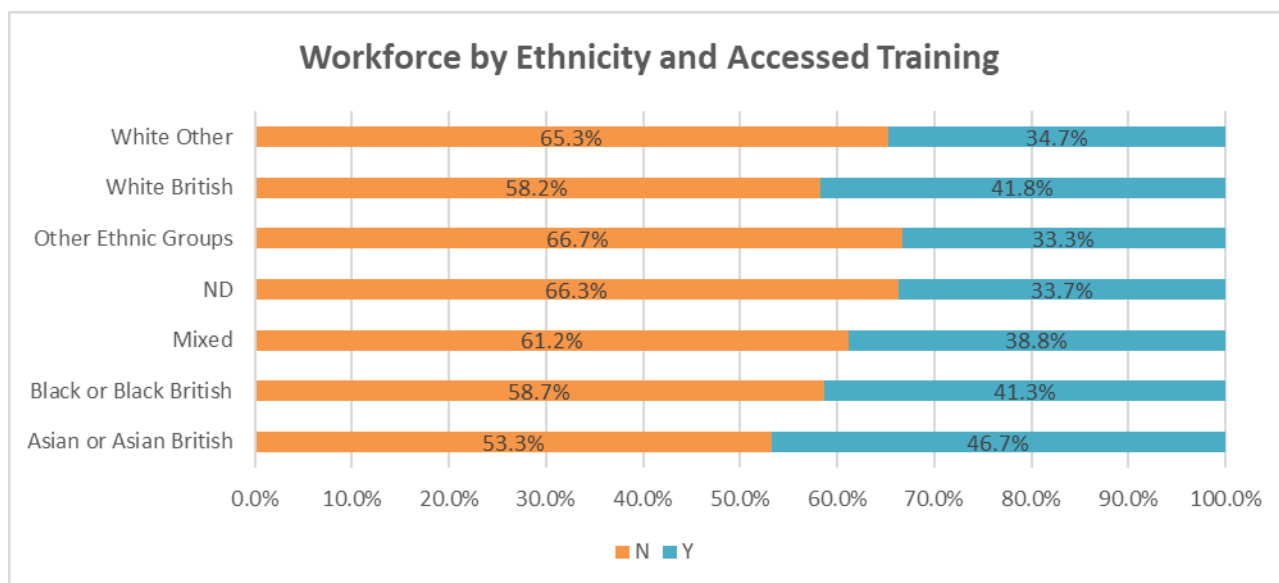
The Council has a range of learning and development opportunities available including classroom courses, e-learning, on-the-job training and coaching and mentoring. The Council also has an integrated programme of leadership and management development. In 2020/21, most training was delivered virtually due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

In 2020/21, 79.7% of the total workforce accessed our corporate training. 47.2% of women accessed training and the number of staff from most minority ethnic groups who accessed training is largely comparable to the proportion of white employees. About one third of staff who accessed training preferred not to declare their ethnicity.

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Gender	Number who accessed Training	Number who did not access Training
Women	47.2%	52.8%
Men	67.6%	32.4%

Workforce by Gender and Accessed Training
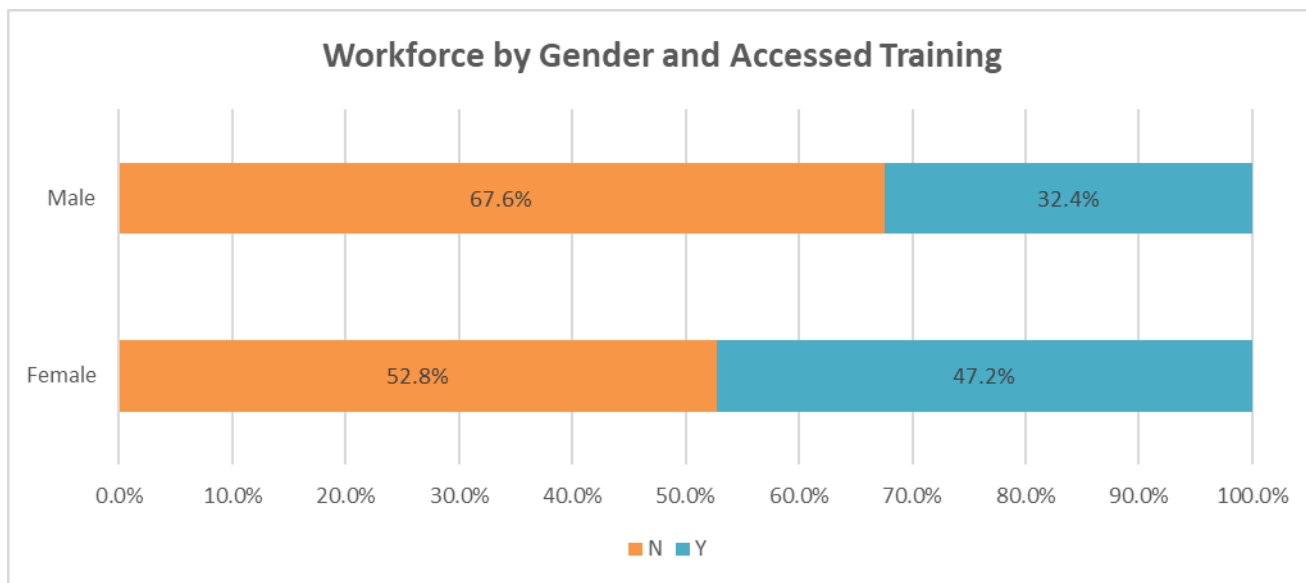
Ethnicity	Number who accessed Training	Number who did not access Training
White British	41.8%	58.2%
White Other	34.7%	65.3%
Black/Black British	41.3%	58.7%
Asian/Asian British	46.7%	53.3%
Mixed	38.8 %	61.2%
Other ethnic group(s)	33.3%	66.7%
Prefer not to say	33.7%	66.3%

Workforce by Ethnicity and Accessed Training

Ethnicity	N	Y
White Other	65.3%	34.7%
White British	58.2%	41.8%
Other Ethnic Groups	66.7%	33.3%
ND	66.3%	33.7%
Mixed	61.2%	38.8%
Black or Black British	58.7%	41.3%
Asian or Asian British	53.3%	46.7%

Development opportunities can be identified in a variety of ways including by the individual through regular 1 to 1 meetings and the annual review process. Training courses delivered on an ongoing basis include: health and safety, first aid, stress resilience, equality and diversity, recruitment and selection, project management, Microsoft Office applications, data protection, lone working and managing aggressive behaviour, in addition to the leadership development programme for managers at all levels.

4.7   Gender pay gap information

The Council has published its gender pay gap figures since 2017. The Council's mean gender pay gap for 2021 is 2.06% and the median gender pay gap is 4.91%. The figures have remained broadly comparable to 2020, when they were 4.71% and 2.53%.   The key difference is that the mean is the lower figure this year whereas the median was the lower figure in 2020.   They also compare favourably with the national average gender pay gap figure for full and part time employees which is 15.4% for 2021 (up from 14.9% in 2020).

The gender pay gap report for 2021 is available on the Council's website on the equality, diversity and inclusion policies page.

4.8   Ethnicity pay pap information

The Council started voluntarily publishing its ethnicity pay gap figures in 2020. Using the snapshot date of 31 March 2021, the Council's mean ethnicity pay gap is 4.26% and the median ethnicity pay gap is 5.69%. In 2020, the mean pay gap was 6.88% and the median pay gap was 0.28%.

The ethnicity pay gap report for 2021 is available on the Council's website on the equality, diversity and inclusion policies page

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READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF HR AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

TO:	**PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**		
DATE:	**16 MARCH 2022**		**6**
TITLE:	**PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2022/23**		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	**CLLR MCEWAN**	**PORTFOLIO:**	**CORPORATE AND CONSUMER SERVICES**
LEAD OFFICER:	**SHELLA SMITH**	**TEL:**	**0118 937 4697**
JOB TITLE:	**ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF HR AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**	**E-MAIL:**	**Shella.smith@reading.gov.uk**

1.   PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1   To recommend to Personnel Committee a Pay Policy Statement for 2022/23, for approval by Council on 22 March 2022.

1.2   Appendices

Appendix 1: Pay Policy Statement 2022/23

2.   RECOMMENDED ACTION

That 2.1 and 2.2 be recommended to Council on 22 March 2022:

2.1   To approve the Pay Policy Statement for 2022/23 in Appendix 1 of this report.

2.2   That the Assistant Director of HR and Organisational Development, in consultation with the Lead Member for Corporate and Consumer Services, be authorised to update the Pay Policy Statement with new pay scales and pay ratios, when the pay discussions between the national employers and joint trade unions for 2021/22 and 2022/23 have been concluded.

3.   POLICY CONTEXT

3.1   Local Authorities are required under section 38(1) of the Localism Act 2011 (the Act) to prepare a Pay Policy Statement. The Statement must articulate the Council's policy towards the pay of the workforce, particularly senior staff and its lowest paid employees.

3.2 The Act sets out in detail the specific elements which the Pay Policy Statement must include as a minimum. It requires that in addition to the determination of senior salaries, authorities must make clear what approach is taken to awarding other elements of pay including:

- severance payments,
- any additional fees (e.g. election duties),
- pay increases,
- honorarium payments etc.

3.3 The Act requires that authorities include in their Pay Policy Statements their approach to the publication of and access to information relating to the remuneration of Chief Officers. Reference to the Council's Statement of Accounts where this information is published is included within the proposed Statement in Appendix 1.

4. UPDATES WITHIN THE 2022/23 PAY POLICY STATEMENT

4.1 The Act requires that Pay Policy Statements are produced annually and are considered by Council. The Pay Policy Statement for 2022/23 is attached as Appendix 1. It has been updated as follows:

- Paragraph 5.2 has been updated to reflect the current status of the national pay negotiations for 2021 and 2022 (see 4.2 below)
- Section 7 has been updated to reflect the new Living Wage Foundation hourly rate which has increased to £9.90. It will be implemented at the Council from 1 April 2022. It will be necessary to pay a Living Wage supplement to staff with an hourly rate below £9.90 (this will apply to about 420 staff on spinal point 3 which is the lowest point used on the Council's pay structure, mainly in schools and casual workers at The Hexagon), at least until the national pay award for 2022 is confirmed
- New pay multiples in Section 8
- Annex D (council employees in salary bands) has been updated with data from 1 April 2021 and Section 10 (Pay Profile) has been updated to reflect this.

4.2 The national pay negotiations for 2022 have not yet started. The three unions are not expected to begin to consult their members on the content of their 2022 pay claim until at least March, which means it is not expected to be tabled until early May (which will already be beyond the usual pay award implementation date of 1 April 2022). This is due to the delay in concluding the national pay negotiations for 2021/22. In early February 2022, the Joint Negotiating Committees for Chief Executives and Chief Officers announced they had reached agreement to award a 1.5% increase from 1 April 2021. A 1.75% increase, backdated to 1 April 2021, was agreed on 28 February for Local Government Services staff (which covers most staff on grades RG1-10 at the Council). The national pay negotiations for 2021 are still ongoing for about 60 staff on Craftworkers terms and conditions (which cover trades staff within the Directorate of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services).

4.3 The Pay Policy Statement for 2022/23 will need to be updated once the pay negotiations are concluded for staff on Craftworkers terms and conditions for 2021, and updated again when they are concluded for all negotiating committees for 2022. Delegated authority is sought through this report for the Assistant Director of HR and Organisational Development, in consultation with the Lead Member for Corporate and Consumer Service, to update the Pay Policy Statement which will require changes throughout to reflect the pay awards in addition to:

- Paragraph 8 to show the new pay multiples
- Annex F (new pay scales)

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

5.1 This report supports effective management of the workforce. High performing, motivated and healthy staff are crucial to achieving the Council's vision to help Reading realise its potential and to ensure that everyone who lives and works here can share the benefits of its success.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 None.

7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

7.1 As the Pay Policy Statement is largely a matter of fact in terms of how the Council currently determines the pay and conditions of its staff, consultation with staff is not required. However, the Statement was presented to the Council's Local Joint Forum on 24 February 2022 for information.

8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

8.1 Not required for this report.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 These are set out in paragraph 3 of this report.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 None.

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READING BOROUGH COUNCIL PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2022/23

1. **INTRODUCTION**

    1.1. Reading Borough Council's pay policy aims to ensure value for money whilst enabling the Council to deliver high quality services to the residents of Reading. The Council seeks to set pay rates that are adequate to secure and retain high quality employees dedicated to the service of the public but will determine overall pay and benefits at an appropriate level in accordance with equality, affordability and other relevant factors.

    1.2. Pay levels will not be unnecessarily generous or otherwise excessive.

    1.3. Reading Borough Council agrees that local authorities should be able to determine their own pay structures in order to address local priorities and to compete in the local labour market.

    1.4. Reading Borough Council is committed to equality, transparency and fairness across all of its activities and particularly in relation to the pay and conditions of its staff.

    1.5. This document has the following Annexes:

Annex A:	Requirements and Recommendations to Publish Personal data concerning Staff
Annex B:	Governance Arrangements for Pay and Conditions of Service
Annex C:	Summary of Conditions of Service
Annex D:	Council Employees in Salary Bands as at 1 April 2021
Annex E:	Pension Discretions Statement
Annex F	Pay scales for staff employed on NJC (Green Book) conditions and Senior Managers (JNC).

    1.6. The following related documents related to pay and remuneration can be accessed through the Council's website:

    - Details and responsibilities of all job roles paid above £50,000
    - Market Supplement Policy
    - Council Senior level organisational chart

2. **LEGISLATION**

    2.1. The authority appoints its staff and determines the terms and conditions of service on which they hold office, under Section 112 of the Local Government Act 1978. This includes procedures for dismissal. Full Council has delegated this power to the Personnel Committee, with the exception of the Head of Paid Service, Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer for whom separate statutory procedures apply.

    2.2. Sections 38 – 43 of the Localism Act 2011 require that the authority produce a Policy Statement that covers a number of matters concerning the pay of the authority's staff, principally Chief Officers. This Policy Statement meets the requirements of the Localism Act in this regard and also meets the requirements of guidance issued in February 2012 and February 2013 by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government to which the authority is required to have regard under Section 40 of the Act.

    2.3. This policy also has some connection with the data on pay and rewards for staff which the authority publishes under the Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency and the data which is published under The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations (2011). A revised Draft Code was published in December 2013. It should be noted that the requirements to publish data under the Secretary of State's guidance, the Code of Practice and the Regulations do differ, the data requirements of

the Code of Practice and the Accounts and Audit Regulations are summarised at **Annex A** to this Policy Statement.

2.4. Any decision under powers delegated in the Council's Constitution / Scheme of Delegation with regard to remuneration to be taken during 2022/23 will be bound by and must comply with this Statement. No decision at variance with this Statement may be taken without the specific agreement of full Council.

2.5. The Head of Paid Service and Assistant Director of Legal & Democratic Services must be consulted prior to any decision impacting on remuneration where there is any question regarding compliance with the Statement.

3. SCOPE OF THIS STATEMENT AND DEFINITION OF TERMS

3.1. This Pay Policy Statement meets the statutory duty to provide the Council with a description of the policy on staff remuneration for annual approval. It provides information on remuneration arrangements for staff directly employed by the Council, excluding staff in schools.

3.2. This Statement sets out the Council's policy with regard to:

- the remuneration of 'chief officers' (the senior pay group – see below)
- the remuneration of the lowest paid employees
- the relationship between chief officers' remuneration and that of other officers

3.3. In this policy the 'senior pay group' (senior managers) covers posts in the top three tiers of the organisation. These include the Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service), Deputy Chief Executive, Executive Directors, Directors and Deputy/Assistant Directors. Posts in this group in Reading are as follows:

(a) the Head of the Authority's Paid Service [Chief Executive]
(b) the Deputy Chief Executive (Deputy Head of Paid Service)
(c) the Executive Director of Children, Education and Early Help Services;
(d) the Executive Director of Social Care & Health;
(e) the Executive Director of Economic Growth & Neighbourhood Services
(f) the Executive Director of Resources
(g) the Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer)
(h) the Monitoring Officer (Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services)
(i) persons who, as respects all or most of their duties, report directly to or are directly accountable to the Head of the Council's Paid Service
(i) persons who, as respects all or most of their duties, report directly to or are accountable to the posts listed in (b), (c), (d), (e), (f), (g) and (h) above (other than staff whose duties are of a clerical or support nature)

3.4. The senior management structure of the organisation can be found in Part 7 of the Council Constitution on the Council's website.

3.5. The Council defines its lowest paid employees as those staff paid on the first spinal column point of the Council's pay grades for National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Government Services staff [RG Grades]. This definition is adopted as it refers to the lowest level of pay for staff on non-casual or apprentice contracts of employment.

3.6. The relationship between the remuneration of the lowest paid employees and that of the Council's senior officers is as described in this Statement and by reference to the published data referred to.

3.7. "Remuneration" for the purposes of this Statement includes these elements:

- basic salary
- pension
- all other allowances arising from employment

4. **GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS AND DECISION MAKING**

4.1. Council has delegated to the Personnel Committee the power to appoint and determine the terms and conditions of employment for all staff, including the application of any discretions under the pension schemes. The terms of reference of the Personnel Committee are set out in Article 8 of Part 2 of the Council's constitution.

4.2. Council, and the Personnel Committee, have extensive and long-standing arrangements to delegate the exercise of this power to the Deputy Chief Executive, Executive Directors, Directors and Deputy/Assistant Directors, in respect of the staff employed in their service areas.

4.3. The delegation is subject to the Council's Officer Employment Rules, which are set out in Part 4 of the Council's Constitution.

4.4. A summary of the arrangements for determining terms and conditions of service for staff can be found in **Annex B**.

4.5. The Council, and the Personnel Committee, have adopted a range of policies which apply to the recruitment and employment of the staff of the authority. Policies which are specifically relevant to this Statement include:

- Low Pay Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Employment Stability Agreement and Pay Protection Policy
- Appraisal Scheme and Performance-Related Progression Scheme
- Policies relating to Market Supplements; Starting Salary on Appointment; Honorarium and Acting-Up Payments

4.6. The Scheme of Delegation provides for the Deputy Chief Executive, Executive Directors, Directors and Deputy/Assistant Directors to manage, review and apply the Council's Human Resources policies, and to determine the appropriate pay and conditions for the appointment of staff within these policies.

5. **CONDITIONS OF SERVICE**

5.1. Reading Borough Council applies terms and conditions of employment that have been negotiated and agreed through appropriate collective bargaining mechanisms (national or local) or as a consequence of authority decisions, these are then incorporated into contracts of employment.

5.2. The Council is a member of the local government employers association for national collective bargaining in respect of chief executives, chief officers and other employees. There are separate negotiations and agreements in respect of each of these groups. Changes from national negotiations generally take effect from 1 April each year and are retrospective to 1 April where agreements are made later than 1 April. It is the authority's long-standing policy to implement national agreements. The Head of Paid Service and Chief Officers are under the JNC conditions of service, with locally determined pay. All other employees are under the relevant national agreement on pay and conditions of service applying to the particular service area, with local variations to pay. Pay for staff on all terms and conditions (as set out in Annex C) was last increased nationally ('cost of living' increase) for most staff in April 2021. The national pay negotiations for NJC staff for 2021/22 reached agreement on 28 February 2022 to award a 1.75% increase, backdated to 1 April 2021. The negotiations for Chief Executives and Chief Officers reached agreement in early February 2022, in both cases to award a 1.5% increase, backdated to 1 April 2021. The negotiations for staff covered by Craftworkers terms and conditions for 2021/22 are still ongoing. The Council will apply any settlement reached nationally in respect of staff covered by national bargaining machinery where this is the locally agreed mechanism for determining cost of living increases.

5.3. A summary of the arrangements for determining terms and conditions of service for staff is set out in **Annex C.**

6. **POLICY ON REMUNERATING SENIOR MANAGERS**

   6.1. **Head of Paid Service**: The Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive) is paid on a locally determined salary which is reviewed and approved by Personnel Committee when the post becomes vacant. Independent external consultancy advice on appropriate remuneration levels (taking account of role and responsibilities, recruitment and retention factors and local and regional salary benchmarks) is presented to Personnel Committee to inform their decision-making in this matter.

   6.2. The locally determined salary will be within the parameters of the Pay Policy Statement and will be set out in the Minutes of the Personnel Committee meeting which approves the salary, which will be published on the Council's website. The salary range will also be published in the job advertisement to fill the vacant post.

   6.3. At the conclusion of the recruitment process, the decision to appoint a person to fill the post of Head of Paid Service will be taken by Council, which will be advised of the local salary, and the point at which the appointment was recommended to be made.

   6.4. No other payments or benefits are payable to the Head of Paid Service (e.g. bonus, performance related pay, health insurance, car lease) other than those referred to elsewhere in this Policy Statement as being applicable to all employees.

   6.5. Unless otherwise determined on appointment, the salary for the Head of Paid Service is subject to annual review by the Personnel Committee (on the anniversary of the date of appointment), in accordance with the following principles:

   • That any salary progression is subject to a satisfactory annual appraisal;
   • That the salary / scale is uplifted by the pay award nationally agreed for the JNC for Chief Executives;
   • That these principles take effect on the anniversary of the date of appointment without need for Personnel Committee decision, unless an exception report is initiated by the Leader of the Council.

   6.6. **Deputy Chief Executive, Executive Directors, Directors and Deputy/Assistant Directors**: These senior staff are paid on locally determined incremental Reading Senior Management / Corporate Director (RSM / CD) salary scales. These scales were established and approved by Personnel Committee following an independent review of senior salaries carried out by the Hay Group in 2001/2, using relevant regional public sector salary benchmarks. These scales are uplifted by the pay award nationally agreed (if any) for the JNC for Chief Officers. Exceptionally, the JNC pay award is not implemented for the senior pay group in times of severe budget challenge.

   6.7. The Deputy Chief Executive post receives a special responsibility allowance of £14,355 per annum (based on 1st April pay scales) which is 50% of the salary difference between the Chief Executive and Executive Director grade maximums. Cost of living pay awards agreed by the Joint Negotiating Committee for Chief Officers of Local Authorities are to be applied to the allowance. There are no other additional elements of remuneration in respect of overtime, flexi-time, bank holiday working, stand-by payments, etc., paid to senior staff, as they are expected to undertake duties outside their contractual hours and working patterns without additional payment.

   6.8. No other payments or benefits are payable to these senior staff (e.g. bonus, performance related pay, health insurance, car lease) other than those referred to elsewhere in this Policy Statement as being applicable to all employees.

7. **POLICY ON REMUNERATING THE LOWEST PAID IN THE WORKFORCE**

   7.1. This Policy Statement reconfirms the Council's long-standing Low Pay Policy. The grading structure allows for all staff, except apprentices, to be paid an hourly rate no

lower than the Living Wage Foundation rate. The new rate of £9.90 per hour will apply at the Council from 1 April 2022.

7.2. The Council pays a Living Wage supplement where necessary to increase the hourly rate of employees to at least the Living Wage Foundation rate (except for apprentices as detailed in 7.3 below). The new Living Wage Foundation rate of £9.90 per hour will be paid to Council staff from 1 April 2022. There is one pay point on the Council's salary scales which is below £9.90 per hour. This is spinal point 3 which equates to £9.79 per hour (see Annex F). It is likely that the pay award arising from the national pay negotiations for 2022/23 will increase this rate to above £9.90 per hour. In the meantime, the Council will pay a Living Wage supplement to all staff on this spinal point to ensure they receive at least £9.90 per hour.

7.3. Apprentices are paid at least the nationally recommended allowance rate of £4.81 per hour from 1 April 2022 for the first 12 months of employment and thereafter are paid at least the National Minimum Wage (NMW) as applicable to the employee's age. These rates are updated as the national allowances are revised.

7.4. Reading Borough Council is also committed to the development and publication of a local policy to promote and require, to the extent permitted by law, the application of the Council's low pay policy to staff working for the Council's contractors in addition to the application of TUPE. The Council became an accredited Living Wage Employer in 2015.

8. PAY MULTIPLES

8.1. The highest paid salary in this authority is £161,044 to which is the top of the annual salary range paid to the Head of Paid Service. This is the pro rata rate as the Head of Paid Service works term time only (the full-time equivalent rate is £169,266). The current ratio between the lowest paid employee (scp 3, £18,562 per annum as at 1st April 2021) and the highest paid employee (using full-time equivalent rates) is 1:9.12 (but note that the lowest salary has not yet received a pay award for 2021/22 as the national pay negotiations are still ongoing). This ratio is with effect from 1st April 2021. The Council will work to maintain a ratio of no more than 1:10 between the lowest paid and the highest paid.

8.2. This authority does not have a policy on maintaining or reaching a specific highest / **median** 'pay multiple', however the authority is conscious of the need to ensure that the salary of the highest paid employee is not excessive and is consistent with the needs of the authority as expressed in this Policy Statement. The authority's approach to the payment of other staff is to pay that which the authority needs to pay to recruit and retain staff with the skills, knowledge, experience, abilities and qualities needed for the post in question at the relevant time, and to ensure that the authority meets any contractual requirements for staff including the application of any local or national collective agreements, or authority decisions regarding pay. The median salary paid by the Council is £28,672. The pay multiple between the highest and median salary is 1: 5.90 (but note that the median salary has not yet received a pay award for 2021/22 as the national pay negotiations are still ongoing).

8.3. Pay multiples will be monitored each year within the Pay Policy Statement and will be benchmarked against comparable authorities as others' pay policy statements are published.

8.4. In terms of overall remuneration packages the Council's policy is to differentiate by setting different levels of basic pay to reflect differences in responsibilities (job evaluation) but not to differentiate on other allowances, benefits and payments it makes.

9. PAY AND GRADING STRUCTURE

9.1. The Council uses established formal job evaluation procedures to identify the relative worth of jobs within the council (including the senior pay group), and to allocate jobs to the appropriate pay grade.

9.2. For the senior pay group (RSM / CD Grades) RBC uses the Hay job evaluation scheme, for other jobs we use the national NJC for Local Government Employees JE scheme.

9.3. The NJC Job Evaluation Scheme, which is recognised by employers and trades unions nationally, allows for robust measurement against set criteria resulting in fair and objective evaluations and satisfies equal pay requirements

9.4. Pay grades are shown at Annex F.

10. PAY PROFILE

10.1. **Annex D** shows employees at 1 April 2021 by salary band and then by gender, ethnic origin and disability.

10.2. The numbers of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic employees and disabled employees are shown as a proportion of employees who have made a positive declaration.

10.3. The percentage of women in higher than men across all salary bands except for apprentice. About 60% of the Council's workforce are women.

10.4. The percentage of employees from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds is highest in RG2 at 33.85%. The percentage of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic employees in the workforce is 15.32% (if employees who have not made a positive declaration are excluded). This is an increase from April 2020 when it was 14.2%.

10.5. The number of employees who have declared a disability across salary bands ranges between 0% in RG10 and 6.9% for apprentices. The percentage of employees who have declared a disability in the workforce is 4.44% (if employees who have not made a positive declaration are excluded). This is a slight increase from April 2021 when it was 4.13%.

11. PAY PROGRESSION

11.1. Under the Council's Performance Related Progression Scheme the award of an annual increment is dependent upon an employee's achievement of performance targets and competency objectives. The scheme also links incremental progression with whether performance is improving or declining. No increment can be awarded if an employee is subject to formal disciplinary or capability (poor performance) procedures.

11.2. The following principles apply to pay progression for all RBC staff:

- 'Gateways' will be established 2 or 3 increments from the top of each grade depending on its length. Progression within a grade beyond the gateway will be for wider responsibility which meets agreed competency levels, based on job evaluation (JE) factor levels;

- Progression up to the gateway within the grade will be subject to a satisfactory assessment of performance and contribution based on management evidence throughout the year;

- Progression between grades within career grades will be dependent on meeting competencies at the next grade level;

- On progression matters, there will be one appeal level above the approving manager (i.e. designated officer or Assistant Director);

- Regular 1-1s and annual reviews are fundamental to employee progression.

11.3. Accelerated incremental progression within the evaluated grade is only possible where there is objective evidence of outstanding performance or there is evidence that

demonstrates inequality of pay level with comparable peers. Any such increase must be approved by the relevant Executive Director or Deputy Chief Executive and reasons provided to HR.

11.4. In addition to 11.3, accelerated increments would be paid for the progression within an existing career grade structure where skills and competencies (including academic attainment) have been achieved which meet predetermined career grade progression criteria.

11.5. The acceleration of an employee through the gateway of their existing grade, needs to be evidenced and certified by the Service Manager as meeting pre-existing and defined career progression criteria and approved by the relevant Executive Director or Deputy Chief Executive. Copies of the evidence to support such a decision need to be placed on the employee's personal file held by HR.

11.6. Any career grade progression is conditional upon budget provision being available.

11.7. Employees successfully moving posts within the Council will be subject to the principle of annual incremental progression assessment. They will no longer receive an automatic increment 6 months after being in their new post.

12. LOCAL PAY ARRANGEMENTS

12.1. **Child Care Solicitors** – This section, based in RBC's Legal Service, provides a service to other Berkshire Unitary Councils. Staff who were employed by the former Berkshire County Council retain local pay and progression arrangements which were inherited by RBC as a result of Statutory Transfer Order / TUPE provisions. A consultation is underway which proposes to move the employees who are affected by this onto standard RBC terms and conditions.

13. REMUNERATION ON APPOINTMENT AND PROMOTION

13.1. The Council's policy is to not pay any form of "signing on" fee or incentive payment when recruiting, except where there are significant recruitment difficulties that jeopardise service delivery, as identified and approved by CMT.

13.2. The starting pay point for all new employees (including internally appointed or promoted employees) should normally be the first point of the appropriate grade. There may be circumstances (e.g. offers from other employers, market forces) where it is necessary to make an offer that is at a higher point within the grade. The authority to make an offer higher than the starting point lies with the relevant Director or Deputy/Assistant Director, who must also consider the equality of such an exception and must inform the Assistant Director of HR and Organisational Development of the reason for the exception. This policy applies to all staff.

13.3. At the point of any assimilation to a new grade, employees moving to a higher grade will be placed at the bottom of that new grade.

14. OTHER ELEMENTS OF THE REMUNERATION PACKAGE

14.1. **Pension**: Pension provision is an important part of the remuneration package. All employees may join the local government pension scheme (or the Teachers Pension Scheme for relevant staff) and are enrolled automatically unless they wish to opt out. The scheme is a statutory scheme with contributions from employees and from employers. The current employer contribution rate for Reading Borough Council is 14.8%. This rate is reviewed and set every three years by the actuary. Reading Borough Council is part of the Berkshire scheme, administered by the Royal Borough of Maidenhead and Windsor. Neither the scheme nor the Council adopt different policies with regard to benefits for any category of employee: the same terms apply to the Chief Executive, chief officers and other staff.

14.2. **Election / Returning Officer Fees:** The Returning Officer is an officer of the Borough Council who is appointed under the Representation of the People Act 1983. Whilst

appointed by the Borough Council, the role of the Returning Officer is one which involves and incurs personal responsibility and accountability and is statutorily separate from their duties as an employee of the Borough Council. As Returning Officer, they are paid a separate allowance for each election for which they are responsible.

14.3. Separate fees will be paid to the Returning Officer and Corporate Legal Adviser for undertaking Returning Officer duties. These fees will be paid in line with the amount recommended by the Government or Electoral Commission for Parliamentary and European elections and referendums, or as set out in the Council's budget estimates for local elections.

14.4. The Returning Officer may appoint one or more Deputy Returning Officers and pay a fee to them for undertaking the duties that the Returning Officer allocates to them.

14.5. **Market Supplements**: The Council may pay a market supplement, in addition to base salary, in order to recruit or retain staff with special skills experience or knowledge. Market supplements are applied, reviewed and withdrawn in accordance with the Council's market supplement policy, which is published on the Council's website. The Head of Paid Service has delegated authority to determine posts for which salary supplements will be paid, and the amount and duration of the supplement, in consultation with the Assistant Director of HR and Organisational Development and the relevant Executive Director or Deputy Chief Executive.

14.6. **Honorarium and other temporary additional payments**:

Under the Council's scheme of delegation to officers, the Deputy Chief Executive, Executive Directors, Directors and Deputy/Assistant Directors are authorised to approve additional payments in the circumstances described below:

(a) **'Acting-up'** - The employee will either receive the 'rate for the job' that they are covering if they are undertaking the full range of duties and responsibilities. As a minimum, this means that they will be paid at the first spinal column point of the grade of the post that they are acting up into. If the employee is not undertaking the full range of duties of a higher graded post, then an acting up allowance will be paid. The allowance will be a percentage of the difference between the first point on the grade of the post being covered and the employee's current salary equivalent to the percentage proportion of higher responsibility being undertaken.

(b) **Honorarium payments** - Where an employee is undertaking work on a project or discrete piece of work which would fall outside of the normal range of duties expected for their particular post, then the employee shall be eligible for an honorarium payment for the duration of the project.

The level of payment made should be determined with regard to the level of responsibilities being undertaken and this should be determined with regard to the Council's Job Evaluation Scheme. All such payments must be approved by the Assistant Director of HR and Organisational Development to ensure proper application of the Council's policy.

The employee will be paid an amount appropriate to the proportion of their time being spent working at this higher level on a monthly basis for the duration of the project / programme.

15. **NON-PAY ELEMENTS AND BENEFITS**

15.1. **Annual Leave**: The following annual leave entitlements apply

- The <u>minimum</u> annual leave allowance (on appointment) will be 24 days per year
- There will be an additional 5 days at 5 years continuous local government service (granted from anniversary of start date).
- There will be an additional 3 days at 10 years Reading Borough Council service (granted from following 1 April).

- The minimum annual leave allowance (on appointment) will be 30 days per year for the senior pay group
- The <u>maximum</u> annual leave allowance **for all staff** will be 32 days.

15.2. **Salary Sacrifice Schemes / Employee discount schemes: All employees** can access salary sacrifice schemes for childcare vouchers, Kennet Day Nursery, Added Voluntary Contributions (AVCs), bicycle purchase, and lease cars. There are also non-subsidised employee discount schemes.

15.3. **Flexible Working: All employees** can access flexible working arrangements from their first day of employment subject always to the needs of the service.

15.4. **Car Allowances / Expenses**: The Council will meet or reimburse authorised travel, subsistence and (exceptionally) accommodation costs for attendance at necessary and approved meetings and training events. The Council does not regard such costs as remuneration but as non-pay operational costs. This policy is applied consistently to the Head of Paid Service, chief officers and other employees. The locally determined car allowance reimbursement rate for necessary and approved work-related travel is 45p per mile for **all authorised car users**. Employees with a salary sacrifice lease car undertaking approved work-related travel receive the relevant HMRC advisory rate depending on the engine size of their vehicle. No other car allowance (e.g. monthly lump sum) is payable to any employee.

16. TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT

16.1. Under the Council's Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the decision to effect dismissal or retirement on the grounds of redundancy or efficiency of the service is a decision of Personnel Committee for posts at Deputy/Assistant Director and above. The decision is delegated to the relevant Executive Director or Deputy Chief Executive for all posts below this level.

16.2. However, the final decision as to the compensation to be paid as a result of such dismissal decisions, **for all posts**, is a decision of Personnel Committee. Personnel Committee also need to approve any employee requests for early retirement which require employer consent and entail a cost to the Council.

16.3. Each of the proposals presented to the Committee must first be considered and agreed by an officer panel comprising the Director of Finance (S151 Officer), Monitoring Officer and the Assistant Director of HR and Organisational Development. This panel is established to monitor applications on the basis of consistency, legality and financial prudence. In terms of financial prudence, each case must demonstrate a 'payback period' within one year, or, exceptionally, two years in 'efficiency of the service' cases if sufficient service and efficiency benefits to the Council can be demonstrated. This Panel also assesses associated questions e.g. exercise of exceptional discretion; reasonableness of alternative employment in redundancy cases etc.

16.4. In the event that the compensation to be paid exceeds £100,000 in total, then full Council will be offered an opportunity to vote on the matter prior to approval.

16.5. **Discretionary Enhancement of Redundancy Payments**: The policy for the award of any discretionary payments is the same for all staff regardless of their pay level. Redundancy payments under regulation 5 of the Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Compensation) (England & Wales) Regulations 2006 provide discretion to pay up to an overall lump sum of 2 times the statutory redundancy payment formula based on actual weeks' pay, capped at 52 weeks' pay (may be adjusted following consultation). This is payable to employees made redundant with 2 or more years continuous service regardless of their age. Discretionary compensation can be reduced in cases where an offer of suitable alternative employment is deemed to have been unreasonably refused.

16.6. **Settlement Agreements:** In exceptional circumstances, and specifically so as to settle a claim or potential dispute the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services can agree payment of a termination settlement sum (subject to a decision of Personnel Committee if outside the normal framework for termination payments as set out in this section).

16.7. **Policy on Re-Employment**: The policy for re-employment following redundancy / efficiency termination is the same for all staff regardless of their pay level. Employees in receipt of compensation payment for loss of employment which has had discretionary enhancements applied to it are not permitted to take up employment with Reading Borough Council within 12 months of the ending of their current employment.

16.8. **Flexible Retirement**: In accordance with Superannuation Regulations, employees can, on or after age 55 and with Council consent, reduce their hours of work or the grade in which they are employed and draw (some or all of) their accrued pension benefits whilst continuing in employment and building up further benefits in the Scheme – enabling them to ease into retirement. Employees must be 55 or over and have 3 or more months' membership in the LGPS (including transferred rights) in order to be eligible to make a flexible retirement request following a reduction in hours or grade. Pension benefits will normally be reduced if paid before age 65. This Policy is open to all employees, subject to financial requirements being met (net savings to the Council and a payback period of no more than 2 years).

17. PENSION DISCRETIONS

17.1 The Council's current Policy Statement on the use of discretions under the relevant Superannuation Regulations is attached as **Annex E.**

18. PAY PROTECTION

18.1 The Council's Pay Protection Policy is approved by the Personnel Committee as part of the Employment Stability Agreement. The Policy provides a mechanism for assisting employees to adjust to a reduction in pay as a result of organisational change.

19. PUBLICATION OF INFORMATION ON THE REMUNERATION OF STAFF

19.1 This Pay Policy Statement will be published on the Council's website. In addition, details of all posts paid above £50,000 will be published.

20. AMENDMENTS TO THE POLICY

20.1 As the Policy covers the period April 2022 to the end of March 2023, amendments may need to be made to the Policy throughout the relevant period. As the Localism Act 2011 requires that any amendments are approved by the Council by resolution, proposed amendments will be reported to Personnel Committee for recommendation to the Council.

21. POLICY FOR FUTURE YEARS

21.1 This Policy Statement will be reviewed each year and will be presented to Council each year for consideration in order to ensure that a policy is in place for the authority prior to the start of each financial year.

PAY POLICY STATEMENT – ANNEX A

The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency indicates that local authorities should publish the following data **concerning staff**:

- Salaries, job descriptions, responsibilities, budgets (including overall salary cost of staff reporting), and numbers of staff for all staff in receipt of a salary of more than £50,000
- An organisational chart of the staff structure of the authority including salary bands and details of currently vacant posts
- The 'pay multiple' – the ratio between the highest paid salary and the median average salary of the whole authority workforce

The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations (2011) require that the following data is included in the authority's accounts:

- Numbers of employees with a salary above £50k per annum (pro-rata for part-time staff) in multiples of £5k
- Job title, remuneration and employer pension contributions for senior officers. Senior officers are defined as Head of Paid Service, Statutory Chief Officers and Non-Statutory Chief Officers by reference to Section 2 of the 1989 Local Government & Housing Act.
- Names of employees paid over £150k per annum

For the above remuneration is to include:

- Salary, fees or allowances for the current and previous year
- Bonuses paid or receivable for the current and previous year
- Expenses paid in the previous year
- Compensation for loss of employment paid to or receivable, or payments made in connection with loss of employment
- Total estimated value of non-cash benefits that are emoluments of the person

For the above pension contributions to include:

- The amount driven by the authority's set employer contribution rate
- Employer costs incurred relating to any increased membership or award of additional pension

GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS FOR PAY AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE
[Note: these provisions are subject to amendment as the source documents are amended]

1.1. **Constitution of Reading Borough Council**

Part 3.3 Responsibility for Council Functions (Schedule 1, Part 2):

37. Power to appoint staff, and to determine the terms and conditions on which they hold office (including procedures for dismissal)	Section 112 of the Local Government Act 1972.	Personnel Committee General Delegation to Deputy Chief Executive, Executive Directors, Directors and Deputy/Assistant Directors
40. Power to appoint officers for particular purposes (appointment of "proper officers")	Section 270(3) of the Local Government Act 1972	Personnel Committee
43. Duty to designate officer as head of the authority's paid service, and deputy head of paid service and to provide staff, etc	Section 4(1) of the Local Government & Housing At 1989 (c. 42)	Council

1.2. The **Officer Employment Procedure Rules** are in Part 4 of the Constitution.

SUMMARY OF CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

Chief Executive

The terms and conditions for the Head of Paid Service are as set out by the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) for Chief Executives, and as amended locally. Pay is determined locally.

Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Directors

The terms and conditions for the Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Directors are in accordance with the Scheme of Conditions of Service agreed by the National Joint Negotiating Committee for Chief Officers, and as amended locally. Pay is determined locally.

Directors and Deputy/Assistant Directors (third tier – i.e. reporting directly to the Head of Paid Service, Deputy Chief Executive or an Executive Director)

The terms and conditions for Directors and Deputy/Assistant Directors are as set out by the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) for Chief Officers, and as amended locally. Pay is determined locally.

NJC Staff

The Terms and conditions for NJC staff are determined by the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Government Services, and as amended locally.

Craft Employees

The Terms and conditions for NJC staff are determined by the National Joint Council (NJC) for Craft and Associated Employees, and as amended locally.

Teachers

The terms and conditions for Teachers are as set out in the School Teachers Pay and Conditions Document.

Soulbury Staff

The Soulbury Committee determines the national salary framework for Soulbury staff and terms and conditions, as amended locally.

Youth Workers

The terms and conditions for Youth Workers are as determined by the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) for Youth and Community Workers, and as amended locally.

Coroners

The terms and conditions for Coroners are set by the Joint Negotiating Committee for Coroners, and as amended locally.

PAY POLICY STATEMENT – ANNEX D

Council Employees in Salary Bands as at 01.04.2021

Grade Bandings		Total Staff	Women		BME			Disability		
			No.	%	No.	ND	%	No.	ND	%
Apprentices	Up to £18,562	39	13	33.33%	4	3	11.11%	2	10	6.90%
RG2	£19,312	75	45	60.00%	22	10	33.85%	1	24	1.96%
RG3	£21,748	271	183	67.53%	40	17	15.75%	9	57	4.21%
RG4	£27,041	449	259	57.68%	63	20	14.69%	23	57	5.87%
RG5	£32,234	315	195	61.90%	42	11	13.82%	10	33	3.55%
RG6	£36,922	228	121	53.07%	35	11	16.13%	8	30	4.04%
RG7	£42,821	162	98	60.49%	21	6	13.46%	6	21	4.26%
RG8	£48,847	101	58	57.43%	13	8	13.98%	3	14	3.45%
RG9	£54,878	53	28	52.83%	6	3	12.00%	3	7	6.52%
RG10	£58,973	15	13	86.67%	3	0	20.00%	0	2	0.00%
Above £58,973		46	24	52.17%	5	7	12.82%	1	14	3.13%
		1754	1037	59.12%	254	96	15.32%	66	269	4.44%

ND = Not Disclosed
Percentages are based on the proportion of employees in each band who have made a positive declaration

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME REGULATIONS 2013
STATEMENT OF POLICY ABOUT EXERCISE OF DISCRETIONARY FUNCTIONS
SCHEME EMPLOYER DECLARATION

The Scheme employer known as **Reading Borough Council** ('the Council') has prepared this written statement of policy in relation to its exercise of certain discretionary functions available under the Local Pension Scheme Regulations 2013. The Scheme employer declares that it will keep this statement under review and publish the statement (and any amendments made thereto) in a place that is easily accessible to all of its eligible Scheme employees and that it will provide to the administering authority the most up to date version of the statement at all times.

PART A – Formulation of COMPULSORY policy in accordance with Regulation 60 of the

Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013

Regulation 16 – Additional Pension Contributions

The Scheme employer may resolve to fund in whole or in part any arrangement entered into by an active scheme member to pay additional pension contributions by way of regular contributions in accordance with *Regulation 16(2)(e)*, or by way of a lump sum in accordance with *Regulation 16(4)(d)*.

The Scheme employer may enter into an APC contract with a Scheme member who is contributing to the MAIN section of the Scheme in order to purchase additional pension of not more than the additional pension limit (£6,500 from 1st April 2014 subject to annual increase in line with the Pensions (Increase) Act 1971).

The amount of additional contribution to be paid is determined by reference to actuarial guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

Consideration needs to be given to the circumstances under which the Scheme employer may wish to use their discretion to fund in whole or in part an employee's Additional Pension Contributions.

Scheme Employer's policy concerning the whole or part funding of an active member's additional pension contributions

The Council has resolved not to adopt this discretion at this time.

Regulation 30(6) – Flexible Retirement

An active member who has attained the age of 55 or over and who with the agreement of their employer reduces their working hours or grade of employment may, with the further consent of their employer, elect to receive immediate payment of all or part of the retirement pension to which they would be entitled in respect of that employment as if that member were no longer an employee in local government service on the date of the

reduction in hours or grade *(adjusted by the amount shown as appropriate in actuarial guidance issued by the Secretary of State - separate policy required under Regulation 30(8)).*

As part of the policy making decision the Scheme employer must consider whether, in addition to the benefits the member may have accrued prior to 1 April 2008 (which the member must draw), to permit the member to choose to draw all, part or none of the pension benefits they built up after 31 March 2008 and before 1 April 2014 and all, part of none of the pension benefits they built up after 1 April 2014.

Due consideration must be given to the financial implications of allowing an employee to draw all or part of their pension benefits earlier than their normal retirement age.

Scheme Employer's policy concerning flexible retirement

The Council has resolved that it will give such an opportunity to its employees. Flexible Retirement under this discretion will be subject to an agreed policy framework. The Council has resolved that waiving actuarial reduction in full or in part will only be considered where there will be a sufficient financial or other benefit to the authority. An exception to this requirement is the employee's exceptionally difficult personal or domestic circumstances

Regulation 30(8) – Waiving of Actuarial Reduction

Where a Scheme employer's policy under regulation 30(6) (flexible retirement) is to consent to the immediate release of benefits in respect of an active member who is aged 55 or over, those benefits must be adjusted by an amount shown as appropriate in actuarial guidance issued by the Secretary of State (commonly referred to as actuarial reduction or early payment reduction).

A Scheme employer (or former employer as the case may be) may agree to waive in whole or in part and at their own cost, any actuarial reduction that may be required by the Scheme Regulations.

Due consideration must be given to the financial implications of agreeing to waive in whole or in part any actuarial reduction.

Scheme Employer's policy concerning the waiving of actuarial reduction

That the Council does not consent to waive any actuarial reduction for staff electing to retire at age 55 or over, <u>unless</u> there is a sufficient financial or other benefit to the Council. An exception to this requirement is the employee's exceptionally difficult personal or domestic circumstances.

Regulation 31 – Award of Additional Pension

A Scheme employer may resolve to award

      (a) an active member, or

(b) a member who was an active member but dismissed by reason of redundancy, or business efficiency, or whose employment was terminated by mutual consent on grounds of business efficiency,

additional annual pension of, in total (including any additional pension purchased by the Scheme employer under Regulation 16), not more than the additional pension limit (£6,500 from 1st April 2014 subject to annual increase in line with the Pensions (Increase) Act 1971).

Any additional pension awarded is payable from the same date as any pension payable under other provisions of the Scheme Regulations from the account to which the additional pension is attached.

In the case of a member falling within sub-paragraph (b) above, the resolution to award additional pension must be made within 6 months of the date that the member's employment ended.

Scheme Employer's policy concerning the award of additional pension

The Council has resolved not to adopt this discretion at this time

Schedule 2 – paragraphs 2 and 3

Where a scheme member retires or leaves employment and elects to draw their benefits at or after the age of 55 and before the age of 60 those benefits will be actuarially reduced unless their Scheme employer agrees to meet the full or part cost of those reductions as a result of the member otherwise being protected under the 85 year rule as set out in previous Regulations.

So as to avoid the member suffering the full reduction to their benefits the Scheme employer can 'switch on' the 85 year rule protections thereby allowing the member to receive fully or partly unreduced benefits but subject to the Scheme employer paying a strain (capital) cost to the Pension Fund

Scheme Employer's policy concerning the 'switching on of the 85 year rule

That the Council does not consent to switch on the 85 year rule for staff electing to retire at age 55, unless there is a sufficient financial or other benefit to the Council. An exception to this requirement may be the employee's exceptionally difficult personal or domestic circumstances.

PART B – Formulation of RECOMMENDED policy in accordance with the

Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013

Regulation 9(1) & (3) – Contributions

Where an active member changes employment or there is a material change which affects the member's pensionable pay during the course of a financial year, the Scheme employer may determine that a contribution rate from a different band (as set out in Regulation 9(2)) should be applied.

Where the Scheme employer makes such a determination it shall inform the member of the revised contribution rate and the date from which it is to be applied.

Scheme Employer's policy concerning the re-determination of active members' contribution bandings at any date other than 1st April

The Council shall re-determine contribution rates on 1st April each year <u>only</u>. Staff joining the scheme shall be placed in a contribution band consistent with their contracted, actual pay in the first instance except for casual staff who shall initially be placed on the lowest contribution band. The banding placement for individual staff shall be re-determined wef from the 1st April only in subsequent years following initial placement and adjusted as necessary in the light of the pensionable pay actually earned in the previous year (using a '12 month equivalent' calculation for staff who have not worked a full year).

Regulation 17(1) – Additional Voluntary Contributions

An active member may enter into arrangements to pay additional voluntary contributions (AVCs) or to contribute to a shared cost additional voluntary contribution arrangement (SCAVCs) in respect of an employment. The arrangement must be a scheme established between the appropriate administering authority and a body approved for the purposes of the Finance Act 2004, registered in accordance with that Act and administered in accordance with the Pensions Act 2004.

The Scheme employer needs to determine whether or not it will make contributions to such an arrangement on behalf of its active members

Scheme Employer's policy concerning payment of Shared Cost Additional Voluntary Contributions

The Council will pay SCAVC contributions where an employee has elected to pay AVCs by salary sacrifice. The amount of these employer SCAVC contributions will not exceed the amount of salary sacrificed by the employee. This is a Council discretion which is subject to the employee meeting the Council's conditions for acceptance into the salary sacrifice shared cost AVC scheme and may be withdrawn or changed at any time.

Regulation 22 – Merging of Deferred Member Pension Accounts with Active Member Pension Accounts

A deferred member's pension account is automatically aggregated with their active member's pension account unless the member elects within the first 12 months of the new active member's pension account being opened to retain their deferred member's pension account.

A Scheme employer can, at their discretion, extend the 12 month election period.

Scheme Employer's policy concerning merging of Deferred Member Pension Accounts with Active Member Pension Accounts

The Council has resolved not to extend the time limit for election beyond 12 months.

Regulation 100(6) – Inward Transfers of Pension Rights

A request from an active member to transfer former pension rights from a previous arrangement into the Local Government Pension Scheme as a result of their employment with a Scheme employer must be made in writing to the administering authority and the Scheme employer before the expiry of the period of 12 months beginning with the date on which the employee first became an active member in an employment (or such longer period as the Scheme employer and administering authority may allow).

Scheme Employer's policy concerning the extension of the 12 month transfer application period

The Council has resolved not to extend the time limit for election beyond 12 months.

Regulation 21(5) – Assumed Pensionable Pay

A Scheme employer needs to determine whether or not to include in the calculation of assumed pensionable pay, any 'regular lump sum payment' received by a Scheme member in the 12 months preceding the date that gave rise to the need for an assumed pensionable pay figure to be calculated.

Scheme Employer's policy concerning inclusion of 'regular lump sum payments' in assumed pensionable pay calculations

That the Council does include in such calculations an element for 'regular lump sum payment' where it is fair, equitable and justifiable to do so.

Regulation 74 – Applications for Adjudication of Disagreements

Each Scheme employer must appoint a person ("the adjudicator") to consider applications from any person whose rights or liabilities under the Scheme are affected by:

(a) a decision under regulation 72 (first instance decisions); or

(b) any other act or omission by a Scheme employer or administering authority,

and to make a decision on such applications.

Responsibility for determinations under this first stage of the Internal Disputes Resolution Procedure (IDRP) rests with "the adjudicator" as named below by the Scheme employer:

Name: Michael Graham

Job Title: Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services

Address: Civic Centre, Reading, **Tel No:**0118 9373470

Email: michael.graham@reading.gov.uk

SCHEME EMPLOYER CONFIRMATION

It is understood that the discretions contained within this statement of policy are applicable to all eligible members of the Scheme. The Scheme rules allow for a revised statement to be issued at least one month in advance of the date that any new policy takes effect. The revised statement must be sent to the administering authority and the employer must publish its statement as revised in a place that is accessible to all of its eligible scheme members.

The policies made above:

Have regard to the extent to which the exercise of the discretions could lead to a serious loss of confidence in the public service;

Will not be used for any ulterior motive;

Will be exercised reasonably;

Will only be used when there is a real and substantial future benefit to the employer for incurring the extra costs that may arise;

Will be duly recorded when applied.

Name in Block Capitals: JACQUELINE YATES

Position: DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Scheme Employer's Name: READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

PAY POLICY STATEMENT – ANNEX F

PAY SCALES FOR COUNCIL STAFF (1ST APRIL 2021)

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New NJC Pay Structure - April 2021

GENERAL PAY SCALE

SCP	Per Annum	Per Hour	Current Grades	SCP
53	£60,005	£ 31.10		53
52	£58,559	£ 30.35	RG10	52
51	£57,113	£ 29.60	RG10	51
50	£55,838	£ 28.94		50
49	£54,562	£ 28.28		49
48	£53,287	£ 27.62	RG9	48
47	£52,011	£ 26.96		47
46	£50,738	£ 26.30		46
45	£49,702	£ 25.76		45
44	£48,690	£ 25.24		44
43	£47,665	£ 24.71	RG8	43
42	£46,662	£ 24.19		42
41	£45,648	£ 23.66		41
40	£44,624	£ 23.13		40
39	£43,570	£ 22.58	RG7	39
38	£42,614	£ 22.09	RG7	38
37	£41,591	£ 21.56		37
36	£40,578	£ 21.03		36
35	£39,571	£ 20.51		35
34	£38,553	£ 19.98		34
33	£37,568	£ 19.47	RG6	33
32	£36,371	£ 18.85		32
31	£35,336	£ 18.32		31
30	£34,373	£ 17.82		30
29	£33,486	£ 17.36		29
28	£32,798	£ 17.00	RG5	28
27	£31,895	£ 16.53	RG5	27
26	£30,984	£ 16.06		26
25	£30,095	£ 15.60		25
24	£29,174	£ 15.12		24
23	£28,226	£ 14.63		23
22	£27,514	£ 14.26		22
21		£ -	RG4	21
20	£26,446	£ 13.71	RG4	20
19	£25,927	£ 13.44		19
18		£ -		18
17	£24,920	£ 12.92		17
16		£ -		16 s
15	£23,953	£ 12.42		15
14	£23,484	£ 12.17		14
13		£ -		13
12	£22,571	£ 11.70		12
11	£22,129	£ 11.47		11
10		£ -	RG3	10
9	£21,269	£ 11.02	RG3	9
8	£20,852	£ 10.81		8
7	£20,444	£ 10.60		7
6	£20,043	£ 10.39		6
5	£19,650	£ 10.19		5
4	£19,264	£ 9.99	RG2	4
3	£18,887	£ 9.79		3
2	£18,516	£ 9.60	RG1	2
1	£18,333	£ 9.50		1

	Apr-22	
	Living Wage	Per Hour
	19100	9.90
	19100	9.90
	19100	9.90

GENERAL PAY SCALE / SOCIAL WORKERS & OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS

SCP	Per Annum	Per Hour	Current Grades		SCP	Current Grades		SCP
53	£ 60,005	£ 31.10			53			53
52	£ 58,559	£ 30.35		RG10	52		Service Manager = RGSW10	52
51	£ 57,113	£ 29.60			51			51
50	£ 55,838	£ 28.94			50			50
49	£ 54,562	£ 28.28			49			49
48	£ 53,287	£ 27.62	RG9		48			48
47	£ 52,011	£ 26.96			47	Team Manager = RGSW9		47
46	£ 50,738	£ 26.30			46			46
45	£ 49,702	£ 25.76			45			45
44	£ 48,690	£ 25.24		RG8	44			44
43	£ 47,665	£ 24.71			43			43
42	£ 46,662	£ 24.19			42		ATM = RGSW8	42
41	£ 45,648	£ 23.66			41			41
40	£ 44,624	£ 23.13			40			40
39	£ 43,570	£ 22.58	RG7		39			39
38	£ 42,614	£ 22.09			38	see note 1		38
37	£ 41,591	£ 21.56			37			37
36	£ 40,578	£ 21.03			36	Higher specialist SW / OT= RGSW7		36
35	£ 39,571	£ 20.51			35			35
34	£ 38,553	£ 19.98			34			34
33	£ 37,568	£ 19.47		RG6	33		see note 2	33
32	£ 36,371	£ 18.85			32			32
31	£ 35,336	£ 18.32			31		Experienced SW / OT = RGSW6	31
30	£ 34,373	£ 17.82			30			30
29	£ 33,486	£ 17.36			29			29
28	£ 32,798	£ 17.00	RG5		28	SW/OT=RGSW5b see note 3		28
27	£ 31,895	£ 16.53			27			27
26	£ 30,984	£ 16.06			26	SW/OT NQ=RGSW5a		26
25	£ 30,095	£ 15.60			25			25
24	£ 29,174	£ 15.12			24			24

Notes for SW & OT grades:

1. Only Children's Social Workers and OTs and Adults Approved Mental Health Practitioners can progress above the gateway in RGSW7

2. Only Children's Social Workers and OTs and Adults Supervising Social Workers and OTs can progress above the gateway in

3. For Social Workers (not OTs) progression to RGSW5b can only be attained by passing the Assisted Year of Supported Employment

NB28	JNC READING SENIOR MANAGEMENT		EFFECTIVE DATE			1-Apr-21

PAYAWARD	1.5%			

ANNUAL 01/04/20	GRADE		SCP		MONTHLY 01/04/21	WEEKLY 01/04/21	HOURLY 01/04/21
54,756.00	RSMD		1	55577	4631.45	1065.86	28.8071
56,144.00	RSMD		2	56986	4748.85	1092.88	29.5374
57,531.00	RSMD		3	58394	4866.16	1119.88	30.2671
58,918.00	RSMD		4	59802	4983.48	1146.88	30.9968
60,309.00	RSMD		5	61214	5101.14	1173.96	31.7286
61,696.00	RSMD	RSMC	6	62621	5218.45	1200.96	32.4583
63,082.00	RSMD	RSMC	7	64028	5335.69	1227.94	33.1874
64,470.00	RSMD	RSMC	8	65437	5453.09	1254.95	33.9177
65,858.00	RSMD	RSMC	9	66846	5570.49	1281.97	34.6479
67,246.00		RSMC	10	68255	5687.89	1308.99	35.3781
68,634.00		RSMC	11	69664	5805.29	1336.01	36.1083
70,023.00		RSMC	12	71073	5922.78	1363.05	36.8391
71,411.00		RSMC	13	72482	6040.18	1390.07	37.5693
72,799.00		RSMC RSMB	14	73891	6157.58	1417.08	38.2996
74,185.00		RSMC RSMB	15	75298	6274.81	1444.06	39.0287
75,574.00		RSMC RSMB	16	76708	6392.30	1471.10	39.7595
76,965.00		RSMC RSMB	17	78119	6509.96	1498.18	40.4913
78,348.00		RSMB	18	79523	6626.94	1525.10	41.2189
79,742.00		RSMB	19	80938	6744.84	1552.23	41.9523
81,133.00		RSMB	20	82350	6862.50	1579.31	42.6841
82,517.00		RSMB RSMA	21	83755	6979.56	1606.25	43.4122
83,904.00		RSMB RSMA	22	85163	7096.88	1633.25	44.1419
85,296.00		RSMB RSMA	23	86575	7214.62	1660.35	44.8742
86,680.00		RSMA	24	87980	7331.68	1687.29	45.6023
88,066.00		RSMA	25	89387	7448.92	1714.27	46.3315
89,460.00		RSMA	26	90802	7566.83	1741.40	47.0649
90,843.00		RSMA	27	92206	7683.80	1768.32	47.7925
92,232.00		RSMA	28	93615	7801.29	1795.36	48.5233
93,622.00		RSMA	29	95026	7918.86	1822.42	49.2545
95,006.00		RSMA	30	96431	8035.92	1849.36	49.9827
96,392.00		RSMA	31	97838	8153.16	1876.34	50.7118
100,832.00		CDIR	32	102344	8528.71	1962.77	53.0477
103,937.00		CDIR	33	105496	8791.34	2023.21	54.6813
107,264.00		CDIR	34	108873	9072.75	2087.97	56.4316
110,693.00		CDIR	35	112353	9362.78	2154.72	58.2356
111,788.00		CDIR	36	113465	9455.40	2176.03	58.8117
115,138.00		CDIR	37	116865	9738.76	2241.24	60.5741
118,486.00		CDIR	38	120263	10021.94	2306.41	62.3355
125,385.00		CDIR	39	127266	10605.48	2440.71	65.9650

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READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF HR AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

TO:	PERSONNEL COMMITTEE		
DATE:	**16 MARCH 2022**	**AGENDA ITEM:**	**7**
TITLE:	**REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S EMPLOYMENT POLICIES**		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	**CLLR RUTH MCEWAN**	**PORTFOLIO:**	**CORPORATE AND CONSUMER SERVICES**
LEAD OFFICER:	**SHELLA SMITH**	**TEL:**	**74697 / 0118 937 4697**
JOB TITLE:	**ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF HR AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**	**E-MAIL:**	**shella.smith@reading.gov.uk**

1.   **PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1.1   A review of the Council's employment policy framework is underway which aims to ensure that all employment policies are clear, easy to understand, up to date and reviewed regularly. This report presents five policies, all of which have been reviewed jointly and agreed with the Joint Trade Unions.

1.2   The report includes the following appendices:

Appendix A: Bullying and Harassment Policy
Appendix B: Employment Stability Agreement
Appendix C: Relocation and Accommodation Schemes Policy
Appendix D: Shift and Unsocial Hours Allowance Policy
Appendix E: Standby and Call Out Policy
Appendix F: Equality Impact Assessment

2.   **DECISION**

2.1   **That Personnel Committee approve the following revised/new HR policies (detailed in Appendices A to E of this report):**

- Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Employment Stability Agreement
- Relocation and Accommodation Schemes Policy
- Shift and Unsocial Hours Allowance Policy
- Standby and Call Out Policy

3. POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 Good employment policies should support a culture based on trust, fairness and inclusion. They can also speed the decision-making process by ensuring that clear guidance is readily available to cover a range of employment issues. Further, they can assist in avoiding involvement with employment tribunal claims by providing guidance for managers that reflects accurately current employment law and good practice. It is therefore important that employment policies are clear, easy to understand, up to date and reviewed regularly.

3.2 Of the five policies covered in this report, the Relocation and Accommodation Policy is new. The Bullying and Harassment Policy has been updated to include examples of cyberbullying and microaggression. The Employment Stability Agreement has been updated to include examples of pay protection; Shift and Unsocial Hours Allowance Policy; and Standby and Call Out Policy have all been updated with gender neutral language and updated job titles.

3.3 ACAS Codes of Practice give authoritative advice in key areas of employment practice. A failure to follow the Code does not make a person or organisation liable to proceedings. However, employment tribunals will take the Code into account when considering relevant cases. Tribunals will also be able to adjust any awards made in relevant cases by up to 25% for unreasonable failure to comply with any provision of the Code (by an employer or an employee).

4. POLICIES COVERED UNDER THIS REVIEW

4.1 All employment policies have now been reviewed by the HR and Organisational Development team, apart from the Union Facilities Agreement, which will be presented for approval to Personnel Committee in July 2022, following consultation and negotiation with the Joint Trade Unions. The policies included in this report are:

- Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Employment Stability Agreement
- Relocation and Accommodation Schemes Policy
- Shift and Unsocial Hours Allowance
- Standby and Call Out Policy

4.2 Principles used for conducting this review

4.2.1 The policies have been written with the following principles in mind:

1. They must reflect current employment law and the ACAS Codes of Practice and/or guidance where relevant.
2. They must be easy to understand and written in plain English
3. They should be concise. Any information which is not germane to the operation of the policy has been removed. For example, management guidance notes are not included in the policies, but available separately.
4. There should be a consistency of approach across related policies (e.g. same period of notice given to employees to attend formal meetings where relevant)

5.   They should use gender neutral language

4.3   In future, all employment policies will be reviewed every two years or sooner if legislation requires it.

5.   KEY ISSUES AND CHANGES PROPOSED

5.1   The table below sets out in summary terms for each of the revised policies the issues which have been addressed together with additional key changes agreed with the Joint Trade Unions. Once the policy review is complete, hyperlinks will be added to the policies where they are cross-referenced with other policies.

Revised Policies

Issues to be addressed
Bullying and Harassment Policy (Appendix A)
Last reviewed in 2018 and updated to include examples of cyberbullying and microaggression.
Employment Stability Agreement (Appendix B)
Drafted in 2018 but agreement could not be reached with the Trade Unions on proposed reduction in pay protection from four years. The policy has now been updated to reflect current employment law and examples of pay protection scenarios have been included.
Shift and Unsocial Hours Policy (Appendix D)
Last reviewed in 2010 and updated to ensure gender neutral language and correct job titles.
Standby and Call Out Policy (Appendix E)
Last reviewed in 2011 and updated to ensure gender neutral language and correct job titles.

New Policy

5.2   Relocation and Accommodation Schemes Policy (Appendix C)

5.2.1   This policy has been written to assist new employees who need to move to a new house in the Reading area as a direct result of taking up a permanent appointment with Reading Borough Council.

6.   PROCESS FOR AGREEING THE NEW AND REVISED POLICIES

6.1   The process for agreeing the policies with the joint trade unions has been as follows:

10 February 2022	All draft policies (Appendices A - E) were uploaded to a SharePoint folder for union representatives to review, requesting comments to be added in advance of the meeting on 28 February 2022.

28 February 2022	Meeting with trade unions to review feedback and both policies were agreed subject to amendments.
7 March 2022	Final approval from trade unions received.
16 March 2022	Formal approval noted in the Joint Trade Union Committee minutes

6.2   A communications plan is in place to communicate the revised policies to managers and employees. This will include:

- Daily news items on the intranet and iTrent Employee Self Service (the HR system used by all staff to book leave, submit mileage claims etc) to highlight the revised policies and who to speak to about any queries (i.e. their line manager or HR)

- Highlighted in the weekly email to all staff

- Strategic HR and OD Business Partners/HR Advisers will highlight the revised policies and their implications (for staff and managers) when they attend department management team meetings and 1-1 meetings with managers.

- An email from HR to all line managers to highlight the new policies and explain the changes, and to ask that they discuss them with their staff in team meetings, tool-box talks, 1-1s etc.

7.   CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

7.1   The new and revised HR policies help to ensure that the Council can meet its Corporate Plan priority, specifically ensuring that the Council is fit for the future.

8.   ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

8.1   There are no environmental or climate change implications.

9.   COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

9.1   The Joint Trade Unions have been consulted on the revised policies.

10.   EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

10.1   Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

10.2 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been carried out (see Appendix F) and has found no differential impact on any groups with protected characteristics. Some positive impacts have been identified.

11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Certain employment policies and procedures are specifically needed to comply with legal requirements, for example, a written health and safety policy. Even where a policy or procedure is not specifically required by law, employers often find it helpful to have a policy in place to provide clear guidance that reflects the legal framework for handling the issue in question and it also helps employees to be clear about the organisation's stance on a particular subject. The proposed policies presented in this review reflect current employment law and ACAS Codes of Practice and/or guidance where relevant.

11.2 The Council's Constitution confirms that Personnel Committee is responsible for determining the terms and conditions on which staff hold office. The proposed policies will therefore be presented to Personnel Committee for approval, following consultation and negotiation with the trade unions.

12. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

13. BACKGROUND PAPERS

13.1 None

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Bullying and Harassment Policy

March 2022

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Document History	
Version	1.3 (see below)
Status	Final (subject to approval by Personnel Committee)
Date	March 2022
Target audience	All employees of Reading Borough Council with the exception of Schools-based staff for whom alternative procedures apply
Ratification	None
Author	HR Employment Services Team

Version control	Reviewers
Version 1.1	Initial draft – July 2018
Version 1.2	Final version agreed with Joint Trade Unions in December 2018
Version 1.3	Updated definitions of bullying in March 2022

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1. Objectives and scope

1.1 This policy applies to all employees, contractors, agency staff and anyone else engaged to work at Reading Borough Council (the 'Council'). It does not apply to schools based staff who may be covered by separate procedures. The Council is committed to protecting the dignity and equality of opportunity for all employees at their place of work and has a zero tolerance approach to bullying and harassment. This policy covers bullying and harassment in the workplace and in any work-related setting outside the workplace, for example business trips or any work related social events.

1.2 The Council aims to support the creation of a work environment that is free from discrimination, harassment and bullying, where everyone is treated with dignity and respect and no one is treated less favourably than any other person or group of persons on the grounds of their sex, age, disability, race, sexual orientation, gender reassignment status, religion and belief, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership status or any other characteristic.

1.3 The purpose of this policy is to ensure a working environment in which bullying and harassment are unacceptable and where individuals have the confidence to complain about bullying and harassment should it arise, in the knowledge that their concerns will be dealt with appropriately and fairly. Complaints will be treated seriously and dealt with swiftly and confidentially ensuring the rights of all are protected. This policy has been agreed with the Joint Trade Unions as the most effective means of resolving a concern about bullying or harassment. No employee will be made to feel disadvantaged in any way because they have raised or pursued a concern in good faith.

1.4 Any incident(s) of bullying and harassment should initially be reported to the line manager who will advise the employee. If the concern relates to their line manager then the employee can speak to any other manager and/or seek support from any of the support services available to staff detailed in section 8 of this policy. If the complaint relates to a Councillor, employees should speak to their line manager and refer to the Protocol on Member/Officer Relations in the Council's Constitution.

1.5 In complying with the Equality Act 2010, the Council has a legal obligation to ensure that harassment does not take place at work, as this is discrimination. In addition, it has a duty of care towards employees under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

1.6 Responsibilities

1.6.1 **All employees** have a responsibility to behave in ways which support a working environment that is not intimidating. They should play their part in making the Council's policy a reality and be prepared to take appropriate action if they observe or have evidence that someone else is being bullied or harassed. Individuals can be prosecuted under criminal as well as civil law and they could be personally liable and have to pay compensation themselves, in addition to any payment the Council may be ordered to make.

1.6.2 **Additionally,** managers must aim to uphold a working environment in which harassment and bullying do not occur. They must take immediate action if bullying

and/or harassment is suspected or identified, whether or not a complaint has been made, and provide support to the employee. Allegations of bullying and harassment received either informally or formally through this policy must be taken seriously and dealt with promptly and sensitively. A grievance will not necessarily be raised as a result of an investigation taking place.

2.   Definitions

2.1   General information

2.1.1   In this policy **"Complainant"** refers to the employee experiencing the bullying or harassing behaviour; "**Respondent**" and/or **"Perpetrator"** refers to the person against whom the complaint is brought. The term **"parties"** refers to the complainant and the person against whom the complaint is brought.

2.1.2   Bullying and harassment is not necessarily face to face, it may occur through written communications, visual images (for example pictures of a sexual nature or embarrassing photographs of colleagues), social media, email, phone, and automatic supervision methods – such as computer recording of downtime from work, or recording of telephone conversations – if these are not universally applied to all employees.

2.1.3   The lists below are not exhaustive nor in order of importance. Anyone who is perceived as different or who is in a minority, or who lacks organisational power, runs the risk of being bullied or harassed. Health, physical characteristics, religious or personal beliefs etc. may lead to victimisation, bullying or harassment and this can occur between people of the same sex or opposite sex.

2.2   Bullying

2.2.1   Bullying may be characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient. Some examples of bullying behaviour are:

- spreading malicious rumours, or insulting someone by word or behaviour
- copying memos that are critical of someone to others who do not need to know
- ridiculing or demeaning someone – picking on them or setting them up to fail
- exclusion or victimisation
- unfair treatment
- overbearing supervision or other misuse of power or position
- unwelcome sexual advances – touching, standing too close, display of offensive materials, asking for sexual favours, making decisions on the basis of sexual advances being accepted or rejected, sexual harassment
- making threats or comments about unfounded job security
- deliberately undermining a competent employee by overloading and constant criticism
- preventing individuals progressing by intentionally blocking promotion or training opportunities.

- Cyberbullying – the use of electronic communication to bully a person, for example by sending messages of a threatening of intimidating nature.
- Microaggression - a microaggression is a comment or action that negatively targets a marginalized group of people. A microaggression can be intentional or accidental. It can be a form of indirect, subtle, or unintentional discrimination against members of a marginalized group such as racial or ethnic minority.
- Social media can be used to bully people, e.g. through making defamatory posts. This is explained further in the [Social Media Policy](#).
- Communication – inappropriate/insensitive messages to colleagues/clients

2.3   Harassment

2.3.1   People can be subject to harassment on a wide variety of grounds including:

- race
- ethnic origin or nationality
- gender or sexual orientation
- religious or political convictions
- willingness to challenge harassment, leading to victimisation
- membership, or non-membership of a trade union
- disability or learning difficulty
- status as an ex-offender
- age
- real or suspected infection with HIV/AIDS.

I.   In the Equality Act 2010 harassment is defined as 'unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic (sex, disability, race, gender reassignment etc.), which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual'. Harassment is unlawful when a person is harassed because they are believed to have a protected characteristic (whether they have or not) and when they associate with with someone with a protected characteristic.

II.   **Racial Harassment** can include jokes about, or the derogatory treatment of, staff because of their physical appearance or cultural background, racist name calling, discriminatory remarks which cause a member of staff to feel threatened, racially motivated behaviour which interferes with job performance or creates a threatening work environment.

III. **Disability Harassment** can include jokes about, or at the expense of, someone's disability (which can include conditions affecting physical or mental health) or the disabled group to which the member of staff belongs. Remarks of an abusive or unfavourable character about people with disabilities are also classified as harassment.

IV.   **Harassment Because of a Person's Sexuality** or gender reassignment status can include jokes about, or at the expense of, the member of staff's

sexuality or transgender status. The use of names or titles which give offence is also classified as harassment.

V.   **Sexual Harassment** involves unwanted and unwelcome attention of a sexual nature. This may be physical or verbal or involve the denigration of an individual on sexual grounds or by sexual means. Any unwelcome behaviour of a sexual nature which creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment for the recipient may be regarded as sexual harassment. It affects both men and women. Sexual harassment can happen in any number of ways, including:

- written or verbal comments of a sexual nature, such as remarks about an employee's appearance, questions about their sex life or offensive jokes
- displaying pornographic or explicit images
- emails with content of a sexual nature
- unwanted physical contact and touching
- sexual assault

2.4   Sexual assault and physical threats

2.4.1   Some types of sexual harassment, such as sexual assault and other physical threats, are a criminal matter as well as an employment matter. Criminal matters should be reported to the police.

- Call 999 if you or someone else is in immediate danger, or if the crime is in progress.
- Call 101 or report online at https://www.thamesvalley.police.uk to contact the police if the crime is not an emergency.
  If a complaint is reported to the police, or criminal court proceedings are being pursued, a manager must still investigate the complaint as an employment matter. A manager may then follow the disciplinary procedure, without awaiting the outcome of criminal proceedings, provided this can be done fairly.

2.5   Employment tribunal

2.5.1   Employees are usually expected to try and resolve the problem in the workplace first. If that does not work, employees can contact the ACAS Helpline before going to an employment tribunal (see section 8 on Getting Support for further information about ACAS).

2.6   Historic allegations

2.6.1   Complaints of harassment will usually only be considered at an employment tribunal if the employee makes a claim within three months of when the incident took place. A pattern of behaviour which took place before the final incident can be referred to still.   The Council's Grievance Policy contains the same timescale for raising a concern. Sometimes a complaint of harassment will be reported much later than this. A manager should always take such a complaint seriously. They should handle things in a way that is sensitive and fair to the employee who has made the complaint, anybody who has witnessed it and anybody who is being accused of harassment. It

is usually helpful for the employee and the manager to discuss what outcome is desired in these circumstances - sometimes it might be that the employee now feels confident enough to speak out and wants to make sure nobody else in their workplace experiences what they went through.

2.7   What is Not "Bullying" or "Harassment"?

2.7.1   There is a need for employee performance to be managed in order to achieve the aims of the Council and this policy does not seek to diminish a manager´s ability to do this. Evidenced, constructive and fair criticism of an employee´s performance or behaviour at work is not bullying or harassment. However, it is unacceptable to condone bullying behaviour under the guise of a particular management style, such as micro-management. Effective management obtains results whilst ensuring that employees are treated with dignity and respect.

3.   How to raise concerns

3.1   In the event that an individual considers that they are experiencing bullying or harassment they have a number of options open to them.

   I.   They can seek advice from a trade union representative or fellow employee, or from their line manager or any other manager at the Council, or from a member of the HR Team;
   II.   They can speak directly to the individual concerned or write a letter or email to him/her expressing their concerns, requesting that the unacceptable behaviour stop immediately;
   III.   Alternatively, or subsequently if they achieve no success, they may wish to talk to someone in order to obtain another perspective on the situation and to ensure that someone else knows about the unacceptable behaviour. If the allegation is related to the conduct of the line manager, the manager's manager or HR can be approached; or
   IV.   They can make a formal complaint without following the informal approach.

4.   Investigating complaints of bullying and harassment

4.1   Managers investigating complaints of bullying and harassment will do so in accordance with the Council's Grievance Policy. Where the allegation is proven, the Disciplinary Policy will guide the outcome for the perpetrator. Proven cases of bullying and/or harassment will always be treated as a disciplinary offence, and the Council's Disciplinary Policy may be invoked at any stage where there is a case of bullying or harassment to answer.

4.2   Employers investigating claims of bullying and harassment should consider all the circumstances before reaching a conclusion. In any allegation, it is not the intention of the perpetrator that is key in deciding if harassment or bullying has occurred, but whether the behaviour is unacceptable by *reasonable normal standards*, and is disadvantageous or unwelcome to the person or people subjected to it or witnessing it.

5.   Stage 1 – Informal Action

5.1   In the first instance the line manager, after seeking advice from HR, should try and resolve the matter informally. Separate meetings should be convened with both parties. In the case of a bullying or harassment allegation it is inappropriate that both parties meet to try to resolve the situation until investigations have been conducted and conclusions drawn. Either party is entitled to bring a representative to these meetings and this should be confirmed to them by the line manager.

5.2   If, and only if, it is agreeable to the complainant, it may be helpful for a HR Partner/Officer to facilitate a meeting between both parties to give the complainant the opportunity to talk to the respondent about the offending behaviour.

5.3   The informal action outlined above may be appropriate in many cases and will often be sufficient to resolve matters. A formal complaint should only be considered as a final option if the unacceptable behaviour begins again or in exceptional circumstance such as the nature of the incident(s) warrants a more formal approach.

5.4   The HR team will help to resolve difficulties by providing independent confidential advice and support. Intervention such as professional mediation or counselling can be provided at any stage in the process. By choosing an informal resolution or mediation an employee does not prejudice their right to have a complaint investigated and considered formally should the issue not be resolved and the alleged harassment or bullying continues.

5.5   A note to file must be provided by the line/investigating manager, following the conclusion of the informal stage of the procedure.

6.   Stage 2 – Formal Action

6.1   Formal action will begin if, after monitoring, the informal action has not been acceptable to the complainant, or if the complainant wishes to progress straight to the formal stage.

6.2   The purpose of the formal stage is to ensure that the perpetrator stops the unwanted and unacceptable behaviour. Investigation in accordance with the Grievance Policy will be used to investigate the case of the complainant and provide a resolution. A thorough and impartial investigation must be undertaken with care and sensitivity.

6.3   Should the investigation find there is a case to answer, the Disciplinary Policy will be invoked, as appropriate. Disciplinary policy | Reading

6.4   The Council must protect the rights of both the respondent as well as the complainant during the investigation, and therefore confidentiality is crucial. The procedure for taking and admitting witness statements will follow the Grievance Policy. Witnesses can request anonymity and this will be granted if appropriate, but ideally it is preferable for witnesses to be known in the interest of openness and natural justice.

6.5   Outcomes of disciplinary hearings will not be disclosed to third parties due to privacy and confidentiality.

7.   Follow-up

7.1   Following a formal bullying or harassment complaint, either party may be concerned about working with the other again. Due regard of such views should be taken into account when offering counselling or mediation and a transfer of one or both parties to another section or department may be appropriate in some cases and without disadvantage to the complainant's terms and conditions where feasible. The situation should be monitored carefully by the line manager going forward, in discussion with both parties.

7.2   If either the complainant or the respondent believes they have not been dealt with fairly, they should appeal using the Grievance Policy.

7.3   Should the complaint be found to be untrue or malicious, disciplinary action may be taken in accordance with the disciplinary policy.

8.   Getting Support

8.1   The Council's Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) provides free, confidential telephone counselling and support and is available 24/7. Telephone 0800 282193 (minicom 0800 0854739) and quote username RBC. Support is also available online at www.livewell.optum.com (Username: RBC).

8.2   Trade Union – members of a trade union can speak to their local representative if they have any concerns. You can find the contact details for trade union representatives on the Council's intranet or by following this link.

8.3   HR and managers - You can also speak to your line manager or to a member of the HR team. You can find the contact details for HR on the Council's intranet or by following this link.

8.4   ACAS (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service). You can contact the ACAS Helpline for free and impartial advice, whether you are an employer, employee or representative.   The telephone number is 0300 123 1100. It is available Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm. You can also use the ACAS Helpline Online tool.

8.5   Samaritans - A charity who can provide emotional support for employees who are struggling to cope and need somebody to listen to them. They can be found at www.samaritans.org.

9.   Data protection and retention of employee records

9.1   The Council will maintain records of investigations into alleged incidents of harassment or bullying, the outcome of the investigations and any corrective or disciplinary action taken, in accordance with its data protection policy. Such data is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of responding to such complaints. It will be held on an individual's personal record file, where appropriate, which is retained for seven years after their date of leaving the Council. Inappropriate access or disclosure of employee data constitutes a data breach and should be reported in accordance with the data protection policy

immediately. It may also constitute a disciplinary offence, which will be dealt with under the Council's [Disciplinary Policy](#).

Employment Stability Agreement

March 2022

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Document History	
Version	1.2 (see below)
Status	Final (subject to approval by Personnel Committee)
Date	March 2022
Target audience	All employees of Reading Borough Council with the exception of Schools-based staff
Ratification	None
Author	HR Employment Services Team
Version control	**Reviewers**
Version 1.1	Initial draft – December 2018
Version 1.2	Amended March 2022

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Additional Guidance

- Organisational Change - Guidance and Support for Employees
- Organisational Change – Managers Guide

(The additional guidance is not part of the policy but is available to assist those involved in the policy. It can be found on the intranet or by clicking on the links above)

1.   Introduction

1.1   This Agreement has been reached between the Council and its recognised trades unions and is effective from **(insert date when agreed by Personnel Committee)**.

1.2   The Council and its recognised trades unions are committed to the principle of employment stability. Both sides recognise that there have been changes in the delivery patterns of local government services. Whilst it is acknowledged that there is a need for adaptability, any changes must be achieved within a context of employment stability.

2.   Scope

2.1   This Agreement applies to all staff employed by Reading Borough Council but excludes school based staff.

3.   Context

3.1   Employment stability in this context means that both sides are committed to the principle that if change is necessary and desirable it is achieved within a framework which seeks to protect and support staff and as far as possible eliminates the need for compulsory redundancies.

3.2   This stability is likely to be achieved by timely, meaningful and open discussion of the challenges facing the Council and a system of redeployment, training and development which aims to retain skilled, committed and experienced staff.

3.3   The Council and recognised trades unions share the aim of ensuring staff who may be affected by change are retained in employment by means of training and development opportunities to retain required skills. If this aim is not achievable, every effort will be made to avoid compulsory redundancy.

4.   Consultation and Staff Involvement Framework

4.1   Key Principles of Consultation

4.1.1   Consultation will be undertaken with trades union representatives and staff when management is considering changes to organisational structures or ways of working. Consultation, negotiation and agreement are at the centre of this joint approach to employment stability. It is recognised that if minor changes within an employee's job description are proposed, then effective communication and consultation should take place with the employee - who should be reminded of their right to involve their trades union in these discussions.

4.1.2   Consultation should commence as soon as it becomes known that there is a possible need to effect organisational change and meaningful details can be tabled.

4.1.3 Consultation will –

♦ include the active involvement not only of the recognised trades unions representing the group of staff affected by the change, but also the staff group itself.

♦ be on a collective <u>and</u> individual basis. Trade Union representation and participation will be allowed during such meetings.

♦ consider not only the staff employed in the work area affected by proposals for change, but also staff for whom the change may have an indirect impact.

4.1.4 Consultation with trades unions is not dependent upon the existence of union members within the group of staff directly affected by the change.

4.2 Involving Staff in Organisational Development

4.2.1 It may be the case that managers will want to involve staff, unions and other stakeholders when reviewing and developing services. Such an approach is to be welcomed as in accordance with the values of the Council and the principles of Best Value. The distinction needs to be made here between the preliminary stages of a review where there may be elements of staff involvement and participation and the point at which more formal consultation arrangements need to be put in place. The key here is that formal consultation should start as soon as the process moves from assessment of options for change to a firm set of proposals for change as described in the previous section above.

4.2.2 To assist the clarity of this process, it is suggested that any proposals for this type of approach should include a timetable which sets out the key stages of the process and when formal consultation stages will be introduced.

5. Consultation in operation

5.1.1 General Principles

(i) The recognised trades union(s) representing the staff affected by the proposals will be given details in advance of the employees.

(ii) When giving the relevant union(s) advance notice of the proposals for change, this may be done on the condition that the details are not released until management has had the opportunity to inform the affected staff (see (iii) below).

(iii) As soon as proposals have been developed there will be a meeting with all the staff affected.

5.1.2 The information to be provided will be as follows –

(iv)   The nature of proposed changes and the reasons for them.

(v)   The likely impact of the proposed changes on the structure and organisation of the service area affected.

(vi)   The details of any proposed changes to job descriptions and roles of individuals.

(vii)   If there are likely to be job losses and, if so, the estimated number.

(viii) A proposed timetable for the introduction of the organisational change including the key elements of consultation with staff and trades unions.

(ix)   At the initial meeting with the staff affected by the proposals management will provide an opportunity for the local union(s) to consult with its members.

5.1.3   During the consultative phase, staff will be given the opportunity to be consulted on an individual as well as a collective basis. Staff can be accompanied by their union representative at such meetings. This is in addition to the requirements to consult with the recognised trades union(s). Management and unions will discuss and agree the most effective method of consultation.

5.2   Statutory Requirements

In addition to the basic principles above, it is recognised that there are statutory periods for consultation where enforced job losses could result. In the event of 100 or more potential job losses, there is a 45 day minimum period and where there are 20 to 99 potential job losses, there is a 30 day minimum period. These statutory periods will be observed. However, the aim of the consultation principles above is to recognise the need to go beyond the statutory minimum.

6.   Achieving Employment Stability

6.1   Initial Steps to Achieve Employment Stability

6.1.1   Steps that can be used to achieve employment stability are -

(i)   A Council wide freeze on recruitment

(ii)   A freeze on recruitment to the service area/directorate within which the potential redundancies have occurred

(iii)   Seeking volunteers for redundancy from within the service area affected or wider

(iv)   Review of the use of consultants and subcontractors

(v)   Review of overtime working

(vi)   Consider the ending of temporary contracts and use of agency staff

6.1.2   Consideration may also be given to introducing a process of 'voluntary redeployment' whereby a member of staff offers to be redeployed to another area of work to enable an 'at risk' employee to be redeployed into that post. Any such arrangement must be permissive and have the agreement of all the parties. In addition, an employee who volunteers for 'voluntary redeployment' will do so on a 'without prejudice' basis.

6.2   Selection Criteria in the Event of Reduced Staffing Levels

6.2.1   If the above measures cannot achieve the desired reduction in staff, then it may be necessary to apply selection criteria. In these circumstances it is necessary to consult with recognised trades unions and staff. Selection criteria will be open, transparent, clear and consistently applied.

6.2.2   There may be situations where the proposed changes involve reductions in staffing levels through the reconfiguration of existing posts. In these circumstances the selection methodology needs to reflect the following principles -

6.2.3   Where a new post in a structure is largely or wholly the same as a job in the old structure, then the postholder in the old post will be slotted in to the new post providing that they meet the basic requirements for the post contained in the person specification. This will take place where the grading of the new post is the same grade or one grade above or below of that of the old post.

6.2.4   Where a new post in a new structure is the result of combining the duties of 2 or more existing posts, then selection for the new post will, in the first instance, be restricted to those staff whose duties have been combined into the new post. This process is called 'ring fencing'.

6.2.5   If selection for a post is through a process involving 'ring fencing', the selection process to be used will be based around the Council's recruitment and selection procedure, adapted where necessary to reflect the circumstances of the situation.

6.2.6   Staff who are selected in this way and who are slotted in to a post at a lower grade are subject to the salary protection provisions of this Agreement.

6.2.7   Arrangements to put the above systems and principles into effect will be consulted upon as part of the reorganisation process.

6.3   Finding Alternative Work - Redeployment

Employment Stability Agreement
Version 1.2 – March 2022
Classification: OFFICIAL

6.3.1   An essential element of this Agreement is a recognition that employment stability is a concept that extends across the organisation and is not restricted to the place or section in which an employee is based.

6.3.2   For this reason, the concept of redeployment across the organisation is seen as an essential tool in achieving the aims of this Agreement.

6.3.3   The practical arrangements for redeployment are subject to the same need for collective and individual consultation as already defined above.

6.3.4   The HR Service will maintain details of staff who are to be redeployed. This information will be used to ascertain whether there is a member of staff to be redeployed before an advertisement for a job vacancy is placed. Such a check is an important preliminary stage before advertising a post and no advertisement should take place until this assessment has been made. In addition, the following principles and arrangements will be applied to staff who are to be redeployed -

6.3.5   Staff who are to be redeployed will be provided with details of all vacancies within the Council that exist at the time that their redeployee status is confirmed.

6.3.6   Staff seeking redeployment will receive 'prior consideration' for vacant posts that occur within the Council. 'Prior consideration' means that, providing the member of staff meets the basic requirements of the person specification, there should be a presumption that they will be offered the vacant post. It may be necessary to assess whether a person meets the basic requirements through a formal interview process.

6.3.7   If the employee is not offered a vacant post, then they should be told the reason(s) why it was felt that they did not meet the basic requirements of the post. This advice should be conveyed verbally and in writing to the employee (see section 9 – Appeal Rights).

6.3.8   Staff who are seeking redeployment will have an initial meeting with their manager and an HR Advisor when they will identify training and development needs which will assist them to be redeployed (ie training in interview skills). During the remaining period of their employment, the member of staff will have regular meetings with their manager and HR Advisor to discuss the progress of their attempts to find alternative employment and to agree further initiatives. These meetings can be requested by the employee.

6.3.9   Staff who are redeployed will have an entitlement to a trial period of 4 weeks in their new post. Within this period both the employee and management will have an opportunity to assess the employee's suitability to carry out the job. If, at the end of this period, the employee or manager feels that the trial period has not been completed successfully, they have the right to end the placement.

6.3.10 In the event that the manager feels that the trial period was unsuccessful, they shall tell the employee the reasons for coming to this decision in writing.

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Classification: OFFICIAL

6.3.11 The trial period described above can be extended by the agreement of both sides.

6.3.12 The period of a trial under this scheme shall not count towards the employee's period of notice in the event that the trial is declared as unsuccessful by management.

6.3.13 There is an equal emphasis placed on a member of staff to take part actively in the process to identify potential reasonable alternative employment and the other processes described above.

6.3.14 An employee who is eligible for a trial period under this Agreement is not restricted to the number of such trials that can be undertaken during the period of notice

6.4 Salary Protection in the Event of Redeployment

6.4.1 A member of staff who has been redeployed to a post with a lower level of salary will be entitled to a period of salary protection.

6.4.2 Salary protection will be paid at the rate of pay that the person was on at the time of their redeployment, or one grade above the substantive grade to which the person is redeployed (whichever is the lower).

6.4.3 This rate of pay in 6.4.2 above will be frozen at this level for 4 years from the date of redeployment. There will be no incremental increases, however, national pay awards will be paid in the normal way. At the end of this period of protection, the rate of pay will become that for the post being filled.

6.4.4 Examples of pay protection calculations:

Example 1
An employee on RG5b is redeployed into a new post at RG4m. They will remain on RG5b for 4 years and will not receive any further increments although they will receive cost of living awards. At the end of 4 years, their pay will reduce to the top of RG4m.

Example 2
An employee on RG5b is redeployed into a new post at RG4b. Their pay will reduce to the top of R4m (i.e. one grade above the grade for their new role) from the date they start the new role and will not receive any further increments although they will receive cost of living awards. At the end of 4 years, their pay will reduce to the top of RG4b.

7. Training and Development

7.1 This part of the consultative stage requires an assessment of the skills needed in any new proposed organisational/structural arrangements compared to the skills that staff currently have. If the management assessment is that there is a

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'gap' then this assessment and proposed options for filling the gap should be drawn up and consulted upon with staff and trades unions. The presumption here is that staff will be supported both financially and with reasonable time off to gain the experience or skill needed to meet this 'gap analysis'.

7.2 The key consideration is whether or not it is practicable for an employee to achieve the new skills required within a reasonable period of time. 'Reasonable' in this context is not defined as each case must be decided upon its merits and will vary from case to case.

8. Safeguards where alternative work is not practicable

8.1 There may be occasions where despite the operation of this Agreement it has not been possible to safeguard the continued employment of staff within the section or department in which they are currently placed. Such circumstances will be the exception and such a conclusion will only be drawn where all other methods of protecting employment referred to above have failed.

8.2 Any proposal that includes the possibility that an enforced redundancy may arise should be notified to the Joint Trade Unions.

8.3 Redundancy

8.3.1 If it has not been possible to redeploy a member of staff, then, at the conclusion of the consultation period, those individuals identified as being 'at risk' will be given notice of redundancy.

8.3.2 The period of time allowed for redeployment may be extended beyond the period of formal consultation by joint agreement between management and trades unions, but will not normally exceed 90 days.

8.3.3 Staff will be expected to work through their period of notice unless it is felt by management that this would be inappropriate or impractical. In these situations the member of staff will be dismissed by reason of redundancy and given pay in lieu of notice.

8.3.4 A member of staff working their notice period will be entitled to the same support and assistance in obtaining further employment as under the 'at risk' stages of the process.

8.3.5 If no suitable employment has been identified at the end of the notice period, then the member of staff will be dismissed by reason of redundancy.

8.4 Rights to a Redundancy Payment

8.4.1 A member of staff will lose the right to a redundancy payment in the event that they unreasonably refuse an offer of suitable alternative employment.

8.4.2 An 'unreasonable refusal' is not defined in statute, but there is indicative case law that will help the Council come to a view as to what is a reasonable or unreasonable refusal.

8.4.3 As a general rule, offers of alternative employment which are on the same grade or which protect the earnings of the member of staff under the salary protection arrangements in this procedure and which are within the geographical boundaries of the Council will be regarded as being 'reasonable'.

8.5   Time off to look for alternative employment

8.5.1 Staff who are under formal notice of potential redundancy may have reasonable time off with pay to attend external job interviews. This right does not apply to staff who are 'at risk', but requests for time off from 'at risk' staff will not be unreasonably refused.

8.6   Counter Notice

8.6.1 A member of staff who is given formal notice of redundancy may, if they wish, give the Council 'counter notice' – that is notification of their intention to leave prior to the end date in the employer's notice. Such 'counter notice' will not be unreasonably refused and will be without prejudice to the member of staff's rights to receive a redundancy payment in accordance with the terms of the Local Government Redundancy Scheme.

8.7   Redundancy Payments

8.7.1 Calculations of redundancy payments will be made in accordance with the Local Government Redundancy Payments Regulations (as amended). There is no automatic entitlement to enhanced payments under this scheme, but consideration to the granting of enhanced payments will be given. Any variation to the amount of redundancy compensation is at the sole discretion of the Council's Personnel Committee.

9.   Appeal Rights

9.1   Staff who are aggrieved about the application of any element of this procedure should, in the first instance, seek to raise their concerns informally with their line manager or through the informal and formal consultation process described above – either individually or with the support of their trades union. It is likely that many of the issues that cause staff concern can be successfully addressed through this approach.

9.2   If, however, these concerns cannot be addressed through these means, the employee shall have the right to make a formal appeal to their Assistant/Deputy Director or Director. The appeal will be heard by the Assistant/Deputy Director or Director for the service being reorganised or, if they are not available, by an Assistant/Deputy Director or Director from another directorate.

9.3   An employee may appeal against –

- selection for redeployment
- an interpretation and/or application of this agreement (unless the interpretation/application has been agreed as part of the union/management consultation process)
- formal notice of redundancy

9.4   The appeals will be heard within the timescales set out below. The lodging of an appeal should not, in itself, delay the application of any change process. If an appeal is heard after a change has taken place, then this will not prejudice the rights of the employee making the appeal and cannot be used by management as a reason for not upholding the appeal. It is in the interests of both sides that appeals are addressed and resolved before the proposed change takes effect and every effort should be made to ensure that this happens within the timescales set out below.

9.5   Formal Appeal

9.5.1   A formal appeal to the Assistant/Deputy Director or Director must be lodged in writing within 5 working days of the event complained of (eg selection for redeployment). The written submission should state the grounds for the appeal as well as the reasoning for the appeal in summary form. If the appeal is against dismissal, the appeal will be heard by a panel which will be chaired by a senior manager at Assistant/Deputy Director or Director level who has not been involved in the decision to impose dismissal on the employee, together with the Chair of Personnel Committee and one other member of Personnel Committee or their substitute(s). The hearing manager/panel will be advised by an HR professional and a note taker will also be present.

9.5.2   The Assistant/Deputy Director or Director /panel will consider the representations made by the employee within 5 working days of receipt of the appeal. The Assistant/Deputy Director or Director will receive verbal as well as written submissions from the employee and/or their trades union and the relevant manager responsible for the reorganisation. The Assistant/Deputy Director or Director /panel shall also be advised by an HR advisor.

9.5.3   The Assistant/Deputy Director or Director /panel shall notify the employee of the outcome of the appeal in writing within 5 working days of any hearing convened for that purpose.

9.5.4   The decision of the Appeal shall be final. There is no further right of appeal.

9.5.5   The above time limits during the appeal stage can be varied by joint agreement.

Relocation and Accommodation Schemes Policy

March 2022

Document History	
Version	1.0 (see below)
Status	Final (subject to approval by Personnel Committee)
Date	March 2022
Target audience	All employees of Reading Borough Council with the exception of schools-based staff for whom alternative procedures apply
Ratification	None
Author	HR Employment Services Team

Version control	Reviewers
Version 1.0	March 2022

Table of Contents

1.   Objectives and scope

1.1.   The Relocation and Accommodation Scheme Policy has been designed to assist new employees who need to move to a new house in the Reading area as a direct result of taking up a permanent appointment with Reading Borough Council.

1.2.   The policy applies to all those employed by the Council on a permanent contract.

1.3   This policy covers three separate schemes:

- Relocation Scheme – UK Appointments
- Relocation Scheme – Overseas Appointments
- Accommodation Allowance Scheme

2.   Conditions for all schemes

2.1.   This is a reimbursement scheme. Original valid receipts must be submitted for expenditure already made. The Council will reimburse the claims in monthly salaries.

2.2.   Vacancies will be identified by each directorate's DMT as attracting the relocation and/or accommodation allowances before an advert is placed.

2.3.   A post will only qualify for access to the scheme if it has received prior approval by the relevant Assistant/Deputy Director or Director.

2.4.   Approval must be clear on the Request to Fill form prior to advertising the post. The criteria are as follows:

- It is a recruitment incentive and the post has been agreed by the relevant Assistant/Deputy Director or Director
- To enable an employee to take up appointment with the Council
- That appropriate funds are available within the service area's budget

2.5   The offer of any relocation or accommodation allowance set out below will remain available/payable for **one year** from the employee's start date with Reading Borough Council. Where circumstances prevent this, a request for an extension may be made to the relevant Assistant/Deputy Director or Director, however, costs must be paid before the end of the tax year following the tax year in which the employee started their job.

2.6   All offers of the allowances are subject to the employee entering into a legal agreement with the Council.

3.   Relocation Scheme – UK Appointments

3.1.   An application under the scheme should normally be made within four weeks of an employee's start date even if expenses are not to be paid out immediately. The completed and authorised application form should be sent to Payroll pending further

claims for assistance. Evidence of circumstances and eligibility will be required prior to any payments being made under the scheme.

3.2. Claim periods and eligible expenses which do not attract tax or national insurance (NI) are determined by HMRC. Further details can be discussed with Payroll.

3.3. The postholder must remain with Reading Borough Council for a minimum of 3 years (permanent and fixed term) otherwise a proportion of the assistance must be repaid - this can be done through direct deduction from salary.

3.4. Employees must repay all of the relocation allowance (or a proportion of) received if they:

- Do not relocate within one year of commencement of employment
- Do not remain with Reading Borough Council for at least 3 years
- Either knowingly or unwittingly receive expenses for claims not permitted by the scheme, or in excess of the total permitted.

3.5. Repayment is not required if the reason for not remaining with Reading Borough Council for 3 years is related to redundancy or ill health.

3.6. Relocation reimbursements are treated as part of earnings for tax and NI contributions purposes. However, there is a HMRC limit of £8,000 which is exempt from tax and NI contributions as long as certain conditions are met.

3.7. The Council has set an overall maximum figure of £8,000 (not including Accommodation Allowance).

3.8. Employees should not assume that any assistance will be paid until individual particular circumstances are discussed and agreed with the Service Manager, who will submit a request to the Assistant/Deputy Director or Director for approval. Any questions about the scheme should be directed to the HR Services Manager.

3.9. No additional paid time off will be given for moving house.

4. Eligibility for the Relocation Scheme – UK Appointments

4.1. The employee must currently live more than 50 miles (by the most direct transport route) away from the Civic Offices, or their designated place of work within the borough boundary. The employee must move to within 25 miles of their place of work (by the most direct route).

4.2. The employee or their partner should not be receiving relocation assistance from another party, and the property that is being bought/sold or rented must be the main residence; the scheme is not available to purchase a second property.

5. What can be claimed under the Relocation Scheme – UK appointments

5.1. The employee must provide evidence of expenditure, and evidence of quotations, as applicable, before reimbursement is made. The expenditure must relate to:

- Disposal/intended disposal of old residence
- Acquisition/intended acquisition of new residence
- Transport belongings
- Travelling & subsistence
- Essential goods for new residence
- Rental fees

5.2. House Sale/Purchase

For house sale - the property must have been owned or jointly owned by the employee and relinquishes their rights to it

For house purchase - the property must be acquired or jointly acquired by the employee

a) Legal/Estate Agent Fees

- Reimbursement of necessary and unavoidable fees associated with moving house **up to a maximum of** £5,000. This will include agreed legal and estate agent fees for the sale of an existing home and for the purchase of a new property, including mortgage survey fee, stamp duty and other legal costs. This may include reimbursement for the property survey fee that your Bank / Building Society / other lender **requires** you to undertake, but will not include the cost of any additional survey which you choose to have undertaken.
- Three **detailed** quotations for legal costs must be obtained. The employee may choose any one, but you will only be reimbursed for the cost of the lowest.

5.3. Rental Fees

For termination costs, the tenancy must have been held or jointly held by the employee and they must have relinquished their rights to it

For new rented accommodation, the new tenancy must be held or jointly held by the employee

a) For a non-homeowner seeking rented accommodation any finding/letting agency fees will be reimbursed **up to a maximum of** £5,000, including fees to cover early termination of tenancy costs.
b) Security deposits are not expenses as they are returnable and therefore cannot be claimed.
c) Rental fees cannot be claimed in additional to house sale/purchase fees or in addition to the Accommodation allowance

5.4. Settling In Allowance

This is a maximum reimbursable sum of £3,000, **in total** to cover any combination of the following, available to house purchase and rented accommodation where appropriate:

a) <u>Lodging Allowance</u>
For lodging in temporary accommodation pending the house move (house purchase only), OR securing a longer-term rental property for a maximum period of six months or sooner.

b) <u>Removal Expenses</u>
Up to 100% of approved expenses for **one** move to either rented accommodation or house purchase (i.e. removal costs and insurance in transit). This also applies to removal from temporary rented accommodation to a permanent address.

Three written quotations **must** be obtained; the employee may choose any one, but we will only reimburse the amount of the lowest quotation.

c) <u>Travel Allowance</u>
An employee may claim standard second class public transport or petrol costs (whichever is cheapest) for journeys from home to work pending the permanent house move.

d) <u>Storage of Furniture</u>
Up to 100% of the necessary cost of storing furniture and effects. Again, 3 written quotations must be obtained – an employee may choose any one of the 3 but we will only reimburse the lowest one.

e) <u>Search for accommodation</u>
An employee may claim standard second class public transport or petrol costs (whichever is cheaper) for journeys from home to the Reading area to search for accommodation pending the move to either rented or house purchase. No travel allowance for any subsequent move.

f) <u>Other Incidental Expenses</u>
<u>Only allowable if the employee relinquishes their rights to the old house i.e. sold/tenancy ended and acquires an interest in the new home i.e. house purchase/new tenancy</u>

An employee may claim payment for the replacement of items that are **essential** for them to live in the property you have purchased or rented, not desirable items such as TV's etc. This is intended to replace essential items that are unsuitable for the new property, for example, curtains and carpets. You must offset any amounts received from selling unsuitable items.

Only one claim will be possible for either a move into rented accommodation or the purchase of a new home.

5.5. The Relocation Scheme provides for most situations which are likely to arise when a new employee takes up employment. In the event that an item arises that is not covered but it is clear is within the spirit of the scheme, then agreement can be

obtained from the Assistant/Deputy Director or Director to seek discretion to vary the scheme. Any additional item may be subject to tax if it falls outside of the HMRC guidelines.

5.6. Employees will be entitled to the level of reimbursement which applies on their start date with the Council.

5.7. **Receipts are required for ALL claims - without them payment cannot be made.**

6. Relocation Scheme - Overseas Appointments

6.1. The Relocation Scheme (Overseas Appointments) has been designed to assist employees who need to move to the Reading area from overseas **as a direct result of** taking up a permanent appointment with Reading Borough Council.

6.2. All offers of relocation allowance are subject to employees entering into a legal agreement with the Council, employees must undertake to work for the Council for 1 year from the start date otherwise a proportion of the assistance must be repaid - this can be done through direct deduction from salary.

6.3. If the employee leaves Reading Borough Council before 1 year, a proportion of the assistance received must be repaid on the basis of the weeks not worked. The Council will also be able to deduct any money owing to it from salaries.

7. What can be claimed under the Relocation Scheme (Overseas Appointments)

7.1. The Relocation Scheme (Overseas Appointments) provides for reimbursement of a range of incidental costs and is subject to a maximum reimbursement figure of £1,000. All reimbursement is subject to documented evidence of expenditure, and evidence of quotations as applicable.

7.2. The maximum reimbursable sum of £1,000 can be used to cover costs towards any combination of the following:

      a) Removal Expenses – Including flights, visa, checks etc
      b) When the employee moves into the Reading area a claim may be made for required professional fees (for example, HCPC fees for Social Workers)

7.3. In addition to this financial assistance, employees from overseas can access the Relocation Scheme (UK Appointments) in relation to rental fees (see above), appropriate settling in allowances (see above) and, subject to approval, an accommodation allowance subsidy.

8. Accommodation Allowance Scheme

8.1. The Accommodation Allowance Scheme provides support towards the cost of relocating to Reading and the additional costs of paying a mortgage or rent.

8.2.   If the employee is eligible, this allowance can be claimed in addition to the Council's Relocation Scheme.

8.3.   The accommodation allowance will stop if the employee ceases to live at the property on which the subsidy is paid (unless this is as a result of being given notice on the property by the landlord or other reasons outside of the employee's control e.g. flood or fire) or if they leave Council employment.

8.4.   The accommodation allowance will form part of remuneration and an employee will be taxed at either standard rate or higher rate depending on personal circumstances.

8.5.   Evidence will be required to show that an employee is either paying a new mortgage or has entered into a new rental agreement.

9.   What can be claimed under the Accommodation Allowance Scheme

9.1.   The allowance has been set up to help employees moving from an area of lower house prices (over 50 miles from Reading Civic Offices) to Reading. This is a fixed payment to any employee with the qualifying criteria, irrespective of the region of the UK from which they are relocating.

9.2.   The scheme pays a monthly allowance for up to 3 years from the completion of a new house purchase or commencement of a rental tenancy. The payment is based on a sliding scale over the 3 year period.

9.3.   Employees will be entitled to the level of reimbursement which applies on their start date with the Council.

9.4.   The level of accommodation allowance will be reviewed on a regular basis.

9.5.   The Inland Revenue sees the allowance as part of an individual's assessable income and it is therefore subject to tax and national insurance contributions.

9.6.   The fixed payment over 3 years is as follows:

Year 1 - £300 per month
Year 2 - £200 per month
Year 3 - £100 per month

10. How to claim reimbursement – all schemes

Receipts are required for all claims. Payments cannot be made without them.

STEP 1
The employee should consult the guidance outlined above. The level of assistance required should be discussed between the employee and manager, checking eligibility and documentary evidence to support the request.

STEP 2
Complete the appropriate form for Relocation Assistance (appendices), which must be sent to the relevant Assistant/Deputy Director or Director for approval. A Legal Agreement (3 years for UK appointments, 1 year for overseas appointments) will be entered into by the employee and the signature witnessed by a non-family member over the age of 18.

STEP 3
Following approval, the claim form can be submitted (Appendix I). Receipts and any other necessary documentation, for example, quotes must be attached. Please note that payment will not be made without the relevant receipt(s).

Payment is made through the monthly payroll system so it will appear as part of an employee's salary. It is therefore important that claims are submitted to Payroll by the 10th of the month. Claims submitted after the 10th will be paid in the following month's salary.

A record of all claims made will be held on an employee's personal file.

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RELOCATION SCHEME – UK APPOINTMENTS APPLICATION FORM

Please ensure that you have read the explanatory notes on the scheme, and that you have discussed your application with your manager. The decision column must be completed by the Assistant/Deputy Director or Director.

NAME: START DATE:

POST TITLE: SERVICE:

PRESENT / FORMER ADDRESS:

CONTACT TELEPHONE NO: HOUSE MOVE DATE:

NEW ADDRESS / INTENDED ADDRESS OR LOCATION:

ITEMS FOR MANAGER APPROVAL Manager/employee to tick boxes as required Director		**DECISION** Assistant
House Sale / Purchase Costs		
For sale of existing property and purchase of new property (legal fees etc)	☐	YES/NO
Rental fees	☐	YES/NO
Settling In Allowances		
Removal Expense	☐	YES/NO
Lodging Allowances	☐	YES/NO
Travel Allowances	☐	YES/NO
Storage of Furniture	☐	YES/NO
Search for Accommodation	☐	YES/NO
Incidental Expenses	☐	YES/NO

EMPLOYEE DECLARATION

Please approve my application for those items of financial assistance that I have requested, the details of which we have discussed.

I agree to comply with all the conditions of the scheme set out in the explanatory notes, a copy of which I have read.

Employee name:_____ Signature:_____

Date:_____

MANAGER DECLARATION

I confirm that this application is made in accordance with the conditions of the scheme. I have received confirmation from the Assistant/Deputy Director or Director that this is post has been identified as qualifying, and that this can be evidenced from the list held by the Assistant/Deputy Director or Director in relation to this scheme.

Manager name: _____ Signature: _____

Date: _____

_____

DECISION OF ASSISTANT/DEPUTY DIRECTOR OR DIRECTOR

This application for assistance **IS** approved as detailed above.

Name: _____ Signature:_____

Date: _____

This application for assistance **IS NOT** approved as detailed above. My reasons for this are as follows:

_____

_____

_____

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Date:_____

If approved, please send the original form to Payroll and give a copy to the employee.

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<u>LEGAL AGREEMENT – UK APPOINTMENTS</u>

<u>TO BE ATTACHED TO REQUEST FOR</u>

<u>RELOCATION SCHEME TO BE SUBMITTED AT THE SAME TIME</u>

I,   (name)

of : (address),

being over the age of 18, acknowledge that I have received the sums itemised in the schedule hereto paid to me by Reading Borough Council ("the Council") in accordance with the terms of the above mentioned Scheme and in consideration of those payments. I HEREBY UNDERTAKE:

    a.   to remain in the service of the Council for a period of three years from the date on

       which my employment with the Council commenced,

       namely ...……………...........................

    b.   in the event of my employment with the Council ceasing or being terminated for any reason whatsoever within the said three year period, to repay to the Council a proportion of the sums I have received and the further payments (if any) mentioned in the said Schedule, and I agree that the amount to be repaid shall be proportionate to the number of weeks by which my employment by the Council falls short of the said three year period. I also agree that any part of a week shall count as a full week for the purpose of this calculation.

    c.   I further agree that any such sum owing by me to the Council may be deducted by the Council from my salary/wages.

I acknowledge that notwithstanding the undertakings herein contained the Council shall be entitled at any time to terminate my employment in accordance with the conditions of service under which I am employed and relevant employment law.

DATED this   day of

Signature: _____

Signature of Witness: _____

Address of Witness: _____

_____

Occupation:_____

RELOCATION SCHEME CLAIM FORM

Name:_____ Position:_____

Service: _____ _____Payroll No:_____

	£
Legal and Estate Agent's Fees (lowest of 3 quotes) **Please ensure all receipts and quotes are attached to this form**	
Legal fees Details:	
Estate Agent's fees Details:	
Rental fees Details:	
TOTAL (max up to £5,000):	
Settling In Allowances **Please ensure all receipts and quotes are attached to this form**	
Removal Expenses (lowest of 3 quotes)	
Lodging Allowance Details:	
Travelling Costs (from existing home to Reading standard public transport or petrol costs) (please attach details of journeys)	
Storage of furniture (lowest of 3 quotes)	
Search for Accommodation Details of journeys:	
Other Incidental Expenses (Please offset any amount received from selling goods from the old home that were unsuitable – HMRC requirement) Details:	
TOTAL (max up to £3,000	

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Details of Claim

I declare that I have actually incurred the above expenditure, and attach documents to prove it. The expenditure is incurred directly as a result of my taking up appointment with the Council. The expenditure is additional to, and not a replacement for, expenditure which I would have incurred normally.

Total Claim amount £_____

Signed: (Employee)_____   Date:_____

Name (Employee)_____

Authorised by (Budget Holder)_____   Date: _____

Name (Budget Holder)_____

Please charge to cost code   **R**☐☐☐☐-☐☐☐☐-☐☐☐☐☐-☐☐

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RELOCATION SCHEME - OVERSEAS APPOINTMENTS APPLICATION FORM

Please ensure that you have read the explanatory notes on the scheme, and that you have discussed your application with your manager. The decision column must be completed by the Assistant/Deputy Director or Director.

NAME: START DATE:

POST TITLE: SERVICE:

PRESENT / FORMER ADDRESS:

CONTACT TELEPHONE NO: HOUSE MOVE DATE:

NEW ADDRESS / INTENDED ADDRESS OR LOCATION:

ITEMS FOR MANAGER APPROVAL Manager/Employee tick boxes as required		**DECISION** Assistant Director
Support Expenses (Flights, visa etc)	☐	YES / NO

TOTAL (max up to £1,000

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<u>EMPLOYEE DECLARATION</u>

Please approve my application for relocation assistance that I have requested, the details of which we have discussed.

I agree to comply with all the conditions of the scheme set out in the explanatory notes, a copy of which I have read.

Employee name: _____ Signature:_____

Date:_____

<u>MANAGER DECLARATION</u>

I confirm that this application is made in accordance with the conditions of the scheme. I have received confirmation from the Assistant/Deputy Director or Director that this is post has been identified as qualifying, and that this can be evidenced from the list held by the Assistant/Deputy Director or Director in relation to this scheme.

Manager name:_____ Signature:_____

Date:_____

_____

DECISION OF ASSISTANT/DEPUTY DIRECTOR OR DIRECTOR

This application for relocation assistance **IS** approved as detailed above.

Name:_____ Signature: _____

Date:_____

This application for relocation assistance **IS NOT** approved as detailed above. My reasons for this are as follows:

_____

_____

_____

Name:_____ Signature: _____

Date:_____

If approved, please send the original form to Payroll and give a copy to the employee.

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LEGAL AGREEMENT

TO BE ATTACHED TO REQUEST FOR

RELOCATION SCHEME (OVERSEAS APPOINTMENT) TO BE SUBMITTED AT THE SAME TIME

I, (name)

of (address) :

being over the age of 18, acknowledge that I have received the sums itemised in the schedule hereto paid to me by Reading Borough Council ("the Council") in accordance with the terms of the above Scheme and in consideration of those payments I HEREBY UNDERTAKE:

a.   to remain in the service of the Council for a period of one year from the date on

which my employment with the Council commenced,

namely ...……………...........................

b.   in the event of my employment with the Council ceasing or being terminated for any reason whatsoever within the said one year period, to repay to the Council a proportion of the sums I have received and the further payments (if any) mentioned in the said Schedule, and I agree that the amount to be repaid shall be proportionate to the number of weeks by which my employment by the Council falls short of the said one year period. I also agree that any part of a week shall count as a full week for the purpose of this calculation.

c.   I further agree that any such sum owing by me to the Council may be deducted by the Council from my salary/wages.

I acknowledge that notwithstanding the undertakings herein contained the Council shall be entitled at any time to terminate my employment in accordance with the conditions of service under which I am employed and relevant employment law.

DATED this   day of

Signature: _____

Signature of Witness: _____

Address: of Witness: _____

_____

Occupation: _____

Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

OVERSEAS APPOINTMENT CLAIM FORM

Name:_____ Position:_____

Service: _____

Payroll Number: _____

_____

£

Incidental /Settling In Expenses

Please ensure all receipts and quotes are attached to this form

Removal Expenses – Including Flights, Visa, other checks

HCPC Fees

TOTAL (up to a max up to £1,000)

Details of Claim

I declare that I have actually incurred the above expenditure, and attach documents to prove it. The expenditure is incurred directly as a result of my taking up appointment with the Council. The expenditure is additional to, and not a replacement for, expenditure which I would have incurred normally.

Total Claim Amount £_____

Signed (Employee) _____ Date:_____

Name (Employee) _____

Authorised (Budget Holder)_____ Date: _____

Name (Budget Holder)_____

Please charge to cost code   **R**[ ][ ][ ]-[ ][ ][ ]-[ ][ ][ ][ ]-[ ][ ]

Classification: OFFICIAL

Reading Borough Council
Working better with you

ACCOMMODATION ALLOWANCE SCHEME APPLICATION FORM

Please ensure that you have read the explanatory notes on the scheme, and that you have discussed your application with your manager. The decision column must be completed by the Assistant/Deputy Director or Director.

NAME: START DATE:

POST TITLE: SERVICE:

PRESENT / FORMER ADDRESS: PAYROLL NUMBER:

CONTACT TELEPHONE NO: HOUSE MOVE DATE:

NEW ADDRESS / INTENDED ADDRESS OR LOCATION:

ITEMS FOR MANAGER APPROVAL	DECISION
Manager/Employee tick as required	Assistant Director
	YES / NO
Accommodation Allowance	
(Evidence must be attached)	

EMPLOYEE DECLARATION

Please approve my application for accommodation allowance that I have requested, the details of which we have discussed.

I agree to comply with all the conditions of the scheme set out in the explanatory notes, a copy of which I have read.

Employee name:_____Signature: _____

Date:_____

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MANAGER DECLARATION

I confirm that this application is made in accordance with the conditions of the scheme. I have received confirmation from the Assistant/Deputy Director or Director that this is post has been identified as qualifying, and that this can be evidenced from the list held by Assistant/Deputy Director or Director in relation to this scheme.

Manager name:_____ Signature:_____

Date:_____

_____

DECISION OF ASSISTANT/DEPUTY DIRECTOR OR DIRECTOR

This application for accommodation allowance **IS** approved as detailed above.

Name: _____

Signature:_____

Date:_____

This application for accommodation **IS NOT** approved as detailed above. My reasons for this are as follows:

_____

_____

_____

Name:_____

Signature: _____

Date:_____

Shift and Unsocial Hours Allowance Policy

March 2022

Document History	
Version	1.0 (see below)
Status	Final (subject to approval by Personnel Committee)
Date	March 2022
Target audience	All employees of Reading Borough Council with the exception of Schools-based staff for whom alternative procedures apply
Ratification	None
Author	HR Employment Services Team

Version control	Reviewers
Version 0.0	Originally issued in June 2010

Table of Contents

1. Introduction

1.1. This policy has been designed to provide a consistent approach to payment for shift and unsocial hours working.

1.2. The payment framework in this policy has been developed to provide a means of recognising unsocial and shift hours working that causes some disruption to employees' work life balance

2. Scope

2.1. The policy will apply to all staff on National Joint Council terms and conditions of employment (staff on grades RG1-10) who work unsocial hours / shift arrangements. It does not apply to those on flexitime and flexible working arrangements.

3. Definitions

Unsocial hours	All hours outside plain hours
Plain hours	7am to 8pm, Monday to Friday
Extended Hours Periods	Hours outside plain hours that are split into two periods as set out below
Extended Hours Period 1	5am to 7am, Monday to Friday 8pm to 10pm, Monday to Friday 5am to 10pm, Saturday and Sunday
Extended Hours Period 2	10pm to 5am, Monday to Sunday
A shift	The period of hours a person works during each working day; this could be, for instance, up to 10 hours and could be split into two
Rota period	This is usually 4 weeks. services may determine the need for different rota periods, in which case hour requirements within the criteria should be proportioned accordingly

Types of Shift Allowances:

Type	Description	% Payment
Static	Same hours each day Same days of the week	5
Alternating	Same hours each day but days move throughout the week Same days of the week but hours move throughout the day	10
Rotating	Days move throughout the week and hours move throughout the day	15
Rolling	Days move throughout the week and hours move throughout 24 hours each day	20
Split Shift	An additional premium for staff undertaking spilt shifts where staff are required to undertake at least two shifts during a working day and the shifts are at least two hours apart	4

4.   Principles

4.1.   The underlying principle is that working hours arrangements under this policy are determined by the needs of the service and not chosen to meet the needs of individual employees. If the needs of the service change resulting in different hours needing to be worked, then shift patterns and payments will be varied in accordance with this policy.

4.2.   The agreed percentage will be paid as a percentage of the whole salary on a monthly basis.

4.3.   Working patterns will be examined and the percentage determined by the HR and OD service to ensure consistency and fairness.

4.4.   The percentage of shift allowance applied is in accordance with how unsocial/ shift arrangements meet the criteria set out in the flowchart in Appendix 1.

4.5.   If employees in receipt of a shift percentage are required to work on a bank/public holiday as part of their normal working week or pattern, they will not be entitled to receive any additional payment for working these days. They will receive a paid day off in lieu to compensate for their entitlement to a bank or public holiday.

A GUIDE TO SHIFT ALLOWANCE

```
┌─────────────────────┐
│ Do you work outside │
│    plain hours?     │
└─────────────────────┘
         │ Yes
         ▼
┌─────────────────────┐  Yes   ┌──────────────────────┐  Yes   ┌──────────────────┐  Yes   ┌──────────────────────┐  Yes   ┌──────────────────┐  Yes   ┌──────────────────────┐  Yes   ┌──────────────────────┐
│ Work at least 2     │───────▶│ Works on average 6   │───────▶│ Work at least 3  │───────▶│ Works more than 8    │───────▶│ Do hours or days │───────▶│ Do hours and days    │───────▶│ Works more than 12   │
│ shifts per week?    │        │ full hours outside   │        │ shifts per week? │        │ full hours outside   │        │ change as a      │        │ move as part of a    │        │ full hours outside   │
└─────────────────────┘        │ plain hours in a     │        └──────────────────┘        │ plain hours in a     │        │ regular pattern  │        │ regular pattern,     │        │ plain hours in a 4-  │
                               │ 4-week rota period;  │                                     │ 4-week rota period   │        │ every week?      │        │ including earlies or │        │ week rota period     │
                               │ or 1 Saturday or     │                                     └──────────────────┘        └──────────────────┘        │ lates?               │        └──────────────────────┘
                               │ Sunday per rota      │                                                                                              └──────────────────────┘
                               │ period               │
                               └──────────────────────┘
```

No / No / No / No / No / No / No / Yes

5% shift

10% shift

20% shift — Yes — Do hours include earlies **and** lates **and** move to include nights, i.e. beyond midnight? (Service operates 24/7) — Yes — Works more than 15 full hours outside plain hours in a 4-week rota period — Yes — Do hours **and** days move as part of a significantly irregular pattern (e.g. mixture of earlies and lates and the days off change and there is minimal regularity or repetition to the rota)

Not eligible for any shift allowance

15% shift

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Standby & Call Out Policy

March 2022

Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

Document History	
Version	1.0 (see below)
Status	Final (subject to approval by Personnel Committee)
Date	March 2022
Target audience	All employees of Reading Borough Council with the exception of Schools-based staff for whom alternative procedures apply
Ratification	None
Author	HR Employment Services Team

Version control	Reviewers
Version 0.0	Originally issued in June 2011

Table of Content

1. Purpose

1.1. To ensure a consistent approach to the implementation of standby and call-out arrangements; and to ensure employees who are required to provide standby and call-out in order to respond to service needs and operational requirements are rewarded on a consistent, fair and equitable basis.

2. Scope

2.1. This scheme applies to employees on NJC terms and conditions of employment at Reading Borough Council.

3. Standby

3.1. This is where an employee is expected to be readily available outside of core service hours to work and to physically attend, as required, to deal with emergencies or urgent matters which cannot wait until the core service hours. Standby is different to shift allowance where an employee is paid to attend work at a scheduled time.

4. Standby Payments

4.1. Standby payments are paid at a standard rate of £1.125 per hour for all employees.

4.2. They are based on an agreed duty rota of employees.

4.3. The standby payment is for each week of 131 hours of availability (i.e. 24 hours x 7 days a week = 168 minus 37 hours) an employee is required to standby. Standby for part of a day / week will be paid pro rata of 131 hours.

4.4. As standby payments are based on 131 hours, if an employee is on standby for a Bank Holiday, the additional hours (i.e. 7.4) need to be submitted on a timesheet through iTrent Employee Self-Service.

4.5. The amounts paid in relation to 4.1 and 4.4 are adjusted in line with the NJC Pay Award on an annual basis.

5. Call-out

5.1. Whilst on standby, an employee may be required to respond to a matter either remotely or by attending physically.

6. Call-out Payments

6.1.   The appropriate <u>overtime rate</u> will be paid when an employee is called out. The first 15 minutes per session of call out (e.g. per day or shift) are included in the standby payment.

6.2.   If an employee is called out on a Bank Holiday, they will be paid the appropriate rate and receive time off in lieu for the time they have been called out (not the whole day).

6.3.   Call-out payments will only be paid when an employee has actually undertaken the call-out duties.

7.   Employees' Responsibilities

7.1.   There is no expectation that an employee must remain at their home whilst on standby provided they can be directly contactable by phone and remain in an area with good mobile phone reception in order to be ready to deal with emergencies or matters within an agreed time (usually 30 minutes).

7.2.   Employees must remain capable to carry out the duties required.

7.3.   Employees must be able to attend physically within an agreed time if the matter cannot be dealt with remotely (usually 30 minutes).

7.4.   When employees are scheduled to be on the standby rota, they must respond when called. If the employee is sick, they must inform their line managers as soon as possible so that alternative arrangements can be made.

8.   Managers' Responsibilities

8.1.   Managers should ensure that:

- Duty rotas and call-out experience are kept under review with reference to Working Time Regulations and health, safety and welfare considerations
- Employees on standby keep themselves available for return to work
- Records are kept of call out time and that Payroll are informed that it is call-out not ordinary overtime

9.   Other Standby/Call Out Arrangements

9.1.   Where there is a need for employees to return to work in case of emergency but are not required to standby as defined above, staff will receive a payment when returning to work, but there will be no regular standby payment.

9.2.   It is intended that the current Emergency Response Team (ERT) arrangements continue. At times of potential emergency, for instance risk of flooding, volunteers may be asked to standby under the above definition and

in these circumstances will be paid the standby rate for the number of hours they standby, and call-out payments if called to return to work.

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Reading
BOROUGH COUNCIL **Equality Impact Assessment**

Provide basic details

Policies
Directorate: Resources
Service: HR and Organisational Development
Name and job title of person doing the assessment
Name: Teresa Kaine
Job Title: HR Services Manager
Date of assessment: March 2022

Scope your proposal

What is the aim of your policy or new service/what changes are you proposing?

Review/introduce new employment policies covering:

- Bullying and Harassment

- Employment Stability Agreement

- Relocation and Accommodation Policy

- Shift and Unsocial Hours Policy

- Standby and Call Out Policy

Most the above are revised policies. The Relocation and Accommodation Policy is new.

Who will benefit from this proposal and how?

All employees of the Council and the Council itself because employment policies will be clearly set out. They will also be based on current employment legislation and ACAS codes of practice and/or guidance where available.

What outcomes does the change aim to achieve and for whom?

Setting out clear employment policies can help in supporting a culture based on trust, fairness and inclusion. They can also speed the decision-making process by ensuring that clear guidance is readily available to cover a range of issues.

Furthermore, they can assist in avoiding involvement with employment tribunal claims by providing guidance for managers and staff that reflects accurately current employment law and good practice. It is therefore important that HR policies are clear, easy to understand, up to date and reviewed regularly.

Who are the main stakeholders and what do they want?

All employees covered by the policy and the Council.

Assess whether an EqIA is Relevant

How does your proposal relate to eliminating discrimination; promoting equality of opportunity; promoting good community relations?

Do you have evidence or reason to believe that some (racial, disability, gender, sexuality, age and religious belief) groups may be affected differently than others? (Think about your monitoring information, research, national data/reports etc.)

No. The Council has a legal duty to ensure that the terms and conditions of employment for its employees are clearly set out. The polices that are the subject of this review help to achieve this.

Is there already public concern about potentially discriminatory practices/impact or could there be? Think about your complaints, consultation, and feedback.

No

If the answer is **Yes** to any of the above, you need to do an Equality Impact Assessment.

If No you **MUST** complete this statement

An Equality Impact Assessment is not relevant because:

There is no evidence or reason to believe that some (racial, disability, gender, sexuality, age and religious belief) groups may be affected differently than others by the proposed policies. Nor is there already public concern about potentially discriminatory practices/impact for the issues covered in these policies.

Signed (completing officer) Teresa Kaine	Date 04/03/2022
Signed (Lead Officer) Shella Smith	Date 04/03/2022

2

Assess the Impact of the Proposal

Your assessment must include:

- **Consultation**

- **Collection and Assessment of Data**

- **Judgement about whether the impact is negative or positive**

Think about who does and doesn't use the service? Is the take up representative of the community? What do different minority groups think? (You might think your policy, project or service is accessible and addressing the needs of these groups, but asking them might give you a totally different view). Does it really meet their varied needs? Are some groups less likely to get a good service?

How do your proposals relate to other services - will your proposals have knock on effects on other services elsewhere? Are there proposals being made for other services that relate to yours and could lead to a cumulative impact?

> **Example**: A local authority takes separate decisions to limit the eligibility criteria for community care services; increase charges for respite services; scale back its accessible housing programme; and cut concessionary travel.
>
> Each separate decision may have a significant effect on the lives of disabled residents, and the cumulative impact of these decisions may be considerable.
>
> This combined impact would not be apparent if decisions are considered in isolation.

Consultation

How have you consulted with or do you plan to consult with relevant groups and experts. If you haven't already completed a Consultation form do it now. The checklist helps you make sure you follow good consultation practice. **My Home > Info Pods > Community Involvement Pod - Inside Reading Borough Council**		
Relevant groups/experts	**How were/will the views of these groups be obtained**	**Date when contacted**
Trade unions	Through a series of email communications and meetings with trade union colleagues	10 February 2022 28 February 2022 7 March 2022

4

Collect and Assess your Data

Using information from Census, residents survey data, service monitoring data, satisfaction or complaints, feedback, consultation, research, your knowledge and the knowledge of people in your team, staff groups etc. describe how the proposal could impact on each group. Include both positive and negative impacts.

(Please delete relevant ticks)

Describe how this proposal could impact on Racial groups **Is there a negative impact?**   ~~Yes~~   **No**   ~~Not sure~~

Describe how this proposal could impact on Gender/transgender (cover pregnancy and maternity, marriage) **Is there a negative impact?**   ~~Yes~~   **No**   ~~Not sure~~

Describe how this proposal could impact on Disability **Is there a negative impact?**   ~~Yes~~   **No**   ~~Not sure~~

Describe how this proposal could impact on Sexual orientation (cover civil partnership) **Is there a negative impact?**   ~~Yes~~   **No**   ~~Not sure~~

Describe how this proposal could impact on Age **Is there a negative impact?**   ~~Yes~~   **No**   ~~Not sure~~

Describe how this proposal could impact on Religious belief? **Is there a negative impact?**   ~~Yes~~   **No**   ~~Not sure~~

5

Make a Decision

If the impact is negative then you must consider whether you can legally justify it. If not you must set out how you will reduce or eliminate the impact. If you are not sure what the impact will be you MUST assume that there could be a negative impact. You may have to do further consultation or test out your proposal and monitor the impact before full implementation.

Tick which applies (Please delete relevant ticks)

---

1. **No negative impact identified**

2. ~~**Negative impact identified but there is a justifiable reason**~~

   You must give due regard or weight but this does not necessarily mean that the equality duty overrides other clearly conflicting statutory duties that you must comply with.
   Reason

3. ~~**Negative impact identified or uncertain**~~

   What action will you take to eliminate or reduce the impact? Set out your actions and timescale?

How will you monitor for adverse impact in the future?   An annual Workforce Profile Report is carried out and reported to Personnel Committee which monitors whether there is any adverse impact on employees with protected characteristics, for example, the proportion of female, BAME and disabled employees involved in Council policies that are the subject of this review, compared to male, white and non-disabled employees. The most recent report for looks at data for 1 April to 30 September 2021 and does not indicate that procedures were applied and / or accessed disproportionately by any particular protected characteristic group

Signed (completing officer) Teresa Kaine	Date 04/03/2022
Signed (Lead Officer) Shella Smith	Date 04/03/2022

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