

To: Councillor Emberson (Chair)
Councillors Terry, Ennis, Keane and Mpofu-Coles

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12 November 2025

Your contact is: **Richard Woodford - Committee Services**

NOTICE OF MEETING - PERSONNEL COMMITTEE 20 NOVEMBER 2025

A meeting of the Personnel Committee will be held on Thursday, 20 November 2025 at 6.30 pm in Committee Room 1, Civic Offices, Reading. The Agenda for the meeting is set out below.

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PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MINUTES – 17 JULY 2025

Present: Councillor Emberson (Chair);
Councillors Ennis, Keane and Terry.

Also Present: Kathryn Cook, Louise Duffield, Kieran McGee, Alison McNamara and Miriam Palfrey.

(Councillor Mpofu-Coles was unable to attend in person, so attended remotely via Microsoft Teams, but did not vote on any of the items, in line with the requirements of the Local Government Act 1972)

1. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 13 March 2025 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

2. MINUTES OF PERSONNEL APPOINTMENT COMMITTEES

The Minutes of Personnel Appointment Committees held on 31 March and 3 April 2025 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3. RBC PART TIME WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

The Committee considered a report that provided an analysis of the Council's Part-time workforce starting with a 'headline' summary as follows:

- **Gender Disparity** – A significantly higher proportion of women worked part-time compared to men (88% versus 12%), this reflected national trends;
- **Job Grade Distribution** – Part-time employees were more likely to be in lower-graded roles, with 76% in RG5 or lower, compared to 57% of full-time employees;
- **Length of Service** – Part-time employees tended to have longer tenure at the Council, with 52% having worked for over 10 years, compared to 35% of full-time staff;
- **Age Variations** – The proportion of full-time versus part-time employees was relatively even across most age groups, except for employees aged 60 and over and those under 29, who showed a stronger preference for part-time work;
- **Minimal Ethnic Disparity** – The likelihood of working part-time did not appear to vary significantly by ethnic group;
- **Disability Representation** – Employees who had declared a disability worked part-time at a similar rate to those who hadn't, indicating no substantial difference in employment patterns related to disability.

The report stated that these trends suggested that part-time employment was influenced most strongly by gender, job-type and career stage, rather than ethnicity or disability status.

Nationally the latest UK Labour Market Statistics had shown that approximately 24% of people were employed on a part-time basis and many employees opted for part-time jobs for personal and professional reasons. One common factor was flexibility: part-time roles allowed individuals to balance work with other commitments such as education, caregiving or personal interests and it could be particularly beneficial for parents managing childcare responsibilities, students seeking to fund their studies, or retirees who still wished to remain active in the workforce without the demands of full-time employment. Economic considerations could also play a role because in uncertain job markets, part-time work could provide an income source while allowing individuals to explore multiple opportunities, freelance, or run a personal business. Moreover, organisations could benefit from hiring part-time staff by managing costs and staffing needs efficiently, creating a mutually beneficial arrangement.

The report stated that the proportion of Council employees who were working part-time was broadly in line with the national picture and had been consistent over the previous three years, standing at

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23% in 2023 and 22% in 2024 and 2025. Both nationally and within the Council's workforce more women worked part-time than men, 71% nationally and 88% at the Council and research from the TUC had shown that women were three times more likely to work part-time than men. In its Policies the Council was committed to the promotion of flexible working practices in order to realise accommodation efficiencies and to enable employees to balance their home and working lives.

The report included a number of tables that gave a breakdown of the part-time workforce including the distribution of part-time workforce by service area, the top ten job roles with the highest number of part-time employees and distribution by ethnic group, sex, grade, length of service and age.

Finally, the report stated that in summary the Council's part-time workforce reflected both national employment trends and internal organisational priorities, with a steady proportion of employees choosing reduced hours over the previous three years. While flexibility remained a key driver for part-time work, particularly among women, the data highlighted broader patterns regarding role distribution, length of service and pay grades and the findings reinforced the importance of maintaining inclusive and adaptable employment policies that supported staff in balancing work with personal responsibilities.

Resolved: That the analysis of the Council's part-time workforce be noted.

4. REVIEW OF COUNCIL'S CORE EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

The Committee considered a report presenting four of the 'core' HR Policies which had been under review to ensure that they were fit for purpose and aligned with current ACAS guidance. The four Policies were as follows:

- Bullying and Harassment;
- Grievance;
- Managing Poor Performance;
- Disciplinary Policy.

The report explained that a range of stakeholders and the trades unions had been asked for their input into the four Policies that were under consideration and extensive input had been received from the Council's in-house Employment Lawyer. Each Policy had been discussed and improvements had been suggested, which had then been collated and tested back with participants. It had been clear very early on that there was significant agreement amongst stakeholders about where improvements should be made. Many of the proposed improvements had applied to all Policies and their application as apposed to a single Policy; where there were suggestions about specific changes that needed to be made to individual Policies, these had also been captured.

The report stated that final changes were now being incorporated into the four Policies and had been shared with the trade unions. It was believed that the revisions that had been proposed would improve the application of each Policy and that there would be benefits in introducing them as soon as possible. For this reason the report proposed that authority was delegated to the Head of Paid Services, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee/Lead Councillor for Corporate Services and Resources and the Leader of the Council to approve the changes to the Policies.

Resolved: That the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Lead Councillor for Corporate Services and Resources be authorised to agree the following revised Employment Policies:

- **Bullying and Harassment Policy;**
- **Grievance Policy;**
- **Managing Poor Performance Policy;**
- **Disciplinary Policy.**

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subject to the revised policies being circulated to all members of the Personnel Committee for comment before they were agreed.

5. IMPLICATIONS OF BFFC TUPE ON RBC HR POLICIES

The Committee considered a report on the implications of Brighter Futures for Children (BFfC) Transfer of Undertakings (TUPE) on the Council's HR Policies.

The report explained that Children's Services in Reading had been delivered by BFfC since 1 December 2018 and on 18 January 2025 the Council had agreed to bring Children's Services back in-house by autumn 2025. The transition date for staff and services had been set as 1 October 2025 and BFfC staff would transfer from BFfC to the Council via TUPE (Protection of Employment). A TUPE consultation had been carried out for all Council and BFfC staff between 5 June and 7 July 2025 and the high level proposal for the transition policies had been included within the BFfC consultation document and had stated that Council corporate and HR Policies would, by default, replace BFfC policies.

To facilitate the TUPE of BFfC staff to the Council, all Policies had needed to be reviewed and matched and any gaps addressed. All Policies had been matched and compared to ensure that at transition staff could be informed of any differences and any gaps in provision of Policies could be addressed. Since the creation of the Company, unless otherwise required BFfC had mirrored the Council's HR Policies and therefore there were very few meaningful differences that had been found between BFfC and the Council's HR and Corporate Policies.

The report stated that all current BFfC HR Policies would be replaced by the equivalent Council Policy, except where there was a contractual element, for example, annual leave, which would be protected and would remain for BFfC staff under TUPE as required by law. Where there was no equivalent Council HR Policy, the BFfC Policy would either cease, or consideration would be given to it being adopted by the Council. It was anticipated that the Council would adopt or update the following Policies:

- Council Fostering Friendly Policy – This would be adapted slightly to clarify the Child Placement leave entitlements upon the placement of a new foster child;
- BFfC Reimbursement of Statutory Fees – This Policy would continue to apply to BFfC staff and the Council would look to review the equivalent Policy for Council staff.

Some Council HR Policies gave BFfC new entitlements and/or requirements they did not previously have, for example, Buying Annual Leave Policy, Volunteering Policy, Working Abroad Policy, Transgender Policy. Workload Policy. BFfC staff would be able to take advantage of these Policies from the date of transfer.

Finally, the report stated that all the above implications and changes would be communicated to staff as part of the transition communications and induction plan and the intranet would also be updated to reflect any changes to Policies.

Resolved: That the implications of the TUPE of Brighter Futures for Children be submitted to the Council on 1 October 2025 in respect of HR Policies be noted.

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

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Personnel Committee

20 November 2025



Reading
Borough Council
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Title	Pay Gap Reports for 2025 and Workforce Profile Report for 2024-25
Purpose of the report	To note the report for information
Report status	Public report
Report author	Kathryn Cook – Assistant Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development
Lead Councillor	Cllr Ellie Emberson – Lead Councillor for Corporate Services and Resources
Corporate priority	Our Foundations
Recommendations	<p>That Personnel Committee notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Gender Pay Gap Report in appendix 1 • The Ethnicity Pay Gap Report in appendix 2 • The Disability Pay Gap Report in appendix 3 • The Workforce Profile 2024-25 in appendix 4

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. This report presents the Council's Gender, Ethnicity and Disability Pay Gap reports for 2025.
- 1.2. The mean gender pay gap is -0.33% and the median is 0.00%. This compares to last year's figures of 1.57% mean and 0.00% median.
- 1.3. The mean ethnicity pay gap for 2024 is 2.85% and -0.27% median, compared to last year when they were 4.17% mean and -0.68% median.
- 1.4. For the second year the council is voluntarily publishing disability pay gap information. The mean disability pay gap is 2.98% and the median is 2.13% compared to last year when they were 2.05% mean and 0.00% median.
- 1.5. The report also presents the Workforce Profile for 2024/25 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 2024/25 and compares it to the previous three financial years where relevant.
- 1.6. Taking positive action on workplace equality can have significant benefits for an organisation's reputation, culture and people. The Ethnicity, Disability and Gender Pay Gap reports are a fundamental step on the Council's journey to improving workplace equality. It helps to create a baseline to track current progress and drive continual improvement.
- 1.7. Overall, the Council continues to demonstrate strong performance in workplace equality, with the gender pay gap indicating near parity in average earnings between men and women. Ethnicity and disability pay gaps remain modest, with

targeted actions underway to address disparities and improve representation at senior levels. The voluntary publication of ethnicity and disability pay gap data reflects the Council's commitment to transparency and inclusion. Together, these reports provide a robust evidence base to support ongoing efforts to foster a fair, diverse and equitable workplace.

2. Policy Context

2.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, 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.

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.

3. The Gender Pay Gap Report 2025

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, than men. 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.

3.2 Organisations must publish the following information:

- a) Their mean gender pay gap
- b) Their median gender pay gap
- c) Their mean bonus gender pay gap
- d) Their median bonus gender pay gap
- e) Their proportion of males and females receiving a bonus payment
- f) Their proportion of males and females in each quartile pay band

3.3 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 come from a workforce that feels valued and engaged in a culture committed to tackling inequality.

- 3.4 Appendix 1 shows the Council's gender pay gap information for 2025. The mean gender pay gap is -0.33% and the median is 0.00%. This is based on data at the snapshot date of 31 March 2025. A mean average is calculated by totalling 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.
- 3.5 The Council is in a good position. Most organisations report a gender pay gap, with a median for the whole economy of 6.6%. This reflects the Council's aspiration to be a fair and inclusive employer, making best use of its talent regardless of gender.
- 3.6 Similarly, the Council's results compare positively with other local authorities in the area, as shown in the table below, which compares the most recently published median pay gap results for gender and ethnicity and disability pay gap where available.

Employer	Gender	Ethnicity	Disability
Bracknell Forest	15.8%	-8.9%	N/A
Reading	0%	-0.3%	2.1%
Windsor & Maidenhead	12.9%	6.8%	N/A
Slough	-4.7%	N/A	N/A
West Berkshire	4.1%	N/A	N/A
Wokingham	11.6%	0%	N/A

- 3.7 The actions proposed to continue to address the gender pay gap are at Appendix 1 paragraph 5.

4 The Ethnicity Pay Gap Report 2025

- 4.1 Unlike the gender pay gap, organisations are not yet legally required to publish their ethnicity pay gap, but the Council has chosen to voluntarily publish its data.
- 4.2 The ethnicity pay gap is the percentage difference in the average hourly rate of pay of white employees and Global Majority (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) employees. We publish the same six calculations as for the gender pay gap (see 2.3), plus the proportion of the workforce in each ethnic group and the proportion who have disclosed their ethnicity (93.4%). This is in line with guidance issued by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development who recommend that employers publish a uniform set of eight statistics comparing pay for Global Majority employees with white employees. In addition, we have broken this down

further using the ONS Census' five ethnicity categories so that we can identify any differences in more detail.

- 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 2025. The mean pay gap for Global Majority employees is 2.85%, whilst the median pay gap is -0.27%.
- 4.4 The detailed breakdown by ethnic groups shows some differences which the overall figures mask. Employees from Asian backgrounds and those in Other Ethnic groups have higher average pay than white colleagues. The mean pay gap is largest for employees who identify as Mixed Ethnic Background whose pay is 7.45% lower on average than their white colleagues.
- 4.5 Long service awards are the only payments made at the Council which qualify as bonus pay. All employees are eligible for this payment once they have reached the necessary service related requirements.
- 4.6 The majority of full-pay relevant employees at the Council, 79.9%, are white. There are more white employees in every quartile and the proportion increases as pay increases up to 82.2% in the upper middle quartile, with the upper quartile at 81.6%.
- 4.7. The report also provides a more detailed breakdown of employees by ethnic group by pay grade. At the highest paid end of the pay structure, there are employees from every ethnic group paid on Reading Senior Manager grades or above, except for Other Ethnic Groups, the highest paid employees are still predominantly white.
- 4.8. Overall, the Council is in a strong position and an action plan to further improve the Council's position is underway, aligned to our Inclusion and Diversity Strategy.
- 4.9 The actions proposed to continue to address the issues in the report are in Appendix 2, paragraph 4.

5. Disability Pay Gap Report 2025

- 5.1 As with the Ethnicity Pay Gap, organisations are not yet legally required to publish their disability pay gap, but the Council has chosen to voluntarily publish its data.
- 5.2 The disability pay gap is the percentage difference in the average hourly rate of pay of employees who have who have either declared a disability or who have made a declaration that they are not disabled. Currently 67.4% of employees have provided a declaration and it is the information from these staff that inform the report.
- 5.3 The Council's Disability Pay Gap report is attached at Appendix 3. As with the Gender and ethnicity report It is based on data at the snapshot date of 31 March 2025 and follows the same methodology. The mean pay gap for disabled employees is 2.98% whilst the median is 2.13%.
- 5.4 Overall, the Council appears to be in a good position. The nearest national comparator available, from the Office of National Statistics puts the pay gap at 12.7% (2023).

- 5.5 Actions to continue to focus on the issues relating to disability pay gaps are in Appendix 3, paragraph 6.

6. Workforce Profile Report for 2024/25

- 6.1 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 once every 4 years.

- 6.2 The Workforce Profile in Appendix 4 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 2024/2 and compares it to the previous three financial years 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.

- 6.3 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.

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 chose not to disclose these protected characteristics so there is concern about the validity and reliability of the data.

Key Findings

- 6.4 The Workforce Profile in Appendix 4 includes data for all Council employees. It excludes schools' staff, agency 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 etc. See the Gov.uk website for a definition and examples of full-pay relevant employees (FPREs).

Ethnicity

- 6.5 The proportion of job applicants from Global Majority ethnic groups increased again in 2024/25 to 47.0%. The proportion of White British applicants has again reduced to 38.6%.
- 6.6 27.6% of new starters were from non-white ethnicities, compared to the percentage of non-white ethnicities in the general workforce (18.8%). The number

of job applicants who 'prefer not to say' or who have not declared their ethnic origin has increased slightly to 6.7%.

- 6.7 The percentage of the workforce in Global Majority ethnic groups has gradually increased over the last few years and is now 18.8%. There has been an increase in every ethnic group except White British which has reduced to 67.6% and those in the Mixed ethnicity group which has reduced to 3.7%. The proportion of staff who 'prefer not to say' or who have not declared their ethnicity has increased to 7.0%.

Gender

- 6.8 The Council employs more women overall – 60.2% of employees are women and 39.8% are men. The proportion of men applying to work at the council has increased over the last year, with marginally more men applying than women in 2024/25 - 48.8% men against 47.9% women with the remainder preferring not to say.
- 6.9 A much greater percentage of females work part-time than males (89.3% compared to 10.7%). There is a higher proportion of female workers in all categories.

Disability

- 6.10 In 2024/25, 4.8% of the workforce declared a disability, an increase on the previous year. 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.
- 6.11 A lower percentage of applicants' state that they have a disability (1.5%) than the existing workforce (4.8%). Applications from employees with a disability are positively encouraged through the disability confident scheme. The percentage of applicants who prefer not to say, or do not provide any information has decreased to 89.0%.
- 6.12 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.

7. Contribution to Strategic Aims

- 7.1 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.

8. Environmental and Climate Implications

- 8.1 There are no environmental or climate change implications

9. Community Engagement

- 9.1 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, the Gender and Ethnicity Pay Gap Reports for 2024, and the People Strategy.
- 9.2 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
 - A press statement will be issued to bring the report to the attention of local media, residents and businesses

10. Equality Implications

- 10.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not required for the issues covered by this report however the report itself is heavily grounded in our work to ensure workplace equality and as such is a key lever for the Council to manage the equality implications of its actions.

11. Legal Implications

- 11.1 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.

12. Financial Implications

- 12.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

13. Appendices:

- 1. Gender Pay Gap Report 2025**
- 2. Ethnicity Pay Gap Report 2025**
- 3. Disability Pay Gap Report 2025**
- 4. Workforce Profile 2024-25**

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL - GENDER PAY GAP REPORT FOR 2025

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 From April 2017, under the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017, employers with 250 or more employees are required to publish statutory gender pay gap calculations every year.
- 1.2 To make the calculations, data must be gathered from the Council's payroll from a specific date each year. This specific date is called the 'snapshot date', which is 31 March for public sector organisations.
- 1.3 The calculations must be published on the Council's website and the Government Equalities Office website by 30 March 2026. This report sets out the figures that will need to be published and an analysis of the information.

2 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The information that is required for publication is:

Mean gender pay gap	The difference between the mean hourly rate of pay of male full-pay relevant employees (FPREs) 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 bonus 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.
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 For the purpose of this report, the workforce profile as at the 'snapshot date' date of 31 March 2025 was 1862 full-pay relevant employees (FPREs), which is made up by 1125 (60.4%) women and 737 (39.6%) men.
- 2.3 The Council's data excludes the children's services workforce which transferred to Brighter Futures for Children (BFfC) on 1 December 2018. BFfC are required to report their gender pay gap separately.

- 2.4 In accordance with Government's guidance, data for school staff is not included in this report.
- 2.4 The figures in this report have been calculated in accordance with the Government's guidance by the HR Systems Team in HR and Organisational Development. The highlighted figures in each table are those that will require publication.

Table 1 - Mean and median gender pay gap

	Men	Women	Women's Earnings are:
Mean Hourly Rate	£20.29	£20.36	0.33% higher
Median Hourly Rate	£18.26	£18.26	0.00%

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

	Men	Women	Women's bonuses are
Mean amount of bonus	£913.33	£929.17	1.73% higher
Median amount of bonus	£1000.00	£1,000.00	0.00%

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

	Men		Women	
FPREs total	737		1125	
Proportion of all those receiving a bonus	15	2%	24	2.1%

3 ANALYSIS

- 3.1 Table 1 shows that the Council's mean (-0.33%) and median (0.00%) gender pay gap compares favourably with the national gender pay gap figure. The latest annual survey of hours and earnings (ASHE) gender pay gap tables released by the ONS gives the median pay gap for April 2025 at 6.6%.
- 3.2 Tables 2 and 3 reflect a small group of employees who received their "bonuses" in the relevant period. The Council does not have provision for the payment of 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.

- 3.3 Long service awards at the Council are in recognition of achieving 20 years' continuous service. The Council's current long service scheme offers the following
- 3.4 A one-off money award of £1,000 for those achieving long service with the 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.
- 3.5 12 of the 15 men received the same cash value as 20 of the 24 women. This has, as a result, translated into a -1.73% pay gap, as shown in Table 2.
- 3.6 Based on how the gender pay gap is calculated, although the gap is small, it still exists within the Council as its workforce is predominantly women (60.4%). There are more women than men at every pay quartile, yet over half of women are in the lower middle and upper pay quartiles (see Figures 1 and 2 below).
- 3.7 Figure 3 illustrates the breakdown of men and women in each pay band. Pay band RG10 has the greatest proportion of women (74.2%), which is higher than the overall proportion of women employed at the Council (60.4%). Job roles that fall into this pay band are primarily within the Legal and Democratic service. 100% of the women in this pay band are full-time.
- 3.8 The Council has a good balance of men and women at senior management level. Of the employees paid on Reading Senior Managers grades, i.e. earnings above £62,955 per annum, 50% are women.

Figure 1 – Proportion of men and women in each pay quartile

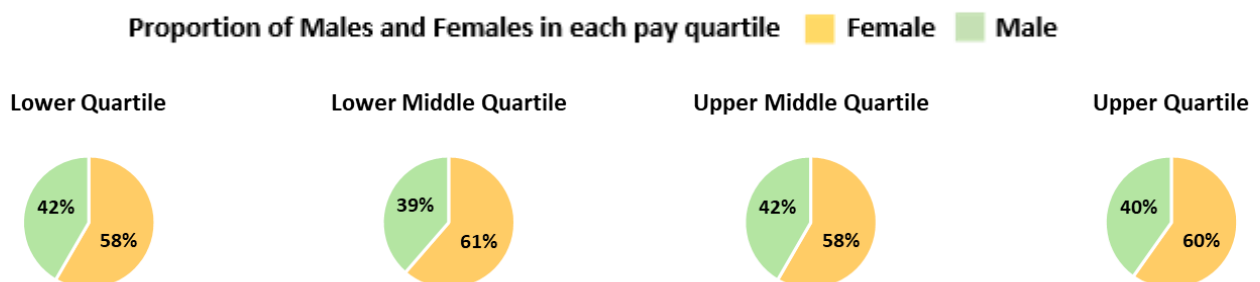


Figure 2 - Number of men and women in each pay quartile.

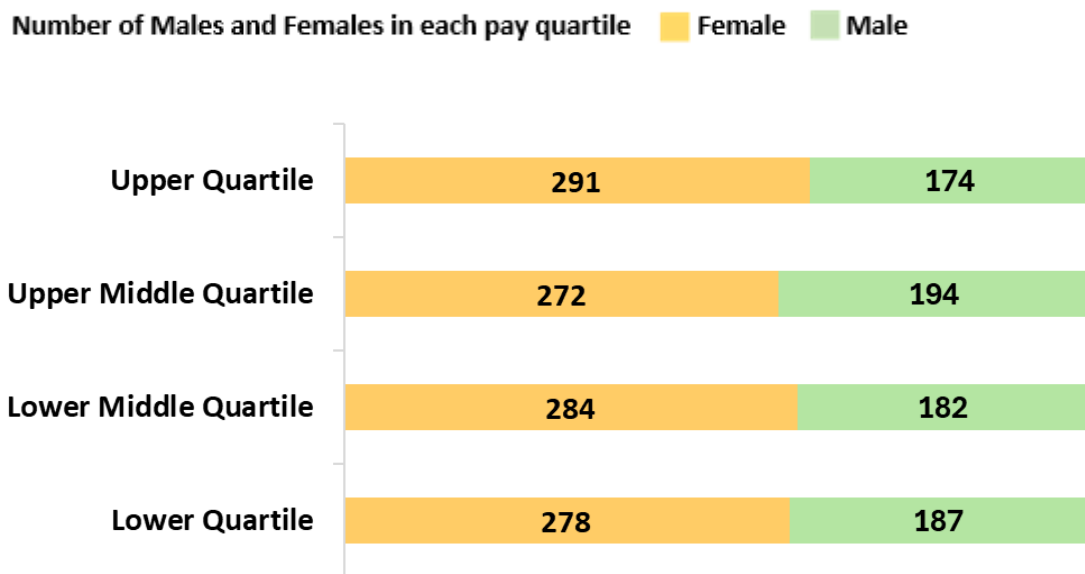
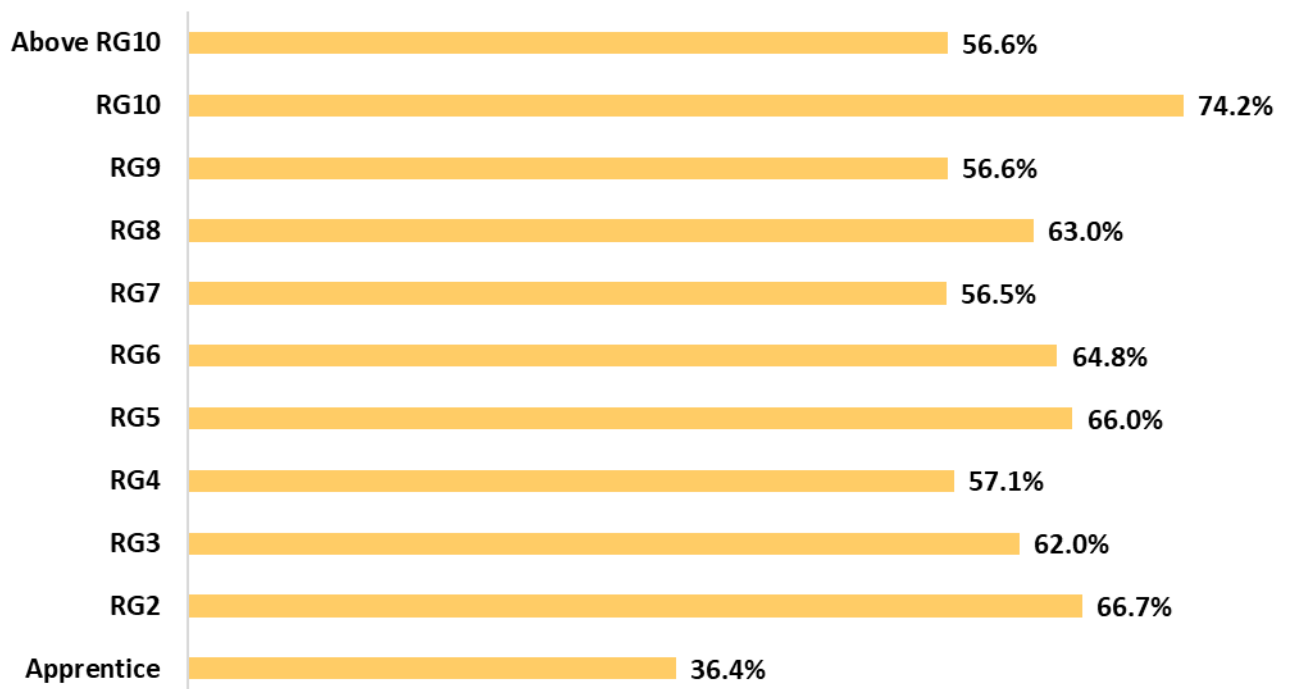


Figure 3 - Proportion of women in each pay band, 31 March 2025



4 CONCLUSIONS

4.1 The lack of pay gap at the Council, is the result of the long-term effort that the Council has invested to ensure fair pay for all staff, including:

- Promoting and supporting a number of flexible working policies for all employees within the Council, irrespective of gender, including job share, part time working and term time working. In some areas there is also flexibility to work from different locations.
- Implemented a new, consistent pay structure in May 2011 as a result of a pay review exercise starting in 2009.
- Having a clear policy of paying employees equally for the same or equivalent work, regardless of gender.
- 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.
- Extended the right to request flexible working to all staff in 2010, 4 years before the Government changed the law.
- Enhanced Shared Parental Pay to mirror contractual Maternity Pay.
- Became an accredited “Living Wage Employer” in 2014 paying the Living Wage set by the Living Wage Foundation as a minimum to all employees at the lower level of the pay structure.

5 ACTION PLAN/RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 Continue to promote the benefits of flexible working practices to employees and managers. In addition, the Council will monitor the take-up of flexible working arrangements by gender and level within the organisation.
- 5.2 Promote the benefits of working for the Council both internally and externally, such as apprenticeship opportunities, flexible working arrangements, 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 and inclusive recruitment 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 Increased awareness about apprenticeship schemes to encourage more employees to improve their skills and experience giving them the opportunity to progress their career.

Ethnicity Pay Gap report 2025

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

ETHNICITY PAY GAP REPORT FOR 2025

1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1 Large organisations are not yet legally required to publish their ethnicity pay gap. However, we have decided to voluntarily publish our ethnicity pay gap since 2020 as we believe it is a fundamental step on the Council's journey to improving workplace equality. We will use this information to help us reflect on what we are doing both internally and externally to achieve a truly diverse and inclusive organisation and where we need to take action to tackle inequality.
- 1.2 The ethnicity pay gap is the percentage difference in the average hourly pay rate for employees from Global Majority 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. We also follow guidance issued by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) who recommend that employers publish a uniform set of eight statistics comparing pay for Global Majority employees with white employees. In addition, we have broken this down further using the ONS Census' five ethnicity categories so that we can identify any differences in more detail.

2. Introduction and background

- 2.1 Unlike for gender, our ethnicity disclosure rate is not at 100% (currently it is 93.4%). We will work towards improving this rate over the next 12 months by explaining to staff how we use this data to identify areas where there may be inequality so that we can take action to address it.
- 2.2 For the purpose of this report, the workforce profile at the 'snapshot date' date of 31 March 2025 was 1732 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.

Mean ethnicity pay gap

The difference between the mean hourly rate of pay of white full-pay relevant employees (FPREs) and that of FPREs from Global Majority groups

Median ethnicity pay gap	The difference between the median hourly rate of pay of white FPRES and that of FPRES from Global Majority groups.
Mean bonus gap	The difference between the mean bonus paid to white FPRES and that paid to FPRES from Global Majority groups.
Median bonus gap	The difference between the median bonus paid to white FPRES and that paid to FPRES from Global Majority groups.
Bonus proportions	The proportions of white FPRES and FPRES from Global Majority groups who were paid bonus pay during the relevant period.
Quartile pay bands	The proportions of white FPRES and FPRES from Global Majority groups in the lower, lower middle, upper middle and upper quartile pay bands.

Table 1 – Workforce by ethnic group

	Number	Percentage
Asian or Asian British	133	7.7%
Black or Black British	141	8.1%
Mixed	68	3.9%
Other Ethnic Groups	6	0.3%
White	1384	79.9%
Total	1732	100%

Table 2 – Overall mean and median ethnicity pay gap and bonus pay gap for Global Majority Employees

	Global Majority Employees	White Employees	Global Majority Employees' earnings are
Mean hourly rate	£19.77	£20.35	2.85% lower
Median hourly rate	£18.31	£18.26	0.27% higher
Mean amount of bonus	£687.50	£921.88	25.42% lower
Median amount of bonus	£687.50	£1000	31.25% 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	£20.40	£20.35	0.24% higher
Median hourly rate	£17.79	£18.26	2.61% lower
Mean amount of bonus	£1000	£921.88	8.47% higher
Median amount of bonus	£1000	£1000	0.00%

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	£19.46	£20.35	4.35% lower
Median hourly rate	£17.79	£18.26	2.61% lower
Mean amount of bonus	£750	£921.88	18.64% lower
Median amount of bonus	£750	£1000	25.00% 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	£18.84	£20.35	7.45% lower
Median hourly rate	£16.61	£18.26	9.07% lower
Mean amount of bonus	£1000	£921.88	8.47% higher

Median amount of bonus	£1000	£1000	0.00%
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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	£20.37	£20.35	0.11% higher
Median hourly rate	£21.08	£18.26	15.42% lower
Mean amount of bonus	£0	£921.88	100% lower
Median amount of bonus	£0	£1000	100% lower

Table 3 – Overall proportion of Global Majority Employees and White Employees who received a bonus

	Global Majority Employees	White Employees
FPREs Total	348	1384
Proportion of all those receiving a bonus	5 (13.5%)	32 (86.5%)

Table 3a –Proportion of employees in each ethnic group who received a bonus

Asian or Asian British	Black or Black British	Mixed Ethnic Backgrounds	Other Ethnic Backgrounds	White
133	141	68	6	1384
2 (1.50%)	2 (1.42%)	1 (1.47%)	0 (0.00%)	32 (2.31%)

3. Analysis

- 3.1 **Table 2** shows that the Council's mean pay gap for Global Majority employees for 2025 is 2.85% (i.e. Global Majority employees are paid 2.85% lower than their white colleagues on average). The median pay gap is -0.27%, meaning that the median pay of white employees is 0.27% less than for Global Majority employees. Both figures have improved since 31 March 2024, when the mean pay gap was 4.17% and the median was 0.68%. In 2020, the mean pay gap was 6.88% and the median was 0.28%.

- 3.2 **Tables 2a to 2d** show this data broken down further for employees from different Global Majority groups compared to their white colleagues. The mean pay gap is largest for employees who identify as from Mixed Ethnic backgrounds, whose pay is 7.43% lower on average than their white colleagues, followed by employees from Black or Black British backgrounds who are paid 4.35% less than white employees on average. There is a -0.24% pay gap for employees who identify as Asian or Asian British, who are paid 0.24% more than their white colleagues on average. The median pay gaps for staff who identify as from Other Ethnic Groups also have higher pay on average than white employees, although this group comprises only six people.
- 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”.
- 3.4 Long service awards are in recognition of achieving 20 years’ continuous service. The Council’s long service scheme currently offers:
- A one-off money award of £1,000 for those achieving long service with the 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
- 3.5 39 employees received long services awards in 2025. 32 of the 39 received a one-off award of £1,000. There is a bonus pay gap of 18.64% for Black or Black British and a 100% gap for Other Ethnic Group staff. However, it should be noted that all employees are eligible for this payment once they have reached the necessary service-related requirements.
- 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 75.5% in the lower quartile to 82.2% in the upper middle quartile, dropping to 81.6% in the Upper Quartile. All quartiles are broadly in line with the overall proportion of while employees in the workforce (79.6%).
- 3.7 **Figures 3a to Figure 3d** illustrate the breakdown of employees from each Global Majority group compared to white employees by pay grade. At the highest paid end of the pay structure, there are employees from every ethnic group (an improvement since 2021, when there were no Asian or Asian British employees or employees from Other Ethnic Groups paid on Reading Senior Manager grades). However, this group is still predominantly white employees.

Figure 1 – Proportion of employees in each pay quartile by ethnic group on 31 March 2025

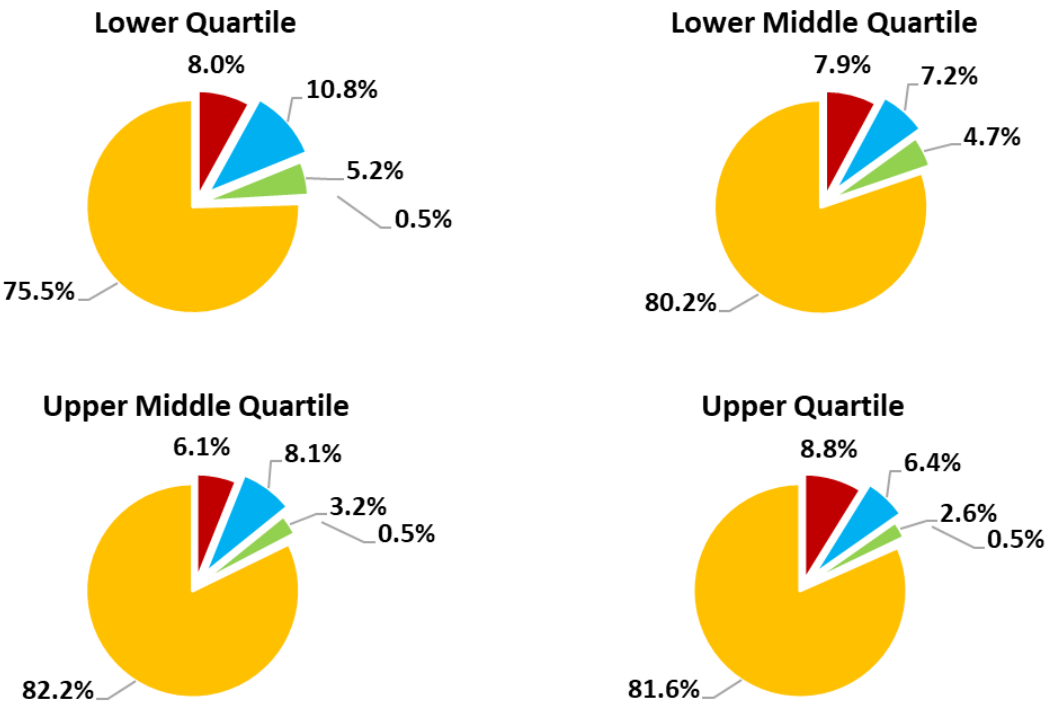


Figure 2 – Number of employees in each ethnic group on 31 March 2025

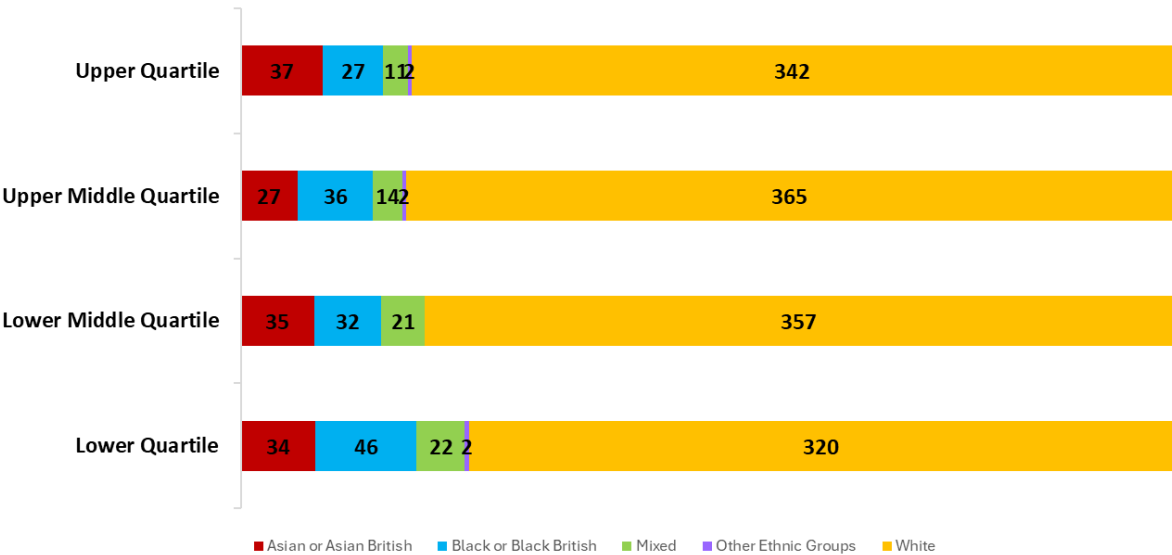


Figure 3a – Proportion of Asian or Asian British employees compared to White Employees in each pay band on 31 March 2025

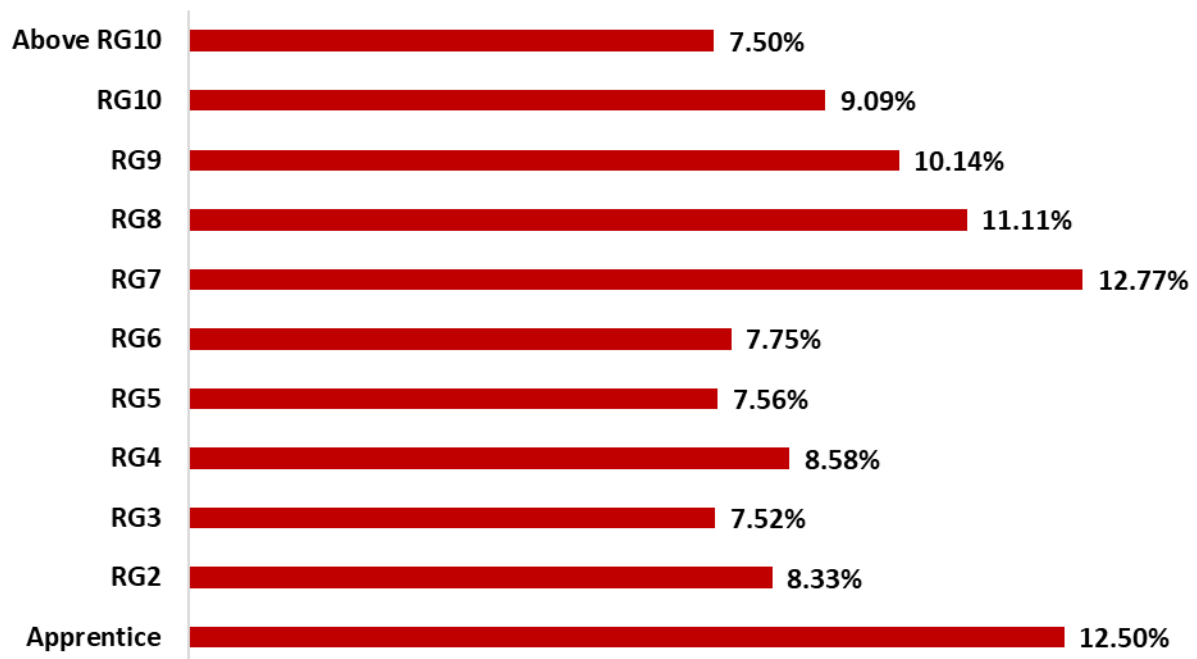


Figure 3b – Proportion of Black or Black British employees compared to White Employees in each pay band on 31 March 2025

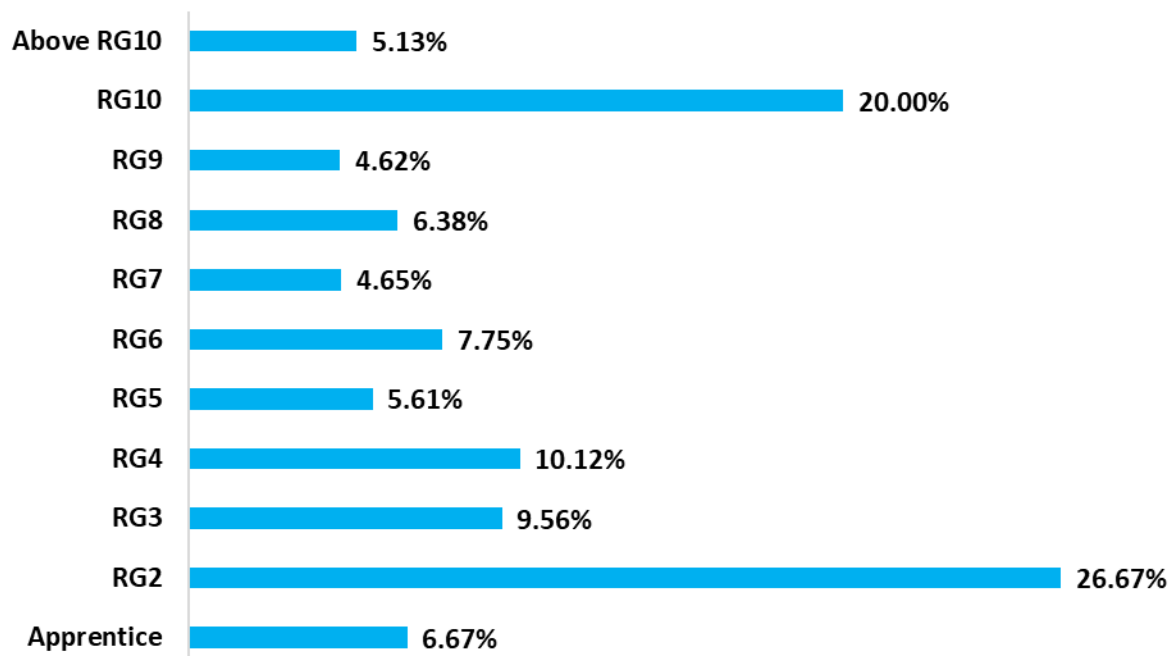


Figure 3c – Proportion of employees from Mixed Ethnic Backgrounds compared to White Employees in each pay band on 31 March 2025

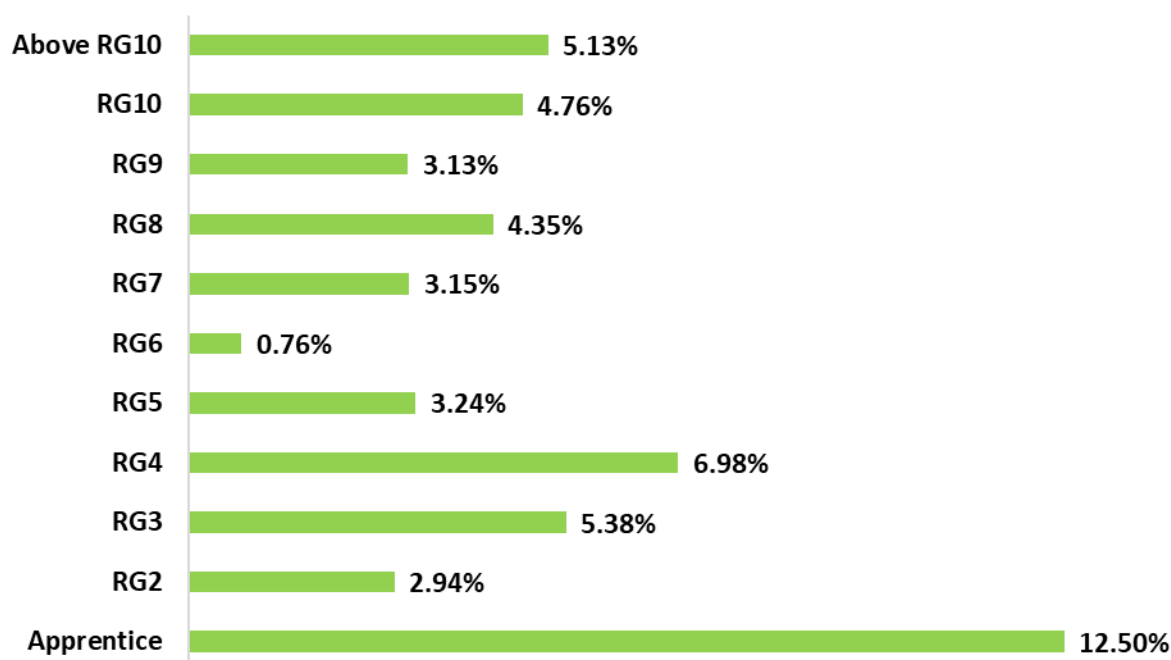
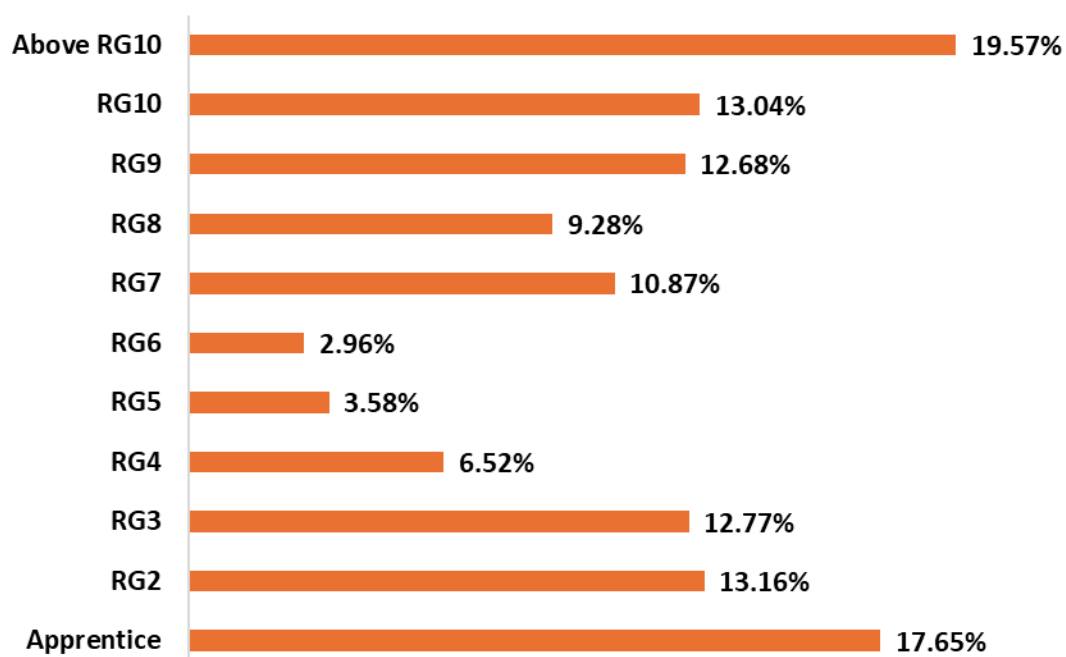


Figure 3d – Proportion of employees from Other Ethnic Groups compared to White Employees in each pay band on 31 March 2025



4. Continuing Actions

- 4.1 Taking positive action on workplace equality can have significant benefits for an organisation's reputation, culture and people. This Ethnicity Pay Gap report, along with our Gender Pay Gap, Disability Pay Gap and Workforce Profile reports, are a fundamental step on the Council's journey to improving workplace equality. It

helps to create a baseline to track current progress and drive continual improvement.

- 4.2 This report will be highlighted to all staff and elected members, and will be published on our website, as part of our approach to improve inclusion and tackle inequality in the workplace.
- 4.3 There are a small proportion of employees (6.6%) who have either not provided 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 are encouraging all employees to disclose their ethnicity, explaining how we use this data.
- 4.4 We will continue to promote the benefits of working for the Council both internally and externally, such as flexible hours and hybrid working arrangements, our diversity commitments etc. We will increase awareness about apprenticeship schemes to encourage more employees to enhance their skills and qualifications, giving them greater opportunities to progress their careers.
- 4.5 We will ensure that all promotion opportunities are advertised internally to our staff to embed a culture where we grow our own talent from within the Council.
- 4.6 We will continue to deliver recruitment and selection training which all recruiting managers are required to complete, which highlights the issue of unconscious bias during recruitment and interview processes and seeks to eliminate it. We are also delivering inclusive recruitment training to managers.

Disability Pay Gap report 2025

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
DISABILITY PAY GAP REPORT FOR 2025

1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1 The Council is publishing the workforce disability pay gap on a voluntary basis. In the absence of a mandatory framework for reporting, the Council have chosen to replicate the regulations and measures used in gender pay gap reporting with some changes, to account for the different data sets, see 1.4. Therefore, this report includes:
- the mean and median disability pay gaps
 - The mean and median disability bonus pay gaps
 - the proportions of disabled and employees who received a bonus
 - the proportions of disabled employees and employees with no disability in each pay quartile
- 1.2. The reporting data includes Council employees who have self-certified their disability status as either 'disabled' or as having 'no disability' and were employed on 31 March 2025. Apprentices or temporary employees are included if they fall within the reference period created by the snapshot date. Mirroring the gender pay reporting regulations, the data excludes schools-based staff and Brighter Futures for Children, the Council's Children's Services Company.
- 1.3. The Council's workforce equalities data is provided confidentially and voluntarily by individuals working for the Council. The Council encourages its workforce to share their equalities data to understand the workforce profile and plan actions to address inequalities. Not all employees choose to share their details. At the reporting date, 67.4% of the workforce disclosed whether they are disabled or have no disability. The remaining employees either have not shared their status or declined to specify.
- 1.4. The gender pay gap report compares two distinct groups – male and female – whereas the disability recorded falls into 2 broad categories: disabled, no disability, then there are groups where no data is available, blank (not recorded) and unspecified (chose not to answer). The way that gender is recorded for mandatory pay gap reporting means that there can be no blank or unspecified records. In calculating the mean and median differences, we have chosen to focus on those who have specified their disability status to give the most precise view of the disability pay gap in the Council, as people with blank or undeclared disabilities could either be disabled, or non-disabled.
- 1.5. The Council publishes this information on its website, and this report relates to the snapshot date of 31st March 2025

2. Disability Pay Gap and Equal Pay

- 2.1 Pay gap reporting is different to equal pay. Pay gaps measure the difference in average hourly pay between different groups. Unlike equal pay audits, which look at the difference in pay between people with different characteristics doing the same job, pay gap reporting looks at the wider picture across the workforce.
- 2.2 The disability pay gap is a measure of the difference in average ordinary earnings (excluding overtime) between employees with no disabilities and employees with a disability across the workforce. It is expressed as a percentage of the earnings of employees with no disabilities. Both the mean (average) and median hourly rates are reported.
- 2.3 The Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful to discriminate (both directly and indirectly) against employees (and people seeking work) because of their disability. An employer can be equal pay compliant and still have a disability pay gap. The cause of a disability pay gap may not fall within the direct control of the employer and is likely to be due to other factors that impose a disadvantage on people with a disability without being explicitly discriminatory.
- 2.4 The Council supports the fair treatment and reward of all staff irrespective of disabilities or other characteristics. This report sets out the Council's disability pay gap and provides reference to the Council's action plan to tackle the gap.

3. Disability Pay Gap Reporting

- 3.1 Mean and Median Pay Gap Reporting: Reading Borough Council has a positive pay gap for the mean and median gross hourly earnings.

3.2 Mean and median gender pay gap

	Not Disabled	Disabled	Disabled Staff earnings are:
Mean Hourly Rate	£20.41	£19.80	2.98% lower
Median Hourly Rate	£18.62	£18.22	2.13% lower

3.3 Mean and median gender pay gap in bonus payments

	Not Disabled	Disabled	Disabled Staff earnings are:
Mean Bonus Rate	£935.29	£750.00	19.81% lower
Median Bonus Rate	£1000.00	£750.00	25.00% lower

3.4 Proportion of men and women who received a bonus

	Not Disabled		Disabled	
FPREs Total	1166		89	
Proportion of all those receiving a bonus	34	2.9%	2	2.2%

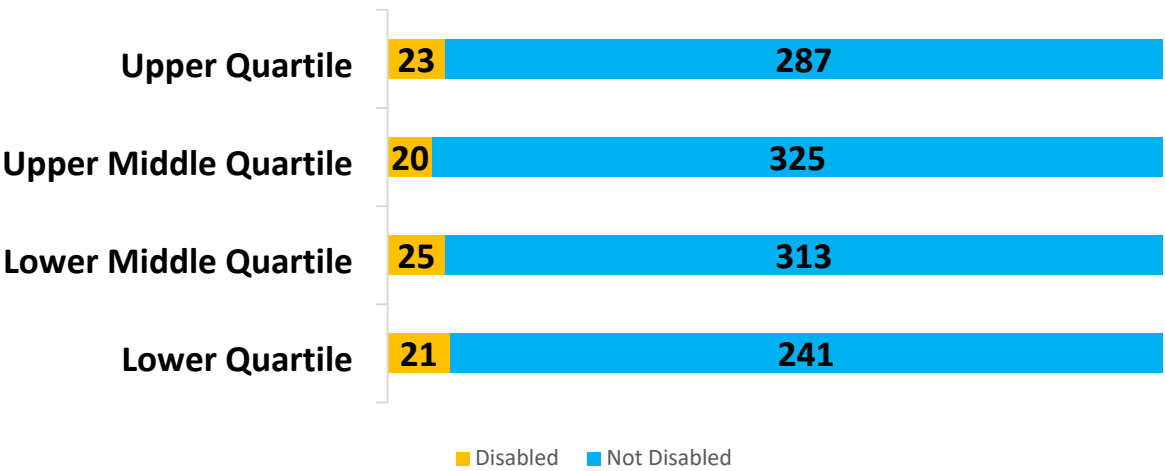
- 3.5. Salary quartile reporting is calculated by sorting employees by their average hourly earnings, from the lowest to the highest, then splitting them into four equal quartiles to show the proportions of disabled employees and employees with no disability in each group.
- 3.6. The Council does not have provision for the payment of 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.
- 3.6. Long service awards at the Council are in recognition of achieving 20 years' continuous service. The Council's long service scheme currently offers:
- A one-off money award of £1,000 for those achieving long service with the 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

4. Supporting Narrative

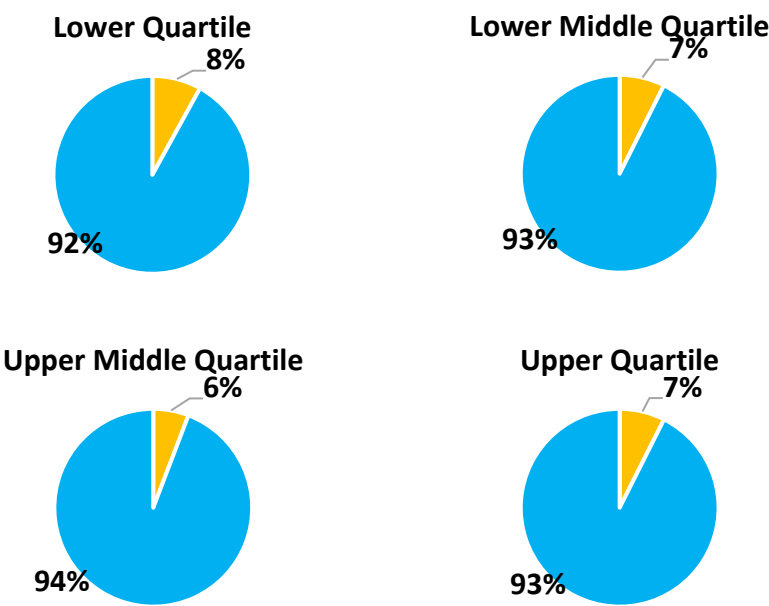
- 4.1 The Council's overall workforce disability profile based on this reporting data is 62.6% with no disability and 30.3% disabled. These figures exclude employees who have declined to provide their disability status.
- 4.2 The mean hourly rate of pay for disabled employees was £19.80. The mean hourly rate for employees with no disability was £20.41, this results in the reported 3.0% difference.
- 4.3 The median hourly rate of pay for disabled employees was £18.22. The median hourly rate for employees with no disability was £18.62, this results in the reported 2.1% difference.

4.4 Salary Quartiles:

4.4.1 Number of Disabled and Not Disabled Staff in each pay quartile:



4.4.2 Proportion of Disabled and Not Disabled Staff in each pay quartile:



5. How figures compare nationally

5.1 The Office of National Statistics (ONS) reported a UK median disability pay gap of 12.7% in 2023, a gap which has remained relatively stable since 2014. This is significantly higher than the RBC median pay gap of 2.13%. The ONS data for 2024 is yet to be released. It is important to note that employees of the Council have self-certified their disability status whereas the ONS use the Government Statistical Service (GSS) harmonised “core” definition. Details on the identifiers used by GSS can be found <https://gss.civilservice.gov.uk/policy-store/measuring-disability-for-the-equality-act-2010/>

5. Summary & Actions

6.1 The Council is confident that its small disability pay gap does not stem from an equal pay issue. In 2011 the Council introduced a new pay and grading system to ensure all roles are graded using a recognised job evaluation system to make sure individuals receive equal pay for equal work.

6.2 The Council is undertaking a number of actions to support Disability Inclusion as part of its Inclusion & Diversity three-year (2024-2026) strategy.

These include:

- Launch of Inclusive Recruitment workshop, guide and interview questions
- Upskilling managers on reasonable adjustments and Access to work.
- Development of Health & Inclusion passports to support all staff which are currently being tested by Staff Disability forum members ahead of launch.
- In 2026 the Council will review our Level 2 Disability Confident status and aim for Level 3 Disability Confident leader status. We will also consider whether an additional statement and/or actions are required to support work in this area.



Reading Borough Council

Workforce Profile Information

2024 – 2025

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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' groups¹ to be part of our team and highly values people's individual skills and talents. The information included in this report is also 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 (2024/25), unless otherwise indicated.

2. Vacancies, applicants, leavers and maternity leave

2.1 Vacancies and applicants

The average number of vacancies advertised per month from April 2024 to March 2025 has decreased compared to the previous year.

Vacancies and applicants	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Average number of vacancies advertised per month	20	36	43	42	31
Number of applicants	5890	4498	5586	6735	7097

The ethnic diversity amongst applicants has increased. The number of White British applicants has dropped when compared to the last two years. While the number of applicants from Global Majority groups has increased to 47.0%, there has been an increase in applicants who have selected not to disclose their ethnicity compared to the last two years.

Ethnic origin	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
White: British	50.9%	49.4%	41.3%	40.8%	38.6%
White Other	10.1%	8.4%	10.2%	8.7%	7.7%
Mixed/multiple	4.0%	4.7%	4.4%	4.7%	4.7%
Asian/Asian British	18.4%	20.9%	25.6%	24.3%	25.8%
Black/Black British	9.2%	9.9%	11.7%	14.8%	14.9%
Other ethnic group	1.0%	1.6%	1.9%	1.6%	1.6%
No value (Prefer not to say)	6.4%	5.1%	4.9%	5.2%	6.7%

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.

The younger age structure of applicants has remained consistent over the years and implies that this age group is more likely to be looking for work. This increase in younger applicants is also reflected in the staff that have recently joined the council.

Age range	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
16 to 29	36.5%	33.3%	36.0%	31.8%	35.9%
30 to 44	35.6%	36.3%	37.1%	38.3%	36.5%
45 to 59	18.4%	21.5%	19.0%	20.9%	19.3%
60 to 64	1.9%	3.2%	2.4%	3.2%	2.4%
65 to 74	0.4%	0.4%	0.7%	0.8%	0.6%
75 and over	0.03%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
No value (Prefer not to say)	7.1%	5.2%	4.8%	4.9%	5.4%

The Council typically attracts more applications from women than men, however the percentage of male applicants in 2024 – 2025 is 0.9% higher than female applicants in the same year and is 8.4% higher than male applicants in 2023 – 2024.

Gender	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Female	55.2%	56.7%	58.0%	58.0%	47.9%
Male	43.1%	41.1%	40.4%	40.4%	48.8%
No value (Prefer not to say)	1.6%	2.2%	1.7%	1.7%	3.3%

A lower percentage of applicants' state that they have a disability (1.5%) than the existing workforce (4.8%). The percentage of applicants who declare that they have a disability has increased 0.8% in 2024 - 2025 while the percentage of applicants who prefer not to say has decreased.

Considered disabled?	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Yes	0.8%	0.8%	0.5%	0.7%	1.5%
No	18.4	13.5%	10.4%	9.0%	9.5%
No value (Prefer not to say)	80.9%	85.7%	89.1%	90.3%	89.0%

2.2 Starters

Some demographic characteristics of starters vary from the existing workforce:

- 5.4% of the starters during 2024/25 reported themselves as being disabled, compared to 4.8% amongst the workforce.
- 27.6% of the starters were from Global Majority ethnicities, compared to the percentage of Global Majority ethnicities in the general workforce (18.8%).
- A much lower percentage of starters are aged 45 and over (33.3% compared to 55.6% amongst the workforce).
- 54.8% of starters are female compared to those in the workforce (60.2 %).

2.3 Leavers

Voluntary labour turnover decreased in 2024/25 compared to the previous year.

Rate	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Labour turnover rate (all reasons)	11.0%	16.0%	14.6%	13.7%	12.7%
Labour turnover rate (voluntary resignation)	8.4%	11.8%	13.6%	12.6%	11.8%

Further information on the reasons for staff leaving employment at the council are shown below. Voluntary resignation is the main reason, followed by the expiration of temporary contracts and retirement.

Reason for leaving	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Death in Service	4	2	1	1	3
Dismissal	5	3	4	8	5
Dismissal – Ill Health	3	4	0	1	0
End of Fixed Term Contract	19	13	0	18	1
End of Temporary Contract	0	0	20	0	21
Mutual Agreement	9	12	9	8	7
Redundancy	6	5	5	0	0
Resignation	108	204	176	181	169
Retirement	26	18	22	19	23
Retirement – Ill Health	3	6	5	7	3
Retirement-Redundancy	0	0	3	0	0
Early Retirement	2	0	0	0	0
Settlement Agreement	1	1	0	0	1
TUPE Transfer	0	0	0	0	0
Unsuccessful Probation	3	2	4	3	2
Total	189	270	249	246	234

Some demographic characteristics of leavers vary from the existing workforce:

- 6.0% of leavers during 2024/25 reported themselves as being disabled, compared to 4.8% amongst the workforce as a whole.
- The amount of leavers (60.3%) in 2023/24 that were White British is lower than proportion in the existing workforce (72.7%)
- A slightly lower percentage of leavers in 2024/25 are aged 55 and over (26.5%), compared to 29.2% amongst the workforce.
- The proportion (53.8%) of female leavers in 2024/25 is lower than the 60.2% of females in the workforce.

2.4 Maternity leave

The vast majority of staff members that go on maternity leave return to work at the council, with 90.2% of those that went on maternity leave during 2024/25 returning.

3. Demographic characteristics of the workforce

3.1 Disability

To ensure that our employment opportunities are accessible to disabled people, we fully commit to being a 'Disability Confident Employer²'. We actively promote employment opportunities to disabled applicants, 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 and counselling.

4.8% of the workforce consider themselves to have a disability. This is in line with previous years. Staff at the council can choose whether or not to classify themselves as disabled so annual fluctuations are not considered to be significant in isolation.

Disability	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
No	80.8%	73.2%	68.2%	65.2%	62.5%
Yes	3.8%	4.1%	4.1%	4.2%	4.8%

3.2 Ethnicity

72.7% of the council's workforce describe their ethnicity as White English/Welsh/Scottish /Northern Irish/ British. This percentage has decreased compared to other years. The percentage of the workforce in Global Majority ethnicities has increased in the last two years and stands at 18.8% in 31st March 2025. The proportion of staff who identify as Black/Black British has shown an increase from 6.9% in 2020/21 to 8.2% in 2024/25.

Ethnicity	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/2025
White: British	75.4%	74.1%	71.1%	68.5%	67.6%
White Other	4.4%	4.7%	6.1%	6.5%	6.6%
Black/Black British	6.0%	6.9%	7.1%	7.3%	7.6%
Asian/Asian British	5.3%	5.6%	6.6%	7.0%	7.2%
Mixed	2.8%	3.1%	3.1%	4.0%	3.7%
Other ethnic group(s)	0.3%	0.3%	0.2%	0.3%	0.3%
Prefer not to say	5.7%	5.3%	5.7%	6.6%	7.0%

3.3 Age profile

A lower percentage of the workforce is aged 16 to 24 (3.5%) compared to the percentage of staff aged 55 to 64 in employment (24.8%).

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

The council is pro-actively working with local schools and colleges through our work experience and apprenticeship programmes to promote employment opportunities. These aim to encourage young people to take up work at the council.

The percentage of the council's workforce aged 55 and over is 29.2% which is slightly higher than the number of staff aged 35 to 44 (24.5%). 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.

Age	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
16-24	4.5%	4.7%	4.8%	3.9%	3.5%
25-34	17.4%	16.6%	16.3%	17.8%	17.4%
35-44	23.6%	24.6%	23.8%	24.5%	24.5%
45-54	28.5%	26.7%	25.8%	25.3%	25.4%
55-64	22.8%	23.7%	25.3%	24.2%	24.8%
65+	3.2%	3.7%	4.1%	4.4%	4.5%

3.4 Gender

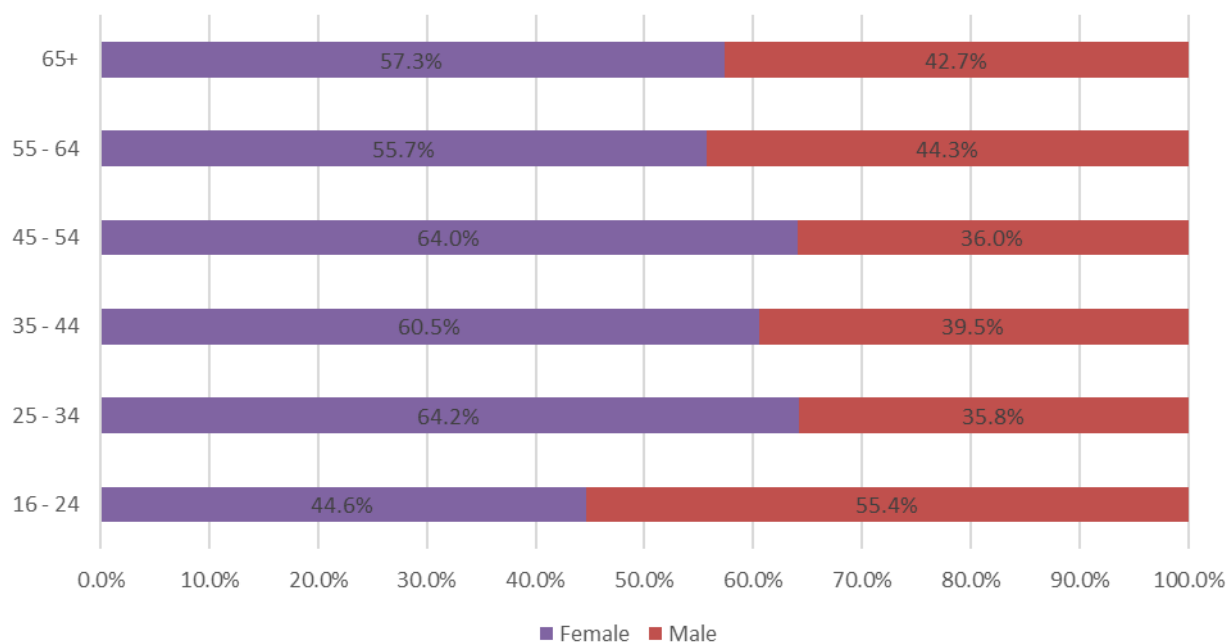
The Council employs more female staff, with 60.2% females and 39.8% males, although this distribution had dropped in the three years prior to 2022/23 as shown in the table below.

The gender split by age in 2024/25 shows a predominantly larger percentage of female employees in all age groups but is particularly high in the 25 to 34 range (64.2%) and the 45 to 54 range (64.0%).

Year	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Female	58.7%	59.8%	60.8%	59.7%	60.2%
Male	41.3%	40.2%	39.2%	40.3%	39.8%

Age Group	Female	Male
16 to 24	44.6%	55.4%
25 to 34	64.2%	35.8%
35 to 44	60.5%	39.5%
45 to 54	64.0%	36.0%
55 to 64	55.7%	44.3%
65+	57.3%	42.7%

Workforce by Age and Gender

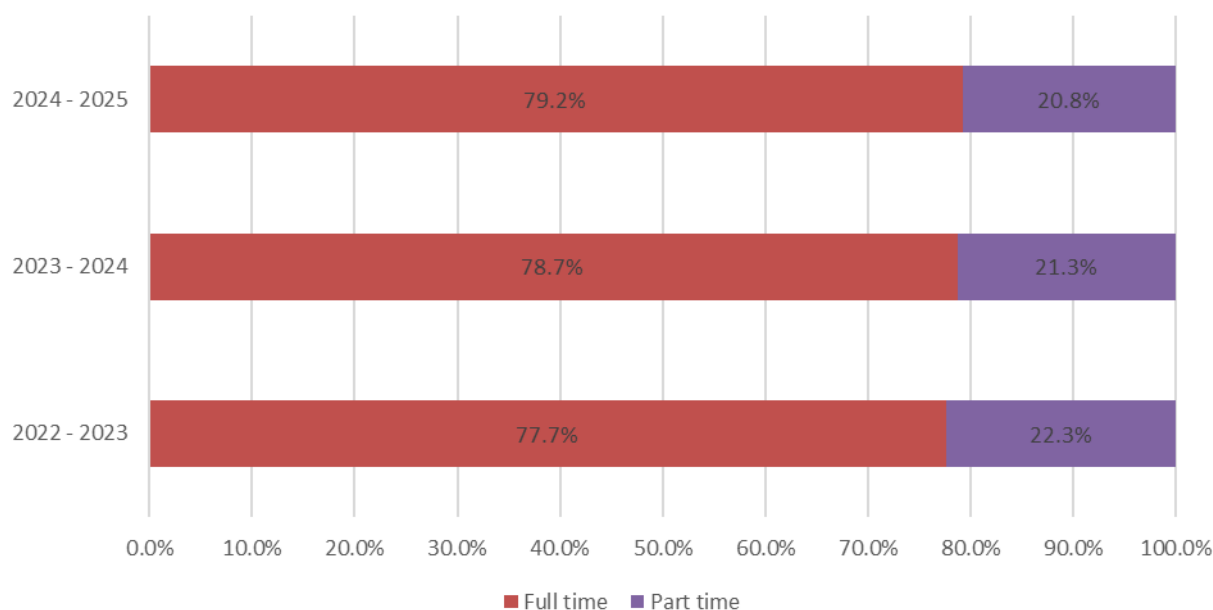


3.5 Full-time and part-time

About three quarters of employees within the council work full-time, whilst 20.8% 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	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Full time	75.4%	75.7%	77.7%	78.7%	79.2%
Part time	24.6%	24.3%	22.3%	21.3%	20.8%

Workforce by full and part time



3.6 Full-time and part-time by gender

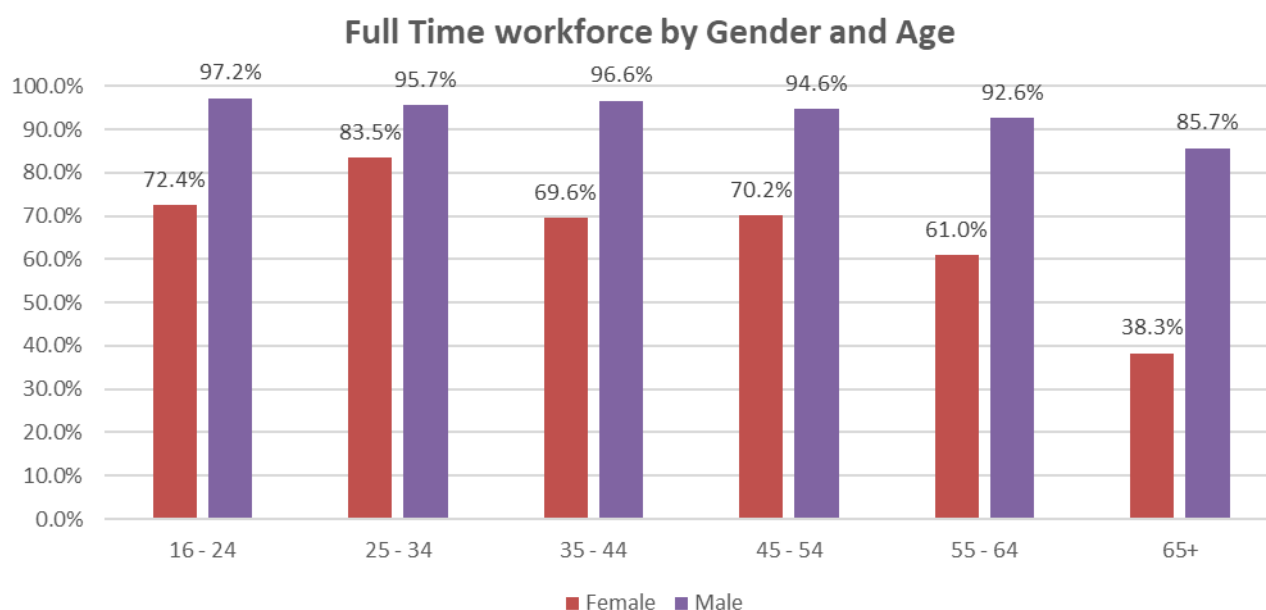
A much greater percentage of females work part-time than males (89.3% compared to 10.7%). The percentage of males and females working full or part-time has remained relatively stable over time

Gender	Contract type	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Female	Full time	49.7%	50.8%	52.5%	51.7%	52.5%
Male	Full time	50.3%	49.2%	47.5%	48.3%	47.5%
Female	Part time	86.3%	88.1%	89.5%	89.3%	89.3%
Male	Part time	13.7%	11.9%	10.5%	10.7%	10.7%

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

A high percentage of females aged 16 to 24 (72.4%) and 25 to 34 (83.5%) work full-time. This then falls for those aged 35 to 44 (69.6%) and then rises again for females aged 45 to 54 (70.2%). Fewer than half of females aged 65 and over work full-time (38.3%), which is potentially due to flexible working and/or retirement and pension options.

More than 90% of Males between the ages of 16 to 64 work full-time, while in the 65+ category 85.7% work full time. Again this is likely to be due to flexible retirement/working arrangements which enable employees to have a gradual route into retirement if they wish.

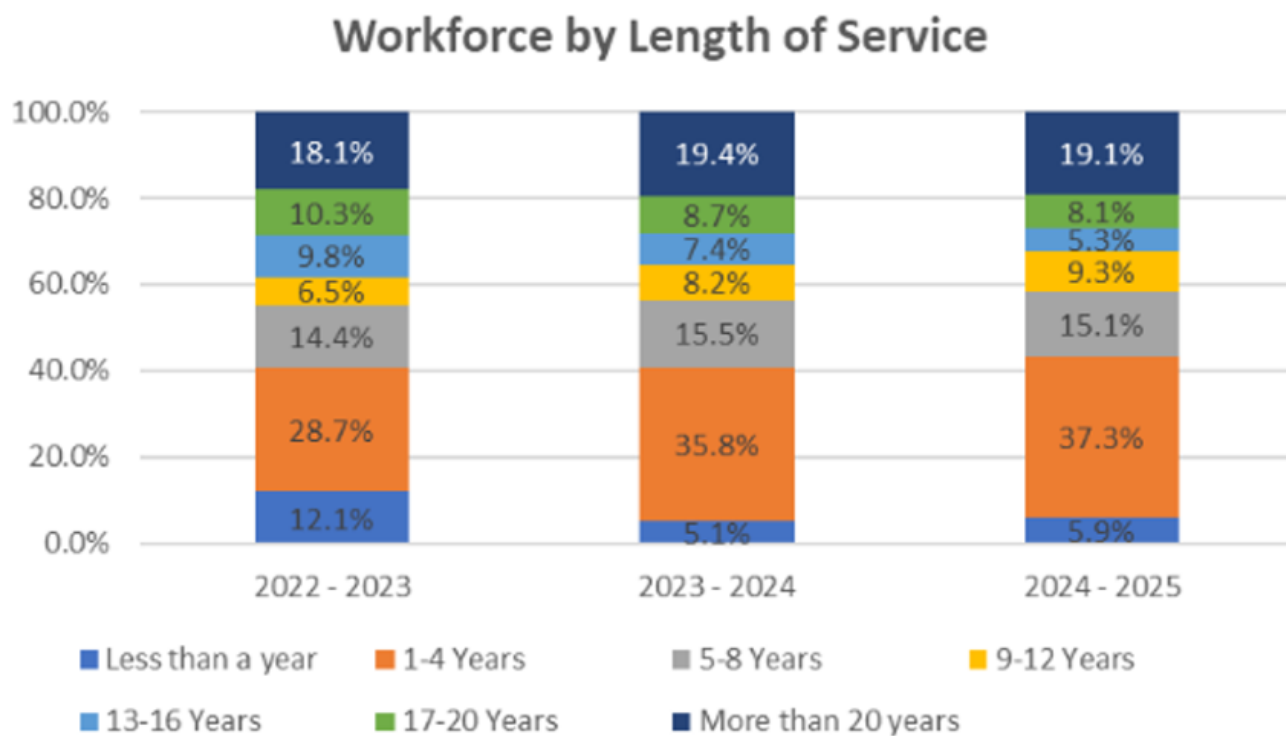


3.8 Length of service

2024/25 shows a 0.8% increase in the proportion of staff that have worked at the council for less than a year compared to 2023/24 and has remained stable for staff who have worked for one to four years and 17 to 20 years' service compared to 2020/21.

Length of service	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Less than a year	8.5%	12.4%	12.1%	5.1%	5.9%

1 to 4 years	29.2%	28.0%	28.7%	35.8%	37.3%
5 to 8 years	14.0%	13.5%	14.4%	15.5%	15.1%
9 to 12 years	9.1%	6.7%	6.5%	8.2%	9.3%
13 to 16 years	10.5%	11.0%	9.8%	7.4%	5.3%
17 to 20 years	10.6%	10.4%	10.3%	8.7%	8.1%
More than 20 years	18.0%	18.0%	18.1%	19.4%	19.1%



3.9 Length of service by disability

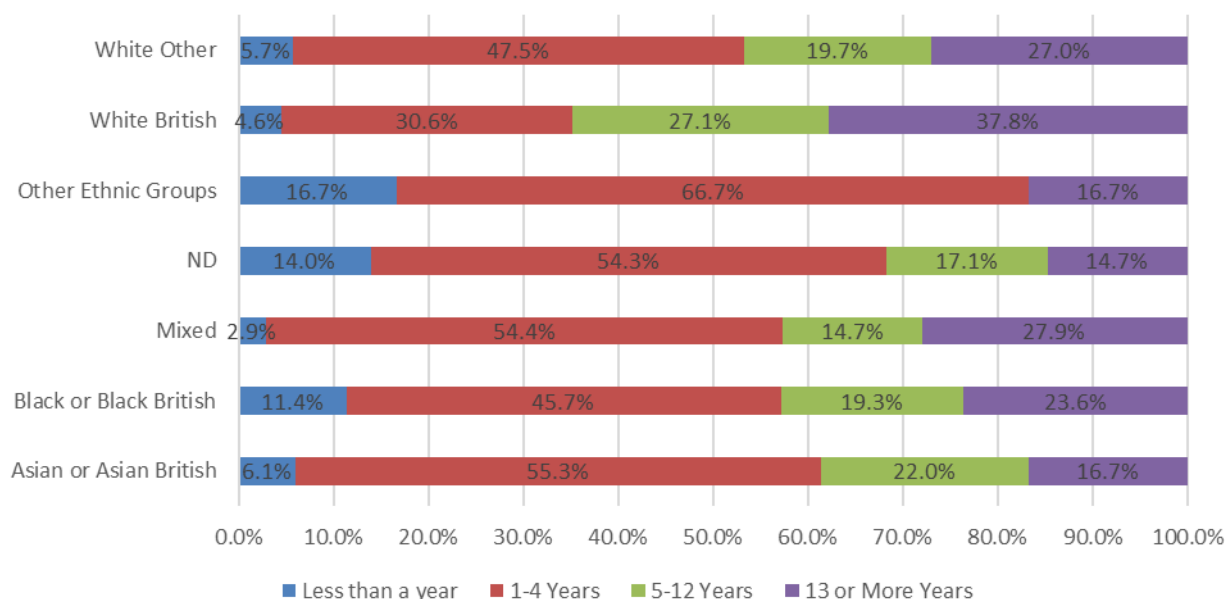
Due to the low numbers recorded for employees with a disability it is difficult to note any particular trends pertinent to their length of service. The data is potentially disclosive and so is not shown here.

3.10 Length of service by ethnicity

The highest proportion of White British employees have worked for Reading Borough Council for 13+ years compared to other ethnic groups where the highest proportions are found in the 1-4 years' service bracket.

Ethnicity	Less than a year	1 to 4 years	5 to 12 years	13 +
Asian/Asian British	6.1%	55.3%	22.0%	16.7%
Black/Black British	11.4%	45.7%	19.3%	23.6%
Mixed	2.9%	54.4%	14.7%	27.9%
Prefer not to say	14.0%	54.3%	17.1%	14.7%
Other ethnic group(s)	16.7%	66.7%		16.7%
White British	4.6%	30.6%	27.1%	37.8%
White Other	5.7%	47.5%	19.7%	27.0%

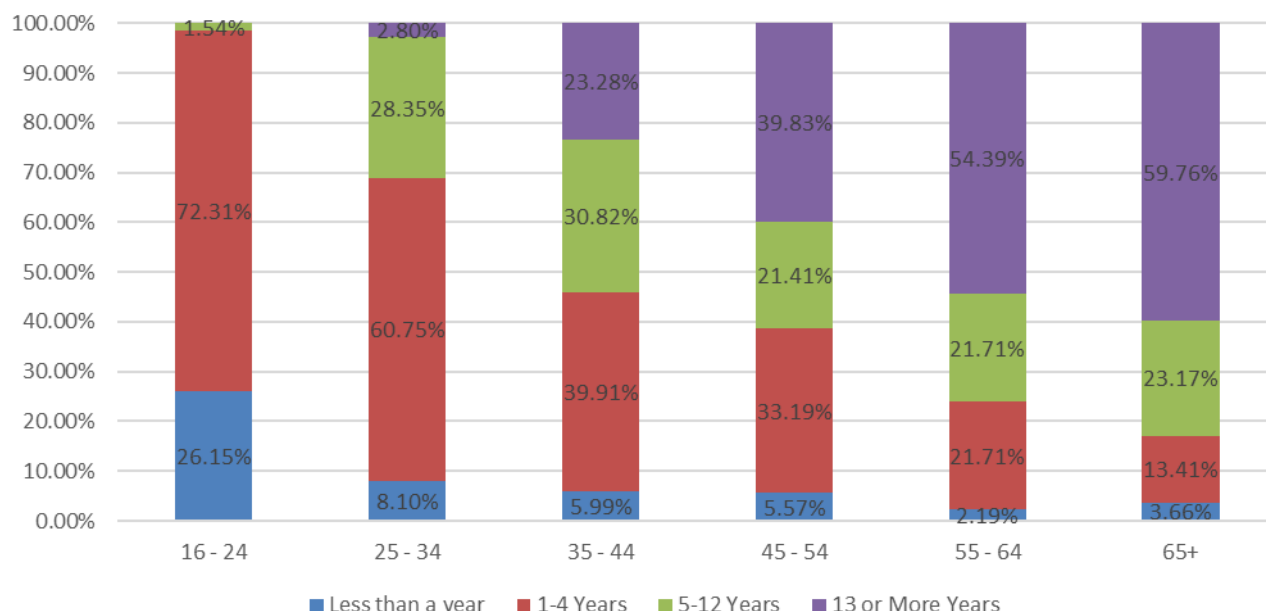
Workforce by Length of Service and Ethnicity



3.11 Length of service by age profile

There are more people in the 35 and over category that have served for longer periods and more people aged 34 and below that have served less than a year. The majority of those aged under 35 have worked at the authority 1 to 4 years. The percentage of staff that have worked at the organisation for fewer than four years declines with age. This is because the correlation between age and length of service tends to be positive, as older employees tend to have naturally been in the organisation longer, or vice versa.

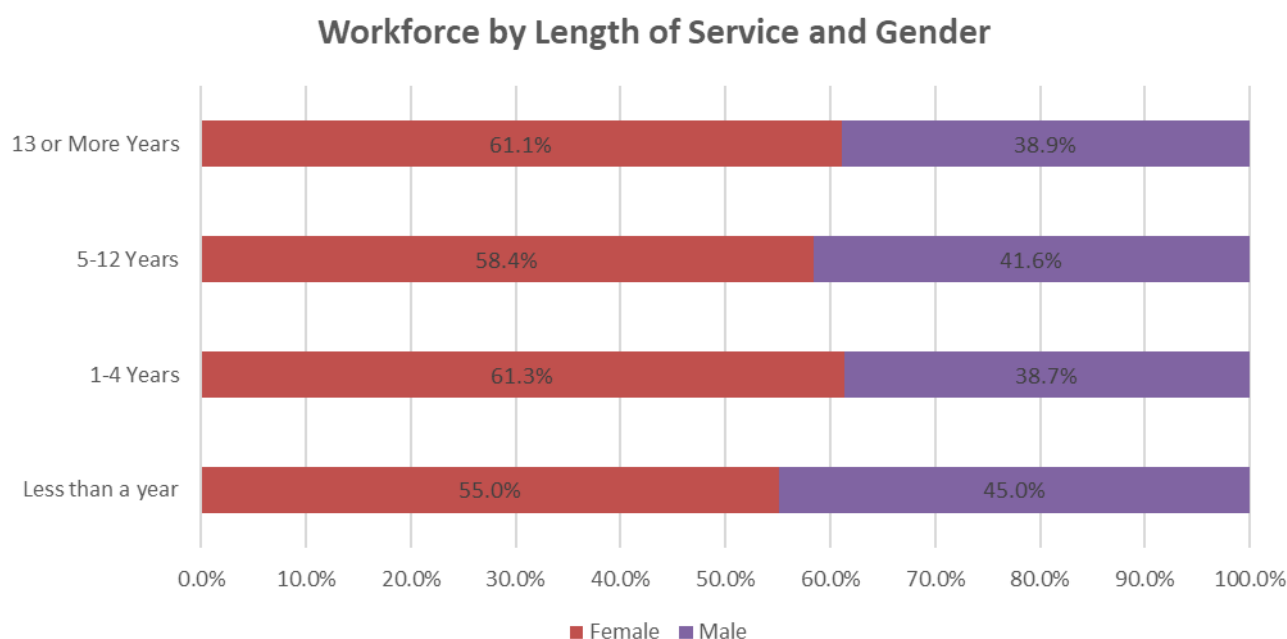
Workforce by Age and Length of Service



3.12 Length of service by gender

The percentage of staff by gender is similar across the different service lengths, although a lower percentage of those that have served for 13 or more years are male.

Ethnicity	Less than a year	1 to 4 years	5 to 12 years	13 +
Female	55.0%	61.3%	58.4%	61.1%
Male	45.0%	38.7%	41.6%	38.9%



3.13 Pay grade

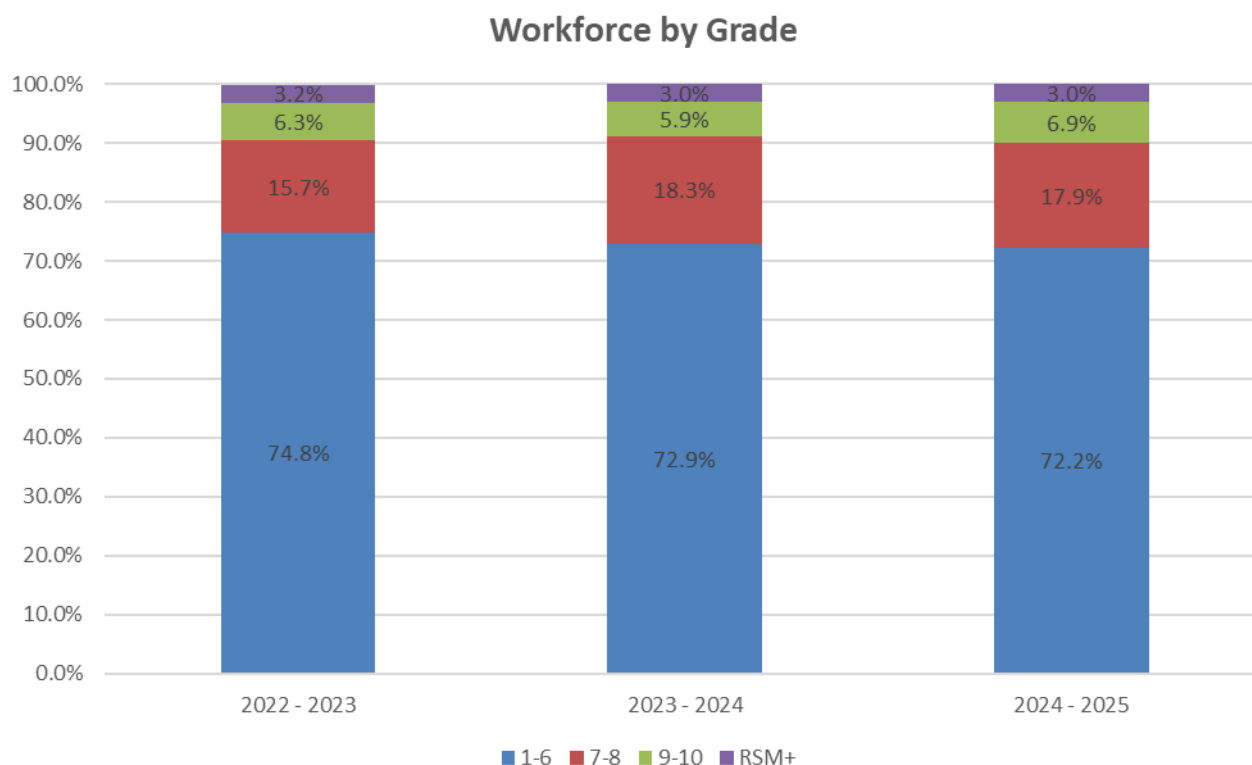
This section features information broken down by salary grades.

Grade explanation

6. **RG2 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.
7. **RG7 to RG8** cover a range of professional and first line manager / supervisory roles.
8. **RG9 to RG10** cover a range of senior professional and middle manager roles.
9. **RSMD and above** cover senior managers, Coroners, Assistant Directors, Executive Directors and the Chief Executive,

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

Grade	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Grades 2 to 6	77.7%	76.3%	74.8%	72.9%	72.2%
Grades 7 to 8	15.4%	15.3%	15.7%	18.3%	17.9%
Grades 9 to 10	4.6%	5.4%	6.3%	5.9%	6.9%
Grades RSM and Above	2.3%	3.0%	3.2%	3.0%	3.0%



3.14 Grade by disability

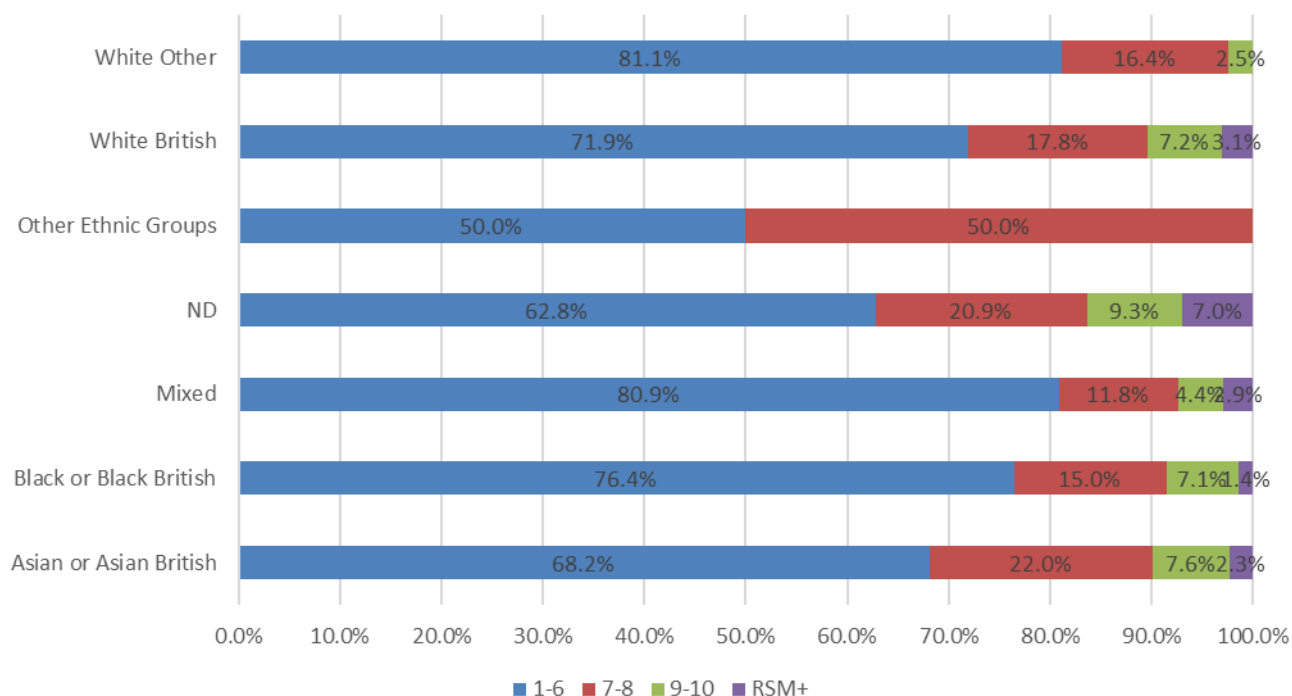
Due to the small number of staff that identify themselves as having a disability in each grade group, the data is potentially disclosive and so is not presented here. The council continues its commitment to be a Disability Confident Employer to encourage applications from disabled candidates and promote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

3.15 Grade by ethnicity

There is a lower percentage of White British staff in RG2 to RG6 than the percentage of staff from Global Majority ethnic groups.

Ethnicity	Grade 2- 6	Grade 7-8	Grade 9-10	RSM and Above
Asian/Asian British	68.2%	22.0%	7.6%	2.3%
Black/Black British	76.4%	15.0%	7.1%	1.4%
Mixed	80.9%	11.8%	4.4%	2.9%
Prefer not to say	62.8%	20.9%	9.3%	7.0%
Other ethnic group(s)	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%
White British	71.9%	17.8%	7.2%	3.1%
White Other	81.1%	16.4%	2.5%	0.0%

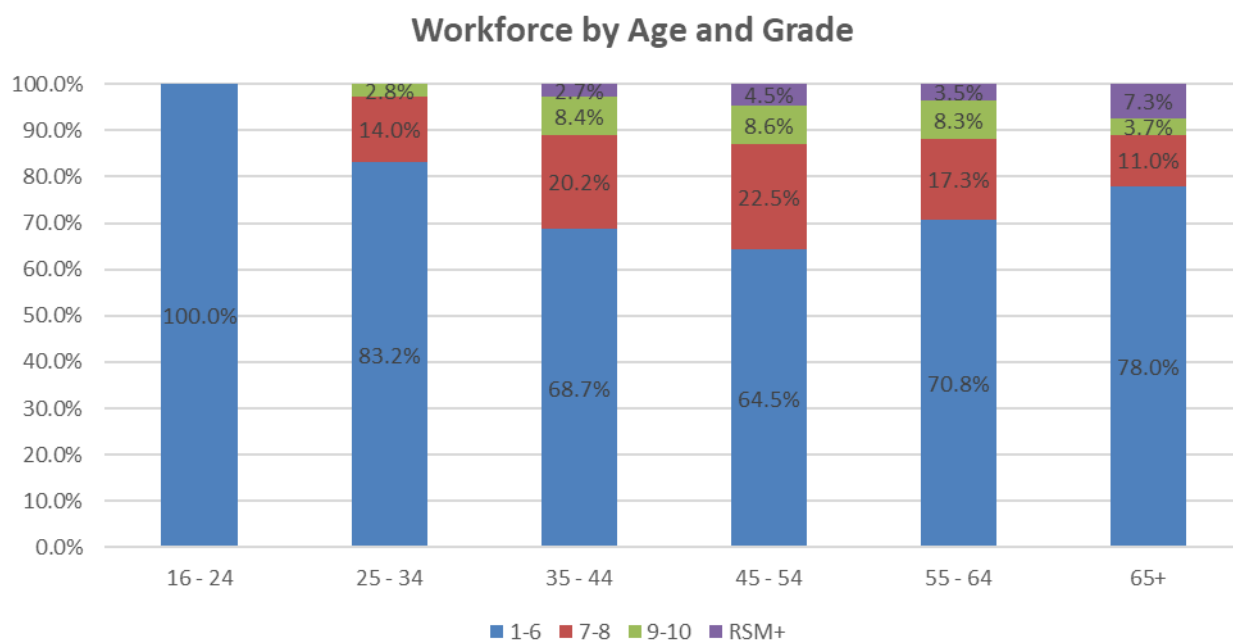
Workforce by Ethnicity and Pay Grade



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 staff are in the earlier stages of their careers. A larger percentage of those aged 55 to 64 are in the highest pay grades than any other age group.

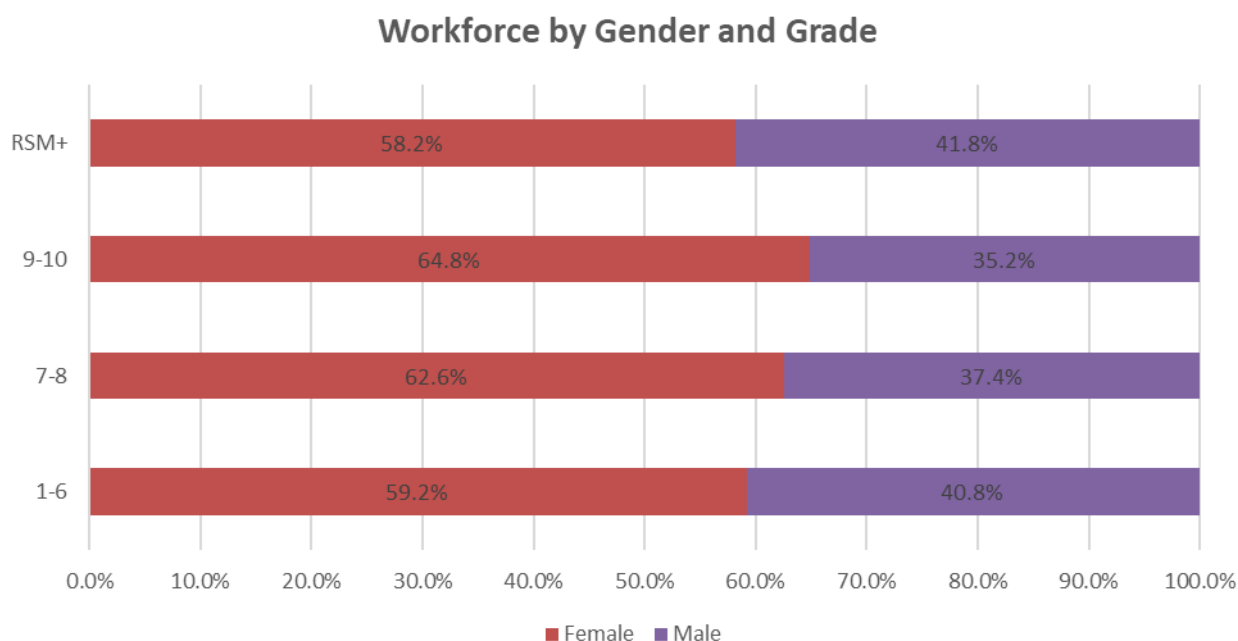
Age	Grades 1-6	Grades 7-8	Grades 9-10	RSM and Above
16 to 24	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
25 to 34	83.2%	14.0%	2.8%	0.0%
35 to 44	68.7%	20.2%	8.4%	2.7%
45 to 54	64.5%	22.5%	8.6%	4.5%
55 to 64	70.8%	17.3%	8.3%	3.5%
65+	78.0%	11.0%	3.7%	7.3%



3.17 Grade by gender

There is a higher proportion of female workers in all categories.

Gender	Grade 1-6	Grade 7- 8	Grade 9-10	RSDM Above	and
Female	59.2%	62.6%	64.8%	58.2%	
Male	40.8%	37.4%	35.2%	41.8%	



4. Staff engagement and procedures

4.1 Quantitative and qualitative research with employees

An engagement survey for staff is completed annually and the results considered by demographic groups, HR and leadership teams.

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

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

4.3 Staff complaints

There were 9 staff complaints about alleged discrimination during the period which this report covers. (3 cases of disability discrimination in the Directorate of Children's Services; 3 disability discrimination, 1 race and 1 sex and age discrimination in DCASC; 1 race discrimination in DoR).

4.4 Engagement with Trades Unions and staff

The Council recognises Trades Union and works in partnership with them to support employees. The Council supports and encourages a range of staff networks and groups to ensure that the voice of staff is heard – quarterly meetings are held between CMT members and Chairs of the staff networks to share ideas, issues and concerns.

4.5 Policies and programmes to address equality concerns

The council has a range of policies and programmes to address equalities concerns. Some examples of these include:

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in Employment Policy

Whistle-Blowing Policy

Grievance Procedure

Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure

HR Casework

Completed HR Casework – Use of Formal Procedures – April 2024 to March 2025 - Analysis by Employee Profile

Case Type	All Cases	Gender		Ethnicity		Disability	
		Female	%	Number	%	Number	%
Capability – Ill Health	79	25	31.6%	15	19.0%	3	3.8%
Capability – Performance	19	9	47.4%	7	36.8%	2	10.5%
Disciplinary	37	9	24.3%	9	24.3%		0.0%
Grievance	18	10	55.6%	7	38.9%	1	5.6%
Total	153	53	34.6%	38	24.8%	6	3.9%

Completed HR Casework – Use of Formal Procedures – April 2024 to March 2025 –
Employee Profile not Disclosed

		Gender		Ethnicity		Disability	
Case Type	All Cases	Not Disclosed	%	Not Disclosed	%	Not Disclosed	%
Capability - IH	79	0	0.0%	2	2.5%	18	22.8%
Capability – Performance	19	0	0.0%	1	5.3%	9	47.4%
Disciplinary	37	0	0.0%	2	5.4%	29	78.4%
Grievance	18	0	0.0%	4	22.2%	9	50.0%
Total	153	0	0.0%	9	5.9%	65	42.5%

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

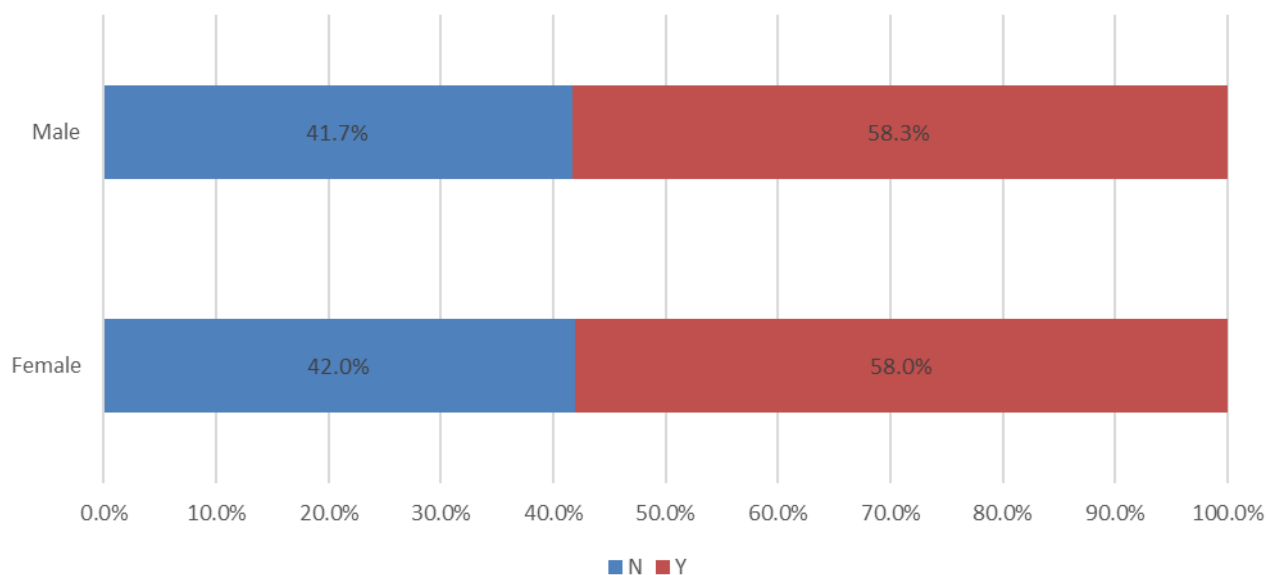
Staff are our main asset and the council is committed to training and personal development. Every member of staff has a crucial role to play in enabling the council to make a difference: to make the borough an even better place to be and to help meet the challenges faced within local communities. To that effect, the council has a People Strategy in place with the aim “to have the right people, in the right job, with the right skills”.

To deliver on this, the council has a range of learning and development opportunities available including classroom courses, e-learning and a professional qualification support scheme as well as on-the-job training, and mentoring. The council also has an integrated programme of leadership and management development.

In 2024/25 58.1% of the total workforce accessed our corporate training, 60.0% of females accessed training and 64.3% of Black/ Black British staff accessed training compared to 57.3% of White British Staff.

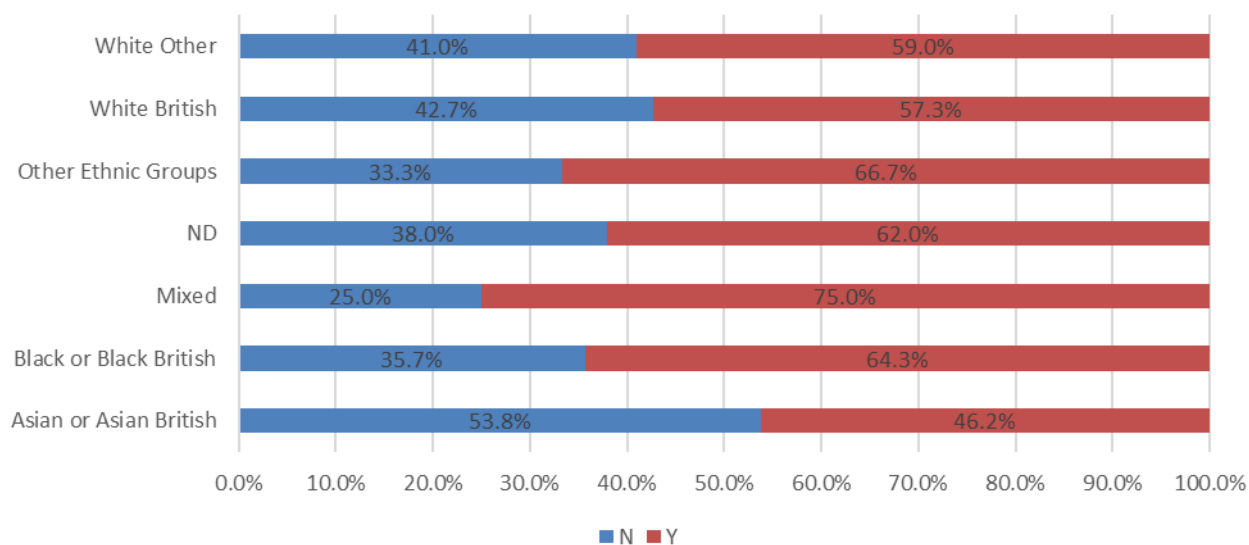
Gender	Number who accessed Training	Number who did not access Training
Female	58.0%	42.0%
Male	58.3%	41.7%

Workforce by Gender and Accessed Training



Ethnicity	Number who accessed Training	Number who did not access Training
Asian/Asian British	46.2%	53.8%
Black/Black British	64.3%	35.7%
Mixed	75.0%	25.0%
Prefer not to say	62.0%	38.0%
Other ethnic group(s)	66.7%	33.3%
White British	57.3%	42.7%
White Other	59.0%	41.0%

Workforce by Ethnicity and Accessed Training



Development opportunities can be identified in a variety of ways including by the individual through regular 1 to 1 meetings, and the performance appraisal process. Training courses available 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.

4.7 Pay gap information

The council has been required to publish and report specific figures about its gender pay gap since 2017. Using the required snapshot date of 31 March 2025 for public sector organisations, the council was pleased to report a median gender pay gap of 0.0%. This showed the council was performing positively against the national average of 6.6% in favour of men.

In addition, the council has voluntarily published ethnicity pay gap since 2020 and will also publish disability pay gap information for the second time this year.

The council will be publishing pay gap information on its website, and on the government reporting w

Personnel Committee

20 November 2025



Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

Title	Update on RBC's Inclusion and Diversity Strategy and Plan
Purpose of the report	To note the report for information
Report status	Public report
Executive Director/ Statutory Officer Commissioning Report	Louise Duffield, Executive Director Resources
Report author	Kathryn Cook, Assistant Director HR&OD
Lead Councillor	Councillor Emberson
Council priority	Ensure Reading Borough Council is fit for the future
Recommendations	That Personnel Committee notes the progress that has been made in relation to the delivery of the Council's Inclusion and Diversity Strategy

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. Personnel Committee agreed the draft Inclusion and Diversity Strategy at its meeting on 16th November 2023. The Committee's comments and feedback were reflected in the final version of the Strategy which was launched to staff in January 2024 and is attached at Appendix 1 for information. This report provides the annual update (year 2 progress) to Personnel Committee on delivery of the Strategy as requested by the Committee at its meeting in November 2023.

2. Policy Context

- 2.1. The Equality Act 2010 is the foundational legal framework to protect individuals' rights and advance equality of opportunity for all. The Act outlines key legal responsibilities for employers including ensuring they do not unfairly discriminate in any aspect of work, do all they reasonably can to protect people from discrimination, and look after the wellbeing of employees. The Act introduced the term "protected characteristics" to refer to groups that are protected under the Act. There are 9 Protected characteristics as follows:

Age	Race	Sex
Sexual orientation	Marriage/civil partnership	Disability
Gender reassignment	Religion or belief	Maternity and paternity

- 2.2. In addition to the duties required by legislation, Council agreed on 17th October 2023 that RBC should include care-experience as a Protected Characteristic in its strategies and plans.
- 2.3. The Public Sector Equality Duty (created under the Equality Act 2010) came into force on 5 April 2011 and requires public bodies and others carrying out public functions to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, to advance equality of opportunities and foster good relations between different communities.

- 2.4. The Council's Inclusion and Diversity Strategy goes beyond 'just' our legal obligations. It aims to embed Inclusion and Diversity in how we do business and how we work as an organisation.

3. Progress in delivering the Inclusion and Diversity Strategy – year 2 actions

- 3.1. Reading is a diverse and vibrant place with pockets of affluence and deprivation. We know that most of the people who work for us are local. Approximately half of our workforce (54%) lives in the borough and a further 33% have an RG postcode (87% total). We want Reading Borough Council to have a workforce that reflects and understands the communities it serves and to be seen as an employer of choice within our communities; one that values inclusion and diversity, and the different perspectives they bring.

- 3.2. Progress has been made since the launch of the Inclusion and Diversity Strategy including:

- A steady increase in the ethnic diversity of staff and the development of a more representative senior leadership team. This has seen the overall proportion of staff from a non-white ethnic group increase to 19.6% (Sept 2025) from a baseline of 15.9% in 2022/23. The TUPE of Brighter Futures for Children back into RBC (as the new DOCs service) will require that we reprofile the Council's position. Future reports will include DOCs data and the action plans will similarly be applied to this service.
- Launch of the "Reverse Mentoring for Inclusion" pilot programme with five members of our Corporate Management Team being mentored, for six months, by a more junior employee with a different lived experience to them, to increase understanding and unity across all colleagues (starting with protected characteristics).
- Publication of our pay gap reports and action plans including the gender pay gap report, our voluntary ethnicity pay gap report and our voluntary disability pay gap report. Personnel Committee is receiving a separate report at the meeting on pay gap reporting – overall we are proud to be presenting a positive outcome on all three pay gap reports.
- Produced an anti-racism statement and action plan for 2025 – Appendix 2. The statement has had the benefit of input from staff groups and will be communicated widely shortly. Meanwhile the actions in the plan are being progressed. These actions include:
 - Regular updates on our work on inclusion and diversity generally and anti racism specifically including at All staff Briefings and Team Talk and at Staff networks
 - Increasing the visibility of inclusion activities including Black History month
 - Support for the new Race in Reading staff group including Team Talk and encouragement to people managers to both get involved in staff groups and to support their team members to be involved in them
 - Introducing a tracking mechanism in HR to track and monitor cases of discrimination related grievances and to enable lessons to be learnt
 - Piloting anti racism training, ensuring all staff understand their roles and responsibilities. The initial pilot has been positively received and will be rolled out – initially to people managers – through 2026.
 - Continuing with the year 1 priority to increase the visibility of diverse communities in our communications including recruitment

- CMT continues to take a very active interest in the work to improve how well the Council's workforce reflects the composition of the Borough – a further update on

the Global Majority action plan, focused on understanding the experiences of employees and making positive improvements to policies and processes in response to this learning, will be considered by CMT in the new calendar year.

Please note the comments in paragraph 3.4 below about feedback from the Black and Asian Councillors Group about the need for a Borough-wide statement on anti-racism which will be taken forward shortly.

- Launch of an Inclusive Recruitment workshop, guide and interview questions for hiring managers. This covers legal implications, processes, support, unconscious bias, and reasonable adjustment.
- Continued delivery of our Inclusive leadership training for leaders and managers. Feedback from attendees remains positive.
- A career and personal development workshop to assist staff who wish to develop in their current roles or progress to more senior positions within the Council.
- Access for all staff to Inclusive Employers' free webinars -regular newsletter promotion (10 free places on each webinar as part of corporate membership).
- Work has been completed to develop Health 'passports' (a statement about the reasonable adjustments required to support individual staff members to ensure that their needs are recorded consistently and to ensure that staff members in receipt of them are not required to restate continually their requirements). This is currently being tested by Staff Disability Forum members ahead of launch.
- Updating our four core HR policies: Bullying & Harassment, Disciplinary, Grievance and Managing Poor Performance to ensure that they continue to reflect best practice.
- Focused attention to recruit care-experienced people to roles including apprenticeships.

Further details are shown at appendix 3.

- 3.3 Progress is shared quarterly with all staff through a supporting comms campaign. CMT members chair, on a rotation basis, a quarterly meeting with Staff Networks chairs as part of the governance of the strategy.
- 3.4 Meetings have been held with Members over the past 18 months about the Council's strategy for inclusion and diversity for its workforce. A keen interest has been shown into the proposed anti racism statement. Whilst the statement at Appendix 2 relates to the Council's workforce, Members are also being engaged with in working towards a broader, Borough-wide public statement.
- 3.5 Progress has also been made with the agreed milestones for the Inclusion & Diversity strategy:

Continue to monitor representation across the whole workforce across numerous identities to identify any inconsistencies/ areas for focus.	Workforce data is part of quarterly performance reports to CMT. This is reviewed by HR & OD to identify areas of focus. For year 2 a working group has reviewed data related to Global majority employees.
Continue to monitor feedback from candidates about the application and interview processes – identifying ways in which we can improve.	Feedback is sought from candidates and regularly reviewed to identify improvements. Feedback is generally very positive with commendations being made about the speed and

	efficiency of the process and the focus given to 'candidate care'.
Monitor turnover across the whole workforce and particular identities (including disabled) to identify any specific areas of concern.	Workforce data is part of quarterly performance reports to CMT. This is reviewed by HR & OD to identify areas of focus. HR&OD Business Partners work with this data to understand where to focus attention e.g. though analysis of sickness absence or recruitment data
Staff survey scores from disabled colleagues to 'match' those of non-disabled colleagues	Next staff survey due to launch on 17 November.
Expect a 5% increase (minimum), currently 77%, in colleagues agreeing "The Council is an inclusive organisation where everyone is respected and valued" on the next engagement survey about the importance of I&D by the end of 2025.	2024 result: 79% 2025 survey due November
Deliver a 50% increase in number of colleagues who are part of a staff network by year 2	Achieved. New networks in year 1 & 2 include Race in Reading, Men's wellbeing circle, Digital Champions and Change Makers Network
By the 2025 staff survey we will expect a 5% (minimum), currently 57%, increase in colleagues trusting senior leadership (question: "Leadership by the Senior Leaders is positive and supportive")	2024 staff survey result: same 2025 survey due in November
Deliver a 10% decrease in 'prefer not to say' / not stated across all identities for new joiners and existing staff by the end of 2025	We are seeing a reduction in non-disclosure rates - full review to be undertaken in early 2026. Proposed to seek Union support to work jointly on a campaign of disclosure.
Ensure all core HR policies – including the I&D strategy - are produced in 'easy read' format	Easy read formats created for launch post finalising of four core policies
Team Reading values are updated and integrated into the start of the 24/25 performance annual appraisal year.	Completed 2024
Expect that 20% (345 as at 30/9/23 headcount) of colleagues engage with I&D training/ comms and engagement events and comms by end of year 1	On track for achievement events including training workshops-Inclusive Leadership, Inclusive Recruitment, Inclusion & Diversity webinars and staff network events.
All line managers undergo the allyship training programme by the end of years 1, 2, 3	In progress -aim for by end of March 2025 likely end of year 3 strategy.

4. Taking this forward

4.1 The priorities for the third year of the Plan (starting January 2026) are set out in detail in Appendix 4. The priorities listed address areas that are felt still to require attention to ensure the delivery of the Inclusion and Diversity Strategy. They include:

- **Communications campaign for the Anti Racism statement and continuing to progress the agreed actions** including supporting training sessions to understand individual responsibilities to support the Council being an Anti-Racist organisation.

NB This work incorporates the 'Global Majority Action Plan' which drives the work to achieve the targets in the Council Plan through the underlying cross organisational activity aimed toward improving Global Majority representation throughout the employee lifecycle, and at all levels of the organisation.

- **Develop and roll out a series of Inclusion & Diversity workshops** e.g. Understanding Neurodiversity and hidden disabilities
- **Support for progression** –continue to deliver tailored progression workshops, and evaluate the impact of initiatives that may have an effect on progression such as the Reverse Mentoring programme.
- **Continue delivery of Inclusive Leadership workshop** to all people managers as a mandatory training session.
- **Policy review** –continue review of policies with the broad lens of inclusion – importantly this will include, but not be limited to, changes required as a result of the Employment Rights Bill (when enacted) as well as the EHRC guidance following the Supreme Court's judgement on the definition of a woman (when available).
- **Disability Inclusion** continue to ensure we are delivering our Level 2 Disability Confident status and aim for Level 3 Disability Confident leader status. We will also consider whether an additional statement and/or actions are required to support work in this area.

- 4.2 Staff Networks, organisational leaders, and Team Reading Stakeholders have been asked to comment on any further priority areas that will support achievement of our ambition for Inclusion & Diversity during year 3 of the strategy. So far feedback includes a focus on Disability Inclusion (invisible disabilities such as neurodiversity, epilepsy, narcolepsy), Carers – unpaid or family carers and Menopause. These will be considered as part of the year 3 delivery

5. Conclusion

Personnel Committee is invited to note the progress during year two (2025) of the Inclusion and Diversity strategy, the additional Anti-racism actions and comment on any further areas they believe should also be considered as a priority for year 3.

6. Contribution to Strategic Aims

- 6.1. The inclusion and diversity agenda has evolved significantly over the last 30 years and continues to evolve. As a Council we need to not only ensure compliance with legislation but also to respond to changing societal expectations and norms.
- 6.2. Our staff are responsible for delivering high quality services to residents and it is important that every member of staff feels able to deliver their best work – feeling included and valued is an important aspect of this. The Council's Inclusion and Diversity Strategy and associated Action Plan aims to ensure the Council's workforce better reflects the residents of the Borough and, although focussed internally, contributes to the Council Plan themes of 'Ensure Reading Borough Council is fit for the future' and 'Promote more equal communities in Reading'. It is also an important aspect of Team Reading Values e.g. 'We work together as one inclusive team with colleagues and partners to deliver great services'.

7. Environmental and Climate Implications

There are no environmental or climate implications arising from this paper.

8. Community Engagement

Not relevant for this report.

9. Equality Implications

9.1. The Strategy and Action Plan are directly related to the Council's responsibilities as an employer. It seeks to put inclusion and diversity at the heart of not only our people management practices and policies but also more generally in how staff engage with each other e.g. through reflecting its themes and priorities in our Team Reading values. Through close monitoring of our performance in relation to all aspects of the Strategy we will track progress in relation to all 'protected characteristics' as well as wider measures of inclusion and diversity.

9.2 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is not relevant to the decision given that the aim of the Strategy is to address issues relating to the equality and inclusion of everyone who works for the Council.

10. Other Relevant Considerations

This report proposes actions that impact on existing HR&OD policies and processes. As the Strategy is delivered, policies and processes are being systematically worked through and agreed with the trades unions prior to being considered by Policy/Personnel Committee as relevant.

11. Legal Implications

None – this proposal is to meet and to overachieve the requirements in legislation.

12. Financial Implications

The proposals in this report are being met from existing budgets

13. Timetable for Implementation

This is a three-year strategy – this update provides the Committee with a progress report on year two of the Action Plan.

14. Background Papers

There are none.

Appendices

- 1. Inclusion and Diversity Strategy 2024-26**
- 2. Anti racism statement and actions for 2025**
- 3. Inclusion and diversity year two plan update**
- 4. Inclusion and diversity year 3 delivery plan proposal**



Reading Borough Council

Inclusion and Diversity Strategy January 2024- December 2026

Our ambition: An inclusive culture where we can all do our best work and can thrive.

To achieve this ambition we will:

- Create a structured I & D Action Plan that moves us from being judged 'programmatic' to 'embedded' in the Inclusive Employers Inclusion maturity model by the end of 2026 and report on progress regularly to staff.
- Identify relevant external memberships that will help us to keep track of best practice e.g., the Business Disability Forum /Inclusive Employers
- Create a governance structure to oversee progress.
- Value inclusion and diversity to support staff wellbeing and create a positive and supportive culture where people feel able to be themselves.
- Develop the skills, knowledge, and talent of our people so that they fulfil their full potential and uphold our inclusive culture.
- Prioritise the creation of both an anti-racist statement for the Council and a disabled 'charter' in the first year of the plan – reviewing the need for proactive measures to support people with other protected characteristics during the life of the plan.

We will focus on the following areas over the next three years:

To support our ambitions, we will...

Review and develop our ambition statement through consideration of the unique lived experiences of different sectors of society:

- As a first step we will think carefully about what it means for RBC to be an antiracist organisation. Taking input from staff, stakeholders and members and from external best practice we will develop a clear and ambitious plan to deliver it.
- We will develop a similar approach to disability in its widest sense (including neurodiversity and mental health), developing strategies to better support this significantly under-represented group in our workforce.
- During the life of the Action Plan we will regularly review progress in relation to all protected characteristics, developing enabling ambition statements as required.

Develop our approach to Inclusive Recruitment:

- Promote diversifying shortlisting and interviewing.
- Create standardised I&D questions to weave into the recruitment process across all jobs (in interview and/or application)
- Promote flexible working options at advert and appointment.
- Ensure external agencies understand our I&D ambitions e.g., when sourcing candidates

- Review our approach to interviews and assessment centres e.g., to enable neuro diverse applicants to perform at their best.
- Use work experience and apprenticeships to support our ambition.

We will improve on our Disability Confident offering:

- Upskill internal HR/Recruitment Team to promote and encourage Inclusive recruitment practices.
- With members of the Staff Disability Forum ensure we focus on the internal experiences of disabled colleagues making sure they have resources and support to succeed in their role
- Provide support to candidates who say they are disabled.
- We will diversify where we promote our available jobs to reach all communities locally.

We will develop a programme of support for all staff seeking career progression.

- Review feedback from the big Conversation and other sources and engage with focus groups to understand better what current support is of value and what needs to be developed.
- Review our current Leadership Development programme pilot with this feedback in mind.
- Develop further variety in the ways the Council supports career progression including developing success plans.

To understand if the above actions are working, we will:

- Continue to monitor representation across the whole workforce across numerous identities to identify any inconsistencies/ areas for focus.
- Continue to monitor feedback from candidates about the application and interview processes – identifying ways in which we can improve.
- Monitor turnover across the whole workforce and particular identities (including disabled) to identify any specific areas of concern.
- Staff survey scores from disabled colleagues to ‘match’ those of non-disabled colleagues

We want Inclusion and diversity to be at the forefront of all our colleagues minds from the work they deliver, management, and team interactions

To support our ambitions, we will...

Launch this Strategy and Action Plan across the workforce so everyone understands the importance and the part they play.

- We'll run staff sessions to explain the Strategy, Action Plan, and language/terminology used.
- To bring all Inclusion & Diversity work together, we'll make an I&D brand to bring unity to the work delivered over the next 2 years and beyond
- We'll update colleagues quarterly on progress.

Develop a robust structure and support for current and upcoming staff networks to build community, trust and diversify feedback

- Set our networks up for success by giving them terms of reference, network running guidance (including membership and meeting structures) and develop a clear communications pathway from networks to the CEO so that concerns and comments can be raised.
- Consider introducing 'protected time' for involvement in staff networks and groups.

People Managers will undergo a series of continuous learning

- Senior leadership to take part in a series of training e.g., Inclusive Leadership to understand a variety of identities to role model inclusive decision making
- Roll out allyship training.
- A reverse mentoring programme will be launched to support understanding and unity across all colleagues (starting with protected characteristics)

To understand if our actions above are working, we will:

- Expect a 5% increase (minimum), currently 77%, in colleagues agreeing "The Council is an inclusive organisation where everyone is respected and valued" on the next engagement survey about the importance of I&D by the end of 2025.
- Deliver a 50% increase in number of colleagues who are part of a staff network by year 2
- By the 2025 staff survey we will expect a 5% (minimum), currently 57%, increase in colleagues trusting senior leadership (question: "Leadership by the Senior Leaders is positive and supportive")

We want all colleagues to have an inclusive and fair experience whilst at work which helps them thrive.

To support our ambitions, we will...

Review all the Council's HR policies to support and include a broad spectrum of identities and experiences to build a healthy workplace

- We will revise all policies with the wider lens of Inclusion and intersectionality beyond protected characteristics (including socio and economic status)
- We'll introduce gender neutral language throughout all policies (especially menopause, parental/adoption)
- We will work with our networks to make sure a wide range of voices review policies.
- We'll communicate all edited and existing policies so all council employees can access them and identify 'easy read' options

Review the Team Reading values to identify where we need to reflect I&D

- Our current values and supporting descriptions will be reviewed and adapted to ensure a clear statement on inclusion and diversity is included to reflect the importance of everyone's role in achieving our ambition "we want an inclusive culture where we can do our best work and can thrive".

Run an organisational-wide data review across the employee lifecycle to gather data to help us make inclusive and informed decisions.

- We will update all data questions to encompass all identities and backgrounds to help us make better decisions for our people. We will do this by collecting consistent data from job application, on boarding, engagement surveys and exit interviews)

- We will launch a data collection exercise across the Council to improve our understanding of our people.

Set line managers up for success to best support their colleagues.

- Upskill line managers to have meaningful conversations on areas of inclusion and diversity to help them understand the needs of their colleagues. This will enable them to discuss and support team members with reasonable adjustments and/or creating the conditions for them to thrive and do their best work in line with our Inclusion and Diversity ambitions.

To understand if the above actions are working, we will:

- Deliver a 10% decrease in 'prefer not to say' /not stated across all identities for new joiners and existing staff by the end of 2025
- Ensure all core HR policies – including the I&D strategy - are produced in 'easy read' format
- Team Reading values are updated and integrated into the start of the 24/25 performance annual appraisal year.

We want to celebrate diversity in our workforce and empower our colleagues to speak up when they see or experience exclusion.

To support our ambitions, we will...

Design an annual plan of Diversity dates and identities to celebrate through communications, events and training:

- Working with our staff groups we will focus on key diversity dates throughout the year to celebrate and raise awareness, making sure they diversify across a variety of identities (sexuality, disability, faith and more)

We will run a cohesive Allyship Training Programme to encourage unity, connection, and solidarity across all identities – so we can all make a positive culture.

- This training programme will encourage and empower colleagues to be active allies.
- It will explore topics of inclusion, diversity and being an active ally.

To understand if our actions are working, we will:

- Expect that 20% (345 as at 30/9/23 headcount) of colleagues engage with I&D training/ comms and engagement events and comms by end of year 1
- All line managers undergo the allyship training programme by the end of years 1, 2, 3

Delivering the Strategy

To implement this Strategy and to ensure its delivery, strong governance will be essential. The following governance and support arrangements will be established:

- A short-term steering group will be set up to have oversight of the strategy and delivery plan– led by the Chief Executive
- Each Directorate will be supported to consider their own action-planning based on the strategy – including via the next service planning round.

- Progress will be monitored and reported through Team Reading Delivery Team & Board and Corporate Management Team and to Personnel Committee
- A communications and engagement plan will be developed to accompany the strategy and for this to be updated at review points.

CONCLUSION

&D is not only a 'good thing' in which to invest, but also an organisational imperative. This Strategy and Action Plan provide RBC with a blueprint for how to become more inclusive and diverse and over a concentrated timespan of three years. We will review the Strategy in early 2026. There will always be more that we can do.

Anti Racism Statement and actions for 2025

Reading is a diverse and vibrant place, and the council is committed to reflecting that diversity in its workforce, celebrating, and encouraging difference. This diversity of backgrounds and experiences enriches what we do.

In 2020 the Council signed Business in the Community's [Race at Work](#) charter. In 2023 we had an organisation wide "Big Conversation" on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion which led to the launch of the Inclusion and Diversity strategy in January 2024.

This strategy included the ambition to create "An inclusive culture where we can all do our best work and can thrive". It also includes a commitment to explore what it means to be an anti-racist organisation.

Why it matters that we take an anti-racist approach

We recognise that it is no longer enough for us to tackle inequalities and be non-racist and that we must be actively anti-racist.

We are committed to achieving racial equality because we recognise that persistent racial inequalities are unfair and unacceptable. We are committed to putting anti-racist practices into our structures, systems, and processes.

We recognise that policies, behaviours, and rules etc. can result in a continued unfair advantage to some people and unfair or harmful treatment of others based on race (Cambridge Dictionary, 2024).

We know that some groups are more likely to face inequality, experience poor outcomes and to live in poverty. We understand that racism can be embedded within the structures and systems of a society.

There is legislation to protect against overt racism, but much racism is more subtle and covert, for example prejudice, assumptions, ignorance, thoughtlessness, and racist stereotyping. Where these remain unchallenged, they continue to impact the experiences of many people.

We recognise the important role our employees play in making Reading BC an anti-racist organisation. The services we develop and deliver will be stronger because of the diversity of the lived experiences of our staff. We do this by living our Team Reading values – recently revised to strengthen our commitment to inclusion and diversity:

- We work together as one inclusive team with colleagues and partners to deliver great services.
- We drive efficiency and value for money in everything we do.
- We are ambitious in our plans and in what we want to achieve
- We are here to make a positive difference to all residents, our diverse communities, and the businesses of Reading.

Our commitments:

Employee voice

- We will hold focus groups with our employees to discuss anti-racism and learn where we need to make improvements.
- We will create the conditions for these discussions to be held in a respectful and safe way.
- We will consider how other areas of diversity (including intersectionality) compound the experiences of our employees.

- We will develop an anti-racism action plan informed by these discussions to address areas for improvements.

Employee support

- We will work to ensure that our staff and managers have the required support via training, policies, and resources to manage and report racism and racist incidents.
- We will provide support for those who have experienced or observed racism and ensure we learn from this.
- We will support our employees to proactively and continuously understand and take action when racism, however subtle, impacts decision making.

Accountability

- We have a zero tolerance to racism throughout the organisation and take action when behaviours do not support our commitment.
- We will regularly monitor progress of the supporting action plan, once created, and its impact towards being an anti-racist organisation.
- As we review our policies, procedures, and services we will ensure they are inclusive, equitable and anti-racist.
- We commit to sharing this statement with our partners and potential partners; to ensure they are clear about our expectations of them to both understand and align with our commitment.

Our Corporate Management Team commit to sponsoring this work to ensure we achieve our ambition of being an anti-racist organisation.

ANTI RACISM ACTIONS

Year 2 delivery plan areas

1. Building Trust and Engagement	Progress	Comment
Proactive Leadership Communication: Regular updates from senior leaders about progress on anti-racism initiatives e.g. Team Talk , ASB, staff group updates	Underway	Anti Racism training discussed in comms and qtly Chairs meeting More focussed campaigns to start on launch of statement
Enhanced Promotion of Inclusion Activities: Increase visibility of diversity events through varied channels, ensuring managers actively encourage participation.	Completed	Staff network events in 2025 International Women's Day and Pride Planned events for Black History

		month and Christmas
Safe Dialogue Spaces: Continue to establish dedicated, facilitated forums where employees feel empowered to share experiences in psychologically safe spaces including staff group forums and employee voice sessions to support Inclusion and Diversity delivery areas	Ongoing	New staff networks in 2025 Race in Reading, Men's Wellbeing Circle, Digital Champions & Change Makers
2. Leadership Development and Representation		
Mentorship Programmes: A reverse mentoring programme pilot with SLG volunteers will be launched to support understanding and unity across all colleagues (starting with protected characteristics)	Underway	Five CMT members part of pilot programme
Leadership Diversity: Increase visibility of diverse leadership team and consider increasing representation in middle management roles through recruitment, promotion, and professional development.	Ongoing	Supported by wider year 2 actions
3. Policy and Accountability Strengthening		
Policy Implementation: Review and enhance anti-racism policies, incorporating clear measures of success and accountability frameworks. Ensure they are communicated and accessible to the whole organisation.	Ongoing	Four core policies being reviewed with broad lens of inclusion as a focus
Resourcing HR: Ensure effective tracking and monitoring of HR cases of discrimination related grievances to enable lessons learnt and shape year 3 Inclusion and Diversity actions	Underway	Updated process/system for case monitoring
Training: Deliver practical, anti-racism training for all staff, ensuring applicability to their roles and responsibilities.	Underway	Pilot sessions planned for November ahead of launch to all staff
4. Embedding Diversity into Culture		
Annual Diversity Calendar: Establish and share a council-wide calendar celebrating diverse cultural events, with visible leadership participation.	Completed	Calendar shared with all staff Leaders encouraged to join networks and events

Team-Level Initiatives: Encourage teams to include cultural elements (e.g., food, storytelling) in meetings to promote learning and connection supported by staff groups	Completed	Staff members encouraged to join networks and events
Visual Representation: Increase visibility of diverse communities in internal and external council communications.	Completed	In year 1 internet updated including recruitment pages
5. Supporting Frontline Staff		
Tailored Guidance: Develop guidance in existing training materials for frontline staff to handle racist behaviours from the public confidently and safely.	Completed	Zero Tolerance policy and comms campaign Speaking up regular comms to staff Managers Team Talk discussions
6. Sustaining Systemic Change		
Employee-Led Networks: Provide resources and autonomy to employee networks/groups focused on diversity, enabling them to influence meaningful change.	Completed & Ongoing	Quarterly Staff Chairs meetings
Regular Progress Reports: Establish a transparent reporting mechanism to share updates on inclusion efforts with employees (including frontline) and the wider community.	Completed	Quarterly Staff Network Chairs meetings Quarterly all staff comms campaigns

INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY YEAR 2 PLAN UPDATE

This includes actions previously updated as not started/underway in the annual Committee update (November 2024) and year 2 actions

Review and develop our Inclusion and Diversity strategy through consideration of the unique, lived experiences of employees with different protected characteristics:		
	Status:	Comments:
Anti racist statement and actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of anti-racist action plan • Launch of anti-racist statement and updated actions 	Completed In progress	Actions agreed with CMT in January 2025 progress shown in Appendix 2
Disability statement and actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of our disability statement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of actions Launch of our disability statement	Not started	This will be reviewed as part of the Council's Disability Confident level 2 re accreditation in 2025 Actions related to Disability inclusion include development of Health & Inclusion passport currently being tested ahead of launch
Allyship training: Note Inclusive Leadership workshop includes allyship		
Run a programme of allyship training.	Ongoing	Ongoing action through strategy three years with CMT focus on completion by end of year 2 So far circa 150 people have attended the workshop (120 people managers) with 42 people due to attend by end of 2025 Remaining managers will attend in 2026
Recruitment		
Target improved representation across whole workforce including leadership and management	Ongoing	Workforce data reviewed related to GM in line with Council plan targets Focus on recruitment process reviews for service areas who have lower representation
Target for global majority new starters to match composition of the Borough over time	Ongoing	Year 3 target – progress reporting in monthly Performance report
Monitor any further positive action to reduce ethnicity and gender pay gaps	Completed	We do not have a gender pay gap in 2025

		We have a small positive ethnicity pay gap for some GM employees. Actions have been identified to address identified gaps.
Upskill colleagues who recruit on topics covering bias in recruitment, relevant laws, reasonable adjustments, and positive action	Ongoing	Pilot workshops delivered November 2024 Quarterly ongoing workshops delivered to hiring managers in 2025
Review current recruitment learning, develop further support required to meet I & D goals	Underway	Review completed Updated content will be launched by end of 2025
Design and launch an Inclusive Recruitment Guide to promote diversifying shortlisting and interviewing panels; create standardised I&D questions to weave into the recruitment process; promote flexible working options at advert and appointment	Completed	Guide and interview questions launched and promoted to all staff Regular delivery of Inclusive Recruitment training workshop
Evaluation of recruitment activity impacts-identify what next to build on in year 2	Completed	Focus on Global majority recruitment
<u>Celebrate and embrace difference:</u>		
Roll-out a programme that celebrates difference – linking to the diversity calendar <u>The Diversity and Inclusion Calendar 2023 Inclusive Employers</u> - diversity events/days to bring people together and help increase cultural understanding and create social inclusion	Complete	Staff network led and HR & OD supported Diversity calendar shared with all staff and comms on diversity calendar areas all year
Introduce a series of ‘lunch & learns’ to help demystify myths and common misconceptions and increase understanding on lived experiences.	Complete & ongoing	Inclusive Employer partnership membership webinars promoted to all staff So far employees have utilised 65 places in 2025. The Council receive 10 free places to webinars on Inclusion & Diversity topics throughout the year Mostly attended by HR & OD and Staff network members
Utilise existing networks to support this.	Complete & ongoing	Networks have arranged events including International Women’s Day, Pride Planned events for Black History Month & Christmas
Data review		
Ensure all sources of identity data (and all questions/answers) are inclusive and consistent including:	Completed & ongoing	This is kept under ongoing review for recruitment

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applying for roles, onboarding, exit interview, engagement survey, retention, sickness etc. (or make your data system can be used across all stages) 		<p>In 2025 diversity information has been added to exit surveys</p> <p>Regular comms campaigns throughout the year to all staff encouraging updating of diversity information on employee system has supported increases in disclosures</p>
Regularly review this data and build in additional actions to this plan as required.	Ongoing	
Share data and insights with staff groups.	Completed	Workforce data and pay gap reporting shared with Staff networks and all staff
Support progression:		
Continue to deliver tailored progression workshops and support to enable mobility including to senior leadership roles	Ongoing	Workshops Personal & career development ongoing delivery- toolkit - published and regular comms
Allyship Training		
Continue programme of training that introduces allyship, discusses intersectionality and highlights identities/ communities that need ally support. Content to encourage and empower colleagues to be active allies and to explore topics of inclusion, diversity and being an active ally.	Partially completed and ongoing	So far circa 150 people have attended the workshop (120 people managers) with 42 people due to attend by end of 2025 Remaining managers will attend in 2026
Policy review		
Continue review of policies with the broad lens of Inclusion and intersectionality and consider opportunities to move beyond protected characteristics (e.g. socio and economic status)	Underway and ongoing	Four HR policies being reviewed Bullying & harassment, Disciplinary, Grievance and Managing Poor Performance.
Where appropriate introduce gender neutral language throughout all (especially menopause, parental/adoption)	Completed	Policies reviews include check on this
Utilise staff networks as a critical friend	Underway	Stakeholder involvement across Council as part of review
Develop 'easy to read' versions of key policies covering key information and contacts for further inquiry	Underway and ongoing	Drafted will be launched once above four policy reviews completed

Proposed INCLUSION & DIVERSITY YEAR 3 DELIVERY PLAN

Year 3

Develop and roll out the next series of I&D workshops e.g.

- Understanding Neurodiversity and hidden disabilities
- How to have an Active Bystander
- Using inclusive language

Support progression:

- Continue to deliver tailored progression workshops and support to enable mobility including to senior leadership roles

Allyship Training:

- Continue the programme of training and introduce a focus on allyship, discussions on intersectionality and highlighting identities / communities that need or will benefit from ally support. Content to encourage and empower colleagues to be active allies and to explore topics of inclusion, diversity and being an active ally

Policy review:

-

- Continue review of policies with the broad lens of Inclusion and intersectionality and consider opportunities to move beyond protected characteristics (eg socio and economic status)
- Where appropriate introduce gender neutral language throughout all policies (especially menopause, parental/adoption)
- Utilise staff networks as a critical friend
- Develop 'easy to read' versions of key policies covering key information and contacts for further inquiry

Review progress made on IE maturity model and identify next steps based on Year 1 & 2 actions:

- Progress made towards delivering our ambition – both for inclusivity and in relation to different protected characteristics

Anti Racism actions:

- Empathy Training:

Train leaders in authentic communication, ensuring their responses during crises reflect understanding and care. Take advantage of staff group expertise to help shape the messaging and tone of the communications that do go out.

- Enhanced Lone Worker Policies:

Strengthen safety protocols by incorporating tools like emergency support systems and culturally competent counselling in the existing employee assistance programme

- **Global Majority Action plan:**
Following CMT input – 3/3/26 – update the actions already agreed to further progress our support for Global Majority employees.

Staff network priorities:

- **Complete the work underway to identify staff network priorities for year 3 of the strategy. To date, the following have been identified (but not all staff networks have yet provided input): Disability Inclusion (invisible disabilities such as neurodiversity, epilepsy, narcolepsy), Carers – unpaid or family carers and Menopause.**

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Personnel Committee

20 November 2025



Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

Title	Redundancy and Special Severance Payment Costs – 1 April 2025 to 30 September 2025
Purpose of the report	To note the report for information
Report status	Public report
Executive Director/ Statutory Officer Commissioning Report	Louise Duffield, Executive Director Resources
Report author	Kathryn Cook, Assistant Director HR&OD
Lead Councillor	Councillor Ellie Emberson – Lead Councillor for Corporate Services and Resources
Council priority	Ensure Reading Borough Council is fit for the future
Recommendations	1. To note the report for information

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides the regular monitoring statement of all termination costs incurred due to employees leaving the Council on redundancy grounds between 1 April 2025 and 30 September 2025 as required under the terms of reference for Personnel Committee. It also includes a summary of Special Severance Payments made within the same period where these have been paid.
- 1.2 Please note that it does not include termination costs for schools-based staff or Brighter Futures for Children for this reporting period. Any termination costs incurred by the newly created Directorate of Children's Services will be included in future reports.
- 1.3 There have been no early retirements on the grounds of efficiency and no Special Severance Payments during this period.
- 1.4 Redundancy payments incurred between 1 April 2025 and 30 September 2025 totalled £74,574.98.

2 Policy Context

- 2.1 This report is provided in accordance with the Terms of Reference for Personnel Committee which state that the Committee will receive from the Assistant Director of HR and Organisational Development twice a year a report on all early retirements and redundancies made in the preceding six months. This report covers the six months from 1 April 2025 to 30 September 2025.
- 2.2 Redundancy and early retirement decisions are made in accordance with Council criteria requiring costs to normally be paid back with on-going efficiency savings within one year. The level of redundancy and early retirement costs is calculated in accordance with the Employment Stability Agreement and discretionary compensation tables agreed by this Committee.

2.3 Personnel Committee is also provided – where relevant- with a summary of Special Severance Payments (SSPs). SSPs are payments made to employees when leaving employment in public service. The following types of payments are likely to be SSPs:

- settlement agreement payments, to discontinue legal proceedings without admission of fault
- the value of any employee benefits or allowances which are likely to continue beyond the employee's agreed exit date
- loan write-offs
- honorarium payments
- hardship payments
- retraining payments related to termination of employment

2.4 The following payments are not SSPs:

- statutory and contractual redundancy payments
- severance payments made under the authority's policy under the Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Compensation) (England and Wales) Regulations 2006
- pension strain payments for those who leave by reason of redundancy or business efficiency aged 55 or over
- payments for accrued annual leave
- payments made to compensate for injury or death of the worker
- payments made as consequence of the award of an ill-health pension under regulation 35 of the LGPS Regulations.

2.5 In accordance with statutory guidance on SSPs issued by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) on 12 May 2022, all SSPs above £20,000 but below £100,000 must be personally approved and signed off by the Head of Paid Service, with a clear record of the Leader's approval and that of any others who have signed off the payment. At the Council, this would always include the relevant Executive Director, the Section 151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer, who will also continue to sign off SSP business cases below £20,000 along with the Head of Paid Service. Payments of £100,000 and above must be approved by a vote of full Council, as set out in the Localism Act 2011.

2.6 The Council did not incur SSP costs during this period.

2.7 All the payments referred to were made in accordance with the Council's Pay Policy Statement.

3 Contribution to Strategic Aims

3.1 This report seeks to ensure that arrangements are in place for the effective management of the Council's 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.

4 Environmental and Climate Implications

4.1 None for this report

5 Community Engagement

5.1 Not applicable to this report

6 Equality Implications

6.1 Not applicable to this report

7 Other Relevant Considerations

7.1 None

8 Legal Implications

8.1 Not applicable to this report

9 Financial Implications

9.1 The Redundancy cost of £74,574.98, made between 1 April 2025 and 30 September 2025, was met from within existing budgets.

10 Timetable for Implementation

10.1 Not applicable.

11 Background Papers

11.1 There are none.

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Personnel Committee

20 November 2025



Reading
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Title	Proposed Arrangements for Monitoring Officer, Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer Statutory Roles
Purpose of the report	To make a recommendation to Council
Report status	Public report
Executive Director/ Statutory Officer Commissioning Report	Louise Duffield, Executive Director of Resources
Report author	Simon Hill, Acting Democratic Services Manager
Lead Councillor	Councillor Emberson, Lead Councillor for Corporate Services and Resources
Council priority	Ensure Reading Borough Council is fit for the future
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the proposed interim arrangements and recruitment process for the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services / Monitoring Officer be noted. 2. That it be recommended to Council to appoint the Executive Director of Resources as Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer with effect from 19 December 2025.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. This report outlines the proposed arrangements to follow the upcoming departure of the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services in December 2025. The post currently incorporates three statutory officer roles of Monitoring Officer, Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer.
- 1.2. The Council has been advised that there is a challenging market for the recruitment of Monitoring Officers. To safeguard against this and to ensure continuity of cover, it is proposed that there will be an interim appointment for the role of Assistant Director and Monitoring Officer. A full campaign for a Permanent replacement will begin in early 2026.
- 1.3. However, with elections scheduled for May 2026, it is proposed that it would not be appropriate for these to be managed by an interim officer, and further it is vital to have an experienced Officer in this role. Therefore, the Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer roles will be proposed to be reallocated to the Executive Director of Resources via a report to Council.
- 1.4. The Council can revisit the permanent arrangements for elections should it wish to, once it has been able to recruit to the substantive Monitoring Officer position.

2. Policy Context

- 2.1. The Personnel Committee has authority to appoint the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer through the Personnel (Appointments) Committee process. The Head of Paid Service has delegated authority to make an interim appointment. It is proposed to recruit an interim officer as soon as possible to allow for there to be a handover from the present Monitoring Officer.

- 2.2. The other statutory officer roles of Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer are currently assigned to the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services by Council, through the Constitution. A variation to this arrangement will require approval at a Council meeting.
- 2.3. At its meeting on 21 March 2023 Council designated the Legal Services Manager as Deputy Registration Officer (DRO) with full powers to act as Electoral Registration Officer in the absence of the Electoral Registration Officer (Minute 45 refers), an arrangement which is proposed to continue.

3. The Proposal

- 3.1. The role of the Monitoring Officer is critical to the Council's ability to operate lawfully and uphold the highest standards of governance. As the principal adviser on matters of legality and propriety, the Monitoring Officer is responsible for ensuring that the Council, its members, and officers act within the law and adhere to the Council's Constitution. This includes overseeing the ethical framework, handling complaints about member conduct, and intervening where there is a risk of unlawful decision-making or maladministration.
- 3.2. Given the complexity and significance of these responsibilities, it is imperative that the Council is never without Monitoring Officer cover. Any period without such oversight could expose the organisation to legal risk, undermine public confidence, and potentially result in decisions being challenged or overturned. Continuous cover ensures that there is always an accountable officer available to provide guidance, support good governance, and promptly address any issues that may arise, thereby safeguarding the Council's reputation and the integrity of its decision-making processes.
- 3.3. The Council's current plan is to start the permanent recruitment process after Christmas. Time will be needed to run the recruitment process and allow the successful candidate to give notice (likely three months) before a new permanent Monitoring Officer can join the Council. Until that time, the Interim Monitoring Officer will be responsible these duties.
- 3.4. It is essential for the Council to have both a Returning Officer and an Electoral Registration Officer in place at all times to ensure the smooth running of electoral processes and uphold democratic integrity. These statutory roles are crucial for overseeing the organisation of elections, maintaining accurate electoral registers, and guaranteeing that all legal requirements are met. Should a casual vacancy arise and a by-election need to be called, any absence in these appointments could result in delays, procedural errors, or even legal challenges, thereby undermining public trust and the Council's ability to deliver its democratic responsibilities effectively.

4. Contribution to Strategic Aims

- 4.1. The statutory officer roles discussed in the report contribute to meeting the priorities set out in the Council Plan by facilitating the participation of residents in local democracy and ensuring effective governance.

5. Environmental and Climate Implications

- 5.1. There are no environmental or climate implications arising from this report.

6. Community Engagement

- 6.1. There has been no consultation, community engagement or publicity for this matter. It is not required.

7. Equality Implications

- 7.1. 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.

7.2. An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is not relevant to the decision.

8. Other Relevant Considerations

8.1. There are no other relevant considerations to report.

9. Legal Implications

9.1. Sections 8(2) and 35 of the Representation of the People Act 1983 set out the requirement for Councils to appoint an Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) responsible for compiling and maintaining the register of electors for their local authority area and a Returning Officer responsible for the administration of Local Government elections. The ERO also serves as the Acting Returning Officer for UK Parliamentary elections.

9.2. Under Section 5 of the Local Government & Housing Act 1989 (as amended), the Council has a duty to appoint a Monitoring Officer who has a number of statutory duties and responsibilities particularly relating to the Council's Constitution and its governance arrangements.

9.3. Michael Graham, Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services has agreed these Legal Implications.

10. Financial Implications

10.1. It should be noted that the need to fund an interim member of staff as Monitoring Officer is likely to exceed the current budget provision for the current post-holder. This pressure will be managed within the overall Directorate budgets.

10.2. Dominic Oakeshott has cleared these Financial Implications.

11. Timetable for Implementation

11.1. Michael Graham leaves his post at the end of the calendar year. An interim appointment for Monitoring Officer may be made in advance of this (but this is dependent on the interim recruitment market). This is likely to be a six month appointment.

11.2. It is currently proposed, subject to further advice and agreement on due process, that the recommendation for the Executive Director to assume the role of Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer is proposed to an Extraordinary Meeting of Council on 25 November 2025 (on the rising of the other Extraordinary Council meeting of the same date).

11.3. This allows for cover to be in place immediately from the departure of the current postholder. As the post-holder will be on annual leave over Christmas, it is proposed to start the cover from 24th December 2025.

12. Background Papers

12.1. There are none.

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Personnel Committee

20 November 2025



Reading
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Title	Head of Paid Service – Confirmation of Performance Review Arrangements
Purpose of the report	To note the report for information
Report status	Public report
Executive Director/ Statutory Officer Commissioning Report	Louise Duffield, Executive Director Resources
Report author	Kathryn Cook, Assistant Director HR&OD
Lead Councillor	Councillor Ellie Emberson
Council priority	ALL
Recommendations	1. That Personnel Committee notes the performance review arrangements for the Head of Paid Service.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. The Council's constitution sets out the responsibilities of Personnel Committee in respect of the performance of the Head of Paid Service. This report updates Personnel Committee in respect of the arrangements for the performance review and target setting processes for the Head of Paid Service as required in the Constitution.

2. Policy Context

- 2.1 RBCs Constitution sets out the responsibilities of Personnel Committee. The terms of reference for Personnel Committee are at Appendix A. The responsibilities of the Committee in respect of the Head of Paid Service's performance are at Section 3 of the Appendix.
- 2.2 RBC has a well-established performance review process for all employees which includes:
 - Regular performance conversations and 1:1s between the individual and their line manager
 - The setting of performance objectives ahead of the 'performance year' – April to March
 - Identification of any development needs
 - Formal annual performance reviews against which the achievement of objectives and development needs are discussed, and overall performance is considered.

3. Arrangements in respect of the Head of Paid Service

- 3.1 The Leader of the Council is responsible for setting performance targets for the Head of Paid Service each year. These performance targets are regularly reviewed, and the Leader holds regular performance discussions with the Head of Paid Service to actively

manage on-going performance. If any development is required, this would also be discussed as part of these ongoing discussions.

4. Contribution to Strategic Aims

4.1. The Head of Paid Service has wide ranging responsibilities for the delivery of the agreed Council Plan and the management of resources required to deliver it. The Head of Paid Service's responsibilities address all five of the Council Plan priorities for the years 2025/28. These priorities are:

- Promote more equal communities in Reading
- Secure Reading's economic and cultural success
- Deliver a sustainable and healthy environment and reduce our carbon footprint
- Safeguard and support the health and wellbeing of Reading's adults and children
- Ensure Reading Borough Council is fit for the future

4.2. In delivering these priorities, the Head of Paid Service is guided by the following set of principles:

- Putting residents first
- Building on strong foundations
- Recognising, respecting, and nurturing all our diverse communities
- Involving, collaborating, and empowering residents
- Being proudly ambitious for Reading

5. Environmental and Climate Implications

4.1 The responsibilities of the Head of Paid Service include actions within the Council Plan relating to Environmental and Climate Implications.

6. Community Engagement

6.1. The responsibilities of the Head of Paid Service include actions within the Council Plan relating to Community Engagement.

7. Equality Implications

7.1. The responsibilities of the Head of Paid Service include actions within the Council Plan relating to Equality and Diversity of the Council as an employer as well as responsibilities for ensuring that the council meets its legal requirements, including under relevant legislation.

8. Other Relevant Considerations

8.1. None

9. Legal Implications

9.1. The responsibilities of the Head of Paid Service are set out in the Council's Constitution and job description. The Constitution sets out the mechanisms through which the Head of Paid Service's targets are set and how performance is reviewed.

10. Financial Implications

10.1. Not applicable to this report

11. Timetable for Implementation

11.1. The Council's performance review cycle commences in April each year and the 'performance year' runs until the end of March.

12. Background Papers

12.1. There are none.

Appendices

1. **Extract from the Council's Constitution setting out Personnel Committee's Terms of reference.**

Extract from Reading Borough Council's Constitution in respect of the responsibilities of Personnel Committee

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

To be responsible for functions exercised under Section 112 of the Local Government Act 1972 namely:

(1) Subject to Officer Employment Procedure Rules set out in the constitution:

- a) to arrange for the appointment of the Council's Head of Paid Service, and make recommendations to Council in this respect;
- b) to appoint Executive Directors, the Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer;
- c) to dismiss Executive Directors;
- d) to establish a Panel (Sub-Committee) under section 102(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 for the purposes of advising the authority on matters relating to the dismissal of the Head of Paid Service, the Chief Finance Officer and the Monitoring Officer of the authority, in accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2015, and which requires the Panel to include at least two independent persons appointed under section 28(7) of the Localism Act 2011;
- e) to settle all matters relating to the above appointments or dismissals unless the decision on the matter is reserved to Council.

(2) To take any decisions affecting the remuneration, terms and conditions of service of the Head of Paid Service;

(3) To undertake performance appraisals of the Head of Paid Service and to set annual targets against which performance can be measured.

(4) To discharge the Council's functions under Section 112 of the Local Government Act 1972, including:

- (a) determining the terms and conditions on which staff hold office;
- (b) approving compensation levels in line with the Council's policies and procedures governing redundancy, medical or early retirement as applying from time to time before notice of dismissal is given to staff below Executive Director level.
- (c) approving matters referred to it by the Local Joint Forum; and resolving matters where it has not been possible to secure agreement at the Local Joint Forum;
- (d) advising the Council and Committees on:
 - (i) the requirements for, and the availability of, human resources necessary for the fulfilment of the Council's policies;
 - (ii) the promotion of good employee relations in the Council;
 - (iii) matters of general employment and personnel concern to the Council;

(iv) the promotion of equal opportunities for all employees of the Council, and in the Council's recruitment and selection procedures, and to monitor the effectiveness of such measures;

(5) To receive from the Assistant Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development twice a year a report on all early retirements and redundancies made in the preceding six months.

(6) To decide on claims for injury allowance made under the Local Government Superannuation (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 1982, where the claim and recommendation for consideration are agreed between both management and trades unions.

(7) Where appropriate, to convene an Investigatory Committee to examine matters relating to the conduct or capability of Directors and Heads of Service.

(8) Delegation to Officers

- (a) The responsibilities for making decisions in respect of the matters within the responsibility of this Committee (other than key decisions) are delegated to the officers in the corporate and senior management structure. An officer can only carry out a responsibility if:
 - they (or an officer who reports to them) have budgetary or management responsibility for it and
 - the constitution or the law does not require it to be carried out by someone else.
- (b) Officers do not have to use their delegated powers: they can ask the person or body that delegated the power to them to make a decision or refer the matter to the relevant committee. Officers who have had something delegated to them can authorise officers they line manage to do it on their behalf (unless it was delegated on condition that they do it themselves).
- (c) The Committee can at any time take back responsibilities they have delegated or decide to delegate them on certain conditions.

MEETING AS AN APPOINTMENTS PANEL, in accordance with the Officer Employment Procedure Rules as set out Part 4 of the Council's Constitution "Rules of Procedure"

(9) Where the Council appoints a Personnel (Appointments) Committee or a Sub-Committee to carry out the function of appointing any officer to the positions referred to in paragraph 2.2 of the Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the membership of the Committee or Sub-Committee shall consist of members nominated by the Group Leaders from the political groups represented on the Personnel Committee and should include the Leader and/or at least one Lead Councillor.

Investigating and Disciplinary Committee (Relevant Officers)

To deal with disciplinary matters relating to the Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive), the Section 151 Officer (Director of Finance) and the Monitoring Officer (Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services) ('relevant officers'), including the authority:

- To implement sanctions other than dismissal of a 'relevant officer,' including suspension;
- To make representations to the Independent Panel in the event the Committee makes a recommendation to dismiss a 'relevant officer.'

Appeals Committee (Relevant Officers)

To hear appeals from the Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive), the Section 151 Officer (Director of Finance) and the Monitoring Officer (Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services) ('relevant officers') in relation to disciplinary matters short of dismissal.

Independent Panel (Relevant Officers)

An Independent Panel, comprising at least two people appointed under section 28 of the Localism Act 2011, to hear from the 'relevant officer' and the Chair of the Investigating and Disciplinary Committee (IDC) and advise Council in the event of a recommendation from the IDC to dismiss a 'relevant officer' i.e., Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive), the Section 151 Officer (Director of Finance) and the Monitoring Officer (Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services).

(NB: confirming the dismissal of a relevant officer i.e., the Head of Paid Service, Chief Finance Officer and Monitoring Officer is a matter reserved to Council.