

Wokingham Borough Council

Workforce Diversity Report – April 2024

The Equality Act 2010 requires Public Bodies to publish sufficient data to show how they are meeting the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty – which includes workforce profile and other information.

The broad purpose of the equality duty legislation is to integrate consideration of equality and good relations into the day-to-day business of public authorities. Therefore, the Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have 'due regard' to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The legislation states advancing equality of opportunity involves having due regard to the need to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Take steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics where these are different from the needs of other people.
- Encourage people with certain protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

Having due regard to the aims of the general equality duty requires the Council to have an adequate evidence base for its decision-making. Collecting and using equality information should enable it to develop a sound evidence base and to understand the impact of its proposals and decisions on people with protected characteristics.

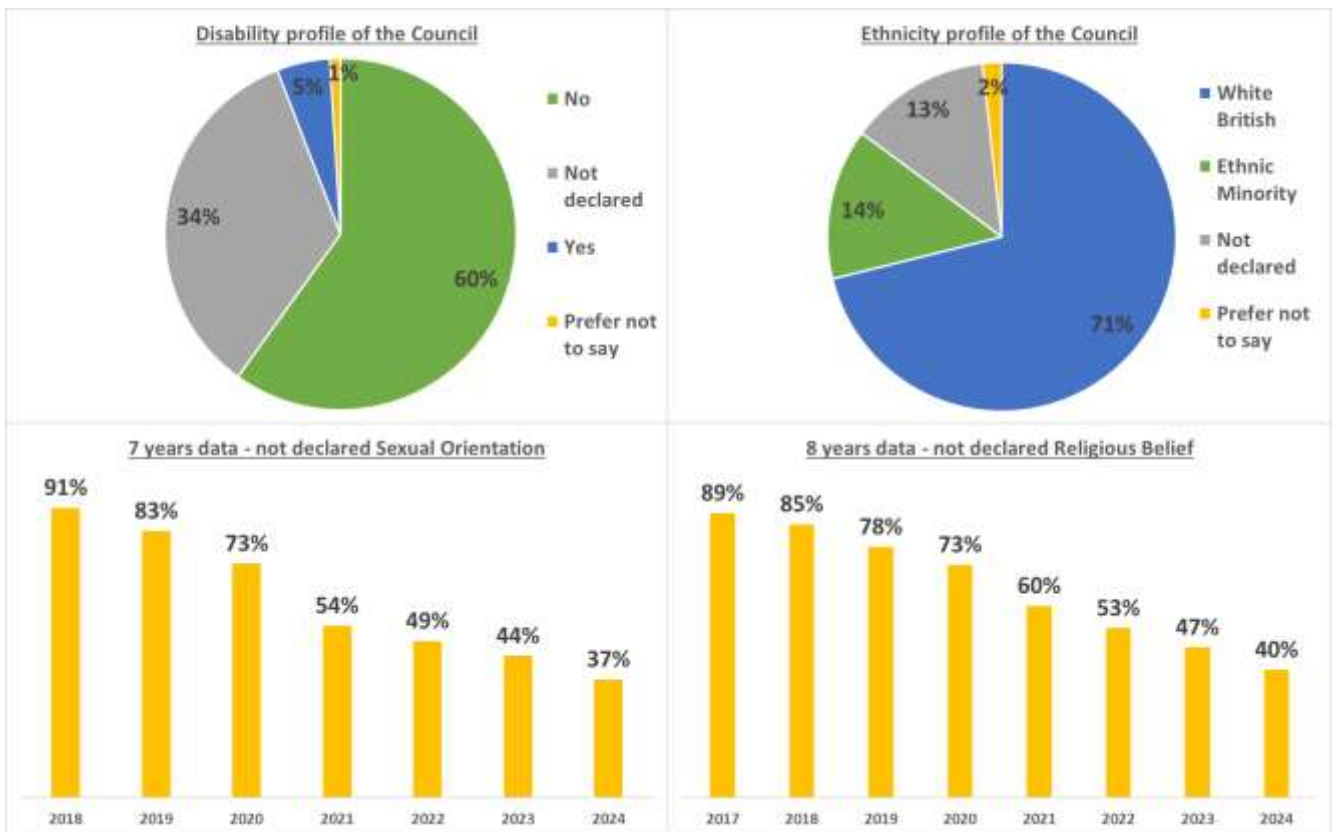
The quality of diversity data of Council staff has gradually been improving since 2017 as highlighted in the below graphs.

This information is requested as part of the recruitment process and added to the ERP system (BWO) during the new starter onboarding process. There has been a campaign to support and promote declaring information about their ethnicity or other protected characteristics which has been supported by staff networks. This has resulted in an increase in disclosures providing us with more accurate information.

Current employees are able to view and update their diversity information via self-service access to BWO and they are reminded to review/add any missing information annually as part of the appraisal process.

Table 1 – Current snapshot of equality data declared

The below graphics give an overall snapshot of the equality data percentages currently declared.



Analysis by protected characteristic

High level summary:

- Analysis has taken place of the workforce make-up based on various protected groups, using data from a fixed date (31 March 2024), e.g. percentage of the workforce by ethnicity, age, sexual orientation and so on; with a view to understanding if the Council's workforce truly reflects the community it serves.
- Other analysis looks at equality data based on the year up to 31 March 2024 e.g. recruitment and leavers data; with a view to understanding if there are any inherent biases towards or against any protected characteristics, suggested by the data.
- As shown by the tables above significant improvements have been made in the percentages of employees declaring their equality data over the last 5+ years.

A full analysis is provided below.

Ethnicity

Table 2 – Ethnicity breakdown of the Council vs Wokingham Borough

The below table shows the ethnicity profile of the Council, Wokingham Borough along with Council leavers and new starters.

	White British	Ethnic minority groups	Prefer not to say	Not declared
Ethnicity profile of Wokingham borough	73%	27%	N/A	0%
Ethnicity profile of the Council	71%	14%	0%	15%
Ethnicity profile of new starters	70%	20%	0%	10%
Ethnicity profile of leavers	66%	22%	1%	11%

In 2023, we can see that 0% of Wokingham Borough have actively selected not to disclose their ethnicity, with ethnicity unknown for 15% of employees which has reduced from the previous report.

Table 3 – Ethnicity breakdown by salary grouping

The below table shows the ethnicity profile of the Council by salary grouping.

	Non-Ethnic Minority Group	Ethnic Minority Group	Prefer not to say	Not declared
<£20,000	0%	0%	0%	0%
£20,000 - £29,999	21%	4%	0%	3%
£30,000 - £39,999	19%	3%	1%	3%
£40,000 - £49,999	18%	5%	1%	3%
£50,000 +	13%	2%	0%	4%
Overall Total	71%	14%	2%	13%

71% of employees declared they did not belong to an ethnic minority group. 13% of employees have not declared their ethnicity, there has been a sustained improvement in this figure indicating action taken to encourage disclosure has been successful and we will continue to reduce this through working with staff networks and detailed communications.

Gender

Table 4 – Gender breakdown of the Council vs Wokingham Borough

The below table shows the gender profile of the Council, Wokingham Borough along with Council leavers and new starters.

	Male	Female
Gender profile of Wokingham borough	49%	51%
Gender profile of the Council	26%	74%

Gender profile of new starters	28%	72%
Gender profile of leavers	27%	73%

The borough has an equal split of men and women, whilst the Council's workforce is predominantly female at 74%. This is broadly consistent with the gender profile across local government. Generally, across all organisations the variations can be accounted for on the basis of the following

- Men are more highly represented in senior positions
- More women than men work part time and part time tends to be more prevalent at lower levels in the organisation
- More women, than men, take career breaks which can impact on their career progression or later career choices
- Local authorities have a wide range of functions and professions, however many of the lower graded roles tend to be dominated by women for example administration, customer services and libraries
- Some local authorities, as is the case for Wokingham, don't always have all service delivered in house and they are delivered by external partners for example DLOs and Waste and Recycling.

Table 5 – Gender breakdown by salary grouping

The below table shows the gender profile of the Council by salary grouping.

	F	M
<£20,000	0%	0%
£20,000 - £29,999	24%	5%
£30,000 - £39,999	19%	7%
£40,000 - £49,999	19%	8%
£50,000 +	12%	7%
Grand Total	74%	26%

There remains a variation in gender split based on salary. For instance, there is the highest percentage of females in the lowest salary group and one of the smallest percentages of males

– this can be explained by the fact that lower paid roles more traditionally occupied by males are outsourced to external organisations.

Disability

Table 6 – Disability breakdown of the Council vs Wokingham Borough

The below table shows the disability profile of the Council, Wokingham Borough along with Council leavers and new starters.

	Yes	No	Prefer not to say	Not declared
Disability profile of Wokingham borough	13%	87%	N/A	N/A
Disability profile of the Council	5%	60%	1%	34%
Disability profile of new starters	3.4%	26.9%	0.5%	69.2%
Disability profile of leavers	10%	55%	1%	34%

In the 2021 census, 13% of WBC residents reported a disability. Current data shows 5% of employees have declared a disability whilst 1% employees have actively opted to select the ‘prefer not to say’ option. This has decreased from 1% in the previous report, it is worth noting that the last report highlighted that 34% of employees had not declared the information at all which is an increase from 15%.

Along with improving the Councils data the Disability Confident Scheme is in place so that the Council can ensure that it encourages potential candidates with a disability to apply for roles.

Sexual orientation

Table 7 – sexual orientation breakdown of the Council

The below table shows the sexual orientation profile of the Council.

Bisexual	1%
Gay	1%
Heterosexual	56%
Prefer not to say	5%
Not declared	37%
Other	0%

2% of employees have declared themselves to be gay or bisexual, compared to national estimates of around 6%. 37%-employees have not declared this information, however it is worth highlighting that this figure has shown a steady reduction since 2018 when it was 91% of employees.

As above due to the small numbers of declarations this characteristic is not broken down by salary range.

Religion and belief

Table 8 – religious/belief breakdown of the Council

The below table shows the religious/belief profile of the Council.

Christian	26%
No Religion	23%
Other Religion	7%
Prefer not to say	4%
Not declared	40%

40% of employees have not declared this information, however it is worth highlighting that this figure has shown a steady reduction since 2017 when it was 89% of employees.

As above due to the small numbers of declarations this characteristic is not broken down by salary range.

Age

Table 9 – Age profile of the Council vs Wokingham Borough

The below table shows the age profile of the Council compared to the borough.

Age range	2024	Population
16-19	0.6% or 1%	4.5%
20-24	3.6% or 4%	4.6%
25-34	15.9% or 16%	11.3%
35-49	39.6% or 40%	22.3%
50-64	37.1% or 37%	19.3%
65+	3.3% or 3%	17.1%

The workforce profile remains older in comparison to the community (based on the 2021 census). Though it should of course be remembered that a working population will not include anyone under 16 and fewer at the higher and lower age ranges, which means there will be proportionally more in the age groups in between.

Recruitment

An audit of recruitment activity from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 has been undertaken. A summary is shown below.

Table 10 – Gender/Ethnicity/Disability profile of applicants to the Council

The below tables shows the gender profile, ethnicity profile and disability profile of people applying for jobs at the Council through the various stages of recruitment.

	Applicants		Shortlisted		Appointed	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Sex						
Female	2804	65%	765	70%	150	72%
Male	1449	34%	315	29%	58	28%
Other	6	0%	2	0%	0	0%
Prefer Not to Say	36	1%	14	1%	0	0%
Not Declared	5	0%	2	0%	0	0%
Total	4300		1098		208	

	Applicants		Shortlisted		Appointed	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Ethnicity						
White British	1966	46%	624	57%	146	70%
Ethnic Minority Groups	2183	51%	440	40%	41	20%
Prefer Not to Say	146	3%	32	3%	1	0%
Not Declared	5	0%	2	0%	20	10%
Total	4300		1098		208	

	Applicants		Shortlisted		Appointed	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Disability						
Yes	259	6%	89	8%	7	3.4%
No	3968	92%	994	91%	56	26.9%
Prefer Not to Say	71	2%	14	1%	1	0.5%
Not Declared	2	0%	1	0%	144	69.2%
Total	4300		1098		208	

This data will be produced on an annual basis to compare and highlight trends. Some initiatives to further improve the workforce profile for individuals with protected characteristics will be actioned the coming year these are capture in the action plan but include review of advertising methods, pilot of anonymised application forms, the exploration of the disability confident scheme.

2023/24 Action Plan Outcomes

Subject	Action	Target	Update
Data Collection	<p>Undertake a project to work towards improving the declaration of equality data.</p> <p>Improve employee confidence in disclosing their personal information.</p> <p>Introduce some new easy ways of collecting the data.</p> <p>Undertake benchmarking with other Local Authorities</p>	<p>85% equality data disclosed.</p> <p>(Currently 65% disability, 85% ethnicity, 63% sexual orientation and 56% religious belief)</p> <p>See what we can learn from the benchmarking adopt new initiatives in consultation with CLT & Staff Networks</p>	<p>Achieved ethnicity disclosure</p> <p>Ongoing work carried forward into 2024/25 continued collaboration with staff networks to increase data collection and disclosure.</p> <p>New LGBTQIA+ staff network set up for 2024/25</p>
Recruitment	<p>Review of job boards and advertising mediums used to attract candidates to ensure that they reach all minority groups</p>	<p>Extensive selection of advertising mediums available to the Council backed up with collated data on what candidates are attracted from which job board</p>	<p>Ongoing work carried into 2024/25 by Resourcing Team</p>

Recruitment	Review of the information provided to the Council by applicants and what information is shared with hiring managers.	Explore the possibility of anonymised application forms	Managers are not able to view monitoring information on applications but will continue to explore opportunities.
Recruitment	Explore the Disability Confident scheme	Introduce the scheme and train recruiting managers	Accredited to Disability Confident Level 2
Training	Introduction of mandatory equality, diversity and inclusion training to be rolled out to all staff	90% completion	97.46% completion achieved

Note: There will also be engagement with the staff networks and SLF's on all the above actions.