

#BETHE
DIFFERENCE



Workforce Monitoring Report

2025 – 2026

Wirral council is committed to making information accessible to everyone. You can visit your local one stop shop or telephone our call centre on (0151) 606 2020 for support and advice if you need information translated or in another format such as large print, Braille or audio.

مجلس ویرال Wirral ملتزم بیامكانية توفير المعلومات ليتمكن الحصول عليها بواسطة كل فرد. يمكنك الذهاب الى وحددة الخدمات المتعددة او اتصل تلفونيا على مركزنا للاتصالات على الرقم (0151) 606 2020 للمساعدة والنصح إذا ترغب في المعلومات مترجمة او في شكل آخر كالكتابة بخطوط كبيرة، بكتابة بريل او شريط كاسيت.
(Arabic)
উইরাল কাউন্সিল সকলের কাছে তথ্য পৌছে দেওয়ার জন্য দায়বদ্ধ। আপনি আমাদের ওয়ান-স্টপ-শপে ভিজিট করতে পারেন বা আমাদের কল সেন্টারে (0151) 606 2020-এই নম্বরে সাহায্য ও পরামর্শের জন্য ফোন করতে পারেন যদি আপনি তথ্য অনুবাদিত, অন্য রুন্নমাটে, বড়ো হরফে ছাপায় বা ব্রেইল লিপিতে পেতে চান।
(Bengali)
偉盧鎮議會致力為所有人士提供資訊。如果您需要某些資料翻譯成其他語文或編制成其他模式的版本（如大字體、凸字或錄音帶），您可以到就近的「一站店」或致電「傳訊中心」（0151606 2020）查詢。
(Mandarin)
Tá Comhairle Wirral tiomanta le heolas a chur ar fail do gach duine. Is féidir leat cuairt a thabhairt ar an ionad ilfhreastail is áitiúla duit nó glaoch a chur ar an lárionad glaonna s'againn ar (0151) 606 2020 chun tacaíocht agus comhairle a fháil má tá eolas de dhíth ort aistrithe nó i bhfoirm éigin eile, mar shampla, cló mór, Braille nó ciosmheáin.
(Gaelic)
विरल कौंसिल, सभी लोगों के लिए जानकारी को पहुंचयोग बनाने के लिए वचनबद्ध है। यदि आपको किसी जानकारी के हिन्दी में अनुवाद की या किसी और रूप में जैसे कि बड़े अक्षरों में छपाई, बरेल में या कैसिट के रूप में अवश्यता हो तो सलाह और मदद प्राप्त करने के लिए आप अपनी स्थानीय वैन स्टॉप शॉप में जा सकते हैं या इस नम्बर पर (०१५१) ६०६ २०२० पर हमारे किसी भी एक काल सेंटर में टैलीफोन कर सकते हैं।
(Hindi)
Rada Miejska Wirral stara się, aby informacje były dostępne dla wszystkich. Mogą Państwo odwiedzić miejscowy ośrodek informacyjny (one stop shop) lub zadzwonić do naszego biura obsługi klienta pod numer telefonu (0151) 606 2020 po wsparcie i porady, jeśli informacje wymagane są w innym języku lub formie, np. dużym drukiem, w wersji audio lub w alfabecie Braille'a.
(Polish)
ਵਿਰਲ ਕੌਂਸਲ ਸਾਰਿਆਂ ਲਈ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਪਹੁੰਚਯੋਗ ਬਣਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਵਚਨਬੱਧ ਹੈ। ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਦੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਤਰਜਮੇ ਦੀ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿੱਚ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਕਿ ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਛਪਾਈ, ਬਰੇਲ ਵਿੱਚ ਜਾਂ ਕੈਸਿਟ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿੱਚ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਸਲਾਹ ਅਤੇ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਲੈਣ ਲਈ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਆਪਣੀ ਸਥਾਨਿਕ ਵੈਨ ਸਟਾਪ ਸ਼ੌਪ ਵਿੱਚ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੇ ਹੋ ਜਾਂ ਇਸ ਨੰਬਰ (0151) 606 2020 ਤੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਕਾਲ ਸੈਂਟਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੇ ਹੋ।
(Punjabi)
Gollaha Wirral waxa uu isku xil-saarey in uu wargelinta ka yeelo wax uu qof walba heli karo. Waxa aad booqan kartaa Dukaanka Hal-Mar-Joogsiga ah ee xaafadaada ama sooba wac xarruuntayada soo wicitaanka oo laga helo (0151) 606 2020 si aad tageero iyo la tallin uga hesho haddii aad u baahan tahay in wargelinta luqad kale loogu turjumo ama looga soo dhigo qaab kale sida far waaweyn, farta ee Braille ama cajallad maqal ah.
(Somali)
ویرال کونسل معلومات کو ہر ایک کیلئے قابل رسائی بنانے کیلئے پابند عہد ہے۔ اگر آپ کو معلومات ترجمہ شدہ یا کسی دیگر شکل جیسے بڑے حروف، بریل یا آڈیو کی شکل میں مطلوب ہو تو آپ مدد اور مشورے کیلئے اپنے مقامی ون اسٹاپ شاپ پر آ سکتے ہیں یا ہمارے کال سنٹر کو (0151) 606 2020 پر فون کریں۔
(Urdu)

Contents

Foreword	4
1. Executive summary	5
1.1 Key finding and actions	5
1.2 What we have achieved to date	8
2. Workforce composition	16
3. Organisational composition	16
4. Equality monitoring information	18
5. Employment practice	24
6. Final comments and next steps	33
Appendix one: Equality improvement: summary action plan	34
Appendix two: Workforce profiling: Equal pay statement	36
Appendix three: Workforce profiling: Gender Pay gap reporting	37
Appendix four: Reference list	38



Our purpose is to work together to promote fairness and opportunity for people and communities. '[Wirral Working Together](#)' is the Council's key plan which sets out our main priorities between 2023-27. A key part of the plan sets out our ambition to create an inclusive borough where nobody is left behind.

Our communities are our greatest strengths with people of many different backgrounds and life experiences living side by side. Supporting all our communities to thrive is a core strand running through all our priorities and fundamental to how we work as a council. The Council Plan helps demonstrate our commitment to be a fair and inclusive employer, to build an inclusive culture and to lead a Borough where diversity is celebrated, people have equal opportunities and where inequality is actively tackled.

The Public Sector Equality Duty helps public authorities like ours to consider how our policies or decisions affect people, including our employees, who have a protected characteristic under the Equality Act, which are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation.

I'm pleased to publish our Workforce Equality Report for 2025-26, which provides equalities information on our workforce in accordance with the Equality Act (2010) and Public Sector Equality Duty (2011).

This report helps us to monitor our progress and performance in respect of workforce equalities and gives us insight to engage with our people to identify improvements that can be made and to address imbalances between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.



Matt Bennett
Chief Executive Wirral Council

Executive Summary

This report draws upon the key findings and actions from analysis of our workforce data in 2025-2026* as required by the Public Sector Equality Duty.

The data we collect and what we do with the information is detailed in the council's Workforce Monitoring Policy. All comparable datasets contained within this report relate to Wirral population figures taken from the Census 2021, and Public Health profiles.

1.1. Summary Findings

- We continue to be one the largest employers in the borough with 77% of our people living locally. This is in keeping with last year.
- The below table and supporting narrative describe our workforce composition as of 1st April **2025** in line with reporting requirements. *It is important to note this headcount may vary from other published reports e.g., our Gender Pay Gap report, due to statistical requirements and data extract date requirements.*

	2025/2026	Previous year
Headcount	3,609	3,709
Turnover	15%	12%
Average length of service	13 years	12 years
Average age of employee	55 years	55 years old
Sex	67% female	66% female
	33% male	34% male
Ethnic Minority Background	4%	4%
Declared disability	9%	8%
Colleagues providing information including 'prefer not to say'	97%	97%

- Our workforce demographic remains relatively stable with a headcount of 3,609. This is a decrease of 100 and is a reverse in trend from previous years. There have been no staff from other organisations known as a TUPE transferred in or out of the organisation.
- We have continued to take steps to increase our people's confidence in providing equalities information through awareness raising campaigns and direct communication. 97% of our people have provided information regarding their protected characteristics, including people who declared that they would 'prefer not to say' (PNTS). This is the same as last year and was highly commended in our most recent Corporate Peer Challenge.

- For some protected characteristics, the proportion of our people who declared they would 'prefer not to say' has decreased but still remains higher than for others. Most notably:

- 18% of our people indicated they would 'prefer not to say' in respect of sexual orientation (in keeping with last year)
- 18% of our people indicated they would 'prefer not to say' in respect of religion and belief (an improvement of 1% from last year).
- 15% of our people indicated they would 'prefer not to say' in respect of disability (in keeping with last year)

We have continued to see the narrowing of gaps in these areas overall in the last three years. We will continue to closely monitor this in the coming year with a staff confidence campaign in June and continue to strengthen our people's confidence in providing this information. However, recognising and respect that the provision of such information is a personal and optional choice for our people.

- Like other local government organisations our workforce is ageing, with 59% of our people aged 46 years and over. This is the same as last year and is in keeping with Wirral's population rates at 59.2%. Apart from those aged 55 and over which makes up 32% of our workforce compared to the local population which stands at 42.5%.

Whilst we continue to support the needs of an ageing workforce, we are also taking steps to strengthen our approach to address the challenges of an ageing workforce. As set out in our talent strategy, we are exploring and developing pipelines to enable people furthest removed from employment to apply and gain roles in the council as well as creating career pathways and aspiring leaders programme for our internal workforce.

- 66% of our workforce identify as female, which is higher when compared to Wirral's population rates of 52%. Around 27% of this cohort are within the 46-55 age group, which is in keeping with last year. We know that this age group is most likely to be experiencing perimenopause or menopause and are more likely to have caring responsibilities. In recognition of this we have:

- Staff network groups for women, menstrual health, working carers and perimenopause / menopause
- A 'Menopause in the Workplace' guide that also takes account of trans men and non-binary staff who may experience the menopause and menstrual health, supported by a series of employee workshops
- A menopause related absence category for recording menopause-related absences
- A Working Carers Policy with associated training for managers.
- A Working Carer's Passport Scheme

- A Menstrual Health conditions guide developed by our Menstrual Health staff network.
- 4% of our workforce identify as being from an ethnic minority background, which is in keeping with last year but lower compared to 7.6% of the Wirral population (an increase of 2.2% from the last census). Whilst this is a similar trend across the Liverpool City Region (LCR) we are working with our LCR partners to improve this, particularly with the Race Equality Hub.

In addition, a commitment within our Talent Strategy is to continue to strengthen our engagement with ethnic minority community groups to ensure our selection processes are inclusive. Including developing a range of early opportunity talent pipelines, and relationships with partners, that support and give a real chance for those furthest removed from employment and those under-represented within our workforce to join us.

- 9% of our people declared a disability, compared with 10.6% of the population. The number declared has broadly remained the same over the last 3 years within the Council. 15% (in keeping with last year) of our people have 'preferred not to say' in respect of this protected characteristic. We will continue to take steps to close the gap by increasing our people's confidence to enable people to feel more confident in declaring a disability to ensure we can support them in the workplace.

We are a Disability Confident employer and are committed to advancing opportunities for disabled candidates. With prospective disabled candidates automatically guaranteed an interview providing they have met the essential criteria for a role. Based on the applications received this year, there is minimal difference between the numbers applied vs appointed, with 4.2% of all disabled applications being successful in comparison to 5.5% of all non-disabled applications being successful. However, 5.6% of successful candidates preferred not to say, which may have some bearing on the overall rates.

We will continue to strengthen our commitment to hosting supported internships that support and give a real chance for those furthest removed from employment to join us.

- We have an overall healthy approach to workforce management when we consider the range and depth of activity and actions outlined in this report ranging from employment practices like performance management, disciplinary, attendance management etc. to internal promotion, apprenticeship and graduate schemes and staff engagement.

Whilst we hold data in relation to our employment practices e.g., exit interviews, staff survey etc. it has previously been limited by the type, range, and methods of collection. In April 2024 we introduced protected characteristic demographic questions to our internal staff survey, enabling us to better understand

experience based on protected characteristic. This has enhanced our ability to collect, identify, understand, and act on insights, hotspots, barriers, and opportunities.

1.2. What We Have Achieved this year (2025/26)

During the reporting period we have:

- Heard from 2201 colleagues in our **2025** staff survey. This equated to 60% of our workforce. This saw 115 more responses than in 2024, which was an overall increase in completion of 1.1%.
- In 2025, we continued to collect demographic information through the staff survey to better understand colleague experience across protected characteristics while maintaining anonymity. Overall, the results indicate positive experiences across all groups, with no significant disparities identified. There were some differences in experience for smaller groups, particularly relating to wellbeing, feeling valued, and involvement in workplace change, which will continue to be monitored through our Inclusion Group and Staff Networks. Encouragingly, experience scores improved across a number of protected characteristic groups compared to 2024, demonstrating continued progress in fostering an inclusive workplace culture. Our Inclusion Group are encouraged that we are committed to reviewing experience of different staff groups and taking action where needed.
- In **2025** we continued to recognise those colleagues reaching their 25-year Wirral Council service milestone with 57 of our staff receiving a certificate.
- Our One Council Staff Celebration ran for the second time in 2025, recognising the contribution of staff across a variety of award categories. This includes the Inclusive Culture category recognising individuals who champion inclusive practices and help colleagues and/or residents feel their voice is heard, listened to and valued. The Rising Star award also recognises employees at the start of their local government careers who are excelling in their roles. In 2025, 305 nominations were received by staff who wanted to recognise their colleagues, an increase of 118 compared with 2024.
- The Wellbeing Community is a staff group for people who feel passionately about driving a positive culture of wellbeing across the organisation. There are currently 33 members within the Wellbeing Community who meet to discuss wellbeing initiatives and themes. In 25/26, some of those discussions have ranged from mindfulness tools, wellbeing support through the Winter months to utilising digital tools to support our wellbeing during the working day.
- Introduced a period product scheme initially at Mallory providing hygiene products on the ground and 2nd floor disabled, gender neutral and female toilets that our menstrual health network help keep supplies topped up

- Introduced anonymous reporting system for all forms of harassment, Respectful Workplaces campaign and training and refresh of the Dignity at Work Policy.
- Began working more closely with our Trade Union equality representatives.
- Developed a new staff network for reservists, ex-military and cadet volunteers.
- We have resurrected the young person's network and notified apprentices and care leavers of the network
- Offer guaranteed interviews for care leavers and ex-military personnel that meet the essential criteria
- Our Inclusion Group (made up of representatives from all our Staff Network groups) has evolved since inception. It has gained greater recognition within the organisation and influences strategic decision making.

This year the group has:

- Co-designed and reviewed key employee related strategies, policies, and processes, including our staff survey and guides for Ramadan and Lent
- Led staff awareness and engagement campaigns, including International Women's Day (including a Q&A session with the Director of Children's Services), held inaugural in person events for South Asian Heritage month and Diwali, ran a huge campaign for Neurodiversity celebration week, Wear it pink fundraiser, LGBT History month, Transgender Day of Remembrance awareness and cake sale fundraiser for Wirral Pride and New Horizons to name but a few.
- Increased its reach to colleagues across the organisation to 441 that are part of various diverse staff networks and groups equating to around 12.2% of our workforce.
- Played a key role in shortlisting nominations received for 2025 staff celebration event.

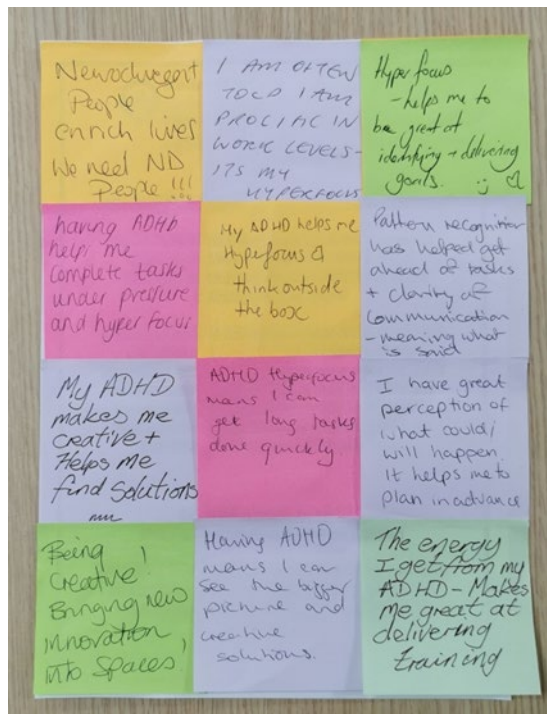




Inclusion Group and Jason Gooding, part of our executive team 2025

Neurodiversity celebration week -March 2026

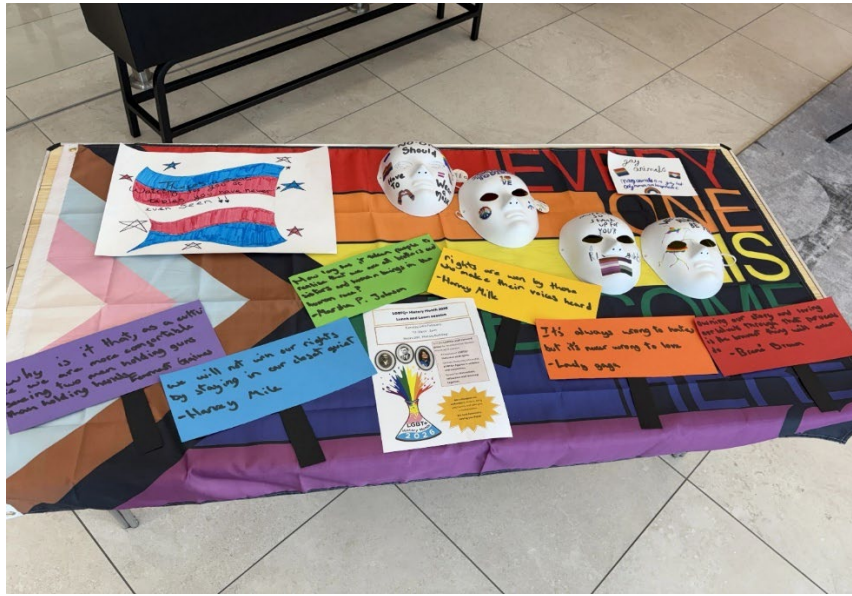




Transgender Day of Remembrance – November 2025



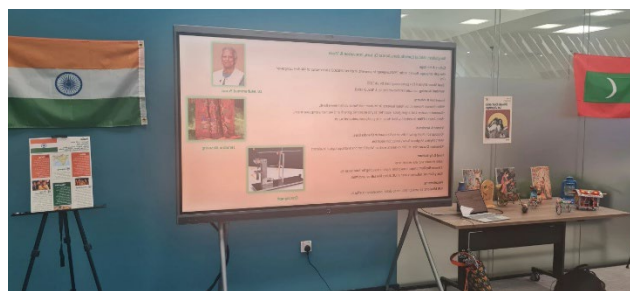
LGBT history month – February 2026



Race Equality week – February 2026



South Asian Heritage Month – August 2025



Diwali



International Women's Day – March 2026



ACCOUNTABLE



AMBITIOUS



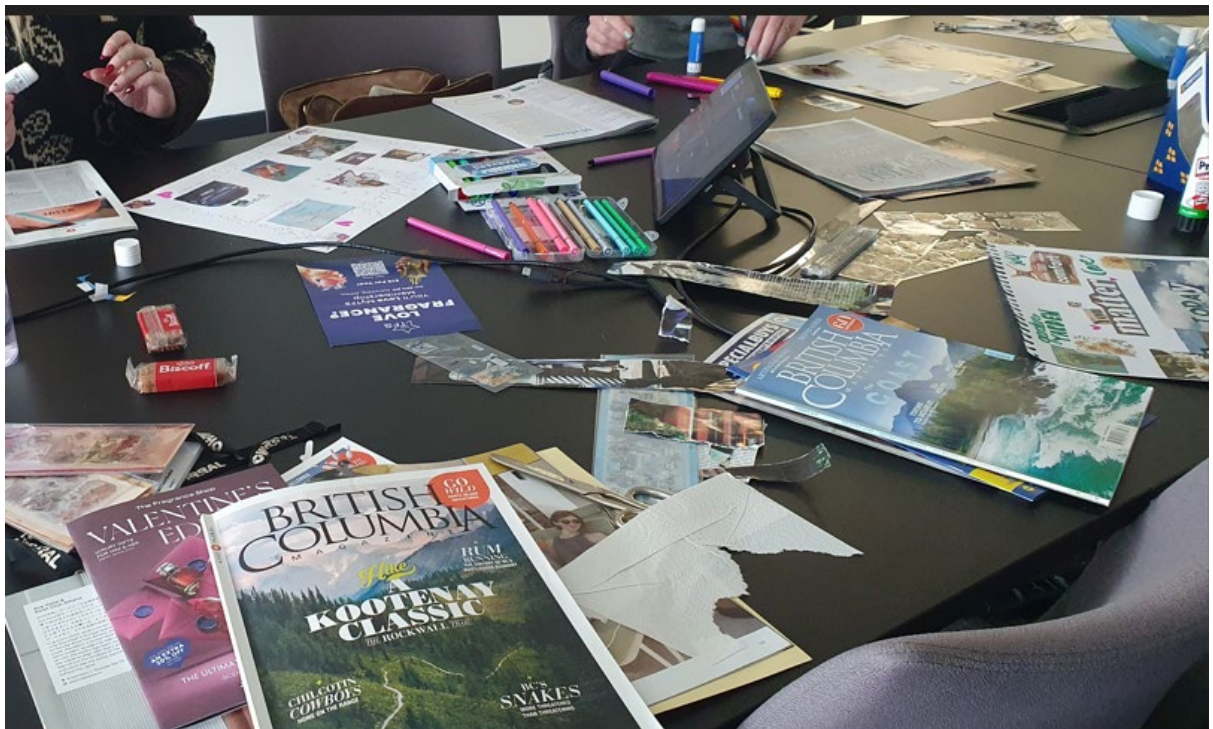
RESIDENT
FOCUSED



PROFESSIONAL



Women's network hosted a 'vision-boarding' session



- The number of staff network groups has grown to 13, which represents around 12.2% of our workforce. This year we introduce a new staff network for reservists, ex-military and cadet volunteers.

- We will continue to support and encourage more networks and groups as required. In the next 12 months we will seek to evaluate our Inclusion Group and Staff Network Groups.
- In conjunction with other councils within the Liverpool City Region, we have completed the first phase of our EmbRACE training programme for our workforce. This is part of the regions commitment to tackle systemic injustice and inequality and drive forward positive change for our Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic employees and residents. The full rollout of this programme will be from 2022 until 2026/27 and reach 17,000 employees across the region. To date 774 (21% of the workforce) employees have completed this training, however, we need to bear in mind that some of these may have left the organisation

2. Workforce Composition

- This report provides data on our workforce profile for 2025-2026. We collect, publish and monitor our people's diversity data to:
 - Check how representative we are according to the local population, wherever possible.
 - Consider and review the impact of our employment policies and processes, including the identification of areas which appear to have a disproportionate impact on certain groups of employees.
 - Show 'due regard' to the Public Sector Equality Duty, a legal requirement under the Equality Act 2010.
 - Identify opportunities to further embed Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion in the workplace, so that all our people feel included, listened to, supported, and developed to reach their full potential.

3. Organisational Composition

- As of 1 April 2025, our:
 - Total headcount equalled 3,609
 - Total employees working full time equalled 2,536
 - Total employees working part-time equalled 1,073 (of which 81% are women).

These figures do not include school employees, councillors, consultants or agency staff (unless they have line management responsibilities).

- In terms of length of service, we have 304 employees with up to 1 years' service (8%), 886 with between 1-5 years' (32%), 665 with 6–10 years (18%), 612 with 11 – 20 years (17%) and 870 with 20+ years (24%).

Length of Service Bands	Total	%
< 3 months	74	2%
3-5 months	54	1%
6-12 months	176	5%
1-2 Yrs	710	20%
3-5 Yrs	448	12%
6-10 Yrs	665	18%
11-15 Yrs	235	7%
16-20 Yrs	377	10%
21-25 Yrs	336	9%
25 Yrs +	534	15%
Total	3,609	

- Whilst we acknowledge we have an ageing workforce, many of which have long service, it should also be noted that 40% of the workforce now have less than 5 years' service, which is a decrease of 1% from the previous year.
- Retention rates during the last 3 years are 91%, 92, and 90% respectively.
- In terms of employees leaving, those with 25+years' service were the highest numbers to leave at 78, followed by those with less than one year's service at 66 (which is reverse in trend from last year when this was the highest cohort) and those with 1-2 years' service at 62. The next highest band is those with 6-10 years' service at 45

Length of Service Bands	2025/26 no. of employees leaving
< 1 year	66
1-2 Yrs	62

3-5 Yrs	38
6-10 Yrs	45
11-15 Yrs	17
16-20 Yrs	31
21-25 Yrs	34
25 Yrs +	78
Grand Total	372

- Overall, there has been no significant changes to the demographic of our workforce over the last three years. We remain female dominated, have an ageing workforce and we are under-representative of our ethnic minority communities. The average length of service is 13 years and turnover rate is 15%, this is an increase of 3% from last year.

4. Equality Monitoring Information

4.1. Age

- Like other local government organisations our workforce is ageing, with 60% of our people aged 46 years and over. This is in keeping with last year:
- Employee level 51% (aged 46 years and over)
 - Manager level 67% (aged 46 years and over)
 - Senior manager and Chief Officer level 95% (aged 46 years and over and increase of 18% from last year)

Age bands	Number of employees	%	*Wirral Estimates	
16 - 20	22	0.6%	15,929	6.1%
21 - 25	98	3%	15,782	6.0%
26 - 30	246	7%	18,520	7.1%
31 - 35	329	9%	19,613	7.5%
36 - 40	393	11%	19,184	7.3%
41 - 45	388	11%	18,206	6.9%
46 - 50	419	12%	20,700	7.9%

51 - 55	530	15%	23,009	8.8%
56 - 60	623	17%	23,743	9.1%
61 - 65	406	11%	20,871	8.0%
66 +	155	4%	66,554	25.4%
Total	3,609		262,111	100.0%

**Estimates are based on Wirral Population figures from the Census 2021*

- Around 32% of our overall workforce are aged over 55. In comparison to the local population which stands at 42.5%.
- 27% our female workforce is aged between 46-55 years. When we look at the local population, this is 16%.
- We are 14% overrepresented in the 51–60 age bracket and 8.5% under-represented in the 16-25 age bracket in comparison to the latest census data.
- 39 of our employees attended pre-retirement courses during this period.
- Whilst we continue to support the needs of an ageing workforce, we are also taking steps to strengthen our approach to address the challenges of an ageing workforce. Our Talent Strategy launched summer 2023 and has key actions to support improvements in this area.

4.2. Sex

- We have a predominantly female workforce (two thirds) which when compared to Wirral's population rates of 52% is higher, this remains consistent over previous years.
- At Chief Officer level, the male / female split is 49% and 51% respectively.
- In relation to pay, women have increased their representation at Chief Officer level by 8% from last year which is extremely positive.
- At manager and senior manager level, the male / female split of 35% men / 65% women shows a decrease of female representation of 1% from last year (when previously there was an increase of 1%). However, this broadly represents the overall make-up of the workforce.

4.3. Ethnicity

- The response rate from our people declaring their ethnicity has remained the same.

	FY 2024/25		FY 2025/26		Last Census 2021	
Ethnicity	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Ethnic minority	133	4%	145	4%	24,232	7.6%
Prefer not to say	218	6%	195	5%	N/A	N/A
White	3,151	85%	3,102	86%	295,967	92.4%
Unknown	207	6%	167	5%	N/A	N/A

- 4% of our people identifying as being from an ethnic minority background compared to 7.6% of the Wirral population. However, this is an increase of 1% from the previous 3 years which is positive.
- Comparisons have been made across the Liverpool City Region with Liverpool having the highest ethnic minority employee representation at 5.9% (with ethnic minority population of 16%).
- We will continue to work with the Liverpool City Region Race Equality Forum to support and develop appropriate interventions. We have developed a Race, Religion and Belief staff network group in respect of the race equality agenda across the region.

In addition, a commitment within our talent strategy is to continue to strengthen our engagement with ethnic minority community groups to ensure our selection processes are inclusive. Including developing a range of early opportunity talent pipelines, and relationships with partners, that support and give a real chance for those furthest removed from employment and those under-represented within our workforce to join us.

4.4. Disability

- Disabled employees are well represented across the entire workforce. Around 9% of the workforce declared they have a disability; this 1% higher than the previous four years. With hidden disabilities being more prevalent, particularly mental health since and during Covid.

	2024/25		2025/26	
	No	%	No	%
No	2578	70%	2,497	69%
Unknown	236	7%	254	7%
Prefer not to say	594	15%	636	15%
Yes	301	8%	318	9%
Total	3,709		3,609	

- Around 15% of our people have 'preferred not to say' in respect of this protected characteristic (which is in keeping with last year) therefore we will continue take steps to close the gap by increasing our people's confidence to enable people to feel more confident in declaring a disability to ensure we can support them in the workplace.
- There were 28 people who requested reasonable adjustment equipment and 52 items in total purchased following an Access to Work request and Health and Safety support.
- Training was provided to 18 people on specialist assistive technology software.
- Specialist workplace coaching strategy training was also provided to 5 people with a total of 80 session (typically, a user will engage with 12-20 sessions). This has been offered as part of Access to Work recommendations and fully funded from DWP and is a personalised coaching program designed to help individuals overcome personal challenges associated with their diagnosis (all are neurodivergent) by developing practical strategies tailored to their strengths and needs within their role and workplace.
- Figures are likely higher where managers have sourced and procured equipment from their own budget which are not recorded centrally. This could be up to an additional 40%. The equipment comprised of Chairs, Mice, Keyboards, Desks, Specialist Footrest, Specialist Headsets, Software, & Hardware.

Please note these are in relation to access to work requests via Health and Safety. Figures may be higher where managers have sourced and procured equipment from their own budget which are not recorded centrally.

- There is limited directly comparable data for this characteristic in respect of the local population. However, it is useful to note that in the Census 2021, 10.6% of the Wirral population declared they experience a long-term health

problem or disability that limits their day-to-day activity. This may suggest we are potentially underrepresented in comparison to the local population but there is insufficient comparable data to be certain.

4.5. Religion Or Belief

- 42% of our people declare as Christian (All Denominations), followed by 24% declaring no religion. This follows the same trend in comparison to Wirral's population.

4.6. Gender Reassignment

- The number of our people declaring they are transgender has remained the same as last year at 0.2%.
- For the first time, gender reassignment has been included in the Census. Around 0.4% (955) were all other gender identities, including non-binary, trans women, trans men. However, this has caused concern within the LGBTQ+ community as non-binary relates to a person's gender identity and is not associated with gender reassignment. Therefore, may not be seen as comparable data.
- The 'unknown' category for this protected characteristic has decreased by 1% since last year (which is a reverse in trend for the first time in 3 years). However, levels of prefer not to say remain consistent at 4%
- We have a Gender Identity policy which was first introduced in 2009, but further steps are being taken to increase our people's confidence in providing information in relation to this protected characteristic. This will be reviewed and refreshed following the Supreme Court Ruling once government guidance has been published.
- We have developed a guide to explain why we ask for personal information, what we do with it, why it is important and who has access. We will continue to implement staff confidence campaigns to reassure employees.

4.7. Marriage And Civil Partnership

- There have been no significant changes in the number of recorded civil partnerships and same-sex marriages since last year.
- There has been no change in the prefer not to say category. However, it is important to recognise and respect that the provision of such information is a personal and optional choice for our people.

4.8. Sexual Orientation

Sexual Orientation	2024/25 % total Council Headcount	2025/26 % total Council Headcount	Latest Census (2021)
LGBTQ+	4%	4%	2.9%
Heterosexual	70%	70%	90.7%
Prefer not to say / Unknown	18%	18%	6.5%

- The latest Census data tell us that 90.7% of the population identify as heterosexual, 2.9% identify as LGBTQ+, with a further 6.5% of unknown responses.
- In comparison to the workforce, we are well represented at 4% of employees that identify as LGBTQ+.
- The proportion of our people providing information regarding their sexual orientation has increased by just under 3.5% over the last two years, which is positive.
- However, the proportion of our people who have indicated they would 'prefer not to say' is still higher than for most other protected characteristics at 18%. The reasons are unknown, and we have updated self-serve to include pansexual and prefer to self-describe to be as inclusive as possible. Again, steps will be taken to increase our people's confidence in providing information regarding protected characteristics and more inclusive options available for our people to identify with.

4.9. Pregnancy, Maternity and Adoption

- In 2025-26, 54 of our people took maternity leave with 33 people accessing maternity support leave. No employees left the organisation before they were due to return.
- 3 employees reduced their working pattern after returning to work for six months.
- 30 people took Paternity leave with 3 employees accessing Fostering Leave.
- 3 employees accessed shared parental leave with another 30 accessing Parental leave.

5. Employment Practices

5.1. Working Carers

- 84% of carers within our workforce are women. This is higher than the national average (59%). Overall, 4% have identified as working carers, which is a decrease of 1% from last year. It is anticipated that around 12% of our people could be working carers based on regional statistics.
- Active steps have been taken to provide support to working carers and will further build upon this. Actions to date include the launch of a working carers policy, management training, the introduction of a Carers Passport scheme and the establishment of a staff network group. We will continue to work with the staff network groups to identify further measures and support where required.

Communication campaigns will continue to ensure our people feel confident to identify as working carers and are aware of the Carers passport scheme. In addition, we will also include other support available such as the Working Carers Policy and the Working Carers network group.

5.2. Job Application Success Rates

- The overall number of job applications for 2025/26 was 9,030. This is a slight increase for the number of applicants from last year which was 8,653.
- Of these applications, 23% were from an ethnic minority background, a decrease of 4% from the previous year and a reverse in trend from last year when there was an increase of 1%. This is still extremely positive when comparing the overall composition of our ethnic minority employees at 4%.
- The number of candidates shortlisted and then appointed were 13% and 14% respectively from an ethnic minority group. (last year it was 18% and 12%) In addition, 5% of all applicants chose not to declare their ethnicity, which is 2% higher than the previous year. We can see a downward trend from the number of applications received, to those shortlisted, to those appointed from an ethnic minority background, in contrast to experience of those from White British background (at 24% shortlisted and 28% appointed). We will continue to monitor this over the next 12 months and take proactive steps aligned to our talent strategy.

Ethnicity	% of total applied	% of total shortlisted	% of total appointed
Ethnic Minority Background	23%	13%	14%
Not declared	3%	14%	16%
Prefer not to say	2%	25%	9%
White British	72%	24%	28%

- When job application success rate by disability and non-disabled, there is no disparity. 10% of all applicants declared a disability (this is 1% higher than last year). However, 4% of all successful candidates declared a disability, this is 3% lower than last year (7%) and is a reverse in trend. Additionally, 3% of total applications who were appointed, preferred not to say. This could have an impact either positively or negatively on the overall results for disabled candidates.

% of applicants declared disability	% of applicants shortlisted declared disability	% of successful Candidates declared disability
10%	22%	4%

- The success rate of candidates that identified as LGBTQ+ was 8% (including prefer to self-define) which is higher than the workforce composition at 4% and is extremely positive. It is also noted that 8% of all applications preferred not to say in respect of their sexual orientation. Last year, 4% of applicants selected prefer not to say.

% of applicants identified as Bi-sexual, Lesbian or Gay and Pansexual	% of applicants shortlisted identified as Bi-sexual, Lesbian or Gay and Pansexual	% of successful Candidates identified as Bi-sexual, Lesbian or Gay and Pansexual
9%	9%	8%

- The highest number of applications (34%) were from age range 26–35-year-olds, a similar trend to last year at 33%. This age group also saw the second lowest % of successful appointments. The highest success rate of new starters was aged 66 plus, where there were 51 applications with a success rate of 40%.

Age band	% of total applied	% of total shortlisted	% of total appointed
Under 25	20%	18%	24%
26 - 35	34%	19%	21%
36 – 45	22%	22%	25%
46 - 55	15%	26%	32%
56 – 65	6%	26%	38%
66+	1%	29%	40%
PNTS/Unknown	3%	22%	11%

More men than women applied for positions within the Council and were more successful at appointment stage than women (when compared to the overall composition of the workforce of men and women at 34% and 66%).

Sex	% of total applied	% of total shortlisted	% of total appointed
Female	56%	21%	4.8%
Male	41%	21%	5.8%
Non-binary	0.3%	35%	11.5%
PNTS / Unknown	2.5%	26%	2.2%

5.3. Promotion Success Rates

- We have now included insight in relation to promotion success rates. We have used this as a baseline for comparable information for this report. We aim to ensure there are no adverse disparities for any protected groups as we monitor this on an ongoing basis.
- Overall, 121 of our people received an increase in pay comprising of change of grade, promotion, re-grade and restructure. This is an increase from last year when 22 people received an increase. This equates to around 3.3% of the workforce.
- Of these, 4% were from an ethnic minority background, which is in keeping with the overall composition of ethnic minority employees at 4%.
- Of those promoted, around 81% of our people promoted identified as female, this is an increase of 13% from last year and above the overall composition of the workforce.
- Of the cohort of promoted employees, men were much less likely to be promoted at 19% which is much lower than the overall composition at 33%. This is a reverse in trend from the previous 2 years.
- Around 12% of those promoted identified as disabled. This is higher than the overall make-up of disabled employees at 8% and is an increase of 3% from the previous year.
- Around 7% of our people who were promoted declared they were lesbian, gay, or Asexual were promoted during 2025/26. This is an increase of 2.5% from last year and is higher than the overall composition of the workforce at 4%.

- We will continue to monitor this to ensure there are no adverse disparities for any protected groups.

5.4. Length Of Service

- A notable proportion of our people are over 46 years of age and have 25 years or more service (14%). We are taking steps to strengthen our approach to workforce and succession planning with a focus on addressing the challenges of an ageing workforce, hard to fill roles, skills gaps, improving diversity, having a flexible and agile workforce that supports progression of the talent already within the organisation.

5.5. Take Up of Training

- In January 2022, our learning platform Flo was launched. This platform has been procured and developed to make it inclusive for all our workforce to access in a simple and easy way.
- Our data tells us that in 2025/26, 86% of all our people accessed (that is recorded centrally and includes essential e-learning) via our learning platform Flo. This is an increase of 24% and is a reverse in trend from the previous year. However, this data does not capture/include all forms of blended learning and development, such as work-based learning. We have adapted our development offer to be more flexible in line with our hybrid working culture and this may have contributed to the significant increase of take up rates.
- Insight from our 2025 staff survey told us that employee experience had increased with regards to learning and development opportunities. With regards to Wirral being a great place to develop, we saw experience had increased by 5.09% across the organisation.
- Around 8.5% of people from an ethnic minority background accounted for staff accessing formal training, which is significantly higher than the overall composition of the workforce from an ethnic minority background (4%).
- Approximately 82% of our people from a White British demographic accessed formal training, which is slightly higher than the overall make-up of this cohort at 81%. Around 5% of this cohort preferred not to say.
- 9% of all disabled employees accessed formal training, which is in keeping with the overall composition of disabled employees at 9%
- Around 4.5% of employees that identified as LGBTQ+ accessed formal training which is slightly higher than the overall workforce from this group. There was 16% of prefer not to say in this cohort which could impact these figures.

- A review of the data in relation to age does not show any disparities for any age ranges. However, employees aged between 36 – 45 were more likely to access delivered training with those aged 66+ less likely to.
- Overall, employees with a protected characteristic are exceeding opportunities to access formal training which is extremely positive.

Aspiring Leaders / Leadership Development programmes

We have tracked the composition of participants in our aspiring leaders programme and leadership development programme as detailed below.

Aspiring Leaders

- Men were well represented at the Aspiring Leaders programme at 50%.
- Colleagues from ethnic minority backgrounds represented 11% of participants, which exceeds their representation within the overall workforce.
- In terms of sexual orientation, representation on the programme was 14%, also exceeding the overall workforce profile.
- There were a good range of age groups accessing the programme from aged 26 – 65.
- Colleagues with additional caring responsibilities accounted for 8% of participants which is also higher than the workforce average.
- All other protected characteristics broadly represented the overall make-up of the workforce.
- Areas where representation was lower than may be expected based on workforce composition include women, who accounted for 50% of participants, and colleagues with a declared disability, who accounted for 5.5% of participants.
- Across all characteristics there were varying levels of "Prefer not to say" responses, which may affect the interpretation of participation rates for some groups.

Leadership Development

- Colleagues with a declared disability accounted for 13% of participants, exceeding their representation within the overall workforce.

- There were a good range of age groups accessing the programme from aged 31 – 65.
- Colleagues with caring responsibilities accounted for 20% of participants, higher than the workforce average.
- All other protected characteristics broadly represented the overall make-up of the workforce.
- Men accounted for 27% of participants, representing a lower proportion than may be expected based on workforce composition.
- Across all characteristics there were varying levels of "Prefer not to say" responses, which may affect the interpretation of participation rates for some groups.

We will continue to encourage a culture of continuous learning and development, empower our people to drive their own development, providing them with the tools and resources to do so. We will also emphasise the value of other forms of learning and development such as shadowing, mentoring, reverse mentoring, online resources, and structured on-the-job learning.

We will continue to monitor trends and ensure development opportunities are accessible to all.

5.6. Reasons For Leaving

- During 2025/26, 372 of our people left the Council. The main reason for leaving was resignation, severance and retirement. This is relatively in keeping with last year when 317 people left. Higher turnover and leaver numbers in 2025/26 have been influenced by planned workforce reduction activity.
- Around 9% of our people who left during 2025-2026 had declared a disability, this is an increase of 1% from last year and is in keeping with the overall make-up of the workforce (9%).
- The sex split of leavers is relatively comparable to the overall composition of the workforce with more women leaving at 64% (compared to 67% of workforce). This is an increase of 3% from last year.
- Around 3.5% of all leavers identified as lesbian, gay, pansexual, bi-sexual and prefer to self-describe. This is generally in keeping with the overall make-up of the workforce. However, there were elevated levels of prefer not to say at 16% that could impact negatively / positively for this protected characteristic group.

- In terms of ethnic minority, 5% of all leavers identified as from an ethnic minority background. This is slightly higher than last year when 3.5% of all leavers were from an ethnic minority background.
- Managers are encouraged to understand our people's reasons for leaving, gather feedback for how their service area can improve, and celebrate what the employee has achieved during their time with us. We will continue to monitor qualitative leavers survey comments for any specific barriers or issues being raised by leavers in relation to protected characteristics.
- In managing the workforce reduction, redesign of roles and structures have been considered, ensuring service resilience. Work has been undertaken to mitigate the impact of planned exits through workforce capacity, redesign, skills, succession and service resilience.

5.7. Apprenticeship, Graduate and other Talent Schemes

We have a range of talent initiatives that support the development of our workforce and provide opportunities for young people, those in the early stage of their careers, and those who are furthest removed from employment.

Apprenticeships

- As an organisation, Apprenticeships (funded through the Growth and Skills Levy) provide development opportunities for both new and existing staff and support workforce and succession planning.
- In 2025/26, 30 Council employees successfully completed an apprenticeship qualification. The average age of these employees was 35. Of those who completed an apprenticeship, 13% were aged under 26, 40% were aged 26-35, 40% were aged 36-45, and 7% were aged 46 and over (see Table 1).
- While staff aged 16-35 make up 20% of the workforce, they accounted for 53% of apprenticeship completions. This reflects the Council's Apprentice and Trainee approach, which is focused on creating opportunities for young people and individuals in the early stages of their careers, helping to build a sustainable talent pipeline for the future.
- Of those who completed an apprenticeship, 43% were male and 57% were female. This distribution is broadly reflective of the Council's overall workforce profile (see table 2).

Table 1

Age Range	No. Staff who completed an apprenticeship	%
16-25	4	13%

26-35	12	40%
36-45	12	40%
46-55	2	7%

Table 2

Sex	No. Staff who completed an apprenticeship	%
Male	13	43%
Female	17	57%

Corporate Graduate and Care Leaver Apprentice Programmes

- Our corporate Care Leaver Apprentice programme supports our Corporate Parent commitment to provide employment opportunities for care-experienced young people. The 2025 recruitment campaign saw 5 Care Leaver Apprentices join the organisation.
- Our corporate Graduate programme provides opportunities for university Graduates to develop practical experience and take the first step into the world of work. The 2026 recruitment campaign saw 3 Graduates join the organisation.
- Services also continue to provide opportunities for Apprentices, Graduates and Trainees to join the workforce, further strengthening talent pipelines

Career Experience and Supported Internships

- We have continued to provide quality career experience placements to local residents, engaging with local schools, Universities, and the Careers & Enterprise Company. In 2025/26 we supported 41 placements in services across the Council.
- In 2025/26 we provided two supported internships to local young people with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND). These placements allow them to develop the skills and experience needed to secure paid employment.

Early Opportunities Pipeline

- Our Early Opportunities Pipeline targets sustainable employment opportunities to those furthest removed from employment in Wirral. This includes young people who are not in employment or education (NEET), residents who use our commissioned Employment Support Service (ReachOut), residents who are unemployed and residents with SEND.

- In 2025/26 we recruited to 1 role via this pipeline and are further utilising this pathway in 2026/27.

5.8. Employee Relation Cases

- From 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026 there were 988 employee relation cases. 27 were related to formal performance management, 78 disciplinary, 64 grievance and 816 absence management. These cases have been analysed in relation to protected characteristics. It is important to note multiple cases may relate to the same employee.

Performance Management:

- 41% of performance management cases involved men, compared with 25% of the workforce.
- Employees recorded as being from an ethnic minority background accounted for 26% of cases.
- The age groups 51–60 accounted for 26% of performance management cases.

Disciplinary:

- Men accounted for 51% of disciplinary cases, compared with 25% of the workforce. The 56–65 age groups accounted for 45% of disciplinary cases, while employees recorded as disabled accounted for 13%.
- Resources available to employees include Health and Wellbeing support, flexible working, the Employee Assistance Programme, Dignity at Work advisers and representatives from staff inclusion groups.

Attendance Management:

- Women accounted for 74% of attendance management cases, compared with 75% of the workforce. Employees aged 51–65+ accounted for 55% of cases. Employees recorded as disabled accounted for 16%, compared with 4% of the workforce.

Grievance:

- 61% of grievances were submitted by women. Employees recorded as disabled accounted for 9% of grievances, and employees from an ethnic minority background accounted for 6%. The 51–60 age groups accounted for 41% of all grievances.

- We will continue to review and monitor our workforce data and demographics in respects to Employee Relations and ensure insights are considered with the implementation of Council's workforce plans and strategies. This will ensure that we have a diverse, engaged, and skilled workforce who deliver outcomes for Wirral residents and are representative of the communities that we serve.

6. Final Comments and Next Steps

In conclusion, our workforce demographic has remained consistent over the last three years. We know where the gaps are, and this report and associated action plan (Appendix One) will contribute to the further development of the Council's workforce plans which support our wider people strategy. This will ensure that we have a diverse, engaged, and skilled workforce who deliver outcomes for Wirral residents and are representative of the communities that we serve.

In conclusion, our workforce demographic has remained broadly consistent over the last three years. The report highlights continued strengths in areas such as development, talent pipelines and staff engagement. Longer term challenges such as an ageing workforce, what could be considered an under representation of ethnic minority communities, and potentially confidence in declaring protected characteristics in some characteristics remain. This year's report should be considered in the context of planned workforce reduction activity undertaken to support the council's financial position, with a continued focus on maintaining service resilience, workforce capacity, skills and succession planning. The findings in this report and the accompanying action plan will support the ongoing development of the Council's people strategy, helping to build a diverse, skilled and inclusive workforce that reflects the communities we serve.



Appendix One: Equality Improvement: Summary action plan

Previous actions have been closed and anything outstanding is included in the below action plan

Action Plan

Action	Target date	Progress Update	Owner
Develop a Workforce Inclusion Policy and plan based on the outcome of the published People Strategy and emerging Council Corporate Equality Plan.	Ongoing	This has been delayed pending Council Corporate Equality Strategy	Inclusion
In support of our Talent Strategy, strengthen our approach to workforce planning to address the challenges of an aging workforce, hard to fill roles, skills gaps, improving diversity and supports inclusive talent progression within the Council. Including actively increasing representation of workforce under 30 years of age. 2024 saw 9.5% of our workforce aged 30 and below.	Ongoing	This is an ongoing piece of work, which will continue over the next 12 months. The figure for 2025/26 is 10.6%	Talent and Change
Continue to actively support our ageing workforce	Ongoing	Pre-retirement workshops, EAP, monthly wellbeing campaigns, Active You offers, Menopause support classes, diverse staff groups including the working carers staff network group. Propose to continue to provide support and monitor this.	Inclusion / Organisational Development

Action	Target date	Progress Update	Owner
Monitor success rates of shortlisted and appointed applicants from ethnic minority backgrounds.	May 2027	The number of candidates shortlisted and then appointed were 13% and 14% respectively from an ethnic minority group. (last year it was 18% and 12%) In addition, 13% of all applicants chose not to declare their ethnicity, which is 11% higher than the previous year. In contrast to those from White British background (at 24% shortlisted and 28% appointed). Propose to continue to monitor this.	Recruitment / Inclusion
Evaluate our Inclusion Group and Staff Network Groups	October 2026	Mini evaluation of LGBTQ+ group undertaken, full evaluation will take place Autumn 2026.	Inclusion
Continue to monitor the levels of PNTS in religion or belief, sexual orientation and disability. Consider work with inclusion group and how to promote this.	May 2027	New action.	

Appendix Two: Equality Improvement: Summary action plan Equal Pay Statement

Employers must ensure men and women are treated equally in the terms and conditions of their employment contract including pay, if they are employed to do:

- 'like work' - work that is the same or broadly similar
- work rated as equivalent under a job evaluation study
- work found to be of equal value in terms of effort, skill or decision making.

The equal terms can cover all aspects of pay and benefits, including:

- basic pay
- overtime rates
- performance related benefits
- hours of work
- access to pension schemes
- non-monetary terms
- annual leave entitlements.

The Pay Policy is reviewed annually and approved by Council. The Pay Policy for 2026/2027 was presented to Senior Officer and Appointments Staffing Sub-Committee on 8 July 2025 and Full Council on 21 July 2025 and with effect from 1 April 2026 we will pay the revised national living wage of £13.45

The Local Government Transparency Code 2014 under the Department for Communities and Local Government requires that all local authorities publish certain information related to the organisation, salaries and fraud including senior salaries over £50,000.

Appendix Three: Workforce Profile: Gender pay gap reporting – 31 March 2026

Wirral Council is required by law (The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017) to publish an annual gender pay gap report.

What is a gender pay gap?

The gender pay gap report shows the average difference between the earnings of women and men. It has several contributory factors, most of which are more about the kinds of industries and jobs open to women than about the ways in which men and women are paid.

Just because there is a gender pay gap does not make it unlawful. Having a gender pay gap does not mean the council is discriminating against women. A gender pay gap is not solely the result of pay practices. It is about much broader influences. Gender pay gaps are the outcome of economic, cultural, societal, and educational factors.

Gender pay is not about equal pay. Unequal pay means that individual women and men are not getting equal pay for doing equal work.

Reporting Requirements

The report is in relation to a snapshot of the workforce in scope as of 31st March 2026 in line with the legislative reporting requirements. The scope of the council's report includes all employees (excluding schools) who are in receipt of base pay and allowances at this date.

The council must report on and publish the mean and median pay gaps and pay quartiles.

Appendix Four: references list

- Census 2021
- [Sexual orientation, UK - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk)
- Wirral Intelligence hub
- [Public health profiles - OHID \(phe.org.uk\)](https://www.phe.org.uk)