

Cheshire West and Chester Council

Workforce Diversity Report – April 2022

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, in particular, 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 been a concern now for a number of years. Individual employees can choose not to declare information about their ethnicity or other

protected characteristics. In many cases the data was never requested and there is therefore have a particularly high proportion of “Undeclared / Prefer Not To Say” responses against the various diversity categories recorded on the personnel system (Oracle).

Several separate initiatives have been launched to try to improve the data, with varying success. It is hoped that the new Unit 4 ERP system which launched for HR and Payroll in November 2021 will provide an opportunity to revisit this again and that wider self-service will enable and empower more staff to enter their data.

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 2022), 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 2022 e.g. recruitment, casework and leavers data; with a view to understanding if there are any inherent biases towards or against any protected characteristics, suggested by the data
- Due to self-declaration and a history of not proactively seeking employee diversity data, there is a significant amount of missing / undeclared equality data which makes it hard to draw conclusions about any anomalies– they may be evidence of conscious or unconscious bias; alternatively there may not be enough data on which to draw a meaningful conclusion.
- Bearing the above in mind, there may be a concern over data relating to the percentage of the workforce who are non-white, especially at senior levels; also over the performance ratings of staff who have declared their religion as any other than Christianity or None.

A full analysis is provided below.

Ethnicity

In 2021, the total percentage of unknown ethnicity was 14.6%. In 2022, we can see that 1.2% of Council colleagues have actively selected not to disclose their ethnicity, with ethnicity unknown for a further 19.6% - a total of 20.8%. So although the proportion of colleagues declaring their ethnicity as White has reduced from 84% to 78%, there hasn't been a corresponding increase in the number of colleagues declaring themselves to be of a non-white ethnicity (0.9% in 2022 compared to 1.7% in 2021).

In the 2021 census, 95.3% of CW&C residents reported an ethnicity within the high-level "White" category, a decrease from 97.4% in 2011. Therefore based on the 2022 workforce data the number of employees self-declaring as other than white would need to more than double to be truly representative of the population. However it's likely that the self-declared figure does underestimate the true proportion of staff belonging to non-white ethnic groups, even if by a small amount. Plans to improve data collection as discussed above and in the Recommendations should address this issue.

No grade group has a particularly higher or lower non-white population than others; though it is interesting that staff in the lowest grade group appear to be more likely to choose to consciously withhold their data. Still no roles above grade 12 were filled by staff declaring themselves to be of an ethnicity other than White.

84% of employees declared they belonged to white ethnicities, this is slightly lower than previous years however the difference appears to be where data is either unrecorded or that the employee has preferred not to declare (nearly 15% compared to 11% in 2020). 1.3% of employees were from a non-white background, down 0.1% from 2020; compared to 2.5% of residents in the borough. No grade group has a particularly higher or lower non-white population than others; though it is interesting that employees in the lowest and highest grade groups are more likely to choose to withhold their data. Still no roles above grade 12 were filled by staff declaring themselves to be of an ethnicity other than White.

	White	Not white / mixed	Prefer Not to Say	Not Known
Grade 1 - 3	70.9%	0.0%	3.5%	25.6%
Grade 4 - 7	77.7%	0.8%	1.4%	20.1%
Grade 8 - 10	79.1%	0.9%	0.9%	19.1%
Grade 11 - 12	82.0%	1.4%	0.3%	16.3%
Grade 13 - 15	86.3%	0.0%	1.3%	12.5%
Grade 16 – 18 & SLT	62.2%	0.0%	0.0%	37.8%
Grand Total	78.4%	0.9%	1.2%	19.6%

Sex

The Council's workforce remains predominantly female at 70.5% - a very slight reduction on 2021's figure which was 71.2%. There remains a variation in gender split based on grade. For instance, there are slightly more males in the lowest grade group – this is perhaps explained by the fact that there are relatively few employees in this group, and a greater proportion are more traditionally filled by men e.g. StreetCare operatives. Less easy to explain is the unequal gender split at the very highest grades. However the percentage of females in both the highest grades groups has increased very slightly – in 2021 the percentage of females at Grades 13+ was 65.9%; in 2022 it is 66.7%.

	F	M
Grade 1 - 3	57.0%	43.0%
Grade 4 - 7	71.4%	28.6%
Grade 8 - 10	70.2%	29.8%
Grade 11 - 12	72.5%	27.5%
Grade 13 - 15	70.0%	30.0%
Grade 16 – 18 & SLT	57.9%	42.1%

Grand Total	70.5%	29.5%
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Disability

The definition of disability is again based on self-declaration. It appears that there has been an issue here with the way data was migrated on to a new HR system, so it is not possible at this time to provide any reliable data on disability in the workforce. Investigations are underway regarding the data migration issue; however national estimates are that around 20% of the population could be considered Disabled under the terms of the Equality Act, so it is clear that the reported data has always been an under-representation of the true figure. Further actions to encourage more self-declaration are required here as with the other measures discussed above.

Sexual orientation

0.7% of employees declared themselves to be gay or bisexual, compared to 1% in 2021 and national estimates of around 6%. A question on sexual orientation was asked for the first time in the 2021 census so it will be interesting to compare actual data both for the borough and nationally, to those estimates.

As above, this is likely to be significantly under-reported, as the sexual orientation of well over half the workforce is unknown. However as with ethnicity, it is at least now clearer that 3.2% of employees have actively chosen not to disclose their sexual orientation. NB Again due to the small numbers, this data is not broken down by grade.

Bisexual	0.1%
Gay	0.6%
Heterosexual	30.0%
Prefer not to say	3.2%
Not known	66.1%

Religion and belief

Of particular note here is that a particularly high proportion have chosen not to disclose their religion, compared to those who chose not to declare ethnicity, or sexual orientation. The reason for this is unclear and would be useful to explore as the Council progresses with actions to encourage disclosure of EDI characteristics.

0.6% declared a non-Christian religion. According to the latest statistics from the 2021 census, 7.7% of the borough's population reported a religion other than Christianity or None, again implying that religions other than Christianity are under-reported. NB Due to the small numbers, again this data is not broken down by grade.

Christian	21.8%
No Religion	0.5%
Other Religion	0.6%
Prefer not to say	13.4%
Undisclosed	63.7%

Age

The workforce profile remains older in comparison to the community (based on the 2011 census). Though it should of course be remembered that by definition a working population won't 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.

Age range	2022	Population
16-19	0.0%	6.00%
20-24	2.5%	7.00%
25-29	6.6%	6.50%
30-34	8.3%	6.50%
35-39	11.0%	8.00%
40-44	12.1%	9.00%

45-49	12.5%	9.50%
50-54	17.2%	8.00%
55-59	15.9%	7.00%
60-64	10.0%	8.00%
65+	3.9%	22.00%

Recruitment

An audit of recruitment activity from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 has been undertaken. A summary is attached below.

The data does not highlight any great concerns in terms of gender. However in terms of ethnicity it may be useful to explore why 6.6% of candidates who declare themselves as from a White ethnicity were appointed, compared to only 2.6% of those self-declaring as from another ethnicity. Interestingly only 2.2% of candidates chose not to disclose their ethnicity, compared to a very high proportion of candidates choosing not to disclose their age. On that basis it is hard to draw any conclusions about potential age bias, because there are so few responses.

	Applicants		Appointed		% In Workforce
	Total	%	Total	%	01/04/2022
Sex					
Female	3061	66.2%	214	7.0%	70.5%
Male	1477	31.9%	76	5.1%	29.5%
Other	9	0.2%	1	11.1%	
Prefer Not To Say / Null	80	1.7%	23	28.8%	
<i>Total</i>	<i>4627</i>		<i>314</i>	<i>6.8%</i>	

Ethnicity					
White	4295	92.8%	284	6.6%	78.4%
Other than White	231	5.0%	6	2.6%	0.9%
Prefer Not To Say / Null	101	2.2%	24	23.8%	20.8%
<i>Total</i>	<i>4627</i>		<i>314</i>	<i>6.8%</i>	
Disability					
Disabled					n/k
Not Disabled / Unknown					n/k
<i>Total</i>					
Age					
16-19	3	0.1%	0	0.0%	0.0%
20-24	34	0.7%	1	2.9%	2.5%
25-29	22	0.5%	3	13.6%	6.6%
30-34	45	1.0%	2	4.4%	8.3%
35-39	38	0.8%	1	2.6%	11.0%
40-44	53	1.1%	2	3.8%	12.1%
45-49	18	0.4%	0	0.0%	12.5%
50-54	27	0.6%	1	3.7%	17.2%
55-59	27	0.6%	0	0.0%	15.9%
60-64	13	0.3%	1	7.7%	10.0%
65+	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3.9%
Prefer Not To Say / Null	4347	93.9%	303	7.0%	
<i>Total</i>	<i>4627</i>		<i>314</i>	<i>6.8%</i>	

Leavers

Leavers throughout the year 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 have been analysed by protected characteristic, and the findings are below. No particular concerns are raised regarding rates of leaving in any particular group.

	Resignations	227	Retirements	59	Other	113	% In Workforce
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	01/04/2022
Sex							
Female	168	74.0%	42	71.2%	83	73.5%	70.5%
Male	59	26.0%	17	28.8%	30	26.5%	29.5%
<i>Total</i>	<i>227</i>		<i>59</i>		<i>113</i>		
Ethnicity							
Other than White	6	2.6%	1	1.7%	0	0.0%	0.9%
White	130	57.3%	48	81.4%	69	61.1%	78.4%
Not known / PNTS	91	40.1%	10	16.9%	44	38.9%	20.8%
<i>Total</i>	<i>227</i>		<i>59</i>		<i>113</i>		
Disability							
Disabled	2	0.9%	1	1.7%	4	3.5%	n/k
Not Disabled / Unknown	225	99.1%	58	98.3%	109	96.5%	n/k
<i>Total</i>	<i>227</i>		<i>59</i>		<i>113</i>		
Sexual orientation							

Heterosexua l	48	21.1%	29	49.2%	26	23.0%	30.0%
Gay	0	0.0%	1	1.7%	0	0.0%	0.6%
Bisexual	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.9%	0.1%
Not known / PNTS	179	78.9%	29	49.2%	86	76.1%	69.3%
<i>Total</i>	<i>227</i>		<i>59</i>		<i>113</i>		

Religion / belief

Christian	32	14.1%	21	35.6%	16	14.2%	21.8%
None	16	7.0%	9	15.3%	7	6.2%	0.5%
Other	0	0.0%	1	1.7%	2	1.8%	0.6%
Not known / PNTS	179	78.9%	28	47.5%	88	77.9%	77.1%
<i>Total</i>	<i>227</i>		<i>59</i>		<i>113</i>		

Age

16-19	1	0.4%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%
20-24	15	6.6%	0	0.0%	3	2.7%	2.5%
25-29	24	10.6%	0	0.0%	7	6.2%	6.6%
30-34	31	13.7%	0	0.0%	8	7.1%	8.3%
35-39	35	15.4%	0	0.0%	13	11.5%	11.0%
40-44	28	12.3%	0	0.0%	7	6.2%	12.1%
45-49	32	14.1%	1	1.7%	13	11.5%	12.5%
50-54	30	13.2%	4	6.8%	18	15.9%	17.2%
55-59	22	9.7%	13	22.0%	25	22.1%	15.9%
60-64	8	3.5%	27	45.8%	10	8.8%	10.0%
65+	1	0.4%	14	23.7%	9	8.0%	3.9%

<i>Total</i>	227		59		113		
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Next steps

The Council has recently signed up to membership of Inclusive Employers, the leading membership organisation for employers who are committed to creating truly inclusive workplaces. Membership includes access to training resources and consultancy support, as well as the right to display an Inclusive Employers accreditation. HR plan to work with Inclusive Employers to set out a plan for increasing participation in declaring equality information, as well as making improvements to our learning offer for staff and managers, and reviewing relevant policies and procedures to ensure they are fit for purpose and aligned to best practice.

A number of equality network groups have existed within the Council for some time and there has been a recent exercise to review those groups, their activities and membership. Network groups exist for a number of different protected characteristics including LGBT colleagues and allies, colleagues with disabilities and a group to encourage racial and cultural inclusion and diversity. The support of the equality network groups will be crucial in explaining to the wider workforce why we need to have a better understanding of the diversity of our workforce, and how we can use that understanding to make sure everyone who works for the Council can feel a sense of belonging.

Although self-service functionality to enable staff to update their equality information was launched at the end of 2016 and several communication exercises have been undertaken to promote this, it has not resulted in significant further uptake and there are still significant gaps in the Council's knowledge of the diversity make-up of its workforce.

It is therefore recommended that further work is undertaken to encourage more staff to provide their information. The plan going forward is to make a renewed effort to encourage data sharing, by explaining why the data is needed and utilising the new technology available such as MS Forms to make it easier for employees to declare their data. HR will also review

processes such as Recruitment to encourage declaration of candidate data, and look at the reporting functionality within the payroll / HR system to facilitate easier access to the data held.

2. Some aspects of diversity, especially at senior levels, have changed little since monitoring began. Work on the new Careers Site has included highlighting case studies from several different groups with the aim of promoting Cheshire West and Chester Council as an inclusive workplace where all employees can be themselves and thrive. It is recommended that further action is undertaken with regard to recruitment, promotion and inclusivity for under-represented groups.

As above, it is anticipated that this can be addressed with the support of Inclusive Employers, including the production of a full action plan with identified measures of success.