



Northumberland County Council

Group Equality Analysis Report

Name of Group:	HR and Workforce
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PART 1 – Overview of the Group's Key Functions and Services

This equality analysis covers the Council's Corporate Human Resources (HR) function and equality issues impacting on the current and future workforce. The Council currently employs around 10,000¹ people and is the largest employer in the County. The functions and policies provided by HR therefore have a direct impact on the equality of all of its employees.

The Council's HR policies provide a framework for all the Council's services and therefore influence the culture of the organisation as a whole, its institutional character and the informal and everyday practices which give employees and users the real messages about what is valued. The role of the Council as a community leader, and as a leading influence on the Northumberland Strategic Partnership means that it operates as an example to other employers and services.

The HR function is responsible for:

- Delivering the core strategic HR service across the Council and to external organisations via Service Level Agreements.
- Embedding best practice standards of HR into line-management and specific business processes such as service planning and performance management.
- Developing and maintaining corporate HR policies, procedures, frameworks and guidelines to support frontline services and the County Council, and to provide employment related advice and guidance to managers. This includes performance management frameworks such as discipline, grievance and sickness management policies.
- Supporting the County Council to attract and retain high quality employees and promote the organisation as an employer of choice.
- Provision of an Employee Welfare Service (working closely with Occupational Health).
- Ensuring that communications between management and the trade unions on terms and conditions of employment and other staffing related matters are maintained.

¹ Employee Services, Dec 2014

- Providing the strategic framework for the pay and reward of employees, including maintenance of the Job Evaluation and Single Status Agreement, and the management of equal pay claims and associated litigation.
- Implementing a Learning & Organisational Development Strategy which helps to deliver the Council's organisational transformation; ensuring that the Council works together to build a culture that will reinforce our values and behaviours.

HR and Employee Services are also responsible for either collecting themselves, or provide guidance on how others should collect, core information about employment directly relevant to equalities. This helps the Council to understand the key equality issues in our workforce, assess our performance and take action where needed.

Staff Equality Survey

In order to inform this equality analysis, the Council undertook a survey of its employees asking for their views and opinions on a wide range of issues relating to workplace equality. Around 800 employees replied across all Council Groups. Throughout this analysis, feedback from the survey has been used where appropriate.

Employee Monitoring Form

The Council has recognised that there is a need to further improve the quality of the information it holds about the equality profile of its employees. The Council's Equality Monitoring Form and guidance for Managers is used to invite all employees, through the supervision and appraisal processes, to update their equality information in a confidential and secure way. This process is ongoing.

Employee Grievances

The Council has a system in place to analyse employee grievances by protected characteristic to identify any trends.

PART 2 – Information Analysis

1. Disability

1.1 What do we know?

Research has shown that disability is linked to poorer pay, job security, access to training and participation in decision making in the workplace². Current research around equality in the workplace for disabled people identifies differential workplace experiences for people with different types of disability. In a recent study of perceptions of disability discrimination³, disabled employees reported more overt and subtle procedural injustice in the workplace than their non-disabled counterparts, and employees with non-physical disabilities such as mental illness, reported more negative experiences than those with physical disabilities.

According to some definitions there are currently around 11 million disabled adults and 770,000 children in the UK, equivalent to 24% of the adult population and 7% of all children⁴. Around half the working-age disabled population, over 3.5 million people, are out of work resulting in a significant waste of talent and potential productivity⁵.

The Life Opportunities Survey (LOS) is a large-scale longitudinal survey of disability in Great Britain. The report for 2009/11 found the following restrictions on participation in employment:

- 56% of adults with impairments experienced restrictions in the type or amount of paid work they did, compared with 26% of adults without impairments.
- The most common enabler for improving employment opportunities for adults with impairments was modified hours or days or reduced work hours. This was identified by 22% of adults with impairments, compared with 16% of adults without impairments.

² Schur, Kruse, Blasi and Blank, 2009: 381.

³ Synder, Carmichael, Blackwell, Cleveland and Thornton, 2010: 5.

⁴ Office for National Statistics (2004) "Living in Britain: Results from the 2002 General Household Survey"

⁵ Sayce Report, 2011

- In the 2011 census 15% of adults aged 16-64 had a disability that limited work or daily living activities in the North East the highest percentage in England.

The population of disabled people includes wheelchair users, people with sensory and mobility impairments – these are an important minority of the total, but the majority of disabled people have other (often less visible) impairments.

Among adults, trends show increasing numbers of people reporting mental illness and behavioural disorders, while the number of people reporting physical impairments is decreasing.

Within the Council, where employees have elected to declare if they have a disability or not, 3.61% of employees have identified themselves as having some form of disability⁶. From this it would therefore appear that the Council has an under-representation of disabled people in its workforce. However, given the high numbers of employees who have chosen not to declare this information, this could be due to under-reporting rather than under-representation. The development of the employee disability network group may over time encourage employees to declare a disability.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission suggest that employee information of this nature be broken down by pay grade, and employment status (i.e. part time or full time).

Table 1 illustrates a breakdown of declared disability by Single Status pay band:

⁶ Employee Services, Dec 2014. Note: Only posts that have been able to be assimilated onto the new pay structure on the employee system have been included. And statistics are based on employees who have submitted Equalities data only.

Table 1 Disability Status by Pay Band and Employment Status⁷

Pay Band	% of staff who have said they have a disability	% of staff who said they had a disability who are part-time
Apprentice & Band 1	8.33	85.71
Bands 2 & 3	3.41	33.33
Bands 4 & 5	3.64	31.03
Bands 6 & 7	2.91	16.67
Bands 8 & 9	3.55	13.33
Bands 10 & 11	1.89	0.00
Band 12 and above	2.04	0.00
Other	5.88	100.00

Employee Views

A Council staff equality survey (2012) asked employees about their perceptions of equality in the workplace and the feedback was disaggregated by protected characteristic. 3.57% of the respondents indicated that they had a disability⁸. A survey has recently been conducted and the findings will be analysed to see if there is a continuing difference in the experience of staff from different protected groups.

Overall, disabled employees generally had less positive perceptions of workplace equality than non-disabled employees, although there were a number of comments from disabled employees which suggested that they felt the organisation had met their needs well. However, some of the key areas raised by disabled respondents related to: problems with physical access in some council buildings; some inconsistencies over the arrangements for time off to attend medical appointments; and the length of time it has taken some people to have workplace adjustments made.

⁷ Employee Services, Dec 2014.

⁸ Employee Services, Dec 2014

In relation to carers, 8.06% of employees who declared a caring responsibility are recorded on the employee database as being a carer of someone ill or disabled⁹.

In the staff equality survey, employees with caring responsibilities were asked about their perceptions of the Council in supporting them at work. Again, there were a number of comments made from carers about how well the organisation and individual managers had supported them in their caring role, and in particular, the flexible working arrangements were identified as being of particular benefit to carers. However, some of the more negative comments from carers were around issues such as: inconsistencies in the application of special leave; lack of knowledge of the rights of carers; and a lack of understanding from some managers about the impact of caring.

1.2 What are the key impacts on disabled people?

- The Council has decided to join the Disability Confident scheme to improve access to employment opportunities within the Council for disabled people.
- Job applicants with certain disabilities may require adjustments to be made to the application and recruitment process.
- Job descriptions and person specifications that concentrate more on process than output may inadvertently discriminate against some disabled people.
- Once in post, the provision of reasonable adjustments should mean that disabled employees get the support they need to effectively carry out their role although some employees have reported delays in getting these in place. The Council is working to address this issue and has put a new system of advice on reasonable adjustments in place where this is appropriate.
- The HR policies that the Council has in place aim to ensure all disabled employees are treated fairly and consistently across all Council Groups.
- Some disabled employees may face prejudice or negative attitudes from others around their perceived ability to perform their jobs which will impact on their experience at work. Training to address negative attitudes and unconscious bias has been introduced.
- Physical barriers to accessing some of the Council buildings will negatively impact on employees with disabilities linked to mobility or sensory impairment, and therefore consideration to things like referral to Access to Work, and offering Personal Emergency Evacuation

⁹ Employee Services, Dec 2014

Plans (PEEP) may need to be considered.

- For carers and some disabled people, the flexible working arrangements enable them to maintain their work/life balance more easily.
- The use of online recruitment systems may be a barrier to applications from some disabled people. Recruitment using paper applications is still available however.

1.3 What do we have in place?

- A commitment to joining the Disability Confident scheme to employ, keep and develop the abilities of disabled employees.
- A range of clear policies around supporting disabled employees at work.
- Flexible working arrangements which support all employees but which are noted to be of particular benefit to employees who have caring responsibilities.
- A commitment to highlighting flexible working arrangements during the advertising and recruitment process.
- Arrangement with the Supported Employment and Education Service to provide specific work opportunities in the Council for people with a learning disability.
- Arrangements to make reasonable adjustments in the workplace.
- An Occupational Health Referral system, including a psychologist and physiotherapist to support employees to return to, or maintain employment.
- Training for managers and employees to help them understand their responsibilities and to ensure that Council policies and procedures are applied consistently.
- Appraisal training for appraisers and appraisees.
- An Equality Monitoring Process for new and existing employees to help improve the Council's understanding of any equality impacts on employees.
- A staff equality survey highlighting areas of good practice and those in need of improvement as perceived by employees themselves.
- "Access to work" is used to support some disabled employees with equipment and support workers to facilitate their employment.
- Diversity information is included within the recruitment process.
- A review of access needs has been built into the appraisal process.

- Guidance is provided for job descriptions and person specifications to ensure that they concentrate on output rather than process, so that they do not inadvertently discriminate against disabled people.

1.4 What else do we need to do?

- Continue to roll out the Equality Monitoring Process to improve the Council's understanding of any equality impacts on employees.
- A joint disabled employee forum was established along with Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust to tackle some of the issues and barriers faced by disabled employees in the workplace.
- Diversity training will continue to be delivered and refresher training will be provided where necessary to ensure existing and future disabled employees get the support they need from the Council to effectively carry out their roles.
- Further work has been undertaken to ensure that the Council complies with its commitments in respect of the 'two ticks' symbol.

2. Sex

2.1 What do we know?

Research suggests that women continue to experience discrimination in the workplace¹⁰ and are frequently paid less, promoted less often and receive less training than their male colleagues¹¹. Within Northumberland, there is a relatively equal split between men and women and this is comparable with both regional and national figures as shown in Table 2:

¹⁰ Kimmel, 2009: 359.

¹¹ Antecal, Barcus and Cobb-Clark, 2009: 782.

Table 2 Gender Statistics (Census 2011)

Area	Total Population	Men	%	Women	%
Northumberland	316,000	154,100	49%	161,900	51%
North East	2,596,900	1,269,700	49%	1,327,200	51%
England	53,012,500	26,069,200	49%	26,943,300	51%

However, overall within the Council, the majority of people employed are female. Figure 1 illustrates the gender profile of the current Council workforce:

Figure 1 Gender Profile of Council Employees¹²

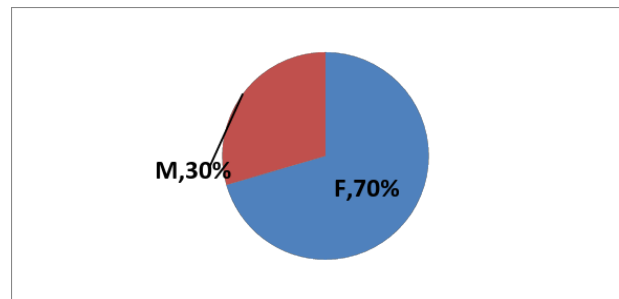


Table 3 provides more detail on the gender profile by Pay Band and also Employment Status (i.e. part time or full time):

¹² All eligible employees included regardless whether they have submitted equalities data. Employee Services, Dec 2014.

Table 3 Gender profile by Pay Band and Employment Status¹³

Pay Band	% of Women Employed	% of Men Employed	% of Women Employees who work Part-Time	% of Male Employees who work Part-Time
Apprentice & Band 1	86.99	13.01	93.56	51.09
Bands 2 & 3	76.34	23.66	91.61	29.51
Bands 4 & 5	70.80	29.20	69.84	15.81
Bands 6 & 7	55.96	44.04	38.40	11.55
Bands 8 & 9	72.44	27.56	38.89	11.48
Bands 10 & 11	66.67	33.33	11.11	6.48
Band 12 and above	59.75	40.25	6.38	2.11
Other	3.76	96.24	100.00	100.00

From Table 3 it is apparent that there is a higher proportion of women at lower pay bands than men, and at the higher pay bands, there is a smaller proportion of women and men working part time. In relation to job applicants, in April 2015 to March 2016, 56.5% of applications were from Women and 43.5% were from Men¹⁴.

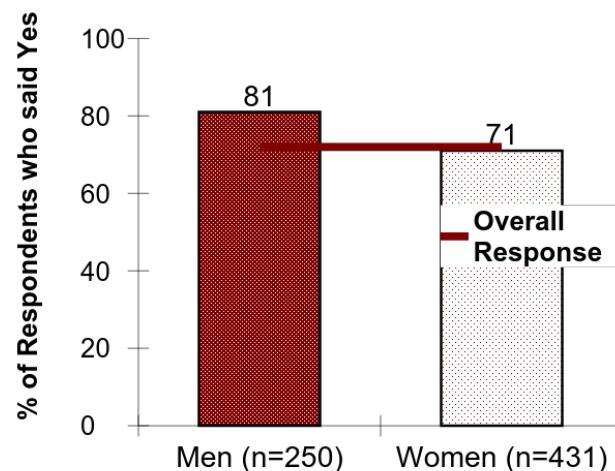
Employee Views

In the staff equality survey, employees were asked about their perceptions of gender equality in the Council. Overall, most respondents indicated that they felt that men and women do have equal opportunities as shown in Figure 2:

¹³ All eligible employees who submitted equalities data. Employee Services, Dec 2014.

¹⁴ Applications made between 1.4.14 & 30.11.14. Employee Services, Dec 2014.

Figure 2: “Do you think men and women have equal opportunities in your workplace?”



Source: Council Staff Equality Survey, 2012

A slightly lower proportion of women than men agreed with this statement and some of the comments suggested that some employees feel that a male dominated culture pervades the organisation, and that due to caring commitments, some women may miss out on employment opportunities.

However, there were also many positive comments received from both men and women about gender equality and particularly about access to flexible working arrangements.

As part of the work around implementing Single Status, the Council commissioned some equalities work around the potential impact of this on men and women, and the roles which more predominantly occupied more by one sex than another.

The outcome of this work was to conclude that in relation to the basic grading and pay structures:

- All the gender grade basic pay gaps narrow under the Northumberland County Council grading and pay structure for single status

employees, all to less than significant levels.

- The overall gender pay gap in relation to basic pay also narrows from 17.9% to 16.7%, marking a significant step towards equal pay among the employees covered by the grading and pay agreement.
- An analysis of those gaining and losing in relation to their basic pay (taking into account bonus payments) shows that there are higher proportions of female than male basic pay gainers and of male than female basic pay losers. The overall patterns are broadly reflected in the individual grades.
- The job evaluation system adopted by the Council was specifically designed for the range of 'single status' jobs and to comply with equal value principles and practices.
- Analysis of jobs proximate to grade boundaries shows that, although there are a number of grade boundaries with female-dominated jobs immediately below and male-dominated jobs above, the jobs in question are invariably accompanied by jobs of opposite gender dominance, so it would be difficult to argue that there was discriminatory impact to the positioning of the grade boundaries.
- The pay structure has scales with minimum point plus either 3 or 4 incremental points. This is consistent with recommended good practice in relation to both gender and age discrimination.
- The pay scales are discrete, in that the maximum point of each lower grade is one scale point lower than the minimum of the next higher grade. There is thus no point at which an employee on the higher grade can be paid less than an employee on the lower grade (as can occur with overlapping pay scales). This is good practice in respect of equal pay legislation.

All of the above are consistent with proposals moving towards equal pay for work of equal value and pay policies generally designed in accordance with good practice and principles.

2.2 What are the key impacts on men and women?

- Since the Council employs a much higher proportion of women than men, any changes to employment arrangements will inevitably impact more on women.
- Single status has narrowed the pay gap in relation to gender.
- Research suggests that women are more likely to have caring responsibilities outside of their employment, and this does potentially have an impact on their employment needs.
- Women are more likely to require part time work, therefore greater consideration may need to be given to advertising jobs in more flexible ways (e.g. part time and flexible working opportunities) so they are not disadvantaged.

2.3 What do we have in place?

- The Council has maternity, paternity and other 'family friendly' policies that provide support to both men and women in promoting work life balance generally, and caring responsibilities with work. The domestic violence policy supports both men and women who may be in violent relationships. The harassment policy supports all genders should they feel harassed in the workplace; and, policies such as job sharing, flexi time and leave of absence, which have been in place for many years, support carers (who tend to be women) maintain a work life balance and stay in employment.
- The Council's pay policy statement provides an outline of the way in which the Council's pay and reward policies are determined and applied across the Council. The job evaluation exercise carried out in 2011 was equality impact assessed by an independent assessor (agreed with the recognised trade unions). The evaluation scheme and its outcomes were deemed to be 'equality proofed', with the gender pay gap narrowing, thus, within the County Council, there should be no evidence that women are paid less than men for work of equal value. The EIA determined that there were 'no significant issues'.
- With regard to training opportunities, work in the Learning and Organisational Development section is ongoing to improve the information the Council has available to put in place any necessary strategies to ensure that women are not disadvantaged in comparison to men.

2.4 What else do we need to do?

We need to ensure that the detailed equality work carried out in 2011 is used to best effect. The EIA determined that pay issues should be monitored and a further equal pay audit is scheduled in 2015. Between now and then, Employee Services will ensure that systems are in place to record things such as starting salaries and incremental progression, and, the HR service will ensure that all jobs are properly evaluated under the Council's job evaluation scheme.

3. Race

3.1 What do we know? Research evidence suggests that racial discrimination is a persistent cause of inequality in the workplace for black and minority ethnic (BME) groups of people¹⁵, and can come in many guises with negative consequences for both the individual and the organisation¹⁶. These consequences include impaired emotional and physical well being, higher rates of absenteeism, and other withdrawal behaviours¹⁷.

Studies have shown that workers from BME groups spend more time looking for work, experience less stable employment, and have fewer opportunities for advancement than their white counterparts¹⁸, and are more likely to experience workplace bullying¹⁹. Consistent with the demographical profile of Northumberland as a whole, the majority of Council employees are identified as 'White British' – 96.25%²⁰. Table 4 breaks this down into ethnic group:

¹⁵ Hirsh and Lyons, 2010: 269.

¹⁶ Mistry and Latoo, 2009: 20.

¹⁷ Deitch, Barsky, Butz, Chan, Brief and Bradley, 2003: 1317.

¹⁸ Pager and Shepherd, 2008: 188.

¹⁹ Lewis and Gunn, 2007: 660.

²⁰ Employee Services, Dec 2014

Table 4 Ethnic Profile of Council Employees²¹	
Ethnicity	% of Employees
Prefer not to say	1.92
WHITE	
English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	96.25
Irish	0.32
Traveller	0.09
Any other White background	0.41
MIXED/MULTIPLE ETHNIC GROUPS	
White and Asian	0.09
White and Black African	0.14
White and Black Caribbean	0.09
Any other mixed/multiple ethnic background	0.09
BLACK/AFRICAN/CARIBBEAN/BLACK BRITISH	
African	0.05
Black or Black British - Caribbean	0.00
ASIAN/ASIAN BRITISH	
Bangladeshi	0.05
Indian	0.23
Pakistani	0.09
Any other Asian background	0.05
CHINESE	
Chinese or Chinese British	0.14

In terms of part time or full time status, of those who have declared their ethnicity, 48.6% of BME employees are part time, as compared to 53.83% of employees who identified as 'White British'.⁶ In relation to Pay Band, Table 5 gives a breakdown of the percentage of employees who have declared their ethnicity who are not identified as 'White British':

²¹ Employee Services, Dec 2014

Table 5 Race profile by Pay Band²²

Pay Band	% of Employees who are not identified as 'White British'
Apprentice and Band 1	1.19
Bands 2 and 3	1.89
Bands 4 and 5	0.88
Bands 6 and 7	2.18
Bands 8 and 9	3.07
Bands 10 and 11	0.94
Bands 12 and above	6.12
Other	1.96

²² Employee Services, Dec 2014

In relation to new applicants, the race profile of new applicants is given in Table 6²³:

Table 6 Race profile of New Applicants (April to December 2014) Racial Group	% of Applicants
White - English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British	87.43
White - Irish	0.26
White - Any Other White Background	1.46
White - Gypsy / Roma Traveller	0.08
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	0.08
Mixed - White and Black African	0.28
Mixed - White and Asian	0.14
Mixed - Other Mixed / multiple ethnic background	0.16
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0.36
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0.40
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	0.36
Asian or Asian British - Other Asian background	0.16
Asian or Asian British - Chinese	0.12
Black / African / Caribbean / Black British - Caribbean	0.12
Black / African / Caribbean / Black British - African	0.59
Black / African / Caribbean / Black British - Any Other background	0.10
Other Ethnic Group - Any other ethnic group	0.20
Prefer Not to Say	7.68

²³ Employee Services, Dec 2014

Employee Views

In the staff equality survey, respondents were asked whether or not they felt they had ever been treated less well because of their ethnicity. 2% of the small number of black and minority ethnic employees who responded to this question felt that they had been.

3.2 What are the key impacts on people from different racial groups?

- Job applicants educated outside of the UK may not have commonly recognised qualifications and unless job adverts are worded correctly to ensure equivalent qualifications are accepted, the advert may act as a barrier to people applying for jobs.

3.3 What do we have in place?

- Our HR policies and E&D policy include specific reference to delivering race equality.
- Our staff training includes specific reference to race equality.
- Equalities monitoring takes place at recruitment stage and the Council's Recruitment Code of Practice provides advice and guidance on all aspects of the recruitment process, including how to draw up person specifications (to ensure, for example, that where possible candidates who have English as a second language are not discouraged from applying for jobs), the gender and racial mix on recruitment panels, and advice on genuine occupational qualifications.
- The Council has a clear policy on checking all prospective employees' right to work in the UK (which is a statutory requirement).

3.4 What else do we need to do?

- Continue to increase the number of employees who have declared their ethnicity through the Employee Monitoring Form process.
- Review the way in which jobs are advertised to see if there are any further opportunities to encourage applications from underrepresented groups.

4. Sexual Orientation

4.1 What do we know?

Research undertaken by Stonewall, one of the leading charities for LGB equality found that many LGB public and private sector employees

find it difficult to fully be themselves in the workplace which then impacts on their efficiency, relationships with colleagues, and their confidence and motivation²⁴. In addition, particular problems with being 'out at work' arise in public services that involve manual labour or operate in male dominated environments²⁵.

Whilst homophobia is arguably decreasing, many lesbians, gay men and bisexuals hide their sexual orientation out of fear of harassment²⁶.

Black and minority ethnic LGB employees sometimes feel they have to choose whether to identify with their ethnicity or sexual orientation, rather than both. They may face racism from other LGB people or homophobia from people from the same cultural or ethnic background.

Although the Council does now ask new and existing employees about their sexual orientation, there are quite high numbers of employees who have chosen not to declare this. Of those who have declared their sexual orientation, 1.10% indicated that they are lesbian, gay or bisexual²⁷.

Sexual Orientation by Employee and declared:

Sexual Orientation	Sum of Employee Count	% of employees who submitted data	% of employees regardless if submitted data
Bisexual	7	0.16	0.08
Gay or Lesbian	31	0.72	0.34
Heterosexual or Straight	3754	87.67	41.25
No Info	4819	N/A	52.95
Other	5	0.12	0.05
Prefer not to say	485	11.33	5.33

²⁴ Guasp and Balfour, 2008.

²⁵ Colgan, Wright, Creagan and McKearney, 2009: 287.

²⁶ Metcalf and Rolfe, 2011: 1.

²⁷ Employee Services, Dec 2014

Summary of Job Applications between 1.4.15 and 31.3.16:

Sexual orientation	Appoint ed	Did Not Attend	Reject ed	Submitt ed	Withdra wn	Grand Total
Bisexual			20	5		25
Gay or Lesbian	1		60	18	1	80
Heterosexual or straight	96	13	3126	974	109	4318
No Answer Given	14	2	246	110	11	383
Other	1		16	2	1	20
Prefer not to say	5		86	16	6	113
Grand Total	117	15	3554	1125	128	4939

Employee Views

In the 2011 Equality and Diversity Council Staff Survey, 55% of non LGB employees felt that LGB employees would feel comfortable being 'out' in the workplace, but only 47% of LGB employees felt this way. Comments from respondents suggested that whilst in some areas, LGB employees would experience no barriers or problems related to the sexual orientation, in others, there are still some people who hold homophobic views, and also evidence that some people may not understand the impact for LGB employees not being able to be 'out' has on their daily lives.

4.2 What are the key impacts on people of different sexual orientations?

- There is evidence to suggest that LGB employees who feel comfortable about being out at work about their sexual orientation, perform better at work and have a better work experience.
- Homophobic attitudes can negatively impact on the health and well being of LGB employees and also impact on business productivity.

4.3 What do we have in place?

- The Council has established a joint LGBT employees network group with Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust to help work

towards improving workplace experience for LGBT people.

- The Council is a Stonewall Diversity Champion and took part in the Stonewall workplace equality index for the first time in 2011. In the 2015 survey The Council was ranked 19th in the index of the Top 100 employers and 4th within local government employers. The Council is continuing to work with Stonewall in identifying areas for improvement.
- An LGBT Champion who acts as a source of advice and guidance.
- The LGBT employees group developed a 'Coming out at work' guide to support LGB employees and guidance for managers.
- The Council and Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust hosted a joint stall at the Northern Pride event to raise the profile of the organisations and to demonstrate their commitment to LGBT equality.
- The HR policies and E&D Policy make a specific commitment to LGBT equality, and LGB employees with dependents have the same rights under employment policies as other employees.
- Staff training includes specific reference to LGBT equality.
- Policies around entitlement to leave make reference to same sex partners.
- We have clear procedures for dealing with bullying in the workplace on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.

4.4 What else do we need to do?

- Continue to support the LGBT staff network.
- Use the results of the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index to identify further areas for improvement and development.
- Develop a guide for Managers on supporting LGBT people who want to come out in the workplace.
- Continue to improve the equality information we hold about employees through the Equality Monitoring Form process.

5. Age

5.1 What do we know?

Increasing recognition of the impact and challenges of an ageing population on society and the labour market has now resulted in a range of

national initiatives focused around age and employment²⁸. There is widespread evidence that older workers, in particular, face age discrimination at work²⁹ and that they are misunderstood, ignored and vulnerable to the effects of age-related stereotyping³⁰. Although it is recognised that age discrimination can be of detriment to people of any age, studies have shown that attitudes are generally more negative towards older workers than younger workers³¹.

However, a recent DWP report on attitudes to age in Britain³², found that 36% of people report age discrimination as “very serious” – and younger people report it as more serious than older people.

The shift in the age balance of the population covered by the Council is part of a broader national and international pattern. However, there are a higher proportion of people aged over 65 in our local population as compared with the regional and national picture. Table 7 presents a profile of Northumberland’s population based on age.

Table 7 Population Age Statistics (Census 2011)

Area	Total Population	0-14 (yrs) %	15-64 (yrs) %	65+ (yrs) %
Northumberland	316,000	15.8	64.1	20
North East	2,596,900	16.6	66.1	17.3
England	53,012,500	17.7	66	16.3

The overall age profile of those employed within the Council is illustrated in Figure 3:

²⁸ Ross, 2010: 169.

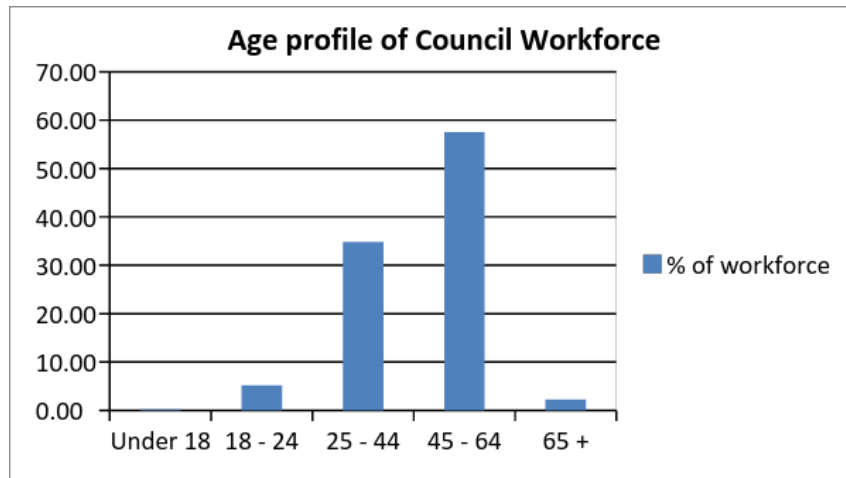
²⁹ Redman and Snape, 2006: 167.

³⁰ Loretto, Vickerstaff and White, 2007

³¹ Kite, Stockdale, Whitley and Johnson, 2005: 241; Shore, Chung-Herrera, Dean, Holcombe Ehrhart, Jung, Randel and Singh, 2009: 117.

³² DWP, Attitudes to age in Britain 2010/11

Figure 3 Age Profile of the Council Workforce³³



The age profile broken down by Pay Band and Employment Status is given in Table 8:

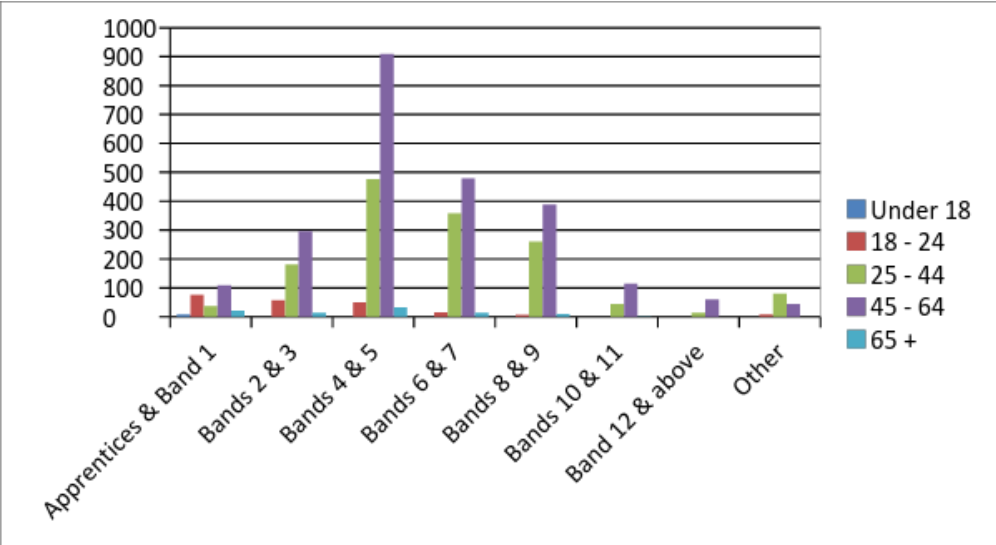
Table 8 Age profile by Pay Band and Employment Status³⁴

	Under 18	18 - 24	25 - 44	45 - 64	65 +
Apprentices & Band 1	8	76	38	109	21
Bands 2 & 3		58	181	297	14
Bands 4 & 5		50	476	909	33
Bands 6 & 7		16	359	479	14
Bands 8 & 9		7	261	388	10
Bands 10 & 11			45	115	1
Band 12 & above			14	60	
Other		8	80	45	

³³ Employee Services, Dec 2014

³⁴ Employee Services, Dec 2014

Figure 4 - Workforce Age by Pay Band³⁵



³⁵ Employee Services, Dec 2014

Employee Views

From the staff equality survey, most respondents said that they didn't feel that people in their age group were disadvantaged in the workplace. However, some comments from younger respondents suggested that some felt that they were sometimes overlooked and not listened to. Comments from older employees suggested that some felt that their skills and experience were sometimes not valued, and some concerns about the impact of Single Status and the impact on pensions.

5.2 What are the key impacts on people of different ages?

- Employees of any age can be subject to ageist prejudice from others, however younger and older employees are more likely to be affected.
- Some older people applying for jobs may not have commonly recognised qualifications and therefore if job adverts are not carefully worded to include recognition of equivalent qualifications, this could act as a barrier to employment.
- During recent rounds of voluntary redundancy, older people are particularly more likely to take up this option although it is offered to people of all ages.
- There are some physically demanding jobs within the Council which, for some people, may become more difficult to manage as they get older.
- Disability increases significantly with age and this may have implications on the support required at work.

5.3 What do we have in place?

- The Council no longer operates a 'normal' retirement age, but support is provided to prepare those who are planning to retire for this.
- The Learning and Organisational Development section provides equalities training which includes training and education on the elimination of discrimination on the grounds of age.
- The Council is taking a leading role with a nationally supported project promoting "Ageing Well in Northumberland". This project is led by a Councillor acting as Older People's Champion. Ageing Well in Northumberland potentially has an important impact on the relations between older people and others in the population as it explicitly encourages an "asset based" approach – which emphasises the personal,

physical and financial resources of older people and their communities and which aims to consider the opportunities presented by an ageing population, as well as ensuring that mental and physical needs are effectively addressed. The project also aims to make ageing well an issue for the whole council, indeed the whole community. The activities which give quality of life to older people and promote their mental and physical well-being are often those which are available to the community as a whole, rather than those which are provided specifically by health and social care agencies.

- Apprenticeship Scheme targeted at young people.

5.4 What else do we need to do?

- Continue to monitor the workplace experience of employees of all ages.

6. Religion or Belief

6.1 What do we know?

Within the workplace, research has found that many of the issues raised around religion or belief tend to be operationally focussed and relate to the terms and conditions of work that make the observance of religious practices impossible³⁶. In addition, research has found a link between poorer workplace experience and religious attire. People wearing religious attire such as the hijab (head scarf worn by some Muslim women), for example, can become targets of stigmatization due to the negative stereotypes associated with their religion³⁷ resulting in poorer employment opportunities and lower personal expectations of employment. There is also evidence to suggest that people with particular religious affiliations or beliefs, in particular Muslims, have higher rates of unemployment and are less likely to be represented in more senior positions³⁸ in the workplace.

A high proportion of employees have not declared their religion or belief, however, Table 9 gives a breakdown of this for those employees who

³⁶ Denvir, Broughton, Gifford and Hill, 2007: 3; and Dickens, Mitchell and Creegan, 2009: 19.

³⁷ Ghuman and Jackson, 2010: 6.

³⁸ Weller, 2011: 14.

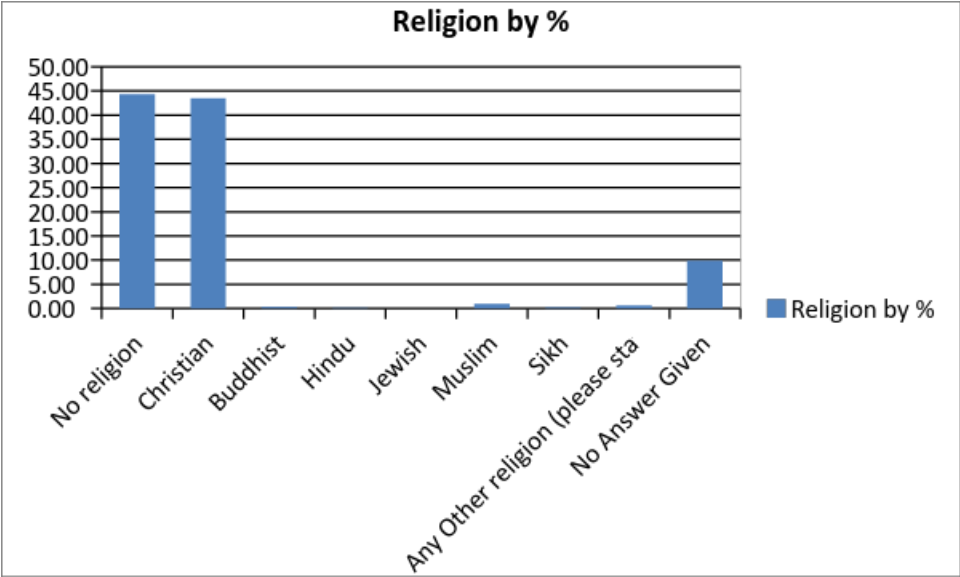
have.

Table 9 Religion/Belief of employees who have declared this as compared with Northumberland Population.

Religion	% of Employees (% based on number of staff who declared a religion)	% Northumberland Population (from Census 2011)
Christian	63.45	68.60
No Religion	27.63	23.90
Other	1.60	0.30
Buddhist	0.27	0.20
Muslim	0.27	0.30
Hindu	0.09	0.10
Sikh	0.27	0.20
Prefer not to say	6.40	6.40

In relation to new applicants, Figure 5 illustrates the profile relating to applicant's religion and beliefs:

Figure 5 Religion/Belief Profile of New Applicants³⁹



³⁹ Employee Services, Dec 2014

Employee Views

In the staff equality survey, most employees indicated that they did not experience any particular issues relating to their religion or beliefs. However, a small number expressed reservations about talking openly about their beliefs.

6.2 What are the key impacts on people with different religions and beliefs?

- People with particular religions or beliefs may wish to take time out during the day for religious observance or have particular requirements to take leave around particular religious festivals or events (e.g. Easter, Eid etc.).
- Employees with certain beliefs may have objections to carrying out certain tasks (e.g. handling alcohol, carrying out civil ceremonies etc.) which may need to be managed by the organisation.
- Employees with certain beliefs may have particular requirements around food preparation and storage.
- Employees working in certain roles (e.g. catering staff) may have particular training needs around the preparation and handling of food for people of different religions and beliefs.

6.3 What do we have in place?

- HR policies and E&D Policy make specific reference to Religion and Belief equality.
- Staff training makes specific reference to Religion and Belief equality.
- Flexible working arrangements are in place to support employees who make need time off to practice their religion.

6.4 What else do we need to do?

- Continue to improve the information we hold about employees religion and beliefs through the Equality Monitoring Form process.
- Review if there are any groups of employees with specific training needs around religion and belief.

7. Transgender

7.1 What do we know?

The number of transgender people is not accurately known. Because of the social stigma attached to this, arising from a widespread lack of awareness of the true nature of the condition, it is something that is often kept hidden.

Therefore it is only possible to collect statistics on the numbers of declared transsexuals and such figures undoubtedly represent only a proportion of those affected. The Council does not currently record this information.

7.2 What are the key impacts on transpeople?

- Confidentiality around someone's transgender status is important. Whether someone wishes other people to know about their status may change over time, particularly if the person is in transition.
- Gender Reassignment can have major implications for mental health, with trans people more likely to experience depression and attempt suicide.

7.3 What do we have in place?

- HR policies and E&D policy include specific reference to trans equality.
- Staff training makes specific reference to trans equality.
- As an employer, the Council has a duty to protect an individual's right to privacy. In particular, where a person holds a gender recognition certificate, they will be treated according to their acquired gender and their status will not be disclosed, unless the employee has explicitly consented to disclosure. Pre-employment checks will be carried out in accordance with the relevant legislation whilst taking into account the above.
- An LGBT Champion who acts as a source of advice and guidance.

- A specific policy is in place relating to transgender and transsexual employees. This should enable employees to feel comfortable in knowing that the Council has guidance to ensure that transsexual and transgender employees are treated fairly and sensitively.

7.4 What else do we need to do?

- Continue to support the LGBT staff network.
- Consideration of the adoption of a specific policy relating to transgender and transsexual employees. Employees should feel comfortable in knowing that the Council has guidance in place to ensure that transsexual and transgender employees are treated fairly and sensitively.

8. Pregnancy and Maternity

8.1 What do we know?

The Council's return to work rate is high, the majority of women who take maternity leave return to their former job following their leave period.

8.2 What are the key impacts around pregnancy and maternity?

- During maternity leave, pregnant women need to be kept up to date and informed about any key work developments that may impact on them.
- Women with young children who have returned to work who are still breastfeeding may have particular requirements around milk expression and storage.
- Ensuring appropriate childcare arrangements are in place is a key issue for those people with children.

8.3 What do we have in place?

- There are some very specific policies relating to pregnancy and maternity e.g. maternity leave provisions, a childcare voucher scheme, various time off provisions, and so on, which go above and beyond what is required by legislation. The Council also has a very generous adoption leave policy and other family friendly policies such as maternity support leave for those (men and women) supporting women at or around the time of childbirth. An action from the Equality Action Plan revised the grievance recording database to ensure pregnancy and maternity related grievances can be recorded separately.
- Flexible working arrangements are in place which can support people who have childcare responsibilities.

8.4 What else do we need to do?

- Review the Council's HR policies in respect of adoption, paternity and maternity to identify changes required by recent legislative changes such as Shared Parental Leave.

9. Marriage and Civil Partnership

The Equality Act protects employees who are married or in a civil partnership against discrimination but does not provide protection against discrimination because of marriage or civil partnership in the provision of services and is not covered by the Public Sector Equality Duty.

The marriage and civil partnership protections ensure that someone is protected from discrimination at work (or in training for work) because they are married or in a civil partnership.

The provisional number of civil partnerships in the UK in 2010 was 6,385, an increase of 1.7 per cent since 2009 (Office for National Statistics, 2011). Northumberland had one of the highest numbers of civil partnership formations in the North East in 2010 (Office for National Statistics, 2011).

Of the current workforce, of those who were willing to declare their marital status, 56.5% of the total number of employees indicated that they were married⁴⁰. It is not clear what proportion of these people are in a civil partnership as this has only recently been recorded.

In terms of new applicants, during April to December 2014, 36.6% indicated they were married and 0.20% indicated they were in a civil partnership⁴¹.

Marriage and civil partnership equality issues are covered within HR policies.

⁴⁰ Employee Services, Dec 2014

⁴¹ Employee Services, Dec 2014

Addressing the data gaps

The equality analysis has identified a number of areas where consideration of strengthening or reviewing data could be made. In particular, the Council needs to focus on improving the quality of the equality profile of our employees through rolling out the Equality Monitoring Form process.

The Council also needs to continue to monitor the workplace experience of its employees.

Key equality issues

Priority equality objectives for HR and Workforce

It is clear from this equality analysis that the HR function has a number of potential impacts, positive and negative, on all of the protected equality groups both specifically and collectively.

In particular, the analysis has identified the need to improve the quality of information about employees in relation to their protected characteristics so that the Council can get a better understanding of how effectively it is delivering on equality.

The staff equality survey identified a number of specific issues for disabled employees and for carers, and the need to ensure that disability equality is being achieved and that managers and other employees are aware of their responsibilities around this.

The staff equality survey also identified some specific gaps in knowledge around issues such as knowing how to raise an equality related concern, and so a focus on staff training and communication should help to address this.