



Northumberland
County Council

Workforce Equality Analysis Report 2024

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Foreword

Welcome to our Workforce Equality Report 2024. This report details how we are working towards meeting our general and specific duties as defined in the Public Sector Equality Duty, covering the period 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024, and provides us with a great opportunity to demonstrate the diversity of our workforce and how we continue to engage with them to ensure all voices are heard.

Northumberland County Council is proud to support Diversity, Equity and Inclusion across its workforce, recognising that the breadth of personal knowledge and experience that each staff member brings to the organisation can ensure that we are an organisation that ensures that its Workforce feels that they belong and are valued.

During 2023 we adopted BEST, the council's new way of working which enables us to give our residents the best experiences through our services whilst also opening opportunities and broadening experience for our staff. BEST allows us as an organisation to become more financially efficient and allows our workforce to bring forward ideas to workstreams and open up conversations to ensure we are all working together.

Our Workforce Equality Report re-affirms where our strengths truly lie as an organisation: within our people. We continue to seek the opinions of our workforce with their feedback continuing to inform our approach for the forthcoming year and help us develop further as an organisation.

This report outlines some key data insights, which allow us to better understand our workforce, and we remain fully committed to fostering a culture of diversity, equity & equality and inclusion within the organisation.



Sarah Farrell - Director of People and Culture

Introduction

Under the Equality Act 2010 (Public Sector Equality Duty) Northumberland County Council as a public body is required to publish equality information annually, and to report on progress with achieving our equality objectives. As part of this duty, we collect and publish information about our workforce and the actions we are taking as an employer to meet our equality objectives. These objectives are:

- Strengthen our knowledge and understanding of the needs of our communities.
- Listen to, involve, and respond to our communities effectively.
- Improve the diversity and skills of our workforce to help us embed equality, diversity and inclusion in how we deliver services and support our staff.
- Create a positive culture, with a clear leadership commitment to improving equality diversity and inclusion both within the council, with our partners and the wider community.

While we are required to publish this information, we welcome the opportunity to reflect upon the valuable work completed throughout the year that has enabled us to progress diversity, equality, equity and inclusion within our organisation.

Moreover, we take this opportunity to assess where we are now and commit to clear actions that we can take, allowing us to become even stronger as an employer.

To support this aim, we have moved from Equality, Diversity and Inclusion to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion to reflect that our organisation recognises and embraces diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences, the first step toward cultivating equity and inclusion. By leading with diversity, we acknowledge the immense value a varied workforce brings regarding innovation and creativity.

Moving from Equality to Equity is also an important change. While equality ensures equal treatment, equity strives for equal outcomes by addressing individual needs and circumstances.

We have formed a new, dedicated team to help identify and lead on change across our services to ensure that Diversity, Equity and Inclusion is embraced across our workforce.

The Council's organisational values outline our commitment to Northumberland's residents and communities. Key to the successful delivery of these values is our workforce, which is why it is extremely important that employees are engaged, heard, and valued at work. We are wholly committed to ensuring that we do not discriminate or otherwise treat unfairly any individual on the grounds of:

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

This report provides an overview of the Council’s performance in relation to equality and employment through the lens of the protected characteristics (Equality Act 2010). It also provides an insight into the work, initiatives and partnerships around diversity, equity and inclusion across the workforce and within our communities.



About Northumberland

Northumberland is England's northernmost county, bordering Cumbria to the west, County Durham and Tyne and Wear to the south and Scotland to the north. Berwick upon Tweed in the far north of the County lies approximately 2 miles from the Scottish border, and much of the county lies further north than the southernmost Scottish border.

From ancient castles and stunning landscapes, picturesque coastal and market towns, Northumberland is a diverse county. Our economy boasts a growing, internationally recognised offshore and renewable energy hub delivering clean and green growth.

The county is the largest unitary authority by geographic coverage with the greatest area of Green Belt of any Local Planning Authority. With an area of 5,013 km² and a population of 321,558¹, Northumberland is the least densely populated of the North-East region's 12 local authority areas and the sixth most sparsely populated in England. The different parts of the county have distinct characteristics, from urban to rural, coastal to upland and well-connected to remote.

The south-east of the county is the most densely populated, with the three largest towns, Blyth, Cramlington and Ashington. These act as main employment centres, drawing from a wider area than just south-east Northumberland. Beyond the south-east, the county's main settlements are located along the Tyne Valley corridor and along the coast.

Morpeth, Hexham, Prudhoe, Berwick and Alnwick are the main market towns, all of which have significant rural hinterlands. Almost 97% of the county's land area is classed as rural, with just under half of the population living in this area and over half of the population living in 3% of the land area, mainly in the south-east of the county.

Statistics provided by the Office for National Statistics show that Northumberland's population grew at a relatively slow rate in the last decade, with an overall population percentage increase of 0.4% (compared to 6.5% across England). One of the challenges faced by the Council is Northumberland's ageing population.

At the last Census² over a quarter of Northumberland's population (25.4%) were aged 65 or over, with an average life expectancy of 81 years. This is an increase 5.37% over the last 10 years, with a further 15.8% aged between 55 and 64. Northumberland County Council appreciates and recognises that this growth in ageing population will cause an increase in demand for social care for older people.

¹ mid-2021 population figures published by the ONS

² Census 2021

Conversely, Northumberland's population for those aged 15 and under is 16.1%, a slight reduction of 0.94% compared to the Census 2011 data.

There is a strong reliance on the public sector for employment within Northumberland, with almost one in three people working in the various sub-sectors of health and social work, education and public administration. With 5200 employees (and roughly the same number again employed within schools), Northumberland County Council is one of the largest employers in the county. Our average annual staff turnover rate stands at approximately 10.89% which compares well to the national average of 16.8%.

Our Priorities, Values & Equality Objectives

Our Priorities

The Council's updated Corporate Plan was launched in 2023. This Plan, running from 2023 to 2026, sets out what the Council, both Members and staff, will do, working with partners and communities to deliver on our Vision and Priorities for all of Northumberland's residents in the coming years.

It outlines how we will ensure we are a Best Value Council, delivering value for money services to residents, businesses, and visitors to the county. Building upon achievements from the previous Corporate Plan this plan shapes how we deliver all services and functions, ensuring service plans and staff appraisals are clear on how they will contribute to achieving our Vision and Priorities.

We want to ensure that the county continues to be a land of great opportunities for current and future generations. To achieve this, Members and Council staff are focused on working together to deliver our three Corporate Priorities

1. **Achieving Value for Money** - operating efficiently and effectively
2. **Tackling Inequalities** - supporting everybody to live their best lives
3. **Driving Economic Growth** - enabling prosperity across the county

Our priorities are interlinked, and all of our actions support the delivery of our vision to be a Land of Great Opportunities. Our actions focus on what we can do as a local authority but, in all of our work we work in partnership with other organisations and within a local, regional and national context. Our measures reflect both things that we can do as a Council and those things we need to work in partnership to achieve.

Our Values

We recognise that how we deliver is as important as what we deliver, and this is the key to our success. Our Northumberland team, officers and members, have developed a set of shared values that will underpin everything we do. It will guide the decisions we make, the way we work with each other and the difference we make in our communities.

- **People First** - We provide services to our people (residents, colleagues, members, partners, visitors and businesses) through lasting, genuine, relationships that make a positive difference to their lives and their communities. We listen and understand our people's needs and put them at the heart of our decision making.
- **Respect** - We are committed to building a trusting, caring and supportive environment for all our colleagues and communities. That means we are there for each other, act with empathy, value differences and encourage others to

express themselves in order to collectively achieve our common goals. We treat others as they would wish to be treated

- **Excellence** - We strive for the highest quality delivery of our services. This means being accountable for our actions and delivering on our commitments. We share and celebrate what works, are open and learn from what doesn't and take pride in continually improving.
- **Resilience** - We have robust controls, practices and support in place to protect our residents, our colleagues and our communities and empower them to thrive and live well. We are committed to acting sustainably in order to drive the right impact, over the long term, whilst ensuring best value for money

These values are the standards by which we will hold ourselves and each other to account. They are our promise to our residents.

Our Equality Objectives

As part of our duty under the Equality Act 2010, the council publishes equality objectives every four years. These set out our equality priorities as an employer and for our services. Our aim is to make diversity, equity and inclusion part of the way the council works, placing it at the heart of everything we do.

Our Equality Objectives for 2021-2025 are:

1. Strengthen our knowledge and understanding of the needs of our communities.
2. Listen to, involve and respond to our communities effectively.
3. Improve the diversity and skills of our workforce to help us embed equality, diversity and inclusion in how we deliver services and support our staff.
4. Create a positive culture, with a clear leadership commitment to improving equality diversity and inclusion both within the council, with our partners and the wider community.

Our Policies

As an equal opportunity employer, we welcome employees of all backgrounds, appreciating the benefits of being able to tap into a range of skills and ideas. Different people bring different perspectives, ideas and abilities. By employing a diverse workforce, the Council can be progressive, solve problems and innovate.

In addition, we have a statutory duty under the Equality Act to recognise the needs of our employees in relation to the nine protected characteristics. We have a responsibility to prevent discrimination and ultimately our aim is to improve the chances, experiences and daily lives of people who work for us or who access our services.

Whilst we acknowledge our duties and responsibilities under the Equality Act, we have ambition to go beyond the legislation, we want to positively celebrate diversity and we aspire to establish a reputation as a truly inclusive employer and a brand which incorporates our values. If we get it right for the most vulnerable members of our workforce, we get it right for everyone.

To support this, we regularly review our HR policies to ensure that they are up to date, relevant and reflective of best practice. We regularly conduct Equality Impact Assessments where a change is to be made to ensure that our policies are fair and equitable to all and free of discrimination. We have worked closely with our staff network groups in the development of new and existing policies to ensure that the voices and views of those groups are heard. We are changing how our policies are set out to make them clearer, simpler and more accessible, ensuring that they are available in formats which are accessible and meet the diverse needs of our employees.

We have a range of HR policies which underpin our commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion across the organisation, and we have several policies which help to promote equality and inclusivity across the organisation and remove barriers to success. They include Agile Working, Breastfeeding Policy, Carers in Work, Dignity at Work, Domestic Abuse Policy, Equality and Diversity in Employment, Family Leave Policy, Flexible Working Policy, Health & Wellbeing Policy, Learning and Development, Psychological Wellbeing at Work, and Trans-Inclusion.

Highlights and Achievements

Staff Networks

Northumberland County Council is proud to support Diversity, Equity and Inclusion across its workforce, recognising that the breadth of personal knowledge and experience that each staff member brings to the organisation can ensure that we are an organisation that ensure that its Workforce feels that they belong and are valued.

To provide a route for staff members to contribute to discussions Staff Networks have been established, adding value to the experience of staff at Northumberland County Council, and it is evident that our current level of investment in the Networks is both valued by our Workforce and exceeds what other local authorities offer its staff.

The Council currently supports eight Staff networks, with the potential for more to be developed. They are:

- Armed Forces Network – Northumberland holds the Gold Standard Award for the Armed Forces Covenant Employer Recognition Scheme
- Autistic Spectrum Disorder Network (incorporating Neurodiversity)
- Carers Network
- Enable Disability – Northumberland is certified as Disability Confident Committed
- Menopause Network – Northumberland has signed the Menopause Workplace Pledge
- Mental Wellbeing Network
- Pride Network
- Race Equality Staff Network

The various Network Groups were formed in response to feedback received through our employee surveys; they are run by staff, for staff and provide opportunities for peer networking, mutual support and staff development, whilst also

- contributing to the council's inclusive culture to support our staff to be the best they can be
- demonstrating the council values and celebrating the contribution of staff to our success.
- helping us to meet our commitment to go beyond the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

Each of the network groups welcomes and encourages membership of all staff from across the council and has a named Director as sponsor who champions the network at senior level, thereby ensuring that equality and diversity are always at the

forefront of senior leadership thinking and ensuring that the values of the Council and the views of our staff are aligned.

To ensure the success of the Networks, the Council recognised that it was important to invest in support their coordination.

- Our Staff Engagement Assistant provides full time, dedicated, overarching holistic support to all networks, working closely with the Chairs & Champions, and is involved in the planning, preparation, and delivery of each of the networks whilst also being an active member and former chair of the Carers group and supporting the Network Champions in their roles.
- A dedicated HR Officer supports and provides guidance in network meetings
- A Communications Assistant attends all network groups to promote the networks, events, and campaigns and maintains the dedicated SharePoint site.
- Our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Lead provides overarching strategic and management support for the Networks, working closely with both the Chairs of the groups, and the Network Champions.
- Our Business Admin Team Support attends each of the network meetings to record any key comments and actions.

The council's Staff Network Groups continue to go from strength to strength and remain a driving force behind our commitment to create a workplace environment which promotes diversity, equity and inclusion for all.

Our Staff Network Groups also act as an important barometer and critical friend to measure how well we are meeting our commitments. We consider it important that each Network Group can arrange events that will benefit staff and a dedicated budget has been allocated to support the delivery of identified initiatives to promote the work of the Network whilst also providing additional opportunities for staff to take part.

This budget has enabled groups to hold events, and drop-ins including the Menopause Latte Lounge, the Mental Wellbeing Group and the Carers Cuppa Catch Up, held across a range of Council sites, reaching staff members who would not otherwise be able to attend. As well as the drop-ins, other events that have been successfully supported through use of the budget are:

Time to Talk Day (2 February 2023)

The Mental Wellbeing Network hosted a special 'Time to Talk' virtual session for members and staff across the council, to get everyone thinking about mental health and how we check-in with ourselves and others. The Health & Wellbeing team also provided an additional special edition Calm Space session to mark the day.

Race Equality Week (6 - 12 February 2023)

We celebrated the Race Equality Network receiving Bronze Trailblazer status from Race Equality Matters. This was promoted internally and externally via press releases. We also asked staff and councillors to the BIG Promise.

International Women's Day (8 March 2023)

We celebrated this important day by inviting colleagues and members to a drop-in event at County Hall on Wednesday 8 March.

World Autism Acceptance Week (27 March - 2 April 2023)

Co-chairs of the ASD Network, Jemma and Lyndsey, told their diagnosis stories to mark Autism Acceptance Week.

Mental Health Awareness Week (15th May - 21st May 2023)

Gary's story | Mental Health Awareness - Gary, valued member of our Mental Wellbeing Staff Network Group, shared his journey of living with anxiety to help others feel understood.

Carers Week (5 - 11 June 2023)

Our Carers Staff Network co-chair, Michelle shared her 'Preparing for Holiday' story to mark Carers' Week.

Black History Month (1 - 31 October 2023)

Organised by the Race Equality & Allies Staff Network, with support from the Race Equality Action Group, events were organised with the aim to celebrate and appreciate culture, heritage, and authenticity. This included Tasters from the Caribbean and Africa, where free meal prep kits and ingredients were provided to staff over 30 staff to give an insight into delicious dishes of the Caribbean and Africa (Jamaica, Nigeria and more).

In addition, a Cultural Day was held where it was recognised that the Council has a unique and diverse workforce in many ways, including the culture and heritage of our workforce. To celebrate that colleagues across the organisation were encouraged to dress in their cultural or traditional attire for the first ever Cultural Day hosted by Race Equality Network co-chairs. The Race Equality & Allies Network also hosted a Cultural Day get-together, with over 20 staff attending, offering the opportunity to get to know the network and its members, meet colleagues, and chat with peers.

Disability History Month (16 November - 16 December 2023)

Each year, we mark Disability History Month to shine a light on the experiences of people with disabilities across the organisation. Real stories from members of our Enable Disability Staff Network group will be shared throughout the month, to highlight this year's theme of Disability, Childhood and Youth. IT also hosted sessions to learn about different digital accessibility features. Colleagues shared the experiences of people with disabilities across the Council, focussing upon the theme of Disability, Childhood and Youth. Throughout the month, we heard from members of the Enable Disability Staff Network group about their experience of disability, from childhood and adolescence to working life, with staff encouraged were encouraged to share their stories and experiences.

The Staff Network Groups each meet a minimum of 3 times per year, with often more meetings taking place to reflect and respond to any emerging issues or themes. By investing in our Staff Network Groups, we have ensured that our Workforce feel included and valued and that they have somewhere safe and supportive to discuss issues relevant to them, ensuring that Inclusion and Diversity remain at the core of our values and principles. This has included the Chairs of all Groups contributing to the Council's Peer Review which took place in January 2024.

Other Achievements

In addition to the Staff Network Groups

- ✓ We have signed and committed to the Menopause Workplace Pledge
- ✓ We are certified as a Disability Confident organisation.
- ✓ We have pledged to support, and are accredited under, the White Ribbon campaign, against Violence Against Women and Girls
- ✓ We're applying for the next stage of the Trailblazer Award from Race Equality Matters. After successfully obtaining the bronze award last year, we're determined to reach the next stage of this valuable accreditation that recognises our work to address racial inequality within the council.
- ✓ The Council has maintained its Gold Standard Award for the Armed Forces Covenant Employer Recognition Scheme. This prestigious award recognises and rewards UK employers and organisations that demonstrate exceptional support for the armed forces community.

Our Workforce Profile

At the time this report was compiled, Northumberland County Council employed a total of **5200** employees (this does not include staff from the council's schools). As at the 8th January 2024, **1736** staff (33.38%) had provided their Equality Information. This section provides an analysis of our workforce composition by protected characteristic and covers the period April 2023 to January 2024.

It should be noted that we do not have complete data for all sections of our workforce, and staff are under no obligation to provide personal data.

We recognise that it is important that declaration rates are improved, and that staff recognise the importance of providing this information. This forms a key component of our new People and Culture Strategy 2023-2026.

Engagement with hard-to-reach employees remains a priority and we continue to work closely with Staff Network Groups, Trade Union Colleagues and other key stakeholders to address this area and to break down the barriers to engagement.

The following pages of this report provide a detailed breakdown of our staff profile by protected characteristic based upon information that is available.

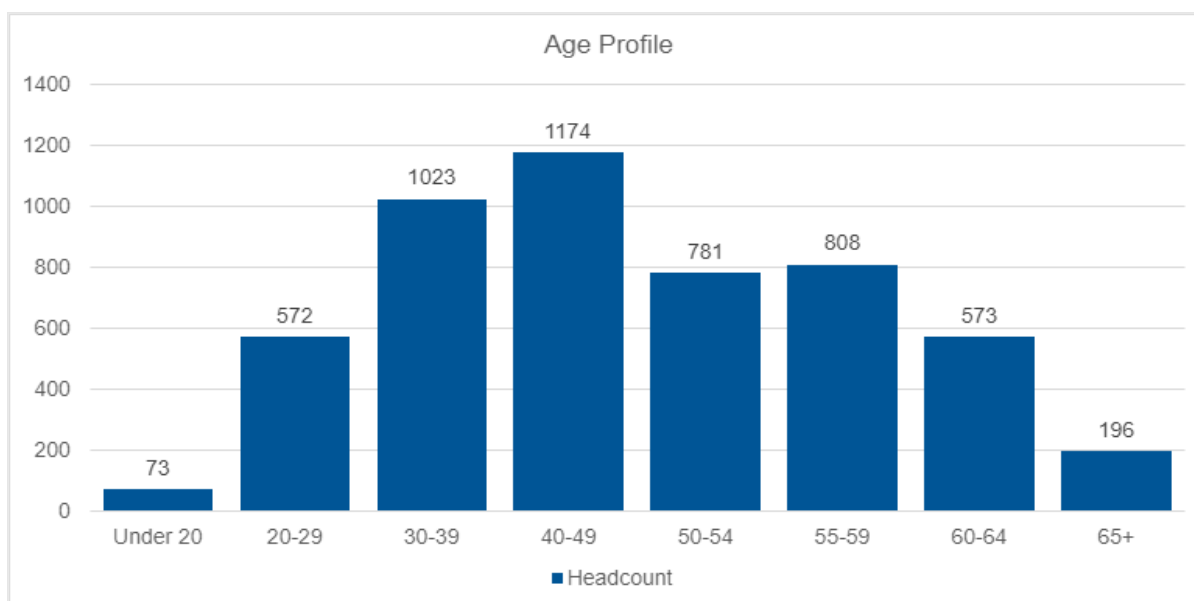
Age

This is defined in the Equality Act 2010 as A person belonging to a particular age (for example 32-year-olds) or range of ages (for example 18- to 30-year-olds).

The age current of the Council’s current workforce is as follows:

Age Range	Headcount	% of Total
Under 20	73	1.40%
20-29	572	11.00%
30-39	1023	19.67%
40-49	1174	22.58%
50-54	781	15.02%
55-59	808	15.54%
60-64	573	11.02%
65+	196	3.77%

The majority of the workforce, 2842 or 54.65%, are aged 49 or under with 2358 or 45.35% aged 50 or over. The largest age group are aged between 40 and 49. This is consistent with the median average age in Northumberland of 48.9³, with over 18s representing 85.0% of the population.



The median age in England and Wales was 40 years (40 years in England, 42 years in Wales); this is higher than the median age of 39 years across England and Wales in 2011.

³ Census 2021

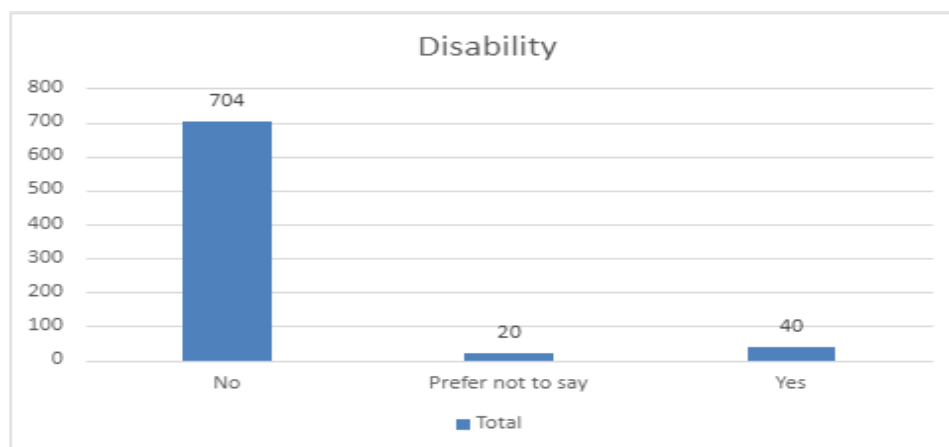
Disability

In the Equality Act 2010 a person has a disability if she or he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Information from the Census 2021 details that 8.3% of the Northumberland population have a disability that limits day-to-day activities a lot, with 11.3% having a disability that limits day-to-day activities a little, a total of 19.6% of the population.

Figures reported by our workforce are as follows:

	Do you consider yourself to have a disability?	% of Respondents
No	704	92.15%
Yes	40	5.24%
Prefer not to say	20	2.61%
Total responses to this question	764	100%



Further detail was requested from our Workforce with the following information provided:

	Do you suffer from Physical Impairment?	% of Respondents
No	699	95.10%
Yes	31	4.22%
Prefer not to say	5	0.68%
Total responses to this question	735	100%

	Do you suffer from Sensory Impairment?	% of Respondents
No	709	96.46%
Yes	22	2.99%
Prefer not to say	4	0.55%
Total responses to this question	735	100%

	Do you suffer from a Mental Health Condition?	% of Respondents
No	666	90.86%
Yes	60	8.19%
Prefer not to say	7	0.95%
Total responses to this question	733	100%

	Do you have Learning Disability / Difficulty?	% of Respondents
No	282	98.95%
Yes	3	1.05%
Total responses to this question	285	100%

Information from the Census 2021 details that 94.5% of the Northumberland population consider that they have Very Good, Good or Fair general health, with 5.5% stating that they have bad or very bad general health.

Our workforce responded as follows regarding their Health:

	Do you suffer from a Health Condition?	% of Respondents
No	661	90.05%
Yes	69	9.40%
Prefer not to say	4	0.55%
Total Responses to this question	734	100%

Gender Reassignment

As defined by the Equality Act 2020 this is where a person undergoes, or proposes to undergo, a process for the purpose of reassigning their sex.

The Council does not currently collect this information from its Workforce however opportunities to capture this information will be developed during 2024/25.

Marriage & Civil Partnership

As defined by the Equality Act 2010, marriage is a union between a man and a woman or between a same-sex couple.

Same-sex couples can also have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must not be treated less favourably than married couples (except where permitted by the Equality Act).

The Council does not currently collect this information from its Workforce however plans have been put in place to collect this information during 2024/2025.

Pregnancy & Maternity

As defined by the Equality Act 2010, pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.

We have supported 88 staff on maternity leave between 1st April 2023 and the 31st January 2024, equating to 1.69% of the whole workforce.

We have a Breastfeeding Policy to support employees who are expectant and new mothers, and their partners, to feed and care for their baby in ways which support optimum health and well-being. We recognise the profound importance of early relationships to future health and well-being and the significant contribution that breastfeeding makes to good physical and emotional health outcomes for children and mothers.

The policy is based on the UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative standard, relevant NICE guidance and the Healthy Child Programme.

Race

As defined by the Equality Act 2010, a race is a group of people defined by their colour, nationality (including citizenship) ethnicity or national origins. A racial group can be made up of more than one distinct racial group, such as Black British.

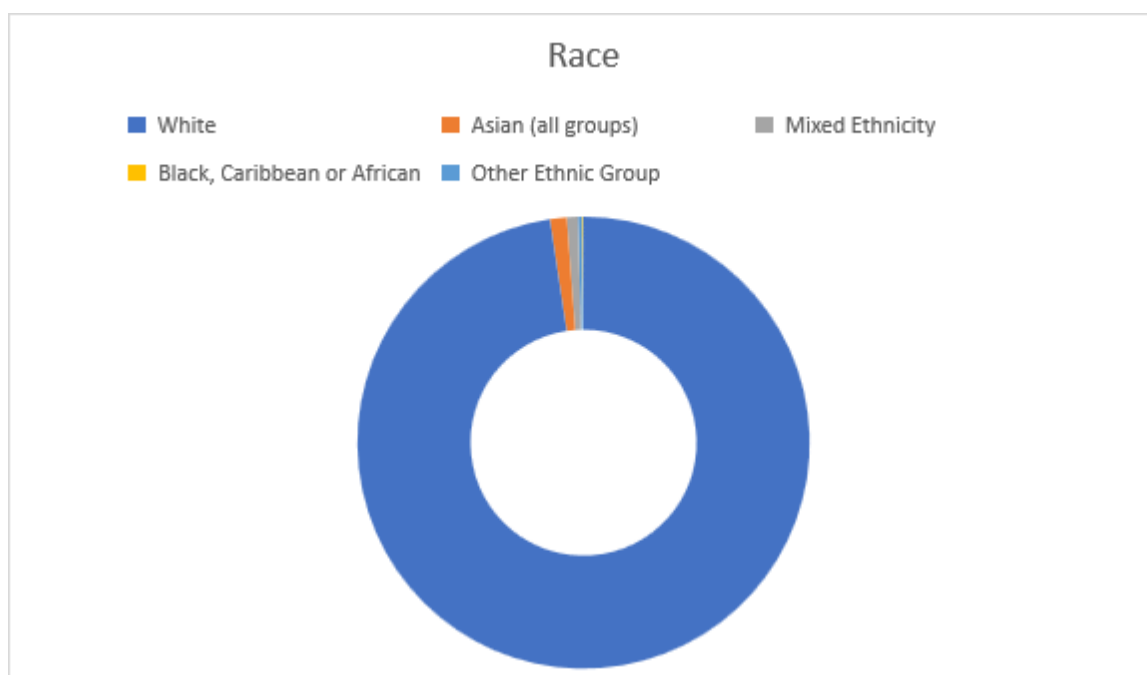
The population of Northumberland is pre-dominantly White at 97.7%, with 1.2% Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh, 0.7% Mixed or multiple ethnic groups, 0.1% Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African and 0.3% Other Ethnic Group⁴.

The Council's workforce profile of 97.54% reflects the county population.

	Please indicate which of these groups you consider you belong to?	% of Respondents
Asian - Any other Asian background	1	0.06%
Asian - Asian British	2	0.12%
Asian - Asian British - Bangladeshi	1	0.06%
Asian - Asian British - Indian	2	0.12%
Asian - Bangladeshi	1	0.06%
Asian - Chinese	4	0.24%
Asian - Indian	4	0.24%
Black/African/Caribbean - African	2	0.12%
Black/African/Caribbean - Black British	2	0.12%
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups - Any other Mixed/multiple ethnic background	2	0.12%
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups - White and Asian	2	0.12%
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups - White and Black African	1	0.06%
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups - White and Black Caribbean	1	0.06%
Prefer not to say	16	0.96%
White - Any other White background	32	1.94%

⁴ Census 2021

	Please indicate which of these groups you consider you belong to?	% of Respondents
Asian - Any other Asian background	1	0.06%
Asian - Asian British	2	0.12%
Asian - Asian British - Bangladeshi	1	0.06%
Asian - Asian British - Indian	2	0.12%
Asian - Bangladeshi	1	0.06%
White - English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	1583	95.36%
White - Gypsy/Roma	2	0.12%
White - Irish	2	0.12%
Total Responses to this question	1660	100%



Religion or Belief

As defined by the Equality Act 2010, religion refers to any religion, including a lack of religion. Belief refers to any religious or philosophical belief and includes a lack of belief. Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.

The majority of the population of Northumberland are Christian (53.2%). The next largest group those that state they have No Religion at 40.1%. Of the remaining respondents, 0.5% are Muslim, 0.2% are Buddhist and 0.2% are Sikh, 0.1% are Hindu and 0.1% are Jewish. Of the remainder 0.4% identified as Other and 5% did not answer the question. ⁵

For the Council's workforce the profile is fairly similar to the county profile, with slightly lower numbers identifying as Christian and a higher percentage stating they have No Religion.

	What is your religion or belief?	% of Respondents
Christian (including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations)	159	46.22%
Muslim	2	0.59%
Sikh	5	1.45%
No Religion	153	44.48%
Prefer not to say	10	2.90%
Other	15	4.36%
Total responses to this question	344	100%

⁵ Census 2021

Sex

As defined by the Equality Act 2010, sex is understood as binary being either male or female. It can mean a group of people like men or boys, or women or girls.

There were 30,420,202 women (51.0% of the population) and 29,177,340 men (49.0%) in England and Wales⁶.

According to the Census 2021 in Northumberland 51.2% are female and 48.8% are male, with a ratio of 95.6 males to every 100 females.

Figures for the Northumberland workforce show that we have a higher percentage of females than both the national and local population average.

	What sex were you assigned at birth, on your original birth certificate?	% of Respondents
Female	1138	65.74%
Male	588	33.96%
Prefer Not to Say	5	0.3%
Total responses to this question	1731	100%

Gender Pay Gap Report

The Gender pay Gap Report considers figures from the previous year and is based upon a data snapshot taken on 31 March 2023. This snapshot showed that at that time females comprised 60.90% of the workforce, slightly less than the 2024 figure shown in the table above, with males making up the remaining 39.10%. This is a swing of 0.54% in favour of female employees.

The **mean** gender pay gap in hourly pay as a percentage for NCC is **-0.37%** which means that the hourly rate for men is 0.37% below the hourly rate for women; in simple terms, women within the organisation get paid narrowly more than men.

Within NCC the gender gap in **median** hourly pay between male and female employees is **1.83%**. This means that the median hourly rate of pay is 1.83% higher than for women, increasing from the previous year when rates were the same.

Our full Gender Pay Gap report is available [here](#).

⁶ Census 2021

Supporting Gender Equality

We work closely with local schools and colleges within the county to showcase the range of opportunities available for young people, and to promote our ambition to be the employer of choice within Northumberland. Our collaboration work with local 6th forms and colleges provides work placements for those that are studying specific courses, enhancing essential employability skills through real life work experiences. We are active supporters of National Apprenticeship week, and our apprenticeship programme helps to break down barriers for young women and gain skills and expertise in areas which were historically gender biased. This has included a campaign of apprentice females in work, celebrating those in manual roles who work alongside male-predominated workforce areas.

We have eight Staff Network Groups across the Council, supporting staff across a range of areas that are relevant and important to them. One of these is the Menopause Staff Network Group. Members agree this provides guidance, advice and mutual support and has been invaluable for many females in the organisation. The Council is also recognised as 'Committed to being a Menopause Friendly Employer' by Menopause Friendly.

We have a range of policies and working practices to promote and sustain work life balance including hybrid working, various flexible working patterns for example part-time, flexitime, home working, maternity, paternity, adoption, dependent and shared parental leave. This range of policies and options provides many of our employees, particularly those with childcare or other caring responsibilities, with a much higher degree of flexibility. We also ensure that we regularly review and update our Family Leave policy to reflect any changes to legislation, including the recent provision for Neo-natal Care leave.

Our Shared Parental Leave policy means that fathers can apply to take shared parental leave so that they too can spend more time with their children during their early, formative years.

We continue to be proud supporters of Men's Health Week and run a series of programmes and initiatives with a dedicated space on our Health and Wellbeing staff portal offering a range of guidance and materials for male colleagues.

We run extensive campaigns to promote International Women's Day which are actively and enthusiastically supported by our many senior female leaders, and Council Members.

Sexual Orientation

As defined by the Equality Act 2010, Sexual Orientation refers to whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.

The Census 2021 details that 92.11% of the population of Northumberland are straight / heterosexual, with 1.23% Gay or Lesbian, 0.84% are Bisexual and 0.17% from All Other Sexual Orientations. 5.64% did not answer the question.

The profile of our Workforce mirrors the profile of the population of our county as detailed below.

	Count of Which of the following options best describes how you think of yourself?	% of Respondents
Bisexual	6	0.34%
Gay man	4	0.23%
Gay woman/lesbian	12	0.70%
Heterosexual or Straight	1592	92.67%
Asexual	1	0.06%
Bicurious	1	0.06%
Demisexual	1	0.06%
Pansexual	1	0.06%
Polysexual	1	0.06%
Prefer not to say	99	5.76%
Total responses to this question	1718	100%

Final Word

Northumberland County Council's strength as an organisation lies within our employees and their commitment to our residents. Together with their support for the Council's priorities of Value for money, Tackling Inequalities and Driving Economic Growth and jobs, they continue to deliver outstanding service to our communities.

Our Council is one of the largest employers in the county with over 5000 employees, who are therefore themselves representatives of our communities.

We are proud to support Diversity, Equity and Inclusion across our workforce, and understand that each and every staff member brings their own experiences and knowledge, which ensures that we are an organisation where our staff feel their contribution is a valued one. Different people bring different perspectives, ideas and abilities. By employing a diverse workforce, the Council can be progressive, solve problems and innovate.

Eight Network Groups have been formed in response to feedback received through our employee surveys; they are run by staff, for staff and provide opportunities and mutual support.

The last few years have meant different ways of working and it is our staff's ability to not only accept change but to work to excel in those changed ways that has enabled the Council to continue to deliver on our priorities.

Our Workforce Equality Report re-affirms where our strengths truly lie as an organisation: within our people. We continue to seek the opinions of our workforce and value their feedback, which continues to inform our approach for the forthcoming year and help us develop further as an organisation, with our aim to make diversity, equity and inclusion, part of the way the council works, placing it at the heart of everything we do.



Cllr Veronica Jones, Inequalities Lead Member