



Northumberland
County Council



Workforce Equality Analysis Report

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Foreward

Equality, diversity and inclusion is extremely important to us as a council; in the provision of our services and in our role as an employer and local leader. Our belief is that in order to deliver our values of respect, residents first, excellence and quality and keeping our communities safe and well, we need to demonstrate that we are truly inclusive and equitable in our approach. We understand that this needs to be driven from within. Nurturing a happy, fulfilled, valued and respected workforce allows our people to be the best they can be, and do their best for the communities they serve.



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PART 1 – Overview

Northumberland County Council is the northernmost county in England covering an area of 5,013km² with a population of 320,300 with 46% living in the urban South East of the county. The population is largely white British with 1.9% recorded as being from a BAME background. 21% of the population has a limiting long-term illness or disability and there is a high percentage of the population over the age of 50, particularly in the north of the county. There is no specific measure in place locally for recording sexual orientation or gender identity other than cisgender male or female but the most recent national data indicates that approximately 2.3% of the country records a sexual orientation other than heterosexual. The North East has the lowest recorded proportion of all the English regions at 1.8%. There were 61 civil partnerships or same sex marriages registered in the county in 2017 with 2,243 marriages or civil partnerships for heterosexual couples.

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 almost 4,500 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 11% which compares well to the national average of 13.8%. This tells us that we have done much to make the council a welcoming place in which to work, but equally tells us that there is much still to do. Our Human Resources Department plays a pivotal role in driving our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusivity and fostering organisational improvements.

We are pleased to publish our Workforce Equality Information Report, 2021. For us, this is more than just an obligation under the Public Sector Equality Duty; it allows the organisation to reflect on all that we have achieved so far, and what we still need to do to make Northumberland a great place to live and work. The data used to create this report is extracted from the Council's Human Resources (HR) systems and covers the period 1st April 2020 to 30 March 2021. References to our staff survey are to the survey made available for completion to staff in the period October to December 2019.

1.2 HR Overview and Functions

Northumberland County Council currently has a 60 strong HR and Learning & Organisational Team and our achievements in workforce innovation and inclusivity have consistently been recognised nationally. In the last year alone, the HR team at Northumberland County Council has been a finalist in the Innovation in Building Diversity & Inclusion Award at the 2020 Municipal Journal Awards and our Executive Director of HR was shortlisted for the HR Director of the Year Award at the Personnel Today Awards.

The HR function within Northumberland County Council is responsible for:

- Delivering the core strategic HR service across the council and to some external organisations (including NCC Schools) via Service Level Agreements
- Embedding best practice standards of HR into line-management and specific business processes such as service planning and performance management through a HR business partnering arrangement
- Developing and maintaining corporate HR policies, procedures, frameworks and guidelines in line with best practice to support frontline services and the county council. To provide employment related advice and guidance to managers including performance management frameworks such as discipline, grievance and health & wellbeing policies
- Supporting the county council to attract and retain high quality employees and promote the organisation as an employer of choice

- Overseeing an Occupational Health and Wellbeing service (which is Nurse Led, and complemented by OH Physicians, Psychologists, Counsellors and Physiotherapists), as part of a shared service arrangement with Northumbria NHS
- Providing a coaching service to improve staff development opportunities
- Ensuring that communications between management and the trade unions on terms and conditions of employment and other staffing related matters are maintained
- 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.

1.3 Employee Engagement

We have worked hard to develop a culture whereby staff can truly be themselves and be their best at work and to foster a 'one council' approach amongst staff so that each and every employee feels that they are valued and contribute to our success. Our annual staff surveys provide us with a barometer of staff sentiment and allow us to understand what we are doing well, and what we need to do better. An impressive 80.5% of our workforce completed our 2019 staff survey, and we believe this is reflective of the significant levels of staff engagement which we have instilled across the organisation. Analysis of the most recent staff survey results will be provided throughout this report.

1.4 Employee Equalities Monitoring

In order to identify any gaps that exist in the diversity of our workforce, it is critical that we hold accurate and robust data for our employees, particularly in relation to protected characteristics. The challenge we face is that we cannot compel employees to provide us with personal biographical data.

In the final quarter of 2020, the council embarked on a number of 'quick win' initiatives to encourage employees to submit personal data onto the Oracle Fusion system. While these initiatives produced small and modest successes, we were encouraged by initial progress. Notwithstanding this, it is apparent that there remains a general reluctance amongst a large proportion of staff to disclose personal biographical data, whether driven by mistrust, apathy or indifference. Over the next twelve months we will look to adopt a more sustained and focused strategy to identify the challenges and barriers to obtaining a more robust data set, and will work closely with trade unions and our staff network groups to achieve maximum employee buy in. The council's draft Equality Strategy 2021, which has recently been put out to public consultation, highlights this as a key action point, and we hope to make significant progress in this area over the coming year.

1.5 Our Network Support Groups

Northumberland County Council has supported the establishment of seven staff network groups initially in partnership with Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust but recently established as independent networks. The groups were formed in response to feedback from staff through our staff survey. These groups are run by staff and are open for all employees to attend. They make a significant contribution to our organisation and policy development. The groups are:

- LGBT+
- Race Equality
- Enable (Disability Staff Group)
- ASD (Autistic Spectrum Disorder)
- Menopause
- Carers
- Mental Health & Wellbeing

These groups act as a support network for our staff and contribute advice and guidance to the organisation on policy and practice as well as supporting campaigns and equality and diversity initiatives supported by the council including Northumberland Pride, North East MELA, Disability and Black History Month.

1.6 Inclusive Recruitment and Employment

Our vision to become a widely recognised leader in inclusive employment is cemented in the Human Resources and Organisational Development and People Strategy 2021-2025 which sets out 5 strategic aims: Enriched Experience; Health, Wellbeing & Selfcare, Planning our People for the Future, Systems, Innovation & Automation, and Equality, Diversity & Inclusion for Everyone. We have set out a number of key objectives which will underpin our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion for all:

- To develop Equality, Diversity & Inclusion in all policies approach to all policies and procedures
- Build on current Equality, Diversity & Inclusion campaigns
- To develop a comprehensive inclusive recruitment process
- Expand and operationalise the work of the network groups
- To be recognised both locally and nationally as an inclusive employer
- To improve staff engagement experience within minority groups
- Demonstrate our commitment through transparent data publication

We will build on our achievements so far by embracing new and advanced ways of thinking, ranging from advanced technologies in recruitment and selection which provide hiring managers with new tools and increased confidence to try out different recruitment and selection approaches and campaigns through to Bystander Training, which empowers employees to prevent and address workplace harassment and discrimination. We will attract, retain and develop the best staff, and protective characteristic will never be a barrier to prospective employees of the council. The Covid 19 pandemic has taught us that we no longer need to be restricted by the confines of geography; we have continued to deliver outstanding services to our communities throughout the pandemic, and have done so with the vast majority of our staff working from home. Recruiting staff from outside of the region will become a key focus for the organisation, providing us with an opportunity to diversify our workforce.



At Northumberland County Council we are committed to ensuring that having a disability never becomes a barrier to employment and workplace achievement.

PART 2 – Information Analysis

This section provides an analysis of our workforce composition by protected characteristic. Each section is broken down into different sub-sections; a breakdown of our workforce, and where corresponding information is held, a summary of findings from our most recent staff survey, and our key achievements / actions.

2.1 Disability

There are currently approximately 14.1 million disabled people in the UK, and approximately 19% of working age adults are disabled. The Labour Force Survey April – June 2020 found that only 4.1million disabled people are in work, meaning disabled people are more than twice as likely to be unemployed as non-disabled people. At Northumberland County Council we are committed to ensuring that having a disability never becomes a barrier to employment and workplace achievement.

2.1.1 Workforce Statistics

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

Table 1 Disability Status by Pay Band and Employment Status

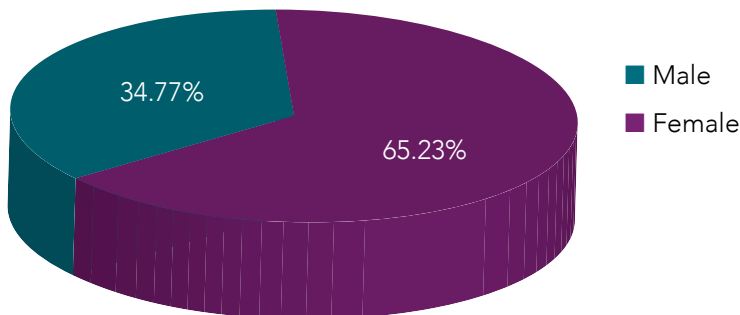
Pay Band	% of staff who have said they have a disability	% of staff who said they had a disability who are part-time	Previous Report	
			% of staff who have said they have a disability	% of staff who said they had a disability who are part-time
Apprentice & Band 1	0.00%	0.00%	14.94%	46.15%
Bands 2 & 3	11.32%	16.67%	6.90%	33.33%
Bands 4 & 5	32.08%	41.18%	31.03%	48.15%
Bands 6 & 7	28.30%	20.00%	17.24%	13.33%
Bands 8 & 9	13.21%	28.57%	17.24%	20.00%
Bands 10 & 11	1.89%	100%	1.15%	0.00%
Band 12 and above	1.89%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Other	11.32%	50.00%	11.49%	30.00%

The table above illustrates that the higher percentage of part time employees are at the lower end of the pay band scale (Band 5 and below). This could be due to the availability of part time work within lower pay grades as shown in Table 1.

The information overleaf was taken from Oracle employee data at the start of January 2021. The figures reflect the number of employees that have provided their data rather than the total number of council employees.

There are 2226 responses.

Gender Profile



Caring responsibilities

230 employees declared they had caring responsibilities.

Disability or long-term health condition

- 2.38% of employees declared they had a disability
- 1.8% declared a physical disability
- 1.3% declared a sensory disability
- 3.91 declared a mental health condition
- 3.41% declared another health condition
- 3.41% declared a learning disability/difficulty

The numbers declaring conditions are higher than the percentage of disabled employees because some people with a health condition do not identify as disabled people.

Race

Please indicate which of these groups you consider you belong to	% of Total Responses
Asian - Asian British	0.09%
Asian - Asian British - Bangladeshi	0.04%
Asian - Asian British - Indian	0.13%
Asian - Bangladeshi	0.09%
Asian - Chinese	0.22%
Asian - Indian	0.31%
Black/African/Caribbean - African	0.90%
Black/African/Caribbean - Black British	0.90%
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups - Any other Mixed/multiple ethnic background	0.90%
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups - White and Asian	0.90%
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups - White and Black African	0.04%
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups - White and Black Caribbean	0.04%
No Response Given	3.37%
Prefer not to say	0.99%
White - Any other White background	3.59%
White - English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	90.35
White - Gypsy/Roma	0.09%
White - Irish	0.27%

Religion or Belief

What is your religion or belief?	% of Total Responses
Buddhist	0.09%
Christian (including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations)	7.28%
Hindu	0.04%
Humanist	0.09%
Muslim	0.09%
No Religion	7.05%
No Response Given	84.68%
Prefer not to say	0.49%
Sikh	0.18%

Sexual Orientation

Which of the following options best describes how you think of yourself?	% of Total Responses
Bisexual	0.54%
Gay man	0.31%
Gay woman/lesbian	0.85%
Heterosexual or Straight	90.93%
No Response Given	1.48%
Prefer not to say	5.88%

2.1.2 Employee Survey

How disabled staff compare against the Council average

0	Positive score of 100%
1	Score > 3 % above benchmark
103	Score < 3 % below benchmark
13	Scores in between

Areas where disabled staff score better than the council average:

- I have had a return-to-work interview if off work due to sickness
- My employer has made adequate adjustment(s) to enable me to carry out my work.

Areas which are significantly worse than the council average:

- In the past 12 months, I have felt unwell as a result of work-related stress
- In the past 12 months, have not experienced musculoskeletal problems (MSK) because of work activities
- I often think about leaving this organisation
- I am satisfied with extent organisation values my work
- I am planning to leave this organisation
- I am likely to look for a job at a new organisation in the next 12 months.
- I am satisfied with recognition for good work
- Senior managers try to involve staff in important decisions
- I feel involved in deciding changes that affect work of my team/department
- I would feel confident that the organisation would address any concerns I may have
- Senior managers act on staff feedback

Engagement question scores were worse than the council average in the following areas:

- I look forward to going to work
- I am enthusiastic about my job
- Time passes quickly when I am working
- There are frequent opportunities for me to show initiative in my role
- I can make suggestions to improve the work of my team/department
- I can make improvements happen in my area of work
- Keeping our communities safe and well is the organisation's top priority
- I would recommend the organisation as a place to work
- If a friend or relative needed to access the services of the organisation, I feel the organisation would try to support their needs

2.1.3 Employee survey findings summary

Disabled staff reported a higher rate of return-to-work interview if off work due to sickness and had more adjustment(s) made to enable them to carry out their work.

However, there was a higher reporting of feeling unwell as a result of work-related stress and experiencing musculoskeletal problems (MSK) as a result of work activities. Disabled staff felt less involved in decision making by senior managers, that the council addressed their concerns or acted upon their feedback. They felt less valued and given less recognition for good work and so were more likely to be looking for a new job outside of the organisation.



2.1.4 What do we have in place?

- We are a Disability Confident employer and guarantee to interview disabled applicants who meet the essential criteria for a job. We can provide application information in alternative formats and make reasonable adjustments to the application process
- A range of clear policies around supporting disabled employees at work
- Flexible working arrangements which support all employees, but which can be of particular benefit to employees who have caring responsibilities
- A commitment to highlighting flexible working arrangements during the advertising and recruitment process
- An arrangement with the Supported Employment and Education Service to provide specific work opportunities in the council for people with a learning disability
- Close links with Northumbria NHS Trust, and an Occupational Health Referral system, including access to a psychologist and physiotherapist who can support employees to return to work, or keep employment
- Training for managers and employees to help them understand their responsibilities and to ensure that council policies and procedures are applied consistently
- An Equality Monitoring Process for new and existing employees to help improve the council's understanding of any equality impacts on employees
- Access to Work is used to support some disabled employees with equipment and support workers to facilitate employment
- A review of access needs has been built into the appraisal process
- Guidance is provided to hiring managers around job descriptions and person specifications to ensure that they concentrate on output rather than process, thereby not inadvertently discriminating against disabled people
- The council has established a number of network support groups, including: Enable (Disability Staff Group), ASD (Autistic Spectrum Disorder) and Carers
- The council has adopted a Carers in Work Policy which provides a framework for staff with caring responsibilities to balance their care commitments with their day to day job role.

2.1.5 What else do we need to do?

- We will continue our efforts to ensure that we have a more robust data set in place, so that we have a more informed understanding of our workforce composition and its needs. We will work closely with staff network groups and trade unions to increase understanding amongst employees about why we need their data, how it will be used and assurance that data collection remains confidential and will not adversely impact employees.
- We will continue to deliver diversity training as a core mandatory element to our training package, but will review and refresh our existing offering to ensure that it remains current and relevant
- We will develop the role and function of our Enable and ASD networks to ensure policy and practice is effectively reviewed and implemented.
- We will encourage potential candidates to apply for our jobs by participating in regional recruitment events specifically targeting people with disabilities.

2.2 Sex

Research suggests that despite increased awareness of gender inequality women continue to experience discrimination in the workplace and are frequently paid less, promoted less often and receive less training than their male colleagues. Gender discrimination in the workplace can take many different forms, but one of the key indicators of inequality remains disparity in pay. Despite signs of a downward trend in pay disparities, a report by the Office of National Statistics in April 2020 showed that the gap among full-time employees remained high, falling to 7.4%, from 9.0% in 2019. Among all employees it fell to 15.5%, from 17.4% in 2019. The Gender Pay Gap within Northumberland County Council is one of the lowest compared to other north east regional local authorities that published data for 2019. It is also considerably lower than the national average figure for all employees. Although this is a positive situation, Northumberland county council is committed to reducing and hopefully eliminating the gender pay gap in the future, as well as challenging all forms of gender discrimination.

2.2.1 Workforce Statistics

The population of Northumberland, in line with regional and national figures is, as would be expected, broadly split between men and women, as shown in Table 2.

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%

Figure 1 illustrates the gender profile of the current council workforce; there are marginally more females employed than males.

Figure 1 Gender Profile of Council Employees

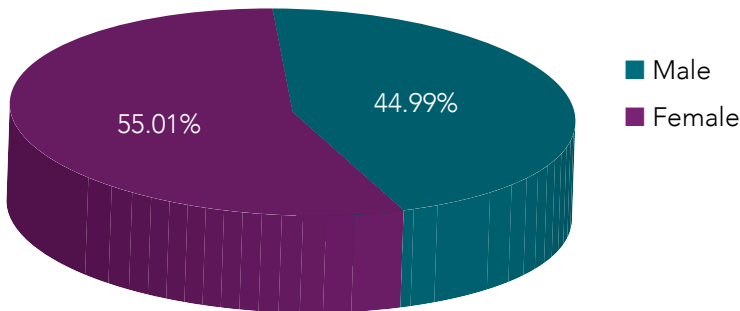


Table 3 provides more detail on the gender profile by Pay Band and also Employment Status (i.e. part time or full time):

Table 3 Gender profile by Pay Band and Employment Status

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	70.04%	29.96%	81.67%	46.75%
Bands 2 & 3	47.32%	52.68%	57.42%	13.33%
Bands 4 & 5	62.73%	37.27%	52.66%	10.76%
Bands 6 & 7	56.72%	43.28%	34.40%	12.54%
Bands 8 & 9	59.89%	40.11%	26.25%	6.17%
Bands 10 & 11	56.99%	43.01%	13.21%	11.25%
Band 12 and above	47.57%	52.43%	18.37%	5.56%
Other	27.98%	72.02%	40.56%	2.45%

Our gender breakdown shows that women outnumber men in most pay bands across the council. However, it is noticeable that this trend is reversed in the more senior roles (Bands 12 and above). As an organisation we need to understand why this is and ensure that women do not face barriers to progression once they reach a certain level (the 'glass ceiling'). It is also noticeable that significantly higher women than men work part-time and this may be because women still bear a disproportionate responsibility for childcare and other caring responsibilities. We hope that our range of family friendly policies which apply to men and women can help redress this imbalance.



2.2.2 Employee Survey

Male	Female	Prefer not to say	
0	0	1	Positive score of 100%
1	22	4	Score > 3 % above benchmark
24	1	107	Score < 3 % below benchmark
92	94	5	Scores in between

Areas where male scores are better than the council's average

- I have not put myself under pressure to come to work when not feeling well

Areas where males scored significantly worse than the council's average

- Last experienced physical/verbal abuse at work reported
- I feel I have the correct level of IT training to work in an agile way
- In relation to agile working, I feel positive about the choice of where I work
- In relation to agile working, I feel positive about my work / life balance

Areas where female scores are significantly better than the council's average

- Last error/near miss/incident that could have hurt or been detrimental to either staff, customers/ service users/residents, or the organisation's reputation was reported
- Last error/near miss/incident that could have hurt or been detrimental to either staff, customers/ service users/residents, or the organisation's reputation was reported
- I am aware of the organisation's statement of values
- I feel I have the correct level of IT training to work in an agile way
- In relation to agile working, I feel positive about the choice of where I work
- I feel positive about the following aspects of agile working; not having to go back to my base/ depot like I used to
- In relation to agile working, I feel positive about my work / life balance

All areas where female scores are worse than the council's average

- I have put myself under pressure to come to work when not feeling well

2.2.3 Employee survey findings summary

When comparing gender results, women were more likely than men to put themselves under pressure to return to work if feeling unwell. Women were generally very positive about aspects of agile working, but interestingly men were significantly less so. While it is pleasing that our female staff seems to have embraced and benefitted from agile working, it is concerning that the experiences of our male employees appear to be very different. This may be due to historical legacies of the perceived role of a man as the breadwinner and the belief that men still need to physically attend the place of work, but we need to work with our managers to understand where the challenges are, and what we can do to overcome them. Men were more likely to have suffered physical or verbal abuse during the course of their employment. Those who preferred not to state their gender were less keen to recommend Northumberland County Council as a place to work and more likely to think about leaving the organisation.

2.2.4 What do we have in place?

- The council has adopted a number of family friendly policies such as Shared Parental Leave, flexible working policy, agile working, leave of absence and flexitime scheme to support return to work where possible and sustain employment. The Family Leave policy has been reviewed and updated. We aim to encourage an open attitude to provide flexible solutions to fit with personal circumstances.
- We recognise that domestic abuse sadly remains a very real threat to many, and that there is evidence that this has been exacerbated by the Covid 19 pandemic. Our domestic abuse policy supports both men and women who may be in violent relationships.
- A Dignity at Work policy has replaced the council's Grievance policy and has been revised to ensure bullying or harassment (regardless of nature), has a clear line of reporting.
- We have reviewed our annual leave purchase scheme to provide flexibility for employees. Since February 2020, annual leave purchased can be repaid over 12 monthly instalments.
- We have appointed an Equality and Diversity Lead for the organisation to review all processes and advise of areas of bias so they can be reduced.
- We have established several network groups including a group for carers and for women experiencing the menopause.
- We have reviewed our recruitment practices and procedures and identified and removed any barriers for entry for gender, and other protected characteristics.

2.2.5 What else do we need to do?

- We know that we need to increase females in senior manager service roles to enable a more balanced representation in this area (Upper Middle Quadrant)
- We will ensure that all adverts state that our posts are open to flexible working
- We will undertake gender pay analysis to ensure gender pay differences are addressed through processes and following changes of Pay Spine 1 April 2019 to incorporate additional spinal column points within locally agreed pay bands
- We will continue to work with schools in Northumberland to ensure that the council becomes an employer of choice for both genders.

2.3. Race

50 years after the passing of the Race Relations Act in 1965, research frequently highlights that employees from a BAME background still receive unequal treatment and unequal access to opportunities in the workplace. In 2019 the University of Manchester published the Racism at Work survey which contained some alarming findings, with 70 % of BAME employees stating that they had been racially harassed at work, and 60% stating that they have been treated unfairly because of their race. The council is committed to building an organisation where all staff feel safe, respected and valued irrespective of their ethnic background, and where race is never a barrier to progression and success.

2.3.1 Workforce Statistics

Consistent with the demographic profile of Northumberland as a whole, the majority of council employees are identified as 'White British' or 'English, Welsh, Scottish, Irish or British' – 97.02%.

Table 4 breaks this down into ethnic group:

Table 4 Ethnic Profile of Council Employees Ethnicity	% of Employees
Asian - Asian British	0.09%
Asian - Asian British - Bangladeshi	0.05%
Asian - Asian British - Indian	0.09%
Asian - Bangladeshi	0.09%
Asian - Chinese	0.23%
Asian - Indian	0.27%
Black/African/Caribbean - African	0.09%
Black/African/Caribbean - Black British	0.09%
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups - Any other Mixed/multiple ethnic background	0.09%
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups - White and Asian	0.09%
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups - White and Black African	0.05%
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups - White and Black Caribbean	0.05%
No Response Given	3.36%
Prefer not to say	1.00%
White - Any other White background	3.63%
White - English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	90.37%
White - Gypsy/Roma	0.09%
White - Irish	0.27%

Table 5 gives a breakdown of the percentage of employees who have declared their ethnicity who are not identified as 'White British':

Table 5 Race profile by Pay Band

Pay Band	% of Employees who are not identified as 'White British'
Apprentice and Band 1	3.57%
Bands 2 and 3	7.14%
Bands 4 and 5	14.29%
Bands 6 and 7	35.71%
Bands 8 and 9	28.57%
Bands 10 and 11	3.57%
Bands 12 and above	3.57%
Other	3.57%

In relation to new applicants, the race profile of new applicants is given in Table 6:

Table 6 Race profile of New Applicants (January 2018 to December 2018)

Racial Group	% of Applicants
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	0.39%
Asian or Asian British - Chinese	0.07%
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0.32%
Asian or Asian British - Other Asian background	0.46%
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0.46%
Black / African / Caribbean / Black British - African	0.79%
Black / African / Caribbean / Black British - Any Other background	0.07%
Black / African / Caribbean / Black British - Caribbean	0.07%
Chinese, Chinese British or other ethnic group - Chinese	0.07%
Chinese, Chinese British or other ethnic group - Other ethnic group	0.02%
Mixed - Other Mixed / multiple ethnic background	0.12%
Mixed - White and Asian	0.23%
Mixed - White and Black African	0.14%
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	0.04%
No Answer Given	6.21%
Other Ethnic Group - Any other ethnic group	0.23%
Other Ethnic Group - Arab	0.14%
Prefer Not to Say	0.85%
White - Any Other White Background	1.78%
White - English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British	87.09%
White - Gypsy / Roma Traveller	0.07%
White - Irish	0.37%

2.3.2 Employee survey

How BAME staff compared with the council's Average

0	Positive score of 100%
52	Score > 3 % above benchmark
32	Score < 3 % below benchmark
33	Scores in between

Areas where BAME staff results are significantly better than the council's average

- Communication between senior management and staff is effective
- Senior managers try to involve staff in important decisions
- I have not put myself under pressure to come to work when not feeling well
- My annual appraisal has definitely helped me agree clear objectives for my work
- Senior managers in my directorate demonstrate the values at work
- I feel positive about the following aspects of agile working; autonomy
- I feel positive about the following aspects of agile working; reduced stress levels.

Areas where BAME staff results are significantly worse than the council's average:

- In the past 12 months, I have come to work when not feeling well enough to perform duties
- I have not had a return to work interview following a period of sickness absence
- I have experienced harassment, bullying or physical/verbal abuse at work from residents/service users/customers, their relatives or other members of the public
- Financial pressures have affected my ability to come to work.

Engagement Scores

All of the questions which count towards the engagement scores were better than the organisational average apart from

- Time passes quickly when I am working.
- There are frequent opportunities for me to show initiative in my role.

2.3.3 Employee survey findings summary

When comparing staff identifying as BAME against the council average, we found that BAME staff are generally more positive about communication between senior management and staff, and that senior managers try to involve them in making important decisions. BAME staff are generally positive about their annual appraisal and agile working and had not put themselves under pressure to come to work when they were not feeling well. They also felt more valued by senior managers within their directorate than the council average.

Less positive than the council average were scores for receiving a return to work interview if off work due to sickness. They had experienced more harassment, bullying or physical/verbal abuse at work and had more incidences of financial pressures which affected their ability to come to work.

2.3.4 What do we have in place?

- Our HR policies and Equalities policy include specific reference to delivering equality on protected characteristics
- All of our staff undertake regular equality and diversity training with a specific section dedicated 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
- We have an established BAME network group which provides support to our BAME employees and allows for the sharing of best practice and experiences, as well as influencing and feeding into our various corporate policies. It provides a space to discuss, question, challenge and take action where necessary to promote race equality and diversity within the organisation and beyond. The network organises events and provides an informal space to share experiences in a confidential and supported environment
- The council held a number of events and initiatives across the organisation to celebrate and recognise black history month in October 2020
- Safecall telephone line to report concerns anonymously

2.3.5 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. We are looking at a range of measures to improve our data, including incentives and working closely with our Race Equality Staff Network Group and trade unions on a programme of communications which underlines the importance of employees submitting biographical data
- We will review the way in which jobs are advertised to see if there are any further opportunities to encourage applications from underrepresented groups. We will consider targeting specific media channels used by BAME communities to advertise posts
- We will participate in a regional recruitment event targeting BAME communities in the region to encourage applications from these communities
- Increase employee engagement in all areas and inclusive of those protective characteristics
- Further work regarding reporting incidents of physical or verbal abuse which are linked with race.

2.4 Sexual Orientation

In 2018, the campaign group, Stonewall published its LGBT in Britain Work Report which highlighted that LGBT employees in the UK continue to experience discrimination and less favourable treatment in the UK. Key findings included the fact that almost one in five LGBT staff (18 per cent) had been the target of negative comments or conduct from work colleagues in the preceding year because they are LGBT, and approximately 35% of LGBT staff had hidden their sexual orientation in the workplace because they feared discrimination. Almost one in five LGBT people felt that they had been discriminated against whilst looking for employment.

Northumberland County Council wants to create a positive environment where individuals are recognised for their talents and skills and can be who they want to be. An individual’s sexual orientation is of no relevance and will provide no barrier to success in our organisation.

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; we understand that this is indicative of the suspicion and fear of discrimination which remains within the LGBT community, and we will make every effort to ensure that our LGBT staff feel safe, secure, supported and valued.

2.4.1 Workforce Statistics

Sexual Orientation by declared:

Sexual Orientation	% of Employees (Declared)
Bisexual	0.55%
Gay or Lesbian	1.18%
Heterosexual or Straight	90.96%
Prefer not to say	7.31%
Other	0.00%

Existing employees who have declared they are Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual by pay band:

This data has been amalgamated to prevent individuals from being identified.

Pay Band	No. of Employees
Apprentice and Band 1	0
Bands 2 and 3	6
Bands 4 and 5	8
Bands 6 and 7	10
Bands 8-12	8*
Other	6

*Data amalgamated to preserve anonymity

Summary of Job Applications between 1.1.18 and 31.12.18:

Sexual Orientation	Appointed	Did Not Attend	On Hold	Rejected	Submitted	Withdrawn	Grand Total
Bisexual				32	5	1	38
Gay or Lesbian	2		1	71	27	3	104
Heterosexual or straight	148	2	42	3658	1036	57	4943
No Answer Given	13	2	4	300	70	11	400
Other				8	2		10
Prefer not to say	3		2	137	25	2	169
Grand Total	166	4	49	4206	1165	74	5664

2.4.2 Employee survey

LGBT+

How LGBT+ staff compared with the council's average

Gay Men	Gay Women	Bi-sexual	Other	Prefer not to say	
2	1	2	3	0	Positive score of 100%
49	32	61	17	1	Score > 3 % above benchmark
16	58	29	26	103	Score < 3 % below benchmark
16	24	24	11	13	Scores in between

Gay Men

LGBT+ Gay Men - areas which are significantly better than the council's average

- I am satisfied with the extent to which the organisation values my work
- Senior managers try to involve staff in important decisions
- Executive leaders act on staff feedback
- Keeping communities safe and well are the organisation's top priority
- I feel agile working has improved my productivity at work
- I feel I have the correct resources/equipment/tools/kit to do my job well when working in an agile manner
- Agile working has improved my work life balance

LGBT+ Gay Men - areas which are significantly worse than the council's average

- In the past 12 months, I have attended work when I have not felt well enough to perform my duties
- I often think about leaving this organisation
- I will probably look for a job at a new organisation in the next 12 months
- I am not planning on leaving this organisation



Gay Women

LGBT+ Gay Women - areas which are significantly better than the council's average

- Communication between the executive leaders and staff is effective
- I feel positive about the flexibility and lack of distractions which agile working provides.

LGBT+ Gay Women - areas which are significantly worse than the council's average

- I have adequate resources to do my work
- My annual appraisal has definitely improved how I do my job
- My annual appraisal has definitely left me feeling that my work is valued by the organisation
- My manager has definitely supported me to receive training, learning or development.

Bi-Sexual

LGBT+ Bi-sexual - areas which are significantly better than the council's average

- I am able to meet all the conflicting demands on my time at work
- I have adequate resources to do my work
- My manager has definitely supported me to receive training, learning or development
- I feel I have the correct level of IT training to work in an agile way
- Agile working has improved my work life balance
- I feel positive about the reduction in stress levels which come with agile working.

LGBT+ Bi-sexual - areas which are significantly worse than the council's average

- In the last month, I have not seen any errors, near misses, or incidents, including data breaches that could have hurt or been detrimental to staff
- In the last month, I have not seen any errors, near misses, or incidents, including data breaches that could have hurt or been detrimental to customers/service users/residents.

Other

LGBT+ Other- areas which are significantly better than the council's average

- I have adequate resources to do my work
- Team members often meet to discuss the team's effectiveness
- Team members communicate closely to achieve the team's objectives
- In the past 12 months, I have not attended work when I did not feel well enough to do so
- I am definitely aware of the organisation's statement of values.

LGBT+ Other - areas which are significantly worse than the council's average

- I am satisfied with opportunities for a flexible working pattern
- I often think about leaving this organisation, and am planning to do so.



2.4.3 Employee survey findings summary

When comparing results of those who declare themselves as LGBT+, Gay women had a much less positive experience than Gay men, people who identify as Bi-sexual or the council average. They were most unhappy with support from their manager, the positive effect of their appraisal and having adequate resources to do their job. They had experienced less physical or verbal abuse and were positive about agile working.

Gay men were more likely to come to work when feeling unwell and also to consider leaving the organisation. However, they were satisfied with the extent the organisation values their work, felt involved in important decisions by senior managers and believed Executive leaders act on their feedback.

Bi-sexual staff were less likely to report incidents or mistakes but were positive about agile working and meeting conflicting demands upon their time.

Other LGBT+ staff were positive about communication within their team and having adequate resources to do their job but were still more likely to look for another job outside of the organisation.

2.4.4 What do we have in place?

- The council has established a LGBT+ employees' network group to help work towards improving workplace experience for LGBT+ people.
- The council is a Stonewall Diversity Champion and in 2019 was named in the Top 100 Employers in the country for its commitment to equality and diversity by Stonewall
- LGBT+ Champions who acts as a source of advice and guidance, and a LGBT+ network group which acts as a support network for our staff and contributes advice and guidance to the organisation on policy and practice, as well as supporting campaigns and equality and diversity initiatives supported by the council including Northumberland Pride which the council sponsors
- The council attends the Northumberland Pride event to demonstrate their commitment to LGBT+ equality
- The HR policies and E&D Policy make a specific commitment to LGBT+ equality, and LGBT+ employees have the same rights under employment policies and entitlement to benefits such as pensions as other employees.
- Staff training includes specific reference to LGBT+ equality
- We have clear procedures for dealing with bullying in the workplace based on sexual orientation, gender identity or trans status
- We have a Trans Inclusion policy and offer support to trans applicants with the application process
- Safecall telephone line to report concerns anonymously. Information about how to make services LGBT inclusive information has been shared with this provider to inform their staff training.

2.4.5 What else do we need to do?

- We will continue to support the LGBT+ staff network
- Continue to support and attend the Northumberland Pride event
- We need to build the confidence of LGBT+ employees to report any concerns and are working with the LGBT+ staff group on actions to address this
- Use the results of the staff survey to identify further areas for improvement and development
- We have developed 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 and encourage employees to feel confident in declaring monitoring data

2.5 Age

With improvements in health care and lifestyle, life expectancy in the UK is increasing. Changes to the State Retirement Pension mean that people will be working for longer, but there are also growing numbers of people who want to remain economically active. However, a 2019 survey by the life insurance provider, Aviva found that more than a third of employees felt that there was age discrimination in the workplace, and half of those aged 60+ who were interviewed as part of the survey felt that they were not ready to retire.

At Northumberland County Council, we recognise the value that older employees bring to the organisation. Older employees bring with them a wealth of skills, work experience and life experience which are invaluable to an organisation whose purpose is to deliver services across the breadth of the population.

2.5.1 Workforce Statistics

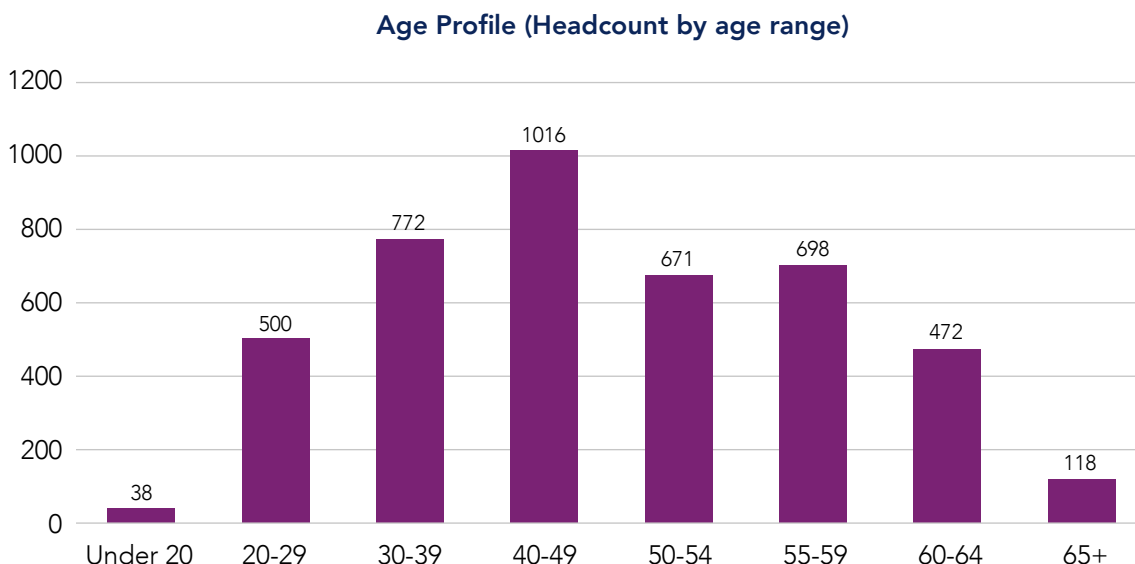
The shift in the age balance of the population covered by the council is part of a broader national and international pattern. However, there are a higher proportion of people aged over 65 in our local population as compared with the regional and national picture. Table 7 presents a profile of Northumberland’s 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 2:

Figure 2 Age Profile of the Council Workforce





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

Table 8 Age profile by Pay Band

Pay Band	Under 20	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65+	Grand Total
Apprentice and Band 1	30	51	18	32	29	38	43	16	257
Bands 2 and 3	4	111	84	88	75	86	74	19	541
Bands 4 and 5	2	147	241	267	214	237	183	56	1347
Bands 6 and 7	0	66	149	225	110	146	65	13	774
Bands 8 and 9	0	61	111	155	102	85	47	5	566
Bands 10 and 11	0	3	28	65	38	33	18	1	186
Band 12 and above	0	0	5	33	29	27	7	2	103
Other	2	61	136	151	74	46	35	6	511
Grand Total	38	500	772	1016	671	698	472	118	4285

2.5.2 Employee Survey

When comparing to the council average

16-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-65	66+	
1	0	0	0	0	4	Positive score of 100%
69	49	13	11	3	61	Score > 3 % above benchmark
26	10	7	1	20	26	Score < 3 % below benchmark
23	58	97	105	94	23	Scores in between

Areas where staff aged 16-20 scored significantly worse than the council's average were:

- Time often/always passes quickly when I am working
- I have had an annual appraisal in the last 12 months
- Money worries have affected my ability to do my job in the past 6 months

Areas where staff aged 16-20 scored better than the council's average

- I am able to meet all the conflicting demands on my time at work
- I have adequate resources to do my work
- There are enough staff in my department for me to do my job properly
- I am satisfied with the extent to which organisation values my work

Areas where staff aged 21-30 scored significantly worse than the council's average:

- Time often/always passes quickly when I am working
- I have had an annual appraisal in the last 12 months
- I am definitely aware of the organisation's statement of values
- I am likely to look for a job at a new organisation in the next 12 months

Areas where staff aged 21-30 scored significantly better than the council's average:

- Communication between senior management and staff is effective
- Senior managers try to involve staff in important decisions
- Training, learning and development needs were definitely identified as part of my annual appraisal
- The organisation is respectful of the diverse communities we serve

Areas where staff aged 31-40 scored significantly worse than the council's average

- I have not felt pressure from colleagues to come to work when not feeling well enough.
- I have experienced harassment, bullying or physical/verbal abuse at work from residents/service users/customers, their relatives or other members of the public
- Money worries have not affected my ability to do my job in the past 6 months

Areas where staff aged 31-40 scored significantly better than the council's average

- In the past 12 months, I have not experienced musculoskeletal problems (MSK) as a result of work activities
- I feel agile working has improved my productivity at work
- Agile working has improved my work life balance

Only areas where staff aged 41-50 scores are worse than the council's average

- There are enough staff in my department for me to do my job properly

Areas where staff aged 41-50 scored better than the council's average

- I feel I have the correct resources/equipment/tools/kit to do my job well when working in an agile manner
- I feel I have the correct level of IT training to work in an agile way
- I feel positive about the reduction in travel and the choice of where I work which comes with agile working

Areas where staff aged 51-65 scored significantly worse than the council's average

- I feel agile working has improved my productivity at work
- I feel I have the correct resources/equipment/tools/kit to do my job well when working in an agile manner
- I feel I have the correct level of IT training to work in an agile way
- Agile working has improved my work life balance

Areas where staff aged 51-65 scored better than the council's average

- My annual appraisal has definitely left me feeling that my work is valued by the organisation
- I am unlikely to look for a job at a new organisation in the next 12 months
- Money worries have not affected my ability to do my job in the past 6 months

Areas where staff aged 66+ are significantly worse than the council's average

- Agile working has improved my work life balance
- I feel positive about the following aspects of agile working: Reduced Travel
- I feel positive about the following aspects of agile working: Less distractions

Areas where staff aged 66+ score significantly better than the council's average

- I often/always look forward to going to work
- I am often/always enthusiastic about my job
- I don't often think about leaving this organisation
- I am unlikely to look for a job at a new organisation in the next 12 months

2.5.3 Employee survey findings summary

For staff under 30 and over 66 they were generally quite happy at work, with their results more positive in many areas than the council average. The younger staff did have issues around receiving an annual appraisal, time not passing quickly at work and an interest in looking for a new role outside the organisation. However, they were positive about training and development, communication with senior managers and the organisational values.

The over 66s were very happy in their role and less keen than their colleagues on agile working. Those in the middle age groups, i.e., 31 to 65 were generally very similar to the council average, with a general contentment. The 30- to 50-year-olds were very positive about agile working and this was less so after 50 (possibly linked to family responsibilities). Staff over 50 seems to have less money worries and be less likely to look for a role outside the organisation.

2.5.4 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". 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.
- A corporate apprenticeship scheme targeted at young people.

2.5.5 What else do we need to do?

- Continue to monitor the workplace experience of employees of all ages
- Increase employee engagement in all areas and inclusive of those protective characteristics
- Post covid pandemic, it is likely that the Council will move to a more blended home / office approach to working, and we will consult widely with all employees on this approach. Latest staff survey results suggest that our older employees are less likely to enjoy home working whether it is because they are not accustomed to IT, or perhaps miss the companionship of an office environment. We will ensure that all concerns are taken into consideration when determining what the workspaces of the future will look like by implementing our WorkSmart programme which will enhance work / life balance for our employees by providing greater flexibility around how and where work is performed. It will simultaneously recognise that we cannot adopt a 'one size fits all' approach, and what works well for one employee does not necessarily work well for another.

2.6 Religion or Belief

In 2017, research by the ComRes faith research centre found that almost one million people in the UK have experienced religion or belief-related discrimination, and 17% of workers say they have seen someone else experience at least one form of bullying, harassment, or discrimination in the workplace. At Northumberland County Council we embrace diversity and tolerance and want our employees to feel comfortable that they can practice whatever religion or belief they choose; we believe that choice of religion is a fundamental right, and we will treat all of our employees equally despite their religious differences.

2.6.1 Workforce Statistics

Table 9 Religion/Belief of employees who have declared a religion as against the Northumberland Population.

Religion	% of Employees (% based on number of staff who declared a religion)	% Northumberland Population (from Census 2011)
Did not declare	84.60%	
Christian	7.31%	68.60%
No Religion	7.13%	23.90%
Other	0.00%	0.30%
Buddhist	0.09%	0.20%
Muslim	0.09%	0.30%
Hindu	0.00%	0.10%
Sikh	0.18%	0.20%
Prefer not to say	0.50%	6.40%

In relation to new applicants, Figure 4 illustrates the profile relating to the applicant’s religion and beliefs:

Figure 4 Religion/Belief Profile of New Applicants

Religion	Headcount
Any Other religion (please state)	43
Buddhist	18
Christian (including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations)	2349
Hindu	12
Jewish	3
Muslim	69
No Answer Given	533
No religion	2633
Sikh	4

2.6.2 What do we have in place?

- Our mandatory Equality and Diversity training HR policies and Equalities Policy make specific reference to religion and belief equality
- Our mandatory equality and diversity training covers religion and belief
- Flexible working arrangements are in place to support employees who make need time off to practice their religion
- Ability to use rooms for prayer if required
- Safecall telephone line to report concerns anonymously

2.6.3 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.
- Ensure new and revised building works incorporate spaces for quiet contemplation and/religious worship.
- Ensure food provided at council facilities reflect religious and vegetarian/vegan requirements.
- Increase employee engagement in all areas and inclusive of those protective characteristics

2.7 Transgender

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 people who declare and such figures undoubtedly represent only a proportion of those affected. Current estimates are that approximately 1% of the population is Trans*. Trans* is used to include people with different gender identities as well as people who are transitioning from the gender they were assigned at birth. The council does not currently record this information; in common with a national increase there has been an increase in Northumberland of the number of people seeking support with gender identity issues.

2.7.1 What do we have in place?

- HR policies include specific reference to trans* and gender identity equality
- The council has recently adopted a specific trans policy which provides a guide for supporting trans* employees, identifies the support offered to staff who are transitioning and outlines the expectations of behaviour for other members of staff in relation to gender identity
- Staff training makes specific reference to trans* and gender identity equality
- As an employer, the council has a duty to protect an individual's right to privacy. 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 considering the above
- We have an LGBT+ Champion who acts as a source of advice and guidance and a staff group which includes trans* and gender identity support as well as a LGBT+ staff network group
- Safecall telephone line to report concerns anonymously this is open to all staff and is LGBT+ inclusive

2.7.2 What else do we need to do?

- Continue to support the (Lesbian, Gay, Bi and Trans*) LGBT+ staff network
- Increase employee engagement in all areas and be inclusive of those with protected characteristics
- Develop our support for local trans services/organisations.
- Continue to support Pride events locally

2.8 Pregnancy and Maternity

The council's return to work rate following pregnancy is high; most women who take parental leave return to their former job following their leave period although the majority request a return on reduced hours following maternity leave.

2.8.1 What do we have in place?

- We have some specific policies relating to pregnancy and maternity e.g., maternity leave provisions, breastfeeding policy, a childcare voucher scheme and various time off provisions. The council also has an adoption leave policy, shared parental leave and other family friendly policies such as maternity support leave for those providing support 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
- The council also provides Keep in Touch days for employees on parental/adoption leave to allow specific times back at work during the period
- Flexible working arrangements are in place to support people who have childcare responsibilities.

2.8.2 What else do we need to do?

- Review the council's HR policies in respect of adoption, paternity and maternity, shared parental leave to ensure they meet legal requirements
- Constantly look at new and innovative ways to facilitate and support the transition back into the workplace following a period of maternity leave.

2.9 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 married. It is not clear what proportion of these people are in a civil partnership as this has only recently been recorded.

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



Northumberland had one of the highest numbers of civil partnership formations in the North East in 2010 (Office for National Statistics, 2011).



PART 2 – Conclusion

As a local leader and significant employer in Northumberland, we are proud of what we have achieved in terms of advancing equality and diversity within the organisation and across the county.

We have laid the foundations in our goal to be recognised as an employer of choice and a leader in inclusive employment both locally and nationally. However, we know that we still have much to do. We have identified areas for improvement and set out a number of strategies and action plans to address those areas where we are not as robust as we would like to be.

We will continue to improve by listening to our staff, stakeholders and communities, and acting upon their feedback. We have already taken steps to address a number of 'quick wins' in light of feedback received via the public consultation on our 2021-2025 Equality Objectives. We will ensure that we put equality, diversity and inclusion at the forefront of everything we do. We are confident that our 2022 Workforce Equality Analysis Report, we will be able to demonstrate significant and tangible progress, and look forwards to presenting our results.



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We will ensure that we put equality, diversity and inclusion at the forefront of everything we do.

