



Employee Workforce Report

2023 - 2024

Human Resources

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Executive Summary

This employee workforce report reviews data from April 2023 – March 2024. It aims to overview key workforce data and the relevant trends in the Councils workforce strategies and priorities.

This report also gives an overview of initiatives in place to support our colleagues over the past year.

Trend data is given through the report where its applicable or available. The workforce data included in this report is our directly employed workforce and does not include temporary agency workers. Statistics quoted are as of 01 April 2024.

Employee Lifecycle

The structure of the report represents workforce statistics based on a typical employee lifecycle. An employee lifecycle is a HR model that identifies the stages an employee advances through an organisation. For employees, it sets out a consistent series of steps through which their career might be expected to move and for the Council it provides a useful means of understanding the workforce.

The HR Team aim to support adaptable, flexible and modern organisation structures that can respond to the changing working environment and meet the Councils priorities. The Council continues to strive to be an 'employer of choice'. The below employee lifecycle will be used in this report to present the Councils current workforce statistics.



Our People

Corporate Workforce Data

Total employees and full time equivalent (FTE's) 2022 – 2024

	01 April 2022	01 April 2023	01 April 2024
Headcount	775	783	804
FTE	676	690	715

Breakdown of permanent, fixed term and casual employees 2022 - 2024

Role Type	01 April 2022	01 April 2023	01 April 2024
Permanent	721	732	749
Fixed Term	34	37	42
Casual	20	14	13

Workforce Headcount and FTE by grade 01 April 2024

Grade Name	FTE	Headcount	Headcount % workforce
Apprentices	4	4	0.50%
BAND 1	5.1	17	2.11%
BAND 2	85	87	10.81%
BAND 3	61	78	9.69%
BAND 4	154	188	23.35%
BAND 5	94	102	12.67%
BAND 6	100	106	13.17%
BAND 7	100	106	13.17%
BAND 8	49	52	6.46%

BAND 9	37	39	4.84%
BAND 10	5.7	6	0.75%
BAND 11	13	13	1.61%
BAND 12*	7	7	0.87%

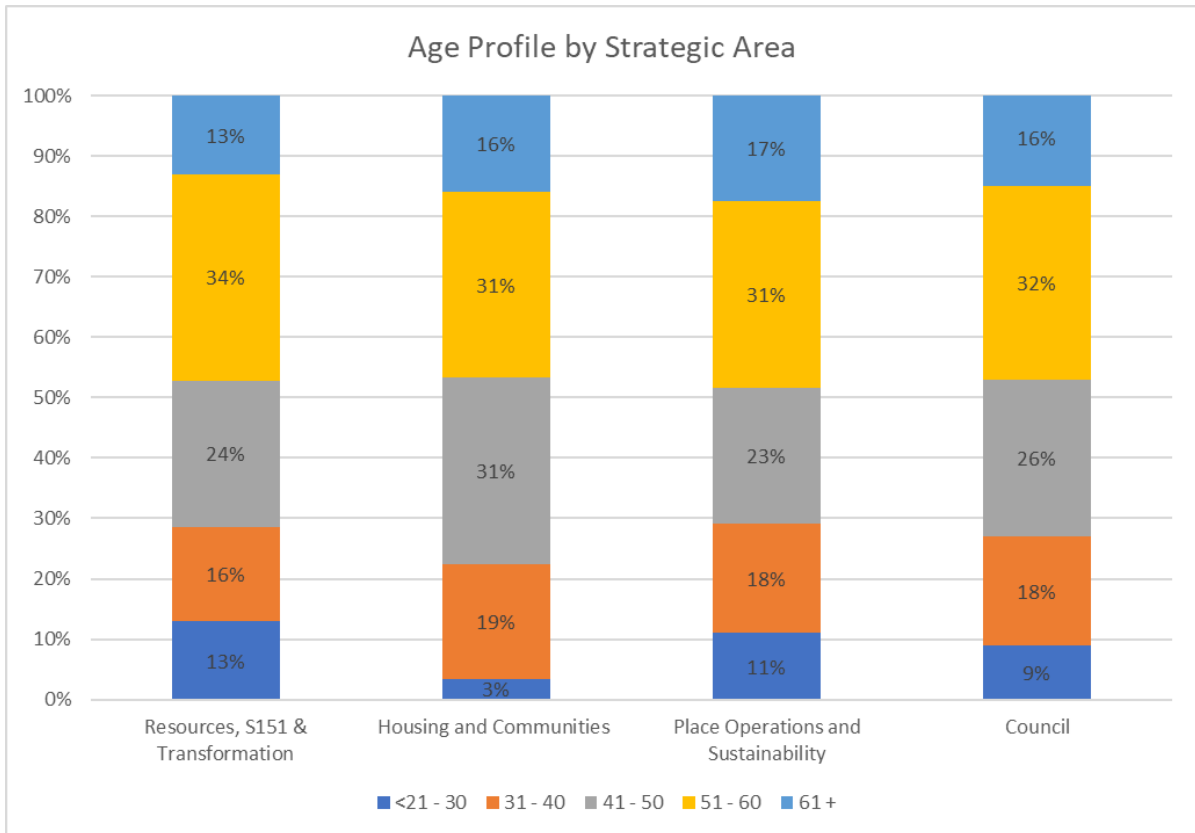
Diversity

The Equality Act 2010 requires public authorities to publish equality information on an annual basis. The diversity information contained within this report supports this and is used to support the building of valuable insight that will aid us in becoming more inclusive.

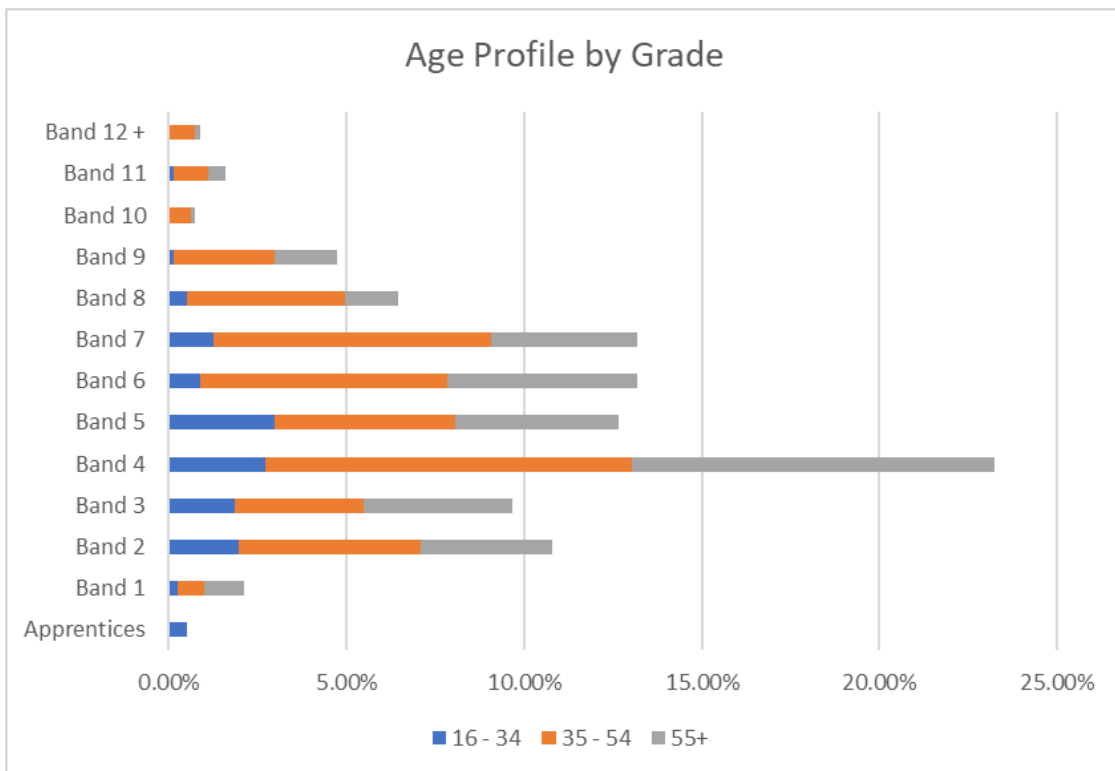
We continue to encourage employees to declare their personal diversity information, however it remains discretionary. In the last financial year we reviewed the language used to describe all diversity data and aligned this with the most recent census and ACAS recommendations. All colleagues were encouraged to review their personal information on the HR Management System and update this.

Age

Age profile by strategic area 01 April 2024



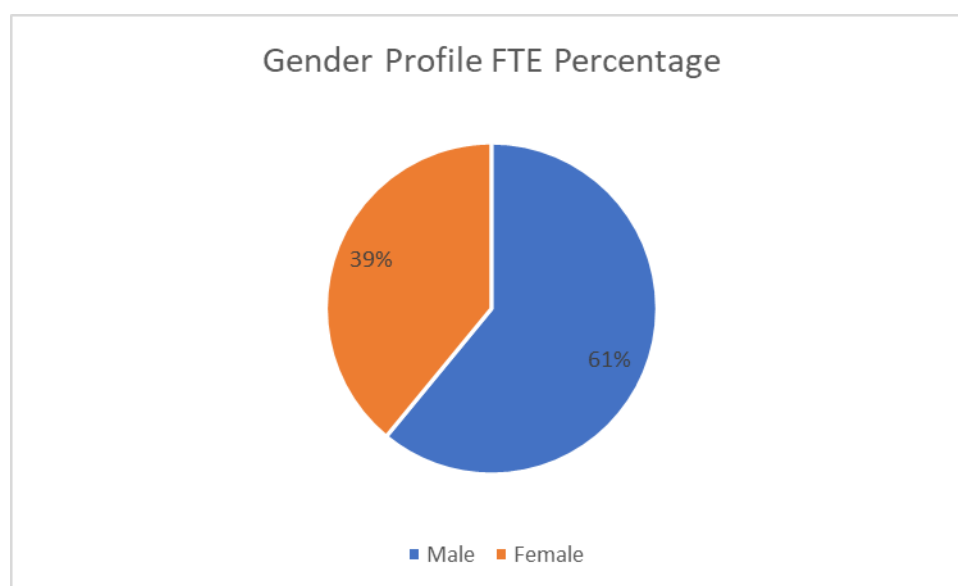
Age profile by grade 01 April 2024



Gender

Gender by headcount and FTE 01 April 2024

	Headcount	FTE
Male	465	439
Female	340	279



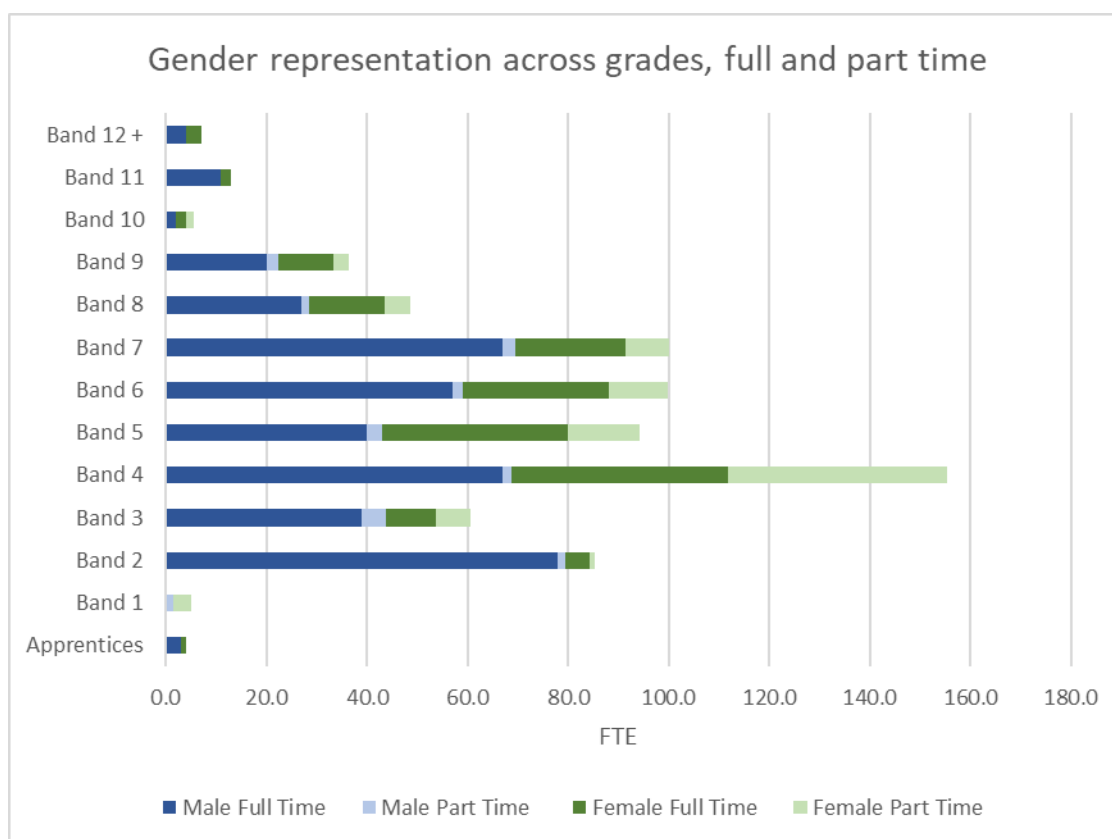
The Council's gender profile has remained the same as the previous year.

Gender FTE profile by grade

	Male Full Time	Male Part Time	Total	Female Full Time	Female Part Time	Total
Apprentices	3.0	0.0	3.0	1.0	0.0	1.0
Band 1	0.0	1.5	1.5	0.0	3.6	3.6
Band 2	78.0	1.4	79.4	5.0	0.8	5.8
Band 3	39.0	4.7	43.7	10.0	6.8	16.8
Band 4	67.0	1.9	68.9	43.0	43.4	86.4
Band 5	40.0	2.9	42.9	37.0	14.3	51.3

Band 6	57.0	2.1	59.1	29.0	11.6	40.6
Band 7	67.0	2.4	69.4	22.0	8.7	30.7
Band 8	27.0	1.6	28.6	15.0	5.1	20.1
Band 9	20.0	2.4	22.4	11.0	2.9	13.9
Band 10	2.0	0.0	2.0	2.0	1.7	3.7
Band 11	11.0	0.0	11.0	2.0	0.0	2.0
Band 12 +	4.0	0.0	4.0	3.0	0.0	3.0
Total	415.0	21.0	436.0	180.0	99.0	279.0

Gender FTE representation across grades, full and part time



This table and graph shows that females are more highly represented in part time roles across the organisation than males, however there are a mix of males and females across all grades.

The Councils Gender Pay gap information is detailed in a separate report to HR Committee.

Gender Identity:

Gender identity refers to a person's sense of their own gender, whether male, female or another category such as non-binary. This may or may not be the same as their sex registered at birth (census 2021). An employee can choose to record their gender identity neutrally using the title MX on the Councils HR Management System. As of 01 April 2024 0.12% of employees have used this title.

Ethnicity

Ethnicity by percentage of headcount 01 April 2024

Ethnicity	Percentage of headcount
Asian or Asian British	1%
Black, Black British, Caribbean or African	0.87%
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	0.37%
Other ethnic group	0.37%
Prefer not to say	4.97%
White	77.76%
No ethnicity data	14.66%

The table shows that 77.76% of our employees identify as white and 2.62% identify within an ethnic minority (the previous year was 2.18%). The census 2021 results show that 3.2% of New Forest residents do not identify as white.

The Council does not hold data for 14.66% of colleagues. This is down from 20.82% the previous year. In the previous 12 months the HR team have updated the sensitive information categories on the HR management system so they are reflective of the most recent census and have periodically raised the profile across the workforce of the importance of updating and providing personal information.

Disability

As of 01 April 2024, 33 employees (4.1% of the workforce) have recorded on the HR system they are managing a long term health condition or disability. This is an increase from 2% on the previous year. 10 of these employees are supported by reasonable adjustments to their role/working environment. We believe this figure is likely to be higher, with employees managing their health conditions themselves informally and not recording this on the HR management system.

However we are pleased to see an increase in the last year of colleagues feeling comfortable to record their health conditions. The HR team has worked hard to raise the profile of why recording this information is important and supportive of the colleague.

The census 2021 results show that 16.1% of New Forest residents identify as disabled and 6.1% of these feel they are limited a lot by their disability.

The management of reasonable adjustments was formalised in January 2023. This included:

- improved employee and management guidance to agree reasonable adjustments
- documenting tailored support
- ongoing review of tailored support (based on employee circumstances)

The Council continues to work with Occupational Health and Access to Work to support and implement employee adjustments.

Time off for new parents

Numbers of family leave from 01 April 2023 – 01 April 2024

Type of leave	Headcount
Maternity	9
Paternity	12
Shared Parental Leave	0
Adoption	0
Keep in touch days	2

There are many benefits to the employee and Council associated with the use of KIT days and therefore we would encourage the amount used to be higher. We will continue to work with managers supporting employees on maternity leave to encourage KIT days. Employees are well supported on their return from maternity leave by managers.

Employee Lifecycle – Attract

Disability Confident Employer

NFDC remains focused on our roles being attractive to as diverse a talent pool as possible, preferably reflective of our local labour market. This includes attracting new employees and developing existing employees.

The Council is an inclusive organisation and takes pride in valuing and celebrating diversity. As a public body we aim to ensure a zero tolerance approach to bullying and harassment across our workforce and respond promptly to any incidents.

We are a **Disability Confident Employer** which means that we're committed to equal opportunities for the whole workforce. We:

- aim to implement best practice in all ongoing and future work
- remove discrimination against any employee or applicant in their access to employment, training, working conditions, promotion or dismissal
- ensure our recruitment process is inclusive and accessible
- communicate and promote our vacancies in methods accessible for all
- offer interviews to any disabled person who meets the essential criteria for the role
- anticipate and make reasonable adjustments for staff and candidates, as required
- support existing employees who acquire a disability or long-term health condition.



Employee Benefits

A vital part of making sure we are an inclusive employer of choice is ensuring our benefits package remains attractive. This was reviewed in 2022 and resulted in a new and refreshed employee benefits package. This included the introduction of employee discounts across national and local retailers and access to the Governments Cycle to Work Scheme. The full employee benefits package is detailed externally to potential applicants: [Employee Benefits](#)

The benefits package was reviewed again in early 2024. The Council intends to implement a buying and selling annual leave policy for all colleagues.

Recruitment Application Form

In order to increase potential applicants from appropriate job seekers, we have introduced a sleek and simple new application form process; we now have a short form to be completed along with up to 500 word supporting statement, and asking for the applicant to upload a CV or other relevant supporting information in a format that they feel best shows off their skills. We have also created a slightly different form for operational roles, where CV's may not be held. We hope that this aids accessibility and is more inclusive as well as more attractive overall.

Recruitment YouTube Video

Many applicants are keen to know, 'why NFDC?' 'what makes it a great place to work?' We have created an inhouse short video with clips filmed by colleagues of their own thoughts on what makes us an employer of choice.

Candidate Pack

A vibrant and engaging candidate pack for all vacancies has been introduced. This sets out information about the New Forest and role, our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, employee benefits including wellbeing and our culture, Future New Forest and the Corporate Plan, personal development and survey information. An example can be seen in appendix 1.

Recruitment Events

We have attended 10 recruitment events over the past year. These have ranged from job centres, schools, colleges, and Get Inspired event covering the whole of Southampton and the New Forest for 13 - 14 year-olds. The aim is to promote the different types of careers we cover, and the type of apprenticeships we offer.

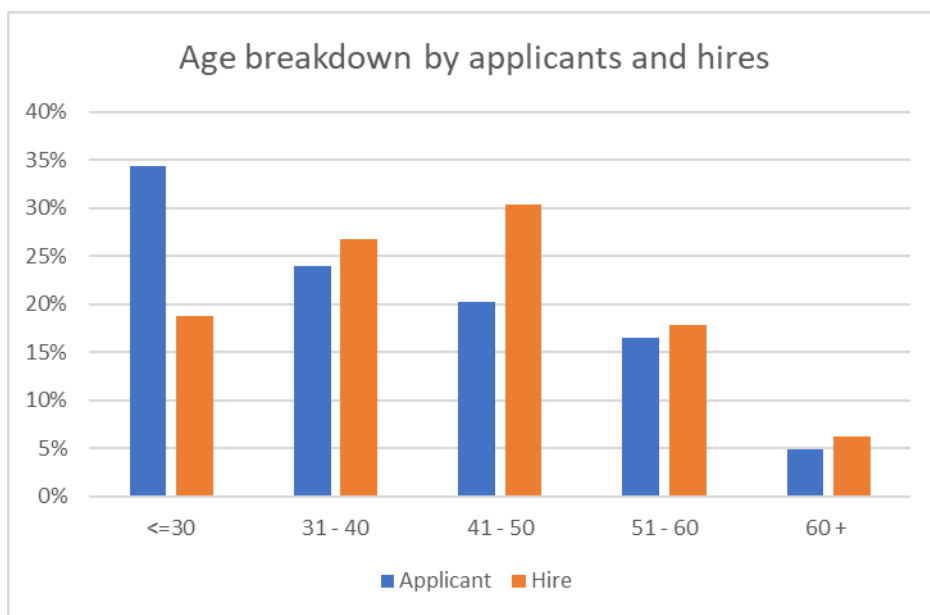
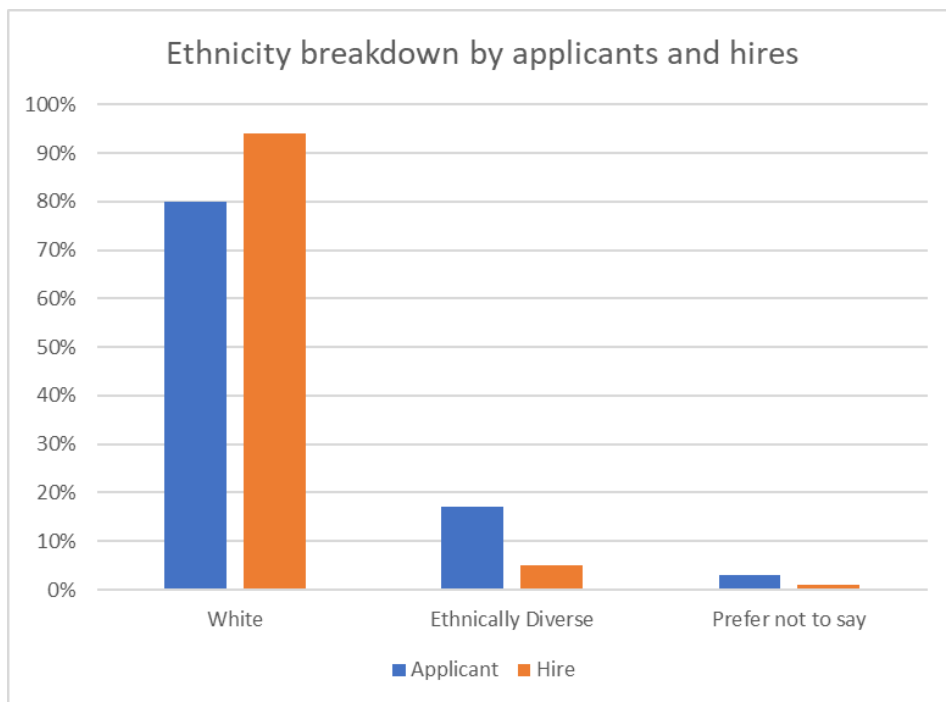
Diversity of Applicants and Hires

The table below shows the number of recruitment campaigns in 2023-2024 to the previous two years:

	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023/2024
Number of recruitment campaigns	248	177	179
Percentage of posts filled first time	92%	81.5%	78%
Number of applications	1573 (6.34 per campaign)	1162 (6.56 per campaign)	1752 (9.78 per campaign)

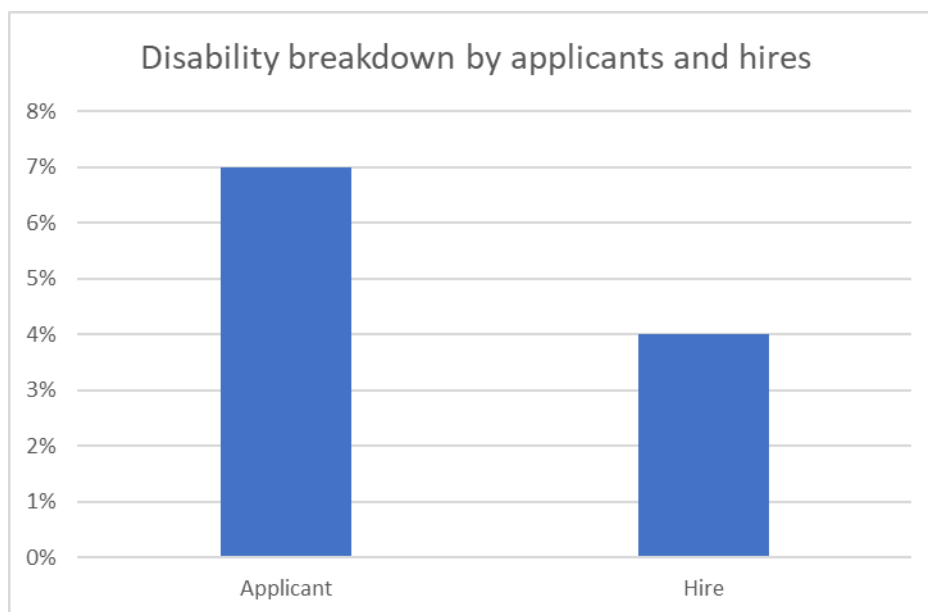
There were 1752 applicants in the last financial year and 133 new starters. 35% were female and 65% were male.

The below graphs identify the diversity of new starters in comparison to applicants. In the most recent financial year the Councils applicants were 17% ethnically diverse. This is increased from 13% in the previous year.



The Council is attracting applications from all age ranges which is reflected in the diversity of our roles and the full range of services that the Council delivers.

The Council continues to support all applicants and new starters who are managing long term health conditions with reasonable adjustments. The number of disabled applicants has increased from 5% to 7% in the last financial year.



Agency Spend Information

In exceptional circumstances Service Managers approve the use of agency workers, or for recruitment agencies to carry out searches for us.

Following a formal tender exercise renewed every 4 years, the Council has its own framework agreement with 15 agencies, and a procedure for how we work with these agencies including rates of pay and induction processes to ensure fair and safe employment. These agencies must be approached first, but if unsuccessful Managers may use any other suitable agency.

For the year to 31 March 2024 agency spend was:

Under the framework: £256,188.08

Outside the framework: £566,096.98

For the year to 31 March 2024, agency spend was as follows:

Non-agency framework usage:

Strategic Area Place, Operations and Sustainability:

Service	Spend
Cemeteries/ Grounds Maintenance	£10,800.00
Conservation and Urban Design	£49,317.82
Development Management	£9,285.00
Economic Development	£50,972.82
Policy and Plans	£9,256.32
Refuse Collection	£2,691.39
Strategic Director – Place, Operations and Sustainability	£231,897.50

Strategic Area Housing and Communities:

Housing Improvements	£1,670.99
Housing Maintenance – comp & asset man - electrical	£14,007.39
Health Commercial	£22,758.91
Pollution	£77,503.52

Strategic Area Corporate Resources, Section 151 and Transformation:

ICT Digital Projects & Services	£65,153.72
Information and Communication Technology	£18,181.60
Legal Services	£2,600.00

Agency framework usage

Strategic Area	Service	Spend
Place Operations and Sustainability	Cemeteries/ Grounds Maintenance	£37,964.66
	Refuse Collection	£106,388.43
	Street Scene	£37,894.46
	Environment Services Administration	£1,002.28
Corporate Resources, Section 151 and Transformation	Electoral Services	£29,983.22
Housing and Communities	Hsg Maint - Comp & Asset Man - Electrical	£10,188.77
	Hsg Maint - Operations Management	£7,298.86
	Hsg Maint - Shared Support Hub	£13,839.79
	Property Services Housing	£11,627.61

The Council continues to monitor agency spend and aims to minimise wherever possible. The front-line Refuse Collection service has continued to use agency staff to fulfil front-line service delivery over the last 12 months and this is always likely to be the case. Agency spend relating to Place, Operations and Sustainability was in response to essential work to support the development of the Solent Freeport. We have continued to manage staffing pressures in Environmental Health, essential works were required in air pollution to fulfil our statutory duties.

We asked managers who procured outside of the framework for their rationale, and all were due to not being able to source the right resource through the Framework suppliers. Some feedback was that the agencies within the framework provided no response at all – our framework agencies have been reminded that if they are contacted and unable to assist they should respond to confirm this.

Employee Lifecycle – Engage

New Starters

In 2023 – 2024 there were 133 new starters. The workforce profile of new starters was 35% female and 65% male. The average age of a new starter was 43.

All new starters complete a 6-month probationary period. The purpose of this is to allow both the new starter and the Council to establish their suitability for the role. 95% of new starters were successful in completing their probationary period in 2023 - 2024. This is very similar to the success rate in the previous year. If employee performance during probation establishes additional support is needed, the probation period may be extended by 3 months. This happened in 3% of probationary periods in 2023 – 2024.

Induction

All new employees are inducted into the Council through an induction process that is led and facilitated by their new line manager. This will include a role specific induction training plan. A corporate induction with HR forms part of the induction process. This is regularly reviewed and covers information relating to the Councils culture, size, leadership and political structure. It also supports new employees with relevant policies and the HR Management System. All new recruits also complete a suite of e-learning modules. All new line managers have an induction with the HR Advisory team to introduce them to people management at NFDC.

The HR Corporate induction is ordinarily delivered in person and new employees are encouraged to work with their line manager on role specific hybrid working during the initial stages of induction.

As part of an ongoing programme of employee engagement the Leader, Chairman of the Council, Chief Executive and Senior Leadership Team meet new starters on a quarterly basis. The primary purpose of this is to welcome and engage with new employees, provide more council wide context, and find out about their initial experiences.

Employee Groups

Colleagues are engaged through various employee groups, including Employee Forum, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Staff Group and the LGBT+ employee led network.

The Employee Forum has been meeting for a number of years and is facilitated by the chief executive to talk through corporate issues impacting staff and to allow colleagues the opportunity to raise questions as they wish.

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion staff group have been meeting since July 2023 and is facilitated by the chief exec. The aims of this group are to help raise awareness of EDI issues across NFDC, build trusting relationships and support meaningful change by contributing to NFDC equality objectives, policies and initiatives.

The LGBT+ employee network is our first peer led network and launched in June 2024. It is in its early stages of development but aims to support colleagues, share experience and contribute an LGBT+ perspective to corporate policies and initiatives.

Employee Lifecycle – Develop

Training and Development 2023 – 2024

We continue to invest informally and formally in our people. The below table compares training spend over the last three years.

	2021 – 2022	2022 – 2023	2023 - 2024
Amount Spent	£138,090	£211,131.87	£253,488.65
Spend per employee	£178.18	£269.64	£314.89
% of pay bill spend	0.44%	0.69%	0.76%

2023 - 2024	Amount Spent	Amount Budgeted
Corporate budget	39,522.25	23,150.00
Service area budget	213,966.40	224,920.00
Total	253,488.65	247,040.00

The overall training spend has increased this year, likely supported by the investment in a corporate leadership development programme. The Council continues to prioritise training and will expand the leadership development programme over the coming year.

When the Council set its 2024/25 budget, it included an increase of 8% to the overall training budget (now totalling £268,000 for the year).

The Council has also invested in the past year in building a learning management system which will support all colleagues with new eLearning packages and a wider training opportunities such as taught courses. It also allows training needs to added to job roles or teams and then progress can be tracked corporately by HR but also by managers and employees directly, as well as eLearning module owners (eg Health & Safety) to ensure full compliance.

The below table gives details of corporate training for the year to 31 March 2024. We are unable to report on service and role specific training as this will have been organised on a individual and service specific basis.

Corporate Training 2023 – 2024

Course	Internal/External	No. of sessions	No. of delegates
Brief Bites - Day to Day Performance Management	Internal	1	16
Brief Bites - Mental Health and Wellbeing for Managers	Internal	1	1
Brief Bites - Performance Management - when things go wrong	Internal	2	16
Brief Bites - Recruitment & Selection	Internal	1	13
Brief Bites - Sickness & Absence	Internal	1	14
Brief Bites - Apprenticeships	Internal	2	2
Coaching Skills	External	2	15
Inclusive Language Training	External	4	43
Neurodiversity	External	2	19
Operational Leadership Training	External	2	28

In the last year the Council has run a leadership development programme for 25 leaders across the Council supported by an external trainer. 2 cohorts were run which included 4 modules and 5 masterclasses. The leadership development programme is intended to be extended to middle managers in the coming 12 months.

The Council has various e-learning modules all employees complete depending on their role. Most modules need regular renewal and are alerted to this through the new learning management system. Module owners have access to a weekly report on who has completed the module and those that are outstanding.

The LMS details all training undertaking by employees, records can be viewed by manager and employee as well as HR. Corporate training course dates and details are recorded in the system and employees can self book, with alerts to their manager for approval.

Inclusion and wellbeing

Inclusion and wellbeing continues to be ongoing themes for our development. Wellbeing support for all employees remains a priority. The below lists various preventative support promoted by the HR Team:

- Ongoing promotion of the Employee Assistance Programme offering 24/7 support for all of life's events, including emotional/personal, legal, financial, addiction and career
- A suite of Wellbeing Champions are available and the benefits of using the support promoted to the workforce. Regular group meetings are held to improve skills and a consistent approach.
- Championing managers to support employees with Wellbeing Action Plans. These help managers to develop an awareness of working style, stress triggers and responses. The aim is to support employee wellbeing at work.
- Ongoing review of up to date and ongoing mental health resources on our pages

All employees complete Equality training every two years. All colleagues are currently completing the new content on the learning management system as they are now required to complete two modules. One focuses on Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging and the other on Dignity at Work to support colleagues in understanding the impact of their behaviour on others.

Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships in the Council continue to be offered, providing skills development and training pathways that benefits department service areas and employee professional development. These are available as new apprenticeship contracts or as a training route for existing employees.

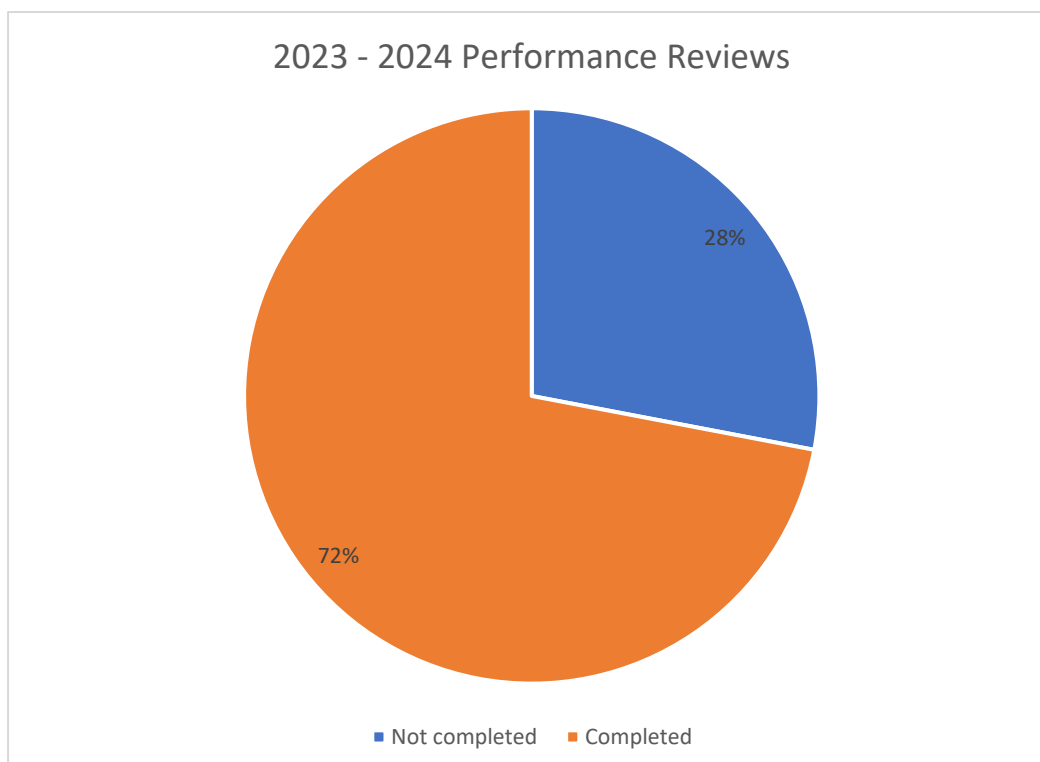
Since the Apprenticeship Levy was introduced in 2017, the Council has enrolled nearly 70 employees onto 15 different types of apprenticeships that's include programmes for business administration, customer service, mechanic, management, landscaping, accounts, ICT and more.

In the last year 12 employees have been enrolled on to programmes and continue to support the work of the Council whilst learning new skills.

Year	Number of Apprenticeships
2017 - 2018	22
2018 - 2019	4
2019 - 2020	15
2020 - 2021	4
2021 - 2022	4
2022 - 2023	8
2023 - 2024	12

Performance Reviews

The Council has an annual performance review system aiming to measure employee performance and review training and development opportunities. In the year 2022 – 2023 there was a completion rate of 61%. We have continued to communicate on the benefits of performance reviews as well as a clear timescale for them to be completed across all levels.



HR Ratios

The table below shows the number of HR employees per headcount of the Council. This figure does not include those employed in Payroll but does include HR Advisory support to the National Park.

	HR Headcount	Headcount (including NPA)	Ratio
2022/2023	8 (6.67 FTE)	783 (857)	1:98 (1:107)
2023/2024	10 (8.67)	804 (877)	1:80 (1:88)

The latest Brightmine (formerly Xpert HR) survey from January 2024 for both private and public sector shows an average of employees per HR practitioner as 1:74.

Perform and progress

The HR Advisory Team train and support managers on effective day to day management to prevent employee issues escalating. The primary focus is always initially on early, informal resolution to support employees moving forward. The Performance Review process supports managers to hold meaningful conversations about performance and provide support and development where it is needed.

There are a small proportion of under performing employees who despite proactive management support are managed using the Councils Capability or Disciplinary policies.

Performance

Our policies support informal resolution of issues wherever possible, therefore we do not expect to see high number of formal performance management cases

Resolution Type	Number of cases
Informal capability	3
Resignation	1

Formally resolved	0
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Misconduct

The Council continues to resolve misconduct cases promptly and aims to resolve informally where possible. The aim is to understand issues and address learning points moving forward to prevent future issues from happening. In 2022 – 2023 there were 24 resolved cases, 8 of these were formal hearings. This year has seen an increase in 7% of total cases

Resolution Type	Number of cases
Informally resolved	14
Stage 1, 2 or 3 hearings	9
Stage 4 hearings	2
Number of dismissals	1
Number of appeals	0

Resolving Workplace Issues

The Council always aims to resolve issues informally between employees and managers as promptly as possible. However there are occasions where this isn't successful or appropriate and therefore the employee may submit a grievance. In 2023 – 2024 there were 5 resolved cases, of which 4 were resolved informally. This is a reduction from 11 in the previous year.

The Council has reviewed its approach to bully and harassment in the last year, this has included a refreshed, stand along policy separate to the grievance procedure. It aims to resolve issues quickly and fairly for all involved and supports our culture of a zero tolerance approach to any bullying and harassment.

Resolution type	Number of cases
Informally resolved	4
Stage 1	1

Stage 1 not upheld	1
Number of stage 1s progressed to stage 2	0

Attendance Management

A full attendance management report is available online. This shows that in 2023 – 2024 the percentage of working time lost was 3.53%, this is reduced from 3.92% in the previous year.

Flexible Working

In the past year there were 10 flexible working requests. 2 of these were initially declined. There was one appeal which was latterly supported.

Policy Reviews

Since April 2024 there have been multiple employment legislation changes impacting HR policies. This includes the protection afforded to employees returning from maternity or shared parental leave, time off for carers leave, flexible working and the duty for employers to prevent sexual harassment.

The HR Team have reviewed all policies impacted and used the opportunity to ensure they are reflective and supportive of our workforce.

The Council has introduced Support Leave to enable colleagues with caring responsibilities up to one working weeks paid leave in a year. The HR Team will review the use of this in the coming year and ensure it remains supportive.

The Bullying and Harassment policy has been reviewed and implemented from January 2024 to reflect a simplified resolution process and one the focuses on supporting our inclusive culture that is free from harassment.

Employee Lifecycle – Reward

Reward

We reward and recognise our people in many ways, both formally and informally. We value our workforce and this is shown in their commitment to their work and our communities.

In addition to our salary and expense arrangements, managers can reward exceptional performance through increment advancements or bonuses (where appropriate). The table below details additional pay information in comparison to the previous year.

	2022/23	2023/24
Double Increments/Advancements	6 employees (5 females, 1 male)	10 employees (3 males, 7 females)
Increment Withheld	0 employees	1 employee
Increment Progression (in line with T&C's)	256 employees	245 employees
No increment due (top of band, at bar in career grade, on fixed term contract, casual or started after September)	537 employees	564 employees
Additional payments (bonus/market supplement/honorarium)	Bonus: 12 Honorarium: 32 Market Supplement: 88	Bonus: 9 Honorarium: 30 Market Supplement: 85

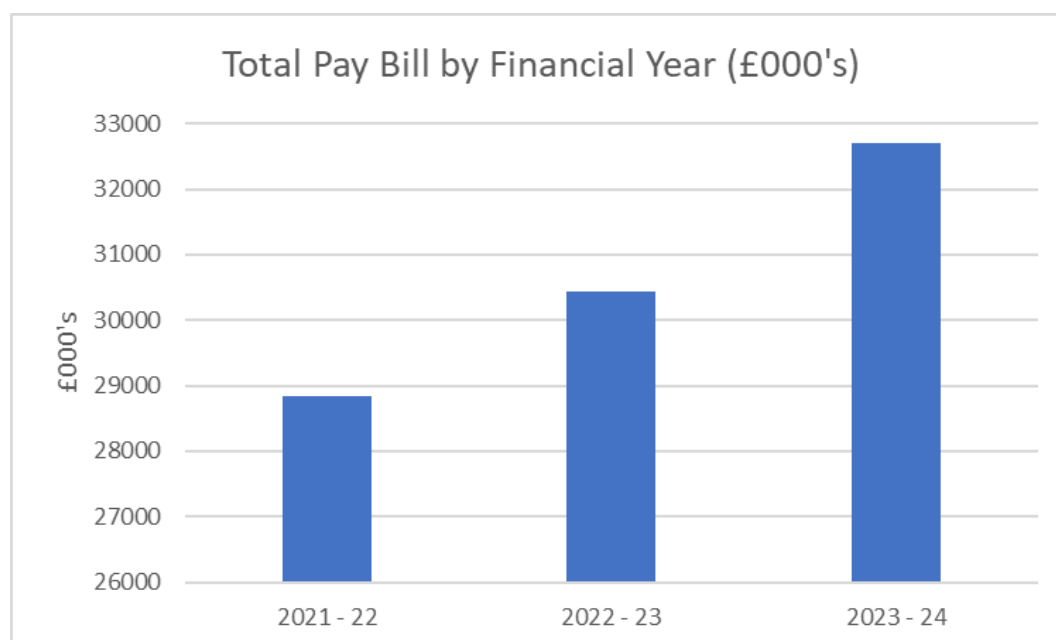
In August 2023 the Council extended its use of Market Supplements to include Bands 11 and 12. This was in response to recruitment difficulties at senior levels. In exceptional circumstances, and where approved by relevant parties, the market supplement could be increased up to 15%. This applies to all posts up to and including Band 12.

In accordance with the Local Government Association guidance on the Government's requirement for reporting remuneration relationships (the ratio between the highest paid employee and the median average earning across the organisation as a multiple). Based on pre 23/24 pay award salaries for 1st April 24:

Chief Executive Remuneration	£137,504
Employee Median Average Remuneration	£28905
Ratio	4.76

Annual Pay Information

	2021 - 22	2022 - 23	2023 - 24
Total Pay Bill (£'000's)	28842	30429	32703



2023 - 2024	£	Total £	Paybill as %
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Total Gross Pay	26,304,137.56		
Employers NI	2,517,448.02		
Employers Super	4,479,334.78	33,300,920.36	
General Fund Original Budgeted Expenditure	75,129,050		
HRA Original Budgeted Expenditure	32,702,830	107,831,880	30.88%

Employee Lifecycle – Retain

Retain

We aim to support employee retention with positive employee engagement, proactive health and wellbeing support and reward a range of benefits and development opportunities.

Equally the Council has appropriate mechanisms in place to support our people to move on when performance does not meet organisational expectations.

External turnover rates 2021 – 2024:

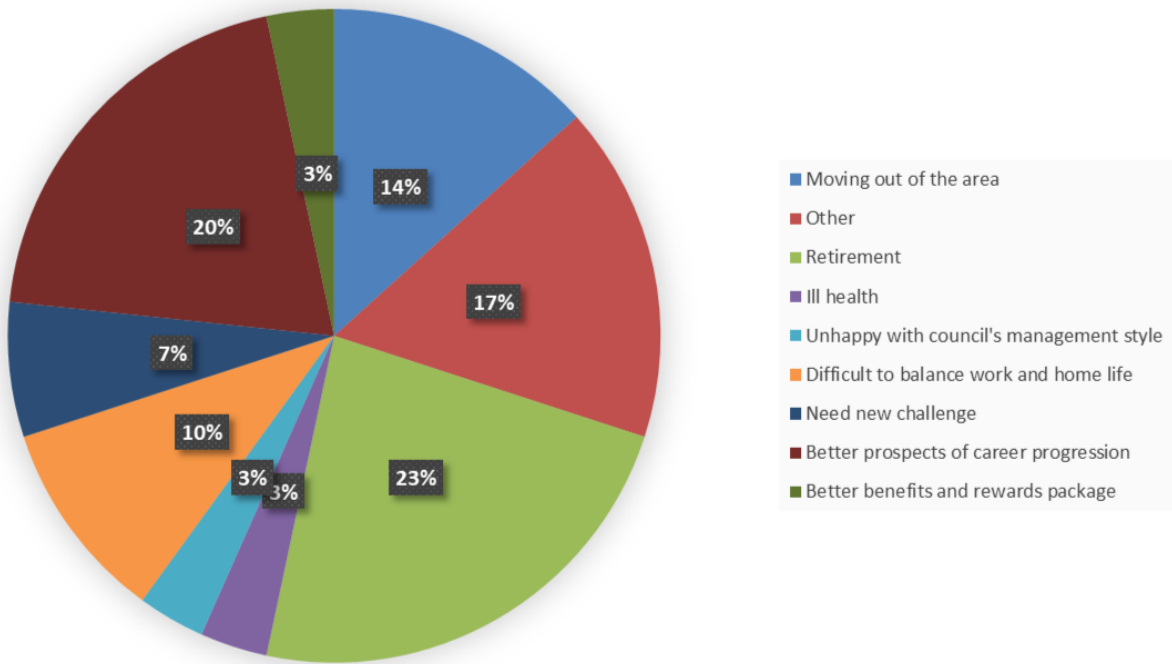
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Voluntary Resignations	17.76%	12.32%	11.31%
Contract Terminations	3.6%	1.16%	2.36%
Turnover	21.36%	13.48%	13.68%

28% of new starters left within 12 months of joining, 9% of those were either on fixed term contracts, or did not meet the requirements of their probation. 51% of those who left were in office-based roles, 49% in operational roles.

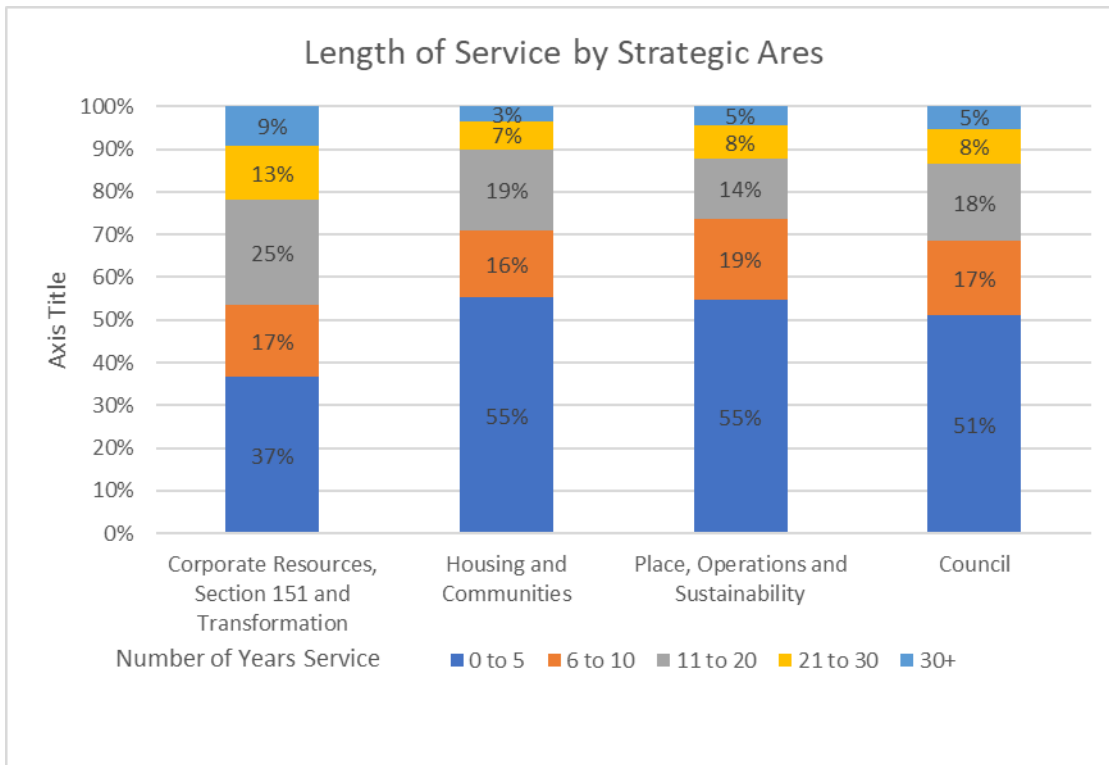
Reasons for Leaving

55% of leavers who were sent the leavers questionnaire, completed it. The highest reason for leaving was retirement, followed by better prospects of career progression. The leavers questionnaire data was used to inform a recent employee benefits review and will be used to support the development of the people strategy.

Main Reason for Leaving NFDC



Length of Service



Conclusions

Our People

Our workforce profile has remained primarily the same as the previous year. We have made positive progress encouraging colleagues to update their personal information on the HR Management System in the previous 12 months, decreasing our unknown ethnicity data from 17.75% to 14.66%.

It is primarily representative of the New Forest Community according to the 2021 census ([New Forest population change, Census 2021 – ONS](#)).

Attract

The number of applicants per recruitment campaign has increased from 6.56 per campaign in the previous year to 9.78.

The diversity of applicants continues to increase, 17% were ethnically diverse in comparison to 13% the previous year.

Engage

All new employees are welcomed to the Council with induction remaining critical to the process.

Develop

We continue to invest in our employees through an increased corporate training budget by 8% for the 24/25 financial year, and role specific training. 0.76% of the pay bill was spent on training in 2023-24, increased from 0.69% the previous year.

Casework and workplace issues continue to contribute to the workload of the HR team. The team aims to support managers in finding the right resolutions to these issues.

Reward

Reward remains critical to our people. Market Supplements were extended to Bands 11 and 12 in August 2023 in response to senior recruitment difficulties.

Retain

Over two thirds of our colleagues are at the top of their salary scale, which indicates healthy retention levels. External turnover has increased from 13.48% to 13.68% but remains at a healthy level.

Next Steps

We continue to explore different ways to analyse and present workforce data to understand more about our people. In the next 12 months the HR Advisory team will be looking to develop improved manager dashboards which will enable managers to have access to their team data to make informed decisions, as well as create oversight for each directorate and the whole organisation.

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion staff group continue to meet quarterly, reviewing processes and policies and raising awareness for EDI issues across the workforce. The Councils LGBT+ Network is an extension of this, supporting colleagues across the Council. Our equality objective 'encourage diversity and champion equality within our workplace, developing and supporting an inclusive working environment where all staff are respected with zero tolerance of bullying and harassment' will be a focus of the EDI group over the coming 12 months. The HR Team will support the Council to meet the recent legislative requirement to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace, with the support of the EDI group.

The Employee Forum continue to meet quarterly raising and resolving relevant issues. Following the recent staff survey the employee forum will review results to agree actions the employee forum can support.

We continue to embed health and wellbeing into the organisation and support managers and employees in this. We do this by proactively supporting all colleagues with wellbeing champions and an established Employee Assistance Programme. We also use tools to support colleagues managing wellbeing issues, for example the HSE Stress Questionnaire and Wellbeing Action Plans. The Councils proactive approach to supporting employees with reasonable adjustments remains a priority and colleagues supported by reasonable adjustments are recorded using a plan with regular manager reviews. The HR Advisory Team will be implementing a 3 yearly rolling people policy review programme, ensuring policies align with our values, promoting empathy and fairness. This aims to support colleagues maintain their wellbeing at work with clear, with supportive employee policies.

The employee benefits package has been reviewed in the past 12 months and with the support of EMT a buying and selling annual leave policy for all colleagues will be implemented from April 2025.

The Learning Management System is now live and being embedded across the workforce. Over the coming 12 months the system will be developed to focus on compliance first, before moving on to support workforce develop and career pathways.

There are 40 managers undertaking a Leadership Development programme from September – December 2024. There will be a further 20 starting the programme in April 2025. Further leadership development opportunities will be developed as part of the people strategy, with the first action being to establish leadership behaviours and a competency framework in 2025.

Recruitment processes continue to be improved, earlier this year the application form was simplified and a candidate pack introduced for all vacancies. This has resulted in positive feedback from both candidates and recruiting managers. These improvements aim to enhance process efficiency as well as ensure quality diverse candidates are attracted and hired.

The report highlights that 28% of new starters leave within the first 12 months. The HR team will review the induction process, considering options of group induction to improve the induction experience.

A people strategy is being developed in line with future new forest which will use this workforce data, alongside a wealth of other data and insight to provide a clear vision of how we will deliver on our employer of choice commitment. The strategy will help shape the future workforce through recruitment, retention, skills and career development to meet our needs and the expectations of future and existing staff.