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DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

Committee: Personnel Committee

Date: Wednesday 25 June 2025

Time: 6.30 pm

Venue 39 Castle Quay, Banbury, OX16 5FD

Membership

Councillor Amanda Watkins (Chair)

Councillor Rebecca Biegel
Councillor Phil Chapman
Councillor Nicholas Mawer
Councillor Lynne Parsons
Councillor Chris Pruden

Councillor Gemma Coton (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Chris Brant
Councillor Harry Knight
Councillor Fiona Mawson
Councillor Rob Pattenden
Councillor Barry Wood

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitute Members

2. Declarations of Interest

Members are asked to declare any interest and the nature of that interest which they may have in any of the items under consideration at this meeting.

3. Urgent Business

The Chairman to advise whether they have agreed to any item of urgent business being admitted to the agenda.

4. Minutes (Pages 5 - 10)

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 26 March and 21 May 2025.

5. Chair's Announcements

To receive communications from the Chair.

6. Requests to Address the Meeting

The Chair to report on any requests to address the meeting.

7. Workforce Profile Statistics - Quarter 4 of 2024-25 (Pages 11 - 38)

Report of Assistant Director Human Resources

Purpose of report

To provide the Personnel Committee with an update on Cherwell District Council's workforce including measuring staff well-being and to highlight the actions officers are taking to address any issues.

Recommendations

The Personnel Committee resolves to:

- 1.1 Review and note the workforce data for quarter 4 of 2024/25 provided in appendix one, devised to provide insight that will enable officers of CDC to address challenges and efficiencies in the workforce more efficiently.

8. Policy Review Updates (Pages 39 - 66)

Report of Assistant Director Human Resources

Purpose of report

To seek approval from the Personnel Committee on proposed changes to existing HR policies.

Recommendations

The Personnel Committee resolves:

- 1.1 To review and approve the following policies for adoption:
 - a. Neonatal Leave and Pay Policy
 - b. Induction Policy

Councillors are requested to collect any post from their pigeon hole in the Members Room at the end of the meeting.

Information about this Meeting

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence should be notified to democracy@cherwell-dc.gov.uk or 01295 221534 prior to the start of the meeting.

Declarations of Interest

Members are asked to declare interests at item 2 on the agenda or if arriving after the start of the meeting, at the start of the relevant agenda item.

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Queries Regarding this Agenda

Please contact Martyn Surfleet, Democratic and Elections democracy@cherwell-dc.gov.uk, 01295 221534

Shiraz Sheikh
Monitoring Officer

Published on Tuesday 17 June 2025

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Cherwell District Council

Personnel Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Personnel Committee held at 39 Castle Quay, anbury, OX16 5FD, on 21 May 2025 at 7.32 pm

Present:

Councillor Amanda Watkins (Chairman)
Councillor Gemma Coton (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Rebecca Biegel
Councillor Chris Brant
Councillor Nicholas Mawer
Councillor Fiona Mawson
Councillor Lynne Parsons
Councillor Rob Pattenden
Councillor Chris Pruden
Councillor Barry Wood

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Phil Chapman
Councillor Harry Knight

1 Appointment of Chairman for the municipal year 2025/2026

It was proposed by Councillor Parsons and seconded by Councillor Coton that Councillor Watkins be appointed Chair of the Personnel Committee for the municipal year 2025/2026.

There were no further nominations.

Resolved

- (1) That Councillor Amanda Watkins be appointed Chair of the Personnel Committee for the municipal year 2025/2026.

2 Appointment of Chairman for the municipal year 2025/2026

It was proposed by Councillor Watkins and seconded by Councillor Brant that Councillor Coton be appointed Vice-Chair of the Personnel Committee for the municipal year 2025/2026.

There were no further nominations.

Resolved

- (1) That Councillor Gemma Coton be appointed Vice-Chair of the Personnel Committee for the municipal year 2025/2026.

The meeting ended at 7.33 pm

Chair:

Date:

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Cherwell District Council

Personnel Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Personnel Committee held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA, on 26 March 2025 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Amanda Watkins (Chairman)
Councillor Gemma Coton (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Rebecca Biegel
Councillor David Hingley
Councillor Nicholas Mawer
Councillor Fiona Mawson
Councillor Lynne Parsons
Councillor Chris Pruden
Councillor Barry Wood

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Phil Chapman
Councillor Harry Knight

Also Present Virtually:

Councillor Chris Brant, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services

Officers:

Claire Cox, Assistant Director Human Resources
Martyn Surfleet, Democratic and Elections Officer

25 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interests.

26 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

27 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 27 November 2024, were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the correction of the following minor amendment:

That Councillor Gordon Blakeway be listed as substitute for Councillor David Hingley.

28 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no Chairman's Announcements.

29 **Requests to Address the Meeting**

There were no requests to address the meeting.

30 **Gender Pay Gap Report**

The Committee considered a report from the Assistant Director Human Resources which provided the Committee with the latest Gender Pay Gap report for information ahead of it being published on the council's website by 30 March 2025.

In introducing the report, the Portfolio Holder Corporate Services advised Members that the Gender Pay Gap report outlined a mean difference in pay between men and women of 4.97%, with men earning an average of £1.01 more an hour than women. For the third year in a 4-year period, there had been no median pay difference between men and women. Even with a mean difference of 4.97% CDC remained significantly lower than the national public sector mean pay gap of 12.9%, and the median pay gap of 13.5%.

In response to a question regarding progress in addressing the gender balance in more male dominated departments, the Assistant Director Human Resources explained that the recruitment process sought to place the best candidate for the role wherever possible and that departments such as Waste Collection and Street Cleansing remained male dominated due to the nature of the work. Continuous monitoring would enable the council to focus its attention on areas of improvement.

In response to a question as to whether the council monitored the work other councils were undertaking to address any imbalances within their work force regarding gender and pay, the Assistant Director Human Resources advised that the council did not currently monitor other authorities work on gender statistics and pay but would seek information should it be required.

Resolved

- (1) That, having given due consideration, the Gender Pay Gap report be noted.

Workforce Profile Statistics - Quarter 3 2024-25

The Assistant Director Human Resources submitted a report to update the Committee on Cherwell District Council's (CDC) workforce including measuring staff well-being and to highlight the actions officers were taking to address any issues.

In introducing the report, the Portfolio Holder Corporate Services advised that the report outlined statistical data in relation to CDC's workforce at the end of quarter 3 of 2024/25 for information. There were no issues, risks or concerns to highlight.

In response to a question regarding negative feedback during exit interviews and whether there were any follow up actions and measures to ensure any concerns were rectified, the Assistant Director Human Resources explained that should negative feedback be received an investigation would be undertaken. Feedback and actions would subsequently be provided to the relevant officers should any action be required.

In response to a question regarding disclosure of disabilities at interview stage and whether there were any issues with encouraging people with disabilities to apply for roles at CDC, the Assistant Director Human Resources advised that CDC was a disability positive employer and that any applicant disclosing a disability would be guaranteed an interview. Applicants were encouraged to disclose disabilities at interview stage to allow for adequate amendments where possible.

Resolved

- (1) That the workforce profile statistics for quarter 3 of 2024/25 (financial year dates) be noted.

The meeting ended at 7.09 pm

Chair:

Date:

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This report is public	
Workforce Profile Statistics – Quarter 4 of 2024-25	
Committee	Personnel Committee
Date of Committee	25 June 2025
Portfolio Holder presenting the report	Councillor Chris Brant
Date Portfolio Holder agreed report	17 June 2025
Report of	Assistant Director of Human Resources, Claire Cox

Purpose of report

To provide the Personnel Committee with an update on Cherwell District Council's workforce including measuring staff well-being and to highlight the actions officers are taking to address any issues.

1. Recommendations

The Personnel Committee resolves to:

- 1.1 Review and note the workforce data for quarter 4 of 2024/25 provided in appendix one, devised to provide insight that will enable officers of CDC to address challenges and efficiencies in the workforce more efficiently.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report outlines statistical data in relation to CDC's workforce at the end of quarter 4 of 2024/25 for information. There are no issues, risks or concerns to highlight this quarter.
- 2.2 Appendix 1 provides the following highlights in CDC's workforce statistics for quarter 3 as follows:
 - 22 leavers and 12 new starters
 - Headcount reduced by 11 to 626, of the 626, 14 employees are multiple role holders
 - FTE reduction of 7.17
 - Minimal shift in employment basis and role basis
 - No change to the number of agency workers at the end of quarter 4, compared to the previous quarter. Remained at 35.
 - A quarterly turnover rate of 3.49%, 0.68% higher than the previous quarter

- Resignation was the main reason for leavers, accounting for 54.55% of all leavers.
- 64% of leavers completed exit interviews, Comments received within the interviews that took place were generally very positive around the teams worked with, with mixed reviews around workloads, with some stating certain areas are busy, but also one comment about a lack of workload. Some left due to family matters and we had a number of fixed term contracts that came to an end.
- 192 sickness absence incidents were recorded, 3 more than the same quarter in the previous year.
- Absence rate at the end of quarter 3 was 0.85 which is not as high as the end of quarter 3.
- Minimal shift in age, gender, ethnicity and sexual orientation profile
- Recruitment data has been provided for the last 12 months, and shows applicants are representative of the district.
- 25 apprenticeships currently underway across a diverse range of subject areas, this has increased by 7 since quarter 2. Of the 25, 5 are being completed by apprentices, and 20 are being undertaken by staff.

2.3 The Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer and Education Secretary Bridget Phillipson announced a new growth and skills levy which will replace the existing apprenticeship levy and is to include new foundation apprenticeships. These new apprenticeships will give young people a route in to careers in critical sectors, enabling them to earn a wage whilst developing vital skills.

2.3.1 In February the government highlighted several changes to how apprenticeships will operate in the future, in response to employers' calls for more flexibility. This will include introduction of shorter apprenticeships from August 2025 (subject to the parliamentary timetable), with the minimum length reduced from 12 to 8 months. The new development will allow training to be delivered and completed faster where that makes sense for a given industry, or an individual has significant prior learning.

Implications & Impact Assessments

Implications	Commentary
Finance	There are no financial implications arising from this report. The report is for information only. Kelly Wheeler, Finance Business Partner, 27 May 2025
Legal	There are no legal implications within this report as it is for information only. Denzil – John Turbervill Head of Legal Services, 30.05.2025

Risk	There are no risks arising directly from this report. Julie Miles, Performance Analyst & Developer, 27 May 2025			
Impact Assessments	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equality Impact		X		<p>There are no equalities implications directly related to this report. However, this report provides the council with valuable data which will help us support and promote equality, diversity and inclusion within our workforce.</p> <p>Julie Miles, Performance Analyst & Developer, 27 May 2025</p>
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		X		
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		X		
Climate & Environmental Impact				N/A
ICT & Digital Impact				N/A
Data Impact				N/A
Procurement & subsidy				N/A
Council Priorities	N/A			
Human Resources	<p>The workforce profile statistics provide valuable insight into the make-up of the council's workforce, which helps form policies and initiatives to suit its diversity.</p> <p>Claire Cox, Assistant Director of Human Resources, 23 May 2025</p>			

Property	N/A
Consultation & Engagement	The Corporate Leadership Team have reviewed the workforce statistics prior to submission to Personnel Committee.

Supporting Information

3. Background

- 3.1 Workforce Data for Quarter 4 of 2024/25 has been produced and is available at appendix one of this report. HR monitor workforce data on a quarterly basis to identify emerging trends in staff wellbeing and organisational development. Comparative data is included, where possible, to assist CDC with benchmarking against the local government sector and, for sensitive information such as ethnicity, gender, and age against the make-up of the district and the UK overall.

4. Details

- 4.1 The workforce profile report at appendix 1 provides commentary and data for quarter 4 of 2024/25, as well as quarterly, whole year and end-of-year comparisons.

- 4.2 The report provides statistics on:

Headcount & FTE

Employment and role basis

Agency usage

Turnover

Leavers by length of service

Leavers by reason

Sickness absence incidents by reason

Sickness absence rates –all absence, short-term, long-term, stress-related

Percentage of working time lost due to sickness absence

Age profile

Gender profile

Ethnicity profile

Disability profile

Sexual orientation profile

Apprenticeship information

- 4.3 At Personnel Committee in June 2023, it was requested that further data analysis be provided in relation to the sensitive information categories. Our

collection of this data has vastly improved, and HR are continuing to encourage all employees to provide this data. CDC recognise this is not mandatory but are encouraging staff to share as widely as possible as all information helps inform future policies / programmes of support.

- 4.4 Following the implementation of the recruitment module within the HR/Payroll system, data around recruitment has also been included in the latest report. This is initially at a high level to provide details of applicants by EDI categories, in order to monitor that recruitment opportunities are reaching all communities within Cherwell, and that applicant pools are reflective of the district we serve. Initial data shows that communities are being reached and applicant pools are reflective but this will continue to be monitored.

5. Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 5.1 The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

Option 1: Not to complete workforce statistics, this option is rejected as workforce analytics will enable CDC to address challenges and efficiencies in the workforce more efficiently.

6. Conclusions and Reasons for Recommendations

- 6.1 Monitoring workforce data helps CDC to measure how well it is supporting staff - focusing on wellbeing and personal development so it can identify issues at the earliest opportunity to address them effectively. It is also helpful for some data sets to compare how we are performing against the rest of the local government sector, to ensure it remains an attractive employer and retains its staff.

Decision Information

Key Decision	N/A
Subject to Call in	N/A
If not, why not subject to call in	N/A
Ward(s) Affected	N/A

Document Information

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Workforce Profile Data – Quarter 4, 2024/25
Background Papers	N/A

Reference Papers	N/A
Report Author	Assistant Director of Human Resources, Claire Cox
Report Author contact details	Claire.cox@cherwell-dc.gov.uk , 01295 221549
Corporate Director Approval (unless Corporate Director or Statutory Officer report)	Corporate Director for Resources and Transformation, 10 June 2025

Headcount and Full Time Equivalent (FTE) comparison and Agency usage

Chart 1 shows that the headcount (based at the end of each quarter) at Cherwell District Council (CDC) has seen a reduction of 11 between quarter 3 and 4 of 2024/25. Within the headcount of 626, 14 employees have 2 roles, and have therefore been counted twice.

Quarter 4 of 2024/25 has seen adjustments of 22 leavers and 12 new starters across the organisation.

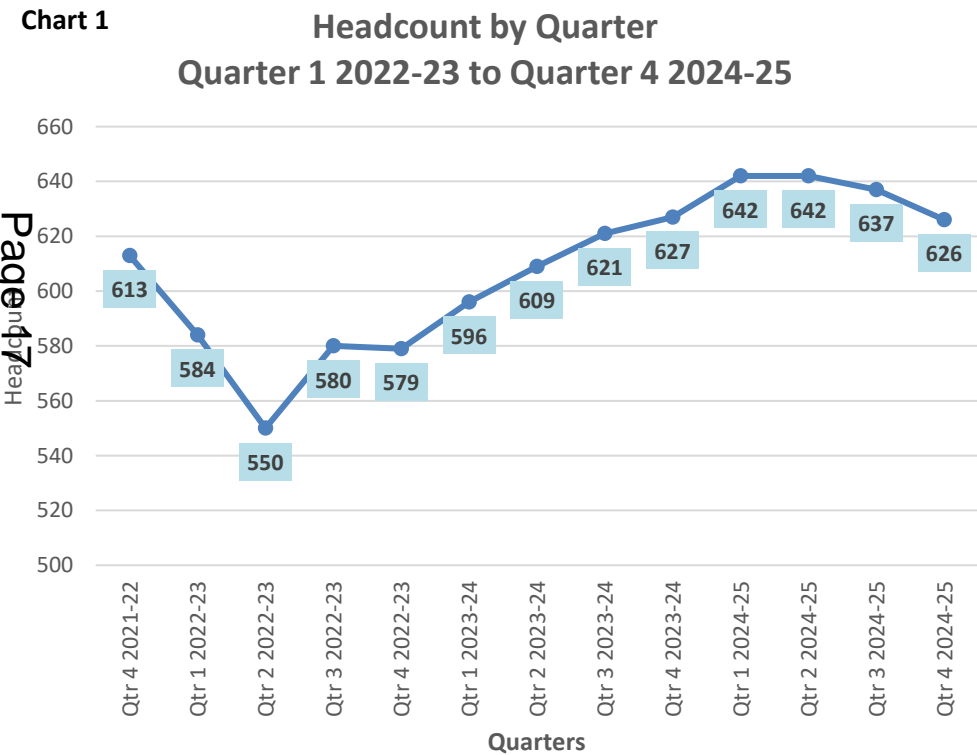


Chart 2 details the distribution of headcount across our departments and directorates as at the end of quarter 4 in 2024/25. Wellbeing and Environmental Services continue to show the highest headcount. The department of Chief Executive’s Office incorporates executive support and employees attributed to the Pan Regional Partnership, for which CDC is the accountable body. CDC are also host employer to the District Councils Network (DCN) and these employees are included in the HR, OD and Payroll directorate.

Property has had the biggest reduction in headcount with 4 since quarter 3. Customer Focus has reduced by 3 in the last quarter. Environmental Services’ headcount has increased by 3 and Housing Services by 2 in the last quarter.

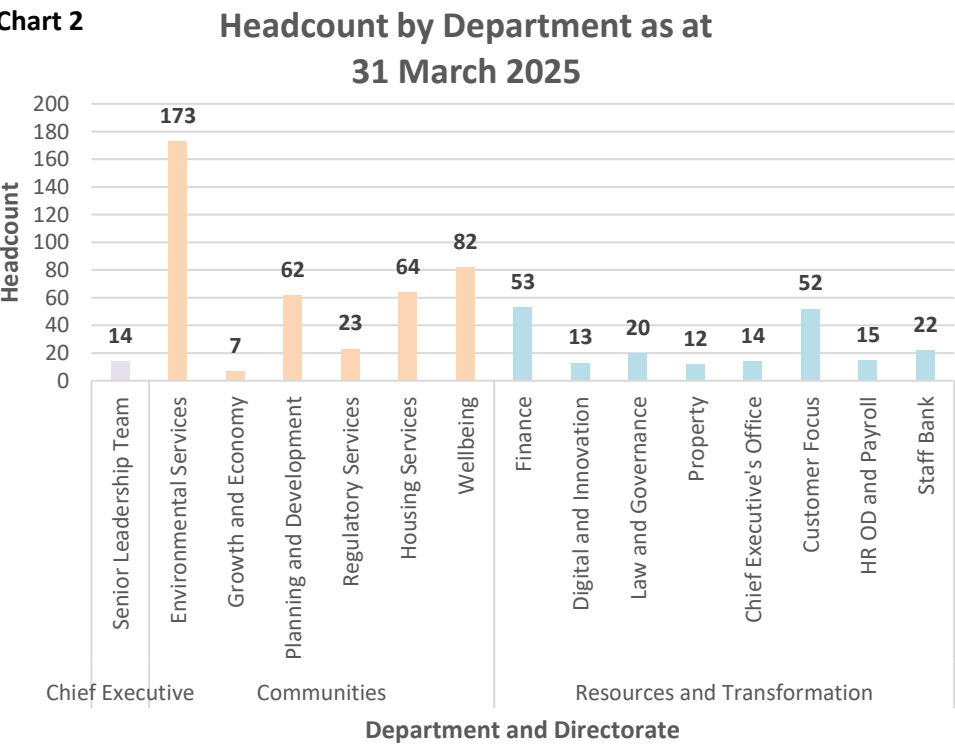


Chart 3 outlines the fluctuation of FTE which has reduced by 7.17 between quarter 3 and quarter 4 of 2024/25.

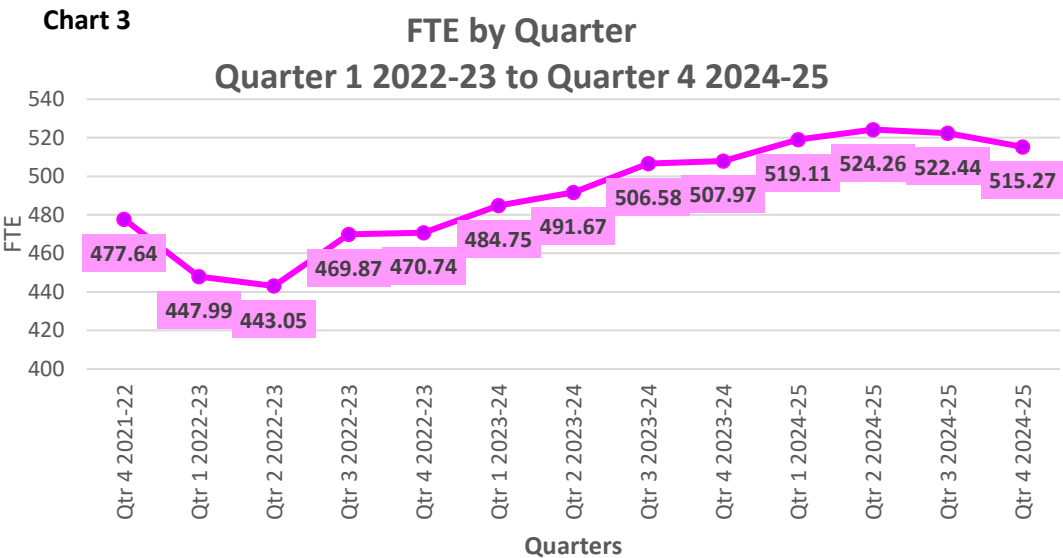


Chart 4 outlines the distribution of FTE across the departments and directorates as at the end of quarter 4 of 2024/25.

Since quarter 3 of 2024/25; Environmental Services has seen an increase of 2.5 FTE and Housing Services have increased by 1.95 FTE. Property's FTE has reduced by 2.66, Customer Focus' has reduced by 2.06 and Regulatory Services by 2 FTE.

Charts 5 shows the breakdown of basis of hours across our workforce as of 31 March 2025. Since quarter 3 of 2024/25 there has been minimal change to the make-up of role-basis with our full-time increasing by 0.4% and part-time reducing by 0.51% and our casual workforce increasing by 0.06%.

Chart 4

FTE by Department as at 31 March 2025

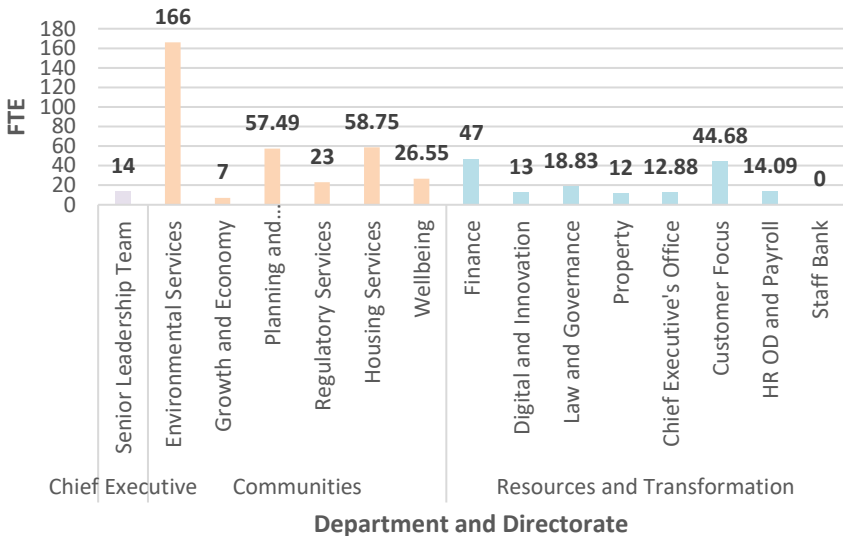


Chart 5

% Breakdown of Role Basis as at 31 March 2025

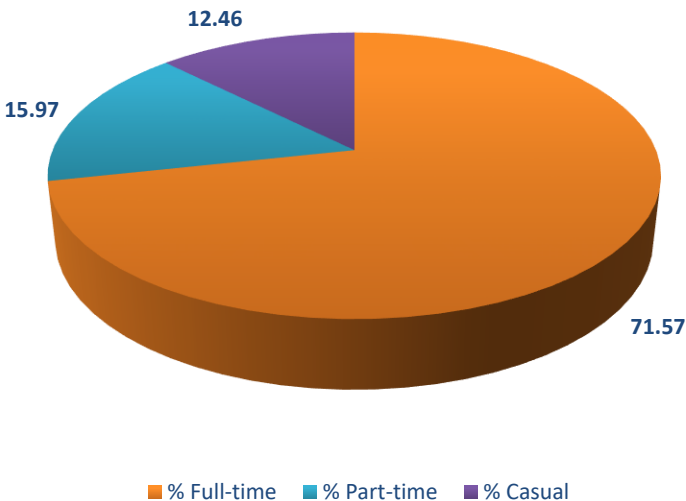
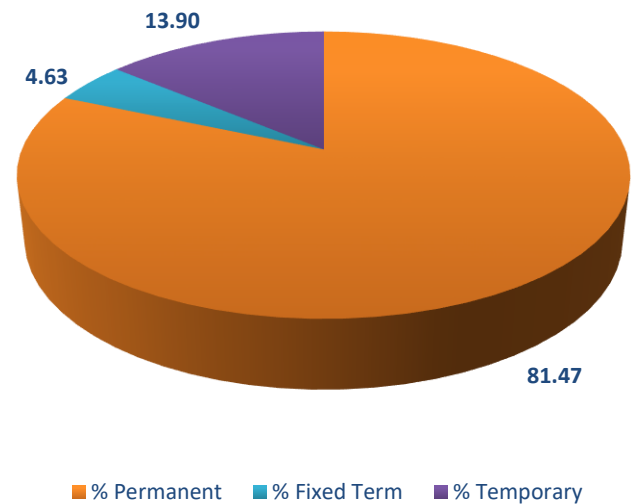


Chart 6 outlines the employment basis of those directly employed by CDC shows that 81.47% of our workforce are in permanent roles. This has slightly reduced, by 0.79% since Quarter 3 of 2024/25. There has been minimal fluctuation of employment basis since the last quarter.

Chart 6

% Breakdown of Employment Basis
as at 31 March 2025



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In addition to employing staff directly, CDC also utilise Agency Workers, either for interim or short-term usage for specific posts and projects.

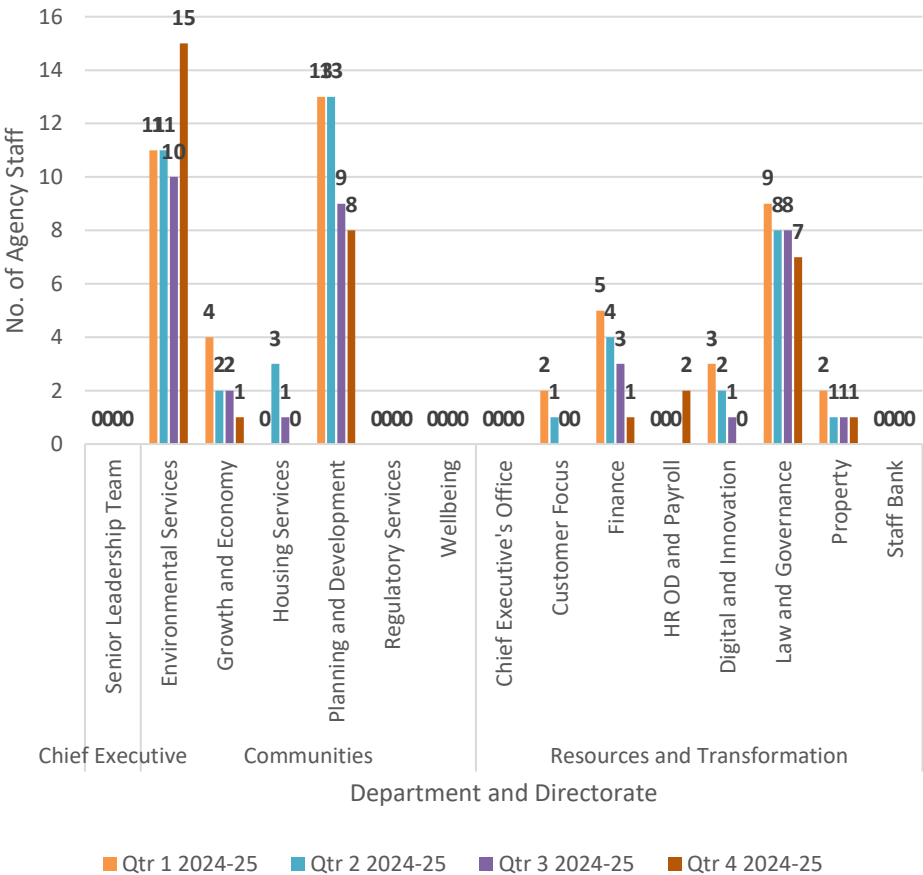
Chart 7 outlines agency usage as at the end of each quarter for the last rolling year by department. A total of 35 Agency workers were engaged with CDC at the end of quarter 4 of 2024/25. This has remained the same since quarter 3 of 2024/25 but has reduced by 20 in the last 12 months.

The highest agency usage is usually Environmental Services, within refuse collection and this is due to having 3-person crews on refuse collection, often utilising agency staff to cover for employee sickness and holidays. Usage in this area has increased by 5 since the end of quarter 3.

Growth and Economy, Housing Services, Planning and Development, Law and Governance and Digital and Innovation have each reduced agency usage by 1 in quarter 4.

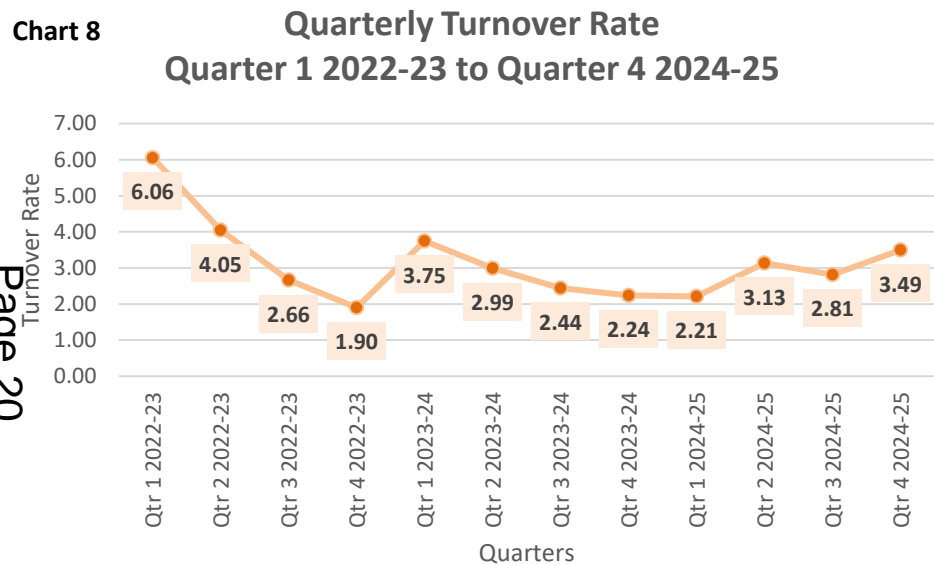
Chart 7

Agency Usage as at Quarter End
for the last rolling 12 months



Turnover rates and Leaver information

Chart 8 tracks the turnover rate per quarter over a 3-year period, from April 2022 to March 2025. The turnover rate is defined by firstly calculating the average number of employees for the quarter period and then dividing the number of leavers by the average number of employees.



The turnover for quarter 4 shows an increase of 0.68% in the turnover rate since quarter 3 of 2024/25 and a 1.25% increase in the last financial year.

Chart 9 details the quarterly turnover rate by department for quarter 4.

Whilst its useful to review labour turnover on a quarterly basis throughout the year; turnover can also be measured at an annual rate. Table 1 outlines the labour turnover rate at CDC an annual basis comparatively for the last 3 years. In 2024/25, CDC had 74 leavers in total, which is 8 more than the previous year. The annual turnover rate saw an increase of 0.52% in comparison to the previous year.

Chart 9

Quarterly Turnover Rate by Department
as at
31 March 2025

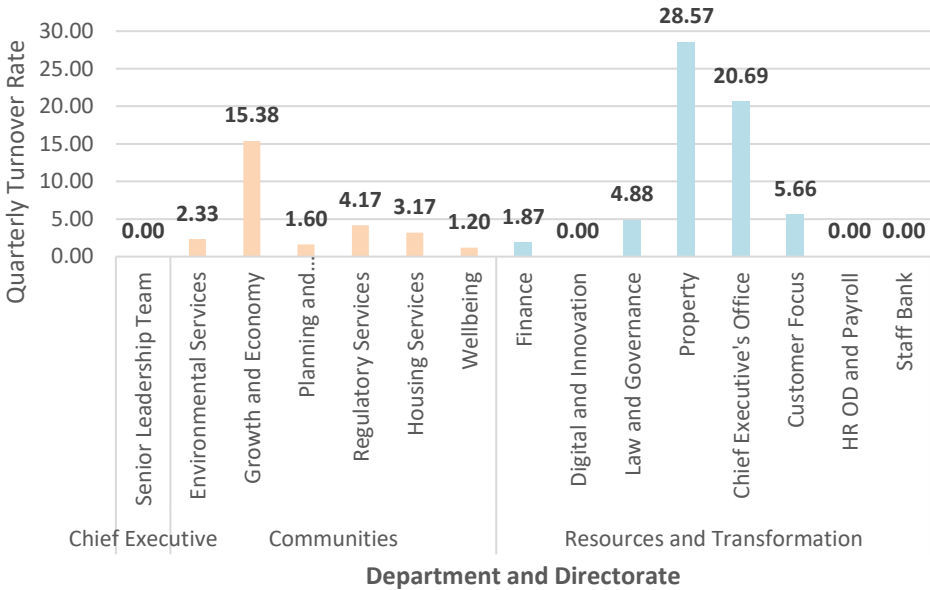


Table 1

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Headcount at 01/04	605	578	627
Headcount at 31/03	579	627	626
Average no. of employees	592	602.5	626.5
No. of leavers	85	68	74
Turnover rate (%)	14.36	11.29	11.81

Chart 10 outlines leavers by reason for quarter 4 of 2024/25. Of the 22 leavers recorded in quarter 4, resignation is the highest reason for leaving, accounting for 55.45%. 13.64% of leavers are due to end of fixed term contract, Retirement and Failure to pass probation each accounted for 9.09% and dismissal due to capability accounted for 4.55%.

Chart 11 outlines leavers by length of service across the last 12 quarters. In quarter 4 of 2024/25, 7 leavers had less than a year's service, 8 had under 5 years' service, 4 had less than 10 years' service and 3 had over 10 years.

Chart 10

% of Leavers by reason
1 January to 31 March 2025

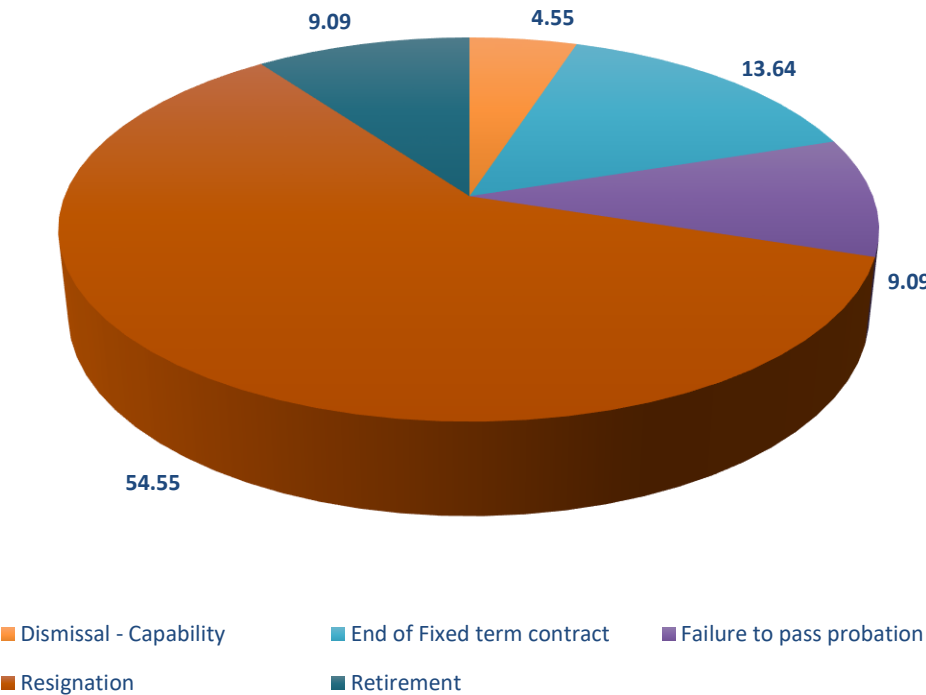
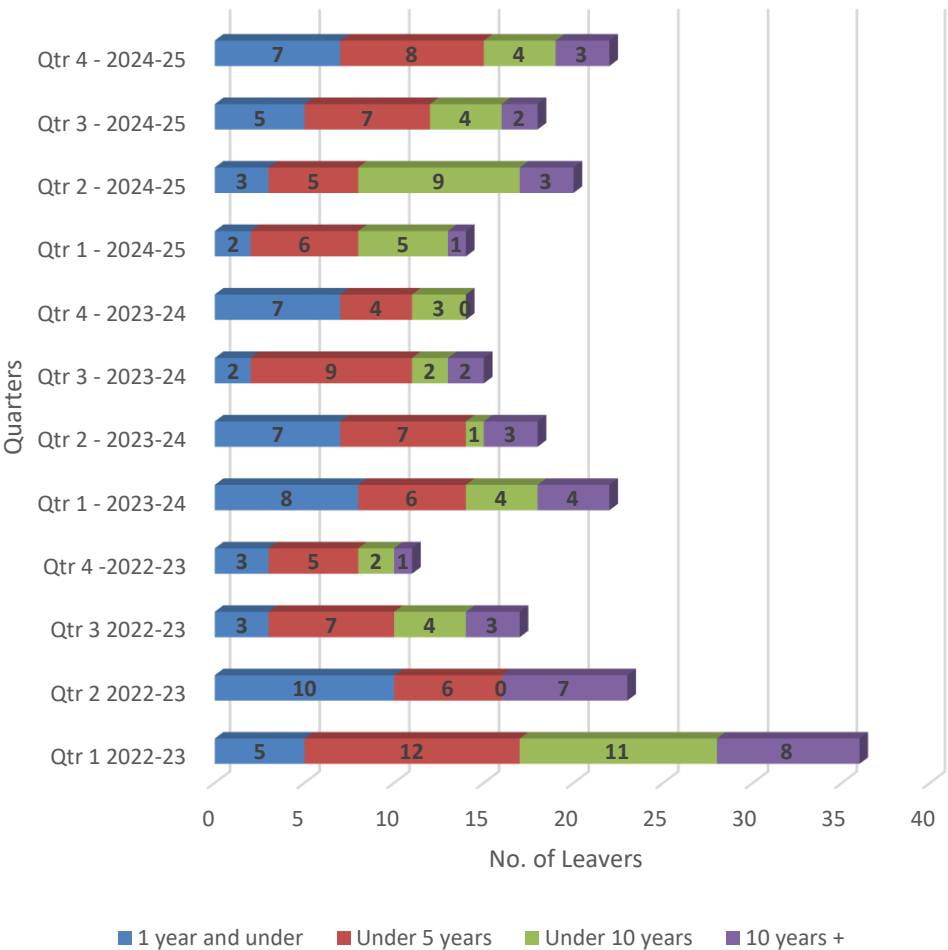


Chart 11

Leavers by Length of Service
1 April 2022- 31 March 2025



When a resignation is received within HR, employees are provided with an electronic exit questionnaire to complete via our HR/Payroll system and invited to attend a meeting with a member of the HR team to ascertain why they are leaving and whether they have any advice or comments on lessons learned or improvements that could be made.

Of the 22 leavers in quarter 4, all were offered the opportunity to partake in an exit interview. 14 completed the exit interview questionnaire and attended meetings with a member of the HR Team. This is a 64% completion rate, which is an increase from the last quarter that recorded a 46% completion rate. We cannot force employees to provide this data to us or attend a meeting with HR but we will continue to encourage engagement in this process in order to embed this.

Comments received within the interviews that took place were generally very positive around the teams worked with, with mixed reviews around workloads, with some stating certain areas are busy, but also one comment about a lack of workload. Some left due to family matters and we had a number of fixed term contracts that came to an end.

HR business Partners review exit interview data in order to pick up any trends and discuss content with relevant managers. Data will continue to be gathered and shared with the relevant managers in a bid to act on any advice received in order to make improvements, where possible, for existing employees, thus aiding retention.

Sickness Absence reasons and rates

Chart 12 shows the number of sickness absence incidents by reason over the last 8 quarters, back to April 2022. stomach/liver/kidney and digestion has seen the most incidents across this period, with 210 across the period. This is closely followed by Musculo-skeletal which had 201 incidents.

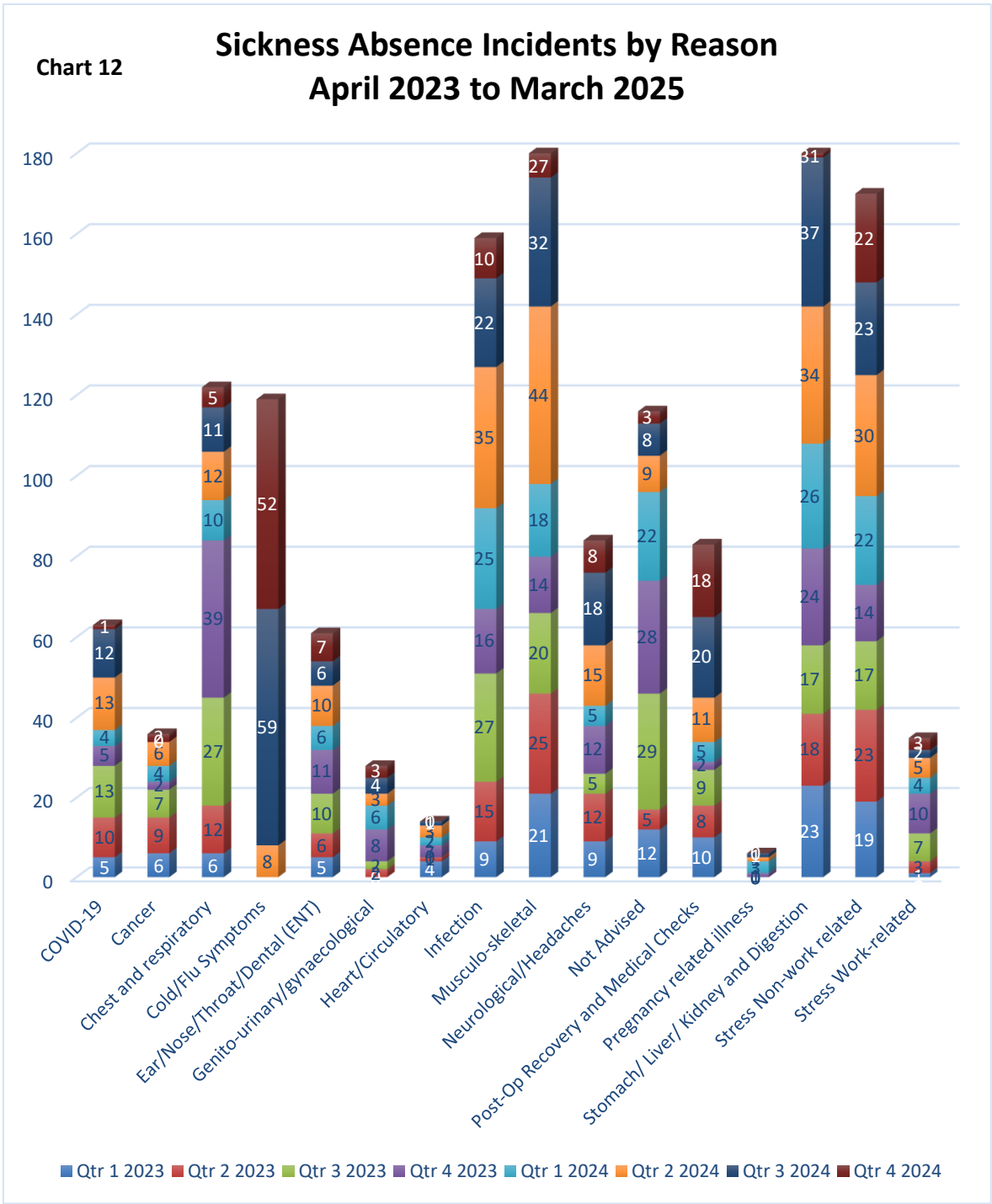
For Quarter 4, cold and flu was the highest recorded reason for sickness absence, accounting for 27% of all incidents in the last quarter. This is followed by stomach/liver/kidney and digestion, which accounts for 16% of all incidents in the last quarter. The third highest reason this quarter was Musculo-skeletal, accounting for 14% of all incidents.

There were 192 incidents of sickness absence recorded in Quarter 4 of 2024/25, this is 3 more incidents than the same quarter of 2023/24.

The highest reason for sickness absence across the last rolling 12 months was stomach/liver/kidney and digestion, with 128 incidents recorded and accounting for 15% of all incidents.

The second highest reason for sickness absence in the last 12 months is Musculo-skeletal, with 121 incidents reported which equates to 14.25% of all incidents.

Cold and flu symptoms is the third highest reason in the last 12 months, recording 119 incidents and accounting for 14.02% of all incidents.



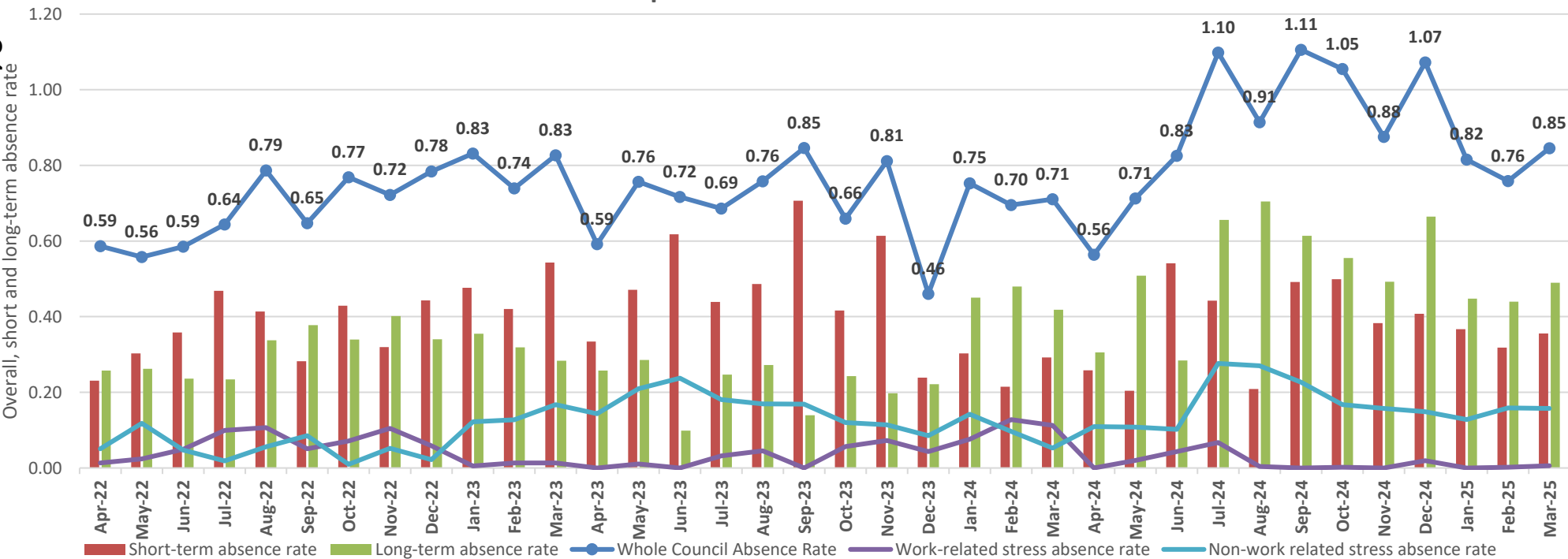
For the purposes of sickness absence reporting, short term absence is recorded as any incident that is less than 28 days, and a GP fit note is required after an employee has been absent for 7 calendar days. Long-term sickness is recorded as any absence spanning 28 days or more. HR work with managers and employees, where employees are off on long-term sick to engage with Cordell Health, CDC’s Occupational Health Provider and ensure effective absence management.

Chart 13 tracks the absence rate per month, which is effectively the percentage of working time lost, from April 2022 to March 2025 and shows a decrease in sickness absence rates since quarter 3. The absence rate is calculated by dividing the hours lost due to sickness absence by the available working hours for the period. September 2024 records the highest rate of absence at 1.11% of working time lost.

Chart 13 also captures the absence rate of short and long-term instances, In the last 12 months. September 2023 has the highest rate of short-term absence, recording a rate of 0.71 days lost. August 2024 had the highest rate of long-term absence in the last 12 months, with 0.70 days lost.

Chart 13

Council Absence Rates by Month
Overall and broken down into short-term, long-term and stress
April 2022 to March 2025



The absence rate attributed to stress is also displayed in Chart 13 and a slight increase in work-related stress was recorded in the last quarter, with a rate of 0.01 in March 2025. Work-related stress incidents accounted for 1.54% of incidents in quarter 4 of 2024/25 and 1.65% of incidents in the last rolling 12 months.

The non-work-related stress absence rate has increased slightly over the last quarter. It has increased from 0.15 at the end of quarter 3 to 0.16 at the start of quarter 4. Non-work-related stress accounted for 11.45% of incidents in quarter 4 of 2024/25 and 11.43% of incidents in the last rolling 12 months.

HR continue to ensure that Occupational Health support is accessed at the point that employee sickness is classified as long-term unless there are benefits to instigate this sooner. If an employee reports that they are absent due to stress, then an immediate referral to Occupational Health is made to ensure that support mechanisms can be put in place as soon as possible. Employees are also asked to complete a Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Stress Questionnaire as this provides information on the causes of stress which aids the organisation in supporting employees to deal with these issues where possible.

Employees also continue to have access to the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) which is provided by Health Assured and offers access to counselling, legal and financial advice, and wellbeing resources. The service is confidential and whilst statistics on usage are reported through to CDC; details of which employees have made contact is withheld.

Charts 14 and 15 provide a breakdown of the percentage of working time lost by department for both short term and long-term sickness absence.

Chart 14 % Working Time Lost due to Short Term Sickness Absence 1 January to 31 March 2025

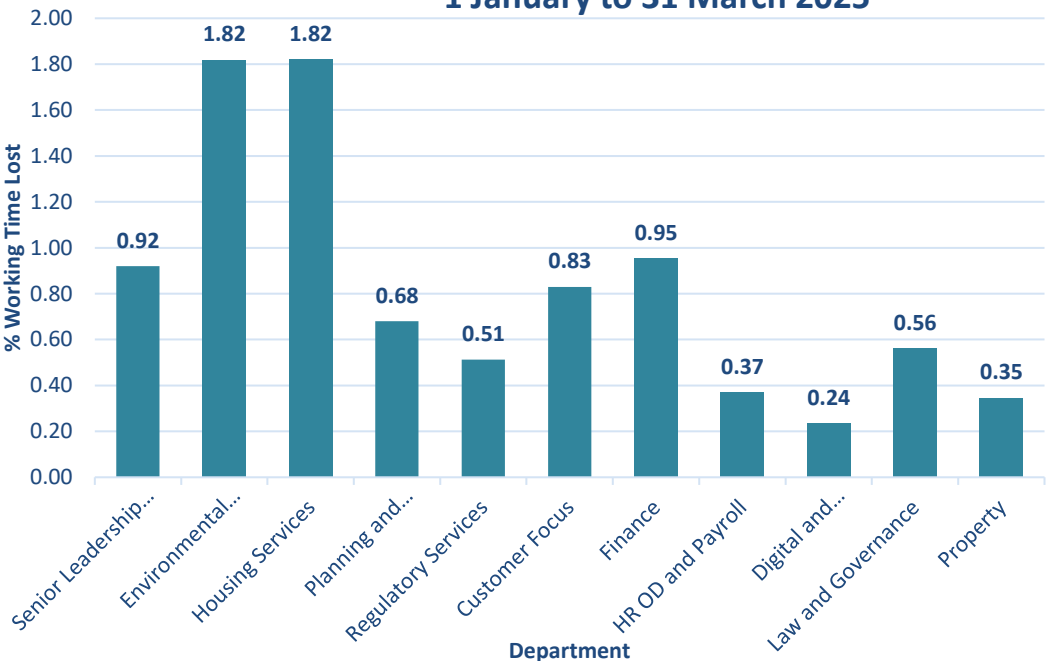
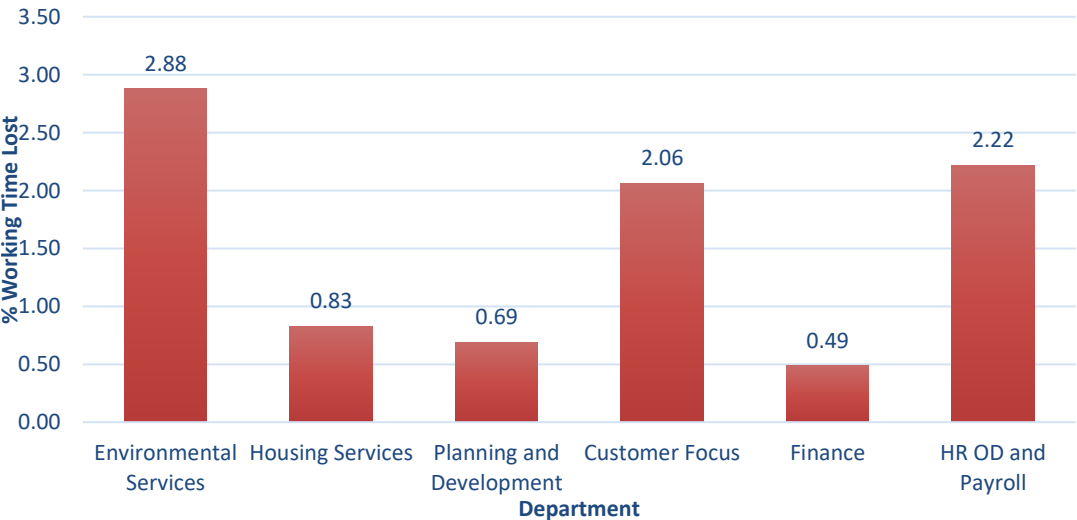


Chart 15 % Working Time Lost due to Long Term Absence 1 January to 31 March 2025



Whilst data for sickness absence is analysed on a quarterly basis for the purpose of these statistics, it is helpful to reflect on this data on an annual basis and Table 2 provides details of CDC’s annual absence rate, which is the percentage of working time lost due to sickness absence per year, for the past 3 years.

Table 2

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Average FTE	460.72	484.94	510.24
Available Working Hours	888864.56	935583.95	984393.40
Hours Lost	28773.3	30260.23	40219.19
Absence Rate (%)	3.24	3.23	4.09
Hours lost due to short term absence	16007.05	18307.73	16958.94
Short term absence rate (%)	1.80	1.96	1.72
Hours lost due to long term absence	12766.25	11952.5	23260.25
Long term absence rate (%)	1.44	1.28	2.36
Hours lost due to work-related stress	2064.6	2111.9	609.53
Work-related stress absence rate (%)	0.23	0.23	0.06
Hours lost due to non-work related stress	3005.95	6117.25	7572.2
Non-work related stress absence rate (%)	0.34	0.65	0.77

In 2024-25, 4.09% of working time was lost due to sickness, this is 0.86% more than the previous year.

The short-term absence rate reduced by 0.24% but the long-term absence rate increased by 1.08% compared to 2023/24.

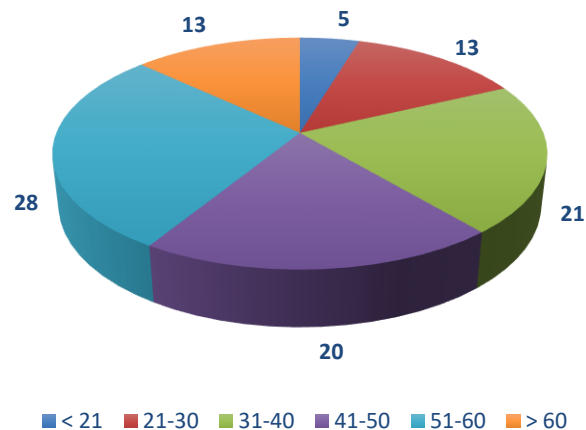
The absence rate for work related stress has reduced by 0.17 but the absence rate for non-work-related stress has increased by 0.12. As previously stated, occupational health support is provided at the earliest opportunity for all employees who report they are suffering with stress.

Age, Gender, Ethnicity, Disability and LGBTQ+ Workforce Profile as at 31 March 2024

Chart 16 shows a breakdown by age of the CDC workforce, expressed in percentage. 13% of CDC employees are over 60. 28% are aged between 51 and 60. 20% of CDC employees are aged between 41 and 50. 21% of the workforce are aged between 31 and 40 and 18% aged 30 and under. There has been minimal change to the age profile within the last quarter.

Chart 16

Age Profile Percentage as at 31 March 2025



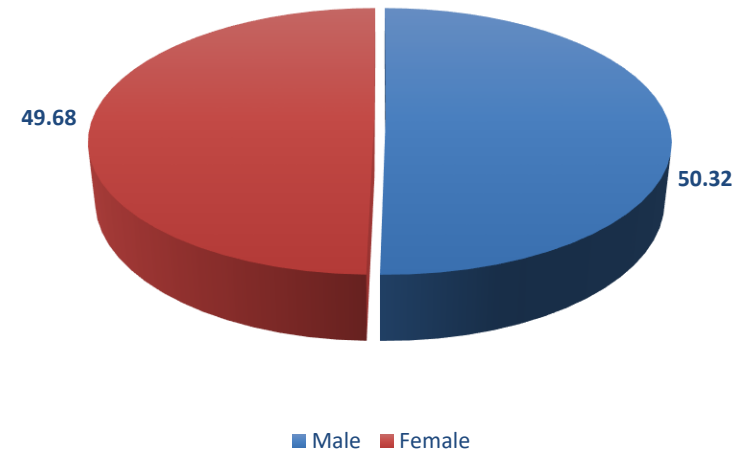
Page 27

Chart 17 breaks down the gender of the CDC workforce and shows that CDC is almost a 50% split.

CDC record statistics on employee equalities data in order to ensure that our workforce is representative of the district we support and serve. Where we are under-represented, we need to review what we can do to ensure these groups are aware of the employment opportunities we have available. Local Insight data in relation to gender and ethnicity within the Cherwell District has been used to compare against the make-up of our workforce.

Chart 17

Gender Profile Percentage as at 31 March 2025



Out of a population of 161,837 within the Cherwell District, the latest census data records that 49.6% are male and 50.4% are female. At CDC, 50.32% of our workforce are male and 49.68% are female meaning it is representative of the district.

CDC employees continue to be encouraged to share their equalities data. In relation to employee ethnicity data, in quarter 1 of 2022/23 51% of employees had not provided this. At the end of quarter 4 of 2024/25, 88.22% of employees have recorded this information, with 5.10% preferring not to specify.

Chart 18 shows a breakdown of ethnicity within CDC. Comparative data has been sought both nationally and from the district and is presented in Table 5.

Chart 18

Ethnicity Profile Percentage as at 31 March 2025

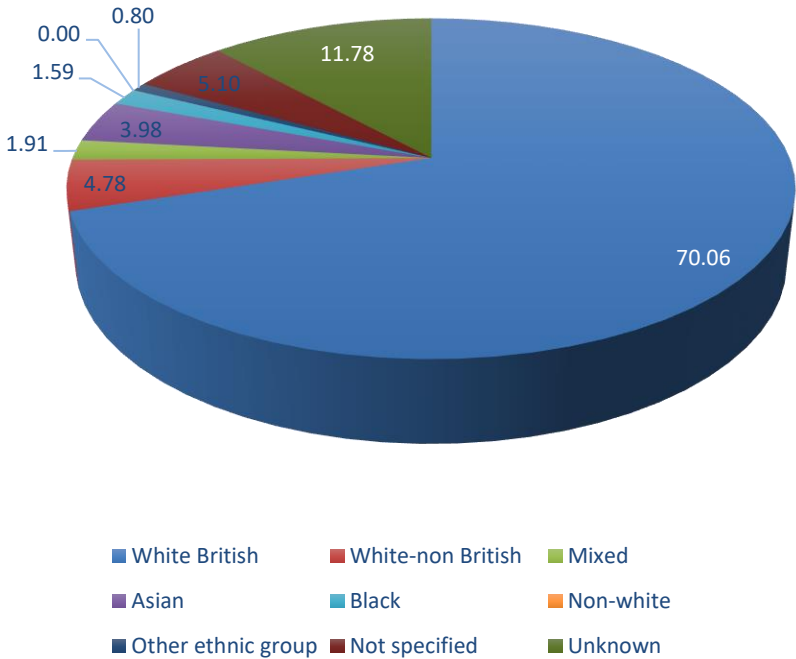


Table 3

Ethnic Group	England average (%)	Cherwell District (%)	CDC (%) Qtr 1 24/25	CDC (%) Qtr 2 24/25	CDC (%) Qtr 3 24/25	CDC (%) Qtr 4 24/25
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh	9.3	6.0	3.89	4.21	4.08	3.98
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African	4.0	1.8	1.71	1.87	1.88	1.59
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	2.9	2.9	1.56	1.72	1.88	1.91
White	81.7	88.1	71.96	74.26	70.02	74.84
Other ethnic group	2.1	1.3	0.78	0.78	0.78	0.80
Not specified	N/A	N/A	5.45	5.30	5.18	5.10
Unknown	N/A	N/A	14.64	11.86	11.62	11.78

CDC’s workforce is predominantly white British with 70.06% of the workforce recording their ethnicity in this category.

Table 3 compares the make-up of ethnic groups across the UK and the Cherwell District and then compares this with the make-up of our workforce. The Cherwell District has a higher percentage of residents in the *White* ethnic group than the average across the UK. Of the workforce data recorded, the *White* category increased in the last quarter by 4.82% but at the end of quarter 4 was 13.26% less than the Cherwell District.

The CDC workforce is slightly under-represented in all the ethnic groups in comparison to the district, and there has been no significant change in any ethnic group between quarters 3 and 4 of 2024/25.

The Personnel Committee requested further information on ethnicity by grade across the organisation. The grade bands have been split into 3 categories; A to E who generally have no supervisory or line management responsibilities, F to I; who are typically team leader and supervisory level roles and then J and above which are management grades.

Chart 19 outlines the percentage of employees by ethnic group and grade band.

We have requested disability information be provided by employees. At the end of quarter 1 of 2024/25, 43% of the workforce had not provided this data, however this has reduced to 19% at the end of quarter 2, and 14% at the end of quarter 3, and this remains at 14% at the end of quarter 4, as illustrated in Chart 20. The HR Team are committed to completing further follow-up to improve the data collection within this area. Chart 21 shows a breakdown of data relating to disability by grade

Chart 19 Ethnic Group Percentage by Grade Band as at 31 March 2025

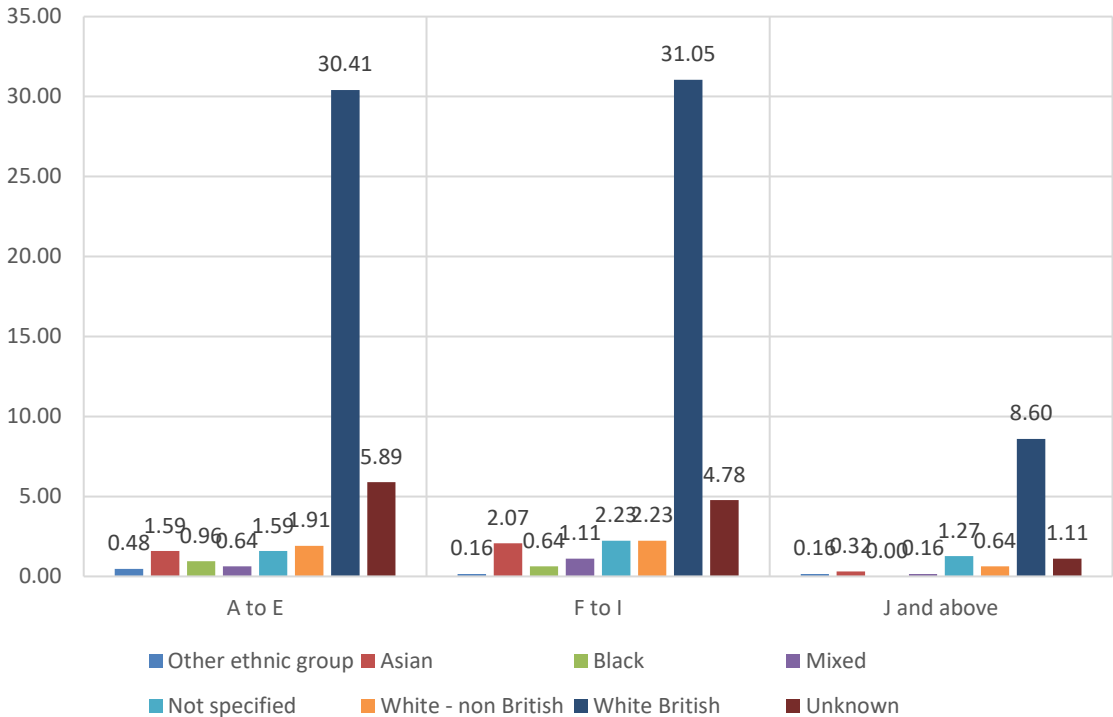


Chart 20 Disability Percentage Profile as at 31 March 2025

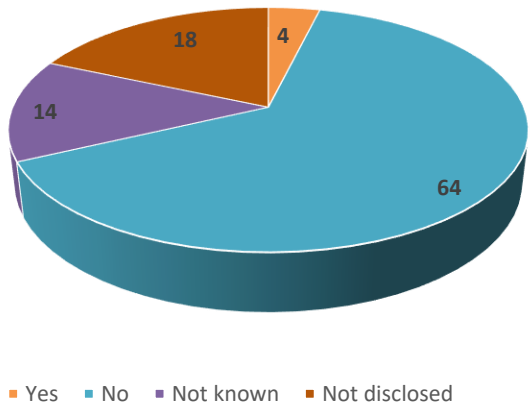
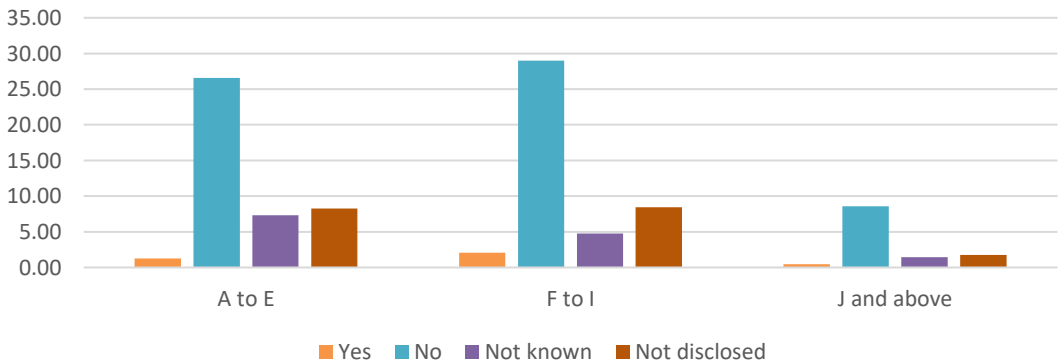


Chart 21 Disability Percentage by Grade Band as at 31 March 2025



CDC is a disability confident employer which means we participate in the Department of Work and Pensions Scheme to guarantee interviews to any disabled candidates who meet the essential criteria for our roles. Where disabilities are identified, management and HR work closely with employees and the council’s occupational health provider to review any reasonable adjustments that could be put in place to assist the employee in their role.

The Personnel Committee also requested data on sexual orientation for our workforce which is provided at Chart 22.

Within this category, 12.42% of the workforce have declined to specify and 13.22% have not completed this data.

As with ethnicity information, sexual orientation data has also been broken down into grade bands and this is shown at chart 23.

As part of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity strategy that was published this year, we have a workforce plan with actions to work through. Data around protected characteristics will continue to be tracked whilst the actions are undertaken, and variations will be provided in future iterations of these statistics.

The HR Team will continue to work with the organisation to gather outstanding data and will continue to update on a quarterly basis.

Workforce Profile

Quarter 4 2024-25

Chart 22

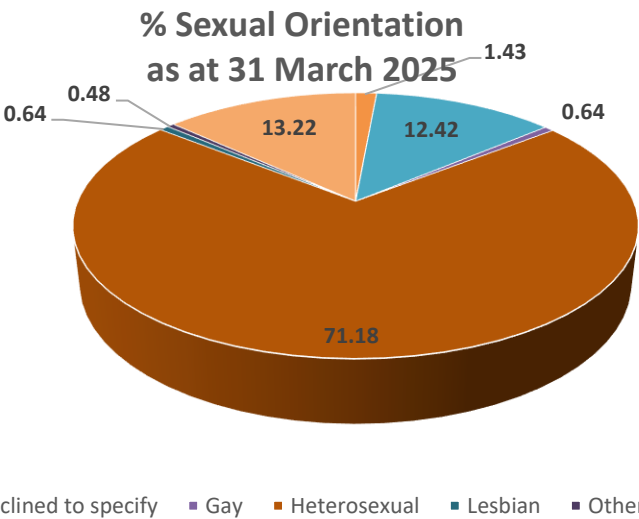
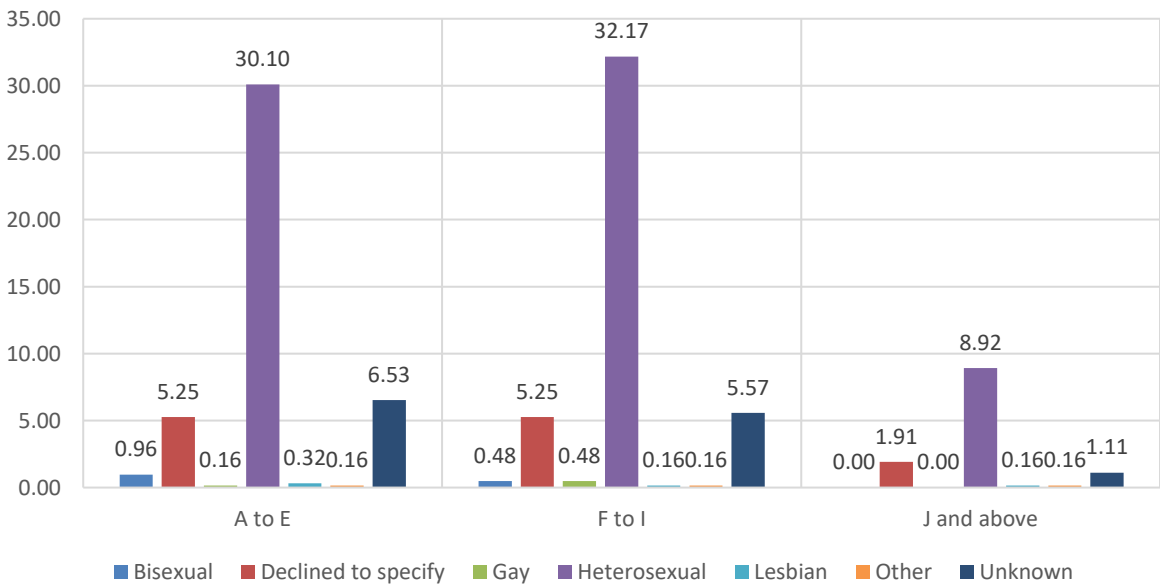


Chart 23

Sexual Orientation Percentage by Grade Band as at 31 March 2025



Diversity in Recruitment

In October 2023, CDC launched a new recruitment module as part of its HR and Payroll system. This has meant that analysis of recruitment data can now be completed. In line with CDC’s Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity agenda, this data allows insight into whether or not CDC is reaching and is representative of all communities within the district. The data presented in this report is representative of the last 12 months from April 2024 to March 2025. There have been 69 recruitment campaigns during this period to which 939 applications were received and 61 offers of employment made.

The following data provides insight into the application data, and where possible provides comparison to the make-up of the district to aid analysis into representation.

Chart 24 shows a breakdown of applicants by age category. At the request of Personnel Committee, the age ranges of applicants have been updated to match the district census data. The highest number of applicants were between ages 35 and 49, followed by 50 to 64, these 2 groups account for 55.48% of all applications. Table 4 provides district data on age bands. When comparing the data of applicants by age to district census data, it shows that applicants in the 25-34 age range are significantly higher than the district percentage and other categories broadly align.

Chart 24

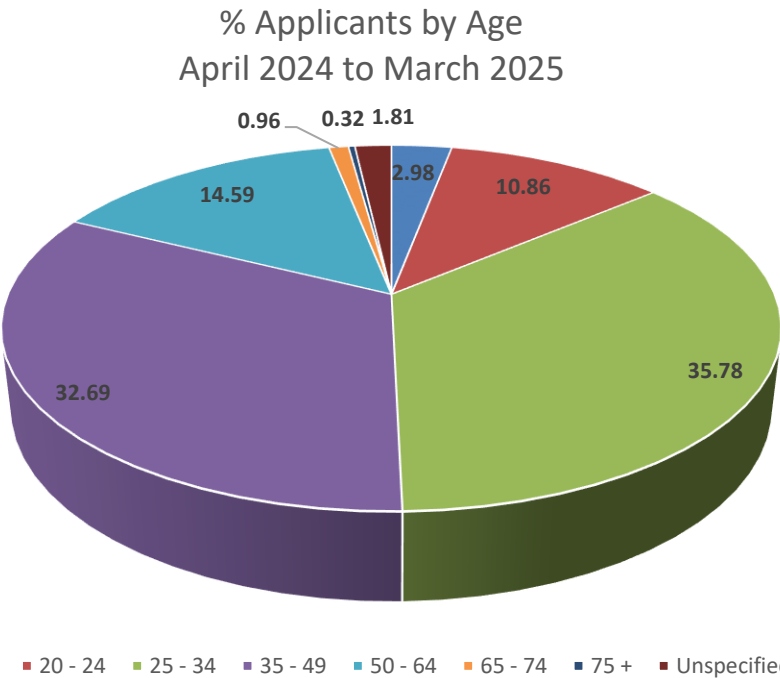


Table 4

Age	% Residents
16 - 19	5.48
20 - 24	6.71
25 - 34	19.45
35 - 49	28.49
50 - 64	26.99
65 - 74	12.88
	100.00

Chart 25 outlines the percentage of applicants per ethnic group and Table 5 shows the make-up of the District.

Chart 25

% Applicants by Ethnicity
April 2024 to March 2024

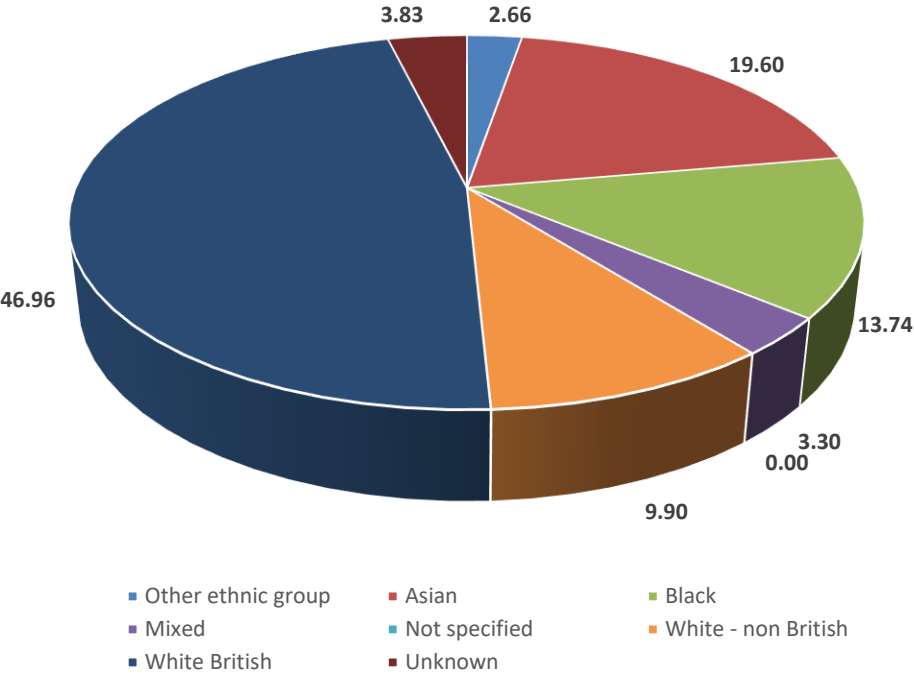


Table 5

Ethnic Group	Cherwell District (%)
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh	6.0
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African	1.8
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	2.9
White	88.1
Other ethnic group	1.3
Not specified	N/A
Unknown	N/A

This data shows that applicants for CDC jobs are ethnically diverse, with applicant numbers within Asian and Black ethnic groups significantly higher than the district percentages.

Chart 26

% Applicants by Gender
April 2024 to March 2025

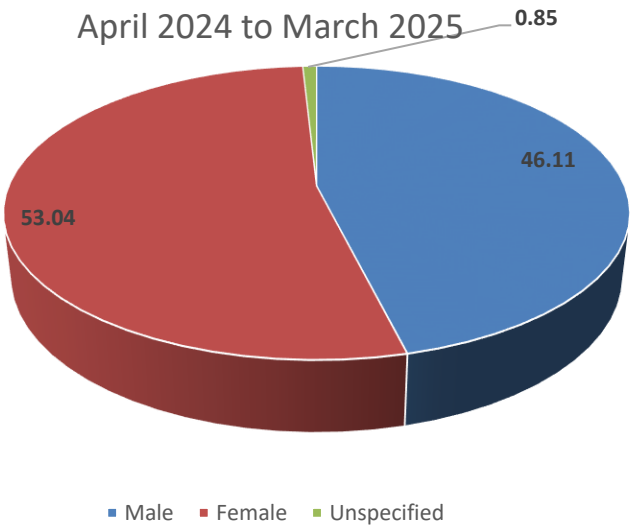


Chart 27

% Applicants with Disabilities
April 2024 to March 2025

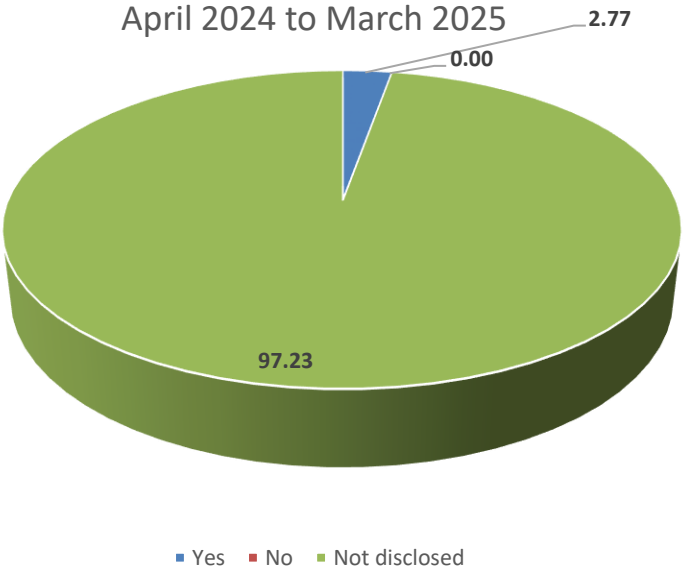


Chart 28 shows the percentage of applicants by sexual orientation. Oxfordshire County Council confirms from census 2021 information that 89.4% of the county identify as straight or heterosexual, with 3.4% not identifying as straight or heterosexual and 7.9% preferring not to say. CDC's applicant data is reflective of these county statistics.

Chart 28

% Applicants by Sexual Orientation
April 2024 to March 2025

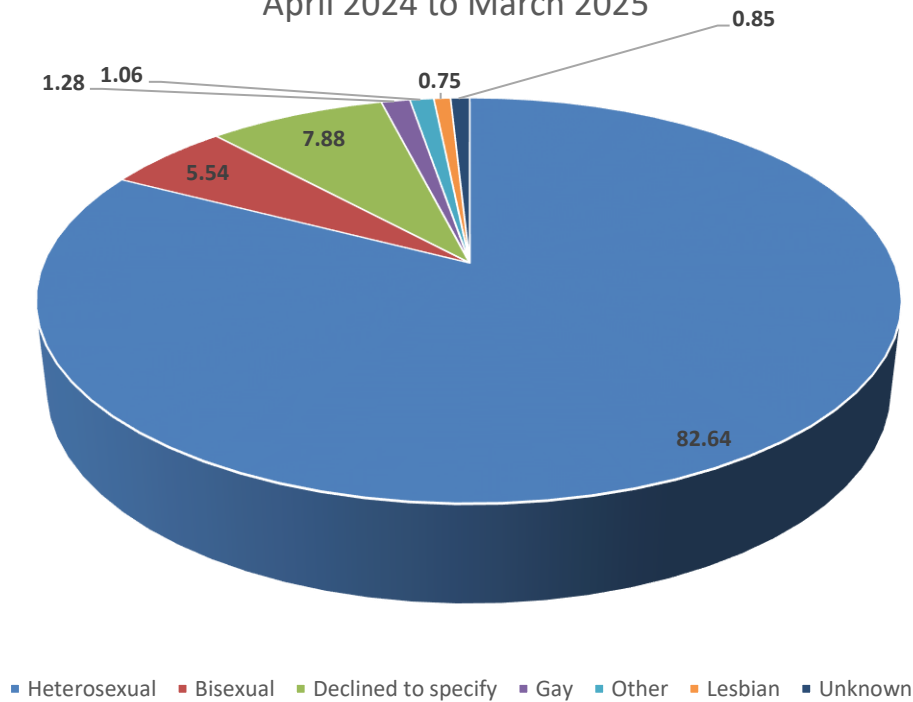


Chart 27 shows the percentage of applicants by disability. 97.23% of applicants have not disclosed this at applicant stage. It is hoped that applicants would provide this information should they have disabilities as we have a guaranteed interview scheme if they meet the essential criteria for a role, as part of being a disability confident employer.

Apprenticeships within Cherwell District Council as at Quarter 4 – 024/25

Background

As an organisation with an annual pay bill of more than £3 million, we pay 0.5% of our pay bill towards the apprenticeship levy. This levy is then used to support apprentices to study for qualifications from Level 2 – Level 7.

Apprentices are new employees into the organisation, who are employed specifically into an apprenticeship role or it is also existing staff who are upskilling using the levy.

The organisation has an apprenticeship levy dashboard (DAS) which is supervised by the HR Department.

Information on apprentices in the organisation

There are 26 apprenticeships currently running within the Council for this quarter, of which 5 is an apprentice on programme, employed specifically as an apprentice; and the remaining 21 are employees undertaking an apprenticeship as CPD or career progression.

There are currently 20 apprenticeships within the Communities Directorate and 6 within the Resources and Transformation Directorate – please see chart 26.

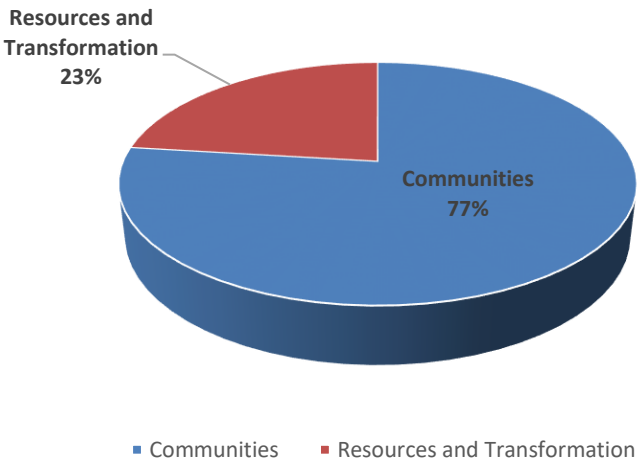
Details of the apprenticeships at the organisation are detailed in the table below. The organisation is using its apprenticeship levy predominantly for upskilling existing staff.

Apprenticeships details below:

Apprenticeship Standard	Level of Apprenticeship	Duration of Apprenticeship	Number of employees on apprenticeship	Apprentice or Employee CPD	Team	Directorate	Cost of Apprenticeships (£)
Business Administrator	Level 3	18 months	1	Apprentice	Depot – Thorpe Lane	Communities (1)	5,000

Chart 29

Percentage of Apprenticeships within Directorates



Apprenticeship Standard	Level of Apprenticeship	Duration of Apprenticeship	Number of employees on apprenticeship	Apprentice or Employee CPD	Team	Directorate	Cost of Apprenticeships (£)
HR Support	Level 3	18 months	1	Apprentice	Human Resources	Resources and Transformation (1)	4,500
Team Leader/Supervisor	Level 3	18 months	5	CPD	Sport and Physical Activities (2) Housing Options and Homelessness (1) ICT (1) Environmental Protection & Enforcement (1)	Resources and Transformation (1) Communities (4)	22,500
Transport and warehouse operations supervisor	Level 3	14 months	1	CPD	Business Support - Depot	Communities (1)	4,700
Motor vehicle service and maintenance technician - light vehicle	Level 3	22 months	1	Apprentice	Fleet Management	Communities (1)	10,669
Sports Coach	Level 4	14 months	1	Apprentice	Wellbeing	Communities (1)	9,000
Data Analyst	Level 4	14 months	1	CPD	Digital Innovation and	Resources and Transformation (1)	14,250
Data Protection and Information	Level 4	18 months	1	CPD	Legal Services	Resources and Transformation (1)	10,000

Apprenticeship Standard	Level of Apprenticeship	Duration of Apprenticeship	Number of employees on apprenticeship	Apprentice or Employee CPD	Team	Directorate	Cost of Apprenticeships (£)
Governance Practitioner							
Senior housing and property management	Level 4	22 months	1	CPD	Housing Grants and Standards	Communities (1)	8,933
People Professional	Level 5	18 months	1	CPD	Human Resources	Resources and Transformation (1)	11,000
Chartered Surveyor	Level 6	66 months	1	Apprentice	Access and Grants	Communities (1)	27,000
Environmental Health Practitioner	Level 6	48 months	1	CPD	Health Protection and Compliance	Communities (1)	22,000
Public Health Practitioner	Level 6	36 months	1	CPD	Health Place Shaping	Communities (1)	22,000
Chartered Town Planner	Level 7	30 months	7	CPD	Planning	Communities (7)	92450
Accountancy Professional (CIPFA)	Level 7	36 months	1	CPD	Finance	Resources and Transformation (1)	20,433
Sustainability business specialist	Level 7	24 months	1	CPD	Environment Services	Communities (1)	10,755
			26		Total apprenticeship levy committed		295,190

Current amount in the Levy Account

The Council currently has £175,108 in their levy account. It is estimated that a further £101,935 will be received over the next 12 months, based on funds entering the Council's Apprenticeship service account, including the 10% top up from the government. It is estimated that the Council will spend £78,124 in the next 12 months based on the current apprenticeships within the table above.

Expired Funds

No funds expired in Quarter 3 of 2024/25 but the levy account is indicating that the Council will not have any funds expiring until May 2027. These indications are estimates made by the apprenticeship dashboard and are based on details available from our last levy payment and apprenticeship arrangements, which may not be up to date. Providers are not always timely in providing the details to add new apprenticeships onto the dashboard and so these estimates may change once a new course is added and payments are starting to be taken from the levy pot.

We may have indicated in a previous quarter's stats that funds were due to expire but if apprenticeship details are updated after creating the report this could then mean no funds expired.

Due to the Council actively putting staff onto apprenticeships, expiring funds are now not anticipated until May 2027 and as the Learning and Development Team are currently engaging further employees on to apprenticeships, this expiry date will be pushed further away.

Apprenticeship Reforms under the new Government

The Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer and Education Secretary Bridget Phillipson announced a new growth and skills levy which will replace the existing apprenticeship levy and is to include new foundation apprenticeships.

These new apprenticeships will give young people a route in to careers in critical sectors, enabling them to earn a wage whilst developing vital skills.

In February the government highlighted several changes to how apprenticeships will operate in the future, in response to employers' calls for more flexibility. This will include introduction of shorter apprenticeships from August 2025 (subject to the parliamentary timetable), with the minimum length reduced from 12 to 8 months. The new development will allow training to be delivered and completed faster where that makes sense for a given industry, or an individual has significant prior learning.

Added to this, employers were given more flexibility over maths and English requirements for apprentices. Businesses will now be able to decide whether adult learners, over the age of 19 when they start their apprenticeship course, will need to complete a level 2 English and maths qualification (equivalent to GCSE) to pass it. This does not mean that apprentices won't be assessed on core English and maths skills needed to demonstrate competency relevant to their occupation, these requirements will remain a fundamental part of the apprenticeship.

Learners aged 16-18 will still be required to achieve English and maths qualifications.

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This report is public	
Policy Review Updates	
Committee	Personnel Committee
Date of Committee	25 June 2025
Portfolio Holder presenting the report	Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services Councillor Chris Brant
Date Portfolio Holder agreed report	17 June 2025
Report of	Assistant Director of Human Resources, Claire Cox

Purpose of report

To seek approval from the Personnel Committee on proposed changes to existing HR policies.

1. Recommendations

The Personnel Committee resolves:

1.1 To review and approve the following policies for adoption:

- a. Neonatal Leave and Pay Policy
- b. Induction Policy

2. Executive Summary

2.1 This report provides overview of the latest policies that have been updated for review and approval by the Committee, as part of a rolling programme of policy reviews and updates.

Implications & Impact Assessments

Implications	Commentary
Finance	There are no financial implications arising from this report. The report is for information only. Kelly Wheeler, Finance Business Partner, 27 May 2025
Legal	Having policies in place to ensure that all new starters receive a consistent level of support and training will help to ensure that the Council inducts all of its new staff in a manner which will allow them to carry out their roles effectively going forward and support the Council's core values. In relation to the Neonatal Leave and Pay Policy, the policy sets out the statutory requirements which the

	Council must comply with and helps to ensure that we will comply with these.			Denzil – John Turbervill Head of Legal Services, 30.05.2025
Risk	There are no risks arising directly from this report. Julie Miles, Performance Analyst & Developer, 27 May 2025			
Impact Assessments	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equality Impact		X		There are no Equalities impacts arising directly from this report. Julie Miles, Performance Analyst & Developer, 27 May 2025
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		X		
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		X		
Climate & Environmental Impact				N/A
ICT & Digital Impact				N/A
Data Impact				N/A
Procurement & subsidy				N/A
Council Priorities	N/A			
Human Resources	It is essential that policies are regularly reviewed and kept up to date with both legislative and organisational requirements. Claire Cox, Assistant Director of Human Resources, 23 May 2025			
Property	N/A			

Consultation & Engagement	UNISON, the Extended Leadership Team and the Corporate Leadership Team have all been consulted on these policies ahead of submission for approval by the Personnel Committee.
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Supporting Information

3. Background

- 3.1 The policies outlined above are part of the rolling programme of policy updates that officers are bringing to Personnel Committee for approval as HR systematically work through and refresh all HR-related policies.
- 3.2 UNISON, and Extended and Corporate Leadership Teams have been provided with these documents for review and comment ahead of approval being sought from the Personnel Committee.

4. Details

- 4.1 The approach officers are taking to review all HR policies is to prioritise those needed to reflect changes in legislation and or work practices.
- 4.2 The aim of the review was to simplify the content where possible, removing any unnecessary information and ultimately making them more user friendly for managers and employees to understand and follow.
- 4.3 The table in Appendix 1 gives an overview of all the proposed changes for each policy.

5. Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 5.1 The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

Option 1: The alternative option would be to continue with the existing policies however officers have rejected this as the policies do not reflect current legislation or the Council's objectives of being an attractive, modern employer.

6. Conclusions and Reasons for Recommendations

- 6.1 Officers have updated the policies attached to this report to reflect current legislation and good practice but also to make them much more user friendly and attractive for existing and potential employees. For these reasons officers recommend the committee approves the revised policies.

Decision Information

Key Decision	N/A
Subject to Call in	N/A
If not, why not subject to call in	N/A
Ward(s) Affected	N/A

Document Information

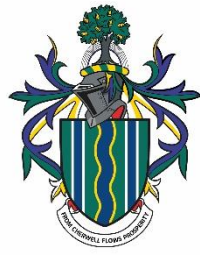
Appendices	
Appendix 1	Outline of changes to each policy
Appendix 2	Neonatal Leave and Pay Policy
Appendix 3	Induction Policy
Background Papers	N/A
Reference Papers	N/A
Report Author	Assistant Director of Human Resources, Claire Cox
Report Author contact details	Claire.cox@cherwell-dc.gov.uk , 01295 221549
Corporate Director Approval	Stephen Hinds, Corporate Director for Resources and Transformation, 10 June 2025

Appendix 1 – Outline of changes to each policy

June 2025

Document	Outline of changes
Induction Policy	Previous induction policy was very old so we have written a new policy to support new starters and managers through the induction process.
Neonatal Policy	New policy to support new legislation

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Induction Policy

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Organisation(s)	Cherwell District Council (CDC)
Policy title	Induction Policy
Owner	Human Resources
Version	1.0
Date of implementation	26 June 2025

DOCUMENT APPROVALS

This document requires the following committee approvals:

Committee	Date of meeting pending approval
Personnel Committee	25 June 2025

DOCUMENT DISTRIBUTION

This document will be distributed to all employees of Cherwell District

DATE FOR REVIEW

No later than 1st July 2028 but sooner if impacted by legislative changes.

REVISION HISTORY

Version	Revision date	Summary of revision

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1 Purpose

This policy outlines the procedures and responsibilities for onboarding and inducting new and existing employees at Cherwell District Council. The aim is to ensure that every new team member feels welcomed, supported, and equipped to begin their role successfully and that existing employees transition into new roles smoothly.

2 Objectives

- Cherwell District Council (CDC) is committed to ensuring that all new employees have a structured induction programme within their first six months of joining. The induction also includes any employees moving to a new role internally, this will be tailored by the line manager to ensure only the necessary parts are covered, for example a move to a leadership role or new team or department.
- Through an effective induction, an employee becomes familiar and accustomed to their job requirements and working environment, as well as gaining an understanding of the Council, its policies, procedures, and values, enabling them to contribute quickly and effectively to the Council's ambition. Its aim is to ensure the effective integration of a new employee into the Council for the benefit of both parties.
- This policy applies to all new employees of Cherwell District Council both in permanent and temporary positions and to all employees transferring to new positions
- Agency workers, consultants, self-employed contractors, volunteers or interns are required to attend the Council's corporate induction and participate in any essential training events that are relevant to their role. They are also expected to proactively obtain sufficient knowledge about the Council that enables them to effectively carry out their roles to the standards expected of all Council employees.
- New managers or employees moving to a managerial role for the first time will be offered additional managerial training to facilitate the new role, to enable them to gain the skills and knowledge required for a manager within the Council.

3 Onboarding/Pre-employment Activities

Once the employee has accepted the offer of employment, the necessary pre-employment activities will take place. As part of the onboarding process the following steps will be completed:

- The new employee will be sent a link from the HR Team to the Council's HR System to help assist with the onboarding process and the pre-employment checks.
- The HR Team will issue the offer letter and will carry out pre-employment checks eg right to work and references, medical questionnaire, qualification verification.
- Once agreed with the manager the start date will be communicated by the HR Team to the new employee. HR will then issue the contract of employment.
- New employees will be given access to relevant HR Policies, Team Structures, Benefits, Organisation Values, Employee Assistance Programme, Pension information via the HR onboarding platform, the link will be sent from the HR Team once the signed contract of employment has been returned.
- Managers will arrange the setup of payroll, email, system logins and IT equipment.
- Managers will create an induction plan and schedule prior to the new employee starting – see Appendix 1 and 2 for examples.

4 Induction

Corporate Induction - All staff including agency, contractors and casual staff (as appropriate) will be booked on to the corporate induction by the HR Team and advised of dates, and will be set up with access to complete CDC's corporate e-learning modules. The corporate induction includes and is not limited to:

- Attendance at a face-to-face induction day that will be ran quarterly with the Chief Executive, and include showcasing of the work of the council to new joiners.
- Attendance at a Meet the Chief Executive session
- Completion of the Council's e-learning package to complete mandatory corporate modules.
- Attendance at a Safeguarding Awareness Session.
- New Managers starting with the organisation or employees moving into a managerial role will be advised and booked onto the relevant managerial programme – please see Appendix 3 for the programme.
- **First Day** - On their first day the new employee will attend the office, unless otherwise instructed, for:
 - Welcome meeting with Line Manager.
 - IT equipment collection and relevant systems access check.
 - Assigning of an onboarding buddy.
 - Workplace tour or virtual orientation.
 - Introduction to the team.
- **First Week** – In the first week the new employee will start to familiarise themselves with the Council and their team through:
 - Detailed role briefing and expectations.
 - Introduction to performance management and objective setting system.
 - Role-specific training or shadowing.
 - Access to e-learning system to complete mandatory corporate training modules.
 - Clarification of probation period and performance
- **First Month and beyond**
 - Ongoing check-ins with Line Manager.
 - Role-specific training and/or shadowing.

5 Probation

- To ensure that all new employees appointed to the Council meet and maintain the required standards of attendance, timekeeping, conduct and performance they will be subject to a 6-month probation period (twelve months for apprentices).
- During the probation period regular meetings will be set up by the line manager with the employee, to discuss progress and to allow timely remedial action to be taken if required. Documented probation review meetings will take place after the employee has completed 3 months and 5 months employment.

- Confirmation of appointment is dependent upon the satisfactory completion of the probation period. In addition to successful probationary reviews, the probation period is only deemed to be complete once the new employee has completed all induction forms, mandatory training and the probation form has been completed on the HR/Payroll system by the Manager.
- See the Probation Policy on the Staff Intranet for further information.

6 Support and Development

The Council values their employees and supports them in their on-going development. There are a number of tools available for staff to engage in and employees can apply for further Learning and Development to support their role:

- **Buddy Scheme** – new employees will be assigned a team buddy by their Line Manager within the first week of employment. This buddy will help them to orientate themselves with the organisation, please see Buddy Scheme Process on the intranet.
- **Training Opportunities** – The Council has a number of learning opportunities for staff to take advantage of. Employees have access to Bookboon (audio and on-line books on personal development), Quarterdeck (short modules of learning and live monthly training sessions on personal development), West Midlands Coaching and Mentoring (access to confidential coach or mentor), Additional Learning and Development appropriate to role – see **Learning and Development Policy and Learning and Development pages** for further information.
- **Feedback** – we value feedback and encourage new starters to feedback to HR and their Manager on the onboarding experience. New employees will be sent an on-line feedback form within 3 months after starting and again after 12 months.
- CDC is an equalities-led, disability-compliant employer. Please feel confident to discuss any access requirements with your line manager so that we can support you at work

7 Roles and Responsibility

Employees have a responsibility to:

- Carry out the relevant induction activities indicated to them by their manager and included in the induction process.
- Be proactive and take ownership of their own induction with the support of their manager.
- Apply the knowledge and skills gained through induction when performing in their role.
- Maintain the records required throughout the induction process.

Line Managers have a responsibility to:

- Setup an induction for the new employee in readiness for their first day. See Appendix 1 and 2 for the new starter checklist and sample induction schedule.
- Ensure new employees complete the appropriate induction process within the agreed timescale.
- Allocate time and commit to personal input into each induction.

- Guide new employees through the information and support available to them.
- Support employees and encourage and enable them to be proactive in conducting their own induction.
- Address any difficulties the employee may be experiencing.
- Ensure that new employees understand their role and expected standards.
- Ensure that new employees understand how their performance will be monitored and reviewed throughout the induction period, and the implications of failing to meet the expected standard of performance throughout the induction period.
- Provide feedback through regular 1-1 sessions during the induction period.
- Address and support any performance issues and agree measures to improve performance.
- Prepare the employee for the Appraisal process (set goals, discuss career aspirations, and develop personal development plans through an appraisal meeting) at the beginning, mid and end of year.
- Maintain the records required throughout the induction process.
- The Human Resources team have a responsibility to: Coordinate contracts, induction materials, policies, compliance training, and feedback collection.
- Provide and maintain the induction process on iTrent.
- Provide advice and support to managers as required.
- Provide advice on induction for individuals with particular requirements.

8 Monitoring and Review

HR will regularly review the onboarding and induction process using feedback from new starters and managers. This policy is reviewed every 3 years or in line with legislative updates or organisational changes.

9 Additional Help and Guidance

For any further help and guidance, managers and new staff can contact the HR Team at humanresources@cherwell-dc.gov.uk.

For UNISON members, the UNISON branch email is unison@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Appendix One - New Starter Checklist

Managers should prepare the New Starter Checklist ahead of the new employee starting, giving plenty of time to allocate tasks to relevant staff as required to help with the induction process.

Thought should be given to the job role that the new employee is undertaking and relevant training arranged with other teams or with someone within the new starter's team as who could demonstrate/help the employee eg Finance System (if the employee is to authorise or raise POs), Procurement Team for the raising of contracts.

New Starter Checklist		
Employee Name:		
Job Title:		
Start Date:		
Line Manager:		
Team/Department:		
Prior to employee's arrival		
Task	Who's Responsible?	Date Task Completed
Create a personalised induction programme		
Inform colleagues of your new employee's arrival		
Log a ticket with the IT service desk portal for a computer login		
Organise office equipment (e.g. laptop, telephone, stationery)		
Organise Personal Protective Equipment (if required)		
Allocate a buddy		
Employee's First Day		
Introductions to team colleagues, relevant Assistant Director(s) and main points of contact and Buddy		
Ensure P45 and bank details have been given to HR or to the payroll team directly		
A tour of the office that includes toilets, kitchen, break out areas, car parking and bike shelters		

Explain what to do in the event of a fire – fire exits, meeting point etc		
Explain the process for calling a first aider and what your new employee should do if they have an accident at work		
Obtain badges for access to the building and car park		
First Week and beyond		
Ensure that your new employee completes corporate e-learning and attends all new starter training sessions		
Ensure your new employee has updated their details and added a professional photograph to the shared staff phonebook on the intranet and itrent ESS		
Confirm your new employee is aware of their annual leave entitlement, about how to book leave and about any local approval requirements		
Explain the flexi scheme and any local arrangements for office cover		
Explain what your new employee must do in the event that they are unable to attend work due to sickness		
Confirm the probation process and how your new employee can access support if they require it		
Clarify the overall building security arrangements and any local lone worker arrangement		
Set your new employee relevant appraisal objectives to take them through to the appraisal year end (March each year)		
Ensure your new employee is aware of the process for claiming mileage and expenses		
Show your new employee how to book a meeting room and a desk within Castle Quay		
Confirm your new employee is aware of how to access all our HR policies		
Apprise your new employee of any confidentiality requirements with your area and the organisation		

Explain our safeguarding responsibilities and how to report any concerns		
Provide an explanation of systems and the employee's working environment		
How to log into the IT system (check their account is active)		
How to access ITent ESS/MSS		
CDC's shared drive structure		
Email and calendars access/use		
The shared staff phonebook on the intranet		
The intranet site and intranet activity calendar		
How to use MS Teams both as the telephone system, chat and meeting space		
Confirm your new employee is clear about their hours of work and break times		
Office Handbook		
Arrange in-house role dependant training eg Finance System, Procurement Process etc and build this into the Induction Schedule where appropriate.		
How to request Learning and Development support for activities and qualifications		
Show where the new starter can find the Learning and Development Resources can be found eg Quarterdeck, West Midlands Coaching and Mentoring and Bookboon		

Appendix Two - Induction Schedule Template

Managers can use the following Induction Schedule as guidance and can adapt as required for their new employee. The induction schedule should be prepared well before the employee starts.

Induction Schedule Template – First Week			
Employee Name:			
Job Title:			
Start Date:			
Line Manager:			
Team/Department:			
Day 1 – Welcome and Orientation			
Time	Activity	Responsible Person	Location/Platform
09:00–09:30	Welcome & Introduction to Buddy	Line Manager	Office / Virtual
09:30–10:30	Office Tour / Virtual Walkthrough	Line Manager / Buddy	Onsite / Teams / Zoom
10:30–11:00	IT Setup & System Access	IT Support	Desk / Remote Support
11:00–12:00	Introduction to Company Mission & Values	Line Manager	Meeting Room / Online
12:00–13:00	Lunch with Team / Buddy	Team / Buddy	Office / Virtual
13:00–14:00	System Training (Email, HR, Comms Tools)	Buddy	Office / Virtual
14:00–16:00	Meet the Team & Key Department Overviews	Line Manager / Dept Leads	Various / Virtual
16:00–16:30	Day 1 Reflection & Q&A	Line Manager	Office / Virtual
Day 2 – Tools, Culture & Compliance			
Time	Activity	Responsible Person	Location/Platform

Induction Schedule Template – First Week			
09:00–10:00	Introduction to Team Processes / Workflows	Line Manager	.
10:00–13:00	Corporate e-learning	Buddy	
13:00–14:00	Lunch & Informal Team Meet	Team	
14:00–16:30	Shadowing or Introductory Tasks	Assigned Colleague	
Day 3-5 – Role-Specific Training & Integration			
Time	Activity	Responsible Person	Location/Platform
Wednesday	Shadowing and Practical Task Introduction	Team Lead	
Wednesday	Introduction to KPIs / Goals	Line Manager	
Thursday	Attend Team Meeting	Team	
Friday	Check-in & Feedback on First Week	Line Manager	
Fri	Review Induction Schedule and Next Steps	Line Manager	

Appendix Three – New Manager Programme

When a manager starts with the Council or an existing employee moves into a managerial role, they will be sent a welcome email outlining the programme below. The manager will automatically be booked onto relevant HR training sessions and advised of the dates but these are also available for existing managers to attend as well and are bookable via Employee Self Service (ESS).

HR Management Training
The HR Business Partners run management sessions on a quarterly basis covering Sickness Absence Management and Recruitment and Selection. If you have not already been booked onto these sessions, you can book yourself on or change your scheduled date yourself by logging into itrent ESS , select Learning and the courses will show on the right-hand side of the screen.
First Steps into Management: sink or swim!
This course is run by HQN and is advantageous for those starting off in management or who may like a refresher. We have always received very good feedback from staff who have attended. Please follow the link to details and dates . To attend this course please complete the Learning and Development Application Form , sign and return this to Teresa.reed@cherwell-dc.gov.uk , Learning and Development Manager, who will book the course for you.
Quarterdeck
Quarterdeck is our on-line short e-learning modules, which can be used to supplement the above course. You will need to register yourself with an account using this link or via the Quicklinks on the intranet. These modules cover a variety of subjects and are short, sharp, timely and interactive. Quarterdeck also provide a monthly live session, which you can book yourself on once you have created your account and a list of these will be found in Quarterdeck under Courses, Live and include subjects such as Focus, Difficult People, Difficult conversations and much more. Any problems with creating an account, please contact Teresa.reed@cherwell-dc.gov.uk .
West Midlands Coaching and Mentoring
We are also a part of the West Midlands Coaching and Mentoring pool which gives you access to 100 professionally qualified coaches from a broad range of backgrounds, all of whom are, or have been serving public sector officers. Mentors have experience and expertise in a variety of specialist service areas, at various leadership levels and in various organisations, use the link to login WM Coaching or visit our Cherwell page.

Level 3 Team Leader or Level 5 Departmental Manager

If you are thinking of a management qualification, why not have a look at the Level 3 or Level 5 Management qualification. We can support managers with this qualification via the apprenticeship levy and it will take approximately 12 – 18 months to complete.

If you are interested have a look at our provider [City Skills](#) and if you would like to participate, contact Teresa Reed, Learning and Development Manager at Teresa.reed@cherwell-dc.gov.uk.

iTrent Appraisal

We currently use iTrent check-ins for carrying out appraisals within the organisation. There are guides available on the intranet, which will take you through the process by if you wish to have 1:1 guidance on how to use the [check-ins](#), please contact Teresa.reed@cherwell-dc.gov.uk, who will be happy to take you through the process.

Additional Resources to aid the New Employee Induction

- Office Handbook available on the staff intranet
- Probation Policy available on the staff intranet under Human Resources, Policies and Procedures
- Learning and Development Policy available on the staff intranet under Human Resources, Policies and Procedures
- Buddy Process available on the staff intranet under Human Resources, Policies and Procedures
- Induction Pages available under Human Resources on the staff intranet

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Neonatal Policy

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Organisation(s)	Cherwell District Council (CDC)
Policy title	Neonatal Leave and Pay Policy
Owner	Human Resources
Version	1.0
Date of implementation	26 June 2025

DOCUMENT APPROVALS

This document requires the following committee approvals:

Committee	Date of meeting pending approval
Personnel Committee	25 June 2025

DOCUMENT DISTRIBUTION

This document will be distributed to all employees of Cherwell District Council.

DATE FOR REVIEW

No later than 1st June 2028 but sooner if impacted by legislative changes.

REVISION HISTORY

Version	Revision date	Summary of revision

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1. **Introduction**

- 1.1 This policy has been developed to help support families whose newborn child spends time in neonatal care following birth. This is generally because the baby is born prematurely (before 37 weeks of pregnancy) or at full-term but sick. For many parents, therefore much of their maternity/paternity leave is spent on the neonatal unit, not at home bonding with their babies.
- 1.2 This policy will ensure that the parents of the child in neonatal care have the opportunity to spend the same amount of time, at home, with their child as would be the case where the child does not spend time in hospital.
- 1.3 This policy does not form part of any contract of employment or other contract to provide services, and it may be amended at any time following consultation with trade union and subject to agreement from the Personnel Committee.
- 1.4 This policy applies to employees only. It does not apply to agency workers, consultants, self-employed contractors, volunteers, or interns.

2. **Statutory Neonatal Care Leave (SNCL)**

- 2.1 The right to take SNCL is a day one right for employees whose newborn baby, born on or after 6 April 2025, requires at least seven consecutive days of neonatal care within the first 28 days of their life.
- 2.2 Employees who have a parental relationship with the child receiving care, including birth parents, adoptive parents or intended parents via surrogacy, and partners of these individuals, will be entitled to up to 12 weeks of SNCL. The right to take SNCL is available regardless of length of service and it must be taken within 68 weeks of the child's birth. SNCL is in addition to other forms of statutory family leave, such as maternity or adoption leave.
- 2.3 Employees must notify their employers if they intend to take SNCL. SNCL is structured into two periods: Tier 1 and Tier 2. An employee who intends to be absent on neonatal care leave must give the following notice:
 - Tier 1 period (i.e. whilst in/within one week of exiting neonatal care): in respect of each week of leave, notice must be given verbally or in writing before the employee is due to start work on the first day of absence (or as soon as it is reasonably practicable to give notice). Tier 1 period leave is only likely to be taken by a father or the mother's partner, as the mother will more than likely already be on Maternity leave during the Tier 1 period.
 - Tier 2 period (i.e. more than one week after leaving neonatal care to 68 weeks from birth):
 - for a single week of neonatal leave - notice must be given no later than 15 days before the first day of leave in writing; or
 - for two or more consecutive weeks of neonatal leave, notice must be given no later than 28 days before the first day of leave

- 2.4 Employees taking SNCL are protected from unfair dismissal and detriment. If an employee is made redundant during SNCL after six consecutive weeks of leave, the employer must offer a suitable alternative vacancy where possible. Employees returning to work after SNCL are entitled to return to the same job if they have taken SNCL in isolation or as part of statutory leave of 26 weeks or less. For longer absences, they must be offered a suitable alternative role if returning to the original job is not reasonably practicable.

3. Statutory Neonatal Care Pay (SNCP)

- 3.1 To qualify for SNCP, employees must have a parental relationship with the child and must also have been continuously employed for at least 26 weeks before the relevant week. The relevant week differs based on the circumstances. For birth parents, it is the 14th week before the expected week of childbirth. For adoptive parents, it is the week in which they are matched with the child. For other cases, it is the week before the neonatal care starts. Additionally, employees must earn above the lower earnings limit for National Insurance contributions.
- 3.2 Employees can choose whether to take SNCP in single weeks or multiple non-consecutive weeks during Tier 1. In Tier 2, SNCP must be taken in a consecutive block.
- 3.3 Where the mother of the child does not qualify for maternity pay, she will still be entitled to apply for neonatal leave and pay.
- 3.4 A line manager cannot refuse a request for neonatal leave provided the employee meets the eligibility criterion and provides the requisite period of notice.
- 3.5 Neonatal leave will be paid at the statutory rate for a week's pay up to a maximum of 12 weeks.
- 3.6 If you are the mother of the child on maternity leave and do not intend to return to work following the maternity leave you will not be entitled to any neonatal pay.

4. Impact on maternity leave and other types of family leave

- 4.1 Maternity leave cannot be paused or restarted, however the provision of neonatal leave and pay will allow the mother to have additional leave at the end of her maternity leave period.
- 4.2 The interaction with other types of statutory parental leave (shared parental leave and paternity/ maternity support leave) with neonatal leave will be more flexible as these can be used at different times. For example, paternity leave can be used at any time between the birth of the baby and 56 days from birth (or due date in the case of premature birth). Neonatal leave can be used at any time up to 68 weeks following admittance to the care unit.
- 4.3 This policy will not impact on the mother's rights to maternity leave and pay or on the right to take paternity/maternity support leave or any other statutory leave.

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