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Cherwell

DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

Committee: Personnel Committee
Date: Wednesday 24 June 2026
Time: 6.30 pm
Venue: 39 Castle Quay, Banbury, OX16 5FD

Membership

**Councillor Rebecca Biegel
(Chair)**

Councillor Dr Isabel Creed
Councillor Frank Ideh
Councillor Kieron Mallon
Councillor G.A. Popescu
Councillor Nigel Simpson

Councillor Julius Parker (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Dr Faltermeyer
Councillor Paul Jeffreys
Councillor Fiona Mawson
Councillor Chris Pruden
Councillor Bryonie Wells

Substitutes Any member of the relevant political group, excluding members of the Appeals Panel

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. Minutes (Pages 5 - 10)

To confirm as correct records the Minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 4 March 2026 and 20 May 2026.

4. Chair's Announcements

To receive communications from the Chair.

5. Requests to Address the Meeting

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

6. Policy Review Updates (Pages 11 - 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 implementation:

- a. Probation Policy
- b. Travel and Subsistence Policy
- c. Standby and On Call Policy
- d. Bereavement and Compassionate Leave Policy
- e. Market Supplement Policy
- f. Capability Policy

7. Workforce Profile Statistics - Quarter 4, 2025-2026 (Pages 67 - 98)

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:

1.1 To review and note the workforce data for quarter 4 of 2025/26 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. Urgent Business

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

Councillors are requested to collect any post from their pigeon hole in the Members' Lounge before or 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.

Evacuation Procedure

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If you make a representation to the meeting, you will be deemed by the council to have consented to being recorded. By entering the Council Chamber or joining virtually, you are consenting to being recorded and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting and/or training purposes.

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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 16 June 2026

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Cherwell District Council

Personnel Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Personnel Committee held at 39 Castle Quay, Banbury, OX16 5FD, on 4 March 2026 at 6.30 pm

Present:

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

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Phil Chapman
Councillor Harry Knight
Councillor Rob Pattenden

Officers:

Claire Cox, Assistant Director Human Resources
Susan Blunsden, HR Manager
Martyn Surfleet, Democratic and Elections Officer

31 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interests.

32 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 21 November, 3 December and 10 December 2025 were agreed as correct records and signed by the Chair.

33 **Chair's Announcements**

The Chair advised that she would be standing down at the forthcoming elections in May and thanked Committee members for their work and support during her time as a member and Chair of the Committee. The Chair paid particular tribute to Councillor Coton as Vice-Chair of the Committee and thanked officers for their help and support.

34 **Requests to Address the Meeting**

There were no requests to address the meeting.

35 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

36 **Policy Review Updates**

The Assistant Director Human Resources submitted a report to seek approval from the Personnel Committee on proposed changes to eight HR policies: Parental Leave Policy; Paternity Leave Policy; Probation Policy; Compassionate Leave Policy; Annual Leave and Bank Holiday Policy; Court Attendance Policy; Honorarium Policy; Health and Safety Policy.

In introducing the report, the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services, explained that the Policies were part of a rolling programme of updates that aimed to review policies on a 3-year cycle to ensure that they remained compliant and reflected current practices.

In response to a question regarding whether there were any operational challenges to implementing and maintaining HR policies within the organisation, the Assistant Director Human Resources explained that work was ongoing to ensure that policies were up to date with government legislation and could be easily comprehended and utilised. They were important in providing guidance to staff, and where there were issues there was flexibility to amend as needed.

In response to a question regarding the inclusion of more gender neutral and inclusive terms within the Parental and Paternity Leave policies the Assistant Director Human Resources confirmed that the HR team would review, and amend where considered appropriate, the current terminology, .

Resolved

(1) That, having given due consideration, the following policies be approved for implementation:

- Parental Leave Policy
- Paternity Leave Policy
- Probation Policy
- Compassionate Leave Policy
- Annual Leave and Bank Holiday Policy
- Court Attendance Policy
- Honorarium Policy
- Health and Safety Policy

37 **Workforce Profile Statistics - Quarter 3 of 2025-26**

The Assistant Director Human Resources submitted a report to update the Committee on Cherwell District Council's workforce as at the end of quarter 3 of 2025/26, including measuring staff well-being and highlighting the actions officers were taking to address any issues.

In introducing the report, the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services, advised that there were no issues, risks or concerns to highlight.

In response to a question regarding the effects of staff absences on the waste collection department, the Assistant Director Human Resources explained that there were issues relating to both staff absence as well as vacancies that have been impacting the service, but that HR Business Partners were working with department managers to rectify and recruit.

In response to a question regarding reasons provided by staff leavers, and whether there were any follow up actions or tracking for patterns, the Assistant Director Human Resources explained that several measures were in place to monitor responses to exit interviews and should any concerns arise they were escalated appropriately.

In a follow up question regarding the low completion rate of exit interviews and whether interviews were held in an impartial manner, the Assistant Director Human Resources explained that exit interviews were not mandatory but encouraged, and that interviews were undertaken by a member of the HR team to ensure that they were open and impartial.

Resolved

- (1) That the workforce profile statistics for quarter 3 of 2025/26 (financial year dates) be noted.

38 **Gender Pay Gap Report**

The Assistant Director Human Resources submitted a report 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 2026.

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 3.1%, with men earning an average of £0.65 more an hour than women. For the fourth year in a 4-year period, there had been no median pay difference between men and women. Even with a mean difference of 3.1% CDC remained significantly lower than the national public sector mean pay gap of 12.3%, and the median pay gap of 13.5%.

In response to a question regarding management development and training for female staff and whether processes were in place to encourage equal

opportunities for senior roles within the organisation, the Assistant Director Human Resources explained that the Council was an equal opportunity employer and that the recruitment process was under review with the aim to understand and remove barriers that may prohibit progression and opportunities for all staff.

Resolved

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

The meeting ended at 7.18 pm

Chair:

Date:

Cherwell District Council

Personnel Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Personnel Committee held at 39 Castle Quay, Banbury, OX16 5FD, on 20 May 2026 at 7.39 pm

Present:

Councillor Rebecca Biegel (Chair)
Councillor Julius Parker (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Dr Isabel Creed
Councillor Dr Faltermeyer
Councillor Frank Ideh
Councillor Paul Jeffreys
Councillor Kieron Mallon
Councillor Fiona Mawson
Councillor G.A. Popescu
Councillor Chris Pruden
Councillor Nigel Simpson
Councillor Bryonie Wells

1 Appointment of Chair for the municipal year 2026/2027

It was proposed by Councillor Dr Creed and seconded by Councillor Dr Faltermeyer that Councillor Biegel be appointed Chair of the Personnel Committee for the municipal year 2026/2027.

It was subsequently proposed by Councillor Popescu and seconded by Councillor Jeffreys that Councillor Jeffreys be appointed Chair of the Personnel Committee for the municipal year 2026/2027.

There being two nominations for the position of Chair, a vote was taken. There were ten votes for Councillor Biegel and two votes for Councillor Jeffreys.

Councillor Rebecca Biegel, having received the most votes, was duly elected Chair of the Personnel Committee for the municipal year 2026/2027.

2 Appointment of Vice-Chair for the municipal year 2026/2027

It was proposed by Councillor Pruden and seconded by Councillor Wells that Councillor Parker be appointed Vice-Chair of the Personnel Committee for the municipal year 2026/2027.

It was subsequently proposed by Councillor Popescu and seconded by Councillor Jeffreys that Councillor Jeffreys be appointed Vice-Chair of the Personnel Committee for the municipal year 2026/2027.

There being two nominations for the position of Vice-Chair, a vote was taken. There were ten votes for Councillor Parker and two votes for Councillor Jeffreys.

Councillor Julius Parker, having received the most votes, was duly elected Vice-Chair of the Personnel Committee for the municipal year 2026/2027.

The meeting ended at 7.43 pm

Chair:

Date:

This report is public	
Policy Review Updates	
Committee	Personnel Committee
Date of Committee	24 June 2026
Portfolio Holder presenting the report	Portfolio Holder for Customer and Community Services, Councillor Nicola Borkmann
Date Portfolio Holder agreed report	11 June 2026
Report of	Assistant Director 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 implementation:

- a. Probation Policy
- b. Travel and Subsistence Policy
- c. Standby and On Call Policy
- d. Bereavement and Compassionate Leave Policy
- e. Market Supplement Policy
- f. Capability 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	This is an information report recommending Committee to approve the reviewed and revised policies itemed above.

	Therefore, there are no financial implications associated with this report.			
	Rachel Ainsworth, Finance Business Partner, 4 June 2026			
Legal	Having up to date policies in place will help to ensure that the Council allows staff them to carry out their roles effectively going forward and support the Council's core values.			
	Appendix 1 clearly identifies the proposed changes which members are being asked to approve.			
	Denzil – John Turbervill, Head of Legal Services, 9 June 2026			
Risk	There are no risks arising directly from this report. Having up-to-date and fit for purpose policies mitigates risks such falling behind our peers regarding staff health and wellbeing policies, or new starters falling behind due to lack of support and training.			
	Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader, 10 June 2026			
Impact Assessments	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equality Impact		X		There are no Equalities impacts arising directly from this report. Our policies are developed / reviewed according to the council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Framework, and in line with the Equalities Act 2010. Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader, 10 June 2026
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,		X		

including employees and service users?				
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>It is essential that policies are regularly reviewed and kept up to date with both legislative and organisational requirements.</p> <p>Claire Cox, Assistant Director of Human Resources, 1 June 2026</p>			
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.			

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	Probation Policy
Appendix 3	Travel and Subsistence Policy
Appendix 4	Standby and On Call Policy
Appendix 5	Bereavement and Compassionate Leave Policy
Appendix 6	Market Supplement Policy
Appendix 7	Capability Policy

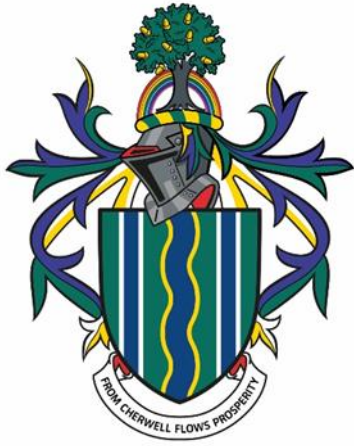
Background Papers	N/A
Reference Papers	N/A
Report Author	Assistant Director of Human Resources, Claire Cox
Report Author contact details	Claire.cox@cherwell-dc.gov.uk , 01295 221549
Executive Director Approval (unless Executive Director or Statutory Officer report)	Executive Director for Resources

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Appendix 1 - Changes to Policies

Policy	Changes
Probation Policy	As advised at the last review, the probation period has reduced from 6 months to 3 months with a one-month option to extend. This is to ensure we act in line with legal advice relating to the new Employment Rights Act 2025.
Travel and Subsistence Policy	Added clarity on the deduction of home to work mileage and provided examples. Changes to the approved HMRC mileage rates – Cars from 45p to 55p.
Standby and On Call Policy	Updated standby and on-call rates to reflect current 2026 rates. Added a paragraph to ensure legal compliance, clarifying that standby and on-call time does not constitute working time.
Bereavement and Compassionate Leave Policy	Change of policy title. Addition of Statutory Bereaved Partner's Paternity leave in line with legislation changes.
Market Supplement Policy	Added definition of Hard to fill. Extended the time frame from 2 years to 3 years for a market supplement. Further clarity regarding authorisation if market supplement extended.
Capability Policy	Tidy up and making formal stages clearer.

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Probation Policy

Document Control and Overview

Organisation(s)	Cherwell District Council
Policy Title	Probation Policy
Author	Human Resources
Owner	Human Resources
Version	3.0
Document Reference	
Approval Date	24/06/2026
Policy Review Cycle	3 years
Latest Review Date	24/06/2029

Document Revision History

Revision Date	Reviser	Previous Version	Description of Revision
24/06/2026	Human Resources	2.0	Reduction of probation period from 6 months to 3 months, with an option to extend by one month

Document Approvals

This document has been approved by:

Approval	Date
Personnel Committee	24 June 2026

Document Distribution

Name	Job Title
All employees of Cherwell District Council.	

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Appendix 1 – How to access probation forms on iTrent

1. Introduction

- 1.1 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.
- 1.2 This policy will be reviewed and updated as necessary to reflect legislative changes.
- 1.3 This policy applies to all employees of Cherwell District Council, it does not apply to agency workers, consultants, self-employed contractors, volunteers or interns.
- 1.4 The council is committed to ensuring that all newly appointed staff receive the best possible support during their probation period to demonstrate their suitability to undertake the full range of duties to their post.
- 1.5 The Council is committed to equality and inclusion and will make reasonable adjustments during the probation period to support employees with disabilities or other specific needs, ensuring they have equal opportunity to demonstrate their suitability for the role.
- 1.6 The standard probation period is three months. In exceptional circumstances, this may be extended by up to one month. If a contract is shorter than the length of the probation period, the probation period will be for the length of time the employee is employed.
- 1.7 During the probation period meetings will be set up by the line manager to ensure regular two-way communication between the line manager and the employee, to discuss progress and to allow timely remedial action to be taken if required.
- 1.8 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 forms have been completed on the HR/Payroll system.
- 1.9 Any issues that arise will be dealt with immediately and not left until a formal review.
- 1.10 If, at any time during the probation period, the probationers conduct, performance, attendance or timekeeping is not satisfactory, and it is evident that the required standard will not be reached before the end of the probation period the council has the right to dismiss the employee with one week's written notice.
- 1.11 Minor disciplinary matters will be dealt with under the probation procedure. However, the formal disciplinary procedure may be invoked in cases of alleged serious or gross misconduct.

- 1.12 Probation is a two-way process, and the new employee has a duty to ensure they raise issues and seek to get action taken to resolve issues. The new employee should actively ensure review meetings are undertaken and recorded.
- 1.13 If at any time during the probation period the employee feels they are not suitable for the role; they must give the Council one week's notice to terminate their employment.

2. **Purpose**

2.1 A probation period provides:

- a) Time during which an employee can demonstrate, through performance, conduct, timekeeping and attendance, their suitability for the role.
- b) An opportunity to assess the employee's capability, reliability and suitability before deciding whether to confirm their appointment.
- c) Through regular reviews, opportunities to identify the employee's training needs and provide appropriate timely development activities, guidance and encouragement, to assist in meeting the required standards.

2.2 During the probation period the line manager will ensure that all employees receive the help and support they need to develop the appropriate skills, performance and attitudes to enable them to satisfactorily complete their probation period. The line manager will:

- a) Provide a thorough induction programme.
- b) Ensure that the employee fully understands the standards expected in the role.
- c) Provide guidance, training and encouragement to help the employee adapt to the new work environment.
- d) Conduct regular reviews of the employee's progress through the probationary period.
- e) Issue warnings at the earliest opportunity if the necessary standards are not being met, stating clearly what improvement is necessary.
- f) Give the employee the opportunity to improve before deciding whether or not to confirm their appointment, except in cases of gross misconduct.

3. **Probation Meetings**

3.1 Probation meetings are intended to be a positive way of supporting and guiding an employee through their probation period. The line manager will meet with the employee on a regular basis to discuss the employee's progress and give advice, guidance, and support where improvements are required. The emphasis is on a two-way communication between the employee and line manager allowing timely action to be taken in the early stages of appointment.

3.2 Formal probation review meetings will take place at one and three months.

- 3.3 Employees should be proactive in seeking support if they have any concerns about the requirements of the role or their capability to perform the role.
- 3.4 Probation meetings should take place in an uninterrupted environment allowing sufficient time in the meeting for both parties to contribute constructively to the discussion.
- 3.5 In line with our values of working collaboratively, acting with integrity, demonstrating accountability, being innovative and thinking sustainably, line managers should:
- Provide constructive, balanced feedback on performance and achievements to date against the objectives set at induction, recognising successes and contributions while being honest and respectful about areas for development.
 - Review timekeeping and attendance, including sickness absence, in a supportive and consistent way, seeking to understand any underlying issues and working collaboratively with the employee to identify appropriate solutions or adjustments where needed.
 - Review and agree training and development needs, encouraging continuous learning and identifying opportunities for growth that support both the individual's development and the longer-term needs of the service.
 - Identify any aspects of performance or conduct that require improvement, clearly setting out expectations and agreed actions, while acting with integrity and fairness and ensuring the employee understands their responsibilities and accountability.
 - Explore any problems or barriers the employee has encountered in their role, creating a safe and inclusive space for open discussion and working together to find practical, innovative and sustainable ways forward.
 - Provide appropriate guidance and support, including signposting to relevant resources or colleagues, and fostering a sense of shared responsibility for achieving positive outcomes.
 - Introduce and agree any changes to objectives, ensuring they remain realistic, achievable and aligned with Council priorities, and that ownership and timescales are clearly understood.
 - Set the next review meeting, confirming actions, responsibilities and timescales to support ongoing progress and accountability.
- 3.6 A copy of the probation meeting documentation should be recorded electronically within the council's current HR/Payroll system. Details of how to do this are at appendix 1.
- 3.7 It is the line manager's responsibility to ensure that reviews are conducted within the timescales described in this policy.
- 3.8 In between reviews the line manager should keep brief notes of the probationer's achievements, development points, training requirements and any advice or warnings given, to be used at the next review meeting. These notes will be shared with the employee.

4. Confirmation of Appointment

- 4.1 If the employee's performance, conduct, timekeeping, and attendance have been satisfactory and fully meet the council's expected standards for the role the line

manager will complete the final probationary review and form on the HR/Payroll system.

- 4.2 Employees will be advised in writing of the successful completion of their probation period.
- 4.3 Employees will not be deemed to have passed their probationary period of employment unless they have received written confirmation from Human Resources.

5. **Terminating Employment**

- 5.1 Probation periods will usually be confirmed as successful at the end of the period however, where performance or required actions have failed to reach the standards required by the line manager, and where reasonably considered there is very little likelihood of the employee being able to reach the required standards within reasonable timeframes, despite additional support and/or training, the line manager should advise the employee that they may not be confirmed in post.
- 5.2 If this is the case, the line manager will arrange a meeting with both their Human Resources Business Partner and the employee. The employee has the right to be accompanied at this meeting by either a workplace colleague or Union Representative.
- 5.3 The purpose of the meeting is to enable the line manager to review the case for termination of employment and to consider any views expressed by the employee before a decision is made.
- 5.4 After a brief adjournment the line manager will state the outcome of the meeting.
- 5.5 The decision will be confirmed in writing to the employee as soon as reasonably practical and normally within 5 working days of the meeting.
- 5.6 Should the outcome of the meeting be dismissal; the employee will be provided with one weeks' notice. For cases of gross misconduct, summary dismissal may be considered.

Appendix 1

Probation review forms are accessible on the Manager Self Service (MSS) iTrent portal

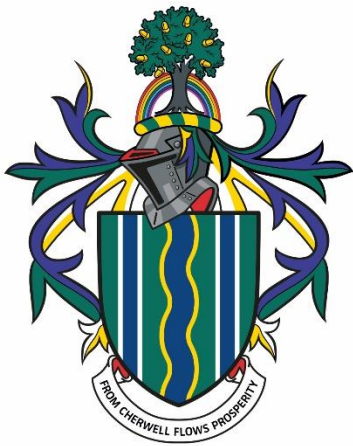
This form will be made available against the person when they start at the organisation and can be accessed in MSS as follows:

- Select the person, whose form needs to be completed
- Click on Questionnaires and Forms under the links section
- Click on Review Questionnaires and Forms
- Click on the Probation Form on the right-hand side of the screen and follow the instructions detailed within the form

Once the manager has completed the form and saved it, the employee will have an opportunity to comment.

All probation documentation stored within the HR/Payroll system will be handled in accordance with data protection legislation, including GDPR, to ensure confidentiality and secure processing of personal information.

Should managers or employees have any queries about the form, please contact:
humanresources@cherwell-dc.gov.uk



Cherwell

DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

Travel and Subsistence Policy

Document Control and Overview

Organisation(s)	Cherwell District Council
Policy Title	Travel and Subsistence Policy
Author	Human Resources
Owner	Human Resources
Version	2.0
Document Reference	
Approval Date	24/06/2026
Policy Review Cycle	3 years
Latest Review Date	24/06/2029

Document Revision History

Revision Date	Reviser	Previous Version	Description of Revision
24/06/2026	Human Resources	1.0	Addition of mileage claim examples. Further clarity regarding compliance checks.

Document Approvals

This document has been approved by:

Approval	Date
Personnel Committee	24 June 2026

Document Distribution

Name	Job Title
All employees of Cherwell District Council.	

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This policy aims to help all council employees understand the procedures they need to follow to be reimbursed for the legitimate expenses they may incur when travelling as part of their work.
- 1.2 This policy applies to all employees of Cherwell District Council. It does not apply to consultants or self-employed contractors.
- 1.3 This policy does not form part of any contract of employment, and it may be amended at any time following consultation with trade union and subject to agreement from the Personnel Committee.
- 1.4 The central principles underpinning this policy are:
 - the need to ensure employees are safe and supported when travelling as part of work;
 - there are clear ways for these employees to minimise the personal expenses they incur when they travel; and
 - there are fair, consistent, and efficient procedures in place to reimburse any expenses.
- 1.5 The policy is also intended to ensure council employees, comply with all relevant taxation rules and guidelines.
- 1.6 Employees will be expected to incur the minimal business costs wherever possible, for example, first class travel on public transport would not be considered reasonable if the same journey could be made on a standard, 2nd class or economy ticket.

2 Eligibility to claim

- 2.1 Employees are allowed to claim only when their duties require them to incur additional personal expenditure and where their manager has pre-authorised the spend.
- 2.2 The reimbursement of travel and subsistence expenses incurred is not an automatic entitlement. Invoices and receipts must be submitted with all claims as evidence of actual cost incurred. Claims submitted without valid receipts will not be authorised by a line manager and therefore not processed.
- 2.3 If an employee uses their own private vehicle to undertake official travel, the council will reimburse them for the expenses incurred through the payment of mileage allowances at the appropriate HMRC rate per mile.
- 2.4 Mileage allowances are not payable for travel between an employee's home and their normal office or permanent workplace (Castle Quay, Thorpe Lane or Highfield Depot). Employees must therefore deduct their home to work mileage for any mileage claim and may only claim for business miles travelled in excess of that

distance. This requirement applies even where the employee was not otherwise scheduled to attend the office on that day.

- 2.4.1 Example 1: (travel from home): An employee’s normal commute from home to the office is 12 miles. On a day they travel from home to a business location that is 15 miles away, only the additional 3 miles can be claimed, as the normal commuting distance is not reimbursable. 15 miles – 12 miles = 3 miles claimable.
- 2.4.2 Example 2: (travel via the office): An employee’s normal commute to the office is 12 miles. On a day when they travel to the office and then make a 20-mile return trip for business purposes and return to the office, only the 20 miles can be claimed. The normal commute to and from the office remains non-claimable.
- 2.4.3 Example 3: (travel to office, site and home) An employee’s normal commute to the office is 12 miles. On a day they travel to the office and travel a further 30 miles during the day to another work location and back home, their total travel is 42 miles. Since the normal commute is 12 miles, it is only possible to claim the mileage that exceeds this: 42 miles – 12 miles = 30 miles claimable

If the total distance travelled during the day had been 12 miles or less, then no mileage could be claimed, as it would not exceed their normal commute.

- 2.5 Taxis will only be reimbursed where there is a genuine reason for their use e.g., where an employee is potentially put at risk due to early morning or late-night travel following attendance at a course; where no public transport is available; or where there are accessibility issues and reasonable adjustments have been agreed.

3 Mileage rates

- 3.1 The council will always apply the current HMRC recommended rate. As of 1 April 2026, these rates are as follows:

Vehicle	First 10,000 miles	Above 10,000 miles
Car or van	55p	25p
EV (privately owned) *	45p	25p
Motorcycle	24p	24p
Bicycle	20p	20p

* Electric vehicles purchased via the council’s salary sacrifice scheme are permitted to claim 8p per mile.

- 3.2 The council encourages employees to share transport where possible. The driver of the vehicle can claim an additional passenger rate of 5p per mile.
- 3.3 Business mileage rates are for the shortest reasonable route. Claims will only be authorised where the route and mileage claimed are reasonable. The council

reserves the right to query, adjust or reject claims that appear excessive or inconsistent.

4 Compliance checks

- 4.1 Prior to requesting an employee to undertake business travel a line manager should satisfy themselves they have a suitable vehicle available for business use. This vehicle should have a current MOT certificate (if >3 years old) and valid vehicle tax.
- 4.2 A line manager must also ensure their employee has a valid driving licence and motor insurance which includes cover for business use.
- 4.3 Compliance checks must be completed at least annually. Employees are required to notify their line manager immediately of any change in licence status, insurance cover, endorsements or medical conditions that may affect their ability to drive for work.

5 Using a bicycle

- 5.1 If an employee chooses to cycle to council meetings or on council business the bicycle must be roadworthy.
- 5.2 In addition to this it is expected that the employee will wear appropriate high visibility clothing and a helmet.
- 5.3 Distances travelled should be reasonable in terms of time and cost.

6 Claim submission timescales

- 6.1 All claims must be submitted by the 10th of each month (or the next normal working day where the 10th falls on a weekend or Bank Holiday) to ensure payment with the next available salary. Claims for subsistence must be submitted via employee self-service in iTrent for manager authorisation.
- 6.2 All claims must be submitted within three months from the date of spend, any claim received after this period will be returned unpaid.
- 6.3 Where exceptional circumstances (such as long-term absence) have prevented the claim from being submitted within the three-month window, the employee should contact Payroll with a detailed explanation that has been supported by their line manager.

7 Breakfast, lunch, tea, and evening meals

- 7.1 Employees may claim reasonable costs of meals eaten while on council business away from their normal place of work of at least 10 miles and 5 hours.
- 7.2

Breakfast	£7.50 *
Lunch	£10.50 *
Tea/coffee	£4.00
Evening meal	£12.50

** Payment will be made only after an overnight stay due to council business.
There will be no reimbursement for alcoholic drinks.*

7.3 Detailed/itemised receipts must be provided. Credit card receipts and copies of credit card statements can be accepted as proof of purchase but **MUST** be accompanied by an itemised receipt/invoice giving details of the items purchased. In exceptional circumstances, where itemised receipts are not available, debit or credit card receipts / statements will be allowed if the place of purchase and a brief description of goods / services are shown. In these circumstances, reimbursement may be through payroll with tax deducted.

7.4 If payment is made via contactless, in some circumstances, a receipt is only provided if requested. The employee must ensure that they obtain a receipt to support the expense.

8 Toll fees and congestion charges

8.1 Where the employee is required to pay a toll and/or a congestion charge fee, these can be claimed in the usual way, but the claim must be supported by an itemised receipt.

9 Overnight accommodation

9.1 Employees who stay away overnight while travelling on business, or attending work-related training, may be reimbursed the actual cost of legitimate general expenses incurred so long as the actual cost is reasonable and not excessive, and valid VAT receipts or invoices are submitted. It will be the employee's responsibility to arrange the overnight accommodation however this **must** be pre-authorised by the line manager.

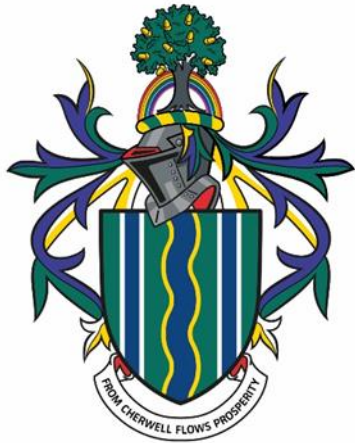
9.2 Further information on work-related training expenses can be found under the Learning and Development Policy.

9.3 The following expenses may be paid:

- Hotel overnight accommodation
- Breakfast, lunch and evening meals if these are not already included in the cost of the hotel stay
- Car parking charges
- Toll charges
- Public transport fares
- Other necessary out of pocket/general business expenses

9.4 In accordance with HMRC rules, the above expenses will be free of tax and NI contributions as long as valid receipts covering the full costs incurred are submitted.

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Cherwell

DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

Standby and On Call Policy

Document Control and Overview

Organisation(s)	Cherwell District Council (CDC)
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Owner	Human Resources
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Document Revision History

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24/06/2026	Human Resources	2.0	Three-year scheduled review. Sooner if impacted by legislative changes.

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Personnel Committee	24/06/2026

Document Distribution

Name	Job Title
All employees of Cherwell District Council.	

Contents		Page
1	Scope	4
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4	Standby allowance	4 - 5
5	On-Call allowance	5
6	Status and review of rates	5

1. Scope

- 1.1 This policy applies to all employees of Cherwell District Council. It does not apply to agency workers, consultants, contractors, volunteers, or interns.

2 Introduction

- 2.1 It is the Council's intention to ensure that all staff who are on a standby or on-call rota receive fair and equitable compensation for inconvenience caused. It also seeks to ensure that staff receive payment in line with the level of inconvenience.

3 Eligibility for payment

- 3.1 The only staff eligible to receive a standby or on-call payment are those dealing with emergencies relating to out-of-hours services that are either statutory Council requirements or are essential to the delivery of Council services; this policy excludes officers who have an all-inclusive payment clause in their terms and conditions of employment.
- 3.2 Only one member of staff per service will receive a standby or on-call payment at any given time: except in exceptional circumstances and with prior agreement.
- 3.3 For the purpose of this policy, out of hours does not include office opening hours i.e., 8.45am to 5.15pm Monday to Friday.
- 3.4 Standby and on call periods under this policy do not meet the legal definition of working time because the Council does not impose restrictions that significantly limit the employee's ability to manage their free time.
- 3.5 The Assistant Director / Head of Service will determine the rota to be used in providing an out of hours service, and which positions / staff should be included in the rota. As hours may vary per service area, an hourly rather than weekly rate will be used.
- 3.6 Managers must ensure that standby and on call arrangements are risk assessed for fatigue, in line with the Council's health and safety duties.
- 3.7 This policy needs to be used in conjunction with the Council's Flexi Scheme Policy.

4 Standby allowance

- 4.1 Standby arrangements will require the employee to remain contactable, outside of normal working hours, for a stated period (in accordance with an agreed rota). Eligibility for standby as opposed to on call requires an employee to be available to attend a site or incident if required and within a

reasonable time period and therefore the employee is required to remain fit to attend work.

- 4.2 The standby rate is reviewed annually in line with the cost-of-living award.
- 4.3 Should an employee be called to attend an incident rather than being able to deal with this over the telephone, overtime will be paid in accordance with the Council's current overtime rates.
- 4.4 Double time will be paid for any hours an employee is required to be on standby during bank holidays. There is no enhanced rate for weekends.
- 4.5 The standby rate is £3.15 per hour (as at 1 April 2026).

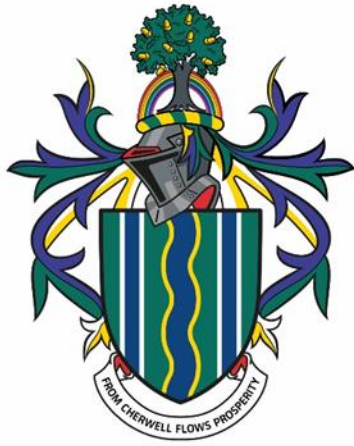
5 On-Call allowance

- 5.1 On-call arrangements will require the employee to remain contactable, outside of normal working hours, for a stated period (in accordance with an agreed rota). On call means that the Council does not require the employee to attend a site or incident as a result of any phone calls or contact. Queries can be dealt with via telephone or other remote communication. Even though the employee is not required to attend work whilst on-call they should remain in a fit state as if they were attending work.
- 5.2 The on-call rate is reviewed annually in-line with the cost-of-living award and recognises the difference in both the volume of queries but also the fact that the employee's home life balance is less disrupted as call outs are never required. The allowance covers all work undertaken in dealing with queries and overtime does not apply to anyone undertaking on call duties.
- 5.3 Double time will be paid for any hours an employee is required to be on-call during bank holidays. There is no enhanced rate for weekends.
- 5.4 The on-call rate is £2.05 per hour (as at 1 April 2026).

6 Status and review of rates

- 6.1 Should the needs of the service change then the Assistant Director / Head of Service has the right to review out of hours arrangements which may result in a change in the rota, and possibly the withdrawal of the out of hours service and the related entitlement to any related allowance. Standby and on call allowances attract normal deductions, including pensions where employees are in scheme membership.
- 6.2 Rates for on-call and standby will be reviewed on an annual basis in accordance with the pay award.

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Cherwell

DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

Bereavement and Compassionate Leave Policy

Document Control and Overview

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Name	Job Title
All employees of Cherwell District Council.	

This policy covers:

1	Who the scheme applies to	4
2	Compassionate leave	4
3	Entitlement	4
4	Refusing a request	5
5	Ongoing support	5
6	Statutory Parental Bereavement Leave	6
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1 Who the scheme applies to

Cherwell District Council's compassionate leave scheme applies to employees only. It does not apply to agency workers, consultants, self-employed contractors, volunteers or interns.

This policy does not form part of any contract of employment or other contract to provide services, and the Council may amend it at any time.

2 Compassionate leave

The Council recognise that adopting a compassionate leave policy supports employees who are going through bereavement and grief following the death of a close family member. The Council is sympathetic to any employee when they lose a close member of their family and are committed to treating the individual with sensitivity and compassion.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that compassionate leave is granted in a fair and equitable manner whilst, at the same time, recognising that compassionate leave arrangements need to be flexible in individual circumstances. The aim is to set down clear guidance in the use of and application of compassionate leave.

The bereavement and compassionate leave policy should not be confused with the statutory right to time off for dependants which is covered in the family friendly policy.

In circumstances where an employee is required to care for a critically or terminally ill family member the councils will be as flexible as possible. Examples of this may include granting short notice annual leave or flexi time, allowing the employee to work from home or authorising a period of unpaid leave.

3 Entitlement

Employees are entitled to request compassionate leave regardless of their length of service.

Up to ten days paid compassionate leave will usually be granted in the event of the death of an employee's:

- Spouse or partner
- Child (under the age of 18)*
- Daughter / Son (including step-children)*
- Parent (including step-parent)
- Parent-in law
- Sibling (including step-sibling)
- Grandparent
- Grandchild

* please see Parental Bereavement Leave below

This list is not exhaustive and will be reviewed in individual circumstances at Executive Director discretion, in consultation with the HR Business Partner.

An employee must request compassionate leave as soon as is practicably possible given the circumstances of the situation; this may, however, be after the employee has returned to work.

If a manager wishes to approve a period of compassionate leave, (up to ten days), employee will add this to the HR/Payroll system under paid leave.

Managers will consider requests sympathetically, reasonably, in confidence and in consultation with his/her HR Business Partner. The Manager should authorise this leave request as quickly as possible.

Where ten days compassionate leave is insufficient, consideration should be given to other leave options including annual leave, flexitime, parental leave and time off for dependants leave if applicable.

4 Refusing a request

A manager will not unreasonably refuse a request for compassionate leave. If the manager feels they are unable to grant a request, they must seek guidance from their HR Business Partner.

5 Ongoing support

Managers are encouraged to discuss on-going additional support whilst the employee is taking compassionate leave and upon their return to work. Such consideration could include short-term flexibility in working arrangements and a referral to Occupational Health for counselling or other well-being advice.

It is important for managers to remember those special or significant days such as the inquest, anniversary of the death or the birthday of the person who has died can also be particularly difficult times for employees.

Grief does not have predicted stages and phases. Everyone reacts differently to bereavement, and this should be understood and respected by both managers and colleagues.

6. Parental Bereavement Leave (PBL)

In line with The Parental Bereavement Leave Regulations 2020, statutory parental bereavement leave and pay is available for parents in respect of children who pass away.

The primary beneficiaries of statutory parental leave are employees who are the parents of a deceased child under the age of 18 years. This includes adoptive parents, foster parents and guardians, and intended parents under a surrogacy

agreement as well as more informal groups such as close relatives or family friends who have taken responsibility for the child's care in the absence of parents for a continuous period or at least 4 weeks before the death.

6.1 Eligibility for Leave

Parental bereavement leave is a "day one" employment right, meaning that employees do not require a minimum period of service for the leave. Eligibility extends to cover individuals with caring responsibility for a deceased child who has died providing that the individual has, for a continuous period of at least four weeks before the child dies, been living with the child and has day-to-day responsibility for the child. Parents who suffer a stillbirth 24 weeks or more into the pregnancy are also entitled to parental bereavement leave.

6.2 Taking Parental Bereavement leave (PBL)

PBL may be taken at any time within 56 weeks of the death of the child.

The statutory entitlement is to two weeks leave. This leave must be taken in blocks of one week and is not available as individual days.

Parents may take leave in a single block of 2 weeks or in two separate blocks of one week each. The weeks need not be consecutive.

Where more than one child dies, the employee is entitled to two weeks' parental bereavement leave in respect of each child.

Where a bereaved employee is already on maternity leave then they can add the parental bereavement leave to the end of their maternity leave. The PBL must then be taken in a single consecutive period.

6.3 Notification

To take parental bereavement leave, an employee must confirm to the HR Department or the line manager that they will take this leave and provide the following information:

- The date of the child's death
- Their relationship to the deceased child that entitles them to statutory parental bereavement leave
- The date they are beginning their parental bereavement leave
- If they intend to take one or two weeks' parental bereavement leave

6.4 Length of Notice requirements

If the employee is taking leave within 56 days of the child's death then they are able to take the leave straightaway without having to give a period of notice.

To cancel this week's parental bereavement leave, the employee must give notice by no later than the time on the first day of that week at which the

employee would have been due to start work.

If the employee is taking leave more than 56 days after the child's death, then at least one week's notice of their intention to take parental bereavement leave is required.

To cancel this week's parental bereavement leave, the employee must give notice to the employer at least one week before the start of that week.

An employee may not cancel any week of parental bereavement leave which has already commenced.

6.5 Statutory Parental Bereavement Pay

To be eligible for statutory parental bereavement pay, employees who are on parental bereavement leave are required to have:

- At least 26 weeks' continuous employment with their employer ending with the week before the week in which their child dies and still be employed by that employer on the day on which their child dies; and
- Normal weekly earnings in the eight weeks up to the week before the child's death that are no less than the lower earnings limit for national insurance contribution purposes.

7.0 Statutory Bereaved Partner's Paternity Leave

Eligible employees have a statutory right to bereaved partner's paternity leave from, day one of employment in circumstances where a child's primary carer dies within the first year after birth or adoption.

- eligible employees having a statutory right to take a single period of up to 52 weeks of unpaid leave, depending on when the bereavement occurs
- leave can be taken at any point within 52 weeks of the child's birth or adoption placement
- leave being a day one right, with no minimum service requirement

The entitlement applies where the:

- child is under one year old, or within the first year of adoption, at the time of the bereavement
- child's mother or primary carer has died
- employee is the child's father or is married to or the civil partner of the child's mother or adopter
- employee has main responsibility for the child after the bereavement.

Terms and Conditions during leave

All contractual terms and conditions, except normal pay, will continue during bereaved partner's paternity leave.

Annual Leave

Annual leave will continue to accrue. Statutory annual leave not taken due to bereaved partner's paternity leave may be carried forward to the following leave year.

Pension

If the employee is a member of the Local Government Pension scheme, employee pension contributions will cease during any period of unpaid leave.

The employee's assumed pensionable pay will be reported to Pension Services so there is no long-term impact to the employee's pension whilst receiving reduced/nil pay.

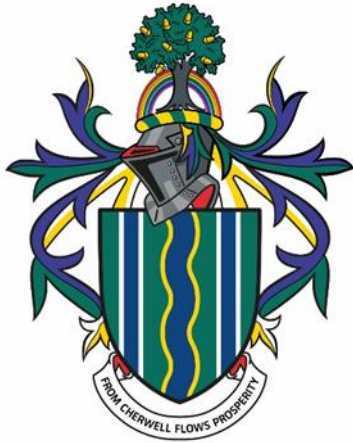
Keeping in touch days

By mutual agreement, employees may work or attend training for up to 10 keeping-in-touch days without ending the leave. Participation is entirely voluntary and must be agreed with the line manager.

Returning to work

The line manager should maintain reasonable contact during leave to discuss return-to-work arrangements, workplace updates, or support needs.

Employees will normally have the right to return to the same role where leave does not exceed 26 weeks. Where this is not reasonably practicable, a suitable alternative role will be offered on no less favourable terms.



Market Supplement Policy

Document Control and Overview

Organisation(s)	Cherwell District Council
Policy Title	Market Supplement Policy
Author	Human Resources
Owner	Human Resources
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24/06/2026	Human Resources	1.0	Added definition of Hard to fill. Further clarity regarding authorisation if market supplement extended.

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Approval	Date
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Document Distribution

Name	Job Title
All employees of Cherwell District Council.	

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 A market supplement policy is required at Cherwell District Council (CDC), as there can be exceptional circumstances and/or sudden changes in market forces deeming it necessary to pay a market supplement in addition to base salary in order to recruit or retain staff.
- 1.2 Market supplements may be agreed when it can be shown that the salary range attached to 'hard to fill*' posts is significantly lower than those offered elsewhere and that this is having an adverse impact on the ability to recruit and retain suitably qualified, experienced and skilled staff.
- 1.3 This document contains the agreed approach to be taken for the application and monitoring of market supplements within CDC.
- 1.4 This policy applies to all employees of Cherwell District Council. It does not apply to staff retained on agency contracts or consultancy agreements, self-employed contractors, volunteers or interns. This policy will not apply to other third party or partner organisations where employees are not employed directly by the Council.
- 1.5 * Definition of Hard to fill are roles are:
 - Vacancy remaining unfilled after 4 recruitment campaigns
 - Persistent skills shortages nationally/regionally
 - Specialist qualifications, professional registration, or experience required
 - High market demand / low supply evidenced through benchmarking

2. Policy statement

- 2.1 In order to maintain the Council's commitment to equal pay, any decision to apply a market supplement must be supported by evidence of external labour-market conditions affecting the recruitment and/or retention of the role.
- 2.2 The existence of genuine recruitment or retention difficulties must be the 'material reason' why a post, that is graded the same as other comparable posts, attracts a market supplement.

3. Objectives

- 3.1 The objective of this policy is to ensure that the council remains competitive when recruiting into key roles.

4. Legislation and regulation

- 4.1 Market supplements are lawful under the Equality Act 2010 where there is evidence to justify that market factors are the “material reason” for the post attracting a higher rate of pay than other posts similarly graded.

5. Policy detail – operations and implementation

- 5.1 Any market supplement shall be objectively justifiable and will be applied according to the following principles:

- Market supplements will normally only be considered for posts identified as ‘hard to fill’.
- It cannot be assumed that simply because other employers offer higher salary levels than CDC, we will necessarily follow suit.
- It is important that employee expectations of market supplements are managed and, before a market supplement is awarded, an employee must agree to and sign a **temporary** amendment to their contract of employment for no longer than two years.
- If a market supplement is introduced to a particular post category, the market supplement should be applied to all posts that hold the same job title, with the same job description/person specification and grade, to ensure equity and minimise risk of equal pay challenge.
- The market supplement must be approved by CLT and funded from existing budget unless otherwise agreed.
- The payment of a temporary market supplement will be expressly identified in the employee’s contract of employment or confirmed by a letter of variation. The start date, review date and end date of the supplement will be clearly stated.
- Market supplements form part of an employee’s pay and will be pensionable. Any overtime payments will include the market worth element. Payments for sickness and holiday will include the market worth element.
- The payment will be expressly identified as a separate pay element and will be subject to the usual deductions for income tax, national insurance and pension.
- Market supplements will be highlighted as part of an employee’s salary when mortgage application references are being completed and total income calculations are being carried out.

- 5.2 The case for payment of a market supplement must be robust enough to resist the challenge of an equal pay claim. It would be expected that the majority of the following evidence can be provided before consideration will be given to applying a supplement:

- The recruiting manager will need to show why they cannot fill the post at the salary level determined by the Councils' pay structure. It will be necessary to detail the recruitment methods, and/or clear pre-existing evidence that a campaign will not/did not succeed, and credible reasons why it is not possible to employ a suitably qualified or experienced candidate or one who, with extra training, could do the job.
- Evidence is required of a poor response to adverts both in terms of quantity and quality of candidates (either from a new campaign, or pre-existing evidence). NB: Human Resources may be asked to investigate the reason for the poor response as this may not be about salary levels – it could be due to other factors.

5.3 A market supplement will not be applied without the recruiting manager either attempting to fill the post through appropriate recruitment methods or providing clear pre-existing evidence that a campaign will not succeed.

If these conditions have not been met, an application for a market supplement may be refused, and it may be necessary to carry out another recruitment exercise before reconsider the application.

6. Market data

- 6.1 Evidence must be collected by the recruiting manager, with appropriate support from Human Resources, that demonstrates other organisations offering higher remuneration packages within the local, regional and national marketplace.
- 6.2 At least three examples of comparable jobs, salaries, total package and summary of main duties will be required. Wherever possible, the job description and person specification of those comparable roles should be provided. The recruiting manager will research this with support from Human Resources.
- 6.3 Ideally, salary benchmarking data should be provided from relevant salary surveys, recruitment media or professional organisations. Benchmarking salary information can also be sought by Human Resources, to confirm (or otherwise) that the pay is not sufficiently competitive to attract candidates of the calibre required and recommend an appropriate level of market supplement for the type of post taking into account national and regional pay considerations.

7. Quantification

- 7.1 A market supplement is expressed as a fixed cash sum allowance, payable monthly. For part-time staff, this will be calculated pro-rata to the hours worked.
- 7.2 Under no circumstances will the market supplement alter the grading of the post determined through the job evaluation process. The supplement only affects the total

pay that the post attracts for the period it is applied. The allowance will be paid for an initial maximum period of three years, however, an extension to this period may be considered.

- 7.3 A market supplement may be extended up to three times with supporting evidence. The same level of approval (CLT) as the initial award is required for all extensions. Only in exceptional circumstances will a Market Supplement be considered beyond three extensions.

8. Procedure and approval

- 8.1 The need for a market supplement can be proposed by the recruiting manager. Approval for the implementation of a market supplement must be approved by CLT.

8.2 Step one

- The recruiting manager will complete a market supplement request form (appendix A)

8.3 Step two

The relevant Assistant Director will present the request to CLT for consideration and approval. The Assistant Director of Human Resources should be consulted to ensure consistency of approach.

8.4 Step three

Once approved, the market supplement will be implemented with conditions documented in the employee's contract of employment.

9. Level of award of market supplement

- 9.1 In determining the level of market supplement to be awarded, emphasis will be placed on the salaries of comparative jobs within comparable organisations with consideration of geographical area.

10. Review

- 10.1 If during the two-year period that the supplement is applied, the duties of the post are reviewed and the post is re-graded through the agreed job evaluation process, the application and level of any market supplement will be reviewed.
- 10.2 A review will also be carried out when an individual leaves a post that has attracted a market supplement, in order to assess the need to advertise the vacancy with a market supplement in the current labour market. Where such a review leads to a decision to withdraw the market supplement, this will apply with immediate effect to vacant post(s). Existing employees still in receipt of a market supplement will continue to be paid until the end of the agreed period and thereafter, it will be withdrawn.

- 10.3 Any employee in receipt of a market supplement will ideally be informed three months before the end of the three-year period that the payment is subject to review and that the payment may cease at that date subject to the outcome of the review. The review will be carried out by the line manager (budget holder) and the employee informed of the outcome, two months before the end of the three-year period.
- 10.4 If the market supplement is going to be extended this will need be approved by CLT.
- 10.5 If a review results in a decision that the market supplement is no longer justified, it will be withdrawn. In these circumstances, individuals affected will be given two months' written notice that the market supplement is being withdrawn.

11. Equality and diversity

- 11.1 The number of employees receiving a supplement will be monitored according to gender, disability, age, ethnic origin, religion and sexual orientation to ensure that the manner in which the policy is applied does not lead to any discrimination.

12. Monitoring and review

- 12.1 The impact of the application of market supplements will be monitored by the HR Manager to evaluate their impact on the Council ability to recruit and retain employees.
- 12.2 The outcome of all requests to apply a market supplement will be monitored to ensure that the policy is applied consistently.
- 12.3 The Council may review this document from time-to-time following consultation with UNISON and subject to agreement with the Personnel Committee may make changes to the content.

13. Relationship with Other HR Policies

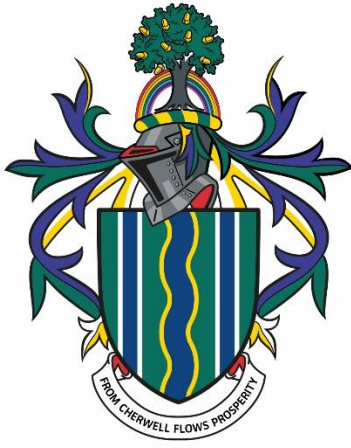
- 13.1 This policy forms part of the Council's wider Human Resources policies and should be applied in conjunction with related policies to ensure fairness, consistency, and compliance with legislative and organisational requirements.
- 13.2 In particular, this policy should be read alongside the following:
Recruitment and Selection Policy
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
Organisational Change Policy
Honorarium Policy

**Appendix A:
MARKET SUPPLEMENT REQUEST FORM**

MARKET SUPPLEMENT REQUEST FORM	
Employee (if applicable)	
Post title	
Pay grade	
Service area	
JUSTIFICATION FOR MARKET SUPPLEMENT	
To aid recruitment to a vacant post?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
To retain existing employee? (where there is a business risk)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
SUPPORTING EVIDENCE / RATIONALE	
Please provide evidence that objectively justifies the need to pay the market supplement. You should address the following considerations: -	
Is the post and/or service a statutory requirement?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Please explain:	
How many post(s) are affected by the application of the market supplement?	
What are the risks if the market supplement is not granted i.e. evidence of operational problems caused by recruitment and retention issues, how long the post has been vacant and the impact on the service, etc.	
Are there difficulties in attracting or retaining high quality staff?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
RECOMMENDATION	
Recommended market supplement for year 1	£
Recommended market supplement for year 2	£

Source of funding / cost centre	
Date of proposed implementation	
Rationale for recommendation:	
Rationale for extension of market supplement (detail extension timeframe):	

APPROVALS		
I am signing to confirm the information in the form is correct and that there is budget provision agreed for this post.		
Name (recruiting manager)	Signature	Comments
	Date:	
Name (Assistant Director)	Signature	Comments
	Date:	
Name (Assistant Director of Finance on behalf of CLT)	Signature	Comments
	Date:	



Cherwell

DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

Capability Policy

Document Control and Overview

Organisation(s)	Cherwell District Council
Policy Title	Capability Policy
Author	Human Resources
Owner	Human Resources
Version	2.0
Document Reference	
Approval Date	24/06/2026
Policy Review Cycle	3 years
Latest Review Date	24/06/2029

Document Revision History

Revision Date	Reviser	Previous Version	Description of Revision
24/06/2026	Human Resources	1.0	Three-year review.

Document Approvals

This document has been approved by:

Approval	Date
Personnel Committee	24 June 2026

Document Distribution

Name	Job Title
All employees of Cherwell District Council.	

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1 Scope

- 1.1 This policy applies to all employees of Cherwell District Council. It does not apply to agency workers, consultants, contractors, volunteers, or interns.
- 1.2 Employees who are covered by a separate policy include the Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer.
- 1.2 This policy is not appropriate for:
 - Performance concerns during a probationary period (see Probation Policy)
 - Misconduct, behavioural issues or gross negligence (see Disciplinary Policy)
 - Short-term performance dips which can reasonably be resolved informally
 - Absence-related capability due to ill health (see Sickness Absence Policy)

2 Introduction

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to provide a fair, consistent, and supportive framework for managing situations where an employee is unable to meet the required standards of performance due to capability.
- 2.2 The Council is committed to supporting employees to succeed in their roles and will take reasonable steps to support improvement before formal action is considered.
- 2.3 This policy will be applied fairly and without discrimination. Reasonable adjustments and individual circumstances will always be taken into account.

3 Definition of capability

- 3.1 Capability refers to an employee's skill, ability, knowledge, or aptitude to perform their role to an acceptable standard.
- 3.2 Performance will be assessed against:
 - The requirements of the employee's role
 - The Council's competency framework
 - The Council's values and expected standards of conduct at work
- 3.2 Indicators of a capability issue may include:
 - Failure to meet key objectives or KPIs
 - Consistent errors or poor quality of work
 - Inability to keep up with role requirements despite guidance and support
 - Lack of necessary technical competence or skills
 - Failure to improve following informal support

4 Roles and responsibilities

- 4.1 Managers will:
 - Identify performance concerns promptly
 - Provide clear feedback and support

- Apply the policy fairly and consistently
- Maintain appropriate records

4.2 Employees will:

- Engage constructively with the process
- Take reasonable steps to improve performance
- Raise concerns or support needs promptly

4.3 HR will:

- Provide procedural and fairness advice
- Support managers and employees throughout the process

5 Informal stage (early support)

5.1 Where performance concerns arise, managers should address them as early as possible through informal discussions.

5.2 The informal stage may include:

- Clarifying role expectations and standards
- Coaching, mentoring or additional supervision
- Training or refresher support
- Adjusting objectives or timescales
- Providing regular feedback

5.3 The purpose of this stage is to support improvement without invoking the formal process. Informal discussions should be documented for reference but do not constitute formal capability action or a warning.

5.4 The timescales adopted during this stage will vary depending on the nature of the role and the seriousness of the concern.

6 Consideration of other factors

6.1 Before progressing to the formal stages of this policy, the line manager must consider whether:

- There may be an underlying health condition or disability
- Reasonable adjustments are required under the Equality Act 2010
- Personal circumstances or workload issues are impacting performance
- Additional support or occupational health advice is appropriate

6.2 Where managers have concerns regarding an employee's performance and are considering whether the formal capability process may apply, they are encouraged to speak to their HR Business Partner at an early stage for advice and guidance. This will help ensure that concerns are addressed appropriately, consistently and in line with this policy.

7 Formal capability process

7.1 Where informal support has not resulted in sufficient improvement, the formal capability process may be initiated.

- 7.1.1 It may be legally possible to move directly to the formal stage of the capability procedure without first following an informal stage, provided this approach is reasonable and proportionate in the circumstances. While informal support is normally best practice, there may be situations where this would add no value or is not appropriate. Examples include cases of serious or sustained underperformance that presents an immediate risk to service delivery, safety, regulatory compliance or public confidence; where there has already been significant prior support, coaching or clear performance feedback (even if not formally labelled as “informal capability”); or where the employee holds a senior, specialist or professional role with clearly defined standards and expectations.
- 7.2 The employee will be notified in writing of the concerns, including relevant evidence and examples, and invited to a formal capability meeting.
- 7.3 At each stage of the process, the employee will be given five working days’ notice of the meeting and the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague.
- 7.4 Where an employee chooses to be accompanied, it is the employee’s responsibility to make the necessary arrangements and ensure their chosen companion is available to attend the meeting as scheduled.
- 7.5 Capability meetings will normally be held in person, as this allows for effective discussion and engagement. Where this is not practicable or appropriate, alternative arrangements such as remote meetings may be agreed.
- 7.6 A Human Resources representative may attend formal capability meetings where appropriate. Human Resources will normally attend meetings from Stage 2 onwards, to provide procedural advice and support. At Stage 1, managers are encouraged to seek advice from their HR Business Partner as required.

8 Stage 1 – First formal capability meeting

- 8.1 The purpose of a first formal capability meeting is to clearly outline the performance concerns and agree a structured improvement plan.
- 8.2 The meeting will:
- Review performance concerns and supporting evidence
 - Explore reasons for underperformance
 - Agree a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)
- 8.3 The PIP will include:
- Clear performance objectives linked to role requirements, competencies and values
 - Support and training to be provided
 - Timescales for improvement (typically 4–8 weeks)
 - Review arrangements
 - The consequences of insufficient improvement
- 8.4 A first capability warning may be issued, which will normally remain live for 12 months.

9 Stage 2 – Second formal capability meeting

- 9.1 Where performance has not improved sufficiently, a second formal capability meeting may be held.
- 9.2 The meeting will:
- Review progress against the PIP
 - Consider whether further support or adjustments are reasonable
 - Assess whether improvement is achievable within a reasonable timeframe
- 9.3 A final capability warning may be issued, which will remain live for 12 months. The warning will confirm final expectations and the possibility of dismissal if improvement is not achieved.

10 Stage 3 – Final capability meeting

- 10.1 Where performance remains unsatisfactory, the Council may proceed to a final capability meeting.
- 10.2 The meeting will consider:
- All support and adjustments provided
 - The length and impact of underperformance
 - The likelihood of sustained improvement
- 10.3 Possible outcomes include:
- Extension of the review period in exceptional circumstances
 - Demotion or redeployment, where suitable roles exist
 - Dismissal with notice on the grounds of capability
- 10.4 Dismissal will only be considered where all reasonable support options have been exhausted.

11 Appeals

- 11.1 Employees have the right to appeal any formal capability warning or dismissal.
- 11.2 Appeals must be submitted in writing to the Assistant Director of Human Resources within five working days of receipt of the outcome.
- 11.3 Appeal hearings will be chaired by a senior manager not previously involved, supported by Human Resources.
- 11.4 If an employee's appeal against dismissal is successful, the employee will be reinstated with no loss of continuity or pay.

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This report is public	
Workforce Profile Statistics – Quarter 4, 2025-2026	
Committee	Personnel Committee
Date of Committee	24 June 2026
Portfolio Holder presenting the report	Portfolio Holder for Customer and Community Services, Councillor Nicola Borkmann
Date Portfolio Holder agreed report	11 June 2026
Report of	Assistant Director 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:

- 1.1 To review and note the workforce data for quarter 4 of 2025/26 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 2025/26 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 4 as follows:

- 16 leavers and 17 new starters
- As at the end of quarter 4, headcount increased by 1 to 625. Of the 625, 14 employees are multiple role holders
- FTE reduced by 2.82, to 517.94, as at quarter end
- Minimal shift in employment basis and role basis
- Increase of 6 agency workers at the end of quarter 4, compared to the previous quarter, from 48 to 54.

- A quarterly turnover rate of 2.56%, 0.48% higher than the previous quarter.
 - An annual turnover rate of 10.10%, 1.71% lower than 2024/25.
 - Resignation was the main reason for leavers, accounting for 68.75% of all leavers. 37.5% of leavers completed exit interviews.
 - Leavers most commonly moved to the private sector (33%) or were exploring options (50%), with fewer joining other local authorities (17%).
 - Feedback reflects a positive culture, strong flexibility, and good onboarding, alongside valued learning and community impact.
 - However, consistent systemic issues were raised, including feeling undervalued, weak leadership, understaffing, and role pressures, all contributing to declining morale. It is worth noting that this feedback was not widely reflected by colleagues in our recent staff survey.
 - 219 sickness absence incidents were recorded, 27 more than the same quarter in the previous year.
 - Absence rate at the end of quarter 4 was 0.78 which has decreased compared to the end of the last quarter despite an initial increase at the start of the quarter. 17 long term sickness cases remain open at the end of quarter 4, which was the same as at the end of quarter 3.
 - The annual absence rate was recorded at 4.82% which is 0.71% more than 2024/25. The short-term absence rate for 2025/26 was 1.59%, a reduction of 0.13% from the previous year. Long-term absence records an increase of 0.87% and a rate of 3.23%.
 - 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.
 - 23 apprenticeships currently underway across a diverse range of subject areas. Of the 23, 4 are being completed by apprentices, and 19 are being undertaken by staff. No apprenticeship funds expired in quarter 4 of 2025/26.
- 2.3 Recent apprenticeship reforms will see several higher-level standards—particularly in management and leadership—defunded, limiting the Council’s ability to use levy funding for programmes such as Team Leader, Operations Manager, and Chartered Manager.
- 2.4 While new Foundation Apprenticeships aim to expand opportunities for young people, early uptake has been very low, raising concerns about their immediate impact. In parallel, new “Apprenticeship Units” offering shorter, flexible training aligned to industrial priorities are being introduced, though key delivery and funding details remain unclear.
- 2.5 The changes primarily affect management development routes, reducing levy-funded options in this area. However, as the Council’s apprenticeship use is largely focused on role-specific qualifications, the overall impact is expected to be limited in the short term.

Implications & Impact Assessments

Implications	Commentary			
Finance	<p>This is an information report only, for the review of workforce statistical data for Q4 2025-26. It must be noted that future level 7 apprenticeships funded from the corporate Learning and Development budget, will add additional pressure to an already stretched budget. It is important that training budgets are reviewed as part future budget processes to ensure adequate funds are available.</p> <p>Rachel Ainsworth, Finance Business Partner, 2 June 2026</p>			
Legal	<p>There are no legal implications within this report as it is for information only.</p> <p>Denzil – John Turbervill, Head of Legal Services, 3 June 2026</p>			
Risk	<p>There are no risks arising directly from this report.</p> <p>Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader, 2 June 2026</p>			
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>Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader, 2 June 2026</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,		X		

including employees and service users?				
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, 21 May 2026</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 2025/26 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 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 2025/26, 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
- Recruitment data relating to personal attributes for the purposes of inclusion
- Apprenticeship information

4.3 Our collection of data relating to protected characteristics 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. Applicant data shows that communities are being reached and applicant pools are reflective. 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, 2025/26
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
Executive Director Approval (unless Executive Director or Statutory Officer report)	Executive Director for Resources

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 an increase of 1 between the end of quarters 3 and 4 of 2025/26. Within the headcount of 625, 14 employees have 2 roles, and have therefore been counted twice, meaning we have 611 employees.

Quarter 4 of 2025/26 has seen adjustments of 16 leavers and 17 new starters across the organisation.

Chart 1

**Headcount by Quarter
Quarter 1 2023-24 to Quarter 4 2025-26**

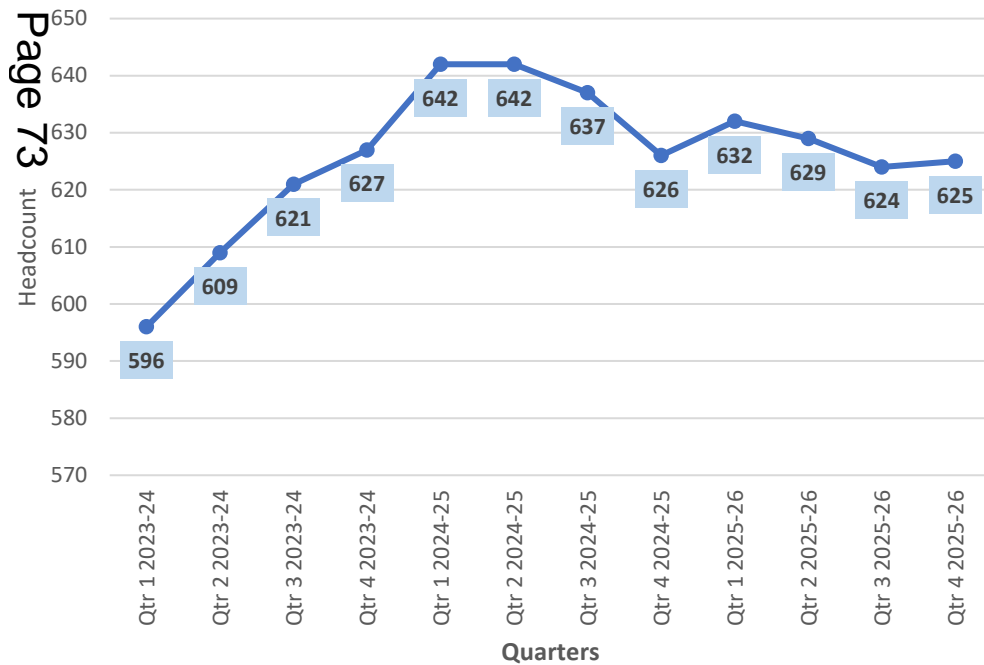


Chart 2 details the distribution of headcount across our departments and directorates as at the end of quarter 4 of 2025/26. Wellbeing and Environmental Services continue to show the highest headcount. CDC are host employer to the District Councils Network (DCN) and these employees are included in the HR, OD and Payroll directorate.

Environmental Services had the biggest reduction in headcount with 5 since quarter 3. as did headcount in Customer Services. Wellbeing’s headcount increased by 3, as did Development Management’s. The Senior Leadership Team increased by 2.

**Chart 2
Headcount by Department as at
31 March 2026**

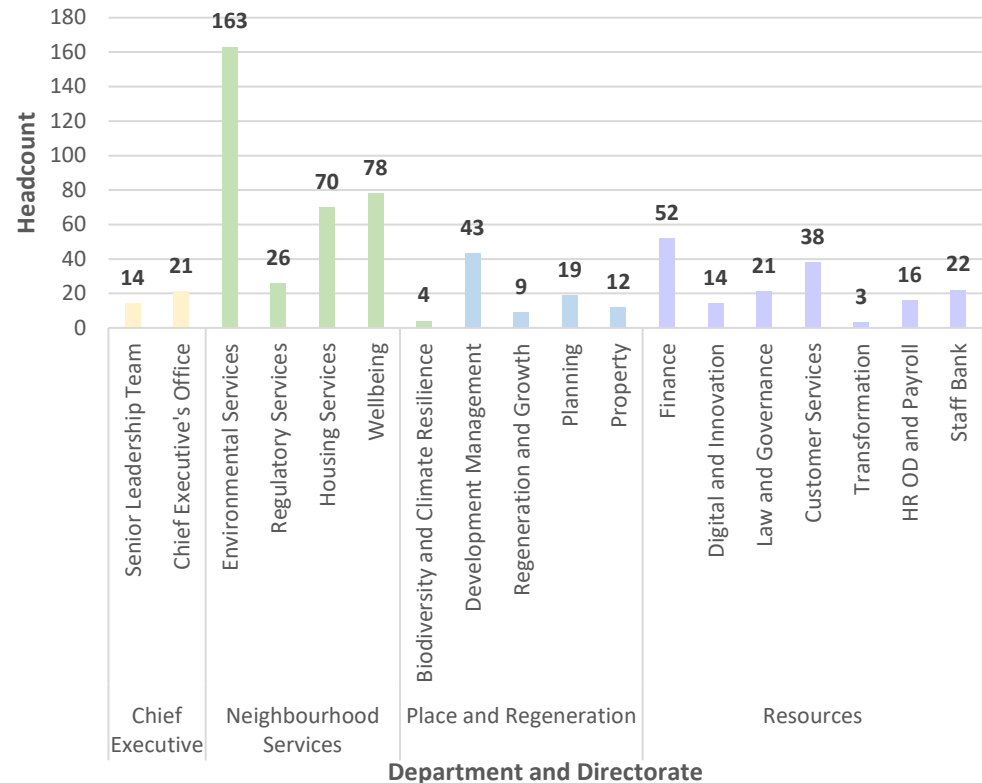
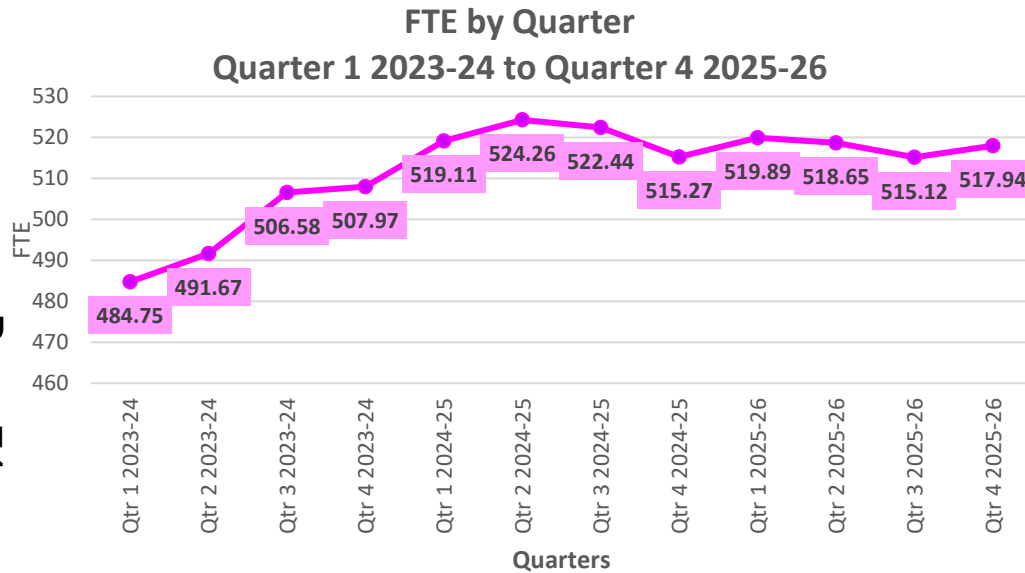


Chart 3 outlines the fluctuation of FTE which has increased by 2.82 between quarters 3 and 4 of 2025/26.

Chart 3



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Chart 4
FTE by Department as at 31 March 2026

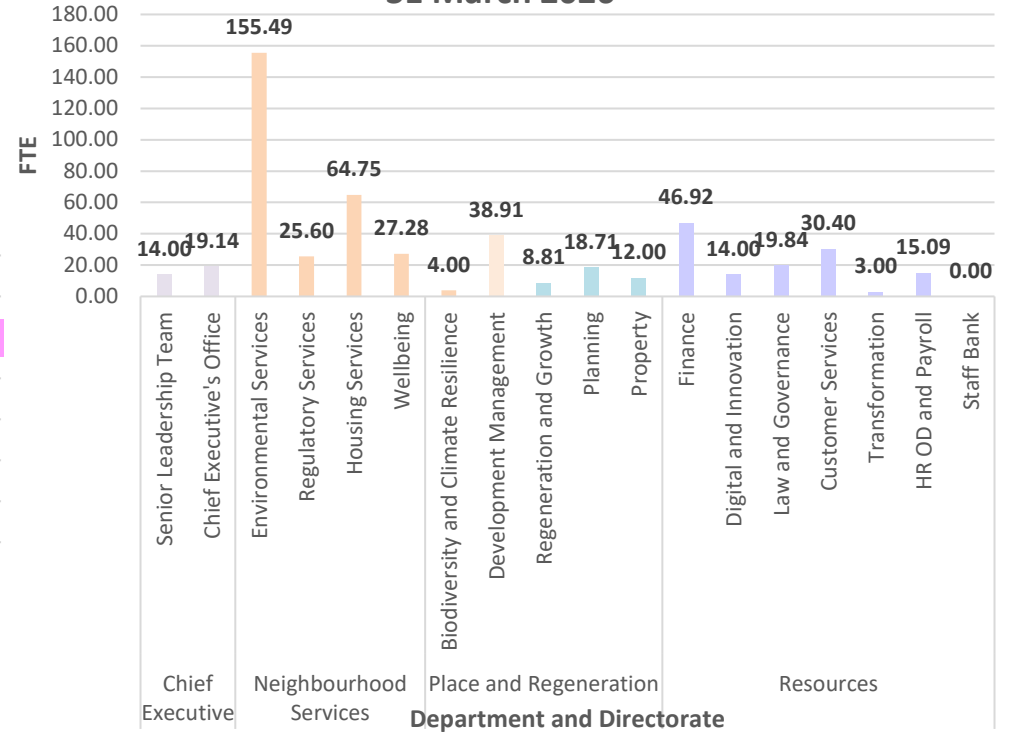


Chart 4 outlines the distribution of FTE across the departments and directorates as at the end of quarter 4 of 2025/26.

Since quarter 3 of 2025/26; Development Management has increased by 3 FTE and the Senior Leadership Team has increased by 2 FTE. Environmental Services' FTE has reduced by 5.3. Customer Services reduced by 3.2 FTE.

Charts 5 shows the breakdown of basis of hours across our workforce as of 31 March 2026. Since quarter 3 of 2025/26 there has been minimal change to the make-up of role-basis with our full-time increasing by 0.19% and part-time increasing by 0.21% and our casual workforce reducing by 0.40%.

Chart 5

% Breakdown of Role Basis as at 31 March 2026

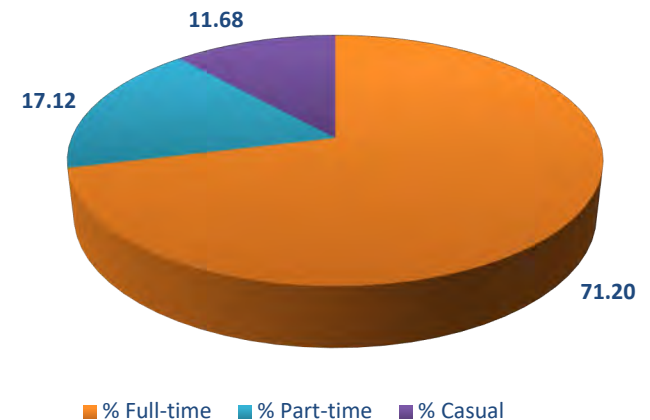
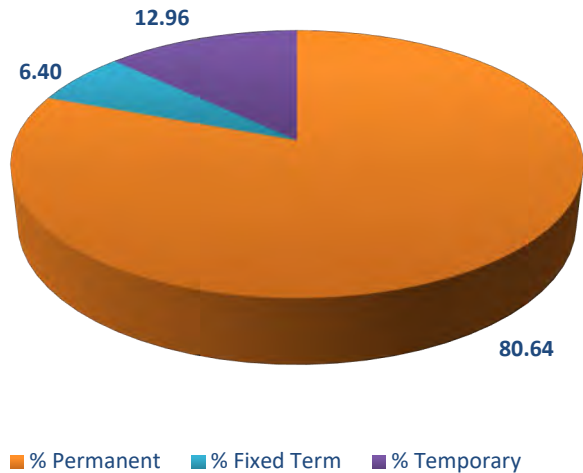


Chart 6 outlines the employment basis of those directly employed by CDC shows that 80.64% of our workforce are in permanent roles. This has slightly reduced, by 0.68% since Quarter 3 of 2025/26. There has been minimal fluctuation of employment basis since the last quarter.

Chart 6

% Breakdown of Employment Basis as at 31 March 2026

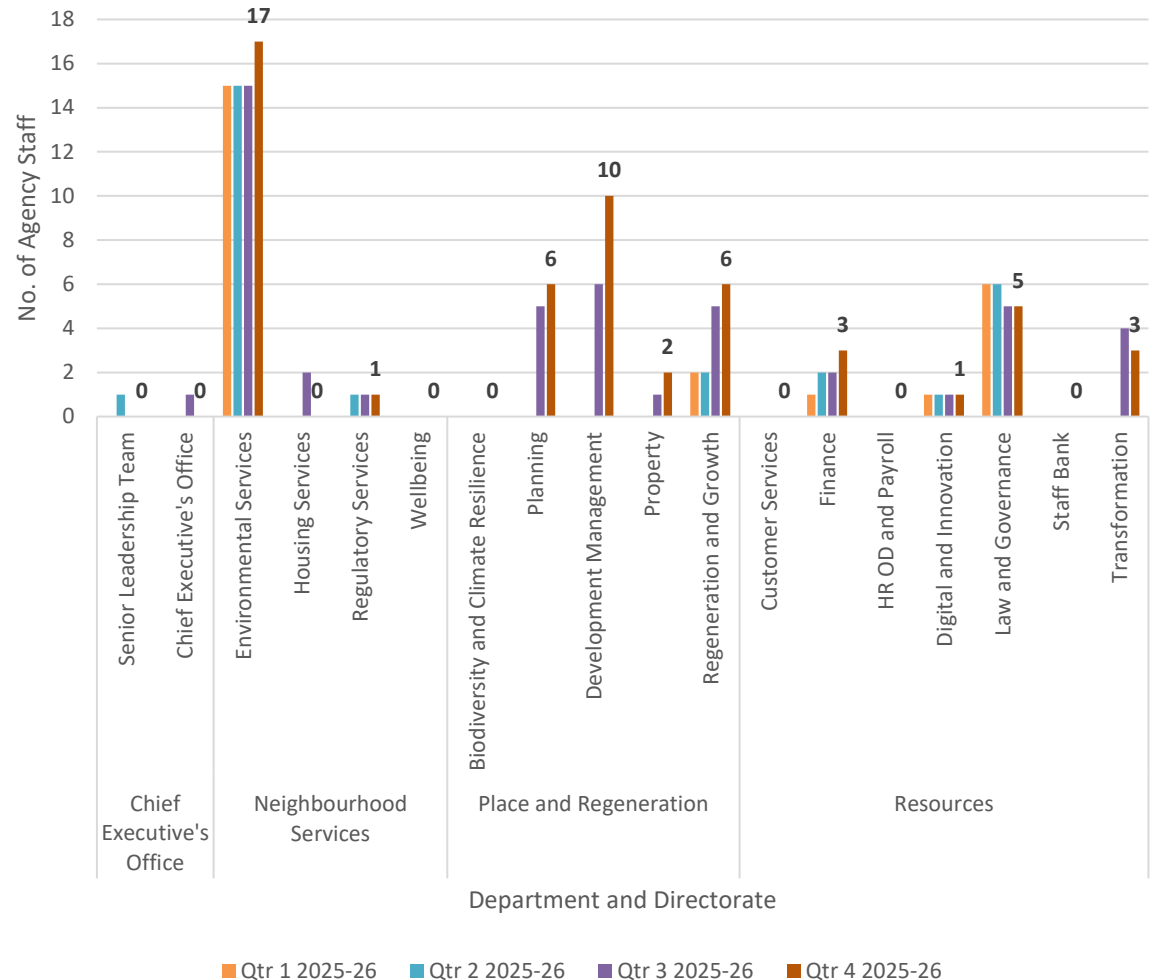


The highest agency usage is usually Environmental Services. Usage in this area increased by 2 in the last quarter.

Development Management have increased agency usage by 4 in quarter 4 of 2025/26, and Planning, Property and Finance have increased by 1. Transformation have reduced by 1.

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

Chart 7

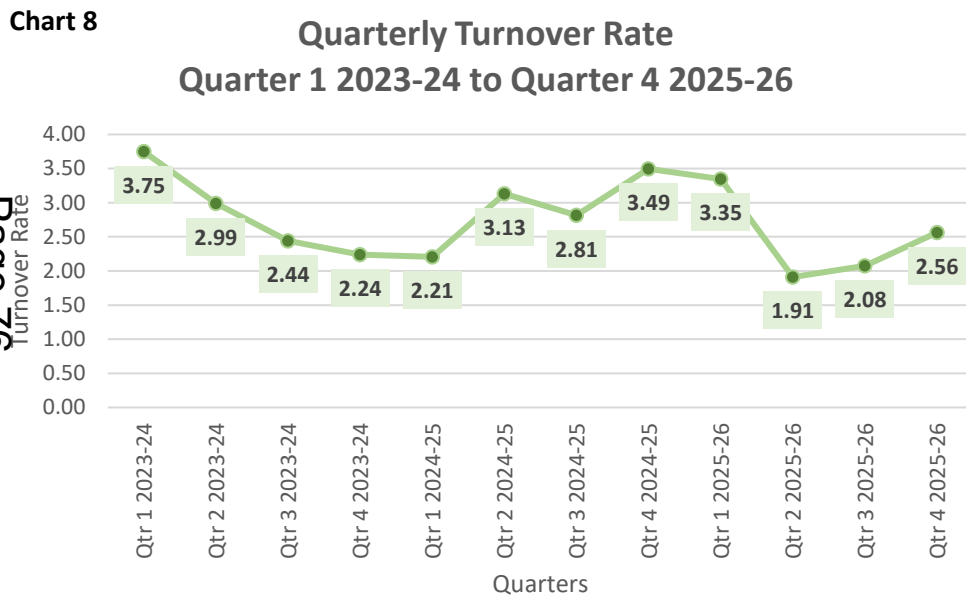


In addition to employing staff directly, CDC also utilise Agency Workers, either for interim or short-term usage for specific posts and projects.

Chart 7 outlines agency usage as at the end of each quarter for the last rolling year by department. A total of 54 agency workers were engaged with CDC at the end of quarter 4 of 2025/26. This has increased by 6 since the end of quarter 3 and is 19 more than the same quarter in 2024/25.

Turnover rates and Leaver information

Chart 8 tracks the turnover rate per quarter over a 3-year period, from April 2023 to March 2026. 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 of 2025/26 shows an increase of 0.48% since quarter 3.

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 2025/26, CDC had 63 leavers in total, which is 11 less than the previous year. The annual turnover rate saw a reduction of 1.71% in comparison to the previous year.

Chart 9 **Quarterly Turnover Rate by Department**
as at
31 March 2026

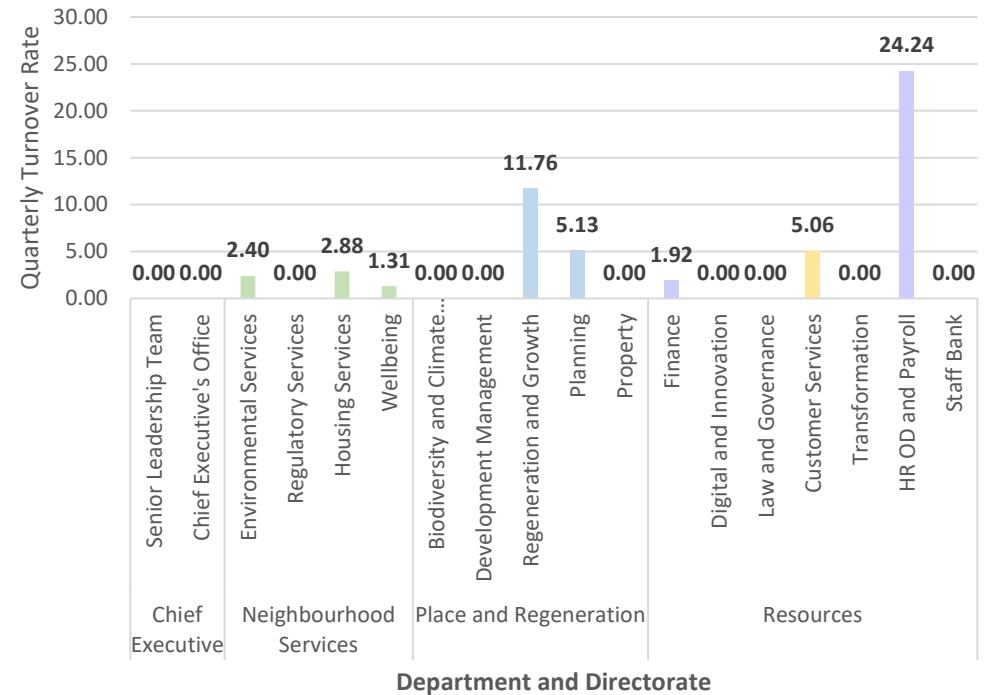


Table 1

	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Headcount at 01/04	578	627	623
Headcount at 31/03	627	626	625
Average no. of employees	602.5	626.5	624
No. of leavers	68	74	63
Turnover rate (%)	11.29	11.81	10.10

Chart 10 outlines leavers by reason for quarter 4 of 2025/26. Of the 16 leavers recorded in quarter 4, resignation is the highest reason for leaving, accounting for 68.75%. Death in service, Dismissal – capability accounted for 12.5% of leavers and Redundancy, End of Fixed Term Contract and Retirement accounted for 6.25% each.

Chart 10

**% of Leavers by reason
1 January to 31 March 2026**

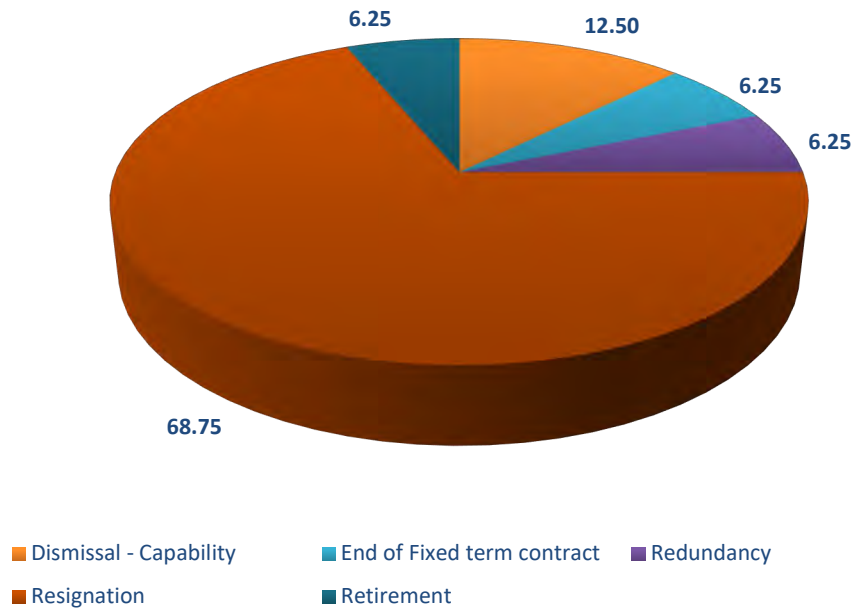
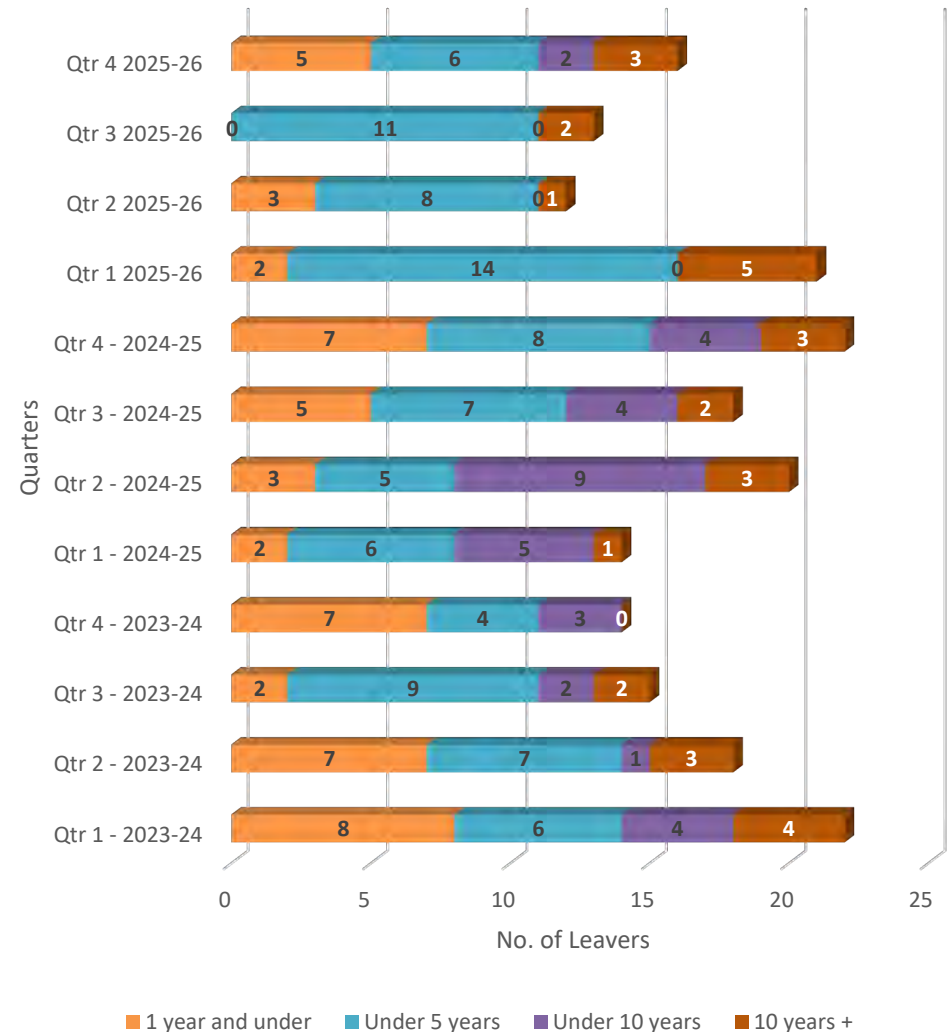


Chart 11 outlines leavers by length of service across the last 12 quarters. In quarter 4 of 2025/26, 5 leavers had less than 1 years' service, 6 had less than 5 years' 2 had less than 10 years and 3 had over 10.

Chart 11

**Leavers by Length of Service
1 April 2023 - 31 March 2026**



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 16 leavers in quarter 4, 6 exit interviews were completed. This is a completion rate of 37.5%, which is a reduction of 16.5% compared to quarter 3. 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.

Of the interviews completed, when asked where they were going next, 16.66% were moving to another local authority, 33.33% were moving to the private sector, 50% were looking for opportunities.

Exit interview feedback consistently described colleagues as supportive and welcoming, with several highlighting good training for new starters, flexibility around hours and hybrid working, and pride in the modern office environment. Some employees valued learning opportunities, community-facing work, and support from specific managers or teams, with a number noting they would consider returning in the future.

Some employees reported feeling undervalued, poorly supported by management, and frustrated by prolonged understaffing and unfulfilled commitments. Common issues included declining morale, unclear or ineffective leadership, role overload, aggressive customer behaviour not reflected in pay, and job roles or processes that did not match reality. Overall, concerns were systemic rather than team based.

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, with data captured on a monthly basis, back to April 2024. Musculo-skeletal has seen the most incidents across this period, with 296 recorded. This is followed by Cold and Flu Symptoms which had 256 incidents.

There were 219 incidents of sickness absence recorded in Quarter 4 of 2025/26, this is 27 more incidents than the same quarter of 2024/25.

For quarter 4 of 2025/26, musculoskeletal symptoms were the highest recorded reason for sickness absence, accounting for 21.5% of all incidents in the last quarter. This is followed by cold and flu symptoms, which accounts for 19% of all incidents in the last quarter. The third highest reasons this quarter was Stomach/liver/kidney and digestion, accounting for 13% of all incidents.

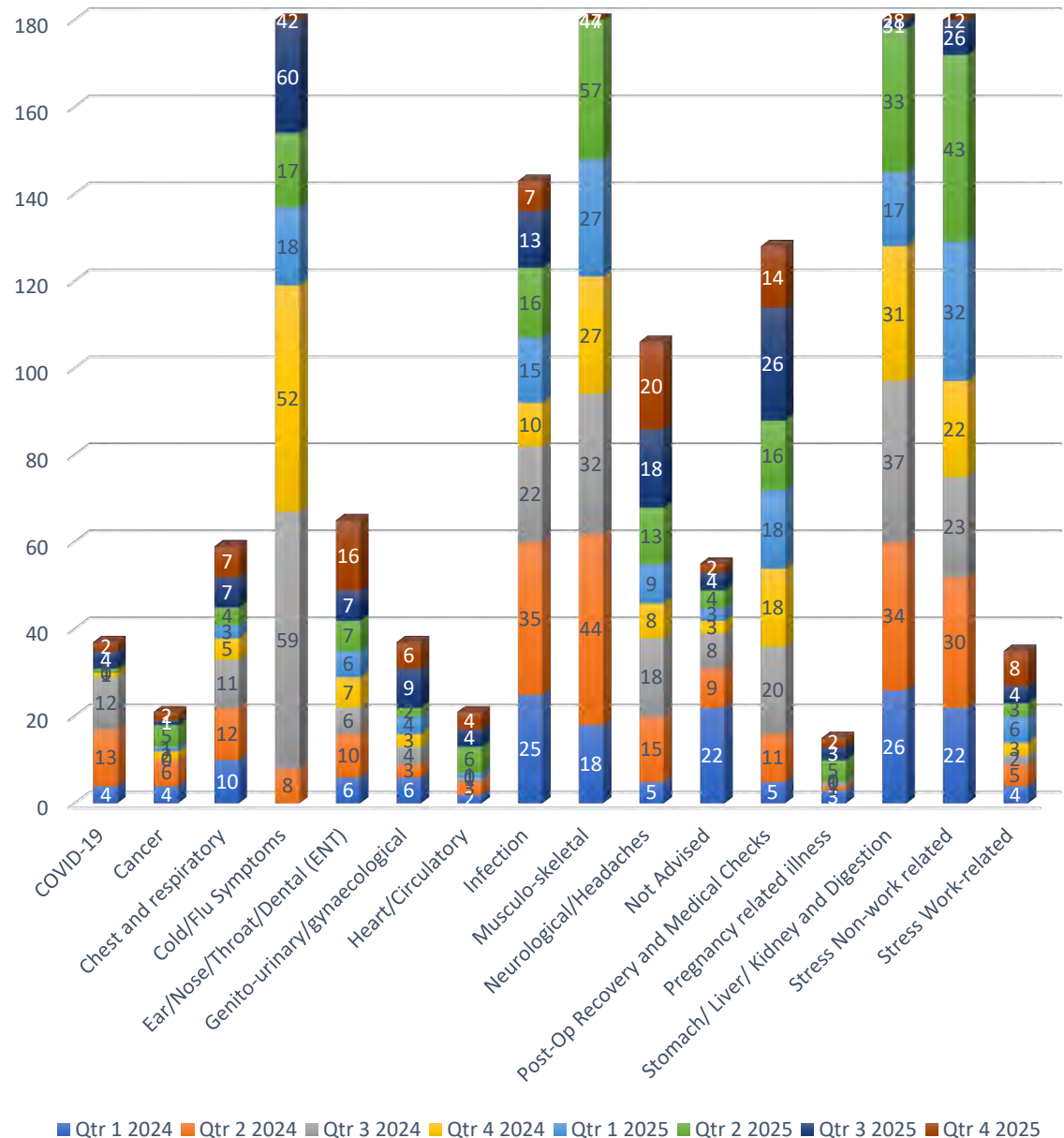
The highest reason for sickness absence across the last rolling 12 months was musculoskeletal, with 175 incidents recorded and accounting for 20% of all incidents.

The second highest reason for sickness absence in the last 12 months is cold and flu symptoms, with 137 incidents reported which equates to 16% of all incidents.

Stress – non work related is the third highest reason in the last 12 months, recording 113 incidents and accounting for 13% of all incidents.

Chart 12

**Sickness Absence Incidents by Reason
April 2024 to March 2026**



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 2023 to March 2026 and shows a reduction in the absence rate since the end of quarter 3 of 2025/26. The absence rate is calculated by dividing the hours lost due to sickness absence by the available working hours for the period. The end of quarter 4 records a reduction of the whole council absence rate of 0.46 from the end of quarter 3, following a slight increase of 0.06 in January 2026. CDC are committed to considering flexible working hours as appropriate, and HR work closely with managers and Occupational Health to review possibilities around workloads as required.

Council Absence Rates by Month
Overall and broken down into short-term, long-term and stress
April 2023 to March 2026

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Chart 13

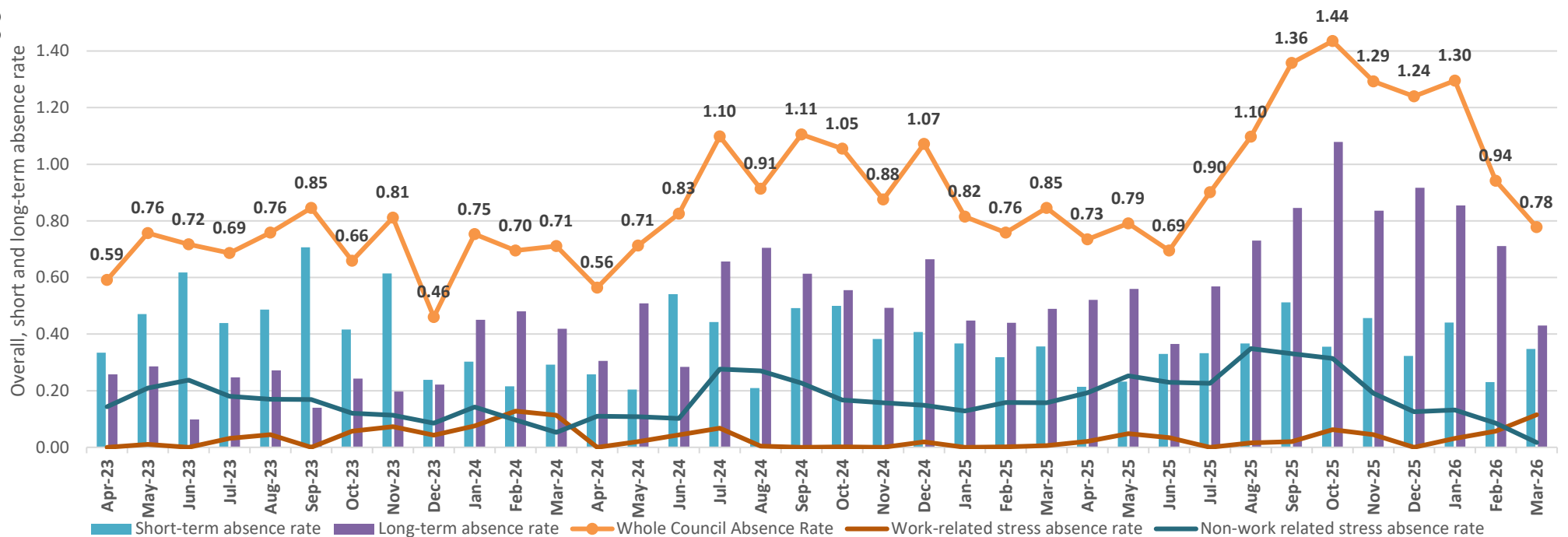


Chart 13 also captures the absence rate of short and long-term instances, In the last 12 months. September 2025 has the highest rate of short-term absence, recording a rate of 0.51 days lost. October 2025 had the highest rate of long-term absence in the last 12 months, with 1.08 days lost. At the end of quarter 4 of 2025/26, 17 long-term sickness absence cases remained ongoing, which is the same as at the end of quarter 3.

The absence rate attributed to stress is also displayed in Chart 13 and an increase in work-related stress was recorded in the last quarter, with no live cases at the end of December 2025 to 2 ongoing incidents being captured in quarter 4. Work-related stress incidents accounted for 4% of incidents in quarter 4 of 2025/26 and 2.5% of incidents in the last rolling 12 months.

The non-work-related stress absence rate has reduced over the last quarter, from 0.13 at the end of quarter 3 of 2025/26 to no open cases at the end of quarter 4. Non-work-related stress accounted for 5.5% of incidents in quarter 4 of 2025/26 and 13% 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 2026

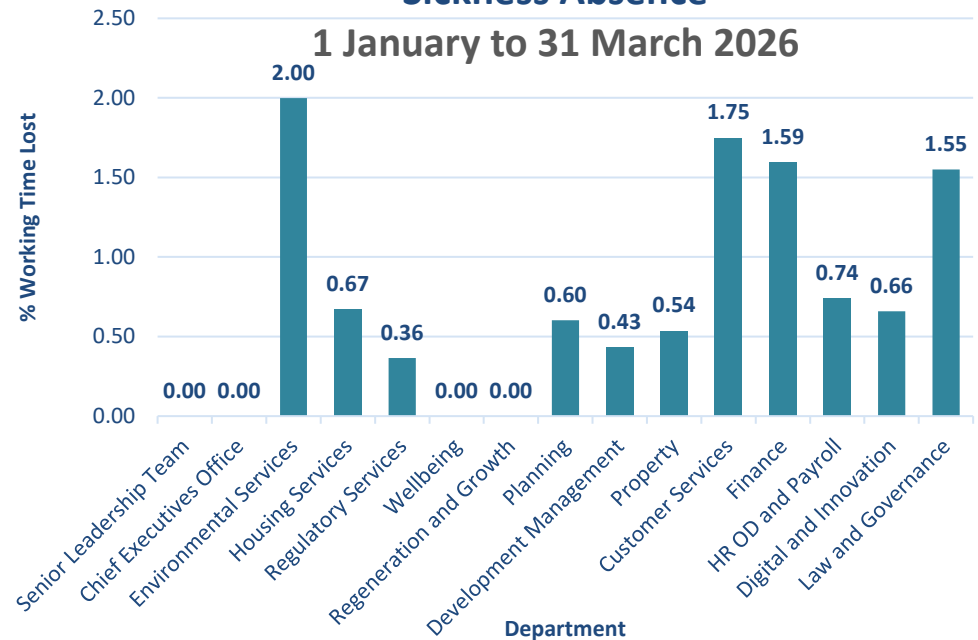
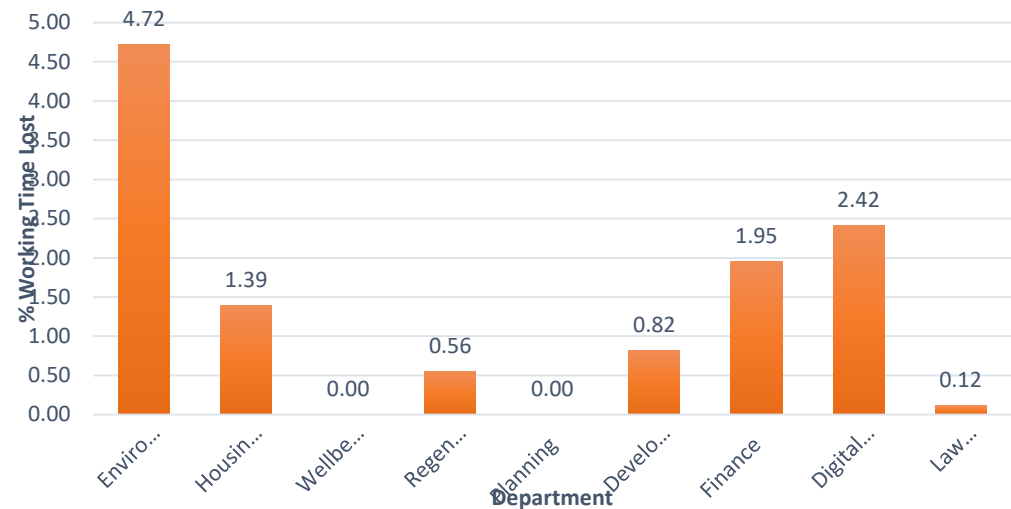


Chart 15

% Working Time Lost due to Long Term Absence

1 January to 31 March 2026



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

	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Average FTE	484.94	510.24	517.13
Available Working Hours	935583.95	984393.40	997687.82
Hours Lost	30260.23	40219.19	48058.07
Absence Rate (%)	3.23	4.09	4.82
Hours lost due to short term absence	18307.73	16958.94	15854.49
Short term absence rate (%)	1.96	1.72	1.59
Hours lost due to long term absence	11952.5	23260.25	32203.58
Long term absence rate (%)	1.28	2.36	3.23
Hours lost due to work-related stress	2111.9	609.53	1726.2
Work-related stress absence rate (%)	0.23	0.06	0.17
Hours lost due to non-work related stress	6117.25	7572.2	9362.63
Non-work related stress absence rate (%)	0.65	0.77	0.94

In 2025-26, 4.82% of working time was lost due to sickness, this is 0.73% more than the previous year and the second year to show further increase.

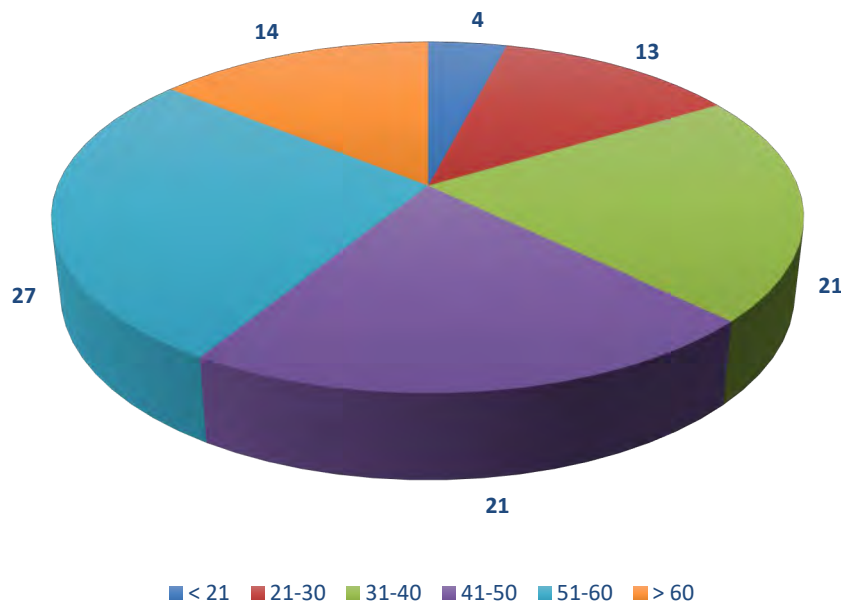
The short-term absence rate reduced by 0.13% but the long-term absence rate increased by 0.87% compared to 2024/25. This was to be expected as an increase in long term sickness absence cases has been reported through the quarters.

The absence rate for work related stress has increased by 0.11 and the absence rate for non-work-related stress has increased by 0.17. 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 2026

Chart 16 shows a breakdown by age of the CDC workforce, expressed in percentage. 14% of CDC employees are over 60. 27% are aged between 51 and 60. 21% of CDC employees are aged between 41 and 50. 21% are aged between 31 and 40 and 17% aged 30 and under. There has been no change to the age profile within the last quarter.

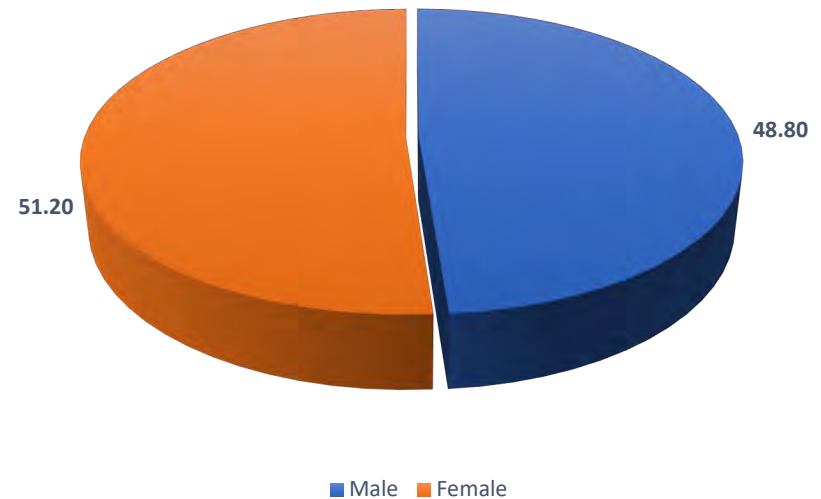
Chart 16 Age Profile Percentage as at 31 March 2026



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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 2026



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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, 48.80% of our workforce are male and 51.20% are female meaning it is representative of the district, and there has been minimal change since quarter 3.

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 2025/26, 88.64% of employees have recorded this information, with 4.64% 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 1.

Chart 18

Ethnicity Profile Percentage as at 31 March 2026

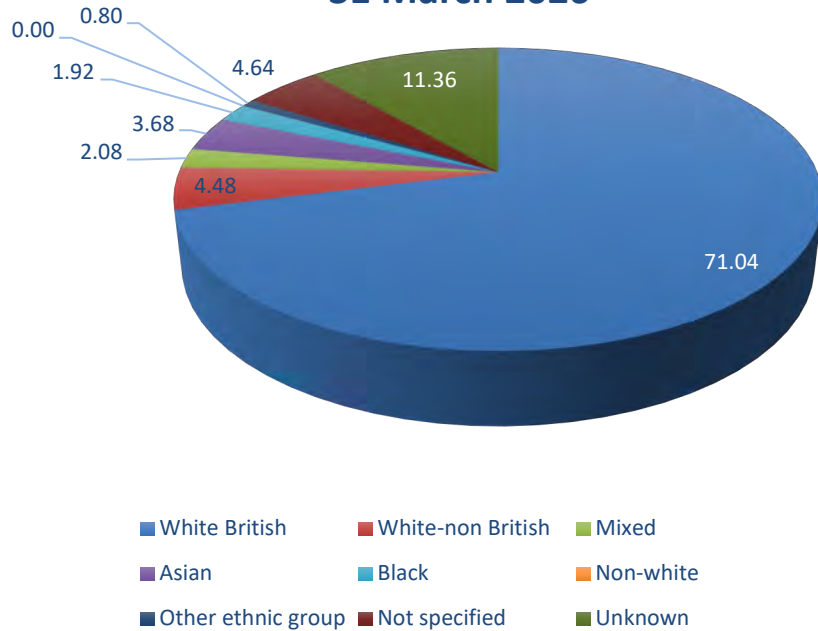


Table 1

Ethnic Group	England average (%)	Cherwell District (%)	CDC (%) Qtr 1 25/26	CDC (%) Qtr 2 25/26	CDC (%) Qtr 3 25/26	CDC (%) Qtr 4 25/26
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh	9.3	6.0	3.80	3.66	3.37	3.68
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African	4.0	1.8	1.42	1.43	1.76	1.92
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	2.9	2.9	1.74	1.75	1.92	2.08
White	81.7	88.1	76.27	76.47	76.28	75.52
Other ethnic group	2.1	1.3	0.79	0.79	0.80	0.80
Prefer not to say	N/A	N/A	4.75	4.61	4.65	4.64
Unknown	N/A	N/A	11.23	11.29	11.22	11.36

CDC’s workforce is predominantly white British with 71.04% of the workforce recording their ethnicity in this category.

Table 1 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 reduced in the last quarter by 0.76% and at the end of quarter 4 was 12.58% 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 2025/26.

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 at the end of quarter 3 of 2025/26 this was down to 13% and remained the same for 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 band.

Chart 19 Ethnic Group Percentage by Grade Band as at 31 March 2026

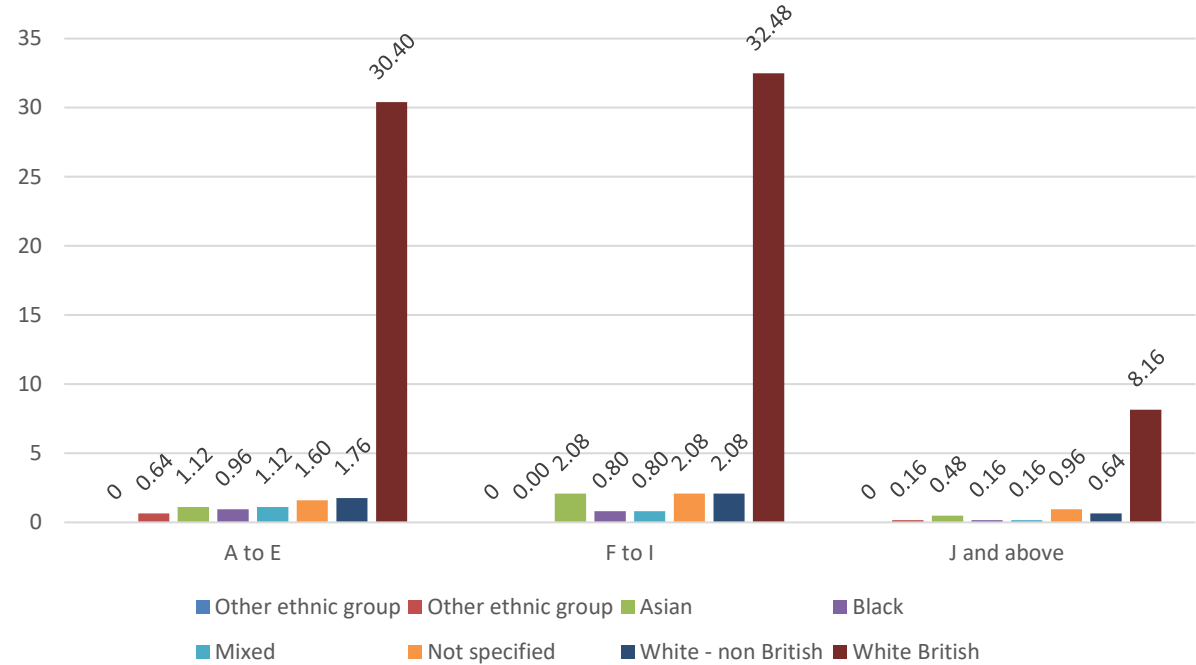


Chart 20 Disability Percentage Profile as at 31 March 2026

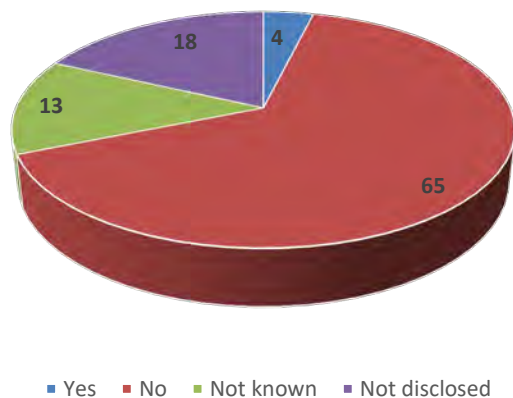
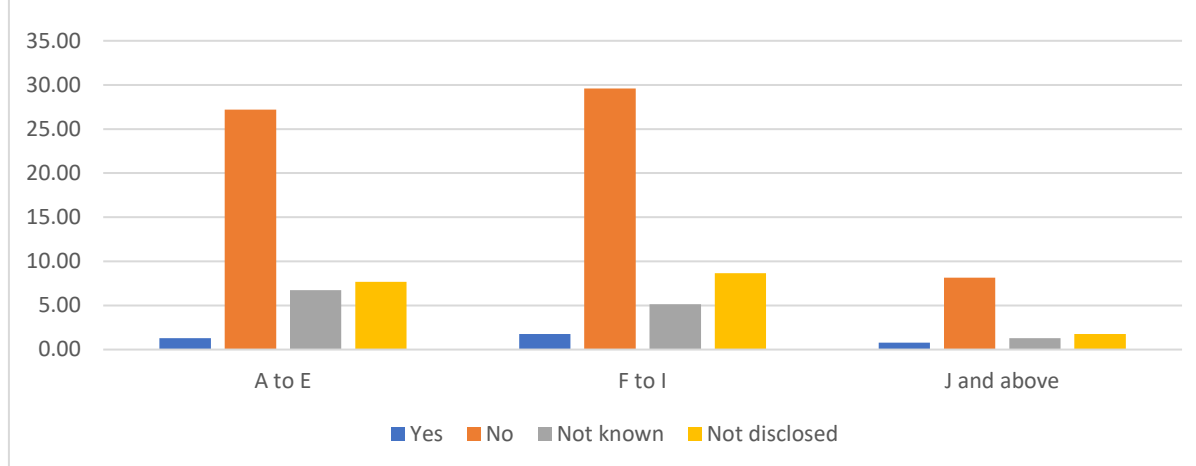


Chart 21 Disability Percentage by Grade Band as at 31 March 2026



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, 11.52% of the workforce have declined to specify and 12.32% 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.

Chart 22

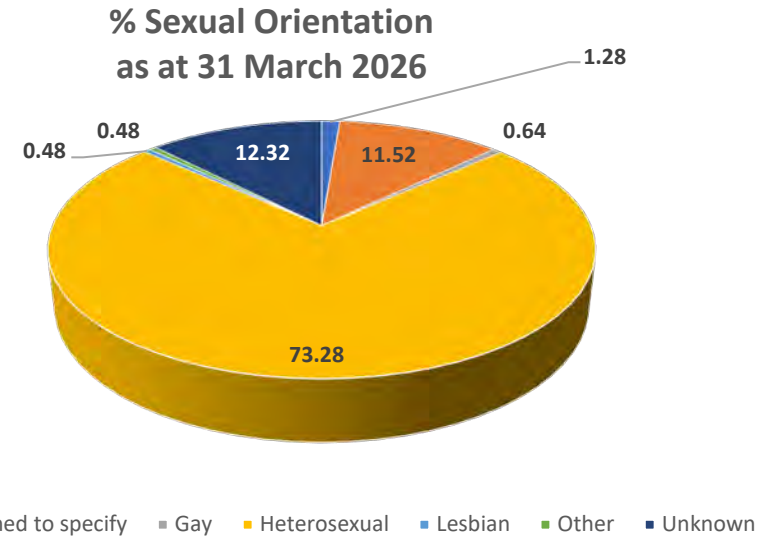
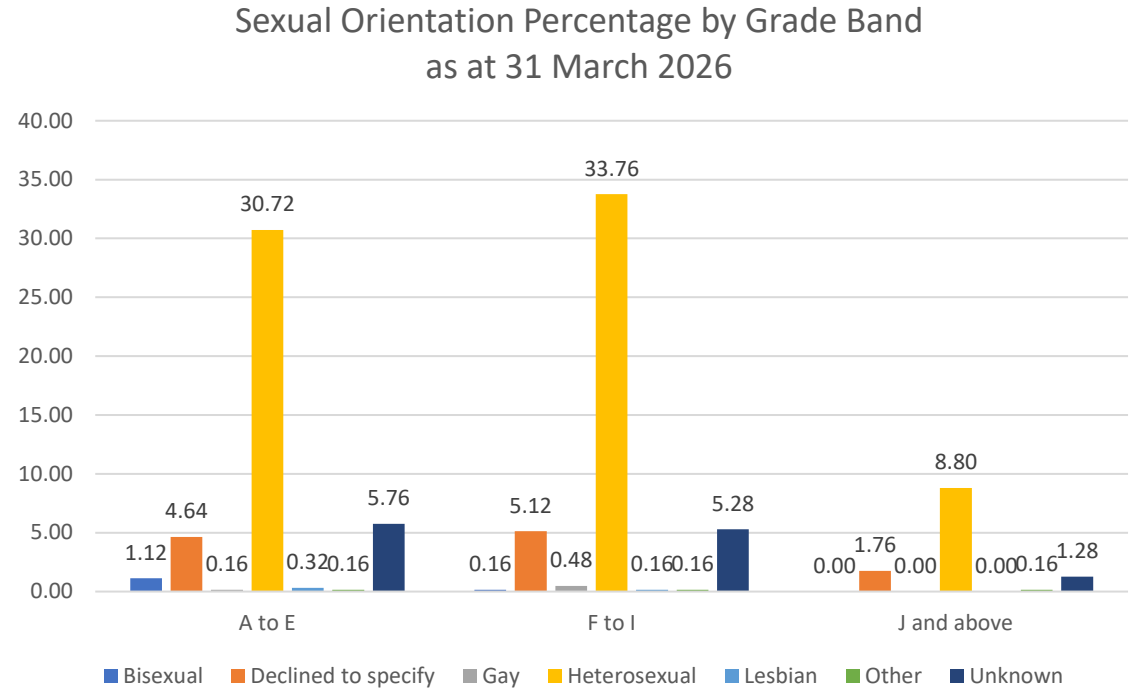


Chart 23



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 2025 to March 2026. There have been 106 recruitment campaigns during this period to which 1508 applications were received and 85 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 25 and 34, followed by 35 to 49, these 2 groups account for 67.64% of all applications. Table 2 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. Applicants in the 50-64 age range are significantly lower than the district percentage. and other categories broadly align.

Chart 24

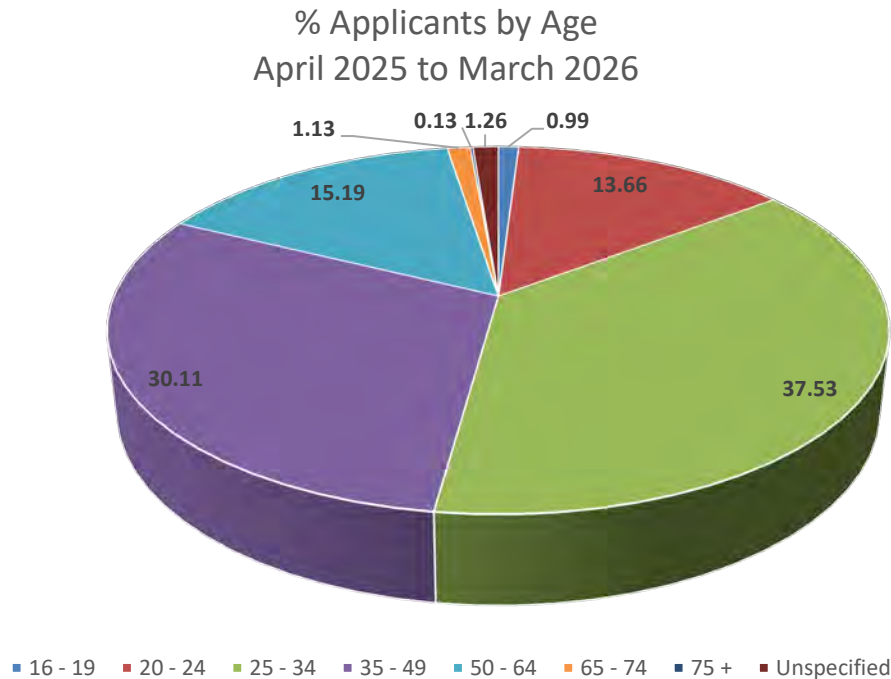


Table 2

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 3 shows the make-up of the District.

Chart 25

% Applicants by Ethnicity
April 2025 to March 2026

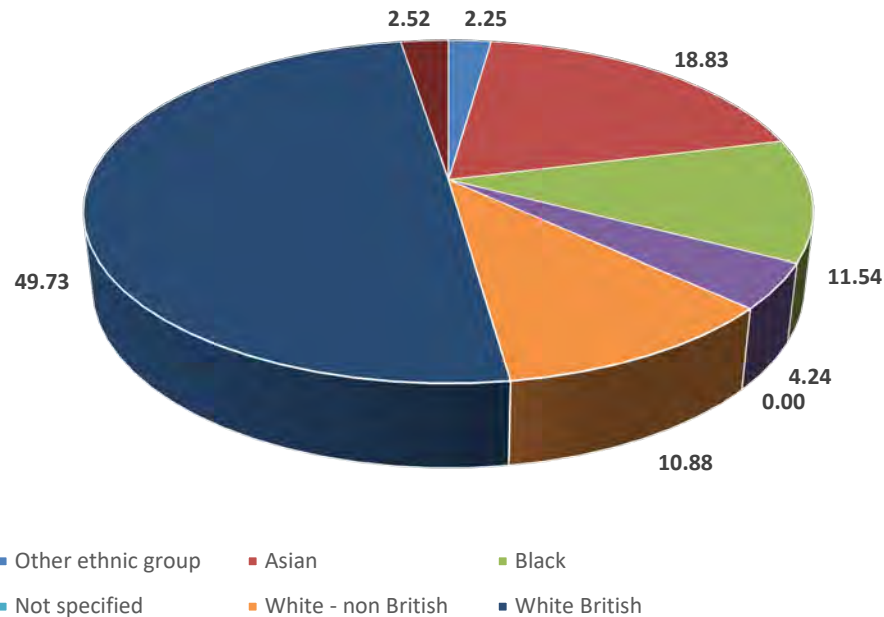


Table 3

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 2025 to March 2026

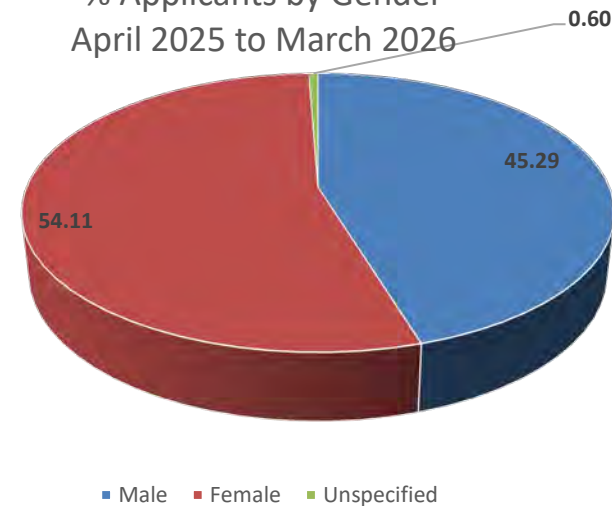


Chart 26 shows the percentage of applicants by gender, which is an almost 50/50 split across male and female, which is both reflective of our current workforce and district data covered earlier in this report.

Chart 27

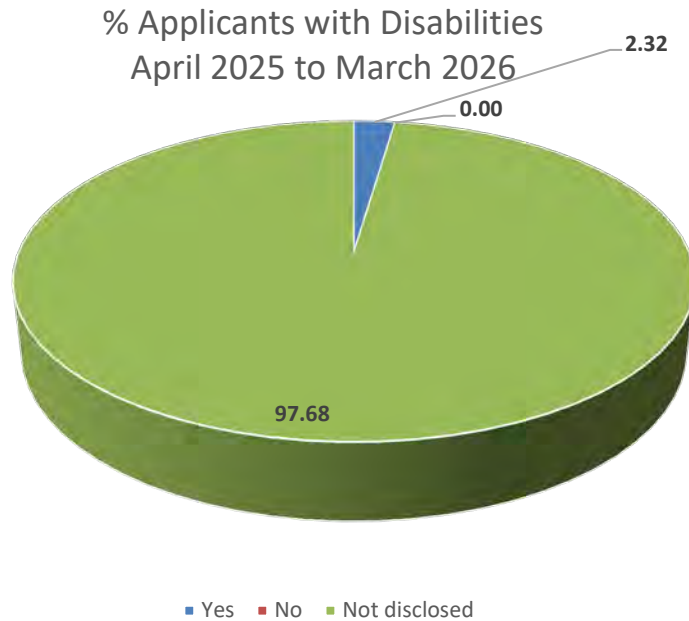


Chart 28 shows the percentage of applicants by sexual orientation. Oxfordshire County Council confirms from census 2021 information that 89.4% of the county identify as straight or heterosexual, with 3.4% not identifying as straight or heterosexual and 7.9% preferring not to say. CDC's applicant data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

Chart 28

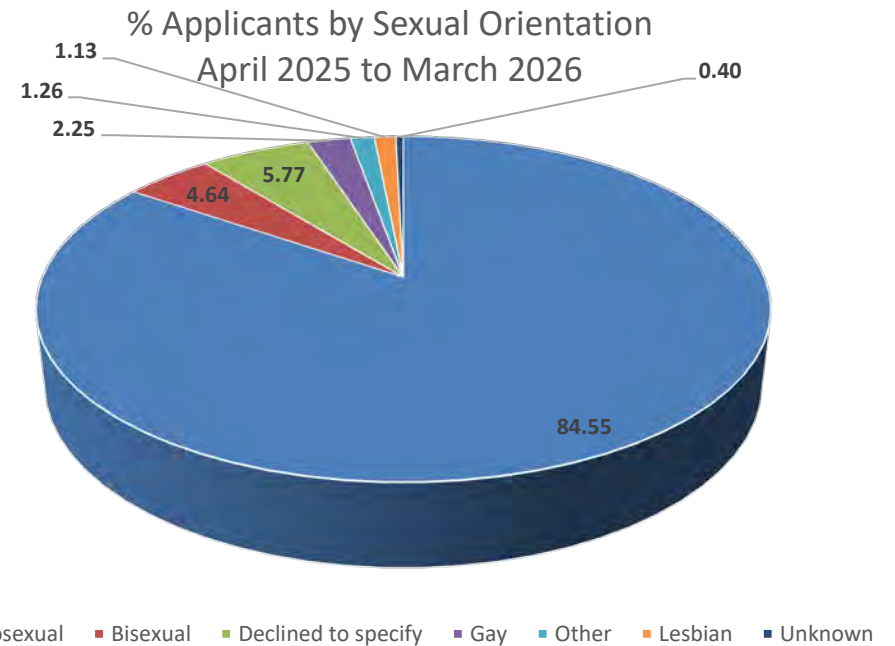


Chart 27 shows the percentage of applicants by disability. 97.68% of applicants have not disclosed this at applicant stage. It is hoped that applicants would provide this information should they have disabilities as we have a guaranteed interview scheme if they meet the essential criteria for a role, as part of being a disability confident employer.

Diversity in Recruitment: A breakdown of applicants to offer by personal attributes for inclusion and grade group

As requested at the Personnel Committee in June 2025, Tables 4-8 below provide a breakdown of applicants and offers of employment made over the last rolling 12-month period, broken down into grade groups and then by:

- Ethnicity
- Sexual orientation
- Age
- Gender
- Disability

Table 4: Number of applicants and offers by ethnicity and grade group

% ETHNICITY	A to E		F to I		J and above		TOTALS	
	No. of applicants	No. of offers	No. of applicants	No. of offers	No. of applicants	No. of offers	No. of applicants	No. of offers
Other ethnic group	1.98	2.70	2.06	0.00	3.11	0.00	2.25	1.18
Asian	15.65	2.70	18.89	8.11	24.22	0.00	18.83	4.71
Black	6.83	5.41	16.03	5.41	10.87	18.18	11.54	7.06
Mixed	4.68	5.41	3.65	0.00	4.66	0.00	4.24	2.35
Not specified	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
White - non British	8.09	5.41	10.79	0.00	15.84	9.09	10.88	3.53
White British	62.05	72.97	45.71	81.08	36.34	72.73	49.73	76.47
Unknown	0.72	5.41	2.86	5.41	4.97	0.00	2.52	4.71
TOTAL %	100	100.00	100	100.00	100	100.00	100.00	100.00
TOTAL NUMBER	556	37	630	37	322	11	1508	85

Table 5: Number of applicants and offers by sexual orientation and grade group

% LGBTQ+	A to E		F to I		J and above		TOTALS	
Sexual Orientation	No. of applicants	No. of offers	No. of applicants	No. of offers	No. of applicants	No. of offers	No. of applicants	No. of offers
Heterosexual	90.29	83.78	85.24	89.19	73.29	81.82	84.55	85.88
Bisexual	3.24	5.41	4.29	0.00	7.76	0.00	4.64	2.35
Declined to specify	2.70	0.00	6.03	5.41	10.56	18.18	5.77	4.71
Gay	1.26	2.70	3.02	0.00	2.48	0.00	2.25	1.18
Other	0.90	0.00	0.95	0.00	2.48	0.00	1.26	0.00
Lesbian	1.62	2.70	0.48	0.00	1.55	0.00	1.13	1.18
Unknown	0.00	5.41	0.00	5.41	1.86	0.00	0.40	4.71
TOTAL %	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
TOTAL NUMBER	556	37	630	37	322	11	1508	85

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Table 6: Number of applicants and offers by age and grade group

% Age Band	A to E		F to I		J and above		TOTALS	
Age Band	No. of applicants	No. of offers	No. of applicants	No. of offers	No. of applicants	No. of offers	No. of applicants	No. of offers
16 - 19	2.16	5.41	0.48	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.99	2.35
20 - 24	14.39	10.81	14.13	2.70	11.49	0.00	13.66	5.88
25 - 34	29.32	8.11	39.84	37.84	47.20	27.27	37.53	23.53
35 - 49	33.09	43.24	30.48	32.43	24.22	54.55	30.11	40.00
50 - 64	18.35	32.43	14.44	24.32	11.18	18.18	15.19	27.06
65 - 74	1.80	0.00	0.63	0.00	0.93	0.00	1.13	0.00
75 +	0.18	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.31	0.00	0.13	0.00
Unspecified	0.72	0.00	0.00	2.70	4.66	0.00	1.26	1.18
TOTAL %	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
TOTAL NUMBER	556	37	630	37	322	11	1508	85

Table 7: Number of applicants and offers by gender and grade group

% Gender	A to E		F to I		J and above		TOTALS	
Gender	No. of applicants	No. of offers	No. of applicants	No. of offers	No. of applicants	No. of offers	No. of applicants	No. of offers
Male	48.20	51.35	40.00	40.54	50.62	54.55	45.29	47.06
Female	51.80	48.65	59.52	56.76	47.52	45.45	54.11	51.76
Unspecified	0.00	0.00	0.48	2.70	1.86	0.00	0.60	1.18
TOTAL %	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
TOTAL NUMBER	556	37	630	37	322	11	1508	85

Table 8: Number of applicants and offers by disability and grade group

% Disability	A to E		F to I		J and above		TOTALS	
Disability	No. of applicants	No. of offers	No. of applicants	No. of offers	No. of applicants	No. of offers	No. of applicants	No. of offers
Yes	0.72	8.11	1.43	5.41	6.83	18.18	2.32	8.24
No	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Not disclosed	99.28	91.89	98.57	94.59	93.17	81.82	97.68	91.76
TOTAL	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
TOTAL NUMBER	556	37	630	37	322	11	1508	85

Apprenticeships within Cherwell District Council as at Quarter 4 – 2025/26

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

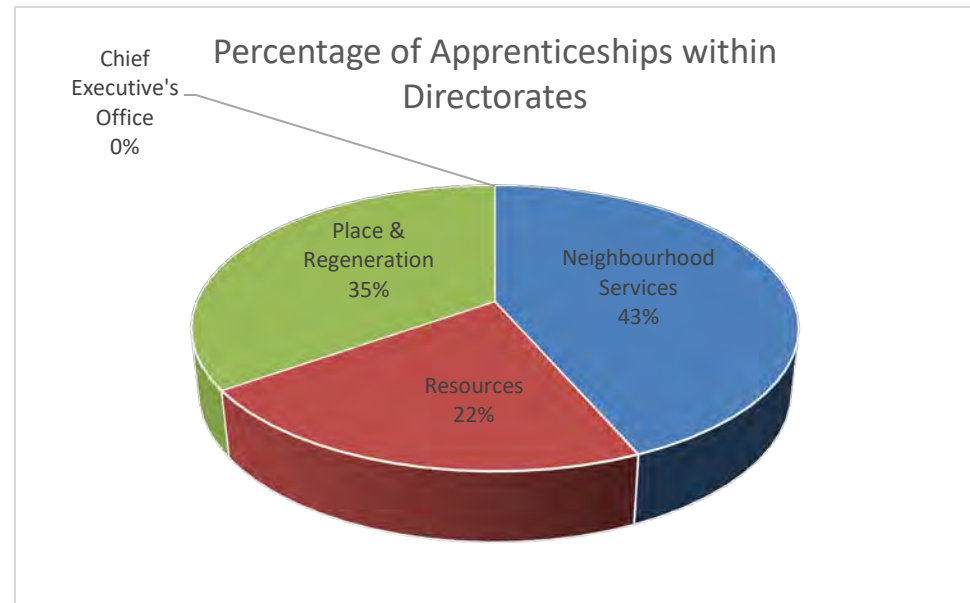
There are 23 apprenticeships currently running within the Council for this quarter, of which 4 is an apprentice on programme, employed specifically as an apprentice; and the remaining 19 are employees undertaking an apprenticeship as CPD or career progression.

There are currently 10 apprenticeships within the Neighbourhood Services Directorate, 8 in Place and Regeneration, 5 within the Resources Directorate and 0 within the Chief Executive’s Office – 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 (£)
Urban Driver	Level 2	8 months	3	CPD	Waste Collection	Neighbourhood Services (3)	24,000



Apprenticeship Standard	Level of Apprenticeship	Duration of Apprenticeship	Number of employees on apprenticeship	Apprentice or Employee CPD	Team	Directorate	Cost of Apprenticeships (£)
Motor vehicle service and maintenance technician - light vehicle	Level 3	22 months	1	Apprentice	Fleet Management	Neighbourhood Services (1)	10,669
Associate Project Manager	Level 4	18 months	1	CPD	Waste Collection	Neighbourhood Services (1)	7,000
Sports Coach	Level 4	14 months	1	Apprentice	Wellbeing	Neighbourhood Services (1)	9,000
Data Protection and Information Governance Practitioner	Level 4	18 months	1	CPD	Legal Services	Resources (1)	10,000
Senior housing and property management	Level 4	22 months	2	CPD	Housing Grants and Standards	Neighbourhood Services (2)	17933
People Professional	Level 5	18 months	2	CPD (1) Apprentice (1)	Human Resources	Resources (2)	22,000
Building control surveyor	Level 6	48 months	1	CPD	Building Control	Place and Regeneration (1)	24,000
Chartered Surveyor	Level 6	66 months	1	Apprentice	Access and Grants	Place and Regeneration (1)	27,000

Apprenticeship Standard	Level of Apprenticeship	Duration of Apprenticeship	Number of employees on apprenticeship	Apprentice or Employee CPD	Team	Directorate	Cost of Apprenticeships (£)
Environmental Health Practitioner	Level 6	48 months	1	CPD	Health Protection and Compliance	Neighbourhood Services (1)	22,000
Public Health Practitioner	Level 6	36 months	1	CPD	Health Place Shaping	Place and Regeneration (1)	22,000
Chartered Town Planner	Level 7	30 months	5	CPD	Planning	Place and Regeneration (5)	57,000
Accountancy or Taxation Professional	Level 7	38 months	1	CPD	Finance	Resources (1)	21,000
Accountancy Professional (CIPFA)	Level 7	36 months	1	CPD	Finance	Resources (1)	20,433
Sustainability business specialist	Level 7	24 months	1	CPD	Environment Services	Neighbourhood Services (1)	10,755
			23		Total apprenticeship levy committed		304,790

Current amount in the Levy Account

The Council currently has **£153,537** in their levy account.

Expired Funds

No funds expired in Quarter 4 of 2025/26.

Latest Update around apprenticeship reforms

Defunding of further Apprenticeships - Sixteen apprenticeships, including popular management standards with tens of thousands of annual starts, will be defunded as ministers attempt to divert training funding towards young people.

Among those standards to be defunded, which would affect the Council are:

- level 3 team leader
- level 5 operations manager
- level 4 lead practitioner in adult care
- level 4 improvement practitioner
- level 5 coaching professional
- level 6 chartered manager

Foundation Apprenticeships - Foundation apprenticeships offer opportunities for young people in that they are paid jobs with structured training.

The first seven foundation level 2 apprenticeships, aimed at young people lasting eight months, launched in August 2025 in the construction sector, digital, engineering and manufacturing and health and social care.

However, official data covering the first few months of starts on foundation apprenticeships showed there were just 36. Two programmes, finishing trades and software and data, didn't recruit at all.

Ministers previously came under fire for excluding high-demand industries from the above offer but will be confirming foundation apprenticeships in hospitality and retail for launch in April.

Apprenticeship Units - The government wants employers to be able to use the levy on short, flexible training courses. The first batch of units are aligned to the government's industrial strategy priorities, and that more will be developed in the future.

- It's not yet clear how many teaching hours these courses will require, how they will be assessed or how they will be funded, despite April's launch date. The first few courses have now been launched and the standards are with providers to see who and if they will deliver these.
- The first apprenticeship units are:
 - AI leadership – developing AI strategy
 - Electric vehicle charging point installation and maintenance
 - Electrical fitting and assembly

- Mechanical fitting and assembly
- Permanent modular building assembly
- Solar PV installation and maintenance
- Welding

Impact

The impact for the Council with the latest changes will mean we will no longer be able to use the apprenticeship levy for management development courses as listed above in the defunding section. At the moment, the majority of our apprenticeships, are more diverse pulling on qualifications required for specific roles within the departments, so this currently this will not have a massive impact on our usage, other than the Level 7 Planning that we can no longer put our staff through.

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