

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 6 between the end of quarters 4 of 2025/26 and quarter 1 of 2026/27. Within the headcount of 631, 14 employees have 2 roles, and have therefore been counted twice, meaning we have 617 employees.

Quarter 1 of 2026/27 has seen adjustments of 14 leavers and 20 new starters across the organisation.

Chart 1

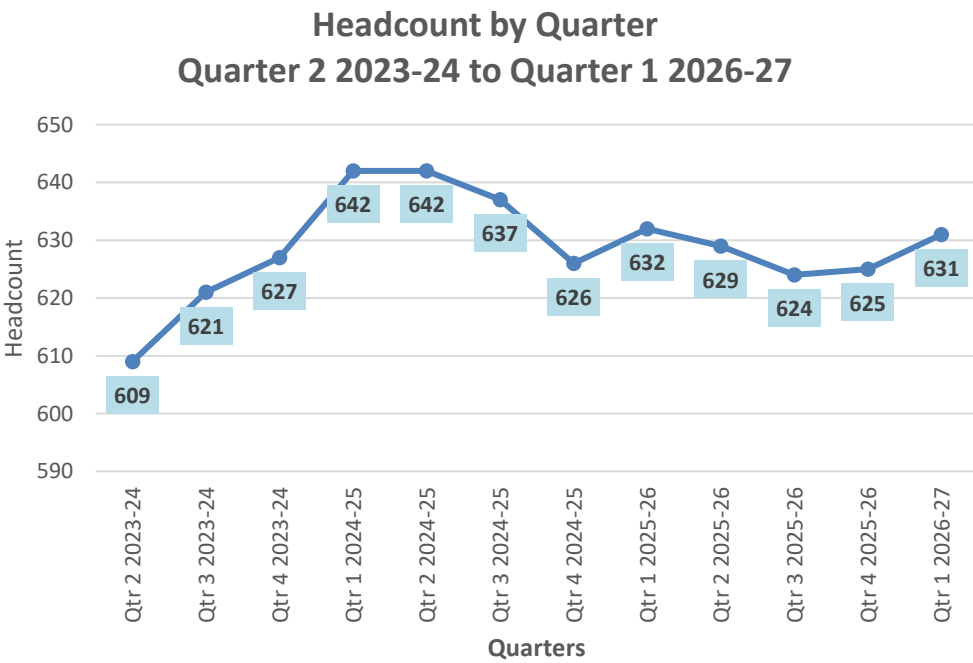


Chart 2 details the distribution of headcount across our departments and directorates as at the end of quarter 1 of 2026/27. Wellbeing and Environmental Services continue to show the highest headcount. CDC are host employer to the District Councils Network (DCN) and these employees are included in the HR, OD and Payroll directorate.

Environmental Services had the biggest increase in headcount with 5 since quarter 4 of 2025/26. Regeneration and Growth increased by 2. Wellbeing 's headcount reduced by 5.

Chart 2

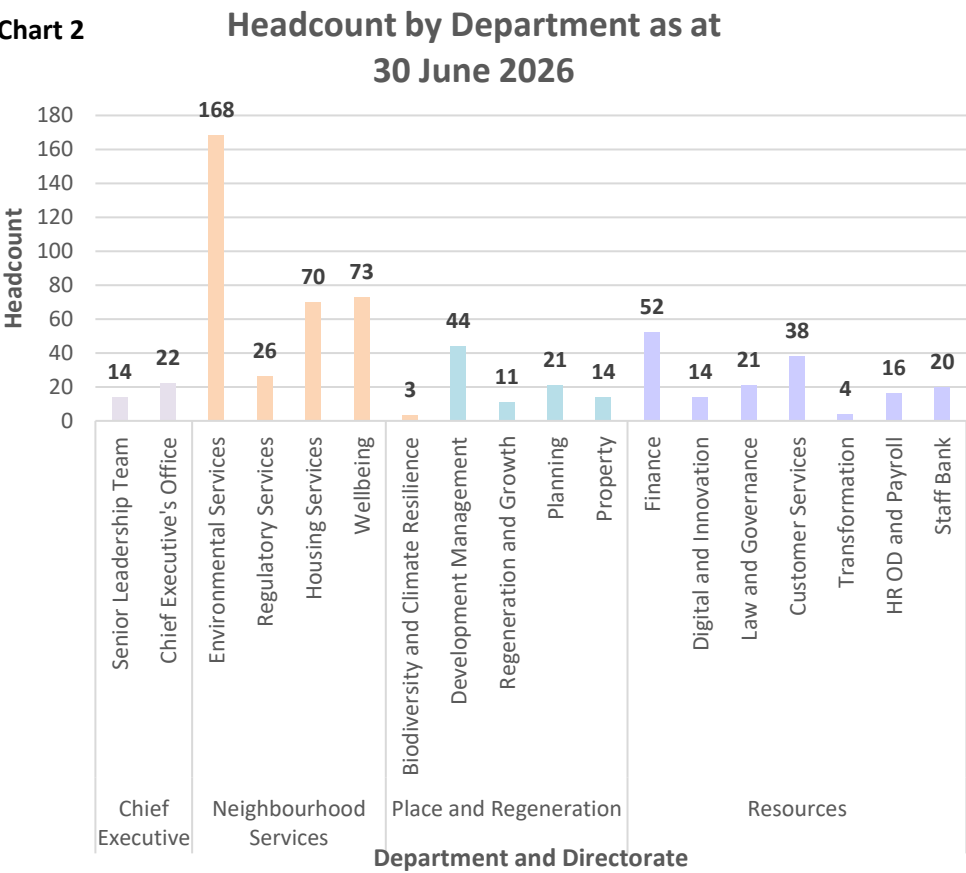


Chart 3 outlines the fluctuation of FTE which has increased by 8.97 between quarter 4 of 2025/26 and quarter 1 of 2026/27.

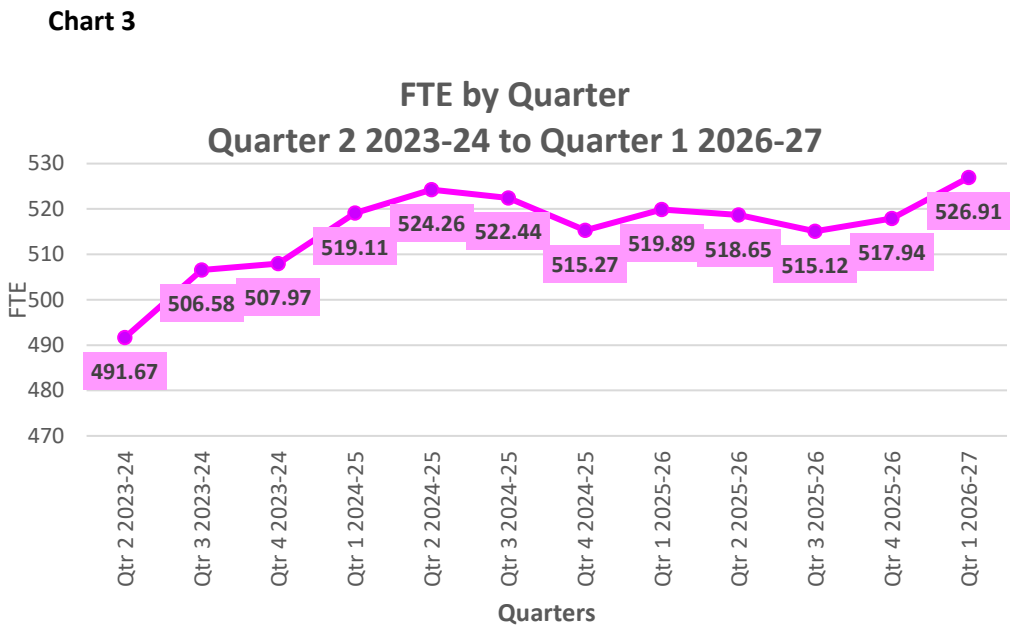


Chart 4 outlines the distribution of FTE across the departments and directorates as at the end of quarter 1 of 2026/27.

Since quarter 4 of 2025/26; Environmental Services has increased by 3.6 FTE and Regeneration and Growth increased by 2 FTE. Wellbeing's FTE reduced by 1.97.

Charts 5 shows the breakdown of basis of hours across our workforce as of 30 June 2026. Since quarter 4 of 2025/26 there has been minimal change to the make-up of role-basis with our full-time increasing by 0.27% and part-time reducing by 0.9% and our casual workforce increasing by 0.63%.

Chart 4

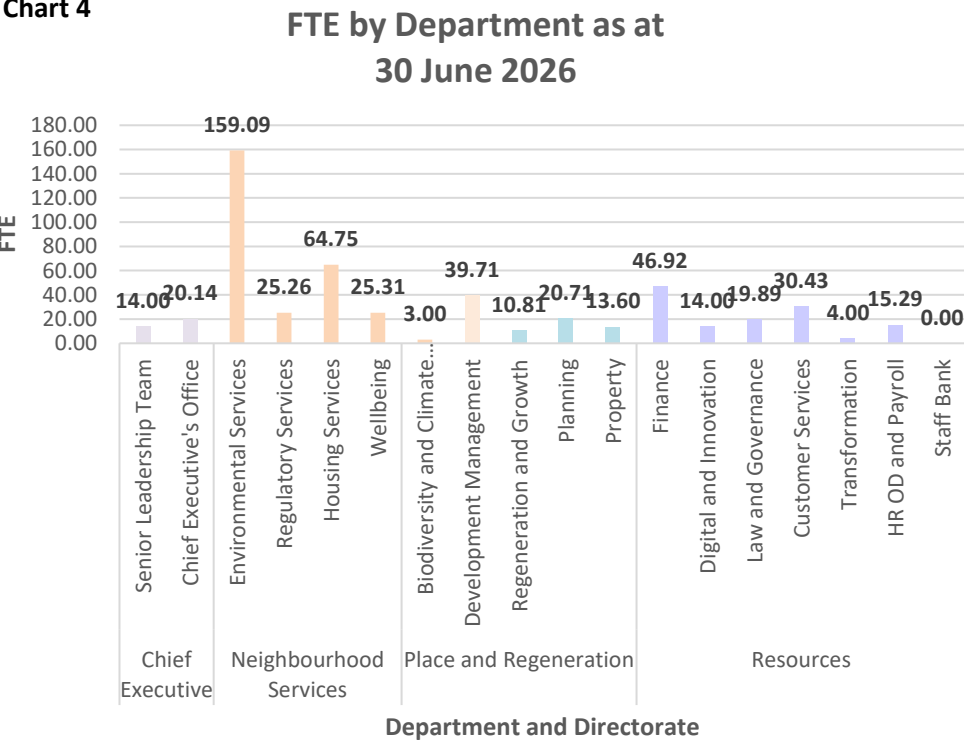


Chart 5

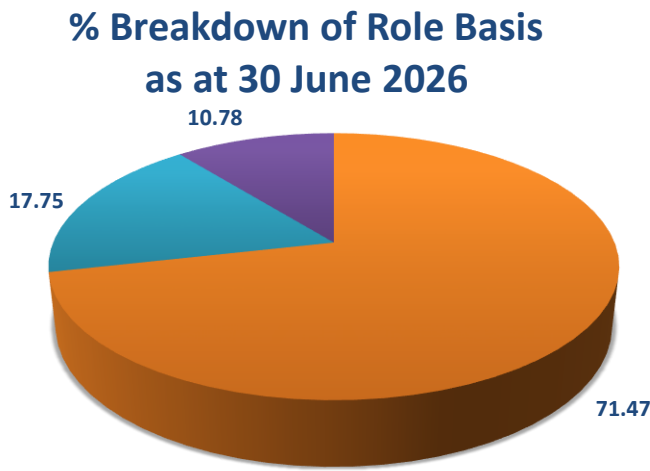
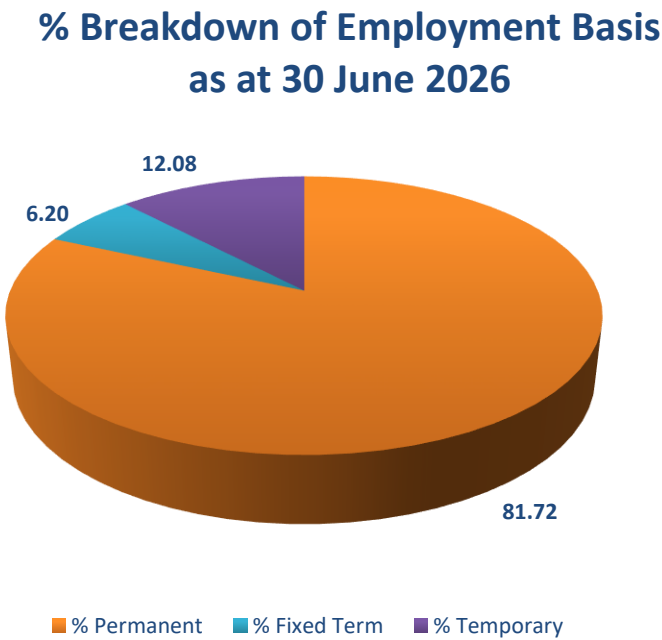


Chart 6 outlines the employment basis of those directly employed by CDC shows that 81.72% of our workforce are in permanent roles. This has slightly increased, by 1.08% since Quarter 4 of 2025/26. There has been minimal fluctuation of employment basis since the last quarter.

Chart 6

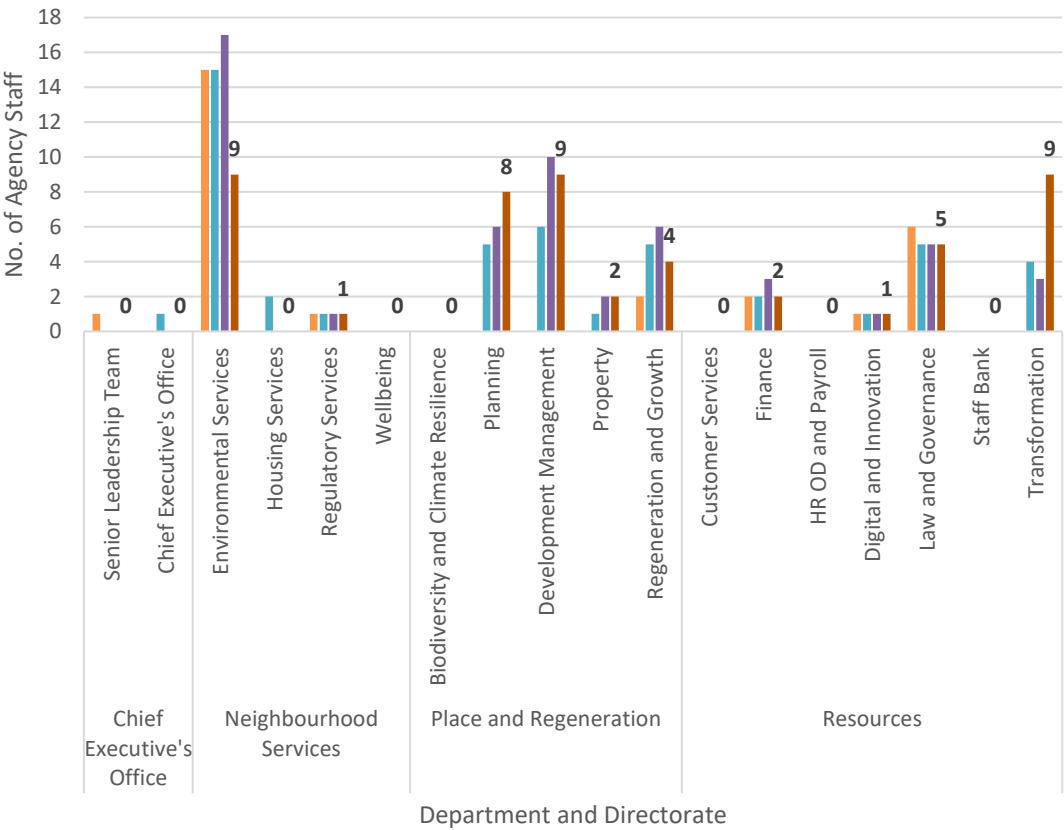


The highest agency usage is usually Environmental Services. Usage in this area reduced by 8 in the last quarter.

Transformation has increased by 6 over the last quarter. Planning and Regeneration have increased by 2 over the last quarter. Regeneration and Growth have reduced by 2 over the last quarter. Development Management and Finance have each reduced agency usage by 1.

Chart 7

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

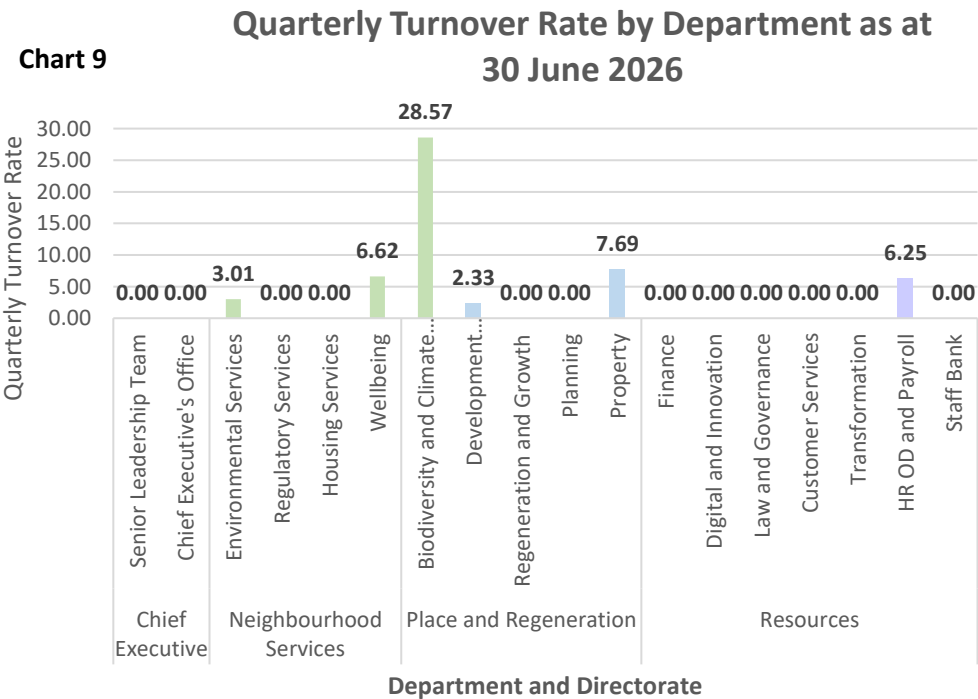
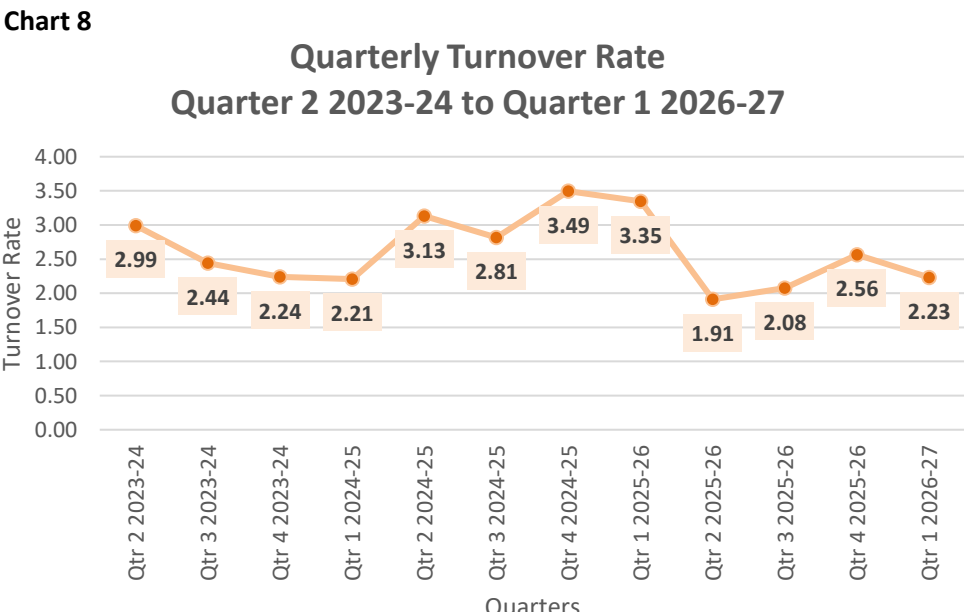


In addition to employing staff directly, CDC also utilise Agency Workers, either for interim or short-term usage for specific posts and projects.

Chart 7 outlines agency usage as at the end of each quarter for the last rolling year by department. A total of 50 agency workers were engaged with CDC at the end of quarter 1 of 2026/27. This has reduced by 4 since the end of quarter 4 of 2025/26 and is 15 more than the same quarter in 2025/26.

Turnover rates and Leaver information

Chart 8 tracks the turnover rate per quarter over a 3-year period, from July 2024 to June 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 1 of 2026/27 shows a reduction of 0.56% since quarter 4 of 2025/26.

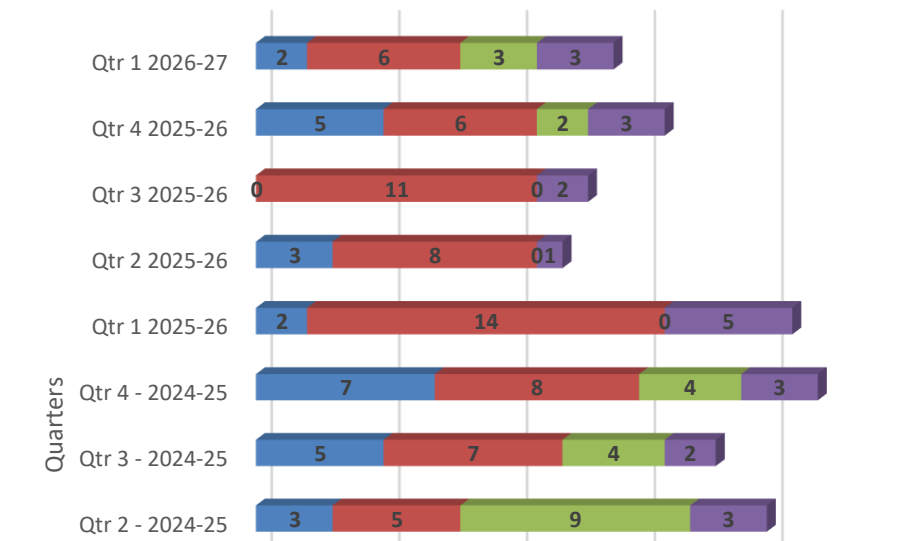
Chart 9 details the quarterly turnover rate by department for quarter 1 of 2026/27.

Chart 10 outlines leavers by reason for quarter 1 of 2026/27. Of the 14 leavers recorded in quarter 1, resignation is the highest reason for leaving, accounting for 46.15%. Retirement is the second highest reason, accounting for 23.08% of leavers. Death in Service, End of Fixed Term Contract and TUPE out accounted for 7.69% each.

Chart 11 outlines leavers by length of service across the last 12 quarters. In quarter 1 of 2026/27, 2 leavers had less than 1 years' service, 6 had less than 5 years' 3 had less than 10 years and 3 had over 10.

Chart 11

Leavers by Length of Service
1 July 2023 - 30 June 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 14 leavers in quarter 1, 4 exit interviews were completed. This is a completion rate of 29%, which is a reduction of 8.5% compared to quarter 4 of 2025/26. 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, 50% had no onward employment to go to and 50% were retiring.

Overall feedback included positive experiences of development and engagement, with one employee particularly valuing the opportunity to complete an apprenticeship and gain confidence working independently. Employees also highlighted generally positive experiences within their teams, and some left to pursue new opportunities, including consultancy work. One individual chose not to participate in a detailed exit interview, preferring to leave on positive terms.

Key themes raised in the small proportion of exit interviews completed centred on

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 July 2024. Musculo-skeletal has seen the most incidents across this period, with 311 recorded. This is followed by Cold and Flu Symptoms which had 274 incidents.

There were 169 incidents of sickness absence recorded in Quarter 1 of 2026/27, this is 9 more incidents than the same quarter of 2025/26.

For quarter 1 of 2026/27, musculoskeletal symptoms were the highest recorded reason for sickness absence, accounting for 19.5% of all incidents in the last quarter. This is followed by Stomach/liver/kidney and digestion, which accounts for 18.5% of incidents. The third highest reasons this quarter was neurological/headaches accounting for 15% of all incidents.

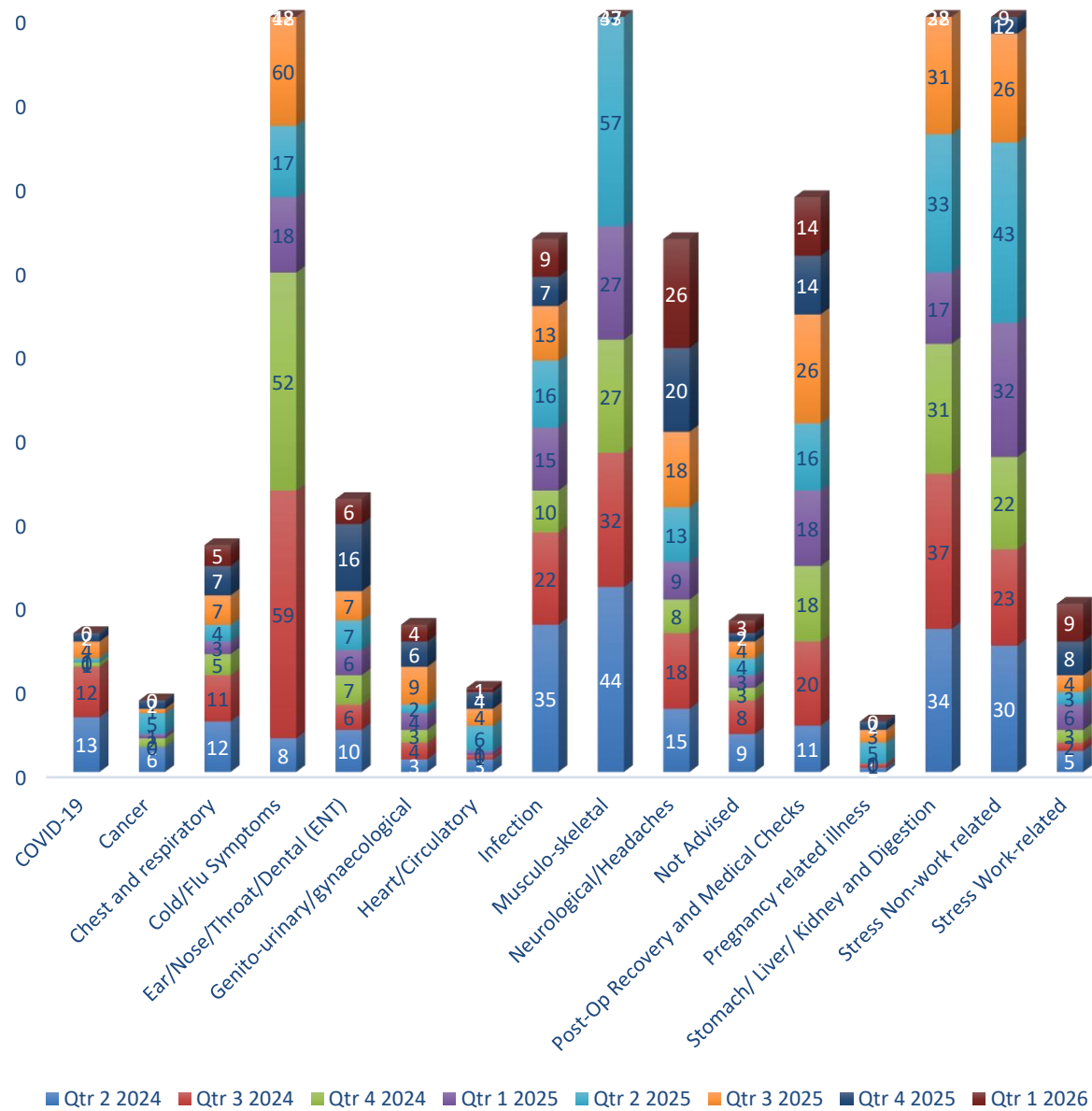
The highest reason for sickness absence across the last rolling 12 months was musculoskeletal, with 181 incidents recorded and accounting for 20.5% of all incidents.

The second highest reason for sickness absence in the last 12 months is cold and flu symptoms, with 137 incidents reported which equates to 15.5% of all incidents.

Stomach/liver/kidney and digestion is the third highest reason in the last 12 months, recording 124 incidents and accounting for 14% of all incidents.

Chart 12

Sickness Absence Incidents by Reason
July 2024 to June 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 July 2023 to June 2026 and shows a slight reduction in the absence rate since the end of quarter 4 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 1 records a reduction of the whole council absence rate of 0.01 from the end of quarter 4. 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.

Chart 13

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

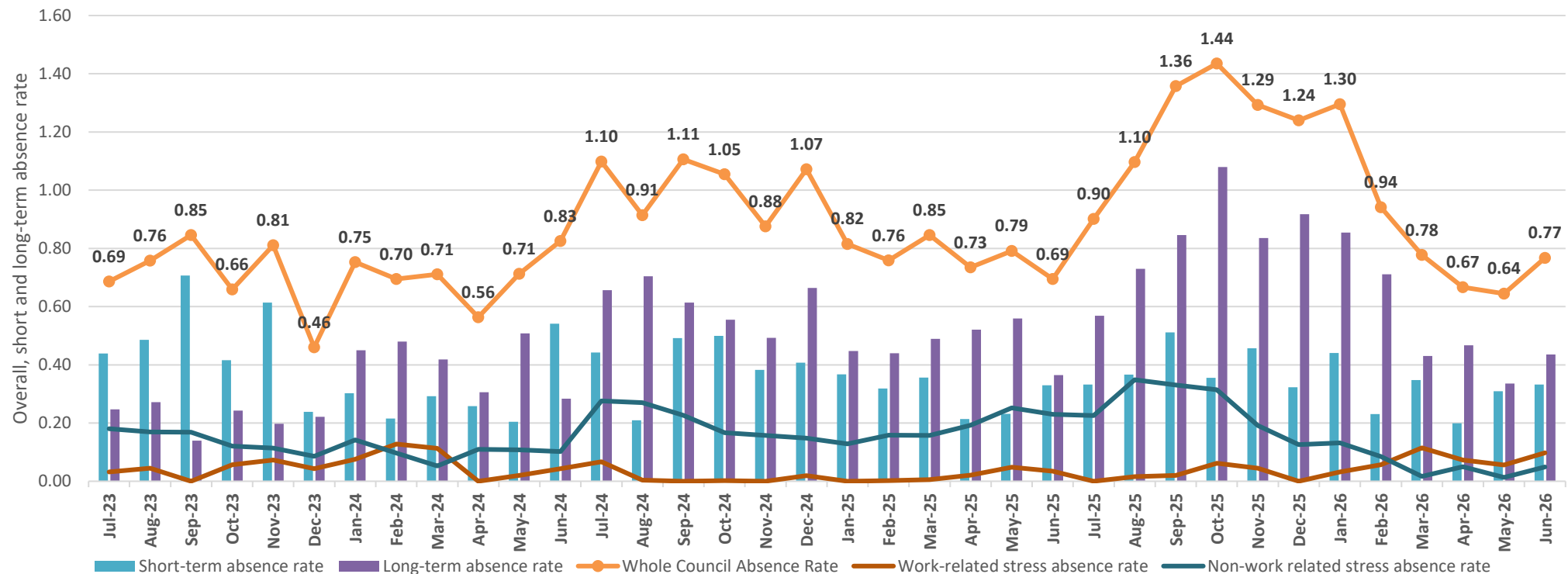


Chart 13 also captures the absence rate of short and long-term instances, In the last 12 months. September 2025 has the highest rate of short-term absence, recording a rate of 0.51 days lost. October 2025 had the highest rate of long-term absence in the last 12 months, with 1.08 days lost. At the end of quarter 1 of 2026/27, 15 long-term sickness absence cases remained ongoing, which is two less than the end of quarter 4 of 2025/26.

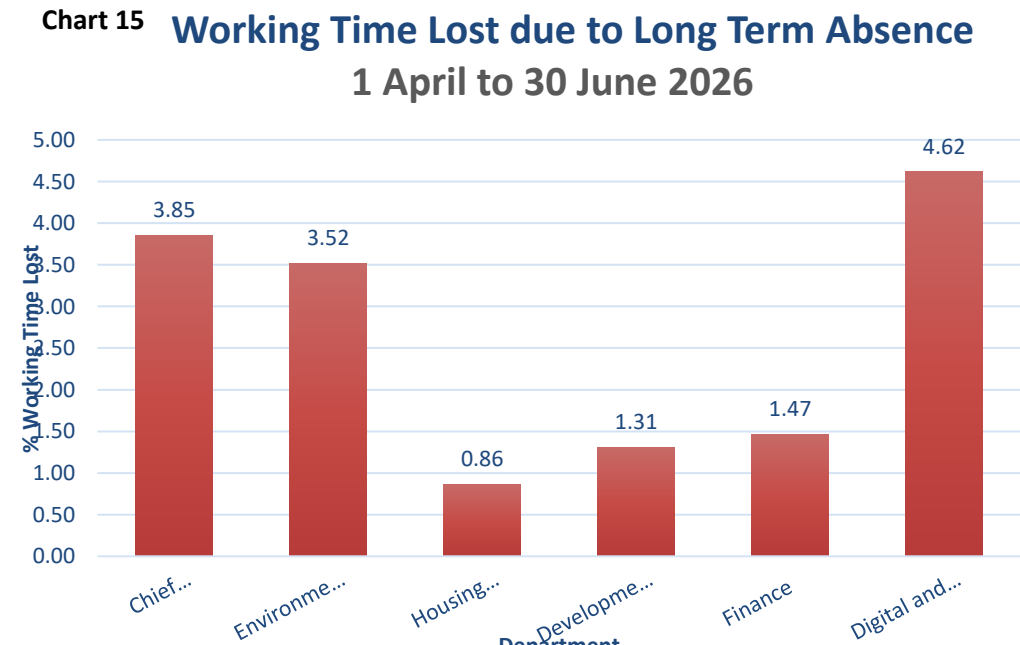
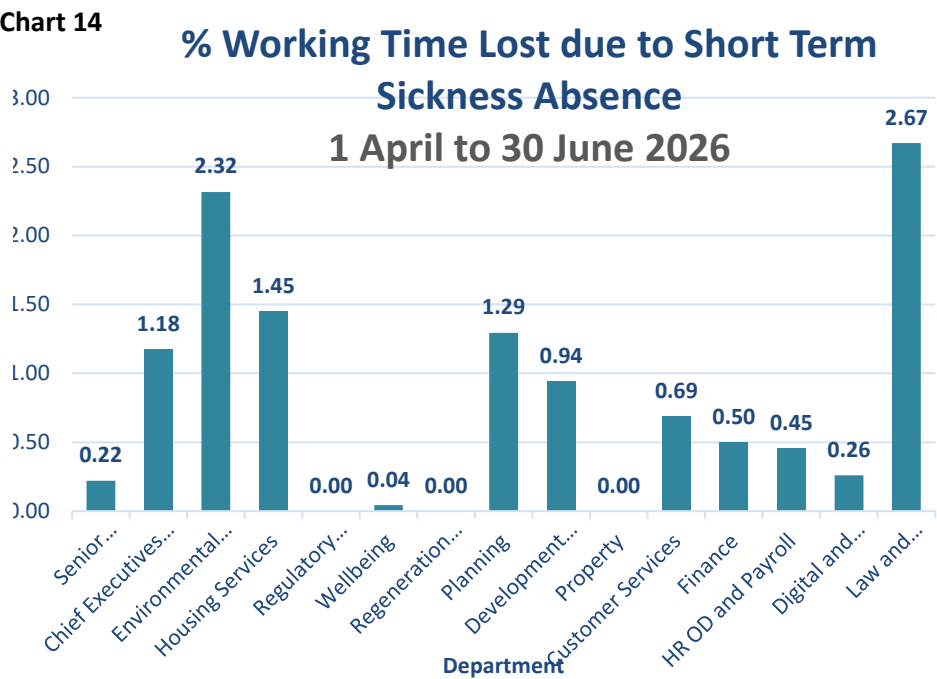
The absence rate attributed to stress is also displayed in Chart 13 and an increase in work-related stress was recorded in the last quarter, with 3 ongoing incidents being captured in quarter 1. Work-related stress incidents accounted for 5% of incidents in quarter 1 of 2026/27 and 3% of incidents in the last rolling 12 months.

The non-work-related stress absence rate has increased over the last quarter, with no open cases at the end of quarter 4 of 2025/26. There are no open cases at the end of quarter 1 of 2026/27 but it did account for 5% of incidents in quarter 1 of 2026/27 and 10% 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.



Age, Gender, Ethnicity, Disability and LGBTQ+ Workforce Profile as at 30 June 2026

Chart 16 shows a breakdown by age of the CDC workforce, expressed in percentage. 14% of CDC employees are over 60, this has not changed in quarter 1. 27% are aged between 51 and 60, again no change between quarters. 21% of CDC employees are aged between 41 and 50, this has increased by 2% in quarter 1. 21% are aged between 31 and 40, which has not changed in quarter 1 and 15% aged 30 and under which has reduced by 2 between quarter 4 of 2025/26 and quarter 1 of 2026/27.

Chart 16

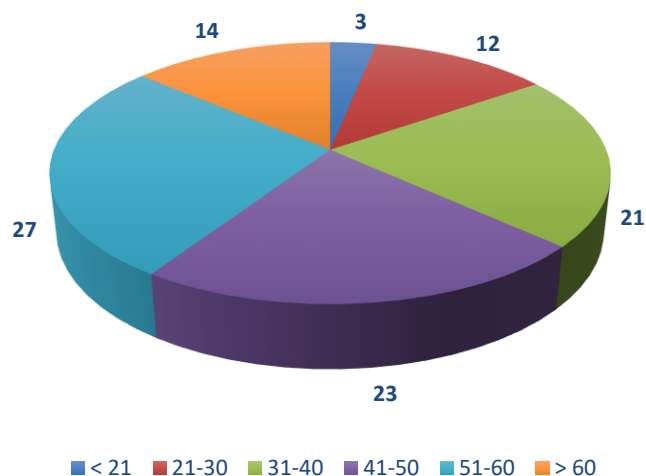
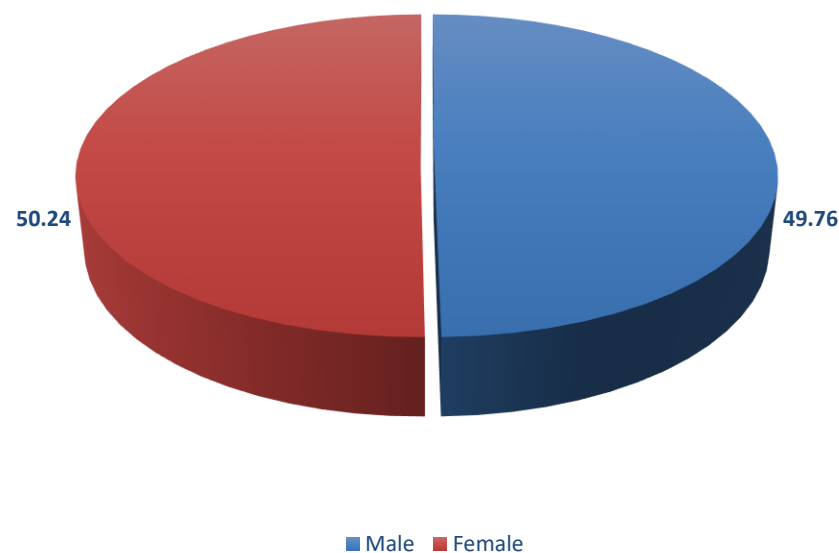
Age Profile Percentage as at 30 June 2026

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

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

Chart 17

Gender Profile Percentage as at 30 June 2026

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, 49.76% of our workforce are male and 50.24% are female meaning it is representative of the district, and there has been minimal change since quarter 4 of 2025/26.

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, 89.22% of employees have recorded this information, with 4.44% 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

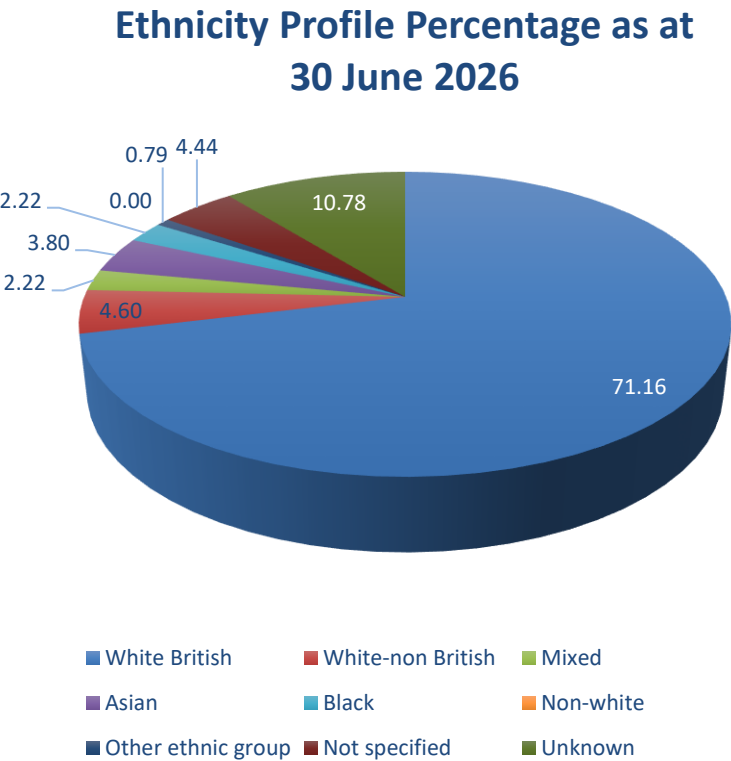


Table 1						
Ethnic Group	England average (%)	Cherwell District (%)	CDC (%) Qtr 2 25/26	CDC (%) Qtr 3 25/26	CDC (%) Qtr 4 25/26	CDC (%) Qtr 1 26/27
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh	9.3	6.0	3.66	3.37	3.68	3.80
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African	4.0	1.8	1.43	1.76	1.92	2.22
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	2.9	2.9	1.75	1.92	2.08	2.22
White	81.7	88.1	76.47	76.28	75.52	75.75
Other ethnic group	2.1	1.3	0.79	0.80	0.80	0.79
Prefer not to say	N/A	N/A	4.61	4.65	4.64	4.44
Unknown	N/A	N/A	11.29	11.22	11.36	10.78

CDC’s workforce is predominantly white British with 71.16% 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 increased marginally in the last quarter by 0.23% and at the end of quarter 1 was 12.35% 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 4 of 2025/26 and quarter 1 of 2026/27.

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 1 of 2026/27 this was down to 13% and remained the same for quarter 1, 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 20 Disability Percentage Profile
as at 30 June 2026

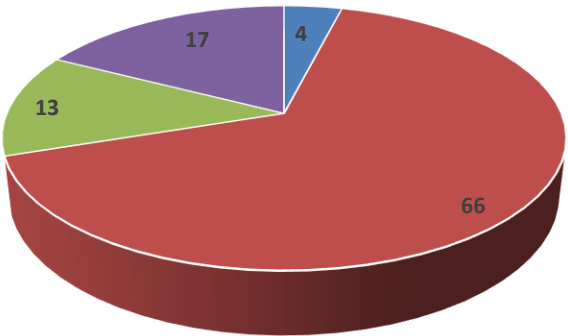


Chart 19 Ethnic Group Percentage by Grade Band
as at 30 June 2026

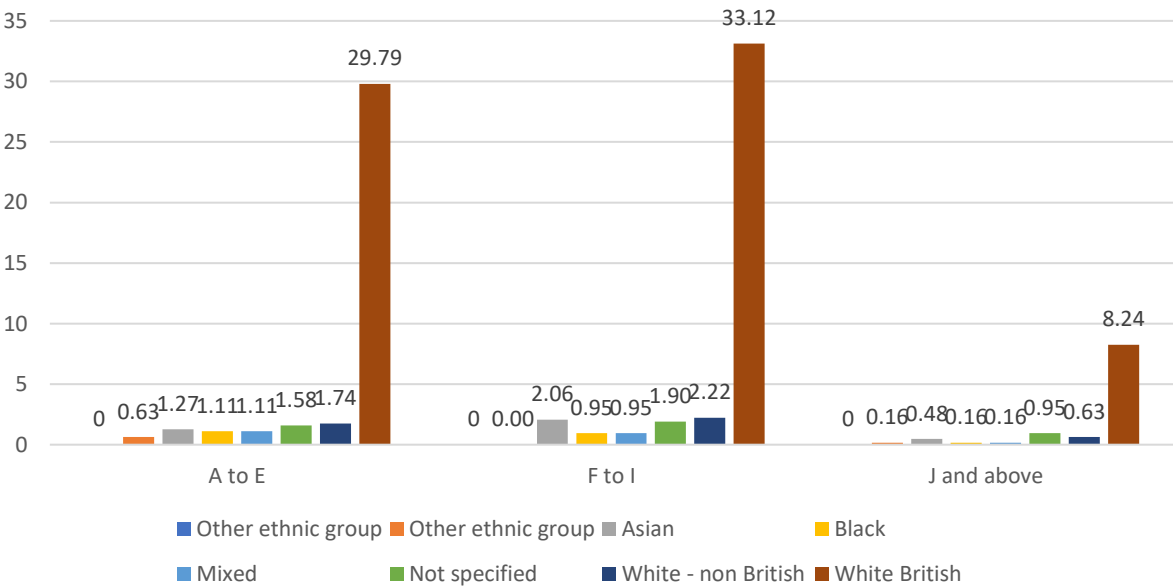
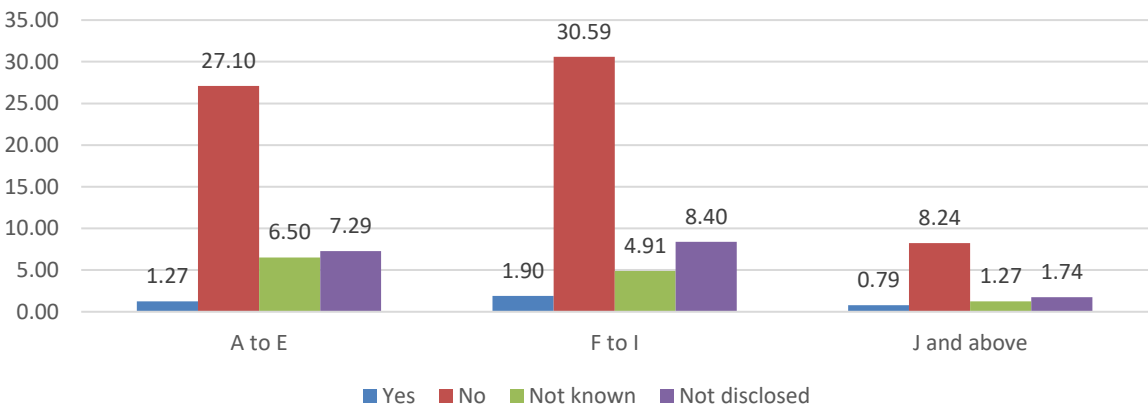


Chart 21 Disability Percentage by Grade Band
as at 30 June 2026



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, 11.25% of the workforce have declined to specify and 11.73% 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.

At Personnel Committee in June 2026, members requested information on the number of veterans we have employed. Our records show that, 0.80% of the workforce have confirmed they are veterans, and 0.63% are reservists.

Chart 22

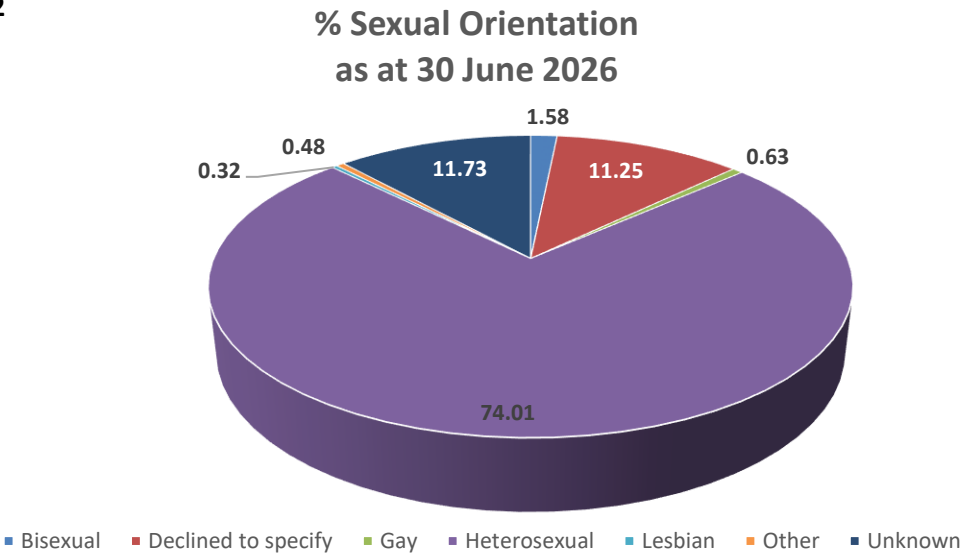
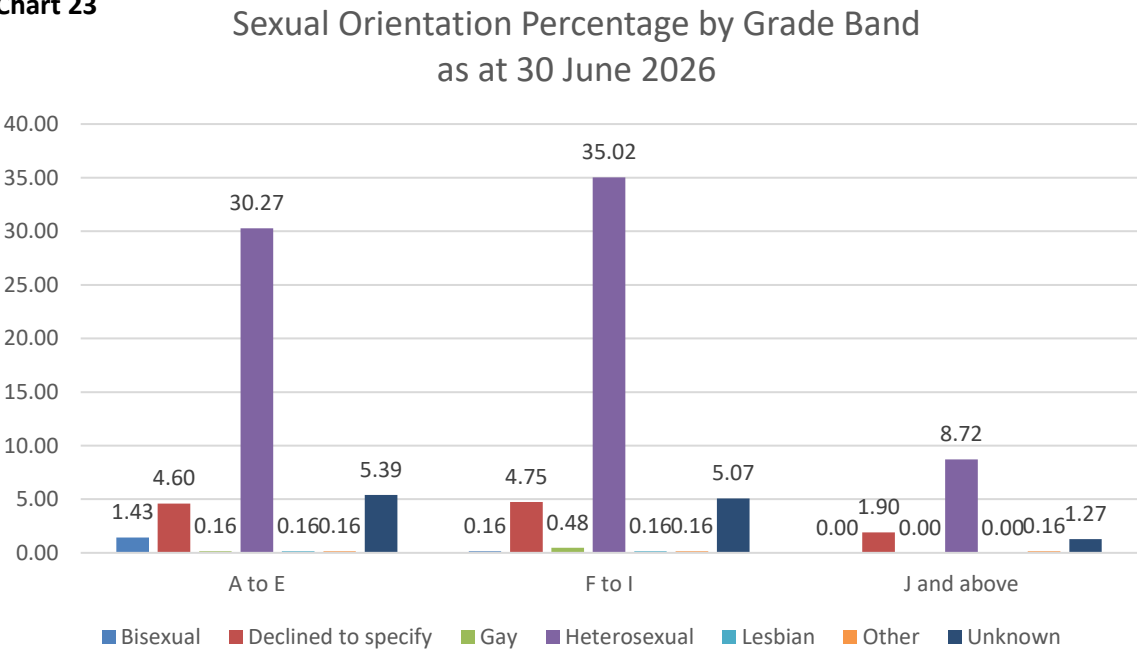


Chart 23



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 July 2025 to June 2026. There have been 102 recruitment campaigns during this period to which 1340 applications were received and 81 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 66.64% 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

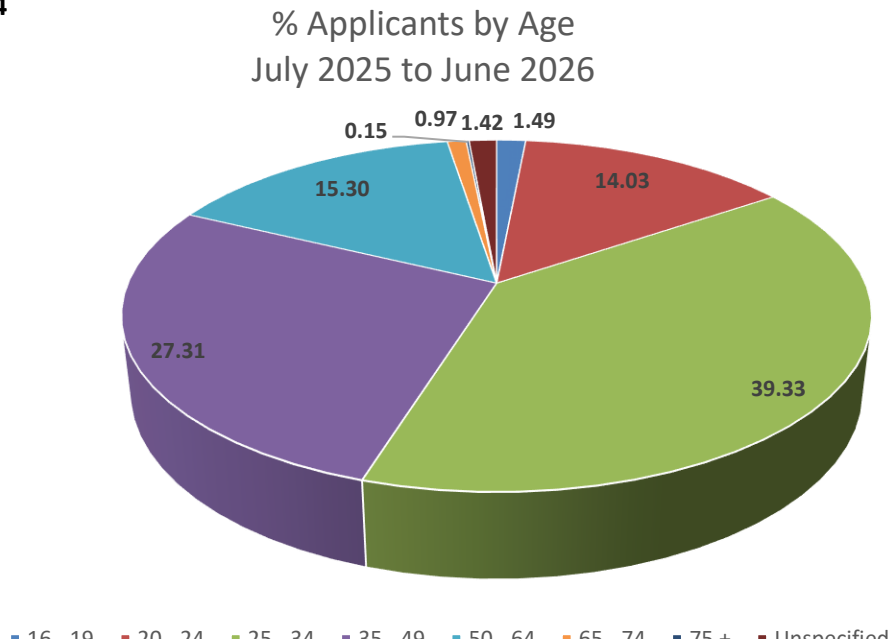


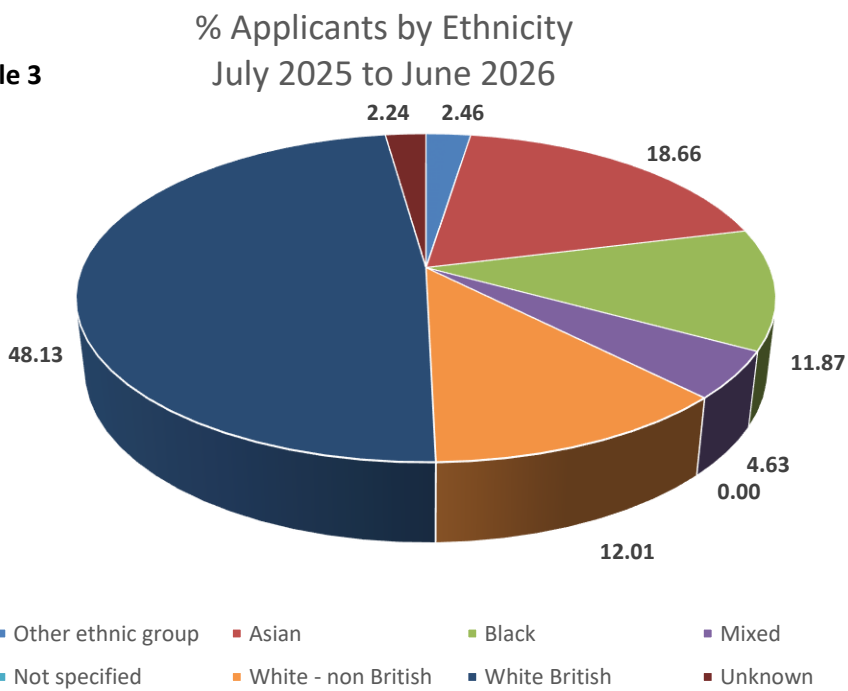
Table 2

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

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

up of

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

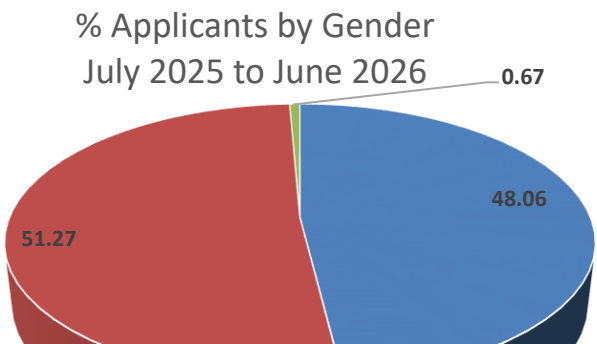


Chart 26 shows the percentage of applicants by gender, which is an almost 50/50 split across male and female, which is both reflective of our current workforce and district data covered earlier in this report.

Chart 27

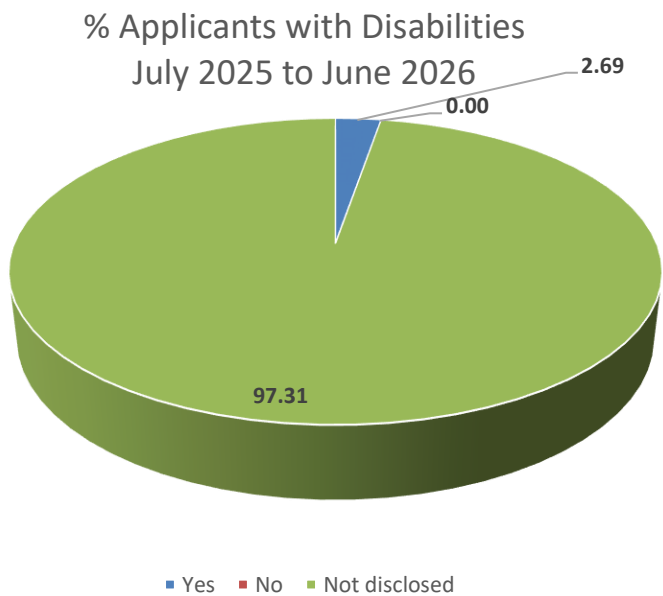


Chart 28 shows the percentage of applicants by sexual orientation. Oxfordshire County Council confirms from census 2021 information that 89.4% of the county identify as straight or heterosexual, with 3.4% not identifying as straight or heterosexual and 7.9% preferring not to say. CDC’s applicant data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

Chart 28

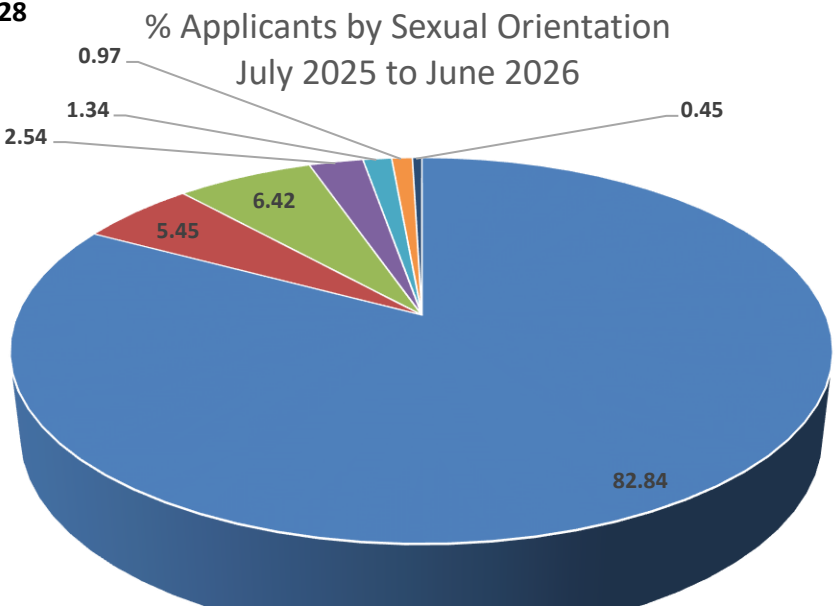


Chart 27 shows the percentage of applicants by disability. 97.31% of applicants have not disclosed this at applicant stage. It is hoped that applicants would provide this information should they have disabilities as we have a guaranteed interview scheme if they meet the essential criteria for a role, as part of being a disability confident employer.

Members at Personnel Committee in June 2026 were keen to understand how many veterans we had employed with us which is answered earlier in this report. We also operate a guaranteed interview scheme for veterans if they meet the essential criteria of the role being advertised. We only hold this data for 6 months and in the last 6 months of 515 applicants, 2% confirmed they were veterans.

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
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Comparator Ethnic Group	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	2.92	0.00	1.97	3.13	2.67	0.00	2.46	1.23
Asian	13.93	0.00	19.71	9.38	23.15	13.33	18.66	6.17
Black	6.97	8.82	15.59	6.25	12.17	13.33	11.87	8.64
Mixed	4.27	5.88	5.20	6.25	4.15	0.00	4.63	4.94
Not specified	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
White - non British	9.66	8.82	11.47	6.25	16.02	6.67	12.01	7.41
White British	61.80	73.53	43.91	68.75	37.09	66.67	48.13	70.37
Unknown	0.45	2.94	2.15	0.00	4.75	0.00	2.24	1.23
TOTAL %	100	100.00	100	100.00	100	100.00	100.00	100.00
TOTAL NUMBER	445	34	558	32	337	15	1340	81

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	88.76	82.35	82.97	90.63	74.78	80.00	82.84	85.19
Bisexual	4.27	5.88	5.20	0.00	7.42	0.00	5.45	2.47
Declined to specify	3.60	0.00	6.27	9.38	10.39	13.33	6.42	6.17
Gay	1.35	5.88	3.58	0.00	2.37	6.67	2.54	3.70
Other	1.12	0.00	1.08	0.00	2.08	0.00	1.34	0.00
Lesbian	0.90	2.94	0.90	0.00	1.19	0.00	0.97	1.23
Unknown	0.00	2.94	0.00	0.00	1.78	0.00	0.45	1.23

TOTAL %	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
TOTAL NUMBER	445	34	558	32	337	15	1340	81

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	4.04	5.88	0.36	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.49	2.47
20 - 24	14.61	8.82	15.23	3.13	11.28	0.00	14.03	4.94
25 - 34	29.89	5.88	43.01	28.13	45.70	33.33	39.33	19.75
35 - 49	31.01	44.12	27.24	37.50	22.55	40.00	27.31	40.74
50 - 64	18.20	35.29	13.62	31.25	14.24	26.67	15.30	32.10
65 - 74	1.12	0.00	0.54	0.00	1.48	0.00	0.97	0.00
75 +	0.22	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.30	0.00	0.15	0.00
Unspecified	0.90	0.00	0.00	0.00	4.45	0.00	1.42	0.00
TOTAL %	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
TOTAL NUMBER	445	34	558	32	337	15	1340	81

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	56.63	52.94	39.96	31.25	50.15	60.00	48.06	45.68
Female	43.15	47.06	59.68	68.75	48.07	40.00	51.27	54.32
Unspecified	0.22	0.00	0.36	0.00	1.78	0.00	0.67	0.00
TOTAL %	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
TOTAL NUMBER	445	34	558	32	337	15	1340	81

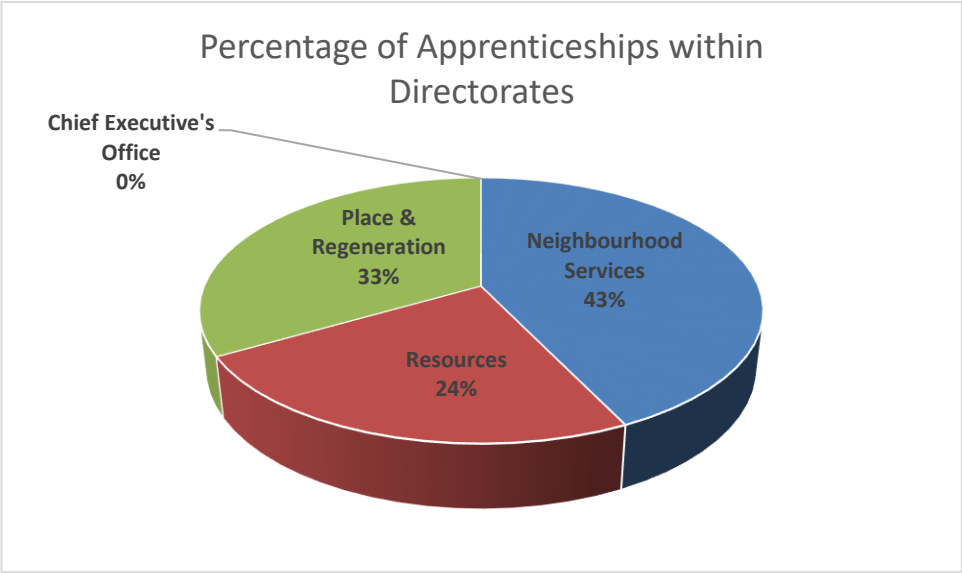
Table 8: Number of applicants and offers by disability and grade group

% 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	1.57	11.76	1.25	6.25	6.53	13.33	2.69	9.88
No	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Not disclosed	98.43	88.24	98.75	93.75	93.47	86.67	97.31	90.12
TOTAL	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
TOTAL NUMBER	445	34	558	32	337	15	1340	81

Apprenticeships within Cherwell District Council as at Quarter 1 – 2026/27

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. The Apprenticeship Levy Fund is a government initiative that enables employers to invest in workforce development through approved apprenticeship training and assessment. Levy payments are collected through PAYE and credited to the employer's Apprenticeship Service Account. For councils and other public sector organisations, Apprenticeship Levy funding can be used to support a wide range of apprenticeship programmes, from entry-level roles through to professional and leadership qualifications. The Council's levy is 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 21 apprenticeships currently running within the Council for this quarter, of which 2 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
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
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
Environmental Health Practitioner	Level 6	48 months	1	CPD	Health Protection and Compliance	Neighbourhood Services (1)	22,000

Apprenticeship Standard	Level of Apprenticeship	Duration of Apprenticeship	Number of employees on apprenticeship	Apprentice or Employee CPD	Team	Directorate	Cost of Apprenticeships (£)
Public Health Practitioner	Level 6	36 months	1	CPD	Health Shaping Place	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
			21		Total apprenticeship levy committed		268,790

Current amount in the Levy Account

The Council currently has **£156,036** in their levy account.

Expired Funds

Apprenticeship Levy funds can expire if not utilised in a timely manner. No funds expired from Cherwell District's Council's apprenticeship levy account in Quarter 1 of 2026/27.

Latest Update around apprenticeship reforms

- **Change to End Point Assessment** - The biggest apprenticeship reforms in England currently are focussing on making apprenticeships shorter, more flexible, and less bureaucratic, while targeting funding towards skills shortages and younger entrants. Skills England are also looking at the way apprenticeships are assessed. Currently apprenticeships have an End Point Assessment where the learners are given, normally, 3 months to prepare for after the completion of their qualification. This can sometimes lead to learners not completing the apprenticeship as they have already completed the qualification they wish to attain. Skills England are looking at how assessments can be ongoing throughout the apprenticeship, which would mean completion would be slightly quicker and reducing administration burden and delays for both employers and providers.
- **Standard Revisions** - According to the latest Skills England revisions and adjustments status reports, there are 328 apprenticeship standards in the assessment reform pipeline as of July 2026. These are standards that have entered development for review, revision, adjustment, or reform under the new apprenticeship assessment model initiated by the Government in February 2025 following a review of the apprenticeship assessment system.
- **Under 25s exempted from apprenticeship co-investment hike** – The Department for Work and Pensions has confirmed levy-paying employers that exhaust their apprenticeship service account will not have to contribute towards training and assessment for eligible new starts aged 16 to 24 from August 1. The government had planned to increase the contribution required from levy payers with insufficient account funds from 5 to 25 per cent for all new apprenticeship starts from that date. But this has now been changed and apprentices aged between 16 and 24 will now be exempt, meaning their training and assessment will be fully funded by government up to the relevant funding band maximum.
- **Benefit-hit apprentice families will be boosted by bursary** - Households will be able to claim a new bursary worth up to £4,500 a year to help offset the benefits they lose when a young person takes up an apprenticeship. The Department for Work and Pensions has announced the new bursary will close a loophole that penalises potentially thousands of low-income households when a young person starts an apprenticeship and is reclassified as an independent worker. This will hopefully mean parents will encourage their children to engage in apprenticeships.

At Personnel Committee in June 2026, members requested information around how many staff had studied via apprenticeships within the last 2 years, whether they were retained, and had then progressed in their careers. The Council's apprenticeship programme continues to demonstrate positive outcomes in supporting workforce development, retention and internal progression. Of the 11 employees identified as completing their apprenticeships, nine remain employed by the Council, with many using their apprenticeship to develop within their current role or progress into higher-level positions. Examples include promotions into team leader roles, progression through career-graded professional pathways, and enhanced capability following service restructures. Current apprenticeships are also supporting the development of specialist skills in areas such as Planning, Surveying, Building Control, Data Analysis and HR.

The programme is also helping to build future talent pipelines in hard-to-recruit professional areas. Several employees have progressed directly into substantive roles or achieved promotion following completion of their apprenticeship, while others continue to undertake higher-level qualifications alongside their employment. Two apprentices have left the organisation following completion of fixed-term apprenticeship arrangements; however, the overall retention rate remains strong, with the majority of participants continuing to contribute to the Council's workforce and organisational capability.

Over the past 24 months, two employees have left the Council before completing their apprenticeship programmes. At the point of leaving, a total of £17,724.06 had been spent on apprenticeship training (£9,120.06 for a Level 7 Chartered Town Planner apprenticeship and £8,604.00 for a Level 7 Sustainability Business Specialist apprenticeship). The combined full value of these apprenticeship programmes was £22,155, meaning approximately 80% of the total programme costs had been incurred before the employees left.

While this represents a training investment that did not result in completion, the number of early leavers remains low and should be considered alongside the wider success of the Council's apprenticeship programme, which continues to support recruitment, retention, professional development and succession planning across a range of service areas.

An apprenticeship qualification is more expensive than the normal University route, due to the fact that an apprenticeship is much more than the academic course. The individual is essentially studying for two qualifications and will achieve an apprenticeship qualification and also the qualification they wished to study as detailed in our table above. There are a lot of other costs associated with the apprenticeship due to the fact learners have 1:1 with a coach on a regular basis, meetings with managers, track of the off the job activities, End Point Assessments. To break it down:

- **University course only** → mainly academic teaching.
- **Apprenticeship** → academic teaching + workplace training + coaching + compliance + assessment + employer engagement.