

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 no change in headcount between quarter 1 and 2 of 2024/25.

Quarter 2 of 2024/25 has seen adjustments of 20 leavers and 25 new starters across the organisation.

Chart 1

**Headcount by Quarter
Quarter 3 2021-22 to Quarter 2 2024-25**

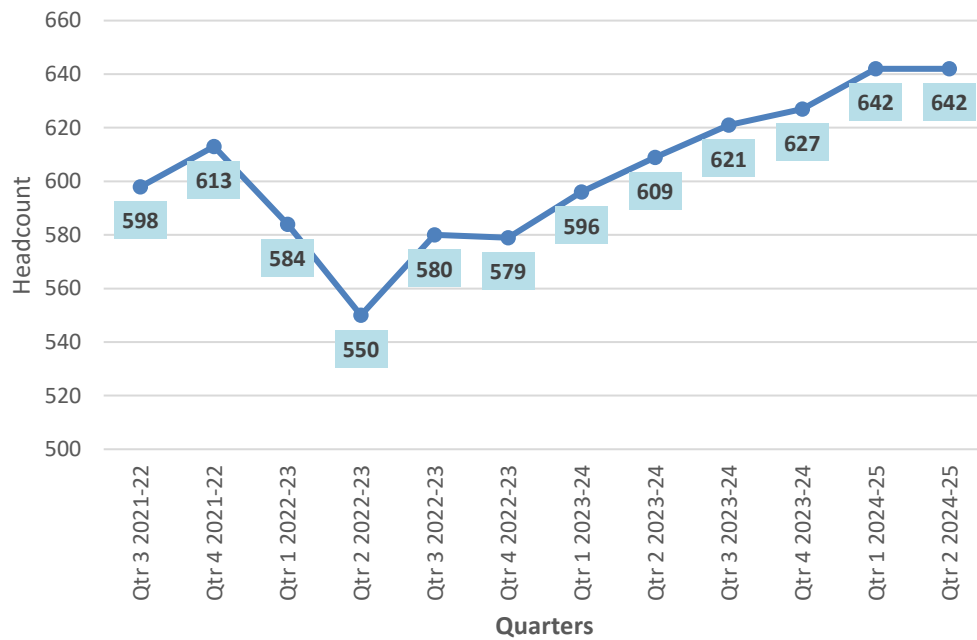


Chart 2 details the distribution of headcount across our departments and directorates as at the end of quarter 2 in 2024/25. Wellbeing and Environmental Services continue to show the highest headcount. The department of Chief Executive’s Office incorporates executive support and employees attributed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

Planning and Development has had the biggest increase in headcount with 5 new since quarter 1 of 2024/25, and Housing Services has increased by 4. Wellbeing has seen a reduction of 10 since quarter 1 of 2024/25. This is due to casual workers leaving. Digital and Innovation (formerly ICT and Digital) have had a reduction of 4, this is predominantly due to a restructure.

**Chart 2
Headcount by Department as at
30 September 2024**

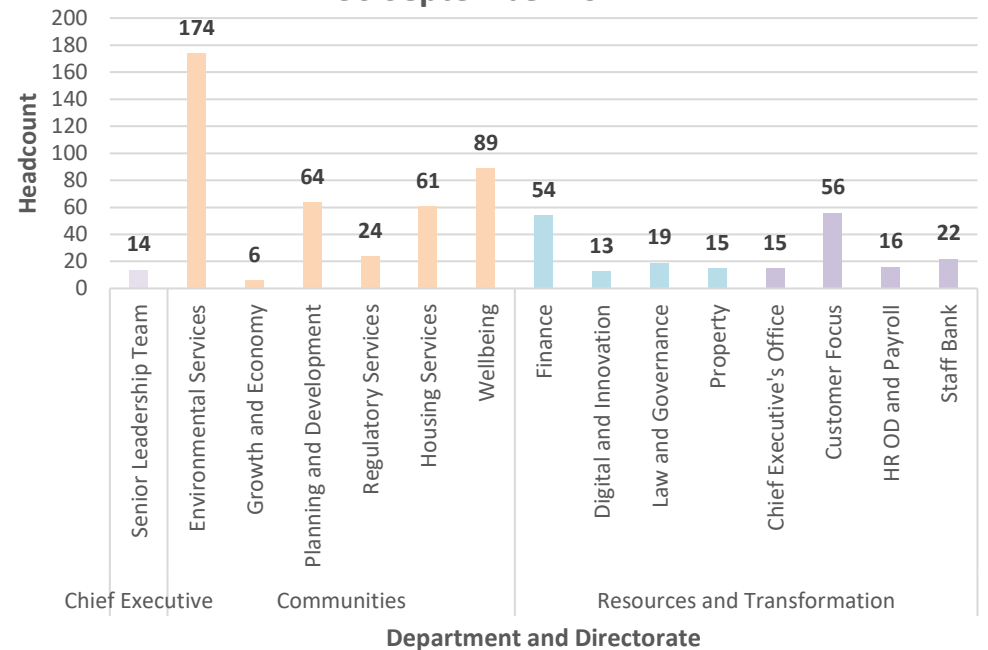


Chart 3 outlines the fluctuation of FTE which has increased by 5.15 between quarter 1 and quarter 2 of 2024/25.

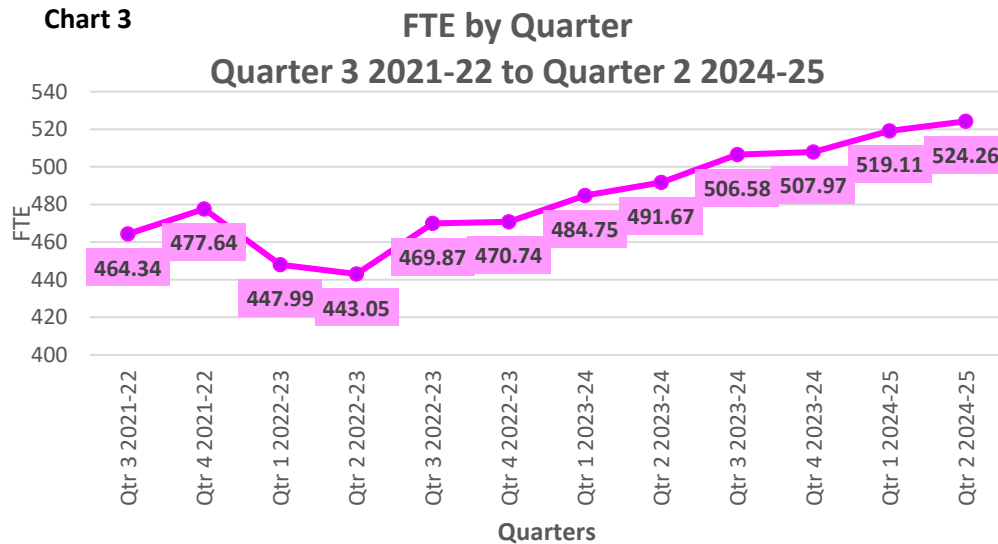


Chart 4 outlines the distribution of FTE across the departments and directorates as at the end of quarter 2 of 2024/25.

Since quarter 1 of 2024/25; Planning and Development has seen an increase of 4.85 FTE, and Housing Services has increased by 3.95.

Charts 5 shows the breakdown of basis of hours across our workforce as of 30 September 2024. Since quarter 1 of 2024/25 there has been minimal change to the make-up of role-basis with our full-time and part-time both increasing by 0.47% and our casual workforce reducing by 0.94%.

Chart 4: FTE by Department as at 30 September 2024

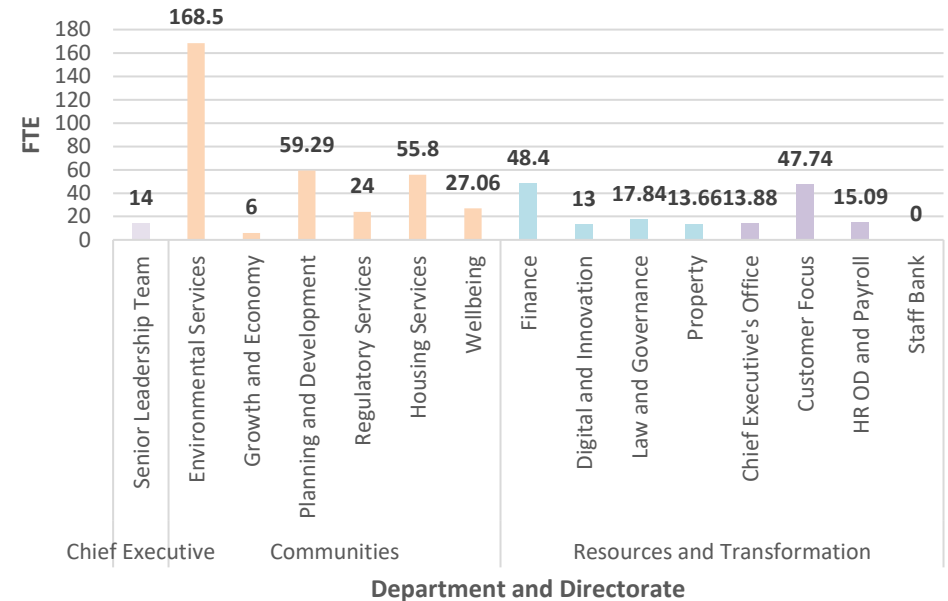


Chart 5: % Breakdown of Role Basis as at 30 September 2024

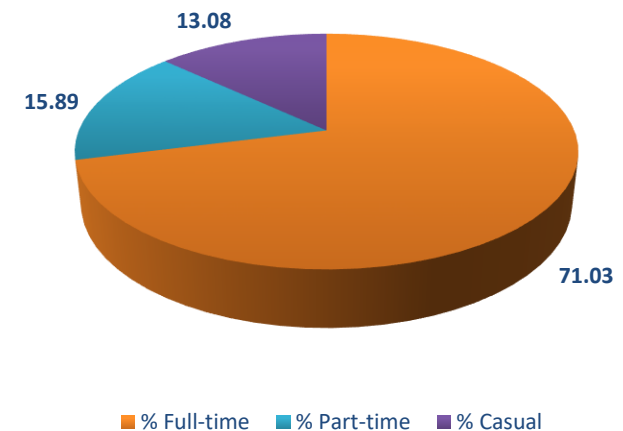
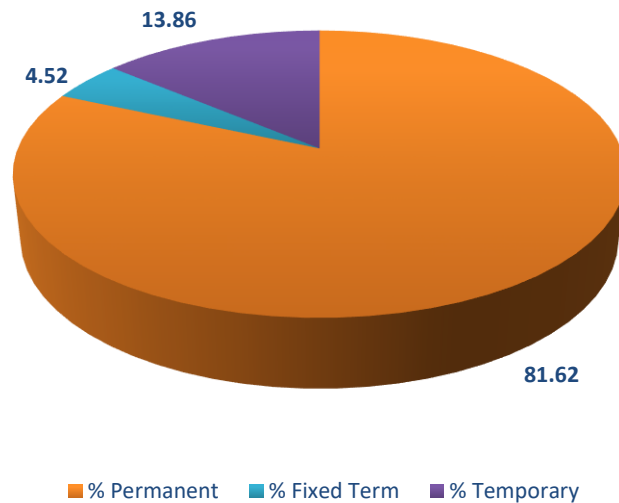


Chart 6 outlines the employment basis of those directly employed by CDC shows that 81.62% of our workforce are in permanent roles. This has slightly increased by 0.59% since Quarter 1 of 2024/25. The percentage employed on a temporary basis has reduced by 1.03% and the percentage employed on a fixed term basis has increased by 0.44%.

Chart 6

% Breakdown of Employment Basis as at 30 September 2024



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

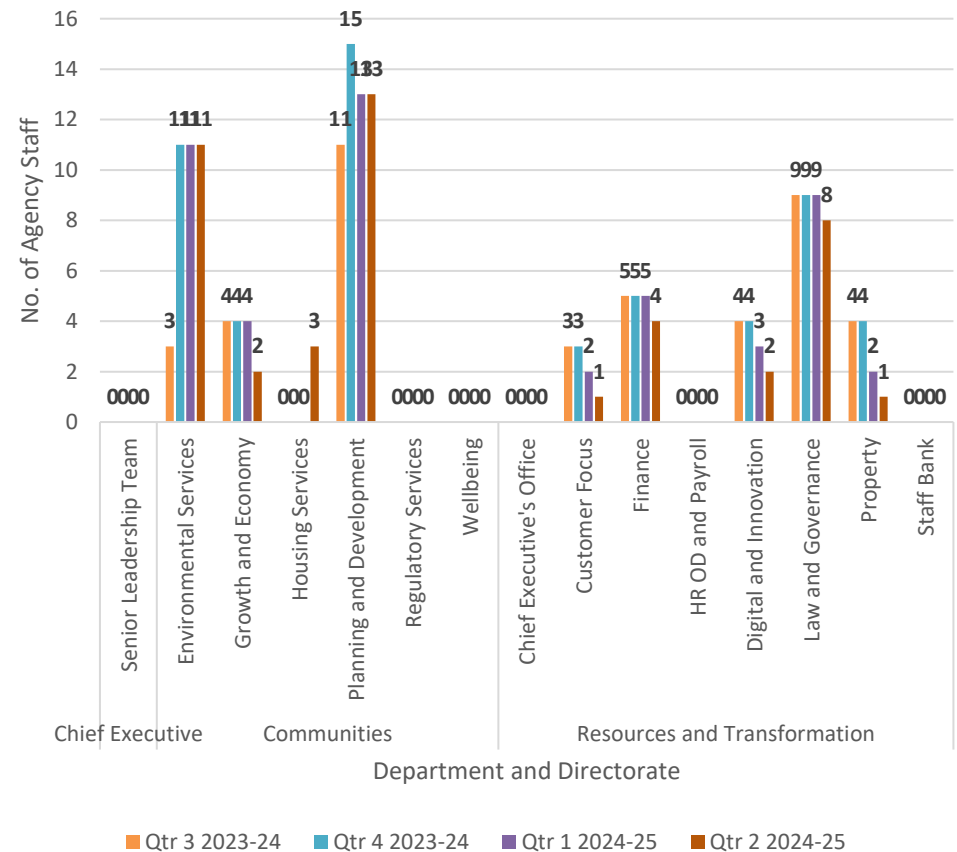
Chart 7 outlines agency usage as at the end of each quarter for the last rolling year by department. A total of 45 Agency workers were engaged with CDC at the end of quarter 2 of 2024/25. This is a reduction of 5 since the end of quarter 1 of 2024/25 and 10 since the end of 2023/24.

The highest agency usage is usually Environmental Services, within refuse collection and this is due to having 3-person crews on refuse collection, often utilising agency staff to cover for employee sickness and holidays. Usage in this area has remained at 11 for the last 3 quarters.

Growth and Economy have reduced agency usage by 2 in quarter 2. Customer Focus, Digital and Innovation, Finance, Law and Governance and Property have reduced their agency usage by 1. Housing Services has engaged 3 agency staff since quarter 1.

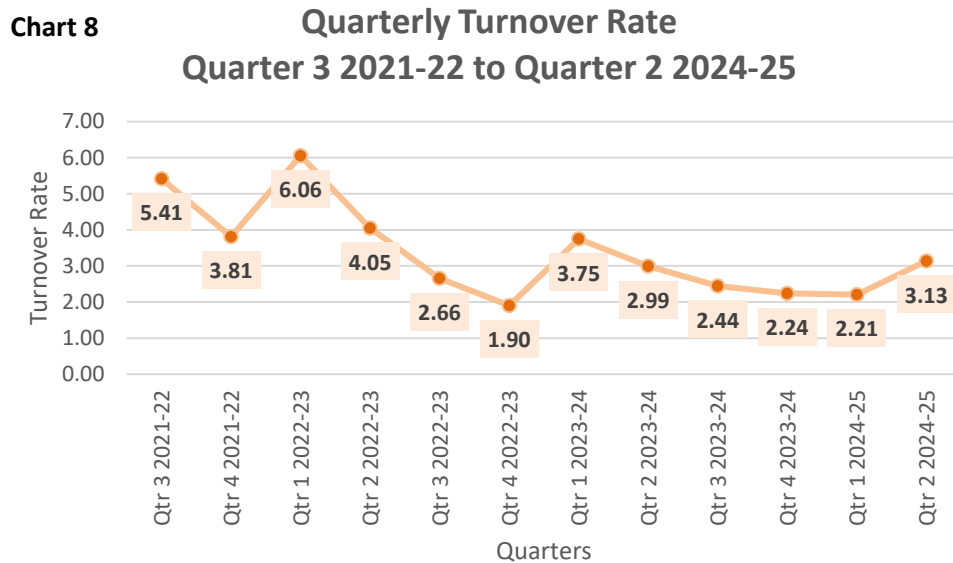
Chart 7

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



Turnover rates and Leaver information

Chart 8 tracks the turnover rate per quarter over a 3-year period, from October 2021 to September 2024. 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 2 shows an increase of 0.94 since quarter 1 of 2024/25.

CDC have been participating in the workforce metric benchmark exercise that is coordinated by the Local Government Association. Data around employee turnover is submitted on a quarterly basis by CDC and other local authorities across the country and this has been translated into a mean average across the local authorities' sector.

Table 1 provides comparison of the turnover rate for all local authorities across the UK and CDC. Quarter 4 of 2022/23 is showing CDC as 1.6% below the mean. Statistics for Quarter 3 of 2023/24 have now been included in table 1 and show that CDC is 0.56% below the mean. These are all that is available for comparison.

The LGA have confirmed that the quarterly benchmark club has now ceased but an annual benchmark exercise will continue to take place. CDC have fed into this exercise for 2023/24 and once results are published, this data will be provided in a future version of this report.

Table 1

Quarter	Mean for All English authorities	CDC
Qtr 2 2022-23	4.3%	4.05%
Qtr 3 2022-23	3.3%	2.66%
Qtr 4 2022-23	3.5%	1.90%
Qtr 1 2023-24	Not published	3.75%
Qtr 2 2023-24	Not published	2.99%
Qtr 3 2023-24	3.0%	2.44%
Qtr 4 2023-24	Not published	2.24%
Qtr 1 2024-25	Not published	2.21%
Qtr 2 2024-25	Not published	3.13%

Chart 9 provides further insight into this quarter's turnover by department.

Chart 9 Quarterly Turnover Rate by Department as at 30 September 2024

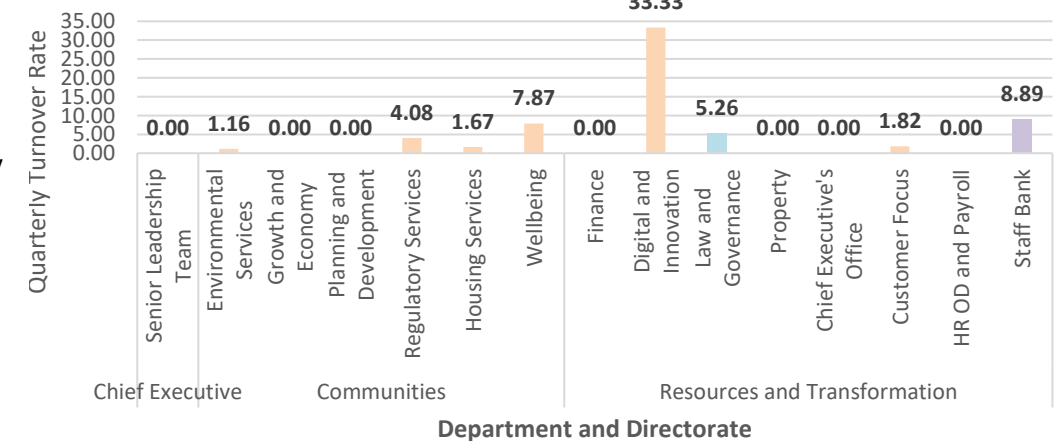


Chart 10 outlines leavers by reason for quarter 2 of 2024/25. Of the 20 leavers recorded in quarter 2, Not known is the highest reason for leaving, accounting for 40% of all leavers. This is due to casual workers no longer engaging with us. 35% of leavers are due to retirement, 20% are due to redundancy and 5% due to early retirement.

Chart 10

**% of Leavers by reason
1 July to 30 September 2024**

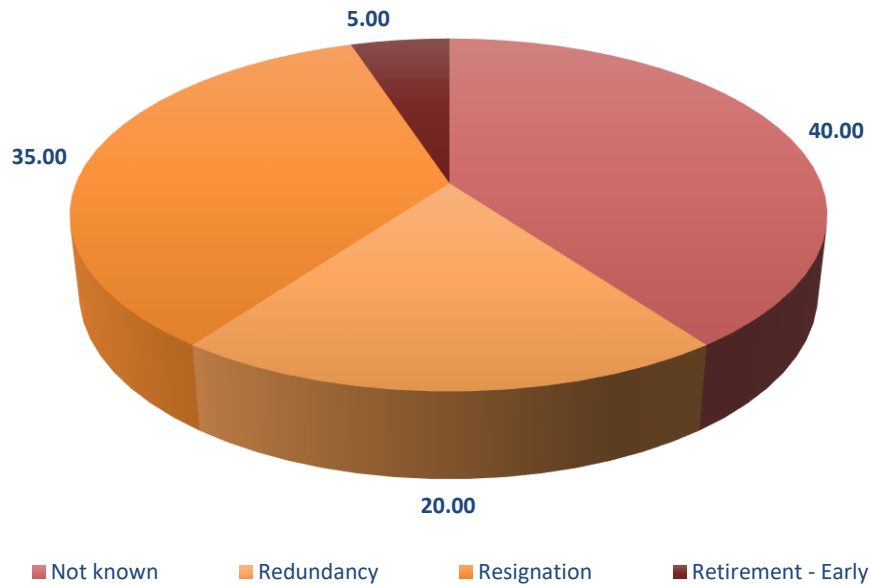
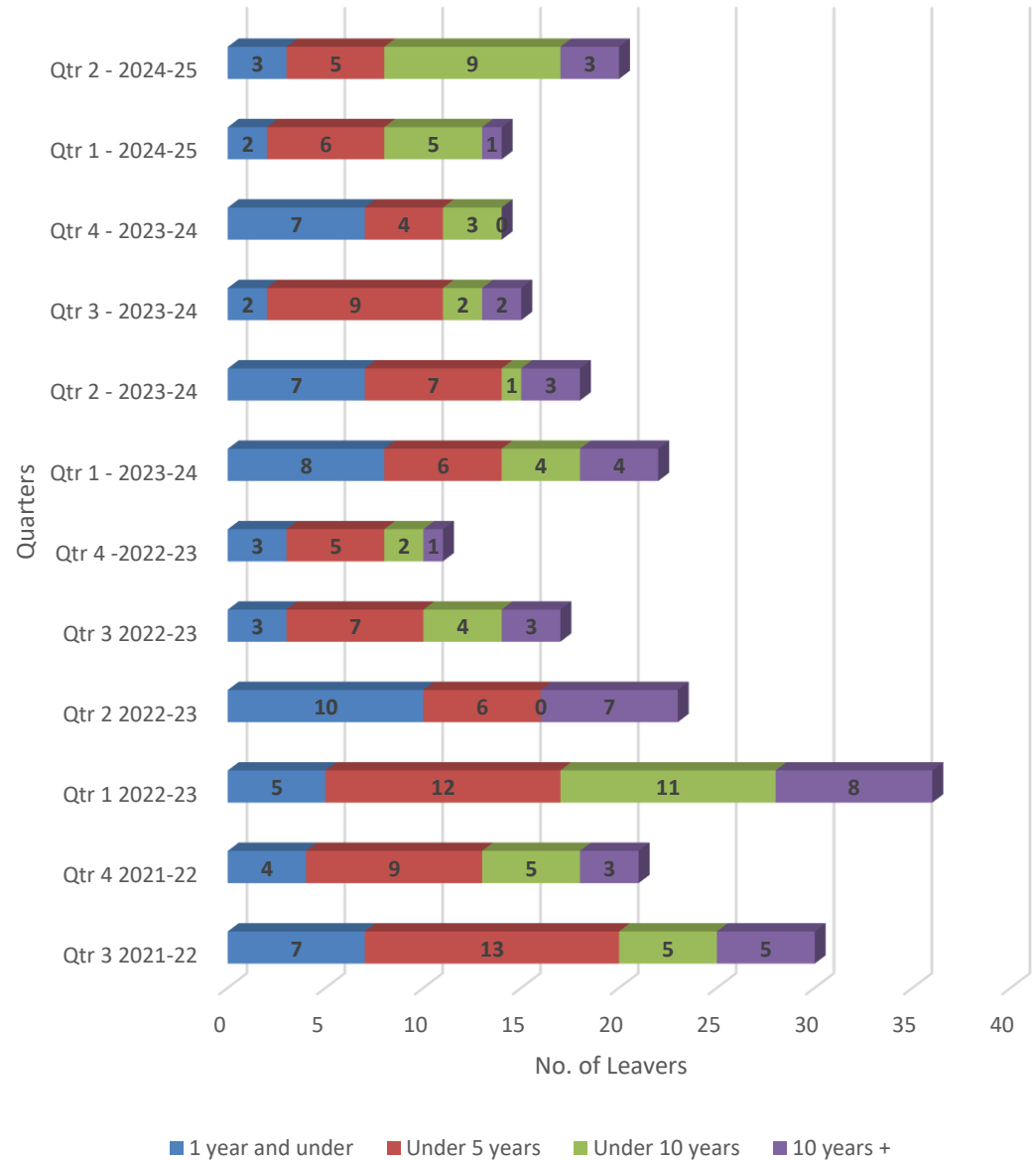


Chart 11 outlines leavers by length of service across the last 12 quarters. In quarter 2 of 2024/25, 3 leavers had less than a year's service, 5 had under 5 years' service and 9 had less than 10 years and 3 had over 12 years.

Chart 11

**Leavers by Length of Service
1 October 2021- 30 September 2024**



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 20 leavers in quarter 2, 8 were casual workers who opted to no longer engage with CDC. Excluding these, 7 completed the exit interview questionnaire and attended meetings with a member of the HR Team. This is a 58% completion rate, which is an increase of 15% from the last quarter. We cannot force employees to provide this data to us or attend a meeting with HR, but we will continue to encourage engagement in this process in order to embed this.

Comments received within the interviews that took place were mixed, with some positive comments about colleagues and praise for the variety of work available. Other comments included disappointment at a permanent opportunity not arising, work not being at the right level for the role, opting to follow ambition in a variation to the field of work not offered by the Council.

Data will continue to be gathered and shared with the relevant managers in a bid to act on any advice received in order to make improvements, where possible, for existing employees, thus aiding retention.

Sickness Absence reasons and rates

Chart 12 shows the number of sickness absence incidents by reason over the last 8 quarters, back to October 2022.

Stomach/Liver/Kidney and Digestion and Musculoskeletal has seen the most incidents, with 142 per reason across the period.

A new reason of Cold/Flu symptoms has been introduced as it was felt by the Corporate Leadership Team, that other reasons did not lend themselves to such symptoms being recorded.

For Quarter 2 of 2024/25, Musculo-skeletal was the highest recorded reason for sickness absence, accounting for 18% of all incidents in the last quarter. This is closely followed by Infections, which accounts for 15% of all incidents in the last quarter. Stomach/Liver/Kidney and Digestion accounted for 14%.

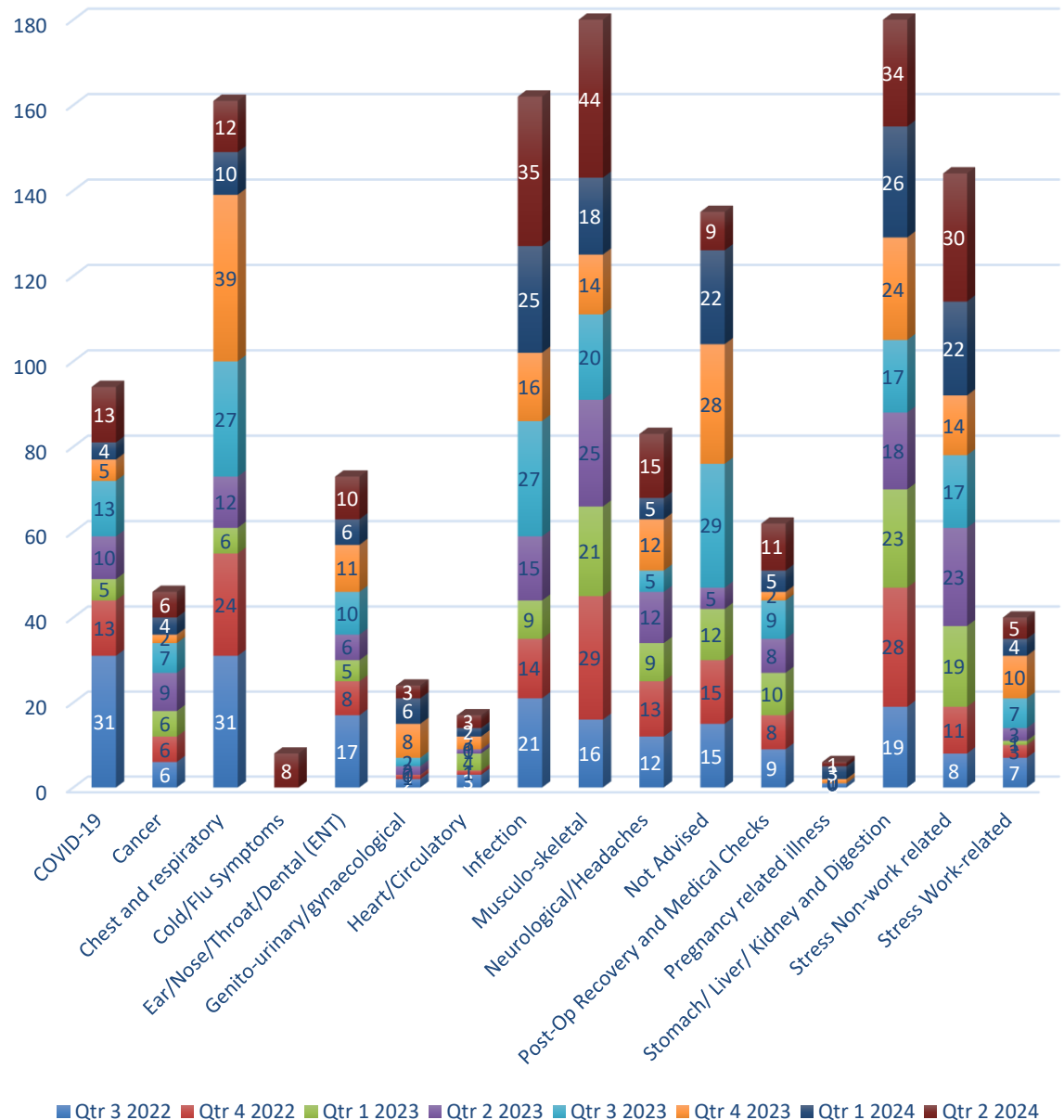
There were 239 incidents of sickness absence recorded in Quarter 2 of 2024/25, this is 90 more incidents than the same quarter of 2023/24.

The highest reason for sickness absence across the last rolling 12 months was Infection, with 103 incidents recorded and accounting for 13.2% of all incidents.

The second highest reason for sickness absence in the last 12 months is Stomach/Liver/Kidney and Digestion, with 101 incidents reported which equates to 12.94% of all incidents.

Musculo-skeletal is the third highest reason in the last 12 months, recording 96 incidents and accounting for 12.30% of all incidents.

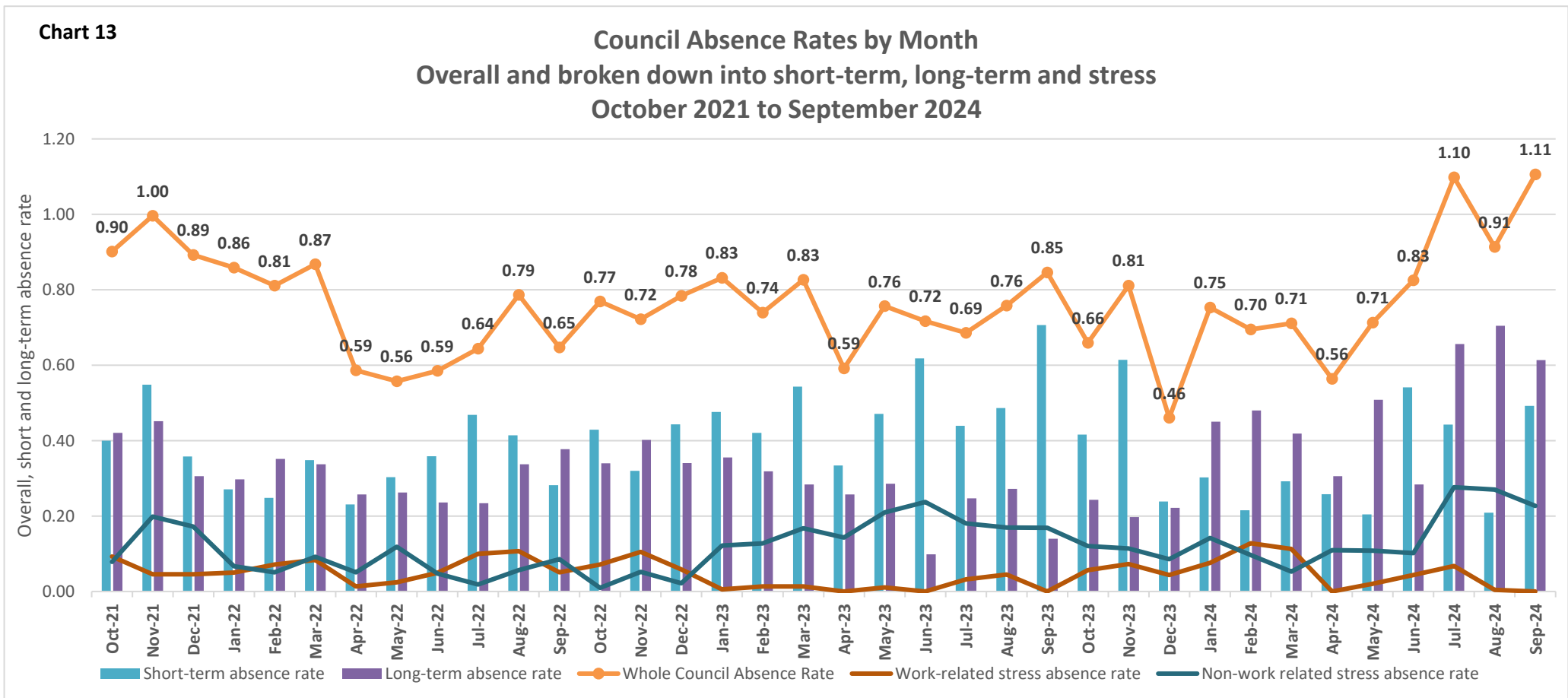
Chart 12 Sickness Absence Incidents by Reason October 2022 to September 2024



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 October 2021 to September 2024 and shows for the first time since November 2021, the percentage working time lost due to sickness absence is higher than 1% in both July and September 2024. The absence rate is calculated by dividing the hours lost due to sickness absence by the available working hours for the period. September 2024 records the highest rate of absence at 1.11% of working time lost.

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



The absence rate attributed to stress is also displayed in Chart 13 and shows work-related stress has reduced in the last quarter, with a rate of 0.00 recorded in September 2024. Work-related stress accounted for 2.09% of incidents in quarter 2 of 2024/25 and for 3.33% of all incidents occurring in the last rolling 12 months.

The non-work-related stress absence rate had increased between quarters 1 and 2 and then reduced over the last quarter. It has increased from 0.10 at the end of quarter 1 of 2024/25 to 0.28 at the start of quarter 2 of 2024/25 and then ended the quarter on 0.23. Non-work-related stress incidents accounted for 12.55% of all incidents in quarter 2 of 2024/25 and 10.64% of all incidents across the last year.

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

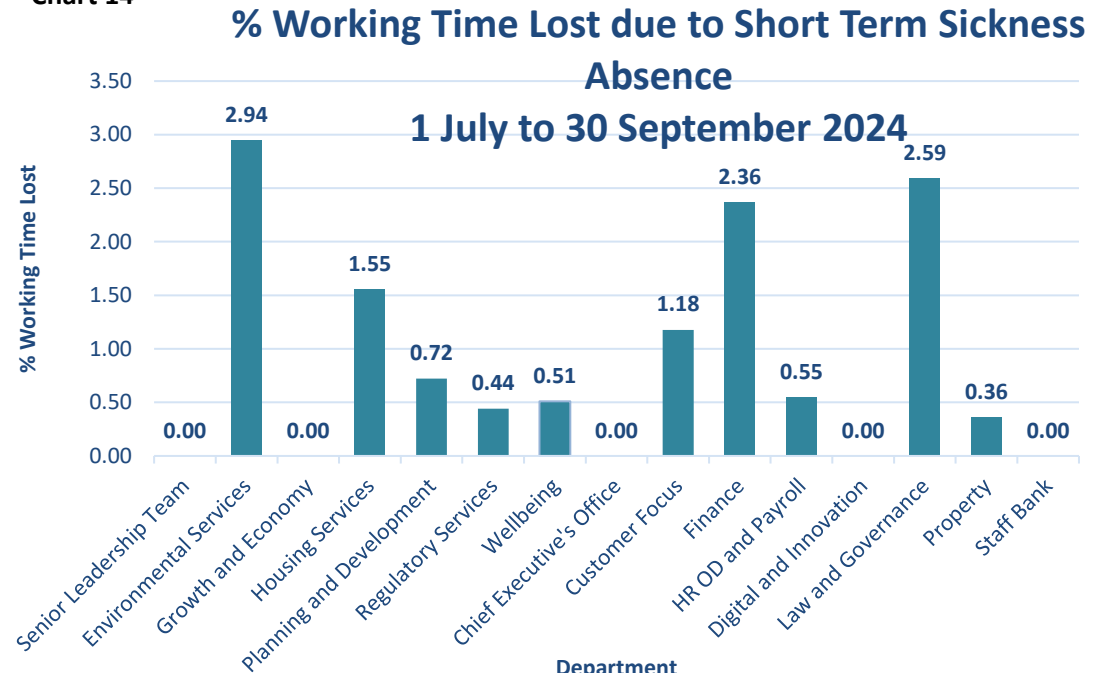
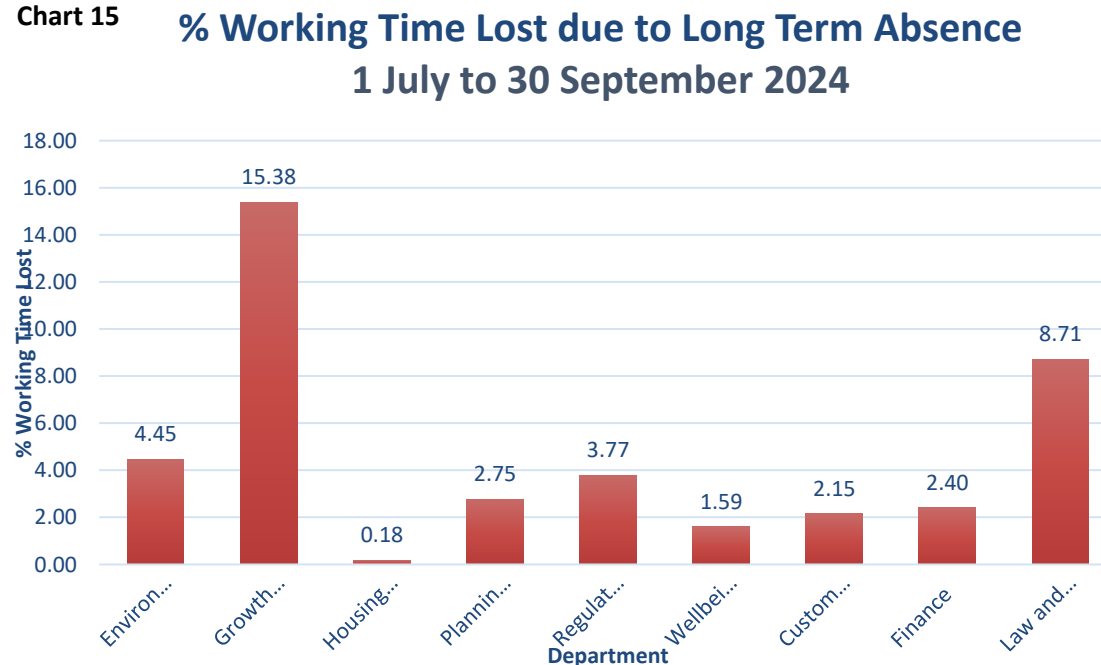


Chart 15



Comparative sector data for sickness absence rates has been sought from the Local Government Association (LGA) and is displayed alongside data for CDC in Table 2.

LGA Sickness data for quarter 3 of 2023-24 is now available and has been added to table 2 but this data will no longer be collected on a quarterly basis as this is part of the quarterly LGA benchmark club that has ceased to exist. This data will be collected on an annual basis and CDC has provided a submission for 2023/24. The LGA calculated the mean sickness absence rate across all English authorities as 2.7 days per full time equivalent (FTE) employee in quarter 3 of 2023/24. CDC was 0.77 days lower for the same period. CDC short term absence rates were higher than the mean but long-term absence rates were lower. Comparative data CDC records a rate of 3.12 days lost per FTE in quarter 2 of 2024/25.

Metric Type	Value Type	QUARTER 4 22/23 Mean for All English authorities	CDC Qtr 4 22/23	CDC Qtr 1 23/24	CDC Qtr 2 23/24	QUARTER 3 23/24 Mean for All English authorities	CDC Qtr 3 23/24	CDC Qtr 4 23/24	CDC Qtr 1 24/25	CDC Qtr 2 24/25
Sickness absence rate	Days per FTE	2.5	2.4	2.04	1.97	2.7	1.93	2.12	2.05	3.12
Days lost through sickness, short term	%	1.6	2.22	2.16	2.20	1.6	1.95	1.22	1.51	1.15
Sickness absence, short term (FTE)	Days per FTE	1.0	1.44	1.41	1.63	1.1	1.26	0.79	0.98	0.59
Days lost through sickness, long term	%	2.2	1.48	0.98	0.83	2.4	1.02	2.04	1.64	1.97
Sickness absence, long term (FTE)	Days per FTE	1.4	0.96	0.63	0.54	1.5	0.66	1.32	1.07	1.01

Age, Gender, Ethnicity, Disability and LGBTQ+ Workforce Profile as at 30 September 2024

Chart 16 shows a breakdown by age of the CDC workforce, expressed in percentage. 13% of CDC employees are over 60. 26% are aged between 51 and 60. 21% of CDC employees are aged between 41 and 50. 20% of the workforce are aged between 31 and 40 and 20% aged 30 and under. The over 60 category has increased by 1% from the end of quarter 1 of 2024/25, and the under 21 category has reduced by 1% in the last quarter.

Chart 16

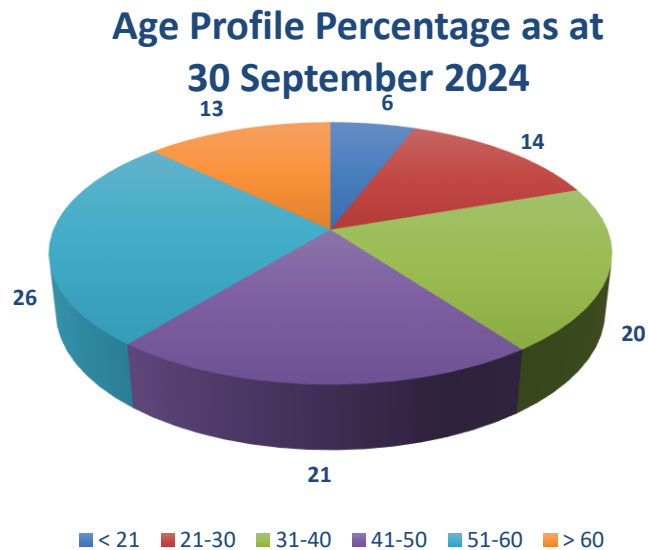
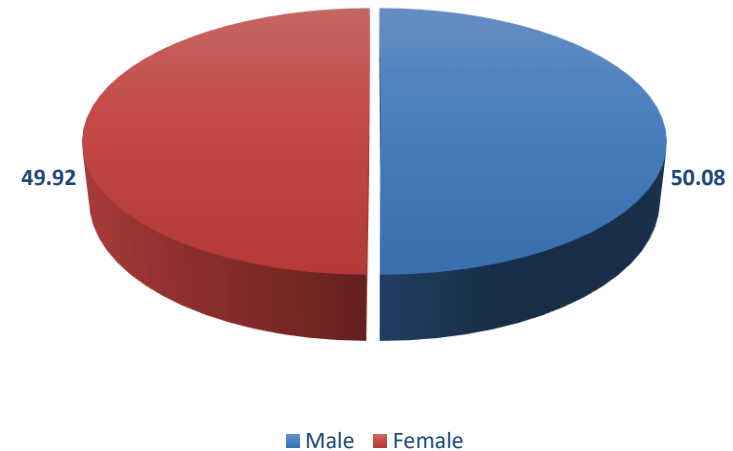


Chart 17 breaks down the gender of the CDC workforce and shows that CDC is almost a 50% split.

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 September 2024



Out of a population of 161,837 within the Cherwell District, the latest census data records that 49.6% are male and 50.4% are female. At CDC, 50.31% of our workforce are male and 49.69% are female meaning it is representative of the district. These statistics have been minimal change since quarter 1 of 2024/25.

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 2 of 2024/25, just over 85% of employees have recorded this information, with 5.3% preferring not to specify.

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

Chart 18 Ethnicity Profile Percentage as at 30 September 2024

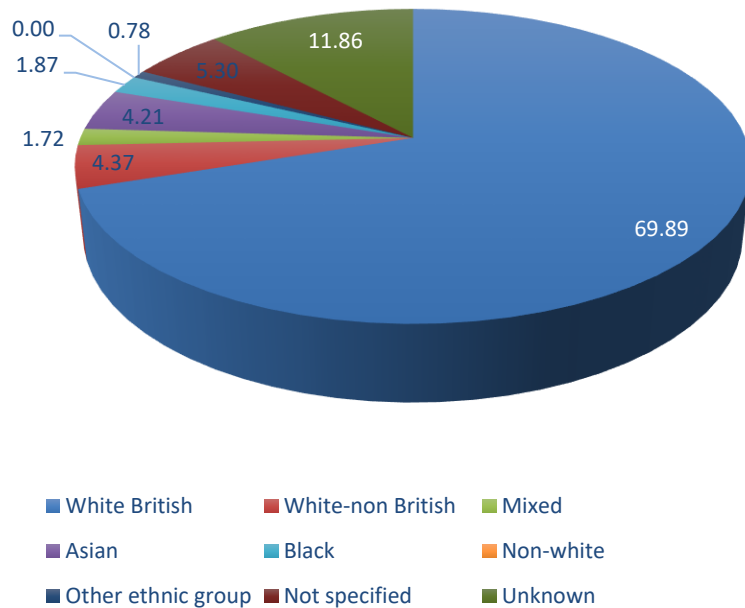


Table 3

Ethnic Group	England average (%)	Cherwell District (%)	CDC (%) Qtr 3 23/24	CDC (%) Qtr 4 23/24	CDC (%) Qtr 1 24/25	CDC (%) Qtr 2 24/25
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh	9.3	6.0	3.86	3.67	3.89	4.21
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African	4.0	1.8	1.13	1.28	1.71	1.87
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	2.9	2.9	1.13	1.28	1.56	1.72
White	81.7	88.1	71.82	71.45	71.96	74.26
Other ethnic group	2.1	1.3	0.81	0.80	0.78	0.78
Not specified	N/A	N/A	5.96	5.74	5.45	5.30
Unknown	N/A	N/A	15.30	15.79	14.64	11.86

CDC’s workforce is predominantly white British with 69.89% of the workforce recording their ethnicity in this category.

Table 3 compares the make-up of ethnic groups across the UK and the Cherwell District and then compares this with the make-up of our workforce. The Cherwell District has a higher percentage of residents in the *White* ethnic group than the average across the UK. Of the workforce data recorded, the *White* category for the workforce increased by 2.3% in quarter 2 of 2024/25. All ethnic groups, with the exception of *other ethnic group*, have marginally increased in the last quarter.

The CDC workforce is slightly under-represented in most ethnic groups in comparison to the district. As at the end of quarter 2 of 2024/25, CDC has just slightly exceeded representation in relation the district in the *Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African* ethnic group.

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

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

We have requested disability information be provided by employees. At the end of quarter 1 Of 2024/25, 43% of the workforce had not provided this data, however this has reduced to 19% at the end of quarter 2, 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 30 September 2024

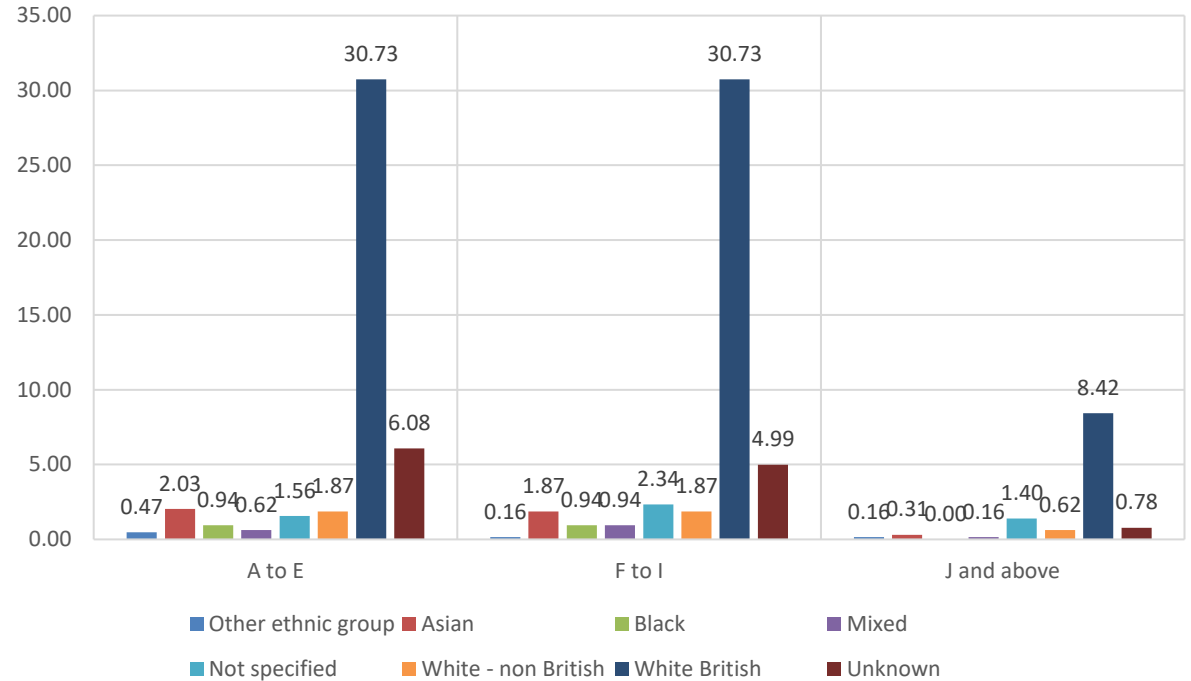


Chart 20

Disability Percentage Profile as at 30 September 2024

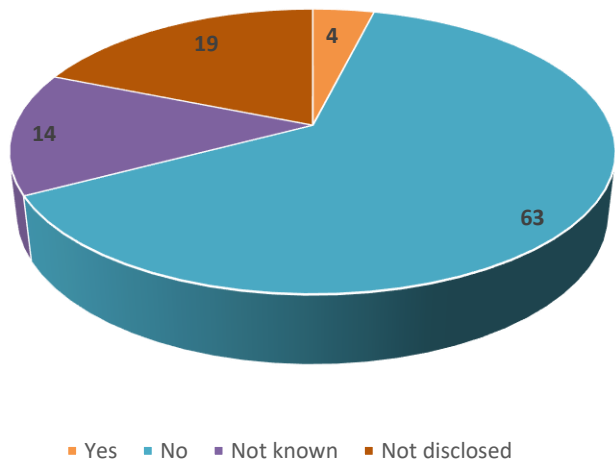
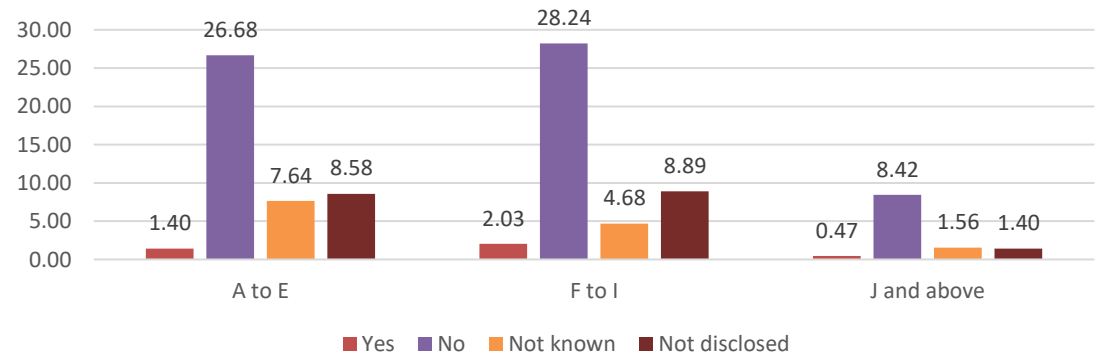


Chart 21

Disability Percentage by Grade Band as at 30 September 2024



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

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

Within this category, 12.95% of the workforce have declined to specify and 13.26% have not completed this data. This data collection has marginally improved in the last quarter.

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

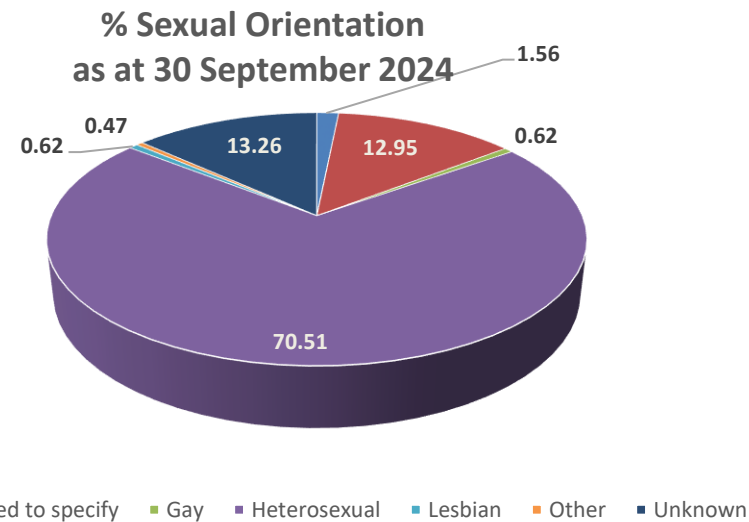
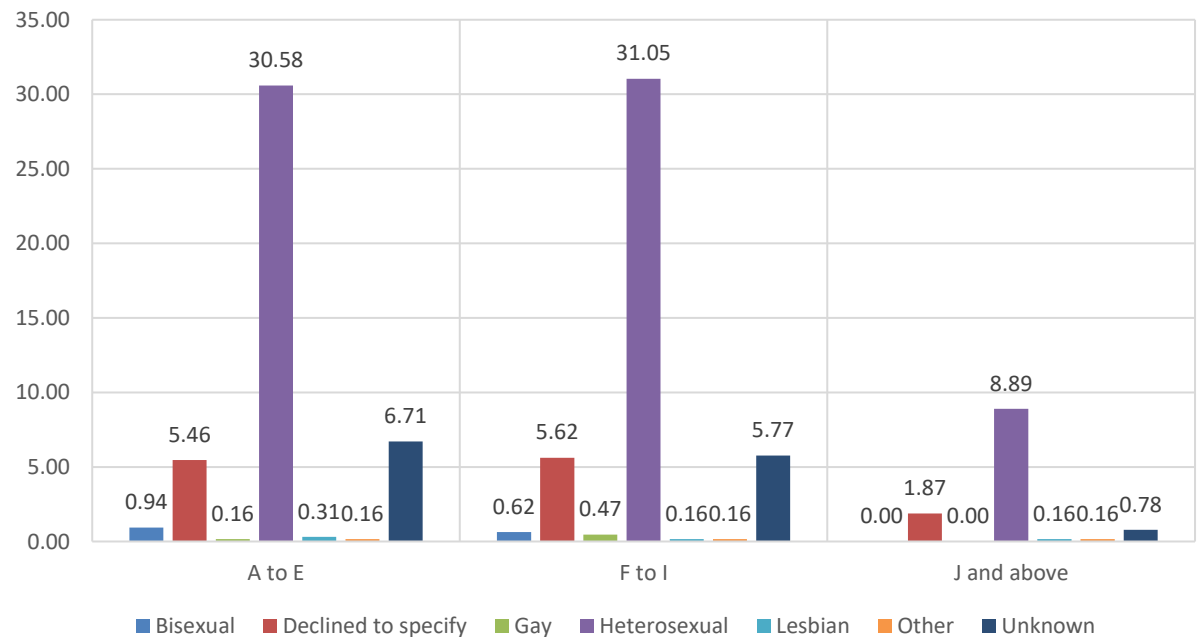


Chart 23

Sexual Orientation Percentage by Grade Band as at 30 September 2024



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. Recruitment data has been analysed and since going live in October 2023, 73 recruitment campaigns have been completed, to which 865 applications were received and 68 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. The highest number of applicants were between 21 and 30, followed by 31 to 40, these 2 groups account for 60.23% of all applications. Table 4 provides district data on age bands. Whilst district data does not quite correlate with age groups relevant to the CDC workforce, Chart 24 shows that the distribution of applicants across the age bands is representative of that within the district.

Chart 24

**% Applicants by Age
October 2023 to September 2024**

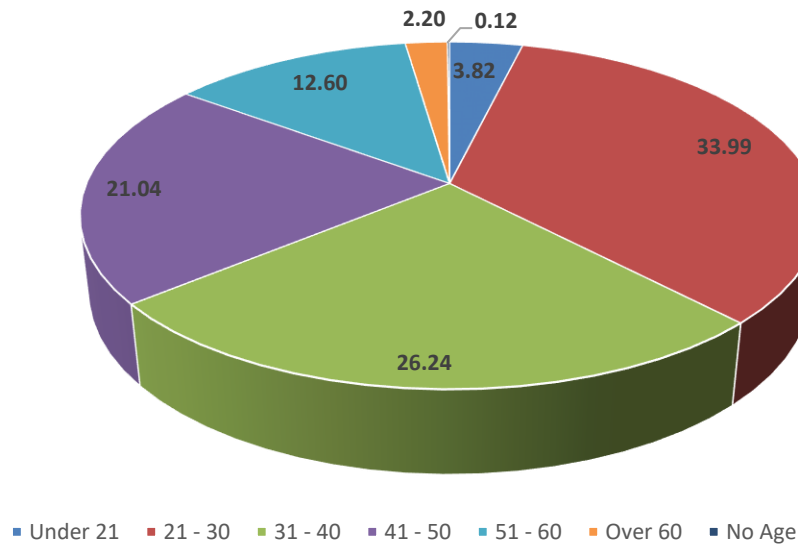


Table 4

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

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

Chart 25

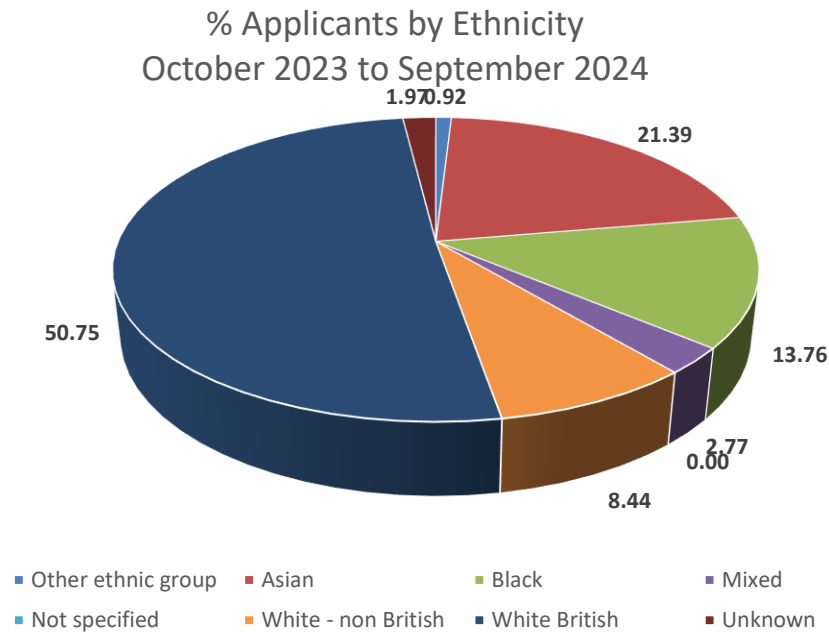


Table 5

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

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

Chart 26 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 26

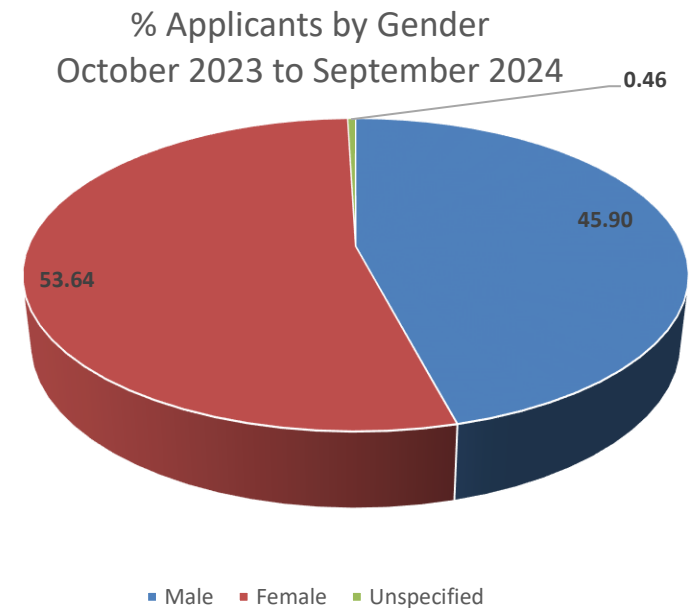


Chart 27 % Applicants with Disabilities
October 2023 to September 2024

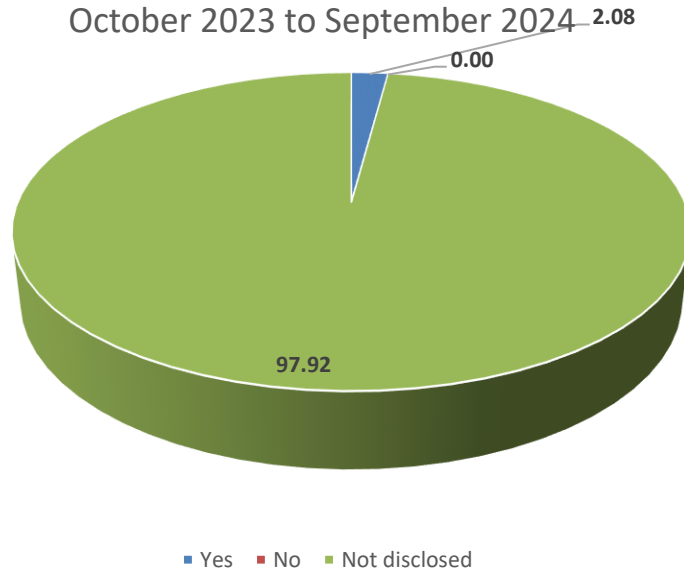
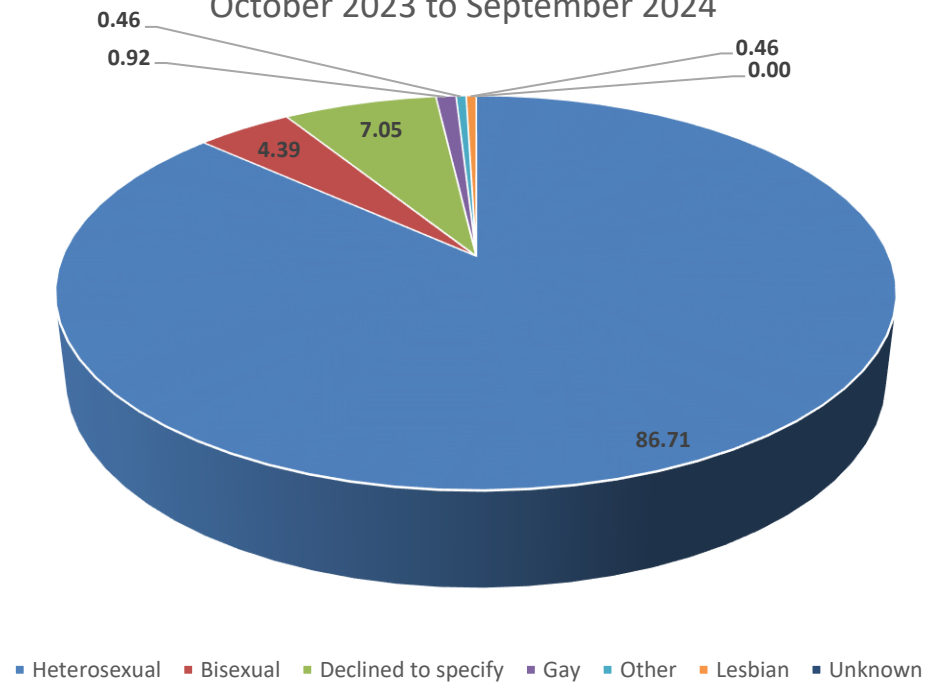


Chart 27 shows the percentage of applicants by disability. 97.92% of applicants have not disclosed this at applicant stage. It is hoped that applicants would provide this information should they have disabilities as we have a guaranteed interview scheme if they meet the essential criteria for a role, as part of being a disability confident employer.

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

Chart 28 % Applicants by Sexual Orientation
October 2023 to September 2024



Apprenticeships within Cherwell District Council as at Quarter 2 – 2024/25

Background

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

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

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

Information on apprentices in the organisation

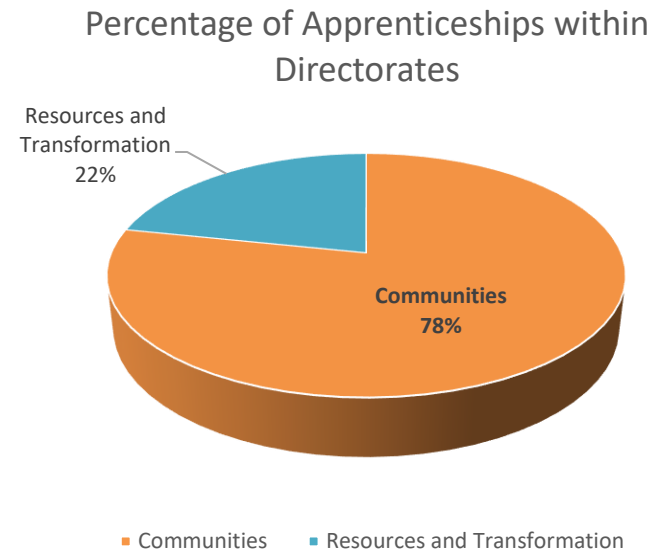
There are 23 apprenticeships currently running within the Council for this quarter, of which 4 is an apprentice on programme, employed specifically as an apprentice; and the remaining 19 are employees undertaking an apprenticeship as CPD or career progression.

There are currently 18 apprenticeships within the Communities Directorate and 5 within the Resources and Transformation Directorate – please see chart 26.

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

Apprenticeships details below:

Apprenticeship Standard	Level of Apprenticeship	Duration of Apprenticeship	Number of employees on apprenticeship	Apprentice or Employee CPD	Team	Directorate	Cost of Apprenticeships (£)
Autocare Technician	Level 2	2 ½ Years	1	Apprentice	Fleet Management	Communities (1)	12,000



Apprenticeship Standard	Level of Apprenticeship	Duration of Apprenticeship	Number of employees on apprenticeship	Apprentice or Employee CPD	Team	Directorate	Cost of Apprenticeships (£)
Business Administrator	Level 3	1 ½ Years	1	Apprentice	Depot – Thorpe Lane	Communities (1)	5,000
HR Support	Level 3	1 ½ Years	1	Apprentice	Human Resources	Resources and Transformation (1)	4,500
Team Leader/Supervisor	Level 3	1 ½ Years	5	CPD	Sport and Physical Activities (2) Housing Options and Homelessness (1) ICT (1) Environmental Protection & Enforcement (1)	Resources and Transformation (1) Communities (4)	22,500
ASB and Community Safety	Level 4	2 Years	1	CPD	Community Safety	Communities (1)	8,000
Data Analyst	Level 4	14 months	1	CPD	Digital and Innovation	Resources and Transformation (1)	14,250
People Professional	Level 5	1 ½ years	1	CPD	Human Resources	Resources and Transformation (1)	11,000
Chartered Surveyor	Level 6	5 ½ Years	1	Apprentice	Access and Grants	Communities (1)	27,000
Environmental Health Practitioner	Level 6	4 Years	1	CPD	Health Protection and Compliance	Communities (1)	22,000
Public Health Practitioner	Level 6	3 Years	1	CPD	Health Place Shaping	Communities (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 (£)
Chartered Town Planner	Level 7	2 ½ years	7	CPD	Planning	Communities (7)	92450
Accountancy Professional (CIPFA)	Level 7	3 Years	1	CPD	Finance	Resources and Transformation (1)	20,433
Sustainability business specialist	Level 7	2 years	1	CPD	Environment Services	Communities (1)	10,755
			23		Total apprenticeship levy committed		271,888

Current amount in the Levy Account

The Council currently has £170,036 in their levy account. It is estimated that a further £100,382 will be received over the next 12 months, based on funds entering the Council's Apprenticeship service account, including the 10% top up from the government. It is estimated that the Council will spend £53,586 in the next 12 months based on the current apprenticeships within the table above.

Expired Funds

Some funds expired in Quarter 1 of 2024/25 amounting to £183.74. The levy account is indicating that the Council will have an amount of £364.00 in expired funds in January 2025. These indications are estimates made by the apprenticeship dashboard and are based on details available from our last levy payment and apprenticeship arrangements, which may not be up to date. Providers are not always timely in providing the details to add new apprenticeships onto the dashboard and so these estimates may change once a new course is added and payments are starting to be taken from the levy pot.

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

Apprenticeship Reforms under the new Government

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

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

The new levy will also allow funding for shorter apprenticeships, giving learners and employers greater flexibility over their training than under the existing system – where apprenticeships must run for at least 12 months.

To fund this, employers are being asked to rebalance their funding for apprenticeships, asking them to invest in younger workers. This will also involve businesses funding more of their level 7 apprenticeships – equivalent to a master's degree and often accessed by older or already well qualified employees – outside of the levy.

The government launched Skills England in July to help identify skills needs. Skills England will play a crucial role in determining which types of training will be eligible for the expanded growth and skills levy and will set out shortly how they will work with stakeholders to inform their advice to DfE.