

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

Chart 1 shows that the headcount (based at the end of each quarter) at Cherwell District Council (CDC) has seen a reduction of 5 between quarter 2 and 3 of 2024/25. Within the headcount of 637, 14 employees have 2 roles, and have therefore been counted twice.

Quarter 3 of 2024/25 has seen adjustments of 18 leavers and 10 new starters across the organisation.

**Headcount by Quarter
Quarter 4 2021-22 to Quarter 3 2024-25**

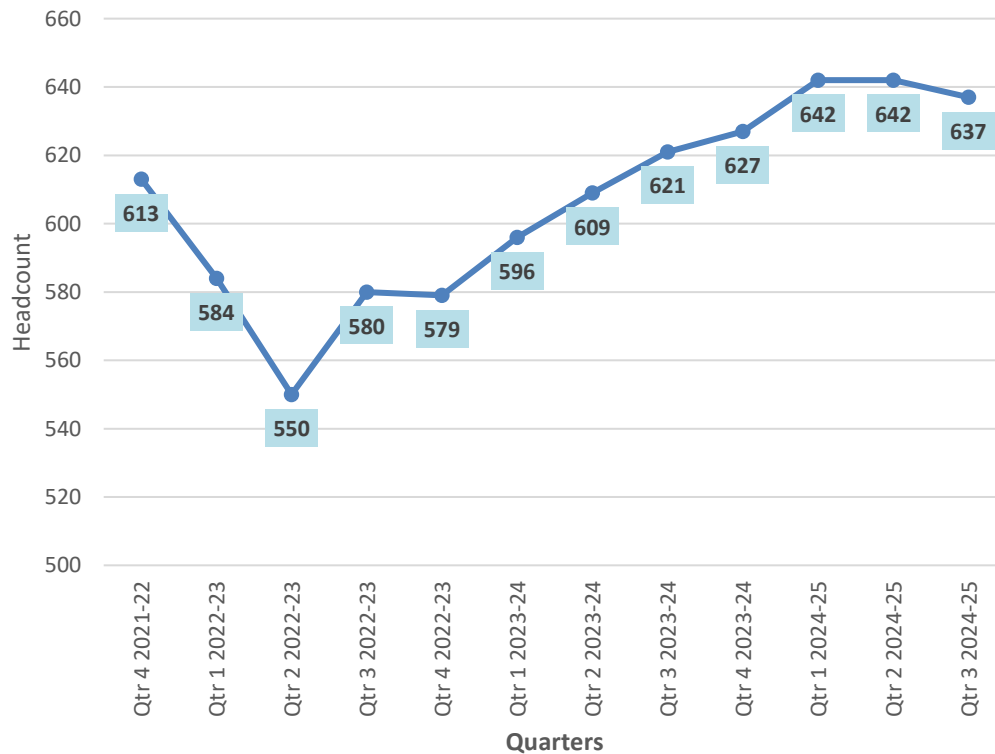


Chart 2 details the distribution of headcount across our departments and directorates as at the end of quarter 3 in 2024/25. Wellbeing and Environmental Services continue to show the highest headcount. The department of Chief Executive’s Office incorporates executive support and employees attributed 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.

Wellbeing has had the biggest reduction in headcount with 5 less since quarter 2 of 2024/25, and Environmental Services has reduced by 4. Law and Governance increased by 2 since Quarter 2.

**Chart 2
Headcount by Department as at
31 December 2024**

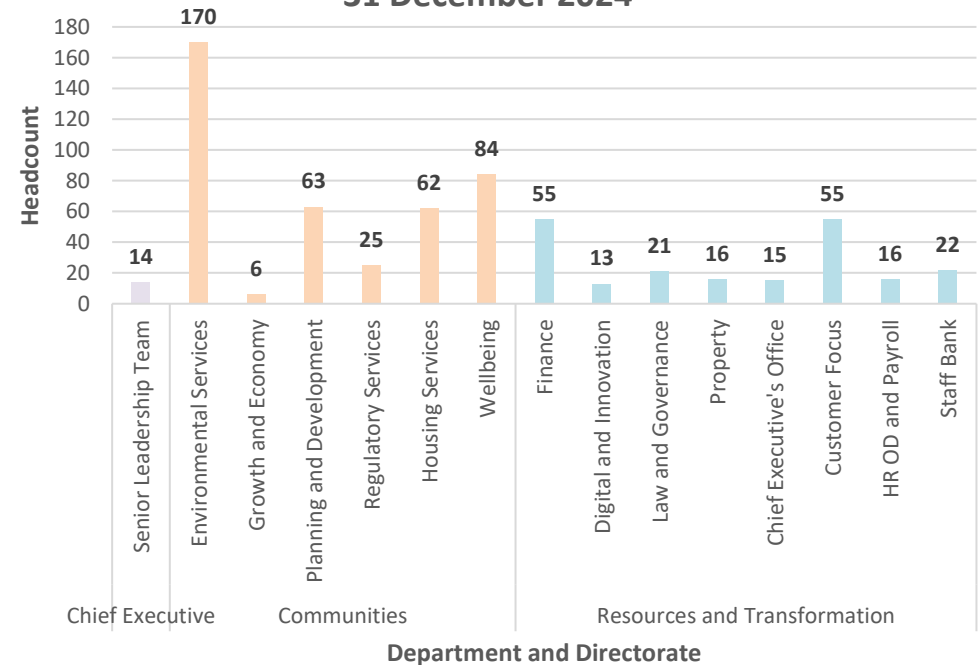


Chart 3 outlines the fluctuation of FTE which has reduced by 1.82 between quarter 2 and quarter 3 of 2024/25.

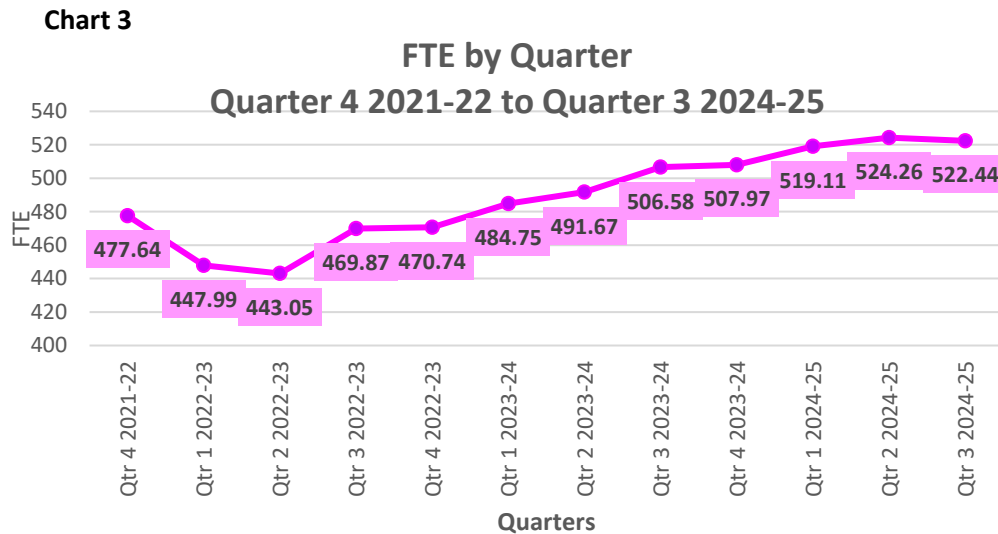


Chart 4
FTE by Department as at 31 December 2024

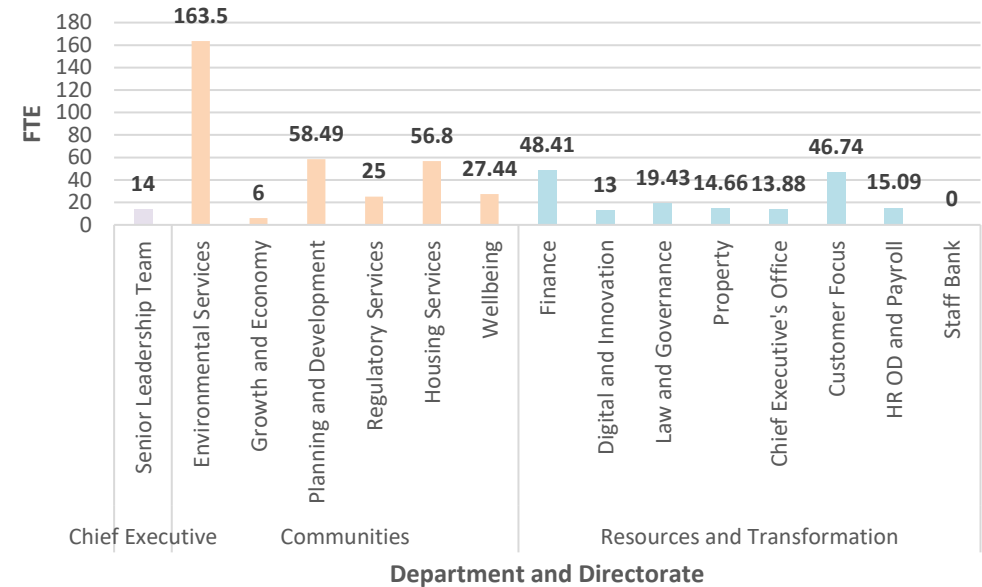


Chart 4 outlines the distribution of FTE across the departments and directorates as at the end of quarter 3 of 2024/25.

Since quarter 2 of 2024/25; Law and Governance have seen an increase of 1.59 FTE and Regulatory Services, Housing Services, Property and Customer Focus have all increased by 1 FTE. Environmental Services has seen a reduction of 5 FTE, and Housing Services has increased by 3.95.

Charts 5 shows the breakdown of basis of hours across our workforce as of 31 December 2024. Since quarter 2 of 2024/25 there has been minimal change to the make-up of role-basis with our full-time increasing by 0.08% and part-time by 0.59% and our casual workforce reducing by 0.48%.

Chart 5
% Breakdown of Role Basis as at 31 December 2024

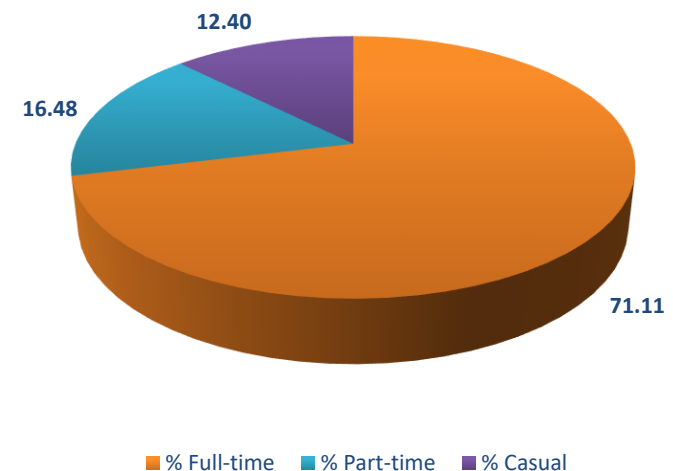
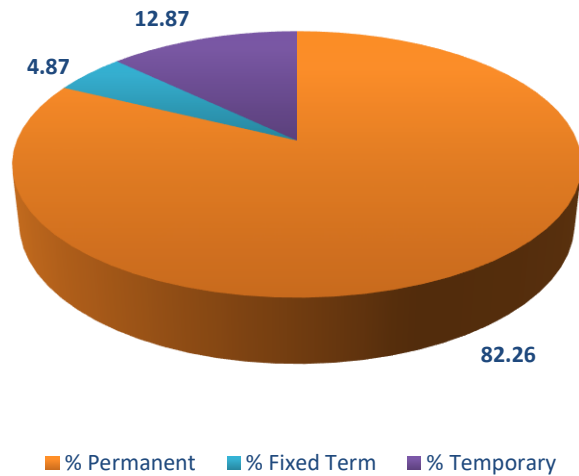


Chart 6 outlines the employment basis of those directly employed by CDC shows that 82.26% of our workforce are in permanent roles. This has slightly increased by 0.64% since Quarter 2 of 2024/25. The percentage employed on a temporary basis has reduced by 0.99% and the percentage employed on a fixed term basis has increased by 0.35%.

Chart 6

% Breakdown of Employment Basis as at 31 December 2024



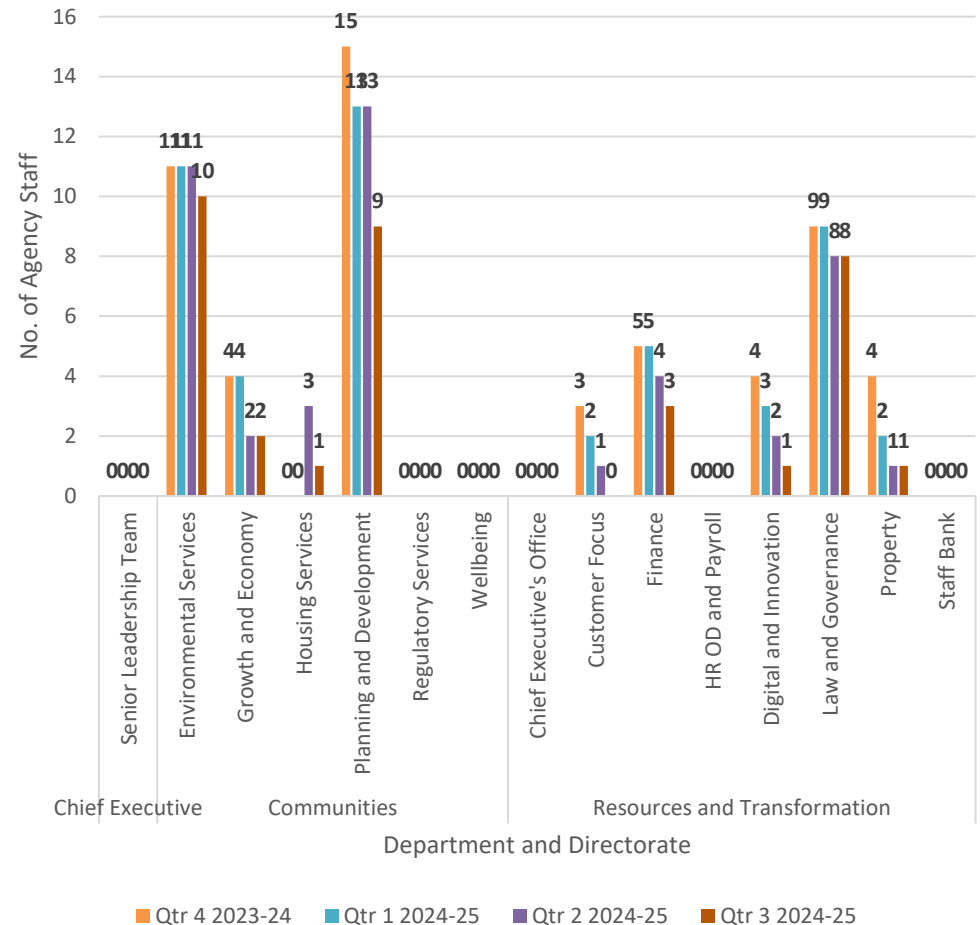
In addition to employing staff directly, CDC also utilise Agency Workers, either for interim or short-term usage for specific posts and projects.

Chart 7 outlines agency usage as at the end of each quarter for the last rolling year by department. A total of 35 Agency workers were engaged with CDC at the end of quarter 3 of 2024/25. This is a reduction of 10 since the end of quarter 2 of 2024/25 and 13 since the end of quarter 1.

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 reduced by 1 in the last quarter.

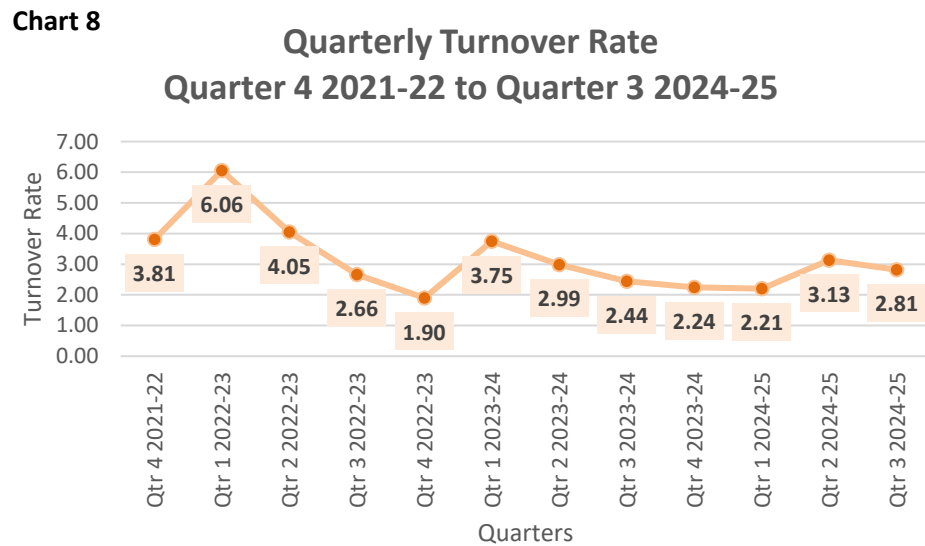
Planning and Development have reduced agency usage by 4 in quarter 3. Housing Services has reduced by 2 and Customer Focus, Finance and Digital and Innovation all reduced by 1.

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 January 2022 to December 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 3 shows a reduction of 0.32 since quarter 2 of 2024/25.

Chart 9 details the quarterly turnover rate by department for quarter 3.

Chart 10 outlines leavers by reason for quarter 3 of 2024/25. Of the 18 leavers recorded, Resignation is the highest reason for leaving, accounting for 55.56% of all leavers. 22.2% of leavers were due to End of fixed term contract, 11.11% were due to Retirement, with Dismissal – Capability and Failure to pass probation each accounting for 5.56%.

Chart 9
Quarterly Turnover Rate by Department
as at
31 December 2024

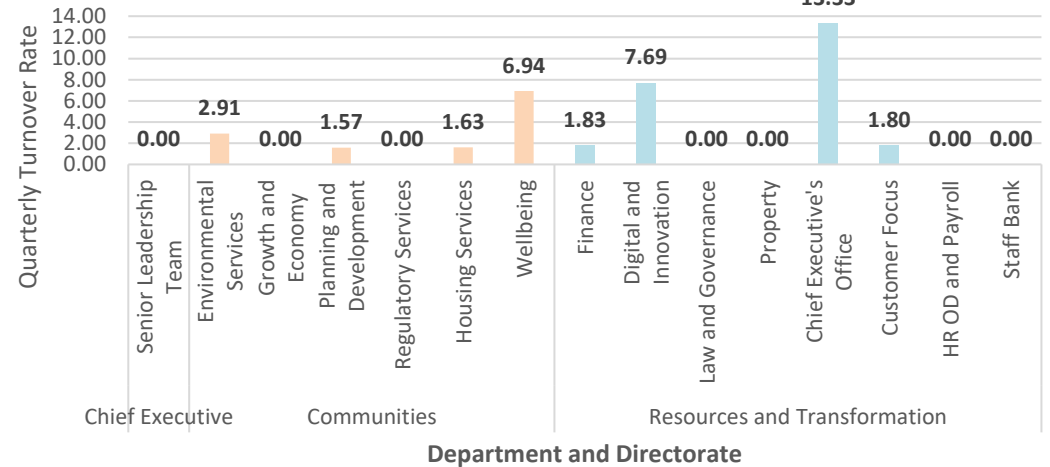


Chart 10
% of Leavers by reason
1 October to 31 December 2024

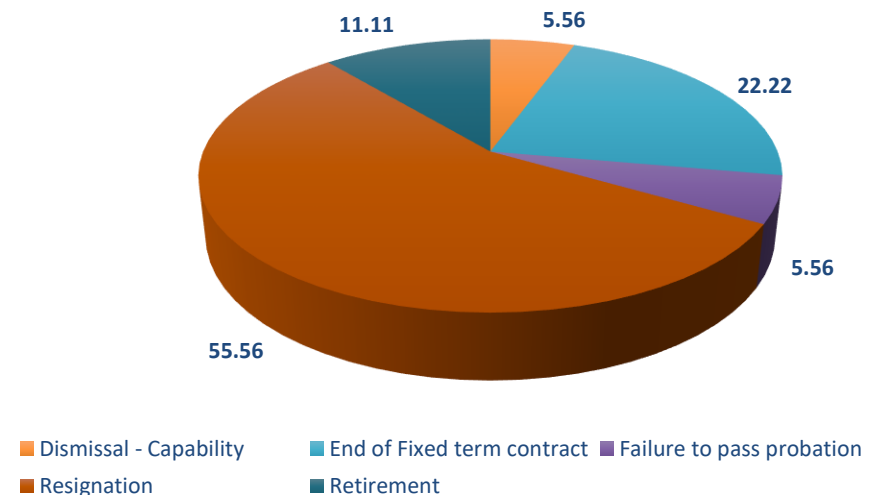
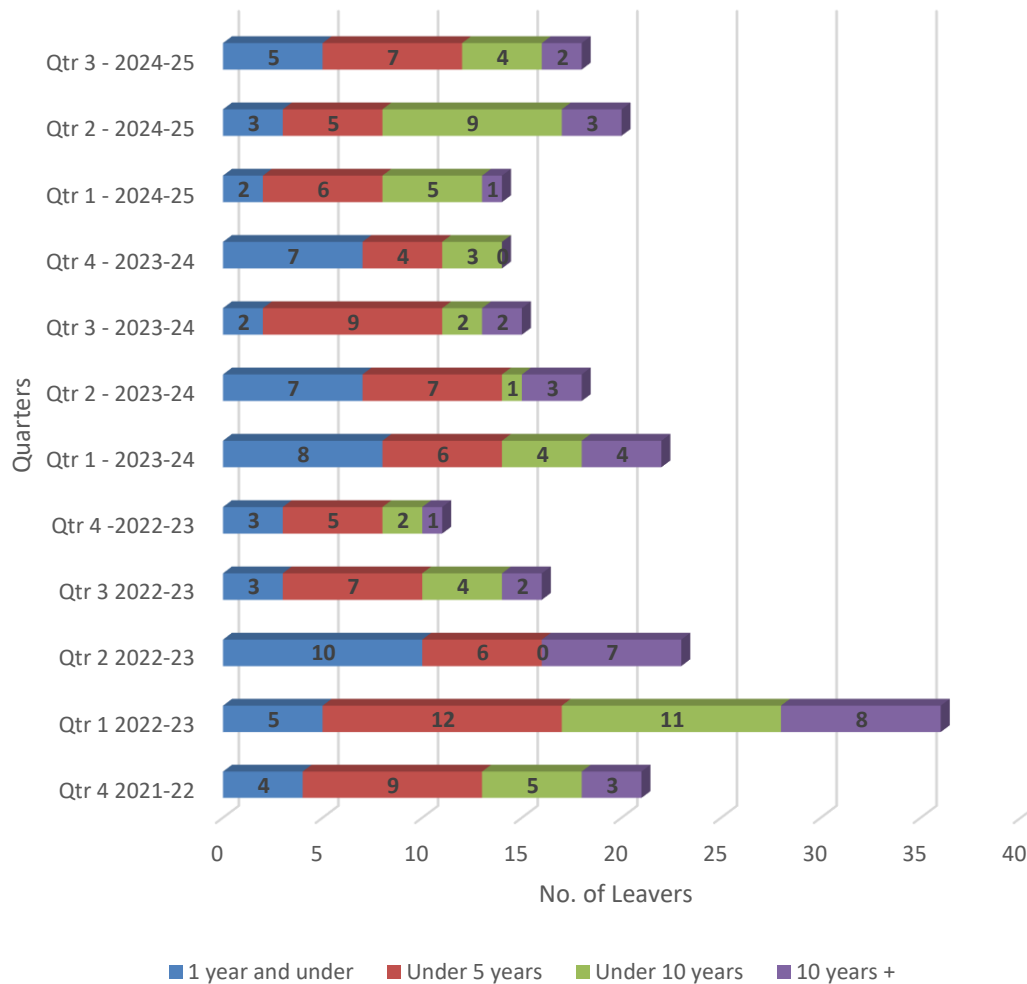


Chart 11 outlines leavers by length of service across the last 12 quarters. In quarter 3 of 2024/25, 5 leavers had less than a year’s service, 7 had under 5 years’ service, 4 had less than 10 years and 2 had over 10 years.

Chart 11
Leavers by Length of Service
1 January 2022- 31 December 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 18 leavers in quarter 3, 10 completed the exit interview questionnaire and attended meetings with a member of the HR Team. This is a 56% completion rate, which is a reduction of 2% 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 from colleagues retiring after many years of service. Other comments included needing to deal with extensive workloads and feeling undermined by managers, with some suggesting there are too many virtual meetings now with so many colleagues home working.

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, captured monthly by reason over the last 8 quarters, back to January 2023. Stomach/Liver/Kidney and Digestion and Musculoskeletal has seen the most incidents, with 156 per reason across the period.

A new reason of Cold/Flu symptoms was introduced in quarter 2 of 2024/25 as it was felt by the Corporate Leadership Team, that other reasons did not lend themselves to such symptoms being recorded.

For Quarter 3 of 2024/25, Cold/Flu symptoms was the highest recorded reason for sickness absence, accounting for 23% of all incidents in the last quarter. This is followed by Stomach/Liver/Kidney and Digestion, which accounts for 14% of all incidents in the last quarter. Musculo-skeletal accounted for 13%.

There were 256 incidents of sickness absence recorded in Quarter 3 of 2024/25, this is 66 more incidents than the same quarter of 2023/24.

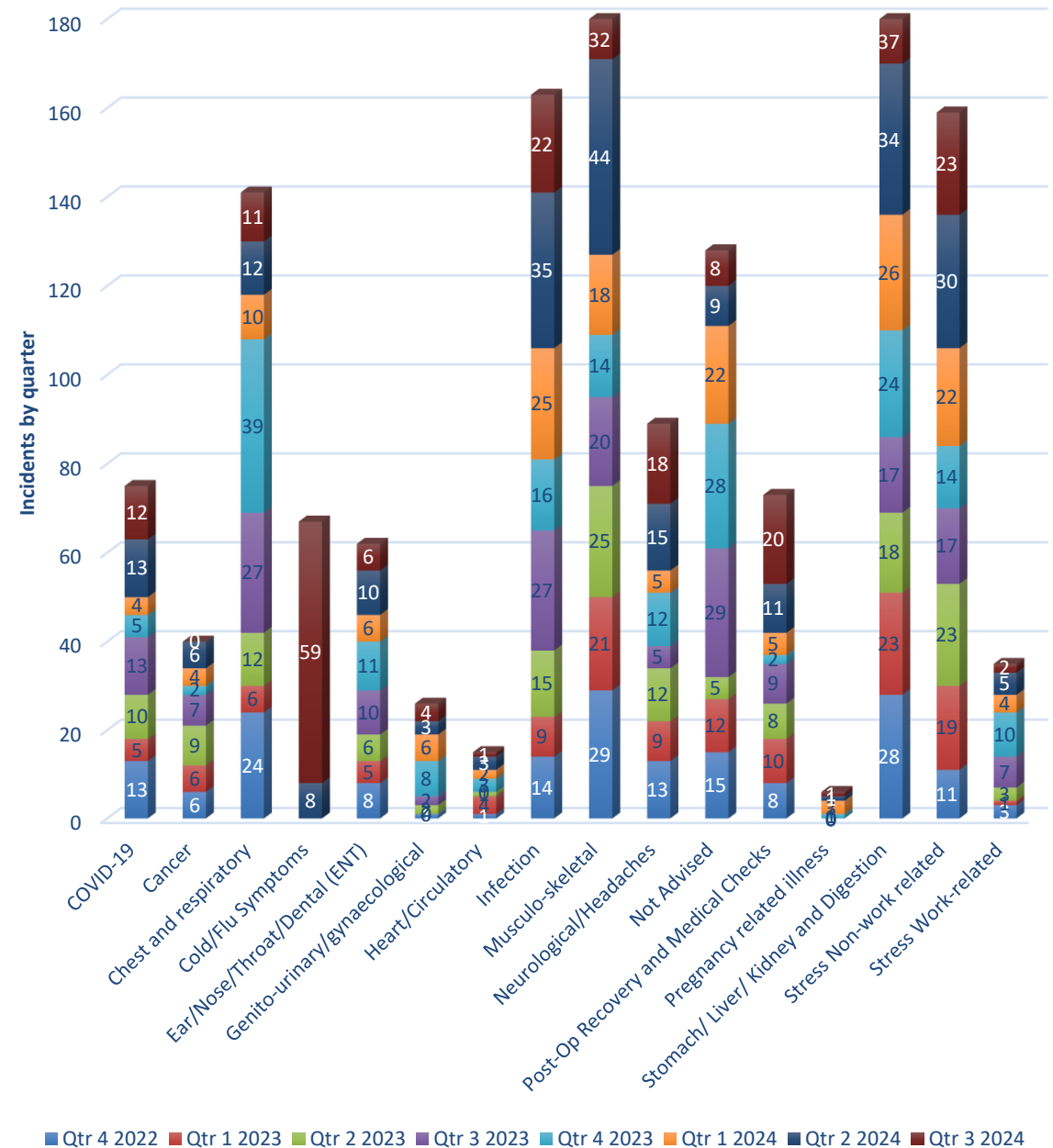
The highest reason for sickness absence across the last rolling 12 months was Stomach/Liver/Kidney and Digestion, with 121 incidents recorded and accounting for 14.3% of all incidents.

The second highest reason for sickness absence in the last 12 months is Musculo-skeletal, with 108 incidents reported which equates to 12.8% of all incidents.

Infection is the third highest reason in the last 12 months, recording 98 incidents and accounting for 11.6% of all incidents.

Chart 12

**Sickness Absence Incidents by Reason
January 2023 to December 2024**



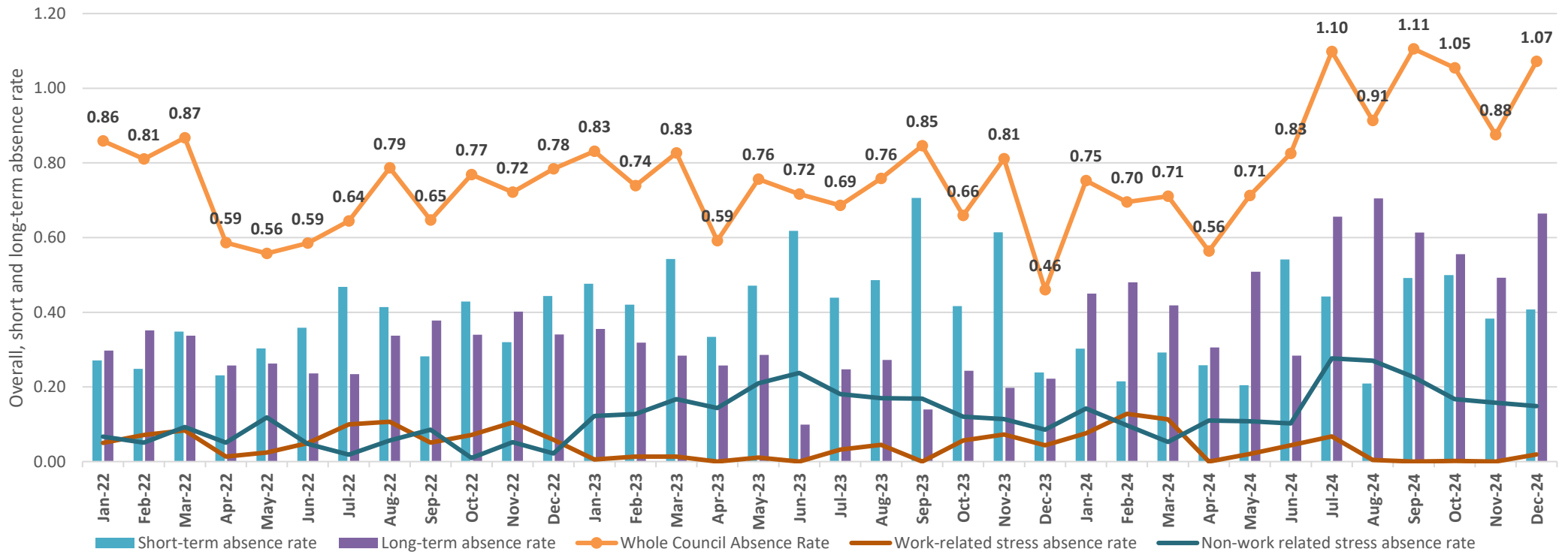
For the purposes of sickness absence reporting, short term absence is recorded as any incident that is less than 28 days, and a GP fit note is required after an employee has been absent for 7 calendar days. Long-term sickness is recorded as any absence spanning 28 days or more. HR work with managers 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 January 2022 to December 2024 and shows a further increase in sickness absence rates since quarter 2. 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. This steady increase is reflective of national trends, with the NHR reporting significant rises in norovirus cases, and flu cases were reported to have quadrupled between November and December 2024.

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

Chart 13

Council Absence Rates by Month
Overall and broken down into short-term, long-term and stress
January 2022 to December 2024



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 0.02 recorded in December 2024. Work-related stress accounted for 0.78% of incidents in quarter 3 of 2024/25 and for 2.5% of all incidents occurring in the last rolling 12 months.

The non-work-related stress absence rate has continued to reduce in quarter 3 of 2024/25. It ended quarter 2 on 0.23 and ended quarter 3 on 0.15. Non-work-related stress incidents accounted for 9% of all incidents in quarter 3 of 2024/25 and 10.5% 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

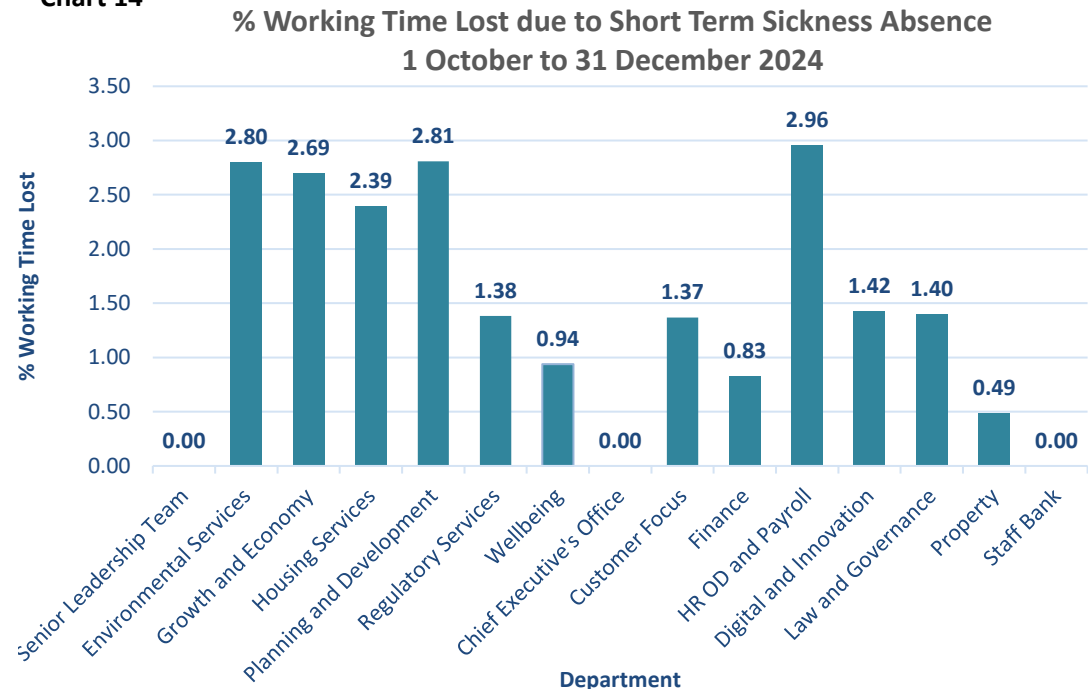
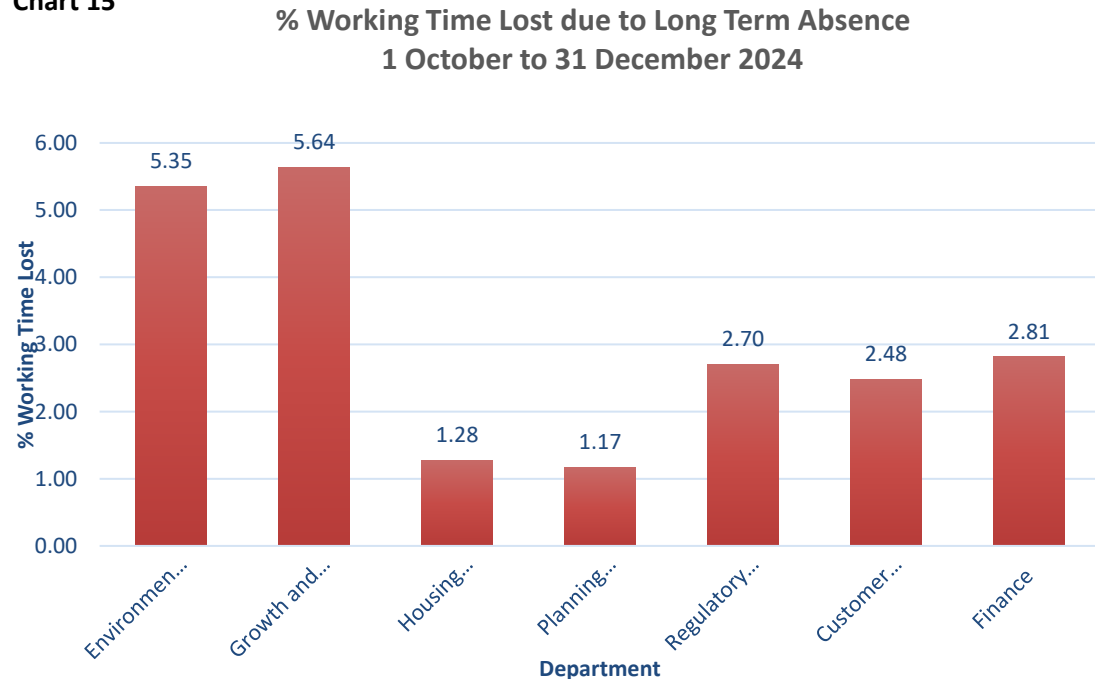


Chart 15

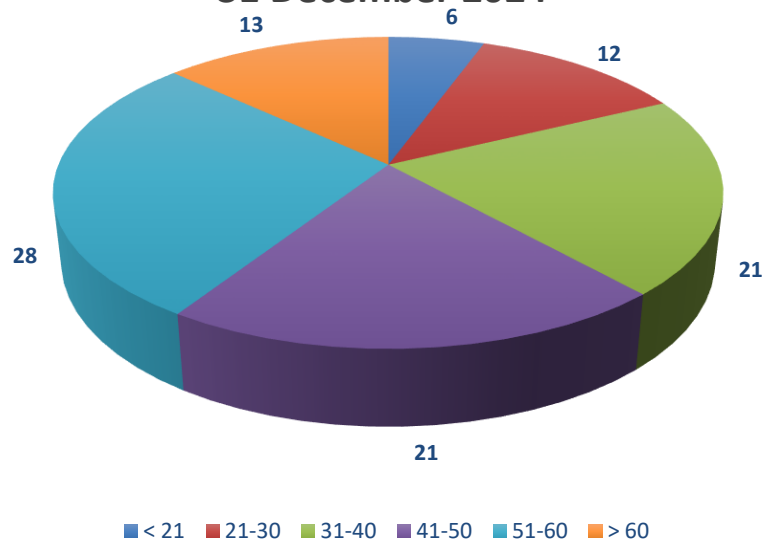


Age, Gender, Ethnicity, Disability and LGBTQ+ Workforce Profile as at 30 September 2024

Chart 16 shows a breakdown by age of the CDC workforce, expressed in percentage. 13% of CDC employees are over 60 which has not changed since quarter 2. 28% are aged between 51 and 60, this category has increased by 2% since the last quarter. 21% of CDC employees are aged between 41 and 50, this has not changed in the last quarter. 21% of the workforce are aged between 31 and 40, which has increased by 1% since quarter 2 and 20% aged 30 and under which has not changed.

Chart 16

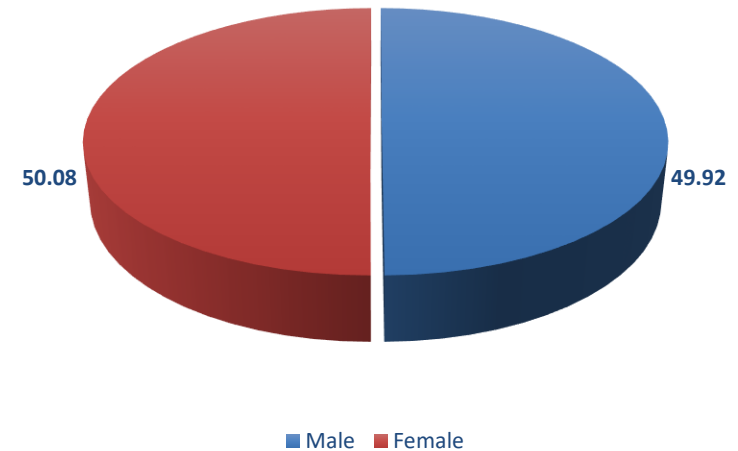
Age Profile Percentage as at 31 December 2024



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 December 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, 49.92% of our workforce are male and 50.08% are female meaning it is representative of the district. These statistics have been minimal change since quarter 2 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 3 of 2024/25, just over 88% of employees have recorded this information, with 5.18% preferring not to specify.

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

Chart 18

Ethnicity Profile Percentage as at 31 December 2024

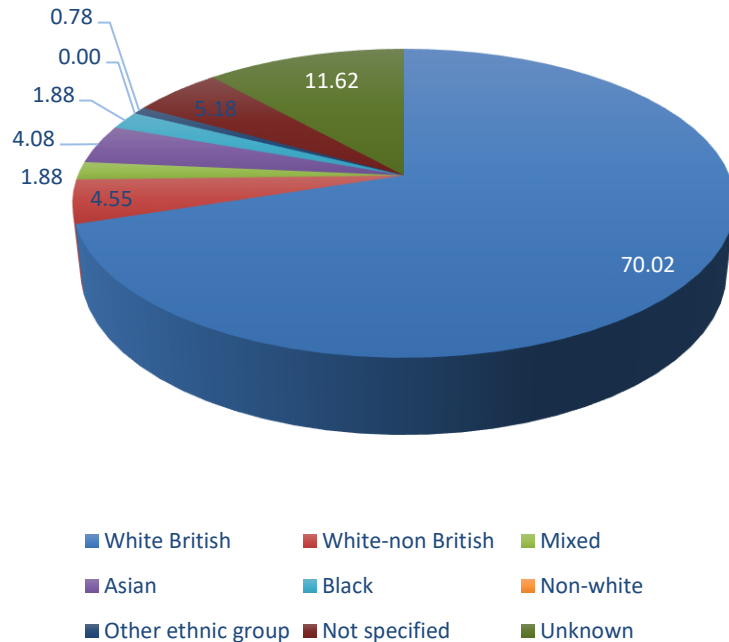


Table 3

Ethnic Group	England average (%)	Cherwell District (%)	CDC (%) Qtr 4 23/24	CDC (%) Qtr 1 24/25	CDC (%) Qtr 2 24/25	CDC (%) Qtr 3 24/25
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh	9.3	6.0	3.67	3.89	4.21	4.08
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African	4.0	1.8	1.28	1.71	1.87	1.88
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	2.9	2.9	1.28	1.56	1.72	1.88
White	81.7	88.1	71.45	71.96	74.26	70.02
Other ethnic group	2.1	1.3	0.80	0.78	0.78	0.78
Not specified	N/A	N/A	5.74	5.45	5.30	5.18
Unknown	N/A	N/A	15.79	14.64	11.86	11.62

CDC’s workforce is predominantly white British with 70.02% 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 reduced by 4.24% in quarter 3 of 2024/25. There has been marginal or no change to all other ethnic groups.

The CDC workforce is slightly under-represented in most ethnic groups in comparison to the district. As at the end of quarter 3 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, and 14% at the end of quarter 3, 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 December 2024

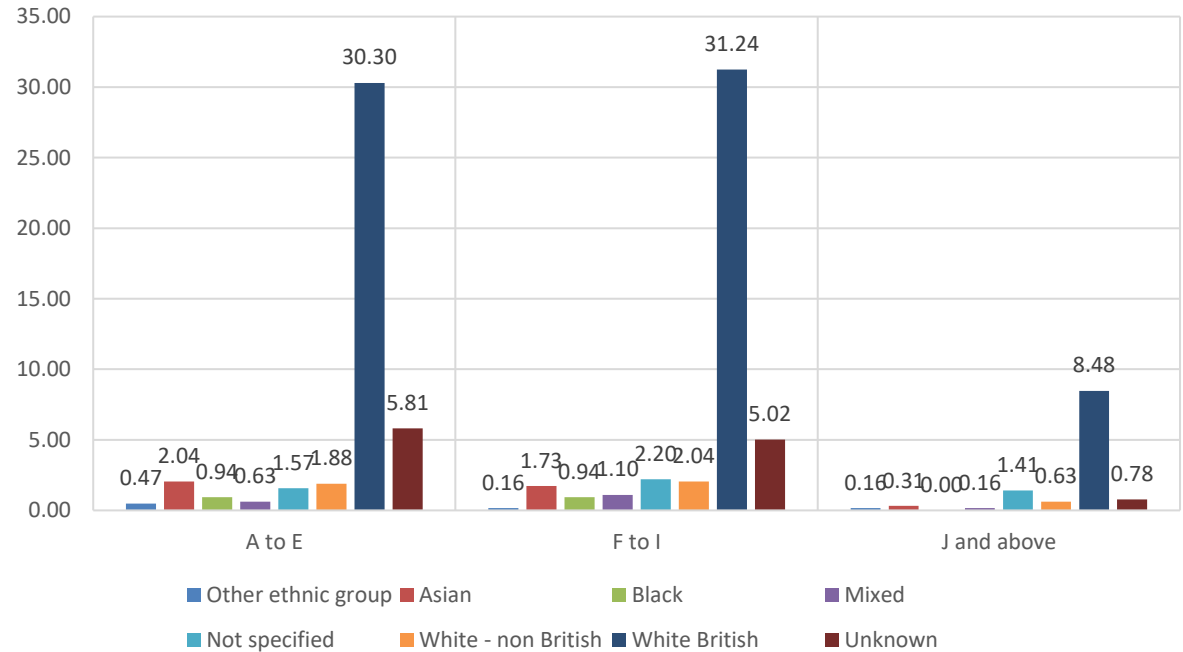


Chart 20 Disability Percentage Profile as at 31 December 2024

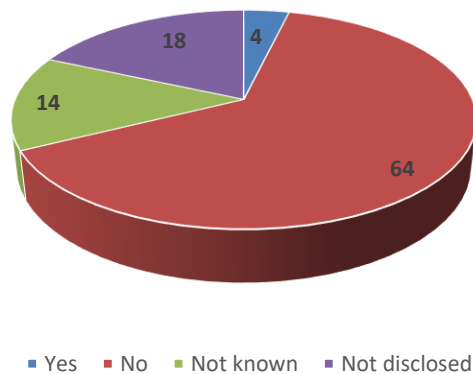
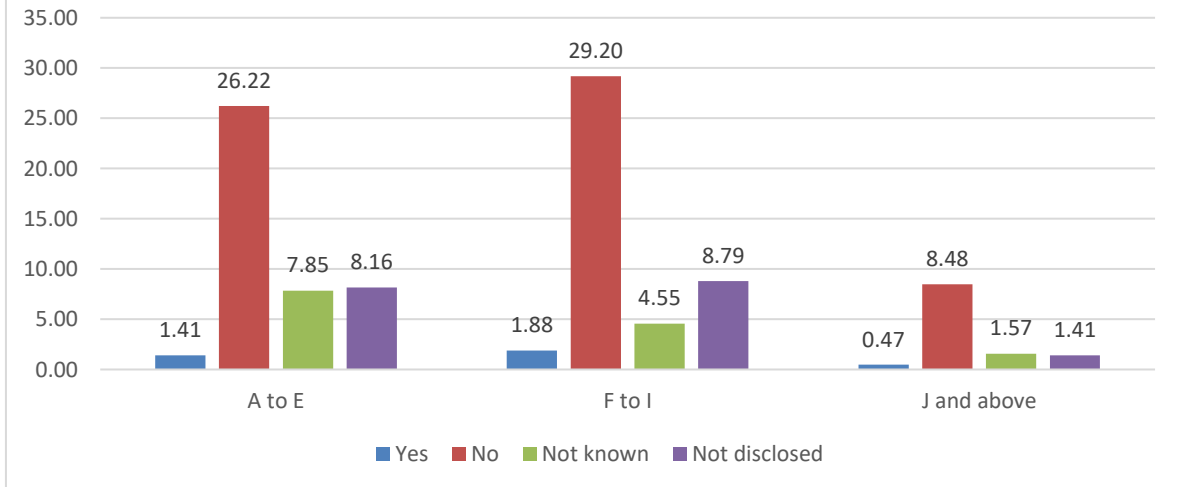


Chart 21 Disability Percentage by Grade Band as at 31 December 2024



Cherwell District Council

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, 12.72% of the workforce have declined to specify and 13.03% 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.

Workforce Profile

Quarter 3 2024-25

Chart 22

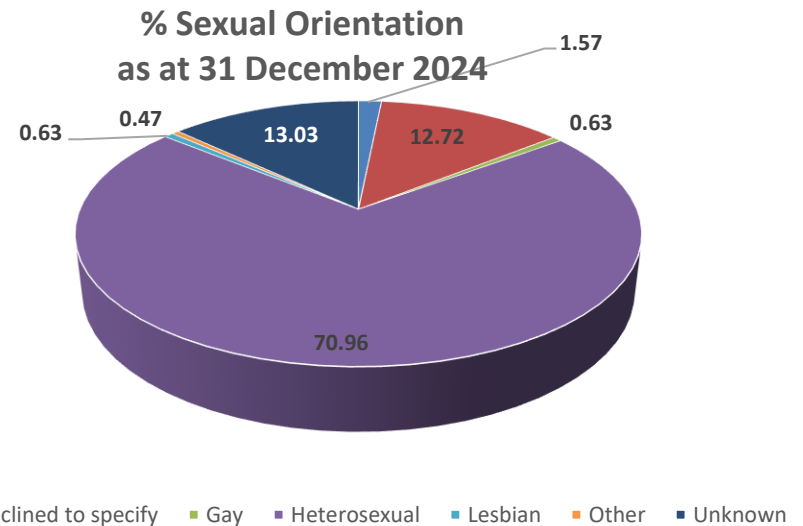
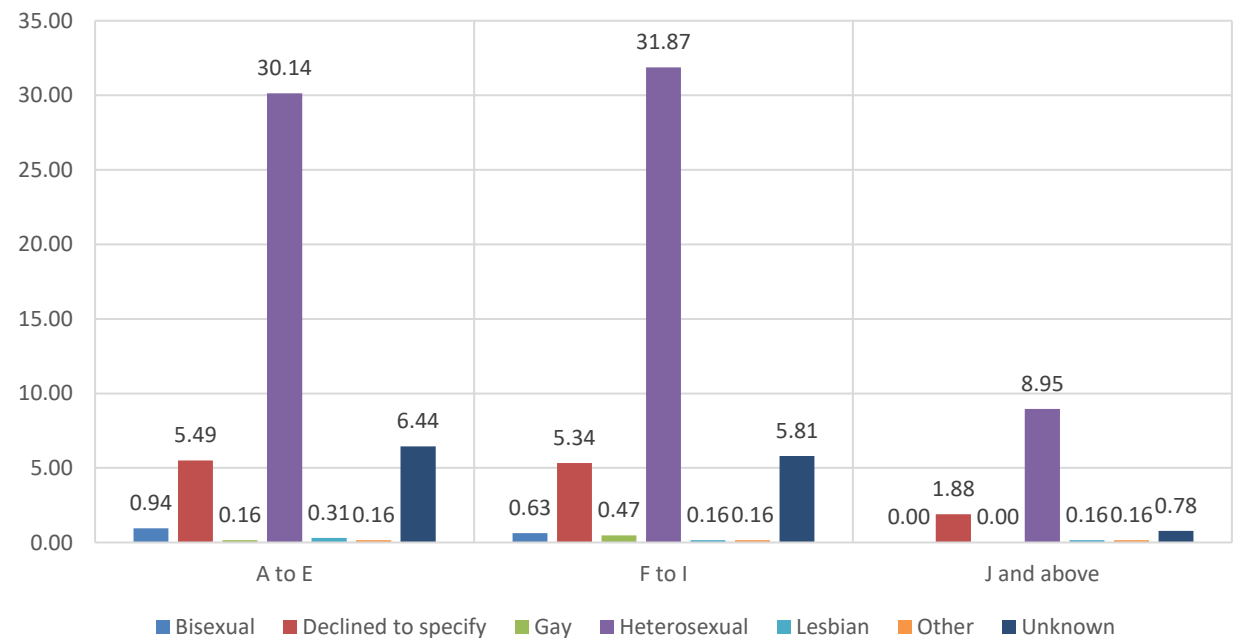


Chart 23

Sexual Orientation Percentage by Grade Band as at 31 December 2024



Diversity in Recruitment

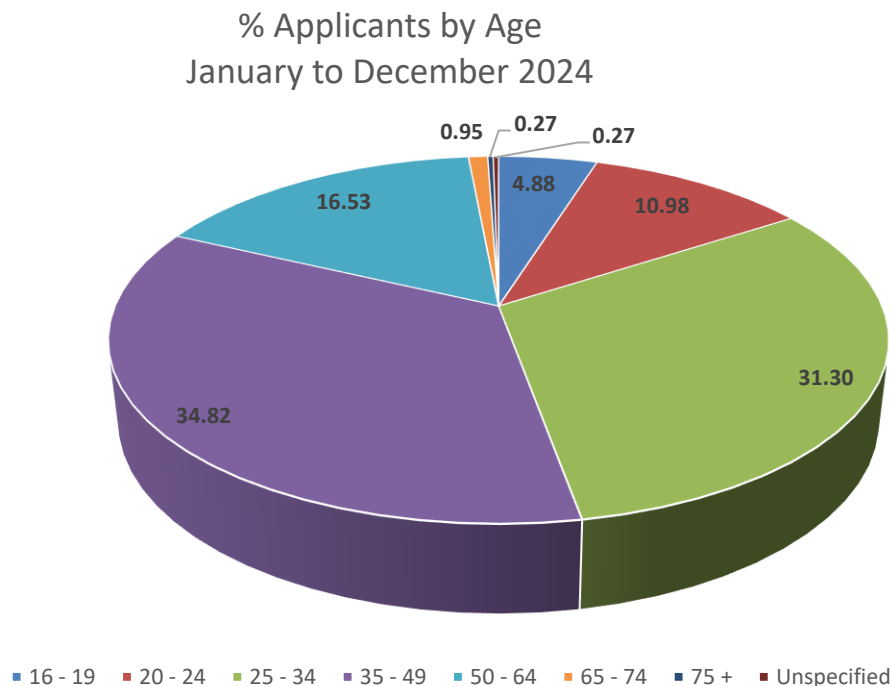
In October 2023, CDC launched a new recruitment module as part of its HR and Payroll system. This has meant that analysis of recruitment data can now be completed. In line with CDC’s Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity agenda, this data allows insight into whether or not CDC is reaching and is representative of all communities within the district. Recruitment data has been analysed and since going live in October 2023. The data presented in this report is representative of the last 12 months from January to December 2024. There have been 62 recruitment campaigns between January and December 2024, to which 737 applications were received and 62 offers of employment made.

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

Chart 24 shows a breakdown of applicants by age category. At the request of Personnel Committee, the age ranges of applicants have been updated to match the district census data. The highest number of applicants were between ages 35 and 49, followed by 25-34, these 2 groups account for 66.12% of all applications. Table 4 provides district data on age bands. When comparing the data of applicants by age to district census data, it shows the percentage of applicants in age ranges 20-24, 25-34 and 35 to 49 are higher than the district average.

Chart 24

Table 4



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

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

Chart 25

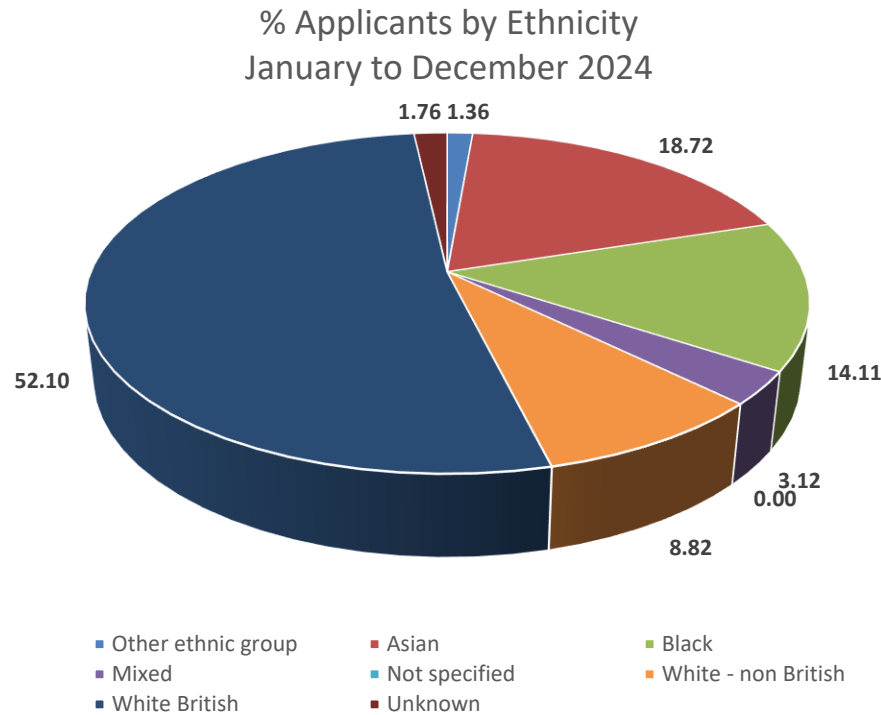


Table 5

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, and applicants in the White British significantly lower.

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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

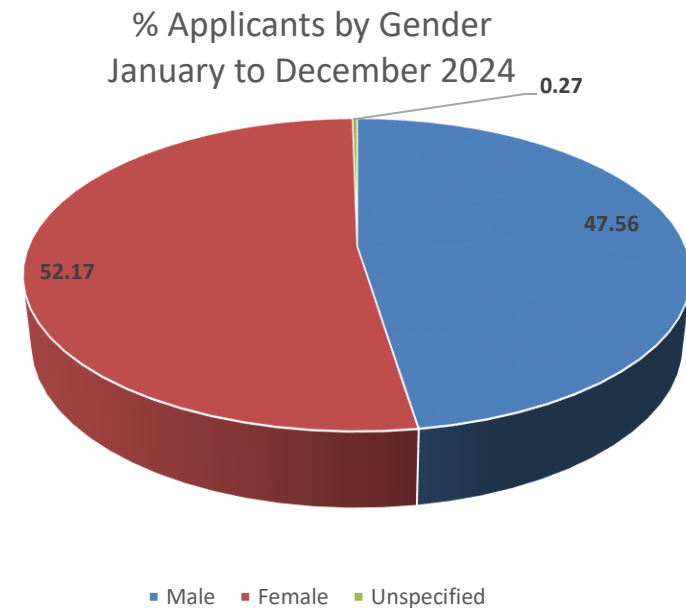


Chart 27

% Applicants with Disabilities
January to December 2024

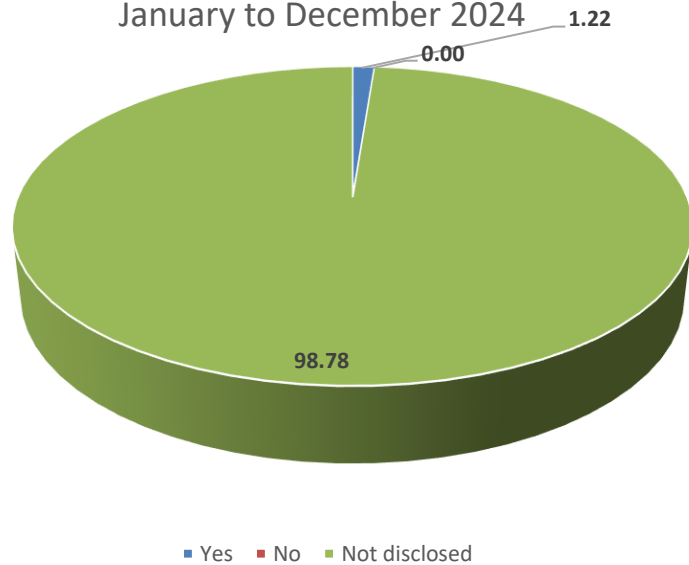
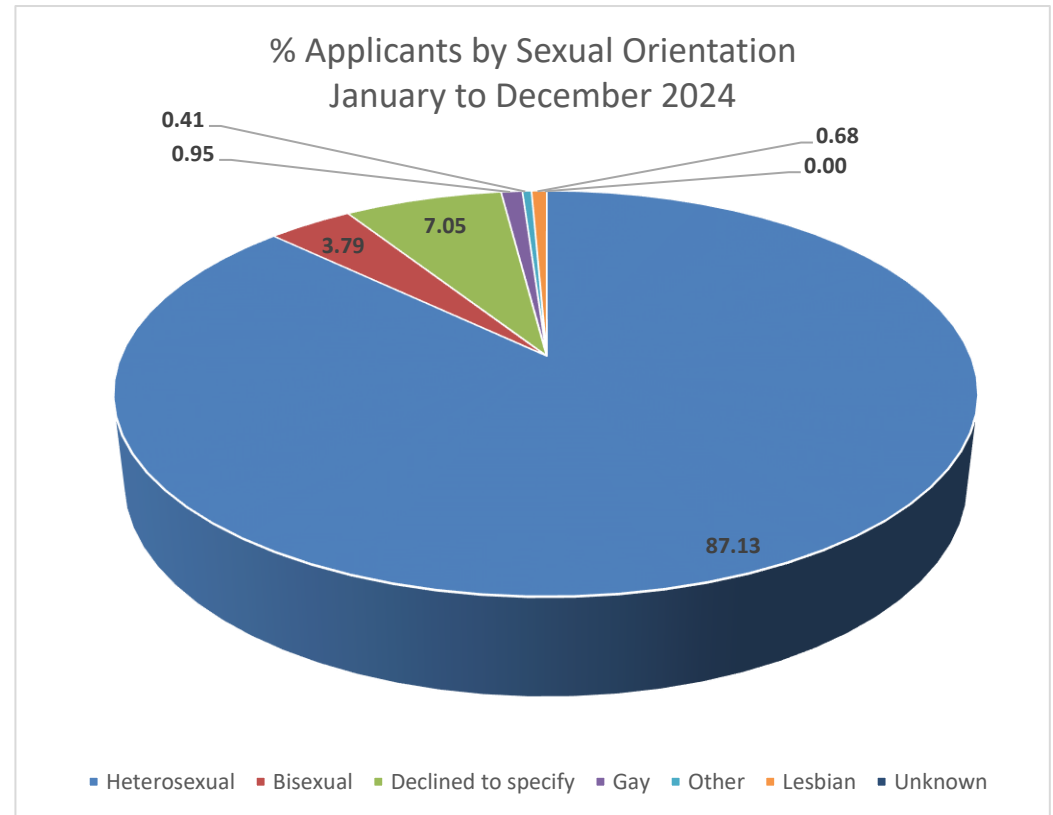


Chart 27 shows the percentage of applicants by disability. 98.78% of applicants have not disclosed this at applicant stage. It is hoped that applicants would provide this information should they have disabilities as we have a guaranteed interview scheme if they meet the essential criteria for a role, 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
January to December 2024



Apprenticeships within Cherwell District Council as at Quarter 3 – 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 25 apprenticeships currently running within the Council for this quarter, of which 5 is an apprentice on programme, employed specifically as an apprentice; and the remaining 20 are employees undertaking an apprenticeship as CPD or career progression.

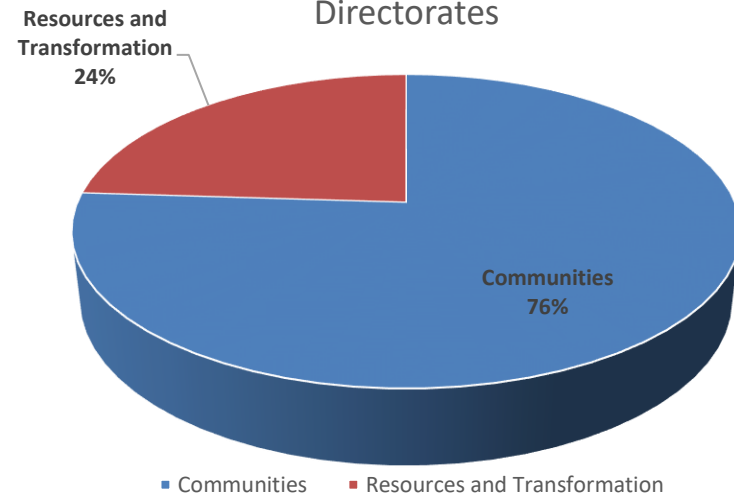
There are currently 19 apprenticeships within the Communities Directorate and 6 within the Resources and Transformation Directorate – please see chart 26.

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

Apprenticeships details below:

Apprenticeship Standard	Level of Apprenticeship	Duration of Apprenticeship	Number of employees on apprenticeship	Apprentice or Employee CPD	Team	Directorate	Cost of Apprenticeships (£)
Autocare Technician	Level 2	2 ½ Years	1	Apprentice	Fleet Management	Communities (1)	12,000
Business Administrator	Level 3	1 ½ Years	1	Apprentice	Depot – Thorpe Lane	Communities (1)	5,000

Chart 29 Percentage of Apprenticeships within Directorates



Apprenticeship Standard	Level of Apprenticeship	Duration of Apprenticeship	Number of employees on apprenticeship	Apprentice or Employee CPD	Team	Directorate	Cost of Apprenticeships (£)
HR Support	Level 3	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
Transport and warehouse operations supervisor	Level 3	14 months	1	CPD	Business Support - Depot	Communities (1)	4,700
Sports Coach	Level 4	14 months	1	Apprentice	Wellbeing	Communities (1)	9,000
Data Analyst	Level 4	14 months	1	CPD	Digital and Innovation	Resources and Transformation (1)	14,250
Data Protection and Information Governance Practitioner	Level 4	1 ½ years	1	CPD	Legal Services	Resources and Transformation (1)	10,000
People Professional	Level 5	1 ½ years	1	CPD	Human Resources	Resources and Transformation (1)	11,000

Apprenticeship Standard	Level of Apprenticeship	Duration of Apprenticeship	Number of employees on apprenticeship	Apprentice or Employee CPD	Team	Directorate	Cost of Apprenticeships (£)
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
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
			25		Total apprenticeship levy committed		287,588

Current amount in the Levy Account

The Council currently has £164626 in their levy account. It is estimated that a further £136,768 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 £61,301 in the next 12 months based on the current apprenticeships within the table above.

Expired Funds

No funds expired in Quarter 3 of 2024/25, but the levy account is indicating that the Council may have an amount of £1,303 expiring in February 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.