

**Corporate Workforce Equality & Diversity
Annual Report 2024**

Prepared by:
People Management

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Introduction

Our Workforce Equality and Diversity Report provides a snapshot of our workforce information and is based on data that we held about our staff as at 31st March 2024 (the data period is 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024).

In the same way that we recognise and value the diversity of people living in the city, we also understand the benefits that having a diverse workforce can bring, and we are committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all employees. We understand that having a workforce with a wider range of skills, backgrounds, ages and experiences means we will have an organisation that is more responsive to our communities.

This report sets out some of the information we analyse to help us make our workplaces more inclusive, enable our employees to be the best they can be and in turn support the delivery of our City Plan. This report forms part of the information we collect, analyse and publish to help comply with the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duties (PSED). The Equality Act 2010 introduced the PSED which consists of a General Duty and Specific Duties. The General Duty requires public bodies, to pay due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not (this includes tackling prejudice and promoting understanding)

The Specific Duties require public bodies to be transparent about how they are responding to the Equality Duty. This report demonstrates compliance with the requirement to publish information relating to employees who share protected characteristics (for public bodies with 150 or more employees). The report presents information in relation to the characteristics protected by equality law but also goes further as we recognise other characteristics can also be linked to disadvantage, for example poverty, caring responsibilities, gender identity and more.

Context



This report forms part of a wider suite of information that supports employee equality, diversity and inclusion action planning:

- [Equality Scheme](#) - this sets out further information on the Equality Act 2010, Public Sector Equality Duty and what the council is doing to meet the needs of the legislation and beyond. It also sets out the council's equality objective and associated activity, including increasing employee monitoring declaration rates, improving understanding of equality in employment and determining perceptions of fairness in our workplaces.
- [Pay Policy Statement](#) – this sets out the methods by which salaries of all employees are determined and helps to ensure a fair approach by ensuring transparency of senior pay and the relationship with pay of other employees. Equal pay principles are incorporated into our practice and decision making. During 2016 the council implemented a wide-ranging pay review via a Workforce Transformation Project, which reviewed and set the relative grade and pay level for every position in the council. That exercise was the subject of a very detailed equality impact assessment, which demonstrated how the review had reduced pay gaps.
- [Gender Pay Gap Report](#) - to comply with The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017.
- Employee views – via an employee survey, staff insight sessions, the Supporting Equality Network, ad hoc surveys, and engagement events.
- Apprenticeships -The Council continues to be active in its promotion of apprenticeships. The Council directly employed 54 apprentices (18 recruited as Apprentices and 36 existing employees' accessing an apprenticeship through the Apprenticeship LEVY) during the period of this report.

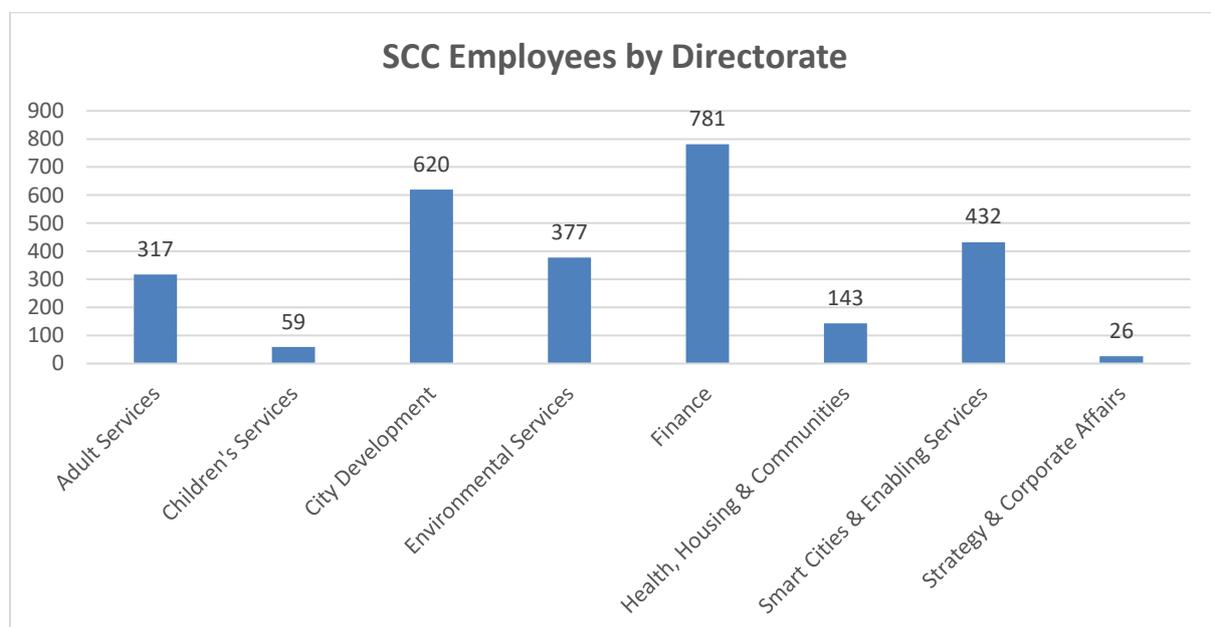
Declaration Rates

In recent years the key focus for our workforce diversity reporting has been to improve declaration rates to enable more useful analysis. The introduction of Employee Self Service, which has enabled employees to view and update their own equality information, has helped us to reduce the gaps in our information.

We have now reduced the number of people who have not completed their equality data from 16.2% to 4.5%. Of those that have completed 2% prefer not to disclose.

Some of the data we hold on our employees involves small numbers and can make meaningful analysis difficult. Sharing such information within this report increases the risk of identification if the information is presented in full. Therefore, where there are groups of fewer than 10 people within an equality characteristic, the information has been redacted with an * to protect anonymity. Information is published in accordance with General Data Protection Regulation's and Data Protection Act 2018 and does not identify individuals. All employee equality information is stored securely and treated confidentially.

Workforce Overview

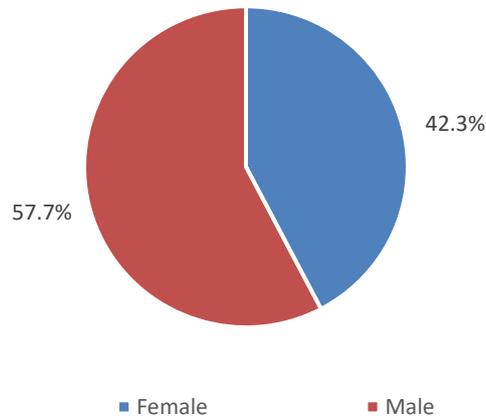


Contracts

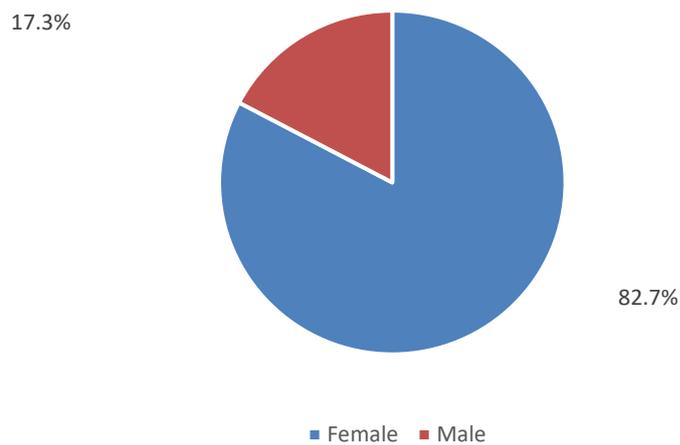
We directly employ 2755 people on a range of employment contracts. Some people have more than one job and therefore the job count is higher at 2913. This data, and the data in the following analysis excludes 1481 school-based employees.

966 employees (35.1%) work on a part-time basis, (i.e. less than a standard 37 hours working week), and 1789 work full-time. The incidence of part-time working across the organisational structure shows a predominance of part-time working in lower paid roles, and this pattern is similar across the UK. Part time working is nationally recognised as a contributor to gender pay gaps, due to women taking on low paid part time roles to balance family and caring responsibilities more often than men.

Gender Percentage Split (Full time positions)



Gender Percentage Split (Part time positions)

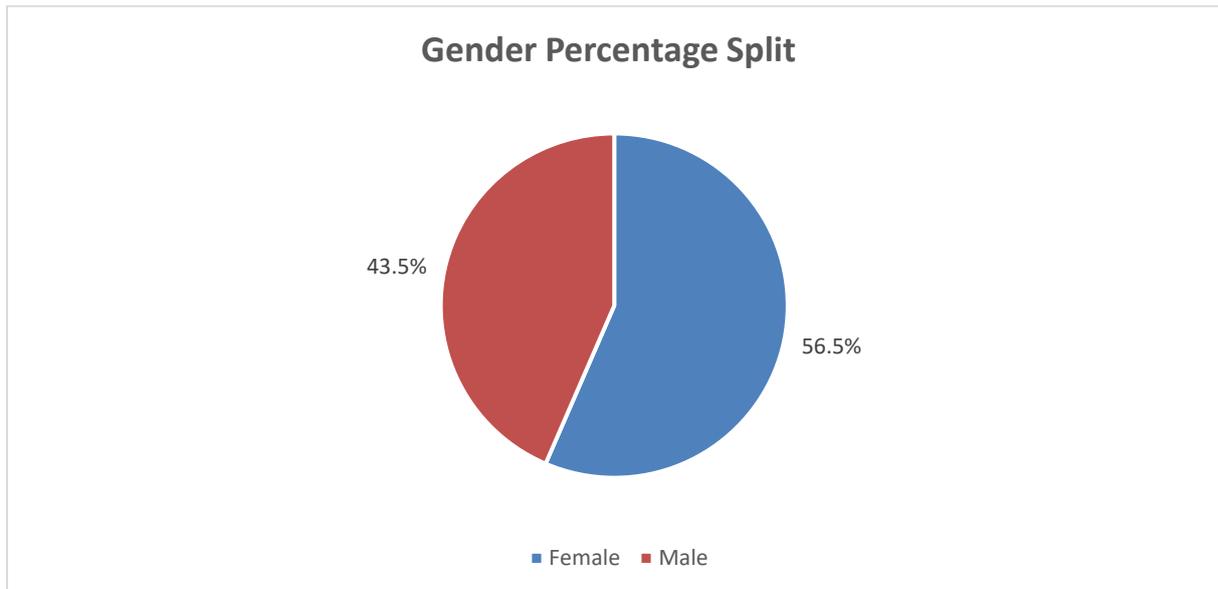


The council employs 192 people on a Permanent Variable Hours contract (PVH). This means that they have the same employment rights and terms and conditions of employment as other employees but do not have a set number of contracted working hours. Although this enables the Council to have a flexible workforce available to meet temporary or changeable staffing requirements, we look to establish posts with contracted hours of work wherever possible.

Workforce diversity data analysis

Gender

Overall, female employees make up 56.5% of Sunderland City Council staff and 43.5% are male. This compares to a population with 51% female and 49% male (2021 Census). Women predominantly fill part time positions (82.7% of part-time workers are female) which also influences the make-up of the work force.



Age

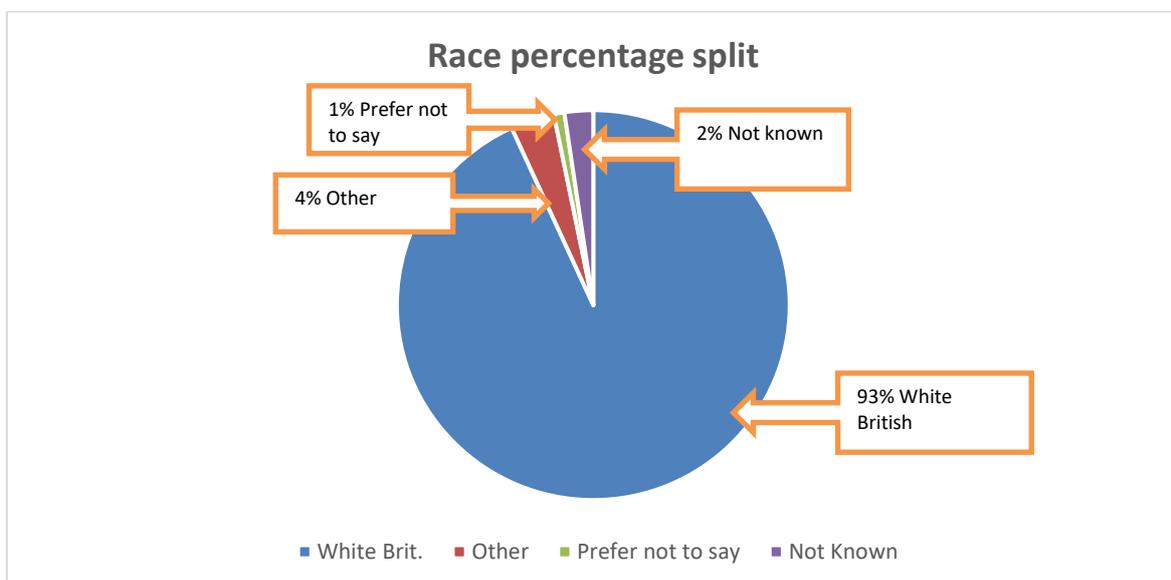
The average age of the population of Sunderland is 43 years of age (2021 Census). The age profile of the council workforce has reduced over the last 3 years and the average age of our employees in 2024 is now 47.8. The percentage of our employees aged 16-30 has also increased to 10.2%. The proportion of the workforce under 50 now accounts for the majority of council employees (50.4%).

Age Range

Age Range	Grand Total	%age
16 to 19	28	1.0%
20 to 24	86	3.1%
25 to 29	137	5.0%
30 to 34	190	6.9%
35 to 39	235	8.5%
40 to 44	342	12.4%
45 to 49	370	13.4%
50 to 54	414	15.0%
55 to 59	488	17.7%
60 to 64	333	12.1%
65 to 69	105	3.8%
70 to 74	21	0.8%
75 to 79	*	0.2%
80 to 85	*	0.0%
Grand Total	2755	100%

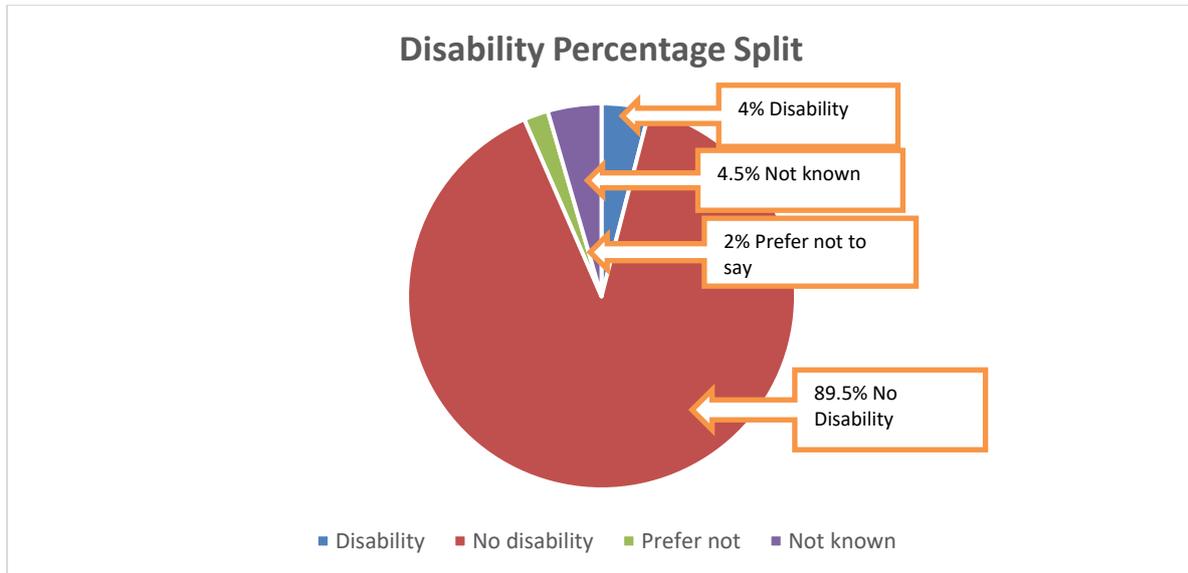
Race

The workforce within Sunderland City Council is predominantly White British (93.0%). This is not surprising, given that the majority of our employees are resident within Sunderland and there is a small non-white British population within the city. The 2021 Census shows 94.6% of the Sunderland population are White. Detailed analysis of wider data in relation to ethnicity is difficult due to the low numbers of non-white British people in the workforce.



Disability

The council has 110 employees (4%) who declare themselves as disabled, compared to 23.1% of residents in Sunderland declaring themselves disabled (Information sourced from 2021 Census). The figures suggest that there is some under-reporting of disability in the employee statistics. It is likely that there is also some under-representation of disability in the workplace.



Pregnancy & Maternity

A snapshot figure at the end of March 2024 shows 13 employees on maternity leave.

36 employees were on maternity leave between April 2023 and March 2024. 97.2% of employees whose maternity leave finished in this 12-month period returned to work, which is a significantly high proportion and is a positive reflection of the council's employment policies to support working parents, e.g. flexible working options.

24.3% of our employees state that they are a parent / carer for a child under the age of 18. The information provided helps us to understand our workforce profile, and to ensure that our policies and practices best support employees with childcare responsibilities. The number is likely to be higher, as information is currently not known for this category for some of the workforce.

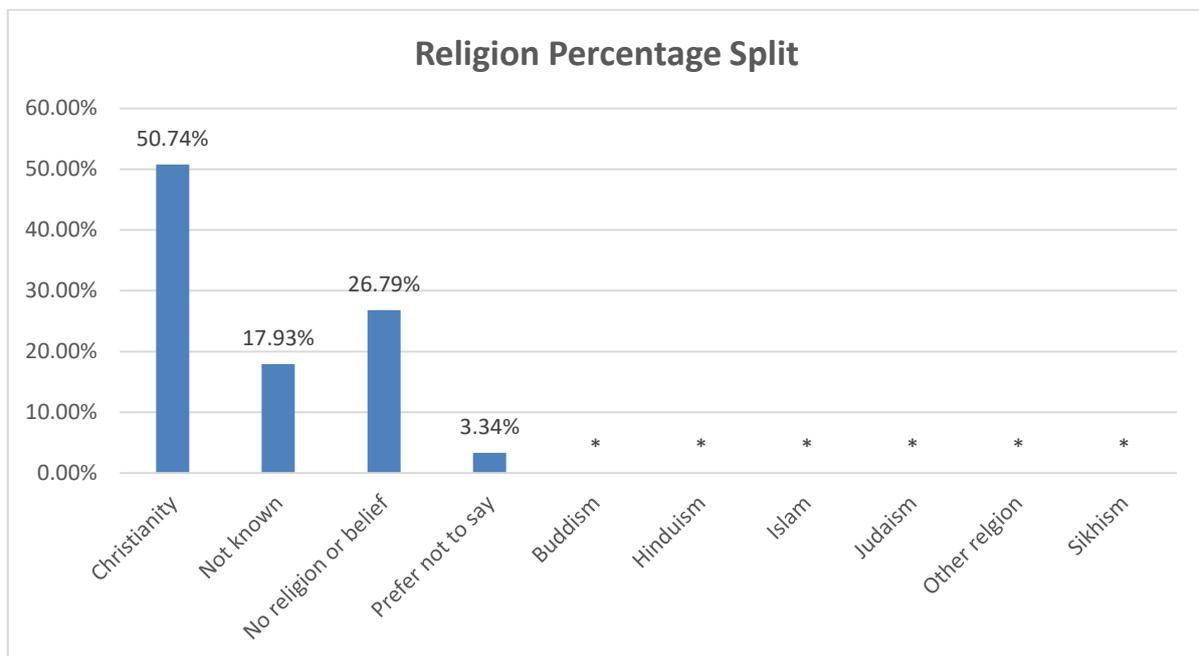
Gender Reassignment

In 2015 a policy was developed, in consultation with a transgender employee and the employee network, and introduced in order to support Trans, Non-binary and Transitioning Employees. It has since been reviewed based on guidance from Stonewall.

Information on employees who are or have transitioned is still not widely held. Of course, employees have the opportunity not to disclose information on an equality aspect if they so wish. This data has not been included in this report because this could lead to identification of individuals.

Religion or Belief

Our employees provided information, on a voluntary basis, regarding their religion or belief, to provide a baseline of employee information to help to gain a better understanding of equalities across the council and inform our policies and practices where they impact on religion or belief. As mentioned, employees can choose not to disclose information on an equality aspect if they so wish.



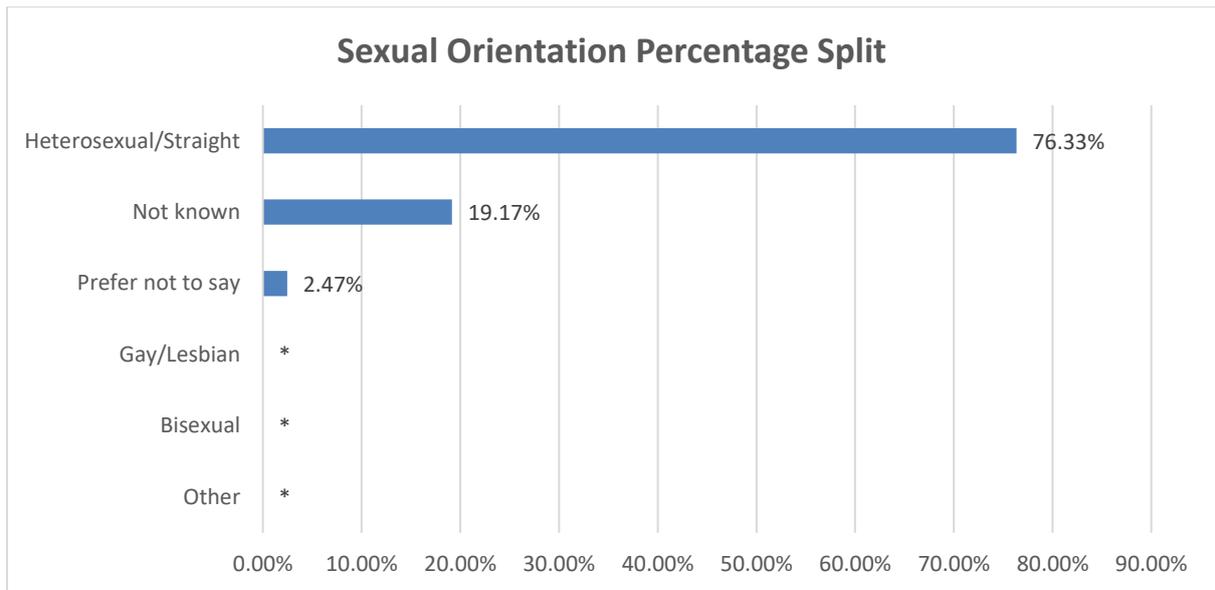
The Council's employment policies and procedures in place for supporting employees in respect of religion or belief include for example:

- Specific flexibility available in our Leave of Absence Policy for religious or cultural observance.
- The allocation of faith rooms for use during lunch break periods.

Sexual Orientation

Our employment policies and benefits are explicit and apply to everyone in the council and all relevant benefits will be paid to both same sex and opposite sex couples.

Flying the Rainbow flag annually to promote International Day against Homophobia and Transphobia and promoting Sunderland Pride also sends a message out of the council's commitment to sexual orientation equality in the workplace.



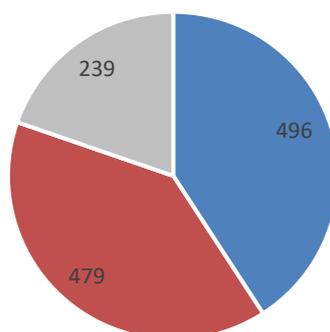
Marriage & Civil Partnership

78% of employees have disclosed their marital status.

Carers Information

We asked employees to advise whether they are a Carer, so that we can understand our workforce profile and the demands on our employees in respect of caring responsibilities. Employees may record that they fit more than 1 category of caring. The definition used is: “A carer is someone who, without payment, provides help and support to a friend, neighbour, relative or partner (opposite or same sex) who could not manage without this help because of frailty, illness or disability.”

Parent Carer & Carer Breakdown



■ Parent Carer ■ Carer ■ Carer & Parent Carer

Employee Journey

Recruitment and Progression

The Council is committed to recruiting a high-quality workforce with appropriate expertise, skills and experience. Equality of opportunity is at the core of our recruitment and selection procedures which provide ways to assess and appoint the most capable and effective employees while ensuring that all individuals are treated fairly. It is our policy to recruit the most appropriate person for each approved vacancy.

Wherever possible the Council remains committed to maximising the opportunities for redeployment and career development and to utilising the skills and expertise of existing employees, including apprentices.

The Council is committed to ensuring that all recruitment is free from unfair and unlawful discrimination. The Council encourages disabled people to apply for advertised vacancies.

Reasonable adjustments for disabled people are made at all stages of the recruitment process, if required. We guarantee to interview and consider all disabled applicants who meet the criteria of a job vacancy.

The application form contains an equal opportunity monitoring form. This information is used for monitoring purposes and compiling performance information but is removed before shortlisting.

Health & Wellbeing Programme

The council continues to support employee Health and Wellbeing via the Employee Wellness Programme and access to occupational health services. The programme provides a number of support services to promote and enable healthy living within the council and within the City.

The Council continues to participate in the North East Better Health at Work Award. This regional award recognises employers who assist their employees in improving their health and wellbeing.

We remain at the Maintaining Excellence level of the BHAWA (the highest level of the Award) and, through engagement work, continue to work with and support over 50 external workplaces across the City.

The council is committed to change the way mental health is thought about and support employees who experience mental health problems.

The Council's Occupational Health Service provides a comprehensive range of proactive services to support and maintain the health, safety and wellbeing of employees in the workplace.

The functions of the Occupational Health Service include:

- attendance management
- health surveillance
- health screening
- health promotion
- immunisation
- counselling
- physiotherapy

Listening to Our Employees

Our Supporting Equality Network (an employee network) has been running since 2014. The network is open to all employees. It raises awareness of equality issues, influences council policy and allows staff to give their views and share relevant information.

The council take any equality concerns seriously and address these through the appropriate channels. We would usually become aware of these through direct approaches from employees or trade union representatives, through our joint consultation arrangements and groups, or through practical implementation of our relevant policies.

Conclusion

The collection, monitoring and reporting of workforce equality information is in line with the council's Equality Scheme and our duty to monitor the Council's workforce and publish the results. We will continue to develop an equality profile of staff, and publish this on an annual basis, in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty. We will also use the findings from this report to inform future action planning to help us meet

our equality objectives as part of our commitment to an inclusive and diverse workforce.