

Notice of Meeting

Employment Committee

Councillor Leake (Chair),
Councillor Allen (Vice-Chair),
Councillors Angell, Bhandari, Dudley, Mrs L Gibson, Neil, Porter and
Wade
Councillor Heydon (Non-Voting Co-Optee)

Wednesday 14 December 2022, 6.30 pm

**Council Chamber - Time Square, Market Street, Bracknell, RG12
1JD**



Agenda

*All councillors at this meeting have adopted the Mayor's Charter
which fosters constructive and respectful debate.*

Item	Description	Page
1.	Apologies	
	To receive apologies for absence and to note the attendance of any substitute members.	
2.	Declarations of Interest	
	<p>Members are asked to declare any disclosable pecuniary or affected interests in respect of any matter to be considered at this meeting.</p> <p>Any Member with a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in a matter should withdraw from the meeting when the matter is under consideration and should notify the Democratic Services Officer in attendance that they are withdrawing as they have such an interest. If the Disclosable Pecuniary Interest is not entered on the register of Members interests the Monitoring Officer must be notified of the interest within 28 days.</p> <p>Any Member with an affected Interest in a matter must disclose the interest to the meeting. There is no requirement to withdraw from the meeting when the interest is only an affected interest, but the Monitoring Officer should be notified of the interest, if not previously notified of it, within 28 days of the meeting.</p>	
3.	Minutes from previous meeting	3 - 6
	To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 12 October 2022.	
4.	Urgent Items of Business	
	Any other items which, pursuant to Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Chairman decides are urgent.	
5.	Update from the Chairman of the Local Joint Committee	

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	A verbal update from the Chairman of the Local Joint Committee.	
6.	Minutes of Sub Groups	7 - 12
	The Committee is asked to note the minutes of the Local Joint Committee held on 12 October 2022 and the Education Employment Sub Committee on 12 October 2022.	
7.	COVID-19: Health & Safety Assessment Report	13 - 24
	To receive the Health & Safety Assessment Report. Reporting: Doug Brady	
8.	HR Policy Review - Domestic Abuse and Violence/Abuse at Work	25 - 52
	To review and agree the revised policies for Domestic Abuse and Violence/Abuse at Work. Reporting: Paul Young	
9.	Annual Workforce Monitoring Report 2021/22	53 - 76
	To receive the Workforce Monitoring Report. Reporting: Paul Young	

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Published: 6 December 2022

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**EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE
12 OCTOBER 2022
7.30 - 8.29 PM**

Present:

Councillors Leake (Chair), Allen (Vice-Chair) and Mrs L Gibson

Present Virtually:

Councillors Angell, Bhandari, Dudley and Porter

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillors Neil and Wade

Non-Voting Co-optee Present Virtually:

Councillors Heydon

11. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

12. Minutes from previous meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on the 12 July 2022 were approved as a correct record.

13. Urgent Items of Business

There were no urgent items of business.

14. Update from the Chairman of the Local Joint Committee

The Chairman update the Committee that Local Joint Committee had been held earlier in the afternoon and had covered the items that were on the Employment Committee agenda. There were no particular issues raised.

15. Minutes of Sub Groups

The minutes of the Local Joint Committee held on the 12 July 2022 were noted.

16. Social Worker Pay/Retention & Recruitment People

The Committee received a report which sought approval for revised pay arrangements across social care to address the significant recruitment and retention challenges, support a more stabilised workforce and to reduce the agency spend.

The Committee were joined by Paul Young, Assistant Director: HR & OD and Grainne Siggins, Executive Director: People to present the report.

The work had been ongoing, with a report being presented to CMT in February 2022 outlining the extent of temporary/agency worker use and the issues this presents for service delivery and continuity particularly in social care. As a result, a project team

was established to explore the current market factors and comparative salaries, both locally and regionally, for social care for both adults and children.

There were three main reasons to why a Project Team had been formed:

- 1 To reduce reliance on agency workers and spend.
- 2 To stabilise the social care workforce by recruiting qualified workers to vacant permanent roles.
- 3 To retain existing social care workforce by providing better career opportunities, training and development.

Within the supporting documentation, the work of the Project Team had been detailed. Much of this work had been challenging, with issues around gathering information from other Local Authorities as factor.

Learning and development opportunities also needed to be a factor, following the Ofsted review, it was reported that the learning and development offering in Bracknell Forest was strong, but there was not the capacity for social workers to access it as they were too busy with their day job. This was something that this work wished to address in order to support staff.

The current pay arrangements differed between workers in children's social care and across adults because market premia payments and staff retention payments had been implemented for around 10 years. Due to these pay differentials the recommendations proposed in this report are likely to impact more positively in adult social care rather than all areas of the children's workforce. This had caused some issues within the review as it had been the desire to level up the salaries, however this hadn't been possible through this review as shown by the pay arrangements detailed within the report.

The proposals for the adult workforce would place social workers and occupational therapists at the top of the pay arrangements, in comparison neighbouring authorities. Given the forthcoming challenges in this area and the need for greater numbers of qualified staff there was every expectation that other local authorities would also be reviewing their own pay arrangements.

The proposed pay and grading scheme was based around three career pathways, which were detailed within the report, and allowed aligned training and career development including apprenticeships to each role within the pathways. Apprenticeship roles was something that was really important for Bracknell, with a "grow your own" approach being looked at. It was hoped that there would shortly be an apprenticeship program with a Southern University, which was a positive development.

Arising from the Committees comments and questions, the following points were made:

- In terms of the supervision newly qualified social workers required, simpler work, smaller caseloads and high-level supervision.
- Some roles required additional levels of qualification.
- The grades were supported in a way to manage the complexity levels of the work.
- The Assistant Team Management role would have the management oversight of cases, make key decisions and audits.
- There was no management at service level, that had previously been removed from the structure.

- The Council would always look to reduce layers and increase bands of control.
- Both Occupation Therapists and Social Workers were required to register with their relevant professional bodies in order to practice which was supported by the Council.
- The proposal had significant financial implications and there was a report going to the Executive to ensure the finances were in place, should the Committee agree the recommendations.
- MP meant market premium and RP meant retention payment.
- A retention payment had been given to all employees in 2021/22.
- It was raised that on Bracknell Forests website there was a vacancy showing for a Social Worker within the MASH team which was advertising up to £43k which didn't equate to the local pay comparison.
- 5.8 detailed the current salary at £43k.
- The comparable for children didn't look bad, but it did for adults and was less favourable. The increase for a children's social worker was £800.
- The recommendation was for all social workers for children and adults.
- Agency activities and costs detailed within the report were correct.
- There was an increase in agency costs due to the increasing vacancies.
- A number of agency staff would always be required to a degree, but the proposals would hopefully reduce that to a minimum.
- Suggested reduction in agency numbers had been detailed at 5.27.
- The number of agency staff were detailed within the report.
- The number of agency staff depended on the able to recruit to post and permeant positions and how quickly this could be done.
- There was a whole range of reasons to why permanent staff were preferred.
- It was hard to predict the number of agency staff due to turn over.
- These roles were roles that the LA had to have in place as a statutory duty which is why they had to be replaced by agency staff.
- Some Members raised concerns that the numbers felt like a jump in the dark and were not convinced by the proposals.
- The report detailed the countrywide challenges within social care and recruitment.
- The council was in a competitive market locally.
- Still with these proposals staff could earn more as an agency worker.
- Good quality staff making good quality decisions were needed to support and be committed to the council.
- AMHPS vacancies was due to an increase in numbers and an on-call arrangement in place.
- The EIA would be published in the next two weeks.
- The details surrounding the Climate Change implications would be responded to separately.
- Concerns were raised that there was not enough evidence.
- It was raised that there were more vacancies and agency jobs in the report then on the website.
- It was hoped that the council would be in a more favourable position for filling vacancies if the recommendation were approved.
- The posts in the report were regularly advertised and closed.
- A breakdown could be provided of the posts advertised and how many people had applied. It was commented by Members that this should have been included within the report.

RESOLVED that the Employment Committee consider the report and approves the following recommendations:

- i. A revised pay and grading scheme for social care.
- ii. The payment of 4 per cent retention payment for children's social workers.
- iii. Extension of the market premium payments to the Heads of Service roles in Adult Social Care

17. **2022 Pay Award**

Paul Young, Assistant Director: HR & OD provided a verbal update on the 2022 Pay Award.

The current position was that this was the pay award due for April 2022, but was looking like it could be confirmed earlier than previous years.

The request from Trade Unions had been an increase of £2000 on each spinal column point along with a number of other claims, such a recognition payment for work during the pandemic, national agreement on family leave and pay and home working policies, increase in millage rates, updates to contracts on term only arrangements and an additional day annual leave.

The National Employers responded to the Unions claim back in July, with an increase on spinal column points of £1925 and an increase of 4.04% on all allowances, that would be backdated from April 2022, and from April 2023 an additional day of annual leave would be added to the annual leave entitlement.

The Trade Unions had received the National Employers offer and they have gone back to their membership to consult and determine whether the offer would be accepted. UNISON had confirmed that the offer had been accepted from their members, the ballot for GMB was still open and would close on the 21 October.

It was hoped that the Council would be in a position to grant the April 2022 pay award in the November 2022 pay.

CHAIRMAN



**LOCAL JOINT COMMITTEE
12 OCTOBER 2022
4.00 - 4.30 PM**

Present:

Councillors Leake (Chair), Allen and Angell
David Allais, UNISON
Pat Kenny, UNISON
David McMullen, GMB

Apologies for absence were received from:
Councillors Wade

6. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

7. Minutes from Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2022, were approved as a correct record.

8. Urgent Items of Business

There were no urgent items of business.

Employment Committee: Agenda and Related Matters

The Sub-Committee was briefed and discussed the following matters which were to be considered by the Employment Committee later in the evening:

9. Social Worker Pay/Retention & Recruitment People

The Assistant Director: Human Resources & Organisational Development, Paul Young, advised the Sub-Committee that it was proposed to introduce revised pay arrangements across social care staff to address the significant recruitment and retention challenges. A revised pay and grading scheme was to be introduced, along with a 4 per cent retention payment for children's social workers and an extension of the market premium payments to the Heads of Service roles in Adult Social Care. The aim was to reduce the reliance on agency workers and therefore costs. At the same time, it was hoped to stabilise the social care workforce by recruiting qualified workers to vacant permanent roles, whilst retaining existing workers by also providing better career opportunities, training and development.

Mr Young stressed that it was a particularly difficult area. Recruitment in other work areas had been difficult but nowhere near as bad as with professional social workers.

In response to a suggestion that the Council was always chasing the dragon, Mr Young advised that on this occasion the Council was ahead of the dragon. The likelihood was that other local authorities would however respond by offering

enhanced pay. Therefore, the Council was not just increasing pay, but also seeking to offer support, training and development opportunities and aiming to help improve staff's work/life balance. The Council was also looking to have better arrangements to grow its own staff, including offering more apprenticeships. This was in response to the lack of social workers available in the market. The Council wanted to become an employer of choice.

Pat Kenny indicated that most councils were talking about it. Slough had been spending £2m per month on agency workers across the Council. There were also issues about some agency workers who, if employed, might face disciplinary action, but if coming from an agency would just leave one authority only to move to another. He believed that if the Council was perceived as a good employer, it was more likely that staff would stay there.

Mr Young indicated that exit interviews had revealed that more people were leaving to go to agencies, increasing the costs to the Council. He stressed that the Council wanted to have a stable workforce.

Councillor Leake indicated that it was a national problem that one council could not solve. A proper supply was required. The employers and unions needed to get together nationally to see how it could be addressed. Modular training may assist.

There were no other comments.

10. **2022 Pay Award**

The Assistant Director: Human Resources & Organisational Development, Paul Young, advised the Sub-Committee the employers had offered, with effect from 1 April 2022, an increase of £1,925 on all NJC pay points 1 and above and an increase of 4.04% on all allowances. With effect from 1 April 2023, there would be an increase of one day to all employees' annual leave entitlement and the deletion of pay point 1 from the NJC pay spine. They had rejected a one-off COVID-19 recognition payment, the introduction of a homeworking allowance, the introduction of a school support staff retention payment scheme and a reduction of the working week to 35 hours with no loss of pay.

David Allais reported that UNISON had accepted the offer with 62% in favour of the offer. David McMullen stated that the GMB ballot would close on 21 October 2022 and was hopeful that the offer would be accepted. Mr Young added that, if accepted, would be implemented for payment in November.

11. **Matters to be Raised by Trade Unions**

No matters were raised by the trades unions.

CHAIRMAN

**EDUCATION EMPLOYMENT SUB
COMMITTEE
12 OCTOBER 2022
5.30 - 5.56 PM**



Present:

Councillors Allen (Chair), Mrs L Gibson and Leake

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillors Wade, Bhandari, Neil and Porter

Non-Voting Co-optee Present Virtually:

David Allias, UNISON

6. Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest.

7. Urgent Items of Business

There were no Urgent Items of Business.

8. Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on the 8 July 2020 were approved as a correct record.

9. Schools HR Policy Review - Organisational Change Policy

The programme of review for Schools HR policies and procedures was ongoing with updates to the Organisation Change Policy for Schools being brought to the Committee.

The last update to the Policy has been made in 2021, which had been mirror changes. This review was to ensure all employment responsibilities were included within the policy.

No significant changes had been made to the policy, and the policy had been through the relevant consultation process with Schools and the Schools Trade Unions. Any comments received had been included within the updated policy.

Arising from the Committees comments and questions, the following points were made:

- The previous update was in regard to wording rather than significant policy changes.
- It would be useful to have a track change document for policies going forward.
- The policy changes included changes to the steps of consultation, clarity of roles and responsibility and clearer on steps should the Council need to go through a redundancy process in schools.
- Going forward there would be a listing of the changes within the policy, or a tracked change document.

- There was nothing specific that had triggered requirement to make the changes to this policy. HR had asked for some clarification on points when going through the process in schools.
- The second policy on the agenda was a brand-new policy.
- HR support was provided to Local Authority maintained schools and a number of Academy Schools in Bracknell. HR support was not provided to Greenshaw Academy Schools or Kings Group Academy Schools as there was an HR function within these Trusts.
- The School's HR Services was often at the top of list of services to schools and scored very highly.

RESOLVED that the Committee review and agree the updated procedures for Organisation Change Policy for Schools.

10. **Schools HR Policy Review - Low Level Concerns Policy**

The programme of review for Schools HR policies and procedures was ongoing with the Low Level Concerns Policy for Schools being brought to the Committee.

This was a brand-new policy and was a statutory duty under the 2021 Keeping Children in Education guidance.

This wasn't an investigation or formal process but set out what schools needed to do where low level concerns were raised. It set out how to record, report and investigate these concerns, and where necessary report the concerns to the designated Local Authority Officer.

Arising from the Committees comments and questions, the following points were raised:

- Members were pleased to see policy
- When multiple low level concerns were raised, trends and frequencies would be monitored. Each concern would be recorded and investigated. The onus was on schools, to undertake monitor, the investigation and report any issues to the designated officer.
- This policy was not a procedure, it was how to record low level concerns and use as evidence to proceed to a formal disciplinary or the designated officer.
- It was raised that there needed to be a point where multiple low level concerns should be raised as a disciplinary matter and that there should be a link between this policy and the disciplinary policy.
- There was a list of examples of low level concerns within the report.
- It was emphasised that there was a clear link between the Low Level Concerns Policy and the Disciplinary Polices and would stand alongside the Disciplinary Policy, and would supplement the policy.
- It was raised that the Disciplinary Policy needed to make reference to this new policy.
- As part of the policy review, the procedures were being updated and amended.
- This policy formalised and ensured all low level concerns were documented which currently didn't always happen.
- The policy would be shared with schools for adoption following agreement of this Committee.

RESOLVED that the Committee review and agree the procedures for Low Level Concerns Policy for Schools.

CHAIRMAN

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To: **EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE**

COVID-19: Health & Safety Assessment Report Executive Director: Delivery

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. As a result of COVID 19 and the changes with working arrangements, this report summarises the results of completions of the following eLearning package Display Screen Equipment, Home Working Assessments, Returning to the Office Assessment and BAME Vulnerable Assessments, which have been undertaken since January 2022.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 Employment Committee to note the H&S report.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1. The council has a duty of care under the Health and Safety legislation for ensuring the wellbeing of staff. All staff have had to change their working environments and ways of working; therefore, the council are required to update everyone's risk assessments. For those who use computers as part of their work, these staff also had to undertake Display Screen Assessments (DSE).
- 3.2. According to the NHS' Equality and Health Inequality hub, the coronavirus pandemic has widened the health inequalities across the country, "*disproportionate[ly] impact on many who already face disadvantage and discrimination.*" Evidence shows this has had a particularly negative effect on BAME communities. Therefore, it is important that the council is informed of how this may impact the workforce and puts in place actions to mitigate these impacts.

4. Alternative Options Considered

- 4.1. No alternative actions proposed.

5. Key Findings

- 5.1 The purpose of the report is to ensure compliance with the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 (as amended in 2002) when working at home and in the office.

This year the following have been undertaken:

- BAME/Vulnerable Assessment: 0 (no new ones)
- DSE e-learning: 38
- DSE Assessments 128
- New Working from Home Assessments:17
- Returning to the Office Assessment: 207

More detail can be found within the report.

The assessments can be found at:

<https://bfcouncil.sharepoint.com/SitePages/Risk-assessment-guidance.aspx>

6. Proposed next Steps

- 6.1. The recommendations in Section 2 are intended to ensure that the Council has an effective framework for ensuring compliance with best practice in terms of work environment, in the interests of staff wellbeing.

7. Consultation and Other Considerations

Legal Advice

- 7.1. The recommendations in this report are underpinned by the Council's duties as an employer, both in common law and under statute to take reasonable care in ensuring a safe work environment (which extends to home working) and safe systems of work for its staff.

Financial Advice

- 7.2. There are no financial implications.

Assistant Director: HR and OD

- 7.3 HR is supportive of the recommendation for staff to complete the home working assessment and display screen equipment. Further discussion is required regarding the collation of risk assessments and whether the responsibility is held within HR or H&S.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 7.4 This paper is provided to summarise information related to health equalities and coronavirus. The proposed actions aim to encourage positive actions related to equalities.

Environment and Climate Implications

- 7.5 Not applicable.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 7.6 The council has reviewed its workplace risk assessment tool developed to assess working practice of all staff. The tool now enables a particular assessment of BAME staff as well as considering other protected characteristics which might put a member of staff at greater risk from COVID 19.

Background Papers

Appendix A – Health and Safety Report 2022.

Contact for further information

Assistant Director: Property
Kamay Toor: 01344 355183
Kamay.Toor@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

Health and Safety Manager
Doug Brady: 01344 352288
Doug.Brady@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

Health & Safety Assessment Report 2022

15

Homeworking Assessment, Returning to the Office Assessment
and BAME/Vulnerable Group Analysis

Summary



Employee Satisfaction

The analysis shows that responding colleagues are on the whole satisfied with their working from home set up.

16

Value for Money

The outcome for some of the assessment resulted in purchase of equipment to help resolve colleagues issues and concerns. In the long run acting as a protective factor for DSE and homeworking related absences.



Summary of Returns:

- Since last year additional Homeworking Assessments have been undertaken by new employees and existing employees with changes to their home working arrangements.
- BAME/Vulnerable Assessments have been completed previously.
- DSE eLearning package was updated May 2020.
- All employees who wish to return to any office have been asked to complete a “Returning to the Office Assessment”.

Headline figures used in the Health and Safety Analysis

Health & Safety Questionnaires Returned

- Total BAME/Vulnerable Assessments since 2020: **128**
- New DSE e-learning completed: **38**
- New Home working Assessments: **17**
- Total returning to the Office Assessments : **565**

Employee Numbers

The council employees **1194** individuals

Number of employees per directorate:

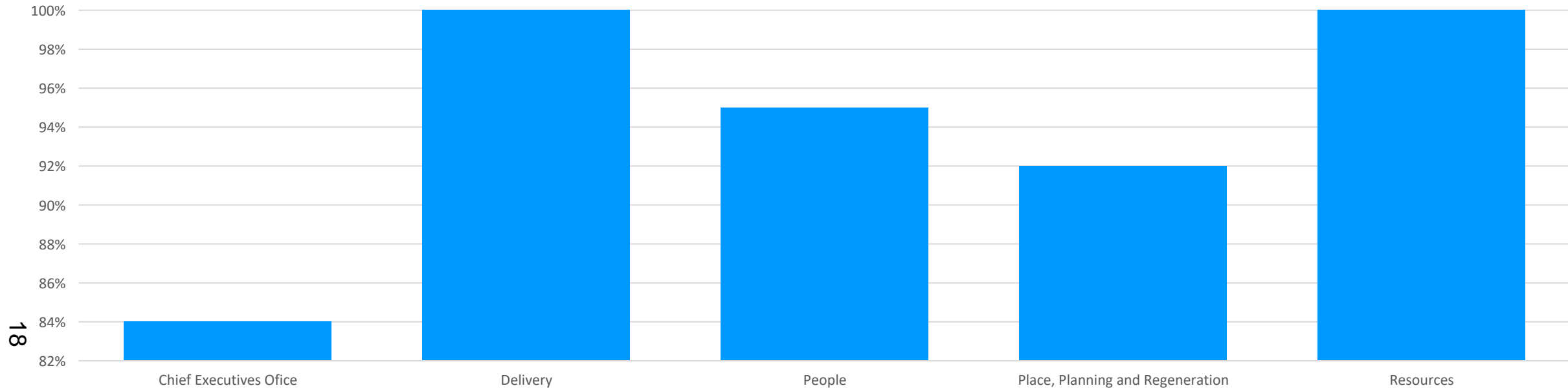
- Chief Executives: **49**
- Delivery: **200**
- People: **665**
- Place, Planning and Regeneration: **190**
- Resources: **90**

BAME Employee Numbers

The council employees **126** BAME individuals.

BAME/Vulnerable Assessment Analysis (same as 2021)

BAME/Vulnerable Assessments Completed per Directorates



Chief Executives Office 83%

Delivery 100%

People 95%

PPR 92%

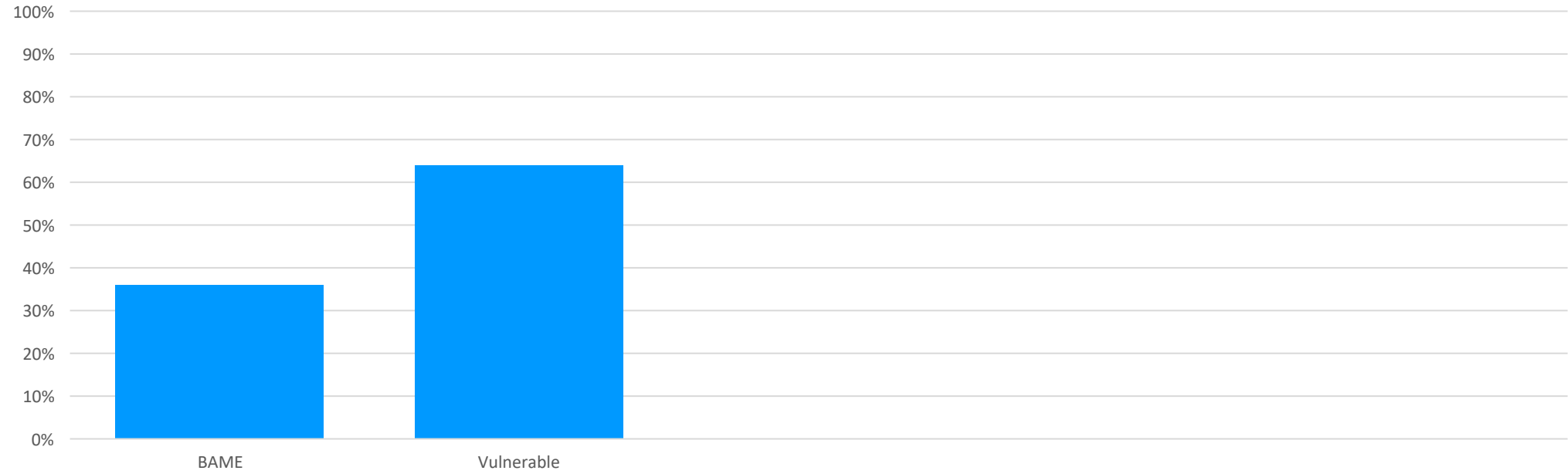
Resources 100%

Summary

BAME staff represents 11% of the workforce at Bracknell Forest Council. This group are recognised as vulnerable or at an increased risk of Covid-19. As such Public Health advises that extra measures are taken to reduce their risk of exposure to the disease. Understanding individual's level of risk and seeking to mitigate them is a council priority. 128 assessments were submitted for analysis.

Breakdown of Completed BAME/Vulnerable Assessment Analysis

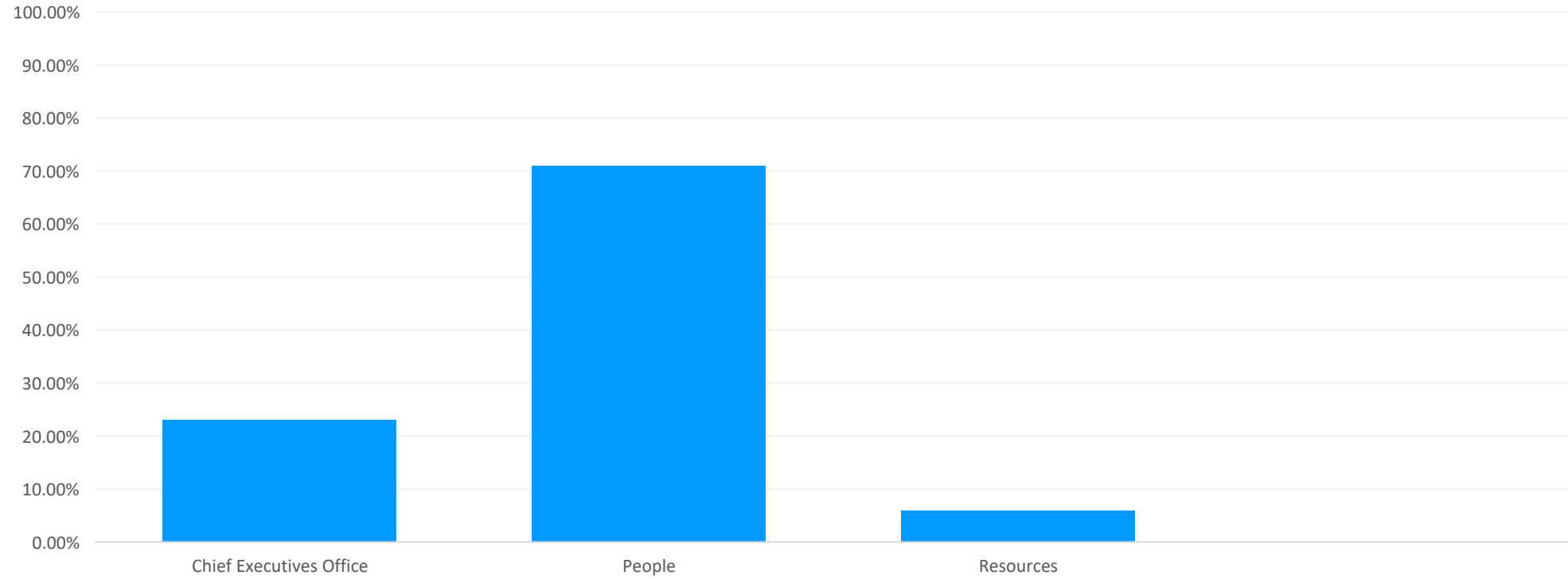
19



BAME 36%
Vulnerable 64%

2022 New Home Working Assessments Completed per Directorate

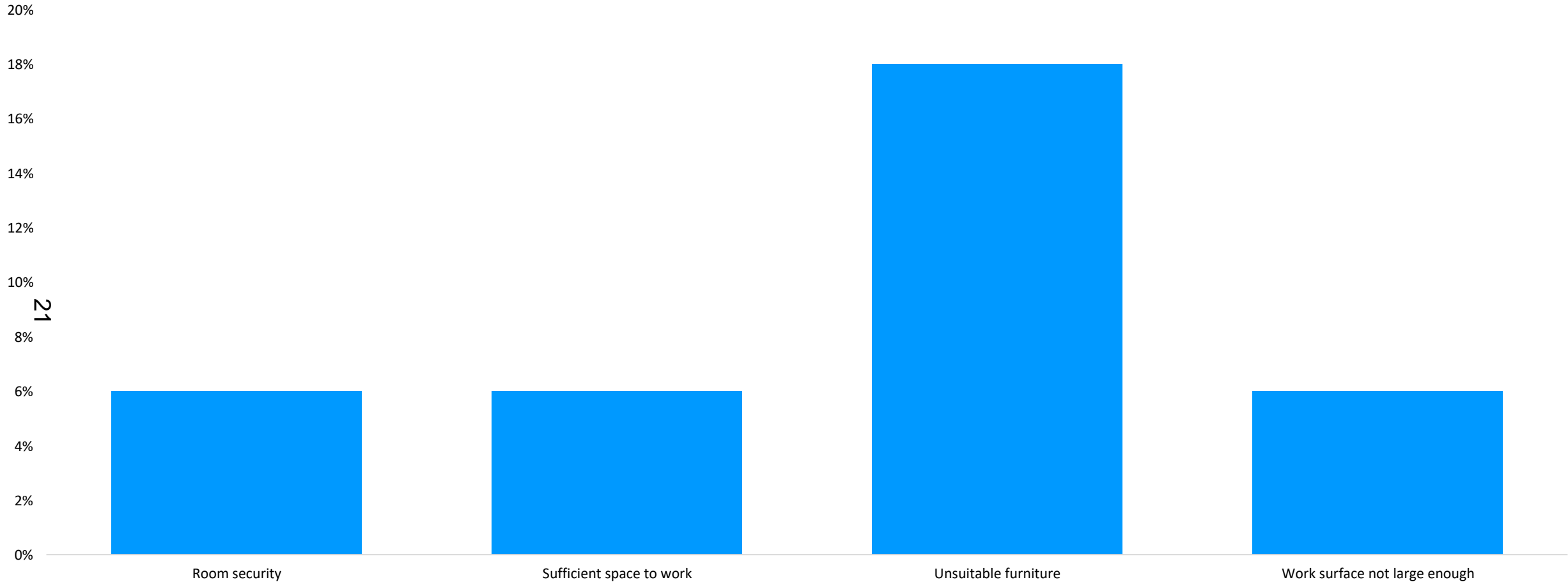
20



Chief Executives Office 23%
People 71%
Resources 6%

Areas of Concern Highlighted in the 17 New Homeworking Assessments

% of people expressing concern about different aspects of homeworking arrangements

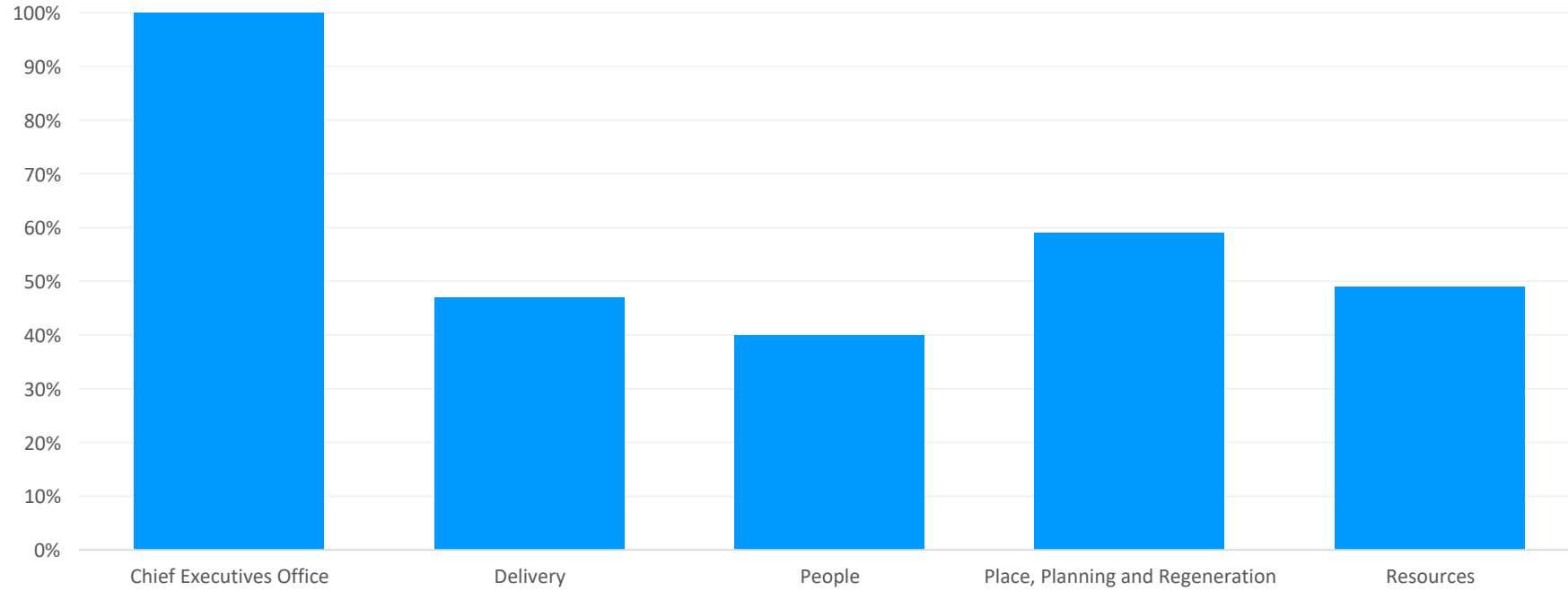


Summary

Not having enough room for suitable home working furniture can result in insufficient working space and a lack of lockable furniture.

Total Returning to the Office Assessment Completed per Directorate as 31st August 2022

22



Chief Executives Office 100%
Delivery 47%
People 40%
PPR 59%
Resources 49%

Key Findings and Next Steps

1

Many colleagues have been provided with office chairs and monitors for homeworking.

2

Colleagues overall are satisfied with their home working arrangements

3

Colleagues should review their home working assessments if their personal circumstances change

4

There should be clear documentation of actions taken to manage and resolve colleagues concerns by each manager.

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To: **EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE**
14 December 2022

HR POLICY REVIEW – DOMESTIC ABUSE AND VIOLENCE/ABUSE AT WORK **Executive Director of Resources**

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The Human Resources team are undertaking a review of the HR policies with a view to update and, where applicable, rationalise the number required. A schedule has been established to undertake this work resulting in revisions to the Domestic Abuse and the Violence/Abuse at Work Policies.

2 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 That Employment Committee review and agree the revised policies for Domestic Abuse and Violence/Abuse at Work.**

3 Reasons for Recommendation(S)

- 3.1 To enable revised policies to be provided to assist managers throughout the Council in effectively managing and, where necessary, support their workforce and to comply with legal requirements and best practice.

4 Alternative Options Considered

- 4.1 To retain the existing policies and ignoring the updates provided for this review.

5 Supporting Information

- 5.1 It is recognised that the HR policies require review to ensure they remain up to date, follow best practice, effectively support managers in dealing with often complex cases and cover the Council's legal duties. As a result, a schedule has been established to review the current HR policies some of which have not been reviewed for some time.
- 5.2 A schedule has been established for the policy development work which has already seen updates to the Disciplinary, Grievance, Organisational Change and Agile Working procedures. The process for reviewing the policies has included engagement with stakeholders across the Council and trade unions.
- 5.3 The following amendments have been made to the policies:

1) Domestic Abuse

- Equality section amended
- amendment to scope
- confidentiality section added
- updated DA definition
- expanded on employee & manager responsibilities
- expanded on responding to disclosure section
- added section for when both victim and perpetrator work for the council,
- added appendix on types of abuse.

II) Violence/Abuse at work policy

- Updates to name of organisations/bodies.
- Reference to new policies - Equality and Dignity at Work Policy.
- Added statement about Cyberbullying and approaches to addressing this.
- Links to guidance/policy added for ease of reference.

5.4 It is recognised that the policy and procedure alone does not provide the confidence and competence to manage workforce situations. The HR/OD Team will be supporting the effective management of these procedures through a programme of development for managers.

6 Consultation and Other Considerations

Legal Advice

6.1 As a responsible employer it is incumbent upon the Council to ensure that it has in place policies and procedures which provide a framework for enabling it to discharge its legal responsibilities in the field of employment law. These responsibilities are framed around a need to ensure employees have access to fair and transparent processes HR processes. The updated policies provide a framework for decision making which (when followed) will mitigate the risk of successful legal challenges.

Financial Advice

6.2 Not required for this paper

Other Consultation Responses

6.3 The policies have been through a consultation exercise with trade unions. Any comments or suggestions received have either been incorporated into the policy or an explanation provided as to why it was felt inappropriate to do so.

Groups across the Council have had the opportunity to consider and comment on the policies including the Equalities Group.

Equalities Impact Assessment

6.4 The performance of these policies is monitored annually and will be included with future monitoring reports.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

6.5 The policies being presented could have a significant impact on the Council where either poor people management or failure to follow due process could present legal challenges. This is aside the personal impact this can have on either individuals or wider teams where these important areas are not addressed well.

Climate Change Implications

6.6 The recommendations in Section 2 above are expected to have no impact on emissions of CO₂.

The reasons the Council believes that this will have no impact on emissions are the fact that these are employment procedures in place to support attendance and fair treatment for staff at work.

Health & Wellbeing Considerations

- 6.7 It is recognised that implementation of these procedures can create significant challenges for all staff involved. It is essential that consideration for the health and wellbeing for staff is always considered and the appropriate support is provided including involvement with occupational health

Background Papers

Domestic Abuse and Violence/Abuse at work Policy

Contact for further information

Paul Young, Human Resources and Organisational Development, Resources Department
Paul.young@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

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Domestic Abuse Policy

Document Control

Current Version:	1.3	Date Modified:	TBC
Revision due	The service aims to review policies and procedures every two years to ensure documents are up to date		
Owning Service	Human Resources		

Approvals (if required)

Date Employment Committee gave authorisation for changes (where necessary)
tbc

Change History

Version	Date	Description	Changes made by
1.2	November 2022	Equality section added, amendment to scope, confidentiality section added, updated DA definition, expanded on employee & manager responsibilities, expanded on responding to disclosure section, added section for when both victim and perpetrator work for the council, added appendix on types of abuse.	
1.1	July 2020	Updated to include links to additional guidance	Sarah Darby

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BRACKNELL FOREST COUNCIL'S DOMESTIC ABUSE POLICY

1 INTRODUCTION

Domestic abuse is a serious crime which occurs in all levels of society in all parts of the UK. Bracknell Forest Council recognises the impact that domestic abuse can have on an individual, whether as the person experiencing domestic abuse, witness to abuse or alleged perpetrator. This policy sets out the Council's commitment to the welfare and safety of staff and to taking necessary steps to support individuals experiencing or affected by domestic abuse and challenge the behaviour of alleged perpetrators of such abuse in line with the [Human Rights Act 1998](#) and [Health and Safety laws](#).

Bracknell Forest Council does not condone domestic abuse under any circumstances and requires all staff to behave appropriately and professionally at all times. This policy aims to create a safer workspace and send out a strong message that domestic abuse is unacceptable.

2 EQUALITY

At Bracknell Forest Council we are committed to encouraging equality, diversity, and inclusion among our workforce, and eliminating unlawful discrimination. We want everyone that works for us to feel that their individuality is respected, and their unique contributions are valued.

The aim is for our workforce to be truly representative of all sections of society and our customers, and for each employee to feel respected and able to give their best.

The organisation - in providing goods and/or services and/or facilities - is also committed against unlawful discrimination of customers or the public.

3 PURPOSE

- To raise awareness of domestic abuse and its effects on both individuals and the workplace.
- To create a working environment that allows employees to feel safe in seeking help to address issues arising from domestic abuse either via the Council or other external agencies.
- To ensure that those employees affected by domestic abuse who are seeking assistance are responded to appropriately, quickly, positively and in confidence.
- To ensure that all Council employees understand the important role they can play in tackling domestic abuse and to develop a consistent approach across the Council.
- To provide guidance to assist and support managers in identifying domestic abuse; dealing with disclosures from employees experiencing domestic abuse in a sensitive, fair, and consistent manner; managing employees who are alleged perpetrators of domestic abuse; managing circumstances where both

the person experiencing domestic abuse and the alleged perpetrators of domestic abuse are employed in the same workplace.

- To demonstrate to perpetrators of domestic abuse that their behaviour will not be tolerated by the Council.

4 PRINCIPLES

The Council accepts that:

- Domestic abuse is unacceptable and should not be tolerated.
- Violence and abuse in a relationship is an abuse of power as well as often being a criminal offence.
- Anyone can be affected by domestic abuse. It occurs in all communities and affects people of all backgrounds.
- Domestic abuse can occur at both home and at work; but nevertheless, can be a workplace issue and that the council has a responsibility for the welfare of employees.
- Each situation of domestic abuse is unique and should be dealt with on its own merit and needs.

5 SCOPE

This procedure applies to all employees of Bracknell Forest Council, with the exception of:

- School based staff.

Where there are concerns for agency or contract staff, managers are encouraged to be supportive with advice from HR.

Other Council's procedures linked to this policy could be considered including Whistleblowing, Violence and Abuse at Work and where there is evidence of abusive behaviour by an employee, the Council's Disciplinary procedure.

6 CONFIDENTIALITY

The Council will treat any information disclosed sensitively and in confidence. The Council will encourage employees experiencing domestic abuse to share information with other agencies to ensure that the full range of civil and criminal remedies can be pursued.

Any referrals to other agencies will only be made on behalf of the employee with their consent, except for cases where the safety of a child/children or vulnerable adult is compromised, there is a risk to staff or if there is a high risk of serious harm to anyone. In such cases, the individual will be informed of the reason for disclosure and care will be taken to ensure that this does not put the individual at greater risk.

Please see the recording information section for further guidance.

7 DEFINITIONS

7.1 Domestic Abuse Act 2021 definition

In line with the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, and for the purposes of this policy, domestic abuse is defined as:

“Behaviour of a person (“A” – the perpetrator of the abuse) towards another person (“B” – the victim of abuse) is “domestic abuse” if:

- A and B are each aged 16 or over and are “personally connected” to each other,
and
- The behaviour is abusive.

Behaviour is “abusive” if it consists of any of the following:

- Physical or sexual abuse.
- Violent or threatening behaviour.
- Controlling or coercive behaviour.
- Economic abuse.
- Psychological, emotional, or other abuse.

It does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct.

“Economic abuse” means any behaviour that has a substantial adverse effect on B’s ability to:

- Acquire, use, or maintain money or other property, or,
- Obtain goods or services

For the purposes of this policy, A’s behaviour may be behaviour “towards” B, even though it consists of conduct directed at another person (for example, B’s child).

This incorporates harmful traditional practices for example but not limited to ‘honour’ killings, forced marriage and female genital mutilation.

Personally connected means two people who:

- Are, or have been, married to each other.
- Are, or have been, civil partners of each other.
- Have agreed to marry one another (whether or not the agreement has been terminated).

- Have entered into a civil partnership agreement (whether or not the agreement has been terminated).
- Are, or have been, in an intimate personal relationship with each other.
- Have, or there has been a time when they each have had, a parental relationship in relation to the same child.
- Are relatives.

Children as victims of domestic abuse:

For the purposes of this policy a child is a person under the age of 18 years and can be a victim of domestic abuse if they:

- See, hear, or experience the effect of the abuse and are related to either person.
- The person is a parent of or has parental responsibility for the child.
- The child and person are related.

For the full legal definition of domestic abuse please refer to [part one of the Domestic Abuse Act](#).

7.2 Types of domestic abuse

Domestic abuse is not limited to physical violence and can include a range of damaging behaviours. Please see [appendix A](#) for a list of the types of domestic abuse.

8 IMPACT OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

The impact of domestic abuse on an individual can be vast. The following list highlights some of the effects on a person experiencing domestic abuse. It also identifies the impact that the violence can have on their relationships with others and their ability to make and sustain social contact and family and work commitments.

- Fear for life, fear for children's lives.
- Self-doubt, self-blame and loss of confidence and self-esteem, shame, embarrassment, distorted sense of reality.
- Isolation from family and friends, decreasing or no social contacts.
- Frequent absences from work, poor concentration, inability to fulfil work role.
- Lowered ability to relate to their children, increasingly punitive parenting, and perceived neglect of children.
- Use/increasing use of drugs and alcohol.
- Anxiety, panic attacks, depression, post-natal depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, physical effects of stress, self-harm, suicide.
- Physical effects – from bruising to broken bones, chronic pain, irritable bowel syndrome, and death.

Perpetrators may also try to harass the employee experiencing domestic abuse whilst at work, abuse or threaten their colleagues or employer, or control their income.

All these effects can have an impact on an employee's punctuality, attendance, work performance, work development, productivity, and staff turnover.

9 EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

The Council believes that every employee who is experiencing, or has experienced, domestic abuse should be able to raise the issue with their employer, in the knowledge that the Council will treat the matter sympathetically, effectively and in confidence.

Individuals experiencing domestic abuse may find it difficult to speak to their line manager or colleagues. They may be concerned about not being believed, being judged by others, how this information will be used, if the information will be disclosed to the perpetrator and/or other agencies.

In cases where an employee who is experiencing domestic abuse does choose to seek advice and support, they may do so via a number of sources, including:

- Their immediate supervisor or another member of direct line management.
- Human Resources.
- The [Employee Assistance Programme](#). This is a confidential service.

If the employee is uncomfortable with approaching one of the above as an initial contact, they may seek advice and support from a colleague or Trade Union representative who may make the initial contact on their behalf.

The Council encourages all employees to report if they suspect a colleague is experiencing or perpetrating domestic abuse. Employees should speak to their line manager about their concerns in confidence. In dealing with a disclosure from a colleague, managers should ensure the person with concerns is made aware of the existence of this policy.

There may be the case where the employee's manager is directly involved with the domestic abuse incidents in which case the employees can report the case to the manager's manager or to a member of the HR Team.

10 GUIDELINES FOR MANAGERS

Disclosure is unlikely to be given easily by employee's experiencing domestic abuse or by the alleged perpetrators, therefore managers should take the following approach in addressing the situation:

- Recognise the problem.
- Respond appropriately.
- Refer on to appropriate help.

- Record the details.

The manager is advised to contact HR at the earliest opportunity to ensure advice is sought to deal with the matter.

10.1 Recognising domestic abuse

Recognising domestic abuse may not always be obvious. It is important that managers have an awareness of the possibility of domestic abuse, and of the signs which might suggest this is taking place as it may present itself as another work issue, for example, frequent absences from work. Employee's experiencing domestic abuse may all react very differently and exhibit different signs. These could include but are not limited to:

- Changes to behaviour including uncharacteristic withdrawal, appearing depressed, anxious, agitated, or angry. They may also appear distracted or have difficulty concentrating.
- Changes in the quality of their work for no apparent reason.
- Changes to normal working pattern or hours, such as arriving late or leaving early/late.
- Reduced attendance or increased sick leave or alternatively high presenteeism without an explanation
- Needing regular time off for appointments.
- Taking frequent or excessive calls during work time from a partner or family member.
- Repeated injuries or unexplained bruising or explanations that are inconsistent to the injuries.
- Substance use/dependence.
- Inappropriate or excessive clothing (may be hiding injuries or bruising).

Similarly, perpetrators of domestic abuse will not necessarily fit stereotypes. While some will be overtly aggressive and domineering, others may appear concerned, attentive, and charming. The perpetrator may manipulate those around them to hide or normalize abusive behaviours and to minimize allegations. Further behaviours may also include:

- Disguised compliance, missing or cancelling appointments, non-attendance, playing different professionals off against one another.
- Making false or vexatious allegations against the person experiencing domestic abuse.
- Convincing professionals that their controlling tactics are for the person experiencing domestic abuse own safety and/or the safety of their children.
- Using children as a form of control.
- Use of others to indirectly communicate with or threaten the person experiencing domestic abuse.
- Use of false profiles on social media or other platforms.

The most important factor in managers identifying that an employee is suffering domestic abuse is simply having the awareness that it may occur and acknowledging the impact that it will have on that individual. If there are signs of

domestic abuse the line manager should consider asking sensitive, non-threatening questions within one-to-one meetings in a private setting.

Training is available is available for managers for recognising signs and types of abuse. Should managers feel uncomfortable about raising matters with their staff or wish to seek support and what approaches to take, support is available through HR,

10.2 What employees can expect

When an employee is considering making a disclosure of domestic abuse, or when they make a disclosure either as the person experiencing domestic abuse or the alleged perpetrator, they have the right to:

- Have discussions in private, with issues around confidentiality (and its limits) explained fully to them.
- Be believed and supported in a sensitive way.
- Be given information on their options, including signposting and offers of referrals to other support agencies.
- Be listened to, not judged or pressurised, and respected on their decisions.
- Be given continued support and communication.
- Where appropriate, positive action should be taken (see section on “how to respond to disclosure” below).

10.3 How to respond to disclosure

In the case of disclosure to the manager, it should be ensured that the individual is taken seriously, without judgement and that respect is given to their thoughts and ideas on the right way forward. Information and tools on dealing with disclosures can be provided by HR. Records of the disclosure should be taken as per [section 10.5](#) of this policy.

Managers should provide employees with both direct support and offer to support referrals to local agencies, details of which can be accessed [here](#). Consideration should be given to providing the individual with a nominated contact within the organisation that the individual can speak to should they wish to discuss any matters that may be affecting them. This could be the line manager or any other appropriate employee.

If the individual expresses that they wish to report the abuse, then the police should be called. The police may wish to take witness statements from the employee experiencing domestic abuse/alleged perpetrator and any colleagues to whom they first disclosed the abuse.

Managers should reassure the individual that the information will be treated sensitively and remain confidential where possible, in accordance with [section six](#) of the policy.

On occasions there may be times when threats and acts of domestic abuse take place at the workplace. Managers should draw up a safety plan for when the employee is at work. Safety for the employee experiencing domestic abuse,

children (if any), and any other family members involved is paramount both in and out of the workplace, whether they are staying or leaving the abusive relationship. Particular consideration should be given to the work location where the alleged perpetrator has access to the building or service area to ensure the employee is safeguarded. The arrangements to allow for this should be discussed and agreed with the employee.

Matters relating to welfare of any children in the household should follow the Child Safeguarding Policy.

When safety planning, the following should be considered:

- Increased security at work.
- Agreeing on safe lines of communication between the line manager and the individual.
- Temporary changes to workplace or work schedule, including possible relocation (including car park location). This can be done in conjunction with the councils [agile working policy](#).
- Obtaining the employee experiencing domestic abuse's consent to share information with work colleagues on a strict 'need to know' basis.
- Obtaining the employee experiencing domestic abuse's consent to alert reception if there are any protection orders/injunctions or the alleged perpetrator is likely to come to Council premises.
- Planning for what to do if the abuser contacts or attends the workplace.
- Agreeing code words or hand signals to alert others if the individual is in danger.

In addition to any immediate support, assistance and counselling provided by the Council, the Authority will give sympathetic consideration to authorising reasonable time off where it is necessary to arrange appointments in normal working hours for the following purposes:

- Appointments with support agencies, welfare agencies and legal advisors.
- Arranging re-housing.
- Making arrangements for children and any other dependents where necessary, including schools.
- Attending relevant police investigations/court hearings.

If you feel you need additional guidance and support on how to deal with a case of domestic abuse, please refer to the [Respond to Abuse Advice Line](#) (a resource for any business or organisation who would like free guidance and information regarding how to support employees affected by domestic abuse in the workplace).

Managers should ensure they are cooperating with any police investigation or legal action, including allowing reasonable time for staff to provide witness statements and attend court hearings.

In situations where staff are required to attend court as a witness, they must not discuss the case with anyone, including other witnesses or the person experiencing domestic abuse/alleged perpetrator. Every effort should be made wherever

reasonably possible to restrict the contact between the individuals involved until after the court proceedings. The individual should be provided with support with the process via signposting to the advice lines detailed in this policy and to the councils Employee Assistance Programme.

10.4 Where both the person experiencing domestic abuse and alleged perpetrator work for the Council

In cases where both the person experiencing domestic abuse and alleged perpetrator of domestic abuse are employed by the organisation, appropriate action will be taken in accordance with this policy. In addition, action should be taken to avert contact in the workplace between the person experiencing domestic abuse and alleged perpetrator where appropriate. This may include the temporary suspension or redeployment of the alleged perpetrator whilst the investigation is pending. HR can provide further advice and support on this.

10.4 Recording information

Any records of employees who experience domestic abuse will be treated as strictly personal and confidential in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations. This will include any referrals to other professional support agencies. Information in respect of their work location or home address should not be divulged without the express consent of the employee.

Where there has been a disclosure of abuse by either party, the information should be written down as accurately as possible with the time and date recorded and be kept in a safe and secure place. This may form part of any police investigation; therefore, it is fundamental that the record is as close to verbatim as possible.

11 MANAGING ALLEGED PERPETRATORS

Employees of the Council are expected to behave in an acceptable and appropriate manner at work. Failure to adhere to this may be considered a serious matter and could result in disciplinary action, including potential dismissal. Alleged perpetrators of domestic abuse may use work resources as part of the abuse, using telephones, email systems, or abusing their own position to find out information about their partner or family member. They may also be harassing their partner or family member during working hours and neglecting their own duties. This too would be a disciplinary matter.

Upon hearing an allegation that an employee has perpetrated domestic abuse, consideration should also be given to the following questions:

- Is there an impact at the workplace – for example is the individual behaving inappropriately?
- What is the potential impact on other team members if the allegation becomes known?
- What is the impact on delivery of services by the alleged perpetrator, for example if they are allegedly violent and are dealing with vulnerable clients?
- Is there potential damage to the council's reputation?

Action taken against the alleged perpetrator will depend on individual circumstances which will be investigated as appropriate. An allegation is not itself grounds for discipline/dismissal.

The Council recognises that it has a role in encouraging and supporting employees to address violent and abusive behaviour. The manager should ensure that the alleged perpetrator is treated fairly and honestly, and that appropriate information about support is provided for them. The manager should encourage the alleged perpetrator to seek support and help from an appropriate source. They should explain the concerns around the allegation and the necessary steps needed. They should also ensure the individual is kept informed of any progress or outcomes and the potential implications to them.

In cases where there is a police investigation, reasonable time off should be given for matters related to this and subsequent court hearings. The manager and colleagues may also be asked to provide witness statements and should be supported in doing so. Please see section [10.3](#) for more information on this.

Separate from any potential disciplinary actions, the Council has access to and knowledge of various programmes which look to address offending behaviours; these will be made available as necessary.

APPENDIX A – TYPES OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

Domestic abuse is not limited to physical violence; it includes a range of damaging behaviours which include but are not limited to:

- **Verbal Abuse:** belittling, insulting, or demeaning someone with words – alone or in front of others.
- **Physical violence:** any type of violence against someone such as pushing, hitting, punching, kicking, choking, or using weapons.
- **Emotional or psychological abuse:** hostile behaviours, silent treatment, preventing them from sleeping, manipulating a person’s anxieties or abusing a position of trust.
- **Controlling behaviour:** attempting to restrict who someone sees or talks to. Preventing them socializing with friends or family.
- **Gaslighting:** persistently undermining or manipulating someone, so they doubt their own sanity or become convinced that they are the problem.
- **Economic abuse:** taking control of someone’s finances to deny them money and limit their independence.
- **Sexual abuse:** rape, touching or groping, making someone watch pornography.
- **Technology facilitated abuse:** Insulting or threatening someone via social media, messaging, or email; sharing or threatening to share intimate photos.
- **Harassment or stalking:** a pattern of persistent and unwanted attention that makes someone feel pestered, scared, anxious or harassed. For example, making unwanted communication, using threats, or repeatedly following a person or spying on them.
- **Coercive control:** an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidating or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten an individual.
- **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM):** all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reason.
- **Forced marriage:** when a marriage in which one or both spouses do not consent to the marriage and duress is involved. Duress can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual, and emotional pressure.
- **Religious marriage and divorce:** where an individual is coerced to enter a marriage through the use of faith or within the context of values held within a religious community. Withholding of a religious divorce.
- **Honour crimes or honour-based abuse:** when a crime or incident has been committed ostensibly to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community. This can involve emotional abuse, physical abuse, family disownment and in some cases, murder. In most cases there are multiple perpetrators from the immediate family, sometimes the extended family and occasionally the community at large.
- **Abuse relating to faith:** manipulation and exploitation through the influence of religion, requirements for secrecy and silence or the requirement of obedience to the perpetrator of domestic abuse, owing to religion or faith, or their “divine” position.

For more information on the types of domestic abuse please [see Domestic Abuse Statutory Guidance](#).

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Violence/Abuse at Work Policy

Document Control

Current Version:	2.0	Date Modified:	September 2022
Revision due	The service aims to review policies and procedures every two years to ensure documents are up to date		
Owning Service	Human Resources		

Approvals (if required)

Date Employment Committee gave authorisation for changes (where necessary)

Change History

Version	Date	Description	Changes made by
2.0	September 2022	Updates to name of organisations/bodies. Reference to new policies - Equality and Dignity at Work Policy. Added statement about Cyberbullying. Links to guidance/policy added for ease of reference. Transferred to new template.	Liz Cooper
1.0	June 2010	Original policy	

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VIOLENCE/ABUSE AT WORK POLICY

1 INTRODUCTION

Employees of Bracknell Forest Council, like all those who deal directly with the public, may face aggressive or violent physical behaviour, sexist, racist, or other forms of verbal abuse. This behaviour will not be tolerated, and the Council will support employees in their dealings with this type of behaviour. Employees should take reasonable precautions to avoid putting themselves at risk and should inform their manager of any incidents so that they can give appropriate guidance and support and share information with others. Violent or abusive behaviour must be treated seriously and always reported.

Whilst this document is based on the premise of good employment practices, the advice should be read in conjunction with *Section 2 (12)* of the [Health and Safety Manual](#).

The Council acknowledges its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Act Guidance. In relation to the way in which it approaches violence towards staff which is perceived as being racially motivated. This policy takes those responsibilities into account when dealing with such incidents.

2 EQUALITY

At Bracknell Forest Council we are committed to encouraging equality, diversity, and inclusion among our workforce, and eliminating unlawful discrimination. We want everyone that works for us to feel that their individuality is respected, and their unique contributions are valued.

The aim is for our workforce to be truly representative of all sections of society and our customers, and for each employee to feel respected and able to give their best.

The Council, in providing goods and/or services and/or facilities, is also committed against unlawful discrimination of customers or the public.

3 PURPOSE

The Council has a duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act to minimise the risk of violence to all employees. This policy provides the guidance to achieve this.

4 PRINCIPLES

4.1 Members of the Public

Violence includes not only physical attack, but also threatening behaviour, verbal abuse and behaviour calculated to cause hurt or distress. The Council will ensure that any issues related to gender, ethnicity, disability, nationality, religion, age or other diversity issues are swiftly dealt with. Employees encountering violence or

abuse in the course of their duties, will be fully supported by the Council in all actions which fall short of pursuing private litigation.

This will also include Cyberbullying which is the process of using the internet, social media or mobile phones to intentionally intimidate, harass, offend or cause distress to someone.

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 places a general duty on every employer to ensure as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety, and welfare at work of all employees. Managers therefore have a responsibility to assess the risk of violence to their staff and to ensure reasonable preventive measures are in place.

Successful strategies for preventing violence at work require local input from each department which reflects the specific nature of its task, local conditions, and circumstances. Departments should therefore implement specific operating procedures within the enabling framework of this policy and code of practice. Those operating procedures should be appropriate to the degree and type of risk of violence to which employees may be exposed.

Information about people or premises associated with a violent incident should be shared with colleagues across the Council if they are seen to present a continuing risk to employees. Alert is the Council's database of such people and premises and allows such information to be shared. Employees who visit addresses across the Borough must make a check against this database as a routine part of planning the visit; if there is a recorded risk they will be advised accordingly. The Council's Health and Safety Team can provide information on the Alert system.

4.2 Employees

It is also the case that the violent incident may involve another employee rather than a member of the public. If this is so then this policy will still apply, with the investigation for the Violent/Abusive Incident Report form serving as part of an investigation within the Disciplinary Procedure and as evidence at any subsequent Hearing. However, employees should also be aware that the Council's Equality and Dignity at Work Policy [Equality and Dignity At Work Policy.pdf](#) provides an alternative procedure for dealing with harassment (particularly if the violent incident is not a one-off incident and a wider set of behaviour needs to be addressed).

The Council will provide support to any employee subjected to violence/abuse and take all reasonable steps to protect from future incidents and intimidation in the workplace. This may involve consideration under separate Council procedures including Disciplinary and/or temporary redeployment arrangements.

5 SCOPE

This procedure applies to all employees including agency and casual workers of Bracknell Forest Council with the exception of:

- School based staff (see separate School policy).

6 RISK ASSESSING AND DEVELOPING LOCAL GUIDANCE

The Code of Practice set out below is of a very general nature, and the level of risk and the best ways to minimise it will be very different in different work areas. Specific risk factors include:

- Off-site visits
- working closely with adults or children who may have behavioral problems
- working alone, or in one-to-one meetings with clients/customers
- travelling between locations
- handling cash, where this may make them vulnerable to violence connected with the attempted theft of the cash
- dealing with issues which impact on a client's family or home which prompt strong reactions from members of the public.

Each department dealing with members of the public will have different situations to face, and some may have detailed guidance about what to expect and how to respond to those situations. Managers should ensure that any such local guidance is readily available to employees.

Each employee will have a different perception of the type and degree of risk they face. Managers should ensure they are listening to the concerns of front-line staff and reacting appropriately. Employees should also receive training appropriate to the level of risk of violence and the type of situation they are likely to encounter. Managers may consult Organisational Development Team for advice about the availability of appropriate training courses.

Each location will have specific safety and security issues. Enhanced physical security is not always the answer as the environment can be exacerbated. Any measures introduced should be appropriate to the assessed risk and periodically reviewed to see what impact they have had on violent incidents and the fear of violence.

7 ASSESSING AND REDUCING THE RISK – ACTIONS FOR LINE MANAGERS

7.1 Assessing the risk

Managers must assess the risk of violence against employees and take any necessary steps to reduce that risk. Assessing the risk of violence will involve talking with employees about their experiences. Risk may be increased if the employee works alone or visits people in their homes but is not confined to these situations; any face-to-face contact with the public may carry a potential risk.

7.2 Evaluating the risk and considering preventative measures

Once the risk has been evaluated, managers will be required to check existing precautions and decide if they are adequate.

The [Lone Working Policy](#) and the [Health and Safety Manual](#) gives advice on this issue, but examples of possible areas to consider include:

- the environment in which people using Council services wait to be seen and are seen. The lighting, furniture arrangements, exits, and visibility are all significant factors - the provision of alarms, wider counters, CCTV, or service windows may be useful in areas of high risk.
- ensuring the incidents are reported and as necessary recorded on the Alert database. Further detailed information regarding its operation can be found here [Bracknell Alert \(sharepoint.com\)](#)
- ensuring that employees are routinely consulting Alert before visits. Appropriate measures should be taken where a risk factor is indicated.
- what systems exist to let colleagues know where employees are going and when they are expected back.
- Consideration whether some visits should not be undertaken alone
- Ensuring employees are aware how off-site visits may be conducted to minimise risk
- Ensuring an employee who is making off-site visits involving a significant degree of risk have a mobile phone to summon assistance more easily, or have a regular checking-in procedure
- Ensuring employees at particular risk attend appropriate training, on the issues of violence at work on how to spot the early signs of aggression, and how to avoid it or cope with it
- where alarms are installed, they should be regularly checked, and an appropriate response procedure should be in place.
- consider displaying a notice in public areas e.g., adjacent to reception desks and entrances of Council occupied buildings. The notice is designed to act as a deterrent in preventing incidents as it will send a clear message that unacceptable behaviour will not be tolerated and that information about an individual may be shared between Council departments.

8 Reporting incidents

If an employee encounters violence or the threat of violence, then they should discuss the incident with their supervisor or manager*. The manager should establish what has happened as soon as reasonably possible once the employee feels able to discuss. Remember that the employee may be distressed, and it is important to ensure that they are being listened to for their own sake, as well as to obtain the details which are the basis of the formal report.

(*should there be any circumstances where an employee feels unable to discuss their experiences with their line manager, they may contact either their line managers manager or a member of the HR Team.)

If the employee is injured or shocked then the manager should first arrange appropriate practical support, such as medical attention or first aid, organising a lift home, arranging to contact a friend or relative, or offering to arrange counselling support through the [Employee Assistance Programme \(sharepoint.com\)](#). It should be determined if the police have been called, and if not, to call them if required/appropriate.

Employees should report violent incidents even if they indicate they were not distressed by them or felt able to cope. The next employee to encounter similar

circumstances may not be so well equipped to handle the situation, may be more inexperienced, or may encounter a more extreme situation; reporting an incident gives the next employee the information they need to be prepared for the next visit.

As soon as practically possible, the manager should visit the place where the assault took place, and carry out a detailed investigation (including, wherever possible, interviews with the alleged perpetrators). Witnesses should be asked to record the incident in writing at the earliest possible time.

The manager and employee should work together on filling in the Violent/Abusive Incident Report Form, which they will both sign. The procedure and the Violent/Abusive Incident Report (VIR) Form are available via the following link: [Health and safety manual and policy \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

Managers should note that any incident which results in an absence of more than three days, or any incident which results in a major injury, will also require them to complete a form F2508 reporting it to the Health and Safety Executive. See following link: [Report an accident or incident \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

Managers should also note that, where an incident is reported which may relate to any Discriminatory issue (including sex and race), provision exists to refer the matter to the appropriate statutory body, e.g., The Equality and Human Rights Commission.

The VIR form also calls for the manager to note any action which can be taken to prevent recurrence of such an incident. The form will be passed to the Director of the Department concerned. The "Alert" online form should be completed to input the relevant information onto the "Alert" system where the Manager has indicated this is appropriate. This is then reported to the Health and Safety Advisor for monitoring/health and safety purposes and, if the incident is perceived as relating to racial issues, to the Head of Community Engagement and Equalities (for monitoring purposes). Managers and Directors should jointly ensure that any appropriate preventive measures are put in place. Details of the procedure can be this link: [Bracknell Alert \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

Departments may construct their own additional procedures surrounding the use and distribution of the VIR form, and in relation to actions proposed and taken therefore, provided that the corporate requirements set out in this document and in the Health, Safety and Welfare Manual are met. Some departments may have other regulations or reporting requirements to meet, and it is of course anticipated that any additional actions, forms, or procedures specific to a given department will be incorporated into their own operating procedures.

The departmental Health and Safety groups will regularly receive details of the violent/abusive Incident reports received and take actions as required.

9 DEALING WITH MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Violent and aggressive behaviour is clearly inexcusable, but the risk of such

behaviour being encountered may be increased if a member of the public finds their contact with the Council's representatives does not meet the expected customer standards. Even if the outcome of their contact with the Council may lead to upset or some form of enforcement, the way in which the individual is dealt with can influence the nature of their response. "Members of the Public" is meant as a broad category which may also include clients, pupils or their parents, suppliers etc. Employees may find it useful to consider the following:

- How long does the individual have to wait for a response? Is the individual told how long they are likely to have to wait, and informed if there is any further delay?
- Is the availability of employees with relevant knowledge sufficient to ensure that an emergency/situation can be dealt with without undue delay?
- Will the individual feel that he or she has been listened to?
- If it is necessary to refuse a request or take an unwelcome action, has the action been explained to the individual?
- Could the individual interpret the employee's body language or speech as threatening, and could that threat be reduced by, for example, sitting down or speaking calmly?
- If visiting the member of the public at home, have they been told who the employee is, been shown their identification card, and are they aware of the purpose of the visit?

None of the above should be taken to imply that when violent incidents occur it is the employee's fault; these are simply examples of ways to reduce, not eliminate, the risks by modifying behaviour.

Training on dealing with difficult situations is available through the Learning and Development programme.

Notices are posted in Council buildings to which the public has access indicating clearly that unacceptable behaviour towards staff will not be tolerated. These notices warn that in the event of any incident, the Council may impose sanctions including banning them from Council premises and reporting incidents to the police, and that these actions might result in them being prosecuted. It is hoped that these will act as a deterrent and may help stop an incident from escalating.

Should an employee be subjected to online abuse from a member of the public, the Council will consider ways in which this can be prevented or taken down from an online platform. This may include contacting the online platform provider and seeking the removal of the abusive material or making direct contact with the member of the public. Further recourse to the Council's Legal Department or, dependent on the circumstances, the Police will be considered.

Managers have responsibility for supporting the health, safety and welfare of their staff however, for their own safety, employees should be aware of issues like the following:

- In a potentially difficult situation, they should check that they know the way out and that their path to an exit is not blocked.
- If going off site, the employee should find out what they can about where they will be going and what to expect there and, where necessary, ensure the appropriate emergency response alarms are provided.

- When going off site, the employee should ensure their colleagues know where they are and when they are expected back and should call the office if they are delayed - in some cases a checking in procedure should be used.
- Employees should never put themselves in danger by trying to protect cash.
- Employees should never be embarrassed to raise an alarm or ask for help or to be accompanied.
- Employees should be made aware of meeting room facilities and the arrangements to seek urgent assistance
- Employees should discuss potentially difficult situations with their manager, to see if the risk can be reduced (e.g., by sending two people, or arranging for the member of the public to come into the offices).
- Is the availability of employees with relevant knowledge sufficient to ensure that an emergency can be dealt with without undue delay?
- Will the individual feel that he or she has been listened to?
- If it is necessary to refuse a request or take an unwelcome action, has the action been explained to the individual?
- Could the individual interpret the employee's body language or speech as threatening, and could that threat be reduced by, for example, sitting down or speaking calmly?
- If visiting the member of the public at home, have they been told who the employee is, been shown their identification card, and are they aware of the purpose of the visit?

None of the above should be taken to imply that when violent incidents occur it is the employee's fault; these are simply examples of ways to reduce, not eliminate, the risks by modifying behaviour.

Above all, if the employee has any reservations about their own safety in a situation, they must withdraw.

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To: **Employment Committee**
14 December 2022

Monitoring the Council's Workforce – 2021/22 **Executive Director: Resources**

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 Bracknell Forest Council aspires to be an Employer of Choice and live its values of Inclusive, Ambitious and Always Learning. Under the Equality Act 2010 Bracknell Forest Council (BFC) also has a legal duty to advance equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people. Part of this legal duty is to report annually on its workforce composition. This report fulfils that responsibility.

2 Recommendation(s)

For Employment Committee to note the report and approve for publication on the BFC website in line with the statutory responsibility

3 Reasons for Recommendation(S)

- 3.1 To comply with the Council's and to ensure the Council has a clear aim to ensure equality across all services and through our workforce

4 Alternative Options Considered

- 4.1 N/A

5 Supporting Information

- 5.1 The Council are required to publish a workforce monitoring report which provides a report of the equality data for Bracknell Forest Council for the year to 31 March 2022.
- 5.2 Aside from the statutory duties, the Council has a clear aim to ensure equality across all services and through our workforce. This report should provide information and data to recognise areas of strength and identify areas for improvement. This should then lead to work with relevant Officers, Equalities Groups, and staff around the Authority to develop necessary actions and monitor performance.
- 5.3 The aim for the Council's workforce to reflect the composition of the local population to ensure it is representative of the community we serve, thereby helping to ensure that appropriate services are provided to all our citizens. We wish to celebrate diversity and ensure everyone is treated fairly and with dignity and respect. A programme of activity is underway and progressing well, progress is noted here as well as recommendations to keep improving.

5.4 Bracknell Forest Council 'All of Us' Equality Scheme

The Council's Equality Objectives are important as they guide the work undertaken and show the commitment to challenging inequality and promoting a fair and inclusive borough. The Council has identified the following Equality objectives:

- 1. Inclusive in all we do**
Continue to make our services more inclusive and culturally competent in a borough where everyone is made to feel included and valued.
- 2. Accessible for all**
Ensure that we provide information, engage and communicate in ways that are easy to understand for all.
- 3. Accountable and Fair**
We will treat all people fairly without favouritism or discrimination while recognising some people will need additional support.
- 4. Diverse and inclusive workforce**
We will strive to have a workforce who have the right skills, behaviours and mindsets supported by high quality people managers and inspiring leaders.
- 5. Recovering from the Covid-19 pandemic**
Address the increased inequalities and disproportionate impact of the pandemic on people and communities.

The All of us equality schemes available at: Equality Scheme for web 2022-25 (bracknell-forest.gov.uk)

5.5 Progress on Actions from Last Report

These updates are a review of the work that has taken place. The ongoing actions will form the new action plan for 2022-2023 and onwards.

Action from 2021 Workforce Monitoring Report	Actions Taken
Review HR processes to ensure they are fair and without bias.	There is a timetable of review for all HR policies and processes to ensure they remain relevant, fair and without bias. The first ones have been completed, these are Disciplinary, Grievance, Agile Working, Performance Improvement and Capability. Equality & Dignity at work policy
Recruitment of Equality Allies Network	Network set up with 35 recruits. Allies are identified by their badges and tag on email address. Quarterly Equality Allies Meetings being held to promote best practice and address challenges Onboarding overview sessions took place, Allies attended workshops, one to one conversations session run.
Implement a revised values and behaviours framework across BFC	Values have been revised to Inclusive, Ambitious and Always Learning Values incorporated within Appraisal and 1:1 conversation form to enable conversation. They form part of recruitment branding.

	<p>New EDI e-learning packages introduced and publicised.</p> <p>Dedicated new manager Hub designed to be interactive and provide guidance and promote best practice.</p>
Leadership and Management Development for aspiring, new or existing managers	Based on the leadership and management feedback from the skills survey a spec has been created and will be introduced shortly.
Continue to place significant emphasis on equalities, diversity, and inclusivity as part of induction training and ongoing training and development delivered to staff.	<p>Reintroduced monthly Corporate Inductions for new starters with Chief Executive.</p> <p>As of August 2022, Phase 1 of Inclusive conversations completed. 189 managers attended, but there were 129 non attendees – all managers expected to complete training by 31 March 23.</p> <p>New Leadership and Manager development procurement will have emphasis on EDI.</p> <p>Work in collaboration with Diversity Calendar working group to continue to celebrate diversity and inclusion.</p> <p>Research best practice to ensure that we are aligning reflecting and understanding current social norms and practice.</p>
All new starters are required to complete the “Equality in the Workplace” e-learning module within 4 weeks of joining. This will be continuously monitored, and staff and managers chased where necessary.	<p>These are monitored as part of the 6-month probation process.</p> <p>New 5 e-Learning equality modules introduced, with separate modules for Teams and managers.</p>
Regular EqIA (Equality Impact Assessment) workshops are being run for all staff.	Equality Impact Assessment refresher and induction training programme continued for managers and staff involved in policy updates, service revisions, projects and change programmes.

5.6 There are a series of actions that are monitored through the Equality Group including:

- Compare data when full details of the 2021 Census become available
- Tracking and reporting of all protected characteristics within our casework system Develop an Inclusive Language guide
- Continue to record and actively monitor all probation extensions, working closely with managers to ensure there is no opportunity for bias.
- All managers to have attended Inclusive conversations training

6 Consultation and Other Considerations

Legal Advice

- 6.1 The relevant legal issues are addressed within the main body of the report.

Financial Advice

- 6.2 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

Other Consultation Responses

- 6.3 The report and actions arising from has been discussed at the Equalities Subgroup on Monday 12 September.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.4 N/A and discussed within paper contents.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 6.5 Recruitment and Retention: Ensuring equality, diversity and inclusivity is considered across the lifecycle of employees and informs policy, procedure, and organisational change.

Climate Change Considerations

- 6.6 There are no climate change considerations arising from this report.

Health & Wellbeing Considerations

- 6.7 The health and wellbeing of staff is critical as part of their experience of working with Bracknell Forest. Central to this is enabling a culture where staff feel safe, supported and have confidence that they will not experience any form of discrimination. The output of this report should provide evidence of the progress that is being made and identify areas where action is required.

Background Papers

Contact for further information

Lisa.Hippolyte, Workforce Systems and Data Manager, Human Resources
Resources Directorate
Lisa.hippolyte@bracknell-forest.gov.uk



Bracknell Forest Council

Annual Workforce Equality Report 2022



1. Introduction

Bracknell Forest Council aspires to be an Employer of Choice and live its values of Inclusive, Ambitious and Always Learning. Under the Equality Act 2010 Bracknell Forest Council (BFC) also has a legal duty to advance equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people. Part of this legal duty is to report annually on its workforce composition.

To assist us in undertaking these duties, we review relevant information and data to recognise areas of strength and identify areas for improvement. We then work with relevant Officers, Equalities Groups, and staff around the Authority to develop necessary actions and monitor performance.

We aim for the Council's workforce to reflect the composition of the local population to ensure it is representative of the community we serve, thereby helping to ensure that appropriate services are provided to all our citizens.

We wish to celebrate diversity and ensure everyone is treated fairly and with dignity and respect. A programme of activity is underway and progressing well with reporting arrangements in place to the Equality Board.

2. Local Demographics

The Council is committed to work towards a situation where the Council's workforce broadly reflects the make-up of its local community. The demographic make-up of Bracknell Forest has changed. New Census information was published in April 2022 and where it is available, we will use this updated dataset for comparisons with the council's workforce.

2.1 Gender

The 2021 Census information shows Bracknell Forest as having the following Gender Profile.

Female	Male
50.7%	49.3%

2.2 Age Profile

The 2021 Census information gives the following age profile for Bracknell Forest.

Age Band	% of Population
Under 15	18.5%
16 -19	5.7%
20 - 29	11.9%
30 - 39	15%
40 - 49	14.5%
50 - 54	7.2%
55 - 59	6.7%
60 - 64	5.5%
65 and over	15%

Last year we reported the estimate for Over 65s in 2026 would be 16.3%. From the Census 2021 results this seems like a very sound estimate.

2.3 Ethnic Origin and Religion

The 2011 Census data on ethnic origin and religion is the latest available data. Office for National Statistics has not yet published the data relating to these areas from the 2021 Census and therefore this is the only data to compare, but caution must be taken when comparing to data 11 years old and therefore need to review alongside the 2021 schools' census.

Ethnic Origin	2011 local population	2011 nationally (England)	Current BFC Staff*
White	89.9%	84.9%	80.4%
Black	2.5%	3.5%	4.5%
Asian	4.2%	8%	4.7%
Mixed	2.5%	1.8%	1.4%
Other	0.9%	1.8%	0.4%

*8.6% not disclosed

The 2011 Census showed 12.3% of the South East's population belonging to minority ethnic groups. The figure for Bracknell Forest's population in 2011 was 10%, slightly lower than the figure for the Southeast. The current figure for Bracknell Forest Council is 11% from a BAME (Black Asian Minority Ethnic) background. We use the acronym of BAME for analysis purposes although we recognise this group is made up of different ethnic groups and we analyse these in more detail later.

The 2021 schools census information published in January 2022 shows nationally 26% of pupils from an ethnic minority background, it is clear from this figure that once the results from the 2021 census are published for ethnicity that we could see a large increase in our local population compared to the previous results.

Religion	2011 % of local population	2011 nationally (England)	Current BFC Staff**
No religion	30.4%*	32.8%*	28.95%
Buddhist	0.8%	0.5%	0.15%
Christian	64.8%	56.6%	45.92%
Hindu	1.7%	1.7%	1.4%
Jewish	0.2%	0.5%	0.37%
Muslim	1.2%	5.6%	1.4%
Sikh	0.4%	0.7%	1.18%
Other	0.5%	1.5%	2.57%

* The national figures show None and Not provided as one large group whereas for BFC are separate.

** Non specified 18.06%

The above figures are based on the 2011 census, further analysis will be undertaken when the 2021 data becomes available.

3. Data analysis

Human Resources collect a range of data on the workforce. This report covers permanent and temporary staff employed by BFC excluding schools (1166 employees), with criteria: -

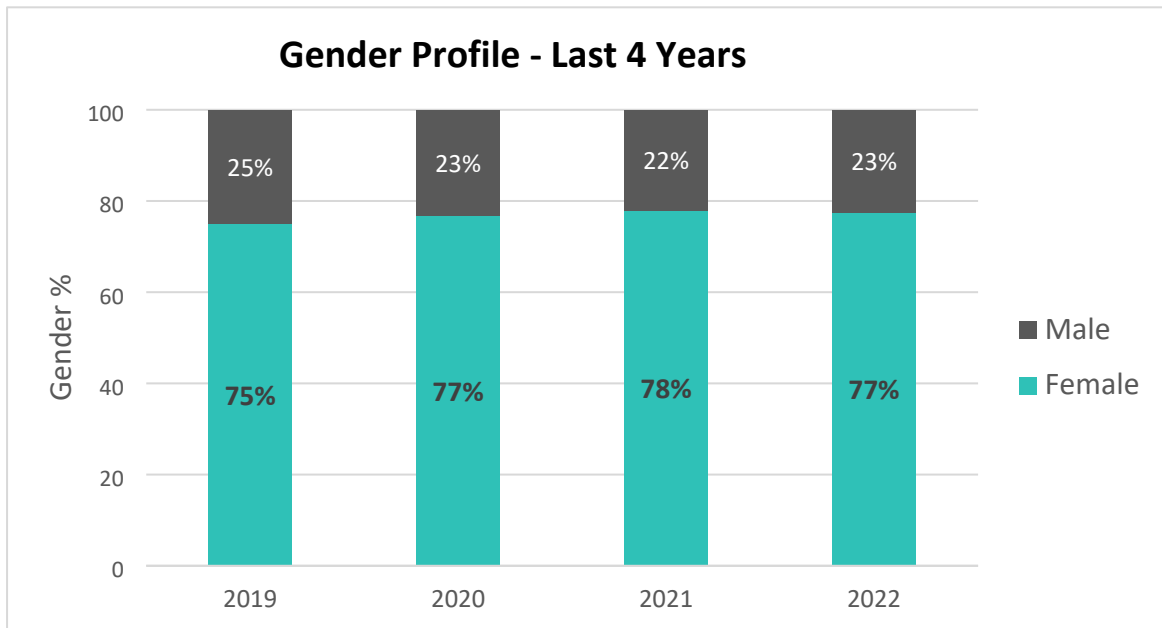
- Staff in post on 31st March 2022
- New Starters between 1st April 21 and 31st March 22
- Leavers between 1st April 21 and 31st March 22
- Staff who attended training events from 1st April 21 to 31st March 22
- BAME includes Black, Asian, Mixed and Other. We use this acronym for analysis purposes, but we recognise and evaluate each individual ethnic origin.

For some indicators, because of the small numbers in the comparator group, a slight increase or decrease in the head count can have a disproportionate effect. Where numbers are small, the actual numbers are sometimes quoted as the percentages can be deceptive when applied to small groups.

Information on disability, ethnicity, religion/belief, and sexual orientation is collected by self-declared returns from employees and candidates and, as there is no compulsion to return this information, some choose not to (or return selected information only). This data is recorded on iWorks which staff are periodically asked to check and update.

The Training course information relates to internal courses booked or recorded on iWorks. However, there are a few other types of learning which are open to all staff which are not included within these figures. It is assumed that managers and staff access these where required. The statistics relate solely to the training places taken up on Council run courses and it should be noted that the same person undertaking more than one training event will therefore appear in the statistics more than once. The level of attendance at directly booked “off the job” training courses tends to reduce with the popularity of other types of learning – for example e-learning and other learning interventions.

4. Gender Profile



The Council employs more female staff with over three quarters at 77.4%. This is slightly higher than the local government average at 75.9%*. The highest proportion of female staff is within the People Department with 85% which is consistent with social care being a female dominated profession.

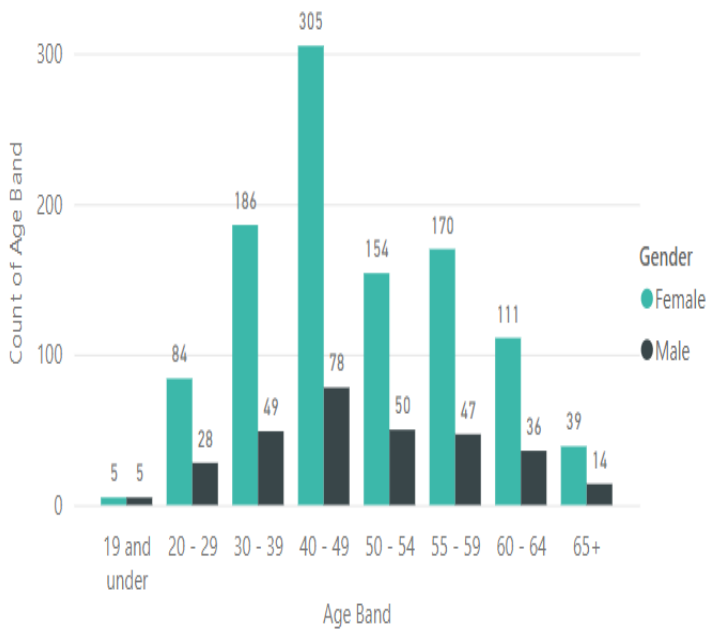
(*Source: Local Government in England Workforce Data Summary – September 2021)

4.1 Starters and Leavers

	Workforce	Starters	Leavers	Training
Male	22.6	29.2	17.9	19.9
Female	77.4	70.8	82.1	80.1

- While the Borough has an equal split of gender, the Council has a gender profile where 77.4% of the workforce are women and 22.6% men.
- 29.2% of new starters were male whilst the number of leavers was at 17.9% - given this figure the under representation of male staff is showing signs of improvement
- The percentage of male leavers is showing a significant reduction with a high of 38.3% in 19/20, 27.7% in 20/21 and this year a figure at 17.9%
- Training figures show males are underrepresented for training attendance
- The gender profile over the last 4 years has fluctuated slightly for the number of males across the workforce
- They have been no issues identified during the year for any transgender staff.

Count of Age Band by Age Band and Gender



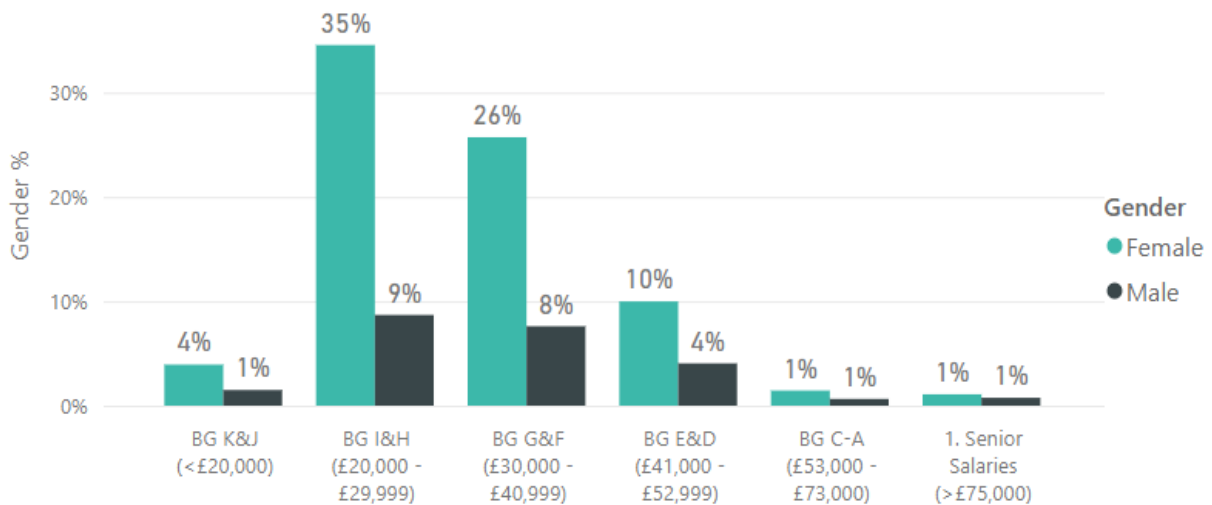
Gender	Age Band	Count of Age Band
Female	19 and under	5
Female	20 - 29	84
Female	30 - 39	186
Female	40 - 49	305
Female	50 - 54	154
Female	55 - 59	170
Female	60 - 64	111
Female	65+	39
Male	19 and under	5
Male	20 - 29	28
Male	30 - 39	49
Male	40 - 49	78
Male	50 - 54	50
Male	55 - 59	47
Male	60 - 64	36
Male	65+	14
Total		1361

4.2 Leavers

An analysis of leaving reasons shows that 85% of the men that left through the year did so voluntary compared to 91% of women. The top reasons for Men and Women leaving are shown below: -

Male	Female
Another Local Authority (30.3%)	Personal Reasons (29.1%)
Private Company (24.2%)	Another Local Authority (22%)
Personal Reasons (18.2%)	Private Company (15.6%)

Salaries across Gender Profile (as % of entire workforce)



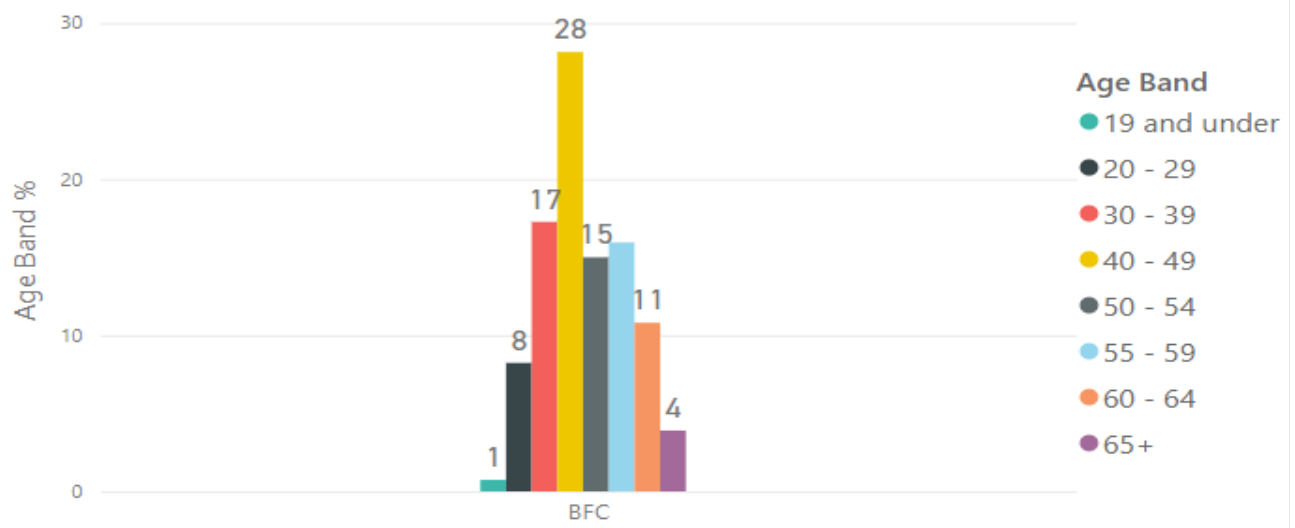
The salary profile appears to show a consistent level of men achieving each salary range, while there is a skew for women to occupy lower salary ranges, which is similar to the national picture.

The trend in recent years of a greater percent of male leavers compared to the workforce has changed in the past year, now can see more females leaving than men and a higher number of male joiners. We will continue to review next year to check if this trend continues to improve the balance of our workforce gender.

Details of our gender pay gap can be found further on in this report.

5. Age Profile

Staff Age BFC

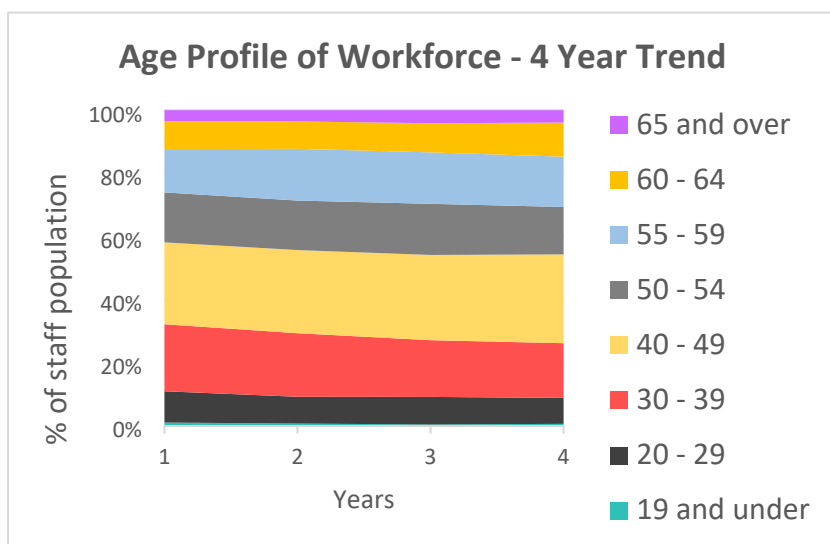


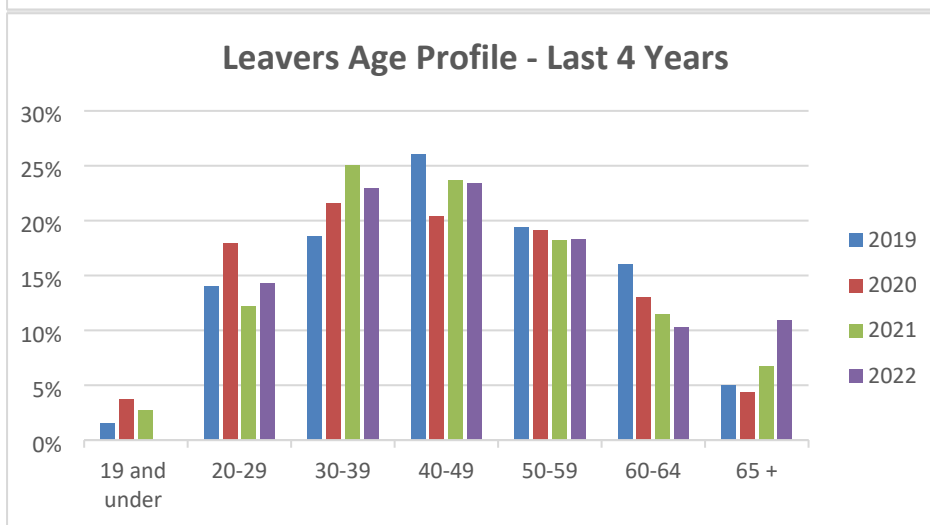
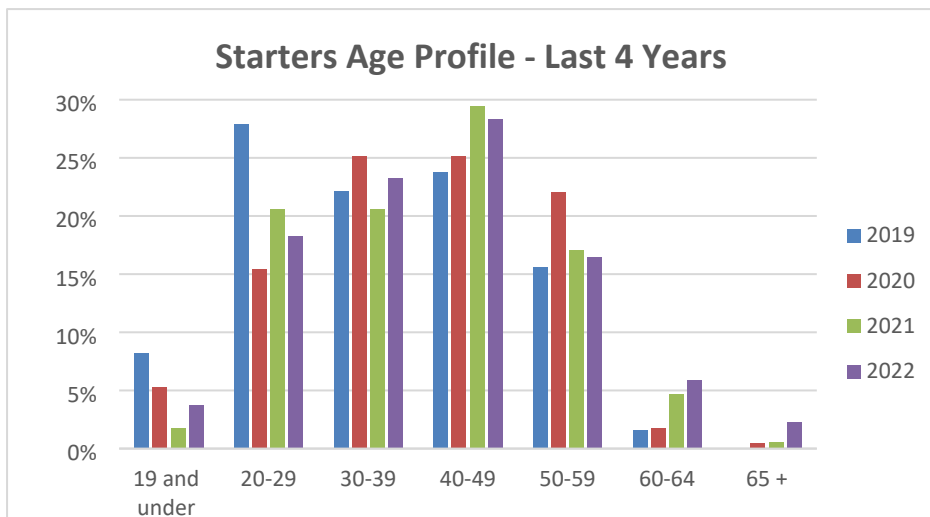
5.1 Staff Leavers

Age Band	Workforce	Starters	Leavers	Training
19 and under	0.73 (0.5)	3.65	0	3.5
20 - 29	8.23 (8.87)	18.26	14.29	5.92
30 - 39	17.27 (18.33)	23.29	22.86	18.75
40 - 49	28.14 (27.53)	28.31	23.43	27.47
50 - 54	14.99	6.39	6.86	18.8
55 - 59	15.94 (31.17*)	10.05	11.43	18.98
60 - 64	10.8 (9.38)	5.94	10.29	6.59
65 +	3.9 (4.22)	2.28	10.86	

(Figures in brackets indicate the 20/21 totals. Age range indicated for 55 – 59 incorporates the wider range of 50 – 59)

- The vast majority of 65+ leavers (87%) is due to retirement, for 60-64 this was 55% of the reasons for leaving.
- Local insight shows that if we wish to employ staff under 18 years old, the majority are still in education and training at 96% for 16-year-olds and 89% for 17-year-olds.
- Workforce age profile similar to 20/21 profiles – small increase in the 19 and under age band
- No record of those staff in the 65+ age band accessing training
- Evidence of successful recruitment for young age banding
- Higher proportion of leavers at the lower age band
There is an ageing workforce as we do have a skew to higher proportion in the higher age bands. Though marginally the 60+ has decreased slightly in the past year.



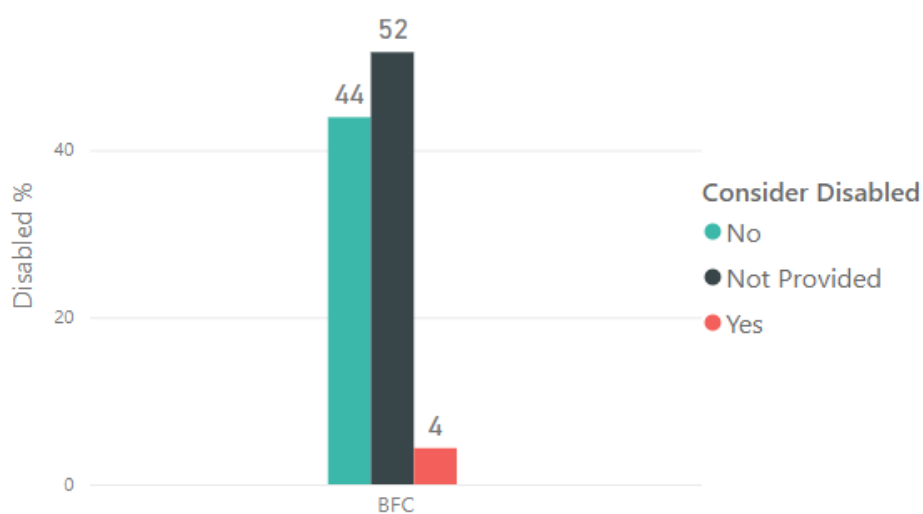


- Our data from the last 4 years shows a broadly similar pattern over the last 4 years however the proportion of staff in the lower age bands is decreasing.
- The number of staff starting in the lower age groups has been declining over the last few years which shows as a workforce we have an aging population, and this is unlikely to change over the next year or so.
- We have a higher proportion of leavers aged 65+ but this is to be expected as our proportion of the workforce at this age is also increasing.

6. Disability Profile

The data around the disability profile of Bracknell Forest is not clear. We have a sizeable proportion of staff who seem to have not provided their disability status (52%) however we cannot be sure that a high number of these would be no disability and they just left the field blank. For reference those not disclosing an ethnicity stands at 8.6% which is what we would expect with disability. That said, the data available shows the proportion of staff with a disability has increased. This is lower than the national picture which indicates that 20% of working age adults are disabled (Source <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/the-employment-of-disabled-people-2021>).

Staff Disability BFC



	19/20	20/21	21/22
Yes	2.14	2.21	4.34
No	41.52	42.86	43.94
Prefer not to say	56.34	54.93	51.72

The 2011 Census information indicates that 3% of the population of Bracknell Forest aged 16-65 are either permanently sick or have a disability and are not considered part of the economically active population. No census figure is available for disabled people who are part of the working population in the Bracknell Forest area.

Number of staff indicating a disability have increased significantly in 21/22

The number of staff undefined for disability makes profiling and analysis challenging

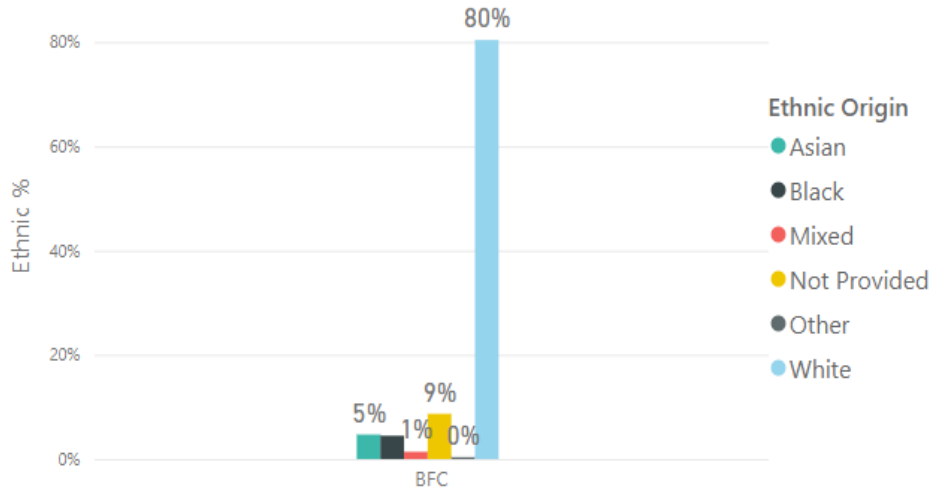
	Workforce	Starters	Leavers	Training
Yes	4.34	3.65	6.82	5.41
No	43.94	26.94	39.77	50.09
Prefer not to say	51.72	69.41	53.41	44.5

- The number of leavers is higher than expected for disabled staff
- Number of starters excluding disability status is increasing
- Disabled staff are accessing training opportunities
- An analysis of leaver reasons shows that out of 12 leavers that stated they had a disability 10 of these left voluntarily. The 2 who left involuntarily was due to health matters.

7. Ethnic Origin Profile

For the first time this year we have broken down the Ethnic Origin statistics into more categories. This makes it difficult to do comparisons with previous years, but this trend will be introduced over the next few years as more data is available.

Staff Ethnic Origin BFC



7.1 New Starters/Leavers

There is not a record of ethnic origin for many of the new joiners, making analysis unclear. New iTrent recruitment system pulls through all diversity factors from application stage to employment, which will improve our future analysis and understanding.

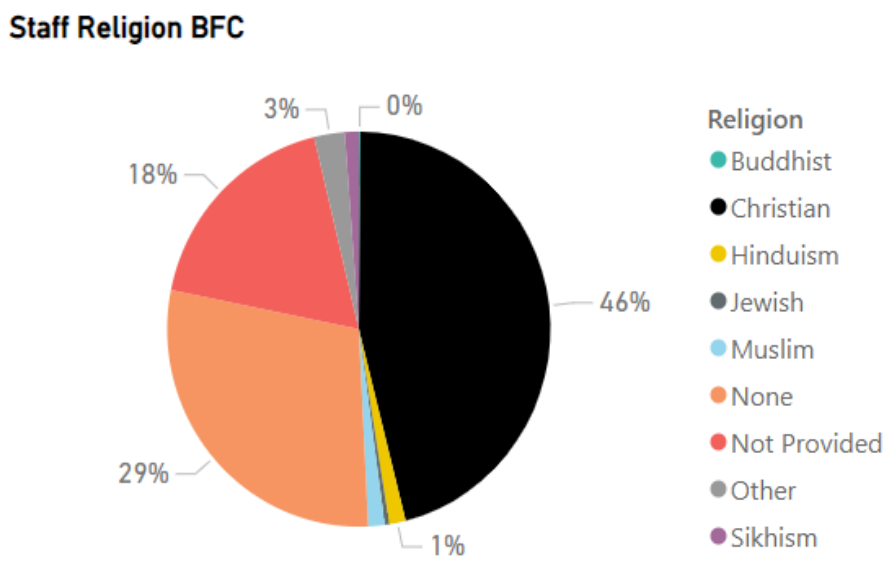
	Workforce	Starters	Leavers	Training
Asian	4.70	6.39	7.47	4.38
Black	4.48	5.02	5.75	4.65
Mixed	1.40	1.37	2.30	1.56
Other	0.37	0.91	0	0.36
White	80.38	61.64	73.56	80.42
Not Provided	8.67	24.66	12.07	8.63

- Our results show that we have a higher proportion of new starters (12.78) from BAME background
- There is a higher proportion of leavers (15.52) from a BAME background.
- Training attendance mirrors the workforce profile.
- Due to the significant number of 'not provided' for new starters, in depth analysis is challenging

8. Religion and Belief

The religion most common at BFC is Christian with almost 46%. There is a significant proportion (over 47%) of the workforce that have either indicated they have no religion or have declined to identify

Staff Religion BFC



8.1 Religion Starters/Leavers

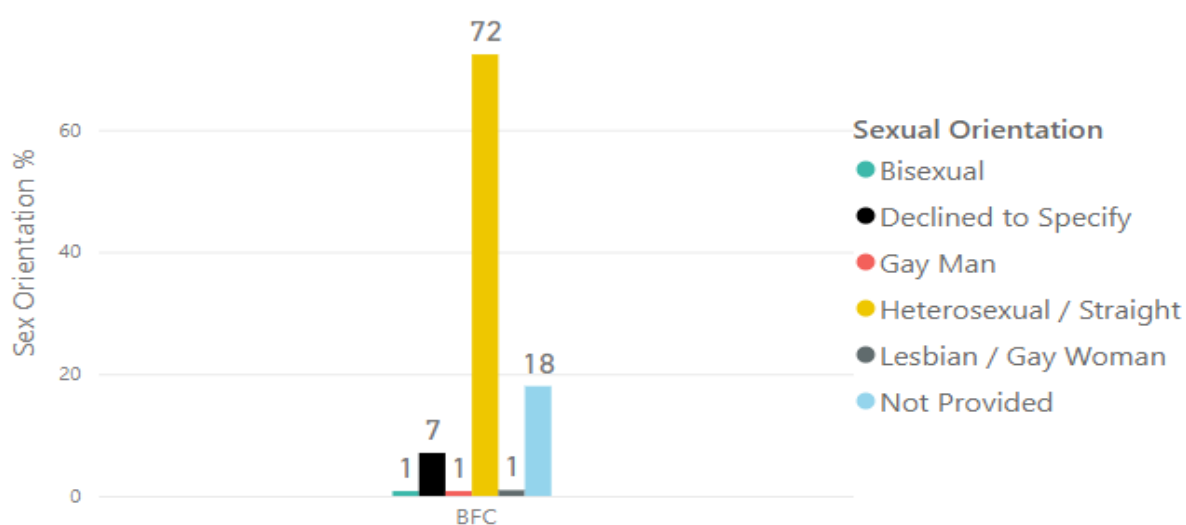
	Workforce	Starters	Leavers	Training
Buddhist	0.15 (0.08)	0.91	0.57	0.13
Christian	45.92 (47.64)	28.77	44.32	43.49
Hinduism	1.40 (1.44)	1.37	1.14	1.40
Jewish	0.37 (0.42)			0.59
Muslim	1.40 (1.18)	2.74	2.27	0.67
Sikhism	1.18 (1.35)	1.83	2.27	1.51
Other	2.57 (2.36)	3.20	2.84	2.14
None	28.95 (29.90)	26.94	23.86	33.08
None Provided	18.06 (15.62)	34.25	22.73	17.00

(figures in brackets indicate 20/21 values)

- The workforce totals for Buddhist, Muslim, None provided and other have increased slightly from 20/21. This reflects the higher number of new starters.
- All other areas have decreased with the biggest reduction shown in Christian
- Higher number of starts
- Less training opportunities are being accessed by Muslim members of the workforce
- There is a significant number of new starters who have decided against identifying their religion or belief. Sexual Orientation

9. Sexual Orientation Profile

Staff Sexual Orientation BFC



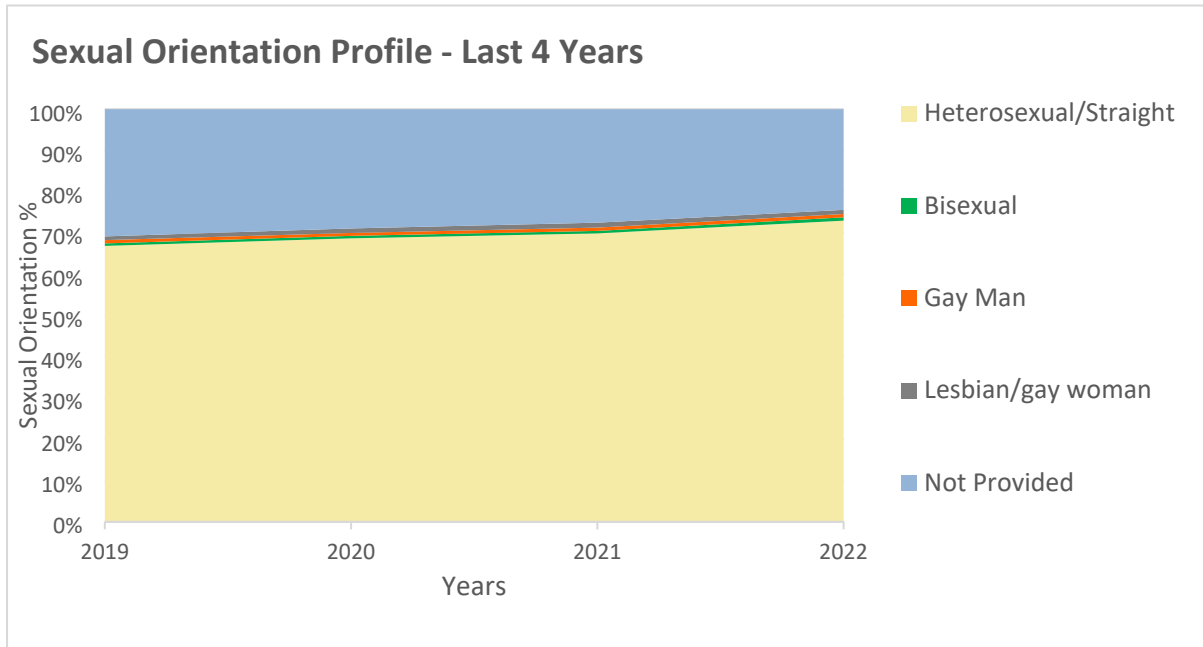
9.1 New Starers/Leavers

	Workforce	Starters	Leavers	Training
Bisexual	0.81 (0.28)	2.74	1.14	0.60
Gay Man	0.81 (0.42)	2.28	1.70	0.96
Heterosexual/Straight	72.37 (71.11)	69.86	63.07	71.10
Lesbian/Gay woman	0.96 (0.47)	0.91	1.14	2.75
Declined to specify	7.05	2.28	10.80	8.18
Not provided	18.00 (27.25)	21.92	22.16	16.41

(figures in brackets show values for 20/21 – Declines to specify and not provided total combined)

- 2021/22 shows a reduction in staff declining to provide/declining to specify their sexual orientation

- All categories has shwon an increase in representation, partly due to the opportunity to update the information on the I-works system
- Higher proporion of new starters for Bisexual and Gay Man categories



Data from the Office for National Statistics in 2020 estimated that 4.2% of the southeast population (Aged 16+) defined themselves as being lesbian, gay, bisexual, or other. Unfortunately, the figures from the 2021 Census are unavailable for us to compare against. Bracknell Forest profile is similar to previous years with 2.58% defining themselves in this way which is lower than the current estimates available.

10. Gender and Ethnicity Pay Gap

Reporting Requirements

The government introduced mandatory gender gap reporting for all organisations with 250 or more employee in 2017. Organisations are required to publish the following statistics:

- the difference in the mean and median hourly rates of pay between male and female employees
- the difference in the mean and median bonus payments between male and female employees
- the proportion of male and female employees who received bonus pay during the twelve-month period preceding the snapshot date
- the proportion of people in each quartile of the organisation's pay distribution.

The mean, or arithmetic mean, is the average of a set of numbers, calculated by adding all the numbers together and then dividing by how many numbers there are. The median is another type of average and is the middle value of a list of numbers. The pay quartiles are calculated by listing all rates of pay in order of value and then dividing into four equal sections (quartiles), with each quartile containing the same number of individuals

10.1 Gender Pay Gap

The table below shows the mean and median gender pay gap based on hourly rates of pay as of 31st March 2022 for all Non-Schools Staff. The table compares the figures for this year with those of last year (the first year we separated non-schools out from schools)

	Difference between men and women	
	Mean Hourly Rate	Median Hourly Rate
31 March 2021	15.90%	11.70%
31 March 2022	13.50%	11.70%

The actual figures for the hourly rates in 2022 are as follows:

	2021 Hourly Rate	
	Mean	Median
Men	£24.32	£21.66
Women	£21.04	£19.11

The national median gender pay gap is 15.4% (October 2021 Office for National Statistics Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings ASHE Gender Pay Gap Analysis – (all organisations)). Further information published by the Office for National Statistics using data from the ASHE survey shows that the median gender gap for the public sector is 18.0%. The median gender pay gap for Bracknell Forest Council (11.7%) is lower than the public sector average.

10.1 Gender Bonus Gap

The bonus pay gap has been calculated in line with the definition of bonus pay contained within the regulations. For Bracknell Forest this includes Retention Payments, Honoraria payments and Merit Awards.

The table below shows the figures for 2021-2022: -

	Difference between men and women	
	Mean Hourly Rate	Median Hourly Rate
2022	3.60%	-21.40%

Actual figures:

	2022 Bonus Rate	
	Mean	Median
Men	£203.89	£139.87
Women	£196.55	£169.86

These figures clearly show there is no bias in the bonus pay paid across the Authority. Reviewing Mean rate, men are paid slightly more but using the median hourly rate, women are paid more.

The bonus gap figures can be misleading due to the small numbers of staff in receipt of the payments during the year, which will skew the results.

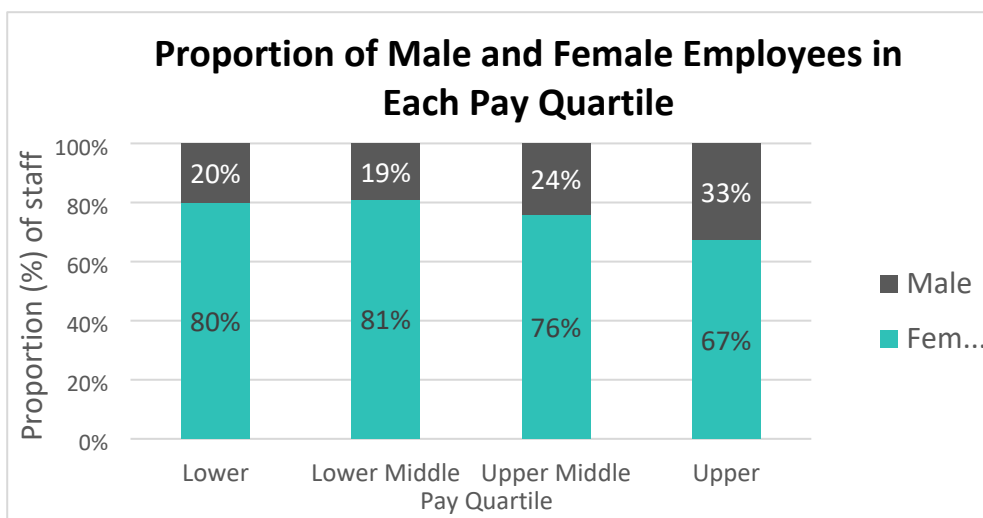
Proportion of Men and Women who receive bonus pay

Female	Male
10.10%	6.40%

More females get a bonus payment than men proportionally to their gender. The principal areas within the Council that receive bonus pay as per the definition are within Social Care in the People Directorate. We have a higher proportion of females (85%) within this directorate compared to the whole workforce (76%) which will in some way explain the figures above.

10.2 Pay Quartiles

The chart below illustrates the distribution of people across the quartiles of the Council’s pay range and shows that the pay gap is largely because of occupational segregation. Local authorities have a wide range of services and professions, however many of the lower paid roles tend to be dominated by women e.g., administration, care, customer services etc.



The proportion of Female employees in the bottom two quartiles is slightly higher than the proportion in the Authority, however as explained above this is expected due to the nature of the jobs in the lower quartiles. These include Library Assistants, Administrative Roles and Customer Services Roles which traditionally are more attractive to females.

Whilst female employees are strongly represented in the upper and middle quartile, over half (52.7%) of females are within the lower two quartiles. There are more men in the upper quartiles.

10.3 Ethnicity Pay Gap

As part of the Action Plan agreed last year, we have calculated our ethnicity pay gap. There is no published guidance, so we have worked to the same guidelines as with the Gender Pay Gap. We have only included staff that have declared their ethnicity. This equates to 91.3% of staff.

Of those who have declared their ethnicity 88% are from a white (non-ethnic minority) background and 12% from an ethnic minority background.

	Difference between ethnic minority and non-ethnic minority employees and women	
	Mean Hourly Rate	Median Hourly Rate
2022	-3.20%	-10.60%

In terms of both mean and median calculations ethnic minorities are paid more.

We have not produced figures for ethnicity bonus pay gap due to the small numbers of staff involved.

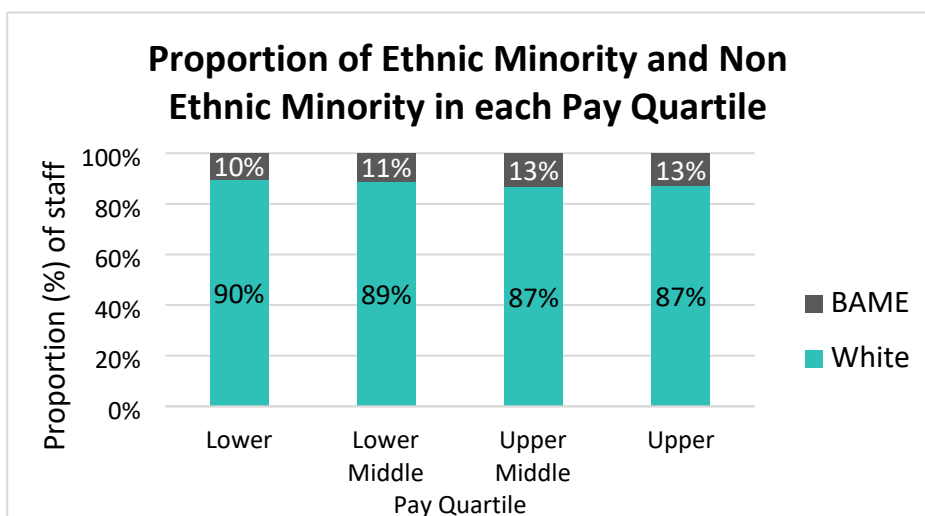
Proportion of Ethnic Minority and Non-Ethnic Minority Employees who received bonus pay.

Ethnic Minority	Non-Ethnic Minority
10.10%	12.40%

Showing 10% of ethnic staff receive a bonus which is less than non-ethnic at 12%

Ethnicity Pay Quartiles

The chart below illustrates the distribution of ethnic minority employees across the quartiles of the Council's pay ranges. This shows a uniform distribution across the four quartiles. Over half of our ethnic minority employees are in the upper quartiles.

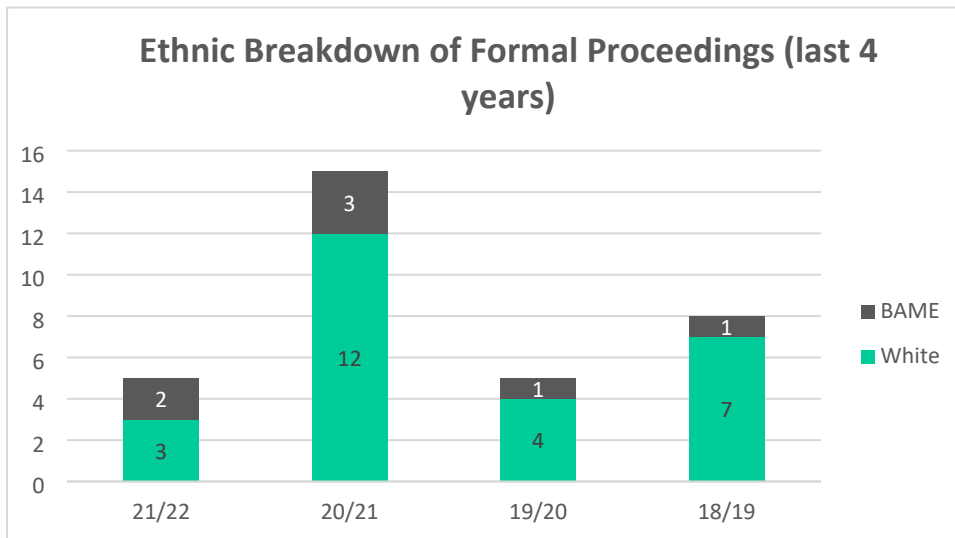


These results on ethnicity pay gap are positive and clearly show that BFC does not have an issue in this area.

11. Employment Procedures

Our records show that 9 members of staff went through a formal proceeding during 21/22. These include Disciplinary, Capabilities and Grievance but as the numbers are very small, one case will make a big impact on data analysis. The graph below shows the Disciplinary and Capability casework over the last 4 years. The proportion of those from an ethnic minority is larger than the total population.

The 2 members of staff in the past year were from an ethnic minority group came from different categories of ethnic origin.



If you look at all formal proceedings including Grievances, 2 out of the 9 employees were from an ethnic background.

Below is a Summary table of the sensitive characteristics of those that went through a formal proceeding through the year compared with the figure for the staffing population. This shows a tendency for age category 55-59 members of staff to be subject to more formal proceedings. Each case has been reviewed and there are a variety of reasons for each formal proceeding and there is no pattern. One case was for health issues which lead to early retirement.

Characteristic	BFC Staff Figure (%)	Formal Proceeding (%)
Sex	76% Female	78% Female
Disabled	4% declared disabled	0% declared Disabled
Ethnic Origin	12% Ethnic Minority	22% Ethnic minority
Sexual Orientation	1% Lesbian/Gay Woman	11% (1) Lesbian/Gay Woman
Age	17% 30 – 39 28% 40 – 49 15% 50 – 54 16% 55 – 59 11% 60 – 64 22% 65 and over	11% 30 – 39 22% 40 – 49 11% 50 – 54 22% 55 – 59 11% 60 – 64 22% 65 and over



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