

# EDI

Equality, Diversity  
& Inclusion



## Annual Report 2024 - 25

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (2022 to 2025)



worcestershire  
county council

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# Introduction

This report sets out a summary of the work undertaken by Worcestershire County Council (WCC) in the third and final year of delivery, measured against the objectives in our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy 2022 to 2025. It includes updates on work we have completed for each objective, a summary of the demographic data of our county, and our workforce demographic data, which we are required to publish annually.

Our progress towards these objectives is monitored throughout the year via our EDI frameworks as shown in our strategy. As part of our Public Sector Equality Duty, we are required to produce and publish an annual report outlining the progress that we have made against the objectives. This information is set out as a provision of The Equality Act 2010.

Our Strategic Diversity Leadership Group meet quarterly to review the progress and set actions going forwards. This group is chaired by the Chief Executive Officer, and regular membership includes Assistant Directors from all directorates as well as the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion team, and occasional attendance from Staff Network Chairs



## Our EDI Strategy

At the Council, we believe that everyone deserves a voice. The current EDI Strategy gives us the remit for our ongoing work and priorities. It has been successfully embedded across the organisation and has had some powerful impacts since its launch in September 2022, on our staff, our partners, and our communities.

In this EDI Strategy, our Equality Objectives are:

- 1.** Build a resilient, empowered and engaged community that thrives in all of Worcestershire.
- 2.** Prioritise and embed Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at all levels
- 3.** Ensure fair, positive, and proactive measures are taken to attract and retain diverse talent and skills, and development planning is in place for future leaders
- 4.** Collaborate effectively and empower our employees to be accountable for our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion approach across Council

The EDI Strategy does not sit alone, but complements and is complemented by other relevant work in the Council, such as our Workforce Strategy, Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, SEND Strategy, Adult Social Care Strategy, and a wide range of other projects and workstreams.

Last year, we agreed to extend our current strategy to September 2025. This was due to a range of factors, including the significant changes to the structure of the council and the impact on our workforce, as well as to allow completion of some key programmes of work and initiatives driven by the current strategy. This allowed us to continue our commitment to the objectives in place, carry on with the important work being delivered in our Directorate Equality Groups, and importantly, gave us an opportunity to change our approach for the development of our next strategy.

Work on the next strategy was underway during the last year, and this report is the final Annual Report to be published under the EDI Strategy 2022 to 2025. The next strategy will set out the work we will begin, continue and improve, based on learnings from this strategy, mapping the Council's EDI work from April 2026. The strategy is anticipated to last until April 2028.

After April 2028, it is expected that Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) will take effect, as set out by the England Devolution White Paper released in December 2024. Local government reorganisation is the process in which the structure and responsibilities of local authorities are reconfigured. The government has set out plans to abolish every two-tier system of district and county councils in England, including Worcestershire County Council and the six district councils in the county.

Through our EDI work and Council values, and with close links and collaborative work, we are creating and driving a culture of inclusion and respect for our residents. Our commitment to our duties under the Equality Act 2010 empowers us to embed equality into everything we do.

We are working hard to create an environment where everyone feels included and valued. We celebrate diversity, continue to challenge discrimination and hold ourselves accountable for making positive change. In this Annual Report, we are proud to share some examples of the work we are doing to break down barriers and promote inclusion across the county.



## Our Duty

The Public Sector Equality Duty is set out within the Equality Act 2010. Links to further information can be found in the Supporting Documents.

The General Duties require that public authorities, such as Councils, have 'due regard' to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct prohibited within the Equality Act 2010
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who don't
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who don't

There is no standard legal definition of 'due regard', although various court cases have clarified the general duty and what 'due regard' means.

Fostering good relations means taking action to reduce prejudice and increase understanding between different groups of people.

Advancing equality of opportunity means:

- removing or reduce the disadvantage that people with protected characteristics face
- taking steps to meet the specific needs of people with protected characteristics
- encouraging people with protected characteristics to participate fully in all activities, especially when they are underrepresented

The Equality Act defines nine protected characteristics:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- religion and belief
- race
- sex
- sexual orientation

The Public Sector Equality Duty applies to WCC and will apply to any new authority that governs Worcestershire after the completion of Local Government Reorganisation.

With the launch of the next strategy, we acknowledge that the work must persist, and challenges continue to arise. Those challenges must be met with enthusiasm, passion, commitment and resource, to fully and effectively implement the changes we want to see for Worcestershire.



## Statement from our EDI Lead:

Our efforts in and commitment to ensuring we are a place of work that lives our values, embraces inclusion, and provides equitable and respectful services to our communities, has never been more necessary. In a climate where human and equal rights remain at risk, providing assurance, support and services that reflect the needs of our workforce and communities is essential.

In many areas of WCC, the work we do aims to be inclusive by nature, as we build on creating environments where colleagues and residents can thrive, celebrate their diversity and difference, and create meaningful change. Our statutory obligations allow us to be held to account by remaining compliant with our Public Sector Equality Duties, and we use this as the strong foundation in which to build on our wider EDI work.

Empowering colleagues to be themselves, supporting managers in sharing best practice and leading with strength, sensitivity and compassion, creates impactful cultural changes, and aligns with our workforce strategy, statutory duties, and intentions of high-performing and productive teams. Through these workstreams we have the opportunity to fulfil our objectives within the EDI Strategy across all directorate areas. This is measured and monitored quarterly through our frameworks, is led at senior level and has tangible impacts for our workforce and our communities.

This report provides an insight into some of the successes and work completed. It also highlights the work and the challenges still ahead of us. We take this opportunity to review and reflect on our EDI work, and analyse new areas to target in our subsequent EDI Strategy, developing new objectives to reinvigorate our focus. We look forward to sharing the details of this report with you.



# Equality Objectives

This section explores the work delivered by the Council towards our four Equality Objectives, laid out in our EDI Strategy 2022 to 2025.

**Equality Objective 1:  
Build a resilient,  
empowered and  
engaged community  
that thrives in all of  
Worcestershire.**

- Engaging and encouraging participation between the communities we serve and Council services and staff.
- Support training, development and employment initiatives; countywide
- Colleagues contribute, collaborate and drive inclusion forward

Supporting our Worcestershire community underpins everything we do at the Council, and our EDI work is no different. Year on year, we have increased our EDI work within our local communities, and this report describes many projects that have built engagement with residents of Worcestershire.

A key pillar of our engagement with Worcestershire is how we communicate with our residents, and we have continued to vary our methods and content this year. We support many valuable local projects and pieces of work that are driven by local communities and businesses, collaborating with our residents to make positive change. This complements our activities to support and empower our county, through education, employment and community-building activities. Finally, we co-produce and collaborate with key pieces of Council work, responding to the voices of those we are here to serve.



## Engaging and encouraging participation between the communities we serve and Council services and staff

Throughout the year, we continued communicating with our community in a variety of ways. We combined print, digital and in-person communication to make sure Worcestershire residents can feel involved and informed about the work we are doing, as well as advocated for, through our inclusive approach and best practice in engagement activity. These channels are also used to highlight and celebrate activities across the county, offer information and guidance to the public, and look at national and international events through a local lens.

Our Resident Roadshows returned this summer, bringing Council colleagues, Councillors and residents together to discuss the issues that matter to them in a way that suits them. The Roadshows are held at existing community events, to show support and provide a convenient and accessible contact point. This year, the Roadshow visited Bromsgrove, Redditch, Worcester, Droitwich Spa and Stourport.

We have also expanded our commitment to making information accessible online, alongside in-person, phone, email and social media enquiries. Work undertaken by our digital team resolved accessibility issues with our website through the year, and the latest reports agree that, from a sample of 125 webpages, our webpages were 94% accessible. Further information on our digital accessibility work is shared under Equality Objective 4.

Elsewhere in our communities, travel links have been strengthened through the 'Worcestershire On Demand' bus service. Expansions in the service through the year has brought it to new areas of Bromsgrove and Malvern, as well as launching in Wychavon in August. This serves a higher proportion of older and disabled residents, and since January, has also offered free travel to veterans.

The Waseley Hills and Worcester Woods parks have been reaccredited this year, which involved improvements to accessible information in both areas. This was developed with the help of the Council's Staff Network for disabled colleagues, RISE, and the many volunteers who have lived experience of disability, such as those working with Mencap.

The Wythall and Hollywood Fun Run was notable for its guide runners, tailored support and dedicated spaces to enable the inclusion of blind and visually impaired participants, in collaboration with our partner, Sensory Matters. This improved the event experience for disabled people, who were also able to access inclusive sports taster sessions on the day.

For Learning Disability Week, our Adults and Communities colleagues held a series of events including a special Olympics, Zumba, games and disco, as well as information about services for adults with learning disabilities and their loved ones.

Services have become more accessible in this period, with two new initiatives. The Registration Services team have been visiting Kidderminster Family Centre, easing access to their help for families who could otherwise struggle to access their support. The Mobile Library has also been extended to visit additional rural areas, reducing geographic inequality in our county.

One area we wanted to better improve access and provision for, across many teams at the Council, is Worcestershire's Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. This reporting period has seen the Council drive improvements to our site management and maintenance, as well as a reduction in school exclusion rates for children and young people from these communities.

In our social care teams, we had previously developed an eLearning module, to enhance knowledge about specific challenges, support and barriers for Gypsy, Roma and Travellers, and our Children's Services identified a further training need for their workforce. Awareness sessions were delivered on Gypsy, Roma and Traveller identities, needs and strengths. These sessions were in the form of a voluntary training for all colleagues, and a presentation to all managers in the service. The training was accompanied by an updated briefing with key information, which serves as a resource for any colleague.

Funding, through investment and grants, is a key way the Council empowers our communities to make a difference in what matters to them. The Public Health team celebrates community work through the 'Celebrating Community Stories' Project and its 2024 to 2025 report. The campaign highlighted organisations across the county that help residents stay healthy, active and creative. With funding support from the Council, many of these groups provide opportunities to those with certain protected characteristics.

Some of the works supported include:

- H.E.L.P., a charity supporting rough sleepers and vulnerably housed people in Kidderminster, providing a night café, warm space, furniture provision and pet bank; through engaging with the charity, users can be signposted to further support or helped with relocation
- over 50 young people with experience of the justice system were involved in the creation of murals at Tolladine Road Youth Justice Centre; the artwork was designed collaboratively with young people, engaging them with art and creative design
- Gilt Edge Bowls Club, which primarily serves members over the age of 75, was granted funding to repair fencing and purchase equipment suitable for beginners, building connection in their Stourport community
- Evesham Velodrome and Myriad Day Centre, who together opened weekly inclusive cycling sessions for adults with 'Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities'
- with support from a Community Wellbeing grant, Nunnery Wood Football Club were able to open an under-18 team to bridge the gap between youth and adult football for local female players
- Sensory Matters were funded to provide physical activity for members, accessible materials for local leisure centres, and a full internship for physical activity, bringing a new team member with lived experience of visual impairment to the charity



Through the Councillor Divisional Fund, the Councillors have up to £10,000 of annual discretionary funding to spend on causes that matter to their residents.

Between 2024 and 2025, the Councillors funded a variety of community activities, such as days out for elderly residents of Pebworth, support for local arts engagement, outings for Ukrainian families, Dancefest, and local Pride activities.

Financial contributions were made to many local charities, trusts and community groups that work for Worcestershire residents with certain protected characteristics, including the Disability Support Project, Youth Engagement Partnership, Pershore Men's Shed, Mobilise Arts, and Brain Tumour Support.

Further contributions were made to support local culture, through funding to Worcestershire Literary Festival and Fringe, Droitwich Spa Comedy Festival, Astwood Bank Carnival, Elgar Festival, Saltfest, the children's literature festival Curious Minds, and the Worcester Mela.

We also publish and make information available for local, national and community funding opportunities, such as our Community Grant Programme and Strengthening Worcestershire Fund, alongside charities, trusts and community funds. On our website and through our Councillors, we provide information and access to funds for a range of projects, as well as useful resources and training opportunities, supporting and encouraging participation of individuals and community groups across the county to foster good relations.

### Support training, development and employment initiatives; countywide

Employment opportunities in Worcestershire include programmes dedicated to supporting residents. This focuses on a variety of pathways into employment for those who may face additional barriers, and in particular, work to support disabled residents was extended this year.

Connect to Work was launched, which offers people in Worcestershire 4 to 12 months of dedicated advice on strengths, roles and finances, coaching and placement opportunities, and employer support as well as help in accessing joined-up healthcare if needed. The scheme can be accessed for many reasons, to benefit those seeking or staying in work, including disabled people, refugees, veterans, carers and care leavers.

The supported internship programme continued, in which young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) were able to work at Worcester Royal Hospital or the Alexandra Hospital, through partnership with Worcestershire Acute NHS Trust.

Training is continually offered by our Adult Learning, Young Adult Learning and SEND Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS). Newly this year, Adult Learning Services provided free sessions for professionals

on autism, based on training from SENDIASS, which was co-produced with autistic people.

In Education, a review of our Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) process in June found that 7 in 10 children and young people now have their EHCP complete within 20 weeks, and 8 in 10 were compliant with the annual review. Quality was also markedly improved within the plans themselves. Although these are significant strides, it also highlights significant room to grow.

SEND education in Worcestershire will also improve with our inclusion in the next phase of the national Partnership for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS). As of September 2025, PINS has launched in Worcestershire, supported by the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care Board (ICB). The programme aims to support all children, with a particular focus on SEND provision, staff skill, early intervention and stronger partnerships between schools and parent carers.

The training, development and job opportunities of our residents continues to be a priority, with offerings such as Skills4Worcestershire, Connect to Work and Get Worcestershire working building towards a flourishing region.

## Colleagues contribute, collaborate and drive inclusion forward

This year, we have increased opportunities for residents to be involved in Council work through co-production. This way of working makes sure the right people are at the front of the design and implementation of our services, having their voices heard and their experiences shared.

In the Children's Services directorate, the hiring of two Co-production Officers will support this work. Part of the Council since May 2025, these officers work closely with the community of children and young people with SEND.

The team connect with residents by visiting a variety of schools, colleges, family hubs, groups for young people, alternative provisions, and service users' homes. This was enhanced by an event at the Hive, through which residents could meet them and connect with 14 other related services in the county. The team has been involved in training their colleagues, partners and stakeholders in meaningful engagement and co-production strategies.

In response to sentiment from their engagement work, the team now facilitate a forum of engaged young people with SEND, Voices United. Meeting for the first time in July, this group co-produced their name, logo and direction. A regular newsletter was launched in September 2025, with all content provided directly from Forum members. This first edition brought together personal reflections from a young vision-impaired member, artwork from two more members, and local events of interest to them.

Two members from Voices United also sit on the SEND and Alternative Provision (AP) Partnership Executive Board, which makes strategic decisions for provision in Worcestershire. Attending as equal members of the board, this facilitates the sharing of ideas and information between the Board and the Forum, building communication in both directions. The forum will continue to develop and grow in partnership with the Council, providing a pathway to meaningful co-production for our colleagues and partners.

The team also co-produced a set of outcomes and a vision statement for young people with SEND in Worcestershire, engaging over 450 children and young people across the county to share their views and shape the Council's Quality Assurance. Young residents have contributed to the Neurodivergent Language Project and the Change Programme, have begun work on a project to co-produce the Early Years Inclusion processes, and will furthermore be involved in a Self-Evaluation Framework project, the first of many future projects under this framework.

In Adult Social Care, co-production continued with the Building Together Forum. This board brings together adults from across the county with lived experience of Adult Social Care services, many representing under-served voices, alongside their carers, family, and professionals. Established in 2023, Building Together has previously contributed to the Adult Social Care Strategy, and continues to engage with the service as equals in the co-production relationship.





Some achievements of the group in this period include:

- co-production of Easy Read document templates for key social work documents, including assessments and support plans
- improving the steps involved in Direct Payments and the language and structure used in Direct Payment information
- redesigning key documents for carers, such as carers' assessments, to be more person-centered and strength-based
- supporting the organisation of lived experience sessions in Celebrating Social Work Week (see Equality Objective 4)

Building Together also links in with our well-established Learning Disability Partnership Board and Autism Partnership Board, who led on the co-production of the Learning Disability and All-Age Autism Strategies.

The Learning Disability Partnership Board, Autism Partnership Board, Autism Reference Group and Carers' Partnership Forum bring together people with lived experience, carers, key professionals from statutory and voluntary sectors to steer our local strategies. Some recent key achievements from this work includes co-production of our About Autism resources for the Autism Partnership Board website and co-production of healthy lifestyles information for people with learning disabilities and professionals who work with them through the Learning Disability Partnership Board.

A further group, which links directly to the Carers' Partnership, in which carers were fully engaged in delivering a project which supported unpaid carers when the person they support returns home from hospital.

Another group was established in this period for under-served voices, Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children and Young People, where bi-monthly meetings highlight barriers and needed support for this vulnerable group. This accompanies our ongoing engagement pathways for residents, such as the Parent and Carer Forum, Worcestershire Youth Cabinet, Autism Partnership Board, Local Access Forum, Worcestershire Viewpoint Panel, and further groups that bring the voices of residents to teams across the whole of the Council.

Senior managers and coproduction leads from WCC are instrumental in our cooperative approach to EDI in external forums and groups, with attendance at regular meetings for West Midlands Association of Directors for Adult Social Services (ADASS), West Midlands Local Authority Equality Network, Worcestershire Integrated Care Equality groups and sub-committees, and we offer continued support for new members of groups by providing expert advice and guidance.

This way of working is key to ensuring our services meet the needs of the county, but also provides a platform for perspectives that may be minoritised or seldom heard.

**Equality Objective 2:  
Prioritise and embed  
Equality, Diversity  
and Inclusion  
at all levels**

- Implementing a governance structure for EDI
- Colleagues at senior levels are visible in driving inclusion and challenging behaviours

**Implementing a governance structure for EDI**

In the first EDI Strategy’s final year, clear frameworks for EDI work remain in place council-wide. The governance structure at the Council is made up of three distinctive groups, each playing a part in embedding EDI across the council.

The Strategic Diversity Leadership Group consists of the Chief Executive Officer and senior colleagues responsible for decision making regarding EDI works, programmes, initiatives and communications planning. Corporate decisions and accountability for compliance and reporting are managed here, with senior leaders being the key figureheads for driving best practice and knowledge throughout their relevant directorates. Members of this group attend from each of the Council’s four directorates, alongside the Council’s EDI team.

A key step taken during this reporting period was the inclusion of Staff Network Chairs at select SDLG meetings. This creates a new feedback channel from colleagues to the senior decision-makers in EDI at the Council. This improves accountability, strengthens resourcing, and demonstrates commitment from senior staff.

Directorate Equality Groups (DEGs) meet regularly to plan, measure and action the objectives in the strategy, as well as promote ideas and discuss challenges arising from the work. Each Directorate has a group, comprising of four:

- Adults and Communities
- Economy and Infrastructure
- Children’s Services
- Chief Executive’s Unit

Chairs of the DEGs lead on operational activity and projects to support inclusion. They are attended by Equality Champions drawn from each service area within the directorate, who link the EDI perspective to their daily work.

## Colleagues at senior levels are visible in driving inclusion and challenging behaviours

Part of the work of a Directorate Equality Group is to engage with wider EDI plans, delivering information, through facilitating sessions, ensuring regular attendance occurs at meetings, and cascading messages to ensure they reach all levels. The Directorate Equality Groups use emails, newsletters and team meetings to share internal and external information about EDI, including projects and initiatives, events and resources.

All groups hold open platforms at their meetings, creating a safe and constructive space for innovation, challenge and accountability. This conversational approach, balanced with objective action planning and documentation, enables transparency and proactive inclusion.

This reporting period saw the relaunch of two DEGs. In Children's Services, the appointment of two co-chairs to coordinate regular DEG meetings brought Children's Services into closer collaboration with other directorates. The DEG began some key workstreams, focused first on accurate reporting of service users' identities and demographics in Children's Social Care, which will begin with an open learning session for colleagues and be monitored through an identity-themed audit. The DEG has also driven work towards raising awareness of Staff Networks, and brought EDI into conversation at staff meetings, including the all-manager annual session, which saw presentations on language that cares for looked-after children, and awareness of local Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

The Chief Executive's Unit also relaunched their DEG, bringing together senior colleagues from diverse working areas such as Finance, IT and Digital, Communications, Learning and Development, Legal and Governance, and Public Health, as well as EDI. Since its first meeting in the summer, this group has focused on two priorities: accurate capturing of ongoing work, and improving collaboration between areas to fully unify and embed the directorate's contributions to our Equality Objectives. This has enabled the capture of important ongoing work, such as policy improvements discussed in Equality Objective 3, and accessibility in our digital resources, discussed under Equality Objective 4.

The Economy and Infrastructure DEG report the completion of 22 of their 26 directorate objectives, in contribution to the overall Equality Objectives. This includes ongoing review of the accessibility of the highway network, with particular attention to the safety of vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, wheelers and cyclists. EDI is regularly included in internal communications and staff events, and EDI considerations are monitored in the newly-launched Complaints Handling Code within the directorate, to ensure impacts linked to protected characteristics are captured. The DEG is now looking to better connect to and support staff who are under-served by the DEG work, beginning with an in-person meeting held at County Enterprises, our supported employment workplace for people with learning and physical disabilities.





Following this tour of County Enterprises, one of the key outcomes identified was the importance of improving how we share information and carry out performance reviews in that area, using formats that are clear, practical and easy for staff to engage with.

The insights gained will help us shape a more flexible approach that recognises the diverse needs of staff across the directorate, particularly for teams that are on smaller sites. As this work develops, the intention is to create an adaptable model that can be applied more widely across the county.

In Adults and Communities, DEG sessions have continued regularly. A focus of these meetings has been the planned inspection of the social care service from the Care Quality Commission (CQC). The group explored best-practice examples and provided key channels for evidencing the EDI work at the Council, allowing another way for us to receive feedback on our EDI work with an expert social care lens.

Additional work from this DEG included embedding the Dignity at Work Policy, and the hosting of two learning sessions during Celebrating Social Work Week, discussed under Equality Objective 4.

The directorate's Adult Front Door service was evaluated by Healthwatch in this period, an oversight body that champions the voices of health and social care service users. Healthwatch found the service was providing an overall positive experience, as colleagues approached service users with sensitivity and care, while accurately identifying their needs and offering support to meet them.

Healthwatch's recommendations were taken forward as a priority, and an action plan developed to address areas of improvement. These include raising awareness of the service's purpose, redistributing resources to make both referral pathways (web and phone) equitable in wait time, and providing accessible formats for referral and communication, with a focus on British Sign Language (BSL) and screen reader compatibility. One improvement, in place as of September 2025, has been mandatory asking and capturing of caring responsibilities for callers, with signposting made available consistently.



Staff Networks remain a central part of our internal EDI work at the Council. These networks bring together the voices of colleagues who are seldom heard at the authority, or those who are in the minority of our workforce. They drive further engagement, awareness and steering for decision-making, collaborating with teams as experts by experience in vital areas. The Council now has three Staff Networks, each with a name, logo and a clear remit to serve a specific group linked to a protected characteristic.

The Plus Network unites colleagues on the LGBTQ+ spectrum, and the Network renamed itself during this period to highlight the inclusivity of the network through drawing attention to the plus symbol. This year, the Plus Network launched its own section on the Council intranet, providing a resource for colleagues who seek to learn and understand terms, experiences and history relating to the LGBTQ+ community. An event open to all colleagues was offered, Colour with Pride, a collaborative and welcoming session to create a Progress Pride Flag. Further events are planned for the next reporting period, such as marking Spirit Day, Transgender Day of Remembrance, and LGBT History Month.

The RISE Network established a vision this year: to empower anyone experiencing a disability, neurodivergence, long-term or mental health condition. The new name of the Network reflects the values it seeks to embody: resilience, inclusion, strength and empowerment. A key achievement of the Network in this period was the creation of an introductory video, communicating the Network's purpose, activities and diversity to the wider Council. With the support of SDLG, this video and further resources will be hosted on a specific intranet page, following the successful launch of the Plus intranet page. The RISE Network also launched a series of peer support sessions in this period, providing a way for members to connect and discuss issues in an informal space.

Finally, in November 2024, the first meeting of the Race Equality and Cultural Heritage (REACH) Network was held. The REACH Network established itself through the election of an Interim Chair, promotion activities to build its membership, and by the end of the reporting period, were planning an event to mark Black History Month and raise the Network's profile amongst colleagues at the Council.

Work continues to connect Networks with colleagues who may be able to lend their voices to the communities they represent, as well as building links with other public sector Staff Networks and community groups, improving their impact.



**Equality Objective 3:  
Ensure fair, positive,  
and proactive measures  
are taken to attract and  
retain diverse talent and  
skills, and development  
planning is in place for  
future leaders**

- Removing barriers within our recruitment process
- Attract skilled diverse talent to the Council
- Proactive future proofing and development opportunities for groups historically excluded, or who had barriers to leadership roles

At WCC, we are ambitious when it comes to employment opportunities that meet the needs of the council, balanced with the skills and potential of the county. We are passionate about apprenticeships, colleague development and creating a workplace that empowers colleagues to achieve success.

### **Removing barriers within our recruitment process**

Routes to work for the Council are varied. We regularly offer paid internships, supported employment, work experience, and closely partner with local businesses to ensure we can share opportunities, job roles, and progression routes for people we support. By maintaining a variety of ways to discover, explore and apply for jobs at the Council, we maximise opportunities and minimise barriers in recruitment.

We aim to be proactive in the employment opportunities we offer, to both meet our needs as a council and to develop the skills and potential of people in our county. We offer information about our career opportunities to schools and school leavers, further and higher education facilities, at community events, and publicly online on our website and external services. We continue to share information through written communication, social media, and in-person and online events. We focus on offering career opportunities and development, engaging with people at every stage of their career journey to build a thriving working community in Worcestershire.

We are a Disability Confident employer, and hold Level 2 of the Disability Confident scheme. This means we have evidenced hiring, retaining and developing our people. We highlight our membership of the scheme and our commitment to equality of opportunity in our hiring adverts, to demonstrate our commitment from candidates' first point of contact. We provide accessible information during the hiring process, offer reasonable adjustments to candidates, and commit to interviewing disabled people who meet the minimum criteria for a role.

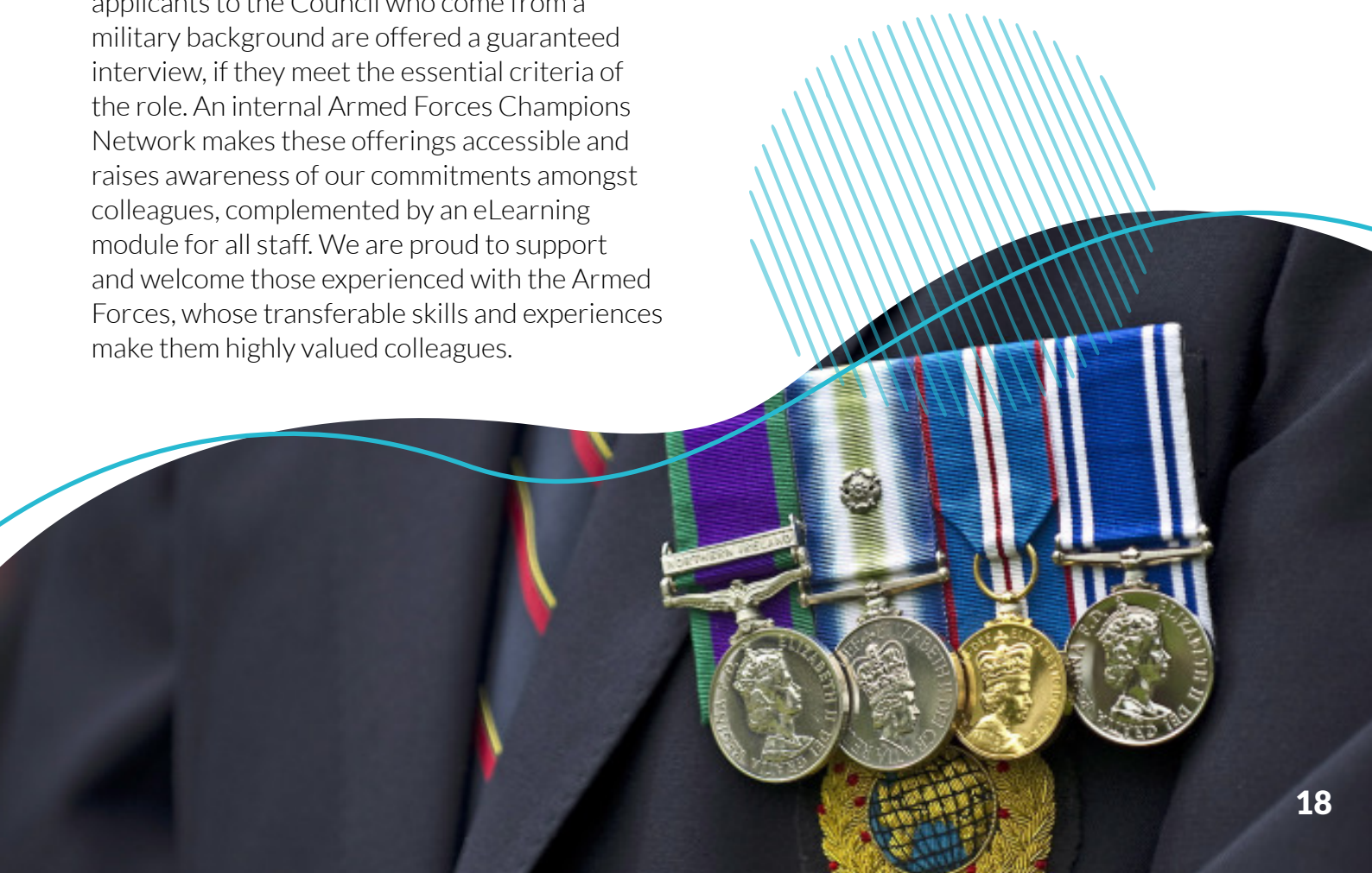
We hold the Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) Gold by the Ministry of Defence for enhancements to our commitment to employees with Armed Forces connections, both current and future. This includes veterans, reservists, and those with family connections. To achieve this, we evidenced:

- we proactively showed forces-friendly credentials in our recruiting and selection processes
- we offer 10 extra days paid leave for reservists to carry out their military commitments, and flexible leave to adult cadet volunteers and to spouses and partners of those serving in the Armed Forces
- we actively ensure that our workforce is aware of these positive policies
- we are an ambassador of the Covenant to other organisations and employers
- we support our local Cadet Forces

In addition to these requirements, job applicants to the Council who come from a military background are offered a guaranteed interview, if they meet the essential criteria of the role. An internal Armed Forces Champions Network makes these offerings accessible and raises awareness of our commitments amongst colleagues, complemented by an eLearning module for all staff. We are proud to support and welcome those experienced with the Armed Forces, whose transferable skills and experiences make them highly valued colleagues.

Worcestershire County Council has committed to a phase 3 piloting of the Social Care Workforce Race Equality Standard (SC-WRES). This programme, that reports on Adult and Children's Social Care, will map 9 key indicators of race equality implications and demographic data. These include workforce diversity metrics, staff sentiment and representation in senior leadership, and involve measuring differential treatment of staff in recruitment, training, disciplinary procedures, as well as experiences of bullying and harassment from colleagues and service users, and perception of equality of opportunity and discriminatory practices.

In this period, we built towards establishing the programme and engaging stakeholders, as well as gathering the initial data needed to measure and deliver the improvements needed. This commitment, made with the support of senior leadership, will be relevant across the organisation and drive us towards a fairer, safer and more equitable place to work. A report of the findings, along with an action plan containing support and guidance, from programme owner Skills For Care, will be delivered in 2026.



## Attract skilled diverse talent to the Council

Information about inclusion at onboarding, signposting to EDI work and staff networks are all provided in early stages of employment, and continual links to our EDI Hub are highlighted throughout the year. We ensure that job descriptions are updated to reflect our EDI goals, and we widened the approach to advertising positions. Looking ahead, changes to our processes will enable better links between new starters and available support, development and EDI learning opportunities in the coming year.

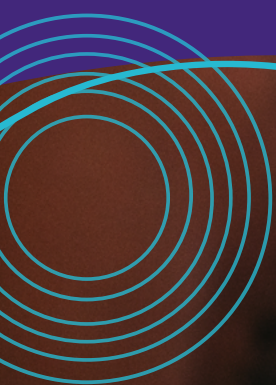
Retaining and developing diverse staff requires a holistic, yet intentional approach beyond structured opportunities. We have undertaken a variety of projects to improve the work environment for our staff.

One of the main pathways to working and developing at the Council is through apprenticeships, and this reporting period saw the launch of a new apprentice dashboard that allows the apprenticeships team to collect and utilise equality monitoring information. This has enabled the team to understand and respond to equality, diversity and inclusion needs in the Council's apprentices across all work areas. It also allows us to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty by taking positive action to address inequalities, and identifying further opportunities to engage with those who currently aren't applying or accessing our offer.

The apprenticeship data is currently in line with national statistics, but there is more we can do with our external training providers to work effectively with the apprentices we support. This data helps make sure appropriate and targeted help is available throughout the apprenticeship and allows the team to proactively engage and offer support, improving their experience and our service.

As part of our position within the Herefordshire and Worcestershire ICS, the Council has engaged with the Active Bystander Programme. The Active Bystander Programme seeks to educate, inform, and improve the moral courage of staff, building a community of colleagues who feel safe and confident to intervene, speak out and support recipients of inappropriate behaviours.

Over the year, 10 Active Bystander Champions have been trained on the programme, and awareness sessions were delivered to 29 colleagues alongside and through partnership with other ICS organisations. As the programme develops, bespoke sessions are planned for internal delivery, to raise their awareness and confidence in Active Bystanding. This will support our journey towards a civil and compassionate working culture that challenges discrimination and other behaviours for our colleagues.





**Proactive future proofing and development opportunities for groups historically excluded, or who had barriers to leadership roles**

Retaining talented colleagues is beneficial to everyone: the individual employed, the council, the local economy, and the local community. In the next phase of our strategic delivery, we are aiming to improve our working environment, maintain our participation in the Armed Forces Covenant, Disability Confident and Race at Work Charter schemes, and develop further processes and resources to support our staff.

Annual support and engagement was continued for the Moving Up programme in Adult Social Care. This leadership development initiative by Skills for Care is supported by the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS). The programme is designed to help Black, Asian, and ethnic minority managers and aspiring managers in health and social care progress into senior roles by boosting confidence, leadership skills, and understanding of personal branding and impact.

In Economy and Infrastructure, we are introducing inclusive slideshows for display, designed to spark meaningful conversations around key communications. The aim of this new approach is to create opportunities for connection, ensure every colleague feels seen, heard and valued, and strengthen our cross-team commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, especially for those who may not regularly access central communications.

In broader Learning and Development opportunities, this year saw the growth of our EDI Hub and eLearning opportunities, in-person workshops, and the launch of new content discussed in Equality Objective 4. The number of learning opportunities that are directly EDI-related across the Council now number over 30. Many of these are available to anyone at the Council, or on request to teams and departments. We will continue to expand and enhance this offering in the coming months.

Our mentoring and coaching programme has continued, providing opportunities for colleagues to develop themselves and their work lives, particularly focusing on soft skills such as self-confidence, decision-making, resilience, stress management, and developing work relationships and partnerships. This provides WCC staff with another route to career development, open to all. This offers particular benefit to marginalised colleagues, who are likely to experience inequalities in career progression.

Coaching was also made available to all staff through our Employee Assistance Programme (EAP). Alongside access to counselling, advice and online resources, the EAP includes two types of coaching for our staff: one option focused on performance, and the other on overcoming challenges and working towards future goals. Complementing our internal programme, this provides staff with another pathway to development opportunities, which they can access independently and flexibly.

Finally, our wellbeing programme continued for all colleagues, and some aspects of the programme contribute specifically to retaining and supporting staff who may have barriers to a healthy working life. Wellbeing offered to staff during this period included health screenings for body composition and blood pressure, a peer support group for menopause, and the Desk to 5k Programme. This initiative, adapted from the NHS Couch to 5k, brings exercise to the workplace through a gradual course of increasing movement. Designed to be accessible from launch, the programme's first cohort highlighted how welcoming opportunities for exercise are valued by our colleagues.

During Wellbeing Week, several sessions were delivered with the specific aim of supporting EDI knowledge or colleagues directly, covering topics such as:

- accessible documents
- understanding gender identity
- trauma-informed care
- men's mental health
- Plus Network's Colour With Pride (see Equality Objective 2)
- local services, including Autism West Midlands and the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Wellbeing and Recovery College

These specific sessions were complemented by events covering physical, financial, mental and social wellbeing, which supports wellbeing and resilience for our colleagues and has a lasting impact on retention.



**Equality Objective 4:  
Collaborate effectively  
and empower our  
employees to be  
accountable for our  
Equality, Diversity and  
Inclusion approach  
across Council**

- Building confidence and skills in our colleagues leading on EDI work (Equality Champions)
- Encouraging regular updates of colleagues' personal data (in line with current GDPR, privacy policy and Data Protection)
- Communications promote inclusion and belonging; our diverse current and potential workforce are valued, respected, and celebrated

The majority of what we do as a local authority requires us to be collaborative. We seldom work on a project with a singular department, and teamwork is essential to ensuring we can effectively deliver relevant and inclusive services to residents and clients. We know that creativity, innovation and equality, diversity and inclusion go hand in hand when it comes to supporting colleagues and residents, alike.

The work we have completed and committed to since launching the EDI Strategy is supported at every level and is lead and driven through many proactive teams and passionate individuals. We have values that back up our commitments, we have a set of policies that establishes our purpose and processes for those who face discrimination, and we aim to consistently address inequality at every opportunity.

## Building confidence and skills in our colleagues leading on EDI work

Through our governance framework, colleagues at a variety of levels and in all directorate areas are involved in leading our EDI work. Diverse and honest voices are needed to keep us accountable and effective, and every colleague's input is valuable in that goal. All colleagues therefore have access to opportunities to build their confidence and skills in areas relating to EDI.

Our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion eLearning forms part of our Mandatory Learning Courses. This eLearning was developed to ensure we can create a positive impact, not just at work, but within our communities, and provides employees with the skills and confidence to not only comply with legal requirements but to be allies and help make the workplace a more supportive and inclusive environment. This will return to the mandatory learning schedule in early 2026 to refresh everyone's knowledge of our commitment.

In addition to this, employees also have access to our Unconscious Bias and Unconscious Bias for Managers eLearning, and additional eLearning on the Armed Forces Covenant, neurodiversity and neurodivergence, and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. A coproduced Ramadan Awareness and Learning session is delivered on an annual basis to educate and prepare staff to support their colleagues who participated in Ramadan this year.

An additional module was launched in May 2025 on D/deaf Awareness. Developed through the collaboration of Learning and Development, EDI and Sensory Impairment teams, this module introduces colleagues to the basics of including and supporting D/deaf people, with a focus on social and cultural models of disability and practical strategies for working effectively with D/deaf colleagues, partners and service users. This module was designed to be useful and relevant for staff at all levels, and is accessible on demand through the eLearning platform. At the time of publication, the module has had over 100 completions and was promoted through Staff Networks and Deaf Awareness Week.

Alongside this learning, our Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) trainings continue to be held throughout the year, with promotion improving uptake across the organisation. This has brought more colleagues to understand their involvement in the Council's statutory equality duties, and is increasing accountability in all departments. The EDI team continually provide feedback and support with the EIA process to colleagues and external partners, so new policies, processes, functions and services are developed with EDI in mind.





Offline training sessions were held in a variety of service areas through this period. A session on understanding gender identity was held in Children’s Services with over 60 attendees, exploring the experiences of those with the gender reassignment characteristic. During Celebrating Social Work Week, two sessions were offered to colleagues in the Adults and Communities directorate, in which individuals shared their lived experiences of domestic abuse of men, mental ill health, caring responsibilities, and transgender experiences in healthcare. These sessions were all well-received and led to meaningful discussions and actions from colleagues who attended.

As a public body the Council has a statutory duty to ensure all websites and online systems meet the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines and published an accessibility statement. Since being in post, the Digital Accessibility Lead has identified the family of websites, including legacy systems, owned by the council to address these needs. Many third-party providers are now directly collaborating with the council to work on web accessibility requirements. Similarly, internally created websites are regularly maintained for accessibility by the web team. For new websites, procurement and purchasing guidance for websites and online applications was published to ensure this commitment is upheld moving forward.

Beyond legal expectations for websites, we consider digital accessibility as relevant to all staff, and advocate that all staff share responsibility for it. This is demonstrated through our broader commitment to digital accessibility by promoting the basic principles of accessible content creation throughout all digital information and channels. This includes everyday content such as email communications, the documents and presentations we share with residents and colleagues, and social media content.

A key tool to meet these broader needs for accessibility across the Council is SCULPT. SCULPT provides guidance for all colleagues on the foundational principles of accessible digital content, highlighting features important to inclusion, such as:

- structure, such as headings and subheadings
- colour, contrast, captions and checkers for accessibility
- use of images, including alternative text and handling decorative images
- links and logical reading order
- plain language and clear fonts
- tables for data, and transcription



SCULPT is communicated in a variety of ways, including through an online resource hub, training sessions, and physical resources. This also includes a mandatory SCULPT eLearning course for all staff and new starters to complete. Pioneered by our Digital Accessibility Lead, it has directly impacted the accessibility of both internal and external documents and raised awareness of the variety of benefits of accessibility for both disabled and non-disabled people.

Alongside this work, a series of Digital Accessibility Pledges were collected from colleagues for Global Accessibility Day. This initiative encouraged staff and teams to consider the relevance of digital accessibility to their own work.

To reinforce the importance of digital accessibility, a staff survey was conducted that found that 3 in 5 colleagues at the Council use accessibility features, and colleague stories were shared to highlight the varied needs and tools that enable or disable their digital inclusion.

In November 2024, we undertook a comprehensive digital accessibility maturity assessment. This evaluated the Council's legal compliance, practices and staff capabilities, and informed the upcoming Digital Accessibility and Inclusion Strategy, which was in draft form by the end of the reporting period. This unified strategy, driven by our Digital Inclusion working group, will bring together the efforts of a range of service areas to make organisational change.

Finally, the collaborative development of our next EDI Strategy will involve staff input, ensuring better alignment between our EDI goals and the skills, needs and interests of our employees. This will enable further confidence and contribution from our workforce to our EDI work.

### **Encouraging regular updates of colleagues' personal data (in line with current GDPR, privacy policy and Data Protection)**

The campaign to encourage disclosure of colleagues' demographic data continued this year with further communications. With all data categories now aligned to the Census 2021 categories, this enables accurate and comparable reporting on the demographics and protected characteristics of our workforce. This is needed for reporting purposes, but also provides us with rich insight into gaps, challenges and opportunity for improving our accessibility, diversity and culture as an organisation.

Across the Council, we consistently raised the data campaign in communications, both written and verbal. It was a topic at Directorate Equality Group meetings and supported from senior leadership. We continued to highlight the form to new starters and prompt colleagues to update their data through the year, to build a stronger picture of our workforce.

This year's campaign, launched in April, focused on the benefits of updating the information on our HR system. This covered both emergency contact details and sensitive data, and highlighted the safety and anonymity of giving this information, as well as its uses by a variety of teams to understand the makeup of the Council's workforce and contribute to equality and inclusion across the organisation.

Information was shared through our internal news, weekly email round-up, and through the Manager Focus newsletter that goes to all line managers in the organisation. It was also included in the catch-up bulletins discussed below, to better reach across the varied roles in the Council.

**Communications promote inclusion and belonging; our diverse current and potential workforce are valued, respected, and celebrated**

We aim to keep everyone across WCC informed about the work we are doing, and communicate this through regular workforce updates, Senior Leadership’s staff briefings, and informal sharing on our intranet. Key information is centralised on a dedicated site for EDI, our EDI Hub.

We also continued to provide catch-up bulletins for employees who may miss communications, such as those who are frontline workers, those without regular access to technology or information, those whose first language is not English. These bulletins bring together key wellbeing and EDI stories into one place, and are cascaded by managers to ensure all Council colleagues are reached. The bulletins are now fully SCULPT-compliant, ensuring digital accessibility is maintained in these key communications.

Internal communications developed this year to highlight events and expand the knowledge of WCC staff. New articles were written to acknowledge and mark events in the EDI calendar, raising awareness and interest across a range of topics. These included:

- religious occasions such as Christmas, Rosh Hashanah and Hanukkah, Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr, Diwali, Yule and Krishna Janmashtami
- disability awareness around Disability Pride Month, World Down Syndrome Day, World Autism Awareness Month, Neurodiversity Pride Day, Mental Health Awareness Week and World Aids Day
- days related to cultural heritage, such as Windrush Day, Black History Month and South Asian Heritage Month
- events in the LGBTQ+ community, including Pride Month, Transgender Awareness Week, Intersex Awareness Day and International Asexuality Day
- tackling discrimination through National Hate Crime Awareness Week and Islamophobia Awareness Month
- we also acknowledged Refugee Week and Carers Rights Day

We have continued or started to be involved and actively collaborating with a range of stakeholders, organisations, local community groups and individuals in Worcestershire. This will improve further over the next phase of the strategy, as we develop the next EDI Strategy for the Council to begin in 2026. Through our local connections, forums we are involved in, partnerships and public services, we aim to engage a variety of people in the Worcestershire community. Through this process, the development of the next strategy will be relevant, timely and tailored to the needs of colleagues, the county, and the people we serve.

# Equality Monitoring and Capturing Data

## Gender Pay Gap Report 2024 to 2025

A Gender Pay Gap is the difference between the average earnings of men and women, expressed relative to men’s earnings, for example, ‘women earn 15% less than men’. It is an indicator of the differences in opportunity of men and women within the workplace.

It is not a measure of equal pay, whether men and women receive equal pay for equal work. Everyone performing the same role at WCC is paid the same grade, irrespective of their gender, but this does not mean gender has no impact on earnings due to variation in progression, type of work, development opportunities and career impacts between men and women.

The 2024 to 2025 Gender Pay Gap Report showed that women at WCC earn 93p for every £1 that men earn.

Between this year and the previous year, the difference between mean hourly pay has decreased from 8.5% to 7.5% and the median from 8.85% to 6.7%. There continues to be no bonus pay gap. There has also been a slight increase in the number of women in higher hourly pay quartiles.

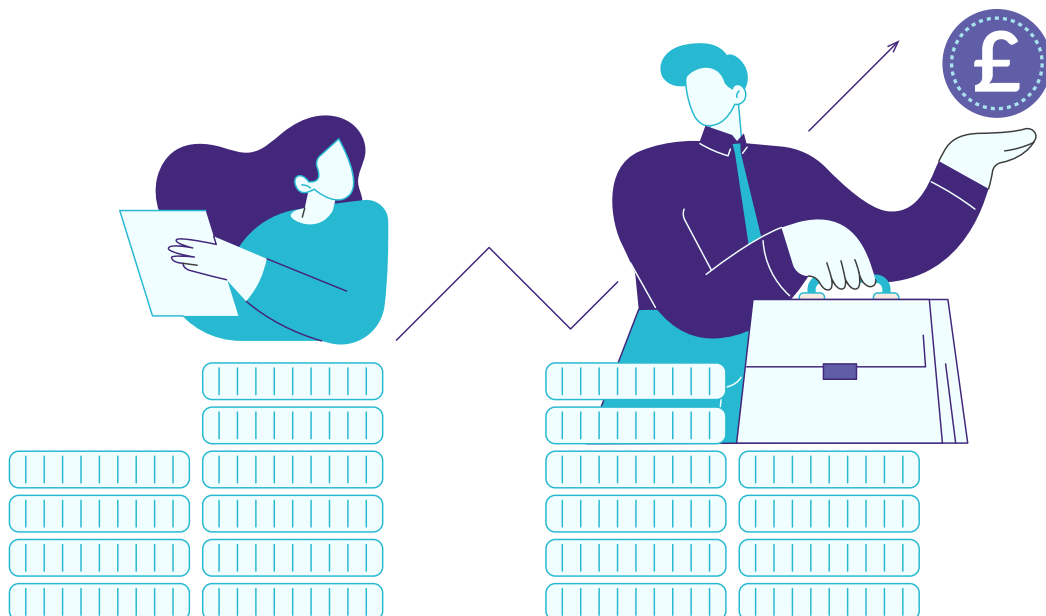
Although pay is not yet equal, our figures compare favourably against the ONS benchmarking data from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE):

- our pay gap is lower than the national gender pay gap of 13.8% (mean) and 13.1% (median)
- our pay gap is lower than the overall public sector, where the gender pay gap was 12.9% (mean) and 13.5% (median)

We are continuing improvements in areas we know are effective in reducing the pay gap, such as reviewing recruitment processes and our people policies, ensuring transparency in pay processes, developing our wellbeing approach and providing leadership development, all of which support the objectives of our Workforce Strategy and our Equality Objectives.

The data we report on and the figures for our gender pay gap are based on Worcestershire County Council employees only and exclude schools.

Read the full report at [2024 to 2025 Gender Pay Gap Report for Worcestershire County Council](#).





Aerial photo of Wildwood, Image supplied by GJS Dillon

“ We are working hard to create an environment where everyone feels included and valued. ”

# Who is Worcestershire?

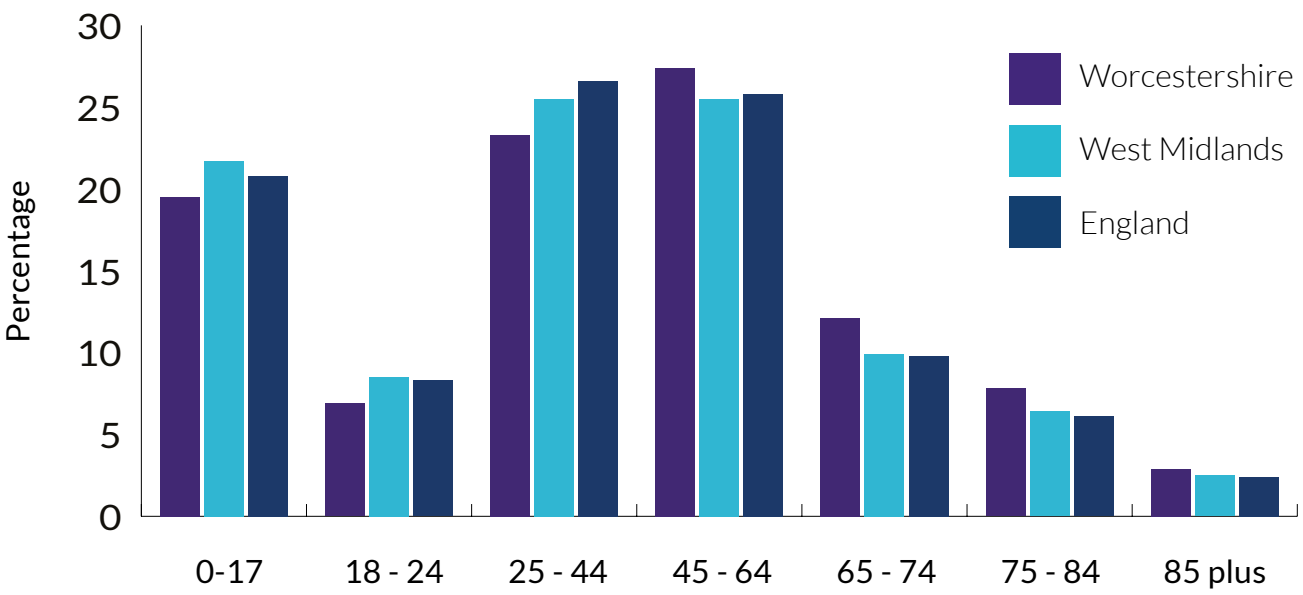
The below information data sets are the results of the county of Worcestershire, from the Office for National Statistics Census 2021. The findings and additional, sub-category detail can be found online via our website, or government websites.

Our Public Health team have shared the data online and this can be viewed in a number of ways, including ward profile demographic detail.

## Age

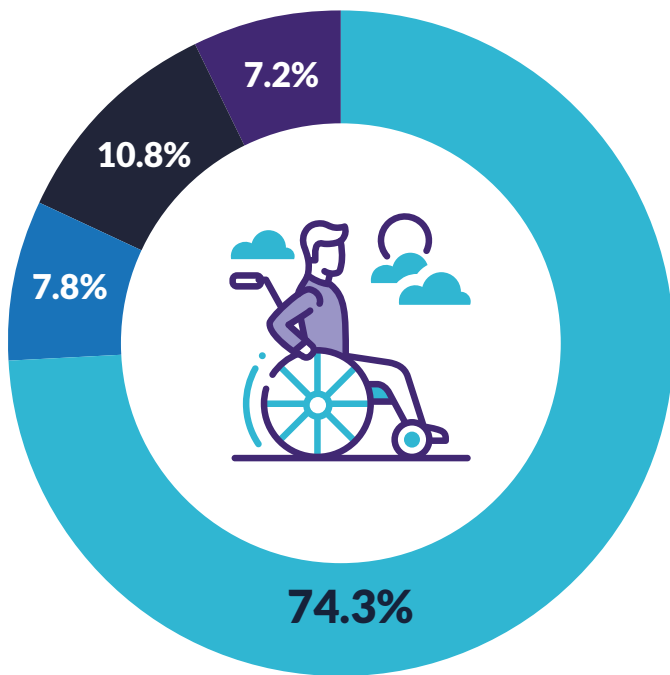
Age Category	0-17	18-24	25-44	45-64	65-74	75-84	85 plus
Total Age	117,938	41,423	140,763	165,515	73,144	47,133	17,759
% of Worcestershire	19.5%	6.9%	23.3%	27.4%	12.1%	7.8%	2.9%

## Worcestershire Age Compared to West Midlands and England Age Breakdown



## Disability

Disability	Percentage
Not disabled under the Equality Act: No long term physical or mental health conditions	74.3%
Not disabled under the Equality Act: Has long term physical or mental health condition but day-to-day activities are not limited	7.8%
Disabled under the Equality Act: Day-to-day activities limited a little	10.8%
Disabled under the Equality Act: Day-to-day activities limited a lot	7.2%



### Disability profile in Worcestershire

- Not disabled under the Equality Act: No long term physical or mental health conditions
- Not disabled under the Equality Act: Has long term physical or mental health condition but day-to-day activities are not limited
- Disabled under the Equality Act: Day-to-day activities limited a little
- Disabled under the Equality Act: Day-to-day activities limited a lot



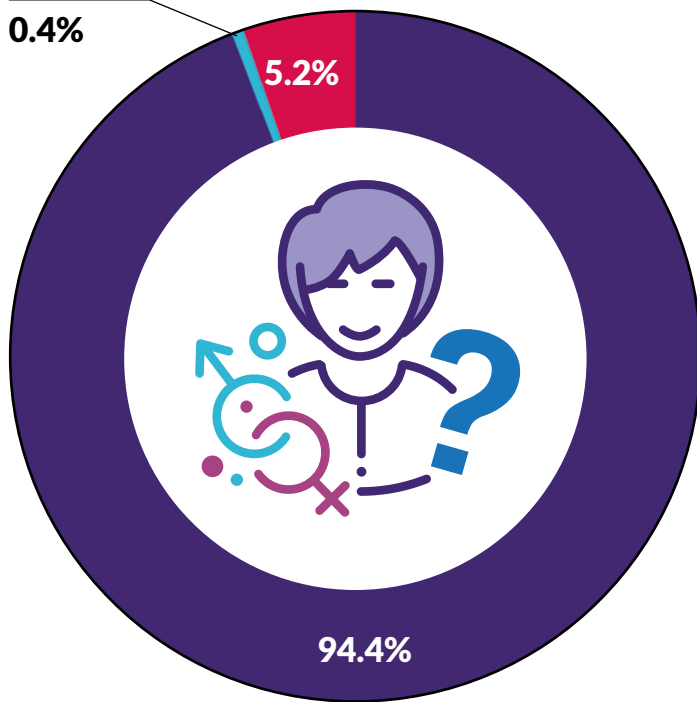


## Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Percentage
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: <b>Bangladeshi</b>	0.3%
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: <b>Chinese</b>	0.3%
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: <b>Indian</b>	0.9%
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: <b>Pakistani</b>	1.1%
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: <b>Other Asian</b>	0.5%
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: <b>African</b>	0.3%
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: <b>Caribbean</b>	0.3%
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: <b>Other Black</b>	0.1%
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: <b>White and Asian</b>	0.6%
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: <b>White and Black African</b>	0.2%
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: <b>White and Black Caribbean</b>	0.7%
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: <b>Other Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups</b>	0.4%
White: <b>English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British</b>	88.7%
White: <b>Irish</b>	0.6%
White: <b>Gypsy or Irish Traveller</b>	0.3%
White: <b>Roma</b>	0.1%
White: <b>Other White</b>	4.2%
Other ethnic group: <b>Arab</b>	0.1%
Other ethnic group: <b>Any other ethnic group</b>	0.5%

## Gender Identity

Gender Identity	Percentage
Gender identity the same as sex registered at birth	94.4%
Gender identity different from sex registered at birth but no specific identity given	0.1%
Trans woman	0.1%
Trans man	0.1%
All other gender identities	0.1%
Not Answered	5.2%



### Gender Reassignment in Worcestershire

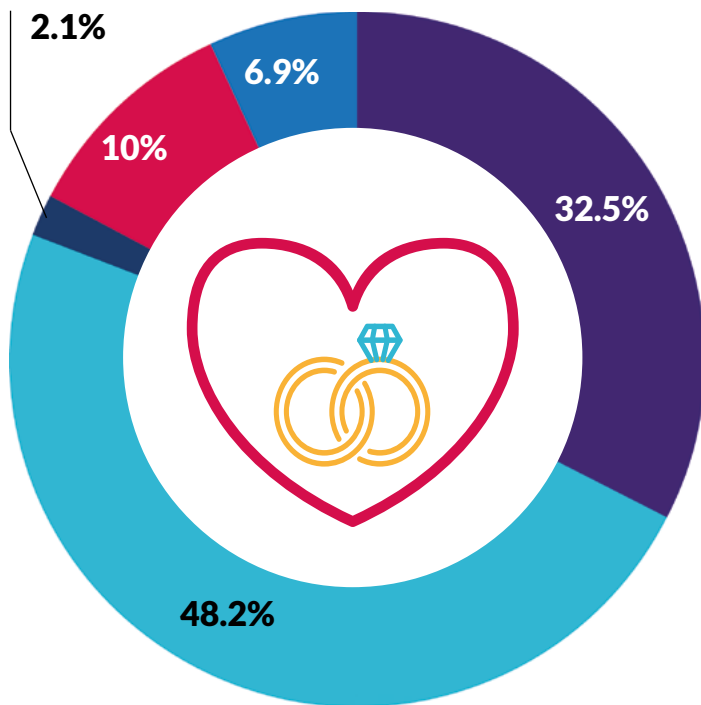
- Gender identity the same as sex registered at birth
- Gender identity different from sex registered at birth
- Not answered

Gender identity information from the Census 2021 is classed as official statistics in development, reflecting that they are innovative, evolving, but have some uncertainty.



## Marriage and Civil Partnership

Marriage and Civil Partnership	Percentage
Never married and never registered a civil partnership	32.5%
Married: <b>Opposite sex</b>	48%
Married: <b>Same sex</b>	0.2%
In a registered civil partnership: <b>Opposite sex</b>	0.1%
In a registered civil partnership: <b>Same sex</b>	0.1%
Separated, but still married	2.1%
Separated, but still in a registered civil partnership	0%
Divorced	10%
Formerly in a civil partnership now legally dissolved	0%
Widowed	6.9%
Surviving partner from civil partnership	0%



### Marriage and Civil Partnership in Worcestershire

- Never married or registered a civil partnership
- Married / Registered civil partnership
- Separated
- Divorced / dissolved
- Widowed / Surviving Partner

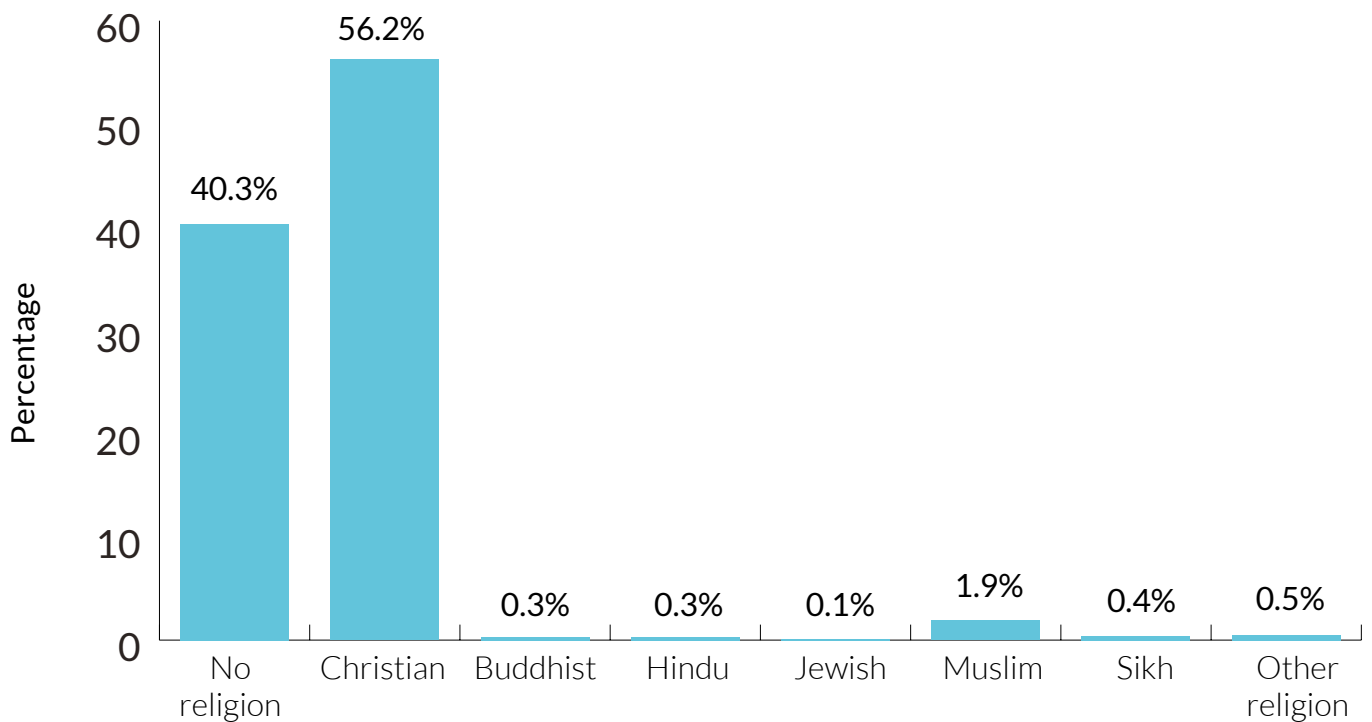




## Religion and Belief

Religion	Percentage
No religion	40.3%
Christian	56.2%
Buddhist	0.3%
Hindu	0.3%
Jewish	0.1%
Muslim	1.9%
Sikh	0.4%
Other religion	0.5%

### Religion and belief in Worcestershire

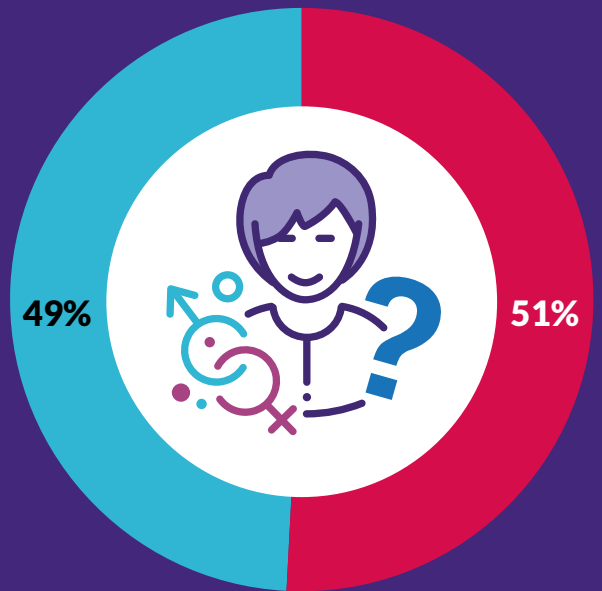


## Sex

Sex	Percentage
Female	51%
Male	49%

### Sex in Worcestershire

- Female
- Male

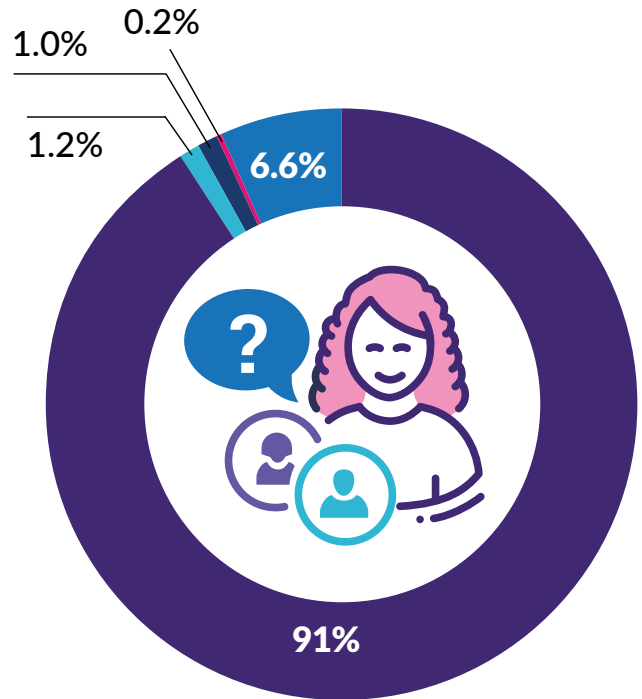


## Sexual Orientation

Sexual Orientation	Percentage
Straight or Heterosexual	91.0%
Gay or Lesbian	1.2%
Bisexual	1.0%
All other sexual orientations	0.2%
Not answered	6.6%

### Sexual Orientation in Worcestershire

- Straight or Heterosexual
- Gay or Lesbian
- Bisexual
- All other sexual orientation
- Not answered

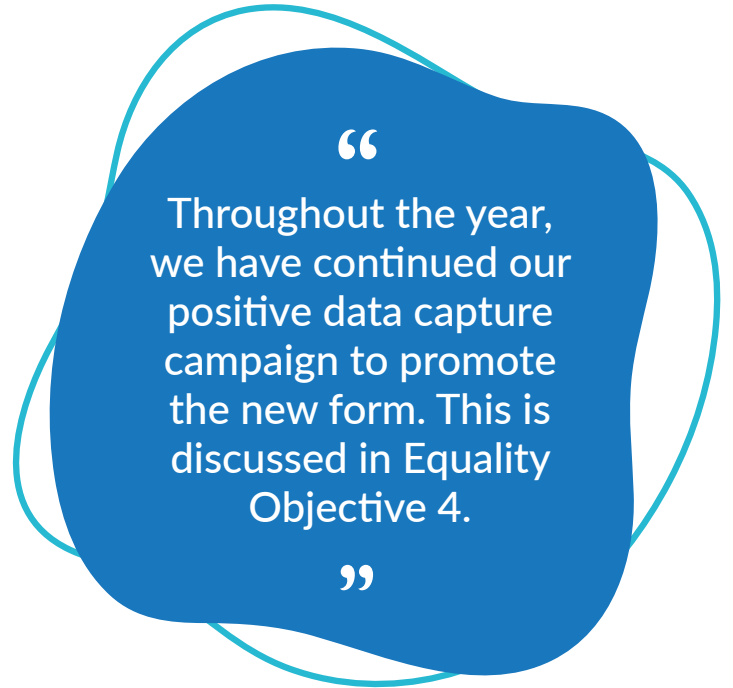


# Workforce Data

As captured in August 2025, we had 3,609 WCC colleagues, and 4,510 colleagues in schools. This data is taken from our HR system and includes all employees across Economy and Infrastructure, Adults and Communities, Chief Executive’s Unit and Children’s Services.

We updated the categories and options on our demographic data page for this reporting period. The questions asked on our HR system align with the 2021 Census questions, which allows us to have a clearer understanding of how our workforce relates to the demographics of Worcestershire.

We know that our current Workforce Data is limited. 72% of our workforce has not yet given any information when looking at the protected characteristics detailed below. The data capture campaign will continue as an ongoing effort to improve the completion rate. This will allow us to compare and analyse data with increasing effectiveness.



## Completion rates

We have a 100% capture rate for age. This is due to our recruitment and HR management system capturing this aspect of identity as standard procedure when processing identity checks for people undertaking to work with us. There are a number of identity elements and verifications required from a legal perspective when starting a job role, or when we undertake to employ a person, such as providing evidence of eligibility to work for us, or eligibility status for employment in the UK.

When considering we have 100% completion capture for age category data, and when removing this singular demographic statistic, we have zero demographic data information for 2,120 (58.9%) colleagues across the directorates of Economy & Infrastructure, Adults & Communities, Children’s Services, and the Chief Executive’s Unit. For schools this equates to 3,733 colleagues or 82.8%.

Data sets shown below from our system capture exclude those responses left ‘blank’. An option to ‘prefer not to say’ is available across non-statutory questions and is shown in each relevant category.



Below is a breakdown of the percentage completion for each of the protected characteristics.

Question topic	Completion WCC	Completion schools
Age	100%	100%
Disability	15.5%	<1%
Gender reassignment	15.9%	<1%
Marriage/civil	37.4%	16.2%
Race	17.5%	1.8%
Religion/belief	20.7%	2%
Sex	16%	1.1%
Sexual orientation	17.9%	1.6%

We also ask additional questions to understand other characteristics of our workforce:

Question topic	Completion WCC	Completion schools
Caring responsibility	15.9%	<1%
Care leaver	15.4%	<1%
Armed Forces - self	15.7%	<1%
Armed Forces - family/spouse	15.4%	<1%

## Age

We have exact ages collected, and for reporting purposes and consistent comparable data sets, we have mapped age into brackets as shown below. As a workplace, the data for 17 and under is not captured for WCC.

The Census 2021 displays additional categories for age, such as 75-84 year olds, and 85+ year olds which we do not separately capture in our age group figures.

Age bracket	WCC	Schools
17 and under	Not captured	<1%
18 - 24	3.2%	5.8%
25 - 34	14.2%	18.3%
35 - 44	21.7%	26.3%
45 - 54	27%	27%
55 - 64	26.3%	18.5%
65 - 74	6.5%	3.5%
75+	0.8%	<1%

## Disability

For disability, our question is ‘Do you have any physical/mental health conditions lasting 12 months or more?’ This question and our categories are based on the census data question from 2021, in order to provide a baseline of data for the organisation. From 2024, we will ask and capture comparative data for the county to the workforce.

Disability	WCC	Schools
No	10%	<1%
Yes	4%	<1%
Prefer not to say	1.4%	<1%

## Gender Reassignment

For gender reassignment, our question is ‘Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?’ This question and our categories are based on the Census 2021, in order to provide a baseline of data for the organisation. The Census 2021 data on gender reassignment is classified as official statistics under development.

Gender Reassignment	WCC	Schools
No	<1%	<1%
Yes	15.3%	1%
Prefer not to say	<1%	N/A

## Marriage and civil partnership

For marriage and civil partnership, our question and categories are based on the census data question from 2021, in order to provide a baseline of data for the organisation.

Marital status	WCC	Schools
Divorced	3.8%	<1%
Formerly in a civil partnership that is now legally dissolved	<1%	N/A
In a registered civil partnership	<1%	N/A
Married	27.4%	18.5%
Never married and never registered in a civil partnership/single	3.7%	<1%
Prefer not to say	1.4%	<1%
Separated	<1%	<1%
Widowed/surviving partner from a registered civil partnership	<1%	N/A

## Race

For race, our prompt is 'Ethnic origin'. There were 628 inputs from WCC and 79 from schools. Our categories are based on the Census 2021, in order to provide a baseline of data for the organisation.

Race	WCC	Schools
Asian other	<1%	5%
Asian/Asian Welsh/Asian British Bangladeshi	<1%	N/A
Asian/Asian Welsh/Asian British Indian	<1%	N/A
Asian/Asian Welsh/Asian British Pakistani	<1%	N/A
Black other	<1%	<1%
Black/Black Welsh/Black British African	<1%	N/A
Black/Black Welsh/Black British Caribbean	<1%	N/A
Mixed or multiple ethnicity other	<1%	N/A
Mixed or multiple ethnicity other White and Asian	<1%	N/A
Mixed or multiple ethnicity other Black and Caribbean	<1%	N/A
Other ethnicity/ethnic group	<1%	N/A
White Irish	1.8%	8.9%
White other	8.9%	26.6%
White/White English, Scottish, Welsh, Northern Irish, British	81.8%	58.2%

## Religion

For religion and/or belief, our question and categories are based on the Census 2021, in order to provide a baseline of data for the organisation.

Religion and/or belief	WCC	Schools
Buddhist	<1%	N/A
Christian	7.2%	<1%
Hindu	<1%	N/A
Muslim	<1%	<1%
Sikh	<1%	N/A
No religion	11.4%	1.4%
Other not listed	<1%	<1%
Prefer not to say	<1%	<1%

## Sex

For sex, our question is ‘What is your sex?’ Our categories are based on the Census 2021, in order to provide a baseline of data for the organisation. Due to this, it asks a binary question on sex.

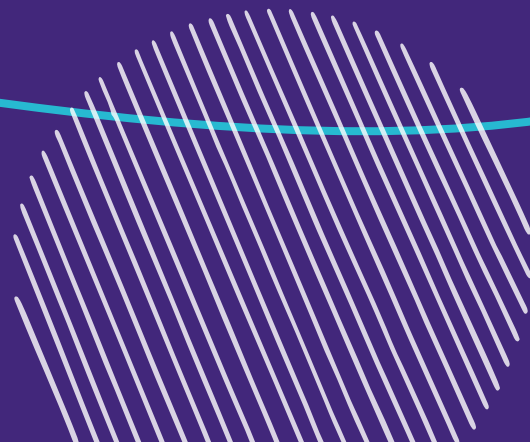
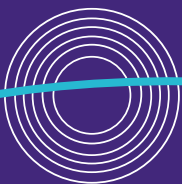
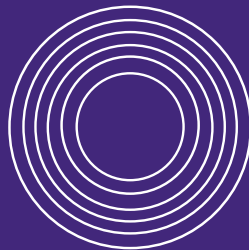
Employee sex is no longer automatically captured.

Sex identifier	WCC	Schools
Female	12.7%	1%
Male	3.24%	<1%
Blank	84%	98%

## Sexual Orientation

For sexual orientation, our wording and categories are based on the Census 2021, in order to provide comparable data for the organisation. There were 643 inputs from WCC and 70 from schools.

Sexual Orientation	WCC	Schools
Bisexual	4.4%	10%
Gay or lesbian	2.5%	<1%
Identify another way	1.9%	N/A
Heterosexual / Straight	11.7%	21.4%
Prefer not to say	80%	67.1%



# Summary

The table below sets out a summary of key achievements during this reporting period against each of our Equality Objectives and outcomes. Further details on activities can be found in the relevant sections of the report.

Objective	Key Progress and Achievements
<p><b>Build a resilient, empowered and engaged community that thrives in all of Worcestershire</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing actions to support career and education opportunities for residents</li> <li>• Greater presence in the community through engagement and support for community organisations through funding</li> </ul>
<p><b>Prioritise and embed Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at all levels</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Directorate Equality Groups leading on EDI work with achievements in each of the four directorates</li> <li>• Staff Networks embedded in our EDI framework and bringing together the voices of staff</li> </ul>
<p><b>Ensure fair, positive, and proactive measures are taken to attract and retain diverse talent and skills, and development planning is in place for future leaders</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive action continues in recruitment, learning and development, mentoring and coaching and staff wellbeing</li> <li>• Commitments to equality of opportunity frameworks including Disability Confident and SC-WRES</li> <li>• Engagement with the wider ICS culture change through the Active Bystander Programme</li> </ul>
<p><b>Collaborate effectively in our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion scheme of work and plans across the Council.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal comms and training enhance EDI knowledge and confidence at all levels</li> <li>• Significant strides in digital accessibility and the SCULPT framework</li> <li>• Collaboration will improve further through development of the new Strategy</li> </ul>

The next step in our EDI work is to develop a new strategy for 2026 to 2028. This will update our objectives to reflect the progress we have made, and the significant work we have yet to achieve. We are ambitious and purposeful in our approach to enhancing inclusion and improving our workforce culture as well as supporting our communities and providing the best, most accurate and appropriate services. We have more work ahead to bring our goals and plans to fruition and provide a strong foundation for further work after Local Government Reorganisation is complete.

We look forward to building on the positive work, and correcting issues we identify along the way, to ensure we empower our communities, workforce and stakeholders to take positive action, prioritise EDI and lead by example to improve outcomes across Worcestershire.

# Supporting Documents

Further information about the Council, our EDI work, and other resources mentioned in this report can be found below.

## Council EDI Documents

[Equality Policy \(PDF\)](#)

[Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy \(PDF\)](#)

[Slavery and Human Trafficking statement \(PDF\)](#)

[Gender Pay Gap Report 2024 \(PDF\)](#)

[Gender Pay Gap Report 2024 to 2025 reporting year](#)

## Wider Council Documents

[Our Plan for Worcestershire](#)

[Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution](#)

[Funds and bids](#)

[Councillors' Divisional Fund Scheme](#)

[Co-production and how to get involved \(SEND\)](#)

[Community Wellbeing Programme](#)

[Public Health News and Insights](#)

[Joint Strategic Needs Assessment \(JSNA\)](#)

[Learning Disabilities Strategy](#)

[All-Age Autism Strategy](#)

## Documents on Worcestershire

[Census 2021 | Worcestershire County Council](#)

[Census - Office for National Statistics](#)

[Accredited country parks in England](#)

[Inclusive Employment Support - Worcestershire Growth Hub](#)

[Inclusive Worcestershire Archives - Worcestershire LEP](#)

[Worcestershire Employers Interactive Map](#)

## EDI Documents

[The Public Sector Equality Duty \(PSED\)](#)

[Public Sector Equality Duty: Guidance for Public Authorities](#)

[Race at Work Charter - Business in the Community](#)

[Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care System](#)

