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Introduction

“The County Council promises not to discriminate against anyone because of race, colour, ethnic or national origins, nationality, religion, disability, age, sex, marital status, caring responsibilities, sexual orientation, political or trade union activity”

Equality is a core value of the Authority, and underpins the way in which we deliver services. We are working to embed equalities into all of our services and employment practices so that we can meet the aims of the Authority’s Equalities Promise Statement and the Equal Opportunities Policy.

The County Council has made an additional commitment to ensuring equality in four other areas outside of the protected characteristics. These are rurality in recognition of the rural nature of Somerset and the impact that has on the Council’s ability to provide services to all; military service in recognition of the fact that Somerset is home to Service Personnel and their families and a signatory to the Armed Forces Covenant; low income in recognition of the fact that Somerset has more limited opportunities for high incomes than some of the more urban counties and the deprivation indices show that Somerset has some significant challenges; and Carers, who often need additional support when you consider this role is often combined with another factor such as rurality or low income.

This report forms part of the overall reporting requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). The PSED places a specific duty on the Council to publish information about its employees (where the organisation exceeds 150 staff) and service users broken down by relevant protected characteristic to show how the Council is:

- Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advancing equality of opportunity
- Fostering good relations between people

This report provides both, an overview of the Council’s performance in terms of Equalities in relation to employment as well as an outline of the work, projects and initiatives around equalities within the Council.

Our work in 2018 will include the introduction of a new People Strategy and a programme of work to support an organisation that is ambitious, confident and focused on improving people’s lives. Equality sits at the heart of this work.

Sex

County Profile – not collated within census (Sex and Sexual Orientation are the two areas that are not collected under the Census).

SCC Profile

The Council's workforce is 73.1% female and 26.9% male (compared to 73.5% female and 26.5% male in 2016). The gender profile of the top 5% earners is 53.26% female and 46.74% male (compared to 48.3% female and 51.7% male in 2016).

The data shows females continue to make up three quarters of the workforce. There has been an increase in the number of women in the top 5% of earners.

The reason for the higher level of female employees in the organisation is a higher proportion of female workers within social care and caring roles. This reflects the national picture in local government employment.

Recruitment (see appendix 1 for full data)

As in previous years, the majority of applicants are female.

The recruitment statistics show no bias in relation to the protected characteristics.

Training

Of those who attended training 25% were male and 75% were female. These figures mirror the workforce profile in terms of sex.

Gender pay gap

The Council has been working hard on ensuring we are ready to report our Gender Pay data. The data will be added to this report by the end of March 2018.

Supportive Policies

Somerset County Council is committed to supporting parents before, during and after they return from Shared Parental Leave (SPL). SPL enables eligible mothers, fathers, partners and adopters to choose how to share time off work after their child is born or placed. It also applies to surrogacy where there is a Parental Order. It is designed to give parents flexibility in how to share the care of their child in the first year following birth or adoption. The regulations came into force on 1 December 2014 and applied to eligible parents, where a child was born or placed for adoption on or after 5 April 2015.

Age

County Profile

- At the time of the 2011 Census 61.1% of the County's population were of working age, 16-64.
- The relative size of the working age population is below the national average in all Somerset districts.
- The highest concentrations are in major towns and in areas housing military personnel (40 Commando, Norton Fitzwarren, and RNAS Yeovilton).
- In some areas of Burnham-on-Sea, Minehead and Frome less than half the population are of working age.

Between 1984 and 2014 those aged 85+ increased by 170%. The number of 85+ is projected to double in the next 2 decades. With this increase in those aged 85 and above we can confidently assume we will see an increase in those providing non-paid caring support. This has the potential to change the profile of employees working within the organisation and an increase in those requiring to work flexibly or/and part time.

SCC Profile (see appendix 2 for full data)

The data shows that the age profile of the Council is broadly the same when compared to that of 2016 with around 52% of the workforce being between the ages of 36 to 55.

Those aged 16-25 account for 6.6% of the Council's employees, a slight increase when compared to 2016. The hope is that continued work through the apprenticeship scheme and pathways to employment work will see this figure continue to rise. The County's lack of a university reduces our ability to retain young people coming to study in the area. This is then also true for those young people that go and study outside of the County and remain in their area of study.

This age breakdown is similar to other authorities with a similar geographical makeup.

Recruitment Data

The recruitment data indicates that a greater number of candidates were shortlisted and were appointed when compared to data from 2016.

The recruitment data indicates that there has been a significant decrease in the percentage of 16-24 year olds being appointed despite a significant increase in the number of 16-24 year olds applying. One possible reason for this is a high number of individuals (including apprentices) applying for multiple vacancies.

Whilst the data indicates that candidates aged 65 and over are the most successful at being appointed the number of applicants is too small for this to be a meaningful finding.

Training

The age profile of those attending corporate training was broadly in line with the workforce age profile showing no bias in training.

Recent Successes

Apprenticeship Scheme

Since May 2017 the Authority has been required to pay the equivalent of 0.5% of its salary bill into a levy which can only be utilised on apprenticeship qualifications. As at January 2018 the Council had 121 employed (compared to 25 in November 2016). The demographic of the apprentices is generally of a younger age. However, we have recruited apprentices from a number of age brackets. There are no age barriers to completing an apprenticeship and one of the 'pros' of the levy is that it can be utilised on existing members of staff that 'up skill' via an apprentice qualification – these existing members of staff also come from a variety of backgrounds and ages.

The Director of HR and OD has set a target of 150 apprentices to be employed by Somerset County Council at any one time. This ambitious target should be met later in 2018, the real challenge will be maintaining this number as and when the current crop of apprentices begin to qualify.

Pathways to Employment Scheme

The Council continues to run the Pathway to Employment Scheme. Now in its third year, the Council has a specific budget to help support those young people from vulnerable backgrounds; such as those with a disability or those that have left care. To date around 120 young people have benefitted from the scheme in some way. Upon reviewing the scheme last year HR and OD service proposed a change in the way the budget is used to increase the number of young people that can be supported. Instead of solely using the budget to finance the salary of those young people offered fixed term contracts and apprenticeships, some bespoke programmes for those deemed not yet 'work ready' have been included. An example of one of these programmes was a week-long residential activity and employability weeks held at the Pinkery Resource Centre on Exmoor. 13 care leavers took part and completed a number of challenges whilst also learning new skills and meeting employers. All 13 were more 'work ready' upon completion of the week long trip. In time, a number of other programmes are planned such as a trade 'taster' week whereby the young people are given day-long opportunities to experience mechanics, painting and decoration, carpentry, plumbing and electronics to spark an interest before being signposted to relevant future opportunities.

Case Study - Harry offered the following feedback on his experiences of working at SCC and being an apprentice:

"My colleagues at Somerset County Council are very supportive. They have worked with other people with disabilities before I started working for the Council. My employment advisor from Aspire has also been very supportive. The right training can help me to work independently and my job coach comes into my work place when I'm learning a new skill.

I have made a support card which tells my colleagues about what I find difficult and how I like to be supported. As a visual learner, I read illustrated user guides when I start learning a new task. This helps me to process information. Anybody with a disability who has the motivation can get a paid job

Disability

County Profile - Data from the census 2011 tells us that 18.8% of the population of Somerset said they had a long-term condition or disability.

Almost 12.7% of them were aged 16-64. The proportion is on a par with both regional and national averages.

SCC Profile

- The percentage of top 5% earners declaring a disability was 3.78% compared with 3.14% in 2016.
- The percentage of employees declaring a disability increased to 7.6% compared with 5.3% in 2016.

Last year we introduced an annual prompt for staff to update the data we hold on them in order to capture more accurate information. This year's figures indicate that this has improved the accuracy of our data and our expectation is that this figure will increase year on year as people become more comfortable with recording their information. It should be noted that this declaration is not mandatory and where a member of staff does not require additional support they may not feel the need to declare.

Recruitment (see appendix 3 for full data)

- Applicants who declared a disability increased to 7.3% compared with 6.13% in 2016.

Applicants who declared a disability were more successful in being short listed, in line with expectations under the Disability Confident Scheme.

The percentage of applicants with a disability who were then appointed is broadly in line with all other applicants appointed.

Training

The amount of employees attending training mirrors that of the workforce at large. All training is run in accessible venues and we ask applicants when booking on training if they need adjustments to assist them.

Reasonable Adjustments

As an employer we actively seek to provide reasonable adjustments for employees with disabilities in order to enable them to carry out their role. Such adjustments are identified through a range of mechanisms including the government's Access to Work Scheme, Occupational Health and Health and Safety assessments. Each case is individual and the types of adjustments the Council puts in place vary significantly according to need.



“I have spent the vast majority of my working life within Somerset County Council. A large portion of this time has been with Children’s Social Care.

I have found my career to be satisfying and rewarding. I have had opportunities to train and improve my skills, this has included access to the Open University as well as in house and other training alongside my non-disabled colleagues and peers. I have had the satisfaction of receiving a reward for my work and of seeing my career progress and develop along with the services that I have been a part of. I have benefitted from a secondment which has enabled me to learn and develop new skills. I am pleased to say that my needs as

a person with disabilities have been met without complaint, fuss or argument. Many times, I have not needed to ask for adjustments and they have been made in anticipation of me finding them helpful. This has enabled me to feel valued and supported. In return, I have been able to perform on an equal footing to my colleagues – which is all I ask. As I feel valued by my employer, I in turn value the service that I am a part of. As the service is growing and developing, I in turn have the opportunity to keep pace and value the children, young people and families that we support.

As a disabled person, it is my hope that I may in some way empower other young people who have disabilities to strive to reach their own desired potential. The only barrier to success within Somerset County Council would be a negative attitude toward myself. I am and have always been fortunate to be part of a supportive team where equality and ‘ability’ matter. On the very rare occasion where my needs cannot be met through reasonable adjustment, I have been pleased with how quickly and efficiently these difficulties have been resolved.

Growing up, it was always my fear that I would be ‘hard work’ or an inconvenience for an employer. Far from this, I feel that my skills and abilities are harnessed, embraced and nurtured. I have the opportunity to grow and develop as a person and within my career.

Having Yusef, my guide dog, has enabled fantastic networking opportunities. He’s a sensitive fellow who enjoys a fuss but can tell when a colleague has had a difficult meeting or visit. Dog therapy is a free bonus to having a guide dog in the team. He will sit on your feet if you are feeling down and lend a comforting ear at times when you are feeling challenged. When he is wearing his harness, Yusef is the ultimate professional (usually). However, beware if you leave food within his reach. He has

a particular penchant to apples and when given one will let his professionalism slip somewhat (we all have our weak points).

All in all, I can say that my experience of working within Somerset County Council and particularly within Children's Social Care to have been rewarding and empowering. I foresee continuing within the service for the remainder of my career but also expect to continue to progress my career alongside my non-disabled peers. There are opportunities to progress alongside effective and professional support where it is needed.

I would thoroughly recommend a career with Somerset County Council for colleagues with or without a disability. The emphasis is on your ability".

Case Study:

"As a result of moving to a new role, and to a new location, I needed to have the right amount of lighting so that I could see, but also not be affected by too much light.

Facilities Management responded quickly and listened to my requirements. They arranged for adequate lighting to be put into my new location, and also checked that it was ideal after I had been there for a few days.

June swiftly arranged for blinds to be put up, so we could move without delay.

Thank you Facilities for your swift and considerate actions, which has enabled me to move without worry".

Advanced DSE Assessments – to support employees with medical conditions.

We now have a number of individuals fully trained to carry out advanced DSE assessments which has improved financial efficiencies as well as improving timescales in offering employees this support. In the first five months of being able to offer this service we have saved over £3000.

Mental Health Awareness Sessions

We offer specific workshops covering reasonable adjustments and there is a Mental Health Awareness course which is open to all staff and delivered on demand. The Council involves both, internal and external equality and diversity specialists in key projects relating to office space, work premises and their use to ensure accessibility for all.

Case Study

Comments from a team of employees who attended a Mental Health Awareness session ran by the Council.

“I found the Mental Health Awareness Training very helpful and informative. The delivery met every target I had hoped it would. Very enjoyable”

Matt Mutter

“The Mental Health Awareness Training I found to be very interesting and beneficial, Helpful for my role and life in general”

Sue Blackmore

“The Mental Health Awareness Training was very informative. The team found it very enjoyable and interactive, and I think they all took something helpful away from the session. Many thanks”

Steve Osborne

Reuse of Equipment

The provision of reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010 often involves the need to procure specialist equipment such as ergonomic chairs, keyboards and specialist software. Whilst the Council receives part funding for some items through the government’s Access to Work Scheme it is still responsible for a significant financial contribution. In order to maximize efficiencies and significantly reduce cost, whilst ensuring the need of employees with disabilities requiring equipment is met, the Council continues to ensure equipment is stored centrally and reused wherever possible.

Donation of Equipment

There are occasions when we are unable to reuse certain pieces of equipment or furniture. When this is the case we donate the equipment to the voluntary sector ensuring it can benefit somebody else. One example of this was an electric wheelchair which we donated to Compass Disability.



Disability Confident

<https://www.gov.uk/recruitment-disabled-people/encouraging-applications>

The Council became a Disability Confident level two employer in September 2016.

The Disability Confident Scheme was introduced by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and replaces the Two Tick scheme which the Council had been awarded for many years. The Council is currently looking at working towards and achieving a level three under the scheme in 2018. The Council is linking with both DWP and other Disability Confident employers within the County to support this.

Case Study –

"I'm a 54 year old woman on the Autistic spectrum, sometimes known as Asperger's Syndrome or high functioning Autism. I was diagnosed at 48 and like many autistic people I have suffered from depression and anxiety all my life mostly due to the difficulties I have with personal relationships.

I started working for Transporting Somerset in 2013 as a relief driver, I very much enjoyed the job but I struggled with the changing rota every week as like most autistics I do not like change and am happiest with a predictable routine. So I was pleased and relieved to get a contracted position in 2015.

Because I appear to get on well with people and am quite capable I found I was being moved from job to job quite regularly and this had an impact on my physical and mental health. I also have sensory issues and find some smells quite overwhelming and distressing.

I approached my line manager for help with problems but struggled with the communication, I then approached HR and was put in touch with the Equalities Officer who has helped me to communicate better with my boss and has ensured that some reasonable adjustments have been made to my working practice that have allowed me to remain happy and well at work"



Mindful Employer

The Council has recently signed up to the Mindful Employer Charter as we are committed to further improving our support for mental health within the workplace. Details of the full charter can be found here:

<http://www.mindfulemployer.net/charter/>

Race

County Profile

- At the time of the 2011 Census there were 28,414 Somerset residents whose ethnicity was not White British, equating to 5.4% of the County's overall population
- 'White Other' relates to people who are White and not 'British', 'Irish' or 'Gypsy or Irish Traveller' and is the second largest ethnic group in Somerset, after 'White British' representing 2.8% of the population.
- Polish is the most common 'non-UK' ethnicity in all Somerset's districts, and Polish-born residents now account for 1% of Somerset's overall population. There are significant pockets of residents in parts of Shepton Mallet, Yeovil, Minehead, Taunton and Bridgwater.
- The size of the Portuguese population in Somerset has also increased markedly in the last ten years. There are now notable groupings of Portuguese residents in areas of Chard and Shepton Mallet.

The information on the Polish and Portuguese communities in Somerset mirrors trends with the rest of the Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities in Somerset. Whilst the numbers of residents are quite low they are clustered together, predominately in the large towns.

SCC Profile (see Appendix 4 for full data)

- The percentage of employees from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities including White Other is 5.5%, an increase on 2016 which was 5.23%.
- The percentage of employees from BME communities excluding White Other is 2.2%, an increase on 2016 which was 2.03%
- The percentage of top 5% earners is 0% against a target of 1%

The data shows a very slight increase in BME representation in the workforce as a whole. The overall BME numbers are still relatively small therefore a slight change can have a disproportionate impact on the statistics.

Due to the low numbers of figures there is little additional information that can be gleaned from them. However the current increasing BME employee figures are more reflective of the current ethnic profile of Somerset.

Recruitment

The BME sample size is small and therefore it is difficult to draw any significant conclusions. However the following can be said:

- Candidates who described themselves as Other or Asian were the most successful in terms of being shortlisted and appointed within the recruitment process.
- Candidates who described themselves as Black and those who declined to declare their ethnicity were the least successful in terms of being shortlisted and appointed within the recruitment process.

Training

The information available for those taking up training mirrors that of the workforce.

Sexual Orientation

Community Profile

Sexual orientation, along with sex, is not currently measured by the census and there is therefore very little data available regarding the size and profile of the Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual (LGB) population. Some data is however available from national surveys.

One such survey was the Integrated Household Survey conducted by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) in 2014. 1.6% of those surveyed described their sexual identity as gay, lesbian or bisexual. It is however widely accepted that this figure is very likely to be an underestimation due to respondents not feeling able to or choosing not to disclose their sexuality.

SCC Profile

Asking questions about sexual orientation is part of our workforce self-reporting. The current data remains too small to report or draw any meaningful conclusions from.

For the purposes of assessing the impact of the Civil Partnership Act 2004 the Department for Trade and Industry made an assumption that 5% of the adult British population was lesbian, gay, or bisexual. If applied to the Somerset population, this would equate to around 22,000 adults in Somerset and 5% of the Council's workforce.

Recruitment (see appendix 5 for full data)

- The percentage of applicants who described themselves as LGB decreased to 1.85% compared with 3.3% in 2016.
- The percentage of applicants who described themselves as heterosexual reduced to 56.25% compared with 82% in 2016.
- The percentage of applicants whom did not declare their sexual orientation significantly increased to 41.9% compared with 14.5% in 2016.

The data indicates a significant increase in applicants choosing not to declare their sexual orientation and should be explored further.

Training

We do not currently ask employees specifically about their Sexual Orientation when they book on a training course. With the introduction of an online training tool we can now connect this information with their employees' profile. This will mean we can collate this information without having to ask for it again.

Gender Reassignment

Community Profile

Whilst it is widely acknowledged that people going through the gender reassignment process is increasing, there is little statistical data to support this.

SCC Profile

Our data follows that of the national picture in that whilst the organisation is aware that we have employees either going through or having gone through the gender reassignment process, this is not evidenced in the data recorded on our employees.

We are in the process of amending the questions asked in the staff monitoring information to gather more reflective information on our workforce for this group.

Recruitment

The information that we have in this section is too small to report or draw any meaningful conclusions from.

Training

We do not currently ask members of staff specifically if they have been or are going through the gender reassignment process when they book on a training course. With the introduction of an online training tool we can now connect this information with their employee profile. This will mean we can collate this information without having to ask for it again.

Recent Successes

Unisex Toilet

The Council continues to work through a programme of rationalising the properties it holds. This is in partnership with other public bodies in Somerset. Where buildings are being remodelled to make these spaces modern and usable unisex toilets have also been introduced. This has been done to reduce the instances where people have to declare their gender and the possibility for challenge. So far this has worked very successfully.

Manager Support

Support and guidance is actively given to any employee identifying themselves as transgender. This support ranges from practical support such as how and where personal details need to be changed as well as emotional support. Each case and support provided is dealt with individually and with guidance from the employee involved.

Pregnancy and Maternity

SCC Staff Benefits

Wyvern Nurseries Ltd has been commissioned to offer workplace nursery provision to employees. Wyvern Nursery Ltd at Bishops Hull (Taunton), Wellsprings (Taunton), The Hollies Children's Centre (Taunton), Frome Community College, Victoria Park Children's Centre (Bridgwater) and, The Levels Children's Centre (Langport), provide care for children aged between 3 months and school age for all Council employees, subject to availability. Places are available for the over 2's at Littleoaks Nursery.

Last year saw the introduction of a formal staff benefits scheme 'My Staff Shop'. Although we previously offered childcare vouchers, these are now hosted as part of a wider staff benefit offer. Childcare vouchers provide a simple way for working parents to save on the cost of childcare – benefitting from automatic reductions in Income Tax and National Insurance. Suitable for children up to age 15, they can be used for a wide range of care - from nurseries, nannies and child-minders through to holiday camps, breakfast and after school clubs.

There are additional services offered including discounts for relevant stores, offers on days out, financial products etc.

Marriage and Civil Partnership

Somerset County Council does not currently collate data from employees or external applicants regarding marriage and civil partnership.

The Council is not currently looking to change this as it is felt that no value would be gained in doing so. The Council will review this annually when producing this report, and, if and when it becomes necessary will look to collate this data. If relevant it will also review policy decisions and staff benefits to meet identified need.

Religion and Belief

Community Profile

- In line with the national trend, the proportion of Somerset people saying they were Christian has dropped sharply since 2001, from 76.7% to 64.0%. This is still one of the highest figures in the South West region.
- The proportion claiming no religious affiliation rose from 14.9% to 26.6%. Figures were particularly high in parts of Frome, Taunton and Bridgwater.
- Although overall numbers were relatively small, there were substantial increases in the number of Buddhist, Muslim and Hindu people in Somerset in the last decade.
- Based on 'write-in' responses, there are 1,147 followers of Paganism, more than the combined total of those of Hindu, Sikh and Jewish faith.
- Mendip had the fourth highest proportion of the population affiliated to one of the other religions of any Local Authority in England and Wales. It was number one for Paganism (0.4% of the population) as well as Mixed Religion, Shamanism and the Druid religion.

SCC Profile

Asking questions about religion and belief is now part of our workforce self-reporting. The current data is very small and no meaningful conclusions can be drawn. Employees are now encouraged to review and update their equalities information on an annual basis so it is hoped that this will result in more meaningful data that we will be able to report on in the future.

Recruitment (see appendix 6 for full data)

- 24.21% declared not having a religion or belief
- 32.47% declared themselves as Christian.
- Applicants declaring a religion or belief other than Christian make up 2.49%

Training

We do not currently ask employees specifically about Religion and Belief when they book on a training course. With the introduction of an online training tool we can now connect this information with their employee profile. This will mean we can collate this information without having to ask for it again.

Recent Successes

Chaplaincy Service

The County Hall Chaplain is available to all employees in order to offer support in dealing with personal and social needs while at work. The service is free, confidential, impartial and non-judgemental.

The Quiet Room

The Quiet Room is a space designated for prayer, relaxation and reflection for all employees. Without advocating or endorsing any particular religion or belief system, the Quiet Room provides a dedicated, comfortable space to enable employees to do this during the workday. The Council encourages managers to support reasonable

use of the Quiet Room subject to business needs. The room will need to be relocated in 2018 as part of maintenance work.

Religious Observance

The Council has a policy that supports members of staff to observe key religious events. This is done through agreement with their Manager on a case by case basis and dependent on business need.

Rurality

Somerset is a predominantly rural county with around 48% of the population classified as 'rural' and 52% as 'urban'. Rural Somerset has an older population demographic, particularly in respect of people aged 45 and over. Linked to this, a higher proportion of rural residents provide unpaid care to friends or relatives.

The Council is involved and leads on a number of initiatives around rural economic regeneration and rural transport links. The Council operates a car share scheme. Further information can be found here:

<http://www.somerset.gov.uk/policies-and-plans/strategies/rural-economic-regeneration/>

<http://www.somersetintelligence.org.uk/profile-of-rural-somerset-from-the-2011-census.html>

The Council does not collate specific data regarding employees and reality.

Carers

The Council does not collate specific data regarding employees with caring responsibilities. The Council does however recognise that it has a number of employees who are also carers and has a number of supportive policies in order to meet the needs of these employees.

The Council also recognises that carers of dependants with a disability are fully covered by the Equality Act 2010 under disability.

Military Status

Somerset has a sizeable population of military personnel with a number of units based in the County and is signed up to the Somerset Armed Forces Covenant (SAFC). Further detail can be found here:

<http://www.somerset.gov.uk/policies-and-plans/schemes-and-initiatives/somerset-armed-forces-community-covenant/>

The Council does not collate data regarding employees who are ex-military.

Low Income

Whilst Somerset has a higher employment rate than the UK overall (78.5% compared to 72.6%) and higher levels of self-employment than the UK (17.5% compared to 14.7%) average earnings in Somerset are consistently lower than the overall UK level.

The Council's lowest pay rate equates to £7.78 which is 28p above the national living wage.

National requirements for apprentices are that they are paid £3.45 per hour.

The Council pays national minimum wage for age which is higher than the national requirement for apprentices. The lowest national minimum wage is £4.20 for apprentices at level 2 and 3. Higher level apprentices are paid more.

Redundancies

In 2016/17 there were a total of 163 redundancies (see appendix 7 for full data).

Summary of Redundancy Data

- The percentage of men that have been made/taken redundancy is in line with the percentage of men in the overall workforce profile.
- The data showed no equality concerns.

Monitoring of Internal Procedures 2016/2017

This year we have continued to monitor cases supported by HR on an informal basis (for example where a complaint was made but informal action e.g. mediation, or resetting of expectations was taken to resolve the issue) as well as formal ones where warnings may have been an outcome.

Please note all data excludes schools.

Dismissals

There were 10 dismissals during 2016/17. Due to this relatively small number further data will not be published in order to protect the individuals' identity.

Grievance Procedures

There were 2 formal grievances during 2016/17. Due to this small number further data will not be published in order to protect the individuals' identity.

Disciplinary/Performance

The data shows there were 30 formal cases in 2016/17.

All equality data has been thoroughly examined to ensure there was no bias in relation to matters of equality. No bias was found.

Sickness Absence

The data shows there were 21 formal cases on 2016/17.

All equality data has been thoroughly examined to ensure there was no bias in relation to matters of equality. No bias was found.

Internal Procedures Summary

- There was no evidence of disciplinary or dismissal cases being linked to Disability, Race or Age. No cases linked to fraud and corruption. One case was linked to sex discrimination.
- For Disciplinary/Individual Performance/Fairness and Dignity/Sickness Absence and Dismissal cases there was no other evidence/trends found that highlighted equalities concerns.

Supportive Policies and Practice

The Council continues to carry out Equality Impact Assessments for all new employment policies or where a significant change is being made.

Redeployment

One of the aims of the redeployment policy is to support and identify new roles for employees who are no longer able to carry on in their current role because of disability. We have successfully redeployed a number of employees with disabilities in the past year under this policy.

The Council has a number of supportive policies, guidance and schemes particularly in relation to the following areas:

- Attendance and Leave
- Equalities
- Family
- Health, Safety and Wellbeing
- Leavers
- Starters and Movers
- Ways of Working

Consultation

Equality Networks and Disability Confident

The Council is currently in the process of consulting a number of Disability Confident employers in relation to both, setting up joint Employee Equality Networks with the Council as well as working more closely in terms of equality objectives.

Trade Union Consultation

The Council works closely with and consults regularly with recognised trade unions on employment policies, practice and equalities.

Staff Survey

The Council carries out three short surveys annually all of which include questions around equality and diversity. All responses are confidential and collated as a whole and by service area. Feedback from the equality based questions is reviewed by internal equality specialists to identify any trends and inform any necessary actions.

Projects and Initiatives

The Council actively embeds equalities within the work we do including all project work. Wherever appropriate the Council ensures that Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) are carried out and that these remain working documents for the duration of the project. Below are some examples of projects that the HR and OD teams have been involved in from an equality perspective over the past year.

Working Well Initiative – Information for the Corporate Equality Report

Working Well is a programme to support the health and wellbeing of Somerset County Council employees. Through Working Well, we want to make sure employees are aware of help that is available to support their wellbeing at work. The programme was set up because we all know that when you're feeling well, you're working well, so it's something that's good for individuals, the Council as a whole and Somerset.

As part of Working Well a group of employee volunteers form a Champions Network who, contribute ideas, post articles in our internal newsletter (Our Somerset), Yammer and Facebook and organise activities. Some of the most popular Our Somerset Articles during 2017 were: Rounders Tournament, The Spin Bus & Are you thriving or surviving? Find out your mental health score.



Top Tips for Staying Well at Work was the most popular.

The arrival of the 'Spin Bus' caused some amusement to many but to those who climbed aboard it offered a fun way to keep fit. During National Stroke Awareness month, the Champions arranged for the Stroke Association to offer free blood pressure tests for staff across the County.



Following the opening of a Wellbeing Zone in Taunton Library, employees were invited to learn more about wellbeing by visiting the library with Working Well Champions on hand to answer questions.

In spite of an early weather scare, the fifth annual Council rounders tournament went ahead on a breezy Wednesday afternoon in July at the Wyvern Club in Taunton. Nine teams took to the pitch in three groups, with the winners of each group progressing to the finals. The 'All Rounders' battled through to be crowned champions. The runners up were Batty Birds, with Healthy Hooligans taking third spot. £71 pounds was raised on the night and donated to St Margaret's Hospice. This event hit all 5 Ways to Wellbeing (Activity, Connection, Giving and for some, Learning and taking Notice).

2017 saw the launch of another Wellbeing Network Group -the Mental Wellbeing Ambassadors. Meeting for the first time under a Mental Health First Aider banner this group has evolved into the Mental Wellbeing Ambassadors. Currently numbering 23, these employees from across the Council, volunteer to champion positive mental health and wellbeing within our workplace. Many have completed training in Mental Health First Aid others have undertaken Mental Health Awareness training; and all are signed up to the Public Health programme 'Connect 5 – Ways to work with mental wellbeing in everyday practice'.

The Mental Health Ambassadors have an important role in the Wellbeing programme in promoting positive mental wellbeing by challenging the stigma that sometimes surrounds mental ill health. They provide one to one confidential support to people experiencing emotional and mental wellbeing issues and information about resources and local support services.

Comments from Champions and Ambassadors:

"In January 2012 I had to take about six weeks off work suffering from Anxiety and depression following a bereavement – for the 5 months prior to this I had been juggling supporting my terminally ill father, being a mother to 4 children and holding down quite a demanding role as a Shared lives worker. Taking the time off gave me the space I needed to catch my breath and re-evaluate my life I realised the only person who could truly look after myself is myself and I began to investigate ways of keeping well in mind and body. Little achievable steps that I could implement immediately without adding pressure. At the same time I was very open about my situation and the reason I had been off work and I found people opening up to me and telling me of their own struggles with mental wellbeing and managing stress. This mutual sharing and support was so beneficial and supportive to me that when in 2015 the opportunity to be a working well champion came up I jumped at the chance. For me it has been about breaking down stigmas around mental health and stress and building mutual support in the team. Encouraging people to take carer of themselves in ways they enjoy to build up their resilience to life and addressed stresses that can come and go. We don't as a team do big events or take part in Marathons, Instead we concentrate on little achievable steps that help us all every day.

In the office we have actioned:

Fruit replacing biscuits

Moving the stationary cupboard and photocopier to another room – so we move more

Bring and share healthy breakfast or lunches where we swap ideas and recipes

Out of work

We encourage each other to do something for ourselves every week such as an exercise classes, hobbies or long walks”

“The Working Well angle crosses over into a culture hack that I got involved in you may remember for stand up meetings.

Not a totally selfless reason to join honestly, I wanted to pressure myself to be healthier although I have encouraged others with healthier choices along the way. I have enjoyed meeting and working with other people from different areas of SCC.

I participated in nature walks this year and encouraged team members to join

“I have an interest in Mental Health and Wellbeing and am keen to be more involved in ensuring this issue is considered a part of working life.

I feel we need to change the way people at all levels think and act about mental health problems and hope to help make the stigma and discrimination a thing of the past. I want staff to know it is okay to ask for help. Just having a conversation with your line manager or someone else like a Mental Wellbeing Ambassador can help to break down the silence and shame around the subject. All staff need to know there is help and support available at work”

“I joined the Working Well Champions in 2014 with the remit of cascading corporate initiatives and resources out to Business Support staff via the Business Managers Group via a brief Monthly Update newsletter. This then gave the Business Managers the knowledge to support their own services. Since then I have expanded my signposting network to include Corporate Property, Facilities Management, the PA Team and more recently all staff, who now have access to my newsletter ‘The Paperclip’ via Yammer, the Working Well Forum and the Intranet Working Well pages. The newsletter (named after my poem of the same name, see Jan 2017 edition) is a summary of the articles to be found on Our Somerset, Yammer and the Working Well Forum with additional Mindfulness and mental wellbeing resources. The Paperclip has a slant towards increasing colleague awareness of mental wellbeing, which is the main reason why I became interested in the Champions role. This is an area close to my heart (and mind) as I feel that everyone should have the opportunity to open up about their experiences with mental health in the workplace. Having had both positive and negative experiences in this area, in my own small way I hope that I am able to signpost people towards the resources available to them (both Corporate and Personal); to feel empowered to approach their managers with anything that they feel needs to be ‘out there’ so as to help both the individual and the workplace to gain the most out of every working day. Through awareness raising via Time to Talk Day and Stress Awareness Day for example, the Working Well Champions start a great debate (inside and outside of our heads) which needs to continue so that views are heard and the stigma around mental health fades into history”

Articles from Our Somerset:

- Top Tips for Staying Well at Work
- Grasp Life by the Handle bars – Cycling and the ‘Fixing Dad’ story of a man whose lifestyle choices caught up with him until his two sons resolved to save him.

Geoff was overweight, overworked and resigned to a premature death from a catalogue of health conditions including type2 diabetes. Doctors were talking to him about the possibility of amputating his foot when his sons embarked on

a mission to restore their dad's health and enjoyment of life. They discovered there were no quick fixes, but over a year the brothers transformed their dad from an obese, barely mobile night time security guard into a fighting fit endurance cyclist, public speaker and health activist

- Promoting the Fixing Dad Campaign
- Love Your Bones - In October the Champions using World Osteoporosis day raised awareness of the condition and what individuals can do to prevent and manage it with an article in Our Somerset
- 'All Aboard' the Spin Bus for a Free Taster Session

The Learning Centre

The Learning Centre is an e-learning platform introduced into the Council in 2014. The site currently hosts four generic Equality and Diversity modules that are accessible to all SCC employees. In addition there are a number of other modules that are more specific according to the diverse needs of employees, for example, on Mental Health Awareness, Learning Disability Awareness, A Guide to Reasonable Adjustments, Communicating with Deaf Customers, and Autism and Dementia Awareness. These all contribute to extending the knowledge of staff employees around equality and diversity. The Council's new starter induction includes a mandatory module on the Learning Centre which includes equality and diversity information and signposts for further learning as outlined above. This learning platform has allowed us to be more flexible in the training we offer and enables broader access than when we only hosted one day face to face course. The Council still offers face to face courses and briefings where appropriate. The Learning Centre is also being used by relevant officers to help book all employees onto a face to face Equality and Diversity course being rolled out over the coming months/years.

Sex Data

Recruitment Data

2016/17 Application by Sex	Number of Applicants	% Shortlisted	% Appointed from shortlisted	% Appointed from applicants
Female	1558	75.8%	47.9%	18.3%
Male	702	86.5%	39.2%	5.72%
Not stated	238	54.2%	38.8%	21%
Total	2498	57.9%	44.9%	26%

2015/16 Application by Sex	Number of Applicants	% Shortlisted	% Appointed from shortlisted	% Appointed from applicants
Female	2206	53.8%	40.4%	21.4%
Male	926	46.8%	35.3%	16.5%
Not stated	165	43%	36.6%	15.8%
Total	3297	53.5%	36.8%	19.7%

Age Data

Age	No. of Employees March 2016	No. of Employees March 2017
16-25	5.9%	6.57%
26-35	16.4%	16.77%
36-45	22.6%	22.48%
46-55	31.7%	29.44%
56-65	21.3%	22.25%
65+	2.1%	2.49%

Recruitment Data

2016/17 Application by Age	Number of Applicants	% Shortlisted	% Appointed from shortlisted	% Appointed from applicants
16-24	284	63.7%	13.3%	8.5%
25-35	604	56.8%	45.2%	25.7%
36-45	493	59.4%	46.4%	27.6%
46-55	561	55.4%	37%	20.5%
56-65	273	58.2%	22.5%	25.6%
Over 65	19	52.6%	60%	31.6%
Declined to Specify	282	59.6%	37.5%	22.3%
Grand Total	2498	57.9%	44.9%	26%

Appendix 2

2015/16 Application by Age	Number of Applicants	% Shortlisted	% Appointed from shortlisted	% Appointed from applicants
16-24	404	50.5%	47%	23.3%
25-35	810	50.9%	39.5%	20.1%
36-45	649	52.1%	36%	18.8%
46-55	831	52.9%	36.1%	19.1%
56-65	353	47.3%	38.9%	18.4%
Over 65	14	50%	57.1%	28.8%
Declined to Specify	236	46.6%	39.4%	18.8%
Grand Total	3297	53.5%	36.8%	19.7%

Training

Age	% attended training
16-24	4%
25-35	19%
36-45	25%
46-55	32%
56=65	19%
66+	1%

Disability Data

Recruitment Data

2016/17 Application by Disability	Number of Applicants	% Shortlisted	% Appointed from shortlisted	% Appointed from applicants
Yes	183	61.7%	37.1%	22.9%
No	2046	58.3%	45.9%	26.8%
Declined etc.	260	50.8%	45.5%	23%
Grand Total	2498	57.9%	44.9%	26%

2015/16 Application by Disability	Number of Applicants	% Shortlisted	% Appointed from shortlisted	% Appointed from applicants
Yes	202	59.9%	27.3%	16.3%
No	2820	50.7%	40.3%	20.5%
Declined etc.	275	44.7%	32.5%	14.5%
Grand Total	3297	53.5%	36.8%	19.7%

Race Data

Ethnic Groups	2016	2017
White	86.4%	87.8%
Asian	0.53%	0.55%
Black	0.68%	0.73%
Mixed	0.74%	0.8%
Other	0.08%	0.11%
White other	3.2%	3.7%
Not assigned	2.47%	2.2%
Prefer not to say	5.9%	4.11%

Recruitment Data

2016/17 Application by Race	Number of Applicants	% Shortlisted	% Appointed from shortlisted	% Appointed from applicants
White British	2035	59%	45.7%	26.9%
Asian	23	47.8%	63.6%	30.4%
Black	21	66.7%	21.4%	14.3%
Mixed	29	48.3%	42.9%	20.7%
White other	113	50.4%	43.9%	22.1%
Other	9	44.4%	75%	33.3%
Unspecified etc.	268	59.7%	35%	20.9%
Total	2498	57.9%	44.9%	26%

Appendix 4

2015/16 Application by Race	Number of Applicants	% Shortlisted	% Appointed from shortlisted	% Appointed from applicants
White	2786	51.8%	39.2%	20.4%
Asian	42	42.8%	11.1%	4.8%
Black	35	60%	33.3%	20%
Mixed	34	67.6%	43.5%	29.4%
White other	131	35.1%	41.3%	15.5%
Other	3	33.3%	100%	33.3%
Unspecified etc.	266	71%	18.5%	13.1%
Total	3297	53.5%	36.8%	19.7%

Sexual Orientation

Recruitment Data

Application by Sexual Orientation 2016/2017	No Applicants	% Shortlisted	% Appointed from Shortlisted	% Appointed from applicants
Bisexual	50	56%	42.9%	24%
Gay/Lesbian	44	54.5%	40%	22.7%
Heterosexual	1981	57.8%	41.7%	26.2%
Declined etc.	423	58.9%	43.8%	25.8%
Grand Total	2498	57.9%	44.9%	26%

Application by Sexual Orientation 2015/2016	Number of Applicants	% Shortlisted	% Appointed from Shortlisted	% Appointed from applicants
Bisexual	45	42.2%	36.8%	15.5%
Gay/Lesbian	63	50.7%	31.2%	15.9%
Heterosexual	2712	50.8%	39.1%	19.8%
Declined etc.	477	51.4%	38.4%	19.7%
Grand Total	3297	53.5%	36.8%	19.7%

Religion and Belief Recruitment Data

Religion/Belief	% of applicants 2016/17
Buddhist	0.32%
Christian	32.47%
Hindu	0.04%
Jewish	0.04%
Muslim	0.04%
Sikh	0.04%
Any Other Religion	1.99%
Shi'a Muslim	0.02%
No Religion	24.21%
Declined etc.	40.83%

Redundancy Data

In 2016/17 there were a total of 163 redundancies.

	Profile of redundancies made (compulsory & voluntary)							
Gender	Female		Male		Not Declared			TOTAL %
2016/17	72.4%		27.6%		0%			100
Ethnic Group	White British		BME		Not Declared			
2016/17	91.4%		3.7%		4.9%			100
Disability	No		Yes		Not Declared			
2016/17	54%		4.3%		41.7%			100
Age	Aged 16-25	Aged 26-35	Aged 36-45	Aged 46-55	Aged 56-65	Aged 65+	Not Found	
2016/17	0%	3.1%	9.8%	33.3%	47.4%	6.3%		100

	Profile of redundancies made (compulsory & voluntary)							
Gender	Female		Male		Not Declared			TOTAL %
2015/16	62.2%		37.8%		0%			100
Ethnic Group	White British		BME		Not Declared			
2015/16	89.2%		2.7%		8.1%			100
Disability	No		Yes		Not Declared			
2015/16	98.7%		1.3%		0%			100
Age	Aged 16-25	Aged 26-35	Aged 36-45	Aged 46-55	Aged 56-65	Aged 65+	Not Found	
2015/16	0%	4%	14.9%	23%	51.4%	6.7%	0%	100