

**HR Policy Committee**  
**Monday 16 January 2017**  
**2.00 pm Luttrell Room - County Hall,**  
**Taunton**



To: The Members of the HR Policy Committee

Cllr A Groskop (Chairman), Cllr J Bailey, Cllr A Bown, Cllr Coles, Cllr J Hunt and Cllr H Siggs

Issued By Julian Gale, Strategic Manager - Governance and Risk - 6 January 2017

For further information about the meeting, please contact Rebecca Dunstan on 01823 359039 or [rdunstan@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:rdunstan@somerset.gov.uk)

Guidance about procedures at the meeting follows the printed agenda.

This meeting will be open to the public and press, subject to the passing of any resolution under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972.

This agenda and the attached reports and background papers are available on request prior to the meeting in large print, Braille, audio tape & disc and can be translated into different languages. They can also be accessed via the council's website on [www.somerset.gov.uk/agendasandpapers](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/agendasandpapers)



**RNID typetalk**

## **AGENDA**

Item HR Policy Committee - 2.00 pm Monday, 16 January 2017

**\* Public Guidance notes contained in agenda annexe \***

**1 Apologies for Absence**

**2 Declarations of Interest**

Details of all Members' interests in District, Town and Parish Councils will be displayed in the meeting room. The Statutory Register of Member's Interests can be inspected via the Community Governance team.

**3 Minutes from the previous meeting (Pages 5 - 8)**

The Committee is asked to confirm the minutes are accurate.

**4 Public Question Time**

The Chairman will allow members of the public to present a petition on any matter within the Committee's remit. Questions or statements about any matter on the agenda for this meeting will be taken at the time when each matter is considered.

**5 Workforce Equalities Report 2016 (Pages 9 - 46)**

To consider the above report (attached)

**6 Time Off Policy relating to Election Duties (Pages 47 - 50)**

To consider the above report.

**7 Any other urgent items of business**

The Chairman may raise any items of urgent business.

## THE MEETING – GUIDANCE NOTES

### 1. Inspection of Papers

Any person wishing to inspect Minutes, reports, or the background papers for any item on the Agenda should contact the Committee Administrator for the meeting – Jamie Jackson on 01823 357628 or [jajackson@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:jajackson@somerset.gov.uk). They can also be accessed via the council's website on [www.somerset.gov.uk/agendasandpapers](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/agendasandpapers)

### 2. Notes of the Meeting

Details of the issues discussed and decisions taken at the meeting will be set out in the Minutes, which the Committee will be asked to approve as a correct record at its next meeting. In the meantime, details of the decisions taken can be obtained from Jamie Jackson on 01823 359628; Fax 01823 355529 or [jajackson@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:jajackson@somerset.gov.uk)

### 3. Members' Code Of Conduct Requirements

When considering the declaration of interests and their actions as a councillor, Members are reminded of the requirements of the Members' Code of Conduct and the underpinning Principles of Public Life: HONESTY; INTEGRITY; SELFLESSNESS; OBJECTIVITY; ACCOUNTABILITY; OPENNESS; LEADERSHIP. The Code of Conduct can be viewed at:

<http://www.somerset.gov.uk/organisation/key-documents/the-councils-constitution/>

### 4. Public Question Time

At the Chairman's invitation you may ask questions and/or make statements or comments, or send in a written question about **any matter on the Committee's agenda**. You may also present a petition on any matter within the Committee's remit. **The length of public question time will be no more than 30 minutes in total.**

A slot for Public Question Time is set aside near the beginning of the meeting, after the minutes of the previous meeting have been signed.

Any person wishing to raise a matter under public question time must inform the Committee Administrator, Jamie Jackson, by 12 noon **the (working) day before** the meeting.

You must direct your questions and comments through the Chairman. You may not take direct part in the debate.

The Chairman will decide when public participation is to finish.

If there are many people present at the meeting for one particular item, the Chairman may adjourn the meeting to allow views to be expressed more freely.

If an item on the agenda is contentious, with a large number of people attending the meeting, a representative should be nominated to present the views of a group.

An issue will not be deferred just because you cannot be present for the meeting.

Please remember that the amount of time you speak will be restricted, normally to two minutes only.

**5. IMPORTANT NOTE FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

The Council in support of the principles of openness and transparency allows filming, recording and taking photographs at its meetings that are open to the public providing it is done in a non- disruptive manner.

Members of the public may use Facebook and Twitter or other forms of social media to report on proceedings and a designated area will be provided for anyone who wishes to film part or all of the proceedings. No filming or recording will take place when the press and public are excluded for that part of the meeting. As a matter of courtesy to the public, anyone wishing to film or record proceedings is asked to provide reasonable notice to the Committee Administrator so that the Chairman of the meeting can inform those present.

We would ask that, as far as possible, members of the public aren't filmed unless they are playing an active role such as speaking within a meeting and there may be occasions when speaking members of the public request not to be filmed.

A copy of the Council's Recording of Meetings Protocol should be on display at the meeting for inspection, alternatively contact the Committee Administrator for the meeting in advance.

**6. Substitutions**

Committee members are able to appoint substitutes if they are unable to attend the meeting.

**7. Hearing Aid Loop System**

To assist hearing aid users, the Luttrell, Hobhouse and Wyndham Rooms have infra-red audio transmission systems. These work in conjunction with a hearing aid in the T position, but we also need to provide you with a small personal receiver. Please request one from the Committee Administrator and return at the end of the meeting.

**8 Emergency Evacuation Procedure**

In the event of the fire alarm sounding, members of the public are requested to leave the building via the signposted emergency exit, and proceed to the collection area outside Shire Hall. Officers and Members will be on hand to assist.

## HR POLICY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Meeting of the HR Policy Committee held in the Luttrell Room - County Hall, Taunton, on Monday, 14 November 2016 at 1.30 pm

**Present:** Cllr A Groskop (Chairman), Cllr J Bailey, Cllr A Bown, Cllr Coles and Cllr H Siggs

**Other Members present:** Cllr L Redman

### Apologies for absence:

#### 137 **Declarations of Interest** - Agenda Item 2

None.

#### 138 **Minutes from the previous meeting** - Agenda Item 3

The Committee confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2016 as a correct record.

#### 139 **Public Question Time** - Agenda Item 4

Nigel Behan of Unite raised the following questions regarding agenda Item 6

“The third recommendation states:

(3) To remove the requirement for an Officer Appeals Committee to hear appeals by officers against dismissal.

(Review of the Officer Appeals & Chief Officer Appointments Processes)

Q1 We are concerned that removing this very important existing procedure will undermine confidence in the fairness of dismissal processes. For instance, if someone has been dismissed (by a Senior Officer) should not they have an opportunity to Appeal to Elected Councillors (who ultimately represent the Employer)?

Q2 How many Officer Appeal Committees (OAC) have there been for each year in the last ten years? What evidence is there that removing this right that it will save “time”?

Q2a) What evidence has been produced to demonstrate that that this “material” change will not make a difference?

Q2b) Why is there no Equality Impact Assessment and has a risk log been produced to accompany this proposal?

Staff, when facing disciplinary procedures, want the Elected Councillors to hear their part of the narrative and believe that Elected Councillors will be more

independent. They also want Elected Members to see the whole situation from a dispassionate perspective (and value the Seven Principles of Public Life).

We believe Elected Members would want to “look under the bonnet” and hearing appeals is an opportunity to look at the issues from a different perspective. It is also an opportunity for Elected Members to make recommendations, if relevant and necessary. (Staff learn more about the Council’s Constitution.)

Q3 Most Local Authorities have similar “Staffing Committees” to hear Appeals and the processes and rights of dismissed employees to Appeal to Elected Councillors are included in the Constitution. Why is it necessary to remove this important right?

Q4 Does the Committee think that staff being able to Appeal to the OAC, provides further assurance that proper processes are followed -and also provides sufficient assurance that there is appropriate separation from (other parts of) the Senior Leadership Team if the Appeal to Elected Members is removed?”

The Chairman agreed that these questions would be considered during discussion of Item 6.

140 **Amendments to Statutory Protection Arrangements for the Chief Executive, S151 Officer and Monitoring Officer & related amendments to 'Disciplinary Action' Arrangements for Senior Officers - Agenda Item 5**

The Committee considered the report of the Deputy Monitoring Officer, which recommended changes to the statutory protection arrangements to be applied where the Council proposed to dismiss one of its statutory officers (the Chief Executive, Section 151 Officer or Monitoring Officer). This would bring the Council’s constitutional provisions into line with recent legislation.

The report also included associated amendments required or considered appropriate to the wider constitutional provisions relating to disciplinary action with regard to SLT Officers and including the Monitoring Officer  
Several concerns were raised regarding the ability of the Independent Persons to fulfil the roles required of them, as they were primarily appointed to advise on members’ conduct issues. Members were assured that the Panel would be fully supported and would be able to access independent legal advice if required.

The Committee resolved to recommend the Council to approve:

1. The revised statutory protection proposals set out in the report to be applied where the Council proposes the dismissal of a post-holder holding the position of Chief Executive, Section 151 Officer or Monitoring Officer – paragraph 1.1.8 refers. The Committee requested the addition of an extra statement, stipulating that the Independent Persons Panel would be able to draw on external, independent legal advice if it so required.

2. Associated amendments proposed to the arrangements relating to SLT Officers and including the Monitoring Officer as summarised in paragraphs 1.1.8.- 1.1.11.
3. An amendment to the Council's Pay Policy Statement to reflect the changes in procedures recommended in 1 and 2 above – see paragraph 1.1.12 and the Appendix to the report.

141 **Review of the Officer Appeals & Chief Officer Appointments Processes - Agenda Item 6**

The Committee considered a report by the Strategic Manager, HR Business Relations, which proposed efficiency changes to HR processes involving members.

**Chief Officer Appointments Panel:** The current process required both an Appointments Panel and an Appointments Committee to meet physically to deal with different phases of an appointment. These procedures had proved to be inflexible and lengthy, particularly when the Council wished to make a swift appointment. In order to improve the efficiency of the process, officers proposed that the Appointments Panel should be able to hold virtual meetings and that the membership of the Appointments Committee should be reduced from 8 members to 5.

The Committee unanimously supported these proposals and the Constitutional changes required as a consequence.

**Officer Appeals Committee:** In order to streamline current processes, officers proposed reducing member involvement in appeals by staff against dismissal (excluding chief officers) by removing the ability to appeal to the Officer Appeals Committee. Instead, officers recommended that appeals against dismissal should be dealt with at senior officer level.

In response to the questions raised at Public Question Time and by Committee members, officers explained that convening officer appeal hearings within the 28 day timescale was proving increasingly difficult due to the limited availability of the 6 members involved. Also, as members were not involved in the appointment of staff below the level of Chief Officer, it was inconsistent to involve them in hearing appeals against dismissal. The standards appeals procedure could be appropriately amended to cover areas where members would have been involved, for instance dismissal on the grounds of conduct, performance and health.

Members acknowledged that there had been administrative difficulties since the membership of the Officer Appeals Committee had been reduced from 12 to 6 but were reluctant to remove the ability for staff to have appeals heard by members. After further discussion, it was agreed that this item would be deferred until the next meeting to enable officers to examine other options, such as members having a role as mediators earlier in the process, rather than decision-makers.

The Committee resolved to recommend the Council:

- (1) To amend the procedures that apply to the Chief Officer Appointments Panel to enable it to meet virtually to undertake its functions as detailed in the Constitution.
- (2) To reduce the maximum size of the Chief Officer Appointments Committee from 8 members to 5.
- (3) To amend the Pay Policy Statement 2016/17 to reflect decisions made in (1) and (2) above
- (4) To ask the Constitution Committee to make any necessary changes to the Constitution to reflect decisions made in (1) and (2) above

The Committee also resolved:

To defer the proposals regarding the Officer Appeals Committee to the January meeting of this Committee

**142 Staff Benefits - Agenda Item 7**

The Committee received a verbal update on the success of the Staff Benefits scheme after its first six months of operation

**143 County Hall Parking Update - Agenda Item 8**

The Committee received an update on the current consultation process taking place on the proposed parking changes and noted responses received from members so far. A further report would be made to the January meeting of the Committee

**144 Any other urgent items of business - Agenda Item 9**

There were no other items of business.

**(The meeting ended at 2.50 pm)**

**CHAIRMAN**



Somerset County Council

HR Policy Committee

– 16 January 2017

## Workforce Equalities Report 2016

Cabinet Member: Cllr Anna Groskop, Cabinet Member for HR, Health & Transformation

Lead Officer: Chris Squire, HR&OD Director

Author: Vicky Hayter, Strategic Manager HR Business Relations

Contact Details: 01823 359858

	<b>Seen by:</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Report Sign off</b>	Legal	Honor Clarke	9/1/17
	Corporate Finance	Kevin Nacey	9/1/17
	Human Resources	Chris Squire	9/1/17
	Cabinet Member	Anna Groskop	
	Monitoring Officer	Julian Gale	9/1/17
	<b>Summary:</b>	This report sets out the authority's workforce position in 2015/16 in relation to the 9 protected characteristics. Along with other councils, we are required to publish equality data in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty. This report aims to highlight good practice and areas which can be further developed.	
<b>Recommendations:</b>	<b>This report is for information only</b>		
<b>Links to Priorities and Impact on Service Plans:</b>	The Workforce Equalities report is published annually on the Council's website in accordance with our statutory duties. The report identifies areas where we need to focus to ensure that we are as inclusive as possible and take into account all appropriate adjustments.		
<b>Financial, Legal and HR Implications:</b>	Equalities encompasses financial, legal and HR implications. Consideration has to be given to both the financial costs of making required adjustments in relation to a protected characteristic and the costs of not making adjustments. A decision not to adjust or to limit adjustment runs the risk of the case going to a tribunal with the associated costs and reputational damage. It is important to draw attention to the good practice that exists within the authority.		
<b>Equalities Implications:</b>	See report.		
<b>Risk Assessment:</b>	See legal and financial implications above		

## 1. Background

- 1.1. Somerset County Council has a statutory duty to report on equalities under the Public Sector Equalities Duty. This report sets out the statistics relating to the

protected characteristics. It also highlights good practice stories and identifies areas for focus and development.

## **2. Options Considered**

2.1. This report is for information and there were no alternative options considered.

## **3. Consultations undertaken**

3.1. None. However the report will be shared with unions for information

## **4. Implications**

4.1. As detailed above

## **5. Background papers**

5.1. Workforce Equalities Report (attached)

**Note:** For sight of individual background papers please contact the report author.

# **Somerset County Council Workforce** **Equalities Report 2016**

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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.

In addition to the nine protected characteristics outlined within the Equality Act 2010, Somerset County Council considers four further demographics to have local protected characteristic status; rurality, low income, military status and careers. The following information provides an overview of both the county and the council’s profile along with a selection of examples of good work in each of the protected characteristics:

## Sex

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

### **SCC Profile (see appendix 1 for full data)**

The Council's workforce is 73.5% female and 26.5% male (compared to 74.66% female and 25.34% male in 2015). The gender profile of the top 5% earners is 48.3% female and 51.7% male (compared to 47.12% female and 52.88% male in 2015).

The data shows females continue to make up three quarters of the workforce. There has been a slight 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** - 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 median (The numbers are places in value order and the median is the middle figure) hourly rate for male employees is £8.59 compared to £10.23 for female employees.

The mean (is achieved by dividing the total wage bill by the number of employees) hourly rate for all male employees is £13.73 compared to £12.29 for all female employees. Male employees earn on average £1.44 more than female employees.

Somerset County Council's gender pay gap based on mean is 10.49%

According to the Office for National Statistics the UK's gender pay gap for all employees was 19.2% in 2015.

It is important to note when considering these figures that the findings cover a large number of different types of jobs, the full selection of wages and includes areas that are either more male or female orientated roles. For example there are more women than men in care roles, and there are more men than women in IT.

Having said that there is some work that we can do in this area. An action will be identified at the end of the document.

## **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 unchanged when compared to that of 2015 with around 53% of the workforce being between the ages of 35 to 56.

Those aged 16-25 account for 6.2% of the council's employees. The hope is that work completed through the apprenticeship scheme and pathways to employment work will see this figure 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**

Generally the percentages of applicants by age bracket reflects the workforce

Candidates aged between 16 and 24 are marginally more successful at being appointed than candidates of other ages. This could be because of the success of the apprenticeship scheme.

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** – In preparation for the impending apprenticeship levy (April 2017) the Council have put in place a programme of work to ensure that SCC's levy (c. £1m) is fully utilised. The levy gives the authority an opportunity to recruit more apprentices than it has ever had. The Council will look to place apprentices across the authority and make use of the full range of levels of qualification that are available. Due to the number of apprentice recruits that are likely to take place a number of opportunities will be given to primarily young people (based on previous data) however as an attractive local employer we receive a number of applications from the over 25 age group too. The Council will monitor the demographic profile of those offered opportunities post April 2017. An additional opportunity also arises for existing members of staff through the introduction of the levy; the Council will also be able to make use of the levy to pay for qualifications that allow a member of staff to 'progress' meaning teams unable to finance an apprentice could still access funds to utilise on current employees.

A young person's buddy scheme has also been adopted. The thought being that being paired with another young person during the initial few months will assist to settle the new young employee more quickly.

**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 some 90 young people have benefitted from the scheme in some way. Upon reviewing the scheme the Council have proposed a change in the way the budget is used to increase the number of young people that can be supported. From 2017/18 the budget will be used more innovatively to make the scheme more inclusive. Additional 'pre-traineeship' opportunities will be added to increase the pool of young people that will be able to be supported by the scheme.

Some great successes have come out of the Pathway to Employment Scheme. One example of a success being a 17 year old care leaver that initially completed a traineeship at the authority that then progressed into an apprenticeship and now she continues to complete the qualification having moved into a permanent role.

**Case Study** - Felix offered the following feedback on his experiences of being an apprentice:

"During my period as part of the apprenticeship scheme I felt that was correctly supported throughout the process and that they were able to place me in a placement that was suitable for my skills and was able to make reasonable adjustments suitable for my dyspraxia. I felt I was also very well supported throughout by the management and staff, I also had additional support from an Equalities officer from the Human Resources team who had helped me previously

and was a key part of helping me getting my placement. This placement was successful enough that I was offered a full time job just under six months into my apprenticeship.

I feel it has helped me establish a good starting point for my job and that it makes me feel like I'm correctly supported and recognised for my disability and still treated equally as my other colleagues within the workplace and that If any issues arise they can be supported and helped through"

## **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 (see appendix 3 for full data)**

- The percentage of top 5% earners declaring a disability was 3.14% compared with 3.01% in 2015.
- The percentage of employees declaring a disability increased to 5.3% compared with 5.12% in 2015.

These figures lead us to believe that not all staff are declaring a disability. To try and resolve this we have introduced an annual prompt for staff to update the data we hold on them. 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**

- Applicants who declared a disability increased to 6.13% compared with 5.48% in 2014/15.

Applicants who declared a disability were more successful in being short listed, in line with expectations under Disability Confident and previously the 2 Tick policy. The percentage of applicants with a disability who were then appointed is 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.

### **Recent Successes**

#### **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.

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

“Angela” suffers from severe anxiety and had experienced significant change at work. She had a number of anxiety attacks both at work and home. With HR support Angela and her manager completed a Wellness and Recovery Action Plan. This enabled both to identify possible triggers and discuss support we could offer Angela. A number of adjustments were put in place which included a flexible start time. Angela was also given details for Care First where she could receive face to face counseling. The counseling and adjustments enabled Angela to adapt to the change at work and establish new routines. Angela is now happy within her role and no longer requires any of the adjustments.

## 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 maximise efficiencies, whilst ensuring the need of employees with disabilities requiring equipment is met, the Council reviewed how this equipment is purchased, stored and reused.

Savings through the recovery and re-issue of specialist seating and peripheral IT equipment from 01/04/2016 – 31/11/2016 is **£6132.99**

- Estimated value of residual chair and peripheral stock **£10,000+** if replaced new.
- All equipment delivered and adjusted by Health and Safety Advisers using own transport

In addition to saving money on equipment further savings have been made by Health and Safety carrying out ‘first-line’ workstation assessments negating the cost of approx. £250 per session from OHAssist.

- On average 4-5 per month have been completed with a saving from 01/04/2016 to 31/11/2016 of approximately **£10,750**.

## 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.

## Dementia Awareness

“During 2016, there was a range of dementia awareness activity taking place, which was accessible by SCC employees affected by dementia. Much of this activity was focused around Dementia Awareness Week in May:

- Two Dementia Friends sessions delivered for SCC staff
- Countywide media campaign coordinated by SCC including a press release, expert panel discussion on BBC Radio Somerset
- Information stands across the county

In addition, it has been identified that as the SCC workforce ages there is likely to be an increase in the number of employees who start to develop memory problems and the early signs of dementia. During 2016, such a case presented which resulted in HR, Adults' & Health Commissioning and Adult Social Care working together to develop a supportive approach to assisting the individual in their employment, as well as their in their day to day life.”

## 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 and replaces the Two Tick scheme which the council had been awarded for many years. The Council is currently looking at how it can work towards and achieve a level three under the scheme.

## Mindful Employer



The Council has recently signed up to the Mindful Employer Charter as we are committed to further improving our support with 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 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 5.23%, an increase on 2015 which was 4.48%.
- The percentage of employees from BME communities excluding White Other is 2.03%, an increase on 2015 which was 1.78%
- The percentage of top 5% earners is 0.52% 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 White Other, Asian and those who declined to specify their ethnicity were the least successful in terms of being shortlisted and appointed within the recruitment process.
- Candidates who described themselves as Black, Mixed and Other represent the highest group in terms of shortlisting and also appointed.

**Training** – The information available for those taking up training mirrors that of the workforce

## **Recent Successes**

### **Case Study 1**

“Alan” works as a Care Assistant in a Care Home. He has been working in the care profession for the last 20 years. Due to changes within this profession it has become necessary for Alan to document his work and notes on service users. As English is not Alan’s first language he was struggling to communicate in writing. We were able to identify this being the cause for a perceived performance concern. We supported Alan in attending an adult literacy class where he was able to improve his skills in reading and writing. Alan now feels confident in his ability to communicate in writing.

### **Case Study 2**

As part of a performance management process we required a particular language translator. We were unable to source a translator with those language skills through our current provider. We also looked at other professional sources of translators but were unsuccessful. Rather than ending up using a relative we contacted Universities within the area that had international students. This resulted in us finding a translator through one of the University Societies.

## **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 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. Having said that the current data is very small and it would be statistically unsound to include it here.

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 bisexual or gay/lesbian increased slightly to 3.3% compared with 2.5% in 2014/15.
- The percentage of applicants who described themselves as heterosexual reduced to 82% compared with 87% in 2014/15.
- The percentage of applicants did not declare their sexual orientation increased to 14.5% compared with 10.5% in 2014/15.

It is worth noting that the number of applicants that are part of this group is higher than the figures reported by the national data.

### **Training**

We do not currently ask members of staff 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 staff profile. This will mean we can get this information without having to ask them again.



## **Gender Reassignment**

### **Community Profile**

Whilst it is widely acknowledge 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 currently looking to amend the questions asked in the staff monitoring information to gather more reflective information on our workforce for this group.

### **Recruitment**

At the information that we have in this section is too small to report and pull any conclusive 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 staff profile. This will mean we can get this information without having to ask them again.

### **Recent Successes**

**Unisex Toilet** - The Council is currently working 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.

This 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 childminders 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 LA 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. Having said that the current data is very small and it would be statistically unsound to include it here. 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)**

- 42.2% of applicants declined to declare either having or not having a religion or belief.
- 38.6% declared not having a religion or belief
- 16.7% declared themselves as Christian.
- Applicants declaring a religion or belief other than Christian make up 2.5%

### **Training**

We do not currently ask members of staff 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 staff profile. This will mean we can get this information without having to ask them 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.

**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, 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 rurality. The Council operates a car share scheme.

## **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 UK level.

Our lowest pay rate equates to £7.52 which is 32p above the national living wage. In April 2017 this will rise to £7.78 in line with the national living wage rise to £7.50.

National requirements for apprentices are that they are paid £3.45 per hour. Somerset pays national minimum wage for age. The lowest would be £4 rising to £7.20. These are for apprentices at level 2 and 3. Higher level apprentices would be paid more.

## **Redundancies**

In 2015/16 there was a total of 74 redundancies (see appendix 7 for full data).

### **Summary of leavers data**

- The total number of leavers including redundancies in 2015/16 was 682.
- The percentage of men that have been made/taken redundancy is greater than the percentage of men in the overall workforce profile.
- The data shows a decrease in redundancies with regard to employees who describe themselves as BME or those with a declared disability.
- When comparing redundancies to the age profile of the Council the figures are broadly the same.

## **Monitoring Of Internal Procedures 2015/2016**

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 15 dismissals during 2015/16. Due to this relatively small number further data will not be published in order to protect the individuals' identity.

### **Grievance Procedures**

There were 3 formal grievances during 2015/16. 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 24 formal cases.

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

### **Sickness Absence**

The data shows there were 31 formal cases.

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

## **Internal Procedures Summary**

- There was no evidence of disciplinary or dismissal cases being linked to Disability, Race or Age. One case linked to fraud and corruption. One case 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.

Occupational Health Referrals – To improve the effectiveness of Occupational Health referrals and avoid unnecessary delays for some applicants with disabilities we have reviewed and amended our medical health questionnaire. We will continue to review the effectiveness of the new system. This change was approved by unions. We are also exploring options for speeding up the process of receiving occupational health advice such as using the Government Fit for Work Scheme.

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**

**Consultation Events** – The Council held an equalities consultation event in March 2015. The aim of the event was to engage with employees on five key areas with regards to equality and diversity in order to create a list of pledges which the Council would formally sign up to through a non-key decision. A list was drawn up and the pledges used to form an action plan which we are currently working towards completing.

[Somerset County Council Equality Pledges 2015 - 2016 F.docx](#)

The Council is currently reviewing how it consults with employees on matters of equality and diversity.



**Trade Union Consultation** – The Council works closely with and consults regularly with recognised 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 & 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** – The Working Well Initiative has been created in order to develop, manage and promote a healthy workplace programme for Somerset County Council. This initiative is championed by the Council’s senior leadership team along with a network of local champions across the county.

In November 2015 the Council was recognised by Public Health Somerset for its commitment to improving the health and wellbeing of its workforce. The Council was awarded the Somerset Healthy Workplace Gold Standard.

An on-going programme of action has been developed to continue this work and an annual assessment needs to be completed to maintain the gold status. This along with feedback from our annual Working Well staff survey will help to identify where we need to focus our efforts to support staff wellbeing. Two key areas that have been identified as requiring focus are Muscular Skeletal Management and Stress and Resilience.

Achievements so far include the introduction of a rapid response physiotherapy service and the Council becoming a Mindful Employer.

In 2016 the Council will be working towards the National Workplace Wellbeing Charter.

**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 staff, 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 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 was awarded the 'Inspirational Learner Engagement' award and an individual employee was awarded the 'Rising Star' award. This year the Learning Centre has been nominated in 3 categories:

- Most Innovative E-Learning
- Inspirational Learner Engagement
- Best Adapt Project

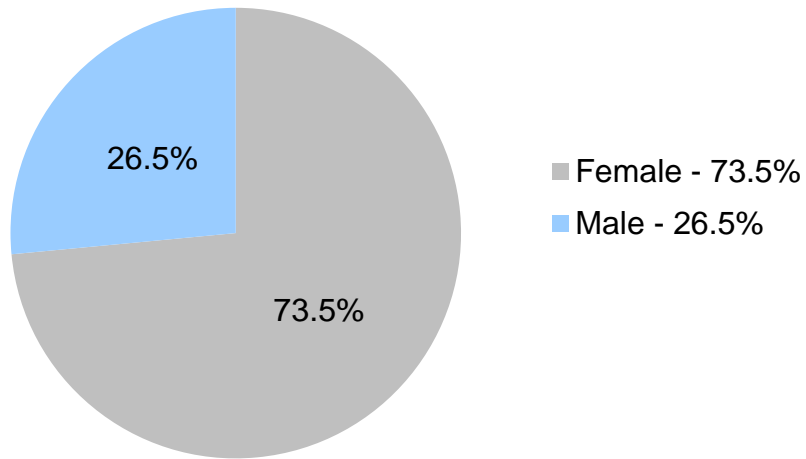
**Recruitment** – The Council is currently reviewing its recruitment and selection practice. Following some initial focus groups carried out in February 2016 an E-Learning module around Equalities & Recruitment has been written and added to the Learning Centre. This will be developed further with the introduction of an e-recruitment system this year.

## **Key objectives for 2017**

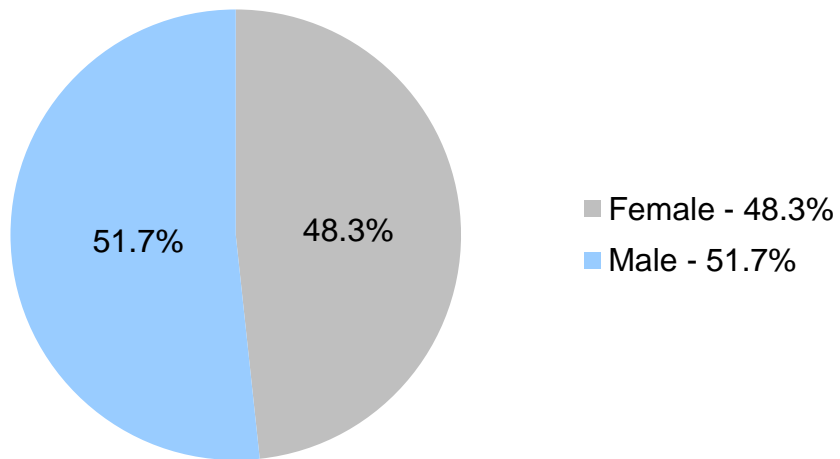
- **To create an Employee Equalities Network.**  
The Council has had a number of single strand employee networks in the past. Despite running successfully for a number of years all of the networks have experienced significant reductions in attendance to meetings. Feedback has told us that increased workloads and restructuring have been the main causes of this. The Council recognises how beneficial such networks are to both individuals and the Council as a whole. The Council is therefore looking to set up an equalities employee network that will cover all of the relevant protected characteristics and operate on a district level. We are looking to invite partner organisations to join us on this initiative.
- **To create a pathway for those wishing to move to a lower graded role.**  
The Council recognises that employers focus on up-skilling, succession planning and encouraging their employees to develop in order to have a career in SCC. The Council also recognises that at times, for a variety of reasons, employees may wish to take on roles with less responsibility and pressure. The Council would like to support such employees choosing to do this.
- **To ensure a successful move to Windows 10 for all employees with specialist IT requirements due to disability.**  
The Council is in the process of updating its current operating systems to Window 10. The Council recognises the importance of ensuring compatibility with all specialist software in use as a reasonable adjustment under the Equality Act 2010. The Council's IT department are embarking on collating data from specific users and with the help of employee volunteers, ensuring that thorough testing is carried out prior to delivering Windows 10.

## Appendix 1: Sex data

### Sex Profile

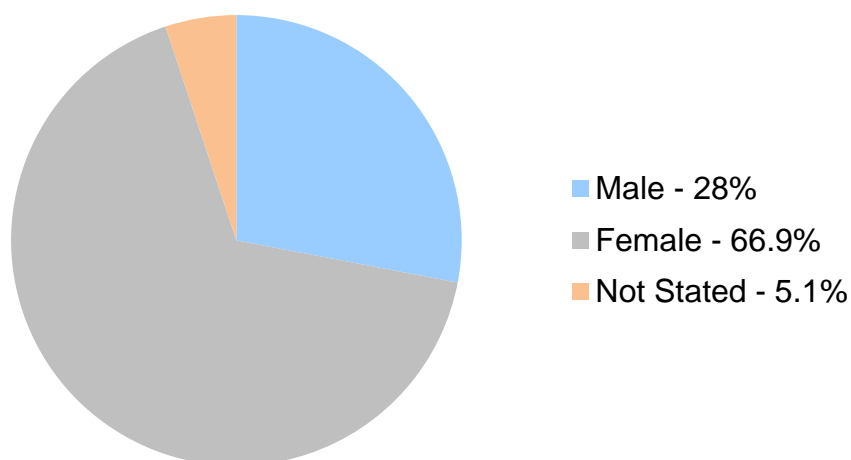


### Sex Profile Top % Earners

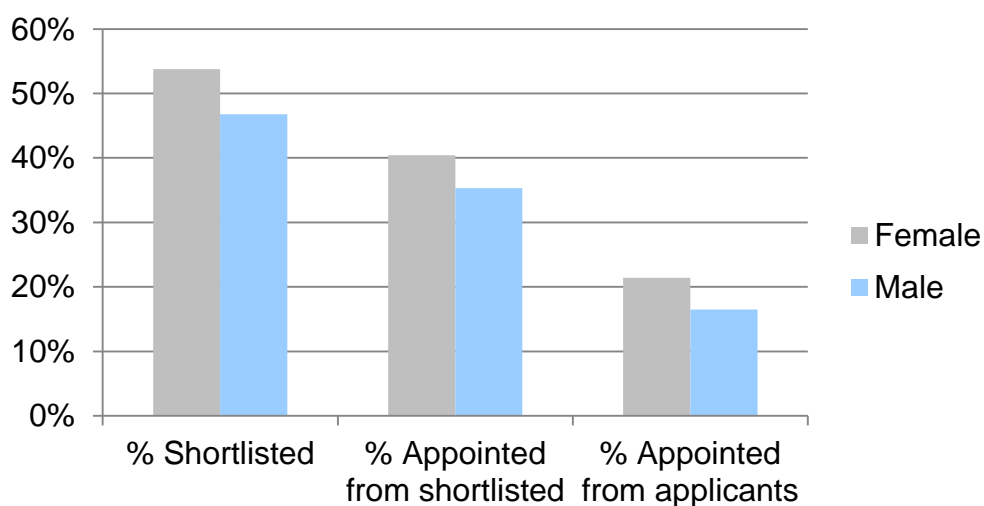


## Recruitment data

### Applications by Sex



### Recruitment by Sex

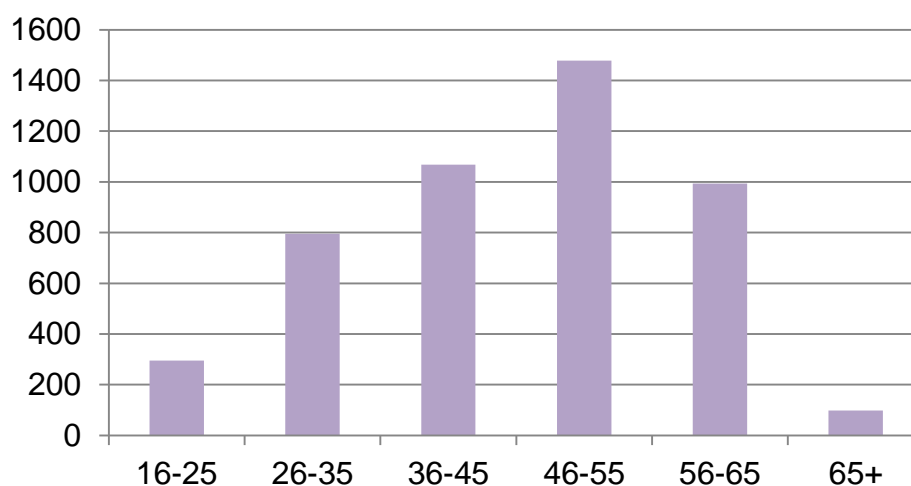


2015/16 Application by Sex	Number of Applicants	% Shortlisted	% Appointed from shortlisted	% Appointed from applicants
Female	2206	53.8%	40.4%	21.4%
Male	926	46.8%	35.3%	16.5%
Not stated	165	43%	36.6%	15.8%
Total	3297	53.5%	36.8%	19.7%

<b>2014/2015 Application by Sex</b>	<b>No Applicants</b>	<b>% Shortlisted</b>	<b>% Appointed from shortlisted</b>	<b>% Appointed from applicants</b>
Female	3113	57.4%	27.3%	15.7%
Male	1062	50.4%	27.1%	13.7%
Not stated	110	49.1%	42.6%	20.9%
Total	4285	52.4%	29.2%	15.3%

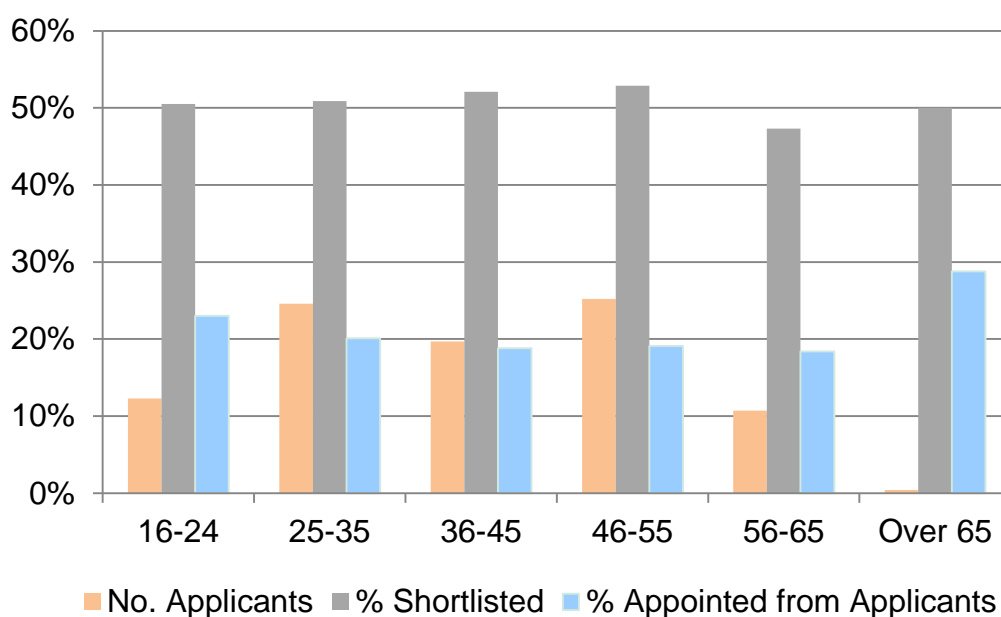
## Appendix 2 – Age data

**Workforce Profile by Age 2016**



<b>Age</b>	<b>No. of Employees March 2016</b>	<b>No. of Employees March 2016</b>
16-25	6.2%	5.9%
26-35	16.8%	16.4%
36-45	22.6%	22.6%
46-55	31.3%	31.7%
56-65	21%	21.3%
65+	2.1%	2.1%

## Recruitment by Age



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

<b>2014/2015 Application by Age</b>	<b>No Applicants</b>	<b>% Shortlisted</b>	<b>% Appointed from shortlisted</b>	<b>% Appointed from applicants</b>
16-24	613	49.6%	27%	13.4%
25-35	1084	52.9%	30.4%	16%
36-45	915	51.8%	29.9%	15.5%
46-55	965	55.1%	27.8%	15.3%
56-65	468	54.7%	29.3%	16%
Over 65	23	43.4%	50%	43.5%
Declined to Specify	217	44.2%	31.3%	13.8%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>4285</b>	<b>52.4%</b>	<b>29.2%</b>	<b>15.3%</b>

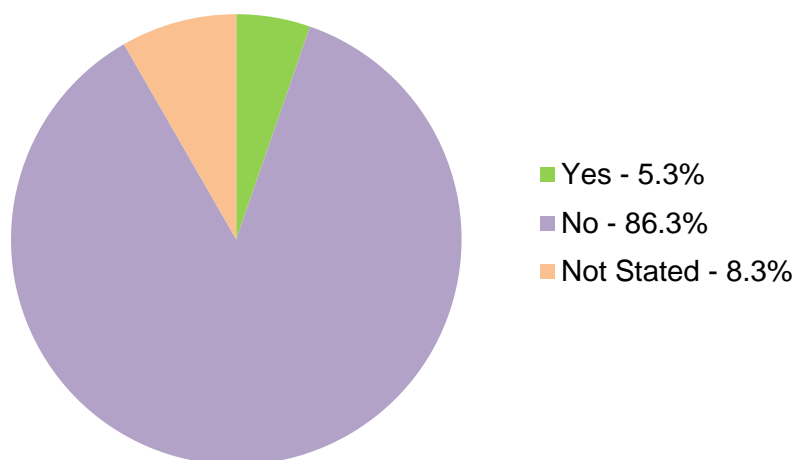
### **Training**

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



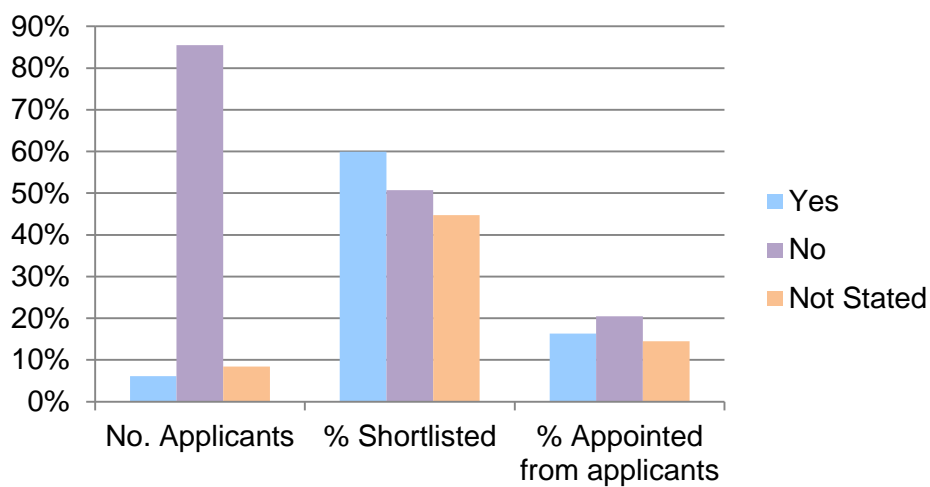
## Appendix 3 – Disability data

### Workforce Profile by Disability



## Recruitment data

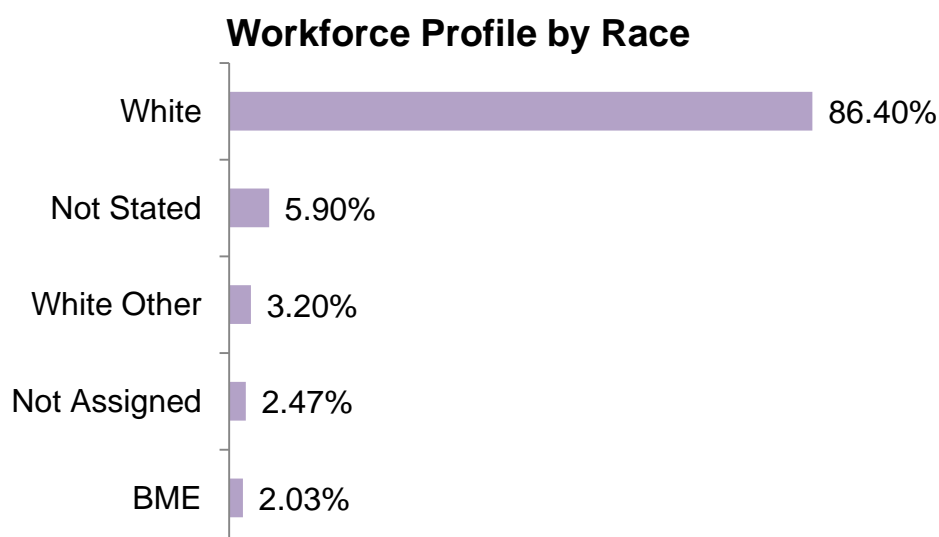
### Recruitment by Disability



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%

2014/2015 Application by Disability	No Applicants	% Shortlisted	% Appointed from shortlisted	% Appointed from applicants
Yes	235	50.2%	23.7%	11.9%
No	3853	44.9%	34.3%	15.4%
Declined etc	195	40.5%	41.8%	16.9%

## Appendix 4 – Race data

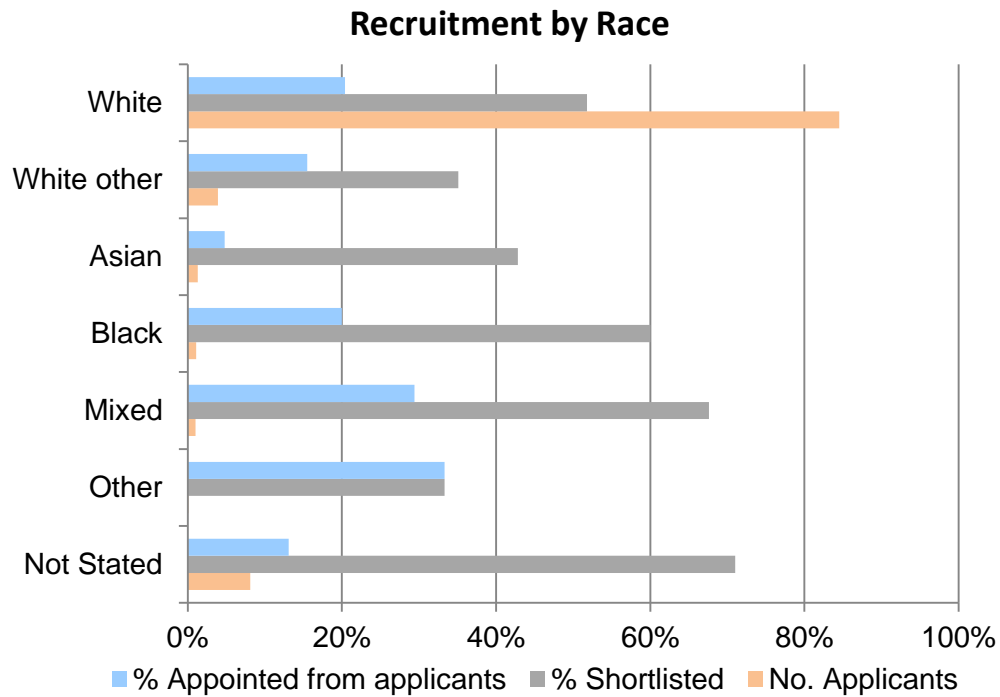


Ethnic Groups	2015	2016
White	86.8%	86.4%
Asian	0.5%	0.53%
Black	0.52%	0.68%
Mixed	0.7%	0.74%
Other	0.06%	0.08%
White other	2.7%	3.2%
Not assigned	2.3%	2.47%
Prefer not to say	6.4%	5.9%

## Training

Race	% attended training
White British	88%
White Irish	0.3%
White Other	2.7%
Asian	0.3%
Mixed	0.9%
Black	0.5%
Not stated	0.2%
Prefer not to say	4.6%

## Recruitment data



<b>2015/16 Application by Race</b>	<b>Number of Applicants</b>	<b>% Shortlisted</b>	<b>% Appointed from shortlisted</b>	<b>% Appointed from applicants</b>
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%

<b>2014/2015 Application by Ethnicity</b>	<b>No Applicants</b>	<b>% Shortlisted</b>	<b>% Appointed from shortlisted</b>	<b>% Appointed from applicants</b>
White	3769	45.3%	34.2%	15.5%
Asian	51	35.3%%	27.8%	9.8%
Black	42	54.8%	34.8%	19%
Mixed	41	56%	22.2%	9.7%
White other	175	33.1%	31%	10.2%
Other	12	33.3%	25%	8.3%
Unspecified etc	195	50.2%	36.7%	18.5%
Total	4285	45.4%	33.9%	15.3%

## Appendix 5 – sexual orientation recruitment data

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

Application by Sexual Orientation	No Applicants	% Shortlisted	% Appointed from Shortlisted	% Appointed from applicants
<b>Bisexual</b>	40	42.5%	29.4%	12.5%
<b>Gay/Lesbian</b>	68	52.9%	25%	13.2%
<b>Hetrosexual</b>	3730	44.6%	33.9%	15.1%
<b>Declined etc</b>	447	48.3%	35.6%	17.2%
<b>Grand Total</b>	4285	45%	33.9%	15.3%

## Appendix 6 – religion and belief recruitment data

Religion/Belief	% of applicants 2015/16
Buddhist	0.44%
Christian	16.7%
Hindu	0.23%
Jewish	0.05%
Muslim	0.49%
Sikh	0.05%
Any Other Religion	1.2%
No Religion	38.6%
Declined etc	42.2%

## Appendix 7 – Redundancy data

In 2015/16 there was a total of 74 redundancies.

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

Profile of redundancies made (compulsory & voluntary)								
Gender	Female		Male		Not Declared			TOTAL %
2014/15 %	83%		21%		0			100
Ethnic Group	White British		BME		Not Declared			
2014/15 %	82.7%		6.7%		10.6%			100
Disability	Non Disabled		Disability Declared		Not Declared			
2014/15 %	94.2%		1.9%		3.9%			100
Age	Aged 16-25	Aged 26-35	Aged 36-45	Aged 46-55	Aged 56-65	Aged 65+	Not Found	
2014/15 %	0	1.9%	19.2%	28.9%	46.2%	3.8%	0	100

**Somerset County Council**

**HR Policy Committee**

**Item No. 6**

– 16<sup>th</sup> January 2017

**Time Off Policy relating to election duties**

Cabinet Member: Cllr Anna Groskop, Cabinet Member for HR, Health & Transformation

Lead Officer: Chris Squire, HR&OD Director

Author: Jamie Jackson, Service Manager, Governance

Contact Details: 01823 359040

<i>Please complete sign off boxes below prior to submission to Community Governance</i>			
	<b>Seen by:</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Report Sign off</b>	Legal	Honor Clarke	6/1/17
	Corporate Finance	Kevin Nacey	6/1/17
	Human Resources	Chris Squire	7/1/17
	Senior Manager	Richard Williams	6/1/17
	Cabinet Member	Anna Groskop	7/1/17
	Monitoring Officer	Julian Gale	4/1/17
	<b>Summary:</b>	<p>The purpose of the report is to review the existing provision for leave arrangements for Somerset County Council employees when assisting with County Council elections, within the existing Request for Time Off Policy (previously miscellaneous leave). The Committee is asked to consider whether to maintain or amend the policy.</p> <p>This is especially pertinent with the forthcoming elections in May 2017.</p>	
<b>Recommendations:</b>	<p>The Committee is asked to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) whether to maintain the current provision within the Request for Time Off Policy (last updated June 2016) with regards to work on Country Council elections</li> <li>b) or to amend the policy to require Council employees to take a day's leave when assisting with County Council elections.</li> </ul> <p>The existing policy states:</p> <p><b>Work on County Elections</b></p> <p>Council employees engaged on Council election work will not lose a days' pay or a days' leave from their annual entitlements when undertaking such work as presiding employees, poll clerks, etc. subject to the work of the Council not being</p>		

	prejudiced.
<b>Reasons for Recommendations:</b>	The current policy is advantageous to County Council staff who undertake this work and was designed to provide that sufficient resource and capacity to enable the County Council elections to be well run and meet the necessary electoral standards. The current policy is common to the approach taken by many (but not all councils) and the Committee need to decide whether the policy is still appropriate given that there is a cost involved.
<b>Links to Priorities and Impact on Service Plans:</b>	This review, report and Committee's views will strengthen the relevance of the existing Request for Time Off Policy.
<b>Financial, Legal and HR Implications:</b>	There are continuing financial implications with this report, however these are difficult to establish and are relatively small. There remains an imperative to provide sufficient capacity at polling stations across the County.  There are no new Legal and HR implications as a result of this report.
<b>Equalities Implications:</b>	There are no direct equalities implications as a result of this report.
<b>Risk Assessment:</b>	If the current policy is maintained then there are no direct risk implications. If the policy is changed with staff being required to take a day's leave then there is a potential risk that fewer staff may volunteer meaning that any shortfall would need to be met elsewhere with appropriate individuals. This presents a small theoretical potential risk to the successful running of the election but there have been no shortage of volunteers to assist with elections in recent years.
<b>Scrutiny comments / recommendation (if any):</b>	N/A at this point

## 1. Background

### **Request for Time Off Policy**

At 13 June HR Policy Committee meeting, the Committee agreed to an amendment to the existing Request for Time off Policy, previously known as Miscellaneous Leave.

This amendment extended the range of elections that Somerset County Council (SCC) staff are able to assist with, by taking a days' leave and includes EU, Parliamentary, District, Police and Crime Commissioner, Mayoral elections and any national or local Referenda.

As part of the item debate a Committee Member raised a concern about another part of the policy, which enables SCC staff who assist at polling stations on County Council election days, to receive a day's pay without the need to take annual or flexi leave and queried whether this was fair and consistent with neighbouring councils. SCC members of staff who assist at the polling stations also receive a payment from the district council (funded by the County Council) to cover the roll of poll clerk or



presiding officer, so meaning that the County Council is paying twice for that days' work. For 2016 elections, poll clerks received £135 (gross) and presiding officers' received £225 (gross).

Officers were subsequently tasked with contacting neighbours at Unitary, County and District/Borough level to establish whether the Council's policy for staff to receive a day's pay to assist with their authority's elections were consistent.

Officers received responses from 9 regional neighbours; Bristol City Council, Devon County Council, Dorset County Council, Mendip District Council, Sedgemoor District Council, South Somerset District Council, Taunton Deane Borough Council, West Somerset Council and Wiltshire Council.

Although the majority of those who responded had some minor policy differences to SCC's, 8 out of the 9 authorities aligned with Somerset County Council's policy, allowing for a day's pay when assisting with their own council's election.

Several councils go further than this and grant a day's leave to their staff irrespective of the type of election they were assisting with.

Only Sedgemoor District Council require their own staff to take a day's leave to assist with their own election.

## **2. Options Considered**

As detailed above the current policy is consistent with the policy of Unitary, County and District Council regional neighbours with the one exception. However amending the policy would result in a small financial saving and there has not been a shortage of volunteers for election duties for a number of years.

The Committee's decision will ensure that the Council's Request for Time Off Policy provides clear guidance on the issue, and in good time for the 2017 County Council elections.

No other options were considered.

## **3. Consultations undertaken**

Beyond the discussions with other Local Authorities to establish their existing policies, this report has not been shared.

## **4. Implications**

As detailed elsewhere in this report.

## **5. Background Papers**

Somerset County Council's Requests for Time Off Policy – 24<sup>th</sup> June 2016.

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