Somerset County Council Workforce Equalities Report 2016

Contents

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:

<u>Sex</u>

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

<u>Age</u>

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"

<u>Disability</u>

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**
  - o Estimated value of residual chair and peripheral stock **£10,000+** if replaced new.
  - o 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.
  - o 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 commited 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/

<u>Race</u>

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.

<u>Sexual Orientation</u>

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 at '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 Disciplinaries/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
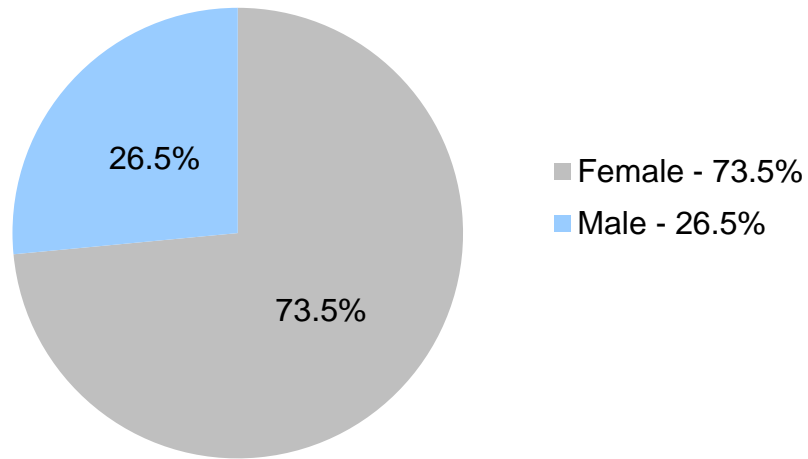- Inspirational Learner Engagement
- Best Adapt Project

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

Female - 73.5%
Male - 26.5%

Sex Profile Top % Earners

Female - 48.3%
Male - 51.7%
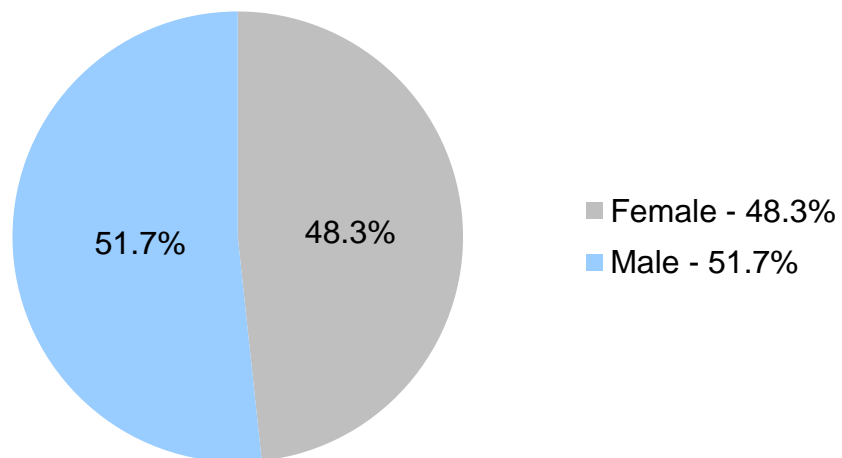
Recruitment data

Applications by Sex

- Male - 28%
- Female - 66.9%
- Not Stated - 5.1%
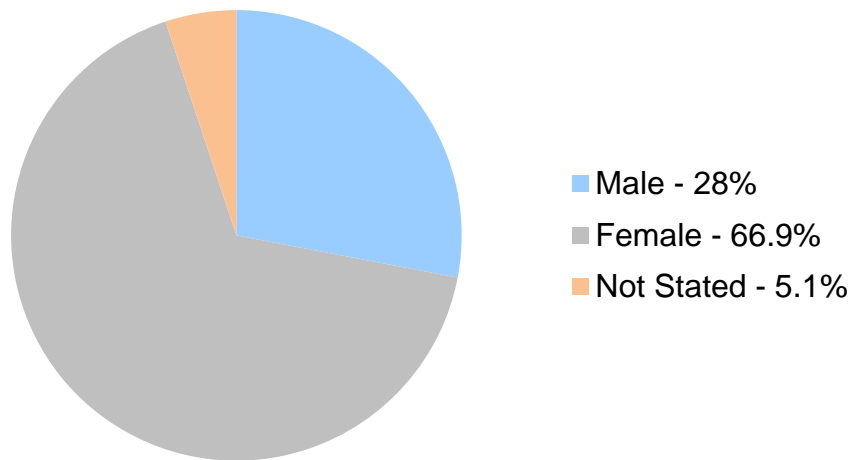
Recruitment by Sex
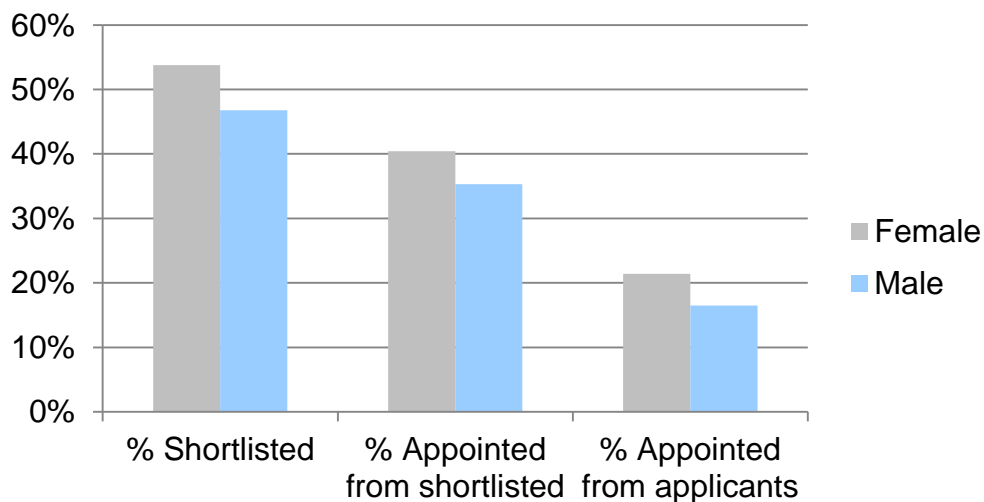
- Female
- Male

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%

2014/2015 Application by Sex	No Applicants	% Shortlisted	% Appointed from shortlisted	% Appointed from applicants
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
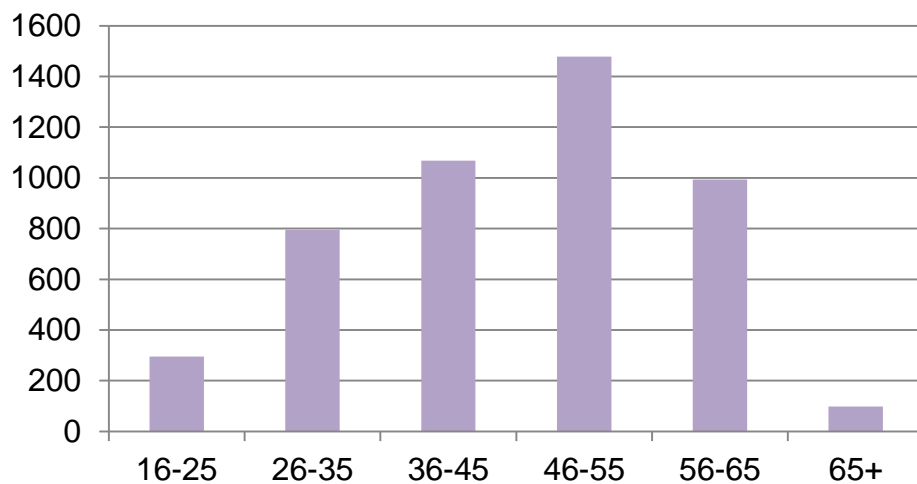
Age	No. of Employees March 2016	No. of Employees March 2016
16-25	6.2%	5.9%
26-35	16.8%	16.4%
36-45	22.6%	22.6%
46-55	31.3%	31.7%
56-65	21%	21.3%
65+	2.1%	2.1%

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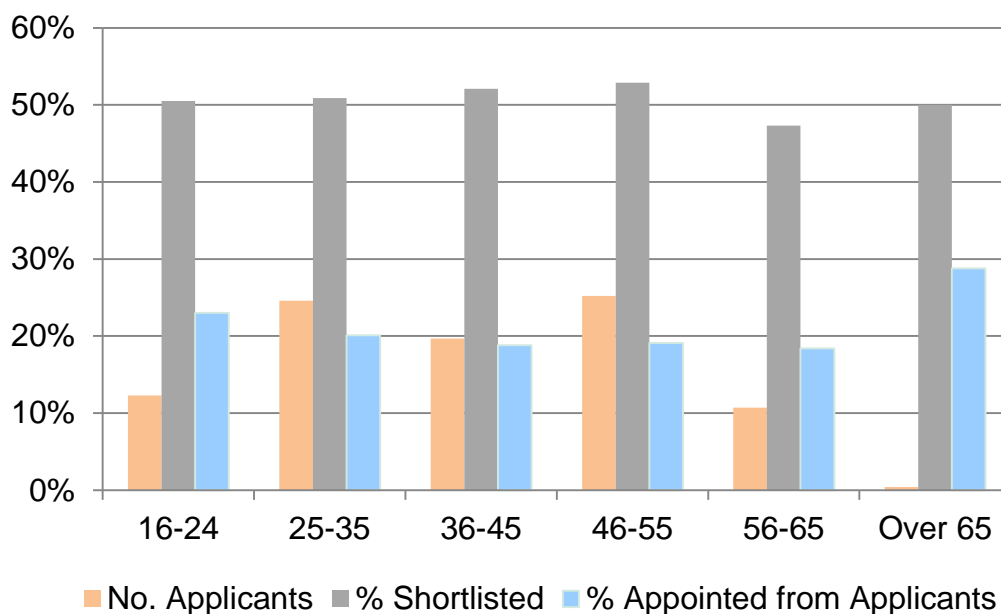
2015/16 Application by Age	Number of Applicants	% Shortlisted	% Appointed from shortlisted	% Appointed from applicants
16-24	404	50.5%	47%	23.3%
25-35	810	50.9%	39.5%	20.1%
36-45	649	52.1%	36%	18.8%
46-55	831	52.9%	36.1%	19.1%
56-65	353	47.3%	38.9%	18.4%
Over 65	14	50%	57.1%	28.8%
Declined to Specify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

2014/2015 Application by Age	No Applicants	% Shortlisted	% Appointed from shortlisted	% Appointed from applicants
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%
Grand Total	4285	52.4%	29.2%	15.3%

Training

Age	% attended training
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

- Yes - 5.3%
- No - 86.3%
- Not Stated - 8.3%
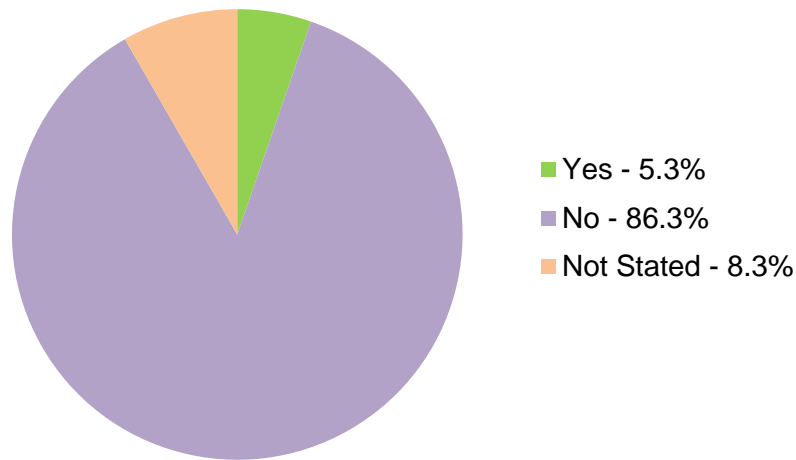
Recruitment data

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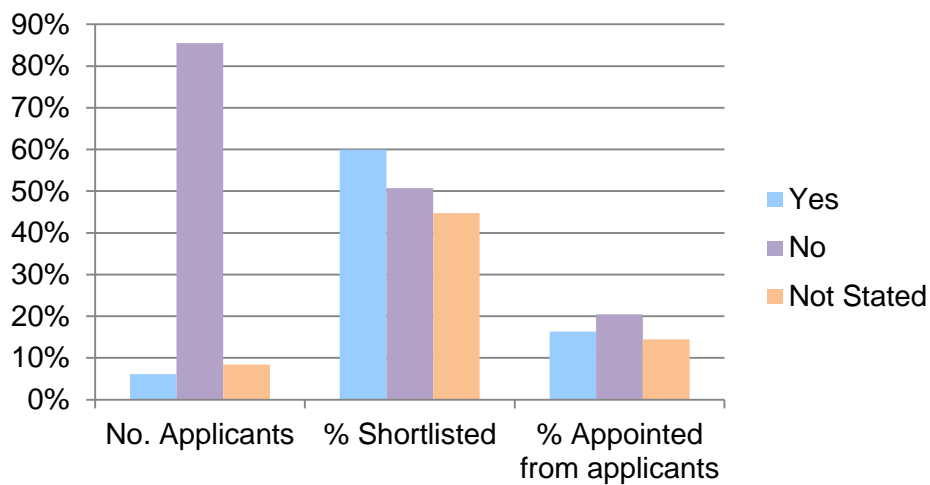
2015/16 Application by Disability	Number of Applicants	% Shortlisted	% Appointed from shortlisted	% Appointed from applicants
Yes	202	59.9%	27.3%	16.3%
No	2820	50.7%	40.3%	20.5%
Declined etc	275	44.7%	32.5%	14.5%
Grand Total	3297	53.5%	36.8%	19.7%

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

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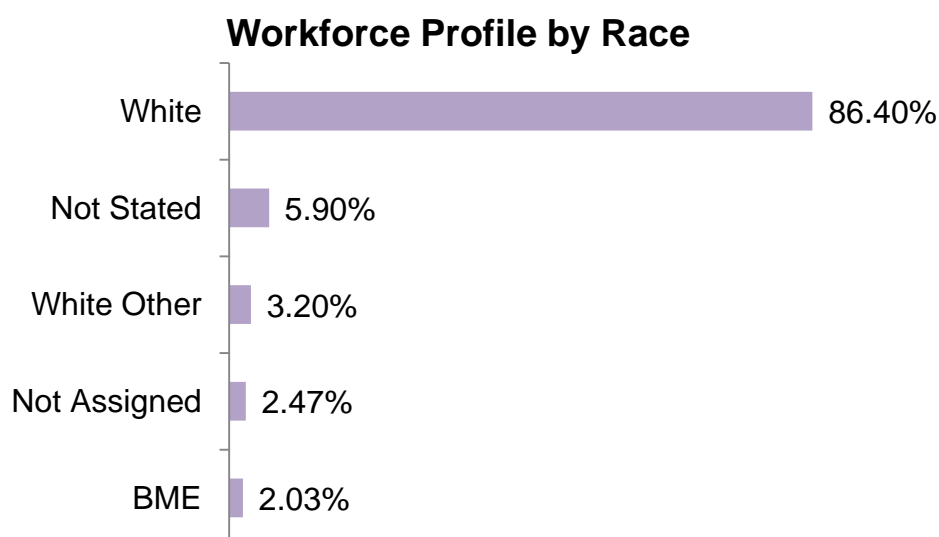
Ethnic Groups	2015	2016
White	86.8%	86.4%
Asian	0.5%	0.53%
Black	0.52%	0.68%
Mixed	0.7%	0.74%
Other	0.06%	0.08%
White other	2.7%	3.2%
Not assigned	2.3%	2.47%
Prefer not to say	6.4%	5.9%

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

Recruitment by Race

■ % Appointed from applicants   ■ % Shortlisted   ■ No. Applicants
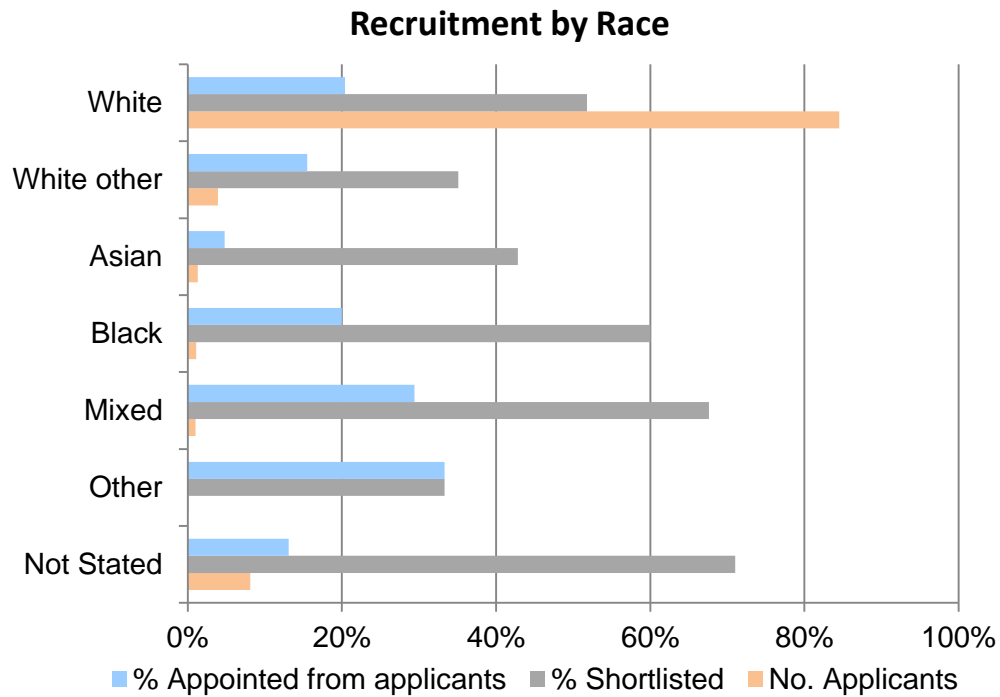
2015/16 Application by Race	Number of Applicants	% Shortlisted	% Appointed from shortlisted	% Appointed from applicants
White	2786	51.8%	39.2%	20.4%
Asian	42	42.8%	11.1%	4.8%
Black	35	60%	33.3%	20%
Mixed	34	67.6%	43.5%	29.4%
White other	131	35.1%	41.3%	15.5%
Other	3	33.3%	100%	33.3%
Unspecified etc	266	71%	18.5%	13.1%
Total	3297	53.5%	36.8%	19.7%

2014/2015 Application by Ethnicity	No Applicants	% Shortlisted	% Appointed from shortlisted	% Appointed from applicants
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
Bisexual	45	42.2%	36.8%	15.5%
Gay/Lesbian	63	50.7%	31.2%	15.9%
Hetrosexual	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%

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

	Profile of redundancies made (compulsory & voluntary)						
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%

(TOTAL % = 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

	Profile of redundancies made (compulsory & voluntary)						
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

(TOTAL % = 100)