

People Data Annual Report 2023/2024

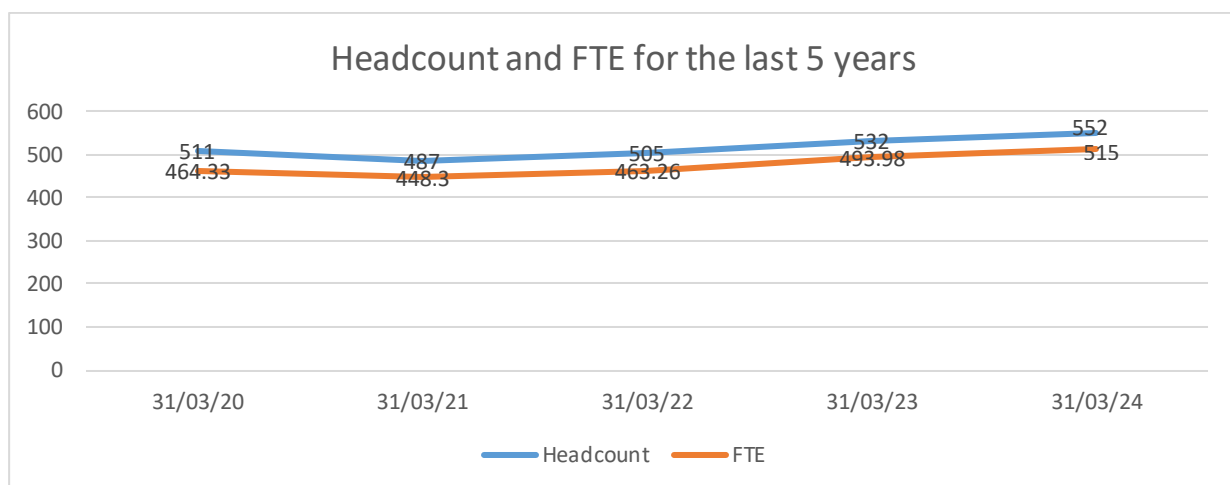
1 Introduction

This report has been produced annually for several years with the aim of providing important people data and analysis to the Strategic Leadership Team and to members. Personnel Committee agreed some revisions to the annual report on 30th November 2021, which is reflected in the information below. This report refers to data for the 2023/24 financial year.

2 Headcount and full time equivalent

2.1. Headcount for the financial year compared to the previous 5 years

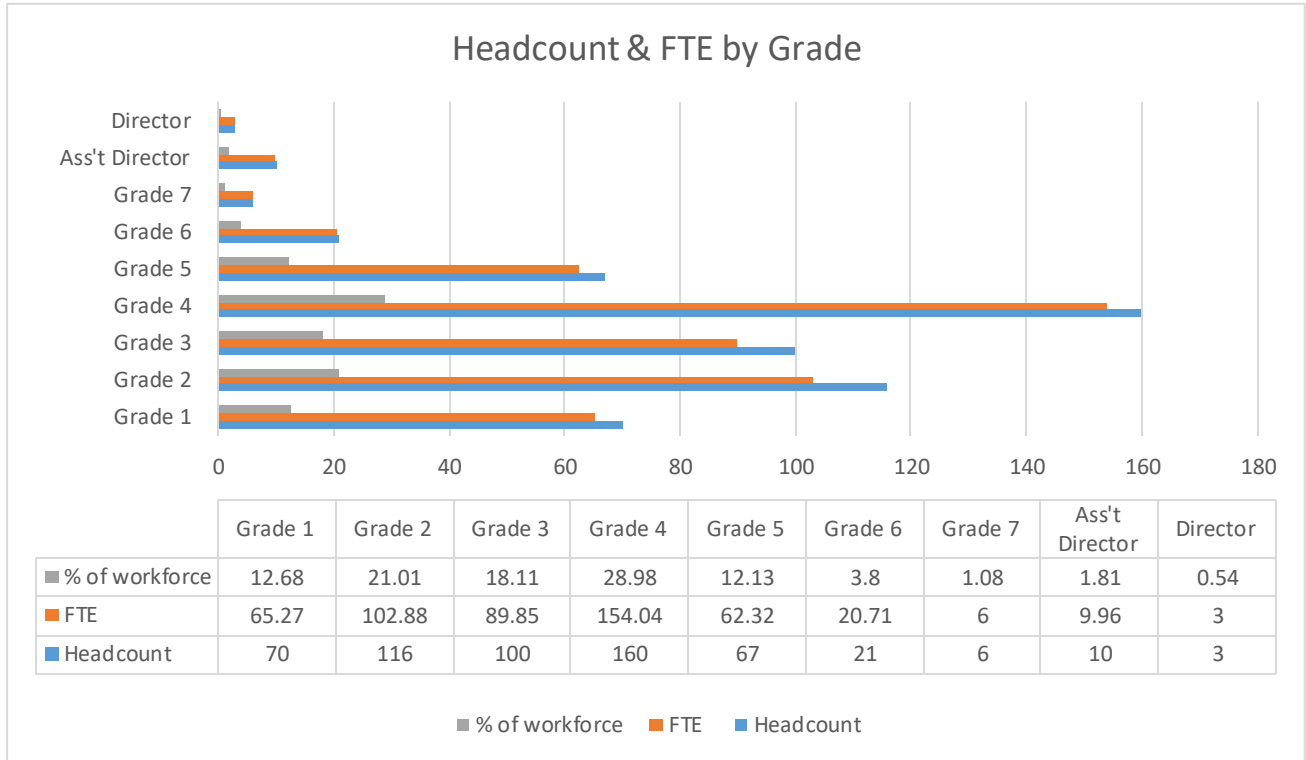
As of 31st March 2024, the headcount was 552 and the full time equivalent (FTE¹) was 515.02. Headcount has increased by 3.75% compared to the same period the previous year and reflects the increase in posts in some areas as part of the budget planning process. We remain below the budgeted FTE of 557.3.



¹ Full Time Equivalent (FTE) measures employees in a way that makes them comparable although they may work a different number of hours per week. The unit is obtained by comparing an employee's average number of hours worked to the average number of full time hours. A full-time person is therefore counted as 1 FTE, while a part-time worker is a proportion of 1 FTE. For example, a part-timer employed for 18.5 hours a week where full-time work consists of 37 hours, is counted as 0.5 FTE.

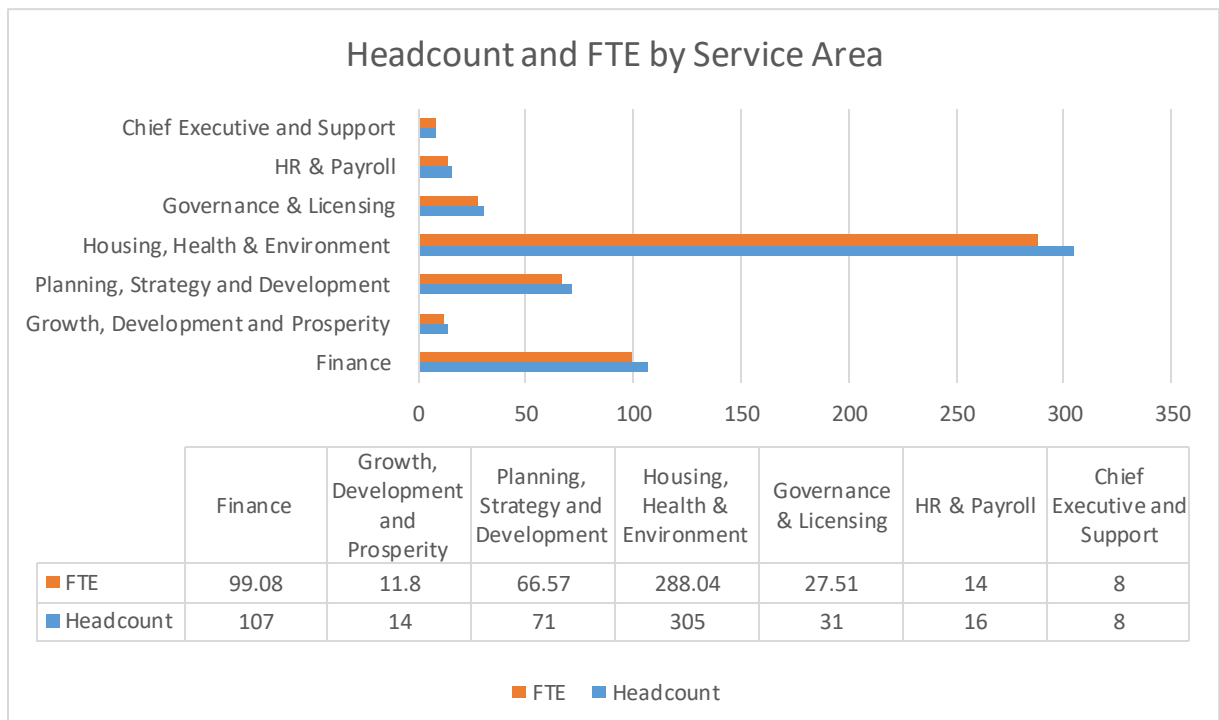
2.2. Actual headcount and FTE by grade for the year compared to previous year

Following our Reward Review in the third quarter of 2022 which revised our grading structure, we are not able to make a direct comparison to previous years. However at the end of 2022/23, the majority of our workforce (27.47%) were paid in grade 4 (£33,945 - £40,221) which has increased slightly in 2023/24 to 28.8%. This is closely followed by 21.01% of our workforce being paid at grade 2 (£27,334 -£29,777).



2.3. Headcount by Service

The graph below shows the headcount and FTE by service area as of 31st March 2024. Housing, Health and Environment represent 55.25% of the organisation.



2.4. Annual Salary Costs for the financial year compared to the last 5 years



Salary costs in the graph above relate only to the general fund and externally funded posts. Posts which are paid from the Housing Revenue Account are excluded from these figures.

Salary costs have increased by 14.8% compared to the previous year, which is the result of increased headcount and the Pay Award which is negotiated nationally. The Pay Award for 2023/24 was £1,925 on all spinal column points.

The Pay Award for 2024/25 is currently still under negotiation between the national employers and trade unions (UNITE, GMB and UNISON). The unions have requested £3,000 on all spinal column points or 10% whichever is greater, however the employers have offered a full and final offer of £1,290 on all spinal points, and therefore the pay negotiations currently remain unresolved.

2.5. Staff Travel Costs for the last 5 years

Travel expenses include business and training mileage. The graph below shows there has been a 1.01% reduction in travelling expenses in 2023/24 claimed by employees compared to the same period last year. On average travelling officers are claiming for 1,437 miles per annum, 15 miles less than last year.

This reduction is the result of increased use of technology which allows more meetings to take place remotely, in line with the Council's Worksmart Policy and supports our Climate Change Strategy aspirations.



3 Vacancies, Agency Workers and Recruitment

3.1. Recruitment activity

The costs of recruitment advertising for the last few years are shown in the table below and demonstrate the increase in recruitment activity, linked to recent recruitment and retention challenges, as well as increased recruitment media costs.

In 2023/24 we recruited 75 new starters compared to 107 in 2022/23, 82 in 2021/22 and 34 in 2020/21. The cost per head of recruiting in 2023/24 was £1,368 per head, compared to the previous year when it was £894, a 53.02% increase on the previous year.

Due to market shortages some posts have had to be advertised more than once since the first advert did not yield sufficient or suitable applicants. According to the CIPD (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development) the average cost of recruitment per employee can range from £3,000 to £5,000 so despite the increase we are still performing well against this benchmark, making effective use of media and using free resources where possible as well as publicising via our social media channels.

Recruitment Advertising Spend	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20
	£102,662	£95,714	£68,349	£30,105	£32,917

3.2. Vacancy and Agency Data

We regularly report vacancy, market supplement and agency data to Personnel Committee. The table overleaf provides a snapshot of the beginning and end of the year.

Although vacancy numbers remain similar at the beginning and end of the year it should be noted that vacancy levels are lower than at the peak of the recruitment challenges and prior to implementation of the Reward Review. The most recent reported LGA data (2020/21) has a vacancy rate median benchmark figure of 15%. In addition, of the 45 vacancies as at 31st March 2024, 12 have now been appointed to and are waiting to start and 21 posts were under active recruitment. Only 11 vacancies were not being actively recruited to at that time, in the main because recruitment campaigns were being arranged.

The increase in agency staff is due to some seasonal appointments in StreetScene. However, in the main agency cover has been used to provide essential assistance to cover hard to fill jobs where there are significant local/national labour shortages for certain skills, such as surveyors, planning and legal roles, whilst permanent recruitment is pursued.

The length of time a role is vacant has increased slightly and is largely due to some posts having some lengthy notice periods to serve prior to commencement, which has skewed the average.

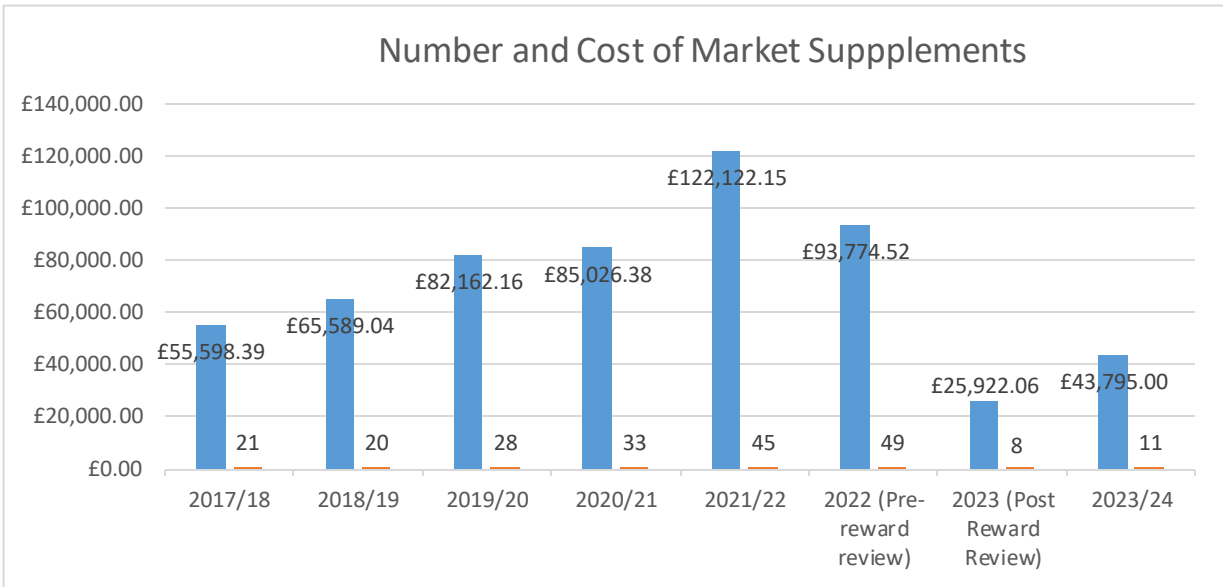
	01.04.23	31.03.24
Total Vacancies for EDDC (Recruiting in Progress & Not Recruiting)	38 (7.14% of the workforce)	45 (8.15% of the workforce)
Average length of time a Recruiting in Progress vacancy is vacant	99.94 days	100.37 days
Total Positions filled by Agency	22	36

3.3. Market supplements

Market Supplements are an additional temporary payment to the basic salary of an employee where market pressures would otherwise prevent the Council from being able to recruit or retain staff with a particular skill. Market supplements are reviewed annually, informed by market data at that time.

Up until the implementation of the Reward Review the number of market supplements were at their highest level of 49. One of the aims of the Reward Review was to reduce the requirement for market supplements by ensuring alignment of standard grades to the market, where possible, thus negating their need. The graph below shows the level and cost of market supplements applied to posts up to the introduction of the Reward Review in December 2022 and post Reward Review.

The number of market supplements has increased from 8 at the end of 2022/23 to 11 at the end of 2023/24. This remains below the 2018/19 level prior to the covid pandemic and pre the Reward Review, but demonstrates ongoing pressures in certain specific roles and professions such as solicitors. The 11 posts which were in receipt of a market supplement at the end of 2023/24 are in Legal, Place, Asset and Commercialisation, Growth, Development and Prosperity and Environmental Health.

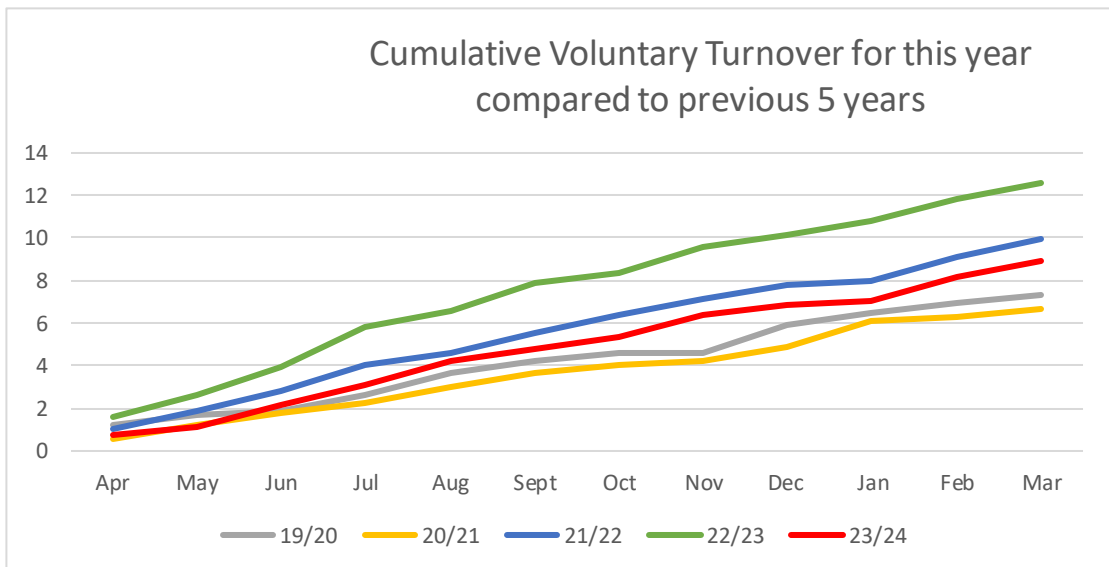


4 Turnover

4.1. Cumulative Voluntary Turnover

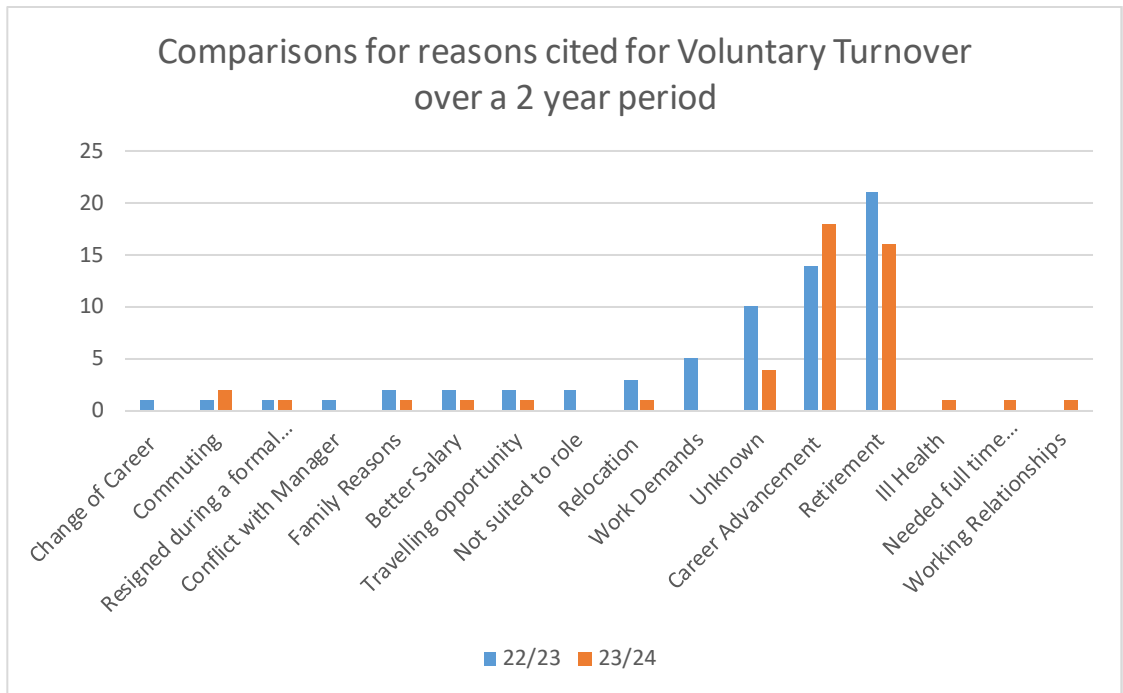
Voluntary turnover includes resignations and retirements (there is no compulsory retirement age). In the last annual report, we advised that it would take up to 12 months to establish if the 2022 Reward Review along with other actions had had a positive effect on our voluntary turnover rates and we reported there was an early indication that turnover had slowed in the last quarter of 2023/24.

The graph below shows cumulative voluntary turnover for the last five years. At the end of 2023/24 voluntary turnover was 8.89%, equating to 49 voluntary leavers compared to 9.91% the previous year where there were 65 voluntary leavers - a decrease of 24.61%.



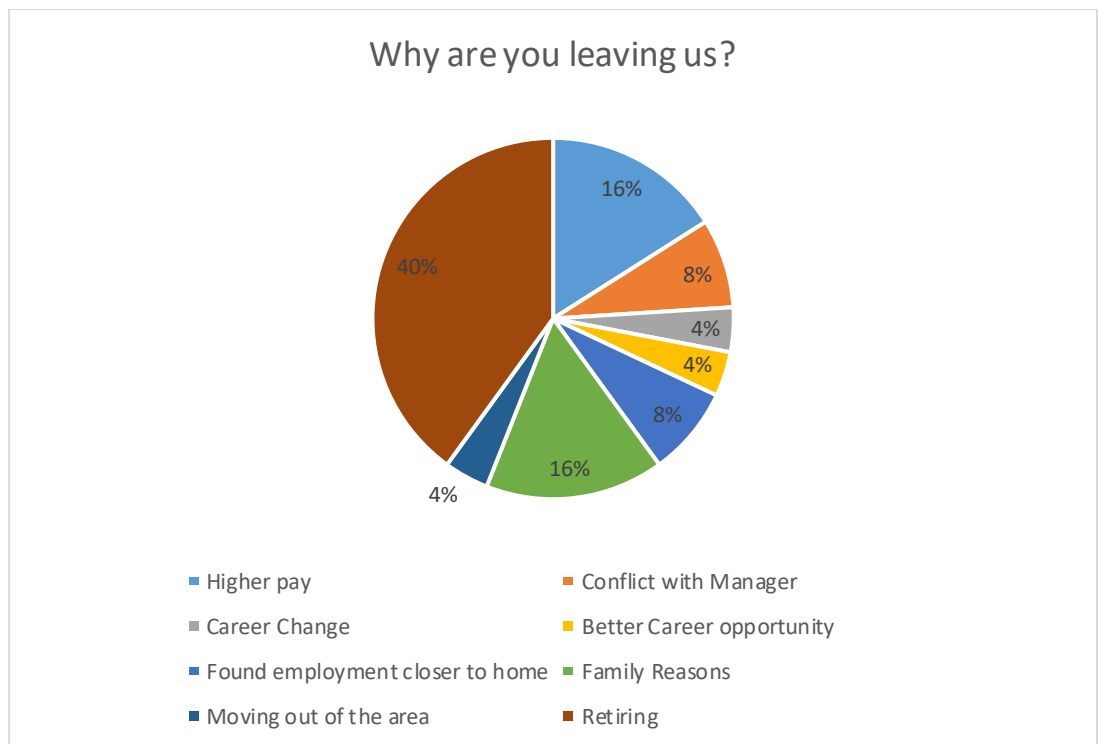
Reasons for leaving are varied and it is not always possible to identify a specific reason, particularly as not all leavers return an exit questionnaire or specify detailed reasons within their resignation letter. To help with collecting more meaningful data we have made modifications to our leavers form which has assisted greatly.

Last year the top two reasons for leaving were retirement and career advancement and these still remain the top two reasons for leaving but in reverse order, career advancement (18) and retirement (16).



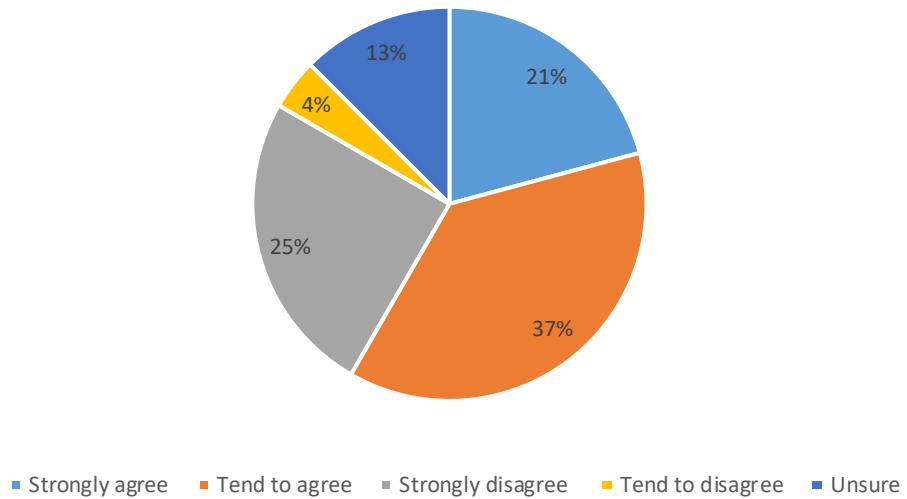
Exit Questionnaires

We had a 48.97% return of exit questionnaires from voluntary leavers this year which has allowed us to gain more insight into reasons for leaving. Of the exit questionnaire respondents, the following insights were gathered.



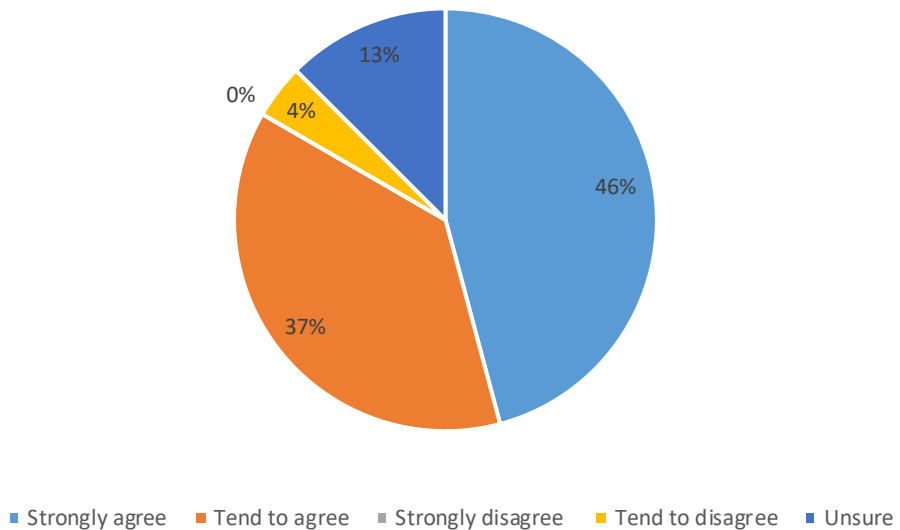
40% of respondents were retiring and 16% were either leaving because of family reasons or for higher pay.

The pay was adequate for the job I was doing

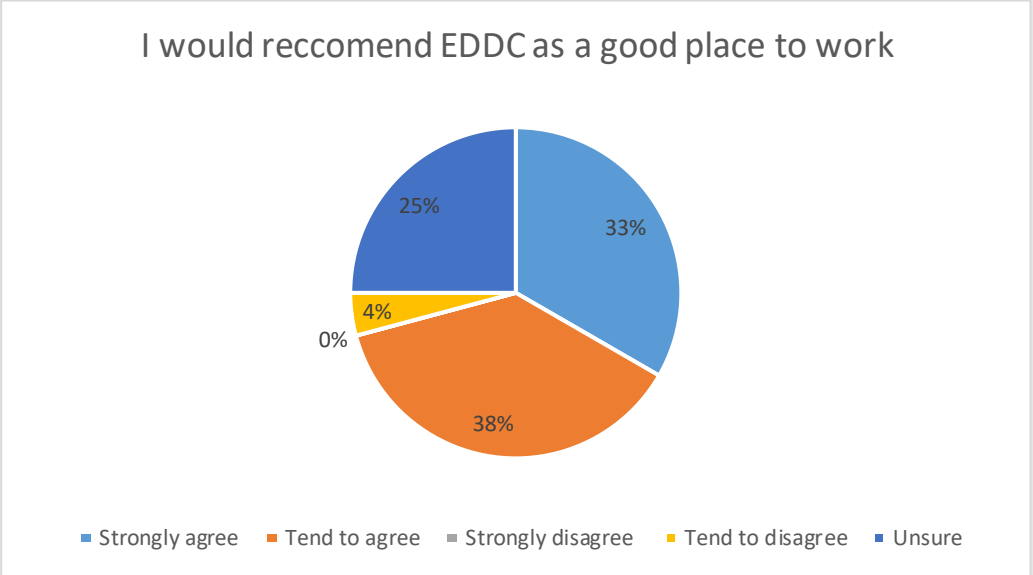


However, 58% either strongly agreed or tended to agree that they were paid adequately for the role they did. Those that tended to disagree were in roles such as surveyors or arborist, where there are wider market pay pressures.

Other Benefits were good



83% tended to agree or strongly agree that other benefits, excluding pay, were good. Only 4% said they disagreed, whilst 13% were unsure.



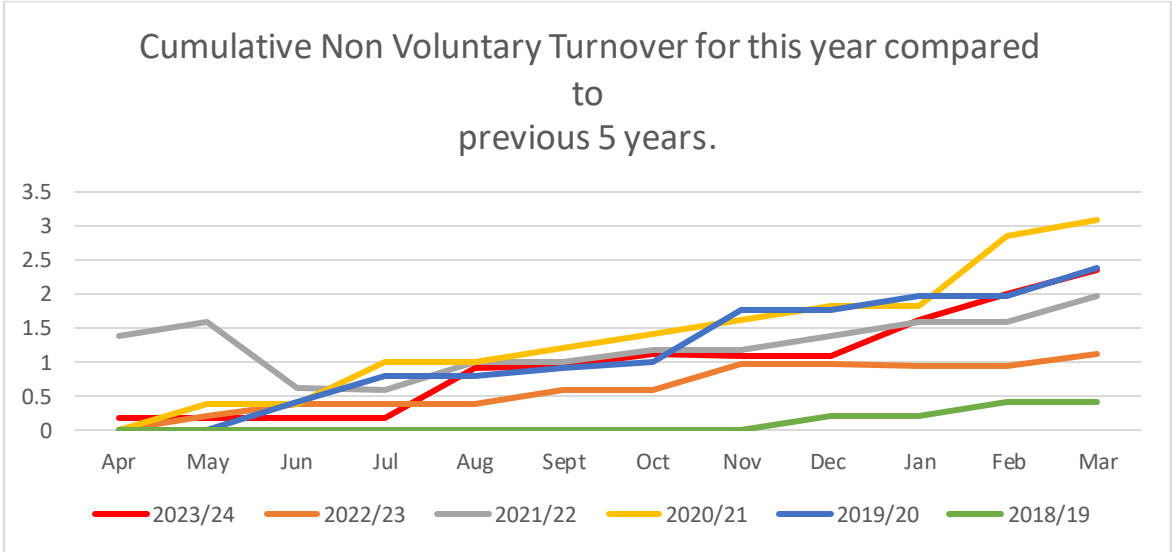
71% tended to agree or strongly agree that they would recommend EDDC as a good place to work.

In 2023/24, 3 employees left the council within 9 months which compared favourably to the last 2 years where there was 7 in 2022/23 and 16 in 2022/21. Employees that left within 9 months were only with the Council between 2 – 8 days.

4.2. Cumulative Non-voluntary Turnover

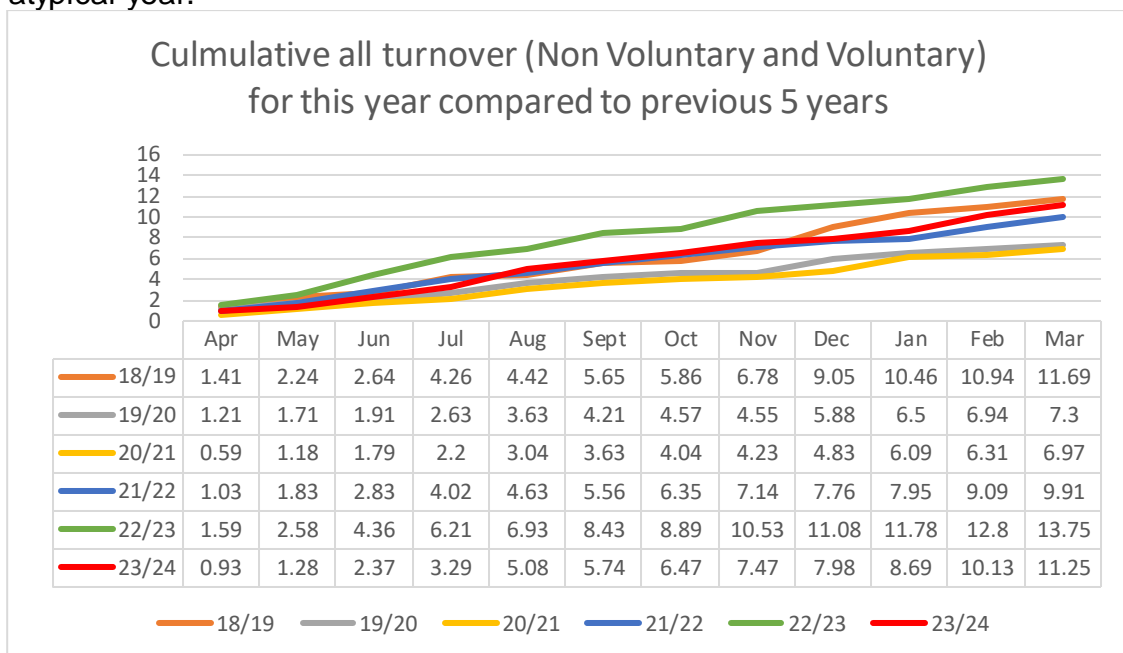
Non-voluntary turnover includes dismissals, redundancy, end of fixed term contracts and death in service.

At the end of 2023/24 cumulative non-voluntary turnover was 2.36% (11 dismissals and sadly 1 death in service) which is higher than last year's 1.13% (6 dismissals) but is still lower than 2020/21 when it was 3.07% (14 dismissals).



4.3. Combined Cumulative Voluntary and Non-voluntary Turnover and Comparisons with Benchmarking Data

Examining all turnover data (voluntary and non-voluntary), the 2023/24 rate of 11.25% shows a decline from the previous year's 13.75%. Notably the lowest turnover rate recorded in the last 5 years was 6.97% during the Covid-19 Pandemic which stands out as an exceptional and atypical year.



Specific figures for turnover rates across different councils in the southwest are not uniformly available. Turnover trends for 2023/24 indicate that there is an increase in turnover rates compared to previous years influenced by factors including economic conditions and labour market dynamics. Turnover rates vary significantly by industry - the private sector have a turnover rate of 8.9% while public sector services are at 14.6%. Higher public service rates are likely to be indicative of increased pressures to manage staffing levels amidst financial constraints and rising demand for services.

The table below from Local Government Inform shows local government turnover benchmark data for all (voluntary and non-voluntary) turnover. East Devon District Council's cumulative voluntary and non-voluntary turnover is less than the maximum for all the years where benchmarking data has been reported. Unfortunately, there is no current benchmarking data for years between 2021 and 2024.

Period	Labour turnover		
	%		
	Minimum for All local authority districts in South West	Mean for All local authority districts in South West	Maximum for All local authority districts in South West
2016/17	11	13	15
2017/18	9	15	22
2018/19	14	19	30
2019/20	no value	no value	no value
2020/21	7	11	19

5 Learning and development and ‘growing our own’

5.1. Learning and Development Activity

As shown in the table below, take up of training by employees has increased this year compared to last year, although anecdotally, there continues to be an apparent capacity challenge for staff allocating time to attend training.

Learning and development activity	2023/ 2024	2022/ 2023	2021/ 2022	2020/ 2021
Number of learning and development events organised and delivered	44	32	31	61
Number of attendees	483	372	227	452
Overall spend (corporate training budget only)	£60,000	£60,000	£34,514	£32,819
In addition to the above we also have 412 users with e-learning licenses who have completed 2,304 courses comprising of 2,998 modules.				

We have continued to roll-out Safeguarding Level 3 training and Mental Capacity Act Assessment Training for front line staff to support the Safeguarding Policy.

We have also upgraded our e-learning platform which has more functionality and flexibility with data and reports more visible to managers which will assist with identifying the mandatory training that has been completed by teams. Staff were moved to this system together with their completion records at the end of February 24 and although it is too early to run meaningful reports, we can advise that the system currently has 520 active users with 6,495 completed records.

We have also entered a group of aspiring managers into the South West Council Challenge in October 2023, where we were highly commended for two awards - the Best Team and Communications. We intend to continue with this initiative on an annual basis.

Leadership development training was also provided to the Senior Leadership Team, and we have also facilitated Mental Health Awareness and Resilience Training for Housing Staff.

Post training evaluation feedback on the learning and development offered continues to be positive.

Learning and development topics include:

- Assertiveness, Self Confidence and Communication Skills
- Business Writing Skills
- Coaching Skills for Managers
- Dealing with Difficult Customers and Behaviours
- Delegation and Empowerment
- Developing a Growth Mindset
- Disciplinary, Capability and Grievances
- First Aid at Work
- Managing Sickness Absence
- Mental Capacity Act Training
- Mental Health First Aid
- Performance Management
- People Skills for Managers
- Pre-retirement
- Presentation Skills
- Procurement
- Project Management
- Recruitment and Selection
- Safeguarding Level 3
- Self-Neglect and Hoarding
- Welcome Morning
- Management Academy
- Workplace Mediation Skills
- Superwellness webinars on 4 topical wellbeing areas.

5.2. Apprenticeship Activity

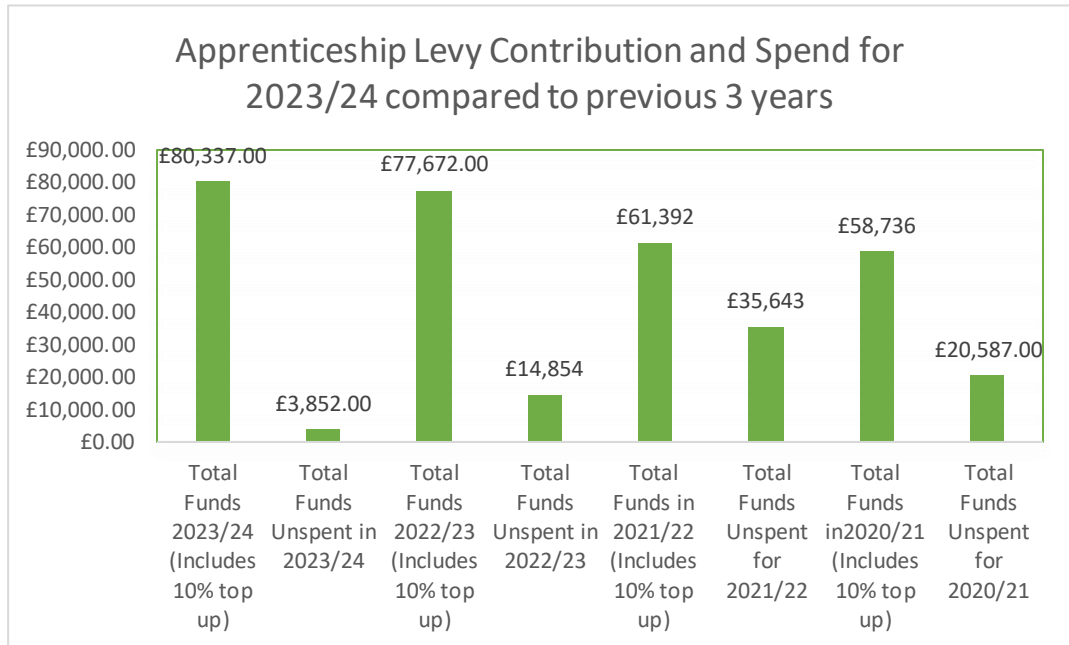
Apprenticeships are nationally accredited qualifications available to new and existing employees, which are funded by the Council's Apprenticeship Levy. The Council must allocate 0.5% of its annual pay bill to fund the Levy, which for 2023/24 was c£83k, compared to c£58k in 2022/23. This increase in Levy is linked to the increase in headcount and subsequently the pay bill.

The number of apprenticeships the Council is currently supporting is 17 which is an increase of 54.54% compared to 2022/23, with the Council's apprenticeship numbers specifically commended during the recent Peer Challenge.

Apprenticeship qualifications currently used include:

- Level 7 Chartered Town Planning (Masters level)
- Level 7 Senior leader (Masters level)
- Level 6 Chartered Manager (Degree)
- Level 6 Environmental Health Practitioner (degree level)
- Level 6 Building Control Surveyor (degree level)
- Level 6 Civil Engineer
- Level 4 Business Analyst
- Level 4 Counter Fraud Investigator
- Level 4 Associate Project Management
- Level 4 IIRV Revenues and Benefits
- Level 3 HR Support
- Level 3 Business Administrator

We recently held a celebration day for apprentices that had successfully completed their end point assessment and in recognition of their achievements, which was supported by the Senior Leadership Team and service managers.



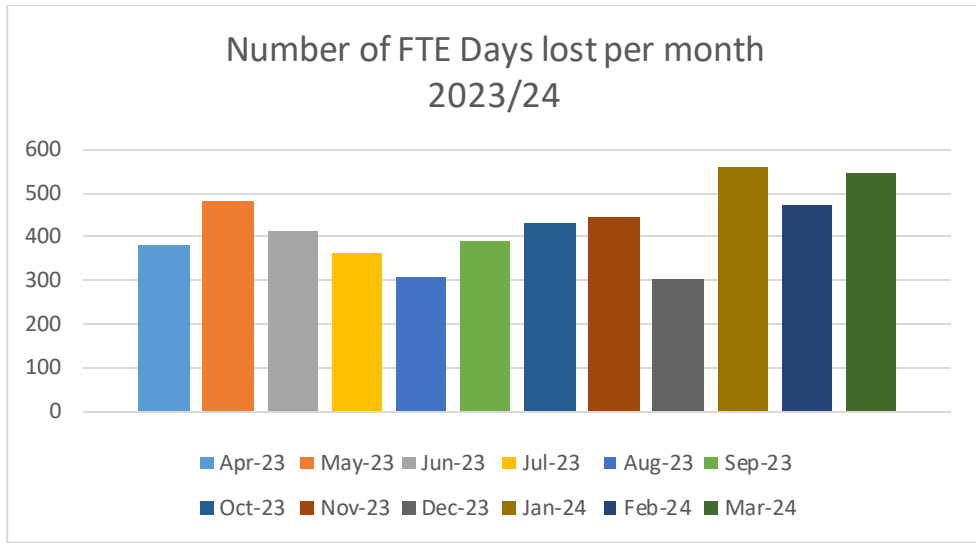
The Government's Levy Funding Rules mean that funds will expire and transfer to HMRC if they are not utilised within 24 months from the first month in which it is paid into our account. Monitoring Levy spend is therefore important, to ensure that we maximise its use. The graph above shows the total Levy fund and the amount that expired and was reclaimed by HMRC. Progress has been made in the number of apprenticeships offered to new and existing staff through our grow our own work which is demonstrable through maximising Levy spend and through the reduction of unspent Levy funds by 74.06% compared to the same period last year.

A new Grow Our Own budget has recently been agreed by Council to fund three new early career apprenticeships which will allow services to bid for an apprentice within their service, as well as a graduate as part of the LGA (Local Govt Association) National Graduate Development Programme. The Council is also recruiting a graduate for the LGA's Pathways to Planning programme and we have already recruited to an early careers Level 2 Arborist apprenticeship which will commence in June 2024. We also continue to identify apprenticeship opportunities for existing staff.

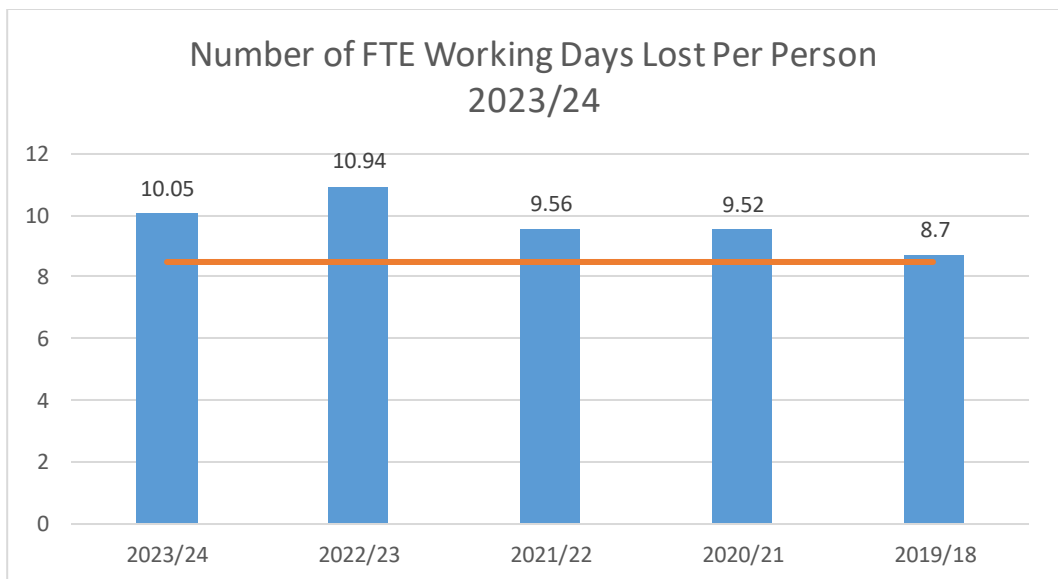
6 Sickness Absence & Wellbeing

6.1. FTE Working Days Lost due to Sickness Absence

The graph below shows the total number of full time equivalent (FTE) working days lost per month for the 2023/24 financial year.



The Council's target is that no more than 8.5 working days should be lost through sickness absence, per employee. However, as shown in the graph below, we have been in excess of this target for the last 4 years, apart from the year in which the Covid Pandemic commenced. There has however been a 2.88% decrease this year on all absences with an average of 10.05 days lost per FTE compared with 10.94 days lost per FTE in 2022/23. Of the total headcount, 21% of employees had no absence during 2023/24, which means that 4 in 5 employees had at least 1 instance of absence. Although there is no current up to date benchmarking data for sickness absence for district councils in Devon, one district council reported their absence level was 10.74 days per person which is 0.69 FTE higher than East Devon.



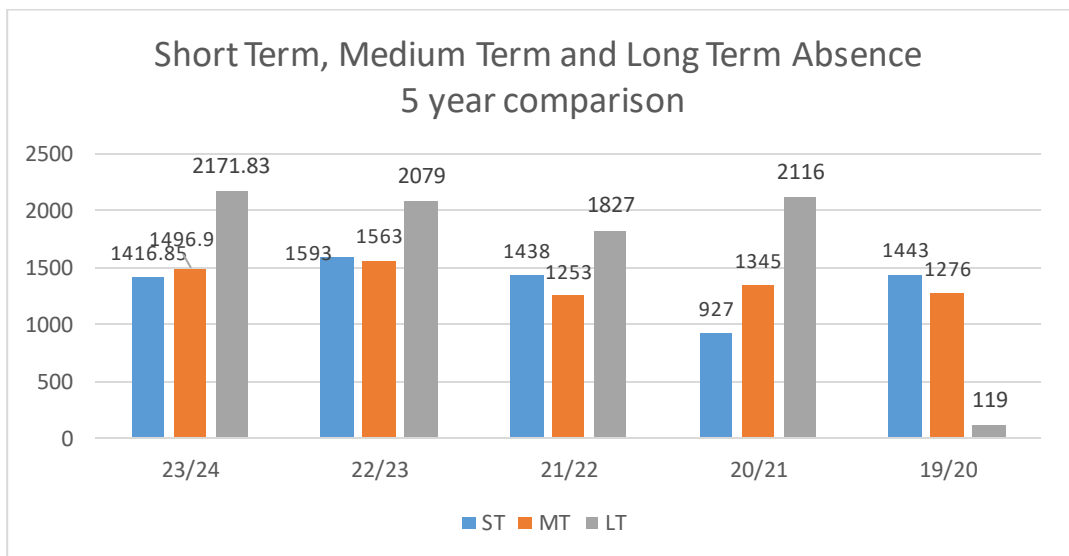
According to a recent XperthHR sickness absence survey of public and private sector organisations, for an organisation employing between 250 and 999 employees the upper quartile absence rate was 8.2 FTE days per person.

6.2. Reasons for Short, Medium and Long-term Absence

Overall, there has been a 2.88% reduction in absence this year, reducing from 5,235 total days lost to 5,085 days. The reduction in absence is attributable to a decrease in short-term and medium-term absence days lost. Unfortunately, long-term absence has increased and is at the highest level reported since 2019/20.

Short-term absence (less than 8 days) accounted for 27.85% of all absences, medium-term (9 days to 2 months) accounted for 29.46% of all absences and long-term (more than 2 months) accounted for 42.69% of all absences.

Comparison over the last five years is shown in the graph below.



Short-term Absence

Short-term absence has significantly decreased by 11.11% compared to the same period last year. Our Worksmart Policy is possibly contributing positively to the reduction in short-term absence rates, as employees can continue working if they feel well enough, without having to travel to the workplace, whereas in the past they may have taken absence.

Among short-term absences, cold and flu are the leading causes, accounting for 23.49% of all short-term absence. Covid-19 is the second most common cause. This data suggests a shift in the primary reason for short-term absence to pre-pandemic trends, but with Covid-19 still contributing notably.

Returning to the top three reasons for short-term absence since 2018/19 are stomach, kidney, liver and digestion issues which has replaced phased return to work which had previously featured in the top three for the last four years.

The most common reasons for short-term absence over the last five years are shown in the table overleaf.

	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19
1	Cold & Flu (332 days)	Covid-19 (Positive Test) (458 days)	Cold & Flu (280 days)	Phased Return to work (140 days)	Cold & Flu (399.5 days)	Cold & Flu (387 days)
2	Covid -19 (Positive Test) 234 days	Cold/Flu (306 days)	Covid-19 Positive Test (244 days)	Stomach, Kidney, Liver Digestion (103 days)	Phased Return (251 days)	Chest, Respiratory (257.5 days)
3	Stomach, Kidney, Liver, Digestion (187.2 days)	Phased return to work (176 days)	Phased return to work (159 days)	Cold & Flu (100 days)	Stomach, Kidney, Liver, Digestion (217 days)	Back Problems (230 days)

Medium-term Absence

The most common reasons for medium-term absence over the last five years are shown in the table below.

Medium Term Absence (9 days to 2 months)						
	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19
1	Other Muscular Skeletal Problems (293.82)	Stress, anxiety, fatigue (personal) (410 days)	Stress, anxiety, fatigue (personal) (303 days)	Stress, anxiety fatigue (personal) (525.5 days)	Stress, anxiety, fatigue (personal) (446 days)	Other Muscular Skeletal Problems (243 days)
2	Stomach, Kidney, Liver Digestion (178.5 days)	Other Muscular Skeletal Problems (225 days)	Other Muscular Skeletal Problems (148 days)	Stress, anxiety, fatigue (work- related) (165 days)	Hospital treatment/ operation (203 days)	Stress, anxiety fatigue (personal) (230 days)
3	Depression (personal) 122 days	Chest/ Respiratory Problems (166 days)	Hospital treatment/ operation (133 days)	Hospital Treatment/ Operation (162 days)	Stress, anxiety fatigue (work- related) (193 days)	Hospital treatment/ operation (173 days)

The reduction in medium-term absence by 4.28% is a positive development compared to the same period last year. However muscular skeletal issues remain the primary cause, with StreetScene being mostly impacted, which is unsurprising given the nature of the work. Stomach issues are the second leading reason caused by underlying issues such as colitis and IBS while depression for personal reasons ranks third, with bereavement being the main underlying reason for an employee's depression.

Long-term Absence

The most common reasons for long-term absence over the last five years are shown in the table overleaf.

Long Term Absence (more than 2 months)						
	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19
1	Stress, anxiety, fatigue (Personal) (596.64)	Stress, anxiety, fatigue (work-related) (494 days)	Stress, anxiety, fatigue (Personal) (504 days)	Stress, anxiety, fatigue (Personal) (525.5 days)	Hospital treatment/operation (354 days)	Hospital treatment /operation (777 days)
2	Other Muscular Skeletal Issues (384.5 days)	Stress, anxiety, fatigue (Personal) (477 days)	Stress, anxiety, fatigue (work-related) (329 days)	Stress, anxiety, fatigue (work-related) (165 days)	Stress, anxiety, fatigue (Personal) (210 days)	Other Muscular Skeletal Issues (422 days)
3	Neurological Headaches (295 days)	Covid-19 (289 days)	Heart, blood pressure, circulation (263 days)	Hospital treatment/operation (142 days)	Chest/Respiratory (165 days)	Eye, Ear, Nose & mouth /dental, Sinusitis (253 days)

Long-term absence accounts for 42.69% of all absences. The number of employees absent for 2 months or more is up from the same period last year from 25 employees to 30. Subsequently long-term absence has increased by 4.42%. Long-term absence ranged from 43 to 134 days.

Stress, anxiety and fatigue (personal) was the leading cause of long-term absence and was cited by 10 employees (1.18% of our headcount) and ranged between 43 and 92 days. Attributable causes were primarily bereavement, and family/relationship issues. Work-related stress does not feature in the top three reasons for long-term absence for the first time since 2020/21, although 4 of the employees who were absent for 2 months or month had also raised a grievance. Anecdotally the trend for sickness absence in 2023/24 across all sectors according to XpertHR is an increase in mental health absences, which mirrors our experience.

Other muscular skeletal issues were cited by 4 employees ranging from 134 days to 48 days for reasons such as sciatica and arthritis. 3 of the 4 employees are in manual roles and 1 has since left the Council's employment.

Neurological issues impacted 2 employees who lost 295 days between them.

Actions to mitigate against sickness absence

The steps we have taken to address absence levels include return to work meetings, absence reviews, referral to employee assistance programme, hybrid/flexible working, risk assessments, support on return to work and in some cases formal warnings. We also continue to offer absence management training for managers.

We also refer to Occupational Health for advice. In the last year we instigated 52 Occupational Health referrals and implemented reasonable adjustments where appropriate in accordance with the Equality Act.

This last year we have encountered significant service delays from our Occupational Health service provider in relation to the issuing of appointments and the return of reports, which has inevitably delayed a return to work in some cases and subsequently impacted on our absence levels. As a result, we have commenced a new procurement exercise in partnership with Devon County Council with the aim of working with a new supplier from late autumn. We hope a change of supplier will result in employees being seen within a more reasonable timescale.

6.3. Employee wellbeing support

Overall spend on employee wellbeing and support services for the year 2023/24 which includes the Employee Assistance Programme, fitness for employment screening, occupational health referrals and flu vaccinations was £17,385.

The Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) provides a confidential and anonymous service for employees to get impartial advice and support through counselling or advice on a range of issues which affect employee wellbeing. It also provides in the moment support on point of contact, podcasts and blogs, self-help downloads, debt advice and domestic abuse help. We changed EAP provider in May 23 and feedback from employees on the new service includes:

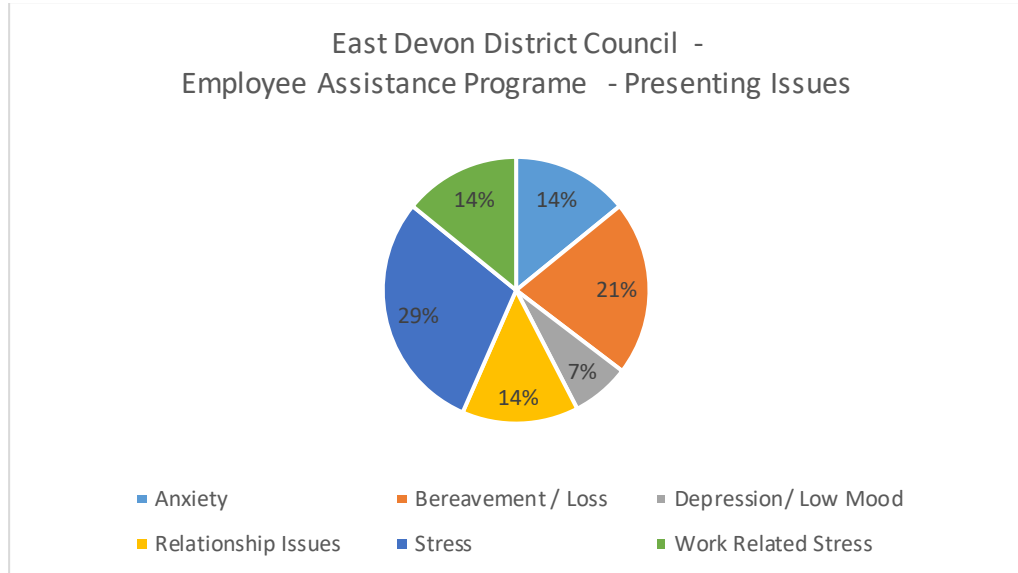
It helped me work through my feelings on my return to work and was a great support to me. The counselling I received was outstanding, and got me out of such a dark place in my life. The counsellor I had was so supportive and kind also.

Being able to talk to someone that doesn't know me or judges me by my professional role and helped we work through my struggles

I felt safe to talk about anything hopes, fears, grief, anxiety. There's things I feel I can't talk about with family or friends because of fear of judgement or to always want to maintain a strong front. But this felt like a safe space to voice my struggles, to be vulnerable and receive support.

During 2023/24, 38 individuals contacted the employee support line for either immediate support or longer-term support. We have supported 50 separate enhanced face to face counselling sessions.

29% (11 employees) contacted the EAP for support with stress, followed by 21% (7 employees) for support with bereavement. In equal third place at 14% (5 employees) were supported with anxiety, depression/low mood and work-related stress.



Employee Assistance programs are widely used across various organisations to support wellbeing. Trends often show similar patterns of usage across diverse types of organisations. The top 5 presenting issues for all organisations that use the same EAP provider were as follows:



During 2023/24 the Council has supported various initiatives under the Council’s Happy Healthy Here offer, including flu vaccinations, “Know your Numbers” and “Health MOT” checks in partnership with LED, spinal checks with a local chiropractor, smoking cessation pop up’s and webinars with a focus on diabetes, menopause, men’s health and social wellbeing. We have also introduced a new health cash plan for employees to claim back on health-related expenses, such as the physio or chiropractor. In the latter part of 2023/24, we introduced a Wellbeing Champions Programme, similar to Mental Health First Aiders, which will assist in embedding a sense of employee responsibility for their physical, mental and financial wellbeing and an awareness of the tools available to support this.

Financial wellbeing continues to be a focus and we still provide access to monthly webinars for all staff, if they wish, on a range of topics from budgeting to debt management. Our wellbeing portal also provides access to specialised help for debt and financial wellbeing and provides employees with discounts on a comprehensive range of lifestyle savings. Employee engagement has increased from 71.4% to 75.36% since launching the portal last year. The top two brands for savings are on the weekly shop from Tesco and Asda as shown in the table below.

Top Brands

1.	Tesco e-voucher	130
2.	ASDA - High Street	73
3.	Vue	72
4.	Currys eGift	59
5.	Sainsbury's - High Street	46
6.	Marks & Spencer - High Street	39
7.	Argos - eGift	31
8.	Ikea	28
9.	Scott Cinemas	26
10.	Boots eGift	24

7 Employee Relations

Employee relations issues include dealing with employee grievances, disciplinary matters and dismissals (which can include redundancy or cessation of fixed term contract dismissals).

In 2023/24 there were 10 dismissals compared to 9 the previous year, with 6 due to the end of fixed term contracts. There were no redundancy dismissals.

Grievances raised by employees has increased this year from 2 the previous year to 7. The majority of these were in Housing and related to allegations of poor management and poor relationships with colleagues. This is an unprecedented level of grievances which the Council has not seen in previous years. We aim to encourage employees to address their issues informally and through mediation where possible, as not only is it costly to the organisation but can take significant toll on a person's overall mental health. However, it has not been possible to resolve grievances informally in these instances which has resulted in significant time and cost to the organisation to deal with. It is likely that further organisational changes may lead to potentially similar grievance levels next year.

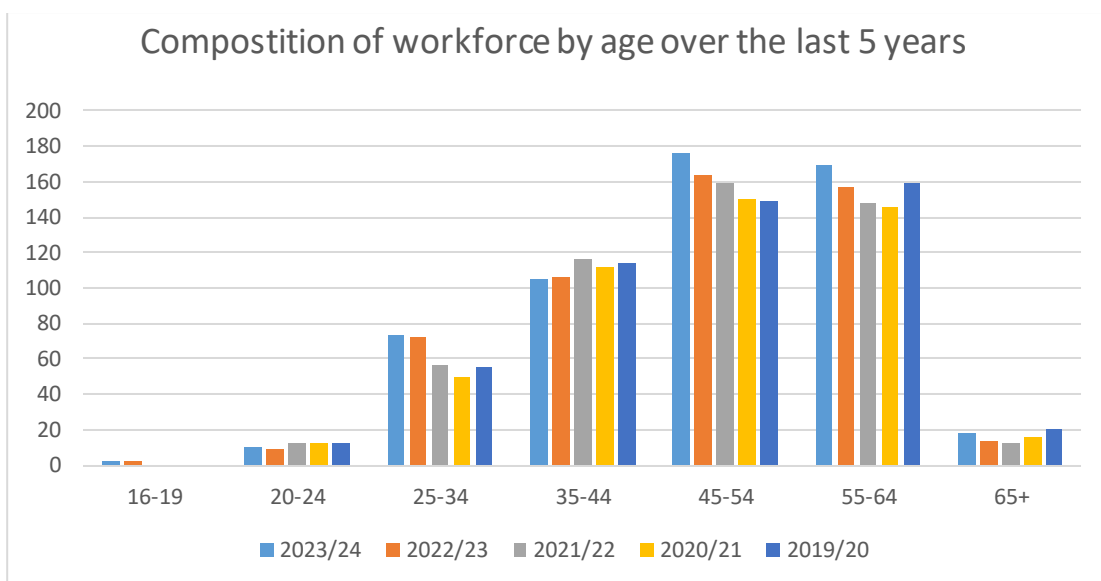
HR also investigated under the disciplinary policy and procedure 9 cases of alleged misconduct of which 4 resulted in no further action, and 1 resigned prior to a formal meeting.

8 Workforce Profile

8.1 Age

The average age of the workforce remains unchanged from last year and is 48.

We have 2 employees who are aged 16-19. The largest proportion of the workforce are aged between 45-54 (31.76%) followed by employees in the 55-64 age group (30.5%) meaning that 62.26% are aged between 45-64 years. 18 employees are aged 65+ and 13 currently working beyond state pension age of 66.



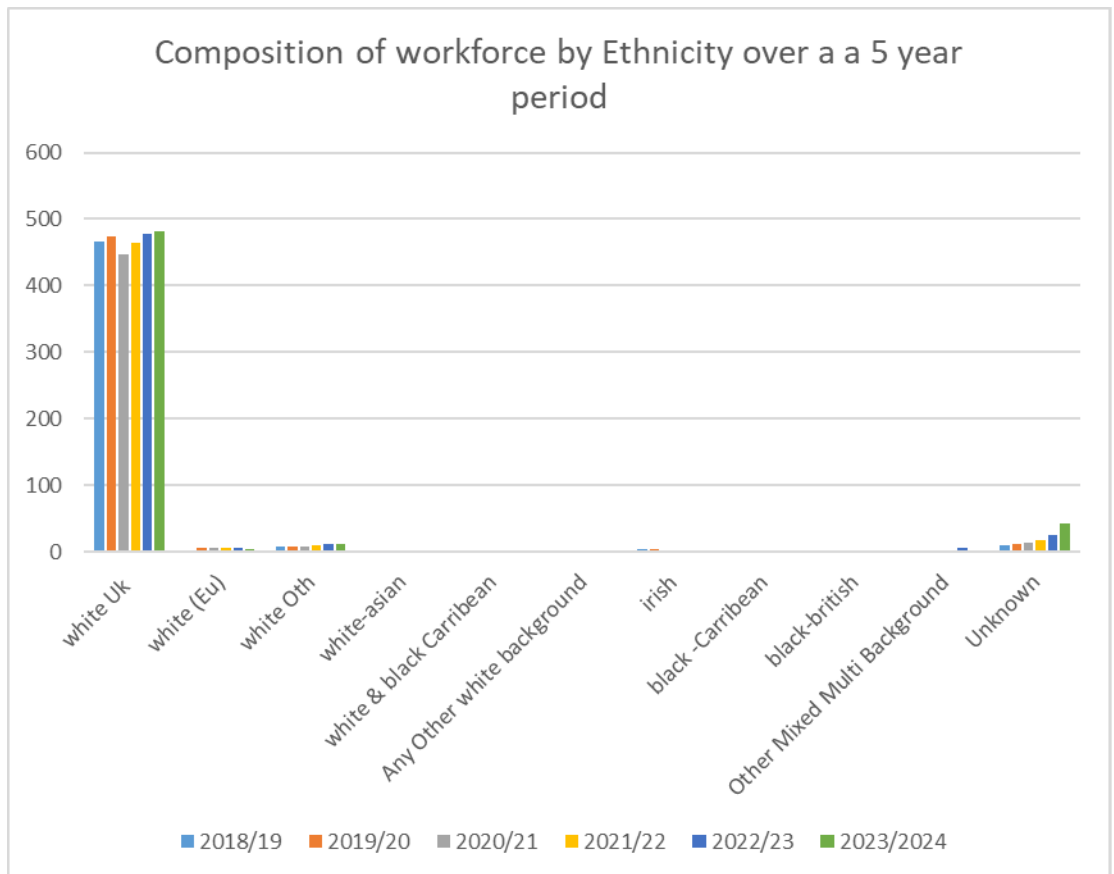
8.2 Ethnicity

Results from the most recent 2021 census report that 2.3% of East Devon's residents are from ethnic groups other than white.

From data we have available 1.8% of our workforce are from an ethnic group other than white UK. Those employees who identify as white UK (English, Welsh, Scottish and Northern Irish) account for 87.31% of the workforce compared to 97.4% of the population.

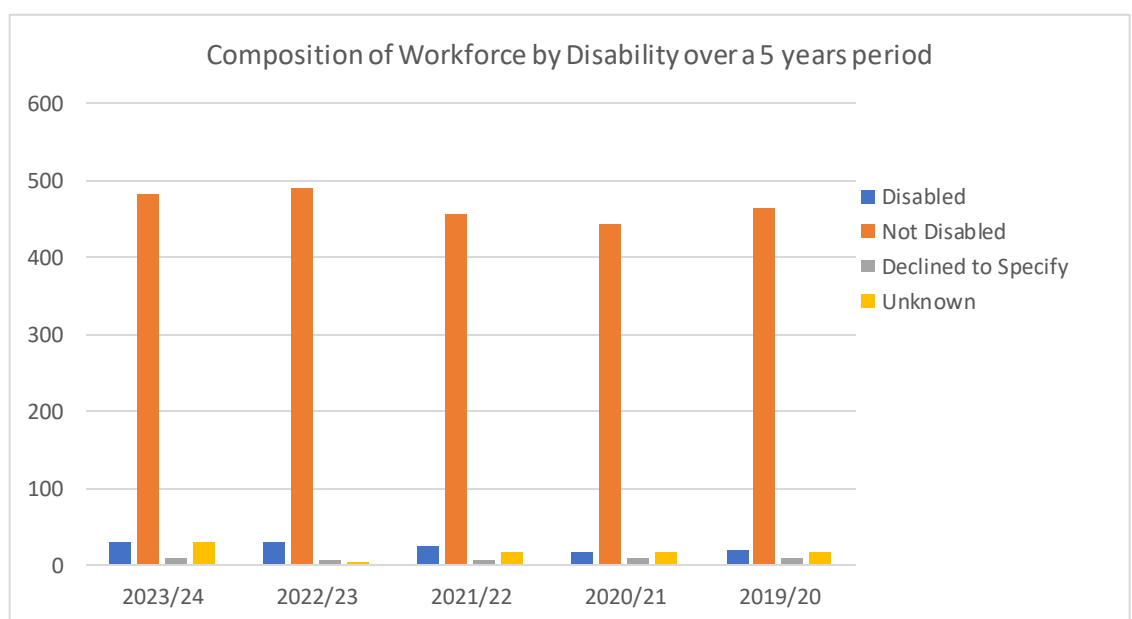
However, as shown on the graph below, 8% of our workforce have not provided this information and we continue to promote the completion of this data in the self-service part of the HR system, to enable improved monitoring.

We have now also recently recruited an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Advisor who will review how our data is collected and how it can be used to inform actions to support our Equality Policy.



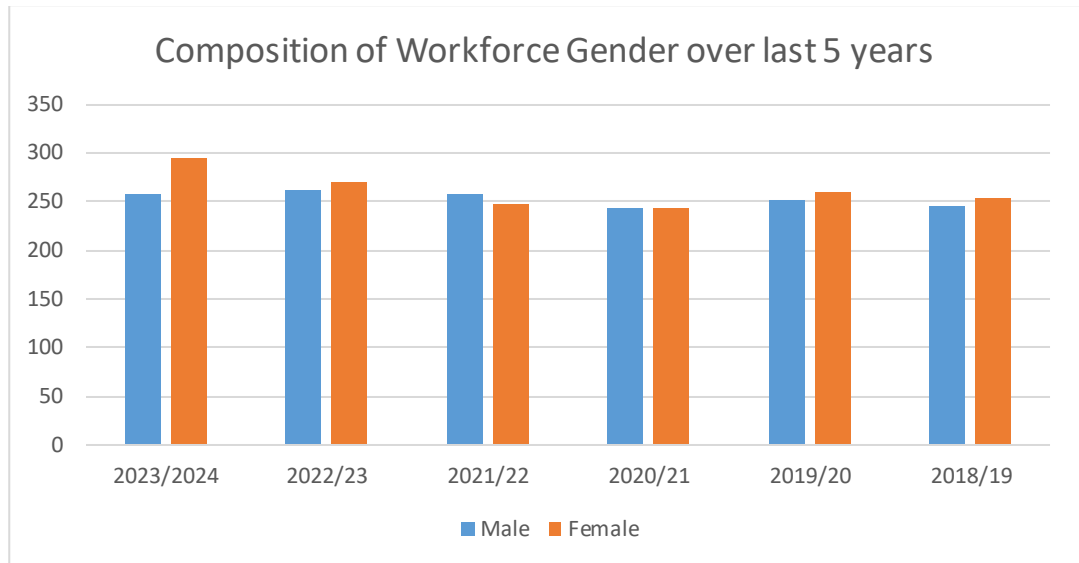
8.3 Disability

The percentage of employees who have self-declared a disability is currently 5.43%, marginally reduced from last year's 5.82% of the workforce, but is higher than the 2021/22 reported figure of 4.74% of the workforce. The Council is a Disability Confident and MINDFUL Employer which demonstrates the Council's commitment to supporting the health and wellbeing of its employees. As with ethnicity, we continue to promote the completion of this field in the HR system.



8.4 Gender

The workforce gender split has shifted from last year and the proportion of women to men has increased for the second year running. In 2023/24 the workforce is composed of 295 (53.44%) females and 257(46.55%) males. This is an increase from the previous year when the gender split was 270 Females (50.75%) and 262 Males (49.25%).



Employers in Great Britain with more than 250 staff are required by law to publish their Gender Pay Gap.

The Gender Pay Gap is a measure of the difference between men's and women's average earnings across an organisation or the labour market. It is expressed as a percentage of men's earnings. This is different to the term 'equal pay' which means that men and women in the same employment performing equal work must receive equal pay, as set out in the Equality Act 2010. The purpose of Gender Pay Gap reporting is to achieve greater gender equality across the UK and increase pay transparency. Causes of a gender pay gap can include the ability to progress into higher pay roles, for example through a wish to work part time or because of caring responsibilities or less access to career progression support and development opportunities.

In 2023, the Office for National Statistics reported that the National Gender Pay Gap for all employees, full and part time median pay was 14.3% less for women than men.

The Council's median gender pay gap for 2023/24 was that 4.29% of males are paid lower than females and this means that East Devon compares favourably against the national picture. The Council's gender pay gap has therefore reversed as in the previous last two years the pay gap was higher for males than females at the rate of 6.18% in 2022/23 and 8.49% in 2021/22.

The median pay gap has changed as a result of more females being paid in the upper middle quartile and is in part attributable to recruiting two females to Director posts.

Benchmarking data with other neighbouring authorities who have published their 2023/24 gender pay gap reports are shown in the table below. This shows a similar profile for our neighbours. Teignbridge and North Devon have a much higher proportion of females in the upper quartile than males which accounts for their higher reported median.

Local Authority	Median hourly rate difference between male and female*
East Devon District Council	-4.29%
Exeter City Council	-2.91%
Teignbridge	-7.38%
North Devon	-8.1%

* A minus calculation indicates that women earned more than men in the organisation.