



# WORKFORCE PROFILE

## 2023/24



**October 2024**

Surrey Heath Borough Council  
Knoll Road, Camberley GU15 3HD  
[human.resources@surreyheath.gov.uk](mailto:human.resources@surreyheath.gov.uk)



## Overview

The Workforce Profile presents data on Surrey Heath Borough Council's workforce between the period of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024. This profile demonstrates the Council's compliance with the general duty under section 149 of the Equality Act (2010). The profile specifically reports data on protected characteristics in relation to the workforce and demonstrates our commitment to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who do and do not share a protected characteristic. The report also looks at staff recruitment, turnover and sickness rates and compares data over the last 3 years.

The report links closely to the Council's People Strategy and Achieving Equity Strategy and ensures the commitment to the general duty is ongoing through informing action plans. The profile helps the Council to understand the composition of the workforce and allows comparison over years from which trends can be identified. This can subsequently lead to recommendations and can highlight areas in which there may be issues.

## Scope

As at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, there were 295 employees working at Surrey Heath Borough Council, excluding casual staff, agency workers and councillors, and it is these employees that the data in this report relate to.

## Age

As at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, the mean age of employees was 46 years 1 month. Figure 1 shows that the average age of employees over 3 the last 3 years.



Year	Mean Age (years & months)
2023/24	46 years 1 month
2022/23	45 years 9 months
2021/22	45 years 9 months

Figure 1 - table showing mean age of employees in years and months over three years

The distribution of age by bracket is shown below in figure 2. A significant proportion of the workforce (68.1%) are aged 41 and over, with the most populous bracket being 51-60 with 29.5% of employees falling within it. This compares to the previous year in which the most populous bracket was the 41-50 bracket with 29% of employees.

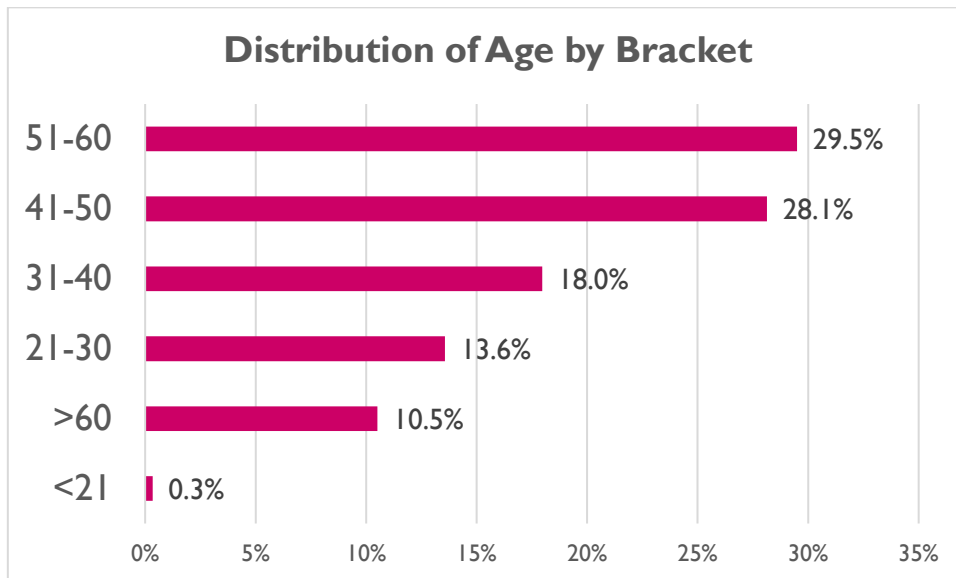


Figure 2 - a bar chart showing distribution of age of employee by age bracket

Figure 3 below shows the proportion of male and female employees within each age bracket. Two thirds of employees within the most populous age bracket are female while almost three quarters (73.5%) of employees aged 41-50 are female.



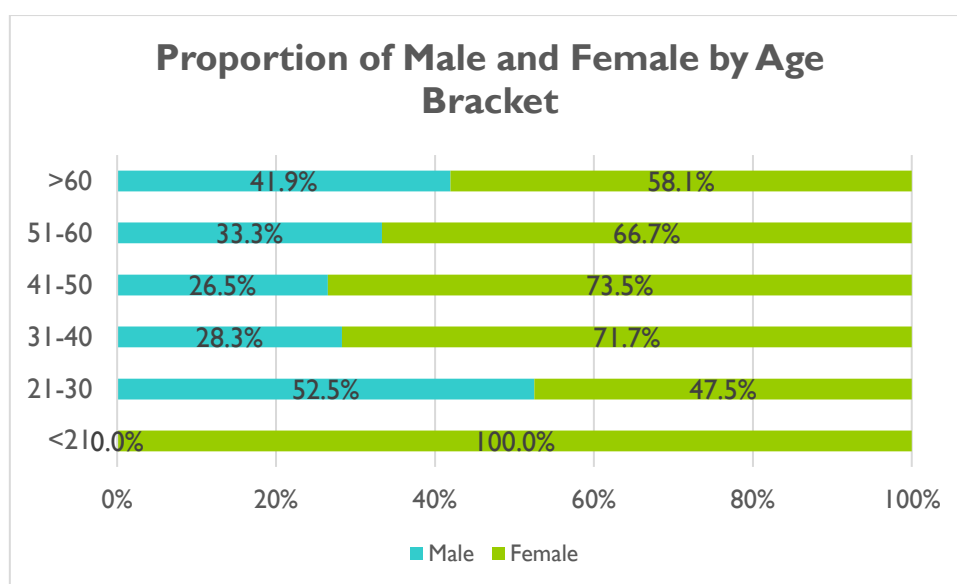


Figure 3 - a bar chart showing the proportion of male and female employees in each age bracket

The data suggests the Council has an ageing workforce. The Menopause Policy has been implemented to ensure there is support in place for those who need it, particularly as we know the majority of the Council's workforce are female (65.8%). The data suggests that a large proportion of the workforce may be considering retirement in the coming years and so the Council offers free retirement planning sessions, in which employees can access advice and support.

The risk that this represents is a loss of talent and corporate knowledge as members of the workforce retire. It is important to continue to attract younger workers into the Council where appropriate.

To try and attract younger workers, the Council has strengthened its offer for younger employees by improving the Leave and Special Leave Policies. There has also been a strengthening of family friendly benefits including paid leave for infertility treatment and miscarriage.

The average age of new starters in 2023/24 was 43 years 4 months, compared to 2022/23 (40 years 8 months) and 2021/22 (40 years 7 months). This may be as a



result of the loss of apprenticeship and graduate trainee roles to make Council finances more sustainable in 2023/24.

## Disability

As at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, 4.1% of employees reported having a disability. Figures 4 and 5 below compare this with ONS census data for the population of Surrey Heath. However, we cannot assume that those who don't report a disability don't have a disability, as there may be many reasons employees may choose not to disclose this and it is likely therefore (particularly given the workforce age profile) that disability is under-reported in our data.

There have been steps taken to try and improve this, however the data relating to disability remains unreliable.

<b>Disability Status</b>	<b>Surrey Heath, ONS (%)</b>	<b>Surrey Heath Borough Council (%)</b>
<b>Disability</b>	13.3%	4.1%
<b>No reported disability</b>	86.7%	95.9%

*Figure 4 - a table showing percentage of employees reporting a disability compared with the percentage from Census 2021*



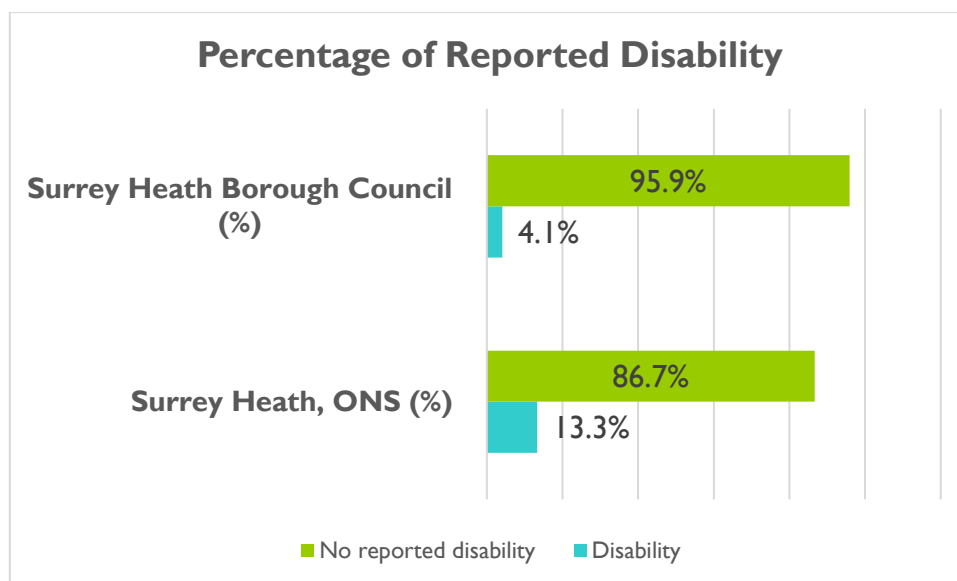


Figure 5 - a bar chart showing percentage of employees reporting a disability compared to Census 2021

## Sex

As at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, 65.8% of employees were female and 34.2% of employees were male. Overall there were 194 female employees and 101 male employees. This compares to the previous year when 64% of employees were female and 36% were male. Over the last three years, the sex split has remained relatively stable as shown in the graph below, and this is similar to trends seen at other local authorities.



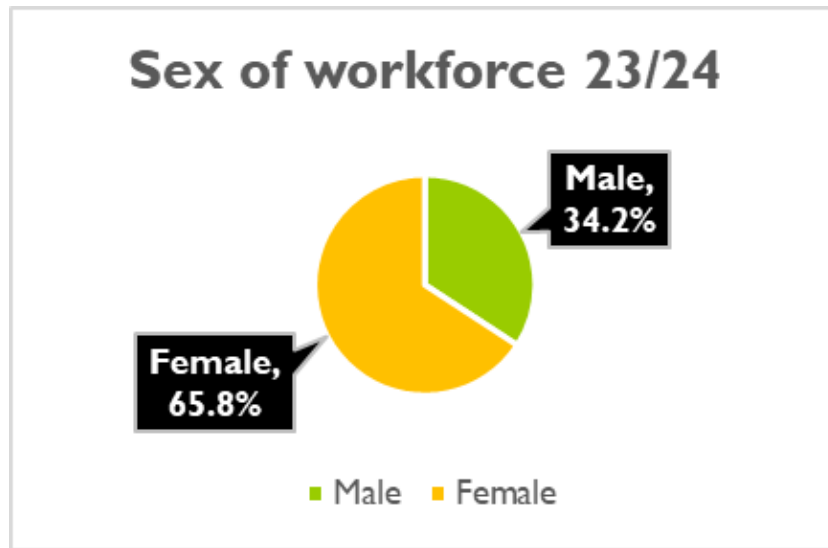


Figure 6 - a pie chart showing the percentage of male and female employees

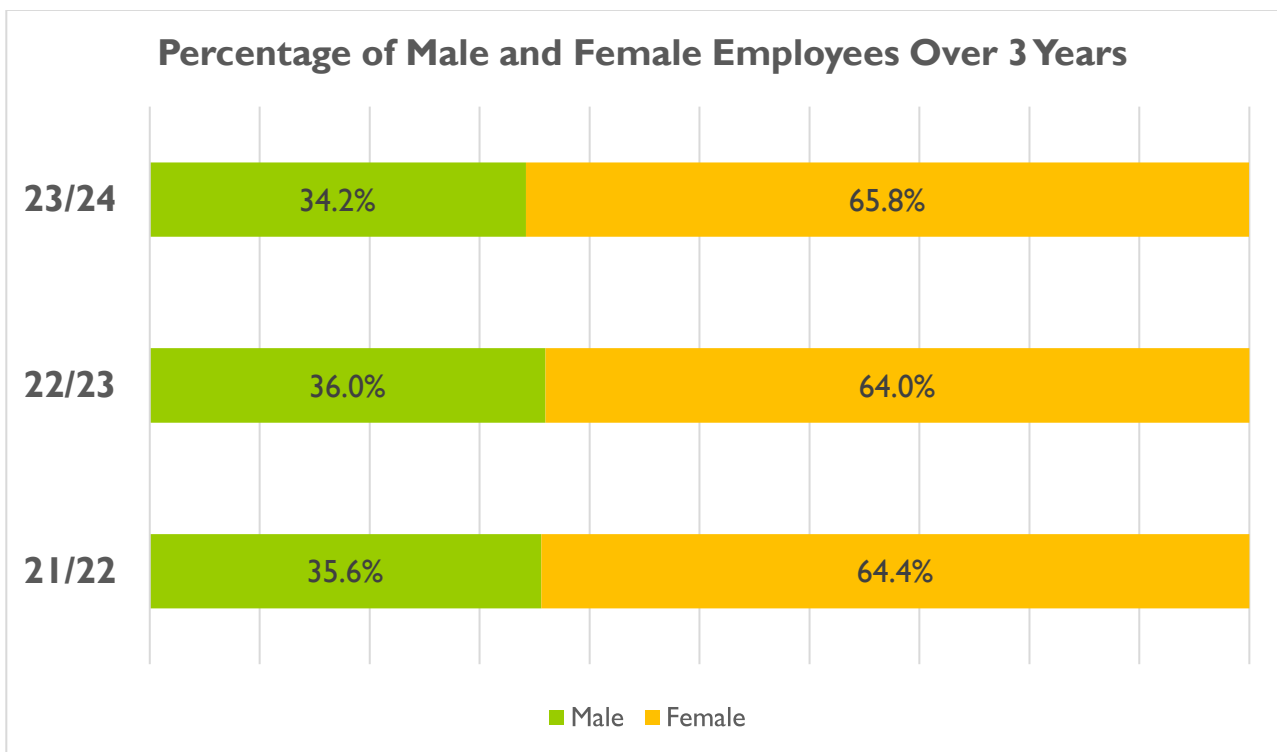


Figure 7 - a bar chart comparing percentages of male and female employees over 3 years

More than half of full-time employees are female (56.7%) and this increases significantly to 85.1% when looking at part time employees as shown in figures 8



and 9. This is similar to the figures from 2022/23, when more than half of full-time employees were female (55.8%) compared to male (44.2%) and when looking at part-time workers, 83.1% were female and 16.9% were male.

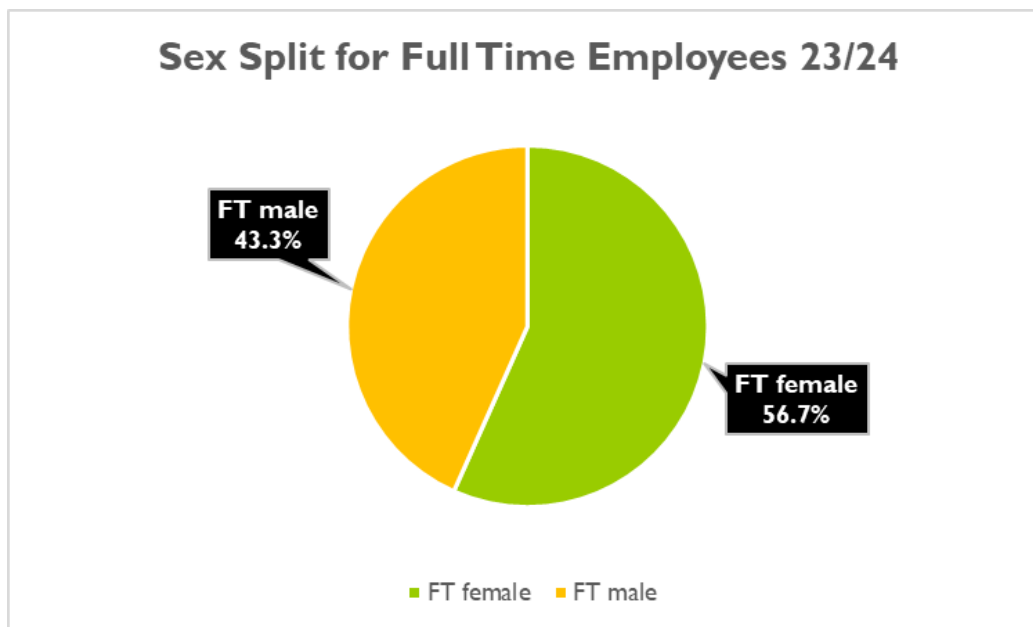


Figure 8 - a pie chart showing the percentage of male and female full time employees

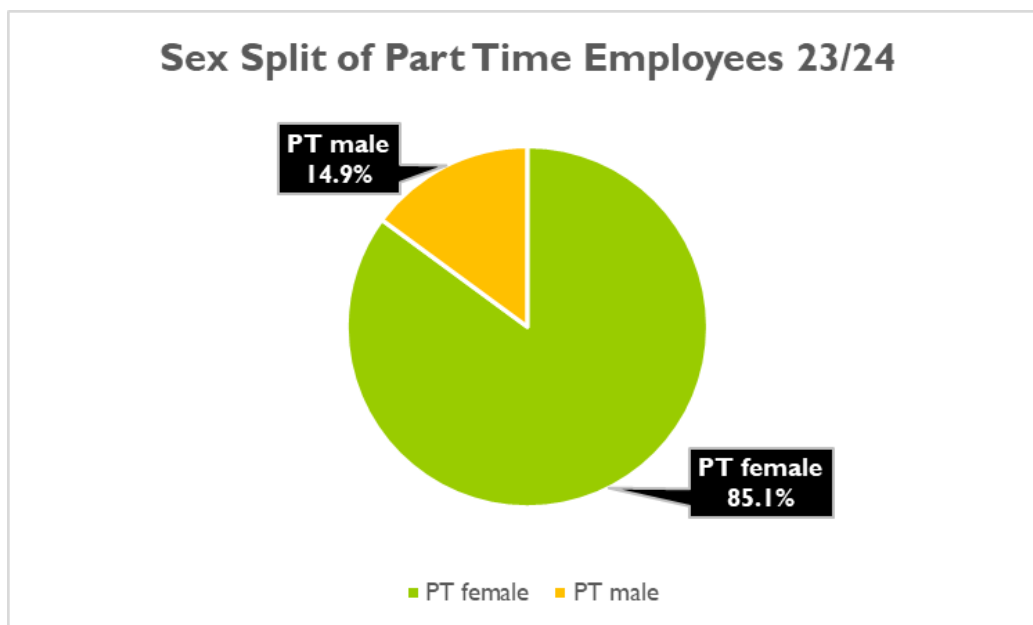


Figure 9 - a pie chart showing the percentage of male and female part time employees



## Gender Pay Gap

As at 31st March 2023, there was a mean gender pay gap in Surrey Heath Borough Council of 12.20% and a median of 17.33%. This compares to the previous year in which the mean gender pay gap was 13.66% and the median was 13.07%. The national gender pay gap, calculated as the median, as reported by the ONS for 2023 is 14.3%. The table below compares the gender pay gap in Surrey Heath with that of neighbouring Councils in Surrey and Hampshire.

Local Authority	Mean Pay Gap (%)	Median Pay Gap (%)
Surrey Heath	<a href="#">12.2%</a>	17.33%
Guildford	<a href="#">7%</a>	13%
Waverley	<a href="#">12.5%</a>	12.6%
Runnymede	<a href="#">4.7%</a>	0%
Rushmoor	<a href="#">12.7%</a>	9.5%
Woking	<a href="#">17.3%</a>	18.3%
Elmbridge	<a href="#">11.3%</a>	13.5%

*Figure 10 - a table comparing the mean and median gender pay gap of the Council with other local authorities in Surrey and Hampshire. Please note figures are taken from [gender-pay-gap.service.gov.uk](https://gender-pay-gap.service.gov.uk)*

Gender pay gap can be influenced by a number of factors at the highest and lowest paid levels in the organisation and by the number of roles they employ that traditionally focus on one sex over another. For example, Councils who retain their waste services inhouse tend to see a lower pay gender gap than those who do not.

## Gender Reassignment

Surrey Heath Borough Council do not collect data from the workforce related to gender reassignment and reporting on this may lead to individuals being identified



as a result. However, gender reassignment is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act (2010).

Following feedback from a staff survey about pronouns and uncertainty around gender, Surrey Heath Borough Council held a Lunch and Learn for staff with Blossom LGBT, and staff can access training courses on gender identity in the workplace. Internal communications around the use of pronouns in staff email signatures has also been shared with staff.

## Sexual Orientation

The sexual orientation of the workforce is reported below in comparison to the 2021 census data for Surrey Heath. Please note that a large proportion of employees chose not to complete this information and so the data cannot be reliably compared.

<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	<b>Surrey Heath, ONS (%)</b>	<b>Surrey Heath Borough Council (%)</b>	<b>Surrey Heath Borough Council (% of those who answered)</b>
<b>Heterosexual/straight</b>	91.89%	55.6%	93.7%
<b>Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or other</b>	2.06%	3.7%	6.3%
<b>Not answered</b>	6.05%	40.7%	

*Figure 11 – a table showing sexual orientation profile of employees compared with the Census 2021 data for Surrey Heath*

## Race/ethnicity

The ethnicity profile of Surrey Heath Borough Council employees as compared to Census 2021 data for Surrey Heath is displayed below in figure 12. 82.4% of the Council's workforce is white which compares to the Census 2021 in which 85% of



Surrey Heath identified as white. The ethnic profile of Surrey Heath Borough Council is very similar to that of Surrey Heath borough, as shown below.

Please note that 3.4% of Surrey Heath Borough Council workforce chose not to disclose their ethnic origin or did not complete this information.

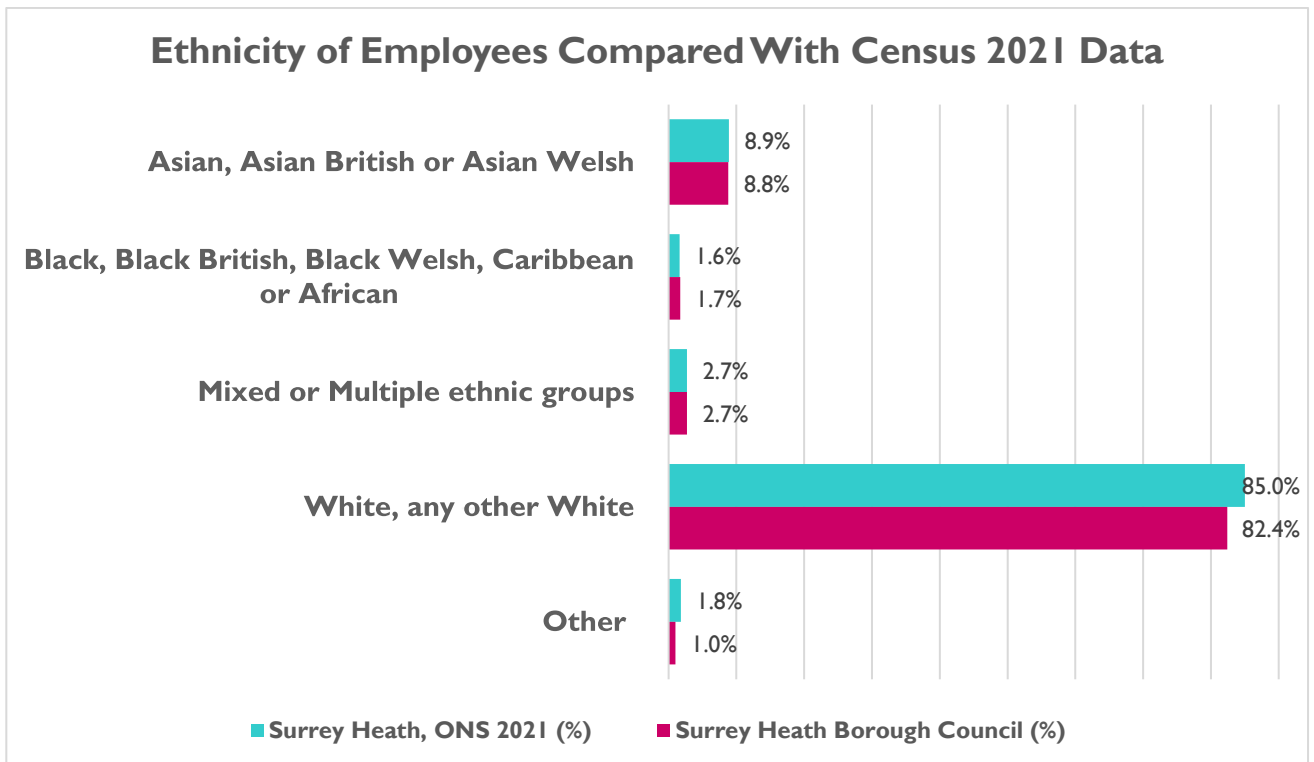


Figure 12 - a bar chart showing ethnic origin of employees compared with Census 2021 data for Surrey Heath

## Pregnancy and Maternity

Between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, 1.4% of employees took paternity leave and 1.7% of employees took maternity leave. Of these, 100% returned to work following this. The graph below shows trends in paternity and maternity leave over the last 3 years. In March 2023, Surrey Heath Borough Council's Maternity Pay Policy was improved which may have contributed to the 100% return to work rate.



Year	Paternity Leave (% of workforce)	Maternity Leave (% of workforce)	Adoption Leave	Total taking parental leave (%)	% returned to work
23/24	1.4%	1.7%	0	3.1%	100%
22/23	0%	1.4%	0	1.4%	100%
21/22	0.36%	3.27%	0	3.6%	90%

Figure 13 – a chart showing the percentages of paternity, maternity and adoption leave, total workforce taking parental leave return to work rate of these, over 3 years

The Council offers flexible working patterns which may have contributed to the 100% return to work rate of new parents over the last 2 years. 10.8% of the workforce work flexible patterns as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, defined by a flexible working application usually consisting of a compressed hours arrangement. Of this 10.8%, three quarters are female and one quarter are male. This compares to the previous year, when 10.1% of employees worked flexibly; 69% female, 31% male and 2021/22 when 8.6% worked flexibly; 65.2% female, 34.8% male.

## Religion or Belief

The table below shows religion/belief of Surrey Heath Borough Council's workforce in comparison to that of Surrey Heath Borough as reported in the Census 2021. A considerable number of employees either did not answer or chose 'prefer not to say' (38%) so this must be considered when comparing the data.

Religion/belief	Surrey Heath, ONS 2021 (%)	Surrey Heath Borough Council (%)	Surrey Heath Borough Council (% of those who answered)
No religion	36%	24.7%	39.9%



Religion/belief	Surrey Heath, ONS 2021 (%)	Surrey Heath Borough Council (%)	Surrey Heath Borough Council (% of those who answered)
Christian	50%	29.8%	48.1%
Muslim	3.1%	2.4%	3.8%
Other religion	3%	5.1%	8.2%
Not answered	5.7%	38%	

Figure 14 – a table showing religion of employees as a percentage compared with the Census 2021 data for Surrey Heath

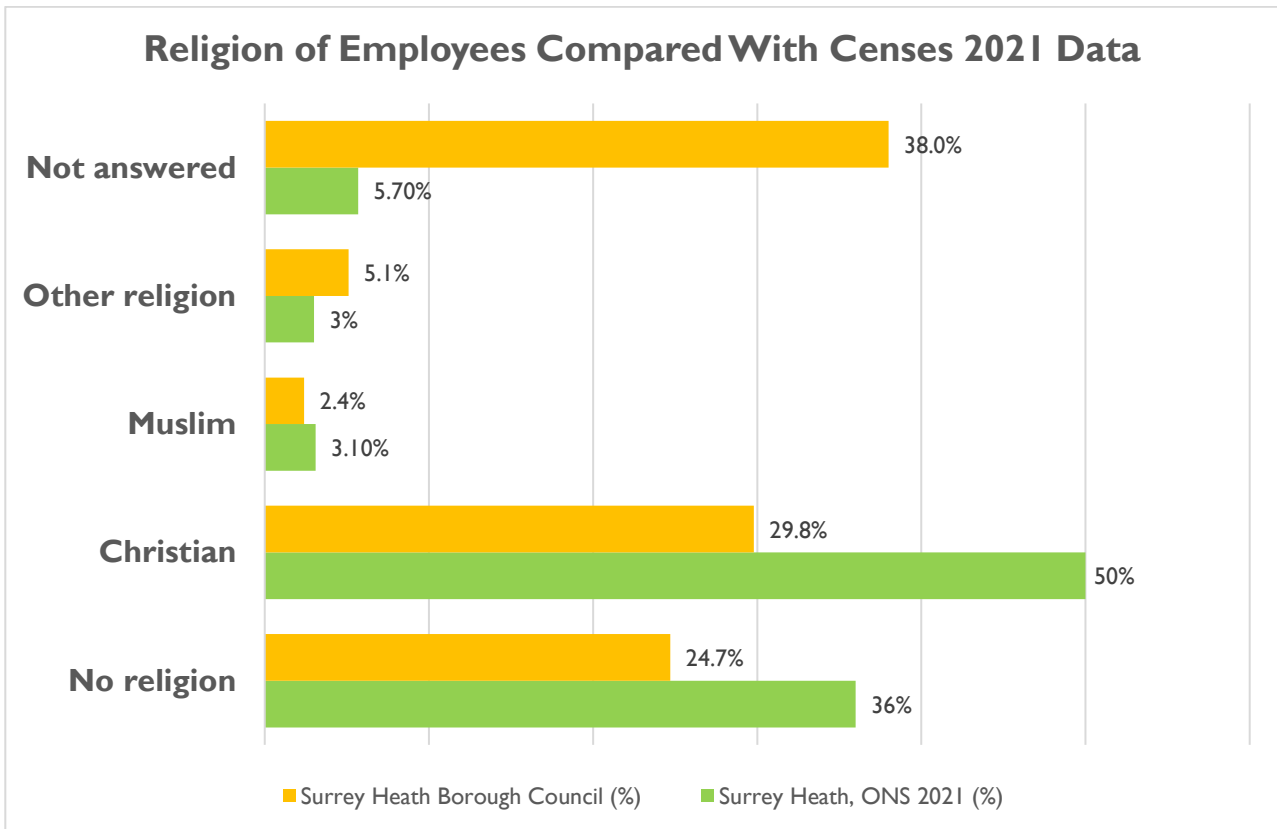


Figure 15 – a bar chart showing religions of employees as a percentage, compared with the Census 2021 data for Surrey Heath



## Sickness

Between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, 1491 days were lost due to staff sickness. The top reason for sickness during this period was anxiety/stress/depression. As seen in figure 16 below, the number of days lost to sickness is the lowest for 3 years, however the most common reason for sickness remains anxiety/stress/depression for the second consecutive year.



Figure 16 – figure showing number of days lost to sickness over 3 years

Surrey Heath Borough Council committed to training 15 members of staff to become certified Mental Health First Aiders and this has been achieved. There is also a dedicated health and wellbeing page on the employee intranet which offers support and signposts to staff who may require it, including how to access the Employee Assistance Programme which offers a 24 hour counselling and advice service free of charge to employees.

## Carers

Surrey Heath Borough Council do not collect data on whether employees are carers, however it is known that caring responsibilities are likely to affect a proportion of the workforce. The introduction of a new Carers Policy in 2024, and subsequently paid carers leave, ensures that those employees with caring responsibilities are supported.



## Staff recruitment and turnover

### Recruitment

In 2023/24, there were 52 new starters (59.6% female, 40.4% male). Of a total of 64 posts advertised in 2023/24, the rate of successfully filling the post was 81.3% and of these, 92% were recruited to in the first campaign, and 8% were successful in the second campaign. Figure 17 below compares the number of new starters over the last 3 years.

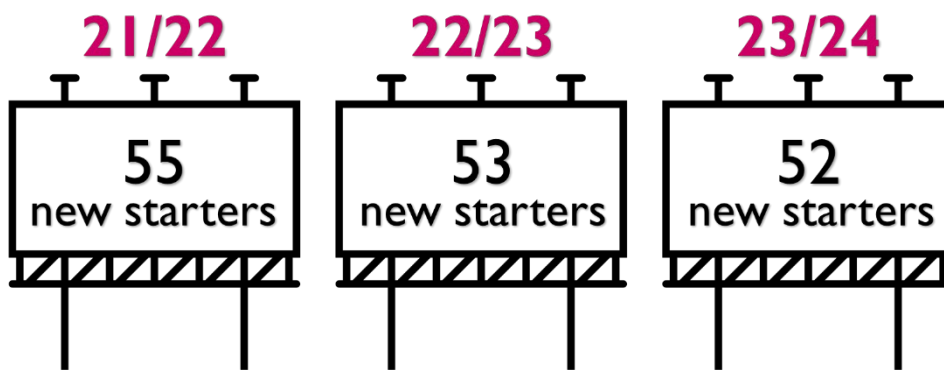


Figure 17 - graphic showing the number of new starters for 3 years

In 2022/23, there were 53 new starters. Of these new starters there was a relatively even split of male (49.1%) and female (50.9%). In 2021/22, there were 55 new starters. Of these new starters, 61.8% were female and 38.2% were male.



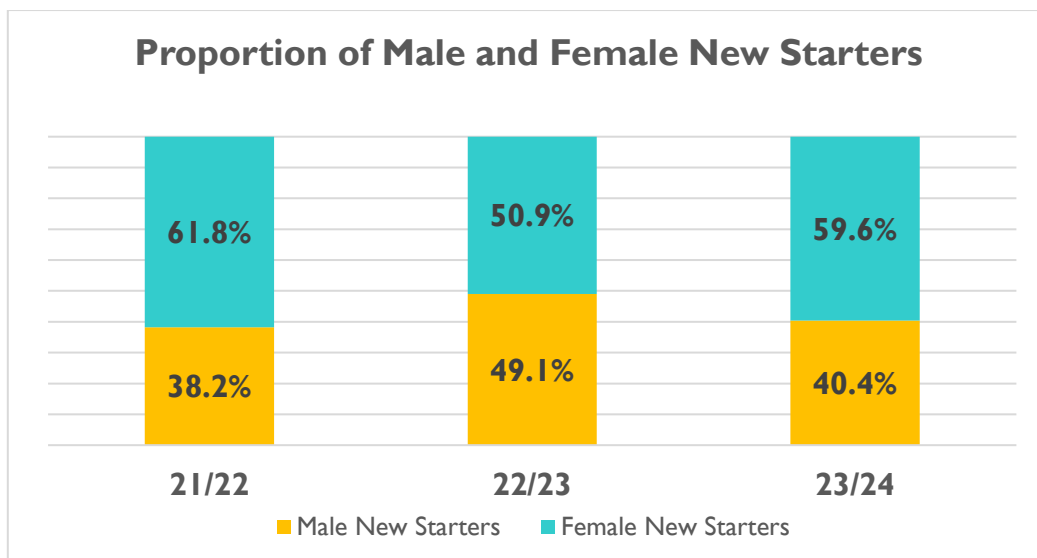


Figure 18 - a chart showing the percentage of male and female new starters over 3 years

The Council has strengthened policies and benefits for staff to try to attract younger employees. This has included introducing Leave for Infertility and Miscarriage as well as Paid Dependents Leave in the case of a family emergency, as well as offering flexible working. However, it is too early to draw conclusions from the introduction of these policies in terms of their success in attracting staff.

### Turnover

Between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, there were 48 leavers from the Council. 38 of these were for voluntary reasons (resignation or retirement) and 10 were non-voluntary.

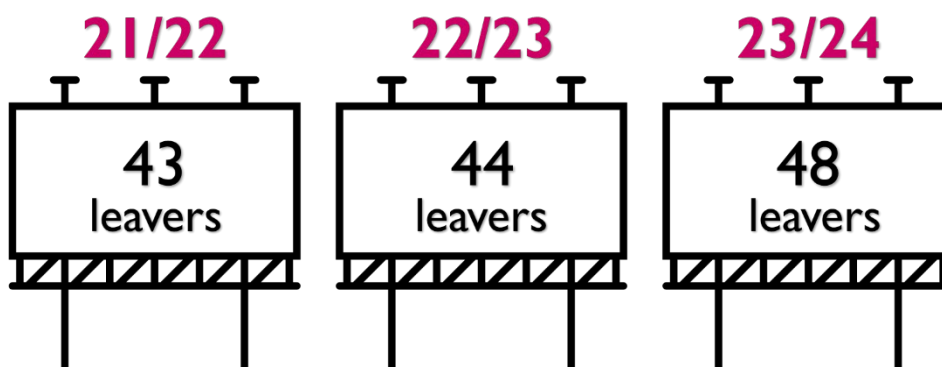


Figure 19 - graphic showing the number of leavers over 3 years



Over half of those who left (58.3%) were grade 4-6. This is expected as these grades are the most likely to be seeking career advancement and seeking different employment experiences to build their career pathway. Almost two thirds of the workforce were grades 4-6 at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024.

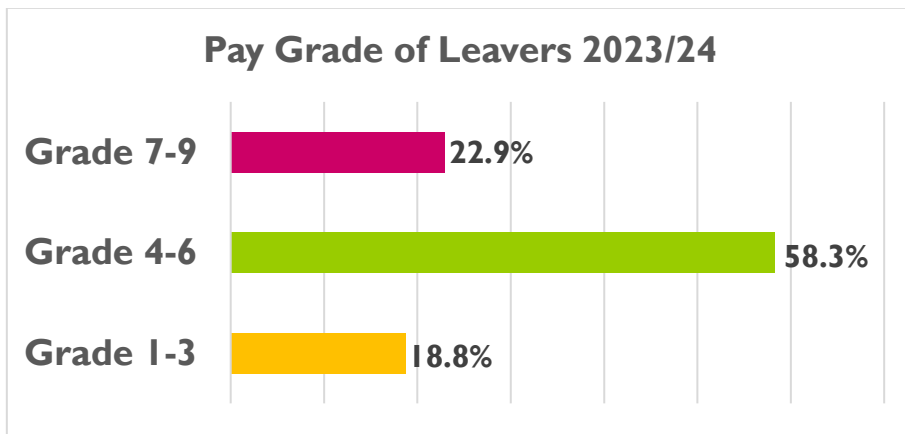


Figure 20 – a bar chart showing the percentage of leavers by pay grade in 2023/24

The average length of service of leavers was 4 years 7 months (figure 22) and the average length of service of leavers has reduced for three consecutive years. When considering only those who voluntarily resigned (not retired) the average length of service reduces further to 4 years. 69% of all leavers worked at the Council for between 1 month and 5 years and only 14% served 10+ years (figure 21). Percentage of staff turnover was 16.52% and percentage of voluntary staff turnover was 13.08%.



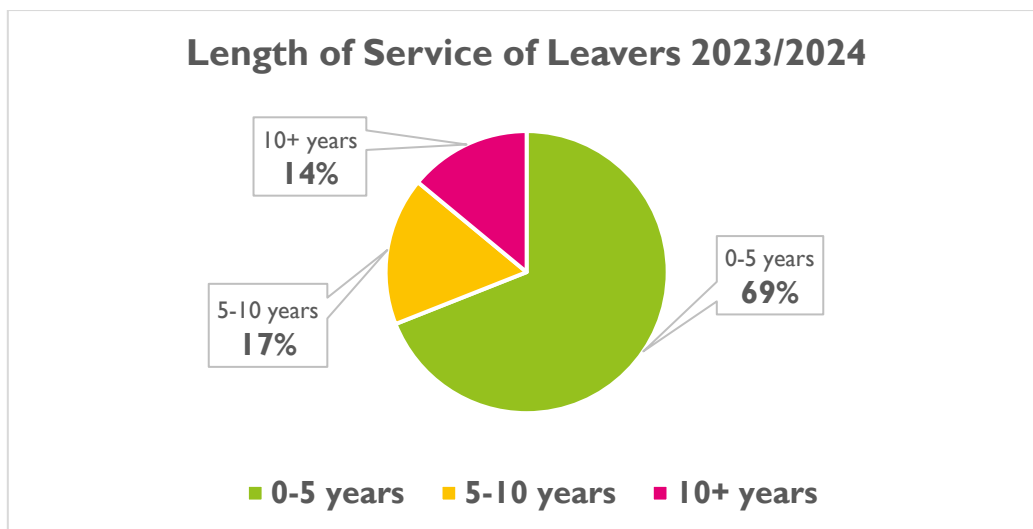


Figure 21 - a pie chart showing the length of service of leavers

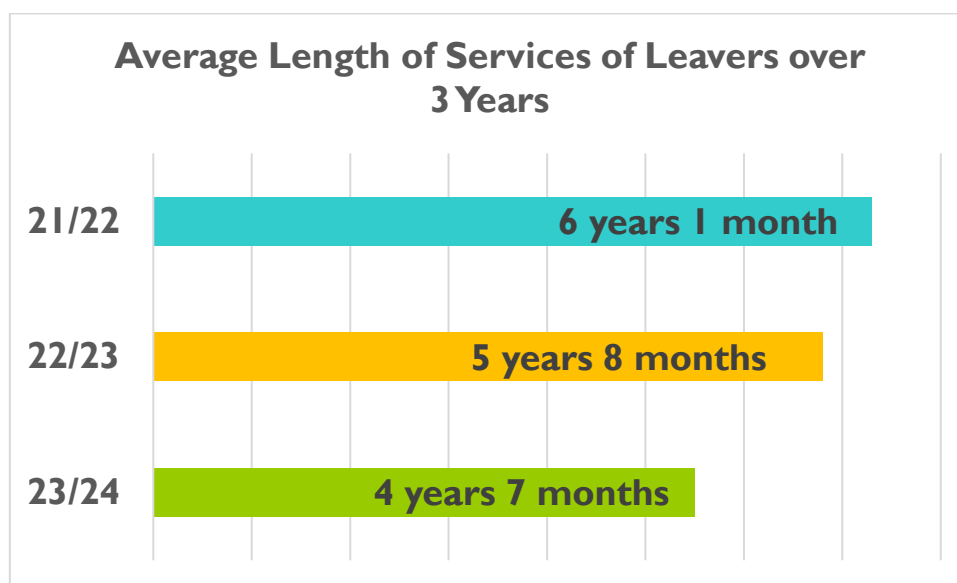


Figure 22 - a bar chart showing the average length of service of leavers over 3 years

The turnover rate for those with less than 5 years of service may reflect a more volatile job market and greater skills growth and options for workers following the pandemic but it does indicate a possible area for focus in the People Strategy.



## Conclusion

The Workforce Profile helps the Council to understand the composition of its workforce in relation to protected characteristics and shows the Council's commitment to the general duty, as per the Equality Act (2010). The data presented can be examined over time to identify trends and to identify areas in which additional work and consideration is required in order to meet the responsibilities of the duty. It can act as an evidential base when decisions are made within the Council.

This Workforce Profile suggests some areas in which some additional work may need to be targeted. Firstly, it suggests that Surrey Heath Borough Council has an ageing workforce. While attempts have been made to try to attract younger workers, the average age of the workforce has increased for 3 consecutive years, and the average age of new starters also appears to be increasing. The Council has acknowledged this through ensuring there are policies and support in place that are appropriate for its employees, for example the Menopause policy and offering flexible working. When considering attraction within the People Strategy and organisational design, this is a finding that needs to be taken into consideration.

Secondly, while the mean gender pay gap has reduced since the previous year, the median gender pay gap has increased. The ONS national average gender pay gap is calculated as a median figure, and therefore the Council's median gender pay gap is actually larger than this average. Surrey Heath Borough Council is committed to equal opportunities of all employees and is continually looking to improve this. The Council are offering a fully funded Women in Leadership development programme to support women in the Council in their career progression and to step in to senior leadership roles.

Thirdly, the data related to staff turnover is of interest. There is a high rate of turnover of staff in grades 4-6 (58.3%) and average length of service of leavers has reduced for three consecutive years to an average of 4 years 7 months for



2023/24. This suggests that there may be an issue with retention in particular areas which may require further exploration.

