



SURREY HEATH BOROUGH COUNCIL

WORKFORCE PROFILE

2024/25



September 2025

Surrey Heath Borough Council
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Overview

The Workforce Profile presents data on Surrey Heath Borough Council's workforce between the period of 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025. 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 4 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 31st March 2025, there were 281 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 31st March 2025, the mean age of employees was 46 years 8 months, a slight increase from the previous year. Figure 1 shows the average age of employees over the last 4 years.



Year	Mean Age (years & months)
2024/2025	46 years 8 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 four years

The distribution of age by bracket is shown below in figure 2. A significant proportion of the workforce (69%) are aged 41 and over, with the most populous bracket being 51-60 with 29.9% of employees falling within it. The number of employees under 30 has decreased, in 2023/2024 this was 13.9% and in 2024/2025 it dropped to 11.4%.

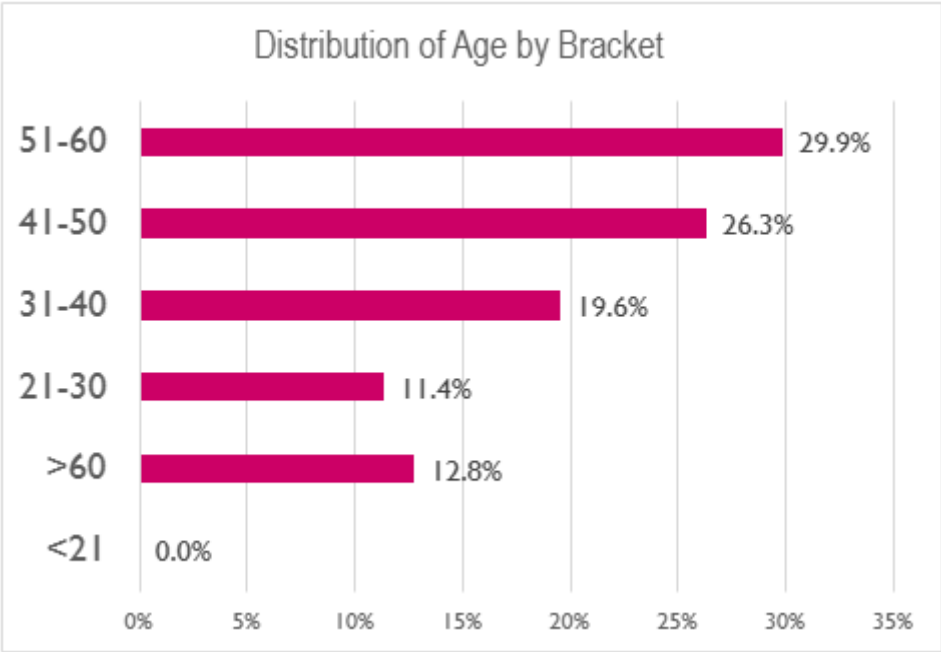


Figure 2 - a bar chart showing distribution of age of employee by age bracket



Figure 3 below shows the proportion of male and female employees within each age bracket.

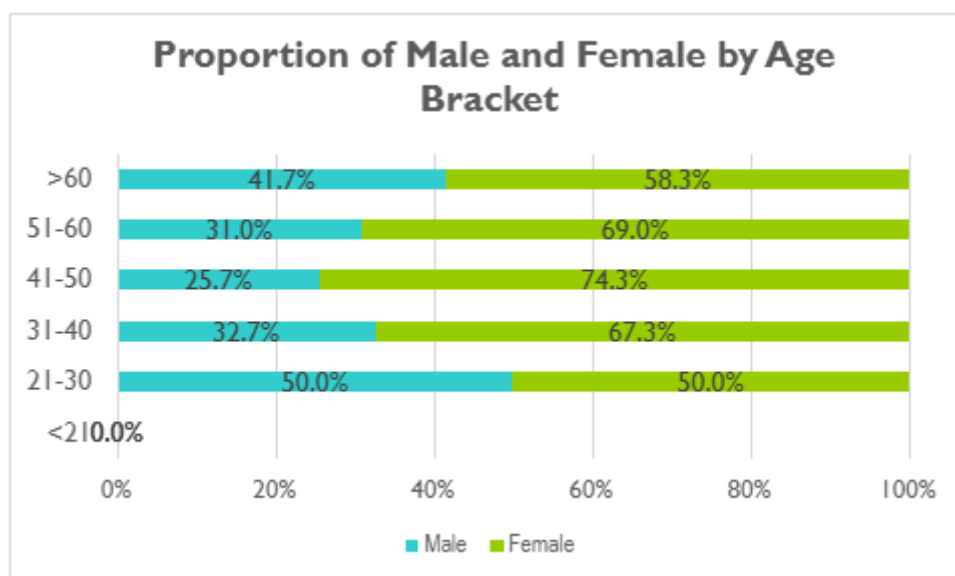


Figure 3 - a bar chart showing the proportion of male and female employees in each age bracket

Over two thirds of employees within the most populous age bracket are female while almost three quarters (73%) of employees aged 41-50 are female. 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 (67%). 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 41.6. Similar to 43 years 4 months the previous year, 2022/23 (40 years 8 months) and 2021/22 (40 years 7 months).

Disability

As at 31st March 2025, 2.8% 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. The 2.8% of people reporting a disability is less than at 31st March 2024 when 4.1% of employees reported a disability.

Disability Status	Surrey Heath, ONS (%)	Surrey Heath Borough Council (%)
Disability	13.3%	2.8%
No reported disability	86.7%	97.2%

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



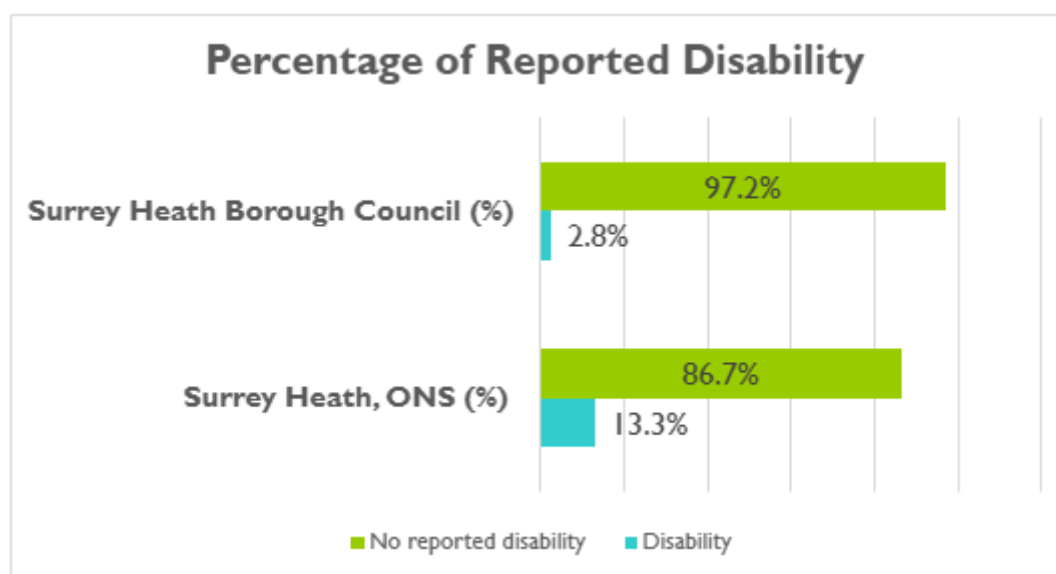


Figure 5 - a bar chart showing percentage of employees reporting a disability compared to Census 2021

Sex

As at 31st March 2025 two thirds of the workforce is female (66.5%) and one third (33.5%) male. This shows a slight increase in female workers from the previous year. Overall there were 187 female employees and 78 male employees. The figures for the previous four years are very similar so the sex split has remained stable. Similar trends are seen at other local authorities.



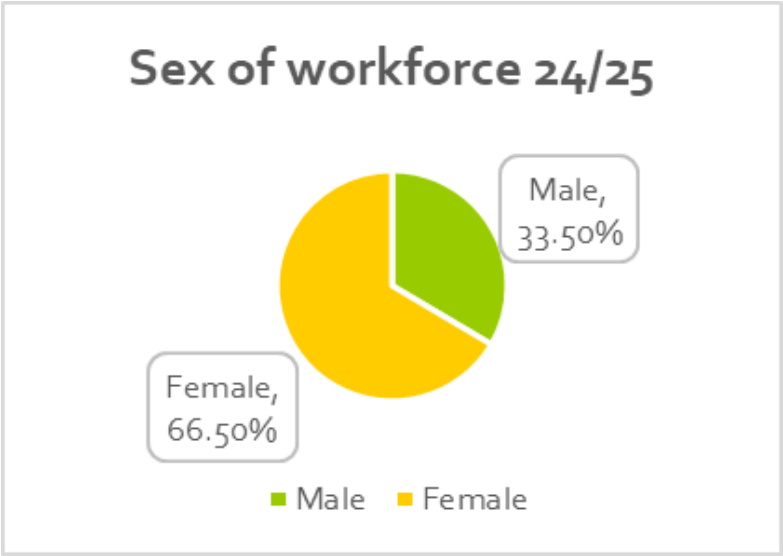


Figure 6 - a pie chart showing the percentage of male and female employees

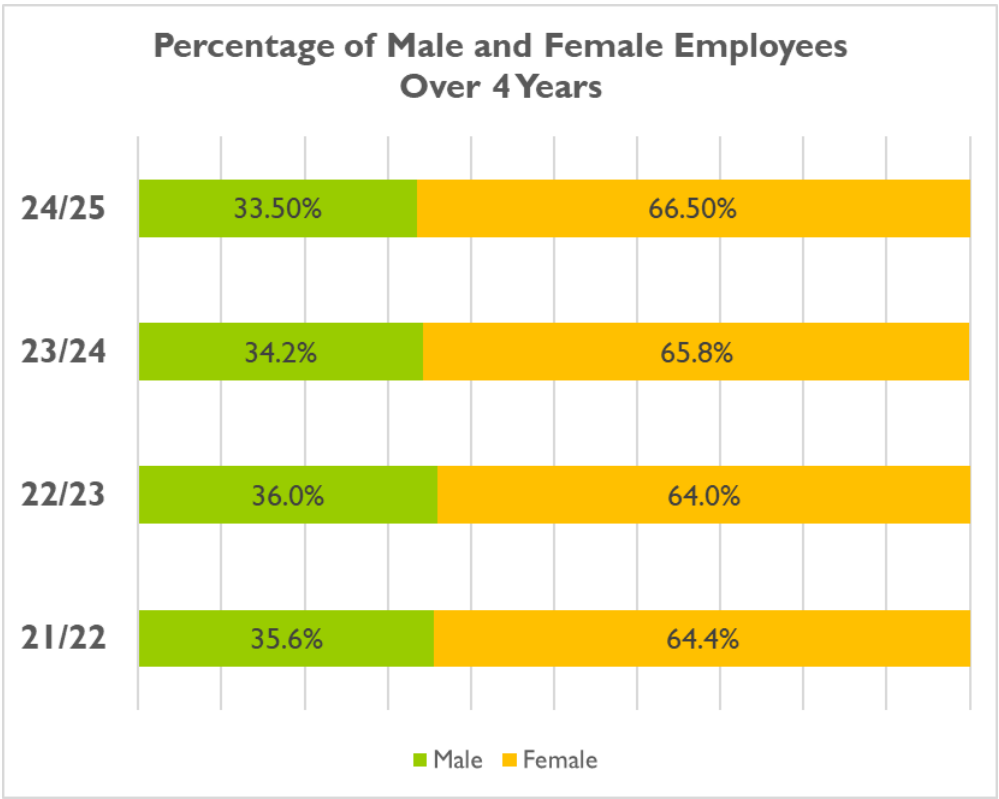


Figure 7 - a bar chart comparing percentages of male and female employees over 4 years



More than half of full-time employees are female (57.2%) and this increases significantly to 88.1% when looking at part-time employees as shown in figures 8 and 9. This is similar to the figures from previous years when more than half of full-time employees were female. Overall, the number of part-time and full-time females is increasing.

Year	Full time Male	Full Time Female	Part Time Male	Part Time Female
2024/2025	42.8%	57.2%	11.9%	88.1%
2023/2024	43.3%	56.7%	14.9%	85.1%
2022/2023	44.2%	55.8%	16.9%	83.1%

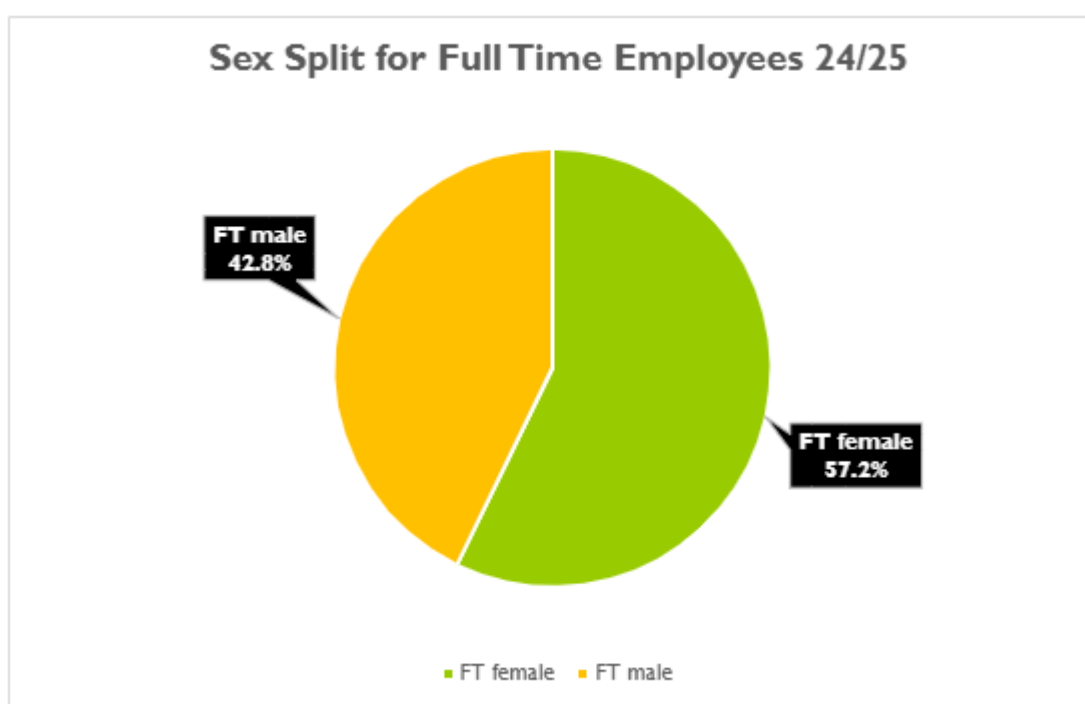


Figure 8 - a pie chart showing the percentage of male and female full time employees



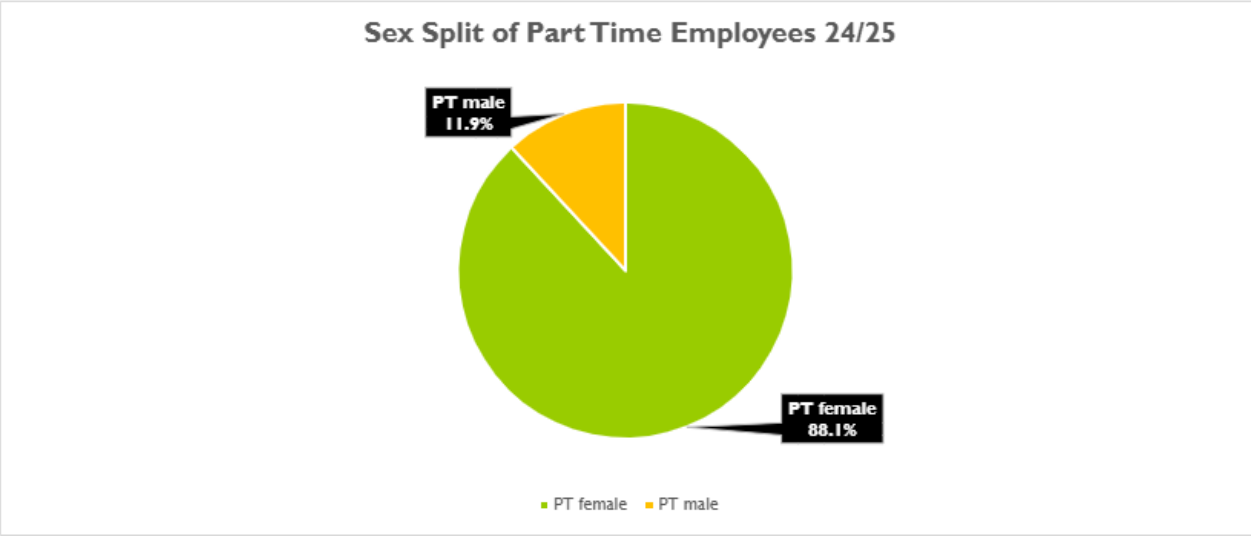


Figure 9 - a pie chart showing the percentage of male and female part time employees

Gender Pay Gap

As at 31st March 2024, there was a mean gender pay gap in Surrey Heath Borough Council of 8.7% and a median of 11.8%. In the previous year the mean score was 12.20% and a median of 17.33%. The downward trend is positive between the years in the below table.

Surrey Heath	Mean Pay Gap (%)	Median Pay Gap (%)
31 st March 2024	8.7%	11.8%
31 st March 2023	12.20%	17.33%
31 st March 2022	13.66%	13.07%

The national gender pay gap, calculated as the median, as reported by the ONS for 2024 is 13.1%. 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	<u>8.7%</u>	11.8%
Guildford	<u>-9.4%</u>	-9.5%
Waverley	<u>7%</u>	12.3%
Runnymede	<u>3.1%</u>	4.3%
Rushmoor	<u>12.8%</u>	9.8%
Woking	<u>17.9%</u>	18.6%
Elmbridge	<u>13.1%</u>	16.4%

Gender pay gap can be influenced by a number of factors at the highest and lowest

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

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).

On 16 April 2025, the UK Supreme Court reached a unanimous decision, in the case of *For Women Scotland Ltd v The Scottish Ministers [2025] USCK 16*, that the terms "man", "woman" and "sex" in the Equality Act 2010 refer to a biological man, a biological woman and biological sex, and therefore that the legal definitions of "man" and "woman" do not include transgender men and transgender women.

This has created considerable controversy and division between groups supporting different protected characteristics and has been the subject of several Freedom of Information requests to the Council requesting information about the Council's response to the ruling. In line with many other Councils, we are awaiting



the updated guidance from the Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) before making any policy changes, however we have taken steps to ensure that the rights of all staff are protected and fairly represented.

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.

Sexual Orientation	Surrey Heath, ONS (%)	Surrey Heath Borough Council (%)	Surrey Heath Borough Council (% of those who answered)
Heterosexual/straight	91.89%	56.0%	92.7%
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or other	2.06%	4.4%	7.3%
Not answered	6.05%	39.6%	

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. It also compares data from the year ending 1st April 2024 to 1st April 2025. 90.2% of the Council's workforce is white which compares to the Census 2021 in which 85% of Surrey Heath identified as white and April 2024 where 82.4% of the workforce is white. The ethnic profile of Surrey Heath Borough Council is less than that of Surrey Heath borough, as shown below.



Please note that a large proportion of the Surrey Heath Borough Council workforce chose not to disclose their ethnic origin or did not complete this information.

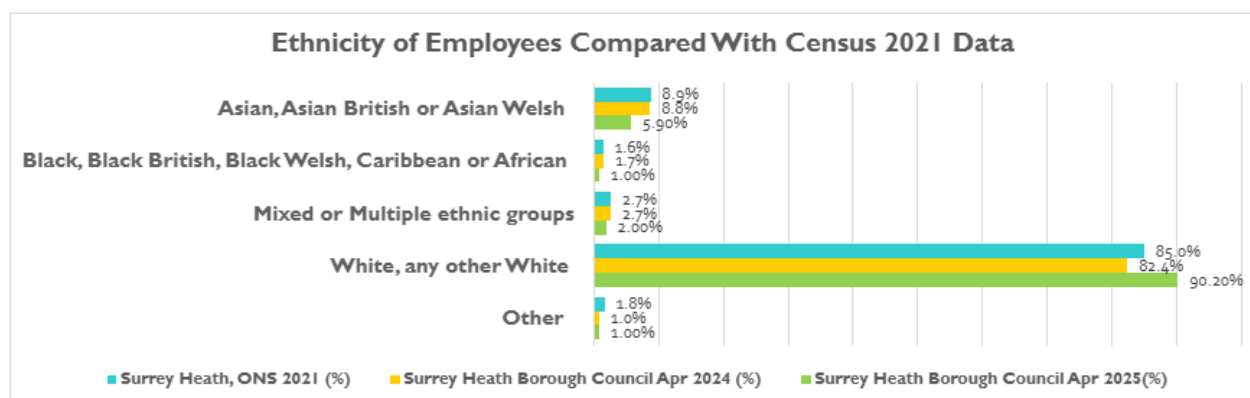


Figure 12 - a bar chart showing ethnic origin of employees in April 2024 to April 2025 compared with Census 2021 data for Surrey Heath

Pregnancy and Maternity

Between 1st April 2024 and 31st March 2025, 0.4% of employees took paternity leave and 0.7% of employees took maternity leave. The employees are still on maternity leave so we are unable to confirm the % returned to work. The graph below shows trends in paternity and maternity leave over the last 4 years.

Year	Paternity Leave (% of workforce)	Maternity Leave (% of workforce)	Adoption Leave	Total taking parental leave (%)	% returned to work
24/25	0.4%	0.7%	0	1.1%	TBC
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 4 years

The Council offers flexible working patterns which may have contributed to the 100% return to work rate of new parents between 2021 and 2024.

Flexible Working

The below table shows flexible working patterns over the past 3 years.

Year	% of Workforce using flexible patterns	Male % of Workforce using flexible patterns	Female % of Workforce using flexible patterns
24/25	11.2%	21.4%	78.6%
23/24	10.8%	25%	75%
22/23	10.1%	31%	69%

Figure 14 – a chart showing the percentages of the workforce working flexible patterns over the last three years and the percentages of male and females working these patterns.

11.2% of the workforce work flexible patterns as at 31st March 2025, defined by a flexible working application usually consisting of a compressed hours arrangement. The trend of people working flexible has increased every year it has been offered. Of this 11.2%, over three quarters are female and less than one quarter are 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 (89.7%) have not entered their religion 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)
Prefer not to say	36%	2.1%	20.7%
Christian	50%	4.3%	41.4%
Muslim	3.1%	0.4%	3.4%
Other religion	3%	0%	0%
Not answered	5.7%	89.7%	-
None		3.5	34.5

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

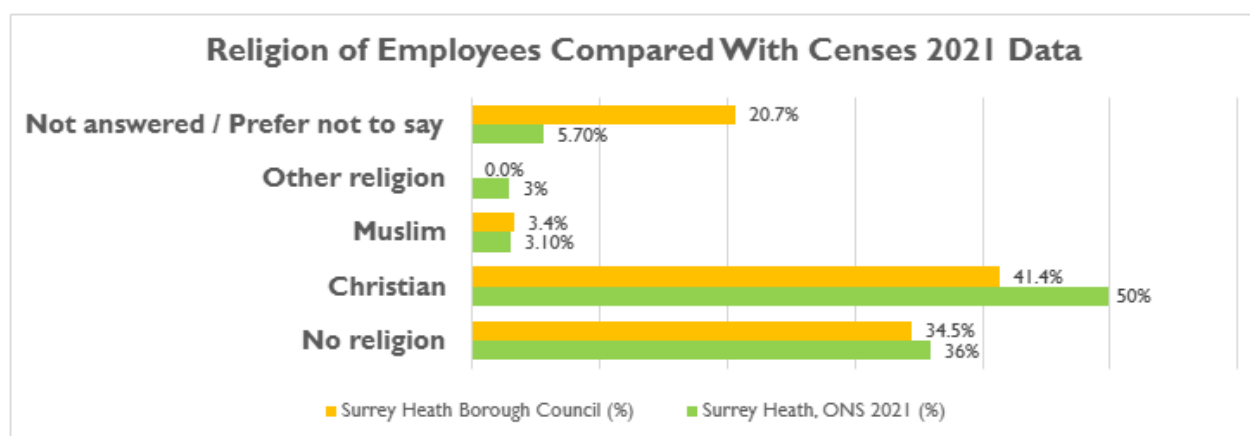


Figure 15 – a bar chart showing religions of employees as a percentage of those who answered, compared with the Census 2021 data for Surrey Heath

Sickness

Between 1st April 2024 and 31st March 2025, 1391 days were lost due to staff sickness. The top reason for sickness during this period was chest and lung illnesses, a change from anxiety/stress/depression in the previous two years. As



seen in figure 17 below, the number of days lost to sickness is the lowest for 4 years.

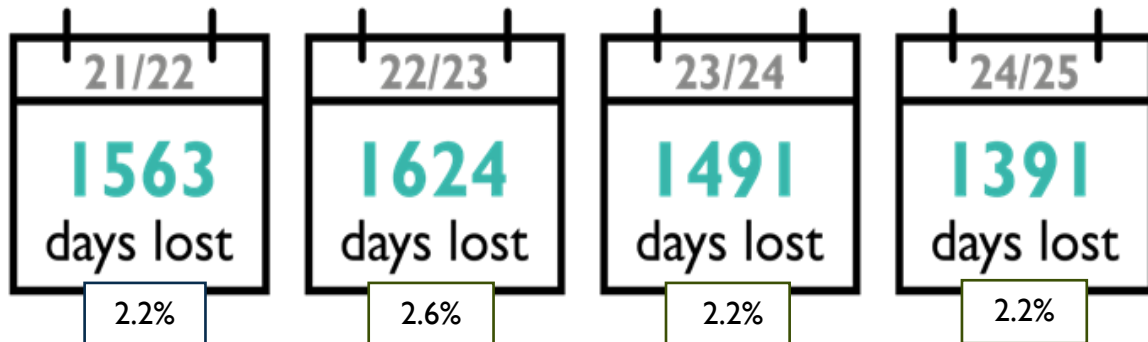


Figure 16 – figure showing number of days lost to sickness over 4 years

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 2024/25, there were 28 new starters (64.3% female, 35.7% male). Of a total of 37 posts advertised in 2024/25, the rate of successfully filling the post was 74.0% compared to 81.3% last year. This difference is mainly due to unsuccessfully trying to fill two vacancies. Other local authorities have also found it difficult to recruit to these posts. 67.6% were recruited to in the first campaign. Figure 18 below compares the number of new starters over the last 4 years.

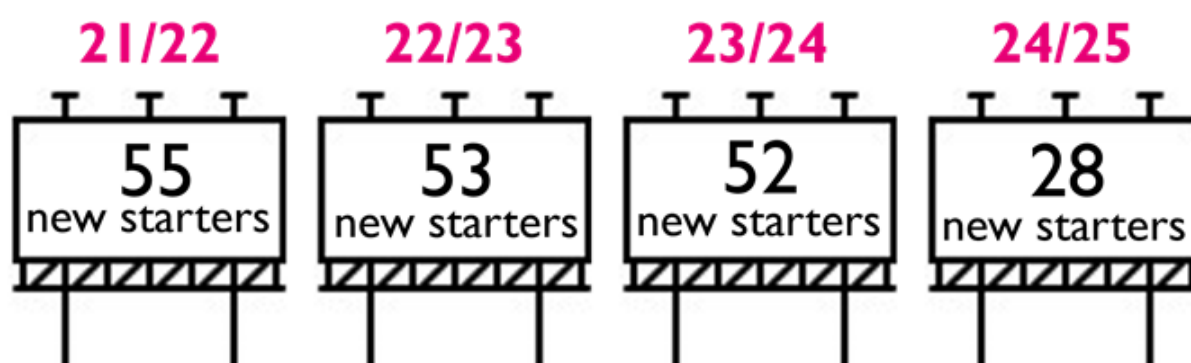


Figure 18 - graphic showing the number of new starters since 2021/22

The number of new starters on 2024/2025 is lower than in previous years. This is predominantly due to the 'choose to leave' project whereby, to manage the financial sustainability of the Council, vacancies have been held to promote savings, and roles and work redesigned to reduce demand and streamline teams. This has seen a reduction in the posts held and reduced recruitment. We have also focussed on the promotion of internal talent to bridge critical business delivery gaps created by resignations and retirements.

In 2024/2025 35.7% of new starters were male and 64.3% female. 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. The amount of female new starters is increasing.



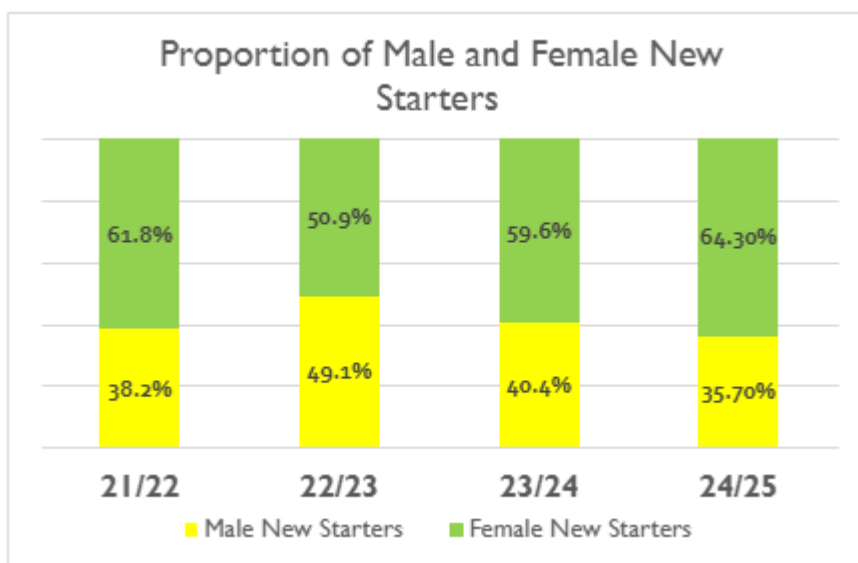


Figure 19 - a chart showing the percentage of male and female new starters over 4 years

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. There are also several staff taking unpaid parental leave. It is too early to draw conclusions from the introduction of these policies in terms of their success in attracting staff.

Turnover

Between 1st April 2024 and 31st March 2025, there were 68 leavers from the Council. 44 of these were for unplanned reasons (resignation or retirement) and 24 were planned turnover (for example the end of fixed term contracts or redundancies/TUPE transfers). This compares with 2024/25 in which there were 38 unplanned leavers and 10 planned leavers. The difference in planned leavers relates to 10 staff transferred as part of a TUPE transfer agreed with Surrey County Council and the termination by Surrey County Council of funding for the



Family Support Service.

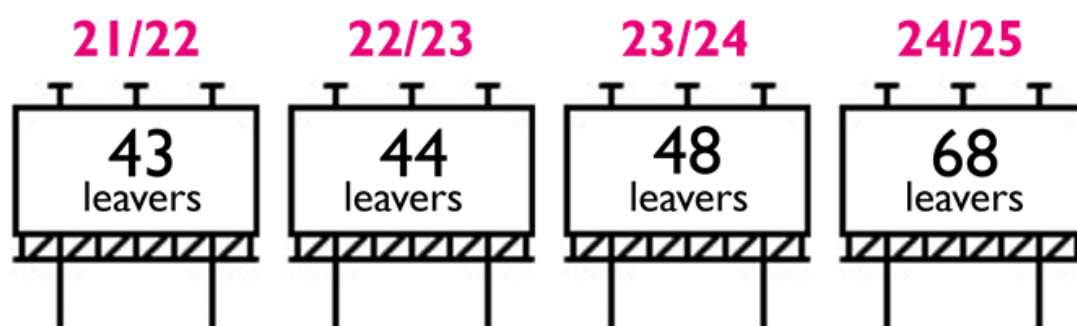


Figure 20 - graphic showing the number of leavers over 3 years

Nearly two thirds of those who left (60.3%) 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.

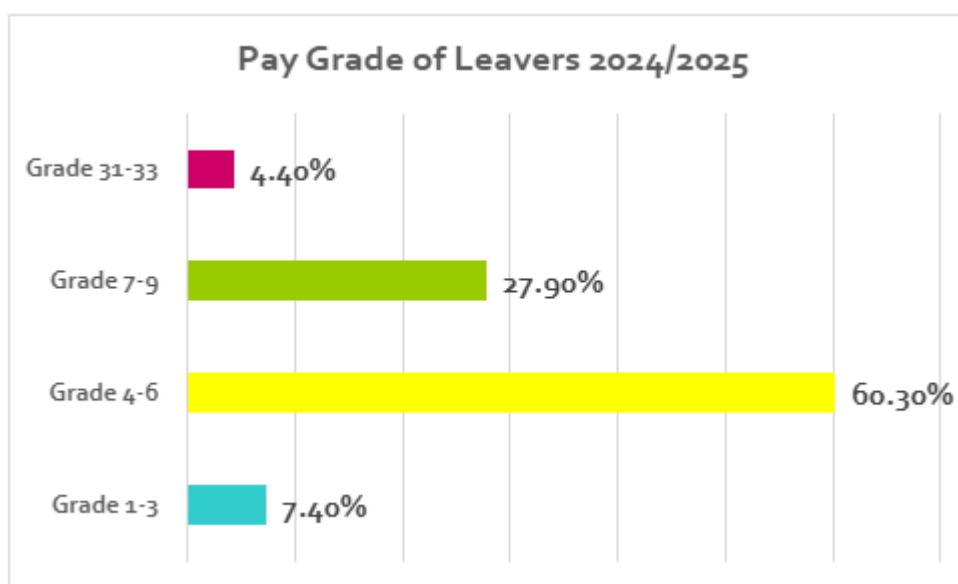


Figure 21 – a bar chart showing the percentage of leavers by pay grade in 2024/25

The average length of service of leavers was 4 years 6 months (figure 23) and the average length of service of leavers has been declining for four consecutive years. When considering only those who resigned (not retired) the average length of



service has reduced to 2 years 9months. This is a significant drop from 4% last year. 70.6% of all leavers worked at the Council for between 1 month and 5 years. This indicates that employees often leave relatively early in their careers. Only 8.8% served 10+ years (figure 22). Percentage of staff turnover was 24.19% and percentage of voluntary staff turnover was 8.54%.



Figure 22 - a pie chart showing the length of service of leavers

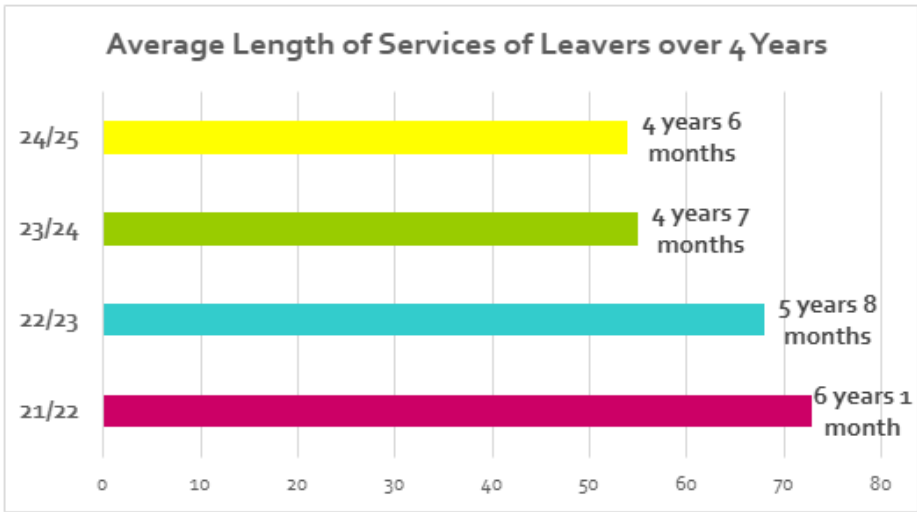


Figure 23 - a bar chart showing the average length of service of leavers over 4 years



The turnover rate for those with less than 5 years of service may reflect a more volatile job market in 2024/25 (this has significantly slowed in 2025/26) and/or that the culture of working in a Local Authority may be difficult to adapt to. It remains an active area of focus for the People Strategy as the cost of recruitment is estimated in the region of £2,500 per post. To respond to this and achieve higher levels of business intelligence, more detailed exit interviews have been introduced and these are reflected in the refreshed People Strategy for 2026/27.

In 2024 due to the need to promote financial sustainability within the Council, the pay award could not reflect the cost-of-living crisis (it was set at 1% against a significant rate of inflation). This will have prompted a higher-than-average turnover, particularly amongst workers earlier in their careers with lower levels of service.

Local government reorganisations and potential impact on workers through potential job transfers and changes in role may make workers feel uncertain and increase the amount of people leaving. To respond to this, the Council have provided employees with learning opportunities to maximise change resilience and career development as well as promoting a campaign of proactive communications based on the premise that 'staff know first'.

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 4 consecutive years. 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, the data related to staff turnover is of interest. There is a high rate of turnover of staff in grades 4-6 (60.3%) and average length of service of leavers has reduced for four consecutive years to an average of 4 years 6 months for 2024/25. This suggests that there may be an issue with retention in particular areas which may require further exploration. The uncertainty from employees regarding local government reorganisation is likely to contribute towards these figures.

Both of these conclusions are reflected in the refreshed People Strategy and associated action plan.

