



Workforce Report

1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026

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Introduction

Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (the Public Sector Equality Duty) and the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017, Medway Council is required to publish workforce equality information to demonstrate compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty. This includes the publication of workforce equality information and employee pay data, which together form a key component of our statutory responsibilities.

Medway Council is committed to ensuring that equality considerations are embedded in every aspect of our work. As a local authority, we must:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;
- foster good relations across all protected groups.

In accordance with our duties, we publish equality information annually and set measurable equality objectives at least every four years. These commitments are set out in our Equality Policy, Equality Objectives, and our Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy 2023–2028.

Medway Council is proud of the diversity of its workforce. Our Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy outlines our ambition to create a fair and inclusive organisation where all employees feel represented, valued, and able to thrive. It expresses our vision for Medway to be a place “where everyone, employees and community, have equal access to opportunities and services, and are included and represented in decisions that affect them.”

Our values of Collaborative, Ambitious for Medway, Trusted, Respectful, Caring, and Proud to be Medway—guide how we work together and highlight the importance we place on valuing Medway’s diversity, heritage and people.

‘Medway is a diverse and vibrant place, and we want our workforce to reflect the richness of our community. We are committed to fostering an inclusive workplace where colleagues feel welcomed, respected and able to contribute fully, regardless of their background or personal circumstances. By embracing diversity and ensuring everyone feels a sense of belonging, we strengthen our organisation and the services we deliver. Our goal is to create an environment where staff feel safe to speak up and are listened to, where they are valued for who they are, and where they can be themselves every day.’

This report provides an overview of workforce composition, recruitment, retention, turnover and attendance trends, supporting the Council's ongoing commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. It also enables the Council to monitor workforce representation, identify emerging workforce trends and assess progress against its equality objectives.

Workforce Monitoring and Equalities Data

Medway Council collects, monitors, and publishes workforce equality data to help us understand the makeup of our workforce and to demonstrate how effectively our employment policies and practices support our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010.

As part of our statutory duties, we publish annual equality information, including employee data and pay information, to ensure transparency and compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty. Our monitoring includes analysis of gender pay, ethnicity and disability pay gaps, as outlined in our Workforce Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy 2023–2028.

Much of the information used in this report relies on employees voluntarily disclosing their protected characteristics through the Council's HR and payroll system, MyView.

Unless stated otherwise, analysis in our reports is based on 'known data'—that is, information voluntarily provided by employees and held within our integrated HR systems. As with all self-reported data, high levels of unknown or undisclosed information reduce the Council's ability to identify potential inequalities, monitor workforce representation and evaluate the effectiveness of equality initiatives.

Where declaration rates are low, changes over time may reflect variations in data completeness rather than changes in workforce representation and should therefore be interpreted with caution.

Improving workforce data completeness remains an important area of focus for the Council. Accurate and comprehensive workforce information enables the Council to better understand representation across protected characteristics, identify potential inequalities, measure progress over time, and evaluate the effectiveness of equality, diversity and inclusion initiatives. Where declaration rates are low, the Council's ability to fully understand workforce representation and target interventions is reduced. The Council will therefore continue to encourage employees to review and update their equality information through MyView on a voluntary basis.

Local Information

To understand how representative the Council's workforce is of the communities it serves, workforce data can be compared with local demographic information from the national census. Whilst direct comparisons should be treated with caution, local population data provides useful context for assessing workforce representation and identifying areas where further progress may be required.

Based on Census 2011 and Census 2021 data for Medway, the following key changes have been observed:

Population Growth

Medway's population increased from 263,900 in 2011 to 279,800 in 2021, representing 6% growth over the decade. This growth rate is slightly lower than both the Southeast (7.5%) and England overall (6.6%). Continued population growth is likely to increase demand for local authority services and reinforces the importance of maintaining sufficient workforce capacity across key service areas.

Working-Age Population

In 2021, Medway had 176,703 residents aged 16–64, representing the population from which the Council primarily recruits its workforce. This group represents the Council's primary labour market and provides important context when considering recruitment, retention and workforce sustainability.

Long-Term Health Conditions & Disability

The proportion of Medway residents reporting a long-term illness or disability increased from 16.4% in 2011 to 17.4% in 2021. This reflects a gradual rise in the number of people whose daily activities are limited due to health conditions.

These trends reinforce the importance of ensuring recruitment, retention and workplace support arrangements continue to meet the needs of employees with disabilities and long-term health conditions.

Unpaid Care Provision

Between 2011 and 2021, the proportion of Medway residents providing unpaid care fell from around 9.5% to 8.1%, a decrease of roughly 1.4%. Despite the reduction, unpaid caring responsibilities continue to affect a significant proportion of residents and highlight the importance of maintaining flexible employment practices that support work-life balance.

Ethnic Diversity

Medway has become more diverse over the decade. In 2011, 89.6% of residents identified as White; by 2021 this fell to 84.3%. Residents from Black, Asian, Mixed or other ethnic minority backgrounds increased from 10.4% in 2011 to 15.7% in 2021.

The most notable rise was in the Black, Black British, Caribbean or African group, increasing by 3.1%, reaching 5.6% of the population in 2021.

These changes highlight the importance of monitoring workforce ethnicity to ensure the Council continues to attract and retain a workforce that reflects the diversity of Medway's communities.

Religion or Belief

The largest single group in Medway falls under "Other / No religion," which accounts for 49% of the population. This reflects a broader national trend towards declining religious affiliation and provides useful context when considering the religion and belief profile of the workforce.

Workforce information: Overview

The information in this section provides an overview of Medway Council's workforce profile, including total headcount and full-time equivalent (FTE) staffing levels, offering insight into both the number of individuals employed and the organisation's overall staffing capacity. Understanding the size and composition of the workforce helps the Council assess whether it has sufficient capacity to meet current and future service demands. The section also presents information on contract types and salary bands to support understanding of employment patterns, resourcing levels and the distribution of roles across the Council, informing workforce planning and organisational decision-making.

Medway Council is structured into three main directorates: Business Support (BSD), Children and Adults (C&A), and Regeneration, Culture and Environment (RCE). Unless specified otherwise, the workforce snapshots in this section show the position as of 31 March for the relevant reporting year. For the purposes of this section, headcount refers to the total number of individual employees working at Medway Council. This includes both those in established posts (with contracted hours) and employees on zero-hour contracts in casual or relief roles.

Headcount and FTE

Headcount and FTE changes over the past 12 months are summarised in Tables 1a and 1b below.

The Council's workforce continued to grow during 2025/26. Total headcount increased by 8.7% (266 employees), rising from 3,064 in March 2025 to 3,330 in March 2026. Workforce capacity increased at a slightly higher rate, with FTE rising by 218.3 (9.7%) from 2,248.8 to 2,467.1. This indicates that growth was driven not only by additional employees, but also by an increase in contracted hours across the workforce.

Business Support remained broadly stable during the year. Headcount increased by 12 employees (+1.9%) and FTE increased by 5.7 (+1.2%). Whilst Communications and Marketing recorded notable growth, overall workforce capacity across the directorate remained broadly stable.

The Children and Adults directorate recorded the largest increase in workforce numbers and capacity. Headcount increased by 253 employees (+21.4%), whilst FTE increased by 175.1 (+16.4%). Growth was evident across the directorate:

- Adults recorded the largest increase, with headcount rising by 94 employees (+33.8%) and FTE increasing by 89.5 (+34.2%). This reflects the implementation of the service's rightsizing activity, which has increased workforce capacity.
- Children Services also recorded significant growth, with headcount increasing by 73 employees (+12.1%) and FTE increasing by 69.1 (+12.6%).
- Education and SEND headcount increased by 65 employees (+49.6%), primarily due to the recruitment of casual staff to support delivery of the Medway Test. However, FTE reduced slightly by 1.5 (-1.2%), indicating that the increase was largely associated with casual or low-hours appointments rather than additional substantive capacity.
- Public Health increased by 23 employees (+14.0%), with FTE rising by 19.0 (+14.6%).

Regeneration, Culture and Environment (RCE) remained stable in terms of headcount, increasing by just one employee (+0.1%). However, FTE increased by 37.5 (+5.2%), demonstrating an increase in workforce capacity despite little overall change in employee numbers. Growth in FTE was driven primarily by Culture and Community, Frontline Services and Regeneration.

Overall, the Council experienced significant workforce growth during 2025/26, with increases in both headcount and FTE. The majority of this growth was concentrated within the Children and Adults directorate, reflecting continued investment in frontline service delivery and organisational capacity. This increase in workforce capacity helps ensure the Council is better positioned to meet current service demands and support future workforce sustainability.

Table 1a: Headcount for March 2025 and March 2026

Directorate/Division	Headcount Mar-25	Headcount Mar-26	Headcount change Mar-25 to Mar-26	% Change in headcount Mar-25 to Mar-26
Finance & Business Improvement	520	522	+ 2	+ 0.4%
Legal and Governance	77	80	+ 3	+ 3.9%
Communications and Marketing	19	25	+ 6	+ 31.6%
Chief Executives Office	16	17	+ 1	+ 6.3%
Business Support	632	644	+ 12	+ 1.9%
Adults	278	372	+ 94	+ 33.8%
Children Services	605	678	+ 73	+ 12.1%
Education and SEND	131	196	+ 65	+ 49.6%
Public Health	164	187	+ 23	+ 14.0%
Directors Office	4	3	- 1	- 25.0%
Children and Adults	1183	1436	+ 253	+ 21.4%
Culture and Community	802	786	- 16	- 2.0%
Frontline Services	243	248	+ 5	+ 2.1%
Regeneration	199	211	+ 12	+ 6.0%
Directors Office	5	5	+/- 0	0.0%
RCE	1249	1250	+ 1	+ 0.1%
Total	3064	3330	+ 266	+ 8.7%

Table 1b: FTE for March 2025 and March 2026

Directorate/Division	FTE Mar-25	FTE Mar-26	FTE change Mar-25 to Mar-26	% Change in FTE Mar-25 to Mar-26
Finance & Business Improvement	365.8	364.6	- 1.2	- 0.3%
Legal and Governance	72.5	74.3	+ 1.8	+ 2.5%
Communications and Marketing	17.3	23.5	+ 6.2	+ 35.8%
Chief Executives Office	10.0	8.9	- 1.1	- 10.8%
Business Support	465.6	471.3	+ 5.7	+ 1.2%
Adults	261.4	350.9	+ 89.5	+ 34.2%
Children Services	548.5	617.6	+ 69.1	+ 12.6%
Education and SEND	120.7	119.2	- 1.5	- 1.2%
Public Health	130.0	149.0	+ 19.0	+ 14.6%
Directors Office	4.0	3.0	- 1.0	- 25.0%
Children and Adults	1064.6	1239.7	+ 175.1	+ 16.4%
Culture and Community	454.8	475.4	+ 20.6	+ 4.5%
Frontline Services	184.7	192.9	+ 8.2	+ 4.5%
Regeneration	75.2	83.6	+ 8.4	+ 11.2%
Directors Office	3.8	4.1	+ 0.3	+ 8.2%
RCE	718.6	756.1	+ 37.5	+ 5.2%
Total	2248.8	2467.1	+ 218.3	+ 9.7%

Contracts

Changes in the number of contracts over the past 12 months are summarised in Tables 2a and 2b below.

Between March 2025 and March 2026, the total number of contracts increased by 4.6% (+178), from 3,833 to 4,011. This growth was driven entirely by an increase in established contracts, which rose by 214 (+8.5%) from 2,504 to 2,718. Over the same period, casual and relief contracts reduced by 36 (-2.7%) to 1,293. As a result, established contracts now account for 67.8% of all contracts, compared with 65.3% in March 2025, demonstrating a continued shift towards more permanent employment arrangements and a more stable workforce profile.

Business Support remained broadly stable during the year. Established contracts increased by six (+1.2%) to 504, whilst casual and relief contracts increased by seven (+5.1%) to 145. Overall changes across the directorate were relatively modest, reflecting a stable workforce profile.

The Children and Adults directorate recorded the largest increase in established contracts, rising by 183 (+16.1%) to 1,318. Growth was evident across a number of divisions:

- Adults recorded the largest increase, with established contracts rising by 91 (+33.5%). This reflects the service's rightsizing activity and continued investment in permanent workforce capacity.
- Children Services established contracts increased by 74 (+12.5%), supporting continued growth in frontline service delivery.
- Public Health established contracts increased by 21 (+15.1%).
- Education and SEND established contracts reduced slightly by two (-1.6%). However, casual and relief contracts increased substantially by 73 (+146.0%), largely due to the recruitment of casual staff to support delivery of the Medway Test.
- Overall, casual and relief contracts across the directorate increased by 79 (+69.9%), driven primarily by the growth within Education and SEND.

Within Regeneration, Culture and Environment (RCE), established contracts increased by 25 (+2.9%), whilst casual and relief contracts reduced by 122 (-11.3%). The reduction was largely driven by Culture and Community, where casual and relief contracts decreased by 143 (-19.4%). Despite this reduction in flexible staffing arrangements, established contracts across the directorate continued to grow, particularly within Culture and Community and Regeneration, indicating a continued shift towards more permanent employment arrangements.

Overall, the contract profile shows continued growth in permanent employment across the Council. Whilst the total number of casual and relief contracts reduced slightly, established contracts increased significantly, with the most notable growth occurring within the Children and Adults directorate. This reflects continued investment in workforce stability and demonstrates a reduced reliance on temporary staffing arrangements across the organisation.

Table 2a: Number of established contracts for March 2025 and March 2026

Directorate	# of contracts Mar-25	# of contracts Mar-26	Contract change Mar-25 to Mar-26	% change from Mar-25 to Mar-26
Finance & Business Improvement	393	392	- 1	- 0.3%
Legal and Governance	76	78	+ 2	+ 2.6%
Communications and Marketing	19	25	+ 6	+ 31.6%
Chief Executives Office	10	9	- 1	- 10.0%
Business Support	498	504	+ 6	+ 1.2%
Adults	272	363	+ 91	+ 33.5%
Children Services	593	667	+ 74	+ 12.5%
Education and SEND	127	125	- 2	- 1.6%
Public Health	139	160	+ 21	+ 15.1%
Directors Office	4	3	- 1	- 25.0%
Children and Adults	1135	1318	+ 183	+ 16.1%
Culture and Community	544	555	+ 11	+ 2.0%
Frontline Services	216	220	+ 4	+ 1.9%
Regeneration	106	116	+ 10	+ 9.4%
Directors Office	5	5	+/- 0	0.0%
RCE	871	896	+ 25	+ 2.9%
Total	2504	2718	+ 214	+ 8.5%

Table 2b: Number of casual and relief contracts for March 2025 and March 2026

Directorate	# of contracts Mar-25	# of contracts Mar-26	Contract change Mar-25 to Mar-26	% change from Mar-25 to Mar-26
Finance & Business Improvement	130	133	+ 3	+ 2.3%
Legal and Governance	1	2	+ 1	+ 100.0%
Communications and Marketing	0	0	+/- 0	0.0%
Chief Executives Office	7	10	+ 3	+ 42.9%
Business Support	138	145	+ 7	+ 5.1%
Adults	7	10	+ 3	+ 42.9%
Children Services	21	19	- 2	- 9.5%
Education and SEND	50	123	+ 73	+ 146.0%
Public Health	35	40	+ 5	+ 14.3%
Directors Office	0	0	+/- 0	0.0%
Children and Adults	113	192	+ 79	+ 69.9%
Culture and Community	739	596	- 143	- 19.4%
Frontline Services	33	34	+ 1	+ 3.0%
Regeneration	306	326	+ 20	+ 6.5%
Directors Office	0	0	+/- 0	0.0%
RCE	1078	956	- 122	- 11.3%
Total	1329	1293	- 36	- 2.7%

Workforce information: Protected Characteristics Overview

Medway Council is committed to meeting its equality obligations by promoting fairness, dignity, and inclusion across its workforce. The Council is committed to creating an inclusive working environment that promotes equality of opportunity and supports a diverse workforce. This commitment also includes ensuring that our workforce reflects the diversity of Medway's communities, widening access to opportunities, and creating a culture where everyone can succeed regardless of their background, characteristics, or personal circumstances. Monitoring workforce equality data enables the Council to understand workforce representation, identify potential inequalities and assess progress towards its equality, diversity and inclusion objectives.

The workforce snapshots in this section show the position as of 31 March for the relevant reporting year. This includes both those in established posts (with contracted hours) and employees on zero-hour contracts in casual or relief roles. To prevent the identification of individuals, information in this section is reported as percentages rather than absolute headcounts.

Declaration rates

Declaration rates show the proportion of employees who have shared information about their protected characteristics, including disability, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief, and gender reassignment. They help the Council assess the completeness and reliability of its equalities data, supporting workforce planning, monitoring and decision-making. Higher declaration rates provide a more accurate picture of the workforce and should be considered when interpreting workforce profile data.

Employees are required to provide information relating to their sex and age when they join the Council. Disclosure of other protected characteristics is voluntary. The protected characteristic of gender reassignment is monitored through the collection of transgender status information. References to transgender status within this report relate to the Council's monitoring of this protected characteristic.

Table 3 shows the year-on-year changes in declaration rates for each protected characteristic. Declaration rates for sex and age remain at 100%; however, declaration rates fell across most other protected characteristics during 2025/26.

The largest reduction was in the declaration of disability, which decreased from 59.8% to 54.5% (-5.3%). Ethnicity declaration rates also reduced from 94.9% to 90.4% (-4.5%). Smaller decreases were recorded for sexual orientation and religion or belief, both falling by 1.7% to 72.8% and 72.0%, respectively.

The only characteristic to show an improvement was gender reassignment, where declaration rates increased from 4.8% to 6.1% (+1.3%). Despite this increase, declaration levels for this characteristic remain low, reflecting the highly sensitive nature of the information and the voluntary basis on which it is collected.

Declaration rates remain high for sex, age and ethnicity. However, declaration levels for disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief and gender reassignment remain lower and should be considered when interpreting the workforce profile data presented in subsequent sections of this report.

Table 3: Declaration rate by protected characteristics for March 2025 and March 2026

Protected characteristic	2025	2026	% change from 2024/25 to 2025/26
Sex	100%	100%	0.0%
Age	100%	100%	0.0%
Ethnicity	94.9%	90.4%	- 4.5%
Disability	59.8%	54.5%	- 5.3%
Sexual orientation	74.5%	72.8%	- 1.7%
Religion and belief	73.7%	72.0%	- 1.7%
Gender reassignment	4.8%	6.1%	+ 1.3%

Workforce by sex

The sex composition of the workforce remained broadly stable between March 2025 and March 2026. Female employees continue to represent the majority of the workforce, accounting for 75.2% of all employees in March 2026, an increase of 1.3% compared with the previous year. Male representation reduced correspondingly from 26.1% to 24.8% (-1.3%). Despite this movement, the overall workforce profile remains largely unchanged, with women continuing to make up around three-quarters of the Council's workforce. This profile is consistent with the occupational composition of the Council's workforce, particularly within social care, education and support services where women are traditionally more strongly represented.

At directorate level, the workforce profile remained consistent with previous years. Female representation increased slightly across all three directorates, rising from 74.5% to 75.6% within Business Support, from 84.1% to 84.3% within Children and Adults, and from 64.1% to 64.4% within Regeneration, Culture and Environment (RCE).

Children and Adults continues to have the highest proportion of female employees, with women accounting for more than four-fifths of the workforce (84.3%). Business Support also remains predominantly female (75.6%), whilst RCE has the most balanced workforce profile, although women continue to represent almost two-thirds of employees (64.4%).

Overall, the data indicates that the workforce profile by sex has remained stable over the past 12 months, with women continuing to form the majority of employees across all directorates.

Table 4a: Percentage headcount for March 2025 and March 2026 by sex

Sex	March 2025	March 2026	% change from 2024/25 to 2025/26
Female	73.9%	75.2%	+ 1.3%
Male	26.1%	24.8%	- 1.3%

Table 4b: Percentage headcount by directorate and sex for March 2025 and March 2026

Sex	BSD		C&A		RCE	
	2024/25	2025/26	2024/25	2025/26	2024/25	2025/26
Female	74.5%	75.6%	84.1%	84.3%	64.1%	64.4%
Male	25.3%	24.4%	15.9%	15.7%	35.9%	35.6%

Workforce by age

The age profile of the workforce shifted during 2025/26, with the most significant increase recorded within the 16-24 age group. The proportion of employees aged 16-24 increased from 6.6% to 9.7% (+3.1%). In contrast, reductions were recorded across all age groups between 25 and 64, with the largest decrease seen within the 35-44 age group, which fell from 23.3% to 21.9% (-1.4%).

Despite these changes, employees aged 45-54 remain the largest age group within the workforce, accounting for 23.9% of employees. The proportion of employees aged 55-64 also reduced slightly from 21.9% to 20.6% (-1.3%).

Increases were recorded within the older age groups, with employees aged 65-74 rising from 4.9% to 5.7% (+0.8%) and those aged 75 and over increasing from 0.4% to 0.9% (+0.5%). However, these groups continue to represent a relatively small proportion of the overall workforce.

At directorate level, the most notable change was within Regeneration, Culture and Environment (RCE), where the proportion of employees aged 16-24 increased from 9.7% to 16.5% (+6.8%). Smaller increases were also recorded within Children and Adults, whilst Business Support remained broadly stable. Across all three directorates, employees aged between 35 and 64 continue to represent the majority of the workforce.

Overall, the workforce age profile remains broadly balanced. Whilst there has been an increase in the proportion of younger employees, particularly those aged 16-24, the majority of employees continue to be within the 35-64 age range.

Table 5a: Percentage headcount for March 2025 and March 2026 by age

Age group	March 2025	March 2026	% change from 2024/25 to 2025/26
16 to 24	6.6%	9.7%	+ 3.1%
25 to 34	17.9%	17.3%	- 0.6%
35 to 44	23.3%	21.9%	- 1.4%
45 to 54	25.1%	23.9%	- 1.2%
55 to 64	21.9%	20.6%	- 1.3%
65 to 74	4.9%	5.7%	+ 0.8%
75+	0.4%	0.9%	+ 0.5%

Table 5b: Percentage headcount by directorate and age for March 2025 and March 2026

Age group	BSD		C&A		RCE	
	2024/25	2025/26	2024/25	2025/26	2024/25	2025/26
16 to 24	6.6%	6.2%	4.2%	5.3%	9.7%	16.5%
25 to 34	18.1%	16.1%	19.6%	19.6%	15.4%	15.3%
35 to 44	22.1%	22.0%	27.4%	27.0%	18.5%	15.9%
45 to 54	27.7%	29.0%	24.2%	25.0%	24.8%	19.9%
55 to 64	20.9%	20.0%	20.7%	18.9%	24.2%	23.0%
65 to 74	4.2%	5.6%	3.6%	4.0%	7.0%	7.7%
75+	0.4%	0.9%	0.3%	0.3%	0.5%	1.6%

Workforce by ethnicity

The ethnic profile of the workforce remained broadly stable during 2025/26. However, there was a notable increase in the proportion of employees whose ethnicity is recorded as Unknown, rising from 5.1% to 9.6% (+4.5%). This reflects the reduction in ethnicity declaration rates reported earlier in this report and should be considered when interpreting changes across individual ethnic groups.

The proportion of employees identifying as White/White British decreased from 77.7% to 73.2% (-4.5%), whilst smaller changes were recorded across other ethnic groups. Black/Black British representation increased slightly from 8.3% to 8.4% (+0.1%), Other ethnic groups increased from 0.7% to 0.9% (+0.2%), and Multi-ethnic representation remained unchanged at 1.7%. Small reductions were recorded for Asian/Asian British employees (-0.2%) and those who preferred not to disclose their ethnicity (-0.1%).

At directorate level, the most significant change was within Children and Adults, where the proportion of employees with unknown ethnicity increased substantially from 4.7% to 15.7% (+11.0%). Corresponding reductions were observed across several declared ethnic groups, most notably White/White British (-9.5%) and Black/Black British (-1.1%). This change reflects the increase in employees whose ethnicity is recorded as unknown, particularly following significant workforce growth within the directorate during the year. As a result, the reduction in the proportion of employees within declared ethnic groups should not be interpreted as evidence of a material change in the underlying ethnic composition of the workforce.

In contrast, ethnicity profiles within Business Support and Regeneration, Culture and Environment (RCE) remained relatively stable, with only minor changes recorded across most ethnic groups and little change in the proportion of employees with unknown ethnicity.

Overall, the Council continues to employ people from a diverse range of ethnic backgrounds. However, the increase in employees whose ethnicity is recorded as unknown reduces the completeness of the data available for analysis and should be taken into account when comparing workforce representation between years.

Table 6a: Percentage headcount for March 2025 and March 2026 by ethnicity

Ethnic group	March 2025	March 2026	% change from 2024/25 to 2025/26
White/White British	77.7%	73.2%	- 4.5%
Multi-ethnic	1.7%	1.7%	0.0%
Asian/Asian British	5.1%	4.9%	- 0.2%
Black/Black British	8.3%	8.4%	+ 0.1%
Other	0.7%	0.9%	+ 0.2%
Refused	1.4%	1.3%	- 0.1%
Unknown	5.1%	9.6%	+ 4.5%

Table 6b: Percentage headcount by directorate and ethnicity for March 2025 and March 2026

Ethnic group	BSD		C&A		RCE	
	2024/25	2025/26	2024/25	2025/26	2024/25	2025/26
White/White British	80.5%	80.4%	72.9%	63.4%	80.8%	80.7%
Multi-ethnic	1.6%	1.1%	1.9%	2.0%	1.5%	1.6%
Asian/Asian British	6.5%	6.4%	4.6%	4.0%	5.0%	5.0%
Black/Black British	4.3%	4.8%	14.0%	12.9%	5.0%	5.2%
Other	0.9%	1.2%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	1.0%
Refused	1.4%	1.2%	1.4%	1.3%	1.5%	1.4%
Unknown	4.7%	4.8%	4.7%	15.7%	5.6%	5.1%

Workforce by disability

The disability profile of the workforce remained broadly stable between March 2025 and March 2026. The proportion of employees declaring a disability decreased slightly from 5.9% to 5.7% (-0.2%), whilst the proportion declaring that they do not have a disability decreased from 53.4% to 48.4% (-5.0%). The proportion of employees refusing to disclose their disability status remained very low at 0.4%.

The most notable change during the year was an increase in employees whose disability status is recorded as unknown, rising from 40.2% to 45.5% (+5.3%). This reflects the reduction in disability declaration rates reported earlier in the report and indicates a decrease in the completeness of disability data.

At directorate level, the proportion of employees declaring a disability remained relatively stable. Business Support remained unchanged at 6.2%, Children and Adults decreased slightly from 6.9% to 6.1%, and Regeneration, Culture and Environment (RCE) increased marginally from 4.8% to 5.0%.

The largest change was within Children and Adults, where the proportion of employees with an unknown disability status increased from 42.9% to 52.4% (+9.5%). This increase is reflected in a corresponding reduction in the proportion of employees recorded as not having a disability and should be considered when interpreting directorate-level disability data.

Overall, disability representation across the workforce has remained broadly unchanged over the past 12 months. However, the increase in employees with an unknown disability status reduces data completeness, and trends in disability representation should therefore be interpreted with caution.

Table 7a: Percentage headcount for March 2025 and March 2026 by disability

Disability	March 2025	March 2026	% change from 2024/25 to 2025/26
Yes	5.9%	5.7%	- 0.2%
No	53.4%	48.4%	- 5.0%
Refused	0.5%	0.4%	- 0.1%
Unknown	40.2%	45.5%	+ 5.3%

Table 7b: Percentage headcount by directorate and disability for March 2025 and March 2026

Disability	BSD		C&A		RCE	
	2024/25	2025/26	2024/25	2025/26	2024/25	2025/26
Yes	6.2%	6.2%	6.9%	6.1%	4.8%	5.0%
No	62.0%	60.2%	50.0%	41.3%	52.4%	50.4%
Refused	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.2%	0.7%	0.7%
Unknown	31.5%	33.2%	42.9%	52.4%	41.1%	44.0%

Workforce by sexual orientation

The sexual orientation profile of the workforce remained broadly stable between March 2025 and March 2026. The proportion of employees identifying as heterosexual decreased slightly from 65.6% to 64.2% (-1.4%), whilst the proportion identifying as LGB increased marginally from 4.1% to 4.3% (+0.2%). The proportion of employees who refused to disclose their sexual orientation decreased from 4.8% to 4.3% (-0.5%).

The most notable change during the year was an increase in the proportion of employees whose sexual orientation is recorded as unknown, rising from 25.5% to 27.2% (+1.7%). This reflects the reduction in sexual orientation declaration rates reported earlier in this report and indicates a decrease in data completeness.

At directorate level, the largest change was within Children and Adults, where the proportion of employees with an unknown sexual orientation increased from 20.6% to 28.3% (+7.7%). Corresponding reductions were seen in the proportion of employees identifying as heterosexual. In contrast, the proportion of employees with an unknown sexual orientation reduced slightly within both Business Support and Regeneration, Culture and Environment (RCE).

Overall, the profile of the workforce by sexual orientation has remained relatively stable over the past 12 months. However, the increase in employees with an unknown sexual orientation reduces data completeness and should be considered when interpreting year-on-year changes in workforce representation.

Table 8a: Percentage headcount for March 2025 and March 2026 by sexual orientation

Sexual orientation	March 2025	March 2026	% change from 2024/25 to 2025/26
Heterosexual	65.6%	64.2%	- 1.4%
LGB	4.1%	4.3%	+ 0.2%
Refused	4.8%	4.3%	- 0.5%
Unknown	25.5%	27.2%	+ 1.7%

Table 8b: Percentage headcount by directorate and sexual orientation for March 2025 and March 2026

Sexual orientation	BSD		C&A		RCE	
	2024/25	2025/26	2024/25	2025/26	2024/25	2025/26
Heterosexual	64.2%	65.4%	71.2%	64.6%	61.1%	63.2%
LGB	2.1%	2.8%	4.7%	4.5%	4.6%	4.7%
Refused	5.4%	5.0%	3.5%	2.6%	5.8%	5.8%
Unknown	28.3%	26.9%	20.6%	28.3%	28.6%	26.2%

Workforce by religion and belief

The religion and belief profile of the workforce remained broadly stable between March 2025 and March 2026. Employees identifying as having no religion (30.1%) and those identifying as Christian (30.2%) continue to represent the largest declared groups. Most other categories showed little change over the year.

The most notable changes were a reduction in the proportion of employees declaring no religion, from 32.4% to 30.1% (-2.3%), alongside increases in employees who prefer not to say (+1.1%) and those whose religion or belief is recorded as unknown (+1.6%). This reflects the reduction in religion and belief declaration rates reported earlier in the report.

At directorate level, the largest change was within Children and Adults, where the proportion of employees with an unknown religion or belief increased from 22.2% to 29.5% (+7.3%). Corresponding reductions were seen in the proportion of employees identifying as Christian and as having no religion. Business Support and Regeneration, Culture and Environment (RCE) recorded smaller changes.

Overall, the workforce profile by religion and belief has remained stable over the past 12 months, with Christianity and no religion continuing to be the most commonly declared beliefs across the Council. The increase in employees with an unknown religion or belief reflects the reduction in declaration rates reported earlier in this report.

Table 9a: Percentage headcount for March 2025 and March 2026 by religion/belief

Religion/Belief	March 2025	March 2026	% change from 2024/25 to 2025/26
Christian	30.8%	30.2%	- 0.6%
Buddhist	0.2%	0.2%	0.0%
Hindu	0.8%	0.8%	0.0%
Jewish	0.1%	0.2%	+ 0.1%
Muslim	1.7%	1.8%	+ 0.1%
Sikh	1.3%	1.2%	- 0.1%
Other	2.0%	1.9%	- 0.1%
No Religion *	32.4%	30.1%	- 2.3%
Prefer not to say	4.6%	5.7%	+ 1.1%
Unknown	26.4%	28.0%	+ 1.6%

* No religion includes those who have declared they are Agnostic as well as Atheist.

Table 9b: Percentage headcount by directorate and religion/belief for March 2025 and March 2026

Religion/Belief	BSD		C&A		RCE	
	2024/25	2025/26	2024/25	2025/26	2024/25	2025/26
Christian	26.6%	26.6%	35.8%	32.1%	28.1%	29.9%
Buddhist	0.3%	0.3%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%
Hindu	0.8%	0.9%	0.6%	0.6%	0.9%	1.0%
Jewish	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	0.4%	0.1%	0.1%
Muslim	3.2%	3.3%	0.8%	1.0%	1.8%	1.8%
Sikh	1.1%	0.9%	1.4%	1.3%	1.2%	1.3%
Other	1.7%	1.9%	2.3%	1.9%	1.8%	1.8%
No Religion *	32.6%	31.2%	31.7%	28.3%	32.8%	31.6%
Prefer not to say	4.3%	6.8%	4.7%	4.8%	4.6%	6.2%
Unknown	29.4%	28.1%	22.2%	29.5%	28.7%	26.1%

* No religion includes those who have declared they are Agnostic as well as Atheist.

Workforce by transgender status

Declaration rates for transgender status remain very low, although there was a small improvement during 2025/26. The proportion of employees whose transgender status is recorded as unknown decreased from 95.2% to 93.9% (-1.3%), while the proportion declaring they are not transgender increased from 4.7% to 5.9% (+1.2%). The proportion of employees declaring they are transgender remained unchanged at 0.1%.

This pattern is consistent across all directorates. Business Support recorded the lowest proportion of unknown responses (91.5%), whilst Regeneration, Culture and Environment (RCE) recorded the highest (95.3%). All directorates reported a small increase in the proportion of employees declaring they are not transgender, contributing to the overall improvement in declaration rates.

Despite this improvement, declaration levels remain very low, with more than nine in ten employees having no recorded transgender status. As a result, the Council's ability to understand workforce representation in relation to gender reassignment remains limited.

Table 10a: Percentage headcount for March 2025 and March 2026 by transgender status

Transgender status	March 2025	March 2026	% change from 2024/25 to 2025/26
Yes	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%
No	4.7%	5.9%	+ 1.2%
Refused	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Unknown	95.2%	93.9%	- 1.3%

Table 10b: Percentage headcount by directorate and transgender status for March 2025 and March 2026

Transgender status	BSD		C&A		RCE	
	2024/25	2025/26	2024/25	2025/26	2024/25	2025/26
Yes	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%
No	6.2%	8.4%	5.7%	6.1%	3.0%	4.5%
Refused	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%
Unknown	93.7%	91.5%	94.2%	93.8%	96.8%	95.3%

Workforce Representation compared with Medway Population

Understanding how representative the Council's workforce is of the communities it serves helps provide context for workforce equality monitoring and supports consideration of workforce diversity. Whilst direct comparisons between workforce and population data should be treated with caution, Census 2021 information provides a useful benchmark when considering workforce representation across key protected characteristics.

Table 11 compares selected workforce characteristics with the Medway population. Female employees account for 75.2% of the Council's workforce compared with 50.8% of Medway residents. This reflects the occupational profile of the Council's workforce, particularly within social care, education-related and professional support services.

Employees from ethnic minority backgrounds account for 15.8% of the workforce, compared with 15.7% of Medway residents. Employees identifying as Black/Black British account for 8.4% of the workforce, compared with 5.6% of the local population. These figures indicate that the Council's workforce continues to reflect the ethnic diversity of the local community and that Black/Black British employees remain represented at a higher proportion than within the Medway population.

Employees aged 16 to 24 account for 9.7% of the workforce compared with 10.3% of Medway residents. Whilst representation within this age group remains slightly below that of the local population, it has increased considerably during 2025/26, with employees aged 16 to 24 now representing a larger proportion of the workforce than in previous years.

Workforce disability representation should be interpreted with caution. Whilst 5.7% of employees have declared a disability, declaration rates remain relatively low at 54.5%, limiting the reliability of direct comparisons with local population data. Census 2021 data indicates that 17.4% of Medway residents report a long-term illness or disability. Improving declaration rates therefore remains important in supporting a more complete understanding of workforce representation in this area.

Overall, the Council's workforce continues to be broadly representative of the Medway population in relation to ethnicity, whilst female employees remain overrepresented compared with the local population. Representation of younger employees has increased during the year, although it remains slightly below the proportion seen across Medway residents. Disability representation remains more difficult to assess due to lower declaration rates.

Table 11: Workforce Representation compared with Medway Population

Characteristic	Medway Population (2021 Census)	Workforce (March 2026)
Female	50.8%	75.2%
Aged 16 to 24	10.3%	9.7%
Ethnic Minority Groups	15.7%	15.8%
Black/Black British	5.6%	8.4%
Long-term illness or disability	17.4%	5.7%

Starters: Overview

Monitoring the number of employees joining the Council provides an important indication of recruitment activity and workforce growth. Analysis of starters helps the Council understand whether services are successfully attracting the skills, knowledge and experience required to meet current and future service demands, while also supporting succession planning and workforce resilience.

Reviewing starter trends enables the Council to assess the effectiveness of recruitment campaigns, identify areas experiencing recruitment challenges, and understand how workforce capacity is changing over time. This information can help inform workforce planning decisions and ensure the organisation is equipped to respond to changing service needs.

The data in this section is based on the reporting years 2024/25 and 2025/26. Unless otherwise stated, headcount refers to the total number of individual employees working at Medway Council. This includes both those in established posts (with contracted hours) and employees on zero-hour contracts in casual or relief roles.

Starters by headcount

Across the organisation, the number of starters increased from 600 in 2024/25 to 628 in 2025/26, representing an overall increase of 4.7% (+28). However, recruitment activity varied significantly across the directorates.

Children and Adults recorded the largest increase in both absolute and percentage terms, with starters increasing by 114 (+40.7%) from 280 to 394. This reflects significant recruitment activity across the directorate during the year, including workforce growth within Adult Social Care as part of the service's rightsizing activity. The increase was also influenced by the recruitment of a large number of casual staff within Education and SEND to support delivery of the Medway Test.

In contrast, Business Support recorded a reduction in starters, falling from 89 to 63 (-26; -29.2%). Similarly, Regeneration, Culture and Environment (RCE) experienced a decrease of 60 starters (-26.0%), from 231 to 171.

Despite reductions within Business Support and RCE, the substantial increase within Children and Adults resulted in an overall increase in starters across the Council during 2025/26. This indicates that recruitment activity remained high during the year, with growth concentrated primarily within Children and Adults.

Table 12: Headcount of starters for 2024/25 and 2025/26

Directorate	Starters 2024/25	Starters 2025/26	Starters change 2024/25 to 2025/26	% change from 2024/25 to 2025/26
BSD	89	63	- 26	- 29.2%
C&A	280	394	+ 114	+ 40.7%
RCE	231	171	- 60	- 26.0%
Total	600	628	+ 28	+ 4.7%

Note: During 2025/26, there was an increase in the proportion of starters with unknown equalities information across a number of protected characteristics. This was particularly evident within Children and Adults and was influenced by the recruitment of a significant number of casual staff during the year, for whom non-statutory equalities information was not always recorded. As a result, levels of unknown data have increased for some protected characteristics, particularly within Children and Adults, and this should be considered when reviewing changes in the profile of new starters.

Starters by sex

The sex profile of starters changed during 2025/26, with female employees accounting for 77.1% of all starters, compared with 72.2% in the previous year (+4.9%). Male representation decreased correspondingly from 27.8% to 22.9% (-4.9%). Female starters therefore continue to form the clear majority of new recruits to the Council.

At directorate level, females remained the majority of starters across all three directorates. Business Support saw a small increase in the proportion of female starters, rising from 76.4% to 77.8% (+1.4%). Within Children and Adults, the profile remained largely unchanged, with female starters accounting for 82.7% of all starters compared with 82.9% in 2024/25. Regeneration, Culture and Environment (RCE) recorded the most notable change, with female representation amongst starters increasing from 57.6% to 64.0% (+6.4%).

Overall, the profile of starters by sex remains consistent with the wider workforce profile, with women continuing to represent the majority of new recruits across all directorates. The high proportion of female starters within Children and Adults reflects the occupational profile of services across the directorate.

Table 13a: Percentage starters headcount for 2024/25 and 2025/26 by sex

Sex	2024/25	2025/26	% change from 2024/25 to 2025/26
Female	72.2%	77.1%	+ 4.9%
Male	27.8%	22.9%	- 4.9%

Table 13b: Percentage starters headcount for 2024/25 and 2025/26 by directorate and sex

Sex	BSD		C&A		RCE	
	2024/25	2025/26	2024/25	2025/26	2024/25	2025/26
Female	76.4%	77.8%	82.9%	82.7%	57.6%	64.0%
Male	23.6%	22.2%	17.1%	17.3%	42.4%	36.0%

Starters by age

The age profile of starters changed during 2025/26, with a reduction in the proportion of younger starters and an increase in recruitment across older age groups. The proportion of starters aged 16 to 24 decreased from 23.2% to 16.7% (-6.5%), representing the most significant change across all age groups. In contrast, the proportion of starters aged 25 to 34 increased from 22.0% to 22.9% (+0.9%) and those aged 35 to 44 increased from 21.2% to 23.1% (+1.9%).

The 45 to 54 age group remained relatively stable at 20.0% of starters (-0.5%). Increases were also recorded amongst older age groups, with starters aged 55 to 64 increasing from 11.3% to 12.9% (+1.6%), those aged 65 to 74 increasing from 1.7% to 3.8% (+2.1%), and those aged 75 and over increasing from 0.2% to 0.6% (+0.4%).

At directorate level, patterns varied. Business Support recorded increases in starters aged under 45, particularly within the 25 to 34 age group. Within Children and Adults, the proportion of starters aged 16 to 24 reduced from 11.4% to 8.9%, whilst increases were recorded across several older age groups. Regeneration, Culture and Environment (RCE) continued to recruit the highest proportion of younger starters, although the proportion aged 16 to 24 decreased from 40.1% to 32.6%.

Overall, the age profile of starters remains relatively balanced across the age groups. Despite the reduction in younger starters during 2025/26, employees aged under 45 continue to account for the majority of new recruits to the Council.

Table 14a: Percentage starters headcount for 2024/25 and 2025/26 by age

Age group	2024/25	2025/26	% change from 2024/25 to 2025/26
16 to 24	23.2%	16.7%	- 6.5%
25 to 34	22.0%	22.9%	+ 0.9%
35 to 44	21.2%	23.1%	+ 1.9%
45 to 54	20.5%	20.0%	- 0.5%
55 to 64	11.3%	12.9%	+ 1.6%
65 to 74	1.7%	3.8%	+ 2.1%
75+	0.2%	0.6%	+ 0.4%

Table 14b: Percentage starters headcount for 2024/25 and 2025/26 by directorate and age

Age group	BSD		C&A		RCE	
	2024/25	2025/26	2024/25	2025/26	2024/25	2025/26
16 to 24	15.7%	22.2%	11.4%	8.9%	40.1%	32.6%
25 to 34	22.8%	30.2%	27.1%	23.1%	15.6%	19.8%
35 to 44	22.5%	25.4%	25.0%	25.6%	16.0%	16.3%
45 to 54	25.8%	9.5%	23.9%	24.9%	14.3%	12.8%
55 to 64	11.2%	11.1%	11.4%	11.9%	11.3%	15.7%
65 to 74	2.6%	1.6%	1.1%	4.6%	2.2%	2.9%
75+	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%	0.2%	0.0%

Starters by ethnicity

The ethnicity profile of starters changed significantly during 2025/26. The most notable change was the increase in starters whose ethnicity is recorded as unknown, rising from 8.5% to 32.4% (+23.9%). This increase is reflected in corresponding reductions across most declared ethnic groups.

The proportion of starters identifying as White/White British decreased from 63.8% to 49.6% (-14.2%). Reductions were also recorded amongst Black/Black British starters (-5.4%), Asian/Asian British starters (-3.3%) and Multi-ethnic starters (-0.6%). In contrast, the proportion of starters identifying as Other ethnic groups increased from 0.2% to 1.6% (+1.4%). The proportion of starters who refused to disclose their ethnicity fell from 2.2% to 0.3% (-1.9%).

At directorate level, the most significant change was within Children and Adults, where the proportion of starters with an unknown ethnicity increased from 10.0% to 47.7% (+37.7%). Corresponding reductions were recorded across all declared ethnic groups within the directorate. Smaller increases in unknown ethnicity were recorded within Business Support, whilst Regeneration, Culture and Environment (RCE) remained broadly unchanged.

Overall, the increase in starters whose ethnicity is recorded as unknown is the most significant trend within the data, particularly within Children and Adults. This reduces the completeness of the information available for analysis and makes it more difficult to determine whether changes across ethnic groups reflect recruitment patterns or data quality.

Table 15a: Percentage starters headcount for 2024/25 and 2025/26 by ethnicity

Ethnic group	2024/25	2025/26	% change from 2024/25 to 2025/26
White/White British	63.8%	49.6%	- 14.2%
Multi-ethnic	2.7%	2.1%	- 0.6%
Asian/Asian British	7.0%	3.7%	- 3.3%
Black/Black British	15.7%	10.3%	- 5.4%
Other	0.2%	1.6%	+ 1.4%
Refused	2.2%	0.3%	- 1.9%
Unknown	8.5%	32.4%	+ 23.9%

Table 15b: Percentage starters headcount for 2024/25 and 2025/26 by directorate and ethnicity

Ethnic group	BSD		C&A		RCE	
	2024/25	2025/26	2024/25	2025/26	2024/25	2025/26
White/White British	66.3%	73.0%	56.8%	34.0%	71.4%	76.7%
Multi-ethnic	3.4%	1.6%	1.8%	2.0%	3.5%	2.3%
Asian/Asian British	7.9%	4.8%	6.1%	3.0%	7.8%	4.7%
Black/Black British	12.4%	7.9%	22.1%	12.2%	9.1%	7.0%
Other	0.0%	3.2%	0.4%	0.5%	0.0%	3.5%
Refused	1.1%	0.0%	2.9%	0.5%	1.7%	0.0%
Unknown	9.0%	9.5%	10.0%	47.7%	6.5%	5.8%

Starters by disability

The disability profile of starters changed during 2025/26, with a substantial increase in the proportion of employees whose disability status is recorded as unknown. Unknown disability status increased from 51.2% to 73.3% (+22.1%), whilst the proportion of starters reporting that they do not have a disability decreased from 44.2% to 22.6% (-21.6%).

The proportion of starters declaring a disability remained broadly stable, decreasing slightly from 4.2% to 4.0% (-0.2%). The proportion of employees refusing to disclose their disability status also remained very low, falling from 0.5% to 0.2% (-0.3%).

At directorate level, all areas recorded increases in unknown disability status. The largest increase was within Children and Adults, where the proportion of starters with an unknown disability status increased from 65.4% to 83.8% (+18.4%). Smaller increases were also recorded within Business Support and Regeneration, Culture and Environment (RCE).

Overall, the increase in starters whose disability status is recorded as unknown is the most significant trend within the data, particularly within Children and Adults. This reduces the completeness of the information available for analysis and limits the conclusions that can be drawn about disability representation amongst new starters.

Table 16a: Percentage starters headcount for 2024/25 and 2025/26 by disability

Disability	2024/25	2025/26	% change from 2024/25 to 2025/26
Yes	4.2%	4.0%	- 0.2%
No	44.2%	22.6%	- 21.6%
Refused	0.5%	0.2%	- 0.3%
Unknown	51.2%	73.3%	+ 22.1%

Table 16b: Percentage starters headcount for 2024/25 and 2025/26 by directorate and disability

Disability	BSD		C&A		RCE	
	2024/25	2025/26	2024/25	2025/26	2024/25	2025/26
Yes	3.4%	9.5%	4.6%	3.3%	3.9%	3.5%
No	79.8%	42.9%	29.6%	12.7%	48.1%	37.8%
Refused	1.1%	0.0%	0.4%	0.3%	0.4%	0.0%
Unknown	15.7%	47.6%	65.4%	83.8%	47.6%	58.7%

Starters by sexual orientation

The sexual orientation profile of starters changed during 2025/26, with a substantial increase in the proportion of employees whose sexual orientation is recorded as unknown. Unknown sexual orientation increased from 13.7% to 34.7% (+21.0%), whilst the proportion of starters identifying as heterosexual decreased from 73.7% to 58.8% (-14.9%).

The proportion of starters identifying as LGB decreased from 7.0% to 4.1% (-2.9%). The proportion of employees who refused to disclose their sexual orientation also decreased from 5.7% to 2.4% (-3.3%).

At directorate level, the most significant change was within Children and Adults, where the proportion of starters with an unknown sexual orientation increased from 17.9% to 49.0% (+31.1%). Corresponding reductions were recorded across all declared sexual orientation categories within the directorate. Smaller increases in unknown data were recorded within Business Support and Regeneration, Culture and Environment (RCE).

Overall, the increase in starters whose sexual orientation is recorded as unknown is the most significant trend within the data, particularly within Children and Adults. This reduces the completeness of the information available for analysis and should be considered when interpreting year-on-year changes in the sexual orientation profile of new starters.

Table 17a: Percentage starters headcount for 2024/25 and 2025/26 by sexual orientation

Sexual orientation	2024/25	2025/26	% change from 2024/25 to 2025/26
Heterosexual	73.7%	58.8%	- 14.9%
LGB	7.0%	4.1%	- 2.9%
Refused	5.7%	2.4%	- 3.3%
Unknown	13.7%	34.7%	+ 21.0%

Table 17b: Percentage starters headcount for 2024/25 and 2025/26 by directorate and sexual orientation

Sexual orientation	BSD		C&A		RCE	
	2024/25	2025/26	2024/25	2025/26	2024/25	2025/26
Heterosexual	78.7%	82.5%	70.7%	46.2%	75.3%	79.1%
LGB	5.6%	7.9%	6.8%	2.8%	7.7%	5.8%
Refused	6.7%	0.0%	4.6%	2.0%	6.5%	4.1%
Unknown	9.0%	9.5%	17.9%	49.0%	10.4%	11.0%

Starters by religion and belief

The religion and belief profile of starters changed during 2025/26, with a substantial increase in the proportion of employees whose religion or belief is recorded as unknown. Unknown religion or belief increased from 15.8% to 35.6% (+19.8%), whilst the proportion of employees who preferred not to say increased from 4.7% to 10.0% (+5.3%).

Correspondingly, reductions were recorded across several declared categories. The proportion of starters identifying as Christian decreased from 35.7% to 28.5% (-7.2%), whilst those reporting no religion decreased from 35.7% to 20.0% (-15.7%). Smaller reductions were also recorded across a number of other religious groups. In contrast, the proportion of starters identifying as Muslim increased from 1.8% to 2.4% (+0.6%) and those identifying as Jewish increased from 0.0% to 0.5% (+0.5%).

At directorate level, the most significant change was within Children and Adults, where the proportion of starters whose religion or belief is recorded as unknown increased from 21.4% to 50.0% (+28.6%). Corresponding reductions were recorded across the declared religion and belief categories. Smaller increases in unknown data were recorded within Business Support, whilst Regeneration, Culture and Environment (RCE) remained broadly stable.

Overall, the most significant change is the increase in the proportion of starters whose religion or belief is recorded as unknown. This reduces the completeness of the data available for analysis, with a greater proportion of starters having no recorded religion or belief than in the previous year.

Table 18a: Percentage starters headcount for 2024/25 and 2025/26 by religion/belief

Religion/Belief	2024/25	2025/26	% change from 2024/25 to 2025/26
Christian	35.7%	28.5%	- 7.2%
Buddhist	0.5%	0.2%	- 0.3%
Hindu	1.5%	0.6%	- 0.9%
Jewish	0.0%	0.5%	+ 0.5%
Muslim	1.8%	2.4%	+ 0.6%
Sikh	1.2%	0.6%	- 0.6%
Other	3.2%	1.6%	- 1.6%
No Religion *	35.7%	20.0%	- 15.7%
Prefer not to say	4.7%	10.0%	+ 5.3%
Unknown	15.8%	35.6%	+ 19.8%

* No religion includes those who have declared they are Agnostic as well as Atheist.

Table 18b: Percentage starters headcount for 2024/25 and 2025/26 by directorate and religion/belief

Religion/Belief	BSD		C&A		RCE	
	2024/25	2025/26	2024/25	2025/26	2024/25	2025/26
Christian	40.4%	34.9%	37.1%	22.3%	32.0%	40.1%
Buddhist	1.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%	0.6%
Hindu	1.1%	1.6%	1.8%	0.5%	1.3%	0.6%
Jewish	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.8%	0.0%	0.0%
Muslim	2.2%	6.3%	0.4%	1.3%	3.5%	3.5%
Sikh	3.4%	0.0%	1.1%	0.5%	0.4%	1.2%
Other	1.1%	1.6%	3.2%	1.0%	3.9%	2.9%
No Religion *	33.7%	15.9%	29.6%	18.3%	43.7%	25.6%
Prefer not to say	7.9%	28.6%	5.4%	5.3%	2.6%	14.0%
Unknown	9.0%	11.1%	21.4%	50.0%	11.7%	11.6%

* No religion includes those who have declared they are Agnostic as well as Atheist.

Starters by transgender status

The transgender status profile of starters continues to be characterised by high levels of unknown data. However, the proportion of starters whose transgender status is recorded as unknown decreased from 96.7% to 90.1% (-6.6%), representing an improvement in declaration rates compared with the previous year.

The proportion of starters declaring that they are not transgender increased from 3.3% to 9.5% (+6.2%), whilst the proportion declaring that they are transgender increased slightly from 0.0% to 0.3% (+0.3%). No starters were recorded as having refused to disclose their transgender status.

At directorate level, unknown data remained high across all areas, although improvements were recorded within Business Support, Children and Adults, and Regeneration, Culture and Environment (RCE). Despite these improvements, more than 89% of starters in each directorate continue to have no recorded transgender status, limiting the insight available from the data.

Overall, declaration rates for transgender status remain low and the high proportion of unknown data continues to limit meaningful analysis. As a result, trends in transgender representation should be interpreted with caution.

Table 19a: Percentage starters headcount for 2024/25 and 2025/26 by transgender status

Transgender status	2024/25	2025/26	% change from 2024/25 to 2025/26
Yes	0.0%	0.3%	+ 0.3%
No	3.3%	9.5%	+ 6.2%
Refused	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Unknown	96.7%	90.1%	- 6.6%

Table 19b: Percentage starters headcount for 2024/25 and 2025/26 by directorate and transgender status

Transgender status	BSD		C&A		RCE	
	2024/25	2025/26	2024/25	2025/26	2024/25	2025/26
Yes	0.0%	1.6%	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%
No	2.2%	25.4%	5.4%	6.3%	1.3%	11.0%
Refused	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Unknown	97.8%	73.0%	94.6%	93.4%	98.7%	89.0%

Leavers: Overview

Monitoring the number of employees leaving the Council provides valuable insight into workforce stability and retention. Analysis of leavers helps the Council understand employee turnover patterns, identify potential retention risks, and assess the impact of workforce movement on service delivery and organisational capacity.

Reviewing leaver trends, including the reasons employees choose to leave, supports a better understanding of factors that may influence retention. This may include changes in the wider labour market, career progression opportunities, retirement patterns, or other workforce-related factors. Identifying these trends enables the Council to take informed action where appropriate and supports the development of targeted workforce strategies.

The data in this section is based on the reporting years 2024/25 and 2025/26. Unless otherwise stated, headcount refers to the total number of individual employees working at Medway Council. This includes both those in established posts (with contracted hours) and employees on zero-hour contracts in casual or relief roles.

Leavers by headcount

The number of leavers reduced significantly during 2025/26, decreasing from 504 in 2024/25 to 353, a reduction of 151 employees (-30.0%).

The largest change was within Children and Adults, where leavers fell from 305 to 140 (-165; -54.1%). This reduction follows the higher level of workforce movement recorded during 2024/25, when a significant number of casual contracts within Education and SEND came to an end. As a result, the year-on-year reduction should be viewed in the context of this one-off increase in leavers during the previous year.

Business Support recorded a small decrease in leavers, falling from 47 to 44 (-3; -6.4%), indicating a broadly stable position compared with the previous year.

In contrast, Regeneration, Culture and Environment (RCE) experienced an increase in leavers, rising from 152 to 169 (+17; +11.2%).

Overall, the reduction in leavers during 2025/26 was driven primarily by lower levels of workforce movement within Children and Adults following the ending of a substantial number of casual contracts during the previous year. This was partially offset by an increase in leavers within RCE.

Table 20: Headcount of leavers for 2024/25 and 2025/26

Directorate	Leavers 2024/25	Leavers 2025/26	Leavers change 2024/25 to 2025/26	% change from 2024/25 to 2025/26
BSD	47	44	- 3	- 6.4%
C&A	305	140	- 165	- 54.1%
RCE	152	169	+ 17	+ 11.2%
Total	504	353	- 151	- 30.0%

Leavers by sex

The sex profile of leavers changed during 2025/26. Female employees continued to account for the majority of leavers; however, their proportion decreased from 76.6% to 68.1% (-8.5%). Correspondingly, the proportion of male leavers increased from 23.4% to 31.9% (+8.5%).

At directorate level, females remained the majority of leavers across all three directorates. Within Business Support, the proportion of female leavers decreased from 68.1% to 63.6% (-4.5%). A smaller reduction was recorded within Children and Adults, where female leavers decreased from 81.0% to 78.6% (-2.4%). The most notable change was within Regeneration, Culture and Environment (RCE), where the proportion of female leavers decreased from 70.4% to 60.6% (-9.8%).

Despite these changes, the profile of leavers by sex remains broadly consistent with the wider workforce profile, with women continuing to account for the majority of leavers across the Council.

Table 21a: Percentage leavers headcount for 2024/25 and 2025/26 by sex

Sex	2024/25	2025/26	% change from 2024/25 to 2025/26
Female	76.6%	68.1%	- 8.5%
Male	23.4%	31.9%	+ 8.5%

Table 21b: Percentage leavers headcount for 2024/25 and 2025/26 by directorate and sex

Sex	BSD		C&A		RCE	
	2024/25	2025/26	2024/25	2025/26	2024/25	2025/26
Female	68.1%	63.6%	81.0%	78.6%	70.4%	60.6%
Male	31.9%	36.4%	19.0%	21.4%	29.6%	39.4%

Leavers by age

The age profile of leavers changed during 2025/26, with increases recorded across the younger age groups and reductions across those aged 55 and over. The proportion of leavers aged 16 to 24 increased from 10.5% to 19.5% (+9.0%), representing the largest change across all age groups. Increases were also recorded amongst employees aged 25 to 34 (+2.1%) and 35 to 44 (+4.6%).

In contrast, the proportion of leavers aged 55 to 64 decreased from 20.8% to 16.7% (-4.1%), whilst those aged 65 to 74 decreased from 17.1% to 8.8% (-8.3%). The proportion of leavers aged 75 and over also reduced from 3.2% to 1.1% (-2.1%).

At directorate level, Regeneration, Culture and Environment (RCE) continued to record the highest proportion of leavers aged 16 to 24, increasing from 21.1% to 30.6%. Within Children and Adults, the proportion of leavers aged 25 to 34 and 35 to 44 increased, whilst the proportion aged 55 and over reduced. Business Support recorded a more mixed profile, although the proportion of leavers aged 65 to 74 decreased from 27.7% to 15.9%.

Overall, the age profile of leavers changed during 2025/26, with a higher proportion of leavers from younger age groups and a lower proportion from older age groups than in the previous year. Employees aged 45 to 64 continued to account for a substantial proportion of leavers, although younger age groups represented a greater share of leavers than in the previous year.

Table 22a: Percentage leavers headcount for 2024/25 and 2025/26 by age

Age group	2024/25	2025/26	% change from 2024/25 to 2025/26
16 to 24	10.5%	19.5%	+ 9.0%
25 to 34	16.3%	18.4%	+ 2.1%
35 to 44	13.5%	18.1%	+ 4.6%
45 to 54	18.7%	17.5%	- 1.2%
55 to 64	20.8%	16.7%	- 4.1%
65 to 74	17.1%	8.8%	- 8.3%
75+	3.2%	1.1%	- 2.1%

Table 22b: Percentage leavers headcount for 2024/25 and 2025/26 by directorate and age

Age group	BSD		C&A		RCE	
	2024/25	2025/26	2024/25	2025/26	2024/25	2025/26
16 to 24	6.4%	13.6%	5.9%	7.9%	21.1%	30.6%
25 to 34	23.4%	15.9%	17.4%	26.4%	11.8%	12.4%
35 to 44	6.4%	15.9%	16.1%	20.7%	10.5%	16.5%
45 to 54	14.9%	13.6%	21.3%	21.4%	14.5%	15.3%
55 to 64	21.3%	22.7%	21.3%	15.7%	19.7%	15.9%
65 to 74	27.7%	15.9%	14.1%	6.4%	19.7%	8.8%
75+	0.0%	2.3%	3.9%	1.4%	2.6%	0.6%

Leavers by ethnicity

The ethnicity profile of leavers changed during 2025/26, although White/White British employees continued to account for the majority of leavers. The proportion of White/White British leavers increased from 61.9% to 69.8% (+7.9%), whilst the proportion of Black/Black British leavers decreased from 13.3% to 9.9% (-3.4%). Smaller changes were recorded across the remaining ethnic groups, with Multi-ethnic leavers increasing slightly from 2.0% to 2.5% (+0.5%) and Asian/Asian British leavers decreasing from 5.6% to 4.8% (-0.8%).

The proportion of leavers whose ethnicity was recorded as unknown decreased from 15.7% to 12.1% (-3.6%). The proportion of employees who refused to disclose their ethnicity also reduced slightly from 0.8% to 0.6% (-0.2%).

At directorate level, Children and Adults continued to record the highest proportion of Black/Black British leavers at 17.1%, whilst Business Support and Regeneration, Culture and Environment (RCE) remained predominantly White/White British. Unknown ethnicity data reduced within Children and Adults but increased slightly within Business Support and RCE.

Overall, the ethnicity profile of leavers remained broadly consistent during 2025/26. Whilst some shifts were recorded across individual ethnic groups, the proportion of leavers with an unknown ethnicity decreased compared with the previous year.

Table 23a: Percentage leavers headcount for 2024/25 and 2025/26 by ethnicity

Ethnic group	2024/25	2025/26	% change from 2024/25 to 2025/26
White/White British	61.9%	69.8%	+ 7.9%
Multi-ethnic	2.0%	2.5%	+ 0.5%
Asian/Asian British	5.6%	4.8%	- 0.8%
Black/Black British	13.3%	9.9%	- 3.4%
Other	0.8%	0.3%	- 0.5%
Refused	0.8%	0.6%	- 0.2%
Unknown	15.7%	12.1%	- 3.6%

Table 23b: Percentage leavers headcount for 2024/25 and 2025/26 by directorate and ethnicity

Ethnic group	BSD		C&A		RCE	
	2024/25	2025/26	2024/25	2025/26	2024/25	2025/26
White/White British	74.5%	77.3%	50.8%	58.6%	80.3%	77.1%
Multi-ethnic	2.1%	4.5%	2.0%	1.4%	2.0%	2.9%
Asian/Asian British	4.3%	4.5%	6.2%	5.7%	4.6%	4.1%
Black/Black British	17.0%	2.3%	16.1%	17.1%	6.6%	5.9%
Other	2.1%	0.0%	1.0%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%
Refused	0.0%	2.3%	1.0%	0.0%	0.7%	0.6%
Unknown	0.0%	9.1%	23.0%	16.4%	5.9%	9.4%

Leavers by disability

The disability profile of leavers changed slightly during 2025/26, although no substantial changes were recorded across the declared disability categories. The proportion of leavers declaring a disability decreased slightly from 5.0% to 4.0% (-1.0%), whilst the proportion reporting that they do not have a disability increased from 44.4% to 49.4% (+5.0%). The proportion of employees refusing to disclose their disability status remained very low, decreasing from 0.6% to 0.3% (-0.3%).

The proportion of leavers whose disability status was recorded as unknown decreased from 50.0% to 46.3% (-3.7%). Despite this reduction, almost half of all leavers continue to have no recorded disability status.

At directorate level, Children and Adults continued to record the highest proportion of leavers with an unknown disability status, although this decreased from 60.3% to 57.9% (-2.4%). Business Support and Regeneration, Culture and Environment (RCE) recorded small increases in unknown disability data. Across all directorates, the proportion of leavers declaring a disability remained low.

Overall, the disability profile of leavers remained broadly stable during 2025/26. Although some changes were recorded across the categories, a substantial proportion of leavers continue to have no recorded disability status, which should be considered when interpreting the data.

Table 24a: Percentage leavers headcount for 2024/25 and 2025/26 by disability

Disability	2024/25	2025/26	% change from 2024/25 to 2025/26
Yes	5.0%	4.0%	- 1.0%
No	44.4%	49.4%	+ 5.0%
Refused	0.6%	0.3%	- 0.3%
Unknown	50.0%	46.3%	- 3.7%

Table 24b: Percentage leavers headcount for 2024/25 and 2025/26 by directorate and disability

Disability	BSD		C&A		RCE	
	2024/25	2025/26	2024/25	2025/26	2024/25	2025/26
Yes	6.4%	9.1%	3.6%	5.0%	7.2%	1.8%
No	63.8%	56.8%	35.4%	36.4%	56.6%	58.2%
Refused	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%	0.0%
Unknown	29.8%	34.1%	60.3%	57.9%	35.5%	40.0%

Leavers by sexual orientation

The sexual orientation profile of leavers changed during 2025/26. The proportion of leavers identifying as heterosexual increased from 55.0% to 65.3% (+10.3%), whilst the proportion identifying as LGB decreased slightly from 4.6% to 3.7% (-0.9%).

The proportion of employees whose sexual orientation was recorded as unknown decreased from 38.3% to 25.4% (-12.9%), representing the most significant change across all categories. In contrast, the proportion of employees who refused to disclose their sexual orientation increased from 2.2% to 5.6% (+3.4%).

At directorate level, the proportion of leavers with an unknown sexual orientation decreased significantly within Children and Adults from 43.6% to 25.0% (-18.6%) and also reduced within Regeneration, Culture and Environment (RCE) from 31.6% to 24.7% (-6.9%). Business Support recorded a small increase in unknown data from 25.5% to 29.5% (+4.0%). Heterosexual employees continued to account for the majority of leavers across all three directorates.

Overall, the sexual orientation profile of leavers remained broadly stable during 2025/26. However, a quarter of leavers continue to have no recorded sexual orientation, which should be considered when interpreting the data.

Table 25a: Percentage leavers headcount for 2024/25 and 2025/26 by sexual orientation

Sexual orientation	2024/25	2025/26	% change from 2024/25 to 2025/26
Heterosexual	55.0%	65.3%	+ 10.3%
LGB	4.6%	3.7%	- 0.9%
Refused	2.2%	5.6%	+ 3.4%
Unknown	38.3%	25.4%	- 12.9%

Table 25b: Percentage leavers headcount for 2024/25 and 2025/26 by directorate and sexual orientation

Sexual orientation	BSD		C&A		RCE	
	2024/25	2025/26	2024/25	2025/26	2024/25	2025/26
Heterosexual	68.1%	61.4%	50.2%	65.7%	60.5%	65.9%
LGB	6.4%	4.5%	3.9%	2.1%	5.3%	4.7%
Refused	0.0%	4.5%	2.3%	7.1%	2.6%	4.7%
Unknown	25.5%	29.5%	43.6%	25.0%	31.6%	24.7%

Leavers by religion and belief

The religion and belief profile of leavers changed during 2025/26. The proportion of leavers identifying as Christian increased from 26.0% to 31.6% (+5.6%), whilst the proportion reporting no religion increased from 25.6% to 33.1% (+7.5%). Smaller changes were recorded across the remaining religion and belief groups.

The proportion of employees whose religion or belief was recorded as unknown decreased from 39.5% to 26.6% (-12.9%), representing the most significant change across all categories. In contrast, the proportion of employees selecting prefer not to say increased from 2.6% to 4.0% (+1.4%).

At directorate level, the proportion of leavers with an unknown religion or belief decreased within Children and Adults from 43.0% to 26.4% (-16.6%) and within Regeneration, Culture and Environment (RCE) from 36.8% to 25.9% (-10.9%). Business Support recorded a small increase in unknown data, rising from 25.5% to 29.5% (+4.0%). Across all directorates, employees identifying as Christian or having no religion continued to represent the largest declared groups.

Overall, the religion and belief profile of leavers remained broadly stable during 2025/26. Whilst some changes were recorded across the categories, employees identifying as Christian or having no religion continued to account for the largest proportion of declared leavers.

Table 26a: Percentage leavers headcount for 2024/25 and 2025/26 by religion/belief

Religion/Belief	2024/25	2025/26	% change from 2024/25 to 2025/26
Christian	26.0%	31.6%	+ 5.6%
Buddhist	0.2%	0.0%	- 0.2%
Hindu	1.0%	0.3%	- 0.7%
Jewish	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Muslim	1.2%	2.3%	+ 1.1%
Sikh	1.0%	0.6%	- 0.4%
Other	3.0%	1.7%	- 1.3%
No Religion *	25.6%	33.1%	+ 7.5%
Prefer not to say	2.6%	4.0%	+ 1.4%
Unknown	39.5%	26.6%	- 12.9%

* No religion includes those who have declared they are Agnostic as well as Atheist.

Table 26b: Percentage leavers headcount for 2024/25 and 2025/26 by directorate and religion/belief

Religion/Belief	BSD		C&A		RCE	
	2024/25	2025/26	2024/25	2025/26	2024/25	2025/26
Christian	40.4%	36.4%	27.2%	35.7%	19.1%	27.1%
Buddhist	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%	0.0%
Hindu	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%	0.7%	1.3%	0.0%
Jewish	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Muslim	0.0%	4.5%	1.6%	0.7%	0.7%	2.9%
Sikh	4.3%	0.0%	1.0%	0.7%	0.0%	0.6%
Other	2.1%	0.0%	2.3%	1.4%	4.6%	2.4%
No Religion *	21.3%	27.3%	21.0%	28.6%	36.2%	38.2%
Prefer not to say	6.4%	2.3%	3.0%	5.7%	0.7%	2.9%
Unknown	25.5%	29.5%	43.0%	26.4%	36.8%	25.9%

* No religion includes those who have declared they are Agnostic as well as Atheist.

Leavers by transgender status

The transgender status profile of leavers continued to be characterised by very high levels of unknown data during 2025/26. The proportion of leavers whose transgender status was recorded as unknown remained largely unchanged, increasing slightly from 97.6% to 97.7% (+0.1%).

The proportion of leavers recorded as not transgender decreased marginally from 2.4% to 2.0% (-0.4%), whilst the proportion recorded as transgender increased from 0.0% to 0.3% (+0.3%). No employees were recorded as having refused to disclose their transgender status.

At directorate level, unknown transgender status remained above 97% across all directorates. Business Support recorded 100% unknown data during 2025/26, whilst Children and Adults and Regeneration, Culture and Environment (RCE) recorded only small changes compared with the previous year.

Overall, the profile of leavers by transgender status remained unchanged during 2025/26. However, levels of unknown data remain extremely high, limiting meaningful analysis of workforce trends by transgender status.

Table 27a: Percentage leavers headcount for 2024/25 and 2025/26 by transgender status

Transgender status	2024/25	2025/26	% change from 2024/25 to 2025/26
Yes	0.0%	0.3%	+ 0.3%
No	2.4%	2.0%	- 0.4%
Refused	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Unknown	97.6%	97.7%	+ 0.1%

Table 27b: Percentage leavers headcount for 2024/25 and 2025/26 by directorate and transgender status

Transgender status	BSD		C&A		RCE	
	2024/25	2025/26	2024/25	2025/26	2024/25	2025/26
Yes	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%
No	2.1%	0.0%	2.6%	2.1%	2.0%	2.4%
Refused	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Unknown	97.9%	100.0%	97.4%	97.1%	98.0%	97.6%

Turnover: Overview

Turnover measures the proportion of employees who leave the Council during a specified period and provides an indication of workforce stability. Monitoring turnover supports workforce planning by helping to identify trends in employee retention and workforce movement across the organisation.

This section analyses employee turnover during the 2024/25 and 2025/26 reporting years, covering the periods 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 and 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026, respectively. Comparisons between the two years are used to identify changes in turnover levels across the Council and within each directorate

The turnover rate is calculated using the number of employees who left the Council during the reporting year as a proportion of the average workforce. The section also includes analysis of one-year turnover, which measures employees leaving the Council within their first year of employment and provides an indication of early retention.

Turnover calculations are based on employees in established posts and exclude casual workers. This approach provides a more meaningful measure of workforce stability and employee retention by removing fluctuations associated with casual employment arrangements. Consequently, turnover figures presented in this section may differ from the total number of leavers reported elsewhere in this report, which includes all employee groups.

Overall Turnover rate

The Council's turnover rate decreased from 12.7% in 2024/25 to 9.7% in 2025/26.

Turnover rates decreased across all three directorates during the year. Children and Adults continued to record the highest turnover rate, although this reduced from 15.3% to 10.3% (-5.0%). Business Support recorded the lowest turnover rate, decreasing slightly from 9.0% to 8.6% (-0.4%). Regeneration, Culture and Environment (RCE) also experienced a reduction, with turnover falling from 11.6% to 9.3% (-2.3%).

The reduction in turnover within all three directorates contributed to the overall decrease in the Council's turnover rate. Whilst Children and Adults continued to record the highest turnover, the difference between directorates reduced compared with the previous year.

The Council's turnover rate of 9.7% is below wider local government workforce data published by the Local Government Association (LGA), which reports annual leavers equivalent to approximately 12% of the local government workforce. Whilst direct comparisons should be treated with caution due to differences in workforce profile, organisational structure and reporting methodologies, this indicates that workforce turnover at Medway Council remains lower than levels reported across the wider local government sector.

Overall, turnover rates decreased across the Council during 2025/26, with reductions recorded across all three directorates. The Council's turnover rate also remained below levels reported across the wider local government sector, although Children and Adults continued to record the highest turnover rate internally

Table 28a: Turnover rate for 2024/2025 and 2025/2026

Measure	2024/25	2025/26	% change from 2024/25 to 2025/26
Turnover rate	12.7%	9.7%	- 3.0%

Table 28b: Turnover rate for 2024/2025 and 2025/2026 by directorate

Measure	BSD		C&A		RCE	
	2024/25	2025/26	2024/25	2025/26	2024/25	2025/26
Turnover rate	9.0%	8.6%	15.3%	10.3%	11.6%	9.3%

First Year Turnover rate

First year turnover measures the proportion of employees who leave the Council within their first year of employment and provides an indication of early workforce retention.

The Council's first year turnover rate decreased from 29.8% in 2024/25 to 27.3% in 2025/26 (-2.5%). Despite this reduction, more than a quarter of employees who joined the Council left within their first year of employment.

First year turnover reduced within both Business Support and Children and Adults. Business Support recorded the largest reduction, falling from 25.6% to 16.3% (-9.3%). Children and Adults continued to record the highest first year turnover rate, although this reduced from 33.5% to 31.0% (-2.5%).

In contrast, Regeneration, Culture and Environment (RCE) was the only directorate to record an increase in first year turnover, rising from 25.3% to 27.5% (+2.2%).

The reductions within Business Support and Children and Adults contributed to the overall decrease in the Council's first year turnover rate. However, first year turnover remains considerably higher than the overall turnover rate across all directorates, indicating that workforce movement continues to be concentrated amongst newer employees.

Overall, first year turnover reduced during 2025/26, with the largest reduction recorded within Business Support. Despite this reduction, Children and Adults continued to record the highest level of first year turnover and more than a quarter of new employees continued to leave within their first year of employment. Early retention therefore remains an area requiring ongoing monitoring across the Council.

Table 29a: First Year Turnover rate for 2024/2025 and 2025/2026

Measure	2024/25	2025/26	% change from 2024/25 to 2025/26
First Year Turnover rate	29.8%	27.3%	- 2.5%

Table 29b: First Year Turnover rate for 2024/2025 and 2025/2026 by directorate

Measure	BSD		C&A		RCE	
	2024/25	2025/26	2024/25	2025/26	2024/25	2025/26
First Year Turnover rate	25.6%	16.3%	33.5%	31.0%	25.3%	27.5%

12-month Rolling Turnover rate

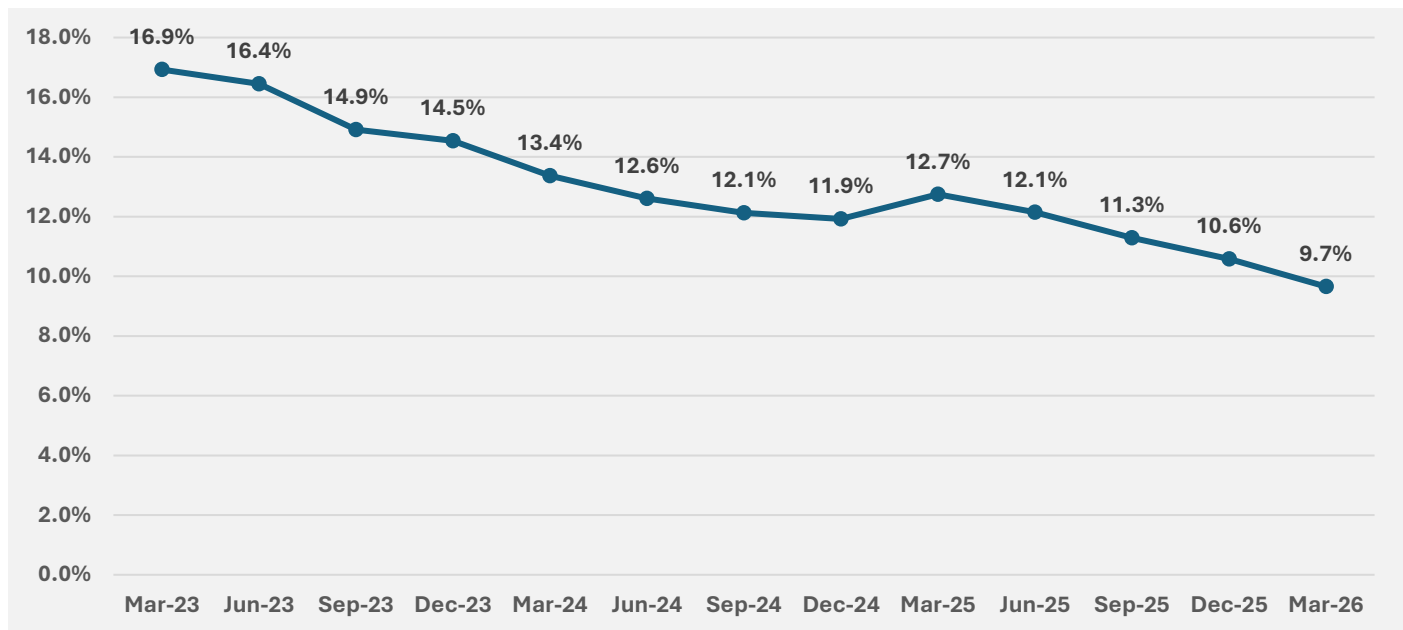
The 12-month rolling turnover rate provides a longer-term measure of workforce turnover by calculating the turnover rate over the preceding 12 months at quarterly intervals. This approach helps to identify underlying trends in workforce stability by reducing the impact of short-term fluctuations in employee turnover.

Graph 1 shows that the Council's 12-month rolling turnover rate generally decreased between March 2023 and March 2026. The rate fell from 16.9% in March 2023 to 12.7% in March 2025 (-4.2%) and continued to decrease to 9.7% by March 2026 (-3.0%).

Whilst there was some variation during the period, including a small increase between December 2024 and March 2025, the overall trend demonstrates a sustained reduction in workforce turnover. Following March 2025, the turnover rate decreased in each subsequent quarter, reaching its lowest level in March 2026.

Overall, the rolling turnover data indicates a sustained reduction in workforce turnover between March 2023 and March 2026. Despite some short-term variation, the longer-term trend demonstrates lower levels of workforce turnover across the Council.

Graph 1: 12-month Rolling Turnover rate



12-month Rolling First Year Turnover rate

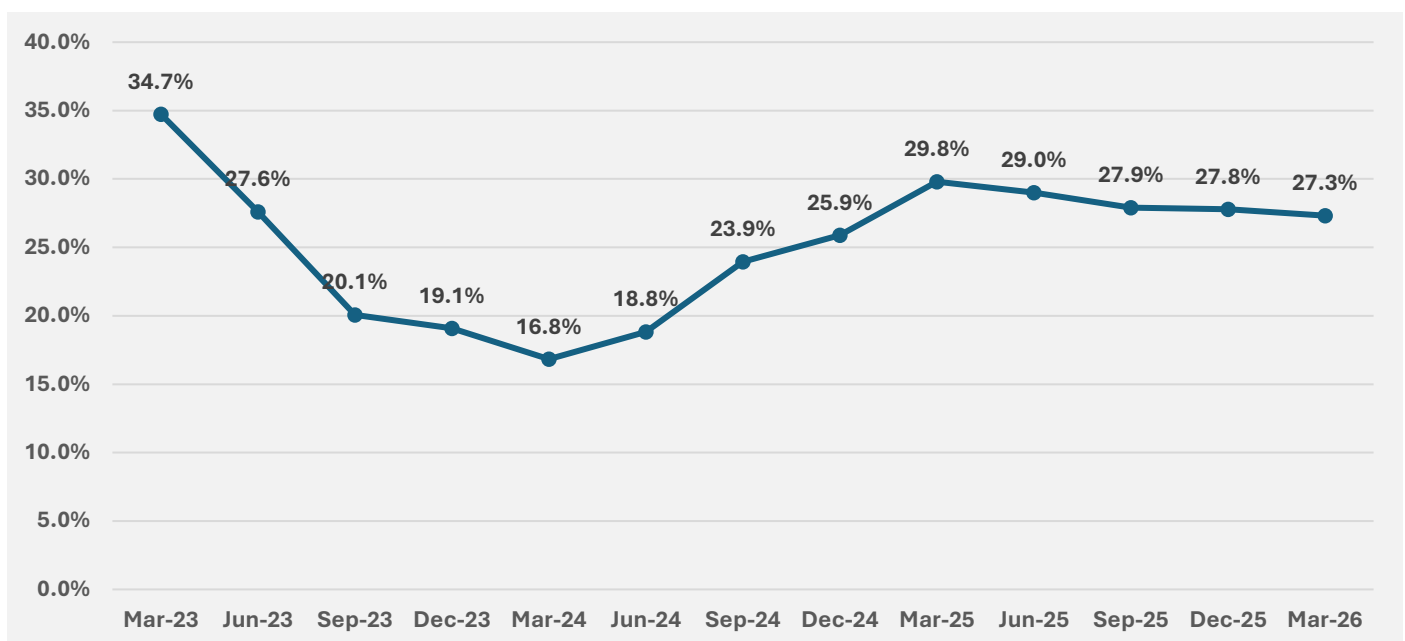
The 12-month rolling first year turnover rate provides a longer-term measure of employees leaving the Council within their first year of employment. The rate is calculated quarterly using a rolling 12-month period and helps identify longer-term trends in the retention of newly appointed employees.

Graph 2 shows that the Council's 12-month rolling first year turnover rate decreased from 34.7% in March 2023 to 16.8% in March 2024 (-17.9%). However, from March 2024 onwards the rate increased steadily, reaching 29.8% in March 2025 (+13.0%). The rolling first year turnover rate remained above 27% throughout the subsequent year, reducing slightly to 27.3% by March 2026 (-2.5%).

Whilst the rate decreased during 2025/26, it remained considerably higher than the level recorded in March 2024. Following the increase recorded between March 2024 and March 2025, the rolling first year turnover rate remained relatively stable throughout 2025/26, fluctuating between 27.3% and 29.0%.

Overall, Graph 2 highlights a contrast between overall workforce turnover and first year turnover. Whilst overall turnover continued to decrease over the period, first year turnover remained comparatively high. This indicates that workforce movement continues to be more concentrated amongst employees within their first year of employment than the wider workforce.

Graph 2: 12-month First Year Rolling Turnover rate



Sickness: Overview

Sickness absence is an important indicator of workforce wellbeing, attendance and organisational resilience. Monitoring absence levels helps the Council understand the health and wellbeing of its workforce, identify emerging trends and target interventions to support employee attendance and reduce the impact of absence on service delivery.

This section analyses sickness absence during 2023/24 and 2024/25 and examines changes in absence levels across the Council and within each directorate. Sickness absence is measured using days lost per full-time equivalent (FTE) employee, enabling meaningful comparisons over time by accounting for changes in workforce size.

The section considers overall sickness absence levels, short-term and long-term absence, and the most commonly reported reasons for absence. It also includes analysis of the 12-month rolling sickness absence rate, which provides a longer-term view of attendance trends by reducing the impact of short-term fluctuations and helping to identify sustained changes in absence levels.

Overall sickness rate

The Council's sickness absence rate decreased from 10.46 days per FTE in 2024/25 to 9.97 days per FTE in 2025/26 (-0.49). Over the same period, the total number of sickness absence days increased from 22,519 to 23,507 (+988). This reflects continued workforce growth during the year, with sickness absence increasing at a slower rate than workforce capacity.

Sickness absence rates decreased across all three directorates during the year. Children and Adults continued to record the highest sickness absence rate, although this reduced from 12.32 days per FTE to 11.70 (-0.62). Business Support also recorded a reduction, with the rate decreasing from 9.36 to 8.64 (-0.72). Regeneration, Culture and Environment (RCE) recorded the lowest sickness absence rate and a further reduction from 8.50 to 8.11 (-0.39).

Whilst sickness absence rates reduced across all directorates, the number of sickness absence days increased within Children and Adults and RCE, reflecting growth in workforce numbers over the period. In contrast, both sickness absence days and the sickness absence rate reduced within Business Support.

Overall, the Council's sickness absence rate reduced during 2025/26, with reductions recorded across all three directorates. Despite this improvement, absence levels remained highest within Children and Adults.

Table 30a: Sickness rate and days lost to sickness absence for 2024/25 and 2025/26

Measure	2024/25	2025/26	Change from 2024/25 to 2025/26
Sickness absence days	22,519	23,507	+ 988
Sickness absence rate	10.46	9.97	- 0.49

Table 30b: Sickness rate and days lost to sickness absence for 2024/2025 and 2025/2026 by directorate

Measure	BSD		C&A		RCE	
	2024/25	2025/26	2024/25	2025/26	2024/25	2025/26
Sickness absence days	4,184	4,024	12,356	13,491	5,979	5,992
Sickness absence rate	9.36	8.64	12.32	11.70	8.50	8.11

Short-term and Long-term sickness absence

Short-term sickness absence generally relates to periods of absence lasting fewer than 20 working days, whilst long-term sickness absence relates to periods of absence lasting 20 working days or more.

During 2025/26, the number of short-term sickness absence days increased from 8,929 to 11,520 (+2,591). As a result, the proportion of sickness absence attributable to short-term absence increased from 39.7% to 49.0% (+9.3%). In contrast, long-term sickness absence days reduced from 13,590 to 11,987 (-1,603), with the proportion of sickness absence attributable to long-term absence decreasing from 60.3% to 51.0% (-9.3%).

The reduction in long-term sickness absence was evident across all three directorates. Within Business Support, long-term sickness absence days reduced from 2,354 to 1,781 (-573), with the proportion of sickness absence attributable to long-term absence falling from 56.3% to 44.3% (-12.0%). Children and Adults recorded the largest reduction in long-term sickness absence, decreasing from 8,151 to 7,868 days (-283), whilst the proportion attributable to long-term absence reduced from 66.0% to 58.3% (-7.7%).

Regeneration, Culture and Environment (RCE) also recorded a reduction in long-term sickness absence days, from 3,085 to 2,338 (-747). As a result, short-term sickness absence accounted for a greater proportion of sickness absence within the directorate, increasing from 48.4% to 61.0%.

Overall, long-term sickness absence continued to account for the largest proportion of sickness absence during 2025/26. However, its contribution reduced considerably compared with the previous year, resulting in a much more even balance between short-term and long-term absence.

Table 31a: Short-term and long-term sickness absence for 2024/25 and 2025/26

Measure	2024/25	2025/26	Change from 2024/25 to 2025/26
Short-term sickness absence days	8,929	11,520	+ 2,591
Long-term sickness absence days	13,590	11,987	- 1,603
Short-term sickness absence %	39.7%	49.0%	+ 9.3%
Long-term sickness absence %	60.3%	51.0%	- 9.3%

Table 31b: Short-term and long-term sickness absence for 2024/25 and 2025/26 by directorate

Measure	BSD		C&A		RCE	
	2024/25	2025/26	2024/25	2025/26	2024/25	2025/26
Short-term sickness absence days	1,830	2,243	4,205	5,623	2,894	3,654
Long-term sickness absence days	2,354	1,781	8,151	7,868	3,085	2,338
Short-term sickness absence %	43.7%	55.7%	34.0%	41.7%	48.4%	61.0%
Long-term sickness absence %	56.3%	44.3%	66.0%	58.3%	51.6%	39.0%

Reasons for sickness absence

Table 32a shows the five most common reasons for sickness absence during 2024/25 and 2025/26.

Stress/Anxiety remained the most common reason for sickness absence across the Council, increasing from 3,994 days lost in 2024/25 to 4,181 days in 2025/26 (+187). Stress/Anxiety accounted for considerably more days lost than any other individual sickness reason and continued to be the leading cause of absence across the organisation.

Surgery remained a significant cause of absence, accounting for 1,709 days lost during 2025/26, whilst Cold/Flu increased slightly to 1,698 days lost. Cancer remained amongst the most common reasons for absence, accounting for 1,575 days lost during the year.

Depression entered the five most common reasons for sickness absence during 2025/26, accounting for 1,331 days lost. In contrast, Unknown no longer featured amongst the five most common reasons, reflecting improvements in the recording of sickness absence reasons during the year.

Overall, Stress/Anxiety remained the leading cause of sickness absence during 2025/26. The continued prominence of Stress/Anxiety and Depression within the most common reasons for absence reinforces the importance of supporting employee wellbeing and mental health across the workforce.

Table 32a: Reasons for sickness absence for 2024/25 and 2025/26

Rank	2024/25		2025/26	
	Reason	Days lost	Reason	Days lost
1	Stress/Anxiety	3,994	Stress/Anxiety	4,181
2	Unknown	1,952	Surgery	1,709
3	Surgery	1,746	Cold/Flu	1,698
4	Cold/Flu	1,596	Cancer	1,575
5	Cancer	1,492	Depression	1,331

Reasons for sickness absence by directorate

Table 32b shows the five most common reasons for sickness absence within each directorate during 2025/26.

Stress/Anxiety was the leading cause of sickness absence across all three directorates, accounting for 819 days lost in Business Support, 2,594 days lost in Children and Adults, and 768 days lost in Regeneration, Culture and Environment.

Beyond Stress/Anxiety, the profile of sickness absence varied between directorates. Within Business Support, Surgery, Unknown, Cold/Flu and Depression were also amongst the most common reasons for absence. Within Children and Adults, Cancer, Surgery, Cold/Flu and Depression featured amongst the most frequently recorded reasons. Within Regeneration, Culture and Environment, Cancer, Cold/Flu, Back Pain and Depression were amongst the most common causes of absence.

Whilst there was some variation between directorates, several themes were consistent across the Council. Stress/Anxiety remained the leading cause of sickness absence across all directorates, whilst Depression, Cancer, Cold/Flu and Surgery were also key contributors to absence levels.

Overall, the profile of sickness absence reasons was broadly consistent across the Council during 2025/26, with mental health-related absence continuing to account for a significant proportion of sickness absence days.

Table 32b: Reasons for sickness absence for 2025/26 by directorate

Rank	BSD		C&A		RCE	
	Reason	Days lost	Reason	Days lost	Reason	Days lost
1	Stress/Anxiety	819	Stress/Anxiety	2,594	Stress/Anxiety	768
2	Surgery	488	Cancer	989	Cancer	581
3	Unknown	363	Surgery	973	Cold/Flu	565
4	Cold/Flu	317	Cold/Flu	816	Back Pain	344
5	Depression	278	Depression	771	Depression	282

12-month rolling sickness absence rate

The 12-month rolling sickness absence rate provides a longer-term measure of sickness absence by calculating the average sickness absence rate over the preceding 12 months at quarterly intervals. This approach helps to identify underlying trends in attendance by reducing the impact of short-term fluctuations in sickness absence.

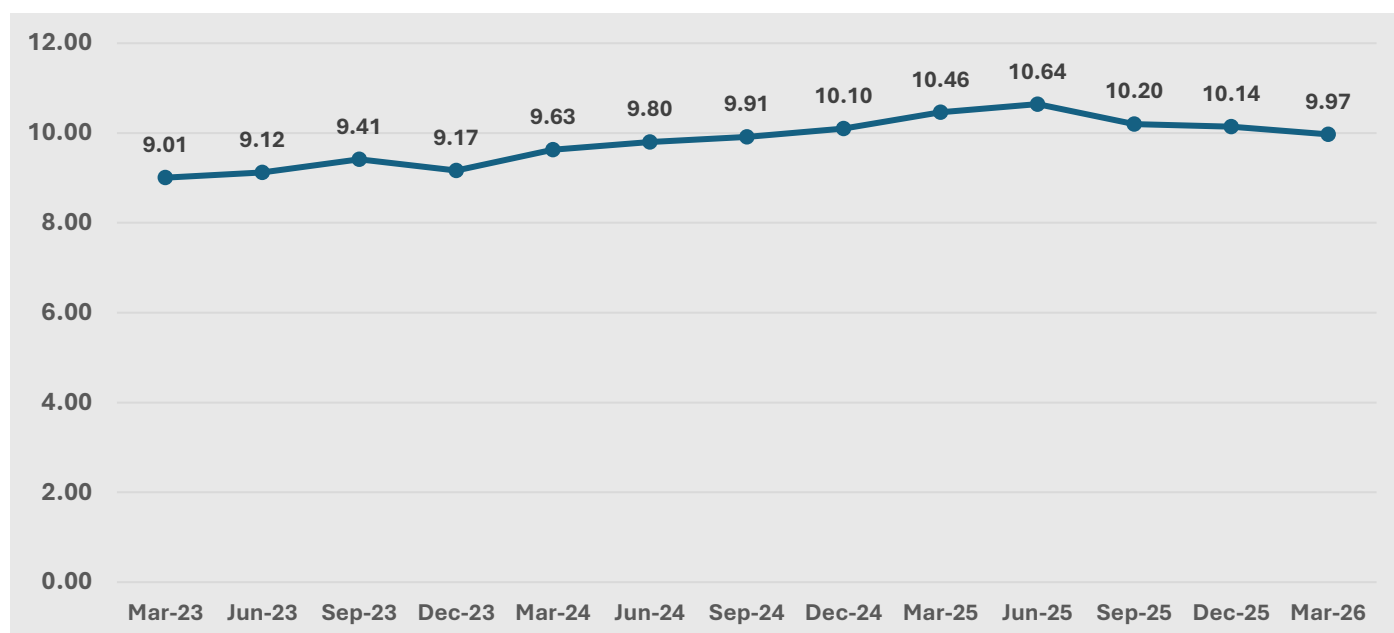
Graph 3 shows that the Council's 12-month rolling sickness absence rate generally increased between March 2023 and June 2025. The rate rose from 9.01 days per FTE in March 2023 to 10.46 days per FTE in March 2025 (+1.45) and continued to increase to a peak of 10.64 days per FTE in June 2025 (+0.18). The rate then decreased to 9.97 days per FTE by March 2026 (-0.67).

Whilst the rolling sickness absence rate fluctuated during the period, the overall trend demonstrates a sustained increase in sickness absence up to June 2025, followed by a gradual reduction during the remainder of the reporting period.

Similar trends were evident across the three directorates. Business Support increased from 8.99 days per FTE in March 2024 to a peak of 9.67 days per FTE in June 2025 before reducing to 8.63 by March 2026. Children and Adults continued to record the highest rolling sickness absence rate throughout the period, increasing from 10.48 days per FTE in March 2024 to 12.32 in March 2025 before reducing to 11.51 by March 2026. Regeneration, Culture and Environment (RCE) recorded the lowest rolling sickness absence rates and experienced comparatively smaller fluctuations, decreasing from 8.82 days per FTE in March 2024 to 8.12 by March 2026.

Overall, the rolling sickness absence data indicates that the increase in sickness absence experienced during 2024/25 formed part of a longer-term trend. However, the reduction in rolling sickness absence rates throughout 2025/26 suggests that sickness absence levels have stabilised and begun to reduce. Despite this, Children and Adults continued to record the highest levels of sickness absence across the Council throughout the period.

Graph 3: 12-month Rolling Sickness Rate



Workforce Report Action Plan

The analysis presented within this report highlights a number of positive workforce outcomes, including reductions in turnover and sickness absence, alongside areas requiring further attention such as equality data completeness, first-year turnover, **workforce succession planning** and understanding equality outcomes.

To ensure these findings lead to meaningful improvement, Appendix 2 contains a targeted Workforce Report Action Plan. The plan translates the evidence contained within this report into a series of priority actions designed to strengthen workforce resilience, improve the quality of workforce equality information, support employee wellbeing, enhance workforce diversity and develop a more comprehensive understanding of employee outcomes across protected characteristics. Progress against the action plan will be monitored through the Council's workforce governance arrangements and reported annually to demonstrate how workforce intelligence is being used to improve organisational effectiveness, inclusion and workforce sustainability.