



**Supporting
Equality, Diversity
and Inclusion**

APRIL 2023 - MARCH 2025

**South Oxfordshire and Vale of
White Horse District Council**

WORKFORCE EQUALITY REPORT



Listening Learning Leading



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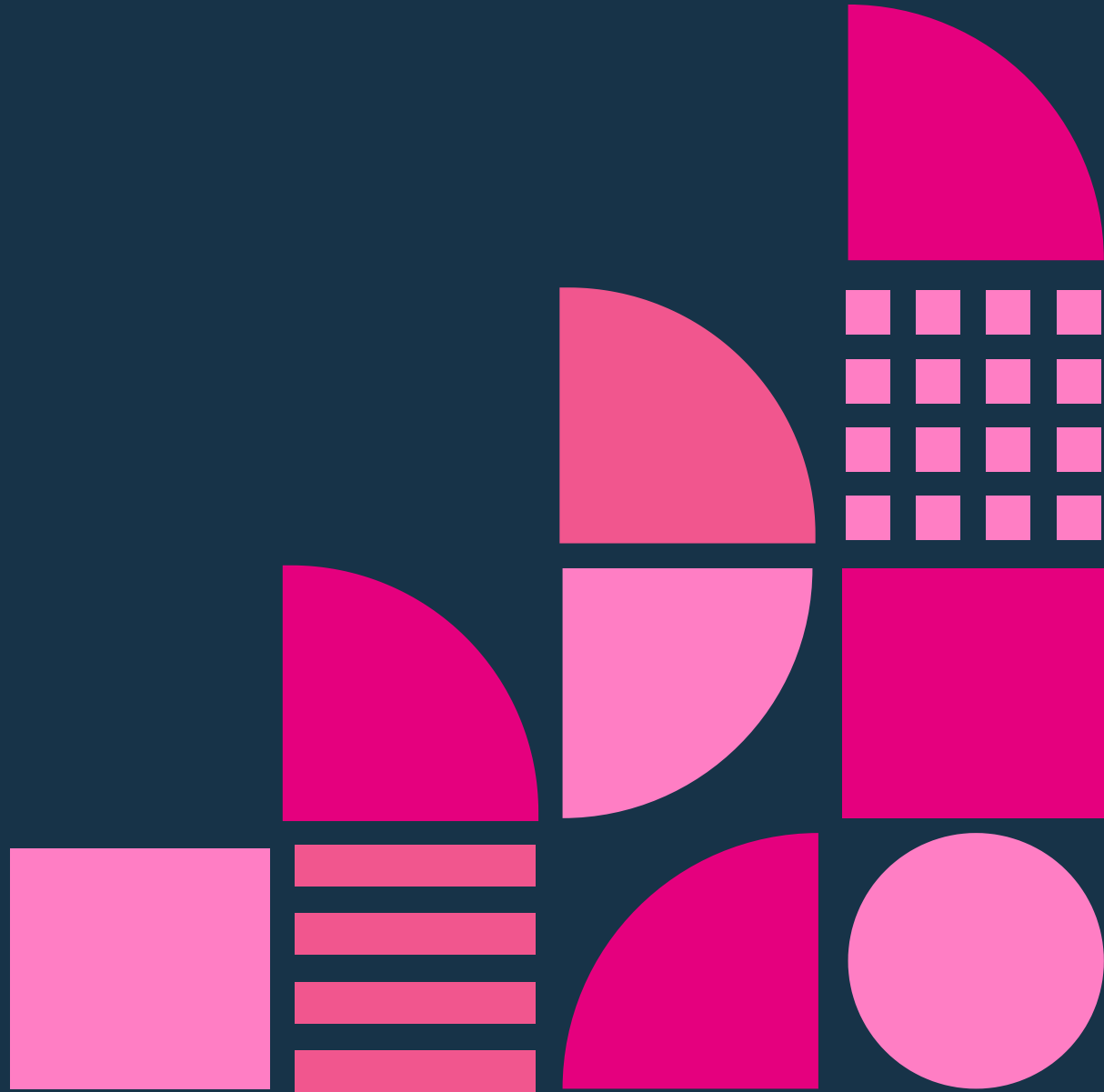
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You can find a plain word version on the council websites by going to the pages below:

- **[Vale of White Horse - Accessibility, equality and diversity page](#)**
- **[South Oxfordshire - Accessibility, equality and diversity page](#)**



Context



Background

South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse District Council aspire to create an environment where everybody feels that they belong and have a voice which will be heard. We embrace our differences, the unique talents, beliefs, backgrounds, and abilities of all our staff. We strive to make our councils a place where no-one experiences discrimination or feels disadvantaged because of their individual characteristics when working for us.

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, the councils are required to publish equality information to show our compliance with the general equality duty.

The characteristics that are protected by the Equality Act 2010 are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage Or Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy And Maternity
- Race
- Religion Or Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation.

Background continued

The councils must also publish information on pay for our employees; This is done as separate Pay Policy Statements which are available on the councils' websites. This Workforce Equality Report forms part of our response to the Public Sector Equality Duty. You can find out more about the Public Sector Equality Duty by going to the **[Equality and Human Rights Commission website](#)**.

The Equality act also includes protection against discrimination by association, this provides protection for people who are discriminated against because someone close to them falls under one or more of the protected characteristics.



Our workforce monitoring data is collected, reviewed, and published to help us understand who our workforce is; and to show the impact of our employment policies and practices and how we are meeting our responsibilities as an employer regarding equality.

Data and Reporting

Much of the information in this report relies on employees self-reporting and providing their information through the councils' HR system. Over the course of the reporting period (April 2023 to March 2025) we have seen an increase in the number of staff who are providing this information although we still have many instances where data is 'unknown' across the following protected characteristics: Disability, Race/Ethnicity, Religion and Belief, and Sexual Orientation

The people and Culture team are implementing a new Human Resources Information System (HRIS) which has meant some data sets are still under development, in the next 12 months the team aim to expand upon the current data to ensure it reflects the workforce accurately.

This report covers the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2025. The report spans the course of two years in order to update the report's findings to current day. Future iterations will continue to span a single year.



Data and Reporting

Currently due to the limitations of our reporting system we do not have local information relating to **Gender Re-assignment and Pregnancy and Maternity**.

Unless otherwise stated, analyses presented in this report are based on ‘known data’. This means only data that employees have self-disclosed and therefore held on the councils’ HRIS. Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100.

Tables 1 and 2 show the percentage of total employees for which equality data is known and recorded for 2023-2024 and 2024-2025.

Table 1: April 2023 - March 2024 in percentage

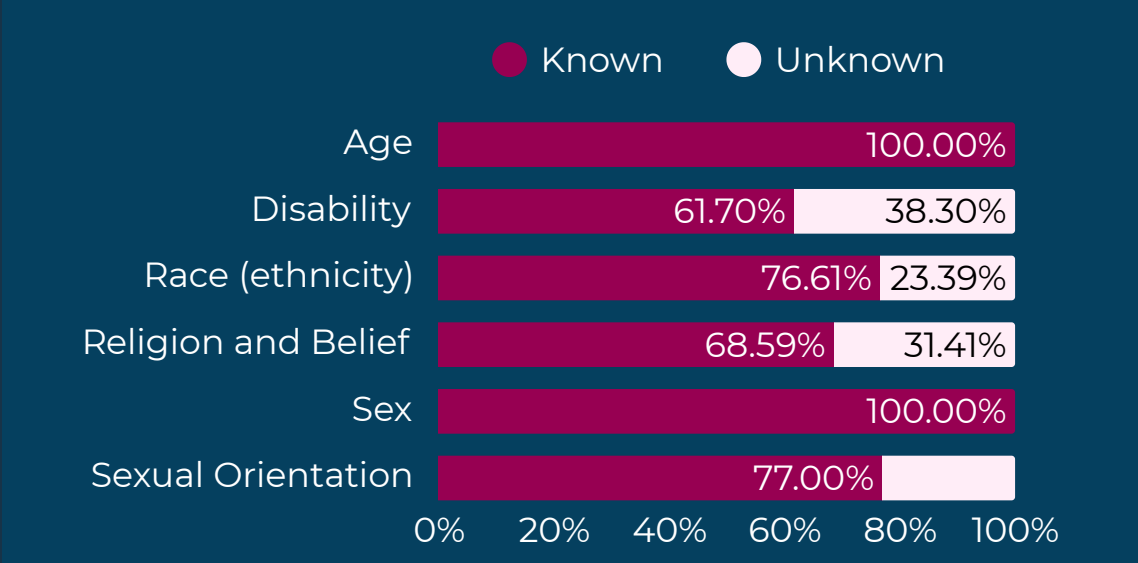
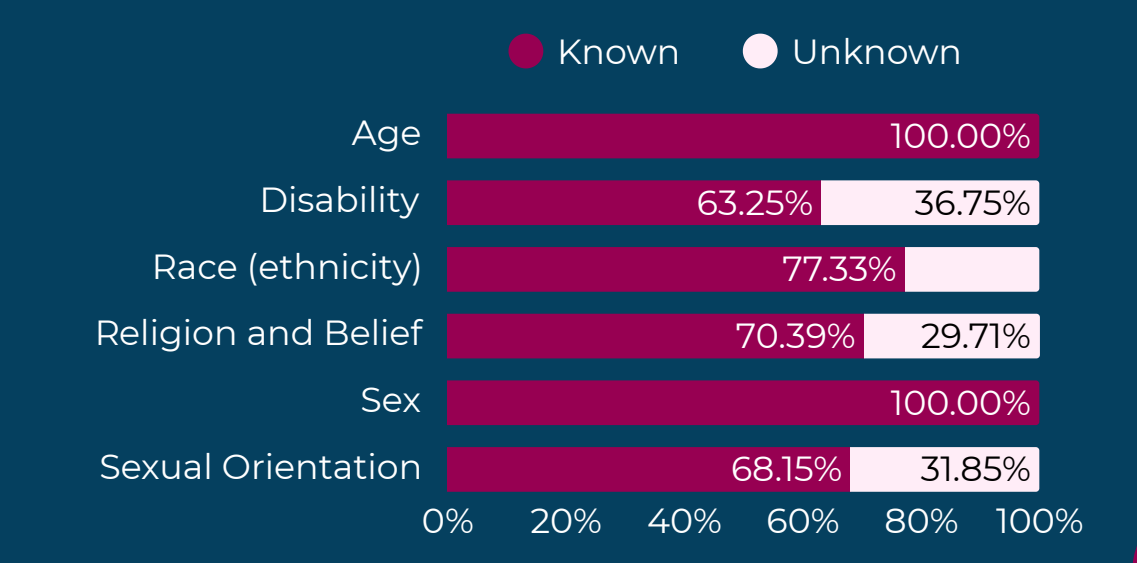


Table 2: April 2024 - March 2025 in percentage



Local Information

To understand the impact of employment policies and practices, our workforce data is compared with local demographic information and national population data where this is available. In most instances this data was collected as part of the latest Census in 2021.

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse districts

Ethnicity

7% of South Oxfordshire and **9.3%** of Vale of White Horse population are from an ethnic diverse community (are non-'White British').



Religion and Belief

52.9% of South Oxfordshire and **52.3%** of Vale of White Horse residents consider themselves to have a religion or belief.



Disabilities

13.7% of South Oxfordshire and **14.6%** of Vale of White Horse residents have a limiting long-term illness, health problem or disability that affects their day-to-day activities.



Working Age

The estimated working age population (those aged 16-74 years) is **106,413**



LGBTQIA+

2.38% of South Oxfordshire and **2.70%** of Vale of White Horse residents identify with the LGBTQIA+ community.





Policies and Initiatives

We have run
a total of **5**

Access
group
meetings

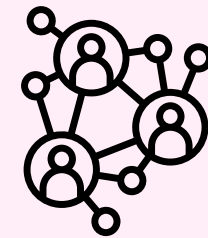


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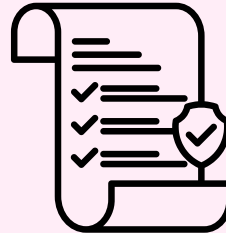
Number of Diversity Days
Celebrated in the last year



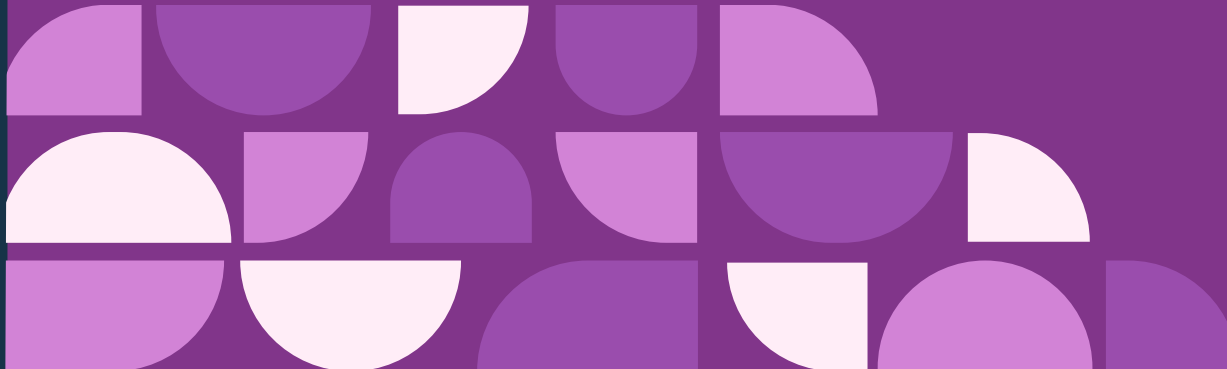
We have
held a
total of **9**
Diversity
and
Inclusion
Champion
meetings



We have **13** different
policies to support
equalities and wellbeing



Policies and Initiatives at a glance



We celebrated

In the last year we have celebrated a number of different Diversity days and focused on ensuring our staff wellbeing Including:

- Vision and Values Launch
- Fusion Fest at Cornerstone Arts Centre
- Menopause Awareness
- Men's Mental Health

You can find the Diversity Days for the upcoming year by going our website:

[Diversity and Social Campaign Calendar - South Oxfordshire](#)

[Diversity and Social Campaign Calendar - Vale of White Horse](#)





Access group

The councils have continued to facilitate a network who meet on a quarterly basis. The aim of the group is multifaceted with a view to sharing details of projects the councils are working on and any upcoming consultations as well as an opportunity to discuss topics of interest with the relevant officer to raise awareness of accessibility issues. The group has discussed several topics including:

- Council activities
- Building Accessibility
- Elections and Polling stations
- Communications and Engagement
- The Inclusive Economy Partnerships

Disability Confident Employer

The councils have been certified as a Disability Confident Employer (Level 2). The councils continue to work towards achieving the Disability Confident Leader (Level 3) throughout the next 12 months.

Through the Disability Confident Scheme, the councils are able to make the most of the talents that disabled people bring to the workplace. The councils challenge attitudes towards disability, increase understanding of disability, and remove barriers to disabled people and those with long-term health conditions, ensuring that disabled people can fulfil their potential and realise their aspirations.

Digital Inclusion working group

In 2024, the Councils' created an internal Digital Inclusion working group in order to ensure that our digital services are accessible in accordance with WCAG guidelines.

Diversity and Inclusion Strategy Update

The councils' continue to work towards the action plan which sets out the commitment and actions to creating diverse and inclusive services, embedding equalities programmes for residents and staff. You can find the details of the **Diversity and Inclusion Strategy by going to the councils website.**

Diversity & Inclusion Champions Network

We have in place a Champions Network which provides a safe space for colleagues from across the councils to share experience relevant to diversity and inclusion and to act as champions for diversity and inclusion in their respective service areas.

Our Champions have reviewed policies and resources currently in place at the councils, including the introduction of the Wellbeing Passport, Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy and Menopause Awareness Policy.

Equality and diversity training

The councils regard training as a key component in supporting equality, diversity and inclusion. All new starters undertake mandatory Equality and Diversity training as part of their induction with the aim to ensure a better understanding of what equality legislation means for service planning and delivery, to increase awareness of equality in the workplace and to identify expectations in terms of behaviour.



Staff members on a Wellbeing Walk for Men's Mental Health Day

People and Culture expansion

At the beginning of 2024, the Councils expanded their People and Culture team. This expansion included an additional role dedicated to Equality and Wellbeing. The additional role has meant that the team can commit more time and resource to Diversity and Inclusion at the councils, both for staff and the communities they serve.

People & Culture policies and guidelines addressing equality issues

The councils have in place various agreed policies providing support and covering all aspects of employment law, employee relations and recruitment. The following policies and guidelines explicitly address issues relevant to the councils' Public Sector Equality Duty responsibilities:

- Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Carers Leave Policy
- Capability Policy
- Corporate Equality Policy
- Employee Conduct Policy
- Equality in Employment Policy
- Maternity, Paternity, Adoption and Surrogacy Policy
- Menopause Policy
- Organisational Change Policy
- Redundancy Policy
- Shared Parental Leave Policy
- Sickness Absence Policy
- Stress Policy



Equality and Wellbeing Team at Fusion Fest

Vision and Values

The Councils have introduced a new set of Vision and Values which are underpinned by a behavioural framework which will help provide clarity and guidance on how we work, each of which support a different aspect of Diversity and Inclusion.

Each Value has a Champion in the councils' Senior Management Team (SMT) who model and advocate for their specific value. By embedding these at a senior level, the values will be adopted throughout the rest of the organisation.

These Values will continue to be embedded throughout the next 12 months and aim to develop our staff's way of working.

Our Vision

We are customer focused and approachable. We are honest and open and are committed to providing high quality cost-effective public services.

Our Values



Working Together

We are a committed professional team, who embrace change and help one another improve



People and Planet

We care about each other and the environment we share



Respect

We act with integrity, and champion Diversity and inclusivity



Accountability

We take ownership, do what we say, strive for clarity and welcome feedback



Approachability

We are open, honest and accessible



Wellbeing Passport

Following a successful trial in 2024, the Wellbeing Passport was introduced across the Councils. This is a personalised document designed to encourage communication between employees and managers regarding their individual needs, preferences, and wellbeing at work. It serves as a tool to support open dialogue about working conditions, feedback and support, ensuring that each employee's unique circumstances are recognised and accommodated.

Wellbeing Group

The Wellbeing Group is made up of council employees with a shared passion for promoting wellbeing in the workplace and regularly meet to arrange upcoming activities and provide feedback on how previous activities have been received. The group of volunteers work to provide a range of activities and events staff can attend both virtually and in person to accommodate the way we are all now working. The wellbeing group have been paramount in the training and coordination of our network of Mental Health First Aiders across the councils.

At the end of 2024 The Equality and Wellbeing team reviewed the Mental Health First Aiders and are seeking new members of staff who would like refresher or full training.



Workforce Strategy 2024-2028

In 2024, the councils introduced a new Workforce Strategy;

Our workforce vision is:

Providing a professional, supportive, and inclusive environment for staff to feel empowered, to grow and to thrive in their roles.

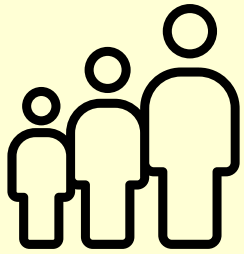
Our workforce strategy themes are:

- **Organisational Development** – creating a culture and environment that is fit for the future and where staff can thrive.
- **Equalities, diversity, and inclusion** – that we understand our current workforce profile, understand where there are gaps to be addressed and how representative we are of the communities we serve, and create an environment where individuality is celebrated.
- **Transformation** – use data to inform decisions, encourage innovation, and seek to streamline and/or digitise processes/systems where possible. The workforce strategy will also support a culture of change and continuous improvement of systems, processes, roles, and approach.
- **Wellbeing** – to create an environment to support staff to maintain positive health and develop high levels of engagement.
- **Learning & development** – ascertain the skills and knowledge required to provide services now and, in the future, to deliver our priorities and have a highly motivated workforce.
- **Talent acquisition and development** – to attract, retain and develop talent, providing career progression and diversification opportunities.



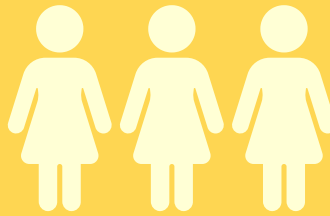
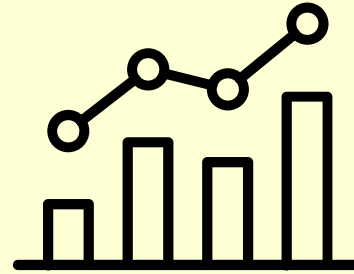
Our Workforce





The majority of our workforce are between 45 - 64 in age range.

Statistically, data **mirrors our demographic data** for Religion and Belief and Ethnicity



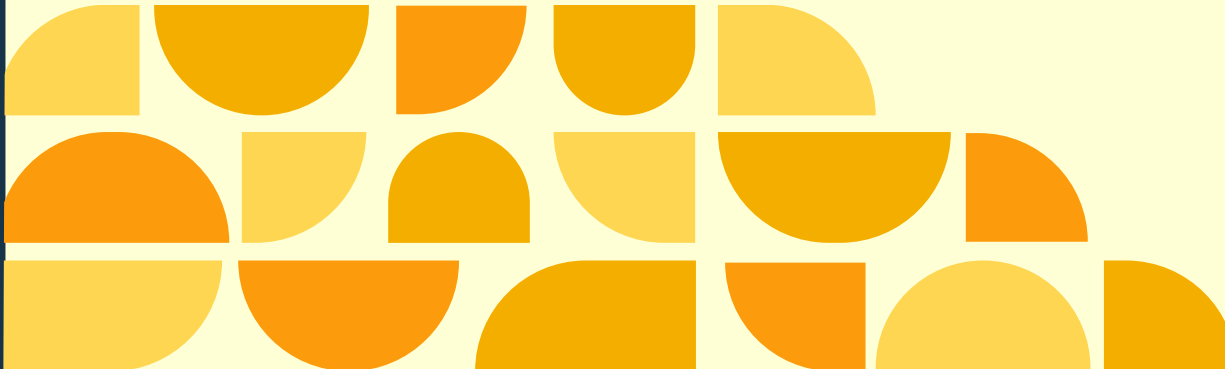
The majority of our workforce are women

We have had an increase on **known data** for:

- Disability
- Religion and Belief
- Ethnicity



Our Workforce at a glance

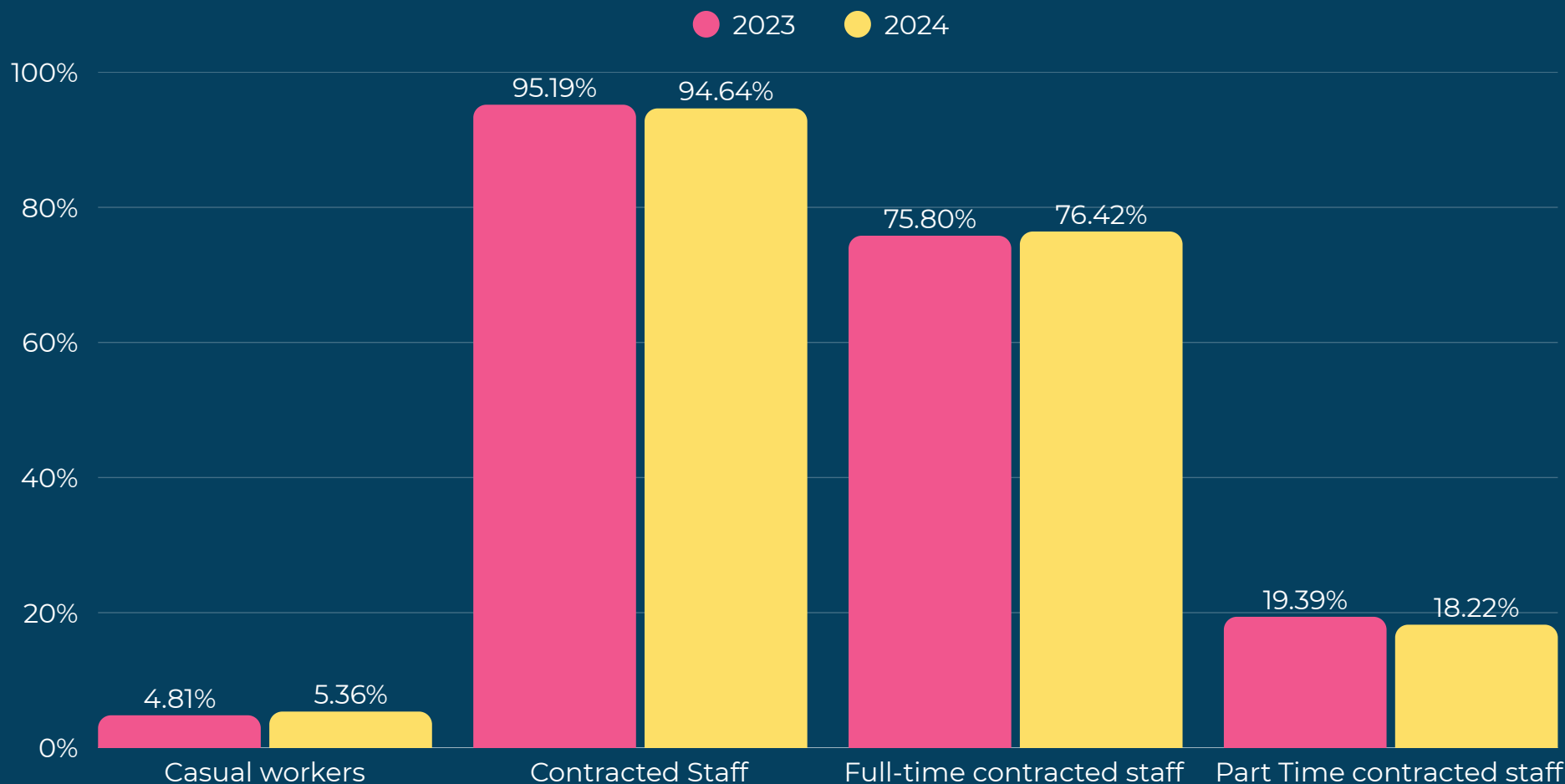


Overview

The data presented in this chapter is based on a snapshot date of 31 March 2024 and 31 March 2025

On the 31 March 2024 the councils employed **624** members of staff. On the 31 March 2025 the councils employed **653** members of staff.

Table 3: Overview of workforce in percentage



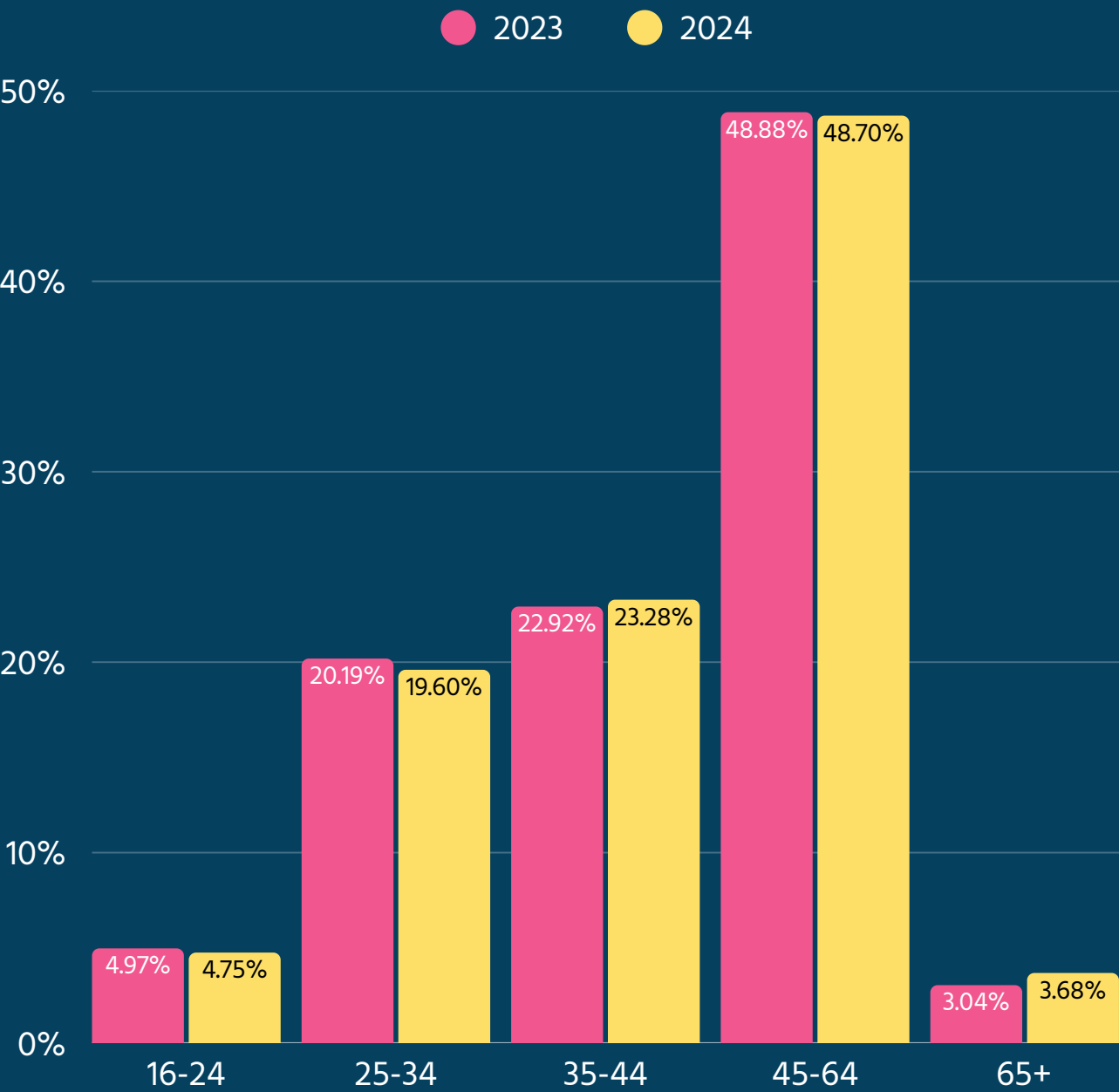
Age

The age profile of employees is presented in Table 4.

There has been little change from previous years, with statistics staying consistent from previous years.

The latest Census data (2021) has been used to collect details of ‘economically active’ residents of our districts, **65.1% (South Oxfordshire)** and **65.2% (Vale of White Horse)** of the 16+ population was classed as in employment or actively seeking work.

Table 4: Workforce by Age in percentage

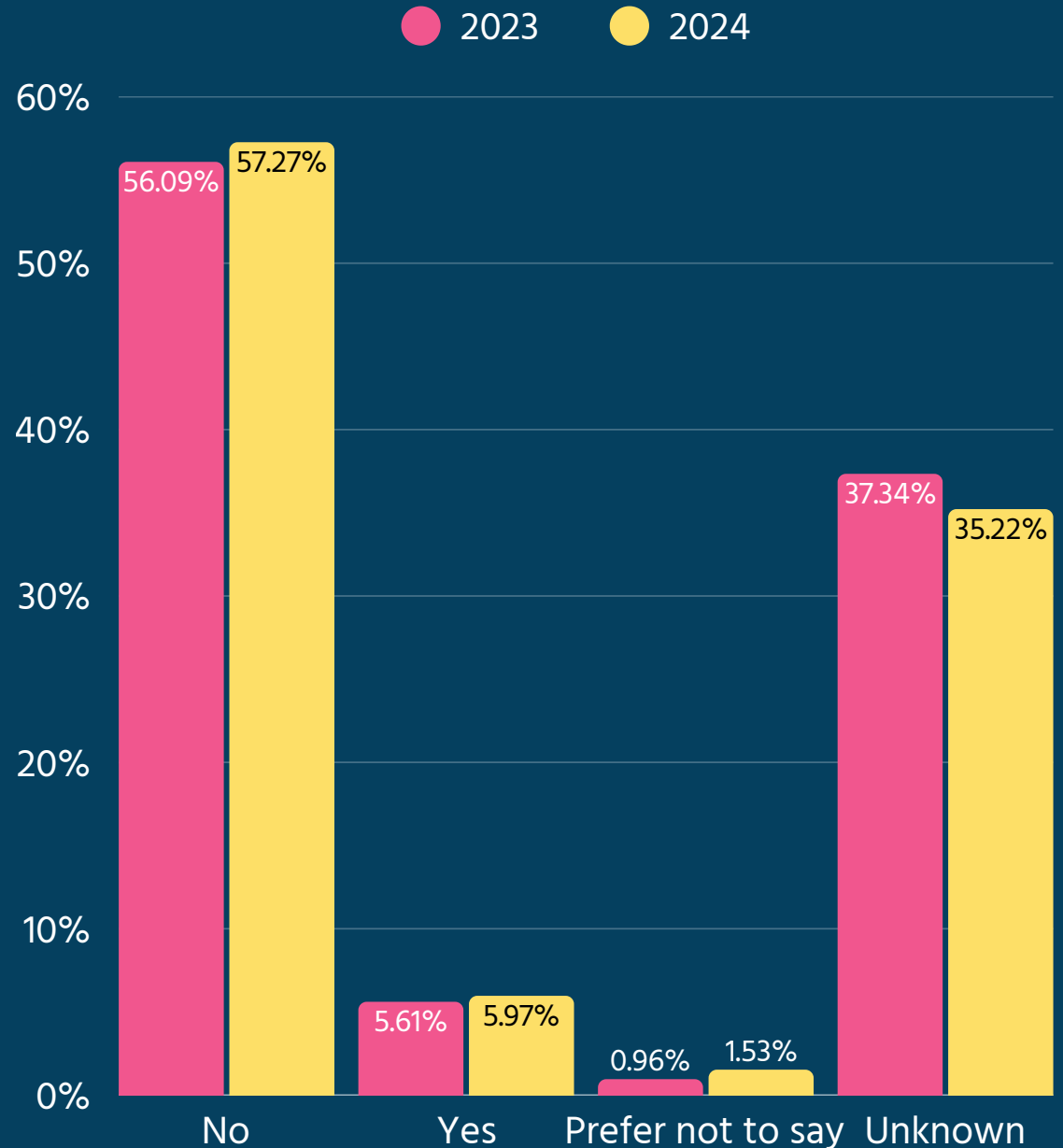


Disability

The disability profile of employees is presented in Table 5. Data on employees' disability status is **known for 61.70% of our workforce in 2023 and 63.25 in 2024**. Based on known data, 5.61% of our workforce has declared a disability in 2023 and 5.97% in 2024.

Data from the latest Census in 2021 has so far only been released based on the total population of each local area relating to disability. For **South Oxfordshire** the number of people classed as disabled under the Equality Act is **13.7%** of the total population, whereas for **Vale of White Horse** this figure is **14.6%**. This would appear to indicate that disabled employees are under-represented in our workforce. However, as we still have staff who are not recording this information, it is not possible to draw definite conclusions.

Table 5 Workforce by Disability in percentage



Ethnicity

The ethnicity profile of employees is presented in Table 6. Ethnicity data is known for **76.61%** of staff in 2023 and **77.33%** in 2024.

The **latest Census data** from 2021 is also included in Table 7. This shows that in both of our districts more than 90% of our populations identify as White. Although our staff profile shows only 72.12% in 2023 and 71.51% in 2024 identify as White, these figures are likely, in part, to be impacted by staff where this information is not known. We will continue to monitor these figures.

Table 6: Workforce by Ethnicity in percentage

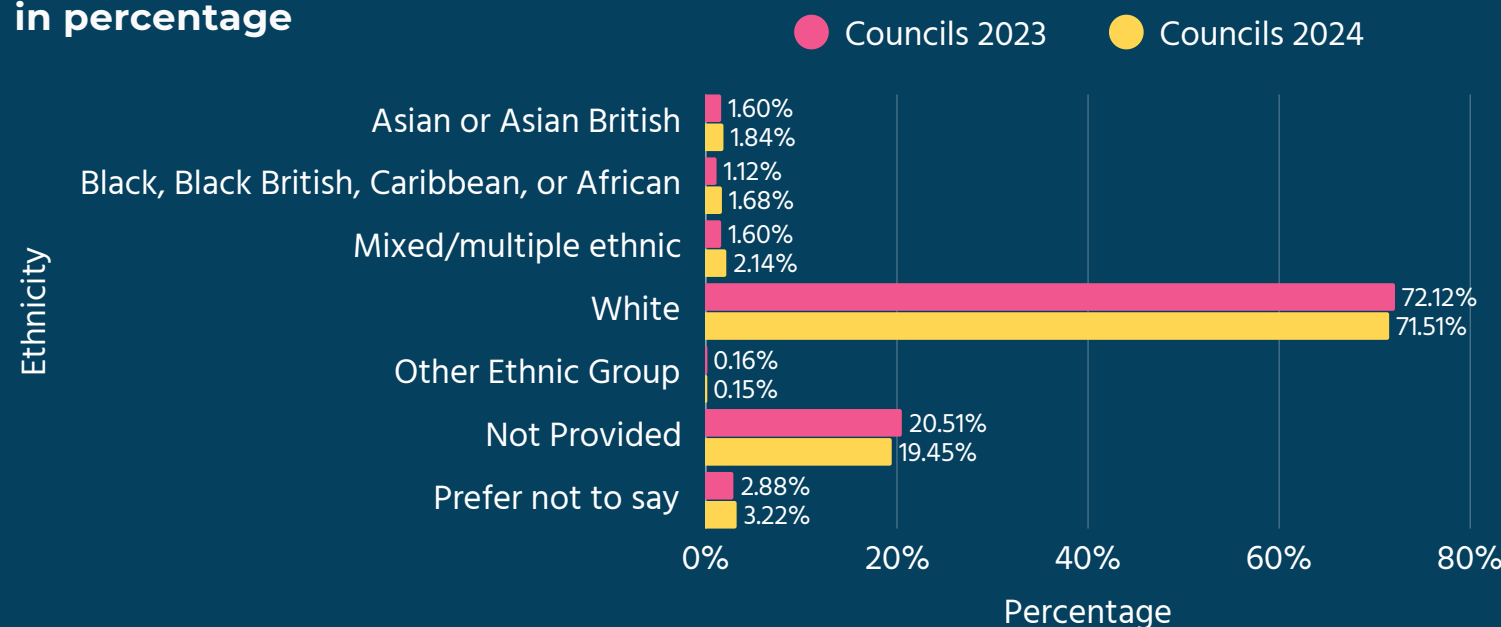
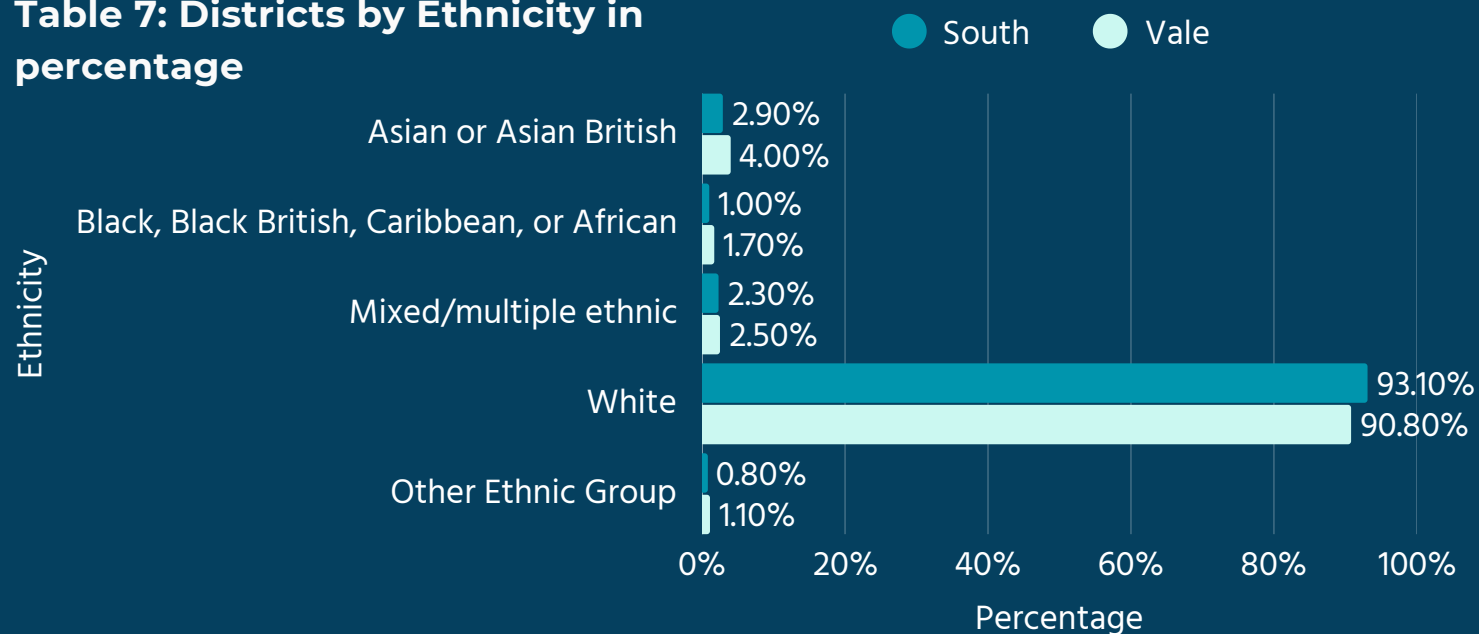


Table 7: Districts by Ethnicity in percentage



Religion and Belief

The profile of our workforce by religion and belief is presented in Table 8. Data on religion and belief is held for **68.59%** for 2023 and **70.39%** for 2024.

The latest Census data is also provided in Table 9. This shows that, discounting the staff we cannot identify, the profile of our districts is similar to our workforce.

Table 8: Workforce by Religion in percentage

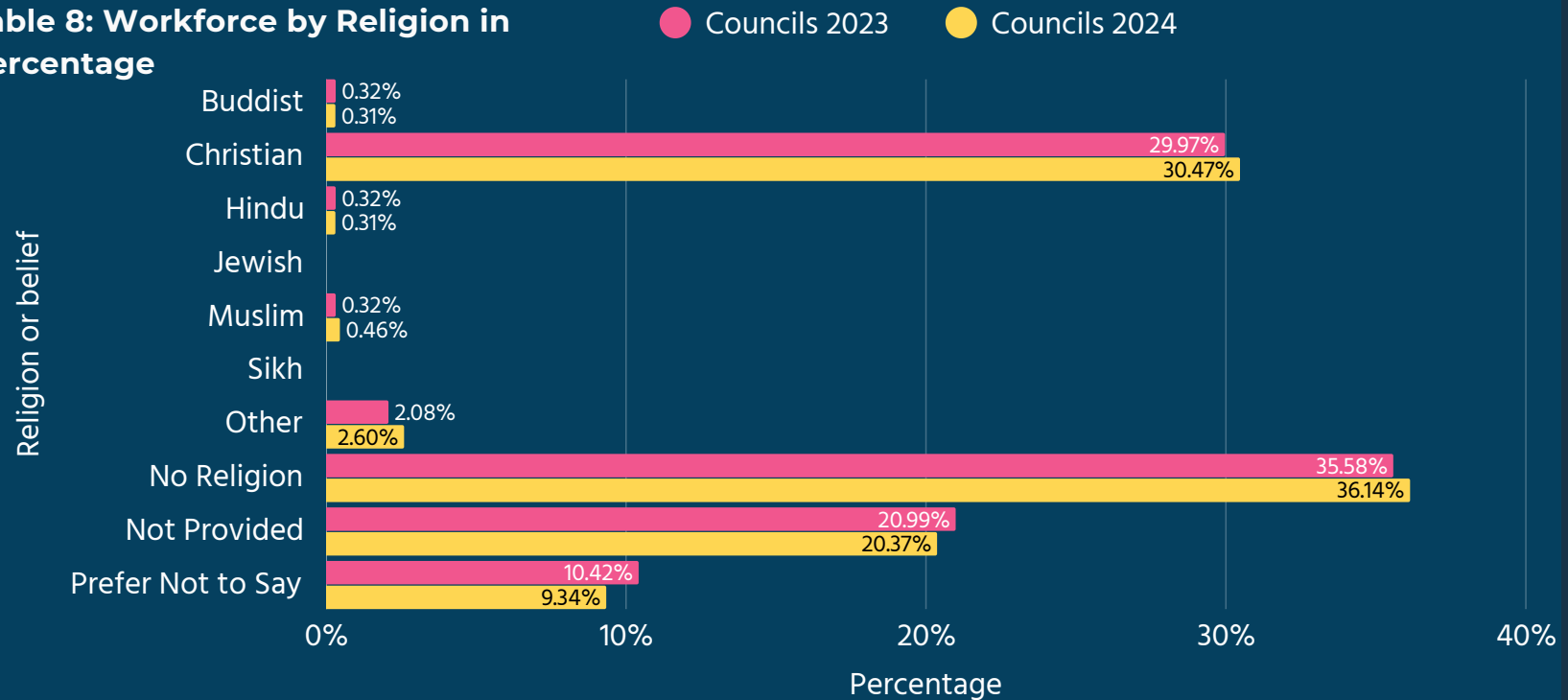
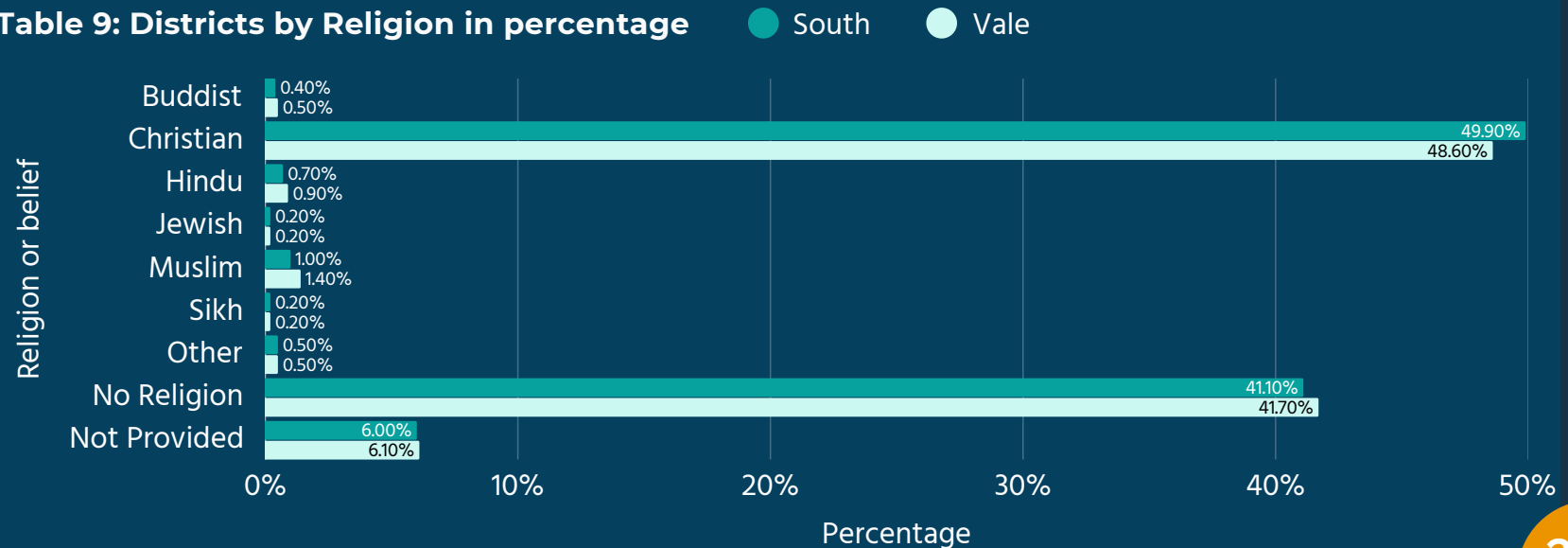


Table 9: Districts by Religion in percentage



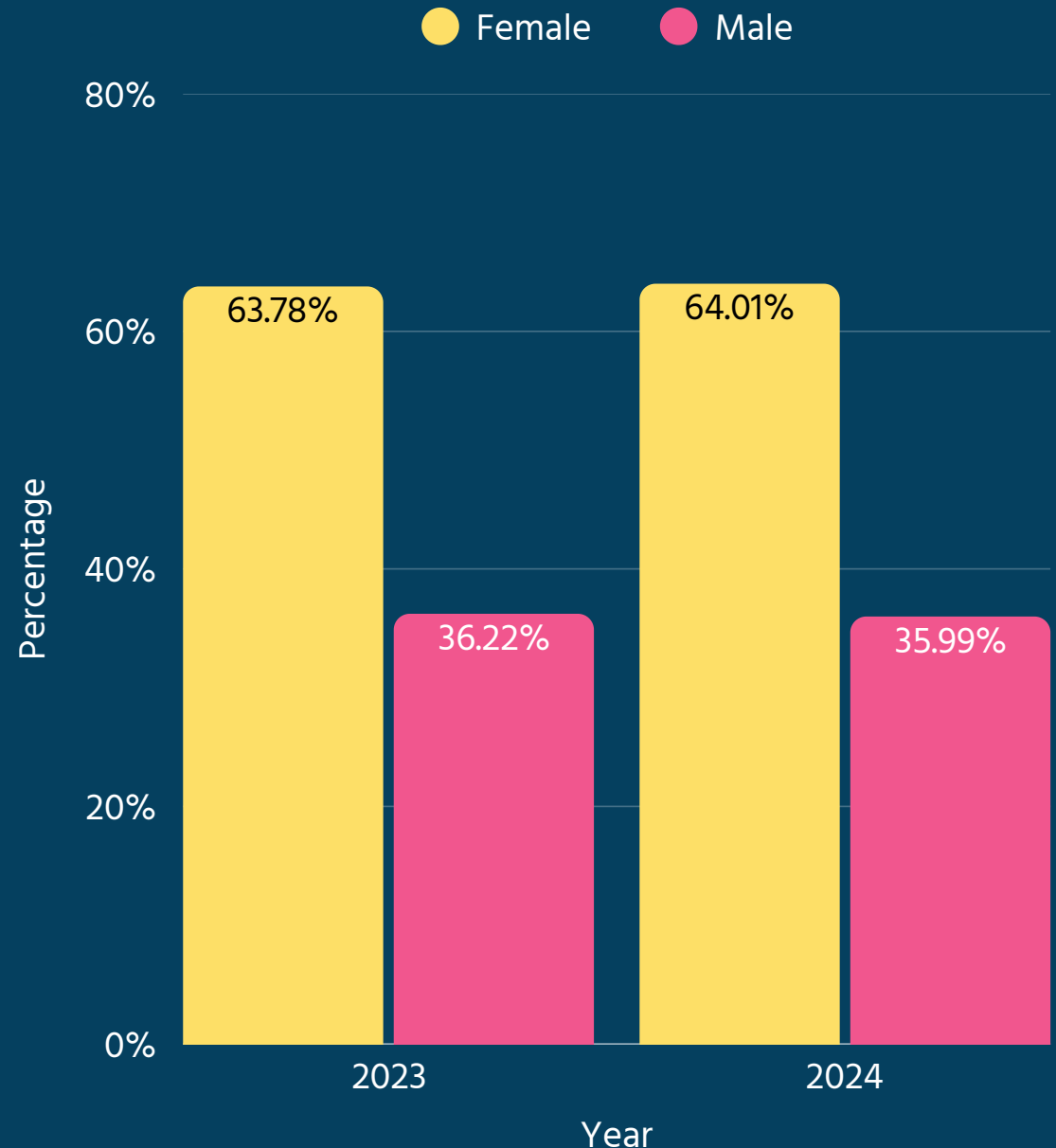
Sex

The profile of our workforce by sex is presented in Table 10. The workforce split by sex has stayed similar to previous years.

In comparison to the working age population, male employees are under-represented within the workforce; however, this sex split is typical for local authorities.

Due to the limitations of our current data, we are unable to report on the workforce who do not identify as Male or Female, we plan on improving this by introducing new reporting software.

Table 10: Workforce by Sex in percentage

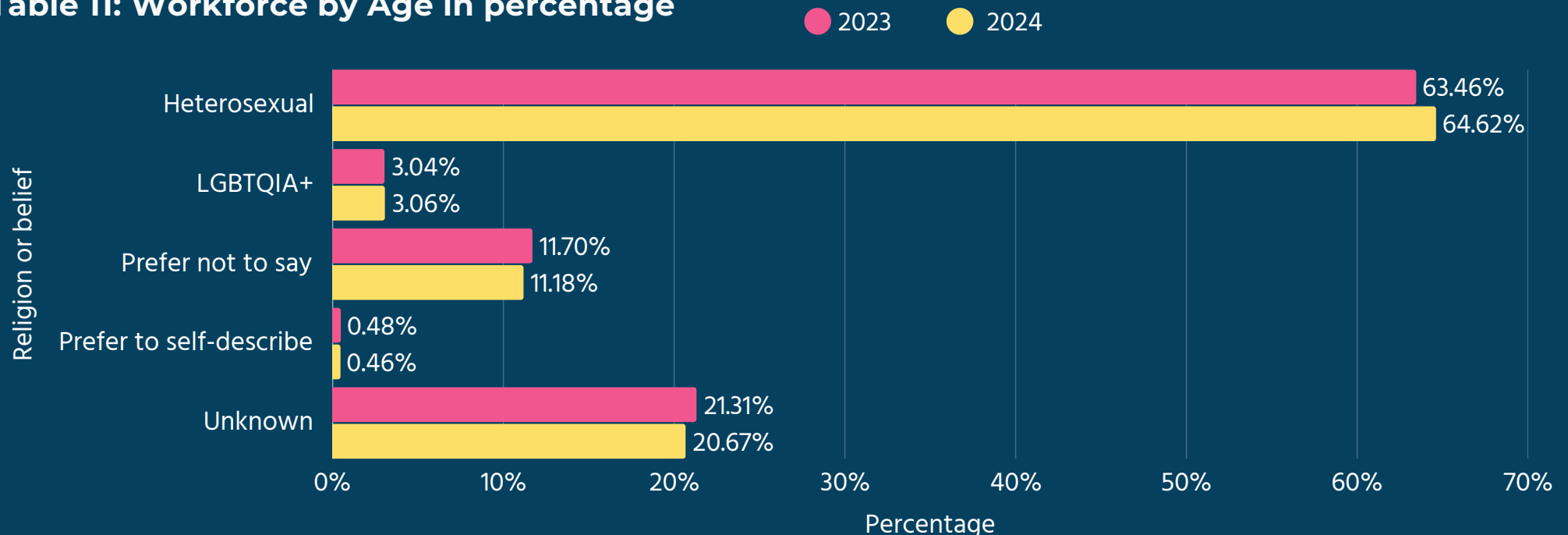


Sexual Orientation

The profile of our workforce by sexual orientation is presented in Table 11. Data on sexual orientation is held for **68.15%** in 2024 and **77%** in 2023 of our workforce (including staff who 'prefer not to say').

Our workforce who report as LGBTQIA+ is in line with the latest Census data [1] for our districts. In South Oxfordshire 2.4% and in Vale of White Horse 2.7%.

Table 11: Workforce by Age in percentage



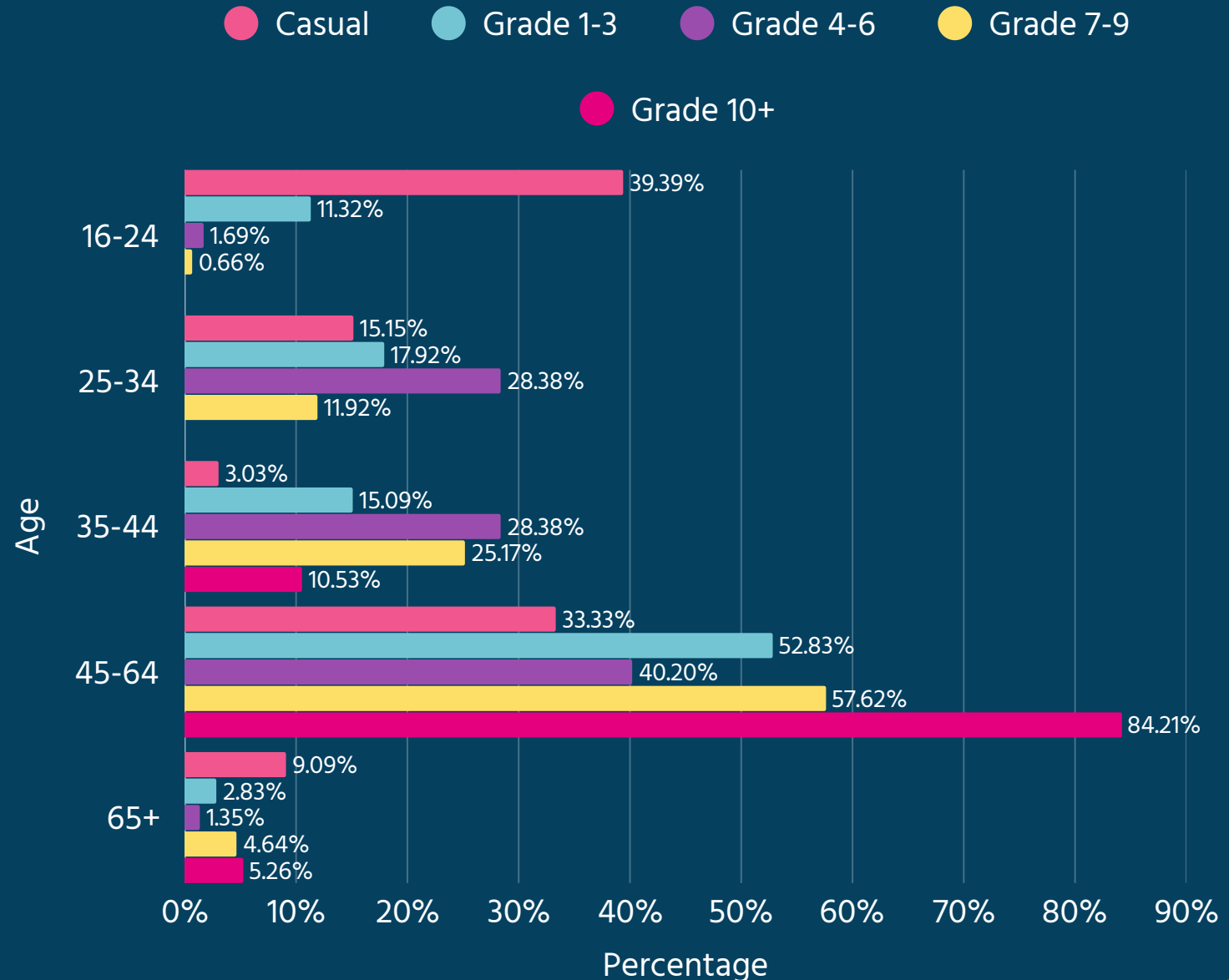
"[1] Note: The census data separates sexual orientation and Gender Identity, which may affect the comparability of our internal data. Additionally, the data collection methods within the HR system may differ from census procedures."

Grade 2023

Table 12 shows the number of staff across the grading structure the councils operate broken down into age bands. Our casual workers are all on spot salaries appropriate to the evaluated grade for the role.

The largest group of our workforce is between 45-64 with the majority within Grades 10+.

Table 12: 2023 Workforce by Grade in percentage



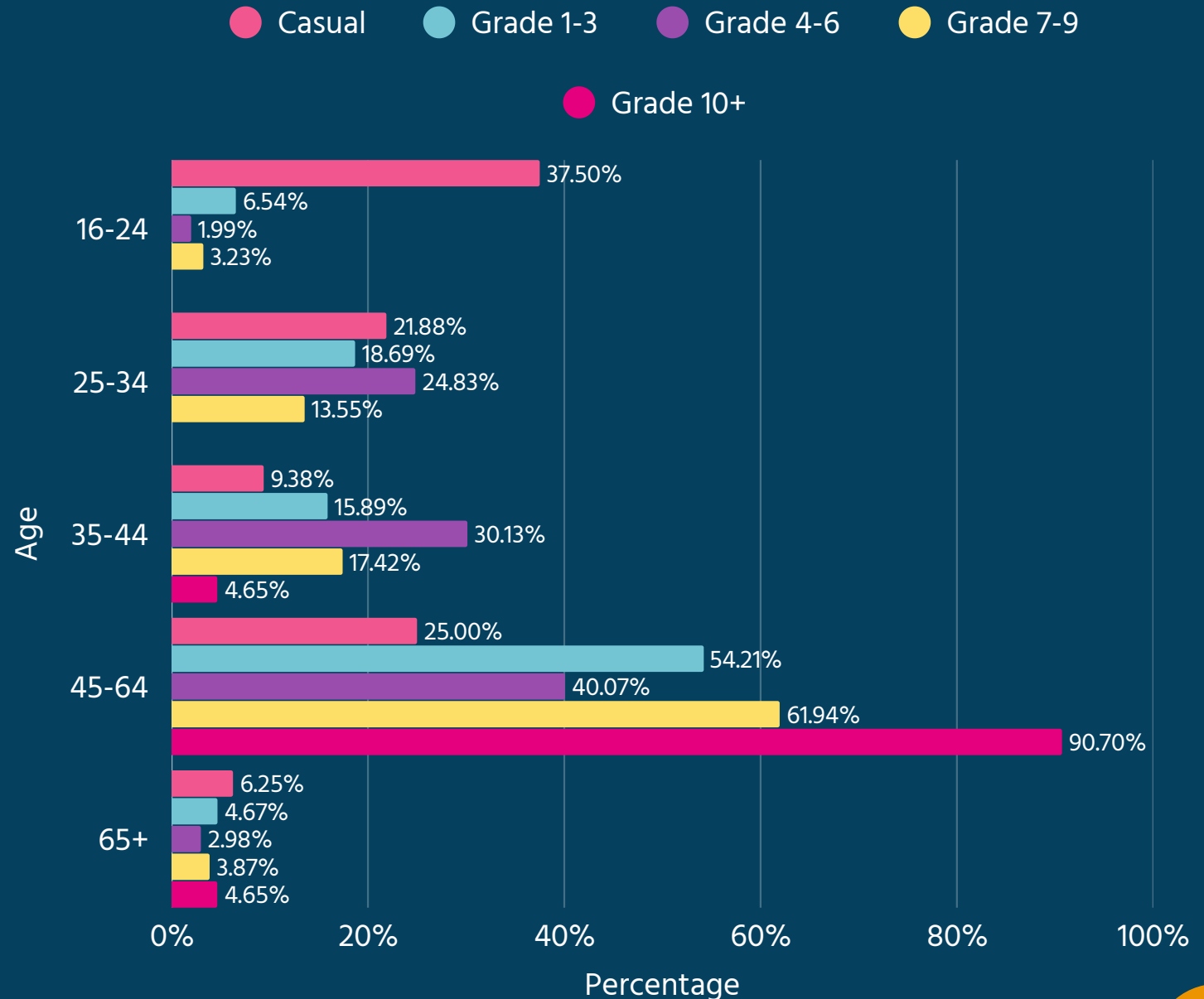
Grade 2024

Table 13 shows the number of staff across the grading structure the councils operate broken down into age bands. Our casual workers are all on spot salaries appropriate to the evaluated grade for the role.

The largest group of our workforce is between 45-64 with the majority within Grades 10+.

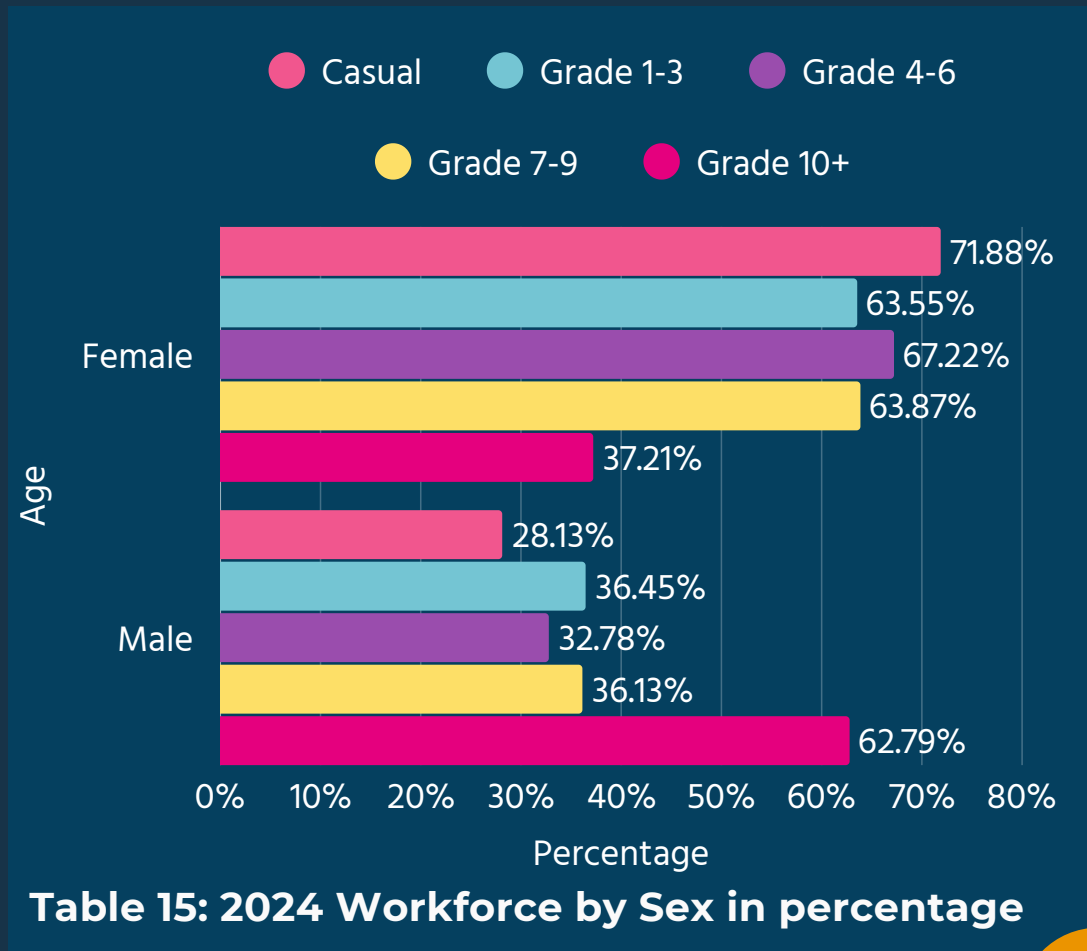
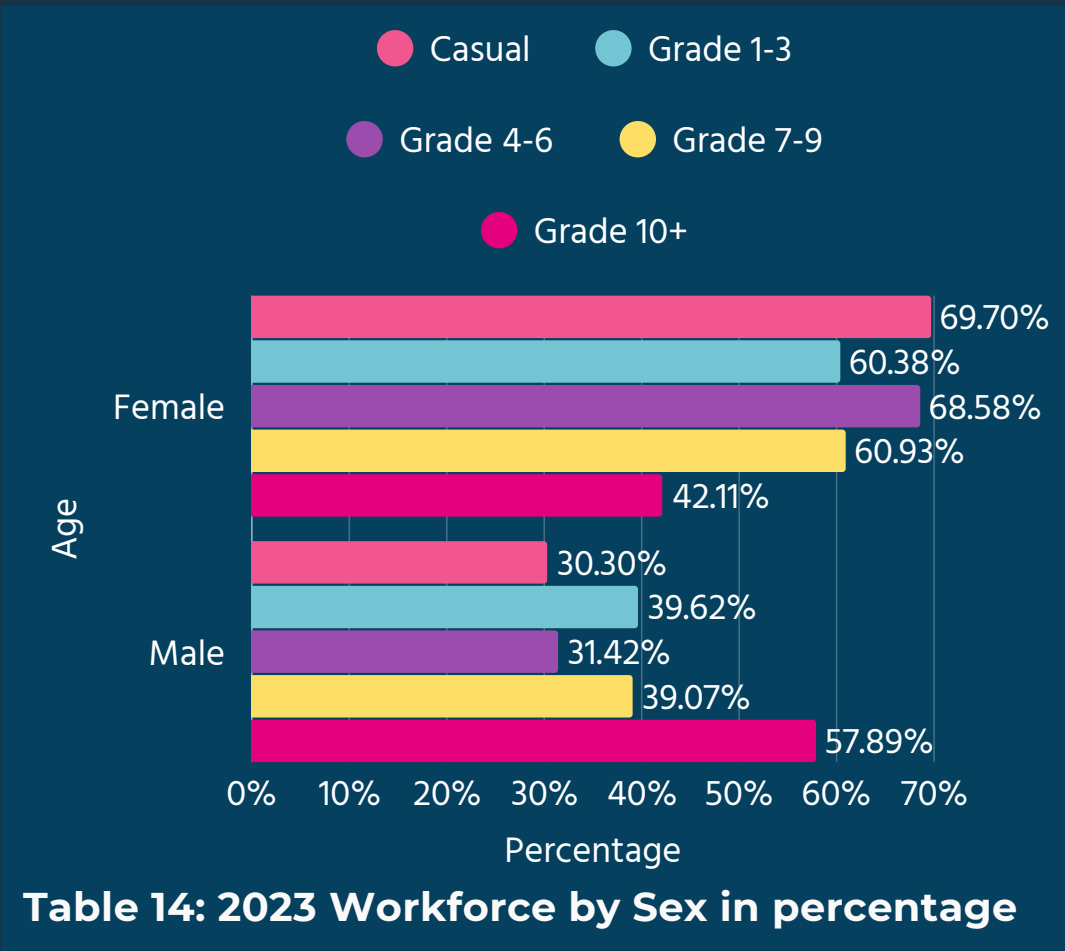
This has stayed consistent over the last two years.

Table 13: 2024 Workforce by Grade in percentage



Sex and Grade

Tables 14 and 15 shows that we continue to have a higher proportion of female staff than male across most of our salary grades. The exception being in grades 10+ where we have 66.6% male and 33.3% female.



Recruitment, Leavers and Training



Recruitment, Leavers and Training at a glance

In 2023 we received **1783 applications** and **appointed 150** external candidates

In 2024 we received **1760 applications** and **appointed 41** external candidates



In 2023 there was a total of **81 leavers**

In 2024 there was a total of **45 leavers**



In 2023 **69.23%** employees accessed different training courses managed by the People & Culture team

In 2024 **64.78%** employees accessed different training courses managed by the People & Culture team

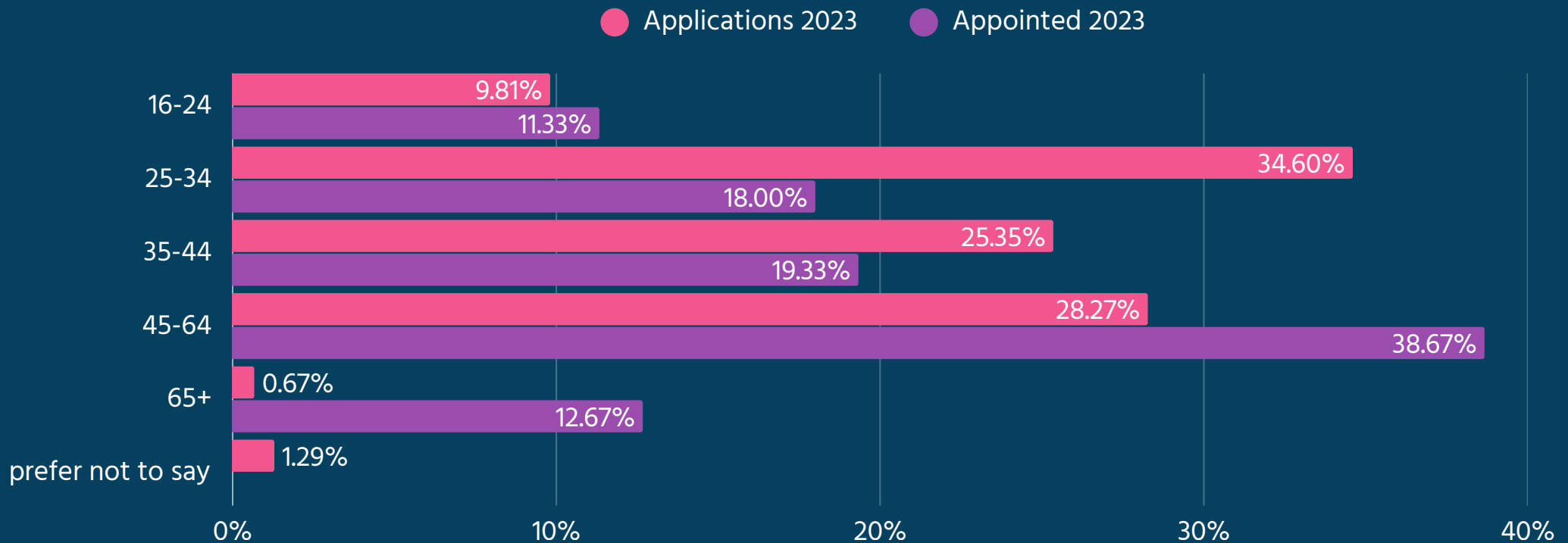


Recruitment by Age 2023

In 2023 we received 1783 applications and appointed 150 external candidates to positions within the councils.

Table 16 shows the number of applicants and appointed candidates by age range in 2023. As the number of appointments is a relatively small number statistical trends are difficult to draw, **It is also important to note that during 2023 and 2024 there were a number of unallocated candidates due to a data error, therefore any unallocated numbers have been filled under “Not Provided”.**

Table 16: Recruitment by Age in percentage

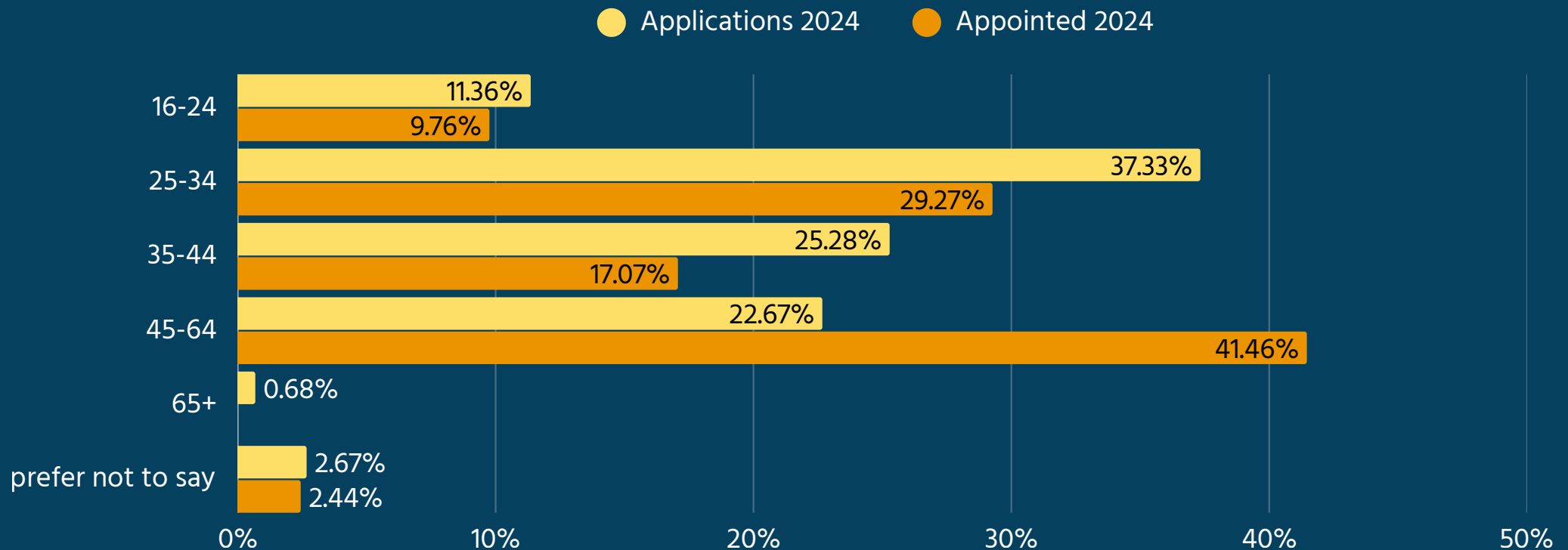


Recruitment by Age 2024

In 2024 we received 1760 applications and appointed 41 external candidates to positions within the councils.

Table 17 shows the number of applicants and appointed candidates by age range in 2024. As the number of appointments is a relatively small number statistical trends are difficult to draw, **It is also important to note that during 2023 and 2024 there were a number of unallocated candidates due to a data error, therefore any unallocated numbers have been filled under “Not Provided”.**

Table 17: Recruitment by Age in percentage



Recruitment by Ethnicity

Table 18 and 19 show the number of applications and appointed candidates by ethnicity in 2023 and 2024. As the number of appointments is a relatively small number statistical trends are difficult to draw.

It is important to note that during 2023 and 2024 there were a number of unallocated candidates due to a data error, therefore any unallocated numbers have been filled under “Not Provided”.

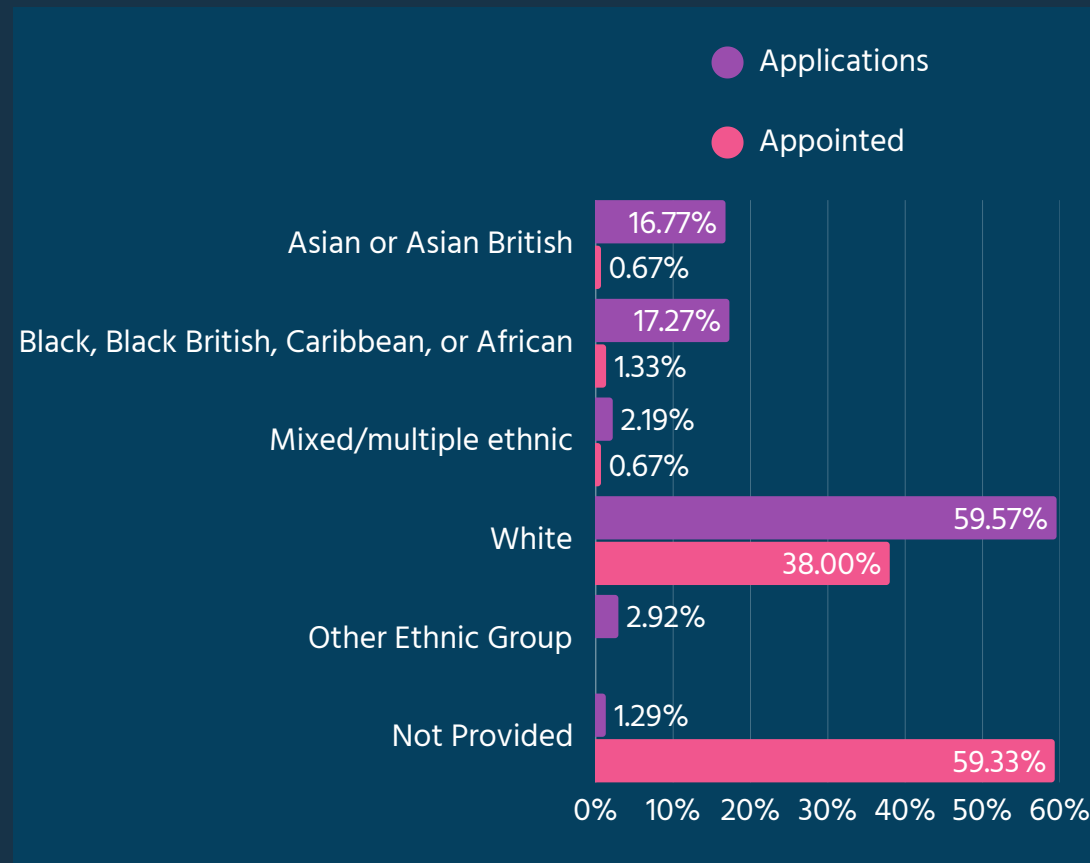


Table 18: 2023 Recruitment by Ethnicity in percentage

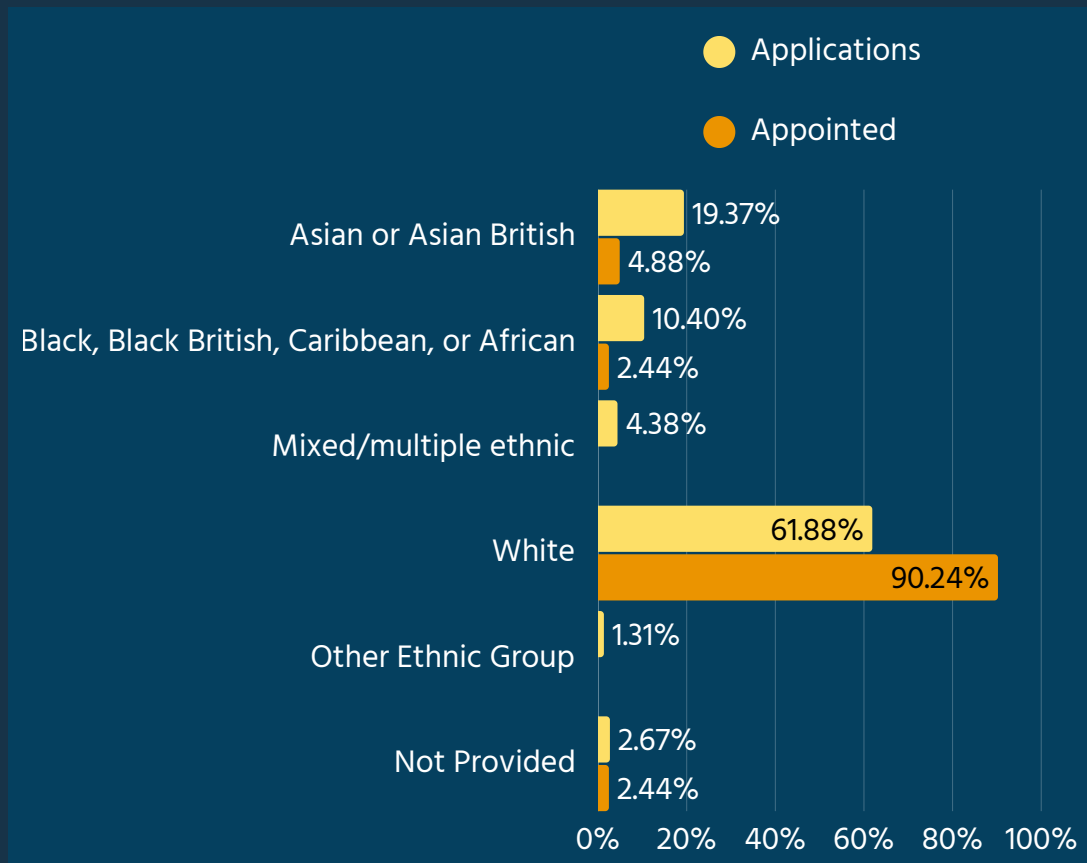


Table 19: 2024 Recruitment by Ethnicity in percentage

Recruitment by religion and belief

Table 20 and 21 show the number of applications and appointed candidates by religion and belief in 2023 and 2024. As the number of appointments is a relatively small number statistical trends are difficult to draw, **It is also important to note that during 2023 and 2024 there were a number of unallocated candidates due to a data error, therefore any unallocated numbers have been filled under “Not Provided”.**

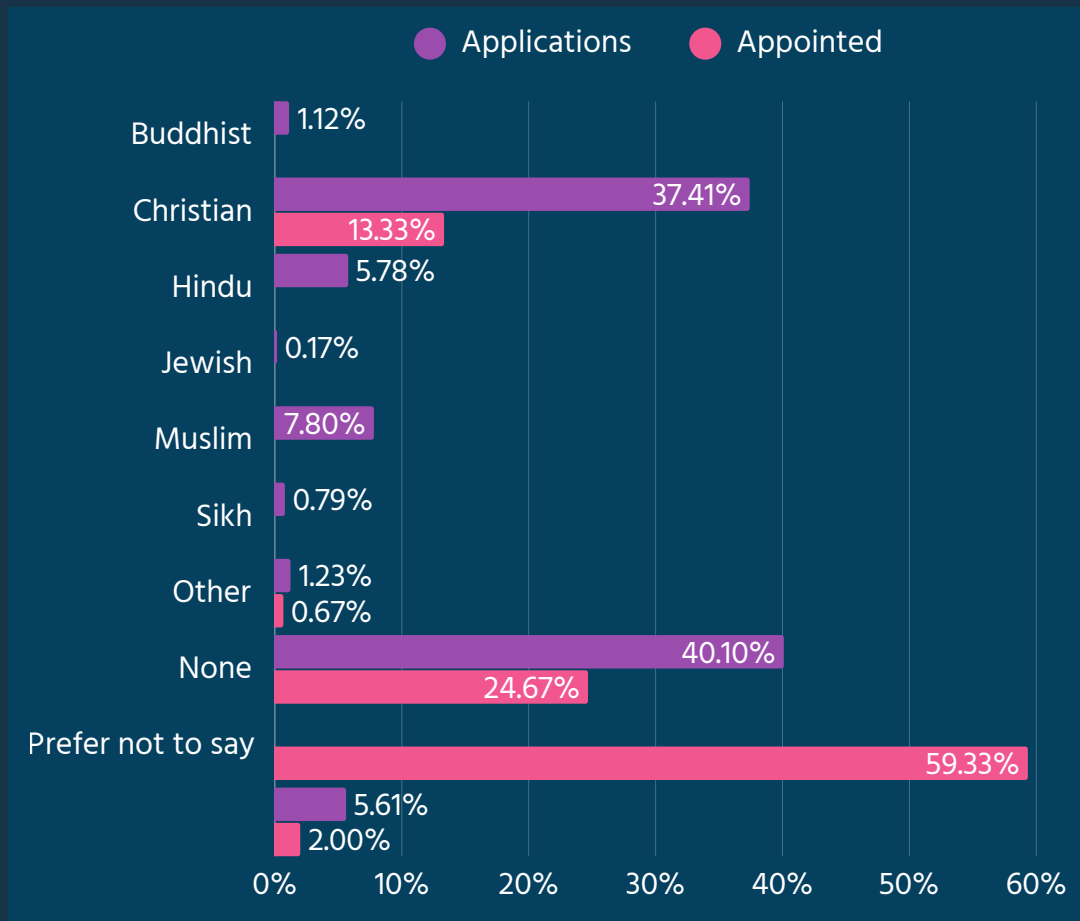


Table 20: 2023 Recruitment by Religion and belief in percentage

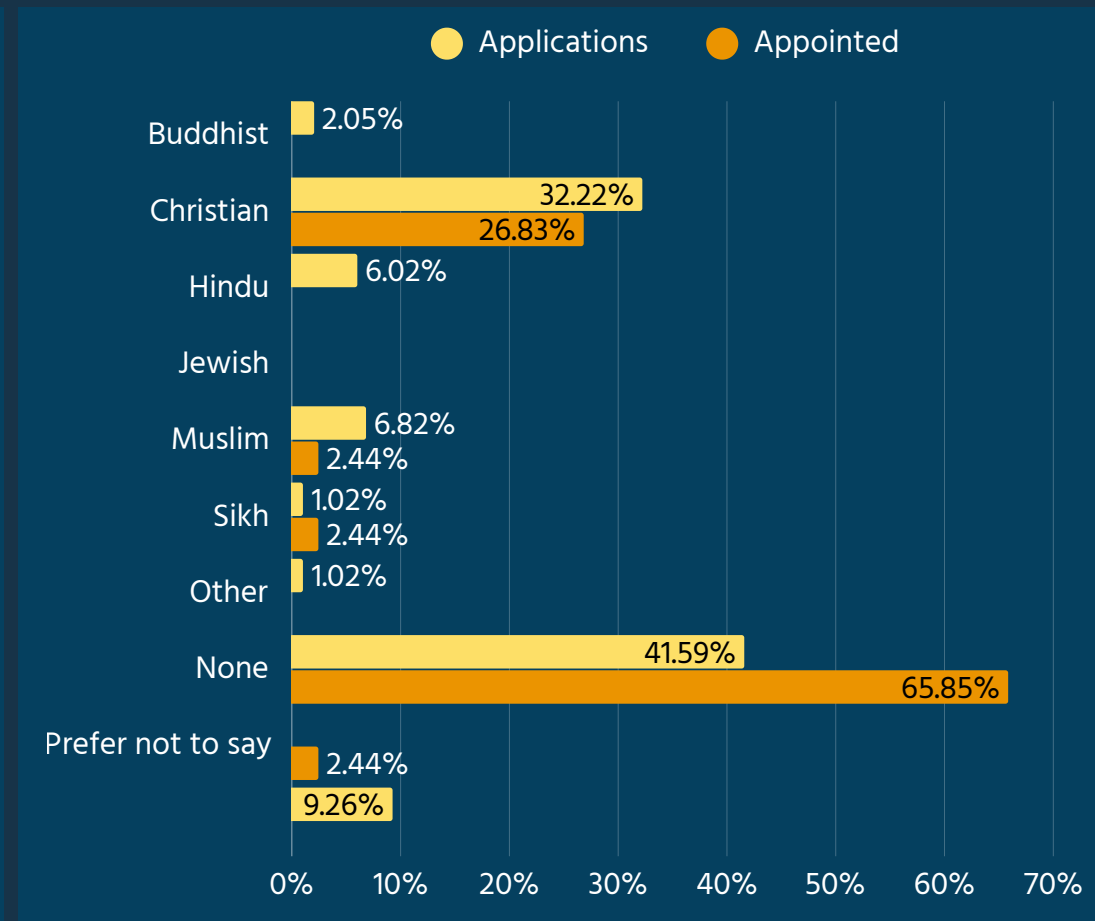


Table 21: 2024 Recruitment by Religion and belief in percentage

Recruitment by Disability and Sex in 2023

Table 22 shows the number of applicants and appointed candidates based on sex in 2023. Table 23 shows the number of applicants and appointed candidates based on Disability in percentage in 2023. As the number of appointments are relatively small, statistical trends are difficult to draw.

To ensure candidates who are disabled receive the same opportunity as other candidates those who declare a disability at the time of application and meet the essential criteria for the post, will be offered an interview.

It is important to note that during 2023 and 2024 there were a number of unallocated candidates due to a data error, therefore any unallocated numbers have been filled under “Not Provided”.

Table 22: Recruitment by Sex in percentage

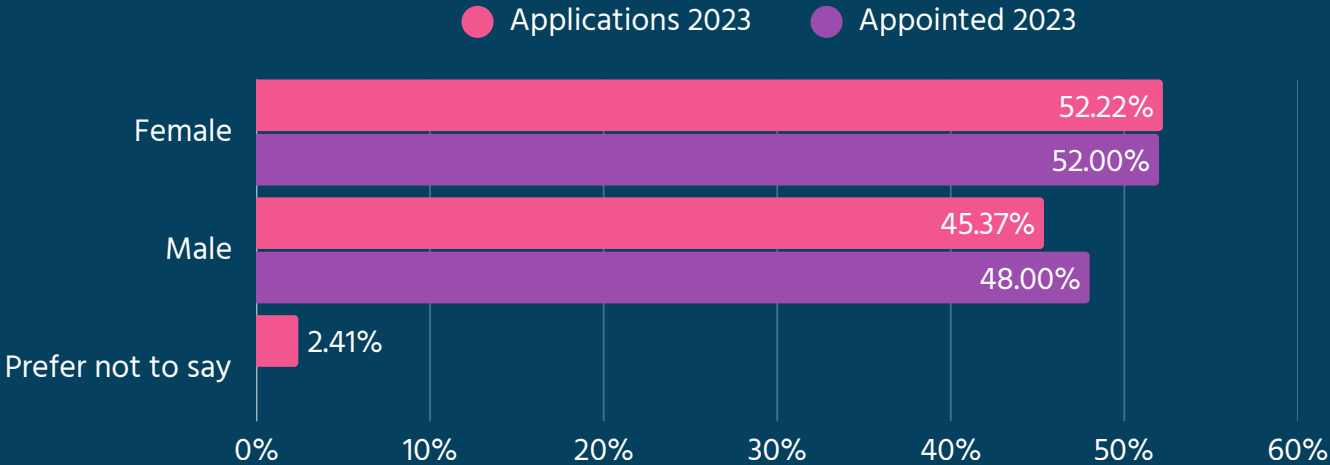
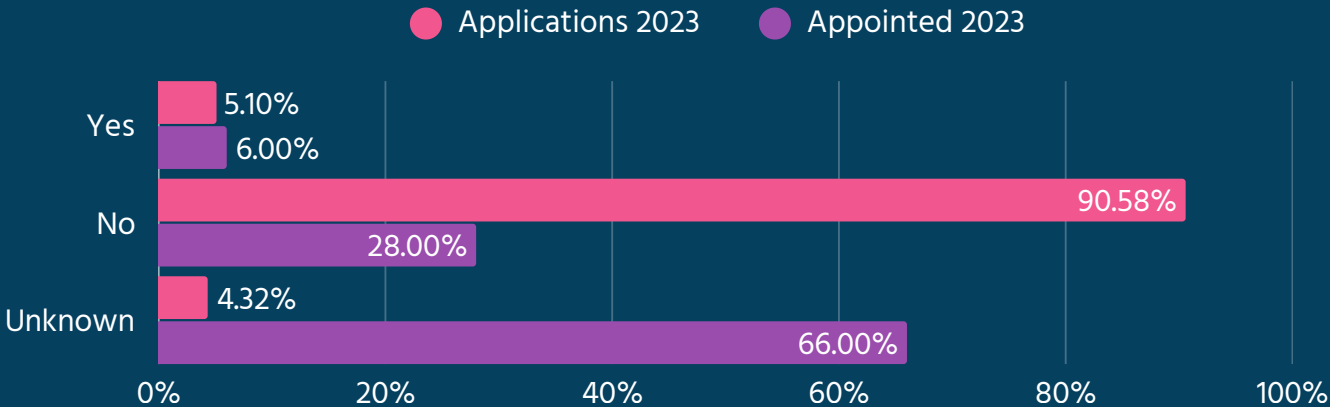


Table 23: Recruitment by Disability in percentage



Recruitment by Disability and Sex in 2024

Table 24 shows the number of applicants and appointed candidates based on sex in 2024. Table 25 shows the number of applicants and appointed candidates based on Disability in percentage in 2024. As the number of appointments are relatively small, statistical trends are difficult to draw.

To ensure candidates who are disabled receive the same opportunity as other candidates those who declare a disability at the time of application and meet the essential criteria for the post, will be offered an interview.

It is important to note that during 2023 and 2024 there were a number of unallocated candidates due to a data error, therefore any unallocated numbers have been filled under “Not Provided”.

Table 24: Recruitment by Sex in percentage

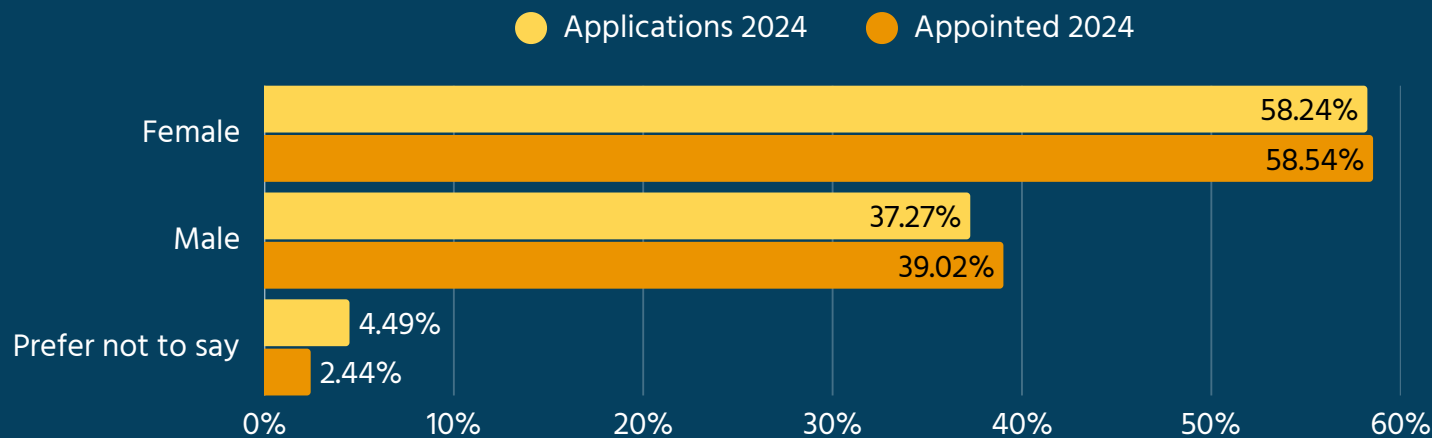
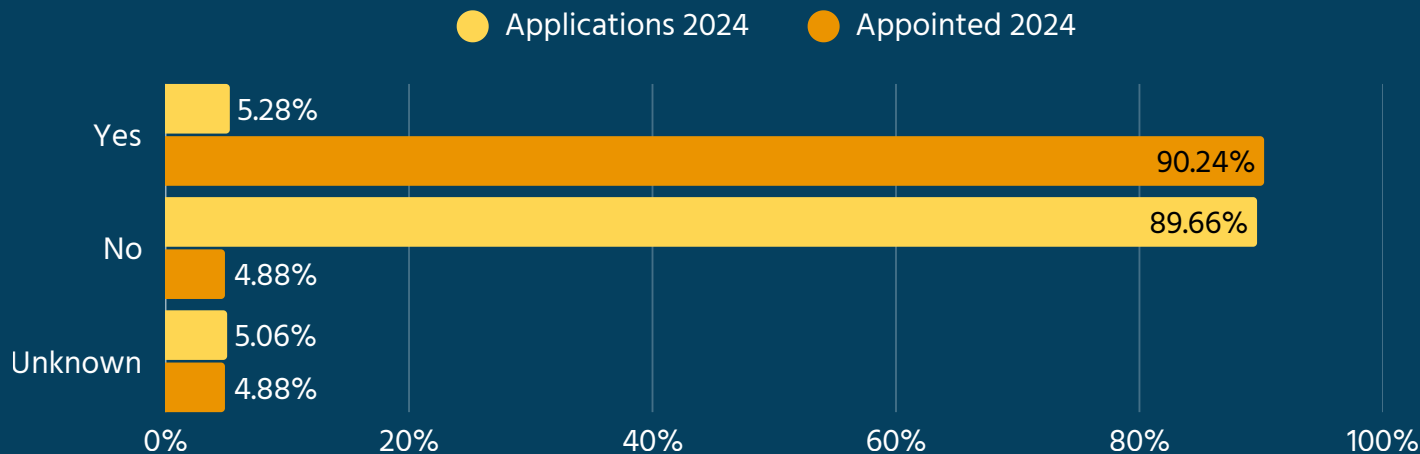


Table 25: Recruitment by Disability in percentage

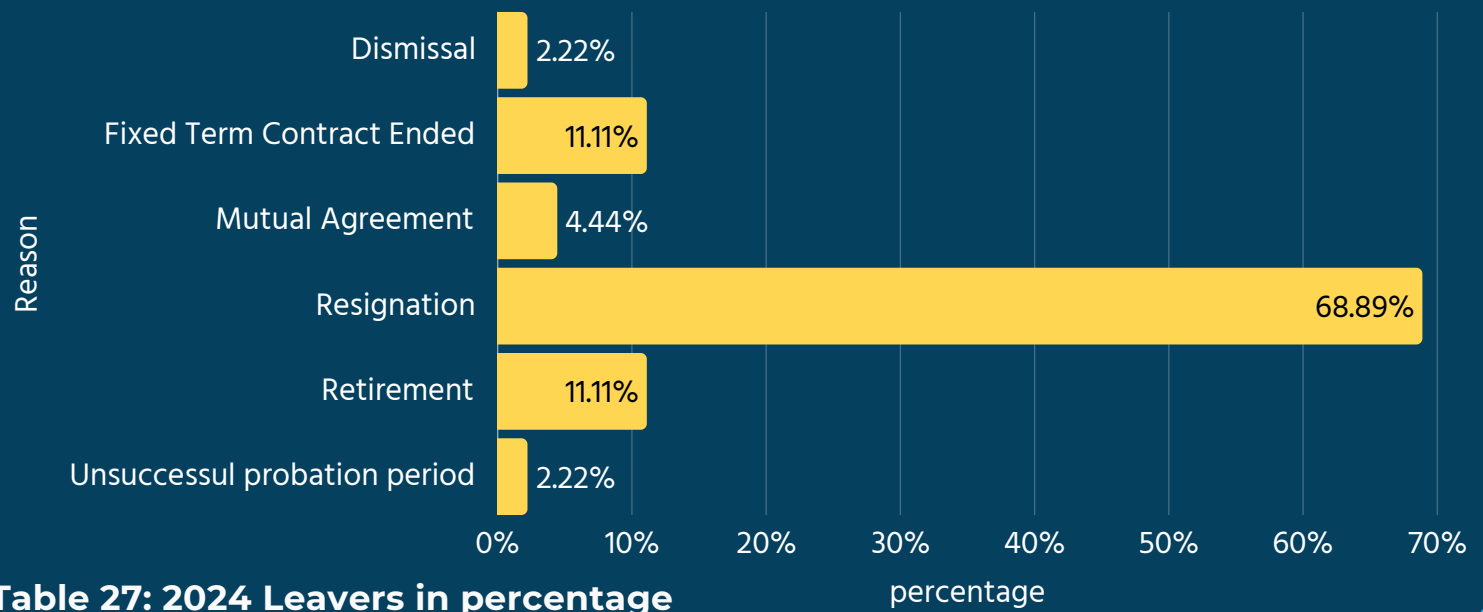
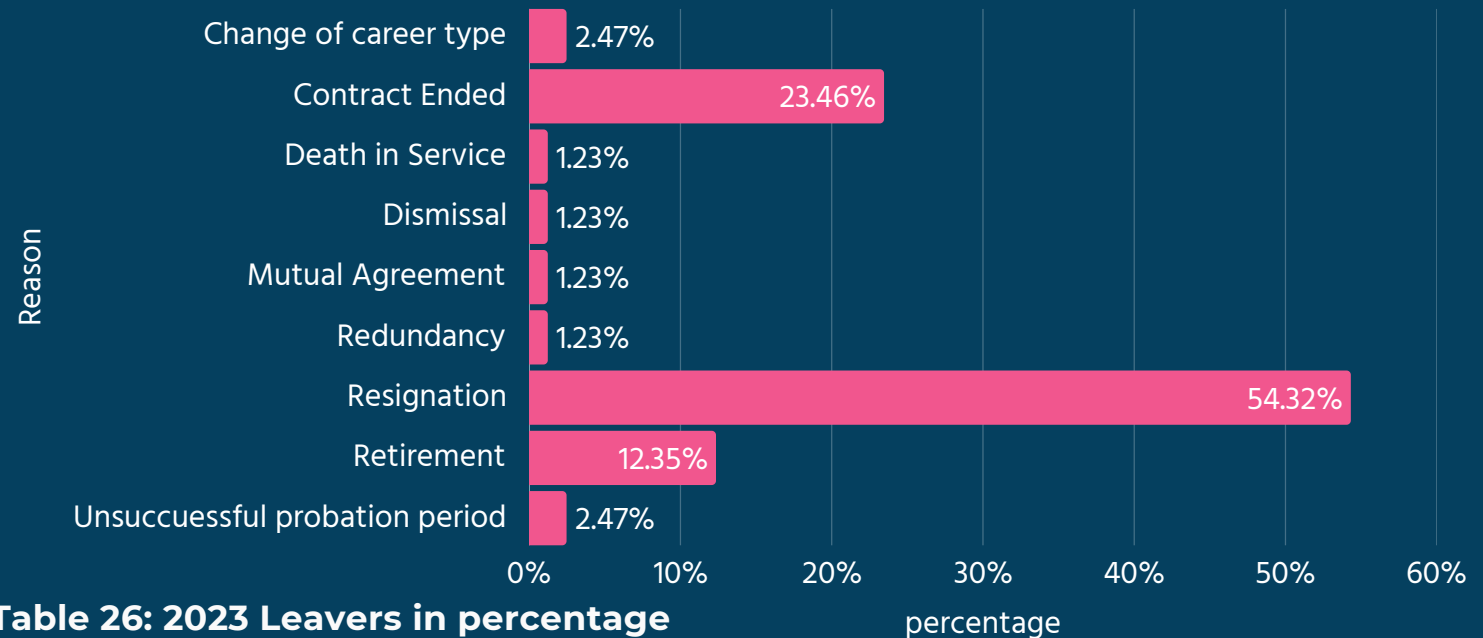


Leavers

During 2023-2024 there was a total of 81 leavers and 2024-2025 a total of 45.

As shown in Table 26 and 27, more than half of the leavers left due to a resignation.

As part of our workforce monitoring, we have been more proactive in capturing reasons for leavers and so this year we no longer have the category 'unknown' which is positive step. it has been identified that there is still improvement to be made within data collection and the wider People and Culture teams are working to identify improvements within this area.



Training

During 2023-2024 69.23% employees accessed different training courses managed by the People & Culture team and 64.78% during 2024-2025 last year.

The councils operate using an external learning platform called “LEAH” which contains various training courses. Service specific training is organised by and recorded within individual service areas and is not included in this analysis. In 2024 there has been progress towards moving to a new Learning Management platform where training will be built in line with government guidance.

During 2023 and 2024, the Equality and Wellbeing team also organised and ran a number of internal training for staff, including:

Pause and Talk

World Menopause Day - In October 2024 our Equality and Wellbeing team alongside Unison organised a menopause pause and talk to discuss the importance of Menopause support in the workforce.

Men’s Mental Health - During 2024, the Equality and wellbeing team went on a walk and talk and virtual roundtable with the workforce to discuss men’s mental health

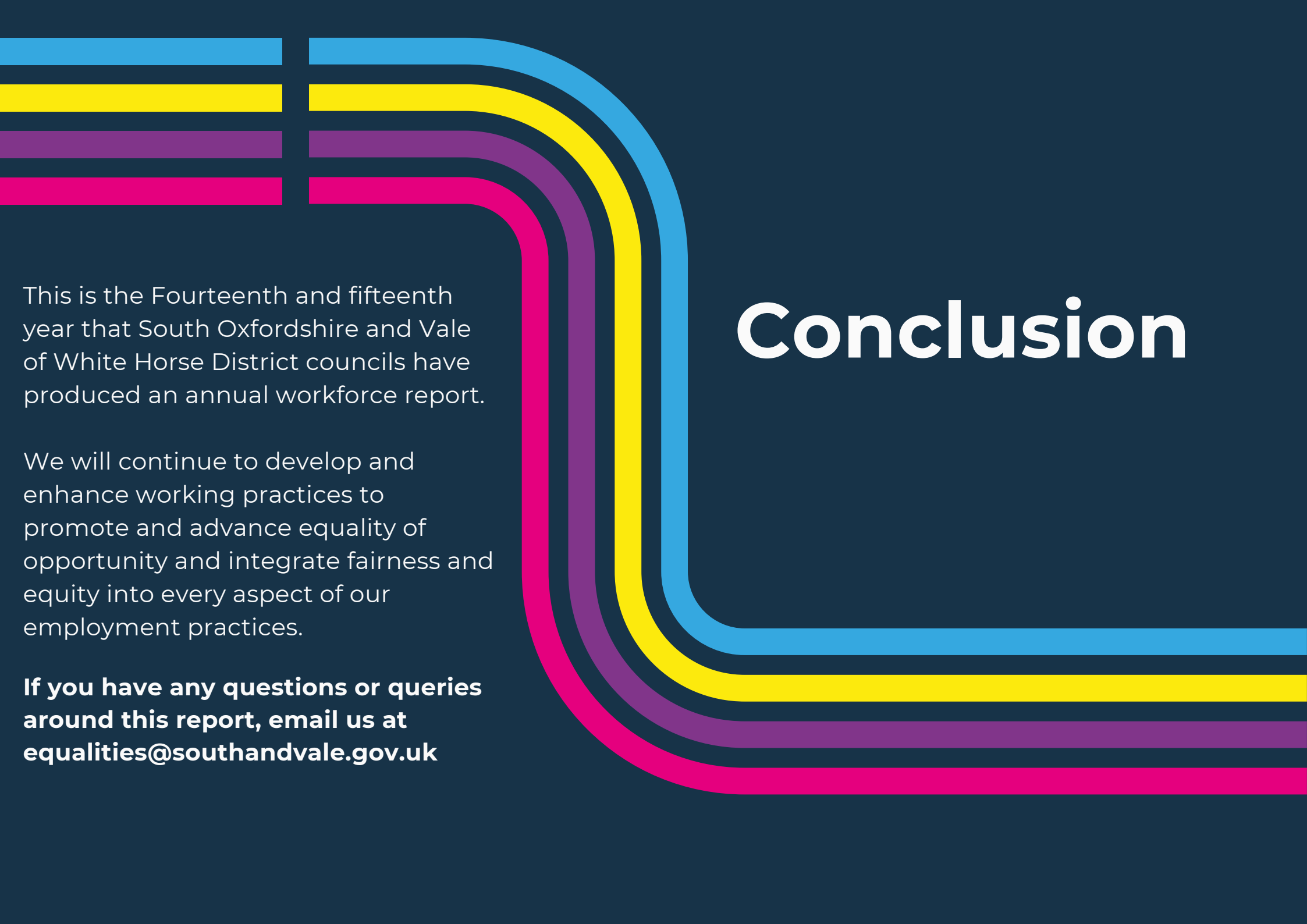
Our Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

We offer a EAP for all staff to use which has access to a number of e-learning to ensure their wellbeing is looked after.

MBL webinars

Throughout 2023 and 2024, the workforce had access to a number of different webinars and resources from MBL webinars provided by the Councils





This is the Fourteenth and fifteenth year that South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District councils have produced an annual workforce report.

We will continue to develop and enhance working practices to promote and advance equality of opportunity and integrate fairness and equity into every aspect of our employment practices.

If you have any questions or queries around this report, email us at equalities@southandvale.gov.uk

Conclusion