



**Supporting
Equality, Diversity
and Inclusion**

APRIL 2025 - MARCH 2026

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

.....

WORKFORCE EQUALITY REPORT



Listening Learning Leading



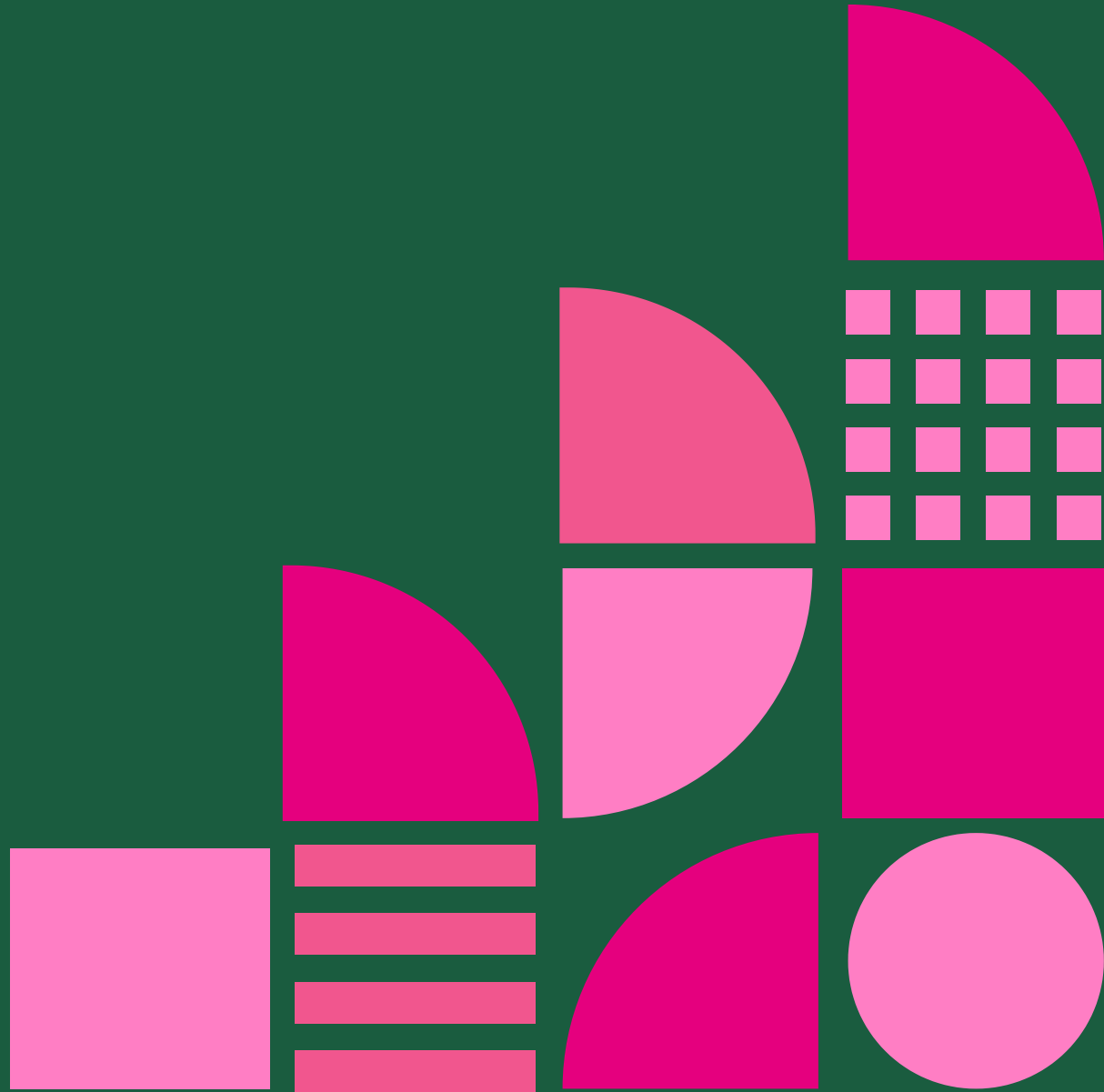
Contents

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- Policies and Initiatives
- Our Workforce
- Recruitment, leavers and training
- Conclusion

You can request a plain word version by emailing the equalities team at equalities@southandvale.gov.uk



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.

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.

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.

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 2025 to March 2026) 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 have now implemented a new Human Resources Information System (HRIS) and continue to further develop reporting functionality and data sets to provide more comprehensive information to support us future analysis.

This report covers the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026.

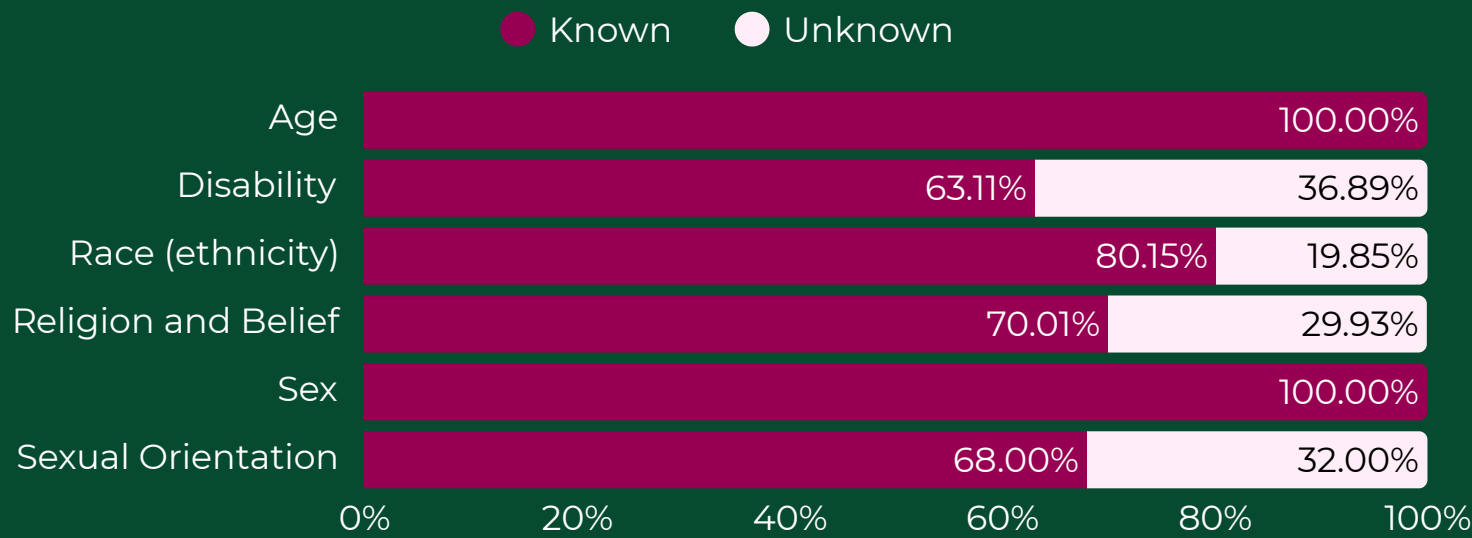


Data and Reporting

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.

Table 2: April 2025 - March 2026 in percentage



Tables 1 shows the percentage of total employees for which equality data is known and recorded for 2025-2026.

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.

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 **3**
Forum
group
meetings

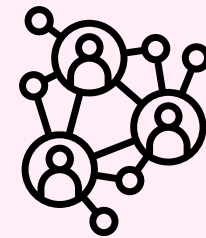


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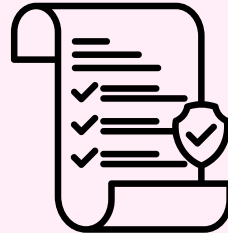
Number of Diversity Days
Celebrated in the last year



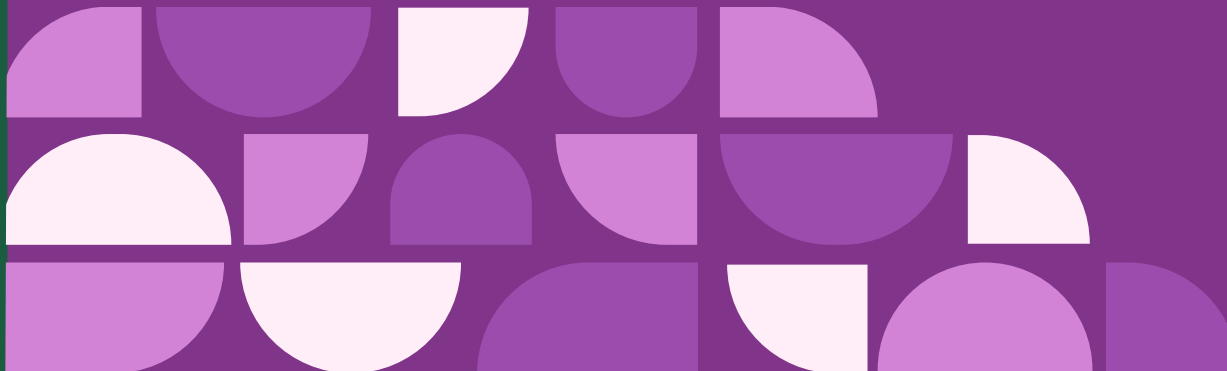
We have
held a
total of **8**
Diversity
and
Inclusion
Champion
meetings



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:

- Movember - most impressive & most creative moustache
- Resilience and Mental Fitness Webinar
- Loneliness Awareness Webinar
- Workstation Posture and Pain Webinar
- Supporting Menopause at Work Webinar
- Neurodiversity in the Workplace Webinar
- Youth Mental Health Webinar
- Race Equality Matters Webinar
- Dyslexia at Work Webinar

As part of South East Employers, staff also had access to monthly Neurodiversity and Menopause Cafes

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](#)



Disability Confident Employer

After working closely with the Disability Confident team the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and undergoing a peer assessment - The councils have officially been awarded Disability Confident Employer Leaders (Level 3) having previously held Disability Confident Employer (Level 2) status for several years.

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

The councils' continue to develop digital accessibility through the Digital Inclusion Working Group in order to ensure that our digital services are accessible in accordance with WCAG guidelines. The group have developed online training for all staff, with the aim to develop a hub of resources.

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

The Councils' Champions Network continues to provide a safe space for colleagues from across the organisation to share experience relevant to diversity and inclusion, advice and support on policies, and training for staff, and act as champions in their respective service areas.

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.

Equality Impact Assessments (EqIA)

The EqIA process has been reviewed and re-designed to ensure a consistent approach for decision-making at the councils'. In addition, the amount of EqIAs completed has now been added as a measure to the councils' performance reports, with the aim to continue to provide a transparent approach to our decisions.



Equality and Wellbeing officer at a Climate Community event in Thame

Forum group

The councils' have continued to facilitate a network who meet on a quarterly basis. The aim of the group is to share projects the councils are working on and any upcoming consultations as well as provide opportunities to discuss topics of interest with relevant officers, and to raise awareness of accessibility issues. The group has discussed several topics including:

- Council activities
- Waste Services
- Customer Services
- Communications and Engagement

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

Roadshows

in the Autumn of 2025, the Equality and Wellbeing team ran a number of roadshows in response to the **Diversity and Inclusion Strategy** and a Vale of White Horse **Councillor motion in July 2024**, which resolved to develop in-person engagement with the public to understand what they want to see from the equality and diversity team, and provide a suite of resources in Libraries, Community Centres and Markets.

Following a successful pilot, seven roadshow at six different market towns were delivered, generating 113 pieces of individual feedback. Analysis highlighted several pieces of feedback. Residents expressed a need for clearer information about what the councils can and cannot do, greater visibility of available services, improved signposting to accessible businesses and charities, and more support around employment and recruitment.



Roadshows were held at the following Market Towns across South and Vale:

- Abingdon
- Didcot
- Henley
- Thame
- Wallingford
- Wantage



Vision and Values

The Councils continue to imbed the Vision and Values and behavioural framework, each of which support a different aspect of Diversity and Inclusion.

Each Value has a Champion in the councils' Senior Management Team (SMT) who models and advocates for their specific value.

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

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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. 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 involved in the training and coordination of our network of Mental Health First Aiders across the councils.

At the end of 2025 Refresher training for all Mental Health First Aiders was completed, and two new Mental Health first aiders completed full training.



The new Wellbeing Room at Abbey House

Wellbeing Room

In the Winter of 2025, the Equality and Wellbeing team developed and launched a 'Wellbeing Room' for all staff to enjoy. The room includes wellbeing resources, Mindfulness activities and prayer mats for staff to take time away from their desk to pray, enjoy some quiet time or catch up with colleagues.



Workforce Strategy 2024-2028

The People and Culture team have continued to work on the vision and themes from the Workforce Strategy that was developed in 2024. Information on each theme, and the overarching vision can be found in last years workforce report. Themes include equalities, diversity, and inclusion, and wellbeing as key elements of the strategy.

Stress Survey and Action Plan

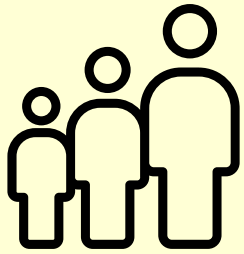
In the Spring of 2025, the Equality and Wellbeing team alongside key stakeholders in the councils' released an all staff Stress Survey to assess the wellbeing of our staff, to ensure that the councils' continue to improve, creating a safe and positive working environment for everyone. 57.3% of the workforce completed the survey.

After analysing the results, a Stress Action Plan is currently in place, which consists of training for all staff, improvements to our monitoring of data and reporting, and building on our positive working culture.



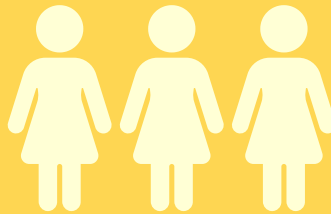
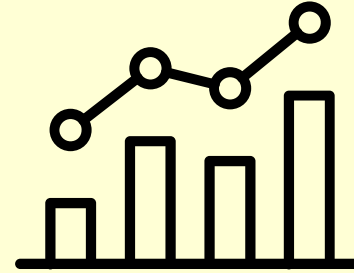
Our Workforce





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

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

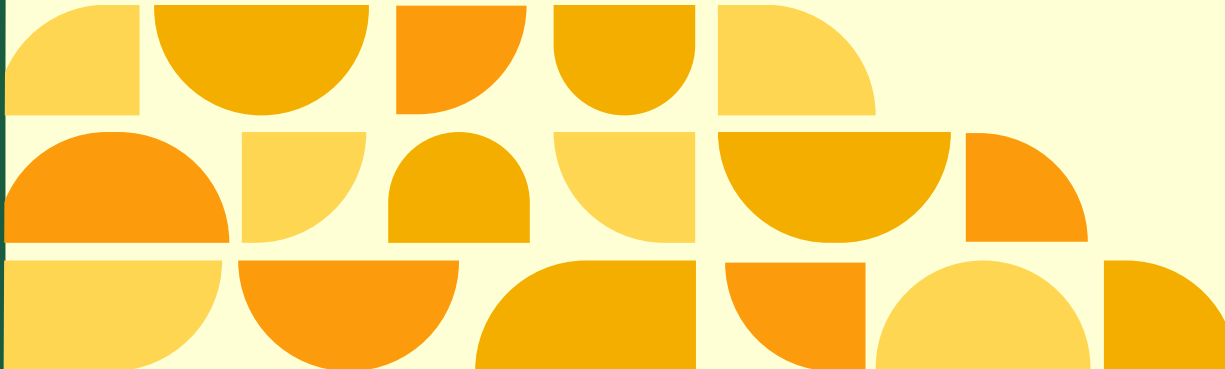


The majority of our workforce are women

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



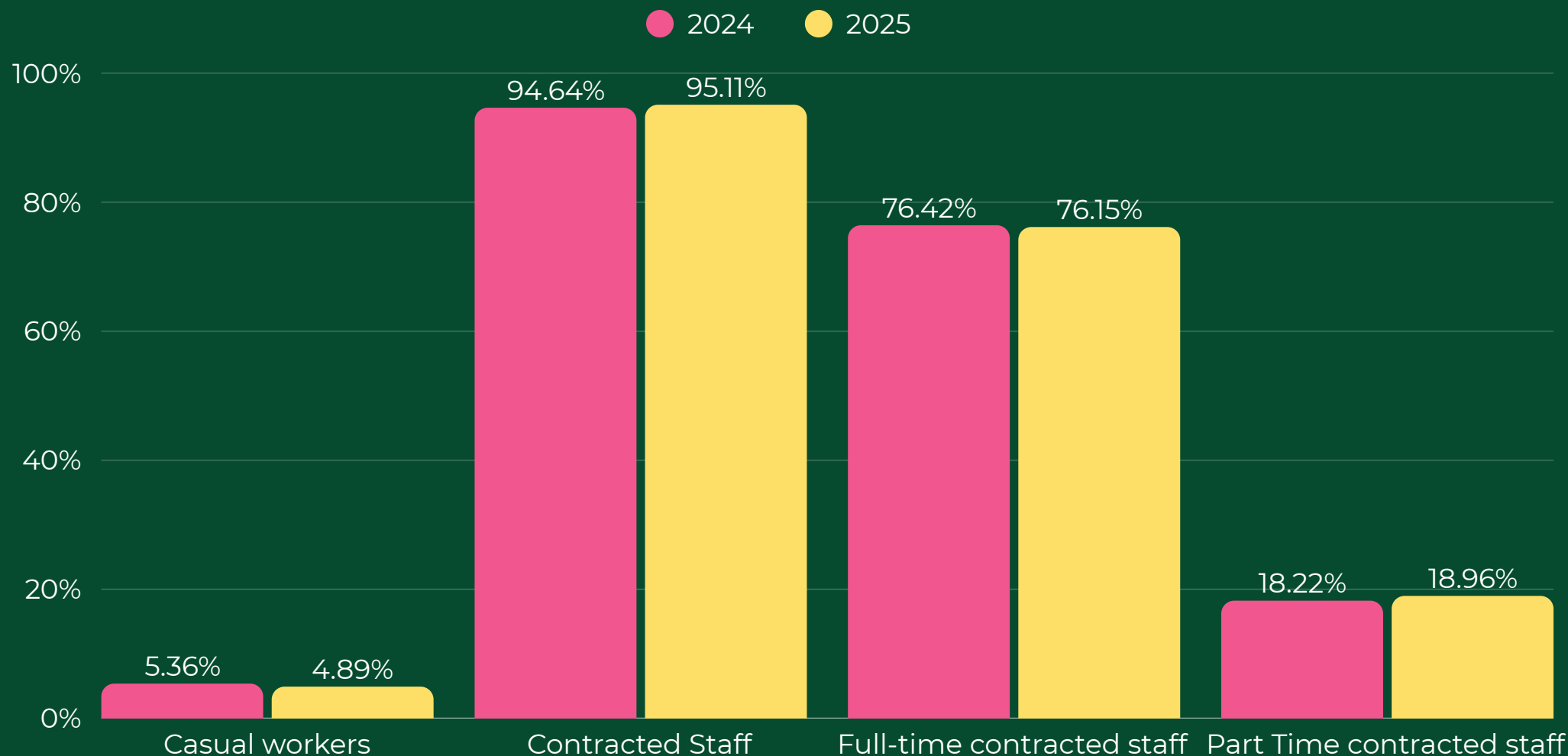
Our Workforce at a glance



Overview

The data presented in this chapter is based on a snapshot date of 31 March 2026. On 31 March 2026 the councils employed **675** members of staff.

Table 2: Overview of workforce in percentage



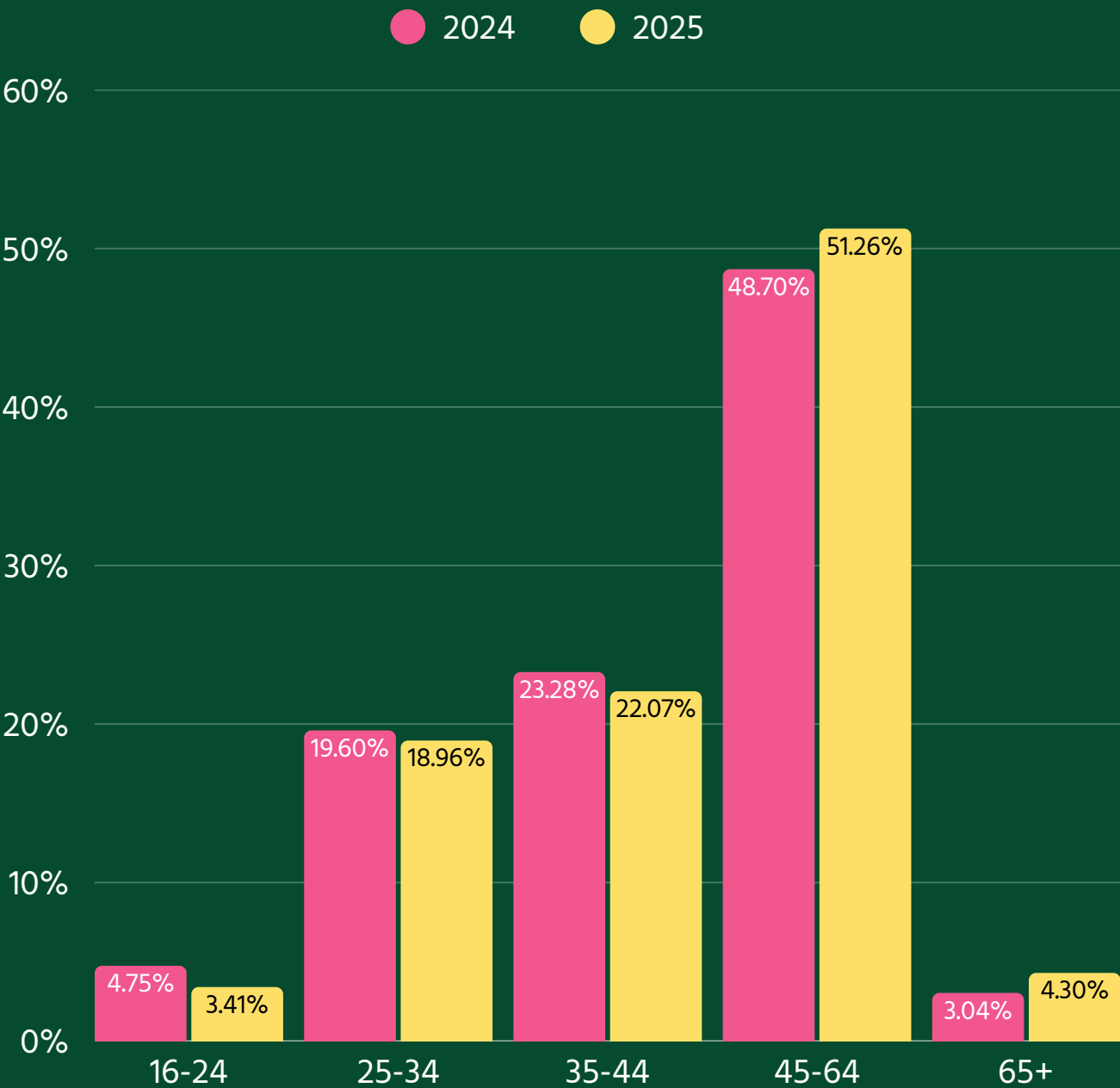
Age

The age profile of employees is presented in Table 3.

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 3: Workforce by Age in percentage

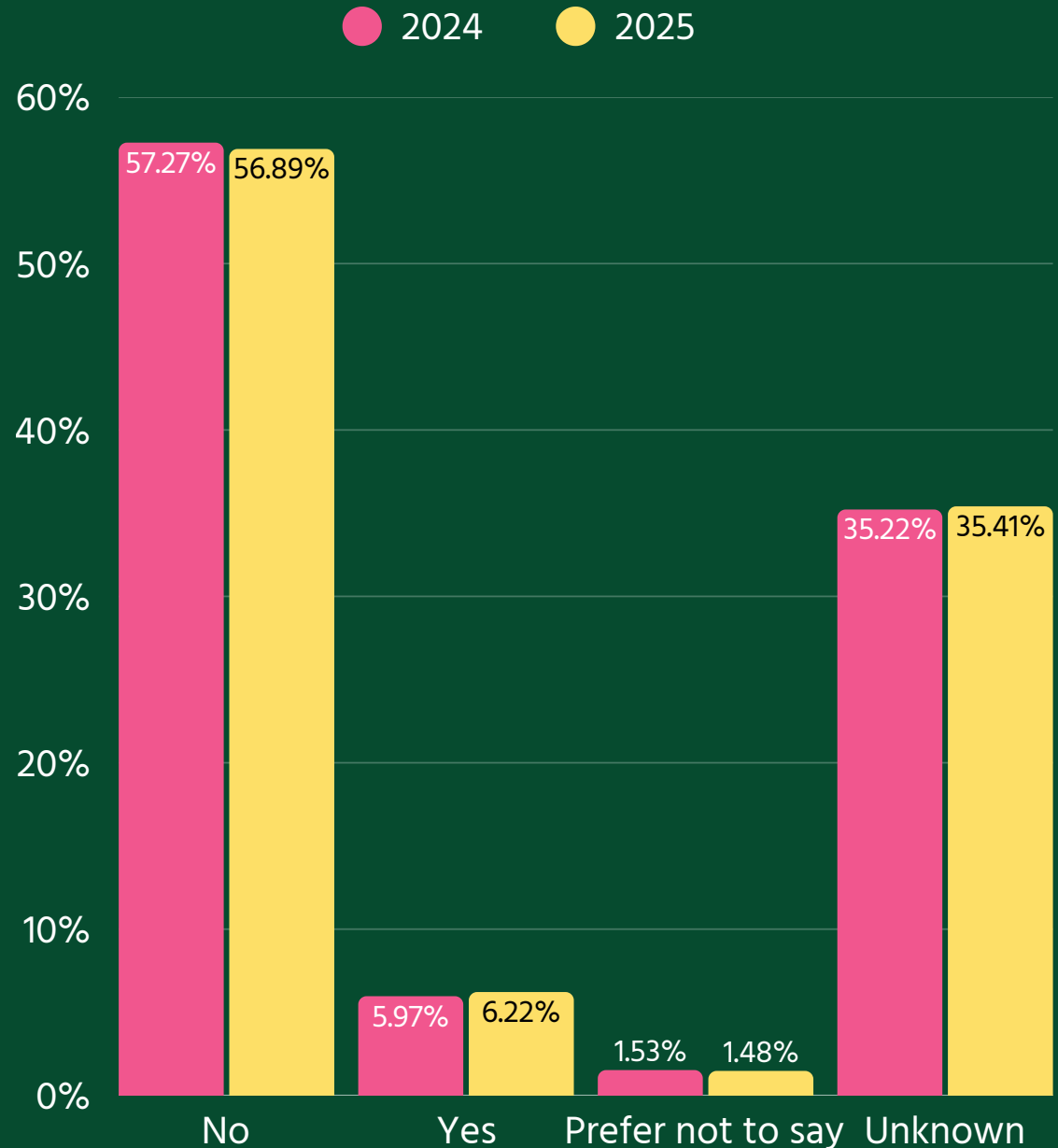


Disability

The disability profile of employees is presented in Table 4. Data on employees' disability status is **known for 63.11% of our workforce in 2025 and 63.25% in 2024**. Based on known data, 6.22% of our workforce has declared a disability in 2025

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 4 Workforce by Disability in percentage



Ethnicity

The ethnicity profile of employees is presented in Table 5. Ethnicity data is known for **80.16%** of staff in 2025, a 2.83% increase on last year.

The **latest Census data** from 2021 is also included in Table 6. 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 5: Workforce by Ethnicity in percentage

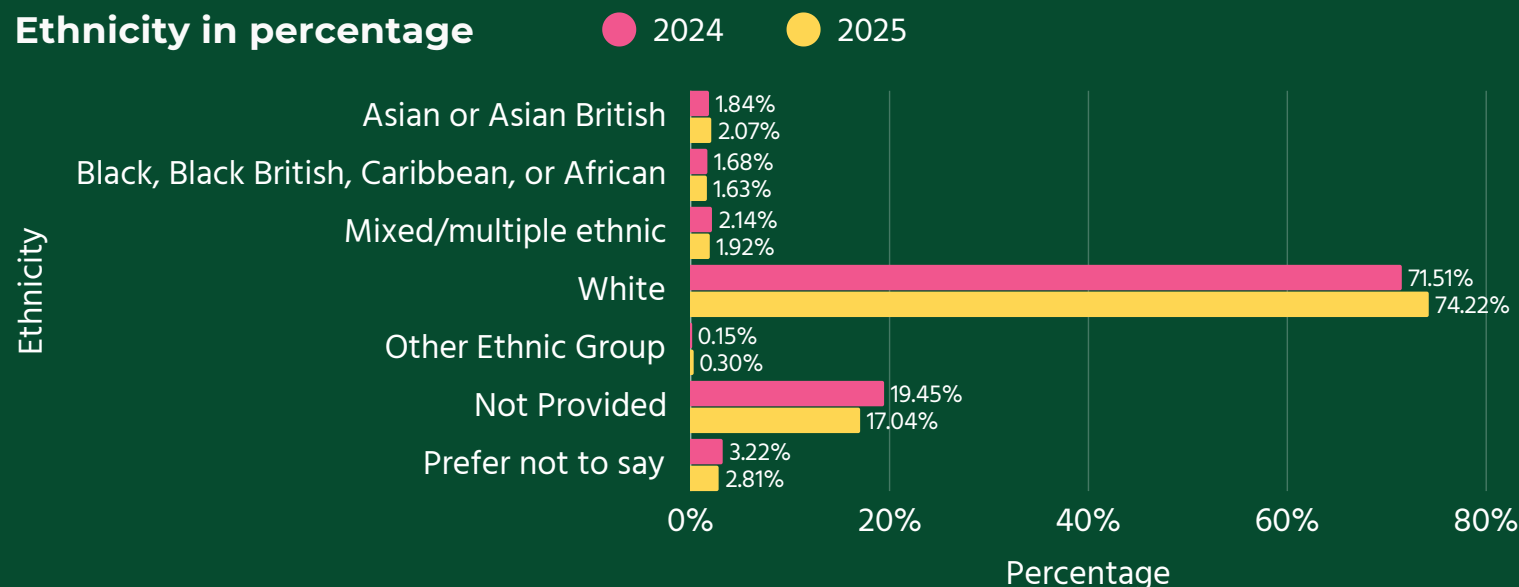
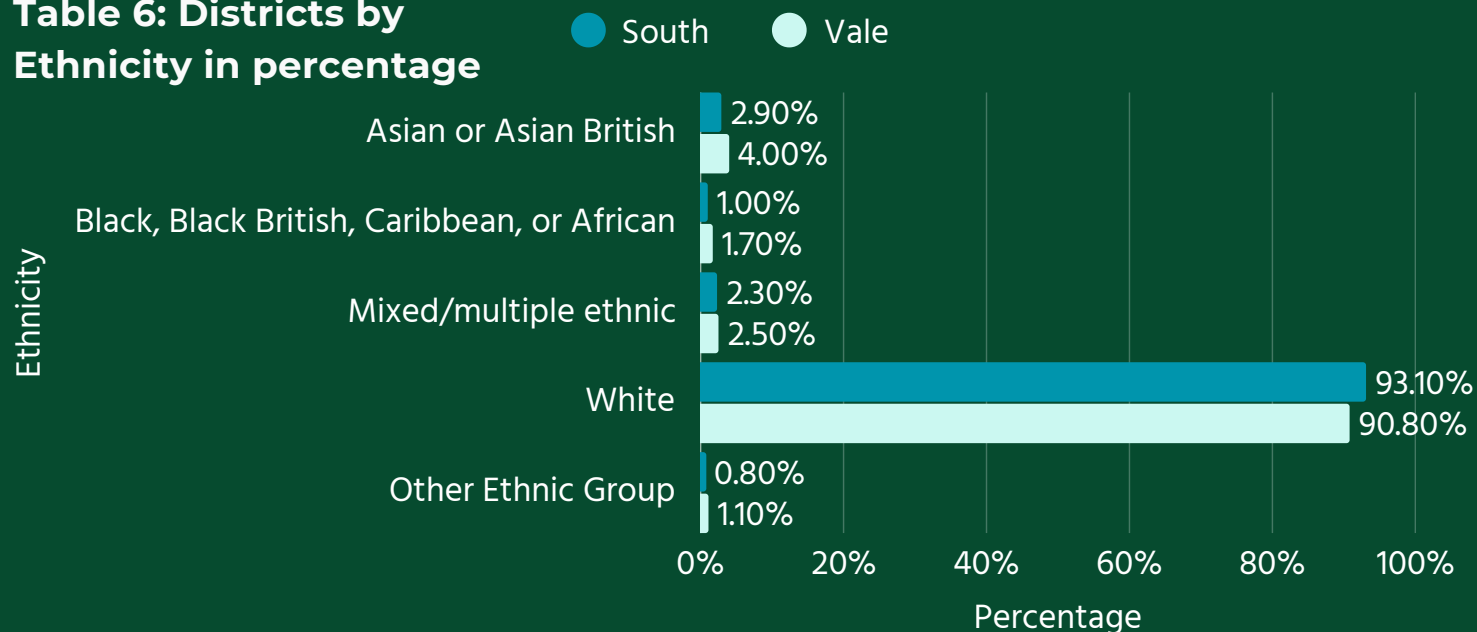


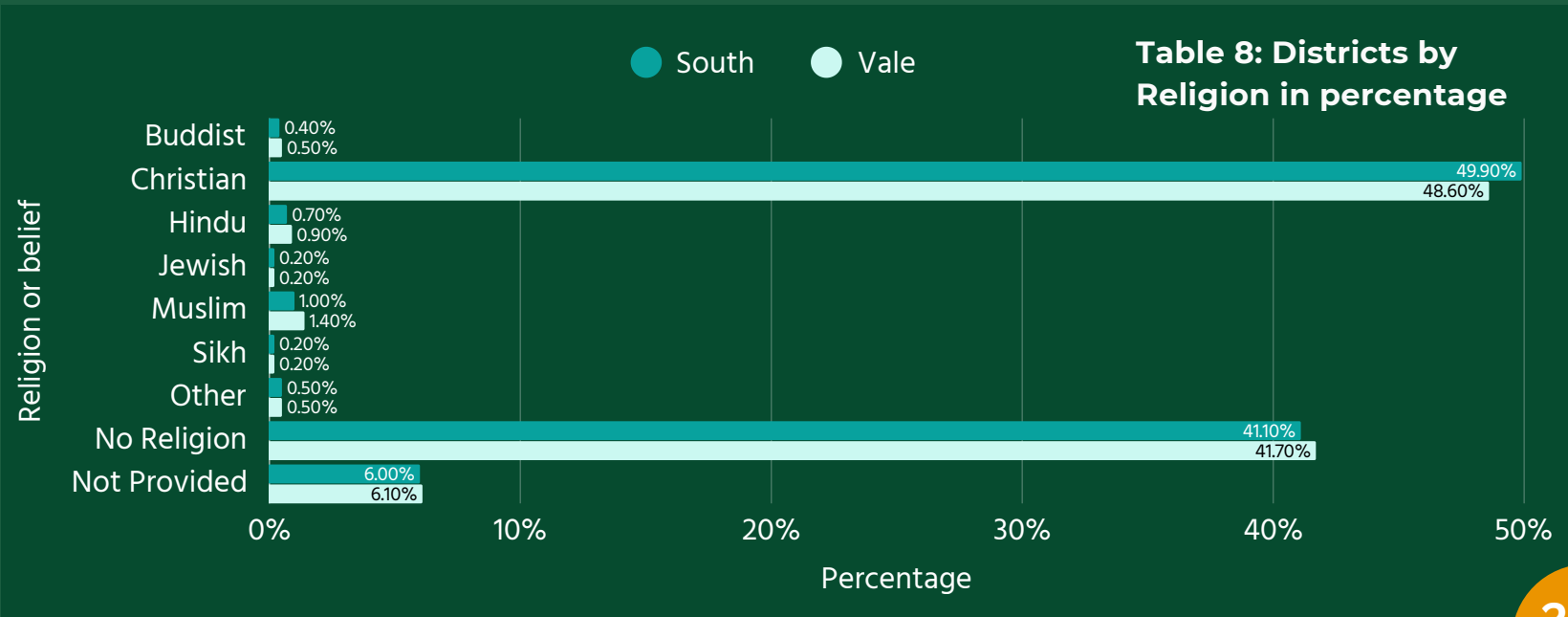
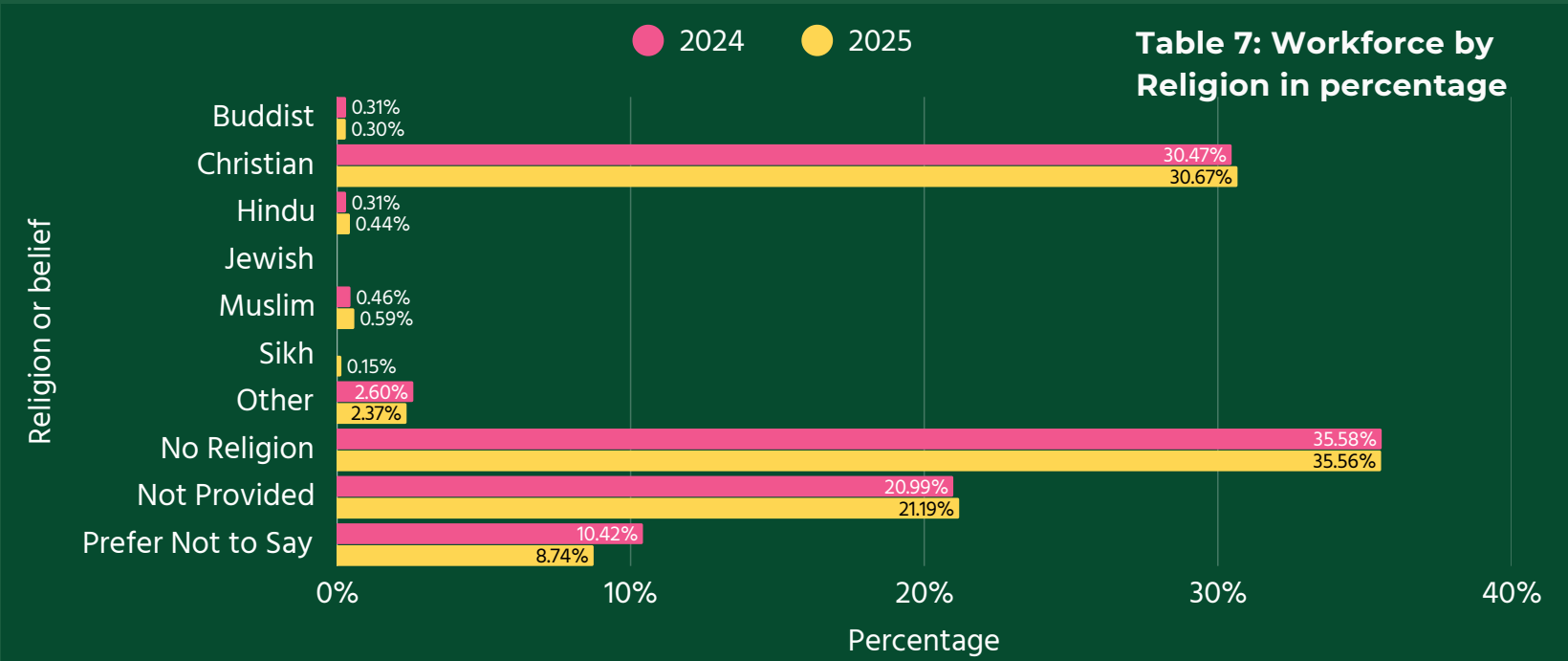
Table 6: Districts by Ethnicity in percentage



Religion and Belief

The profile of our workforce by religion and belief is presented in Table 7. Data on religion and belief is held for **70.39%** for 2024 and **70.07%** for 2025.

The latest Census data is also provided in Table 8. This shows that, discounting the staff we cannot identify, the profile of our districts is similar to our workforce.



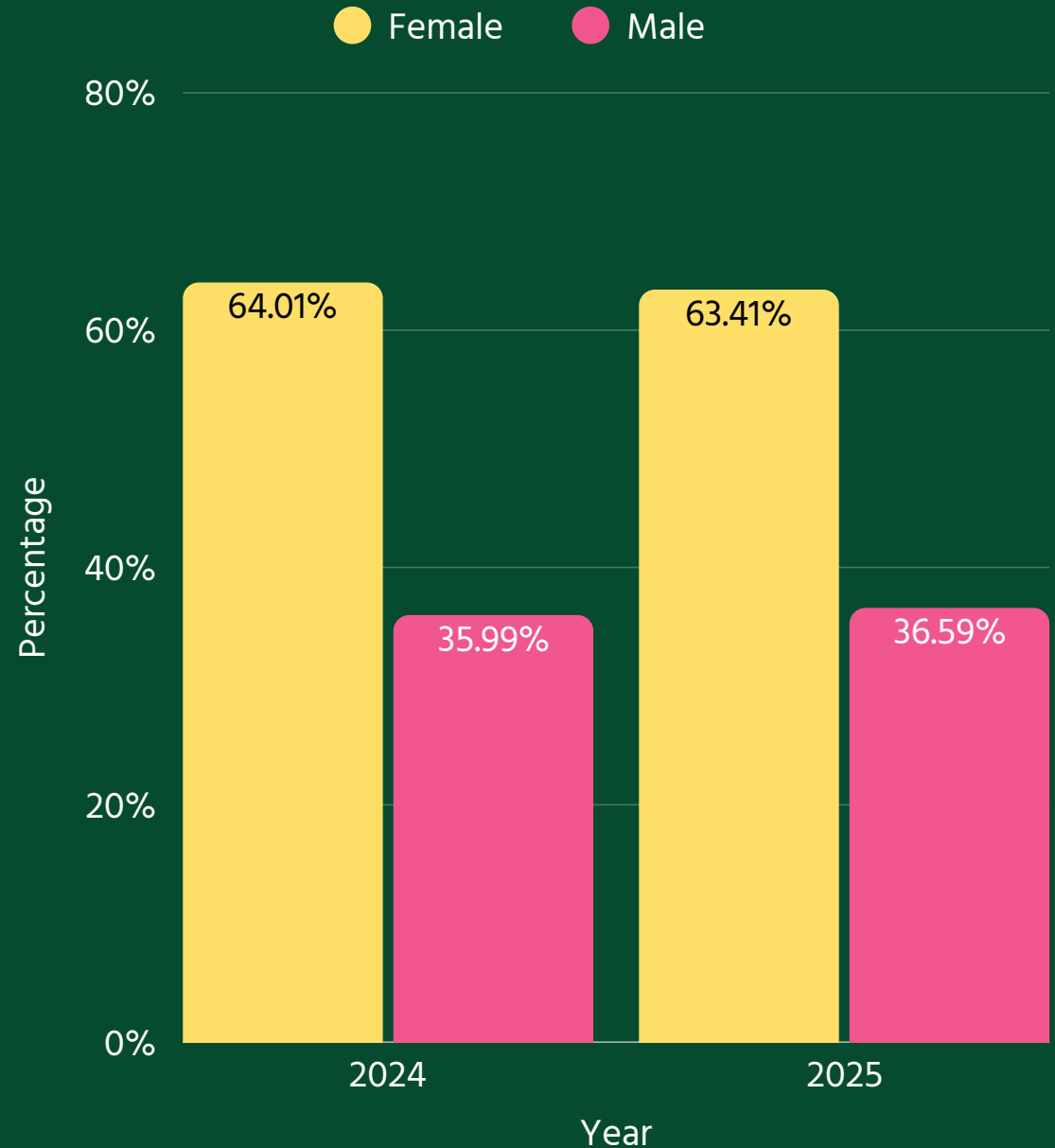
Sex

The profile of our workforce by sex is presented in Table 9. 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 hope to develop this for future reports.

Table 9: Workforce by Sex in percentage

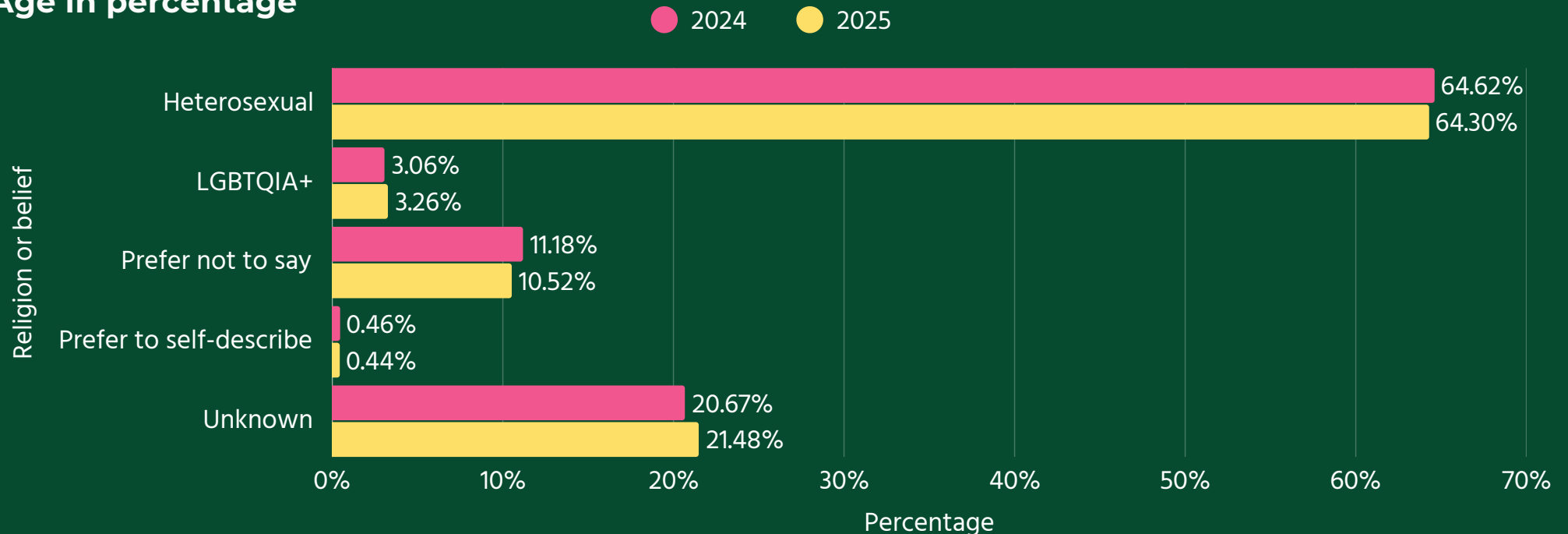


Sexual Orientation

The profile of our workforce by sexual orientation is presented in Table 10. Data on sexual orientation is held for **78.52%** of our workforce (including staff who 'prefer not to say') in 2025.

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 10: 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."

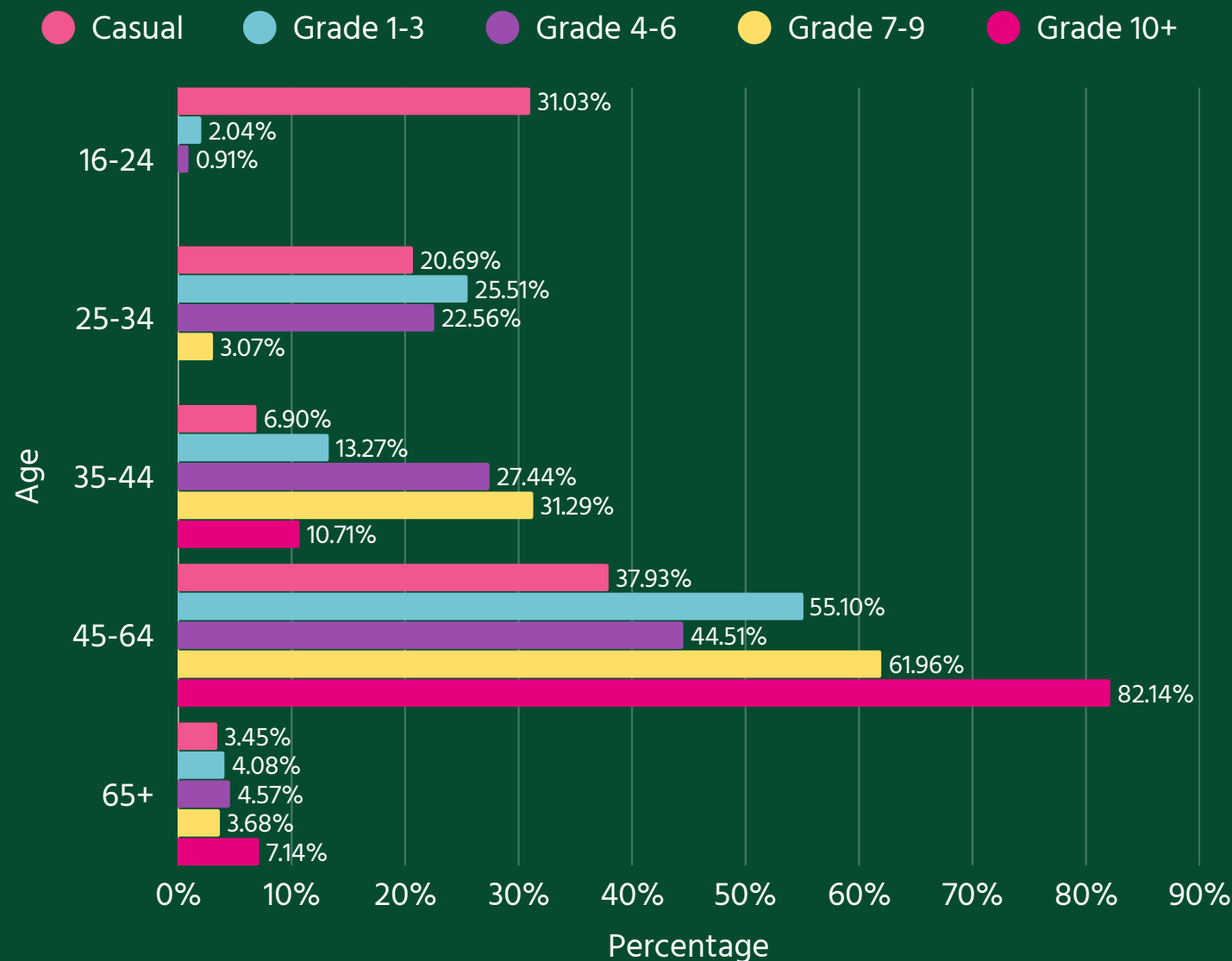
Grade

Table 11 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 year.

Table 11: 2024 Workforce by Grade in percentage



Sex and Grade

Tables 12 shows that we continue to have a higher proportion of female staff than male across most of our salary grades. The exception being in Casuals where we have 51.72% male and 48.28% female.

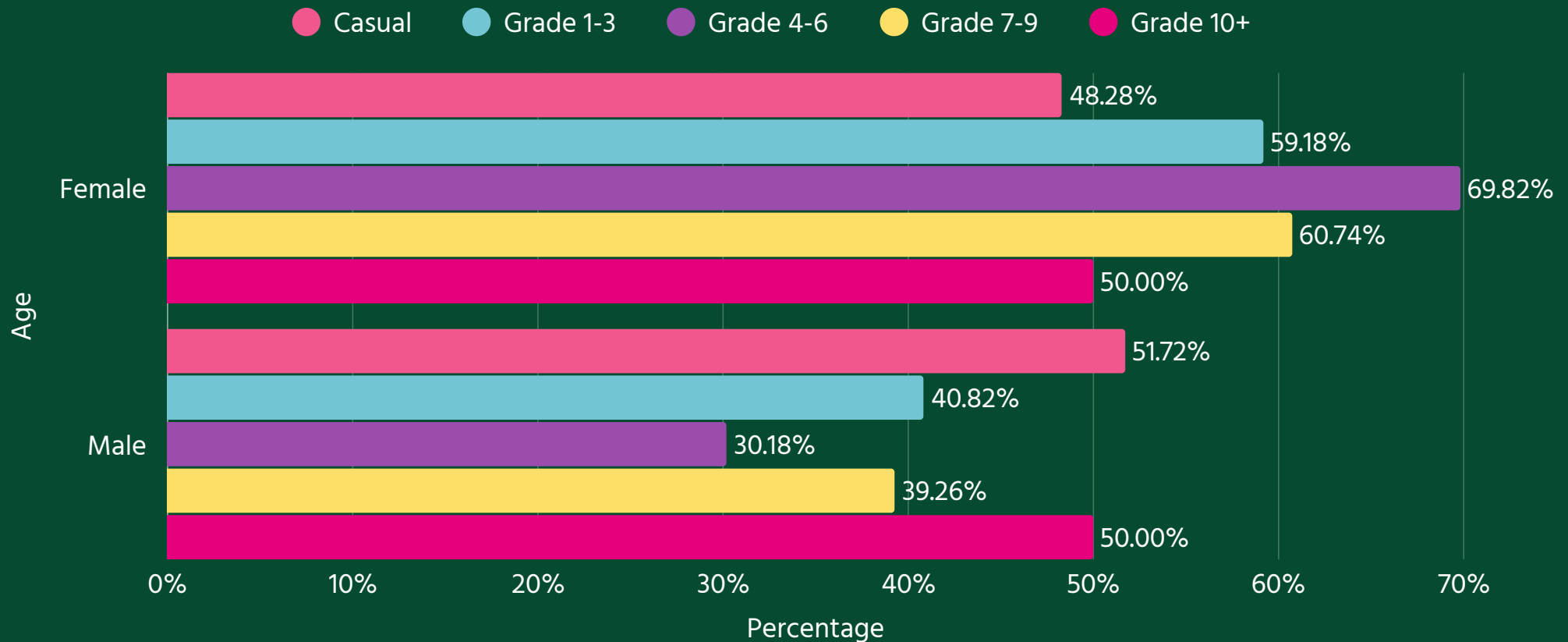


Table 12: 2025 Workforce by Sex in percentage

Recruitment, Leavers and Training

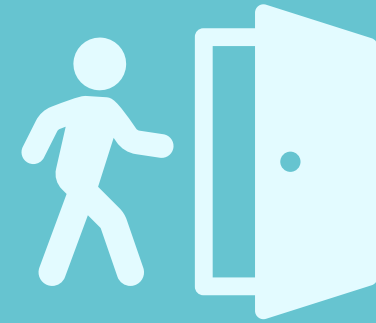


Recruitment, Leavers and Training at a glance

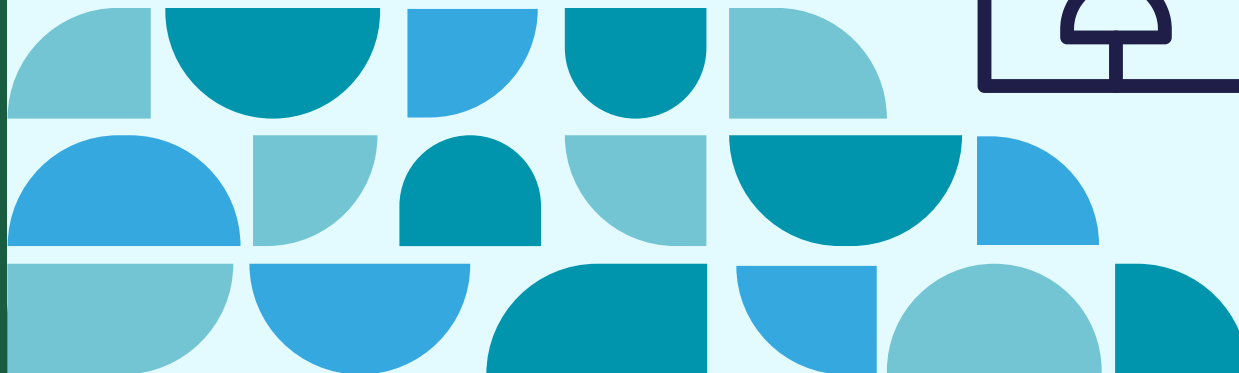
In 2025 we received **649 applications** and **appointed 36** external candidates



In 2025 there was a total of **52 leavers**



In 2025 **73.48%** employees completed different training courses managed by the People & Culture team

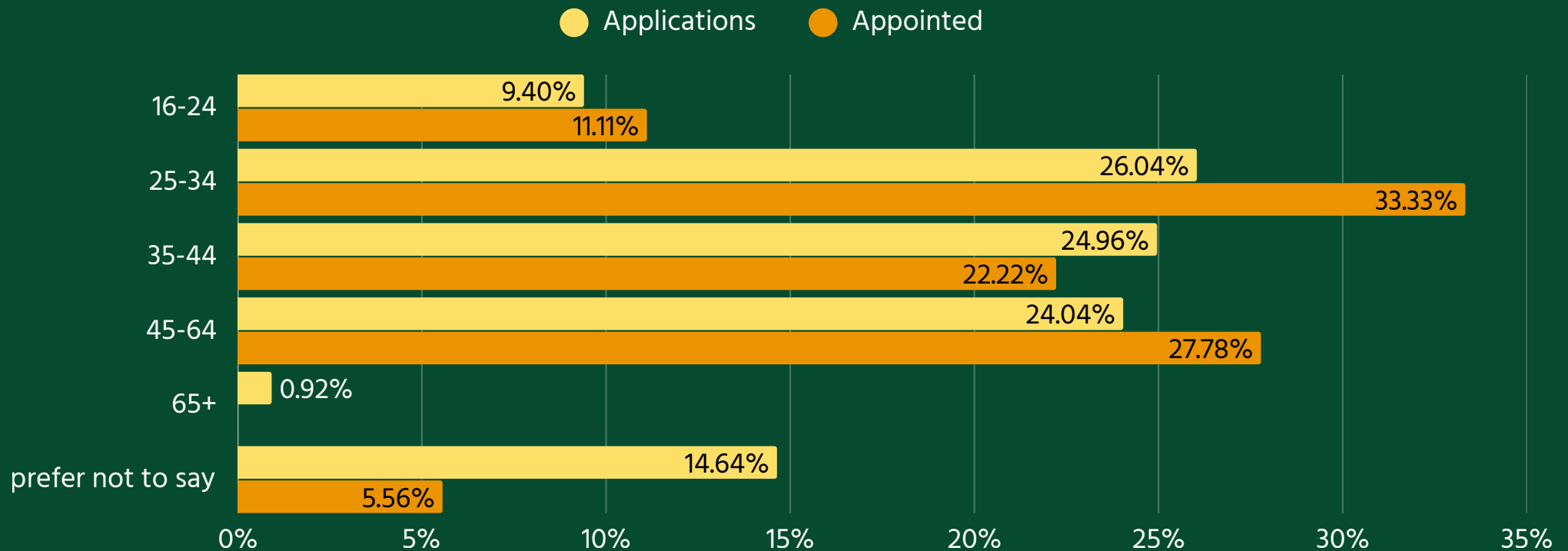


Recruitment by Age

In 2025 we received 649 applications and appointed 36 external candidates to positions within the councils. Table 13 shows the number of applicants and appointed candidates by age range in 2025. As the number of appointments is a relatively small number statistical trends are difficult to draw.

It is important to note that due to the implementation of the new Human Resources Information System (HRIS), there is missing data between April - July 2025.

Table 13: Recruitment by Age in percentage

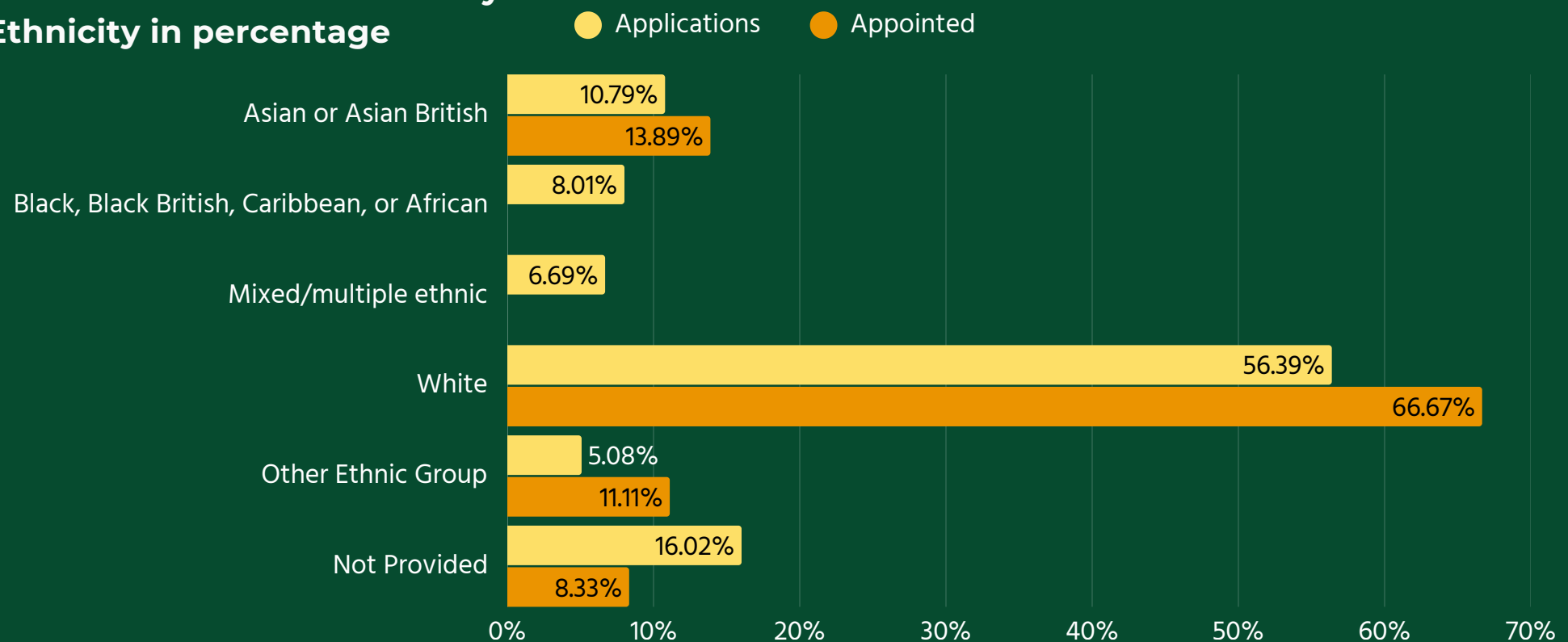


Recruitment by Ethnicity

Table 14 show the number of applications and appointed candidates by ethnicity in 2025. As the number of appointments is a relatively small number statistical trends are difficult to draw.

It is important to note that due to the implementation of the new Human Resources Information System (HRIS), there is missing data between April - July 2025.

Table 14: 2025 Recruitment by Ethnicity in percentage



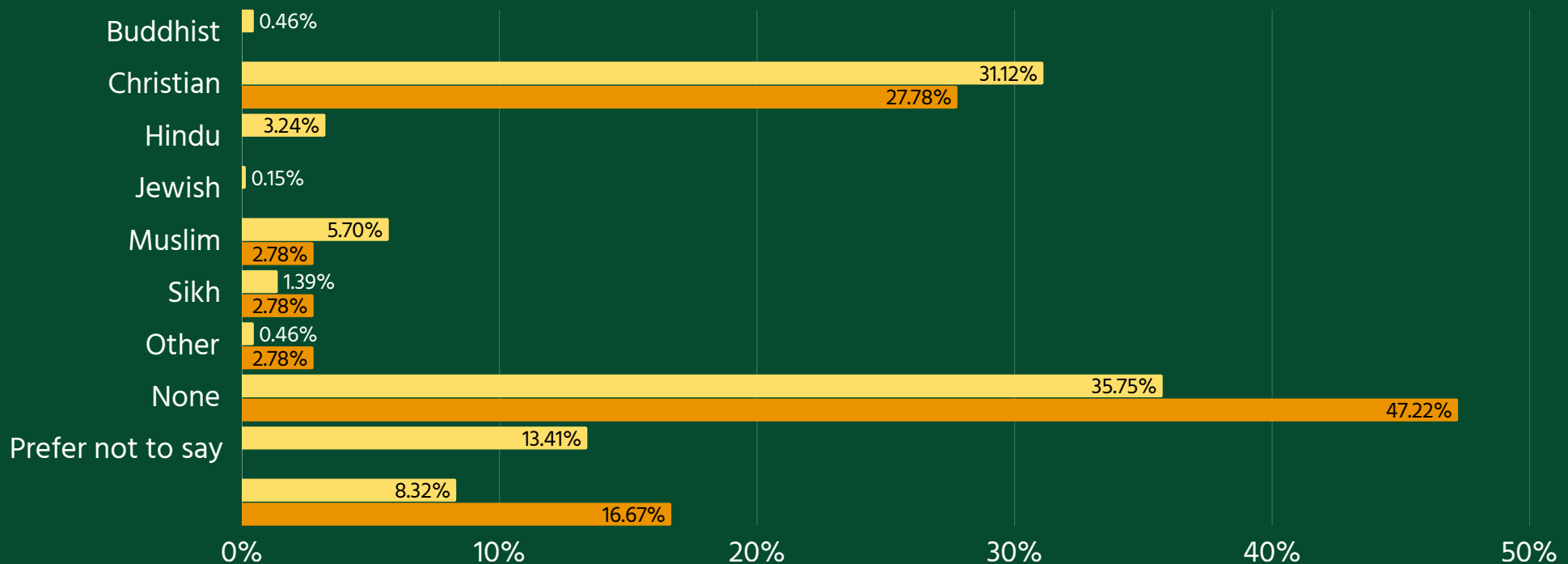
Recruitment by religion & belief

Table 15 shows the number of applications and appointed candidates by religion and belief in 2025. As the number of appointments is a relatively small number statistical trends are difficult to drawn.

It is important to note that due to the implementation of the new Human Resources Information System (HRIS), there is missing data between April - July 2025.

Table 15: 2025 Recruitment by Religion and belief in percentage

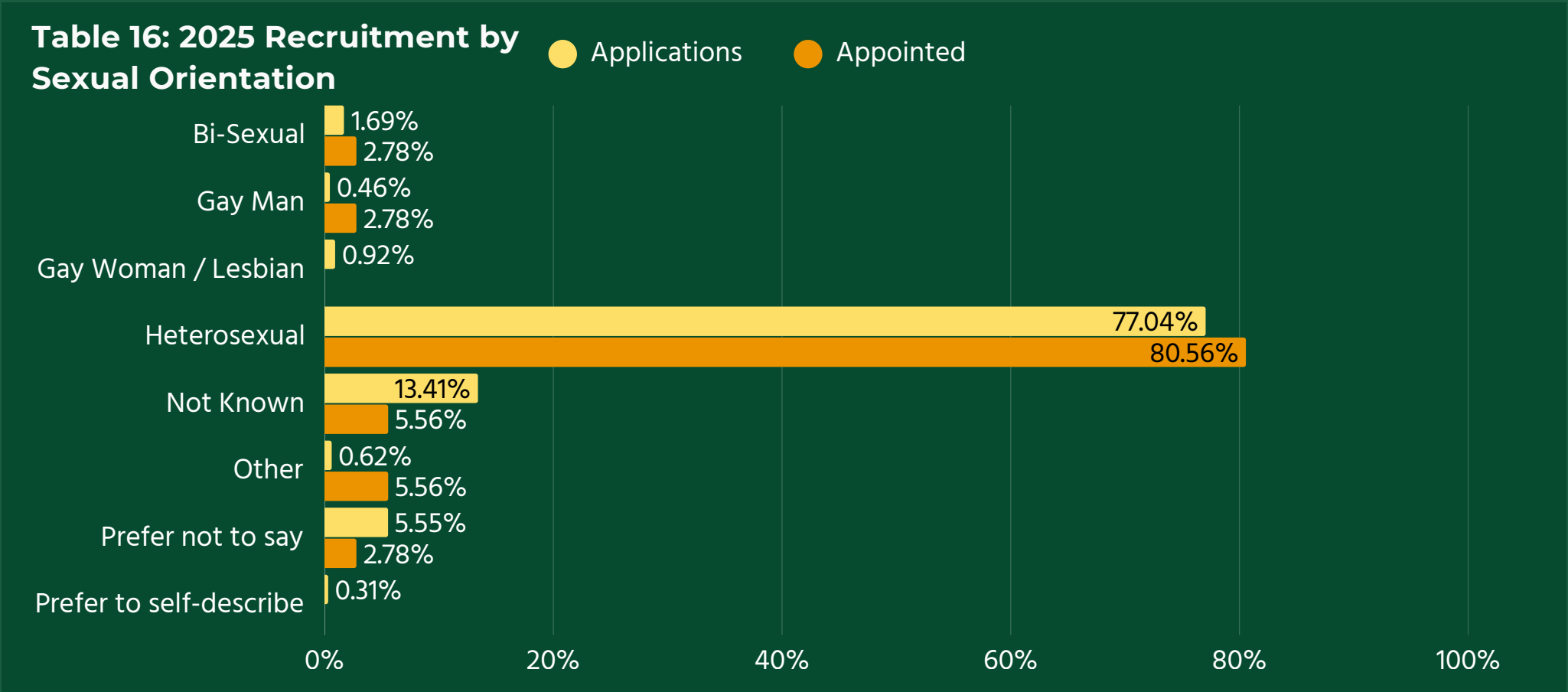
● Applications ● Appointed



Recruitment by Sexual Orientation

Table 16 shows the number of applications and appointed candidates by sexual orientation in 2025. As the number of appointments is a relatively small number statistical trends are difficult to drawn.

It is important to note that due to the implementation of the new Human Resources Information System (HRIS), there is missing data between April - July 2025.



Recruitment by Disability and Sex

Table 17 shows the number of applicants and appointed candidates based on sex in 2025. Table 18 shows the number of applicants and appointed candidates based on Disability in percentage in 2025. 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 due to the implementation of the new Human Resources Information System (HRIS), there is missing data between April - July 2025.

Table 17: 2025 Recruitment by Sex in percentage

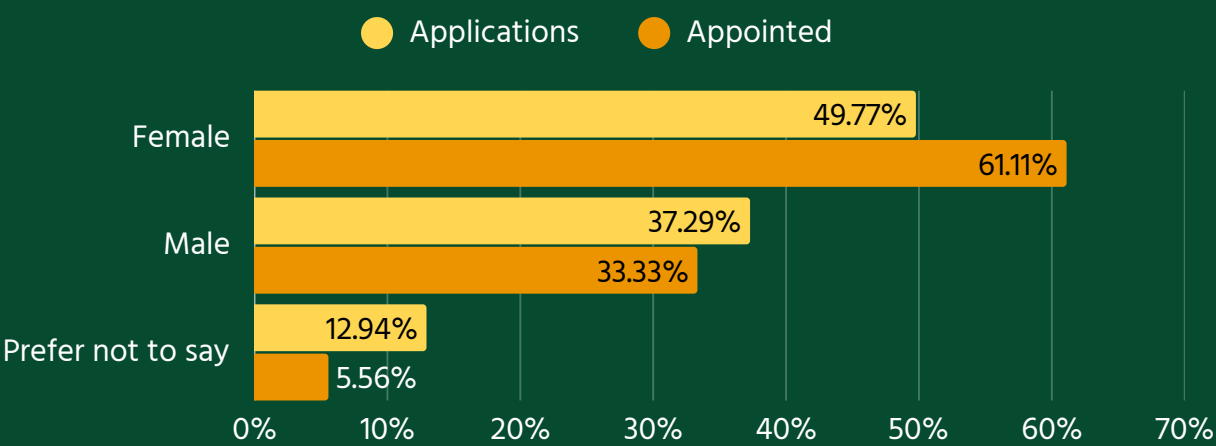
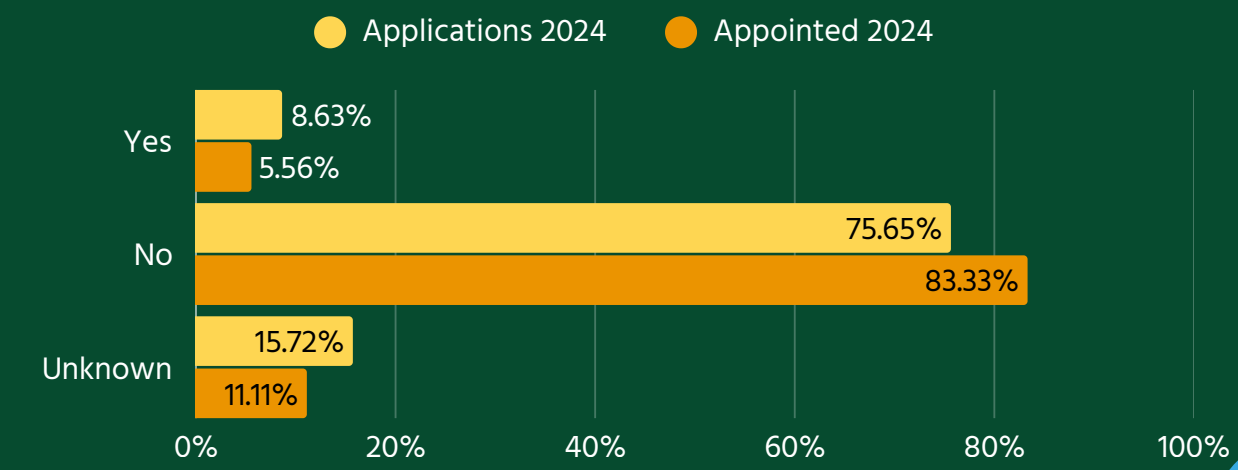


Table 18: 2025 Recruitment by Disability in percentage



Leavers 2025

During 2025-26 there was a total of 52 leavers. As shown in Table 19, 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 . 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.

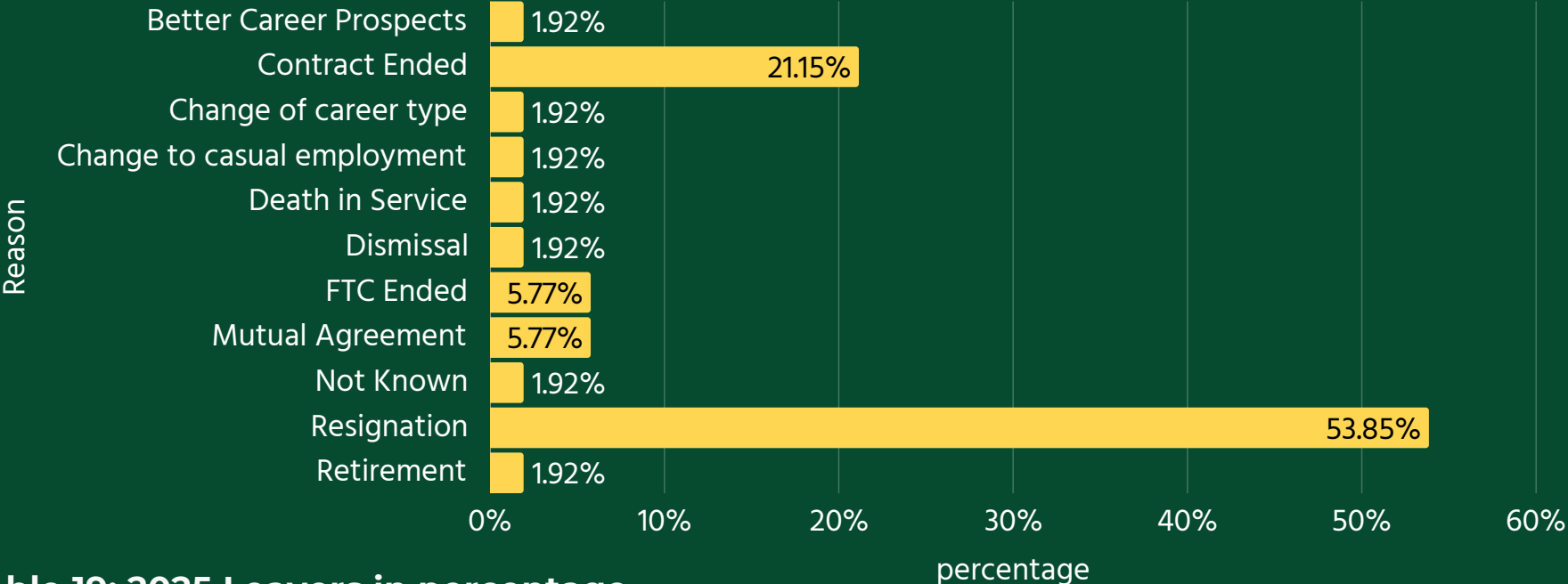


Table 19: 2025 Leavers in percentage

Training

During 2025-2026 73.48% employees accessed different training courses managed by the People & Culture team.

The councils operate using an external learning platform called “MyDevelopment” which contains various training courses. Service specific training is organised by and recorded within individual service areas and is not included in this analysis.

During 2025-26, the Equality and Wellbeing team also organised and ran a number of internal training for staff, including:

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.

Mental Health First Aider (MHFA) Training

In 2025, our MHFA's went through refresher training to ensure they are up to date on the best ways to look after staff wellbeing.

MBL webinars

Throughout 2025, the workforce had access to a number of different webinars and resources from MBL webinars provided by the Councils



Early career initiatives

In 2025, the Councils ran a number of Apprentenships, Internships, and work experience, to improve education and access to work for everyone. This included:

IMPACT. Graduate programme

In 2025, the Councils recruited three new Graduates as part of the 2-year Local Government Association's IMPACT. graduate programme.

Apprenticeships

In 2025, the Councils supported two employees on apprenticeship programmes, one on the Digital Accessibility Level 4 Apprenticeship and one on the Chartered Town Planner Level 7 Degree Apprenticeship.

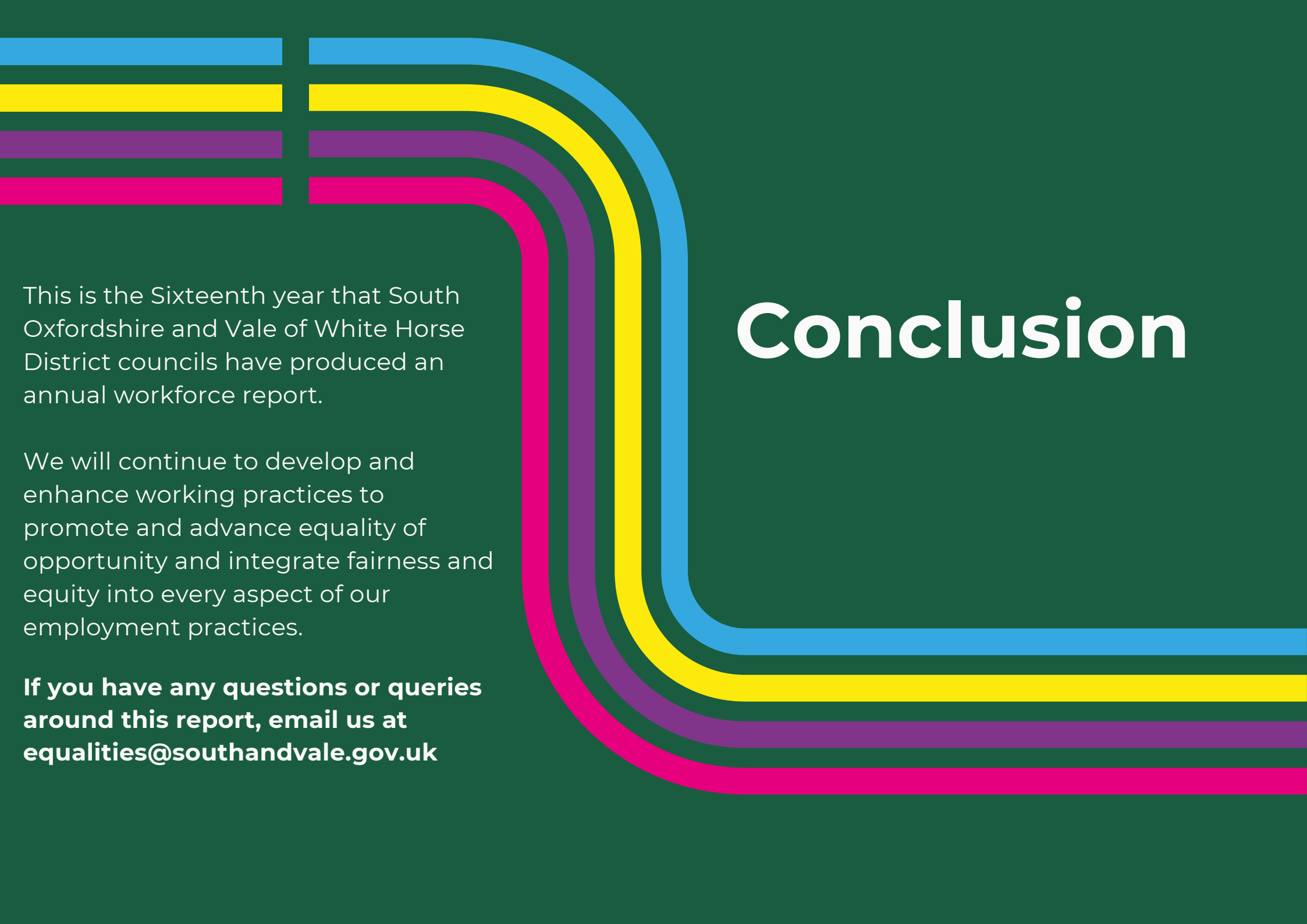
Internship programme

In 2025, the Learning and Development (L&D) team worked in partnership with Oxford University Careers Service to develop an internship programme, welcoming two Summer Interns into Community Arts and Economic Development teams.

Work Experience

The L&D team developed a pilot work experience programme, and welcomed four students in People and Culture and Community Arts teams.





This is the Sixteenth 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