

Shropshire Council

Annual Workforce Diversity Report

2024 – 2025



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Shropshire Council is committed to building an inclusive and diverse workforce that reflects the communities we serve. Our goal is to create an atmosphere where everyone feels valued, respected, and encouraged to reach their full potential.

This report highlights our continuous efforts to promote equality and diversity while providing a comprehensive overview of our workforce demographics, alongside policies and initiatives designed to support inclusion. We believe that by embracing the varied perspectives and experiences of our employees, we not only enrich our workplace culture but also improve our ability to meet the needs of Shropshire's communities effectively.

(The workforce data used in this report is based on employee headcount as of 31 March 2025 and includes corporate and maintained school employees. Figures for the local population are taken from the 2021 Census).

A snapshot of our workforce on 31 March 2025

5,113 employees (3,937.16 full-time equivalent)	2,325 full-time	2,788 part-time
	4,094 females	1,019 males
	1,663 school-based employees	3,450 corporate employees

Gender

The gender profile of our workforce is consistent with previous years:

	Female Headcount	Male headcount
March 2024	81%	19%
March 2025	80%	20%

There has been little change in the gender composition of our highest earners:

	Female senior earners	Male senior earners
March 2024	67%	33%
March 2025	65%	35%

Our current workforce

All
Female - 80%
Male - 20%

Age 16-64
Female – 80%
Male – 20%



We have in place a range of initiatives to promote a gender diverse workplace – unbiased recruitment processes to attract a broad range of candidates, flexible working practices to support the work-life balance of both men and women, a job evaluation scheme to ensure equal pay for equivalent roles, and family friendly policies to promote employee wellbeing and flexibility.

Our local population

All
Female – 51%
Male – 49%

Age 16-64
Female – 50%
Male – 50%

Recruitment applicants - 5,213 job applications were received in 2024/25, of which 70% were female and 29% male (1% chose to not disclose their gender).

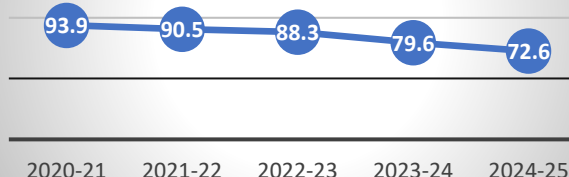
Successful candidates - 78% of the successful candidates were female and 22% male, a slight change compared to the previous year which was 83% female and 17% male.

Shropshire Council has reduced its mean Gender Pay Gap by nearly 1% this year and by over 10% since 2018. The median gap rose slightly due to changes in lower-paid male earnings but overall has still fallen by more than 11% since reporting began.

See the full report here ([Equality, diversity and social inclusion | Shropshire Council](#)).

Disability

Employee disability status is not known



The number of employees for whom we hold no disability status has significantly reduced over the past five years. In 2020-21, 93.9% of employees had an unknown disability status, but this figure has steadily decreased each year, reaching 72.6% in 2024-25. This downward trend demonstrates ongoing progress in collecting and recording disability status information across our workforce.

Disability disclosure among applicants shows that 7.1% of candidates identified as disabled, indicating some representation, but compared to the local working age population (15.4%) may suggest under-representation. Most applicants (88.3%) reported no disability. A small proportion chose not to share this information, with 3.6% preferring not to say and 1.0% not disclosing their disability status.

Our current workforce

All	Age 16-64
2.7%	2.7%

A comparison of the disability status of our workforce, March 2024 to March 2025:

<u>Disability Status</u>	<u>March 2024</u>	<u>March 2025</u>
Disabled	2.4%	2.7%
Non-disabled	17.1%	23.1%
Prefer not to say	0.9%	1.6%
Not known	79.6%	72.6%

A breakdown of the disability status of our new recruits and leavers during 2024/25:

<u>Disability Status</u>	<u>Starters</u>	<u>Leavers</u>
Disabled	4.3%	1.7%
Non-disabled	65.6%	20.6%
Prefer not to say	7.2%	0.6%
Not known	23.0%	77.1%

Our local population

All	Age 16-64
18.5%	15.4%

Relationships with our employees - the table below shows the proportion of employees, by disability disclosure status, who have been involved in disciplinary processes or raised a grievance:

<u>Disability Status</u>	<u>Disciplinary</u>	<u>Grievance</u>
Disabled	2.0%	5.1%
Non-disabled	16.3%	12.8%
Prefer not to say	2.0%	0.0%
Not known	79.6%	82.1%

Both processes show high levels of missing disability data which makes meaningful comparison limited. Among the small proportion with known status, disabled employees appear in both processes but at low percentages.



Ethnicity

	Our Current Workforce		Our Local Population	
	All	Age 16-64	All	Age 16-64
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh	1.2%	1.2%	1.3%	1.7%
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African	0.8%	0.9%	0.3%	0.5%
Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups	0.6%	0.7%	1.2%	1.1%
Not Specified	14.7%	14.7%	0.0%	0.0%
Other Ethnic Group	0.1%	0.1%	0.4%	0.6%
Prefer not to say	1.1%	1.1%	0.0%	0.0%
White	81.5%	81.5%	96.7%	96.2%

Our workforce's ethnic composition has remained mostly consistent year on year. We've continued to decrease the number of employees without recorded ethnicity information: 18.3% in 2022/23, dropping to 16.8% in 2023/24, and further to 14.7% in 2024/25 — showing positive progress. However, with a large proportion of staff still having no recorded ethnicity, the true picture of diversity is incomplete. The categories are as per national Census categories. We are mindful that the Protected Characteristic of Race, as defined in the Equality Act 2010, encompasses ethnicity, nationality, culture, and language, and includes people who may record themselves as being from another ethnic group.

During 2024/25, 13.3% of our recruitment applicants were from other ethnic groups (excluding White), a similar figure to the previous year, suggesting ongoing interest from applicants from ethnic minority communities. "Ethnic minorities" is the phrasing that we use, as per national guidance.

	Starters		Leavers	
	2023/24	2024/25	2023/24	2024/25
White	77.3%	75.1%	60.1%	78.6%
Other ethnic groups	3.6%	7.2%	1.9%	2.7%
Not known/Prefer not to say	19.0%	17.7%	38.0%	18.7%

The number of new starters from ethnic minority groups has increased from 3.6% in 2023/24 to 7.2% in 2024/25. Whilst the number of leavers from ethnic minority groups remains consistent with the demographic of the current workforce, the high level of missing ethnicity data makes it difficult to assess if any particular groups are disproportionately represented in the leavers totals.



Ethnicity data from employee relations cases in 2024/25 indicates that ethnic minority staff accounted for 14.3% of disciplinary cases and 12.8% of formal grievances, compared with 1.70% representation within the wider workforce. Although both workforce and casework datasets contain notable gaps—particularly within disciplinary records—these patterns point to a potential over-representation of ethnic minority employees in formal casework processes, reinforcing the need to continue improving data completeness and maintaining fair, transparent and inclusive employment practices.

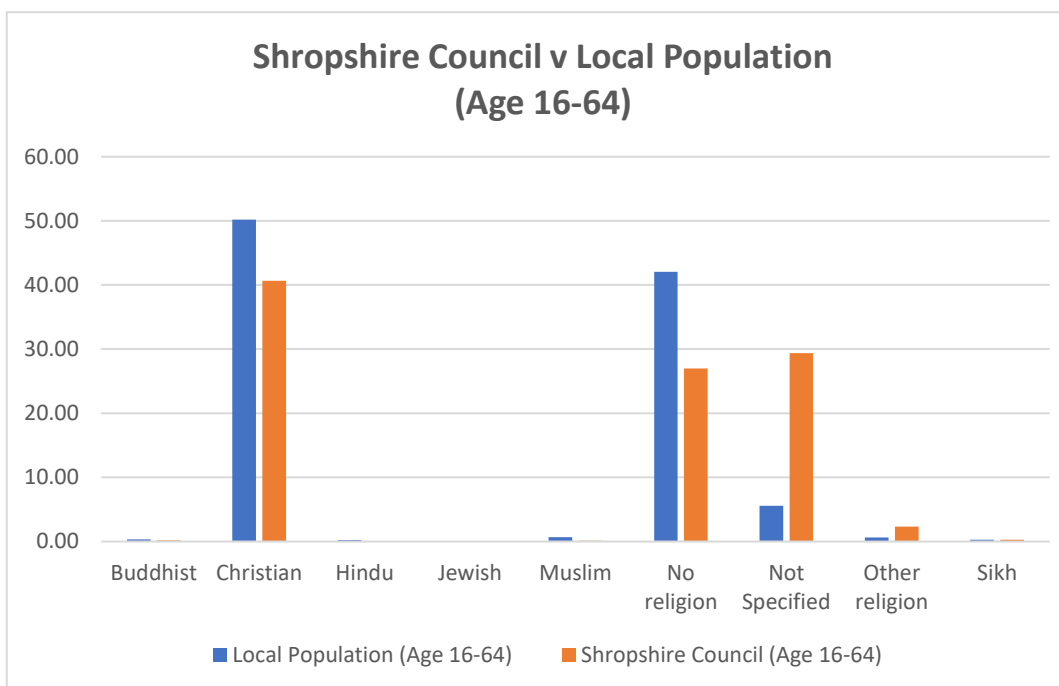
Religion

	<u>Our Current Workforce</u>		<u>Our Local Population</u>	
	All	Age 16-64	All	Age 16-64
Buddhist	0.20%	0.14%	0.28%	0.35%
Christian	41.10%	40.29%	55.47%	50.17%
Hindu	0.04%	0.07%	0.17%	0.22%
Jewish	0.02%	0.02%	0.06%	0.06%
Muslim	0.12%	0.14%	0.53%	0.67%
No religion	26.44%	24.12%	36.95%	42.06%
Sikh	0.27%	0.26%	0.24%	0.30%
Other religion	2.25%	2.02%	0.46%	0.61%
Not specified	29.55%	29.33%	5.85%	5.56%

Shropshire Council celebrated and promoted awareness of a wide range of religious festivals, including:

Bodhi Day (Buddhism)
 Diwali
 Hanukkah
 Lent and Easter
 Ramadhan
 Vaisakhi
 Plus, broader cultural events such as Chinese New Year, and Inter Faith Week.

These celebrations were communicated through intranet updates, EDI calendars, and annual diversity reporting, demonstrating the Council's ongoing commitment to inclusivity and respect for diverse religious observations and commemorations.



Compared with Shropshire's population, our workforce shows a broadly similar religious profile. However, a high 'not specified' rate among employees suppresses declared proportions across all groups. Once disclosure improves, the workforce share for major categories will likely move closer to the local profile and we will have a clearer view of the diversity of faith representation. This will help us to be better able to accommodate staff faith needs, such as quantifying where prayer spaces may be useful and time needed to observe particular days and events.

The number of new starters for whom we hold no religious details has continued to reduce, with 15.6% of new starters recorded as 'not known', compared to 21.5% the previous year.

Age

15 years and under
16 to 24 years
25 to 34 years
35 to 44 years
45 to 54 years
55 to 64 years
65 years and over

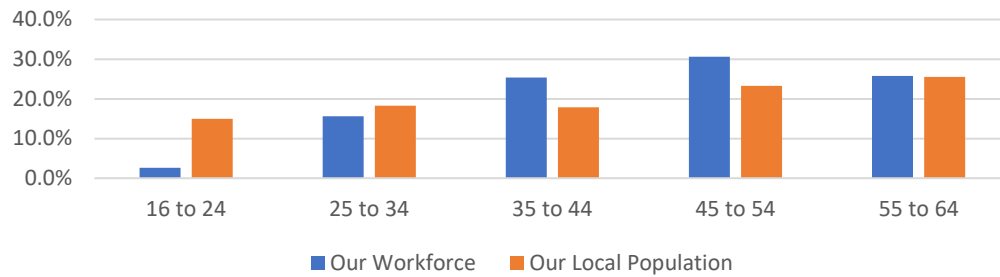
Our current workforce

All	Age 16-64
0.0%	n/a
3.5%	3.7%
14.6%	15.1%
24.1%	24.9%
29.9%	30.9%
24.5%	25.4%
3.3%	n/a

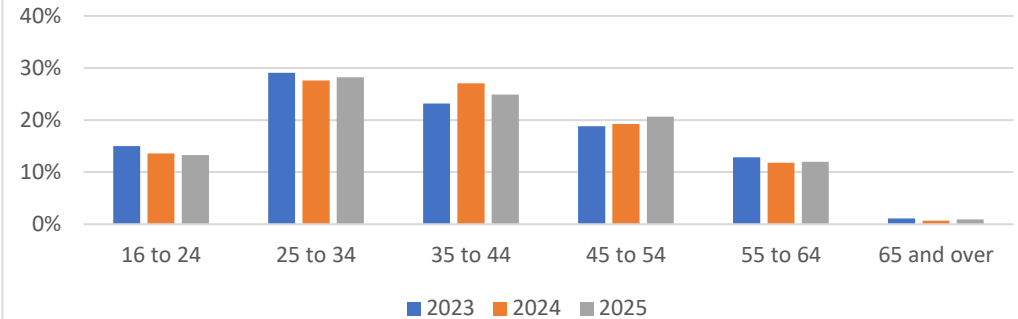
Our local population

All	Age 16-64
15.9%	n/a
8.8%	15.0%
10.8%	18.3%
10.5%	17.9%
13.7%	23.3%
15.0%	25.5%
25.4%	n/a

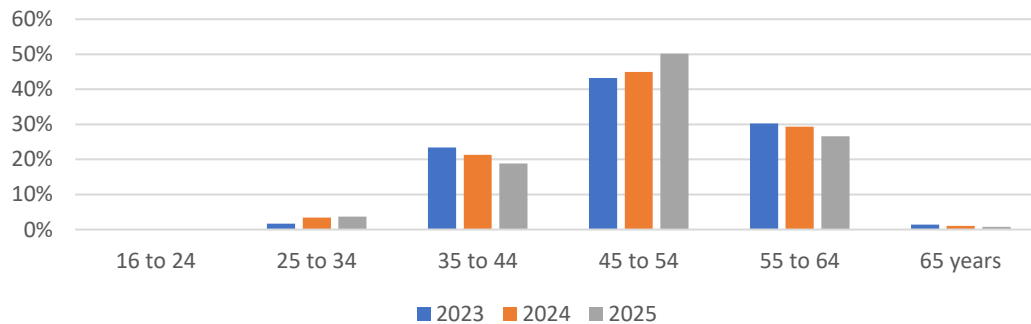
Age profile of our workforce and local population
(Age 16 - 64)



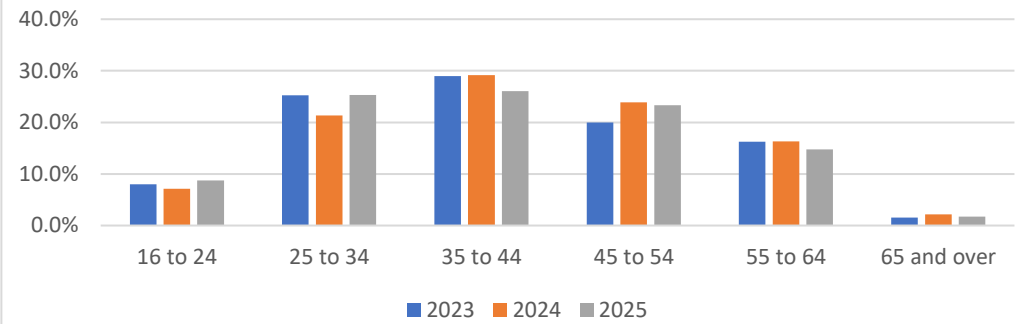
Age profile of our recruitment applicants



Age profile of our senior earners



Age profile of our new starters



Sexual Orientation

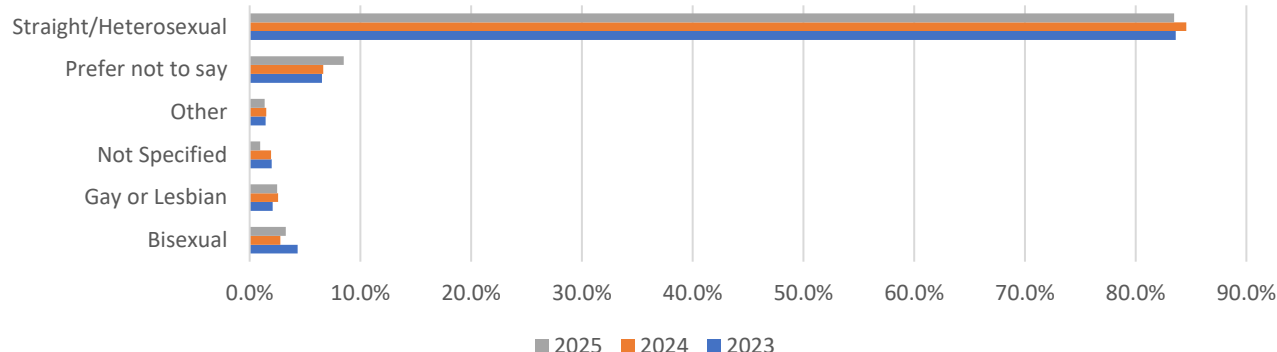
	<u>Our current workforce</u> Age 16 and over	<u>Our local population</u> Age 16 and over
Bisexual	0.7%	1.0%
Gay or Lesbian	0.7%	1.2%
Not specified	28.8%	7.1%
Other	0.2%	0.2%
Prefer not to say	7.3%	n/a
Straight/Heterosexual	62.2%	90.6%

Our senior earners:

Gay or Lesbian	1.1%
Not known	31.4%
Prefer not to say	5.9%
Straight/Heterosexual	61.6%

Although lower than the previous year, non-disclosure rates remain high, meaning true representation across our most senior earners is unknown. This may suggest that ED&I engagement or confidence at senior level needs strengthening.

The profile of our recruitment applicants



Overall, the data indicates a consistently diverse applicant pool, with stable representation across sexual orientation categories. While no immediate concerns arise from year-to-year changes, the increasing “prefer not to say” rate signals the importance of maintaining clear, trusted messaging around the purpose of equality monitoring.

We continue to observe high levels of non-disclosure, indicating that additional focus may be required to enhance disclosure confidence. The representation of heterosexual individuals appears lower than anticipated, likely as a result of incomplete data.

Other news...

In February, Shropshire Council marked LGBT+ History Month with a theme of Activism and Social Change. This was included in the Council’s staff weekly update and formed part of organisation-wide equality, diversity and inclusion engagement throughout the month.

During Pride Month in June, the Council once again publicised the efforts of community activists in regard to activities and events. Staff were encouraged to use Pride-themed MS Teams backgrounds and the Rainbow Flag was flown from Council buildings.

The Public Sector Equality Duty

In November 2024, Cabinet agreed to the publication of Shropshire Council's Equality Objectives Action Plan for 2024 to 2028 to meet our specific Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), as set out in the Equality Act 2010. Publication of the Strategic Equality Objectives Action Plan is a legal requirement under the PSED. Its production enabled the Council to not only frame our proposed actions for the next four years but also record and reflect upon progress made in the last four years.

The Action Plan serves to continue to demonstrate our commitment to tackling racism and other forms of discrimination, harassment and victimisation, to fostering good relations across communities, and to advancing equality of opportunity, through our actions as a Council and in partnership with others. This includes support to our workforce as well as to communities, with examples given in the annual service user diversity reports and workforce diversity reports that are also published as per PSED requirements. The Gender Pay Gap reports sit alongside these, with the sets of reports serving to aid trend analysis over time.

Further information can be found here - [Equality objectives | Shropshire Council](#)

Workforce Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

This policy sets out Shropshire Council's commitment to creating a workplace that values difference, background, and circumstance. We aim to eliminate discrimination and promote an inclusive environment where everyone can develop their skills and talents.

HR Policies and Guidance

A wide range of information is available on the staff intranet, providing employees and managers with comprehensive guidance on employment-related matters.

Our policies are regularly reviewed to ensure inclusivity, compliance with current legislation, and continued relevance to our organisation. This year, these efforts included the review and update of our Code of Conduct. In addition, we have prioritised the revision of the Family Leave Policy, successfully integrating all key categories of family-related leave into a single, cohesive framework. The revised policy is designed to support employees through pregnancy, adoption, surrogacy, parenting, caregiving responsibilities, and neonatal needs, demonstrating the Council's ongoing commitment to equality, employee wellbeing, and work-life balance.

Recruitment

As part of a comprehensive review of our recruitment and onboarding strategies, we aim to launch a dedicated webpage detailing our commitment to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion. This initiative aims to attract a broader and more diverse pool of applicants, enhance confidence in our recruitment processes and clearly reflect our organisational values.

Employee Engagement

Shropshire Council has greatly increased efforts to connect with employees, including holding engagement sessions, conducting pulse surveys, and continuing to share weekly updates from the Chief Executive.

Workforce Data

Understanding workforce demographics and requirements is essential. Employees are able to access, review, and update their equality information through the HR System. Submission of this data remains voluntary, with the option to select 'prefer not to say' if chosen. The organisation will maintain its commitment to encouraging regular reviews and updates of personal equality records.

We plan to implement new Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) to enhance the measurement of data related to ethnicity and disability, aiming to further improve our records in advance of upcoming disability and ethnicity pay gap reporting requirements.

Early Careers, Apprenticeships and Access to Vacancies

Shropshire Council continues to work with both national and local Apprenticeship Training Providers to offer a wide range of apprenticeships including Higher, Advanced and Degree level qualifications. We work closely with training providers to ensure they are able to offer flexible training to meet the needs of the organisation as the majority of our services undertake hybrid working. Shropshire Council continues to work with these providers to develop apprenticeships for the future, providing greater flexibility to all employees in accessing apprenticeships.

Shropshire Council has championed an Apprenticeship First approach, ensuring that apprenticeship training is considered for all training needs in the first instance for both professional development and new recruits. Enabling an increase in recruited apprenticeships will endeavour to increase social mobility and diversity of the workforce, creating opportunities and entry-level access to roles within the organisation and allowing new recruits to develop and enhance their skills and knowledge whilst in paid employment.

In addition, Shropshire Council are looking at new options to support Care Leavers, Children Looked After (CLA) and those who are undertaking Supported Employment. In the last 12 months, Shropshire Council have hosted Supported Intern Placements in IT and Planning Policy. We're also currently supported a CLA apprenticeship placement in the 16+ Leaving Care team and the employee is undertaking an apprenticeship in Youth Work.

Young People Leaving Care are also a local protected characteristic grouping to whom we seek to give 'due regard' in all our decision-making processes.

We continue to adapt our existing offer including refreshing induction and onboarding processes and seeking a process of continuous improvement. We are in the process of enhancing our main office hub to better accommodate face-to-face collaboration. These improvements are designed to support the aspirations of young people seeking hybrid work opportunities, allowing them to build valuable skills and confidence within a dynamic workplace setting. By doing so, we reaffirm our ongoing commitment to our corporate parenting responsibilities and to fostering an environment where young people can thrive professionally.

Shropshire Council are reviewing the approach to work experience opportunities, making placements easier to access and the opportunity open to more applicants. In the last 12 months we have worked closely with School Career Leads, our Career Hub and local Department for Work and Pensions, supporting and attending jobs fairs, offering training sessions which enable job seekers and Young People to understand how they can enhance their CVs, job applications and interview techniques when applying for roles at Shropshire Council.

The Council continues to follow the developments of the new Growth and Skills Levy and over the next 12 months will consider the opportunities and how these can be integrated into existing practice. Shropshire Council will continue to support staff who require Functional Skills as fundamental tools and skills to enable them best access to development opportunities and career progression.

Over the coming 12 months, Shropshire Council will continue to review its approach to Early Careers and Apprenticeships to tackle issues in regard to an ageing workforce and meeting future workforce needs and priorities. Shropshire Council will engage with internal and external stakeholders to generate an aligned action plan, alongside the wider Workforce Strategy refresh (2026-2029).

Employee Development

Through its online learning management, Shropshire Council has continued to promote opportunities for staff to continue self-development alongside essential and mandatory training for all staff, such as on Modern Slavery. The aim through this focus upon online resources is to make learning accessible and flexible to all, wherever they may be located in our rural county. This is then complemented

by offers including face to face sessions and online seminars. Whether the training and development is through face-to-face, virtual and online delivery it is around and ensuring that the content of the learning has an ED&I thread to it.

The Council has included specific actions around training and development within the Strategic Equality Objectives Action Plan 2024-2028, as follows:

Identify and implement good practice in training and guidance on developing and maintaining good relations with groupings in the community, as part of Shropshire Council guidance, training programmes and briefings for staff and elected Members.

- The aim is to increase understanding amongst officers and elected Members about the challenges faced by people with Protected Characteristics and people at risk of social exclusion.
- This is in order to help in collective progress, for the workforce and for members, towards the three national equality aims - eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advancing equality of opportunity; fostering good relations.
- We have and will continue to work with our colleagues in the NHS to progress relevant training and other actions to tackle issues such as ageism and misogyny, sexism, and discrimination on grounds of religion and belief, as well as experiences of racism amongst the workforce, including racism directed towards employees from those who use our services.

During Hate Crime Awareness Week, which was in the week leading up to Show Racism the Red Card Day on Friday 17th October, we also held an online screening of a film on rural racism from University of Leicester research, watched Benjamin Zephaniah read his own poetry and that of Dylan Thomas, and discussed racism through that lens.

We also launched documentation including a statement of commitment to support staff across all settings against racism and discrimination. The documentation is called “Dignity and respect towards staff across settings”. Council officers have worked with employee engagement groups and with internal providers to produce this document. It was published on the external website in the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion pages as a resource for ready access and usage, and as public demonstration of the Council’s commitment towards tackling racism and other forms of discrimination.

Further support is needed to build on awareness raising for managers as well as for staff, to equip them in their leadership roles with the confidence and competencies to recognise and tackle racism wherever encountered. This has also been highlighted by the Shropshire Council Anti Racism Forum (SCARF), whose members include colleagues working with refugees, and by the Workforce EDI group of the ICS, both of which have raised concerns about racism towards health and social care staff. Whilst a broad online offer is available to staff

which includes recent additions addressing allyship, misogyny and misandry, it remains the intention that when finances allow, face to face development opportunities will be introduced as part of the offer to staff.

Working with Wolverhampton and Telford & Wrekin Councils, there continues to be sharing of online seminars and development sessions on a range of topics. The Council has similarly shared awareness raising pieces with neighbouring and regional local authorities, and with NHS organisations through the ICS, on a range of commemorations, celebrations and events. For example, we promoted South Asian Heritage Month and Pride Month online seminars and involved regional colleagues and ICS colleagues in our Hate Crime Week online film screening and poetry seminar.

The Council's Mastering Leadership Matrix supports career development by offering the opportunity to gain new skills, knowledge and experience, with equality and diversity recognised within the programme's modules.

Supported Employment

Enable, our supported employment service, continues to help people into employment, training, and education. Providing support to overcome barriers when entering or returning to employment and assisting job seekers in their efforts to achieve sustainable employment and find a suitable career path.

Award Nomination

Shropshire Council's Anti-Racism Forum, SCARF, has been shortlisted for the Diversity and Inclusion category at the LGC Awards 2026, recognising its impactful work in identifying, challenging, and addressing racism. This national nomination highlights the growing external recognition of SCARF's contribution to fostering a fair, inclusive, and supportive working environment.

Next Steps

We will continue to work to reduce 'not specified' rates for disability, ethnicity, religion and sexual orientation to get a clearer picture of our workforce diversity. This information helps us to seek to ensure that workplace settings and interactions meet the varying needs of employees. For example, if they have disabilities, which may be physical, sensory, or hidden conditions such as neurodiversity, the more that the Council knows as an employer the better placed we are to assist individuals in ways that meet their individual needs.

New KPI's will be introduced for disability and ethnicity to support future pay gap reporting and strengthen monitoring.



We are committed to further advancing apprenticeships, supported internships, work experience, and additional opportunities for young people with care experience.

We will introduce a dedicated webpage in regard to recruitment, outlining our commitment to EDI to help candidates understand our inclusive values from the outset.

Engagement sessions, pulse surveys, and leadership communications will be ongoing to maintain continued progress.

Summary

Shropshire Council remains committed to building a workplace where everyone feels respected, valued and able to thrive. The progress outlined in this report demonstrates our ongoing dedication to improving data quality, strengthening inclusive policies, and widening access to employment. These efforts link into the People Plan for the Council, approved in December 2025, as a comprehensive roadmap for developing a high-performing, inclusive, and sustainable workforce. It is central to achieving the Council's vision for the future, supporting the workforce, and delivering the outcomes set out in the Improvement Plan and forthcoming Corporate Plan as part of the one Shropshire plan.

As we move forward, we will continue to work to embed Equality, Diversity and Inclusion into every aspect of our people practices, ensuring our workforce better reflects the communities we serve and that all employees are supported to reach their full potential.