



From mountain to sea

Equality Mainstreaming and Outcomes Progress Report 2021 - 2025



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Foreword

Welcome to Aberdeenshire Council's Equalities Mainstreaming and Outcomes Progress Report 2021-2025.

Our Equalities and Mainstreaming Report demonstrates our continued commitment through the wide-ranging activities, best practice and honest reflection on how we work within the organisation and together with our partners. As we make progress with our Equality Outcomes, we continue to embed and integrate equalities through all that we do, placing the people of Aberdeenshire at the heart of our services.

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown us how individuals and communities who already experience the greatest inequality in society are the ones who are most negatively affected. Simultaneously, it has also shown how, by working together with a shared sense of compassion and community we have been able to respond in a way that demonstrates the strengths and values we have that overcomes the challenges.

This report highlights how we are addressing inequalities, how Aberdeenshire Council, Aberdeenshire Education Authority and Aberdeenshire Licensing Board are embedding equality practices by encouraging strong leadership of the Equalities agenda across councillors, Strategic Leadership Team, the Education Authority and Licensing Board.

We have a strong commitment to equality, and we recognise that promoting equality and diversity is a continuing journey. Building on our previous work, our aim is to support a fairer, inclusive Aberdeenshire where equality of opportunity is an important consideration in everything we do and is a critical part of our approach.

This report is designed to provide an overview of progress since the 2021 report in relation to:

- Mainstreaming equalities into the structures of Aberdeenshire Council, Aberdeenshire Education Authority and Aberdeenshire Licensing Board
- Progress in relation to our current Equality Outcomes (2021 – 2025).

It provides evidence of what we have achieved over the last two years as well as highlighting the actions to be taken over the next two years of the equality outcomes.

Part A: Mainstreaming Equalities

1 Our Equalities journey so far

The equality outcomes 2021-25 demonstrate that we are continuing to take equalities into account in the way we go about our business when acting as:

- an Employer;
- a Policy and Decision Maker;
- a Service Provider;
- a Buyer of Goods and services;
- an Education Authority; and
- Licensing Board

We recognise that mainstreaming equalities has a number of benefits, including:

- Equalities becomes part of the structures, behaviours and culture of Aberdeenshire, to the benefit of employees and Service users;
- We can demonstrate how, in carrying out our business, we are promoting equalities; and
- Mainstreaming equalities contributes to continuous improvement, better performance and better value.

In addition to corporate activity, Education and Children's Services and partners have developed the Children's Services Plan, the results of which formulate our overall approach.

The Children's Services three-year plan provides information on how local services plan and deliver support to children, young people and families across Aberdeenshire; to make sure they get the right support, at the right time, by the right people.

The five priorities for the Aberdeenshire 2020-2023 Children's Services Plan are as follows:

1. Providing help for care experienced children & young people (Corporate Parenting).
2. Drive early intervention and prevention to support children and young people affected by their own or someone else's drug or alcohol use.
3. Support children with a disability and their families.
4. Making sure children get the best start in life by giving the best support to families in the early years (children aged 0 to 8 years old).
5. Improving Mental Health outcomes for children and young people.

2 Overview of Aberdeenshire in the context of Equalities

2.1 The Legal context

2.1.1 *The Public Sector Equality Duty*

Section 149 of The Equality Act 2010 came into force in April 2011, introducing a new Public Sector Equality duty that became law across Scotland. The Public Sector Equality Duty has three parts with which we must comply. It requires public bodies such as Aberdeenshire Council, Aberdeenshire Education Authority and the three Aberdeenshire Licensing Boards to have due regard to, or to consciously consider, the need to:

1. Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
2. Advance equality of opportunity between those who have Protected Characteristics and those who don't; and
3. Foster good relations between those who have Protected Characteristics and those who don't.

These are sometimes referred to as the three aims or arms of the general equality duty. The Act explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

In terms of discrimination, the following describes how they are classified:

- Direct discrimination - treating someone with a protected characteristic less favourably than others
- Indirect discrimination - putting rules or arrangements in place that apply to everyone, but that put someone with a protected characteristic at an unfair disadvantage
- Harassment - unwanted behaviour linked to a protected characteristic that violates someone's dignity or creates an offensive environment for them
- Victimisation - treating someone unfairly because they've complained about discrimination or harassment

2.1.2 *What are Protected Characteristics?*

Everyone is protected by the Act. Every person has one or more of the Protected Characteristics, so the Act protects all of us against unfair treatment. The Protected Characteristics are:

Age

The Equality Act 2010 protects people of all ages. Aberdeenshire Council has divided this into two groups- age (younger) and age (older). Please note that there is no fixed boundary between age (younger) and age (older) as this will depend on the context.

Disability

Disability includes people with physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out day-to-day activities. These would include learning and sensory disabilities, people with a long-term illness, and people with mental health problems.

Gender Reassignment

The Equality Act 2010 provides protection for Transgender people. A Transgender person is someone who proposes to, starts, in the process or has completed a process to transition from one sex to another.

Marriage and Civil Partnership

Marriage is defined in The Equality Act 2010 as a union between two people of different or the same sexes. Same sex couples can also have their relationship legally recognised as civil partnerships. Civil partners must be treated the same as married couples on a wide range of legal matters.

Pregnancy and Maternity

The law covers pregnant women or those who have given birth within the last 26 weeks, and those who are breast feeding.

Race

Under The Equality Act 2010 race includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins. It also includes Gypsy Travellers.

Religion or Belief

In The Equality Act 2010, religion includes any religion. It also includes a lack of religion. Belief means any religious or philosophical belief or a lack of such belief.

Sex

Sex is either a man or a woman. Both are protected under The Equality Act 2010.

Sexual Orientation

The Equality Act 2010 says that you must not be discriminated against because you're gay, lesbian, bisexual or heterosexual.

2.1.3 The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012

The Scottish Government introduced a set of specific equality duties to support the better performance of the general duty by public bodies. These duties include requirements to:

- publish a report on the progress of mainstreaming the equality duty every two years;

- publish equality outcomes and report on progress;
- assess and review policies and practices;
- gather and use employee information;
- publish gender pay gap information;
- publish an equal pay statement (every 4 years)
- consider award criteria and conditions in relation to public procurement

At its meeting on 23 September 2021 Aberdeenshire Council approved Aberdeenshire's Equalities Mainstreaming and Equality Outcomes Report 2021-25. The report was also approved by the Licensing Board and the Education and Children's Services Committee on 18 and 26 August 2021 respectively.

This report highlights the progress which has taken place since April 2021.

We are committed to meeting the Public Sector Equality Duty and Specific Duties.

We will ensure that we will:

- take effective action on equality;
- make the right decisions, first time around;
- develop better policies and practices, based on evidence;
- are more transparent, accessible and accountable;
- deliver improved outcomes for all in the community; and
- ensure our equality outcomes have a positive impact

2.1.4 *Fairer Scotland Duty*

Part 1 of the Equality Act (2010), The Fairer Scotland Duty, came into force in Scotland from April 2018. It places a legal responsibility on particular public bodies (including Local Authorities) in Scotland to actively consider (pay due regards to) how they can reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage when making strategic decisions.

To fulfil our obligations under the duty, Aberdeenshire Council must be able to demonstrate that the following key requirements are met:

- To actively consider how to reduce inequalities of outcome in any major strategic decision making
- To publish a written assessment, showing how this has been carried out

2.1.5 *Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015*

The Community Empowerment Act 2015 aims to strengthen communities across Scotland by strengthening their voices in decisions about public services and making it easier for them to own land and manage buildings.

The Act has been in force since 2015.

Part 3 of The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 introduced a new right by which community groups can request to be involved in, and have influence over, decisions and services that affect communities. This involvement is described as an Outcome Improvement Process (OIP) and is initiated by a Participation Request (PR)

2.2 Bringing this report to life

Throughout this report and in [Appendix 3](#): examples, case studies and vignettes have been used to bring this report to life.

We continue to build equalities into our organisational structures, adopting an inclusive approach to developing and delivering our equalities vision, strategies and plans through the work we do and the services we deliver which are outlined below. Many of the mainstreaming activities described in this report demonstrate this.

2.3 Equalities Governance Framework

The Equalities Governance Framework in Aberdeenshire is designed to support, embed and promote the equalities agenda throughout Aberdeenshire. There are several elements to the structure as follows

Equalities and Human Rights Strategy Board (EHRSB)

The Equalities & Human Rights Strategy Board (EHRSB) is made up of senior employees who have been nominated to represent their relevant council Service and trade union representation. Membership reflects the broad range of services provided by the council and the need for a council-wide approach to equalities. The Board provides direction to ensure Aberdeenshire's ability to comply with The Equality Act 2010 and The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012.

The EHRSB meets on a half-yearly basis and is chaired by the Director of Education and Children's Services.

Equality Ambassadors

Approximately 40 Equality Ambassadors have been nominated across the council, Education Authority and staff that support the Licensing Board. Their role is to support the mainstreaming of equalities by assisting staff when completing Integrated Impact Assessments and responding to day-to-day queries regarding equalities matters as well as share updates across their service area. Equality Ambassadors also receive training and any Equalities related updates to ensure their knowledge is up to date,

Elected Members

All Aberdeenshire Council Elected Members recognise the significant importance of equalities in their role of leading, supporting and advocating for the people and communities within Aberdeenshire Council.

Business Strategy Team

Within the Business Strategy Team, the Policy & Performance Team Leader and the Policy Officer support the corporate approach to equalities, complementing the work of Services and monitors and reports on progress.

Mental Health First Aiders

Aberdeenshire Council recognises the importance of supporting its employees, particularly where it comes to their mental health. A group of approximately 20 volunteer employees have been trained to provide mental health first aid. Mental

health first aiders are there to support staff in a crisis. Training has been re-established in December 2022 to further enhance mental health first aider provisions.

2.4 Integrated Impact Assessments (IIAs)

Aberdeenshire uses a digital Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) tool to provide robust evidence to demonstrate that we are giving due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty.

The impact assessment takes account of all nine Protected Characteristics as well as the Fairer Scotland Duty. An impact assessment should be carried out where any strategic decision, new policy or changes to a policy, or project is being carried out.

Guidance on the completion of Integrated Impact Assessments has been developed for employees. This guidance is written in the form of short notes as well as a recorded session held on Aberdeenshire Council's learning platform, ALDO. It details the process from screening to carrying out the assessment to determine if there are potential impacts, both positive and negative, on people with Protected Characteristics and different socio-economic groups, and examples of the potential different impacts on protected groups.

The guidance is available for all employees to access through the Equalities pages of the council's intranet.

2.5 Prejudice and Discrimination Reporting Process

A Prejudice and Discrimination incident is any discriminatory act based on prejudice or discrimination against an individual as a result of:

1. The victim having one or more of the Protected Characteristics under The Equality Act 2010 being treated unfairly; or
2. It is assumed that the victim has one or more of the Protected Characteristics, being bullied; or
3. The victim is associated, or assumed to be associated with someone who has one or more of the Protected Characteristics

The Prejudice and Discrimination Report can be used to report behaviour such as, but not restricted to:

- offensive language
- threatening behaviour
- physical violence
- abusive text messages, emails or comments on social media
- spreading rumours, being ignored or excluded
- having belongings stolen or damaged, based on having one or more of the Protected Characteristics

Prejudice and discrimination incidents may be recorded in the following ways:

1. Schools: prejudice and discrimination incidents are recorded within the Bullying and Harassment module of SEEMIS;

2. Service users/customers: prejudice and discrimination incidents are recorded through the council's Feedback Team;
3. Employees: HR&OD record details of prejudice and discrimination incidents between staff members

An update report on prejudice and discrimination incidents is provided to the EHRSB twice a year for consideration and action as appropriate.

2.6 Committee reporting structure

Committee reports take account of equalities impacts through Integrated Impact Assessments. We continuously work to ensure that we are consciously considering equalities where we are considering new policies or changes to existing policies or strategic decisions.

2.7 Budget setting

Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty impact assessments are integral to the Council's budget setting process.

2.8 Communications Plan

We use a broad range of communication methods available to us to engage with employees and residents.

2.8.1 *Intranet*

Our equalities SharePoint site on Arcadia, our employee intranet, provides comprehensive guidance on corporate equality resources to support employees when dealing with equalities issues.

2.8.2 *Equalities and Diversity Events*

We raise awareness by highlighting key dates relating to Protected Characteristics. These are promoted via articles on Yammer and our intranet for staff, and through our social media channels.

Some of the events include Black History Month, Hate Crime Awareness Week, World Breastfeeding Week, International Youth Day, IDAHOBIT, 16 Days of Action, Holocaust Memorial Day

2.9 Social media

We use our social media channels to highlight our work around equalities and key dates to employees, residents and communities. Examples of these have been our commemoration of Holocaust Memorial Day shared on Twitter, Facebook and YouTube; used Facebook to highlight and signpost International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia; and a series of social media posts during Black History Month 2021.

Twitter was used during November and December 2022 for 16 days of action by Aberdeenshire's Violence Against Women Partnership including actions and learning during those 16 days.

2.10 Interpretation, Translation and Transcription

We continue to provide interpretation services and access to translation services to ensure communities' effective access to Services. Council Services are encouraged to use face-to-face interpreters, telephone interpretation and translation of key documents.

The council translates key publications and documents which are targeted towards people who may not speak English as a first language.

Many of our publications include a statement explaining how members of the public can request the document in another format on the front page. This statement includes the top four most requested languages in Aberdeenshire.

British Sign Language translation and sensory support is now included in our contract for translation services.

2.11 Accessibility

We added accessibility and translation functionality to our Council website in April 2022. The tool has different functions to aid those with sensory support and language barriers such as a magnifier, text to speech and inbuilt translator that will translate to the chosen language. We actively monitor usage to look for any trends that can help inform of any areas we need to focus on.

2.12 Training and Development

To support our equalities work we need to ensure employees and Elected Members are aware of our equality duties, and also how they affect Service delivery and employee management. Below are examples of training and awareness sessions taken place:

2.12.1 *E-Learning for Employees and Councillors in relation to The Public Sector Equality Duty*

- a) We have run sessions for Equality Ambassadors around the Public Sector Equality Duty. Additionally, training modules are available on the Council's Learning & Development platform, ALDO. Equalities training is mandatory for all employees as part of the corporate induction programme and is refreshed regularly. Training is monitored by the Learning and Development team. In addition, a course on Respecting Diversity was also developed. To date, 19 of our Elected Members have completed the online training.

Equalities training formed part of the Councillor induction following the Local Elections in May 2022. A seminar delivered by the Scottish Women's Budget Group was held on 12 December 2022. The topic was Gender Budget Setting. The session was attended by 23 Elected Members.

- b) Integrated Impact Assessments

An e-learning course has been developed which provides support to those employees who require to complete Integrated Impact Assessments. This is supplemented with a user guide on our Equality page within our intranet. Our

Equality Ambassadors have also received training using case studies to help support Aberdeenshire Council staff in assessing impacts.

c) **Mentally Healthy Work**

Aberdeenshire Council is committed to supporting its employees' wellbeing and mental health. Support is offered through various channels including our employee assistance programme provided by Vivup.

This service offers all employees at least six free and confidential one hour counselling sessions. Further support is offered through continued training and development, workshops on stress management, mental health for managers and wellbeing are offered to individuals and teams, virtually and/or face to face.

Face to face team meetings, the team come to site, meet the team and discuss matters relating to wellbeing. Regular communication and awareness campaigns are run using platforms such as Yammer and trickle as well as a monthly wellbeing newsletter. Information is aimed at providing our employees with support, where to find that support, how to access that support and raising awareness of specific subject matters such as mental health, menopause, cost of living etc. We also offer peer support groups, physiotherapy, employee benefits, meditation sessions and podcasts.

2.13 Participation and Representation

Aberdeenshire is committed to mainstreaming equality considerations into partnership activities and plans. We recognise that encouraging equal opportunities is an important objective of the community planning process, given that its purpose is to lead to a more equitable, just, and inclusive society.

2.13.1 *Scottish Councils' Equality Network (SCEN)*

This is a Network of Equality Officers from Scottish Local Authorities working closely with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA), the Scottish Government and the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC). The Network is a hub for information-sharing, professional support and often acts as a voice on equalities matters in Scotland. The Policy Officer and Team Leader (Policy and Performance) represent Aberdeenshire at SCEN.

2.13.2 *Gypsy/ Traveller Sub Committee*

The remit of the subcommittee is:

1. To develop and approve Council policies and practices in respect of issues specific to Gypsies/Travellers, including their health, welfare, educational and housing needs, and unauthorised encampments.
2. To monitor and approve the Council's Gypsy/Traveller Action Plan.
3. To consider and approve arrangements regarding the provision of accommodation for Gypsies/Travellers

2.13.3 *Gypsy/ Traveller Inter-agency Group*

This is a Grampian-wide officer group comprising the three local authorities (Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire and Moray), Police Scotland, NHS Grampian and

Grampian Regional Equality Council (GREC). The group seeks to pursue a joint approach to responding to Gypsy/Traveller issues within the Grampian area.

The group meets quarterly to consider cross-boundary Gypsy/Traveller issues, including implementation of a Grampian-wide Gypsy/Traveller Action Plan.

2.13.4 *Gypsy/Traveller Officer Working Group*

The Gypsy/Traveller Officer Group (GTOG) comprises of council officers and representatives from Police Scotland and the NHS.

The remit of the Group is to develop, monitor and provide feedback on policies, procedures and practices in respect of:

1. The Gypsy/Traveller Strategic Outcome Statement; and
2. Associated actions and documents produced as a result of the Implementation of the Strategic Outcome Statement.

GTOG meets quarterly or as required, and reports to the Gypsy/Traveller Sub Committee.

The council's Housing Service is the lead Service for dealing with unauthorised encampments and Gypsy/Traveller site provision. Aberdeenshire Council has a dedicated full-time Gypsy/Traveller Liaison Officer.

2.13.5 *Integrate Grampian Forum*

This is a Community Planning Partnership Forum which seeks to promote community cohesion and the integration of new residents in Aberdeenshire. The Forum oversees the Prejudice Incidents Reporting process in Aberdeenshire.

2.13.6 *Peterhead Inclusion Forum*

This group seeks to deal with issues affecting good relations between migrants and the local people in and around Peterhead. Peterhead Inclusion Forum works closely with primary schools and churches in the Peterhead area and the local Community Learning and Development network to provide support to disadvantaged and vulnerable children and parents in Peterhead.

2.13.7 *Aberdeenshire Refugee Resettlement Programme*

The Aberdeenshire vision for refugee resettlement and integration is rooted in the principles of partnership, community development, innovative practice, and co-production – putting new Scots and welcome communities at the centre of decision making, planning and action. We recognise refugees as an asset and a power for change in our communities and not simply victims of conflict, disaster, torture or war.

Aberdeenshire Council and partners have been resettling refugee families since 2015. From 2016 to 2021, the majority of families arrived via the *Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme*, the *Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme* and the *Afghan Relocation Assistance Programme*.

2.13.8 *Grampian Regional Equality Council*

Grampian Regional Equality Council (GREC) promotes and champions equality and diversity in the North East of Scotland and its mission is to work with others to ensure that everyone is valued for who they are and is able to contribute with encouragement, and without fear of discrimination or unfair treatment.

2.13.9 *Community Planning Partnership (CPP)*

To ensure consistency across Aberdeenshire, the Community Planning Partnership has adopted the IIA toolkit developed by Aberdeenshire Council.

Aberdeenshire is committed to mainstreaming equality considerations into partnership activities and plans. We recognise that encouraging equal opportunities is an important objective of the community planning process, given its purpose is to lead to a more equitable, just, and inclusive society.

Community Planning website

Our community planning website was redeveloped to ensure that information on community planning remained as accessible as possible across all different channels. Simultaneously, editors of the website were provided with guidance on how to make the content on webpages accessible for all. It is now a key source of information to support equalities activity across the wider partnership.

Local Community Plans, Socio-economic Inequalities and Integrated Impact Assessments (IIAs)

These are plans which identify priority outcomes and actions to improve the quality of life for those living and working in the area based on evidence and engagement with the local community. An IIA is undertaken for each of the plans.

Aberdeenshire Community Planning Partnership's (CPP) Connected and Cohesive Communities LOIP priority focusses on locality planning arrangements for the CPP's three locality planning areas, that cover four towns in Aberdeenshire – Peterhead, Fraserburgh and Banff & Macduff. To tackle inequalities in Aberdeenshire these areas were chosen based on key areas of disadvantage, highlighted in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD, 2016) and the Improvement Service's Community Planning Outcomes Profile (CPOP) tool. Each of these locality Plans updated annually are accompanied with an IIA.

In March 2017, the Aberdeenshire CPP Board formally agreed three LOIP priorities for Aberdeenshire. These are:

- Reducing Child Poverty in Aberdeenshire (broadened to "Reducing Poverty" in 2020)
- Connected and Cohesive Communities
- Changing Aberdeenshire's Relationship with Alcohol. This priority was removed in 2020 following a three-year review. The Board agreed that an alternative governance was in place via the Integration Joint Board. Progress in relation to this action is provided to the CPP Board in annual updates.

The 2020 review identified an additional priority of Health & Wellbeing. This priority is delivered in two distinct strands – healthy eating active living or HEAL and mental wellbeing.

2.13.10 *Participatory Budgeting (PB)*

Live Life Aberdeenshire (LLA) committed to spending £1.8m of its capital budget on Sport and Leisure infrastructure in Stonehaven through a participatory budgeting exercise.

Over a period of nine months, officers engaged with the public, community groups, clubs and young people to understand the needs and identify options that could be included in a public vote.

Through this engagement, the community indicated a range of sports and leisure activities that could be supported. Officers received proposals from clubs and groups to enhance existing or add additional spaces required to accommodate these sporting activities.

A reference group was formed in summer 2021 to support LLA officers in reviewing options and participatory budgeting approach. The group comprised of Area officers, colleagues from Landscape Services, Community Council members, representatives of sports clubs, colleagues from health and social care, and the local schools.

The reference group agreed a shortlist of options in October 2021. Colleagues within LLA, Landscape, Planning and Property assisted in developing options for the public vote.

Architectural colleagues produced a suite of visualisations to assist the public in their choice. Seven options for consideration progressed to the public vote. These include an additional covered multi-use sports area at the leisure centre; upgrade to the gym, fitness area and the addition of PAMIS (Promoting a more Inclusive Society) changing space at the leisure centre; funding to support additional multi-use space within the Stonehaven Recreation Grounds; funding to support a covered tennis facility at Stonehaven Recreation Grounds; upgrade to the skate park area including seating and lighting; upgrade to the outdoor space within Stonehaven Recreation Grounds to incorporate challenge putting, pétanque and quoits. The options are set out in a leaflet attached.

All options are subject to terms and conditions to ensure compliance with health and safety, planning, and other policies to ensure proper accountability on using public funds. Engagement HQ, the Council's online engagement platform, was used successfully throughout this process, from idea gathering to enabling public members to view the seven options for which they will be able to vote. Over the life of the project, there have been 27.3k visitors, with 205 ideas generated by the community for consideration. This platform was also used for the online vote.

There has been an extensive campaign to raise awareness of the process and vote. As well as issuing information to the media and using social media to raise awareness, posters and flyers were distributed around the town, through doors, and at local events. A dedicated display within Stonehaven Leisure Centre and Library. The library service included promotional bookmarks in books being

borrowed and delivered locally. Officers worked with schools in the network to distribute information and encourage voting. Many community organisations have been encouraged to cascade information through their contact lists and supplied the social media collateral pack and calendar to include content within their own social media.

The turnout for the vote was 1753 15.7% of the population. A post-vote survey is underway to establish the awareness of the PB vote in Stonehaven. The vote was mainly online. However, local sessions supported voting and offered paper voting for those unable to access the digital platform. The highest ranked option by the community will see an upgrade to the Stonehaven Leisure Centre.

2.13.11 *Aberdeenshire Lived Experience Network*

Working directly with those with lived experience, and through partnership work, we are able to bring the voice of lived experience into the work we do to reduce child poverty by understanding the issues and challenges faced by families and marginalised groups across Aberdeenshire and listening to their ideas for change.

We have several ongoing rights-based person led projects where the voices of lived experience are the lead partners in reviewing services which provide us with information on inequalities faced, and from these, help shape these Services to meet their needs.

3 Aberdeenshire as an employer

Aberdeenshire Council values all employees and recognises the importance of equality of opportunity. We aim to achieve this by ensuring the operation of fair and consistent employment practices that take account of the diversity of groups and individuals.

3.1 Workplace profile

We aim to have a diverse workforce which reflects the communities we serve. We seek to achieve this by ensuring the operation of fair and consistent employment practices that take into account the diversity of groups and individuals in our community. By doing this, we aim to be an employer of choice and to be recognised as an employer that provides fair employment opportunities for all.

Further information in relation to our workforce profile, can be found at:

[Appendix 1 Aberdeenshire Council's workforce profile](#)

[Appendix 2 Aberdeenshire Education Authority's workforce profile](#)

3.1.1 *Gender Pay Gap*

The gender pay gap (the difference in the average hourly rate of all men and women across the workforce excluding overtime) is illustrated in the table below.

The information in the following table shows the average hourly rate for all employees, Teachers only (excluding Supply) and Non-Teaching employees (excluding Relief) respectively, over the three financial years 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22. The 'Gap (%)' columns show the percentage pay gap for the respective category. Please note that progress, or otherwise, is best judged when looking at the two groups of Teaching and Non-teaching employees separately in isolation.

The pay gap has decreased for Teaching and for Non-teaching year-on-year, yet it has increased for All Employees. This contradiction is due to the 'All Employees' average hourly rates which are not averages of the respective averages for Teaching and Non-teaching but are calculated in their own right.

In this instance, the proportion of All Employees Females who are Non-teaching Females has increased at the expense of the contribution made by Teaching Females because the average hourly rate for Non-teaching Females is significantly less than that for Teaching Females. This change in relative proportions has caused a drag and has depressed the All-Employee Females average hourly rate.

At the same time the inverse has happened on the Male side, with the proportion of All Employees Males who are Teaching Males increasing at the expense of the proportion of Non-teaching Males; the average hourly rate for Teaching Males is significantly higher than that for Non-teaching Males, so the change in relative proportions has boosted the All-Employees Males average when compared with All Employees Females.

Average Hourly Rates									
	All Employees			Teaching			Non-teaching		
	M	F	Gap (%)	M	F	Gap (%)	M	F	Gap (%)
2019/20	£16.34	£15.41	5.71	£25.86	£24.94	3.55	£13.88	£12.23	11.88
2020/21	£16.97	£15.91	6.22	£26.64	£25.77	3.27	£14.26	£12.63	11.43
2021/22	£17.31	£16.16	6.64	£26.73	£25.87	3.22	£14.59	£13.01	10.86

3.2 Human Resources & Organisational Development (HR&OD) policies

Human Resources policies continue to be prioritised for review on a rolling three-year programme, subject to change if a policy requires to be revised in relation to an amendment in terms and conditions either at local or national level, or to take account of new or amended employment legislation.

3.2.1 *Recruitment policy*

The recruitment guidance continues to be developed to incorporate additional guidance around fair recruitment with the inclusion of an Equalities across Recruitment factsheet. This provides guidance on a number of areas including advert text, interview questions and reasonable adjustment.

- New courses have been introduced on our learning platform to support Managers when recruiting: Reasonable Adjustments Across Recruitment and Recruiting and Retaining People with Sensory Impairment or Deafness. The Recruitment and Selection Course also links to the Equality and Respecting Diversity Courses.
- Aberdeenshire Council continues to be recognised as a Disability Confident Employer and utilised a Guaranteed Job Interview Scheme to support those who wish to be considered under the scheme into employment.

3.2.2 *Apprenticeship schemes*

The Resourcing Team within Legal & People have continued work over the last two years to develop new apprenticeship opportunities across the council. This work links in with the Skills Development Scotland Apprenticeship Week in March each year and supports the establishment of our annual Apprentice of the Year Award. Further to this, the team has re-introduced attendance at school careers events post covid, for students and parents to promote apprenticeships within the Council.

We continue to work with colleagues in Corporate Parenting to ensure care experienced young people are offered a guaranteed job interview and constructive feedback. There has also been a continued partnership with local universities to offer Graduate Apprenticeship to current employees. This offers the opportunity to work toward a degree in a specific discipline as they work to enhance continual learning and skills within their role with the Council.

3.2.3 *Disability leave scheme*

The review of Aberdeenshire Council's disability leave scheme was carried out in September 2020. The amendments included:

- A definition of what disability leave is and how it relates to Aberdeenshire Council's responsibilities under The Equality Act 2010.
- The policy signposts who should be involved in the process of identifying whether reasonable adjustments should be made, how they are made or if leave should be considered. This includes the employee and service, our occupational health provider, Human Resources, employee's GP/specialist and on occasion a disability advisor from the Job Centre.

3.2.4 *Work performance*

The work performance policy was reviewed in 2022 and continues to promote fair and equitable treatment of employees while trying to improve standards of work performance. The update will focus on:

- Relevant information relating to health and disability issues will be included to ensure the correct procedure is applied and any necessary occupational health interventions are made. This should allow for consideration of issues that may be affecting performance other than lack of capability.

- Manager's responsibilities under the procedure are clearly outlined to ensure a clear understanding of all the tools that can be used to assist them in managing performance, ensuring concerns are identified and discussed to allow adequate support to be given in all circumstances.
- Advice on the support available from HR including a case review by HR before a case progresses to a capability hearing. This will allow for a further opportunity to consider any factors linked to Protected Characteristics.
- Documents will be developed to support the manager in all aspects of a work performance while HR engagement is advised, particularly in the case of disability.
- It will be recommended that managers attend policies in practice training in this area to improve their knowledge and skills to allow for improved practice in managing employee performance.

3.2.5 *Neurodiversity Guidance*

Our Neurodiversity Guidance is currently being developed. HR have consulted with Autism Understanding Scotland and Social Work services to develop this. The guidance will give advice to line managers and employees on neurodiversity including any support or possible adjustments for neurodiverse employees in the workplace.

3.2.6 *One Aberdeenshire Principles*

The creation of 'One Aberdeenshire' in 2017 fundamentally changed our approach to engaging with employees. One Aberdeenshire underpins our beliefs, culture, behaviours, strengths, and aspirations within the organisation; It is about identifying where we do things well and supporting colleagues across the organisation to achieve similar success. One Aberdeenshire is about working together as one organisation; through working with our partners to achieve a common goal that better meets the needs of our customers.

The Principles are the cultural aspirations of colleagues which underpin how we will achieve the council's vision to be the best council, from mountain to sea. The Principles are put into action by shaping our systems, processes and structures around these ambitions.

1. Everyone brings their 'best self' to work every day.
 - We try to do our best every day, going above and beyond when necessary.
 - We treat each other the way we want to be treated.
 - We recognise that leadership and team-working is for everybody.
2. We are clear about what is expected of us and ask for clarity if unsure.
 - We work in our communities, for our communities.
 - We communicate clearly and honestly with each other
 - Where our work falls below the standards expected we accept the support offered to improve.
3. We take informed decisions as close to the action as possible.

- We use information and skills to make the right things happen
- Our freedom to make sensible decisions is supported
- We are involved in making sure we have as few 'rules' as possible and our ways of working are as simple as they can be.

4 Procurement

The Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 Act makes specific reference to “reducing inequality in the area” in the context of addressing “wellbeing”. Where it is proportionate and relevant to do so, this allows councils to potentially further their objectives in terms of the nine Protected Characteristics covered by the Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010.

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires councils to have due regard to the inclusion of award criteria which will assist in meeting obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty. Award criteria and contract performance conditions must be related to and proportionate to the subject matter of the contract or framework. We are required to advance wellbeing and health related factors and in terms of fair work practices, i.e. the promotion of physical, social and mental health and reducing health inequalities.

4.1 Fair Work Practices (including the Living Wage)

A bidder's employment practices and its approach to its workforce can have a direct impact on the quality of service it delivers and, sometimes, of the goods it supplies and works performed. Fair pay, including payment of the Living Wage, is one of the ways a bidder can demonstrate that it takes a positive approach to its workforce which is one of the criteria Aberdeenshire Council looks at. Wherever it can be deemed relevant to quality of service or goods or delivery/performance of the contract, a bidder's employment practices and approach to the workforce to perform the contract is evaluated as part of our procurement exercise.

4.2 Living Wage/Living Wage Accreditation

The Scottish Government obtained clarification from the European Commission that public bodies are unable to make payment of the Living Wage a mandatory requirement. It is, however, a key national and organisational priority to encourage accreditation of suppliers as Living Wage employers (and encourage progress towards that end) across the supply chain.

A sample clause reflecting the full range for Protected Characteristics has been incorporated into the standard Invitation to Tender as follows:

'Promoting equality of opportunity and developing a workforce which reflects the population of Scotland in terms of characteristics such as age, gender, disability, marriage and civil religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, gender reassignment, partnership and race (including gypsy travellers). The Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful to discriminate against people with a 'protected characteristic'. Organisational policies (including but not limited to recruitment) should ideally account for and respect all protected characteristics'.

5 Policy Development & Review Framework

The framework has been revised as part of the review of the council's decision-making process and constitutional documents and is now simpler to use for officers and enhances the early consultation and engagement of stakeholders, particularly those with Protected Characteristics at a commissioning phase within the development stage as well as more formally prior to the approval stage.

The monitoring and review stages have also been further strengthened. Each policy committee will consider an overview of policies appropriate to the scheme of delegation on an annual basis to identify gaps or review requirements. Policies will continue to be formally reviewed every five years, however the scrutiny process at Aberdeenshire also allows for early review of a policy if the impact is not as expected.

6 The Work of our Education Authority

6.1 Background

Education and Children's Services (ECS) provides education across the predominantly rural area of Aberdeenshire. There are 17 academies, 146 primary schools, 4 special schools, and 87 nurseries. In addition, there are 36 enhanced provision sites. Partner providers offer early years' educational and childcare in 76 settings.

In 2022 there were 20,864 primary pupils and 15,718 secondary pupils in Aberdeenshire. This is an increase of 45 primary pupils and an increase of 64 secondary pupils since September 2021. The number registered in Aberdeenshire Council Special Schools in 2020 was 216.

Education and Children's Services provides a wide range of services which make a positive difference to our vulnerable learners, Service users, families and communities. As a result of a range of self-evaluation activities and external scrutiny from bodies such as Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate, work takes place continuously to improve performance across a range of measures, including attainment and achievement.

Our key strengths include:

- Improved outcomes for learners with a diverse range of needs, including high levels of attainment in Scottish Qualification Assessment examinations
- Sustained good progress with implementation of Curriculum for Excellence
- Increased levels of positive leaver destinations
- Positive inspections of schools and learning communities

The Service has a detailed equalities action plan in place to ensure key priorities are addressed. We continue to make good links across the Service with other functional

groups; for example, the Service's work with Human Resources in Developing the Young Workforce.

The Prejudice and Discrimination Incident Reporting procedure has been revised to streamline the process and enable monitoring of incidents more effectively. This results in accurate reporting and recording of prejudice-based bullying, including racist and homophobic bullying. This revised procedure focuses on ensuring incidents are dealt with promptly and resolved to the satisfaction of Service users.

The following workstreams support Outcome 3 'In Aberdeenshire people have opportunities to fulfil their potential throughout life.'

6.2 Leadership

Education and Children's Services is committed to developing school leaders at all levels who understand the need to ensure equalities are mainstreamed across all schools in Aberdeenshire.

6.2.1 *Supporting Children and Young People within the LGBT+ Community*

In partnership with Four Pillars, the 'Queer Equality Support Team' project has been developed and an LGBT+ Inclusion Advisor (LIA) post funded to provide support for young people and schools staff. The support offered to schools include:

- Staff LGBT+ awareness training session
- Staff advice and information via email/telephone
- Assembly/class presentation/visit
- LGBT+ Group visit
- LGBT+ Group support pack

In addition, support offered to young people include:

- Advice and information
- One to one session
- Youth and Philanthropy Initiative (YPI) – The Wood Foundation

6.2.2 *Accessibility Strategy*

Aberdeenshire Council is committed to ensuring that all our children and young people are safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible, included. To support this, all of our children and young people should have access to positive learning environments and opportunities to develop their knowledge, skills, ambition, confidence and self-esteem to their fullest potential. Aberdeenshire Council are guided by Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) principles.

Our Accessibility Strategy for schools outlines the present and future developments to enhance and improve access to a quality education to all pupils.

This strategy recognises the rights of pupils with disabilities to appropriate education through improved access to information, curriculum and environment to ensure they are included, engaged and involved.

6.3 Staff development

6.3.1 *Career Long Professional Learning (CLPL) programme*

A programme of CLPL for Education and Children's Services staff is ongoing with these being delivered via our learning platform as well as additional training via twilight and full day sessions. We have a Learning and Development page for Education staff to signpost and to provide more information on the learning.

The programme includes addressing inequalities, celebrating diversity and building resilience in children and young people. Events in the programme included:

- Supporting pupils with visual impairment
- Understanding Neurodiversity, with toolkits and strategies
- Disability inclusion training for school-based staff;
- Working with bilingual pupils in schools
- Celebrating diversity and challenging homophobia
- Wellbeing and relationships
- Anti-bullying
- Restorative approaches
- Nurturing approaches
- Supporting Transgender young people

6.4 Developing our curriculum to support equality

6.4.1 *Meeting learners' needs*

The Getting It Right For Every Child disability strategic group organised a number of multi-agency events which resulted in actions to improve provision for transitions from secondary school to post-school and to increase positive destinations for disabled young people. A greater focus on transition with secondary schools and partners has been rewarded with a further increase in positive destinations for Aberdeenshire school leavers at a challenging time economically in the area.

6.4.2 *The curriculum*

Schools adopt flexible approaches to ensuring the curriculum is inclusive and supports equality and diversity.

6.4.3 *Learning for life – through collaboration*

Community Learning and Development (CLD) created a 'Communicating Well' Guidance Sheet to support CLD practitioners to consider accessibility when they are planning and designing communications, from lessons or surveys to promotional materials. The guidance highlights good practice and also provides links to further guidance. An example of how we have considered accessibility for our Learners in our day-to-day work is where CLD created a two-page summary document to help Adult Learner understand the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) Induction document. Both documents were also interpreted into ten different languages.

CLD also supports people in communities to learn about and improve equalities for themselves and others. Examples of our work with communities:

People First Fraserburgh – Capacity Building People First in Fraserburgh, run by and for adults with learning disabilities, offered a valuable drop-in centre providing a safe space for members to socialise, access support and engage in projects. The centre was forced to close during the pandemic, and it has proved difficult to resume services. Their main concern was finding funding to keep the drop-in open.

People First worked alongside a CLD practitioner to gain clarity on their strengths, vulnerabilities and opportunities to grow more resilience. They sourced appropriate funding and made successful applications of over £35,000. They now have the core funding they need to continue running the drop-in centre and its activities for at least 12 months.

The successful funding bids combined with holistic support from CLD has increased People First's confidence, helped make them feel more hopeful for the future of the charity and instilled a sense of new energy and enthusiasm back to the committee and staff members

Princes Trust Youth Community Art Project Young people from the Inverurie Princes Trust project were supported by CLD staff to undertake a community art project that helped improve access in a community centre. The poles in the community space were difficult to see for visually impaired people so the young people wanted to make them easier to see by turning them into an art installation. The young people worked together to decide who had different roles in the project and worked on a design for the pole next to the Youth Space. The young people learned how to complete risk assessments, art and design skills and budgeting. The young people felt proud of their artwork especially as it helped a minority group access the new campus better.

“I didn't think I could achieve anything, but we worked together and made this!”

Westhill Youth Platform- Mask-ots Collective Poetry The Mask-ots group was invited to participate in the Over 2 Youth 22 event in September 2022 which highlighted the impact of poverty and inequality from a youth perspective. They decided upon two themes – autistic masking and ableism. The group were curious about using collective poetry and CLD Workers supported this. For both poems, young people were given a prompt and worked on their own to come up with individual lines that best represented their experience. These were combined into collective work. This level of anonymity elicited truly personal accounts. Young people were surprised and proud at what they managed to produce in each session. They challenged themselves by displaying their work, talking to the public about their experiences and reading their poetry aloud.

“It is a way to turn your ideas into art. If your feelings are bottled up, writing your feelings down could help you feel better.”

Garioch New Scots Mother and Baby/Toddler Group New Scots mums can be isolated when bringing up young children without the support of wider family and can have difficulty navigating resources in English language. Baby groups can be

a new concept to New Scots. This group was set up to acclimatise mums to the standard UK baby group format to make it easier to integrate into established local groups. CLD staff used established networks to set up and support/facilitate volunteers in delivering the themed sessions for this project, with plans to progress to a new integrated baby/toddler group with a mix of New Scots mums and mums in the community who are more familiar with the concept of baby groups.

6.4.4 *Equitable and appropriate teaching*

Educational psychologists and teachers undertook work on dyslexia friendly practices. The work included reviewing and updating guidance for schools, producing reflective frameworks and providing an online course supporting the use of the Addressing Dyslexia Toolkit. The aim was to ensure equitable and appropriate teaching and learning for children and young people with literacy difficulties.

6.4.5 *Pupil voice questionnaire*

Education and Children's Services piloted the use of a pupil voice questionnaire in preparation for multiagency assessment and action planning (MAAPs) and transition meetings. This was developed in conjunction with the ASN team and ICT as we had identified that there were limited, if any, pupil voices in MAAPs. The questionnaire was completed online and uses Widgit symbols to support pupils with additional special needs (ASN), English as an additional language pupils, and younger pupils. So far this was used for P4-7 mainstream pupils to good effect and further usage is planned with adult support as required. The questionnaire allows pupils to comment on all of the Safe Healthy Achieving Nurtured Active Responsible Respected Involved (SHANARRI) indicators with regard to their life in school. Pupils can read the questions, hear the questions and look at the symbols to support their understanding.

6.4.6 Active Schools

Our main purpose is to provide opportunities for children and young people to take part in sport and physical activity, before school, during lunchtime. While doing so, we ensure everything we do are inclusive. Below are examples:

Example 1: Stonehaven Inclusive Sessions

Stonehaven Community Sports hub runs a disability and inclusion project – initially planned to run for 12 months. Every Friday night since April 2022 different clubs and groups have offered inclusive sessions at the leisure centre in Stonehaven.

Funding was secured through Aberdeenshire Voluntary Action and helped purchase four sport wheelchairs and have allowed participants to try activities such as wheeled Basketball and Athletics, whilst other sports that have been offered include Cricket, Badminton and Martial arts. In addition, the hub secured an initial trial with purchase option of two para trekkers, further expanding the opportunities to allow local people with mobility difficulties to try new activities. The wheelchairs and para trekkers have been made available for public use in and around Stonehaven

Outcomes

- *New inclusive sessions that specifically target those with additional support needs*
- *Increased funding to support the local community*
- *Greater understanding of the needs across the network and further afield*
- *Increased physical activity levels for those living with a disability*

Example 2: Kit for All projects

Live Life Aberdeenshire have supported 4 hubs across Aberdeenshire to develop sport kit for all projects within their local communities. These projects encourage communities to drop off unused and unwanted sports kit, which can then be accessed by those who may otherwise struggle to access kit to participate in physical activity.

With an additional benefit of reducing the volume of waste sent to landfill each year. Projects are now live in Peterhead, Turriff, Inverurie and Stonehaven – with further launches planned in Fraserburgh, Banchory and Huntly.

Schools have been getting involved with these projects to develop in school opportunities for young people to donate and access kit.

6.5 Education programmes

Establishments have adopted programmes of study to ensure that the nine Protected Characteristics are addressed in depth. Examples include:

6.5.1 Respect for All Ambassadors

Respect for All Ambassadors is a group that represents pupils of all ages. The group carries out local work in secondary schools across Aberdeenshire to promote equality and diversity in secondary schools. Each pupil plays an active leadership

role within the group and undertakes significant work in sharing positive messages across their school community.

6.5.2 *The Duke of Edinburgh award*

The Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme offers young people an opportunity to develop their skills, interests and involvement in their community.

The Duke of Edinburgh gold award is the highest achievement in the award scheme and every year a presentation is organised for those who have completed it to collect their certificates and highly sought-after gold badges.

6.6 Community engagement

6.6.1 *Engaging with vulnerable pupils*

With increasing numbers of refugees resettling in Aberdeenshire, many schools have demonstrated good practice, celebrating diversity of language and culture, making use of English as an Additional Language strategies and a range of resources to support learners. One music teacher sourced a Ukrainian bandura for their pupil to continue practising the Ukrainian folk instrument. The English as an Additional Language (EAL) Service responded quickly to the Ukraine resettlement schemes, coordinating guidance and resources for schools through Microsoft Teams, as well as offering support to 111 children and young people from Ukraine (as of December 2022).

Academy DHT feedback: *"Thank you for the comprehensive bank of resources (the EAL Service) have provided through the MS Team Ukraine Resources for Schools. The information, resources, and signposting cover every aspect and they have been invaluable in supporting us... ..as we enroll an S1 pupil from Ukraine"*

Over the last year Aberdeenshire has seen 22 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children arrive through the National Transfer Scheme. Some young people have already moved onto positive destinations at college, while the majority of young people have enrolled in Academies. For those pupils who have very little or no experience of school it has been a challenge to find learning opportunities appropriate to levels of prior learning, but school staff continue to work hard to offer as wide and meaningful a range of experiences and support as possible. Partnership working between social work, education (schools, education officers, EAL) and Community Learning and Development has been crucial to coordinating support for these young people. Education colleagues are working in partnership with NESCOL to develop further opportunities on the pathway from school into positive destinations.

Teacher feedback *'The boys seem very keen and willing to learn. They pick up the new language well despite having no school experience.'*

6.6.2 *Free Period Products*

Aberdeenshire Council is committed to providing free period products in line with the Period Products (Free Products) (Scotland) Act 2021.

These are provided to everyone who needs them for themselves, on behalf of others and for visitors to Aberdeenshire.

Free period products are available in schools during term-time for all pupils and staff. They are also available in community facilities such as community centres and libraries, and also in Service points.

A “Pick Up My Period” App has been developed to and provides locations close by for people to collect products, and also provides educational resources on menstrual health.

Online ordering and home delivery of period products were created during the COVID 19 pandemic when public buildings were closed and this service is continuing.

7 The Work of our Licensing Board

7.1 Constitution

The Licensing Board is constituted in terms of the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005. The Board is entrusted with the administration of liquor licensing, gambling licensing and certain other statutory duties.

At the time of the previous mainstreaming report, there were three divisional licensing boards in Aberdeenshire:

- North Board: 8 members
- Central Board: 8 members
- South Board: 8 members

Following a review of the structure of the Licensing Boards, Aberdeenshire Council, at its meeting of 5th March 2020, revoked the divisional licensing board structure with effect from 28th April 2020 and established a single Licensing Board for Aberdeenshire with effect from 29th April 2020.

- Aberdeenshire Licensing Board: 10 Members

Our Board Members are Elected Members of Aberdeenshire Council and are appointed to the Licensing Board at the first full meeting of the council after each ordinary election. A board in terms of the legislation must consist of at least five Members and meet the following criteria:

- Our meetings are held in public but deliberations can be made in private
- Our decisions must be made in public
- Our meetings are held in venues that are fully accessible to everyone

Following the local government elections in May 2022, 8 new Members were appointed to the Aberdeenshire Licensing Board. There are currently two posts vacant.

Aberdeenshire Council is responsible for administering the licensing system for the Licensing Board. The Members of the Licensing Board and the teams which administer these are all employees of Aberdeenshire Council. The information detailed in Section 4: Aberdeenshire as an Employer is relevant to Licensing Boards. Similarly, this section covers employees of Licensing Boards, all of which is relevant to Outcome 1: 'Aberdeenshire Licensing Board Members have an increased understanding about the challenges facing people from different groups and will respond to their requirements' and Outcome 3: 'Aberdeenshire Council is an inclusive workplace where employees are respected and have an equal opportunity to achieve their full potential'.

7.2 Statutory Provisions and Licensing Objectives

Apart from complying with our public sector equality duties, we have objectives laid down in statute specifically related to our work, around which we must organise all of our licensing functions.

The statutory provisions are found in:

- The Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005; and
- The Gambling Act 2005

The regimes under these Acts set out broad aims which we must support in terms of our functions. These are as follows:

The Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005	The Gambling Act 2005
Objectives	Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preventing Crime and Disorder and • Securing Public Safety 	Preventing gambling from being a source of crime or disorder, being associated with crime or disorder or being used to support crime.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preventing Public Nuisance 	Ensuring that gambling is conducted in a fair and open way.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protecting and Improving Public Health and • Protecting Children and Young Persons from Harm 	Protecting children and other vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling.

7.3 Numbers of licences currently in force (at 31 March 2022)

The Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005

- **531** premises licences;
- **2,167** personal licences;
- **1883** occasional licences; and
- **17** occasional extensions.

The Gambling Act 2005

- **16** premises licences;
 - **144** notices of automatic entitlement for gaming machines;
 - **35** gaming, club gaming and club gaming permits; and
 - **498** registrations for small society lotteries.
-

The Board also considers applications for variation and transfer of the above licences on a regular basis, as well as dealing with applications for review of licences and investigating complaints in relation to licensed premises and licence holders.

7.4 Equality Policy

The Licensing Board endorsed the Equality Outcomes 2021 – 2025 approved by the previous Licensing Boards at its meeting on 22nd June 2022. The policy holds equalities at the heart of the Board's work and ensures openness and transparency of the Licensing Board's position in this regard. The following mission statement has been included in the Equality Policy:

Our mission is to serve the licensing needs of Aberdeenshire as quickly and efficiently as possible, striking a balance between the businesses needs of our customers, and the interests of the community as a whole in order to protect the public and further the licensing objectives set out under the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Gambling Act 2005."

"To achieve our mission:

- *We will reach out to all parts of our society and genuinely reflect their interests in determining policy.*
- *We will have open and honest exchanges of information in customer-friendly settings and make decisions in a fair and reasoned manner based around agreed and published policies and the legal tests set out in legislation.*
- *We will be fair in all we do, including having due regard to the public sector equality duties and the protected characteristics, ensuring that equality considerations are central to the administration of the licensing system.*
- *We will not work in isolation but achieve our objectives in partnership with a wide range of other public bodies, including the Council and its various services, statutory consultees, licence holders and the public. They too must eliminate any form of unlawful discrimination and protect equality of opportunity and good relations between persons from all sections of society.*
- *We will strive to reflect the interests of people from all sections of the society we serve.*

The Licensing Board works closely with Aberdeenshire Council to ensure that it can work with partner agencies in promoting equalities and in adhering to the Public Sector Equality Duty.

The Licensing Board set new Equality Outcomes in 2021 in conjunction with the outcomes set by Aberdeenshire Council to ensure consistency of approach.

7.5 Staffing and Training

Our Licensing Board is served by a Clerk, Depute Clerks, Paralegals, Administrative Staff and Licensing Standards Officers.

All Members and staff have attended, and will continue to attend, seminars and briefings on Equalities run by Aberdeenshire Council.

A Depute Clerk and a Board Member have been appointed Equalities Service Champion for the Licensing Board and Board Members are all trained in equality matters.

7.6 Staff support the Licensing Board in their thinking and understanding of equalities.

Staff also consider equalities in terms of the information provided on application forms in considering and processing applications for licences. Translation and Interpretation Services

The Licensing Board has used, and will continue to use, interpreters at Licensing Hearings where it is known that the applicant for a licence does not have English as a first language. The Licensing Board will continue to provide policy documents and procedures in alternative formats and languages on request. The Licensing Board has specifically inserted wording into correspondence relating to licensing hearings that translation services can be provided upon request.

The Licensing Board links in with the Services provided by Aberdeenshire Council to ensure consistency of approach in the service we provide to the public and to licence holders in Aberdeenshire.

7.7 Integrated Impact Assessments (IIAs)

To ensure consistency across Aberdeenshire, the Licensing Board has adopted the IIA toolkit developed by Aberdeenshire Council.

An Integrated Impact Assessment was carried out as part of the Licensing Board's review of Gambling Policy in June 2022. The IIA highlighted positive impacts following on from ensuring that the Statement of Licensing Principles provides guidance on risk factors and safeguarding issues for operators which facilitate well-regulated and controlled gambling within the local area.

The Licensing Board is currently working on an IIA in relation to its statutory duty to review its Statement of Licensing Policy under the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 which requires to be completed and published by 1st November 2024. The outcomes of the IIA will be considered by the Board in setting the terms of its revised policy.
Licensing Board Report Format

To ensure consistency across Aberdeenshire, the Licensing Board has adopted the committee report style agreed by Aberdeenshire Council to take account of equalities issues throughout the licensing process.

Every report considered by the Licensing Board either has an IIA attached to it, or an explanation as to why an IIA is not required. Additionally, every agenda has an equality statement at the beginning and the Board publicly agrees to take equalities into account when making decisions.

Part B: - Equality Outcomes: 2021 – 2025 Progress

8 Equality Outcomes

8.1 Equality Outcome 1

In Aberdeenshire, disabled people have an improved experience in accessing services that meet their needs through more regular and systematic involvement in design of service delivery across the Council.

Protected Characteristics:

- Disability

General Duty:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

Aims

- More disabled people access public transport safely and in comfort with an integrated service that provides accessible information, appropriate assistance and support from transport employees
- Improve engagement with our services and enhance access to information for marginalised and underrepresented groups

Progress and Achievements so far

- Accessibility has been included as an item on all the Area Bus Forum agendas, providing an opportunity for disabled people and others with mobility concerns to raise and discuss any physical and other accessibility barriers to using bus services
 - Issues raised during meetings are minuted with the actions to resolve documented
 - Before carrying out provisions of services, all contracted-in passenger all drivers undertake training in customer care including disability awareness
 - Council employed minibuses drivers undertake the Minibus Drivers Awareness Scheme (MiDAS), a nationally recognised standard for the assessment and training of minibuses drivers, prior to being allowed to operate any service. MiDAS includes disability awareness training in addition to the use of wheelchair lifts, ramps and the appropriate wheelchair tie-down and occupant restraint system. Aberdeenshire Council currently employ 72 minibuses drivers
 - Procurement of Interpretation, translation and transcription services including BSL which will enhance access to information for all groups
 - Appointment of a Service Design Lead to embed service design approaches with relevant customer groups
 - Service Design champions course rolling out to services across the council- highlighting the need to include users and particularly those from harder to reach groups when designing services to meet their needs
-

- Accessibility and translations functionality was added to our website in April 2022

8.2 Equality Outcome 2

People in Aberdeenshire, particularly those who face barriers through literacy, language and digital exclusion, are provided with accessible information on services provided by the Council and are supported to access these digitally where appropriate.

Protected Characteristics

- Disability
- Age
- Race

General Duty

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

Aims

- More disabled, older people and people with English as an additional language (EAL) can access the information we provide about our services and appropriate assistance and support is provided with the confidence and skills to access our information digitally

Progress and Achievements

- Language translations plug-in for web translations implemented
- Close working with colleagues at the Digital Scotland office within Scottish Government (specifically on the R100 programme), and UK Government DCMS (relating to Project Gigabit)
- Targeted community engagement, as well as regional promotion and stimulation of the programmes
- 10% of all eligible properties (668 premises) have been supported to use the voucher subsidies available to them, to obtain a superfast alternative broadband solution
- the R100 programme has completed the deployment of full-fibre broadband connections to 1,002 premises, which equates to 5% of the planned build, which will take place in Aberdeenshire between 2022 and 2028.
- Two posts have been created to deliver interventions to support young people in digital skills relating to employability, and confidence & wellbeing

Peterhead Digital Inclusion Pilot

This project has been developed because of concerns identified by partners that people with low income living in Peterhead were not digitally connected due to access and cost. A short term, partner working group was established leading to a test for change project. Through data research (Peterhead Strategic Needs

Assessment (2021), Covid-19 Community Impact Assessment, Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) led to a qualitative research project being undertaken in the Longate area, Peterhead as this is an area with low employment and deprivation links to housing, education and crime domains. The aim was to understand whether there was a need for those in the area to be digitally connected. Possibly due to the increased digital support, equipment and free MiFi, resulting from the response to Covid, the findings showed the need was not as great as the quantitative data suggested – the majority of Longate residents already had affordable connectivity and skills and no residents wanted to be involved in developing a community website. Based on these findings the following recommendations were approved and are being taken forward:

- a. The creation of a start-up package for residents who want access to affordable broadband and digital learning support
- b. Undertake further engagement through door to door and drop in sessions
- c. Discuss placing free Wi-Fi in the temporary housing service accommodation.

8.3 Equality Outcome 3

In Aberdeenshire people have opportunities to fulfil their potential throughout life.

Protected Characteristics

- All

General Duty

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Fostering good relations

Aims

- All children and young people will be able to make the most of the education opportunities available to them to reach their full potential, there will be progress by 2023 in the experience of those with protected characteristics who are currently disadvantaged or underperforming.

Progress and Achievements

- Accessibility Strategy developed to enhance and improve access quality education to all pupils especially those disadvantaged with disabilities.
- Training and resources available to support the mental, emotional, physical and sexual health of young LGBT+ individuals
- Our English as an Additional Language (EAL) service has helped young refugees settle into school life or have enabled them to move onto Positive Destinations

UNICEF UK Rights Respecting Schools Award

Aberdeenshire Schools are engaged in the Rights Respecting Schools programme which is an accredited programme run by UNICEF which recognises a school's achievement in putting the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child into practice within the school and beyond.

The programme develops the principles of equality, dignity, respect, non-discrimination and participation. Aberdeenshire schools have maintained their levels of involvement in this programme over the last two years despite Covid. Schools who participate have reported a positive impact on school ethos, improved relationships and wellbeing leading to better learning and behaviour.

Young people learn new skills in how to respect themselves and others and how to actively participate in the life of their school, their community and in global action.

Children's Rights – Incorporation into Scots Law

To help Aberdeenshire Council staff understand the implications and expectations of the incorporation of children's rights into Scots law, an ongoing programme of training and CLPL on learner Participation and Children's Rights is created and implemented in conjunction with Education Scotland and MDEC. This has been offered to senior leaders, school staff and CLD practitioners. There are also ongoing opportunities for young people to reflect on the incorporation and what it means to them.

8.4 Equality Outcome 4

Aberdeenshire Council as an employer continues to create a fair and inclusive place to work where differences between people are celebrated and barriers are reduced for women, disabled people, minority ethnic people, LGBTI+ people and young people

Protected Characteristics

- All

General Duty

- Eliminate discrimination.
- Advance equality of opportunity.
- Foster good relations.

Aims

- Our BAME, disabled, women, young and LGBTI+ employees have safe and supportive work environments to thrive, and we are seen as an employer of choice
- Enhanced opportunities for people with communication difficulties to fully express their skills, personality and ability as part of the application process for employment and skills development programmes.

Progress and Achievements

- Digital Project Lead recruited to provide increased opportunities to build digital skills confidence
- Online learning and webinars developed and delivered to support confidence in digital skills
- Digital champions in place to encourage colleagues to use the digital tools we have available and explore using digital solutions on how things are done within the council. They provide advice and support on anything digital

Employee Groups:

The organisation has been working on building stronger networks of support and bringing employees together through various projects such as the introduction of the peer support groups. The peer support groups bring together employees from different sex, ages and race to meet around a common theme, mental health for example. Currently we have a women's group, a mixed group and are planning for a male only group in 2023. In the development of the next issue of the wellbeing survey, interest in further peer support groups will be explored.

Self Service Equality and Diversity Screen

In 2022, the introduction of Employee Self Service recording and maintenance of Equality and Diversity related information in the HR System allows for more accurate reporting and providing employees with the opportunity to maintain their own details as necessary. These details are stored securely and only utilised for reporting and monitoring purposes. Further, the categories now used are aligned to those used by COSLA and in the Scottish Government Census, which is expected to improve the Council's ability to gauge how its workforce represents the communities.

8.5 Equality Outcome 5

An increased proportion of women, black and minority ethnic people, younger people, disabled people and LGBTI+ people are supported to enter employment or training.

Protected Characteristic

Race

Age

Disability

Sex

General Duty

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

Aims

Locality employment issues is under continuous review to ensure we maintain robust employment practices for all of our citizens

BAME, disabled and LGBTI+ employees have safe and supportive work environments to thrive

Young LGBTI+ people feel supported and have access to improved digital platforms and sources of support.

Progress and Achievements so far

- Aberdeenshire now operates a fully engaged Employability Partnership, Employment CONNECT, which engages with the local communities throughout Aberdeenshire
- Person-centred employability assistance from ages 16-67 and occasionally beyond is offered via 8 Key Workers. The team is responsible for the governance and audit of all No One Left Behind funding received from Scottish Government ensuring programmes are available for all seeking assistance into employment, training or education.

Kickstart:

Kickstart Scheme was a UK Government scheme aimed at helping up to 24-year-olds into employment. Building relationships with DWP, Aberdeenshire Council recruited 27 young people across all services within the Council. From those on a 6-month, 25 hour per week work placement, 16 have continued to work within the local authority.

Long Term Unemployment

Aberdeenshire Council has utilised funding from Scottish Government under the Long-Term Unemployment (LTU) Scheme. The work began at the beginning of 2022. This scheme is aimed at supporting over 25-year-olds living in Aberdeenshire who have been long term unemployed.

We have successfully supported 33 people back into employment for a 6-month period minimum (some up to a year), working across all services. From those so far, 1 has gained full time employment and 4 others have secured part time roles within the organisation.

Developing Young Workforce initiative

Aberdeenshire Council has been awarded a certificate from Developing the Young Workforce North East Scotland (DYWNES). DYWNES is a regional group funded by the Scottish Government which aims to help businesses connect with schools in order to build meaningful working relationships, enabling young people to learn the skills required to enter the workforce for the first time. This certificate recognises the work of Aberdeenshire Council in encouraging and supporting young employees.

Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) Developments in Schools

Aberdeenshire Council's HR Service, with support from the DYW team, has developed a session for primary schools to help them understand the vast array of jobs on offer within Aberdeenshire Council. Workshops are now being created for secondary schools.

Work is continuing on developing a suite of resources to support teachers in DYW. This includes Career Fair Guidance and Employer School-Relationship Planning Guidance for both Senior Leadership Teams and Faculty Heads, and support materials in using the Career Education Standard, including presentations on the importance of career education and the importance of Labour Market Information.

8.6 Equality Outcome 6

LGBTI+, disabled, religious, faith and black and minority ethnic people have increased confidence to report hate crime through our work with partners to; prevent hate crime; encourage people to report hate crime when it happens; and improve service responses to victims

Protected Characteristic

Race
Gender Reassignment
Disability
Sexual Orientation
Religion and Belief

General Duty

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

Aims

- People harmed, witnesses and partner agencies feel more confident in reporting hate incidents

Progress and Achievements so far

- We have worked in partnership with Police Scotland to raise awareness of Third-Party Reporting, and we currently have two third party reporting centres
 - Training has been developed, and is currently being rolled out on Third Party reporting
 - Awareness raising presentation delivered to Housing support from Four Pillars, an organisation that supports Grampian's LGBT + community with issues such as mental, emotional, physical and sexual health and offer information and support on a person-to-person basis to build a community which support itself through peer education, thus allowing individuals to make informed choices to improve their overall health and wellbeing. They provided signposting, referring to different organisations throughout Grampian. The
-

presentation also explained definitions, concepts and terminology relating to the LGBT+ community to ensure staff understanding.

Pupil Participation Forum (PPF)

The Pupil Participation Forum has been running for the last 6 years. It has up to six young people (S1-S6) per school from all 17 secondary schools and they meet six times a year. During Covid meetings were moved online. Meetings have now returned to face to face. The PPF decide on an annual focus that they would like to work on as well as providing a consultative mechanism within Aberdeenshire Council.

Activity in the last two years has included

- Finalising a pupil resource on wellbeing
- Participating in consultations within the council on anti- bullying, attendance, managing substance misuse incidents
- Participating in a national Child Protection Scotland - children & young people campaign
- Creating a resource for school staff on using pronouns and what to do if you misgender with support from the organisation Four Pillars

Their new themes for this session are looking at the stigma of poverty and cultural diversity

Gypsy/Traveller awareness

Annually, we recognise Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month which takes place every June and provides an opportunity to raise awareness of these minority ethnic communities and celebrate the richness they bring and the contribution they make to society. It also helps to address prejudice and stereotyping, as well as promoting their history, language, culture and heritage and helping to challenge myths.

8.7 Equality Outcomes Progress Report

Our progress report is attached to this report as

Appendix 1: Aberdeenshire Council's Workforce Profile

As of December 2022, Aberdeenshire Council employed 16,292 people which took up a total of 21,477 posts within the council. The workforce data presented here is the total number of posts within the council. This report is based on incumbencies or post held by each employee. Some employees may have multiple incumbencies – for example, a Supervisory Cleaner may hold posts for Relief Cleaner and Children's Escort. Throughout the report incumbencies are referred to as 'employee data' or 'employees'.

The information in this Appendix refers to all employees of the council over the years 2021 and 2022. In 2021 the categories for recording the data were updated and this is reflected in the profiling.

The sections on training, leavers and general employee data are generated from our Human Resource Information system. The data relates to development, retention and recruitment respectively. The data on recruitment is obtained from the Talentlink database, the Scottish public authority recruitment tool. As employees often undertake multiple training courses in a year each employee is only counted once in the development figures.

In some parts of our report there are high responses in the 'unknown' category. Steps have been taken to encourage employees to provide as much information as possible to help us gain a better understanding of our workforce profile.

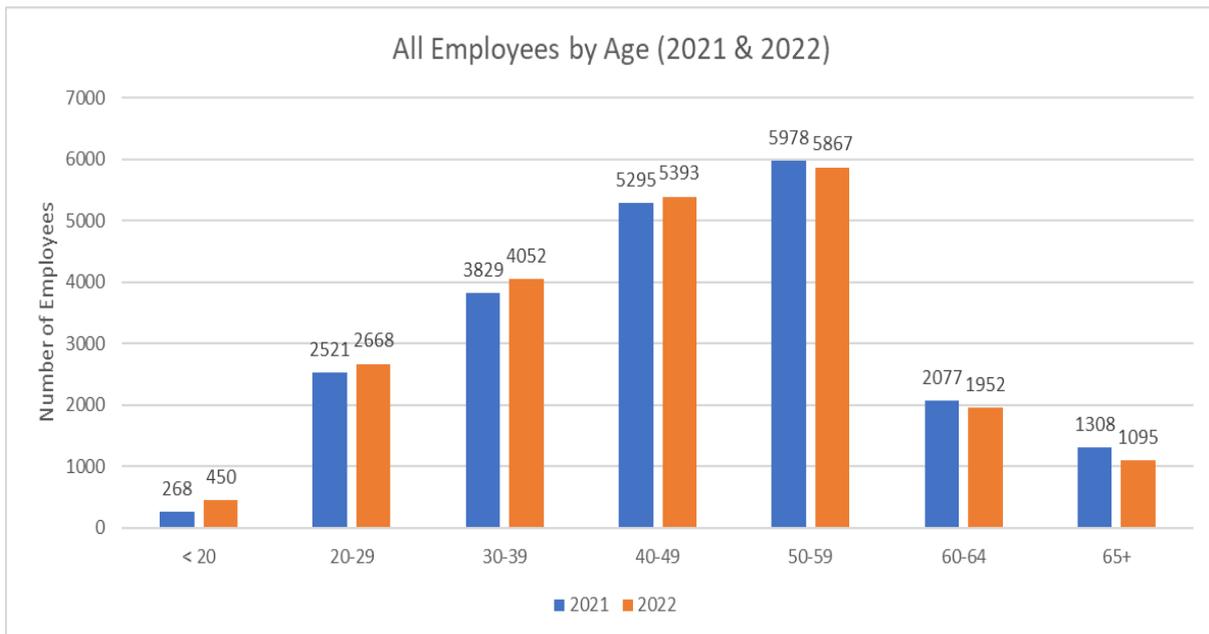
Workforce profile information has been used by some sections of the council to plan for the future in terms of addressing age profiles which would leave a Service 'at risk' due to a predominantly significant proportion of employees in the higher age ranges. Similarly, some Services have used the workforce profile information in new and innovative ways to address the means of retaining employees and skills when duties and tasks need to be provided. It is critical that such work continues and helps the council address changes and gaps in relation to the Protected Characteristics.

Combined Workforce Profile

Age

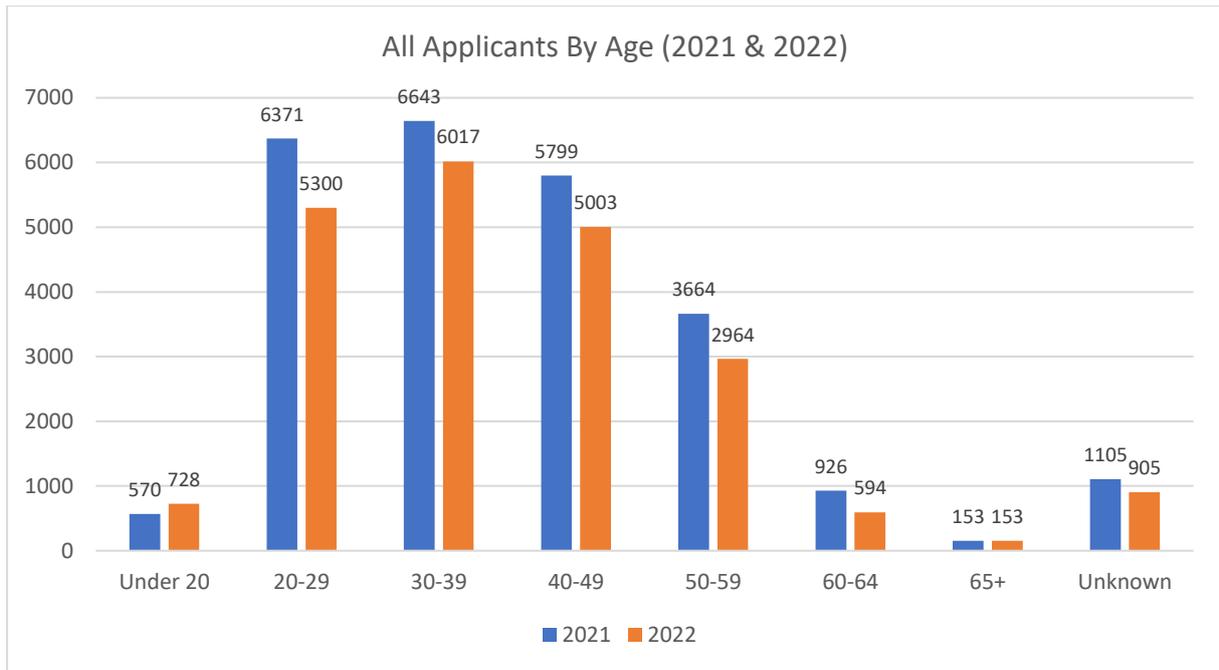
All Employees

The largest percentage of employees fall into the age range 40-49 and 50-59. The number of employees in the 50-59 category has decreased by 0.78% since 2021. The number of employees in the 60-64 category has decreased by 0.67% and the number of over 65's dropped by 1.05% in 2022.



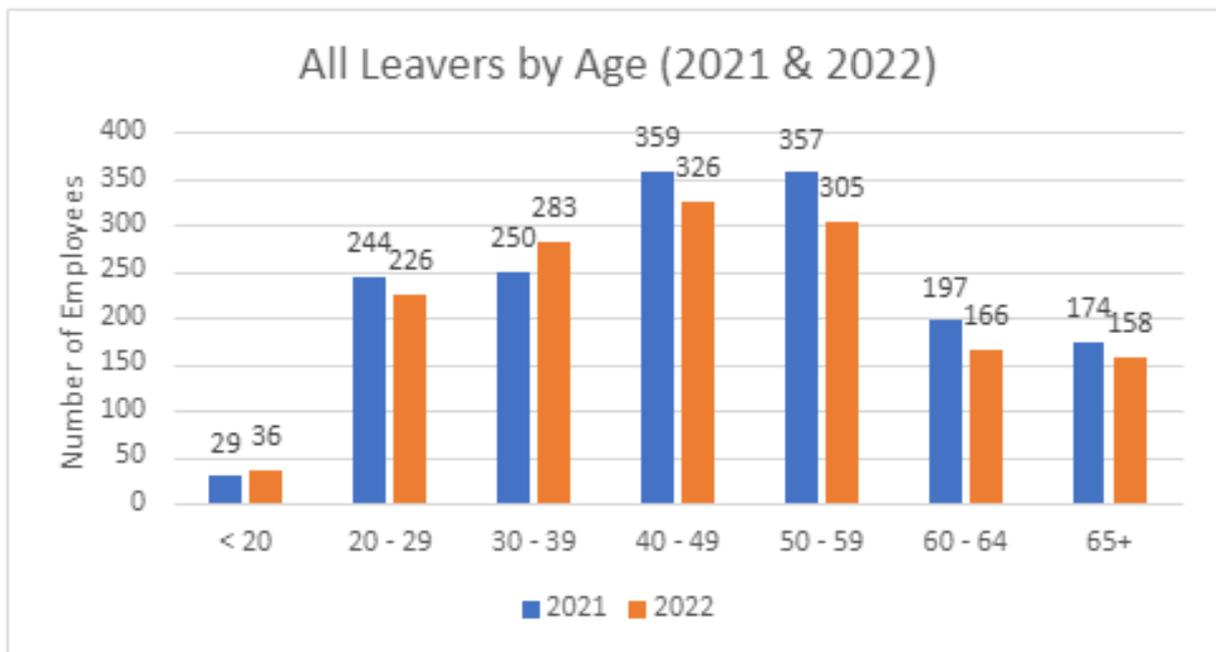
Recruitment

The number of job applicants has decreased across all categories, with the exception of under 20, over the course of the two-year period. This could be partly attributable to the ease of lockdown from the pandemic where potential applicants have returned back to their former roles.



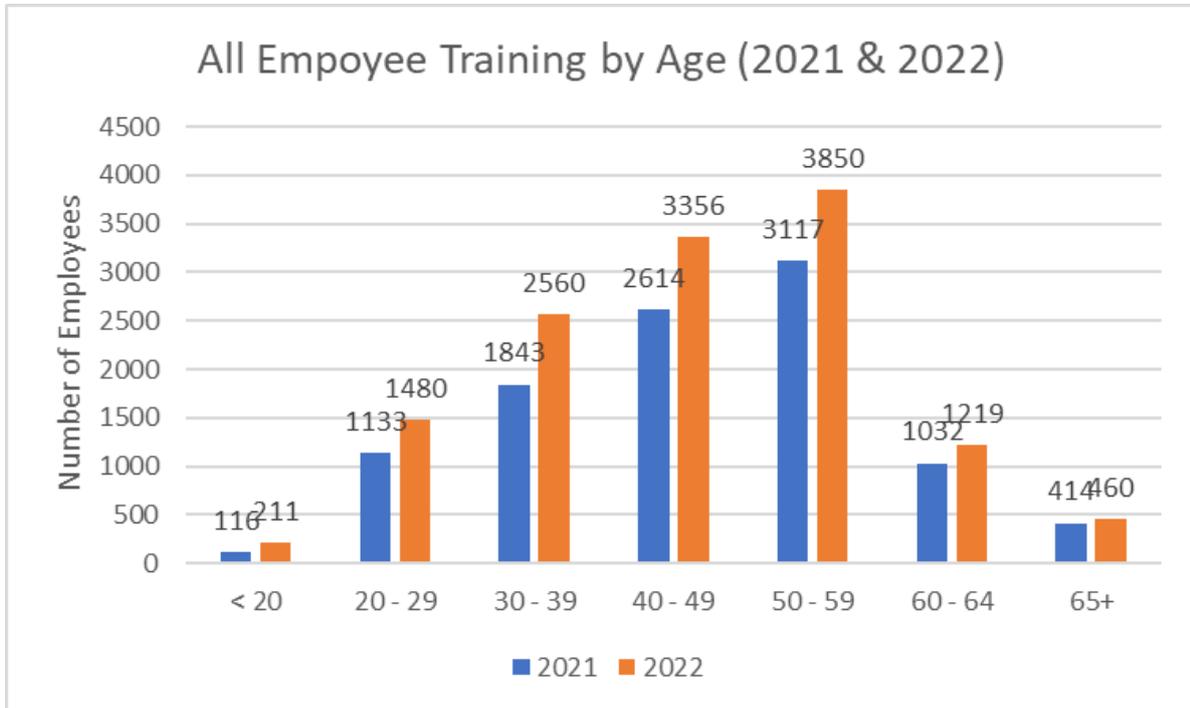
Retention

The highest number of leavers are in the 40-49 category, with a 3.34% increase in the number of those in the 30-39 category leaving.



Development

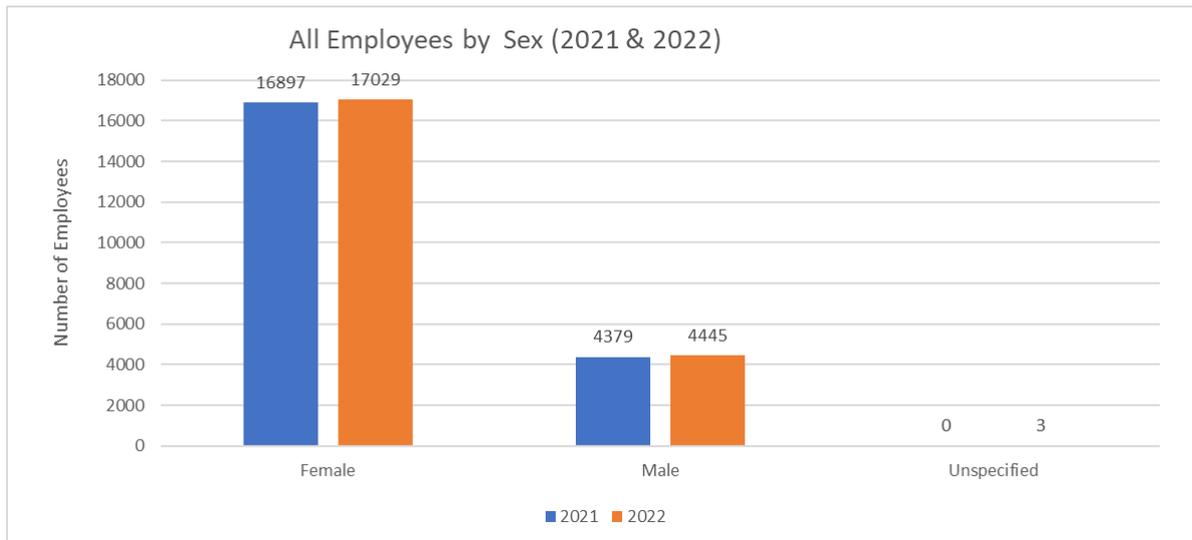
The data indicates an increase in the number of employees participating in training across all categories. Employees in the 40-49 and 50-59 categories undertook the highest number of training courses, in line with age data for all employees.



Sex

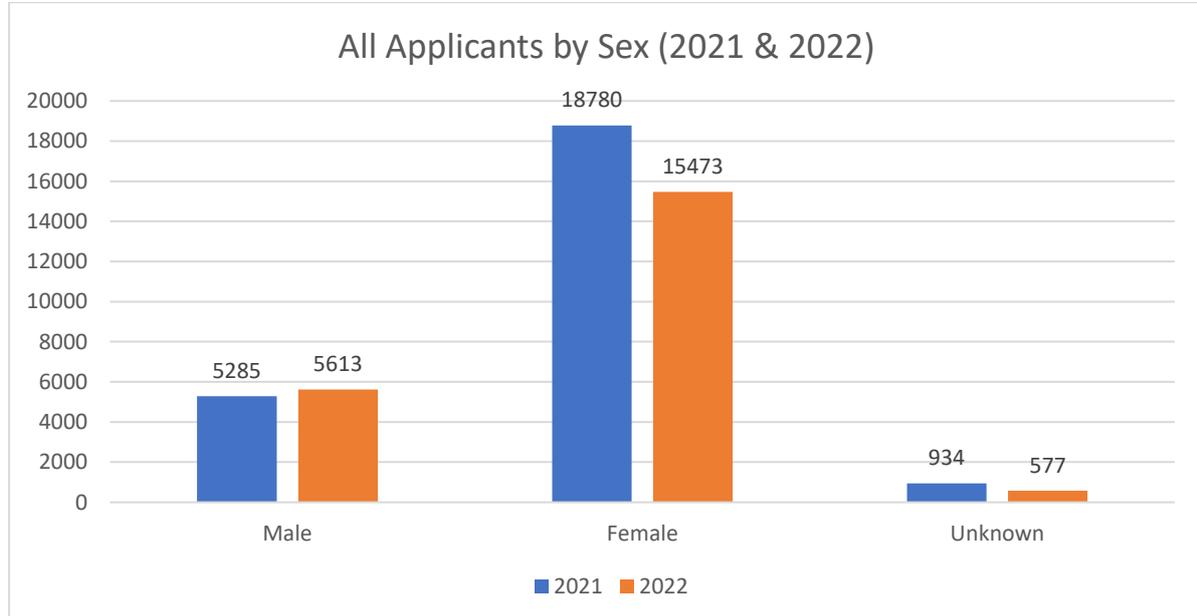
All Employees

The proportion of male (20%) and female (79%) employees has remained the same in both 2021 and 2022.



Recruitment

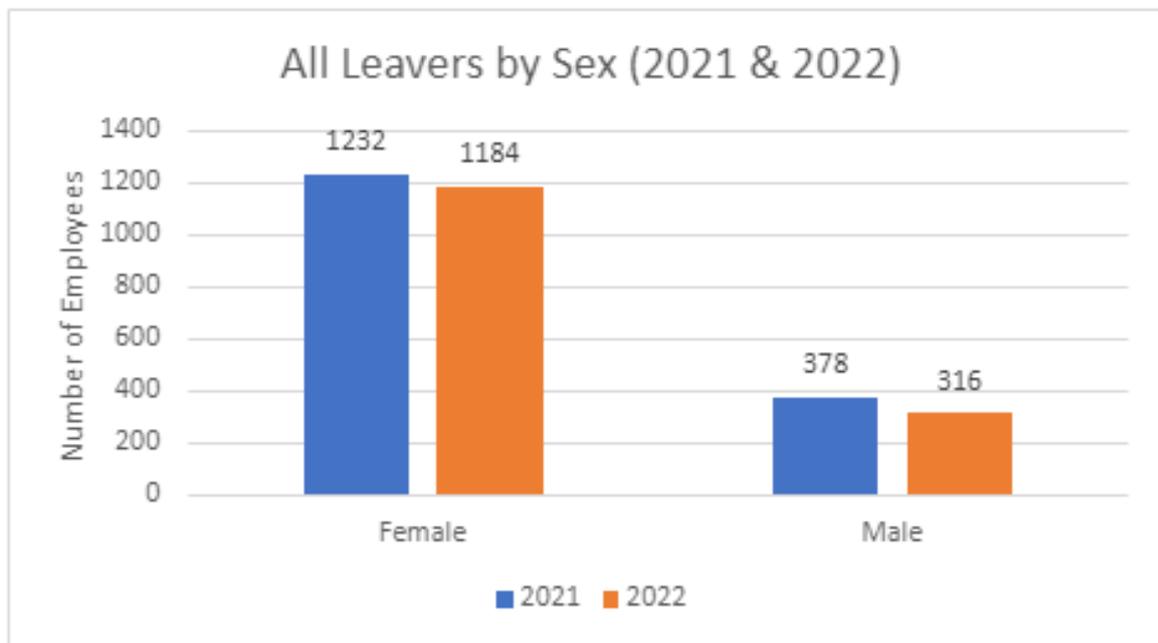
The large increases in applicants across both sexes, with a reduction in the number of 'unknowns' in this category which may be attributable to the changes in capturing recruitment monitoring information. The number of male applicants has proportionally increased more than female applicants, this could be due to the downturn in oil and gas which is a more male dominated sector.



Retention

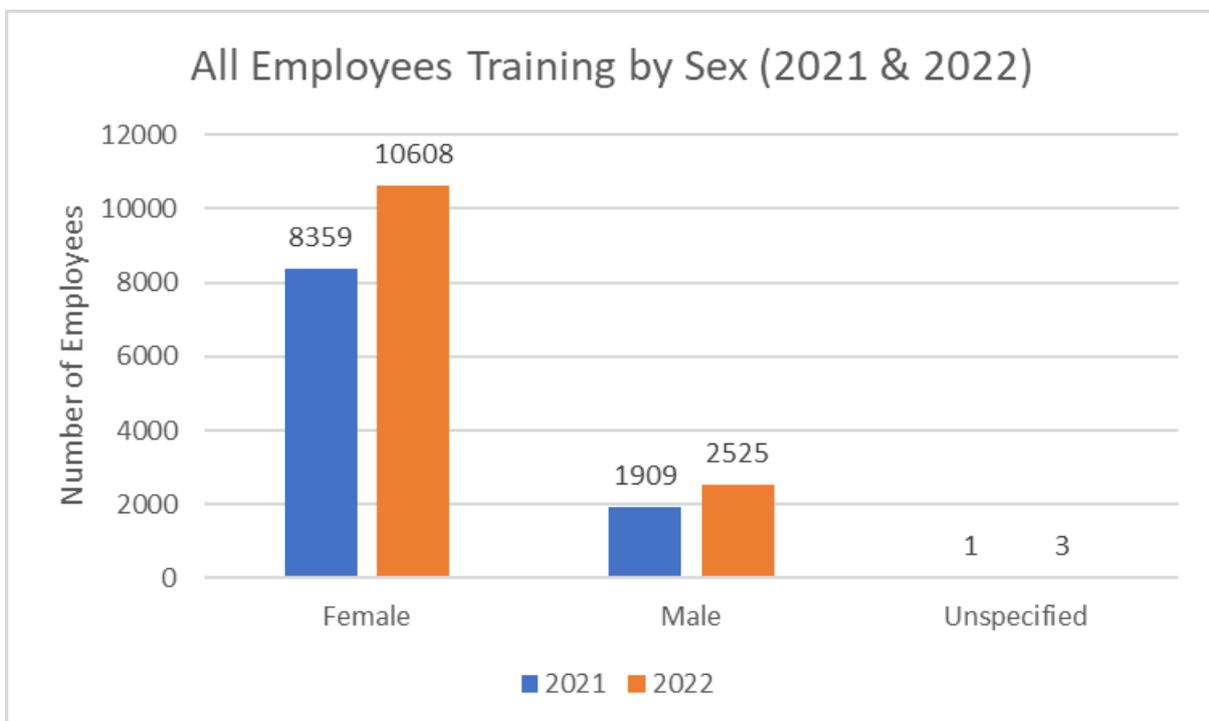
There was a decrease in the number of female leavers in 2022. However, due to the reduction in all leavers from 1610 in 2021 to 1500 in 2022 there was an increase in

the percentage of female leavers from 76.52% in 2021 to 78.93% in 2022 and corresponding fall in the number of male leavers.



Development

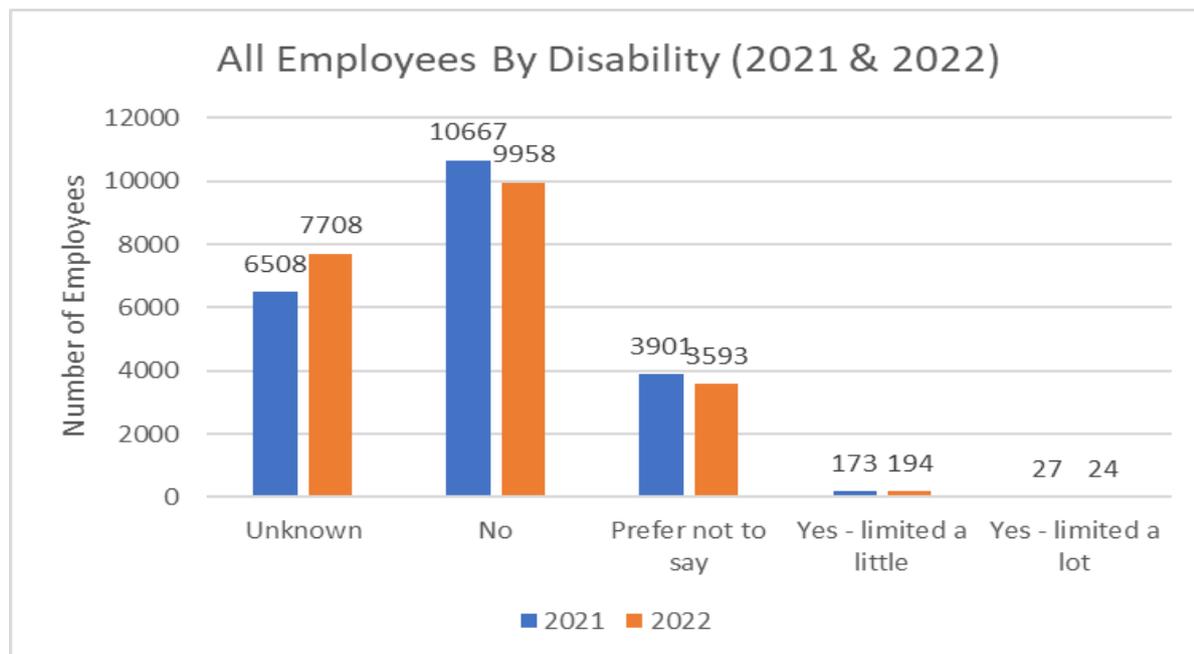
There has been an increase of 2249 in the number of females undertaking training in 2022 when compared to 2021. The total number of employees undertaking training has increased from 10,269 to 13,136.



Disability

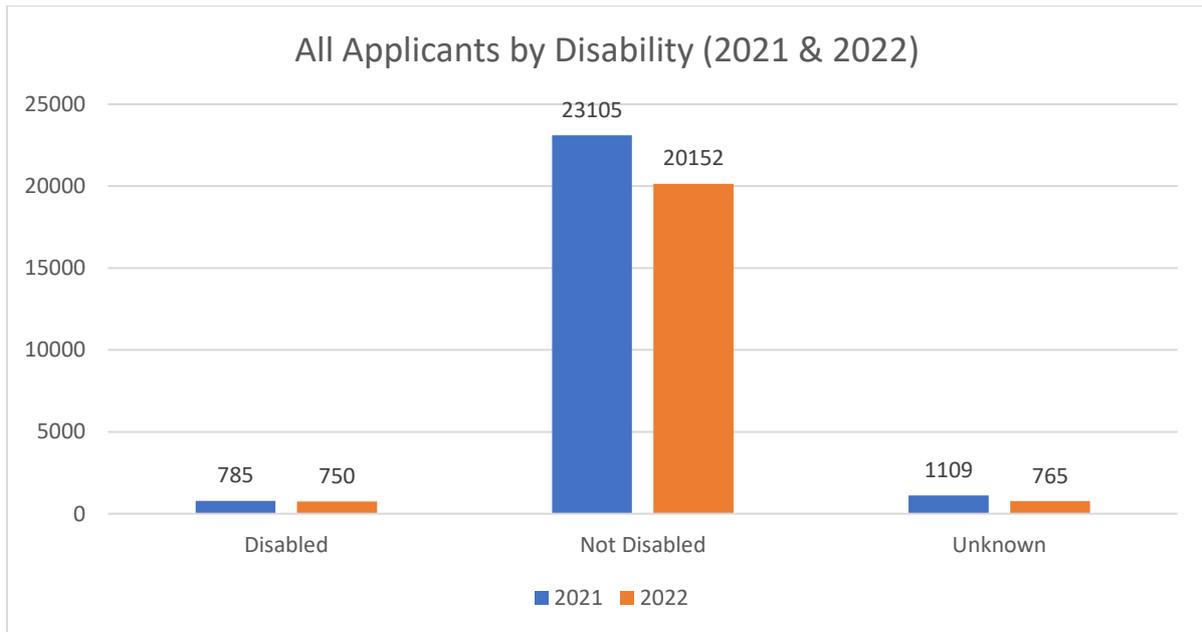
All Employees

The number of employees with a disability has increased marginally in 2022. The number of employees with a disability, Yes - limited a little, has increased and the number of Yes - limited a lot has decreased slightly.



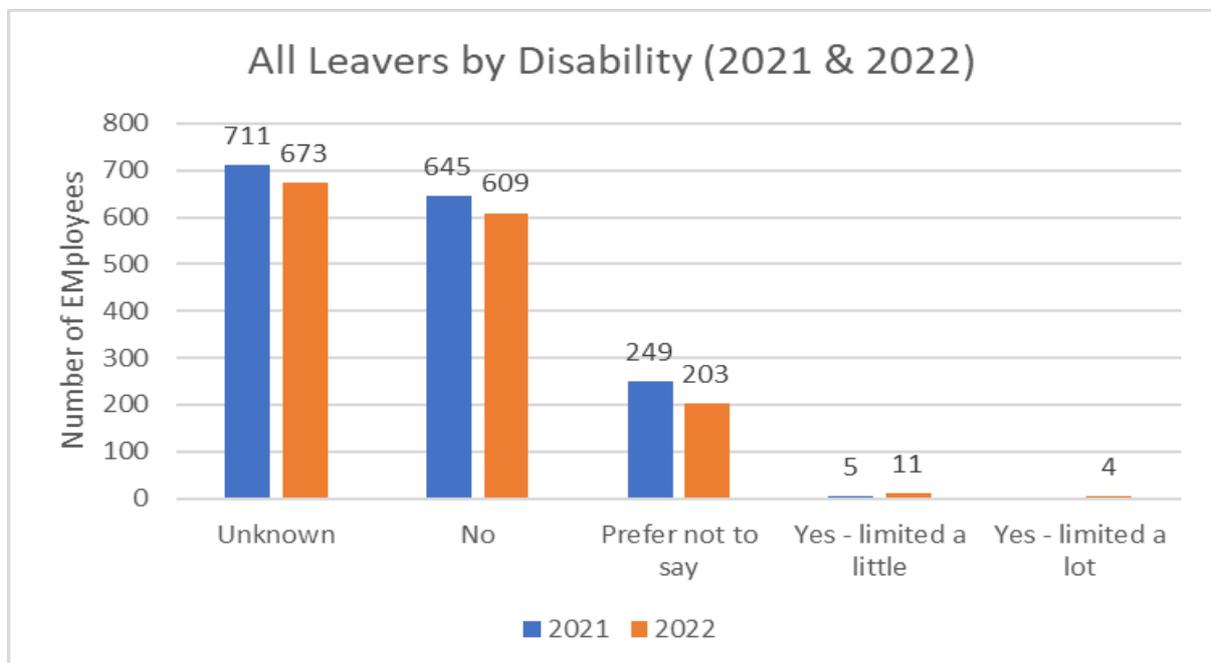
Recruitment

The number of applicants identifying as having a disability remains consistently low at 3%, which is slightly lower previous mainstreaming reports. Work continues to encourage applicants with disabilities to consider the council as a place of employment and improve accessibility. For example, the short-listing process has been adapted to make it easier to identify applicants who wished to be considered for interview through the Guaranteed Job Interview Scheme. Aberdeenshire Council is a Disability Confident Employer and promotes this in all job adverts.



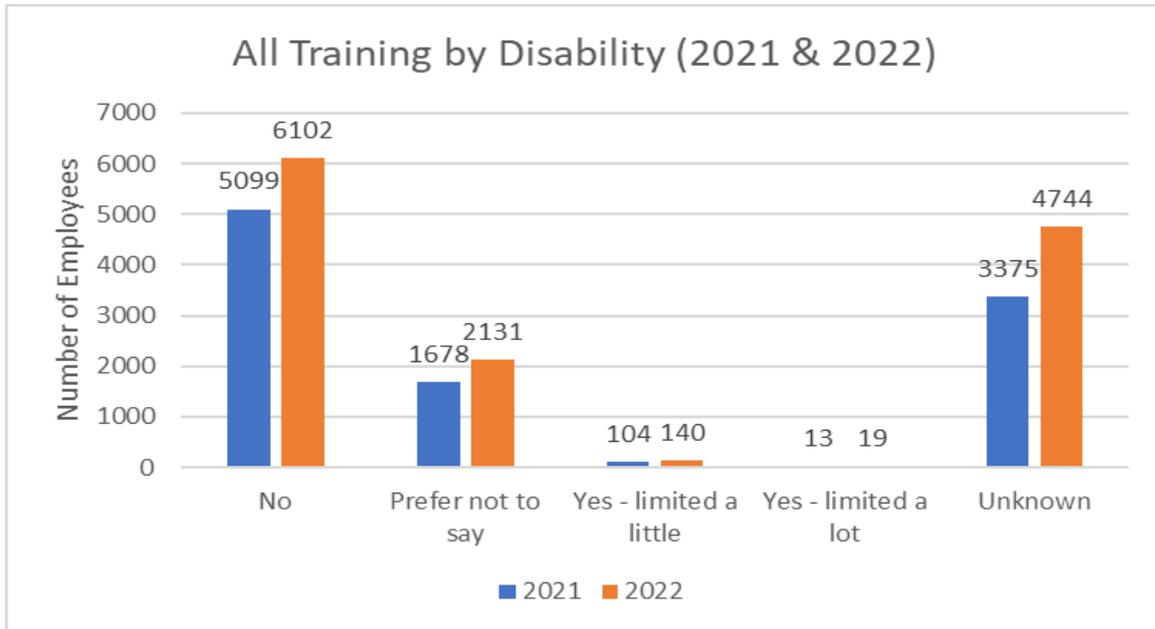
Retention

There has been a marginal increase in the number of leavers reporting as disabled between 2021 and 2022, this is seen in both of the 'Yes' categories.



Development

As reported across all other characteristics, there has been an increase in those undertaking training courses across most groups between 2021 to 2022.



Race

All Employees

The largest proportion of employees identify as White Scottish in 2021 and 2022 but in 2022 this has declined from 45.20% to 42.03%. This will, in part, be due to the increase in the number of employees who are classed as Unknown which has increased to 34.85% in 2022 compared with 29.50% in 2021.

All Employees (Race)	2021	2022
African / Scottish African / British African	22	22
Arab / Scottish Arab / British Arab	1	1
Asian - Bangladeshi / Scottish Bangladeshi / British Bangladeshi	4	3
Asian - Chinese / Scottish Chinese / British Chinese	7	8
Asian - Indian / Scottish Indian / British Indian	21	21
Asian - Other	45	42
Asian - Pakistani / Scottish Pakistani / British Pakistani	5	5
Caribbean or Black	4	5
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	32	35
Other ethnic group	27	24
Prefer not to say	2681	2490
White Gypsy / Traveller	1	1
White Irish	76	70
White Other	278	256
White Other British	2063	1880
White Polish	115	102
White Roma	1	1
White Scottish	9617	9027
Unknown	6276	7484
Total	21276	21477

Recruitment

The information reflects a decrease in applicants between 2021 and 2022. This is largely contributed by a noticeable decrease in those categorised as 'White Scottish'.

All Applicants (Race)	2021	2022
Asian Chinese	42	74
Asian Indian	315	338
Asian Other inc Scottish	137	131
Asian Bangladeshi	51	27
Asian Pakistani	72	76
Caribbean (OR Black)	58	105
African Other	693	1583
Mixed	229	207
Gypsy/Traveller / roma	12	9
Other Ethnic group	94	212
Polish	440	462
White British	1041	2254
White Scottish	17074	13983

White Irish	208	170
White Other	1308	1223
Unknown	1327	809
Total	22484	21017

Retention

There was a slight reduction in the numbers leaving in most categories in 2022 with the total number of employees leaving in 2022 being 110 lower than in 2021.

All Leavers (Race)	2021	2022
African / Scottish African / British African	2	1
Asian - Bangladeshi / Scottish Bangladeshi / British Bangladeshi		1
Asian - Indian / Scottish Indian / British Indian	3	1
Asian - Other	3	2
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	2	2
Other ethnic group	1	2
Prefer not to say	168	136
White Irish	5	7
White Other	14	29
White Other British	144	136
White Polish	10	8
White Scottish	561	523
Unknown	697	652
Total	1610	1500

Development

The number of employees attending training courses reflects an increase in numbers in most categories. The exceptions are Asian – Bangladeshi and Asian – Other where there have been minor reductions and the figures in each of these categories is low in both 2021 and 2022.

All Training (Race)	2021	2022
African / Scottish African / British African	14	16
Arab / Scottish Arab / British Arab	0	1
Asian - Bangladeshi / Scottish Bangladeshi / British Bangladeshi	3	2
Asian - Chinese / Scottish Chinese / British Chinese	3	7
Asian - Indian / Scottish Indian / British Indian	10	15
Asian - Other	26	24
Asian - Pakistani / Scottish Pakistani / British Pakistani	2	3
Caribbean or Black	2	2
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	19	21
Other ethnic group	8	13

Prefer not to say	1116	1447
White Irish	36	48
White Other	119	155
White Other British	978	1227
White Polish	54	65
White Roma	1	1
White Scottish	4639	5493
Unknown	3239	4596
Total	10269	13136

Religion or Belief

All Employees

The largest two categories of religion or belief across both years were Unknown and Prefer not to say at 50.69% in 2021 and 54.33% in 2022. This is consistent with previous mainstreaming reports. The Church of Scotland category reduced from with 19.16% in 2021 to 17.56% in 2022.

The number of employees in the Non category has remained broadly consistent between 2021 and 2022 and the number of employees identifying themselves as Muslim has reduced slightly from 0.24% in 2021 to 0.20% in 2022.

All Employees (Religion or Belief)	2021	2022
Buddhist	29	29
Church of Scotland	4076	3771
Hindu	10	9
Jewish	3	2
Muslim	51	44
None	4247	4031
Other	139	131
Other Christian	1390	1294
Pagan	1	2
Prefer not to say	4835	4472
Roman Catholic	543	493
Sikh	3	3
Unknown	5949	7196
Total	21276	21477

Recruitment

The proportion of applicants across both years was broadly similar across most religions with a couple of exceptions. The largest numbers of applicants continue to identify as having no religion or belief.

All Applicants (Religion or Belief)	2021	2022
Buddhist	34	57
Catholic	1696	1532
Church of Scotland	3651	3053
Hindu	140	205
Jewish	38	20
Muslim	353	262
No religion/belief	14740	12634
Other Religion or Belief	114	8
Sikh	31	18
Pagan	73	81
Other Christian	1395	1395
Unknown	2370	2398

Retention

The data for 2021 and 2022 is broadly consistent and reflective of the overall numbers of employees with regards to religion or belief.

All Leavers (Religion or Belief)	2021	2022
Buddhist	0	1
Church of Scotland	254	218
Hindu	2	0
Jewish	0	1
Muslim	0	3
None	223	256
Other	7	10
Other Christian	95	93
Pagan	0	1
Prefer not to say	320	250
Roman Catholic	27	33
Sikh	0	1
Unknown	682	633
Total	1610	1500

Development

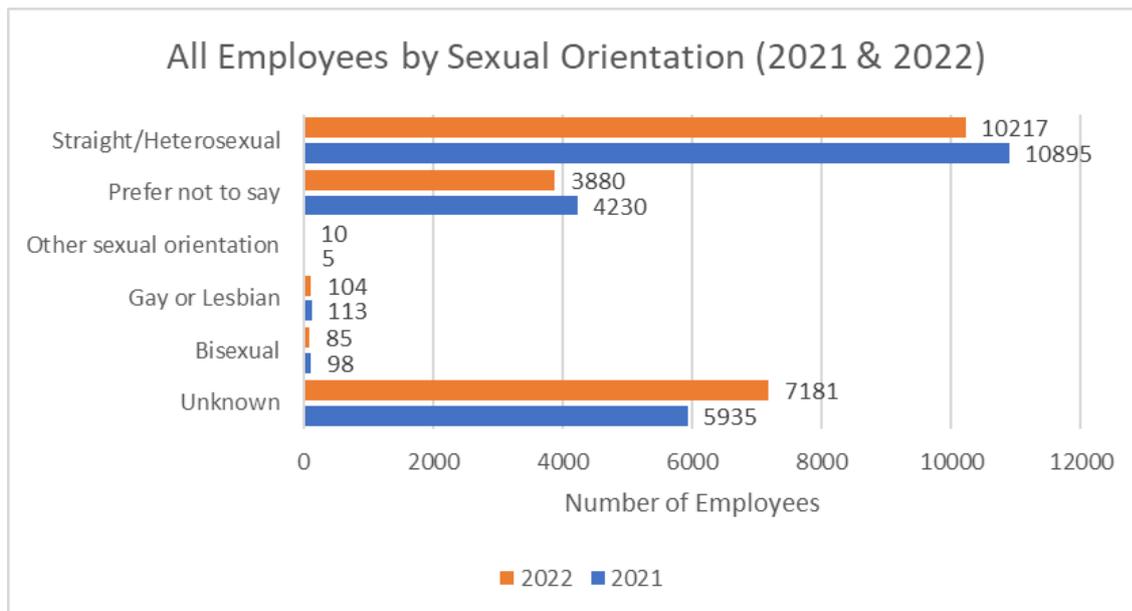
In training data there was an overall increase in those taking courses of 28%. There was an increase in all categories apart from Hindu where the reduction was very minimal.

All Training (Religion or Belief)	2021	2022
Buddhist	12	12
Church of Scotland	1915	2301
Hindu	7	6
Jewish	2	2
Muslim (please specify denomination/school at bottom of page)	23	32
None	2054	2457
Other (please specify at bottom of page)	80	87
Other Christian (please specify at bottom of page)	676	806
Pagan	1	4
Prefer not to say	2123	2669
Roman Catholic	256	312
Sikh	2	3
Unknown	3118	4445
Total	10269	13136

Sexual Orientation

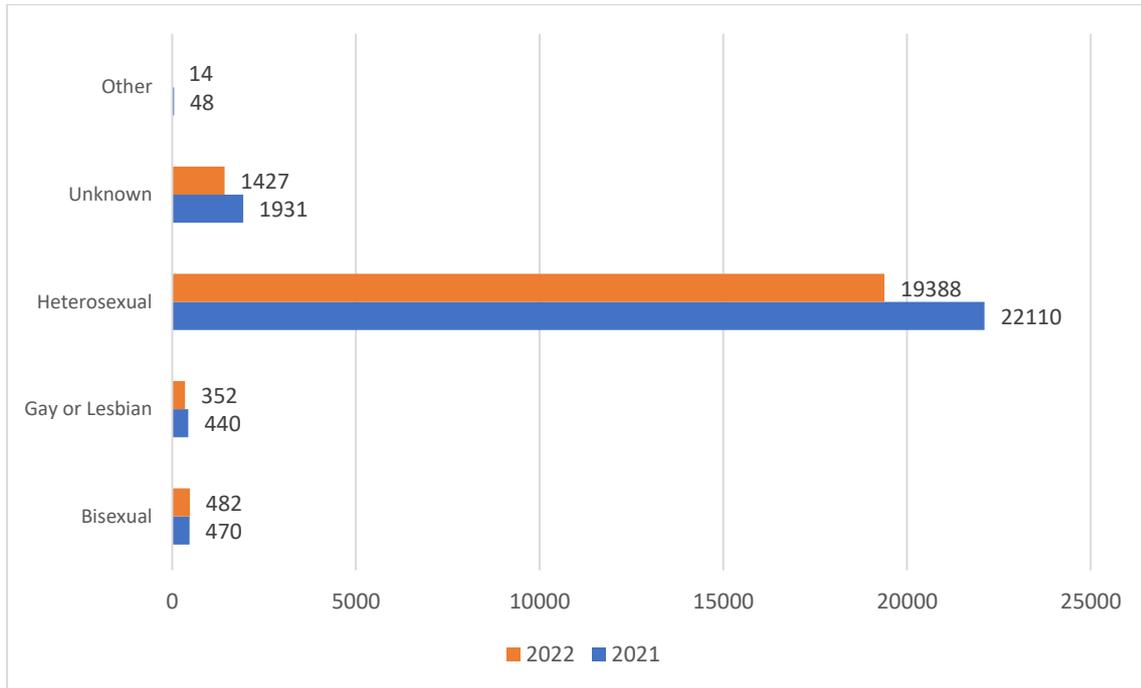
All Employees

The percentage of employees identifying as either Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual (LGB) has decreased slightly from 0.99% in 2021 to 0.88% in 2022. This may have been affected by the increase in the Unknown category from 27.90% in 2021 to 33.44% in 2022.



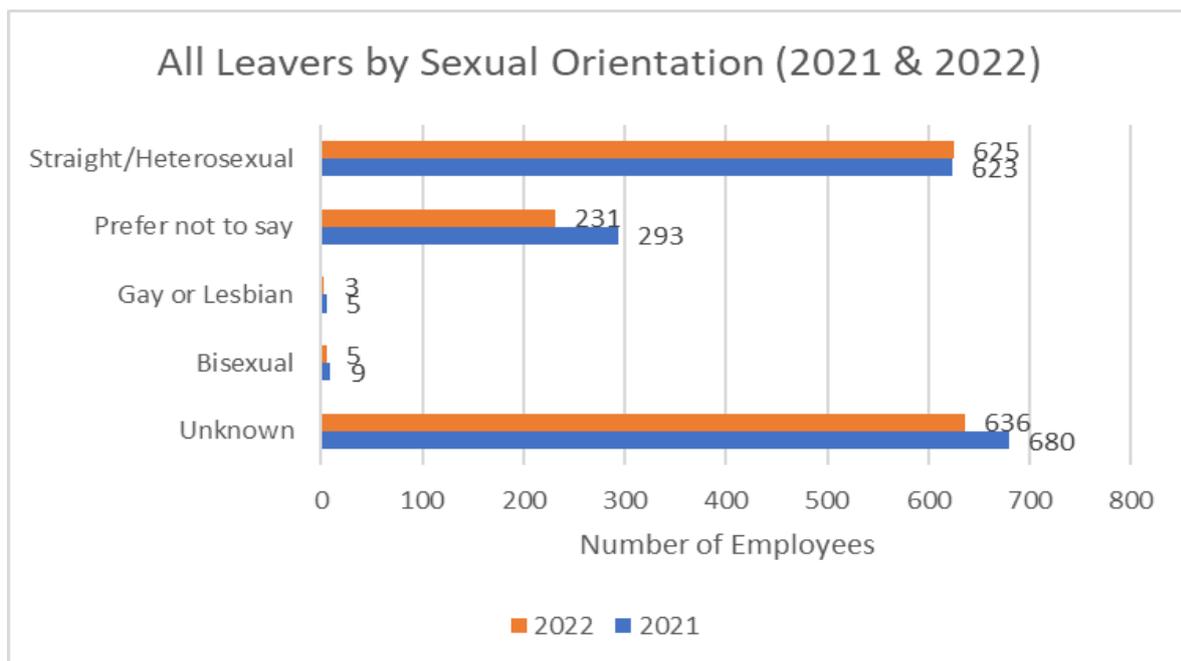
Recruitment

The majority of applications came from people identifying as Heterosexual, with application decreases seen across all sexual orientation categories with the exception of Bisexual.



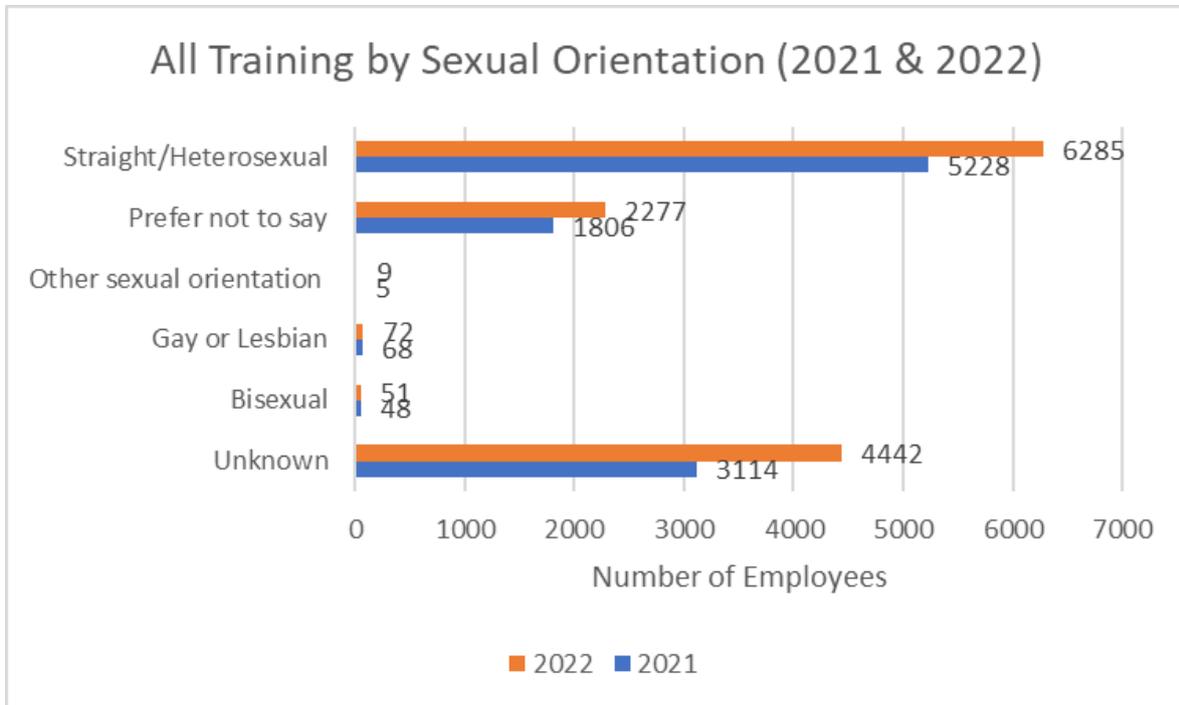
Retention

There has been an increase in those reporting as Unknown which means numbers of leavers across other categories have generally fallen.



Development

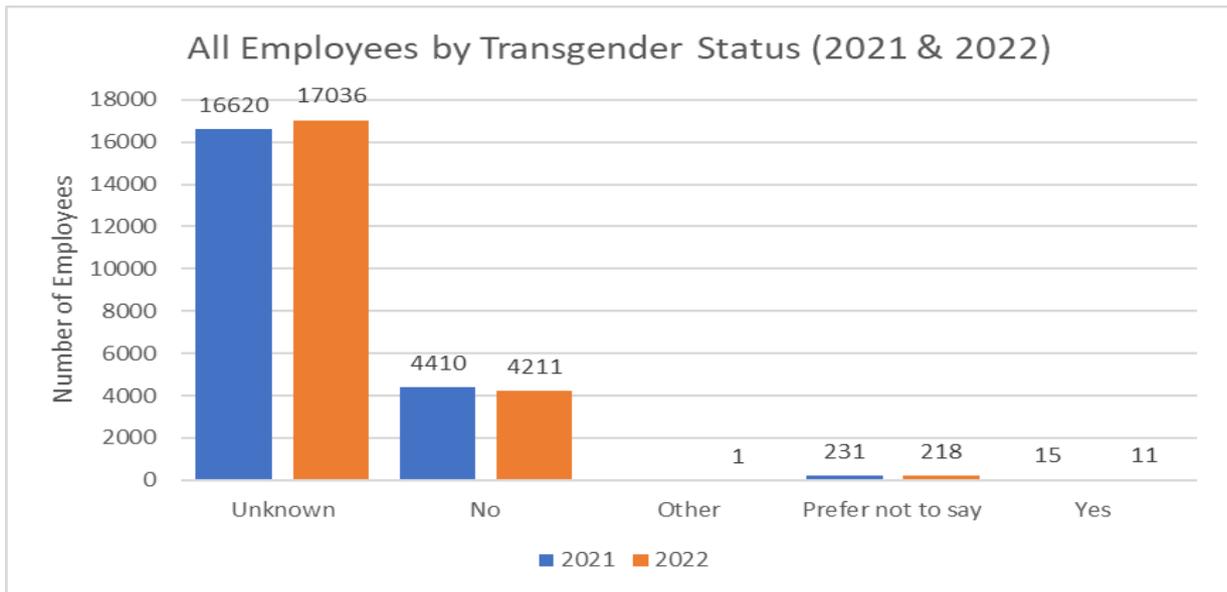
Training courses attended have seen an increase across all categories. The number of those identifying as Straight/Heterosexual has increased from 5,228 in 2021 to 6,285 in 2022.



Transgender Status

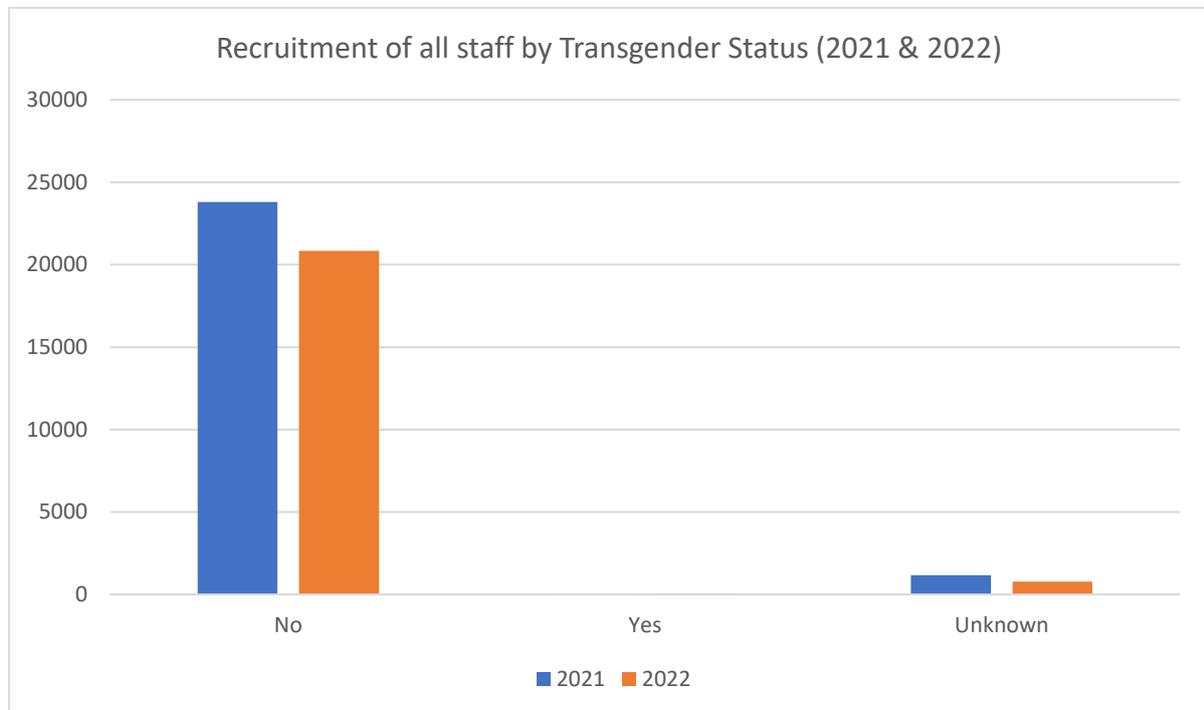
All Employees

There has been slight decrease in the number of employees identifying as Transgender from 0.07% in 2021 to 0.05% in 2022. The largest increase is in the Unknown category.



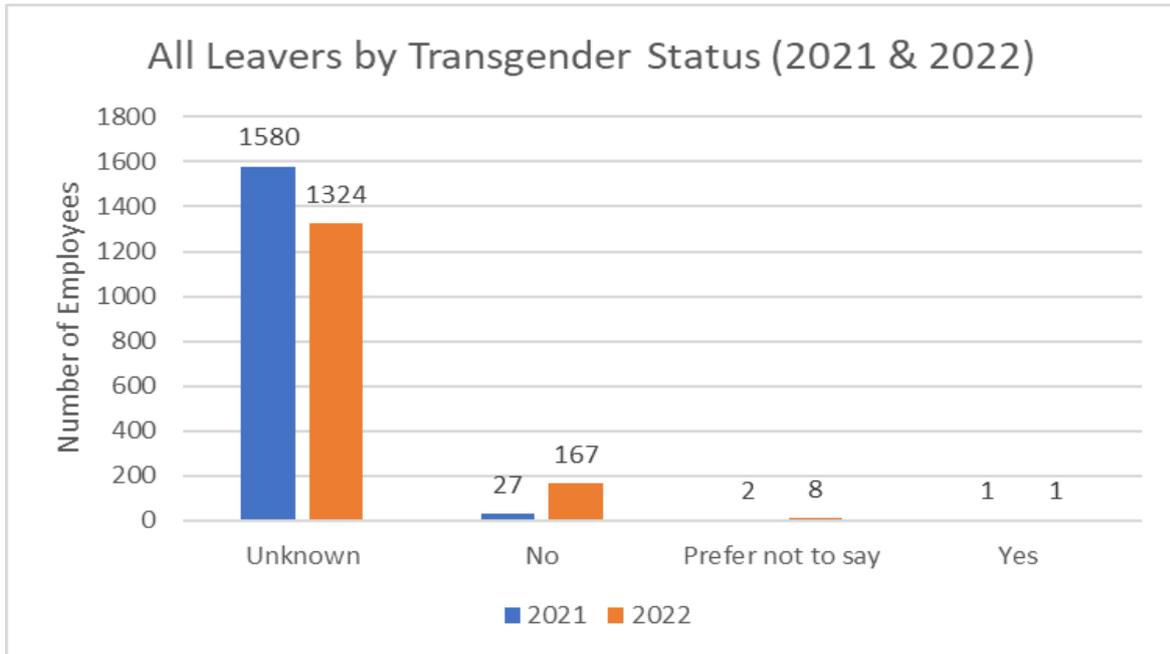
Recruitment

As with all characteristics there has been a big increase in the number of applicants who identify as Transgender or Not Transgender across the reporting period and in comparison with the previous mainstreaming report. Again there is a fall in those reporting as Unknown, which is likely to be attributable to the reasons already discussed.



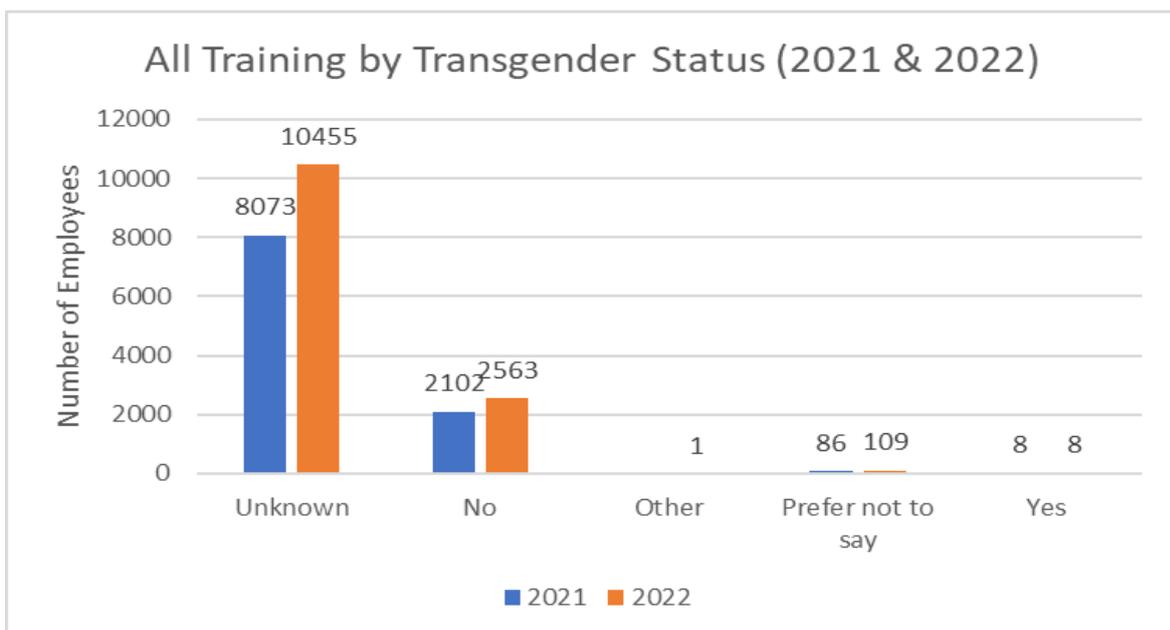
Retention

There has been no change in the number of leavers identifying as Transgender. There has been an increase in the number of employees identifying as not Transgender from 1.68% in 2021 to 11.13% in 2022. This is likely to be related to the fall in those in the unknown category which has reduced from 98.14% in 2021 to 88.27% in 2022.



Development

There has been no change between 2021 and 2022 in the number of employees identifying with a transgender history.



Appendix 2: Aberdeenshire Council Education Authority's Workforce Profile

The following information is split between teaching and non-teaching employees. "Teaching Employees" relates to employees with teaching terms and conditions. "Non-teaching employees" relates to all staff with local government terms and conditions, which includes non-teaching employees who work within the education authority.

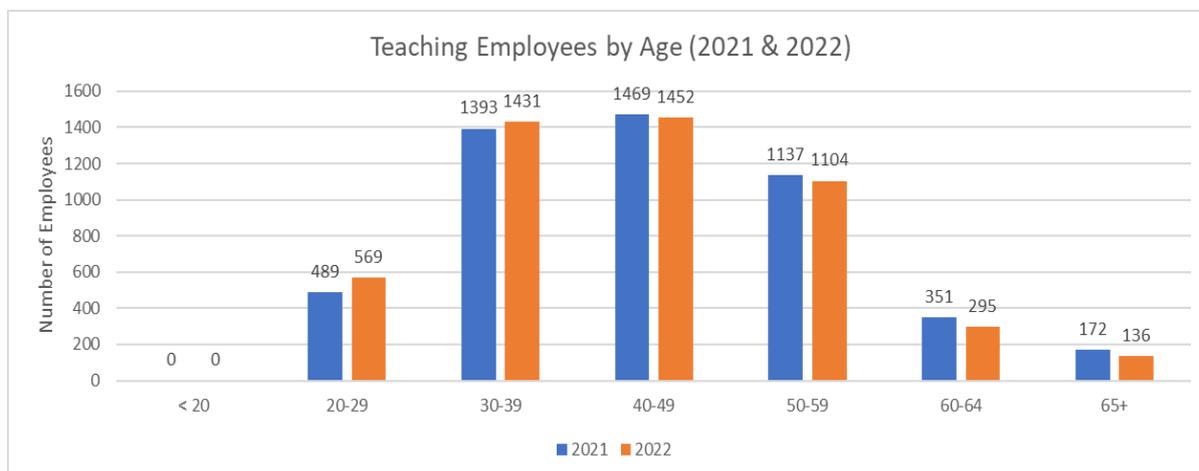
There were 4,987 teaching employees but significantly more non-teaching employees in the Education Authority's profile in 2022.

In this section of the report there is no data relating to recruitment (numbers of applicants) and development (number of training courses attended) for the education authority. Please see the workforce profile for overall information on recruitment and development.

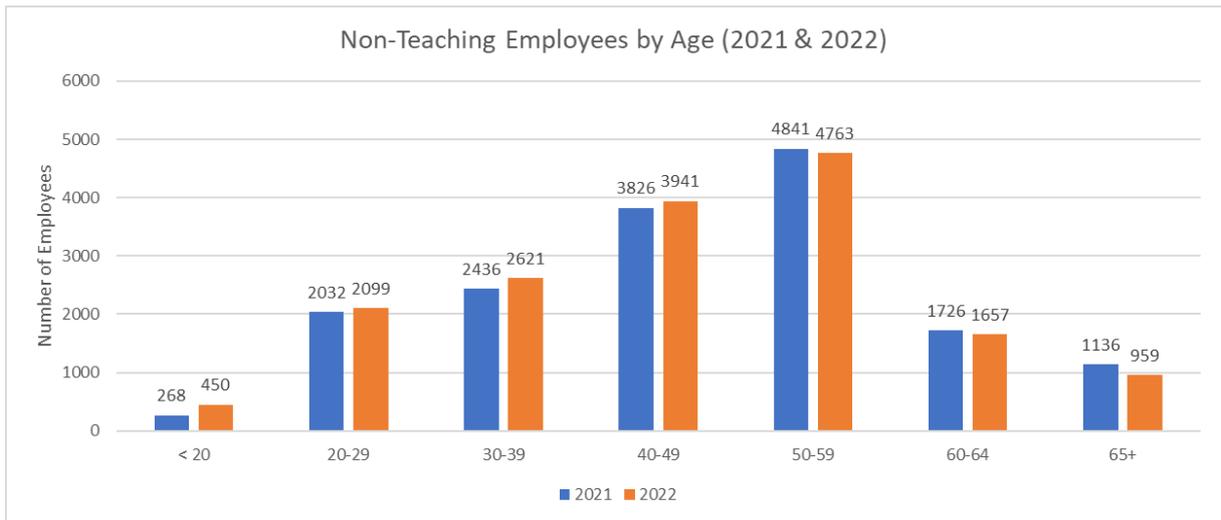
As with the combined employee data, information is based on incumbencies or 'jobs' as it is possible for an employee to hold more than one job with the authority.

Age

The highest number of teaching employees were in the 40-49 age category. The number of employees in the 20-29 age category has increased from 9.76% in 2021 to 11.41% in 2022.

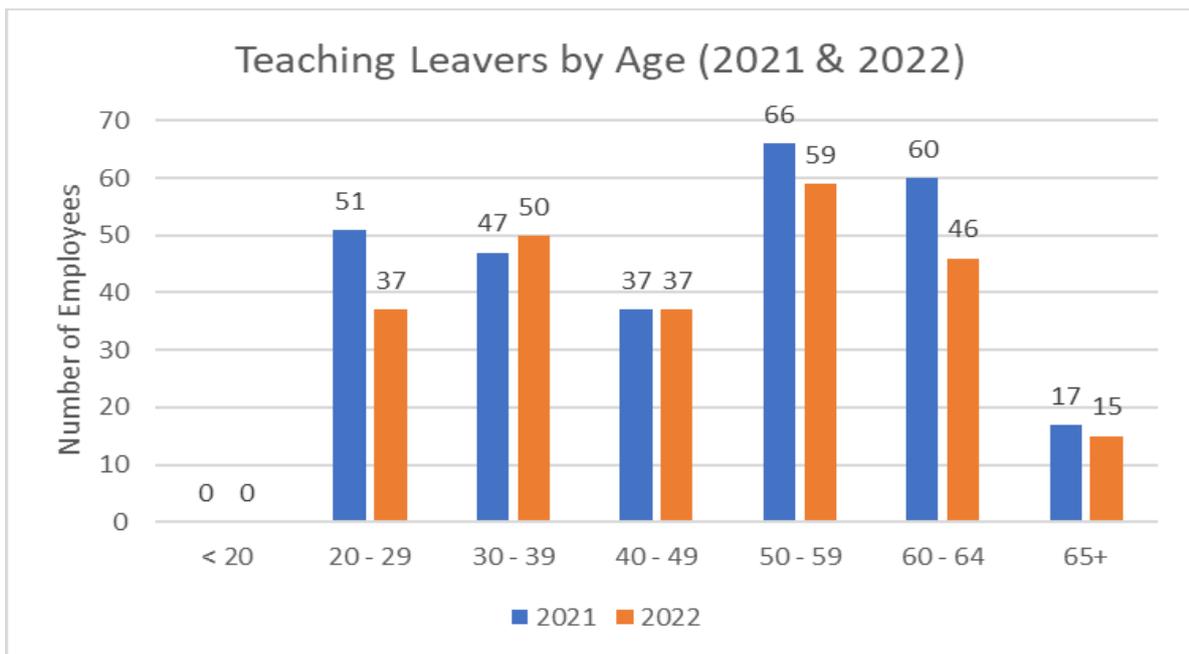


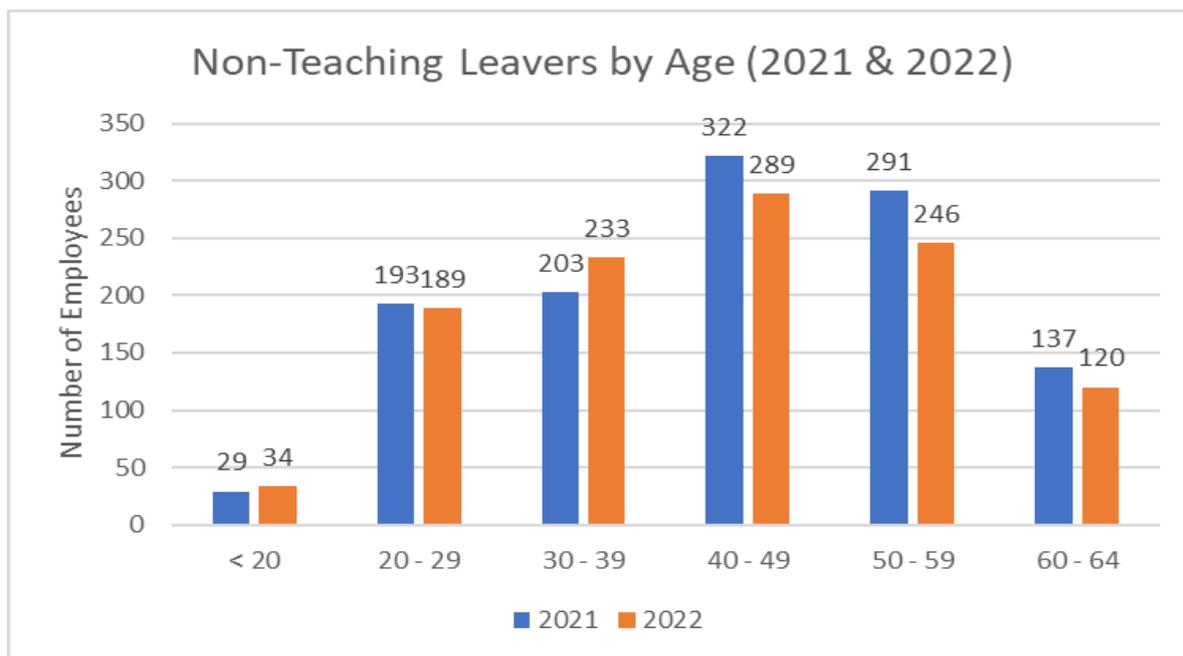
The largest age category for non-teaching employees in both 2021 and 2022 was 50-59.



Retention

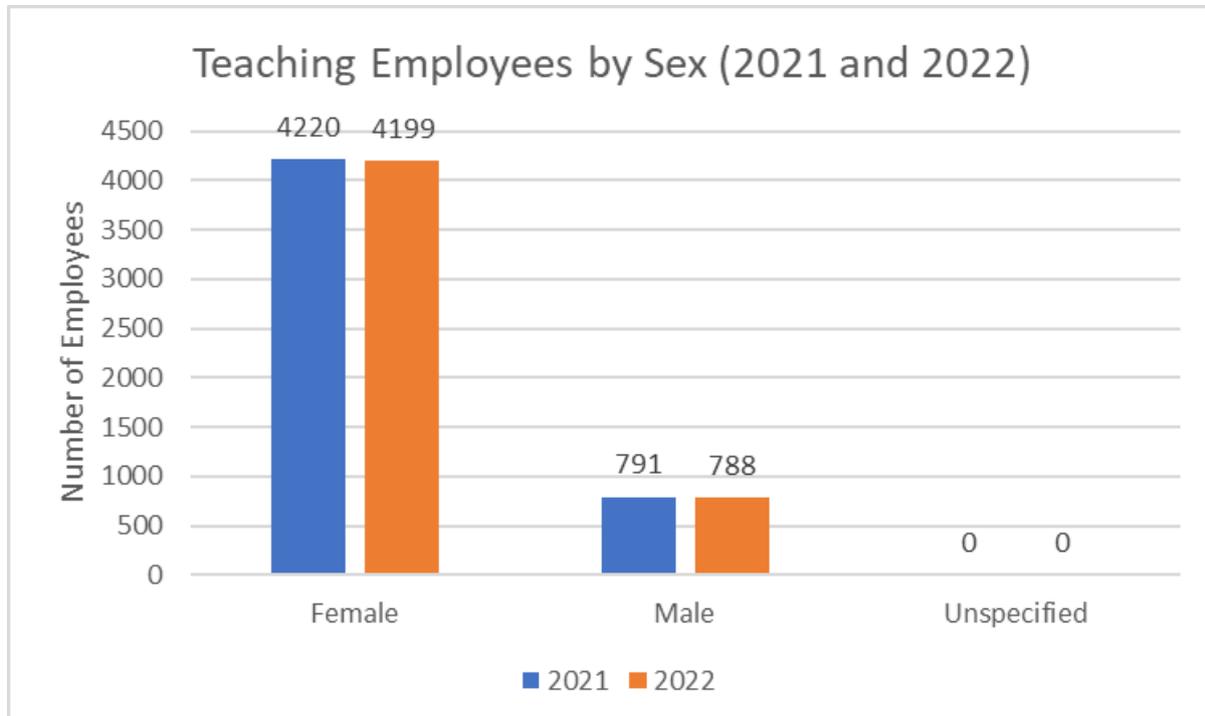
The highest proportion of teaching leavers was in the 50-59 age range and in the highest proportion of non-teaching leavers was in the 40-49 age range.



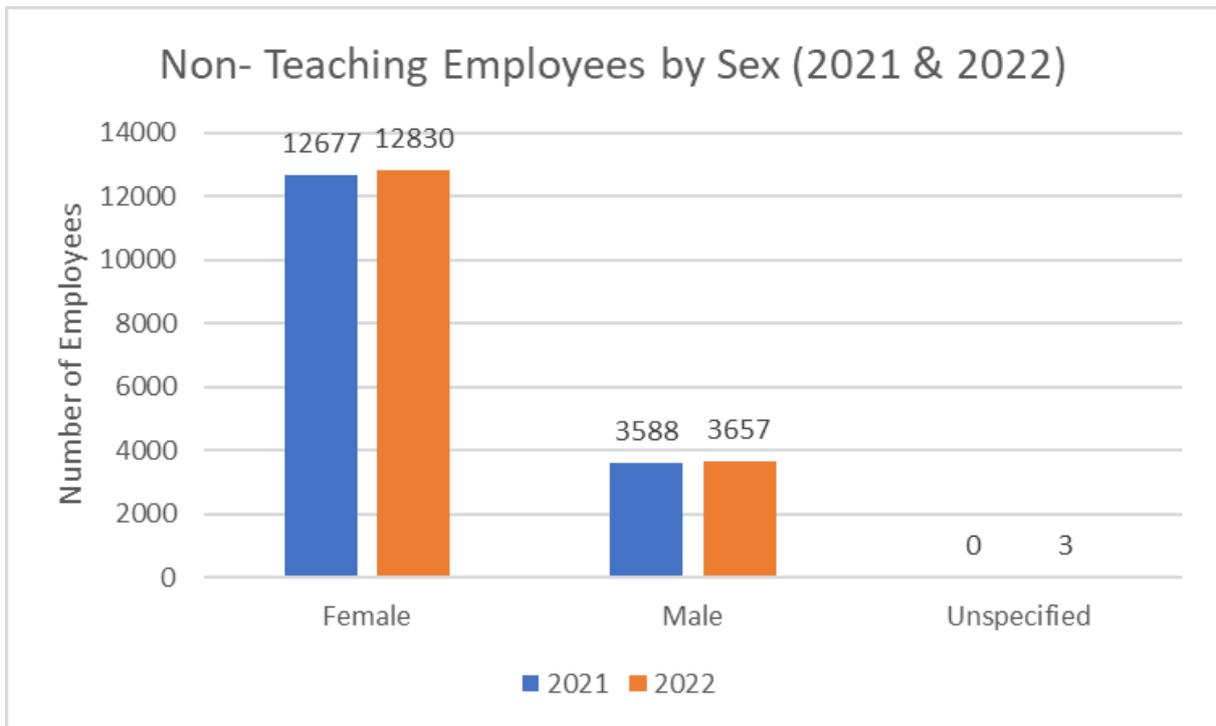


Sex

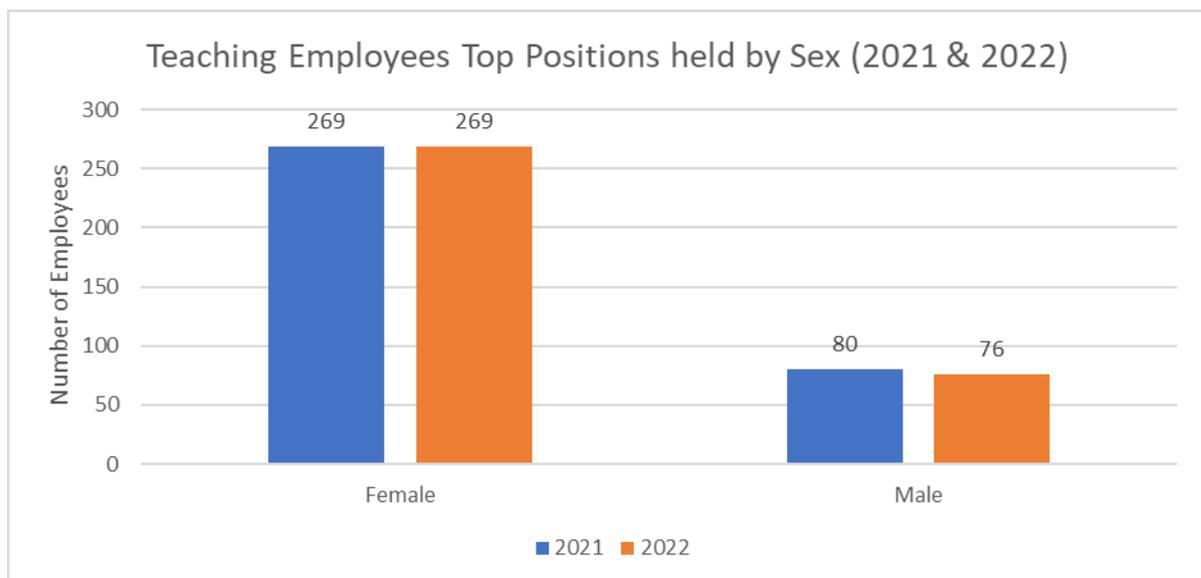
The majority of teachers were female (84%) and this is broadly consistent across 2021 and 2022.



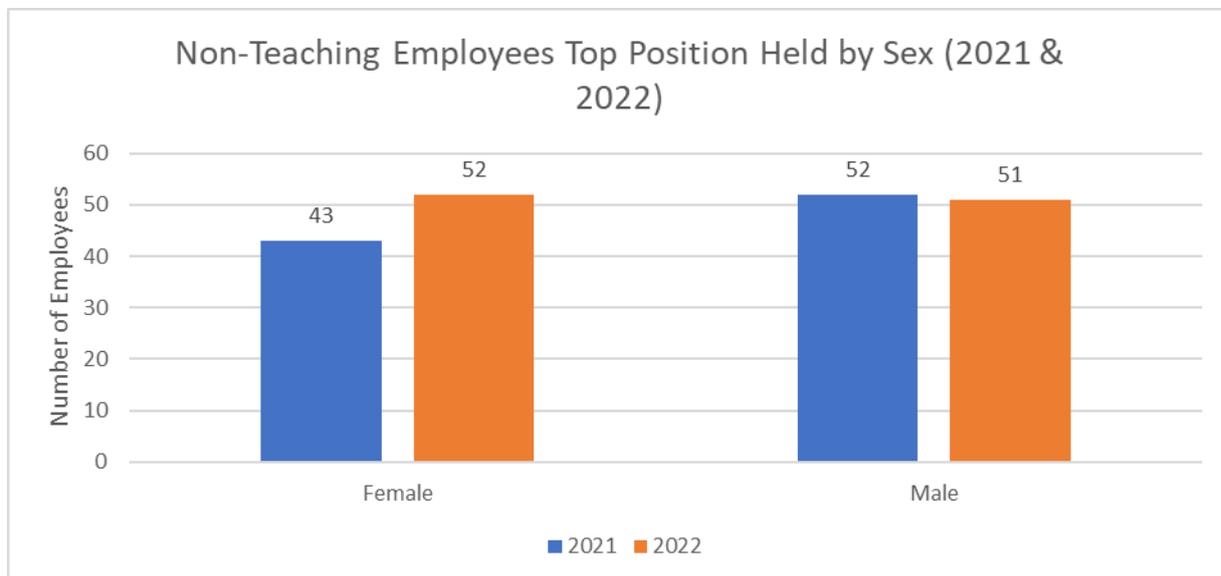
Between 2021 and 2022 the number of female and male non-teaching employees have remained static at 78%.



There has been a slight decrease in the number of employees in top teaching positions. The proportion of male and female top positions was in line with the overall proportion of male and female teaching staff.

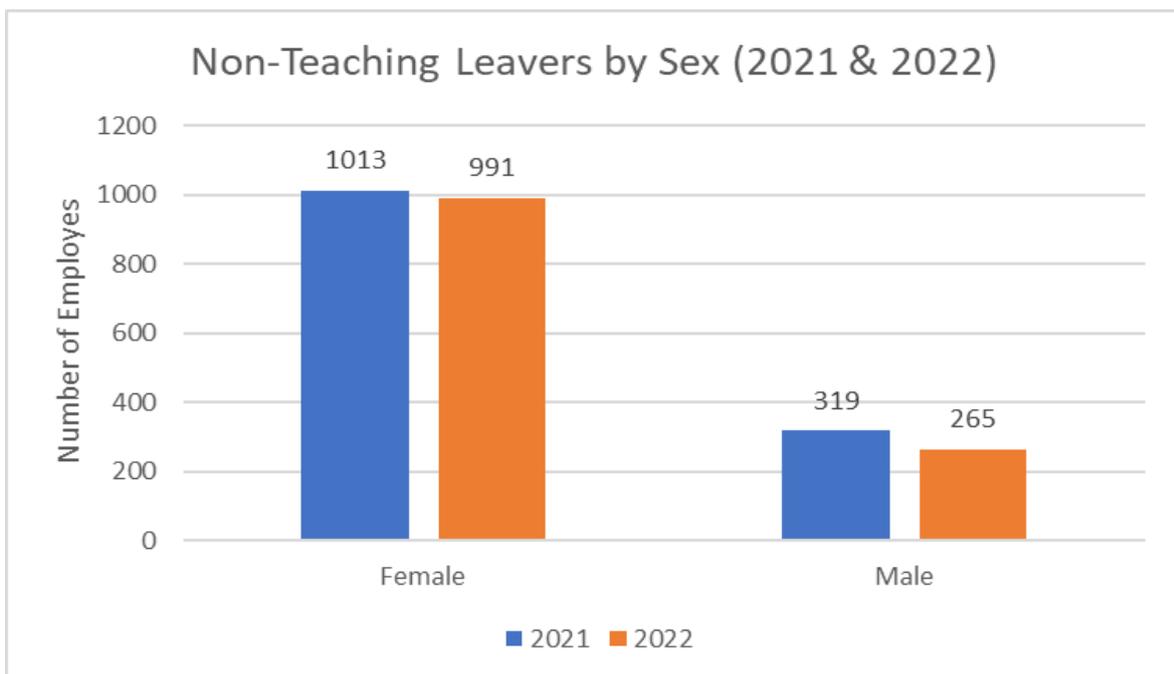
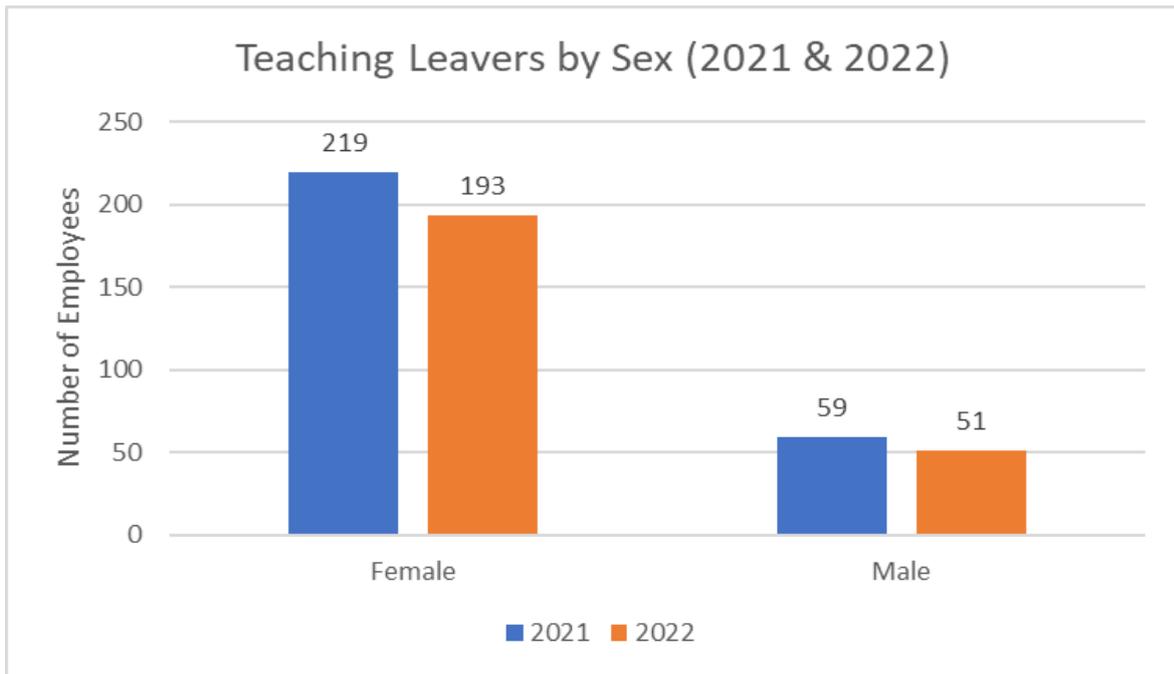


There has been a slight increase in the number of employees in top non-teaching positions. The number of female employees in top positions has increased between 2021 and 2022. The number of male employees in top positions has remained generally static.



Retention

With regards to teaching and non-teaching leavers, the majority of employees leaving the authority were female. The number of female teaching employees leaving has decreased from 13.6% in 2021 to 12.9% in 2022, whereas the number of female non-teaching leavers has increased from 76% in 2021 to 79% in 2022.



Race

In both 2021 and 2022, other than Unknown and Prefer Not to Say, the highest category is White Scottish. This is consistent across both Teaching and Non-Teaching.

All Teaching Employees (Race)	2021	2022
African / Scottish African / British African	6	6
Arab / Scottish Arab / British Arab	1	1
Asian - Bangladeshi / Scottish Bangladeshi / British Bangladeshi	1	1
Asian - Chinese / Scottish Chinese / British Chinese	3	3
Asian - Indian / Scottish Indian / British Indian	10	10
Asian - Other	1	1
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	8	9
Other ethnic group	5	5
Prefer not to say	836	783
White Gypsy / Traveller	1	1
White Irish	25	23
White Other	86	84
White Other British	504	457
White Polish	7	8
White Roma	1	1
White Scottish	1792	1697
Unknown	1724	1897

All Non-Teaching Employees (Race)	2021	2022
African / Scottish African / British African	16	16
Asian - Bangladeshi / Scottish Bangladeshi / British Bangladeshi	3	2
Asian - Chinese / Scottish Chinese / British Chinese	4	5
Asian - Indian / Scottish Indian / British Indian	11	11
Asian - Other (please specify at bottom of page)	44	41
Asian - Pakistani / Scottish Pakistani / British Pakistani	5	5
Caribbean or Black	4	5
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	24	26
Other ethnic group	22	19
Prefer not to say	1845	1707
White Irish	51	47
White Other	192	172
White Other British	1559	1423
White Polish	108	94
White Scottish	7825	7330
Unknown	4552	5587

Retention

With regards to leavers the data is broadly consistent with overall figures, with most reporting either as White Scottish, Prefer not to say or Unknown.

All Leavers: Teaching Employees (Race)	2021	2022
Asian - Indian / Scottish Indian / British Indian	0	1
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	1	0
Other ethnic group	1	0
Prefer not to say	26	32
White Irish	1	2
White Other	3	3
White Other British	36	28
White Scottish	73	72
Unknown	137	106

All Leavers: Non-Teaching Employees (Race)	2021	2022
African / Scottish African / British African	2	1
Asian - Bangladeshi / Scottish Bangladeshi / British Bangladeshi	0	1
Asian - Indian / Scottish Indian / British Indian	3	0
Asian - Other	3	2
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	1	2
Other ethnic group	0	2
Prefer not to say	142	104
White Irish	4	5
White Other	11	26
White Other British	108	108
White Polish	10	8
White Scottish	488	451
Unknown	560	546

Religion / Belief

Consistent with the previous mainstreaming report the highest number of teaching employees are in the Unknown category. The unknown category for Teaching has increased by 3.89% between 2021 and 2022. For Non-Teaching Unknown has increased by 6.07%. For both Teaching and Non-Teaching there has been a reduction, or no change, the majority of the other categories.

All Teaching Employees (Religion or Belief)	2021	2022
Buddhist	5	5
Church of Scotland	812	776
Hindu	5	5
Muslim	11	11
None	783	732
Other	36	33

Other Christian	416	387
Prefer not to say	1199	1120
Roman Catholic	120	108
Sikh	1	1
Unknown	1623	1809

All Non-Teaching Employees (Religion of Belief)	2021	2022
Buddhist	24	24
Church of Scotland	3264	2995
Hindu	5	4
Jewish	3	2
Muslim	40	33
None	3464	3299
Other	103	98
Other Christian	974	907
Pagan	1	2
Prefer not to say	3636	3352
Roman Catholic	423	385
Sikh	2	2
Unknown	4326	5387

Retention

The data was consistent with the overall proportion of teaching and non-teaching employees.

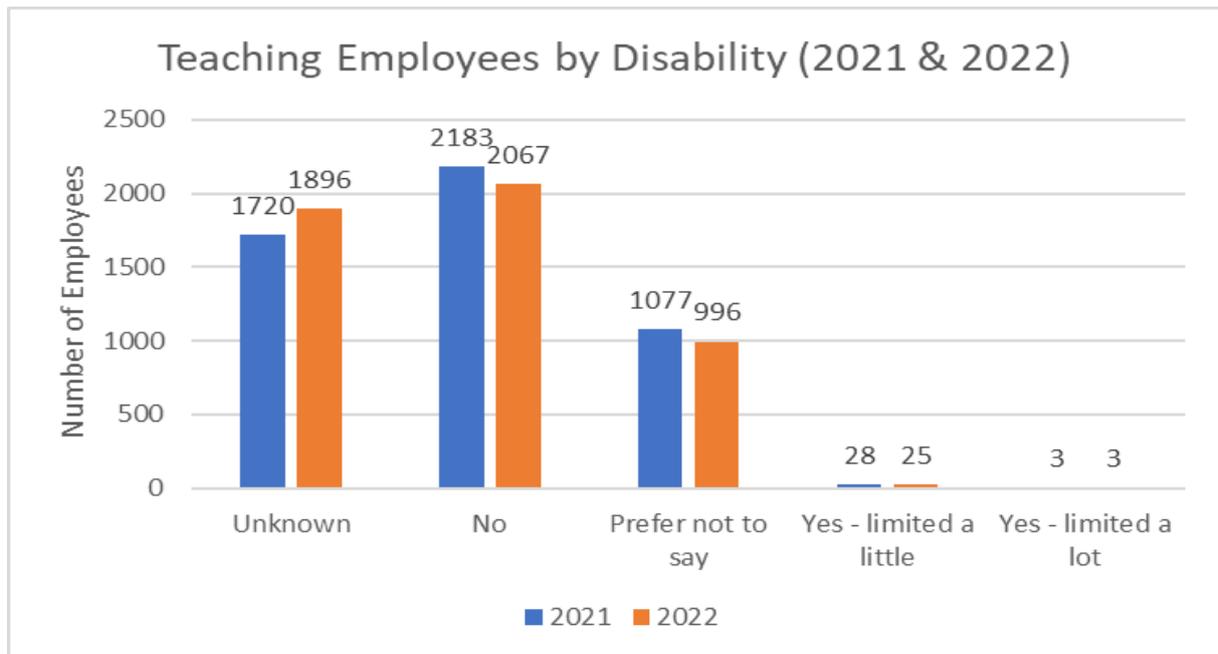
All Leavers: Teaching Employees (Religion or Belief)	2021	2022
Church of Scotland	43	32
None	23	31
Other (please specify at bottom of page)	3	2
Other Christian (please specify at bottom of page)	22	18
Prefer not to say	53	56
Roman Catholic	1	5
Unknown	133	100

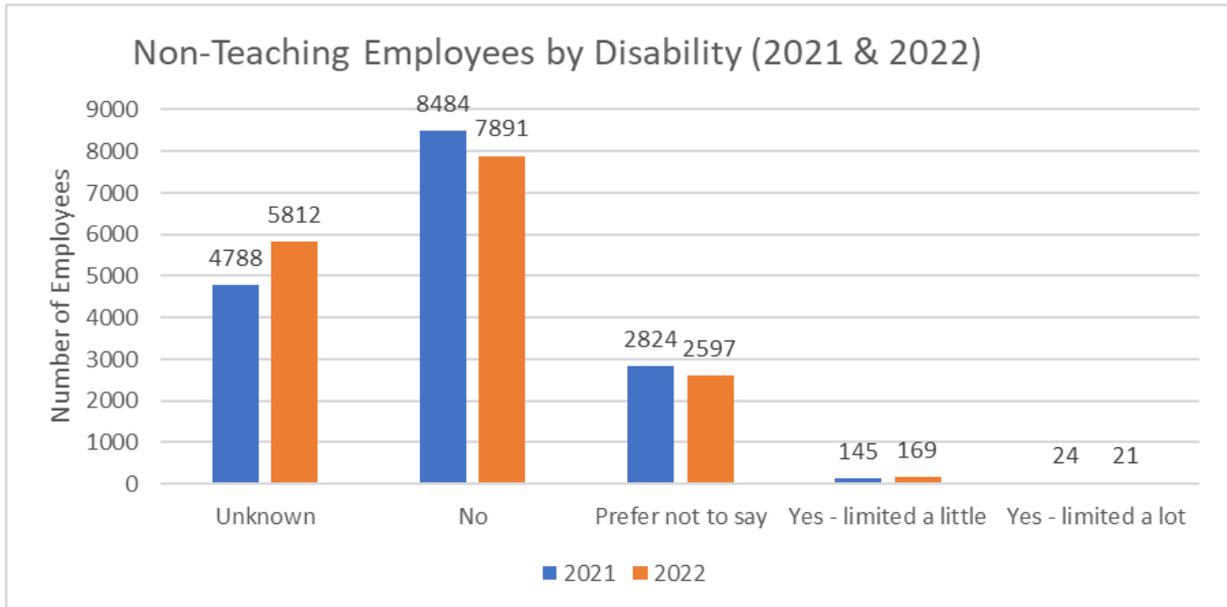
All Leavers: Non- Teaching Employees (Religion or Belief)	2021	2022
Buddhist	0	1
Church of Scotland	211	186
Hindu	2	0
Jewish	0	1

Muslim	0	3
None	200	225
Other	4	8
Other Christian	73	75
Pagan	0	1
Prefer not to say	267	194
Roman Catholic	26	28
Sikh	0	1
Unknown	549	533

Disability

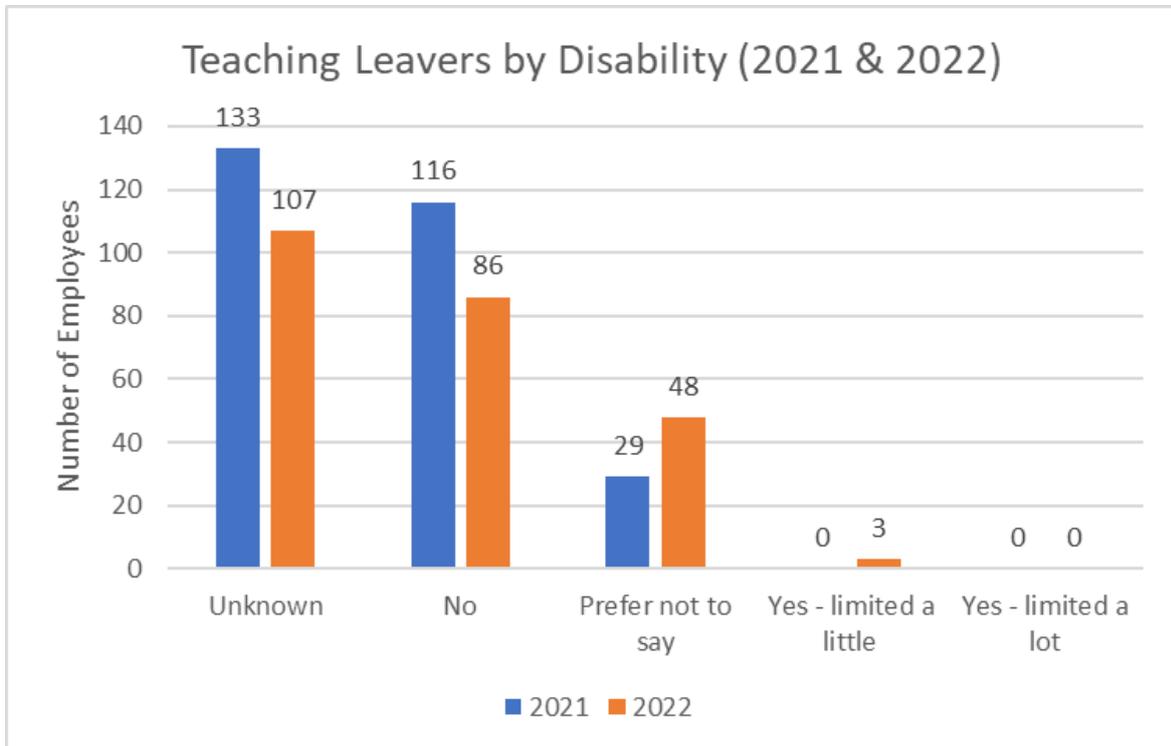
The number of teaching employees identifying as Yes - limited a little or Yes - limited a lot has not changed significantly. For non-teaching employees the number identifying as Yes – limited a little has increased from 0.89% in 2021 to 1.02% in 2022. The number of employees in the Unknown category has increased slightly for both teaching and non-teaching employees.

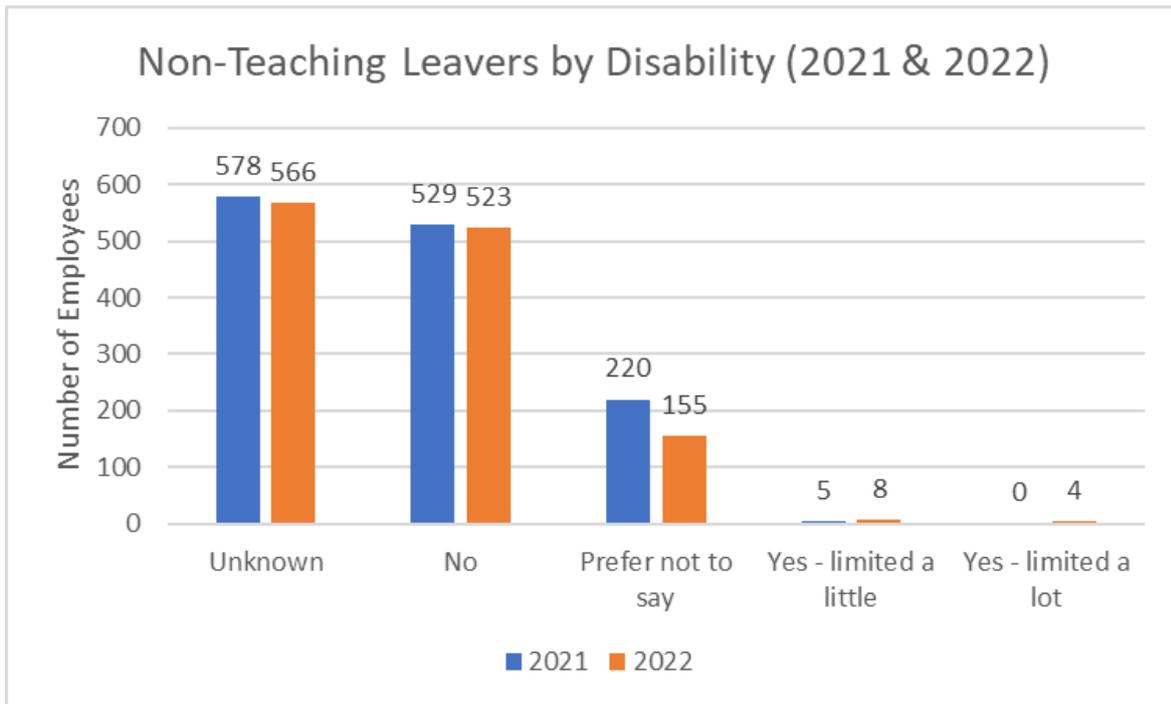




Retention

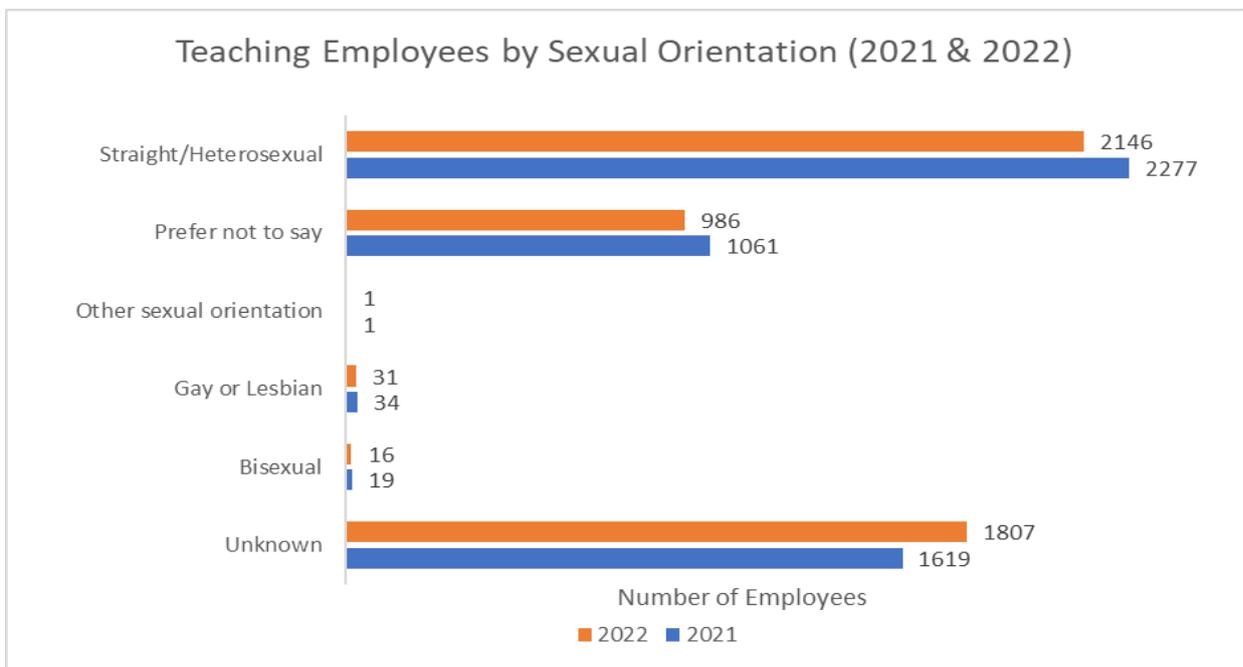
The number of leavers identifying as Yes – limited a little or Yes – limited a lot has remained minimal in both 2021 and 2022.



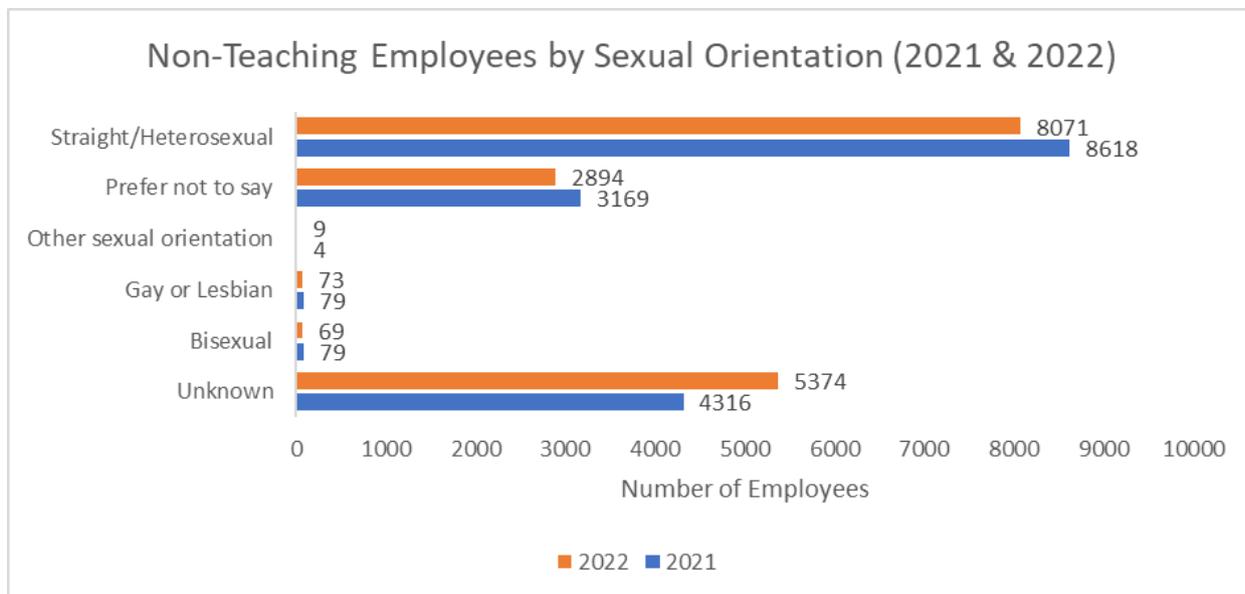


Sexual Orientation

The highest number of teaching employees identified as Heterosexual, with an increase in the number Unknown. This is consistent with previous mainstreaming reports. The number of teaching employees identifying as Bisexual, Gay or Lesbian has remained consistent.

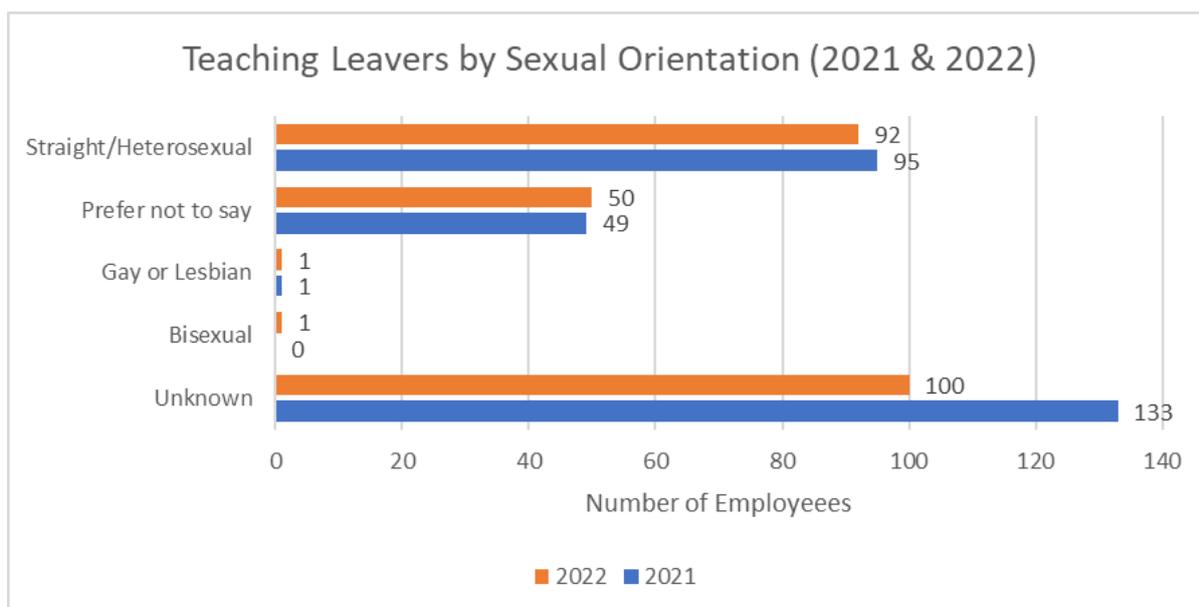


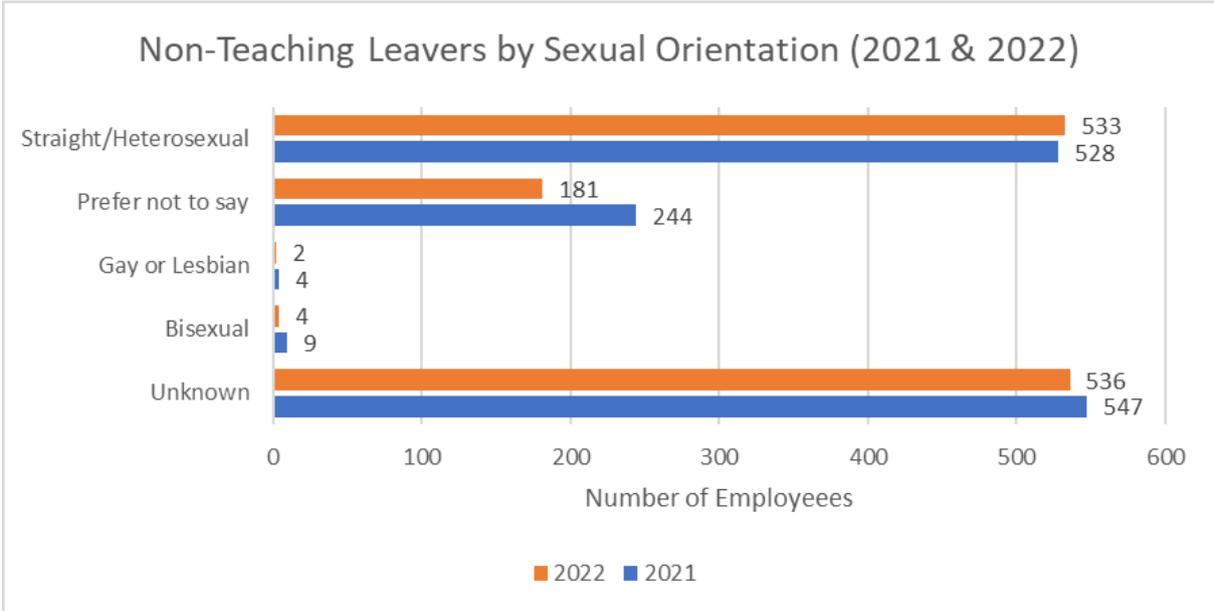
As with teaching employees, non-teaching employees predominately identify themselves as Heterosexual and the number Unknown has increased. The number of employees identifying as Bisexual, Gay or Lesbian has remained static at just under 1% in total.



Retention

The number of employees, both teaching and non-teaching identifying as Bisexual, Gay or Lesbian is consistently low.





Pregnancy/Maternity and Marriage/Civil Partnership

Unfortunately we are unable to gather data on these characteristics for recruitment, retention and development.

Appendix 3: Case Studies

Case Study 1 – Community Learning and Development (CLD)

Equality, diversity and inclusion is core to everything we do within CLD and our performance reflects against HGIOCLD. Example below demonstrates this:

Adult Learning - Banff Aberchirder Men's Shed – ICT

Following referrals for digital learning support in Aberchirder, the CLD adult learning worker has been developing a partnership approach with the men's shed to support ICT learning locally.



The learners have met in the men's shed and have been working towards SQA ICT Level 2. Most of the referrals came via Department of Work and Pensions in the first instance and were learners who had received a Connecting Communities device during lockdown. Developing the collaborative approach means that the Men's Shed is becoming recognised by the learners and new opportunities may now develop there more widely. It is also a safe space with connectivity in the current economic climate.

The learners are reporting feeling positive about the opportunity to learn locally given the limited public transport to and from Aberchirder.

Community Development - People First Fraserburgh – Capacity Building

People First in Fraserburgh, run by and for adults with learning disabilities, offered a valuable drop-in centre providing a safe space for members to socialise, access support and engage in projects. The centre was forced to close during the pandemic and it has proved difficult to resume services. Their main concern was finding funding to keep the drop-in open.



People First worked alongside a CLD practitioner to gain clarity on their strengths, vulnerabilities and opportunities to grow more resilience. They sourced appropriate funding and made successful applications of over £35,000. They now have the core

funding they need to continue running the drop-in centre and its activities for at least 12 months.

The successful funding bids combined with holistic support from CLD has increased People First's confidence, helped make them feel more hopeful for the future of the charity and instilled a sense of new energy and enthusiasm back to the committee and staff members.

Aberdeenshire CLD Learner Voices - Community Resilience Storm Arwen Experience

As part of the wider Aberdeenshire Council engagement exercise, Community Learning and Development (CLD) staff spoke to targeted communities and individuals to capture their voices and experiences in order to better understand their preparedness and resilience following the Storms of early 2022. It was recognised many of these learners and communities are known to be more vulnerable and face barriers and less likely to engage in broad consultation methods such as online surveys.

CLD staff engaged with communities and individuals supported by CLD from identified population groups thought to be less likely to complete broad digital consultation but also those who may experience barriers to preparedness and resilience. In total we engaged with 97 individuals over 15 Group sessions and three 1:1 sessions from the following communities; alcohol and drugs recovery community, ESOL and New Scots community, people with adult literacies needs, young people and vulnerable geographic communities including those with high deprivation/low income and rural areas.

Working with Young People - Banff Academy Mental Health & Wellbeing Peer Educators



Banff academy Mental Health and Wellbeing Peer Educators have successfully concluded on the proposed goal to deliver sessions to all S1s.

The three peer educators have been informing S1s how to look after their mental health and wellbeing and where they can go for help and support. They have also set up a 'drop-in' space for young people who might be feeling overwhelmed in the school day and need some quiet time.

As a result, approximately 200 young people now have a greater understanding of mental health and how they can respond if they themselves, or a friend, is struggling.

The peer educators continue to develop their programme and another 5 young people have expressed an interest in taking part in the next Mental Health and Wellbeing Peer Educators training.

Case Study 2(a) - Procurement

Commercial & Procurement Shared Service (CPSS) demonstrate commitments to equalities, local and national socio-economic priorities and fair work practices (FWP)/Real Living Wage (RLW) by providing relevant evidence of inclusion rates of FWP/RLW in Procurement Annual Reports.

In addition, CPSS contribute positively to equalities mainstreaming and anti-poverty strategies. Equalities can be a standalone community benefit, integrated into specifications or an additional component of added value community benefits. Compassionate and considerate approaches to physical, social and information accessibility integral to commitments. CPSS aim for collaborative, progressive excellence in terms of equalities embracing all protected characteristics and recognising socio-economic disadvantage. The overarching aim and commitment is **total inclusivity** and **equality of opportunity** in terms of employability and skills, promoting gateways to high quality, sustainable and stable employment. Where possible, pooling expertise to undertake proactive outreach work, targeting potential barriers and individuals/groups furthest from the employment/training markets is carried out.

A consistently applied, innovative, themed approach to community benefits in public procurement has been developed and embedded by CPSS. The approach is designed to maximise social value impacts across the three pillars (social, economic and environmental) of sustainable procurement for the benefit of citizens/communities directly affected by the procurement.

As an accountable public authority, the overarching objective to secure creative and ambitious social value outcomes at scale, commensurate with the spend, nature and length of the contract. The approach seeks to anticipate and harness unique professional competencies and ethical drivers of prospective suppliers, and partners encouraging supplier/partner creativity and collaboration in furtherance of objectives.

Incorporation of "Fair Work Practices/Real Living Wage" is regarded as a significant form of social and economic value, focus on gender representation/disability inclusion in school/FE activities considered to be progressive coupled with focus on gender pay gap reporting compliance. Fair Work method statements embrace all protected characteristics and payment of Real Living Wage/the benefits of Living Wage employer accreditation are promoted to the extent permitted by law.

In regulated contracts published by Aberdeenshire Council in 2021/2022, 847 community benefit outcomes were imposed or delivered during 2021/2022 (including 800 hours of community support committed, £20,000 committed to local charitable causes and commitment to 8 foodbank collections over a 4-year period) in regulated contracts. In regulated contracts, this represents a community benefit inclusion rate of 96% and an inclusion rate of 91% in terms Fair Work Practices/real Living Wage.

Case Study 2(b) Procurement

The following clause was included (amongst several other outcomes) in the recent **Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) for the Provision of Contracted Passenger Transport Services (Aberdeenshire)**. There are anticipated to be in the region of

80-100 unique transport providers ultimately be appointed to the DPS. The use of the clause demonstrates awareness of our obligations under the PSED, promotes the duties/sharing of the Council's values to suppliers, encourages compliance with the relevant equalities standard, focuses on areas of particular relevance (signage, physical access to vehicles etc) and asks for information re future plans for improvement during the life of the contract.

Equalities

In furtherance of the Council's obligations in terms of the Public Sector Equality Duty, please detail in broad terms the actions and values that will promote a totally inclusive, person-centred holistic approach to delivery of the Services and to the workforce engaged on this contract. For example, demonstrating awareness of and adherence to Bus and Coach Accessibility and the Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations 2000

***(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/accessible-buses-and-coaches/bus-and-coach-accessibility-and-the-public-service-vehicle-accessibility-regulations-2000>)** in areas including improved bus access to for disabled people, terms of appropriate inclusive approaches to essential signage/printed material and considerate approaches/policies that fully anticipate and meet the needs of service users potentially marginalised through the lack of access to suitable transport or the confidence to fully access the services provided through disability or disadvantage.*

Guidance for Tenderers

Tenderers should detail, in broad terms, the actions and values that will promote a totally inclusive, person-centred holistic approach to delivery of the Services and demonstrate awareness of and compliance with Bus and Coach Accessibility and the Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations 2000

***(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/accessible-buses-and-coaches/bus-and-coach-accessibility-and-the-public-service-vehicle-accessibility-regulations-2000>)** In terms of staff and service users, outline how all protected characteristics will be respected, outline considerate and inclusive approaches to physical access, signage and essential printed or digitally hosted information, approaches/policies that fully anticipate and meet the needs of individuals potentially marginalised through the lack of access to suitable transport or the confidence to fully access the services provided through disability or disadvantage. In both a staff and service user equalities context, please provide assurances that current arrangements facilitate inclusive physical access and briefly outline any future plans for improvement in this area during the life of the contract.*

Case Study 3 – Aberdeenshire Refugee Resettlement Programme

“In Aberdeenshire the weather may be cold, but the people are always warm”

The Aberdeenshire vision for refugee resettlement and integration is rooted in the principles of partnership, community development, innovative practice, and co-production – putting new Scots and welcome communities at the centre of

decision making, planning and action. We recognise refugees as an asset and a power for change in our communities and not simply victims of conflict, disaster, torture or war.

Aberdeenshire Council and partners have been resettling refugee families since 2015. From 2016 to 2021, the majority of families arrived via the **Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme**, the **Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme** and the **Afghan Relocation Assistance Programme**.



War in Europe

The **Homes for Ukraine** scheme was launched on 14 March 2022 by the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. Ukrainian nationals who were residents in Ukraine prior to 1 January 2022, were entitled to apply for a 3-year UK visa with Displaced Persons status. The scheme allows sponsors in the UK to nominate a named Ukrainian or a named Ukrainian family to stay with them in their home or in a separate property for a 6-to-12-month period.

On 18 March 2022, the Scottish Government launched the '**Super Sponsorship Scheme**' as part of the Warm Scottish Welcome initiative.

Aberdeenshire saw one of the biggest responses across the UK per capita, with residents offering to open their hearts and homes to displaced Ukrainians fleeing war and conflict. The Refugee Resettlement Team moved quickly to ensure that we could

provide the safety and sanctuary required. Over the next few months, over five hundred Ukrainians were resettled into Aberdeenshire.



The purpose of refugee resettlement and integration in Aberdeenshire is to ensure that people can rebuild their lives from the day they arrive. Refugees are supported and empowered to understand their rights, responsibilities, and entitlements; access well-coordinated services that allow them to pursue full and independent lives; build social connections and relationships; and live in safe, welcoming, and cohesive communities.

The refugee resettlement process can be brutal for people forced to leave homes, families, and friends. Where a journey will end can't always be predicted, but the resettlement team work to ensure that people are supported with every step, dream, and goal along the way.

Case Study 4 – Digital Inclusion

In Aberdeenshire Council, Digital Inclusion is core piece of work. Within our Options & Homelessness, Housing Services, through joint working, we were successful in procuring flexible funding with approximately £12,000 spent to procure tablets for gypsy/travellers who were not awarded through Connecting Scotland.

Following this the next step was to provide data services through new funding procured for the provision of phone minutes, texts, and data which is now available until 2023, and able to help up to sixty persons per month through Online Centres Network – Databank and uses the networks Three, 02, and Vodafone.

There are different options to suit individuals in need who are experiencing data poverty or inequality. This was granted in late April 2022; Funding opportunities continue to be sought to enable our tenants and those being supported.

Case Study 5 – Customer Services

British Sign Language (BSL) training is currently being rolled out to front-line Customer Advisors in our Service Points. This was suggested by our Advisors who felt it would be useful to support communication with customers who may have a hearing impairment.

Funding was secured for an online training course for 12 Advisors – with the duration of the training being up to a year for completion.

To date, three Advisors have completed the training with others working their way through it.

Feedback after their completion suggests face-to-face training to allow interaction/practice with others also completing the course. This will be looked at once more of our staff complete.

Training materials can be accessed at any time and Advisors have said they will continue to refresh their knowledge as they do not regularly interact with customers who are hearing impaired.

Case Study 6 - Waste Services

Our waste service has developed its waste collection service with a focus on equality and offers additional bins for families with babies and people with medical needs. We also offer assisted collections and bag collections. Smaller bins are offered to people who struggle to move larger bins.

Case Study 7 - Housing

Equality is embedded in the work of our Housing Service, and one particular group that we support is Gypsy Travellers.

We celebrate Gypsy Roma and Traveller History Month annually in June with a series of in person events and information on Aberdeenshire Council's website with the month of activity we aim to address prejudice and stereotyping, as well as promoting the history, language, culture and heritage of the communities, helping to challenge myths.

The Gypsy/Traveller Sub Committee Action Plan addresses issues relating to maximising income, accommodation needs, access to public services, including education and health, racism, discrimination and representation. The Gypsy/Traveller

Sub Committee meets regularly to monitor progress of the actions in the Plan and discuss any other compelling issues.

Aberdeenshire is a Third-Party Reporting centre and training is being extended to Officers in the Housing Service. The Gypsy/Traveller Liaison Officer and Strategic Housing Officer undertook training with the intention of working with the Gypsy/Traveller community to encourage them to report incidences of hate crime.

Case Study 8 - Tackling Poverty and Inequalities

Food Security - Connecting with Communities supports individuals within targeted areas of Kincardine & Mearns, Formartine and Banff & Buchan who may have limited food support and/or transport links for accessing food. Over the past 12 months we have supported 561 people including 232 children.

The aim is to ensure residents in rural and remote locations can access fresh fruit & vegetables at low cost and additionally receive good quality FareShare produce to support management of household budgets as well as health and wellbeing. The project also aims to ensure that individuals receive additional support to address other factors such as social isolation and loneliness, financial difficulties, disabilities & mental health.

Feedback from some of our service users is captured below:

“The recipe for soup I got last week is great and it lasted me two days, I am looking forward to getting more recipes and it’s great that we can get the ingredients too” M, Banff

“It’s like having the old days back when the van used to come, it’s great. I can buy all my fruit and veg for the week and the additional food we get offered is really appreciated” S, Edzell Woods

“We eat well and we don’t have to go to supermarkets and the fruit and veg is much better quality so we are eating more fruit and veg because it is much fresher.” – Resident, Turriff

Fuel Poverty - Through a partnership with SCARF, funding was allocated to increase the number of energy advisors. This has enabled us to continue to deliver the Heat & Eat Project which targets those households that have prepaid energy meters to reduce the risk of further fuel debt.

The Heat & Eat project supported 434 households across Aberdeenshire with 618 food and 618 fuel vouchers with a total investment of £61,182 for these targeted homes.

“A reduction in available finances due to increased living costs makes essential items such as food, heating, fuel for car etc too expensive. This means that there’s hard decision to be made for low-income families such as ours”- Rural Family Marr

Financial Inclusion - Over the last 12 months partners have been building on work already in place through the development of a cash first approach.

This is a preventative and responsive approach that aims to ensure everyone has access to enough money to afford essentials.

One element is ensuring that people have access to good quality Information & Advice Services around income maximisation, welfare rights and debt.

2022 saw 8,250 individuals supported through the Information & Advice Services. Over 3,500 people were given welfare rights advice and 450 debt cases were handled.

The top five enquires for clients were around benefits, debt, finance, housing and energy bills.

Employability - GROW @ The Vinery is located in Banff and led by Aberdeen Foyer. The project includes a kitchen garden, a kitchen, a café style eating area and training delivery space.

The project provides opportunities for community members of all ages to access arts, crafts and wellbeing sessions, drawing on the talents of local tutors. It also provides a safe, shared space for other community and third sector groups. Aberdeen Foyer works in close partnership with NESCOL to ensure these are accredited learning opportunities.

The project has created 11 additional jobs for local people and has delivered skills academies and work experience for over 50 local people. This integrated approach of delivering advice, employment, wellbeing sessions, skills sessions in food and personal development along with developing that safe space has supported over 700 local people to access a range of services and opportunities.

Health & Wellbeing - In June 2021 the Housing Service employed a Health & Wellbeing Support worker to set up a project which targeted those who had no mental health services in place. The support worker found there was a requirement to work with clients to increase engagement with services through developing a person-centred approach and using warm handovers. In May 2022 the project received additional funding through Tackling Poverty & Inequalities to build capacity through an additional post. The workers receive referrals for clients, link them with mental health services and after a period of time refer on to other support services.

This project has worked with 79 people with 43 having acquired skills and no longer requiring this level of support.

Children & Young People - The Tackling Poverty & Inequalities Partnership was aware of the adverse effects the pandemic had had on young people. Partners reported that young people felt that their voice had not been heard and the opportunities to develop skills, socialise and seek employment had reduced.

In partnership with the Community Learning & Development team a youth project was developed using a rights-based approach. Young people from 15 groups across Formartine and Garioch explored poverty & inequalities. They developed workshops and performances that could be used to highlight not only the impact poverty and inequalities have on children and young people but also on their families and communities. The young people organised an event “Over 2 You 22” which was held on 24th September 2022 to deliver their findings to over 250 young people and partners.

“Thank you for giving me the space to be me” – young person

<https://www.ouraberdeenshire.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Over2Youth22-FINAL-.mp4>

As a result of the event young people have developing their own Young Scot Tackling Poverty & Inequalities page which can be viewed using this link - [Tackling Poverty and Inequalities – Young Scot](#)

Experts of Experience – Through the lived experience forum an in person Lived Experience Conference was developed and delivered as part of Aberdeenshire Challenge Poverty Week 2022. The conference was hosted by The Rowett Institute which is part of Aberdeen University.

The aims of the conference were to share good practice, raise awareness of the importance of coproduction with those experts of experience and listen to those with experience around food security, increase cost of fuel and the cost-of-living crisis.

“The tackling poverty and inequality day that was held at the Rowett Institute today was so good. I am so glad I went along in person and met some people from the Forum. I think it was important to be present at the session to show that we do exist and are the actual people on the ground assisting with the Forum and having our opinions heard. I left today feeling valued, appreciated and encouraged that what we do makes a difference. I hope there are more opportunities for engagement going forward.” – Forum member / conference volunteer

The blended approach of in person and online participation allowed 120 participants to take part in the day. They identified solutions, areas of improvements and informed national research but the main outcome was a commitment to develop a charter which will support those who wish to use their experience to inform and change policy, services, and practice. Those at the conference expressed what they would like to see in the developing charter.

Case Study 9 - Health and Wellbeing

We have two groups set up, Let’s Talk Women’s Health and Mental Health. The Mental Health group came about through feedback from employee surveys, team and individual conversations. The group was created and started meeting up virtually in February 2022.

The group meets around every six weeks via MS Teams. There is no set agenda and people can share as much or as little as they would like. Two officers facilitate this group. Following on from the success of this group and taking account of feedback, a women-only group has also been set up to speak about issues affecting women, particularly around menopause.

Case Study 10 - Recruitment/ Developing Young Workforce (DYW)

We attend recruitment fairs, both on school campuses and virtually to promote opportunities in the Council, in particular apprenticeships and entry level/ trainee roles to support the development of the young workforce. Council vacancies and routes into Council employment have also been covered during DWP and Employability events. The resourcing team have attended nearly 20 of these events in 2023 to date.

In the past 12 months we have recruited 35 Apprentices aged 16-19 across the council and are in the process of recruiting a further 12, this includes both Modern Apprentices and Trades. We have also increased the range of Apprenticeships we provide to 16–19-year-olds by introducing Modern Apprenticeships in Financial Support, Cookery, Housing and Digital Marketing.

We have supported 21 SVQ candidates with additional support and provided reasonable adjustments where necessary to enable them to progress and achieve their qualifications. This has ranged from allowing additional time to complete online assessments, scribing, extra support meetings and adjustments to support mental health and wellbeing.

We continue to promote Aberdeenshire Council as a Disability Confident Employer in our job adverts. For Diversity Month we pulled together resources relating to recruiting and supporting employees into a SharePoint page to highlight what being a disability confident employer means to us and highlighting to managers the different ways available to support candidates and employees into work. ([Disability Confident Employer](#)). We are now progressing work towards becoming a Disability Confident Leader.

We work in partnership with Project SEARCH to support their students in the job application process, providing training materials to support their completion of job applications and the setup of mock adverts for students to apply through. These students will then receive feedback on their applications from HR Advisors.

In the HR Service we support Managers to identify and implement reasonable adjustments to support candidates and employees. This has included reasonable adjustments to support managers to explore options for a candidate with dyslexia through the interview process. For example, options considered are the provision of interview questions ahead of interview to allow for reading and comprehension, allow more time for responses and therefore allocated interview time, ensure questions are not complex or convoluted/in many parts. The service and candidate can adopt a combination of these methods at the interview.

Case study 11 – HR policies and procedures

The HR Operational Team advises on a range of employee procedures to ensure employees with protected characteristics can be given support, if necessary. Procedures include attendance management, redeployment, disability leave scheme, advice on reasonable adjustments, special leave, and signposting employees to specialist organisations such as Access to Work to help disabled employees.

Signposting organisations for neurodiverse employees and local Grampian groups supporting Functional Neurological Disorder and other local groups to engage with.

In the instance of a front-line worker with neurological disorder, who was struggling with attendance at work and interaction with colleagues. The service has made a number of reasonable adjustments through discussion and engagement with the employee and their trade union to find a way to ensure they can continue successfully in their role. An example of this has been where an employee, struggling with neurological disorder is shown empathy and compassion by management and a wellness action plan developed, stress questionnaire undertaken alongside employee assistance with various other tools utilised to help support the employee to return to work. With further understanding from discussions with the employee and the tools mentioned above, a plan can be put in place to help the employee and management identify what the triggers may be and try to deal with these before a crisis point is hit.

Case study 12 – Celebrating Diversity Week at Crombie School

At Crombie School we are inclusive- working together with our families and community to provide a safe, nurturing and inspiring environment for all. The staff and pupils are committed to engaging with an inclusive and creative curriculum to maximise success and learning opportunities for our pupils.

This year at Crombie School we have hosted a celebrating diversity week during which we benefited from a visit from the assistance dogs, visitors to explain medical conditions, Downs Syndrome Scotland input and workshops for pupils. We also had a visit from TIE (Time for inclusive education) who provided workshops for the children and enhanced our practice in LGBT Inclusive Education. They provided interactive and collaborative learning opportunities covering a range of themes including: stereotypes, prejudice, and inequality. In addition we had parents in our school talking about inclusion for grown-ups and sharing information about their cultures and traditions. Our celebrating diversity week closed with an information session for parents entitled 'What is an Enhanced provision School?'

We are involved in many other activities and enjoy engaging in positive relationships with charities to ensure equality in school. We work closely with Autism Understanding to ensure we have autism friendly classrooms, and Charlie House who will be delivering sensory workshops to our pupils next session. Some of our parents have sponsored the neurodiversity umbrella project and a Crombie family recently sponsored our Hare for the Big Hop Trail supporting CLAN. Sunshine the Hare is an inclusive hare. Pictured below:



We are committed to understanding pupils as individuals and supporting a variety of needs within our community. We are working towards our Rights Respecting School Silver Award and adhere to our school values which are underpinned by children's rights and the global goals.

Appendix 4: equality outcomes progress report

Action	Status Description	Progress	Latest Note	Due Date	Assigned To
EQ Equality Outcomes	In Progress	53%	<u>OVERALL PLAN</u>	31-Mar-25	
EQ 1 Disabled people have an improved experience in accessing services that meet their needs through more regular and systematic involvement in design of service delivery across the Council	In Progress	72%	<u>EQUALITY OUTCOME</u>	31-Mar-25	
EQ 1.1 Engage with disabled people and organisations including third sector organisations	Completed	100%	Regular meetings to engage with disabled people and organisations including third sector organisations are now in place. Accessibility is now a standing item on all Area Bus Forum agendas, providing an opportunity for disabled people and others with mobility concerns to raise these and discuss any physical or other accessibility barriers to using bus services.	31-Mar-23	Richard McKenzie
EQ 1.2 Engagement with transport providers regarding proposals Review Passenger Transport Strategy	In Progress	5%	The review of the Council's Passenger Transport Strategy will be overseen by the Passenger Transport Network Review	31-Dec-23	Richard McKenzie

Action	Status Description	Progress	Latest Note	Due Date	Assigned To
			Member Officer Working Group (MOWG), which at its meeting on 3 May 2023 agreed an outline remit for the Review, and, in turn, the main matters that should be included in the review.		
EQ 1.3 Work and engage with transport providers to seek enhancements improvements in access to travel.	Completed	100%	Mechanisms are now in place through regular meetings with transport providers: to address issues raised in relation to accessibility; and, to seek improvements in access to travel.	31-Mar-23	Richard McKenzie
EQ 1.4 Procure Interpretation, Translation and Transcription services including BSL	Completed	100%		31-Mar-23	Kakuen Mo
EQ 1.5 Involve the AH&SCP in the procurement process for the commissioning of BSL Interpretation	Completed	100%		31-Mar-23	Kakuen Mo
EQ 1.6 Creation of a BSL section on the website that would hold all BSL content	In Progress	10%	A section can be created on the website. An audit of what would be required is being gathered	31-Aug-23	Marta Mlynarczyk
EQ 1.7 Services to produce content in BSL for the web team to include on the website	In Progress	10%	A section on the website can be created to hold the BSL videos. Research is being carried out to identify the pieces of information	31-Mar-25	Marta Mlynarczyk; Kakuen Mo

Action	Status Description	Progress	Latest Note	Due Date	Assigned To
			that is required to be translated into BSL		
EQ 1.8 Appointment of a Service Design Lead to support the organisation in embedding the service design approach engaging with relevant customers including areas of hard to reach/ disadvantaged groups	Completed	100%		31-Mar-23	
EQ 1.9 Directorates/ Services actively seek the involvement of disadvantaged groups in designing services	Completed	100%	The dedicated service designer post was filled in January 2022 and has made excellent progress in developing a Service Design champions course which is now rolling out to services across the council- highlighting the need to include users and particularly those from harder to reach groups when designing services to meet their needs. Sign up to this course is excellent and this will help the organisation grow its codesign capabilities. The service designer is also working with the Whole family wellbeing service manager to support codesign approaches across the project hubs- the Scottish government has a specific interest in codesign and working	31-Mar-23	Colleen Henderson

Action	Status Description	Progress	Latest Note	Due Date	Assigned To
			with underrepresented groups, so this is a key requirement for the project.		
EQ 1.10 Ensure accessibility of communication channels to citizens and communities	Completed	100%	<p>Our website is checked for Accessibility and this is scored. We have accessibility guidelines which we follow including Alt Text for images.</p> <p>Our social media videos have subtitles.</p> <p>Documents can be translated into different formats and languages.</p> <p>We promote the use of Contact Scotland BSL for those that require BSL interpretation.</p>	EQ 1.10 Ensure accessibility of communication channels to citizens and communities	Completed
EQ 2 People, particularly those who face barriers through literacy, language and digital exclusion, are provided with accessible information on services provided by the Council, and are supported to access these digitally where appropriate	In Progress	41%	<u>EQUALITY OUTCOME</u>	31-Mar-25	
EQ 2.1 Engage and consult with disabled people and people for whom English is an Additional Language and third sector	In Progress	20%	The evidence is gathered through the Accessibility and Readability score	30-Apr-24	Marta Mlynarczyk; Kakuen Mo

Action	Status Description	Progress	Latest Note	Due Date	Assigned To
organisations Identify baseline and agree targets and measures					
EQ 2.2 Continued use of website survey, which includes questions around usability and accessibility, to review web content and other digital communication	Assigned	0%		30-Apr-24	Marta Mlynarczyk
EQ 2.3 Investigation of a language plug-in for web translations. Develop Framework	In Progress	50%	Accessibility and translations functionality was added to the website in April 2022 for a year as a trial to gauge uptake from website users. So far the functionality is mainly used for translations.	30-Apr-24	Marta Mlynarczyk
EQ 2. Content published on website to be in plain English to enable easier understanding and for more accurate translations using the plug-in	Completed	100%	Content is checked for accessibility by web team, guidelines are followed.	30-Apr-24	Marta Mlynarczyk
EQ 2.5 Linking in with partners to gather the data required to meet the needs of the protected characteristics	In Progress	50%	Linked into GREC and Police Scotland for Hate Crime Data and Scottish Government on Equality Data strategy including evidence data finder: www.equalityevidence.scot	30-Apr-24	Marta Mlynarczyk
EQ 2.6 Engagement & Equalities Team & UX Team facilitate a working group to develop service	In Progress	80%	Guidance in place for accessibility from the UX team who advise services of this. Guidance on accessing information in alternative	31-Dec-23	Marta Mlynarczyk; Kakuen Mo

Action	Status Description	Progress	Latest Note	Due Date	Assigned To
guidance for accessing information in an alternative language/format			language formats is available within the specific documents/information themselves		
EQ 2.7 Feedback from the ongoing website survey to support with identifying areas on website where signposting to information in an alternative language/format should be available	Assigned	0%		31-Dec-23	Marta Mlynarczyk
EQ 2.8 Continuing engagement with Scottish and UK Government digital infrastructure investment programmes, working with communities identified through the Reaching 100 programme	In Progress	12%	The Digital Engagement Team continues to work closely with colleagues at the Digital Scotland office within Scottish Government (specifically on the R100 programme), and UK Government DIS (relating to Project Gigabit). Targeted community engagement, as well as regional promotion and stimulation of the programmes is ongoing. To date, 12% of all eligible properties (705 premises) have been supported to use the voucher subsidies available to them, to obtain a superfast alternative broadband solution. Additionally, to date, the R100 programme has completed the deployment of full-fibre broadband connections to 2,234 premises,	31-Mar-25	Jack Rigby

Action	Status Description	Progress	Latest Note	Due Date	Assigned To
			which equates to 14.5% of the planned build, which will take place in Aberdeenshire between 2022 and 2028.		
EQ 2.9 Supporting the continuing roll-out of the full-fibre network through SSE Network's contract (funded through the City Region Deal)	Completed	100%	The rollout of full fibre is complete and we're now expanding the benefits of this infrastructure by opening the access to the laid fibre to third-party telecoms operators, who can use the available ducting and fibre network to lay their own full-fibre infrastructure to the public and provide gigabit capable services to communities.	31-Mar-25	Jack Rigby
EQ 2.10 Working with Digital CONNECT (pilot Digital Inclusion Project) setting in place digital interventions providing digital connectivity, access to digital kit and develop/ enhance digital skills	In Progress	0%	<p>Station House Media Unit (SHMU) have successfully been awarded monies from Aberdeenshire Council's Young Person's Guarantee funding to set-up the Digital CONNECT Project. To date, 2 x FTE posts have been created, and these posts will deliver interventions to support young people in digital skills relating to employability, and confidence & wellbeing.</p> <p>This is an ongoing project.</p>	EQ 2.10 2.10 Working with Digital CONNECT (pilot Digital Inclusion Project) setting in place digital interventions providing digital	In Progress

Action	Status Description	Progress	Latest Note	Due Date	Assigned To
				connectivity, access to digital kit and develop/enhance digital skills	
EQ 3 In Aberdeenshire people have opportunities to fulfil their potential throughout life	In Progress	25%	<u>EQUALITY OUTCOME</u>	31-Mar-25	
EQ 3.1 We will continue to support the reduction in exclusions of children and young people with protected characteristics from school education	In Progress	50%	This action is ongoing	31-Mar-25	Marian Youngson
EQ 3.2 We will identify areas for improvement where children and young people with protected characteristics are not achieving qualifications in school education with direct links to the Gypsy Traveller Action Plan	Assigned	0%		31-Mar-25	Ian Brownlee*
EQ 4 Aberdeenshire Council as an employer continues to create a fair and inclusive place to work where differences between people are celebrated and barriers are reduced for women, disabled	In Progress	39%	<u>EQUALITY OUTCOME</u>	31-Mar-24	

Action	Status Description	Progress	Latest Note	Due Date	Assigned To
people, minority ethnic people, LGBTI+ people and young people					
EQ 4.1 Find out how safe and supported employees with protected characteristics currently feel in the workplace and monitor	In Progress	10%	Working group exploring options for survey of staff to identify level of support- May be possible to incorporate into existing Wellbeing type surveys issued to staff to minimise feelings of 'survey fatigue'	31-Mar-24	Samara Smith
EQ 4.2 Explore with employees the appetite for Employee Diversity & Inclusion Group and initiate as indicated	In Progress	20%	Feedback has not shown an appetite for further groups though this will be explored further in the next staff survey	31-Mar-24	Samara Smith
EQ 4.3 Provide support to groups to enable them to become self sufficient	Completed	100%	Mental health and women's only support group up and running. Mental health group facilitated by 2 officers. Women's only group is led by a volunteer and is self-sufficient.	31-Mar-24	Kakuen Mo
EQ 4.4 Review Scottish Government Ethnic Minority Toolkit and make appropriate amendments to our own Recruitment and Selection Procedure, including Training in line with recommendations given where appropriate.	In Progress	30%	Review of Toolkit has been undertaken and some areas for potential improvement being explored further regarding best practice, feasibility etc- for example vacancy promotion to specific groups, improved data on workforce diversity available	31-Mar-24	Samara Smith

Action	Status Description	Progress	Latest Note	Due Date	Assigned To
			through ESS employee recording and maintenance and the provision of Management Information on the Workforce Profile Dashboard.		
EQ 4.5 Produce and develop an Ethnic Minority Pay Gap Report as recommended from Scottish Government	In Progress	10%	Work has begun on the gathering and identification of possible areas for analysis and inclusion in such a report. This is being considered in line with the current Gender Pay gap reporting which is undertaken while we await clarity on what the expectation is on what should be reported.	31-Mar-24	Samara Smith
EQ 4.6 Provide Increased opportunities to build digital Skills confidence – through Digital Champions, online learning, Digital learning post embedded in L&D, promoting Digital learning& confidence	Completed	100%	David Nicholson recruited as Digital Project lead. Commenced post 24/10.2022	31-Dec-22	Helen Milne
EQ 4.7 Update and promote Recruitment & Selection information and training for Recruiting Managers across all protected characteristics	In Progress	20%	Review has been undertaken on areas where improvement could be made and investigation regarding best practice has begun including development of the existing 'Equalities across Recruitment' factsheet, promoting our accreditation and building networks	31-Mar-24	Samara Smith

Action	Status Description	Progress	Latest Note	Due Date	Assigned To
			to support us in ensuring our recruitment practices are as inclusive as possible.		
EQ 4.8 Immediate areas of focus in training relating to disability: Guaranteed Job Interview Scheme; Reasonable Adjustments	In Progress	25%	Work has begun to progress the Council to Disability Confident Leader status with specific actions being identified.	31-Mar-24	Samara Smith
EQ 5 An increased proportion of women, black and minority ethnic people, younger people, disabled people and LGBTI+ people are supported to enter employment or training	Completed	100%	<u>EQUALITY OUTCOME</u>	31-Mar-25	
EQ 5.1 To enable an inclusive economy with support for people to access employment or training	Completed	100%	Aberdeenshire operates a fully engaged Employability Partnership, Employment CONNECT that is engaged with the local communities throughout Aberdeenshire. Within the council the Employment Support Team offers person-centred employability assistance from ages 16-67 and occasionally beyond via 8 Key Workers. The EST team is responsible for the governance and audit of all No One Left Behind funding received from Scottish Government ensuring programmes	31-Mar-25	Ewen Allardyce

Action	Status Description	Progress	Latest Note	Due Date	Assigned To
			are available for all seeking assistance into employment, training or education. The multi-agency approach operating throughout Aberdeenshire is a reflection of the true partnership that exists.		
EQ 6 LGBTI+, disabled, religious, faith and black and minority ethnic people have increased confidence to report hate crime through our work with partners	In Progress	46%	<u>EQUALITY OUTCOME</u>	31-Mar-25	
EQ 6.1 Raise council employees' awareness to better understand hate crime	In Progress	50%	An Aldo course has been developed and promoted across the organisation. Officers are monitoring the numbers that are completing the training.	31-Mar-25	Helen Milne
EQ 6.2 Raise our awareness of Hate crime through preventative work by the Community Safety Partnership	In Progress	0%		31-Mar-25	Janelle Clark; Andrew Martin
EQ 6.3 Increase awareness of young people to better understand hate crime	In Progress	0%		31-Mar-25	Andrew Martin
EQ 6.4 Work with partners to raise awareness of hate crime with community members through an online workshop and other means	In Progress	0%		31-Mar-25	Janelle Clark; Andrew Martin

Action	Status Description	Progress	Latest Note	Due Date	Assigned To
EQ 6.5 Work with partners to increase the awareness of third-party reporting	In Progress	20%	Work continues with Police Scotland and other partners, such as GREC and other local authorities to increase the awareness of Third-Party Reporting. A meeting took place with Police Scotland's with an agreement for the Policy Officer to contact service managers to identify staff for training on Third Party Reporting, to be delivered by Police Scotland. Thereafter there will be refresher sessions and quarterly forums to raise and discuss issues. Training can be delivered face to face or virtually. Awareness raising information will be circulated.	31-Mar-25	Liz Hamilton
EQ 6.6 Review of Aberdeenshire Council Third Party Reporting Centres and identify, if required, any potential new third-party reporting centres	In Progress	50%	Third Party Reporting centres in place. Training on Third Party reporting has been arranged with Police Scotland, and is ongoing	31-Mar-25	Liz Hamilton
EQ 6.7 In partnership with Four Pillars, the 'Queer Equality Support Team' project has been developed and an LGBT+ Inclusion Advisor (LIA) post funded to provide	Completed	100%		31-Mar-25	Marian Youngson

Action	Status Description	Progress	Latest Note	Due Date	Assigned To
support for young people and schools staff					
EQ 6.7.1 Support for School Staff	Completed	100%	Quest in place with support offered to school staff All support (for school staff or young people) is accessed via the completion of the Microsoft Form which can be found either on the QuEST website QuEST – Four Pillars (fourpillarsuk.org) or directly from this link QuEST Support Request	31-Mar-25	Marian Youngson
EQ 6.7.2 Support for Young People	Completed	100%	Quest in place with support offered to young people All support (for school staff or young people) is accessed via the completion of the Microsoft Form which can be found either on the QuEST website QuEST – Four Pillars (fourpillarsuk.org) or directly from this link QuEST Support Request	31-Mar-25	Marian Youngson
EQ 6.8 Updating of Aberdeenshire's Anti-bullying Policy to align with the National Guidance: Respect for All	Completed	100%		31-Mar-25	Marian Youngson