

Swale Borough Council

Workforce equality monitoring data 2025-26

1. Introduction

Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)) and the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011, we are required to publish equality information to demonstrate our compliance with the general equality duty.

Our Workforce Strategy, which is published on our website, consists of 4 Themes:

- Theme 1 Talent and Development
- Theme 2 Our Brand and Recruitment
- Theme 3 Wellbeing and Reward
- Theme 4 Organisational Change and Design

One of the ways in which we measure our success in meeting the aims of our strategy is reporting annually on equality and gender pay gap data, and this workforce data also forms part of the equality information that we use to assist us in meeting our duty to eliminate discrimination and harassment, promote equality of opportunities and foster good relations between different groups within our workforce.

This report sets out the key information relating to the work force at Swale Borough Council as at 1st April 2026. This information is monitored actively by the Strategic Management Team and, where the data suggests that further investigation is required, this is noted.

2. Workforce profile by protected characteristic

As at 1st April 2026 the council employed a headcount of 271 contracted staff.

Workforce profile by sex

Sex	2025/26	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Male	25%	24%	25%	26%	26%
Female	75%	76%	75%	74%	74%

The Council has a requirement to report on gender under the Equality Act 2010 which created a public sector duty to have due regard to eliminating unlawful discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity between men and women.

The data above is in line with historic trends within the public sector which traditionally attracts more female employees; this pattern is particularly more evident at Swale.

Workforce profile by age

Age	2025/26	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
16-19	0.7%	0.8%	1.1%	0.4%	1.0%
20-29	14.4%	11.4%	10.7%	11.5%	10.5%
30-39	14.4%	16.5%	15.4%	15.8%	18.4%
40-49	28.0%	30.2%	27.8%	25.9%	23.9%
50-59	27.0%	23.8%	27.5%	29.5%	28.8%
60+	15.5%	17.3%	17.5%	16.9%	17.4%

The distribution of age across the authority has fluctuated slightly during the past four years, but there have not been any significant changes. However, there has been a slight increase in the 20-29 and 40-49 age groups and a slight reduction in the 30-39 age group over the past 5 years.

Workforce profile by declared disability

Disability	2025/26	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Disabled	9.6%	7.1%	7.5%	7.2%	7.2%
Non-disabled	80.4%	81.5%	77.5%	76.3%	73.8%
Not declared	10.0%	11.4%	15.0%	16.5%	19.0%

There is no single measure of disability. The above data represents individuals who consider themselves to have a health problem or disability that limits their day-to-day activities.

Non-declaration by applicants and employees of a disability is common, even though they are encouraged to declare. Employees are regularly reminded to update their details when a lifestyle change occurs and it is accepted that disability is an area that can change during service. The numbers of employees not declaring has seen a steady drop and action will continue to be taken to encourage reporting.

Workforce profile by ethnicity

Ethnicity	2025/26	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Asian/Asian British	1.8%	1.6%	1.4%	1.4%	2.0%
Black/Black British	1.8%	2.0%	1.1%	1.1%	2.0%
Mixed/Multiple/Other	2.2%	1.6%	1.1%	1.1%	0.7%
White Other	5.2%	5.1%	4.3%	2.9%	2.6%
White British/NI	86.0%	87.4%	90.0%	92.1%	91.7%
Not declared	3.0%	2.3%	2.1%	1.4%	1.0%

Local Authorities have a duty under the Equality Act 2010 to make appropriate arrangements to ensure their various functions are carried out with due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between people of different racial groups.

There has not been a significant change in the ethnicity profile at the council, although the Mixed/Multiple/Other and White Other groups have seen a small, steady increase over the past 5 years.

Workforce profile by sexual orientation

Sexual orientation	2025/26	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Gay/lesbian/bisexual/other	7%	6%	5%	4%	3%
Heterosexual	80%	78%	78%	78%	77%
Not declared	13%	16%	17%	18%	20%

A significant number of employees have not given details of their sexual orientation, although this number is reducing year on year. This is not surprising as employees may not wish to provide this information. However, employees will continue to be encouraged to update their information on this issue.

Workforce profile by religion and belief

Religion or belief	2025/26	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Christian	39%	40%	42%	45%	44%
Other declared religion or belief	4%	4%	2%	4%	4%
No religion or belief	45%	42%	41%	37%	36%
Not declared	12%	14%	15%	14%	16%

The percentage of those declaring a belief has remained fairly static, although those stating that they have no religion or belief has increased over the past few years.

3. Starters profile by protected characteristic

During 2025/26 a total of 41 people joined the authority (this does not include casual staff).

Starters by sex

Sex	2025/26	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Male	39%	36%	38%	33%	22%
Female	61%	64%	62%	67%	78%

Starters by age

Age	2025/26	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
16-19	2.4%	5.1%	11.5%	0%	6.3%
20-29	36.6%	23.1%	26.9%	25.0%	31.3%
30-39	19.5%	5.1%	34.6%	20.8%	21.9%
40-49	17.1%	48.7%	23.2%	25.0%	15.6%
50-59	12.2%	7.7%	0%	25.0%	21.9%
60+	12.2%	10.3%	3.8%	4.2%	3.0%

Starters by declared disability

Disability	2025/26	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Disabled	9.8%	5.1%	7.7%	4.2%	6.3%
Non-disabled	87.8%	84.6%	92.3%	75.0%	87.4%
Not declared	2.4%	10.3%	0%	20.8%	6.3%

Starters by ethnicity

Ethnicity	2025/26	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Asian/Asian British	2.4%	2.6%	0%	0%	3.1%
Black/Black British	9.8%	5.1%	0%	0%	3.1%
Mixed/Multiple/Other	4.9%	2.6%	3.8%	4.2%	6.3%
White Other	14.6%	5.1%	19.2%	8.3%	3.1%
White British/NI	63.4%	79.5%	73.2%	83.3%	84.4%
Not declared	4.9%	5.1%	3.8%	4.2%	0%

Starters by sexual orientation

Sexual orientation	2025/26	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Gay/lesbian/bisexual/other	10%	8%	8%	8%	6%
Heterosexual	80%	82%	73%	79%	81%
Not declared	20%	10%	19%	13%	13%

Starters by religion and belief

Religion or belief	2025/26	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Christian	32%	26%	19%	38%	19%
Other declared religion or belief	2%	5%	0%	4%	6%
No religion or belief	51%	56%	62%	42%	59%
Not declared	15%	13%	19%	16%	16%

The workforce continues to be predominantly female, although there has been a gradual increase in male representation over the recent years. The percentage of new starters over the different categories has remained fairly consistent, although there has been an increase in starters in the 20-29 age group. However, there has been a decrease in the 40-59 age group over the last few years.

Ethnic diversity has also shown some improvement, with a reduced proportion of White British starters compared to previous years and increased representation from other ethnic groups.

3. Leavers profile by protected characteristic

During 2025/26 a total of 27 people left the authority (this does not include seasonal or casual staff).

Leavers by sex

Sex	2025/26	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Male	41%	46%	44%	31%	40%
Female	59%	54%	56%	69%	60%

Leavers by age

Age	2025/26	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
16-19	0%	2.9%	4.0%	0%	0%
20-29	22.2%	11.4%	32.0%	9.8%	20.0%
30-39	25.9%	0%	12.0%	15.6%	16.7%
40-49	7.5%	25.7%	8.0%	21.6%	20.0%
50-59	11.1%	25.7%	16.0%	21.6%	23.3%
60+	33.3%	34.3%	28.0%	31.4%	20.0%

Leavers by declared disability

Disability	2025/26	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Disabled	0%	14.3%	12.0%	11.8%	10.0%
Non-disabled	88.9%	74.3%	76.0%	62.7%	73.3%
Not declared	11.1%	11.4%	12.0%	25.5%	16.7%

Leavers by ethnicity

Ethnicity	2025/26	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Asian/Asian British	0%	0%	0%	3.9%	0%
Black/Black British	14.8%	0%	0%	5.9%	3.3%
Mixed/Multiple/Other	3.7%	0%	4.0%	0%	3.3%
White Other	14.8%	2.9%	4.0%	3.9%	0%
White British/NI	66.7%	97.1%	92.0%	84.3%	90.0%
Not declared	0%	0%	0%	2.0%	3.4%

Leavers by sexual orientation

Sexual orientation	2025/26	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Gay/lesbian/bisexual/other	7%	3%	4%	0%	3%
Heterosexual	74%	83%	76%	73%	70%
Not declared	19%	14%	20%	27%	27%

Leavers by religion and belief

Religion or belief	2025/26	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Christian	37%	37%	48%	35%	27%
Other declared religion or belief	0%	3%	0%	6%	0%
No religion or belief	41%	51%	36%	34%	46%
Not declared	22%	9%	16%	25%	27%

The gender split of leavers remains broadly in line with previous years, with a higher proportion of females compared to males, reflecting the overall workforce composition.

The age profile shows that turnover is higher among older employees, particularly those aged 60+, who account for a third of all leavers, consistent with previous trends and likely linked to retirement. There is also notable movement in the 20–39 age groups, suggesting some early to mid-career turnover. The ethnicity profile continues to be predominantly White British, although this is lower than in previous years, with an increase in leavers from other ethnic backgrounds, particularly Black/Black British and White Other groups. This indicates a slightly more diverse profile of leavers compared to historical trends.

Disciplinary and grievance

There was 1 case where formal disciplinary action was taken during 2025/26. The outcome was a final written warning being issued.

Disciplinaries by sex

Sex	2025/26	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Male	0%	100%	0%	0%	50%
Female	100%	0%	0%	100%	50%

There were no formal grievances raised during 2025/26.

Grievances by sex

Sex	2025/26	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Male	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Female	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%

5. Return to work rates

	2025/26	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Number of employees whose maternity leave ended in period	5	3	3	2	4
Number of employees who returned to work after maternity leave	4	3	3	2	4
Return to work rate	80%	100%	100%	100%	100%

6. Workforce profile by pay band and protected characteristic

Full details of the Council's reward strategy are set out in the Pay Policy Statement, which is published on the council website.

As an organisation that employs over 250 employees, we are required to report and publish annually on our gender pay gap. The calculation is based on the hourly pay rate for each employee and the data must be a snapshot of salary data as at 31 March. The council reports on the gender pay gap as required and publishes the report on the Government and council website.

Workforce profile by pay band and sex

Sex	Grades 2-3	Grades 4-7	Grades 8-12	Grades 13-14
Male	20%	23%	37%	0%
Female	80%	77%	63%	100%

Workforce profile by pay band and age

Age	Grades 2-3	Grades 4-7	Grades 8-12	Grades 13-14
16-19	3%	0%	0%	0%
20-29	17%	19%	0%	0%
30-39	10%	17%	12%	0%
40-49	27%	26%	37%	0%
50-59	17%	26%	37%	100%
60+	26%	12%	14%	0%

Workforce profile by pay band and declared disability

Disability	Grades 2-3	Grades 4-7	Grades 8-12	Grades 13-14
Disabled	8%	12%	5%	0%
Non-disabled	70%	82%	88%	100%
Not declared	22%	6%	7%	0%

Workforce profile by pay band and ethnicity

Ethnicity	Grades 2-3	Grades 4-7	Grades 8-12	Grades 13-14
Asian/Asian British	0%	3%	2%	0%
Black/Black British	0%	0%	8%	0%
Mixed/Multiple/Other	0%	3%	2%	0%
White Other	3%	7%	2%	0%
White British/NI	90%	86%	82%	100%
Not declared	7%	1%	4%	0%

Workforce profile by pay band and sexual orientation

Sexual orientation	Grades 2-3	Grades 4-7	Grades 8-12	Grades 13-14
Gay/lesbian/bisexual/other	7%	9%	2%	0%
Heterosexual	68%	82%	82%	100%
Not declared	25%	9%	16%	0%

Workforce profile by pay band and religion and belief

Religion or belief	Grades 2-3	Grades 4-7	Grades 8-12	Grades 13-14
Christian	29%	40%	46%	100%
Other declared religion or belief	3%	3%	7%	0%
No religion or belief	42%	50%	37%	0%
Not declared	26%	7%	10%	0%

The workforce profile reflects a consistently strong female majority across all pay bands, including at the highest grade level. The age distribution suggests a typical pattern of progression, with younger employees more concentrated in lower pay bands and more experienced employees represented in higher grades, supporting a broad and balanced age profile across the organisation.

The ethnicity profile indicates that the workforce is largely White British across all pay bands, particularly at senior levels. There is some representation from other ethnic groups within the lower and middle grades.

7. Job applications by protected characteristic

Job applications by sex

Sex	2025/26	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Male	32%	37%	35%	44%	45%
Female	67%	61%	64%	56%	55%
Not declared	1%	2%	1%	0%	0%

Job applications by age

Age	2025/26	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
16-19	3%	3%	7%	10%	5%
20-29	26%	25%	35%	25%	24%
30-39	29%	28%	22%	23%	19%
40-49	20%	24%	16%	16%	11%
50-59	16%	14%	14%	18%	36%
60+	5%	5%	5%	8%	5%
Not declared	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%

Job applications by declared disability

Disability	2025/26	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Disabled	8%	7%	9%	9%	2%
Non-disabled/ Not declared	92%	93%	91%	91%	98%

Job applications by ethnicity

Ethnicity	2025/26	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Asian/Asian British	8%	5%	5%	10%	0%
Black/Black British	16%	13%	10%	13%	8%
Mixed/Multiple/Other	2%	3%	2%	3%	2%
White Other	10%	12%	10%	10%	2%
White British/NI	62%	64%	71%	64%	88%
Not declared	2%	3%	2%	0%	0%

Job applications by sexual orientation

Sexual orientation	2025/26	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Gay/lesbian/bisexual/other	6%	8%	11%	5%	5%
Heterosexual	83%	82%	85%	84%	90%
Not declared	11%	10%	5%	10%	5%

Job applications by religion and belief

Religion or belief	2025/26	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Christian	33%	34%	37%	34%	38%
Other declared religion or belief	10%	6%	7%	9%	7%
No religion or belief	46%	50%	52%	48%	50%
Not declared	11%	10%	4%	9%	5%

8. Job shortlisting by protected characteristic

Job applicants shortlisted by sex

Sex	2025/26	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Male	33%	37%	45%	47%	43%
Female	66%	59%	53%	53%	57%
Not declared	1%	4%	2%	0%	0%

Job applicants shortlisted by age

Age	2025/26	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
16-19	1%	4%	8%	12%	7%
20-29	26%	19%	33%	23%	32%
30-39	26%	22%	27%	21%	21%
40-49	24%	31%	18%	21%	4%
50-59	16%	16%	6%	17%	32%
60+	6%	6%	8%	6%	4%
Not declared	1%	2%	0%	0%	0%

Job applicants shortlisted by declared disability

Disability	2025/26	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Disabled	12%	8%	6%	13%	4%
Non-disabled/ Not declared	88%	92%	94%	87%	96%

Job applicants shortlisted by ethnicity

Ethnicity	2025/26	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Asian/Asian British	5%	4%	0%	6%	0%
Black/Black British	16%	11%	8%	9%	4%
Mixed/Multiple/Other	4%	4%	6%	0%	4%
White Other	9%	10%	18%	15%	4%
White British/NI	63%	66%	68%	70%	88%
Not declared	3%	5%	0%	0%	0%

Job applicants shortlisted by sexual orientation

Sexual orientation	2025/26	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Gay/lesbian/bisexual/other	6%	11%	6%	9%	7%
Heterosexual	82%	78%	88%	85%	86%
Not declared	12%	11%	6%	6%	7%

Job applicants shortlisted by religion and belief

Religion or belief	2025/26	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Christian	34%	38%	39%	32%	36%
Other declared religion or belief	7%	7%	8%	4%	7%
No religion or belief	48%	44%	49%	58%	50%
Not declared	11%	11%	4%	6%	7%

9. Job offers by protected characteristic

Job offers by sex

Sex	2025/26	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Male	42%	36%	41%	37%	38%
Female	58%	64%	59%	63%	62%

Job offers by age

Age	2025/26	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
16-19	2%	5%	9%	10%	8%
20-29	27%	21%	23%	16%	35%
30-39	24%	17%	27%	32%	23%
40-49	24%	36%	18%	16%	8%
50-59	12%	9%	9%	16%	18%
60+	11%	11%	14%	10%	8%
Not declared	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%

Job offers by declared disability

Disability	2025/26	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Disabled	5%	3%	0%	11%	4%
Non-disabled/ Not declared	95%	97%	100%	89%	96%

Job offers by ethnicity

Ethnicity	2025/26	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Asian/Asian British	4%	1%	0%	0%	0%
Black/Black British	11%	5%	0%	5%	4%
Mixed/Multiple/Other	5%	1%	9%	5%	4%
White Other	11%	8%	14%	5%	4%
White British/NI	65%	79%	72%	85%	88%
Not declared	4%	6%	5%	0%	0%

Job offers by sexual orientation

Sexual orientation	2025/26	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Gay/lesbian/bisexual/other	9%	8%	9%	5%	12%
Heterosexual	84%	80%	86%	95%	80%
Not declared	7%	12%	5%	0%	8%

Job offers by religion and belief

Religion or belief	2025/26	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Christian	40%	29%	36%	42%	46%
Other declared religion or belief	2%	3%	9%	0%	4%
No religion or belief	54%	56%	46%	53%	42%
Not declared	4%	12%	9%	5%	8%

The analysis of data on recruitment activity shows that the numbers of female applicants remain consistently high and that the number of male applications has declined over time. However, the proportion of males receiving a job offer in 2025/26 was higher than the applications received or those shortlisted for interview. Applications from all age groups have remained consistent. However, the 50-59 age groups were less successful at the job offer stage, whereas the 60-69 age group had a stronger representation at the job offer stage.

While the proportion of applicants from Asian and Black ethnic backgrounds progressing to shortlist is broadly in line with application rates, there is a reduction in representation at the job offer stage. Continued monitoring,

alongside a sustained focus on fair and inclusive recruitment practices, will help ensure equitable outcomes for all candidates.