

Aberdeenshire's Equalities

Mainstreaming Progress

Report 2015



Equalities – it runs through everything we do

If you need a copy of this document in an alternative language or in large print or in Braille please telephone 01224 664658.

Jeśli chcesz otrzymać kopię tego dokumentu w innym języku, napisanego dużą czcionką lub w języku Braille'a, proszę zadzwonić pod numer 01224 664658.

Ja Jums ir nepieciešama šī dokumenta kopija citā valodā, lielformāta drukā vai braila rakstā, lūdzu, zvaniet pa tālruni: 01224 664658.

Если Вы нуждаетесь в копии этого документа на другом языке, укрупненным шрифтом или шрифтом Брайля, просим Вас позвонить по телефону 01224 664658.

Prašau skambinkite tel. 01224 664658, jei jums reikalinga į jūsų kalbą išversto dokumento kopija ar pageidaujate didelėmis raidėmis ar Brailiu.



Foreword

Aberdeenshire's Equalities Mainstreaming Progress Report 2015 demonstrates the way in which Aberdeenshire Council, the Education Authority and the Three Licensing Boards have embedded equalities from our initial Mainstreaming Report which was published on 30 April 2013.

There is a strong commitment to equality for all and we recognise that equality and diversity is a continuing journey. Building on our previous work our continued aim is to promote a fairer, inclusive Aberdeenshire where everyone can feel part of the community, ensuring that equality of opportunity is always an important consideration in everything we do.

We commend this report to you.



Jim Savege,
Chief Executive



Jim Gifford,
Council Leader



Isobel Davidson,
Chair of E, L & L
Committee



Stuart Pratt,
Convenor of the
North Licensing Board



Cryle Shand,
Convenor of the
Central Licensing Board



Peter Argyle,
Convenor of the
South Licensing
Board

Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	1
2. Overview of Aberdeenshire in the context of Equalities.....	2
3. The Legal context.....	3
3.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty.....	3
3.2 What are Protected Characteristics?	3
3.3 The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012.....	4
4. Our Equalities Journey So Far	5
4.1 Mainstreaming Equalities into Aberdeenshire.....	5
4.2 Aberdeenshire’s Equality Outcomes 2013-2017.....	6
4.3 Aberdeenshire’s Equalities Mainstreaming Report and the Equality Outcomes.....	6
4.4 Bringing This Report to Life	6
5. Mainstreaming in Action: - Building Equalities into Aberdeenshire.....	7
5.1 Equalities Governance Framework.....	7
5.2 Structure of the Equalities Governance Framework:-	7
5.2.1 Equalities Strategy Board (ESB)	7
5.2.2 Corporate Equalities Group (CEG).....	8
5.2.3 Equalities Service Project Team/Networks.....	8
5.2.4 Human Resources and Organisational Development Equalities Group	8
5.2.5 Service Champions	9
5.2.6 Elected Members Champions	10
5.2.7 The Equalities Team	12
5.3 Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs).....	12
5.4 Prejudice Incident Reporting Form	12
5.5 Committee Reporting Structure	13
5.6 Revenue Budget.....	13
5.7 Communications Plan: - Getting the message out to employees and Service users.	13
5.8 Intranet.....	13
5.9 Poster campaigns:-.....	13
5.10 Equalities and Diversity calendar.....	13
5.11 Chief Executive’s Blog	14
5.12 Equalities Newsletter	15
5.13 Equality and Diversity Week	16
5.14 Video Podcast.....	16
5.15 Social Media	16
5.16 Interpretation & Translation Policy	17
5.17 Equalities – a standing item on all team briefs.....	17
5.18 Training and Development.....	17
5.18.1 Briefings for Councillors.....	18
5.18.2 Briefings/E-Learning for Employees and Councillors.....	18
5.18.2.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty.....	18
5.18.2.2 Respecting Diversity Training	18
5.18.2.3 Understanding Equality Impact Assessments.....	19
5.18.2.4 Mentally Healthy Workplace Training.....	19
5.19 Participation and Representation.....	19



5.19.1 Scottish Councils' Equality Network	19
5.19.2 Policy and Resources Gypsy/Traveller Sub Committee	19
5.19.3 Gypsy/Traveller Inter-agency Group.....	20
5.19.4 Gypsy/Traveller Officer Working Group.....	20
5.19.5 The Ethnic Minority Forum (EMF)	20
5.19.6 Integrate Grampian Forum	21
5.19.7 Peterhead Inclusion Forum	21
5.19.8 Minority Ethnic Working Group.....	21
5.19.9 Grampian Regional Equality Council.....	21
5.19.10 Stonewall Scotland.....	21
6. Aberdeenshire as an Employer	22
6.1 Workplace Profile.....	22
6.2 Human Resources & Organisational Development (HR&OD) Policies	23
6.2.1 Maternity Leave Policy, Paternity Leave Policy, and Adoption Leave Policy	23
6.2.2 Recruitment Policy	24
6.2.3 Apprenticeship Schemes.....	24
6.2.4 Attendance Management Policy.....	25
6.2.5 Disability Leave Scheme	26
6.3 Policies in Practice Training.....	27
6.4 Network Groups.....	27
7. Procurement.....	27
8. Service Delivery Which Supports Equalities Within Aberdeenshire.....	28
9. The work of our Education Authority.....	29
9.1 Background	29
9.2 Leadership.....	30
9.3 Staff Development.....	30
9.3.1 The Continuing Development Programme	30
9.3.2 Positive Mental Health Programme	31
9.4 Developing our curriculum to support equality.....	32
9.4.1 Education and Children's Services is committed to providing pupils with a broad, balanced and challenging curriculum.....	32
9.4.2 Meeting Learners' Needs	32
9.4.3 Rights Respecting Schools Award	32
9.4.4 Stonewall Education Equality Index	33
9.4.5 Holocaust Memorial Day 2015	33
9.5 Education Programmes	35
9.5.1 Respect for All Ambassadors	35
9.5.2 Transitions Programme	36
9.5.3 Anne Frank Award.....	36
9.5.4 Youth Commission	37
9.5.5 Young Carers Project.....	38
9.5.6 Housing Education - Homelessness	38
9.6 Community Engagement.....	39
9.6.1. Support to Speakers of Other Languages.....	39
9.6.2. Literacy and numeracy.....	39
9.6.3. Empowering families and young people.....	39
9.6.4. Work with School	39
9.6.5. Engaging with Gypsy/Travellers.....	40



9.6.6. Engaging with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual People	40
9.6.7. Youth Voice	40
9.6.8. Engaging with Older People	40
9.6.9. Engaging with Vulnerable Pupils	40
9.7 Developing attainment	41
9.7.1 Raising attainment and achievement for children and young people	41
9.7.2 An audit of pupil support has been carried out across all 17 Children's Services Networks (CSNs) in Aberdeenshire	41
9.7.3 Affordable Childcare	41
10. The work of our Licensing Boards	42
10.1 Constitution	42
10.2 Statutory Provisions and Licensing Objectives	42
10.3 Numbers of Licences currently in force	43
10.4 Equality Policy	43
10.5 Staff and Training	45
10.6 Translation & Interpretation Services	45
10.7 Equality Impact Assessments	45
10.8 Licensing Board Report Format	45
Appendix 1 - Aberdeenshire Council's Workforce Profile	46
Appendix 2 - Aberdeenshire Council Education Authority's Workforce Profile	68
Appendix 3 – Gender Pay Gap	84
Appendix 4 - Equal Pay Statement and Occupational Segregation	87
Appendix 5 - Service Delivery which supports Equalities within Aberdeenshire	93



1. Introduction

Situated in the North-East of Scotland, Aberdeenshire is a beautiful and historic region, encapsulating the rugged mountains of the Cairngorms and breath-taking coastal scenery.

One of the most dynamic and unique regions of the country, Aberdeenshire is a great place to live, work and visit. Aberdeenshire has performed consistently strongly across a wide range of indicators for a number of years and the latest survey discovered that our residents now enjoy the best quality of life in rural Scotland.

Aberdeenshire Council aims to protect and develop this special environment, while delivering first class public services. We believe we have something to offer people of all walks of life– a quality of life which is hard to find elsewhere.

The political make-up of our Council:-

Political Party	Elected Members
SNP	28
Conservatives	13
Liberal Democrats	11
Independent	13
Labour	2
Scottish Greens	1



2. Overview of Aberdeenshire in the context of Equalities

- On Census day in 2011, Aberdeenshire's population was 253,000, an increase of 9.1% over the 2001 figure, which was the highest rate of increase among Scottish local authorities.
- Since 2001 Aberdeenshire's population aged under 15 decreased by 0.3%, its population aged 15 – 64 increased by 11.9% and its population aged 65 and over increased by 25.7%. By contrast, in Aberdeen City, the under 15 population decreased by 7.2%, its population aged 15 – 64 increased by 9.1% and its population aged 65 and over decreased by 1.2%.
- Between 2001 and 2011 all Councils experienced growth in the population aged 80 and over. In Aberdeenshire this amounted to an increase of 30% over the 2001 figure, the fourth highest growth rate amongst local authorities.
- Aberdeenshire is a large, mainly rural area in the North East of Scotland. Over the last 30 years, the population of Aberdeenshire has increased by more than 50% (32% increase 1983 – 2013) to 247,600 (257,740 in mid-2013). Aberdeenshire's population represents 4.7% (4.8% in mid-2013) of Scotland's total. Its size and spread of population makes the delivery of some public services difficult and can disadvantage people without easy access to transport or the internet.
- In the past, Aberdeenshire's economy mainly depended upon agriculture, fishing and forestry. However over the last 40 years, the development of the oil industry has broadened Aberdeenshire's economic base, which has contributed to the significant population growth of over 50% since 1975. As a result there has been a great demand for houses, schools and industrial land in the area surrounding Aberdeen.
- Aberdeenshire has the lowest unemployment rate in Scotland at 1.3% (0.6% September 2014, second lowest, Shetland Isles rate was 0.5%), compared with the Scottish average of 4.2%. (September 2014 average of Scottish local authorities was 2.3%). It also has the lowest benefit claimant count of the 32 Scottish local authorities. (Seventh lowest in September 2014 if just looking at actual number of claimants.) Just 2,139 people claimed unemployment benefits in Aberdeenshire in 2012. (Monthly average in 2013 was 1,719) This is largely due to the area being cushioned by the oil industry during the national economic downturn.
(Please note that claimants of Universal Credit are not yet included in the Claimant Count.)
- There has been a rapid increase in migration from Eastern Europe, particularly to the northern half of Aberdeenshire with many people choosing to settle in Peterhead and Fraserburgh. This has significantly changed the ethnic minority population of Aberdeenshire which has resulted in a rise in the number of bilingual learners in Aberdeenshire's schools. There is also an increase in the level of demand for English language lessons for adults through Community Learning and Development.



In the 2011 Census, 5.0% of Fraserburgh’s population and 2.1% of Peterhead’s population fell into the ‘White: Polish’ ethnic group; 5.9% and 5.7% respectively fell into the ‘White: Other white’ ethnic group, which will include people from other European countries.

- In the 2011 Census, 6.3% of Aberdeenshire’s population had a long-term health problem or disability which considerably limited their day-to-day activities. 26.9% of the population had one or more health conditions. 87% stated that their health was ‘good’ or ‘very good’.

3. The Legal context

3.1 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, (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.

3.2 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:-

 <p>Age</p> <p>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.</p> 	 <p>Religion or Belief</p> <p>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.</p>	 <p>Sexual Orientation</p> <p>The Equality Act 2010 protects lesbian, gay, bisexual and heterosexual people.</p>
 <p>Disability</p> <p>'Disability' includes people with physical, learning and sensory disabilities, people with a long-term illness, and people with mental health problems.</p>	 <p>Sex (Gender)</p> <p>Both males and females are protected under The Equality Act 2010.</p>	 <p>Gender Reassignment</p> <p>The Equality Act 2010 provides protection for transgender people. A transgender person is someone who proposes to, starts or has completed a process to change his or her gender.</p>
 <p>Race</p> <p>Under The Equality Act 2010 'race' includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins. It also includes Gypsy Travellers.</p>	 <p>Pregnancy and Maternity</p> <p>The law covers pregnant women or those who have given birth within the last 26 weeks, and those who are breast feeding.</p>	 <p>Marriage and Civil Partnership</p> <p>Marriage is defined as a union between two people of different or of same sexes. In addition to same sex marriage, 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.</p>



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

The Scottish Government has 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 by 30 April 2015 and at intervals of not more than two years thereafter;
- 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; and
- consider award criteria and conditions in relation to public procurement.

On 25 April 2013 Aberdeenshire Council approved the report entitled "[Aberdeenshire's Equalities Mainstreaming Report and the Equality Outcomes](#)" ("The Report"). On 29 April 2013 the three Aberdeenshire Licensing Boards approved The Report and on 23 May 2013 the Aberdeenshire Education, Learning and Leisure Committee also approved The Report.

We are required to publish the following information:-

- a fresh Mainstreaming Report no later than 30 April 2017 and subsequently at intervals of not more than two years;
- a report on the progress made to achieve the equality outcomes no later than 30 April 2015; and
- fresh Equality Outcomes no later than 30 April 2017.

This report highlights the progress which has taken place since 30 April 2013.

We are committed to meeting the Public Sector Equality Duty and Specific Duties. We will ensure that we:

- 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.



4. Our Equalities Journey So Far

4.1 Mainstreaming Equalities into Aberdeenshire

Within [The Report](#) (approved by Aberdeenshire Council, the Education Authority and the three Licensing Boards in 2013) we incorporated the following analogy: if Aberdeenshire Council were a stick of rock, Equalities must run through the length of the rock. In other words, we identified equalities as a key component of our work and not an afterthought. This statement also referred to the work of the Aberdeenshire Education Authority and the three Aberdeenshire Licensing Boards. We continue to hold true to this analogy which has been an integral feature in promoting this as a key message across the Council.

Equalities – it runs through everything we do



We are therefore continuing to build an equalities' perspective into every part of our work here at Aberdeenshire; in other words, we are mainstreaming equalities. We are taking equalities into account in the way we go about our business when acting as:

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

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.

We are committed to integrating equalities into our business, using tools such as Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs), and by ensuring that equalities features explicitly and proportionately in business planning, committee reporting and other decision-making, and reports and through all other policy development and review mechanisms. In November 2014 a report was approved by Policy and Resources Committee which set out a policy framework which is designed as a tool for officers to ensure that policies are effectively developed, implemented and reviewed. The framework will be rolled out during 2015 with an identification and review of existing policies that should be governed through the framework taking place as an early task. Any corporate policies developed in 2015 will be developed in accordance with the framework.

Equalities – it runs through everything we do



4.2. Aberdeenshire's Equality Outcomes 2013-2017

In 2013 Aberdeenshire developed six Equality Outcomes which are:-

1. Aberdeenshire Council employees, Councillors, the Aberdeenshire Licensing Boards and the Aberdeenshire Education Authority have an increased understanding about the challenges facing people from different groups and will respond to their requirements;
2. Members of the public are able to access our services with ease and confidence;
3. Aberdeenshire Council is an inclusive workplace where employees are respected and have an equal opportunity to achieve their full potential;
4. Communities and business understand, welcome and respect diversity;
5. Everyone enjoys equal access to education, training and employment; and
6. Access to life opportunities is enhanced by reducing barriers.

Given that Outcomes 1 and 3 relate to internal structures within the Council, Education Authority and three Licensing Boards, progress towards these Outcomes are the focus of this report. The Outcomes Progress Report provides a combination of qualitative data and quantitative data, extracted from Covalent, the Council's performance management system, to demonstrate the benefits and impact achieved resulting from the Council's commitment to equalities. Whilst there is a cross reference to Outcomes 1 and 3 between the Mainstreaming and Outcomes Progress reports, all data relating to Outcomes 2, 4, 5 and 6 are contained within the Outcomes Progress Report. For further details regarding Aberdeenshire's Equality Outcomes, please refer to the report entitled '[Aberdeenshire's Equality Outcomes Progress Report 2015](#)'.

4.3 Aberdeenshire's Equalities Mainstreaming Report and the Equality Outcomes

Elected Members are fully engaged with the equalities agenda and agreed a recommendation to remit a six monthly report update to Policy and Resources Committee. Accordingly, in November 2013, April 2014, and November 2014 reports were considered by the Committee. The reports include action plans regarding the steps that have been taken to building equalities considerations into our work and the progress on meeting our six Equality Outcomes.

From April 2013 we have considered the example actions set out in [The Report](#) as part of our Equality Outcomes. These actions are continually reviewed to ensure progress towards the Equality Outcomes.

4.4 Bringing This Report to Life

Throughout this report examples, case studies and vignettes have been used to "bring this report to life". Examples, case studies, vignettes and feedback have been provided from employees and residents with different Protected Characteristics. These are used throughout the report and have been labelled accordingly. From May 2015 we will be revising our approach and developing plans to engaging our communities in seeking feedback on our progress towards the Equality Outcomes (including the "Mainstreaming" based Outcomes 1 and 3).



Between 2013 and 2014, five community engagement events were held across key areas within Aberdeenshire. Disappointing turnout at these events led to a different approach being adopted to engaging the community on our Equality Outcomes during 2014/ 15 whereby engagement opportunities were integrated to planned community events. Whilst these resulted in an increased level of participation it did not provide robust statistical data upon which to assess our effectiveness at meeting the Equality Outcome.

We were able to utilise data available from the Council's established feedback mechanisms. The Reputation Tracker, a survey conducted on our behalf by an external partner. Each month 150 residents are contacted by telephone and asked a range of questions relating to satisfaction with council services. Collection of this service-level data began in January 2014. Citizen's Panel surveys and the council's employee survey provide information in relation to how people with Protected Characteristics respond to topic specific questions and surveys. In the case of some groups, however, numbers of responses are too low to provide robust information however it still enables us to gather valuable feedback which will continue to inform our approach and actions. Access to the Citizen Panel surveys and reports are available from the Council's website.

5. Mainstreaming in Action: - Building Equalities into Aberdeenshire

We are continuing to build equalities into our organisational structures, adopting an inclusive approach to developing and delivering our equalities vision, strategies and plans, through approaches which are outlined below. Many of the mainstreaming activities described support the delivery of Outcome 1 'Aberdeenshire Council employees, Councillors, the Aberdeenshire Licensing Boards and the Aberdeenshire Education Authority have an increased understanding about the challenges facing people from different groups and will respond to their requirements'.

5.1 Equalities Governance Framework

Since April 2013, the Equalities Governance Framework has been reviewed and updated to support and promote the Equalities agenda throughout Aberdeenshire which includes:-

1. Aberdeenshire Council;
2. Aberdeenshire Education Authority; and
3. The three Aberdeenshire Licensing Boards.

5.2 Structure of the Equalities Governance Framework:-

There are a number of elements to the structure, as follows:-

5.2.1 Equalities Strategy Board (ESB)

The Equalities Strategy Board (ESB) 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. It actively supports the work of the Corporate Equalities Group (CEG). The Board effectively communicates to Service Management Teams the ongoing work of the ESB and the CEG and highlights the key equalities messages and actions that require to be implemented by Services. The ESB meets on a quarterly basis, and is chaired by the Director of Education and Children's Services, who in turn reports to the Chief Executive.

5.2.2 Corporate Equalities Group (CEG)

The Corporate Equalities Group (CEG) is made up of employees who have been nominated to represent their relevant Council Service. Membership reflects the broad range of services provided by the Council and the need for a Council-wide approach to equalities. Partnership representation has been provided by Grampian Regional Equality Council to support the work of the CEG as set out in the appropriate Service Level Agreement. The CEG acts as a conduit between the ESB and the Equalities Service Project Teams. It actively supports and acts upon direction provided by the ESB and ensures effective communication occurs with the ESB and the Equalities Service Project Teams. The CEG meets every two months, and is chaired by the Head of Customer Communication and Improvement, who in turn reports to the Director of Business Services.

5.2.3 Equalities Service Project Team/ Networks

Project Teams/ Networks are currently being established within each Service to deliver actions based on the direction given by the ESB and the CEG and undertake the actions required to achieve Aberdeenshire's ability to comply with The Equality Act 2010 and The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012. The Project Teams/ Networks will provide updates timeously to the CEG Service representative for formal reports including six monthly reports to Policy and Resources Committee, and reports that are specified by the equalities legislation. The updates should comprehensively reflect the work of each Service.

5.2.4 Human Resources and Organisational Development Equalities Group

This group promote equalities and diversity across all employees of the Council. It is also working to achieve equality outcomes from objectives identified from monitoring data, employee surveys and other events/ materials. In addition, it mainstreams equalities through employment policies and procedures, and behaviours, and raises awareness of equality and diversity issues.



5.2.5 Service Champions

Approximately sixty Service Champions have been nominated across the Council, Education Authority and Licensing Boards. Their role is to support the mainstreaming of equalities by assisting staff when completing Equality Impact Assessments and responding to day to day queries regarding equalities matters. They undertake this role in addition to fulfilling their substantive job remit. They assist with passing updates to their Services about equality legislation and relevant issues, as relayed through the Equalities team. They also encourage discussions on equality matters when they attend meetings. Regular sessions with the Service Champions are facilitated by the Equalities Team, Legal and Governance, and a representative of the Areas Team to keep them updated on the progress of the equalities agenda and to share good practice.

FEEDBACK: - The work of Service Champions: - [Equalities Uncovered: Five Key Points for Every Employee](#)

Following one of the regular catch-up meetings with Equalities Service Champions, it was highlighted that it would be useful to develop a document for every employee highlighting five key messages that every employee should know. This has been developed and rolled out throughout the Council, Education Authority and the three Licensing Boards.



5.2.6 Elected Members Champions

Four Elected Members have been appointed to act as a point of contact for any equalities related queries which Elected Members may have. The role of the Elected Members Champion is to encourage discussions on equalities when attending meetings, committees and conferences; to help champion equalities within the local community and with external bodies and partners; to take part in discussions about setting equality outcomes; to represent the Council on equality issues during the Best Value Audit and to promote campaigns and articles, as appropriate.

Aberdeenshire Council is a participant in Stonewall Scotland's Diversity Champions programme which is Britain's good practice employers' forum on sexual orientation. Stonewall Scotland is the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender charity.

Councillor Graeme Clark commented: "Aberdeenshire Council is delighted to be working with Stonewall Scotland to make our work place the best it can be. For everyone."

Councillor Hood added: "Flying the rainbow flag at our headquarters to highlight IDAHO demonstrates the Council's commitment to equalities." Councillor Evison said: "It is good to see the Council celebrating diversity and taking a lead by running workshops for Councillors and staff on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues."

Councillor Isobel Davidson who is also a champion for equalities added: "Equalities is an important part of our work here at Aberdeenshire Council – it runs through everything we do."



Equalities Governance Framework (Revised 2015)

Equalities Strategy Board
 (Meet quarterly)
 Chair – Director of Children’s Services
 Business Services – Head of Service (Chair of CEG)
 Communities – Head of Service and Area Manager
 Children’s Services – Head of Service
 Infrastructure Services – Head of Service
 Trade Union Rep
Professional Advisors
 Legal / Licensing Boards
 Finance
 Procurement
 HR&OD
 Equalities Team

Corporate Equalities Group (CEG)
 (Meet every six weeks, and are responsible for directing the Equalities Service Project Team)

Chair of CEG
 Business Services
 Communities
 Children’s Service
 Education Authority
 Infrastructure Services
 Licensing Boards
 Trade Union Rep
Professional Advisors
 HR&OD
 Legal
 Finance
 Procurement
 Equalities Team

HR&OD
 Equalities
 Group

Business Services
 Equalities Network

Children’s Services
 Equalities Network

Social Work
 Equalities Network

Housing Equalities
 Network

Areas / Community
 Planning Equalities
 Network

Communities

Infrastructure Services
 Equalities Network



5.2.7 The Equalities Team

This team is made up of officers who progress the actions of the Equalities Strategy Board and Corporate Equalities Group, facilitating the development of the equalities vision, strategies and plans, supporting the corporate approach to equalities, complementing the work of Services, monitoring and reporting on progress.

5.3 Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs)

Aberdeenshire uses the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) process to ensure that we evidence how we are giving due regard to the three elements of the Public Sector Equality Duty. This process takes account of all nine Protected Characteristics and includes all three parts of the Public Sector Equality Duty. Specific guidance on the completion of Equality Impact Assessments has been re-developed for employees carrying out EIAs. This guidance, written in the style of an e-magazine and entitled '[Understanding Equality Impact Assessments](#)'. It includes good examples of live EIAs, a flowchart to determine if there is a potential impact on people with Protected Characteristics, and examples of the potential different impacts on protected groups. The guidance is available for employees to access through the Equalities pages of the Council's intranet. To supplement this, an e-learning module has also been developed to support employees preparing EIAs. Additionally, in accordance with the Scottish Ministers' Duty, an Equality Evidence Matrix is being developed which contains Aberdeenshire-specific data relating to the Protected Characteristics. This information will support employees when carrying out an EIA.

EIAs are published on the [equalities pages of Aberdeenshire Council's website](#)

5.4 Prejudice Incident Reporting Form

This [form](#) is used to record and monitor any prejudice incident relating to any of the Protected Characteristics in the workplace or community.

A prejudice incident could take place at work, school, in the street, in the shops, in a pub, or in fact anywhere within Aberdeenshire.

A prejudice incident can include both criminal and non-criminal content. Both must be reported, recorded, and investigated with equal commitment.

The form is available on the Council's intranet and website.

We have worked in partnership with Police Scotland, Grampian Regional Equality Council, and Integrate Grampian to continually develop the Prejudice Incident Reporting process.



5.5 Committee Reporting Structure

Committee reports take account of equalities issues. We are working to ensure that we are consciously considering equalities from the start to the finish of work activities, and building in reviews where appropriate.

5.6 Revenue Budget

Equalities considerations have been built into the Revenue Budget Setting Process. [Equality Impact Assessments](#) are carried out as part of the development of the budget.

5.7 Communications Plan: - Getting the Message out to Employees and Service Users

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

5.8 Intranet

We continually update our equalities pages on our employee intranet which provide comprehensive guidance on all equalities matters to support employees when dealing with equalities issues.

5.9 Poster campaigns

Since the mainstreaming report was published in April 2013 we have rolled out three separate poster campaigns, as follows:-



5.10 Equalities and Diversity Calendar

We have compiled an Equalities and Diversity calendar with key dates relating to the Protected Characteristics. Every month we select dates from this calendar and promote them through articles on our intranet. The purpose being to highlight that equalities considerations are part of everyday life. The articles can support line managers to include an equalities topic within team



briefs. Some of the articles to date include:-International Older People's Day, Black History Month, Hate Crime Awareness Week, World Breastfeeding Week, International Youth Day, Stonewall No Bystanders Pledge, Gypsy Traveller History Month, Ramadan and LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) Pride Month.

5.11 Chief Executive's Blog

Within his blog, which can be accessed by employees, the Chief Executive highlights notable events and initiatives taking place in the Council. An example of one of the topics which has been discussed in the blog is as follows:-

EXAMPLE: - International Youth Day

"Today (12 August 2014) is the United Nations International Day of Youth. Aberdeenshire Council is marking this day to celebrate the protected characteristic of Age (Younger). With over half of the global population being under the age of thirty, the United Nations established this day with the intention of recognising issues which affect youth on an international level. The theme for this year's International Day of Youth is 'Mental Health Matters.'

The United Nations recognises that young people can act as change agents within their local communities and encourages organisations to engage with young people as mechanism for combatting youth based issues. Aberdeenshire Council would like to take this opportunity to highlight some of the excellent work which has been undertaken by young people in the local area.

Within the last year, twenty two young people aged between fourteen and nineteen years old from across Aberdeenshire have participated in an exciting new initiative called The Youth Commission. The Youth Commission was established to create an up to date, fit for purpose policy which reshapes and modernises the approach to bullying in Aberdeenshire schools. One Youth Commissioner said: "We'd like to think that this project will result in people having a better understanding of what bullying is so we can take steps to overcome it because we believe that no child or person in Aberdeenshire deserves to be treated in such a way that it harms them mentally or physically" This joint approach between young people and professionals, recognises the fact that young people can have an influence on issues which affect them within the local communities and their contribution to this project has been integral to the success of the policy development and implementation. As one Youth Commissioner stated: "We hope that because it is created by young people, for young people that it will have a higher success rate than previous policies"

Aberdeenshire Council would like to acknowledge the fact that these Youth Commissioners were appointed following a rigorous selection process which looked at their decision making, communication and leadership skills. Vice Chair of the Education, Learning and Leisure Committee Councillor Ron McKail commended the work of the Youth Commissioners, stating: "It is unacceptable for any young person to be in a position where they fear bullies. It is important that the Council's policies and support mechanisms keep young people safe and I am pleased to see the Youth Commission project take shape as part of this."



Guest Blog – Straight Allies Programme
BY [COLIN MACKENZIE](#) · AUGUST 13, 2014

This month we have two guest bloggers for the price of one! Doug Milne, Garioch Area Manager and Caroline Tough, Project Officer (Equalities) have recently been appointed as Straight Allies for Aberdeenshire Council.

Straight Allies recognise that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people can perform better if they can be themselves, and use their role within the Council to create a culture where this can happen.
Straight Allies Programme

Senior Straight Ally Doug said: “Aberdeenshire Council is committed to the development of a more inclusive culture for LGBT employees. Statistically, most employees are likely to be straight – so it’s absolutely essential that everyone has a good understanding of why LGBT equality is important.”

Caroline: “Equalities is something that I am really passionate about. LGBT is one of the nine Protected Characteristics which we are integrating into the day to day workings of the Council so I am delighted to be taking part in this programme. My two younger brothers are gay and through them I have some understanding of what it means to be LGBT.”

Straight Allies help to tackle feelings of isolation or fear that might exist, particularly in operational environments and offer a point of contact for employees and managers who are seeking support in relation to LGB issues. Straight Allies will be able to listen, as well as be visible and approachable throughout the organisation.

Doug added: “Two of my best friends are gay and by talking about these sort of things very positively in the office helps to accustom people to an area which is not always openly discussed. And that is what this programme is all about- making colleagues feel comfortable so that they can be open about who they are if they chose to.”



5.12 Equalities Newsletter

The Equalities and Strategy Board have agreed that a newsletter be developed following its quarterly meetings. The purpose of the [newsletter](#) is to keep staff up to date on what’s ongoing within the equalities’ agenda.



5.13 Equality and Diversity Week

Respecting Equality and Diversity Week took place during the week of 24 March 2014. The purpose of the week was to raise awareness of equality and diversity issues within the workplace and the community.

The events organised ranged from webinars undertaken by our Policies in Practice team focussing on anti-bullying and harassment, to lunchtime talks undertaken by various external organisations such as Stonewall and Interfaith Aberdeen. Daily articles featured on our intranet homepage. Podcasts were recorded by the Chief Executive, the Chair of the Equalities Strategy Board, and the Chair of the Corporate Equalities Group. In addition, information stalls were available in different work bases across Aberdeenshire.

The events were attended by employees and Councillors.

Feedback “I found the Stonewall workshop ‘Listening between the lines’ really enjoyable and thought provoking event. It really makes you think about the importance of language and the effect it may have on others.”
Jackie, Business Services

5.14 Video Podcast

An example of a video podcast referred to at 5.13 above is '[Equalities Service Champions](#)' which was recorded by Kate Bond, Head of Service (Customer Communication and Improvement), and Chair of the Corporate Equalities Group.

5.15 Social Media

We are increasingly using Social Media as a means to communicate with employees and residents. Examples include Holocaust Memorial Day 2015, Stonewall Scotland's No Bystanders campaign; the Straight Allies Programme and the "Scotland Believes in Equality" campaign. An example is contained here:



5.16 Interpretation & Translation Policy

We continue to develop our provision of interpretation and access to translated information. Services are encouraged to use both face-to-face interpreters, telephone interpretation in Council offices, and translation of key documents where appropriate, to ensure effective access to Services.

The Council aims to translate key publications and documents which are targeted towards people who may not speak English into the top four main community languages after English. These documents are published on the Council's website. Recognising the changing structure of the population in Aberdeenshire, we will periodically review whether changes need to be made to the languages included.

On many of our publications, a statement is included on the front page explaining how members of the public can request information in the document in another format; this statement is in English and includes the top four most requested languages in Aberdeenshire.

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes continue to be delivered through our Community Learning and Development Service.

A review of our Service provision has taken place. Actions resulting from this are being taken forward with our providers.

CASE STUDY:- In a permanence case, where the birth mother was Lithuanian and did not speak English, the Social Work Service paid for the Services of a translator who attended meetings with her and translated reports and letters including court paperwork regarding the permanence order application.

5.17 Equalities – a Standing Item on all Team Briefs

Team Leaders are encouraged to include equality considerations as an agenda item at all team briefs. On occasion, [documents](#) are produced which are intended to act as a discussion point for equality related matters.

5.18 Training and Development

To support our equalities work we need to ensure employees from the Council, Education Authority, Elected Members, and those sitting on Licensing Boards are aware of our equality duties, and also how they affect Service delivery and staff management.



5.18.1 Briefings for Councillors

We have run a number of three hour briefing sessions for our Councillors so they have a good understanding of the Public Sector Equality Duty. To date approximately 90% of Councillors have attended these briefings. This briefing is now available as an e-learning programme on the Council's online learning website.

5.18.2 Briefings/ E-Learning for Employees and Councillors

5.18.2.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty

As at April 2015 we have run a number of three hour briefing sessions for Report Writers, Service Champions, Service Managers, Area Managers, Committee and Monitoring Officers, and Heads of Service in order that they have a good understanding of the Public Sector Equality Duty. In order to assist with the roll out of training, an e-learning package had been developed entitled "Equalities: - What Does It Mean For Me?" which all employees must complete. It is recognised that not every employee has access to a computer as part of their job. Accordingly a DVD is being produced to assist with the roll out of this training.

5.18.2.2 Respecting Diversity Training

This e-Learning course has been developed to help highlight the impact a negative approach towards another person's culture, belief or views can have on all individuals concerned. The course includes six different workplace scenarios, each highlighting one of the Protected Characteristics detailed in The Equality Act 2010. We have placed great emphasis on this being completed by all of our employees, with regular articles promoting the course featured on our intranet homepages, within Service newsletters, and included in payslip messages. The promotion of the course will continue for the foreseeable future to ensure we are always capturing the attention of new employees.

To date, 12.5% of employees have completed the course, which has received a positive response so far. It is recognised that not every employee has access to a computer as part of their job. Accordingly a DVD is being produced to assist with the roll out of this training with ongoing discussions taking place within Services to identify opportunities to deliver this to specific employee groups namely cleaners, school crossing patrollers.

Feedback "We all enjoyed the course and it brought about a fair discussion" Nancy, Business Service



5.18.2.3 Understanding Equality Impact Assessments

An e-learning course has been developed which provides support to those employees who require to complete Equality Impact Assessments.

5.18.2.4 Mentally Healthy Workplace Training

This training is open to all employees but is aimed particularly at those with any line-management responsibility. It provides an opportunity for employees to challenge what they know about mental health and mental health problems and take away a better level of understanding for what this means in terms of the way they treat people and the environment they create within the workplace for which they are responsible. It is a one day course, and participants regularly comment on the beneficial nature of a face to face session for sharing experiences and examples of good practice with others. This is supported by an e-learning package which is available to all employees on our e-learning site.

5.19 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 their purpose is to lead to a more equitable, just, and inclusive society.

Engaging with equality groups is a key part of this process, and there is already good work ongoing in this regard. For case studies regarding ongoing collaborative work, please refer to the report entitled '[Aberdeenshire's Equality Outcomes Progress Report 2015](#)'.

We are aware that when working within a partnership we should take the lead role in ensuring compliance with the duty. We will continue to:-

5.19.1 Scottish Councils' Equality Network

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 an excellent hub for information-sharing, professional support and often acts as a voice on equalities matters in Scotland.

5.19.2 Policy and Resources Gypsy/ Traveller Sub Committee

Police Scotland and NHS Grampian officer representatives attend when there are relevant agenda items. There is discussion of the equalities legislation and our corporate equalities policy position on Gypsy/ Travellers.



5.19.3 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 in Inverurie to consider cross-boundary Gypsy/ Traveller issues, including implementation of a Grampian-wide Gypsy/ Traveller Action Plan.

5.19.4 Gypsy/ Traveller Officer Working Group

The Gypsy/ Traveller Officer Working Group (GTOWG) comprises Council officers and the Gypsy/Traveller Liaison Worker from Grampian Regional Equality Council (GREC), 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.

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

5.19.5 The Ethnic Minority Forum (EMF)

This is an Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire-wide Forum. Membership includes the two local authorities, other key Community Planning Partners, the British Red Cross, Aberdeen Council of Voluntary Organisations, Grampian Regional Equality Council, other community groups, and individuals. The EMF provides a key link between local Service providers and the local minority ethnic communities, including Eastern European migrants. The Forum seeks to take forward issues of interest and concern to the local minority ethnic communities as well as acting as a sounding board on relevant plans and policy development issues.

The Forum seeks to organise two public events every year. The EMF Steering Group meets every eight weeks, plus some ad-hoc meetings, to consider specific issues or to plan special events.



5.19.6 Integrate Grampian Forum

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

5.19.7 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.

5.19.8 Minority Ethnic Working Group

This group is made up of officers from the Housing and Social Work Service, the Corporate Equalities Team (the Equalities Officer), and the Ethnic Minority Housing Worker (based at Tenants First Housing Association). The group oversees implementation of the ethnic minorities housing action plan and related issues.

A new post, Minority Ethnic Outreach Worker, has been funded by Aberdeenshire Council and Aberdeen City Council to support the minority ethnic community to access housing.

5.19.9 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. Aberdeenshire Council has worked in partnership with GREC on equality issues and in promoting awareness.

5.19.10 Stonewall Scotland

Aberdeenshire Council has developed links with Stonewall Scotland through the Workplace Equality Index, the Diversity Champion Programme, the Education Champion Programme, the Education Equality Index, and the Good Practice Programme. The purpose of the various programmes is to provide bespoke support and guidance to local authorities to tackle homophobia and transphobia.

Aberdeenshire took part in the 2014 and 2015 Workplace Equality Index. The Index is Britain's leading tool for employers to measure their efforts to tackle discrimination and create inclusive workplaces for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) employees. Through this programme, seven Straight



Allies have been appointed within the organisation. Straight Allies help to tackle feelings of isolation or fear that might exist, particularly in operational environments, and offer a point of contact for employees and managers who are seeking support in relation to LGBT issues. Straight Allies are able to listen, as well as be visible and approachable throughout the organisation. Since our last report in April 2013, we have climbed one hundred and twenty two places in [Stonewall Scotland's Workplace Equality Index](#) rankings.

CASE STUDY:-

Aberdeenshire have embraced the No Bystanders campaign, which highlights the damaging effect of abusive language and behaviour across our society, and is designed to make us think about the responsibility that we have to challenge bullying and discrimination whenever we see it.



6. Aberdeenshire as an Employer

Aberdeenshire values all of our 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. Equality is regarded as an issue for all employees. Employees must adhere to, and can expect, certain standards of behaviour. Aberdeenshire aspires to be a productive organisation that values diversity and utilises the widest possible sources of talent from all sectors of the community. The following work streams also support the delivery of Equality Outcome 3 *'Aberdeenshire Council is an inclusive workplace where employees are respected and have an equal opportunity to achieve their full potential'*.

6.1 Workplace Profile

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



Further information in relation to our Workplace Profile, Gender Pay Gap, Equal Pay and Occupational Segregation for Aberdeenshire can be found at:

[Appendix 1 Aberdeenshire Council's Workforce Profile](#);
[Appendix 2 Aberdeenshire Education Authority's Workforce Profile](#);
[Appendix 3 Gender Pay Gap](#); and
[Appendix 4 Equal Pay Statement and Occupational Segregation](#).

6.2 Human Resources & Organisational Development (HR&OD) Policies

Human Resources policies continue to be prioritised for review on a rolling two-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. In 2015 the Redundancy and Retirement policies are scheduled for review. The following policies have been reviewed since The Report was published in 2013.

6.2.1 Maternity Leave Policy, Paternity Leave Policy, and Adoption Leave Policy

The wording in these policies has been changed to reflect inclusiveness for LGBT colleagues.

- Update regarding ante-natal appointments:-
Our Maternity policy has been updated to reflect recent changes regarding the right to be accompanied to an ante-natal appointment, whereby the husband, civil partner, or partner, of the pregnant woman now has the right to unpaid time off to attend up to two ante-natal appointments.
- Update regarding breastfeeding:-
Our Maternity policy now includes considerations for mothers who may be breastfeeding on their return to work. The policy highlights that necessary arrangements and facilities can be established where possible, and time off to breastfeed, or to express breast milk, can be provided during working hours.
- Shared Parental Leave
Revisions to the Maternity, Paternity, and Adoption Leave policies are currently underway to include information related to Shared Parental Leave. Shared parental leave will enable mothers to specify a date by which they would end their maternity leave and pay, and share the untaken balance as shared parental leave and pay with their husband, civil partner, or partner. Under this scheme, mothers may also decide to return to work early from maternity leave and then opt-in to shared parental leave and pay at a later date.



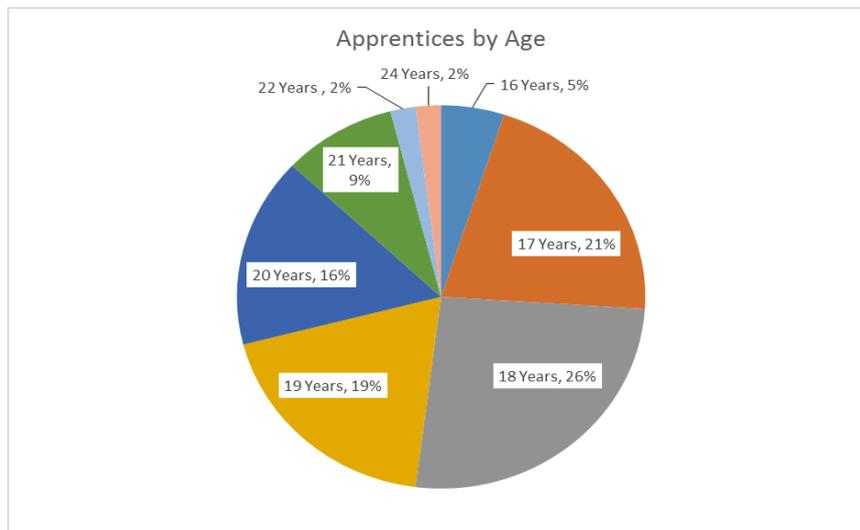
6.2.2 Recruitment Policy

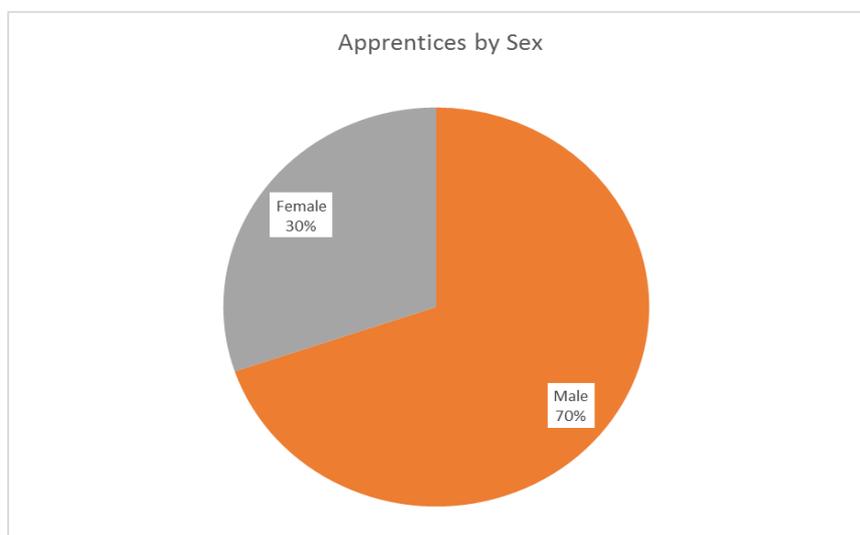
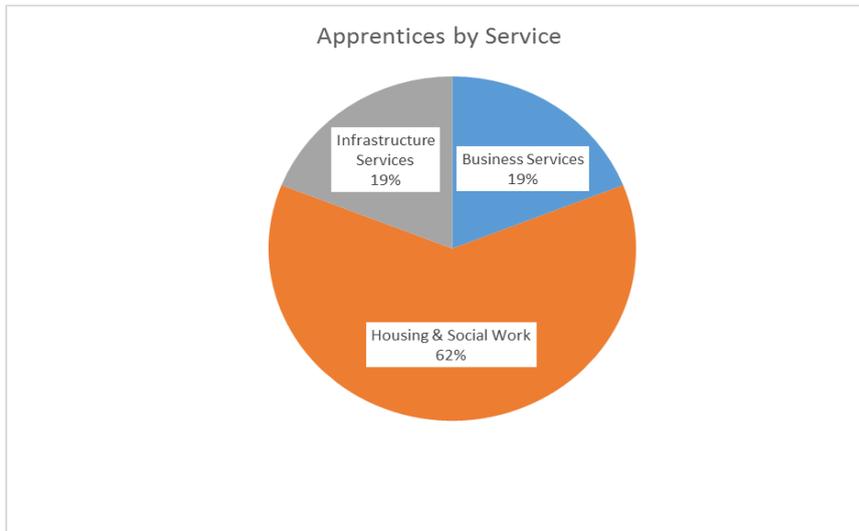
The Recruitment and Selection policy is currently under review, amendments will include:

1. A recent example of the Genuine Occupational Requirement as set out in Schedule 9, Equality Act 2010 was the job advertisement for a Social Worker – Domestic and Gender Based Abuse, where ‘women only’ applicants were sought.
2. An expanded section providing guidance relating to the application of a Genuine Occupational Requirement to a post. In very limited circumstances, an employer may show that a particular protected characteristic is necessary for a role i.e. it is a genuine occupational requirement. For example, when there is a requirement of familiarity with the language, culture, customs and sensitivity to the needs of a racial group, which can most effectively be provided by a person of that racial group, race may be a genuine occupational qualification in certain circumstances;
3. An expanded section providing a review of positive action and when this can be undertaken throughout the recruitment process;
4. An expanded section detailing questions that could be asked at interview, along with those that should not be asked and the reasons for this; and
5. Links to the Equalities policy and guidance documents are to be included throughout.

6.2.3 Apprenticeship Schemes

Human Resource & Organisational Development continue to increase the promotion of Apprenticeship schemes throughout the Council; ensuring they continue to be available to applicants of all ages, whilst actively promoting the schemes amongst the population under the age of 19 and encouraging Services to fill vacancies with Apprenticeships posts. There are currently 43 apprentices within Aberdeenshire Council.





6.2.4 Attendance Management Policy

This policy was reviewed in 2014. The revisions mean the policy is easier to follow for managers, helping to ensure the attendance management process is undertaken fairly and consistently across the workforce. Some of the main points to note within the policy include:

- a section dedicated to 'Disability and The Equality Act 2010' highlights that managers should explore whether disability leave may be applicable before recording an absence as sickness where an employee has been/ is unable to attend work for reasons which arise due to their disability. This section also signposts to the Disability Leave Scheme policy;
- information is highlighted regarding reasonable adjustments and the section includes a link to a guidance document which has been devised to provide further in-depth guidance in relation to this;

- guidance has been included relating to the procedure which should be undertaken when an employee becomes sick in connection with their pregnancy. Signposting to the Maternity Leave policy has also been included within this section; and
- an e-learning course was recently to support managers and employees in understanding and interpreting this procedure.

6.2.5 Disability Leave Scheme

Revisions of the guidance relating to Aberdeenshire Council's Disability Leave Scheme have been proposed and are currently undergoing the consultation process.

The main amendments which have been proposed are:

- inclusion of the definition of what disability leave is, and how it relates to Aberdeenshire Council's responsibilities under The Equality Act 2010;
- the inclusion of a brief definition of reasonable adjustments, along with a link to the newly revised reasonable adjustment guidance;
- work in undertaken on a case by case basis with employees when it is identified that with 'reasonable adjustment' the employee concerned can continue in their existing post. Identification of the 'reasonable adjustment' is undertaken with the employee, our occupational health provider, the relevant Service, and at times, the Access to Work Scheme.
- the inclusion of a "tailored adjustment agreement" which is to be used as a living record of reasonable adjustments agreed between a disabled employee and their line-manager, including the need for disability leave;
- "working with our Occupational Health provider, I was able to identify that due a health condition one of my team should be granted up to four extra days of sickness absence per annum prior to the Council's triggers for attendance management being applied. This means the employee feels less pressure about their condition" Line Manager, Business Services.
- useful links have been included for Access to Work and the Equality and Human Rights Commission website; and
- the inclusion of a set of "Frequently Asked Questions".



6.3 Policies in Practice Training

The 'Policies in Practice' team run courses which cover the practical application of Human Resources policies and procedures. These courses give both employees and managers the opportunity to improve their understanding and interpretation of the policies and procedures, helping to ensure policies are implemented fairly and consistently across the workforce.

Since it was launched in September 2013, the team have developed eight face-to-face courses, for example Anti-Bullying and Harassment, Attendance Management and Whistleblowing, with more planned such as Working Time, and Working Performance Ability.

Courses signpost relevant support mechanisms, various aspects relating to policies can be explored in depth, and they provide employees and line-managers with the opportunity to ask questions. This can be particularly advantageous for policies such as Attendance Management where attendees have benefitted from further in-depth exploration of reasonable adjustments which can support an employee's return to work.

6.4 Network Groups

One of the priorities established by the HR&OD Equalities Group at its inception in 2012 was to encourage and promote the creation of network groups for employees who would associate with, or would like to support, one of the nine Protected Characteristics.

The group helped lay the foundations for the initial steps necessary in gathering support and momentum in establishing the LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) network group within Aberdeenshire Council. The LGBT network group is an autonomous entity, facilitated and led entirely by LGBT employees of Aberdeenshire Council. The early successes of this group is encouraging and it is hoped this will be the first of many network groups which will thrive within Aberdeenshire Council.

7. Procurement

At an operational level, the Council recognises its duties under both The Equality Act 2010 and The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012. The Council has due regard to the equality duty when setting the award criteria for the purpose of evaluating the most economically advantageous tenders. The Council also stipulates contractual obligations on Service providers to comply with The Equality Act 2010 and to have due regard to the equality duty in circumstances where it is proportionate to the subject matter of the contract.



The following is standard in all Invitation to Tender (ITT) documents:-

“Is it your policy as an employer to comply with the obligations contained in The Equalities Act 2010 and, accordingly, your practice not to treat one group of people less favourably than other groups because of their gender, colour, race, nationality, ethnic origin, marital status, age, sexual orientation or religious beliefs nor to discriminate against disabled persons in relation to decisions to recruit, train, or promote employees?”

A positive response to the above question is supported by a copy of the organisation’s equalities policy. As part of contract monitoring it is confirmed that the policy is still current and any complaints relating to non-compliance addressed.

It is noted that the non-statutory guidance for this legislation, as produced by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, advises that the regulation does not impose any requirement on a listed authority where “it would not be proportionate to the subject matter of the proposed agreement”. The guidance also recognises that the authority is only obliged to have due regard where award criteria is “the most economically advantageous tender” i.e. not price only.

Procurement is currently preparing a job profile for a new post which includes the championing of Equalities in Procurement which will cover addressing legislation and networking with other public bodies’ procurement departments. A key part of the role will be embedding the early engagement and commitment across Services (applied consistently in neighbouring authorities). This will also prioritise the amendment in the ITT to refer to each of the nine Protected Characteristics; this is in our overall change programme to be complete by the end of July 2015.

8. Service Delivery Which Supports Equalities within Aberdeenshire

We deliver a wide variety of Services to residents on a daily basis, it is imperative that all residents within the Council area have equal access to these Services and are made aware of any changes which may occur in their provision over time.

Examples, case studies, and vignettes which demonstrate how mainstreaming equalities is making a difference to the way our Services are being delivered can be found in [Appendix 5 - Service Delivery which supports Equalities within Aberdeenshire](#).



9. The work of our Education Authority

9.1 Background

- Education and Children's Services (ECS) provides education across the predominantly rural area of Aberdeenshire. There are 17 academies, 151 primary schools, 4 special schools, and 84 nurseries. In addition there are over 40 enhanced provision sites. Partner providers offer early years' educational and childcare in over 80 settings.
- In 2013 there were 34,185 pupils in Aberdeenshire primary and secondary schools, an increase from the 2012 figure of 33,990. The number of children registered in local authority and partnership pre-school education in 2013 was 4932. 20% of the population of Aberdeenshire is aged under 16. This compares to 18% nationally.
- 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 Commission, we know we are continuing 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;
- high levels of positive leaver destinations;
- positive impact of targeted community based projects; and
- positive inspections of schools and learning communities.

Education and Children's Services is represented on Aberdeenshire Council's Corporate Equalities Group. The Service has a detailed inequalities 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 social work and housing colleagues on preventing homelessness successfully reduced overall levels of young people presenting as homeless in Aberdeenshire.

Education establishments continue to make good use of the [Prejudice Incident Reporting procedure](#). This results in accurate reporting and recording of prejudice-based bullying, including racist and homophobic bullying. Monitoring by senior officers since the report entitled '[Aberdeenshire's Equalities Mainstreaming Report and Equality Outcomes](#)'



published in April 2013, has focused on ensuring incidents are dealt with promptly and resolved to the satisfaction of Service users. The following workstreams support Outcome 1 'Aberdeenshire Council employees, Councillors, the Aberdeenshire Licensing Boards and the Aberdeenshire Education Authority 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'.

9.2 Leadership

Education and Children's Services is committed to developing school leaders who understand the need to ensure equalities are mainstreamed across all schools in Aberdeenshire. The Service delivers a leadership development programme for aspiring leaders. This programme has been refreshed to ensure that all aspects of meeting our equalities duties are covered in depth in the programme. This will ensure that school leaders who take up a first leadership post are fully equipped to audit their school's approach to mainstreaming and to support staff to discharge this duty. The impact will be increased awareness of equalities and improved compliance with guidance with policies and procedures in this area.

9.3 Staff Development

9.3.1 The Continuing Development Programme

A full continuing professional development programme was delivered for Education and Children's Services staff during February 2014.

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

- supporting pupils with visual impairment;
- supporting pupils with specific needs;
- autism awareness, toolkits and strategies;
- disability inclusion training for school based staff;
- working with bilingual pupils in schools;
- infant mental health and the impact of adversity; and
- celebrating diversity and challenging homophobia.

Approximately 700 training places were available to staff.



9.3.2 Positive Mental Health Programme

Poor mental health was identified as a concern in the authority's mapping exercise. In the third year of the programme's development, multi-agency staff have had access to specialist training in the areas of self-harm.

Approximately 80 school and multi-agency staff have received self-harm training over four twilight events across six areas in Aberdeenshire in 2014. The training included sessions on the following:

1. What do we mean by Self Harm?
2. Assessment and Interventions;
3. Coping with and responding to self-harm; and
4. The wider context of Self Harm.

The training was evaluated well, with the vast majority of participants indicating that they felt the course 'addressed their learning needs'; the majority felt that their 'knowledge and understanding' of self-harm had increased. Some felt that further training would be useful. Mental health update training is being hosted during the February 2015 in-Service day.

FEEDBACK: - Some comments from delegates included:

"It made me feel less worried and more confident about supporting a child or young person who is self-harming. It does not feel as scary to deal with. I understand better the reasons for it as a coping mechanism"

"Making me more aware of the signs of self-harm. Also that if I am working with a person self-harming I am not alone, there is support to help me support the pupil"

"As introductory training to self-harm and it was excellent. However for my own personal learning a more in-depth training would be useful and broader mental health in children and young people."

"Enjoyed the four sessions very much - feel much more empowered to act by myself"

"A better understanding of self-harm on a whole and how to interact/engage with the young person to support them"



9.4 Developing our Curriculum to Support Equality

Here are some examples of how our curriculum supports equality:-

9.4.1 Education and Children's Services is Committed to Providing Pupils with a Broad, Balanced and Challenging Curriculum

All schools continue to provide experiences and outcomes for pupils aged 3-18 which encourage an understanding of diversity and equality. Education Scotland inspection reports have highlighted areas of good practice. In Standards and Quality reports, schools demonstrate their commitment to health and wellbeing as a core component of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE). Establishments have received additional advice on how to promote key aspects of health and wellbeing as the responsibility of all. Schools continue to access a range of materials to support aspects of the curriculum. Curriculum development has been accompanied by high quality continuing professional development opportunities for staff.

9.4.2 Meeting Learners' Needs

Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) in Aberdeenshire provides the policy basis, in terms of principles and aims of practice, in relation to individual children and young people. Education and Children's Services have worked extensively with partnership agencies to deliver new GIRFEC Assessment and Action Planning guidelines and associated paperwork in order that the needs of all children and young people in Aberdeenshire are met. Five GIRFEC Update sessions for Head Teachers have taken place across Aberdeenshire. Meetings with Depute Head Teachers and Guidance Teachers have also been held. A revised GIRFEC Toolkit is currently being finalised.

We continue to monitor the quality of our provision using a range of tools. All schools continue to plan for improvement in relation to GIRFEC principles. Regular reports on the achievement and attainment of pupils and groups of pupils are considered by the Education, Learning and Leisure Committee of the Council. Head Teachers and Quality Improvement Officers carefully monitor part-time attendance and exclusions, linking these, where applicable to specific pupils from Protected Characteristics.

9.4.3 Rights Respecting Schools Award

The Rights Respecting Schools (RRS) Award recognises achievement in putting the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child at the heart of a school's planning, policies, practice and ethos. A rights-respecting school not only teaches about children's rights but also models rights and respect in all its relationships: between pupils and adults, between adults; and between pupils. In Aberdeenshire we now have 118 schools at various stages in the Rights Respecting Schools process. Seven schools have gained the prestigious Level 2 Award.



9.4.4 Stonewall Education Equality Index

Education and Children's Services have participated in the Stonewall Education Equality Index benchmarking tool. This highlighted how well we are tackling homophobia and homophobic bullying in our schools and will allow us to monitor and evaluate our progress in eliminating homophobia and biphobia. By participating in the Stonewall Scotland Education Champions program, ECS is entitled to targeted support to improve our planning and delivery of Services. Participation in the benchmarking exercise has helped ensure we have accurately identified priorities for improvement. These improvement priorities have been formalised into a two-year action plan. Stonewall have provided positive feedback on our plans for the coming year around the Youth Commission, Equality and Diversity Ambassadors and training.

Case study: - Mackie Academy, Stonehaven

Since the creation of the new LGBT+ group in school, we have started work on a variety of projects and have several aims with the group. The primary purpose of the group is to create a space for pupils in which they feel safe, and comfortable being, and expressing, themselves in front of peers who have similar experiences, and hold similar views. Work has begun on a poster campaign to raise awareness on different sexual orientations and gender identities within the school, and we hope to hold events to support and raise money for LGBT+ charities, and other charities as well.

9.4.5 Holocaust Memorial Day 2015

Pupils across Aberdeenshire prepared projects and assemblies to mark Holocaust Memorial Day which took place on 27 January 2015. Holocaust Memorial Day takes place annually in the UK and a number of other countries on January 27. It gives everyone the opportunity to pause to remember the millions of people who died, or whose lives were changed beyond recognition, as a result of the Holocaust and subsequent genocides around the world.

Assemblies took place at academies in Turriff, Mintlaw, Fraserburgh, Banff, Stonehaven, Banchory, Aboyne and Inverurie.

Pupils at Mearns, Meldrum and Kemnay Academy, as well as The Gordon Schools, have worked on a number of projects as well as events at schools; a range of displays produced by these projects, including photos of drama work, monologues, survivor stories, and quotes from pupils involved were exhibited at some of Aberdeenshire Council's offices.

Council employees were able view these exhibitions at Woodhill House, Aberdeen, Gordon House, Inverurie, St Leonard's in Banff, and the Buchan Area Office in Peterhead.



Case Study

Two pupils from Mintlaw Academy, Fiona Park and Ainsley Morrison, visited Auschwitz as part of the Holocaust Educational Trust's 'Lessons from Auschwitz' programme. They were invited by the Chief Executive to be guest bloggers on his blog.

Ainsley said: "When we arrived at Auschwitz, we were guided through some displays of items, including piles of shoes and clothes, which were all removed from prisoners as they entered the camp. We also saw photographs of some of the victims of the camp. This was very poignant as I was able to see lots of the different faces of the Holocaust."

Fiona noted: "You really can't appreciate the largeness of the camp until you see it for yourself. It's very easy to just think of the numbers but it's harder to think about the fact that every one of those numbers represents a single person with their own stories, families, goals, dreams and lives."

Ainsley continued: "The trip was very interesting and a good opportunity to have been able to have been given a chance to go on. I am going to keep the memory alive by giving assemblies at my school about what I learned on the trip."

Fiona concluded: "I think that the Holocaust is something that everyone needs to know about. The whole trip was definitely something that I will always remember and will always pass on my knowledge about. I also think that anyone who gets the opportunity to go should go"

Feedback

"I am not usually an emotional person, but learning more about the Holocaust has been a very emotional experience for me". (Pupil)

"It was a past life: but one we always need to remember." (Pupil)

Must commend the pupils on their feedback (as guest bloggers on the Chief Executive's Blog) - and also the exhibition beside the canteen at Woodhill House which is similarly thought provoking. I'd encourage everyone who's able to go have a look at the display and read the work produced by students following their exploration of the issues. Very poignant. Thank you. Jan McRobbie (Employee).



9.5 Education Programmes

An increasing number of establishments have adopted programmes of study to ensure that the nine Protected Characteristics are addressed in depth. Examples include:-

9.5.1 Respect for All Ambassadors

In March 2014, 157 Senior 1-Senior 3 students from eight academies across Aberdeenshire were trained as Respect for All Ambassadors. Young people attended a one day 'Respect for All' seminar which consisted of four workshops delivered by representatives from minority communities looking at life as a member of these groups; how it feels to be the subject of a hate crime, and how life can be made harder by prejudice and discrimination. Young people discussed ways in which they can help combat prejudice and discrimination in their schools and communities. Following the workshops, the pupils were asked to create an action plan to indicate how they would follow up on what they had learned and to identify actions they would take to help combat prejudice and discrimination and to try and embed the 'Respect for All' message in their learning communities.

Following this initial training, a further five academies have participated in the programme. Education and Children's Service now has a total of two hundred and seventy young people who are committed to promoting equalities in Aberdeenshire's secondary schools.

Case Study:-

In January 2015, pupils as 'Inverurie Academy Respect for All Ambassadors' delivered assemblies every morning to every year-group in the school to raise awareness of the Protected Characteristics and encourage an ethos of respect in the school. They also organised and delivered three lunchtime workshops for S1-S6 pupils to drop in to try some activities to make them consider age, race and gender issues and encouraging respect for others. The workshops were a success with around 30-35 pupils (and a couple of members of staff) dropping in to take part in the activities.



9.5.2 Transitions Programme

This is a joint project between Aberdeenshire Council, Education and Children's Services, the National Autistic Society (NAS) and Inspire. It aims to support individuals with disabilities through the transition from childhood to adulthood and to promote the well-being of young people by providing them with experiences to develop skills within the four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence.

Over the course of two academic sessions, one hundred and thirty three pupils have taken part in the project. The project has been formally evaluated and participants report that they had developed social skills and life skills and felt more confident about meeting and socialising with others. This has empowered them to contribute to, and participate more in, the life of the community. In particular, parents and carers valued the opportunities the young people were given to become more independent.

FEEDBACK:-

In an independent evaluation of the project, pupils generally felt more optimistic about the future after the intervention and had started to think about post-school with more confidence. They had enjoyed 'Transitions' and the experience had given them a better sense of themselves. The majority of pupils considered that they had developed social skills and life skills and felt more confident about meeting and socialising with others. This had empowered them to contribute to and participate more in the life of the school. In addition they reported a better understanding of relationships and felt better equipped to manage emotions and make choices.

9.5.3 Anne Frank Award

In 2013 a record number of Aberdeenshire schools successfully participated in the Anne Frank Award. The aim of the award is to challenge prejudice and reduce hatred by drawing on the power of Anne Frank's life and diary. Participation in the award allows learners to use that power to encourage people to embrace positive attitudes, personal responsibility, and respect for others. For the first time this year's programme culminated in a celebration of achievement event at Cine World in Aberdeen where over 200 pupils gave presentations on how they had contributed to increasing awareness of the importance of diversity and equality. The Anne Frank Award is now touring participating schools in Aberdeenshire.



Case Study:-

Fraserburgh Academy were awarded an Anne Frank Award for Outstanding Participation in Promoting Equality and Fairness in school for their Celebrating Diversity Day. In March 2014 the school held a Celebrating Diversity Day involving over 100 pupils and all faculties in the school. The project celebrated the various cultures represented by pupils and staff at the school and the food and drinks traditionally associated with the countries. The Home Economics department held food tasting sessions. The English as an Additional Language pupils presented stalls and displays of traditional food and drinks from their home countries. The 6th Year pupils focussed on the Home Nations and the Modern Languages Department Higher and Advanced Higher pupils covered France, Germany and Spain. Many staff and pupils from other countries like Zimbabwe, Australia, and Morocco had their own displays and stalls there too. The Additional Support Needs pupils focussed on crops of the world'. The History department introduced the colleagues to food rationing in respect of World War II. The school's Equality Ambassadors were in attendance throughout the day. They devised a pupil passport which had lots of questions for pupils to answer and they escorted pupils to the tasting sessions.

9.5.4 Youth Commission

The Youth Commission began in July 2013. It was established to create an up-to-date, fit-for-purpose policy that meets the needs of those who experience, or witness, bullying behaviour. A co-production approach was utilised, recognising our young people as assets integral to the success of policy development and implementation. Twenty two young people, aged between 14 and 19 years old, designed and implemented a comprehensive research and consultation plan. In total, the Youth Commissioners gave 1381 hours to attend meetings, with many more hours spent travelling and working at home.

The views of 353 secondary-aged pupils, 56 teachers, 2 Elected Members, 119 parents/ carers, and 604 primary-aged pupils were gathered.

Research was undertaken which captured the experience and opinions of our diverse local population and six key themes were identified. These findings have now been incorporated into policy and guidance for school establishments.

This policy recognises bullying behaviour within the context of equalities and diversity and will support an enhanced approach to responding to, and the recording of, incidents of prejudiced based bullying.



9.5.5 Young Carers Project

Our Young Carers Project Officer has been working on the production of guidelines for supporting young carers in schools to ensure consistency in approach the length and breadth of the authority. Many of our young carers deal with the results of inequality every day. These guidelines have been aligned with national and local best practice and policy. Staff training materials are also being produced to raise awareness of the broad spectrum of circumstances in which young carers and their families may find themselves and the resulting complex needs they may have. This will encourage early identification and effective support at all levels of the staged intervention process, and will have a particular focus on those traditionally hidden young carers. Curricular materials have also been produced to raise awareness and encourage equality among peers, adding to the supportive and inclusive ethos and culture we are promoting within our establishments.

9.5.6 Housing Education - Homelessness

Education and Housing have worked together to develop a collaborative approach to housing-education in order to prevent homelessness and better equip young people with the knowledge and skills to cope if they are at risk of becoming homeless.

Homelessness Action Scotland provided updated resource material in the form of the, "I'm Offski" resource to be used within secondary schools. To enhance the delivery of this education resource, and recognising our young people as assets, we worked with Service users who have first-hand experience of housing and homelessness Services to create a film documenting their experiences of being homeless. Their genuine and thought-provoking depiction results in a powerful portrayal of the difficulties and challenges that can be encountered on the homeless journey and offers young people an opportunity to look at ways of preventing homelessness.

This collaboration between Services and Service users within the Local Authority results in a locally relevant, trusted, and credible source of information. The outcome is a sustainable model of delivering housing-education in schools, whilst celebrating the contribution that our young people can make to our organisation and our communities.

The resource is designed to provide equity of provision across Aberdeenshire but also has the ability to be flexible in its delivery, based on need and demand. The resource can be used in a class environment, but also on a one-to-one basis with vulnerable young people, thus balancing the difficulties of a demanding and busy curriculum with the needs of our pupils. This resource has the potential to be used in other settings such as Through Care and Aftercare, and community groups.



The approach could be replicated for use in wider Services such as Criminal Justice. This project has been in receipt of a Bronze COSLA award in the category of 'Achieving Better Outcomes'.

9.6 Community Engagement

Here are some examples of on-going work which supports people with different projected characteristics.

9.6.1. Support to Speakers of Other Languages

Community Learning and Development (CLD) continue to provide support the learners who are looking to improve their understanding and delivery of both written and spoken English. While this is the main focus of learning, the learners also gain social skills, employability skills, and understanding of culture. Since the beginning of 2014, CLD have delivered 50 language projects, to a total of 458 learners. The Service has aimed to increase the accreditation opportunities for learners. 107 learners have been supported and have completed core skills awards in communication, ICT, Problem Solving and Working with Others.

9.6.2. Literacy and Numeracy

CLD staff, volunteers, and partners support individual learners who ask for assistance with their literacy and numeracy skills. Learners mainly are supported through one-to-one learning sessions. In the Peterhead area, when workers recognised that most participants were female, they developed a men-only literacy group which has had a positive role in engaging with new learners.

9.6.3. Empowering Families and Young People

Staff members have and continue to work with groups of parents who have children with additional needs. Families have been supported to develop support networks. One such network is Mearns Allsorts. Mearns Allsorts is a support group for families who have children with additional support needs of any age and disability, diagnosed or not. They provide support, advice and information for families and also offer sensory and creative play for any children that come along.

9.6.4. Work with School

CLD teams are working closely with school colleagues to identify young people who may find the school setting a challenge through social or learning issues. CLD staff contribute to flexible learning packages which enable young people to participate more fully in learning. Community-based activities supported by Education and Children's Services staff have included sessions to support very young children with disabilities. Rainbow Rogues is a group



which provides high quality play experiences for children in a small group setting, which their siblings can also attend.

9.6.5. Engaging with Gypsy/ Travellers

Community Learning staff are engaged with the Gypsy/ Traveller communities to identify issues relating to health needs and to support development of initiatives to address these. Child literacy needs were also identified as part of this process and work was undertaken in the North of Aberdeenshire to address this.

ECS works closely with [Enquire](#), the Scottish advice Service for additional support for learning and [STEP](#) which provides support and advice in relation to education for travelling people.

9.6.6. Engaging with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual People

Youth Workers have undertaken training to support work with young people who identify as Lesbian Gay Bi-sexual or Transgender.

9.6.7. Youth Voice

The support to Aberdeenshire Youth Forum and Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament enable young people to have a voice on a range of issues that they feel are important to them.

9.6.8. Engaging with Older People

Work with older people is becoming well established, working in partnership with 50 plus Networks in Aberdeenshire.

9.6.9. Engaging with Vulnerable Pupils

Vulnerable pupils and families have access to a range of professional Services including Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, Social Work Services, and Psychology Services. The Educational Psychology Services in Aberdeenshire has achieved Customer In Excellence status. Using our Integrated Assessment Framework, schools involve other agencies working with the pupil, including the parent / carer to address difficulties and creating, monitoring and evaluating individual pupil plans.



9.7 Developing attainment

Here are some examples of how attainment is being developed:-

9.7.1 Raising Attainment and Achievement for Children and Young People

Projects targeted at raising attainment continue to be a priority in the EC Service's improvement plan. Active Literacy has been introduced in additional schools. All schools have access to in-Service training on collaborative teaching approaches. Educational Psychological Services continue to provide high quality learning opportunities, including those provided in the new e-learning training format. The success of all is routinely celebrated such as Aberdeen Performs, held for the second year in June 2014 and featured a further cohort of young people, including those from protected categories.

9.7.2 An Audit of Pupil Support has Been Carried out Across all 17 Children's Services Networks (CSNS) In Aberdeenshire

A review of enhanced provision is nearing completion. The review aims to ensure equity and consistency of provision across Aberdeenshire schools. One expected outcome will be that the needs of pupils from the protected categories are identified as early as possible and effective interventions planned. The review of enhanced provision is a key component of Education and Children's Services' strategy to close the attainment gap between the highest and lowest attaining groups of pupils.

9.7.3 Affordable Childcare

The availability of high quality, affordable childcare has been cited as a barrier to participation by protected groups. In 2014, Aberdeenshire Council expanded wrap-around provision for vulnerable youngsters who were identified as likely to benefit from early intervention support. Aberdeenshire now has centres in all school Children's Service Networks offering fulltime pre-school education and childcare.



10 The Work of our Licensing Boards

10.1 Constitution

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

Aberdeenshire has three divisional Licensing Boards: –

- North Board: 8 Members;
- Central Board: 8 Members; and
- South Board: 8 Members.

Our Board Members are Elected Members of Aberdeenshire Council and are appointed to the Licensing Boards at the first Full Meeting of the Council after each ordinary Council Election. A Board must consist of at least five Members.

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.

Aberdeenshire Council is responsible for administering the licensing system for the Boards. The Members of the Boards and the Teams which administer the Boards are all employees of Aberdeenshire Council. The information detailed at paragraphs 5.7-5.18 is relevant to Licensing Boards. Similarly, Chapter 6 covers employees of Licensing Boards, all of which is relevant to Outcome 1 'Aberdeenshire Council employees, Councillors, the Aberdeenshire Licensing Boards and the Aberdeenshire Education Authority 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'.

10.2 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 with which we must support in all its functions. These are –

Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005:

- preventing crime and disorder;
- securing public safety;
- preventing public nuisance;
- protecting and improving public health; and
- protecting children from harm.

The Gambling Act 2005:

- preventing gambling from being a source of crime or disorder, being associated with crime or disorder or being used to support crime;
- ensuring that gambling is conducted in a fair and open way; and
- protecting children and other vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling.

10.3 Numbers of Licences Currently in Force

From 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2014 the Boards have issued the following numbers of licences –

Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005

- 713 premises licences;
- 2528 personal licences;
- 312 occasional extensions; and
- 5219 occasional licences.

Gambling Act 2005

- 26 premises licences;
- 144 notices of automatic entitlement for gaming machines;
- 52 gaming, club gaming, and club gaming machine permits; and
- 364 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.

10.4 Equality Policy

The Licensing Boards approved the terms of an Equality Policy on 30 April 2013. The policy has considered equalities to make it the heart of the policy which will ensure that they are open and transparent. Licensing have



engaged with multiple partners and have asked questions regarding equalities. Many of the equalities issues that have been raised are perception-based only. The Licensing Boards are adopting a community planning ethos in all aspects of their work.

The implementation of the policy assists the Licensing Boards in mainstreaming equalities into the licensing process and acts as a tool in assisting them to give due regard to their equalities duties, both in setting licensing policy and procedures and, in determining licence applications.

To that end, they have included the following mission statement in their 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;
- we will promote fairness in all we do, thereby ensuring that equality considerations are central to the administration of the licensing system;
- we will work in partnership with a wide range of other public bodies, including the Council and its various Services, statutory consultees, licence holders and the public to achieve our objective. They too should work towards eliminating any unlawful discrimination and protect equality of opportunity and good relations between persons from all sections of society; and
- we will strive to reflect the interests of people from all sections of the society we serve”.

The Licensing Boards are now also represented on Aberdeenshire Council’s Corporate Equalities Group to ensure that they can work with partner agencies in promoting equalities and in adhering to the Public Sector Equality Duty.



10.5 Staff and Training

Licensing Boards served by a Clerk, Depute Clerks, 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 has been appointed Equalities Service Champion for the Licensing Boards.

10.6 Translation & Interpretation Services

We have 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.

We will also continue to provide policy documents and procedures in alternative formats on request.

We will link 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.

10.7 Equality Impact Assessments

To ensure consistency across Aberdeenshire, we have adopted the EIA toolkit developed by Aberdeenshire Council. We will use this toolkit to assess licensing policies and procedures as necessary.

10.8 Licensing Board Report Format

To ensure consistency across Aberdeenshire, we will adopt the committee report style agreed by Aberdeenshire Council to take account of equalities issues throughout the licensing process.



APPENDIX 1 - ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL'S WORKFORCE PROFILE

As at December 2014, 18509 people were employed by Aberdeenshire Council.

The information in this Appendix refers to all employees of the Authority over the years 2013 and 2014.

The sections on training, leavers and general employee data are generated from our Human Resource Information system. This data relates to development, retention and recruitment respectively. The data on recruitment is obtained from the iGrasp database, the Scottish public authority recruitment tool.

In some parts of our report there are high responses in the 'unknown' category. There are two reasons for this – the first is where the employee has declined to answer a question, the second is where the employee has filled in the 'no declaration' section of the form. 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 e.g. revised wording and guidance attached to the Employee Monitoring Form.

This report is based on incumbencies or posts 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. During the report incumbencies are referred to as 'employee data' or 'employees'. The data report in our previous mainstreaming report has been used to take forward work in relation to the Protected Characteristics.

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 to address the means of retaining employees and skills when duties and tasks require to be provided in new and innovative ways. It is critical that such work continues and helps the Council address changes and gaps in relation to the Protected Characteristics.

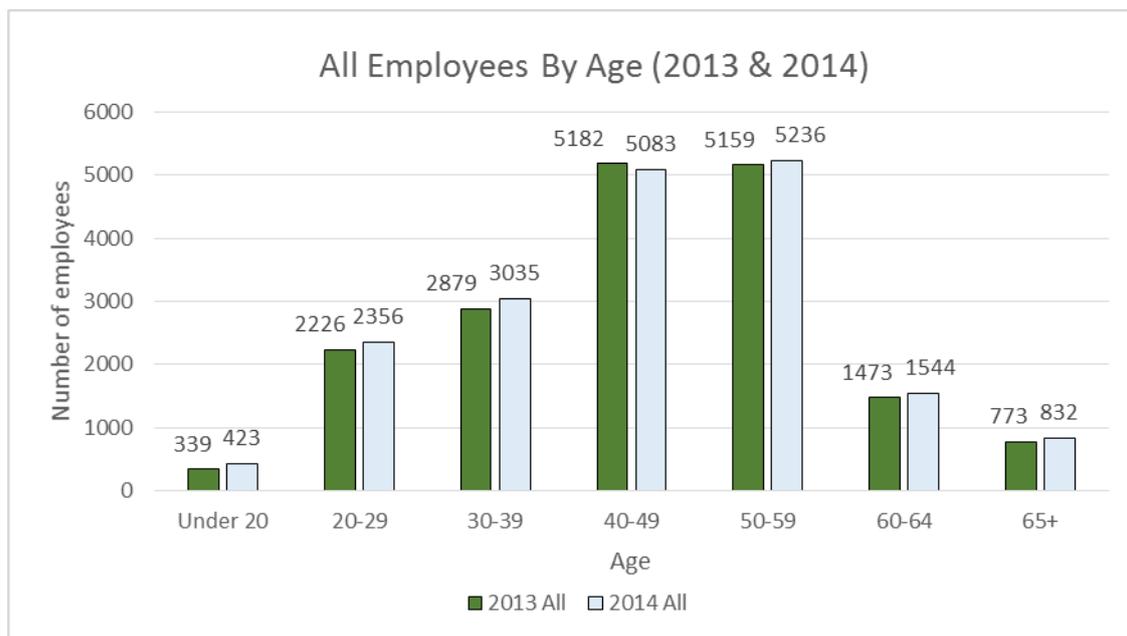


Combined Workforce Profile Age

All Employees

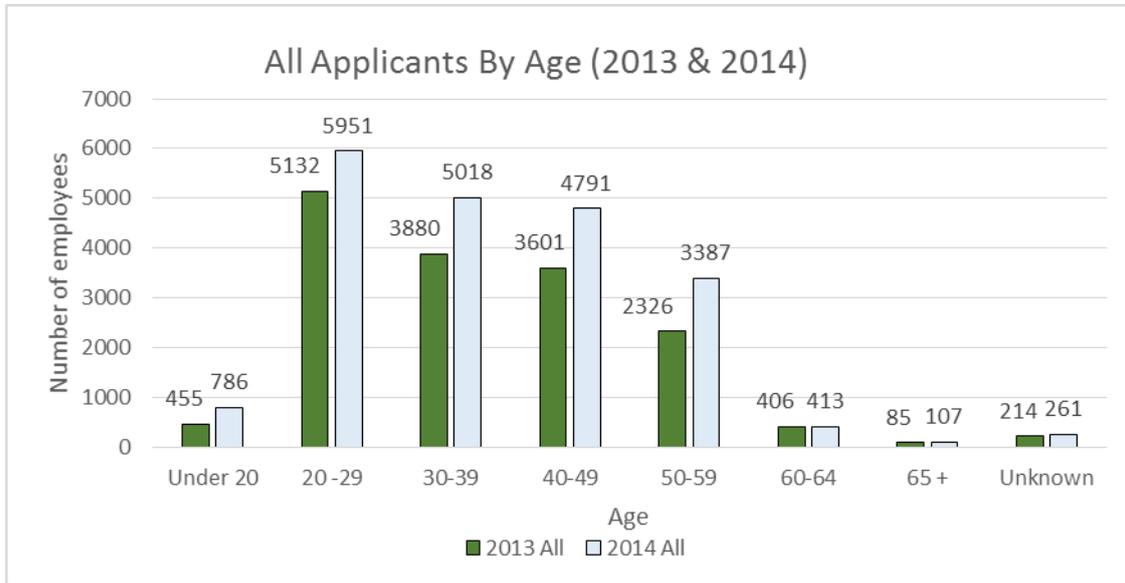
The largest percentage of employees fall into the age range 40 -49 and 50–59, with the number of employees in the 50-59 category increasing slightly in 2014, which is in line with the Census data for 2011.

The number of employees over the age of 65 increased slightly in 2014. Although the lifting of the default retirement age has been in place for over a year, this has not impacted on the number of applicants for jobs in this category.



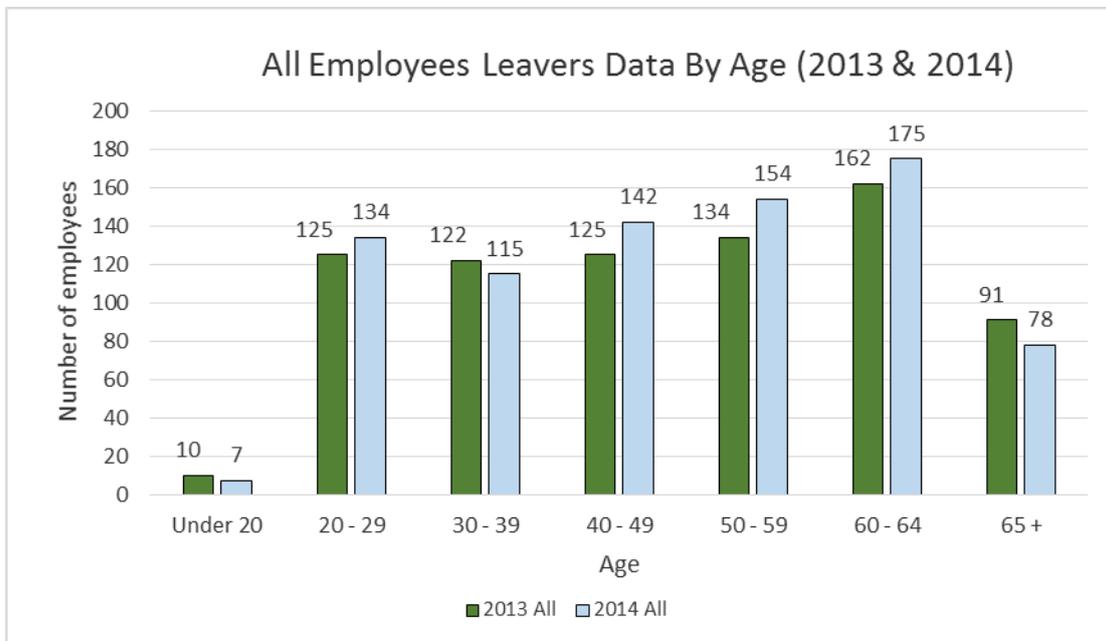
Recruitment

The number of job applicants increased across all age categories over the course of the two years, with the biggest increase in applicants seen in the 30-39 age group category.



Retention

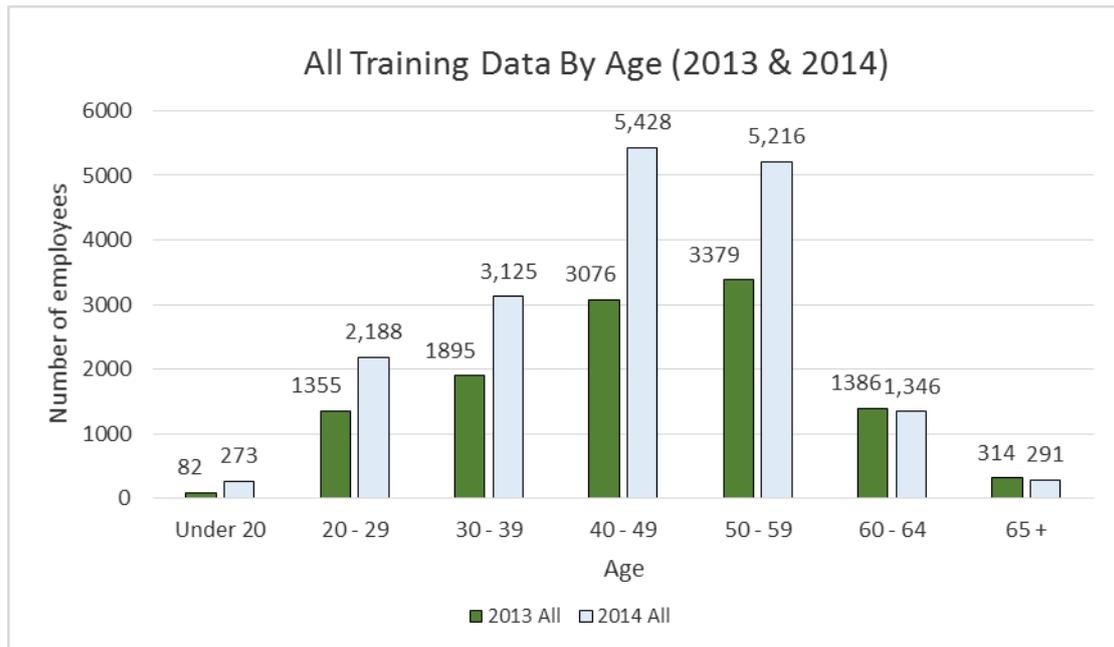
In comparison with the previous mainstreaming report, the highest number of leavers are still in the 60-64 age category, with no major changes across any of the age categories.



Development

The number of employees by age, undertaking internal training courses, is reflective of the general age population of the workforce across 2013 and 2014. Employees in the 40-49 and 50-59 age categories undertook the highest number training courses, in line with data for all employees. In comparison with the previously mainstreaming report, the training data for 2013 and 2014 is broadly consistent.

At present, we are unable to obtain 2014 data for the 60-64 and 65+ age categories, but we hope to have this data prior to the final report being published.

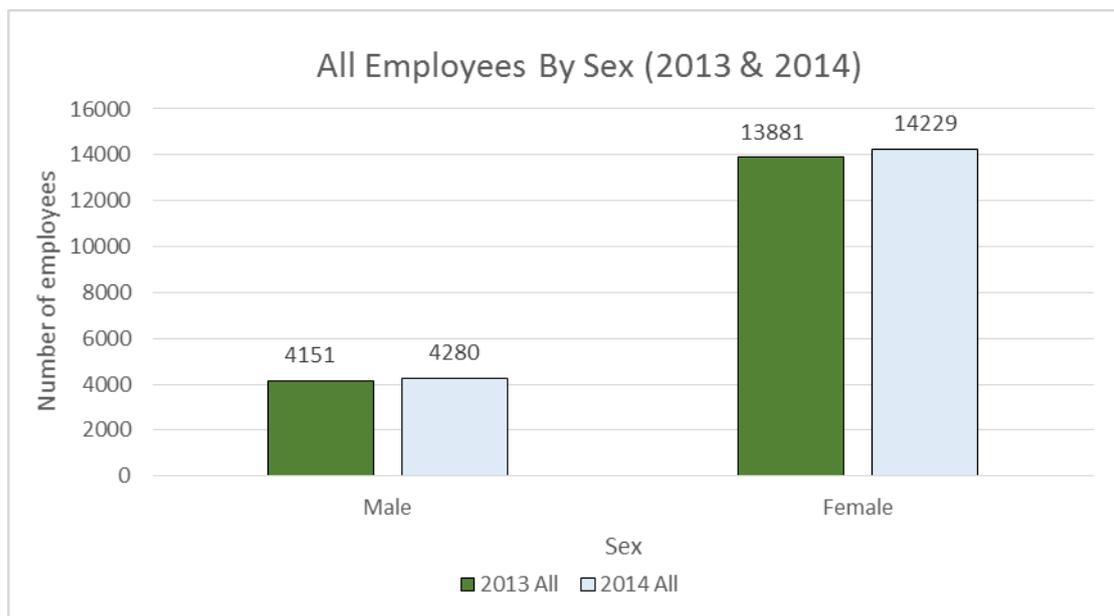


Gender/ Sex

All Employees

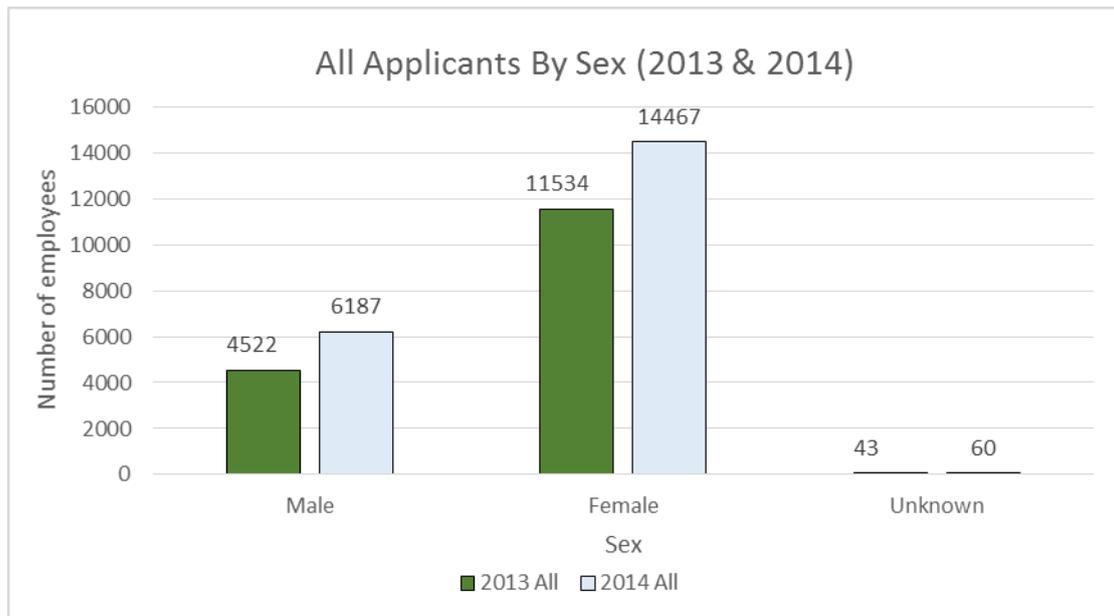
Over the two years of this report, there was no change in the proportion of men (23%) and women (77%) in the workforce. This was broadly consistent with the previous mainstreaming report.

Work continues to encourage applications from our diverse population. Emphasis has been placed on building our Council's reputation as a good employer for the LGBT community to consider, for example by taking place in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index and having Straight Allies within our workforce.



Recruitment

With regards to recruitment, the number of applicants increased over the two years for both male and female categories. In comparison with the previous mainstreaming report, there was an increase in male applicants, compared with a slight decrease in male applicants across the previous reporting period. There was also a significant increase in female applicants, when compared with data from the previous mainstreaming report. The proportion of male and female applicants remained broadly similar over the two years reported.



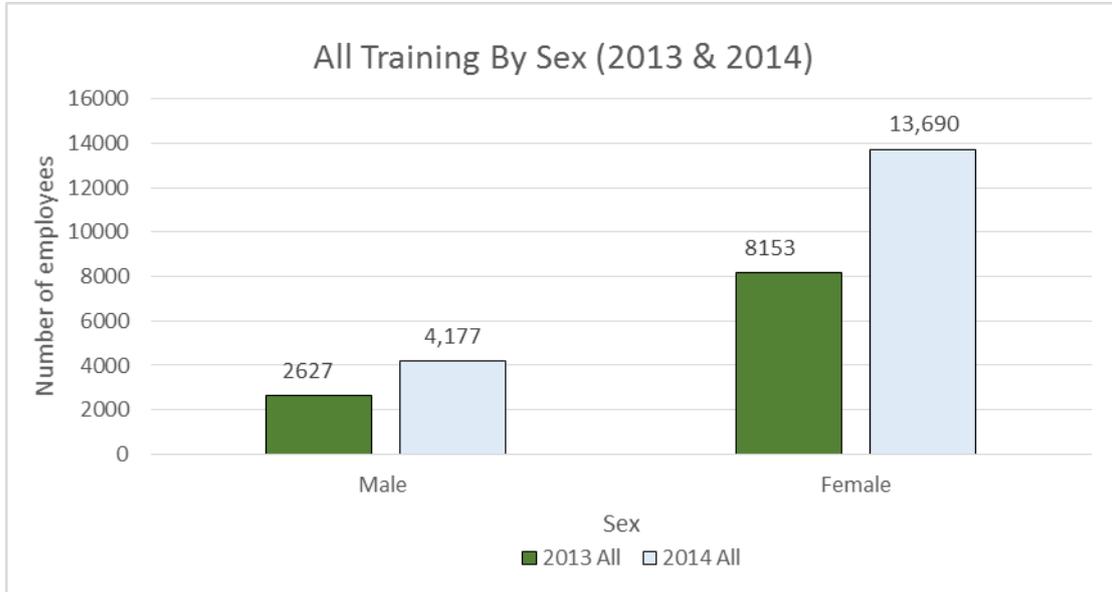
Retention

Regarding leaver's data, the proportion of male and females leaving the authority was broadly similar to the previous mainstreaming report, although it is worth noting that the proportion of male leavers across the two years was significantly higher than the overall proportion of male employees.



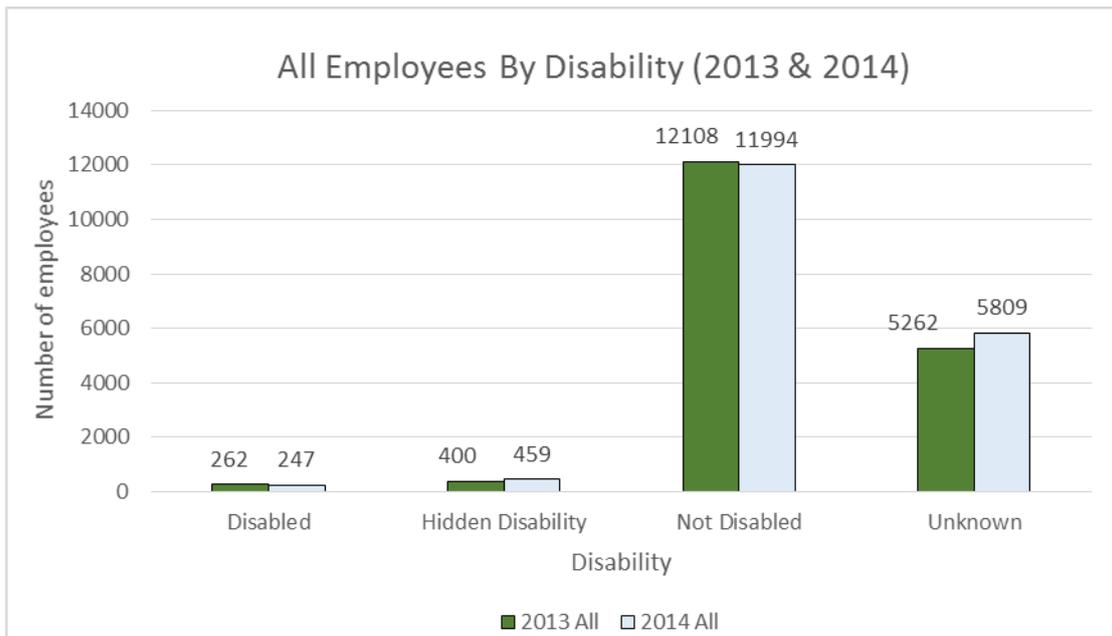
Development

With regards to employee development, there was an increase in overall training courses attended. The proportion of men and women attending training in both years was broadly consistent with the total proportion of male and female employees.



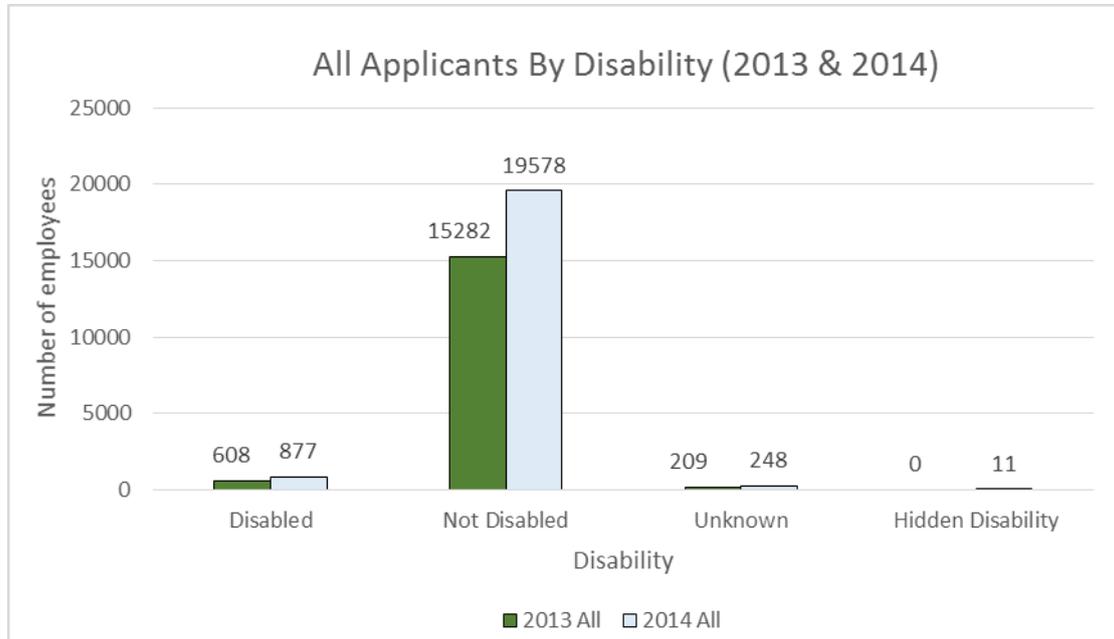
Disability All Employees

With regards to all employees, the number of employees with a disability decreased slightly in 2014, with the number of people with a hidden disability increasing over the same time period.



Recruitment

The numbers of applicants identifying as having a disability remains consistently low at 4%. Further work is required to ensure there are no barriers affecting the success of applicants identifying as disabled.



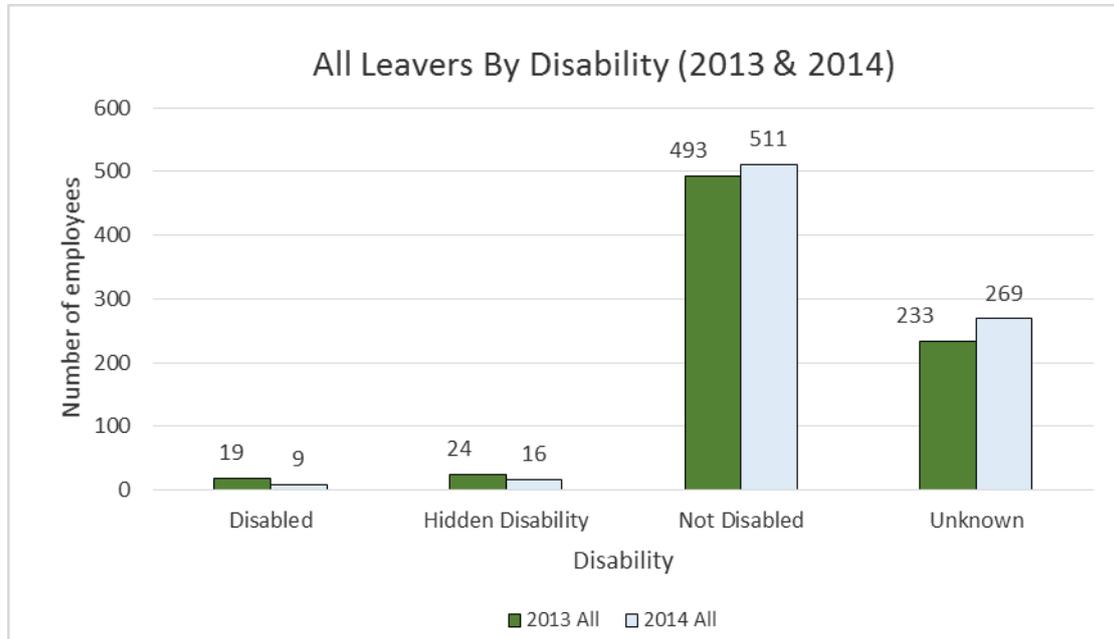
Across 2013 and 2014, 4% of applicants identified as having a disability or hidden disability. Since 2011, there has been a small increase in the percentage. This may be in part due to employees having increased confidence in the authority as an employer of people with disabilities through our Health Working Lives programme, a focus on mental health and promotion of our Disability Leave Scheme, which allows additional paid time off for people with a disability.

The Authority continues to apply the Guaranteed Job Interview Scheme (GJIS) so that any applicant with a disability who meets the essential criteria for the post and has applied under the scheme will be invited to attend for interview.



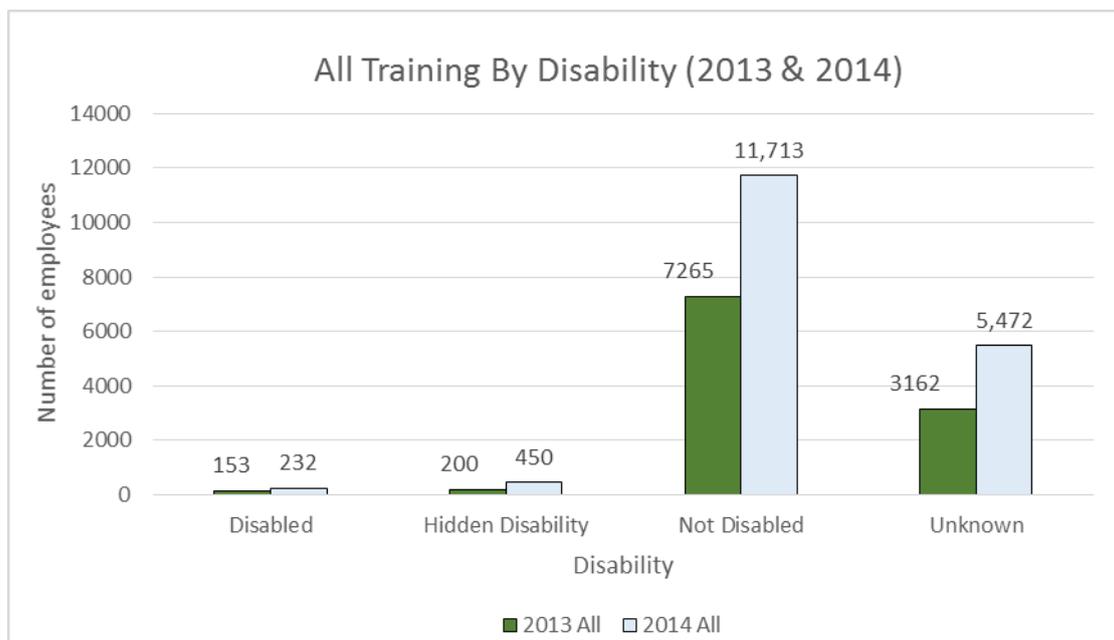
Retention

When compared to the previous mainstreaming report, there was no significant changes to report, with the number of leavers reducing across the disabled and hidden disability groups.



Development

As reported across all other characteristics, training courses undertaken have increased across all disability groups.



Race

All Employees

The majority of employees identify as White Scottish, with significant numbers identifying themselves as White British and White English. 63.5% (2013) and 61.6% (2014) of Council employees identified themselves as White Scottish. Compared with the 2011 Scotland's Census data for Aberdeenshire, 82.2% of people identified themselves as White Scottish.

The proportion of Council employees identifying themselves as White British 9.7% (2013) and 9.9% (2014), was slightly lower when compared to the census data for people identified as White British (12.3%).

The proportion of Council employees identifying themselves as Polish 0.4% (2013) and 0.5% (2014) was again, slightly lower when compared to the proportion of Polish people across Aberdeenshire (1.2%).

Likewise, the proportion of employees identifying themselves as Asian (0.3%) for both years, was slightly less than the proportion of Asian people in Aberdeenshire (0.8%).

A significant number of employees, 17% (2013) and 19% (2014) were classed as Unknown, which may in part account for the lower proportions for Council employees, when compared to the census data.



All Employees		2013	2014
Race	Asian Chinese	7	9
	Asian Indian	21	26
	Asian Other including Scottish	43	46
	Asian Bangladeshi	4	6
	Asian Pakistani	2	3
	Black African	39	24
	Caribbean	6	7
	African Other	0	0
	Black Other	7	5
	Mixed	61	63
	Gypsy Traveller	1	0
	Other Ethnic Background	0	0
	Polish	76	89
	White British	1747	1829
	White English	1057	1012
	White Scottish	11446	11395
	White Irish	71	79
	White Northern Irish	72	82
	White Welsh	80	76
	White Other	227	243
Unknown	3065	3515	



Recruitment

The number of applicants was broadly in line with the general population data for race, with increases in applications across a number of categories.

All applicants		2013 All	2014 All
Race	Asian Arab	14	11
	Asian – Chinese	25	21
	Asian- Indian	150	248
	Asian Other including Scottish	68	136
	Asian - Bangladeshi	22	17
	Asian Pakistani	26	71
	Black African	90	116
	Caribbean	22	57
	African other	233	331
	Black other	26	2
	Mixed	71	76
	Gypsy traveller	1	2
	Other Ethnic Background	108	168
	Polish	174	300
	White - British	0	12
	White -English	1	11
	White - Scottish	11515	14355
	White – Irish	170	274
	White - Nr Irish	0	2
	White - Welsh	0	0
	White Eastern European	158	307
White - Other	2978	3759	
Unknown	247	365	



Retention

The number of employees leaving imitate the workforce profile with most leavers coming from the White Scottish category.

		2013	2014
All Leavers			
Race	Asian Chinese	2	1
	Asian Indian	0	1
	Asian Other including Scottish	2	0
	Asian Bangladeshi	0	0
	Asian Pakistani	0	0
	Black African	2	4
	Caribbean	0	0
	African Other	0	0
	Black Other	1	0
	Mixed	6	1
	Gypsy Traveller	2	0
	Other Ethnic Background	0	0
	Polish	2	1
	White British	98	71
	White English	55	38
	White Scottish	448	480
	White Irish	1	5
	White Northern Irish	8	3
	White Welsh	1	6
	White Other	7	9
Unknown	133	185	



Development

The number of employees attending training courses was consistent with the general population information for race.

All Training		2013 All	2014 All
Race	Asian Chinese	4	7
	Asian Indian	15	31
	Asian Other inc Scottish	33	59
	Asian Bangladeshi	1	2
	Asian Pakistani	0	3
	Black African	32	44
	Caribbean	2	4
	African Other	1	2
	Black Other	8	10
	Mixed	29	42
	Gypsy Traveller	0	0
	Other Ethnic Background	7	11
	Polish	43	99
	White British	1276	1,827
	White English	634	1,036
	White Scottish	6776	10,907
	White Irish	62	77
	White Northern Irish	63	78
	White Welsh	53	81
	White Other	89	210
European Other	26	40	
Unknown	1626	3,297	



Religion or Belief

All Employees

With regards to all employees, the largest category of religion or belief across both years was unknown. Since 2011, Church of Scotland has been the second highest category (27.5% in 2014). After Christian faiths, other faiths in the authority account for 1.8%. 28.8% (2013) and 27.5% (2014) of current employees were identified as Church of Scotland. Compared with the census data, 36.3% of people were classed as Church of Scotland.

The proportion of Roman Catholic employees (referred to as Catholic in the authority's data) was broadly similar with the proportion of Aberdeenshire residents.

0.3% of employees were identified as Muslim across both years, which is in line with 2011 Census data for Aberdeenshire.

Across both years, 40% of employees are identified as unknown.

		2013	2014
All Employees			
Religion or Belief	Buddhist	30	31
	Catholic	574	602
	Church of Scotland	5190	5095
	Hindu	7	9
	Jewish	3	5
	Muslim	60	53
	No religion/belief	3033	3310
	Other Religion or Belief	228	221
	Protestant	888	889
	Sikh	2	3
	Other Christian	744	755
	Unknown	7271	7536



Recruitment

The proportion of applicants across both years was broadly similar, with the largest proportion of applicants identifying as having no religion or belief.

All Applicants		2013	2014
Religion or Belief	Agnostic	0	0
	Atheist	0	1
	Buddhist	62	76
	Catholic	1007	1477
	Church of Scotland	3932	4844
	Hindu	103	178
	Jewish	7	9
	Muslim	105	172
	No religion/belief	7114	9059
	Other Religion or Belief	356	418
	Protestant	0	11
	Sikh	8	15
	Humanist	76	96
	Pagan	40	45
	Other Christian	1881	2565
	Unknown	1408	1748

Retention

The proportion of leavers was broadly similar to the overall employees for each category of religion or belief.

All Leavers		2013	2014
Religion or Belief	Buddhist	1	2
	Catholic	23	23
	Church of Scotland	201	230
	Hindu	1	1



Jewish	1	0
Muslim	3	3
No religion/belief	128	147
Other Religion or Belief	16	8
Protestant	38	29
Sikh	0	0
Other Christian	38	32
Unknown	319	330

Development

Similarly, in terms of development, training data was reflective of the overall number of employees with regards to religion or belief.

Training data all employees		2013 All	2014 All
Religion or Belief	Buddhist	11	36
	Catholic	372	686
	Church of Scotland	3122	4,731
	Hindu	2	14
	Jewish	11	5
	Muslim	40	35
	No religion/belief	1976	3,471
	Other Religion or Belief	129	210
	Protestant	449	801
	Sikh	2	9
	Other Christian	458	812
	Unknown	4208	7,057

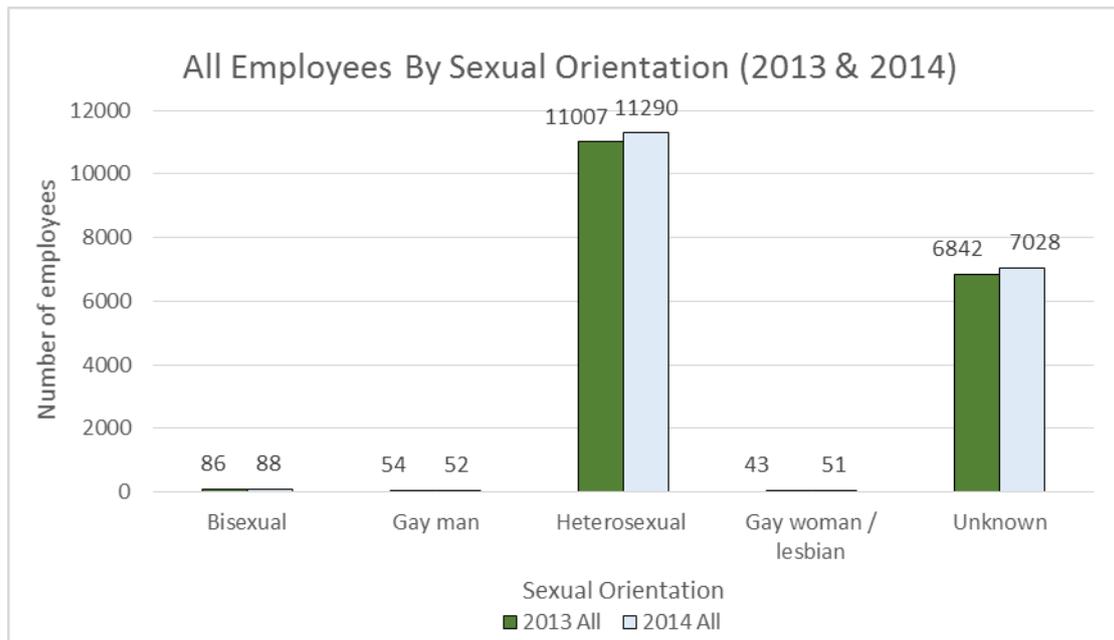
Sexual Orientation

		2013	2014
All Leavers			
Religion or Belief	Buddhist	1	
	Catholic	23	
	Church of Scotland	201	
	Hindu	1	
	Jewish	1	
	Muslim	3	
	No religion/belief	128	
	Other Religion or Belief	16	
	Protestant	38	
	Sikh	0	
	Other Christian	38	
	Unknown	319	



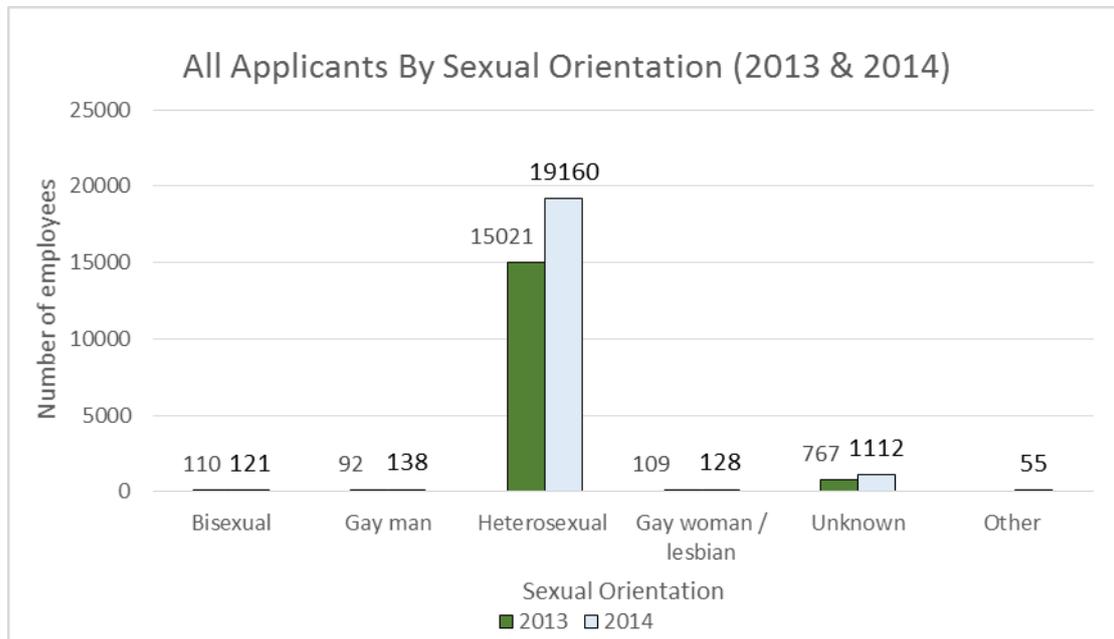
All Employees

The percentage of employees identifying as either lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB) is consistent across 2013 and 2014. Much work has been undertaken during 2014 to promote the Council as an LGB inclusive employer by working with Stonewall Scotland to hold seminars. In addition, an Employee LGBT Network Group has been formed. The Authority also participates in Stonewall Scotland's Straight Allies Programme.



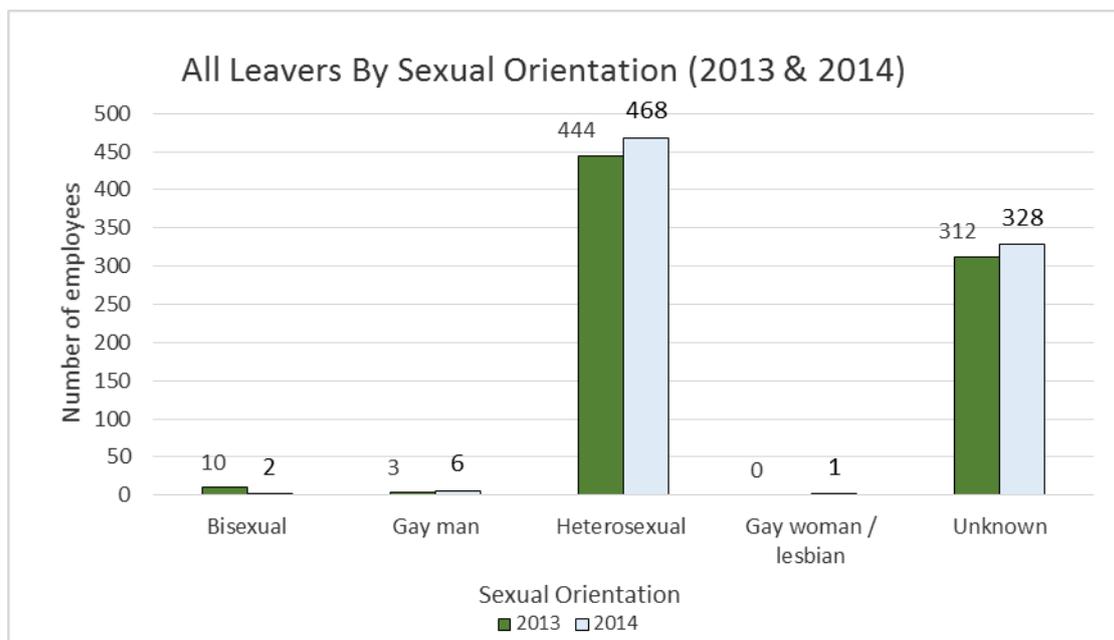
Recruitment

The majority of applications came from people identifying as heterosexual, with application increases seen across all sexual orientation categories.



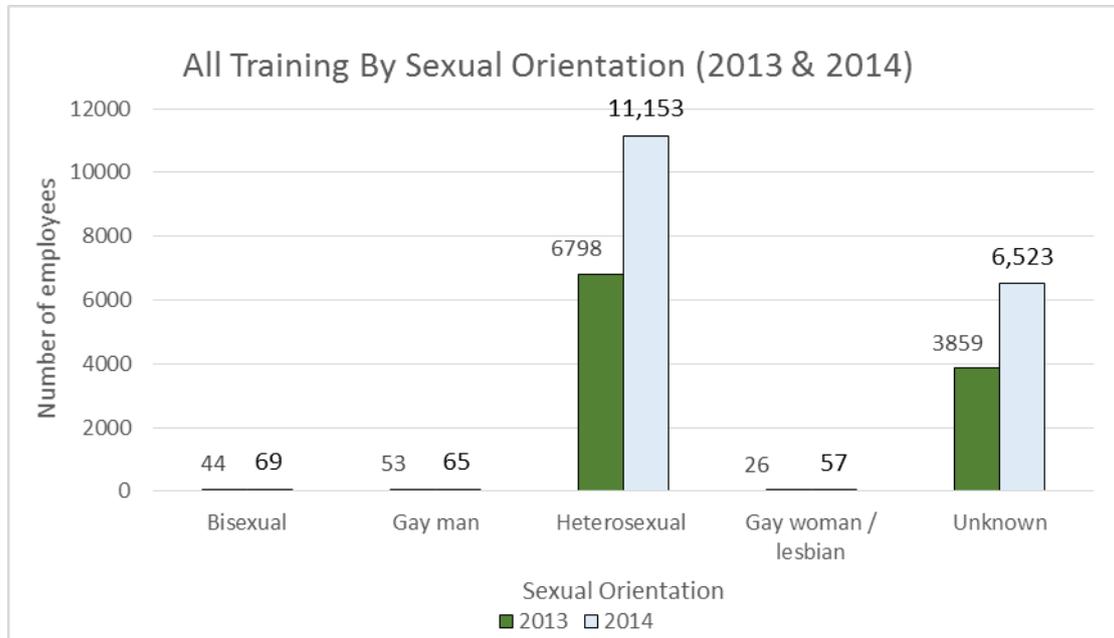
Retention

Leavers data for the period was broadly similar with the previous mainstreaming report, with the highest number of leavers coming from the heterosexual category.



Development

Again, training courses attended increased across all sexual orientation categories during the period reported.

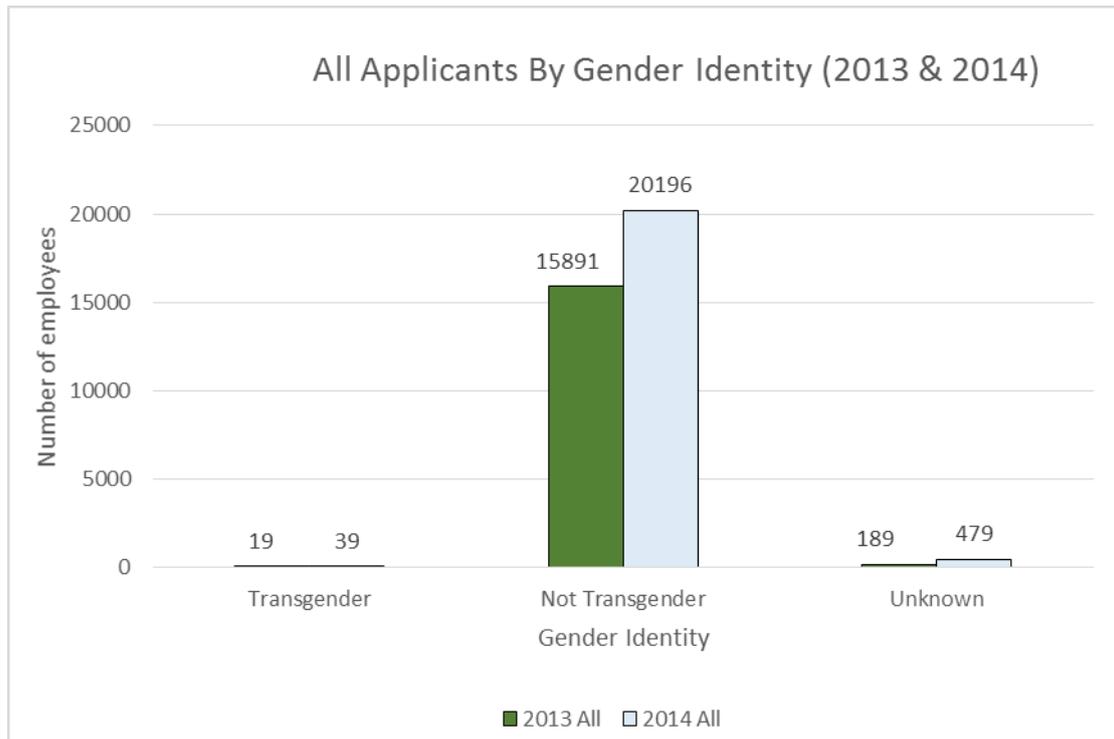


Gender Identity

Recruitment

This is the first period of reporting gender identity information, so no comparison is available with the previous mainstreaming report.

In terms of job applications, there was an increase in job applicants across all gender identity categories.



Retention and Development

There is not currently any method of recording gender identity information for all employees, leavers and training courses, but it is anticipated that this information will be available for the next mainstreaming report.



APPENDIX 2 - ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL EDUCATION AUTHORITY'S WORKFORCE PROFILE

There were 3,895 teaching employees but significantly more non-teaching employees in the Education Authority's profile in 2014.

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 that may work for the education authority. At present, our employee records system is unable to provide data specifically for non-teaching employees who work for the education authority.

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.

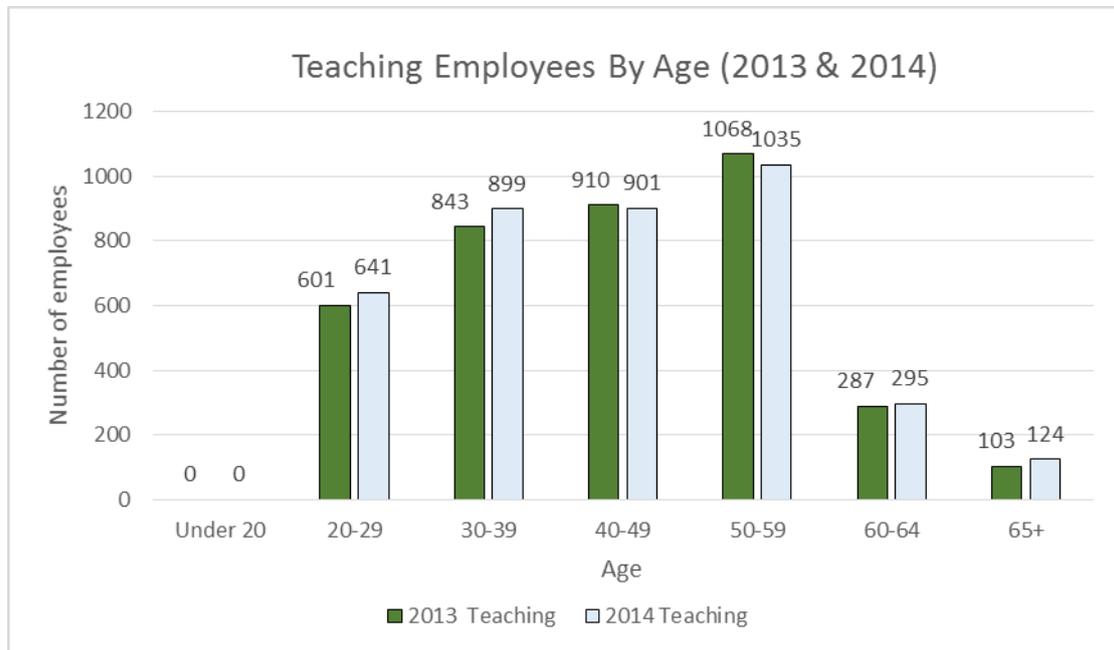
A new employee information management system was scheduled for implementation in 2014, however, this has now been delayed and will now be launched later on in 2015. The new system should provide the opportunity to report more widely on the education authority workforce profile.

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

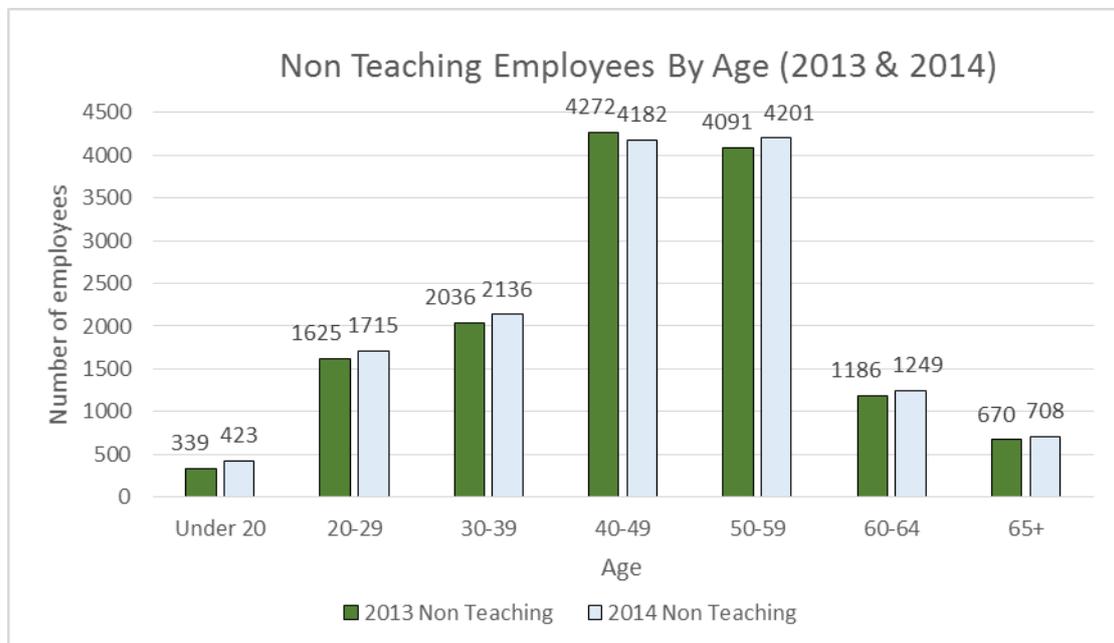


Age

The highest number of teaching employees was in the 50-59 age category, which was consistent with the previous mainstreaming report.

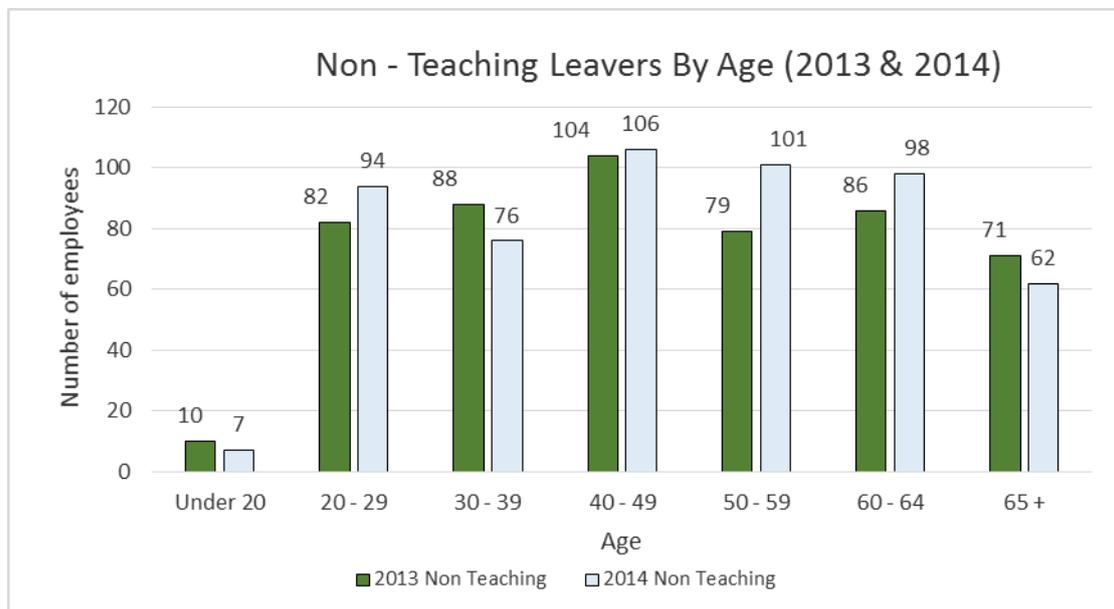
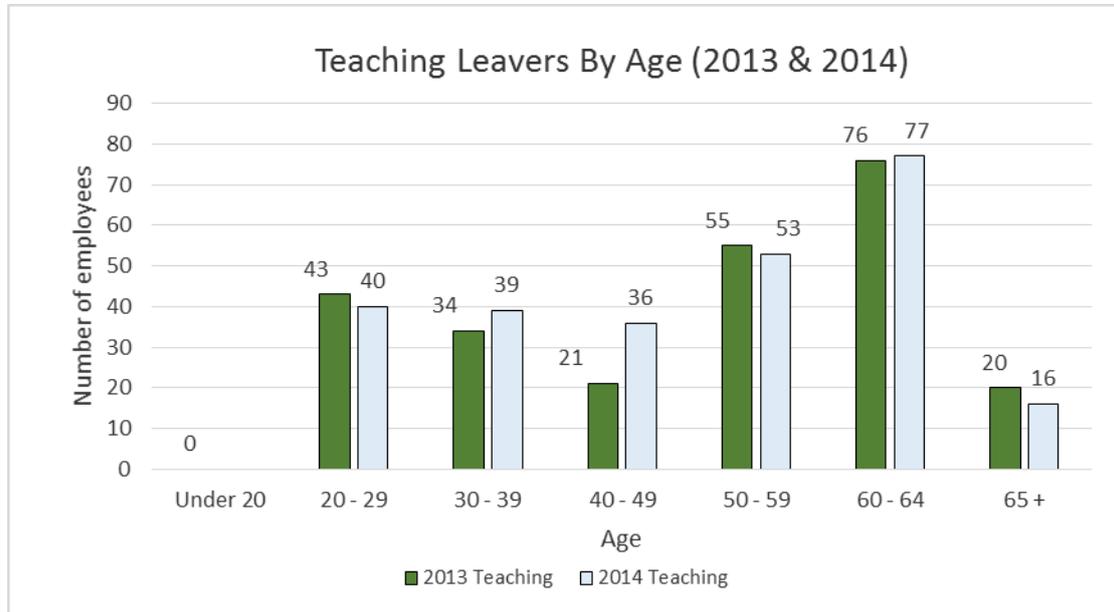


Likewise, in 2014 the largest age category of non-teaching employees was 50-59.



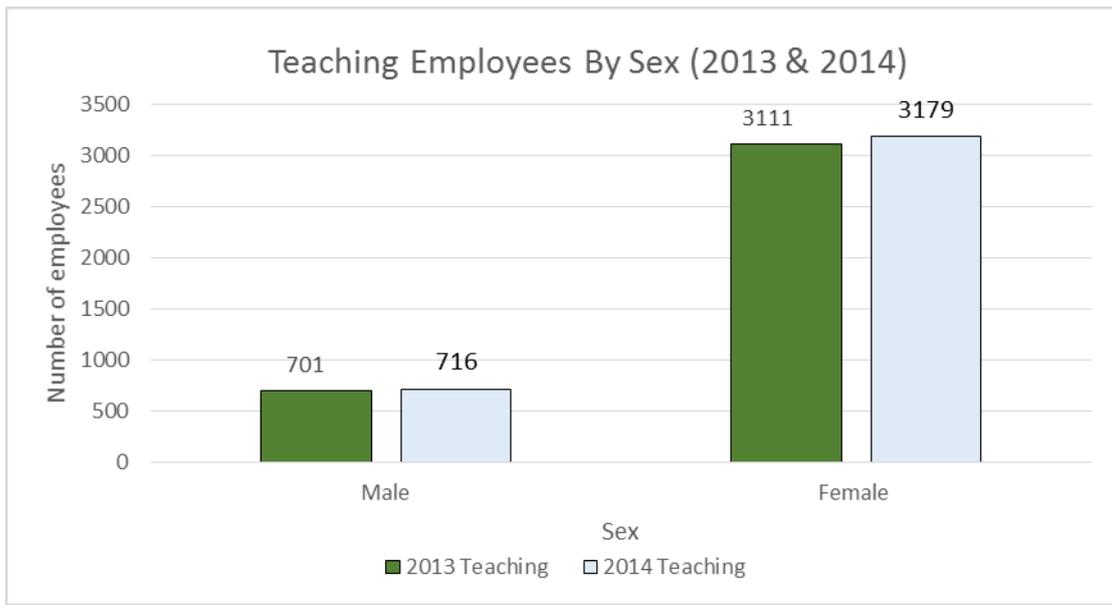
Retention

The highest proportion of teaching leavers was in the 60 – 64 age range whereas the highest percentage of leavers in the non-teaching category was in the 40 – 49 age range.

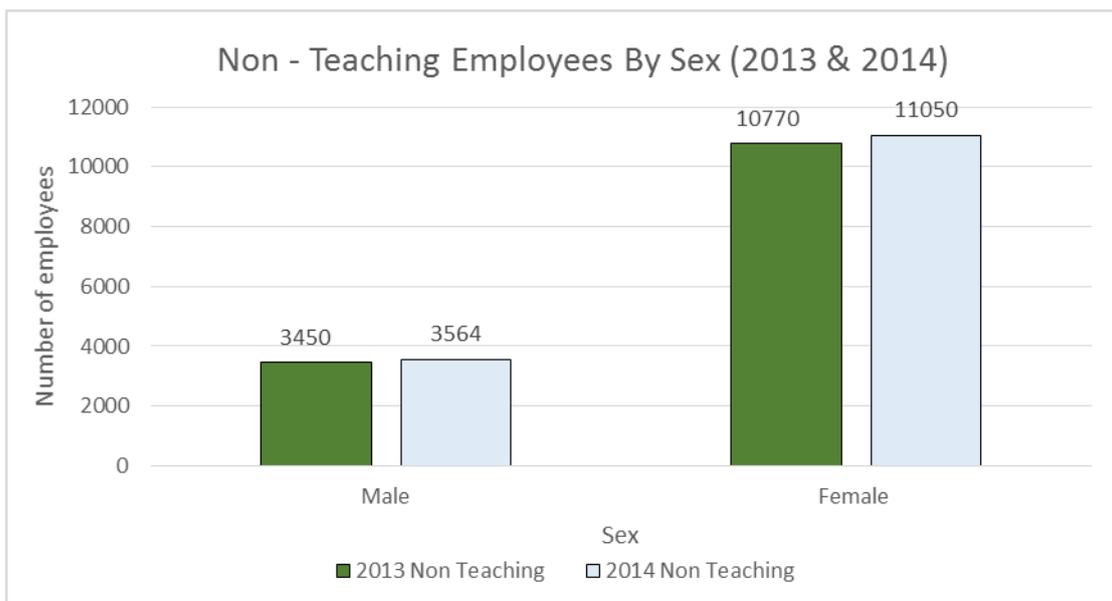


Gender/ Sex

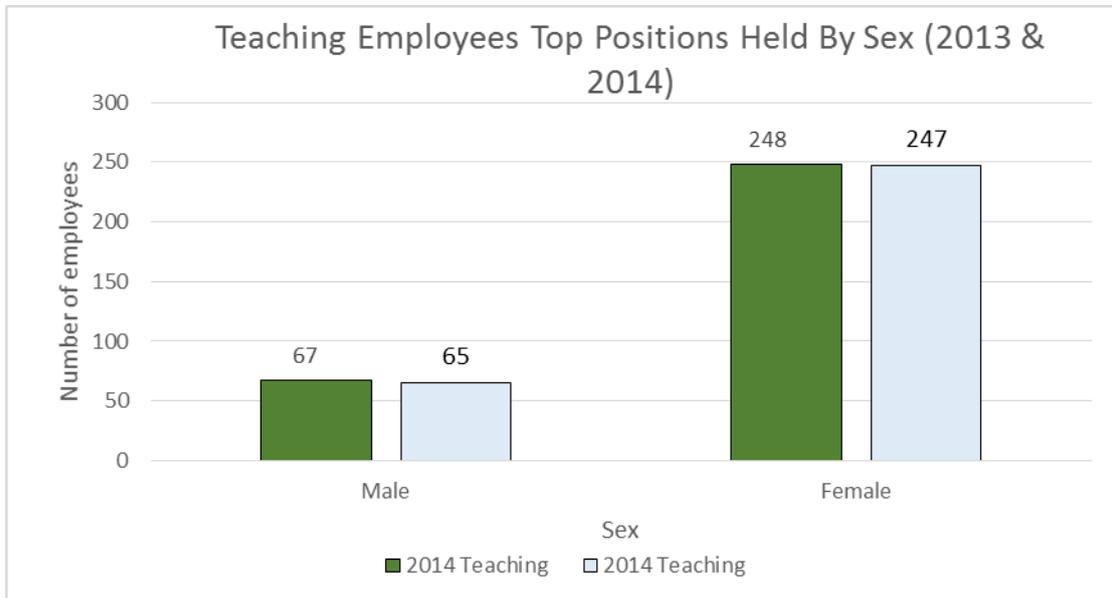
Consistent with previous years, the majority of employees in the education authority were female, with a slight increase in numbers between 2013 and 2014. Male employees made up 18% of the education authority workforce, with the number of male employees increasing slightly between 2013 and 2014.



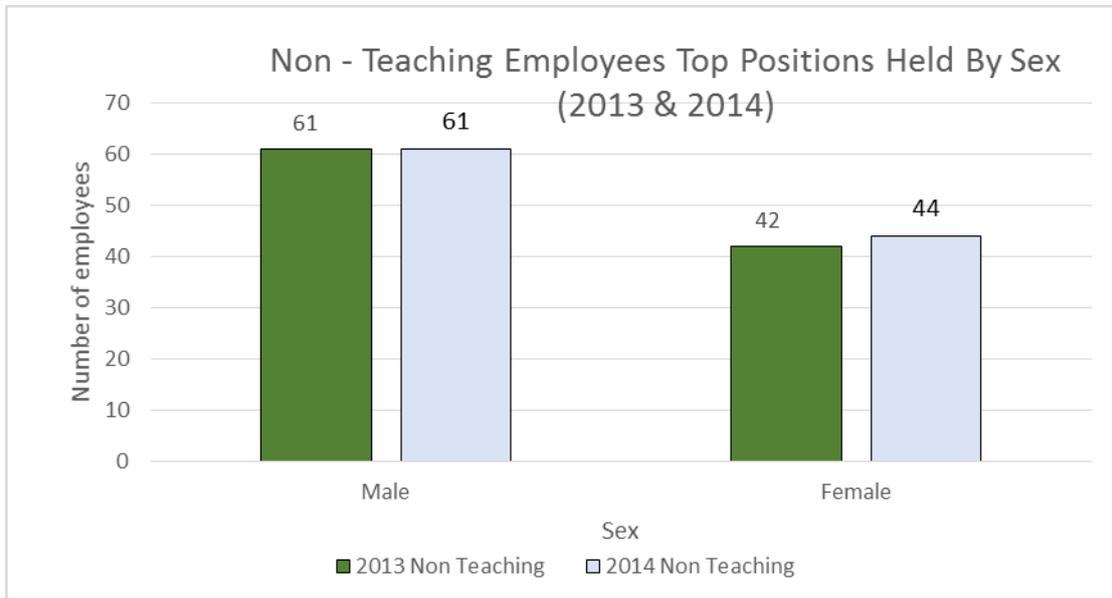
Similarly, with regards to non-teaching employees, both male and female categories saw increases in numbers of employees, with the vast majority of employees being female.



With regards to the top teaching positions held by sex, the proportion of female and male top positions was in line with the overall proportion of female and male teaching staff.

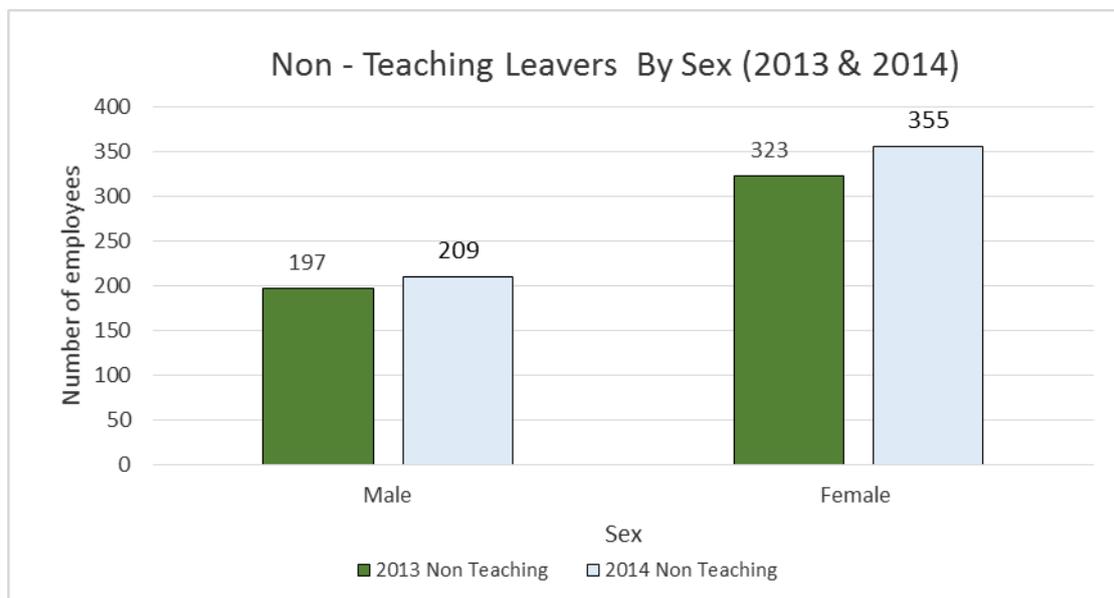
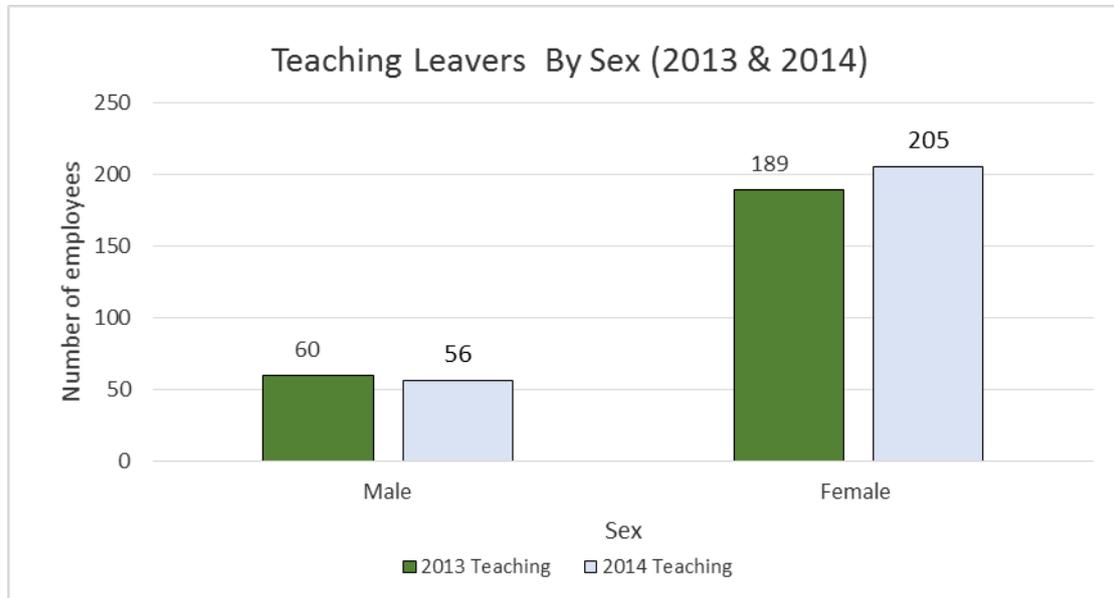


However, with regards to non - teaching employees, there was significantly more male employees in top positions than female, when compared to the proportion of all employees.



Retention

With regards to teaching and non-teaching leavers, the majority of employees leaving the authority were female. Information across the reporting period for both teaching and non-teaching leavers was broadly consistent with the previous mainstreaming report.



Race

With regards to teaching employees and non-teaching employees, the majority of staff identified themselves as White Scottish across the reporting period, with no significant increases or decreases in any of the race categories. It worth noting that the second highest category of race was unknown, for both teaching and non-teaching employees. These trends are consistent with the previously mainstreaming report.

All Teaching Employees		2013	2014
Race	Asian Chinese	2	2
	Asian Indian	4	5
	Asian Other inc Scottish	5	6
	Asian Bangladeshi	1	0
	Asian Pakistani	0	1
	Black African	9	6
	Caribbean	0	1
	African Other	0	0
	Black Other	1	1
	Mixed	15	15
	Gypsy Traveller	1	1
	Other Ethnic Background	0	0
	Polish	4	4
	White British	395	433
	White English	187	192
	White Scottish	2037	2030
	White Irish	15	24
	White Northern Irish	31	38
	White Welsh	17	16
	White Other	64	69
Unknown	1024	1051	

		2013	2014
All Non-Teaching Employees			
Race	Asian Chinese	5	4
	Asian Indian	17	21
	Asian Other inc Scottish	38	39
	Asian Bangladeshi	3	4
	Asian Pakistani	2	2
	Black African	30	23
	Caribbean	6	6
	African Other	0	
	Black Other	6	4
	Mixed	46	48
	Gypsy Traveller	0	
	Other Ethnic Background	0	
	Polish	72	85
	White British	1352	1396
	White English	870	820
	White Scottish	9409	9365
	White Irish	56	55
	White Northern Irish	41	44
	White Welsh	63	60
	White Other	163	174
Unknown	2041	2464	



Retention

With regards to teaching and non-teaching leavers for, the largest number of staff leaving the organisation identified as White Scottish..

		2013	2014
All Teaching Leavers			
Race	Asian Chinese	0	0
	Asian Indian	0	0
	Asian Other inc Scottish	0	0
	Asian Bangladeshi	0	0
	Asian Pakastani	0	0
	Black African	0	0
	Caribbean	0	0
	African Other	0	0
	Black Other	0	0
	Mixed	1	1
	Gypsy Traveller	1	0
	Other Ethnic Background	0	0
	Polish	1	0
	White British	33	24
	White English	16	7
	White Scottish	133	143
	White Irish	0	2
	White Northern Irish	3	1
	White Welsh	0	4
White Other	0	1	
Unknown	61	78	

		2013	2014
All Non-Teaching Leavers			
Race	Asian Chinese	2	1
	Asian Indian	1	1
	Asian Other inc Scottish	2	0
	Asian Bangladeshi	0	0
	Asian Pakastani	0	0
	Black African	2	4
	Caribbean	0	0
	African Other	0	0
	Black Other	1	0
	Mixed	5	0
	Gypsy Traveller	1	0
	Other Ethnic Background	0	0
	Polish	1	1
	White British	65	47
	White English	39	31
	White Scottish	315	337
	White Irish	1	3
White Northern Irish	5	2	



White Welsh	1	2
White Other	7	8
Unknown	72	107

Religion or Belief

With regards to teaching employees, the highest number of employees classed themselves as unknown. Church of Scotland was the second highest category, with no religion or belief third highest.

All Teaching Employees		2013 Teaching	2014 Teaching
Religion or Belief	Buddhist	9	9
	Catholic	139	154
	Church of Scotland	1012	997
	Hindu	2	3
	Jewish	1	1
	Muslim	12	10
	No religion/belief	528	592
	Other Religion or Belief	45	48
	Protestant	208	221
	Sikh	0	1
	Other Christian	167	176
	Unknown	1689	1683

A similar theme was seen for non-teaching employees over the reporting period, with no significant increases or decreases in employees across any religion or belief category.

All Non – Teaching Employees		2013 Non-Teaching	2014 Non-Teaching
Religion or Belief	Buddhist	21	22
	Catholic	435	448
	Church of Scotland	4178	4098
	Hindu	5	6
	Jewish	2	4
	Muslim	48	43
	No religion/belief	2505	2718
	Other Religion or Belief	183	173
	Protestant	680	668
	Sikh	2	2
	Other Christian	577	579
	Unknown	5582	5853



Retention

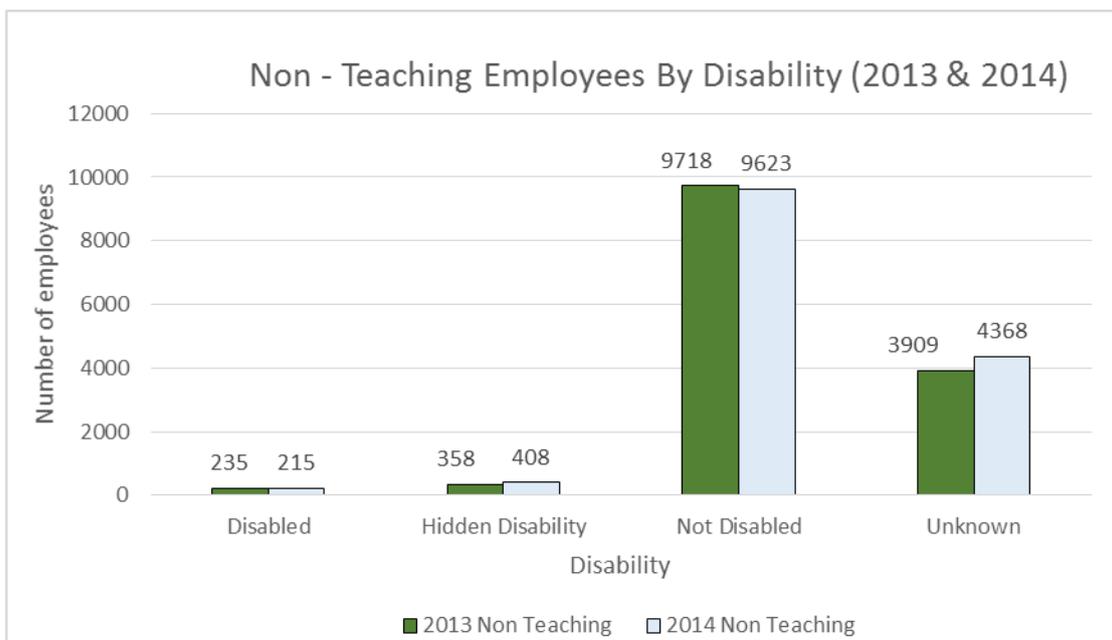
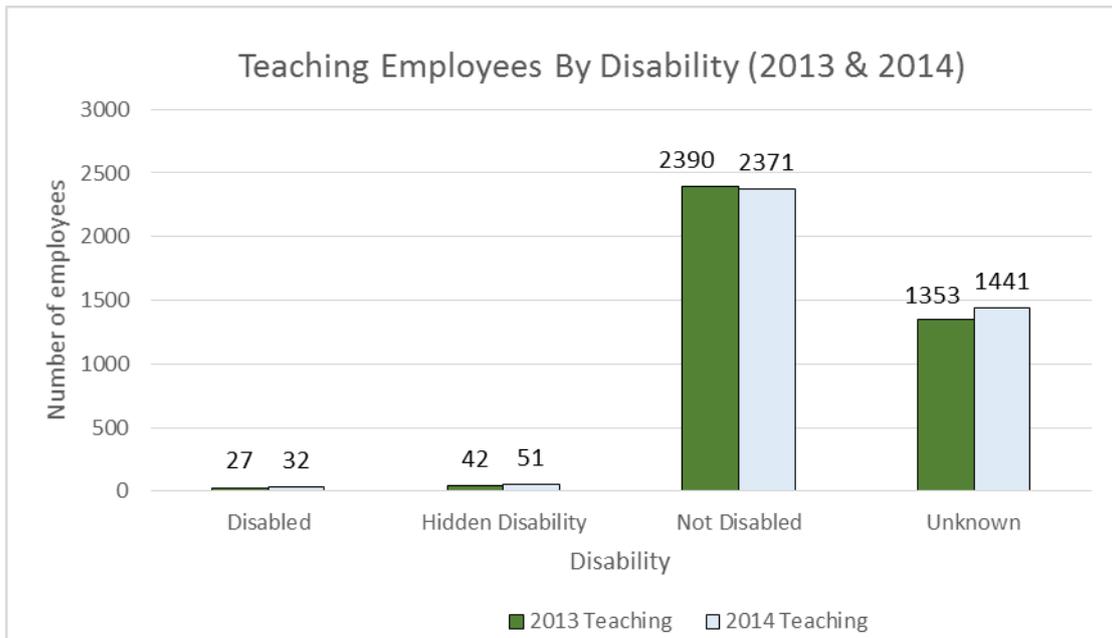
Likewise, with regards to employees leaving the Council, the data was consistent with the overall proportion of teaching and non-teaching employees.

		2013 Teaching	2014 Teaching
All Teaching Leavers			
Religion or Belief	Buddhist	0	1
	Catholic	9	12
	Church of Scotland	67	72
	Hindu	0	0
	Jewish	0	0
	Muslim	1	1
	No religion/belief	35	30
	Other Religion or Belief	3	3
	Protestant	14	11
	Sikh	0	0
	Other Christian	9	11
	Unknown	111	120

		2013 Non Teaching	2014 Non Teaching
All Non-Teaching Leavers			
Religion or Belief	Buddhist	1	1
	Catholic	14	11
	Church of Scotland	134	158
	Hindu	1	1
	Jewish	1	0
	Muslim	2	2
	No religion/belief	93	117
	Other Religion or Belief	13	5
	Protestant	24	18
	Sikh	0	0
	Other Christian	29	21
	Unknown	208	210

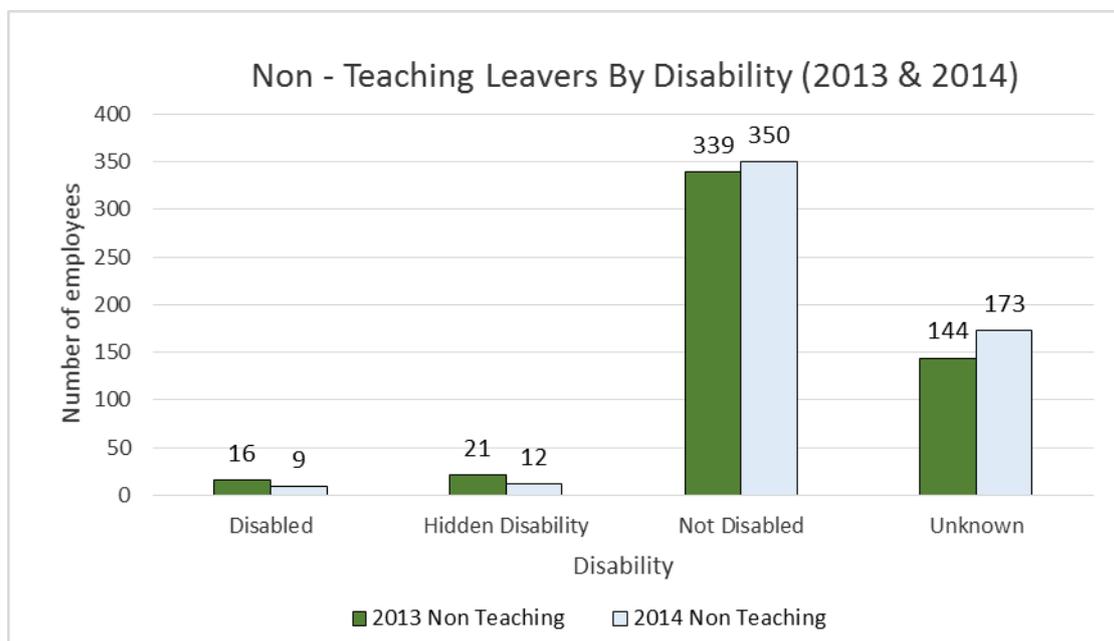
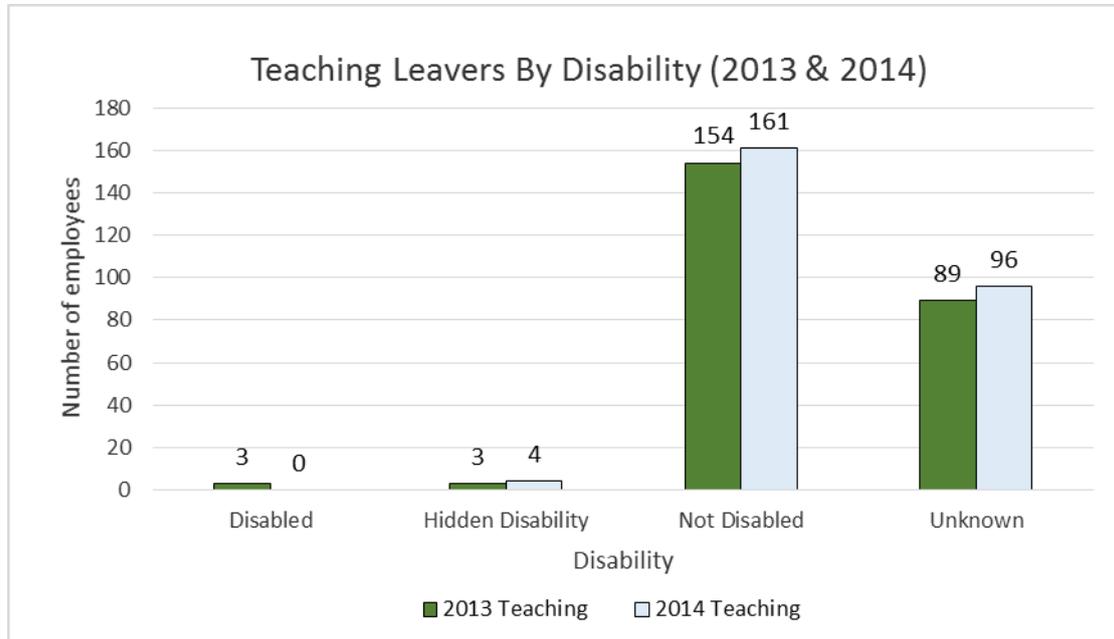
Disability

With regards to teaching employees, the highest number of employees identified as Not Disabled, with the second highest identifying as Unknown. The numbers of people identifying as Disabled and Not Disabled were very small, in relation to the other categories. This trend was also evident in the non-teaching employee data, and both sets of data (teaching and non-teaching) were consistent with the previous mainstreaming report, with no significant variances.



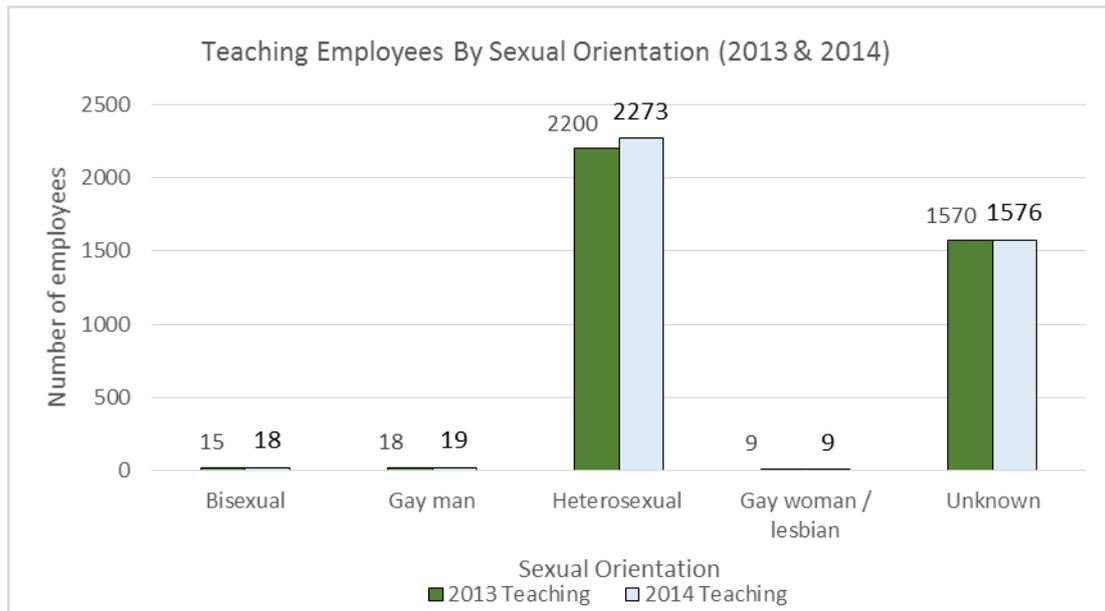
Retention

Similarly, leaver's data for teaching and non-teaching members of staff reflected the overall data for current employees, across the reporting period, with no significant differences with the previous mainstreaming report.

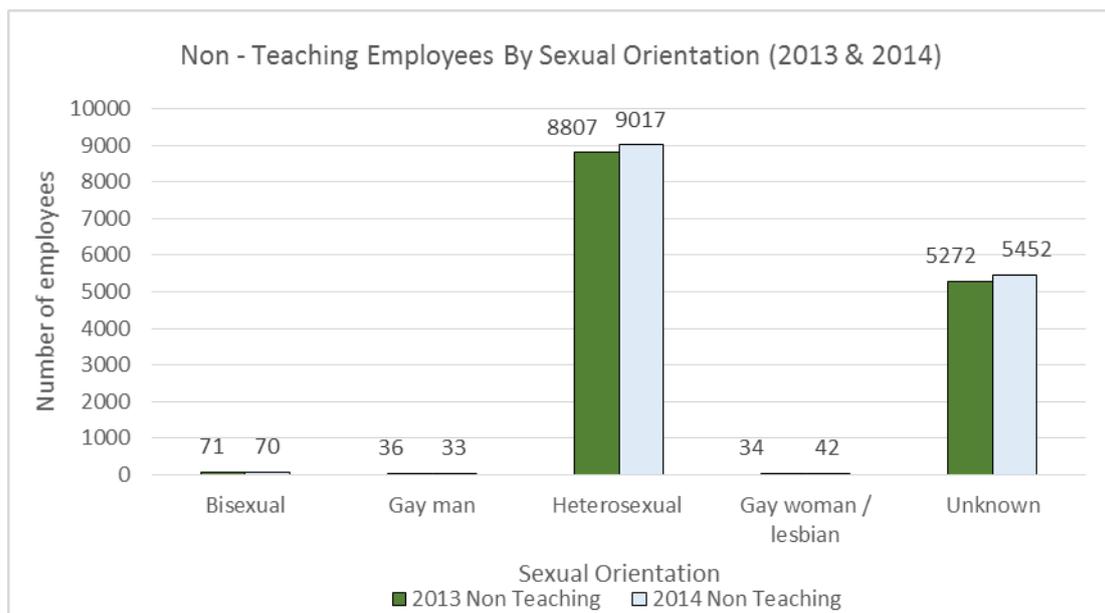


Sexual Orientation

Consistent with the previous mainstreaming report, the highest number of teaching employees identified as heterosexual, with a significant number identifying as Unknown. Very small numbers of teaching employees identified as Bisexual, Gay Man and Gay Women/Lesbian, which was consistent with data from the previous mainstreaming report.

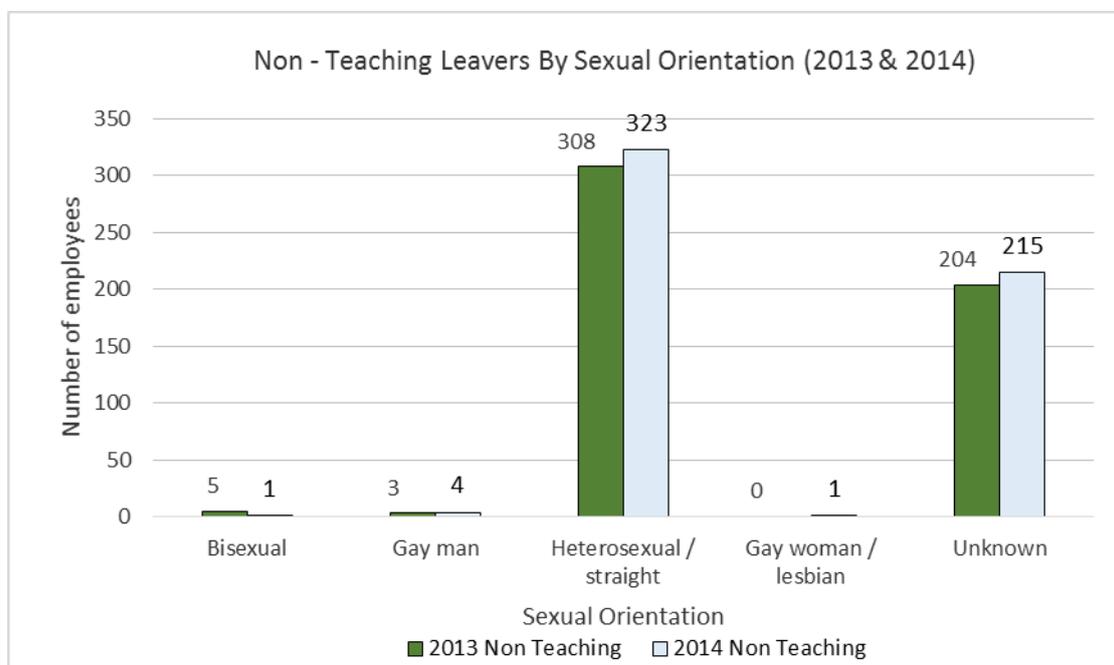
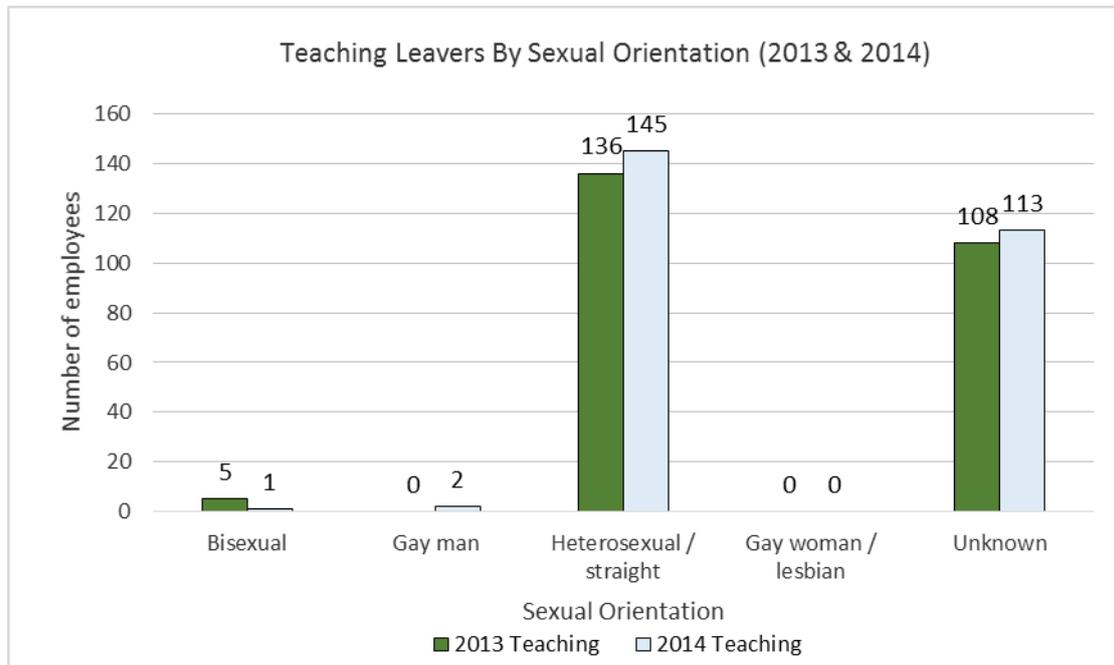


Likewise, the highest number of non-teaching staff identified themselves as either Heterosexual or Unknown. However, the number of employees identifying as Bisexual was around twice as many as employees identifying as Gay Man or Gay Women. Much work has been undertaken to promote the Council as a good LGBT employer since 2013.



Retention

The number of teaching and non-teaching leavers was broadly consistent with overall employee data, however, the number of Bisexual teaching leavers was significantly higher, when compared to overall number of employees identifying as Bisexual.



Gender Identity

We currently only have data for all applicants, and do not have any other data in relation to this characteristic. Going forward, we will be looking to ensure that we are able to capture and report on this characteristic.

Pregnancy and Maternity

We do not currently have this data available, but we are hoping to have this available by the time the final report is published

Marriage/ Civil Partnership

Unfortunately we are unable to gather data on Maternity/ Pregnancy and marriage/ civil partnership characteristics for recruitment, retention and development.



APPENDIX 3 – GENDER PAY GAP

This report is based on incumbencies or posts held by each employee. Some employees may have multiple incumbencies – for example a Pupil Support Assistant may also hold posts for a Children’s Escort and a Relief Nursery Nurse. During the report Incumbencies are referred to as ‘employee data’ or employees.

The following information provides the policy, background, approach and detail of the pay gap calculations and Occupational Segregation required by legislation.

Pay Gap Information

Premise of Calculations:

We have used the basic (excluding overtime) hourly rate of pay for each employee.

We then calculated the average hourly rate of pay for male employees, and separately female employees.

We worked out the mean average for each gender by adding together all of the individual hourly rates of pay, and then dividing this by the total number of employees.

The calculation we used is set out below:

$$(A / B) \times 100 = \text{TOTAL}$$
$$100 - \text{TOTAL} = \text{PAY GAP}$$

A = female average hourly rate

B = male average hourly rate

Chart Details

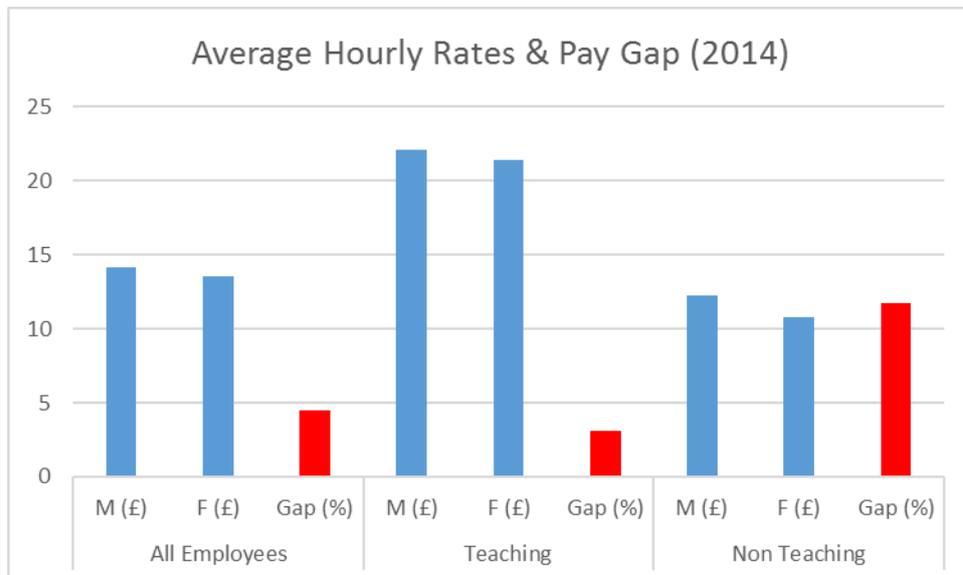
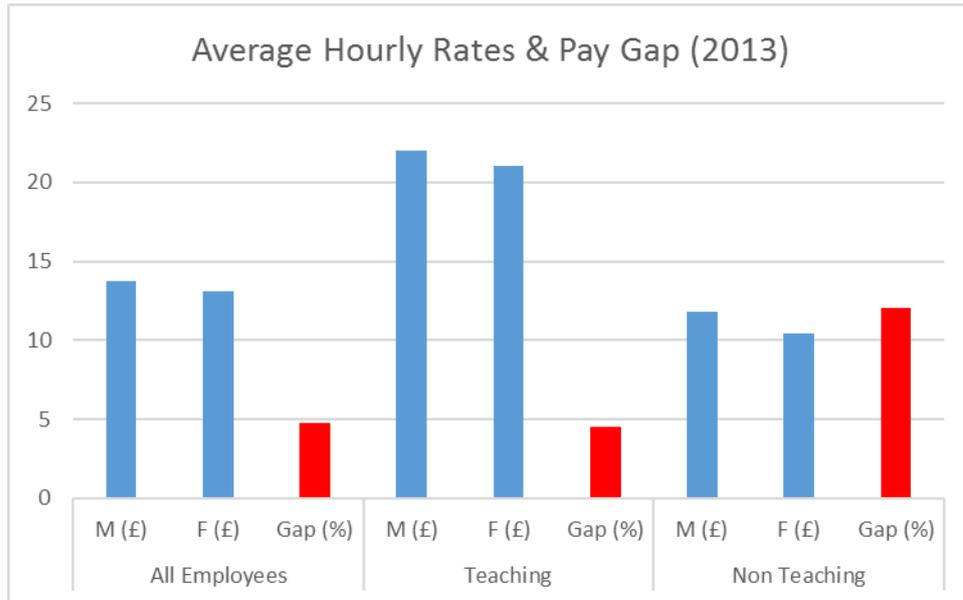
The information in the chart below shows the average hourly rates for all employees, teachers only and non-teaching employees respectively. The figure at the side of each column representing females is the percentage pay gap for each category.

For all employees, the pay gap between males and females fell from 4.73% in 2013 to 4.46% in 2014.

This overall reduction reflects falls in the pay gaps between male and female teaching staff (4.54% in 2013 to 3.13% in 2014) and non-teaching staff (12.02% in 2013 to 11.75% in 2014).



Average Hourly Rates									
	All Employees			Teaching			Non-Teaching		
	M	F	Gap (%)	M	F	Gap (%)	M	F	Gap (%)
2013	13.75	13.10	4.73	22.05	21.05	4.54	11.81	10.39	12.02
2014	14.13	13.50	4.46	22.07	21.38	3.13	12.26	10.82	11.75

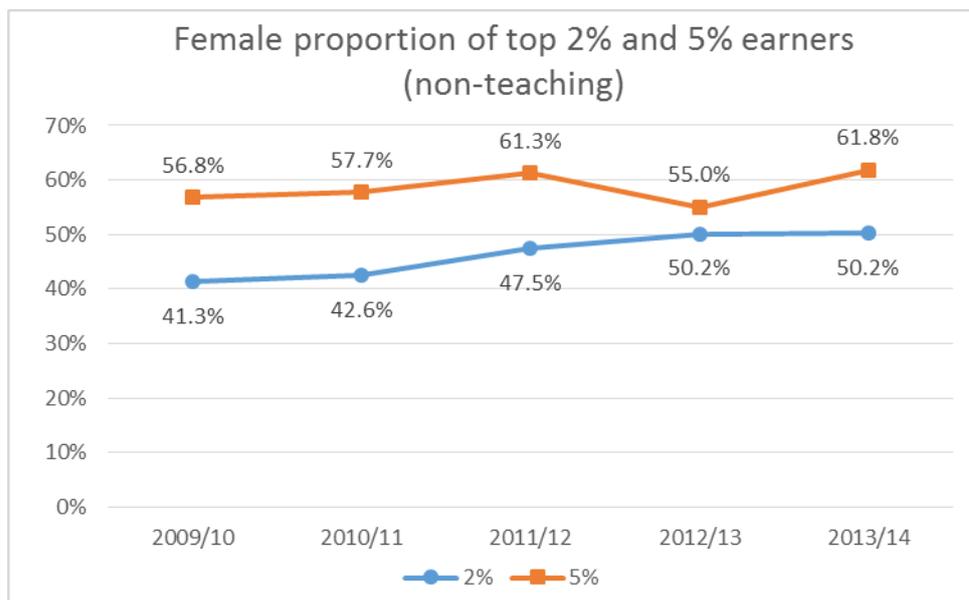


Top Earner Information

The chart below shows the percentage of female employees in the top 2% and 5% of earners in the Council over the past five financial years. The figures relate to non-teaching staff only.

The chart illustrates that over the five year period the percentage of female employees in the top 2% and 5% of earners in the Council has increased. In respect of the top 2% of earners, there has been an 8.9% increase in the proportion of females since 2009-10, while for the top 5% of earners the proportion of females has risen by 5.0%.

Female Percentage of Top Earners



The 5% figures is reported nationally as part of the Local Government Benchmarking Framework. The Aberdeenshire figure of 61.8% is the highest of all Scottish local authorities in 2014 and is well ahead of the Scottish average of 50.7%.



APPENDIX 4 - EQUAL PAY STATEMENT AND OCCUPATIONAL SEGREGATION

Equal Pay

This is the Equal Pay Statement in relation to all employees including Teaching Staff (Education Authority).

Aberdeenshire Council is committed to the principle of Equal Pay for all its employees in compliance with the Equality Act 2010. Section 149 of the 2010 Act places an obligation on all public sector employers to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation, and promote equality of opportunity between men and women.

The Council aims to eliminate any sex bias in its pay structures, systems and conditions of Service, and recognises that avoiding unfair discrimination will improve morale and retention of its workforce, improve efficiency, and contribute to ensuring that it is an employer of choice. In formulating its pay structures, systems, and conditions of Service, the Council will observe the legal rights of men and women under both domestic and European law.

It is important that the Council has fair, equitable and transparent pay structures, systems, and conditions of Service, and that employees have confidence that sex bias will be eliminated if it exists. To this end, the Council will ensure that adequate resources are in place to meet its equal pay objectives, work in partnership with recognised trade unions to eliminate unfair or unlawful practices that impact on pay, and take appropriate remedial action.

Our objectives are to:

- Eliminate any unfair, unjust or unlawful practices that impact on pay; and
- Take appropriate remedial action.

In particular, the Council will:

- Monitor pay statistics internally and externally and publish employment information as it relates to pay and gender pay gap information including occupational segregation;
- Undertake an equal pay review for all employee groups every two years;
- Plan and implement required actions in partnership with trade union representatives;
- Provide training and guidance for those involved in determining pay;
- Inform employee of the method of determining pay levels and calculating payments; and
- Respond to equal pay grievances.



Occupational Segregation

Employees have been divided into the following groups:

Teachers including Educational Psychologists

This covers permanent and supply teaching employees, Educational Psychologists, Quality Improvement Officers and any school based teaching associations, for example, Music Instructors, Probationary Teachers, and Visiting Specialists.

Clerical & Administrative Type Duties

This covers Clerical and Administrative employees up to, but not including, Service Managers. Typical post titles are Finance Assistants, Assistant Housing Officers, receptionists, Administration Assistants and Officers, Customer Services, Registrars, Library Assistants, PAs and Secretaries.

Care Employees

This covers Home carers and other front-line employees in Social Work, Leisure, Community, and school support Services such as Family Support Workers, Coaching Assistants, Children's Escorts, Nursery Nurses, Sheltered Housing, Pupil Support Assistants, School Crossing Patrollers and Community Learning Session Workers.

Catering Employees

This covers our front-line catering employees and line management but not administrative support. This covers post title such as Catering Assistants, Reliefs, Cooks and Unit Supervisors.

Cleaning Employees

This covers out front-line cleaning employees and line management but not administrative support. This covers post titles such as Cleaner, Reliefs, Public Convenience Attendants, Mobile Operatives and Site Supervisors.

Managers

This covers all of the Senior Managers including the Chief Executive, Directors, Area Managers, Heads of Service, Project Managers, Social Work Managers, and Support Service Managers.



Professional & Technician Posts

This covers a range of fully qualified employees and those on professional or technical career development schemes, including Planners, Engineers, HR, Economic Development Technicians, Health & Safety Officers, Librarians, Solicitors, Accountants, Social Workers, Waste Officers, Housing Officers, Coaches, Instructors, Trainers, Community Learning, Senior Practitioners, and Team Leaders of professionals.

Operational, Craft, and Physical Type Duties

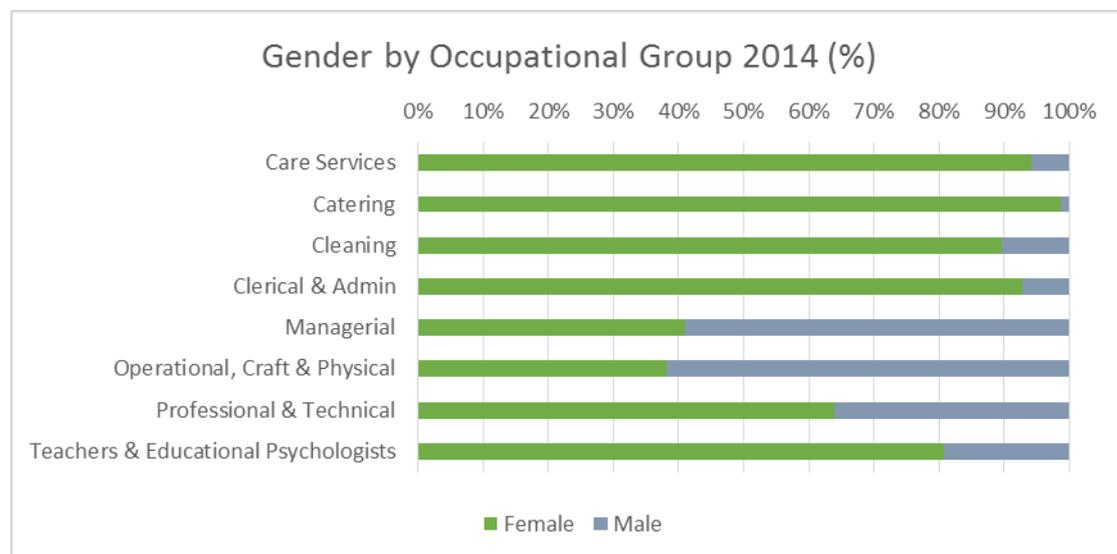
This covers a wide range of crafts, physical work, and technical subjects where the career development is not specifically into professional levels.

This covers post titles such as Mechanics, Time-Served People, School Caretakers, Janitors, Road Workers, Landscape Workers, Refuse Collectors, Dog Wardens, Drivers, Building Maintenance staff???, Roads and Property Inspectors.

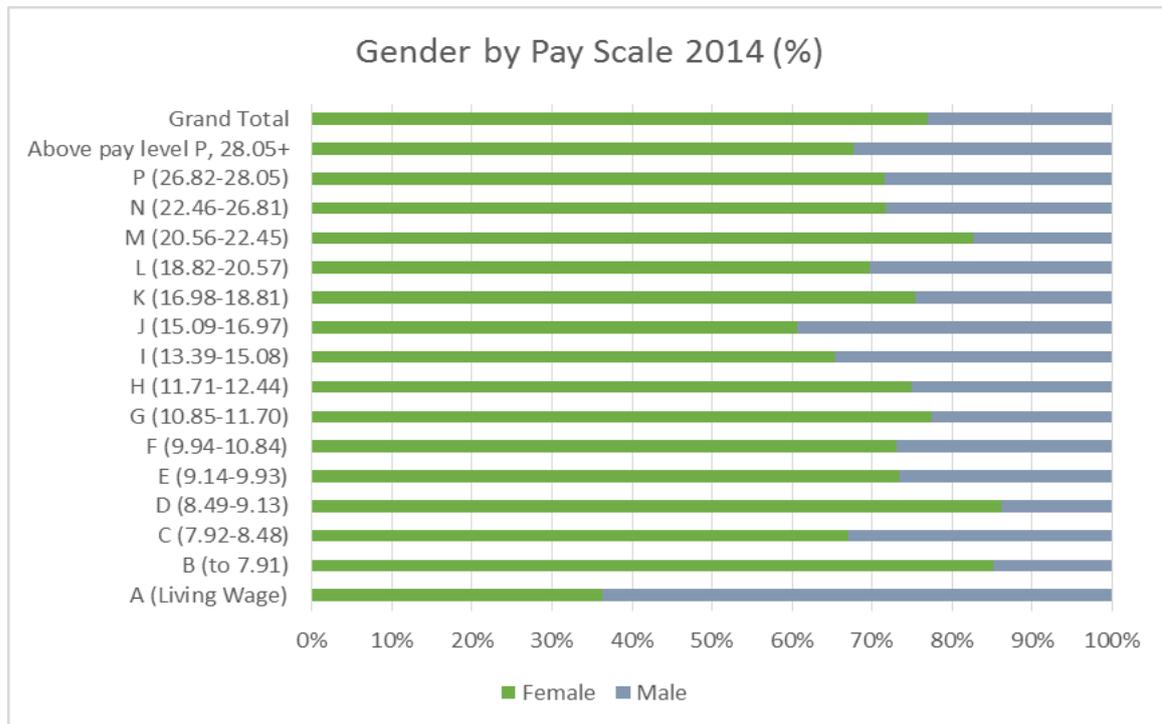
Charts

The following graphs are presented in addition to the table (Appendix?) which has more detailed information suitable for in-depth consideration.

The first chart shows in blue and green the gender split in each of the segregation groups.



The next chart displays the gender split in relation to pay. Teachers' pay has been included in these levels.



This information is used to monitor significant operational groups in the context of developments surrounding the living wage as it applies in Scotland.

Movement in senior managers' salaries are monitored to better understand the gender balance in recruitment into these positions.

All professions within Aberdeenshire Council may be subject to turnover and retention issues, including those specifically associated with local employment factors. Monitoring pay in these areas is undertaken to ensure competitiveness and equality in recruitment. For example, the local oil industry has a significant impact on the ability to attract and retain personnel in all categories. Benefits of working for the Council such as flexible working and the pension scheme are promoted.

Operational, craft, and physical areas, although traditionally male-biased, may see significant changes related to oil opportunities and large-scale geographical roads developments which may impact on Aberdeenshire.

Care and Administration groups are significantly female-biased and monitoring of general trends continues to take place.

Aberdeenshire Council has been co-ordinating and consolidating Services into larger units, streamlining management posts, and creating more effective and efficient administrative and supportive provision. This includes the single



Service of Education and Children's Services. This means that support staff and centrally-based staff cannot be satisfactorily split into education or other local authority functions. The Equality and Human Rights Commission guidance states a requirement to separate Education from other local authority employee information. To support EHRC requirements and produce usable and auditable records, we have produced the information relating to teaching employees separate from all other employees.

Future Requirements

No specific targets are identified, other than the continuing drive to encourage males to apply for traditionally female roles such as Homecarers, Primary School Teachers and clerical & administrative posts.

Conversely, Aberdeenshire Council has been seeking to recruit more females into areas such as craft work, landscape, and waste environments, as well as traditionally male roles such as LGV drivers and technical professions.



The statistical breakdown is as follows:

Table using Aberdeenshire's current pay grades or equivalent to show distribution of earnings in professional segregation

	Care Services		Catering		Cleaning		Clerical & Admin		Managerial		Operational, Craft & Physical		Professional & Technical		Teachers & Educational Psychologists	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
A (Living Wage)	0.16%	0.02%					0.16%	0.08%			0.03%	0.49%				
B (to 7.91)	1.93%	1.29%	68.43%	0.11%	86.33%	9.27%					3.20%	4.26%		0.18%		
C (7.92-8.48)	11.20%	0.84%	6.82%		1.49%	0.55%					11.20%	12.09%				
D (8.49-9.13)	28.42%	0.36%			1.02%	0.24%	46.94%	2.69%			1.74%	8.68%	0.06%			
E (9.14-9.93)	23.31%	1.40%	6.82%	0.66%			8.53%	0.82%			2.77%	11.61%				
F (9.94-10.84)	4.20%	0.53%	15.84%	0.33%			21.22%	0.90%			0.14%	7.21%				
G (10.85-11.70)	8.69%	0.49%	0.33%	0.11%	0.31%		7.84%	1.06%			10.55%	5.31%		0.12%	3.84%	2.05%
H (11.71-12.44)	14.15%	0.62%	0.22%		0.24%	0.08%	4.04%	0.45%			3.80%	6.32%	1.96%	1.96%		
I (13.39-15.08)	1.76%	0.09%				0.08%	3.39%	0.73%		0.82%	3.85%	4.66%	3.37%	1.96%	3.72%	1.10%
J (15.09-16.97)	0.33%		0.33%		0.24%	0.16%	0.61%	0.45%			0.89%	1.08%	6.87%	6.68%	2.79%	0.74%
K (16.98-18.81)	0.16%	0.07%										0.14%	31.33%	10.48%	2.41%	0.52%
L (18.82-20.57)							0.04%			0.82%			12.32%	7.73%	5.70%	1.55%
M (20.56-22.45)										0.82%			7.11%	5.33%	45.47%	8.06%
N (22.46-26.81)								0.04%	4.10%	3.28%			0.86%	1.66%	3.31%	0.72%
P (26.82-28.05)									27.05%	36.07%					8.61%	2.67%
Above pay level P, 28.05+									9.84%	17.21%					4.82%	1.93%
Grand Total	94.29%	5.71%	98.79%	1.21%	89.63%	10.37%	92.78%	7.22%	40.98%	59.02%	38.15%	61.85%	63.89%	36.11%	80.66%	19.34%



APPENDIX 5 - SERVICE DELIVERY WHICH SUPPORTS EQUALITIES WITHIN ABERDEENSHIRE

1. Housing and Community Planning

This Service delivers a wide variety of Services to residents on a daily basis, it is imperative that all residents within the Council area have equal access to these Services and are made aware of any changes which may occur in their provision over time.

Examples of mainstreaming:-

1.1 Facilities for Mobility Scooters in Sheltered Housing

The Housing Service has provided facilities for storing and recharging mobility scooters in recent Very Sheltered Housing conversions, recognising the needs of those who use them. This has been a welcome provision for tenants who require the use of the mobility scooters.

1.2 Loop Systems in Sheltered Housing Common Areas

Hearing loop systems are currently being trialed and will ultimately be provided in sheltered housing complex common lounges, to assist those with hearing difficulties to engage more easily and comfortably.

1.3 Housing Stock Improvement Programme

Dedicated Housing Occupational Therapists are involved in assessments linked to the Capital Programme, ensuring that required adaptations are incorporated within upgrades such as kitchens and bathrooms.

This has proved to be a very positive and welcome initiative for both tenants and the Service, as adaptations can be put in place during the upgrade works, involving minimal disruption and waiting time.

1.4 Equalities Monitoring in the Apply4homes Application Process

Equalities monitoring has been discussed with the [Apply4Homes](#) partnership and a decision has been made that this information should be moved into the application form. Applicants will be required to complete this prior to completing their application for housing. These questions will be made mandatory with the option of "Prefer not to Say". This change will be implemented in 2015.

1.5 Gypsy/ Traveler Seminar

A Gypsy/ Traveller information seminar was held on 3 November 2014. Approximately 60 people attended the seminar including officers and Elected Members from Aberdeenshire, Aberdeen City, Angus, and the Moray Councils. Representatives from partner organisations, Registered Social



Landlords and members of the Travelling community were also in attendance. The purpose of the seminar was to raise Elected Members' awareness of the issues for Gypsy/ Travellers, to help them to make more informed decisions in the future.

CASE STUDY:- *At its meeting on 26 November 2014 , members of the Gypsy/ Traveller Sub-Committee welcomed the breakthrough of attendance of members from the Gypsy/ Traveller community at a Council meeting and encouraged officers to engage with Gypsy/Travellers who had indicated an interest in working with the Council. Members also welcomed the attendance of Councillors at the seminar who were not members of the Sub-Committee, as this was important for raising awareness. Since then, officers have had informal meetings with members of the Travelling Community regarding site provision.*

1.6 Summary Model Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement

The 'Summary Model Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement' is now available in the four most commonly used languages of Russian, Polish, Lithuanian, and Latvian and is accessible to officers as required. This is helpful when signing up new tenants who require the document in a particular language.

CASE STUDY: - *Having the template for the 'Summary Model Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement' readily available and accessible for printing makes it more streamlined for both staff and applicants/tenants. The basics of the tenancy obligations will be understandable to applicants, although for legal reasons, new tenants are required to sign the Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement which is printed in English.*

1.7 Private Sector Housing Information Leaflets

Private Sector Housing Information Leaflets are available in Russian, Portuguese, Lithuanian, Latvian, Polish, and Mandarin, the most commonly used languages, to assist ethnic minority people who live in Private Sector housing.

There is a recognition that many ethnic minority people access housing through the private sector, as well as through the social sector. In view of this, the decision was taken to make information on housing in the private sector available to tenants in the most commonly used languages.

1.8 Minority Ethnic Outreach Project Information Poster

The Minority Ethnic Outreach Project Information Poster, which provides contact information on the Project in several languages, is on prominent display in Housing Offices. The poster has the flags of the different countries displayed on it, as a visual, easily identifiable prompt. The Minority Ethnic



Outreach Worker ensures these posters are distributed and displayed in a variety of locations.

1.9 Tenant Participation

Aberdeenshire Council is committed to working with tenants to provide a high-quality housing Service that is responsive to tenants' needs and recognises that tenants are at the heart of the housing Service. The Aberdeenshire model of tenant participation is a three-way partnership of tenants, tenants' groups, and staff all working together.

There is a sound relationship between the housing Service and tenants that is exemplified by the Tenant Participation Promotion Team (TPPT) and the various functional tenant/officer working groups. The Council is committed to work and consult with tenants from across Aberdeenshire and involve them in as many ways as possible. This is facilitated and helped by holding two tenant events per year, to which every tenant in Aberdeenshire is invited and five tenant officer/officer working groups which cover five functions in housing; Asset Management, Tenancy Management, Finance, Housing Options, and Strategy (Planning for the Future).

There is also a quarterly Tenants' Newsletter, edited and produced by the tenants, issued to all tenant households, encouraging two-way communication and allowing an opportunity for tenants to engage with the housing Service.

1.10 Tenant/ Officer Working Groups

The Planning for the Future Tenant/Officer Working Group which meets on a monthly basis, receives regular updates on Equalities and raises Equalities issues for discussion. The group have signed up to [Stonewall Scotland's "No Bystanders" pledge](#).

This group and the other tenant officer working groups, covering Asset Management, Finance, Tenancy Management and Housing Options, provide tenants with the opportunity to be involved with, and consulted on, policies and procedures, and have an influence the housing Service.

1.11 Community Oil Buying Club

In early 2014, a project steering group was established to explore how savings from oil buying clubs could be made widely available to residents with all Protected Characteristics in Marr, especially those living in fuel poverty. The steering group involved a partnership between a number of local organisations including Aberdeenshire Council Fuel Poverty Officers and the Marr Area Office, North East Scotland Credit Union (NESCU), the Council for Voluntary Services Aberdeenshire and Gordon Rural Action.

The steering group decided to adopt a model which involved entering into a partnership with Highland Fuels who have five years' experience of running commercial and community oil clubs and who have a dedicated fuel club



officer able to carry out the administration of the club.

NESCU is a key partner in the project and will also be directly involved in offering their Services to oil club members in financial hardship. The aim of this link is to ensure that the cost savings available from being a member of an oil club are open to all, irrespective of their financial situation. They will be able to help members with a low interest loan to allow them to use the oil club as well as providing budgeting advice.

CASE STUDY: - It was decided that the pilot scheme would be in the off-gas areas of Rhyndrie, Clatt & Lumsden. A meeting was convened with members of the community to explain how the club would work and how much residents might expect to save by joining. The launch was a great success and there are now 75 households signed up for the scheme. How well the club works and the price of oil for members will be monitored for at least 6 months before other schemes are actively rolled out.

1.12 First Fill of Heating Oil for Tenants

The Housing Management Team agreed a procedure, in early 2014, which assists tenants who are experiencing financial difficulty to obtain a first fill of oil (as a recharge). Oil central heating is the only heating type where a substantial upfront payment is required before the customer can enter in to a payment plan / direct debit agreement with a supplier.

Tenants will be referred to [SCARE](#) (an energy efficiency organisation) in the first instance so that a member of HEAT (the Home Energy Advice Team) can arrange a home visit to give free, impartial advice on energy efficiency. Their advisors can also help with any fuel bill concerns and provide advice on choosing the best supplier. In addition to this, tenants will be required to approach a reputable lender, (such as a Credit Union, Bank, Post Office, or Building Society,) to obtain a loan. If they are unable to secure a loan and can provide proof of this, they can then contact the Tenancy Management Team to request a first fill (500 litres) as a recharge. Provided they have no outstanding housing debt, they will be considered for a one-off fill as a recharge. If they are eligible for this, they will be asked to sign a declaration form agreeing to pay back the recharge within 6 months. A Fair Processing Notice will be issued to, and signed by, the tenant to advise what their information will be used for, and with whom it will be shared. They will be provided with the cost of the 500 litre fill and invoiced after delivery. Subsequent fills thereafter will be the tenant's own responsibility. Both new and existing tenants can ask to be considered for a first fill as a recharge. Tenants can only receive a fill of oil (500 litres) once during their tenancy. The procedure was discussed with members of the Planning for the Future Group in May 2014 and was well received. Although there have been a few enquires about the First Fill as a Recharge, to date, no request has been processed.



1.13 Care & Repair

Aberdeenshire Care and Repair provides a free Service to owner-occupiers and tenants of private landlords who live within Aberdeenshire, offering advice and assistance with repairs, improvements and adaptations. Clients must be either over 60 and/or have a disability.

The Private Sector Housing Team in Housing (Communities) is responsible for the delivery of Care & Repair in Aberdeenshire. Care and Repair report quarterly on general satisfaction figures and it is anticipated that in the future, analyses will be carried out on feedback to further inform the delivery of the Service.

1.14 Tenant Satisfaction Survey

Tenant Satisfaction Survey questionnaires will comply with guidance from the Scottish Housing Regulator on content. The questionnaires will also ask tenants for information on the nine Protected Characteristics.

FEEDBACK:-The results of from the recent full scale Tenant Satisfaction Survey and targeted tenant surveys are being analysed in consultation with tenants to improve the housing Service provided. A Housing Improvement Plan is being developed from these survey results and from the feedback from the Annual Report on the Scottish Social Housing Charter outcomes, detailing specific areas for increased attention.

1.15 Affordable Housing

As of January 2015, the Affordable Housing Team has adopted the Corporate Equalities Monitoring Form to monitor equalities in relation to all applications and nominations for new Low Cost Home Ownership schemes as well as the Empty Homes Loan Fund.

1.16 Sheltered Housing Remodeling

To support the Shifting the Balance of Care Agenda for older people, the housing Service is working on proposals to remodel existing sheltered housing complexes across Aberdeenshire to become Very Sheltered Housing (VSH) complexes, which will consist of independent flats with 24 hour care and support, tailored to meet people's individual needs, on-site, 365 days a year. Work to upgrade Playfauld House, Inverurie and Hamewith Court, Alford to VSH was completed in November 2014.

1.17 Very Sheltered Housing Allocation Criteria

The allocation of Very Sheltered Housing (VSH) is covered by the Council's Allocation policy. Applications for VSH are assessed on their housing, medical and housing support needs. A multi-agency panel will agree nominated applications based on the criteria and each applicant's priority and



circumstances as set out below.

Very Sheltered Housing:

- VSH allows and enables tenants (usually older people) to live in their own rented tenancy;
- Tenants within VSH will have an assessed need for this type of accommodation and support;
- All flats are self-contained but there are communal shared areas for tenants and staff to use;
- All complexes are user-friendly to assist people with mobility problems. It will meet wheelchair standards where possible; and
- Each complex has a 24 hour staffing model to provide care and support every day of the year to meet tenants' individual assessed needs. This is inclusive of a meals Service.

The aim of Very Sheltered Housing is:

- To maximise the independence of older people and people with a disability or people who are assessed as requiring help and care by providing self-contained accommodation with 24-hour care and support tailored to meet individual needs. For example, this may include help to get up in the morning, going to bed, and daily tasks such as laundry. Cleaning is not included within tenants flats);
- To enable housing and care Services to respond flexibly with the best use of money available to meet tenants' needs;
- To create a housing and social culture that adds to the choice, control, freedom, and dignity offered to all tenants to meet individual care needs; and
- Provide a meal Service within the complex, offering lunch and an evening meal.

The allocation criteria includes:

- Applicants who are 60 years of age, or above, and are deemed to be vulnerable in their current accommodation. However younger applicants will be considered depending on their circumstances.
- Allocation will be further assisted and assessed with the completion of a Single Shared Assessment (SSA) to further ensure the applicant has an identified need for VSH;
- Applicants who have the ability to live independently, but require 24 hour support including varying degrees of personal care and housing support;
- Allocation of VSH properties will be a joint Housing and Social Work responsibility; and
- Depending on the applicants' circumstances, they will be awarded housing, medical, and care and support priority in accordance with the allocation policy.



2 Social Work

This Service supports people in need of care, or protection, to help them lead safe, independent, healthy lives. Social work has a statutory responsibility to assess an individual's need for care or protection and to make arrangements to meet those needs in an appropriate and holistic way. To meet its responsibilities, social work directly provides a [range of Services for people](#) and also commissions Services from voluntary and private care companies.

Examples of mainstreaming:-

2.1 Fraserburgh People First

A local advocacy group for people with disability, visited people at Robertson Road Resource Centre to deliver a democracy session to highlight awareness of voting in the referendum on 18 September 2014. Participants were guided by a document produced by the Scottish Consortium for Learning Disability, called an 'Independent Guide to the Referendum - easy read'. The group made a DVD recording of their panel session where participants took roles supporting either the YES or the NO campaign. The group members took on the role of politicians on the panel and answered the questions as they were advised in the objective document. After the session, a vote was conducted in the room where a show of YES and No cards were counted. Badges and stickers and posters for both campaigns were on offer to those involved; there was a good uptake.

2.2 Project Search

This is an intense model that supports people with learning disabilities, autism, and Asperger's to learn skills in a sheltered environment that will enable them to get paid employment outside of that environment. Aberdeenshire Council funds four places each year within the project. 'Inspire', which is a voluntary organisation, supporting training that takes place at Aberdeen University. The University provides the training room and work experience and the North East of Scotland College (NESCOL) provides a tutor to deliver an employability course. Three Aberdeenshire students obtained jobs at NESCOL, the finance department of Aberdeen University and Aberdeenshire Council.



Case Study: - A young man with autism attended Robertson Road Day Service. He had previously attended Banff and Buchan College and successfully completed a computer course but taking the next steps of transferring his learning into getting a job was proving to be a step too far. His communication skills were very limited and dealing with people was quite simply a big ordeal.

He was known to the Employability Service who felt he would be an ideal candidate for Project Search due to the high level of support that is provided both within the City and Guilds training course delivered on the University campus and the job coach support that is available at the work placements throughout the University.

After a lot of persuasion and finally support from his mum he boarded the bus from Fraserburgh through to the University every day for 9 months, and had the experience of working in the finance section, the library and the botanical gardens. He was so skilled at setting up databases whilst he was working in the finance section at the university that he was offered a job at the end of the year. He works there now.

At first his family were unsure if he would be able to continue with travelling through to Aberdeen every day, so to resolve this the whole family moved to Aberdeen. Everything has worked out well.

2.3 Women in the Criminal Justice System

The Criminal Justice Service recognises the specific needs and risks that affect women offenders and the importance of gender responsive and holistic intervention. Aberdeenshire's approach is to develop strong and robust relationships with partners, whereby colleagues from other disciplines are fully aware of the specific needs and issues that female offenders often have, and can work in partnership with criminal justice to provide a 'wrap-around' Service that will specifically target the factors that have been shown to be associated with reoffending in women. It is important to be mindful of the impact of maternal criminal justice involvement on families and children.

Clinical Psychologists will train criminal justice staff and small numbers of staff from other Services so that practice can be more specialised with the proportion of women who are affected by trauma, substance misuse, and personality disorder. Briefings were provided in early 2015 to give a more general overview of the needs of female offenders, and guidance for those in any Service who may jointly work with these women. This will not just serve to reduce reoffending, but should also improve life outcomes for women and their families.



2.4 Dementia Friendly Communities

Funding from the Change Fund has been used to employ part-time development workers in Huntly and Stonehaven to work with local businesses, Services, facilities, and community groups to raise awareness of the effects dementia can have on their existing and potential customers, clients, and members, encouraging them to be welcoming, supportive and inclusive. These projects will be evaluated to form the basis for funding applications to develop dementia-friendly communities in other areas of Aberdeenshire. The projects come under the remit of the Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership.

CASE STUDY: - Aberdeenshire Lifeline

When Mrs Smith's 69-year-old mother, who has Alzheimer's, went missing, it was night-time, and she had no coat or handbag. The family called the police after searching the neighbourhood. Luckily, she was found quickly, but, as Mrs Smith points out, during the time her mother was missing the anxiety and distress was considerable.

Fortunately, following a talk delivered on Tele care at the sheltered housing scheme, the sheltered housing officer recalled that a GPS tracker was available and made a referral directly to Aberdeenshire Lifeline. This is a "Buddi" worn as a pendant around her neck. An appropriate range for Mrs Smith to travel from her home is programmed into the device linked to the "Buddi" website and the monitoring centre.

As soon as the range has been breached Mrs Smith and/or the sheltered housing officer are notified. The exact location will be available via the secure website and pinpoint the mother's location – saving time and money for the agencies who would be involved in finding her, as well as making sure her mother is safe.

As well as having the "Buddi" with her when she goes out a door exit sensor is also fitted by the front door and timed to be on alert should the Service user leave her flat between the hours of 7pm and 9am. If the sensor is triggered then the call handling centre will call Mrs Smith and/or the out of hour's carers.

Aberdeenshire Lifeline feedback from a Service user: Mrs Walker, Peterhead:

"As a non-techy I dreaded how I would manage my new alarm and falls detector (I had fallen recently but fortunately wasn't hurt). Usually I am bamboozled by technical stuff which I don't understand. So it was very refreshing to have someone patiently help me out without making me feel like an idiot. It's a real delight to talk to technical staff (who fitted a community alarm and falls detector) and the Service co-ordinator (who arranged the time and date of installation). They know what they are talking about and are quick to get back to me when I have a problem. Thank you"



2.5 Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ)

Since May 2014 to January 2015, a total of 19 unpaid carers have registered to undertake the SVQ award. 11 have registered on the Social Services & Healthcare (Adult) qualification, and 8 have registered on the Social Services (children and young people) qualification.

An unpaid carer contacted Aberdeenshire Council after hearing about the opportunity to undertake an SVQ Level 2 in Social Services and Healthcare. She cares for her husband who had a stroke a number of years ago, and wanted the opportunity to gain a qualification while carrying out her caring role in her own home environment. This carer commenced the qualification in May 2014, and completed it in January 2015.

FEEDBACK:-“I have thoroughly enjoyed doing the SVQ 2 in Social Services and Healthcare. It has uplifted me in many ways – confidence and a sense of self-worth. I would definitely recommend other carers to do this. I found it very rewarding as I went through each unit. It was also very relaxing done from home. My Assessor was superb and very good and patient with me too. This made such a difference to getting on with the learning. This qualification means a lot to me and I hope to now continue with further education and learning. I also hope to use it for future work”.

2.6 Shared Lives

Shared Lives is a unique and flexible support scheme providing short breaks, day support and long term placements for people over sixteen with a physical and/or learning disability, mental health issues or older people. Support is provided from a Shared Lives carer's own home and as part of their family. Being a real part of the community and what is going on in the area is so important to us all. This scheme ensures that people with disabilities can take part in the same activities as anyone, with the individual support they need.



Case Study: - This is the story of Kath and Penny: Kath provided day support for Penny for 6 months to support her transition moving from the family home into supported accommodation. Kath and Penny both shared a love of trying new experiences, socialising and having a girly chat. Their relationship was built on mutual interests and allowed Penny the opportunity to gain in confidence and widen her support network and social circle. At the start Penny was very quiet and she took a while to come out of her shell. However once she got to know Kath she began to talk about the boy bands she likes such as Westlife and One Direction. Penny's world has now begun to open up and she is trying out new skills and activities. This is reiterated by local area coordinator Vanessa Ross who says that "Shared lives played an important role for Penny". One of Penny's goals when she first met Kath was going to the local disco. Penny says of her time with Kath, "the activity I like the most is the disco at the Larc Club in Stonehaven - which gives me the chance to meet up with friends...Before I would have had to go with my dad and I didn't want to do that".

2.7 Older Peoples Charter in Aberdeenshire

An Older Peoples Charter for Aberdeenshire was published in July 2014, supported by Aberdeenshire Council, NHS Grampian, voluntary organisations, local communities, and older people. Monitored by the Aberdeenshire Community Planning Partnership, it outlines the principles and aims and expectations that all agencies and citizens should have in the delivery of support for older people across communities, under the headings of:

- Having a Voice;
- Information and Advice;
- Transport;
- Residential accommodation;
- Day Care;
- Living at Home;
- Communities; and
- Health.

2.8 Adult Care Management – Integrated Outcomes Survey

The Adult Care Management Integrated Outcomes Survey 2014-2015 has recently been revised and implemented in November 2014. This is for all people receiving support from Adult Care Management in Learning Disability, Mental Health and Community Substance Misuse Services. It helps to ensure that we are fostering good relations with those with whom we work.

The new survey is more condensed and easier for people to use – there are now only 10 questions (previously, there were 23). People have an



opportunity to tell us what they think about our Services, and whether they are achieving their personal goals. This helps us to ensure that people's support packages are helping them to achieve their goals, and that they are involved in shaping and improving our Services.

2.9 Adult Care Management – Self-Directed Support

Self-Directed Support is becoming more embedded in Adult Care Management. This allows people to focus on the outcomes they want to achieve, and we offer personalised budgets to meet outcomes, as opposed to being Service driven.

Service users now have much more control over what they want to do and how this is done. This allows them increased access to life opportunities, enhanced by reducing barriers. Currently, the majority of people supported by Adult Care Management under the Self-Directed Support Model are in Learning Disability Services. However, considerable work is ongoing to review and refine the Self-Directed Support Pathway within Mental Health and Community Substance Misuse Services to ensure that it meets the requirements for the practitioners and people who require support from these Services.

This work is almost complete and it is anticipated that an increased number of people will benefit from Self-Directed Support in Adult Care Management.

2.10 Accessible Learning Disability Strategic Outcome Group

The Aberdeenshire Learning Disability Partnership ensures that accessible Strategic Outcome Group (SOG) meetings take place at least twice per year. People who use Learning Disability Services are encouraged to attend the Accessible SOG so that they have a voice and can contribute to Service monitoring and planning. People are supported to access these meetings if they require. The following values underpin this group:

- Respect – everyone should be treated with respect;
- Fairness – people with learning disabilities should know what Services they can get and what choices they have;
- Independence – people with learning disabilities should be helped to live their own lives;
- Freedom – people with learning disabilities should be able to participate freely in their communities, in the same way as other citizens;
- Safety – people with learning disabilities should feel safe but not be overprotected; and
- Quality – people with learning disabilities should get good quality care and support.



2.11 Community Substance Misuse Services – Confidence to Cook Groups

Aberdeenshire Council's Community Substance Misuse Services have a number of 'Confidence to Cook' Groups running currently. The Banff group is run in the local Church Centre. This is based in a central location and members of the community will often look in to see what the participants are cooking that day. Service users with drug and alcohol issues are often stigmatised and these groups are helping to break down barriers.

On completing the course, participants work with the college to attain basic certificates in Health and Safety, First Aid, Moving and Handling, and Food Hygiene. They also link with the local Volunteering group, who then assist the participants to find volunteering opportunities within the local community.

The Peterhead group also do the above, but prior to going into the 'Confidence to Cook' group, Service users attend the Longside Greentracks Project. The Community Substance Misuse Service has a large allotment in the local village and this has developed and expanded over a number of years. During this time, a number of local volunteers from the community have assisted as well as the local Ranger's Service. This year, the group worked towards the John Muir Awards. Residents from the local area often walk past the allotment and comment on the developments there. This has helped to build relationships within the community and reduce stigma.

CASE STUDY: - This year a Service user with a visual impairment has been supported to attend a 'Confidence to Cook' group. His knife skills put the others to shame! At the same time, a gentleman with alcohol-related brain damage has been supported to attend, to enhance his skills to be able to live more independently.

2.12 Community Substance Misuse Services – Access to Community Resources

Service users are encouraged to use community facilities where possible, to aid their recovery. This includes access to leisure facilities where possible. The Service can allocate gym and swim passes for a three month period. Some people also qualify for bus passes that allows them to access Alcohol Anonymous /Narcotics Anonymous and SMART Recovery. Where appropriate, Service users access volunteering, college and work opportunities. During the summer of 2014, the Community Substance Misuse Service ran an Art Project. The final models were on display as part of the large Fraserburgh Art Project that was open to the public for a number of weeks.



2.13 Community Substance Misuse Services – Access to Translation Services

The Community Substance Misuse Service (CSMS) support a number of people for whom English is not their first language. Where required, CSMS assists people to access translation Services.

FEEDBACK: - *We have found that this has made a real difference to Service users when we use the same translator who can stay with us through the individual's recovery journey. This has led to one person requesting and receiving assistance to access English speaking classes.*

2.14 'Your Voice' Project

The Your Voice project held an event in May 2014, bringing together people from across Aberdeenshire to work in partnership to address issues relevant to older people. This is important work, building on the skills, experience and expertise of older people, that responds to the increasing numbers of older people and changes in how health and social care is delivered, including health and social integration and self-directed support.

The Mearns and Coastal Healthy Living Network has been delivering the project, which is now in its fourth year. Work has taken place with a range of communities to provide a voice for older people in Banff, Fraserburgh, Peterhead, Ellon, Cuminestown, Inch, the Mearns, Portlethen, and Inverbervie. New groups have also been set up recently in Huntly and Banchory. Three workshops were organised: Transport to health appointments; Introduction to using tablets/ iPads; and Health and social care integration.

FEEDBACK: - *Dorothy Foreman, a member of the Portlethen forum said: "Decisions are being made that affect older people now and in to the future. We need to be at the heart of these decisions as we are the people they affect most of all. We are living longer so we desperately need a voice in our communities. This is a much needed group to make sure elderly people are not forgotten."*

As a result of the forums:-

- 42% said that involvement with forums had given them increased confidence to express their view;
- 84% said that they had increased awareness of how to make a difference, and
- 47% said that they were more aware of what was happening locally



2.15 Aberdeenshire Day Services for People with Disabilities: Examples of Good Practice in Making Progress towards an Equal Partnership between Centre Users and Staff at Ellon Day Centre

2.15.1 Service User Meetings

Service users are now taking turns to chair these meetings, with staff support. The purpose of the meetings is to update Service users on centre management matters such as the Amenity Fund balance and forthcoming events. A member of staff and a group of Service users prepare the agenda.

2.15.2 Centre Recruitment and selection

Service users participate informally in the recruitment and induction of new staff and volunteers. A panel of Service users have been involved in interviews for relief care assistants. They made up their own questions and provided feedback to the formal panel at the end of the day. As part of the induction process when the new employees came into post, Service users spent time chatting to them about the centre and particular group activities. A new easy read Induction form was created. The Service user involved found it easy to use this form and enjoyed taking on this role.

2.16 Social Work - Improvement

The Aberdeenshire Lifeline Team is based at the Joint Equipment Centre in Inverurie. It provides specialist tele care and tele health equipment to disabled people across Aberdeenshire. The team has been working to improve the standards and quality of Service provided. For example, self-referrals are now available for Aberdeenshire residents, with access through the Council website, a flexible booking system is in place, and a customer satisfaction survey has been developed. Improvements have been audited by the Tele care Services Association on five themes – referral, Service monitoring, Service user profiling, installation, and evaluation.

2.17 Corporate Parenting Champion's Board

Aberdeenshire Council is committed to delivering an excellent Service and responding to the challenges faced by looked after children, young people, and carer leavers as their Corporate Parent. Being a good Corporate Parent means that the Council will accept and embrace the responsibility for Aberdeenshire's Looked After Children and young people and care leavers, make their needs a priority, and seek for them the same outcomes as any good parent would want for their own children.

The Corporate Parenting Strategy Group is the thematic planning group responsible for continuously improving the multi-agency Service experience of children and young people who are Looked After by the Local Authority. The Corporate Parenting Strategy Group works to a delivery plan which contains



clear actions based around the Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible, and Included (SHANARRI) indicators of wellbeing, aimed at improving outcomes for those young people in Aberdeenshire who are Looked After.

CASE STUDY: - To ensure that all children and young people who are Looked After are included, the Corporate Parenting Strategy Group made a commitment to develop the Aberdeenshire Champion's Board. The Champion's Board will be made up of Looked After young people who live in Aberdeenshire and are aged 10 years and over, along with a range of influential adults who can help make change happen. The purpose of the Board is to 'champion' the needs of Looked After and previously Looked After children and young people by providing them with a platform to engage with their 'corporate parent' and make their needs known.

Through their role as members of the Champion's Board, children and young people will have a direct influence on changing and developing the "Looked After" system in Aberdeenshire and will be responsible for working with other members of the Board to set future direction and priorities. The children and young people involved in the Champion's Board will not only share their views about what needs to be changed, but also the views of other Looked After children and young people in Aberdeenshire.

The Champion's Board was launched at an event at Pittodrie Stadium, Aberdeen on 4 December 2014. The event gave the children, young people and their carers the opportunity to participate in fun activities-based workshops including sessions on Circus Modo (circus skills), Graffiti Art and Football Skills - but also offered young people the chance to give their views on what it was like being in care and to find out more about how they could get involved in the Champion's Board. The event was attended by around 40 young people who were supported to attend by their respective carer / Social Worker, with 7 young people signing up to join the Champion's Board. The Champion's Board will meet 4 times per year.

3 Infrastructure Services

This Service covers six main functional areas: Economic Development, Planning and Building Standards, Property and Facilities Management, Protective Services and Waste Management, Roads and Landscape Services, and Transportation.

Examples of mainstreaming:-

3.1 Disability Access Compliance

The Equality Act 2010 compliance works is part of the "Footways" works within the maintenance programme. There is a rolling programme which was agreed with certain disability groups and is concentrating on town centre improvements such as dropped kerbs and tactile pavements.

Property Service employees are trained to carry out access audits which enables a list of remedial works to be compiled. Funding has been allocated to a programme of remedial works in the capital plan, which is now 90% complete. The remaining 10% will be completed as the office accommodation realisation programme is rolled out. The office rationalisation programme is progressing well, with the new Buchan House office premises in Peterhead due to open in April 2015.

3.2 Disabled Go

Property and Planning are working with Disabled Go to get some of our properties and non-Council buildings/facilities surveyed with a view to providing a clearer picture of access issues. It provides people with a fuller picture of what they can expect before they arrive at the various properties. Funding has been obtained for the next 4 - 5 years along with private sector sponsorship which will enable us to take this forward in partnership to enhance the information available.

3.3 Access Panels

The three Aberdeenshire Access Panels work across the area to try and remove the barriers to the full social inclusion of people affected by disability. The Scottish Disability Equality Forum acts as an umbrella body for the Access Panels. They campaign for, and advise on, improved access for disabled people to the built environment throughout Aberdeenshire and provide an information Service for disabled people everywhere. The Council provides support to these groups through the provision of a part-time employee to help with communications, information provision and facilitating meetings.



Case Study 1

Kindrochit Castle, Braemar

This was a consolidation and upgrade of a scheduled monument. As part of the works we have installed a ramp to allow all abilities access to the site which did not really exist previously. We will also be installing an information board at the entrance which can easily be read by wheelchair users.

Case Study 2

Clock Tower, Stonehaven

This was a full refurbishment of the building and the installation of an interpretative display on the history of the Old Town, the Hogmanay Fireballs and a Town Trail. Again we have installed an access ramp for all abilities access where only steps existed before.

This was particularly challenging because of the limited ramp space available and the Listed Building status. We worked however with the local Access Forum rep and came up with an acceptable design which although not able to comply completely with current standards, was considered by them to be acceptable.

3.4 Aberdeenshire Community Transport Initiative (ACTI)

Aberdeenshire Community Transport Initiative (ACTI) grants provide funding of up to 75% of project costs for the provision of community based rural passenger transport such as community buses, dial-a-trip Services, and voluntary car schemes. ACTI currently provides grant funding to seven local groups. The budget for 2014/15 is £440,000 per annum. These groups provide Services to help address issues associated with rural isolation that affects less mobile groups such as the very young, older people, and disabled people.

3.5 The Ranger Service

Guided walks are regularly arranged for people with different Protected Characteristics, including a group who have learning difficulties coming from North East Scotland College to learn about the natural history on Bennachie; a group from Cornerstone who works with adults and children with learning difficulties; and people from NHS Healthy Minds/Royal Cornhill Hospital Walking Group which is for a group of adults with mental health problem. The Service also arranges events for school pupils including a Scottish Traditional Skills Course.

The Rangers take groups through the John Muir awards which aims to connect people with nature. They were approached by the Social Work team to work with a client group involved in an allotment scheme. These clients were from disadvantaged groups and include people with cognitive impairment and physical disabilities. The project helped them to plant up areas with wild flowers, and make bird boxes and feeders.



3.6 Staffing

The Service is embarking on an exercise to review our staffing complement to see if there are any issues around occupational segregation that may need to be addressed. Some of our functions have a strongly polarised workforce of one gender so it was felt relevant to undertake such a review.

4 Business Services

Business Service provides a wide range of functions to support the work of the Council as a whole, supporting Services across the Council and helping them to meet their objectives. Our Services are:- Finance, Legal & Governance, Human Resources & Organisational Development, Customer Communication & Improvement, ICT, Procurement, Internal Audit, and Support Services.

Business Services has been heavily involved with the development of the following workstreams, of which have been extensively described within the main body of the report:-

- The structure of the equalities governance framework;
- Equality and diversity training;
- Building equalities into the budget setting process;
- Getting the message out to employees and Service users regarding equalities; and
- Building equalities considerations into the work of Human Resources and Organisational Development (HR&OD).

HR&OD also provide advice and support to employees.

Legal and Governance (L&G) provide legal advice in relation to equalities matters, and share case law updates at Corporate Equalities Group and Equalities Strategy Board meetings.

Committee Services ensure that equalities are considered as part of the committee process.

4.1 Business Transformation Projects: - Becoming Tomorrow's Council Today

In being committed to providing the best possible Service to residents and employees, both now and in the future, the Council took the radical decision to look at every part of daily working life, from how we apply for work, to what we do, and where we do it.

We recognise how essential it is to ensure residents have a variety of ways in which to engage with the Council and access Services, and by utilising technologies we are making the delivery of customer Service easier, better and more efficient. In addition more effective use of technology within the



workplace, and streamlining processes in a wide range of areas, is also making working life better too.

The Business Transformation Programme has been designed to ensure that our Council is prepared to meet the challenges in the world in which we live. It is given strategic direction by the Business Transformation Board which is led by the Chief Executive, Directors, and other senior members of staff.

Business transformation is about:

- making the most of all our resources;
- making it easy for our customer to access Services at a time and in a way that meets their needs;
- making work something that we do not somewhere that we go; and
- making it easier to access and use the information we need to do our jobs.

In progressing each of the above priorities, equalities is an underpinning principle. Specific projects significantly contribute to achieving our commitment to equalities.

4.1.1 Improving the Customer Experience Project (iCE)

The project aims to increase customer choice and accessibility for users of Aberdeenshire Council, first point of contact customer Services and information requests by allowing them to access this content at a time and in a way that meets their needs. iCE applies a “digital by choice” approach that ensures that whilst online Service delivery is the preferred channel, traditional means of contact such as phone and face-to-face will continue to be available for those that require them. Customers can select their preferred method of contact and should experience a similar level of Service delivery, irrespective of channel. Particular benefits and opportunities attaching to online Service delivery include increased accessibility to Services, particularly for those with mobility, visual impairment, literacy, or for those where English is not their first language, as the project and associated technology develops.

The initiatives that have been implemented to date include:-

- blue badge scheme;
- feedback service;
- roads faults reporting;
- car park fault reporting;
- council tax;
- business rates;
- trade waste;
- online benefits;
- recruitment; and
- housing medical needs assessments.



4.1.2 Worksmart

Worksmart aims to engage and support staff through the process of changing their working practices to 'do things differently' and deliver more efficient Services. This can be through a variety of ways and has developed to support the workSPACE strategy.

workSPACE strategy has been developed to ensure efficient delivery of customer Services, together with efficient use of the office portfolio, to meet the changing demands of the Service user.

FEEDBACK: - *“I have been working for Aberdeenshire Council since April 2008. In October 2013, I went on maternity leave and now have an amazing daughter Lily. During my maternity leave I took part in several ‘keep in touch’ days which were really useful and kept me feeling part of the team when I returned to work four days a week (29 hours) in September 2014.*

Since returning to work, I have been trying to keep a good work-life balance and juggling it all with childcare. Flexible working and Worksmart allows me to do this. Without Worksmart and our flexible working arrangements, I would not be able to work or would have to work much reduced hours, which would be difficult both financially for my family and for my career.

As most working parents will be aware, due to childcare drop off and pick-ups times and then commuting, it is almost impossible to do a full working day. But flexible working allows me to manage my workload and work slightly shorter days when I commute into Woodhill House or travel further afield for work and I can make up time in the evening and work on my laptop when my daughter is asleep. So I can continue to work and manage my workload and still be at home for bath and bedtime.

I can also work flexibly either at home or at an office (or in my case a Community School Campus) closer to my home and childcare, where I can work longer days and still drop off and pick up from childcare, as I am not commuting an hour plus each way. Using technology such as my laptop and blackberry I can work pretty much anywhere I have a WIFI or mobile phone signal. I regularly Lync into meetings, which is a great tool to help working flexibly.

Overall I am really happy with the way my work life balance seems to be working out. I can still do my job but also be a Mum and spend time with my daughter.” – Kelly Wiltshire, Business Services.



4.1.3 Arcadia Project

The delivery of a redeveloped intranet system for Aberdeenshire Council.

The strategy aims to make it easier for Aberdeenshire Council staff and partners to access tools and resources to support their business functions at a time and in a manner by:

- Supporting Arcadia Vision;
- Being accessible to all employees;
- Single point access to information;
- Quality of content and reliability;
- Control of content and quality;
- Easy to use, navigate and find information;
- Flexibility to encompass new and emerging technologies; and
- Enabling data sharing and collaboration.

The Arcadia redevelopment project supports the modernising of local government Service delivery and Aberdeenshire Council's strategy to modernise the working environment and conditions for staff through the organisational goal of making it easy for our customers to access Services at a time, and in a way that meets their needs, thereby advancing equality of opportunity for all.

4.1.4 Improvement

In contributing to the Council delivering high performing, quality Services, our key focus is to meet the needs of service users and communities. Improvement contributes to transformational change across the Council as we strive to deliver excellence, responding to customer expectations, changing legislation and statutory requirements, and the changing public sector landscape.

Improvement teams are based in each Service to support and enable a culture of improvement contributing to the Council being flexible, adaptable, and able to respond to residents' changing demands and expectations. The improvement teams work closely with Service teams where the customer is central to streamlining and redesigning service delivery.

A broad-ranging programme of improvement projects have been taken forward. An example being the [Aberdeenshire Lifeline Team](#) which provided tangible benefits to service users. The improvement programme of work continues which includes supporting the Council's commitment to the Early Years' Collaborative programme. This is a multi-agency, quality improvement programme to improve outcomes seeking to reduce inequalities, for all babies, children, mothers, fathers, and families across Scotland to ensure that all children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed.



4.1.5 E-Committee Project

The E-Committee project aims to modernise the Council's approach to all aspects of the committee process. The project is being delivered in two Phases. Phase 1, migrating all committee data into the new committee management system ahead of the change of email provider, and streamlining the process for publishing Elected Member and committee information on Arcadia and the website, is now complete.

Phase 2 work, to provide one centralised location for electronic access to all committee related guidance, procedures and documentation; new workflow functionality to manage the committee report consultation and monitoring process; improved search facilities, calendar functionality and electronic agenda packs is now underway, and expected to be delivered in Spring 2015.