

Subject:	Annual Equality Workforce Profile 2024/2025		Status:	For Publication	
Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee		Date:		
Report of:	Head of People and Policy		Portfolio Holder:	Environment and Corporate Services	
Key Decision:	☐	Forward Plan	☐	General Exception	☐ Special Urgency ☐
Equality Impact Assessment:		Required:	No	Attached:	No
Biodiversity Impact Assessment:		Required:	No	Attached:	No
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1. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 1.1 Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee reviews the Council's Annual Equality Workforce Profile for 2024/25 (Appendix 1) and identifies any actions or issues requiring further attention.
- 1.2 Members of the Committee continues to monitor the Council's progress in publishing equality information in line with legislative and best practice standards, ensuring fairness and transparency in employment and service delivery.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Annual Equality Report 2024/25 provides an overview of the Council's progress in delivering its statutory responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).
- 2.2 The report highlights key workforce trends, achievements, and areas for continued focus. It reaffirms the Council's commitment to advancing equality of opportunity, eliminating discrimination, and fostering good relations across the organisation and wider community.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, Rossendale Borough Council has a statutory duty to:
 - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Foster good relations between different groups.
- 3.2 The Council is also required to publish annual information demonstrating compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty and to set measurable equality objectives.
- 3.3 The Annual Equality Report is the mechanism through which progress is reviewed and communicated to Members and the public.

4. DETAILS

- 4.1 The Annual Equality Workforce Profile 2024-25 set out in Appendix 1 presents the Council's key workforce and Rossendale labour market (as per Census 2021) equality data.

Elected Member monitoring information is not included in this report, however it is available from Member Services on request.

- 4.2 As a small district authority, much of the Council's workforce equality data reflects small sample sizes. Where possible, workforce figures are compared with the Rossendale population profile to identify underrepresentation or areas for improvement.
- 4.3 While the Council's workforce does not meet the threshold for statutory Gender Pay Gap reporting (250+ employees), internal monitoring confirms that no gender pay gap exists within the organisation.
- 4.4 The Council remains committed to promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion in all aspects of its work — as an employer, service provider, and community leader. Work continues with partners, residents, and voluntary sector organisations to promote fair access, tackle discrimination, and foster inclusive working environments.

5. RISK

- 5.1 Failure to comply with the Equality Act 2010 or to demonstrate progress against the Public Sector Equality Duty could expose the Council to legal, reputational or operational risk.
- 5.2 Risks are mitigated through officer training, robust equality impact assessment procedures, and oversight by the Corporate Management Team and Equalities Working Group.

6. FINANCE

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Equality actions are delivered within existing service budgets. Any future initiatives requiring additional funding will be considered through the normal budget-setting process.

7. LEGAL

- 7.1 The Council must demonstrate due regard to the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty. Publication of the Annual Equality Report is part of fulfilling this legal obligation and provides evidence of compliance through transparent reporting and documented actions

8. POLICY AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The report supports delivery of the Council's Valley Plan priorities by promoting inclusive growth, strong communities, and equitable access to services. It also aligns with the Council's Corporate Equality Policy, ensuring that equality and inclusion are integral to decision-making and service delivery.
- 8.2 This report underpins the Council's ongoing commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion. The actions within the report contribute directly to meeting the Council's Equality Objectives,

promoting fairness across services, and reducing barriers for residents and staff with protected characteristics

- 8.3 Consultation has been undertaken with the Council's Corporate Management Team, Portfolio Holder and Lead Member Equalities Champion,

9.0 REASON FOR DECISION

- 9.1 To ensure Members are informed of progress against the Council's equality objectives, compliance with statutory duties, and the continuing work to embed equality and inclusion across the organisation and within the community

Background Papers	
Document	Place of Inspection
Annual Equality Workforce Profile 2024/25	Attached as Appendix 1



Annual Equality Report 2024/25



Introduction

Rossendale Borough Council is committed to promoting equality, celebrating diversity, and fostering inclusion across all our services, workforce, and community engagement.

This Annual Equality Report sets out progress during 2024/25 in meeting our statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010 and our Equality Objectives.

1. Our Legal Duties

As required by the Public Sector Equality Duty, we must have due regard to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The approach to equality must account for all “protected characteristics”. These are attributes that can underlie a person’s or community’s marginalisation. There are nine such characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race, including colour, nationality, ethnicity and national origin
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

We also recognise our duties under the Human Rights Act 1998 and continue to support formal adoption of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism to reinforce our zero-tolerance approach to hate crime.



2. Equality Objectives 2021

Our objectives, agreed in the Equality Policy 2021, are:

- To enhance understanding of and promote equality and diversity at all levels within the Council.
- To have a diverse workforce that aims to be representative of the borough and to ensure that all staff are treated fairly.
- To assess, consult and evaluate the equality impact of our policies and decisions and to change where reasonably possible what we do to mitigate or eliminate any inequality.
- To ensure that our staff and councillors engage and communicate with members of the community in an accessible and inclusive way.
- To continue working with our partners, where appropriate, to reduce inequality in all of our communities.

3. Key Achievements in 2024/25

During 2024/25 the Council delivered a range of initiatives to strengthen equality, diversity and inclusion across the borough including maintaining Disability Confident accreditation, delivering the Disabled Facilities Grant programme, progressing Rossendale Works, renewing the Armed Forces Covenant, achieving White Ribbon accreditation activity, running the Over-55 Wellbeing event, planning Rossendale Pride 2025 and strengthening staff wellbeing through Employee Assistance Programme and Wellbeing Champions.

Disability Confident Accreditation

The Council maintained its Disability Confident Employer status, reaffirming our commitment to inclusive recruitment and workplace practices. This accreditation ensures that disabled people have fair access to employment opportunities, that reasonable adjustments are embedded, and that we continue to build an inclusive organisational culture.



Disabled Facilities Grants

Through the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) programme and commissioned home improvement agency, the Council supported residents with disabilities to live independently and safely in their own homes. Adaptations such as stairlifts, accessible bathrooms, emergency repairs and ramp installations have helped to improve quality of life, reduce health inequalities, and enable people to remain active members of their communities. During 2024-25 the Council issued 187 grants enabling people to remain independently within their own homes.



Rossendale Works

The Rossendale Works partnership continued to play a vital role in supporting residents into training and employment. By working with local employers, training providers, and support agencies, the programme has helped people overcome barriers to work, gain new skills, and access sustainable job opportunities, particularly benefiting those from disadvantaged or underrepresented groups.



Armed Forces Covenant

We continued to honour our pledge under the Armed Forces Covenant and launched our new Armed Forces Covenant in March 2024, ensuring that those who serve or have served in the armed forces, and their families, are treated fairly and supported in our community. Practical actions have included promoting employment pathways, signposting to welfare services, and supporting remembrance events across Rossendale.



White Ribbon Accreditation

Through our White Ribbon work, the Council has taken a proactive stance in ending male violence against women and girls. Awareness campaigns, staff training, and partnership activities have helped foster safer communities, promote gender equality, and encourage men to take a stand as positive role models and allies.

Household Support Fund

The Rossendale Household Support Fund continued to provide essential financial assistance to residents in crisis. By supporting households with the costs of food, energy, and other essentials, the fund has helped to alleviate poverty, reduce hardship, and promote dignity and inclusion for those most affected by the cost-of-living challenges. The fund has helped us to support food banks, Citizens Advice and top up the affordable warmth grants.



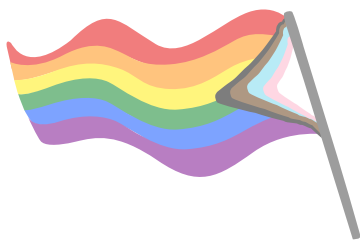
VE Day Community Grants

The Council awarded VE Day Community Grants to local groups and veterans' organisations to support inclusive celebrations that honoured the service and sacrifice of the wartime generation. These events brought together residents of all ages and backgrounds, strengthening community pride and cohesion across Rossendale.



Affordable Warmth Scheme

Through partnership working the Council has supported Lancashire County Council's Affordable Warmth Scheme supporting low-income, vulnerable and pensioner households to improve home energy efficiency and reduce fuel poverty. The scheme has improved health and wellbeing outcomes while promoting sustainability and ensuring that everyone has access to a safe and warm home.



Pride Event – Whitaker Park, July 2025

Planning funding and partnership work took place throughout 2024–25 to deliver the Rossendale Pride 2025 event at Whitaker Park. This celebration of the borough's LGBTQ+ community promoted visibility, inclusion, and equality—fostering understanding, belonging, and respect across all communities in Rossendale.

Wellbeing Champions and Wellbeing Day

The Council's Wellbeing Champions initiative continued to empower staff to act as advocates for health and wellbeing across services. Champions provide peer support, share resources, and promote a positive workplace culture that prioritises mental and physical health. Complementing this, the annual Wellbeing Day offered staff access to workshops, health checks, and activities focused on stress reduction, healthy lifestyles, and resilience-building. Together, these initiatives have strengthened organisational wellbeing, increased awareness of support available, and fostered a culture of care and inclusion across the Council.

Over-55 Wellbeing Event

The Over-55 Wellbeing Event provided an opportunity for older residents to access information, advice, and activities to support their physical and mental health. The event promoted social inclusion, reduced isolation, and connected people with local services that support independent and fulfilling lives.



Employee Wellbeing Initiatives

Rossendale Borough Council continues to promote staff wellbeing through its Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), providing confidential support, guidance, and counselling for personal or work-related issues. In addition, the Council actively marks awareness days relating to protected characteristics, including events for mental health, LGBTQ+, gender equality, and cultural diversity. These initiatives foster an inclusive workplace, raise understanding of equality issues, and ensure employees feel valued, supported, and empowered to contribute fully.

4. Workforce Equality Data (as of March 2025)

The workforce profile data is based on the employee headcount as at 31st March 2025. Census comparators are taken from the 2021 Census Rossendale Labour market figures.

The Council annually monitors the diversity of its workforce.

Establishment and contracts as at 31st March 2025

Establishment	176.9 FTE (14 vacant)
Employed	171 (163.42 FTE)
Full-time	155
Part-time	16
Permanent	161
Temporary	10



Comparison of protected characteristics between the Council's workforce and Rossendale Labour Market (2021 Census)

Characteristic	Workforce (2025)	Rossendale Labour Market (2021 Census)
Gender	54% female 46% male	51.1% female 48.9%
Race	6.89% minority ethnic	7.6% minority ethnic
Disability	7% declared	20% report limiting illness/disability
Age	18% <30, 52% 30–49 30% 50+	23% <30 48% 30–49 29% 50+
Religion/Belief	58% Christian 28% no religion 14% other/undeclared	62% Christian 27% no religion 11% other faiths
Sexual Orientation	3% LGB+ 65% heterosexual 32% undeclared	No local data; national estimate. 3.2% LGB+
Marriage and Civil Partnership	No data	No local data
Pregnancy and Maternity	One staff member taken maternity leave	No local data



As of March 2025, Rossendale Borough Council's workforce continues to reflect a diverse range of backgrounds and experiences. Analysis of equality data shows positive representation across gender, age, and disability, with continued efforts to improve inclusion in all areas of the organisation.

The proportion of staff declaring a disability has remained stable, and the Council continues to ensure that reasonable adjustments are consistently applied to support employees in fulfilling their roles. Workforce initiatives, such as Disability Confident accreditation and targeted recruitment campaigns, support the development of an accessible and inclusive workplace.

Gender representation across the workforce remains broadly balanced, although senior management roles show a slight underrepresentation of women, which is being addressed through leadership development programmes and mentoring opportunities.

Ethnicity data indicates that the Council workforce is predominantly White, reflecting the local demographic. The Council continues to promote equality of opportunity in recruitment, progression, and training to ensure that people from minority ethnic backgrounds are supported and encouraged to develop their careers.

Age diversity is well represented, with a balanced mix of early career, mid-career, and experienced employees. Workforce planning and wellbeing initiatives, including the Over-55 Wellbeing Event and flexible working policies, contribute to supporting staff across all stages of life.

The Council continues to encourage voluntary disclosure of protected characteristics through the annual equality monitoring data collection exercise, helping to strengthen the quality and completeness of workforce data. In addition, equality monitoring extends across key HR processes, including recruitment, disciplinary action, grievance procedures, and staff leavers. Analysis of this data underpins our ongoing equality, diversity, and inclusion strategies, enabling the Council to identify trends, highlight areas for improvement, and take targeted action to ensure fair and equitable treatment for all employees.

Overall, Rossendale Borough Council remains committed to fostering a workplace that values diversity, promotes equality, and ensures that all staff have the opportunity to thrive and contribute fully to the delivery of council services.



5. Rossendale Workforce

Workforce disciplinary and grievance cases

All disciplinary and grievance cases are managed under the formal process of the Disciplinary Policy, Grievance Policy and Dignity at Work Incorporating Bullying and Harassment Policy.

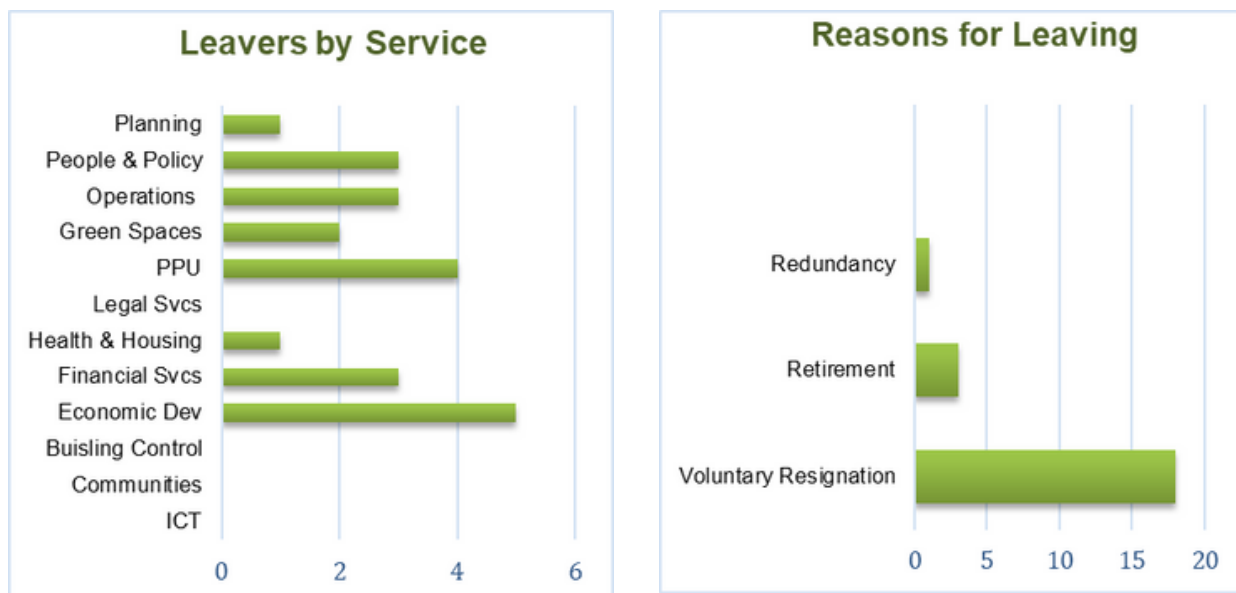
There were two cases disciplinary cases during 2024-25 as detailed below:

Age	1 case - 25-39 years 1 case - 60+ years
Gender	Male
Disability	No
Race	White
Religion and Belief	Prefer not to disclose
Sexual orientation	Prefer not to disclose



Leaving the Council

A total of 22 leavers, staff turnover 24/25 12.87%, break down by service and reasons for leaving below:



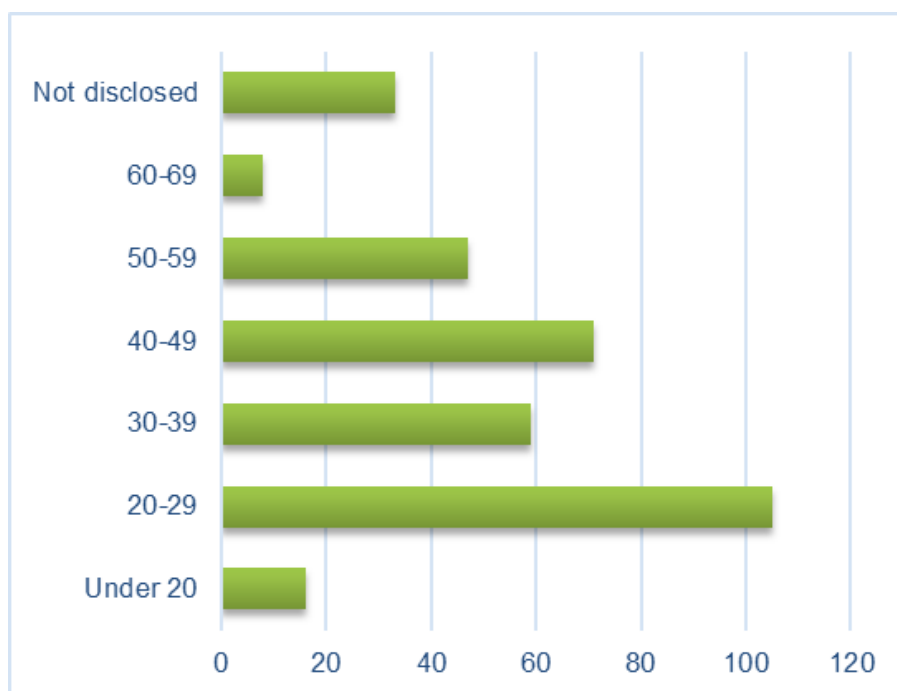
Job Applicants Profile

Equality monitoring is undertaken as part of the recruitment process, it is not compulsory for applicants to disclose the information.

Gender	54% male 46% female
Disability	14% declared disability
Race	72% White British 28% Non-White Minorities
Sexual Orientation	77% Heterosexual 8% Gay/Bisexual 15% Prefer not to say



Applicant Age



Gender Pay Gap

Gender Pay Gap 2024/25: 4.5% (improved from 6% in 2023/24).

6. Equality in Service Delivery

- Continues to apply Equality Impact Assessment's to major service and policy decisions, such as, Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) for affordable housing (December 2024) and Open Spaces and Sports Provision (December 2024), Housing Assistance Policy (December 2024) and internal Employment Policies including Grievance and Probation Policies (July 2024)
- Embedded social value (minimum 10%) into procurement, ensuring contracts deliver wider community benefit.
- Carried out targeted outreach within the community through quarterly public meetings in Whitworth, Bacup, Rawtenstall, Haslingden.

7. Challenges and Lessons Learned

- Workforce declaration rates for disability and sexual orientation remain low.
- Provide alternative interpretation and translation support to customers.
- Cost-of-living inequalities (health and housing) are increasing pressures, highlighting the need for stronger partnerships.



8. Priorities for 2025/26

- Refresh the Equality Policy 2021 and action plan to align with the Local Government Association's (LGA) Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG).
- Improve workforce equality monitoring by increasing confidence and participation in data disclosure
- Refresh equality training framework for staff and councillors.
- Adopt Socio-Economic Duty set out in Section 1 of the Equality Act 2010 as part of our commitment to reducing inequality to customers experiencing socio-economic disadvantage.
- Develop stronger performance monitoring and scrutiny mechanisms.

9. Conclusion

The Council is committed to meeting its equality duties and promoting equality, diversity and inclusion across all services, the workforce and the community.

During 2024/25, we made progress in embedding equality principles, improving representation and supporting residents through a range of targeted initiatives.

We will continue to embed these principles through the refresh of our Equality Policy and delivery of a new four-year Action Plan aligned with the Local Government Association's Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG).

