

Resources Directorate
7 Newington Barrow Way, N7 7EP
Report of: The Director of Human Resources

Meeting of:	Date:	Ward(s):
Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee	20 October 2022	N/A

Delete as appropriate	Exempt	Non exempt

SUBJECT: ANNUAL WORKFORCE REPORT

1. Synopsis

- 1.1 This report sets out some context for the workforce of Islington Council. Public authorities are required under the Public Sector Equality Duty to publish data about the workforce annually. This report provides an overview of key data as well as a summary of initiatives already underway and emerging areas for consideration as part of the next stage of our Challenging Inequality programme.
- 1.2 The report also notes some of the progress the council has made in its response to priorities identified in our staff survey and ongoing commitments in our Challenging Inequality programme. Utilising data, there has been a review and refresh of the Challenging Inequality programme with new activities identified as part of the Islington as an Employer workstream.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 To note the workforce report attached as Appendix 1 and emerging new areas of focus.
- 2.2 To note progress against the existing 'Islington as an Employer' workstream of the Challenging Inequality Programme and plans to deliver outstanding commitments.

3 Background

- 3.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty places a requirement on public authorities to consider how their policies or decisions affect people who are protected under the Equality Act 2010. When public authorities carry out their functions, the Equality Act says they must have due regard or think about the need to:
 - Eliminate unlawful discrimination

- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
 - Foster or encourage good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- 3.2 One of the specific duties under the Act is to publish equality information at least once a year to show how we have complied. The span of information to be published is not specified but normally includes:
- Composition of the workforce
 - Pay (including pay gap reporting)
 - Recruitment and retention
- 3.3 The data report attached as Appendix 1 sets out our workforce data for the 2021/22 period and is produced and published annually. Published information also include plans to address equality concerns within the workforce and uses information from the staff survey. This covering report therefore also summarises progress against our Workforce Strategy and Challenging Inequality programme and plans to deliver outstanding commitments.

4 Overview of 2021/22

- 4.1 At the beginning of 2021/22 the country was still in the midst of ongoing challenges due to Covid-19 and the workforce continued to focus on responding to the pandemic and delivering services to our residents. Throughout the pandemic, there has been an ongoing commitment in maintaining critical services and continuing to support local residents into employment. The Council works alongside valued partners to ensure the most vulnerable in our communities have continued to receive the support they need during this time.
- 4.2 A large proportion of our workforce had to remain working from home in line with government guidance during 2021. At the same time, many of our staff continued to work across the borough, adjusting to the social distancing measures and incorporating new cleaning regimes into their work. Many teams across the workforce adapted to changes in work arrangements and embraced a hybrid model of working.
- 4.3 There has been a shift in ways of working in early 2022 as government guidance removed all Covid-19 restrictions. As an employer, we have now lifted social distancing restrictions in our buildings and at internal and public meetings and events. The changes mean more of our workforce are present in the workplace and the borough, providing more opportunities to come together as a workforce and see each other and engage with residents and the communities we serve in real life. Although restrictions have been lifted, staff continue to play a role in keeping our workplace safe and looking out for each other, especially colleagues who are at risk of serious illness from Covid-19.
- 4.4 The pandemic drastically impacted the way that we work. We chose to build back better and to take advantage of this shift by fully embracing new ways of working that maximise benefits for our residents, the businesses we serve and our staff. This shift to using different tools and communication channels such as Microsoft Teams has improved the way we work and supported more efficient ways of working together. The change in our ways of working provided an opportunity to build and

embed a new and improved model of working and forms part of our FutureWork programme.

- 4.5 The FutureWork design principles enable a flexible, inclusive, hybrid working model that can be adapted for different staff members and teams. The four work styles have been designed with a "resident first" approach in mind and acknowledge that there's a considerable variety of the types of jobs carried out across the workforce. The programme drives a change in the way we work to ensure we all have the right tools, technology support, workplaces, and flexible working offering which will improve workforce wellbeing, productivity and overall satisfaction.
- 4.6 Following feedback from the staff survey, we have made the physical and mental health and safety of our staff a priority during this year and will continue to do so. Tackling health and wellbeing issues raised by the staff survey offers organisational and individual benefits. This includes fostering a more nurturing and supportive environment for our staff, reducing risk, improving performance and productivity, improving attraction and retention, and reducing sickness absence. There is now an online Wellbeing Hub for staff, we launched regular wellbeing events for staff and designed tools to support and encourage wellbeing conversations for managers and their teams.
- 4.7 Embedding the CARE (Collaborative; Ambitious; Resourceful; Empowering) values across the board has been fundamental to developing the culture Islington aspires to, this includes prompting all staff to have a one-to-one Quality Conversation to establish how to embed CARE values into their day-to-day work. In addition, every member of staff has been required to have a set of measurable and meaningful objectives for the 2022/23 year ahead, along with a development plan. This supports the workforce to have clear and measurable targets to work towards and demonstrates how our values and organisational ambitions can be achieved.
- 4.8 There were a large number of recruitment projects during the 2021-22 year. Overall, there were 5,294 people who pursued an application and 553 people were offered posts across the organisation. There continues to be virtual interviewing, however a return to the office has provided more opportunity for on-site interviews in 2022.
- 4.9 In addition to our directly employed workforce, we continue to use agency workers to supplement our staff and to address issues of capacity and expertise. Data on our contingent workforce is reported separately and does not form part of this report.
- 4.10 The 2021 Census provides data on our borough population by demographic. In Islington, the population size has increased by 5.1%, from around 206,100 in 2011 to 216,600 in 2021. At 5.1%, Islington's population increase is lower than the increase for London (7.7%). Nearby areas like City of London and Hackney have seen their populations increase by around 16.6% and 5.3%, respectively, while others such as Haringey saw a smaller increase (3.6%) and Camden saw a decrease of 4.6%. In regard to age, there has been an increase of 12.6% in people aged 65 years and over, an increase of 5.2% in people aged 15 to 64 years, and an increase of 0.4% in children aged under 15 years. We await the publication of further data and commentary from the Office for National Statistics, including: disability; sexual orientation and gender identity; ethnic group; national identity; language; religion.

5 Workforce Strategy and Challenging Inequality Programme

- 5.1 In 2019, Islington agreed a Workforce Strategy which set out a range of commitments to be delivered by 2022. It recognised that a decade of austerity had resulted in some areas of staff development falling behind and also a need to accelerate work on equality, diversity and inclusion. Commitments included:
- Developing and launching management modules for existing and aspiring managers
 - Developing and launching the Islington Management Diploma
 - Increasing level of uptake on the FUSE programme (a funded skills development programme for in-work apprenticeships)
 - Rolling out a council-wide staff survey
 - Providing training and awareness to promote better understanding of equality and inclusion
 - Developing a Diverse Recruiter's scheme,
 - Supporting and developing staff-led groups
- 5.2 The Council completed the procurement process for a corporate Learning Management System called MyLearning. The MyLearning platform has been a crucial step in improving universal access to learning and career opportunities amongst all of our staff and we are now able to report on up-take of training opportunities across the organisation and amongst all protected characteristic groups. MyLearning incorporates a 'develop your career' section with tools for staff to explore their own career development journey and manage their continued professional development.
- 5.3 The Learning Management System enables existing and onboarding staff and managers to complete a suite of e-learning training modules, including 'equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI)'. Learning outcomes for the EDI e-learning include: Understanding the Equality Act 2010 and learning about protected characteristics; Exploring the types of discrimination, including direct, indirect, harassment and victimisation; Knowing how to treat others with respect and offering everyone fair access to opportunities.
- 5.4 There have been a number of development programmes and opportunities launched for staff. This includes universal development programmes - Islington Management Development programme and Solace Emerging Leaders programmes which offer accredited training and development to staff. The management development programmes were promoted to all staff and further targeted support via information and application sessions provided to Black, Asian and minority ethnic staff groups who are under-represented in senior leadership roles.
- 5.5 Islington is a diverse borough with a proud history of championing equality for all. We want our organisation to be a great place to work, where staff diversity is valued as a strength and everyone can be their authentic selves. We believe that it is everyone's responsibility to be respectful, work positively together and challenge exclusionary behaviour. We continued to focus on the 'Islington as an Employer' workstream of the council's overarching Challenging Inequality Programme.
- 5.6 The Challenging Inequality programme's initial objectives aimed to: empower and support professional development particularly from those who are under-represented in certain roles and at senior levels; develop a more modern approach to recruitment and selection that supports and increases diversity; equip senior leaders to embed equality, diversity and inclusion principles into practice across the organisation. The

work includes collaborative working across directorates, for example the Inclusive Language and Accessible Communications Group and complements existing progress to develop and embed our CARE values.

- 5.7 We appointed an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) partner (Cadence Partners) to provide expertise and to support planning and delivery of some aspects of the Challenging Inequality programme. Our partner has been engaged to support us specifically with our: reciprocal mentoring programme – Mentoring for Inclusion; cultural competence training for leaders and managers – Cultural Awareness Learning Programme; a review of our policies and practices.
- 5.8 We reviewed our recruitment and selection processes to ensure that they are fairer and transparent, to help to improve diversity at all levels. All recruiting panels must be diverse and panel members must complete training which is culturally sensitive.
- 5.9 We have launched a Diverse Recruiter's Scheme which includes:
- The introduction of diverse recruitment panels and monitoring criteria to ensure diversity of panels by race and gender. Improving the diversity of our recruitment panels ensures all staff play a role in helping us take more balanced decisions about who to appoint to a role. Staff also have the opportunity to develop their skills and gain experience of the recruitment process.
 - Removal of the grade requirements for panel members and creation of diverse trained panel-member recruitment pools.
 - An internal first approach to recruitment for roles to support internal career progression and open up opportunities for existing staff.
 - Use of a range of diverse recruitment platforms to ensure that our potential candidate audience is as inclusive as possible when seeking to recruit to roles externally. Sourcing diverse external talent can support us to achieve a workforce that is more representative of our community at all levels of the organisation.
 - Monitoring and reporting of recruitment data, ensuring evaluation and review can take place on a regular basis to assess impact and measure success.
- 5.10 There continue to be areas that are more challenging to recruit to, such as IT and social care. Roles currently on the 'shortage of occupation' list issued by the Home Office are exempt from the internal first approach to ensure that there are no additional delays when attempting to fill 'high risk' roles and those where there is a shortage in the market.
- 5.11 A Cultural Awareness Learning Programme was delivered to Corporate Management Board and senior leadership around cultural competence and inclusive leadership. The training included an e-learning workbook and an interactive virtual workshop. 344 managers from across the organisation attended the training. A majority of respondents reported in the evaluation that they felt a 'fair amount' or 'a lot more' confident about their EDI and inclusive behaviours.
- 5.12 A Mentoring for Inclusion reciprocal mentoring programme pilot was developed and delivered. The programme provided career development support to individuals from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds that are underrepresented within our management and leadership levels. Senior leaders learned more from staff about their specific experiences and challenges of being from a minoritised group and supported staff to complete career development plans.

- 5.13 Evaluation of the Mentoring for Inclusion pilot demonstrated an overwhelmingly positive experience that participants had. One of the evaluation metrics for mentees was the extent to which mentees felt heard, understood and valued by the end of the programme. Data suggests this has been a strength of the programme, with mentees expressing a sense of being more confident and empowered. Mentors welcomed the opportunity to support staff in their career development and listen and learn from their experiences. Planning for our second cohort is currently underway and learning from the pilot will inform the future programme of work as we continue to provide mentoring opportunities for staff.
- 5.14 HR worked collaboratively with the Race Equality Network of staff to introduce trauma-informed support to staff via a dedicated Safe Space pilot for staff to talk about racial inequality. The space is specifically for staff from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds to discuss their lived experiences in a supportive environment, facilitated by a counsellor from the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP). Feedback from the 6-month pilot included 94% of respondents reporting that they would attend Safe Space again and 95% 'felt safe and comfortable sharing and contributing to discussion'. The success outcomes from the pilot have ensured this space will continue for staff in the forthcoming year.
- 5.15 In addition, the Council's counselling provider offers bespoke trauma support with qualified trauma psychologists. Some directorates have also set up 'safe spaces' and facilitated discussions at local levels to discuss diversity and inclusion, for example the Resources directorate Equality Working Group delivered 'bring and share sessions' for staff and collated feedback to inform actions in the directorate in the year ahead.
- 5.16 Islington partnered with other London local authorities to deliver Black on Board, a targeted development programme aimed at improving representation on boards amongst Black, Asian and minority ethnic staff. 100% of participants reported increased confidence and 75% achieved board positions. Following a successful pilot, a second cohort was launched for year 2022-23 and will be evaluated in the forthcoming year to ensure appropriate planning ahead to deliver targeted development opportunities to staff.
- 5.17 It is important that initiatives within our Challenging Inequality Programme are regularly reviewed to ensure that we have a clear and structured plan to address issues of under-representation and barriers within the workforce across all protected characteristics. It is also important that this is informed by a current picture of the statistical data as well as insights and feedback from our staff.
- 5.18 In our 2020/21 report, we shared our bi-annual Staff Survey results which highlighted a number of priority areas, noting that lowest scoring responses across many of the questions in the staff survey have been from staff who 'prefer not to say' when asked to share their demographic data. Work has begun to take place during the year to encourage colleagues to share their data so that we can improve our understanding of our workforce by addressing gaps. We have adopted a 'share not declare' approach to this, ensuring colleagues understand how important this information can be in identifying barriers and developing initiatives and this work will continue.

5.19 This report provides data about our workforce. Note that we can only provide a high level overview of the data across our workforce, setting out key points of detail and differences for protected characteristics and looking at the broad themes and patterns that can be seen. Correlation of datasets can be important when considering intersectionality. However, that can result in small group sizes where individuals may be identifiable and is used at an operational level by officers to inform priorities.

6 Data Summary

General

- 6.1 The headcount of employees was 4,773. This excludes casual workers and others who are not directly employed such as agency workers. This is an increase of 0.9% on employee numbers in 2020-21 (4,729).
- 6.2 Islington has a similar sized workforce to boroughs such as Hackney, Southwark, Tower Hamlets, Camden and Greenwich who have similarly retained key services in-house rather than outsourcing. As a result of this, the headcount is much larger than the average for all London boroughs, which for 2020/21 (when last collated) was 2,760.
- 6.3 Approximately 24% of the workforce are Islington residents.
- 6.4 Overall, 17.26% of all employees work part-time.
- 6.5 Employees' length of Islington service is on average 9 years, Adults Social Care has the longest-serving staff group on average with 12.9 years. Many of our employees have continuous service, i.e. service with other Local Authorities or recognised bodies that counts towards their eligibility for certain terms and conditions such as annual leave, sickness and redundancy pay. The average length of continuous service is 12.7 years.

Race & Ethnic Origin

- 6.6 When looking at broad ethnic groups, the percentages of employees from Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities within Islington Council is 41.59% of employees compared to 51.00% who are White and 7.41% who have either not disclosed their data or prefer not to say. More specifically, 26.65% are of Black or Black British ethnicity, 4.99% were of Mixed Ethnicity and 8.32% of Asian or Asian British ethnicity. Those of White British ethnicity were 34.99% compared to White Other at 16.01%.
- 6.7 Islington population data shows that the percentage of Islington residents who were from a Black, Asian and minority ethnic background overall was 32% so our data shows that colleagues from these backgrounds are represented in higher levels within our workforce than in our community. When resident data is broken down further, Black or Black British ethnicity was 12%, Mixed Ethnicity 7% and Asian or Asian British 10%. Islington's population has high levels of White Other at 20%. 44% of Islington residents are of White British ethnicity.

- 6.8 The Council's performance indicators include the percentage of Black, Asian and minority ethnic staff within the top 5% of earners. At the end of 2021/22, the percentage of Black, Asian and minority ethnic staff within the top 5% of earners had increased to 25.06%. This trend follows an increase at the end of the previous year 2020/21, which was 22% against a target of 21.7%. This remains a top priority for the Council, i.e. to improve representation at the senior levels through a combination of recruitment and progression.
- 6.9 The percentages of employees from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds compared to White employees change through the salary bandings. For White staff, there is an increase in representation through the salary bandings, whereas for Black employees there is a decrease in representation as salary bandings increase. For Asian and Asian British, Mixed and Other ethnic groups, there is no significant difference in representation through the salary bandings.
- 6.10 When representation is looked at in quartiles, the differences are significant in the higher quartile, e.g. 34% of colleagues are from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds and 66% White.
- 6.11 Islington council has a mean ethnicity pay gap of 9.97% which is a small improvement on last year (10.3%). This means that on average, Black, Asian and minority ethnic employees are paid a lower hourly rate than White employees. Whilst this is an improvement, we acknowledge a need to continue to proactively monitor data, engage with Black, Asian and minority ethnic staff and work closely with our Race Equality Network to champion targeted opportunities and ensure a culture of allyship in the organisation.
- 6.12 Our Race Equality Network (REN) continue to work closely with colleagues in HR following agreement of the proposals agreed annually. This has included engagement and input from network members into shaping the programmes set out in section 5 above. Including tailored support for staff from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds to have a safe space to ensure that staff with access to specialist trauma support and assistance for staff who have experienced discrimination or racism. Targeted development opportunities have also been funded and piloted in consultation with the REN.
- 6.13 The Black History Working Group (IslingtonBH365) is a sub-group of the REN and has continued to lead an annual programme of activities for staff, local residents, national and international communities. The Group encourage and promote awareness and understanding of Black History and community. The Group's objective is to support continual shared learning across the council and wider community and become an integral part of the council structure.
- 6.14 In regard to recruitment data by ethnicity, there are considerably higher numbers of applications from Black candidates in particular when compared to the council and local population. 45.1% of posts offered were to candidates from a Black, Asian or minority ethnic background which is aligned when compared with the existing workforce (41.59%).
- 6.15 When applications are compared with local resident data, applications received from Black or Black British ethnicity was 30.47% and 23.96% of roles recruited to by Black

or Black British candidates compared with 12% of local population. This suggests there are considerably higher numbers of applications from Black candidates in particular when compared to the council and local population.

- 6.16 Applications received from Asian or Asian British applicants were 17.97% and 10.79% of roles recruited to, compared with 10% of Islington's population. 39.39% of all applications received were from applicants from White backgrounds and 53.99% recruited to roles, this compares with 44% of Islington residents of White ethnicity, suggesting there is a higher proportion of White staff recruited to roles when compared to local population.
- 6.17 Apprenticeships are also used to upskill existing staff, providing them with new skills and career opportunities as part of our 'FUSE' programme. We continue to work to ensure that there is a diverse talent pipeline offering staff to upskill and progress in their careers across the council.
- 6.18 Our apprenticeship data for 2021/22 shows that we have been successful in attracting a range of candidates from diverse ethnic backgrounds into our placements. All applicants must be either an Islington resident, an Islington care leaver or a student at an Islington secondary school currently or within the last 12 months. During 2021/22, 43.59% of our 78 apprentices were from Black, Asian or minority ethnic backgrounds, with 8.97% from Mixed backgrounds, 12.82% from Asian backgrounds and 17.95% from Black backgrounds.
- 6.19 It should be noted that numbers are relatively small and therefore one individual's data accounts for 2.94% of all joiners and 4.3% of FUSE. However, there is a trend that those taking up apprenticeships are more likely to be from a Black, Asian or minority ethnic background. Black and Black British staff are particularly well represented in career progression apprenticeships with 34.78% of starts, compared with 26.45% of the overall staff group.
- 6.20 Secondment and acting-up opportunities are placements where an employee (internal or external) can gain new skills and experiences to support career progression. Whilst we had not historically captured career progression data, we are now capturing and monitoring secondments and acting-up roles to regularly report.
- 6.21 Of the 216 act-up and secondment opportunities recruited to during 2021-22, the ethnicity breakdown was: 8.85% Asian/Asian British; 26.39% Black/Black British; Mixed 7.87%; 54.63% White. We will continue to monitor the career progression data and evaluate the potential impact secondments and act-up opportunities can have on career development and notably promotion.
- 6.22 Islington colleagues are participating in the London Tackling Racial Inequality Programme which aims to work together across all London Boroughs to share best practice and develop toolkits for improvement across the areas of Recruitment & Selection, Leadership, Culture and Career Progression. This work includes the development of new datasets which will allow much richer benchmarking and tracking across London in the year ahead.

Sex

- 6.23 Women are slightly more represented amongst our workforce at 53.05% than men at 46.95%. This is a variation from our resident population which has a lower percentage of women (48.78%) compared with 51.22% men.
- 6.24 Recruitment data shows that 64.37% of all posts offered were to females which is higher than the council average of females in the workforce (53.05%). 60.01% of all applications received for jobs are from females.
- 6.25 Women are more represented than men at almost all salary bandings with the exceptions of £20-£30k and £60-£70k. The £20-£30k includes the predominantly male groups of Public Realm operatives and Caretakers. A larger percentage of males are employed in Environment (72.01%) and Homes and Neighbourhoods directorates (62.8%). Conversely, females are represented significantly in Fairer Together (83.1%), Public Health (79.22%) and Adult Social Care (76.77%) directorates.
- 6.26 Islington council has a mean gender pay gap of -4.35%. This means that on average Islington male employees are paid at a lower hourly rate than Islington female employees. This is predominantly due to the higher proportion of women (56%) in the upper pay quartile.
- 6.27 Islington's Women's Forum provides an opportunity to discuss issues affecting women in the workplace. It is a place to share learning, best practice, opportunities and engage in the support a forum can offer. The Women's Forum supported the development of the council's new miscarriage policy and guidance, including the provision of special leave for individuals and partners who experience a miscarriage. The forum is striving to improve support for menopause and menstruation in the workplace and several other actions to support health and wellbeing of women at work.
- 6.28 The Council has developed guidance to support those staff experiencing domestic violence. Noting that this can be experienced by both men and women, but that research shows a trend that one-in-four adult women have or will suffer from domestic violence and abuse in their lifetime. Additional domestic abuse training has been provided to HR staff to ensure the workforce are able to access appropriate support. The Council achieved the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance's (DAHA) accreditation.
- 6.29 The Council continues its partnership with Timewise. Timewise Council status is awarded to local authorities that commit to becoming more flexible as employers, meeting the future challenges of our changing workforce. This is ever more important as we harness the benefits of hybrid working as part of our FutureWork programme. 17.26% of our workforce work part-time and women are far more likely to work part-time than men. The highest percentage of part-time employees is in Adult Social Care where 29.55% of the workforce is part-time.
- 6.30 Mental health absence is the highest reason for sickness absence across both men and women. Many staff are losing working days due to stress and depression specifically. However, women lose almost twice as many working days as men due to

anxiety disorders. Stress and mental health conditions remain the primary cause of sickness absence nationally. Mental Health Awareness Week this year was marked with a number of internal events for all staff and this is an area of focus in our Health and Wellbeing Action Plan.

- 6.31 In addition, further working groups will explore differentials in sickness absence by gender and provide targeted response and support to men and women. The Health and Wellbeing Action Plan will be prioritising initiatives that are likely to have the greatest impact on minimising absence and enabling colleagues to return and sustain attendance at work
- 6.32 Our Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) provides support and resources to help staff, including emotional support from qualified counsellors or practical help and advice on coping strategies to manage challenges, like health and fitness or managing work-life balance. One-to-one support from qualified counsellors is also available, including couples counselling, specialist trauma support, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, and other therapies. There were 249 EAP counselling cases this year. Overall, 160 staff members utilised our EAP offer this year and we continue to promote services widely to the workforce.
- 6.33 Our staff survey also captured anonymous data on gender. Less than 1% of respondents identified as non-binary. However, there is increased acknowledgement that there are a number of staff who support the Council acknowledging sex and gender identity as separate categories.

Disability

- 6.34 9.43% of our staff have shared that they have a disability, a slight increase on last year (8.94%) and is higher than the average across London boroughs (6.25%). While 48.27% of staff have confirmed that they do not have a disability, a slight increase on last year (44.58%). The small increases in declaration of disability status suggest more staff have shared their status this year. However, there are still 42.3% who have not stated either way. The highest declaration of disability by directorate was in Adult Social Care where 12.63% stated that they are disabled.
- 6.35 There have been communications campaigns to encourage staff to 'share not declare' their disability status. Further work will be carried out this year by way of our campaign, to continue to encourage staff to share information about their disability with us in order to enable the best support to be in place through initiatives such as our workplace passport. The passport is a voluntary scheme and has been designed to encourage and allow meaningful conversations with an employee about their health and wellbeing and the management of their condition/disability.
- 6.36 All staff are encouraged to share their disability status as part of the recruitment process and are supported to access reasonable adjustments. In regards to recruitment, 7.66% of all applications received in 2021-22 shared a disability and of all applicants successfully recruited to roles 9.4% shared they had a disability, similar to our overall rate.
- 6.37 Analysis of our 2020-21 Staff Survey results highlighted a number of priority areas for staff with disabilities. There has been an action forum established in collaboration with the Disabled Staff Forum to deliver a series of improvements for disabled staff.

As part of a focus on disability in the Challenging Inequality programme and in collaboration with the Disabled Staff Forum, there are continued actions to provide increased support for disabled staff in 2022-23.

- 6.38 The Disabled Staff Forum continued to work collaboratively with HR colleagues to address disadvantages disabled staff might experience within the council, also highlighting the need for allyship and awareness amongst all staff. The Disabled Staff Forum advocated for the creation of the Disability and Wellbeing Officer role and having a centralised budget for reasonable adjustments. This aims to support disabled staff more effectively and efficiently by streamlining access to support and resources.
- 6.39 We have refreshed our workforce Health and Wellbeing Action Plan to take account of the feedback from our staff, following a health and wellbeing follow-up survey. The action plan which is jointly delivered across teams such as HR, Public Health and Health and Safety is driven forward by the Health and Wellbeing Steering Group. Key themes include: mental wellbeing; health and safety; work-life balance. Actions contribute towards achieving 'excellence' under the London Healthy Workplace Charter.
- 6.40 Staff survey data showed that staff with disabilities are statistically less likely to be positive about their working experience at Islington – although there was not such a difference for other protected characteristics. One area with lower than average scores was around learning and development and career opportunities. All staff now have access to MyLearning and we will be monitoring data throughout 2022/23 and continuing to work closely with our staff forums to ensure that training opportunities are fully accessible and that there are further opportunities, for example mentoring opportunities for disabled staff.
- 6.41 All HR staff attended Disability Awareness training to ensure there is greater understanding and support for staff. The Disability and Wellbeing Officer is leading on ensuring that workplace adjustments are managed swiftly and with dignity. Staff in HR are equipped to engage with staff and managers directly regarding reasonable adjustments and able to advise about further sources of help and support that are available.
- 6.42 Islington council has a mean disability pay gap of -2.26%. This means that on average Islington employees with a disability are paid at a slightly higher hourly rate than Islington employees without a disability.
- 6.43 As a Disability Confident employer, we recognise the value of diversity and are committed to ensuring that people with long-term health conditions or impairments do not encounter discrimination. We are working to achieving level 3 of the Disability Confident Employer scheme by reviewing our approach to reasonable adjustments, recruitment and completing a range of initiatives as part of our Health and Wellbeing Action Plan to challenge mental health stigma and discrimination.
- 6.44 The FutureWork programme has worked with staff to gather feedback from the pilot and an audit of the pilot has been conducted by Arup to report and make recommendations to ensure workplaces incorporate inclusive design principles and are co-designed with the requirements of those with disabilities and neuro-diverse

conditions in mind. We are dedicated to supporting staff with disabilities through the next phase of our Challenging Inequality programme and FutureWork programme.

Age

- 6.45 The average age of an Islington employee is 47, which is marginally higher than the London Councils average of 46.66. The largest of all the age bandings is 50-64; 40.96% of staff fall into this category. A mandatory retirement age was removed in 2011 and we continue to see increasing numbers of staff choosing to work beyond the previous default retirement age of 65 (4.76%). Under the Local Government Pension Scheme, employees can presently choose to retire from age 55 (with reduced benefits).
- 6.46 Age by salary grouping show that the majority of the age-banding 50-64 is in the £30-£40k grouping which is consistent with most other age bands, with the exception of 16-24 and 65+ age bands where there is greater representation in the £20k-£30k salary grouping.
- 6.47 In terms of recruitment data, 55.24% of applications received and 54.66% of roles recruited to were in the 25-39 age banding, representing the largest group for both applications received and recruited to posts.
- 6.48 In addition, we continue to have success with our apprenticeship programmes so that we are developing a future pipeline of talent for the future to balance our ageing workforce. Directorate People Plans, capturing insights from data and staff engagement will draw out related issues. These will be developed by HR whilst owned by our senior leaders.

Sexual Orientation

- 6.49 Data on sexual orientation has generally been collected by employers since the changes under the Equality Act 2010 and data gaps have often not been filled retrospectively.
- 6.50 4.4% of employees have recorded that they are gay, lesbian, bisexual or that they prefer to self-describe. This is an increase on the previous year (3.7%) and compares with 61.97% of employees who have recorded that they are heterosexual. However, 33.63% of staff do not have a recorded sexual orientation status, despite a slight increase in disclosure, this remains an area for data quality improvement. In our staff survey last year 8% of respondents described themselves as gay, lesbian or bisexual demonstrating that there are some colleagues who have not disclosed their sexual orientation.
- 6.51 The LGBTQ+ Staff Forum aims to improve the working lives of LGBTQ+ staff at the council by providing the opportunity to impact council policies and practices. It also provides a safe place to discuss issues and receive support and advice. The LGBTQ Staff Forum is particularly proud to fly the new Progress Pride flag, the colours of which include Trans, non-binary, and people of colour.
- 6.52 In LGBTQ+ History Month, the forum organised a free event 'Queer London and Islington's LGBTQ+ history', where over 60 people came together to learn more of

the iconic history in the borough. In 2022-23, the forum aim to increase awareness and celebration of the LGBTQ+ community and will be supporting the launch of further awareness training to staff and organising events for forum members and all staff to join.

Religion or Belief

- 6.53 Data on religion or belief was only generally collected by employers after the Equality Act changes. Our data shows that 33.29% of the workforce are Christian, 6.93% are Muslim, 1.07% Hindu, 7.48% are of another religion or belief, 13.03% have no religion and there is a data gap of 36.25% of staff who have not stated either way. Of those who have shared that they practise another religion, none is disclosed by more than 1% of the workforce.
- 6.54 Our Equality Calendar includes religious and faith-based celebrations and observances are acknowledged throughout the year. Staff are encouraged to be aware and respectful to colleagues from different faith groups.

Pregnancy & Maternity

- 6.55 During 2021/22, 61 employees commenced parental leave, this includes maternity leave, shared parental leave and adoption leave. The vast majority of women who commenced maternity leave have returned or are currently planning to. Our wellbeing hub includes advice and support for parents and carers. We are seeking to review our Parental Policy and support to parents in the year ahead.

Grievance & Disciplinary

- 6.56 The number of staff who were subject to disciplinary investigation and/or disciplinary action (42) is a very small percentage of all employees (0.89%).
- 6.57 On 6 occasions disciplinary hearings resulted in dismissal during the reporting period. Those subject to such actions are 0.13% of all employees. Where there are such small numbers drawing conclusion based on individual characteristics e.g. sex, ethnicity or gender is not statistically significant.
- 6.58 The numbers of staff who submit a formal grievance are also very few (22). This represents 0.46% of the workforce. Note this data relates to individual employee grievances that require a formal process to resolve. Many grievances can be resolved informally or through mediation; all parties are encouraged to pursue such actions as a first step.
- 6.59 It is difficult to draw conclusions from relatively low numbers when considered against the overall workforce. However, we do carry out analysis and monitoring of individual cases to ascertain whether more detailed action is necessary. A review of our Bullying and Harassment guidance will be taking place in the forthcoming year and will engage with staff from across the organisation.

7 Next Steps

- 7.1 As set out throughout the paper, the data provides us with areas of focus for the forthcoming year. More detailed analysis of the dataset, evaluations of programmes

will continue and will inform the Workforce Strategy from 2023 onwards. There will be actions to address gaps and provide opportunities for further exploration and staff engagement. Upgrades to the HR system will enable improved access by front-line staff and we anticipate improvements to records and data insights.

7.2 The Challenging Inequality programme continues to work collaboratively with staff to take clear and substantial action to address equality issues, create an inclusive workplace and foster a culture of fairness and inclusion. The Islington as an Employer actions will be supported by Islington as an Employer steering group in 2022/23 and include:

- Research and evaluate training and development programmes for participation to make recommendations to repeat or introduce new programmes
- Delivery of Reciprocal Mentoring for Inclusion scheme (second cohort)
- Creation of Equality Champions
- Establish an Equality Calendar of events for the workforce
- Review of existing Health & Wellbeing action plan, establishing key priorities for the workforce i.e. improving mental health awareness and analysis of sickness absence data to explore trends amongst different occupational and protected characteristic groups
- A focus on supporting and improving the experiences of staff with disability and long-term health needs
- Support career progression of Black, Asian and minority ethnic staff to ensure representative at all levels of the organisation

7.3 As new initiatives are being developed, evaluation criteria and success factors are being built in so that we can monitor impact. This includes our mentoring schemes, management development programmes and training. Evaluation data will provide recommendations for the incorporation of any new metrics for inclusion for 2022/23.

7.4 We have continued to use apprenticeships and schemes such as Kickstart to provide employment opportunities for local people as well as maximising our Apprenticeship Levy spend through in-work apprenticeships such as our Islington Management Diploma and participation in the London-wide SOLACE programme for emerging leaders. Both management development programmes now have second cohorts of staff actively engaged in the programmes to support their professional development and we are developing our career pathways strategy to provide more pathways into employment, particularly among our residents. We are reviewing our Apprenticeships and career pathways in the year ahead.

7.5 In order to ensure that we are best placed to respond to the challenges of financial restraints and to continue to tackle the inequality within our borough ensuring fairness for all, Let's Talk Islington launched, to hear from the local community about what we can do to improve life for everyone who lives, works and studies in the borough. Further work will be undertaken by the Inequality Task Force to create a more equal borough.

7.6 We will also be reviewing our pay and grading framework. With a more modern and transparent pay and grading structure, we will be able to attract the best talent, retain the best staff and our people will deliver the best services for our residents.

8 **Conclusion**

- 8.1 The workforce data and upcoming workforce strategy staff engagement sessions will continue to provide us with valuable information to assist in prioritising areas of work in the year ahead. As set out above, our Challenging Inequality Programme already contains a range of initiatives in development that are particularly designed to support staff groups, ensuring that opportunities for development and career progression are available to all in our workforce.
- 8.2 Improving the health and wellbeing of our staff remains a key priority in the year ahead. For disabled staff and those who have a long-term health need, we will be working to ensure appropriate workplace adjustments are made and encouraging greater disability awareness amongst staff. We want to continue to improve the experiences of our disabled staff at work and make sure all staff have support in place to manage their mental health and wellbeing.
- 8.3 As we progress and embrace FutureWork and our new ways of working, we will be embedding a staff engagement strategy to ensure that we continue to proactively listen and communicate with staff so that both staff voice and data continues to drive our programmes of work and areas of focus.