



Human Resources & Community
Development

**ACHIEVING EQUITY
STRATEGY 2024 - 2027**



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Moving from Equality to Equity

In the United Kingdom, the legal basis for all organisations to follow when considering how they treat people is the [Equality Act 2010](#). This protects people from discrimination and victimisation on the grounds of 9 protected characteristics.

The characteristics that are protected by the Equality Act 2010 are:

Race

Race refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.

Disability

A person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment and this impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

Sex

Under the Equality Act, 'sex' is understood as binary, being a man or woman. For the purposes of the Act, a person's legal sex is their biological sex as recorded on their birth certificate. A trans person can change their legal sex by obtaining a Gender Recognition Certificate.

Gender reassignment

Gender re-assignment includes anyone who is proposing to undergo or has undergone a process (or part of a process) to reassign their sex.

Pregnancy and maternity



Pregnancy refers to the period when a person is pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating someone unfavourably because they are breastfeeding.

Age

A person belonging to a particular age (for example 45 year olds) or range of ages (for example 18 to 30 year olds)

Religion or Belief

Religion refers to any religion, including a lack of religion. Belief refers to any religious or philosophical belief and includes a lack of belief. Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.

Sexual orientation

Sexual orientation refers to a person's sexual attraction whether this is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.

Marriage and Civil Partnership

Marriage is a union between a man and a woman, or between a same-sex couple. Same-sex couples can also have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must not be treated less favourably than married couples (except where permitted by the Equality Act)

The act also provides for protection against discrimination by association which provides protection for people who are discriminated against because someone close to them falls under the definition of one of the protected characteristics, or if a person has complained about discrimination or supported someone else's claim

Public sector organisations also have an additional [public sector equality duty](#) to:



- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality 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.

A summary of the legal framework under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty is attached as Annex A.

The above illustrates what Surrey Heath Borough Council ('The Council') must achieve. However, the business case for going further is compelling.

Equality vs Equity – What is the difference?

Equality means each individual or group of people is given the same resources or opportunities.

Equity recognizes that each person has different circumstances, and allocates the appropriate resources and opportunities needed to reach an equal outcome.

[Source: International Women's Day: Equality versus Equity what's the difference?](#)
(Adapted)

The Business Case for Equity

In January 2013, the Department for Business and Skills published the [business case for equality](#)

This confirms that the drivers for achieving equity can be either external or internal to the organisation and include:

External - Equity for residents helps to achieve the Corporate Strategy of healthy and inclusive communities, builds positive relationships with residents, makes



services more accessible (for everyone, not just those from protected groups), reduces bureaucracy and improves social mobility. Ultimately, this reduces dependency on public sector services, thereby reducing costs of service delivery. This case has been supported by later research including the below 2020 update from McKinsey however progress has been slow and more needs to be done to achieve inclusion (a sense of fairness, openness and equality of opportunity):

<https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/diversity-and-inclusion/diversity-wins-how-inclusion-matters>

Internal - Diverse internal teams are generally regarded as being more creative, think from a wider perspective, consider wider views, strive to achieve simpler and more effective processes, question norms and are more innovative. Achieving equity allows staff to reach their potential, adding to attraction of the Council as an employer, (particularly to those who are at an earlier stage in their careers), reduces the gender pay gap and helps to build flexibility in policy and process. It also helps people stay in work when they might otherwise leave due to caring responsibilities or disability. Greater flexibility can lead to higher productivity at reduced costs.

All of this will be needed to achieve a balanced budget over the coming years without impacting the quality of services delivered.

McKinsey recommends an evidence-based model to achieve this:

Table below adapted from McKinsey and Company

Companies need a systematic, business-led approach to inclusion and diversity, as well as bolder action on inclusion:	
1. Systematic business-led approach to inclusion and diversity	<p>Increase diverse representation particularly in leadership and critical roles.</p> <p>Strengthen leadership and accountability for delivering on inclusion and diversity goals</p>
2. Take bold steps to strengthen inclusion	Enable equality of opportunity through fairness and transparency



	<p>Promote openness, tackling bias and discrimination</p> <p>Foster belonging through support for multivariate diversity</p>
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This strategy is based on the above model, and aims to exceed the ‘base line’ of our legal requirements by striving to achieve equity rather than equality. This recognises that some people encounter barriers when accessing resources or opportunities and seeks to understand and then work to remove those barriers.

The Council therefore recognises:

- That barriers to opportunities and resources exist for some people due to their personal characteristics.
- That many people experience ‘intersectionality’, that is, that they may encounter more barriers than others because they experience more than one protected characteristic.
- That the Council aims to remove these barriers in the delivery of their services and improve accessibility to their services and communications
- That some people experience barriers to opportunities from personal characteristics not specifically identified within the Equality Act 2010, and the Council, where possible, seeks to address those barriers.
- That everyone has their own unique experiences of encountering barriers to resources and opportunities and that the Council aims to understand those and take into consideration factors that evidence indicates are marginalising.
- The essential part that the voluntary sector plays in moving towards equity and the role of the Council in enabling that sector. We will continue to support volunteering and promote the voluntary sector where we can throughout the borough.

Why is this important



Whilst Surrey Heath is generally regarded as an economically prosperous and thriving area, it is a borough of contrasts with estates within several wards experiencing higher levels of deprivation, as identified through the [Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019](#) . It is therefore essential that the Council targets community development and place improvement initiatives to the areas that most need it and which will remove barriers to opportunities.

The strategy will focus Community Development resources within Surrey Heath, on those areas of deprivation where the data and research shows they are needed most. The Community Development Team will also work to identify smaller pockets of deprivation across the Borough with the aim of targeting support and resources wherever it is needed most. We will do this by engaging with our communities and through partnership work with organisations engaged across the borough in supporting vulnerable individuals and communities, and through our Achieving Equity Forum.

The role of the Council is to provide select services for residents, businesses and visitors to the borough, and many of those services are aimed at the most vulnerable in society. The Corporate Strategy seeks to empower communities to help themselves and to be inclusive, however those aims can only be achieved if residents and staff are able to access the services and information offered. This is why 'equity' is so critically important.

The Council recognises that historic and systemic inequality exists for certain groups of people and that to remove barriers to resources and opportunities for those people is the right thing to do and will help society grow and develop positively in the longer term. This could lead to reduced dependency on public sector funding.

What this strategy seeks to do

This strategy therefore seeks to:



- Meet and work to exceed the minimum legal requirements as set out in the Equality Act 2010
- Provide and measure the organisation against a framework to remove barriers to opportunity to those who experience these
- Strengthen knowledge of inclusion and equity through training events and opportunities for all officers and councillors at Surrey Heath. Training to be targeted at Surrey Heath specific issues and initiatives.
- Identify the focus areas (roads or estates within specific wards) in Surrey Heath that experience the most barriers to resources and opportunities and target initiatives focussed on improving place, health and quality of life in those areas.
- Continue to promote an organisational culture of openness where difference is welcomed, valued and celebrated
- Deliver an annual calendar of events promoting diversity, inclusion and equity integrated with the Councils annual communication programme.

Surrey Heath's vision and aims

Having considered the Corporate Strategy and the data available, the following vision and aims of this strategy are:

- To make Surrey Heath a safe place to live and work with a strong economy and suitable housing for all
- To build and encourage communities where people can live happily and healthily by understanding their needs and the barriers they face and working to remove those where we can.
- To be particularly aware of the impact of age on the opportunities to access technology, health and wellbeing opportunities and participate in democratic processes. We will take steps to engage people from all ages in the democratic process when building healthy lives initiatives and we will also seek ways to bridge the technological divide that exists between generations.



Approach to achieving equity of opportunity

The Council takes responsibility to ensure that equity is understood as a principle and Service Leaders integrate this into service delivery and employment practices of the authority. This is achieved by:

- Providing regular high quality training opportunities for officers and councillors.
- Ensuring that annual and mid-term appraisals discuss equalities issues
- Asking report writers to consider equalities issues when considering Council recommendations
- Testing our equalities and equity knowledge and approach in our staff survey
- Seeking feedback from our Equalities Champions
- Working with the Achieving Equity Forum, attended by partner organisations working within the equity and inclusion space to understand issues encountered across communities and building that understanding into policies and procedures
- Asking officers to ensure that services can be accessed through diverse methods and that accessibility issues are always considered when providing services.
- Ensuring that approach, progress and learning is shared with our partners and held to account and scrutiny by the Engaging Communities Working Group, External Partnerships Committee and the Employment Committee

This Strategy demonstrates our commitment to continue to move from equality of opportunity to equity of opportunity in our employment practices and service delivery. The Council is also committed to work with partners to achieve equity.

The Council is particularly aware of the discrimination, harassment, and victimisation some communities encounter on social media and will proactively recognise that in the event of local, national or international events in our communications approach and strategy.



Objectives and progress measurement

It is essential that a strategy has a measurable action plan for implementation and that progress against that action plan is reported. The Local Government Association (LGA) has a framework to support that, see:

<https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/equalities-hub/equality-framework-local-government>. The Council was last measured against this framework in 2010 at which point is gained 'achieving' status. Our ambition is to ask the LGA to re-measure our progress within the strategy period and that we maintain or exceed that status.

The Council will continue to use the framework within the action plan and when reporting progress to the relevant committees.

To enable measurement against the framework we will identify and assess annual objectives in the following areas:

Understanding and working with our communities

- Work to understand community data relating to older people and engage with third sector representatives to understand and support older people to age well
- Work to understand community data relating to ethnic diversity within the borough and engage with third sector representatives to understand and support these groups appropriately
- Develop our Achieving Equity Forum to listen to voices from across communities and ensure that feedback is built into our decision making, policies and processes
- Proactively share data trends and patterns with our partners to identify and resolve gaps in our knowledge through the Surrey Heath Partnership and the Engaging Communities Working Group
- Seek to improve the number and accuracy of data declarations on protected characteristic information from our staff and service users.



- Work with our partners to support the health and well-being outcomes of our community particularly focusing on those who are living in a home with one or more dimension of deprivation or who are homeless

Leadership Partnership and Organisational objectives

- Consult with residents and encourage residents' panels on issues that are important to them
- Develop our leaders to be excellent ambassadors of equity issues and role model that in their everyday behaviours
- Understand the impact of language on inclusion and continually refresh our knowledge by publishing a guide to language that is reviewed annually
- Act as a visible community champion for equity issues through our website and social media channels
- Train our staff to have difficult conversations when behaviour needs to be challenged
- Deliver an annual Diversity Calendar agreed with the Engaging Communities Working Group which drives communications activities in support of the events identified.
- Deliver an 'Achieving Equity Action Plan', agreed with the Engaging Communities Working group, developed in partnership with our Achieving Equity Forum
- Run an annual programme of events to support, educate, celebrate and recognise communities who are more likely to encounter barriers to resources and opportunities

Responsive Services and Customer Care

- Consider how we use technology to support accessibility of services but also remain aware of those who are not able to access services in this way. Our default approach will be to provide diverse methods to access services.
- Use our green space and leisure facilities to deliver a programme of sport and leisure activities which will support our community engagement with



the citizens of Surrey Heath. These will be particularly aimed at those who are less likely to access sport and leisure facilities for example those from Wards and estates recognised as experiencing more social deprivation, women and those from ethnic minority groups

- Deliver the Armed Forces Covenant programme and review this annually
- Maintain and develop our approach as a Disability Confident organisation and we will continue to review and develop initiatives to support those living with disabilities, in particular barriers to employment
- Work with our partners to deliver safety, health and development projects aimed at women and girls
- Have a clear communications programme supporting all of the above that is accessible and enables people who do not speak English to access services
- Ensure that equality of opportunity is built into our procurement process and that social value impact is considered as part of our contract award mechanisms and frameworks

Diverse and engaged workforce

- Develop Equalities Champions to promote equity of opportunity in our service delivery
- Work with our Human Resources team to ensure that recruitment processes remain focussed on removing barriers to employment and training opportunities, particularly considering age, caring responsibilities, disability and race
- Take positive action to encourage women to enter senior management positions through training, coaching, support, flexible working opportunities in senior roles and improving family friendly policies for all
- Ensure that our staff are trained to understand the aims and objectives of this strategy and are equipped to enable and facilitate it
- Make the Mental Health Commitment at Work and report our progress regularly to the relevant committees



Our Publications

Under the Public Sector Equality Duty, the following must be published within the below timescales:

- Our gender pay-gap data by 31st March each year
- Information on general duty compliance with regard to our employees (this is our Workforce Profile report which is reviewed by the Employment Committee annually)
- Information on general duty compliance with regard to people affected by our policies and practices.
- Our Equality Objectives which are included in this strategy and refreshed at least every four years. Our aim is to exceed this by including meaningful analysis and our action plan, together with this strategy.

Roles and responsibilities

Councillors and Officers have a responsibility to adhere to the organisations policy and strategy.

The Council have the responsibility to ensure that the objectives of the Equity Strategy are reflected in the design of the organisation's policies and the delivery of services, including internal policies, and for these issues to be kept under review.

All staff (i.e. employees, casual workers, contractors, and volunteers) are responsible for conducting their work in a way that supports delivery of the strategy and which demonstrates the Council's values. Staff have a responsibility to attend any mandatory training that supports the objectives of the Strategy. However, some individuals and groups have additional duties under the Strategy, as described below:



Individual/Group	Role	Additional Duties
Leader and Housing & Inclusion Portfolio Holder	Equality Champion	Champion inclusion, equity and diversion for the Council
Chief Executive	Equality Champion	Integration of Achieving Equity Strategy and Equality Legislation into service delivery and employment
Head of HR Performance & Communications	Equality Champion	Delivery of Achieving Equity Strategy
Identified Staff members	Equality Champion and/or Staff Representative	<p>Equality Champions meet regularly to provide feedback on equity issues and take feedback to teams, services and departments.</p> <p>Staff Representatives support staff who encounter unfairness of opportunity and regularly provide feedback to senior officers and HR relating to staff views. The input and feedback of the staff through Staff Representatives is essential to good employment relationships.</p>
Councillors	Equality Champion	Promoting cohesion and fostering good relations within their ward. Must pay due regard to equality and human rights in all ward work and engage with residents on these matters to represent them their views. Raise issues with the Portfolio Holder and consider whether issues within their ward may merit a Residents Panel. Use Ward Councillor grants to



		particularly support communities within their wards that may encounter barriers to opportunities and resources.
Achieving Equity Forum	Forum	Meet on a quarterly basis to seek the views of community representatives, particularly those that historically have encountered marginalisation. Test performance of the Council against this strategy. Feedback to Engaging Communities Working Group.
Engaging Communities Working Group	Working Group	Deliver the Corporate Objective Strategy of healthier and more inclusive communities. Reviews implementation of this strategy and associated action plan. Reviews the work of the Council for communities experiencing barriers or lack of access to resources and opportunities.
Surrey Heath Partnership	Working Group	Meets regularly, taking a holistic approach to community safety and development. Shares data and information relating to marginalised groups. Feedback from the group is taken into account in the Councils community engagement and development work.
External Partnerships Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Scrutinises the work of partners and enables residents to hold partners to account. Provides opportunities to share data and information between partners and the Council.
Employment Committee	Committee	This committee agrees Staff and Human Resources policies. Whilst the Workforce Profile is not a policy, it is included annually for information to the committee to facilitate debate and to enable members of the committee to consider achieving equity fully when agreeing policies.



Performance and Finance Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Responsible for challenging Council members, officers and others about decisions impacting on equality and human rights issues.
Senior Managers		Ensure the strategy is integrated into all aspects of service planning and delivery. Work with Managers to ensure information about the impact of the strategy on equity across the borough is gathered, evaluated and made available.
Managers		Work with Senior Managers on the above items. Managers also have an individual responsibility to ensure that individual staff members understand their specific roles and responsibilities regarding implementing the Strategy and working in a manner that is accordant with the Council's approach to equality and human rights.

Delivering the Strategy

The equity objectives are delivered via the Annual Achieving Equity Action Plan and are therefore specific and measurable. The Achieving Equity Action Plan forms a key part of the performance management and monitoring process. The Action Plan will be accompanied by a progress report outlining the current work of the Council. The report for 2023 will act as a 'base line' for future reporting and will be developed alongside the action plan.

Equality Impact Assessment and Actions

The Council uses equality impact assessments on its services, policies (including HR policies) etc to demonstrate that equality is considered in the decision-making process. Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) are conducted in relation to all the protected characteristics.



Equality impact assessments scheduled for the year and actions resulting from previous assessments are fed into the Annual Plan for implementation.

Annexes

- **Annex 1** **2022/23 Workforce Profile**
- **Annex 2** **Diversity Calendar 2023/24**
- **Annex 3** **What the data for the borough indicates (an overview)**
- **Annex 4** **The Legal Framework (detail)**



Annex I 2022/23 Workforce Profile

Overview

This profile provides workforce data over the time period from 1st April 2022 until 31st March, focusing on how our staff at Surrey Heath Borough Council are grouped by age, gender, grade, contract type and those who have identified themselves as having a disability and a certain ethnic origin and religion. The profile also examines vacancies, new starters, specifically their time to hire and also leavers and will look extensively at sickness absence and analyse the top reasons.

This profile helps the Council to understand the composition of the workforce over this period of time and as it is repeated over coming financial years, can identify trends and patterns, providing an evidential basis for future workforce analysis and recommendations.

Number of Employees

As at 31st March 2023, there were 283 employees working for Surrey Heath Borough Council. These are split by service as follows:

Service	Number of employees as at 31 March 2023	Percentage of Surrey Heath employees
Environment and Community	94	33%
Finance and Customer Service	54	19%
Planning	31	11%
HR, Performance and Communications	38	13%
Property and Economic Development	17	6%



Joint Waste Solutions	34	12%
Legal and Democratic Services	13	5%
Chief Executive's Office	3	1%

These charts below show the visual proportion of staff split by service, as the table above lays out.

Number of Employees by Grade

The grade with the highest number of employees was SH04 with 76 employees (26%) and the grades with the lowest amount were those at the higher and lower ends such as SH02, SH10, SH33 (less than 1%)

Number of Employees by Gender

As of 31st March 2023, roughly two thirds (64%) of the workforce were women and roughly a third (36%) were men. Overall, there were 182 female employees and 101 male employees working in the council.

Number of Employees by Contract Type

The majority of staff in the Council were permanent (64%), and the smallest (less than 1%) number of employees in a contract type was apprentice.

Age

As of 31st March 2023, the mean age of Surrey Heath's workforce was 46 years, 5 months and the median age of employees was 57 years, 7 months (57.58 years).

This shows that the majority of the workforce are in higher age brackets.

Age Band Breakdown

The largest group of employees in a certain age band were those aged between 41 to 50 which contributed to 29% of the workforce.

Conversely, the smallest group of employees in a certain age band were those aged under 21, contributing to 1% of the workforce.

Overall, over half (55%) of the workforce are in the age bands 41 to 50 and 51 to 60, therefore displaying that the majority of the workforce occupy the higher age brackets.



Age by Service

The service with the youngest overall average age of employees was Legal and Democratic Services, with a mean age of 46 years and a median of 47 years 1 month. Investment and Development also shared the joint lowest mean average age of 46 years.

The service with the oldest average age of employees was Joint Waste Solutions, with a mean age of 47 years 2 months and a median age of 48 years 1 month.

Age by service	Mean Average	Median Average
Environment and Community	46 years 5 months	47 years 7 months
Finance and Customer Service	46 years 3 months	47 years 5 months
Planning	46 years 5 months	47 years 7 months
HR, Performance and Communications	46 years 3 months	47 years 6 months
Property and Economic Development	46 years	47 years 3 months
Joint Waste Solutions	47 years 2 months	48 years 1 month
Legal and Democratic Services	46 years	47 years 1 month

Age by Gender

The average age of female employees was 46 years, 5 months and the median age was 47 years, 7 months.

Almost identically, the average age of male employees was 46 years, 5 months and the median age was 47 years, 7 months.

Length of Service

The average length of service as of March 31st, 2023, as represented by the mean was 6 years, 10 months and the average length of service as represented by the median was 4 years, 6 months.

Length of Service Band Breakdown



Just under a quarter (24%) of employees have been a part of the workforce for 3 to 5 years and just under half (46%) have been working at the Council for 1 to 5 years.

Employees working for between 16 to 20 years are represented the least in the Council, contributing to 5% of the workforce.

Length of Service by Service

The service with the employees who have the longest length of service was Environment and Community with a mean length of service of 9 years, 8 months and a median length of service of 7 years 4 months.

The service with the employees who have the shortest length of service was Joint Waste Solutions with an average mean length of service of 2 years, 5 months and a median length of service of 1 year, 10 months.

It is important to note that Joint Waste Solutions was a new service in 2017 and therefore, that could be a contributing factor as to why the average length of service is significantly lower than that of other services.

Length of service by service	Mean length of service	Median length of service
Environment and Community	9 years 8 months	7 years 4 months
Finance and Customer Service	6 years 9 months	4 years 5 months
Planning	6 years 7 months	4 years 6 months
HR, Performance and Communications	6 years, 3 months	4 years 6 months
Property and Economic Development	7 years	4 years 7 months
Joint Waste Solutions	2 years 5 months	1 year 10 months
Democratic Services	6 years 4 months	4 years 6 months

Length of Service by Gender

The average length of service of female employees was 6 years, 10 months and the median length of service was 4 years, 6 months.

For male employees, the average length of service was very similar to their female counterparts, with a mean average of 6 years 9 months and a median of 4 years, 6 months.



Gender Pay Gap

According to the most recent Gender Pay Gap report as at 31st March 2022, there was a mean gender pay gap in the Council of 13.66% and a median of 13.07%.

This table compares the gender pay gap in Surrey Heath with that of other neighbouring councils in Surrey, Hampshire and Berkshire and other local authorities in Surrey.

Local Authority	Mean Gender Pay Gap %	Median Gender Pay Gap %
Bracknell Forest	13.5%	11.7% ^[1]
Elmbridge	12.9%	19.7% ^[2]
Guildford	7%	12% ^[3]
Runnymede	7.6%	3.1% ^[4]
Rushmoor	13.8%	10.9% ^[5]
Surrey Heath	13.66%	13.07%
Tandridge	3.19%	7.45% ^[6]
Woking	16.37%	15.81% ^[7]

Disability

As at 31st March 2023, 4% of the workforce report that they have a disability.

Please note that this data is only representative of those that have disclosed a disability, which illustrates the limitations in our current data. We have established that the data transfer onto our new iTrent system on 1st April 2021 has not been completely successful for our current data needs. This has prompted an action to reach out to staff to remind them to update their details, which will in turn improve our data for next year.

Disability in the Context of the Borough

By comparing our data with the 2021 ONS Census data, the borough of Surrey Heath has a higher percentage of residents with a disability (13.3%) and is defined by two types: 'disabled and limited a lot' and 'disabled a limited a little'.

The percentage for those who are not disabled is higher at Surrey Heath Borough Council, although due the drawbacks to our data as outlined above, a direct comparison is not as accurate but useful to compare how representative the Council is for the borough.



Disability Status	Percentage in Surrey Heath, ONS ^[8]	Percentage at Surrey Heath Borough Council
Disability	13.3%	4%
Without Disability	86.7%	96%

Ethnic Origin

Ethnic Origin in the Context of the Borough

Out of all Council employees, the majority of workers are of 'White (English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish), any other white background' (69%) ethnic origin. The ethnic origins least represented in the Council are 'Black (Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African). Please note that 22% showed 'preferred not to say' or 'withheld'.

Compared to the ONS data from the 2021 Census, the ethnic origin with the highest percentage at the Council and in the borough is 'White, any other white background' at 85% compared to 69%.

The ethnic group with the lowest percentage was 'Black, African or Caribbean, or any other background' at 1.6% compared to 1%.

Ethnic Origin	Percentage in Surrey Heath, ONS ^[9]	Percentage at Surrey Heath Borough Council*
White, any other white background	85%	69%
Asian, any other Asian background	8.9%	5%
Black, African or Caribbean, or any other background	1.6%	1%
Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Origin	2.7%	2%
Other	1.8%	1%

*Please note that these percentages in the table for Surrey Heath don't add up as the Council have an option for 'preferred not to say' or 'withheld', whereas the ONS Census result did not, so it is not possible to compare this data.

Religion

At Surrey Heath Borough Council, just over half (51%) of employees have given information in relation to religion. Of the people who have provided this information, the most common



religion at the Council is 'Christian', representing half of those who have given information. Just over a third (37%) have said that they have 'None' and therefore no religion and 2% answered 'Prefer not to say'.

Although our data is not fully complete, this gap highlights the need to encourage staff to provide these details so that we can improve our data for next year.

Religion in the Context of the Borough

The ONS 2021 Census data for the borough of Surrey Heath shows that the most common religion is also 'Christian', with half of the borough answering this option.

The religions with the lowest percentage were 'Sikh', accounting for less than 1% of employees at the Council and 1.3% in the borough and 'Buddhist', with 3% of staff members at the Council but 1.1% in the entire borough.

Religion	Percentage in Surrey Heath, ONS ^[10]	Percentage at Surrey Heath
Christian	50%	51%
None/ No religion	36%	37%
Muslim	3.1%	3%
Buddhist	1.1%	3%
Sikh	1.3%	1%>
Prefer not to say/ not answered	5.7%	2%
Other	2.9%	4%

Vacancy

As of 31st March 2023, there were 25 posts vacant, excluding casual workers and temporary staff.

Over the year, the total number of vacancies peaked in the month of December 2022, with 43 vacancies that month and was the lowest in February and March 2023.

The average number of vacancies across the year was 37.7 vacancies and the median number was 37 vacancies. Please note that there is no data for May 2022.



The chart below tracks the number of vacancies by month. Overall, the number of vacancies stay at quite similar amounts but there is a fluctuation of 18 vacancies total.

New Starters

In the time period from 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023, there were 111 total new starters, of which 53 were in permanent, fixed-term and apprentice positions and 58 were in casual, temporary, elections or member roles.

Time to Hire

On average, the mean time to hire from job vacancy to employee start date was approximately 84 days and the median time to hire was 101 days.

From job vacancy submission date of the Staff Resourcing Form to the employee start date, there was an average mean time of 74 days and a median time of 73 days.

It is important to note that many actions are covered in this period of time, including time to advertise, read applications, interview, make a decision and offer, conduct pre-employment checks and for a new starter to give a notice period.

Mean time to hire from vacancy to start date (days)	Median time to hire from vacancy to start date (days)	Mean time to hire from Staff Resourcing Form submission date to start date (days)	Median time to hire from submission to start date (days)
84	101	74	73

Leavers

In the year from 1st April to 31st March 2023, there were 46 leavers (44 in the year 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022) who were in permanent and fixed-term positions.

Reasons for leaving

Out of the 46 total leavers in permanent and fixed-term positions, over three quarters (77%) left due to 'resignation'. The least common reasons for leaving were 'not returning from maternity leave' (2%), 'dismissal/termination' (2%) and 'unsuccessful probation period' (2%).

Please note that these are the current categories on the Exit Form and 'resignation' could account for numerous reasons for leaving, which is why it is perhaps disproportionately at such a high percentage, as the chart below shows.



Leavers by Service

In the year from 1st April 2022 until 31st March 2023, the service with the largest number of leavers was Environment and Community, accounting for over a quarter (28%) of all leavers in permanent and fixed-term roles.

The service with the lowest number of leavers was the Chief Executive’s Office, contributing to 2% of leavers.

It is important to note that these two services also attribute to the services with the highest and lowest number of total employees respectively.

Sickness Absence

In the year from 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023, there was a total of approximately 1241 days lost, compared to 658 days from 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022. This amounted to a total of around 9077 hours lost, versus 4817 total hours from 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022.

Overall, there were 35 reasons for absence and of these 35, the top 5 most frequent absence reasons were ‘Cold/ Cough/ Influenza’, ‘Covid-19’, ‘Gastric/Stomach Problems’, ‘Anxiety/ Stress/ Depression/ Other Psych’, and ‘Virus/ Viral’. The frequency of all these absence reasons was an increase from the previous year.

Top 5 Long-Term Absence Reasons

Out of all the absence reasons, ‘Anxiety/ Stress/ Depression/ Psych other’ was the most frequent long-term absence, contributing to approximately 284 days lost or 2104 hours lost.

Top 5 Long-term reasons	Number of days lost	Number of hours lost	Frequency
Anxiety/ Stress/ Depression/ Psych other	284	2104	19
Fractures	70	474	3
Cancer	87	644	4
Joint Disorder	37	271	3
Bereavement	32	273	3



Top 5 Short-Term Absence Reasons

The most frequent short-term absence was 'Cold/ Cough/ Influenza' which contributed to 69 total absences and caused approximately 139 days lost or 979 hours lost.

Although the absence reason due to 'Covid-19' was slightly less frequent, it contributed overall to the most days and hours lost for a short-term absence, causing approximately 143 days lost or 1031 hours.

Top 5 Short Term	Number of days lost	Number of hours lost	Frequency
Gastric/ Stomach Problems	49	354	32
Virus/Viral	36	255	18
Any Other Illness	42	315	11
Covid-19	143	1031	59
Cold/ Cough/ Influenza	139	979	69

^[1] <https://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-04/workforce-monitoring-report-2022.pdf>

^[2] <https://www.elmbridge.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-03/Gender%20Pay%20Gap%20Report%202023.pdf>

^[3] https://www.guildford.gov.uk/media/34414/Gender-Pay-Gap-report-2023/pdf/Gender_Pay_Gap_Report_2023.pdf?m=638145676312470000

^[4] <https://www.runnymede.gov.uk/information-data/gender-pay-gap>

^[5] <https://democracy.rushmoor.gov.uk/documents/s12430/Appendix%20B%20-%20Gender%20Pay%20Gap%20Report.pdf>

^[6] <https://democracy.rushmoor.gov.uk/documents/s12430/Appendix%20B%20-%20Gender%20Pay%20Gap%20Report.pdf>

^[7] <https://www.woking.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Jobs/Equalities%20Annual%20Report%202023%20including%20Pay%20Gap%20Report.pdf>

^[8] <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/censusareachanges/E07000214/>

^[9] <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/censusareachanges/E07000214/>

^[10] <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/censusareachanges/E07000214/>



Annex 2 Annual Diversity Calendar 2023/24

June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May
Child Safety Week (5-11)	International Friendship Day (30 th)	Pride Flag Raise	Pride Surrey (9-10)	World Menopause Day (18)	International Men's Day (19)	World Aids Day (1)	Mahayana New Year (25)	Chinese New Year (1)	Zero Discrimination Day (1)	World Autism Awareness Day (2)	Dementia Action Week (20)
Carer's week (6-12)		International Youth Day (12 th)	National Inclusion Week (25-1)	Hidden Disabilities Awareness Week (15-21)	Remembrance Day, Parade and Flag, veterans' day (11)	UN Human Rights Day (10)	Holocaust Memorial Day (27)	World Day of Social Justice (20)	International Women's Day (8)	Ramadan ends + Eid al-Fitr (9)	Mental Health Awareness Month
Refugee Week (20-26)		National Senior Citizen Day (21)	HeForShe	Black History Month	Interfaith Week with a focus on Diwali on 12 (12-19)	Hanukkah (7-15)		LGBTQ+ History Month	Ramadan starts (10)	Baisakhi (13)	
Pride Month					Anti-bullying week (13-17)	Christmas (25)			Neurodiversity Celebration week (13-19)		
					Men's Mental Health Awareness Month				International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (21)		



Annex 3 What the data for the borough indicates (an overview)

Whilst Surrey Heath can be considered to be a prosperous and pleasant place to live for many of its residents, there is deprivation as defined in the [Surrey Heath Census](#). In Surrey Heath, 42% of households experience one or more dimension of deprivation (education, employment, health or housing). In the least deprived neighbourhood, 1.4% of people are estimated to be income-deprived in contrast to those in the most deprived neighbourhood where 18.1% are estimated to be income deprived.

We can see 25% of housing is rented (this has increased since 2011). This can be further broken down as 9.6% social housing and 15.4% as private rental. Of the 36,000 households, 3562 (10%) are reliant on public transport.

Age

Surrey Heath has an aging population particularly in the over 70 age range with the largest increase in Surrey in the 80-85 age range at 37.5%. The largest percentage of the population is in the age range 50-64 years at 21.2%, followed by those aged 25-49 years, making up 20.4%.

Ethnicity

9.7% of the communities have a non-UK identity (either whole or in part).

All non-white communities in the borough have increased since 2011 with the largest non-white groups being of Asian ethnicity. The borough is well represented by the Sikh and Nepalese communities in particular (many of the Nepalese communities are Ghurkhas and their families).



Whilst English is the predominant language, approximately 1% of our residents cannot speak English well.

Citizens Advice report that 14% of their users are from ethnic minority backgrounds which is disproportionately high.

LGBTQ+

In Surrey Heath, 1.05% of people identify as gay or lesbian, 1.28% identify as bi-sexual, 0.54% identify as a different gender from the sex they were registered for at birth, 0.22% identify as other sexualities and 6.05% did not answer the questions.

Education

36.97% of our residents aged 16 and over have their highest [education level](#) at 2 or below with 13.07% having no qualifications.

Armed Forces

3246 residents have served in the armed forces.

Disability

26% of households noted having at least one person with a disability within them. 4.8% of residents identified as being disabled and limited a lot where 8.5% identified as being disabled and limited a little.

Health

3.1% of residents consider themselves to be in bad or very bad health with 87% describing their health as good or very good. 7.5% of residents provide unpaid care of those with long term medical conditions.

The Hope Hub report an increase in the number of users presenting with mental health issues and have identified this as the most significant increasing support need for their client group.

Sex

All Surrey Local Authorities had a slightly higher female than male population. Surrey Heath population consisted of 51% females and 49% males.

Gender



0.35% of the Surrey Heath population answered 'no' to the question 'Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?'

Annexe 4 Legal Framework

Summary of the Requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty

1. The Equality Act 2010 came into force on 1 October 2010 and replaces separate pieces of legislation relating to the different equality groups.
- 2a. The public sector equality duty consists of a general equality duty, which is set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, and specific duties which are imposed by secondary legislation. The general equality duty came into force on 5 April 2011. The specific duties came into force in September 2011. It applies to all public listed bodies in Schedule 19 across Great Britain as well as other organisations when carrying out public functions.
- 2b. A new modular design (2020) allows the Council to self-assess practices to identify areas of activity that need improving but also what they succeed in to support organisations to become more inclusive employers. This is further achieved through the addition of an LGA Equality Peer Challenge.

Protected Characteristics

3. The general equality duty covers nine legally protected characteristics which are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage, and civil partnership (only in respect of eliminating unlawful discrimination), pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. It also encourages Councils to consider other issues that might be affecting staff such as caring responsibilities as well as issues affecting communities such as rural isolation.

Equality Act 2010



4. The [Equality Act 2010](#) provides a new cross-cutting legislative framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all. It legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and wider society by replacing previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act, making the law easier to understand and strengthen protection.

Further principles – 2020

- The EFLG is part of the LGA's sector led improvement offer to the local government sector and as such engagement with the Framework is voluntary.
- The EFLG is supportive of the EHRC's six selected domains of equality measurement which it has identified as the areas of life that are important to people and that enable them to flourish. They are: Education, Work Living standards, Health, Justice, and personal security, and Participation.
- The modular design of the Framework reflects the fact that Councils come in all shapes and sizes with different resources, communities, and priorities. It recognises that action on all equality issues at once is not always possible.
- The Framework supports the LGA's Equality Peer Challenge

Prohibited Conduct: Discrimination, Harassment and Victimisation

5. The Equality Act 2010 introduces a basic framework of protection against direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation in services and public functions etc.

Direct Discrimination

This occurs when someone is treated less well than someone else in the same situation because of a protected characteristic.

Harassment

This occurs when unwanted behaviour towards someone causes them to feel intimidated, degraded humiliated or offended

Victimisation

This occurs when a person treats another badly because they have or intend to make a complaint against them in relation to being discriminated against or harassed

Indirect discrimination

This occurs when a policy which applies in the same way for everyone has an effect which particularly disadvantages people from an equality group



Discrimination by Association

This occurs when a person is treated less favourably because of their association with a person who has a protected characteristic; this can be a husband, wife, partner, friend, child, or primary carer.

Discrimination due to Perception

This occurs if someone is treated less favourably because another person thought that they had a protected characteristic even though they did not.

Discrimination Arising from Disability

A new concept of 'discrimination arising from disability' has been introduced by the Equality Act. There is a requirement to make reasonable adjustments for people with disabilities. It occurs when the disability is known and as such the person is treated unfavourably and disproportionately to the individual achieving an aim.

Restrictions on Pay Secrecy Clauses

A contractual term which restricts a person from disclosing their pay is unenforceable in certain circumstances.

Employment – Health Related Questions

7. Employers will only be able to ask prospective candidate's health related questions to enable a decision to be made as to whether reasonable adjustments are needed for the person in the selection process and whether an applicant can carry out an essential function of the job. It is unlawful to ask a candidate or referee verbal or written questions about the health of a candidate prior to an offer being made.

Public Sector Equality Duty

The duty is a statutory duty on listed public authorities and other bodies carrying out public functions. It ensures that those organisations consider how their functions will affect people with different protected characteristics. These functions include their policies, programmes, and services. The duty supports good decision-making by helping decision-makers understand how their activities affect different people. It also requires public bodies to monitor the actual impact of the things they do. For example, to keep under review how different groups of pupils are performing at school and to identify and take action if some pupils with protected characteristics need more support than others.



The general duty of the duty can be found in [sections 149 to 157 of the Equality Act 2010](#) ('the act') and is supported by [specific duties](#) found in regulations.

The general duty requires decision-makers to have due regard to the need to eliminate conduct prohibited by the act, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations in relation to activities such as:

- recommending new or revised public policy
- publishing a consultation document
- designing and providing a public service

The specific duties help decision-makers to perform the general duty more effectively.

The duty does not dictate a particular outcome. The level of "due regard" considered sufficient in any particular context depends on the facts. The duty should always be applied in a proportionate way depending on the circumstances of the case and the seriousness of the potential equality impacts on those with protected characteristics. Overly bureaucratic and burdensome approaches without reference to the equality aims specified in the legislation should be avoided. Public authorities must not 'gold-plate' their compliance with the duty at the unjustified expense of the taxpayer and of private or voluntary sector contractors. Similarly, regulators should not try to impose the duty on private companies that would never be bound by it.

It is for the decision-maker to decide how much weight should be given to the various factors informing the decision. The duty does not mean that decisions cannot be taken which disadvantage some people (provided this does not constitute unlawful discrimination), but the decision-maker should be aware of the equality impacts of these decisions and consider how they could positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations. The decision-maker should consider ways of preventing, or balancing the effects that their decision may have on certain groups. They should decide which mitigations, if any, they might want to put into place in reconsidering the decision. The mitigation should be proportionate to the problem at hand.

The duty requires decision-makers to understand and take account of the consequences of their choices, having due regard to the aim of eliminating conduct prohibited by the act, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations. At the same time, the duty is not a rubber stamp. It is a legal requirement. Making decisions without having due regard to the duty can be unlawful.

Responsibility for complying with the general duty falls on the decision-maker. It is therefore essential that the decision-maker is made aware of any work that others have done to comply with the duty. For example, if you work in a ministerial government department, the decision-maker is often the minister. In these situations, the minister must see the assessments that officials have made to ensure compliance with the general duty.



The Aims of the General Equality Duty

7. In summary, those subject to the equality duty must, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need 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 different people (with/without a protected characteristic) when carrying out their activities.
8. The act explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves:
 - Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
 - Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.
 - Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.
9. The Act states that meeting different needs involves taking steps to take account of disabled people's disabilities. It describes fostering good relations as tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people from different groups. It states that compliance with the duty may involve treating some people more favourably than others.
10. The general equality duty therefore requires equality considerations to be reflected into the design of organisation's policies and the delivery of services, including internal policies, and for these issues to be kept under review.

The Specific Duties:

11. In summary, a public authority covered by the specific duties (listed body) is required to:

Publish information

 - Publish sufficient information to demonstrate its compliance with the general equality duty across its functions. This must be done by 31 December 2011, and at least annually after that, from the first date of publication. (The general duty to have due regard requires local authorities to have an adequate evidence base for its decision making).

This information must include, in particular:

- Information on the effect that its policies and practices have had on people who share a relevant protected characteristic, to demonstrate the



extent to which it furthered the aims of the general equality duty for its employees and for others with an interest in the way it performs its functions.

- Evidence of analysis that they have undertaken to establish whether their policies and practices have (or would) further the aims of the general equality duty. (Case law demonstrates that the analysis must include consideration as to whether there is any detrimental impact and how this can be mitigated. This should be in a written format before a decision is made.)
- Details of the information that they considered in carrying out this analysis.
- Details of engagement that they undertook with people whom they consider having an interest in furthering the aims of the general equality duty.

Prepare and Publish Quality Objectives

12. A public authority covered by the specific duties (listed body) is also required to:
 - Prepare and publish one or more objectives detailed in the aims of the general equality duty, by 6 April 2012, and at least every four years thereafter
 - Ensure that those objectives are specific and measurable.
 - Publish those objectives in such a manner that they are accessible to the public
13. The following principles from **case law** on the previous equality duties will, however, continue to apply for the new duty. To comply with the general equality duty, a public authority must ensure that:
 - Those who exercise its functions (for example, its staff and leadership) are aware of the duty's requirements. Compliance involves 'a conscious approach and state of mind'. This means that decision-makers must be fully aware of the implications of the duty when making decisions about their policies and practices.
 - The duty is complied with before and at the time that a policy is under consideration and a decision is taken. A public authority cannot satisfy the duty by justifying a decision after it has been taken.
 - Consideration of the need to advance equality forms an integral part of the decision-making process. The duty must be exercised in such a way that it influences the final decision.
 - Any third parties exercising public functions on its behalf are required to comply with the duty, and that they do so in practice. This is because the duty rests with the public authority even if they have delegated any functions to a third party.
 - Regard is given to the need to advance equality when a policy is implemented and reviewed.

Publishing Employee Equality Monitoring Information



14. Listed bodies with 150 staff or more also need to publish information in relation to their employees.

Bodies with 150 staff or more are expected to publish the below information:

- the race, disability, gender, age breakdown and distribution within your workforce
 - indication of likely representation on sexual orientation and religion or belief, provided that no individuals can be identified as a result
 - an indication of any issues for staff who are proposing to undergo or have undergone a process (or part of a process) to reassign their sex based on your engagement with staff or voluntary groups
15. In relation to services, the Equality and Human Rights Commission would normally expect to see the information that you routinely publish broken down by protected group. This will obviously depend on what services you deliver but would usually include:
- performance information relating to functions relevant to furthering the aims of the duty
 - access to services
 - satisfaction with services, and
 - Complaints (broken down by protected group, with an indication of reasons for complaints).

Further guidance relating to the Duty can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/public-sector-equality-duty-guidance-for-public-authorities/public-sector-equality-duty-guidance-for-public-authorities>

Procurement and Grants

16. The general equality duty applies to other organisations who exercise public functions. This will include private bodies or voluntary organisations which are carrying out public functions on behalf of a public authority. The duty therefore applies to where the Council has contracted out a service or is considering contracting out or is decommissioning a service. It also applies to the allocation or withdrawal of grants.
17. The specific duty on information requires listed bodies to publish information about their compliance with the duty across all their functions, including contracted-out functions. Where a function is contracted out, there may be a need to specify in the tender documentation what information the contractor should collect and report on, for the Council to meet the General Equality Duty.

