

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IN THE LONDON BOROUGH OF HILLINGDON

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REASON FOR ITEM

The Chairman requested that a report exploring equality and diversity within the Council workforce be added to the Work Programme.

BACKGROUND AND INFORMATION

The Equalities Act 2010 outlines nine characteristics which are protected under legislation. These nine protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. This list of protected characteristics give a legislative framework for the consideration of 'equalities', while 'diversity' is often seen as broader and can include characteristics such as variety in experience, knowledge, work preferences, managerial style, etc.

The Council has a specific Equality and Diversity policy together with employment policies such as Recruitment and Selection and Absence Management that cover protected characteristics.

We provide managers with equality guidance and training and have invested in an e-learning training module on the protected characteristic of disability. In the last year, 495 managers have completed this training with a further 25 currently completing the module.

The Council publishes an annual Workforce Equality Data report as part of our statutory duty under the Equality Act 2010. This offers a snapshot of the Council's workforce demographic at 31 March of the previous year. The current report contains data relevant to 31 March 2016, and an updated report covering 31 March 2017 will be published early in the new financial year. The report contains information about the protected characteristics of race, sex, disability and age.

The underlying principle for recruitment is selection on merit and while we, for example, have initiatives to increase the number of applicants with a disability, our selection is always based upon choosing the best candidate for the job.

The protected characteristics of disability, race, age and sex are discussed further in this report based on the Workforce Equities Data report with additional comments on any employment initiatives currently in place.

Disability

The London Borough of Hillingdon has been awarded Disability Confident Employer (level 2) status under the Government's Disability Confident scheme, which recently replaced the 'Two Ticks' Positive about Disabled People scheme. This award indicates that the Council has an inclusive and accessible recruitment process and is proactive in making reasonable workplace adjustments to support employees with a disability to maintain productive employment.

The Council operates a guaranteed interview scheme ensuring that anyone with a disability, who meets the minimum requirements of the role, is automatically short-listed for interview during the selection process. While the Council always looks to select on merit, the guaranteed interview scheme ensures that people with a disability are fairly represented within the selection process.

PART I - MEMBERS, PRESS AND PUBLIC

The definition of disability, relevant to employment legislation under the Equality Act 2010, is very broad applying to any mental or physical condition that is long-term (likely to last over 12 months) and significantly impairs the individual to complete normal 'day-to-day' activities.

All managers are trained in disability awareness and the duty to make reasonable adjustments in the workplace for people with disabilities using a dedicated e-learning module.

We subscribe to an absence management service called FirstCare which monitors all absence and provides employees with point of contact medical advice from trained nurses. Managers have the support of an occupational health service and are able to refer employees with a disability or potential disability so specialist advice on managing the health condition in the workplace can be provided.

Government research indicates that 83% of people actually acquire their disability while in work (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/disability-confident-campaign>) and the Council proactively monitors the health of employees through a Health Surveillance programme. This involves regular health checks for employees to ensure that, for example, working with noisy machinery or vibrating tools does not have a negative impact on the long-term health of the worker. Of course, personal protective equipment (PPE) is issued to employees where relevant.

Two of the highest causes of absences are mental health conditions and musculoskeletal injuries, both of which can develop into disabilities if the condition is likely to persist for over a year. We have introduced initiatives to support employees including a regular physiotherapy clinic. As a preventative measure around mental health we have introduced a management course in workplace stress awareness and a course in building personal resilience for employees.

We also partner with Access to Work to provide assistance to disabled employees. For example, last year we were able to employ a blind social worker after securing funding to support a personal assistant who is able to support the employee when travelling on social work visits.

The equalities data indicates that 2.1% of the Council's employees have declared a disability. The data also indicates the positive impact of the guaranteed interview with 5.1% of applicants declaring a disability in 2015/16, resulting in 5.2% of offers being made to people with a disability.

Race

The following table shows our workforce race demographic compared to the population of the Borough and the wider London population:

| Race | Hillingdon Council | Hillingdon Residents | London Population |
|-----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Asian / Asian British | 12.3% | 28.8% | 19.6% |
| Black / Black British | 7% | 10.3% | 16.5% |
| Mixed | 1.7% | | |
| Other | 2.3% | 4.6% | 5.5% |
| <i>Total BAME</i> | <i>23.3%</i> | <i>45.9%</i> | <i>43.2%</i> |
| White | 66.5% | 54.1% | 57% |
| Not Given | 10.2% | | |

PART I - MEMBERS, PRESS AND PUBLIC

The data indicates that the BAME demographic (23.3%) is under-represented in relation to the Borough's residents (55%) and the wider London population (57%). This may be partially offset by those that chose not to provide their race when applying for employment with the Council (10.2%).

The BAME demographic is further under-represented in more senior roles as demonstrated in the following table:

| Race | Hillingdon Council | Senior Staff |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|
| Asian / Asian British | 12.3% | 5.5% |
| Black / Black British | 7% | 3.6% |
| Mixed | 1.7% | 2.7% |
| Other | 2.3% | 0% |
| <i>Total BAME</i> | <i>23.3%</i> | <i>11.8%</i> |
| White | 66.5% | 75.4% |
| Not Given | 10.2% | 7.3% |

The Council does not engage in any specific initiatives targeted at the recruitment of BAME employees.

Sex

As indicated in the following table, there is a higher proportion of females in the Council's workforce. While not exactly balanced or representative of our Borough's residents, 46.5% of our senior managers are female.

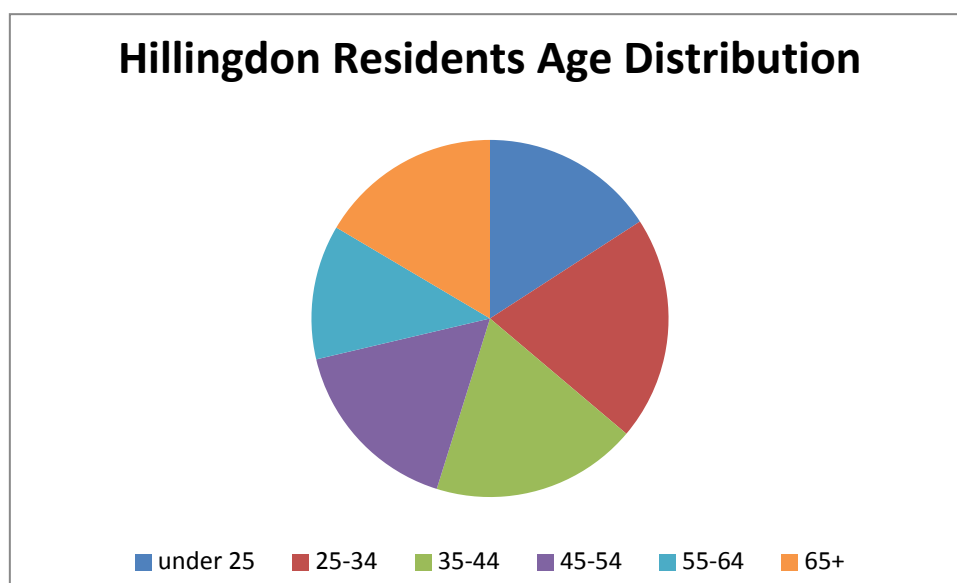
| Sex | Hillingdon Council | Senior Staff | Hillingdon Residents |
|------------|---------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| Female | 64% | 46.5% | 49.9% |
| Male | 36% | 53.0% | 50.1% |

Interestingly, the median salary for women is higher than that of men in the Council at £15.41 per hour, against £14.97 for full-time staff. We do, of course, have a female Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive, as well as relatively well-paid, female-dominated occupations such as social work.

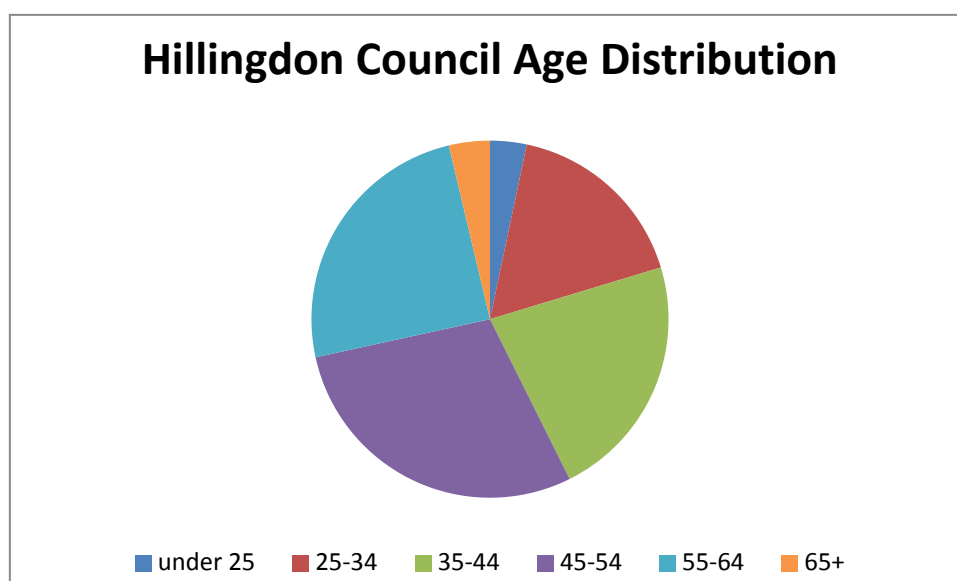
The Council does not engage in any specific initiatives targeted at the recruitment of any particular gender.

Age

The following chart displays the age distribution of our residents:



By comparison, the following chart shows the age distribution across the Council's workforce. As expected, the proportion of under-25s is less, as it does not include anyone below working age, and the proportion of over-65s is less because of retirement.



However, the age demographic does indicate some concerns, especially demonstrating that we have an aging workforce, with well over half of employees being over-45s and the number of employees over 65 (3.7%) exceeding the number of under-25s.

The Council has developed an ambitious apprenticeship programme, the first phase of which will see over 20 new apprenticeships advertised across the Council in March 2017. While these are 'all-age' apprenticeships, it is anticipated that the majority of applicants will be school or college leavers which will proactively address some of our age demographic challenges.