



Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

Employee Equality Monitoring Statistics 2024

This report contains the employee monitoring statistics, covering the period 1st January 2024 – 31st December 2024 for Comhairle nan Eilean Siar.

All data has been collated from various internal sources including the Comhairle's Payroll and HR systems. MyView is the self-service portal utilised by the Comhairle for employees to update their own Equal Opportunities data, which is linked to both HR and Payroll systems. All Comhairle employees are encouraged to review their equality monitoring data annually. Data relating to recruitment is collated through MyJobScotland.

In 2023, access to Comhairle nan Eilean Siar's IT systems was affected by a Criminal Cyber Incident on the 7th of November 2023. The incident caused significant disruption, including partial loss of data concerning the statistics in 2023. Therefore, direct comparisons cannot always be drawn with the previous year, and data of other years is looked at in addition where necessary.

The Comhairle, like many Local Authorities, is facing multi-faceted workforce capacity pressures, including challenges of recruitment, retention, staff absence, and an ageing workforce. These pressures span a wide range of skills, professions and occupations, which means the Comhairle is regularly reviewing and strengthening longer term workforce planning activities to ensure that staffing levels are maintained inline with the needs of services.

Despite recent wage increases, rising cost of living has affected families and individuals across the UK, and more individuals, families and communities are feeling increased financial pressures. The Outer Hebrides, which as well as being a relatively low wage economy also has high levels of fuel poverty. Significant and relentless budget cuts over recent years impact profoundly on the services delivered by local government and the lives of the communities they serve. Communities are experiencing increasing poverty and financial hardship, at a time when councils have reducing capacity to support them.

The Comhairle remains as committed as ever to ensuring that our strategies and priorities resonate with the people we serve and that local communities are at the heart of our decision-making. These ambitions are not limited by budget, and we will continue to explore all available opportunities to access funding to achieve these ambitions.



Workforce Profile

In 2024, the Comhairle employed 2068 employees (Including teachers and relief staff); this is a slight increase from 2001 employees in 2023. In some instances, multiple part-time posts are held by one individual, these duplications have been omitted, and each employee has only been counted once. The figures discussed throughout this report also exclude employees who hold relief or supply posts.

Workforce Ethnic Origin Profile

Figures included in table 1 below are based on the 2068 Comhairle employees. The ethnicity equality data for 2024 and the previous years are given, for benchmarking purposes.

Ethnic Origin	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME)	*	*	12	12	16	14	17
White	44	34	32	32	28	21	20
White - Scottish	1690	1696	1701	1667	1609	1479	1529
White - other British	66	55	56	113	113	103	153
White - other White Ethnic Group	87	98	128	71	59	53	30
Mixed	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Other	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Prefer not to answer (PNTA)/Non-Disclose	155	185	188	221	282	321	308
Total	2068	2105	2125	2128	2118	2001	2068

Table 1: Ethnic Origin Profile

* As per Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) guidance where numbers are below 10 employee information is not disclosed.



The majority, 74%, of Comhairle employees describe themselves as 'White – Scottish', which is the same as in 2023 and a decrease from 76% in 2022. At the 2022 Scottish census, 83% of the local population in the Western Isles described themselves as 'White Scottish'. Figure 1 shows the breakdown of all ethnicities within the Comhairle's workforce.

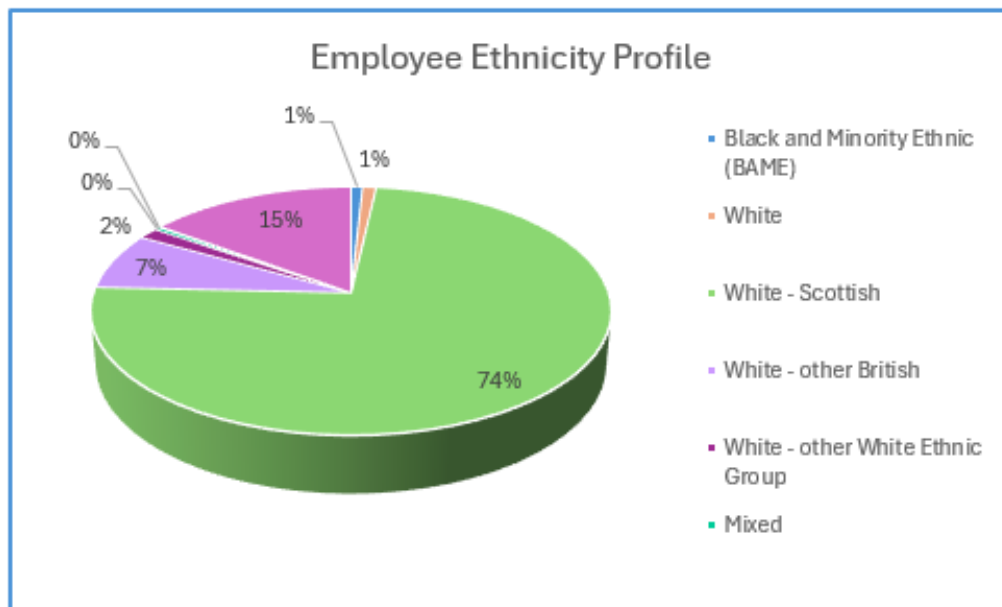


Figure 1: Employee Ethnicity Profile

Ethnicity profiles of Comhairle employees have remained stable relative to previous years. BAME, as per the 2001 definition, are individuals that do not describe themselves as white. The Comhairle's workforce profile comprises of 0.8% BAME employees, which is unchanged compared to previous year's data.

In the summer of 2020, the Prime Minister appointed the [Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities](#) to review the causes for race inequality in the UK. In its report, published on 31 March 2021, the Commission found that aggregate terms like 'BAME' (black, Asian and minority ethnic) were no longer helpful and should be dropped, advocating instead a focus on understanding disparities and outcomes for specific ethnic groups. The number of Comhairle employees of individual Black, Asian and other minority groups however are so small that the Comhairle could not report on any individual group for disclosure reasons. Therefore, the Comhairle maintains the grouping system of employees of ethnic minority groups for the time being.



Workforce Sex Profile

In 2024, of the 2068 Comhairle employees 461 were male and 1607 were female. Figure 2 depicts the sex breakdown of all Comhairle staff in 2024. The percentage of male and female employees has remained very similar since 2021. Consistently for several years three quarters of Comhairle workforce have been female. Certain service sectors, including teaching and health & social care, have a high representation of female employees. The Comhairle's flexible working policy allows a high proportion of female employees to work whilst accommodating caring responsibilities and childcare. The Comhairle implements a policy of equal opportunity in relation to employment.

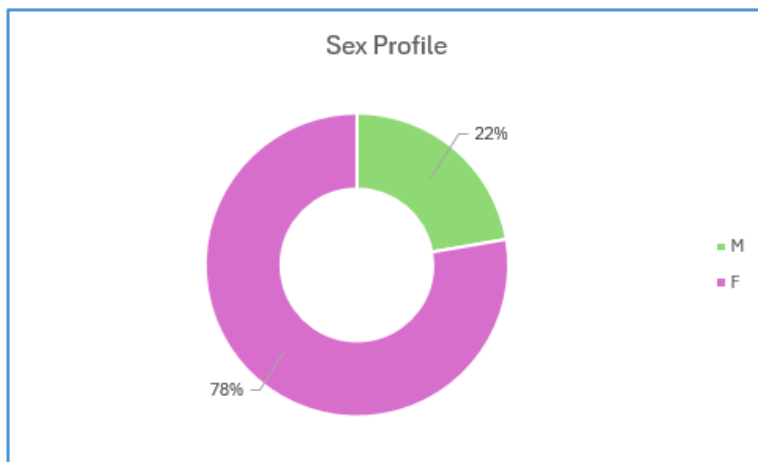


Figure 2: Employee Sex Profile

Table 2, below, details the percentage of Comhairle female employees who are in the top 2%, 5% and 10% of earners. In 2024 there has been an increase of female employees in the top 2%, 5% and 10% of Comhairle earners combined. The job evaluation grading model is utilised to all Comhairle posts to ensure employees are paid alike for work of equal value.

As at December 2024	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Number of Contracted employees (Minus 0 hours employees)	1614	1758	1640	1594	1623	1638
Total Number of contracted Council Employees in top 2% of earners	32	36	33	36	37	37
Total Number of female council employees in top 2% of earners	7	10	8	11	12	14
Percentage of female council employees in top 2% of earners	22%	28%	24%	30%	32%	38%
Total Number of contracted Council Employees in top 5% of earners	80	141	138	131	115	138
Total Number of female council employees in top 5% of earners	37	74	69	65	53	76
Percentage of female council employees in top 5% of earners	46%	52%	50%	50%	46%	55%
Total Number of contracted Council Employees in top 10% of earners	160	187	164	214	201	182
Total Number of female council employees in top 10% of earners	89	105	86	115	111	105
Percentage of female council employees in top 10% of earners	56%	56%	52%	53%	55%	58%

Table 2: Female Employees in top 2%, 5% and 10% of earners



Workforce Disability Profile

Since 2023 there has been a slight decrease in the number of Comhairle employees reporting having a disability, from 44 to 40 individuals.

35% of Comhairle employees have not disclosed their disability status, as shown in Figure 3. Due to the high non-disclosure rate, it can be assumed that the actual figure of disabled employees may be higher. The 2022 Census found that 24% of the authority's population were limited by a disability or health condition.

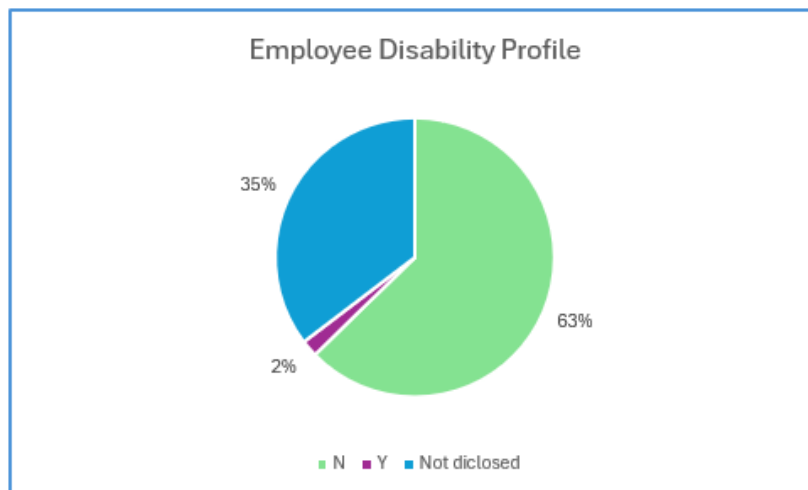


Figure 3: Employee Disability Profile

During the recruitment process the Comhairle will guarantee a job interview to an individual who declare they have a disability and meet all the essential criteria of the post. Reasonable adjustments will be made by the Comhairle to help ensure employees with a disability can continue to carry out the duties necessary of the post held.



Workforce Age Profile

Figure 4 illustrates the age profile of Comhairle employees for 2024, compared to data from 2023 and 2022.

In 2024, the number of employees has increased to 2068 compared to 2001 employees in 2023. Following the 2022 Scottish Census, the median age of the Outer Hebrides population was estimated to be 51 years, which is slightly higher than 49.8 years, estimated in 2021. The Comhairle's workforce age distribution reflects this local population statistic as the 45-54-year age group is still the second largest. The 55-64-year age group has increased slightly compared to the previous two years, while the 65+ age group has decreased. It is positive to note that the three youngest age groups each have increased at a slightly higher rate than the 45-54- and 55-64-year age groups.

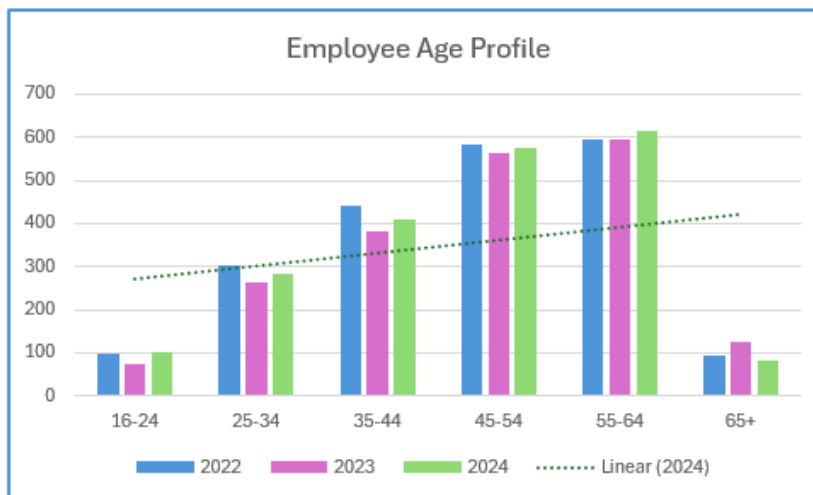


Figure 4 Employee Age Profile 2022-2024

Figure 5 demonstrates the age distribution of the workforce, comparing male and female employees.

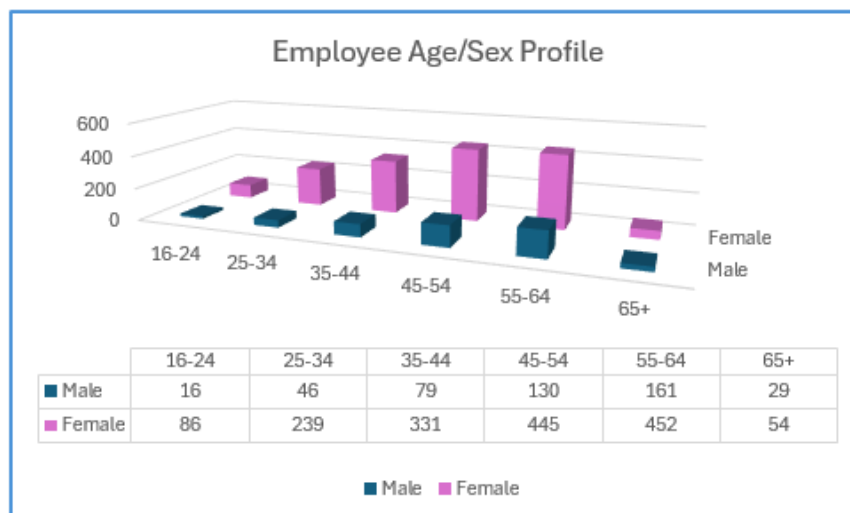


Figure 5 Employee Age/Sex Profile



Workforce Religion Profile 2024

In 2024, Employees stating their religion as The Church of Scotland accounted for 26% of the Comhairle's workforce. The non-disclosure rate decreased at 37% in 2024 compared to 40% in 2022 compared to 39% in 2021. Employees stating their religion being Roman Catholic accounted for 10% of the workforce in 2024. Other religions, including Hinduism and Buddhism, were reported by employees however the specific numbers are not listed as there are less than ten. Employees stating they have no religion accounted for 16% of the workforce in 2024, which is an increase compared to 12% in 2022.

Due to the Cyber Attack in November 2023, updated figures for the Comhairle Workforce Religion Profile in 2023 were unavailable. Therefore, current numbers are compared with previous years.

Workforce Sexual Orientation Profile

Most employees, 62%, stated that they are heterosexual in 2024. The level of non-disclosure for this protected characteristic during the same period was 37%. Employees stating they are homosexual or bisexual accounted for 0.6% of the Comhairle's workforce. Figure 6 depicts this breakdown of the sexual orientation profile.

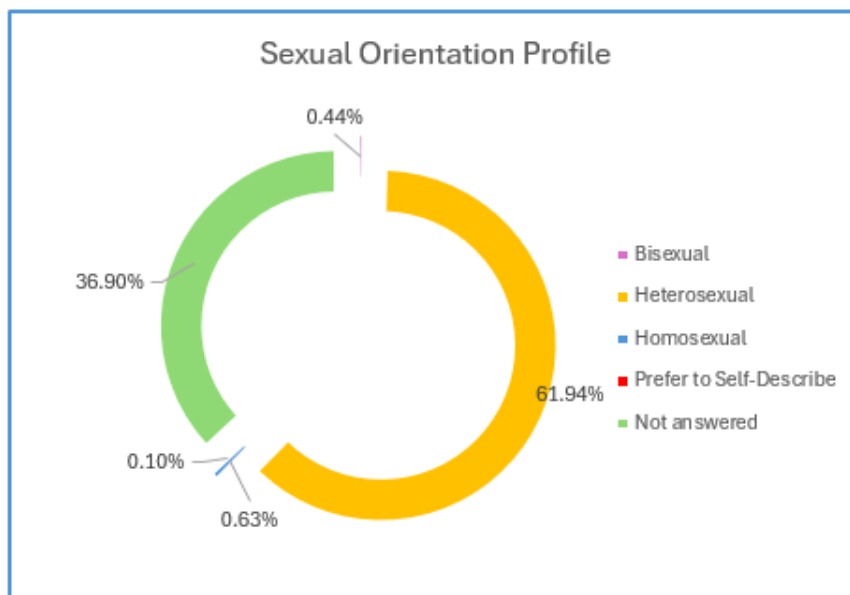


Figure 6: Sexual Orientation Profile



Workforce Transgender Profile

Figure 7 shows the transgender profile of the Comhairle's workforce. The non-disclosure rate for this protected characteristic, has dropped to 47% in 2024. No Comhairle employee stated that they identify as transgender. 53% of employees stated that they do not identify as transgender.

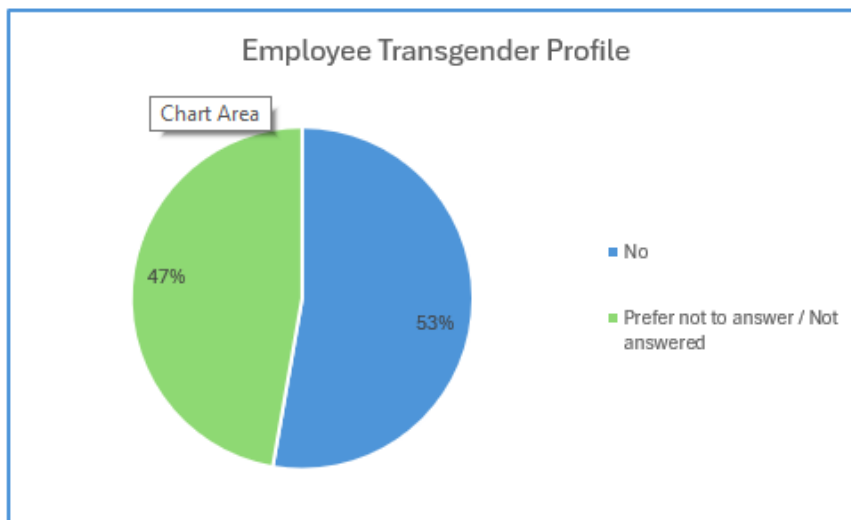


Figure 7: Employee Transgender Profile



Equality Profile of Councillors

In 2024 there were 29 elected members, representing an estimated population of 26,030 across the local authority area. The islands are separated into eleven ward areas, of which the elected members serve.

There were now two female councillors since the 2022 elections. Prior to the 2022 elections encouragement has been given to women to stand for political office. The Women into Politics workshops focused on allowing women to share their political ambitions, get information on different political roles available to them, hear from a previous female Councillor about her experiences and explore barriers to entry that are unique to the Western Isles. These events were open to all women. Two female Councillors have been voted into office in the 2022 elections.

Figure 8 shows the age and sex profile of the 29 councillors in 2024, displaying the majority are aged over 55. No councillors reported having a disability in 2024, but the breakdown of this and other protected characteristics cannot be reported on as the numbers are too low.

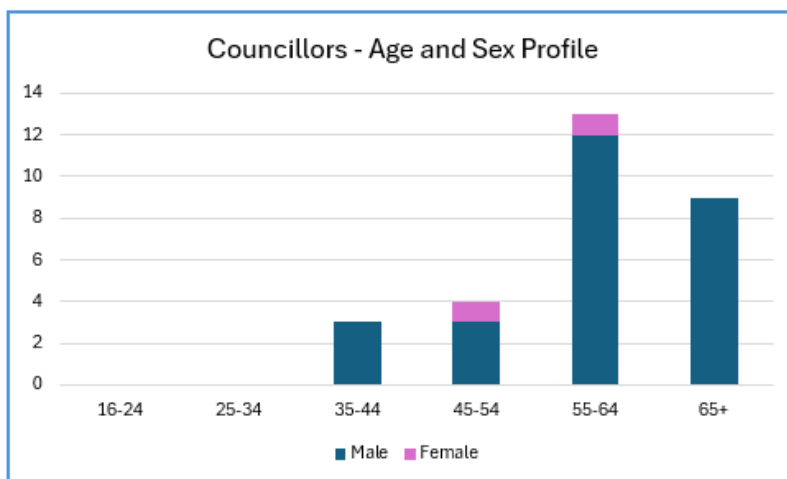


Figure 8: Councillors - Age and Sex Profile



Equality Profile of Recruitment Applications

Through 2024, 860 posts were advertised on the My Job Scotland portal, and a total of 2462 applications were received for the posts advertised. Table 3 shows the ratio of applications to posts advertised over the last six years.

Year	No of posts advertised	No of applications received	Average Ratio
2024	860	2462	2.86 applications per post
2023	1077	2013	1.9 applications per post
2022	882	2089	2.4 applications per post
2021	625	1671	2.7 applications per post
2020	303	1231	4.0 applications per post
2019	381	1607	4.2 applications per post
2018	380	1926	5.0 applications per post

Table 3: Ratio of applications received to posts advertised

Less than half of the 860 posts advertised through 2024 were for part-time or temporary posts; these have been required to meet the needs of the service. Recruitment continues to prove challenging for several posts. Although the number of posts advertised has decreased, the number of applicants has increased. Several posts may have been advertised on more than one occasion before an appointment was made. This will be giving an inflated, higher, number of posts advertised for 2024.

Recruitment Applications Ethnic Origin Profile

Most applicants through 2024 described themselves as 'White – Scottish', this has been the case for numerous years. However, there is a noticeable increase of applicants of other ethnic origin since 2021 when the number of 'White – Scottish' applicants was 70% in total. In 2024, 'White – Scottish' applicants accounted for 57% of all application received. There is a notable change within the 'BAME' group of applicants, from a total of 5% in 2022 to 17% in 2023 and 19% in 2024 respectively. There are more than ten applications in each of the various ethnic groups, which is why the chart below is showing a break-up of the percentages.

Applications received from individuals of a BAME ethnicity (as per the 2001 census definition – "people who do not identify themselves as white") has been showing an upward trend for the last few years. In 2021 0.82% of all applicants identified their ethnicity as BAME, however in 2022 figure was 5%, and rose to 19% in 2024. The non-disclosure rate in 2024 was 6%, a slight increase from 4% 2023.



Figure 9 illustrates the ethnicity of all individuals that applied for posts in the Comhairle in 2024.

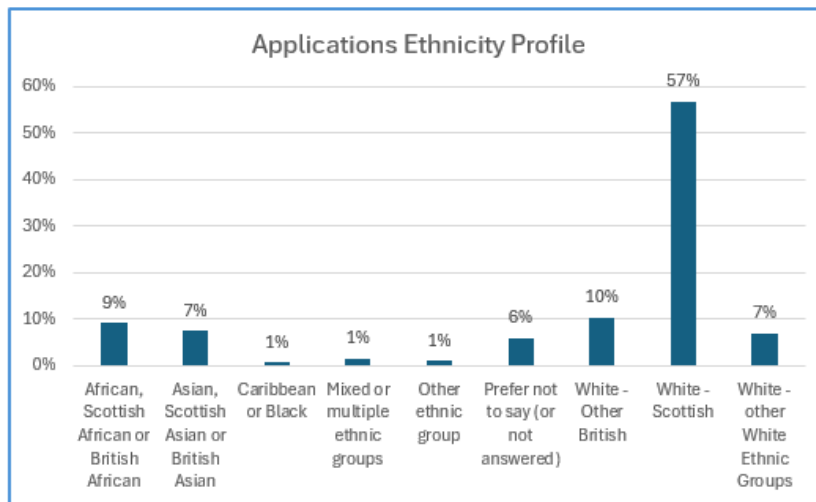


Figure 9: Applications Ethnicity Profile

Figure 10 illustrates the developing trends of reduction in 'White – Scottish' applicants and increase in 'BAME' applicants

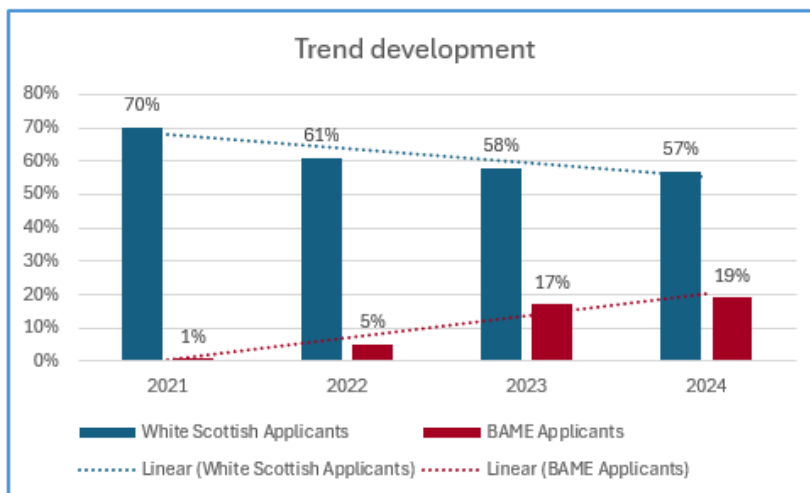


Figure 10: Trend development White - Scottish and BAME applicants



Recruitment Applications Sex Profile

In 2024 the majority, 59%, of applications were submitted by females. This is a notable decrease to the previous years' data where 67% in 2023, 64% in 2022 and 71% in 2021 were female. The level of non-disclosure for this protected characteristic has increased from 2% in 2023 to 5% in 2024.

Figure 11 shows the apportionment of male to female applications.

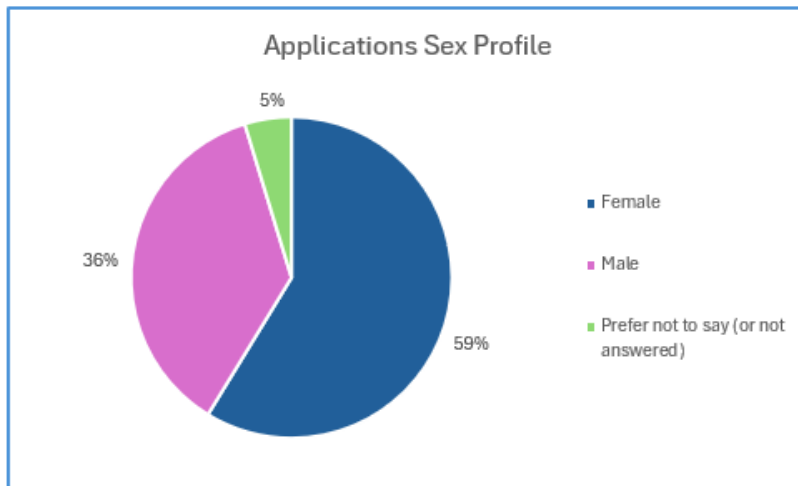


Figure 11: Applications Sex Profile

Recruitment Applications Disability Profile

Of the 2462 applications received through 2024 114 applicants considered themselves disabled. This equates to 5% of applications. 15 applicants consider them to be limited a lot by their disability. The non-disclosure rate for 2024 is 7%, up from 5% in 2023. Figure 12 shows the breakdown of disability profile for all applicants.

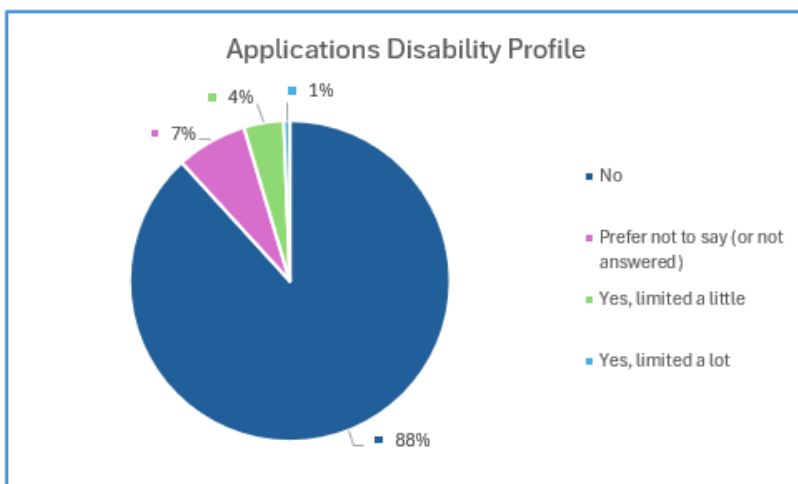


Figure 12: Applications Disability Profile



Recruitment Applications Religion Profile

The majority, 34%, of applicants stated they had no religion in 2024, an increase from 32% in 2023. The non-disclosure rate in 2024 was 11%, a slight increase from 9% not disclosing their religion in 2023. Church of Scotland remains the largest religion selected by applicants but dropping from 23% of all applications in 2023 to 20% in 2024. Applications religion profile is more varied than in previous years, with several other religions being disclosed by more than 10 applicants. Other religions disclosed by less than 10 applicants has been included into 'Various, incl. Other religion or body'. Figure 13 shows the breakdown of religion profile for applications received in 2024.

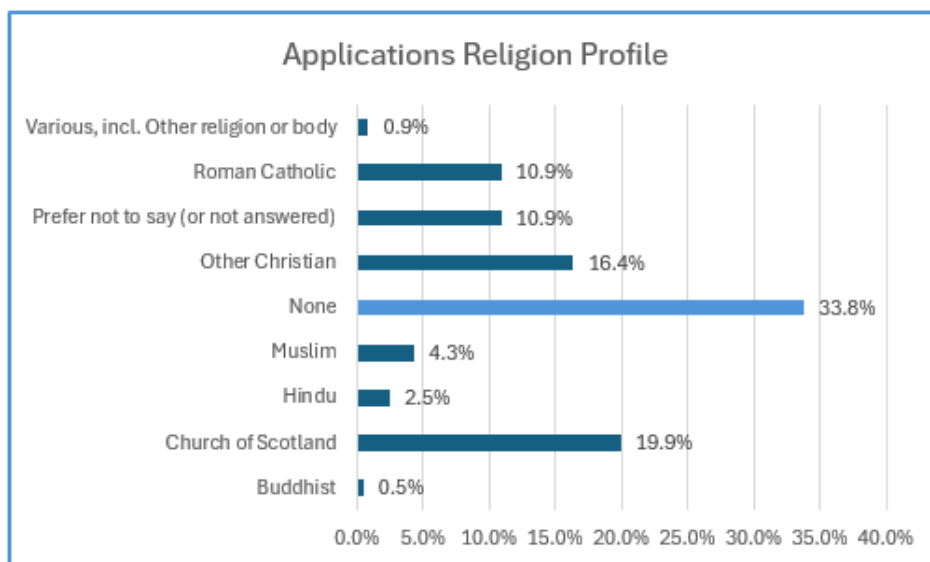


Figure 13: Applications Religion Profile



Recruitment Applications Sexual Orientation Profile

Applicants declaring that they are heterosexual accounted for 86% of all applications received in 2024. Over 3% of individuals stated that they were homosexual or bisexual. Figure 14 illustrates this summary.

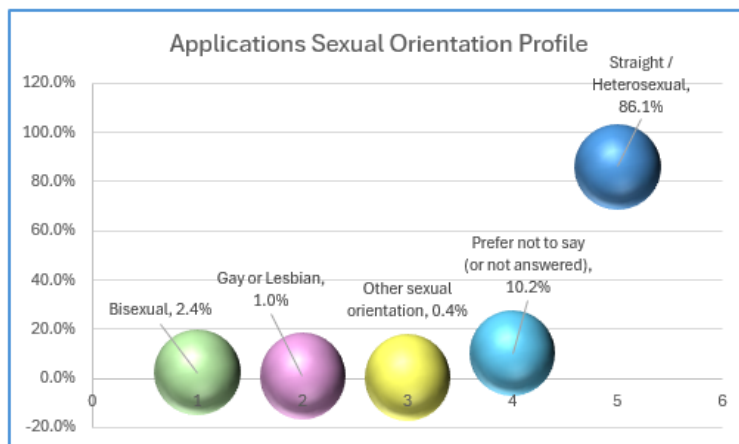


Figure 14: Applications Sexual Orientation Profile

Recruitment Applications Transgender Profile

In 2024, 0.45% of applicants declared that they identify as a transgender person. 6% of all individuals who applied did not disclose whether they identified as transgender, a slight increase from 4% in 2023. 93.4% of applicants stated they were not a transgender person.



Appointed Candidates

From the 2462 applications 574 candidates were appointed to a post within the Comhairle. In some instances, more than one appointment may have been made to a post, for example to establish a pool of carers.

Appointed Candidates Ethnicity Profile

The majority of appointed candidates in 2024 identified as 'White -Scottish', accounting for 69% of all appointments. 1% of appointed candidates identified as 'BAME' while 4% applicants of 'BAME' origin were appointed in 2023. Successful candidates not disclosing their ethnicity increased slightly from 10% in 2023 to 11% in 2024. Figure 15 shows the ethnicity profile of appointed candidates.

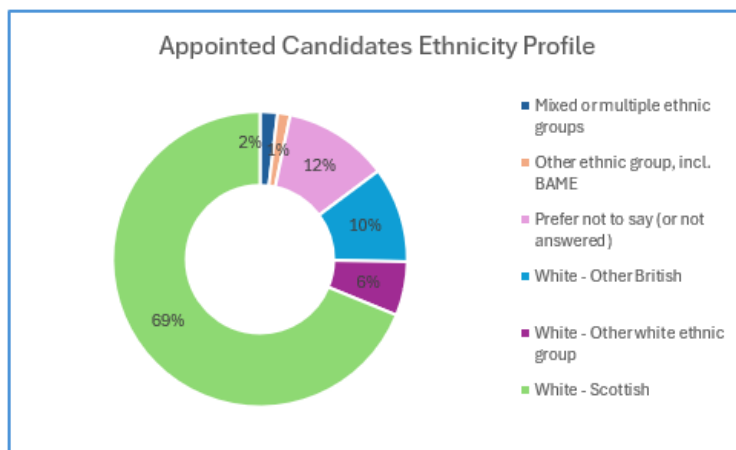


Figure 15: Appointed Candidates' Ethnicity Profile

Appointed Candidates Sex Profile

Of the 574 candidates appointed in 2024, 68% described their sex as female and 21% of appointed candidates identified as male, as shown on Figure 16. The remaining 11% did not disclose the information for this protected characteristic, increasing from 9% non-disclosure of sex in 2023.

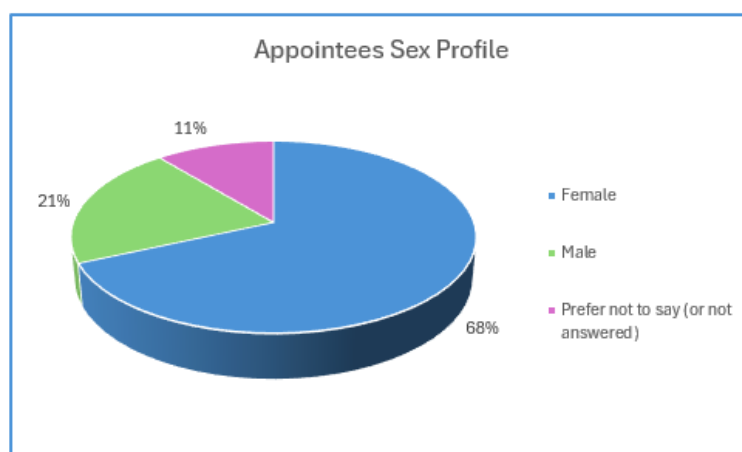


Figure 16: Appointed Candidates' Sex Profile



Appointed Candidates Disability Profile

12% of the appointed candidates in 2024 did not disclose their disability status. Of the 574 individuals, 4% disclosed that they have a disability, the remaining 84% stating they are not disabled. This summary is demonstrated by Figure 17.

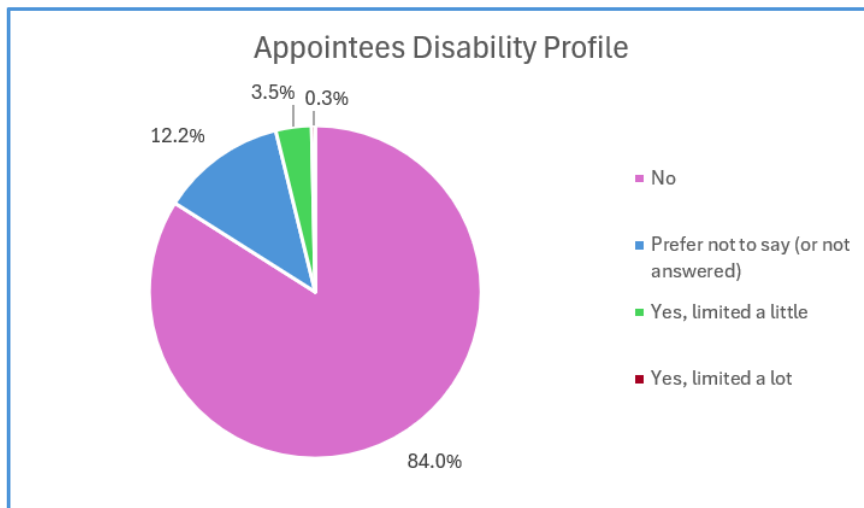


Figure 17: Appointed Candidates' Disability Profile

Appointed Candidates Religion Profile

As per Figure 18 below, 24% of the appointed candidates stated that their religion was Church of Scotland, a decrease from 28% in 2023. A further 11% of the candidates disclosed their religion as Roman Catholic. Candidates disclosing, they have no religion accounted for 36% of all appointed through 2024. The percentage of candidates not disclosing their religion has increased from 15% in 2023 to 17% in 2024.

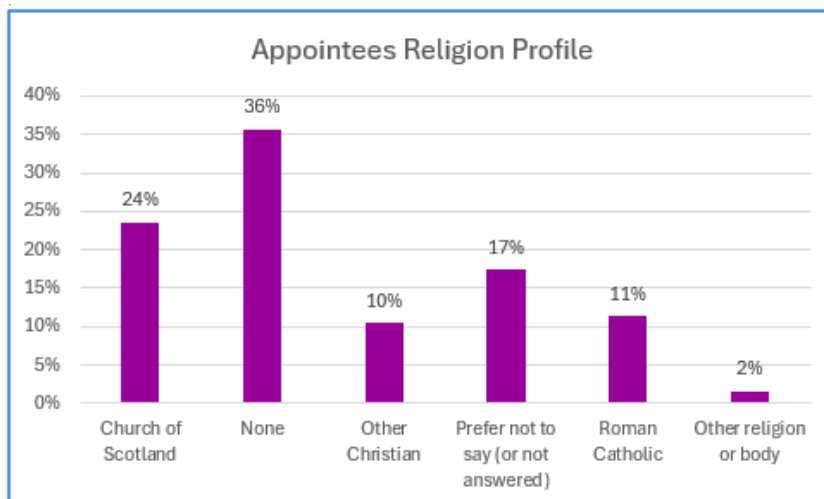


Figure 18: Appointed Candidates' Religion Profile



Appointed Candidates Sexual Orientation

The majority, 83.6%, of appointed candidates identified themselves as heterosexual. This is very similar to 86% in 2023. The non-disclosure rate for this protected characteristic has remained the same as in 2023 at 12.9%. 20 appointed candidates, accounting for 3.5%, indicated other sexual orientations, compared to 2% in the previous year.

Appointed Candidates Transgender Profile

Less than ten of the appointed candidates in 2024 declared that they do identify as a transgender person. 69 appointed candidates, accounting for 12%, did not disclose that information.

Leavers

In 2024 a total of 267 employees left the Comhairle's employment, this includes those whose fixed term contracts came to an end.

Leavers Ethnicity Profile

Through 2024 most individuals that left the Comhairle were defined as 'White – Scottish'. This is in proportion to the current workforce of the Comhairle.

Leavers Sex Profile

212 of the 267 leavers in 2024 were female, accounting for 79% of all leavers. The remaining 21% were identified as male. This percentage divide is in line with the Comhairle's current workforce sex profile.

Leavers Disability Profile

59% of the individuals that left Comhairle employment in 2024 did not consider themselves disabled. 4% out of the 226 leavers, disclosed that they were disabled.

Leavers Religion Profile

41% of leavers in 2024 did not disclose their religion, 20% identified their religion as Church of Scotland, slightly higher than in 2022 and 2023 when 19% of leavers identified their religion as Church of Scotland. A further 15% of leavers declared they had no religion.

Leavers Sexual Orientation

58% of leavers in 2024 identified themselves as heterosexual. 40% of leavers, did not disclose their sexual orientation.

Leavers Transgender Profile

None of the leavers identified themselves as a transgender person, however 48% of leavers did not disclose this information.



Leavers Age Profile

26% of leavers were aged between 55-64, a further 19% were aged 25-34, and 15% were aged over 65, as depicted in figure 19 below. The percentage of leavers at retirement age was similar in 2022 at 14% but had doubled to 28% in 2023. The most notable change is in the 25-34-year-old age group of leavers, increasing from 12% in 2023 to 19% in 2024.

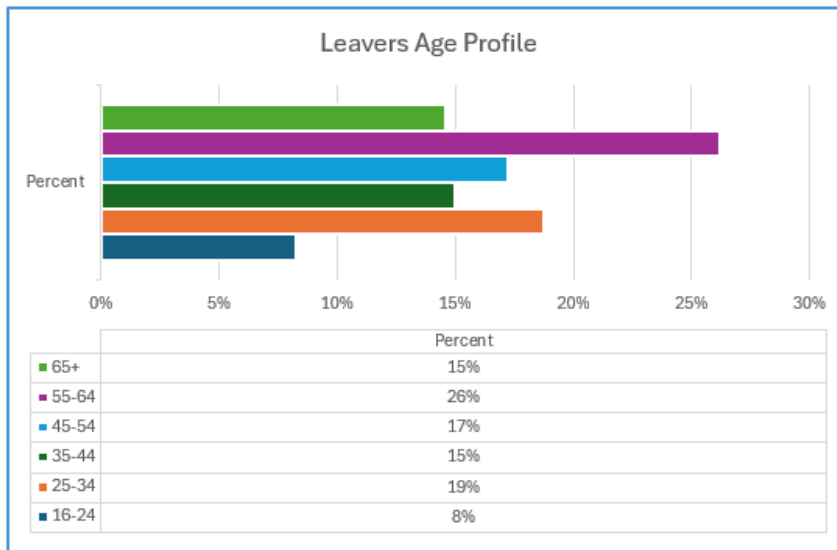


Figure 19: Leavers Age Profile



Performance Assessment

The Comhairle do not record equality monitoring information during their Performance Appraisal procedures. Emphasis has been increased on self-appraisals on an annual basis in the Comhairle. The Comhairle does not operate any policy in which employees may suffer or benefit as a result of their performance.

Disciplinary, Grievance and Respect at Work

Disciplinary

Through 2024 there were 14 instances where disciplinary action was required. This is an increase of 40% compared to ten instances in 2023. It had been consistent in recent years that the number of disciplinary procedures and sanctions issued had remained particularly low.

The majority involved in disciplinary procedures were female. Most of those involved in disciplinary procedures who disclosed this information were of White Scottish ethnicity. None of the employees disclosed that they were disabled or transgender.

Grievance

As less than 10 grievances were formally processed through the Grievance Procedure during 2024, specific numbers cannot be reported regarding the protected characteristics discussed through this report.

Respect at Work

This policy allows complaints to be resolved informally, where this is not possible a formal approach will be implemented.

There were less than ten complaints formally processed during 2023 through the Respect at Work policy.



Training

During 2024, a total of 973 Comhairle employees undertook training, either online or face-to-face. This is an increase of 41% from 688 employees in 2023. However, since about 13 weeks' worth of data, equating to around 60+ training courses, was lost in 2023 because of the cyber-attack on 7th November 2023, the numbers cannot be compared directly. For that reason, comparisons might be going back further to provide a more accurate picture. In 2022, 844 Comhairle employees participated in training courses which is much more similar to 2024.

Training is provided for employees internally to meet requirements of their post, undertake duties of the post or for professional career development. Training includes introductions to the organisation and its policies and procedures. In addition to this, training is given to cover a variety of subjects including manual handling, first aid and recruitment & interview training.

All staff that enrol onto an internal training course is given an Equal Opportunities Form to complete; however, this is voluntary. All information disclosed within these forms are recorded and held by the Comhairle's Human Resources section. Equal opportunities data is not held for employees who complete external or online training.

Digital platforms are also being utilised to provide online training to employees, thus providing a more flexible approach. LearnPro is used by the Comhairle to provide this style of training, with over 6000 programmes available, covering a wide range of topics.

Training Ethnic Origin Profile

The majority, 80%, of employees attending internal training in 2024 described themselves as 'White – Scottish'. This is a slight drop again from previous years and can be compared in Table 4 below. The non-disclosure rate has increased from 7% in 2023 to 9% in 2024, contrary to the increased participation trend in disclosure of this information in previous years. Specific numbers of ethnicities cannot be disclosed if there are less than 10 employees selecting them, these are therefore combined into the 'Other' category.

Ethnic Origin	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
White – Scottish	80%	81%	86%	85%	87%	83%	80%
Other White British	6%	7%	6%	8%	8%	7%	9%
Not disclosed/PNTA	9%	9%	6%	4%	2%	7%	9%
Other	4%	3%	2%	3%	3%	3%	2%

Table 4: Training Ethnicity Profile



Training Sex Profile %

Nearly full disclosure rates were obtained for this protected characteristic. The sex profile for employees attending training in 2022 was 80.6% women and 18.9% men, with a non-disclosure rate of 0.5%.

Training Disability Profile

Employees attending training that consider themselves to have a disability accounted for 4% of all attendees, a decrease from 6% in 2023 but closer to 2022 when 3% considered themselves to have a disability. 11% of participants did not disclose whether they had a disability, in comparison to 2023 when 10%, and 2022 when 5% of participants chose not to disclose that information.

Training Age Profile

Of the 973 employees attending training in 2024, 921 disclosed their age, which is a disclosure rate of 95%, more than in 2023 when 90% of employees attending training disclosed their age, and the same as in 2022 (95%). The highest number of employees attending training sat within the 45-54 age bracket, as shown on figure 20. This is the same as in 2022. In 2023, the highest number of employees attending training sat in the 55-64 age bracket but closely followed by the number of attendees in the 45-54 age bracket.

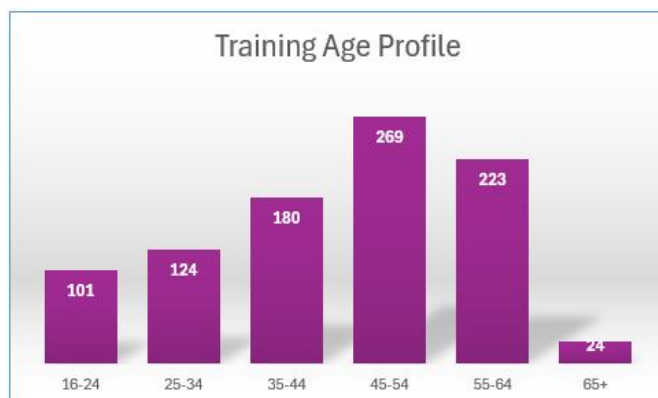


Figure 20 - Training Age Profile



Training Religion Profile

As shown in figure 21, 45% of employees attending training identified their religion as 'Church of Scotland', with a further 13% identifying as 'Other Christian', and 11% identifying as 'Roman Catholic'. 9% of employees did not disclose their religion. Specific numbers of religions cannot be disclosed if there are less than 10 employees selecting them, these are therefore combined into the 'Other' category.

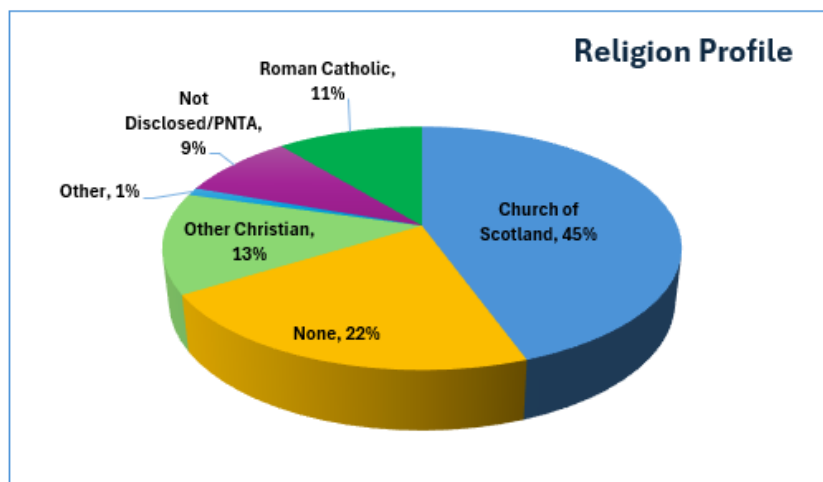


Figure 21: Training Religion Profile

Training Sexual Orientation Profile

92% of training attendees through 2024 described themselves as heterosexual. Those identifying as bisexual accounted for less than 2% of employees. 6% of employees did not disclose their sexual orientation, which is 1% higher than disclosure rates in 2022, and identical to disclosure rates in 2023. Specific numbers of sexual orientations cannot be disclosed if there are less than 10 employees selecting them, these are therefore combined into the 'Other' category, consisting of less than 1% of employees.

Training Transgender Profile

Some employees identified themselves as a transgender person whilst completing training, however specific numbers cannot be disclosed as there are less than ten. 27.65% of all attendees did not disclose any information. 71.94% of employees stated they were not transgender.



Improving the Workforce Disclosure Rate

Employees are encouraged to update their Equal Opportunity data on an annual basis. This can usually be done on 'MyView', a self-service facility used by the Comhairle which is linked to their HR and Payroll systems. Paper forms can also be provided for any employee who does not have access to the internet. Anyone starting employment with the Comhairle is also requested to complete an Equal Opportunities form. This is encouraged with the aim to reduce the non-disclosure rates across the protected characteristic groups discussed through this report. 'MyView' was re-established after the cyber-attack and has been available again since November 2024. The most recent reminder by Human Resources to all staff to update their data was sent in January 2025.

Table 5 shows the employee's non-disclosure rates for the last five years. Non-disclosure rates for Religion are not available for 2023.

Characteristic	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Disability	27%	26%	25%	28%	28%	35%
Ethnicity	9%	9%	10%	13%	13%	15%
Religion	45%	44%	39%	40%	N/A	37%
Sexual Orientation	47%	46%	41%	41%	39%	37%
Transgender	58%	57%	51%	53%	53%	47%

Table 5: Non-disclosure rates