



Working for Stafford Borough Council

This document takes a look at the people we attract to work for us, those that have been through our recruitment processes and joined over the last 12 months (April 2015-March 2016), and those who have moved onto new challenges. This document focusses on employees on a permanent or fixed term contract, but depending on service requirements, we also take on a number of casual workers each year.

We have a corporate Equality and Diversity Policy and the information contained in this document also complies with our requirements under the Equality Act 2010, where there is a general duty to provide information about our employees.

Stafford Borough Council has signed up to be A Mindful Employer, sharing a commitment to work with a positive approach towards increasing mental health awareness in the workplace. In addition, the council has signed up to Disability Confident employer scheme, which supersedes the disability Two Ticks accreditation, which has been held for more than ten years.

In order to make the Council an employer of choice and attract young people to work for us, we continue to build on relationships formed with local high schools and colleges in the Borough, providing high quality work experience opportunities across the council. These continued relationships have enabled us to attract young people as and when they begin their working life.

Our longstanding relationship with a large training provider has also enabled us to continue to provide apprenticeship opportunities and to upskill our workforce, which has in turn enabled all employees to seek further employment opportunities within the council and further afield.

Workforce Profile

Stafford Borough Council employs close to 400 employees across eight service areas.

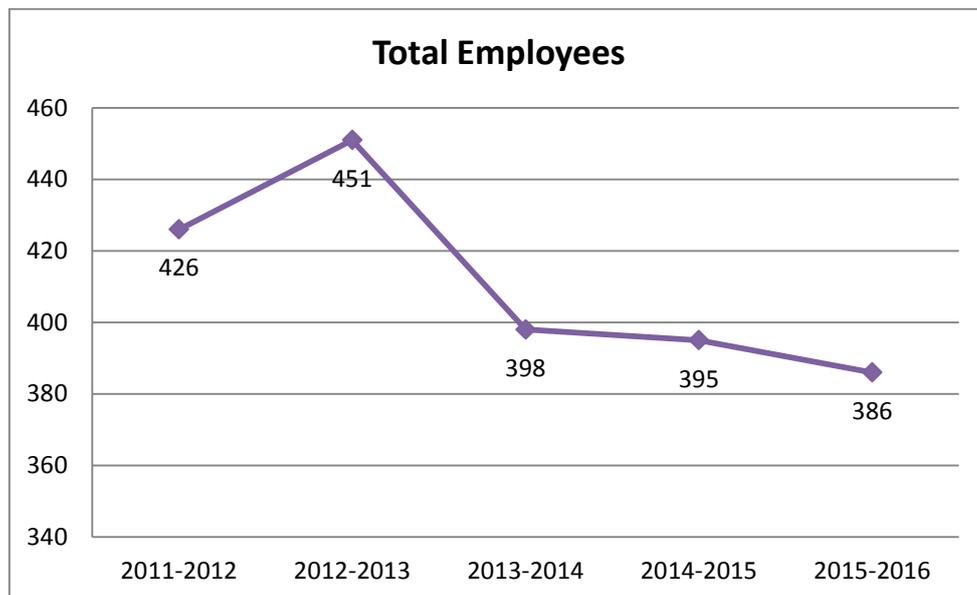
Following the shared service arrangements with Cannock Chase District Council in 2010/2011, some services are provided to both authorities by Stafford Borough Council (Legal services, Human Resource Services and Technology) whereas Cannock Chase District Council provides Finance and Building Control services to both authorities.

The workforce profile information provided in this report is based on those employed by Stafford Borough Council, who may be based at either site or across both.

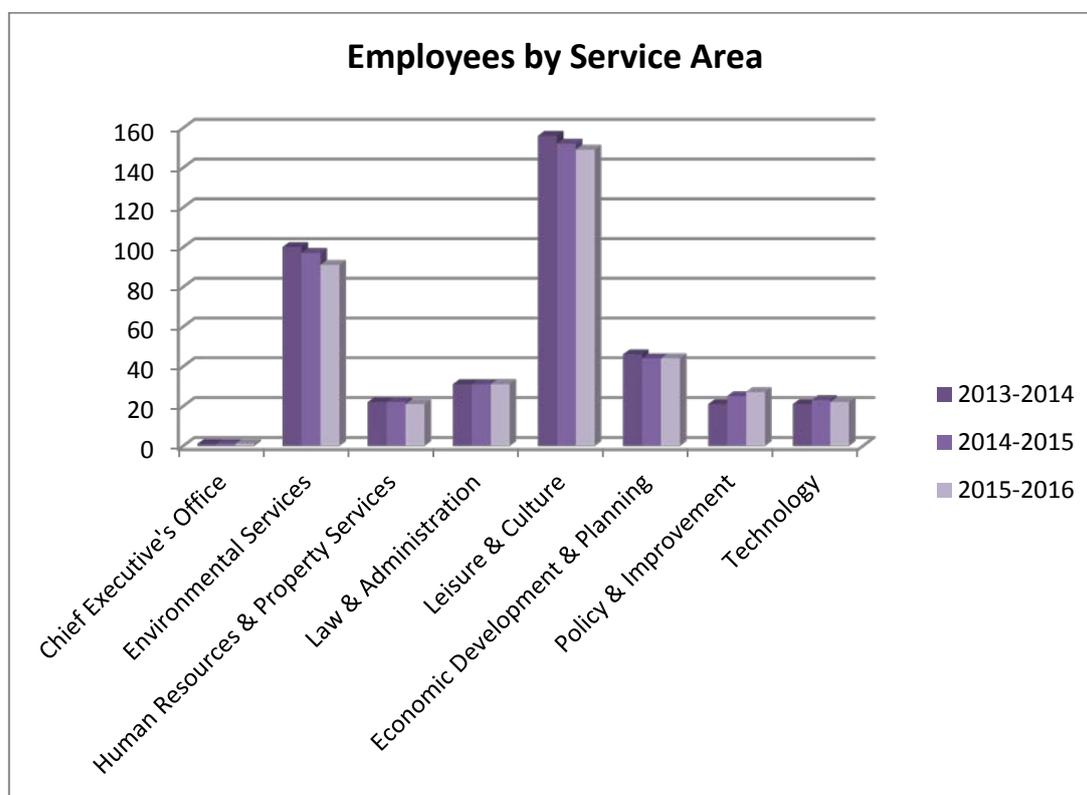
With the budgetary environment continuing to be challenging, the profile for 2015-2016 also reflects a year where Stafford Borough Council has continued to review services where appropriate, and question how the services required can be best provided to meet the needs of the community.

Total Employees

The number of employees with a permanent or fixed term contract has changed little over the last three years, with the numbers remaining close to 400 (information as at 31st March each year).



Leisure and Culture service area remains the largest area of employees, followed by Environmental Services.



Starters and Leavers

	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
Total employees as at 31.03	398	395	386
New Starters	22	35	45
Leavers	46	44	52
Turnover	11.60%	10.99%	13.30%

The 2015-2016 turnover is similar to the national average of 13.6%, turnover in 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 also broadly reflects the national average. (CIPD Annual Survey Report – Resourcing and Talent Planning 2015).

With the budgetary environment for local authorities continuing to be challenging, each potential vacancy is reviewed, then approved by Cabinet before being advertised.

Vacancies are advertised via our on-line recruitment system, Engage, where we continue to offer a variety of different routes of application to suit Candidates differing requirements. The Council also provides a PC on the ground floor of the Civic Centre building for use by members of the public. This can be used for job searches and applying for current vacancies at the council. The Engage system also allows candidates to personalise the appearance of each window for ease of use.

In addition, vacancies are advertised on WM Jobs, LG jobs, the Job Centre Website and in other media as appropriate to the vacancy.

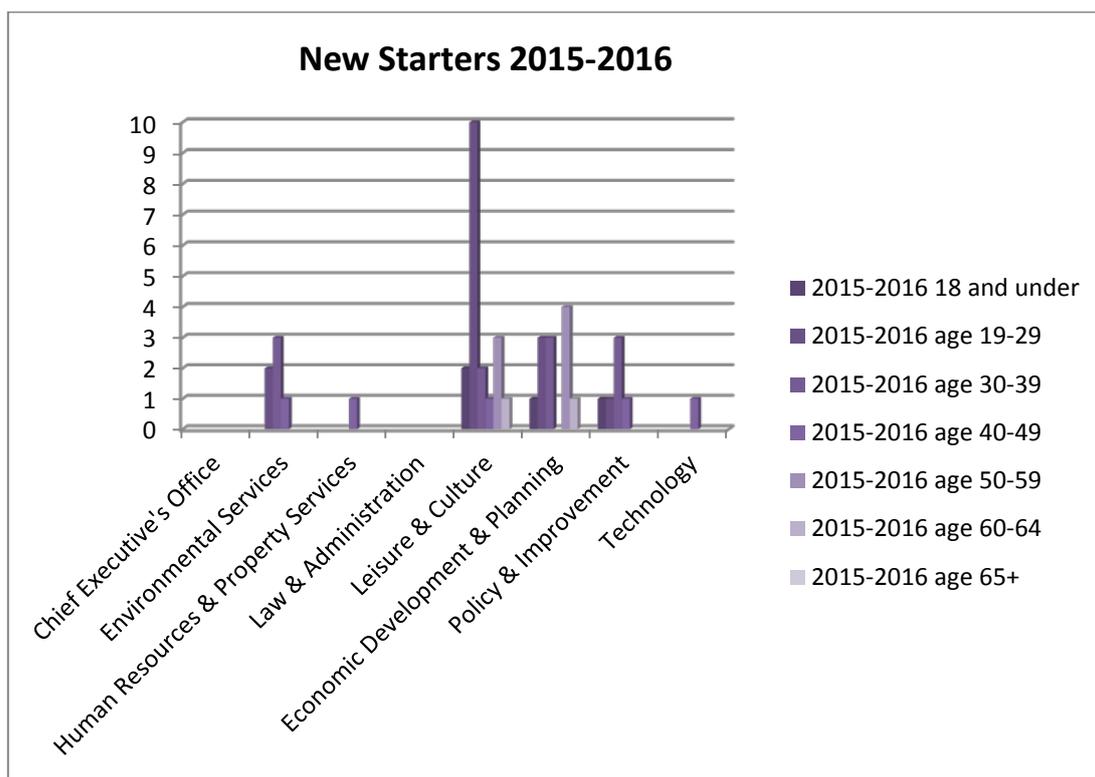
New Starters

We recruited 45 employees in 2015-16, spread across most service areas.

Looking at the people that joined us, the largest number of new recruits are from the 19-39 age category.

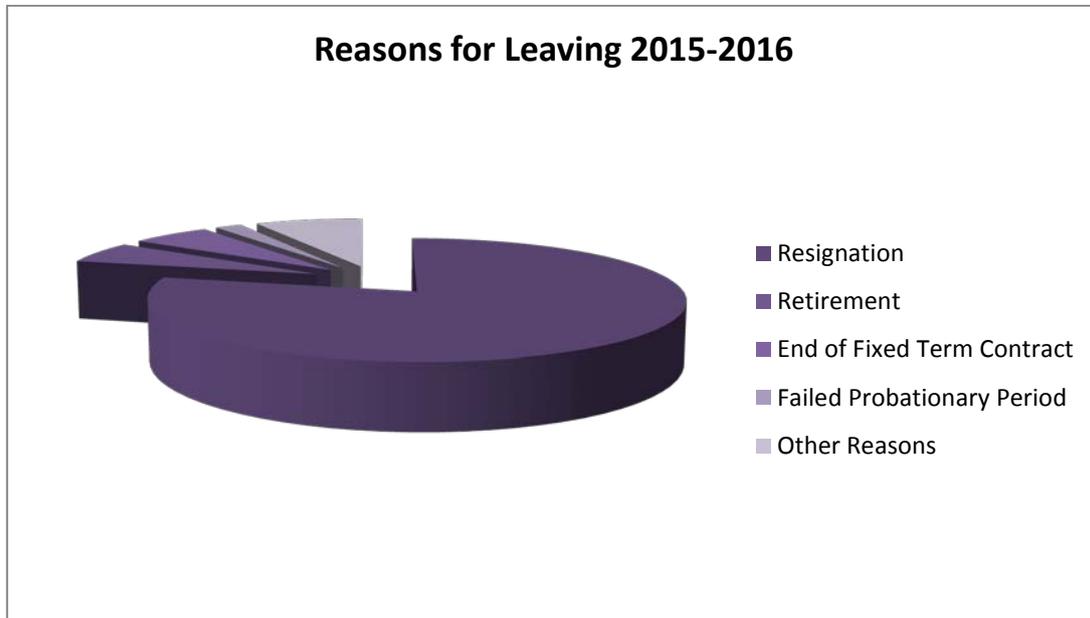
In a continued attempt to redress an ageing workforce, the Council continues to have long standing relationships with local education and training providers and has used these contacts as a means of attracting recruits. In addition, Stafford Borough Council continues to actively support the Apprenticeship scheme, providing on-going continual professional development to NVQ Level 2 for new apprentices.

In addition, the development and promotion of e-learning, along side other methods of learning and development, has enabled corporate training for new and existing employees on subjects such as Data Protection and Child Protection.



Leavers

The main reason for leaving in 2015-2016 was resignation, with the largest proportion moving onto new opportunities in the local area and further afield. Leavers were spread over all service areas and age groups.



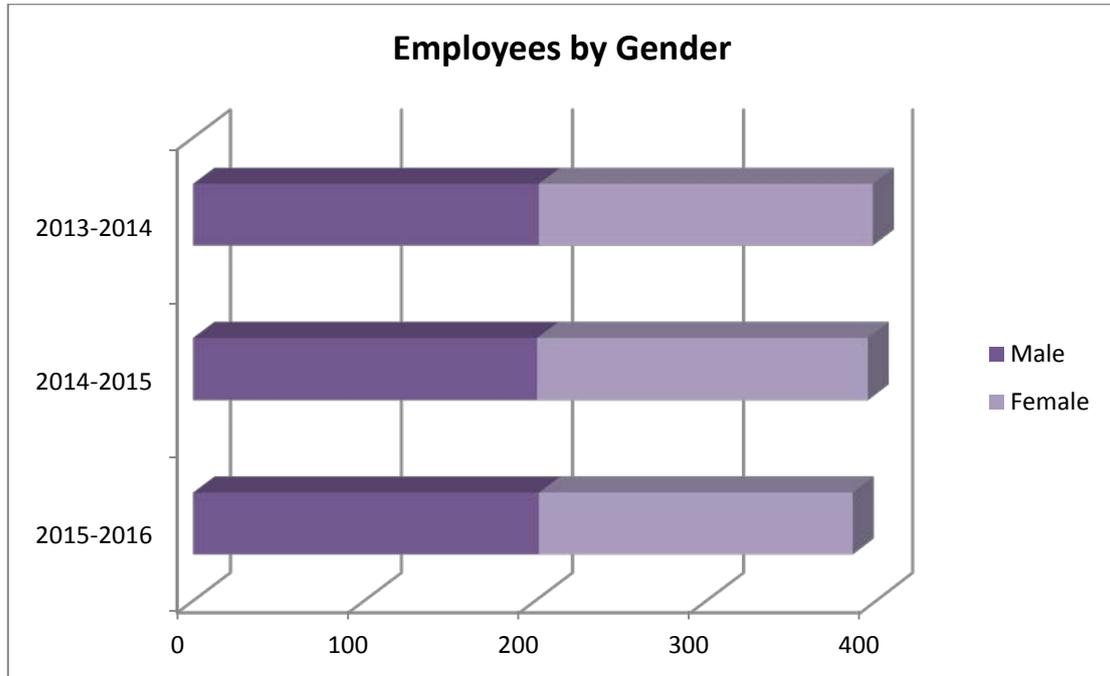
	2015-2016	2014-2015
Resignation	41	30
Retirement	3	2
End of Fixed Term Contract	3	3
Failed Probationary Period	1	0
Other Reasons	4	7

'Other Reasons' for leaving include reasons such as retirement on medical grounds and death in service

Current Employees - Equality Characteristics

1. Gender

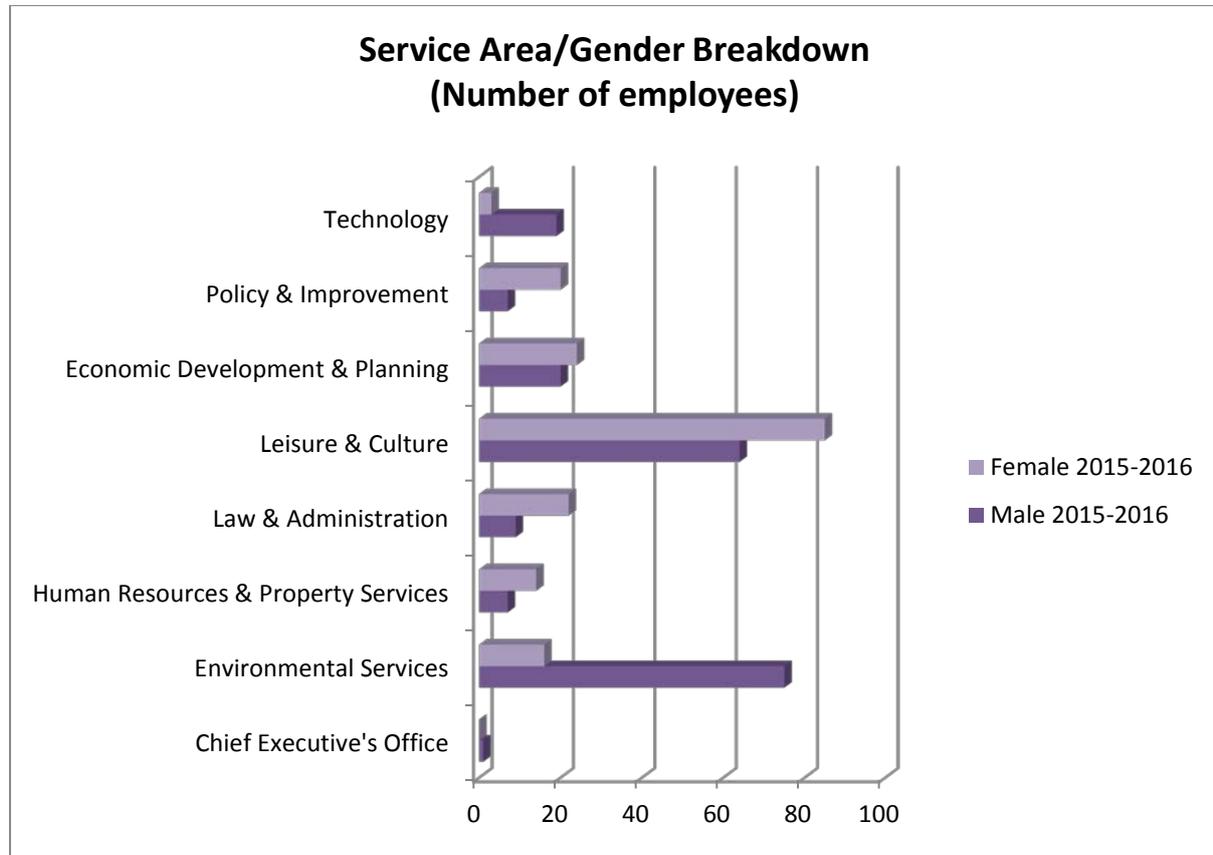
Overall, Stafford Borough Council has a fairly even gender composition.



In the main, we have managed to attract and retain similar percentages of male and female employees and have maintained this even composition for a number of years:

	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
Male	50.70%	50.55%	50.75%	50.89%	52.33%
Female	49.30%	49.45%	49.25%	49.11%	47.67%

However, some of our professions attract typically more of one gender.



Percentage of Male/Female Employees by Service Area

	Tech.	Policy & Imp.	Economic Dev. & Plan.	Leisure & Culture	Law & Admin.	HR & Prop. Serv.	Environ.	Chief Exec's Office
Male	86.30%	25.90%	45.50%	43.00%	29.00%	33.30%	82.40%	100.00%
Female	13.60%	74.10%	54.50%	57.00%	71.00%	66.70%	17.60%	0.00%

Technology is predominately a male based service, particularly within helpdesk support, whereas the Policy and Improvement service area typically attracts more female candidates.

Environmental Services has the largest gender difference, female employees in this area comprise just 17.5% of the Service workforce. The majority of posts within this service area are manual based.

Both service areas have had vacancies during this period and have sought to redress this balance, however, appointments where made, have been based upon the best skills, abilities and experience for the role.

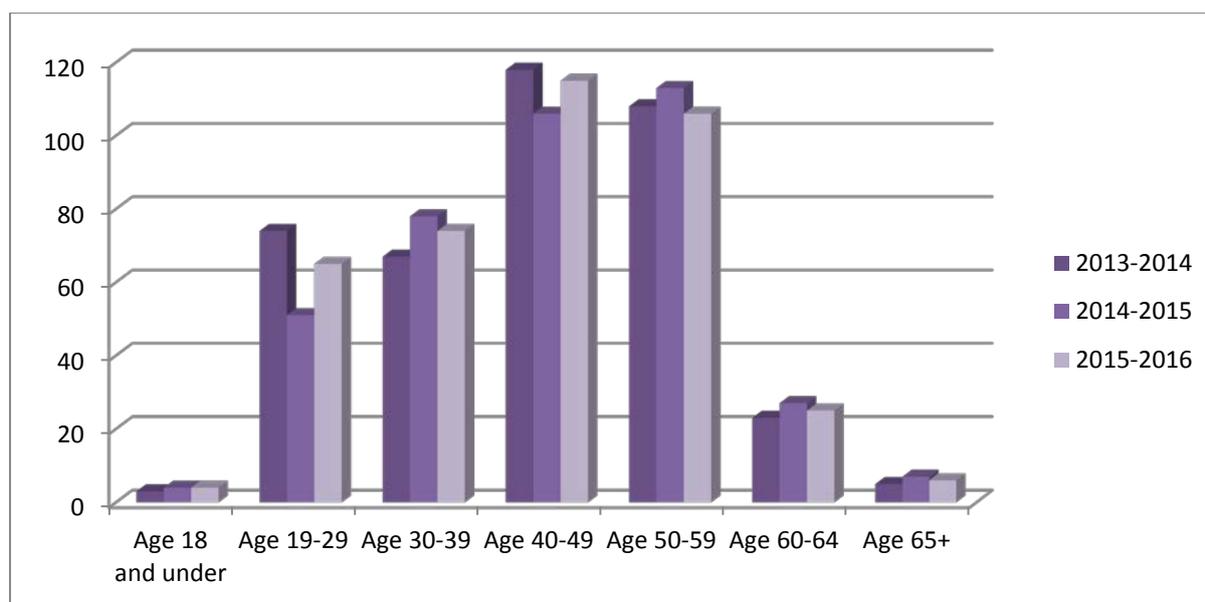
Women in Senior Roles

Women in senior roles (Principal Officer Grade, SCP33 and above) have comprised around 40% of employees for the last three years.

	2011-2012		2012-2013		2013-2014		2014-2015		2015-2016	
Male	65	59.1%	72	65.5%	50	59.5%	53	59.6%	55	60.4%
Female	45	40.9%	49	44.5%	34	40.5%	36	40.4%	36	39.6%

2. Age

The majority of Stafford Borough Council employees fall within the 40-59 age categories; this has been a similar position over a number of years. This does not reflect the community where a just over one fifth of the population are aged 65+, whereas within Stafford Borough Council only 7 employees fall into this category.



We continue to promote the local aim to “Be able to access more good jobs, and feel the benefit of economic growth” for all age categories by continuing to promote and recruit to apprenticeships, increasing the number in the 18-29 age range.

With funding for apprenticeships changing in April 2017, the authority is currently preparing for the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy and will continue to support the Apprenticeship scheme.

Recognising that part time positions such as Lifeguards and Fitness Instructors can be combined with part time education, our Leisure Centres regularly run training courses for members of the public who wish to attain the RLSS National Pool Lifeguard qualification.

Stafford Borough Council undertook 14 work experience placements from local schools during 2015-2016, with students experiencing duties as diverse as lighting and wardrobe at the Gatehouse Theatre, lifeguarding at Stafford Leisure Centre, planning projects within Economic Development and pest control with Streetscene.

As well as a range of services for all levels of ability and experience such as Aquatots and junior trampolining, our leisure centres provide specific services to meet the needs of the proportion of the population that are 65+, for example veteran bowls, young at heart badminton, Aqua Fit, Aqua Zumba, Fitsteps and over 50 swimming sessions.

In addition fitness instructors within our Health Hub are able to work on a one to one basis with individuals to develop appropriate programmes following GP referrals, such as cardiac rehabilitation, sports therapy and inclusive fitness.

3. Disability

In 2015-2016, 3.9% of employees indicated that they had a disability. This has remained constant at around 4% over the last three years.

	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
Disability Indicated	4.02%	4.56%	3.89%
No disability Indicated	91.46%	85.57%	87.05%
Not known	4.52%	9.87%	9.07%

This compares with community data where Stafford has the lowest level of residents claiming Disability Living Allowance in Staffordshire at 5.9% and lower than the national figure for England at 7.1%, although not all Council employees are residents of Stafford (Stafford: Locality Profile October 2016, Staffordshire Observatory).

The most common disabilities are Diabetes, Dyslexia, Arthritic conditions and visual/hearing impairments; however the range across employees is broad. For new recruits, our e-recruitment system is designed to provide options for the partially sighted or candidates with dyslexia.

In addition, the council is a Disability Confident Employer, which has superseded the Disability Two Ticks accreditation, held for more than ten years by Stafford Borough Council.

4. Race

The number of employees in each race category has changed little over the last three years.

	2013-2014		2014-2015		2015-2016	
White	381	95.73%	352	89.11%	347	89.90%
Black	3	0.75%	3	0.76%	2	0.52%
Chinese	1	0.25%	1	0.25%	0	0.00%
Asian	2	0.50%	4	1.01%	5	1.30%
Mixed	1	0.25%	1	0.25%	1	0.26%
Other	0	0.00%	10	2.53%	1	0.26%
Prefer not to Say	10	2.51%	24	6.08%	30	7.77%

7.4% of Stafford Borough's population are classed as Black, Minority or Ethnic (BME) compared with 2.33% in 2015-2016.

The Council recruits using WMJobs which attracts a broad audience across the West Midlands and Staffordshire and continues to recruit new employees based on their skills and experience. We also compete locally with a large County authority that has a far greater range of posts and locations.

Sexual Orientation, Gender Reassignment, Marital Status, Religion and Belief

Data in these areas has not been routinely collated prior to 2014-2015. However, in line with statutory changes, a workplace survey conducted in Quarter 4 of 2014 has enabled us to seek this information from current employees.

In addition, an on-line recruitment system, introduced in April 2014, requests this information from new recruits, enabling the authority to collate data in these areas.

5. Sexual Orientation

Over 60% of employees have described their sexual orientation as heterosexual, however just over a third of employees have preferred not to provide this information, which must always be considered as part of these statistics.

	2014-2015		2015-2016	
Heterosexual	241	61.01%	244	63.21%
Lesbian/Gay	8	2.03%	10	2.59%
Prefer not to say	146	36.96%	132	34.20%

6. Gender Reassignment

No employees have undertaken the process of gender reassignment during the last two years.

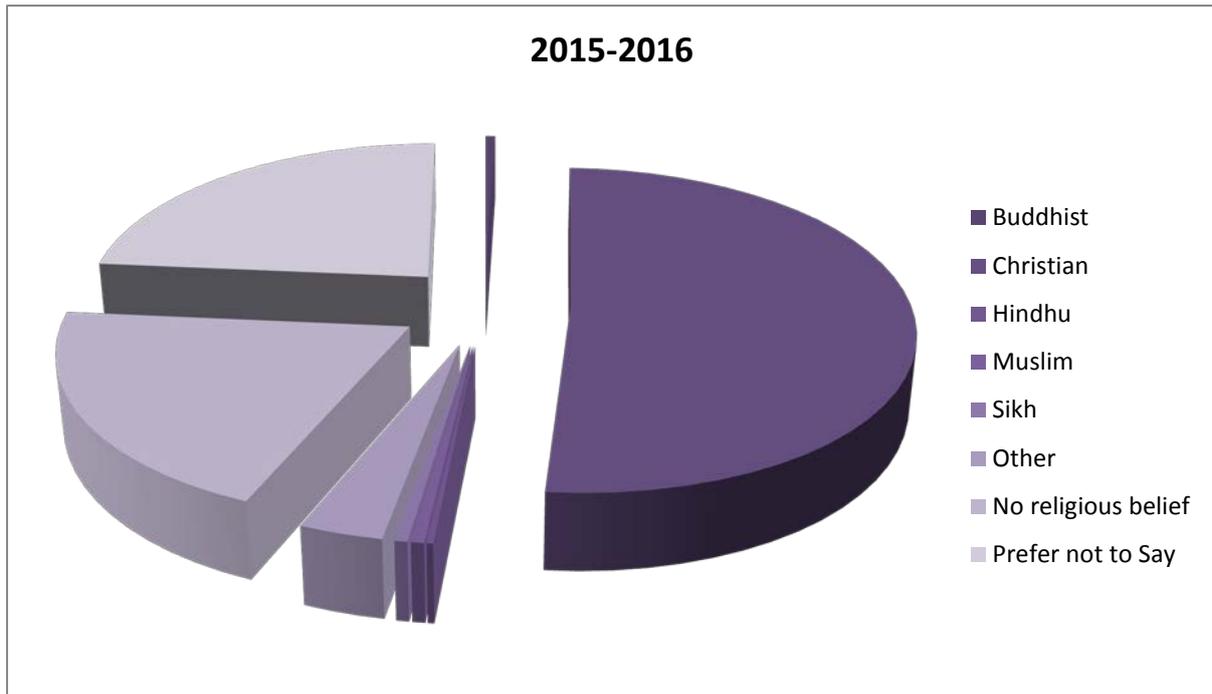
7. Marital Status

In 2015-2016, just over a third of employees have indicated that they are married or in a civil partnership. As with defining sexual orientation, close to 32% of employees have preferred not to provide this information.

	2014-2015		2015-2016	
Single	70	18.13%	61	15.44%
Co-habiting	38	9.84%	44	11.14%
Married	148	38.34%	147	37.22%
Civil Partnership	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Divorced or divorce pending	17	4.40%	17	4.30%
Prefer not to say	113	29.27%	126	31.90%

8. Religion and Belief

A range of religions have been indicated by employees, with Christianity forming 51% of employees, a similar figure to 2014-2015. This figure is slightly lower than indicated in the 2011 Census where 59.3% of England and Wales identified themselves as a Christian. As part of these statistics, it should also be considered that 23.5% of employees preferred not to provide this information, slightly lower than the previous year as employees become more used to this question.



	2014-2015	2014-2015	2015-2016	2015-2016
Buddhist	2	0.51%	2	0.52%
Christian	194	49.11%	197	51.04%
Hindu	1	0.25%	1	0.26%
Muslim	1	0.25%	2	0.52%
Sikh	1	0.25%	2	0.52%
Other	13	3.29%	13	3.37%
No religious belief	76	19.24%	78	20.21%
Prefer not to Say	107	27.09%	91	23.58%

Grievances and Discipline

New shared service Grievance and Discipline policies were introduced in 2013 which enhanced our previous policies, and harmonised these processes across both Councils.

During the last three years, no formal grievances have been raised. A small number of disciplinary sanctions were issued over the last three years – 9, the majority of which were verbal warnings.

Long Term Sickness Absence

Where an absence lasts longer than three weeks, it falls within the Council's definition of being long term. Of the 32 employees who were absence due to a longer term medical condition in 2015-2016, 75% of employees returned to work following their absence

	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
Returned to work following long term sick leave	27	24	24
Did not return after long term sick leave and left SBC	3	6	8
Still on Sick Leave	3	3	0
Returned to work following long term sick leave but has since left SBC	1	2	0

The number of staff returning to work following a period of long term absence has remained stable over the last three years – between 8% and 9% of total employees each year.

	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
Long Term Sickness Absence Cases	8.54%	8.86%	8.29%

The CIPD 2016 Absence Management Survey indicates that Stress is the most common cause of long term sickness absence with half the public sector respondents reporting an increase in stress-related absence in the past year and nearly two thirds reporting an increase in mental health issues.

Stafford Borough Council continues to employ a holistic approach to managing long term sickness absence with a range of support mechanisms in place to help and support employees during a period of long term sickness absence and to facilitate their return to the workplace, utilised as appropriate to the employees needs. These include dedicated case worker, paid phased returns, work adjustments, Occupational Health referrals, medical referrals for sport/leisure, and counselling support services.

Stafford Borough Council regularly undertakes a number of initiatives to support employee health, such as accessing to counselling services, subsidised gym membership, cooking advice and recipes, and health events where diabetes assessment, blood pressure checks and smoking cessation advice is available. A Cycle to Work Scheme is also available for eligible staff, helping in the purchase of a bike for travel to and from work.

In addition, in conjunction with Cannock Chase Council and Occupational Health Service, a flu jab service has been made available to all staff over recent years.

The council's Health and Wellbeing Team provides similar services to the community, for example WalkWise and Doorstep Walks4Life are on offer for employees and members of the public alike as well as alcohol awareness information and Eat Well, Live Well dietary and recipes for the whole family.

Pregnancy, Maternity and Parental Leave

Over this period six employees took maternity leave. Three returned to a change in hours, two returned to the same part time hours and one did not return, following the end of her fixed term contract. This is not an unusual picture and requests for flexible working by all employees are regularly considered.

As well as statutory maternity leave and pay, the Council provides enhanced maternity pay which employees can choose to be taken during their maternity leave or after three months following their return to work.

We have yet to receive a request for a partner to share the mother's maternity leave, although we ensure that parents are made aware of this option through specific communications. Childcare vouchers are also offered to eligible employees, via a salary sacrifice scheme.

Flexible Working

Our Flexible Working policy enables employees to manage their working time, subject to service requirements, whilst building in the facility to attend personal appointments through building accrued time. In March 2013, we also changed the policy to remove core hours of work, to assist with work/life balance.

Requests for flexible working are considered on a case by case basis, considering service area requirements as well as employee work life balance. We have had 42 requests (29% men and 71% woman) for a change in hours of work over the last three years, spread throughout all service areas. The reasons for a change to working hours are varied: changes following maternity leave, service area reorganisation and flexible retirement.

Stafford Borough Council - Moving Forward

The public sector continues to face a challenging environment with continuing budget cuts from central government necessitating careful management of resources, Stafford Borough Council continues to look at ways to consolidate services and shared service working where appropriate, in order to continue to meet the needs of the community of Stafford Borough.

Mindful of the effectiveness of electronic media, the Council introduced a new electronic recruitment system in April 2014, enabling applicants to view current vacancies in real-time, and complete applications on-line using their own electronic devices. The system has proved a positive tool in keeping prospective employees informed of the status of their application as well as streamlining the recruitment process internally within the council.

The system has gained accreditation for the facilities offered to partially sighted and dyslexic applicants. However, if this option isn't ideal for an applicant, hard copy applicants or the facility for translation into different languages are also catered for. Interestingly, over the last three years, we have received very few hard-copy applications (approximately 10) compared with over 3000 on-line applications.

Stafford Borough Council's Recruitment Charter ensures that the best candidate for a vacancy is appointed, regardless of their gender, age, race, religion, marital status or sexual orientation.

The Authority continues to develop and promote e-learning along side other methods of learning in order to continually professionally develop its employees.

Reflecting the national picture, Stafford Borough Council continues its long standing ethos of a holistic approach to absence management and in particular long term absence. Instances of stress, anxiety or depression continue to be highlighted and managed promptly and sensitively by employing support mechanisms appropriate to the employees needs, facilitating their return to the workplace.

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