



Equality Plan and Objectives **2023–2027**

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Access for All statement

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- **Phone** – 01246 242424
- **Email** – enquiries@bolsover.gov.uk
- **BSL Video Call** – a three way video call with us and a BSL interpreter. It is free to call Bolsover District Council with [Sign Solutions](#), you just need wifi or mobile data to make the video call, or call into one of our Contact Centres.

- **Call with [Relay UK](#)** via textphone or app on 0800 500 888 – a free phone service provided by BT for anyone who has difficulty hearing or speaking. It's a way to have a real time conversation with us by text.
- **Visiting one of our [offices](#)** at Clowne, Bolsover, Shirebrook and South Normanton.

Foreword

Welcome to our Equality Plan for 2023 to 2027.

We are committed to providing excellent services shaped by an understanding of the needs of different people and ensuring that how we deliver services promotes equality and fairness, and challenges inequality and discrimination in all its forms. We are also committed to ensuring equality as an employer.

This plan builds on the work of previous equality plans to embed equalities throughout our operations and in our decision-making and partnership working. It also sets out actions we will take to continue to deliver improved equality outcomes for everyone over the next four years.



Steve Fritchley
Leader of the Council



Karen Hanson
Chief Executive Officer





Introduction

We are committed to the creation of a fairer district for everyone.

We are committed to providing excellent services shaped by an understanding of the needs of different people and ensuring that how we deliver services promotes equality and challenges inequality. We will continue to work to understand our communities and to work effectively to reduce and eliminate all forms of discrimination, advance equality and foster good relations

between all groups in society.

This plan recognises our legal responsibilities as set out in the Equality Act 2010 and includes specific equality objectives for this period. This plan applies to all our employees and councillors and covers all aspects of our activities.

Legal requirements

The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) sets out the general equality duty which requires us in the exercise of our functions to 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 people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission states 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." (The Equality and Human Rights Commission: <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/private-and-public-sector-guidance/public-sector-providers/public-sector-equality-duty>)

The Equality Act 2010 covers the following protected characteristics:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership (only with regard to eliminating unlawful discrimination)
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

In addition to the general equality duty, the Act's specific sector duties require public bodies to publish relevant, proportionate information demonstrating their compliance with the Equality Duty; and to set themselves specific, measurable equality objectives (at least once every four years). This information is published on the equality page of our website.

The Accessibility Regulations (Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018) build on our existing obligations to people who have a disability under the Equality Act 2010. They require us to make your website or mobile app more accessible by making it 'perceivable, operable, understandable and robust' and, publish and update an accessibility statement on our website.





Our approach

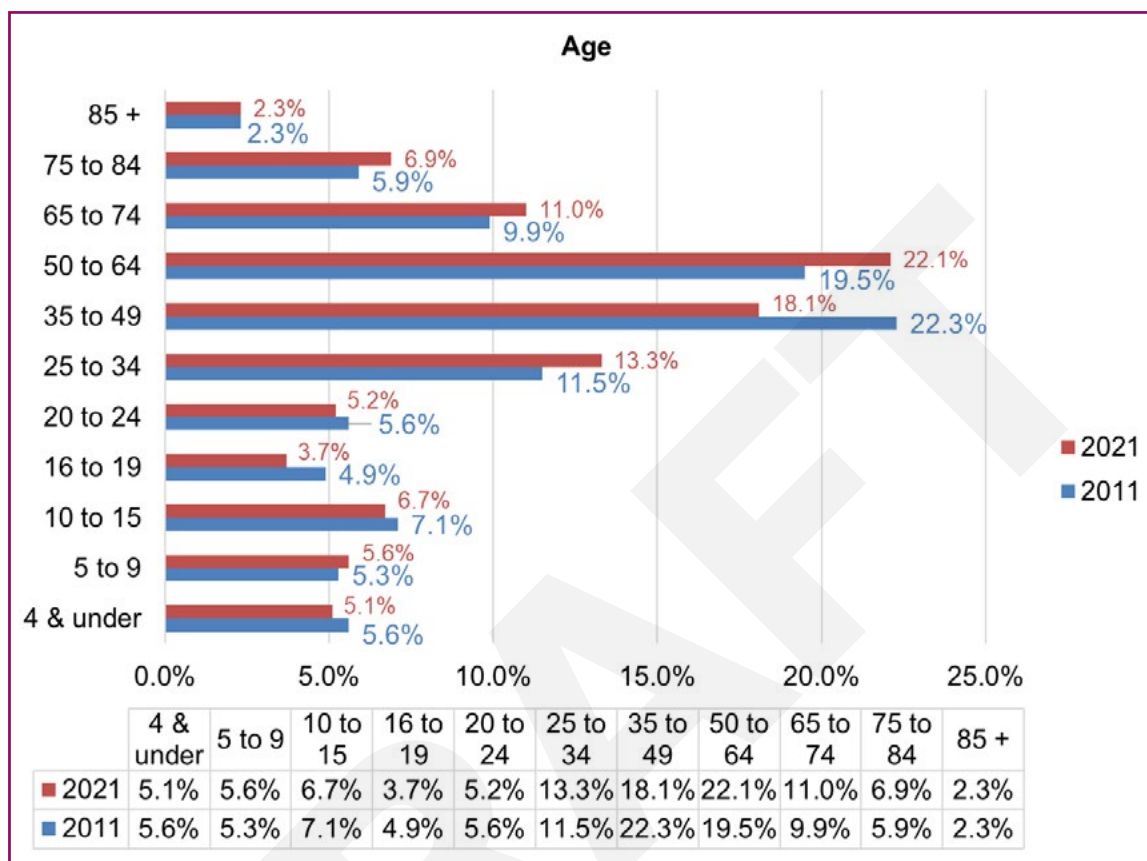
We have a range of measures and processes in place to help us meet our obligations under the Equality Act. These include:

- Undertaking consultation and seeking resident, customer and tenant views on services, documents and development within the District.
- Running a Youth Council to engage directly with school children from the secondary schools within the District.
- Having a Citizens' Panel of approximately 300 residents which we survey twice a year.
- Undertaking equality impact assessments (EIAs) on new policies and strategies concerning people – residents, customers and employees.
- Having an Equality Panel to engage with a small group of residents with an interest in equalities.
- Having a complaints, comments and compliments policy and procedure to enable customers and residents to raise complaints and make suggestions.
- Having four Contact Centres (South Normanton, Shirebrook, Bolsover and Clowne) to facilitate face to face contact with residents.
- Increasing the range of communications channels including webchat, online forms and British Sign Language (BSL) sign video to provide customer choice and convenience.
- Elected members and their constituency/community advocate role.
- Providing regular equalities awareness training for staff and members.
- Having an online hate incident reporting form to provide residents with another avenue to report incidents motivated by hate. Unfortunately some individuals are targeted because of their disability or ethnicity or other protected characteristic.
- Having an anti-social behaviour team who works closely with the Police and other partner agencies.
- Having an effective [Bolsover Partnership](#) approach where we support collaborative working with partner organisations to support the most vulnerable in the District.
- Helping to reduce inequalities through the provision of community grants.
- Providing reasonable adjustments based on disability and support with interpreters where required.
- Using website testing tools and use of assisted technology to test our websites and documents for compliance with accessibility regulations and standards.
- Reducing health inequalities through targeted physical exercise provision and wellbeing support.
- Building mutually beneficial relationships with organisations that support disabilities and help to reduce inequalities such as [Hearing Help](#) and [Hidden Disabilities](#).
- Maximising opportunities to reduce inequality when they arise, for example, incorporating wet rooms and improved facilities into the redevelopment of our sheltered housing schemes and putting together well thought through bids for government funding.
- Being a Disability Confident Employer and upholding the commitment to inclusive and accessible recruitment and supporting existing employees.

A profile of Bolsover District

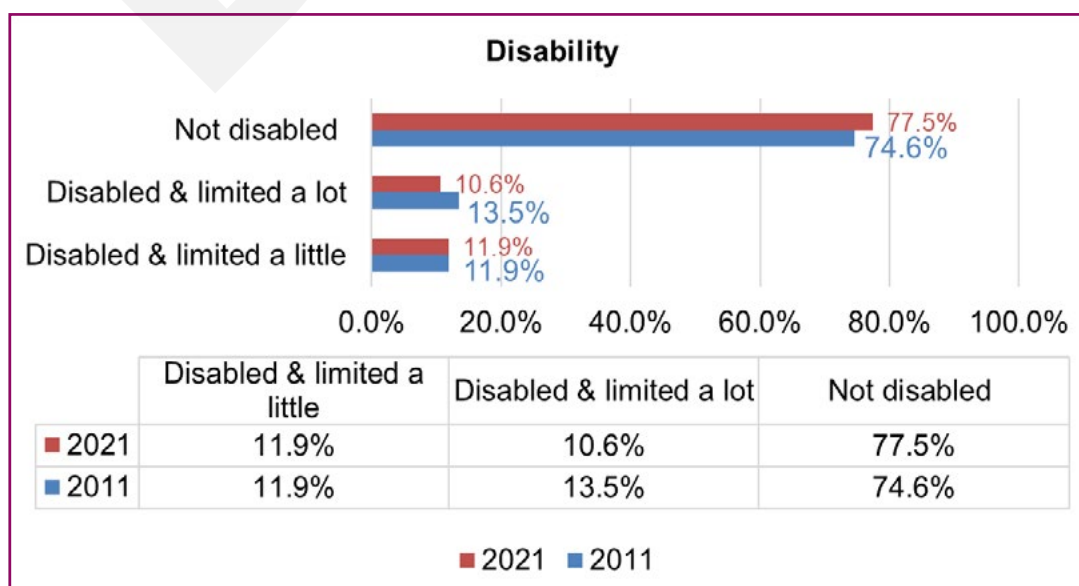
Age

Between the last two Census's (held in 2011 and 2021) the population of Bolsover District has increased by 5.8% from 75, 900 in 2011 to around 80,300 in 2021. The number of people aged 50 to 64 years rose by around 2,900 (reflecting an increase of 19.6%) while the number of residents between 35 and 49 years fell by 2,400 (reflecting a decrease of 14.2%).



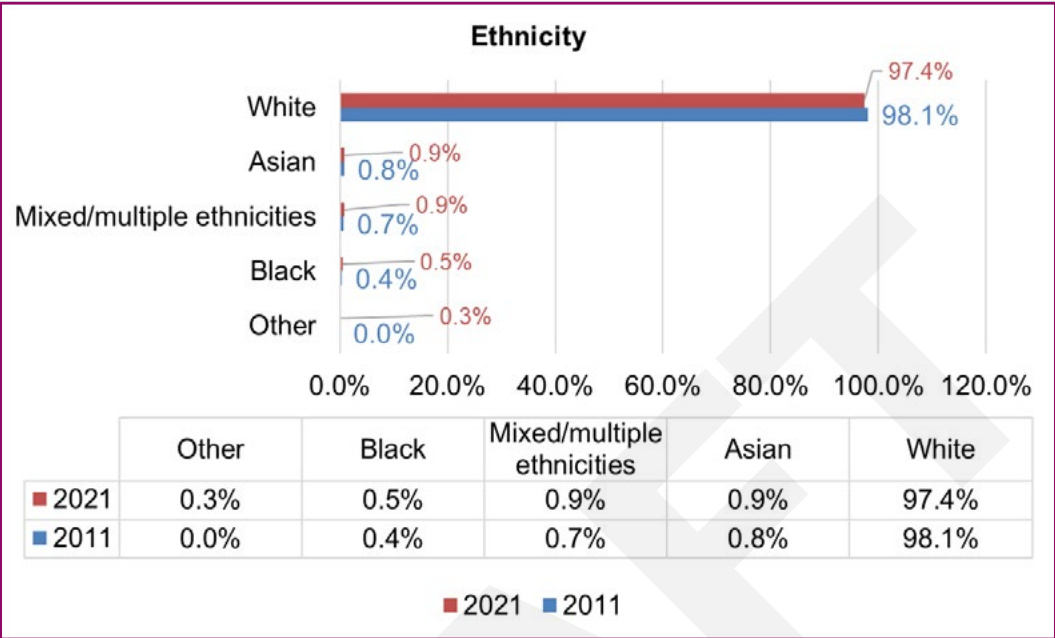
Disability

Residents identified as being disabled (and limited a lot) dropped from 13.5% in 2011 to 10.6% in 2021 reflecting a percentage-point fall of almost 3%. Census 2021 was undertaken during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. This may have influenced how people perceived their health status and activity limitations, and therefore may have affected how people chose to respond.



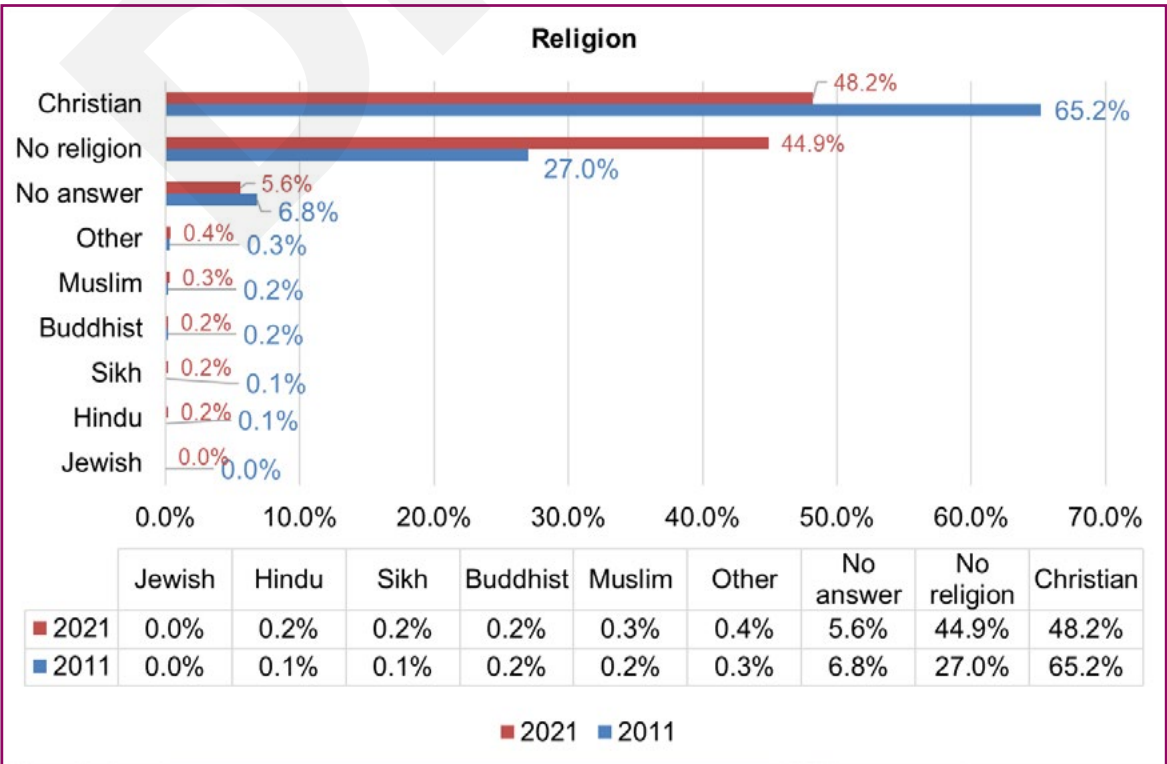
Ethnicity

In 2021, 0.3% of Bolsover District residents identified their ethnic group within the "Other" category ("Arab" or "Any other ethnic group"), up from 0.0% in 2011. The 0.3 percentage-point change was the largest increase among high-level ethnic groups in this area. In 2021, 97.4% of people in Bolsover District identified their ethnic group within the "White" category (compared with 98.1% in 2011), while 0.9% identified their ethnic group within the "Mixed or Multiple" category (compared with 0.7% the previous decade).



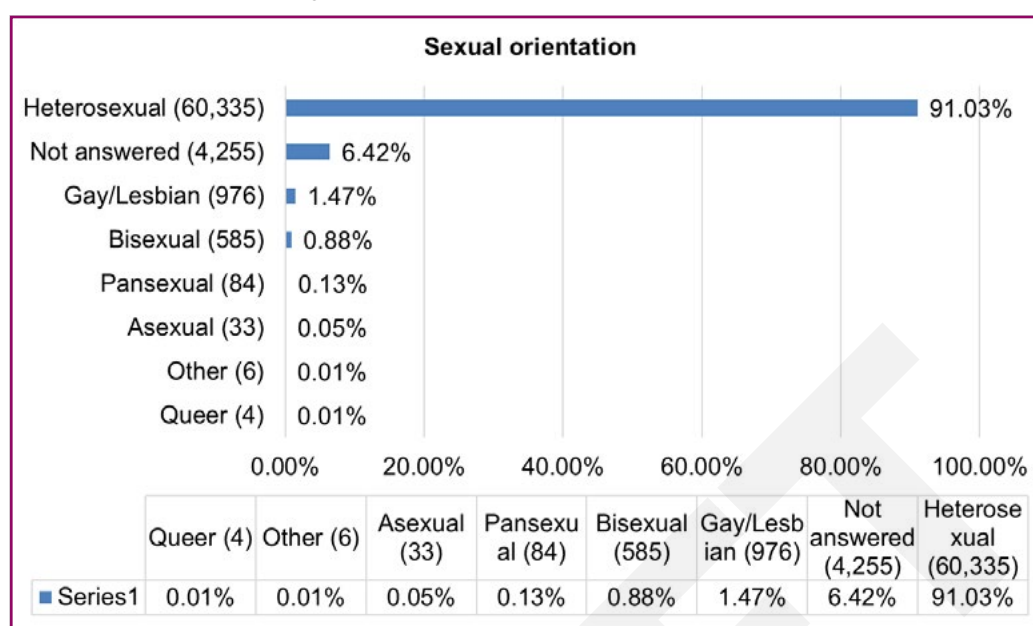
Religion

In 2021, 44.9% of Bolsover District residents reported having "No religion", up from 27.0% in 2011. The rise of 17.9 percentage points was the largest increase of all broad religious groups in Bolsover District. Because the census question about religious affiliation is voluntary and has varying response rates, caution is needed when comparing figures between different areas or between censuses. In 2021, 48.2% of people in Bolsover District described themselves as Christian (down from 65.2%), while 5.6% did not state their religion (down from 6.8% the decade before).



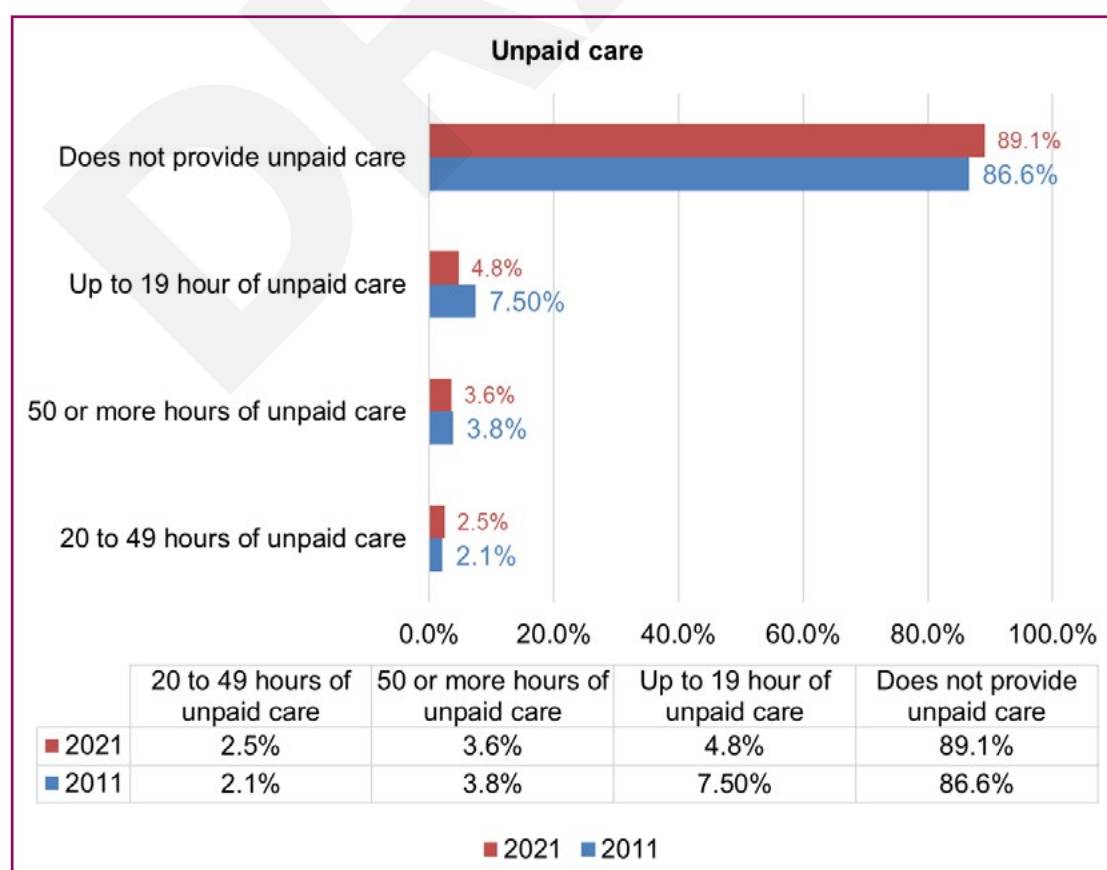
Sexual orientation

This is the first time sexual orientation has been asked in the Census which is why there is no comparative data in the graph below. The responses reflect that the vast majority of the population in the District identify as heterosexual (91.03%).



Unpaid care

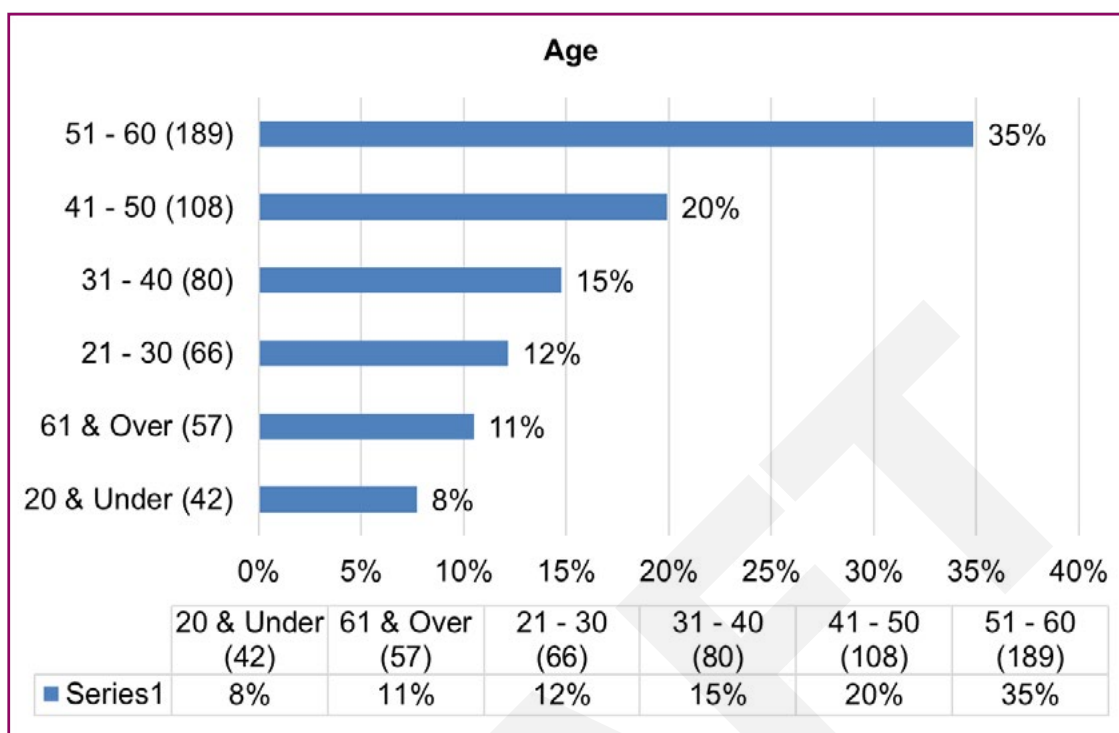
Almost 5% of Bolsover District residents (4.8%) reported providing up to 19 hours of unpaid care each week. This figure is down from 7.5% in 2011 reflecting a 2.7% decrease which was similar to the decrease across the East Midlands (2.8 percentage points, from 7.4% to 4.6%). Across England, the proportion fell by 2.8 percentage points, from 7.2% to 4.4%. Census 2021 was undertaken during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. This may have influenced how people perceived and managed their provision of unpaid care, and therefore may have affected how people chose to respond.



Our workforce profile

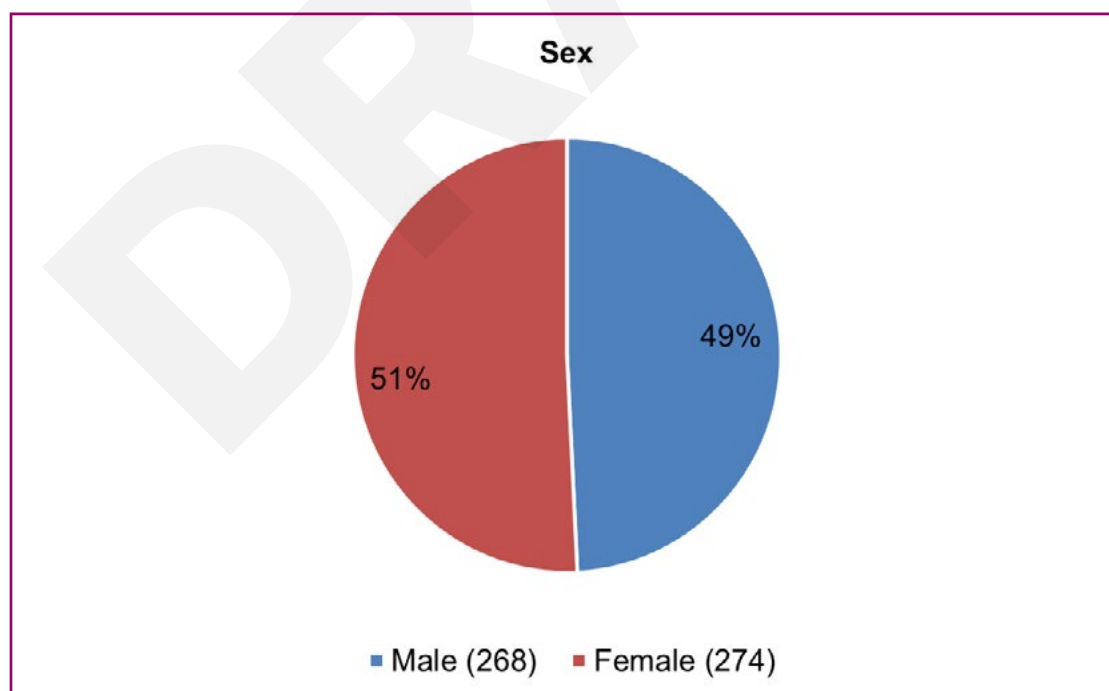
Age

Over a third of our 542 staff (35%) are between the ages of 51-60.



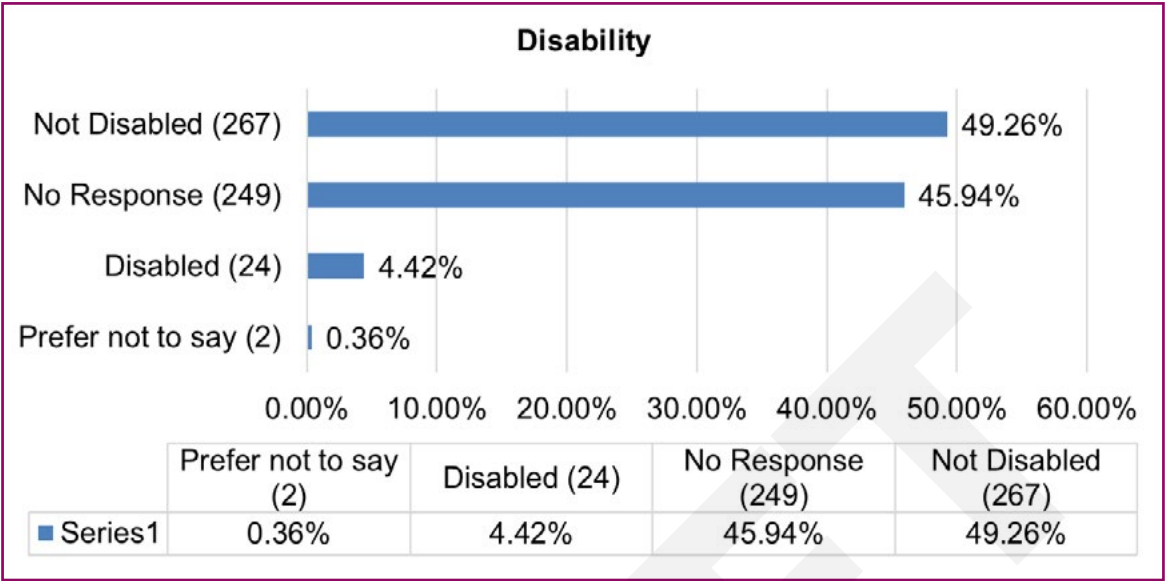
Sex

Our workforce is very close to being equal in representation of both male and female employees with 51% females and 49% males.



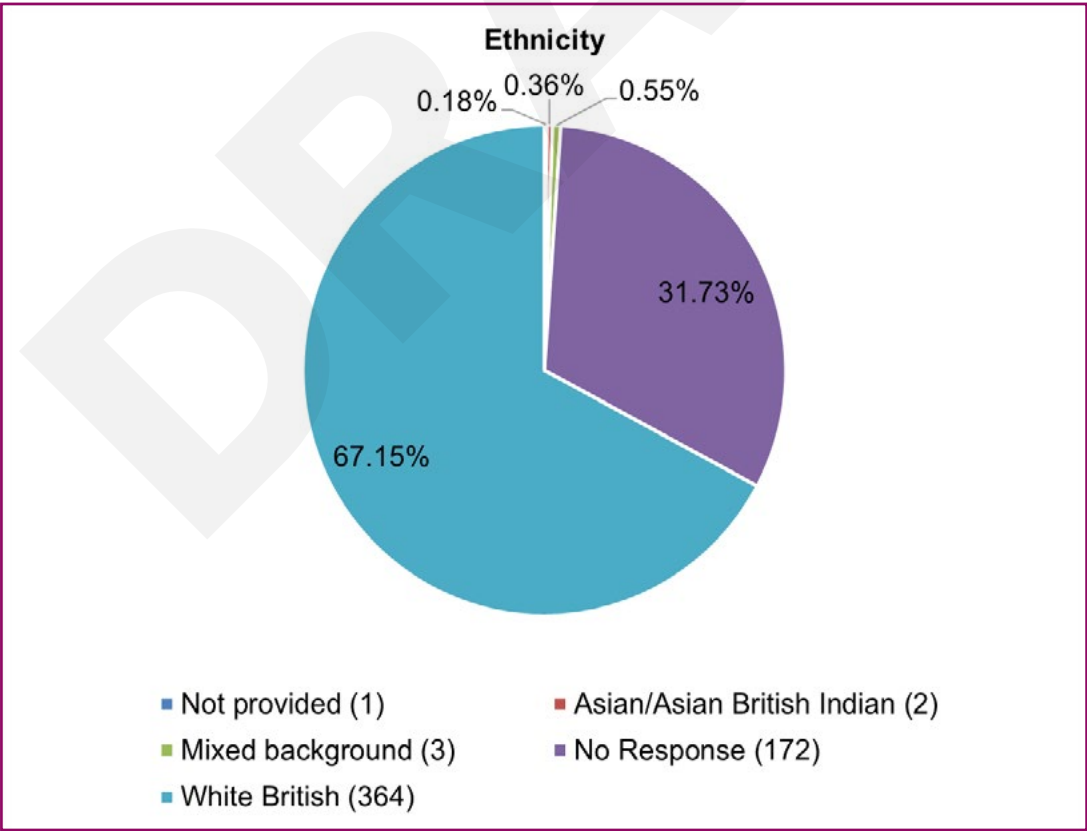
Disability

Almost half of our staff (49.25%) have stated they are not disabled however the figure is estimated to be greater given that almost 46% of the workforce declined to answer this question. We are keen to improve the response rate for this question to enable a more representative view of our workforce.



Ethnicity

Much in line with the Census findings of demographics across the District, the majority of our workforce is White British (67.15%). Again, this figure is estimated to be higher given that almost a third (31.73%) declined to answer this question.



Our equality objectives

Our equality objectives have been developed to provide a framework that takes account of our equality journey so far and provides a clear direction for the next stage. The equality objectives and proposed key actions have been subject to consultation. Responses to the consultation have been used to shape actions under each of the objectives as set out. The three equality objectives together with their key actions are set out here:

Objective 1: Improving customer and resident insight for service planning and delivery purposes

Our aim is to collect more equalities data and undertake more analysis by relevant protected characteristic to deepen our customer insight and improve services as required.

Actions – we will:

- Establish a more consistent approach to equalities data collection by mapping equalities monitoring data collected and evidence base in relevant service areas.
- Use consultation and engagement activity to collect more local information relating to residents with protected characteristics and analyse by characteristic where appropriate.
- Review Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) form and guidance.
- Increase the diversity of our Citizens panel.
- Undertake a light touch review of the Equality Panel.
- Consider the benefits of running a Residents Survey (random sample) to gain perceptions and satisfaction with a larger and more representative sample of residents.
- Consider establishing an email subscribe service for equality and engagement to support information sharing and awareness.
- Analyse hate incident reports over last three years by protected characteristic.

Objective 2: Providing leadership and organisational commitment to actively promote equalities

This aim has two key elements. The first takes forward how we work across our services and with partners to provide leadership, promote equalities and take account of equality considerations in our decisions. The second is about celebrating diversity and marking events.

Actions – we will:

- Conduct equality assessment awareness training for managers to support evidence-based decision-making.
- Review whether equality information provided to decisions-makers is sufficient to demonstrate due regard.
- Refresh the Equality and Diversity action plan every two years and publish an annual report.
- Provide regular equality training for councillors to raise awareness and reflect our values.
- Consider establishing an internal equalities group to consider best practice, share learning and to report to the senior management team as required.
- Review monitoring arrangements for website accessibility and compliance with the Accessibility Regulations and consider further improvements.
- Proactively promote recognised dates that celebrate diversity and support inclusion through our website and social media such as:
 - International Women's Day
 - Pride
 - National Day for Disabled People
 - Carers Week
 - Older People's Day
 - International Youth Day
 - Race Equality Week
 - International Men's Day

- Review published equalities data so it is consistent with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) reporting obligations.
- Consider publishing EIAs or summary version.
- Refresh our Consultation Policy.

Objective 3: Ensuring a diverse and engaged workforce

Our aim is for all employees and councillors to support equality through their actions and behaviour to provide the best services that we can deliver to our communities. We recognise that our workforce is our most valuable asset and we are committed to supporting and promoting equalities in our workforce policies and processes and to engage positively with our employees.

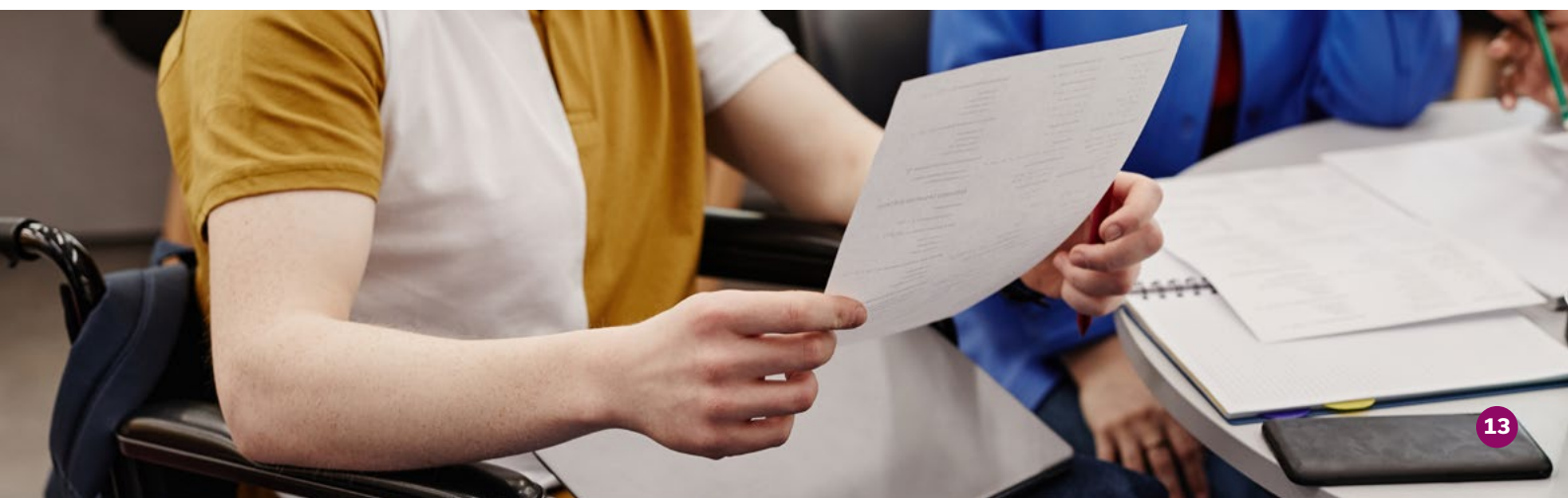
Actions – we will:

- Improve workforce equality data collection so that we have improved and reliable workforce information to inform workforce policies.
- Review and refresh workforce policies, processes and practices to ensure they support equalities, diversity and inclusion.
- Provide regular equality training for staff to raise awareness and reflect our values.
- Provide specialist training to support equality where required or identified e.g. dementia awareness, deaf awareness, mental health awareness.
- Consider how best to increase diversity in predominately single sex work teams to maximise recruitment potential and trial possible solutions e.g. job share, change in working hours.
- Gather recruitment and employment equalities information and monitor to ensure our policies are working.
- Use workforce planning to support workforce diversity and business continuity plans.
- Review our approach to employee engagement to ensure that it is accessible, inclusive and regular.
- Develop our workforce development programme that takes account of different needs and also promotes equalities, diversity and inclusion as being at the heart of what we do.
- Build on our workforce Health and Wellbeing programme offer based on workforce feedback and national good practice.

How we will manage our progress

Progress against the corporate equality objectives will be reviewed on a quarterly basis under our performance monitoring arrangements with information being published annually on our website.

Actions arising from equality impact assessments and/or analysis of equality information from other work such as consultation or satisfaction surveys will be included as tasks within service plans and monitored as part of our performance framework.



Responsibilities for equality

We are committed to equalities and have a structure in place for the continued embedding and scrutiny of equalities, from departmental to Cabinet level. The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance (and Deputy Leader) has the equalities portfolio, as does one Assistant Director.

Senior managers and managers

All Heads of Service and managers have a key role in creating a workplace environment where unlawful discrimination, harassment and bullying are not tolerated. All managers are responsible for ensuring that our equality commitments and the requirements of this plan are embedded within their teams and service delivery. All managers support the corporate equality objectives and identify and undertake service level equality actions.

Employees

Employees have a key role in promoting equality. Employees should understand the relevance and importance of equality to their roles, be committed to delivering excellent services shaped by the needs of different people, and report any equality issues to their managers.

The Performance Team provides support

for equality impact assessments, monitors and delivers some of the actions under the corporate equality objectives and equality actions from service plans and monitors and updates the Equality Plan. They also support the collection and publication of equality information.

The team also administers the Equality Panel which consists of a small group of residents with an interest in equalities. The panel meets three times per year and helps us alongside other mechanisms to meet our statutory equality duties to involve and consult with individuals and interest groups. They support the scrutiny of some of our Equality Impact Assessments, which are a tool for driving service improvements. They also provide feedback on their experience of our services and living in the District, and on some of our documents too.

Councillors

The support of councillors in the development of a fairer Bolsover District and in the achievement of the corporate equality objectives is essential. Councillors have a vital community leadership role in relation to equality and in engaging with communities and acting as conduits for community information.

How we will cascade this information

The Equality Plan and objectives for 2023-2027 will be communicated to staff through team meetings, the intranet and equality awareness training. Councillors will receive information about the Equality Plan

and objectives as part of their induction programme in 2023 and subsequent Member Briefings. The Equality Plan and objectives will also be published on our website for members of the public to view.