NHS

Workforce Diversity Report

2025/26

Our workforce at 31 March 2026

This report describes the diversity of our workforce using 894 employee records held at 31 March 2026. It explains what the information tells us, where information is incomplete and the areas on which we will continue to focus.

894	813.9	80.0%	8.7%	9.4%	3.5%
people	full-time equivalent	female	BME	disabled	gay, lesbian or bisexual

Accessibility statement

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About this report

Item	Detail
Reporting period	1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026
Snapshot date	31 March 2026
Data source	NHS Electronic Staff Record workforce extract
Measure	Headcount, with total FTE shown separately
Workforce covered	894 employee records
Publication purpose	Annual public workforce equality information

Introduction

NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board was established on 1 July 2022 under the Health and Care Act 2022. The ICB plans and commissions NHS services for around 1.8 million people living across Lancashire and South Cumbria.

This report provides a snapshot of the diversity of our workforce at 31 March 2026. It forms part of our commitment to transparency and supports our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty to publish equality information each year.

The report covers age, disability, marriage and civil partnership, ethnicity, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. Information about gender reassignment and pregnancy and maternity has not been included because suitable aggregate information was not available for safe and meaningful public reporting.

Workforce statistics do not tell us everything about people's experiences. We therefore use this information alongside staff feedback, recruitment and progression information, workforce equality standards, pay-gap reporting and equality impact assessments. Together, these sources help us identify barriers and target improvement.

Confidentiality and choice

Sharing equality information is voluntary. We respect every colleague's choice. Information is reported in aggregate and small numbers are grouped where necessary to reduce the risk of identifying individuals.

Our workforce at a glance

Measure	2025/26 position	Change or context
Headcount	894	28 fewer records than 31 March 2025
Full-time equivalent	813.9	Calculated from the supplied workforce records
Female	80.0%	79.3% in 2024/25
Male	20.0%	20.7% in 2024/25
Disabled	9.4%	7.3% in 2024/25
BME	8.7%	7.5% in 2024/25
Aged 36 to 60	75.5%	Largest part of the age profile
Gay, lesbian or bisexual	3.7%	3.3% in 2024/25
Part time	28.7%	257 employee records
Permanent contract	96.4%	862 employee records

Headline messages

- The workforce remains predominantly female.
- Recorded BME and disabled representation has increased compared with the previous report.
- Equality data is most complete for age and sex, and relatively complete for ethnicity.
- Disclosure gaps remain substantial for disability, religion or belief and sexual orientation.
- The workforce is concentrated in middle and later career age groups.
- Representation varies across pay-band groupings, so overall percentages should not be viewed in isolation.

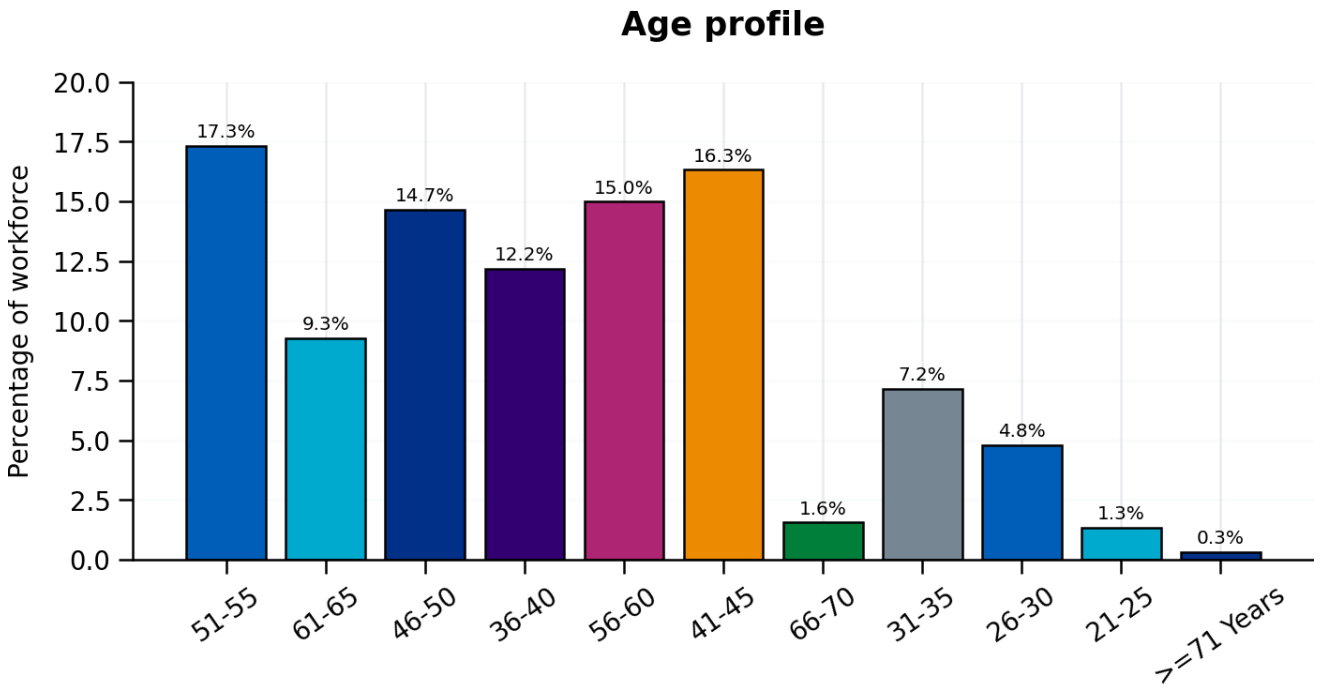
Understanding the data

The analysis uses 894 staff records from the NHS Electronic Staff Record. Each demographic characteristic has been reconciled to the same total. Percentages are rounded to one decimal place, so totals may not always add to exactly 100.0%.

Important points when reading this report

- A recorded characteristic reflects the information held in ESR at the snapshot date.
- “Not declared”, “prefer not to answer”, “not stated”, “unspecified” and blank records are shown because they affect how confidently the information can be interpreted.
- A higher recorded percentage may reflect changes in the workforce, changes in disclosure or both.
- Small groups may be combined in public tables to protect confidentiality.
- The grouped term “BME” is retained because it appears in the source data. More detailed ethnicity categories should be used where the numbers allow safe and meaningful reporting.

Age



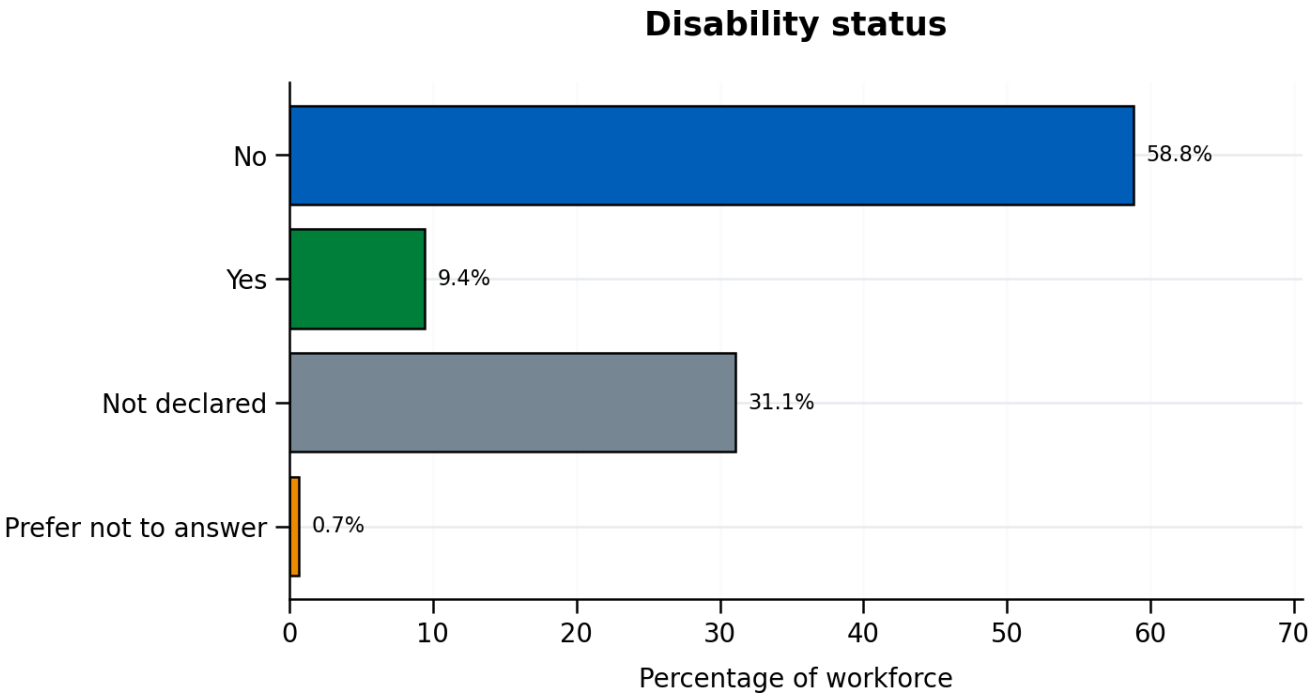
Age band	Headcount	Percentage
21-25	12	1.3%
26-30	43	4.8%
31-35	64	7.2%
36-40	109	12.2%
41-45	146	16.3%
46-50	131	14.7%
51-55	155	17.3%
56-60	134	15.0%
61-65	83	9.3%
66-70	14	1.6%
>=71 Years	3	0.3%
Total	894	100.0%

The largest age group is 51 to 55, representing 17.3% of staff. Overall, 75.5% of staff are aged 36 to 60, 26.2% are aged 56 and over, and 6.2% are aged 30 or under.

What this means

The age profile reinforces the importance of succession planning, knowledge transfer and accessible routes into the organisation for younger people, while continuing to value the skills and experience of colleagues at every career stage.

Disability



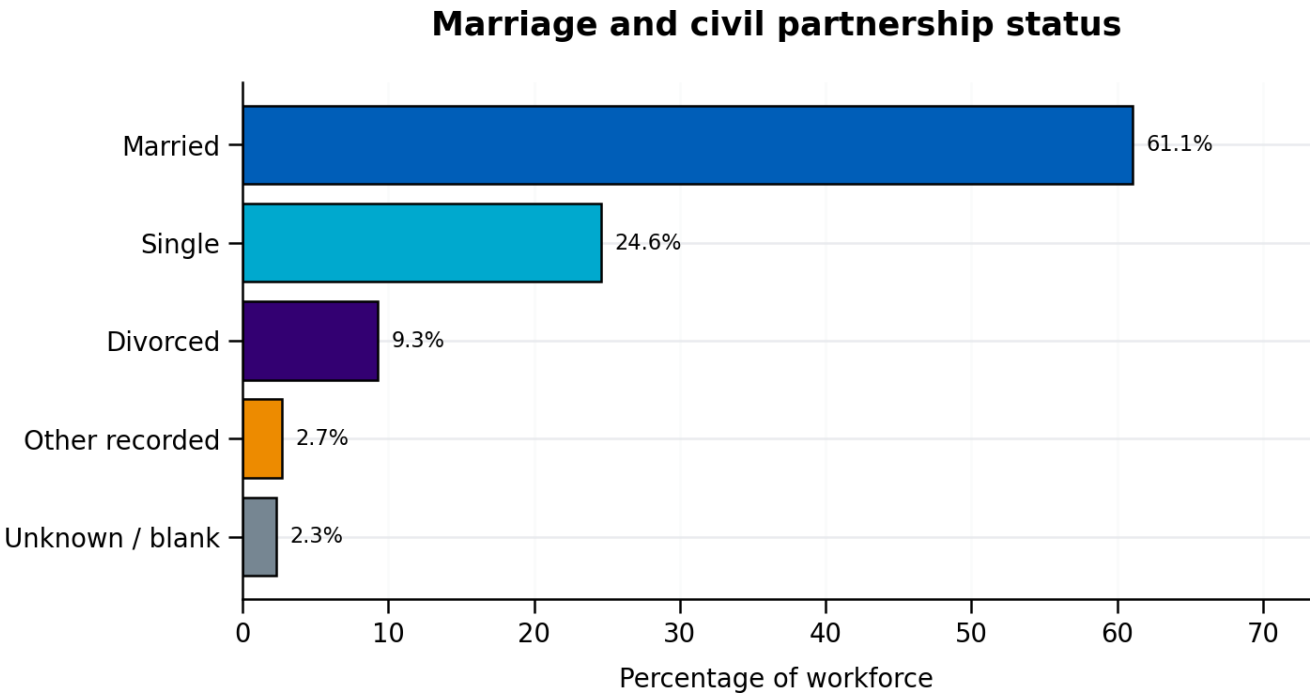
Disability status	Headcount	Percentage	2024/25
No	526	58.8%	50.4%
Yes	84	9.4%	7.3%
Not declared	278	31.1%	Included in 42.3% unknown
Prefer not to answer	6	0.7%	Included in 42.3% unknown
Total	894	100.0%	100.0%

A total of 84 colleagues, 9.4% of the workforce, are recorded as disabled. This is higher than the 7.3% reported in 2024/25. However, the disability status of 31.8% of colleagues is not declared or is recorded as prefer not to answer. This means the recorded figure is unlikely to provide a complete picture.

Why declaration matters

Better information helps us understand representation and staff experience, assess whether workplace support is reaching people equitably and plan improvements. It must be supported by trust, confidentiality and timely access to reasonable adjustments.

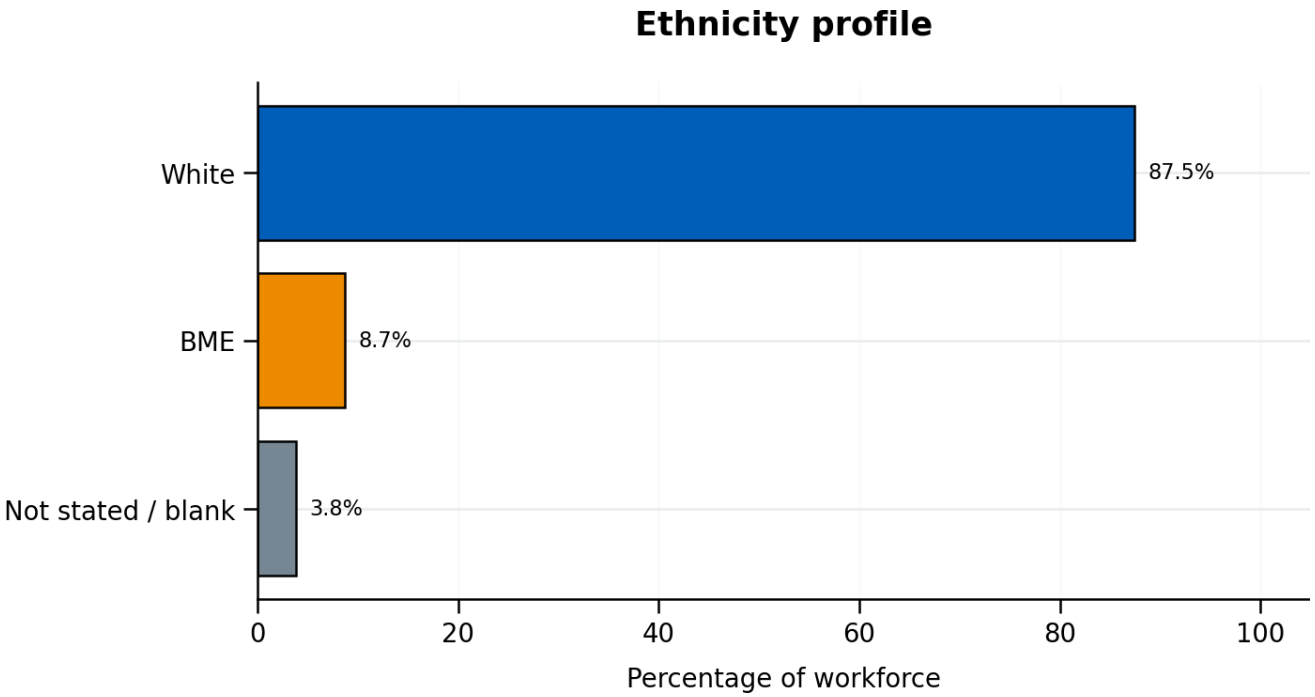
Marriage and civil partnership



Recorded status	Headcount	Percentage
Married	546	61.1%
Single	220	24.6%
Divorced	83	9.3%
Civil partnership	8	0.9%
Legally separated	7	0.8%
Widowed	9	1.0%
Unknown or blank	21	2.3%
Total	894	100.0%

Marriage and civil partnership is protected under the Equality Act 2010 in relation to employment. The information is presented to describe the workforce profile. It should not be used to infer caring responsibilities, family circumstances or working preferences.

Ethnicity



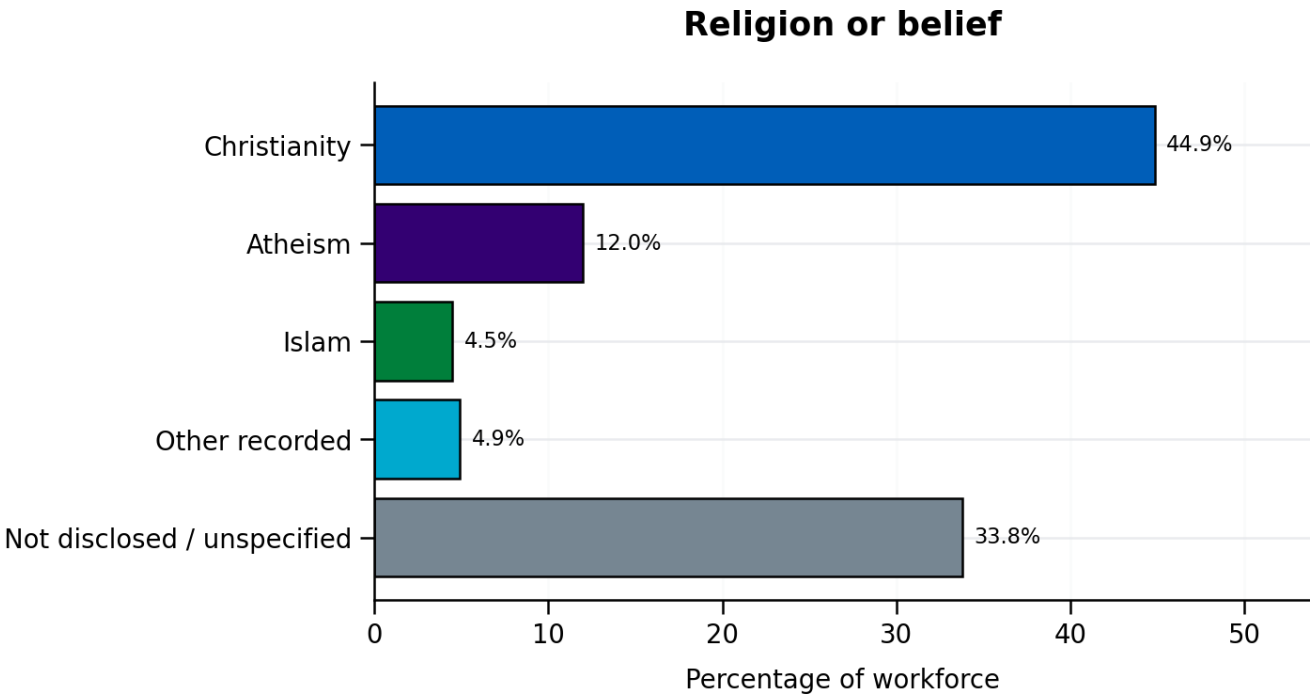
Ethnicity group	Headcount	Percentage	2024/25
White	782	87.5%	87.0%
BME	78	8.7%	7.5%
Not stated	23	2.6%	Included in 5.5% undeclared
Blank	11	1.2%	Included in 5.5% undeclared
Total	894	100.0%	100.0%

BME colleagues represent 8.7% of the workforce, compared with 7.5% in the previous report. The proportion of not-stated and blank records is 3.8%, compared with 5.5% undeclared in 2024/25. The overall figure does not show whether representation is consistent across job levels or functions.

Local context

The previous annual report recorded that 12.3% of the Lancashire and South Cumbria population was from an ethnically diverse group. On that comparison, BME colleagues remain under-represented in the ICB workforce overall.

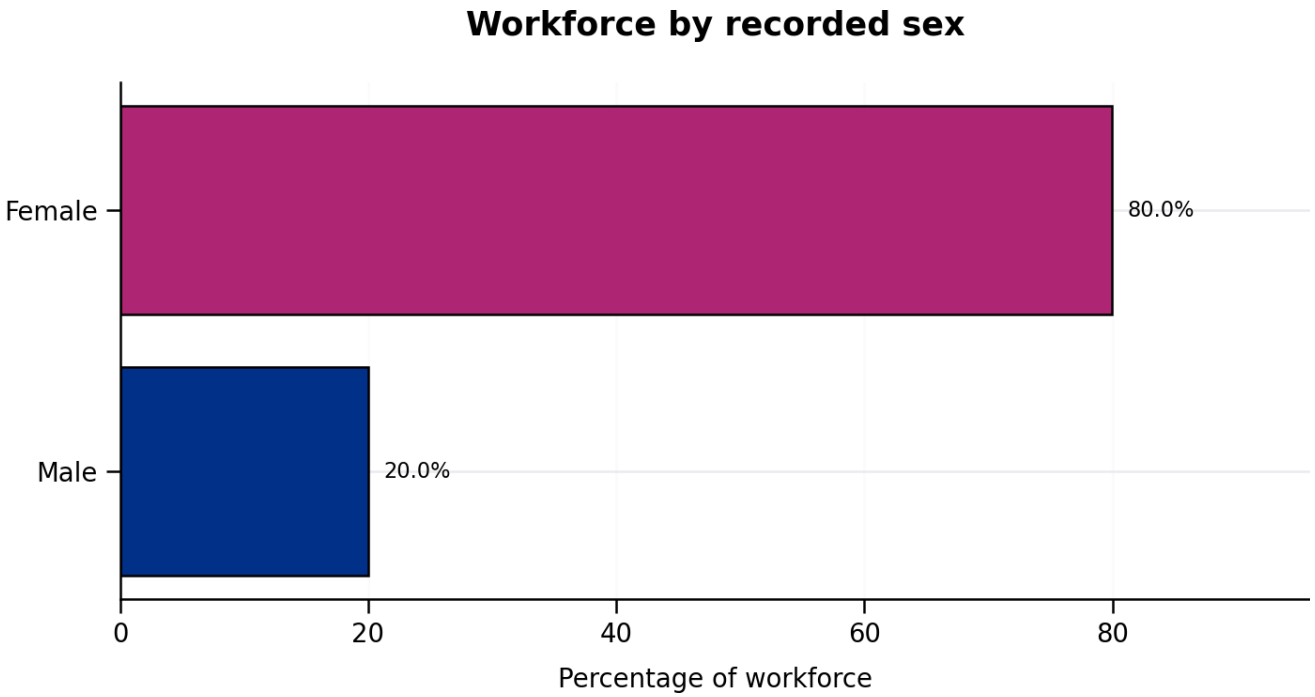
Religion or belief



Religion or belief	Headcount	Percentage
Christianity	401	44.9%
Atheism	107	12.0%
Islam	40	4.5%
Other recorded beliefs	44	4.9%
Do not wish to disclose	261	29.2%
Unspecified	41	4.6%
Total	894	100.0%

Christianity is the largest recorded religion or belief group, followed by atheism and Islam. One third of records, 33.8%, are either not disclosed or unspecified. This limits detailed comparison and reinforces the need to explain clearly why equality information is collected and how it is protected.

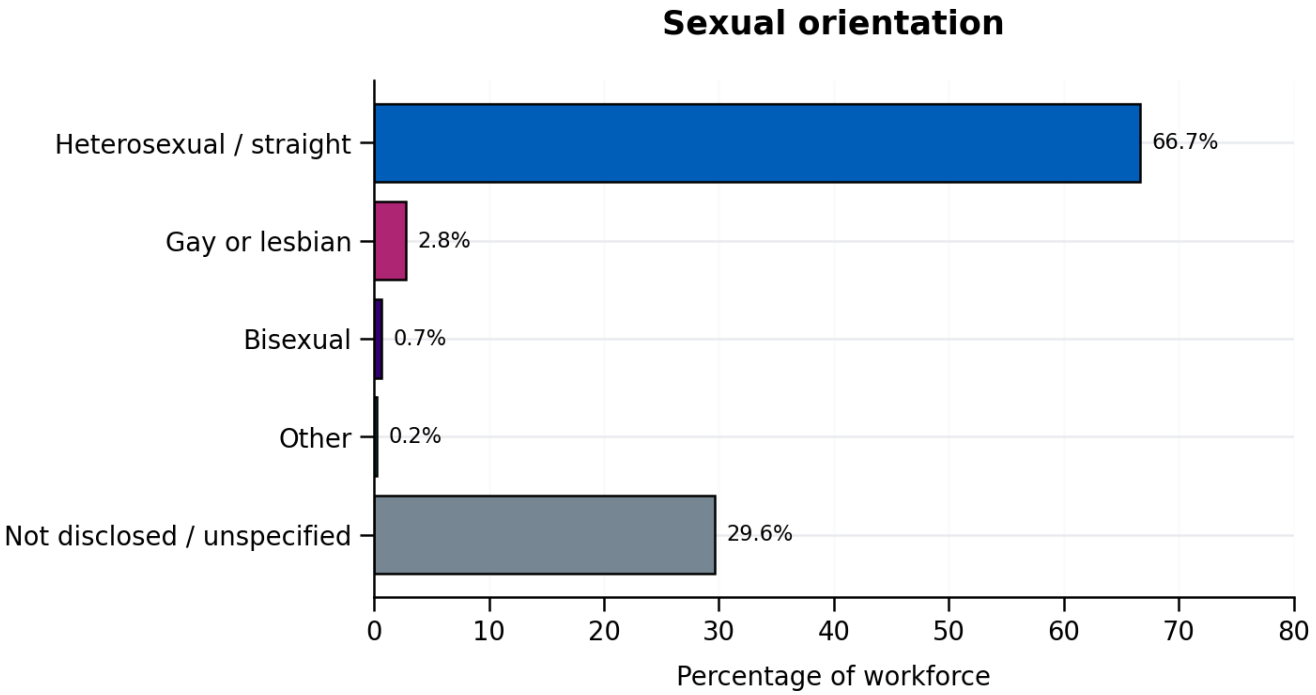
Sex



Recorded sex	Headcount	Percentage	2024/25
Female	715	80.0%	79.3%
Male	179	20.0%	20.7%
Total	894	100.0%	100.0%

Women make up 80.0% of the ICB workforce and men 20.0%. This is a small increase in the proportion of women compared with 2024/25. Overall representation should be considered alongside seniority, working pattern, recruitment, progression and pay data.

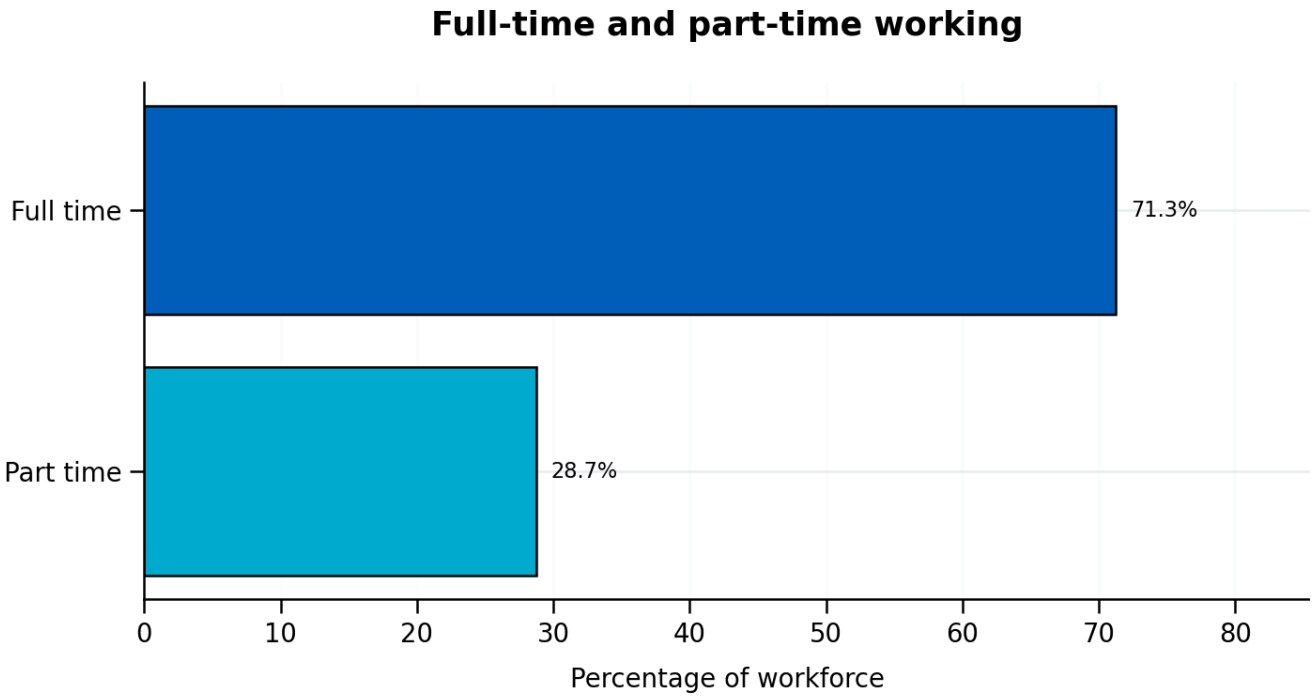
Sexual orientation



Sexual orientation	Headcount	Percentage
Heterosexual or straight	596	66.7%
Gay or lesbian	25	2.8%
Bisexual	6	0.7%
Other sexual orientation	2	0.2%
Asked but declined	226	25.3%
Unspecified	39	4.4%
Total	894	100.0%

Gay, lesbian and bisexual colleagues account for 3.7% of the workforce. A further 29.6% of records are declined or unspecified, compared with 34.2% reported as not declared in 2024/25. Although this represents improved completeness, the remaining gap is still substantial.

Working patterns and contracts



Working pattern	Headcount	Percentage
Full time	637	71.3%
Part time	257	28.7%
Total	894	100.0%

Contract type	Headcount	Percentage
Permanent	862	96.4%
Fixed-term temporary	30	3.4%
Non-executive director or Chair	2	0.2%
Total	894	100.0%

Working patterns should be considered alongside sex, disability, age and caring responsibilities. Flexible and part-time working can help colleagues balance work with health, family and other commitments, but access to development and progression should remain equitable.

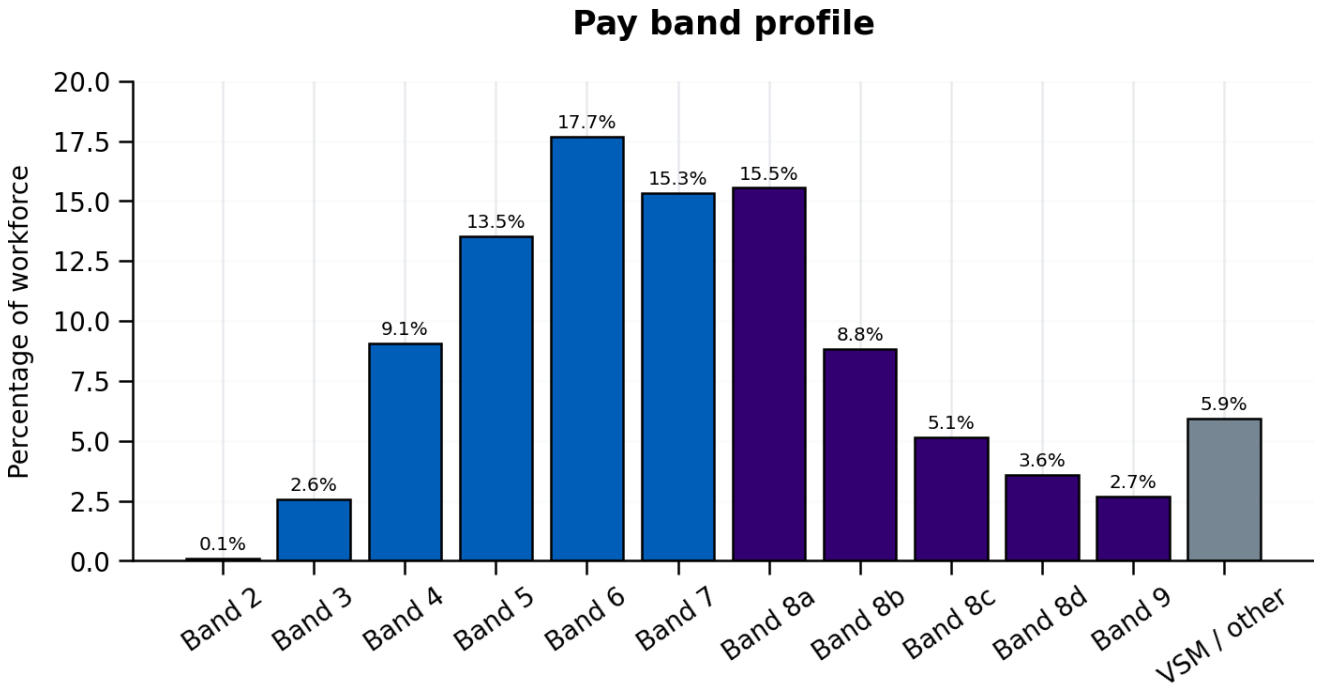
Length of service and staff groups

Length of service	Headcount	Percentage
Less than 1 year	59	6.6%
1 to under 5 years	568	63.5%
5 to under 10 years	148	16.6%
10 to under 15 years	119	13.3%
Total	894	100.0%

Staff group	Headcount	Percentage
Administrative and Clerical	576	64.4%
Nursing and Midwifery Registered	204	22.8%
Add Prof Scientific and Technic	80	8.9%
Medical and Dental	31	3.5%
Allied Health Professionals	3	0.3%
Total	894	100.0%

Most staff, 63.5%, have between one and under five years of service in the dataset. Administrative and clerical roles form the largest staff group, accounting for 64.4% of records.

Representation across pay bands



Pay-band grouping	Headcount	Percentage
Bands 1-4	105	11.7%
Bands 5-7	416	46.5%
Bands 8a-9	320	35.8%
Non-AfC / other	53	5.9%

Pay-band grouping	Headcount	Percentage
Total	894	100.0%

The largest grouping is Bands 5 to 7, followed by Bands 8a to 9. The following tables provide a high-level view of sex, disability and ethnicity within each grouping. They should be interpreted cautiously where group sizes or undeclared information affect the comparisons.

Sex by pay-band grouping

Pay-band grouping	Female	Male
Bands 1-4	87.6%	12.4%
Bands 5-7	84.9%	15.1%
Bands 8a-9	75.9%	24.1%
Non-AfC / other	50.9%	49.1%

Disability by pay-band grouping

Pay-band grouping	Yes	No	Not Declared	Prefer Not To Answer
Bands 1-4	14.3%	56.2%	28.6%	1.0%
Bands 5-7	10.1%	56.7%	32.2%	1.0%
Bands 8a-9	7.5%	65.0%	27.2%	0.3%
Non-AfC / other	5.7%	43.4%	50.9%	0.0%

Ethnicity by pay-band grouping

Pay-band grouping	BME	White	Not Stated	Blank
Bands 1-4	5.7%	94.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Bands 5-7	9.9%	87.0%	1.9%	1.2%
Bands 8a-9	6.9%	88.1%	3.4%	1.6%
Non-AfC / other	17.0%	73.6%	7.5%	1.9%

Men represent 24.1% of Bands 8a to 9 and 49.1% of the non-AfC or other grouping, compared with 20.0% of the workforce overall. BME colleagues represent 6.9% of Bands 8a to 9, compared with 8.7% overall. Disabled colleagues represent 7.5% of Bands 8a to 9, compared with 9.4% overall. These patterns warrant continued monitoring alongside recruitment, progression and pay information.

A note on interpretation

These figures show distribution, not cause. They do not establish that any individual process or decision was unfair. More detailed analysis and staff experience evidence are needed to understand the reasons for differences.

Applications and recruitment

The ICB continued to pause most recruitment activity during 2025/26 because of financial pressures and the organisational change anticipated through NHS reforms. Limited recruitment was undertaken for essential roles only. The available data records 62 applicants, of whom four were shortlisted. None progressed to interview; all four shortlisted applicants are recorded in the category “Interview: Rejected”.

What the information tells us

Theme	What we can see
Representation	Recorded BME and disabled representation is higher than in the previous annual report, although both remain below the local population comparisons used in that report.
Data quality	Ethnicity data is relatively complete. Disability, religion or belief and sexual orientation still have substantial disclosure gaps.
Age	The workforce is concentrated in middle and later career groups, with limited representation at age 30 and under.
Seniority	Representation differs across pay-band groupings. Men are more prominent in the most senior non-AfC or other grouping, while BME and disabled representation is lower in Bands 8a to 9 than in the workforce overall.
Working patterns	Almost three in ten employee records are part time. Equality of access to development and progression should be monitored across working patterns.
Organisational change	The workforce is smaller than in the previous report. Equality evidence should continue to inform workforce change and post-change review.

Our priorities for 2026/27

Priority	What we will focus on
Improve equality information	Explain why information is collected, how it is protected and how it informs improvements, with particular focus on disability, religion or belief and sexual orientation.
Understand representation at every level	Continue analysis by pay band, function, staff group and working pattern, using appropriate small-number controls.
Monitor workforce journeys	Review recruitment, shortlisting, appointment, progression, employee relations, retention and leaving outcomes by protected characteristic.
Strengthen disability inclusion	Improve the consistency and timeliness of reasonable adjustments and use staff feedback to identify barriers.
Support fair progression	Use structured and inclusive recruitment, fair assessment, targeted development, mentoring and sponsorship to widen access to senior opportunities.

Priority	What we will focus on
Build future workforce routes	Consider apprenticeships, work experience and early-career opportunities to broaden the age profile and create accessible entry routes.
Listen and respond	Work with staff networks and colleagues to test the interpretation of data and co-design practical action.
Embed equality during change	Continue to assess and monitor the equality impact of organisational change and workforce decisions.

Our commitment

We will continue to publish workforce equality information, be open about areas where progress is needed and use evidence and staff voice to support a fair, inclusive and respectful workplace.

Appendix: detailed data and notes

Data completeness

Characteristic	Unknown, declined or unspecified	Percentage
Age	0	0.0%
Sex	0	0.0%
Ethnicity	34	3.8%
Sexual orientation	265	29.6%
Disability	284	31.8%
Religion or belief	302	33.8%

Year-on-year headline comparison

Measure	31 March 2025	31 March 2026	Change
Headcount	922	894	-28
Female	79.3%	80.0%	+0.7 percentage points
Male	20.7%	20.0%	-0.7 percentage points
Disabled	7.3%	9.4%	+2.1 percentage points
BME	7.5%	8.7%	+1.2 percentage points
Disability unknown / declined	42.3%	31.8%	-10.5 percentage points
Sexual orientation unknown / declined	34.2%	29.6%	-4.6 percentage points

Publication notes

- Source: NHS Electronic Staff Record workforce extract for 31 March 2026.
- Previous-year figures are taken from the published 2024/25 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report.
- Headcount is used unless otherwise stated.
- Percentages have been calculated from the supplied records and rounded to one decimal place.
- Small categories have been grouped in some public charts and tables to reduce identification risk.
- Recruitment-process figures are drawn from the available 2025/26 recruitment data and are reported separately from the workforce snapshot.