

Powys County Council

Strategic Equality Plan

2012 – 2016

Annual Monitoring Report 2012

1.0 Introduction

This is a progress report of the Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) for Powys County Council, providing information on how the local authority is meeting its requirements in relation to the **Equality Act 2010** and more specifically, the **Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011**.

The thrust of the report provides information therefore in terms of how well the organisation is fulfilling the general duty of the Equality Act 2010 in relation to the protected characteristics. The general duty states public sector organisations (such as the Council) must:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The protected characteristics include:

Race, Sex, Age, Religion and Belief, Sexuality, Pregnancy and Maternity, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership.

As well as the protected characteristics shown above, another issue to which the council will consider when meeting the general duty is in relation to **socio-economic status**. Research now shows, that most issues of inequality are underpinned by 'low socio-economic status'. When investigating issues of inequality, socio-economic status will therefore feature strongly in that process.

The Specific Duties in Wales

The purpose of the specific duties is to assist public bodies in their performance of the general duty. In Wales the specific duties are set by the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011, which cover the following:

- Setting Equality Objectives and publishing a Strategic Equality Plan
- Engaging with people in relation to the protected characteristics
- Collecting and publishing information relevant to compliance with the General Duty
- Carrying out Equality Impact Assessments and publishing the results
- Annual publishing of employment monitoring information
- Promoting knowledge and understanding of the General Duty amongst employees and addressing the training needs of its employees in relation to the General Duty
- Setting a gender pay equality objective where a gender pay difference is identified
- Establishing relevant conditions to meet the general duty in procurement processes

2.0 Collecting meaningful information

This section sets out the steps the authority has taken to identify and collect relevant information.

The starting point for effective Equality improvement work is data and evidence, this sits right at the heart of effective equality work enabling the work to be focused on the right things.

The council has undertaken extensive work in order to gather together meaningful data and evidence, to enable it to set effective Equality Objectives as part of meeting its legal duties to prepare a Strategic Equality Plan (SEP). The data will also be used for conducting equality impact assessments on relevant services, policies and decisions.

In order to do this effectively, different types of data were assembled and analysed, including the following:

2.1 Performance data

In order to continually improve, the council measures its performance using performance measures – these vary considerably and measure lots of different types of things. Some of the data can be broken down (disaggregated) to show how performance differs across the different protected characteristics.

The council was able to generate useful reports which considered disaggregated performance for Adult's Social Services, Children's Social Services and Education.

Gaps in performance data

There was no data that could be generated for gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity; as these categories are new in the legislation and information on these protected characteristics has not yet been collected by our services.

There was also less data available on religion and belief and sexuality, probably reflecting the fact that these characteristics carried less weight in the legislation until the introduction of the Equality 2010.

Improvements of performance data

The SEP commits the Council to improving its data in relation to equality under 'Objective 6 – Service and Employment Accessibility'. Here is a weblink to the plan <http://www.powys.gov.uk/index.php?id=12843&L=0>. Work on this has commenced during the past 12 months since the introduction on the SEP. This has included:

- Developing new universal equalities monitoring categories to be used across our services.
- Amendments to client monitoring databases – the services of the council collect information on people that access certain services, and this information is held on a database.
- Investigating what practices will need to be changed in order to generate more effective data and evidence.

2.2 Equality Impact Assessment work

Equality Impact Assessments are a technical process of assessing how effective services are at meeting the needs of people covered by the protected characteristics.

The Council has undertaken work on these for a number of years, and these provide valuable information for considering equality objectives. In considering these in the process of bringing together information, it highlighted the need to improve the practice of these, and this is contained under objective 6 - Service and Employment Accessibility, in the SEP.

A project is now underway (to complete in the autumn 2013) to conduct robust strategic 'service based' assessments on high impacting service areas, including:

- Adults Social Services
- Children's Social Services
- Education
- Leisure Services

This main goal of this assessment work is to improve the quality of assessments done on our services in order to better identify where there are areas for improvement in terms of equality. This will strengthen the Council's decision-making process, policy development and service planning.

2.3 Public online survey

The council undertook a public survey that was promoted to the Powys community. The 'How fair is Powys?' public consultation survey, was completed by **283 people** and provided valuable data and evidence about what the public perceived to be the main issues of inequality living and working in Powys. It asked questions such as, what do you consider to be the cause of inequality in Powys? To view the results of this survey, please go to <http://www.powys.gov.uk/index.php?id=12843&L=0>.

2.4 Equalities measurement framework

A national equalities measurement framework has been developed which provides a suite of measures for determining levels of equal life in British society between different types of people.

The measurement frameworks provides a benchmark therefore, by which judgements can be made as to whether issues of inequality are becoming better or worse. So, for example, educational attainment and life expectancy are two examples of what is measured, to see if this is going up or down for different types of people.

Although this information is generated at a national level, it is possible to obtain data which relates just to Powys, and so the Council's research officer obtained this raw data and produced a report which presents the Powys-specific data. This is very useful additional data for considering the most acute issues for setting equality objectives.

2.5 National research and strategies

There is significant national data and research generated on issues of inequality that was used to assist the council to ascertain what it should focus upon. For example, the round table discussions that took place at the How Fair is Powys public events were shaped around the key headings from the 'How Fair is Wales' report listed below.

The secondary data and evidence that was considered therefore included:

- **'How Fair is Britain? Research report, 2010, Equality and Human Rights Commission**
- **'How Fair is Wales?', 2011, Equality and Human Rights Commission,**
- **An Anatomy of Inequality in Britain, 2010, National Equality Panel**
- **An Anatomy of Inequality in Wales, 2011, Equality and Human Rights Commission**
- **The Powys One Plan Needs Assessment**
- **Sex and Power 2011, Equality And Human Rights Commission Report**
- **Human Rights Enquiry Report, Equality and Human Rights Report, 2008**
- **Travelling to a better future – A Gypsy and Traveller framework for Action and delivery plan, Welsh Government**
- **Hidden in Plain Sight. Enquiry into disability-related harassment**
- **Powys Hate crime and domestic abuse statistics**

2.6 How Fair is Powys? - Public engagement events

In order to have a robust rounded picture of the issues affecting people in Powys today, public engagement events were facilitated. This also enabled the council to meet its specific duty relating to 'engaging' the public when setting Equality Objectives.

There were two events organised, one in the north of the county (Newtown) and one in the south (Brecon), attended by over 100 people.

The council promoted the events and also targeted certain organisations and individuals with a connection to the protected characteristics, which also included making direct phone calls to a number of organisations. A significant amount of effort was deployed to raise awareness and encourage people to attend the events who represented the protected characteristics, and this was fruitful with an encouraging number of people who attended.

Delegates were given the opportunity to discuss issues on a number a key topic areas based upon the key categories contained in the 'How Fair Is Wales?' report. Issues were recorded individually on post-its and collected in at the end of each session. Round table facilitators also made notes and recorded further key points made.

A team of people – who had also been present at the events and involved in the round table discussion - analysed the post-it notes and additional comments, using the qualitative analysis technique of establishing 'key themes'. This basically meant that patterns emerge in what people have said that can be reported as 'themes'. For the full report on this, please go to <http://www.powys.gov.uk/index.php?id=12843&L=0>. The themes could then be taken forward to consider against other data and evidence.

3.0 The development of the objectives for the Strategic Equality Plan (SEP)

To develop the SEP effectively, the different types of information detailed in section 2, were carefully considered and weighed-up, to pinpoint issues to be taken forward as equality objectives. These are considered to be the most acute issues which emerged from a number of different data sources.

For example, children from low socio economic backgrounds underachieving within education, is a strong theme in the How Fair is Britain? report and the How Fair is Wales? report, this also featured strongly in round table discussions at the How Fair is Powys? engagement events, and it also came through as an issue from the evaluation of internal performance data and the public online survey. This meant that the council was confident this needed to feature as a key equality objective in the SEP. This basic methodology was used to clarify all the finalised ten objectives.

The issues were then discussed internally with the various senior officers in charge of particular services to consider what was achievable, and out of this, equality objectives were then finalised. The objectives also included the 'key steps' to making progress on those objectives over the following 4 year time span 2012-2016.

The draft plan was then put before the Council's cabinet for consideration and following this, a public consultation exercise was undertaken to ask people what they thought of what had been prepared.

The consensus of opinion from the public was very supportive of the objectives and that the plan was communicated well. Some people that responded, did however feel that there needed to be more detail in terms of specific actions, and without this, there was a concern that the organisation could not be held properly to account. Whilst these concerns were logical and fully understood, the organisation had good reasoning for designing the plan in this way, which will be addressed in the next section.

4.0 Embedding the SEP Objectives

The process of embedding high level organisational strategy aspirations and key objectives into the working fabric of the organisation is a challenging and complex process - particularly for a strategy of this nature, which cuts across many services of the organisation and seeks to tackle deep rooted issues. The step between adopting the plan - and making it happen - needs to be carefully considered, both when designing the plan and in terms of how it is taken forward.

Equality plans have also historically been a challenge to implement, often with extensive published action plans that do not get fully implemented. The Council is determined to make sure we get it right with this strategy, and so the plan was carefully designed in a way that would assist it to achieve. Experience has shown, that detailed action plans contained in equality plans in local government, can be counter-productive, by decreasing a sense of ownership and accountability at the service level - where things get implemented.

We decided to therefore take a better approach and agree with service areas the objectives and steps, leaving the detailed action planning to be undertaken by services in the business planning process. This process of 'embedding' has been happening over the past 12 months through various discussions and meetings to take forward work on the objectives over the following 3 years. As well as this embedding work, progress has however been made on a number of the objectives, and this will be reported more fully at some point in the financial year April 2013 – March 2014.

The SEP also has a 'monitoring matrix' contained within it that gives information on which services have the lead for different parts of the 10 objectives and the associated steps.

5.0 Employment Information

This section considers employment information for the workforce.

We have asked all of our employees to complete confidential equalities profiling information about themselves against the 9 protected characteristics, such as their ethnicity and whether they have a religious belief, for example. This was done through asking them to complete the information electronically within the confidential 'personal details' section of the Human Resources IT system, or by returning paper copies.

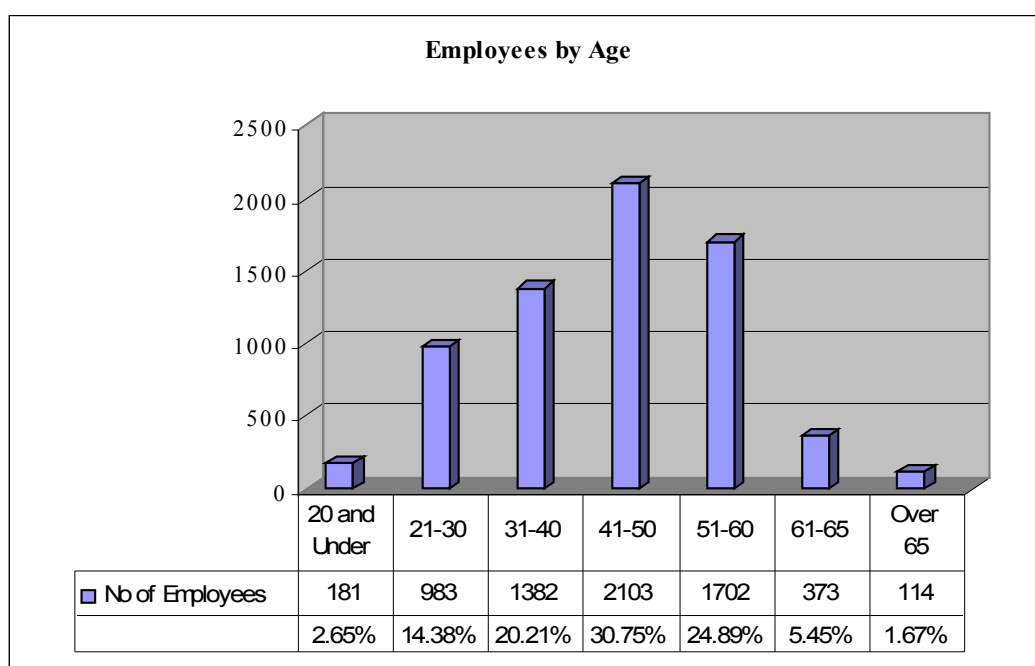
The information is then collected into one place and analysed against important factors; such what types of people are recruited, what levels people are in the organisation and whether certain types of people leave the organisation quicker than others.

This analysis will be useful in determining whether we have a fair and equitable organisation. The analysis follows:

1. Employees working for Powys County Council at 31/12/2012

This first section will consider the people who work for the council broken down by the protected characteristics.

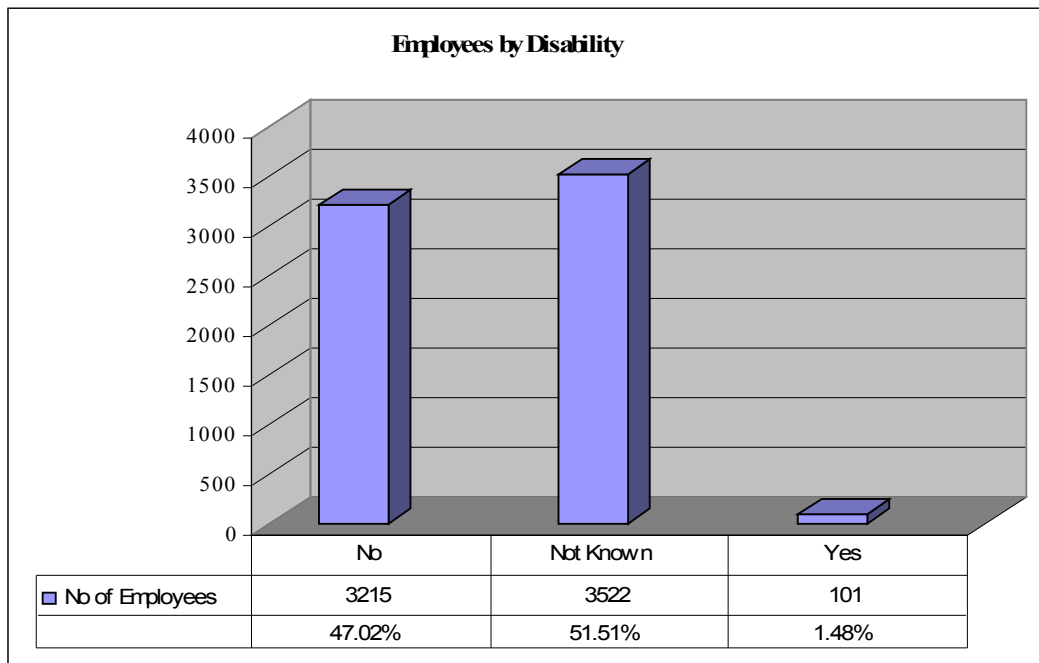
1.1 Age



The workforce spread shows a predominant weighting in the 41-50 year old age category, this generally reflects the census population bulge in this age category, with this tailing off significantly over 60 as expected with general patterns of retirement age.

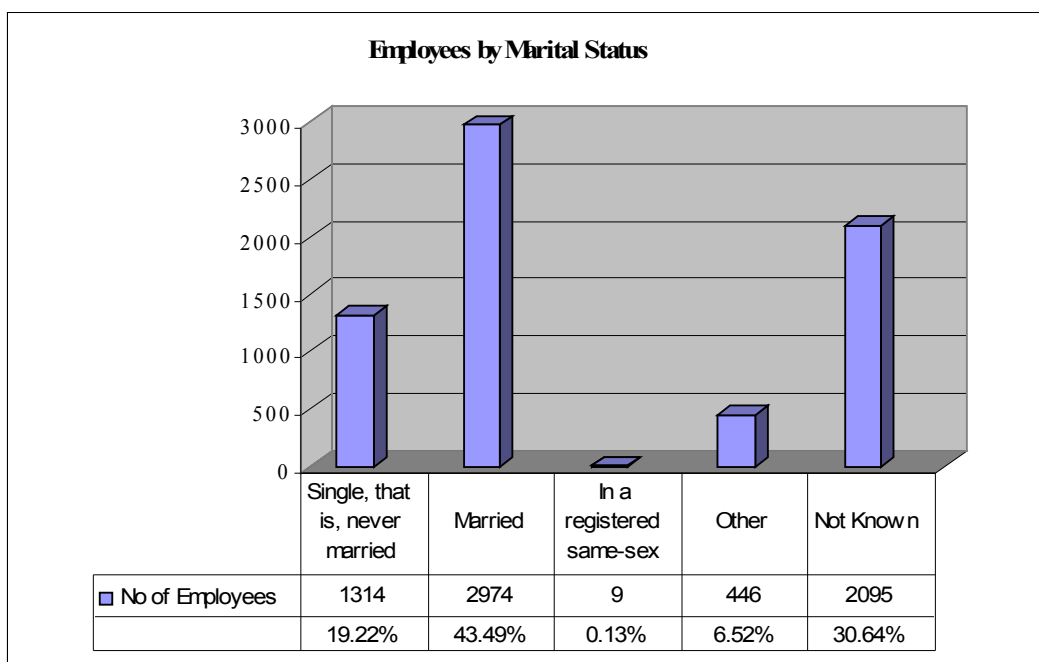
As there are complete statistics for this category, this will undergo further closer analysis against the census figures for Powys. In particular, the 31-40 and 21-30 and the over 60's may need to be further considered.

1.2 Disability



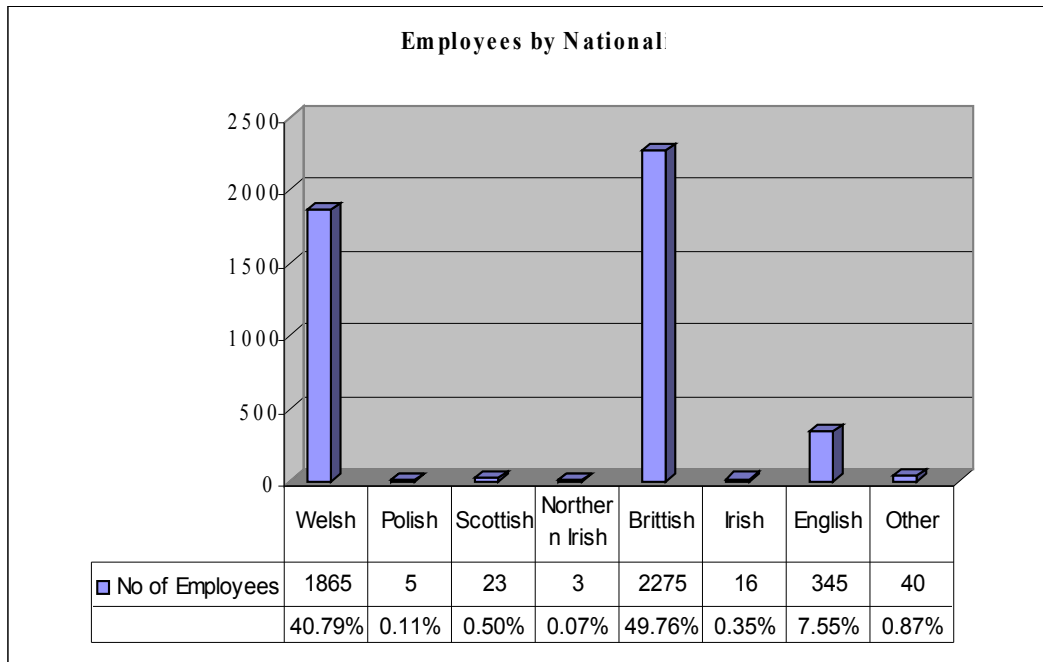
A large proportion of the workforce is currently not known, which makes it difficult to draw any real conclusions for lines of investigation. This gap of 3522 not known will need to be narrowed, this will be worked on over next 12 months.

1.3 Marital Status



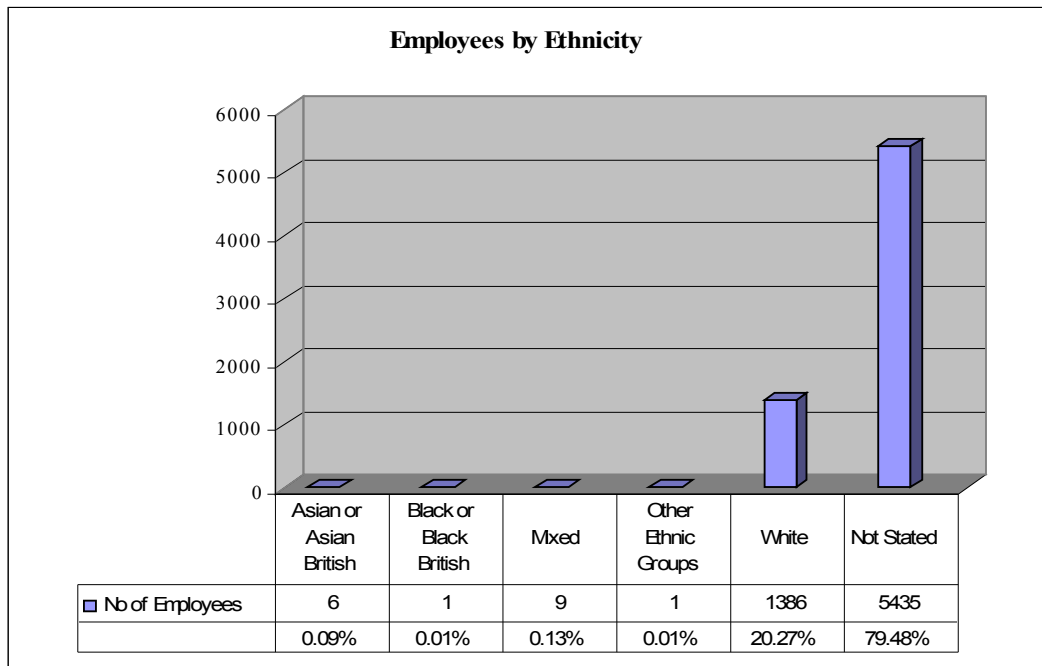
Although a large proportion are still unknown on this (30.64%), a large proportion of the workforce (43.9%) do declare as being married. People in registered same sex civil shows up as less than (0.13%). The gap here will need work also to narrow the gap.

1.4 Nationality



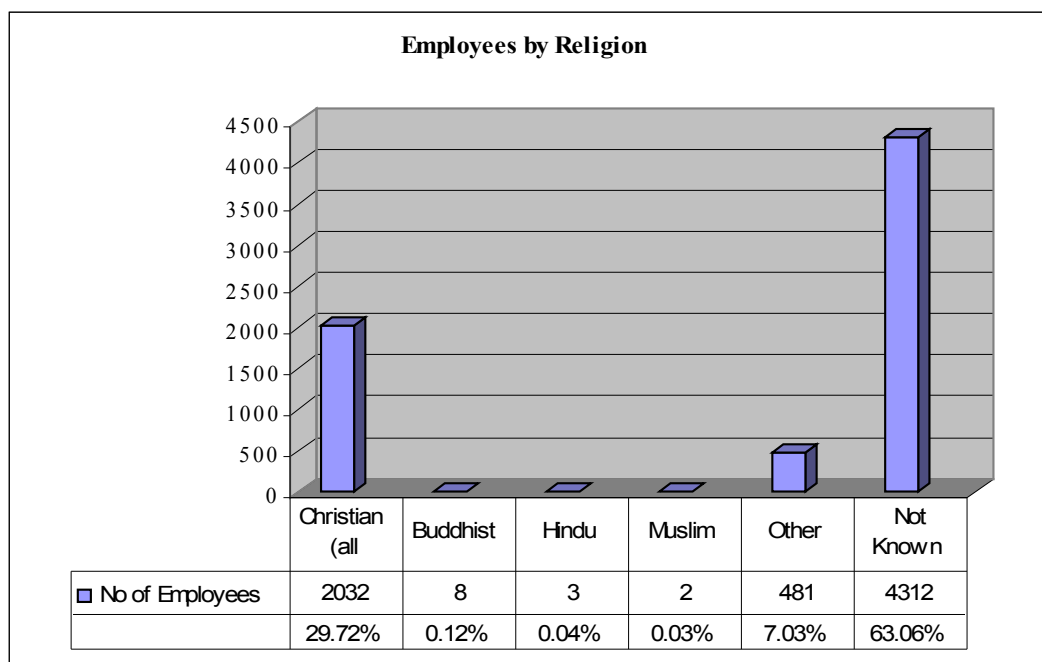
This clearly shows a large proportion of the workforce (40%) declaring their nationality as being 'Welsh', second only to 'British' at 49.76%.

1.5 Ethnicity



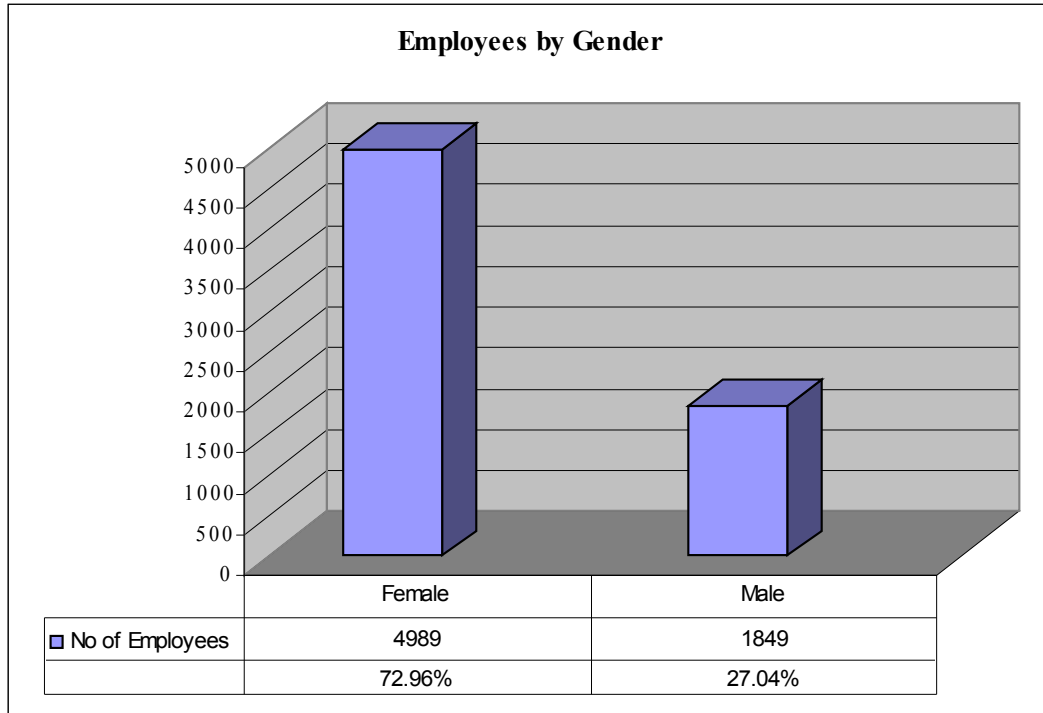
Only a very small amount of people have declared a non-white ethnicity, although there is still 80% as 'not stated' – this low figure will be targeted for improvement over the next 12 months to narrow this gap.

1.6 Religion



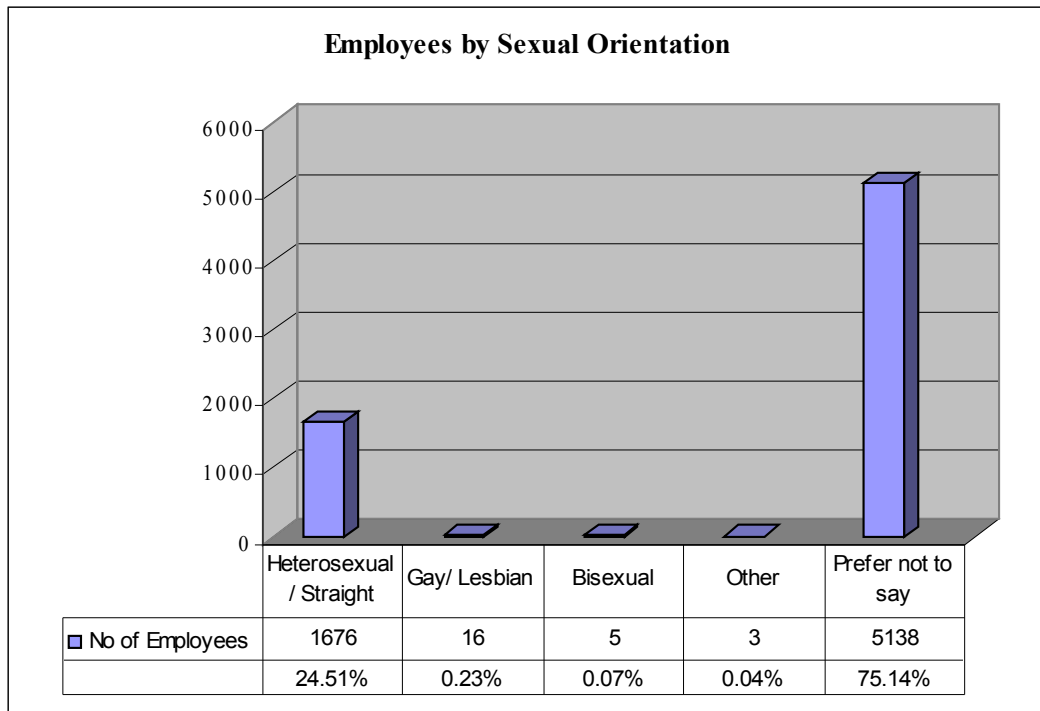
A high proportion of people have declared a religious belief of Christianity (29.72%). 4312 people are still unknown and this will be targeted for improvement.

1.7 Gender



The organisation is heavily weighted towards more women than men holding posts in the organisation – some of this reflects the fact that more women than men hold part-time positions and often more than one – which increases the overall figures. A project is underway as one of the strategic equality plan objectives, to investigate why this pattern of employment has developed.

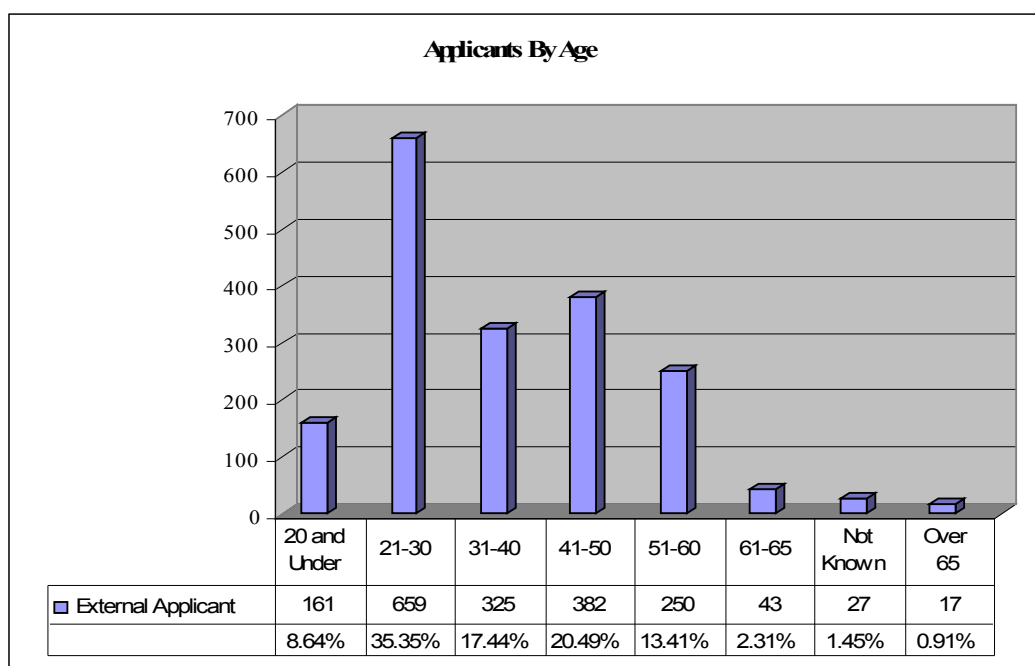
1.8 Sexual Orientation



This question has a high proportion of people selecting the 'prefer not to say' option, presenting therefore as 75% currently non-known.

2. External applicants for employment 01/04/2011-31/03/2012

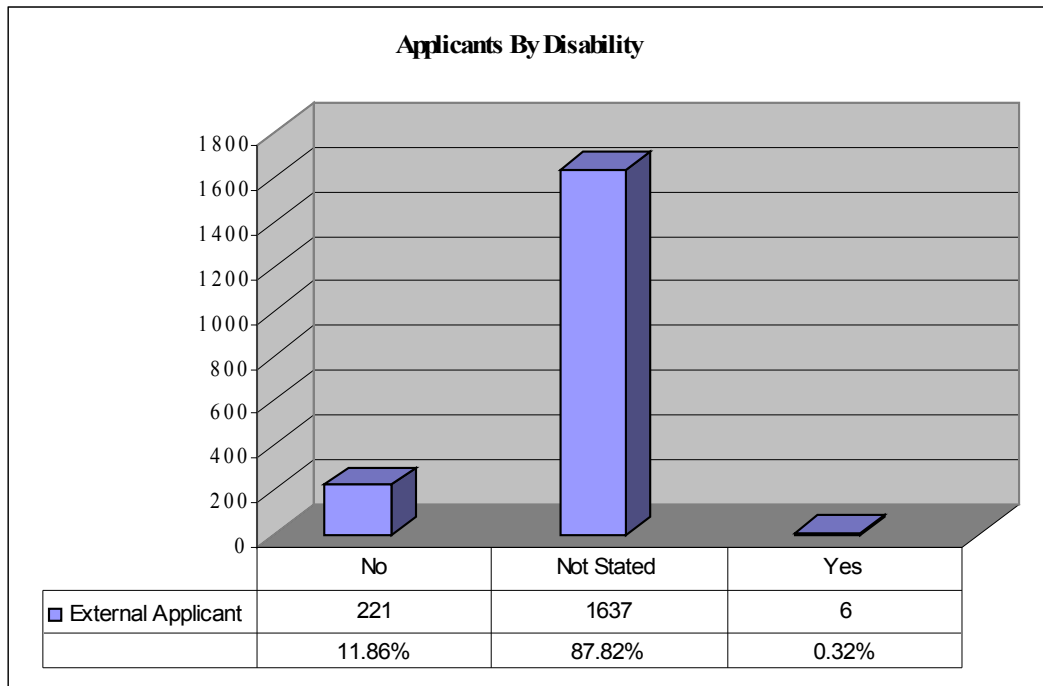
2.1 Age



Applicants for employment are predominantly in the 21-30 age category, with an even spread across the age ranges 31-40, 41-50, and 51-60. This needs to be analysed more closely against employment rate statistics to consider whether this is an unusual figure.

The figures for 20 and under are also very low, which is likely to reflect the fact that this age group tend to still be in education or training. This may however need to be investigated further, to consider whether this is connected to the types of employment being advertised or whether this age group is not attracted to council employment.

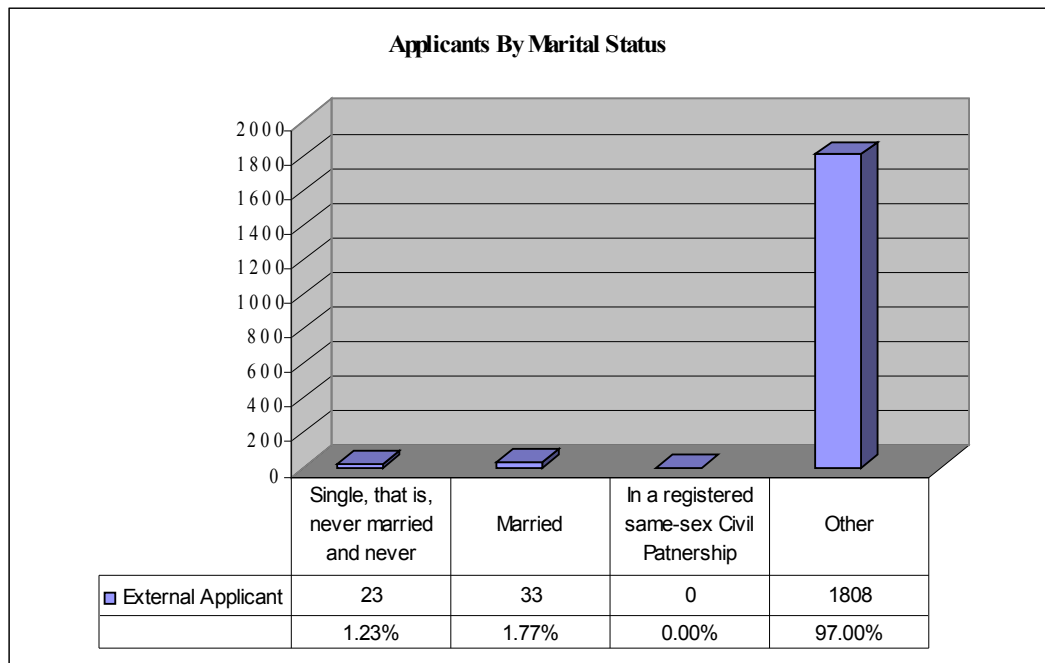
2.2 Disability



A very high proportion (88%) of applicants have not stated whether or not they have a disability. This figure is concerning with only 6 disclosing a disability. The gap of 'not stated' needs to therefore be narrowed-down.

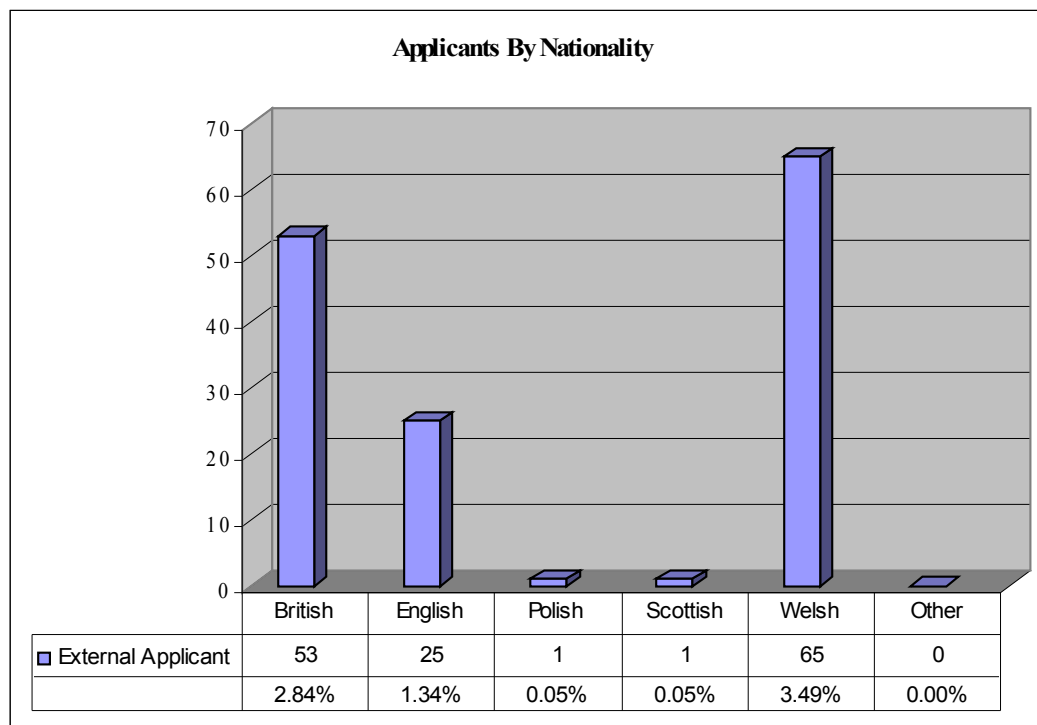
An objective within the strategic equality plan relates to investigating the recruitment process and this figure will be considered as part of that work.

2.3 Marital Status



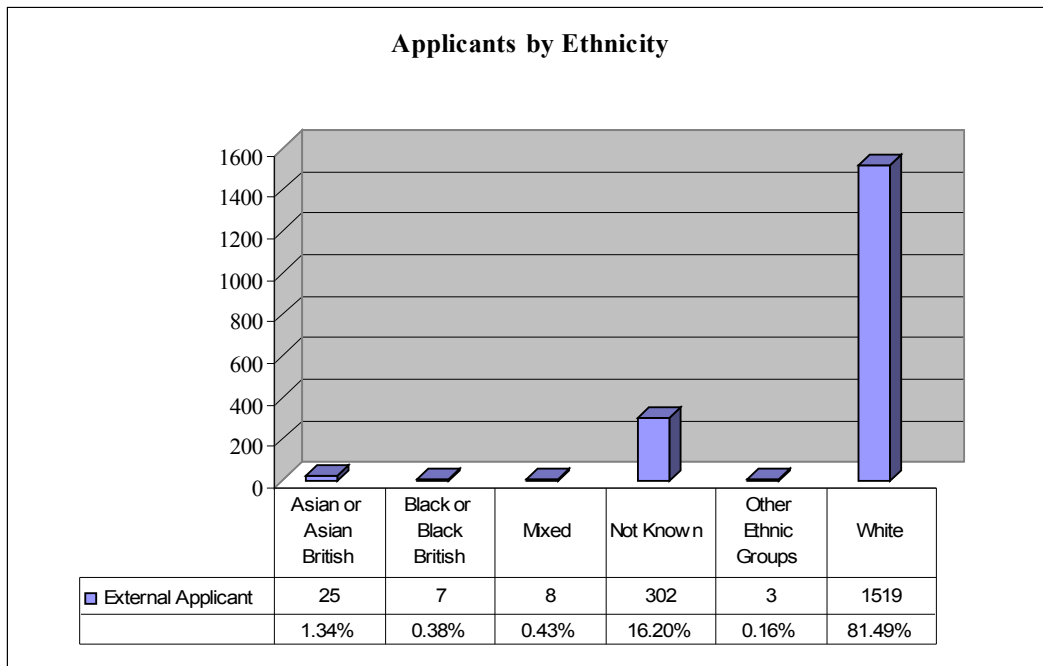
A large proportion of people have been selecting 'other' to this question. This will be considered to evaluate whether the question is being properly understood.

2.4 Nationality



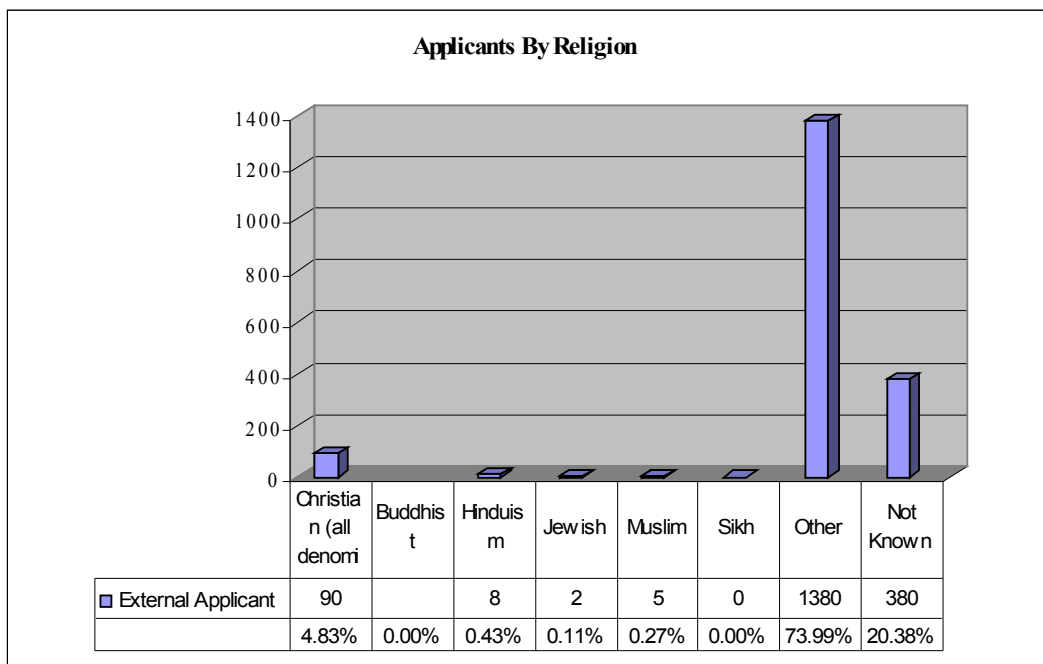
Applicants who answered this question are predominantly British or Welsh.

2.5 Ethnicity



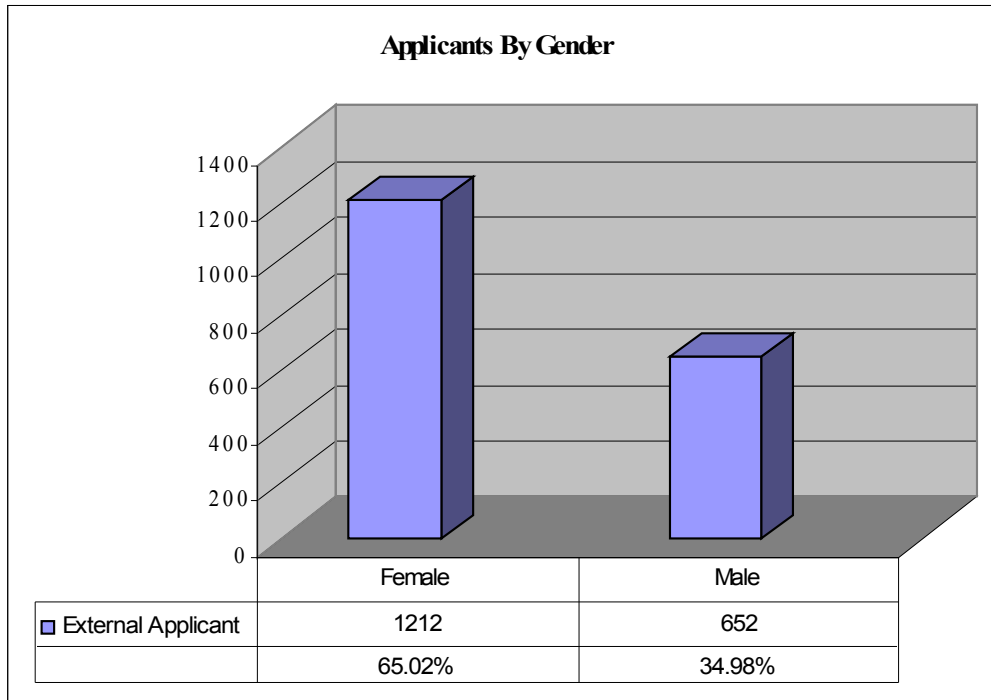
Applicants as expected are predominantly white, with roughly 2% from other ethnic groups. This compares to a census population of roughly 1% from other ethnic groups, showing that there is a good representation of non-white candidates applying.

2.6 Religion



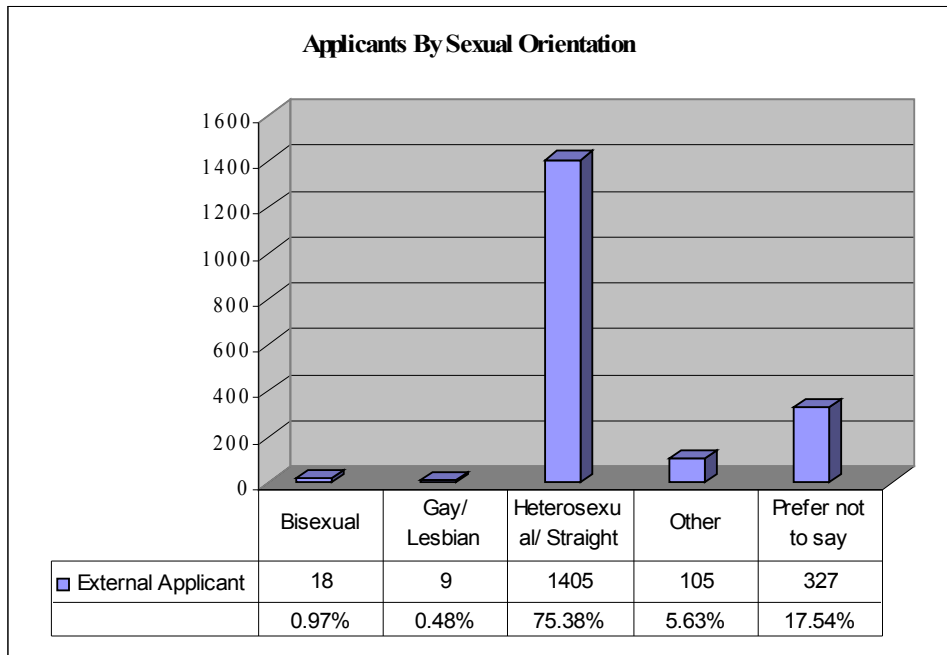
The proportion of candidates declaring their religious beliefs is high in the recruitment process

2.7 Gender



There are twice as many female applicants than male applicants. This will need further consideration to consider whether this can be related to the types of posts being advertised.

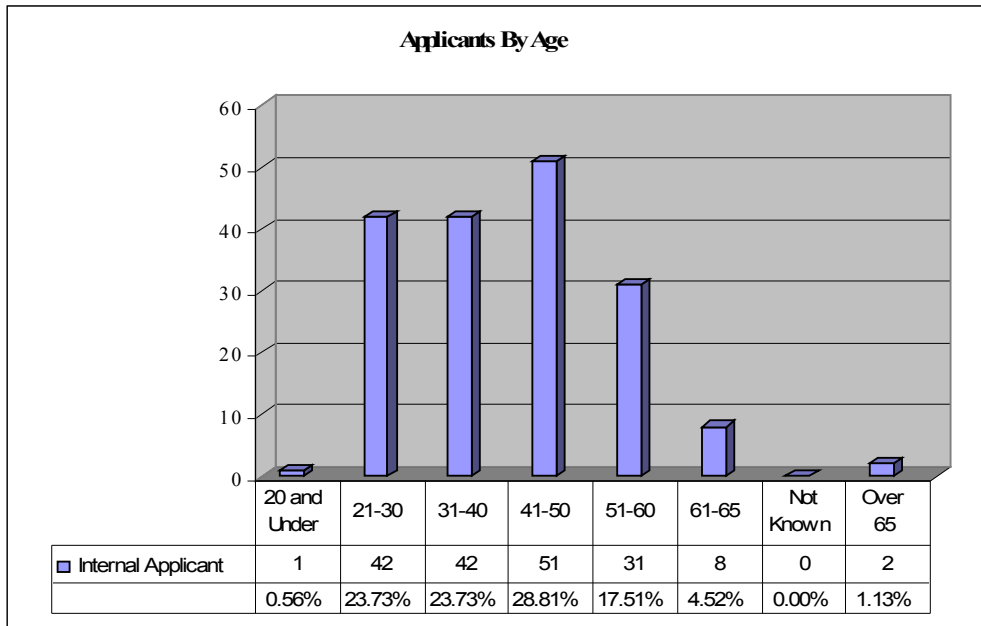
2.8 Sexual Orientation



A good proportion of people are disclosing this in the application process – with the response figures being better than for existing employees.

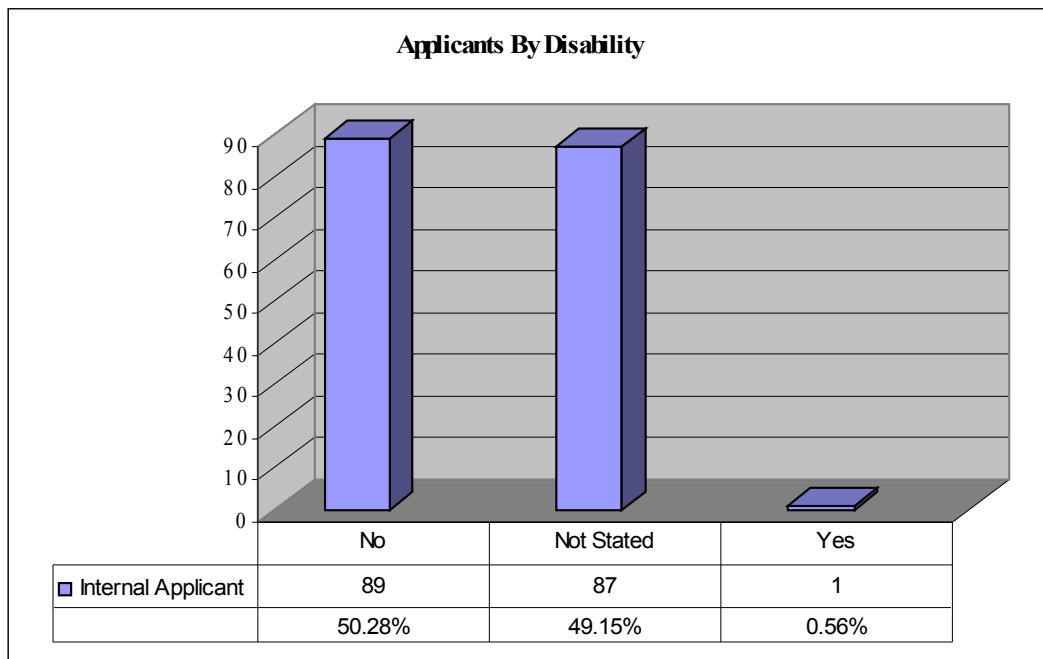
3. Internal Applicants for Employment 01/04/2011-31/03/2012

3.1 Age



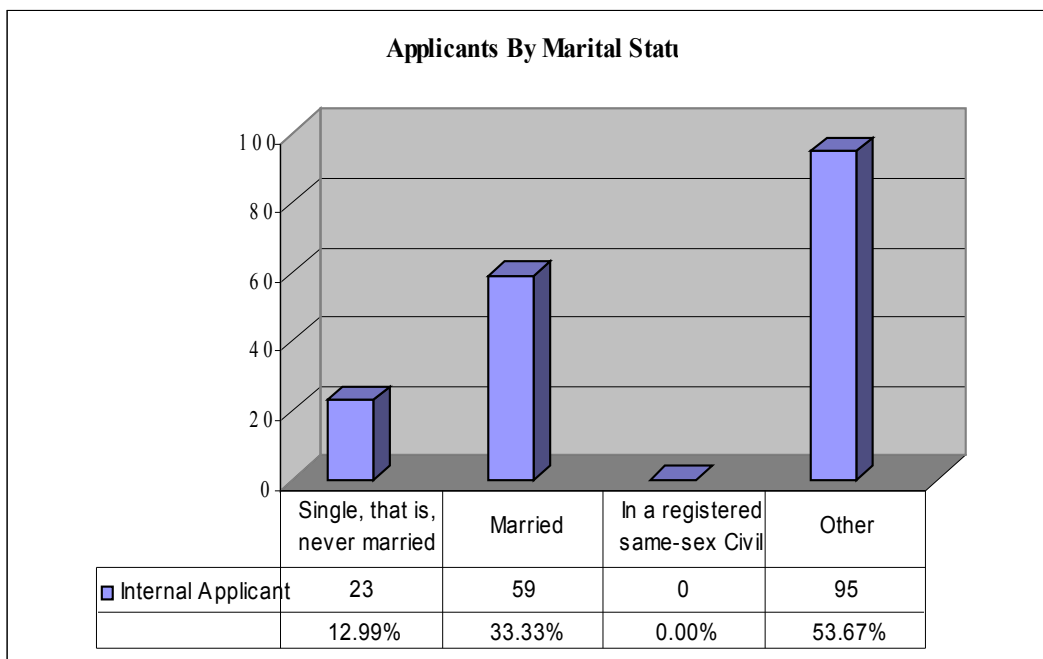
The age spread for internal applicants differs from external, with the 21-30 not being less dominant.

3.2 Disability



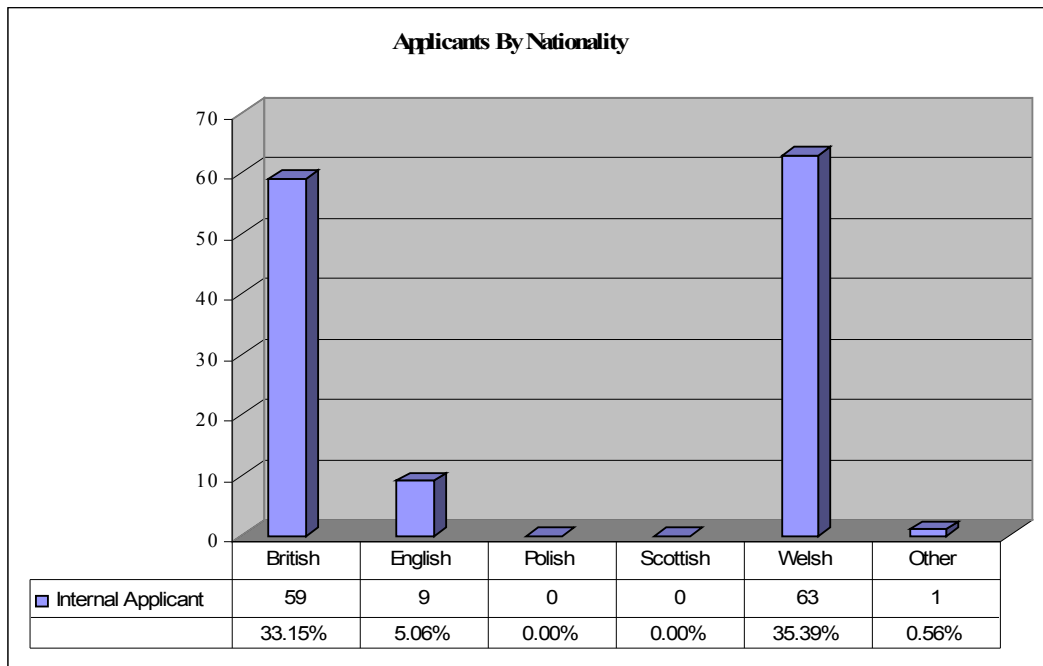
Similar to external applicants, a large proportion (49.12) of people are 'not stating' whether they have a disability. Although this figure is lower than for external applicants, it is still low, with only one applicant disclosing a disability.

3.3 Marital Status



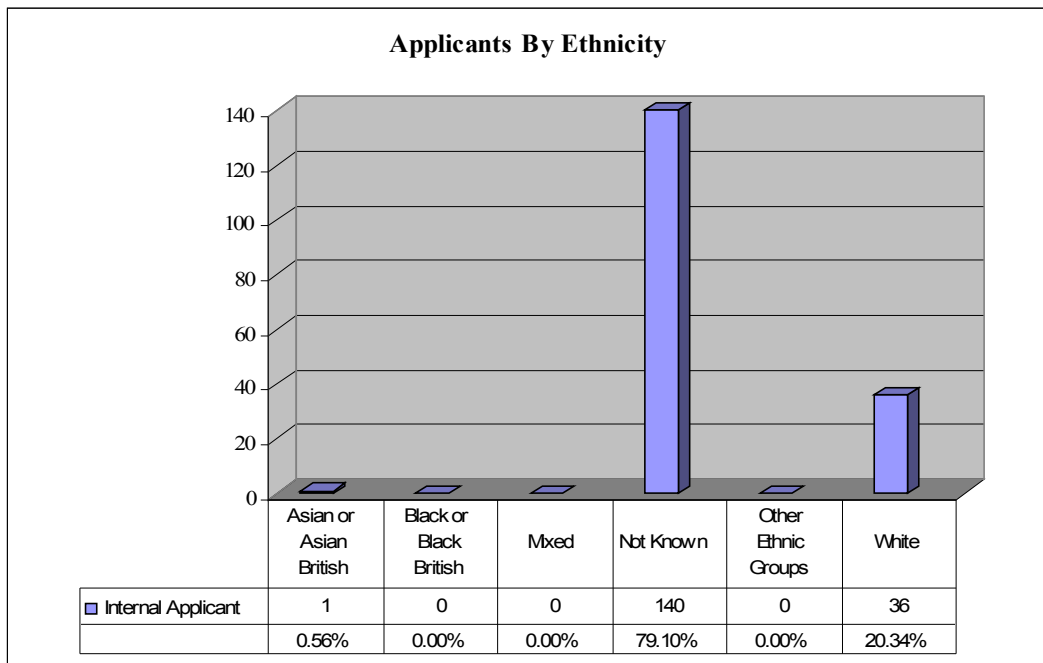
There is a good level of reporting on this question.

3.4 Nationality



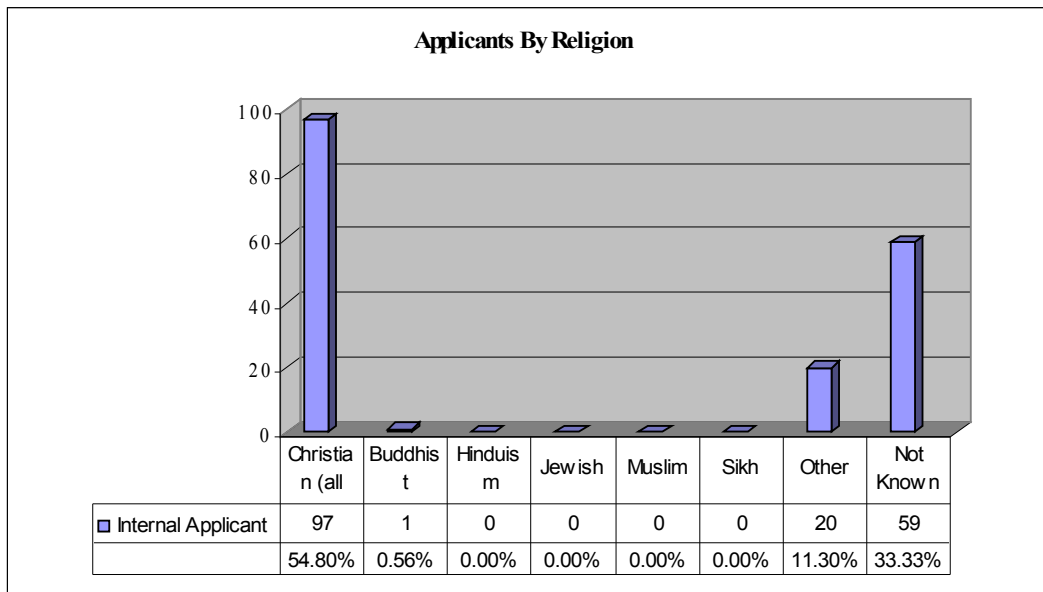
There was only 1 applicant for internal employment positions with a nationality other than British or Welsh.

3.5 Ethnicity



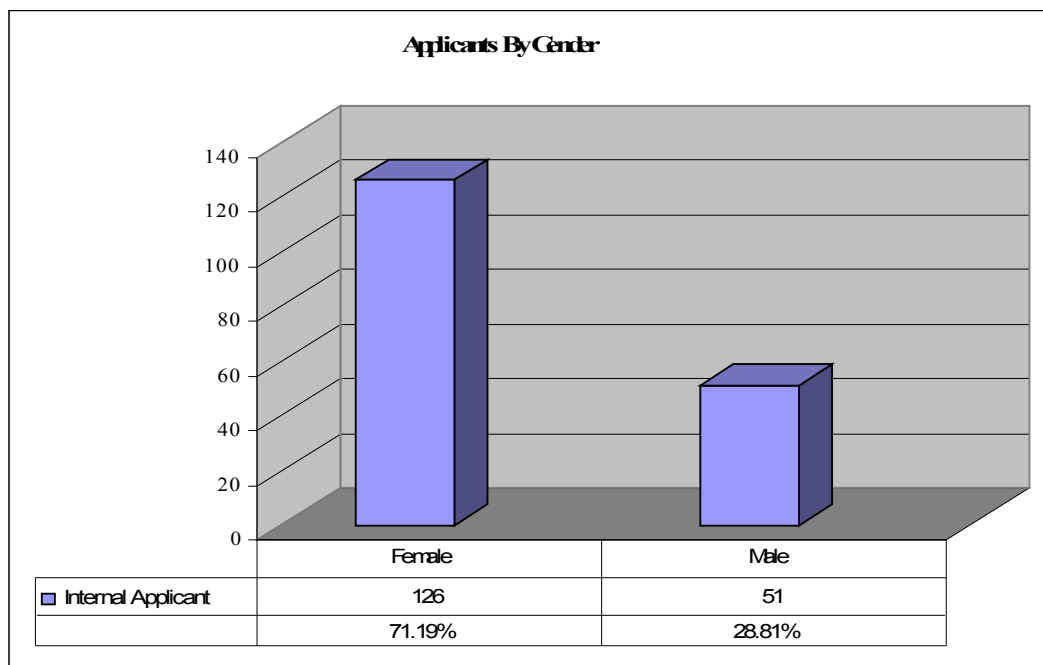
There was only one internal applicant in the time period measured who has declared an ethnicity other than white with 140 'not-known's'.

3.6 Religion



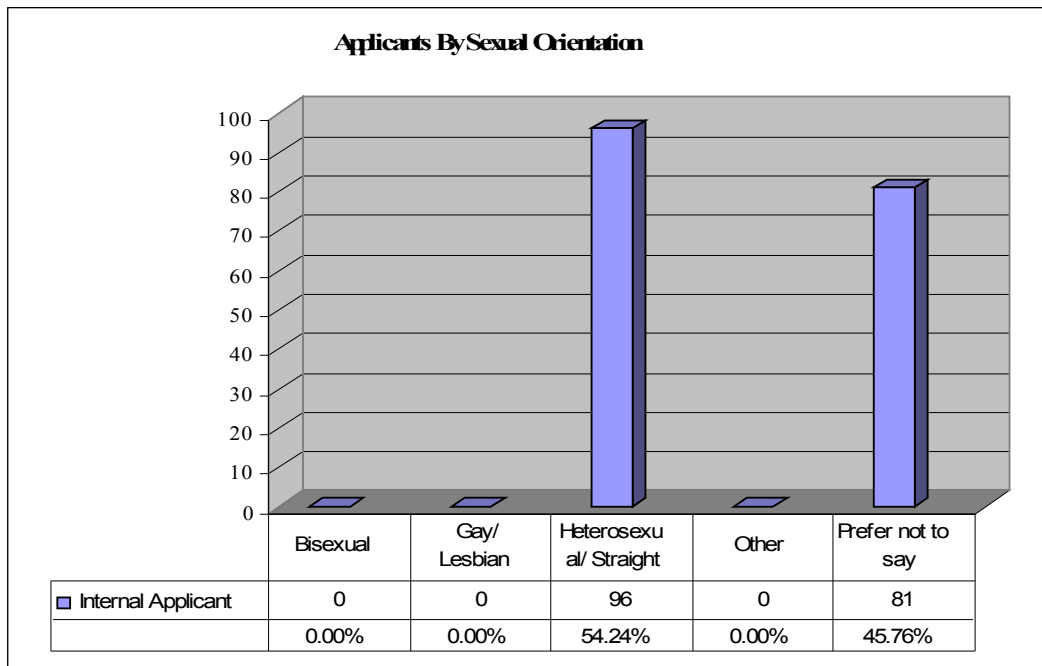
54% of the internal applicants declared having a Christian faith, with roughly 12% of other faith being declared.

3.7 Gender



There have been twice as many female internal applicants than male.

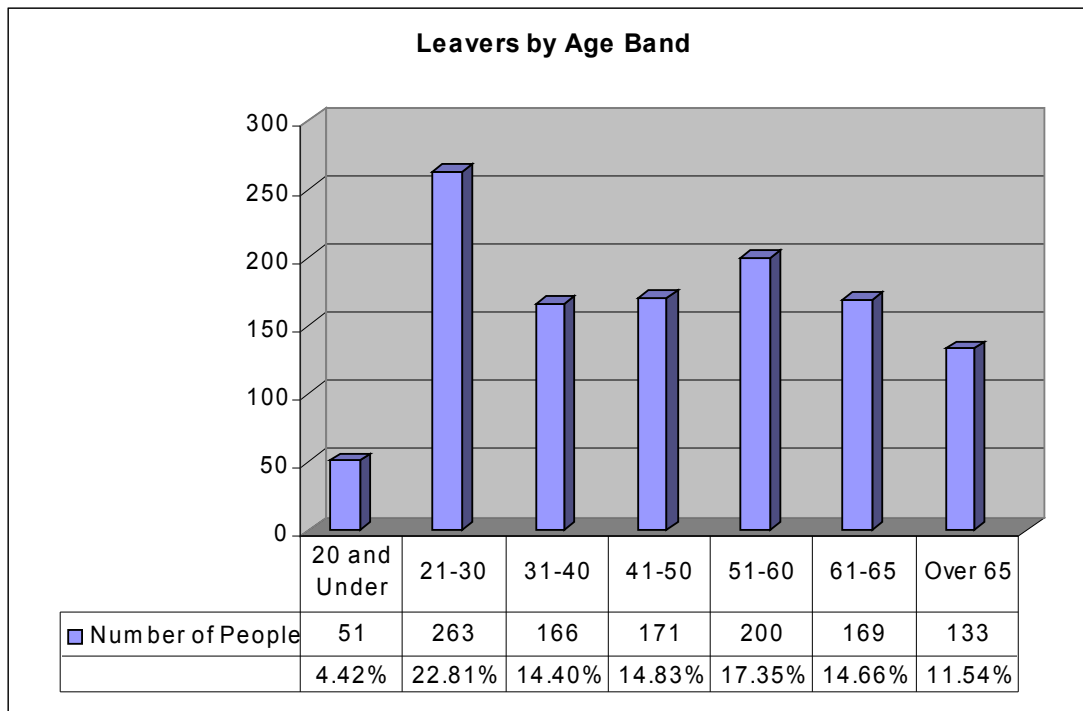
3.8 Sexual Orientation



A large proportion of candidates have selected the 'prefer not to say' option on this one, the rest disclosing as being heterosexual or straight.

4. Employees leaving and reason for leaving 01/04/2011-31/03/2012

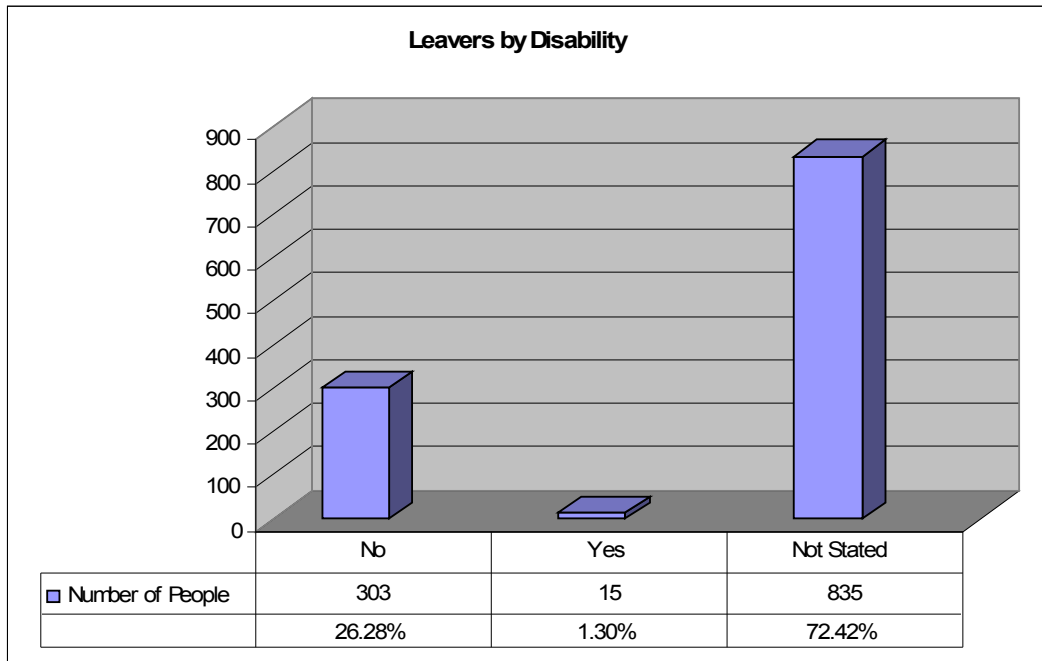
4.1 Age



Although on 'face value' there looks to be a fairly even spread across the age groups, for the spread to be even, we would expect a pattern similar to that of graph 1.2, with a bulge in the 41-50 and 51-60 age category.

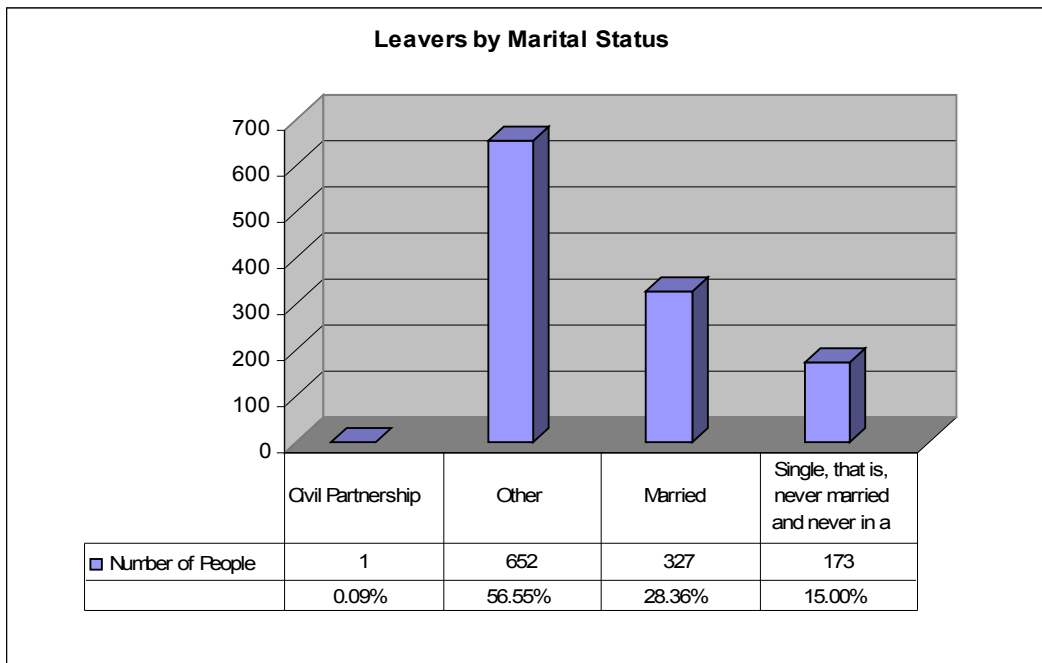
There are a significantly high proportion therefore of 21-30 years old leaving the organisation and this will need investigating to consider why this is happening.

4.2 Disability



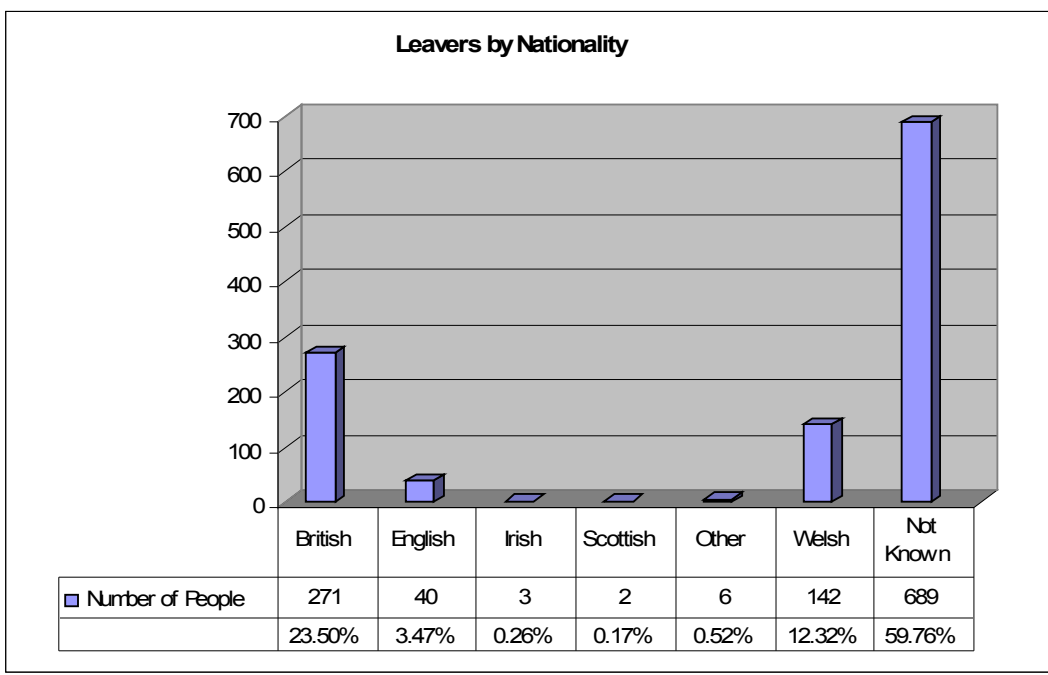
Due to the low numbers of people disclosing in this area, it is difficult to comment on what is shown.

4.3 Marital Status



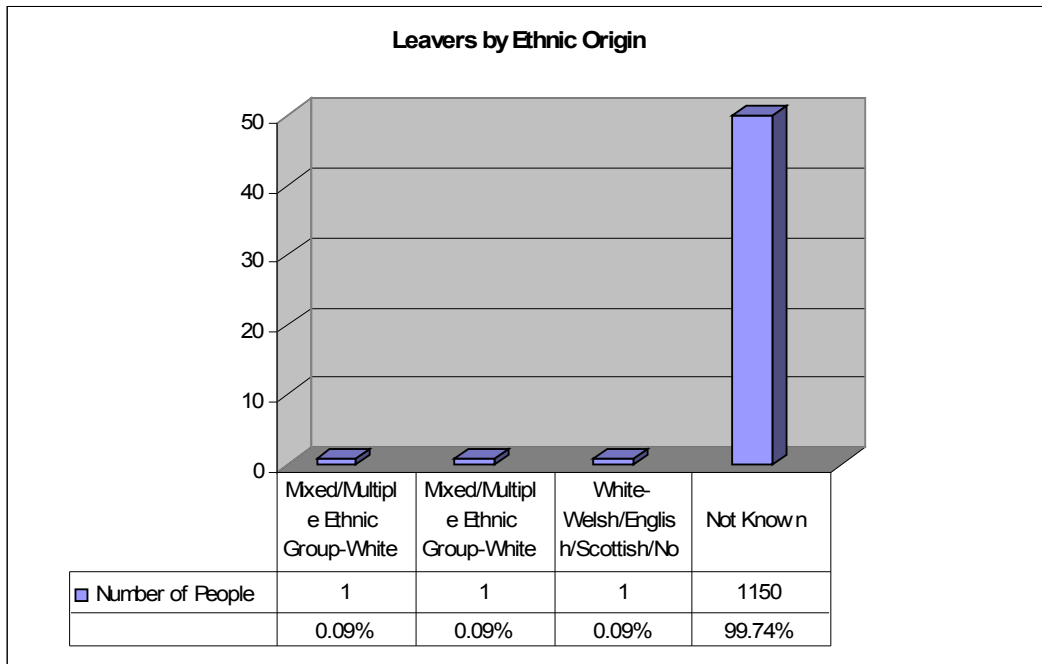
What is interesting to note here, is that when comparing this graph to the graph shown in 1.3, there seems to be nothing to suggest that more married than single people being retained by the organisation.

4.4 Nationality



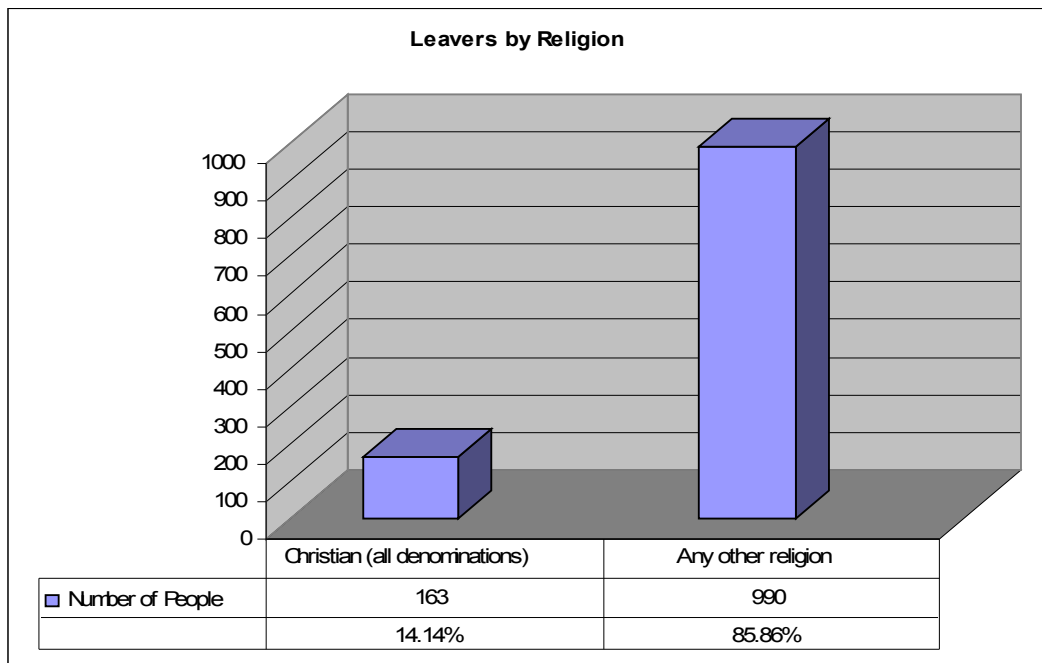
There are a high number of 'not-known's' for leavers ethnicity, but comparing this to the graph shown in 1.4 there seems to be a lower retention rate for 'British people' than for 'welsh people'.

4.5 Ethnicity

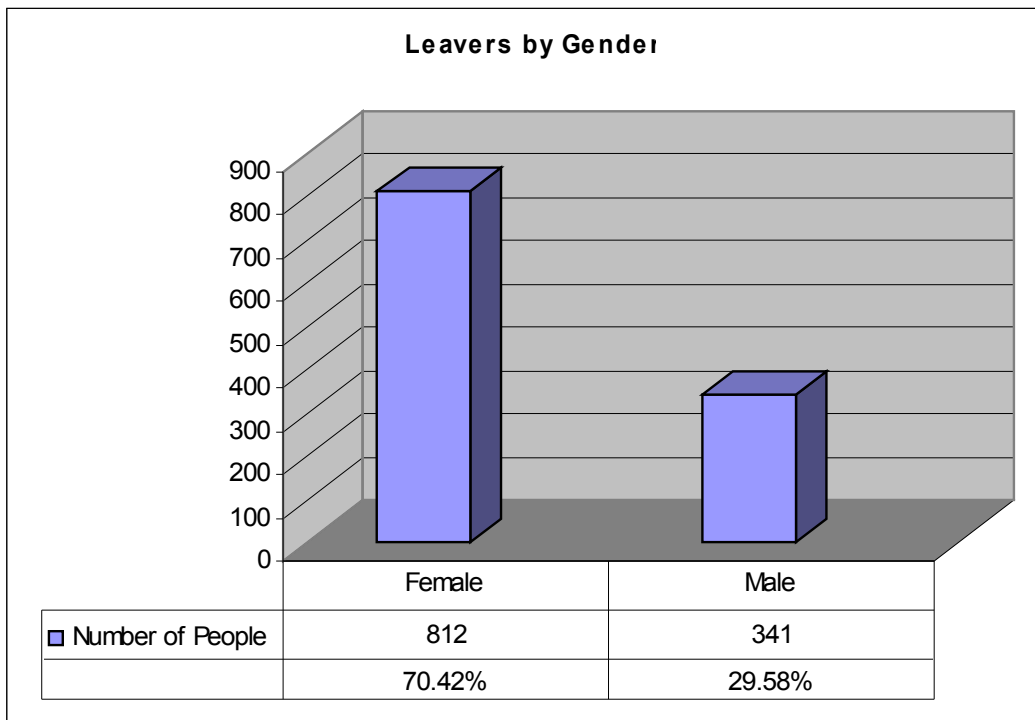


The low levels of disclosure make this difficult to comment upon.

4.6 Religion

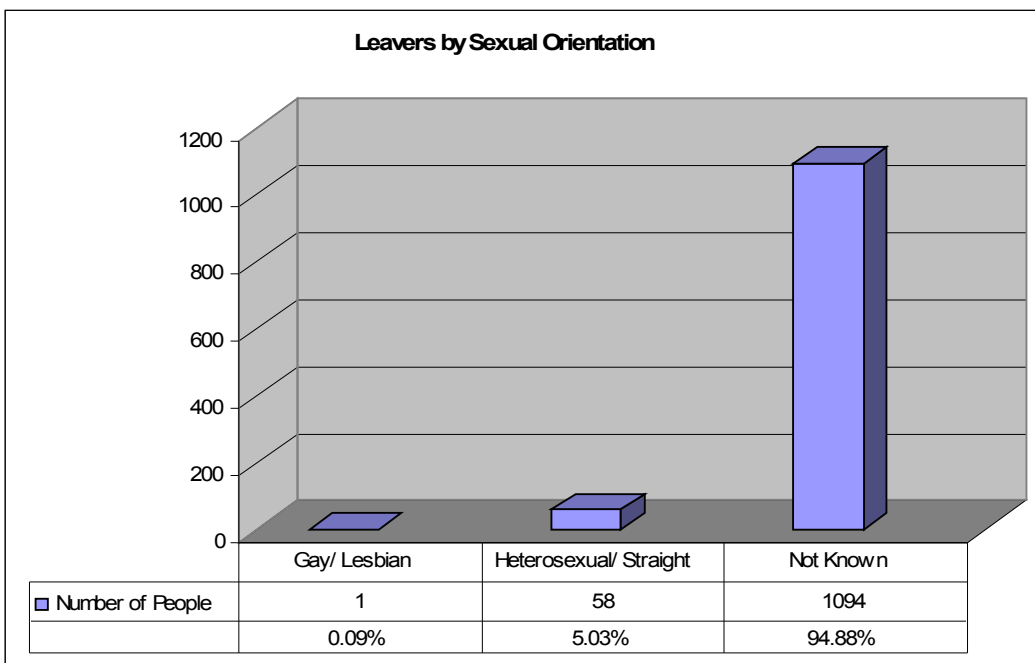


4.7 Gender



There looks to be a much higher retention rate of men than women. This again may require some investigation.

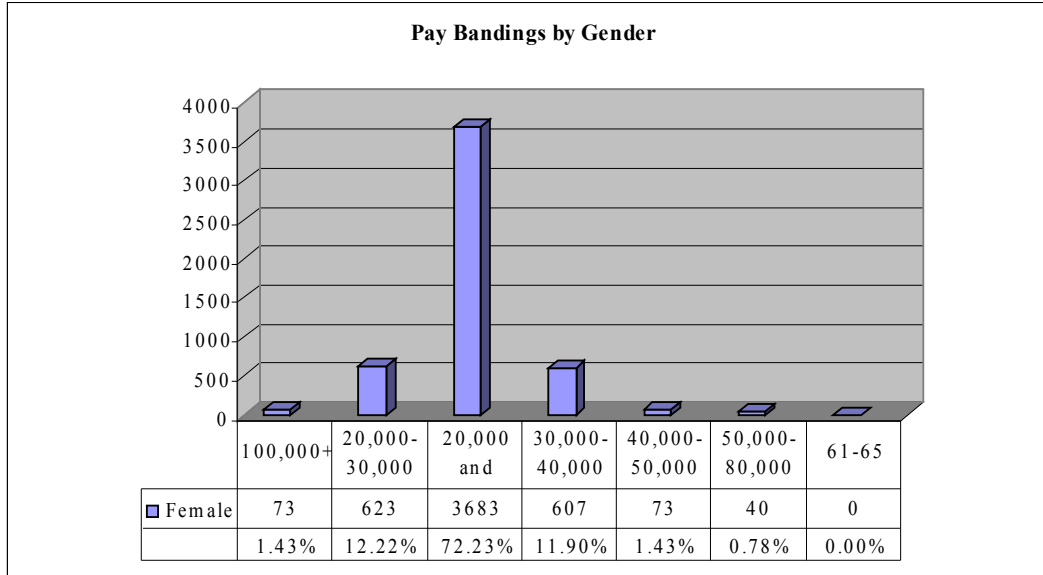
4.8 Sexual Orientation



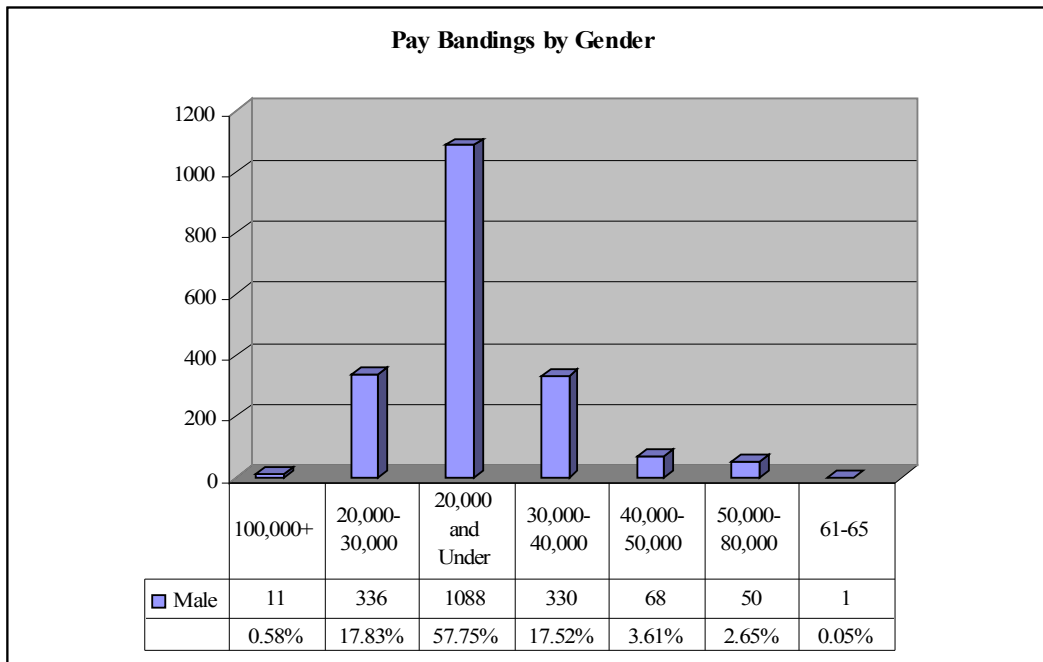
The low level of disclosure makes this difficult to comment upon.

5. Gender Monitoring

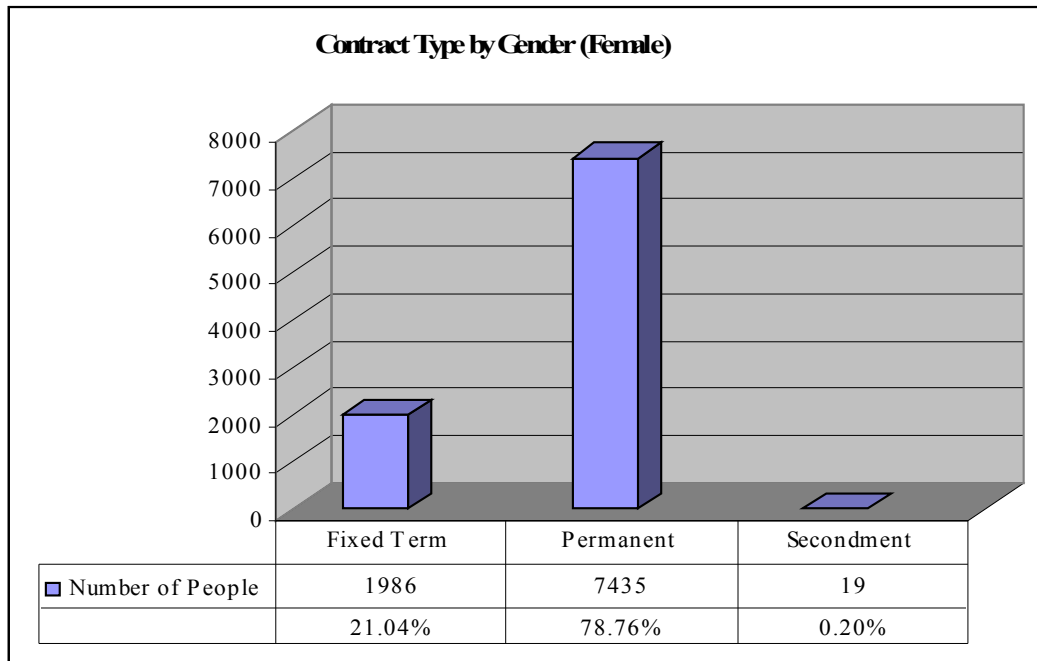
5.1 By Pay Grade (Female)



5.2 By Pay Grade (Male)

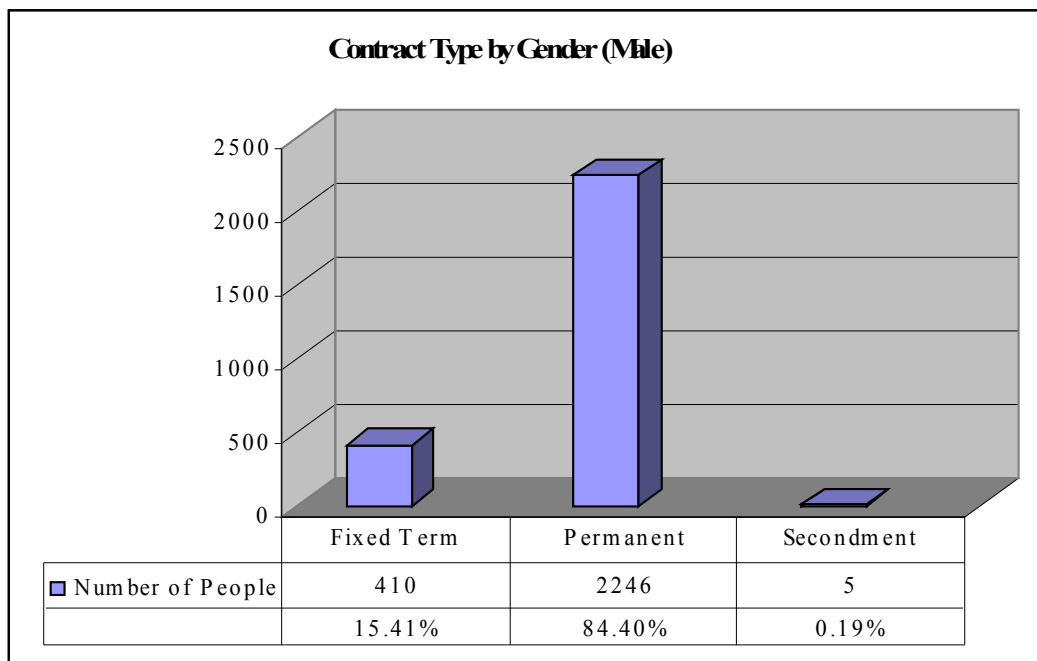


5.4 By contract type (Female)



There are similar patterns between men and women in terms of permanent and temporary contracts, although more men than women are on a permanent contract.

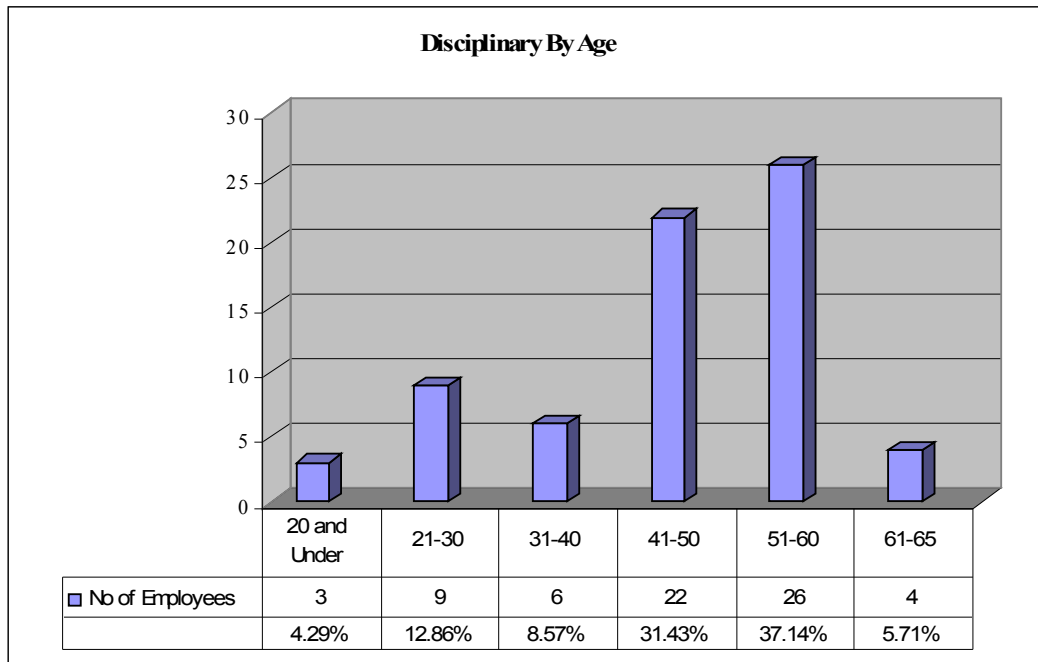
5.5 By Contract type (Male)



There are similar patterns between men and women in terms of permanent and temporary contracts, although more men than women are on a permanent contract (roughly 6% higher).

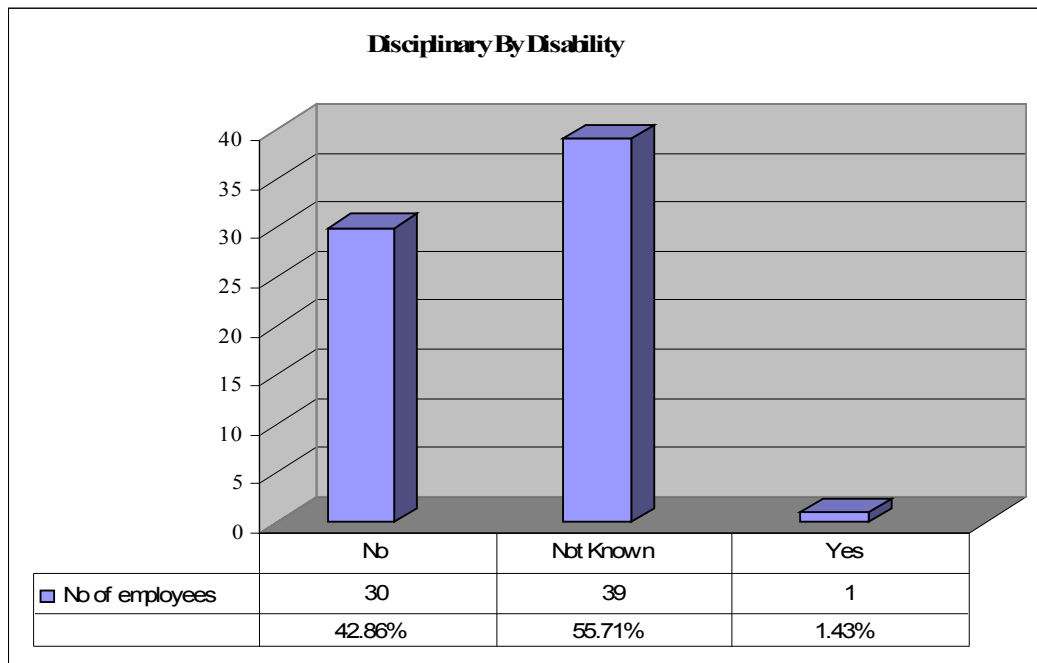
6. Employees who have undergone a Disciplinary between 01/04/2011-31/03/2012

6.1 Age



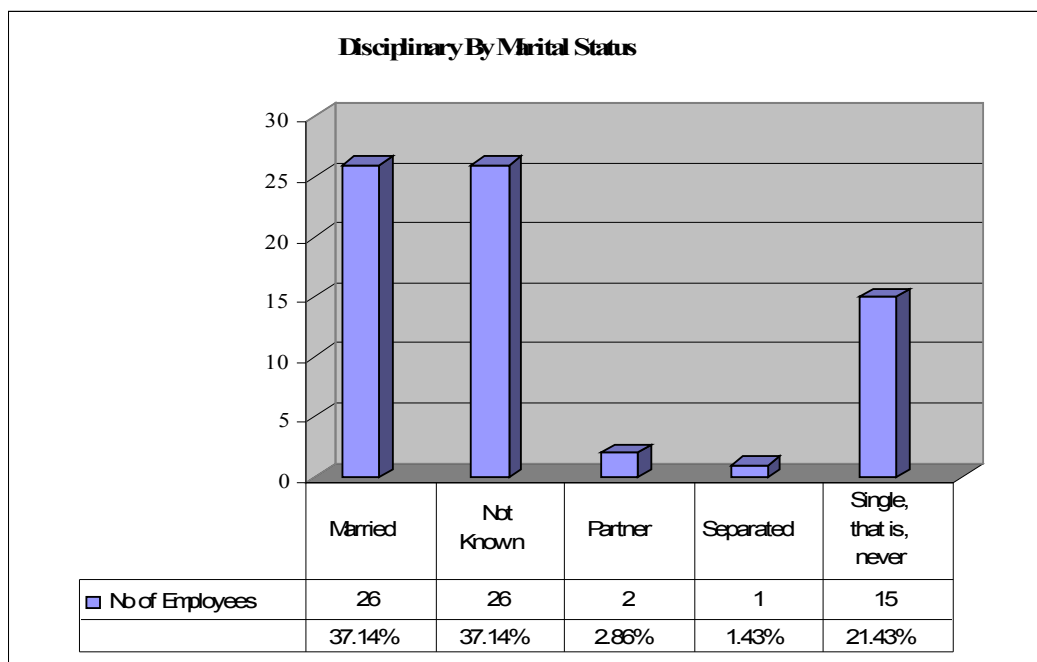
Most disciplinary action occurs in the 51-60 and 41-50 age bracket which when comparing this to the graph in 1.1 this fits with the employee age patterns.

6.2 Disability



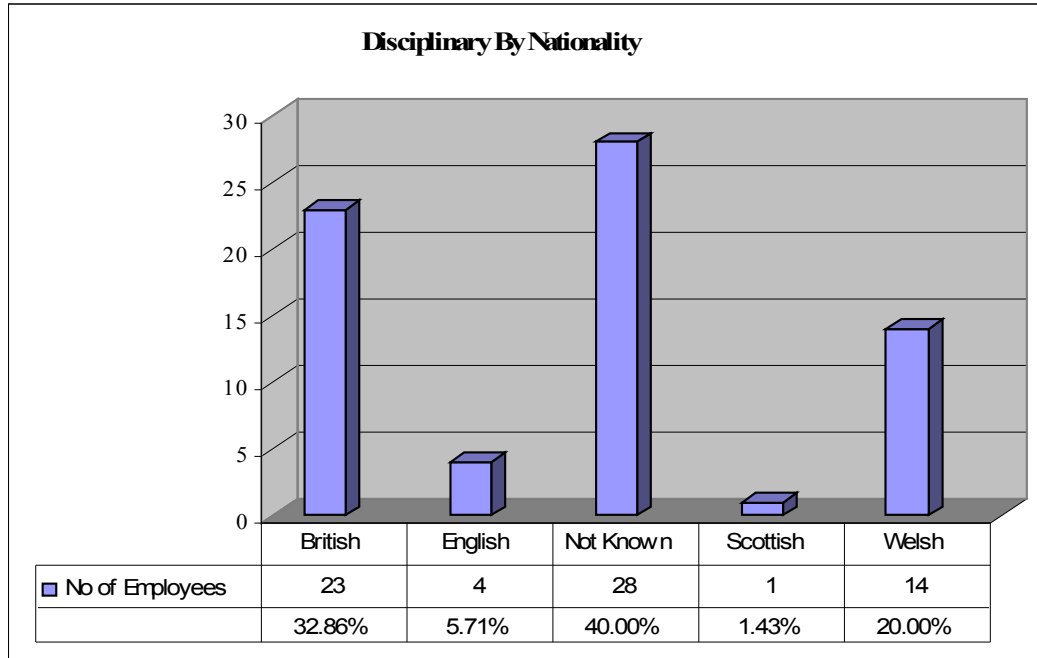
Although there is significant under-reporting in this area, there is nothing to suggest in the known figures that there may be an issue in terms of disabled people involved in these.

6.3 Marital Status



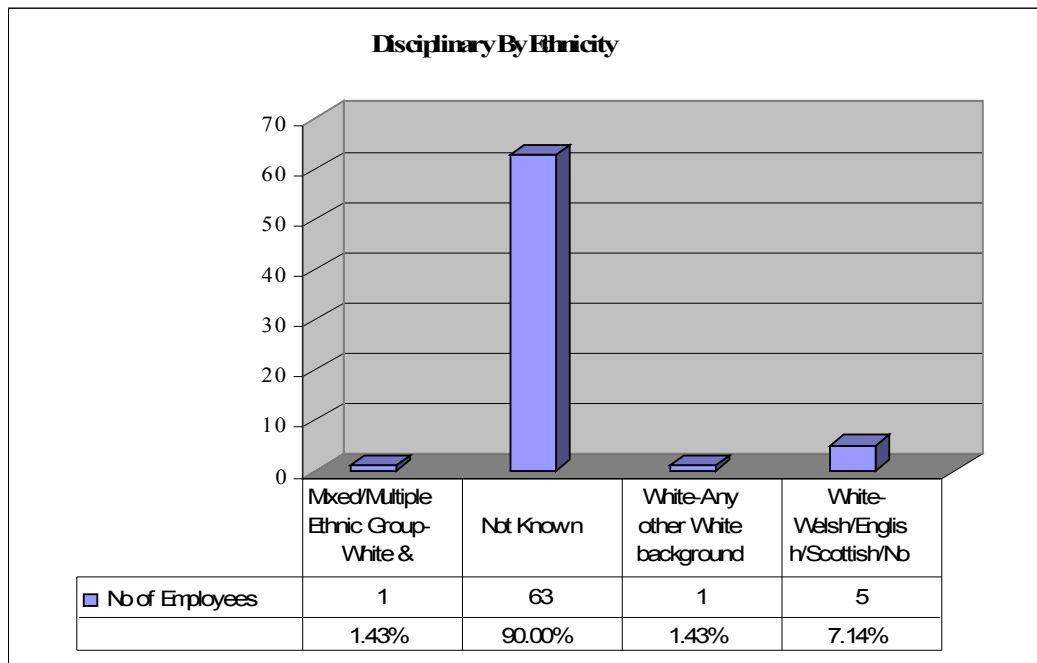
Again, comparing this to the graph in 1.3, there looks to be a proportionate number of married people to not married involved in discipline proceedings.

6.4 Nationality



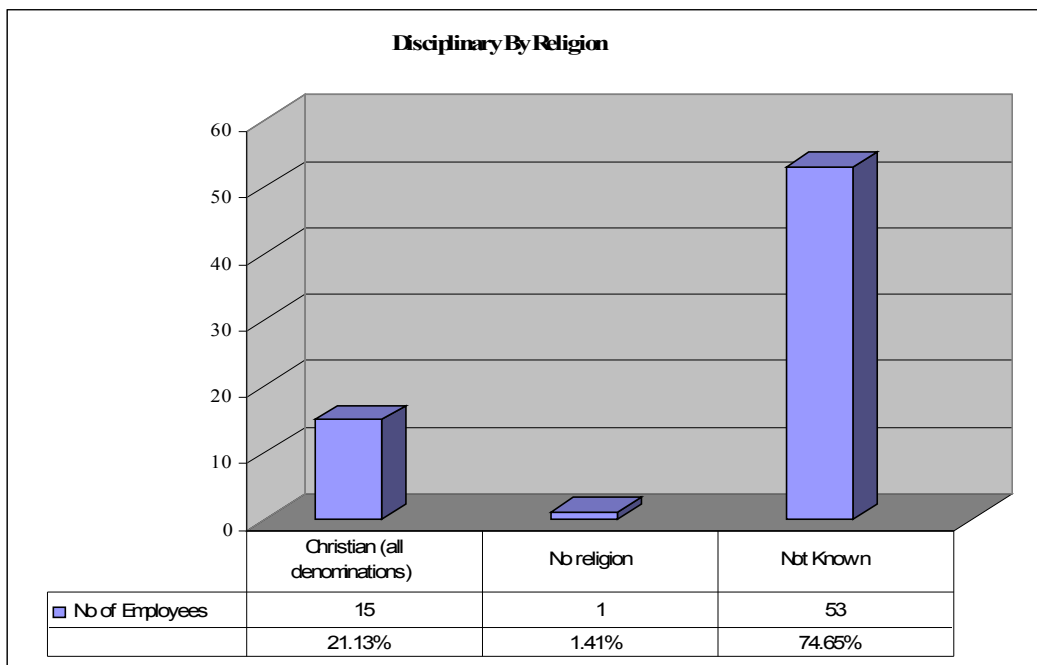
When comparing this data to the graph in 1.4, there does seem to be a proportionally higher percentage of those selecting 'British' as their nationality compared to 'Welsh'.

6.5 Ethnicity

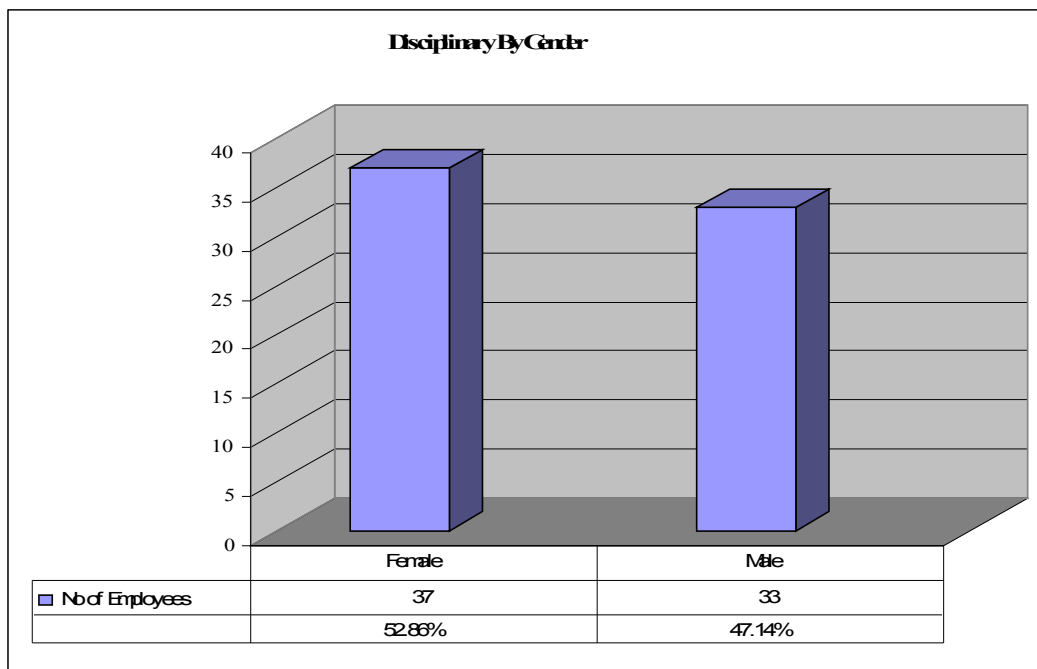


There are too many 'not-known's' to meaningfully comment on the figures here.

6.6 Religion

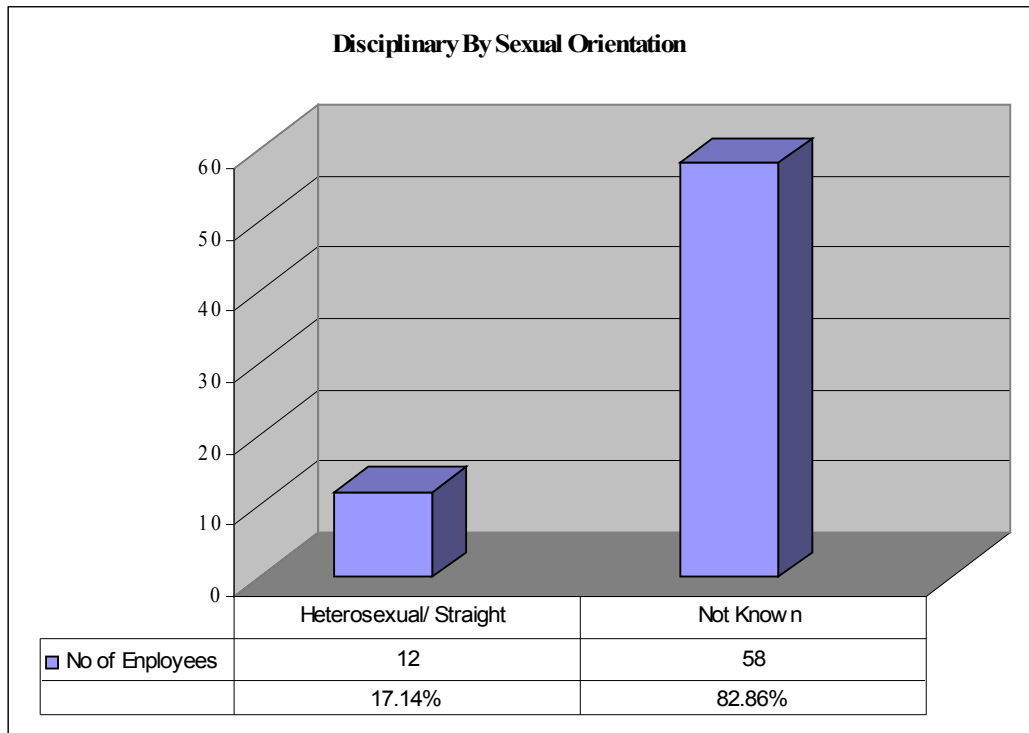


6.7 Gender



There is an even spread between men and women in terms of disciplinary proceedings.

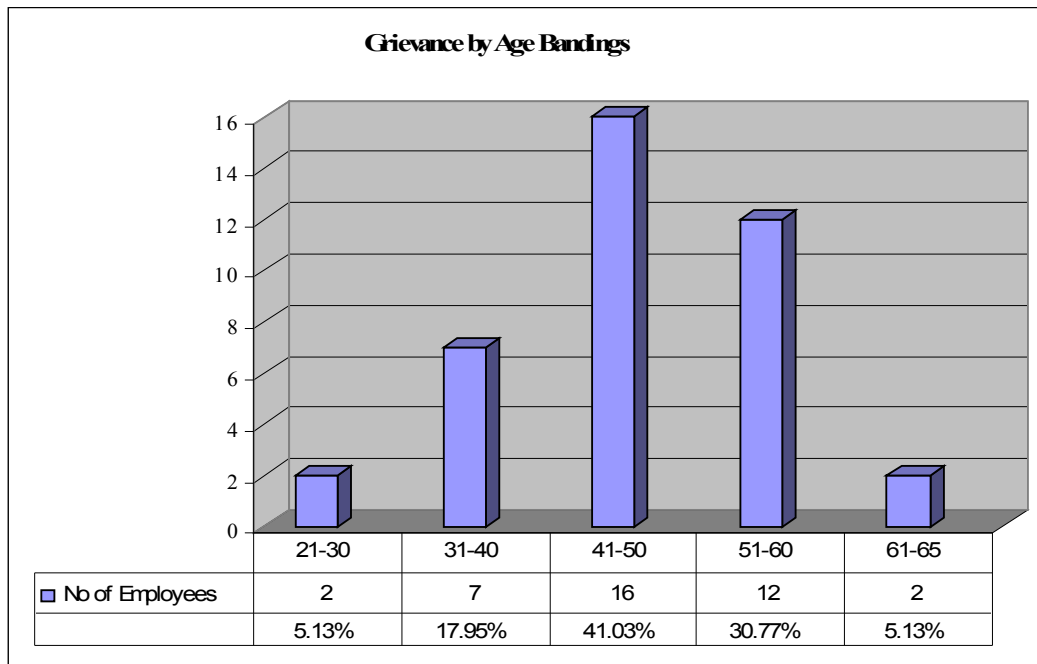
6.8 Sexual Orientation



The number of unknowns makes this difficult to report on.

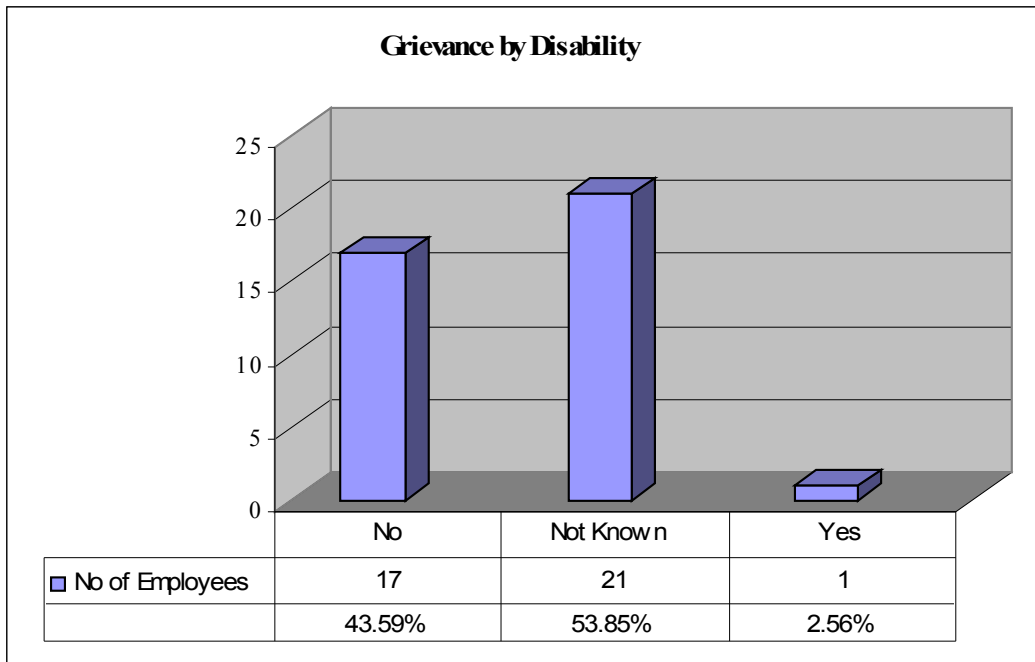
7. Employees who have filed a Grievance between 01/04/2011-31/03/2012

7.1 Age



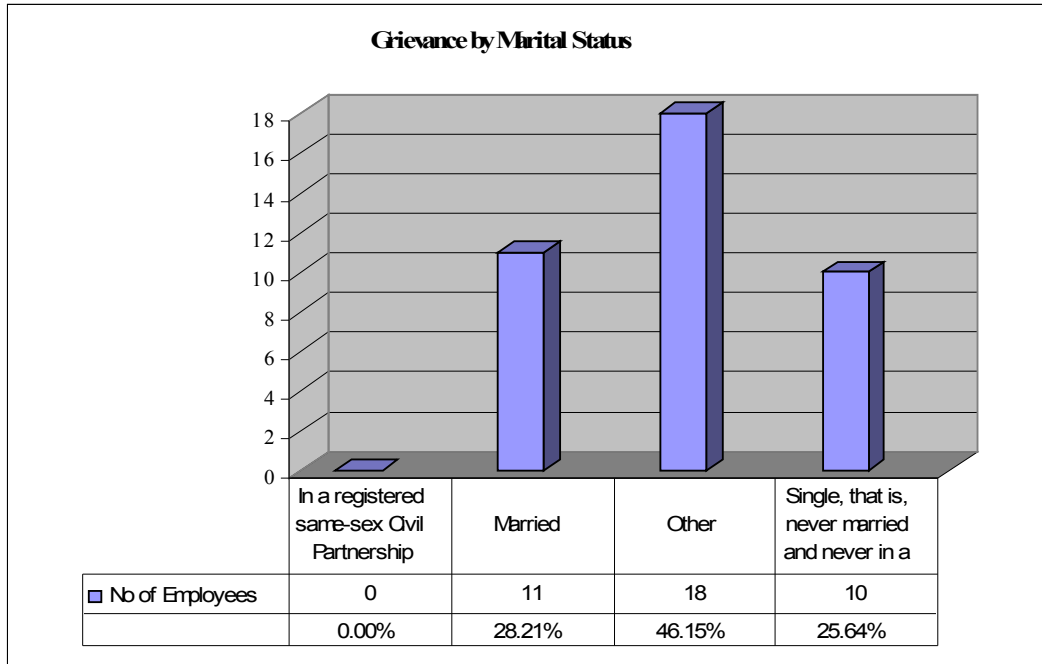
A significant proportion of filed grievances are in the 41-50 and 51-60 age band which correlates with the age population profile graph in 1.1.

7.2 Disability

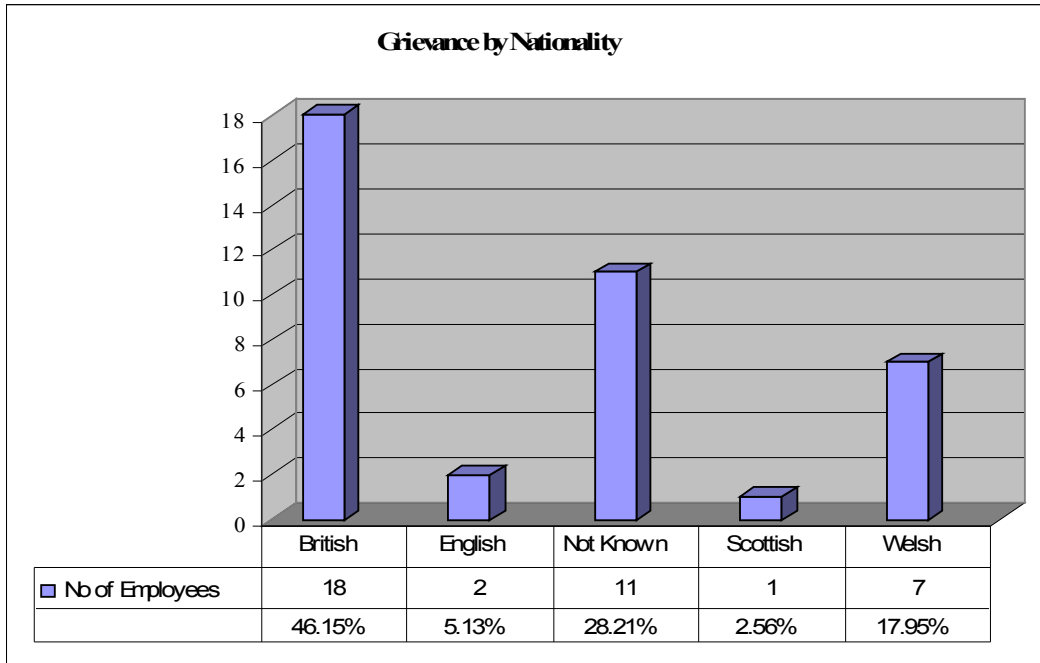


The level of 'not-known's' in this section makes it difficult to provide meaningful comment.

7.3 Marital Status

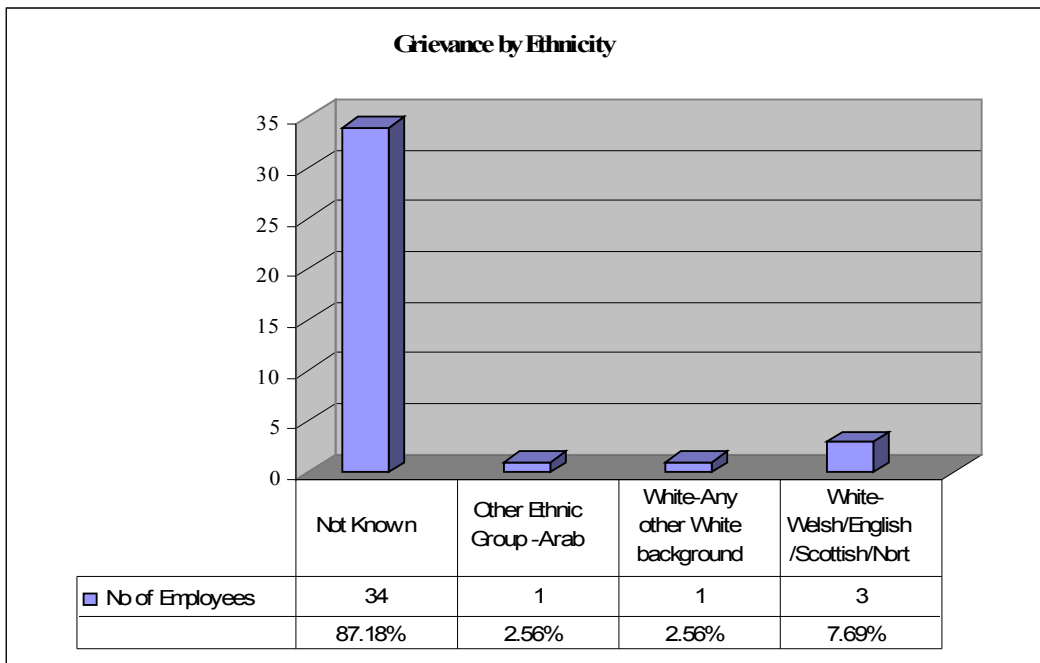


7.4 Nationality



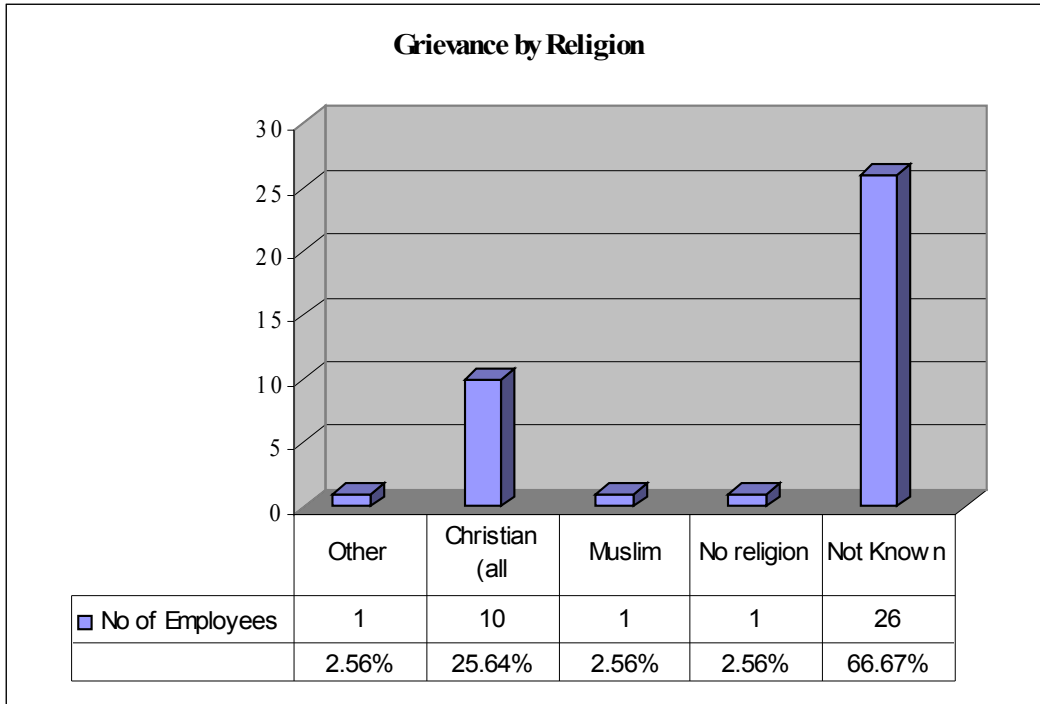
There are proportionally more people disclosing as British than Welsh involved in grievance procedures when these figures are compared to those in graph 1.4.

7.5 Ethnicity



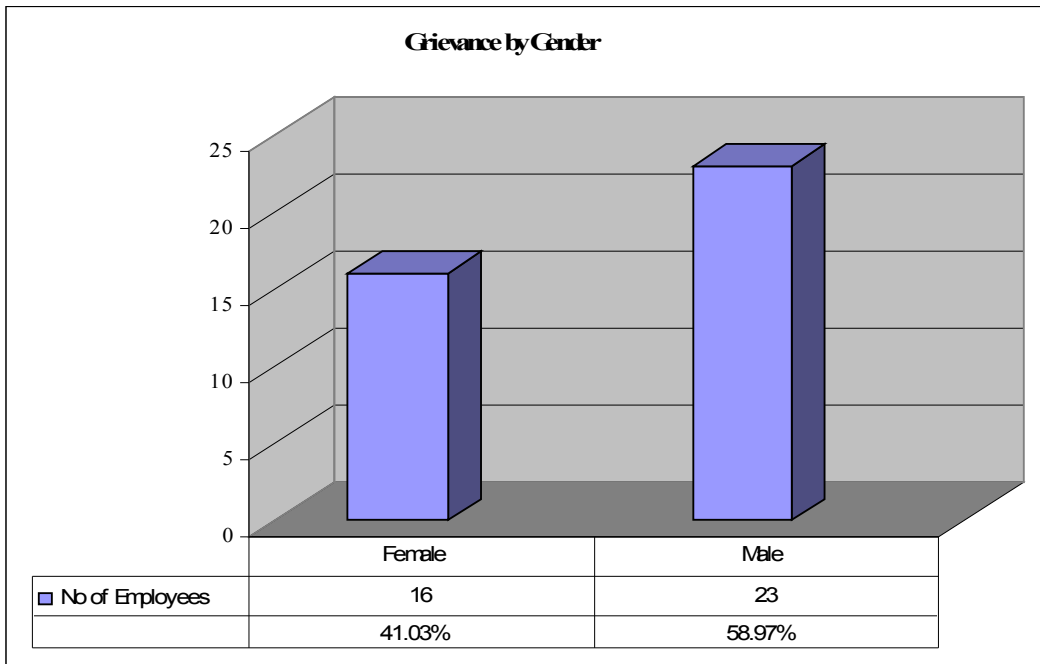
This cannot be meaningfully commented upon due to the low levels of ethnicity disclosure

7.6 Religion



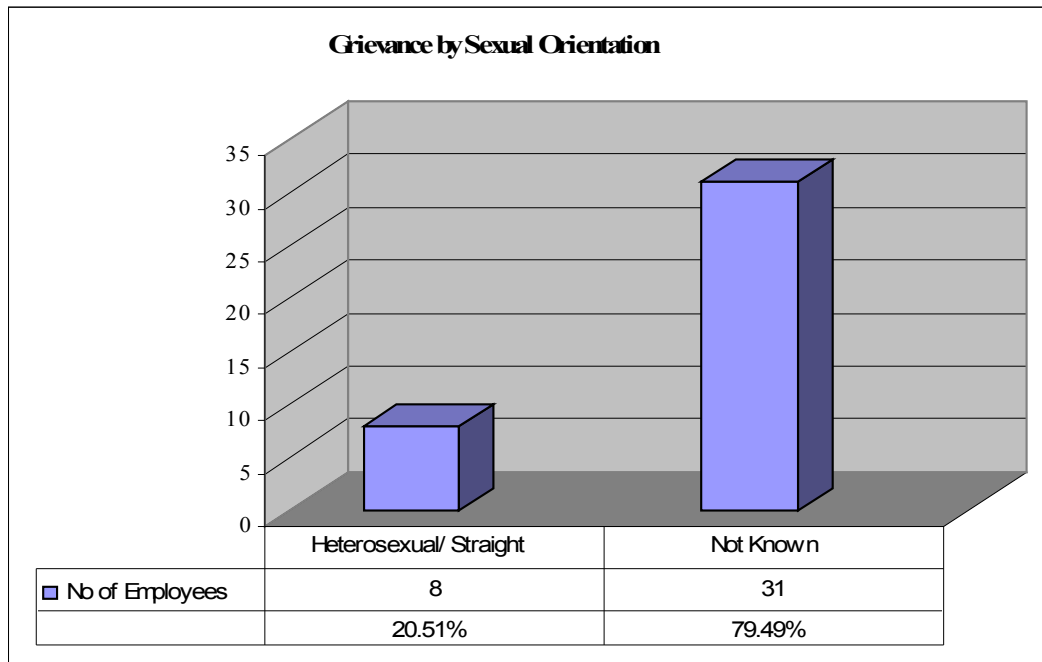
There are a number not-known again which makes commenting less meaningful, however, of those that have disclosed, the majority of those involved in grievances have a Christian faith, which correlates with the graph in 1.6.

7.7 Gender



There is a relatively even balancer between men and women in terms of grievances, although men involved in grievances are slightly higher.

7.8 Sexual Orientation



Due the low levels of disclosure, this cannot be meaningfully commented upon.

8.0 Effectiveness of data gathering

It is important to consider in this report, the effectiveness of the council's arrangements for identifying and collecting relevant information.

In terms of employment information, the organisation will seek to strengthen this over the next 12 months. There are a number of areas where the low levels of reporting need to be strengthened, which should be possible by raising the profile corporately to encourage people to disclose more personal information. Whilst there is a good process in place through either the electronic HR system that employees can go in and amend, or by returning printed hard copies, there seem to be a number of people not fully engaging and disclosing equalities information.

The authorities performance data also needs strengthening by adding all of the protected characteristics to the various customer databases that exists across our service and also through amending processes and procures to gather more robust information. There will also be a need to explore which performance measures require 'disaggregating' (breaking down) by the protected characteristics.