

APPENDIX 1

THE PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS AND WEST LANCASHIRE STATISTICS

Age

People of all ages are protected. Older people, particularly in rural areas, can face social isolation and can feel cut off from the wider community. Young people can often feel socially excluded and marginalised within their communities. We try to engage with people of all ages to empower them to participate in their local communities.

In 2021, the age profile of the Borough compared to the Northwest and English Authorities was:

Age	Percentage of the population	North West	UK authorities
Under 19	22.66%	23.40%	23.11%
19 to 64	55.37%	57.90%	58.47%
65+	22.06%	18.69%	18.41%

The borough is home to Edge Hill University which has more than 13,000 students most of whom live in the area. West Lancashire has a generally ageing population and 5.7% are aged over 80 and has on average more of the population of pensionable age than for the North West or England Authorities.

Disability

A person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities, when carrying out our functions, we will try to:

- promote positive attitudes towards people with disabilities;
- encourage participation by people with disabilities in public life;
- promote equality of opportunity between people with or without disabilities;
- eliminate disability-related harassment;
- eliminate unlawful discrimination; and
- take steps to meet the needs of people with disabilities, even if this requires treatment that is more favourable.

The 2021 Census showed that more than 18.9% of West Lancashire residents consider that their day-to-day activities are limited to some extent by a long-term health problem or disability, which is significantly higher than the national average.

Gender reassignment

Gender Reassignment includes anyone who is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or completed a process (or part of process) to reassign their sex. The Equality and Human Rights Commission notes that the preferred umbrella term is “trans” which encompasses different forms of gender identity, such as people who identify as non-binary. We understand and respect that there can be differences between assigned sex and gender identity and expression and we value all of our staff and customers, including individuals who identify outside of the gender binary.

In the 2021 Census 262,000 (0.5%) said their gender identity was not the same as the sex they were assigned at birth. The Census may underestimate the true figures, as not everyone may be comfortable answering these questions.

We do have a working practice statement on Gender Identity and Gender Reassignment available on our intranet.

Marriage and civil partnership

People who are married or in civil partnerships are protected from discrimination. However, single people are not protected.

Within West Lancashire 45.2% of people are married (Census 2021), 37.2% single, 1.8% separated, 8.9% divorced and 6.9% widowed.

Pregnancy and maternity

There are specific provisions of the Equality Act relating to employment rights for women who are pregnant or have recently given birth.

Pregnancy and maternity-related discrimination can also occur outside of the workplace if a woman is treated unfavourably because of her pregnancy or because she has given birth (within the past 26 weeks) and because she is breastfeeding.

Data on the numbers are not available to us but, we report annually on the staff numbers relating to this characteristic.

Race

In the Equality Act, race can mean someone’s colour, or their nationality (including citizenship). It can also mean their ethnic or national origins, which may not be the same as their current nationality. For example, a person may have Chinese national origins and be living in Britain with a British passport. Race also covers ethnic and racial groups. This means a group of people who all share the same protected characteristic of ethnicity or race.

Public authorities must promote race equality and ensure that employment and services (including services provided through other organisations on their behalf) are fair and accessible for everyone.

Both institutional and individual racism “can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and

behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness, and racist stereotyping which disadvantages ethnic minority people.” We recognise that institutional racism can exist, and that no organisation is immune.

In the 2021 census, the following were the recorded backgrounds of the population in the Borough:

Race	Percentage of the population
White	96.9%
Asian/Asian British	1%
Black/Black Asian	0.4%
Mixed Race	1.3%
Other	0.4%

Religion or belief

This characteristic covers any religion or any religious or philosophical belief, including a lack of religion or belief. Faith groups have a positive impact on our local communities. They bring opportunities to create face-to-face dialogue, which supports a greater understanding of shared values, appreciation of distinctiveness and for side-by-side collaborative social action. Employees and job seekers are protected if they have a faith or if they have no particular faith.

The religious make up at the last census was Christian 61.5%, Buddhist 0.2%, Hindu 0.2%, Jewish 0.1%, Muslim 0.4%, Sikh 0.1%, Other 0.3%, No religion 31.5% and Religion not stated 5.6%.

We have a working practice statement on our intranet , working practice statement 100 Religion and Belief in the Workplace.

Sex

In the Equality Act, sex can mean either male or female, or a group of people like men or boys, or women or girls and you should not be discriminated against because:

- you are (or are not) a particular sex
- someone thinks you are the opposite sex (this is known as discrimination by perception)
- you are connected to someone of a particular sex (this is known as discrimination by association)

We report on our gender pay gap for our employees annually in line with legal requirements. We will take any actions we decide are appropriate if the pay gap information highlights any concerns.

The gender of the borough is relatively balanced overall with 52% (61,000) of the population identifying as female.

Sexual orientation

The Equality Act 2010 says you must not be discriminated against because:

You are heterosexual, gay, lesbian or bisexual

- someone thinks you have a particular sexual orientation (this is known as discrimination by perception)
- you are connected to someone who has a particular sexual orientation (this is known as discrimination by association)

In the Equality Act, sexual orientation includes how you choose to express your sexual orientation, such as through your appearance or the places you visit.

Data on the sexual orientation of the residents of West Lancashire is not available. Estimates at a national level vary from 1.5% to 5% which would mean between 1,700 and 5,600 residents of our borough are lesbian, gay or bisexual.

Data Sources:

Office for National Statistics - Census 2021

Office for National Statistics - Mid-Year Population Estimates:

Components of Change Office for National Statistics - Mid-year estimate