

Appendix D

Equality Impact Assessment

Equalities Impact Assessment

Local Government Reorganisation Proposal

Executive Summary

This Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been developed to inform decision-making on the process of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in Hampshire and the Solent Area. Our proposal recommends transitioning from the current two-tier system to four new unitary authorities, aiming to improve service delivery, governance, financial sustainability and neighbourhood empowerment.

The EIA provides a high-level assessment of the potential impacts of this structural change on residents and staff, based on protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, as well as impacts of poverty and rurality. It draws on a wide range of publicly available data, including the 2021 Census, 2023 mid-year population estimates, the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), and workforce diversity reports from local authorities.

It includes detailed analysis across all protected characteristics, supported by disaggregated data at the proposed unitary authority level. It also incorporates insights from engagement activities undertaken jointly by Hampshire County Council and East Hampshire District Council, including targeted engagement with seldom-heard groups. A representative survey was conducted by independent polling company Kantar Public, and community engagement was supported by organisations such as Action Hampshire.

The assessment identifies both risks and opportunities arising from the proposed changes; it's important to note that these concerns and opportunities are not only in relation to our LGR proposal but also in relation to the LGR process in general.

For residents, potential risks include disruption to services, variation in service access and outcomes, and digital exclusion, while opportunities include improved place-based service design, stronger local engagement, and better alignment of services with demographic needs.

For staff, risks include uncertainty, changes to roles and working conditions, and potential redundancies. There is a risk that these changes may disproportionately affect staff with protected characteristics, potentially exacerbating existing inequalities if not carefully managed. Opportunities include embedding inclusive practices, improving accessibility, and strengthening workforce diversity.

The EIA outlines a range of mitigation strategies such as inclusive transition planning and communication, robust data governance and privacy safeguards, harmonisation of service standards and eligibility criteria, preservation of multi-agency partnerships and safeguarding frameworks, improvements on digital inclusion and alternative access routes, and support for staff through engagement, policy alignment, and retention of best practice.

Neighbourhood empowerment is at the heart of our proposal for future local government. Through the *Local Voices, Lasting Change* report we set out a clear vision for how communities will be more involved in shaping decisions that affect them. By working in partnership with town and parish councils, voluntary organisations and local groups, the new councils will be better able to reflect the voices of all residents—including those who are often less heard. This inclusive approach will help ensure that services are more responsive to local needs and that equalities are considered in everything we do.

With appropriate planning and collaboration, our proposal presents a significant opportunity to improve outcomes for all communities and staff. A continued focus on equity, inclusion, and transparency will be essential to ensure that the benefits of LGR are realised across Hampshire and the Solent Area.

Introduction: purpose and scope of the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

This Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been developed to support decision-making on the preferred option to create four Unitary Authorities ('UA') in the process of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in Hampshire and the Solent Area (the 'Area'). The assessment provides a high-level review of potential equalities impacts using publicly available data and information held within the shared repository between the 15 local authorities in the Area.

Whilst not protected characteristics for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010, given the profile of the Area, Hampshire County Council (the 'County Council') has also chosen to consider the impact of proposals on poverty and rurality when making decisions, in recognition of the broader social and economic factors that influence equity and access to services. The LGR proposal for the Area was developed jointly by the County Council and East Hampshire County Council ('EHDC') (collectively referred to as 'the Councils').

This EIA:

- **Does include:**
 - A broad assessment of equalities implications on our proposal, based solely on publicly available data.
 - Consideration of potential impacts on residents and staff arising from changes to infrastructure and systems.
 - Identification of potential positive and negative impacts, and proposed mitigations.
 - Insights from various engagement activities undertaken by the Councils from July to August 2025.
- **Does not include:**
 - A detailed assessment of specific service-level impacts, as these impacts will need to be identified and assessed as we move through the transition process.

- Analysis of changes to individual services, since this is not a service change proposal at this stage.

Engagement activities

As part of the development of the LGR proposal for the Area, the Councils undertook a comprehensive programme of public and stakeholder engagement. This was designed to ensure that the proposal was informed by a wide range of views, including those of communities most likely to be impacted and those who are seldom heard.

Engagement activities sought to:

- Gather insights into perceived benefits, risks, and priorities related to LGR.
- Inform the final proposal and ensure alignment with Government criteria.
- Identify and highlight equality-related concerns and opportunities

Engagement methods and activities included:

- Public survey: 3,500 responses from individuals, organisations, and elected representatives.
- Representative sample survey: 1,100 residents across the Area, conducted by an independent polling company.
- Targeted stakeholder meetings: Including education, health, police, fire, VCSE sector, parish councils, MPs.

Additional, targeted efforts were made to engage communities typically underrepresented in survey responses. These included:

- A **survey of young people** attending schools within the Area, which received 343 responses from Year 10 students and 63 from Year 12 students.
- Research based on the public survey questions led by the **County Council's Ethnic Minority Community Researcher Network** to gather views from individuals across a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, including Caribbean, Asian, South African mixed race, Bengali, Pakistani, Indian, Nigerian, Hong Kong Chinese, Nepalese, Ukrainian, Russian, British African, and British Caribbean communities in Hampshire, Portsmouth, and Southampton.
- **Focus groups, held by Action Hampshire** to capture perspectives from diverse communities of interest, including carers, young carers, disabled people, children and young people, individuals with dementia, people who are blind or visually impaired, adults with learning disabilities, and those affected by domestic abuse, and residents of urban and unparished areas.

Findings from the engagement activities have directly informed the EIA by:

- Highlighting potential differential impacts on specific groups.
- Identifying opportunities to improve inclusion and representation.

- Supporting the development of mitigation strategies to address concerns.
- Ensuring that the final proposal reflects the needs and priorities of communities across the Area.

Key themes identified:

Benefits and Opportunities

- Equitable service delivery and potential to address current inequalities, including for minority and vulnerable communities.
- Simplification of governance and service pathways, reducing confusion about which council provides which service.
- Financial efficiencies and economies of scale, enabling better use of resources and potential cost savings.
- Improved strategic planning and responsiveness, with opportunities for stronger regional coordination (e.g. transport, economic development).
- Enhanced local identity and community engagement, including clearer opportunities for residents to shape decisions.
- Better alignment with partner organisations and the VCSE sector, supporting joined-up working and community-led delivery.
- Opportunity to embed community engagement into service design, making it a core principle of how councils operate.
- Clarity in service access, especially in areas currently served by two-tier systems.
- Potential for innovation (LGR as a chance to “think outside the box” and initiate new ideas).
- Improved or more equal provision of services, with hopes that larger councils could better fund community projects and reduce disparities.

Concerns

- Risk of losing local identity and representation, especially for smaller or border communities, and concerns about being “overlooked” in larger councils.
- Disruption and uncertainty during transition, particularly for vulnerable groups and those with ongoing service needs.
- Accessibility challenges, including digital exclusion, reduced face-to-face contact, language barriers, and concerns about office closures.
- Service fragmentation and postcode-based disparities, especially where services cross boundaries or rely on consistent processes.
- Impact on workforce and service continuity, including potential redundancies, loss of relationships, and disruption to trusted services.

- Inconsistent communication and lack of clarity on practical implications, including concerns about reapplying for services and understanding what LGR means at a local level.
- Low trust and engagement fatigue, with some communities feeling disempowered or unheard due to past experiences.
- Disruption to democratic representation (concerns about losing contact with elected representatives).
- Dilution of local character, with fears that merging councils could reduce the distinctiveness of cities and communities.

Future service changes

Although the decision under consideration does not result in immediate changes to service provision, it is part of a wider process that will lead to significant transformation in the future. Central government will launch a public consultation to explore options for LGR within the Area. Once the Government announces the option to be implemented in the Area, the Councils will begin detailed planning for any resulting changes to services.

Review of Protected Characteristics

RESIDENTS

Introduction

The proposed creation of new unitary authorities to replace the current two-tier system will bring significant changes to how services are delivered to residents across Hampshire and the Solent area ('the Area'). This geography currently includes Hampshire County Council, the upper-tier local authorities (UTLAs) of Portsmouth City Council, Southampton City Council, and the Isle of Wight Council, as well as 11 district, borough, and city councils. The Area encompasses a diverse mix of urban, suburban, rural, and coastal communities, each with distinct demographic profiles and service needs.

Under our proposal for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), the existing councils would be restructured into four new unitary authorities. This reorganisation will reshape how residents interact with their local councils and access services. Any form of reorganisation of local government in the Area may affect the consistency, accessibility, and quality of service provision, particularly during the transition period. While LGR presents opportunities for more streamlined and locally responsive governance, it also carries risks, especially for residents who rely on continuity of care and support.

Residents are at the heart of local government. This EIA recognises the importance of ensuring that their needs, voices, and lived experiences are central to the LGR process. It considers how different groups may be affected by the transition, with a focus on peoples' protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, as well as people affected by poverty and rurality.

The transition and implementation phase carries the greatest risk of disruption. Identifying and mitigating these risks is essential to protecting residents and ensuring equitable outcomes. Key concerns include the disaggregation of services, which may lead to inconsistency, reduced access, or fragmentation, particularly for vulnerable groups. There is also a risk that the loss of economies of scale or established partnerships could impact service quality and equity.

This section of the EIA focuses on the potential impacts of our LGR proposal on residents across the four proposed unitary authorities. It identifies current inequalities, outlines potential positive and negative impacts of the transition, and highlights where further consideration is needed to ensure fair, inclusive, and effective service delivery across all communities.

Data Availability

This EIA draws on publicly available data, primarily from the Office for National Statistics (ONS), including the 2021 Census and the 2023 mid-year population estimates. The data has been analysed across the proposed Unitary Authorities (i)

Mid-North Hampshire, (ii) South-East Hampshire, (iii) West Hampshire, and (iv) Isle of Wight, to reflect the geography of Hampshire and the wider Solent region. Where possible, data has been aggregated by district and protected characteristics.

1. Age

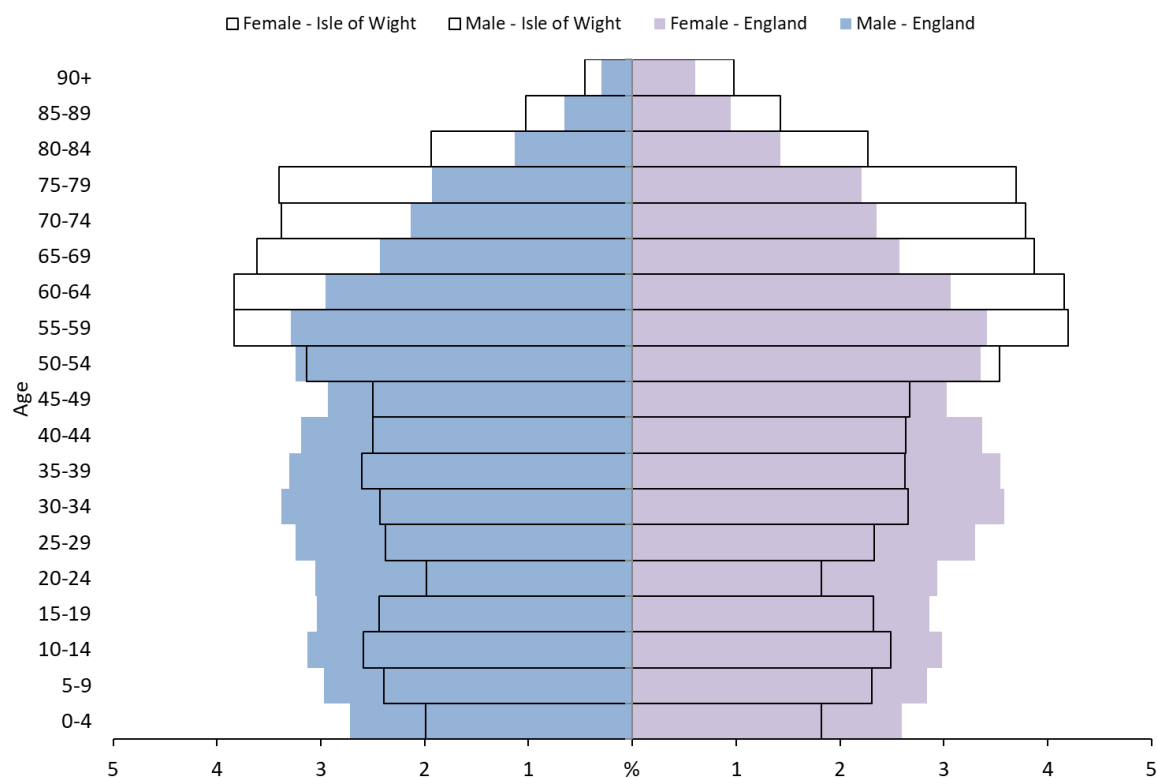
1.1. Overview

The population of the Area is estimated to be approximately 2.036 million people, based on the Office for National Statistics (ONS) 2023 mid-year population estimates. The age structure across the Area reflects a diverse demographic landscape, with notable differences between coastal, rural, and urban regions.

Table 1: Total Population. Source ONS mid-year estimates for 2023

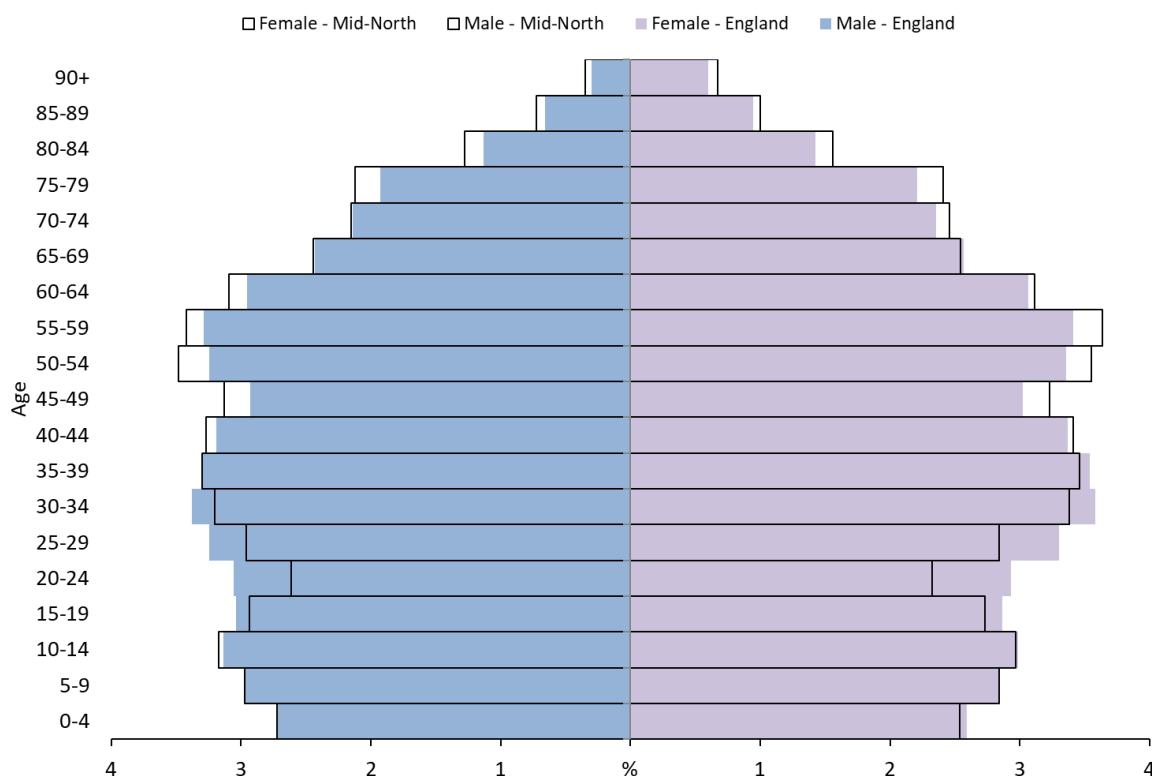
Isle of Wight	140,906
Mid-North	655,528
South-East	532,519
West	706,919

Figure 1: %Age and Sex breakdown of Population – Isle of Wight versus. England.



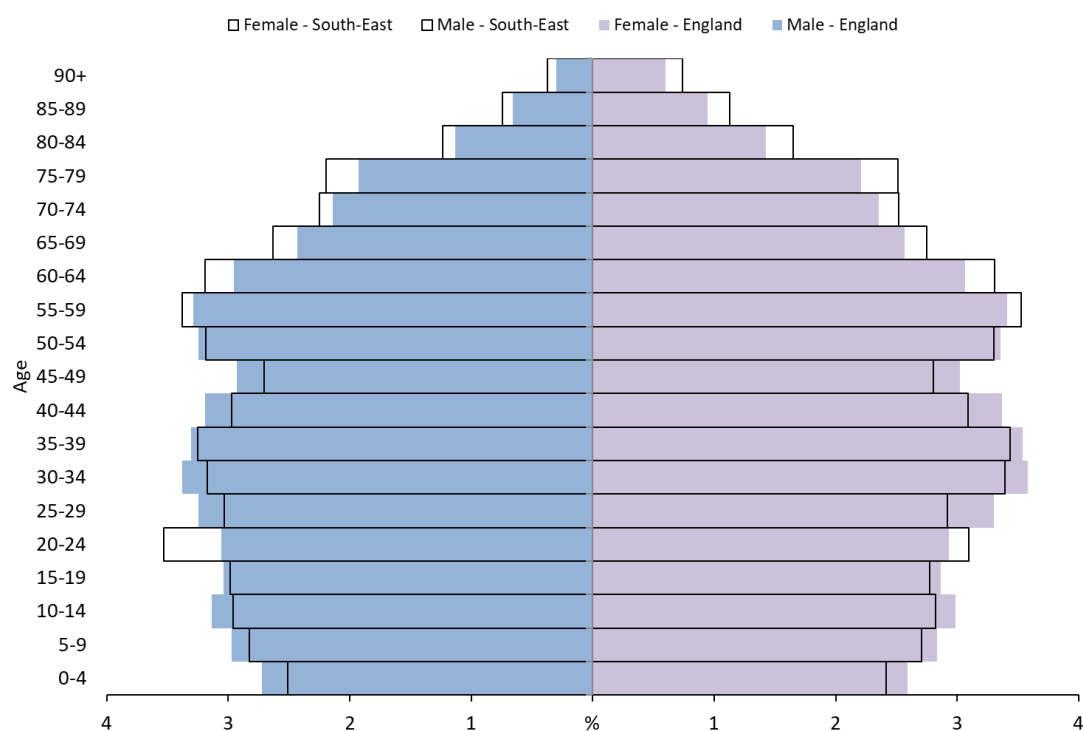
The pyramid shows Isle of Wight has quite a different age profile to the population of England. The 55+ population in England accounts for about 30% of the total population, but the equivalent figure for Isle of Wight is 45% illustrating the Island is made up of a much older population.

Figure 2: Age and Sex Breakdown (Mid-North versus England)



The population profile for Mid-North Hampshire is broadly similar to the profile for England, but with an older population.

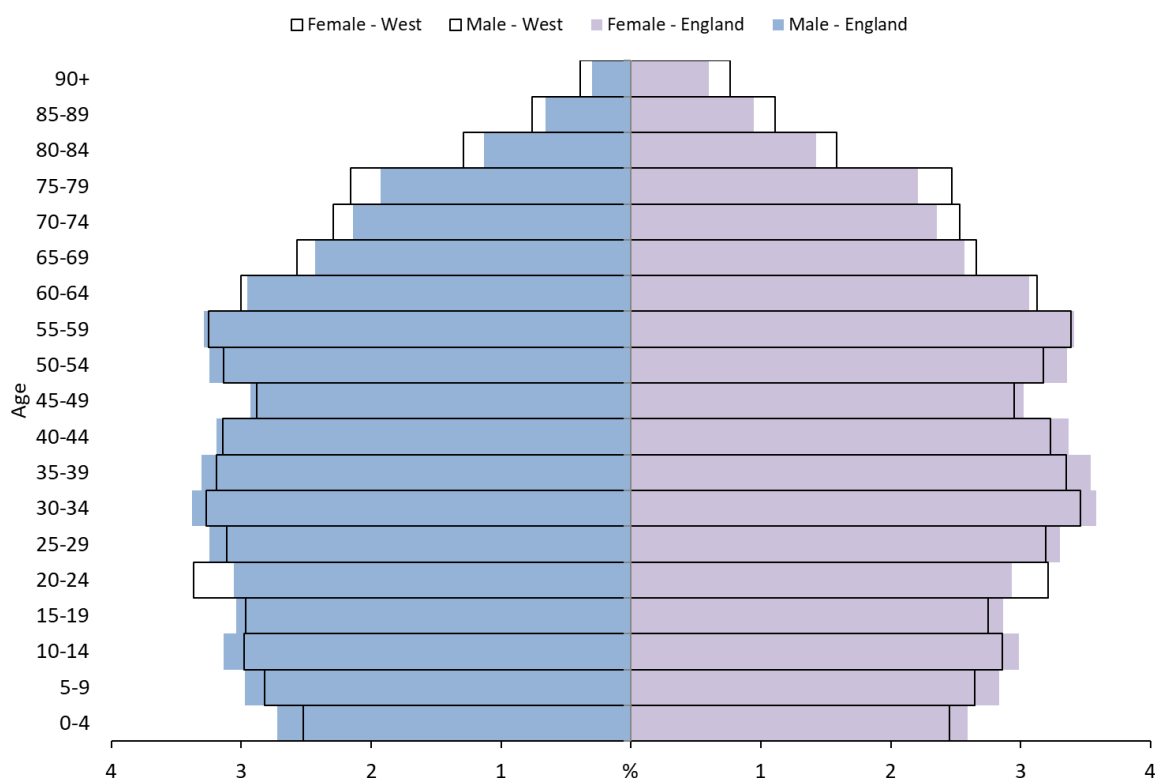
Figure 3: % Age and Sex breakdown (South-East versus England)



The South-East Hampshire age profile is broadly similar to the profile for England, but overall, this area has a larger, older population and a smaller, young population

profile than England. There is a higher proportion of people, particularly males aged 20-24 in South-East Hampshire area (this is probably to the presence of the military population).

Figure 4: % Age and Sex breakdown (West Hampshire versus England)



The West age profile is broadly similar to the profile for England, but with a higher proportion of people in the older age groups, as well as in the 20–24-year-old age group.

Figure 5: Summary of Age profile of Hampshire and the Solent Area

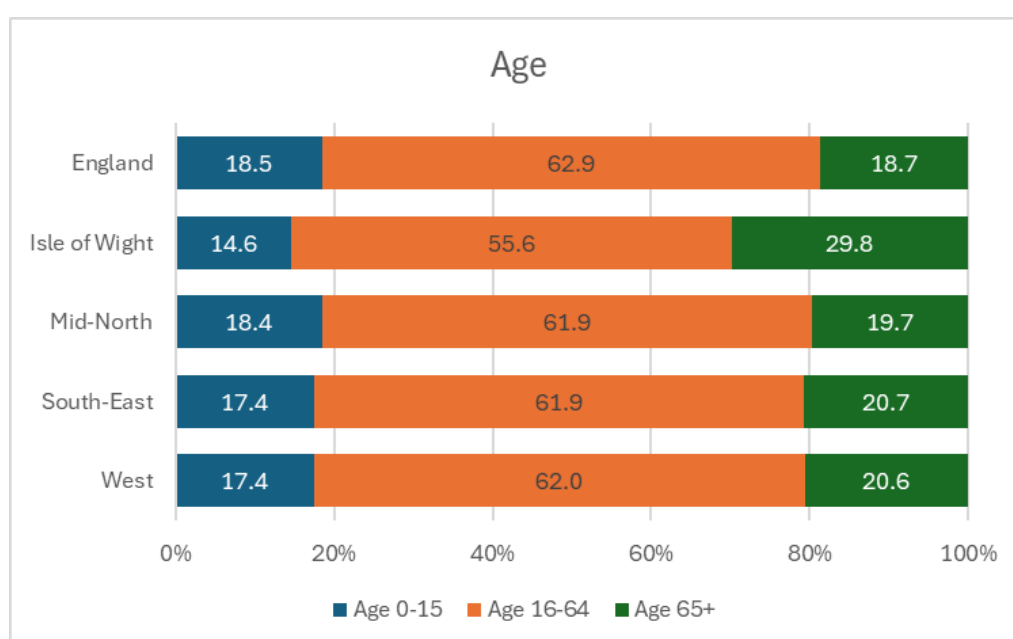
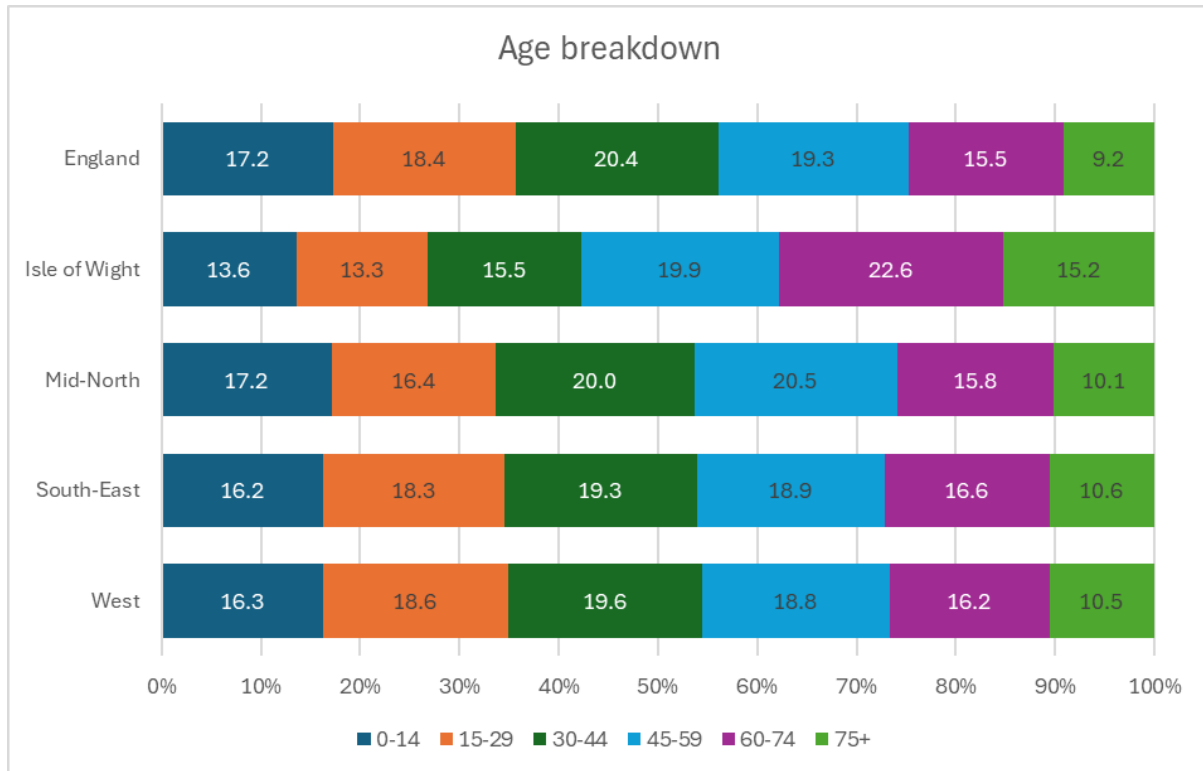


Figure 6: Breakdown of Age profile of Hampshire and the Solent Area



Mid-North Hampshire, South-East and West Hampshire have broadly similar age profiles to each other and to England overall, though these areas show a slightly older population.

Isle of Wight has a significantly older population. Nearly 30% of residents are aged 65 and over, compared to around 20% in other areas and 18.6% nationally. This means approximately one in three people on the island are aged 65+, highlighting potential implications for health and social care services (Figure 6).

The younger year groups 0–14, 15-29 and 20-34 age groups are underrepresented on the Isle of Wight, indicating a lower proportion of children and young people compared to other areas and the national average (Figure 6).

Adults' Health and Social Care

The responsibility of Adults' Health and Care is to prevent people from developing care and support needs, promote independence and to delay deterioration of people's conditions. From April 2024 to March 2025 support and care services was provided by the County Council's Adults' Health and Care for around 32,000 residents in Hampshire to get them back on their feet. Services provided included those that prevent people from developing care and support needs, information and advice about care and support services available in local areas for 120,000 people, assessment of eligible needs under the Care Act 2014, support for over 8,400 carers, 4.1 million hours of homecare, care and support for around 2,500 people in residential and nursing homes, 895 people living in extra care apartments preventing

the need for long term residential care and safeguarding services to prevent abuse and neglect.

The scale and breath of Adults' Health and Care activities shows how it improves lives of the residents of the Area. The other UTLAs in the Area also provide Adult Social Care to meet eligible Care needs under the Care Act 2014. Data of clients that receive social care services in the other UTLAs is not included this assessment and tables below and may result in changes to the overall picture for the South-East and West Hampshire. These changes are presumed to be minimal due to the similarity in age profile of the population and scale of Adults' Social Care services provided by Southampton City Council and Portsmouth City Council compared to Hampshire County Council.

In June 2025, the County Council was providing long term services within Hampshire for around 14,500 people. Around 1,000 individuals located out of county who were also supported are not included in this assessment.

The highest percentage of the County Council's clients aged 65 and over are in the Mid-North (26.5%), followed by the West (22.3%) and then the South-East (18.2%).

However, the age profile of the County Council's clients across each of the new unitary authorities show similar levels for each age group (% Total per unitary authority clients by age group) with significant increases from 55–64-year groups and a maximum in the 85+ year groups. The percentages are also similar for each unitary authority for those aged 65 and over, 66.8% for the Mid-North, 68.6% for the South–East and 65.9% for the West. This is aligned with the age profile of the population and suggests that the Isle of Wight could be providing Adults' Social Care Services for a relatively higher proportion of those aged 65 and over.

Table 2: Number of Hampshire County Council clients by Unitary Authority by Age group in June 2025

Unitary Authority	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75-84	85+	TOTAL
Mid-North	222	392	319	397	575	800	1432	1600	5737
South-East	122	231	217	235	399	525	969	1136	3834
West	172	313	318	323	539	631	1121	1459	4876
Grand Total	516	936	854	955	1513	1956	3522	4195	14447

Table 3: % Hampshire County Council clients by unitary authority by age group in June 2025

Unitary Authority	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75-84	85+	TOTAL
Mid-North	1.5	2.7	2.2	2.7	4.0	5.5	9.9	11.1	39.7
South-East	0.8	1.6	1.5	1.6	2.8	3.6	6.7	7.9	26.5
West	1.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	3.7	4.4	7.8	10.1	33.8

Table 4: % Total Hampshire County Council Clients by unitary authority by age group in June 2025

Unitary Authority	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75-84	85+	TOTAL
Mid-North	3.9	6.8	5.6	6.9	10.0	13.9	25.0	27.9	100.0
South-East	3.2	6.0	5.7	6.1	10.4	13.7	25.3	29.6	100.0
West	3.5	6.4	6.5	6.6	11.1	12.9	23.0	29.9	100.0

The challenges of LGR include ensuring increased financial sustainability of new unitary authorities to ensure that the adult social care load, due to an increasingly aging population and complexity of needs, is evenly distributed across the Area. This is to avoid existing inequalities associated with deprivation, age, disability and rurality being exacerbated by lack of access and poorer experience of adult social care and resulting in poorer outcomes for the most vulnerable.

Children's Services

Across the landscape of Children's Services, the County Council demonstrates significant infrastructure and capability to deliver education services at scale. As of 2025, the County Council oversees 458 local authority-maintained schools, representing 86% of all schools in Hampshire. In contrast, Southampton has 42 (55%) of its schools maintained by the local authority, while Portsmouth has just 18 (29%), reflecting a more academised education landscape.

This disparity in school governance structures is important when considering the implications of disaggregating services to form new unitary authorities. The County Council's model supports a more centralised and coordinated approach to school improvement, safeguarding, and inclusion.

Ofsted inspection outcomes further highlight the strength of Hampshire's education system. A significant proportion of Hampshire's maintained schools are rated 'Good' or 'Outstanding', reflecting consistent performance and effective local authority support. While Southampton and Portsmouth also have high-performing schools, the more fragmented governance landscape can present challenges in delivering consistent outcomes and coordinated support across the system.

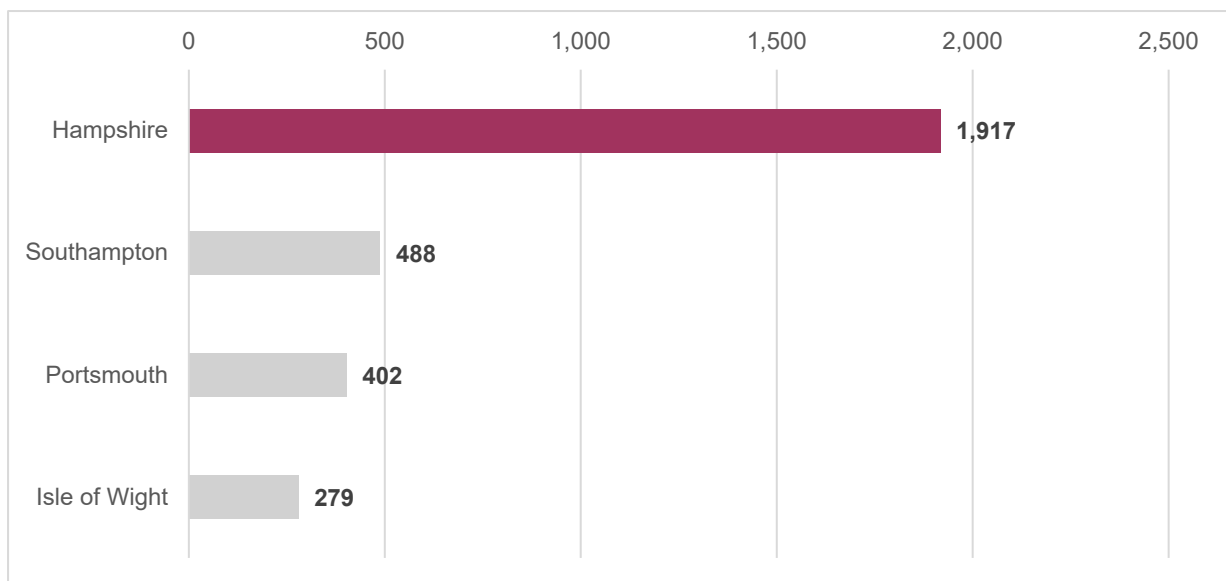
As the region considers future models of local government, it is essential to recognise the value of Hampshire's integrated education infrastructure and the potential risks of disrupting established systems that currently deliver strong outcomes for children and young people.

Table 5: Schools in the area¹

		HAMPSHIRE	PORTSMOUTH	SOUTHAMPTON	ISLE OF WIGHT
Academy	Pupil Headcount - Total	48,835	20,122	14,948	4,350
	Number of schools	73	44	34	7
LA Maintained	Pupil Headcount - Total	135,232	7,877	19,494	12,218
	Number of schools	458	18	42	41

Similarly, wider support and positive impacts are provided for children across the County Council's strong and effective services at a significantly larger scale than neighbouring unitary authorities, as illustrated in Figure 7. When considering the current landscape of social care, it's vitally important to consider how to best ensure that risks to vulnerable service users are minimised through LGR.

Figure 7: Children in Social Care 2024²



1.2. Potential Negative Impacts

- Service disruption during transition affecting vulnerable groups like older people, children, and families.
- New councils might introduce different rules or standards, leading to unequal access to support depending on where people live.

¹ Source: [STATISTICS](#)

² Source: [STATISTICS](#)

- People receiving care from providers in another council area may face delays or confusion due to coordination challenges.
- Recruiting and retaining skilled staff could become harder, with competition between councils potentially affecting service quality.
- Breaking up existing services may weaken important partnerships, such as safeguarding and multi-agency working.
- Managing care placements across council boundaries could become more complex and less stable.
- Areas with higher needs may face more pressure on services, risking delays or reduced quality.
- Existing care systems and frameworks could be fragmented, leading to confusion, higher costs, and disruption for those in care.
- Young people expressed concern that smaller issues could be deprioritised, and that centralised decision-making might reduce their ability to influence local change.

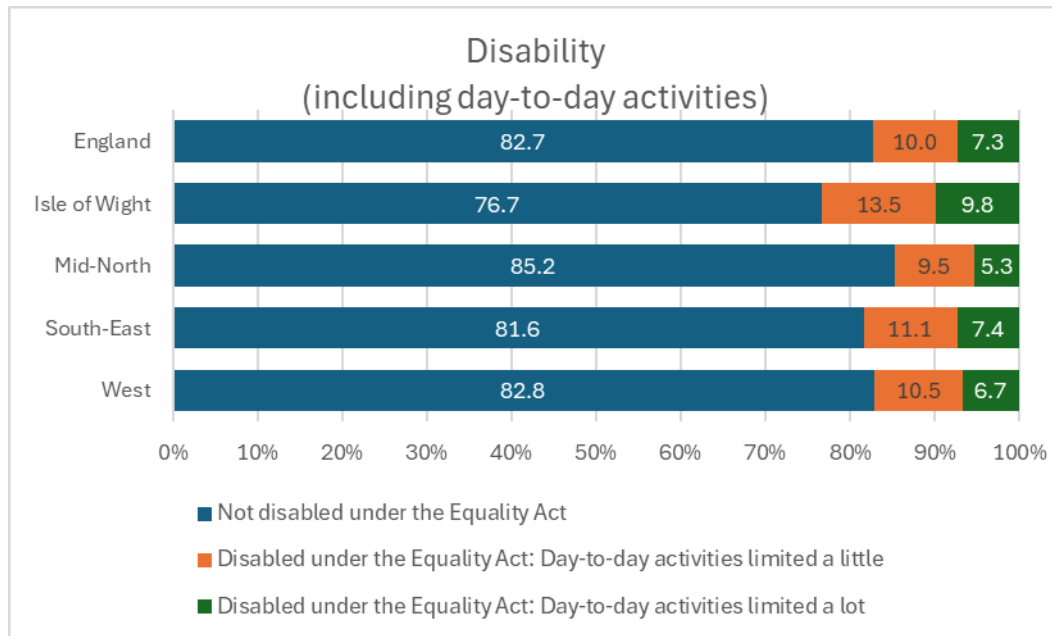
1.3. Potential Positive Impacts

- Integrating services currently provided by upper tier and lower tier organisations such as housing, homelessness support, mental health and home care may improve cohesion and speed of delivery of services for residents.
- LGR presents the opportunity to improve collaboration with schools, GPs, care providers, and community organisations.
- LGR offers the chance to rethink the current partnership model to improve care coordination, especially for older people with distinctive needs; improving data sharing would allow a more accurate alignment of services with local age profiles.
- Young people saw potential for more efficient council operations, clearer responsibilities, and faster decision-making.
- There is an opportunity to invest in youth-friendly spaces, such as parks, leisure facilities, and safe places to socialise.
- Some young people felt LGR could lead to better engagement with residents and more opportunities to have a say in local decisions.

2. Disability

2.1 Overview

Figure 8: Disability profile of Hampshire and the Solent Area



Disability data for the Area is drawn from the 2021 Census, specifically referencing individuals who identify as disabled under the Equality Act (2010). This includes those whose day-to-day activities are limited either “a little” or “a lot” due to a long-term health condition or impairment.

Across England, 17.3% of the population identified as disabled under the Equality Act. In comparison:

- Isle of Wight has the highest proportion of disabled residents at 23.3%, significantly above the national average. Of these, 42.2% report being limited “a lot” in their daily activities, closely mirroring the national figure of 42.4%.
- Mid-North Hampshire has the lowest proportion of disabled residents at 14.8%, with only 35.7% of those reporting severe limitations in daily activities.
- Other areas, including South-East and West Hampshire, fall between these two extremes, with disability rates below the national average and fewer individuals reporting severe limitations.

The data highlights a clear intersection between age and disability, particularly on the Isle of Wight, where the older age profile correlates with higher disability prevalence and severity.

Table 6: Number of Hampshire County Council Clients by Unitary Authority by Client Category (Long Term Care Provision in June 2025)

Unitary Authority	Older Adults	Physical Disability	Learning Disability	Mental Health	Support for Carers	Total
Mid-North	3643	696	1081	230	110	5760
South-East	2490	400	743	160	49	3842
West	3036	578	1072	129	75	4890
TOTAL	9169	1674	2896	519	234	14492

Table 7: % Hampshire County Council clients by Unitary Authority by Client Category (Long Term Care Provision in June 2025)

Unitary Authority	Older Adults	Physical Disability	Learning Disability	Mental Health	Support for Carers	Total
Mid-North	25.1	4.8	7.5	1.6	0.8	39.7
South-East	17.2	2.8	5.1	1.1	0.3	26.5
West	20.9	4.0	7.4	0.9	0.5	33.7

Table 8: % Total Hampshire County Council clients for each Unitary Authority by Client Category (Long Term Care Provision in June 2025)

Unitary Authority	Older Adults	Physical Disability	Learning Disability	Mental Health	Support for Carers	Total
Mid-North	63.2	12.1	18.8	4.0	1.9	100.0
South-East	64.8	10.4	19.3	4.2	1.3	100.0
West	62.1	11.8	21.9	2.6	1.5	100.0

Hampshire County Council's long term care provision in June 2025 across the new unitary areas shows that the Mid-North have a significantly higher percentage of clients supported by Older Adult (25.1%). The percentage of the clients for other long-term provision (Client category) is fairly even. A slight increase of the percentage of people receiving learning disability support is balanced by a lower provision of mental health in the West. Similarly, a slightly higher provision in the South-East for Older Adults is balanced out by a lower provision of physical disability support.

Although this assessment does not include long term care provision client data from the other UTLAs it underlines the robustness of the LGR proposal for Hampshire and the Solent Area in relation to provision the County Council's Adults' Social Care Services across the new Unitary Authorities and its implications for provision of care and support for existing County Council clients.

2.2 Potential Negative Impacts

- Service disruption during transition could affect disabled people who rely on consistent care, accessible services, and trusted support networks.

- Differences in policies and eligibility across new councils may result in unequal access to services and inconsistent application of reasonable adjustments for disabled individuals.
- Reduced collaboration between councils could impact delivery of public health and safeguarding services, which are critical for disabled people who depend on joined-up support.
- Loss or relocation of specialist staff (e.g. sensory teams) may lead to gaps in frontline expertise, affecting the quality of care for disabled residents.
- Increased reliance on digital platforms risks excluding disabled and neurodiverse people, especially those facing barriers like inaccessible interfaces, limited digital literacy, or lack of internet access.

2.3 Potential Positive Impacts

- Combining council responsibilities could make it easier for disabled people to access services by reducing confusion and improving coordination.
- A place-based approach could help target health and care support more effectively in areas with higher disability rates, while promoting inclusive design and prevention in areas with lower rates.
- Disabled people and advocacy groups may have more opportunities to shape services locally, improving how well services meet their needs.
- Resources could be better matched to local needs, allowing for more investment in accessible infrastructure, health services, and community support for disabled residents.
- Improved local data on disability could lead to more responsive and inclusive service design, helping councils better understand and meet the needs of disabled people.

3. Gender Reassignment

3.1 Overview

Under the Equality Act (2010), an individual is identified as having the gender reassignment characteristic if they have undergone or proposes to undergo a process for the purpose of reassigning their sex to one different from their sex assigned at birth. The Census 2021 had a voluntary question that allowed individuals aged 16 and over to state if they identified with a gender different to that of their sex recorded at birth. The question was optional – the data below reflects responses from those who answered the question.

It's important to note that these statistics are considered "official statistics in development" due to the evolving understanding of gender identity and the sensitivity of the topic. The ONS advises caution in interpretation, especially at smaller

geographic levels where numbers are low and subject to disclosure controls. Across England, most respondents (99.42%) reported a gender identity the same as their sex assigned at birth or did not specify a particular identity, 0.11% identifying as trans women, 0.11% as trans men, and 0.11% with other gender identities.

At 99.63%, Isle of Wight has the highest percentage of people with their gender identity the same as their sex assigned at birth.

Figure 9: Gender Identity profile for Hampshire and the Solent Area

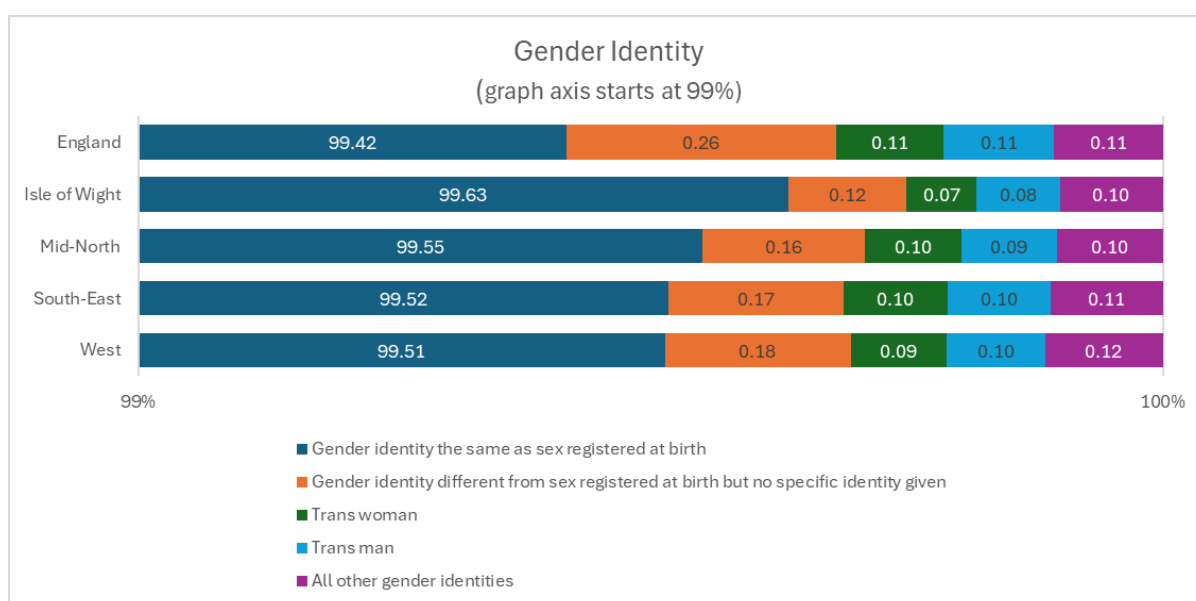


Table 9: Gender Identity (% in each category)

	England	Isle of Wight	Mid-North	South-East	West
Gender Identity the same as sex registered at birth	93.50	93.60	94.90	94.40	94.10
Gender Identity different from sex registered at birth but no specific identity given	0.20	0.10	0.20	0.20	0.20
Transwoman	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10
Transman	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10
All other gender Identities	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10
Not answered	6.0	6.0	4.6	5.1	5.5

3.2 Potential Negative Impacts

- Service disruption during transition could affect access to gender identity or transition-related support, especially if these services are not consistently replicated across new councils.
- Data migration during reorganisation may increase the risk of sensitive personal information—such as gender identity—being mishandled or disclosed, undermining trust and privacy.
- Gender-affirming services and safe spaces (e.g. support groups, inclusive clinics) may be lost or fragmented, particularly in rural or less diverse areas.
- New councils may adopt different approaches to inclusion and safeguarding, leading to unequal access to gender-inclusive services depending on location.
- If trans and non-binary voices are not actively included in service design, their needs may be overlooked in new policies and practices.

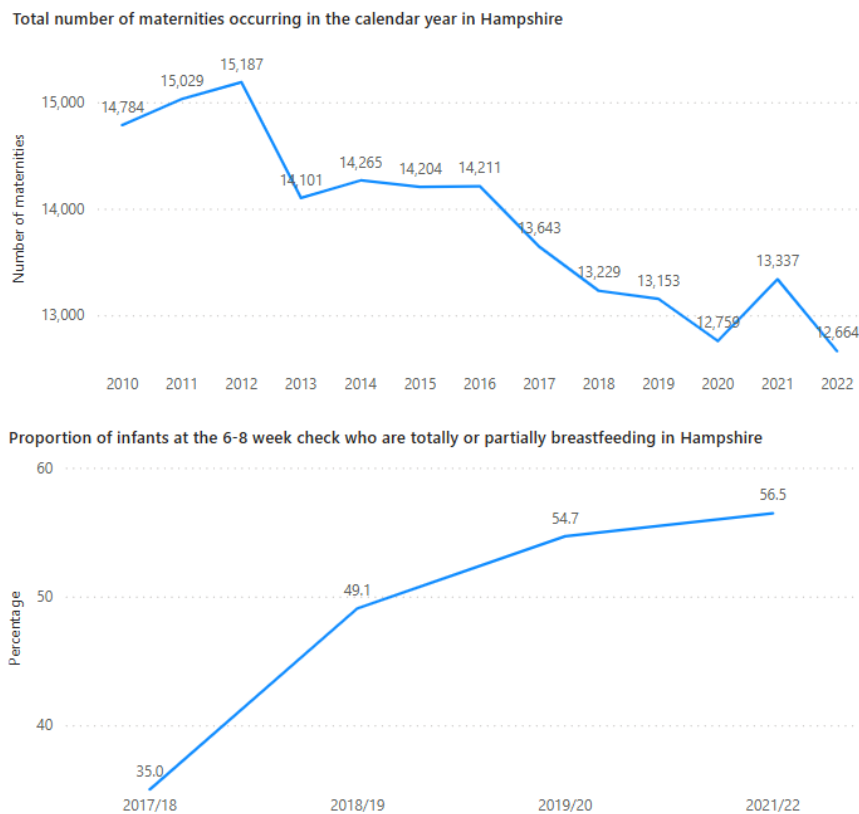
3.3 Potential Positive Impacts

- LGR offers a chance to co-produce services with local LGBTQ+ communities, leading to more responsive, affirming, and accessible support.
- Councils can embed inclusive policies, staff training, and safeguarding protocols from the outset, improving consistency and quality of support for trans and non-binary residents.
- Increased focus on local engagement may improve visibility and representation of gender-diverse communities in service planning and leadership.

4. Pregnancy and Maternity

4.1 Overview

Figure 10: Hampshire and Isle of Wight JSNA Demography Report³



According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS), the number of live births in England and Wales increased slightly in 2024 for the first time since 2021, but many regions, including the South-East, continued to see a decline.

The graph for Hampshire and Isle of Wight illustrates two key trends: a decline in the total number of maternities from 2010 to 2022, with a peak of 15,187 in 2012 dropping to 12,664 by 2022, and a concurrent rise in breastfeeding rates among infants at the six-to-eight-week check, increasing from 35% in 2017/18 to 56.5% in 2021/22. This suggests that while fewer births are occurring over time, there has been a significant improvement in breastfeeding practices.

4.2 Potential Negative Impacts

- There is a risk that disaggregation of services may lead to disruptions in maternity and postnatal care, particularly affecting continuity between pregnancy and early parenting support. This could also hinder integrated

³ Source: [MICROSOFT POWER BI](#)

working with the NHS, potentially impacting the quality of care for some residents.

- There is also a risk of inconsistency between the new unitary authorities in areas such as maternity support policies, childcare funding, and access to parenting programmes, which may result in unequal support for families depending on where they live.

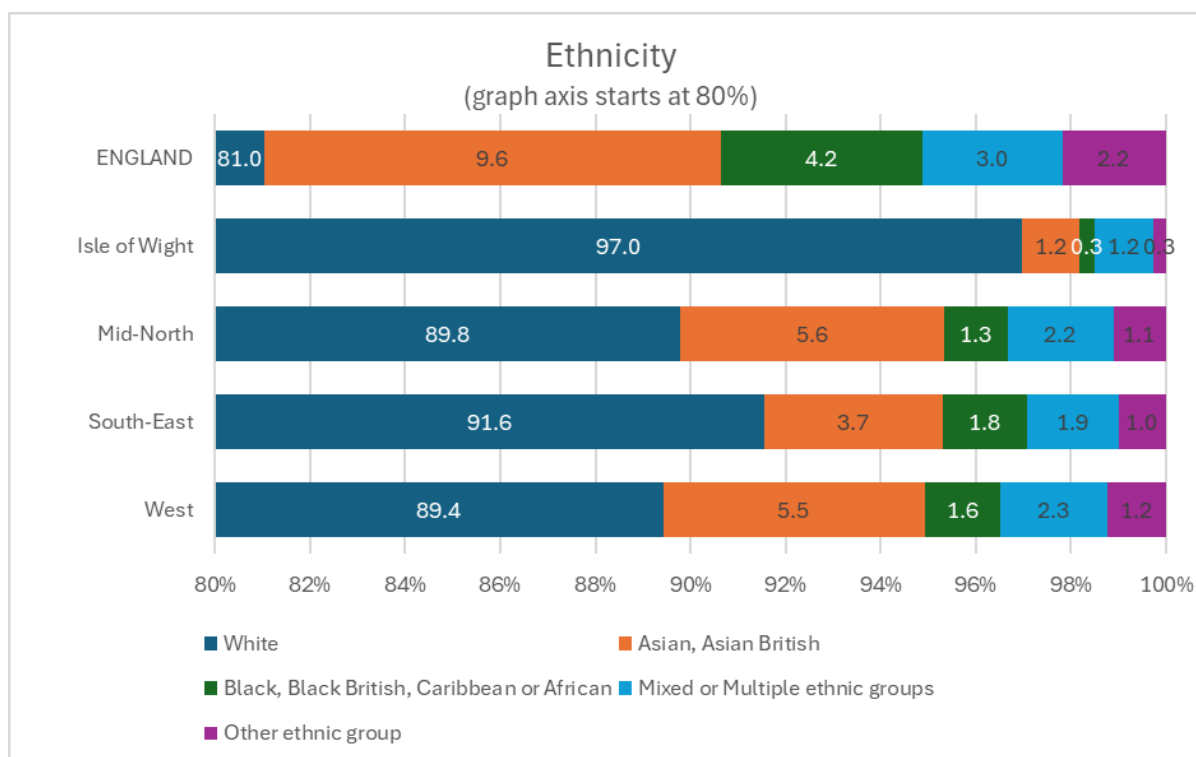
4.3 Potential Positive Impacts

- LGR offers a chance for a more localised service delivery which may make it easier for parents to access support such as community hubs, early years care, and parenting programmes, especially if services are organised closer to where families live.
- The new local authorities could improve coordination between social care, health visitors, and maternity services at the community level, enhancing wraparound support for families.

5. Ethnicity

5.1 Overview

Figure 11: Breakdown of Ethnicity in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight



Ethnicity data for the Hampshire and Solent Area is drawn from the 2021 Census. Compared to the national average, the Area is significantly less ethnically diverse.

Nationally, 81.0% of the population identified as White and 19.0% as non-White. In contrast:

- Isle of Wight is the least diverse area, with 97.0% of residents identifying as White.
- Mid-North Hampshire and West Hampshire have similar profiles, with just over 89% identifying as White and around 5.5% identifying as Asian or Asian British.
- South-East Hampshire has 91.6% of its population identifying as White, but the highest proportion of Black, Black British, Caribbean or African residents among the four areas.

These figures indicate that while diversity exists within the Hampshire and Solent Area, it is concentrated in specific districts, particularly urban centres. This has implications for service delivery, community engagement, and equality planning under LGR. Ensuring that new unitary authorities reflect and respond to the needs of ethnically diverse communities, especially in areas with higher representation, is essential for inclusive policy development and equitable access to services.

Further to this, consideration is given to the ethnicity profile of Hampshire County Council's Adult Social Care clients with long term provision grouped according to the proposed unitary authorities. The client base of the other unitary authorities in the Area is not included in the assessment below.

The ethnicity for the County Council's clients receiving long term care in June 2025 within the county was recorded for 12,997 in June 2025. Compared to the general population, the Mid-North have the highest proportion of White clients within Hampshire and the Solent Area but also 50% more Asian and Black clients within the Unitary authority areas (Table 13: % Hampshire County Council Adult's Social Care – long term client ethnicity by Unitary Authority for each Unitary Authority). This does not align with the age profile for Hampshire and Solent Area population and suggests under representation of Asians in the West and Blacks in the South-East and West.

Table 10: Hampshire County Council Adult's Social Care – long term client ethnicity. Ethnicity Profile by Unitary Authority (excludes unknown/out of county districts in June 2025)

Ethnicity	Mid-North	South-East	West	Total
White	4902	3356	4234	12492
Asian, Asian British	120	30	39	189
Black, Black British, Caribbean or African	53	12	20	85
Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups	32	14	18	64
Other Ethnic Groups	30	14	23	67
Total	5137	3426	4334	12897

Table 11: % Hampshire County Council Adult's Social Care – long term client ethnicity by Unitary Authority (excludes unknown/out of county districts in June 2025)

Ethnicity	Mid-North	South-East	West
White	38.0	26.0	32.8
Asian, Asian British	0.9	0.2	0.2
Black, Black British, Caribbean or African	0.4	0.1	0.2
Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups	0.2	0.1	0.1
Other Ethnic Groups	0.2	0.1	0.2
Total	39.7	26.5	33.5

Table 12: % Hampshire County Council Adult's Social Care – long term client ethnicity by Unitary Authority for each Unitary Authority (excludes unknown/out of county districts in June 2025)

Ethnicity	Mid-North	South-East	West
White	95.40	98.00	97.70
Asian, Asian British	2.30	0.90	0.90
Black, Black British, Caribbean or African	1.00	0.40	0.50
Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups	0.60	0.40	0.40
Other Ethnic Groups	0.60	0.40	0.50
Total	100	100	100

5.2 Potential Negative Impacts

- LGR may disrupt access to interpreting, translation, and culturally sensitive services, particularly in more diverse urban areas. If these services are not prioritised equally across new unitary authorities, residents from ethnic minority backgrounds may face barriers to accessing healthcare, education, and housing support.
- Fragmentation of centralised equality teams and county-wide initiatives could weaken the ability to monitor race equality outcomes, share best practice, and respond to systemic inequalities. This may particularly affect areas with smaller ethnic minority populations, where dedicated resources are less likely to be retained locally.

- Without deliberate inclusion strategies, there is a risk that ethnically diverse communities may be underrepresented in the design and governance of new authorities, leading to services that do not fully reflect their needs.
- New authorities may adopt varying policies and priorities, resulting in unequal progress on anti-racism, inclusive education, and workforce diversity across the region.

5.3 Potential Positive Impacts

- LGR presents a chance to tailor services to the specific demographic needs of their communities, particularly in areas with higher ethnic diversity such as South-East Hampshire.
- LGR presents an opportunity to strengthen relationships with local ethnic minority communities, enabling co-production of services that reflect lived experience and cultural context.
- New authorities can establish inclusive policies, staff training, and community engagement frameworks from the beginning, potentially improving outcomes for ethnically diverse residents.
- LGR provides an opportunity to identify and address disparities in the provision of care services for ethnic minority populations across the Hampshire and Solent area.

6. Religion or Belief

6.1 Overview

Religion data for the Hampshire and Solent Area is based on the 2021 Census. Compared to national figures, the Area shows a slightly higher proportion of people reporting no religion and a lower representation of most minority faiths.

Nationally:

- 36.7% of people reported having no religion
- 46.3% identified as Christian
- Minority religions included Islam (6.7%), Hinduism (1.8%), and Buddhism (0.5%)

In the Hampshire and Solent Area:

- All areas reported over 40% of residents stating they had no religion, higher than the national average
- Christianity remains the most common religion, with over 43% identifying as Christian across all areas
- Minority religions are present in smaller proportions:

- Muslim populations are highest in South-East (2.3%) and West (2.5%)
- Buddhists are most concentrated in Mid-North Hampshire (1.3%), likely reflecting the presence of Nepalese communities
- Hindu representation is highest in Mid-North Hampshire (1.9%), similar to the national average

Urban and ethnically diverse districts such as Rushmoor, Southampton, and Portsmouth show greater religious variation, with higher proportions of Hindu, Muslim, and Buddhist residents. These areas may require more inclusive approaches to service delivery, community engagement, and cultural sensitivity

6.2 Potential negative impacts

- LGR may disrupt existing relationships with faith groups and voluntary organisations that provide community support, food banks, youth services, and mental health outreach. Fragmentation could weaken coordination and reduce the visibility of faith-based contributions to local wellbeing.
- New unitary authorities may adopt differing policies on religious observance, dietary requirements, faith-based education, and cultural sensitivity. This could result in unequal experiences for residents depending on where they live.
- There is a risk that minority faith groups may be overlooked in service design and consultation processes, leading to services that do not reflect their needs or beliefs.
- If county-wide equality teams or interfaith forums are disbanded, it may become harder to monitor religious discrimination, promote interfaith dialogue, and ensure consistent application of the Public Sector Equality Duty.

6.3 Potential positive impacts

- LGR presents an opportunity to build relationships with local places of worship and faith-based organisations, enabling more responsive and inclusive service delivery.
- Localised services could be more attuned to the specific religious and cultural practices of their communities, such as prayer spaces, burial practices, and religious holidays.
- LGR offers a chance to embed inclusive policies and staff training from the outset, ensuring that services are respectful of religious beliefs and practices.
- Strengthened community cohesion – with a more place-based focus, new authorities could foster stronger interfaith collaboration and community cohesion, particularly in urban areas with greater religious diversity.

7. Sex

7.1 Overview

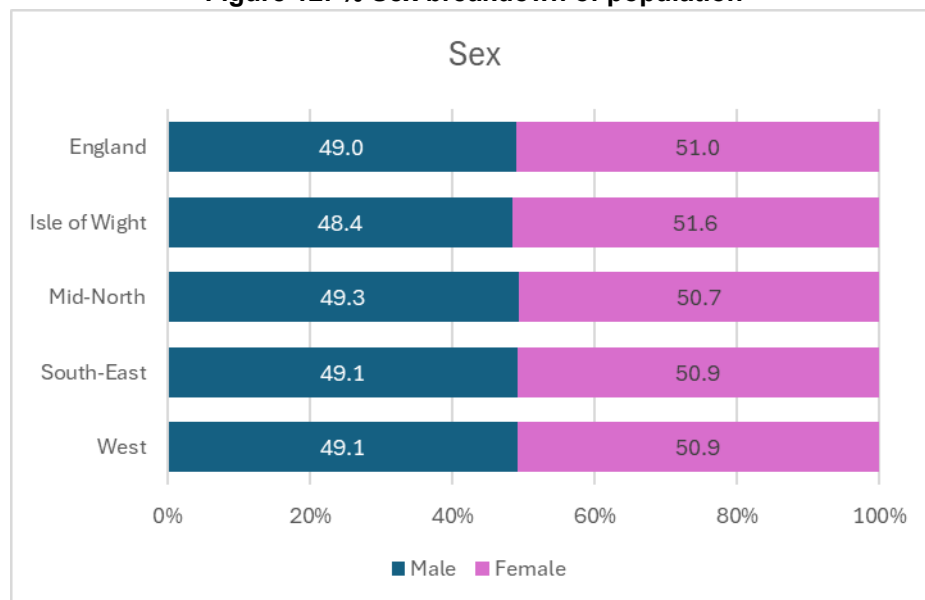
Sex data for the Hampshire and Solent Area is drawn from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) 2023 mid-year population estimates. Nationally, the population is composed of approximately 49.0% men and 51.0% women, a near-even split that is broadly reflected across the proposed Unitary Authority areas.

- Mid-North Hampshire, South-East Hampshire, and West Hampshire show gender distributions similar to the national average.
- The Isle of Wight has a slightly higher proportion of women and a lower proportion of men compared to England. This is likely linked to the Island's older age profile, as women tend to live longer on average.

Population pyramids show that older age groups (particularly those aged 65 and over) are disproportionately female across all areas, with the trend most pronounced in the Isle of Wight. This has implications for service planning, particularly in adult social care, health services, and housing, where older women may have distinct needs and vulnerabilities.

Understanding sex distribution is essential for ensuring equitable access to services, addressing gender-specific health and wellbeing needs, and promoting inclusive policy development under the new local government structure.

Figure 12: % Sex breakdown of population



Population pyramids show the age and sex breakdown of the population. The pyramids below show the population of each of the proposed Unitary Authorities under the preferred LGR option compared to the population of England.

Figure 13: % Age by Sex profile of population of the Isle of Wight

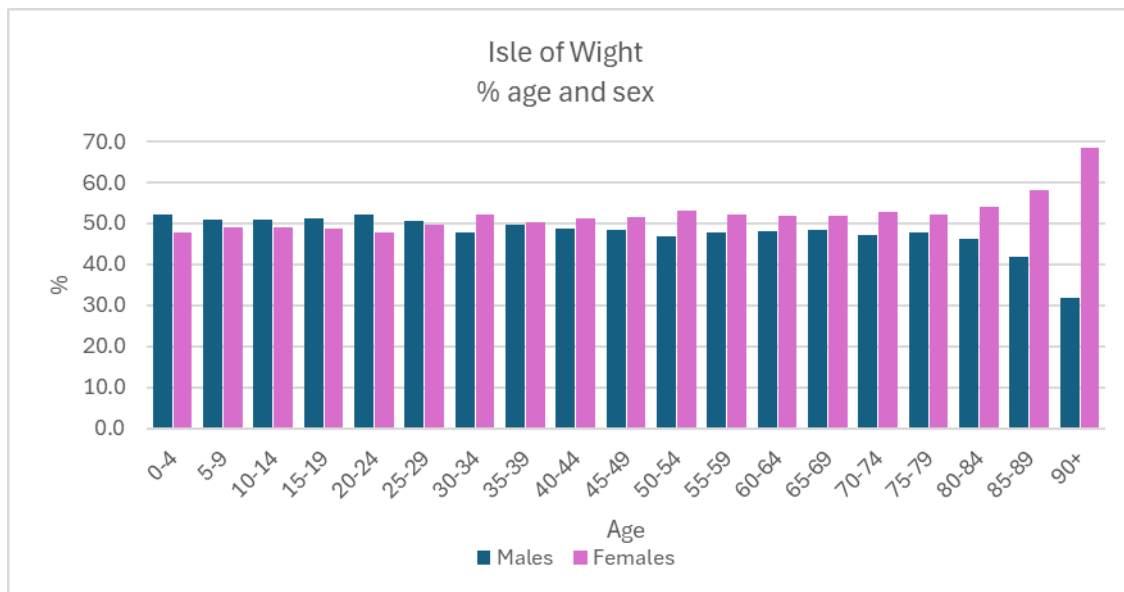


Figure 14: % Age by Sex profile of population of the Mid-North

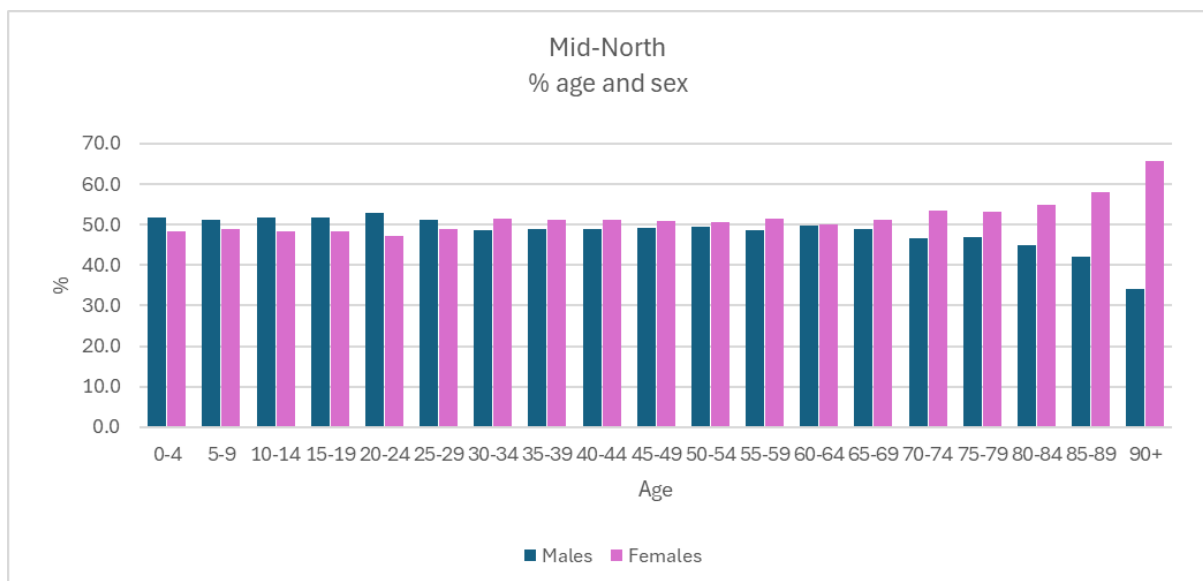


Figure 15: % Age by Sex profile of population of the South-East

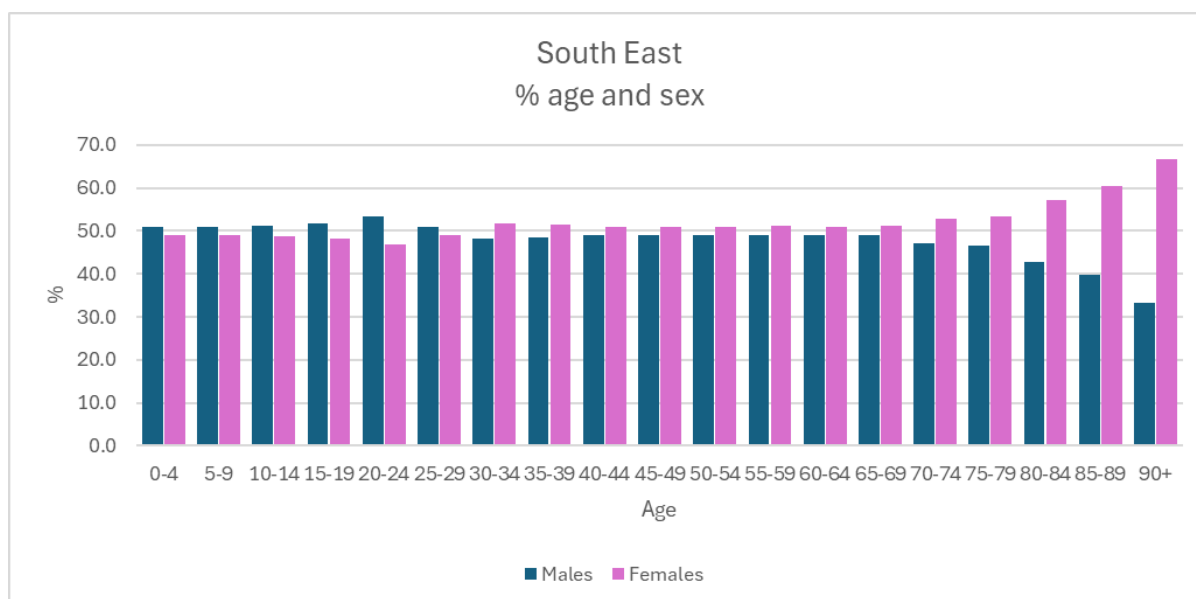
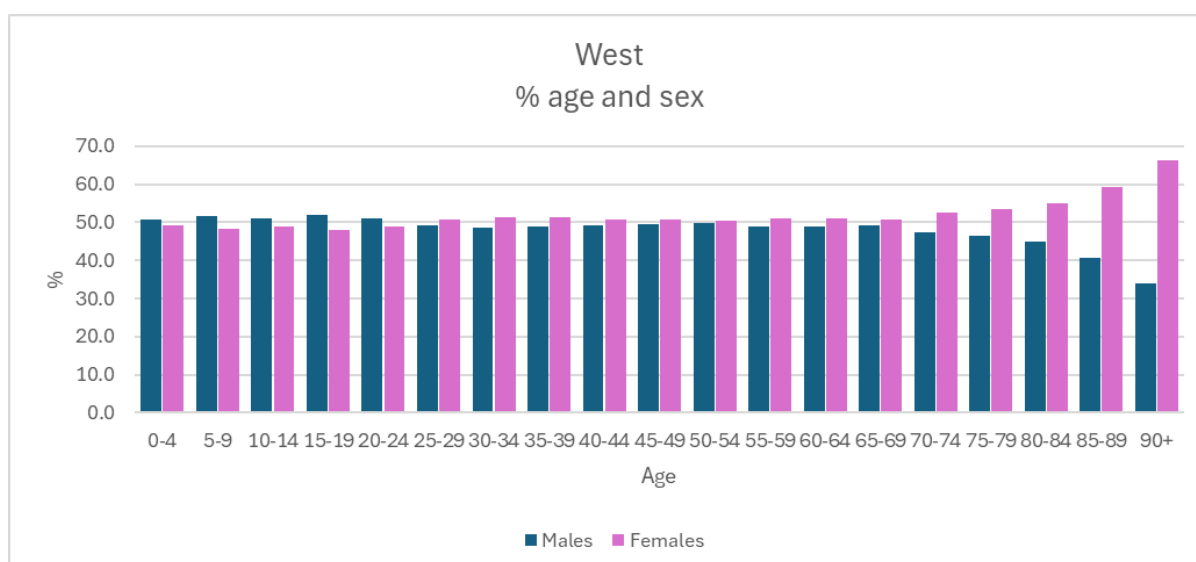


Figure 16: % Age by Sex profile of population of the West



The age and sex profiles show that the Isle of Wight, Mid-North and South-East have a higher proportion of males in the population up to the 25–29-year band after which the female proportion is greater. For West Hampshire the proportion of males in the population is greater up to 20–24-year band after which the female proportion is greater.

The proportion of females compared to males in the population of all the proposed unitary authorities is higher in the older age bands with significantly higher differences from the 70–74-year band for Mid-North, South-East and West. For the Isle of Wight, there are bigger gender difference with age with the female proportion of the population being significantly more from the age band 50-54 years.

Table 13: % Hampshire County Council long term clients sex profile

	Female (including trans woman)	Male (including trans man)	Non-binary	Other (not listed)	Total
Mid-North	58.6	41.1	0.1	0.2	100
South-East	59.7	40.1	0.0	0.2	100
West	58.9	40.8	0.1	0.2	100

The sex profile of Hampshire County Council's long term clients shows that aligned with the population females tend to live longer and are also more likely to live longer in poorer health and need care and support.

7.2 Potential Negative Impacts

- Women, particularly older women, are more likely to rely on health, social care, and community services. As such, any disruption to service delivery resulting from LGR could disproportionately affect them. Additionally, service-level data indicates that older women outnumber older men in the county, making them more vulnerable to potential changes in adult social care provision.
- The potential dissolution of county-wide strategies addressing gender inequality (e.g. domestic abuse, unpaid carers, economic participation, and health outcomes) could result in fragmented or inconsistent approaches across new authorities. This may weaken efforts to tackle entrenched disparities unless mirrored and coordinated effectively.
- There is a risk that gender perspectives may be underrepresented in the design and governance of new authorities, particularly if equality frameworks are not embedded from the outset.

7.3 Potential Positive Impacts

- LGR presents a chance to redesign services with a renewed focus on gender equity. Localised strategies could be developed to address specific issues such as domestic abuse, workforce inequality, and access to support services.
- With more focused governance, each authority could better reflect the gender profile of its population. For example, areas with older female populations may prioritise age-friendly and gender-sensitive health and housing services.
- LGR presents the opportunity to engage with women's organisations, carers' networks, and community groups to co-produce services that reflect lived experience and local needs.

8. Sexual Orientation

8.1 Overview

Figure 18: % Sexual Orientation across England and Hampshire

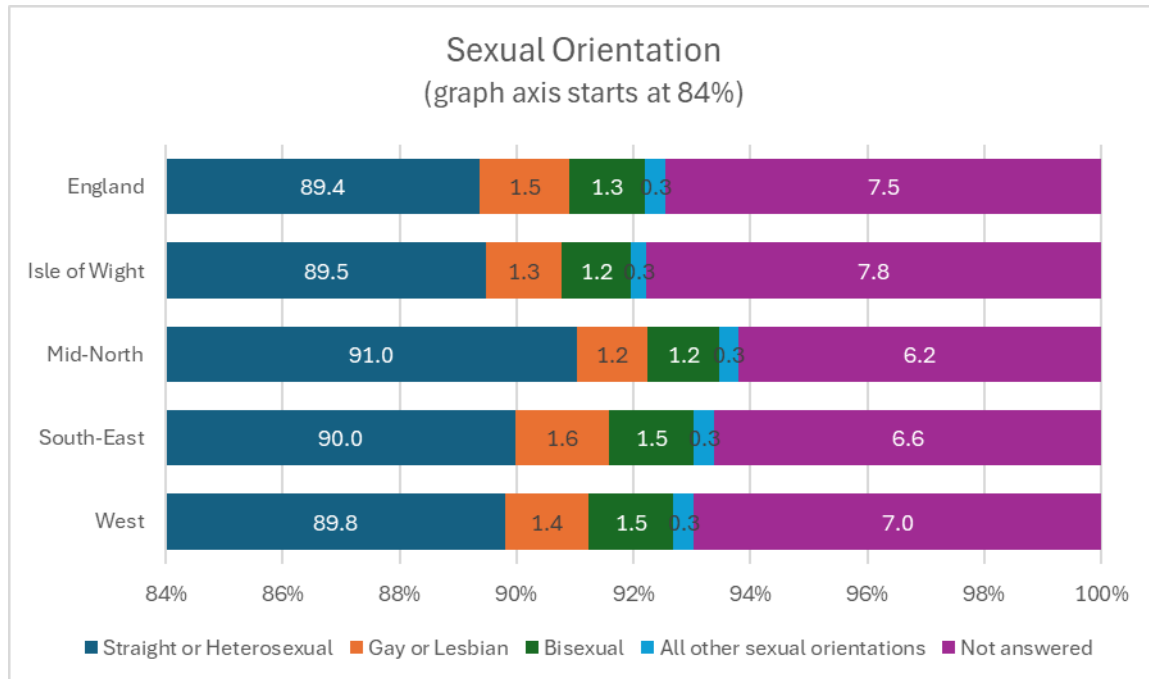


Table 14: Sexual Orientation (% in each category)

	Straight or Heterosexual	Gay or Lesbian	Bisexual	All other sexual orientations	Not answered
England	89.4	1.5	1.3	0.3	7.5
Isle of Wight	89.5	1.3	1.2	0.3	7.8
Mid-North	91.0	1.2	1.2	0.3	6.2
South-East	90.0	1.6	1.5	0.3	6.6
West	89.8	1.4	1.5	0.3	7.0

The national overview from the 2021 Census shows that:

- 89.4% of respondents in England identified as straight or heterosexual
- 1.5% identified as gay or lesbian
- 1.3% identified as bisexual
- 0.3% selected another sexual orientation
- 7.5% did not answer the voluntary question

Across the Hampshire and Solent Area, the figures are broadly similar to the national picture, with some local variation:

- Mid-North Hampshire had the highest proportion of people identifying as straight or heterosexual (91.0%) and the lowest percentage of people who didn't answer the question (6.2%)
- South-East and West Hampshire both had 1.5% of the population identifying as bisexual, which is slightly higher than in England and other areas within the Solent
- Isle of Wight reported 89.5% identifying as straight or heterosexual, with 7.8% not answering the question

These figures suggest that while the majority of residents identify as heterosexual, there is a consistent presence of LGBTQ+ individuals across all areas. The slightly higher proportion of bisexual respondents in South-East and West Hampshire may reflect local demographic or cultural factors. These insights are important for ensuring inclusive service design, safeguarding, and community engagement under any future local government structure.

8.2 Potential negative impacts

- If inclusive policies and safeguarding frameworks are not consistently adopted across new unitary authorities, LGBTQ+ residents may experience unequal access to support services, particularly in areas with lower visibility or representation.
- LGR may disrupt existing LGBTQ+ support networks, advocacy groups, and specialist services (e.g. mental health, youth support, sexual health), especially if these were previously coordinated at a county-wide level.
- Without proactive engagement, there is a risk that LGBTQ+ voices may be underrepresented in the planning and governance of new authorities, leading to services that do not fully reflect their needs.
- During restructuring and data migration, there is a risk of mishandling sensitive information related to sexual orientation, which could undermine trust and deter individuals from accessing services.

8.3 Potential positive impact

- The creation of new unitary authorities presents a chance to embed LGBTQ+ inclusive policies, staff training, and safeguarding protocols from the outset, improving consistency and visibility of support.
- LGR presents the opportunity to engage with LGBTQ+ residents and community organisations, enabling co-production of services that reflect lived experience and local needs.
- Localised governance could allow for more responsive and culturally competent services, particularly in areas with higher proportions of LGBTQ+ residents or specific community needs.

9. Marriage/Civil Partnerships

9.1 Overview

The 2021 Census provides a detailed view of the legal partnership status of residents aged 16 and over across England and the Area. The data reveals patterns in marriage, civil partnerships, separation, divorce, and widowhood.

In England, among over 46 million adults, 37.9% had never married or registered a civil partnership, 44.7% were married, with only 0.21% in a registered civil partnership, 2.2% were separated but still legally married or in a civil partnership, 9.1% were divorced or had a civil partnership dissolved, and 6.1% were widowed or surviving civil partners.

Across the proposed Unitary Authority areas:

- **Mid-North Hampshire** has the **highest proportion** of people married or in a registered civil partnership, at **51.3%**, well above the national average.
- **South-East Hampshire** is the **only area** with a lower proportion of people married or in a registered civil partnership than the national figure, at **43.9%**.
- **Isle of Wight** has the **highest proportion** of residents who are divorced or widowed, reflecting its older population profile.
- **Mid-North Hampshire** has the **lowest proportion** of people who are divorced or widowed.

These variations suggest that marital status is influenced by age demographics and may have implications for service planning, particularly in areas such as housing, adult social care, and family support. Understanding these patterns is important for ensuring that services are responsive to the needs of different household types and relationship statuses under any future local government structure.

9.2 Potential negative impacts

- Services that support couples, families, and individuals experiencing separation or bereavement (e.g. counselling, mediation, housing support) may be disrupted or unevenly distributed across new authorities.
- If policies around family support, bereavement services, or civil partnership recognition vary between authorities, residents may experience unequal access depending on location.
- If service planning does not account for the diversity of household types—including single, cohabiting, and widowed individuals—some groups may be overlooked.

9.3 Potential positive impacts

- New authorities may be able to design services that better reflect local relationship trends, such as higher rates of marriage or widowhood, and provide more targeted support.

- LGR could enable closer alignment between housing, social care, and family support services, improving outcomes for couples and individuals navigating relationship changes.
- LGR offers the opportunity to engage with residents and understand the needs of different household types, leading to more inclusive service design.

10. Poverty

10.1 Overview

Whilst Hampshire County Council is generally amongst the least deprived upper-tier authorities in England, there are significant pockets of deprivation across the Hampshire and Solent area that must be considered in the context of LGR.

According to the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2019:

- Hampshire County Council ranks as the 16th least deprived upper-tier authority out of 151 in England.
- However, Havant, Rushmoor, Gosport, and Eastleigh contain some of the most deprived neighbourhoods in the county.
- Havant is the most deprived district in Hampshire, ranked 119th out of 317 local authorities, placing it in the top 50% most deprived nationally.
- Hart remains the least deprived district in England.

In the Area deprivation is more pronounced, particularly in urban neighbourhoods with higher levels of unemployment, lower educational attainment, and poorer health outcomes. The average IMD for Isle of Wight is 23.3, Mid-North 10.8, South-East 19.6 and West 15.5.

Trends and Specific Areas of Concern

- Havant has seen a worsening trend in place-based deprivation between 2015 and 2019, particularly in Leigh Park.
- Rushmoor and Gosport also contain neighbourhoods in the most deprived deciles nationally.
- Southampton and Portsmouth consistently rank among the more deprived urban areas in the South-East.

The risk of a new unitary authority acquiring a disproportionately higher number of areas of deprivation has been considered through the modelling of the new unitary authorities seeking to balance out regional differences. The exception is the Isle of Wight which stays the same. This provides an opportunity for deprivation on the Isle of Wight to be addressed in a way that meets the islands specific needs.

10.2 Potential Negative Impacts

- While the proposed structure aims to be balanced, LGR will inevitably result in differences in the demographic and socio-economic makeup of the new unitary authorities. These variations may influence the level and type of demand for local services, particularly in areas with higher concentrations of

deprivation. It will be important to ensure that service planning and resource allocation are responsive to these differing needs to maintain equitable outcomes across the region.

- The fragmentation of county-wide initiatives, such as youth employment programmes, transport subsidies, or digital inclusion initiatives, may result in reduced access for low-income residents or increased cost of provision on a per capita basis. Additionally, if the new authorities implement different eligibility criteria, application processes, or digital platforms, residents with lower digital literacy, limited English proficiency, or complex needs may struggle to navigate the system. This could lead to reduced engagement with essential services and further entrench disadvantage unless mitigated through coordinated planning, inclusive design, and targeted support.

10.3 Potential Positive Impacts

- LGR presents an opportunity to shape social and economic policies, such as housing, employment, and welfare support, in ways that are more closely aligned with the distinct socio-economic profiles of each area. This local flexibility could enable more targeted responses to issues such as deprivation, unemployment, and housing need.
- Commissioning and procurement practices could also be reimagined to support inclusive economic growth, with a stronger emphasis on creating local jobs, apprenticeships, and training opportunities. By linking service planning more directly with economic regeneration, the new authorities could help stimulate local economies and improve outcomes for residents.

11. Rurality

11.1 Overview

Population density is a key indicator of how urban or rural an area is, influencing everything from infrastructure needs to service delivery and environmental planning. Rurality in the Hampshire and Solent Area is assessed using population density as a key indicator. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), areas are classified as rural if they have a population density of fewer than 150 inhabitants per km².

Based on this definition and the ONS 2023 mid-year population estimates:

- **Mid-North Hampshire** and the **Isle of Wight** are considered more rural, with population densities of **318** and **371 people per km²**, respectively.
- **West Hampshire** is slightly more urban, with a density of **468 people per km²**, just above the national average of **434 people per km²**.
- **South-East Hampshire** is significantly more urban, with a population density of **2,721 people per km²**, indicating a highly concentrated population.

These differences in rurality have implications for service access, infrastructure, transport, and digital connectivity. Rural areas may face challenges such as limited

public transport, fewer healthcare facilities, and reduced access to employment and education opportunities. Conversely, urban areas may experience pressure on housing, services, and transport systems due to higher population concentrations.

11.2 Potential negative impacts

- During the transition period, residents in rural locations may be disproportionately affected if local service hubs are restructured or relocated. With fewer services available locally, even small changes could result in significant barriers to access.
- Residents in rural areas may face longer journeys and higher transport costs to reach services, particularly if centralised models are adopted by new authorities.
- Rural communities may have less reliable internet connectivity, which could limit access to digital services if LGR leads to increased reliance on online platforms.
- If service planning is driven by population size or urban demand, the specific needs of rural communities may be underrepresented, leading to inequitable resource allocation.

11.3 Potential positive impacts

- LGR could enable more tailored service delivery models that reflect the geographic and demographic realities of rural communities, improving access and responsiveness.
- New authorities may be able to develop integrated transport and outreach strategies to better connect rural residents with essential services.
- LGR presents the opportunity to engage directly with rural communities, ensuring their voices are heard in service planning and governance.
- LGR could encourage the development of mobile, community-based, or hybrid service models that are more suitable for dispersed populations.

12. General Mitigations for Residents

To ensure that LGR delivers equitable outcomes and avoids disproportionate negative impacts on people with protected characteristics and those affected by poverty or rurality, initial, high-level mitigation strategies are recommended:

Providing a pathway to safe and secure transition

- Selecting the preferred four unitary council model, which provides the best way to mitigate any potential negative impacts of LGR in the Hampshire and Solent Area; the model offers the best and most credible chance of securing positive impacts for those with protected characteristics.
- This option builds on the strengths of existing councils and avoids unnecessary disruption to vital services like social care and education. Other options being put forward through the LGR process in Hampshire increase

disruption and risk and are likely to have greater negative impacts on the groups considered in this assessment. The preferred four unitary council model:

- Avoids the risks of creating entirely new council services and infrastructure from scratch, which would be more expensive and take longer to deliver benefits for residents and would introduce significantly more risk to people with protected characteristics and those affected by poverty and rurality.
- Can be built on the infrastructure of existing upper tier authorities, thus minimising risks of transition or disruption and enabling transformative benefits to be realised more quickly.
- Is estimated to save taxpayers nearly £50 million a year, cost the least in transition costs, and pay for itself in just three years – providing the most financially secure model to enable the residents and communities in Hampshire to be supported.

Transition planning and communication

- Develop a detailed transition plan, and supporting EIAs, that includes early engagement with service providers, community organisations, and affected individuals.
- Ensure continuity of care by mapping existing services and establishing interim support mechanisms during the transition period, particularly for vulnerable groups such as older adults, disabled residents, and carers.
- Communicate clearly and regularly with service users about any changes or temporary disruptions, including how they can continue to access services during the transition.
- Maintain open channels for feedback from residents, staff, and partners during the transition period.
- Seek opportunities to hear from underrepresented groups, including LGBTQ+ residents, ethnic minority communities, disabled people, older adults, carers, and faith-based organisations, where feasible.

Data governance

- Implement robust data governance protocols and conduct Data Protection Impact Assessments prior to migration.
- Ensure staff are informed about the importance on handling sensitive data, particularly related to gender identity, transition history, and other protected characteristics.
- Ensure a secure and tested data migration process with contingency plans for data recovery and safeguarding privacy.

Service design

- Ensure consistency in service quality and access across all new authorities, with a specific focus on avoiding postcode-based disparities for people with protected characteristics

- Harmonise eligibility criteria and service standards, particularly for disabled residents, carers, and other vulnerable groups.
- Through Community Development officers actively build links with all sectors of the community, to enable all voices to be heard, as opposed to just hearing the loudest voice.
- Design services that reflect local demographics and needs, especially in areas with distinct age, gender, ethnicity, or disability profiles.
- Embed intersectional analysis into service design to account for overlapping vulnerabilities (e.g. older disabled women in rural areas).
- Ensure culturally appropriate services are maintained, including translation and interpretation support.
- Embed inclusive practices and anti-racism strategies in governance, workforce development, and service delivery.
- Ensure services in rural areas are accessible and not disadvantaged by centralised models or urban-focused planning.

Partnership planning

- Preserve and strengthen multi-agency safeguarding and referral systems, particularly for children, older adults, and survivors of domestic abuse.
- Maintain collaborative structures across health, education, social care, housing, and emergency services to avoid fragmentation.
- Ensure continuity and coordination of specialist services, such as gender identity support, domestic abuse services, and culturally appropriate health and social care.
- Retain county-wide expertise and shared resources where economies of scale are critical to service quality and sustainability.

Digital inclusion

- Prioritise digital access and literacy in the design of new unitary authorities, particularly to avoid exacerbating inequalities during the transition.
- Ensure residents in rural and low-income areas are not excluded due to lack of connectivity, digital skills, or access to devices.
- Maintain and, where necessary, expand outreach and mobile service models to ensure continuity of access for digitally excluded groups during and after the transition.
- Provide clear, accessible alternative contact methods (e.g. telephone, in-person support) to ensure that all residents can engage with services regardless of digital capability.
- Embed digital inclusion strategies into the early planning of new systems, processes, and service models to ensure equitable access from day one.

- Implement robust mitigations such as accessible design standards, alternative access routes, and targeted digital support to reduce the risk of widening the digital exclusion gap.

Review of Protected Characteristics

STAFF

Introduction

The creation of unitary authorities to replace the current two-tier model will involve the reorganisation of staff employed by all the upper and lower tier organisations in the Area. This will affect senior leadership, frontline staff, back-office staff as well as contractors.

We recognise that our workforce is our most important asset, and we are committed to ensuring transparency and openness in our communication with our staff and that our colleagues are treated respectfully and supported through the change and uncertainty ahead of us.

The biggest risks to staff in the process of LGR include disaggregation, which may unsettle and disenfranchise front line staff and increase risks in retention and recruitment in an already difficult climate. Loss of skills, knowledge and expertise alongside the ability to work collaboratively in existing strategic partnerships were also identified.

Broadly, LGR could result in changes in roles and functions, working conditions, pay and grading, terms and conditions of employment and redundancies resulting from elimination duplication of roles. LGR could also affect staff job security in general and overall career prospects.

This EIA considers how the LGR process may affect staff in relation to their protected characteristics. Where data is available the EIA is substantiated by existing trends within the workforce. Where this is not possible, regional, national or sector-based qualitative evidence is used.

Data availability

According to the Local Government Association (LGA), it is estimated that, across the 15 local authorities in the Area, there are around 40,411 full time employment roles with an associated headcount of 54,391 members of staff. 83% of these are full time and 17% part time. 95% have permanent employment contracts and 5% temporary (Table 1).

The LGA quarterly survey also provides insights about local authority staff by gender across the Area. This data is used to assess the equality impact on the protected characteristic sex.

The County Council (including schools) has the highest number of employees (almost 70% of all staff employed in the area) followed by Portsmouth, Southampton and the Isle of Wight (source: LGA Quarterly Employment Survey Q1 2025).

In July 2025, the County Council was supporting 399 schools, nurseries, and education centres with 24,314 members of staff (excluding causal and external contractors).

Table 1: Hampshire and Solent Area Workforce

AREA	FTE	HEADCOUNT	FULL TIME	PART TIME	PERMANENT	TEMPORARY
Hampshire County Council	26561	36958	13674	23284	35480	1478
Southampton	3568	3757	2780	977	3569	188
Portsmouth	4071	5337	2935	2402	4590	747
Isle of Wight	2200	3678	1214	2464	2759	920
Basingstoke and Deane	600	636	528	108	604	159
East Hampshire	245	315	186	129	261	54
Eastleigh	454	537	381	156	478	59
Fareham	427	472	373	99	444	28
Gosport	212	356	192	164	242	114
Hart	126	138	101	37	138	0
Havant	287	351	242	109	298	53
New Forest	730	828	613	215	787	41
Test Valley	514	563	434	129	535	28
Winchester	416	465	349	116	414	51
Total	40411	54391	45145	9246	51671	2720
Percentage	100	100	83	17	95	5

Other workforce diversity data used in this assessment is publicly and readily available, published by the UTLAs in the last two years (2023-2025) (with the exception of the Isle of Wight Council whose data is from 2020 and has not been used in this assessment as the workforce may have changed significantly over the last five years).

The County Council's Annual People Reports include data on staff on Employment of Hampshire County Council (EHCC) and Soulbury terms and conditions and does not include teachers or staff in schools, councillors, casual workers, contractors, and agency workers. Other UTLAs published data does not specify if schools' staff is included or not. As the largest local authority in the Area, it is thought that the County Council's demography of its staff is largely representative of the area.

Limitations

The data in this EIA is currently limited in its ability to reflect the nuances of smaller district and borough councils, including their localised workforce demographics, organisational cultures, and approaches to equality, diversity, and inclusion.

As the LGR programme progresses, we will seek to collect workforce data from all 15 councils to enable a more comprehensive understanding of the potential impacts on staff—particularly those with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. This will support the development of targeted EIAs for workforce-related changes and help identify best practice, promote consistency in inclusive policies, and ensure that equality considerations are embedded throughout the transition process.

1. Age

In Hampshire in 2025, the highest employment rate is estimated to be among the 35-44 age group (82.1%) followed closely by 25-34 and 45-54. The lowest employment rate is among those aged 65 years (22.7%) followed by 65.4% for 55-64 and significantly lower rate (54.2%) for 16-24 ([ONS 2025](#)).

The median average age in Hampshire in 2022 was 44.3 years, and 60.1% of the population falls within 16-64 working aged bracket. Based on this, the median working age population is estimated to be approximately 40 years.

The 2021 Census confirmed that as people age, the risk of becoming disabled increases (JSNA). Among the working age population in Hampshire 8.3% of females and 6.7% of males aged 55-64 were limited a little with daily activities because of their disability compared to 6.2% of females and 3.8% of males aged 25-34. The difference for those limited a lot is even bigger.

The County Council's workforce profile shows the mean average age is 46 years and there is underrepresentation under the age of 25. (Annual People Report 2024-2025).

60% of the County Council applicants are aged between 25 and 45. Applicants aged 35 to 44 are more likely to get hired (29%) than other age groups. (Annual People Report 2024-2025).

Southampton City Council and Portsmouth City Council both show similar age profiles to the County Council with the highest percentage of age group falling between 45 and 64 years.

Table 2: Age distribution of workforce

AGE GROUP	HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL (2025)	SOUTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL (2024)	PORTSMOUTH CITY COUNCIL (2023)
Under 25	3%	2%	4%
25-34	18%	18%	15%
35-44	24%	25%	23%
45-54	27%	26%	26%
55-64	23%	26%	27%
65+	6%	4.0%	5%

1.1 Potential negative Impacts

- Older adults may face age-related health issues and be worried about flexible working arrangements during and after government reorganisation.
- Younger staff may be worried about their career prospects following government reorganisation.
- Older staff may be worried about not finding new jobs if made redundant.

1.2 Potential positive impacts

- There is an opportunity to improve intergenerational collaboration between younger and older members of staff in the new unitary authorities.
- New unitary authorities may be able to use targeted campaigns to improve attractiveness to underrepresented aged groups.
- New unitary authorities may be able to improve their attractiveness by defining their working conditions better for employees.

2. Disability

Based on national and regional prevalence rates for working age adults (16-64) it is estimated that 18-20% of people in that age bracket are disabled in Hampshire. Estimated disability prevalence for 16-64 years are 22.3% for Southampton, 23.1% for Portsmouth and 24.8% for the Isle of Wight.

12% of the County Council staff declared a disability in 2024. 9% (894) of all female staff and 9% (305) of all male staff declared a disability. Those who declared a disability are evenly spread across all ages. 9% of staff declared a disability in Southampton City Council (2024) and 11% in Portsmouth City Council (2023) although these may have changed in line with improvements in declaration of disability trends.

In 2025, 11% of applicants to the County Council declared a disability, and 9% of successful hires were disabled applicants (Annual People Report 2024–2025).

Based on the above national rates, only about half the expected number of applicants declare a disability.

Disabled staff may find it more difficult to look for new jobs if they are impacted by LGR. The employment rate (the number of people employed compared to the total number of people) for non-disabled people aged 16-64 in the UK was approximately 81.2% compared to 37.4% for disabled people in the same age group (ONS 2025).

In the Area, 3.3% of people aged 16 years and over said they were economically inactive due to long term sickness or disability in the 2021 Census and 4.0% said they were economically inactive due to looking after home or family.

68% of County Council employees live in the Southampton and Portsmouth postcodes of Hampshire and commute an average of 15 miles to work (Annual Workforce Report 2023-2024). Changes in location of work could have a positive or negative impact on disabled staff if not considered properly.

Table 3: Disability profile of workforce

AGE GROUP	HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL (2025)	SOUTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL (2024)	PORTSMOUTH CITY COUNCIL (2023)
Disabled	12%	9%	11%
Not Disabled	88%	74%	89%

AGE GROUP	HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL (2025)	SOUTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL (2024)	PORTSMOUTH CITY COUNCIL (2023)
Prefer not to say		3%	
Not supplied		14%	

2.1 Potential negative impacts

- During the transition period, disabled staff may experience delays and breaks in reasonable adjustments such as flexible working arrangements, and access to specialist software and equipment while IT systems are aligned. This might be compounded by the loss of specialist knowledge through relocation of staff who support making employment conditions accessible for staff.
- Changes to type of work and work practices may increase anxiety, especially for staff with mental health and neurodiverse conditions.
- Changes to work location could increase travel time and costs which could particularly impact on the work-life balance of disabled staff.
- Fragmentation of staff networks such as Disability, Carer and working parents' Networks and associated support groups such as the Auto immune and neurodiverse group, could have a detrimental effect on staff feeling less supported and valued and lead to them leaving the sector.
- There is a risk of increased anxiety among disabled staff about being able to find a new job if made redundant.
- Disabled people are less likely to be employed than people without a disability and therefore those made redundant may find it harder to find a new job.

2.2 Potential positive impacts

- LGR may provide opportunities to reduce commuting distances which could improve work-life balance of disabled staff.
- There is an opportunity to strengthen and/or establish new staff networks to support staff with disabilities and caring responsibilities in the new unitary authorities.
- There is an opportunity to improve accessibility of physical spaces, HR and IT systems, remote and hybrid working arrangements for disabled staff as these requirements can be factored into the requirements for new systems and processes.

3. Gender reassignment

In the Area, in the 2021 Census, of those who identified as being a different gender to that registered at birth, 0.1% identified as 'Trans Woman', 0.1% as 'Trans Man', 0.1% identified as 'other' and 0.2% did not specify a gender.

31% of the Conty Council said the gender they identify with is the same as their sex registered at birth and less than 1% said it's not. 68% of employees have not provided this information (Annual People Report 2025). This information is not available for other upper tier councils.

3.1 Potential negative impact

- Disaggregation/aggregation of teams could result in the loss of supportive allies who help staff who are thinking about or undergoing gender reassignment feel supported.
- Trans people may feel anxious about the possibility of joining less inclusive organisations.

3.2 Potential positive impact

- The reorganisation presents an opportunity to embed inclusive policies and systems from the outset, such as ensuring that IT systems allow for self-identification of gender, preferred names, and pronouns. This can help reduce administrative barriers and improve the day-to-day experience of trans staff and service users.
- There is an opportunity for new unitary organisations to improve trans inclusion through training and the provision of inclusive facilities where these are not currently available.
- There is an opportunity to strengthen and or establish new staff networks to support transgender staff in the new unitary authorities.

4. Pregnancy and maternity

The Hampshire County Council Annual People 2025 report shows an increase in maternity leave (4% of female staff) and a decrease in paternity leave (2% of male staff) in 2024-2025. The County Council also offers shared parental leave; adoption leave and keep-in- touch days. This information has not been published for other UTLAs in the Area.

Employees on maternity, paternity, neonatal or adoption leave are legally protected under UK employment law. This includes their service being regarded as continuous even during leave, being entitled to return to the same or similar jobs after their leave and being offered suitable alternative roles before others should redundancies occur.

4.1 Potential negative impact

- Staff on maternity, paternity, neonatal or adoption leave may face increased anxiety about ongoing organisational changes, job security, changes to roles,

teams and line management arrangements. It may be more difficult to keep them engaged when they are not at work.

- LGR may result in changes to working patterns and locations different from those prior to going on maternity or paternity leave.
- As new unitary authorities are set up there could be risks associated with processing leave, pay, or flexible working arrangements during reorganisation.

4.2 Potential positive impact

- There is an opportunity for changes in working arrangements and locations to be more flexible and localised to support caring responsibilities.

5. Ethnicity

The 2021 Census showed an increase in diversity of the Area with 9.4% identifying as non-White. Among the working age population (16-64) this increases to 10.3%.

In line with this, 12% of Hampshire County Council staff identify as ethnic minority. There is a higher representation of male than females amongst ethnic minority staff (Annual People Report 2024-2025).

32% of the County Council applicants were from ethnic minority groups in 2025; the number of applicants hired in 2025 was 14% (Annual People Report 2025). The success rate of applicants (14%) is higher than the ethnic minority working age representation (8-10%).

Ethnic Minority employees are concentrated predominantly in lower pay grades with 21.2% of Grade C as the highest proportion of ethnic minorities followed by F grade (14.8%). The progression of ethnic minority employees tapers at around 5% at Grades G (4.9%) and H (5.5%). (Annual People Report 2024-2025).

6% of Portsmouth City Council (2023) employees identify as being from ethnic minority backgrounds, a figure that has remained consistent since 2020.

Representation by sex shows that 6% of female staff and 7% of male staff are from ethnic minority groups. The proportion of male employees from ethnic minority backgrounds has increased by 1% since 2022.

In terms of pay grades, the highest representation of ethnic minority staff at Portsmouth City Council is at Grade 4 (12%). Across Grades 5 to 10, representation has remained relatively stable at 6–8%. However, there is no representation of ethnic minority staff at higher pay grades (Grades 15, 16, 17, or 19) indicating a lack of diversity at the most senior levels of the organisation.

Table 4: Ethnicity of workforce

ETHNICITY	HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL (2025)	SOUTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL (2024)	PORTSMOUTH CITY COUNCIL (2023)
White	88%	77%	94%
Ethnic Minority	12%	11%	6%
Prefer not to say		2%	
Not supplied		10%	

5.1 Potential negative impacts

- Ethnic minority staff could potentially experience increased anxiety around ability to find new jobs if made redundant, this could be compounded by intersectionality if both from ethnic minority origin and in the 55-64 age bracket.
- There is a risk of increased anxiety among ethnic minority staff about changes to the career pathways and career prospects as a result of disaggregation/aggregation of teams.
- Progress made in career progression by ethnic minority staff in more senior roles who act as role models could be lost through redundancies, disaggregation, aggregation and realignment of roles.
- There is a risk of loss of supportive staff networks such as Black and ethnic minority Networks and supportive allies to help promote an inclusive culture.
- For staff who are not native English speakers, language barriers may make it more difficult to access information or navigate changes during reorganisation. If existing support networks are disrupted, this could lead to increased isolation and reduced access to informal guidance and peer support.

5.2 Potential positive impacts

- There is potential to increase the diversity and inclusivity of the workforce of less diverse organisations.
- There is an opportunity to strengthen and or establish new staff networks to support staff from ethnic minority backgrounds in the new unitary authorities.
- There is an opportunity to adopt more anti racist and inclusive HR policies and practices.
- There is also an opportunity to adopt effective strategies to address career progression imbalance in new unitary authorities.

6. Religion and belief

According to the 2021 Census, 50.7% of the Area's residents stated they had a religion. 46.0% identified as Christian, 1.1% identified as Hindu, 1.9% as Muslim and 0.7% as Buddhist. 43.4% of Hampshire's residents declared they have no religion and 6.0% did not respond.

73% of the County's staff declared their religion or belief in 2024. 44% identified as Christian, 49% did not have a religion or belief and 6.5% identified as either Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim, Sikh or other minority religions or beliefs. There are no identifiable trends of religion by grade in the workforce.

In comparison, 31% of staff at Southampton City Council identified as Christian, while 44% declared having no religion or belief. At Portsmouth City Council, 41% identified as Christian and 52% reported no religion or belief. The total for Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim, Sikh or other minority religions or beliefs in Southampton City Council is around 6.4% and in Portsmouth City Council its around 6%.

It is important for the wellbeing of staff to be able to share their religious identity as it is most likely to shape their values and how these align with their role or service. This also helps reduce the risk of discrimination and harassment relating to their religious beliefs or practices.

A lack of understanding of different faiths or beliefs could be a source of interpersonal conflict, and which could affect communication and collaboration in teams if not managed properly.

6.1 Potential negative impacts

- There is a risk of loss in flexibility during and after reorganisation to practice religion including breaks for prayer during the working day or leave during religious holidays.
- Changes in work location could result in loss of access to on and off-site religious facilities such as prayer rooms, mosques or temples.
- Staff faith groups or interfaith support networks may be disrupted or disbanded during reorganisation, reducing peer support and visibility.
- Staff from minority faiths may feel less secure or visible in a new, larger organisation if diversity is not actively supported.

6.2 Potential positive impacts

- There is an opportunity to build an inclusive culture by promoting a range of religions and faiths in the workplace through awareness raising and training.
- There is an opportunity to strengthen and or establish new staff networks to support staff with diverse religions and beliefs in the new unitary authorities.
- Reorganisation may bring together more diverse communities and staff groups, creating opportunities for interfaith dialogue and mutual understanding.

Table 5 Religion and Belief Profile of Workforce

RELIGION/ BELIEF	HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL (2025)	SOUTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL (2024)	PORTSMOUTH CITY COUNCIL (2023)
Christian	32%	31%	41%
No religion	36%	44%	52%
Not supplied	22%	12%	
Prefer not to say	5%	7%	
Any other religion or belief	2%	3%	4%
Buddhist	1%	0.2%	<0.1%
Hindu	1%	1%	<0.1%
Jewish	0%	<0.1%	
Muslim	1%	2%	2%
Sikh	0.3%	1%	

7. Sex

49.6% of the working age population in the Area is male and 50.4 % female (JSNA). The [LGA Government workforce data](#) states that 74% of council staff in England are female whilst 59.5% of the local authority workforce in the Area are female and 40.5% are male (Table 6).

Table 6: Sex profile of workforce by local authority

AREA	% MALE	% FEMALE	MALE - FULL TIME	MALE - PART TIME	FEMALE - FULL TIME	FEMALE - PART TIME	TOTAL STAFF BY AREA
Hampshire	20	80	11.2	5.1	26.1	57.6	36958
Southampton	43	57	37.8	3.4	36.6	22.3	3757
Portsmouth	31	69	23.6	6.9	31.0	38.5	5337
Isle of Wight	25	75	11.1	13.9	22.2	52.8	3678
Basingstoke and Deane	48	52	45.9	2.5	37.1	14.5	636
East Hampshire	39	61	27.0	11.7	32.5	28.9	315
Eastleigh	44	56	27.6	19.0	43.2	10.2	537
Fareham	52	48	48.7	3.0	30.3	18.0	472
Gosport	43	57	24.4	13.2	29.2	33.1	356
Hart	33	67	30.4	2.2	42.8	24.6	138
Havant	40	60	30.8	8.8	38.5	22.0	351
New Forest	56	44	50.0	5.9	23.6	20.5	828
Test Valley	52	48	48.0	4.0	28.6	19.4	563
Winchester	41	59	34.2	5.4	40.4	20.0	465
Total	40.5	59.5	32.2	7.5	33.0	27.3	54391

The County Council's workforce's gender (without schools) split of 75% female and 25% male is predominantly female and has a high proportion of part time female workers (40%) (Annual People Report 2024-2025). When schools are included, the difference is even greater with 80% of the workforce female and 20% male. The Isle of Wight has a similar workforce gender split to the County Council.

The difference in gender composition of the workforce between the Area and the County Council (including or excluding schools), apart from the Isle of Wight, may be mainly due to the type of services offered by the existing unitary organisations, city, borough and district councils, what proportion is undertaken in house and what proportion is outsourced.

Services such as social care, education and community support tend to have a predominantly female workforce reflecting broader societal patterns in care giving and teaching roles. Conversely, services like planning, engineering, and waste management tend to have a higher proportion of male employees.

Recruitment data of the County Council shows 64 % females, and 36% males applied for roles showing a 5% increase in males. Female hires were 79% compared to 21% male (Annual People Report 2024-2025).

A significantly higher percentage of females of the local authorities workforce in the Area work part time compared to males (27.3% vs 7.5%). This may be linked to higher caring responsibilities of females and has implications for flexible working preferences. Other related considerations are structural inequalities in job roles and career progression.

Table 7: Gender pay-gap by local authority

NAME	MEAN HOURLY PAY GAP [%]	MEDIAN HOURLY PAY GAP [%]
Hampshire	15.9	17.2
Southampton	1.4	5.2
Portsmouth	8.6	7.5
Isle of Wight	4.1	5.9
Basingstoke and Deane	-10.0	-23.7
East Hampshire	11.9	8.9
Eastleigh	1.0	-10.6
Fareham	0.0	-4.5
Havant	18.9	24.4
New Forest	1.9	3.0
Test Valley	-4.6	-14.2
Winchester	7.3	15.2
Average	4.7	2.9

Note: There is no gender pay gap data for Gosport and Hart available on the LGA survey. Negative figures mean in favour of women.

[LGA Government workforce data 2023/2024](#) shows a 3% gender pay gap for local government workforce in England.⁴

For the Area, the average mean gender pay is 4.7% and the median pay gap 2.9%. The pay gap average (2023/2024) masks a diverse range of pay gaps in the Area from 15.9% in favour of men for the County Council to 10% in favour of women for Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council.

In 2024, [Hampshire County Council's Gender Pay Gap report](#) (excluding schools) reported a 12.8% mean gender pay gap and 13.4% median gender pay gap. Southampton City Council reported (2024) a mean gender pay gap of 1.4%, and a median gender pay gap of 5.2%.

Gender pay gap could in part be attributed to over reliance of part time staff who are often in less paid roles with fewer opportunities for career progression.

The County Council's gender pay gap is attributed to its workforce profile which includes comparatively higher numbers of lower paid roles held inhouse undertaken by female staff. The pay gap at Portsmouth City Council in 2023 was 7.1%⁵ and reported as decreasing and reflected in a higher proportion of females working in lower paid roles in grades 1-17 compared to a smaller proportion of men working in higher paid roles in grades 18-19.

The County Council's people report shows that more female members of staff (18%) than males (13%) have caring responsibilities. (Annual People 2024-2025).

7.1 Potential negative impacts

- Disaggregation could result in the disruption of efforts local authorities are taking to reduce gender pay gap.
- Female staff may be worried about changes to teams that could result in loss of flexible working and part time working arrangements.
- Staff (predominantly female) with caring responsibilities may be particularly worried about their ability to continue to undertake their caring responsibilities during and after organisation due to changes in location or working arrangements.
- There is a risk of loss of supportive staff networks and allies to help promote an inclusive culture.
- There is a likelihood of indirect discrimination of changes given the high percentage of female workers.
- Generally, older women may find it more difficult than men to find new jobs due to challenges such as age and gender bias, health and caring responsibilities.

⁴ Source: [GenderPayGapReporting-2023-2024.pdf](#) [Gender pay gap Search and compare gender pay gap data - Gender pay gap service - GOV.UK](#)

⁵ Source: [Portsmouth City Council gender pay gap report for 2024-25 reporting year](#)

- LGR could translate to the loss of skilled female workers during disaggregation.

7.2 Potential positive impacts

- Measures to improve balance in leadership, management and technical roles could be put in place at the outset of emerging unitary authorities.
- There is an opportunity for new unitary authorities to sign up to commitments such as Menopause Workplace Pledge.
- There is an opportunity to strengthen and/or establish new staff networks to support male and female staff in the new unitary authorities.
- It also offers an opportunity to identify measures that have been effective in reducing the structural inequalities such as the Gender pay gap and upholding them in the new unitary authorities.
- The gender pay gap illustrates structural barriers in local government through segregation of roles and senior roles held disproportionately by men. LGR offers an opportunity to address this through the consideration of gender balance when redesigning roles

8. Sexual Orientation

In the 2021 Census, 1.4% of the Area's residents, identified as Gay or Lesbian, 1.4% as Bisexual, 0.3% as 'all other sexual orientations' and 6% did not respond. 91.3% residents identified as Straight or Heterosexual.

Across the County Council's workforce 3.4% have declared their sexual orientation as Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual or another minority sexual orientation which broadly reflects Hampshire's demography (Annual People Report 2024-2025).

In 2023-2024, 8% of the County Council applicants identified as Gay, Lesbian Bisexual or another minority sexual orientation, 9% were shortlisted and 6% hired. This number of hires is the same as last year (Annual People Report 2024-2025).

Publicly available workforce reports from Southampton City Council and Portsmouth City Council do not include data on sexual orientation.

8.1 Potential negative impacts

- LGR could reduce the number of LGBTQ+ allies in teams and leave staff feeling more vulnerable to discrimination and harassment.
- LGR could lead to the loss of role models of senior members of staff who share their sexual orientation and help to promote an inclusive culture.
- There is a risk that LGBTQ+ staff may have increased anxiety about the inclusivity of their working environment in the new unitary authorities. This could be in relation to the need to declare their sexual orientation again, the use of inclusive language, or inclusive practices such as the use of lanyards.

- In turn, this might also affect their views around long-term job security and career prospects in less inclusive organisations.
- There is a risk of loss of supportive staff networks such as LGBTQ+ Network and supportive allies to help promote an inclusive culture.

8.2 Potential positive impacts

- There is an opportunity to make improvements to sexual orientation training and awareness raising activities to promote inclusivity.
- There is an opportunity to strengthen and or establish new staff networks to support staff with different sexual orientations in the new unitary authorities.

Table 8: Sexual Orientation of the Workforce

SEXUAL ORIENTATION	HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL (2025)	SOUTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL (2024)	PORTSMOUTH CITY COUNCIL (2023)
Straight	53%	74%	n/a
Gay / Lesbian	1%	2%	n/a
Bisexual	1%	1%	n/a
Other	1%	1%	n/a
Prefer not to say	4%	9%	
Not Declared	40%	12%	

9. Marriage and Civil Partnership

2021 Census data reported that 47.2% of the Area's residents were married, 34.4% never married and never registered a civil partnership, 9.9% divorced and 6.3% widowed or a surviving partner from a civil partnership.

There is no data published on the marital or civil partnership data of Hampshire County Council staff but there is no reason to believe that the marital and civil partnership profile will be different. It is expected that the impact of LGR on those who are married or in civil partnerships would not directly but rather indirectly impact family life.

10. Poverty (lack of financial resources)

Around 50% of the County Council's workforce have the lowest paid roles (Grades A to D). At Portsmouth City Council, the lowest paid members of staff in similar pay bands to the County Council's Grade A-D, would be Bands No.1 to 6, which make up 35.2% of staff.

It is acknowledged that staff in entry level jobs with low incomes may feel more anxious about job security and ability to adjust to changes in working conditions.

This highlights the importance of carefully considering their needs and concerns during reorganisation, to ensure the process supports all staff equitably.

The proportion of staff by pay grade is not included in Southampton City Council's [Employees Diversity and Inclusion Information](#).

Table 9: Headcount of Hampshire County Council Staff 2025 (Grades A-D)

GRADE	HEADCOUNT	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL WORKFORCE
A	820	7%
B	1,054	8%
C	2,387	19%
D	2,094	17%
Total	6,355	51%

Table 10: Headcount of Portsmouth City Council Staff 2023 (Bands 1-6)

BAND	HEADCOUNT	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL WORKFORCE
1	9	0.2%
2	28	1%
3	236	6%
4	300	8%
5	400	11%
6	341	9%
Total	1,314	35.2%

NOTE: THIS AN ASSUMPTION AS THERE IS NO PUBLICLY AVAILABLE DATA ON THE ACTUAL SALARIES PER BAND.

10.1 Potential negative impacts

- Staff in low-income jobs may experience more anxiety due to the risk of redundancy and resulting financial stress might have an impact on their wellbeing.
- Staff in low-income brackets and lower grades may face more difficulties in dealing with increased travel expenses and time travelling in the case of relocation. This may disproportionately affect those who rely on public transport.
- If roles are made redundant, low-income staff may face greater financial hardship due to limited savings or alternative income sources.
- Changes in working hours, locations and workloads could disrupt childcare and care giving arrangements which is common among low-income staff who tend to be female.

10.2 Potential positive impacts

- New unitary authorities could adopt best practice in tackling workforce inequalities related to access to training, career progression, digital and other resources.

- There is an opportunity to explore greater alignment of pay structures.

11. Rurality

According to the Hampshire County Council's 2023-2024 Annual Workforce Report, the average commuting distance to work was reported as 15 miles, with around a third of staff using more than one mode of travel to reach their workplace from urban locations. While this highlights the urban concentration of the workforce, it's important to recognise that Hampshire is a predominantly rural county, with areas such as Winchester, New Forest, and East Hampshire having significantly lower population densities. These less densely populated areas may present unique challenges in terms of access to employment, transport infrastructure, and service delivery. As part of our ongoing commitment to equity and inclusion, we will seek to gather more detailed data to better understand how these rural dynamics may impact staff, particularly in relation to protected characteristics such as disability, age, and socio-economic status, and ensure that any barriers are identified and addressed.

11.1 Potential negative impacts

- Changes to work location might increase travel distances and the cost of travel to work and in addition may disproportionately affect those on lower incomes who live in rural areas.
- Opportunities to find new jobs if made redundant would be fewer in rural areas which may increase anxiety around the potential risk of redundancy.

11.2 Potential positive impacts

- Where broadband access is reasonable, new ways of working using hybrid and remote options could improve working conditions for staff who live in rural locations.
- Working arrangements of new unitary authorities could include sharing premises to reduce the need for staff who live in rural areas to travel longer distances to work.

12. Mitigations for impacts on staff – early considerations

The staff impact mitigations outlined below are primarily based on the County Council's workforce profile. However, a collaborative approach is essential to gather insights and data from all organisations involved in the LGR process. With thoughtful planning and consideration, many of the potential negative impacts on staff can be effectively mitigated.

Key mitigation measures include:

- Engagement with staff needs to start early to allow staff to articulate their concerns and provide an opportunity for suggestions about how their

concerns may be addressed appropriately and feel heard. Engagement can take place with staff networks as well in team meetings where a two-way conversation can be facilitated.

- Keep staff on family friendly leave, sickness or on other temporary arrangements, such as secondments, informed of changes and how they might be impacted.
- Map inclusion strategies, equality policies, statements (e.g., Zero Tolerance Statement) and commitments (e.g., Disability Confident), across the existing organisations.
- Identify best practice across existing organisations and set out a recommendation for adopting best practice within a set timeframe. This is particularly important for addressing structural inequalities, such as the Gender Pay Gap.
- Where possible adopt best practice recommendations as part of a broader commitment to embedding equality, diversity and inclusion considerations throughout the LRG process.

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