

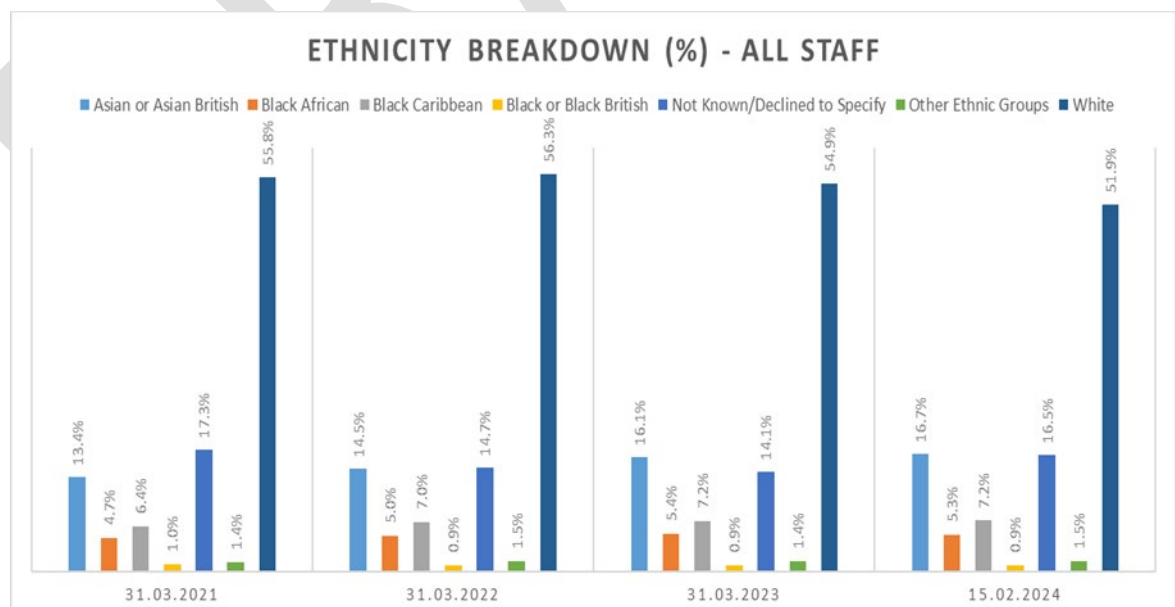
Workforce Progress Report, January 2024

The Council's 2040 commitment to a town built on fairness and social justice has included a renewed and refreshed focus on its approach to Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI). The Council has committed to champion EDI and set the pace for the town and we want to be an exemplary employer for Luton by embedding EDI in our workforce and culture.

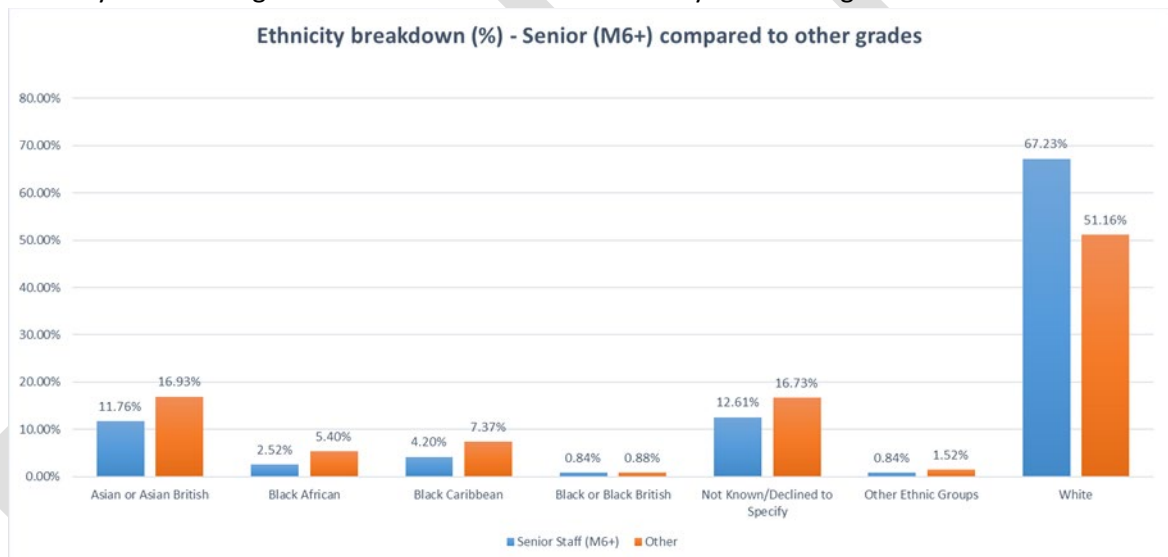
A key strand of our EDI strategy and response to the Council motions is ensuring that our workforce is representative of the community that it serves.

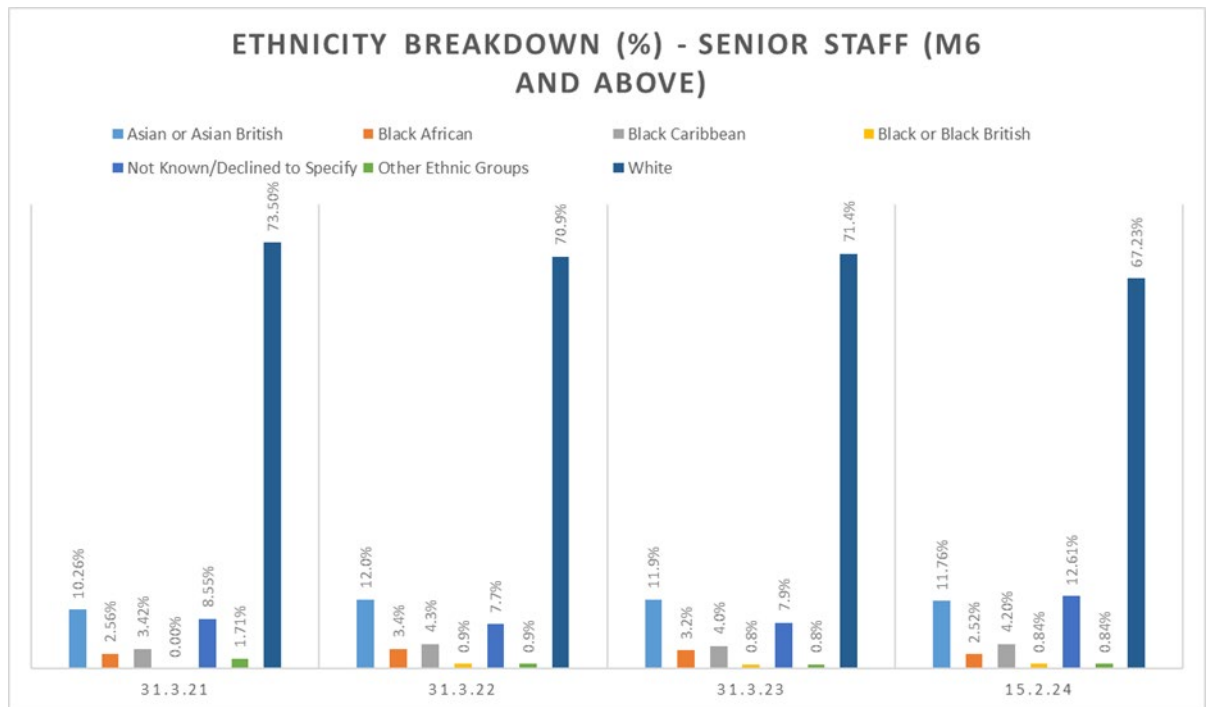
Current workforce position

- 54% of the population of Luton is composed of black and minority ethnic backgrounds. A key part of the Council's Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) strategy is to ensure that its workforce is representative of the community that it serves and has approved targets to align the ethnicity of the workforce with the population of the town. These include.
 - An improvement year on year of 2% of staff from minority backgrounds
 - Improve the representation of staff from minority ethnic backgrounds at a senior level.
- The Council's People Strategy have agreed the following targets.
 - % of workforce who are from ethnic minority backgrounds. 30% by March 2023, 32% by March 2024, and 34% by March 2025.
 - % of M6+ managers who are from ethnic minority backgrounds. 22% by March 2023, 24% by March 2024, and 26% by March 2025.
- The Council's workforce is currently 2617 employees with 51.9% of the workforce identified as white. 31.6% are from an ethnic minority background which is in line to meet the year-end target of 32%. However, 16.5% of the workforce have not shared their ethnicity.



4. To understand the demographics of our workforce and to be able to monitor if and how it is changing, it is critical to hold accurate data. This has been a challenge for the Council for some time as employees are not obliged to provide sensitive data (Religion, Race, Nationality, Sexual Identification, Sexual Orientation, and Disability).
5. Work continues with the EDI coordinators to encourage employees to identify their ethnicity. The success of various initiatives can be seen from the reduction of 21% employees not sharing their ethnicity in March 2021 to the current 16.5%. EDI Co-dominators continue to receive regular summary workforce data across protected characteristics in order to investigate services/teams where data is unavailable and agree local initiatives to complete the data.
6. As the percentage of missing data reduces, we can be more confident in our analysis and monitoring. As such, we have a greater, if not complete, understanding of the make-up of the Council workforce.
7. The number of employees at senior manager (at M6 or above) who identify as being from a minority ethnic background is 20.16% which is below the year-end target of 24%.





8. There has been a slight widening of the mean ethnicity pay gap – calculated to be 8% in favour of white employees at 31.3.23, this is compared to 5.8% in the previous year. This reflects the proportional ethnicity split within different grades and roles within the council and does not suggest that employees from minority ethnic backgrounds are paid differently for equivalent work.
9. The turnover rate for the council as at 31st January 2024 was 10.39% (12.03% year end 2023) below the local government average of 13.4%. Based on the evidence we hold the turnover rate is similar for all demographics.

Progress against Council motion commitments and wider work

10. Significant work has been taken forward in response to the Council motion. This has been driven by our EDI co-ordinators group and through our People Strategy Board. Over the last 12 months there has been a huge focus on developing a new People Strategy for the Council to reflect the workforce theme of the new Fairness Strategy.
11. The new People Strategy establishes Equality, Diversity and Inclusion as a key foundation with a focus on eliminating discrimination in recruitment, retention, promotion, access to training and pay. It also includes the council motion target for a year on year 2% increase in staff from ethnic minority backgrounds within the workforce, eventually resulting in Luton's workforce reflecting at all levels, the community it serves. As part of our People Strategy ambitions around EDI we have developed an implementation plan based on:
 - Recognising and eliminating discrimination in recruitment, retention, promotion, access to training and pay
 - Recognising and valuing the nine protected characteristics of the Equality Act in the workplace, understanding and removing barriers, and meeting specific needs.
 - Developing the Staff Diversity network to help actively shape the culture of the organisation

- Driving behavioural change, including mandatory training on Unconscious Bias
- Ensuring that the number of staff from ethnic minority backgrounds, is not disproportionately reduced in any future restructuring, by taking positive actions to address areas of underrepresentation and to improve recruitment at all levels
- Taking positive steps towards those at senior levels being representative of Luton's population across all 'protected' groups – understand any barriers and set aspirational targets to close any gaps
- Proactive outreach into our community to raise awareness of the Council has an employer of choice, apprenticeships and our commitment to recruit locally and increase representation at all levels.

12. The new People Strategy 2023-26 was published in July 2023. The People Strategy Board is now more inclusive of employees at different levels/job roles. Informed by the Staff Survey results in December 2022, five workstreams, each managed by a working sub-group, are focusing on identified priorities: Diversity & Inclusion; Recruitment & Retention; Employee Wellbeing & Resilience; Hybrid/Flexible Working and Development.

13. The tables below set out progress against each area set out in the council motion.

Motion commitment	Update on progress
<p>1. Develop a specific Diversity and Inclusion Strategy for the council's workforce</p>	<p>Luton's approach to EDI aligns to 'best practice' of the seven recommendations set out by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development. The last 12 months have focused on a new People Strategy and Implementation Plan for the Council which will underpin the council's wider commitments to EDI and social justice set out in its new Fairness Strategy. Both strategies were launched in 2023, and the EDI Foundation of the People Strategy will inform any further work required to develop a Diversity and Inclusion Strategy for the council's workforce in 2024.</p>
<p>2. Identify aspirational targets and develop an action plan to remove the barriers for existing staff to progress to senior level</p>	<p>The workstreams under the People Strategy Board are developing action plans and key measures of success so that we can better track and communicate progress towards our aims. Equity and inclusion is both a workstream of its own but also underpins the other workstreams looking at recruitment, retention, progression/development, wellbeing and flexible working.</p> <p>Providing Leadership & Management Development programmes specifically for MEB employees has been discussed on several occasions. The Council's Diversity Network has consistently stated that this approach does not promote inclusivity or shared learning across roles, services and organisations, and is not supportive of the idea. Nevertheless, the Development workstream under the People Strategy Board will be considering what more the Council can do to ensure increased representation at senior levels and the progression of our workforce.</p> <p>An inclusive learning opportunity for employees aspiring to be future Service/Corporate Directors, is the one-day regional LGA Tri-Sector Challenge event. Luton nominates a team of 6 Service managers each year, particularly including colleagues from under-represented groups. Luton teams included 2-3 MEB employees in 2022 and 2023. Teams have to tackle a series of timed, observed and assessed challenges, and the event organisers provide a detailed feedback report, summarising individual and team strengths and areas for further development. Both teams put forward in the last two years have won awards at the event.</p>

<p>3. Embed the delivery of diversity outcomes at senior level</p>	<p>Specific guidance on EDI has been included in annual service plans requiring the Service Director to set out specific activities in relation across the three dimensions of the Fairness Strategy (internal workforce and culture, community and residents and citizens and civil society).</p> <p>Work through the new EDI Board has seen the Integrated Impact Assessments (IIA) template updated and improved to support the work of our EDI coordinators and Service Directors in order to ensure that assessment of impact is undertaken on all council policy and service development.</p> <p>In addition, our EDI Co-ordinators have been specifically trained to support their directorate and Service Director in preparing high quality IIAs that detail EDI implications of any changes in staff structures or service delivery in order to make a robust assessment of the impact.</p>
<p>4. Ensure clarity and identify who is responsible for driving this agenda</p>	<p>The EDI Board is responsible for overseeing and driving this agenda, by ensuring that all EDI-related activities/initiatives are cohesively managed and delivered.</p> <p>The People Strategy Board drives implementation of the People Strategy, and has a revised governance structure, with more inclusive membership and wider involvement at departmental/service level. This approach is based on the principle that People Strategy implementation is an organisation-wide responsibility, and identified workstreams are not always led by HR.</p>
<p>5. Each department should identify a lead to deliver diversity outcomes so that there is a co-ordinated approach</p>	<p>EDI co-ordinators have now been in place for two years supporting each service director area. Their duties continue to focus on assisting the completion of IIAs; data analysis and actions to reduce missing data around 'protected groups' within service areas, and specific work projects undertaken by individual EDI co-ordinators.</p> <p>Some EDI co-ordinators have had to step away from this role in the last 6 months (16 reduced to 7 at January 2024). Reasons include leaving LBC; maternity leave and workload demands. Efforts to attract other employees to take on this additional paid role are ongoing.</p>

<p>6. All line managers should have diversity objectives built into their job descriptions and their competencies developed as inclusive leaders</p>	<p>'Equality issues' forms a standard part of every job description / person specification. The job descriptions of Service Directors and Corporate Directors additionally highlight the specific leadership responsibilities that they have on equalities issues. The CARES values agreed by the council feature on the external website, recruitment website and are also prominently displayed on the intranet and in many internal/external publications. A Behaviours Framework, 'Modelling our Values' has been developed, in consultation with recognised trades unions and workforce engagement at all levels. The People Strategy 'Development' workstream subgroup is picking up responsibility for launching the framework in 2024.</p> <p>The Council's Leadership & Management Development Framework is designed to enable managers and aspiring managers at all levels to access a wide range of learning opportunities specific to individual needs. The Framework is scheduled for review in 2024.</p>
<p>7. Drive behavioural change by addressing Unconscious Bias from the top down with experiential, face-to-face training for managers/senior managers.</p>	<p>Mandatory Unconscious Bias training continues to be delivered via a mix of service-specific face to face and on-line learning events. In 2023, four EDI co-ordinators undertook Train the Trainer sessions to deliver online Unconscious Bias training. By the end of January 2024, a total of 2,298 employees were recorded on iTrent as having completed this training, compared with 1,300 employees at end of November 2022 (an increase of 43%).</p>

<p>8. Develop a better and more structured career planning process for MEB staff</p>	<p>Following a comprehensive review of the Check-in scheme in 2021, check-in resources now place a stronger emphasis on career development, and the People Strategy Board is committed to ensuring that personal development plans are being used to help all staff to identify and access opportunities.</p> <p>Our L&D offer is reviewed every year to support the Council's business and workforce development needs. Training attendance data recorded on iTrent between January 2023-January 2024 shows a 4.8% increase in training places taken up by MEB employees, compared with a 2% increase based on December 2021-December 2022 data. All learning options are included: webinars, podcasts, eLearning modules and face to face learning.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="689 496 1841 904"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="689 496 974 536">Ethnicity</th> <th data-bbox="974 496 1406 536">January 2023-January 2024</th> <th data-bbox="1406 496 1841 536">December 2021-December 2022</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="689 536 974 571">Asian or Asian British</td> <td data-bbox="974 536 1406 571">1051</td> <td data-bbox="1406 536 1841 571">1031</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="689 571 974 606">Black or Black British</td> <td data-bbox="974 571 1406 606">1148</td> <td data-bbox="1406 571 1841 606">834</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="689 606 974 641">Mixed</td> <td data-bbox="974 606 1406 641">149</td> <td data-bbox="1406 606 1841 641">162</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="689 641 974 676">Other Ethnic Groups</td> <td data-bbox="974 641 1406 676">62</td> <td data-bbox="1406 641 1841 676">50</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="689 676 974 711">MEB employees</td> <td data-bbox="974 676 1406 711">2410 (35%)</td> <td data-bbox="1406 676 1841 711">2077 (36%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="689 711 974 746">White</td> <td data-bbox="974 711 1406 746">3742 (54%)</td> <td data-bbox="1406 711 1841 746">3396 (60%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="689 746 974 782">Sub-totals</td> <td data-bbox="974 746 1406 782">6152</td> <td data-bbox="1406 746 1841 782">5473</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="689 782 974 817">Not Stated</td> <td data-bbox="974 782 1406 817">89 (1%)</td> <td data-bbox="1406 782 1841 817">115 (2%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="689 817 974 852">Blank</td> <td data-bbox="974 817 1406 852">671 (10%)</td> <td data-bbox="1406 817 1841 852">108 (2%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="689 852 974 904">Grand totals</td> <td data-bbox="974 852 1406 904">6912</td> <td data-bbox="1406 852 1841 904">5696</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Ethnicity	January 2023-January 2024	December 2021-December 2022	Asian or Asian British	1051	1031	Black or Black British	1148	834	Mixed	149	162	Other Ethnic Groups	62	50	MEB employees	2410 (35%)	2077 (36%)	White	3742 (54%)	3396 (60%)	Sub-totals	6152	5473	Not Stated	89 (1%)	115 (2%)	Blank	671 (10%)	108 (2%)	Grand totals	6912	5696
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9. Mentoring schemes to be made available for MEB staff at all levels	<p>Our Coaching & Mentoring Strategy was refreshed in 2023, to include reverse mentoring and peer mentoring. A new mentoring training programme launched in November 2023. Our internal coaching pool currently has 45 staff signed up as members. Breakdown by ethnicity shows 24% are MEB employees, as follows:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="689 336 1547 823"> <thead> <tr> <th>Coaching Pool by identified Ethnicity</th> <th>Number</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>African</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Caribbean</td> <td>6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pakistani</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Indian</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Irish</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>British</td> <td>14</td> </tr> <tr> <td>White & Asian</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>White British</td> <td>12</td> </tr> <tr> <td>White Irish</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Any other White Background</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Prefer not to say</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>45</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>The Bedfordshire Peer Learning Network (BPLN), a forum set up for public sector managers to share good workforce development practice, ceased to be active in 2023, despite best efforts to keep the network going.</p>	Coaching Pool by identified Ethnicity	Number	African	2	Caribbean	6	Pakistani	1	Indian	2	Irish	1	British	14	White & Asian	1	White British	12	White Irish	1	Any other White Background	4	Prefer not to say	1	Total	45
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14. Over and above the specific commitments, it also became clear that we needed to do more around our recruitment. As such a number of elements have been introduced:

<p>Do more to engage with our young people to encourage them to explore working with Luton Council.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council’s commitment as a Cornerstone Employer is being realised as we continue to build links with local schools and colleges to improve life chances and raise awareness of career options for young people. • We are working with local Cornerstone Employers and Careers Hub Luton to implement a Legacy Programme. • Mentoring Care Leavers is an ongoing initiative, the principal aim of which is to reduce not in education, employment or training (NEET) figures by better equipping young people for college and work. An established training programme ensures mentors received targeted training in safeguarding, attachment and resilience, and mentoring skills. This preparation ensures that successful mentors are able to develop professional mentoring relationships and clear objectives with young people within a safe environment. • Other Early Talent initiatives in progress include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A T levels pilot scheme, offering 45-day skills placements to young people in Construction and Business Management sectors of the Council, launched in January 2023. - - A Council-wide approach to work experience was piloted between January-December 2023. Features of the pilot include service-based placement coordinators; a front-facing webpage for young people to register interest in potential council work experience opportunities, and a commitment from CLT that each service offers a minimum of 5 placements in year 1. An evaluation report from the pilot is due to be completed by end March 2024. - From September 2023, Luton re-engaged with the LGA’s national graduate development programme, and two graduate trainees are being funded and developed through this 2-year fast-track route into public sector management, completing 4 x 6-month placements in different services. Two former graduate trainees, who secured permanent positions on completion, were MEB employees.
<p>Identify better ways to promote roles within Luton</p>	<p>Focus over the last year has been to restructure the Council’s recruitment function to support the People Strategy objectives for On boarding and talent management and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.</p> <p>New recruitment and marketing staff have been appointed to improve the council recruiting practices to extend the reach of the council through different recruiting mediums including media, job boards, direct candidate resourcing and community engagement.</p> <p>Luton’s employee benefit offer has been promoted on a range of platforms using a diversity of images and cases. Analysis of candidate applications indicate that a wider pool of talent is being attracted to Luton with an increase in numbers of</p>

	<p>younger and local candidates which has an immediate positive impact on ethnic minority applications.</p> <p>The recruitment service and Connect2Luton are working well with Luton's careers advice and employment support functions in Inclusive Economy to reach out into the community to promote the Council as an employer of choice and the range of vacancies and development opportunities.</p> <p>Activities include 3-hour coffee and career sessions every month in collaboration with Resolutions, a local charity dedicated to assisting individuals in re-entering the workforce, engagement with the University of Bedfordshire, working with the Shaw Trust that has led to a number of employees being recruited, community job fairs and other pop-up events such as in the Library and Town centre. Further work will continue this year collaborating with the social justice unit and Ward Councillors.</p> <p>All of our recruitment practices are non-discriminatory and inclusive and we have a recruitment training programme for hiring managers which includes this.</p>
<p>Make our process more slick so we can recruit quickly</p>	<p>A new recruitment system was introduced in January 2024 with a redesigned recruitment process to ensure the time to hire is significantly reduced. A compliance team is being put in place in March to take over the responsibility of safeguarding and compliance checks from recruiting managers which will shorten the time to onboard a candidate as well ensuring safeguarding is completed to a consistent and high standard.</p>