



Annual Equality Monitoring Report

1 April 2025 to
31 March 2026



Forestry Commission



Contents

- 4 Foreword
- 6 Introduction
- 9 Our people: in numbers
- 10 Strategy and oversight
- 12 Training and development
- 14 Supporting and growing our staff networks
- 16 Partnership working and sharing good practice
- 18 Case studies
- 26 Appendix: divisional workforce and recruitment data

Foreword

Everyone who works for the Forestry Commission brings unique experiences, perspectives and talents. We are committed to creating an inclusive culture where every member of our workforce feels valued, respected and empowered to contribute fully and achieve their potential, whilst ensuring everyone feels welcome in the nation's forests.

I am pleased to report continued progress this year. Women now make up 48% of our workforce and hold 43% of senior management positions. For the third consecutive year, our median gender pay gap remains at 0%, while our mean gender pay gap has reduced from 2.96% to 1.88%, demonstrating continued movement towards greater pay parity. Representation of people from minority ethnic backgrounds has risen to 11%, and 9% of employees have told us they have a disability.

These results are underpinned by a sustained and purposeful programme of work. We strengthened our protections against bullying, harassment and discrimination in line with the Worker Protection Act 2023, introduced a refreshed Equality Impact Assessment process, and listened carefully to disabled employees through a dedicated survey and focus groups that will help shape our priorities for the year ahead.

Our staff networks have continued to thrive. Rainbow Canopy's Out in the Forest events welcomed LGBTQ+ communities into forests across the country, while our Women's Staff Network, shortlisted in the inaugural Forestry Commission Awards, continued to influence initiatives ranging from leadership development to the introduction of female-fit personal protective equipment. In October, I was honoured to welcome Sikh communities from around the world to High Lodge, Thetford, where we planted an oak tree as part of the Veterans' Oaks project, recognising the service and sacrifice of civilians and military from all backgrounds who were impacted by World War 2 and wars since then.

We are equally ambitious for the people who visit our forests. Active Forests exceeded its targets for engaging under-served groups in physical activity, the Access for All programme continued to remove barriers to participation and enjoyment, and our Accessible Adventures campaign placed the lived experiences of disabled visitors at the heart of demonstrating that forests are for everyone.

Our approach continues to be recognised as an example of good practice across the Civil Service and beyond, and I am proud of the external recognition received this year. My thanks go to everyone who has contributed to this progress, including our staff networks, volunteers, Diversity and Wellbeing Team, and teams across the organisation. Their commitment and dedication are helping to make the Forestry Commission a place where everyone can belong, contribute and succeed.

Richard Stanford CB, MBE,
Forestry Commission CEO



Introduction

At the Forestry Commission, we are committed to building a workforce that reflects the rich diversity of the communities we serve across Britain. We believe that embracing inclusion and diversity not only strengthens our organisation but also enhances our ability to deliver for the public.

We recognise and value the individuality of every employee, and we are dedicated to creating an environment where everyone feels respected, supported and empowered to thrive.

This report is part of our ongoing responsibility to publish workforce data in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and the Equality Act 2010. It provides a breakdown of our workforce by relevant protected characteristics and demonstrates how we are meeting our obligations to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- advance equality of opportunity between people from different protected characteristics
- foster good relations between people from different protected characteristics

Beyond meeting our legal duties, this report also showcases the steps we are taking to embed equality, diversity and inclusion throughout the Forestry Commission.





Our people: in numbers

This report is based on our workforce figures across Forestry England, Forest Services, Forest Research and the Commissioners' Office for 31 March 2026. The report does not include casual staff.

As of 31 March 2026, the Forestry Commission had 2,402 employees of which:



Our workforce has continued to become more diverse. Since last year's report, our headcount has grown from 2,375 to 2,402, representation of colleagues from a minority ethnic background has increased from 9% to 11%, the proportion of colleagues who have told us they have a disability has risen from 8% to 9%, and female representation has increased by one percentage point to 48%.

A breakdown of workforce data for each part of the Forestry Commission is published in the appendix.

Strategy and oversight

During 2025/26, our diversity and inclusion activity focused on strengthening governance, embedding equality into decision-making, and sustaining an inclusive culture through visible leadership, consistent communications and strong staff engagement. Our work continues to be cited as an example of good practice within the Civil Service and beyond.

Everyone Belongs Board

Now firmly embedded in its fourth year, the Everyone Belongs Board continued to provide oversight, assurance and accountability for equality, diversity and inclusion activity across the Forestry Commission.

Embedding equality in decision-making

We introduced a refreshed Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) process, supported by a new policy adopted from Defra, updated guidance and training, and launched a standardised EqIA form aligned to Defra. This reinforces consistent and robust consideration of equality impacts in policy, project and operational decision-making.

Strengthening protections against bullying, harassment and discrimination

Aligned with the Worker Protection Act 2023, we strengthened our protections against bullying, harassment and discrimination. Following the launch of our preventing sexual harassment at work guidance in January 2026 and live managers' training in July, we rolled out new Preventing Sexual Harassment e-learning to all staff. The e-learning package was developed using real, anonymised experiences shared by members of our Women's Staff Network, highlighting the different ways sexual harassment can happen – from inappropriate comments and unwanted touching to persistent messages and subtle gender-based discrimination.

We also commissioned a series of bullying and harassment awareness workshops for senior leaders, managers and colleagues, building

confidence in recognising these behaviours, responding to incidents and supporting those affected.

Improving disability inclusion

Our 2024 staff engagement survey showed great improvements in diversity and inclusion scores compared to the 2022 survey.

However, when carrying out a deeper dive into the staff survey results by staff demographic data, it was found that disabled staff gave the lowest scores, alongside significantly negative comments. This pattern was consistent across all four business areas: Forest Services, Forestry England, Forest Research and the Commissioners' Office.

In response to this and in collaboration with the Disability, Neurodivergence and Carers' Staff Network, HR colleagues, and the Business Disability Forum (BDF), we undertook a three-strand programme of research:

1. A follow-up survey of staff with disabilities to explore their experiences in depth (conducted July 2025 with 37 responses, analysed by DJS Research)
2. A series of disabled employee focus groups, facilitated and written up by the Business Disability Forum (October 2025 with 16 participants across Forestry England, Forest Services and Forest Research)
3. A survey of line managers to understand their levels of confidence in managing staff with disabilities (193 responses, analysed by DJS Research)

The findings from this research have informed the Disability Inclusion Report and Action Plan, which sets out how we can turn these insights into meaningful, lasting change.

The report shows that the Forestry Commission is widely seen as a supportive employer with a genuine commitment to inclusion, providing a strong foundation to build on.

At the same time, the report is honest about where experiences are not yet consistent. This insight gives us a clear opportunity to move from good intentions to visible, everyday inclusion.

The 10-point action plan is already in place, with practical steps to drive improvement, including:

- publishing a new Disability Inclusion Policy and reviewing disability-related absence processes
- rolling out disability inclusion training for line managers
- improving and speeding up workplace adjustments
- strengthening leadership accountability and visibility

Progress will be tracked and shared with staff regularly and the actions will be kept under review in light of emerging data such as the results of the 2026 staff engagement survey.

Training and development

Building inclusive capability

We continued to invest in inclusive capability throughout the year. Our Creating an Inclusive Workplace training remains open to all colleagues as an ongoing opportunity, and is a core element of the Professional Manager Programme (PMP) and Senior Leadership Programme (SLP). We also enhanced the EDI learning and resources page on our intranet with new videos, research and guidance.

Communications and awareness

An extensive programme of internal communications supported awareness and learning across the year, including notices, news stories and blogs covering International Women's Day, Neurodiversity Awareness, Pride, Black History Month, Men's Health Awareness Month, safeguarding, online abuse, carers' rights, maternity benefits, and menopause and perimenopause.

Developing diverse talent and leadership

We continued to support diverse talent through participation in Defra's Aspire ethnic minority development programme and the Catapult social mobility development programme, with seven mentees and three mentors taking part from the Forestry Commission for the latter. A personal reflection on the Aspire programme is included in our case studies.



Supporting and growing our staff networks

The Forestry Commission has four staff networks. These are:

- Rainbow Canopy (LGBTQ+)
- Disability, Neurodivergence and Carers
- Women's
- REACH (Race Equality and Cultural Heritage)

The networks contribute to important policy and guidance conversations, organise events and knowledge sharing sessions, and use blogs and news stories to highlight awareness days and share personal experiences. Our networks played a central role in awareness activity linked to International Women's Day, Pride Month, Windrush Day, Armed Forces Day and Disability Pride Month, and made strong and sustained contributions across the organisation.

Rainbow Canopy: Out in the Forest

In summer 2025, Rainbow Canopy's Out in the Forest series brought the LGBTQ+ community together in some of Forestry England's most beautiful spaces.

From quiet moments of reflection to vibrant celebrations, these events reminded us why visibility and belonging matter, and gave us the opportunity to show Pride in our nation's forests.

Highlights from the season

- Westonbirt Arboretum hosted a wellbeing walk, activities to connect with nature, fire-lighting, clay art, and a picnic at the community shelter.
- Salcey Forest offered a disc golf taster, complete with catering from a local same-sex couple.
- Hicks Lodge partnered with Wild Minds CIC, also run by a same-sex couple, for nature immersion and forest bathing.

- Whinlatter Forest welcomed participants for a guided wellbeing walk.
- Chopwell Wood went big with a Pride Colour Run alongside Gateshead Pride - drawing around 400 participants.

Feedback from participants was heartfelt and affirming:

"I felt safe, seen, and appreciated... It was just so lovely to be around other like-minded people who felt safe, seen, and appreciated."
– **Westonbirt participant**

"Thank you so much for the disc golf at Salcey Forest! I will definitely be coming back for another round!"
– **Salcey participant**

"Being out in the forest is one of the few places where you can get away from all the negativity in society and not feel judged for who you are."
– **Hicks Lodge participant**

Many shared how these events rekindled a connection to nature they'd lost over time. Others spoke about the reassurance of seeing Pride celebrated in a social climate where visible support can feel less certain.

Women's Staff Network

The Women's Staff Network continued to strengthen its presence as a cross-organisation, volunteer-led network providing support, advocacy and a safe space for women and allies. The network grew to 238 Teams channel members and engaged over 300 attendees across nine Women's Network Hour events, alongside more than 60 channel posts and several internal blogs and notices.

A wide programme of activity was delivered, including webinars on the gender pension gap and living with endometriosis, a 'Women in the Economy' webinar with the Women's Budget

Group, a panel event for International Women's Day, a menopause talking circle, and wellbeing, mindfulness and neurodivergence discussions. The network also progressed work on senior sponsorship and cross-government collaboration.

The network contributed directly to organisational learning and policy: supporting the Preventing Sexual Harassment training, feeding into work with Arbortec to create female-fit safety clothing, and raising safety considerations about women travelling alone for work.

The network's impact was recognised through being shortlisted in the 2025 Forestry Commission Awards, further strengthening its influence and role in shaping an inclusive workplace.



Partnership working and sharing good practice

We continue to contribute actively to Defra and Civil Service policy development. The Diversity and Wellbeing Manager Wali Rahman worked with Defra Group EDI leads to co-create the new Defra Staff Networks Policy, launched in February 2026 with supporting communications, briefings and training for managers and network leads.

Externally, Wali spoke at the D&I Leaders Summit 2025 on Race and Religion at Work, participated in cross-government events and conferences, and contributed to initial discussions on the development of a new forestry sector EDI strategy at the Institute of Chartered Foresters' EDI skills forum.

Recognition and awards

The impact and visibility of our approach to inclusion and wellbeing was reflected in external recognition this year, with Wali receiving the Includability Workplace Champion award at the Includability Awards 2025, and being shortlisted for Mental Health Advocate of the Year at the Great British Workplace Wellbeing Awards 2026.

The Forestry Commission Wellbeing Lead Rose Murby was also recognised for her work to improve workplace wellbeing by being shortlisted as a finalist in the inaugural Forestry Commission Awards.

Workplace wellbeing

Workplace wellbeing remains a core priority for the Forestry Commission with activity focusing on strengthening mental health capability, improving access to support, and reinforcing wellbeing networks across the organisation.

Mental health training for staff and managers was refreshed and promoted to support earlier, more confident conversations about mental ill-health (see infographic below).

We successfully transitioned to new Employee Assistance Programme and Occupational Health providers, improving access to timely clinical and advisory support for staff and managers. The Annual Health Assessments Programme was relaunched, achieving 83% compliance, and the Flu Vaccination Programme was updated and positively received.

Wellbeing Champions continued to play a key role in supporting staff wellbeing at a local level, with numbers increasing by over 50%. Improved training, clearer role definition and stronger links to central wellbeing activity have increased the consistency of wellbeing promotion, signposting and support. Support for Mental Health First Aiders was also enhanced through additional training, clearer guidance and improved peer connection.

Work-related stress has been a significant focus. A comprehensive Work-Related Stress Toolkit, including an updated Stress Risk Assessment, supports earlier and more preventative conversations, and wellbeing has been embedded more firmly into performance reviews. Specific training was introduced in May 2025 and embedded within leadership development programmes, and in February 2026 a corporate Work-Related Stress Risk Assessment was developed, identifying key organisational stressors, existing controls and required actions.

The Forestry Commission gender pay gap

The Forestry Commission Gender Pay Gap Report (2024–2025) continues to show strong progress in building a fairer and more inclusive organisation for everyone.

The report covers pay data from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 and highlights sustained improvements, alongside the actions we are taking to address the structural causes of the gender pay gap.

Our latest results show continued progress:

- for the third consecutive year, the median gender pay gap remains at 0%, meaning the middle hourly rate for women is equivalent to that for men
- the mean gender pay gap has reduced to 1.88%, down from 2.96% last year

This reduction in the mean gap reflects positive movement towards greater overall pay parity and marks an improvement on previous years.

The distribution of men and women across pay quartiles is broadly aligned with overall workforce proportions. Some variation remains in the lower quartiles, largely due to a higher proportion of men working in operational roles that attract additional contractual hours.

Overall, these figures place the Forestry Commission well below national gender pay gap averages and demonstrate sustained progress over time.

While forestry and land based work has historically attracted more men, the proportion of women in the organisation has grown significantly – from 35% in 2005 to nearly 47% today. In comparison, our gender pay gap stood at 21% in 2005, highlighting how far we have come.

Key factors supporting recent improvements include moving to spot salaries in some pay grades. As of the October 2025 pay award, 89% of employees are now on spot salaries or at the bottom of their pay range. This transition away from legacy pay variation is helping to reduce inconsistency and will continue to support pay fairness.

[Read the full Forestry Commission Gender Pay Gap Report 2024–2025 on GOV.UK](#)



78 staff completed the two-day Mental Health First Aid training



100 staff attended in-house Mental Health First Aid training



277 staff completed one-day Stress and Mental Health Awareness training



Annual Equality Monitoring Report
1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026

Case studies

These case studies give you a glimpse into just some of the projects and programmes we run at the Forestry Commission; welcoming everyone into our forests and growing an environment where equality, diversity and inclusion benefits all our employees and citizens across the UK.

Active Forests: removing barriers (2023–2026)

Active Forests is Forestry England's flagship health and wellbeing programme, delivered in partnership with Sport England. Its third phase, Removing Barriers, focused on increasing participation in physical activity by addressing the access barriers experienced by underserved groups – and significantly exceeded its equality and inclusion targets. Against an initial target of 536,000 active visits from priority groups, the programme delivered:



2.1m visits from people living in the three most deprived areas of the country



1.95m visits from people with long-term health conditions



924k visits from non-Christian religious groups



680k visits from LGBTQ+ communities

A key strength of the programme has been its targeted, community-led approach. Women-only running groups delivered with This Woman Runs created safe, supportive environments at Alice Holt, Salcey and Wyre forests, and Active Forests Coordinators supported the delivery of Pride events across four sites. Feel Good in the Forest mini-project funding enabled 35 community-led projects across 17 forests – delivering almost 3,000 active visits through activities ranging from Nordic walking, yoga for older and isolated people and bushcraft for people impacted by bereavement, to mountain biking for young carers and sessions for refugees, asylum seekers and survivors of domestic abuse.

The programme also tackled practical and confidence-related barriers: sessions for deaf and hard of hearing children at Chopwell Woods, weekend walks for people living with dementia and their carers at Guisborough Forest, buggy walks for new mothers at Thames Chase, outreach in warm hubs and foodbanks using virtual forest resources, and 'Know Before You Go' accessibility information to support informed and confident visits.



717k+ visits from minority ethnic groups

Asian, Black, Mixed and other non-White ethnic groups



5.9% increase in the proportion of minority ethnic groups taking part in physical activity in forests

These are experimental statistics from the Active Forests evaluation: Phase 3 'Removing Barriers' - Forest Research.

Access for All

Forestry England's commitment to improving accessibility in the nation's forests continues. With on-going support from government, more great work has been delivered through the Access for All programme in 2025-26.

Access improvements have been based on audience research and developed in collaboration with people who have lived experience. The main aim is to extend a warm welcome to more people than ever before, encouraging everyone to experience the health and wellbeing benefits of being out in nature.

"Our Access for All programme was developed in Covid-19, when across government and the country we could see that access to greenspace close to where people live was critical for the health and wellbeing of all. As we demonstrated the valuable role that our forests could play in providing this, we built a pipeline and a case for interventions that could really make a difference to improving access for all across the country. The resulting programme is a great example of scaling tested and proven interventions – the combination of functional features, such as trail improvements, without which access is either challenging or impossible and interventions, such as Changing Places and inclusive play, which are real draws to our forest destinations increasing access to all have been delivered at scale. It is credit to everything we have achieved so far that we are now growing the programme further to deliver benefits in more places."

**- Hayley Skipper,
Director of Operations –
Commercial Visitor Development**

41 Access improvements across 31 forest locations, including...

- 1 more Changing Places toilet bringing the total to 14 across the country
- 5 new mobility scooters available to hire
- 8 walking, wheeling and cycle trail improvements
- 1 more 'Pedal and Play' trail - an integrated cycling and play experience that encourages children of all abilities to start cycling and develop their cycling skills

- 45 new accessible resting places (perches, benches and picnic tables)
- 7 Inclusive Play areas
- 5 bridges
- 4 shelters
- 2 additional PEC boards (based on the Picture Exchange Communication System) to support non-verbal visitors, now at 3 sites
- Year-round inclusive parking provision and accessible link path at Bedgebury Pinetum
- Improved accessibility and enhanced visitor experience at the much-loved Kielder Castle

An all-terrain mobility scooter in use at Delamere Forest:



Annual Equality
Monitoring Report
1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026

Properly fitting safety gear for female Forestry Commission staff

Female forest workers can finally wear chainsaw protection equipment designed specifically for their bodies, bringing an end to years of using ill-fitting men's workwear that compromised both safety and comfort.

Forestry England's investment has enabled the range of female fit workwear to be developed by manufacturer Arbortec. The design and production process has involved extensive testing and feedback from female forest workers for the first time.

This positive step tackles longstanding workplace challenges in forestry, where female workers have made do with men's equipment. Forestry England's female forest workers have shared experiences of being swamped in extra-small men's shirts, constantly adjusting oversized sleeves, and using tape to secure loose men's chainsaw trousers.

The investment demonstrates Forestry England's dedication to building a truly inclusive forestry sector that welcomes talent from all backgrounds. With 47% of Forestry England's workforce identifying as female, properly fitting safety equipment removes a significant barrier to women's full participation in fulfilling forestry careers.



Accessible Adventures: forests are for everyone

In spring 2026, Forestry England launched Accessible Adventures, a campaign bringing together Active Forests, funded by Sport England and Forestry England, and the Access for All programme, funded by Defra, to highlight how forests are becoming more accessible to more people across the country.

At its heart were real people sharing their lived experiences of visiting the nation's forests, giving an authentic voice to what accessible outdoor spaces can mean in people's lives.

Forestry England hosted four content creators who shared their own lived experiences of disability and accessibility, capturing how accessible trails, all-terrain mobility scooters and Changing Places facilities support wellbeing, independence and connection with nature. Their stories, told in their own words, ran across Instagram, YouTube and Forestry England channels, reaching hundreds of thousands of people across England.

"It's important to put lived experiences at the front and centre of this campaign, as accessibility holds a different meaning to different people. Our aim was to showcase these perspectives and highlight our forests as places where everyone should feel able to spend time, move and connect with nature."

**- Alex Broun,
Active Forests Marketing
and Sponsorship Manager**

The campaign also produced a new bank of photography and video capturing accessible trails, facilities and moments of activity in the forest, forming a longer-term library to support future communications. Photography was captured by Charlie Swinbourne, a deaf professional photographer who creates authentic, inclusive imagery centring disabled, deaf, LGBTQ+ and ethnically diverse talent.



Oak planting at High Lodge marks the contribution of Commonwealth members in World War II

On 26 October 2025, a commemorative oak tree was planted at High Lodge as part of the Veterans' Oaks project. The moving ceremony honoured the contribution of Commonwealth service personnel and civilians in World War II.

Richard Stanford, Forestry Commission Chief Executive Officer and Gurch Randhawa, Non-Executive Director, welcomed guests from Sikh communities across the UK and beyond, including communities from the USA, Germany, and South Africa. The ceremony was held to honour Maharajah Duleep Singh who lived at the nearby Elveden Estate and to remember the service and sacrifice made by soldiers from all backgrounds during the war.

"Veterans' Oaks is a nationwide, community-led initiative to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II – historically marked as the 'oak anniversary'. Through the symbolic act of planting oak trees across the United Kingdom, we commemorate, remember and celebrate the courage, sacrifice, and resilience of the generation who lived through the war – both military personnel and civilians – and pledge to safeguard the nations' environmental future in our struggle against climate change.

"The oak tree is a symbol of British culture: of strength, unity, and endurance. It reflects values embodied by those who lived through wartime adversity. Veterans' Oaks invites the Armed Forces Community and their families, all individuals, community groups, and businesses to plant oak trees as living memorials.

"Veterans' Oaks bridges past and future, uniting memory, education and commemoration with sustainability, urging us to honour history while protecting the world for generations to come. The act of planting is a tangible action of remembrance which also contributes to biodiversity, enriches our natural heritage, and helps fight climate change.

"Today we come together to commemorate, remember and celebrate the service of Sikhs far and wide during World War II and since then in the service of our country, and the significant sacrifice of service personnel and civilians during World War II and subsequent conflicts."

- Richard Stanford
(welcome speech)



My Aspire journey

A personal reflection by Joanna Smith, Apprenticeship Support and Outreach Administrator.

Aspire is a six-month career development programme designed to support ethnic minority colleagues in the Defra group to gain the experience and leadership skills needed to progress their careers. Joanna Smith – the only participant from the Forestry Commission on the 2025/26 programme – shared her reflections.

Aspire aims to:

- equip ethnic minority colleagues with skills and confidence
- facilitate access to tailored development, knowledge, and tools that actively drive career advancement
- create safe, visible, and empowering spaces
- provide a positive development experience for all staff

Why I joined

I remember last January, just back from the Christmas break and trying to get back into the rhythm of work. I saw the information about Aspire and thought, “No way can I take on something else right now!”

At the time, my colleague was on maternity leave, and my to-do list felt endless. But the programme really intrigued me, and I kept thinking about what it could mean for me.

Coming from a minority background (and yes - don't be fooled by my name, I'm 100% Polish), I've often struggled with feeling “good enough” in any job I've done.

You know that feeling when a mistake keeps you awake at night? For me, it's usually agonising over grammar (still not quite sure when to use the or a!). So, the idea of joining a programme where you talk to strangers, participate in workshops, and write job applications? Honestly – it was daunting!

But after some thought, I realised Aspire could help me work on my confidence and self-doubt. So, I applied. I was lucky enough to get in – and as the only person from the Forestry Commission! Funny enough, one of the first sessions was about imposter syndrome, when I learned I am not alone in my feelings.

The programme was engaging and inspiring from the start. Each month there was a different topic, including career reflections, goal setting, leadership, communicating confidently or presenting your best self.

I took part in career sessions with senior leaders across Defra, invaluable training (my personal favourite – ‘becoming unstoppable’), practical workshops on job searching, writing applications and presenting confidently.

The Action Learning Sets (ALS) and Coffee Connect chats were highlights for me. I spoke to a lot of strangers from the Defra group, and they were amazing! I learned so much about the organisation, people's work and their passions. Everyone was kind and supportive throughout.

Was it hard? Absolutely, especially on top of day-to-day tasks. And yes, there were challenges. But it was worth it. Aspire isn't just about job hunting or career progression, it's about building confidence, expanding your network and pushing your own limits.

If not for Aspire, I wouldn't have had the courage to write and share this reflection with you.



Appendix

Our people: across our divisions

For 2025/26 we are also publishing workforce data for each part of the Forestry Commission. All figures are as of 31 March 2026 unless stated otherwise.

Forestry England

Measure	Figure
Employees	1,329
Gender	53% male / 47% female
Declared a disability	7%
Minority ethnic background	6% (incl. 3% non-British white)
White British	92% (2% not disclosed)
Senior management (female / male)	43% / 57%
Senior management ethnicity	5% minority ethnic (incl. 2% non-British white); 93% white British; 1% not declared
Median gender pay gap (2025)	0.00%
Mean gender pay gap (2025)	Male hourly rate 0.05% lower than female
Employees over 40	61%

Forest Services & Commissioners' Office

Measure	Figure
Employees	625
Gender	51% male / 49% female
Declared a disability	12%
Minority ethnic background	11% (incl. 6% non-British white)
White British	87% (2% not disclosed)
Senior management (female / male)	42% / 58%
Senior management ethnicity	6% minority ethnic (incl. 2% non-British white); 93% white British; 2% not declared
Median gender pay gap (2025)	Middle male salary 18.01% higher than middle female salary
Mean gender pay gap (2025)	Male hourly rate 5.47% higher than female
Employees over 40	56%



Measure	Figure
Employees	446
Gender	50% male / 50% female
Declared a disability	9%
Minority ethnic background	20% (incl. 11% non-British white)
White British	75% (5% not disclosed)
Senior management (female / male)	47% / 53%
Senior management ethnicity	9% minority ethnic (incl. 6% non-British white); 82% white British; 8% not declared
Median gender pay gap (2025)	0.00%
Mean gender pay gap (2025)	Male hourly rate 3.01% higher than female
Employees over 40	51%

Completion rates

Equality monitoring declaration completion rates by division:

Category	Forestry England	Forest Services and Commissioners' Office	Forest Research	Forestry Commission (total)
Disability	72.2%	83.2%	72.4%	75.2%
Ethnicity	99.8%	100%	97.1%	99.4%

Recruitment data

The information below includes employment data collected between 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026 for Forestry Commission employees. As of 31 March 2026, the Forestry Commission had 2,402 employees (up from 2,375 in 2025).

Disability

Our disability recruitment data showed:

- total applicants who have a disability: 14.0%
- total applicants who do not have a disability: 79.7%
- total applicants who prefer not to say whether they have a disability: 6.3%
- interviewed applicants who have a disability: 18.2%
- interviewed applicants who do not have a disability: 73.3%
- interviewed applicants who prefer not to say whether they have a disability: 8.5%
- successful applicants who have a disability: 17.3%
- successful applicants who do not have a disability: 73.3%
- successful applicants who prefer not to say whether they have a disability: 9.3%

Ethnicity

Our recruitment data by ethnicity showed:

- total non-white minority ethnic applicants: 27.0%
- total white applicants: 67.5%
- total applicants who prefer not to say their ethnicity: 5.5%
- interviewed non-white minority ethnic applicants: 15.5%
- interviewed white applicants: 78.8%
- interviewed applicants who prefer not to say their ethnicity: 5.7%
- successful non-white minority ethnic applicants: 5.4%
- successful white applicants: 89.2%
- successful applicants who prefer not to say their ethnicity: 5.4%

Gender

Our recruitment data by gender showed:

- total male applicants: 53.9%
- total female applicants: 40.9%
- total applicants who prefer not to say their gender: 4.4%
- interviewed male applicants: 52.4%
- interviewed female applicants: 41.9%
- interviewed applicants who prefer not to say their gender: 5.1%
- successful male applicants: 45.0%
- successful female applicants: 49.2%
- successful applicants who prefer not to say their gender: 5.0%

Age

Our recruitment data by age showed:

- total applicants who are aged 44 or below: 80.3%
- total applicants who are aged 45 or over: 15.5%
- total applicants who prefer not to say their age: 4.2%
- interviewed applicants who are aged 44 or below: 72.3%
- interviewed applicants who are aged 45 or over: 22.9%
- interviewed applicants who prefer not to say their age: 4.8%
- successful applicants who are aged 44 or below: 72.1%
- successful applicants who are aged 45 or over: 23.3%
- successful applicants who prefer not to say their age: 4.6%

