

CABINET

16th September 2025

HR & CULTURAL CHANGE – QUARTERLY EMPLOYEE DATA REPORT

APRIL 2025 TO JUNE 2025 (Q1 2025/26)

Report by Director of HR and Cultural Change

RECOMMENDATION

Cabinet is **RECOMMENDED** to note the report.

Executive Summary

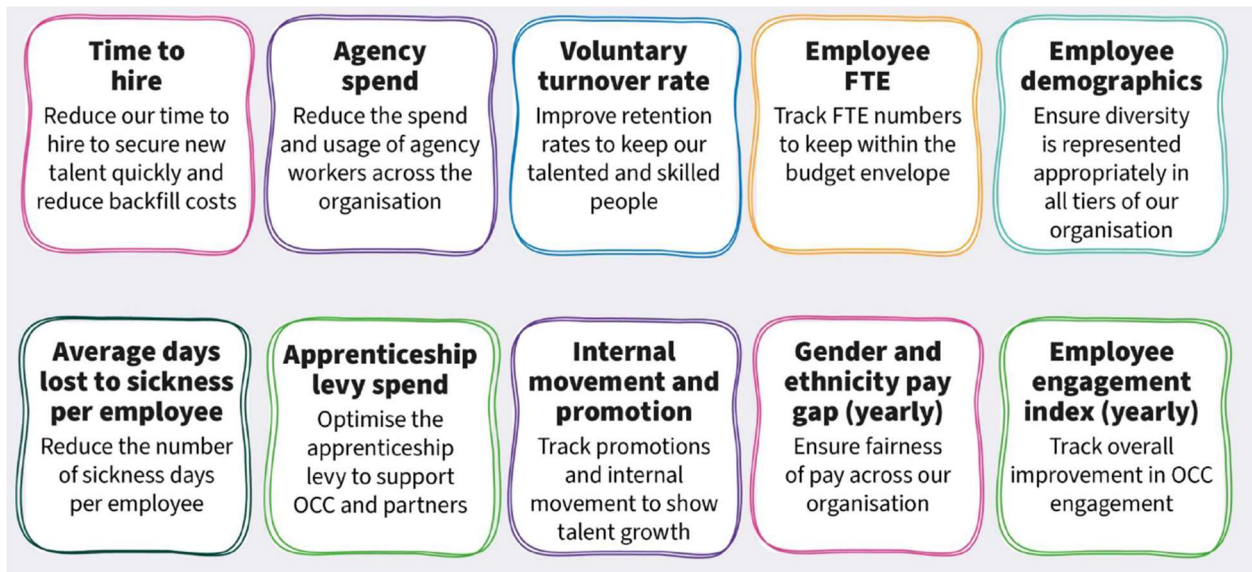
1. This report provides an overview of the progress towards delivering the Our People and Culture Strategy (as measured by the achievement of its key performance indicators) and summarises the main employee-related trends for Q1 2025/26.

Our people and culture strategy

2. The vision for the Our People and Culture Strategy is that 'we develop and maintain high performing, innovative, highly engaged, and agile teams, employing the best people, and reflecting the communities we serve. We nurture an environment that supports diversity, equality, and inclusion, and allows all our employees to bring their whole selves to work to deliver great services for our Oxfordshire residents'. The Strategy focuses on priorities under 4 pillars, ATTRACT, THRIVE, GROW and LEAD:



- 2.1. Organisational people and culture KPIs (key performance indicators) – for the targets set for the KPIs see Annex 2.



Time to Hire

- Following the introduction of the new applicant tracking system in September 2024, Time to Hire metrics are among the KPIs tracked under the Our People and Culture Strategy. Data will be available for wider sharing in the Q2 2025/26 Quarterly Report.

Agency Spend

- Agency spend via the Council's agreed provider of agency workers, HAYS, increased slightly this quarter (Q1 2025/26) to £6.63m from the reported £6.56m in Q4 2024/25.
- There was a decrease in the off contract spend in Q1 2025/26 with a spend of £0.979m in comparison to £1.68m in Q4 24/25.
- The total (HAYS and off-contract) agency spend reduced from £8.24m in Q4 2024/25 to £7.60m in Q1 25/26.
- Year on year the total (on and off-contract) agency spends for Q1 reduced from £7.99m Q1 2024/25 to £7.60m in Q1 2025/26.
- The highest agency spend in Q1 continues to remain in Children's Services, Adult Social Services, Environment and Highways and Law and Governance. (Annex 2).

Turnover

- The overall turnover rate (in the 12- rolling month period) decreased from 13.5% at the end of Q4 2024/25 to 12.0% in (Q1 2025/26)
- The voluntary annual turnover has decreased from 11.0% (seen in Q4) to 10.5% in Q1 2025/26, a positive trend exceeding the Our People and Culture Strategy target of 11.5% per year.

Employee FTE (Full Time Equivalent)

- The Council's FTE has decreased from 4606.23 last quarter (Q4 2024/25) to 4596.58 in Q1 2025/26. This figure represents directly employed colleagues only (i.e, it excludes

agency staff). This is the third consecutive quarter where the number of the Council's directly employed colleagues has reduced (Annex 3).

12. There were 151 new starters in Q1 of 2025/26 and 164 leavers. New starters accounted and 11% of these were under the age of 26. Amongst the 151 people who joined the Council in Q1, 125 colleagues (83%) are on a permanent contract, while 26 colleagues (17%) are on a fixed term or temporary contract with over a third of new colleagues being recruited into our Children's Services directorate.

Employee demographics

13. Promotions/secondments - the percentage of promotions/secondments awarded to those who declared as being from an ethnic minority background was 10% which has decreased slightly since Q4 2024/25 whilst the percentage of promotions/secondments awarded to colleagues at the Council declaring a disability increased from 4% to 7% in Q1 2025/26.
14. Gender - the majority of colleagues at the Council are female (66%), this trend remains stable.
15. Age – percentage of colleagues at the Council who are under 26 remains stable at 5.2% at the end of Q4 2024/25.
16. Disability - the percentage of colleagues at the Council declaring a disability increased from 8.8% at the end of Q4 2024/25 to 8.95% at the end of quarter one
17. Ethnicity – at the end of Q1 2025/26, the non-white colleagues remain at 12% of employed staff of which, Black and Asian colleagues each represent 4%, while individuals identifying as mixed make up 3%, and those classified as other comprise 1%. Additionally, 8% of colleagues did not disclose their ethnicity.

Average Days Lost to Sickness

18. The sickness absence rate in the rolling 12-month period has increased slightly from 8.7 days absence per FTE in Q4 2024/25 to 8.8 days in Q1 25/26. However, there has been a decrease in the sickness absence recorded quarter on quarter, from 4.31% in Q4 of 2024/25 to 3.83% in Q1 25/26.
19. The average number of sick days per FTE has declined year over year, dropping from 9.1 days in Q1 2024/25 to 8.77 days by the end of Q1 2025/26.

Apprenticeships and Apprenticeship Levy utilisation

20. In Q1 of 2025/26 26 colleagues completed their apprenticeship and 28 new apprenticeships were enrolled – increasing the total number of apprentices on programme to 334. (This figure includes colleagues undertaking apprenticeships in schools.)
21. Q1 2025/26 spend was £0.368m, decreasing slightly since last quarter, which was the largest spend to date for a quarter of £0.369m. The total Apprenticeship Levy spend for the last 12 months was £1.401m.
22. The Apprenticeship Levy utilisation has increased from 89.6% in Q4 2024/25 to 93.4% in Q1 2025/26. Year on year, the Apprenticeship Levy utilisation has increased from 89.6% in Q1 2024/25 to 93.4% in Q1 2025/26. (See Annex 3)

Movement and promotion

23. Movement and promotion at the Council has improved this quarter at 8.7% (mobility rate) in Q1 2025/26. This exceeds our target of 8.5%

Gender and Ethnicity Gap March 2025

24. The most recent figures detailing the Council's Gender Pay Gap were published in March 2024, showing a gap of 2.95%, with the Ethnicity Pay Gap reported at 2.59%. This year's figures (to March 2025) will be reported to the Remuneration Committee and Council later in the year as part of the annual Pay Gap Report before being published.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

25. Equality and inclusion implications are considered across all our workstreams.

Sustainability Implications

26. There are no sustainability implications arising from this report.

Risk Management

27. There are no risk management issues arising from this report.

Financial Implications

28. Action taken to manage the level of agency staffing expenditure contributed to services managing expenditure within the agreed budget in 2024/25.

29. Continuing focus is required so that costs are managed within agreed service budgets in 2025/26.

Kathy Wilcox, Head of Corporate Finance

Legal Implications

30. There are no direct legal implications arising from this progress update report relating to the delivery of the Our People and Culture Strategy.

Jay Akbar, Head of Legal and Governance Services

Staff Implications

31. Staff implications are considered across all our workstreams and covered in this report.

Cherie Cuthbertson

Director of HR and Cultural Change

Annexes:

ANNEX 1 Quarterly employee data dashboard Q4 2024-2025

ANNEX 2 Our people and culture strategy v2

ANNEX 3 Quarterly additional data 2025-26

Background papers: Nil

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06/08/2025