

Divisions: N/A

CABINET - 22 JUNE 2021

WORKFORCE REPORT AND STAFFING DATA Q4 2020/2021

Report by Karen Edwards

RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to note the report.

Executive Summary

1. Our workforce is the most valuable asset the council deploys. It is our people that make a difference to our residents and our communities. The very nature of the work, and the services we provide, is people intensive. Our residents are reliant on the professionalism of our workforce to deliver high quality services and the future ambitions of the Council.
2. Many of our staff have continued to work from home during Q4 (January-March 2021) as a result of the pandemic and the lockdown restrictions with very limited numbers working from council buildings.
3. This report provides an update on key HR activities during Quarter 4 (1st January – 31st March 2021) along with a refreshed workforce profile at Appendix 1 and absence data including COVID related absence data which is provided at Appendix 2.

Quarter 4 overview of activity.

- General Overview of the HR, OD and Corporate Health and Safety Team
- Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion
- Apprenticeships
- Delivering the Future Together Programme
- Managing for Performance Framework – 12.3.2.
- Organisational Change and Redundancies
- Resourcing
- Corporate Health, Safety and Wellbeing

General Overview of the HR, OD and Corporate Health and Safety Team

4. The HR team continues to work flexibly and predominantly from home with no impact on the delivery of services. During Quarter 4, the team has continued to respond to COVID 19 in addition to business as usual activities. We continue to adapt the delivery of our services and the advice and guidance provided in response to the challenges our workforce experience as a result of the pandemic.
5. The team is made up of a range of specialists including HR Business Partners and Advisory, Reward, Resourcing, Business Systems and Data Analytics, Corporate Health, Safety and Wellbeing and Organisational Development (OD). The range of knowledge, skills and experience across the team has been instrumental in providing an effective response to the pandemic and this continues to be the case as we move forward and respond to the Government's roadmap and the lifting of some restrictions whilst ensuring that HR moves forward to support the delivery of organisational goals.
6. We continue to update the COVID FAQ's as national advice and guidance starts to change and respond to new emerging issues resulting from the pandemic. A weekly manager's briefing continues to be produced providing a wealth of information and top tips for managers on areas such as looking after the wellbeing of employees and sharing good practice.
7. Informal meetings continue to take place every 4 weeks with the trade unions. These meetings continue to focus on COVID and any resulting issues that arise as a result in changes to national guidance including any impact on the local situation. These are well attended and allow us to deal promptly with emerging issues whilst sharing information, maintaining good communication and enabling positive collaboration across Oxfordshire.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

8. Work continues on the workforce action plan aligned to the Including Everyone: Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Framework.
9. A mentoring programme has been launched to create opportunities for staff, particularly those in underrepresented groups, to have shadowing and mentoring opportunities to support everyone to reach their full potential. 22 mentors from across the organisation have been trained by West Midlands Employers who manage the Coaching and Mentoring pool on behalf of OCC. There is a link on the OCC intranet to the site where staff can register their interest and can filter their search by using key words to find a match with a Mentor with a particular professional specialism. . A further 24 training places will be made available to increase the number of mentors in late summer 2021.
10. The OCC Organisational Development (OD) team receive notification that an interest has been registered and OCC staff have access to both our internal Mentors and experienced Mentors from other public sector organisations who are members of the West Midlands Coaching and Mentoring pool.
11. The site prompts mentees and mentors to complete regular feedback forms throughout their mentoring programme (at the point of registration, at the point of

matching, at the mid-way point and when the programme comes to an end, this is optional but we do encourage our staff to complete this.

12. In addition to the mentoring programme, the council has introduced a programme to focus on reverse mentoring for diversity. 15 members of the BAME Network were trained as mentors in February 2021 by an external provider who is experienced in reverse mentoring. These 15 mentors have been matched with members of CEDR and ELT to provide mentoring around EDI with a focus on lived experience. The programme's mid-point review meeting took place in May 2021 and reported very positive outcomes around learning and safe spaces to discuss difficult issues. A final review will take place in August 2021 with the intention of rolling out a further programme from Autumn 2021.
13. In Q4, the Council published the Gender Pay Gap report for 2019/2020 (snapshot date 30 March 2020) and registered this on the government's gender pay gap service portal.
14. Whilst there is currently no legal requirement to do so, the Council also produced its first ethnicity pay gap report for 2019/2020. The data identifies a small ethnicity pay gap in terms of the mean hourly rate of 1.1% and there is a lower proportion of BAME staff in the lower middle quartile and the upper pay quartile. The report format and data presentation require further refinement and has therefore not been published this year, but it is anticipated that as from 2020/2021, the report will be placed on the OCC website alongside the Gender Pay Gap report.
15. Although the report has not been published, it has been shared and discussed with the Council's BAME network. A focus group was held at the end of Q4 to discuss the report's findings and to explore and discuss colleagues' experiences of career development at OCC and any barriers to progression. Feedback included a desire for better access to acting up and project work opportunities as valuable ways to provide further development opportunities. There was also some concern about a lack of consistency in the management of these opportunities across the Council and this will be taken forward by the HR Business Partners at the Directorate Leadership Team meetings. Whilst the re-focus of the Managing for Performance framework 12. 3. 2. will provide for more focussed and effective one-to-one conversations about career aspirations and development, further targeted work needs to be considered for BAME colleagues and others.

Apprenticeships

16. As reported in Q3, this coming year we have made a commitment to focus on apprenticeships. Work on the apprenticeship action plan is progressing well with the development of a new workforce planning tool which will provide an emphasis on embedding apprenticeships and career pathways within workforce plans.
18. A vacancy arising in the Organisational Development team has been converted to an Apprenticeship Manager role to support the development of an apprenticeship strategy, improve optimisation of the levy, the development and

embedding of career pathways, to support work with our communities around skills gaps and social mobility and to help establish better links with young people across Oxfordshire who are experiencing barriers to employment. The successful candidate is expected to commence employment in early July 2021. Further work will be undertaken in Q1 and early Q2 to build an apprenticeship hub supported by some fixed term funding as detailed in the Corporate Plan for 2021/22.

19. Challenges continue with using the full apprenticeship levy, but we spent 70% of the annual levy in 2020 compared to less than 50% in 2019.
20. As of 31st March 2021, 175 staff members were studying for apprenticeships with 22 having registered on programmes in the previous quarter. 82 apprenticeships were completed in the year April 2020 – March 2021. In the year April 2020 – March 2021 33% of new enrolments were in schools.
21. A further 42 registrations are planned to take place shortly of which 22 have arisen as part of an organisational wide initiative in business improvement skills through the LEAN Academy.
22. With the COVID restrictions being lifted and the establishment of the apprenticeship hub, we are expecting the numbers of apprenticeships to increase significantly during 2021-22.

Delivering the Future Together (DTFT) Programme

23. The Delivering the Future Together (DTFT) programme is our internal programme for change. Following a widespread employee engagement programme which commenced in June 2020, new/refreshed values and behaviours have been developed and finalised. The DTFT programme is all about living our values and behaviours and working together so that we can build on our strengths, be even better at everything we do and have an even greater impact on the lives of the people and communities of Oxfordshire. The programme is all about supporting, engaging, enabling and developing our people. The launch of the new/refreshed values and behaviours is scheduled to take place towards the end of Q1 2021/2022.
24. In Q4, the DTFT board successfully recruited to the role of Champions Network Lead. The role was offered as an internal secondment opportunity for 12 months and the successful candidate will start in role in early June 2021.
25. The Champions Network Lead will lead a network of 150 plus Champions who will be recruited from across OCC to work throughout the organisation. Their role will support bringing the values and behaviours to life in our teams and be instrumental in providing feedback about what's working well and 'even better if', collecting great ideas, making connections and sharing best practice from teams across the organisation and sharing this with the Programme Board. They will do this by supporting and facilitating discussions to support teams to adopt the Values and Behaviours within their work. This will provide personal development for those who come forward as Champions and support managers with their

teams. Internal recruitment for the Champions will start in Q1 following the launch of the new Values and Behaviours. Being a Champion is all about passion and not seniority, those who take up the roles will receive training.

26. In addition to the above work, the DTFT programme board has identified several workstreams that will support a great workforce culture into the future through which our new/refreshed Values and Behaviours will run as a recurrent theme. These include Managing for Performance, Recruitment and Induction, Talent Management, Reward and Recognition, Learning and Development, Wellbeing and others, all of which form a work programme of approximately 12 – 18 months.

Managing for Performance Framework – 12.3.2

27. The first of the DTFT workstreams to start to be delivered is the refreshed performance management framework 12. 3. 2. This framework was first introduced in 2017 and reviewed during Q3 2020/2021.
28. As part of the Q3 review, the framework has been refreshed setting out more clearly the purpose of the framework with a clear emphasis on the need for quality conversations to be taking place between all managers and staff throughout the year. 12 is the number of meetings that should take place over the year with each employee, 3 of which should be extended conversations to look at objective setting, review of performance, development opportunities and to look at what is working well and what could be even better with 2 meetings per year focussed on service planning in response to the corporate plan. An increased emphasis has been placed on wellbeing as part of the 12 conversations per year.
29. During Q4, a programme of training on 12. 3. 2. for all managers has been developed consisting of 4 modules.
 - Module 1 – What is 12. 3. 2. and what is its purpose?
 - Module 2 – Holding quality conversations
 - Module 3 – Embedding the Values and Behaviours in our conversations
 - Module 4 – Holding challenging conversations
30. The objectives for the re-focussing on 12.3.2. managing for performance programme are as follows:
 - Understand what managers need to do to manage **for** performance (not just performance manage) ... and act on this
 - Understand the importance of doing **quality one to ones**, the benefits they get from them and to carry them out constantly and consistently
 - Demonstrate effective **performance management skills** (setting great objectives, focusing on strengths not weaknesses, giving people stretch

challenges not panic ones, developing and promoting their team members)

- Demonstrate effective **management for performance skills** (holding quality conversations, dealing with challenging conversations, motivating people to change their behaviours)
- Understand and appreciate the **12.3.2 framework** and how it differs (positively) from traditional appraisals
- Are able to see the impact of how having a **good quality conversation** with their people, delivers even better service to our residents, customers and colleagues
- Include the values and behaviours as a common part of 121 conversations
- Are seen to add even more **value** to their team

31. For our staff, over time, we want to achieve a workplace where teams and individuals

- Are clear in their understanding about what is expected from them and how they will be supported and developed in order to **achieve success**
- Know what to expect from **the 12.3.2 framework** and understand and value a 12.3.2 conversation
- **Are celebrated for their efforts** and achievements, especially with regard to demonstrating our values and behaviours
- Are supported to **deliver and achieve** – regularly and consistently
- Receive the same **management for performance experience** across the whole organisation
- Know their manager believes in them and promotes their **development and well being**
- Feel **listened to** and heard
- **Value and appreciate** the time spent with their manager

32. Ultimately, one to ones should be a mutually worthwhile experience and something that both parties look forward to.

Organisational Change and Redundancies

33. The HR Business Partners and Advisory team continue to support several projects where changes to staffing structures are planned providing support from inception to implementation and during Q4 work to support a joint Property Team re-design, consultation on a joint Continuous Improvement team in the Customer

Service Centre was completed and a new IT service delivery model was developed and consulted on to support the implementation of the new IT and digital improvements strategy.

34. In Quarter 4, there were a total of 9 redundancies all of which related to the organisational change programmes taking place in the Provision Cycle and the Health, Education and Social Care (HESC) areas.
35. In total in 2020/2021 there were 26 redundancies at the council.

HR Resourcing Team – Key Projects

36. The HR Resourcing team is a small team which provides specialist resourcing expertise to managers across the Council. The support that is provided ranges from reviewing and advising on job descriptions for specific markets, the design of adverts, advising on the advertising of roles via internal social media channels and external advertising, sourcing agencies, briefing and liaising with agencies, determining the best approach for assessment/interview processes and researching market pay rates where there is difficulty filling roles. In Q4, the team have supported recruitment to vacancies within the Provision Cycle, the Continuous Improvement Team in the Customer Services Centre, Peripatetic Customer Services Advisers in Libraries and the Growth team.
37. Other more specific areas of focus for the Resourcing team during Q4 have been:

Surge Testing

38. In Q4, the HR Resourcing team supported the preparation of 'surge testing' across Oxfordshire in response to new variants of COVID-19. In preparation, HR developed a resourcing plan for the provision of staff including recruitment, screening, and training to ensure the Council was prepared for a rapid response to instructions to undertake targeted surge testing across potentially affected areas in the county. HR also continues to monitor the availability of suitable agency staff via a local recruitment agency.

Children's Services

39. The team have continued to support the transition to the Family Solutions model including onboarding a high number of new starters and supporting hiring managers throughout the recruitment process. A focus on the reduction of temporary agency worker placements is now underway.
40. HR is working with the Director of Children's Services and his senior leadership team to look at recruitment and retention issues amongst Children's Social Workers which is both a local and national issue. The Director of Children's Services is due to take a report to CEDR shortly highlighting the challenges and the work undertaken in Children's Services to date and next steps for consideration.

Adult Services

41. The Resourcing team have met and interviewed with people in the Approved Mental Health service, to gain a deeper understanding of the Approved Mental Health Practitioner (AMPH) role, and the motivations of the remarkable people who undertake the role. This shaped the creation of content for job adverts with the right look, tone and approach, placed in the right locations for AMHPs working for other authorities to see our adverts. A branding concept was also agreed to use for Social Work and Occupational Therapist recruitment. A web landing page has been created with the campaign branding including quotes and audiograms from the team.

Armed Forces Engagement

42. Links have been forged with the Careers Transitions Partnership and Forces Families Jobs to promote job opportunities to veterans and their families. Automated feeds for vacancies through to these jobs boards are being explored as well as attendance at virtual careers events.

Future Temporary Agency Staff Delivery and Sourcing Options for Oxfordshire County Council and Cherwell District Council

43. OCC's current managed service contract for temporary agency staff delivery and sourcing with Comensura is due to expire in November 2021. HR & Procurement colleagues have undertaken soft market testing in preparation for the next tender exercise.

Corporate Health, Safety and Wellbeing

Covid 19

44. During Q4, the Council's Corporate Health and Safety team continued to work with colleagues in Public Health and service areas to maintain compliance with government requirements to ensure our buildings and operations remain safe. On 22 February 2021, the UK government announced a four-step roadmap to ease restrictions across England and provide a route back to a more normal way of life.
45. As the economy reopens and the relevant milestones are reached, the Council will continue to follow the relevant government guidance on working safely and put in place measures to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

Dealing with violent, abusive and threatening behaviour towards staff

46. The Council has updated and reinforced its Zero Tolerance: Violent, Abusive and Threatening Behaviour policy to prevent, manage and respond to work-related violence from clients and members of the public. This approach gives a clear message to the public that any violent, abusive or threatening behaviour towards any Council employee or Council worker is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

47. The nature of some work i.e. social care often means exposure to this behaviour is unfortunately a residual risk. We aim to ensure staff are competent and confident in the measures needed to deal or respond to it. This includes ensuring risks are properly assessed and safe systems of work implemented and reinforced through training.
48. Whilst in many cases most incidents can be dealt with through engagement and working with clients, in some cases, the situation may escalate or pose a serious risk of harm. In these cases, senior management will be consulted, and consideration given to what police or legal action is available and in extreme cases services may be withdrawn.

Stress, Anxiety and Depression within the workforce

49. Stress, Anxiety and Depression remains the top reason for sickness absence. At present we are unable to identify from reports where stress is related to the workplace or other non-occupational stressors.
50. The council has an Employee Assistance Programme and the provider is Vita. Vita are able to provide staff with a fully comprehensive psychological support service, offering counselling sessions for our staff and a dedicated managers hotline. In addition, higher counselling such as Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing (EMDR) which is particularly helpful for trauma and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) can also be provided.
51. Through our occupational health provider People Asset Management (PAM) we are able to provide wellbeing assessments (Psychological Occupational health Assessments), tailored debriefing sessions (both group and individual) such as dealing with anxiety in Covid times, critical incident debriefing and wellness sessions.
52. Our intranet pages contain advice to managers about how an employee that reports feelings of stress should be helped and we encourage employees to complete a stress risk assessment which asks individuals to identify the areas of the work as identified by the HSE where they may be feeling overwhelmed, this enables the line manager to put in place an action plan and address any issues raised.
53. A WAP (Wellness Action Plan) is also available on the Intranet can be utilised by an employee to help advise their line manager as to how best to support them in the workplace and what keeps them well at work. We also have a Psychological Health Questionnaire available on the Intranet to help employees identify whether they may need to seek support.
54. We have a number of support groups throughout the council and our wellbeing champions are always keen to help signpost individuals to the relevant support.
55. We also have some Stress awareness bitesize sessions available for line managers. Every year we run a number of webinars for staff and have had

speakers from MIND Oxfordshire, Able futures and Access to Work over the last 12 months.

Quarter 4 Staffing Data (1st January – 31st March 2021)

- 56. Appendix 1 of this report provides staffing data relating to the workforce profile, sickness absence, turnover, apprenticeship numbers and agency spend.
- 57. Workforce data and trends are published in more detail on the Council's intranet. This includes a breakdown of staffing numbers and trends over the past five quarters by Directorates and Schools, including temporary and part time employees, turnover and sickness rates along with diversity and salary profiles. This data provides information by service and includes the spend and use of agency workers.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

- 58. Equality and inclusion implications are considered across all our workstreams as identified in the section above.

Sustainability Implications

- 59. There are no sustainability implications arising from this report.

Risk Management

- 60. There are no risk management issues arising from this report.

CLAIRE TAYLOR

Corporate Director Customers, Organisational Development & Resources

Annex: Appendix 1 - Workforce Profile Q4
Appendix 2 – Covid Absence Data Q4
Appendix 3 – Apprenticeship and Levy note

Background papers: Nil

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June 2021