

CABINET - 27 FEBRUARY 2024

WORKFORCE REPORT & WORKFORCE DATA OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2023 – Q3 2023/24

Report by Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer

RECOMMENDATION

1. The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to note the report.

Executive Summary

2. This report provides the workforce profile for quarter 3 2023/24 including an overview of headcount, agency spend, sickness, turnover and other relevant management information and performance indicators (Appendix A). This report also sets out some of the actions being taken to address the trends identified.

Workforce Profile

3. Appendix A of this report provides data and information about the Council's directly employed workforce. The highlights from this data and information are:
4. The Council's directly employed headcount (excluding agency workers) equates to 5353 people (4473.4 FTE) at the end of Q3. This is an increase of 394 people over the past 5 years and an increase of 14 since Q1 2023/2024. A project group has been set up to help identify the underlying reasons.
5. Total agency spend in Q3 equates to £8,969,483 compared to £9,593,378 in Q2, representing a 6.5% decrease. A task group is underway aimed to reduce the reliance on agency spend and target hotspot areas with the Council Management Team tracking progress and introducing appropriate interventions as required.
6. 5% of the Council's workforce is 25 or under which remains static from the previous quarter. The average age of our workforce is 46.
7. Benchmarking data from across a pool of 71 other councils across England including County, City and District councils has been gathered. The average age across the sample group is 47. Initiatives to address this include growing our early careers talent through our apprenticeship offering, graduate programmes, internships and training and development plans.
8. The rolling 12 monthly voluntary turnover is 11.9%, down from 13.1% at the same time in 2022 / 2023. The average voluntary turnover across the sample pool of 71 other councils is 13%. There is an aim to reduce this through the following actions:
 - Develop and embed more employee-centred leadership styles through the 12.3.2 Managing for Performance programme;

- Ensure managers are having discussions during induction, team meetings and 1-1s and setting clear objectives linked to the Council's vision and values;
- Encourage and celebrate applications for external recognition awards for individuals e.g. apprenticeship awards; and
- Plan and schedule a programme of celebratory events e.g. Long Service, qualification / apprentice graduations.

9. For Q3 2023/2024, sickness absence per FTE has increased by 0.3 days to 8.9 days in the 12 months previous. The average across our sample pool of 71 other councils is 11 days per FTE. The top reason for sickness absence remains as stress, anxiety and depression at 27.8% and this has increased when compared to the same period in 2022/2023 when it was 21.3%. Steps being taken to address this include:

- Undertaking a 'deep dive' into sickness management data, trends, policy, training etc;
- Addressing the top 5 priority health focus through targeted plans in areas such as back pain and musculoskeletal issues, long term health and covid related problems; and
- Upskilling managers to better support and manage absences with an emphasis on mental health and neurodiversity.

10. 10% of the workforce are recorded as non-white which remains static from the previous quarter. The data from the sample pool of 71 councils is difficult to compare due to the way in which the data is collated and reported. 7% of the workforce are recorded as having a disability, up from 6% since the last quarter (versus 8% across 71 other councils). Actions being taken include:

- Raising awareness of the value of a diverse workforce through initiatives such as reciprocal mentoring which is underway, staff network events and celebrating diversity;
- Ensure hiring managers have received appropriate training and follow objective, structured assessment and selection processes designed to maximise fairness and minimise adverse impact on different candidate groups;
- Review policies and procedures to ensure they capture diversity responsibilities throughout, that they are consistent, easy to follow and employee-centred; and
- Introduce future leadership development programmes including a targeted programme for under-represented groups.

11. Workforce data and trends are published in more detail on the Council's intranet.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

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

Sustainability Implications

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

Risk Management

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

Financial Implications

15. The level of agency expenditure was a contributory factor in the year end directorate overspend for 2022/23 and it continues to impact on forecast pressures in 2023/24.

Comments checked by:

Kathy Wilcox, Head of Financial Strategy

Legal Implications

16. There are no potential legal implications of any actions/outcomes detailed within this report.

Comments checked by:

Paul Grant, Head of Legal

Lorna Baxter

Executive Director of Resources

Annex: Appendix A - Workforce Profile Q3

Background papers: Nil

Contact Officer: Michael Fletcher, Head of HR Business Partnering
Advisory

February 2024