

REPORT TITLE: - WORKFORCE REPORT 2021/22

29 JUNE 2022

REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER: Cllr Margot Power Cabinet Member for Finance and Value

Contact Officer: Robert O'Reilly (Service Lead HR) Tel No: 07890732036  
Email ROReilly@winchester.gov.uk

WARD(S): ALL

PURPOSE

To provide an overview of the workforce of the Council and a summary of key HR activities for the year ending 31 March 2022.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the report be noted.

## IMPLICATIONS:

### 1 COUNCIL PLAN OUTCOME

- 1.1 The performance of the Council's workforce is critical to the delivery of all outcomes set out in the Council Plan.

### 2 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1 None.

### 3 LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 None.

### 4 WORKFORCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Employees are critical to the delivery of the council's services and priorities and monitoring and reporting on key employment metrics enables proactive employment practises.

### 5 PROPERTY AND ASSET IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None.

### 6 CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

- 6.1 This report is for information only and therefore no consultation or communication is required.

### 7 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 None.

### 8 PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

- 8.1 There is no differential impact on a specified group as all HR matters are applied consistently.
- 8.2 As required nationally, the council reports on any potential discrepancies in pay, based on gender ("Gender Pay Gap" reporting); in accordance with the statutory timeframe.

### 9 DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 9.1 This report does not include any confidential data and therefore a data protection impact assessment is not required.

10 RISK MANAGEMENT

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>
Financial Exposure <i>Failure to apply pay principles and rules fairly and consistently leading to discrimination and/or legal challenge</i>	Consistent application of pay principles and rules.	Positioning the council as an Employer of Choice.
Exposure to challenge <i>Failure to comply with statutory reporting requirements, resulting in adverse local media coverage or legal challenge</i>	Statutory reporting is embedded within HR's annual work programme, and within the committee work programme where appropriate, to ensure publication within statutory timeframes.	
Reputation <i>Failure to deliver public services and the Council Plan due to reduced workforce capacity, leading to public criticism and/or adverse local media coverage</i>	Ongoing workforce monitoring to enable early identification and remedial action where recruitment difficulties and/or high sickness levels could impact on the Council's ability to deliver public services and the Council Plan	

11 SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

- 11.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Audit and Governance Committee with an overview of the workforce of the Council and a summary of key HR activities for the year 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.
- 11.2 This is the second workforce report to be considered by the Audit and Governance Committee since it assumed responsibility for the human resources functions of the Council from the former Personnel Committee.
- 11.3 Appendix 1 provides a range of indicators supporting the report commentary relating to:
- (i) the Council's staff establishment
  - (ii) recruitment and turnover
  - (iii) sickness absence

## (iv) equality

Tables, charts and graphs in Appendix 1 are as at 31 March 2022 unless stated otherwise and have been extracted from the Council's Access HR system and separate monitoring records.

**The Council's staff establishment**

- 11.4 As at 31 March 2022, the Council employed 431 permanent and fixed-term staff. This was a decrease of 1.1% headcount compared to March 2021.
- 11.5 Staff numbers by headcount and Full-Time Equivalent (FTE), distribution by grade and contract type metrics are provided in Appendix 1. Headcount is the actual number of staff employed by the council whereas FTE is the total number of hours worked by all staff (headcount) divided by the standard working week of 37 hours.

**Recruitment and turnover**

- 11.6 There were 60 external appointments, made up of 44 permanent employees and 16 employees (including 1 apprentice) on fixed-term contracts.
- 11.7 There were 60 leavers (46 permanent employees and 14 employees on fixed-term contracts). Reasons for leaving are shown in Appendix 1.
- 11.8 Staff who both started and left within the same year are included in the figures above.
- 11.9 Total annual turnover (i.e. employees leaving the Council for all reasons) was 14.5% as compared to 20% in 2020/21.
- 11.10 The average length of service was 10 years.

**Sickness absence**

- 11.11 Sickness absence continues to be closely monitored. Reports on sickness absence and completion of return to work interviews are reviewed with the Strategic Directors on a quarterly basis.
- 11.12 The average number of days of sickness per employee rose to 6.76 days from 5.95 days in 2020/21 explained further in 11.15 below. The 2021/22 absence figures represent a fall from pre-pandemic levels of 7.51 days in 2019/20.
- 11.13 The current rates are below the average sickness rate for the public sector of 8.2 days per employee in 2021 as reported by XpertHR.
- 11.14 The pandemic had caused a swing towards a higher proportion of long term sickness (20 days or more) vs short term sickness in 2020/21, due to less seasonal illness and working from home enabling continued productivity with minor ailments. However, we saw a reversal of this throughout 2021/22 to more typical pre-pandemic levels as Covid 19 restrictions were lifted. This

was also evident in the absence reasons as we saw a re-entry of historically common absence reasons such 'Infections including cold and flu' into the top 5 most common sickness reasons recorded for the year.

- 11.15 Sickness rates relating to COVID 19 have broadly peaked and troughed in accordance with national rates and the roll out of the vaccination programme – with the most days lost for COVID 19 sickness absence since the start of the pandemic occurring in March 2022. However, the average length of time per COVID-19 sickness has reduced and subsequently flattened since December 21 – this is likely explained by the Omicron variant's increased transmissibility but milder symptoms.
- 11.16 'Mental health – Personal' was consistently the top sickness reason across the year at 24.25%, and if mental health for all reasons (personal, work and reason not stated) are combined they account for 37% of all sickness, an increase of 1% from last year.
- 11.17 Whilst mental health related absence rates are concerning, they are not surprising given wide reporting of the effect of the pandemic on the nation's mental health. HR continue to lead on a number of mental health initiatives including mental health first aiders, an externally provided counselling service and an Employee Assistance Programme via the corporate health plan.
- 11.18 HR continues to support managers to manage sickness absence within their teams including referral to an external occupational health provider as required.
- 11.19 A revised absence management policy has been published and HR will run a series of sickness absence management workshops for managers in the autumn.

### **Equality**

- 11.20 The Council's gender profile of 62% female and 38% male closely aligns with the public sector as a whole as reported by the ONS (65% female and 35% male EMP13: Employment By Industry January- March 2022). The Council reported a 15.5% median gender pay gap as at the snapshot date of 31 March 2021. Median average percentages are the way the government reports on gender pay gap data across the economy.
- 11.21 HR will continue to encourage staff to update their ethnicity and disability status, which is disclosed on a voluntary basis, to facilitate equality monitoring and reporting. Ethnicity data for the 40% of staff who have disclosed their ethnicity as at 31 March 2022 is included in Appendix 1. Meaningful analysis is not possible to be published in this report from the disability data available as it could possibly result in identification of individual employees.

## HR Update

- 11.22 At the request of the A&G Committee at the November 21 meeting, a Workforce Matters Task & Finish sub-group of selected members met three times over January – March 22 to consider a number of workforce matters and provide recommendations to ELB. The following recommendations were submitted to ELB:
- Recruitment - to trial a “CV first” approach for specific roles and to establish on the WCC website front (home) page a prominent, separate tile to advertise job vacancies
  - Apprenticeships - to submit a budget bid for one supernumerary apprentice to start in September 2023
  - Appraisals - HR to review the appraisal process and form for use in April 2023
- 11.23 HR organised an employee attitude survey to find out how employees feel about various aspects of their working lives at the council and to inform senior managers and elected members how engaged employees are with their work and the Council as a whole. Due to close on 1 July, the survey results will be discussed with ELB and Members (details to be discussed at A&G on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2022).
- 11.24 HR continues to deliver a variety of on-line and workplace resources to support staff wellbeing and mental health.
- 11.25 HR delivered suicide awareness training to 65 employees in the last quarter of 2021 in response to increased suicide related safeguarding referrals. The training provides officers with the confidence and skills to respond to someone at increased risk of suicide.
- 11.26 HR is reviewing and updating HR policies and has recently published a new Menopause Policy and a revised Absence Management Policy.

## 12 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 12.1 This report is for information only. No decisions are required therefore consideration of other options was not required.

### BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:-

#### Previous Committee Reports:-

AG63 Workforce Report 2020/21 11 November 2021

#### Other Background Documents:-

None

### APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 – Workforce Report 2021/22 Data

## Appendix 1

### Workforce Report 2020/21 Data

#### Establishment

Table 1 – Staff numbers by headcount and Full-time Equivalent (FTE)

	Headcount	% reduction	FTE	% reduction
<b>March 2021</b>	436	1.1%	392.06	0.7%
<b>March 2022</b>	431		389.28	

Table 2 – Headcount of staff by grade

Pay Grade	Headcount
<b>Apprentice Scale 3</b>	0
<b>Degree Apprentice Scale 4</b>	1
<b>Scale 3</b>	84
<b>Scale 4</b>	121
<b>Scale 5</b>	82
<b>Scale 6</b>	81
<b>Scale 7</b>	23
<b>Scale 8</b>	19
<b>Scale 9</b>	8
<b>Scale 10</b>	8
<b>Scale 12</b>	3
<b>Chief Executive</b>	1
<b>Total</b>	431

Table 3 – Contract Type

<b>Full time (37 hours)</b>	75%
<b>Part-time</b>	25%
<b>Permanent contract</b>	94%
<b>Fixed-term contract</b>	6%

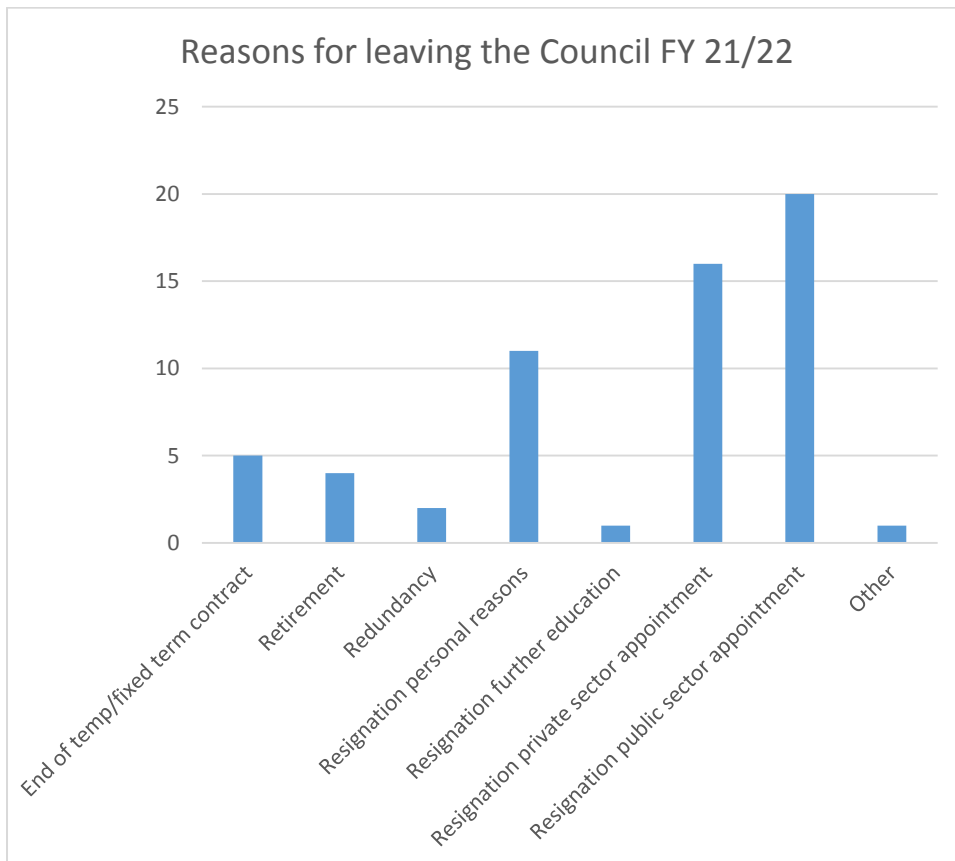
## Sickness

Table 4 - Top 5 sickness absence reasons (averaged over April 21 – March 22)

Sickness Reason	Percentage of total annual sickness	Previous Year's ranking (out of 19)	Direction of travel
Mental Health – personal	24.25%	1	↔
COVID-19 Coronavirus	13.48%	2	↔
Mental Health – work-related	9.91%	7	↑
Stomach, liver, kidney & digestion	9.79%	5	↑
Infections incl cold and flu	8.54%	8	↑

## Recruitment and Turnover

Table 5 – Reasons for leaving the Council





**Equality**

Table 6 – Age profile

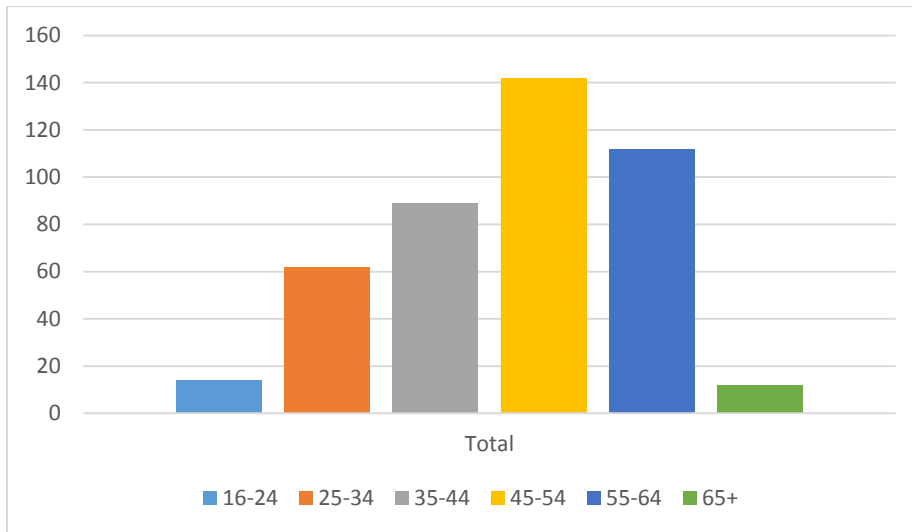


Table 7 – Ethnicity profile as at March 2022

