

Report to	Governance and Audit Committee
Date of meeting	25 th January 2023
Lead Member / Officer	Cyng/Cllr Julie Matthews
Head of Service	Louise Dougal, Interim Head of Service for HR
Report author	Louise Dougal, Interim Head of Service for HR
Title	Recruitment, Retention and Workforce Planning

1. What is the report about?

- 1.1. This report is intended to give the Governance and Audit Committee an update on the position for Denbighshire County Council with regards to Recruitment and Retention issues and Workforce Planning activities.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

- 2.1. In 2022, Recruitment and Retention was put on the Corporate Risk Register. This report has been produced in order to provide the committee with up to date information regarding Recruitment and Retention issues within the council and the progress on Workforce Planning activities.

3. What are the Recommendations?

- 3.1 It is recommended that the committee take note of the details contained within the report and the interventions that have been put in place in order to support and strengthen recruitment, retention and workforce planning.

4. Report details

Recruitment across the Council

- 4.1. In 2022, Recruitment and Retention was put on the Corporate Risk Register. Please refer to Appendix 1 for data on recruitment and retention.

- 4.2. Pre Pandemic, there were a small number of jobs within the council that were classed as 'hard to recruit'. These jobs included (but are not limited to); Cooks, Cleaners, Carers, School Crossing Patrol Assistants along with some specialised posts, such as Educational Psychologists, Architects, Electricians, Teaching Assistants and Social Workers. The traditional method of recruitment, whereby the job was advertised for two weeks was proving unsuccessful, therefore, the Recruitment Specialist would work with the departmental managers to agree a suitable alternative method of recruitment.
- 4.3. During the Pandemic, the statistics demonstrate that recruitment was at an all-time low (April 20 – March 21), however vacancies were still being advertised and filled, due to the steady flow of leavers and new jobs being created.
- 4.4. During 2020/21, as a council we advertised 475 jobs, in 2021/22 there were 953 jobs advertised and for the period of April 2022 to November 2022, there have been 763 jobs advertised. At year end this is likely to reach over 1000.
- 4.5. There are a number of positions, that are now deemed as hard to recruit to. This is mainly due to:
 - Pay – local government cannot compete with private sector, other public sector bodies and agencies rates.

However, the pay award in 2022 saw our bottom rate of £9.50 increase significantly to £10.50 per hour, this bottom rate is expected to rise significantly again by 2024 to £11.35 per hour which should see an increase in recruitment to our lower paid roles. The lower grade roles are now starting to compete with other bodies, however the pay award for the professional roles has not been as high and therefore the higher graded professional roles will still remain a recruitment and retention issue for the Council.

- Agile Working – significant increase in this new way of working in all sectors

Employees all over the UK, now have a wider geographical search area due to the post Pandemic agile working practices organisations have adopted, which in turn enable us, as a council to recruit from further afield due to our agile working practices. However, the North / South divide does not work in our favour when employees are being offered higher salaries in Cardiff and London for example. This has been witnessed in a few hard to recruit to positions and unfortunately we cannot compete. Our new proposed

Agile Working Policy gives employees more choice about how and where they work which should help improve our recruitment and retention of employees.

- Staff Development – when staff leave they are asked to complete a leaving questionnaire, these are not mandatory and some choose not to complete, However, on average, the majority of leavers to the council state in their exit survey questionnaire that ‘Career Progression’ is a reason for leaving followed by Retirement, Promotion and Work life balance in some services, where agile and flexible working is not possible. Staff Development is part of the CEO’s 5 principles and will be a focus of the People Strategy moving forward.

4.6. These Recruitment and Retention concerns are being addressed through the following groups / action plans:

- Corporate Workforce Plan – Led by HR, Action plan attached
- Social Care Recruitment & Retention Operational Group – Led by Nicola Stubbins, Action Plan attached
- Recruitment & Retention Risk Register Safeguarding – Led by Nicola Stubbins

4.7. From the action plans you can see the various actions and improvements we are making to our recruitment methods and terms and conditions of employment to help address these issues.

Recruitment & Retention in Community Support Services

4.8. Safeguarding has now moved to critical risk on the Risk Register and part of this is linked to recruitment and retention challenges within our Professional Social Worker roles. Nicola Stubbins is leading on the above groups to address the issues. The Risk Register group is made up of CET members and meets on a monthly basis. This group is looking specifically at pay and any other issues which they can influence and change.

4.9. The Social Care Recruitment & Retention Operational group is led by Nicola Stubbins and is made up of operational managers and HR Officers. Please see Appendix 2 for a summary of the Recruitment and Retention task group and associated actions.

4.10. Social Worker recruitment in both Children and Adults in the council is challenging. Denbighshire are not alone in this as this is a UK wide issue. Agencies are able to pay the Social Workers a higher salary which ultimately impacts the cost for the council. Staff are

leaving their permanent employment to go and work for an agency for a substantial amount more. As of 9th January 2022, Denbighshire have 14 Social Workers advertised, Conwy have 9, Flintshire have 6, Gwynedd 4, Anglesey 1 and Wrexham 0. This changes on a weekly basis.

Workforce Planning

4.11. A Workforce Planning Action Plan was created to monitor actions and measure progress of the Corporate Workforce Plan for 2022, this plan can be found within Appendix 3.

4.12. On an annual basis, the Council carries out workforce planning activities with all services. The workforce plan outlines the Council's commitment on how it will enhance and develop the workforce, now and in the future to deliver the best possible service to its residents within a changing economic landscape. The delivery aims of the Workforce plan focus on the following areas:

- Leadership & Management
- Recruitment and Retention of Talent
- Enabling High Performing, Engaged and Empowered Workforce
- Develop a Flexible and Agile Workforce
- Support Health & Wellbeing

4.13. The below areas are a summary of what we have achieved from the action plan in the last 6 months:

- Recruitment Policy and Process changes, inc new application form
- Created and launched DCC Facebook page for recruitment only.
- Designed and implemented a 'Work for Us' recruitment website.
- New branding for recruitment adverts.
- Supported a number of managers to recruit in areas where it's difficult to recruit (specialist packs and social media campaigns).
- Supported and increased the number of Career Pathways within the Authority.
- Evaluation of reasons for leaving in high areas of turnover and piloting a Stay Survey in CSS.
- Updated the Corporate Induction to include agile and flexible working.
- Created a New Management Induction.
- Arranged a Jobs Fair for frontline/hard to recruit vacancies.

- Increased the Corporate Learning and Development offer for employees via numerous funding streams at no cost to the Authority.
- Sourced and delivered financial wellbeing sessions for employees and introduced financial wellbeing information and advice on the website.

4.14. In the next six months, the focus will be on the development of a 'People Strategy,' which will include the outcomes from the CEO's 5 Principles workshops and a review of the Leadership Strategy. The New Ways of Working policy will also be finalised during this period.

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?

5.1. All corporate priorities are impacted by the workforce within the council. Without the adequate number of staff in key positions, the service delivered could be impacted.

6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

6.1. There are no associated costs as the report is for information only.

7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?

A wellbeing impact assessment has not been carried out as this is just for information only.

8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

8.1. The report is for information only and therefore does not require consultation.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

9.1. Not applicable.

10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

10.1. There are no risks associated with the recommendation as the report is just for information only.

11. Power to make the decision

13.1 No decision is required