

<b>Report to</b>	<b>Performance Scrutiny Committee</b>
<b>Date of meeting</b>	<b>13<sup>th</sup> March 2025</b>
<b>Lead Member / Officer</b>	<b>Councillor Julie Matthews, Lead Member for Corporate Strategy, Policy and Equalities</b>
<b>Head of Service</b>	<b>Catrin Roberts, Head of Corporate Support Services People</b>
<b>Report author</b>	<b>Louise Dougal – HR Services Manager</b>
<b>Title</b>	<b>Workforce Planning Recruitment &amp; Retention and Sickness Absence</b>

## **1. What is the report about?**

1.1. This report provides information and progress of the workforce plan and associated action plan (including recruitment and retention activities) and also provides turnover and sickness absence data for 2024.

## **2. What is the reason for making this report?**

2.1. To provide current information, data and progress.

## **3. What are the Recommendations?**

3.1. That the Committee confirms that it has read, understood and taken account of the information being presented and support the ongoing monitoring of the workforce planning process, workforce action plan, turnover and absence.

## **4. Report details**

### **Workforce Plan (including Recruitment and Retention Activities)**

4.1. A corporate workforce plan and associated action plan was agreed by the Council in January 2022 and taken to Performance Scrutiny Committee in

March 2022. Workforce planning for 2023 was paused to allow the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) restructure to be completed and the recruitment of the 5 vacant Heads of Service roles. However, work on the 2022 action plan continued during this time.

- 4.2. A corporate internal audit has been completed for the workforce action plan for 2022 and reported to the Governance and Audit Committee. Dates within the plan have been revised for the small number of outstanding actions. In summary, the internal audit report confirmed that Human Resources (HR) have robust HR initiatives and strategies in place to support the corporate workforce plan. The development of some policies and guidance has been delayed due to several vacancies within the team and other workload pressures and have new revised completion dates.
- 4.3. The 2024 Workforce Planning exercise for the Council will commence in March this year, 2025 and the Council will have a new corporate workforce plan and associated action plan in May 2025.
- 4.4. Please refer to Appendix 3 for a copy of the 2022 corporate workforce action plan.

#### Recruitment and Retention – Risk register

- 4.5. Risk 48: The risk that recruitment and retention issues leads to a loss of expertise and capacity resulting in poor or inadequate performance.
- 4.6. Following risk deep dive by CET, the intention is to de-escalate this risk to a service level risk with Heads of Service evaluating and managing this risk within their respective service areas.
- 4.7. The report states that risk 48 was recently reviewed and updated as part of the September 2024 review. The report states that it is arguably no longer useful because whilst recruitment and retention remain areas of concern for certain roles in particular services, we have taken steps through initiatives such as career grades to “grow our own talent” to address difficult to recruit positions. The report also mentions that HR will be strengthening workforce planning for adults and children’s social care and that the social care risks around workforce is diminished and should be managed by Services via Service Risk Registers.

## **Recruitment, Retention and Staff Turnover**

- 4.8. Appendix 1 provides an overview of staff turnover.
- 4.9. Staff turnover rate defines how many employees leave an organisation during a set period of time. DCC Turnover in 2022/23 was at its highest rate 12.4% but from 2023/24 onwards we have seen a decrease in staff turnover, 11.40% for period Apr 2023 - Mar 2024 and 9.12% for Apr 2024 - Dec 2024. As a general rule, an organisation should be aiming for a turnover rate of 10% or less.
- 4.10. A high turnover rate can be costly and disruptive to a business; however, it is important to note that our rate is still below average compared to the UK average (16% according to CIPD).
- 4.11. Appendix 1 shows that there have been 226 leavers (people) and 231 leavers (to positions) in the period from April 2024 to December 2024, and the position headcount has also decreased during this time by 18 positions. This could be as a result of deliberate recruitment delays for efficiencies, unfilled vacancies, a reduction in staff or the post is not required anymore.
- 4.12. In the financial year of 2022/23 redundancy did not appear in the top 5 of leaving reasons, however like all other years before, redundancy has appeared in the top 5 list.
- 4.13. There is a programmed piece of work scheduled in HR which will look at leaving reasons and ensure that managers, when completing the leaver form, have a more in depth list of leaving reasons to enable us to report more accurately for these reports and also the Public Sector Duty Reports.

## **Sickness Absence**

- 4.14. Appendix 2 gives an overview of sickness absence for 2023/2024. The average days lost for this period is 9.12 days which is a reduction from the previous year (9.56 days).
- 4.15. The top 5 reasons for absence (percentage of absences) have remained consistent over the reporting periods, with 'Depression Anxiety Mental Health Fatigue' being the top reason for absence, however, 'Other Musculo Skeletal' is now the top absence type in the current year to date at 11.52% of absences,

with 'Depression Anxiety Mental Health Fatigue' as the second most attributed reason at 11.41%. We have also seen a noticeable increase in unknown absence types, with a 75.65% increase in unknown absences in Apr 2024 - Dec 2024 compared to Apr 2023 - Mar 2024.

4.16. Sickness absence is monitored on a monthly basis by HR and Managers and support is provided to managers on the application of the policy. HR will work with services to ensure that they put a reason for absence into the system and monitor this going forward.

## **5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Plan 2022 to 2027: The Denbighshire We Want?**

5.1. The work on these key areas contributes to theme 6 in ensuring Denbighshire County Council is a well-run high performing Council, delivering and embedding the staff well-being policy, supporting training and workforce development, promoting fairness, equality and diversity and working collaboratively both across the Council and with partners to alleviate problems with recruitment and retention.

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

6.1. Staff absence, recruitment and retention can have a significant impact on services. Financial costs arise from back filling roles, i.e. cooks, refuse collectors. Non-financial costs come from the additional pressures on managers, teams, and employees in services to carry out additional work and training.

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

7.1. Not applicable.

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

8.1. Not applicable.

## **9. Chief Finance Officer Statement**

9.1. Staffing costs form the majority of the Council's revenue expenditure and it is vital that this resource is managed effectively and efficiently. The workforce plan

is an important tool in that management and the possible financial impacts are summarised in section 6.

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

10.1. The main risk comes from staff absence whether that be due to sickness absence or turnover. We have HR Specialists working in services to support and improve attendance through a number of HR Policies.

10.2. We are also promoting our values and supporting our leaders to lead with compassion. We promote the important of 1-2-1 meetings for all staff so employee's health, wellbeing, work life balance and workload is actively managed.

## **11. Power to make the decision.**

11.1. Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000 and Section 7.4.2 of the Council's Constitution sets out Scrutiny's powers with respect of performance management and policy objectives.