

Notice of Meeting



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Personnel Committee

Tuesday 14 January 2025 at 6.30 pm
in Council Chamber

Note: This meeting can be streamed live here: <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/personnelcommitteelive>.

Date of despatch of Agenda: Monday 6 January 2025

For further information about this Agenda, or to inspect any background documents referred to in Part I reports, please contact Sam Chiverton (Apprentice Democratic Services Officer) on (01635) 519462

e-mail: Sam.Chiverton1@westberks.gov.uk

Further information and Minutes are also available on the Council's website at www.westberks.gov.uk



To: Councillors Matt Shakespeare (Chairman), Biyi Oloko (Vice-Chairman), Antony Amirtharaj, Jeff Brooks and Laura Coyle

Substitutes: Councillors Martin Colston, Denise Gaines, Ross Mackinnon and Howard Woollaston

Agenda

Part I

Page No.

1. **Apologies for Absence**
To receive apologies for inability to attend the meeting (if any).
2. **Minutes** To Follow
To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee Meetings held on 2 July 2024 and 28 November 2024.
3. **Declarations of Interest**
To remind Members of the need to record the existence and nature of any personal, disclosable pecuniary or other registrable interests in items on the agenda, in accordance with the Members' [Code of Conduct](#).
4. **Statutory Pay Policy** 5 - 24
Purpose: The Council is required, in accordance with section 38 of the Localism Act 2011, to publish an annual pay policy statement. This report seeks to secure compliance with that duty, by seeking approval of the Statutory Pay Policy Statement for publication.
5. **Update on HR Activity Q1 and Q2 - 2024/2025** 25 - 44
Purpose: This report is an information only report for the purposes of updating on HR activity for Q1 and Q2 of 2024/2025 for Personnel Committee, Corporate Board and Operations Board. This data excludes school workforce data. This report is part of a bi-annual updates to the Personnel Committee and sets out some of the changes to HR activity and statistics in the current year. The report includes some of the detail behind the key statics, including to directorate level.
6. **Date of Next Meeting**
Meeting required in week commencing 15 July 2025.

Sarah Clarke.



Agenda - Personnel Committee to be held on Tuesday 14 January 2025 (*continued*)

Sarah Clarke
Service Director (Strategy & Governance)

If you require this information in a different format or translation, please contact Sadie Owen on telephone (01635) 519052.

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Statutory Pay Policy 2025/26

Committee considering report:	Personnel Committee
Date of Committee:	14 th January 2025
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Jeff Brooks
Report Author:	Olimpia Byrne
Forward Plan Ref:	C4648

1 Purpose of the Report

The Council is required, in accordance with section 38 of the Localism Act 2011, to publish an annual pay policy statement. This report seeks to secure compliance with that duty, by seeking approval of the Statutory Pay Policy Statement for publication.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 It is recommended that Council adopt and approve the Statutory Pay Policy Statement for publication. It is further recommended that the Council delegate authority to the Monitoring Officer.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
Financial:	None.
Human Resource:	The report details HR implications within it.
Legal:	This report satisfies the Localism Act 2011 in respect of a pay policy statement.
Risk Management:	None.
Property:	None.

Policy:	Localism Act 2011.			
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equalities Impact:				
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		X		
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		X		
Environmental Impact:		X		
Health Impact:		X		
ICT Impact:		X		
Digital Services Impact:		X		
Council Strategy Priorities:		X		
Core Business:		X		
Data Impact:		X		The Council is obligated to publish this anonymised salary data by the Localism Act 2011.

4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 Section 38 of the Localism Act 2011 requires local authorities to publish an annual pay policy statement. The method of publication is at the discretion of the authority, but it is expected to comply with the principles set out in the Local Government Transparency Code. The statement must be approved by the full Council.
- 4.2 Council approved the annual publication of the statement, in principle, on 1st March 2012. This report seeks Council's approval, for publication of the 2025/26 pay Policy Statement.
- 4.3 The statement should set out the policies in relation to;
- Remuneration of its chief officer
 - The remuneration of its lowest paid employees (and our definition and reasons for defining it)
 - The relationship between the remuneration of its chief officers and those who are not chief officers.
- 4.4 The definition of chief officers includes the Chief Executive, the Monitoring Officer, the Section 151 Officer, Executive Directors, as well as those who report directly to any of these post holders. Thus, in West Berkshire Council, this definition would include all Service Directors.
- 4.5 Chief Officer remuneration includes salary, bonuses, performance-related pay, fees or allowances (including as returning officer), benefits in kind, etc. The policy should also state how chief officer salary will be determined on appointment and any arrangements for payments upon leaving office.
- 4.6 This matter should be considered at Personnel Committee recommending this policy to Council for adoption.

5 Other Options Considered

- 5.1 The Council could determine not to publish a pay policy statement but this is not recommended as there is a legal duty to publish this information.

6 Conclusion

- 6.1 It is recommended that the Pay Policy Statement is submitted to Personnel Committee for approval, and once approved published on the Council website with effect from April 2025, to comply with our statutory duty under the Localism Act.

7 Appendices

7.1 Appendix A –Statutory Pay Policy.

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CHANGE HISTORY

Version	Date	Change
4.0	January 2024	Annual review to reflect pay award
5.0	December 2024	Annual review

1. Purpose

This document covers the requirements to publish a pay policy statement under s38 of the Localism Act 2011. This Pay Policy Statement does not apply to employees working within schools.

2. Definitions used in this document

Chief Officers are defined in s43 of the Localism Act as

- the head of the authority's paid service;
- the monitoring officer
- a statutory chief officer, which under the Local Government & Housing Act 1989 means Director of Children's Services, Director of Adult Social Services, Director of Public Health, Chief Education Officer, Chief Social Worker and the Section 151 officer;
- a non-statutory chief officer which under section s2(7) of the 1989 Act means direct reports of the head of paid service (HOPS), a person for whom the HOPS is directly responsible, a person who as respects all or most of their duties is required to report directly or is directly accountable to the HOPS, or a person who as respects all or most of their duties is required to report directly or is directly accountable to the local authority themselves, or any committee or sub-committee of the authority;
- a deputy chief officer which under s2(8) of the 1989 Act means a person who, as respects all or most of the duties of his post, is required to report directly or is directly accountable to one or more of the statutory or non-statutory chief officers.

In West Berkshire Council these posts are:

Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service)

Executive Director (Adult Social Care)

Executive Director (Children & Family Services)

Executive Director (Resources) (Section 151 Officer)

Executive Director (Place)

Service Directors:

- Service Director: Adult Social Care
- Service Director: Community Services
- Service Director: Education and SEND
- Service Director: Children's Social Care
- Service Director: Development & Housing
- Service Director: Environment
- Service Director: Finance, Property & Procurement
- Service Director: Strategy, Governance & IT (Monitoring Officer)
- Service Director: Transformation

Heads of Service

- Head of ICT

All Service Managers reporting to a Head of Service or Service Director.

All Service Leads.

Employees who are not chief officers: all other employees (including those employed on a casual basis) employed directly by the Council.

This policy does not cover the remuneration of other 'workers' employed by the Council, as employees of agencies or as self-employed consultants.

Lowest paid employee: minimum of £12.26 per hour. Notes on this definition are set out below:

Apprentices aged 16-18, may be paid on the age-related National Minimum Wage. The Apprentice NMW rate is not used. Apprentices have been excluded from this definition on the basis that they are in specific posts created for training purposes.

Median salary: £35,235 (full time equivalent). This is a measure of the 'average' salary for employees in the Council. It is defined as the 'midpoint' salary, such that there is an equal probability of falling above or below it.

Mean salary: £38,167 (full time equivalent). This is an alternative measure of the 'average' salary for employees in the Council. The arithmetic mean is defined as the sum of all the salaries divided by the number of salaries.

Highest paid employee: the Chief Executive is paid £165,691.

3. Pay Policy from April 2025

All jobs within the Council are paid on salary grades with five or more incremental points.

Job evaluation:

The Hay (Local Government) job evaluation scheme is used to establish the grade for each post relative to all other jobs within the Council. The job evaluation procedure is used to evaluate all new jobs and to re-evaluate existing jobs where there have been significant changes.

All jobs are assigned to a grade within the West Berkshire Council salary structure on the basis of the job evaluation score. The individual salary scale points are based on the National Joint Council for Local Government Employees (Green Book) salary scale up to SCP42.

Salary structure – employees on Service Lead Grade (N) and above

The establishment of any post attracting a total remuneration (basic salary, contribution to car lease or equivalent and employer's pension contribution) package of £100,000 or more requires approval from Full Council.

A post level called Service Lead was established within the staffing structure in 2020 and may be used by Service Directors as they are appointed, as appropriate. Service Lead posts form part of the fourth tier of management but not all fourth tier posts will be Service Leads. Service Leads will normally report to a Service Director (third tier). A separate pay grade has been established for these posts.

Service Directors are paid on Grade O. Along with the remaining Head of Service in an emerging structure, they constitute the third tier of management within the Council. Service Directors report to an Executive Director (second tier).

Where a Head of Service remains, they are paid on the HOS grade. Along with Service Directors, they constitute the third tier of management and may be allocated new responsibilities as required to meet the needs of the Council at this level, within their grade. The Head of Service report to an Executive Director (second tier).

The Executive Director (Place) and the Chief Executive are both paid on specific grades for those posts. The Executive Directors for Adult Social Care, Children and Family Services and Resources are paid on a grade for the posts. The different grades for the four Executive Director posts reflect the difference in responsibilities. All five posts (Chief Executive and Executive Directors) may be allocated new responsibilities as required to meet the needs of the Council within their grade. Officers designated as the Monitoring Officer (s5 and 5A LGHA 1989), the s151 Officer (Chief Finance Officer), the Director of Children's Services, or the Director of Adult Social Care will be paid an additional amount as follows:

- Executive Directors/Chief Executive - £5,200 per annum
- Service Directors or Service Leads - £7,500 per annum

Salary on appointment – all employees

Appointments will normally be made to the minimum point of the grade. Service Directors and Managers may take into account the previous experience and skills of the employee to offer appointment above the salary minimum for the post.

Recruitment and Retention

The Council operates a Recruitment and Retention scheme of staff within Children and Family Services to support in improving the terms and conditions for social workers. The scheme provides social workers in the front line of safeguarding work with a 'golden handshake', further bonus payments and the opportunity to take extended paid leave ('sabbatical') after a three year's service, subject to certain qualifying conditions as an incentive to retain qualified and experienced social workers. Staff must have at least one years service, and have successfully completed their probation period to qualify for a payment of £3,000.

In April 2023 the Council introduced a Market Supplement Policy which forms part of the Recruitment and Retention Strategy with a focus on

developing a strong, skilled and experienced workforce. The policy addresses recruitment and retention issues within the labour market by temporarily increasing the pay awarded to a post without altering the job evaluation determined grade for the post. Subject to qualifying criteria, successful market supplements should not exceed the value of £10,000. Payment of market supplements are awarded to posts rather than employees and are subject to tax, NI and pension contributions.

Incremental progression – all employees

Each employee progresses through the grade band for the post by the award of one increment (or spinal column point (SCP)) on 1st April each year until the maximum of the grade band is reached, subject to six months service in the grade band (whether that band has been attained by appointment, promotion or regrading) and satisfactory performance in the job.

Any existing employee who is appointed to a new post within the Council whose salary, on 1st April, would otherwise be less than one column point in excess of the salary they would have received on that day in their old grade band, will be entitled to an increment on that day even if he/she has not been 6 months in the new post, subject to satisfactory performance.

An increment may be withheld if an employee is subject to formal capability procedures during the year leading up to the 1st April.

An additional increment may be awarded in any one year to an employee, at the discretion of the Service Director, on the grounds of special merit or ability, provided the maximum of the grade is not exceeded.

Additional payments – all employees

Additional payment may be made for additional hours, overtime, undertaking higher responsibilities, and for non-standard working arrangements such as stand-by or evening work, or for exceptional working conditions. Senior Managers are only entitled to overtime payments in exceptional circumstances where regular overtime cannot be practically compensated by time off in lieu, there is no other solution to ensuring the work is covered, the Executive Director believes the payment to be necessary and appropriate and it can be contained within the service budget. See Appendix 2 for details.

Car allowance payments for new senior managers ceased to be paid from November 2007. Some senior employees who were already in receipt of such allowances continue to receive them on a protected basis whilst in post.

Essential car users (defined as those who travel at least 1,500 business miles per annum) receive an allowance.

All employees can claim expenses for essential business travel at the rate of the cost of public transport, or a mileage rate. Subsistence expenses may be claimed at the rates recommended by HMRC.

Employees with a 'home' or 'community' workstyle under the Council's Hybrid Working Policy (introduced in April 2022) are paid a monthly allowance of £12.50. This is a contribution towards the cost to employees

of home working including set up of an appropriate work space, broad band charges and utility bills.

The Council does not operate a separate bonus scheme for its Chief Officers. With the exception of the Special Recruitment Payment mentioned in 3.1.7 and the hybrid working workstyle allowance mentioned in 3.1.18 above no other charges, fees or allowances or remuneration are payable to Chief Officers in connection with their responsibilities.

Fees for Returning Officer duties during elections are payable to the Chief Executive or their nominated representative acting as the Returning Officer. Fees for national elections are set by central Government and vary according to the type of election. Fees for local elections (parish and district elections) are set by the Council.

There are no benefits in kind, such as private health insurance, payable to Chief Officers.

Chief Officers are eligible to join the Local Government Pension Scheme in the same way as other employees.

Severance arrangements

Chief Officers are subject to the same redundancy payment and pension arrangements as other employees. These are set out in the Council's [Employer Statement of Policy on Discretionary Compensation](#).

There are a number of discretions available under the Local Government Pension Scheme, as a matter of policy, WBC does not exercise any discretion that would represent a cost to the Council. More information is available through the [Employer Statement – Local Government Pension Scheme Discretions Policy](#).

All redundancy or severance costs (including the cost of mandatory early payment of pension) of between £10,000 and £99,999 must be approved in accordance with the scheme of delegation and in line with relevant statutory guidance. Severance costs linked to sickness absence can be approved by Service Director or above, with a maximum cost as defined in [Sickness Absence - Reporting and Management, Procedure and Guidance](#) .

An employee who has left the Council, with a redundancy or other severance payment under the discretionary compensation scheme, will not normally be re-engaged by the Council within two years of the termination date. In exceptional circumstances the HR Service Lead may make a decision, after consultation with the Chief Executive, the Monitoring Officer, the Section 151 Officer, and the Leader and Shadow Leader of the Council, to authorise re-engagement where it is in the interests of the Council to do so. (See the [Re- Employment Policy](#).)

4. Pay ratios in the Council

It is the Policy of the Council to ensure that the ratio of the salary of the highest paid officer and the lowest paid officer is well below the 20:1 ratio recommended as a maximum in the terms of reference for the 2011 Hutton Review of Fair Pay in the Public Sector.

As at 1st April 2024, pay ratios within the Council stand as follows:

2023	2024
<i>Highest:lowest = 7.06:1</i>	<i>Highest:lowest = 7.22:1</i>
<i>Highest:median = 4.39:1</i>	<i>Highest:median = 4.70:1</i>

5. Pensions

5.1 Council employees are entitled to join an occupational pension scheme. Scheme members contribute a percentage of their monthly salary and the council contributes an additional amount into the relevant scheme. Contribution rates vary according to the level of pay.

5.2 New employees are automatically enrolled onto the relevant pension scheme, but may choose to opt out. Employees who have opted out of the scheme may also choose to opt back in.

5.3 Most council employees are eligible to join the [Local Government Pension Scheme](#) (administered by [Berkshire Pensions](#)). Teachers are eligible to join the [Teachers' Pension Scheme](#).

6. Review

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and more frequently if necessary to respond to any changes.

Appendix 1 – Revised West Berkshire Pay Scales

These are correct at the time of publishing

WBC PAYSCALES 01/04/2024				
<u>Grade</u>		<u>SCP</u>	<u>1.4.23</u>	<u>Monthly</u>
				-
	B	2	£ 23,656	£ 1,971.33
C		3	£ 24,027	£ 2,002.25
		4	£ 24,404	£ 2,033.67
		5	£ 24,790	£ 2,065.83
	D	6	£ 25,183	£ 2,098.58
E		7	£ 25,584	£ 2,132.00
		8	£ 25,992	£ 2,166.00
		9	£ 26,409	£ 2,200.75
		10	£ 26,835	£ 2,236.25
		11	£ 27,269	£ 2,272.42
	F	12	£ 27,711	£ 2,309.25
		13	£ 28,163	£ 2,346.92
		14	£ 28,624	£ 2,385.33
		15	£ 29,093	£ 2,424.42
		16	£ 29,572	£ 2,464.33
G		17	£ 30,060	£ 2,505.00
		18	£ 30,559	£ 2,546.58

		19	£	31,067	£ 2,588.92
		20	£	31,586	£ 2,632.17
		21	£	32,115	£ 2,676.25
		22	£	32,654	£ 2,721.17
I	H	23	£	33,366	£ 2,780.50
		24	£	34,314	£ 2,859.50
		25	£	35,235	£ 2,936.25
		26	£	36,124	£ 3,010.33
	27	£	37,035	£ 3,086.25	
	28	£	37,938	£ 3,161.50	
	29	£	38,626	£ 3,218.83	
	30	£	39,513	£ 3,292.75	
K	J	31	£	40,476	£ 3,373.00
		32	£	41,511	£ 3,459.25
		33	£	42,708	£ 3,559.00
		34	£	43,693	£ 3,641.08
	35	£	44,711	£ 3,725.92	
	36	£	45,718	£ 3,809.83	
	37	£	46,731	£ 3,894.25	
	38	£	47,754	£ 3,979.50	
		39	£	48,710	£ 4,059.17
	L	40	£	49,764	£ 4,147.00

		41	£	50,788	£ 4,232.33
		42	£	51,802	£ 4,316.83
		43		54,299	£ 4,524.92
		44		56,901	£ 4,741.75
		45		58,886	£ 4,907.17
M		46		60,863	£ 5,071.92
		47		62,860	£ 5,238.33
		48		63,730	£ 5,310.83
		49		66,086	£ 5,507.17
		50		68,437	£ 5,703.08
		51		70,787	£ 5,898.92
		52		0	
		53		73,294	£ 6,107.83
		54		74,407	£ 6,200.58
		55		75,521	£ 6,293.42
	N- Service Lead	56		76,636	£ 6,386.33
		57		77,748	£ 6,479.00
		58		78,861	£ 6,571.75
		59		79,974	£ 6,664.50
		68		100,011	£ 8,334.25
	O- Service Directors	69		101,682	£ 8,473.50
		70		103,351	£ 8,612.58

		71	105,021	£ 8,751.75
		72	106,691	£ 8,890.92
P-ED		79	133,407	£ 11,117.25
		80	134,520	£ 11,210.00
		81	135,634	£ 11,302.83
		82	136,747	£ 11,395.58
		83	137,861	£ 11,488.42
		84	138,973	£ 11,581.08
	Q- ED	85	140,087	£ 11,673.92
		86	141,199	£ 11,766.58
		87	142,314	£ 11,859.50
		88	143,426	£ 11,952.17
		89	144,540	£ 12,045.00
		90	163,464	£ 13,622.00
CEX		91	164,577	£ 13,714.75
		92	165,691	£ 13,807.58
		93	166,803	£ 13,900.25

Appendix 2 – Additional Payments Scheme

Criteria for making service related additional payments

The scheme provides for additional payments to be made where:

- There is a clear service need to resolve organisational and/or staffing difficulties;
- Other organisational responses (e.g. restructuring or re-allocation of work) will not overcome the difficulties;
- No other provision exists for payments to be made under WBC Conditions of Service;
- Costs can be contained within service budgets;
- The relevant Executive Director is satisfied that payments are necessary and appropriate in all the circumstances.

If the above criteria apply, and other conditions and criteria are met (see sections below) additional payments may be made at the discretion of the Service Director, in consultation with their Executive Director. Where the Chief Executive is agreeing these payments they should be made in consultation with the Leader of the Council.

Payment for Exceptional Working Patterns

The normal working week will be the working week or regular work pattern defined in the contract of employment, normally based on any five named days out of seven.

Some jobs require regular working patterns which, because of service demands, are particularly disruptive to social or domestic life and these jobs may therefore present difficulties of recruitment and retention e.g. week end working, split duty or sleeping in.

Others may require acceptance of occasional severe disruption to regular work patterns which are not commonly acceptable under normal basic pay arrangements. Where there is clear evidence that such circumstances present service delivery problems, additional payments, based on a maximum of time and a third of basic pay may be made at the discretion of the Service Director in consultation with their Executive Director. Where the Chief Executive is agreeing these payments they should be made in consultation with the Leader of the Council.

Payment for night work

Time and a third may be paid for night work undertaken between the hours of 10pm and 6am.

Payment for stand-by duty

For some jobs, where stand-by duty is a regular requirement, specific stand-by payments may be written into the employment contract. The HR Service Lead or the relevant Service Director will advise where these apply.

Where there is no contractual requirement or payment for stand-by duty, and stand-by duty is not reflected in the grading of the post, payment of one third of basic pay may be paid. Payment will be at the discretion of the Service Director in consultation with their Executive

Director. Where the Chief Executive is agreeing these payments they should be made in consultation with the Leader of the Council.

Payment for higher responsibility

WBC Conditions of Service provide for an employee, who for reasons other than annual leave of another employee, is called upon to undertake the duties and responsibilities of a higher graded post for a period of at least four weeks may, at the discretion of the Service Director, receive an honorarium to reflect the additional duties and responsibilities.

In determining the appropriate level of additional payment, the Service Director should take into account factors like:

- The difference between grading between the absent employee and the employee providing cover
- The duration of the period of absence
- The level of support provided to the covering employee
- Arrangements relating to the employee's normal duties;

Although not normally provided for in WBC Conditions, Service Directors may, exceptionally, make additional payments to employees covering for absence resulting from annual leave. The above criteria are relevant in deciding to make payments in these circumstances, in particular, the duration of cover and the difference in grading.

Any such payments should only be made in consultation with their Executive Director. Where the Chief Executive is agreeing these payments they should be made in consultation with the Leader of the Council.

Payment for Regular Overtime

Some jobs require regular overtime working that cannot, practicably, be compensated by flexible working. These jobs may be held by employees above the normal ceiling for overtime payment (scp26).

Where regular overtime is a feature of the job (e.g. regular requirement for attendance at evening Council and/or Committee meetings), the Service Director may agree the payment of a flat rate allowance that reflects the regular nature of the demand and the normal basis for calculating additional payments (time and one third). Any such payments should only be made in consultation with their Executive Director. Where the Chief Executive is agreeing these payments they should be made in consultation with the Leader of the Council.

Payment for Exceptional Working Conditions

WBC job evaluation takes account of physical aspects of jobs where they are a regular feature e.g. heavy and awkward working conditions. Normal pay reflects the conditions of such jobs. However, in some jobs such conditions may occur only occasionally and will not, therefore, be reflected in grading.

In other jobs, employees may be required, from time to time, to work in particularly dirty or otherwise unpleasant circumstances.

Where job grading has not taken exceptional working conditions into account, additional payments may be made. Where the exceptional conditions extend over a period of time,

payment of time and a third for hours worked in those conditions will be appropriate. In the case of a short, one-off situation, a payment for Other Exceptional Circumstances, as described below, may be paid.

Payment for election duties

Election fees are payable to some staff as and when elections are held for National Elections. The fees are set by HM Government and vary according to type of election.

Payment for Other Exceptional Circumstances

From time to time, other exceptional circumstances may arise that merit an additional payment e.g. short and unusual exposure to particularly unpleasant work conditions, reward for a sustained period of particularly heavy increased responsibility, or exceptional achievement. In such circumstances, an additional payment may be made. Although not a limit in truly exceptional circumstances, the normal ceiling of time and a third for additional payments should be taken into account when determining an appropriate additional payment.

Payment for Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) work

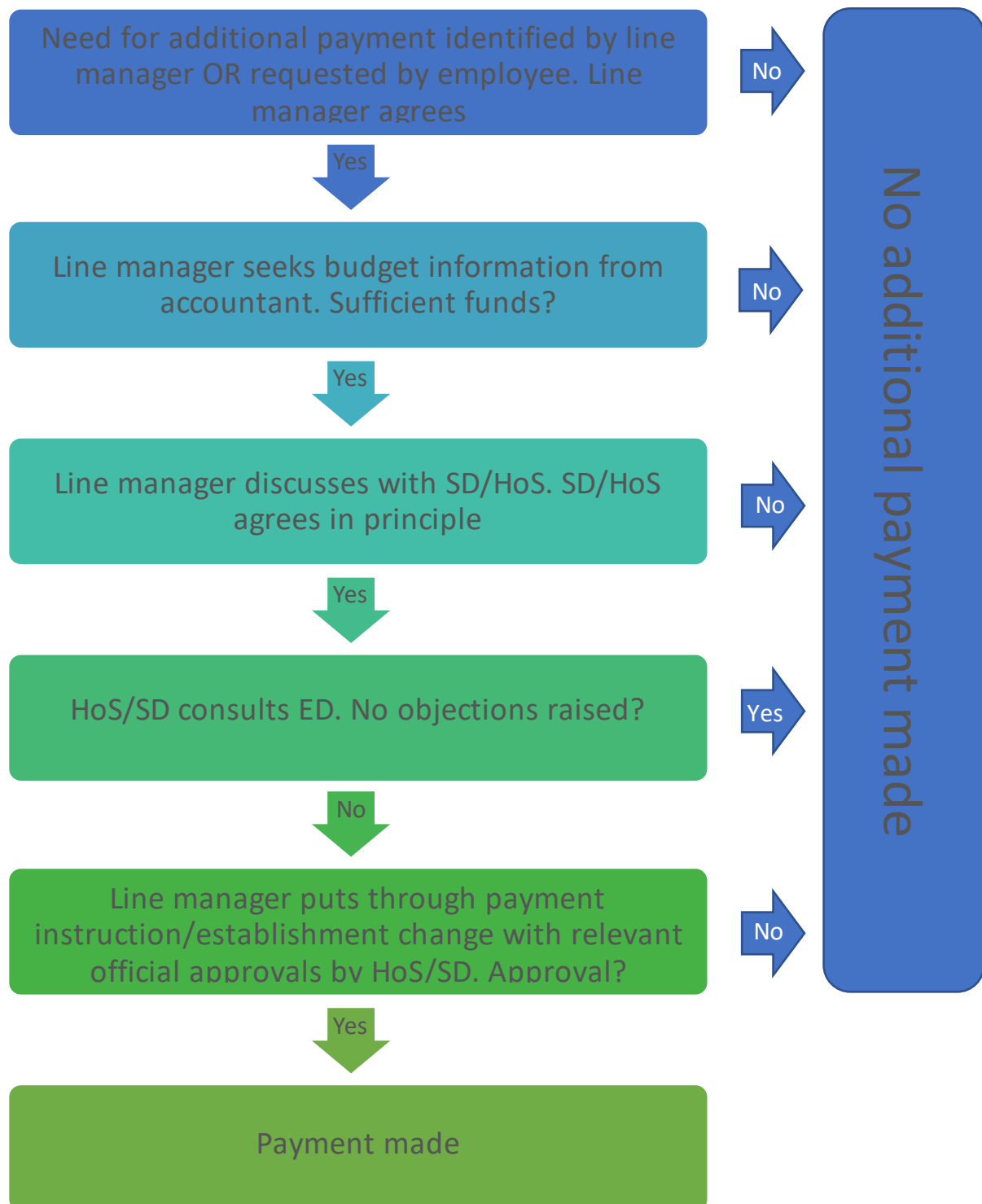
Where the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) is set up to respond to an emergency, staff carrying out EOC work will be paid as follows:

- All hours worked on EOC duties outside 0700 to 1900 Monday to Friday will be paid at £30 per day, plus £15 per hour for work conducted outside of core duties.
- Full time employees working the day shift (7am to 7pm) will receive an honorarium payment of £30 for each day shift worked.
- Part time employees working extra hours on the day shift will be paid £15 per hour for each additional hour worked in addition to the £30 honorarium payment for each day shift worked.
- The hours paid will include the time it takes to come in and go home if the employee would not have had to make this journey in normal circumstances (for example travelling back in for a midnight start or travelling at weekends). However employees cannot claim 'petrol costs'.
- Staff required to be on stand-by or actively responding to support outside of normal core hours will be paid an additional rate of £30 per 24 hour period for standby duties, plus £15 per hour if called into work.
- These payments are payable to all employees regardless of grade.

Where employees who have worked weekends, late or night shifts would prefer to take the extra hours they worked as flexi rather than receive £15 per hour they should inform their line manager and HR by email.

Staff who had booked annual leave but come in for a day shift should swap their leave to another day. If the EOC work occurs towards the end of an annual leave period, and as a result, there is a need to carry forward leave after the end of the leave year, the employee should agree this with his/her line manager. The employee will receive the £30 honorarium for each day shift worked.

Additional Payments – General Approvals Flowchart



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Update on HR Activity Q1 and Q2 - 2024/2025

Committee considering report:	Personnel Committee
Date of Committee:	14 January 2025
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Jeff Brooks
Report Author:	Paula Goodwin, Vicky Holland, Karen Turner, Lorraine Collins, Melanie James, Samantha Hodson
Forward Plan Ref:	N/A

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report is an information only report for the purposes of updating on HR activity for Q1 and Q2 of 2024/2025 for Personnel Committee, Corporate Board and Operations Board. This data excludes school workforce data.
- 1.2 This report is part of a bi-annual updates to the Personnel Committee and sets out some of the changes to HR activity and statistics in the current year. The report includes some of the detail behind the key statics, including to directorate level.

2 Recommendation

This is an information only report. Personnel Committee is asked to consider and feedback on the information provided within the report.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
Financial:	None as this is an information only report.
Human Resource:	The activity stated within this report is completed as either part of BAU activity or as part of the delivery of the Workforce Strategy. This is an information only report so there are no direct implications from the outcome of the report.

Legal:	None			
Risk Management:	None			
Property:	None			
Policy:	All information provided in the report take account of the relevant WBC policies and procedures.			
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equalities Impact:				
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		X		This is an information only report.
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		X		This is an information only report.
Environmental Impact:		X		None
Health Impact:		X		None
ICT Impact:		X		None
Digital Services Impact:		X		None

Council Strategy Priorities:		X		This update report provides information that supports the Workforce Strategy and HR BAU activity to meet Council priorities.
Core Business:		X		This update report provides information that supports the Workforce Strategy and HR BAU activity to meet Council priorities.
Data Impact:		X		None as all data is anonymised.
Consultation and Engagement:	Corporate Board Operations Board Service Director, Strategy & Governance Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Internal Governance			

4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 This report is for information only that will go to Corporate Board, Operations Board and Personnel Committee to provide an update on the HR matters contained within the report for Q1 and Q2 of 2024/2025 year.
- 4.2 This report provides an update on recruitment activity, training, wellbeing and performance management -casework. The report includes the detail behind a range of statistics from HR, but the main items highlighted are:
- (a) That there has been an increase in the amount of casework within HR for the first two quarters of the current year.
 - (b) That there has been significant recruitment activity in the current year, with an increase in applicant numbers and new starters.
 - (c) That the voluntary turnover figure for all staff has increased to 13.77% for the current year, from 12.47%.
 - (d) That sickness absence has increased to 10.24 days per worker in the current year from 8.75 days per worker for the same period in 2023/24.

5 Employment Data

- 5.1 A full year of employment data is published at the end of each year i.e. following on from March annually. As this is a 6 monthly update then comparative data is not available, however some data has been produced for the purposes of the report.

5.2 See table below for headcount and post data for the last 4 years. (This data excludes all temporary posts and agency and off contract workers).

	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024
Headcount	1545	1532	1511	1537
Post FTE	1621.98	1667.93	1731.10	1767.83
Occupied FTE	1366.44	1362.10	1357.90	1387.80
Vacant FTE	255.54	305.83	373.20	225

Total vacancy figures breakdown as of 26th November 2024	
No of vacant posts	225
Live adverts	32
<i>(Note: some adverts are for multiple posts)</i>	
Onboarding/Starting after the 1st December 2024	28
Agency workers excluding care homes	61
Vacant posts not accounted for <i>(Note: posts are either on hold, only recently vacant so awaiting instructions on recruitment or have no budget and require deletion).</i>	104

5.3 As reporting on the halfway point of the year, turnover has been calculated as both a 6 monthly and projecting annualised figure. Using the annualised turnover, this would see turnover of 13.77% if the same number of staff left in the second half of the year. This would see an increase from 12.47% to 13.77%. The average UK turnover is 14% or lower. Exit data is collated from leavers information and the reasons for leaving are as seen in the table below.

Reason for Leaving	Number of employees
Death in Service	3
Dismissal	3
End of Fixed Term Contract	5
Redundancy - Compulsory	1
Resignation	74
Retirement	15
Retirement - Ill Health	5

6. Starters, Leavers and Turnover Q1 and Q2

6.1 Please see Appendix 1 which shows, starters, leavers and turnover for the past 5 years and as at the end of Q2 in 2024/25 year i.e. 30th September 2024.

7 Talent Attraction

7.1 We have had a total of 140 new starters in the period from 1st April 2024 through to 30th September 2024, this is an increase of 37% vs the previous six months. This figure is for new external applicants and does not include existing employees moving into new posts. As of 30th September 2024, there were also an additional 27 candidates awaiting imminent start dates with completed pre-employment checks.

We have received a total of 2314 applications in the period of 1st April 2024 through to 30th September 2024 vs a total of 1873 applications during 1st October 2023 through to 31st March 2024 which represents a 24% increase in applicant numbers.

- 7.2 We have successfully rolled out the recruitment and on boarding module of ITrent which replaces the Job Go Public ATS system.

Guidance for managers on using the system has been created and during the roll out, demo sessions were set up to walk managers through how to use the system to effectively manage their vacancies.

Managers can now arrange interviews via the system – offering candidates flexibility to select the most convenient interview slot for them. This also increases the visibility of the number of interviews happening within the organisation.

We are currently working on the next phase of the roll out which is developing reports and media tracking. As ITrent does not have a dedicated talent pooling functionality we are also working on setting up a vacancy newsletter to keep unsuccessful candidates up to date with other vacancies.

8 Early Careers

- 8.1 Over the past six months, we have made progress in developing our early careers offering, a key achievement has been the partnership with Kennet School's new T-Level centre, where we have established a strong relationship. During this period, we hosted nine T-Level students, including four who worked closely with the early careers team and provided valuable feedback on attracting young talent. In response we have enhanced our apprenticeship case studies, improved careers information, and increased our presence in schools.

We have been active in promoting careers at seven local career fairs and as members of the Apprenticeships Ambassador Network, we are staying informed on developments to ensure our offer remains competitive.

We have increased our focus on graduate and postgraduate apprenticeships in the last twelve months with a 177% increase in Level 6 and a 133% increase in Level 7 learners being enrolled. This increased emphasis on graduate apprenticeships spans a range of disciplines with a specific focus on our hard to fill areas including Legal, Social Work and Occupational Therapy.

Over the period of April to October 2024, we have hosted 24 work experience students which is an increase of 60% vs the previous six months. We have hosted 9 T-Level students on placements which is an increase of 50% vs the previous six months.

Our achievements have been recognised externally, including the Large Employer award and Apprentice of the Year with West Berkshire Training Consortium.

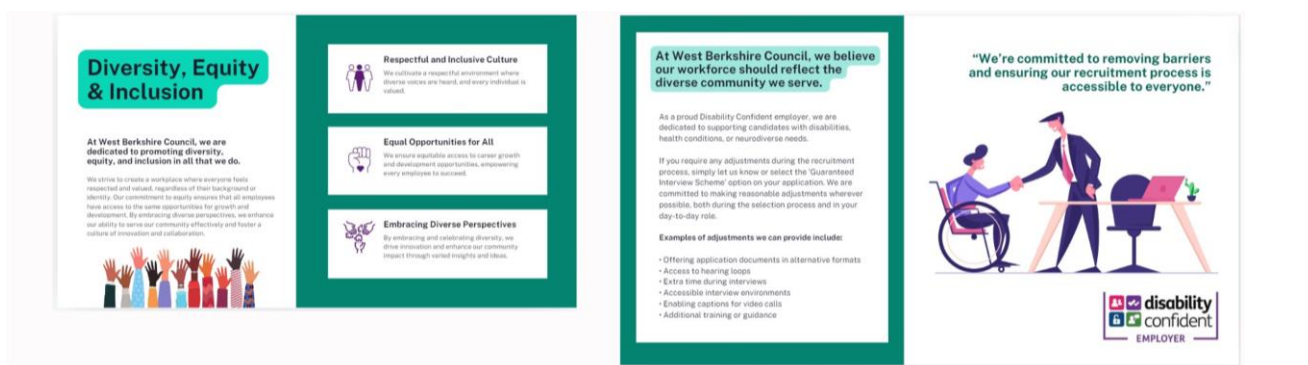
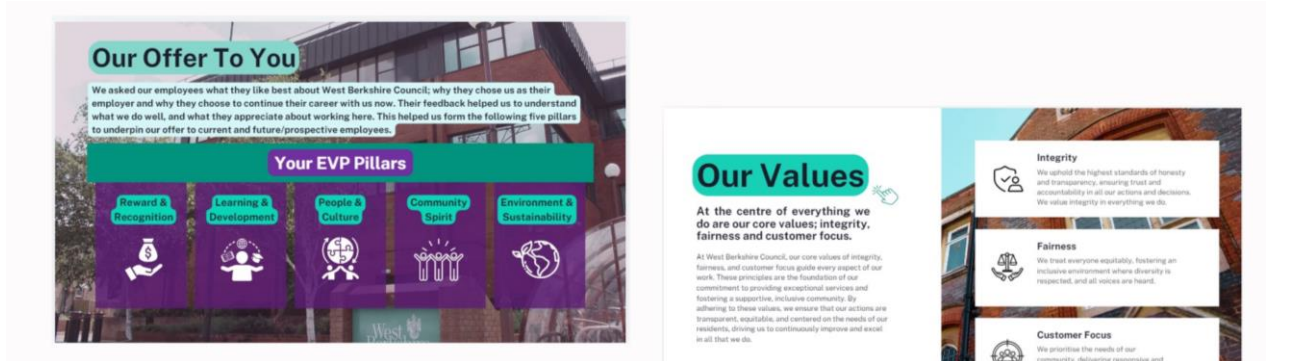
9. EVP

- 9.1 We have successfully launched our new EVP and careers site on 1st October 2024. The creation of our EVP has been a collaborative effort across the council, shaped by the

feedback through surveys, workshops and conversations across the organisation. These insights helped us identify key themes that matter most to our employees, including career development, wellbeing, flexibility, and the importance of making a meaning impact within our community.

From these themes, we developed our EV, which embodies the promise we make to our existing workforce and to potential candidates.

The EVP “Working with us” document can be viewed here [Working with us](#) but below are some images.



Alongside the EVP document we have worked with the comms team to create video case studies and design assets for social media, banners and posters.

Physical Assets – Roller Banners & Posters



Further work to build on our video and written case studies is ongoing and a three-month social media plan has been developed.

- 9.2 Our use of social media for recruitment will be rolled into BAU to ensure that when the comms team are out filming, we have a “working with us” slant to continue to build on our assets. We are great at showcasing the results of our work to the residents but aim moving forward is to extend that spotlight to the team behind that work and showcase the breadth of careers and projects we can offer future talent.
- 9.3 By launching the new Careers Site, we’re making it easier for people to explore the opportunities available, reinforcing West Berkshire Council as an ‘employer of choice’. The site showcases all the great things we offer, from our diverse range of roles to the benefits that make a career with us so rewarding.

We are tracking the traffic coming to the site, in the first two weeks we had a 61% increase in new users and 59% increase in existing user’s vs the same period last year.

10 Agency

- 10.1 As of 10th September 2024, the number of agency workers is down a further 15% vs April 2024 from 169 to 144.

The forecast spend for this year on agency is around £7M VS £9.5M in 2023 and £12M in 2022.

A total of 45 agency workers have now moved into direct employment since May 2023 which has saved a total of £726,000.

11 Performance Management – Casework

Context

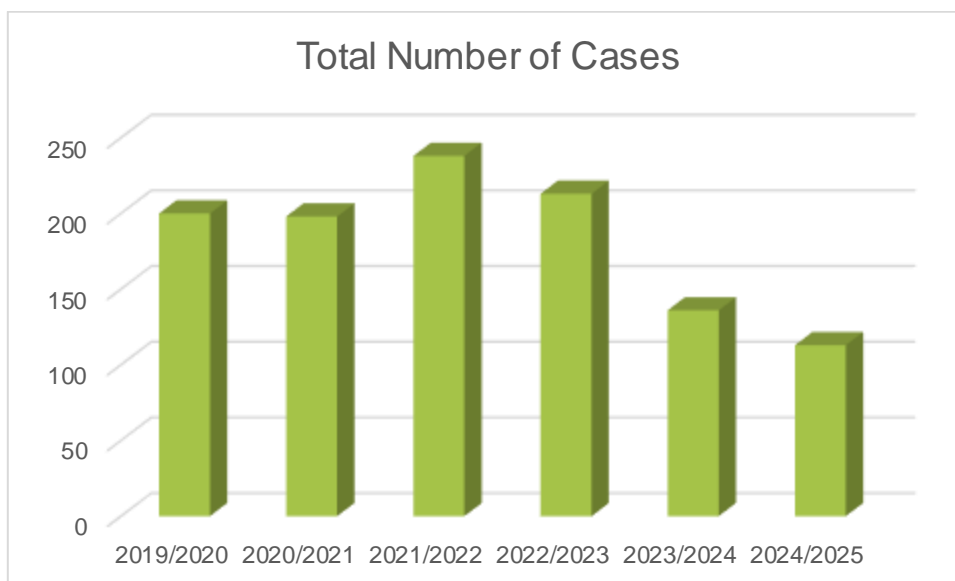
11.1 The Council’s HR team supports both corporate managers and around 60 % of WBC schools in managing people issues to conclusion. For the purposes of this report, this includes:

- Disciplinary and capability
- Grievances and whistleblowing
- Sickness absence, ill-health retirement, and related adjustments
- TUPE, restructures, and redundancies.

11.2 This report gives figures for the Q1 and Q2 of 2024/2025 and excludes schools’ data.

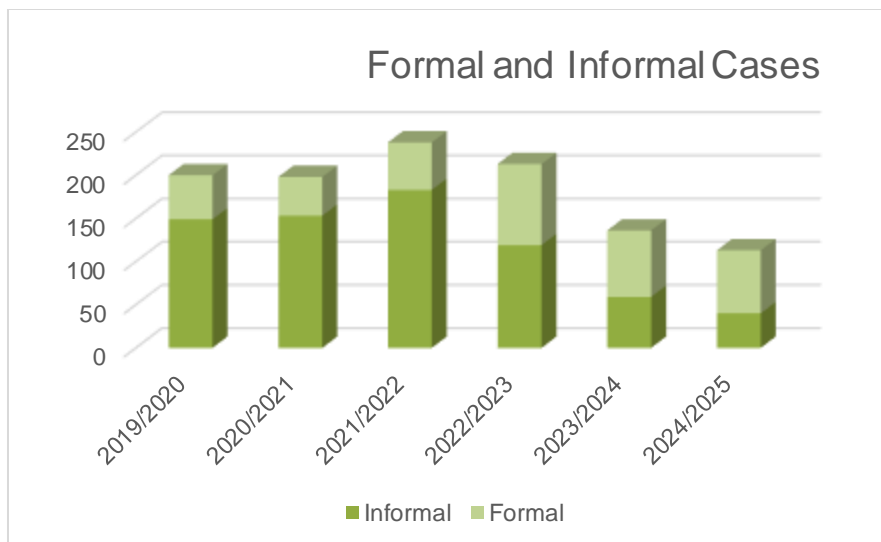
11.3 Table 1 below, shows the number of formal and informal cases within corporate for five full years plus Q1 and Q2 of 2024/2025. The numbers have slightly increased on the same period last year but are statistically insignificant.

Table 1



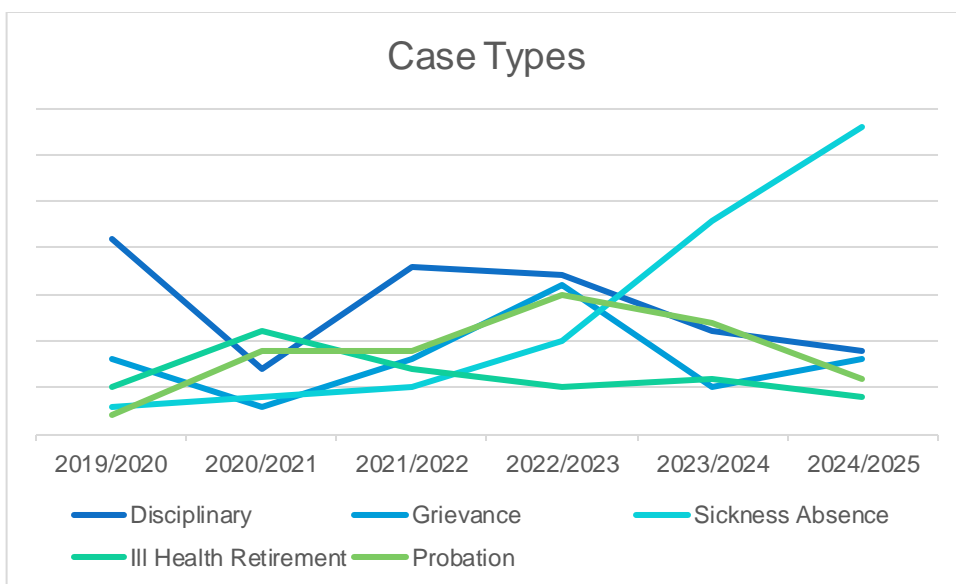
11.4 Table 2, below, shows the mix of informal and formal casework. During the previous four years as well as Q1 and Q2 for 2024/2025.

Table 2



11.5 Table 3, below, shows the variation in the main types of cases over the past five years (note – actual numbers are not given, to ensure confidentiality and data protection). Sickness Absence cases are on the rise in 2024/2025.

Table 3



12 Sickness Absence

12.1 The Councils working days lost per person due to sickness absence as at the end of Q2 2024/25 is at 10.24 days. The table below shows the year end outturn absence figures for the previous 4 years for comparison purposes.

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Q1 & Q2 of 2024/25
Days lost per person	7.15	9.95	9.90	10.69	10.24

Note that so far this year:

- This is 4.2% (0.45) working days below the 2023/24 Council year end out turn figure of 10.69 days lost per employee.

12.2 The table below shows the number of days lost per person by Directorate based on Q1 & Q2 2024/2025 year to date figures.

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25 Annualised based on Q1&Q2 sickness reported
Resources	6.0	6.5	6.2	7.6
People	12.0	11.6	NA	NA
People ASC	NA	NA	18.1	16.3
People CFS	NA	NA	8.5	7.8
Place	8.6	8.8	7.0	8.6

Note: People ASC sickness levels not including Care Homes would reduce down from 16.3 12.0 days lost per person within the Directorate

12.3 The table below shows the number of days lost per person by Directorate.



12.4 Q1 and Q2 shows annualised working days lost per person was at 14.5% (1.49 working days) above the reported Q2 2023/24 annualised figure of 8.75 days lost per employee. The Q2 2024/25 figure of 2.88 working days lost per person is 28% (0.64 working days) above the reported Q1 2024/25 figure of 2.24 days lost per person.

Short term vs Long Term absence

12.5 Long term absence is defined as a continuing sickness absence of more than 28 consecutive calendar days.

12.6 Up to the end of Q2 for the period 2024/25 the overall absence related to employees with long term sickness absence is 60.1% of all sickness absences (4,750 days lost); for the same period in 2023/24 this was 63.3% (4,230.5 days lost). This shows a slight increase in long term absence.

12.7 Short term absence is defined as a period of sickness absences less than 28 calendar days in one occasion. Up to the end of Q2 for the period 2024/25 short term absence has increased to 39.9% (3,153 days lost); for the same period in 2023/24 this was 36.7% of all sickness absences (2,448.5 days lost).

Absence Reasons

12.8 Up to the end of Q2 2024/25 the most common reason for long term absence is “Mental health conditions”. The most common reason for short term absence is “Minor illnesses – which includes coughs/colds and flu; sickness/nausea and diarrhoea”. The most common reason for both short term and long-term absence in 2023/24 was “Mental health conditions”.

In total, 33.4% of all Q1 and Q2 2024/25 year to date sickness absence (long term and short term) was due to “Mental health conditions” compared to 33.2% in 2023/24.

- 12.9 “Mental health conditions” remain the significant reason for long term sickness, with Q1 and Q2 showing the same trend as last year (2,042 days) compared to 2,018 days for the same period in 2023/24.
- 12.10 Human Resources are addressing the levels of sickness absence within the Council, by ongoing policy and training reviews with line managers. Ensuring that managers are supporting employees from the onset of the sickness absence.

Benchmarking

- 12.11 The Office for National Statistics (ONS) publishes an annual survey on workplace absence for all sectors. The 2022 report published in April 2023 confirms that the percentage of working hours lost because of sickness or injury rose to 2.6% in 2022 an increase of 0.4 percentage points from 2021 and the highest it has been since 2004, when it was 2.7%. This is the latest data available from ONS.
- 12.12 The number of working days lost because of sickness or injury was an estimated 185.6 million working days in 2022, a new record high according to the Office of National Statistics. This represents an increase of 35.8 million from 2021 and 47.4 million more than its pre-pandemic 2019 level. While the number of working days lost was a record high in 2022, days lost per worker was not, as the total number of workers in the UK has risen since the 1990’s. The number of days lost per worker was 5.7 days in 2022.
- 12.13 No information is available in these ONS figures about the type of services and therefore staff for local government. Within Berkshire we are aware that the six unitary authorities have very different approaches to the contracting in and out of services.
- 12.14 The 23rd annual CIPD Health and Wellbeing at work report published on 12th October 2023, supported by Simply Health shows the highest sickness absence rate for over a decade. The average rate of employee absence stands at 7.8 days per employee per year, a considerable increase since last reported in October/November 2019 (5.8 days per employee). Whilst this data is lower than the West Berkshire Council data it should be noted that the CIPD data will include a variety of organisations and therefore is not a direct comparator for the Council.

13 Appraisals

- 13.1 WBC requires employees to have an annual appraisal. The annual appraisals, are utilised to ensure that there is a balance between the strategic objectives of the Council, the respective service and to help staff development. While appraisal and performance management data was imported from the old HR system, reported completion rates are lower than before the change of HR system. This is likely to be manager adjusting to the new way of reporting appraisal dates.
- 13.2 The below table is the appraisal data for each quarter of 2024/2025. Data was not available in Q1 because manager self-service was not available through iTrent. It is reported for the first time from iTrent for Q2. Further promotion to input appraisals and 1:1s will continue before the next reporting period.

13.3 We are hopeful that the introduction of the Performance Review module in iTrent along with workflow and scheduling in Employee Self Service will encourage managers and staff to complete and record objectives with ease.

Appraisal/Performance Management Completions %	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2
People – Adult Social Care	92.93	90.42	n/a	73.16
People – Children & Families	74.55	70.76	n/a	46.29
Place	87.68	85.11	n/a	65.27
Resources	75.81	74.13	n/a	59.81
Total	83.79	81.16	n/a	61.86

14 Training

14.1 The Corporate Training Programme consists of Mandatory and Non-Mandatory Training and runs annually between April and March.

Corporate training is commissioned annually and HR work with key stakeholders within the Council to design the programme based on the needs of the Departments and employees collectively. There is a dedicated resource that supports training for Social Care teams as their annual mandatory and non-mandatory training is large due to the nature of their service.

Learning is face to face or virtual, or learning. Courses are run by subject matter experts, some internal and some external. We work closely with our Apprenticeship partners to run bitesize sessions as well as other training organisations and internal subject matter experts.

From 1st April 2024 to the present, we have been running a variety of training face to face and virtual, whilst we implement our new Learning platform Docebo, which will be known as **Learning Hub**. There has been a delay with the Learning platforms as we have experienced some issues around the licence requirements.

HR Update – Corporate Board Report

Learning Hub will roll out from November 2024 starting with the EDI module and other mandatory e-learning. Staff will work through mandatory e-learning initially giving them a chance to focus on the mandatory training. The Learning Hub has the potential to host other medias of training for example, videos, presentations, links to webinars and other training mediums.

14.2 The summary below shows an example of what Corporate Training has been running from April – September 2024

Course Title	No of Sessions	Delegates Trained
Fire Awareness	4	39
Personal Safety	3	34
Health and Safety for Staff	1	7
Performance Management Framework	3	36
Budget Manager Training	3	66
Governance - Report Writing Training	3	49
Behaviour Framework for Staff & Managers	1	6
Data Protection Security Essentials	25	631
ITrent Recruitment Module Training	3	45
Sickness Absence	1	12
Managing the Probation process	1	12
Apprentices Wellbeing workshops	2	22
Stress Awareness	1	33
Meditation practice	1	30
Mental Health Awareness Week – Mental health and movement	1	74
Menstrual and menopause health	2	3
Sleep	1	80
Suicide Awareness	1	73
Team Development Session	1	7
Induction for CFS	3	25
Total	61	1284

14.3 We do have further training booked between October 24 through to March 2025 in the following areas.

Equality Diversity and Inclusion training
Managing Difficult Conversations/Courageous Conversations
Hybrid Working - Managing Remote Teams
Mental Health First Aider Training
Worker Protection Act Training
Managing Change
Courageous Conversations
Leadership & Management

15 Wellbeing

15.1 The Wellbeing at Work Programme sits within our corporate training offering and continues to support employee wellbeing through universal and targeted services and support. Our Occupational Health provider continues to review employees face-to-face or via video/phone consultation; our Employee Assistance Programme is available 24/7. Through the EAP employees can self-refer to access up to six free counselling sessions; our mental health first aiders continue to deliver on the aims of reducing stigma and discrimination and normalising mental health conversations; and our internal wellbeing provision provides an increasing range of education, team development, services and sign posting.

The wellbeing hub on the intranet is dedicated to employee wellbeing and signposts employees to guidance and other organisations that can support employees and managers with wellbeing. The Council has a dedicated wellbeing room at Market Street which provides space for employees to support their wellbeing, for religious practice and space for breastfeeding employees to express. The calendar of wellbeing education events has seen an increase in attendance following the changes to how employees are invited to participate. The Equality Staff Forum is moving into an action focused space, the first success was creating top tips for employees on how to thrive in an open office environment.

From October 2024 employee wellbeing, equity and engagement will be led by Employee Experience Specialist in the Workforce Development Team. Priority areas for this new HR function will include Workers Protection Act 2023 and employee related actions within the EDI Framework.

16 Conclusion

The contents of the report are for information for Personnel Committee on the 14 January 2025

17 Appendices

Appendix A – Starters and Leavers – 5 years from 1 April 2020 – 30 September 2024

Appendix B - Percentage % of Starters by Age Range – 5 years (2019 to 2024)

Appendix C - Percentage (%) of all leavers during the last 5 years by age range

Appendix A

Starters and Leavers – 5 years (1st April 2020 to 30th September 2024)

	2020/21	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025 Q1-Q2
Number of starters	175	210	247	219	121
Number of leavers	142	220	242	190	106
Turnover (%)	9.29%	14.30%	15.9%	12.47%	6.88% (6 months) 13.77% annualised
Voluntary turnover (%)	8.44%	13.00%	14.86%	11.09%	5.78% (6 months) 11.56% Annualised
Average length of service of leavers	6y 8m	7y	5y 9m	7y 7m	8y 6m
Average length of service of employees employed at year end	8y 8m	8y 9m	8y 10m	8y 9m	8y 7m

	2020/21	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025 Q1-Q2
Stability index (% employees at year end with 12 or more months' service)	90.29%	89.43%	86.3%	89.13%	88.4%

Appendix B

Percentage % of Starters by Age Range – 5 years (2019 to 2024)

	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025 Q2
Under 25	18.29	20.95	9.72	11.42	4.53
25-34	26.86	22.86	25.10	33.33	29.37
35-44	17.71	23.33	25.91	25.11	26.12
45-54	24.00	21.90	21.05	20.09	24.86
55-64	12.00	9.52	17.00	8.22	15.12
65+	1.14	1.43	1.21	1.83	0.00

Appendix C

Percentage (%) of all leavers during the last 5 years by age range

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25 Q2
Under 25	5.63	9.09	5.79	5.26	5.66
25-34	16.20	12.73	23.97	16.32	12.26
35-44	21.13	19.55	21.07	21.58	25.47
45-54	21.83	22.73	19.83	24.21	15.09
55-64	22.54	21.36	19.83	17.37	25.47
65+	12.68	14.55	9.50	14.74	16.04