
Update on HR Activity 2021 Q1/Q2/Q3

| | |
|--|---|
| Committee considering report: | Personnel Committee |
| Date of Committee: | 21 st February 2022 |
| Portfolio Member: | Councillor Howard Woollaston |
| Date Head of Service agreed report: <i>(for Corporate Board)</i> | 17 th January 2022 |
| Date Portfolio Member agreed report: | 10 th February 2022 |
| Report Author: | Paula Goodwin, Abigail Witting, Amie Heath, Rebecca Bird |
| Forward Plan Ref: | N/A |

1 Purpose of the Report

This report is an information only report for the purposes of updating on four aspects of HR activity for 2021/2022 Q1 and Q2 which includes Recruitment, Appraisals and Performance Management, Training, and Casework. This report is provided at request of members of the Personnel Committee by way of an update.

2 Recommendation(s)

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 Strategic Director; Strategy & Governance Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Internal Governance | | | |

4 Executive Summary

4.1 This report is for information and has been written at the request of members of Personnel Committee to provide an update on the matters contained within the report.

4.2 Performance Management and Appraisals

A behaviour framework is being developed and will underpin the performance management framework for WBC going forward and will require a review of all related policies and procedures. This will happen during 2022 and is an action from the Workforce Strategy. There will be a proposal to review the current way appraisals are undertaken and therefore a process and policy review will take place during 2022. There will also be a review of other performance management policies and procedures over the coming year.

4.3 Casework

WBC is no different to any other organisation in having employee cases such as sickness absence, capability, grievances, disciplinaries and ET claims. From the data held within the report there is nothing to suggest there are any issues in any areas of WBC and that the casework seen is of a volume similar to those in other local authorities with a similar makeup and service provision. Sickness absence is usually higher in the care sector due to the nature of the role. Management of these cases is proactive by the HR team in advising and supporting managers to an appropriate outcome.

4.4 Training

Over the course of the year training has been delivered utilising more on line and e-learning due to Covid restrictions impacting. Many staff are still engaging with learning and as WBC continues to implement the actions from the Workforce Strategy a current Training Needs Analysis survey will help to determine the training offer corporately for 2022/2023. It is also hoped that once the Behaviour

Framework is agreed that work can also commence on Leadership Development, Management Development and Aspiring Managers programmes. This also supports the current offer of coaching and mentoring that is being further developed with a greater coaching pool.

4.5 Recruitment

Recruitment is one of the themes in the Workforce Strategy and the whole process and way of doing things at WBC is being reviewed. Within the paper there is an outline view of the projects that are currently underway or will be taking place in the shorter term subject to resources. There will be a heavy focus on the customer and end user when the review takes place and available systems to ensure meeting the Council's Digital Strategy requirements. Making best use of the data available will also be important and some of that data can be seen within this report. A review of recruitment is only one aspect of the employee cycle and therefore it is important to highlight that this aspect should not be considered in isolation of the rest of the employee cycle. Other projects related to the rest of the employee cycle have either started or are being considered over the 2022/2023 which is the remaining lifespan of the current Workforce Strategy. A new strategy will then need to be developed.

5 Performance Management/Appraisals

5.1 WBC requires employees to have an annual appraisal. The annual appraisal, and 6 monthly reviews, are utilised to ensure that there is a balance between the strategic objectives of the Council, the respective service and to help staff development. Some of the key elements included in the appraisal are so that employees and line managers:

- Review achievements in the past 12 months against the objectives set at the last appraisal meeting, the six-month review and/or other objective-setting meeting;
- Review individual competencies against the WBC standards framework for employees and, where appropriate, the WBC standards for leaders and managers;
- Determine SMART objectives for achievement over the next year. For managers these will include targets related to Corporate Health Indicators and Key Performance Indicators;
- Review learning and development over the past 12 months, and identify current and future learning needs and how these will met over the next period (the Personal Development Plan);
- Discuss other factors relevant to work performance and planning (career aspirations, retirement plans, etc).

5.2 New employees have objectives set as part of their probation review period (six months or one year depending on the post). Once probation is completed employees' should then have an appraisal meeting and the Appraisal Policy utilised from that point on. Appraisal data is monitored regularly to ensure as high as percentage as possible of staff have an appraisal annually. Current data for percentages of appraisals completed are shown in the table below, and show an

overall total of 79% for the Council as a whole. The WBC target is set at 90% of staff to have had an appraisal within the previous 18 months (this is a temporary extension from the usual 15 months due to COVID) and there is a continual push from senior managers to support this happening. Directorates have been provided with lists of missing data to chase up within services and HR are working with services where reporting lines have changed and data can no longer be input in the usual way. In addition CLT are receiving monthly reports on appraisals so the situation can be monitored.

Appraisal Data as at 7th February 2022

Note: This relates to staff who have had an appraisal in the past 18 months and excludes staff in their probation period as objectives are set during probation.

| Structure Unit | % |
|------------------------------|---------------|
| CEO and Support | 100.00 |
| People | 84.09 |
| Adult Social Care | 79.12 |
| Children and Family Services | 90.65 |
| Communities and Wellbeing | 92.00 |
| Education Services | 86.63 |
| Place | 85.31 |
| Development and Regulation | 78.64 |
| Development and Planning | 57.14 |
| Housing | 88.57 |
| Public Protection | 87.96 |

| | |
|------------------------------------|--------------|
| Environment | 94.52 |
| Resources | 85.14 |
| Commissioning and Procurement | 86.36 |
| Finance and Property | 83.93 |
| ICT | 59.52 |
| Strategy and Governance | 94.96 |
| Grand Total – Average WBC % | 84.55 |

5.3 At present employees and line managers do not have specific windows for completion of appraisals each year as determined by the policy however there are continual messages cascaded to encourage appraisals to take place and an appraisal should be completed every year with a review after six months. This does usually take place in March/April and a mid-year around October each year. The reporting data is based on a 15 month window (i.e. an appraisal having taken place in the last 15 month period). This allows for new starters to enter the cycle following probation (6 months and in some cases 12 months).

This will be reviewed as part of the review of the appraisal process. Appraisal meeting dates are recorded in MyView (Resourcelink – HR and Payroll System) however appraisal documentation is recorded between the employee and employer in paper form using the form available on the intranet.

Regular reminders are sent to managers regarding their responsibilities to complete and record appraisals appropriately. This is being championed by CLT and is mentioned to staff in Let's Chat and all user emails. Appraisal data is monitored quarterly as a Corporate Health Indicator and reports can be provided to services to monitor progress. HR have provided support to services where recording of data has been missed and reporting lines have changed meaning staff are no longer direct reports to previous managers.

5.4 The appraisal process currently includes measurement and feedback against the WBC competency framework as detailed in appendix A, as well as objectives.

5.5 As part of the Workforce Strategy it has been agreed to replace the above with a new behaviour framework which is currently being worked up and it is hoped will be ready for implementation in April 2022. This will require a review of all policies and procedures that will be impacted by this change of which

Induction/Probation and Appraisals will be two. It is intended as part of the reviews to consider whether additional changes should be made to the policies and procedures such as process changes and ideally this would be completed by gaining feedback from those that use the policies and procedures to ensure that they meet customer needs as well as considering the future direction of travel and culture changes.

6 Casework

Context

- 6.1 The Council has a range of established employment policies and procedures to manage different issues that may arise during the employee lifecycle these include disciplinary, grievances, performance capability, probation and sickness absence/ ill-health capability issues (this comes under the umbrella defined for the purpose of the report as casework). The HR team supports managers and services in managing these issues to resolution. The team also supports organisational change including TUPE transfers, restructures and redundancies. The team supports both corporate teams and provides a traded service to 55% of West Berkshire schools.
- 6.2 There are key principles in all of our procedures, which are developed with input from our recognised trade unions, and in line with ACAS codes of practice. These include:
- An emphasis on resolving issues informally if possible
 - Sharing information about the concerns with the employee and gaining their response
 - Acting consistently
 - Acting promptly
 - A right to representation at formal meetings
 - Reasonable notice of formal meetings
 - The right to appeal any formal outcomes.

Routine Measures

- 6.3 Quarterly measures are currently reported as below for the Council.

These are:

- Numbers of formal cases (schools and corporate)
- Numbers of informal cases (schools and corporate)
- Average feedback from managers (supported by the team)
- Number of Occupational Health referrals
- Number of contacts with Employee Assistance Programme
- Number of redundancies (schools and corporate).

The aim of these measures is to monitor the volume and quality of work undertaken by the team.

6.4 For the purpose of this report, corporate data on cases has been isolated to provide a clear picture on the volume of casework in corporate teams for the three full years from 1st April 2018 up to the current part-year to quarter 3 of 2021/22. Table 1 shows the overall number of cases over that period of time. The peak was in 2018/19 with 214 corporate cases. The 2021/22 figures only cover to the end of quarter 3, so it is likely that the year-end outturn will be similar or slightly higher than the last two years.

Table 1

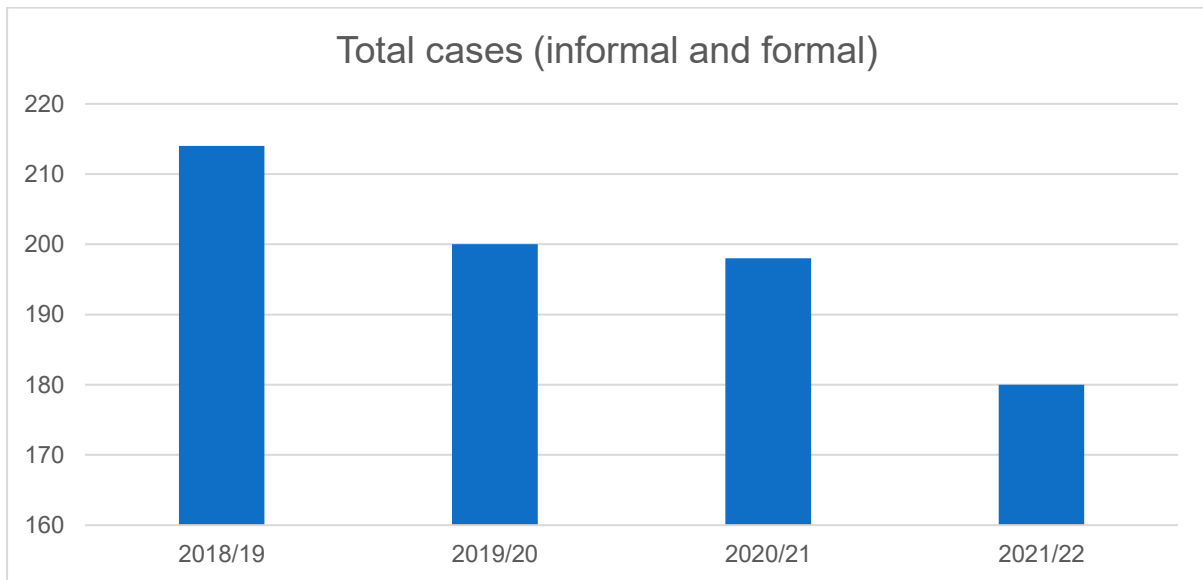


Table 2

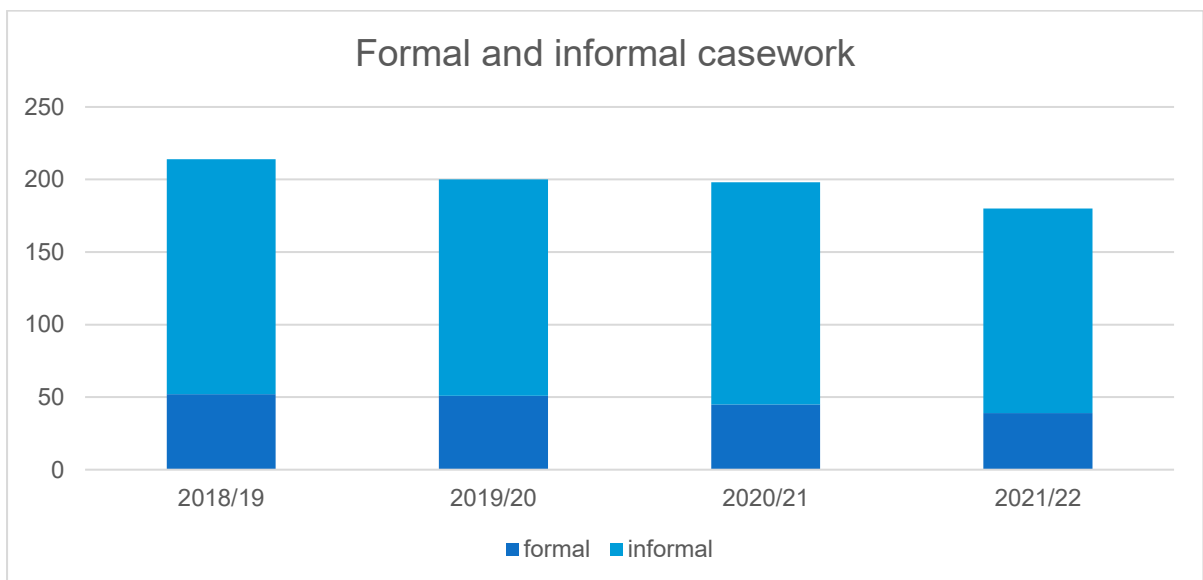


Table 2 shows the mix of informal and formal casework. For the four years shown, formal casework has made up between 24% and 27% of all cases recorded. A significant proportion of informal casework relates to sickness absence, but it includes any advice and support given outside of a formal

process. For 2021/2022 year to date there have been 12 disciplinary cases and 5 grievances.

6.5 Trends

There are a few trends worth noting.

- The number of formal sickness absence cases is 12 in 2018/19 but much lower in subsequent years. The vast majority of absence management is done informally, as shown by these figures.
- The number of Ill-health retirement cases has increased from 1 in 2018/19, to 5 in 2019/20 and 11 in 2020/21. Anecdotally, it is believed that the pandemic has made some people re-consider the management of their health conditions in relation to work, although this may also be a result of our ageing workforce.
- The number of formal disciplinary cases fluctuates between 7 in 2020/21 and 21 in 2019/20. 7 is a particularly low number and reflects to the general low level of casework during the early part of the pandemic.
- There has been an increase in “other” casework over this period. This includes informal support which does not fit any particular category, including queries related to Covid 19 which do not relate to absence e.g. pregnancy or clinical vulnerabilities.

6.6 Employment Tribunals

The Council has historically had very low rates of employment tribunal claims. This table shows the number of claims since 1st April 2018 for both corporate and schools who buy the HR service.

| Employment Tribunal claims | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|-----------|---------|
| | Claims received | Corporate | Schools |
| 2018/19 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2019/20 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 2020/21 | 4 | 2 | 2 |
| 2021/22 | 1 | 1 | 0 |

Between 2013 and 2017, fees were a paid on application to the employment tribunal service. In July 2017, the Supreme Court ruled in favour of UNISON that the obligation to pay fees was a restriction on access to justice. At this time, many employers expected an increase in tribunal claims as there was no longer any deterrent to raising a claim.

Once an employment tribunal claim has been raised, the HR team work with our legal colleagues to assess the risk, consider options and manage the requirements of the tribunal.

6.7 Sickness Absence

Current figures and patterns

At the end of quarter 2 of 2021/22, the annualised number of days lost through sickness absence for the whole Council is calculated as **9.4 days**.

The table below shows the year end outturn absence figures for the previous 4 years.

| | Actual number of days lost per person in 2016/17 | Actual number of days lost per person in 2017/18 | Actual number of days lost per person in 2018/19 | Actual number of days lost per person in 2019/20 | Actual number of days lost per person in 2020/21 |
|----------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| Council Result | 8.80 days | 8.59 days | 9.84 days | 9.65 days | 7.15 days |

These figures show:

- 2020/21 was the primary year impacted by the COVID pandemic. This impacted on absence rates in that normal absence was reduced significantly due to a large proportion of staff working at home for the majority of the year. 2020/21 was an anomaly.
- In the previous years, there was a significant increase from 8.59 days in 2017/18 to a high of 9.84 days in 2018/19, followed by a slight reduction in 2019/20.
- It is worth noting that as a direct provider of social care, sickness absence figures due are higher than comparators such as the private sector and neighbouring authorities who do not provide direct care due to the nature of the work.

6.8 Benchmarking

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) publishes an annual survey on workplace absence for all sectors. Their 2020 report (published in March 2021) showed an all-time low (3.6 days lost per worker) in sickness absence, which mirrors our own experience of the impact on sickness absence of COVID working arrangements. Prior to 2020, the survey showed the number of days lost per worker had reduced pretty consistently from 7.2 in 1995 to 4.2 in 2019.

The ONS figures for the public sector again show an all-time low for 2020 (5.4 days lost per FTE) and a reducing picture over time from 8.8 days in 1995 to 5.8 days in 2019. The ONS' figure for local government absence is 5.7 days lost in 2019. The Health sector is shown with a higher rate of 7.7 days lost.

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. As

our highest absence rates are in Adult Social Care and Children & Families services, the contracting out of these services, or parts of them, would have a significant impact on our overall absence figures.

6.9 Absence by Services & Directorates

This table shows the annualised average days lost per employee for each service area at the end of Q2, against the Council’s average of 9.4 days.

This table shows the averages for each directorate.

| Directorate | Annualised average days lost per employee – at Q2 2021/22 |
|-------------|---|
| Resources | 6.8 |
| People | 11.2 |
| Place | 7.7 |

6.10 Split between Long Term and Short Term Absence

Data available shows there has been a significant increase in the proportion of long term absence in 2020/21 which is as a result of a higher proportion of long term absence due to a reduction in days lost to short term absence during the pandemic.

At the end of 2021/22 quarter 2 figures show long term absence at 65% of all absence, so this may be a continuing trend linked to higher rates of home working.

6.11 Absence Reasons

The most common reason for both short term and long term absence for 2020/21 is “stress, depression and mental health. The most common reason for both short term and long term absence for 2020/21 is “stress, depression and mental health related”. In total, 40.3% of all absence (long term and short term) was due to “stress, depression or mental health-related”.

As 2020/21 was the pandemic year, this is likely to reflect both the impact of the pandemic on mental health in the workforce and general population, but also the decline in absence for other reasons. However, it should be noted that the number of actual days lost for this reason increased compared with other years.

To date in 2021/22, the year to date figure for “stress, depression or mental health-related” is 37.8% of all absence, down from 49.3% for quarter 1. This may be because absence for other reasons has increased over the second quarter of the year.

“Stress, depression or mental-health related” has been the most common reason for absence for a number of years and national statistics for the public sector show that this is the most common reason for absence.

6.12 Management processes

Sickness absence is reported by managers or services on the MyView portal, which is linked into the main HR and Payroll system.

The Council’s Sickness Absence procedures include trigger points for action under the procedure. These are:

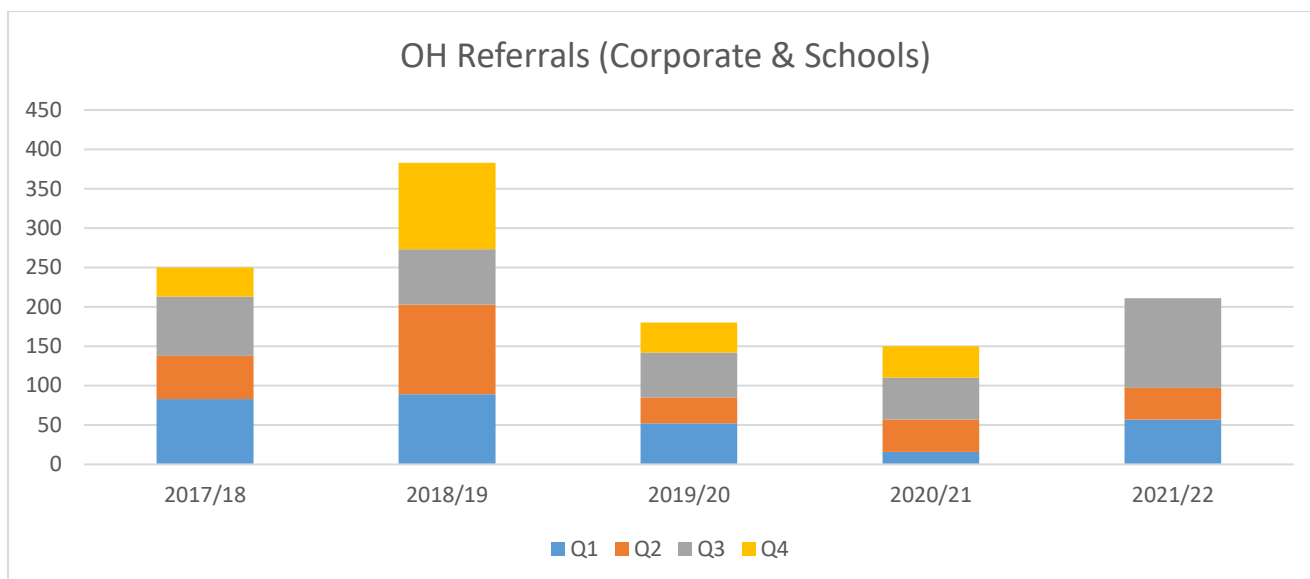
- Three or more sickness/injury absences in a rolling three month period
- Unacceptable patterns of absence; for example a pattern of calling in sick the day before or after a weekend or bank holiday, or before or after annual leave.
- A period of long term absence of more than 28 calendar days (long term sickness absence) where the return to work date has not been specified or is of concern to the line manager

If any one of these triggers is met, the line manager is expected to undertake an informal sickness absence meeting with the individual. HR support is available for the planning and preparation of these meetings.

Monthly reporting within HR is in place for employees who breach the triggers for long term and short term. All cases are followed up with the line manager to offer advice. This would usually result in a referral to Occupational Health as well as advice on the informal sickness absence meeting.

Our new OH provider, Cordell Health, has been in place since 5th October 2021. There were some concerns about the effectiveness of the previous provider. So far we are pleased with the quality and effectiveness of the new provider based on feedback.

Numbers of referrals to Occupational Health are reported quarterly. These figures include both corporate and schools staff and are as detailed below.

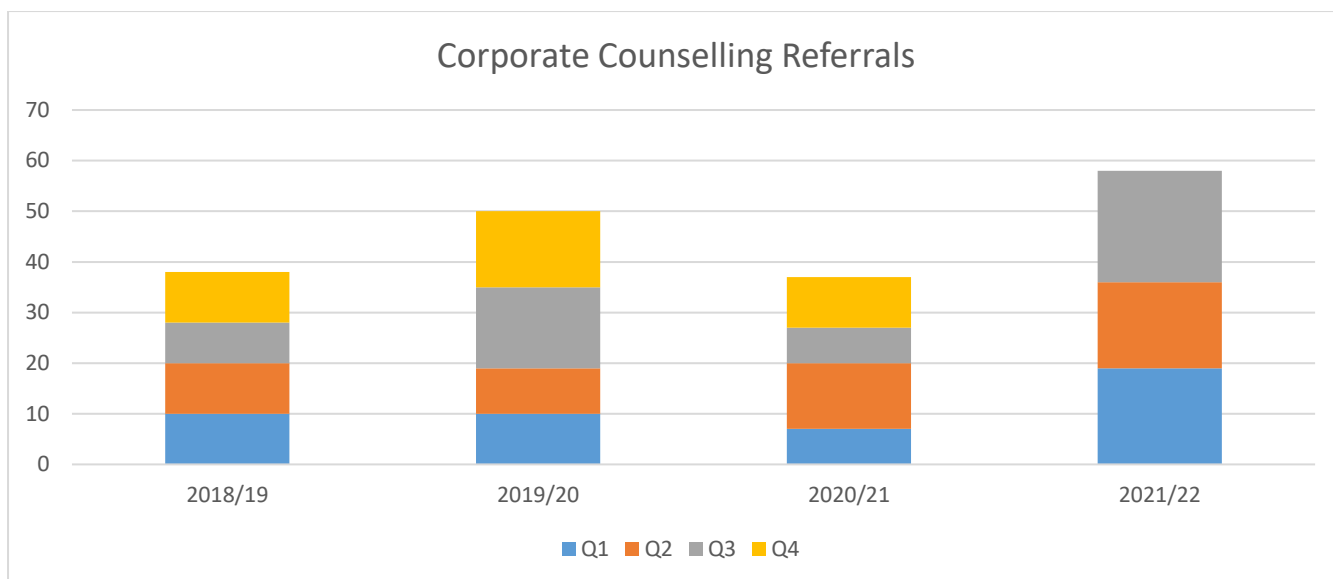


In quarter 3 of 2021/22, the total number of referrals was 114. This is the highest figure for some time and is a result of the new OH provider catching up on a backlog, as well as an unusually busy period. Of these, 50 referrals were for schools staff and 64 for corporate staff.

The Council offers two sources of emotional support to employees. The first is confidential counselling with a local counsellor who meets our selective criteria (this covers qualification, insurance, professional memberships). The Council commits to fund up to 6 sessions from a central budget, based on management referral. The second source is the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) with Care First, which was implemented on 1st July 2020 as part of the Workforce strategy. The EAP provides a free access service to all corporate employees 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, and can provide advice on a variety of topics as well as emotional support including counselling.

Measures for the Employee Assistance Programme vary widely. Since it was implemented in July 2020, we have seen up to 19 contacts per month, but in some months no, or very few contacts. The monthly average figure for the twelve months from August 2020 was 8.75 contacts.

The chart below shows the numbers of counselling referrals from 1st April 2018 to 31st December 2021. Funding for counselling comes from a central budget, managed by HR. This resulted in an increase in referrals in the last two quarters of 2019/20. Although counselling was offered in many different forums at the start of the pandemic, referrals were lower in 2020/21, however we have seen a large peak in demand so far throughout 2021/22.



In conclusion WBC has sickness rates that have not changed dramatically over the last few years and data suggests that these rates are equivalent to those in other local authorities with similar services. WBC has effective processes and procedures in place to support the management of sickness absence. Further considerations for employee support will be made in relation to employee wellbeing when a new post is filled from March 2022 for a year.

7 Training

7.1 The Corporate Training Programme is made up of Mandatory and Non Mandatory Training. Training is delivered using a blended approach of E-learning, Virtual (Zoom or Teams) as well as Face to Face training.

Training is commissioned annually. HR work with key stakeholders within the Council to design the programme based on the needs of the departments. HR work particularly closely with Social Care teams as their annual mandatory and non-mandatory training need is large due to the nature of their service delivery.

HR commission external trainers for specific expert areas if we do not have an internal expert on the subject matter.

The Training Programme is published on the intranet and shows what training is available to book within our Learning Management System - Learning Time. There is mandatory and non-mandatory training which is dependent on the role. For example, managers have different mandatory training to non-managers. Social Care workers have quite different responsibilities therefore their mandatory training is more extensive and specific.

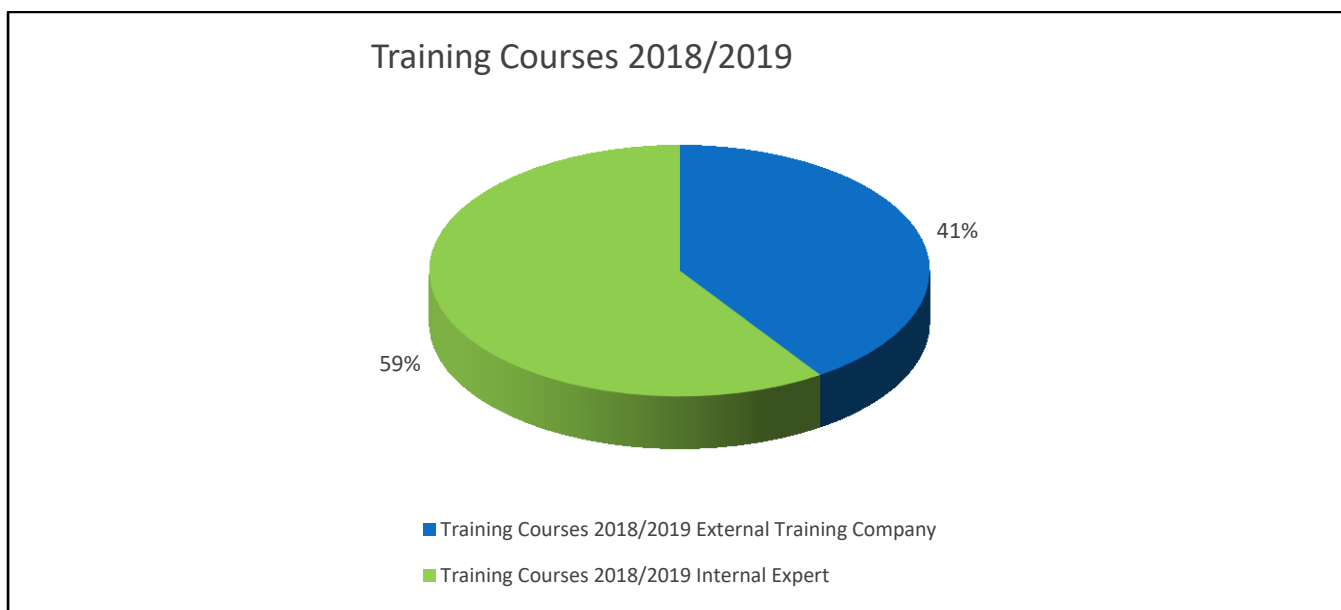
The learning can be classroom (face to face or virtual) or e-learning. Courses are run by subject matter experts, some internal and some external. WBC have internal experts that run training, for example the majority of our Health & Safety training is run by the Health and Safety Manager and his team. Some Social Care training is run by Social Care experts who are qualified and experienced in specific areas. Many courses are run by external training organisations with specifically commissioned skills, experience and expertise. HR have received excellent training feedback and have worked with

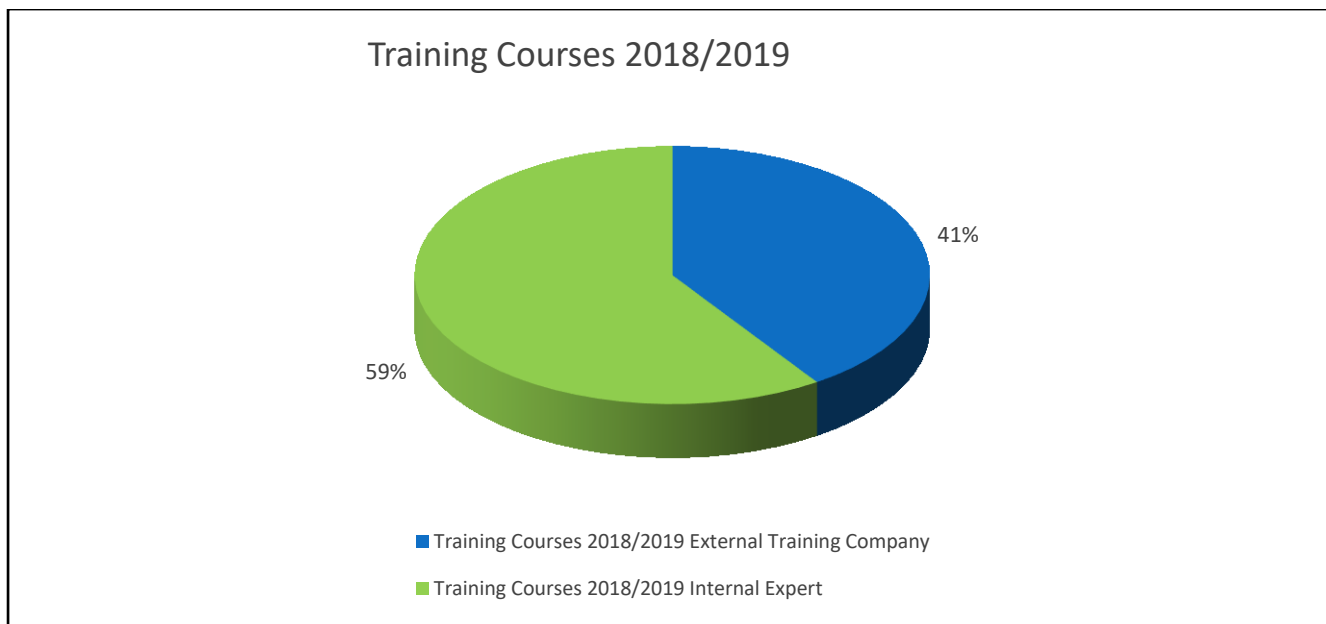
HR Update

some companies for many years, and therefore they understand our culture, as well as our policies and procedures.

HR have worked hard to make learning more accessible over the last few years moving certain courses from face to face to e-learning where possible. Our Learning Time site (WBC Learning Management System) is external so you do not have to be logged into the West Berkshire Intranet to get access, and it is available on any device, even smartphones. Our e-learning content is mainly written by Learning Pool (the company who provide our site) and authorised or edited by internal subject matter experts to meet the specific needs of the council before they are accessible to staff.

The next two pie charts show the percentage split between internal expert trainers, and external training companies. These are for years 2019/2019 and 2019/2020, so almost entirely pre-pandemic. There was a drop in face to face training during quarter 4 of 2019/2020 due to the pandemic. Before lockdown started training courses were getting postponed and cancelled due to the uncertainty. External training organisations offer a wealth of expertise, and experience for our delegates and some Services opted to wait for face to face courses to continue, obviously no one could envisage how long the lockdown or pandemic would last.





During 2020/2021 HR had to cancel and postpone training due to the pandemic. We had to adjust to different room capacities and change venues due to social distancing being put in place. Many external trainers decided not to run their courses and wait until they could see people face to face. This put a lot of pressure on us to find an alternative provider. Some training was introduced as e-learning, we bought into a Social Care Catalogue of courses and quickly assessed content and published them in April 2020. This meant Social Care workers could still practice and fulfil their roles.

The figures below show an increase in e-learning courses completed. Data for 2018/2019 is skewed due to the introduction of mandatory e-learning for GDPR for all staff due to the introduction of new legislation which required all staff to complete a data protection refresher.

| | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 |
|---|---------|---------|---------|
| Number of employees who completed at least one e-learning course | 1287 | 1169 | 1305 |
| Percentage of employees undertaking e-learning | 86.61 | 77.31 | 84.47 |
| Number of e-learning courses completed | 5218 | 4663 | 5808 |
| Percentage of employees completing any course (e-learning or classroom) | 94.76 | 89.15 | 90.42 |
| Total courses completed | 8509 | 7376 | 7419 |

8 Recruitment & Retention

Background

8.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of recent recruitment activity within the Council. In addition the report will provide an update of current recruitment projects highlight potential areas for development or improvement and outline future project plans.

Recruitment Activity Overview

8.2 The information in this section is based on years 18/19, 19/20 and 20/21, focusing on full-time equivalent numbers. The data excludes staff employed in schools, casual and agency workers unless otherwise stated.

8.3 The Council has seen a change in recruitment activity in the last three years and this report will consider this by organisation and then drill down by directorate.

8.4 At the time of this report, the organisation has a total of 1653 FTE, with 1371.88 occupied and 281.12 vacant.

8.5 Within the last three months (Q3), 111 adverts have been placed on the website, some of which were multiple roles. 70 new starters have joined the Council in that period. The table below provides more detail around starters and leavers over the last 5 year period for comparison purposes.

| | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 |
|--------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Number of starters in year | 167 | 246 | 209 | 243 | 175 |
| Number of leavers in year | 241 | 223 | 211 | 211 | 142 |
| Turnover (%) | 16.24% | 15.13% | 14.19% | 14.08% | 9.29% |
| Voluntary turnover (%) | 12.26% | 12.01% | 12.30% | 12.14% | 8.44% |
| Average length of service of leavers | 8y 3m | 7y 3m | 5y 8m | 6y 2m | 6y 8m |

HR Update

| | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Average length of service of employees employed at year end | 8y 8m | 8y 5m | 8y 8m | 8y 7m | 8y 8m |
| Stability index (% employees at year end with 12 or more months' service) | 89.11% | 86.29% | 89.23% | 87.10% | 90.29% |

| % of all starters during the year who were in this age range | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Under 25 | 10.18 | 10.57 | 12.44 | 10.29 | 18.29 |
| 25-34 | 31.14 | 24.80 | 24.40 | 19.34 | 26.86 |
| 35-44 | 23.95 | 17.89 | 23.92 | 25.51 | 17.71 |
| 45-54 | 24.55 | 29.27 | 24.88 | 25.93 | 24.00 |
| 55-64 | 8.98 | 16.67 | 14.35 | 17.70 | 12.00 |
| 65+ | 1.20 | 0.81 | 0.00 | 1.23 | 1.14 |

| % of all leavers during the year who were in this age range | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Under 25 | 5.81 | 2.91 | 6.16 | 3.32 | 5.63 |
| 25-34 | 19.09 | 19.35 | 14.22 | 19.43 | 16.20 |
| 35-44 | 16.18 | 17.97 | 25.12 | 20.38 | 21.13 |
| 45-54 | 21.58 | 20.28 | 22.75 | 24.17 | 21.83 |
| 55-64 | 28.22 | 26.73 | 24.64 | 25.12 | 22.54 |
| 65+ | 9.13 | 8.76 | 7.11 | 7.58 | 12.68 |

These tables show there is a diverse spread of ages in both the starters and leavers' data suggesting there is not significant issues around particular age groups joining or leaving the organisation.

Turnover for the 2020/2021 year has also reduced. This may be as a result of the pandemic where instability in the job market, with furlough and redundancies has encouraged staff to stay in roles that were deemed more secure.

8.7 Key Performance Indicators

The following performance measures are monitored quarterly in relation to recruitment activity:

| KPI | Target | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | 2021/22 (Q1- 3) |
|---|--------------|---------|---------|---------|--------------------|
| Number of corporate and school staff enrolled onto training which is funded through the apprenticeship levy | 114 | 114 | 76 | 54 | 41 |
| Number of corporate staff and those who have been facilitated via levy transfer, who are disadvantaged and aged 16-25, enrolled onto training which is funded through the apprenticeship levy | 3 | N/A | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Number of young people attending/involved in work experience and project work opportunities | 9 | N/A | 1 | 0 | 5 |
| % of posts advertised externally that are filled first time (new for 2021/22) | Baseline | N/A | N/A | N/A | 58% |
| Average feedback from managers on recruitment and selection activity | 4.8 out of 5 | 5 | 4.9 | 5 | 5 |

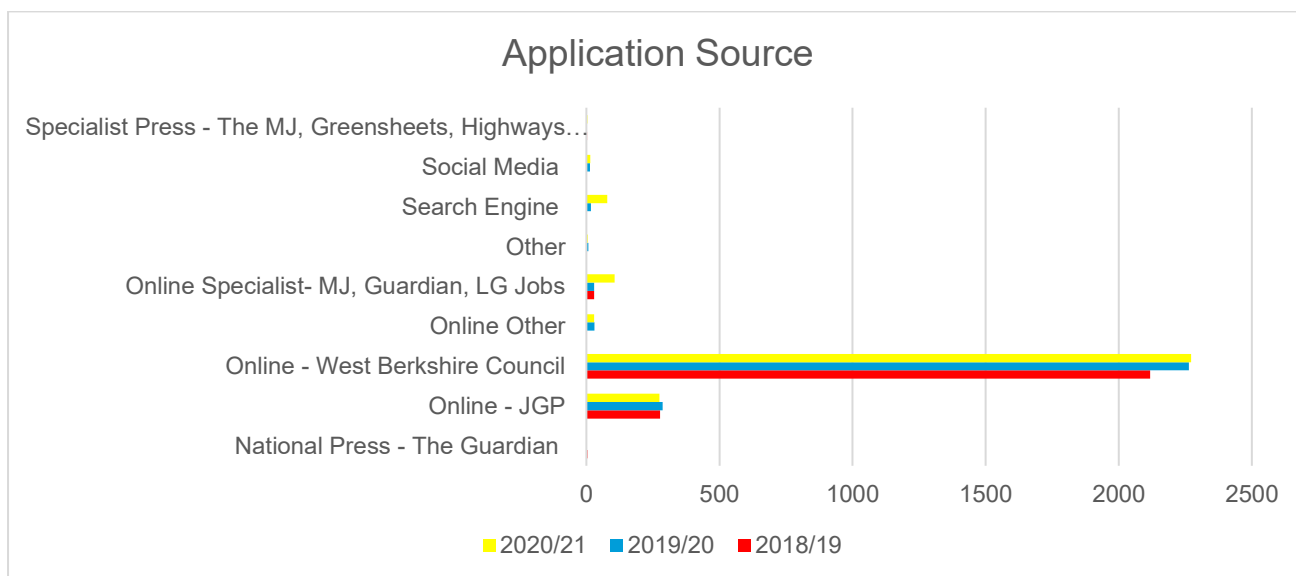
8.8 Equalities Data – Applicants

The table below shows data for the last year in relation to disability, age, ethnicity of applicants applying for roles.

| | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 |
|----------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Disability | 3.5% | 4.0% | 3.4% |
| No disability | 91.3% | 90.5% | 93.1% |
| Disability - Not specified | 5.2% | 5.5% | 3.5% |
| Male | 23.0% | 26.1% | 28.2% |
| Female | 72.3% | 69% | 68.8% |
| Gender not specified | 4.7% | 4.9% | 3.0% |
| White | 75.1% | 79.0% | 78.6% |
| All other ethnicities | 20.7% | 16.5% | 19.2% |
| Ethnicity not specified | 4.2% | 4.5% | 2.2% |

8.9 Source of Job Applications

WBC uses Jobs Go Public (JGP) as the applicant tracking system where all candidates apply for jobs with WBC. As can be seen from the chart below our applications come from a range of sources however by far the most common sources of applications is our own website or Jobs Go Public (JGP) followed by specialist online advertising. We are looking at a revamp of the WBC website to support employer branding and with a review of attraction methods to ensure an appropriate pool of applicants can be sourced.



8.10 Agency Spend

The ability to utilise agency staff is crucial for the Council. There are a range of reasons the Council will need agency staff and, especially in social care areas, immediate staff absences will require filling with agency staff. Much of the cost of agency staff will be funded through the existing budget, where an agency members of staff is covering a vacancy.

From 4th March 2019 all requests for agency support have been dealt with via the Managed Service Provider Comensura who was appointed the contract following procurement. Management of the contract sits within Commissioning rather than with HR. Comensura review the market and put forward agency employees with the Council receiving a rebate.

The Comensura contract was set up to reduce agency costs by using a managed service provider. All agencies charge a fee on top of the workers hourly rate to cover their expenses and contributions to National Insurance and Tax. At the start of the contract, looking at historical agency spend data, agreed margins were set with Comensura to limit the amount agencies could charge on top of the hourly rate.

HR Update

The way this works is WBC pay the agency fee without the cap but Comensura only pass on the agreed margin to the agency itself and then each quarter WBC receives a rebate equivalent to the amount paid to Comensura and the rate paid to the agency. The margins and agreed rates vary from role to role.

The table below outlines the agency expenditure for the last 3 years. As Commensura was new in 2019 we do not have any baseline data prior to that as agency spend was recorded in a different way.

| | Financial Year 19-20 | Financial Year 20-21 | Financial Year 21-22 to date |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Off-Contract Spend | £1,528,494.51 | £2,102,647.35 | £2,174,017.47 |
| On Contract Spend | £4,244,275.49 | £4,676,353.73 | £4,688,379.10 |
| Annual Rebate | -£395,039.02 | -£526,401.83 | -£328,610.09 |
| Annual Total | £5,377,730.98 | £6,252,599.25 | £6,533,786.48 |

FY 19-20 includes the values for March 2019 as it was the first month of the contract.

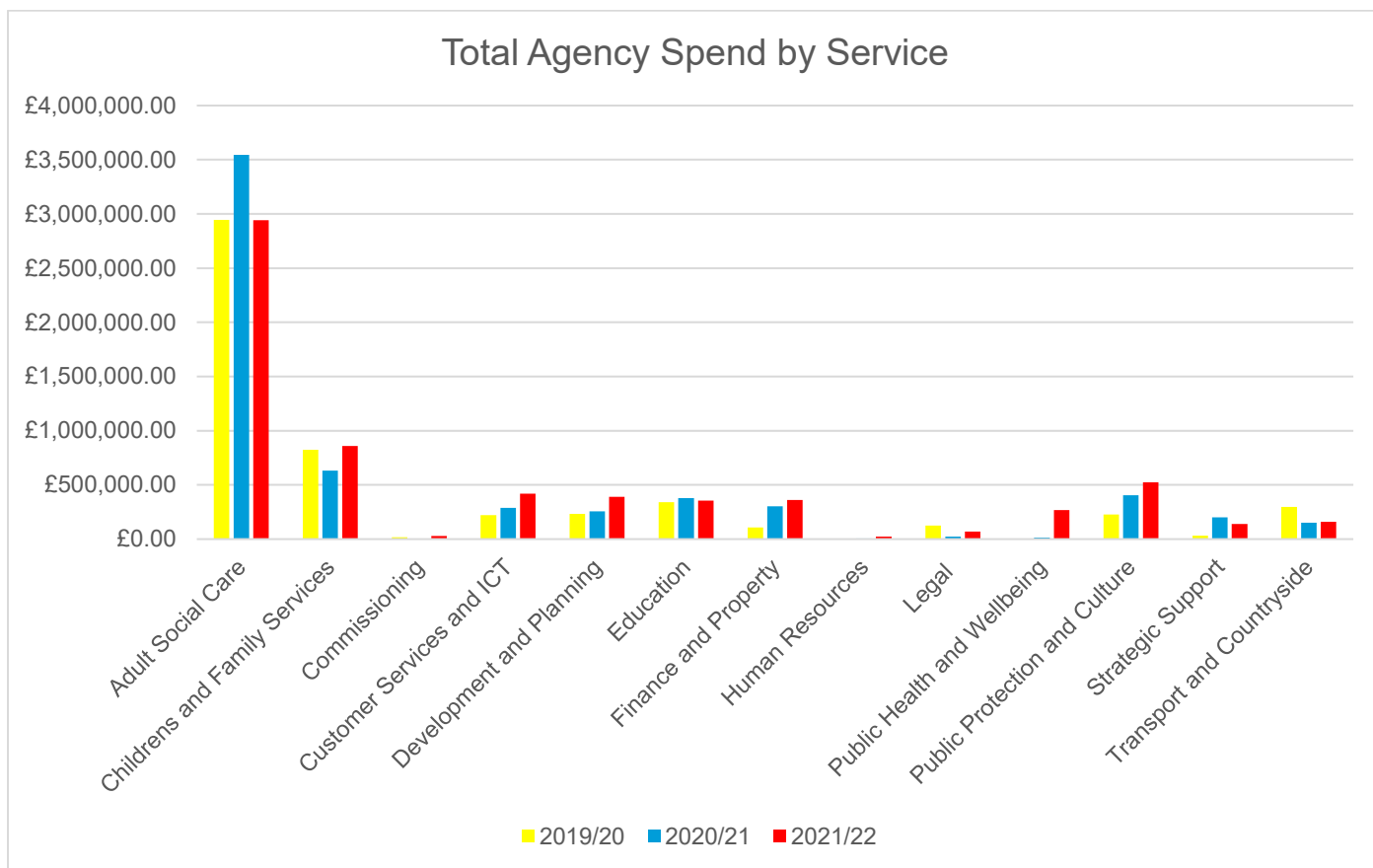
FY 21-22 to date has Q3s spend, but does not include the rebate figure for Q3 as this is yet to be provided.

Overall spend has gone up each year and will definitely go up this year with a quarter to go. This is due to increased demand for agency staff from services, rather than the Comensura contract costing more.

The reasons behind this will relate to an increased need for staff during the pandemic where staffing has been impacted due to self-isolation or Covid cases where staff have also been unable to work from home due to the nature of their roles. In addition off contract spend has increased as demand for professional services staff and ASC staff was exceptionally high and due to there being a national shortage there was an extremely competitive market place meaning Commensura could not always fulfil the assignments. In addition there was a requirement to fill roles promptly.

The rebate figure is the perceived difference that the Comensura contract has made each year compared to when the contract was not in place.

The total spend trends can be seen in the chart below:



8.11 Future Recruitment Strategies and Activities to Date

The following are strategies, projects and activities that HR is either leading on or involved in at present, and will help to prevent and assist with any existing or future recruitment hotspots throughout the Council.

Social Media & Recruitment Advertising

- HR and the Communications Team are in the early stages of working in partnership to review and improve the Council’s jobs and careers webpages content and design. This will also involve a review of its use of social media recruitment advertising.
- HR have worked with CFS to develop their microsite to advertise vacancies and promote the service and opportunities. This is in the final stages and ASC will follow suit with assistance from HR.

Workforce Strategy

- The current workforce strategy has been reviewed and refreshed and contains a number of activities that will support the Council with recruitment challenges.
- Career Pathways - HR have had a training session with the LGA to look at ways of implementing more proactive workforce planning activities. This led to a workforce planning exercise with the finance team who have recently experienced recruitment challenges. Part of this involves identifying critical roles in the team and developing

HR Update

career pathways. It is hoped to expand this exercise to other areas of the council in the future.

- Career Progression for Women project - in response to the workforce board discussions around the gender pay gap and annual employment report a project is being carried out to explore the career progression experiences for women at the Council. Insight gained from the project will be used to inform the implementation of workforce strategy projects to promote diversity and inclusion in the widest sense.
- Diversity in recruitment - working with the workforce board and Equality & Diversity board HR are working to improve the diversity of its workforce looking at applicant experience and reviewing the recruitment areas of the website.

Apprenticeships

- Apprenticeships continue to be a key part of our recruitment strategy. Regular cohorts for ASC, Project Management of Management apprenticeships were paused due to responding to COVID-19 however these cohorts have started again since September.
- Since the last report we have recruited apprentices in Youth Work, Museum Hospitality, Payroll and Economic Development. ICT are currently shortlisting for an Apprentice Data Technician.
- There are plans to carry out some virtual activities for National Apprenticeship week in February.
- Since April 2017 there have been 319 apprenticeships started. There are currently 160 apprentices on programme. 72 apprentices withdrew in most cases this is because they left the Council. 87 apprentices have completed their programme.
- We currently work with 29 different training providers.

The table below shows the current apprenticeships in progress- this includes corporate and school apprenticeships.

| Apprenticeship | Level of Qualification | Number Enrolled |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|
| Adult Care | 2 | 7 |
| Customer Service | 2 | 1 |
| Early Years | 2 | 1 |
| Healthcare Cleaning Operative | 2 | 2 |
| Adult Care Worker | 3 | 12 |
| Business Admin | 3 | 6 |
| Digital Support Technician | 3 | 1 |
| Early Years | 3 | 3 |
| insurance Practitioner | 3 | 1 |
| Payroll Administrator | 3 | 1 |
| Teaching Assistant | 3 | 23 |
| Team Leader Supervisor/ILM 3 | 3 | 19 |
| Accounting Technician | 4 | 1 |

HR Update

| | | |
|------------------------------------|---|----|
| Business Analyst | 4 | 1 |
| insurance Practitioner | 4 | 1 |
| Passenger Transport Manager | 4 | 3 |
| Project Manager | 4 | 4 |
| Regulatory Compliance | 4 | 1 |
| School Business Manager | 4 | 2 |
| Operations Manager/ILM | 5 | 14 |
| Chartered Manager | 6 | 2 |
| Occupational Therapy | 6 | 3 |
| Social Worker | 6 | 10 |
| Teacher | 6 | 1 |
| Accountancy Taxation Professional, | 7 | 3 |
| Chartered Town Planner | 7 | 1 |
| Senior Leader | 7 | 16 |

Kickstart

The Council has engaged with the Government Kickstart scheme facilitating placement applications for local businesses but also placements for the Council itself recruiting to 19 posts. Additional posts are currently being recruited to as well as current placements being extended or leading to permanent roles.

WBC Promotional Videos

The previous Chief Executive commissioned Communications to create two promotional videos; one to outline the Council's ambition and to reflect living in the district, and another to focus on recruitment and WBC being an employer of choice.

The 'Working for West Berkshire Council' video is now complete and has been published.

Communications have been working with individual services to develop suits of photographs to use for advertising and promotion.

Work Experience

- Work Experience - working with local schools to increase work experience opportunities and train staff to be job mentors for support new apprentices.
- In addition staff from the council have attended careers fairs, carried out mock interviews for students and participated in a CV review feedback process.
- In October the council facilitated 5 work experience placements with further placements planned for February and May.
- Working with the Employment is Everyone's Business group which includes parent forums, schools, and colleagues from the SEND team discussions are underway to support a pilot scheme for mainstream pupils with SEND to attend work experience.

8.12 Future HR Projects related to Recruitment and Retention

The employee lifecycle can be divided into a number of stages. At each stage there are a number of HR recruitment projects which will help identify and resolve issues. Recruitment is not a single activity. There are a range of opportunities throughout the lifecycle to impact directly on the Council’s ability to recruit. Central to this is the workforce strategy. The graphic below shows the stages of the employee lifecycle.



The table below seeks to summarise the proposed HR projects which are relevant to each stage within the lifecycle above that will help drive change to enable WBC to be able to continue to successfully recruit and retain. These are all set to be completed or started within the current timeframes of the Workforce Strategy which ends in 2023 and will be reviewed towards the end of 2022 in preparation for developing a strategy for 2023 onwards.

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Attract</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing e.g. Linked In, careers fairs • Referral Scheme • Develop bespoke recruitment campaigns for hard to fill roles • Refresh external recruitment pages • Work experience • Apprenticeships • Investigate graduate scheme • Introduce internships • Sign up to covenants e.g. care leaver, armed forces, domestic abuse in addition to Disability Confident | <p>Recruit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review JGP • Review recruitment processes • Review Application form- simplify form • Reduce bias in recruitment process e.g. blind applications, awareness of gendered wording • Review interview testing tools e.g. ability & psychometric • Digitise EC process |
| <p>Onboarding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refresh internal pages • New Manager Induction • Mandatory Training review • Corporate Induction review • Centralise information on agency, contractors and volunteers alongside employees • Review DBS process | <p>Learning & Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refresh internal pages • Coaching & Mentoring • Devise Leadership and Management offer. • Training for managers on recruitment best practice |
| <p>Reward Recognition & Benefits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay & Grading Review- remove overlapping grades and benchmark salaries • Review honoraria data & policy • Consider introducing market supplements | <p>Progression & Performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Career pathways • Develop future leaders • Manager Networks • Improve collection and use of data to inform decisions • Implement recommendations from career progression for Women project |
| <p>Retain/Exit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review exit interview • Develop career pathways • Develop future leaders • Increase wellbeing & resilience for all staff • Develop reward and recognition strategy • Raising concerns process • Implement Timelord 2 | <p>Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop behaviour framework • Develop positive and productive organisational culture • Improve collection and use of data to inform decisions e.g. review AER, Recruitment report, manager dashboards • Carry out workforce planning • Centralise agency & Contractor data so non staff and staff database are combined • Develop HR & Payroll system • Improve engagement with services around recruitment activity |

In summary there are a number of activities that will be taking place over the coming months that is intended to support the attraction and retention of employees as a

starting point. It is also intended to view reward and recognition as part of the Workforce Strategy.

17 Conclusion

The contents of the report are for information for Personnel Committee on the 21st February 2022.

18 Appendices

Appendix A Competency Framework

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: No:

- The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval
- Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council
- Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position
- Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee or associated Task Groups within preceding six months
- Item is Urgent Key Decision
- Report is to note only

Officer details:

Name: Paula Goodwin
Job Title: HR Service Lead
Tel No: 07385413479
E-mail: paula.goodwin1@westberks.gov.uk

Document Control

| | | | |
|----------------|--|----------------|--|
| Document Ref: | | Date Created: | |
| Version: | | Date Modified: | |
| Author: | | | |
| Owning Service | | | |

Change History

| Version | Date | Description | Change ID |
|---------|------|-------------|-----------|
| 1 | | | |
| 2 | | | |

Appendix A

Existing Competency Framework

| | All employees | Leaders of people |
|---|--|---|
| When working with people | <p>Display respect for customers/clients/colleagues</p> <p>Work as part of a team to achieve goals</p> <p>Listen to other points of view</p> <p>Deliver a high standard of customer service</p> <p>Communicate effectively</p> | <p>Understand stakeholders' motivation and objectives</p> <p>Be a skilled influencer (communicate the vision and objectives, inspire and motivate, develop buy-in and trust)</p> <p>Expect, encourage and support high standards of performance from team members</p> <p>Use a range of leadership styles appropriate to individual team members and the situation</p> <p>Develop team working and a sense of common purpose; manage conflict</p> |
| In relation to learning and development | <p>Learn continually through experience</p> <p>Seek opportunities to improve skills and understanding</p> <p>Coach and guide colleagues</p> | <p>Actively develop the team to meet current and future challenges</p> <p>Encourage team members to reflect on experience and learning; actively encourage transfer of learning</p> <p>Seek feedback on own performance to improve self awareness and own development needs</p> |
| In their approach to work | <p>Focus on priorities</p> <p>Work to the best of his/her ability</p> | <p>Be a role model (demonstrating drive, purpose, integrity, fairness,</p> |

| | All employees | Leaders of people |
|---------------------------|---|---|
| | <p>Strive to deliver high standards</p> <p>Use initiative and seek creative solutions</p> <p>Display integrity and openness</p> <p>Ensure own personal safety and that of others in the workplace</p> | <p>enthusiasm, openness, resilience)</p> <p>Adapt to change, taking prompt and appropriate remedial action where required</p> |
| When managing performance | | <p>Set/agree clear objectives, and quality and performance measures (for tasks and staff)</p> <p>Monitor and evaluate budgets, staff performance, and objectives</p> <p>Recognise good performance, and challenge underperformance and conduct</p> <p>Develop and empower team members to make decisions (coaching)</p> |