

WORKFORCE REPORT AS AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2020

HUMAN RESOURCES AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT



INTRODUCTION

The People Strategy (<https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/peoplestrategy>) underpins the work of Human Resources and Organisational Development, enabling our workforce to be adaptable and agile for the challenges of the future - “Our people will feel welcome, aspire to be the best, we will attract and keep the right people and we will be well led”.

The Council:

- Employs people on a number of national local government terms and conditions
- Participates in national collective bargaining for pay
- Adopts the principles of the Foundation Living Wage

The Council’s management team (CMT) consider workforce reports on a monthly basis to monitor the composition of the workforce and spend. Departmental managers receive sickness absence reports on a monthly basis, providing them with the information to ensure that sickness absence is managed appropriately.

Recruitment panels consisting of representatives of CMT are held weekly to consider and approve any requests to advertise vacancies.

WORKFORCE COMPOSITION

The workforce is made up of a core workforce of employees, with a peripheral workforce of temporary/seasonal employees and agency workers through a coordinated corporate contract.

EMPLOYEE HEADCOUNT AS AT 30 SEPTEMBER					
	Males 2020	Females 2020	Total 2020	Total 2019	Difference
People	75	235	310	325	-15
Customer and Corporate Services	152	286	438	347	+91*
ODPH	38	44	82	90	-8
Place	495	269	764	750	+14
Executive Office	21	61	82	91	-9
Children’s Services	111	631	742	773	-31
Finance	28	52	80	212	-132*
Council wide	920 36.8%	1578 63.2%	2,498	2,588	-90

* Reflects the transfer in September 2020 of Soft FM, Hard FM, and Strategic Projects from Finance to Customer and Corporate Services (HR&OD).

AGENCY SPEND BY DIRECTORATE	April- Sept 2020	Full 2019/20 year	Forecast to year end 2020/21
People	£ 36,715.16	£ 333,249.95	£ 60,209.27
Public Health	£ 109,469.40	£ 149,042.03	£ 286,078.22
Place	£ 647,942.29	£1,642,499.31	£ 1,082,361.91
Children's Services	£ 453,851.40	£1,097,490.16	£ 845,226.89
Executive Office	£ 52,214.31	£ 100,223.17	£ 131,165.56
Customer & Corporate Services	£ 68,936.95	£ 259,119.08	£ 129,388.20
Finance	£ 7,743.81	£ 244,497.46	£ 13,230.74
Grand Total	£1,376,873.32	£3,826,121.16	£2,547,660.79

Agency spend has reduced significantly in recent years with stringent monitoring now in place and tighter contract monitoring.

HR AND EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

A review of the Council's key HR and employment policies and procedures has taken place to ensure they are fit for purpose. This policy schedule includes:-

People Strategy
Trade Union Facilities Agreement
Managing Sickness Absence
Managing Performance
Probation
Recruitment and Selection
Disciplinary
Grievance
Use of Personal Devices (Bring your own device)
New Ways of Working
Sustainable Green Staff Travel Plan
Annual review of the Plymouth Book and Employee Handbook
Apprenticeship Strategy

New Payroll and HR System

The Council has been working alongside Delt, the Council's IT and Payroll provider, to deliver a new Payroll and HR system. The system has gone live this November, with much improved engagement for all employees as everyone can now access the system when they wish.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

The Senior Leadership Team and Members have been using the Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG) to explore best practice in relation to:

- the delivery of accessible and responsive services to customers and residents in their communities including those from protected characteristics
- employing a workforce that reflects the diversity of the area they are serving
- provision of equality of opportunity for all of the workforce
- meeting the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty

91.8% (with computer access) have completed the Equalities in the Workplace eLearning module. A review of Diversity and Inclusion across the Council is currently being undertaken and new training will be commissioned as a result of this.

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

Establishment and vacancy control measures are in place, which include the approval of a recruitment panel, prior to filling any post.

There continue to be services or occupations across the Council which have roles that are difficult to fill. The pay for posts across the Council are set by using an objective job evaluation scheme.

Occasionally, the internal rate for a role does not compete with the market rate and it is hard to fill specialist role. Market factor supplements can then be considered and these apply to some roles in the following professions:

- Surveyors
- Lawyers
- Category Leads (Procurement)
- Social Workers

In Children's Services, there are dedicated resources for the recruitment of children's social work practitioners which has resulted in our vacancy rate being well under the national average for a number of years. More information about how the Council recruits and supports this cohort is available on a dedicated website:

<https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/adultsandchildrensocialcare/childrensocialcare/academysocialworkplymouth>

INDUCTION

When an employee joins the Council, there is a corporate induction checklist supplemented with any local departmental requirements. This is in place to ensure that they are able to undertake their role safely and effectively, with any additional learning needed. There are specific eLearning courses that all employees are required to complete within their first weeks with the Council and local managers will support any employees who do not have access to the Council's systems to cover what they need.

Much of the new starter information is digitalised on Staff Room where there is a range of resources and helpful guides for the new entrant, including an Employee Handbook. Every new employee is invited to a virtual Welcome Event, hosted by the Chief Executive. This session gives them an overview of the Council and connects them with our mission, our values, our political setting and the relationships between services.

MANDATORY TRAINING

Compliance with mandatory training is tracked on a monthly basis through the balanced scorecard, with Department Management Teams responsible for ensuring all employees are up to date. This includes:

- Data Protection
- Equality and Diversity
- Fraud Awareness
- Health and Safety
- Information Security

In addition, monthly data is published on Staff room by department, in relation to compliance with health and safety mandatory training, with a target rate of 100%. Data does not include employees without computer access (this is captured locally), on career breaks, maternity or adoption leave, unpaid leave, vacant posts or people on long term sickness absence (over 4 weeks).

Compliance rates as at 31 October

Name of course	Target	Number in scope	% compliance
Introduction	All employees	2488	93.2%
Intro for managers: e-learning	All managers with direct reports	401	94.3%
Intro for managers: taught course		401	93.5%
IOSH Managing Safely and IOSH for Senior Executives	All managers J grade and above and SLT	72	72.2%

Where completion rates drop below 90% action is taken by the Service Director for HROD to ensure individuals are actively managed to complete their required training.

APPRENTICES

Apprenticeships are available as programmes of learning for new starters to the Council, and for current employees to undertake learning associated with their current occupation as part of their continued development. The apprenticeship target for 2020/21 is 58 and 21 internal and external apprenticeships have started between 1 April and 30 September 2020. There are 19 new apprenticeships in the pipeline, including care work, customer services (Information Governance and Libraries), Landscaping, Horticulture, Arborist, Garage Maintenance (HGV) and Project Management (Low Carbon team). The apprenticeship levy is being spent, and based on the current level of spend, the expiry date is April 2021 (the first point we could lose levy). Government incentives have now started and the Council has put in its first claim for £6000 for 3 apprentices in Finance who are under 25 and started since 1 August 2020, with a further two claims being prepared.

At the end of the 2019-20 financial year, there were a total of 101 apprentices. During 2019/20 there were 62 new apprenticeships, made up of 28 (45.2%) new starters and 34 (54.8%) existing employees. This exceeded our 2.31% target for the year.

We have a wide range of apprenticeship occupations ranging from Animal Care, Chartered Surveyor, Customer Services, Paralegal and Residential Childcare. Out of the 62 new apprenticeships in 2019/20, 27% studied Business Administration and this was across all directorates, and 14.5% were LGV drivers based in Street Services. The qualifications ranged from Levels 2 to 7.

DEVELOPMENT

An employee is supported during their employment life with the Council. This starts with new starter induction, regular performance reviews and the regular identification of training needs.

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

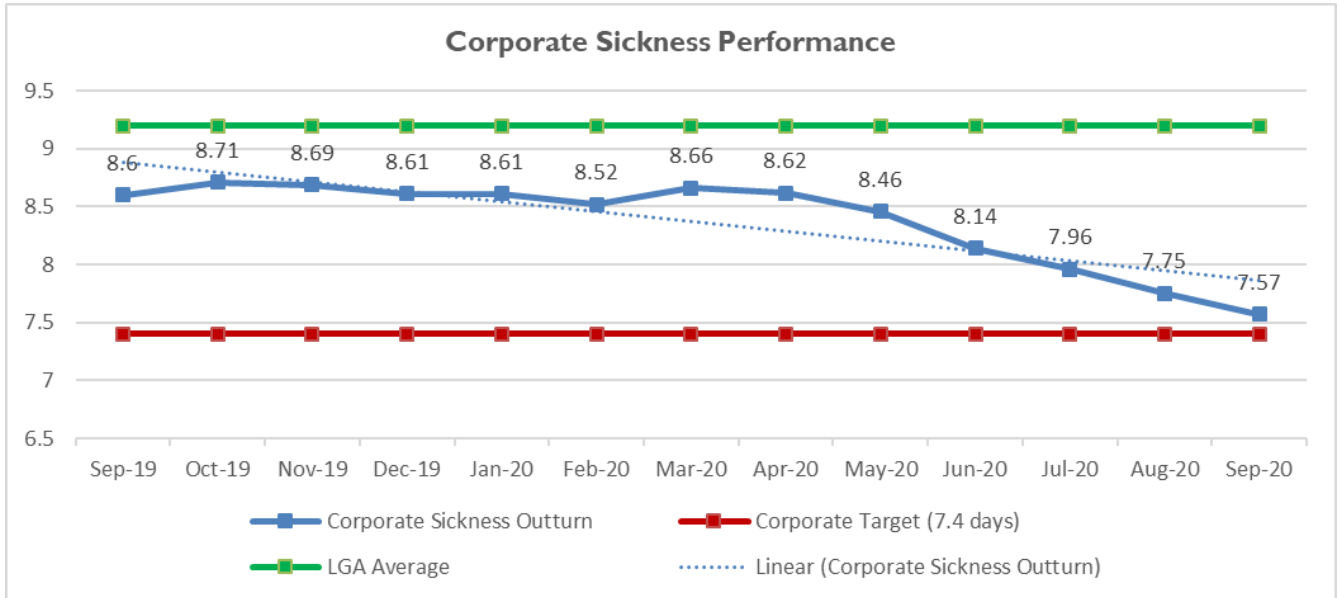
There is a range of different ways to develop our workforce, whether for an individual, team, department or across the whole of the Council. Whilst the majority of in person learning and development activity is currently paused, a broad range of development opportunities are being delivered in different ways. We currently have 82 different eLearning courses live on our Learning Zone, covering subjects such as health and safety, management skills and information security. We commission training sessions and workshops on specific subjects. Recent topics have included Managing Remotely and Managing Sickness Absence, both of which were effectively delivered online. Where it is appropriate and necessary, some training and learning activities are delivered directly. This includes specific training around using a corporate computer system, including our social care system CareFirst. Other development may be focused on supporting leadership development or adapting to change. Through the MacNet coaching network, employees can access a coach to support their development, and Staff room provides a wealth of materials for self-led development for employees to access as and when required. For frontline services where employees do not have access to the system, managers provide regular toolbox talks to ensure colleagues receive the development needed for their role.

PERFORMANCE REVIEW

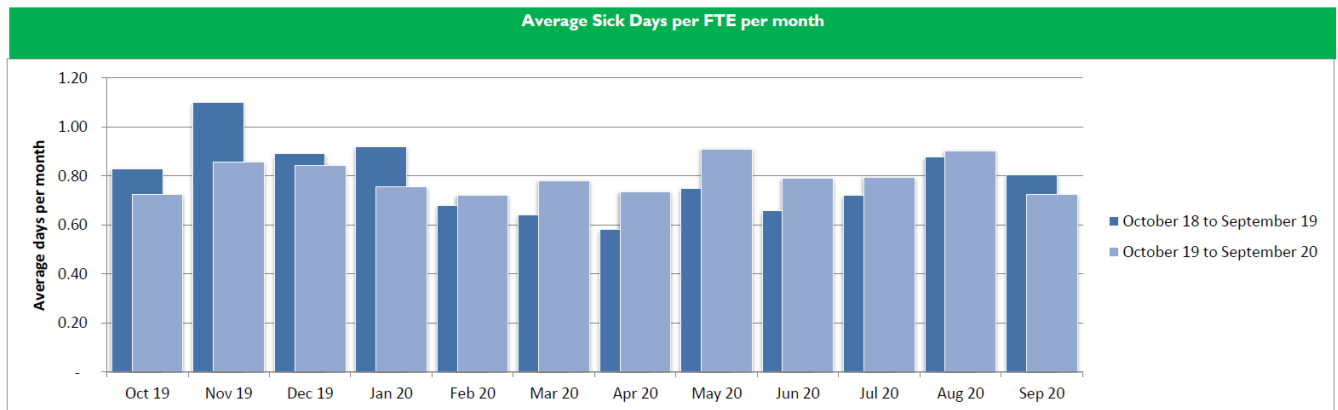
The Council has a performance review framework with regular performance discussions and an annual review, to connect each employee with the purpose of their role and to ensure that objectives are kept “live”. Everyone is encouraged to take responsibility for their own outcomes and self-development and line managers receive training to lead performance discussions effectively. We are currently showing that just over 80% of all employees have completed this years’ APR. Performance improvement plans are introduced to support those employees who have an outcome which needs improvement.

SICKNESS ABSENCE

The Council monitors sickness absence levels on a monthly basis and this is reported to management teams to enable action to be taken as required.



Comparison of average days/FTE each month



Number of employees with a sickness absence record	Short term (4 weeks or less)	Long term (more than 4 weeks)
September 2019 (rolling year)	1,333	233
September 2020 (rolling year)	1,151	196

Top reasons for sickness absence during September 2020:

Short term - Stress/Depression/Psychological

Long term - Musculoskeletal, and Stress/Depression/Psychological.

Tools available to manage sickness absence

- Proactive Managing Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure
- Occupational health provision
- Employee Assistance Programme, promoted on screen savers
- Training
 - Management training – Managing sickness absence policy

- Management training – Managing teams remotely
- Health and safety training across all health and safety standards
- Stress and resilience training
- Mental health first aider training
- Counselling support through Employee Assistance Programme

WELLBEING

The Council had previously been awarded the National Wellbeing Charter, sponsored by Public Health England. This no longer exists, but a new local scheme for the city has been developed by Livewell South West, called [Wellbeing at Work](#).

The Wellbeing at Work Award scheme is a successful programme aimed at Plymouth businesses encouraging health and wellbeing to be part of the culture of an organisation.

The Council achieved the bronze wellbeing at work award in 2020 and is now working towards the silver award.

To be awarded the bronze level award we had to demonstrate our commitment to wellbeing through having an active steering group, wellbeing champions, a workplace health needs assessment, a health and safety assessment and wellbeing action plan. Some examples include:

- comprehensive signposting on our wellbeing pages on a variety of subjects
- a parent support group during the pandemic for parents to discuss support and problems around home schooling and balancing work
- wellbeing and resilience training to support employees and managers
- one to one support on stress, wellbeing and resilience where identified
- an increase in the communication for additional wellbeing support available including a printed handbook for colleagues without intranet access.
- wellbeing drop in sessions twice a week for everyone to access.

The wellbeing champions work together and within their departments to:

- help promote national and seasonal health and wellbeing campaigns
- use health promotion materials to support positive interventions
- be available to advise and support colleagues (and clients/customers where appropriate) about health and wellbeing and be able to signpost to relevant information and support

They are trained mental health first aiders and have also had training to improve their understanding of how lifestyle behaviours and environmental factors affect wellbeing.

FLU VACCINATION PROGRAMME

Ten clinics were arranged at various locations for front line employees to book their flu vaccination, if not eligible for a free NHS vaccination. Final numbers are still awaited from Well Pharmacy, however 427 appointments were booked.

Due to the increased interest in flu vaccinations due to COVID-19 (having flu reduces your immunity and makes you more susceptible to COVID-19), a further offer has been made to employees, who can now seek to obtain a vaccination from their local pharmacy and will be reimbursed £9 towards the cost by the Council. This offer excludes anyone who is eligible for a free NHS vaccination.

It is likely that employees seeking to take up this offer, may not be able to access a flu vaccination until much later in the flu season due to the way PHE is prioritising distribution of the flu vaccination. This is out of the Council's control, and employees have been advised of this.

RESPONSE TO THE PANDEMIC

The pandemic has required an intense and focused effort over the last nine months to protect our employees, as far as reasonably practicable from contracting and transmitting COVID-19 whilst undertaking their work activities. This work still continues in line with our Local Pandemic Management Plan and includes:

- daily briefings and collaboration with our recognised Trade Union representatives
- communicating the government key messages to employees on a regular basis via Staff room and various information cascades introduced as part of the emergency operations centre.
- prioritising colleagues to continue to work from home if they are able to do so
- initiating a reset sign off process for the re-introduction of services post first lockdown
- expecting COVID-19 specific risk assessments, safe systems of work and tool box talks for any service provision and work activity; regularly reviewed to ensure controls are working and in accordance with any new government guidelines
- delivering COVID-19 secure building assessments and implementation of COVID-19 secure building controls
- producing, reviewing and updating a PPE Policy: providing the right level of PPE to teams in accordance with government guidelines
- producing a RIDDOR and infection control process for managers to report in the event of an employee developing symptoms of COVID-19.

The corporate Health, Safety and Wellbeing professionals and TU Health and Safety Representatives have supported service areas and schools during their remobilisation and reopening to ensure that all services are providing COVID secure environments for our workforce and our services users, clients, pupils, teachers and members of the public. These have included:-

- some 60 building surveys due to reopen, to set occupancy levels, and determine secure environments
- support to maintained and controlled schools through the pandemic on partial and full opening, providing advice, guidance and reassurance visits, receiving positive feedback from the HSE on our joint approach, including our special schools
- worked closely with colleagues in Facilities Management (FM) on cleaning and ventilation best practice
- supported the continuation of essential services to keep our workforce as safe as possible
 - waste collection
 - household waste recycling centres
- worked closely with our Public Health colleagues on intricate and complex situations arising from the Government guidance to ensure the safety of employees, clients, service users, pupils in critical areas, such as school transport and legally directed contact
- monitored our buildings regularly with our FM colleagues to ensure that COVID secure arrangements are in place and being followed
- provision of Flu Clinics in a COVID secure environment to help protect vulnerable staff
- modified our incident management process to capture potential work related COVID exposure in line with HSE guidance
- one to one support for discomfort at home for colleagues using display screen equipment and arranging equipment with our FM colleagues, often reducing pain and keeping people at work
- a point of contact working alongside Public Health for monitoring, interpretation and application of Government guidance and Council policy
- corporate assurance through risk assessment and safe systems of work monitoring
- continuing compliance with existing Health and Safety legislation to ensure a culture of safety across the Council

- delivered and supported remote training on IOSH managing safely, safe lifting techniques, ladder safety, conflict resolution, health and safety training for new managers

ORGANISATIONAL DESIGN

To meet the future needs of the Council, both financially and service delivery, the workforce needs to be agile, with regular consideration of the design of the organisation and service reviews.

Enhanced Voluntary Release Scheme (EVRS)

The EVRS scheme is offered to employees in certain circumstances, and normally prior to a restructure. It is a discretionary scheme that allows employees to leave the Council by mutual agreement.

During 2019/20, EVRS was offered to employees in Education, Participation and Skills (Children's Services) and Customer and Corporate Services. 12 employees left Children's Services in January 2020 and 7 left Customer and Corporate Services at the end of April 2020.

EVRS was opened council wide during quarter 2 of 20/21 (excluding Education, Participation and Skills, registered social workers and managers where registered a social work qualification is a requirement). There were 64 leavers in September 2020 from this exercise, with further leavers by the end of the year.

Directorate	Leavers through EVRS April - September 2020	EVRS Leavers 2019/20
Children's Services	4	12
Customer & Corporate	31	0
Executive Office	2	0
Finance	3	0
ODPH	1	0
People	16	0
Place	14	0
Grand Total	71	12

This has minimised the need for compulsory redundancies with 10 compulsory redundancies during 2019/20, and 2 occurring during 2020/21 to date.