

IMPACT OF WORKFORCE CHANGES

Human Resources and Organisational Development



Subject: Impact of Workforce Changes
Committee: Audit Committee
Date: 8 December 2016
Cabinet Member: Councillor John Riley
CMT Member: Lesa Annear (Strategic Director for Transformation and Change)
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Ref:
Key Decision: No
Part: N/A

1. Purpose

At the recent Audit Committee held 29th September 2016, Members of the Audit Committee were presented the six monthly monitoring of the Strategic Risk and Opportunity Register. A new risk had been added to the register in relation to 'the organisation's ability to meet performance and delivery expectations in relation to statutory duties and deadlines. Members of the committee raised a question regarding the impact of delivering services with a reducing workforce and the effect on sickness levels. Monitoring, tools and measures were briefly discussed. In response to this item, this report summarises workforce and sickness trends and highlights particular monitoring and measures in place in relation to work related stress.

2. Workforce Information

Workforce information is monitored by the Council Management Team (CMT) and departmental managers. Workforce numbers have been reducing over the years.

The table below shows workforce numbers at the end of each financial year, alongside the level of sickness absence:-

Year	Headcount as at 31 March	FTE as at 31 March	Number of working days/FTE as at 31 March
2015/2016	2739	2269.4	6.87
2014/2015	3417	2695.9	8.56
2013/2014	3670	2935.5	6.79
2012/2013	3838	3063.0	9.23
2011/2012	4155	3248.5	9.78

Other sickness information:

Current sickness is running at an average of 7.01 working days per FTE for the last 12 month period. Reasons for sickness absence remain consistent:

- Minor illnesses such as colds and flu contribute to the most common reasons for short term sickness.

- Musculoskeletal and stress related illness remains the most common reasons for long term sickness absence.

Stress related absence figures have been reviewed alongside the decreasing headcount/FTE statistics over the last five years. The statistics show stress level fluctuations regardless of headcount/FTE.

Further month by month analysis was undertaken for the current financial year to date at directorate level but no correlation was found between decrease in headcount and FTE and increase in stress levels.

3. Approaches to Managing Sickness Absence and Employee Wellbeing

Plymouth City Council proactively supports the well-being of Plymouth City Council staff. We have multiple strategies in place to equip managers and support employees to manage sickness absence, including return to work meetings.

The Health, Safety and Wellbeing (HSW) Team within HR&OD offer an assessment tool and guide on Managing Stress and Resilience in the workplace. This provides guidance to managers on the principles and processes of reducing stress related sickness absence. Implementation of this guidance is monitored on an annual basis, with recommendations made to departmental Joint Consultative Meetings. Stress audits and Stress Resilience Assessment training is also offered by the Health, Safety and Wellbeing team.

Plymouth City Council is the first organisation in the area to be awarded the National Workplace Wellbeing Charter. The Health, Safety and Wellbeing (HSW) Team is currently working with Public Health and other teams within HR&OD to develop an action plan to further improve workplace wellbeing, with a focus on leadership, attendance management and mental health. This demonstrates the organisation's commitment to the health, safety and wellbeing of its staff and ultimately improve attendance through various proactive initiatives e.g. Workplace Wellbeing Champions, Mindful Employer.

In order to identify priorities and effectively deploy resources to support employee wellbeing, the HSW Team is undertaking an in-depth Health Needs Assessment. This exercise will look at our employees as a demographic, looking for correlations between job hazards and the working environment, workplace incidents and absences. It will also include a health survey to identify lifestyle behaviours.

In partnership with the team at Livewell South West, the HSW Team will be offering health checks for all employees over the age of 40 in the New Year. Those who are eligible will receive an assessment to identify the risk of heart disease, stroke, kidney disease and diabetes and will be given support and advice to help them reduce or manage that risk.

The annual flu vaccination programme is taking place in November and December this year, with 400 vaccinations available to employees.

An employee assistance programme providing 24/7 practical information and resources is offered to employees, including access to counselling and advice to help balance their work, family and personal lives.