

RECRUITMENT UPDATE APRIL 2023

1. RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 That HR Committee acknowledge the content of the report and support the proactive steps aimed to improve recruitment campaigns.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This report provides an update on recruitment for the year ended 31st March 2023. It outlines progress made with recruitment tools and includes plans to improve branding and generic tools in the coming months.

3. VACANCY INFORMATION

- 3.1 The table below details an overview of historical vacancy information. Much greater detail will be included in a broader update in September with all other HR statistics.

Date range	Number of recruitment campaigns	Number of applications	Number of posts filled 1 st time	Average number of new starters per month
01/04/22-31/03/23	177	1,162	81.5%	15
		A mean average of 6.56 per campaign	6 were still out for 2 nd advert in April 2023	Additionally, April 2023 saw 27 new starters

- 3.2 Recruitment at every banding level has been challenging in the last year as demonstrated in the number of posts filled 1st time. Retention has remained an additional challenge at lower banded roles with employees leaving for very little difference in salary but detailing that any amount meant easier to meet growing costs, or a little less travel saving significantly on transport. The 2022 pay award will have assisted with this matter to some extent.
- 3.3 Posts requiring further rounds of recruitment have been across the board but have reduced in the second half of the year, helped in part by our efforts to utilise different publications, changing tenure of post, and updating our advert template.
- 3.4 The HR Admin team assist managers with all aspects of recruitment from adverts and where to advertise, arranging interviews, informing candidates of outcomes, pre-employment checks and contract documentation, new starter set up and induction.
- 3.5 The team also carry out administrative functions for the HR Service, including all aspects of system administration & maintenance for the HR Hub, employee queries, job evaluations, forestnet updates, arranging Health Surveillance, Agency Worker Framework administration, work experience administration, SharePoint upkeep, the HR Newsletter, monthly wellbeing meetings with our apprentices, as well as any other adhoc activities (such as arranging the popular Christmas quiz).

- 3.6 The implementation of the additional days' leave from April 2023 was a particularly lengthy project to resolve and required significant time from the team. In part this is because not all employees have a leave year start date of 1st April. In some instances, their leave year is dictated by their start date.
- 3.7 The level of recruitment, along with the additional tasks means the HR Admin team, consisting of 4 people, equating to 3FTE's, are always very busy. Following several recruitment attempts, resulting in the successful appointment, our HR apprentice has unfortunately now recently resigned from her position.
- 3.8 To accommodate all requests successfully, we work to a two-day turnaround standard on all the above HR Admin matters, enabling us to provide an effective, accurate and efficient service. Increasingly, managers ask for same day turnaround on adverts, and on invites to interviews and many other processes. Whilst we understand pressures of managers to fill their posts, this puts additional pressure on the already tight resource.
- 3.9 In iTrent currently, the team spend a very small amount of time (approximately 1 – 2 hours per week) on the Learning module. We will shortly be moving to a dedicated Learning Management System, and consideration needs to be given as to the resource required to ensure that achieve the maximum benefit from the system moving forwards, particularly in relation to management reports, system setup and ongoing development and optimum utilisation of the system available.

4. PROACTIVE STEPS TO IMPROVE RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGNS AND PROCESSES

- 4.1 In the September 2022 Recruitment Update report, there were detailed improvements such as, updated 'Recruitment' forestnet pages with a range of useful documents and flow charts, an improved advert template and training for our team on advertising, and a 'where to advertise' guide.
- 4.2 In the last six months we have worked to improve our service further and are currently implementing the following aspects. These are not quick fixes and with our small team, these are still work in progress:
 - i. Improving our vacancy management e-form and e-processes (in conjunction with ICT) with the aim is to make the process quicker and easier for all involved.
 - ii. Improving the iTrent recruitment application form within system limitations to improve user experience and the information we receive on applicants.
 - iii. Undertaking LinkedIn training, updating our own profiles within the team, and linking all recruitment campaigns to LinkedIn. We are also working to provide weekly 'employer of choice' posts to LinkedIn, such as Army Team Building event, Apprenticeship successes etc.
 - iv. Streamlining and updating the process with the Communications Team for social media images. We now have a range of images in line with our new branding, which we will update periodically to use as soon as we are ready to go live for any advert. We can now send this to the recruiting manager as a professional easy to use link that they can share as they wish.
 - v. We are working with our advertising agency to provide advertising media statistics, which will be publicised on the recruitment pages of forestnet for managers to view and consider for future campaigns.

- vi. As part of our branding and generic recruitment advertising, banners for our refuse vehicles are currently being produced, there will be one vehicle from each depot with this on. We are also purchasing sustainable branded items to give out at our recruitment events (such as rulers/pencils/post it notes).
- vii. We have attended two recruitment events recently at different job centres across the district. One was focussed on employing people who have disabilities and helping to show how we work towards reasonable adjustments for the right candidates. The other was generic, and we met with over 80 prospective candidates. Both were really engaging events to showcase the council and the jobs we have available. In May, we will attend the regional 'Get Inspired' event, which our Economic Development team are heavily involved with. This is aimed at young people starting their GCSEs with the aim of showcasing different businesses and where their studies can take them. Coastal and Environmental Health will have practical activities for attendees to try out. We will look to attend further events throughout the year.
- viii. There is also potential for an exciting new 3-month work experience placement. We have a framework procurement agreement with Travis Perkins (TP) for our housing stock materials and equipment. As part of the framework, based on our spend, we accrue 'points' for social responsibility issues. During covid we accrued lots of points, and these equate to approx. 3 months' worth of work experience, that TP would run and offer, with our branding as a joint venture. This would be 'store-based' in the Lymington branch, and the candidate would get experience in every aspect of work in the store, as well as getting out with a driver and seeing some other end to end processes; the final programme is being designed as we speak. We will check the content and risk assessments once finalised and will receive regular updates.

The advertising will be led by TP with our input and joint branding and will be targeted to those aged over 18.

The placement is unpaid, but the lucky candidate will be mentored throughout their work experience by TP and build their skills on the job and through personal development eLearning modules, hopefully to a level where if TP had a vacancy they would take the person on - (it'll work much like the government lead Kickstart scheme in covid times, in essence). They will also be able to use the TP staff discount scheme. It is hopeful that this will go live in June.

- ix. In the future, and with assistance from Communications, we would like to engage with a videographer to design a short attractive corporate recruitment video.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 In order to remain able to provide an excellent service to our customers we are at a point where an additional resource is required for the HR Admin team. At a time when we are trying to be more proactive in our attempts to attract people to our vacancies it is imperative that we use all the methods available to us. Many of the points raised in section 4 are new to the team but all have resource implications.
- 5.2 In light of this it is proposed that an additional full time HR Administrator is recruited.
- 5.3 In relation to the Learning Management system mentioned in point 3.9 above, there is huge potential within the systems that we have now seen demonstrations on to provide a much improved offering to all staff, including managers and system administrators.

- 5.4 A well developed system would be able to provide learning pathways for staff, career options, and longer term training including leadership and general management, all of which were items brought up through the staff survey as areas of concern for staff.
- 5.5 As an Organisational Development tool a well implemented and updated system would also assist managers with ensuring that staff are attending the training required but can also link to their appraisals and forward career plans. In some systems there is also capacity for a 360 option to be delivered.
- 5.6 There is currently no capacity within the HR Admin team to support the development of the LMS system to it's full potential, even with the additional resource referred to in 5.2.
- 5.7 As a result an additional resource is proposed to support the LMS system. This would be at a competent Administrator level. It does not require an IT systems post as there is no programming required, but a good knowledge of the council structure, reporting lines and learning requirements across the council.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There will be small costs absorbed by existing budgets for the development of the branding campaign, banners, flyers, and branded stationery.
- 6.2 All of these measures however are intended to improve first time recruitment rates, and so will negate the need for costly follow up recruitment campaigns.
- 6.3 The addition of two posts at Band 4 would equate to approx. 46 – 50k plus on costs.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Many staff are now able to work in a flexible hybrid way, which means a reduced commute and therefore positive environmental impact.

8. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 All campaigns aim to promote equal opportunity for all applicants. Our attendance at recruitment events across the district and further afield assist with this. All of the ways that we are trying to promote and improve our recruitment campaigns aim to have an inclusive appeal, and this should improve our image as an employer of choice. As detailed at the start of the report, much more detailed statistics, including equality and diversity recruitment data, will be included in the broader HR Statistics report in September.

9. DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 We will continue with our current practices which are GDPR compliant, no changes are envisaged.

10. EMT COMMENTS

- 10.1 EMT were pleased with the proactive steps that have been taken with regards to recruitment.

- 10.2 EMT acknowledged that the anticipated drop in recruitment campaigns due to the outsourcing of the Health and Leisure centres has not materialised and therefore support the recruitment of an additional HR Administrator.
- 10.3 With regards to the Learning Management System EMT proposed that a corporate view is taken on current resources and impact of the new system moving forward.

11. EMPLOYEE SIDE COMMENTS

- 11.1 It was commented that it would be useful to know the turnover figure for the last year as well as the vacancy information.
- 11.2 This would be provided at the next meeting as part of the Annual Workforce report.

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