

HR Committee – 9 January 2025

Employee Workforce Report 2023 – 2024

Purpose	Information
Classification	Public
Executive Summary	<p>The employee workforce report reviews data from April 2023 – March 2024. It aims to overview key workforce data and the relevant trends in the Councils workforce priorities. The report also gives an overview of initiatives in place to support our colleagues over the past 12 months. The data is as of 01 April 24:</p> <p>Our People: a summary of workforce statistics relating to headcount, diversity and pay information. Our FTE is 715, the workforce profile is primarily consistent with the previous year and representative of the New Forest Community according to the 2021 census. Unknown ethnicity data has decreased from 17.75% to 14.66%.</p> <p>Attract: The number of applicants per recruitment campaign has increased from 6.56 to 9.78 per campaign. The diversity of applicants continues to increase, 17% were ethnically diverse in comparison to 13% the previous year.</p> <p>Engage: All new employees are welcomed to the Council with induction remaining critical to the process.</p> <p>Develop: We continue to invest in our employees through an increased corporate training budget by 8% for the 24/25 financial year. 0.76% of the pay bill was spent on training in 2023-24, increased from 0.69% the previous year.</p> <p>Reward: Reward remains critical to our people. Market Supplements were extended to Bands</p>

	<p>11 and 12 in August 2023 in response to senior recruitment difficulties.</p> <p>Retain: External turnover has increased from 13.48% to 13.68% but remains at a healthy level.</p>
Recommendation(s)	HR Committee note the contents of the report and support the priorities in 'next steps' (section 4).
Reasons for recommendation(s)	<p>The Equality Act 2010 requires public authorities to publish equality information on an annual basis. The diversity information contained within this report supports this and is used to support the building of valuable insight that will aid us in becoming more inclusive.</p> <p>Future New Forest sets out our ambition to be an employer of choice by delivering a people strategy that outlines how we attract, retain, and grow talent. The data in the workforce profile is essential to understanding our workforce and achieving this aim.</p>
Ward(s)	All
Portfolio Holder(s)	Councillor Jeremy Heron
Strategic Director(s)	Alan Bethune – Corporate Resources, Section 151 and Transformation
Officer Contact	<p>Heleana Aylett Service Manager HR Heleana.aylett@nfdc.gov.uk</p>

Introduction and Background

1. This employee workforce report (**Appendix 1**) reviews data from April 2023 – March 2024. It aims to overview key workforce data and the relevant trends in the Councils workforce strategies and priorities.
2. This report also gives an overview of initiatives in place to support our colleagues over the past year.

3. Trend data is given through the report where its applicable or available. The workforce data included in this report is our directly employed workforce and does not include temporary agency workers. Statistics quoted are as of 01 April 2024.

Employee Workforce Profile Findings (page 34 – 35)

Our People

4. Our workforce profile has remained primarily the same as the previous year. We have made positive progress encouraging colleagues to update their personal information on the HR Management System in the previous 12 months, decreasing our unknown ethnicity data from 17.75% to 14.66%.
5. It is primarily representative of the New Forest Community according to the 2021 census (**New Forest population change, Census 2021 – ONS**).

Attract

6. The number of applicants per recruitment campaign has increased from 6.56 per campaign in the previous year to 9.78. The diversity of applicants continues to increase, 17% were ethnically diverse in comparison to 13% the previous year.

Engage

7. All new employees are welcomed to the Council with induction remaining critical to the process.

Develop

8. We continue to invest in our employees through an increased corporate training budget by 8% for the 24/25 financial year, and role specific training. 0.76% of the pay bill was spent on training in 2023-24, increased from 0.69% the previous year.
9. Casework and workplace issues continue to contribute to the workload of the HR team. The team aims to support managers in finding the right resolutions to these issues.

Reward

10. Reward remains critical to our people. Market Supplements were extended to Bands 11 and 12 in August 2023 in response to senior recruitment difficulties.

Retain

11. Over two thirds of our colleagues are at the top of their salary scale, which indicates healthy retention levels. External turnover has increased from 13.48% to 13.68% but remains at a healthy level.

Employee Workforce Profile Next Steps (page 35)

12. We continue to explore different ways to analyse and present workforce data to understand more about our people. In the next 12 months the HR Advisory team will be looking to develop improved manager dashboards which will enable managers to have access to their team data to make informed decisions, as well as create oversight for each directorate and the whole organisation.
13. The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion staff group continue to meet quarterly, reviewing processes and policies and raising awareness for EDI issues across the workforce. The Councils LGBT+ Network is an extension of this, supporting colleagues across the Council. Our equality objective 'encourage diversity and champion equality within our workplace, developing and supporting an inclusive working environment where all staff are respected with zero tolerance of bullying and harassment' will be a focus of the EDI group over the coming 12 months. The HR Team will support the Council to meet the recent legislative requirement to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace, with the support of the EDI group.
14. The Employee Forum continue to meet quarterly raising and resolving relevant issues. Following the recent staff survey the employee forum will review results to agree actions the employee forum can support.
15. We continue to embed health and wellbeing into the organisation and support managers and employees in this. We do this by proactively supporting all colleagues with wellbeing champions and an established Employee Assistance Programme. We also use tools to support colleagues managing wellbeing issues, for example the HSE Stress Questionnaire and Wellbeing Action Plans. The Councils proactive approach to supporting employees with reasonable adjustments remains a priority and colleagues supported by reasonable adjustments are recorded using a plan with regular manager reviews. The HR Advisory Team will be implementing a 3 yearly rolling people policy review programme, ensuring policies align with our values, promoting empathy and fairness. This aims to support colleagues maintain their wellbeing at work with clear, with supportive employee policies.

16. The employee benefits package has been reviewed in the past 12 months and with the support of EMT a buying and selling annual leave policy for all colleagues will be implemented from April 2025.
17. The Learning Management System is now live and being embedded across the workforce. Over the coming 12 months the system will be developed to focus on compliance first, before moving on to support workforce develop and career pathways.
18. There are 40 managers undertaking a Leadership Development programme from September – December 2024. There will be a further 20 starting the programme in April 2025. Further leadership development opportunities will be developed as part of the people strategy, with the first action being to establish leadership behaviours and a competency framework in 2025.
19. Recruitment processes continue to be improved, earlier this year the application form was simplified and a candidate pack introduced for all vacancies. This has resulted in positive feedback from both candidates and recruiting managers. These improvements aim to enhance process efficiency as well as ensure quality diverse candidates are attracted and hired.
20. The report highlights that 28% of new starters leave within the first 12 months. The HR team will review the induction process, considering options of group induction to improve the induction experience.
21. A people strategy is being developed in line with future new forest which will use this workforce data, alongside a wealth of other data and insight to provide a clear vision of how we will deliver on our employer of choice commitment. The strategy will help shape the future workforce through recruitment, retention, skills and career development to meet our needs and the expectations of future and existing staff.

Corporate plan priorities

22. Future New Forest sets out our ambition to be an employer of choice by delivering a people strategy that outlines how we attract, retain, and grow talent. The data in the workforce profile is essential to understanding our workforce and achieving this aim.

Financial and resource implications

23. There are none as a direct consequence of this report, however varying financial information is included throughout the report, including agency spend (page 17-79), employee costs (page 30 - 31) and training and development (page 22).

Equalities implications

24. The purpose of the workforce profile is to enable the Council to consider workforce equality implications. These are considered throughout. Where the ethnic group size has been less than 50, care has been taken to ensure that individuals cannot be identified.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Employee Workforce Report

Background Papers:

None