

HR Committee – 11 September 2025

EMPLOYEE WORKFORCE REPORT 2024 – 2025

Purpose	For Review
Classification	Public
Executive Summary	<p>This report provides key workforce data and an overview of initiatives in place to support employees in the past year.</p> <p>The employee workforce report reviews data from April 2024 – March 2025. 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 25:</p> <p>Our People: a summary of workforce statistics relating to headcount, diversity and pay information. Our FTE is 731, 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 increased from 14.66% to 15.9%.</p> <p>Attract: The number of applicants per recruitment campaign has increased from 9.78 to 16.93 per campaign. The diversity of applicants continues to increase, 22% were ethnically diverse in comparison to 17% 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 a corporate training budget. 0.85% of the pay bill was spent on training in 2024-25, increased from 0.76% the previous year.</p> <p>Reward: Reward remains critical to our people. Market Supplements were extended to Bands 11 and 12 in August 2024 in response to senior recruitment difficulties.</p>

	Retain: External turnover has decreased slightly from 13.68% in 2023/24 to 13.4% in 2024/25 but remains at a healthy level.
Recommendation(s)	HR Committee to note the contents of the report and support the priorities in 'next steps' page 38 of the Employee Workforce Report (Appendix 1).
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)	Cllr Jeremy Heron
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Introduction and Background

1. This employee workforce report (Appendix 1) reviews data from April 2024 – March 2025. 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 2025.

Employee Workforce Profile Findings (pages 38 - 42)

Our People

4. Our workforce profile has experienced slight changes over the past year, reflecting our efforts to encourage colleagues to update their personal information on the HR Management System. This initiative will continue to ensure our data remains current and accurate.
5. It is primarily representative of the New Forest Community according to the 2021 Census results ([New Forest population change, Census 2021 – ONS](#)).

Attract

6. The number of applicants per recruitment campaign has increased significantly from 9.78 to 16.93. Additionally, the diversity of applicants has improved, with 22% being ethnically diverse compared to 17% the previous year.

Engage

7. All new employees are welcomed with a critical induction process. Further engagement plans are in progress, aiming to strengthen stakeholder relationships and drive higher participation levels in the next financial year.

Develop

8. We continue to invest in our employees through an overall corporate training budget, which increased for the 2024/25 financial year compared to the base budget of 2023/24. Training expenditure has increased to 0.85% of the pay bill in 2024/25, up from 0.69% the previous year.

Reward

9. Reward remains a critical focus, with Market Supplements extended to Bands 11 and 12 in August 2024 to address senior recruitment difficulties. This initiative aims to attract and retain top talent in key positions.

Retain

10. Over two-thirds of our colleagues are at the top of their salary scale (70%), indicating healthy retention levels. External turnover has decreased from 13.68% to 13.40%, maintaining a stable and healthy workforce.

Employee Workforce Profile Next Steps (page 40 - 42)

11. We continue to explore new ways to analyse and present workforce data to better understand our people. Over the next 12 months, the HR Advisory team will focus on supporting these efforts.
12. The Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) staff group meets quarterly to review processes and raise awareness of EDI issues. The LGBT+ Network supports colleagues, and the HR team will help meet new legislative requirements to prevent workplace sexual harassment.
13. The Employee Forum meets quarterly to address and resolve issues. They will review action plans from the recent staff survey to ensure ongoing engagement and a positive workplace environment.
14. We continue to embed health and wellbeing into the organisation by supporting colleagues with wellbeing champions and an Employee Assistance Programme. Tools like the HSE Stress Questionnaire and Wellbeing Action Plans help manage wellbeing issues.
15. The employee benefits package will be reviewed this year to ensure it remains attractive to current and prospective employees.
16. The Learning Management System is a key resource, supporting compliance and career development. Monthly meetings with supervisors help complete mandatory modules, and new non-mandatory content will be developed in 2025/26.
17. Three cohorts of middle managers completed development sessions from Sept 24 – July 25. More development will be delivered in 25/26 to meet future needs, aligned with our People Strategy.
18. Recruitment processes have been enhanced with a simplified application form and candidate pack, receiving positive feedback. We plan to review and update our recruitment strategy in the new financial year with continuous improvements.
19. The report highlights that 22.9% of new starters leave within their first 12 months. The HR team will review the induction process and analyse exit interview feedback to reduce early turnover rates.
20. Amendments have been made to our probation policy (so that it aligns with our process) and introduce our new neonatal care leave policy;

both of which are going to EMT for comments and approval in summer 2025.

Corporate plan priorities

21. 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.

Consultation undertaken

EMT comments

22. EMT requested that comments from the report should influence future planning and/or initiatives surrounding retention insights, particularly a focus on early-career retention given that the data reveals the common reason for employees leaving NFDC are within 0–5 years.

EMT also noted the importance of using exit data to drive change for the future and how this could improve retention and turnover.

Also, for questions surrounding gender diversity, HR to investigate the most effective strategies to use to attract more women into operational roles.

ESLP Comments

The report was shared with unions and discussed at Employee Side Liaison Panel. No further comments were received.

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 - 19), employee costs (page 33 - 35) and training and development (page 23 - 25).

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 None

Background Papers: