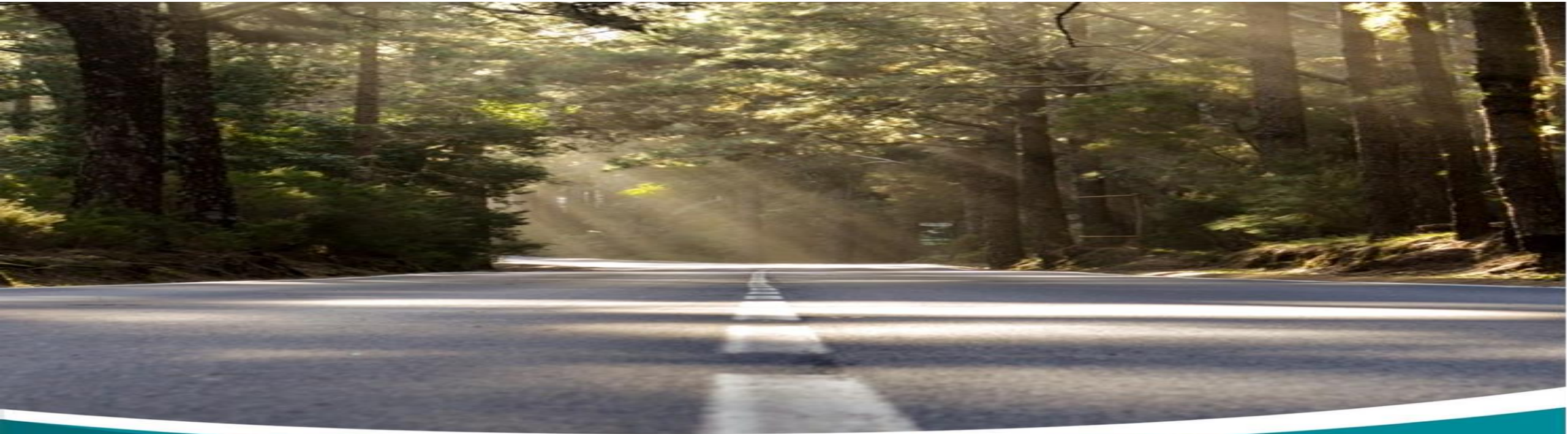


HR ANNUAL REVIEW

2024/25





HELEANA AYLETT – HR SERVICE MANAGER

Through the following pages I hope to show how the delivery of our HR service supports our internal customers and our external partners, including potential employees and partners of the future.

In part, the reason for this document is to address an issue raised in the last Employee Survey. Some of the HR team expressed a view that they didn't always see how their own role played a part in contributing to the Councils corporate plan. As an internal service, it is sometimes difficult to see how our roles contribute to the plan but in pulling this document together it has become increasingly clear what the importance of our roles are, and that they do indeed support the council's ambition for the future.

In November 2023 we took part in a HR Service Review conducted by the LGA. As a result of the recommendations of the review, additional resources were secured, supported by EMT. This enabled us during 2024 to redesign the advisory support we give to our managers, and we now have a business partnership model with an HR Advisor allocated to each Strategic Directorate, and an Assistant Advisor to add additional support across all areas. The incredible feedback that we have had on this approach has indicated that the change has been hugely beneficial and is greatly appreciated by both staff and managers.

In the summer of 2024, we were delighted to be awarded 'Employer of the Year' by Brockenhurst College, which was down to the hard work and dedication put in by members of the Learning and HR Admin Team.

We endeavour to attend as many of the career events held by local schools and colleges as we can, flying the flag for NFDC and promoting our opportunities to potential employees of the future. They provide a great opportunity to connect with many younger people and to explain to them the wide range of careers available in Local Government and give them options to consider in the future.

More recently we have been involved in the National Recruitment campaign – designed to promote jobs in local authorities which includes radio advertising and national media campaigns.

In a world where it is increasingly competitive to attract the best people, we have overhauled many of our processes to ensure that our onboarding processes are as smooth and efficient as possible, we work closely with managers offering advice and guidance at all stages of the recruitment process.

Close to everyone's heart is the reassurance that each month they will be paid the correct amount at the right time. We assist all staff with pay and pension queries and deal directly with HMRC as required. Along with members of the HR Admin and HR Advisory team, a member of the payroll team attend one of the council depots each month just after payday to provide advice as required.

A key part of the HR service is the Health and Safety Team. They work hard to ensure that we have safe systems of work in place, adhere to safety guidelines and should the worst happen – investigate and then put in place measures to ensure it doesn't happen again. This involves working closely with all managers and employees, sometimes using the art of persuasion to remind them that the quickest way to get the job done is not necessarily the safest.

Forming good, trusting relationships with managers is key for this to happen effectively and to ensuring that matters are raised and reported in the correct way.

Wellbeing for our staff remains a key priority. We aim to support all our staff by providing the Employee Assistance Programme free of charge. We also have the additional in-house Wellbeing Champions, and if necessary, we can support staff with our Occupational Health providers.

We also provide information on a variety of help groups and supporting charities for both physical and mental health and wellbeing issues on our website which can signpost staff so they can access help themselves if they prefer.

As we go into 2025/26 financial year, we will continue to meet the challenges ahead, we know the council will face some difficult times and we will be here to support in the best way that we can.

My thanks as always must go to each member of my team. Without their hard work and dedication, we simply couldn't have achieved everything set out in the following pages. I hope that laying it out like this will help each of them to understand how their own contribution really does make a difference.

The HR Service



Heleana Aylett - Service
Manager HR

Jade Carter –
Payroll Manager



James Loring –
Corporate H&S
Manager



Shannon Smith –
Senior HR Advisor
Advisory Service



Zoe Ormerod –
Senior HR Advisor
Recruitment and
Learning



Administer and process
payments to all NFDC and NPA
staff, Councillors & third parties
HMRC returns & compliance
Provide assistance and training
on iTrent
Internal/external audits
Administration of staff benefits
such as AVC Wise and
Cycle2Work
LGPS administration and
assistance

Act as the council health and
safety competent persons
Accident/Incident Investigation
and reporting
Internal H&S Audits
Corporate Health and Safety
Policy Management
H & S Advice to the NFNPA

Case Management Advice
Organisational Change Advice
Job Evaluation
HR Policies
Occupational Health
Reasonable Adjustments
Benefits
Wellbeing
EDI
HR Reporting
HR Advice to NPA

Full recruitment process
Recruitment events & branding
Induction and onboarding
Work experience
Agency framework
HR Administration
HR Hub System Admin
Learning Management System
Apprenticeships
Graduate Placement Coordinati
on
Employee events

Payroll@nfdc.gov.uk

Jade Carter – Manager

Senior Payroll Officer
Payroll Administrator

Healthandsafety@nfdc.gov.uk

James Loring – Corporate
Health and Safety Manager
Two x Corporate Health and
Safety Advisors
Corporate Health and Safety
Administrator

Hradvisory@nfdc.gov.uk

Shannon Smith – Senior HR
Advisor (maternity cover)

Maternity Leave - Senior HR
Advisor
Two x HR Advisors
Assistant HR Advisor

Hr.admin@nfdc.gov.uk

Zoe Ormerod – Senior HR
Advisor

HR Admin Supervisor
Four x HR Administrators
Learning Co-ordinator
LMS Administrator

PAYROLL



Payroll is an ever changing, integral part of an organisation and the Payroll team strive to ensure we keep up to date with legislation whilst delivering a payroll service which is efficient, helpful and most importantly, correct.

A brief overview of a typical day for us would involve collating all the payroll information for our staff, performing checks in order to pick up on any discrepancies/queries, processing the payroll, ensuring third party payments are made on time, liaising with HMRC and Hampshire Pensions and being on hand to answer any queries from staff and Councillors. We get a wide variety of queries covering many areas of payroll including pay, tax, pensions, retirement and statutory payments.

Over the past year, along with our usual processes, we have spent some time improving our payroll system, ensuring claims are being processed in a timely manner and correctly and also making ourselves more visible throughout the Council. We will continue to concentrate on these areas which help us provide an effective service to the Council's employees and Councillors.

HEALTH AND SAFETY



The Corporate Health and Safety team play a crucial role in the organisation ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of our staff, contractors and members of the public.

Over the past year the team have been working hard to ensuring that suitable health and safety information is available to all our staff via the means of our dedicated SharePoint pages. We have also focused on improving control measures for some of our highest risks such as lone working, with the introduction of the Appello lone working system and Orbis protect panic alarms.

In 2025 - 2026 we will continue to work with all services at New Forest District Council in developing the very best health and safety systems to keep our staff, contractors and members of the public safe.

Our HR Admin team cover a wide range of activities from an end to end recruitment service – from advert through to welcoming new colleagues at induction, attend recruitment events across the district to promote ourselves as an employer of choice, and manage work experience requests.

In addition to this, we manage all aspects of apprenticeships and graduate placement coordination, contract administer the agency workers framework, oversee the iTrent and Learning Management System, acting as system administrators as well as managing system upgrades and associated works, and manage employee related events.

We're keen to continuously develop and evolve the services we offer and always welcome suggestions that we can consider and take forward.

ADVISORY SERVICE



The HR Advisory Team supports each Strategic Directorate within the Council by using a business partnership module with designated HR professionals to align the Council's objectives with people management and support.

Over the past year, the HR Advisory Team successfully delivered key projects including: buying & selling of annual leave policy; essential car user review; Hardley depot move; restructures; new sickness reasons, policies and letter templates; Waste service change; reporting.

As we move into 2025, the team continues to drive important initiatives, such as:

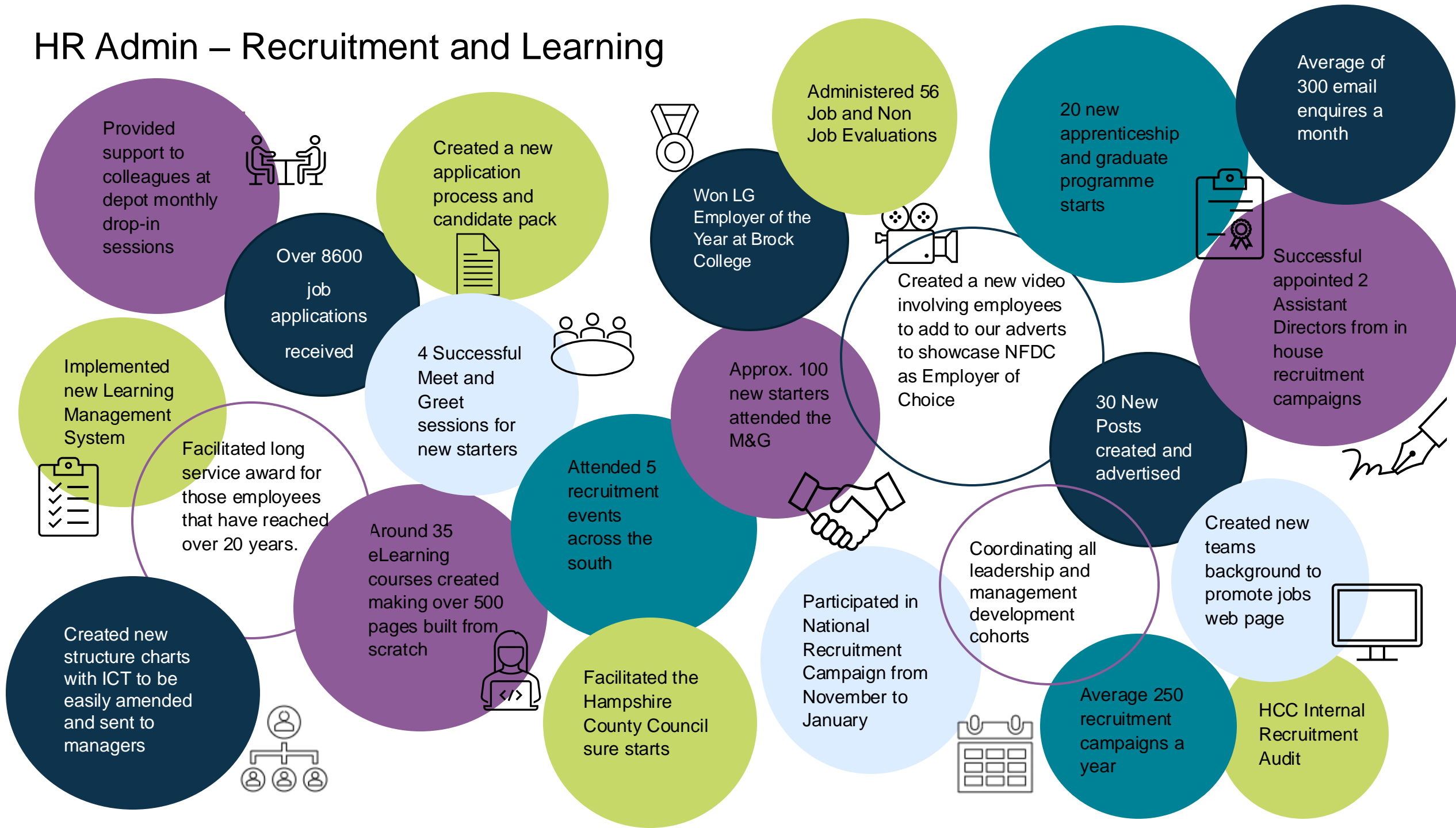
- Support to Waste Transformation Programme (continued)
- Delivering bullying & harassment (including sexual harassment) training
- Expanding HR "Brief Bite" sessions to upskill line managers
- Ensuring HR policies remain compliant and in line with employment law updates
- Enhancing processes to provide employees with supportive management
- End of Fixed-term Process and Redeployment

RECRUITMENT AND LEARNING



HR Admin, Recruitment and Learning

HR Admin – Recruitment and Learning



Recruitment Events

Get Inspired

We were invited by EPB South to attend an event in 2023, this turned out to be very successful and were invited back again last year. Working with local schools and employers around the Hampshire District, it is a great event that showcases the huge variety of job opportunities in our local area. Over 2500 students aged 11-18 attended, which is great exposure to highlight us as an employer of choice and a great place to work. We were joined by colleagues from other services areas which were a great hit with the students. It is really important to us to reach out to as many people as we can to highlight what career options are available at your local council.



Schools, Job Centres & Wembley



We have attended numerous events at our local schools, colleges and job centre and were even invited to Wembley, well the council offices next door, to attend the National Graduate Recruitment event.

We really enjoy attending these events and engaging with the public and students. We get a real sense of achievement when people are surprised to hear about the variety that we employ and that we are not just our front facing service, whilst extremely important, there is more to us than meets the eye.



Apprenticeships, Graduates and Employer of the Year

We have had a record year of apprenticeship and trainee roles, smashing our previous total of 12, we now have 18 apprentices in total comprising of new apprentices and our existing staff currently undertaking apprenticeship training.

Additionally, we have recruited to two new graduate posts. This is a first to us at NFDC utilising the LGA's 'Impact' and 'Pathways to Planning' programmes. Ros and Hannah are making meaningful and valuable contributions to their services and well as continuously learning and developing, proving that the graduate roles have been a worthwhile addition to our early careers' roles.

We were very pleased to be awarded the Employer of the Year award at Brockenhurst College due to the support we give to the college throughout the year.



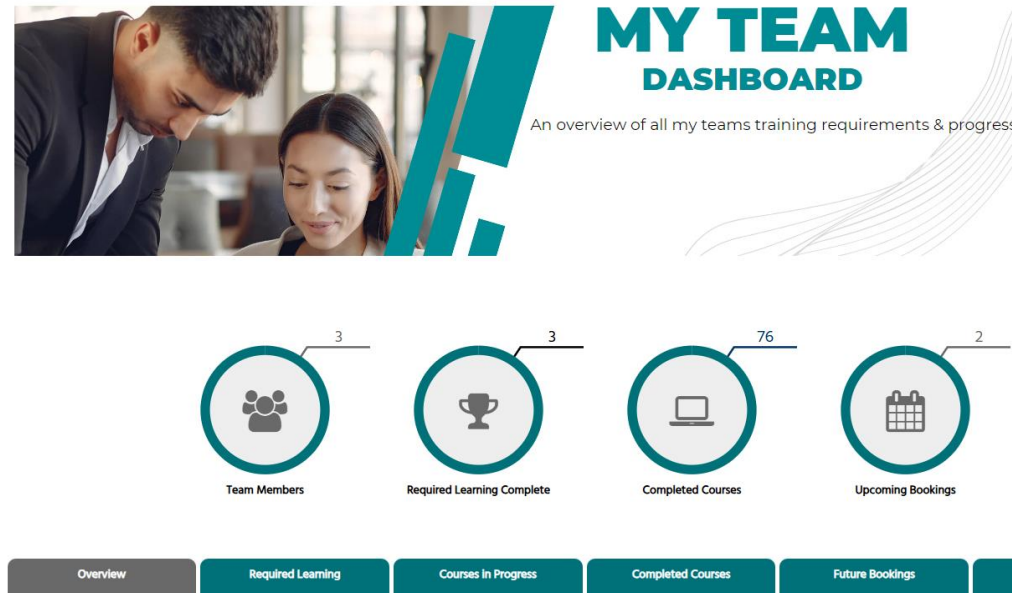
Learning Management System

In April 2024, we went live with our new LMS. This new system allows us to track the completed training for easier but also allows us to keep course content up-to-date and relevant, creating engaging courses to encourage staff development.

The system includes eLearning, 'taught' courses, seminars, webinars and toolbox talks


This system allows employees and managers a one-stop shop to easily track where they are and what modules are required and when they are due.

We have built over 500 course pages and since going live our staff have completed over 10,200 courses.




Payroll Team

Payroll



Annual
Gross pay paid
£28,138,990.74

ANNUAL
NET PAY PAID
£21,093,946.94



Annual LGPS Pension paid by
Employees = £1,724,230.60
Employers = £4,810,795.41

885
employees or
91% of staff paid
into the pension
scheme

93 NFDC
employees paid
into the AVC
pension scheme.
Paying in a total of
£329,033.39

NFDC paid
972
Employees

Completed actions
required to implement the
pay award in November
and backdated payments
to April.

We paid
£159,752.30
in mileage.

13
NFDC employees
received their 20
years
long service award

Paying into the AVC
pension scheme
saved approximately
£65,800.00 in tax and
£26,300.00 in
National Insurance.

We paid
£686,236.08 in
overtime.


Actioned the
payroll for
National Park
Authority

£19,504.04
Was paid over to third
parties by NFDC for
benefits such
as Childcare
vouchers, cycle2work
scheme, charitable
giving

Completed the
annual pay
increments and
market
supplement
process to all
eligible
employees

£12,949.35
was paid to the
unions for
NFDC member
subscriptions

We paid
£42,905.61
statutory maternity pay
SMP



Completed Training
and Assistance in
Toolbox Talks

We paid
£133,743.29
statutory
sick pay
(SSP)

We completed 3
major payroll audits,
along with supporting
our finance team &
NPA with their audits.



Audits

As a council we are audited on a regular basis to ensure that we are compliant with laws, regulations and our company policies. Over the past year we have been involved in three separate payroll audits, as well as assisting the Finance team and the National Park with their audits. Audits can cover a wide array of areas and each one concentrates on a different aspect of payroll. Recent audits have concentrated on our payroll processes, ensuring we are consistent, compliant and accountable. As a team, we strive to process the payroll in a manner which is efficient and accurate and we have many checks in place to support this.

Audits are a time consuming aspect of our job as they are extremely detailed. We spend time with the auditor over a period of weeks or months, demonstrating how we meet the standards that are required of us. The last audit we were involved in took place over a period of 4 months and involved many meetings, collating reports and finding the evidence to support our actions.

At the end of each audit, we are provided with a detailed report on the findings. This gives us any information on what we have done well or if there are any areas in which we can improve. Due to this, audits can be a helpful way of ensuring we are proving an effective payroll service.

Council Depot Visits & National Payroll Week

The Payroll team, along with HR and HR Advisory have been making visits to the council depots. We started to do this as we wanted to be more available to staff so that if they have any queries or questions regarding their pay, or anything payroll/HR related, they can pop in and speak to us in person. This has been very popular with staff who have welcomed the visits as they prefer being able to speak to someone face to face rather than over the phone or having to send an email. The visits have helped staff get to grips with using the HR hub – ESS so they are more confident about how to submit claims, amend their personal details, book holiday etc. But it has also let them get to know us as people, which in turn we hope makes them feel more comfortable about contacting us if they do have a query or question. The payroll team recently made our first visit to the new depot in Hardley Industrial Estate where we were able to help staff with how to claim their relocation mileage after moving from the Claymeadow Depot. We will continue to make our monthly visits going forwards so we can support our employees.

We also provided sessions for all employees online and in person for National Payroll Week – during these sessions we gave information and updates to staff about everything payroll related and staff had the opportunity to ask any questions. We had uptake within the sessions but would love to see more staff at future sessions.

New Forest National Park Authority (NPA)

Alongside processing the payroll for NFDC, we also complete the monthly payroll for NPA. We process this in the same way as our NFDC payroll, ensuring all entries are accurate and liaising with their HR lead to gather the required information in order to pay their employees.

We process all payroll aspects such as starters, leavers, contract changes and various payroll elements such as First Aid allowance and Fire Warden Allowance. We deal with absences and statutory payments including sick pay, maternity, paternity and adoption.

We are also responsible for filing their returns with HMRC and ensuring necessary payments are made promptly. This extends to any third parties they use, such as pension and unions. We administer the deductions and are responsible for uploading monthly schedules.

As well as this, we administer the pension, including auto-enrolment, monthly pension remittances, the pension annual return and informing Hampshire Pensions of any changes in employment.

We implement any pay awards and annual increments, as well as ensuring pension tables are up to date.



LGPS – Hampshire Pension Fund

NFDC & NPA employees have the benefit of being in the Local Government Pension Scheme. All new staff with a contract lasting three months or more, will be enrolled into the scheme upon commencement of their employment. We must also adhere to auto enrolment rules from the Pension Regulator. This requires us to perform a triennial task of bringing any employee that meet certain conditions relating to age and earnings back into the main section of the scheme if they have opted out or joined the 50/50 section.

The Hampshire Pension Fund of the LGPS is administered by Pension Services at Hampshire County Council so we liaise with them regularly to ensure that they have all the required information to process members pensions. This includes updating them with starter and leaver details on a monthly basis, as well as updating member records if they change post or increase/decrease their working hours. We must also inform them of any absences which result in a break in pensionable service such as unpaid leave or strike breaks. We do this via the Employer Portal.

The Member Portal is available for all members to sign up to so they can keep track of their pension details, update their personal information and review their annual benefit statements. This is reported on periodically and we contact staff to try and encourage them to engage with their workplace pension as early as possible in their working life.

Each month once we have deducted contributions from our employee's salary, we must reconcile these and then pay them over to the Hampshire Pension Fund as well as the contributions from NFDC & NPA for each member. The employer contributions that NFDC pay are currently 18.4% which on average is approximately three times the amount that the employee pays. NPA pay 17.5% employer contributions.

Annually we must update Pension Services with all members contributions and salary details for the previous year. This is a very time consuming but important task which we hope to complete without queries again this year.

In addition to these regular processes we also deal with adhoc queries from employees and Pension Services which can include checking service history or financial details, estimate requests for various types of retirements (eg, flexible or ill health) or change of personal circumstances (eg, divorce) and general questions regarding the scheme (eg, how pensions can be increased by the making of additional voluntary contributions).

The LGPS is very much part of our daily work in the Payroll team!

My Money Matters

NFDC works in partnership with My Money Matters to offer a free online platform to our employees which gives them access to a tailored financial health check, educational webinars and use products and services suggested to them. This platform gives employees the chance to make additional voluntary contributions towards their pension. This is also known as a Shared Cost AVC.

A shared cost AVC is a cost-efficient way to save for retirement in addition to the LGPS. The AVC could be taken as a tax-free lump sum or it can be used to help an employee retire early. If an employee opts to pay into an AVC they sign a salary sacrifice agreement which not only gives the employee savings on their tax and national insurance contributions but it also gives NFDC savings on employer NI contributions and also savings made into the apprenticeship levy. There is however a requirement when an employee sets up an AVC that their contribution does not reduce their pay to below the National Living Wage and payroll have a requirement to check this for every employee before each pay run and the AVC amount would need to be reduced or cancelled if this took an employee below this threshold.

HR Advisory Team

HR Advisory Team



9 Flexible Working requests supported

105 instances of paid Support Leave granted.
89 instances of Compassionate/Bereavement leave granted.

Reviewed and relaunched Sickness Procedure

Conducted the Waste Transformation Project to ensure the service runs effectively and efficiently

Introduced Buying and Selling of Leave policy

Developed the Case Management Framework to ensure managers are aware of and feel supported by HR on all of their Employee Relations matters

Supporting Employee Forum

23 Freedom of Information requests completed

Council wide review of Essential Car Users to promote a positive move to net zero



9 Wellbeing Walks organised



Undertook and facilitated 25 Job Evaluation panels

Launched the LGBT+ employee led network

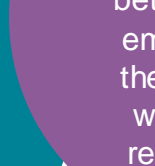
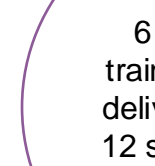
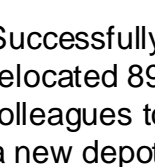
Implemented Proactive Service Area Discussions to provide an overview of activity in each service and direct HR support to managers

61 attendees to our new Management Development Programme

Attendance at depots – monthly drop in sessions



Successfully relocated 89 colleagues to a new depot



More robust monitoring of sickness absence alerts to provide better support to employees and their health and wellbeing and reduce council sickness levels

Continued our HR Advisory support to the NPA

Launched a 'SafeSpace' at Appletree Court to provide a space for people to unwind, practice their faith or breastfeed

9 people supported with Maternity leave
9 people supported with Paternity leave
6 instances of Parental leave

Reviewed B & H policy to include Sexual Harassment

Developed an Employee Relations Case Decision Log to document our thoughts and decisions when working on Employee Relations cases

Performed an entire restructure of the Housing and Communities service area



Policy Review

We have reviewed policies and procedures to ensure they remain in line with employment law and best practice. In the past financial year, we have reviewed and updated 12 HR policies.

A review of our family policies included the addition of carers leave, and a council wide roll out of our buying and selling annual leave policy. We have also reviewed our bullying and harassment policy as part of our duty to prevent sexual harassment. Our sickness policy was reviewed which saw long and short-term sickness being separated into two policies and all appendices, such as template letters and return to work forms being updated.

By reviewing our policies and procedures periodically, and as and when new changes arise, the HR Advisory team are able to provide robust resources to managers to enable them to manage employee relations issues within their teams with confidence.

Hardley Depot

From 10th February 2025, we have started operating from our new depot at Hardley Industrial Estate.

This marks a significant milestone in the council's long-term plan to expand our fleet and enhance frontline services.

The HR Advisory team have played a key part in delivering this change to ensure all staff involved are considered and consulted with to ensure a smooth transition to our new place of operation. The Corporate Health and Safety team were responsible for completing the fire evacuation procedures and security procedures for the depot.



LGBT+ Employee Group

The HR Advisory team launched the LGBT+ employee group in 2024.

It is a staff led group, that works to help make the council a diverse, inclusive workplace, aligned with our organisational values.

The group provides an informal network to connect with colleagues, safely discuss issues related to the LGBT+ community, support each other and share our knowledge and experience.



Proactive Service Area Discussions

Using our new business partner structure the Advisory team, have been able to have proactive conversations with Service Managers to keep them informed of Employee Relations matters within their service, provide support and ensure they know we are on hand for advice when required.

Our HR Advisors schedule time at least one a month to discuss HR matters, where cases are at, upcoming HR matters and reflect on past cases to build those relationships and reiterate our support.

In future, we hope to provide an even easier way for service managers to get an overview of HR matters within their service, as we look to develop a case management system using Power BI.



Waste Transformation

Waste Transformation has been underway throughout this financial year and the HR Advisory team have been vital in facilitating this huge change ensuring all employees are considered and consulted upon every aspect of change within the service.

The team have attended and facilitated many meetings involved in this process, including follow up consultation meetings and even attending the depots at 05:30 to be flexible in supporting our staff and the service.

Away Space

The team have worked hard this past year to ensure we embrace Equality, Diversity and inclusion and promote this at NFDC.

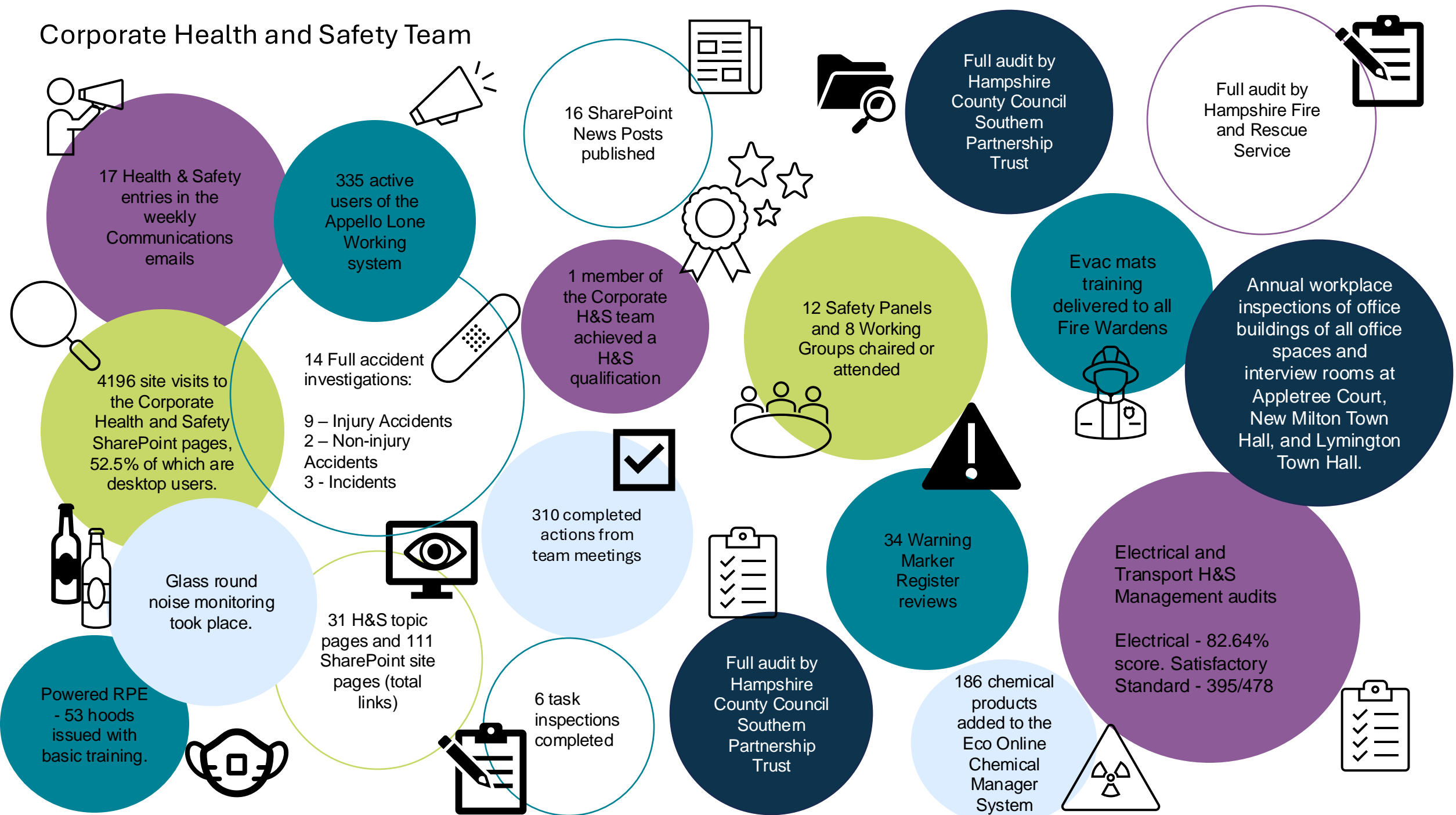
Our away space is to support all colleagues for the purpose of quiet contemplation, meditation, time out, prayer or to observe religious practices. The room is open to all colleagues, irrespective of their religion or belief, or those with no religion or belief.

The room is a neutral space to be accessible to all colleagues. It is to be respected by all colleagues so that everyone benefits from this space, this will include low noise levels and leaving the room as it is found.



Corporate Health and Safety Team

Corporate Health and Safety Team



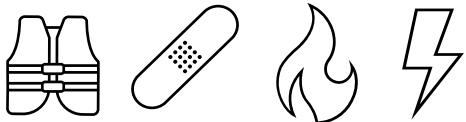


SharePoint pages

The Corporate Health and Safety team have created 31 Health and Safety topic SharePoint pages which are available to the council via the Corporate Health and Safety SharePoint pages. A further 2 SharePoint pages are currently under development (Health and Safety Policies and Depots)

The topics covered are:

Abuse, Violence and Confrontation, Accidents, Incidents and Near Misses, Asbestos, Alcohol and Drugs, Control of Contractors, Construction Design, Management, COSHH, Confined Spaces, Display Screen Equipment, Driving for Work, Dust, Electricity at Work, Emergency Procedures, Fire, First Aid at Work, Home Working, Hot Works, Infections and Diseases, Lone Working, Manual Handling, Needlesticks and Sharps, Outdoor Working, Personal Protective Equipment, Risk Assessment, Respiratory Protective Equipment, Safety Panels and Working Groups, Toolbox Talks, Training, Warning Marker Register, Wellbeing, Working at Height.



WMR transition to SharePoint

The Corporate Health and Safety team have been working hard to create a new and improved Warning Marker Register (WMR). The new version will be available in spring/summer 2025 and will be accessible via SharePoint.

The new WMR will eventually fully replace the current WMR however, existing WMR will still be available for a short period whilst the background work takes place.

The new WMR is expected to be fully functioning and accessible by May 2025. The new WMR will be accessible on all council devices including work mobile phone devices via newly created app.



Accident statistics

Employee

- A total of 230 employee accidents were reported to the Corporate Health and Safety team in the 2024/25 financial year, 11 of which were RIDDOR reportable.
- A total of 52 employee near misses were reported to the Corporate Health and Safety team in 2024/25.
- Over 420 working days were lost due to injury and illness in 2024/25 - that's the equivalent of an employee being off for nearly a whole year!
- The top reported accidents/incidents by employees by cause were verbal abuse, carrying, lifting, handling and slip, trip and falls.
- The top reporting teams were Housing Maintenance and Waste and Recycling and Grounds Maintenance.

Member of public

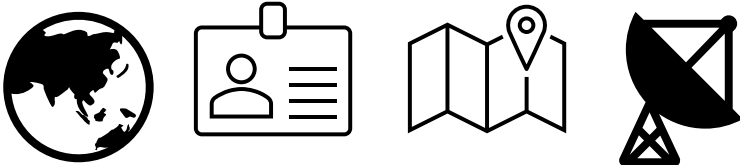
- A total of 93 member of public accidents were reported to the Corporate Health and Safety team in the 2024/25 financial year.
- The top reported accidents/incidents by members of the public by type were cuts and superficial injuries.

Lone Worker Safety

Following a review of the council's lone working policies and procedures in 2024, it was identified that requirement for a lone working system which includes a panic alarm function was essential. Following rigorous testing of several lone working safety solutions coordinated by the Corporate Health and Safety team, the council have chosen Orbis as the provider and the Orbis Red Alert lone working ID badge holder system.

This system will be used for all individuals/teams identified as higher risk lone workers and has been rolled out across the council. This is in addition to the already implemented Appello lone working management system for low-risk lone workers.

[Lone Working](#)



Training

The Corporate Health and Safety team, with the support of the LMS Administrator have collated LMS training data reports and statistics for each of the directorates for each of the quarterly Safety Panels on 4 occasions. The data reflects the complete/incomplete modules on the LMS system and allows for managers to identify the progress towards completion of the mandatory training modules.

2025 saw the roll out of the IOSH Managing Safely course for managers and supervisors.

First Aider training took place in 2025.

Evac mat training was delivered to all First Aiders in early 2025.

Corporate Health and Safety Advisor George Gale is currently studying towards the NEBOSH Level 6 National Diploma for Occupational Health and Safety. Management Professionals.

Corporate Health and Safety Administrator Toby Molineaux successfully passed the level 3 NEBOSH General Certificate in Occupational Health and Safety.



Joint Projects

In 2024 the Corporate Health and Safety team conducted risk assessments and oversaw the health and safety of various polling stations during the local government elections.

The team have continued to support our colleagues at the New Forest National Park Authority and have assisted with various queries and information requests, as well as policy sharing.

A full noticeboard information overhaul at the depots and information offices was conducted, displaying the latest versions of the Corporate Health and Safety Policy Statement and contact details of the council's Wellbeing Champions, Fire Wardens, First Aiders, Serious Incident Officers and Employee Safety Representatives.

The team conducted demonstrations of the latest Respiration Protective Equipment (RPE) in the form of masks and hoods to the employees at Marsh Lane Depot, training operatives in their correct use.

