

Staffing Matters and Urgency Committee

22 January 2024

Report of the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development

Workforce Profile as at Quarter 2 2023/2024

Summary

1. This report provides the Staffing Matters and Urgency Committee (SMUC) with the workforce profile, covering the period of 1 July to 30 September 2023 (Quarter 2).

Background

2. The data provided in this report is already available throughout the Council. The workforce data provided through the performance framework, is discussed at both Corporate Management Team and Directorate Management Teams.

Analysis

3. **Annex A** gives a full overview of key performance indicators directly linked to the Council's workforce.
4. Headcount, new starters, resignations and leavers rates are all lower in comparison to the Q2 position in 2022.

	Q2 2022	Q2 2023	Trend
Headcount	2523	2023	Decrease
FTE	2113	2186	Increase
Average Days Sickness	13.0 days	11.3 days	Decrease
New Starters	233	208	Decrease
Leavers	217	170	Decrease
Resignations	72%	64%	Decrease
Retirements	17%	24%	Increase

5. Sadly, death in service remains a steady figure within the reasons for leaving at 3% (2.4% in Q2 in 2022). Resignations are lower this quarter compared to Q2 last year and remain the highest reason for leaving, but retirements are higher this quarter than Q2 in 2022

and reflects the age profile of the Council's workforce, where the highest age category of our workforce is 50 to 64 years old (46%).

6. Resignations continue to remain in line with regional figures and despite financial challenges around the region and nationally there continues to be vacancies advertised providing new opportunities, promotions and career changes for staff to apply. Figures in the public sector overall are anticipated to change as Councils face the difficulty of balancing budgets in the current climate of reduced funds and increased costs. City of York Council will, in the next year, see changes in the workforce profile as the need to downsize is required to meet a balanced budget.
7. Linking starters and leavers there is a reduction in turnover this quarter compared to Q2 in 2022; 14% v 16.3%. Following the Committee's request further analysis has been provided on resignation information in the workforce profile Annex A including tables 1.11 and 1.12 showing age and grades of those employee who resign. More detailed information is not available on reasons for leaving other than information shown in table 1.6; the Council does not collect where an employee is moving to, for example to another local authority, private sector, to take up university / further education to spend time with dependents etc.
8. Looking at the data, voluntary leavers; those who chose to leave the Council and resign, are mostly aged between 50 and 64, this links with increased retirement numbers but also statistically, this is the age band nationally where employees make career choices to either reduce hours and responsibilities or conversely take their next career step before retirement or they chose to retire.
9. The age band of 50 to 64 is the highest workforce age band of the Council's workforce. The average age of the workforce has reduced slightly over the years (now 46 years old), and this age band makes up 46% of the Council's workforce, slightly higher than the percentage of Yorkshire and Humber (43%) and England from the Census data (41%).
10. Work with York (WWY) assignments have continued to be used but have significantly reduced. Agency placements are falling month on month as the Council seeks to make permanent appointments or reduce agency spend. Notable reductions are in Children's and Adult Social Care who now have a much more stable and permanent workforce for the benefit of our service users. Presented in the annex are Q2 figures and there are further

reductions in agency evident in Q3 which will be presented to the Committee in March.

11. Cost control measures are in place across the Council to ensure that spend and budgets are controlled, as such when a post becomes vacant, some remain unfilled or alternative options are considered including acting up arrangements for existing members of staff. HR are working with relevant managers to ensure creative recruitment for hard to fill vacancies that need to be filled. Wellbeing is at the heart of all considerations, employees are not expected to work excessive hours to cover unfilled vacant roles, and decisions around priorities and ways of working have to be considered in more creative ways.
12. Sickness absence figures are starting to fall slowly. The Council does have several employees who are on long term sickness with terminal illness, for these employees we explore ill health retirement options but employee absence continues to be part of the absence figures, this may in some cases distort absence figures in some directorates.
13. In September 2023 the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) presented a benchmark figure for absence as part of their Health and Wellbeing at Work report, this report was paused during COVID. Across all working sectors, the CIPD quoted an average level of employee absence of 7.8 days per employee and the highest level of absence reported for over a decade. The report acknowledges significant differences in the way in which absence is reported so comparisons like for like are very difficult. For the public sector the average absence is quoted as 10.6 days, the Council average sits at 11.3 days only slightly higher, this is a reduction from 13 days reported in Q2 in 2022. Discussions with other regional Yorkshire and Humber Councils confirms that City of York are comparable in terms of sickness absence trends; figures are higher in social care, days absent are steadying after the pandemic recovery period and absence rates tend to reduce in Q4.
14. In terms of reasons for absence the CIPD report mentions, minor illness, muscular skeletal and stress / mental health as the most common reasons for absence. This mirrors the Council's absence reasons which at November 2023 were Stress, Muscular skeletal and Other Reason (minor illnesses).
15. The Local Government Association (LGA) has published that they propose to set up a benchmarking survey on key workforce

statistics for Councils and it is understood that this will include absence; this will not however, dictate how sickness is calculated so there will continue to be variances so direct comparisons will be difficult.

16. We are currently preparing for the next employee survey, which will be launched at the end of January. The survey will include a focus on well being and this can be reported accordingly alongside absence reasons.
17. In terms of equalities profiling, the workforce gender and age distribution remain largely comparable year on year. Similarly, the declaration of sexual orientation and disability remains largely the same, there are slight increases of those employees declaring BME and disability.
18. We continue to promote and request that employees update their sensitive information (for example disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation) status to allow us to have a closer comparison with our local community.
19. In practical terms we are also working to ensure that our recruitment opportunities are sent to a wide range of community groups to attract and ensure that these are promoted to as many areas as possible of our community. We are also going to undertake a calculation similar to the gender pay gap on the data that we hold on ethnicity and disability with the caveat that this can only be based on the data that we hold but hopefully promotion and awareness can encourage future completion. This will be prepared for 31 March 2024.
20. The Council is currently working with an Equality/Inclusion Consultant and developing the Councils draft Equalities for Local Government (EFLG) Assessment which will also make recommendations on possible actions to assist with creating a more diverse workforce.

Consultation

21. The contents of the report and Annex have not been consulted on as the data is factual and already available through different sources.

Council Plan

22. The content of the report and annex are not material to the Council Plan but are valuable information to contribute to relevant workforce data evidence and the profile of the workforce has been included in the Council Plan 2023-2027.

Implications and risks

23. There are no implications or risks associated with this report.

Risk Management

24. N/A.

Recommendations

25. Staffing Matters and Urgency Committee is asked to:
- i. Note the report and workforce profile provided in **Annex A**.

Reason: In order to provide an overview of the workforce profile.

Contact Details

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Ian Floyd
Chief Operating Officer

Report Approved

Date

✓

10 January 2024

Specialist Implications Officer(s): N/A

Wards Affected: *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

All ✓

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

Previous Workforce Profile Reports;
Quarter 2 2022 (20th February 2022)

<https://democracy.york.gov.uk/documents/s165554/Workforce%20Profile%20Report%20SMUC%20February%202023.pdf>

<https://democracy.york.gov.uk/documents/s165555/Annex%201%20-%20CYC%20Workforce%20Profile%20Report%202022%20Q2.pdf>

Quarter 1 2023 (2nd October 2023)

<https://democracy.york.gov.uk/documents/s170083/Workforce%20Profile%20Report%20SMUC%20October%202023.pdf>

<https://democracy.york.gov.uk/documents/s170084/Annexe%20A%20-%20CYC%20Workforce%20Profile%20Report%202023-24%20Q1%20v1.pdf>

Annexes

Annex A – Workforce Data 2023/2024 Quarter 2