



A meeting of the **EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE** will be held in **THE CIVIC SUITE (LANCASTER/STIRLING ROOMS), PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON, PE29 3TN** on **WEDNESDAY, 23 JULY 2025** at **7:00 PM** and you are requested to attend for the transaction of the following business:-

## **AGENDA**

### **APOLOGIES:**

**Contact Officer: L Adams**  
**01480 388234**

#### **1. MINUTES (Pages 5 - 12)**

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 25th February 2025 & 15th May 2025.

**Contact Officer: L Adams**  
**01480 388234**

#### **2. MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

To receive from Members declarations as to disclosable pecuniary, other registerable and non-registerable interests in relation to any Agenda item. See Notes below.

**Contact Officer: L Adams**  
**01480 388234**

#### **3. WORKFORCE INFORMATION REPORT (QUARTER 4) (Pages 13 - 30)**

To consider an update on HR matters impacting on the performance of the organisation.

**Contact Officer: L Harfield**  
**01480 388569**

**4. WORKFORCE PROFILE REPORT (Pages 31 - 42)**

To consider and comment on the Workforce Profile.

**Contact Officer: L Harfield  
01480 388569**

**5. USE OF CONSULTANTS, HIRED STAFF & TEMPORARY STAFF 2024/2025  
(Pages 43 - 50)**

Members are asked to comment on the report and note its contents.

**Contact Officer: S Jones  
01480 388214**

**6. WORKFORCE STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN UPDATE (Pages 51 - 62)**

To receive an update on the Workforce Strategy.

**Contact Officer: L Harfield  
01480 388569**

**7. HR POLICY UPDATES (Pages 63 - 80)**

The Committee is asked to consider and endorse the updated policies.

**Contact Officer: L Harfield  
01480 388569**

**8. REPRESENTATIVES OF EMPLOYEES**

At the request of representatives of employees to consider a range of issues.

**Contact Officer:**

15 day of July 2025

***Michelle Sacks***

Chief Executive and Head of Paid  
Service

**Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and other Registerable and Non-Registerable Interests.**

Further information on [Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and other Registerable and Non-Registerable Interests is available in the Council's Constitution](#)

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**Please contact Anthony Roberts ,Democratic Services, Tel: 01480 388169 / email [Anthony.Roberts@huntingdonshire.gov.uk](mailto:Anthony.Roberts@huntingdonshire.gov.uk) if you have a general query on any Agenda Item, wish to tender your apologies for absence from the meeting, or would like information on any decision taken by the Committee/Panel.**

Specific enquiries with regard to items on the Agenda should be directed towards the Contact Officer.

Members of the public are welcome to attend this meeting as observers except during consideration of confidential or exempt items of business.

Agenda and enclosures can be viewed on the [District Council's website](#).

### **Emergency Procedure**

In the event of the fire alarm being sounded and on the instruction of the Meeting Administrator, all attendees are requested to vacate the building via the closest emergency exit.

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## HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE held in THE CIVIC SUITE (LANCASTER/STIRLING ROOMS), PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON, PE29 3TN on Tuesday, 25th February 2025

PRESENT: Councillor A Blackwell – Chair.

Councillors S Cawley, S A Howell, P A Jordan, P Kadewere, D N Keane and C Lowe.

APOLOGY: An apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor L Davenport-Ray.

### **23 MINUTES**

Subject to the deletion of Councillor P Kadewere from the attendees, the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 20th November 2024 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### **24 MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

No declarations were received.

### **25 WORKFORCE INFORMATION REPORT QUARTER THREE 2024-25**

The Committee received and noted a report on Human Resources (HR) matters impacting on the performance of the Council during the period 1st October to 31st December 2024. The report included the latest position and trends relating to employee numbers, salary costs and sickness absence. A copy of the report is appended in the Minute Book.

The Committee was informed that at 668 the total number of employees at the end of the last quarter was slightly higher than at the end of the previous quarter and that the total spend on pay costs for employees in 2024/25 was forecasted to be £1.119m higher than the year's budget. The report also indicated that three employees had retired in the quarter. Members recognised the employees' achievements and asked that their congratulations be passed on.

The Committee commented on the positive sickness trends reported and expressed appreciation of the role of HR in bringing them about. Following a question by Councillor Cawley on a related subject, Members were informed that the key to dealing with long-term sickness was to maintain contact with employees from an early stage and to refer them to occupational health so any required additional support could be put in place. In addition, under the Absence Management Policy, managers and HR were involved in the process. The Employees Representative Group and the Union also were involved. It was emphasized that, generally, HR had a role in ensuring that all managers followed the Policy.

In response to questions by Councillor Jordan, it was confirmed that Occupational Health services were provided by an external organisation and that the service was regularly reviewed to ensure it met the Council's requirements. Following a recent review, the waiting time for the service had been reduced to two days, but this could be expedited when necessary.

Councillor Cawley mentioned the positive trend in the number of HR cases that were active and, following a question, was advised of the formal procedures that might be used in this respect, including disciplinary procedures.

At the conclusion of their deliberations on the report, the Chief Executive referred to the importance of training for managers. The view had been expressed in focus groups that managers would benefit from internal training and therefore, training sessions had been booked. The purpose was to provide managers with support.

Having recognised the achievements of the apprentices, it was

**RESOLVED**

- a) that the contents of the report be noted, and
- b) that the Council place on record its recognition of and gratitude for the excellent contribution made by the employees who have recently retired from employment in the local government service and pass on its best wishes for a long and happy retirement.

## **26 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2025/2026**

With the assistance of a report by the Strategic HR Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Committee considered the draft 2025/2026 Pay Policy Statement. The Statement provided information about the Council's policies relating to the pay and reward of Chief Officers and other employees, as required by the Localism Act. Members were informed that the Statement would be published on the Council's website together with data on Senior Officers' salaries as required by the Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency. Whereupon, it was

**RESOLVED**

that the Council be recommended to approve the Pay Policy Statement for 2025/2026.

## **27 GENDER PAY GAP REPORT - MARCH 2024**

Consideration was given to the Council's Gender Pay Gap Report, which had been prepared by the Interim Head of HR (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book). The Report was based on the Council's employees as of 31st March 2024. The Council was legally required to publish gender pay gap information each year. Members' attention was drawn to the fact that the Mean Pay Gap was -1.6%, which indicated the extent to which women earned on average more per hour than their male counterparts. Members were informed

that this demonstrated the Council's ability to recruit and retain an equal workforce.

The Committee discussed the Mean Bonus Pay Gap. Following questions by Councillors Keane and Cawley, it was reported that the figures related to honorariums and showed they were higher for women. Honorariums were based on the level of additional work carried out and were granted at the discretion of managers. They were signed off by Heads of Services. HR had oversight of the payments to monitor for anomalies and ensure they complied with the guidance on accepted reasons for payment of honorariums.

RESOLVED

that the Gender Pay Gap Report – March 2024 be endorsed for publication.

## **28 WORKFORCE STRATEGY UPDATE**

By means of a presentation (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) Kiran Hans, HR Manager – Project Delivery, provided the Committee with an update on the Workforce Strategy. During the presentation, reference was made to actions completed against the Action Plan, including holding roadshows to capture employees' views, establishing a Buddy Scheme, revising the Employee Handbook, securing new support services for employees and the completion of a workshop on introducing objectives at all levels of the Council. Having then seen a video on iCare, Members were acquainted with the next priorities in the Action Plan, which related to electric vehicles, One Leisure discounts for employees, access to ICT for all employees and the social committee.

Following a question by Councillor Lowe, the Committee was informed that all new starters were invited to a session where Directors welcomed them to the Council. The Chief Executive added that to ensure she was accessible to employees, she held regular drop-in sessions and produced a "Friday e-mail" each week to maintain a channel of communication.

After a further question by Councillor Cawley on the Action Plan priorities, the Chief Executive emphasised that employee benefits were key to recruitment and that by hosting a live document containing responses to employees' feedback and requests, the Council was able to build organisation wide trust and confidence.

RESOLVED

that the information presented be received and noted.

## **29 HR POLICY UPDATE - FLEXIBLE WORKING SCHEME**

By means of a report by the Acting Strategic HR Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Committee was acquainted with the outcome of a review of the Flexible Working Policy. The change meant all employees below Director level were eligible for flexitime. The format of the Policy also had been amended.

In response to questions by Councillor Cawley, the Acting Strategic HR Manager stated that the Council had adopted a process and form to enable line managers to determine requests for flexible working. The law only permitted the Council to refuse such requests for certain reasons and the Council was required to demonstrate why it could not accommodate a request. If refusal was being considered, Human Resources would be involved so that the Policy was followed. However, generally, the Council tried to accommodate requests. It was suggested that the decision criteria should be incorporated into the procedure document, and that the Policy should refer to the procedure.

Councillor Cawley asked further questions on how the Council balanced its own business needs with those of individuals and whether decisions to allow flexible working were reviewed. In response, the Committee was informed that managers were encouraged to review flexible working arrangements, and that advice was provided on how to proceed if they were not working. This would be incorporated into the procedure document.

After a question by Councillor Cawley about hybrid working, the Chief Executive reported that this was the subject of a review by Internal Audit and further consideration would be given to it in light of the outcome of that review. Having received a comment by Councillor Lowe that the review should cover mental health, it was

RSOLVED

that the Flexible Working Policy be endorsed.

### **30 REPRESENTATIVES OF EMPLOYEES**

David Pope, Employee Representative, informed Members that the main issue for employees was Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). The impact of LGR had been mitigated by open communication with employees. This was demonstrated by the drive to show employees that they were valued. Mr Pope welcomed the fact that employees were being engaged with.

### **31 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

RESOLVED

that the press and public be excluded from the meeting because the business to be transacted contains exempt information:

- relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information);
- relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority; and
- in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.

### **32 LEISURE UPDATE**

By means of a presentation by the Head of Leisure and Health (a copy of which is appended in the Annex to the Minute Book) the Committee gave consideration to exempt information relating to One Leisure. Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED

that the information presented be received and noted.

**33      WORKFORCE STRATEGY AND DUE DILIGENCE FOR LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION**

The Committee gave consideration to an exempt report by the Head of Paid Service (a copy of which is appended in the Annex to the Minute Book) on the Workforce Strategy and due diligence for Local Government Reorganisation. Members discussed the matters raised and accordingly

RESOLVED

that the recommendations contained in the exempt report now submitted be endorsed

Chair

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# HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE held in THE CIVIC SUITE (LANCASTER/STIRLING ROOMS), PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON, PE29 3TN on Thursday, 15th May 2025

PRESENT: Councillor Councillors A Blackwell, S Cawley, L Davenport-Ray, S A Howell, P A Jordan, P Kadewere, D N Keane and C Lowe.

APOLOGIES: None.

## **1 ELECTION OF CHAIR**

RESOLVED

that Councillor A Blackwell be elected Chair of the Committee for the ensuing Municipal Year.

## **2 MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

No declarations of interests were received.

## **3 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR**

RESOLVED

that Councillor P Kadewere be appointed Vice-Chair of the Committee for the ensuing Municipal Year.

Chair

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## Workforce Report Quarter Four 2024-25

### Report Highlights

Report Section	Measure	Trend	Q3 2024/25	Q4 2024/25
1.1	<a href="#">Headcount</a>	↑	668	687
1.1	<a href="#">FTE</a>	↑	608.28	620.13
1.2	<a href="#">Variable Employees</a>	↑	372	400
1.4	<a href="#">High Earners</a>	↓	57	55
1.5	<a href="#">Leavers</a>	↓	33	21
1.6	<a href="#">Turnover</a>	↑	17.5%	19%
1.7	<a href="#">Employment Offers Made</a>	↓	80	59
2.0	<a href="#">Sickness Days Lost per FTE</a>	↓	8.5	8.3
2.3	<a href="#">Sickness Absence – Long-Term</a>	↑	41.1%	54.45%
3.0	<a href="#">HR Caseload</a>	↑	72	95
3.1	<a href="#">HR Caseload – Sickness Absence Management</a>	↓	55.5%	53.6%
			2024/25 Budget	Q4 Forecast
1.3	<a href="#">Pay bill – Total</a>	↑	£30.7m	£31.9m
1.3	<a href="#">Pay bill – Employees</a>	↑	£30.4m	£30.3m
1.3	<a href="#">Pay bill – Contract &amp; Agency Staff</a>	↑	£0.3m	£1.6m

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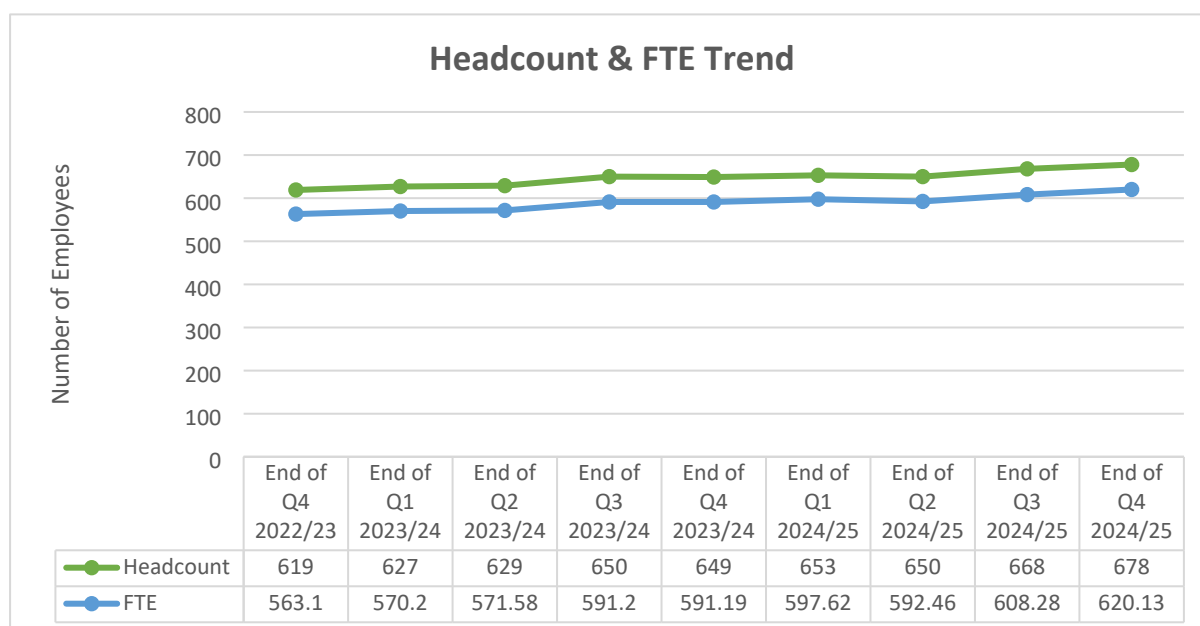
## 1.0 EMPLOYEE PROFILE

**Definition: Headcount** is the number of employees working within the Council, counting primary roles only, and excluding casual roles.

A **full time equivalent** (referred to as FTE) is a measure of an employee's workload to make the position comparable across the workforce based on a 37-hour full-time working week. For example, an FTE of 0.5 indicates that the employee works half of a full-time working week (18.5 hours).

### 1.1 HEADCOUNT AND FTE

At the end of Quarter Four (31 March 2025), the total number of permanent and fixed term employees employed by Huntingdonshire District Council was 678 (excluding those employed on a variable or casual hour basis) with the number of full-time equivalent posts at 620.13.

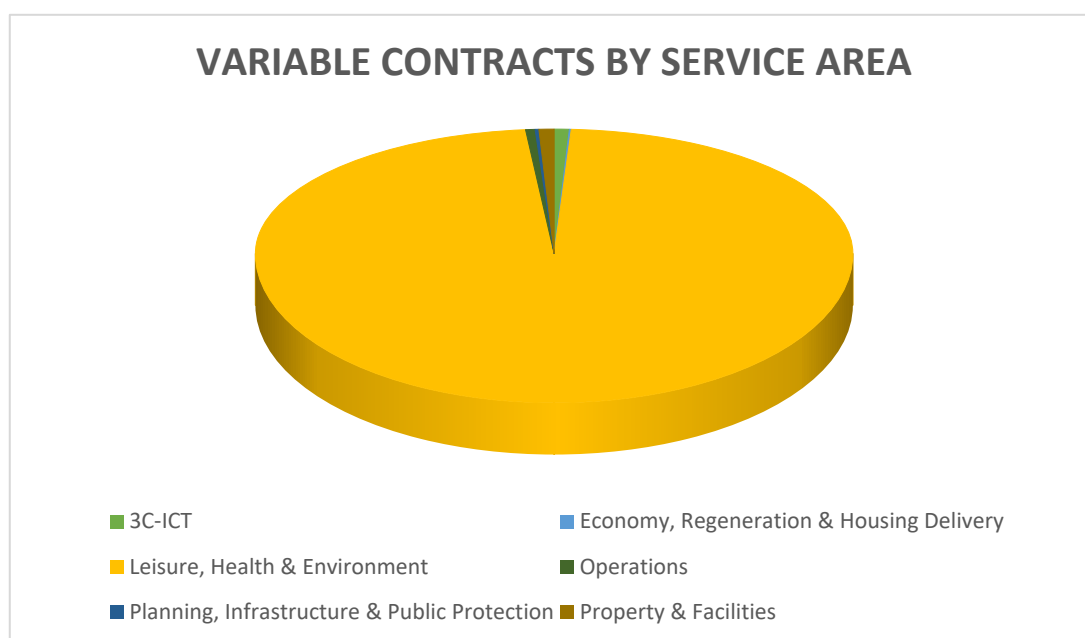


### 1.2 WORKFORCE BY CONTRACT TYPE

Data on Variable employees (zero hours basis contracts) is included in the below table. However, data on Variables are not included in the other areas of the workforce reporting. Variables are typically employed in multiple positions across Leisure services; though a small number of Variables are employed in Operations, Recovery Services, and ICT. At the end of Q4, HDC had 400 individuals employed in 820 posts. This is an increase from Q3.

The numbers in the table below may vary as they include employees with multiple contracts/ positions.

Employment Type	Q3 2024/25	Q4 2024/25
Fixed Term	43	42
Permanent	600	613
Apprentice	2	3
Secondment/Acting Up	29	20
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>674</b>	<b>678</b>
Variable employees	372 (751)	400 (820)



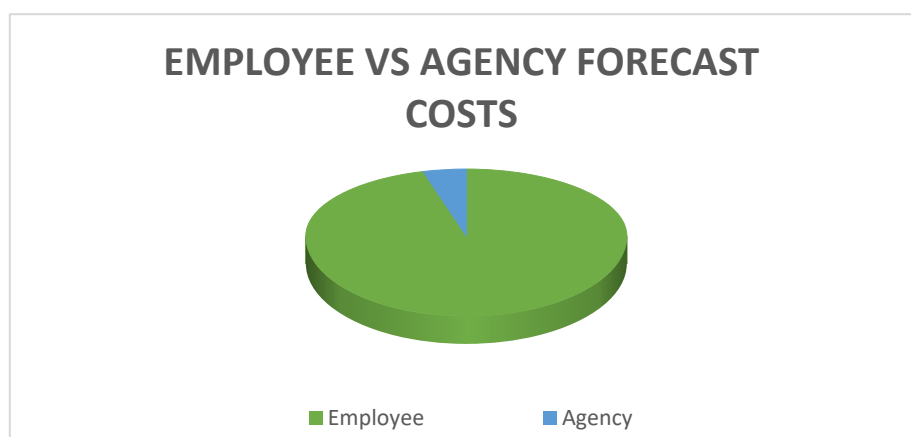
### 1.3 PAYBILL

The following table shows the employee pay costs over several years. At this stage of 2024/25 the forecast shows a projected overspend on all employee costs (staff, contractors and agency workers) of £1.137m. This arises from a spend of £1.640m on contractors and agency workers against a budget of £337,335, plus £165,000 projected underspend on employee salaries as shown below. The information from this year's agency spend has been taken into account for the 25/26 budget and appropriate budget has been allocated for the upcoming financial year.

The majority of our agency spend is centred towards our ICT and Operational Services teams.

Year	Employee Paybill Budget (£)	Employee Paybill Actual (£)	Employee Paybill Forecast (£)
2017/18	24,591,631	23,536,053	
2018/19	25,230,515	23,192,646	

2019/20	24,871,268	23,941,696	
2020/21	25,679,601	24,240,402	
2021/22	25,377,310	25,421,307	
2022/23	27,330,175	26,467,958	
2023/24	27,848,427	27,157,627	
2024/25	30,414,246		30,248,936



## 1.4 HIGH EARNERS

**Definition: High earners** are classified as employees who are paid at £50,000 or above. This information is already published annually in line with the Government's commitment to improve transparency across the public sector and the target hasn't changed since it was introduced. The Councils pay policy distinguishes authorisation of salaries over £75,000 per annum.

At the end of Quarter Four, there were 55 employees paid at FTE salaries of £50,000 or above, representing 8.1% of the total workforce. 1.2% of the workforce are paid salaries over £75,000. The total number of employees classed as high earners has decreased since the previous Quarter (57).

## 1.5 LEAVERS

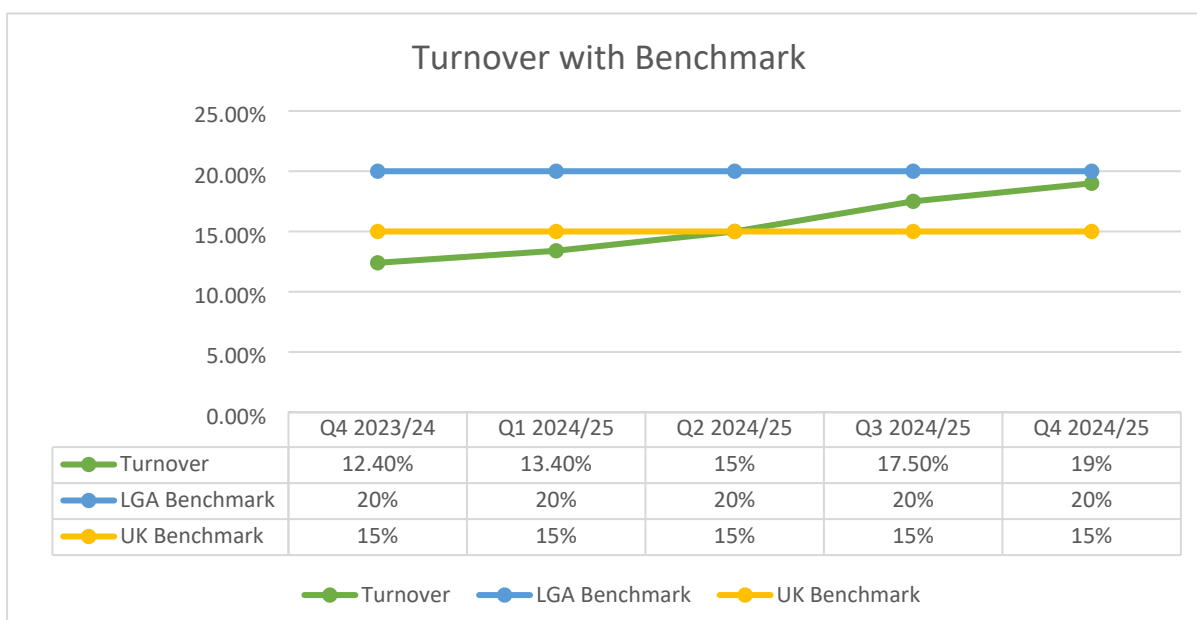
During Q4, there were 21 full-time/part-time employees on permanent or fixed-term contracts who left the organisation, which is lower than the total leaving in the previous Quarter (33).

8 of the leavers from Q4, resigned to take up other posts with either commercial or public sector employers, this is a decrease from the 9 in last quarters report. We had no retirements during this quarter.

Leaving Reason	Permanent	Fixed-term
Dismissal Capability	1	0
Dismissal Ill Health	0	0
Dismissal Misconduct	1	1
End of Contract	0	0
Failed Probation	0	0
Redundancy	1	0
Retirement	0	0
Settlement Agreement	0	0
Voluntary Resignation	15	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>3</b>

## 1.6 TURNOVER

In the 12 months to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025, 126 employees left the Council. As a proportion of the average number of permanent/fixed term employees over this period, the overall annual turnover rate for employees is 19%, which is higher than the previous quarter but remains below the LGA benchmark. Data from exit interviews is analysed to see where additional support may assist with staff retention.



## 1.7 RECRUITMENT METRICS

Recruitment activity has remained busy, reflecting the dynamic and competitive nature of the current job market. There has been an 41.97% increase in number of roles advertised compared to Q3.

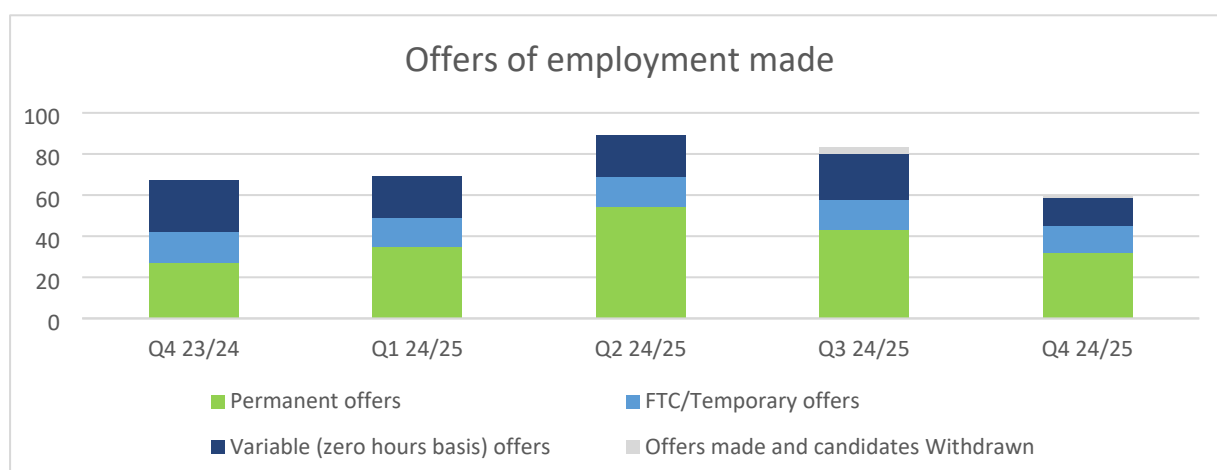
Of the 59 offers made through core recruitment activities, 15 were existing HDC staff, promoted or moving into other positions around the council. The HR team will continue to support the business with creating opportunities to grow and develop our workforce, careers, and mobility around services.

Advertised Roles	Q4 23/24	Q1 24/25	Q2 24/25	Q3 24/25	Q4 24/25
	46	83	83	47	81

Advertised Roles per business area	Q4 23/24	Q1 24/25	Q2 24/25	Q3 24/25	Q4 24/25
ICT	7	6	1	5	6
Corporate Services (HR, Finance, Facilities, Dem Services)	15	8	10	2	6
COO (Development/Planning, Community, Revs & Bens, Customer Services)	2	9	17	3	11
Strategic Housing & Growth	2	2	4	3	3
One Leisure	6	36*	21	25	32
Recovery Services (Car parking; Countryside, Parks & Open Spaces)	3	1	6	5	6
Operations (Waste, CCTV, Grounds Maintenance, Street Cleaning)	11	17	17	3	15
Executive/Transformation/Communications	0	4	7	1	2

\*includes One Leisure review.

Number of candidates applied	Q4 23/24	Q1 24/25	Q2 24/25	Q3 24/25	Q4 24/25
	362	604	1129	763	994



## 1.8 RECRUITMENT CHALLENGES/SUCSESSES

There has been a continuation in the trend of heightened candidate attraction this quarter.

The data continues to demonstrate real success in reaching candidates with 994 applications compared to 763 in the previous quarter.

LinkedIn continues to support our talent acquisition activity. We have achieved 219,000+ impressions, 10,600+ job views and 938+ total apply clicks resulting in 6 hires. In addition, our followers have grown by 259. This is very encouraging, and we will continue to use all the tools at our disposal to grow our LinkedIn network.

Following the successful first in-house executive search for the role of Chief Digital Information Officer last quarter, we have successfully carried out our second executive search for the Head of Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer role. This achievement continues to demonstrate the team's capability to manage future executive searches and will have a positive impact on recruitment efforts in several ways:

- **Enhanced Reputation:** The team's ability to attract and evaluate top-tier candidates will bolster HDC's reputation, making it easier to engage high-calibre talent in future searches.
- **Increased Confidence:** This achievement will boost the team's confidence, encouraging the council to take on more challenging and executive recruitment projects.
- **Refined Processes:** The experience gained will allow us to refine strategies and processes, leading to more efficient and effective recruitment efforts.
- **Stronger Networks:** Building relationships with outstanding candidates and industry professionals will expand the council's network, providing access to a broader talent pool in the future.

## 1.9 LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Activities that have taken place in the last quarter to help support employee engagement and aid in retention the following activities have taken place:

- Learning & Development (L&D) continue to work closely with Cambridge Regional College (CRC), with a view to hosting work experience placements with us during the year. Work experience placements are very popular compared to previous years, and new links with local educational settings are proving worthwhile with several placements in the pipeline.
- A shared graduate with Huntingdonshire District Council, Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire District Council started with us in February for their 8

month and final placement on the National Graduate Development Programme and is enjoying working here.

- In the lead-up to and during February, in celebration of National Apprenticeship Week, a dedicated team at HDC organised an event to recognise apprentices across the county. Apprentices were invited to attend and network, while apprenticeship teams, neighboring local authorities and local businesses showcased their programmes. The event also featured inspiring on-stage stories from apprentices, who shared their personal journeys and experiences.
- The Leadership Development Programme launched in March with the first course of many running over this financial year, the programme is fully supported by the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) the programme is designed for all people managers across the council.
- L&D continue to provide up to date apprenticeship information when required to managers and individuals to explore apprenticeship opportunities for existing staff as well as new apprenticeship contracts to the council.
- Apprenticeships during Q4; three staff have successfully completed all the required learning components of the apprenticeship programme and are working towards their respective End Point Assessments in the following apprenticeships:
  - Digital and technology solutions specialist (integrated degree), Level: 7
  - Community sport and health officer, Level: 3
  - Countryside ranger, Level: 4

### **Apprenticeships**

- The apprenticeship programme is continuing to develop and support internal staff within HDC. By the end of Quarter Four (31 March 2025), 2 new apprenticeships, one is a new apprentice contract the other an existing employee.
- The figures shown in the table below are as at the end of March 2025.

	<b>Level 3</b>	<b>Level 4</b>	<b>Level 5</b>	<b>Level 6</b>	<b>Level 7</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>New Apprenticeships</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Ongoing</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>28</b>

- L&D will continue to link in with East of England Local Government Association to understand the changes to the levy and the impact this will have on some apprenticeships.

- The Workforce Strategy Team are continuing to deliver the next 4 priorities, these are Electric Vehicles via a salary sacrifice scheme, Social Committee, Leisure Discounts and ICT access for all.
- Focus groups have been held across all areas of the workforce to re-develop the new 1-2-1 process which has been re-launched as 'My Conversation'. This will be rolled out to all staff from April 2025
- A Cervical Screening van was arranged at Pathfinder House for staff to book appointments following feedback that appointments were difficult to book at GP surgeries
- The Leadership and Development training sessions started and have so far been well received by staff. These will continue to roll out
- Roadshows were held in February to update staff on what had been put in place so far as part of the Workforce Strategy and to gain more feedback and engagement from them
- A Council wide bake off was arranged for Red Nose Day with money raised for the cause
- Random Act of Kindness Day and Brew Monday were also promoted with staff encouraged to take part

## 2.0 SICKNESS ABSENCE

**Definition:** Long term sickness is classified as a continuous period of absence of 28 or more calendar days. All other periods of absence are defined as **short term**.

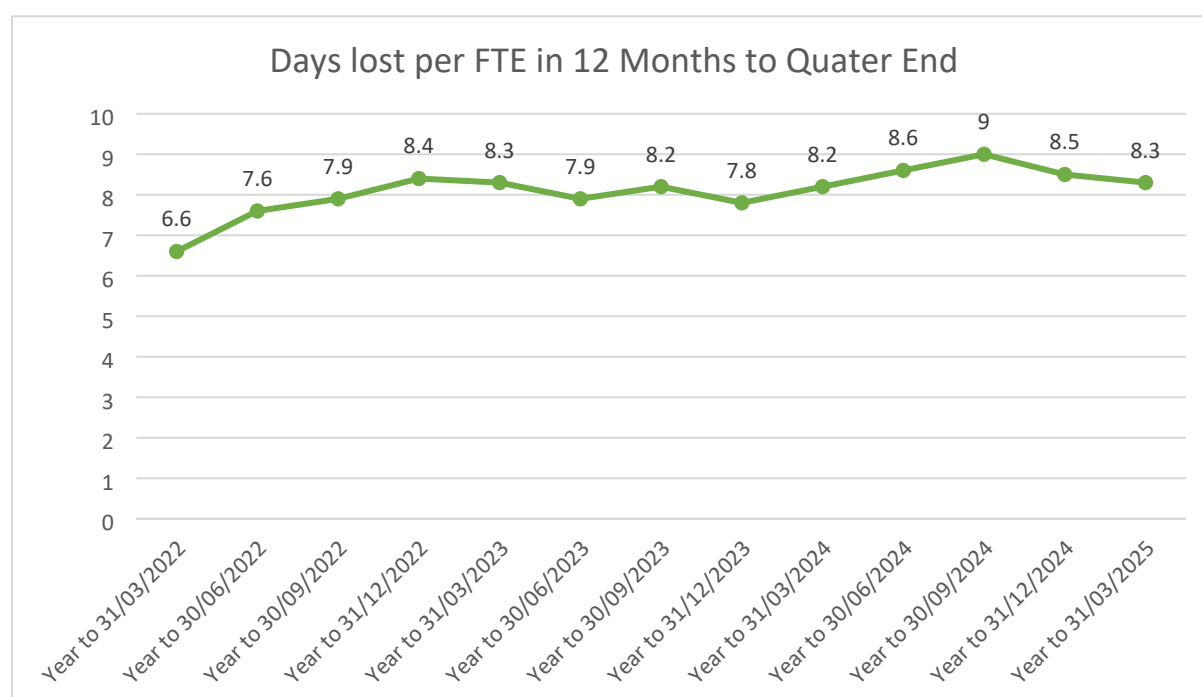
The absence data is calculated per full-time equivalent (FTE) as per the guidelines set out in the previous Best Value Performance Indicators (former statutory dataset) for sickness to account for adjustments in working hours.

Trigger points for management action under HDC policy are as follows:

- 3 or more periods of absence in a rolling 3-month period
- 6 or more periods of absence in a rolling 12-month period
- 8 working days or more in a rolling 12-month period
- Long term absence of 28 calendar days or more
- Patterns of absence  
(e.g., regular Friday and/or Monday; repeated absences linked to holidays)

### 2.1 TREND OF WORKING DAYS LOST ACROSS HDC

The graph shows the trend in sickness absence per FTE employee over a rolling period to the end of each Quarter since March 2022. It shows that sickness absence to the end of Q4 has decreased to 8.3 days per FTE which is a decrease from 8.5 days per FTE last quarter.



## 2.2 REASONS FOR SICKNESS ABSENCE

The top 5 reasons for sickness absence by category below: -

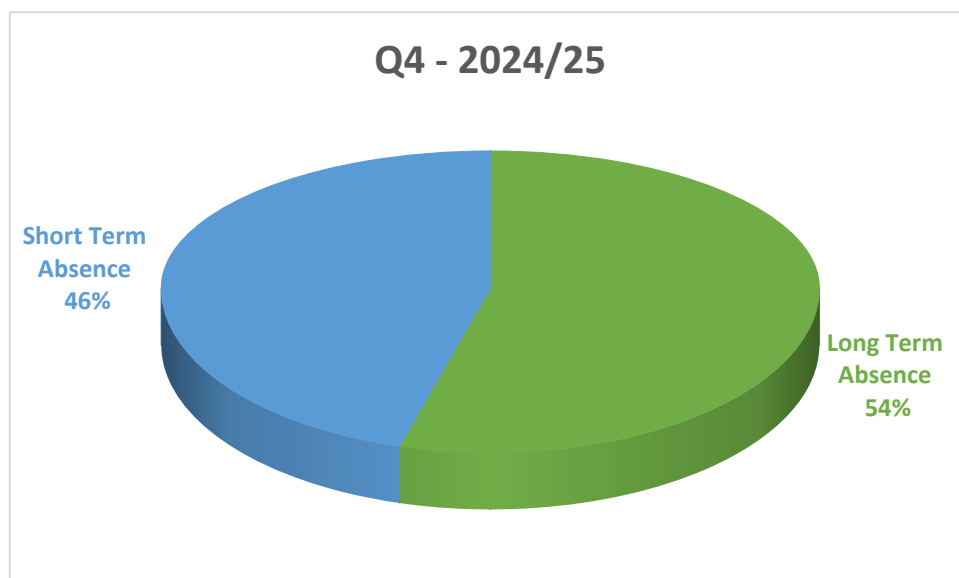


## 2.3 SICKNESS ABSENCE BREAKDOWN

Days lost due to long-term sickness has reduced in Q4 compared to the previous Quarter. This is due to a number of complex sickness absence cases being resolved. Short term sickness has increased compared to last quarter, however when compared to Q4 in the previous year it is significantly below that and there were higher than usual national cases of norovirus and covid being reported.

Quarter	Total days of long-term sickness	Total Working days lost (Short term sickness)	% of total absence long-term	% of total absence short-term
Q3 2022/23	771 (15)	635.5	54.82%	45.18%
Q4 2022/23	348 (8)	752	31.60%	68.40%
Q1 2023/24	590 (11)	411	58.90%	41.10%
Q2 2023/24	820 (20)	379	68.30%	31.70%
Q3 2023/24	878 (24)	541	61.80%	38.20%
Q4 2023/24	859 (29)	472	64.50%	35.50%
Q1 2024/25	859 (22)	449.5	65.60%	34.40%
Q2 2024/25	823 (18)	566.01	59.30%	40.70%
Q3 2024/25	525 (17)	663.29	44.10%	55.90%
Q4 2024/25	716 (22)	599	54.45%	45.55%

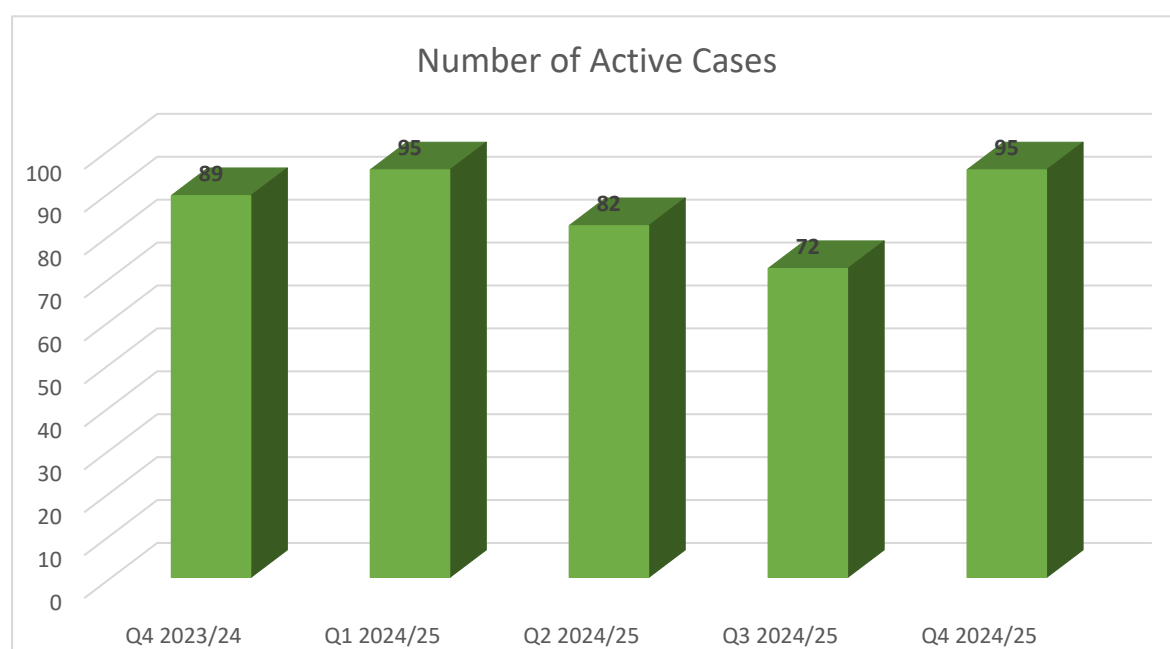
\*Brackets denotes number of employees absent.



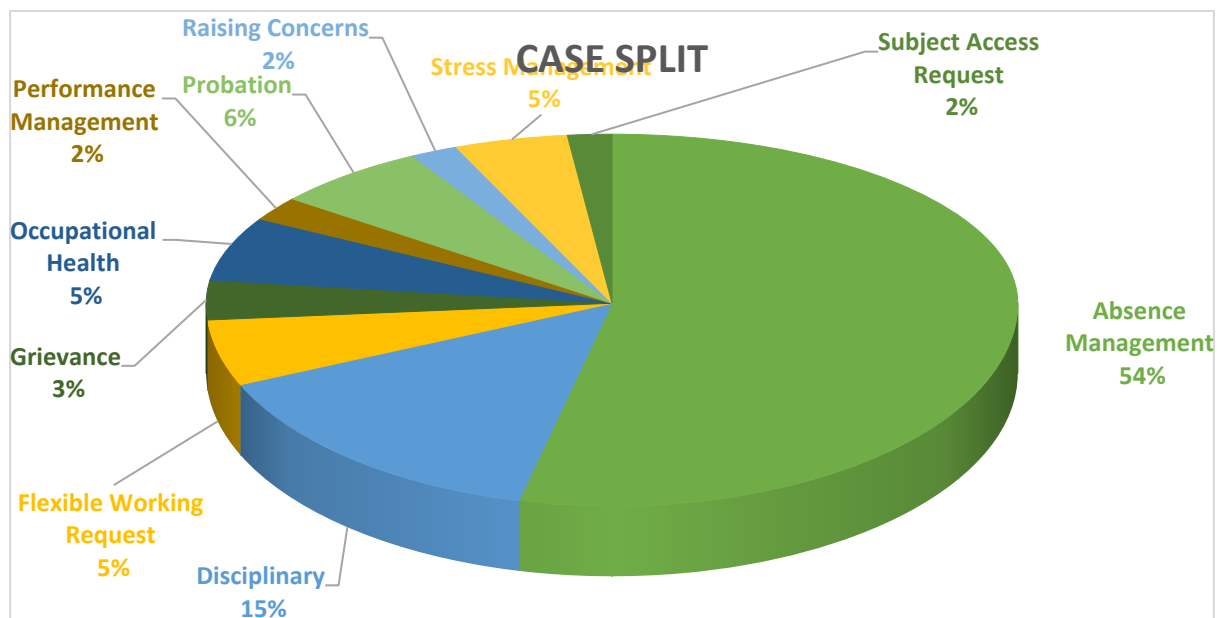
### 3.0 HR CASELOAD

The caseload is recorded to provide an indicator of the type of HR issues that the organisation has been dealing with over the last 12 months.

### 3.1 BREAKDOWN OF HR CASES BY TYPE



During Q4 there were 95 cases in progress, of which 25 were dealt with under formal procedures. The Overall total was higher than in the previous Quarter.

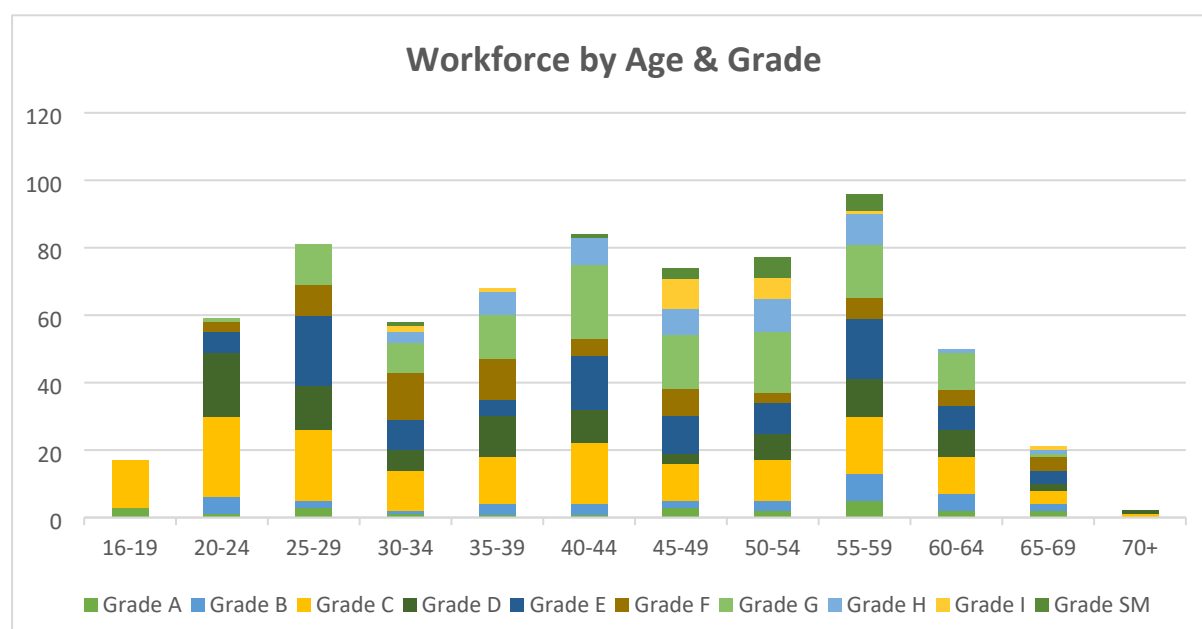


## 4.0 EQUALITIES DATA

Equality Data may be presented using percentages and not specific numbers as in some cases the sharing of specific numbers would mean that a small group of people could be easily identified.

### 4.1 WORKFORCE BY AGE AND GRADE

The number of employees by 5-year age band is depicted below by pay grade. Please note that where an employee has two jobs on different grades, they have been counted within their age band against both grades.



For the purposes of simplifying this graph, employees who have transferred into the Council on existing terms and conditions have been linked to Huntingdonshire District Council pay grades based on their current salary levels.

### 4.2 WORKFORCE GENDER

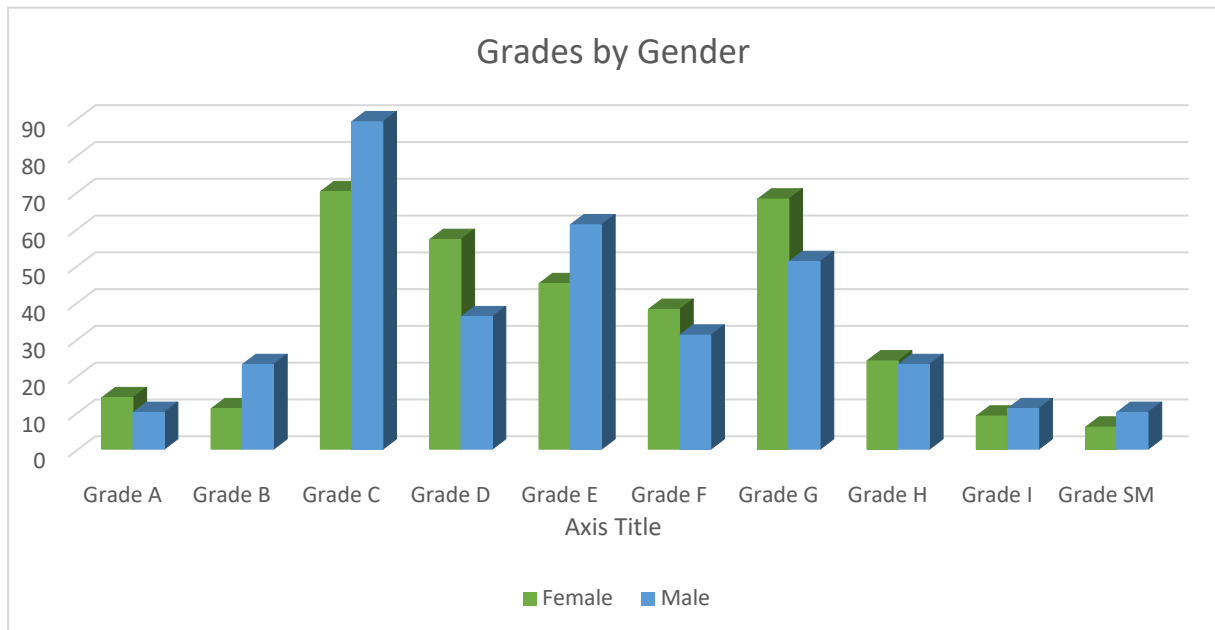


342



345

### 4.3 EMPLOYEES BY GRADE AND GENDER



### 4.4 WORKFORCE BY ETHNICITY

Ethnicity	% of workforce
Asian	2.04%
Black	1.46%
Mixed	1.31%
Not Stated	9.32%
Other Ethnic Groups	0.44%
White	85.44%

### 4.5 DISABILITY DATA

Disability Status	% of work force
No	75.55%
Not Known	12.95%
Yes	11.50%

## 5.0 ACCIDENT / INCIDENT REPORTS

This section reports on the number and nature of accidents and incidents occurring in owned, managed and occupied premises or associated with work activities undertaken by the Council's employees, during the period 1<sup>st</sup> January to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025.

**Definition:** Accidents reported to the Incident Control Centre under the requirements of the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations are referred to as RIDDOR accidents.

### 5.1 OPERATIONS SERVICES

There was one RIDDOR accident reported.

There were Three non-RIDDOR accidents relating to employees recorded.

The table below summarises the employee related accidents recorded by nature and severity:

Type	Category	Severity	No of cases
Non-RIDDOR accident	Contact with moving machinery	No First Aid	1
Non-RIDDOR accident	Fall from a height - <i>up to and inc 2 metres</i>	GP Recommended	1
Non-RIDDOR accident	incident/no injury	Ambulance Called	1

### 5.2 OFFICE-BASED PREMISES

There were no RIDDOR accidents reported.

There were no non-RIDDOR accidents relating to employees recorded.

There were no non-RIDDOR accident relating to non-employees recorded.

### 5.3 ONE LEISURE AND ONE LEISURE ACTIVE LIFESTYLES

There were no RIDDOR accidents reported.

There were four non-RIDDOR accidents relating to an employees recorded.

The table below summarises the employee related accidents recorded by nature and severity:

Type	Category	Severity	No of cases
Non-RIDDOR accident	Struck by moving, including flying/falling, object	First Aid	1
Non-RIDDOR accident	Strike against something fixed or stationary	First Aid	1
Non-RIDDOR accident	Exposure to fire or heat	First Aid	1
Non-RIDDOR accident	Struck by moving, including flying/falling, object	First Aid	1

A total of eighty-four accidents were recorded involving non-employees.

There were no RIDDOR reportable accidents involving non-employees recorded.

There were seventeen recommendations to seek further medical attention and one ambulance was called.

# WORKFORCE PROFILE

as at 31 March 2025



## Equality Act 2010: Public Sector Equality Duty

The purpose of this report is to provide an annual summary of the profile of the workforce of Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) by their protected characteristics as defined under the Equality Act 2010.

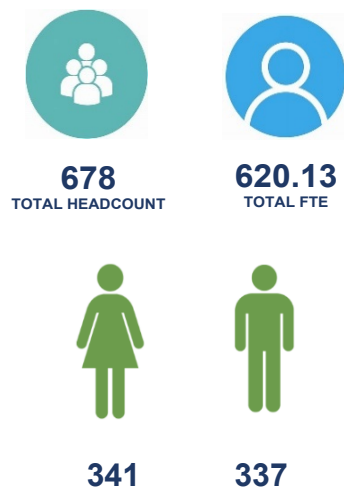
All public sector employers, including local authorities, have a statutory duty under the Equality Act (2010) to publish the equality profile data it holds for its directly employed workforce on a regular annual basis. The latest workforce information for HDC is based on data obtained as at 31 March 2025.

The three aims of the Equality Duty are:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

As equality monitoring questions are optional, the Council does not hold a full set of information for every employee. Where employees did not answer or did not want to state their protected characteristics, these are shown as “not declared”

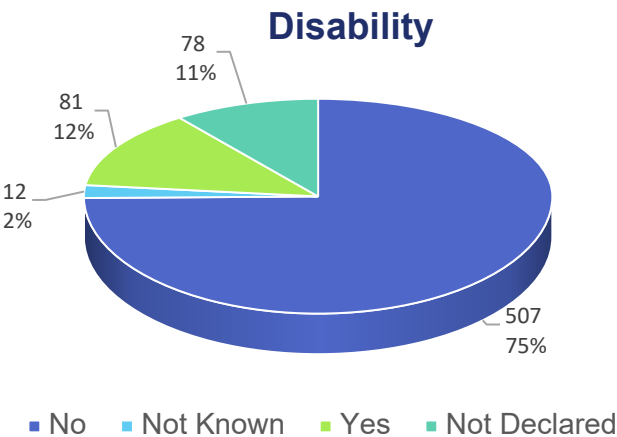
# Huntingdonshire District Council 2024/25 - Headcount and Gender



The figures are spilt by Total Headcount

# Huntingdonshire District Council 2024/25 - Disability

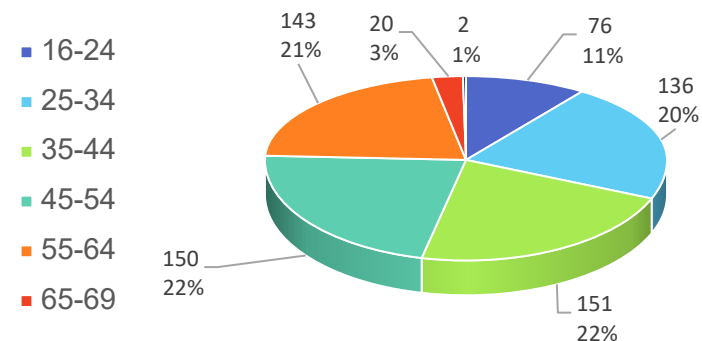
Year	No	Yes	Not Known	Not Declared
2023	400 (64.62%)	65 (10.5%)	8 (1.29%)	146 (23.59%)
2024	468 (72.11%)	73 (11.25%)	9 (1.39%)	99 (15.25%)
2025	507 (75%)	81 (12%)	12 (2%)	78 (11%)



## Huntingdonshire District Council 2024/25 - Age

Age Group	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-69	70+
Number of Employees & percentage	76 11%	136 20%	151 22%	150 22%	143 21%	20 3%	2 1%

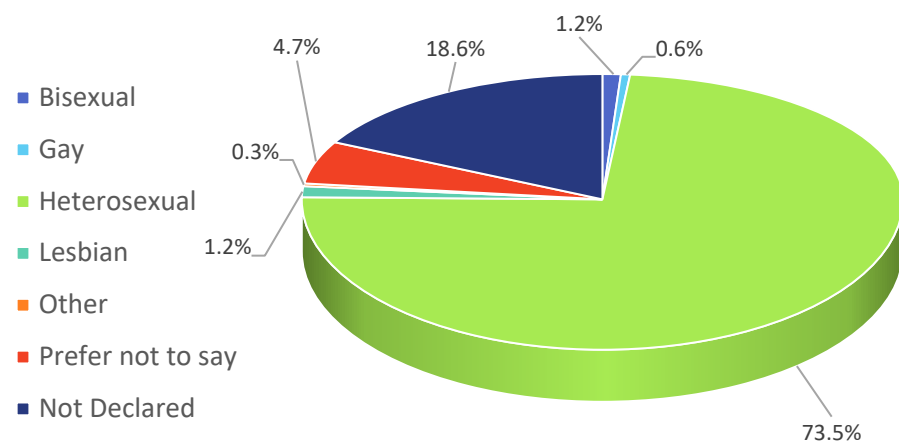
Workforce by Age



## Huntingdonshire District Council 2024/25 - Sexual Orientation

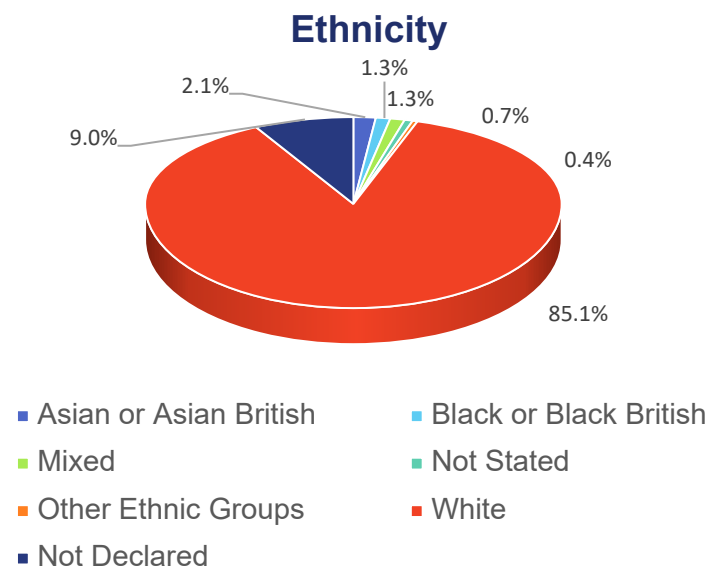
Sexual Orientation	No of Employees and percentage
Bisexual	8 (1.2%)
Gay	4 (0.6%)
Heterosexual	498 (73.5%)
Lesbian	8 (1.2%)
Other	2 (0.3%)
Prefer not to say	32 (4.7%)
Not Declared	126 (18.6%)

Sexual Orientation



## Huntingdonshire District Council 2024/25 - Ethnicity

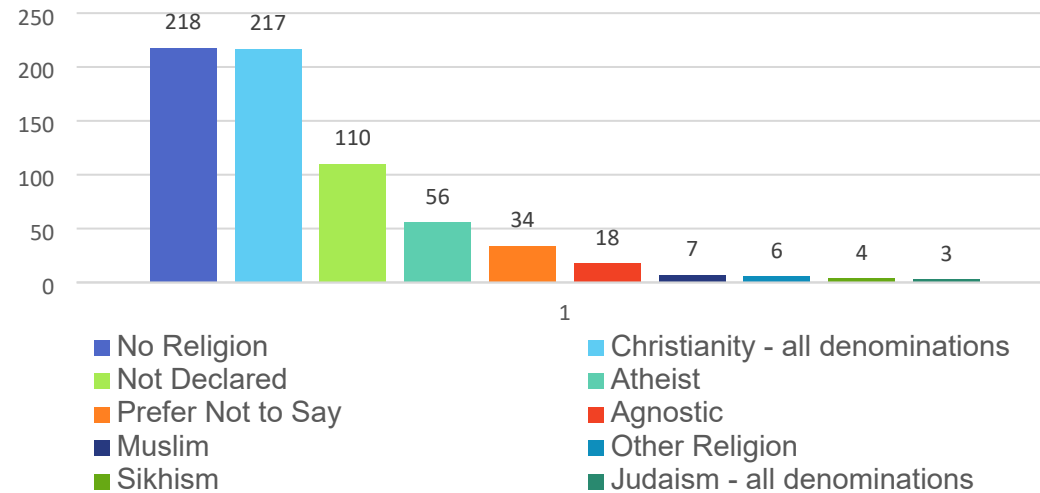
Ethnicity	Asian	Black	Mixed	Other	White	Not Declared
Number of Employees 2023	13 2.1%	7 1.1%	6 1%	4 0.6%	470 75.9%	119 19.2%
Number of Employees 2024	12 1.85%	11 1.69%	8 1.23%	4 0.62%	531 81.82%	83 12.79%
Number of Employees 2025	14 2.1%	9 1.3%	9 1.3%	3 0.4%	577 85.1%	61 9%



## Huntingdonshire District Council 2024/25 - Religion Belief

Religion	Number of Employees and Percentage
Agnostic	18 (2.7%)
Atheist	56 (8.3%)
Buddhism - all denominations	1 (0.1%)
Christianity - all denominations	217 (32%)
Hindu	1 (0.1%)
Islam - all denominations	2 (0.3%)
Judaism - all denominations	3 (0.4%)
Muslim	7 (1%)
No Religion	218 (32.2%)
Other Religion	6 (0.9%)
Prefer Not to Say	34 (5%)
Rastafarian	1 (0.1%)
Sikhism	4 (0.6%)
Not Declared	110 (16.2%)

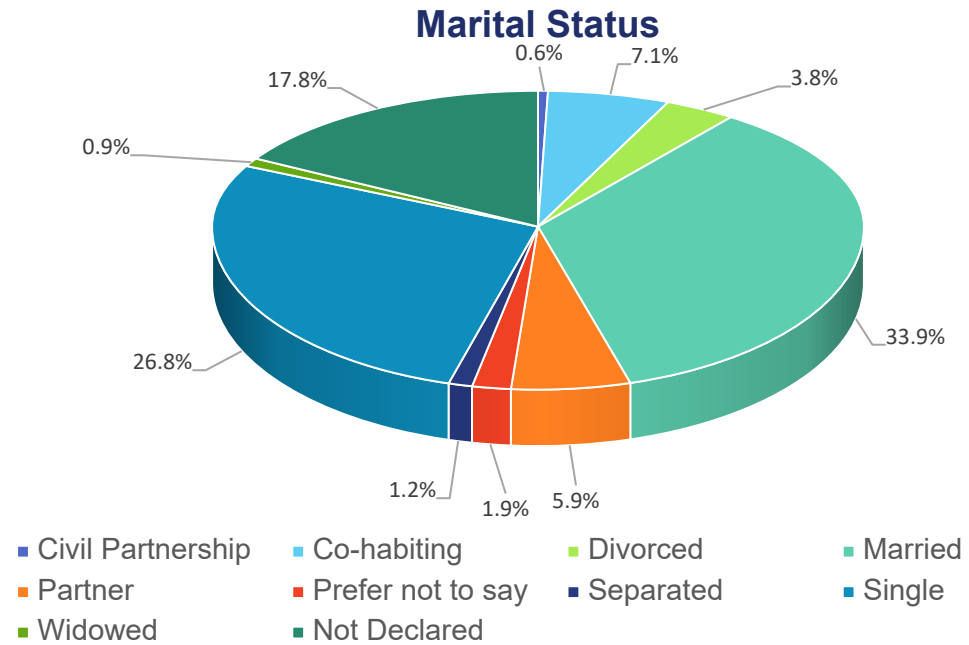
Top 10\* - Religion Belief



\* Other categories have 2 or less employees

## Huntingdonshire District Council 2024/25 – Marital Status

Marital Status	Number of Employees and percentage
Civil Partnership	4 (0.6%)
Co-habiting	48 (7.1%)
Divorced	26 (3.8%)
Married	230 (33.9%)
Partner	40 (5.9%)
Prefer not to say	13 (1.9%)
Separated	8 (1.2%)
Single	182 (26.8%)
Widowed	6 (0.9%)
Not Declared	121 (17.8%)



## Recommendations

Work during 2024/2025 has been focused on increasing the declaration rate for protected characteristics. This has helped to improve the data and this will continue, recommendations and future steps include the following:

- Continue to work at increasing the data on protected characteristics.
- Carry out analysis on the data we have and compare this against census data and bring back to October Employment Committee.
- Continue to work on action plan from last year and bring an update to October Employment Committee.

## Equality Action Plan 2024/25

Equality Actions		Owned by
<b>Gender</b>	Further work needs to be done on education around menopause generally and in particular with managers so that they are able to support staff in the best way.	Kiran Hans
	Creation of Menopause champions to lead the work in this area.	Kiran Hans
<b>Disability</b>	Explore with IT a Dyslexia friendly font, so that emails can be in the correct size, justified appropriately and using the correct font.	Kiran Hans
	Explore Mindful employer charter, this charter is about taking positive approach to mental health at work.	Kiran Hans
<b>Age</b>	The recruitment team have been going out to colleges to attract potential applicants and will continue to do this.	Julie Holland/ Sam Sanderson
	Continue to work on bringing in more Apprenticeships	Julie Holland
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	Work needs to continue on the not declared rate and education on the categories on the system will help with this, as this could be contributing.	Lisa Baggaley
<b>Ethnicity</b>	Explore The Race at work charter and UNISON Anti Racism Charter to see which actions can be implemented at HDC.	Lisa Baggaley
	Continue to promote cultural days as part of the workforce Strategy	Kiran Hans
<b>Religion and Belief</b>	As above feed into workforce strategy to celebrate cultural days	Kiran Hans/Chloe George
	More data is needed on the non-declaration rate.	Lisa Baggaley
<b>General Actions</b>	Work during 2022/2023 has focused on decreasing the number of employees that have not declared their protected characteristics. This has helped to improve the data but will need to continue through managers and individuals by explaining the benefits of capturing this information and by being specific about the data that is missing.	Lisa Baggaley

	Update the Equal Opportunities Policy.	Lisa Baggaley Lisa Morris/Linsey Bishop
	Make the roles advertised look more accessible to people who may not have the exact skills by advertising training opportunities relating to roles.	Sam Sanderson
	Explore employee networks for different groups to support and develop each other, feed into HR Policies, communications, learning and development and Equality actions.	Kiran Hans/Chloe George
	Workforce Strategy includes a number of areas that will support the work around Equalities.	Kiran Hans/Chloe George
	Explore employee networks for different groups to support and develop each other, feed into HR Policies, communications, learning and development and Equality actions.	Kiran Hans/Lisa Baggaley
	Continue to review where and how we promote our roles, ensuring inclusivity.	Sam Sanderson



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Public  
Key Decision - No

## HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

<b>Subject Matter:</b>	Use of Consultants, Hired Staff and Temporary Staff
<b>Meeting:</b>	Employment Committee 23 July 2025
<b>Executive Portfolio:</b>	Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources - Cllr B Mickelburgh
<b>Report by:</b>	Corporate Director of Finance and Resources
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	All

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### Executive Summary:

Members requested this annual report in order to monitor the Council's use of interim staff (consultants and temporary staff).

### Capital

During 2024/25, consultants have continued to be employed to provide technical and professional advice in respect of the Commercial Investment Strategy, Local Plans, future high street funding and development of market town prospectus for growth. There were also costs for temporary staff which have been employed on capital projects in the year.

### Revenue

Overall, there was a net increase of £630k in the cost of interim staff in 2024/25 when compared to 2023/24. There is a continued use of interim staff to cover staff vacancies across the Council where recruitment has proved difficult, and to provide expert advice and interim capacity whilst the Council follows the current transformation programme, development of the Local Plans and other business efficiency improvements.

All costs relating to interim staff have been met from within current resources (central government grants, existing budgets or use of earmarked reserves) and the use of such staff has given the Council the flexibility and short-term capacity to undertake its transformation programme.

### Recommendation:

Members are asked to comment on the report and note its contents.

## **1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To advise of the use of consultants and temporary staff during the 2024/25 financial year.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 In July 2014 the Employment Panel approved guidance notes for managers regarding the use of consultants and temporary staff.
- 2.2 The use of interim staff is an essential requirement in the day-to-day management of the Council's business. However, their use is limited to a range of specific purposes i.e., to meet a specialist skills gap where a full-time resource would not afford the Council value for money, to cover for unplanned gaps in staffing or to meet short-term peaks in workload.
- 2.3 Increasingly, the Council is benefitting from successful bids which attract external funding to deliver projects that meet our corporate objectives. Use of interim staff to deliver these projects is therefore fully funded and does not represent an additional burden on the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- 2.4 The Council's accepted definitions for consultants and temporary staff is shown below:

### **Consultants**

Individuals are contracted to the Council as a sole trader or employees of a contractor to provide specialist and/or professional skills and knowledge the Council lacks. This is often to deliver a specific task or project where it would be non-economic for the Council to retain these skills on a full-time basis. The contract terminates after a defined period of event (e.g., delivery of a report of advice).

### **Temporary Staff**

Individuals contracted to the Council as employees of an agency or contractor to provide additional capacity. They may be providing short term cover for staff absences (e.g., refuse operatives) or medium-term cover (e.g., cover for vacant posts while permanent recruitment completes).

### 3. EXPENDITURE ANALYSIS

3.1 The analysis shown below is split between capital and revenue. The reason for this distinction is that interim staff employed for capital development projects are incidental to the project and can be financed from capital resources i.e., the sale of assets.

#### 3.2 Capital

During 2024/25, there was an overall increase of £106k in the cost of interim staff compared to 2023/24, a summary is shown below, and the detailed analysis is shown in **Appendix 1**.

<b>Capital Comparison of consultants and temporary staff 2024/25 and 2023/24</b>			
	<b>Consultants</b>	<b>Temporary</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
<b>2024/25</b>	763	192	<b>955</b>
<b>2023/24</b>	742	107	<b>849</b>
<b>Increase</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>106</b>

This increase relates mainly to the use of consultants for the increased reliance on consultants for the Old Falcon and the Market Town/Future High Street programmes and consultancy relating to solar PV canopies, offset by reduced spend on the Transport Project.

#### 3.3 Revenue

During 2024/25, there was an overall increase of £630k in the cost of interim staff compared to 2023/24, a summary is shown below, and the detailed analysis is shown in **Appendix 2**.

<b>Revenue Comparison of consultants and temporary staff 2023/24 and 2022/23</b>			
	<b>Consultants</b>	<b>Temporary</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
<b>2024/25</b>	1,424	1,734	<b>3,158</b>
<b>2023/24</b>	1,168	1,360	<b>2,528</b>
<b>Increase</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>374</b>	<b>630</b>

#### **4. KEY IMPACTS**

- 4.1** The use of interim staff assists the Council in meeting services needs and objectives. If such resources are not used from time-to-time, then it is very likely that service delivery and priorities would be impacted, and the process of transformation would take considerably longer.

#### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1** There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

#### **6. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1** New regulations came into force on 6 April 2017 changing the responsibility for assessing the tax status of consultants, interims, and temporary staff. If directly engaged (not through an agency), the Council must determine whether the individual is acting as if a member of staff and if appropriate, collect national insurance (NI) contributions and tax. The determination, based on HMRC guidance, considers a number of factors including duration, if a post holder, ability to substitute, etc. Failure to collect the correct tax and NI risks incurring fines, interest charges and back tax. The Management Team have been briefed and provided with links to the HMRC guidance and the HMRC online assessment tool. The Heads of Service have been tasked with identifying any consultants, interims and temporary staff that fall within the scope of the regulations and carrying out the appropriate assessment.

#### **7. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED**

- Appendix 1 - consultants and temporary staff – capital expenditure
- Appendix 2 - consultants and temporary staff – revenue expenditure

#### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None.

#### **CONTACT OFFICER**

Suzanne Jones  
Corporate Director of Finance and Resources

## CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

Comments on expenditure in excess of £10,000 are provided.

CONSULTANTS CAPITAL EXPENDITURE			
Head of Service	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000	
Corporate Resources	23	14	Fees relating to work on Investment Property in Hampshire
Housing Strategy	586	424 117 5	Fees relating to Market towns & future high streets* Old Falcon Transport project*
ICT Shared Services	36	85	Fees relating to Hardware replacement
Leisure & Health		80	Solar canopy & panels
Strategic Insight & Delivery	97	38	Fees relating to Hinchingsbrooke Country Park
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>742</b>	<b>763</b>	

TEMPORARY STAFF CAPITAL EXPENDITURE			
Head of Service	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000	
Economic Development		10	Administrative support relating to UK Shared Prosperity Fund
Housing Strategy	107	157 25	Fees relating to: Old Falcon* Market towns & future high streets*
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>192</b>	

\* externally funded

## REVENUE EXPENDITURE

Comments on expenditure in excess of £10,000 are provided.

CONSULTANTS REVENUE EXPENDITURE				
Head of Service	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000	Expenditure for 2024/25 includes	Justification for Spend
Chief Operating Officer	50	33	Support for Licensing	Specialist advice not available within establishment
Chief Planning Officer	187	175 103 25 9	Support for: Planning applications** Local plan** Community Infrastructure Levy Other**	Specialist advice not available within establishment
Corporate Leadership	28	20 16	Support for: Leadership team Strategic communications Place Strategy**	Specialist advice not available within establishment
Corporate Resources	514	87 60 48 41 37 31 5 8	Support for: Risk management & internal audit Financial management system Commercial Estates** Treasury, valuations and pension fund administration** HR initiatives** Commercial investment strategy VAT reclaims** Other areas	Specialist knowledge not available within the Council and/or that is required for financial stewardship and audit

Economic Development		43 43	Support for Hunts travel feasibility UK Shared Prosperity Funding	Specialist knowledge not available within the establishment
ICT Shared Services	114	74	Support for ICT applications**	Specialist knowledge not available within the establishment
Leisure & Health	38	57 20 6 18	Support for Feasibility studies Latent demand surveys Mystery shoppers Other areas	Specialist knowledge not available within the establishment
Operations	47	55 30 12	Support for Garden waste project** Materials recycling contract** Other areas	Specialist knowledge not available within the establishment
Strategic Insight & Delivery	190	221 53 45 37 12	Support for: Biodiversity initiatives* Climate change strategy** Civil parking enforcement implementation project* Parks, open Spaces & countryside management** Other areas	Specialist advice not within establishment.
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,168</b>	<b>1,424</b>		

\* externally funded or funded from earmarked reserves/increased income

\*\* budgeted in MTFS

<b>TEMPORARY STAFF REVENUE EXPENDITURE</b>				
<b>Head of Service</b>	<b>2023/24 £000</b>	<b>2024/25 £000</b>	<b>Expenditure for 2024/25 includes</b>	<b>Justification for Spend</b>
Chief Operating Officer	102	98 60	Agency staff for: Commercial team Benefits Administration*	A combination of cover to maintain service delivery and to cover additional workload re grant payments
Chief Planning Officer	70	132	Agency staff for: Development Management*	Cover to maintain service delivery
Corporate Resources	32	60 37 10 3	Agency staff for: Procurement Human resources Maternity cover* Other	A combination of cover to maintain service delivery and to support the income generating portfolio of property
Corporate Leadership	12	25	Agency staff for: MD team & Communications	
ICT Shared Services		228	Agency staff for: 3CICT service	Cover to maintain service delivery
Leisure & Health		4		
Operations	1,105	954 98 19 6	Agency staff for: Waste Management* Street Cleansing* Grounds maintenance Vehicle maintenance* Other services	Requirement to back fill vacancies, sickness and holidays with agency staff to maintain service delivery
Strategic Insight & Delivery	39			
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,360</b>	<b>1,734</b>		

\* externally funded or funded from earmarked reserves/increased income/staff savings

\*\* budgeted in MTFS



# Workforce Strategy Update

## Chloe George



# Recent Activity

- Leadership Development Programme
- Neurodiversity awareness and support webinar
- Arranged training for new members of ERG
- Bumps to Baby, Midlife Matters and Infant loss partnership for support sessions
- 3<sup>rd</sup> set of Road shows held at all sites w/c 16 June

# Roadshows



## Continued:

- New one to one form - 'My Conversation' launched
- Seeking feedback on incremental progression form
- iCare Awards Ceremony

# iCare Awards Ceremony



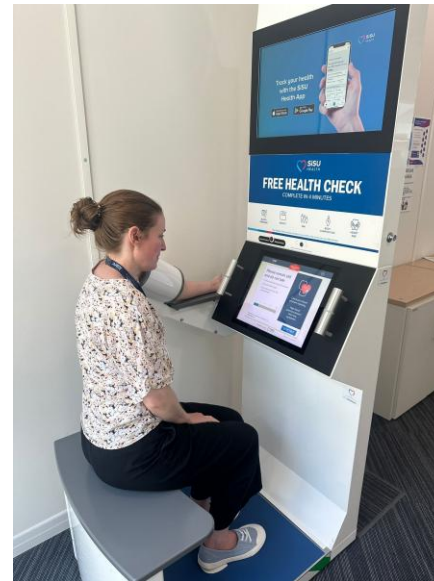
Page 55



## Continued:

- Project Group formed to look at Hybrid working policy
- Electric Vehicles procurement exercise
- Health Kiosks returned 8 July at EFH and PFH.
- Mental Health Awareness Week

# Health Kiosk and Mental Health Awareness Week



## Continued:

- Random Acts of Kindness Day
- International Women's Day
- Cervical Screening 6 March
- Comic Relief Bake off
- Easter Egg hunt
- Cystic Fibrosis awareness day

## Next 4 Priorities:

- Communications Strategy
- Hybrid Working
- Mentoring and Coaching
- Long Service Awards

# Upcoming Activity:



Kidney Research UK



I am remarkable session



HDC Rounders Tournament



Escape Pain Management sessions

## Progress on Actions:

November 24 Committee	February 25 Committee	July 25 Committee
9 Completed 15 in progress 25 to start	11 Completed 19 in progress 19 to start	18 Completed 18 in progress 13 to start

Any Questions



Public

Key Decision - No

## HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

**Title/Subject Matter:** HR Policy Update

**Meeting/Date:** Employment Committee – 23 July 2025

**Executive Portfolio:** Cllr Lara Davenport-Ray, Executive Councillor for Climate, Transformation and Workforce

**Report by:** Leanne Harfield, Acting Head of HR

**Ward(s) affected:** N/A

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### Executive Summary:

As noted in the November 2022 committee meeting HR are undertaking a programme of reviewing and refreshing our current policies to ensure that they are accurate, legally compliant and reflect current practice within HDC. We are therefore bringing the next set of policies we have reviewed to you.

The policies reviewed in this period are:

- Neonatal Care Leave Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy

Summary of the changes:

Policy	Amendments
Neonatal Care Leave Policy	This is a new policy brought in inline with the Employment Rights Act 2025
Recruitment and Selection Policy	Updated to reflect process change and included approach to secondments and internal moves. Included The Immigration Act 2016

Full copies of the policies are included in the appendices for your information.

### Recommendation:

The Committee is asked to consider and endorse the updated policies.

## **2.1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The report draws Committee attention to the revised policies and that we are seeking endorsement to use the new format.

## **2.2 WHY IS THIS REPORT NECESSARY/BACKGROUND**

- a. The main reason for these policies being updated is to ensure that we have legally compliant, up to date and in line with current processes policies that are accessible for all to use.
- b. It also ensures we have correct version control on the document to reflect any changes as we move forward.
- c. Finally, this will ensure that all policies going forward will reflect the correct employee representative groups.

## **2.3 KEY IMPACTS / RISKS**

- a. Having up to date policies that are regularly reviewed ensure that we are legally compliant and that our processes are robust by following them, reducing any risks of potential future claims.

## **2.4 WHAT ACTIONS WILL BE TAKEN/TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

- a. The updated policies will replace the current policies on our employment policy section of the intranet.

## **2.5 LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLAN, STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND/OR CORPORATE OBJECTIVES**

- a. To have an engaged and motivated workforce, as part of being a more efficient and effective council – through updated, clear employment policies.

## **2.6 CONSULTATION**

- a. Corporate Leadership Team, the Employee Representative Group and UNISON have been briefed and given the opportunity to review the proposed policy changes and support them.

## **2.7 REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS**

- a. Adoption of the revised policies will ensure that HDC is legally compliant and has a clear trail of policy amendments.

## **2.8 LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED**

- Neonatal Care Leave Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy

# Neonatal Care Leave

## Version 1

<b>Version Control</b>			
<b>Version</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Changes</b>
1	Lisa Baggaley	31 March 2025	New policy in line with ERA 2025

Name of Policy	Neonatal Care Leave Policy
Person/posts responsible	Head of HR, OD and H&S
Date approved/adopted	July 2025
Approved by	Employment Committee
Review Date	July 2027

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The Council has introduced support for parents of babies who require neonatal care (for at least 7 consecutive days) before the baby reaches 28 days of life. It is envisaged that this leave will allow parents to extend their time off with their baby at home when they are out of hospital instead of using their parental leave.

## **2. Purpose**

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to inform employees of their right to request a period of Neonatal Care Leave ("NCL") when their baby requires neonatal care. This leave is in addition to existing parental leave entitlements namely: maternity, adoption, paternity, shared parental, collectively known as "family leave".

## **3. Neonatal Care definition**

- 3.1 Neonatal care means care of a medical or palliative nature which lasts for at least 7 consecutive days within the first 28 days of birth.

## **4. Scope and eligibility**

- 4.1 This policy applies to all current Huntingdonshire District Council employees whose baby was born after 6 April 2025.
- 4.2 Employees who have a child that meets the definition of neonatal care in section 3 will be eligible to request NCL.
- 4.3 Employees who meet the eligibility criteria to receive the Council's package for the child (as outlined in the relevant policy e.g. maternity, paternity) will be entitled to take this leave at full pay. Employees who do not meet this criteria are eligible to take this leave as unpaid.

## **5. Key Principals of neonatal care leave**

- Both parents are entitled to take NCL.
- Eligible employees will be entitled to NCL on full pay, equivalent to the number of days the baby received neonatal care for at least 7 consecutive days. This leave is capped at 12 weeks.
- NCL is prorated to the normal weekly hours of work and payment will be based on the normal rate of pay (e.g. if the employee normally works 21.75 hours per week, and the baby received neonatal care for 1 calendar week/7 days, the employee would be eligible to 21.75 hours at their normal rate of pay).
- NCL can be taken in one block (e.g. at the end of the maternity leave) or taken as non-consecutive periods of at least one week.
- NCL must be taken no later than 68 weeks from the child's date of birth.
- The Council reserves the right to request evidence of neonatal care to process this leave.
- The right to NCL is per child therefore if an employee has multiple births (e.g. twins) and both require neonatal care, the total NCL will be added together. This will be capped at 12 weeks in total.

- In the unfortunate event that a baby is admitted to neonatal care (for a period of at least 7 consecutive days), discharged, and then readmitted to neonatal care (for a period of at least 7 consecutive days), providing that the second admittance occurs before 28 days of birth, both instances will count towards NCL.
- Where an employee is taking NCL immediately after the period of family leave, no additional notice will be required as this should have already been confirmed as part of the return to work process. If the employee is taking their NCL at a later date (e.g. not immediately after family leave), employees should give their line manager notice of at least twice the length of the period of leave to be taken, capped at 4-weeks (e.g. if the employee is requesting 1 week of NCL, they should request this at least 2 weeks in advance).
- There may be exceptional situations where the line manager may have to refuse a request for NCL (if not taken immediately) due to operational demands. Where requests to take NCL are declined, the line manager should ensure that the employee is given appropriate opportunity to take the leave at the earliest possible time and confirm to the employee the reason for declining the request.

## **6. Procedures**

### **6.1 Notifying the Council**

- 6.1.1 Employees should notify their line manager if their baby has been admitted into neonatal care (for at least 7 consecutive days). The line manager should take a note of the date that the baby was admitted into neonatal care and discuss with the employee their leave options (as confirmed in section 6.2).
- 6.1.2 The employee should notify their line manager once the baby has been discharged from neonatal care. The line manager should take a note of the date that the baby was discharged. Once the leave options have been agreed and the neonatal dates have been confirmed, the line manager must notify HR Inbox ([humanresources@huntingdonshire.gov.uk](mailto:humanresources@huntingdonshire.gov.uk)) to ensure that the leave is accurately recorded and processed.
- 6.1.3 Employees can contact their HR Business Partner for support and advice to discuss their options at any time.

### **6.2 Taking Neonatal Care Leave**

#### **6.2.1 Maternity and Adoption**

- If the employee is the primary carer (and taking a period of maternity or adoption leave), the leave can be taken after their maternity/adoption leave has ended or curtailed (if moving onto Shared Parental Leave). They can choose to take this leave immediately after maternity/adoption leave (before they return to work) or at a different time (no later than 68 weeks after the baby's date of birth).
- HR will write to the employee approximately 10 weeks prior to the end of their leave confirming the expected date of return to work. Employees should ensure that they respond to this letter to confirm that they are intending to return to work on the date confirmed in the letter and whether they intend to take NCL (and annual leave) directly after their maternity/adoption leave.

- If the employee chooses to take the leave at a different time, the employee must ensure that they provide advanced notice to take this leave as confirmed in section 5.

#### **6.2.2 All other family leave types**

- If the employee is taking a period of paternity leave, shared parental leave or parental leave, more flexibility can be provided as to when the leave can be taken.
- If NCL is being taken immediately, or directly after the period of family leave, the line manager must notify HR of these arrangements.
- If the employee chooses to take the leave at a different time, the employee must ensure that they provide advanced notice to take this leave as confirmed in section 5

### **7. During Neonatal Care Leave**

- 7.1 All terms and conditions remain the same during a period of NCL (except salary if employees do not meet the eligibility criteria).

### **8. Returning to Work**

- 8.1 Employees should refer to the relevant parental leave policy for details on planning for their return to work.
- 8.2 The Council understands that returning to work can be a difficult time for parents, particularly those who have experienced a traumatic and upsetting time seeing their baby in a neonatal ward. Babies can have ongoing medical needs requiring regular hospital appointments and check-ups when the parent returns to work. The Council will support time off with pay to allow parents to attend these appointments. Employees should refer to the Special Leave Policy for further information

### **9. Support**

- 9.1 Any questions employees have about matters raised in this policy should be raised with HR. Any work-related issues should be addressed with their line manager.

## Appendix 1

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### **My baby has been admitted into neonatal care at birth. What do I need to do?**

As soon as is reasonably practicable, you should contact your line manager to notify them of the situation. In the event that your baby spends 7 consecutive days in neonatal care, you will be eligible to request neonatal care leave "NCL". You should ensure that your line manager is made aware of the admission and discharge date in order to process the leave. NCL must be taken no later than 68 weeks from the child's date of birth.

- For employees taking maternity or adoption leave: NCL can be used after your family leave has ended.
- For employees taking Shared Parental Leave: NCL can be taken before, during or after your leave.
- For all other family leave types (e.g. paternity): NCL can be taken before or after your leave however it should be noted that paternity leave must be taken no later than the child's first birthday. It is recommended that paternity leave is taken in the first instance.

#### **Is neonatal care leave paid?**

If you met the eligibility to receive the Council's enhanced/occupational package for the child, then the NCL will be paid at full pay equivalent to the number of days the baby received neonatal care (for at least 7 consecutive days). This leave is capped at 12 weeks. If you did not meet the eligibility criteria, you can still take this leave however this will be unpaid.

Note: The leave is pro rated to your contracted weekly hours of work.

#### **My baby was admitted into neonatal care after they were born. I am currently on paternity leave. Should I pause my paternity leave and take neonatal leave instead?**

No, you cannot pause and restart a period of paternity leave. You should continue your paternity leave and arrange with your line manager and HR when you want to take your neonatal care leave.

#### **Do I need to take Neonatal Care Leave immediately after my maternity leave?**

No. NCL can be taken at any time up until 68 weeks from the child's date of birth. (The only exception to this is that maternity and adoption leave is driven by the date of birth/placement of the child therefore NCL must be taken once maternity/adoption leave ends). If you are not taking the leave immediately or directly after a period of family leave, you will need to provide notice to your line manager of at least twice the length of the period of leave to be taken, capped at 4-weeks (e.g. if you are requesting 1 week of NCL, you should request this at least 2 weeks in advance).

#### **Do I need to take the Neonatal Care Leave (NCL) all at once?**

No. You can take NCL in non-consecutive blocks however the minimum leave you can take in a block is one-week. Employees must ensure that advanced notice is provided to the line manager in order to take this leave if the leave is not being taken immediately or directly after a period of family leave.

**I have had twins, both of which required a period in neonatal care. Twin 1 was admitted for 5 weeks and twin 2 was admitted for 8 weeks. Am I entitled to take NCL for both children?**

Yes. The leave is capped at 12 weeks therefore, in this situation, you would be entitled to a total of 12 weeks NCL.

# **Recruitment & Selection policy**

## **1.1**

<b><u>Version Control</u></b>			
<b><u>Version</u></b>	<b><u>Author</u></b>	<b><u>Date</u></b>	<b><u>Changes</u></b>
1.1	Sam Sanderson	May 2025	Updated to reflect process change and included approach to secondments and internal moves.  Included The Immigration Act 2016

Name of Policy	Recruitment & Selection Policy
Person/posts responsible	Head of HR, OD and H&S
Date approved/adopted	Reviewed May 2025 for Approval in July 2025
Approved by	Employment Committee
Review Date	June 2027

## 1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) acknowledges that recruiting and retaining a skilled workforce is essential for achieving our goals. This policy promotes fair and consistent recruitment practices that support equality of opportunity, vital for service delivery.
- 1.2 Recruitment and selection are critical management functions representing significant investments. Our policy ensures effective recruitment practices to build a diverse workforce that enhances our service quality.
- 1.3 The policy is based on equal opportunities, emphasising equity, fairness, consistency, and merit-based appointments.
- 1.4 It aims to appoint the best candidates, support diversity, and ensure cost-effectiveness in the recruitment process.
- 1.5 HDC commits to ensuring hiring managers are trained and competent in managing recruitment and understanding equality standards.

## 2. Scope of Policy

- 2.1 Effective recruitment is key to HDC's success, requiring employees with the skills and qualifications to meet strategic objectives.
- 2.2 This policy applies to all permanent and fixed-term employees directly employed by HDC and serves as a guideline for recruiting temporary and contract staff.

## 3. Policy Objectives

- 3.1 We value diversity in our workforce and are committed to fostering diversity through our recruitment practices.
- 3.2 The recruitment policy will be regularly reviewed to ensure fair and equitable processes that do not discriminate unlawfully on various grounds.
- 3.3 All colleagues involved in recruitment must adhere to our Equality and Diversity Policy and Code of Conduct; violations may result in disciplinary action.
- 3.4 We will promote vacancies to a wide pool of candidates, encouraging applications from under-represented groups and considering positive action where appropriate.
- 3.5 Recruitment decisions will be based on merit, incorporating results from role-related assessments and interviews.
- 3.6 We will support career mobility by considering internal promotions and secondments.
- 3.7 Flexible working options will be offered where appropriate.
- 3.8 Agencies providing temporary workers must adhere to an open and transparent process aligned with HDC values.

- 3.9 Coaching and training on recruitment, equality, and diversity will be provided to all involved in the recruitment process.

#### 4. Recruitment Steps

It is HDC policy to follow the steps below when considering the recruitment of new staff. Please refer to our Recruitment Processes Guide for Hiring Managers for more detail.

- 4.1 When an existing position becomes vacant, the hiring manager must review the requirements of the role and determine if the role is still required. If it is, considerations should be made to determine if a like for like replacement, or a revision of the role is required. If recruitment is necessary, the existing job description should be reviewed and any necessary changes made.
- 4.2 All new job descriptions must be evaluated before recruitment; existing posts should be re-evaluated if there are any changes made to the job description.
- 4.4 For any recruitment need, the hiring manager must complete and submit a vacancy authorisation form (VAF) to the Recruitment Team, for CLT approval.
- 4.5 Upon VAF approval, the hiring manager will provide advert copy along with a job description to the recruitment team, and a recruitment timetable will be established.
- 4.6 Job advertisements will usually close at least two weeks from publication, although the advertising period can be shortened, depending on business need. Hiring managers are encouraged to review applications regularly and can close the advert early, should sufficient applications be received. Shortlisting will be completed within five working days and the completed shortlisting matrix and interview schedule emailed to the recruitment team to action.
- 4.6 Secondment opportunities will be advertised internally.
- 4.7 Interview panel members must be informed of the timetable and collaborate and agreed on interview questions in advance.
- 4.8 Recruitment documentation will be retained for 12 months post-appointment and then destroyed.
- 4.9 If the successful candidate declines the offer or the post becomes available within six months, other suitable candidates will be contacted.

#### 5. Advertising

- 5.1 We will ensure advertisements reach a diverse candidate pool, with all permanent and fixed-term posts advertised internally and externally as needed.
- 5.2 All vacancies will be posted on the HDC website, and advertising expenditures will be coordinated through the recruitment team.
- 5.3 The most effective advertising methods will be utilised, and positive action may be taken to encourage applications from under-represented groups.
- 5.4 Cost-effective campaigns may be run for specific posts.
- 5.5 In certain cases, vacancies may be offered to redeployees or as secondments instead of external advertising.

## 6. Information for Applicants

All advertised roles must include:

- Application instructions
- Job description and person specification
- Contract length and salary/grade
- Closing date and potential interview dates
- Location
- Working hours
- Background information on HDC and/or the role
- Any conditional offer requirements (e.g., DBS checks, Drug and Alcohol screening)
- Equality and diversity statement

## 7. Shortlisting

- 7.1 The application forms received by the closing date will be longlisted by the hiring manager. Applicants **must** be chosen against the essential criteria. It is the responsibility of the hiring manager at this stage to record on the shortlisting matrix scores for all applicants. The completed shortlisting matrix and interview schedule must be returned to the Recruitment Team who will invite selected candidates for interview. This will include timetabling the interviews and arranging any pre-employment checks if appropriate. Candidates who have not been shortlisted will also be informed by the Recruitment Team.
- 7.2 HDC is a Disability Confident employer. Being a Disability Confident employer means actively committing to attracting, recruiting, retaining, and developing a diverse workforce, including disabled people. A key component is the "guaranteed interview" aspect, where if an applicant with a disability meets the essential criteria (minimum requirements) outlined in the job description, they are guaranteed an interview. It is the responsibility of the hiring manager to ensure disabled candidates who meet the essential criteria, are shortlisted for interview.
- 7.3 The appointing manager will approach suitable colleagues to assist with **shortlisting and interviewing**. At least two people should be involved in shortlisting and sit on the interview panel. The same people should be involved in all interviews where possible to ensure consistency. If a panel member feels there is a conflict of interest with a candidate, they should seek advice from the recruitment team at the earliest opportunity.

## 8. Interviews

- 8.1 The hiring manager must lead the interview panel, familiar with equality, diversity, and recruitment policies. All panel members should have received relevant training.
- 8.2 The interview panel should ideally consist of two members, ensuring diversity. More senior positions may require three members.
- 8.3 Candidates will be given reasonable notice for interviews and any required tests, with adjustments made for disabled candidates.

- 8.4 The panel will discuss questions in advance, covering requisite skills and HDC values. Consistency is essential; all candidates should be asked the same core questions.
- 8.5 Interview durations should be consistent, and notes should be taken and retained for 12 months.
- 8.6 Appropriate selection methods will be used, including assessment centres or tests as needed.
- 8.7 The panel will score candidates based on their performance, considering both technical competence and alignment with HDC values.

## 9. Selection and Offer

- 9.1 Following interviews, the panel will compare candidates' answers against the person specification and decide on suitability.
- 9.2 Panel scores will be recorded, and appointment decisions will be made by consensus. If no candidates are suitable, the post may be re-advertised.
- 9.3 The hiring manager will inform the successful candidate and agree on a start date and salary.
- 9.4 Feedback will be provided to all interviewed candidates within 48 hours of the final interview. For external candidates, the recruitment team will facilitate this on behalf of the hiring manager. For internal candidates, the hiring manager is responsible for communicating the outcome and feedback.

## 10. External Offers

- 10.1 It is the responsibility of the hiring manager to extend the verbal offer. Once accepted, the hiring manager will complete a preferred candidate form and email it along with the interview notes to the recruitment team.
- 10.2 The Recruitment Team will contact the selected candidate with a written conditional offer, subject to satisfactory pre-employment checks.
- 10.3 The Recruitment Team will ask the candidate for evidence of their right to work in the UK at point of offer. The hiring manager will verify the original right to work in the UK documentation on the candidate's first day and email it to the recruitment team for our records. HDC does not hold a Sponsorship Licence and is unable to provide a Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS) or take over existing sponsorship.
- 10.4 Employment commences upon receipt of satisfactory references and required pre-employment checks, including an occupational health fit certificate.
- 10.5 The Recruitment Team will manage DBS/BPSS checks, with costs covered by HDC. If the new starter requires a BPSS, the hiring manager will need to request this from the Recruitment Team.
- 10.6 Any unsatisfactory pre-employment checks (as laid out in section 16.1), may lead to a withdrawal of the conditional offer.

## 11. Internal Offers

- 11.1 It is the responsibility of the hiring manager to extend the verbal offer. Once accepted, the hiring manager will complete an internal mover's form and email it along with the interview notes to the recruitment team.
- 11.2 The Recruitment Team will contact the selected candidate with a written conditional offer, subject to any necessary pre-employment checks.
- 11.3 Hiring managers are advised to follow the guidelines as set out in the Guidance for Secondments and Internal Moves.

## 12. Redeployees

- 12.1 The Council is committed to minimising compulsory redundancies and redeploying employees who are no longer able to fulfil their current role. One way of achieving this is to redeploy employees who are at risk to other jobs within the Council.
- 12.2 Redeployees need only to demonstrate during the shortlisting and interview process that they meet the essential criteria in the person specification in order to be appointable to the job. The post must be deemed a suitable alternative employment.
- 12.3 Please see the Redundancy Policy for more details.

## 13. Secondments and Internal Moves

- 13.1 We encourage the use of secondment arrangements as a valuable means of providing cost-effective career development opportunities for our employees. Secondments are also a way of effectively covering the need for resources on a fixed term basis and for resourcing project work. Managers are advised to follow the guidelines as set out in the Guidance for Secondments and Internal Moves.
- 13.2 Hiring managers are advised to conduct a formal interview process ensuring fairness and transparency by ensuring all interested parties are asked the same interview questions.
- 13.3 Applications shall be accepted from internal applicants who are: not subject to a current capability action plan concerning performance, not subject to current disciplinary proceedings or not subject to a live formal disciplinary sanction.

## 14. Acting Up

- 14.1 It is the responsibility of the Hiring Manager to determine the need for an acting up arrangement, usually in response to a temporary vacancy, absence, or project requirement. This assessment should involve consultation with your HR Business Partner.
- 14.2 The hiring manager must clearly communicate the acting up opportunity to all members of the team, outlining the reasons for the arrangement, the role's responsibilities, and the expected duration. This can help to manage expectations and encourage suitable candidates to apply.

- 14.3 Where more than one expression of interest is made, or there is more than one suitably qualified member of staff, hiring managers are advised to conduct a formal interview process ensuring fairness and transparency by ensuring all interested parties are asked the same interview questions. If there is only one expression of interest, it is the hiring manager's decision as to whether to conduct a formal interview process.

## 15. Equality and Diversity

- 15.1 HDC recruits based on ability and job requirements.
- 15.2 The Equality and Diversity statement is included in all external advertisements and is available on HDC's careers page.
- 15.3 Applicants will complete an equality and diversity monitoring form, securely stored to ensure fairness in recruitment.

## 16. Employment Checks

- 16.1 The following checks are to be used to ensure suitability of all new colleagues, prior to commencement of employment at HDC.
- Proof of identity and right to work in the UK
  - Reference checks for two previous employers or character/education references if no employer references are available.
  - Occupational Health fit certificate
  - Proof of qualifications (if relevant to the role)
  - Valid UK driving licence (if relevant to the role)
  - DBS (if relevant to the role)
  - Drug and Alcohol screening (if relevant to the role)
- 16.2 All candidates must have the proof of identity confirmed by the hiring manager and Recruitment before they are offered employment. They must submit original documents (on the approved list) to prove their identity and their right to work in the UK. HDC does not hold a Sponsorship Licence and is unable to provide a Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS) or take over existing sponsorship.
- 16.3 Candidates are required to disclose any unspent criminal convictions under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Possession of a criminal record does not necessarily preclude the candidate from employment. Information which has a bearing on the requirements of the post will normally be discussed with the candidate at interview.
- 16.4 If information given during the application process is found to be untrue, the offer of employment will be withdrawn.

## 17. English language

- 17.1 The Immigration Act 2016 created a duty for public sector employers to ensure that each person who works for them in a customer facing role speaks fluent English.

- 17.2 Fluency relates to an individual's ability to speak with confidence and accuracy, using accurate sentence structures and vocabulary, all without hesitation and appropriate to the situation in hand. It does not relate to regional accents, dialects, speech impediments or the tone of conversations.
- 17.3 The person specification for customer facing roles explains what our fluency standard is for those roles.
- 17.4 Job applicants will demonstrate their level of fluency by competently answering interview questions in English.

## 18. References

- 18.1 Employment references are required for each new colleague to cover the last two employers. One must be from their current or most recent employer unless suitable reason is given.
- 18.2 Where the candidate has no previous employment record, a reference from their school or other educational institution should be obtained where relevant. In exceptional circumstances, where no employment or education reference we will accept character references.
- 18.3 Where the candidate was self-employed, they will need to provide evidence that their business was properly conducted, i.e references from clients, bank manager, or accountant.
- 18.4 The recruitment team will take up references. If there are concerns about a reference, we will contact the referee for further information. If this is not possible or there is difficulty obtaining references, we will contact the hiring manager for authorisation to proceed without references.
- 18.5 If satisfactory references are not received within a reasonable timescale, the conditional offer of employment may be withdrawn.

## 19. Health

- 19.1 All employees at HDC are asked to complete an occupational health questionnaire via our occupational health provider. This is to ensure the employee is able to undertake all of the duties expected of them in line with the job requirements.
- 19.2 Successful applicants who share they are disabled or may require adjustments to their work or working environment may be referred to our Occupational Health provider. Where reasonable adjustments are agreed these must be recorded in writing using the adjustment passport. The candidate should also receive written confirmation of whatever adjustments have been agreed.

## 20. Use of Agencies

- 20.1 In circumstances where there is deemed a business need, HDC shall use an agency to assist with finding the right candidate for a role.

- 20.2 Recruitment is responsible for all contact with the agencies and for negotiating the recruitment fees. Managers or other employees should have no contact with agencies unless agreed by Recruitment and all enquiries from agencies should be re-directed to Recruitment. Equality and inclusion policies of all agencies shall be verified by Recruitment.

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