

## Cambridgeshire County Council HR Services Update

To: Staffing and Appeals Committee

Date: 23rd February 2023

From: Janet Atkin, Assistant Director HR Services

Purpose: To provide Committee with an update on progress with actions and achievements relevant to the previous and proposed people strategy.

Recommendation: The Committee is asked to note the information contained in the report.

### Officer contact:

Name: Janet Atkin  
Post: Assistant Director HR Services  
Email: [janet.atkin@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:janet.atkin@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)  
Tel: 01223 699495

### Member contacts:

Names: Councillor Edna Murphy  
Post: Chair of Staffing and Appeals Committee  
Email: [Edna.Murphy@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:Edna.Murphy@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)  
Tel: 01223 706398

## 1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Staffing and Appeals Committee with an overview of the Cambridgeshire County Council workforce demography, current people related challenges across the organisation and the work being undertaken and planned to address these challenges.

## 2.0 Our Workforce

- 2.1 The graphics below illustrate some data summarising our current workforce demography.



Our average colleague age is 45. 4.5% of you are over the age of 65, and 4.6% are under 25 years old



80% of our workforce are female



Our turnover currently stands at 15% with around 55 leavers per month. This is an increase from 12.3% last year



63% of our workforce have shared their ethnicity information with us. Of these, 90% have stated they are white, 3% Asian or Asian British, 3% Black, Black British, Caribbean or African, 2% mixed, multiple or other ethnic groups and 2% who would prefer not to say



Our total headcount is 4625  
Our total full time equivalent is 3448



We have 203 apprentices working across 45 apprenticeship standards



Team charters and our work spaces and buildings give us flexibility in the way that we undertake our roles and facilitate efficient ways of working



3.2% of us have declared we are disabled. We are proud to be a disability confident employer



We currently lose 31,688 working days per year to absence, with 'anxiety, mental health and depression' being the highest reasons for sickness absence



Our colleagues work for us for an average of 7.9 years with 169 of us (3.7%) having more than 25 years service



31% of our workforce work part time, in addition to a wide range of flexible working arrangements including 9 day fortnights



We are proud to be a flex from first employer, enabling colleagues to request the right to flexible working from day one.

### A GUIDE TO WELLBEING AT THE COUNCIL

Workshops, blogs and more...



55 colleagues are Mental Health First Aiders. We have an excellent wellbeing offer

- 2.2 Reporting, analysing and understanding our workforce data enables us to target our people related activity across the organisation to improve workforce wellbeing, performance, and engagement in addition to many other benefits.

- 2.3 The following sections of the report summarise the work that has been undertaken over the past 12 months, is planned for the next 12 months, and references this workforce information where relevant.

## 3.0 Employee Relations

- 3.1 **Change Management.** During 2022 and into 2023 there has been a number of structural changes across the Council. This has included a review of the Corporate Leadership Team, the current proposals to separate People Services from Peterborough and reviews of the Prevention and Early Intervention Services, Think Communities Services and Corporate Insight and Programmes Services. The HR Advisory team have provided consultation advice, support and input to ensure colleagues are actively engaged and that managers are supported during organisational change to achieve the outcomes needed. A wholesale review of our change management processes and policy is planned in 2023 to make sure that they continue to meet and model best practice.

3.2 **Workforce Data.** As well as using our workforce information to inform strategy and people related project work, the HR Advisory team meet with Directors and Directorate management teams on a regular basis to review the data relevant to their services. Dashboards are provided enabling each directorate to have an overview and understanding of the absence trends, turnover and cases such as performance management, disciplinary and workplace concerns that are happening across their services. The workforce data helps to inform solutions and mitigation for potential workforce challenges.

## 4.0 Resourcing

4.1 **The Recruitment and Retention team.** The team has grown to 10 people and now provides professional recruitment advice across the whole organisation whereas it previously supported only the social care teams. The challenges nationally regarding recruitment have sharpened our focus on retention as well and we have introduced a dedicated post carrying out exit interviews, feedback from colleagues new in post and analysing data relating to length of service and reasons for leaving. This will provide valuable insights to inform our efforts to retain and develop people.

4.2 **“The Recruitment Hub”.** A new Recruitment Hub system has been introduced which has seen the reach into the employment market increase through the ability to post vacancies across a number of sites and therefore increase the number of candidates. Improved application processes have led to barriers being removed which previously may have deterred candidates from applying. A review of the candidate journey and the managers role in the process has been undertaken with new training soon to be rolled out. Our recruitment policies and processes have been streamlined and updated as part of the system introduction.

4.3 **Exit and stay interviews.** Examples of projects that are ongoing into the next 12 months include new ways of gaining qualitative feedback from both leavers and new colleagues. Face to face exit interviews are offered to colleagues who have chosen to leave and the data gathered from these interviews will help to inform future retention strategies. ‘Stay’ interviews are also being undertaken with colleagues after their first 6 months of employment with us. As with the exit interviews, this will give us valuable information to inform retention strategies but also meaningful feedback on our recruitment and induction processes to inform continuous improvement in that area.

## 5.0 Employee Engagement

5.1 **Engagement activity.** Activity in 2022/23 that informs our understanding of employee engagement has included:

- Engagement surveys seeking views from colleagues on Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) and on Internal Communications
- Focus groups seeking feedback from colleagues on their experiences of the new Our Conversations approach

- Themes arising in opportunities for colleagues to come together for regular corporate events such as Cambridgeshire Conversations, EDI Conversations, and Wellbeing Hours
- Feedback via internal networks
- Regular review of feedback via new starter and exit questionnaires and interviews

5.2 **Engagement themes.** Themes arising from the above and from previous engagement surveys have informed the new draft People Strategy, the draft EDI Strategy and our focussed approach to Wellbeing.

5.3 **Future plans.** In the coming year we plan to engage an external supplier to undertake a benchmarked employee survey covering a wide range of engagement questions, test the appetite for a manager network, and use the feedback from the Internal Communications survey to inform ways to ensure colleagues in all services feel connected and are able to make their voices heard.

## 6.0 Health and Safety

6.1 **Display Screen Equipment.** During 2022 there have been 875 DSE Self-Assessments completed and of these, 109 (12%) required an Advanced Assessment carried out by the Health and Safety Team. Given the increase in agile working and people choosing to work where it makes most sense to do so, it is even more important that these assessments are carried out to maintain people's safety.

6.2 **Health and Safety Training.** A key feature of any Safety management System is to ensure the competency of staff to undertake the activities expected of them safely. Training, across a suite of core courses, remains a key activity with an estimated 25% of H&S Team time being spent on training delivery. During 2022, 546 staff attended H&S training courses. The Introduction to First Aid online course is a mandatory course which must be completed annually. During 2022, 1232 staff completed the course.

6.3 **Incident reporting.** During 2022, there were 431 incidents reported relating to CCC colleagues. There were 101 physical assaults reported and these related to Adult Social Care staff. 2 of the physical assaults were reported to the HSE under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases & Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR).

6.4 **Health and Safety updates** are now provided to the Corporate Leadership Team on a monthly basis along with updates on wellbeing activity.

## 7.0 Learning and development

7.1 **Learning to support all colleagues.** Between April and December 2022, colleagues have accessed 4863 course places and have completed 11,237 individual eLearning packages.

- 7.2 **“Our Development”**. In April 2022 we successfully launched and have since continued to develop our own learning management system (Our Development) which hosts our eLearning offer and enables colleagues to book onto training events. Our Development has enabled us more flexibility to shape a system that works for CCC colleagues and receives positive feedback. We have also enabled other teams to utilise the system for their learning offers, moving us towards a single point for all learning across the council.
- 7.3 **Coaching**. We have increased our coaching offer, enabling colleagues to access 3 sessions of 1:1 coaching to focus on a goal or issue.
- 7.4 **New training offering**. Our menopause awareness training has been our most in demand course, and we have continued to add additional dates and expand our delivery team to keep up with the level of interest. We have also worked in partnership with the Energy team to launch and deliver Net Zero training, including Carbon Literacy training leading to Bronze level accreditation for CCC and launched supporting eLearning.
- 7.5 **Learning to support managers and leaders**. We have at pace and in response to feedback developed and delivered a package of support for colleagues going through organisational change including a bespoke offer for Leaders and Managers.
- 7.6 **Psychometric Testing**. Our package of psychometric support continues to be well used, supporting the recruitment of senior officers, and change management for colleagues using a report for building resilient agility.
- 7.7 **New colleagues**. We have re-designed the Welcome learning for new colleagues with updated eLearning and a new Welcome event focusing on the vision, values, and priorities of CCC. We are also going to be shortly launching a CamWeb page for new colleagues, which hosts all the essential information to support successfully settling into the council, in one place.
- 7.8 **Adult Social Care**. We have developed closer links with the Principal Social Worker and locality teams enabling us to be proactive to the Learning & Development requirements of the Adult Social care workforce. The team have developed ‘Huddles’ to support practitioners to enhance their skills in complex areas such as, Safeguarding, Fluctuating Capacity, Hoarding & Welfare. We have closer links with Contracts and the Care Home Support Team and offer sessions to support with the improvement of standards of practice following the monitoring of Care Homes. We have increased capacity in the team to support with the delivery of additional courses in ASC and the PVI sector. The ‘Supporting Carers’ training has been refreshed and Strengths Based Training has been rolled out to all practitioners. The team are also supporting the review of practice guidance and training standards of priority areas.
- 7.9 **Children’s Social Care**. The team have been building closer links within Children’s social care aided by the creation of the Children’s Workforce programme Board. A wide range of courses are offered to Children’s Social Care colleagues, these are delivered both via online and face-to-face events

and are open to social workers and alternatively qualified colleagues and include topics like, key theories of child development and how to apply in practice; safeguarding children and young people; Child and adolescent development; communication and engagement with children and young people; direct work and creative tools to use children and young people; critically reflective supervision; working with groups; domestic abuse; evidence-based assessment and analysis; tools to assess neglect, the role of the lead professional in child protection; working with child exploitation; intra-familial sexual abuse; managing child sexual abuse work for managers; child protection enquiry (section 47) training for social workers (3 days) and Motivational Interviewing for the Family Safeguarding practice model.

- 7.10 **Social Workers & ASYE's.** The team is now fully involved in the current ASYE recruitment drive for Newly Qualified Social workers. The support offered through the Adults ASYE Assessor role continues to receive positive feedback from the locality teams. Social Workers in Adults have been offered the opportunity to complete the Best Interest Assessors award, which supports with professional development but also a priority area of practice. We have facilitated placements for student Social Workers and we have 9 'Step Up to Social Work', postgraduate students who will be completed in March 2023 and 7 of these have posts within children's 2 are moving to adults. We have also updated the children's services induction handbook, to support new colleagues navigate their first few weeks in the council.
- 7.11 **Apprenticeships.** We have seen a steady increase in the number of apprentices offered, currently we have 203 apprentices, there has also been growth in the number of employers requesting a levy transfer to support them offer apprenticeships across Cambridgeshire. As interest continues to grow, we are now starting to work on our approach for managing apprenticeships when demand reaches greater than the funds available, this is looking increasingly likely.
- 7.12 **Social Work apprentices.** Our first cohort of Social Work apprentices are due to qualify in the spring of 2023, and all have been offered permanent Social Work roles Cohort 3 has just commenced their programme and further cohorts are in development to continue with our Grow Your Own approach.
- 7.13 **Apprenticeship Awards.** We have recently hosted our second Apprenticeship Awards, this time in person at New Shire Hall which celebrated the achievements of apprentices and those who support them and was attended by over 80 people.
- 7.14 **Civil Engineering.** Working with Highways a new offer for Civil Engineering technicians apprentices has been approved by full council and will start in September 2023.
- 7.15 **Graduates.** Successful recruitment of 4 new NGDP graduates who joined CCC in October and continued support to the previous cohort of 4 graduates. In addition, a new role was created to provide oversight for the whole programme and manage recruitment, placements and support sessions.

## 8.0 Reward and recognition

- 8.1 **Business Partnering.** Strategic HR Business Partners are dedicated to work alongside departments, understanding the demands of the service but reflecting back the needs of the workforce. Supporting and challenging managers to understand the importance of motivation, reward and recognition. The Strategic HR Business Partners work alongside managers, encouraging them to ensure regular Our Conversations are carried out as a mechanism to support performance but also provide feedback and recognition to those delivering services across the organisation.
- 8.2 **New Leadership Grades.** New leadership grades were modelled and costed by the Workforce Strategy and Policy team before being approved by Staffing and Appeals Committee last year. These new pay grades are now operational with existing colleagues having been assimilated onto the new grades, and also new colleagues recruited to them. This has allowed some of the new salary ranges to be tested in the open recruitment market and it is pleasing to note that we attracted a good field of candidates for roles at the new salary ranges.
- 8.3 **Ratings Conversation.** Our new ratings process was launched in 2021 and we are nearing the end of the second whole year of the process. Whilst we are not yet in the position to summarise the ratings outcomes for this year, we are really pleased to have a return rate of 99.3%, meaning that almost all of our eligible colleagues have had a ratings conversations during December and January. It is expected that approximately 25% of our colleagues will receive incremental progression as a result of this process.

## 9.0 Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI)

- 9.1 **EDI Conversations & Blogs.** In 2022 there were monthly EDI Conversations on a range of topics for colleagues to participate in, followed by a round-up blog of each topic. In total, 69 posts were published from the EDI Team in 2022 which raised awareness of EDI-related topics and supported colleagues to implement actions in their everyday roles.
- 9.2 **EDI Action Plan.** Our actions from the CCC EDI Action Plan were implemented throughout 2022 with oversight from the EDI Leadership Forum which is led by our Executive Director of Strategy and Partnerships and has representatives from all departments and our IDEAL staff network. The plan includes actions related to three outcome areas. At the end of 2022, 28 actions were completed, 33 were in progress and ongoing and 5 were deferred to 2023.
- 9.3 **The Equal Group Survey.** In early 2022 an independent employee survey was conducted by The Equal Group. 1,288 colleagues completed the survey, giving a response rate of circa 30%. A significant proportion of people did not engage with the survey which is part of a broader challenge around engagement. The key themes from the survey included leadership, mental health and wellbeing, training, data collection and internal policies.

- 9.4 **Anti-racism Charter.** In May 2022, the Council signed the Unison Anti-Racism Charter which commits the Council to a range of pledges designed to prevent racial bias. Alongside the charter is an ongoing anti-racism action plan which includes specific actions against each of the commitments.
- 9.5 **Equality Impact Assessments and Super Users.** A revised Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) process was implemented during 2022 which included a new online system and new resources for colleagues to access via the EqIA hub. In addition to the new process, EqIA Super-users were recruited and trained to provide additional support for colleagues completing EqIAs. All of our employment policies will now be assessed using this new tool, and we plan to publish the EqIA's alongside each policy.
- 9.6 **Diversity data.** A priority for 2023 is to improve our diversity disclosure rates. A targeted communications exercise will be launched shortly, and we will work with colleagues who do not have regular access to IT or our employee records system (ERP) to ensure that they know how to update their data and what it is used for.
- 9.7 **EDI e-learning & Guidance.** Our new EDI e-learning will be released in March. This will be mandatory for all colleagues and introduces the key concepts of equality, diversity and inclusion, encourages colleagues to reflect on their practice and take action, covering important topics such as allyship and bystander intervention. Following the launch of the 4 introductory modules, additional EDI learning will be introduced to build on this foundation knowledge. A new course, 'The 4 Pillars of Inclusion' will be launching in May, this builds on the knowledge covered in the eLearning modules and explores leadership and allyship behaviours and how to support an inclusive workplace. Last year CLT members also attended a programme of Compassionate and Inclusive Leadership learning, additional dates have been secured to enable the new members of CLT to experience this learning and this is going to be expanded further to support all members of the Extended Leadership Team to participate.
- 9.8 **Integrated Assessment.** Following the upcoming plan to introduce Health and Carbon Assessments, work is underway to introduce an integrated Impact Assessment tool to align all three assessments and include the socio-economic inequalities. The aim is to have a more streamlined approach which is user-friendly. A range of training and resources will be launched to support colleagues to use the new tool and process.
- 9.9 **EDI Strategy 2023-2027.** A new EDI Strategy will be presented to Full Council in May before being launched. This will set out our approach to EDI and our equality objectives for the next four years. Colleagues will be consulted with on the draft strategy and a new EDI action plan will be developed to identify how the objectives will be achieved.
- 10.0 **Wellbeing**
- 10.1 **Dashboards and key indicators.** CLT review monthly dashboards featuring key indicators of employee wellbeing. These show that while our top two absence reasons remain related to mental health and stress, the total



days absent due to these reasons is on a downwards trajectory. Use of our Employee Assistance Programme has increased, and people are more often accessing this while remaining in work as opposed to once they are off sick.

- 10.2 **Monthly Wellbeing Hours** continue to prove a popular way to promote wellbeing resources and encourage people to support and protect their own wellbeing while being part of a shared experience with colleagues. Sessions regularly attract more than 300 people, with consistently positive evaluations. These sessions are recorded and we are building a substantial library of recordings and resources capturing the expertise on various subjects which is then readily available for people to access as and when they need it.
- 10.3 **Partnership working with the Integrated Care System** has proven valuable, with bespoke support solutions being codeveloped, including a series of clinician-led sessions enabling colleagues from social care, public health and education to reflect on the emotional impact of their work through the COVID pandemic. 145 people attended these sessions.
- 10.4 **Development of new strategic approach to Wellbeing** has commenced, building on themes identified in our employee engagement activity, as well as through work with CLT and management teams, and our trade union colleagues. This will identify the challenges for CCC in the current context, as well as opportunities to better understand the varying needs across the range of services we offer.
- 10.5 **Health promotion.** Interventions commissioned through our existing Public Health offer have been promoted internally and specific interventions offered including smoking cessation support and the regularly oversubscribed weight management sessions.
- 10.6 **Launch of new Wellbeing and Mental Health Awareness Sessions.** These launched in December 2022 and are already popular, with a practical focus on how colleagues can support their own mental health and have meaningful conversations at work about their wellbeing. There has been a provision of mental health awareness sessions for a number of years but this is a new approach with a different provider.

## 11.0 Our People Strategy

- 11.1 **A new People Strategy** is being developed and following engagement and input from colleagues across the organisation and from Staffing and Appeals Committee, it will be presented to Full Council in May.
- 11.2 **Compassionate, inclusive and personal approach.** The proposed strategy has a much more people focussed, personal approach than previous strategies and introduces some new core values for Cambridgeshire. The strategy has been developed alongside the EDI strategy and our approach to wellbeing as well as ensuring it is aligned with other enabling strategies such as our Digital strategy.

11.3 Workforce information. The activity above and the workforce information available to us has all helped to shape the People strategy and ensure that our people activity for the coming years is aligned to the Councils overall Strategic Framework and ambitions.

## 12.0 Source Documents

12.1 None