

Workforce Profile Update

To: Staffing and Appeals Committee

Meeting Date: 7th November 2023

From: Service Director: HR Services

Outcome: To provide Staffing and Appeals Committee with an update of the workforce demography and the current people related challenges across the organisation.

Recommendation: Staffing and Appeals Committee is invited to comment and take note of the detail within this report and request any areas for more detailed focus in the full annual workforce report which will be produced for February 2024.

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1.0 Background

- 1.1 In previous years a workforce information report has been provided annually in February for Committee alongside the statutory reports. In February 2023 the Committee asked for a brief mid year report to be produced to keep Members more closely informed regarding any changes and challenges being faced.
- 1.2 This report now sets out some of the key demographics and a summary of the key areas that the HR Team will be focussing on to address the workforce challenges faced.

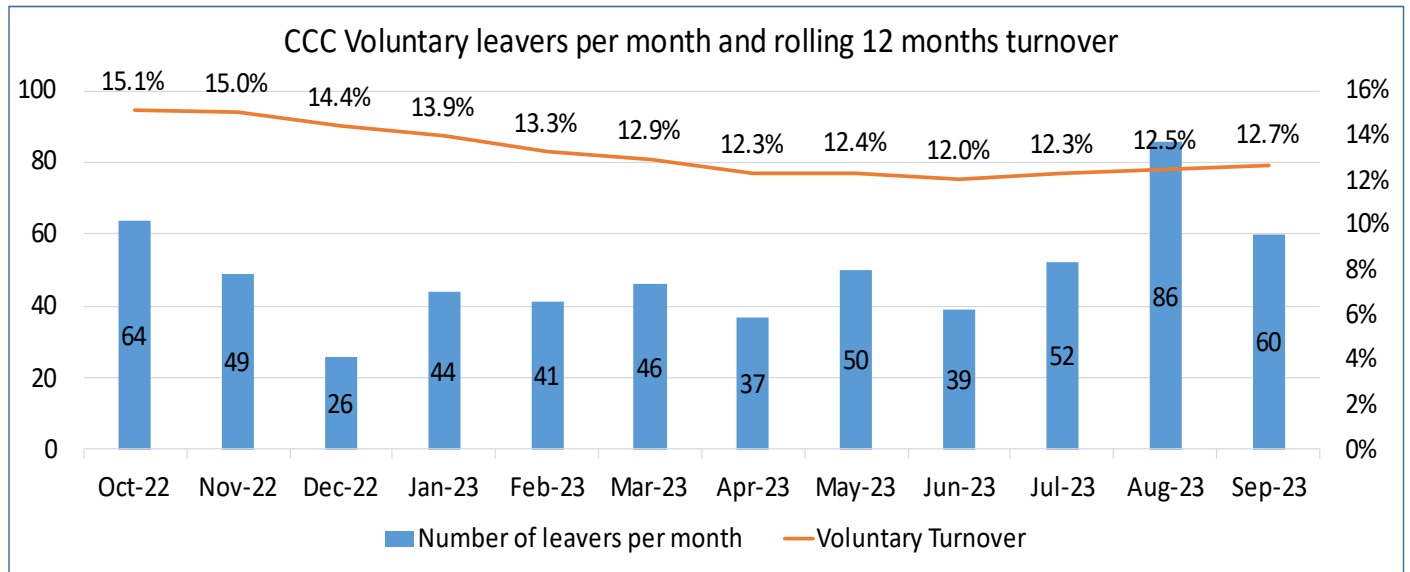
2.0 Our Workforce



- 2.1 At 30th September 2023 the overall head count for Cambridgeshire County Council was 4746, an increase from the 4738 headcount in February 2023. This correlates with the increase in number of part time workers also demonstrated above.
- 2.2 The number of leavers has been steadily reducing since October 2022 and appears to be settling back to pre covid levels. We would prefer to see the turnover rate nearer 10% which is considered a healthy rate but recognise that the employment market is changing along with the expectations and ambitions of the workforce, particularly those coming into the employment market for the first time so we will need to see how this pattern settles nationally across all sectors before determining what might be reasonable to view as a healthy pattern going forward.
- 2.3 With the role of Retention Advisor well established in the recruitment team we are focusing on good quality exit interviews to understand the reasons people are leaving. We also try to identify issues early through engagement sessions with new starters to continue to reduce the number of leavers where possible but also understand any issues new employees are facing in their first 6 months. Feedback from these sessions has been incredibly positive

and those who have taken part have reported that they feel reassured that there is a corporate investment into making sure that they settle well into the organisation as well as being well supported by their new line manager into their team environment.

2.4 Voluntary turnover for the last twelve months is shown below:



Of the total voluntary leavers for the rolling 12 months period ending 30 September 2023, 14% had 6 months service or less which is higher than the reporting period for Q1 (10.43%).

3.0 Absence and Health

3.1 Sickness absence is monitored closely and whilst the primary reason for long term absence remains as mental health and depression, we have seen a reduction in the number of days lost for this reason over the past 9 months. We can attribute this decrease in part to the improved support that is now in place and the support and challenge provided by the HR Advisory team to balance case management with the support needed.

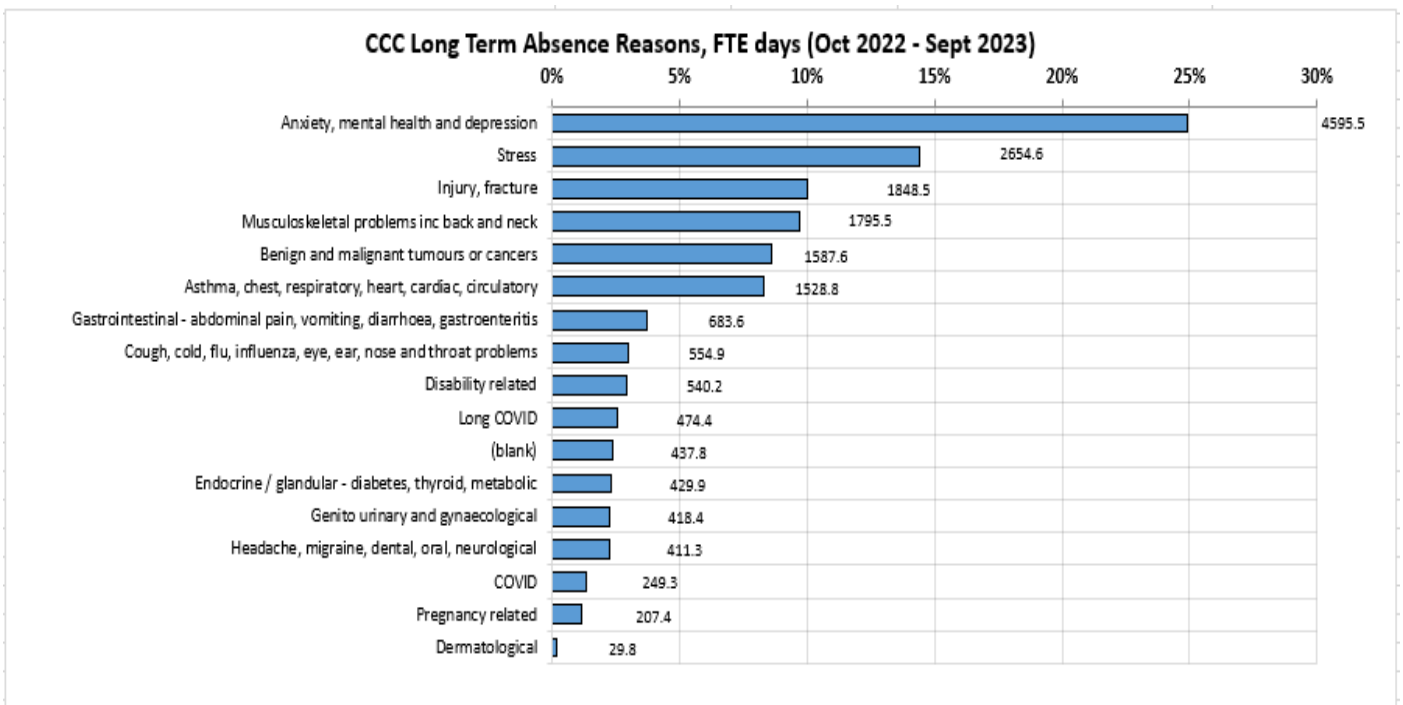
3.2 We have had a consistent focus on improving the support offered to colleagues affected by their mental health and the core standard offer the council provides is set out below:

- Dedicated Wellbeing Conversations as part of Our Conversations
- Employee Assistance Programme from Health Assured. This includes:
 - 24 hour/365 day access via phone line to trained counsellors.
 - Face to face, telephone and online counselling and CBT.
 - Other advice including legal and financial information.
 - EAP app supports colleagues on the go, from their smart phone, and includes instant messaging, mini-health checks and breathing techniques.
- Mental Health First Aiders – Colleagues trained to have supportive conversations, spot signs of poor mental health, and signpost to further support.

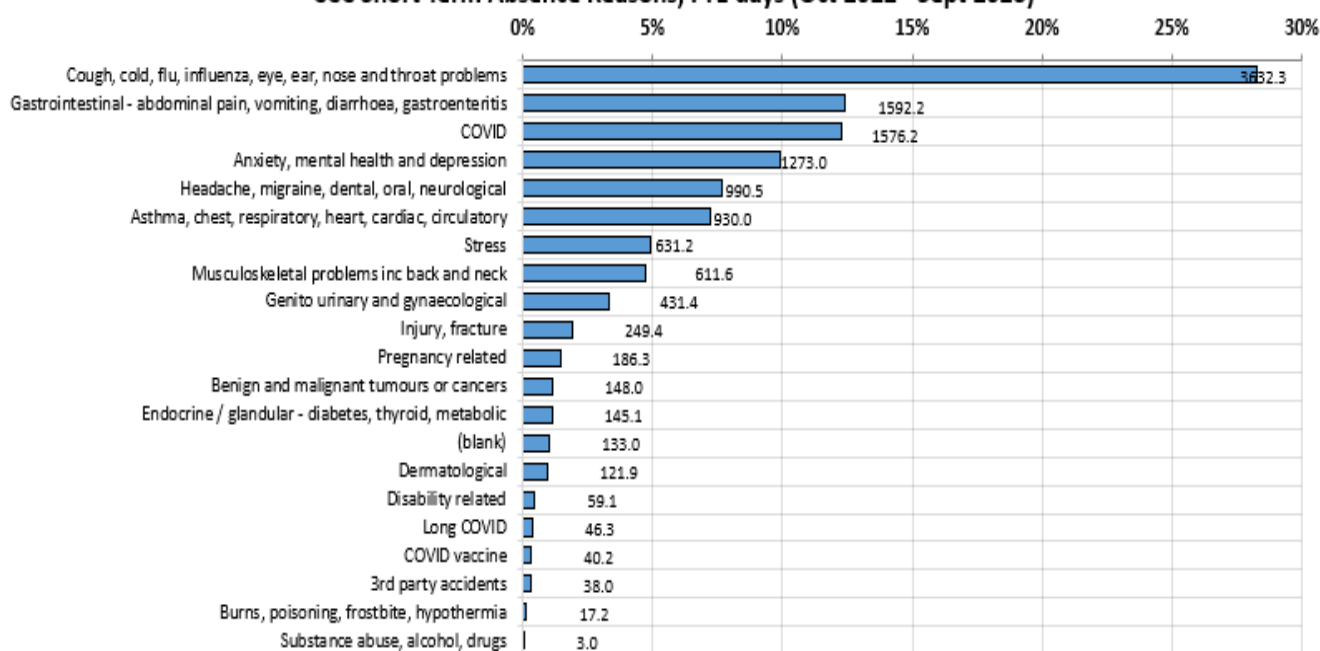
- Wellbeing and Mental Health Awareness sessions for employees and managers.
- Maximus/Access to Work mental health 1:1 support up to 9 months - For colleagues who feel their mental health is preventing them returning to or remaining in work.
- Specific support for Social Care and Public Health teams via the ICS Staff Support Hub

3.3 The majority of short term absences are attributed to cough, cold, flu etc which is not unusual. Short term absences can be more disruptive for services than longer term absence, so levels of absence, patterns and anyone hitting triggers for high levels of absence are monitored by managers with advice from their HR Advisors, and supportive measures are put in place wherever possible.

3.4 Details of reasons for long and short terms absence for the last twelve month rolling period can be seen below:



CCC Short Term Absence Reasons, FTE days (Oct 2022 - Sept 2023)



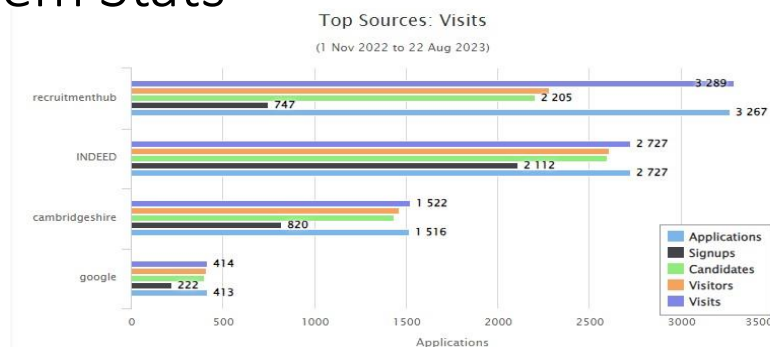
3.5 **Workforce Data.** As well as using our workforce information to inform strategy and people related project work, the HR Advisory team meet with Directors and Directorate management teams on a regular basis to review the data relevant to their services. Dashboards are provided enabling each directorate 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 Following a restructure of the HR Service in 2022, capacity was diverted from existing resources to increase the Recruitment and Retention team. The team was previously established to support only the children’s and adult social care teams where there is high turnover and volume of recruitment. However, recruitment and retention is now one of the most significant challenges for all services and in recognition of this the team is now resourced to provide professional recruitment advice across the whole organisation.
- 4.2 A new Recruitment Hub system has been live since November 2022 and 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.
- 4.3 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 was completed as part of the new system introduction and training is run continually and is always well attended.
- 4.4 Whilst data from the previous system was not available the new system is able to give us a wealth of statistics. The table below shows figures from June 2023 and we will monitor trends in the data now that we have the ability to do so.

Recruitment System Stats

	Total since November 22
Number of jobs published	731
Applications Started	14088
Applications submitted	9956
Offers made	704
Checks complete candidates hired	504



Top 5 most applied for roles

Role Details	Application Count
Financial Management Graduate Training Scheme... Ref: Ref/3472/2206	254 in total
Junior Insight Analysts Ref: Ref/1728/2236	148 in total
Reablement Support Worker Ref: Ref/1661/444	135 in total
Children's Information and Advice Officer MAS... Ref: Ref/233/821	132 in total
Financial Management Associate and Internal A... Ref: Ref/3472/780	130 in total

5.0 Current and Future Challenges

- 5.1 Workforce challenge discussions feature highly on the risks being managed across all parts of the organisation in a way that they have not before. Historically we have grappled with the challenges of finding people for some key areas such as Reablement, Social Work, Planners and Highways Engineers, but now these challenges are faced more widely and indeed more acutely. The HR teams working closely with Directorate Management Teams to develop clear plans for addressing the areas that are most affected through bespoke recruitment campaigns.
- 5.2 Growing our own – we continue to increase our investment in apprenticeships and will be launching our social care development academy in November. These are some of the ways we are focussing on providing opportunities for people to join our workforce and 'earn as they learn'. This is without doubt the most productive way we can develop the skills and talent that we need for the future and is an area where we are continuously looking for options to expand this offer and activity.
- 5.3 We are committed to increasing the diversity of our workforce and as part of that we must fully understand the diversity of the people that we already employ and any barriers to progression and development that they face. We have been working with the IDEAL committee to share the message that this information is vital to us fully understanding the experience of all colleagues across the Council.
- 5.4 We will continue to focus on identifying and removing any barriers to the recruitment and onboarding process to provide a better experience and to encourage more diversity in the applicants and appointments that we make through external recruitment and internal movement.
- 5.5 Recognising the difficulties that the wider environment and particularly the cost of living crisis has had and continues to have on our workforce is important. We continue to build

our Wellbeing Hub to provide a broad range of support for colleagues including a section on Financial Wellbeing, and respond to emerging challenges that people face.

- 5.6 Our workforce have greater expectations of what their experience should be like at work, and rightly so, so we have to work harder to make sure that their experience is as positive as possible, and provides the opportunities for growth and development that people are seeking to make sure that the Council is regarded as a good employer and a great place to work.
- 5.7 Responding positively to the messages from the recent employee engagement survey carried out will be critical in addressing the levels of engagement and satisfaction reported and this will be managed alongside the People Strategy to make sure that a comprehensive plan is in place, with strong leadership from the Corporate Leadership Team.
- 5.8 The full report in February will set out the activity and progress against the key areas of the People Strategy 2023 – 2028 approved by Full Council earlier this year.

6.0 Source Documents

- 6.1 [Staffing and Appeals Committee - February 2023](#)