

AGENDA

Meeting: Staffing Policy Committee

Place: Kennet Room, County Hall, Trowbridge BA14 8JN

Date: Tuesday 9 May 2023

Time: 2.00 pm

Please direct any enquiries on this Agenda to Ellen Ghey - Democratic Services Officer of Democratic Services, County Hall, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge, direct line 01225 718259 or email ellen.ghey@wiltshire.gov.uk

Press enquiries to Communications on direct lines 01225 713114/713115.

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Membership:

Cllr Stuart Wheeler (Chairman)
Cllr Helen Belcher OBE
Cllr Allison Bucknell
Cllr Richard Clewer
Cllr Carole King

Cllr Jacqui Lay
Cllr Ashley O'Neill
Cllr Tamara Reay
Cllr Ricky Rogers

Substitutes:

Cllr Liz Alstrom
Cllr Caroline Corbin
Cllr Mel Jacob
Cllr Simon Jacobs

Cllr Bob Jones MBE
Cllr Kathryn Macdermid
Cllr Nabil Najjar
Cllr Tom Rounds

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Please see the agenda list on following pages for details of deadlines for submission of questions and statements for this meeting.

For extended details on meeting procedure, submission and scope of questions and other matters, please consult [Part 4 of the council's constitution](#).

The full constitution can be found at [this link](#).

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AGENDA

PART I

Items to be considered while the meeting is open to the public

1 **Apologies for Absence**

To receive any apologies or substitutions for the meeting.

2 **Minutes of Previous Meeting** (*Pages 5 - 8*)

To approve and sign as a true and correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 1 March 2023.

3 **Declarations of Interest**

To receive any declarations of disclosable interests or dispensations granted by the Standards Committee.

4 **Chairman's Announcements**

To receive any announcements through the Chair.

5 **Public Participation**

The Council welcomes contributions from members of the public.

Statements

If you would like to make a statement at this meeting on any item on this agenda, please register to do so at least 10 minutes prior to the meeting. Up to 3 speakers are permitted to speak for up to 3 minutes each on any agenda item. Please contact the officer named on the front of the agenda for any further clarification.

Questions

To receive any questions from members of the public or members of the Council received in accordance with the constitution.

Those wishing to ask questions are required to give notice of any such questions in writing to the officer named on the front of this agenda no later than 5pm on **Friday 28 April 2023** in order to be guaranteed of a written response. In order to receive a verbal response, questions must be submitted no later than 5pm on **Wednesday 3 May 2023**. Please contact the officer named on the front of this agenda for further advice. Questions may be asked without notice if the Chairman decides that the matter is urgent.

Details of any questions received will be circulated to Committee members prior to the meeting and made available at the meeting and on the Council's website.

6 **Grow Your Own Social Workers Policy** *(Pages 9 - 30)*

To consider a report on the draft policy for the Grow Our Own Social Worker Development Scheme.

7 **Chief Officer Posts Guidance** *(Pages 31 - 38)*

To receive a report on the work undertaken to ensure alignment between the Council's constitution, Council policies, and role descriptions in relation to "Chief Officer" posts.

8 **Quarterly Workforce Report** *(Pages 39 - 46)*

To receive the Quarterly Workforce Report for January – March 2023.

9 **Urgent Items**

Any other items of business which, in the opinion of the Chairman, should be considered as a matter of urgency. Urgent items of a confidential nature may be considered under Part II of this agenda.

PART II

Items during whose consideration it is recommended that the public should be excluded because of the likelihood that exempt information would be disclosed

None

Staffing Policy Committee

MINUTES OF THE STAFFING POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 1 MARCH 2023 AT KENNET ROOM - COUNTY HALL, BYTHESEA ROAD, TROWBRIDGE, BA14 8JN.

Present:

Cllr Stuart Wheeler (Chairman), Cllr Helen Belcher OBE, Cllr Allison Bucknell, Cllr Carole King, Cllr Ashley O'Neill, Cllr Tamara Reay and Cllr Ricky Rogers

13 **Apologies for Absence**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Richard Clewer.

14 **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 January 2023 were presented for consideration. A query was raised on the possibility of elected Members utilising salary sacrifice schemes in general, noting the Tusker electric or hybrid vehicle proposal reported at the last meeting. A response would be circulated to the Committee after the meeting.

It was then,

Resolved:

To approve and sign the minutes as a true and correct record.

15 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of disclosable or other interests.

16 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no announcements.

17 **Public Participation**

There were no statements or questions submitted.

18 **Market Supplement Policy**

A report was presented on proposed revisions to the market supplement policy. The policy was first implemented in 2013 and reviewed in 2018. It was stated approximately 60 roles within the council had a market supplement applied.

It was explained that the updates largely related to clarifications on HR processes, but also to review the policy annually, in exceptional circumstances looking at roles beyond the public sector when considering whether to apply a market supplement, and other changes as set out in the report.

The Committee discussed the report and the policy and procedure. In response to queries it was stated that where a market supplement was agreed as necessary due to difficulties in recruitment at local government pay policy rates, that supplementary increase would then be applied to existing staff on the same roles. The Committee also discussed the policy relating to removal of a market supplement, and noted some of the areas where the policy had been applied such as for social workers and in building control.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was,

Resolved:

To approve the updates to the market supplement policy and procedure.

19 **Diversity and Inclusion Employment Monitoring Report**

A report was presented on the annual inclusion and diversity employer monitoring report. This was a requirement of the Equality Act 2010 as part of the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Details were provided on the collection of data relating to diversity and inclusion, the proportion of the workforce under the age of 25, staff turnover, a slight decrease in the percentage of females in the top salary bands, reverse mentoring schemes to enable senior male leaders to understand the challenges and experiences of female staff, and other updates.

The Committee discussed the report, noting that significant levels of unresponsiveness to some details could potentially impact the council's data, which was an historic issue, with some staff concerned about possibly being identified even though an anonymous survey, and others not seeing the relevance to respond.

The Committee discussed the report, noting that significant levels of unresponsiveness to some details could potentially impact the council's data, which was an historic issue, with some staff concerned about possibly being identified even though an anonymous survey, and others not seeing the relevance to respond. Efforts were being made to improve this through working with staff networks and remains a focus area. It was noted that this data does not look at employee satisfaction, however, the staff survey would look at this and may be possible to link back to protected characteristics where possible. Efforts were being taken to improve the number of exit interviews taking place to obtain improved data on why people left the council.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was,

Resolved:

To note the contents of this report and that this information will be fed into the action plan linked to the new Inclusion strategy.

20 **Gender Pay Gap Report**

A report was presented on the Gender Pay Gap. The council was required to publish and report specific figures on the difference between the average earnings of men and women, expressed relative to men's earnings.

The data in the report related to information up to the end of March 2022, including mean and median gender pay gap in hourly pay, as well as information on bonus pay gaps and proportions of male and female employees on each pay quartile.

Details were provided on the council's action plan to reduce the pay gap, including further implementation of the inclusive workforce strategy, reverse mentoring pilot programmes, and sponsoring female delegates to a stepping up leadership programme. With the council's leisure centre operation being taken in house, there had been a proportional increase in the number of lower paid male employees, which is shown in the figures.

The Committee received the report, and sought details on actions being taken to reduce the pay gap further.

It was then,

Resolved:

To note the contents of the gender pay gap infographic report and action plan, and the obligations placed on the council with regards to the publication of gender pay gap data

21 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

(Duration of meeting: 10.30 - 11.00 am)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Kieran Elliott of Democratic Services, direct line 01225 718504, e-mail kieran.elliott@wiltshire.gov.uk

Press enquiries to Communications, direct line 01225 713114 or email communications@wiltshire.gov.uk

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Staffing Policy Committee
9th May 2023

‘Grow Our Own’ Social Worker Development Scheme policy

Purpose

1. The purpose of the report is to provide a draft policy to SPC for the Grow Our Own Social Worker Development Scheme. The aim of the Grow Our Own Social Worker Development Scheme is to support employees to qualify as social workers. The scheme provides an opportunity to undertake a professional qualification in Social Work with a view to returning to work within the council’s social services.
2. The Career Break policy has also been amended to reflect the introduction of the new Grow Our Own policy.

Background and main considerations

3. Children’s and adults’ social care are key areas for us as a local authority. These areas pose challenges with regards to both recruitment and retention, leading to greater reliance on agency staff and the risk of staffing instability.
4. The Grow Our Own Social Worker Development Scheme seeks to retain talent within the organisation by supporting staff to develop into Social Worker roles.
5. The scheme applies to those staff currently working for Wiltshire Council, who wish to undertake formal social work training, who have the qualifications required and meet the entry criteria for their chosen programme.
6. The scheme benefits both the employee and the organisation. Investing in staff development in this way demonstrates that we value our staff, positively impacting upon motivation and job satisfaction, and creating a greater sense of loyalty to the organisation. Increasing our number of trained social workers will also address a critical skills gap, improving service delivery and resilience, leading to better outcomes for the residents of Wiltshire.

The Wiltshire Council Offer

7. The council's Career Break policy currently requires staff to resign, ceasing their continuous service. This reduces the incentive for staff to return to the council following their career break.
8. In order to incentivise individuals to return to the council after achieving their social work qualification, the decision, as supported by CLT, is to make an exception to this rule for the Grow Our Own Social Worker scheme. For the purposes of this scheme, employees will still need to resign from their substantive post and will not be an employee of Wiltshire Council for the duration of the programme. Then, providing that staff commence the ASYE programme with Wiltshire Council within three months of successfully qualifying, they will be able to have their previous continuous service taken into account for contractual benefits such as sickness absence, maternity/paternity, long service and annual leave.
9. Enabling staff to have previous continuous service taken into account if they return to the council on the ASYE programme within 3 months is a benefit which will support us to attract these staff back to the organisation.

Environmental impact of the proposal

10. None identified.

Equalities impact of the proposal

11. This policy will be taken to the next equality impact assessment panel. All comments from this panel will be considered.

Risk Assessment

12. If Wiltshire Council does not support employees to grow their career in social work, staff may look to other organisations which offer these development opportunities. Due to the shortages in this area we need to retain staff to enable us to deliver effective services to our vulnerable residents.

Financial Advice

13. The training options are funded via Grant income from DfE, the apprenticeship levy or by employees themselves. Considerations have been made regarding the financial implications of retaining employees' continuous service, however it is believed that the financial and service implications of not

retaining staff would be a greater cost to the council. It should also be noted that continuous service would not be retained for redundancy purposes.

Legal Advice

14. Legal advice has been received internally from Asifa Ashraf, Solicitor, who confirmed that allowing these staff to retain their continuous service would be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim, that being resolving the business need for social workers.

Recommendations

15. It is recommended that SPC support and agree the new Grow Our Own policy, and the related amendments made to the Career Break policy.

Tamsin Kielb
Director HR&OD

Report Author: Francesca Hyde, Strategic Projects and Policy Officer

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Grow Our Own Social Worker Development Scheme Policy

This policy can be made available in other languages and formats such as large print and audio on [request](#).

Go straight to the section:

- [What is the aim of the scheme?](#)
- [Who does it apply to?](#)
- [Who does it not apply to?](#)
- [What are the training options?](#)
- [Career break options](#)
 - [Career break and the Wiltshire Council offer](#)
 - [Step up to Social Work programme](#)
 - [Frontline programme](#)
- [‘Work and study’ options](#)
 - [Apprenticeships](#)
 - [Open University BA \(Hons\) in Social Work and Open University Postgraduate \(PG\) Diploma in Social Work](#)
- [Equal Opportunities](#)
- [Advice and guidance](#)
- [Further information](#)

What is the aim of the scheme?

The aim of the Grow Our Own Social Worker Development scheme is to support employees to qualify as social workers. The scheme provides an opportunity to undertake a professional qualification in Social Work with a view to working within Children’s or Adult Services.

Once qualified, Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSW) will have the opportunity to apply for the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) programme with Wiltshire Council. The ASYE programme gives newly qualified social workers additional support during their first year of employment.

Who does it apply to?

It applies to those staff currently working for Wiltshire Council who wish to undertake formal social work training, who have the qualifications required and meet the entry criteria for their chosen programme.

This scheme is available to all Wiltshire Council employees, including those employed on a part-time and job share basis, unless a separate contractual policy applies to a transferred employee to whom separate TUPE terms and conditions of employment apply.

Who does it not apply to?

The scheme is not available to employees on a casual contract, agency workers, or employees who are already qualified social workers.

This policy does not apply to teaching and non-teaching employees employed in maintained schools or academies.

What are the training options?

1. There are five different pathways into gaining a Social Work Qualification:

Career break options:

- [Step up to Social Work](#) – for Families and Children’s Services - funded via Grant income from DfE
- [Frontline to Social Work](#) – for Families and Children’s Services - this is a charity which is also supported by DfE

‘Work and study’ options:

- [Open University BA \(Hons\) in Social Work](#) – for Families and Children’s Services and Adult Social Care
- [Open University Post Graduate Diploma in Social Work](#) – for Families and Children’s Services and Adult Social Care
- [Apprenticeships](#) for Families and Children’s Services and Adult Social Care

2. For an overview of all the options, see the Pathways into Social Work flowchart.
3. [Career break](#) options support employees to take a career break from their employment with Wiltshire Council in order to gain a Social Work qualification. A career break means that the employee will resign from their substantive post and will not be an employee of Wiltshire Council for the duration of the programme. There are two career break programmes available, the [Step up to Social Work programme](#) and the [Frontline programme](#).
4. ‘Work and study’ options support employees to gain a qualification in Social Work whilst continuing to work at Wiltshire Council. There are two programmes available via the Open University, [the Open University BA \(Hons\) in Social Work](#) and the [Open University Post Graduate Diploma in Social Work](#).
5. There is also an apprenticeship route into social work. More information on this can be found [here](#). Depending on the employee’s current role within the council, there are two routes into this apprenticeship – upskilling within their existing relevant role, or applying for the apprenticeship role. Further information can be found in the [apprenticeships section](#).

Career break options

Career break and the Wiltshire Council offer

6. The council's [career break policy](#) will apply to employees if they undertake the Step Up to Social Work or Frontline programme. A career break means that the employee will resign from their substantive post and will not be an employee of Wiltshire Council for the duration of the programme.
7. Under this policy, the Wiltshire Council offer is that, provided that the employee commences the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) programme with Wiltshire Council within three months of successfully qualifying, they will be able to have their previous continuous service taken into account for contractual benefits. This includes sickness absence, maternity/paternity, long service and annual leave. Continuous service would not be retained for redundancy purposes.
8. This decision may be applied to other hard-to-fill and critical roles where there is evidence of the need to support with recruitment and retention, subject to appropriate analysis and approval by the service's HR Business Partner and Director.
9. Before applying to either the Step up to Social Work or Frontline programme, the employee should discuss their intention to train as a Social Worker and take a career break with their line manager. They should also read the [career break policy](#) so that they fully understand the process and the implications of taking a career break.
10. If an employee is undertaking the Frontline programme and is placed with Wiltshire Council, they will be on a career break for the first year of the programme and be employed as a Newly Qualified Social Worker for the second year on the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) programme.

Line manager considerations

11. Where possible, managers should support an employee's request to take a career break to study a Social Work qualification under the Frontline or Step-up programmes. Managers can liaise with the Principal Social Worker for advice.
12. Please refer to the [career break policy](#) for more information.

Step up to Social Work programme (post-graduate diploma in Social Work)

Overview of the programme

13. The Step-up to Social Work is an intensive fast track 14-month programme, where students are placed within a Local Authority to gain practice experience whilst undertaking academic learning. Successful candidates will be awarded a postgraduate diploma in Social Work.

14. The step-up programme can run every two years. Wiltshire Council works in partnership with the South West Regional Partnership group and hosts placement opportunities for the students taking part in the scheme. The South West Regional Partnership is led by Bournemouth University.

Financial information

15. Successful applicants accepted onto the Step up to Social Work programme will receive a bursary from the Department for Education (DfE). Please visit the [Step-up to social work government website](#) and [Department for Education](#) for more information.

16. The employee will be responsible for payment of their own individual professional fees connected with social work registration.

17. Whilst on placement, employees may be able to claim for business travel mileage if they need to use their own vehicle to travel, however wherever possible employees should car share or use a council vehicle. Please refer to the [business travel mileage allowances policy](#) for more information.

Entry requirements

18. Applicants must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- A minimum 2:1 Level 6 degree qualification or minimum 2:2 honours degree plus a higher degree
- GCSEs in English and Mathematics at Grade C / Grade 4 or above
- Completion of their degree
- Minimum of 6 months' full time or equivalent experience of voluntary or paid work with children, young people or families
- Live in England
- Driving license or confirmation that they are able to travel for work

Application and selection process

19. Applications must be submitted via the [Step up to Social Work government website](#). Applications may be open every two years, depending on the Department for Education.

20. If the employee is successful at the application stage, they will be invited to an assessment day organised by Bournemouth University in partnership with the regional local authorities. This will be a full day which will include a face to face interview, a group activity with service users, a written assessment and a telephone exercise.

21. If the employee is accepted onto the programme, they will need to complete a [career break request form](#) as soon as possible which their manager will need to sign off.

After qualifying

22. When an employee successfully completes the programme and gains their Social Work England registration, they will be given an interview with the council. They will be subject to an assessment process before being offered employment as a Newly Qualified Social Worker (NQSW).

Frontline programme (post-graduate)

Overview of the programme

23. The Frontline Social Work Post-graduate programme is an intensive 12-month fast track programme where applicants work within a local authority to gain practice experience whilst undertaking academic learning.
24. The programme runs over two years. The first year qualifies the employee as a social worker through direct work with children and families. During the second year they will work as a Newly Qualified Social Worker and will be responsible for their own caseload.
- Year 1: From September to August, the employee will be supported and assessed by a Consultant Social Worker who oversees four to five students as a “pod” within children’s social care. A practice tutor is also allocated to provide the academic training within the local authority and regional group. On successful completion of Year 1, they will achieve a post-graduate diploma in Social Work.
 - Year 2: Successful students who are registered with Social Work England will be employed by the local authority as a Newly Qualified Social Worker. As a Newly Qualified Social Worker, they will complete their Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) while continuing to study towards their master’s degree with Frontline.

Financial information

25. If the employee’s application is successful, they will receive a bursary for the duration of the first year of the programme. For more information, please go to the [Frontline website](#).
26. During the second year, the employee will be interviewed by the council and, if successful and having gained their social work registration, will be employed as a Newly Qualified Social Worker on the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) programme. They will be paid as an employee.

27. The employee will be responsible for payment of their own individual professional fees connected with social work registration.
28. If the employee is placed with Wiltshire Council, they may be able to claim for business mileage if they need to use their own vehicle to travel. Please refer to the [business travel mileage allowances policy](#) for more information.

Entry requirements

29. To be eligible for the Frontline programme, the employee must:
- Have a 2:1 or above in an undergraduate honors degree (predicted or obtained) or 2.2 in an undergraduate honours degree as well as a level 7 qualification.
 - Have a grade C or above in Mathematics and English Language GCSE (or equivalent).

Application and selection process

30. Applications must be submitted via the [Frontline website](#). Applications usually open in September each year.
31. When submitting their application, the employee will be able to select the Local Authority that they would prefer to be placed with for their placement, although it is not guaranteed that this will be allocated to them.
32. If the employee's application is shortlisted, they will be invited to an assessment day with Frontline.
33. If the employee is accepted onto the programme, they will need to complete a [career break request form](#) as soon as possible which their manager will need to sign off.

After qualifying

34. If the employee successfully completes the programme and gains their social work qualification, they will be offered the opportunity to apply for a Newly Qualified Social Worker (NQSW) vacant position with Wiltshire Council. They will be subject to an assessment process before being offered employment as a Newly Qualified Social Worker (NQSW).

'Work and study' options

Apprenticeships

35. Depending on the employee's current role within the council, there are two routes into this apprenticeship: upskilling within their existing relevant role or applying for the apprenticeship role.

36. Apprentices cannot be asked to repay any of the training costs if they leave the apprenticeship early.

Upskilling apprenticeship route

37. **The upskilling route** is only available for those already undertaking a closely related role, which can continue to be undertaken whilst undertaking the apprenticeship and will enable the employee to develop the key competencies required in the apprenticeship. The employee's current role would usually be within one grade of the L6 apprenticeship grade (H) and they would remain in this role on their current pay for the duration of the apprenticeship.
38. The Family Keyworker (children's) (CA09-1159, Grade I) and Social Care Practitioner (adults) (CA08-1346, Grade H) roles have been identified as roles which would enable postholders to "upskill" through the social work apprenticeship route. Whether other roles are deemed closely related to social care will be decided by the apprenticeship provider, alongside HR and the Principal Social Workers.
39. If the employee is on a role paid at grade J or higher (e.g., Senior Family Keyworker) then, subject to meeting the person specification for the Social Worker apprenticeship, they will move **permanently** to a Family keyworker role and be paid at the top of grade I for the duration of the upskilling apprenticeship. This move would not be a secondment, and there would be no right to return to the Senior Family Keyworker role should they be unsuccessful in completing the apprenticeship.

Apprenticeship role

40. If the employee is on a higher graded role but does not meet the person specification for a Family Keyworker, they will need to move **permanently** into the H grade apprenticeship role for the duration of the apprenticeship. This move would not be a secondment, and there would be no right to move back to their substantive post should they be unsuccessful in completing the apprenticeship.
41. For this programme, the apprentice will need to work a minimum of 30 hours per week for the duration of the training programme
42. The L6 degree apprenticeship rate of pay is Grade H, spinal column point 15, for the duration of the apprenticeship. Wiltshire Council pay scales can be found on [HR Direct](#). All those undertaking the apprenticeship are expected to apply for an Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) position at grade J upon successful completion and any previous pay arrangements will cease to apply.
43. This apprenticeship opportunity offers employees a degree level apprenticeship with 20% off-the-job time to train without having to pay any tuition fees. Further information can be found in the [apprenticeship scheme policy and procedure](#).

Open University BA (Hons) in Social Work and Open University Postgraduate (PG) Diploma in Social Work

Line manager considerations

44. Employees must give fair and consistent consideration to requests from employees who wish to undertake a Social Work qualification with the Open University.
45. Where possible, managers are expected to support an employee's request, however the impact to service delivery and to other team members must be considered, as there might not be an opportunity to back-fill the employee's post when the employee is on study days or on placement. The service must therefore be able to provide appropriate cover to deliver the required level of service-to-service users.
46. If managers are unable to agree to a request due to operational requirements, they should forward the request to their Head of Service/Director for further consideration.
47. Please refer to the [Time to train](#) and [Learning and Development policies](#) for further information.

Overview of the programmes

48. The BA (Hons) is a 3-year degree course which combines distance and online learning with face-to-face seminars. The course is split into six modules, with two modules per year.
49. The PG Diploma is a 17-month continuous study programme which also combines distance and online learning with face-to-face seminars. The course is split into 2 modules, each of them taking approximately 8 months to complete.
50. The employee will need to complete practice placements for both the BA and PG programmes. All placements will be with Wiltshire Council.
51. The employee will need to get their line manager's agreement before applying as they will remain employed by the council under the terms and conditions of their substantive post for the duration of the programme.
52. Wiltshire Council will offer the employee advice and assistance via the Organisational Development (OD) team in the form of 1:1 support, support workshops and group supervision for the duration of the study.
53. The OD team will oversee the employee's progression. They will be expected to share the results at the end of each module with them.

Financial information

54. Fees for the BA (Hons) Open university programme can be found [here](#) and for the PG Diploma [here](#).

55. Wiltshire Council will not be responsible for paying the university fees.
56. Wiltshire Council will not be responsible for any other costs incurred as a result of the employee failing and/or having to retake or re-sit exams or assessments.
57. The employee will be responsible for payment of their own individual professional fees connected with social work registration.
58. Employees are able to apply for an interest free loan to help them to fund the course fees. Further information can be found in the [Professional Qualification Learning Loan policy](#).
59. Whilst on placement, employees may be able to claim for business mileage if they need to use their own vehicle to travel. Please refer to the [business travel mileage allowances policy](#) for more information.
60. Travel and other expenses incurred when attending examinations or tutorials will not be reimbursed by Wiltshire Council.

Entry requirements

61. Employees wishing to undertake the BA (Honours) in Social Work must:
- have at least two years continuous service.
 - have GCSE at grades A*-C in English and Mathematics or certified equivalent
 - meet the UCAS tariff threshold of 96 points or equivalent. Details of tariff points awarded to various qualifications can be found [here](#).
 - obtain an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) with barred lists (children and adults) check. Please see the [DBS policy and procedure](#) for more information.
 - More information on the entry requirements can be found [here](#).
62. Employees wishing to undertake the postgraduate diploma must:
- have at least two years continuous service.
 - have GCSE grade A*-C in English and Mathematics or certified equivalent.
 - hold an honours degree with a minimum 2:2 classification in any discipline which demonstrates experience of engaging directly with service user in a professional setting.
 - obtain an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) with barred lists (children and adults) check. Please see the [DBS policy and procedure](#) for more information.
 - Normally one year's experience either in paid or voluntary sector or a 2:1 classification in a similar discipline such as:
 - Health and Social Care
 - Nursing
 - Occupational Therapy
 - Psychology

- Sociology/Social Studies
- Law/Legal studies
- Teaching/Education
- More information on the entry requirements can be found [here](#).

63. Employees whose first language is not English must achieve an International English Language Testing Systems (IELTS) score of 7 for both the BA (Honours) and the Postgraduate programmes.

Application and selection process

64. Employees are not able to apply directly to the Open University. Applications need to be made via Wiltshire Council as their employing organisation.

65. If employees are interested in the scheme, they will be required to complete a short application form expressing their interest, which will include a personal statement. They will need to submit this to the Organisational Development (OD) team. For more information or to request an application form, please contact learning@wiltshire.gov.uk.

66. A shortlisting process will take place and if the employee is successful, they will be invited to participate in an assessment day organised by the Open University. Wiltshire Council will be involved in the assessment day, and the employee will be advised of the arrangements at the point of invite.

Line manager agreement

67. Employees must discuss their intention to undertake a Social Work qualification with the Open University with their manager and get their agreement before submitting an expression of interest.

68. If the employee's manager is unable to approve their request, they will have to set out the grounds for refusal in writing.

69. Employees have the right to appeal if their request is refused.

70. Please refer to the [Time to train policy](#) for more information.

Time off to study

71. Students on the Open University Programmes will be entitled to one paid day a week for study, pro rata for part-time employees, during university term-time. This will be for the purpose of attending classes/seminars or completing coursework or online learning.

72. Time off studying will be classified as normal 'working time' and therefore Wiltshire Council's policies, procedures and contractual obligations will apply.

73. Employees will be released from their substantive post to complete 2 practice placements. They will not be expected to undertake any duties related to their substantive post whilst they are on placement.
74. If further time is required, employees may reach an agreement with their manager to work flexibly or use flexitime or annual leave. All arrangements for time off must be approved by their manager before it is taken.
75. There is an expectation that employees will need to complete additional study in their own time to successfully complete the course.
76. For more information please refer to the [Learning and Development](#) and [Time to train policies](#).

Employee/Student commitment

77. Employees will be expected to continue to carry out the duties of their substantive post and to fulfil their normal contracted hours on the days not allocated for study and outside of university term time, in accordance with their contract of employment.
78. Employees will be required to provide Wiltshire Council with proof of successful module completion, when requested.

After qualifying

79. Upon successful completion of the programme and upon gaining Qualified Social Worker status, employees will be expected to actively seek and apply for a Newly Qualified Social Worker (NQSW) vacant position with Wiltshire Council on the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) programme. They will be subject to an interview process before being offered employment as a Newly Qualified Social Worker (NQSW). In the event of a post being offered, it is expected that they will accept the employment offer.
80. Post-qualification and until the employee secures a Newly Qualified Social Worker position, they will continue to fulfil the role in which they are employed under their contract of employment.
81. If the employee is not successful in completing the qualification or in securing a Newly Qualified Social Worker position, they will remain in their substantive post.

Equal Opportunities

This policy has been [Equality Impact Assessed](#) to identify opportunities to promote equality and mitigate any negative or adverse impacts on particular groups.

Managers will make any necessary adjustments to ensure that all employees are treated fairly. For further information see the [guidance on equal opportunities](#).

Advice and guidance

If you require help in accessing or understanding this policy, you should contact your line manager or trade union representative if you are a member.

If, due to the nature of your query, it is not appropriate to contact your line manager you should contact your Head of Service who will nominate an appropriate manager or colleague to help you.

Further information

There are a number of related policies and procedures that you should be aware of including:

- [Career break policy](#)
- [Time to train policy](#)
- [Learning and development policy](#)
- [Professional qualification learning loans policy](#)
- [Assessed and Supported Year in Employment \(ASYE\) policy](#)
- [Equality and Diversity policy and procedure](#)

For further information please speak to your supervisor, manager, service director or contact your [HR advisor](#).

Career Break Scheme policy

This policy can be made available in other languages and formats such as large print and audio on [request](#).

What is it?

This policy gives guidance on the council's career break scheme which gives all Wiltshire Council employees the opportunity to take a period of unpaid time away from work, in the form of a career break.

Please note that the parents and carers employment break policy and procedure has now been integrated with this policy.

Who is covered by this policy?

This policy applies to all Wiltshire Council employees, with at least 12 months continuous service, unless a separate contractual policy applies to a transferred employee to whom separate TUPE terms and conditions of employment apply. This policy does not apply to teaching and non-teaching staff employed in maintained schools or academies. This policy also applies to centrally employed teachers.

This policy also applies to all Wiltshire Council employees who take a career break to undertake the Step Up to Social Work or Frontline programme to qualify as a social worker. For more information, please see the Grow Our Own Social Workers policy.

What is a career break?

1. There may be times when an employee may want or need to take a period away from work. A career break can provide employees with an opportunity for personal development, to fulfil personal or domestic commitments, or to take an extended break to look after children or other dependent relatives.
2. A career break is unpaid and can be for a period of between 6 months and 5 years.

Main points

3. Employees may want to take a career break for a number of reasons. These could include:
 - Personal development
 - Voluntary or community work
 - Education or training – e.g., **qualifying as a Social Worker under the Grow Our Own Social Workers policy.**

- Extended foreign travel
 - Caring responsibilities for children or dependants
 - Caring for a dependent relative with terminal illness
 - Caring for a relative recovering from an illness where the recovery time is unknown
4. A career break can be between 6 months and 5 years.
 5. Employees will be required to resign from the council and whilst they are on the career break they are no longer an employee of Wiltshire Council.

How to apply for a career break

6. Employees should discuss their request for a career break with their line manager.
7. Formal applications for a career break should then be made using the [career break request form](#). This should be at least 3 months before the intended start date. However, there will be some flexibility in exceptional circumstances.
8. The employee's application should include reasons for seeking an employment break and an indication of the anticipated length of absence.
9. The employee's line manager will review their application and discuss it with their Head of Service and/or Associate Director. **Line managers must treat all requests fairly, within timescales, giving clear reasons for approval or non-approval of a career break.**
10. A decision will be made within 28 days of the request and the line manager will confirm the outcome in writing.
11. **If the career break is approved, managers should forward paperwork to HR as soon as possible. Managers should complete a leavers form and return it directly to the HR Payroll team for action.**

Keeping in touch and reorientation to work

12. Employees will need to keep in touch with their line manager to ensure that they are kept up to date with their role and with any developments within the council. This is the responsibility of both the employee and their manager. The employee will need to agree how this is done in advance with their manager.
13. When the employee's application for a career break has been accepted, they should agree how they will keep in touch with service and corporate developments and how they can remain professionally up to date. This will help to ensure that they are able to return to work with confidence and that they are able to restart work at similar performance levels to

when they left. It will also help to ensure that their skills are maintained sufficiently to allow them to become rapidly updated and to compete for jobs of a similar nature at the end of the break, if they are applying for internal vacancies.

14. The employee should update their manager of any changes in personal circumstances, including intention to increase or shorten the time away.
15. Depending on the length of their break, the employee should give their manager/HR between 6 weeks to 3 months' notice of their availability for work.

Return to work

16. Employees should give 3 months' notice of their intention to return to work.
17. Re-employment cannot be guaranteed. However, for shorter career breaks of less than a year and where practicable the manager, in discussion with HR, will give consideration to the employee returning to the job in which they were employed before their career break began. They will still, however, be required to resign in order to go on the career break.
18. For career breaks of longer than a year, the employee will not be able to return to the job in which they were employed before commencing their career break. To facilitate the employee with their return to work at Wiltshire Council after an extended career break, they can register their availability with the Recruitment team. The employee should regularly monitor the council's careers website to identify suitable roles in which they may be interested. Where they meet the requirements of the person specification, they are guaranteed an interview for suitable posts within the council.
19. The employee should advise HR and the Recruitment team of any applications they make so that they can ensure they are interviewed (subject to the requirements of the job being met).
20. These provisions will operate for a maximum of six months from the date of the employee's availability for work. If the employee unreasonably refuses an offer of employment, the council's obligations to help them secure a job will cease.
21. If an ex-employee is returning to a role requiring a DBS check (previously CRB), NPPV or other security vetting, line managers should ensure that their record is up to date and assess whether it needs to be reviewed. The line manager should seek advice from the HR Advisory team should they be unsure whether a change of circumstance or incident needs to be reported.

22. On return to work report any changes in health to the HR advisory team as they may require a referral to the Occupational Health department.
23. If the employee returns to the same service area, or to a new role and service area, the line manager will need to make suitable arrangements for the reintroduction into the workplace. Depending on the length of the break, this may include an induction period and assessment of any training and development needs, including ensuring access to IT systems if necessary. Any reasonable adjustments required previously will need to be retained.

Declined requests

24. The scheme operates at the discretion of the council and is not a right of the employee. It depends on the existing and longer term operational requirements and business needs. The employee's manager has the right to refuse a career break request but must give the employee the reasons why they have declined the request.
25. Circumstances where a career break request may be declined or postponed are:
 - Where the employee has been appointed to cover another member of staff to carry out a specific task
 - Where the employee is on an approved training course funded by the council
 - Inability to recruit additional staff or reorganise work amongst existing staff
 - There is a substantial negative impact on service delivery
 - The activity could affect the council's reputation. E.g. volunteering for a political organisation involved in criminal activity.
 - The need to retain the employee's skills, knowledge and experience
 - There is substantial cost of covering the role i.e. by an agency / interim member of staff
26. As there is no guarantee that an application for a career break will be accepted, the employee should not commit themselves to any plans unless their career break has been approved.
27. If the request is refused the employee will be informed in writing. The letter will include the reasons for refusal.

28. There is no right of appeal if the career break is refused.
29. Managers must keep a written record of all refused requests and the reason for refusal. Copies should be sent to the HR Advisory team.

Leaving the Scheme

30. If an employee decides to leave the scheme, they should inform their line manager, in writing, as soon as possible. If they leave the scheme then the Council will not be able to assist in facilitating a possible return to work as detailed in the policy above.

Scheme implications

31. Employees must return all council equipment whilst on a career break.

Pension

32. In taking a career break, the employee has resigned and ended their employment with Wiltshire Council and they will have changed from being an active member of the pension fund to a deferred member. If they re-join the council they start as a new member again but they can have their service joined. Deferred benefits can be aggregated with their active pension account. However, the date when their break occurred is important and aggregation is dependent on the rules of the pension fund that apply at the time they re-join. Employees should, therefore, contact the Wiltshire Pension Fund to find out the impact on their pension.

National Insurance contributions

33. Employees only make contributions during paid periods of employment. If they wish to maintain payments during a career break, they will need to make arrangements with the Benefits Agency.

Continuous service and annual leave entitlement

34. Employees are expected to take any outstanding leave prior to the start of the employment break. From 1 April 2002, if an employee's career break is for maternity reasons or for reasons concerned with caring for children or other dependents, their continuous service will be broken but they will be able to have previous service taken into account for the sickness and maternity schemes, providing their break does not exceed eight years and they have not been in paid full time employment. For annual leave, the eight years' time limit does not apply provided the employee has not been in full time employment. In the case of a TUPE transfer there are specific regulations in the green book (national agreement on pay and conditions of service) about continuity of service.

35. The implications on continuous service differ for employees taking a career break in order to qualify as a social worker under the Grow Our Own Social Workers policy. Please see this policy for further information.

Other salary deductions, e.g., salary sacrifice schemes

36. As the employee has resigned from their employment with Wiltshire Council, their membership to all schemes will cease. The employee will have to repay any outstanding balance with salary sacrifice schemes, and this amount will exclude the tax benefit. The employee will need to contact HR Payroll to arrange full payment of any outstanding amounts.
37. After their career break, if the employee returns to work with Wiltshire Council there is no guarantee that these salary sacrifice schemes will still be available, or in what format they will be operating if they are still available.

Pregnancy during career breaks

38. If an employee falls pregnant whilst on a career break, they may be entitled to a Maternity Allowance. Employees should seek advice from the Benefits Agency.

Equal Opportunities

This policy has been [Equality Impact Assessed](#) to identify opportunities to promote equality and mitigate any negative or adverse impacts on particular groups.

Related policies and documents

- Flexible working policy
- Maternity leave
- Adoption leave
- Shared Parental leave
- Annual leave
- Ordinary parental leave
- Leave for carers

Further advice and information

 [Template letter - Career Break acceptance.docx](#)

For further information please speak to your manager, or contact a member of the HR Advisory team.

Chief Officer posts guidance

Purpose

1. The purpose of the report is to provide Staffing Policy Committee with a brief summary of the work which has been undertaken to ensure alignment between the Council's constitution, council policies and role descriptions in relation to "Chief Officer" posts.

Background and main considerations

2. A review of the council's constitution is currently being conducted, coordinated by the council's Democratic Services team.
3. As part of this work it was identified that a review of the wording within the Constitution, council policies and role descriptions needed to be undertaken to ensure alignment of the use of the term "chief officer".
4. As part of this work a revised guidance document confirming the posts designated as chief officer posts at Wiltshire Council has been created (attached as Appendix 1) and the Constitution, council policies and job descriptions will all refer to and align to this list.

Main changes

5. The Constitution Focus Group have reviewed and confirmed minor wording changes to Part 3 and Part 14 on the Council's Constitution to ensure that the descriptions of chief officer posts are consistent across all documents and make reference to the guidance document. These changes will be confirmed at full council on 16 May 2023.
6. In February 2023 the council's "Assistant Director" posts were renamed as "Director" to provide greater clarity about the level and responsibility that they have within the organisation and at the same time the role descriptions for these posts were updated to reflect that, going forward, these posts will fall under the council's "Chief Officer" policies and processes (e.g. Member appointment).

7. Where there are specific council policies for Chief Officers these will be updated to link to the guidance document. The policies this applies to are:
 - Appointment policy for chief officers
 - Redundancy policy and procedure for chief and senior officers
8. Other council policies refer to the fact that, where they are applied to Chief Officers, they must be read in conjunction with the Constitution and terms and conditions of employment. These policies will also be updated to link to the guidance document. These policies include:
 - Disciplinary policy
 - Grievance policy
 - Improving work performance policy

Environmental impact of the proposal

9. None identified.

Equalities impact of the proposal

10. None identified.

Risk Assessment

11. Not required.

Financial Advice

12. Not applicable.

Legal Advice

13. The guidance document has been reviewed and approved by Perry Holmes, Director – Legal and Governance.

Recommendations

14. It is recommended that SPC note the new guidance document and confirm that policies should be updated to align and refer to this where appropriate.

Tamsin Kielb
Director HR&OD

Report Author: Paula Marsh, Senior Strategic HR Business Partner

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Wiltshire Council - Chief Officer posts guidance

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Staffing Policy Committee
9 May 2023

Appendix 1 - Wiltshire Council - Chief Officer posts guidance

This document confirms those posts at Wiltshire Council which are considered to fall under the definitions of Chief Officers and Deputy Chief Officers as set out within the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

It also identifies those posts to which the council's Chief Officer policies and processes do and do not apply.

Statutory Chief Officer posts:

Statutory Chief Officers hold designated posts which, under legislation, the authority must have in place.

The council's Chief Officer policies and processes apply to the Statutory Chief Officer posts identified below in line with part 14 of the Council's constitution:

Statutory post	Defined within	Identified Wiltshire Council post(s)
Head of Paid Service	Local Government and Housing Act 1989, <u>section 4</u>	LSL1-1877 Chief Executive
Monitoring Officer	Local Government and Housing Act 1989, <u>section 5</u>	LSL2-1249 Director - Legal and Governance
Chief Finance Officer	Local Government Act 1972, <u>section 151</u>	LSCD-1998 Corporate Director Resources / Deputy Chief Executive
Director of Children's Services	Children Act 2004, <u>section 18</u>	LSCD-1999 Corporate Director People
Director of Public Health	National Health Service Act 2006, <u>section 73A (1)</u>	LSL2-1602 Director of Public Health
Director of Adult Social Service	Local Authority Social Services Act 1970, <u>section 6 (A1)</u>	LSL2-2434 Director - Adult Social Care

Statutory officer posts to which chief officer policies do not apply

There are other posts within Wiltshire Council which are considered "statutory officers" as they hold a statutory post but to which the council's chief officer policies and processes do not apply due to the grade and level of their post within the organisation (i.e. they sit below Director grade and are not part of the council's extended leadership team).

Examples of statutory posts to which the council's chief officer policies and processes do not apply are:

Statutory post	Defined within	Identified Wiltshire Council post(s)
Deputy Electoral Registration Officers	Election Act 2022	LSL4-1832 Head of Democracy, Governance and Customer Services LST2-2225 Electoral Services Specialist Manager
Designated Scrutiny Officer	Local Government Act 2000, section 9FB	OS15-0075 Democracy Manager – Democratic Services
Lead Data Protection Officer	Data Protection Act 2018, sections 69-71	OS13-0343 Data Protection Lead

Non-statutory Chief Officers

These are posts where the postholder, as respects all or most of the duties of their post, is required to report directly or is directly accountable to the head of paid service or report directly or is directly accountable to the local authority themselves or any committee or sub-committee of the authority. This excludes any person whose duties are solely secretarial or clerical or are otherwise in the nature of support services.

The council's Chief Officer policies and processes apply to the Non Statutory Chief Officer posts identified below in line with part 14 of the Council's constitution:

Identified Wiltshire Council non-statutory chief officer post(s)
LSCD-1947 Corporate Director – Place

Deputy Chief Officers

These are posts where the postholder, as respects all or most of the duties of their post, is required to report directly or is directly accountable to one or more of the statutory or non statutory chief officers.

This excludes any person whose duties are solely secretarial or clerical or are otherwise in the nature of support services.

The council's Chief Officer policies and processes apply to the Deputy Chief Officer posts identified below in line with part 14 of the Council's constitution:

Wiltshire Council deputy chief officer post(s)
LSL2-2094 Director - Procurement & Commissioning
LSL2-1606 Director – Assets
LSL2-1243 Director - Education & Skills
LSL2-1242 Director - Families and Children
LSL2-1604 Director - Highways and Transport
LSAD-2019 Director – Environment
LSAD-2022 Director – Finance
LSAD-2194 Director - HR&OD
LSAD-2090 Director - Leisure, Culture & Communities
LSAD-2073 Director -Transformation & Business Change
LSAD-2270 Director – ICT
LSAD-2097 Director – Planning

There are other posts within Wiltshire Council which are considered “deputy chief officers” because they report directly to one or more of the statutory or non statutory chief officers but to which the council’s chief officer policies and processes do not apply due to the grade and level of their post within the organisation (i.e. they sit below Director grade and are not part of the council’s extended leadership team).

Examples of posts which meet the definition of “deputy chief officer” but to which the council’s chief officer policies and processes do not apply are:

Report to:	Posts
Chief Finance Officer	LSL3-2088 Head of Wiltshire Pension Fund
Director of Children’s Services	LSL3-1898 - HoS Perf, Outcomes & QA Children& Adults
Director of Public Health	PH-CON Public Health Consultants (x4) LSL5-0085 Head of Occupational Health and Safety
Director of Adult Social Service	LSL4-2092 Head of Housing – People services LSL4-1349 Head of Service – Reablement LSL4-1347 Head of Service – Ageing Well LSL4-2080 Head of Service – Living Well LSL4-0153 Head of Service – Mental Health and Safeguarding LSL4-1514 Head of Service – Community Support LSL4-1513 Head of Service – Learning Disabilities and Autism
Monitoring Officer	LSL3-0093 Head of Legal Services LSL4-1832 Head of Democracy, Governance & Customer Services LSL4-1440 Head of Communications Marketing &Events LSL4-1821 Head of Service - Executive Office LSL5-1527 Head of Registration
Corporate Director - Place	LSL3-2100 Head of Economy & Regeneration

Any queries regarding this document should be addressed to Human Resources by emailing policyandreward@wiltshire.gov.uk

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Quarterly Workforce Report

March 2023



Observations and Exceptions

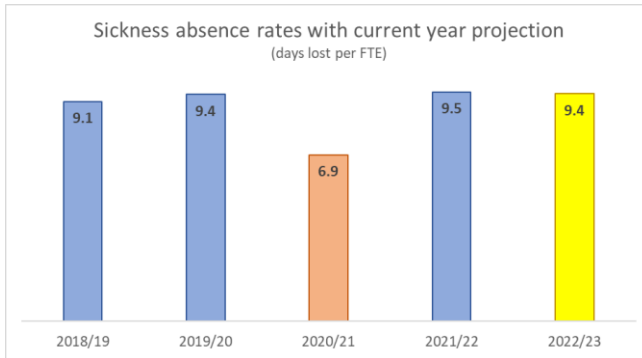
Previous reports had focussed primarily on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on our workforce and service delivery. However with restrictions having been removed for some time, there are other topical challenges facing Wiltshire Council and our workforce that have surfaced. The current job market, central government leadership and policy instability, the cost of living and energy crises could all have an impact on Wiltshire Council and our staff. A cost of living working group was established to monitor and measure the impact and explore what support we can provide our staff (as appropriate).

SICKNESS ABSENCE

As mentioned in the previous report, Public Health experts had predicted a significant increase in flu and COVID variants this winter¹. We can see from the days lost per FTE graph in the long term trends section at the end of this report that both the October – December (Q3) and January – March (Q4) quarters were higher than what we would normally expect in these quarters. Absences relating to cold/flu have seen a significant increase (+287% compared to the July-September 2022 quarter). An increase is expected in these quarters due to the seasonal influences on sickness absence, i.e. more colds/flu during the colder months, however this was a more significant increase than we would normally see based on seasonal influences. The previous two years, excluding the year influenced by COVID and related restrictions on social contact, saw on average an increase of 114%; less than half the increase we saw this quarter (287%). Absences relating to cold/flu in July-September 2022 were slightly lower (around 20% lower) than what we would normally see in this quarter, however this doesn't explain how significantly this increased in Q3 and Q4. When breaking down the reasons further, all absences under the cold/flu umbrella saw an increase, most significant in days lost were cough/cold and infection/virus, however the most significant increase proportionately was flu (+344% compared to the July-September 2022 quarter). This supports the prediction by the Public Health experts. However, unlike flu, absences relating to COVID did not see the increase predicted by the experts, we actually saw a reduction (-39%). This may be due to people not reporting it or falsely assuming it was a cold or other virus, especially given the testing is no longer free for most, and may explain some of the increase cold/flu absences.

However, although we have seen a significant, and higher than normal increase in cold/flu, this doesn't appear to have influenced the overall absence rate over the whole financial year to that extent; as can

¹ This is due to a lower than usual natural immunity, due to previous COVID restrictions protecting people from flu, and due to a particularly bad winter flu season in the southern hemisphere, particularly in Australia, which experts normally use to predict what may happen in the northern hemisphere ([Why Experts Are Predicting a Bad 2022-2023 Flu Season \(prevention.com\)](#), [Lower than usual natural immunity has experts predicting flu and COVID-19 cases to climb this winter - News \(devon.gov.uk\)](#))

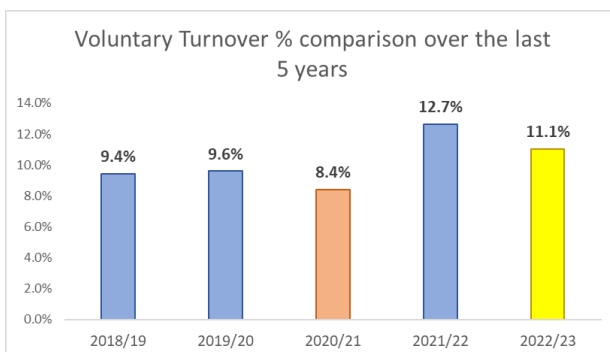


be seen from the graph below. The 2023/23 sickness absence rate (highlighted in yellow) is in line with pre-COVID trends and what we would 'normally' expect. The 2020/21 year highlighted in orange is the financial year influenced significantly by COVID and the government and corporate restrictions on social contact.

Stress related absence continues to be the biggest contributor to sickness absence, affecting around 1 in every 4 days lost to sickness. During COVID, Wiltshire Council experienced an increase in depression/anxiety, which has since been in decline. 'Other mental health' experienced the biggest increase this quarter (35%), however this reason does not provide much detail or information. Work related stress has also experienced an increase over the last two quarters (~20%). This increase has primarily been from Adults Social Care who has experienced a 106% increase compared to the July-September 2022 quarter, predominantly in the Emergency Duty Service and Mental Health Team West and were due to 3 long term absences across both teams.

Employee Turnover

Nationally the country is in a candidate-driven job market. In this type of market, jobs are abundant, and top-tier candidates are often scarce and as a result employers have to compete for top talent, making attracting and recruiting the right talent increasingly challenging. COVID and the enforced requirement to work from home has caused technology in this field to improve drastically and quickly, this has meant that remote working and hybrid working is now a standard offering for most companies. This has opened the job market up significantly, with candidates now able to apply for jobs and companies further away than they would normally be comfortable commuting. This is positive for Wiltshire Council as it opens up the potential applicant pool for our vacancies, and we have seen some evidence of this with on average around 2 applicants more per advert between January – March 2023 compared to January – March 2022. However, conversely, the fact that there are more opportunities available, alongside the cost of living crisis, may be causing staff to leave to seek improved financial benefits, especially if they have more bargaining power in the current candidate driven job market. It's difficult to provide any concrete evidence of this at Wiltshire Council as exit questionnaire completion is still low in comparison to all leavers, however Wiltshire Council



have experienced increasing turnover rates over the last two financial years. Historically voluntary turnover at Wiltshire Council has been fairly static, fluctuating closely around 10%. However both the 2021/22 and the 2022/23 financial year are both significantly above this at around 12%, see the graph on the left. In the previous report I had projected, based on the first two quarters of the financial year, another increase in 2022/23 compared to

2021/22. However voluntary turnover rates in the last two quarters (Q3 and Q4) slowed compared to the first two quarters and the rate, although higher than normal, was lower than projected. The yellow bar is the current 2022/23 financial year and the orange bar has been slightly influenced by COVID when there were concerns around job security, a theme that was consistently highlighted in the

Wellbeing and Engagement Survey's at the time. This was also a national problem with furlough policies and the impact on the economy affecting recruitment.

Although external evidence suggests that we are still in a candidate driven labour market, sources such as [People Management](#) and [Sky News](#) state that a report from the Recruitment and Employment Confederations (REC) and KPMG shows that the overall supply of candidates has increased for the first time in more than two years and suggests we may be coming out of this tight labour market. Therefore more candidates and therefore more competition for roles, may somewhat explain this reduction in voluntary turnover, especially given the biggest reductions were in people leaving for the private sector (-40%) and for no reason (-34%). This presents a positive outlook for recruitment and retention at Wiltshire Council, however, this remains an area of focus.

In Q4 Wiltshire Pension Fund (5.3%), Assets (3.4%) and Highways & Transport (3.0%) had the highest voluntary turnover rates. Although only Assets appears to be on an increasing trend. This doesn't appear to be from any particular service, team or role within Assets. Three left for another local authority, all from different teams. None of these completed an exit questionnaire so we have no additional information or insight.

Leaving for another local authority appears to be an increasing trend in the latter two quarters of the 2022/23 financial year. Employees leaving for another local authority in the latest quarter (Jan-March 23) has increased by around 110% compared to the average over the preceding 11 quarters (since the start of the 2020/21 financial year), making this increase significant and something to investigate. The directorates with the highest number of employees leaving for another authority are Leisure and Adult Social Care. This doesn't appear to be from any particular team or role however this is something to monitor in the coming quarters, especially in statutory services and those that have known recruitment issues.

Finance and salary costs

The financial health of the organisation remains a topic high on the agenda, especially with the new prime minister proposing to reintroduce austerity measures. Since the spike in headcount due to the TUPE transfer of Places Leisure in October 2021, the council headcount has been on a slight increasing trend. This has somewhat been reflected in the permanent staffing costs trend, however the biggest influence on the staffing costs is the pay award. In November 2022 employees received a pay award of £1,925 on all pay points for eligible NJC and HAY staff, which was backdated to April 2022. This explains the spike in the October – December 22 quarter and the subsequent reduction in the January – March 23 quarter (contrary to the increase in headcount) in the permanent staffing costs graph in the long term trends section at the end of this report. Backdating this pay award to April 2022 inflated the October – December 2022 cost as staff received the additional pay for 8 months, whilst the reduction in the January – March 23 quarter has returned to what will be the new normal cost.

Agency costs are something to continue to monitor. Although, as can be seen from the long term graphs at the end of this report, agency costs and use are still significantly lower than in the past, it has been on an increasing trend which continued into the October – December 2022 quarter, however has reduced slightly in the latest January – March 23 quarter. These costs continue to be predominantly from the social care directorates and is primarily due to the current job market, however as sources suggest, the outlook is slightly more positive for the job market and its impact on recruitment, which may result in our need and reliance on agency staff to reduce. The HR business partners, alongside the Talent Acquisition Consultant for the area, are working with the services to explore possible recruitment and retention strategies, and we review our agency workers monthly.

WORKFORCE DEMOGRAPHICS



Current quarter	5063
Oct-Dec 22	4961
July-Sept 22	4884
Apr-June 22	4876



FTE

Current quarter	3877.4
Oct-Dec 22	3797.8
July-Sept 22	3746.8
Apr-June 22	3717.5



Disability

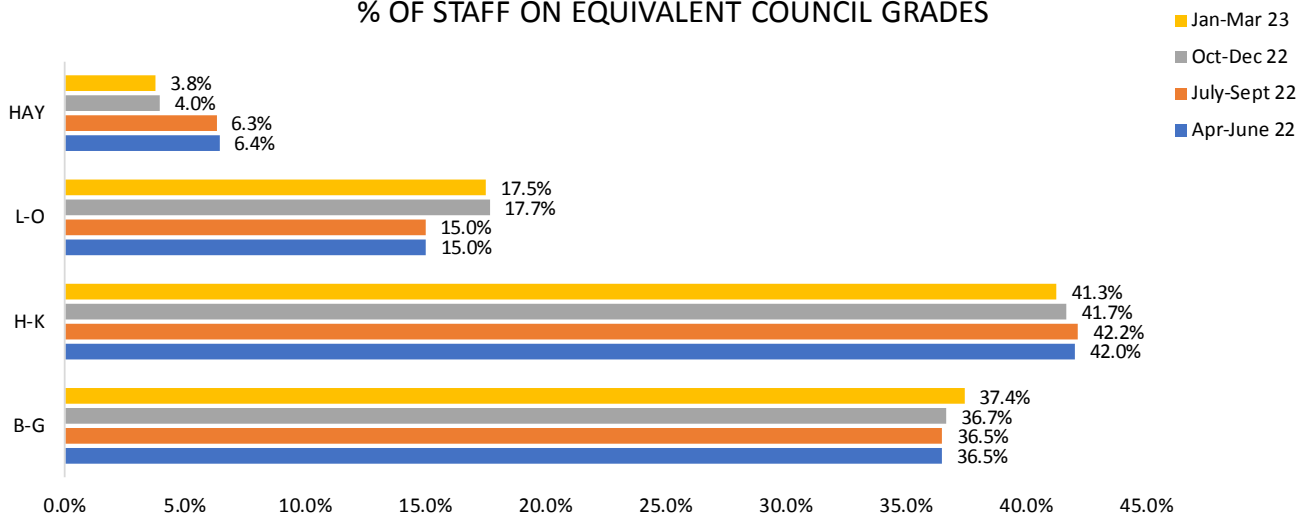
Current quarter	10.4%
Oct-Dec 22	10.0%
July-Sept 22	8.0%
Apr-June 22	8.4%



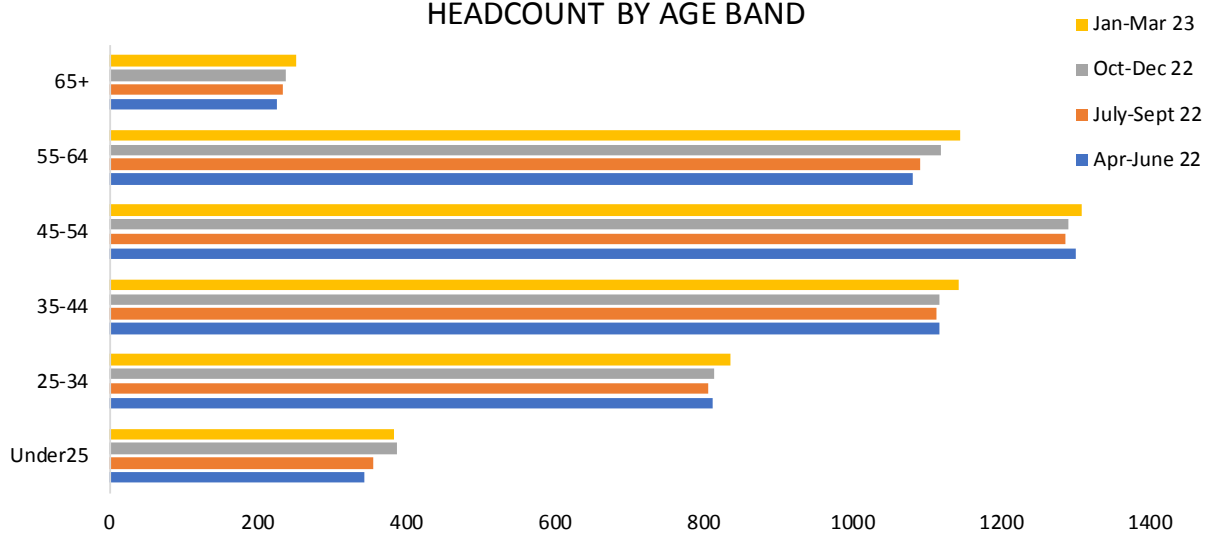
Ethnicity (BME)

Current quarter	4.5%
Oct-Dec 22	4.5%
July-Sept 22	4.3%
Apr-June 22	3.9%

% OF STAFF ON EQUIVALENT COUNCIL GRADES



HEADCOUNT BY AGE BAND



SICKNESS ABSENCE

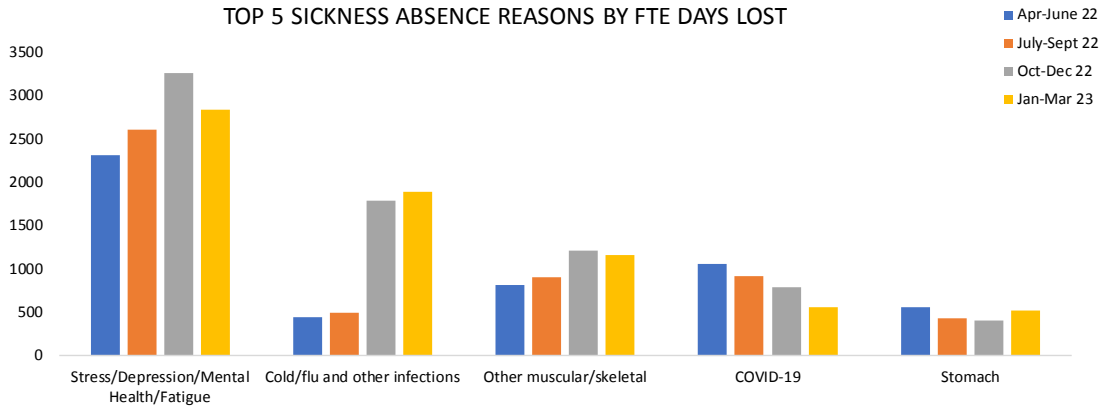
Working days lost per FTE for directorate

Jan-Mar 23

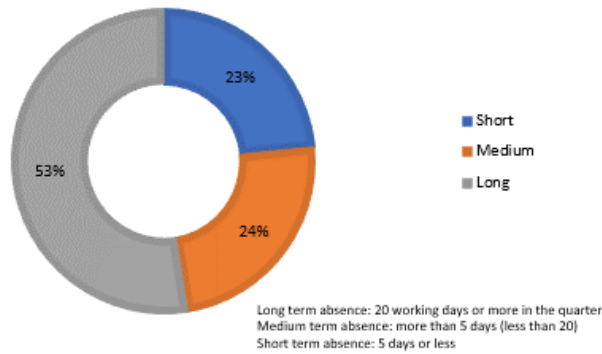
2.6

↓ a decrease from last quarter (2.7)

TOP 5 SICKNESS ABSENCE REASONS BY FTE DAYS LOST



SICKNESS ABSENCE BREAKDOWN JAN - MARCH 2023



TURNOVER

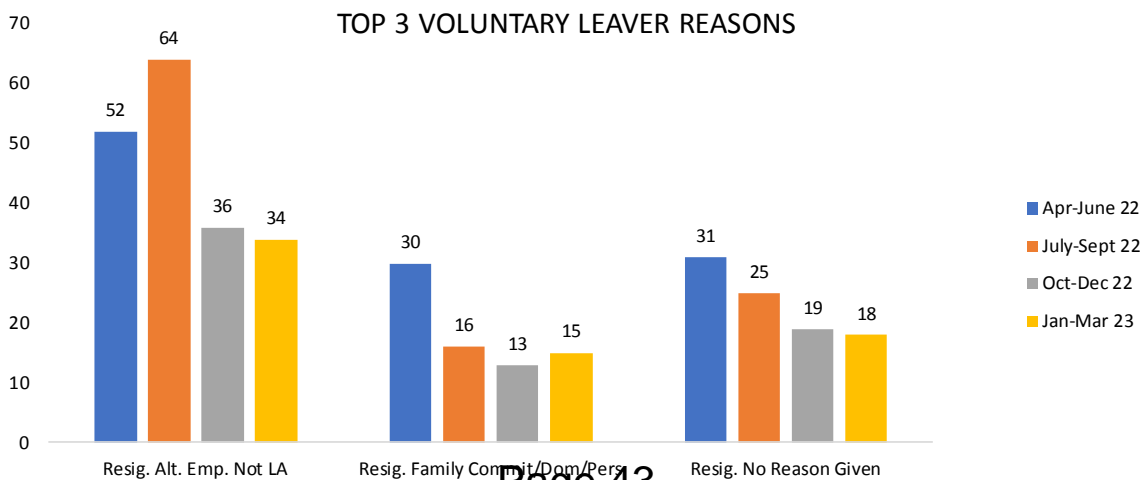
Leavers under 25 years old

Current quarter	13
Oct-Dec 22	8
July-Sept 22	15
Apr-June 22	14

Leavers with less than 1 years' service

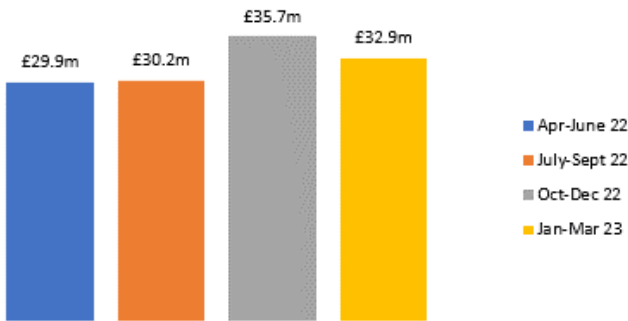
Current quarter	21
Oct-Dec 22	26
July-Sept 22	38
Apr-June 22	29

TOP 3 VOLUNTARY LEAVER REASONS

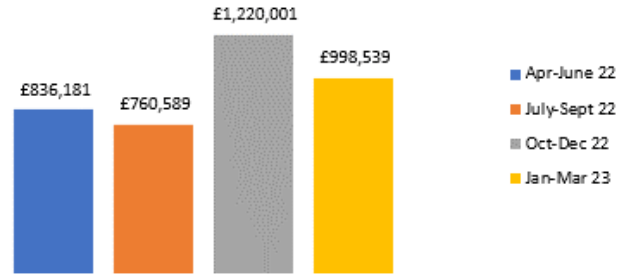


EMPLOYEE COSTS

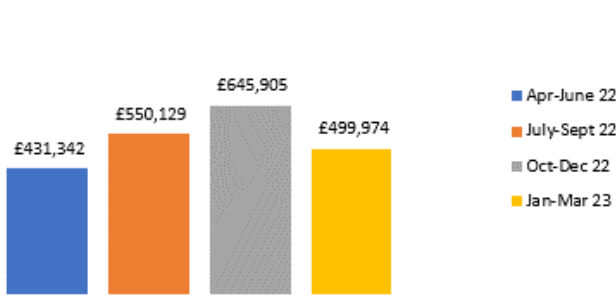
PERMANENT EMPLOYEE SALARY COSTS



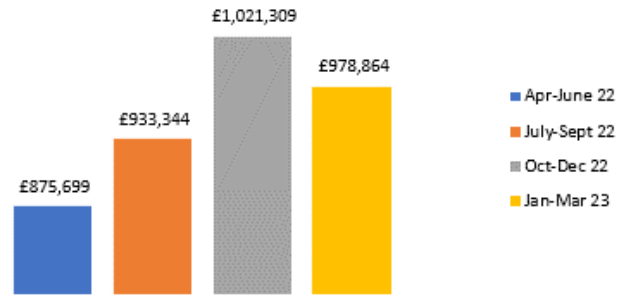
SICKNESS ABSENCE COSTS



CASUAL EMPLOYEE SALARY COSTS



AGENCY COSTS



ADVISORY CASES

Disciplinary

	New cases this quarter	Variance from previous quarter
Current quarter	18	5
Oct-Dec 22	13	-5
July-Sept 22	18	5
Apr-June 22	13	-6

Absence & Health

	New cases this quarter	Variance from previous quarter
Current quarter	167	16
Oct-Dec 22	151	43
July-Sept 22	108	-22
Apr-June 22	130	11

Grievance

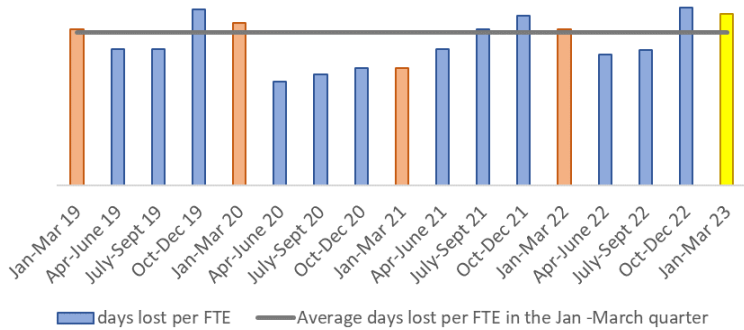
	New cases this quarter	Variance from previous quarter
Current quarter	12	6
Oct-Dec 22	6	1
July-Sept 22	5	2
Apr-June 22	3	-5

Improving Work Performance

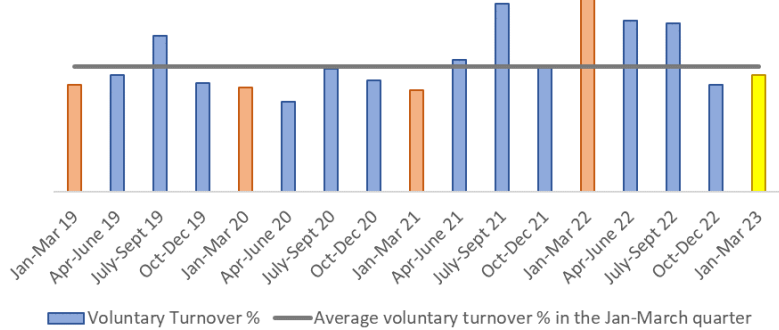
	New cases this quarter	Variance from previous quarter
Current quarter	8	6
Oct-Dec 22	2	-1
July-Sept 22	3	1
Apr-June 22	2	0

LONG TERM TRENDS

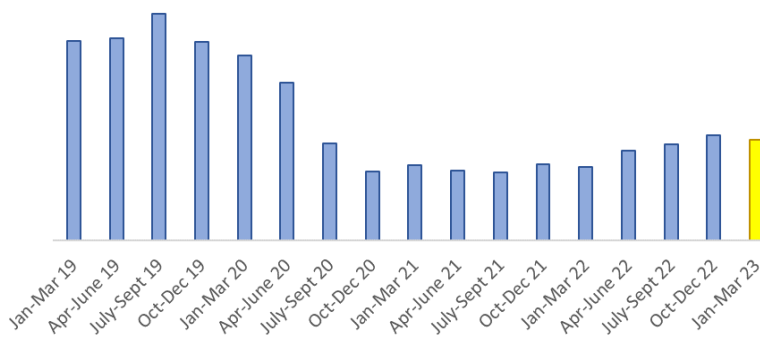
Days lost per FTE over the last 4 years



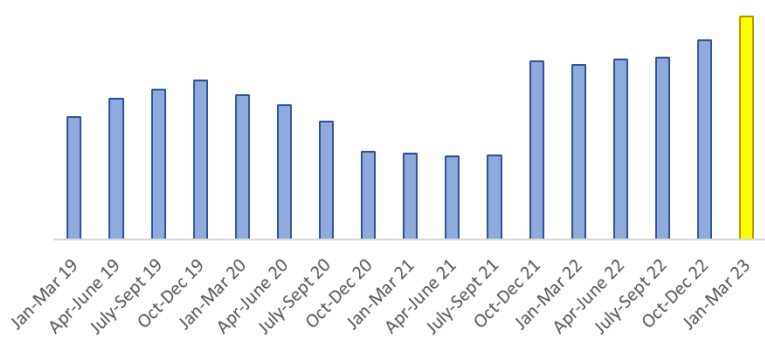
Voluntary Turnover % over the last 4 years



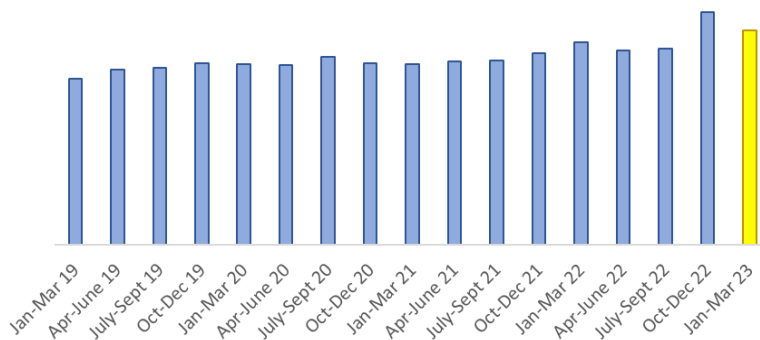
Agency spend over the last 4 years



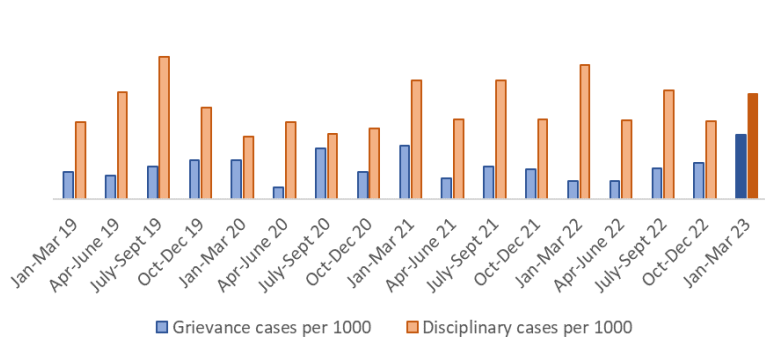
Headcount change over the last 4 years



Permanent staffing cost change over the last 4 years



Disciplinary and Grievance cases per 1000 employees over last 4 years



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