

## **WILTSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **STAFFING POLICY COMMITTEE**

**7 March 2012**

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### **Under 25 Year Olds in the Wiltshire Council Workforce - Workforce Analysis and Recruitment Schemes and Initiatives**

#### **Purpose of Report**

1. To outline information relating to under 25 year olds in the Wiltshire council workforce and to highlight the schemes and initiatives run by the council to encourage greater representation of this group.

#### **Background**

2. At the meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2011 the Staffing Policy Committee considered a report on Equality and Diversity. Following this item members requested a further paper providing analysis on the under 25's within the authority with particular focus on:
  - the number of leavers under the age of 25
  - reasons for their departure
  - length of service
  - the recruitment and retention initiatives in place
3. This report presents data provided by the HR Information Team, HR Policy and Reward Team and the Economy and Enterprise Team.

#### **Main Considerations for the Council**

#### **Workforce Analysis**

4. As at the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2011, 6.7% of the Wiltshire Council workforce are in the 'under 25s' category. (Not including casual contracts).
5. During the 2011 staff survey, 23% of under 25's were analysed to be fully engaged with the authority compared to 18% across the entire workforce. This was second highest after the 65+ year olds age group of which 27% were analysed as fully engaged.
6. Benchmarking data from 7 other local authorities show that Wiltshire Council has the highest percentage of under 25's in its workforce. The remaining authorities (other than Surrey) have figures of 4% and under. In addition, it should be noted Wiltshire Council surpasses the rate provided by DLA Piper. (Ave 44 authorities) See Table 1 below.

<b>Authority</b>	<b>% under 25</b>
Buckinghamshire	2.7%
East Sussex	3.6%
Hampshire	3.3%
Hertfordshire	3.1%
Kent	5.6%
Oxford	3.7%
Surrey	5.0%
DLA (average of 44 authorities)	4.4%
Wiltshire	6.7%

7. Table 2 illustrates the trend in the number of under 25's within the Wiltshire Council workforce since 2009. The drop in figures for September 2011 can be explained by the current economic climate and recent service reviews, which have restricted our ability to recruit externally. However the figures increased in December 2011 due to an increase of under 25 new starters (+54) which made up 13% of total new starters year to date in Quarter 3 alone. 44 of the 76 new starters were in Neighbourhood services.

Table 2

<b>Date</b>	<b>% WC workforce under 25</b>
31/03/2009	6.8%
31/03/2010	6.6%
31/03/2011	6.4%
30/09/2011	5.3%
31/12/2011	6.7%

### Length of service and Leavers

8. As at the end of December 2011, Wiltshire Council employees who started under the age of 25 had a median length of service that is 1 year longer than the median length seen across all employees.
9. However, when looking at leavers between April and December 2011, employees who started work with the Council when under the age of 25 worked a median of 6 years before leaving the authority compared to 7 years for all other leavers across the council.
10. Retaining employees for the first year of service would appear to be a cause for concern:
- a. 24% of all leavers that started at WC when they were under 25 years old left the authority with less than one year's service. This compares to only 6% of all other leavers.
  - b. This is compounded by the fact that 55% of all leavers with less than one year's service were under 25.

11. However, exit interview information and the reasons for leaving stated do provide some rationale for this high level of turnover:
- There were 46 under 25 leavers with less than one year's service. Of these, 26 left due to coming to the end of their contracts. 4 of 5 respondents to exit interviews said they would have liked to have stayed if their contract could have been extended but the possibility of converting to a permanent contract is unlikely in the current climate.
  - There was also 1 dismissal, 1 person moved area, 2 not paid this year, 2 individuals were TUPE'd and 4 others left due to personal reasons
  - Of the remaining 10 leavers, who were leaving for alternative jobs, 7 were part time (average of 0.64 fte) and may have been seeking full time work.
  - The remaining 3 leavers were paid an average of £17,976 which is much lower than the average full time equivalent salary at Wiltshire Council (£23,902). Therefore these employees may have left to seek higher paid work.

### Recruitment

12. The figures highlight that when compared with other age groups, the under 25's age group have a low percentage of applicants shortlisted, in relation to the number of applications.
13. From the recruitment data for the six month period from April 2011 to September 2011, 22.5% of applicants were from people under the age of 25. 7.9% of these were shortlisted and 2.0% were successfully appointed.
14. Figures show that the highest percentages of applicants come from the 25-34 year old age bracket, and that these also have the highest percentage being shortlisted and appointed.

### Results

15. The workforce analysis results have demonstrated that:
- Although only 6.7% of the Wiltshire council workforce are in the under 25's category, when compared to 7 other authorities, Wiltshire has the highest representation of this group.
  - It appears that the statistics for leaving the council with less than 1 years service are significantly high for the under 25's age group.
  - The most common reasons for leaving in this age group are due to the end of temporary contracts. This significantly contributes to the high number of leavers in this age group.
  - Employees who begin employment with the council whilst in the under 25 age group have a longer than average length of service.
  - Whilst the number of applicants for jobs in the under 25's bracket is relatively high, these are not translating into a proportionate successful recruitment rate.

16. Whilst it can be said that Wiltshire Council faces the same challenges as any other authority, there are clearly some areas for development.

### **Recruitment Schemes and initiatives**

17. Wiltshire Council has a broad suite of schemes and initiatives to address not only attracting under 25's into the workforce in terms of general recruitment, but also in relation to partnership schemes with the Department for Work and Pensions, (DWP), to help address the high numbers of those not in employment, training or education. (NEETS)
18. In addition, The People Strategy, due for launch in April 2012, will include the development of initiatives to tackle the issues of recruiting and retaining under 25's in the workforce.

### **Internal schemes**

#### Apprenticeship programme

19. Apprenticeships are paid vocational learning opportunities, open to those over 16 years old, covering a wide range of sections including; business administration, leisure, sports management, leadership and coaching, social care, education, vehicle maintenance, etc.
20. Apprentices learn whilst undertaking a role, building up knowledge and skills whilst gaining nationally recognised qualifications and receiving a salary.
21. Depending on the type of apprenticeship, the programme usually runs between 1 and 4 years. Training is funded by the government and scaled down from full funding to no funding depending on age and qualifications.
22. There are 3 levels of apprenticeship:
  - Intermediate Apprenticeships (equivalent to five good GCSE passes at grades A-C)
  - Advanced Apprenticeships (equivalent to two A-level passes)
  - Higher Apprenticeships
23. We currently have 4 teaching assistants and 3 care workers working towards advanced apprenticeships.
24. There is a target of a further 13 placements (totalling 20) to be made by July 2012.

#### **National Graduate Development Programme (NGDP)**

25. Managed through Local Government Improvement and Development, the NGDP is a graduate management scheme specifically for local government. Recruitment and selection is managed centrally, while the final selection round for candidates who successfully complete the initial selection process, is held at each participating authority.

26. The scheme offers a two year placement with a local authority involving a minimum of three placements covering strategic, front line and support work. Additionally the National Management Trainees (NMT's) study for the Postgraduate Diploma in Local Government Management through Warwick University, whilst receiving more business-specific development with the host local authority. This programme offers a very comprehensive introduction to local government, creating highly marketable employees.
27. We have been involved in the scheme since September 2004, and have so far successfully hosted 7 National Management Trainees and a further two recruits started with us in October 2010.
28. We currently have 3 graduates on the scheme, who currently work within Research, Performance and Public Protection. We have retained 2 employees from this scheme, one who has become a successful project manager in the Transformation Team, and the second is now a CAM (Community Area Manager).

#### Work experience – schools/college

29. We promote work experience as a context for lifelong learning by offering unpaid work placements to school/college students, graduate students and those re-entering the workplace, enabling key skills to be gained, and confidence built before applying for permanent employment.
30. Wiltshire Council believes that good work experience should be both engaging and informative, allowing those who undertake such a placement to benefit from new skills and a greater understanding of the roles and responsibilities of that career path.
31. In 2011 we found work experience placements for 37 students, ranging from 13 to 36 years old.

#### **DWP(Dept of Work and Pensions) Initiatives**

32. These schemes provide work experience placements within Wiltshire Council and in local businesses. They are particularly significant as they not only show Wiltshire's commitment to addressing the rising number of NEETs within Wiltshire, but also, with regard to Wiltshire Council placements, provide a marketing opportunity to a younger demographic as they focus on the 18-24 age bracket. We currently run or have submitted funding applications to the following:

#### Work Experience Placements

33. A project aimed at 18-24 year olds, who are unemployed and not in education, who may have had some paid work experience. They are often considered an attractive proposition to the employer as the work experience opportunities under this project are typically 2- 8 weeks, so are considered more meaningful and worthwhile for the employer to engage, yet still at nil

cost to the employer as DWP funded. In some cases DWP will fund the opportunity to last for 12 weeks if it can lead directly into an apprenticeship.

34. We have had one placement start on this scheme, and have three potentially starting in January/February. It has been agreed that we will create a total of 20 placements before the end of March 2012. This has been advertised through The Wire and by approaching line managers who have participated in previous schemes.

#### Job Centre Plus (JCP) Flexible support fund

35. We have recently gained funding for this project, due for implementation in January, which is aimed at 18-24 year olds from the first day they register with Job Centre Plus, and are not eligible for the previously mentioned work experience programme. (This may be due to barriers including learning difficulties, mental health issues, and long term health conditions.) Wiltshire Council will be supporting 150 customers to overcome their barriers and progress into sustainable employment. This will include mentoring and work experience placements.

#### DWP Innovation Fund

36. Working across the council and with partners, we are currently scoping a project proposal and funding application to this fund, to improve employment prospects for young people by supporting disadvantaged 14-17 year olds to achieve better employment outcomes, and provide support for people aged 18 and over, to gain employment.

#### Youth Contract

37. Recently announced, the Youth Contract overall is worth a total of £940 million. Under the Youth Contract, the Government will:
  - fund wage incentives of up to £2,275 for 160,000 young people to make it easier for private sector employers to take them on (importantly the young people must be on the Work Programme to be eligible and therefore will have been a JCP customer for at least 9 months already, or if they are defined as 'vulnerable', they will become eligible after 3 months). As with the Future Jobs Fund all employers will be expected to pay at least the national minimum wage. The wage subsidy is open to all businesses, including those that already employ large numbers of young people (like retail and construction) and emerging sectors (like the green economy, creative industries and ICT). Anyone rejecting a subsidised job offer will be required to undertake four weeks' mandatory work activity.
  - offer at least 40,000 incentive payments of up to £1,500 for small firms to take on young apprentices
  - provide extra support from Jobcentre Plus for unemployed 18–24 year olds, with additional advisor time and a careers interview from the National Careers Service after three months on Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA), and with weekly,

rather than fortnightly, signing for all 18-24 year olds from month five (more demanding than the current regime).

- provide an offer of either a work experience or a Sector Based Work Academy place for every unemployed 18–24 year old who wants one after three months on Jobseeker’s Allowance, before they enter the Work Programme (the Government is providing an additional 250,000 places)
  - introduce a further £50m a year programme to target 16- and 17-year-olds who are not in education, employment or training. The scheme will focus on the 25,000 most disengaged young people.
38. Exact figures and details around how Wiltshire Council will be involved are still being developed, however, we will be fully supporting this scheme.

### **Going Forward**

39. This report has demonstrated that compared with other authorities nationally, our representation of under 25’s within the workforce is well placed. We have recently been constrained by the economic climate in terms of external recruitment, but despite this we do have a number of schemes and initiatives either in place or in development, to attract younger people into our work force.
40. We can do more and this is to be addressed in the People Strategy to be delivered in early 2012. Initiatives to be considered will include:
- Career development programmes including clear career pathways
  - Reward/recognition schemes – ways of rewarding high performers
  - Personal development plans
  - Promoting variety of employment opportunities and benefits of working for Wiltshire Council in community – schools/colleges/job fairs/libraries etc
  - Promoting Apprenticeship Programme and Work Experience opportunities within regional schools and colleges. (Economy and Enterprise are promoting 2 events in Chippenham and Salisbury for Apprenticeship week, in early February 2012, for business, young people and providers)
  - Working proactively with external partners e.g. Job Centre Plus
  - Developing a graduate placement scheme in partnership with local universities to enable students to complete a year in industry as part of their degree course. A version of this scheme has been in place in HR for 4 years, and the 4 graduates who have completed a placement have been retained in permanent and temporary roles.

### **Environmental Impact of the Proposal**

41. None

### **Equalities Impact of the Proposal**

42. No negative impacts have been identified.

### **Risk Assessment**

43. None

### **Options considered**

44. None

### **Recommendation**

45. The Committee is asked to note the analysis of the under 25's within the Wiltshire workforce; and
- a) to recognise Wiltshire Council's position in a national context.
  - b) to recognise the impact of the current economic climate and recent reorganisation on the volume of external recruitment.
  - c) to recognise the schemes and initiatives in place to encourage improved recruitment and engagement with this age range.
  - d) to support the ambitions of the people strategy to develop initiatives to improve the under 25's representation in the workforce.

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