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**TRAFFORD
COUNCIL**

AGENDA PAPERS FOR EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

Date: Monday, 9 December 2024

Time: 5.00 pm

**Place: Committee Rooms 2 and 3, Trafford Town Hall, Talbot Road, Stretford,
M32 0YT**

A G E N D A	PART I	Pages
1.	ATTENDANCES	
	To note attendances, including Officers and any apologies for absence.	
2.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	
3.	QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC	
4.	MINUTES	1 - 4
	To receive and if so determined, to approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 2 nd September 2024.	
5.	BUILDING CONTROL - MARKET SUPPLEMENT	5 - 8
	To consider a report from the Director of Human Resources.	
6.	AGENCY SPEND - Q2	9 - 20
	To consider a report from the Director of Human Resources.	
7.	WORKFORCE REPORT	21 - 32
	To consider a report from the Director of Human Resources.	
8.	QUARTERLY REPORT ON EXEMPTIONS TO THE SICKNESS POLICY	Verbal Report

Employment Committee - Monday, 9 December 2024

To consider an oral report of the Director of Human Resources.

9. URGENT BUSINESS (IF ANY)

Any other item or items which, by reason of special circumstances (to be specified), the Chairman of the meeting is of the opinion should be considered at this meeting as a matter of urgency.

SARA TODD

Chief Executive

Membership of the Committee

Councillors J. Bennett (Chair), D. Acton (Vice-Chair), Babar, G. Carter, S. J. Haughey, J. Leicester, S.E. Lepori, D.C. O'Sullivan and S. Zhi.

Further Information

For help, advice and information about this meeting please contact:

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This agenda was issued on **Friday, 29 November 2024** by the Legal and Democratic Services Section, Trafford Council, Trafford Town Hall; Talbot Road, Stretford, Manchester, M32 0TH

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EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

2 SEPTEMBER 2024

PRESENT

Councillors: J Bennett (Chair), D Acton, B Babar, G Carter, J Leicester, D O'Sullivan

In attendance

Angela Beadsworth	Director of HR
Nina Kijowski	Head of Resourcing and Development

1. ATTENDANCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillors Haughey, Lepori and Zhi, Cal Aston, Bev Norton and Kate Sturman.

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

No declaration of interest was expressed against any of the items on the agenda.

3. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

No questions from members of the public were received.

4. ASC MARKET SUPPLEMENT

The Director of Human Resources updated the Committee on the Adult Social Care Market Supplement paid to social workers and senior practitioners to encourage recruitment and retention of staff in Adult Social Care, stating that most local authorities offer a similar supplement which is replicated nationally. The supplement has supported us to retain staff and it is recommended it be continued for the next two years.

RESOLVED – That the Committee approve the continuation of the market supplement payment for the next two years with a view of receiving an update on the progress at the end of the first year.

5. PEOPLE PLAN 2024-27

The Head of Resourcing and Organisational Development informed the Committee that the People Plan report submitted is the new name for the People Strategy and that it will set out our people ambitions for the next three years.

Our People Plan has been developed by working together with our people and our partners. We have listened closely to what is important to them and will continue to work in collaboration when implementing the plan. This plan builds on and refreshes the previous people strategy and whilst it is supported and enabled by our HR Team, it belongs to all of us that work at Trafford Council.

Our People Plan has also been shaped by the ambitions laid out in our corporate plan and other plans and strategies that underpin and support us to achieve our corporate priorities.

From feedback and engagement with colleagues we have identified some key priorities and focus areas at each stage of the employee lifecycle namely Work with us, Learn & Grow with us, Belong & Connect with us and Stay and Thrive with us. It's underpinned by how we collaborate with key partners and stakeholders and outlines a set of measures to demonstrate how we are meeting our ambitions.

Whilst our plan sets out our ambitions and priorities, it will be flexible. It is intended to be a live document which may change in line with new priorities, new thinking, and new feedback.

Members felt they had not been consulted and were informed that the plan was not new but had been presented to Committee previously and that this is work in progress. Any feedback Members wish to contribute is welcome as the plan is a live document that will flex and change as the organisation changes.

Members queried the recruitment process and whether it was still a traditional method of questions and answers and were informed that whilst there is a traditional method in place, there are variations depending on the level and type of post. It is also 'values based' approach which means that all applications and questions at interview relate to *how* candidates align with our EPIC values as well as being able to demonstrate skill and technical competence.

Training is provided for Chairs of the interview panels and work is ongoing to improve and modernise the resourcing process.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That Members approve the People Plan
- 2) That the report be noted and welcome opportunity to continue to shape the plan.

6. REGULATORY SERVICES MARKET SUPPLEMENT

The Director of Growth and Regulatory Services informed the Committee of the challenge of recruiting and retaining staff in such a difficult financial climate especially given that historically Trading Standards is a specialised area of any authority with few officers in the market. This makes it even more difficult to fill vacancies and pay is a major factor when it comes to recruiting and retaining staff.

RESOLVED – That the Committee approve the continuation of the market supplement payment for the next two year subject to annual review.

7. AGENCY SPEND Q1

The Head of Resourcing and Development reported on the quarterly agency workers spend and was happy to note a reduction at quarter 4 compared with the same period last year. The reduction in the spend at quarter 4 was particularly noticeable in Legal around specialised solicitors.

The Committee were informed that the majority of spend related to the Children, Adults and Place directorates. Agency spend is monitored monthly and reports to the Committee will continue on a quarterly basis.

Members asked to explore the possibility of developing in house solicitors and stated that other local authorities were spending less suggesting there may be lessons to learn.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

8. QUARTERLY REPORT ON EXEMPTION TO THE SICKNESS POLICY

The Director of Human Resources provided a verbal update on the Exemption to the Sickness Policy at quarter four where 5 requests were received: three were approved, one employee left the service due to ill health and one returned to work.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

9. URGENT BUSINESS IF ANY

There was no urgent business to discuss

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TRAFFORD COUNCIL

Report to: Employment Committee
Date: 9th December 2024
Report for: Information
Report of: Director of Growth and Regulatory Services

Report Title

Building Control - Market Supplement

Summary

This report provides an update in relation to a market supplement payment for Building Control staff.

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended the Employment Committee:

- Note the approval of a market supplement payment of £7,149 per annum (pro rata) for the Building Control Officer, Principal Building Control Officer and Building Control Manager posts with effect from 1st January 2025 for a period of 2 years.

Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

Name: Nigel Smith, Head of Regulatory Services
Contact: nigel.smith@trafford.gov.uk

Background Papers: None

Implications:

Relationship to Corporate Priorities	<i>Building control has a significant role in reducing carbon emissions and improving thermal efficiency, reducing fuel costs for households</i>
Relationship to GM Policy or Strategy Framework	<i>If the growth ambitions of GM are to be realised, effective Building Control for tall buildings and other buildings at risk needs to be in place.</i>
Financial	<i>There is an additional financial cost arising from the payment of a market supplement. This will be met from within the exiting service budget.</i>
Legal Implications	<i>The Building Control Officers are involved in regulatory enforcement. The ability to recruit and retain staff is therefore crucial to the Council meeting its statutory responsibilities.</i>
Equality/Diversity Implications	<i>Not applicable</i>
Sustainability Implications	<i>Not applicable</i>
Carbon Reduction	<i>Building Control supports the reduction of carbon emissions in domestic and commercial buildings.</i>
Staffing/E-Government/Asset Management Implications	<i>The intention of the market supplement is to lessen recruitment and retention challenges</i>
Risk Management Implications	<i>The new Building Safety Regulator can place Councils in 'special measures' if they do not have an effective Building Control Service. There is a risk that if we do not implement the market supplement that we may face increased remuneration and retention challenges.</i>
Health and Safety Implications	<i>Effective Building Control is vital for Building safety.</i>

1.0 Background – Building Control Responsibilities

- 1.1 The process of Building Control ensures that all types of building are constructed and completed to appropriate standards which are set nationally. These standards ensure that buildings are structurally sound and are sufficiently robust to be occupied for their intended purpose. The Building Control system is closely aligned with the fire service and helps ensure that all buildings have the requisite fire safety standards. Effective building control also plays a leading role in ensuring that buildings are thermally efficient - thus playing a part in both mitigating Climate Change and tackling fuel poverty.
- 1.2 Building control is unusual within the Council in that it blends statutory responsibilities with a traded service. Unlike planning applications, building control applications can be processed by private companies – and so the Council carries out its core functions within a competitive environment. This provides the challenge of competition – but also the opportunity to win work and increase income. This fee paying activity cross subsidises non-paid statutory responsibilities that the private sector cannot carry out and which the Council must deal with.
- 1.3 Over the past decade Private companies have become adept at 'cherry picking' work – and have recruited large numbers of staff from Councils. This in turn has

made recruitment difficult for Local Authorities – who have been generally poor at responding to market conditions – and who have failed to train sufficient new younger staff. The Council has consequently suffered from vacancies and staff turnover in recent times.

2.0 Building Safety Act

- 2.1 Alongside ongoing competition and pressure within the service, there is now significant new legislation in the form of the Building Safety Act 2022 which imposes new obligations and responsibilities on building control bodies – and building control professionals. The Act establishes a new Building Safety Regulator who has oversight of taller buildings – but also the profession as a whole. The Health & Safety Executive acts as the Building Safety Regulator in England.
- 2.2 In addition to previous duties, there is now an obligation to provide support for the Building Safety Regulator on High Rise Buildings and other structures within its jurisdiction.
- 2.3 Special attention is paid to multi-occupancy higher risk residential buildings (HRRBs) – and Councils are designated according to whether they include such buildings. Given our building mix, Trafford is designated as a HRRB authority.
- 2.4 New performance standards are now being applied to Building Control departments - in a way that has never been applied previously. These new performance standards cover all aspects of a Building Control service within the new regime and will be monitored by the Building Safety Regulator.
- 2.5 As part of this regime and in order for Building Control Officers to practice, they have also needed to undergo a fresh process of registration. This is the equivalent of asking everyone to re-take qualifications gained earlier in their career. Many older officers are choosing to retire rather than go through the registration process – leading to a premium on qualified staff. There are several different classes and categories of registration, ranging from single occupancy domestic dwellings to complex commercial and high-rise buildings.

3.0 Regrading

- 3.1 As a consequence of these changes some older professionals are choosing to retire rather than re-train – placing qualified staff further at a premium. This will further exacerbate market pressures within the industry – and Councils in particular.
- 3.2 Within GM all authorities are struggling with recruitment and retention of staff, partly because salaries are perceived as not sufficiently competitive.
- 3.3 Against this context, if Trafford is to retain staff and meet the obligations of the Building Safety Act we need to do more to retain staff. If we succeed in that, there will be the opportunity to gain additional higher skilled work, as the Building Safety Regulator will come to Councils first for their high rise work. This could be a steady and reliable income stream in the future.

3.4 It was previously recognised that there was therefore a need to review salaries in the light of the challenges and changes within the industry, and a business case was approved in 2022.

4.0 Market supplements

4.1 In addition to salary review, it was previously agreed that the Building Control Officer, Principal Building Control Officer and Building Control Manager posts would receive an honorarium of £2,992 and a market supplement of £4,157.

4.2 These measures have been effective in the Building Control team being able to retain existing staff and also recruit two additional Building Control Officers.

4.3 However, against the context described above, the pressure on retaining staff is still acute, with ever increasing salaries being offered in the private sector. We are also aware that several GM local authorities are experiencing significant issues with retaining and attracting qualified building control staff, with a number relying solely on agency staff – this brings further budgetary pressures as recruitment agencies can charge a premium for qualified staff. It is therefore essential that the market supplements are retained.

4.4 The market rate was tested by the Pay and Reward Team by the benchmarking of salaries across other GM authorities and also in the private sector, and this supported the maintenance of the total salary package at the existing rate.

4.5 It was decided, therefore, that when the current honoraria payments come to an end on 31st December 2024, that this would be wrapped up into one market supplement payment to maintain the current salary. It was agreed therefore that the Building Control Officer, Principal Building Control Officer and Building Control Manager posts would receive a market supplement of £7,149 (equivalent to the existing market supplement payment of £4,157 together with the honorarium of £2,992) with effect from 1st January 2025 for a period of 2 years.

5.0 Recommendation

5.1 It is recommended that Employment Committee:

- Note the approval of a market supplement payment of £7,149 per annum (pro rata) for the Building Control Officer, Principal Building Control Officer and Building Control Manager posts with effect from 1st January 2025 for a period of 2 years.

TRAFFORD COUNCIL

Report to: Employment Committee
Date: 9th December 2024
Report for: Information
Report of: Director of Human Resources

Report Title

Agency and Consultant Spend for Q2 Period - 1 July 2024 to 30 September 2024

Summary

This report details the quarterly spend for the Council on agency workers and consultants. Spend is broken down by quarter and by Directorate. The report details the reasons agency and consultants are required to supplement the Council's workforce to meet temporary resource needs.

Recommendations

That the content of this report is noted.

Relationship to Corporate Priorities	This report supports the delivery of our corporate priorities.
Relationship to GM Policy or Strategy Framework	We are part of the GM Pledge for Social Work agency provision.
Financial	The cost of using agency workers is carefully managed and monitored through existing budgets.
Legal Implications	Agency assignments are carefully monitored to ensure that they are legally compliant, and any employment liability is mitigated.
Equality/Diversity Implications	None
Sustainability Implications	None
Carbon Reduction	None
Staffing/E-Government/Asset Management Implications	The use of agency workers supports critical resourcing gaps.
Risk Management Implications	None
Health & Wellbeing Implications	None
Health and Safety Implications	None

Summary of key stakeholders involved in report production:

Names: Nina Kijowski, Head of Organisational Development & Resourcing, Cal
 Aston, Resourcing Consultant

1. Corporate Overview

- 1.1 To ensure that we are proactively managing all vacancies and vacancy spend across the council we have a robust approvals process in place. This process helps us to support the management and reduction of agency spend.
- 1.2 Currently all vacancy requests go through an online chain of advice and approvals starting with the HR and Finance Business Partners, through to the relevant Corporate Director and for final approval from the Director of Human Resources and Director of Finance and Systems.
- 1.3 This process supports us to ensure that vacancies are only filled if there is an absolute requirement to do so.
- 1.4 Currently there is an 8-week vacancy pause in place. This pause excludes Health and Social Care, front line operational roles and services managed through Joint Management Boards (GMSS and STAR).
- 1.5 To further support the work of the Finance and Change board, the HR Team are undertaking a review of the current process with the aim of identifying if there are any opportunities to further strengthen and streamline the vacancy approval process, specifically in relation to agency and casual workers.
- 1.6 To support us to meet service requirements, there are still specific circumstances where immediate resourcing (predominantly short term in nature) is required and access to temporary agency support is essential to meet critical gaps in service provision. In some instances, due to the nature of specific or specialist work, consultants may also be required.
- 1.7 As outlined in our people plan (2025-2028) there are a number of projects currently underway that should positively impact over the long term on vacancy and agency spend. These include, but are not limited to, formalising an approach to succession and talent development, a review and refresh of how we design roles and role profiles and developing specialist skills through career graded posts.

2. Spend Overview - Quarter 2 (July 2024 to September 2024)

- 1.4 The total agency spend in Q2 2024/25 was £1,744,971.31. This has slightly decreased since Q1, where the spend was £1,892,864.16.
- 1.5 Total agency spend to date for this financial year is £3,637,835.47. In comparison to the same period last year, total spend has slightly increased by £213,149.02.

- 1.5 Appendix 1 gives a specific breakdown of agency spend for Quarter 2 by Directorate and role type.

Directorate Overview

2.1 Children's Services

- 2.1.1 In Q2 2024/2025 agency spend in Children's Services totalled £1,237,126.91. In comparison to Q1 spend has slightly decreased from £1,353,536.18.
- 2.1.2 In comparison to Q2 in 2023/24 (£1,225,771.96) the spend is marginally higher (+£11,1354.95).
- 2.1.3 The largest proportion of the Q2 2024/25 agency spend is on Qualified Social Worker roles and Advanced Practitioners. The spend with Reed, the GM collaborative Agency Provider, for these roles equates to £591,326.85 and the spend with the Social Work Additional Framework (SWAF) is £265,059.93.
- 2.1.4 The combined spend for Reed and SWAF for Advanced Practitioner and Social Work roles (£856,386.78) accounts for 69% of overall agency spend within Children's Services.
- 2.1.5 Under the Social Work Agency Framework (SWAF) we awarded contracts to 3 agencies (HCL, Paradigm and Liquid Personnel) in June 2021 for a period of 3 years. The purpose of this arrangement was to provide an additional supplementary supply chain which could be used if Reed was unable to source suitable candidates. Due to Reed comfortably being able to now source these candidates and greater stability in the workforce, we have only sought to extend these contracts in the short term until 31 December 2024.
- 2.1.6 Despite a reported increase in agency assignments, we are seeing a greater stability in the workforce across the Directorate. The number of occupied positions in the Directorate at the end of Q2 was 593, this is the highest number of occupied posts since April 2023. Turnover has also been on a downward trend since a peak of 14.31% in December 2023. At the end of Q2 turnover the percentage figure for turnover was 11.30%.
- 2.1.7 We continue in our attempts to recruit to vacant roles across the Directorate and negate the need for agency workers. At the end of Q2 there were 52 open cases of recruitment, 29 were up to offer stage and 23 were after offer stage.
- 2.1.8 The Directorate have recently successfully recruited to 2 Practice Manager roles on a permanent basis and have received positive enquiries from 3 interim Practice Managers engaged by agency about converting their assignments to contracted employment with the Council.

- 2.1.9 In Q2 we completed the service redesign of Early Help which saw the introduction of our Family Help model. The previous model contained several temporary roles and appointments. All roles in the new structures, which spans 3 service areas, are permanent roles. Interviews for remaining roles took place recently and conditional offers of employment were made.
- 2.1.10 The greatest reduction in the number of agency assignment was Residential Child Care Officers where the number of assignments reduced by 7 (from 16 in Q1 to 9 in Q2). Recruitment to RCCO vacancies will be taking place following recent business case approval.
- 2.1.11 The greatest increase in agency assignments was Child Care Workers who are deployed to work in our Day Care and Day Nurseries with the number of assignments increasing from 11 in Q1 to 24 in Q2. The service has struggled with recruitment to these roles over the past 18 – 24 months however this is showing signs of improvement with Sanyu Daycare being fully staffed since September and recruitment to the Day Nursery taking place with confirmed appointments.
- 2.1.12 The number of Social Worker agency assignments has remained relatively static. The recruitment challenge to social care roles is one that all Local Authorities across Greater Manchester find themselves facing. Whilst recognising that our workforce comprises a significant percentage of agency workers this is balanced with the need to support services across the directorate in discharging their statutory responsibilities and being able to respond in an agile way to unexpected demands in service areas.
- 2.1.7 This month marks the 1-year anniversary of the inception of the GM Pledge which saw a memorandum of understanding being introduced by Directors of Children's Services and HR Directors across GM creating an agreed set of principles on the engagement of agency social work resource. This included introducing a pricing framework for temporary roles which all Local Authorities should adhere to. We have and continue remain compliant with this pricing framework having benefitted prior to the creation of the Pledge with a robust internal process for the approval of agency assignments within Children's Services.

2.2 Adult Services

- 2.2.1 Q2 2024/25 spend in Adult Services totalled £268,996.37, spend has increased slightly since Q1 (£259,101.70) and Quarter 4 2023/0024 (£247,525.39).
- 2.2.2 Total agency spend to date for this financial year is £528,098.07. In comparison to the same period last year, total spend has slightly increased by £57,613.69 from £470,484.38
- 2.2.3 The largest spend in Q2 2024/25 was a combined spend on qualified agency social workers (£155,915.52) followed by support workers at Ascot House and Supported

Living (£54,167.07). Combined spend in these areas' accounts for (£210,082.59) approximately 78.09% of agency spend in the directorate.

- 2.2.5 To support career development and attraction into the sector, Adults Trafford Learning Academy has an engagement programme with schools and colleges across Trafford to promote and inspire adult social care as a rewarding career choice. During Q2 the learning academy attended 4 careers events at schools across the borough.
- 2.2.6 Alongside the above activity, in partnership with Blessed Thomas Holford (BTH) and Trafford Local Care Organisation, the academy attended a specific Health and Social Care Careers event on 01 July, which was attended by year groups from BTH and Sale High School who are studying Health and Social Care.
- 2.2.8 The Learning Academy is proactively supporting school students with their work experience opportunities in Year 10, by linking students seeking work experience with local social care providers and Ascot House. During this financial year 7 work experience placements have taken place to date.
- 2.2.7 Following the implementation of a market supplement for qualified Social Workers, along with the launch of the new recruitment approach we have seen a reduction in the number of vacancies in the service. During Q1, 2.0 FTE Social Workers left the service and a further 4.8 FTE left in Q2 for the following reasons: 3 x personal reasons, 1.8 x early retirement and 2 x dissatisfied with the job. The service has reviewed the adverts and ensured that the benefits of working for Trafford are promoted via Greater Jobs and we have since recruited to 4 of the roles and currently out to advert to recruit to the remaining vacancies.

2.3 Update - Children's and Adults Services Social Work development

- 2.3.1 ASYE: The Learning and Development Team supports the coordination of the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE), supported by the Learning and Improvement Team in Children's Services and Principal Social Worker in Adults Services.
- 2.3.2 There have been 9 newly qualified Social Workers who have started in Children's Services in Q2 and 4 in Adults Services. This programme involves support and assessment against the Post Qualifying Standards in their first year in practice. In total we have 8 colleagues registered and undertaking the ASYE programme in Adult Services and 18 colleagues in Children's Services. The programme for Adult's ASYE has been reviewed and the updated programme is due to launch in January 2024.
- 2.3.2 Social work students: We have identified 6 student placements within Children's Services and 3 in Adults Services for this academic year. Students on placement

with us are engaged with regularly and those in their final year are encouraged to apply for vacancies with Trafford Council upon completion of their degree.

2.3.3 Social worker apprenticeship: We have a successful social worker apprenticeship programme, which involves completing a social work degree in 30 months, through university learning at Manchester Metropolitan university, with extended practice development opportunities within their substantive roles. To date we have supported 16 colleagues to complete the Social Work degree, with the following cohorts in progress.

- Cohort 4 – There are 7 colleagues on cohort 4 who are progressing well and are currently undertaking placements (Children’s Services x4, Adults x3). They are due to complete in early 2025.
- Cohort 5 – There are 3 colleagues who will started on the programme in March 2024, they have all completed the first six months of the course successfully (Children’s Services x2, Adults x1).
- Cohort 6 – Children’s Services recruited 3 colleagues in June who started the course in September 2024, one person has since gone on a Break in learning due to their health but hope to rejoin in early 2025.
- Cohort 7 – Adult services are currently recruiting up to 3 colleagues for a March 2025 start.

Once graduated, the new qualified workers move into vacant social work positions identified in our Adults or Children’s Directorate.

2.4 Legal and Governance

2.4.1 In Q2 2024/2025 the total agency spend in Legal and Governance was £204,988.14. The spend has decreased slightly since Q1 from £233,634.32. The spend in this directorate is all on lawyers and solicitors. The reduction in spend is accounted for in one less assignment in Q4 (11 assignments as opposed to 12) than there was in Q1.

2.4.2 Total agency spend to date for this financial year is £438,622.46. In comparison to the same period last year, total spend has marginally decreased from £444,103.78.

2.4.3 The recruitment and retention of solicitors within the public sector is recognised nationally. The main reason for this is the competitiveness of their reward package as compared with the private sector.

2.4.3 A Directorate review was completed within the parameters of the existing budget, part of which was to develop ways in which to embed supportive career options to attract new staff and to provide more internal opportunities for colleagues to grow and progress at Trafford. New posts were introduced to the existing structure,

including at junior and senior level, all of which have been successfully recruited to this year including two Senior Lawyer posts.

2.4.4 Market force supplements remain in place across specific Lawyer roles to promote attraction and retention. A more detailed review of the Legal Service is currently being undertaken and this will include an exploration of other routes to qualification, such as the wide range of apprenticeships, and the viability of introducing and embedding these into the teams to attract new talent.

2.4.4 The GM Lawyer Academy, in partnership with the GMCA and Manchester Metropolitan University, has been established to support the growth and development of Lawyers across the region. The pilot programme has commenced and involves Lawyers working in the commercial/property teams. Trafford have one member of staff participating. If the scheme is successful, consideration will be given to expanding into other areas of specialism and the potential for a formal qualification will be explored. Activity is ongoing across GM Local Authorities, who are working together to explore ways in which we can collaboratively create, promote and support a learning and development offer and career progression pathways to attract people to legal careers in Local Government.

2.5 Finance and Systems

2.5.1 In Q2 2024/25 the total agency spend in Finance and Systems was zero. The spend in the previous Q4 was also zero.

2.6 Place

2.6.1 In Q2 2024/25 agency spend in Place totalled £11,744.94. The spend has increased since Q1 from £2,155.69. This is due to an increase in business support assignments from 1 to 3. The increase, in spend is temporary and relates to Parking Services who require additional capacity to deal with a peak in demand for residents permit applications for three months.

2.6.2 Agency spend has significantly reduced in comparison to the same quarter in 2023/2024 (£39,702.41) and in overall terms when comparing total spend to date (£13,900.63) in this financial year in comparison to last year (£47,845.23).

2.7 Strategy and Resources

2.7.1 In Q2 2024/25 the total agency spend in Strategy and Resources was £22,114.87. This has reduced from the previous quarter where spend was £44,436.27. Total spend this quarter within the directorate, pertains to Operational Services for Education for catering and cleaning roles. The reduction in spend, during Q2 is linked to schools closing for the summer break.

- 2.7.2 The number of assignments were reduced from 79 to 59 from Q1 to Q2, which accounts for some reduction in spend alongside less reliance on off contract agencies due to Reed (who offer more competitive margins) now being able to fulfil cleaning shifts in schools by using a local supplier in Trafford.
- 2.7.3 Total agency spend to date for this financial year is £66,551.14. In comparison to the same period last year, total spend has significantly decreased to £124730.18

3. Summary Agency Spend Position

- 3.1 The total agency spend in Q2 2024/25 was £1,744,971.31. Spend has decreased from £1,892,864.16 in Q1.
- 3.2 In the corresponding period (Q2) in 2023/24 the overall spend was £1,794,593.53. Therefore, spend has slightly decreased by £49,622.22.
- 3.2 The majority of agency spend continues to be in Legal Services alongside Adults and Children’s Services, due to ongoing challenges with recruiting and retaining social workers and lawyers. As outlined above work continues to try to mitigate this and move to a more stable resourcing position.
- 3.3 We will continue to monitor agency spend and provide reports for visibility and progress resourcing actions to support a more permanent workforce.

4. Consultant Spend

- 4.1 The total spend in Q2 2024/25 was £14,489.60. The spend breaks down as follows:

	Children’s	Place
Q2	£3,609.60	£10,880

- 4.2 During Q2 2024/25 consultants were engaged in Children’s Services and Place. Both consultants have been engaged to undertake bespoke pieces of work. Within our Place directorate a temporary Trading Standards Officer is leading on a piece of work (tobacco agenda) which was funded by Public Health. This role is due to end in November 2024. In Children’s Services consultancy spend is on an ongoing basis for Foster Panel Chair.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 Agency and consultant spend will continue to be monitored on a regular basis and reports will be presented to Employment Committee, for information.
- 5.2 Employment Committee is recommended to note the content of this report.

Appendix 1

Trafford Council Agency Spend By Directorate Q2– 2024/2025

Directorate	Role	Number of Assignments	Total Cost
CHILDRENS	Business Support Officer	5	£20,685.14
	Child Care Worker	24	£18,857.26
	Reed - Advanced Practitioner	7	£89,202.49
	SWAF - Advanced Practitioner	4	£78,355.02
	Reed - Social Worker	37	£502,124.36
	SWAF – Social Worker	10	£186,704.91
	Family Support Worker	3	£16,342.68
	Independent Reviewing Officer	1	£17,772.28
	Personal Advisor	2	£19,734.34
	Residential Child Care Officer	9	£36,415.06
	Strategic Lead	1	£24,147.71
	Practice Manager	12	£203,784.04
	SWAF – Practice Manager	1	£23,001.70
TOTAL		116	£1,237,126.99
ADULTS	Senior Practitioner	2	£27,250.73
	Social Worker	17	£155,915.52
	AMHP	2	£2,017.88
	Catering Assistant	2	£1,673.29
	Chef/Chef Manager	7	£3,771.87
	Domestic Support	3	£2,427.86
	Freedom of Information Support Officer	1	£1,634.62
	Social Care Team Leader	1	£5,698.39

	Social Work/Best Interest Assessor	1	£14,439.14
	Support Worker	50	£54,167.07
TOTAL		85	£268,996.37
LEGAL & GOVERNANCE	Lawyer/Solicitor	11	£204,988.14
TOTAL		11	£204,988.14
PLACE	Business Support Officer	3	£10,529.33
	English for Speakers of Other Languages	1	£1,215.61
TOTAL		4	£11,744.94
Strategy and Resources	REED – Catering Assistant	2	£1,690.03
	REED - Chef/Chef Manager	4	£3,141.31
	REED - Cleaner	29	£12,851.37
	Off Contract – Catering	14	£4,432.16
TOTAL		59	£22,114.87
GRAND TOTAL		277	£1,744,971.31

Workforce Measure	Current Quarter 2- July to September						
	Council	Children's Services	Adult Services	Finance & Systems	S&R	Legal & Governance	Place
Staff in Post							
Staff in post (HC) - end of quarter	2541	593	472	198	971	58	249
Staff in post (FTE) end of quarter	1984.6	481.9	410.4	186.9	613.9	51.7	239.9
Temporary Resource							

Agency staff (HC) in quarter	245	113	85	0	32	11	4
Total Headcount	2786	706	557	198	1003	69	253
% of Agency Workers to Perm Workers	8.8	16.0	15.3	0.0	3.2	15.9	1.6

Appendix 2

Snapshot of the percentage of agency workers compared to Council staff as at September 2024.

Please Note:

Staff in Post: Figures are based on posts, not people, as some employees have multiple posts which maybe in different directorates.

Agency spend and headcount: Headcount is based on those on assignment in month and spend is based on the invoices received in the month.

Working Patterns: Agency workers will be working ad hoc shifts and not all will be on full/part time assignments.

3. Annual Agency Spend across GM

Table (1): The table below highlights the 12 months agency spend to September 2024 with REED, our umbrella agency provider across Greater Manchester by Local Authority. Trafford rank 5th in terms of smallest spend out of 13 Local Authorities in the collaboration.

Local Authority	Total 12 Month Spend to September 2024
1. Blackpool	£1,357,415
2. Blackburn & Darwen	£1,368,492
3. Stockport	£3,897,998
4. Warrington	£4,527,720
5. Trafford	£6,355,105
6. Wigan	£7,185,781
7. Salford	£7,214,012
8. Bolton	£8,636,327
9. Bury	£9,010,154
10. Rochdale	£9,011,984
11. Tameside	£9,484,121
12. Oldham	£11,923,941
13. Manchester City	£25,045,635

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TRAFFORD
COUNCIL

Workforce Update December 2024



Our People Strategy

Our People Strategy is framed around 4 key themes that show how the HR Service enables the employee journey to be a really positive experience and one where we recruit and nurture talent, take care of ourselves and each other and provide the tools for everyone to be the best they can be.

This report details some key workforce metrics, so we can monitor progress and provides updates on different work areas, all themed around our People Strategy. The metrics cover the year ending September 2024.

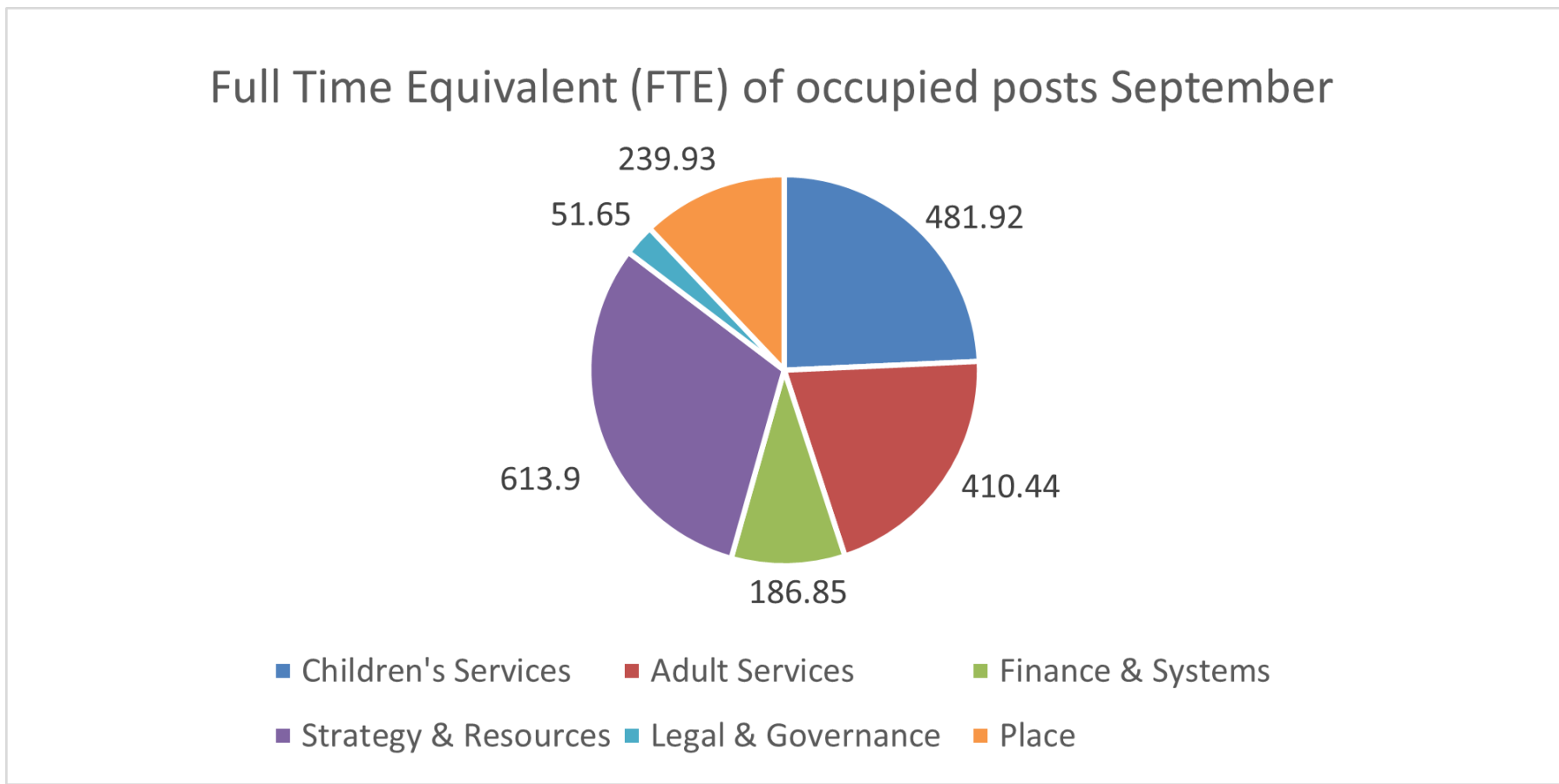
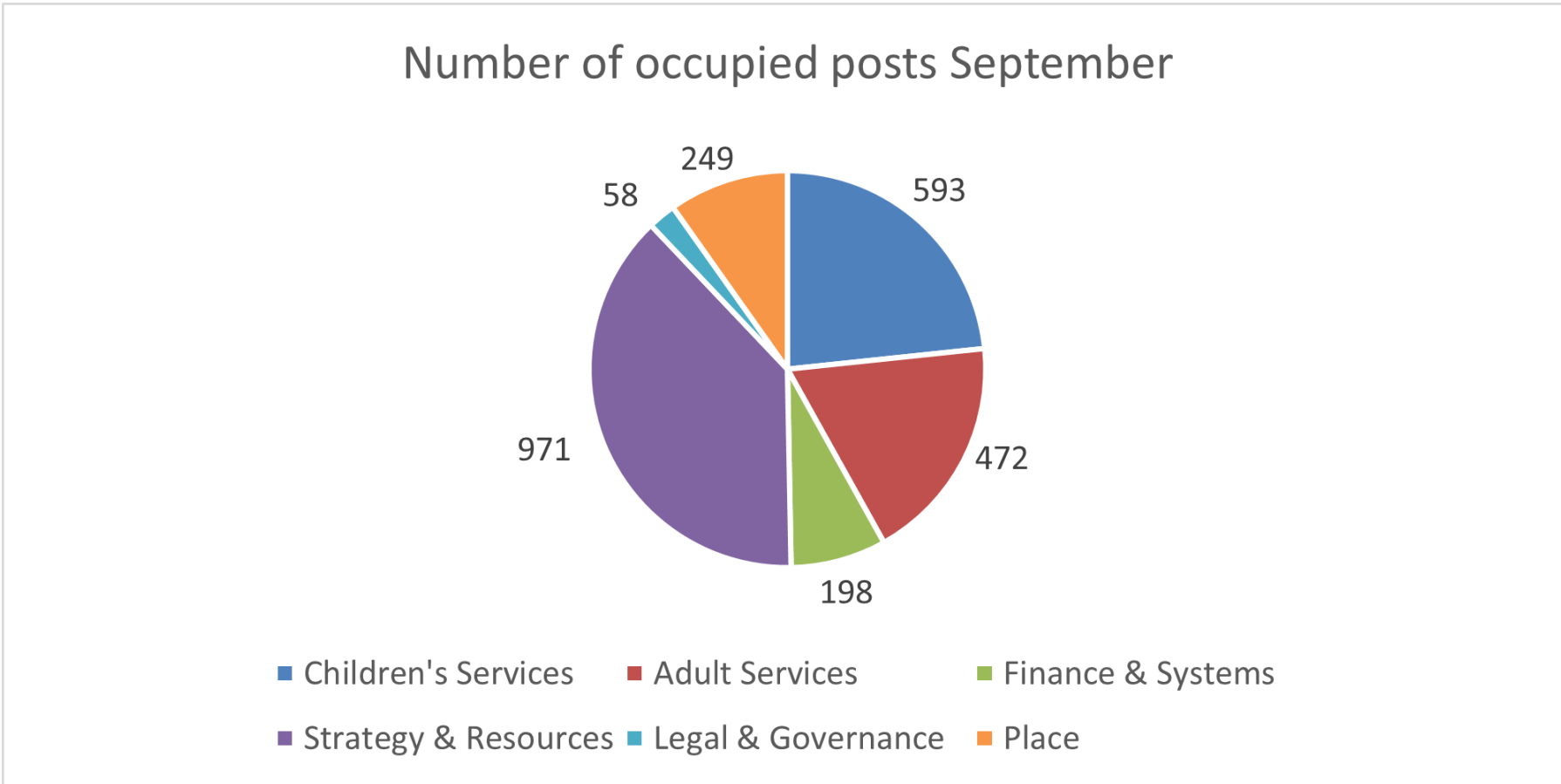
Our refreshed People Plan will be launched in January 2025 and the update will align to the new Plan.



Report Contents

Page 3	-	Attract and Recruit
Page 6	-	Engage and Retain
Page 9	-	Grow and Nurture
Page 12	-	Embed and Sustain

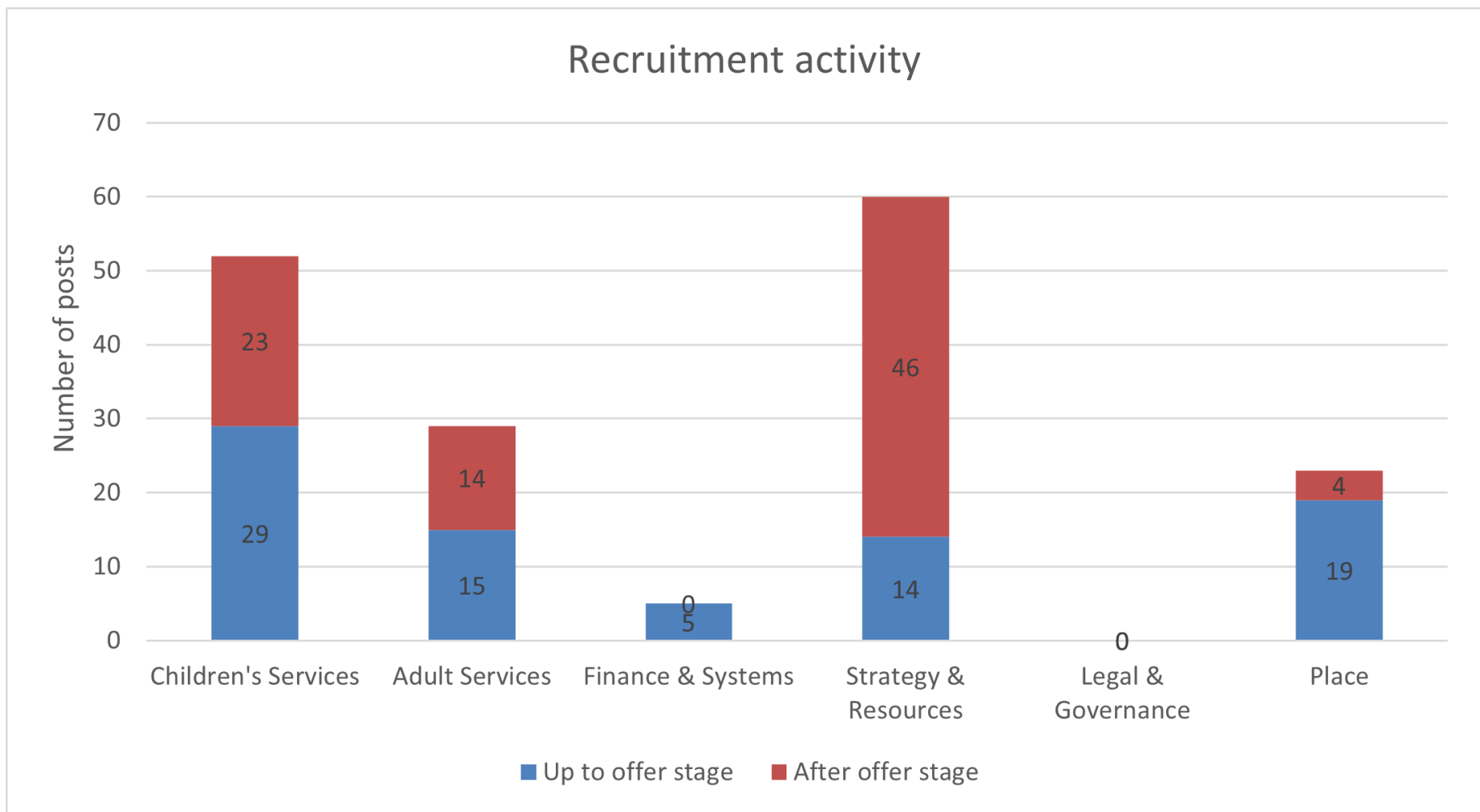
ATTRACT & RECRUIT



In September 2024 there were a total of 2541 substantive posts occupied within the Council which equates to a full time equivalent (FTE) of 1984.7. The biggest variance between the number of posts and the FTE is within Strategy & Resources—this is due to staff who work in Operational Services for Education (OSfE) where the majority of roles are part-time, based on the nature of the needs of our schools client base. Some staff have more than one post within the Council so the headcount/total number of employees equals 2441.

Over the 12 months to end of September 2024 we welcomed 266 new employees to the Council which equates to 232.90 full time equivalents (FTE).

ATTRACT & RECRUIT



Resourcing Updates

Recruitment activity – At the end of September there were 169 roles being recruited to. This is a significant reduction from the figure of 218 six months prior at the end of March. Of these 82 were up to the offer stage and 87 were after offer, but before commencing with the Council.

Work with us — improve our processes and systems — we collaborate

GM Pledge and DfE – There are ongoing challenges with recruitment and retention across the social care workforce at a national, regional, and local level. To respond to this the GM Pledge was introduced in November 2023 - it involves the introduction of an agreed set of rules on the engagement of agency social work resource in local authority children’s social care across Greater Manchester. This included the introduction of price caps on what local authorities may pay per hour for an agency social worker. Trafford Council don’t engage any workers via our agency provider above the capped rate. There is also work progressing at a national level and this links to the Department for Education introducing DfE reporting requirements which will come in to place in April 2025. We are analysing the operational guidance and working with our suppliers and other GM Local Authorities. This will be in addition to the GM Pledge reporting requirements.

Greater Jobs – We went live with the new recruitment website and ATS (application tracking system) in June 2024. This is a collaborative project across Greater Manchester and the new system will transform the way we attract, assess, and onboard talent. Following successful implementation we are exploring how we currently use the system to support us to measure, as per the people plan our average time from advert to employment offer. We will focus on developing the self-serve function of the system relating to adverts. This will enable managers to automate the advert process, so they are not dependent on the resourcing team manually inputting. This should have a positive impact on the process and timescales.

ATTRACT & RECRUIT



Resourcing continued

Business Case Automation—phase 2

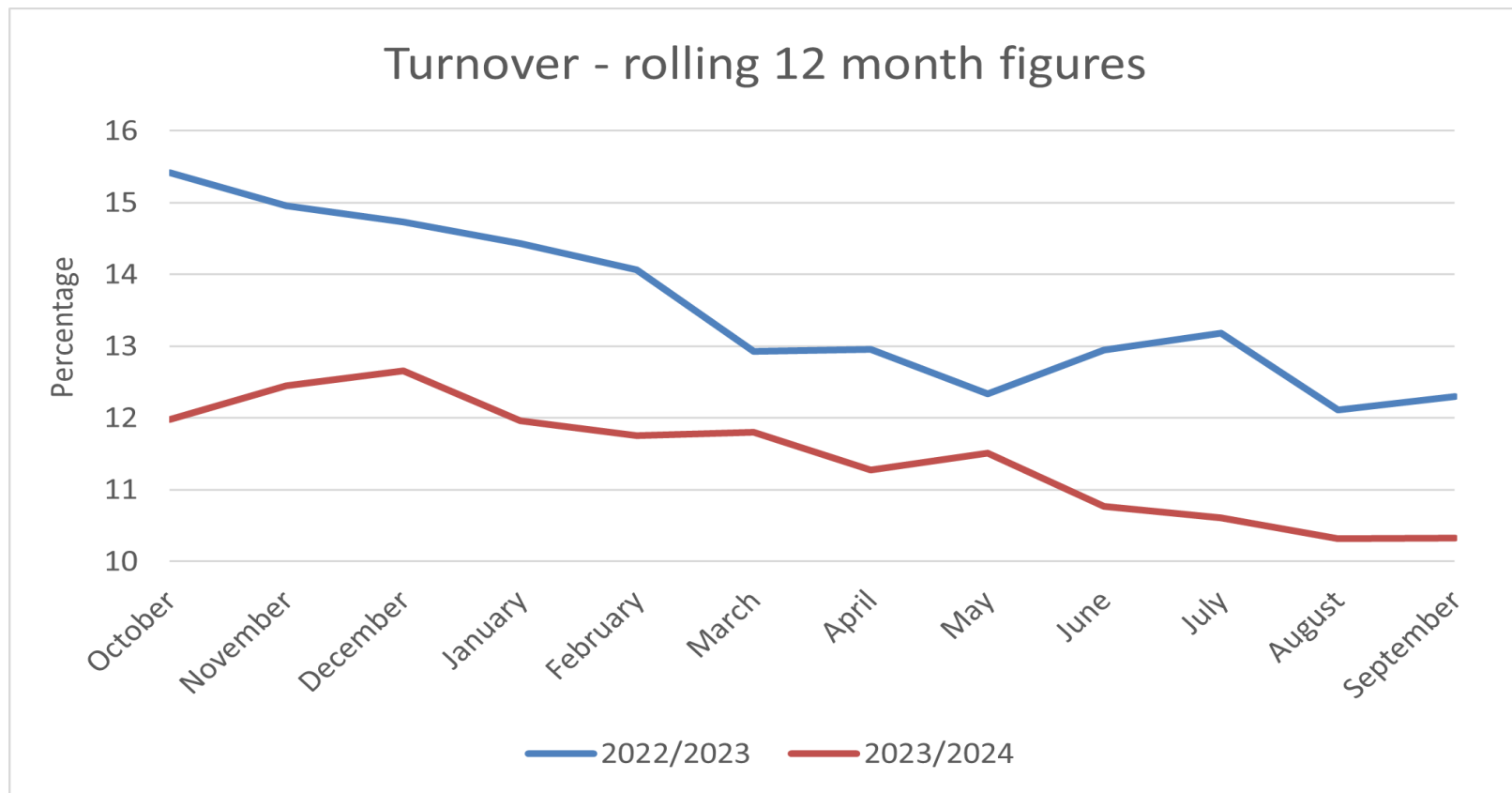
We have in place an online process for managers to seek approval for business cases to make changes to roles, create new roles and advertise vacancies. To support with the launch of self serve advertising, we have met with ICT to include an additional stage within the current business case process. This stage, before it enters the authorisation route, will be an email to our Job Evaluation Team to review and check the correct role profile is being used and therefore protecting the integrity and consistency of our Trafford Brand and pay and grading structure. We have also requested to work with ICT to streamline requests from services previously exempt from the business case process . These are traded or joint services (GMSS, OsFE and STAR procurement). Due to the nature of the services they haven't been subject to the same authorisation process but moving them to it will improve assurance and will enable a 'one front door' approach. Alongside reducing email traffic and requests for further information, this will help to ensure consistency and positively impact on team resource. Additionally, it will future proof us should there be any changes to recruitment approval processes in future.

Learn and Grow with Us—Promote learning and Apprenticeship Opportunities—We Empower

Work Experience – We offered 20 work experience placements to Trafford school children during summer 2024. Feedback from the children was positive with all enjoying the interactive induction sessions which took place each Monday during the work experience window. Managers said they benefited from the suite of resources on our intranet pages to support them during placements. A lessons learnt session has taken place and plans are being made for 2025's offer.

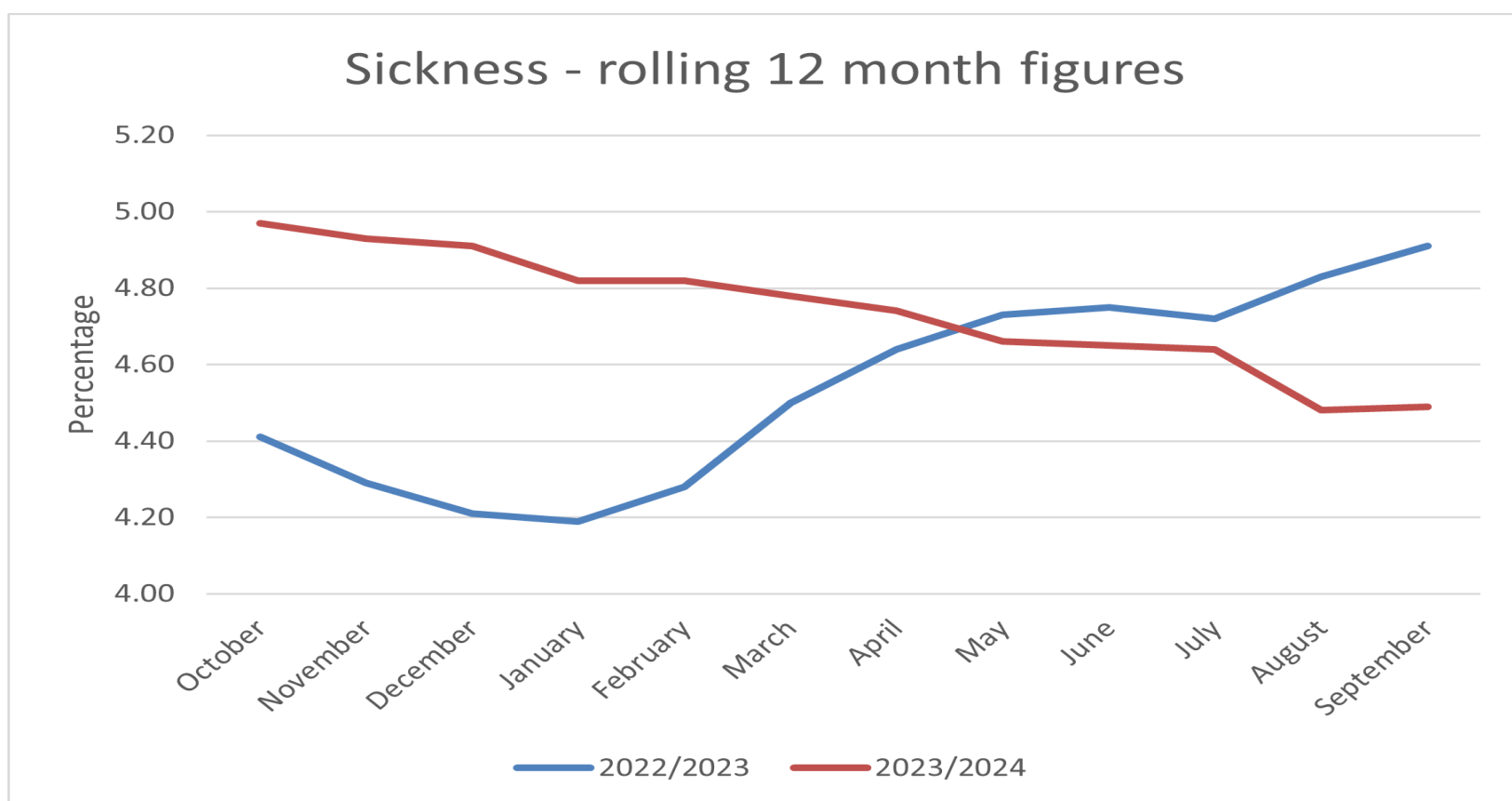
Supported Internships – The first cohort of supported interns successfully graduated from the programme early summer. In September we welcomed a new cohort which has 8 young people on it. Pure Innovations and the council are now working together to secure placements for them.

ENGAGE & RETAIN



Turnover

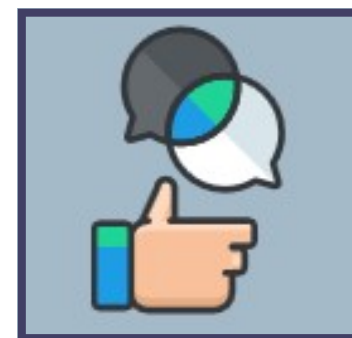
Our turnover figures are based on posts, and include all those who leave the Council for any reason. In October 2022 turnover was at 15.42% and it has reduced over the last two years to a figure of 10.33% in September 2024. This is a really positive trend demonstrating that employee retention has been improving.



Sickness absence

We report sickness absence by percentage of total available time lost to sickness absence. The rolling 12 months sickness figure to October 2022 was 4.41% and after a period of reducing it increased to a peak of 4.97% in October 2023. Since then there has been a downward trend to nearly the same level as two years ago. At the end of September 2024 it was 4.49% (this equates to an average of 13.28 days per full time equivalent employee.) Of the time lost to sickness in the year to September 2024, 73% is due to long-term sickness and 27% is short-term sickness.

ENGAGE & RETAIN



Engagement and Wellbeing

EPIC Wellbeing – We continue to increase the visibility of colleague wellbeing to ensure this spotlight is varied and engaging. A number of key areas were included over this period, including World Mental Health Day, Suicide Prevention, a number of cancer awareness opportunities, National Fitness Day and Men’s Health Month, where we developed a wide range of activities, held colleague spotlight sessions and promoted numerous resources. A new EPIC Manager training session has also been developed to reflect our culture of positive wellbeing and the first sessions were rolled out in November with more sessions planned for the new year.

Equalities and Diversity (EDI) – Inclusion continues to be a high priority as we develop our culture of Whole Self and acceptance across the organisation. To reinforce this, a number of topics have been developed, including pride month, neurodiversity, National Carers Week and Volunteering Week. In October 2024, we launched our Inclusion standards, co-designed across GM and will align with our EPIC values.

Let’s Talk events – These took place in the Summer and more are planned for December. Attendance has significantly increased during 2024 and several of the events have been full with representation from many of teams across the organisation. These engagement events are opportunities for colleagues to network, and update on strategic topics and important organisational wide projects and initiatives. Topics include the new Culture Strategy, new Corporate Priorities, winter finances, the forthcoming Corporate Peer Challenge and highlights from the Environment Team and Digital Inclusion in the Place team.

Leadership Summit – The next leadership event is planned for 2nd December, taking place at Hotel Football and the theme is Our Trafford, Our Future to continue our focus on our new Corporate Priorities. A wide range of engaging agenda items are planned to motivate and inspire our leaders, including external speakers covering topical sessions from the LGA and leadership wellbeing.

Time to shine Awards – This year’s colleague awards have included a refreshed set of award categories aligned with our Corporate Priorities as well as our EPIC values. A large number of nominations were received highlighting inspiring colleagues that have gone the extra mile! The awards event planning is now underway, which is due to take place at the Cricket Ground in February 2025.

Engagement Survey – Following the 2022 survey, the next B-Heard survey will be launched in Spring 2025. Detailed preparation is progressing to ensure readiness for this roll out, which includes reviewing previous action plans and successes, the relevant data set and key communications.

EPIC Values visibility – Following the launch of the organisational values in 2019, a key piece of work is in progress to raise the profile of the true meaning of each individual value in line with our culture. To support this, new intranet pages have launched, along with a focused campaign to share colleague stories, best practice, resources and narrative to visibly engage colleagues and bring this to life for everyone.

ENGAGE & RETAIN



Policy, reward and benefits continued

Blue Lights scheme – This is a benefit provider for those who are in the NHS, emergency services, social care sector and armed forces. They offer access to discounts online and in stores for a wide range of categories including holidays, cars, days out, fashion, gifts, insurance, phones and much more for a small bi-annual subscription. We have worked with the provider to put in place a mechanism for colleagues in our Social Care services to access this if they choose to do so.

Anti-racism and managing third party abuse policies – An anti-racism working group has been meeting to consider issues relating to racism experienced by colleagues. The work of the group has included developing an Anti-Racism Policy, and a Managing Third Party Violence and Abuse Policy plus a Zero Tolerance statement. These new policies have been launched with two in person sessions and the group continues to work towards them being fully embedded.

Age Friendly Employer Pledge – This pledge is promoted by the Centre for Ageing Better to improve the recruitment, retention and development of older workers and we signed up to it in August. We have identified a senior sponsor for age-inclusion and as part of our commitment we shall agree at least one new action in the area each year. We have lots of support already in place for older colleagues, including our Working Well passport, however we will consider how we can enhance colleague experience.

Financial Wellbeing and Planning for Retirement Seminars – A year ago, we brought on board a company who provide both Financial Wellbeing and Planning for Retirement seminars for Council employees at no cost. Seven courses have been held so far and they have been well attended with positive feedback. We now have agreed dates for the coming year and these have been added to our training pages, so staff can book on.

Revised workforce report for Corporate and Directorate Leadership teams— A detailed monthly report has been provided with workforce metrics so that they can monitor and respective services can take action as appropriate. The decision was taken that this be moved to quarterly provision—this reduces the time spent on it's production and longer-term trends can be seen which can be more meaningful than monthly changes.

GROW & NURTURE



Apprenticeship Scheme

During Q2 we enrolled a total of 15 apprentices across the Council in a range of areas such as STAR procurement and children's services. Our Social Work Degree apprenticeship programme is ongoing with 3 starts for the September 2024 cohort, one which is a Trafford care leaver. During this quarter 6 of the apprenticeships were of a degree level (level 6).

Learning and Development Activity

Training offer – We continue to offer a range of learning and development events for colleagues to attend through our learning and development calendar. Our EPIC Manager Programme continues, with two cohorts per year, with cohort 28 currently underway. We have recently arranged two sessions of Deaf Awareness training, with places reserved for frontline colleagues and elected members.

GROW & NURTURE



Learning and Development Activity continued

E-learning – We have started to move our e-learning users over to the new e-learning system. We have started with external customers who purchase licences from us, and then moved on to Council employees, by directorate. The aim is for all Council employees to have access to the new system by the end of the year.

Elected Member training – Training offered to elected members recently includes a session on Political Awareness, delivered by North West Employers and a session on the Council’s new Corporate Priorities. Some members also attended the Deaf Awareness training offered recently alongside colleagues. The Member Development Steering Group has elected a new Chair, Cllr Leicester. The group will be considering the training needs of elected members during the fallow election year next year.

Upskilling Managers in People Management – We have started to develop a suite of managers training sessions on key HR topics such as Conduct, Attendance, Capability, Dignity at Work and Grievance. A pilot of Proactively Managing Attendance was undertaken in November 2024 and further pilots of the remaining HR Topics are planned for early 2025. It is envisaged that the full programme will be rolled out across the Council by summer 2025.

Adults social care – We continue to facilitate cohorts going through Legal and Ethical Literacy, Implementing the Care Act, and Safeguarding Adults training with the plan still being to ensure all adult social care colleagues have completed this training by spring 2025. We recruited a new OD Consultant to support Adults & Children’s services and they have been onboarding since July, They are currently focussing on revamping our Student Placement and Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) for newly qualified social workers offers as well as the Adults Social Worker career development policy.

GROW & NURTURE



Health and Safety

Safe delivery of elections – HSU worked closely with Democratic Services throughout April, May and early June in a key supportive role to ensure the safe delivery of the Local and General Election arrangements including the polling stations, receipting and main count.

The team had representation at the weekly elections planning meetings. An event safety management plan was developed and coordinated, risk assessments were in place for each aspect of the elections and the service supported the implementation of security and contingency arrangements in co-ordination with the emergency planning lead officer.

Managing volatile incidents in our buildings – The Trafford Internal Security Review Group (TISRG) continues to work to review and improve the safety and wellbeing of staff from volatile and aggressive behaviour displayed from visitors and service users within our buildings.

To address the wide scope of work now being covered in managing safety and security, the group has been refreshed and incorporates a wider representation from relevant services and partners within our buildings.

The group has now made some significant progress in the development of improved safety and security measures.

Schools Support and SLA Delivery – Schools continued to be supported through the health and safety SLA's which in addition to an on-site visit included:

- Unlimited advice and guidance through our duty officer system.
- Access to school specific guidance on our SLA portal.
- Access to a range online health and safety training.

The school Health and Safety SLA year 2023-24 closed in August with 80 schools having received competent support. Currently, 73 schools have purchased the Health and Safety SLA for 2024-25, including our community schools.

Display screen equipment (DSE) assessments – A total of 19 complex DSE (computer) workstation assessments have been carried out by the HSU for employees. These included supporting colleagues working from home and those with more complex health needs.

EMBED & SUSTAIN



Service improvements

Itrent Case Manager – The HR system, Itrent, has the ability to include a case management module that provides a record of the activities undertaken as part of managing the HR casework. A mapping out exercise of the HR processes has been undertaken and a ‘blue print’ of attendance management has been completed. GMSS have created a pilot version of ‘Case Manager’ using attendance management blue print. The blueprint has been tested and feedback has been given to GMSS in relation to the functionality of the module.

CRM move to M365 – The transfer from our current Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system to M365 has concluded. The HR element of the project successfully transferred during Oct 24.

EPIC Pioneers – Trafford have a number of engagement champions across the organisation and activities have taken place this year to re-energise this initiative to ensure the team remain focused and adding value. In recognition of the importance of these champions, following a recruitment campaign to increase coverage, 6 new members joined the Pioneer team bringing it to 14, expanding into Place, Children’s Social Care and Strategy & Resources.

Automatic carry forward of annual leave—Annual leave is recorded within the ITrent HR system and employees can use the MiTrent self-service function to manage their leave. Towards the end of each leave year colleagues need to ensure that all leave is accounted for, i.e. taken, moved into their leave banking scheme or carried forwards. This has required manual work with tickets to the Systems team in GMSS. From April this year it was agreed that any leave up to 36.25 hours would be automatically carried forwards to the following year. Managers can now also action the carry forward of more than 36.25 hours (with appropriate approval) and the moving of leave into their banking scheme. This improvement has made this process more efficient for everyone and gives managers more control with greater self-service capability.

Changes to the schools SLA offer — The Human Resources service offers several services to schools and this year refined some of the offer.

For Health and Safety, schools now have two SLA options to choose from:

- Gold—full SLA Support with addition of an audit visit to the school
- Silver - full access to all support resources, a named advisor available on the phone

The new SLA allows schools to have structured H&S audit support. Schools are encouraged to follow the audit structure:

- Year 1 GOLD package Full H&S Audit
- Year 2 GOLD package Fire Risk Assessment
- Year 3 SILVER package

Occupational Health and the Employee Assistance programme continues to also be an offer that schools can purchase and use to support positive attendance.