



**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.

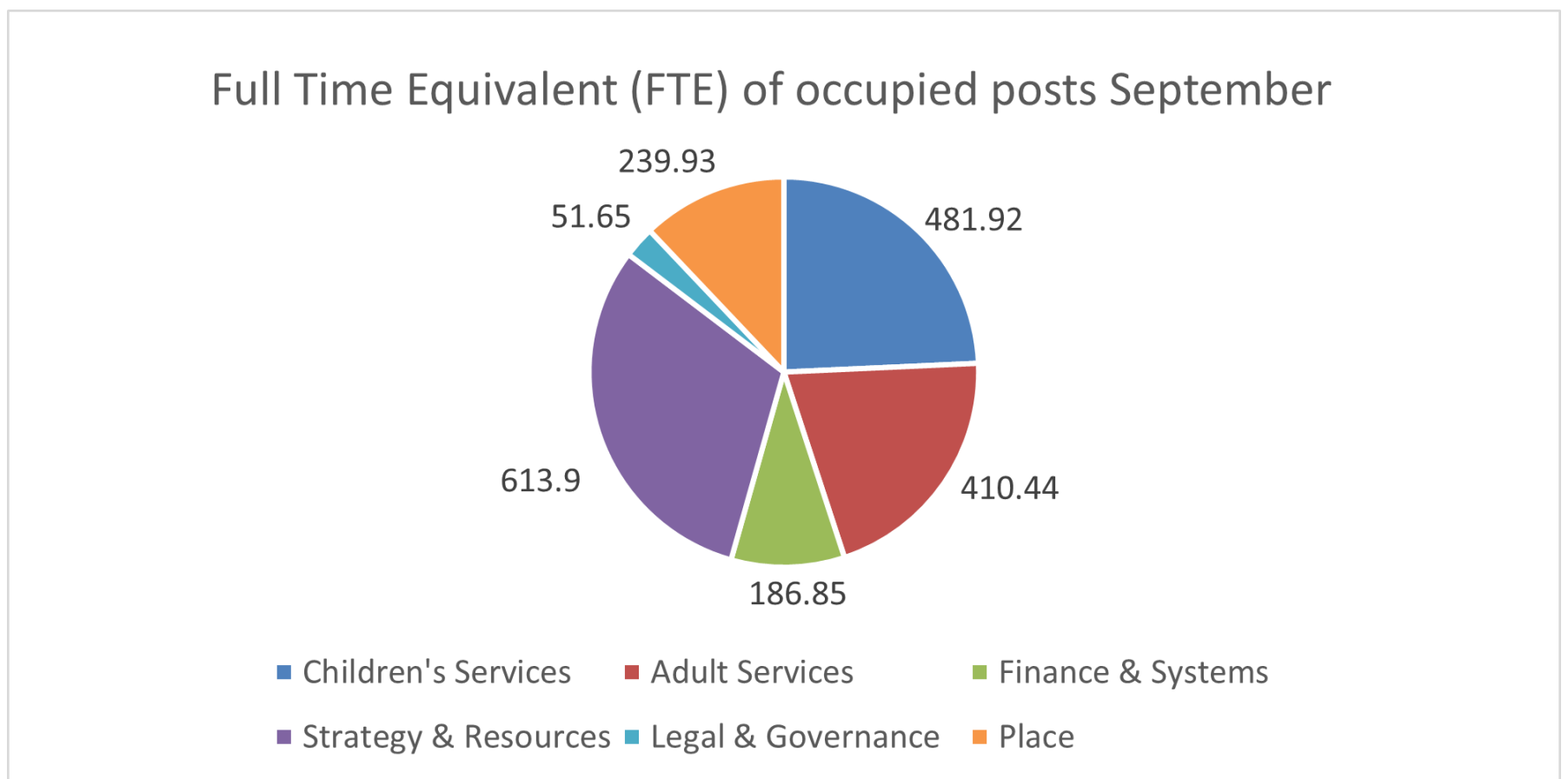
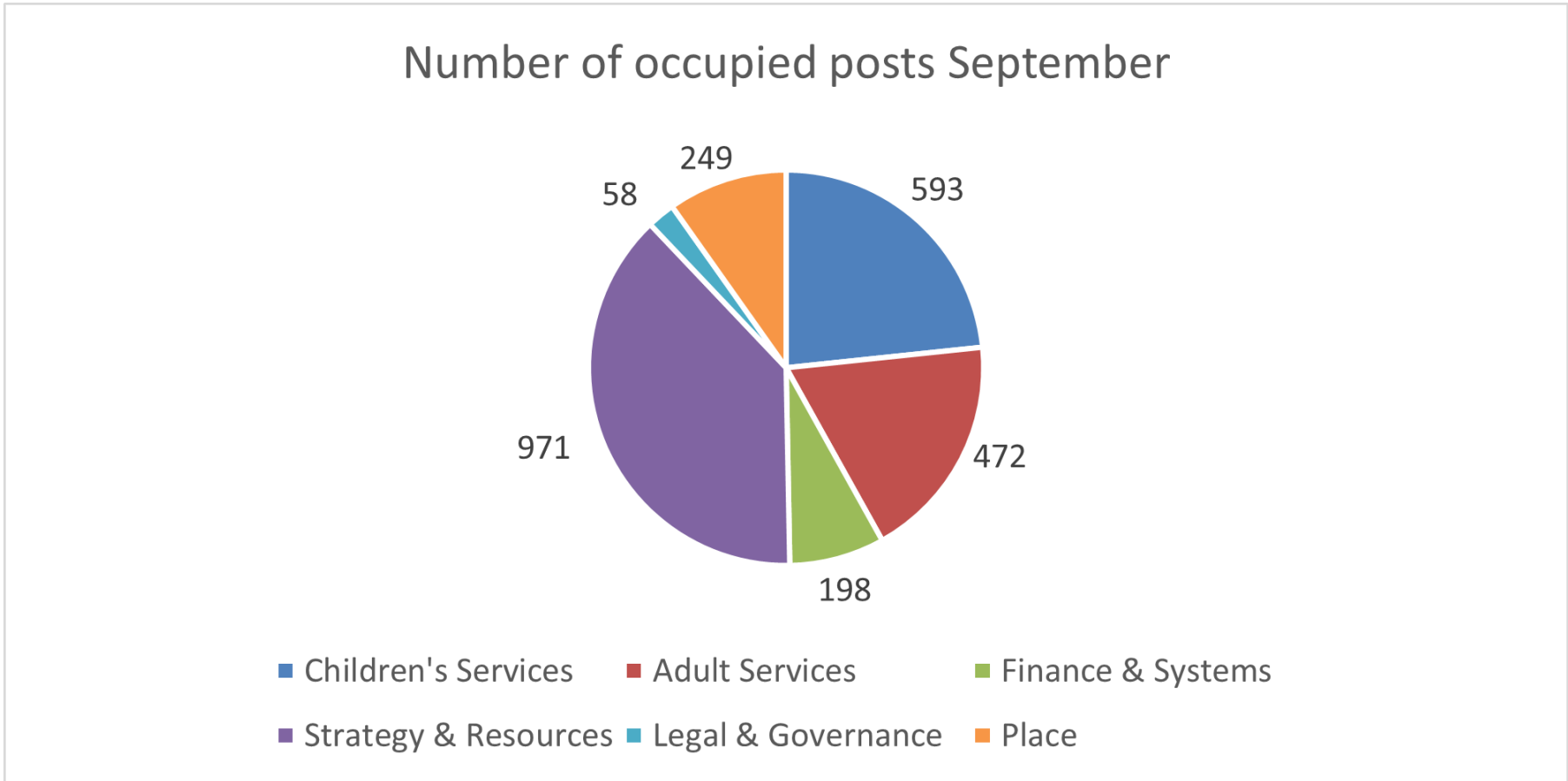
Our refreshed People Plan will be launched in January 2025 and the update will align to the new Plan.



## Report Contents

Page 3	-	<b>Attract and Recruit</b>
Page 6	-	<b>Engage and Retain</b>
Page 9	-	<b>Grow and Nurture</b>
Page 12	-	<b>Embed and Sustain</b>

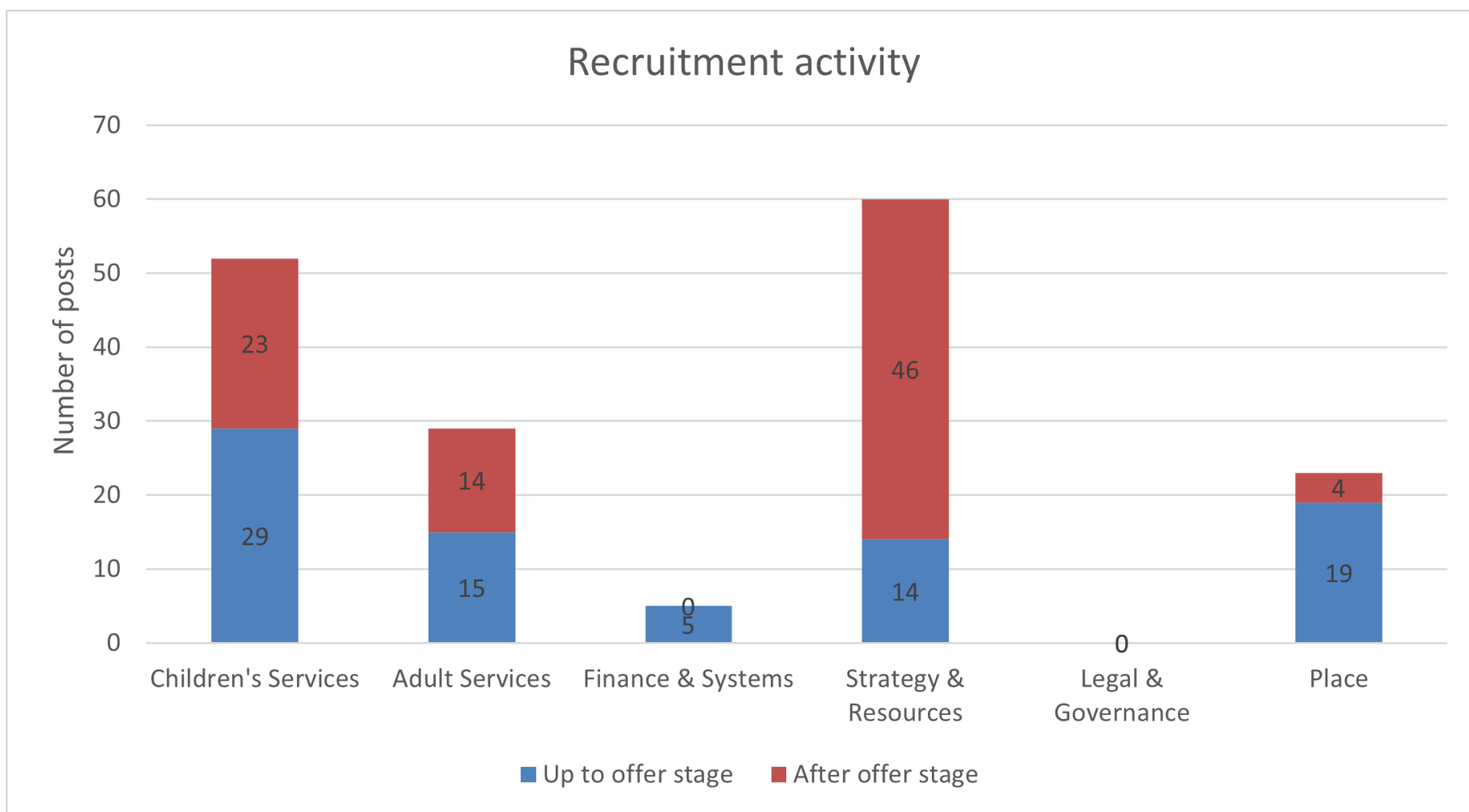
# ATTRACT & RECRUIT



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**

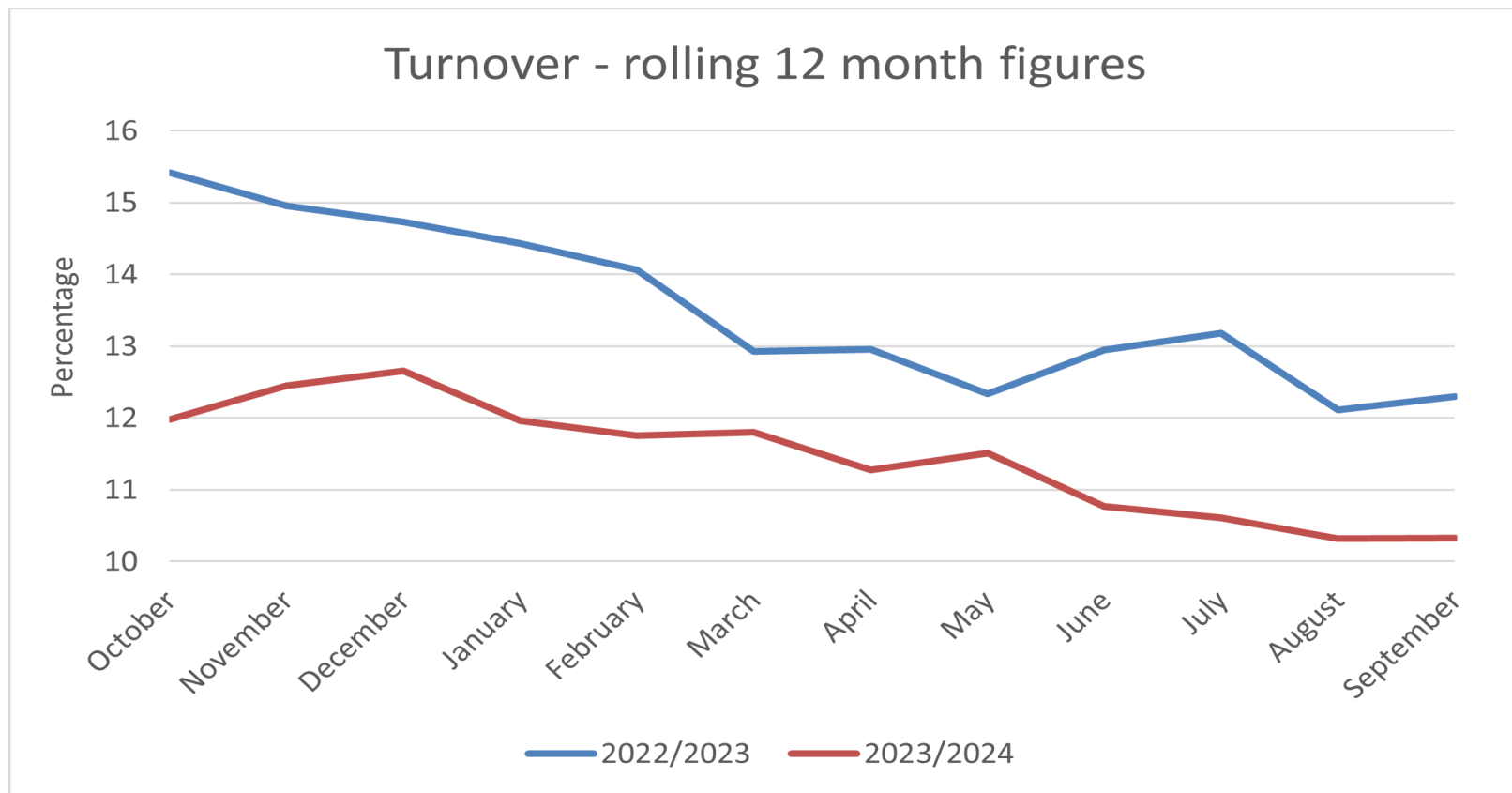
We have in place an online process for managers to seek approval for business cases to make changes to roles, create new roles and advertise vacancies. To support with the launch of self serve advertising, we have met with ICT to include an additional stage within the current business case process. This 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.

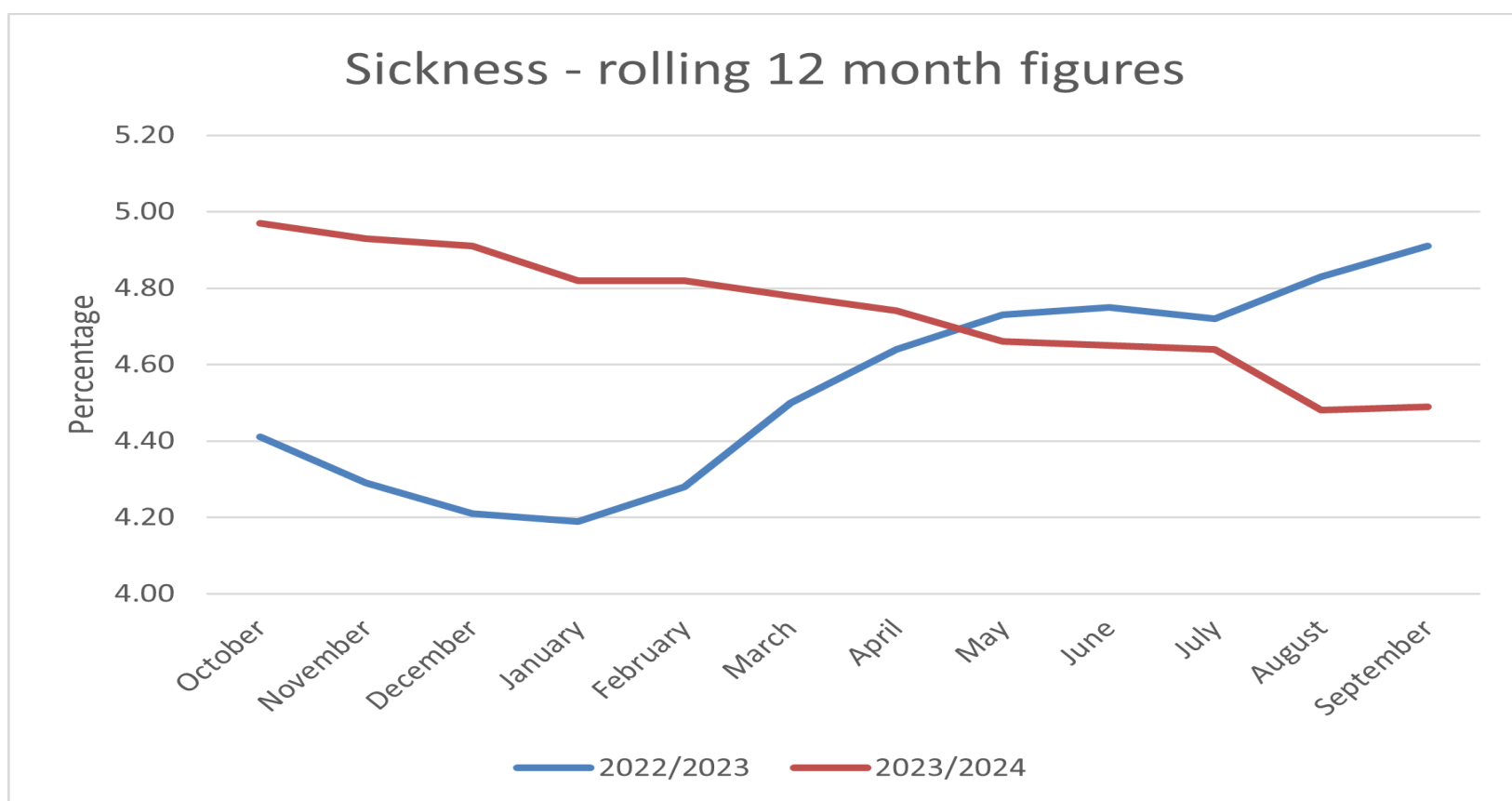
**Supported Internships** – The first cohort of supported interns successfully graduated from the programme early summer. In September we welcomed a new cohort which has 8 young people on it. Pure Innovations and the council are now working together to secure placements for them.

# ENGAGE & RETAIN



## Turnover

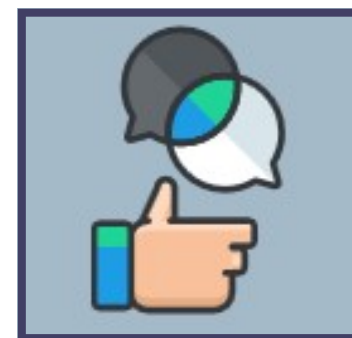
Our turnover figures are based on posts, and include all those who leave the Council for any reason. In October 2022 turnover was at 15.42% and it has reduced over the last two years to a figure of 10.33% in September 2024. This is a really positive trend demonstrating that employee retention has been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

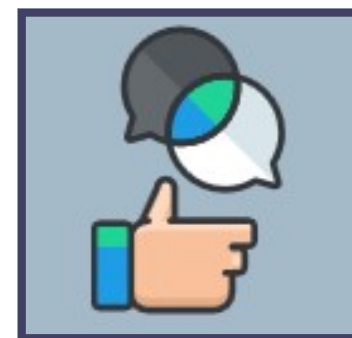
**Leadership Summit** – The next leadership event is planned for 2<sup>nd</sup> December, taking place at Hotel Football and the theme is Our Trafford, Our Future to continue our focus on our new Corporate Priorities. A wide range of engaging agenda items are planned to motivate and inspire our leaders, 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.

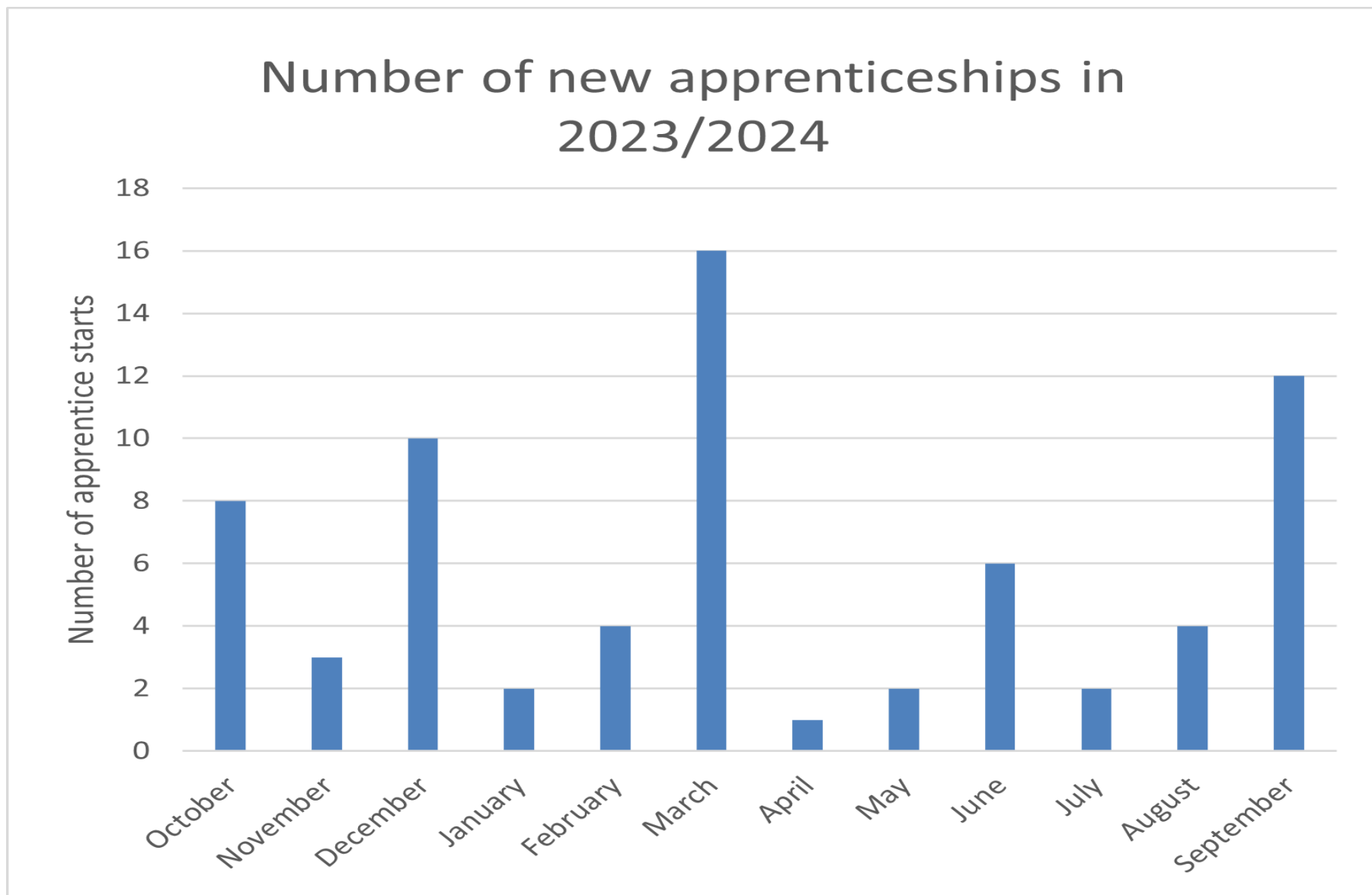
**Age Friendly Employer Pledge** – This pledge is promoted by the Centre for Ageing Better to improve the recruitment, retention and development of older workers and we signed up to it in August. We have identified a senior sponsor for age-inclusion and as part of our commitment we shall agree at least 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



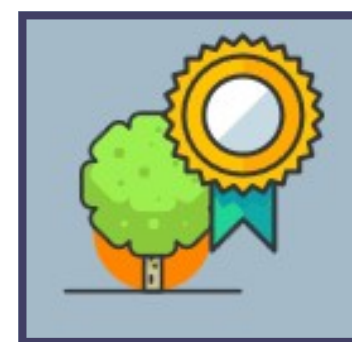
## Apprenticeship Scheme

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.