



# Employment Committee Update Report

HR Service

7<sup>th</sup> December 2020



# Sickness absence Jan – Nov 2020

Trafford Council - staffing

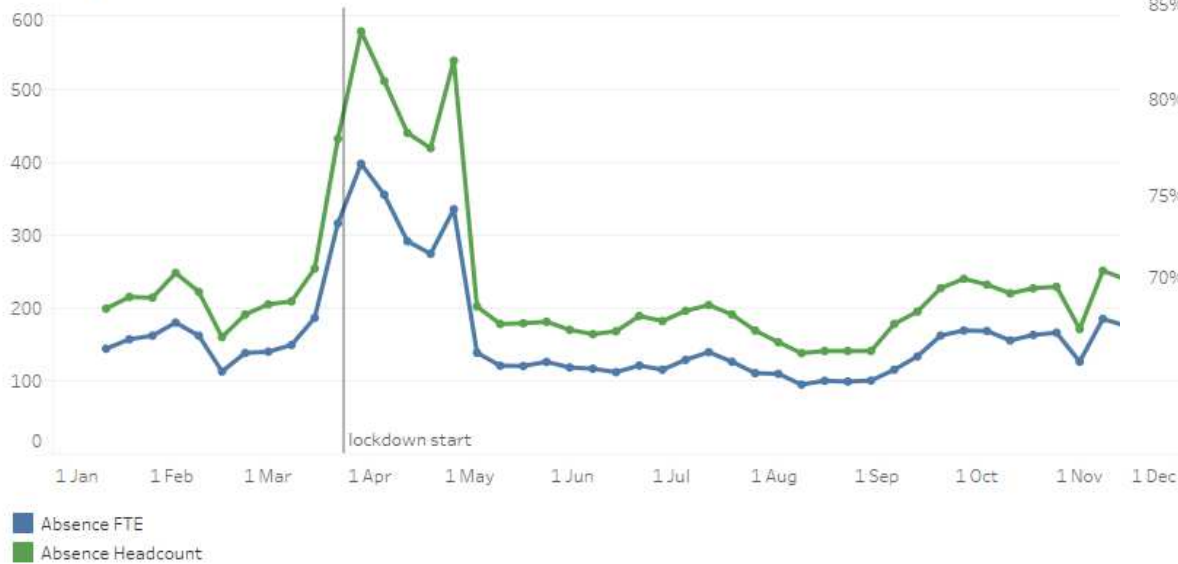
**239**  
members of staff  
absent

**175**  
full time  
equivalents  
absent

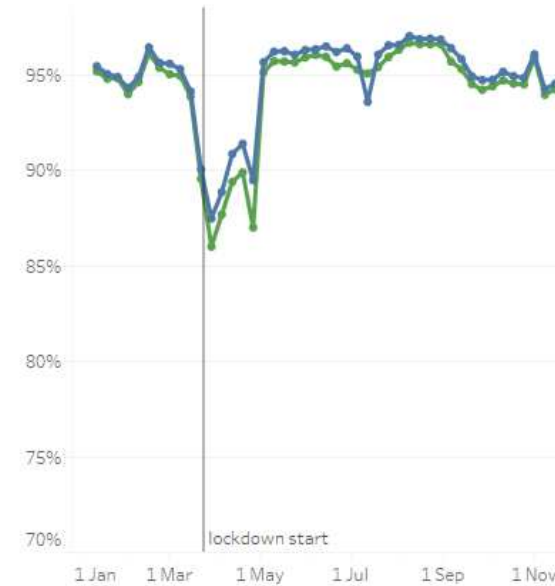
**94.2%**  
of headcount  
available to work

**94.5%**  
of whole time  
equivalents

Absence by week



Availability by week



Current availability by directorate

Directorates	Availability (%)
Adult Services	92.0%
Childrens Service	94.0%
Finance & Systems	98.2%
Governance & Community Strategy	94.8%
Place	94.4%
Schools	95.4%
Strategy & Resources	93.0%
Total	94.5%
Total	94.2%

Availability rates are for all staff within the directorate

# Health, Safety and Wellbeing

Workstream	Work Overview	Key Outcomes / Deliverables
<p><b>COVID-19: Working from home Support</b></p>	<p>Supporting our staff to work from home</p>	<p>In line with the current restrictions and to protect staff from the risks of COVID, arrangements continue to allow our workforce to <b>work from home</b> where possible to do so. Support provided through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Additional workstation equipment</b> (laptop risers, keyboards and mice) was made available to all colleagues through a central ordering system, to enable staff to work from laptops safely. <b>Over 700 pieces of kit were ordered.</b> Headsets are also now available for colleagues where required.</li> <li>• <b>Additional health &amp; safety workstation guidance and support</b> is available on our intranet pages.</li> <li>• The Health and Safety Team provide <b>workstation assessment support</b> where further advice is required</li> <li>• Guidance produced to <b>support the mental wellbeing</b> of colleagues working from home</li> </ul>
<p><b>COVID-19: Keeping our Trafford buildings COVID secure</b></p>	<p>Measures to ensure our buildings and other settings are and remain COVID secure to protect our front line staff.</p>	<p>A Workforce Reintegration Group and Operational Health and Safety group continues to monitor and review the COVID Secure arrangements in place for colleagues occupying our buildings which includes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Management of the occupancy levels</b> of our main buildings to <b>20%</b> of our normal capacity.</li> <li>• <b>Social distancing arrangements</b> in place through one way systems, restrictions on desk use and managing occupancy in kitchens, toilets and meeting rooms.</li> <li>• <b>Increased cleaning regimes</b> and hand hygiene arrangements.</li> <li>• <b>Screens being installed</b> at public facing areas.</li> </ul> <p>COVID arrangements at our main administrative buildings are reviewed <b>on a monthly basis.</b></p> <p>Communications on the arrangements continue to be issued on our intranet pages and via staff and manager briefings</p> <p><b>Direct support continues to our key front line services.</b> In addition to Ascot House, Registrars Service, Libraries, Music Services, Flixton House and the Arts Centre, the health and safety team have also developed specific 'COVID19 House Risk Assessments' for our Supported Living Services and Children's Homes to suit their particular working arrangements.</p>

# Health, Safety and Wellbeing

Workstream	Work Overview	Key Outcomes / Deliverables
<p>COVID-19: Staff at Greater Risk</p>	<p>Protecting our staff at Greater Risk of COVID-19</p>	<p>Government guidance has been issued to provide further protection for persons who are 'Clinically Extremely Vulnerable' and 'Clinically Vulnerable'.</p> <p>Trafford guidance for services and for schools has been produced to support Service Leads and Head Teachers through an individual risk assessment process to identify and consult with staff at greater risk and how they should be supported with additional protective measures.</p> <p>The guidance has been reviewed and updated each time the government advice has changed</p> <p>It has been widely communicated through our intranet pages, staff and manager briefings and at liaison meetings.</p>
<p>COVID-19: Test and Trace</p>	<p>In support of the NHS Test and Trace Guidance, local arrangements support our workforce in responding effectively to potential COVID19 symptoms to minimise the risk of transmission within the work environment.</p>	<p>Local arrangements with Public Health support a <b>swift response and assessment</b> to suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the workforce which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self isolation and a referral for a test is followed.</li> <li>• An assessment of working arrangements and any potential contacts.</li> <li>• Communication to any close contacts to ensure strict social distancing and hygiene arrangements are adhered to.</li> <li>• Identify any further steps to minimise the risk of transmission</li> </ul> <p>The Health and Safety Team have worked closely with Public Health in response to confirmed and suspected cases of COVID-19 within Services and schools through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Initiating additional cleaning and hygiene</b> measures as required</li> <li>• Supporting outbreak control meetings for schools to manage cases effectively</li> <li>• <b>Reviewing the COVID Secure arrangements</b> within our premises. These arrangements have greatly facilitated the effective management of cases within our buildings.</li> </ul>

# Health, Safety & Well Being

Workstream	Work Overview	Key Outcomes / Deliverables
COVID-19: Health and Wellbeing Support	COVID-19: Schools Support	<p>As schools have fully opened from September, they have continued to be supported in the arrangements for the safe return of staff and children to the classroom. Measures have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing risk assessment support on the COVID arrangements in place and regular guidance updates</li> <li>• Supportive outbreak control meetings to manage cases of COVID in schools supported by site visits where needed</li> </ul>
COVID-19: Health and Wellbeing Support	Supporting the wellbeing of our colleagues during the pandemic	<p>The impact of the COVID Pandemic has significant implications for the mental wellbeing of our colleagues. We have continued to provide, promote and signpost staff to a range of support to in line with our ongoing EPIC You Health and Wellbeing Strategy. Interventions have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Mental Health First Aiders:</b> Promoting our trained volunteers who are a point of contact if colleagues are experiencing a mental health issue or emotional distress. A <b>Mental Health First Aid Video</b> was produced introducing some of the Mental Health First Aiders and the dedicated support they provide</li> <li>• Continued promotion of a range of <b>Health and Wellbeing Resources</b> and support services including our <b>Employee Assistance Programme</b> providing 24/7 confidential support and counselling, <b>EPIC You Wellbeing Intranet pages</b>, working from home supporting guidance, and <b>Stay EPIC manager resources</b></li> <li>• The delivery of <b>EPIC Manager Health and Wellbeing Module</b> as part of the EPIC Manager programme to ensure managers are able to support the wellbeing of their teams.</li> <li>• <b>Mental Health Awareness Week:</b> A week of promotional communications and support encouraging colleagues to check in on each other and take time to talk</li> <li>• <b>World Mental Health Day:</b> A week of support for colleagues in the run up to World Mental Health Day which included mental health myth busters, 3 tea and talk sessions held by our Mental Health First Aiders and promoting opportunities to take time out from work and help your mental health during the pandemic</li> <li>• <b>National Self-Care Week:</b> Promoting self care resources for staff and further tea and talk sessions for staff</li> </ul>

# Organisation Development

Workstream	Work Overview	Key Outcomes / Deliverables
<p>Manager Virtual Programme</p>	<p>Supporting Managers to be EPIC.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have undertaken a 6 monthly review of the our <b>EPIC Manager Programme</b> and refined the content to enable us to deliver key modules to managers at a faster pace. We have split the content into 3 key areas, Core Modules, Strategic Modules and Operational Modules. Key modules that are linked to our strategic priorities, alongside operational modules will be delivered monthly from January 2020, We will still continue to deliver the core elements of the programme in addition to the below and we will build on all the content with our Micro Learn bite-sized sessions, which will be introduced in 2021</li> <li>- Understanding Finance (Strategic Module)</li> <li>- Change Management (Strategic Module)</li> <li>- Leading Equality &amp; Diversity (Strategic Module)</li> <li>- Staff Engagement (Strategic Module)</li> <li>- Being the Best (Core Module)</li> <li>- Health &amp; Wellbeing (Core Module)</li> <li>- Vital Conversations (Core Module)</li> <li>- Team Engagement (Core Module)</li> <li>- Values Based Recruitment (Operational Module)</li> <li>- Disciplinary Investigation Skills (Operational Module)</li> <li>- EPIC You Check in (Operational Module)</li> <li>- Getting the Most out of I Trent (Operational Module)</li> <li>- Managing Absence (Operational Module)</li> <li>- Understanding Commissioning (Operational Module)</li> </ul>
<p>2019: EPIC Check-in Program</p>	<p>Continue to support managers with their check-in conversations .</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We continue to deliver our suite of training to support managers and colleagues to engage in productive conversations and make the most out of their Check-ins. Training is now scheduled and delivered monthly.</li> <li>• We have also developed a range of tools alongside our training modules to support managers and colleagues to start to have “coaching health and wellbeing conversations” . These guides are available to all colleagues on our EPIC Check-in Pages.</li> <li>• Alongside supporting managers and colleagues at the Council we have also worked with the CCG to refine and refresh the appraisal paperwork and process. Their new process Engage, Achieve, Aspire was launched in September 2020 alongside training and support guides and materials.</li> </ul>

# Organisation Development

Workstream	Work Overview	Key Outcomes / Deliverables
Employee Support	Creation of a variety of “How To Guides” and training to support colleagues to remain healthy and productive in this new environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We continue to design and deliver a range of materials for our “#Stay EPIC” intranet pages. These host a number of best practice resources that have been designed by the team to support colleagues and managers to stay healthy, happy and productive during lockdown and as we continue on our Journey. The pages bring together all the sources of support available to colleagues and managers, our latest resource includes a resilience toolkit, other resources include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Useful links to support colleagues to look after their mental health</li> <li>- Working from Home Guidance</li> <li>- Guidance and tools for managers to support colleagues at greater risk of Covid-19</li> <li>- Latest information, updates and FAQ pages.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
New starters	Creation of a more streamlined induction to support and ease the pressure on managers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We continue to support with the “virtual induction” of colleagues joining us at Ascot House and are now supporting with the induction for <b>Track and Trace roles</b>. We are currently designing this induction but it will include similarly to Ascot House the issuing of a <b>welcome guide for all new starters</b>, to introduce them to Trafford and their new role. The welcome guide also outlines the key e-learning and policies they are required to complete virtually before joining us at Ascot House. Alongside our welcome guide we have refreshed the <b>Managers induction</b> and <b>New starter induction checklist</b>.</li> </ul>
Partnerships	Supporting 16-24 gain meaningful high quality placements and job opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are making an application to be a Gateway Organisation under the new government backed Kick Start Scheme.</li> <li>• The Kick start Scheme in Trafford will be a mix of internal and external placements. We are working with the Strategic Growth Team to deliver the programme and upon successful completion of our application our first placements are planned to start in March 2021.</li> <li>• We are currently committing to deliver 8 internal placements. Each placement will be offered twice to a young person, once in March and again in October 2021.</li> </ul>
Time to Shine	Recognising, Thanking and Celebrating the Achievements of our Colleagues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In lieu of not being able to deliver our annual <b>Employee Recognition Awards</b> this year, we are holding a virtual “Time to Shine” event on the 02 December.</li> <li>• We have asked DMT’s to shortlist from over 293 EPIC Star nominations received to date and nominate X2 colleagues under each award categories. Winners for each category will be decided by a small judging panel consisting of representatives from each of our employee networking groups/staff forums and Pioneer representatives.</li> <li>• Our EPIC Awesome Team 2020 will be voted for by colleagues across the council.</li> <li>• All winners will be announced on the 02 December at our Time to Shine event which will be attended by CLT, Leader of the Council, the Mayor and other party leaders.</li> </ul>

# Organisation Development

Workstream	Work Overview	Key Outcomes / Deliverables
Let's Talk All Colleagues	Designed and delivered virtual All Colleague Let's Talk Take 5 Session.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Let's Talk – All Colleagues</b> - We continue to support the organisation and delivery of our Let's Talk sessions. To date virtual All Colleague "Let's Talk Event" have taken place in July, September and November. Participant numbers are capped at 50 attendees to support us to facilitate a more interactive session. The event format was tweaked slightly, and alongside key updates from our CEX, the leader of Council and other key updates (Finance, People, Public Health etc) we deliver a 30 minute Micro Learn on each session. These have been focussed on wellbeing and change and colleagues are signposted to further resources at the end of each session.</li> <li>• <b>Let's Talk Leaders and Colleague Events</b> –We continue to support on Let's Talk Leaders events also and similarly delivered a 30 minute Micro Learn session. Sessions for Leaders have taken place in September and there will be a final session on the 15 December 2020.</li> <li>• Following on from the feedback at the All Colleague Let's Talk Session where we delivered a short micro learning session on wellbeing/resilience, we have delivered this content via a lunch and learn session open to all colleagues. A further lunch and learn session is planned to expand on the content shared in our November All Colleague Let's Talk Session.</li> </ul>
Engagement Survey	Sharing the Corporate Results b-Heard and Pulse Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>We analysed and shared</b> the results of the covid-19 pulse survey and shared the corporate results with CLT. We have also distributed Directorate level results to Heads of Services.</li> <li>• Alongside sharing the results of our Pulse Survey we also shared the corporate results from the b-heard engagement survey that was undertaken in October/November last year. The sharing and action planning for the b-Heard results was paused in March due to Covid-19. A high level overview of both sets of results was shared with all colleagues, alongside a summary of some great work done to date to improve employees experience of working for Trafford. The communication also outlined our corporate engagement action plan and next steps.</li> <li>• Heads of Service across our directorates have now completed their local engagement action planning groups and we will be sharing this information with CLT members in the weeks to come to ensure actions are implemented and momentum maintained.</li> </ul>



# Policy, Reward and Workforce Intelligence

Workstream	Work Summary	Key Outcomes / Deliverables
<p>Managing COVID-19 and dealing with queries</p>	<p>At the early stage of the pandemic a comprehensive set of FAQs was developed. These have been updated as different issues have become more pertinent.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An initial set of FAQs was created for staff and managers in the Council and schools, informed by the HR COVID-19 mailings.</li> <li>• These have been periodically updated.</li> <li>• There was a full review of all FAQs and they were reorganised to make them more user friendly.</li> <li>• COVID-19 related policy queries being answered for the Council and schools.</li> </ul>
<p>Workforce returns</p>	<p>Information provision regarding the impact that COVID-19 is having on staff availability both internally and also for external returns.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Several reports being provided for different audiences - all are either on a weekly basis or more frequently.</li> <li>• Reports are informing national public sector workforce impact of COVID-19.</li> <li>• Supporting with the identification of staff to be tested.</li> <li>• Understanding of which services most impacted by COVID-19 related absence.</li> <li>• Production of a now monthly workforce availability/resourcing report for CLT.</li> </ul>
<p>Support for 'at risk'</p>	<p>For certain groups of staff, they or their families, or those for whom they care, are at more risk if they contract the virus. Agreed approach to supporting and reducing the risk for these staff.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidance for managers produced on the at risk groups, approach to having conversations with staff and undertaking risk assessments and measures to reduce risk.</li> <li>• Guidance revised further to the government's policy decision to pause shielding.</li> <li>• Guidance revised in relation to pregnant employees over 28 weeks pregnant.</li> <li>• Further to the second 'lockdown' and change of approach for the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV), guidance revised again.</li> </ul>
<p>Voluntary Workforce Resilience</p>	<p>Offer to employees of Voluntary Severance scheme, flexible working options and encouraging use of the leave purchase scheme. These give staff opportunities and also provide savings for the Council.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Voluntary severance scheme created and employees had the opportunity to apply by 30<sup>th</sup> October – final decisions being made with regard to staff that can be released either on 31<sup>st</sup> March or 30<sup>th</sup> September.</li> <li>• Promotion of the Flexible Working Scheme. Staff can apply at any time subject to scheme criteria being met, however we had focused promotion linked to the VS scheme timescales.</li> <li>• Leave Purchase Scheme. This is an annual scheme that has been in place for a few years. The window for applications for 2021/22 opened in November, closing at the end of January and staff will be encouraged to consider purchasing leave.</li> </ul>

# Policy, Reward and Workforce Intelligence

Workstream	Work Summary	Key Outcomes / Deliverables
<p><b>COVID-19 Job Protection Scheme</b></p>	<p>Early pandemic, the national guidance was studied, whilst exploring the funding for certain roles within the Council and schools to establish whether it was appropriate to use the scheme.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decision was made that no posts directly employed by the Council should be furloughed. The basis for this is that where employers receive public funding for staff costs, and that funding is continuing, there is an expectation that employers use that money to continue to pay staff. With furlough extensions this has remained the stance.</li> <li>• Decision that schools be advised that they may furlough staff in 'wrap-around' care roles, for example afterschool clubs as they are funded through parental contributions and not school budgets. With furlough extensions this has remained the stance.</li> <li>• Guidance for schools drafted with template letter.</li> <li>• Process in place so that schools can send GMSS the necessary information for furloughed staff and GMSS complete the submission through the HMRC claim portal where there is a shared PAYE number.</li> <li>• Revised guidance produced each time the scheme has changed or been extended – the scheme is currently open until March 2021.</li> <li>• Job security for affected staff.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Banking Leave</b></p>	<p>New scheme which gives staff additional flexibility to move leave between years.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New scheme available to employees from December 2020. Staff have a separate 'bank' of annual leave distinct from their normal annual scheme. They can have a maximum of 20 days in it and can move 5 days each year into it from their normal annual leave. Leave can then be booked with the usual manager approval.</li> <li>• Scheme built in the Itrent system.</li> <li>• Guidance available on intranet page.</li> <li>• Provides more flexibility for staff who want to consider an extended break from work.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Christmas and Christmas period</b></p>	<p>In order to encourage staff in our Business Critical Services to work extra hours where required due to sustained pressure, we have reviewed our pay offer.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overtime within the Council is normally paid at plain time – we moved to this in 2014 as part of several changes to terms and conditions. From mid-November until Christmas Eve, overtime due to COVID-19 pressures to be paid at time and a half in recognition of the efforts of the workforce in responding to the pandemic.</li> <li>• Pay arrangements for the Christmas period, i.e. from Christmas Eve until the New Year are being finalised.</li> </ul>

# Business Partner Team

Workstream	Work Summary	Key Outcomes / Deliverables
ER Casework	Response to, and progression of, employee relations casework to support employees and managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responding to new, emerging casework.</li> <li>• Supporting and advising managers to progress.</li> <li>• Liaison with external authorities, as applicable.</li> <li>• Open and continued dialogue with trade unions</li> </ul>
2019 : ER Work	Continue to support services in expediting and concluding case work paused due to Covid-19. Utilisation of alternative, appropriate IT/media platforms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identified and categorised employment matters to ensure that those business critical cases continue.</li> <li>• Supporting and advising managers to progress</li> <li>• Liaison with the trade unions to agree a mutual position.</li> <li>• Open and continued dialogue with trade unions</li> </ul>
Service Level Agreements	Review of current SLA's for 20/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review, development and communication of SLA's for schools and traded services for Teacher Unions and UNISON with effect from 01 April 2020.</li> <li>• Ongoing review and development of SLA offer for schools and traded services for HR Consultancy, with effect from 01 September 2020.</li> <li>• Review and delivery of CCG SLA</li> </ul>
Training	Breakfast Briefings for Senior Leaders in School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivery of briefing sessions prior to second lockdown period on a variety of subjects including employment law updates and employment procedures.</li> <li>• Development of 'virtual' briefings during COVID19 period.</li> </ul>

# Resource Hub

Workstream	Work Overview	Key Outcomes / Deliverables
Mobilisation of GM Resource Hub	To provide a temporary solution to an immediate staff resource crisis as a result of COVID-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social media campaign promoting temporary and volunteer opportunities.</li> <li>• Bank of CV's on file from potential external candidates - undertaking an analysis of skills to match to temporary opportunities.</li> <li>• Carrying out interviews to identify suitable candidates so that we can quickly deploy them into roles when required.</li> <li>• Have the skills survey's and workforce data to match staff for deployment into critical roles ensuring safeguarding and statutory requirements are met.</li> <li>• Liaison with line managers to identify staff shortages / future demand and skill set required.</li> <li>• Clear process map relating to all roles, passing of data, communication and actions to ensure all parties clear on responsibilities and hand offs across the work streams.</li> <li>• Templates for communications to employee and line/recruiting managers confirming revised temporary working arrangements.</li> <li>• Creating and maintaining a list of casual and volunteers and link in with voluntary sector as appropriate.</li> <li>• Dedicated phone line and email address facility for managers and employees.</li> <li>• Agree and implement appropriate pay principles and process for payment.</li> <li>• Use of business intelligence and existing relationships to proactively explore possible deployments.</li> <li>• Liaising with Trafford Leisure to identify staff that we can deploy into our services on a casual basis where is a requirement and a skills match.</li> </ul>
Recruitment	To ensure continuity of recruitment activity across the Council, and traded services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction of an updated vacancy authorisation process to ensure all vacancies are filled internally whenever possible</li> <li>• Development of guides to assist managers when recruiting virtually.</li> <li>• All interviews and assessments are now carried out via Teams. This is working well as managers become more confident with this way of working.</li> <li>• Successfully administered assessment centres with large panels for director level roles.</li> <li>• Content of GreaterJobs Trafford pages updated to show applicants what it's like to work at Trafford.</li> </ul>

# Workforce Reform

Workstream	Work Overview	Key Outcomes / Deliverables
d Recovery & y Plan	Development of workforce strategy and priorities to enable delivery of the Trafford Recovery & Locality Plan – Health & Social Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gained insight in to 4 Strategic Design Group priorities to understand workforce needs / implications</li><li>• Co-produced 2020/2021 workforce priorities with Trafford Locality Workforce Group, to be agreed by the Local Care Alliance on 10<sup>th</sup> December</li><li>• Will need to then develop programmes of work against each priority</li><li>• Moving forward with implementation of the Virtual Workforce Information System (VWIS) which will provide a Locality and Neighbourhood view of the workforce profile including staffing numbers, vacancies, absence, turnover and diversity data for the Trafford Local Care Organisation (potentially GMMH)</li></ul>

