



**TRAFFORD**  
**COUNCIL**

# Workforce Update

## June 2023



# 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.

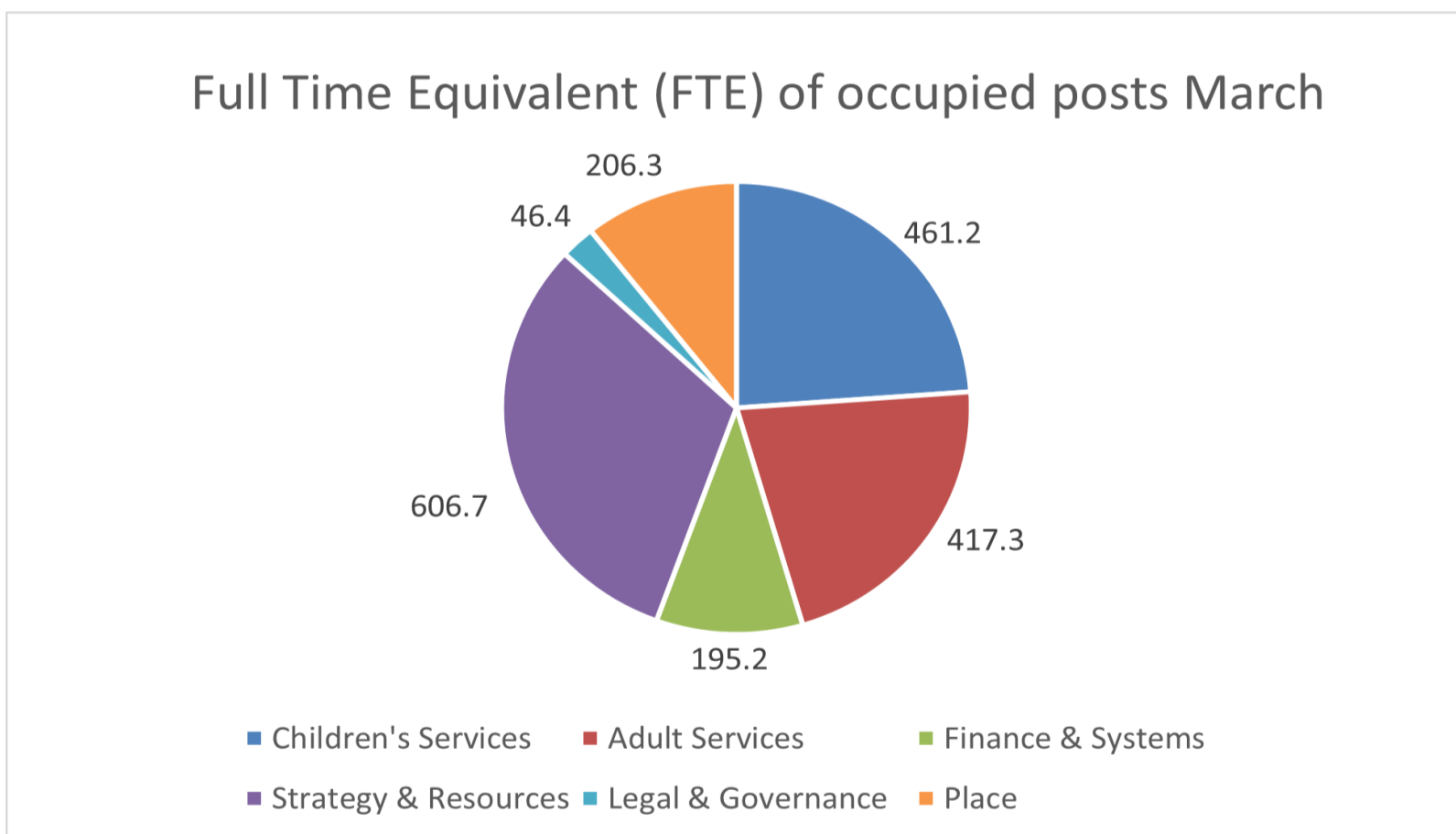
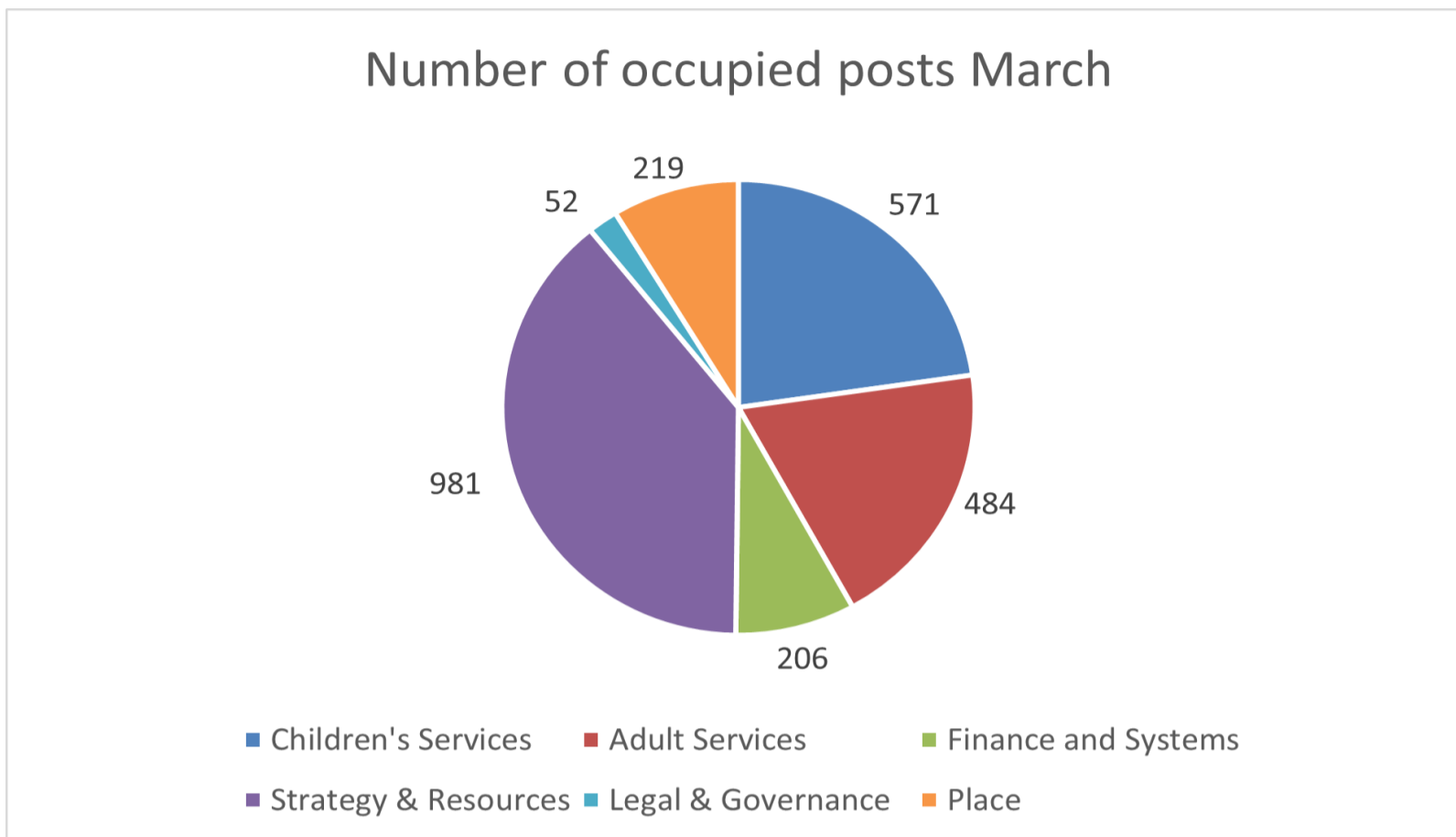
This report details some key workforce metrics, so we can monitor progress and provides updates on different work areas, all themed around our People Strategy.



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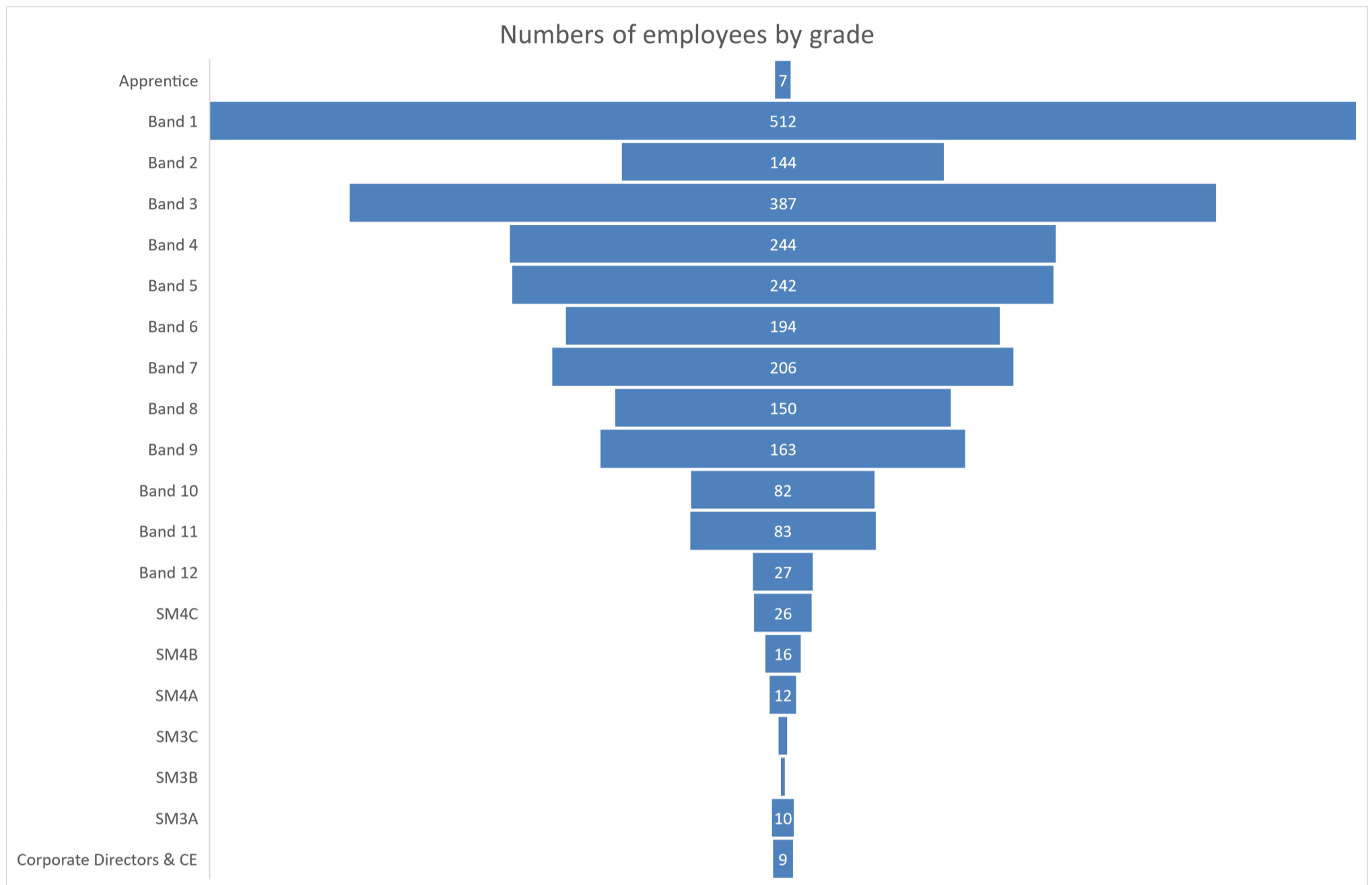
# ATTRACT & RECRUIT



In March 2023 there were a total of 2513 substantive posts occupied within the Council which equates to a full time equivalent (FTE) of 1933.1. 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 was 2410.

Over the year we welcomed 310 new employees to the Council which equates to 254 full time equivalents (FTE).

# ATTRACT & RECRUIT



## Number of employees by grade

There are 20 main grades within the Council, including those on Soulbury and Teachers terms and conditions. Any not on the main pay scales have been aligned with the band which includes their salary.

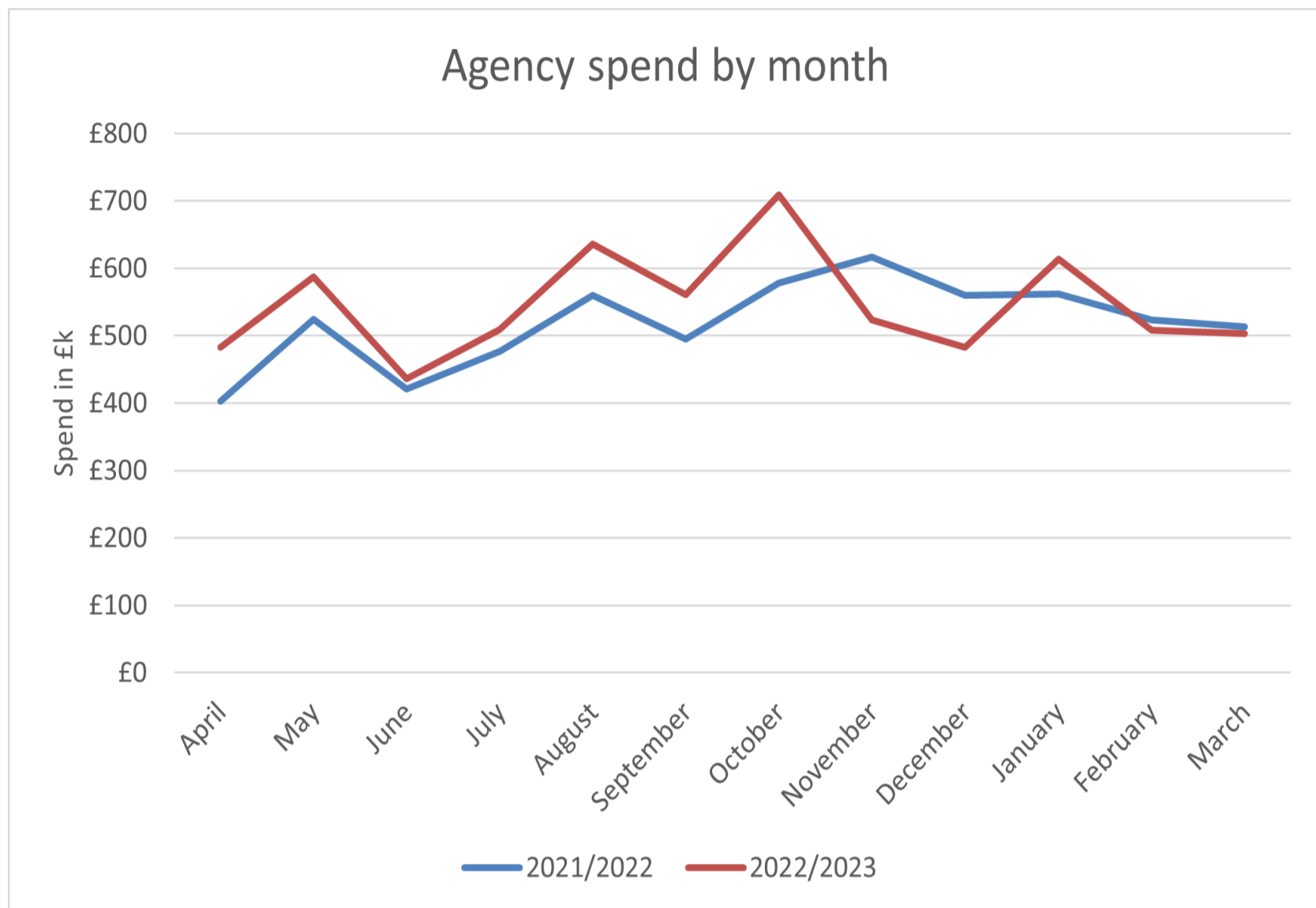
It can be seen that the band with the highest number of posts at 512, is Band 1 which includes many staff attached to our schools, mostly within Operational Services for Education (OSfE). The roles on band one include Catering Assistants, Cooks, Cleaners, Domestic Assistants, School Crossing Patrol Officer and Front of House Assistant. Many Band 1 roles are part-time and term-time, which provides flexibility.

As well as being on the Apprentice grade, some Apprentices are on Band 1.

Band 3 is our second most populated grade with 387 posts—these include Business Support Officers, Care Assistant, Crematorium Technician, Customer Services Advisor, Early Help Worker, Exchequer Services Support Officer, Library and Digital Advisors, Support Workers, Validation Officers.

Senior Manager roles make up 0.01% of the workforce and around half of our roles are up to and including band 4, and half above this grade.

# ATTRACT & RECRUIT



## Agency usage

The chart above details monthly agency spend in 2021/2022 as compared with 2022/2023. It can be seen that for around half of both financial years the spend showed a similar trend, however with the spend in the most recent year higher. From October to November in 2021/2022 the spend increased however in 2022/2023 the spend significantly decreased. Encouragingly In March 2022/2023 spend was slightly lower than the previous March.

The total agency spend in Q4 2022/23 was £1,625,440. In the previous period of Q3 2022/23 Agency spend was £1,714,206. Spend overall has decreased by 5.2% from Q3 to Q4. In the corresponding Q4 2021/22 the overall spend was £1,593,147, which is a marginal increase of 7.7%.

The majority of agency spend continues to be in Adults and Children's Services due to ongoing challenges with recruiting and retaining social workers. Work continues to try to mitigate this, such as the proposal of the GM pledge in Children's services, social work degree apprenticeships etc. to support us to move to a more stable workforce.

The majority of agency spend was through Reed (our umbrella agency) where the spend was £1,375,231 with the remaining spend via the Social Worker Agency Framework. Much of the pressure continues to be due to the difficulties recruiting qualified Social Workers and support workers.

A full breakdown of agency spend can be found in the Q4 Agency and Consultant spend report.

# ATTRACT & RECRUIT



## Resourcing

**Work Experience** - We have offered 20 work experience placements to Trafford school children . Most are taking place in July and are lasting for a working week. Placements are taking place across the directorates supporting a variety of career aspirations. We have also developed a suite of resources on our intranet pages to support managers to induct and onboard their work experience placement.

**Supported Internships** - We are working in collaboration with Children's Services to strengthen our supported internship offer. The proposal is to offer up to 10 annual placements at the Council as a pilot and increase this across the partnership to 20 placements a year. The placements will be supported by Trafford College and Pure Innovations. In addition we are in conversation with a Construction company who are also keen to offer a Supported Internship to Trafford residents. A meeting is planned for early June to progress.

**Operational Resourcing** - Operational Services for Education have a rolling recruitment programme. We meet weekly to discuss ongoing recruitment challenges to target vacancies. Dates are being agreed for community recruitment events, to interview candidates on the day and start recruitment checks.

We have supported with interviews for the Deputy Director of Public Health and Public Health Consultants. This has resulted in 2 successful appointments to the service. The candidates are currently undergoing pre-employment checks.

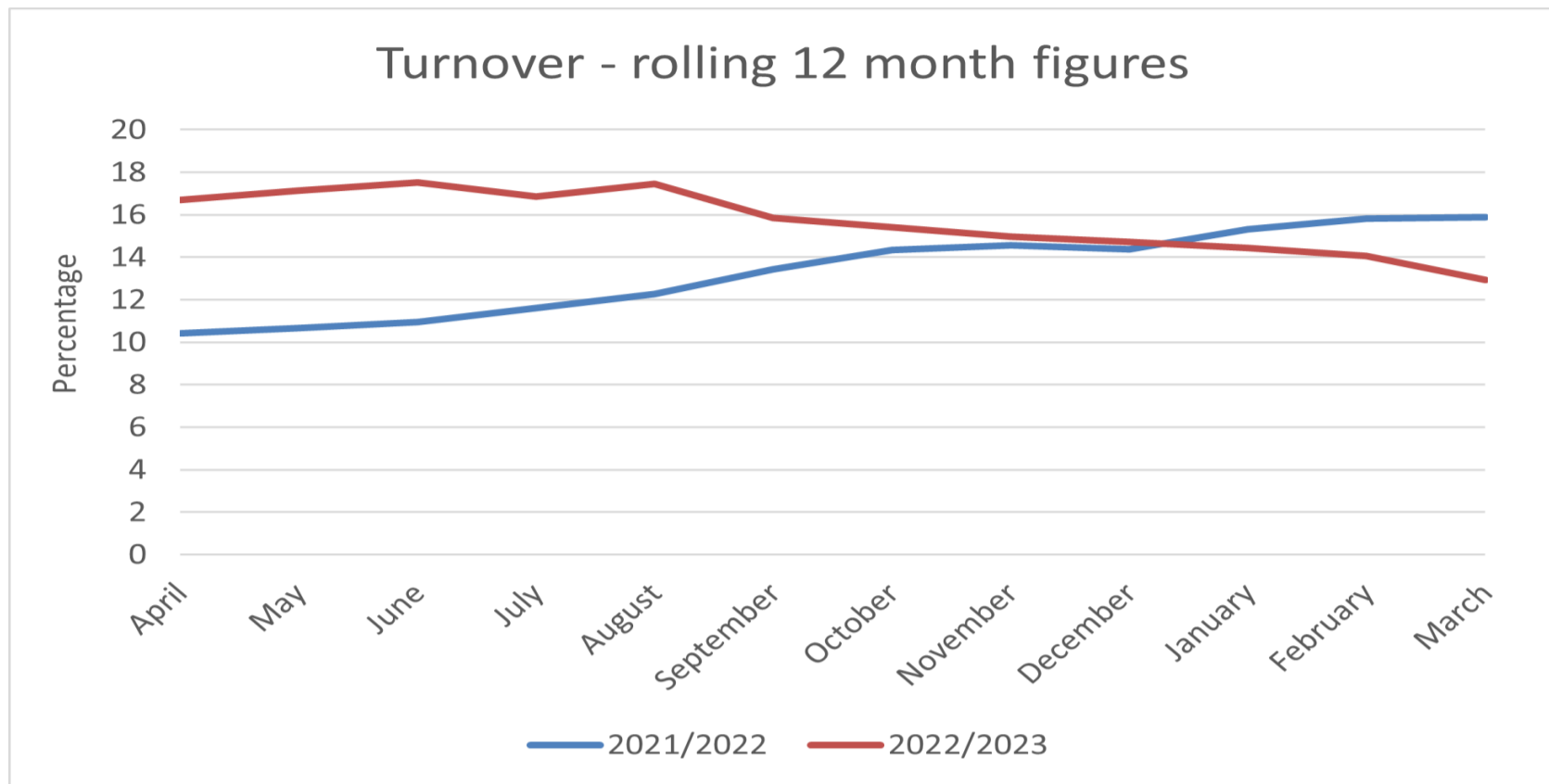
**Children's Services** - In April we attended the Children's Investing in People Steering Group. We supported Children's Services with two recruitment webinars as part of the ongoing children's campaign. In April this focussed on recruitment to the Cared for and Care Experienced part of the service, as they are facing extreme shortages. This was particularly beneficial in recruiting to the aftercare worker role available within the service which received 22 applications. We will support the motion that care experienced YP have priority access to roles in the council and are working with colleagues to progress the offer.

**Elections Resourcing Support** –The recruitment team supported the resourcing of count assistants, supervisors and receipt team members as well as ensuring right to work checks are in place for all staff for the election in May. This included collecting data and assigning wards to ensure correct resources were in place.

## Real Living Wage Accreditation

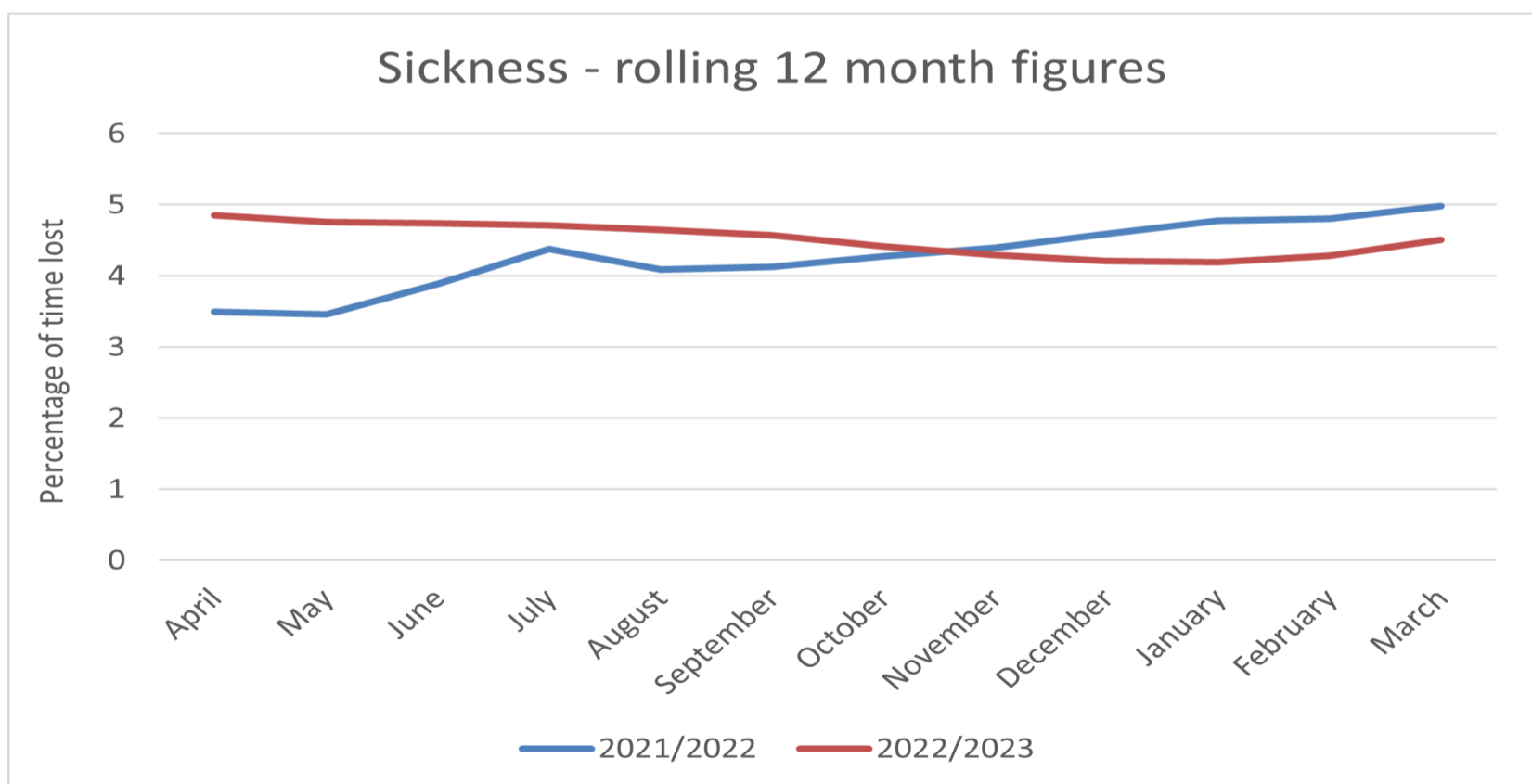
In support of one of the Council's key priorities to support people out of poverty by maximising people's income, we now pay the Real Living Wage to staff within the Council and our maintained schools. In March we achieved Real Living Wage Accreditation which formally recognises and celebrates employers who offer their staff the rate. This will support with our attraction strategy with higher pay for those starting at the bottom two pay points of our entry level band 1.

# ENGAGE & RETAIN



## Turnover

Our turnover figures are based on posts, and include all those who leave the Council for any reason. In 2021/2022 the figures started to increase over the year from 10.42% in April ending at 15.88% in March – some of this is likely to be due to the longer term impact of the pressures on services during covid, nationally referred to as ‘the great resignation’. Through 2022/2023 figures peaked in June 2022 and have been on a downward trend since then with the figure at 12.93% in March 2023.



## Sickness absence

We report sickness absence by percentage of total available time lost to sickness absence. Sickness in April 2021 was 3.49% and then it increased over the year to 4.98% in March 2022. Through 2022/2023 it has gradually decreased each month until February 2023 where there is a slight upturn and the sickness at the end of the financial year was 4.50%. There have been decreases in both long-term and short-term absence. There has been variable levels of COVID-19 related sickness over the two years, however levels are now very low.

# ENGAGE & RETAIN



## Health and Wellbeing

**Active Travel Events** - Our Staff Active Travel Group arranged a number of events in May to encourage and support staff to get walking, wheeling and cycling more.

- They arranged for Manchester Bike Kitchen to fix up 24 staff bikes at Sale Waterside and Trafford Town Hall
- A lunch and learn was provided to colleagues on all things active travel, including our staff facilities, range of active travel resources available and support available through the Staff Active Travel Group.
- Cycling UK came to Trafford Town Hall to give colleagues a chance to try out e-cycles – a great way of using a bike for a longer distance commute, or for less able riders. Our Leader, Councillor Ross came down and tried an e-bike out for himself.

**Mental Health Awareness Week** - During Mental Health Awareness Week in May we delivered a webinar with the Greater Manchester Resilience Hub covering strategies for managing our emotions during challenging times. The session also covered the support that the Hub provides to Health and Social Care colleagues. 18 staff members attended.

We also held two face to face tea and talk sessions were held at Trafford Town Hall and Sale Waterside. These included a fantastic mindfulness session delivered by a passionate colleague from Children's Services and then a chance for colleagues to chat and take some time out supported by our Mental Health First Aiders.

During the week we also delivered two in-person Mindfulness / Tea and Talk sessions – one at Trafford Town Hall and one at Sale Waterside. The sessions started with a mindfulness exercise followed by a chance for colleagues to connect with our Mental Health First Aiders present. 15 colleagues attended in total.

**Menopause support**—We have reviewed and are in the process of refreshing our Menopause offer to colleagues. Bi-annual sessions are planned for both colleagues and managers and our internal resources have been updated via the intranet with support guides and materials.

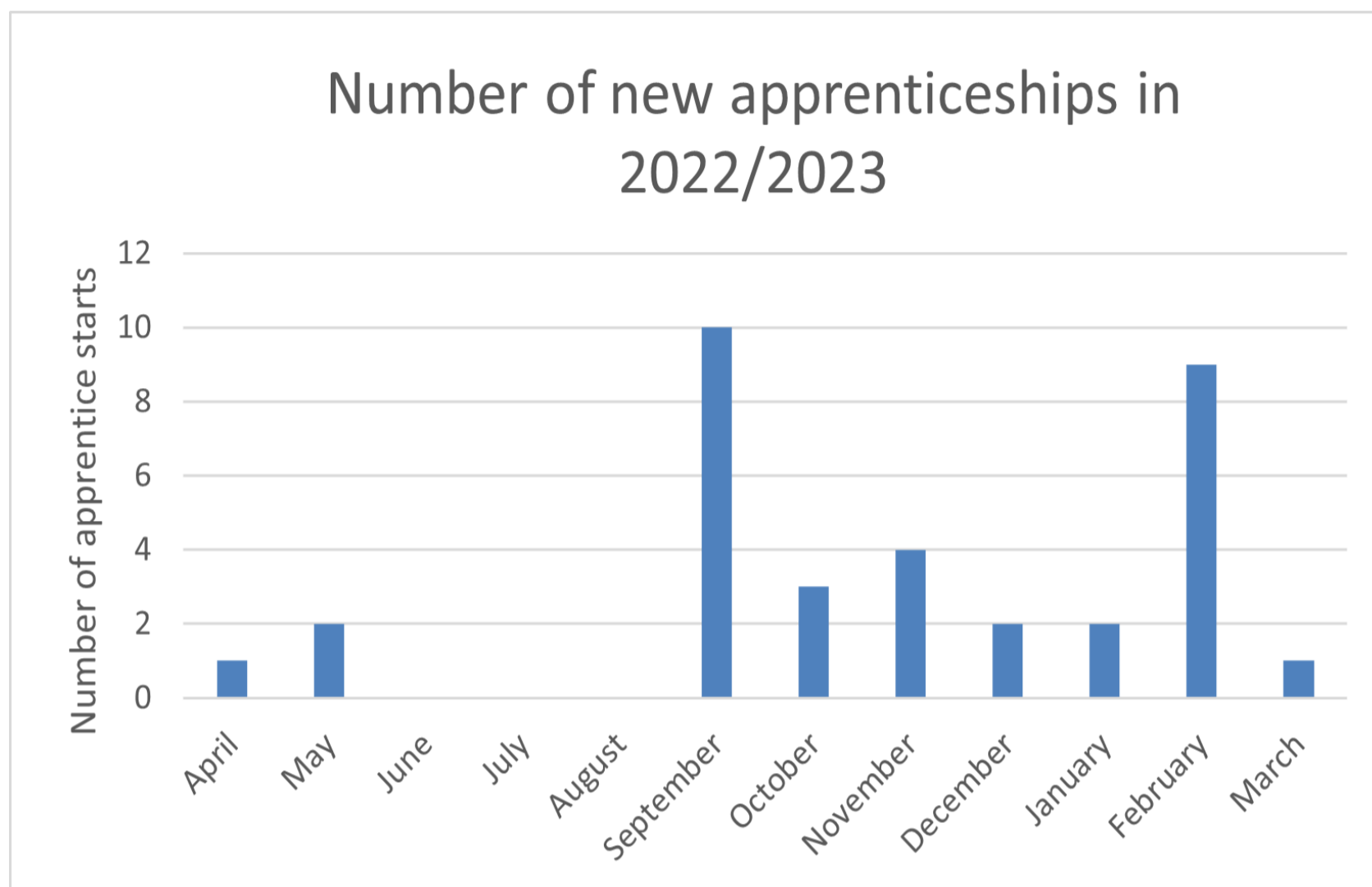
## Policy, reward and benefits

**Eyecare scheme**—We offer a scheme to ensure we meet our responsibilities under H&S legislation to provide free eye tests for regular VDU users. Further to a change in the business model of our previous provider, we went through a procurement process to select a new provider. We have now implemented the process for accessing an eye test and glasses, where needed, with the new opticians.

**Pay increase for term time colleagues**— Further to the inclusion of an additional day of leave as part of the NJC pay deal agreed in 2022/2023, this has meant additional pay for those who work term time. They receive a slight increase in annual salary instead of being given an extra day away from work as they already have a greater period of leave than those who work full year. This exercise meant recalculating what is known as the 'term time fraction' to add in the extra day and then implementing this in the HR and Payroll System for those employees within the Council and our schools. The change was effective from 1st April 2023.



# GROW & NURTURE



## Apprenticeship Scheme

During Q4 we have enrolled a total of 12 apprentices across the Council in a range of areas such as Public Health, Procurement, GMSS and IT services. Our Social Work Degree apprenticeship started in September 2022 with 7 apprentices from Children and Adults Services, which saw an increase in our numbers for this month. Numbers also increased in February as we promoted our new inhouse cohort Leap into Management Level 5 in Q3 and have enrolled 5 colleagues from across different directorates, this cohort started in February 2023.

## Learning and Development Activity

**Presentation skills training**—Working with colleagues in our modernisation team we have launched a new Presentation skills training course. Colleagues within the Modernisation Team attended an external ‘Train the Trainer’ course and have since delivered a number of sessions to council teams. This course will be scheduled regularly on our Learning and Development Calendar.

**Course offer**—we continue to offer a range of learning and development events for colleagues to attend through our learning and development calendar. Popular courses over recent months have included Values Based Recruitment Training and EPIC Check-In Training. Our EPIC Manager Programme still runs periodically and we are currently facilitating Cohorts 23 and 24.

# GROW & NURTURE



## Learning and Development Activity

**Course offer**—To help increase completion of our mandatory e-learning courses, we have begun moving managers over to ‘appraiser’ roles in the eLearning system and provided training to these managers. We are currently working with colleagues in our adults directory and Operational Services for Education (OSfE). The appraiser function will enable managers to view team member course completions rather than relying on monthly reports distributed via the learning and development team.

**E-learning**—We have started the procurement process for a new eLearning system. This has included scoping out system requirements and kick starting the project management process with system stakeholders. In May we tested the potential system we will be procuring as part of the GM contract and confirmed that we will be staying with our current provider meLearning and moving to their new platform called FORM.

During May 2023 we have been working on the development of two new eLearning courses, ‘Finance for Budget Holders’ and ‘End of Year Finances for Budget Holders’, working with Finance colleagues. These courses will be launched over the forthcoming weeks.

**Leading through Change course**—We have now completed 4 of the 7 workshops in this programme for leaders and managers in Adult Social Care / Public Health. The evaluation to date continues to be positive with leaders feeding back that they’ve used the resources provided in team meetings and individual 1:1’s.

We have also met with the Quality Assurance lead and continue to ensure that the programme aligns with newly forming guidance from the CQC in relation to their regulatory domains and particularly the ‘Well Led’ element of the service. We’ve discussed the development of a leadership ‘plan on a page’ to summarise the approach from the learning and activity.

**Adults**—We are supporting Adults Directors in getting ‘inspection ready’ by reviewing their mandatory courses, reviewing compliance, data cleansing and working with managers to monitor training going forwards.

**M365 Development**—We are working alongside our IT and Digital colleagues and Changing Social in supporting the adoption and change programme. There are 3 planned cycles of training across the whole council for which we are supporting with the administration of training sessions and calendars. for named service leaders, data administrators and digital champions. We will also be supporting IT and Digital colleagues with an evaluation of the training and implementation.

**Elected Member training** — We delivered a Transgender Awareness Course for Members in March 2023 with Gendered Intelligence and through member development needs we have developed a programme for the rest of this year. Induction for new members is well under way, with a welcome meeting in May 2023 and further sessions booked in.

**Upskilling Managers in Employee Relations** - We have started to develop a suite of managers e-learning modules and training sessions on key HR topics such as Conduct, Attendance, Capability, Dignity at Work and Grievance.

The Training and Development of Managers coincides with a full review of the HR documentation and creating clear processes maps and manager toolkits with the over all aim of supporting managers to effectively manage HR processes and conclude activities in a timely manner.

# GROW & NURTURE



## Health and Safety

**Your Safety, Your Wellbeing Initiative** - the internal safety and wellbeing initiative to refocus and engage with services on the fundamentals of safety and wellbeing continues to be promoted since its launch in January 2023. As well as the dedicated intranet resource pages, the campaign was promoted at OSfE Seminars and staff and leader 'Let's Talk' sessions including focus on computer workstation health and wellbeing. A programme of service self-assessments and subsequent health and safety auditing is now underway.

**Managing volatile incidents in our buildings** - work has progressed to improve the safety and wellbeing of staff in our buildings from volatile and aggressive behaviour displayed by visitors and service users. This has included improved procedural processes for support from our security teams and physical improvements underway with our door pass access systems, car park barriers and CCTV arrangements. The working group originally including Health and Safety Unit, Estates Team, Emergency Planning and FM providers is now a refreshed 'Trafford Internal Security Review Group'. It now incorporates wider representation from relevant services, to improve workforce consultation and support proactive management of service users.

**Fatality incident support** - in October 2022, a major accident took place in Sale where two persons were struck by a falling tree tragically leading to one person being fatally injured and the other person incurring serious injuries. The Council and Tree Unit, who manage our tree stock, were subject to investigation initially by Greater Manchester Police and then the Health and Safety Executive under health and safety legislation. These investigations were supported by the Tree Unit, Legal Services, Health and Safety Unit and Insurance Services. The Health and Safety Unit also undertook a significant internal investigation into the accident considering the circumstances, tree stock management arrangements and general health and safety management within the Tree Unit.

The HSE investigation concluded with confirmation that no further action is to be taken against the Council arising from incident. The incident and subsequent investigation details are still subject to a Coroner's Inquest. However, the Health and Safety Unit are supporting the Tree Unit with the outcomes and recommendations of the investigations.

# EMBED & SUSTAIN



## HR services for schools

We offer several different services to schools via annual SLA arrangements. The SLAs provide an income to the HR function which is used to resource the services we provide and also to increase capacity for Council workforce activity. As well as those detailed below, Greater Manchester Shared Services (GMSS) offer a payroll service. There are standard packages for the SLAs, however in addition to this for some there are pay as you go options for some aspects of the offer. This provides more flexibility for schools.

**HR Consultancy SLA:** The buy-back of the HR Consultancy remained stable in 2022/2023 as in the previous year and our customers include schools and other organisations in Trafford. We offer 2 levels of SLA, one which includes a face to face presence in addition to the unlimited telephone/email advice of the first. A number of schools have returned to purchase the Trafford HR Consultancy SLA, and further activity is planned this year to promote the HR Consultancy SLA and engage with schools who do not currently buy-back.

**Health and Safety SLA:** A strong buy back of our health and safety service was noted for 2022/2023 with the Health and Safety delivering on-site visits for the audit programme throughout the year. Schools have been recommended to receive either a 'full management audit' option or fire risk assessment as required to support their compliance needs.

**Occupational Health SLA:** The level of buy back of this key service was exactly the same in 2022/2023 as in the previous year. The Council uses a provider for their own Occupational Health requirements as well as offering it out to schools—this is part of a GM contracts collaboration, and the provider has remained the same across the two years.

**TU Facility Time SLA:** The Council and our schools recognise several Trade Unions and provide them with agreed amounts of facility time. Depending on the type of school, they can access teaching TU reps either via de-delegation or buying into the SLA. For access to TU reps for support staff this is solely via the SLA.



# EMBED & SUSTAIN



## GM Good Employment Charter

The Charter is a voluntary membership and assessment scheme, which aims to elevate employment standards in GM. There are 7 different characteristics of good employment, namely: secure work; pay; recruitment; health & wellbeing; flexible work; engagement & voice, and; people management. We have had supporter status for several years and further to more work in these areas to improve the offer and experience of Trafford colleagues we applied for and have achieved member status.

## Elections

Throughout April and into early May we worked with Democratic Services to facilitate training for staff working at the Local Government election on 4 May.

**Count Supervisor Training** – Face to Face sessions delivered to run through the count including the grass skirt process. Training was more immersive so that supervisors could see the process in action and ask any questions.

**Count guidance booklet** - This was developed and distributed to all staff who volunteered to work the elections, summarising the process and details about the event.

**Poll Station Training** – Virtual training sessions delivered by Democratic Services via MS Teams for colleagues working in the polling stations. The sessions covered established training content alongside changes e.g. voter ID, that polling staff need to be aware of.

**Member Sessions** – Sessions for current elected members to attend to understand and familiarise themselves with the count and the Grass Skirt process. An information pack, including the video summary was also sent to all candidates and agents.

## Review of Hybrid working

As part of Let's Talk sessions with leaders and colleagues in February and March, we considered what was working well and less well with our hybrid working approach. The feedback reinforced how diverse we are as a council and therefore it is not possible to have a "one size fits all" approach to hybrid working.

Taking on board the feedback, we have defined some core principles which are underpinned by a hybrid working framework and tools. This will give further clarity around expectations and empower managers to design and discuss hybrid working within teams to ensure that the right balance is struck to meet the needs of colleagues, partners and crucially our residents. The next steps are to communicate this framework to managers and hold a series of drop-in sessions to support managers with any specific challenges.

## Refresh of the People Strategy

We continue to work on the refresh of the people strategy which is due to be re-launched in September 2023. The HR Director is currently meeting with Heads of Service to hear feedback which will help support the reshaping of the strategy.

# EMBED & SUSTAIN



## Service improvements

**Internal Audit: Health and Safety Unit** - The Council's Audit and Assurance service have completed a review of the Health and Safety Unit as part of their Internal Audit Plan. The findings showed 'Substantial Assurance' in the delivery of the Service with areas reviewed operating in a sound and effective manner. The Health and Safety Unit are progressing the recommendations, including updating current data on team structures/functions to support an updated risk profile of Council services and delivery of a proactive audit programme by the team.

**HR Operations Improvement Work: Document templates** – A suite of letters, forms, document templates are being created for the key areas for HR operations. The aim of this exercise is to upskill line managers, provide a more efficient completion of casework administration and also to provide a consistent approach to the way in which we present our casework administration. Included in this is a review of the current process to ensure we reflect our policies and best practice.

**Itrent Case Manager** – The HR system, Itrent, has a function that enable us to accurately record the steps and actions taken in HR casework. By implementing this function we will be in a position to more easily provide up to date information for reporting and legal purposes. Mapping out of the HR processes is underway and a public sector partner has agreed to a demonstration of the model.

**CRM move to 365** – The CRM system which is used to log questions/queries to GMSS will become 'unsupported' from May 24. After this date queries will be raised via M365. The 'as is' processes have been reviewed and agreed and there are plans to commence the user stories.

**Automation of Business Case sign-off for resourcing** - Currently we have a manual process for this and we are automating it using Microsoft Power Platform. During May testing of the new system continued. This is now in the final stages and a soft launch is planned over the forthcoming weeks.

**New resourcing intranet pages** - The new pages are now live with future pages planned during 2023.

**Recruitment direct inputting of new starters** - In April, the recruitment team started direct inputting of information into the payroll system (iTrent) for new starters. 25 were successfully completed across April and May. Previously this was done via a form going from Recruitment to GMSS however this meant double handing and a higher risk of error. Recruitment Applicant Tracking system—we attended a GM Steering group meeting in April. Work is ongoing in preparation for the new Applicant Tracking System. A tender specification is being finalised by the greater.jobs team and work has begun to prepare for the scoring of the specifications.