

Lancashire County Council Workforce Update

Report to the Community, Cultural and Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 13 December 2022



1. Introduction

This report has two purposes. Its first aim is to provide the scrutiny committee with the current position of Lancashire County Council regarding the workforce and workforce related topics such as absence, recruitment, and turnover. These are often referred to as 'lagging' indicators as this is reporting on activities that have already happened.

There is a workforce profile which takes an in-depth look at the local labour data for the Northwest and provides a narrative around the council's workforce profile and where the areas of concern are, given that the profiles continue to demonstrate that the council is an organisation with an aging workforce.

The second part of the report introduces a future-focus and provides insights into generational replacement theory, the draft people strategy, and the council's journey to creating an organisation that provides a thriving, inclusive and engaging workplace, with an employer brand that attracts talented individuals that see their future career being here in Lancashire and working for the county council. To drive this people-focussed culture and ways of working, the report introduces new and emerging thinking around People Strategy and resourcing people functions – referred to as People Services.

Hybrid and flexible working remain a key challenge for many organisations as they evolve to the future of work following the pandemic and this report provides an update on the council's approach to hybrid and flexible working.

And finally, this report introduces the thinking and planning around the Integrated Performance framework and what that will mean for individual performance, and how the organisation is shaping this updated way of working and capturing performance information to be set in real-time, learning lessons from the way we changed at pace at the outset of Covid-19.

There is a lot of work happening to modernise the council's ways of working and working practices, with new technology at the core. There are some significant challenges to overcome, and this report provides the opportunity for members of the Community, Cultural and Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee to make recommendations on the scale of work being undertaken and its prioritisation.



2. Workforce Snapshot

2.1. Absence - Current Position

2.1.1 The national picture

The UK workforce (all sectors) had a sickness absence rate of 2.1 % according to data gathered by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) covering employee sick days during 2021, the highest figure for the last 10 years. This was up from a low of 1.8% in 2020.

2.1.2 Local Government Comparators

The latest Annual and Quarter comparisons from LG-Inform are below. The latest submissions have seen less participation from other councils compared to 2020/21. The average across councils has increased from 8 days absence per full-time equivalent employee (FTE) in 2020/21 to 10.8 days in 2021/22 which is caused by an increase in absence in all participants.

2021/22 (April 2021 to March 2022)

Council	Absence days per FTE
Kent	7.1
North Yorkshire	8.4
East Sussex	8.8
Gloucestershire	8.8
Surrey	9.3
Devon	12.2
Nottinghamshire	13.3
Lancashire	13.9
Derbyshire	15.6
Average	10.8

2.1.3 Lancashire County Council Sickness Absence

The council's sickness absence levels are currently higher than acceptable levels. Our rolling 12 months absence is at 5.09%, more than double the national absence rate. Covid-19 has impacted on this for several reasons:

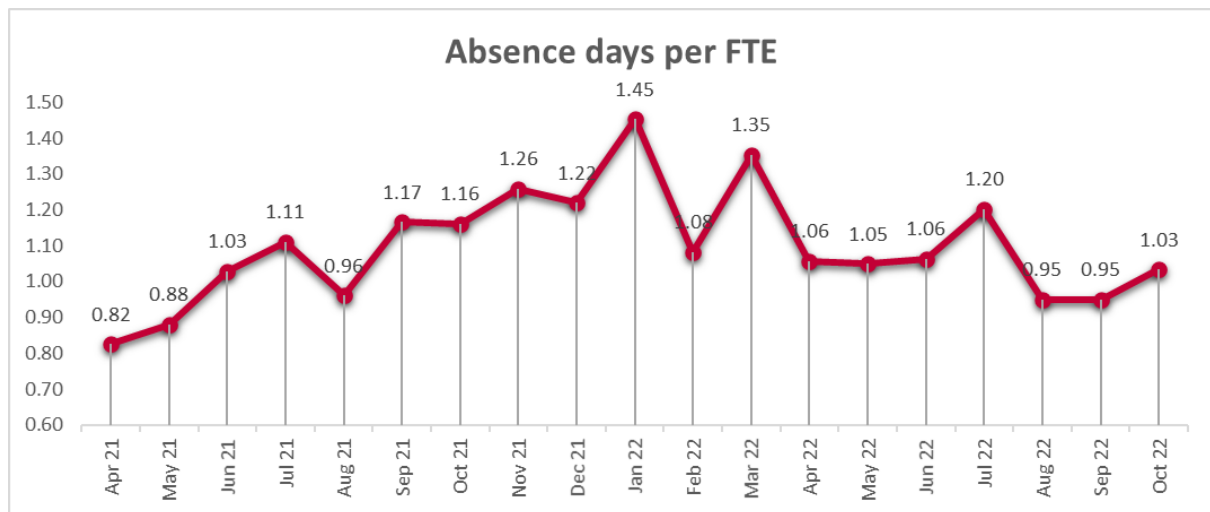
- Cessation of monitoring and resetting targets reduced the ability to assess performance improvement.
- Delays to treating pre-existing health conditions has extended sickness absence beyond what would have normally been expected.



- Reduced occupational health capacity due to absences resulted in delays in providing support to enable sickness absence outcomes; and
- Mental health absence increased.

Nationally mental health related absence has been the highest reason for absence for several years, but the pandemic has accelerated it and so this is a particular focus for sickness absence and health interventions.

The target of 12.47 absence days per FTE was set to achieve a 10% reduction from the previous end of year 12-month absence per FTE, which was 13.86. The county council's current rolling 12-month position is at **13.50**. This includes a Covid-19 spike in July 2022. Absence trend per month is shown below to show the overall trend of absence, with recent interventions lowering absence in September and October compared with the previous year:



The latest 12-month rolling absence (November 2021 to October 2022) shows that long-term absence still accounts for the highest number of absence days, split by directorate below:

Directorate	Working Days absent	Short Term days*	Long Term days*
Adult Services and Health & Wellbeing	7.31%	31.49%	68.51%
Education & Children's Services	4.29%	31.89%	68.11%
Growth, Environment & Transport	4.81%	33.20%	66.80%
Resources	3.76%	38.87%	61.13%
Council Total	5.09%	33.24%	66.76%

*Short-term absence is up to 28 days, and long-term absence is 28+ days.

Whilst sickness absence continues to trend higher than we would like, it is important that we view this in the context of the council's services. For example, front line staff who may work in residential care homes, although they may feel well enough to work



should they have colds, flu, virus, they are unable to attend work due to infection control requirements. The nature of their work means that they cannot simply work from home as an alternative.

It is also important that we recognise that currently a large cohort of the council's workforce have had no absence at all. 74% of our people had no absence in Quarter 1 and this rose to 75% in Quarter 2.

We have established a series of additional interventions in recent months to manage absence and we are starting to see green shoots of impact, however some of our longer-term absence cases relate to serious illnesses and the availability of NHS appointments, operations and specialist treatment is having an impact. We continue to review long-term absence cases closely and fully utilise our relationships with Occupational Health, Employee Support teams in Public Health and have recently implemented an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) which provides, amongst other services, counselling, advice, and guidance around emotional and financial wellbeing.

2.2 Turnover

2.2.1 Turnover rates

Turnover in Lancashire County Council was 13.86% in 2021/2022.

According to an analysis of labour turnover between January 2021 and January 2022 by Cendex (part of XpertHR), the public sector experienced the highest level of employee departures, with a total labour turnover rate of 15.6% and a voluntary labour turnover rate of 8.8%.

This recent turnover figure suggests a worsening picture against the most up to date data available via the Local Government Association (LGA) following a relatively stable few years between 2015 and 2018.

2.3 Vacancies and Recruitment – Current Position

2.3.1 Talent Acquisition vs Recruitment

Talent acquisition is the entire process of building a talented team of employees. You can think of it as an on-going process where we work to build relationships, plan our hiring needs, and find a consistent array of candidates. With this strategic approach, the council can ensure it is consistently attracting the best talent.

Recruitment is the process of finding a candidate to fill a specific need or role for the business. Unlike talent acquisition, it is not ongoing. Rather, this process begins once we have an identified vacancy. The sole purpose of recruiting is to fill in the workforce gaps within the company. This is very much a tactical approach.



2.3.2 Recruitment challenges

Like most employers the council is facing challenges to attract quality candidates to its roles. The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) says that given the current cost of living pressures, this is likely to shift, however, it is expected current challenges will remain for the next 12 months or so.

In April 2022, Heads of Service (HoS) were surveyed and nearly all identified difficulties in attracting high calibre candidates to professional, management and front-line roles and difficulties in attracting enough candidates for these roles resulting in some cases the need to readvertise the role on multiple occasions.

Factors that HoS believe are attributable to these challenges are:

- Pay – not competitive enough in the market and given the size of the council it should be more competitive. This was the key issue raised by HoS
- Insufficient skills/expertise in the sector
- Working arrangements – working evenings/weekends/shifts with limited flexibility
- Locality - remote areas, age demographic of residents, competition from neighbouring councils
- Lack of diversity in the workforce
- Lack of understanding of the role and functioning of a local authority
- Competing with agency rates of pay
- Limited career progression
- Not 'selling' the role to prospective candidates

Roles that HoS identified are difficult to recruit to are set out in Appendix 1.1.

Most sectors and industries are struggling to meet the demands of the recruitment market, so the council is not alone with these challenges. In April 2021, the CIPD survey reported that 47% of employers report having "hard to fill" vacancies and the same percentage said they had increased salaries to try to offset this.

In the 2022 version of the same CIPD survey of over 1000 people professionals, 77% of respondents had difficulties in attracting candidates. This significant increase in recruitment difficulties is further explored in the most recent piece of research by the CIPD.

In their Resourcing and Talent Planning report published in September 2022, (the twenty-third year the report has been produced) the CIPD found that:

- 30% of employers who had recruited in the past 12 months say that advertising roles as 'open to flexible working' is amongst their most effective recruitment methods.
- 54% of organisations who have had recruitment difficulties are offering greater work flexibility to address recruitment difficulties.



- 49% of organisations say their use of hybrid/remote working has greatly or somewhat increased, and almost a quarter expect this to increase further in the next 12 months.
- Overall, the report findings show that the world of work has changed forever, and employees increasingly want to work for businesses that provide career development opportunities, have good organisational values, and offer flexible working.
- Nearly two-fifths of organisations (38%) are increasing efforts to meet their skills requirements by developing more talent in-house.
- Upskilling existing employees is the most common response to recruitment difficulties (60%); and
- Almost half of organisations (46%) currently offer apprenticeships, around a third have graduate and/or post-A-level entry routes, and just over a quarter have intern schemes.

The research also notes that, even in the challenging economic context, there are steps businesses can take to entice employees to their organisation, such as offering greater flexible working and career development and emphasising the job security their organisation can provide in difficult times.

2.3.3 Current recruitment activity

As of 21 November 2022, the council has 217 job adverts which cover over 440 individual roles with some key information shown below. The information below highlights the areas with the highest number of advertised vacancies by:

Organisational Area

Organisational Area	Vacancies
Older People Care Services	160
Facilities Management	106
Disability	63
Highways	15
Adult Social Care Learning Disabilities, Autism and Mental Health	11

Role

Role Titles	Vacancies
Casual Care Assistant	105
Catering Casual	52
Community Support Worker	32
Catering Assistant	22
Casual Community Support Worker	20



Grade

Grade	Hourly Rate of pay	Vacancies
Grade 3 (Casual)	£10.98	91
Foundation Living Wage (Casual)	£9.90	65
Grade 4	£10.98-£11.39	51
FLW/Grade 3 (Casual)	£9.90	49
Foundation Living Wage	£9.90	38

Locations

Location	Vacancies
Preston	94
Wyre	58
Hyndburn	47
West Lancashire	47
Lancaster & Morecambe	41

2.3.4 Addressing challenges

Some of the ways that the Talent Acquisition team is addressing the current challenges are by targeting specific services, roles, and locations, and supporting where capacity allows.

2.3.4.1 Specialist TA Support

Provision of specialist support to look at the characteristics and profile of the ideal candidate focused not on the detail of the role, but on the current and future capacity of applicants so focused on characteristics, behaviour, and experience. This then creates the advert, graphics, and appropriate resourcing channels to attract the most suitable candidates. Provision of headhunting (local, regional, and national) and candidate engagement to encourage applications to hard to fill posts. This approach was very successful and provided us with 103 applicants for a mental health support worker role, with 40 of those being invited in for interview. The service explained due to the calibre of candidates they kept having to increase the benchmark to reduce the number to 40 interviews for 21 roles.

2.3.4.2 Virtual Recruitment Sessions

Provision of monthly, virtual recruitment sessions for children's social workers with a view to extending this to both Adults and Disability Services for both social workers and support workers. This attracts students, ASYE (assessed and supported year in employment) social workers, qualified and returners to meet with the Heads of Service or Principal Social Worker, including both home and international applicants. This has also been completed for the Highways Service following a restructure which resulted in an increased number of applications to their vacancies and is currently being considered by Facilities as an option to support their vacancies.

This approach generated 80 applicants across 7 roles for Adults and Disability Services where a traditional approach generates less than 5 applicants. In the



Highways example, we had 29 interested potential applicants on the highway's virtual recruitment call showcasing our employer brand. This approach shows that applicants can be generated if we have resource to tailor approaches like this on a much bigger sale.

2.3.4.3 Careers Fairs, Events and Employer Brand

Experience has shown that very few people know either about Lancashire County Council or the variety of roles that we have/that are available. This has been demonstrated by the significantly high level of interest and feedback that we have seen at the careers fairs recently attended – 164 people spoken to in 4 hours, over 300 people spoken with, and data collected for in another 4-hour session – students and the unemployed are interested in joining us and learning more about our organisation.

University careers fairs for some permanent roles and to build our brand, reputation and value proposition and many casual vacancies have been supported. These have covered all roles but with a specific focus on adults and children's social care, disability, facilities, and schools catering - with over 30 applications for adult social care at the most recent event. Potential candidate data (500+) is currently being sent to all relevant services, so they have people to contact for their vacancies. A calendar of additional "pop-up" events is also planned to support individual services throughout 2023 and will be extended to a variety of colleges/universities in Lancashire, Manchester, and Merseyside. By extending the council's reach/circulation, it will expand our employer brand awareness, increase our talent footprint, and support our draft people strategy regarding enhancing our reputation "as a great place to work".

In addition, attendance and support at job centres and other work fairs have meant some services returning and being overwhelmed at the quality of the potential candidates they have met and interviewed. Support at these events and other occasions have also included applications, interviews, and recruitment portal usage to make it easier for people to apply regardless of technical ability therefore making it accessible to all. The work with external agencies will also increase our inclusivity by ensuring that all our communities have access to roles within the organisation plus with the referrals coming from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and knowing that those with disabilities and from minority ethnicities are more likely to be unemployed, this should also improve our organisations diversity.

Individual services have also been hosting their own recruitment events with brilliant success. For example, the Children and Family Wellbeing recruited over 95 Family Support Workers during their events and Children's Residential are looking to follow suit, recruiting across the roles required for new children's residential homes. In addition, we are intending to host council events throughout Lancashire looking at all roles and potentially utilising libraries and other locations to host these.

2.3.4.5 External Partnerships

Working in partnership with publications, employment organisations and the NHS is providing fruitful especially regarding lower grade/minimal qualification roles. Recent partnerships with DWP, Fedcap and The Grow Company have all been successful with hiring entry level roles at zero cost to the county council outside of the time required by us to support.



These are all government funded organisations who have referrals of people on Universal Credit or recently unemployed to support them into employment. They sift all applicants for suitability, deliver any required training, provide CV, interview, and application support, and are happy to host events, provide candidates and support in any way possible.

No-cost to us advertising with the NHS has recently provided us with a successful Public Health candidate and by looking tactically where and how we advertise has ensured value for money to date. Our latest potential partnership is looking at international recruitment across a variety of roles including digital and social care, but with further research required – it encompasses 14 recruiters covering 14 different countries and an organisation with 15 years' experience based in Bolton – watch this space.

2.3.4.6 Financial Packages and Referrals

Work is underway to explore potential changes to Policy in which we potentially could introduce financial supplements by way of attraction payments, retention bonuses and market supplements for specialist, niche and hard to fill roles. Other public sector organisations are paying up to £4,000 in recruitment and retention bonuses for social workers and we pay on average £5,000 less in salary for many roles, so having the flexibility to support roles financially and where appropriate is key.

We currently operate a Refer a Friend (RaF) scheme within Children's Services which we are hoping will increase in pace as referral schemes are currently the most successful way of recruiting candidates, both from an attraction and retention perspective. This has also been discussed within Adult Services and for an investment of approximately £50,000 we could have our own app which would be available across the entire organisation and applicable to all roles or those we wished to provide additional support for. The RaF scheme was launched in April 2022 so it will be interesting to see how this evolves.

2.3.4.7 Educating Hiring Managers and Services

Our redesigned recruitment project will also encompass a mindset for hiring managers and we will support them to embrace and make full use of the support available.

Our focus will be on opening opportunities for our current staff to be developed, implement career pathways so progression is clear, and this can in turn be used to promote retention and allow people time to learn and develop skills for their next step.

There are few perfect candidates out there, especially in today's market, but there are candidates that have the right skills, values, behaviours and potential that we could be hiring.

2.3.5 Impact of budgetary pressure

In recent months we have seen the impact of budgetary pressure on the workforce – the introduction of a more robust approach to vacancy approvals to manage costs and in this case vacancies that are classed as 'business critical' being approved for



recruitment at this time. A piece of work has been completed to remove long-standing vacancies from the establishment and therefore from budgets, along with a review of agency and consultancy spending which is currently underway.



3. Workforce Profile

3.1. Our People

3.1.1 The bigger picture

Labour market in the regions of UK, report taken from the Office of National Statistics – published November 2022.

Table 1: Summary of latest headline estimates and quarterly changes, for regions of the UK, seasonally adjusted, July to September 2022

	Employment rate (%) aged 16 to 64 years	Change on April to June 2022	Unemployment rate (%) aged 16 years and over	Change on April to June 2022	Inactivity rate (%) aged 16 to 64 years	Change on April to June 2022
UK	75.5	0.0	3.6	-0.2	21.6	0.2
Great Britain	75.6	-0.1	3.6	-0.2	21.5	0.2
England	75.8	0.0	3.6	-0.3	21.2	0.3
North West	73.3	-0.06	4.0	-0.4	23.6	0.7

Whilst the latest data from ONS shows that the Northwest has less individuals in employment than the national average and is decreasing, the inactivity rate continues to grow and this is due in part to those individuals who might be studying, have caring responsibilities, may be unwell and not fit enough to work, or already retired. What this intelligence shows is that the pool of available candidates is less in the Northwest than it might be elsewhere in the UK.

3.1.2 Lancashire County Council

Staffing levels are at 10,038.74 FTE with a headcount of 13,060, which is split across the Directorates below:

Directorate	Headcount	FTE
Adult Services and Health & Wellbeing	3,382	2796.06
Education & Children's Services	3,365	2859.69
Growth, Environment & Transport	2,484	1882.39
Resources	3,829	2500.60
Council Total	13,060	10038.74

Staff Age

The average employee age is 47.12 split across the Directorates below:



	Adult Services and Health & Wellbeing	Education & Children's Services	Growth, Environment & Transport	Resources	Council Total
Average Age	46.99	44.10	51.09	47.32	47.12

The age group with the highest number of employees is 46-55 which is true for all Directorates except Growth, Environment and Transport which is 56-65. The average age in this staff group is likely influenced by the school crossing patrol roles.

Age Group	Adult Services and Health & Wellbeing	Education & Children's Services	Growth, Environment & Transport	Resources	Council Total
16-24	111 (3.28%)	147 (4.37%)	66 (2.66%)	92 (2.40%)	416 (3.19%)
25-35	594 (17.56%)	763 (22.67%)	363 (14.61%)	618 (16.14%)	2,338 (17.90%)
36-45	701 (20.73%)	853 (25.35%)	314 (12.64%)	915 (23.90%)	2,783 (21.31%)
46-55	1,017 (30.07%)	935 (27.79%)	653 (26.29%)	1,109 (28.96%)	3,714 (28.44%)
56-65	885 (26.17%)	634 (18.84%)	847 (34.10%)	984 (25.70%)	3,350 (25.65%)
66+	74 (2.19%)	33 (0.98%)	241 (9.70%)	111 (2.90%)	459 (3.51%)

Staff Service Durations

Around 30% of staff have 15 or more years of service with Lancashire County Council, the next highest group is between 2 years and 6 years at around 25%

Directorate	Adult Services and Health & Wellbeing	Education & Children's Services	Growth, Environment & Transport	Resources	Council Total
Up to 6 Months	263 (7.78%)	313 (9.30%)	172 (6.92%)	275 (7.18%)	1,023 (7.83%)
More than 6 months an up to 1 year	161 (4.76%)	184 (5.47%)	123 (4.95%)	262 (6.84%)	730 (5.59%)
More than 1 Year and up to 2 years	268 (7.92%)	308 (9.15%)	233 (9.38%)	319 (8.33%)	1,128 (8.64%)
More than 2 years and up to 6 years	963 (28.47%)	807 (23.98%)	596 (23.99%)	829 (21.65%)	3,195 (24.46%)



More than 6 years and up to 10 years	353 (10.44%)	360 (10.70%)	236 (9.50%)	537 (14.02%)	1,486 (11.38%)
More than 10 years and up to 15 years	377 (11.15%)	461 (13.70%)	316 (12.72%)	499 (13.03%)	1,653 (12.66%)
More than 15 years	997 (29.48%)	932 (27.70%)	808 (32.53%)	1,108 (28.94%)	3,845 (29.44%)

Staff Contract Types

Around 94% of staff are on a Permanent contract

Directorate	Fixed Term	Permanent	Percentage Permanent
Adult Services and Health & Wellbeing	262	3,120	92.25%
Education & Children's Services	321	3,044	90.46%
Growth, Environment & Transport	82	2,402	96.70%
Resources	135	3,694	96.47%
Council Total	800	12,260	93.87%

3.2. Benchmarking our profile

Benchmarking continues to be a work in progress. Regularly publishing benchmark data was one of the areas of work which took a back seat for many organisations during Covid-19, whilst other pressing priorities were delivered.

Some small snapshot data is available on some websites, but this should be reviewed with a health warning that there are not enough organisations publishing this data yet, to be comparable.

Benchmark 1 – Kent County Council – [workforce profile as at June 2021](#)

2020/21: 7,373.50 FTE

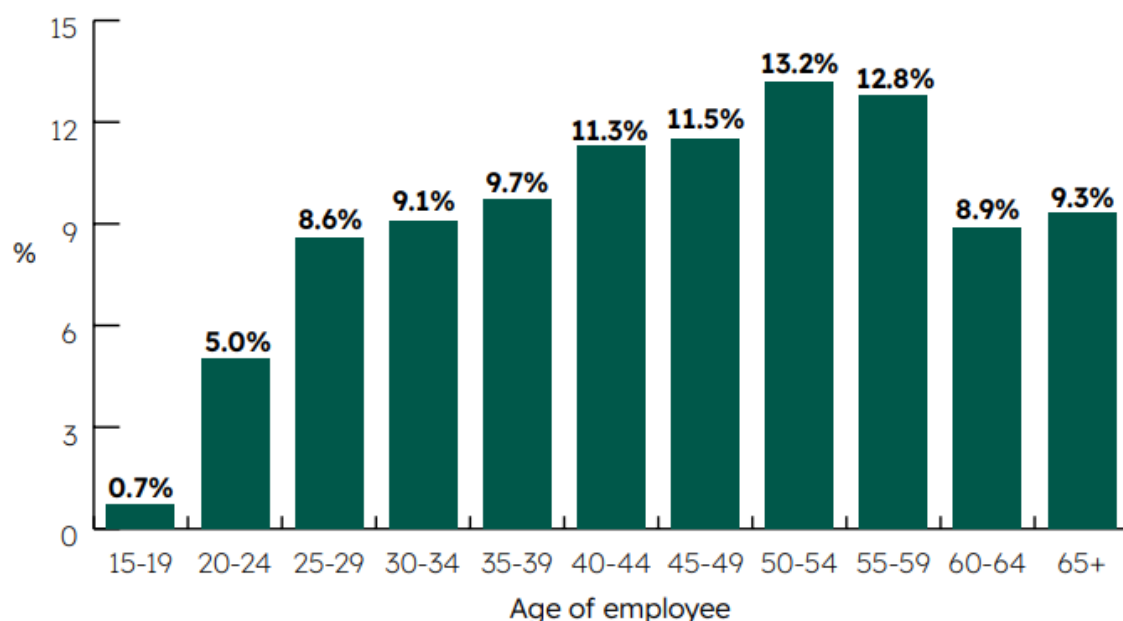
Average Age: 45.7

Benchmark 2 - Essex County Council, published in 2021

Circa 43,000 FTE

Essex Age Profile:





Benchmark 3 – Surrey County Council, April 2021 – Circa 10,000 employees

Challenges they report (taken from their workforce strategy)

- 4.9% of their staff are under the age of 25, compared to the UK average of 14%
- 33% of staff have more than 10 years' service
- 40% of staff are likely to retire in next 10 years
- 1.7% of staff are undertaking apprenticeships, against a government target of 2.3%
- Their voluntary turnover is comparable to national average of 12.4%, but 25% of this turnover takes place in first 12 months of employment
- 22% of social care workforce is via agency

Surrey Age Profile:

Age group	2019	2020	2021
13 to 19	0.88%	0.85%	0.66%
20 to 24	4.20%	3.99%	3.97%
25 to 29	7.26%	7.56%	8.07%
30 to 34	9.67%	10.02%	10.47%
35 to 39	11.32%	10.90%	10.51%
40 to 44	11.97%	12.32%	12.38%
45 to 49	13.15%	13.02%	12.55%
50 to 54	15.09%	14.40%	14.47%
55 to 59	13.27%	13.48%	13.77%
60 to 64	8.54%	8.65%	8.41%
65 to 69	3.04%	3.20%	3.13%
70 to 74	1.09%	1.10%	1.12%
75 +	0.53%	0.53%	0.49%



4. Generational Replacement

The workforce profile in section 3 above raises some clear concerns around the aging workforce at Lancashire County Council and how we manage and plan to replenish as individuals retire.

4.1. Retirement Trends

In 2022, the average retirement age in the UK is 64.55. According to ONS, there's every chance this figure will increase in future given the recent shift towards flexible working as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. The government's independent statistics provider suggests that increased home working could enable older workers to remain in the workforce for longer.

4.1.1 Retirement age by gender

The average retirement age for men is 65.1, while the average retirement age for women is 64. This tells us that women typically leave the workforce 13 months earlier than men.

This is despite women typically needing larger pension pots, given they are expected to live longer than men. In the UK, the average life expectancy for a man is 84 years and for a woman it is 86 years.

Interestingly, data from 2021 indicates there has been a 0.2%-0.3% decrease in the average retirement age across both genders. This suggests the pandemic has encouraged workers to bring forward their retirement plans.

4.1.2 Retirement age by region

According to the most recent Wealth and Assets Survey by the ONS, the average retirement age in the UK can vary considerably by region.

For example, 19% of those in the South West of England can expect to continue working beyond the age of 70. This compares to just 10% of those living in the North East. This contrast may be explained by the differences in the cost of living between these regions.

Meanwhile, 10% of those living in the East Midlands give up work before 60, compared to just 4% in both Wales and the South West of England.

The North East has the highest number of people (64%) that can expect to retire at the typical retirement age of 65-69. This compares to just 55% for workers in the South East.

4.1.3 Retirement predictions for the Northwest

The ONS suggests that for the Northwest, 8% of the working population will retire at the age of 60, 24% between ages 60-64, 56% between age 65-69 and 12% at 70+.



Given our age profile, if we applied these statistics, the county council would need to recruit the following numbers just to replace retirees in the next year (2023).

Directorate	No. of employees aged 56-65	24%* likely to retire	No. of employees aged 66+	56%* likely to retire
Adult Services and Health & Wellbeing	885	212	74	41.5
Education & Children's Services	634	152.16	33	18.48
Growth, Environment & Transport	847	203.28	241	134.96
Resources	984	236.16	111	62.16
Council Total	3,350	803.6	459	257.1

*estimation using ONS retirement prediction data

From expected retirement alone, if we model the ONS predicted retirement percentages, we will need to replace 1,060 roles next year. This is separate to natural turnover in the other age groups, the vacancies we are already carrying, and the backfill cover we recruit to cover absence or sickness and any new roles that might emerge.

This equates to an annual retirement rate of just over 8%, which will change each year as the age profile shifts.

4.2. Generational Diversity

Generational diversity, as with other types of diversity in the workplace such as cultural diversity and gender diversity, is important to balance an organisation. Managing diversity effectively allows organisations to build a collaborative, multigenerational workforce which has many benefits. An organisation that embraces generational diversity in the workplace will create a strong workforce as each generation displays different strengths and once combined, an organisation can benefit from them.

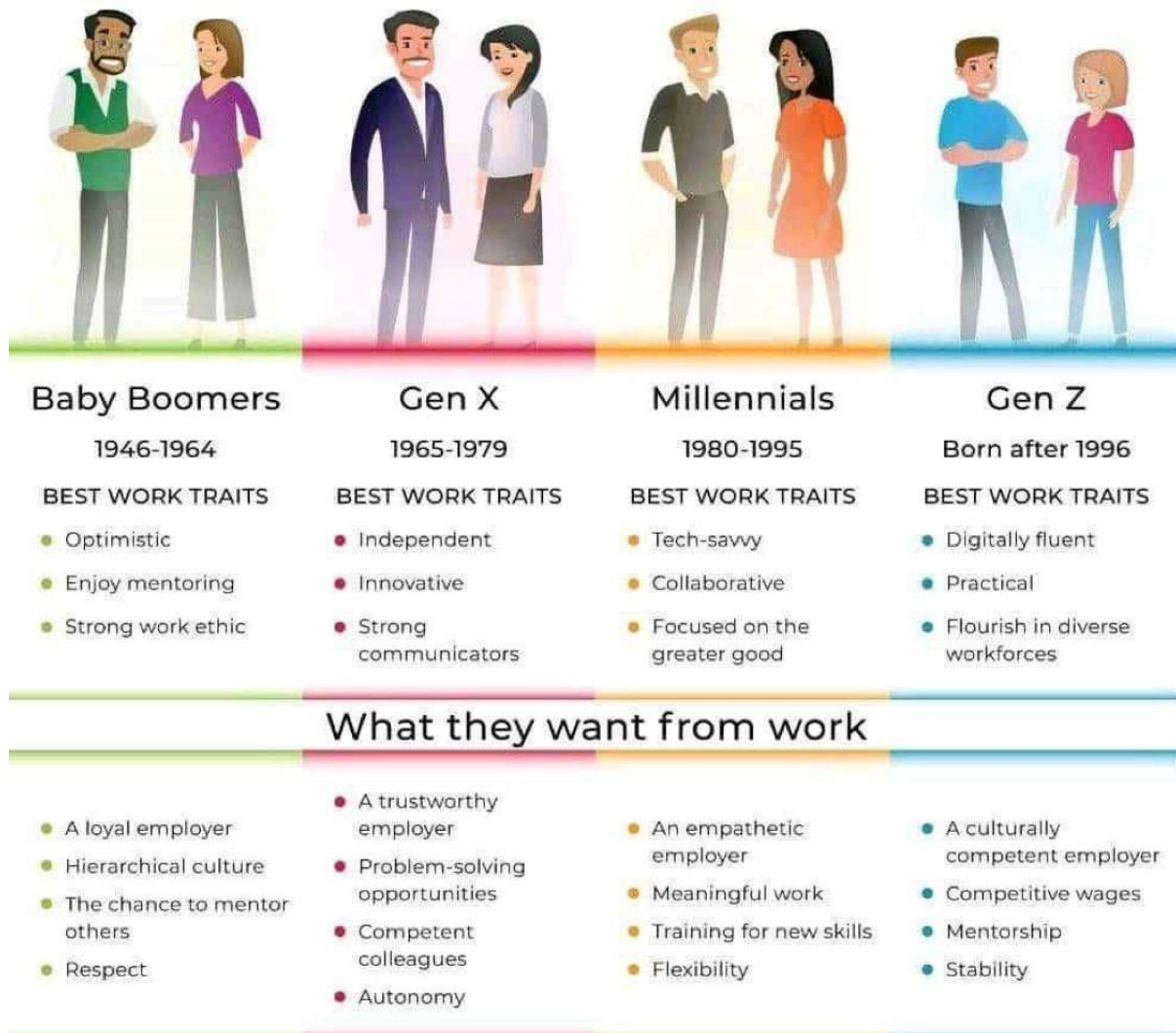
The theory of generational differences suggests that the period in which you grow up or enter the labour market has a lasting influence on your attitudes, priorities, behaviour, or life choices. It is presented as a simple concept – a small number of generations, with a fixed list of characteristics that typify each one.

Most of us will be aware of the generational breakdowns – roughly, the Traditional's born from 1925, Baby Boomers from 1946, Generation X from 1965, Generation Y or Millennials from 1980, and Generation Z from 1996. Some sociologists suggest the next generation has already emerged: Generation Alpha (people born from 2011 onwards).



What employees want by generation

Data source: Mazlo | Infographic design by Antonio Grasso for educational and motivational purposes



The notion of generational differences implies that Millennials are not just different from Generation X-ers now, but will always be different, that the cut-off point of being born around 1980 is more or less accurate, and that these differences hold across different regions.

4.3. Observed shifts in the labour market

In 2003 it was predicted that by 2030, organisations would face massive human resources challenges due to generational shifts in the labour market. What we have seen to happen are:

- The last remaining Traditionalists (born 1925 – 1946) mainly retired by 2020. Likewise, the first wave of Baby Boomers (1946 – 1965) are retiring in droves and will continue to do so in the coming years.



- The second wave of Boomers (1955 – 1964) will still be a driving force in established organisations until the mid-2020s, when they are predicted to also leave. This date is approaching quickly.
- Gen X-ers, who have gradually risen to power in established businesses, are threatened by the fast-changing, highly dynamic, modern market environment, and lead the business-side of start-ups together with more digital-affine Gen Y leaders.
- In 2016, Millennials overtook the Baby Boomers as the biggest group in the labour market. We have seen them gain strong influence in emerging leadership theory and organisational cultures and ways of working and, rather than previous generations who acclimatised to the world of work, this group are influencing previous generations to think and act more like them.
- Just starting their work life, Gen Z-ers will fill the chairs left behind by the retiring Baby Boomers although they are unlikely to fill the roles and act, behave or think in the way their predecessors did.

The challenge with generational replacement is for effective people management. It can be challenging, divisive and potentially discriminatory. Advice from the CIPD (March 2020) is to focus on life stages of our people rather than generational differences.

4.4. Our approach to workforce resilience

4.4.1. Reviewing recruiting practices:

We have recruitment challenges and high vacancy levels. This provides an opportunity, as we seek to address these challenges and recruit new employees to be cognisant of the differences and benefits across generations. This means that where, how, and when we advertise is critical. We will need to advertise our vacancies via various channels and mediums and craft our message to appeal to multiple generations if applicable. This can be done by using language and providing information that will appeal across generations. One size will not fit all, to be truly inclusive and appreciative of general differences.

Our approach - we will redefine our Day 0 to Day 1 recruitment process through a redesign project that sits as part of the People Strategy.

4.4.2. Customising our development approach to each employee:

We are fortunate to be a large employer that has a suite of cross departmental and business-wide initiatives running at any one time. This enables the county council to really think differently in its developmental approach and its use of these projects and programmes. Whilst we need to be mindful not to stereotype, a multigenerational workforce means that our employees value different things. Retention of employees is critical for many of our services, especially across multiple generations as experience and knowledge is crucial on the job to shape the next leaders and



managers of the future. Retention starts with employees, regardless of their generation, feeling that their needs are being met.

Our approach - The new service delivery model for People Services and the People Strategy both bring about a step change in our development offering, aligning individual needs and motivations arising from individual performance engagement discussions to the way in which we will develop, shape, and deliver both skills and behavioural development.

4.4.3. Mentoring and Reverse Mentoring:

Mentoring traditionally is viewed as an older, wiser individual mentoring an individual in their early career in the workforce. However, the benefit of a multigenerational workforce means that this can go both ways. The transfer of knowledge across all five generations is extremely important and organisations can benefit from developing ways to share and transfer knowledge across the generations. This also bridges into age-diverse teams when problem-solving to achieve an outcome or deliver a project.

Our approach – This will be a key element of the workforce resilience element of the People Strategy, this also features part of early careers.

4.4.4. Succession Planning:

Every organisation requires new people or existing staff to fill future vacancies. As skillsets adapt and new ones are built (think digital skills over the last twenty years), being clear on the skills and capabilities required for our most high profile and critical posts will be extremely important. Succession planning will require individuals with varying levels of experience and some of that experience might only be able to be gathered through specific lengths of time in roles, therefore any approach needs to be inclusive, yet clear, with justifiable criteria.

Our approach – This will be a key element of the workforce resilience element of the People Strategy, this also features part of performance engagement discussions and will be key to retention our high performers.



5. Draft Lancashire County Council People Strategy

5.1. What is a People Strategy?

A People Strategy is a set of practices that determine how you attract, retain, and grow your employees to best accomplish the organisation vision and purpose. It focuses on the people within an organisation and how they add value to the business, which is people centric.

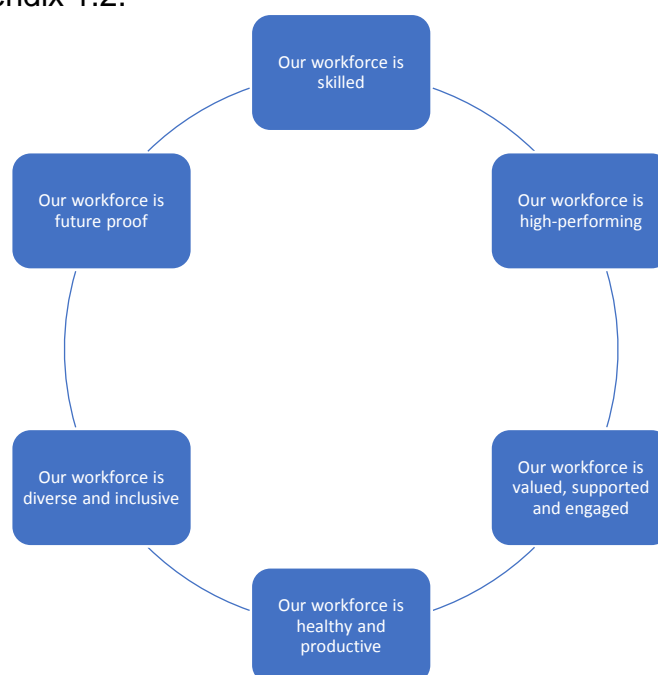
In comparison, a Human Resources (HR) strategy focuses on the systems and processes that support people management. It is a process-centric, more operational focus, and defines how HR will support the business goals.

Many organisations are shifting towards a People Services function, in replacement of a HR and Learning and Development functions, given the challenge for talent, retention and development of existing workforces in a post-pandemic world.

5.1.1 People Strategy driving People services

A true People Services function is built around a People Strategy and a draft people strategy framework has been developed for the county council, covering the period 2023-2027. The people strategy framework is the direction of travel for this period and sets the people priorities that support the business as it delivers its strategic priorities. The strategy framework does not change, but the organisational development plan that sits below it, which sets out the annual work plan, will shift and adapt, driven by changing goals, the external environment, and such like.

The People Strategy is built on six strategic pillars below, and the full framework can be found at appendix 1.2.



Once the service plans for 2023/24 are agreed as part of the business planning process, the Organisation Development plan for 2023/24, which will be the vehicle for the delivery of the first year of the People Strategy, will also be agreed. For some of the strategic aims of the People Strategy, we will need to go back to basics and rebuild the offer, processes, systems, and ways of working so they are fit for purpose.

5.1.2 Moving from Human Resources to People Services

Within the county council, the Human Resources service, and Skills, Learning and Development Service, will merge in the coming months to become People Services. This is not just a change of name, but a shift in purpose, direction, and ways of working.

A new service delivery model has been designed and whilst there is still work to do to firm up what will sit inside and outside of People Services, it provides a clear signal that a step change is required to meet our workforce challenges.

Capabilities for the service to be effective are listed in the model, further discussion is needed around the capabilities that we have and those that will need to be built as they do not already exist or are elsewhere in the business structure at this moment in time.



The model is built around three clear purposes – workforce needs that are current (now), those emerging that need addressing in the short- to medium-term (6-12 months), and workforce needs of the future (12+ months).

The full delivery model can be found at Appendix 1.3.



6. Update on Workforce Working Arrangements

The Community, Cultural and Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee received a report in September 2022 providing an update on building utilisation and occupation levels. Proposals for providing updates to subsequent scrutiny sessions have been developed, and these will be discussed between the Deputy Leader and the Chair of committee

6.1. Flexible and hybrid working – an overview

Hybrid working, or agile working as it is sometimes known, describes when staff spend some of their working week at home and some in the workplace.

Flexible working is a term used to describe a working pattern where the employee has some level of choice around start and finish times, or how their working day is structured.

The main differences between hybrid and flexible working are:

- Hybrid working only refers to flexibility with the place of work – i.e., hybrid workers work partly from an office and partly from home.
- In contrast, flexible working covers working hours, the place of work, the time the employee is required to work, and much more.
- An employee has a statutory right to request flexible working – and within that request, an employee can ask for flexibility with their place of work, which is what is reflected in a hybrid working model.

There is now an increasing evidence base in relation to the benefits and challenges of flexible and hybrid working. As an example, a study in April 2022 by the Open University and the Public Sector Executive journal found that in a survey of more than 2,600 public sector employees across all levels of seniority, the majority (62%) of staff now work remotely for one or more days per week, with 76% of those surveyed saying they would like to do this.

They also said that hybrid or remote working made organisations more attractive across the public sector, with 73% of those polled saying they would be more likely to stay in a job that offered this (increasing to 90% in government and local authorities).

However, most public sector employees said they wanted a blended approach to remote working. 29% of those polled said they wanted to be in the office one to two days a week, while 26% said their preference was for three to four days. A quarter (24%) said they wanted to be in the office full time.



Similarly, of the 29% who said they were currently working remotely full time, less than one in five (21%) wanted this arrangement to be permanent.

6.2. Working Flexibly at Lancashire County Council

The council's key policy in relation to working arrangements and places of work is the Working Flexibly Policy and Procedure. This policy was recently reviewed, and the findings are attached as Appendix 1.4.

The review builds on several staff engagement exercises including feedback from briefings following the policy launch, a survey carried out by Unison as part of their engagement with staff on flexible working, a pulse survey conducted with staff and managers in November 2021, and feedback from leadership and management training sessions delivered by the Skills, Learning and Development Service between January and April 2022.

Because of the review, there were specific recommendations as to actions which will help to further embed the policy and enhance the guidance and help to address people and productivity priorities. These included:

- Offer hosted training for managers on the updated policy and procedure.
- Enhance the working flexibly guidance for managers around dealing with flexible working appeals.
- Update guidance surrounding care for dependants to give further clarity on how this should be considered and how it links into other policies and procedures; and
- Consider communication methods to further embed the policy principles, alongside the work being undertaken by the working flexibly board.



7. Performance Arrangement

7.1. Integrated Performance Framework

Faced with significant financial challenges and the need for a complex and challenging programme of change, our approach to business, financial and service planning, and performance management needs to be seamless so that:

- We continue to deliver the best outcomes to our residents.
- Our delivery plans and priorities are agreed within our financial context; and
- We are all working towards a common purpose and set of priorities.

Significant progress has been made over recent months in relation to performance reporting. The Executive Management Team (EMT) and Cabinet recognise that this is an important step, and that we have some components of an integrated business, service planning and performance framework. But there are gaps, and it is not consistent across the council. It is suggested that Lancashire County Council needs:

- A single approach to integrated performance and business planning.
- Dedicated capacity in place to drive design and implementation.
- To link our corporate priorities through to individual performance on our front line – golden thread; and
- Integrated decision making around the prioritisation of change and improvement initiatives with robust challenge over return on investment and non-financial business benefit.

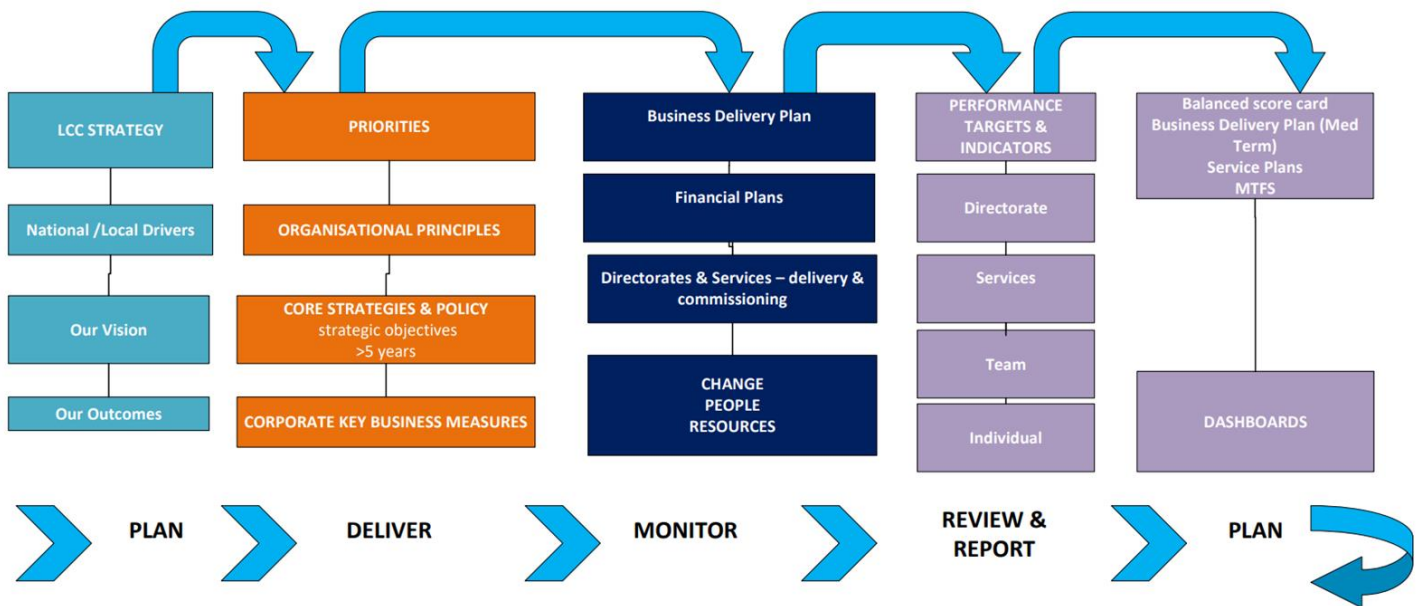
The visual below shows an outline of an integrated planning framework.





The development and implementation of an integrated performance, planning and financial framework will support the council to take a longer-term view which is dynamic and can respond and change as the operating environment changes. It will also provide a more cohesive approach, with service planning happening in the same way to the same timescale across the organisation.

At a high level, the visual below sets out the key components and sequence which will be brought together into an integrated Lancashire County Council approach.



In developing this integrated framework, we will work across the council to:

- Adopt a shared single organisational approach.
- Build on existing areas of good practice.
- Work as one team enabling our teams sufficient time to focus on planning and performance.
- Take a data and insight led approach to enable decision making.
- Focus on results and outcomes for our customers.
- Connect the golden thread of our priorities through to performance.
- Take accountability for organisational wide performance.
- Embed our performance framework across our organisation at all levels.

The integrated framework will need to develop in lock step with the council's Medium Term Financial Strategy, Human Resources and Organisational Development performance cycle, workforce plan, and align with a strategic change delivery plan and digital and technology needs. The following sections provide further information about the proposed approach to performance engagement.

7.2. Individual Performance Engagement

7.2.1 Trends in business

Both employers and employees alike are questioning the effectiveness of the once-yearly review, with McKinsey research showing that most CEOs do not find the performance management process helpful in identifying top performers.

Likewise, more than half of employees polled in a Workhuman survey of more than 3,500 full-time workers feel the performance management process is not indicative of all the work they do and that it does not improve their performance in the long run.

Indeed, in 2020, with widespread remote working, combined with heightened stress and uncertainty, nearly a third of organisations adjusted their performance evaluations, with others postponing or skipping their customary year-end performance appraisals entirely.

As we emerge from the cocoon of the pandemic and the impact it has had on business, we are starting to see three top trends in performance management:

1. Impact of hybrid work

There are two areas of flexibility that need to be considered: location and time.

2. More continuous feedback and check-ins

By changing the approach to include more continuous feedback and employee check-ins it can be easier to provide the needed real-time



resources for improvement and growth. By documenting a plan for continuous feedback and annual performance reviews, we will see the results of building a culture of continuous improvement and growth.

3. Using performance data gathered in real time

Competition for top talent is more intense than ever. To remain competitive, organisations will need to make data-driven decisions that optimise performance, motivation, and development. Therefore, use of real-time reporting and technology adoption will be critical to driving a performance culture.

Overall, we can expect greater flexibility, communication, and feedback as major themes in performance management this year.

7.2.2 Lancashire County Council Direction of travel and current thinking

Given current financial and workforce challenges, there is clear evidence that improving the council's performance management approaches could offer some real benefits including staff retention, upskilling to meet workforce needs, and the significant improvement in workforce data to give oversight of workforce matters to support effective decision making and action.

SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound) targets and productivity must be at the core of any performance system that is implemented.

Traditional performance reviews are based on work environments where managers are often just a few feet away from an employee's desk. But the abrupt switch to remote working in the early part of the pandemic meant that face-to-face observation was no longer possible.

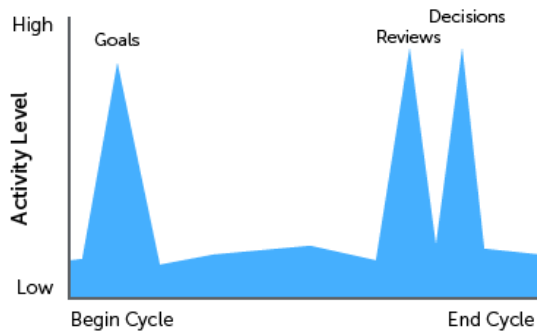
With fewer opportunities for impromptu catchups, many managers began to schedule regular check-ins with their team and quickly discovered the upside of more frequent, scheduled communication. We are keen to embed this as part of our ways of working as our recent staff survey suggests that this is a more effective way to engage and manage our people.

When teams give and receive feedback on a continuous basis, the lines of communication open, allowing problems and concerns to be addressed in real time, rather than waiting until they are deemed critical enough to raise formally, and encouraging in-the-moment expressions of gratitude and recognition.

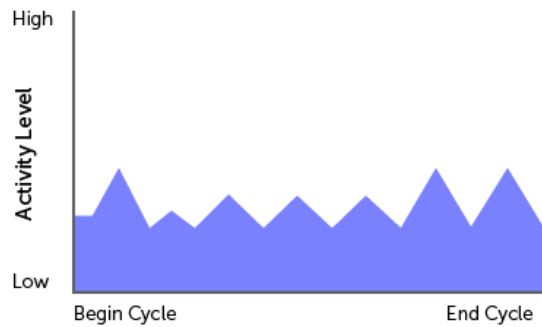


Organizations Want to Improve Performance Management

Traditional Performance Management



Everyday Performance Management



- Focus on process not people
- Formal and event-driven
- Separate from work
- 3-5% impact on performance

- Focus on people not process
- Informal and ongoing
- Integrated with work
- Up to 39% impact on performance

Source: Gartner, Inc. 2015

Individual performance management should ensure that we do the things that make the biggest impact for our diverse range of customers, and our staff are working towards achieving corporate, team and individual outcomes.

Through individual performance management conversations, line managers and their staff should work together to check progress to see where their work contributes to the vision for Lancashire. This is the 'golden thread' which links our strategic planning and our service delivery to the contributions of our individual staff.

Regular and meaningful discussions with a focus on SMART targets and effectiveness are at the heart of our approach. This is so that we can ensure performance expectations are clear, promote on-going dialogue regarding progress and achievements, highlight factors limiting staff performance in a timely manner, and ensure appropriate planning of professional and personal development.

Regular quality conversations ensure the welfare and wellbeing of staff is a constant workplace consideration.

A focus on on-going feedback, the development of staff, the identification of potential, and agility in how people perform their roles are core components of an effective, continuous performance management approach and are therefore essential to supporting planning and delivery to upskill, reskill and re-design the workforce.



To shift to this new way of managing performance, we will need to:

- Build on the basic principles of the existing performance engagement approach to improve individual performance management, support workforce planning, increase engagement, and facilitate greater organisational oversight of performance linked to corporate priorities.
- Capture and regularly report data to support planning and decision making linked to workforce and service delivery.
- Foster a culture of performance management where authentic, regular discussions support delivery, engagement, talent management and workforce planning.
- Ensure that our people have the right skills, capabilities and behaviours that enable them to deliver in their roles and provide assurance that we are providing resilient services; and
- Develop our leaders to be confident to focus on performance and then they can adopt the behaviours that create the culture that both empowers people and allows them to be accountable.

All managers and staff would be responsible for:

- Identifying actions required to achieve priorities and objectives.
- Identifying measures and setting targets for achievement of desired outcome.
- Identifying risks to achieving good performance and managing them.
- Recording data using business systems; and
- Leading teams and individuals in a way that creates a high performing culture using coaching as a management style.

Draft Annual Performance Engagement discussions process:

April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March
On-going objectives and outputs review to support delivery agility											
On-going wellbeing check in and review each month building on earlier conversations.											
Individual role outcomes and key objectives agreed following annual service/team planning .			Personal Development/Training Planning focused discussions to support WD planning.			Career Planning focus to support resource planning, succession planning and talent management			Improvement and engagement focus to feed service planning process.		
					Talent dashboard reporting						Talent dashboard reporting



Real time data would feed into a performance/talent dashboard which would provide an organisational view of our performance delivery, talent, and succession planning along with wellbeing check-ins supporting us with our approach to wellbeing and avoiding situations of absence where we can, via early intervention.

Given our current organisational challenges, there is compelling evidence of the value that this could offer to the future proofing of our workforce and the ability to continue to delivery robust and resilient services to the people of Lancashire.



Appendix 1.1 - Head of Service (HoS) identification of roles that bring recruitment challenges

	Front-line roles	Support/ Back Office / Management role
Adults, Health, and Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualified and unqualified roles in mental health • registered managers • care assistants • OTs, overall roles in acute services, • community support workers • trading standards officers • infection control nurses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analysts • lab technicians, • public health intelligence roles
Education and Children's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • family support workers • neighbourhood group workers • evening assistant youth support workers • social workers • Educational Psychologists • specialist teachers • residential workers • home managers • catering and technical roles in museums, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governor services • Clerks • school advisory roles
Growth, Environment and Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall roles in waste services • security and customer service roles Preston bus station, • vehicle and plant technicians, • school crossing patrols, • civil enforcement officers, • highways flood risk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • estate surveyors • planners • civil engineers • carbon strategy technical roles • specialist transport roles
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • catering supervisors and assistants, • cleaners and supervisors, • conferencing and reception roles, • general maintenance operatives, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • general maintenance managers, • qualified accountants • specialist corporate accountants, • all pension roles, • commercial/property/highways/planning solicitors, • payroll managers and technical specialists, • digital mgt roles • senior architecture roles • category managers • procurement information officers

Appendix 1.2 – The People Strategy Framework

Aim Our strategic pillars	We will achieve this by.. Our Cultural Ambition	...and deliver it through... Our Employer Value Proposition (EVP)	...and measure it by.. Our Performance Dashboards metrics
Our workforce is skilled	Continued and targeted development through innovative and creative learning and skills solutions coupled with work opportunities that continually develop skills, experience, and capabilities to ensure our people and the organisation are continually growing and developing.	Career pathways Skills resilience strategy inc apprenticeships, graduates etc Levy delivery plan Succession planning Leadership & management Development programmes Competency frameworks Skills assessment & Database	% of internal promotions ROI from development Retention metric % of roles with a succession plan £ investment per headcount in skills development
Our workforce is high performing	Developing an exciting and challenging work environment that drives, and recognises brilliant individual, team, and organisational performance, focussing on results, whilst addressing those whose performance and contribution falls short of what is required.	Performance framework & SMART targets Wellbeing strategy 'Talent by design' strategy and plan & EVP People Managers development programme People policy update and review Reward and recognition framework	Absence metric Metrics from Wellbeing strategy Performance / talent data % of workforce performing lower than expected Retention metric
Our workforce is valued, supported, and engaged	Creating an engaged and connected workforce, where people are passionate about our vision and values and actively share knowledge, confident to challenge, knowing they will be listened to and have an increased understanding of the role they play in the future.	Performance framework Redesign of Onboarding and induction process and programme Engagement pulse surveys Internal communications Strategy and plan Staff survey	Turnover metric Onboarding / induction feedback % Hires in first year remaining in post eNPS score Metrics from Internal comms strategy
Our workforce is healthy and productive	Working together to embed a culture which enhances, promotes, and protects positive mental and physical health and wellbeing, where psychological safety is at the heart of our working practices in the way we shape roles and focusses on improving health and wellbeing across people's lives, driving connection and protects against social exclusion.	Wellbeing strategy and annual plan Access to OH Services Leadership & management development Clearly defined hybrid/flexible working practices driving the accommodation strategy	Metrics from wellbeing strategy No. of OH referrals ROI from development Retention rates eNPS
Our workforce is diverse and inclusive	A culture that brings together different views, ideas, and experiences not only to help us make decisions more effectively but also ensuring our policies reflect the needs of everyone in Lancashire. Our People are encouraged and supported to develop and reach their potential through being their authentic self.	Redesign of the recruitment process & EVP Engagement pulse surveys Clarity on roles and behaviours Using our data to drive future	Recruitment feedback Diversity dashboard Turnover/retention/absence per protected characteristic
Our workforce is future proof	A purposely designed career model and resourcing methodology that will attract and grow and retain people who are determined to use their skills, capabilities, and experience to deliver outcomes for Lancashire and its communities.	Building teams using our OD principles 'Talent by design' strategy and plan & EVP Redesign of the recruitment & selection process Workforce planning integral to business planning Creation of the employee master data set & dashboards	Recruitment feedback No Of applications Time to hire Cost to hire

Appendix 1.3 – The Proposed Service Model for People Services

	People Operations focuses on Now Business as usual, support function, needs a cultural shift to be more customer-focussed	Leadership, Organisational Effectiveness & Engagement Focuses on next 6-12months This is the bridge between current state and future state, small core team and flexible resource for specific skillsets as and when	Workforce Resilience focuses on the Future Resilience, building for the future, looking outside and links to labour market
People Strategy Delivery focus area	Our workforce is valued, supported, and engaged Our workforce is healthy and productive Our workforce is high performing	Our workforce is skilled (now) Our workforce is valued, supported, and engaged Our workforce is high performing Our workforce is diverse and inclusive	Our workforce is skilled (future) Our workforce is future proof Our workforce is high performing Our workforce is diverse and inclusive
Capabilities required	Business partnering – matrix managed between P&C and Directorates Management toolkits HR policies HR casework Manager advice and guidance Restructure & TUPE ER and consultation Traded services to schools Pay and remuneration policies Job evaluation OH, and employee wellbeing	Organisation values & competency frameworks Organisation design Organisation development People Change framework and project management of change Employee satisfaction/engagement & associated action plans Learning & development Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging Learning management system owner Career development Leadership & management development Employer recognition	Lead advisor to the \Employment committee/CMT/SIB Workforce / People strategy Workforce planning & forecasting Supplier/ commissioning hub Workforce data Talent – EVP, marketing, process, candidate journey Intranet/online internal offer Performance management Early careers/apprenticeships Social work and social care academy
Performance measures	Absenteeism Turnover rate Average time to hire Employee retention rate No of grievances and disciplinaries resolved	Learning & development investment per employee Employee satisfaction index % of roles as part of career development pathways EDI Dashboard ROI of OD interventions	eNPS No of hires coming from referrals Internal vs external hiring ratio % of roles with a succession plan Employer brand positioning (Glassdoor etc)
	Shared Services		
	Part of the operations workstream but supporting the whole team - this is the engine room, user-design focus, continually automating always looking for ways to deliver better services		

Appendix 1.4

Working Flexibly Policy & Procedure – 6 Month Policy Review

Policy Principles

Our ways of working are becoming increasingly flexible, with growing numbers of employees working from home or other locations, working part-time and varied hours, and we recognise the many benefits of agile working practices. Overall, we value flexibility as it supports us to meet individual and service requirements, which in turn improve the service we offer to our customers and residents. It also allows us to look at alternatives to reduce travel time and increase efficiency.

Although the nature of some roles within the council cannot be completely flexible due to the service requirements, we encourage managers to consider flexible working practices to effectively deliver their services.

This can also support managers and staff to consider how flexible working options can support their ability to flexibly adapt to changes in working practice and service needs.

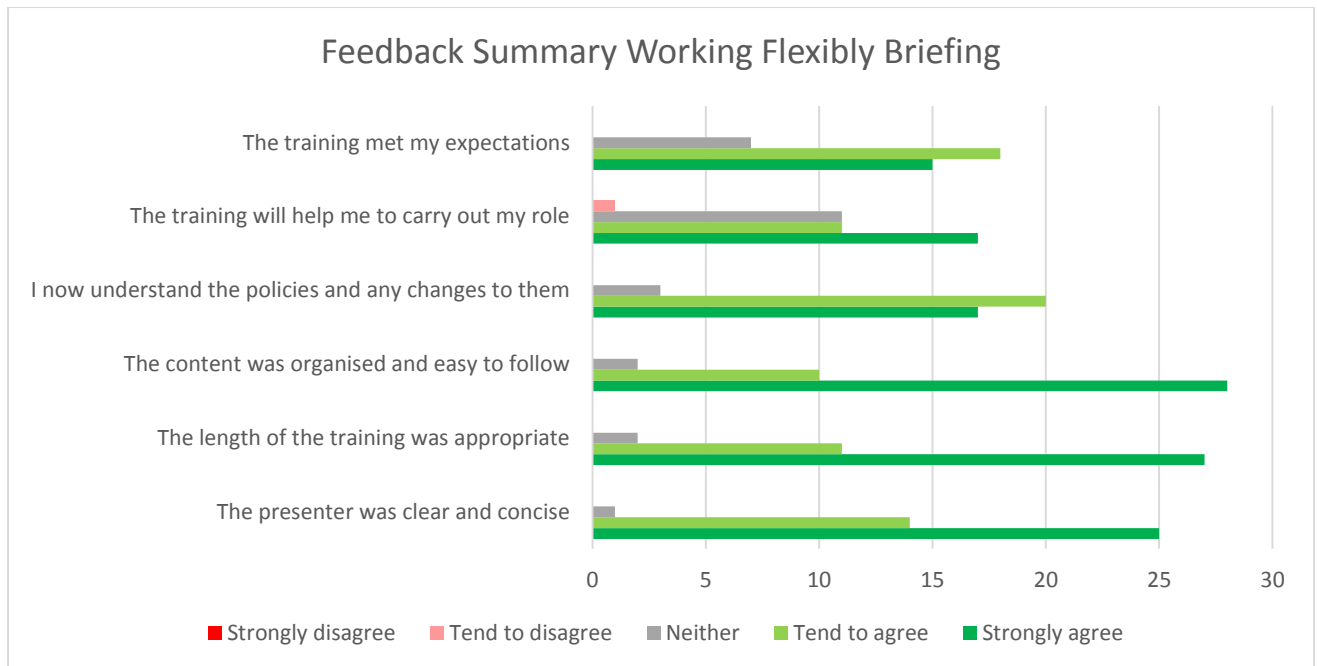
Policy changes now in place since the policy launch

- Right to request flexible working from day one of employment.
- Flexibility for management to consider more than one flexible working request within 12 months if the service wishes to consider it.
- Removal of flexi-time scheme (with time off in lieu available if required).
- Homeworking requests can now be made for any reason.
- Career break scheme removed, and sabbatical extended from six months to twelve months.

Feedback following the policy launch

General

- Low numbers of queries received (18 in total), of which questions were largely routine and procedural queries
- Positive feedback received on the number of flexible working options available
- Negative feedback centred around the removal of the flexi scheme, in response to which advice was provided on the application of time off in lieu
- Positive feedback received from the delivery of the working flexibly briefing as shown below











Trade Union Survey

Unison conducted a staff survey to understand views from their members on the updated working flexibly policy. Unison confirmed that approximately 40% of their members (non-schools) participated in the survey. A summary of the key points is as below:






- The ability to work flexibly may be dependent on the attitude of the manager, which led to the perception of inequality of opportunity to work flexibly.
- It was felt that time off in lieu was not being utilised satisfactorily, particularly for those that were using flexitime previously.
- Flexibility on where you work appears to be the most common improvement although 16% said that they believe their role is denied this flexibility.
- When you work is the second most common improvement although 30% said that they believe their role is denied this flexibility.
- The survey results showed:
- The updated policy had an overall approval rating of 5.12 (out of 10), and in relation to the management attitudes/approach to the updated policy the approval rating was 4.43 (out of 10).
- 12.78% of respondents had made a flexible working request under the new policy. 73.33% of those applicants had their flexible working request agreed by management.
- 3.64% of respondents had experienced an employer led flexible working request under the new policy.

Respondents were asked what the benefits were to the new policy:

Answer Choices			Response Percent
1	Better work life balance		57.47%
2	Helps with caring responsibilities		33.48%
3	Helps with health (e.g., reasonable adjustments, disabilities, managing health conditions)		37.56%
4	Greater flexibility		45.25%
5	Choice of when and how to work		33.48%
6	Don't know		18.55%
7	None		11.76%
8	Other (please specify):		13.12%

A good proportion of respondents said their work/life balance had improved, that the policy has supported staff with caring responsibilities, has supported staff managing health/disabilities and has afforded greater flexibility

Respondents were asked what are the problems with the policy?

Answer Choices			Response Percent
1	My job does not allow for flexibility		25.95%
2	Managers attitudes to flexible working		47.03%
3	TOIL not recorded/granted		25.41%
4	Removal of flexi time		42.16%
5	Other (please specify):		15.68%

As above the main issues centre around management attitudes and the removal of flexitime.

The survey showed that 68.95% of respondents were not affected by the removal of the flexitime scheme. The 31.05% of respondents who said they were affected said that they felt the main issue was an inability to reclaim additional hours worked and a lack of flexibility. This may suggest that time off in lieu is not being utilised correctly (if the additional hours are required owing to business need).

Overall, it demonstrated further work could be undertaken to embed the policy and ensure that management understand the policy and how it can be applied for both the benefit of the service and employee experience.

Staff / manager stakeholder engagement

Returning to the workplace pulse survey


In the recent returning to workplaces pulse survey for employees and managers the response was positive regarding the ability to work in a more flexible way:

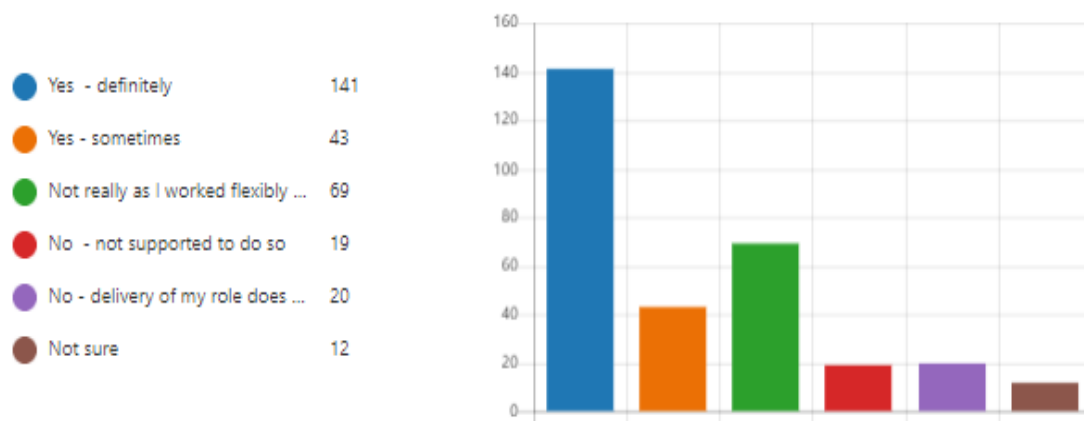
Employee survey

- It was very encouraging to see that 23% of staff were already working flexibly before the policy and procedure was launched and 61% of staff were able to carry out their role in a more flexible way after the launch of this policy in Nov 2021.
- It was also surprising to see that 6% of staff had no support to carry out their role in a flexible way and 4% were not sure on this matter. Also, it was helpful to learn that for 6% of staff, flexibility did not apply to their role and reinforces our understanding that “one size does not fit all”.

7. Since the launch of the working flexibly policy in Nov 21, do you feel that you have been able to carry out your role in a more flexible way?

[More Details](#)

 Insights



Manager survey

- It was very encouraging to see that one third of managers and their teams were already working flexibly before the policy was launched and 62% of managers were able to support their teams to deliver their service in a more flexible way after the launch of the policy in Nov 2021. 16% of managers have also seen an increase in requests to work more flexibly.
- Only 6% of managers felt they were unable to support their teams with working flexibly practices as there are service delivery constants not conducive to apply this policy in practice.
- 17% of managers reported seeing an increase in flexible working requests.

5. Since the launch of the working flexibly policy in Nov 21, have you been able to support your team to operate in a more flexible way?

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

Yes - definitely	104
Yes- sometimes	42
Not really - we have adopted f...	77
No - not possible due to servi...	14
No - was not aware of the wor...	1



6. Have you seen an increase in flexible working requests since the working flexibly policy was launched in November 2021?

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

Yes	39
No	186
Maybe	10



Feedback from leadership and management sessions

Between January and April 2022, the Skills, Learning & Development service asked delegates participating in leadership and management training sessions to provide their views on the working flexibly policy and whether this has supported their services in their delivery and benefited their staff. Their responses in summary were as follows:

- Managers felt they had embraced working flexibly throughout the last 2 years and recognised that staff had adapted their home life around this.
- It was seen that some staff felt they found working from home more productive, and in one case life changing as they struggled to commute owing to their disability.
- Generally positive response about being able to informally allow flexibility around start and end times to the day to meet caring needs.
- Managers felt the application of the policy will help with recruitment and retention.
- Delegates advised there is also a requirement to focus on business need.
- Managers spoken to had generally not seen an increase in flexible working requests.
- Staff understand the policy and understand the procedure involved in making flexible working requests.
- Small number of staff had raised they felt they had lost out on the ability to accrue 18 flexi days. Generally, it was felt that the culture had changed around time off in lieu, in terms of it being service led as opposed to employee led and this was seen as a positive from a management perspective.
- Some managers needed to reinforce to staff to take regular breaks.
- Some managers felt they needed structured rules to apply flexibility.

Feedback from manager stakeholder group

A manager stakeholder group was conducted on 18th May 2022, and the feedback received is as follows:

- There has been an increase seen in working flexibly requests, particularly around compressed hours.
- Consistency of application of working flexibly practices may vary from manager to manager.
- It was felt that guidance could further endorse business needs.
- The participants advised they believed that it was a good opportunity to reset the culture around accruing working time from being employee led to service led. They shared it was good to have the ability to flex when time can be taken back to suit the individual and service, however there was a suggestion that a cap is applied so that individuals are unable to accrue too much time off in lieu. Time off in lieu is felt to be preferable to using casuals to cover (due to the experience of existing staff) and it is seen as a good retention tool.
- Front line services find applying flexibility challenging.
- Managers are generally seeing increased productivity as a result of working flexibly and further ability to work remotely in some services, saving time on commute which may mean more access for service users to our staff

Recommendations / actions

The below sets out the recommendations and actions identified as a result of the review following input from stakeholders, the trade unions, and the data review.

The below actions will allow us to further embed the policy within the council and enhance further the working flexibly guidance.

- Offering hosted training for managers on the updated policy and procedure.
- Enhance the working flexibly guidance for managers around dealing with flexible working appeals
- Update guidance surrounding care for dependants to give further clarity on how this should be considered and how it links into other policies and procedures.
- Consider communication methods to further embed the policy principles, alongside the work being undertaken by the working flexibly board.
- No proposed changes to the working flexibly policy and procedure.

Wider Developments

Whilst the review was for a specific purpose as part of the consultation with the trade unions, since that time developments have taken place that consider the wider impact of flexible, agile and hybrid working arrangements to meet business needs. In addition, strategic workforce priorities have developed that will further focus on delivery of a people strategy, the aim of which is to fully ensure we work in a way that will actively deliver our priorities and enable our council to meet the needs of our residents.