



Item: 3

Human Resources Sub-committee: 5 November 2024.

Human Resources – Annual Overview.

Report by Corporate Director for Strategy, Performance and Business Solutions.

1. Overview

- 1.1. Although some elements of workforce data are reported to Service committees as performance indicators on a six-monthly basis, in terms of the Scheme of Administration, the Human Resources Sub-committee should receive an Annual Overview report covering key areas of information on the workforce and transactional activity and is attached as Appendices 1 and 2 to this report.
- 1.2. There are a number of key transactional activities around workforce management and recruitment which are undertaken or co-ordinated by the Human Resources and Organisational Development service which are not generally brought to the attention of Elected Members as they are operational in nature. However, this report provides a useful overview of these and associated trends compared to previous years.
- 1.3. Included in the statistics is data on the following areas:
 - Recruitment activity and associated processes
 - Occupational Health
 - Sickness Absence
 - Job Evaluation
 - Change in Establishment process
 - Staffing numbers
 - Formal employee processes (Appendix 2)
 - Leaver information (Appendix 2)
- 1.4. Due to the low numbers in some categories of formal employee processes, and the risk therefore of identifying individuals, this has been regarded as exempt information and is contained in Appendix 2.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. It is recommended that members of the Sub-Committee:
- i. Scrutinise the Human Resources Statistics and Employee Data for 2023/24, attached as Appendices 1 and 2 to this report.

3. Exempt and/or Confidential Information

- 3.1. Under Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public should be excluded from the meeting in respect of any discussion relating to Appendix 2. Appendix 2 contains exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

For Further Information please contact:

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Implications of Report

1. **Financial** – There are no significant financial implications arising directly from this report.
2. **Legal** – There are no significant legal implications arising directly from this report.
3. **Corporate Governance** – The receipt of annual reports relating to staff numbers and statistics is a referred function of the Human Resources Sub-committee.
4. **Human Resources** – The information in this report is used to help inform workforce priorities and actions and to monitor trends within the Council.
5. **Equalities** – Not Applicable.
6. **Island Communities Impact** – Not applicable.
7. **Links to Council Plan** – The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the following Council Plan strategic priorities:
 - Growing our economy.
 - Strengthening our Communities.
 - Developing our Infrastructure.
 - Transforming our Council.
8. **Links to Local Outcomes Improvement Plan** – The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the following Local Outcomes Improvement Plan priorities:
 - Cost of Living.
 - Sustainable Development.
 - Local Equality.

9. **Environmental and Climate Risk** – Not applicable.
10. **Risk** – Not applicable.
11. **Procurement** – Not applicable.
12. **Health and Safety** – Not applicable.
13. **Property and Assets** – Not applicable.
14. **Information Technology** – Not applicable.
15. **Cost of Living** – Not applicable.

List of Background Papers

None.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Human Resources statistics 2023-24

Appendix 2: Restricted employee data 2023-24

Appendix 1.

Human Resources Statistics for 2023/24

1. Recruitment Activity

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Advertised vacancies	444	800	1,104	1,072
Re-advertised vacancies	110	211	511	365
Offers made	675	875	761	647
Total number of job applicants	N/A	N/A	3,386	3,536

Recruitment during 2023/24 continued at the same high volume experienced in the previous year, reflecting the challenging recruitment market the Council is operating within. The figures include all types of recruitment; permanent, temporary and relief, casual and supply engagements.

Associated with recruitment, the number of PVG scheme checks required in 2023/24 was 451 compared to 545 in 2022/23. This number includes other non-employment related checks the Council carries out such as those for Elected Members, Foster carers, Students and Volunteers.

A new criminal convictions checking regime by the Scottish Government was due to be introduced in 2024, however this has now been delayed until 2025/26. Looking ahead this will see a legal obligation on the Council to carry out re-checking of any employee working in a 'protected role' i.e. working with children or protected adults, every 5 years. This re-checking is something that is not currently required and so will increase workload and cost of the employee checking process.

A positive trend in recruitment activity is a decrease in the number of posts being re-advertised, although within this figure there are posts that will have been re-advertised on several occasions. A further positive sign is an increasing trend for number of applicants; however this does not always result in a corresponding increase in applicants who meet the requirements for the role.

Recruitment and retention of staff across the Council is an acknowledged significant challenge, and solutions are not simple or straight forward to identify or put in place. The Council, like many employers across Scotland, face a shrinking workforce pool since Brexit, and a UK Government approach to Visas and immigration that has made the ability to attract and recruit from Europe and further afield significantly more challenging and costly for employers, and less attractive for prospective applicants.

The UK faces national skills shortages in an increasing range of professional and front-line roles from Social Workers, Teachers, many other skilled/professional roles, and many direct service provision roles including care and early learning and childcare.

Orkney continues to face a range of local factors that impact on recruitment including a challenging housing market with a shortage of affordable rental properties; virtually full employment with local unemployment levels below 2%; and a disparity in funding with other Island Councils that impacts on both staffing capacity and salary structures in some areas.

Since the COVID pandemic, Orkney also faces increased competition from many organisations not based in Orkney who are embracing and enabling a remote or home working approach.

This has created a wider range of professional employment opportunities that simply did not exist pre-COVID, which whilst positive in many ways for the local economy, places increased challenge on the limited local employment market.

1.1. New employees recruited to Council (2023/24)

Contract Type	Permanent		Relief		Temporary	
	22/23	23/24	22/23	23/24	22/23	23/24
All Council	154	138	136	109	54	61
ELH	54	50	76	51	40	33
ESR	24	19	9	9	4	8
NSI	28	22	13	9	6	11
OHAC	38	28	37	39	3	0
SPBS	10	19	1	1	1	9

1.2. Current employees moving jobs or taking up additional jobs (2023/24)

Contract Type	Permanent		Relief		Temporary	
	22/23	23/24	22/23	23/24	22/23	23/24
All Council	239	227	24	84	33	29
ELH	81	71	5	5	24	23
ESR	27	19	0	15	2	2
NSI	26	33	3	17	5	0
OHAC	87	83	16	46	2	1
SPBS	18	21	0	1	0	3

2. Occupational Health

Activity	2022/23	2023/24
Pre-employment Questionnaire	244	225
Pre-employment Assessment	31	65
Management Referrals	70	73
Review Appointments	60	72
Ill Health Retirement Independent Registered Medical Professional Assessment & IRMP Information Provision	No Data returned	13

These figures show the number of new employees who require to complete a pre-employment questionnaire as part of assessing their fitness to work. This figure is lower than the total number of new starts as many employees who may be transferring between jobs within the Council do not require to have their fitness re-assessed if the work is of a similar nature. Pre-employment assessments occur when a questionnaire identifies issues that the Occupational Health service requires to assess in more detail with an in-person appointment.

The other main activity within Occupational Health is referrals of existing staff for assessment of health issues that may be impacting on their ability to work and subsequent reviews.

The Council has reviewed its Occupational Health provision due to the retirement of the current provider in November 2024 and is currently in the process of looking to put in place a single provider arrangement to enable a more integrated approach to employee wellbeing advice and support, with a view to positively impacting on levels of sickness absence and improving employee wellbeing more generally.

3. Sickness Absence (FTE Days)

Reason for Sickness Absence	ELH 22/23	ELH 23/24	ESR 22/23	ESR 23/24	NSI 22/23	NSI 23/24
Minor Illness/Conditions	1,967.03	2,688.38	216.28	297.35	805.31	1,027.36
Injuries/Accidents	63.84	250.85	50.43	17.71	270.24	126.35
Injuries/Accidents – work related	81	29.84	0	152.00	25.68	9.00
Recurring Medical Conditions	640.57	297.46	15	56.00	76.43	397.49
Acute Medical Conditions	899.69	1,029.12	203.73	194.84	775.51	489.96
Hospitalisation for Treatment	428.13	652.96	262.45	132.02	219.49	274.24
Musculoskeletal Injuries	733.21	402.14	113.4	230.80	413.99	625.63
Stress	809.07	790.60	343	172.23	203.31	118.35
Stress – work related	331.37	412.83	20	16.00	442	38.43
Mental Ill Health	607.50	650.52	314.14	66.57	269.54	49.85
Maternity/Pregnancy Related	85.45	173.92	40.20	12.00	20.54	30.19
Phased Return to Work	171.25	81.96	0	3.71	68.91	36.12
Other	532.04	520.03	83.46	57.71	63.24	111.53
COVID-19	791.10	302.28	95.65	33.71	211.94	49.83
Menopause Related	16.57	12.45	0	0	0	1.36
No Reason Given	0	2	8	0	0	0
Totals	8,157.82	8,298.37	1,765.7	1,442.65	3,866.13	3,395.69
% of Council	35.38%	36.22%	7.66%	6.30%	16.77%	14.83%

Reason for Sickness Absence	OHAC 22/23	OHAC 23/24	SPBS 22/23	SPBS 23/24	Council Total Days 22/23	Council Total Days 23/24	Council Total % 22/23	Council Total % 23/24
Minor Illness/Conditions	1,167.84	2,225.69	85.31	458.61	4,241.77	6,694.39	18.40%	29.23%
Injuries/Accidents	437.41	431.81	5	39.30	826.92	886.02	3.59%	3.78%
Injuries/Accidents – work related	67.37	7.38	0	0	174.05	198.22	0.75%	0.87%
Recurring Medical Conditions	373.49	415.12	42.4	372.94	1,147.89	1,540.04	4.98%	6.72%
Acute Medical Conditions	1,058.59	1,025.08	32	49.00	2,969.52	2,787.00	12.88%	12.17%
Hospitalisation for Treatment	431.6	422.84	98	75.33	1,439.67	1,567.39	6.24%	6.84%
Musculoskeletal Injuries	1,405.22	550.85	0	0	2,665.82	1,809.42	11.56%	7.90%
Stress	396.32	867.47	1.8	9.21	1,753.53	1,957.86	7.61%	8.55%
Stress – work related	504.60	450.58	29	0	1,326.97	917.84	5.76%	4.01%
Mental Ill Health	1114.13	795.80	0	147.00	2,305.31	1,709.74	10.00%	7.46%
Maternity/Pregnancy Related	53.92	44.86	0	0	200.11	260.97	0.87%	1.14%
Phased Return to Work	229.85	39.46	14	21.00	484.01	182.25	2.10%	0.80%
Other	707.84	652.19	20	127.66	1,406.58	1,469.12	6.10%	6.41%
COVID-19	923.84	425.19	65.6	59.87	2,088.13	870.88	9.06%	3.80%
Menopause Related	0	55.60	0	0	16.57	71.42	0.07%	0.31%
No Reason Given	0	0	0	0	8	2	0.03%	0.01%
Totals	8,872.05	8,409.92	393.11	1,359.92	23,054.85	22,904.55		
% of Council	38.48%	36.72%	1.71%	5.94%	100%	100%		

Sickness absence figures are produced regularly as part of the Council’s suite of cross Council Performance Indicators and reported to service committees every 6 months as well as annually as part of the Local Government Benchmarking Framework.

We already know from this that the Council’s absence rates have increased in total in the post Covid period, which mirrors the trend across other Authorities and indeed the UK workforce.

The above table provides a different analysis across reasons for absence which will be important for us to track and monitor for trends, so we know how best to support employees and reduce absence levels.

We can see that there was a minor decrease in overall days lost to sickness absence in 2023/24 compared to the previous year. Notable changes in reason for absence are:

1. An increase in short term absences reported as specifically due to minor illnesses. It is likely that the significant decrease in absences specifically reported as owing to Covid-19 accounts for the bulk of this change.
2. Changes to the distribution across categories relating to stress and mental ill health. Overall there has been an approximate reduction of 3% across these categories which is pleasing, however what we see within that is an increasing trend for absences due to stress that is not work related.
3. A reduction in absences reported as due to musculoskeletal injuries.

4. Job Evaluation

Service by Year	Number		% of Council	
	22/23	23/24	22/23	23/24
Education, Leisure, and Housing	9	16	10.5	28.6
Enterprise and Sustainable Regeneration	29	9	33.7	16.1
Neighbourhood Services and Infrastructure	29	22	33.7	39.3
Orkney Health and Care	16	4	18.6	7.1
Strategy, Performance and Business Solutions	3	5	3.5	8.9
Council (overall)	86	56	100	100

Job Evaluation is the process by which pay grading for most jobs within the Council is assessed, and therefore their remuneration. This is undertaken in accordance with the nationally agreed SJC Job Evaluation Scheme. Job Evaluation is required when new unique jobs not previously evaluated are created, or when job roles are substantively altered and therefore require re-evaluation. This process can be fairly time intensive for the managers of roles under evaluation and for Human Resources Operations team.

Whilst the statistics above show a decrease in actual evaluation numbers, what the numbers do not reveal is the increasing complexity of the re-evaluation process. An evaluation process can now regularly consist of several actual evaluations and significant time spent with managers at all levels having to ensure that the evaluation process is being used appropriately and that outcomes remain consistent across the Council SJC workforce.

It is anticipated that the changing demands on services coupled with the need to review service delivery in line with available resources, will mean an increased number of adjusted job descriptions and therefore more job evaluation work. We have now put in place a process of monitoring this level of work to enable a more accurate reporting in this area going forward.

5. Establishment Changes

Service by Year Number	Number		% of Council	
	22/23	23/24	22/23	23/24
Education, Leisure, and Housing	270	339	49.8	53.2
Enterprise and Sustainable Regeneration	92	65	16.9	10.2
Neighbourhood Services and Infrastructure	61	100	11.2	15.7
Orkney Health and Care	89	92	16.4	14.5
Strategy, Performance and Business Solutions	31	41	5.7	6.4
Council (overall)	542	637	100	100

These figures denote the number of Change In Establishment forms approved; it should be noted that many individual forms cover multiple posts/changes so the actual number of approved establishment changes is significantly higher.

Change in establishment exists to accurately track changes to the Council's staffing establishment and to ensure appropriate sign off in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation to Officers is undertaken.

This process is significantly resource intensive and time consuming. The Council's current HR and Payroll system is not designed to include the internal approval process and therefore necessitates a separate administrative process to be managed.

6. Staffing Numbers

6.1. Headcount for 2022/23

Headcount at 01/04/2022	Total	Permanent	Temporary	Relief
All Council Employees	2,694	1,923	237	534
ELH	1,299	860	154	285
ESR	263	183	14	66
NSI	428	337	20	71
OHAC	719	482	43	194
SPBS	100	87	9	4

Headcount at 31/03/2023	Total	Permanent	Temporary	Relief
All Council Employees	2,723	1,974	200	549
ELH	1,346	890	142	314
ESR	285	200	14	71
NSI	401	334	13	54
OHAC	709	473	33	203
SPBS	109	99	4	6

6.2. FTE Staffing for 2022/23

FTE at 01/04/2022	Total	Permanent	Temporary	Relief
All Council Employees	1,646.2941	1,469.2970	176.9971	N/A
ELH	735.6704	629.8448	105.8256	N/A
ESR	172.6372	159.1515	13.4857	N/A
NSI	283.7299	265.0847	18.6452	N/A
OHAC	376.1995	344.6588	31.5407	N/A
SPBS	78.0571	70.5571	7.5000	N/A

FTE at 31/03/2023	Total	Permanent	Temporary	Relief
All Council Employees	1,679.3478	1,514.3456	165.0021	N/A
ELH	760.7366	647.7596	112.9770	N/A
ESR	189.8808	176.4345	13.4463	N/A
NSI	272.8476	264.3668	8.4811	N/A
OHAC	368.6396	342.5562	26.0834	N/A
SPBS	87.2429	83.2286	4.0143	N/A

6.3. Headcount for 2023/24

Headcount at 01/04/2023	Total	Permanent	Temporary	Relief
All Council Employees	2,723	1,974	200	549
ELH	1,346	890	142	314
ESR	285	200	14	71
NSI	401	334	13	54
OHAC	709	473	33	203
SPBS	109	99	4	6

Headcount at 31/03/2024	Total	Permanent	Temporary	Relief
All Council Employees	2,755	1,991	231	533
ELH	1,355	880	150	325
ESR	301	210	53	38
NSI	388	316	13	59
OHAC	655	437	17	201
SPBS	190	167	11	12

6.3. FTE Staffing for 2023/24

FTE at 01/04/2023	Total	Permanent	Temporary	Relief
All Council Employees	1,679.3478	1,514.3456	165.0021	N/A
ELH	760.7366	647.7596	112.9770	N/A
ESR	189.8808	176.4345	13.4463	N/A
NSI	272.8476	264.3668	8.4811	N/A
OHAC	368.6396	342.5562	26.0834	N/A
SPBS	87.2429	83.2286	4.0143	N/A

FTE at 31/03/2024	Total	Permanent	Temporary	Relief
All Council Employees	1,700.0309	1,529.3663	170.6647	N/A
ELH	748.2382	637.3469	110.8912	N/A
ESR	208.6638	186.4931	22.1706	N/A
NSI	163.0824	253.0259	10.0565	N/A
OHAC	335.7080	319.3188	16.3892	N/A
SPBS	142.8386	132.6814	10.1571	N/A

Difference in Staffing	2022/23	2023/24
Permanent FTE Staffing Change	+45.05 FTE	+15.02 FTE

The overall staffing figures show the breakdown by number of employees on permanent contracts, temporary contracts and casual/relief/supply work as well as the full-time equivalent picture.

Glossary

ELH	Education, Leisure, and Housing
ESR	Enterprise and Sustainable Regeneration
NSI	Neighbourhood Services and Infrastructure
OHAC	Orkney Health and Care
SPBS	Strategy, Performance and Business Solutions