

Strategic Workforce Planning Priorities

2024 - 28

Introduction

Attracting and retaining talented people is one of the main strategic objectives set out in our People Strategy. Strong workforce planning ensures we have the right people in the right roles, with the right skills at the right time, and for the right cost.



In the period since 2012 the council's overall headcount has increased by 27%. Figure two shows the annual trends since 2012 in each type of employment. Until the Covid 19 pandemic, temporary posts stayed largely consistent in terms of their proportion of the workforce with permanent and casual workers showing a steady increase.

Over the last three years, following a spike in 2021, there has been a decrease in the number of permanent staff to just below pre pandemic levels, and an increase in the number of temporary and casual staff. This can be largely attributed to temporary ringfenced funding for additional projects and specific activities associated with COVID19 recovery and council priorities such as refugee resettlement and the rural growth deal. A total of 15 Modern Apprentices across areas such as early years and digital are also included in the increase in the number of temporary posts since 2021.

The main reductions in permanent employees over the last three years have been in professional, personal service (includes roles such as Classroom and ASN Assistants) and elementary occupations (includes roles such as catering and cleaning staff). The main increases in temporary and casual employment have also been within these areas. With roles such as ASN assistants, social workers, catering and cleaning roles examples of those who have seen reductions in permanent numbers and a corresponding increase in temporary or casual arrangements.

Temporary employment can be attractive for those seeking a portfolio career; however, it provides less certainty for employees. Our data shows that turnover in our temporary posts is higher, as those approaching the end of temporary arrangements seek another assignment. The Verity House Agreement, a new partnership between the Scottish Government and COSLA, is expected to allow more flexibility in spend for councils, with less ring-fenced or directed funding. Having more flexibility in funding could reduce the requirement to have such a high number of temporary posts.

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Figure Two: Workforce Trends

The average age of a council employee is 46 years.

Like the other Local Authorities in Scotland, we have an ageing workforce with around half our employees



Growing Our Own (GOO)

GOO is the council's longstanding approach to developing our own talent. Providing opportunities for local school leavers and existing employees to gain qualifications and work experience related to their personal career aspirations and our workforce planning priorities. Our GOO framework includes, foundation and modern apprentices, student sponsorship, work experience and shadowing, graduate trainees, and professional qualifications as well as other bespoke learning.

In recent years the council has earmarked funding to support delivery of GOO opportunities linked to our high-risk workforce planning activities at service level. This is over and above the GOO funding allocated by individual teams to support their workforce planning actions.

As part of our operational workforce planning conversations, we will seek to quantify the activities taking place at team level to provide an overall picture of the GOO activity taking place across the organisation.

Retaining older workers

We value the wealth of experience and knowledge that our older workers have, and with many people choosing to continue working after the traditional retirement age, we want to make it easy for our older workforce to continue to contribute to the Council's success. Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) reports show that the most important consideration for older workers when deciding on work is flexibility. We will therefore focus on understanding what type of flexibility is important, for those considering or approaching retirement.

Recruitment

Following the pandemic, the council's overall risk rating in terms of recruitment has been a mixed picture. Six teams within the council have seen a reduction in their risk rating citing the remote working opportunities now available widening the pool of potential candidates. Managers have also highlighted the good work being undertaken by the communications team in promoting our vacancies on social media as having a positive impact on their ability to recruit.

Around 63% of our job applicants already live in Argyll and Bute. We see this as an opportunity to attract applications from out with our area supporting our ABplace2B aspirations.

Nine teams have seen an increase in their recruitment risk rating citing national skills shortages, pay and competition in the labour market, temporary funding for posts, Argyll and Bute's housing emergency and the make-up of our job descriptions/ approach to recruitment as factors contributing to this.

Agency workers are used to fill gaps where Council teams are unable to recruit to vacancies. Our Health of the Organisation reporting shows that spend on agency workers has significantly increased when compared to pre pandemic spend. The increase in agency spend has been mainly within Adult Care, and Development



and Economic Growth, both areas which are experiencing national shortages in the labour market. The HR and OD team are undertaking several activities, including a review of our approach to recruitment and relocation which are aimed to address or better understand these recruitment challenges.

Succession Planning

Our corporate plan sets out the priorities that our Elected Members aim to deliver over the coming years as

Figure Four: Teachers Workdays Lost

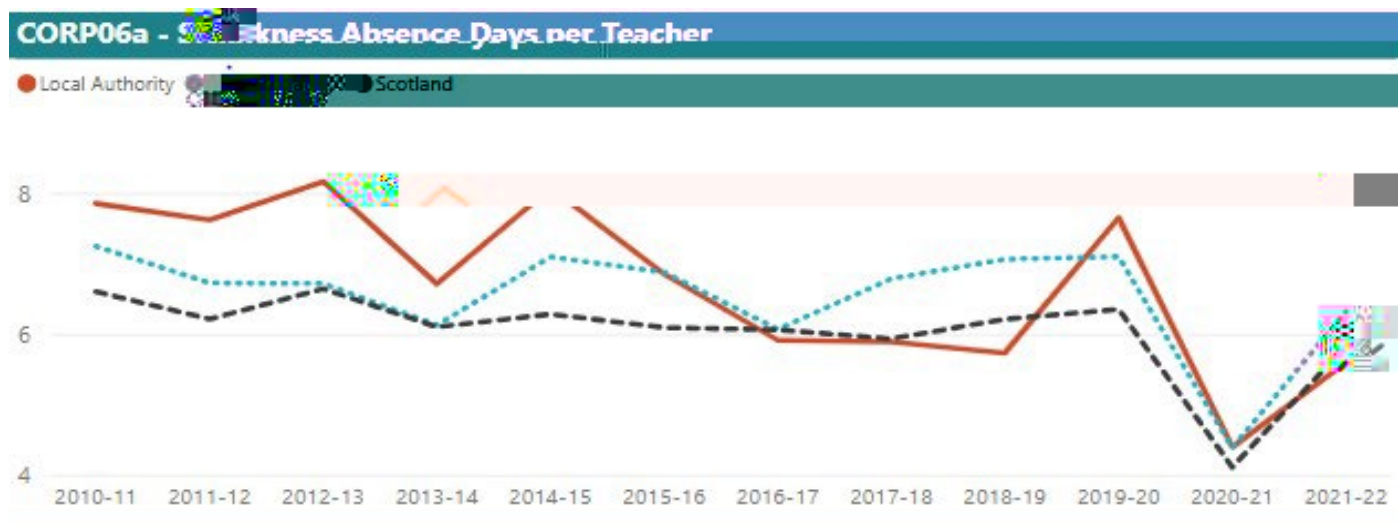
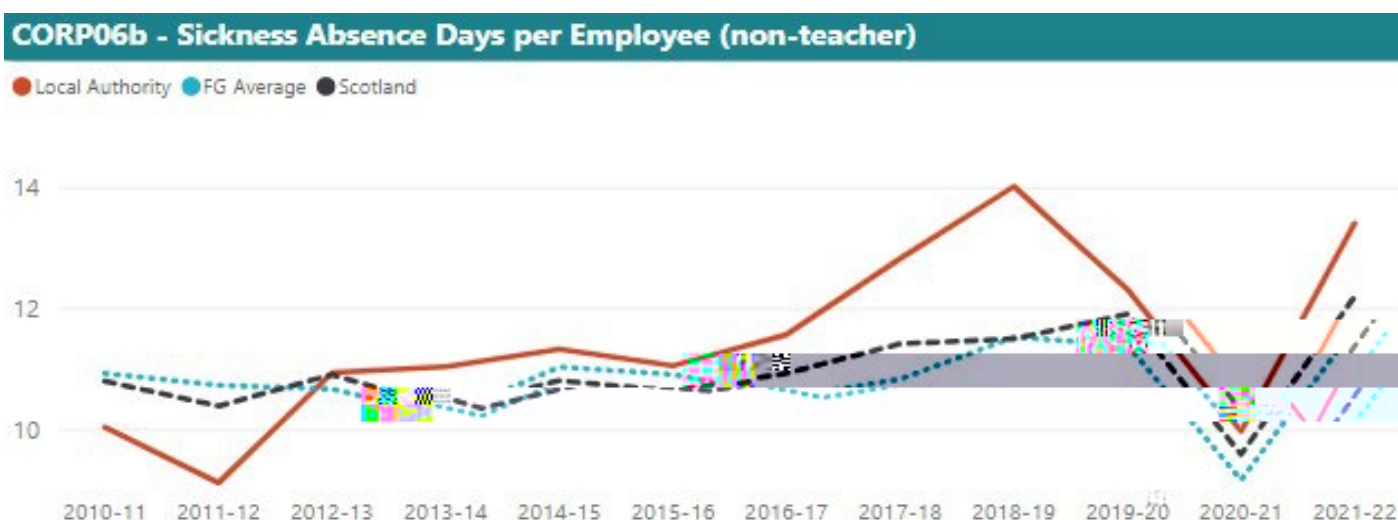


Figure 5: Scottish Local Government Employee Workdays Lost



As well as supporting people when they are unwell, the focus of our wellbeing strategy is on prevention. We do this by supporting our workforce to make healthy choices that improve their physical, mental, and financial wellbeing.

We also set out in our people strategy our objective to provide fair work. We regularly survey our workforce on the issues that impact their wellbeing. A survey is planned for 2024 and actions arising from that will form part of our delivery plan for future years. In addition, we plan to include sickness absence as a category in our workforce planning risk matrix and bring this data into our operational workforce planning conversations.



Equalities and Equal Pay

The Council's diversity equality and inclusion policy sets out our intention to ensure equality fairness and inclusion for all those in the Council's employment. We have a segregated workforce in some roles. For example, people working in home care are 99% female. By contrast, employees in Roads and Amenities and IT are predominantly male. The prevalence of females is particularly noticeable within our education service.

We aim to widen opportunity for people in job roles that they may not have considered otherwise and create opportunity for all.

It is hard to make comparisons between 2011 Census data and our workforce data regarding sex, disability and religion because of the high proportion of missing data and 'prefer not to say' within the workforce data.

Figure Six: Part time workforce by



