

Time began: 10.32am
Time ended: 11:05am

**Personnel Committee
11 April 2024**

Present Councillor Evans (Chair)
 Councillors Bonser, Nawaz and Amin.

Officers present Liz Moore - Head of HR and OD
 Tania Hay - Organisational Development Manager
 Helen Bounds - HR Advisor Lead

25/23 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received for Councillor Smale and Councillor A Holmes.

26/23 Late Items to be Introduced by the Chair

There were no late items.

27/23 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

28/23 Minutes of the Meeting held on 11 January 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 January 2024 were agreed as an accurate record.

**29/23 Colleague health and wellbeing update and
 Quarter three Attendance Management
 Performance**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Corporate Management which provided an update on colleague health and wellbeing and Quarter three Attendance Management Performance. This was presented by the HR Advisor Lead.

It was noted that the Council provided an in-house, doctor-led Occupational Health service. It was reported that the Council had achieved its annual SLA of 15 days from referral to consultation. It was noted that the Occupational Health service was on track against service level agreements, delivering appointments within 5-10 days of receipt of the referral.

It was reported that an integral part of the Council's wellbeing offer was the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), which was externally hosted. It was noted that colleagues could access information and advice on a range of

health and financial matters, 24 hours a day and 7 days a week. The Committee noted that a total of 14 new counselling cases were opened in January and a further 8 in February. It was reported that the People Services directorate remained the highest user of the counselling service during the period January - February.

The Committee noted that the average take-up remained at seven counselling sessions each and that the most popular format for the session was telephone consultations. It was reported that the top three reasons for accessing counselling sessions across all Council directorates were stress/anxiety, women's health and family reasons. It was noted that Personal Issues accounted for 72% of access and work-related issues accounted for 28% of access. It was reported that headline figures of levels of take up are shared at a directorate level.

The Committee noted that the Council's performance on attendance for the current financial year quarter three result of 3.33 FTE days lost showed an increase on the last quarter with a year-to-date result of 8.83 days per FTE. It was reported that this was a continued overall decrease when compared to the year-to-date result for 2022/23.

The Committee noted that the quarter three result gave a year-end forecast of 11.77 FTE days lost which would be 1.27 days higher than the year-end target of 10.5 FTE days lost but was 1.57 days lower than the 2022/23 year-end results of 13.34 days lost.

It was noted that HR continued to share attendance HR dashboard information with Directors and Heads of Service. The Committee noted that the dashboard included a breakdown of absence reasons, starters and leavers and turnover rates which all formed part of the picture of absence. It was reported that this information fed directly into the Service Area action plans which included long term and short-term absence cases. It was noted that HR Advisors actively supported Managers through the formal part of the Attendance Management Policy.

It was reported that the Council's prevention focussed wellbeing approach supported the Council's vision of ensuring that health and wellbeing was embedded in everything that the Council did and championed at all levels and across all functions, so that positive wellbeing became part of the Council's culture.

It was noted that HR's focus over the next few months would be:

- Developing and launching a wellbeing champion network to signpost colleagues on a range of health and wellbeing issues. HR's aim was to have 10% of the workforce as wellbeing champions/advocates.

- Launching new internal wellbeing pages to support colleagues and provide the tools needed to make healthy choices, so that colleagues could continue to take responsibility for improving their own health and wellbeing.
- Developing a wellbeing activity calendar, and all the activity associated with the planned actions to be supported by the identified champion network.
- Continuing with the attendance group work and ensuring that managers were making progress against their action plans.

A councillor asked whether any targeted work was taking place in specific directorates. It was reported that unique targeted work was taking place in each area and that every service area over target had a specific action plan.

A councillor asked why the target for the champion network was 10%. It was noted that 10% would be a starting point and that this figure would be kept under review.

A councillor asked whether a future report could include figures for the overall number of days lost per department and the cost of agency cover for these absences. The HR Advisor Lead agreed to include this information in a future report.

Resolved:

- 1. to note the colleague health and wellbeing offer that is available to the Council's colleagues, and the importance of supporting colleagues to take personal responsibility for their wellbeing.**
- 2. to note the Council's attendance management performance for quarter three of 3.33 FTE days lost and a year-end forecast of 11.77 FTE days lost for 2023/24, against a year-end target of 10.5 FTE days lost.**

30/23 The Apprenticeship Programme

The Committee received a report of the Director of Corporate Management which provided an update on The Apprenticeship Programme. This was presented by the Organisational Development Manager.

It was reported that the Apprenticeship Team had had a very busy National Apprentice Week attending events at Buxton and Leek College, University of Derby, and Derby College Group. It was noted that the team ran a design an apprenticeship poster competition within the city secondary schools and that the winners had their designs displayed on the big screens across the City.

It was reported that during the event that the Apprenticeship Team attended at the Dome campus in Buxton, the team was awarded with 'Apprentice Employer of the Year' for the support they gave colleagues who were studying for their Level 3 Team Lead apprenticeships. The Committee noted that the Council had three nominees for Nottingham Trent University awards and that one of

the Council's Social Work apprentices had been nominated for 'Outstanding Apprentice of the Year' – Health, Education and Care.

It was reported that the council had two colleagues who had been nominated for 'Apprentice Mentor of the Year'. It was reported that both were Senior Training and Education Officers one from Childrens Services and one from Adults Services. The Committee noted that two apprentices had also been nominated for Enterprising Women Awards by the East Midlands Chamber.

It was reported that on 18 March at the SME Business Connect, the Prime Minister announced that the Government was investing a further £60m to boost apprenticeships, with the aim of increasing opportunities for young people, and equipping businesses with the skills they needed to thrive. The Committee noted that this additional funding was to meet increased employer demand for apprenticeships and to support the continued provision of high-quality training.

It was reported that the new measures announced included:

- From 1 April, SME employers who do not pay the levy no longer had to contribute to the cost of apprenticeship training for 16–21-year-olds. The government was fully funding the training costs for these individuals.
- From 6 April, levy-paying employers could transfer up to 50% of their funds to support apprenticeships in other businesses – double the current 25%.

A councillor asked whether the Council would be able to transfer 50% of its funds to local employers. It was noted that the Apprenticeship Team was working closely with Regeneration & Economic Growth along with 20 training providers to find new employers in the city that could benefit from this change.

It was reported that removing the co-investment charge for 16–21-year-olds would reduce training costs for smaller employers and that the increase to the levy transfer limit would boost flexibility for large employers like DCC, helping to ensure that the Council could support other employers locally.

It was noted that between the start of the Apprenticeship Levy in April 2017 and 26 March 2024, the Council had transferred a total of £5,073,839 into its Apprenticeship Levy Digital Account. It was reported that to date the Council had drawn down £2,661,056 for internal apprenticeship training programmes and had transferred £255,044 of its Levy fund to several local employers.

It was noted that between November 2019 and March 2024, £693,713 of the Councils Levy fund had expired and had been returned to the Department for Education to support funding the national apprenticeship programme. It was reported that as of 26 March 2024, there was £1,468,405 in the Council's Levy fund.

A councillor asked whether any figures on BAME apprentices were available. It was noted that these figures were available and that the Organisational Development Manager would share these figures with Committee members.

Resolved:

- 1. to note the recent successes with the apprenticeship programme and to congratulate the colleagues and apprentices who had been nominated for awards.**
- 2. to note the information on the Government's announcement to increase investment for apprenticeships.**
- 3. to note the Levy payments made to date, the drawdown for training programmes and expired funds as of 26 March 2024.**

MINUTES END.