

Item: 3

Human Resources Sub-committee: 27 May 2025.

Human Resources – Annual Overview.

Report by Director of Infrastructure and Organisational Development.

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.
- 1.2. The relevant data and information is attached as Appendices 1 and 2 to this report, along with commentary and analysis.
- 1.3. 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.
- 1.4. Included in the statistics is data on the following areas:
 - Recruitment activity and associated processes including the Social Care Staffing Recruitment Campaign.
 - Occupational Health.
 - Sickness Absence.
 - Job Evaluation.
 - Change in Establishment process.
 - Staffing numbers.
 - Customer Enquiries.
 - Formal employee processes (Appendix 2).
 - Leaver information (Appendix 2).

- 1.5. 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. Note the Human Resources Statistics 2024/25 and Employee Data 2024/25, 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 matter to 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.
 - ☐ Improving Population Health.
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.

Background Papers

None

Appendices

Appendix 1: Human Resources statistics 2024-25.

Appendix 2: Restricted employee data 2024-25.

Appendix 1.

Human Resources Statistics for 2024/25

1. Recruitment Activity (excluding OHAC Campaign in 2024/25)

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Advertised vacancies excl. care campaign	444	800	1,104	1,072	890
Re-advertised vacancies excl. care campaign	110	211	511	365	225
Offers made	675	875	761	647	790
Total job applicants excl. care Campaign applicants	N/A	N/A	3,386	3,536	3,519

1.1. Recruitment Activity (including OHAC Campaign in 2024/25)

	2024/25
Advertised vacancies incl. care campaign	2,314
Re-advertised vacancies incl. care campaign	1,569
Offers made	840
Total job applicants <u>including</u> care campaign applicants	4,187

2. New employees recruited to Council (2024/25)

Contract Type	Permanent			Relief			Temporary		
Year	22/23	23/24	24/25	22/23	23/24	24/25	22/23	23/24	24/25
Council	154	138	160	136	109	124	54	61	34
ELH	54	50	52	76	51	67	40	33	23
ESR	24	19	19	9	9	10	4	8	4
NSI	28	22	30	13	9	11	6	11	3
OHAC	38	28	44	37	39	36	3	0	3
SPBS	10	19	15	1	1	0	1	9	1

2.1. Current employees moving jobs or taking up additional jobs (2024/25)

Contract Type	Permanent			Relief			Temporary		
Year	22/23	23/24	24/25	22/23	23/24	24/25	22/23	23/24	24/25
Council	239	227	183	24	84	150	33	29	63
ELH	81	71	68	5	5	44	24	23	47
ESR	27	19	29	0	15	14	2	2	2
NSI	26	33	18	3	17	19	5	0	6
OHAC	87	83	57	16	46	72	2	1	6
SPBS	18	21	11	0	1	1	0	3	2

3. Vacancies (Permanent established post vacancies only) at 31 March 2025

	Vacant Posts (Number)	Establishment (Posts)	Vacant % (Posts)	Vacant Posts (FTE)	Establishment (FTE)	Vacant % (FTE)
ELH	102	1365	7.47%	38.98	854.18	4.56%
ESR	20	315	6.34%	13.62	233.07	5.84%
NSI	38	410	9.26%	29.22	306.71	9.52%
OHAC	168	677	24.81%	117.86	503.74	23.39%
SPBS	35	218	16.05%	21.71	168.85	12.85%
Council	363	2985	12.16%	221.39	2066.55	10.71%

The Council continues to face some significant challenges in recruitment and retention, with many of the factors nationally driven, or outwith the direct scope of the Council to be able to influence. Work continues to look at any and all aspects of recruitment and selection practice and approach to ensure that everything continues to be fit for purpose and as efficient and effective as possible.

Significant work has been done this year on the Recruitment and Selection Policy to support the ongoing practice changes that are continuing. Another key focus has been the establishment of a Council Recruitment and Selection brand for recruitment or working for the Council with a dedicated website <https://joinus.orkneyislands.uk/> that will act as the main focus for people interested in working for the Council where they can find out about living and working in Orkney, the Council, the pay, conditions and benefits of working for the Council and the range of job opportunities available and then simply click on a link and apply for a post. The brand will also be carried through other recruitment activity including advertising and documentation.

4. Orkney Health and Care – Care Recruitment Campaign

The recruitment campaign within Orkney Health and Care running from June 2024 – June 2025 focused on recruiting to front line care posts:

- Social Care Assistant/Social Care Assistant (Nights)
- Care at Home Assistant/Care at Home Assistant (Nights)
- Mobile Community Responder
- Care Organiser

The objective of the campaign was to look to reduce the level of vacancies and reduce the significant unbudgeted spend on agency staffing within these front-line posts by attracting local applicants:

- who were either new to care; or
- had previous care experience to return to care.

The campaign offered applicants the following recruitment incentives:

- A Golden Hello payment, on a trial basis of £2,000 where they were either new to care or return to care and stayed with the Council for at least 2 years.
- Relocation expenses of up to £6,000.
- Current Council employees could earn a £250 refer a friend payment, where they encouraged someone to apply for work in one of the front-line care vacancies within the campaign.

Qualifying posts that were eligible for the incentives were:

- Only those specified within the campaign.
- Posts that were permanent or with a minimum of 1-year temporary contract length.
- Had a minimum contracted hours of 14 per week.

Exclusions from the Golden Hello payments were:

- Current employees of the Council within care posts.
- Any applicant who was working or had worked within an adult care setting within the three months prior to their application.

Significant focus and effort have been put in by Human Resources to support the design, launch and ongoing management of the recruitment campaign, in order to support Orkney Health and Care given the significant impact that the vacancy position is having.

A review of the campaign will be undertaken after 12 months to fully assess its impact.

5. Occupational Health

Activity	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Pre-employment Questionnaire	244	225	389
Pre-employment Assessment	31	65	48
Management Referrals	70	73	124
Review Appointments	60	72	68
Ill Health Retirement Independent Registered Medical Professional (IRMP) Assessment and IRMP Information Provision	N/A	13	13

The figures show an increase in pre-employment questionnaires, this is primarily linked to the continuing high levels of recruitment activity and challenges related to making appointments as well as the increased activity levels associated with the Orkney Health and Care Social Care recruitment campaign.

An increase in management referrals over the last year is positive from the perspective that it evidences proactive management and support to employees in relation to their health and wellbeing, which may be impacting on their ability to undertake their job. Evidence shows that earlier intervention on health matters will contribute to supporting employees back to work sooner and helping to reduce the number of situations that lead to sickness absence. It could however also show that a greater number of our employees are experiencing underlying health issues that are requiring intervention and this trend will be monitored in the future.

During 2024/25, the Council's long standing Occupational Health Physician, based in Orkney, retired and, following a successful procurement process, we are now in the process of establishing a long-term provision with a new Occupational Health provider which will allow the Council to draw all aspects of the Occupational Health Service provision into a single provider. The new provision will also see significant modernisation of process with online referral and reporting facilities and significantly improved timescales for appointments.

6. Sickness Absence (Reasons for Sickness and FTE Days lost)

Reason for Sickness Absence	ELH 22/23	ELH 23/24	ELH 24/25	ESR 22/23	ESR 23/24	ESR 24/25
Minor Illness/Conditions	1967.03	2,688.38	3138.18	216.28	297.35	690.77
Injuries/Accidents	63.84	250.85	177.8	50.43	17.71	23.14
Injuries/Accidents – work related	81	29.84	0	0	152.00	0
Recurring Medical Conditions	640.57	297.46	174.55	15	56.00	51.00
Acute Medical Conditions	899.69	1,029.12	394.4	203.73	194.84	292.66
Hospitalisation for Treatment	428.13	652.96	570.07	262.45	132.02	197.54
Musculoskeletal Injuries	733.21	402.14	358.13	113.4	230.80	253.78
Stress	809.07	790.60	576.64	343	172.23	130.31
Stress – work related	331.37	412.83	558.67	20	16.00	196.19
Mental Ill Health	607.50	650.52	315.27	314.14	66.57	78.00
Maternity/Pregnancy Related	85.45	173.92	140.59	40.20	12.00	0
Phased Return to Work	171.25	81.96	161.03	0	3.71	26.00
Other	532.04	520.03	653.42	83.46	57.71	129.60
COVID-19	791.10	302.28	74.35	95.65	33.71	3.57
Menopause Related	16.57	12.45	17.59	0	0	25.00
No Reason Given	0	2	0	8	0	0
Totals	8,157.82	8,298.37	7,310.69	1,765.7	1,442.65	2,097.56
% of Council	35.38%	36.22%	33.45%	7.66%	6.30%	9.59%

Reason for Sickness Absence	NSI 22/23	NSI 23/24	NSI 24/25	OHAC 22/23	OHAC 23/24	OHAC 24/25	SPBS 22/23	SPBS 23/24	SPBS 24/25
Minor Illness/Conditions	805.31	1,027.36	1,099.16	1167.84	2,225.69	1,954.33	85.31	458.61	266.54
Injuries/Accidents	270.24	126.35	34.68	437.41	431.81	82.41	5	39.30	1.35
Injuries/Accidents – work related	25.68	9.00	27.39	67.37	7.38	61.81	0	0	0
Recurring Medical Conditions	76.43	397.49	70.30	373.49	415.12	109.00	42.4	372.94	165.49
Acute Medical Conditions	775.51	489.96	378.68	1058.59	1,025.08	820.68	32	49.00	143.36
Hospitalisation for Treatment	219.49	274.24	299.11	431.6	422.84	348.92	98	75.33	143.08
Musculoskeletal Injuries	413.99	625.63	766.08	1405.22	550.85	863.67	0	0	25.24
Stress	203.31	118.35	218.58	396.32	867.47	1,171.09	1.8	9.21	127.06
Stress – work related	442	38.43	9.00	504.60	450.58	517.62	29	0	199.71
Mental Ill Health	269.54	49.85	171.24	1114.13	795.80	590.36	0	147.00	54.00
Maternity/Pregnancy Related	20.54	30.19	0	53.92	44.86	67.07	0	0	24.40
Phased Return to Work	68.91	36.12	60.43	229.85	39.46	33.20	14	21.00	116.40
Other	63.24	111.53	225.84	707.84	652.19	928.26	20	127.66	134.04
COVID-19	211.94	49.83	68.39	923.84	425.19	57.74	65.6	59.87	9.51
Menopause Related	0	1.36	0	0	55.60	0.24	0	0	0
No Reason Given	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	3,866.13	3,395.69	3,428.88	8,872.05	8,409.92	7,606.40	393.11	1,359.92	1,410.18
% of Council	16.77%	14.83%	15.69%	38.48%	36.72%	34.80%	1.71%	5.94%	6.45%

Reason for Sickness Absence	Council Total Days 22/23	Council Total Days 23/24	Council Total Days 24/25	Council Total % 22/23	Council Total % 23/24	Council Total % 24/25
Minor Illness/Conditions	4241.77	6,694.39	7,148.98	18.40%	29.23%	32.71%
Injuries/Accidents	826.92	886.02	319.38	3.59%	3.78%	1.46%
Injuries/Accidents – work related	174.05	198.22	89.20	0.75%	0.87%	0.40%
Recurring Medical Conditions	1147.89	1,540.04	570.34	4.98%	6.72%	2.60%
Acute Medical Conditions	2969.52	2,787.00	2,029.78	12.88%	12.17%	9.28%
Hospitalisation for Treatment	1439.67	1,567.39	1,558.72	6.24%	6.84%	7.13%
Musculoskeletal Injuries	2665.82	1,809.42	2,266.90	11.56%	7.90%	10.37%
Stress	1753.53	1,957.86	2,223.68	7.61%	8.55%	10.17%
Stress – work related	1326.97	917.84	1,481.19	5.76%	4.01%	6.77%
Mental Ill Health	2305.31	1,709.74	1,208.87	10.00%	7.46%	5.53%
Maternity/Pregnancy Related	200.11	260.97	232.06	0.87%	1.14%	1.06%
Phased Return to Work	484.01	182.25	397.06	2.10%	0.80%	1.81%
Other	1406.58	1,469.12	2,071.16	6.10%	6.41%	9.47%
COVID-19	2088.13	870.88	213.56	9.06%	3.80%	0.97%
Menopause Related	16.57	71.42	42.83	0.07%	0.31%	0.19%
No Reason Given	8	2	0	0.03%	0.01%	0%
Totals	23,054.85	22,904.55	21,853.71			
% of Council	100%	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 tables provide 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 from this year's figures that there has been an overall reduction in the level of sickness absence for the Council which is positive news, however there remains more to be done to see sickness absence return to pre-Covid levels and reach the performance indicator targets within the Council Plan. Notable changes in reason for absence are:

1. A reduction in absence related to injuries/accidents and injuries/accidents at work.
2. A continuing increase in short term absences reported as specifically due to minor illnesses and other. We have identified that a likely contributory factor in this is incorrect recording of reasons for sickness absence. Work is being undertaken to support managers to ensure accurate reporting and recording of absence, including the launch of online short video guides on how to use the sickness absence system so managers can quickly access these at any time, as well as revised written guidance for support.
3. An increase in the number of days lost to stress related absence but a decrease in days owing to other mental ill health related absence. Close monitoring of mental health related absence already takes place and this will be continued to see if this is an ongoing trend.

5. Job Evaluation

Service	Number by Year	Number			% of Council		
		22/23	23/24	24/25	22/23	23/24	24/25
Education, Leisure, and Housing		9	16	4	10.5	28.6	7.84%
Enterprise and Sustainable Regeneration		29	9	9	33.7	16.1	17.65%
Neighbourhood Services and Infrastructure		29	22	25	33.7	39.3	49.02%
Orkney Health and Care		16	4	11	18.6	7.1	21.57%
Strategy, Performance and Business Solutions		3	5	2	3.5	8.9	3.92%
Council (overall)		86	56	51	100	100	100%

Job Evaluation is the process by which pay grading for most jobs within the Council are 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 a continuing demand for adjusted job descriptions and therefore more job evaluation work in the coming years.

6. Establishment Changes

Service	Number by Year	Number			% of Council		
		22/23	23/24	24/25	22/23	23/24	24/25
Education, Leisure, and Housing		270	339	231	49.8%	53.2%	50.33%
Enterprise and Sustainable Regeneration		92	65	48	16.9%	10.2%	10.46%
Neighbourhood Services and Infrastructure		61	100	68	11.2%	15.7%	14.81%
Orkney Health and Care		89	92	86	16.4%	14.5%	18.74%
Strategy, Performance and Business Solutions		31	41	26	5.7%	6.4%	5.66%
Council (overall)		542	637	459	100%	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.

Plans are being submitted to the Corporate Leadership Team through Improvement and Performance to make use of software available as part of the Council's existing Office365 licensing to implement a system to manage the Change in Establishment process, so that it can be streamlined and operate more effectively and efficiently.

It is hoped that this process will also enable much of the establishment changes, which have to be made manually at present, to be progressed via a more efficient upload process, freeing up officer time from a transactional process to be able to focus more on value added development and improvement work.

8. Staffing Numbers - Headcount and Full Time Equivalent Staffing (FTE)

8.1. Council

	TOTAL		PERMANENT		TEMPORARY		RELIEF	
	Headcount	FTE	Headcount	FTE	Headcount	FTE	Headcount	FTE
1/4/2022	2,694	1,646.2941	1,923	1,469.2970	237	176.9971	534	N/A
1/4/2023	2,723	1,679.3478	1,974	1,514.3456	200	165.0021	549	N/A
1/4/2024	2,755	1,700.0309	1,991	1,529.3663	231	170.6647	533	N/A
1/4/2025	2,772	1,706.6474	2,031	1,559.9027	192	146.7447	549	N/A
Change in last year	+17	+6.6165	+40	+30.5364	-39	-23.92	+16	N/A

8.2. Education, Leisure and Housing

	TOTAL		PERMANENT		TEMPORARY		RELIEF	
	Headcount	FTE	Headcount	FTE	Headcount	FTE	Headcount	FTE
1/4/2022	1,299	735.6704	860	629.8448	154	105.8256	285	N/A
1/4/2023	1,346	760.7366	890	647.7596	142	112.9770	314	N/A
1/4/2024	1,355	748.2382	880	637.3469	150	110.8912	325	N/A
1/4/2025	1,349	749.1839	912	656.6313	125	92.5526	312	N/A
Change in last year	-6	+0.9457	+32	+19.2844	-25	-18.3386	-13	N/A

8.3. Enterprise and Sustainable Regeneration

	TOTAL		PERMANENT		TEMPORARY		RELIEF	
	Headcount	FTE	Headcount	FTE	Headcount	FTE	Headcount	FTE
1/4/2022	263	172.6372	183	159.1515	14	13.4857	66	N/A
1/4/2023	285	189.8808	200	176.4345	14	13.4463	71	N/A
1/4/2024	301	208.6638	210	186.4931	53	22.1706	38	N/A
1/4/2025	315	213.8830	221	194.2147	47	19.6683	47	N/A
Change in last year	+14	+5.2192	+11	+7.7216	-6	-2.5023	+9	N/A

8.4. Neighbourhood Services and Infrastructure

	TOTAL		PERMANENT		TEMPORARY		RELIEF	
	Headcount	FTE	Headcount	FTE	Headcount	FTE	Headcount	FTE
1/4/2022	428	283.7299	337	265.0847	20	18.6452	71	N/A
1/4/2023	401	272.8467	334	264.3668	13	8.4811	54	N/A
1/4/2024	388	272.8470	316	264.3668	13	8.4811	59	N/A
1/4/2025	390	269.0272	324	260.5610	9	8.4662	57	N/A
Change in last year	+2	-3.8198	+8	-3.8058	-4	-0.0149	-2	N/A

8.5. Orkney Health and Care

	TOTAL		PERMANENT		TEMPORARY		RELIEF	
	Headcount	FTE	Headcount	FTE	Headcount	FTE	Headcount	FTE
1/4/2022	719	376.1995	482	344.6588	43	31.13	94	N/A
1/4/2023	709	368.6396	473	342.5562	33	26.0834	203	N/A
1/4/2024	655	335.7080	437	319.3188	17	16.3892	201	N/A
1/4/2025	662	333.2481	430	315.8763	17	17.3718	215	N/A
Change in last year	+7	+2.4599	-7	-3.4425	N/C	+0.9826	+14	N/A

8.6. Strategy, Performance and Business Solutions

	TOTAL		PERMANENT		TEMPORARY		RELIEF	
	Headcount	FTE	Headcount	FTE	Headcount	FTE	Headcount	FTE
1/4/2022	100	78.0571	87	70.5571	9	7.5	4	N/A
1/4/2023	109	87.2429	99	83.2286	4	4.0143	6	N/A
1/4/2024	190	142.8386	167	132.6814	4	11	12	N/A
1/4/2025	182	141.3051	165	132.6194	8	8.6857	9	N/A
Change in last year	-8	-1.5335	-2	+0.062	+4	-2.3143	-3	N/A

Difference in Staffing	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Permanent FTE Staffing Change	+45.05 FTE	+15.02 FTE	+30.5364 FTE
Permanent Headcount Change	+51	+17	+40

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. The increase in permanent FTE this year reflects a slightly improved picture in terms of recruitment activity and providing permanency to temporary roles which were long standing.

9. Enquiries

Human Resources has a high level of customer enquiries, whether it is in person, on the phone, via email and now online via MS Teams. These enquiries range from responding to managers and employees and supporting applicants for employment. Whilst it is not possible to provide data to support every aspect of this the following telephone and email data provides some interesting information on the level of customer enquiries.

9.1. Telephone Enquiries

5,464 incoming, calls totalling 204 hours 35 minutes were received across HR Operations.

980 outgoing calls, totalling 45 hours 7 minutes were made across HR Operations.

Total of 6,444 calls, totalling 249 hours 44 minutes dealt with.

9.2. Email Enquiries

195,389 incoming email enquiries were received and responded to across HR Operations.

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