



Report of the Head of HR and Service Centre
Organisational Transformation Corporate Delivery Committee -

20 December 2022

Recruitment and Retention

Purpose:	To inform the Committee of the Council's current recruitment and retention strategy
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For Information:	

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Council's approach toward Recruitment and Retention is detailed in the Recruitment and Selection Policy which is available on Staffnet for managers and employees (Appendix 1).
- 1.2 The policy covers the Council's approach to advertising, shortlisting and selection to vacancies, including when it is appropriate to assess Welsh language requirements and taking positive action where tie break situations occur.

2. Current recruitment practice

- 2.1 The Council's main external webpage contains a link to 'Jobs' which is clearly visible and easy to find.
- 2.2 The jobs homepage lists the values, priorities and principles in order to highlight the type of employee that we are looking to apply to join our workforce. Separate sections are available to choose from according to the area of work that applicants may be searching for – school based vacancies, social care vacancies and the general vacancy list.

- 2.3 To support those applicants with a disability, we promote alternative methods of application such as braille, larger print and audio where requested and we provide a helpful 'Tips on completing your job application' document, along with a list of some of the benefits that Swansea Council employees receive.
- 2.4 Applications are available to complete in either English or Welsh.
- 2.5 We promote diversity and inclusion and a YouTube video link to promote the work that the Equalities Scrutiny Group has done to highlight the importance the Council places on equalities. The Council is a Disability Confident Employer and a Stonewall Diversity Champion.
- 2.6 The Council typically advertises on the Swansea.gov.uk website for the majority of vacancies but will also use eTeach for school based vacancies in addition to select specialist advertising websites for niche roles. Senior roles are required to be externally advertised and will therefore usually feature in a well known local government publication, the Management Journal in addition to the Guardian.
- 2.7 Applications are received via the Council's online application system with exceptions made for candidates with accessibility needs.
- 2.8 Upon the closing date being reached, managers will be sent a recruitment pack from the Service Centre and are required to undertake the initial shortlisting stage before providing confirmation of which applicants are to be invited to interview. Shortlisting consists of a scored framework in which written applications are measured against the job profile of the role the candidate has applied for.
- 2.9 The selection procedure may include a range of tasks to assess competence against the job profile alongside the formal interview process.
- 2.10 Successful candidates receive employment offers and new starter documentation electronically from the Service Centre. There is currently no automated on-boarding process in place to welcome new starters to the Council at the time of their offer being made. This is considered further in the report as a future recommendation.
- 2.11 To support the Council's aims in attracting talent from a wide pool, a Relocation Policy is in place to support those new hires who need to relocate to Swansea to take up employment. It is likely that this will be appropriate for senior roles where there have been significant recruitment difficulties or where there are roles which are part of a national campaign. Employees who receive relocation expenses are required to remain in employment for a period of 3 years to retain the expenses or make reimbursement on a monthly sliding scale basis.

3. Retention

- 3.1 To support new starters in early employment the Council expects managers to ensure that an effective induction framework is in place to ensure performance expectations are clear, mandatory training is completed and awareness on policies and procedures is provided. 3 and 6 monthly probationary period reviews are issued by the Service Centre to managers for completion.
- 3.2 The Council provides a range of terms conditions of employment alongside non-financial benefits that help provide a supportive, fair and inclusive package of benefits in order to both attract new recruits and retain members of the existing workforce. Further information on the detailed reward and recognition package which supports our recruitment and retention strategy was discussed at the September Organisational Transformational CDC meeting, a copy of the report is available in Appendix 2.
- 3.2 Annual leave is based on length of service. Those with less than 5 years' service receive 24 days, those with 5-9 years' service receive 29 days and those with 10 years or more receive 33 days. The Council operates an additional annual leave purchase scheme where a proportion of pay can be deducted across the calendar year to buy up to 10 additional annual leave days.
- 3.3 The opportunity to work flexibly is a key benefit of working for the Council as a wide range of options are available to the workforce – the promotion of part time working, job sharing compressed working hours and more recently the introduction of hybrid working all demonstrate an employer wishing to support work/life balance.
- 3.4 Exit interview questionnaires are provided to all leavers to address any issues that may show retention issues in particular job groups, manager reporting lines or with wider reasons for leaving such as level of pay, terms and conditions, etc.
- 3.5 Whilst retention of key staff is an issue in some departments due to the nature of work required or more competitive pay available elsewhere in the labour market, the Council's workforce demographic statistics show a overall positive picture.

Taken from the ONS workforce labour market data set, the graphic below shows the number of vacancies in the UK, showing the greatest increase has been in the 2021/22 year.



[Employment and labour market - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk)

Turnover across the Council during the competitive 2021/22 was 7.7% against a UK average of 15%.

- 3.6 As with turnover, length of service at Swansea Council is also an indicator of workforce retention. In the 2021/22 year, over 6000 employees (53% of the workforce) had worked for the Council for 10 years or more. The Workforce Strategy provides a breakdown by Directorate:

Directorate	Employee Numbers
Education and Schools	2866 (48%)
Place	1588 (60%)
Resources	458 (54%)
Social Services	1109 (56%)
TOTAL	6031(53%)

- 3.7 Whilst turnover and length of service shows broadly positive retention, there are critical areas that are facing significant difficulty in attracting and retaining staff. These areas need separate consideration and intervention to support managers to develop strategies to overcome barriers preventing a full complement of staff and HR Business Partners work with service area managers to identify opportunities where appropriate. These could include market supplements where pay is the inhibiting factor to recruitment.

8. Workforce Strategy 2022-2027

- 8.1 Recruitment and retention is a key element of the Council's new Workforce Strategy. The Council's Workforce Strategy 2022-2027 identifies 'An Employer of Choice' as one of its four central strands and highlights 'Recruitment and Retention' as one of two objectives that will enable Swansea Council to strive to be seen as an employer of choice.
- 8.2 We want Swansea Council to be a rich, fulfilling and rewarding place to work. The workforce has adapted to and absorbed a very different way of working during the pandemic and continued the journey of agile working. We want to identify the best aspects of these new ways of working into our

everyday working practices and, in doing so, create more compelling reasons to attract and retain talented staff.

8.3 We will develop a recruitment strategy designed to widen the applicant talent pool, having regard to our aspiration for a diverse workforce that is more reflective of our communities.

8.4 The Workforce Strategy action plan sets out the 'Recruitment and Retention' actions as follows:

To recruit and retain the right quantity and quality of employees that we need to support the Council in the future through development of our Recruitment Attraction Programme, delivering a positive recruitment experience for applicants and hiring managers.

Actions:

- Review and update of Recruitment and Selection Policy; so that it meets with employment legislation, best practice and Council need (particularly with regard to Equalities). Where necessary, taking positive action through R&S activity to make sure our staff profiles reflect our inclusive and diverse communities.
- Development of our Recruitment Attraction Approach; so that our websites are enhanced to best promote our employer brand, stressing the benefits of working with us. Ensuring that recruitment advertising is effective, focussed, good value for money, uses language and imagery that maximises potential interest from a diverse range of candidates, and is legally compliant
- Review of Application Process; so that it is compliant with legislation and is seen to be supportive to applicants
- Upskilling of recruiting managers so that they are appropriately trained in unconscious bias training, and that all employees who are involved in recruitment panels follow correct processes in conducting recruitment interviews.
- Creation of a modern on-boarding and induction experience for new starters

Strand 6 – Recruitment and Retention

<p>Review and Update of Recruitment and Selection Policy; so that it meets with employment legislation, best practice and Council need (particularly with regard to Equalities).</p>	<p>Where necessary, taking positive action through R&S activity to make sure our staff profiles reflect our inclusive and diverse communities. Addressing future skills and resource gaps; through delivery of effective programmes to attract and retain talent in key resource and skill shortage areas, identified through workforce planning activities</p>	<p>Appointment of Recruitment Specialist</p>	<p>March 2023</p>	<p>Head of HR</p>	<p>Recruitment Specialist Service Centre Hiring Managers Workforce Equalities Group</p>	<p>Funding received for recruitment of Recruitment Specialist</p>
<p>Review of Application Process; so that it is compliant with legislation and is seen to be supportive to applicants.</p>	<p>That we meet established KPIs in relation to recruitment practices.</p>	<p>Appointment of Quality Systems Lead</p>	<p>March 2023</p>	<p>Head of HR</p>	<p>Quality Systems Lead Service Centre IT Recruitment Specialist</p>	<p>Funding received for recruitment of Pay & Grading Officer</p>
<p>Development of our Recruitment Attraction Approach;</p>	<p>So that our websites are enhanced to best promote our employer brand, stressing the benefits of working with us. Ensuring that recruitment advertising is effective, focussed, good value for money, uses language and imagery that maximises potential interest from a diverse range of candidates, and is legally compliant</p>	<p>Appointment of Recruitment Specialist</p>	<p>March 2023</p>	<p>Head of HR</p>	<p>Recruitment Specialist Service Centre Hiring Managers</p>	<p>Funding received for recruitment of Recruitment Specialist</p>
<p>Upskilling of recruiting Managers</p>	<p>So that, for example they are appropriately trained, in unconscious bias training, and that all employees who are involved in recruitment panels follow correct processes in conducting recruitment interviews.</p>	<p>Appointment of Recruitment Specialist</p>	<p>July 2023</p>	<p>Head of HR</p>	<p>Recruitment Specialist Service Centre Hiring Managers Workforce Equalities Group Corporate L&D Team</p>	<p>Funding received for recruitment of Recruitment Specialist and Corporate L&D Officers</p>

Creation of a modern on-boarding and induction experience for new starters	So that we have a consistent on-boarding and induction process in place that supports new employees in understanding their role and place in the organisation	TBD on Oracle fusion implementation	September 2023	Head of HR	Corporate L&D Service Centre	Not commenced
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9. Future considerations

9.1 The actions contained in the Workforce Strategy focus on policy development, attraction strategy, the application process, manager training and on-boarding options, additional areas to explore could include:

- Greater promotion of the benefits of the Local Government Pension Scheme
- Wider reach across our communities with initiatives such as the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) in line with our Armed Forces Covenant support
- Confirming the Council's approach to hybrid working for each job role should enable a wider talent pool to be available us through our attraction strategy
- Including in our recruitment material the lived experiences of working for the Council – for example apprentices, care workers, Welsh speaking colleagues – to promote the wide and varied opportunities for a career in the Council from the first hand experience of our workforce members
- The enhanced processes that could be gained from increased technological developments in our new Oracle Fusion system. Increased workflow and automation should ensure an end to end recruitment process that reduces the time to recruit, improves accuracy and builds the relationship with new starters before they have experienced their first day of employment.

10. Integrated Assessment Implications

10.1 The Council is subject to the Equality Act (Public Sector Equality Duty and the socio-economic duty), the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure, and must in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Acts.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Deliver better outcomes for those people who experience socio-economic disadvantage
- Consider opportunities for people to use the Welsh language
- Treat the Welsh language no less favourably than English.
- Ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs

- 10.2 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 mandates that public bodies in Wales must carry out sustainable development. Sustainable development means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the 'well-being goals'.
- 10.3 Our Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process ensures we have paid due regard to the above. It also takes into account other key issues and priorities, such as poverty and social exclusion, community cohesion, carers, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Welsh language.
- 10.4 There are no integrated assessment implications associated with this report. There is no impact identified on people and/or communities when considering all the impacts identified in the screening. This is a for information report and does not require any decision making which could impact on others.

11. Financial Implications

- 11.1 There are no financial implications directly associated with this report.

12. Legal Implications

- 12.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report.

Background Papers: None

Appendices

- Appendix 1 - Recruitment and Selection Policy
Appendix 2 – Reward and Recognition Report, Organisational Transformation
CDC, 25 October 2022
Appendix 3 - IIA