

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN AND WEST NORFOLK

Annual Employment Monitoring 2022/23

Background

The Council has undertaken monitoring of its recruitment and selection procedures since 1996 and of its workforce since 2000, with findings reported to Elected Members and Senior Managers over this period. Over time the reports have taken various formats, as systems for collecting information have been improved, and as guidance and legislation regarding the monitoring that should be undertaken has been revised.

The information is compiled into the annual 'Employment Monitoring' report, which has a particular emphasis on meeting the requirements of relevant equalities legislation which was consolidated in the Equalities Act 2010. Guidance supporting the Equalities Act has reinforced the importance of public authorities monitoring and reporting their staff profile, particularly in relation to recruitment, promotion, training, pay, grievances and disciplinary action.

In addition, the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations which came into force in September 2011 require public bodies to publish information to demonstrate their compliance with the general equality duty. This includes a requirement to monitor and publish information about their employees. The specific duties are not prescriptive about the information that needs to be published, but this must include information relating to people who share a relevant protected characteristic. The contents of this employment monitoring report therefore demonstrate the Council's compliance with this requirement.

The details of the monitoring exercise also provide evidence of the Council's progress against the employment related objectives it has set, which include ensuring opportunities for promotion and training are available to all employees.

Details of the monitoring undertaken can be found summarised in Appendix 1, which is organised into sections as follows:

- i. The Council's workforce profile (section 1)
- ii. Recruitment activity (section 2)
- iii. Applications for promotion (section 3)
- iv. Training and development activities (section 4)
- v. The number of employees refused training (section 5)
- vi. The impact of performance assessments (section 6)
- vii. Grievance procedures (section 7)
- viii. Disciplinary procedures (section 8)
- ix. Employees leaving the Council's employment (section 9)
- x. Employees experiencing at least one period of sickness absence in the year (section 10)

Where possible, information for the most recent year, plus the five previous years, has been included.

When reviewing the 2017/18 Monitoring Report, members of the Corporate Performance Panel requested that additional monitoring in relation to age be included in future reports. Therefore throughout the information provided in Appendix 1 age was added where the data had been collected and monitored for the first time in 2018/19. Unfortunately at that point we were unable to provide the age monitoring information for training or sickness. From 2019/20 we have been able to add this information for training and sickness and for future years it will therefore be possible to compare age related information for all categories.

Summary of Monitoring Results

i. The Council's Workforce Profile

The Council's workforce profile for the 2022/23 year has remained broadly the same as the past five years. When reviewing the Council's workforce profile a useful comparison is the relevant information on the population of West Norfolk, as compiled via the 2021 Census. This shows that the population within the Council is broadly comparable with the population of West Norfolk as a whole:

	Council Workforce 2022/23	Council Workforce 2021/22	2021 Census
White	95.44%	95.25%	95.62%
Other Ethnic Group	1.90%	2.18%	4.38%
Undefined	2.66%	2.57%	0%

	Council Workforce 2022/23	Council Workforce 2021/22	2021 Census
Female	55.51%	53.47%	51.17%
Male	44.49%	46.53%	48.83%

ii. Recruitment Activity

It is interesting to monitor the number of applications received per vacancy in each of these years as shown below.

Year	Number of adverts placed	Average number of applications per vacancy
2017/18	207	10.11
2018/19	147	16.64
2019/20	139	17.87
2020/21	95	13.28
2021/22	159	6.01
2022/23	151	8.00

However, it should be noted that these figures are an average – there are some specialist vacancies where we receive (as expected) very low number of applicants.

The figures shown in section 2 of Appendix 1 highlight that the number of job applications received within the 2022/23 year has started to increase from the previous year, but not back up to pre-pandemic levels. Following covid, there are national recruitment challenges in all sectors, and at all levels. Overall the number

of vacancies within the Council remains broadly the same as 2021/22 which remains a slight increase to previous years. This is a combination of usual levels of turnover, re-advertisements, and new posts both permanent and temporary positions. Unfortunately, average numbers of applications continue to be low compared to 2020/21 and previous years. The number of applicants per vacancy across the year range from 0 to 58. However, there is also the challenge of candidates accepting other roles whilst in the process of applying for our vacancies, due to the number of opportunities available to them, this is particular the case for candidates accepting permanent roles while apply for or being offered temporary or seasonal vacancies for this Council.

iii. Applications for Promotion

During 2022/23 the figures show an increase from recent years, but as with the external recruitment this remains slightly lower than earlier years. However the percentage of applications being shortlisted remains a broadly similar level as in previous years, with the successful applicants slightly lower. The Council continues to offer a range of vacancies to existing employees on an “internal only” basis, taking this approach to recruitment in circumstances where it is felt employees with suitable skills are already employed within the organisation. In addition, all employees can of course apply for those positions advertised on a wider basis, and if unsuccessful will receive full feedback to assist with any future vacancies they may be interested in.

iv. Training and Development Activities

The monitoring information shows that during 2022/23 the number of employees receiving training has increased from the previous couple of years, and is approaching pre-pandemic levels. Face to face training provision has increased during the year, and training was more concentrated on meeting urgent training needs such as safeguarding with more varied training planned for next year.

v. The Number of Employees Refused Training

During the 2022/23 year there have been two instances where training has been refused. The first instance was a request for an external training course which was very similar to a planned in-house course. The external training was therefore refused, and the employee has been added to the list of delegates for the in-house training which is being run during 2023/24. The second instance was refused due to the request received within the employees probation period. However, this training will be reconsidered once the employees probation has been completed. In all other previous years there have been no employees who were refused training.

vi. The Impact of Performance Assessments

The results from the 2022/23 appraisal year are reported in point 6 of appendix 1. This information is shown as the number of staff achieving each performance rating.

NB during 2020/21 performance assessments were not undertaken in the usual way, and rather than following the usual performance management gradings,

assessments were largely based on employees response to covid. Therefore, we are unable to measure and compare the data for 2020/21.

vii. Grievance Procedures

Although there is a very small increase in 2022/23, overall the number of cases remains very low with 2021/22, 2019/20, 2018/19 having no grievances.

viii. Disciplinary Procedures

The number of disciplinary cases investigated during the 2022/23 has slightly increased from the previous year, but remains broadly the same in comparison to the previous years.

ix. Employees Leaving the Council's Employment

The total number of employees leaving the Council's employment in 2022/23 is slightly lower than the previous year and remains broadly the same as the years prior to the pandemic. The years 2020/21 and 2019/20 were impacted by the pandemic and employees not wanting to leave their employment during this uncertain period.

x. Sickness Absence

The figures for 2022/23 are slightly lower than for the 2021/22 year, which showed a higher figure than 2020/21. It should be noted for several months during 2020/21 those considered critically vulnerable were isolating and many staff were working from home, and when in the office staff were socially distanced etc for covid, potentially impacting on the ability of other viruses/colds etc to spread. The 2022/23 and 2021/22 years data are broadly similar to the remaining previous years and have no areas of concern to report.