

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN AND WEST NORFOLK

Annual Employment Monitoring 2020/21

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.

NB. In considering the report it should be noted that the information contained within Appendix 1 relate only to those employees directly employed by the Council (i.e. the information excludes the employees of Alive West Norfolk since the leisure service was TUPE'd out in September 2014).

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 2020/21 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 2011 Census (the data from 2021 census is not published until Spring 2022). This shows that the population within the Council is broadly comparable with the population of West Norfolk as a whole:

	Council Workforce 2020/21	Council Workforce 2019/20	2011 Census
White	95.54%	95.48%	97.2%
Other Ethnic Group	1.62%	1.38%	2.8%
Undefined	2.84%	3.14%	0%

	Council Workforce 2020/21	Council Workforce 2019/20	2011 Census
Female	53.55%	53.64%	51%
Male	46.45%	46.36%	49%

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
2016/17	127	10.48
2017/18	207	10.11
2018/19	147	16.64
2019/20	139	17.87
2020/21	95	13.28

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 last year has reduced. This monitoring year starts just as full covid-19 lockdown started, and initially for the first four months there was a recruitment freeze while the Council responded to the epidemic, and staff were re-deployed to other areas, and to assist the community, advertising re-commencement in August 2020. When recruitment started again, less people were changing jobs and many remained on Furlough with their employers. Overall therefore the number of both vacancies and applications are low compared to previous years.

iii. Applications for Promotion

During 2020/21 as recruitment in general was lower the Council figures show a reduction in number, however the percentage being shortlisted and successful remain a broadly similar level as in previous years. 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.

iv. Training and Development Activities

The monitoring information shows that during 2020/21 the number of employees receiving training was considerably lower than in previous years. This is due to all face to face training being cancelled due to the pandemic and this has not been resumed. In the main just essential training such as first aid has been completed to ensure employees continue to keep their essential training up to date which otherwise would have run out.

v. The Number of Employees Refused Training

During 2020/21 there were no employees who were refused training, the same response as returned in 2019/20, 2018/19, 2017/18, 2015/16 and 2016/17.

vi. The Impact of Performance Assessments

During 2020/21 the performance assessments were not assessed in the usual way, and rather than following the usual performance management, they were assessed for employees response to covid in an unprecedented year. Therefore, we have been unable to measure or compare the data to previous years. 2021/22 performance management will return to usual, and data from that year will be compared to 2019/20 and earlier.

For the previous years, following the trial of the revisions to the Council's performance management scheme during 2017/18, the scheme has been updated from 2018/19. Previously the scheme assessed employees against definitions of 'exceeded', 'met' or 'partially met'. For the 2017/18 appraisal year onwards the assessment definitions have been revised to 'exceeded', 'achieved with merit' 'achieved' or 'partially met'. The aim of the revisions were to provide employees who more than met their targets, but not enough to gain an overall rating of exceeded, the ability to gain recognition for their performance during the year. The results from

the 2019/20, 2018/19 and 2017/18 appraisal year are reported in appendix 1. This information is shown as the number of staff achieving each grade.

vii. Grievance Procedures

During 2020/21 there was one grievance, the same as 2017/18 and 2015/16. During the other years there have been no grievances.

viii. Disciplinary Procedures

The number of disciplinary cases progressed during the 2020/21 has slightly decreased since last year, but remains slightly higher in comparison to the previous years.

ix. Employees Leaving the Council's Employment

The total number of employees leaving the Council's employment in 2020/21 is lower than in previous years turnover, this is due to most employers not recruiting at the start of the pandemic, and employees not taking the risk to change job roles while everything was so uncertain. For those that did leave, the spread between male and female, and the level of leavers from other ethnic group, with a disability and age range remains consistent.

x. Sickness Absence

The figures for 2020/21 are lower than in previous years with no areas of concern to report. When considering these lower figures, it is to be noted that for several months those considered critically vulnerable were isolating and many staff working from home, and when in the office staff were socially distanced etc for covid, so less usual colds/viruses circulating.