Workforce Information – Q2 2023/24

Leadership & Management		Indicator 2023/24	Q2 2023/24	Q1 2023/24
Leadership Stability	Percentage of Senior Management positions filled by permanent WSCC employees (Excluding Vacancies)	On-going	**G**	G
		95%	**100%**	100%
	Rolling 12-month turnover percentage for permanent positions at HAY Grade (or equivalent) and above	On-going	**G**	G
		<11%	**8%**	9%

Resourcing & Talent		Indicator 2023/24	Q2 2023/24	Q1 2023/24
Employed workforce (*Includes all staff directly employed by WSCC. Excludes casuals, agency, outside bodies, pensioners & partners*)	Total Employed Headcount (*total number of people employed over reporting period*)	Not Applicable	**6,414**	6,283
	Employed Headcount (*at the end of the reporting period*)	Not Applicable	**6,239**	6,137
	Employed FTE (*at the end of the reporting period*)	Not Applicable	**5602**	5,498
	Number of new Apprentice starters since the start of the financial year (excluding Schools)	End of Year	**A**	A
		113	**50**	8
Agency (Matrix)	Total contract spend with Matrix	Not Applicable	**£5,587,663**	£5,642,098
	Agency (Matrix) % of Employed workforce	Not Applicable	**8%**	9%
Staff Turnover	Rolling 12-month turnover rate	On-going	**G**	G
		Between 9% & 13%	**9.8%**	10.8%

Performance & Development		Indicator 2023/24	Q2 2023/24	Q1 2023/24
Performance	Percentage positive response to the Pulse Survey question: "I have regular meaningful conversations with my manager about my performance, wellbeing and support needs"	On-going	**A**	G
		80% (78%)	**79% (Sep 2023 Survey)**	79% (May 2022 Survey)
Learning & development	Percentage positive response to the question: "I have good opportunities to develop my skills and knowledge in line with my role and my aspirations"	On-going	**G**	G
		73% (70%)	**75% (Sep 2023 Survey)**	71% (May 2022 Survey)
	Staff induction completion rates	On-going	A	A
		91%	**84%**	79%

Wellbeing, Values & Ways of Working		Indicator 2023/24	Q2 2023/24	Q1 2023/24
Behaviours & Values	Percentage positive response to the Pulse Survey question: "I am treated with dignity and respect by my work colleagues"	On-going	**G**	G
		88% (87%)	**90% (Sep 2023 Survey)**	91% (May 2022 Survey)
Ways of Working	Percentage positive response to the Pulse Survey question: "I am part of a supportive team where we regularly reflect on our successes and challenges enabling us to continuously improve"	On-going	**G**	G
		80% (78%)	**81% (Sep 2023 Survey)**	81% (May 2022 Survey)
	Percentage positive response to the Pulse Survey question: "My ideas and opinions are valued and are used to help shape the way we work and our future planning"	On-going	**A**	G
		75% (73%)	**74% (Sep 2023 Survey)**	74% (May 2022 Survey)
Level of sickness absence *(May retrospectively change due to late reporting of sickness)*	Rolling 12-month average number of calendar days lost due to sickness absence per FTE	On-going	**A**	A
		15 Calendar Days p.a.	**16.2**	15.9
	Number of calendar days lost due to short term sickness absence (less than 21 calendar days)	Not Applicable	**5,968**	5,164
	Top reason for short term absence (less than 21 calendar days)	Not Applicable	**Anxiety, Stress, Depression, Mental Health**	Respiratory, Cough, Cold, Flu
	Number of calendar days lost due to long term sickness absence (21 or more calendar days)	Not Applicable	**16,361**	14,574
	Top reason for long term absence (21 or more calendar days)	Not Applicable	**Anxiety, Stress, Depression, Mental Health**	Anxiety, Stress, Depression, Mental Health
Diversity & Inclusion		Indicator 2023/24	Q2 2023/24	Q1 2023/24
Employee Disclosure Rate	Disclosure rate for self-declaration of an employee's: disability; sexual orientation; race/ethnicity; religion	End of Year	**G**	G
		60%	**53.2%**	52.7%

RAG Rating Key:

R Significant Risk   A At Risk   G On Track

Workforce Summary Narrative

1. Of the twelve KPIs with a RAG status indicator, five are reported as Amber and seven are reported as Green. This compares to last quarter where three KPIs were reported as Amber and nine were Green.

2. The two KPIs that have changed from Green to Amber are two Pulse Survey related KPIs:

   i. **'Percentage positive response to the Pulse Survey question: "I have regular meaningful conversations with my manager about my performance, wellbeing and support needs**". A new Pulse Survey was undertaken in September 2023 so the results for the five KPIs related to the Pulse Survey can be refreshed. The result of this Pulse Survey KPI remains the same as the previous survey at 79%, but it now falls one percentage point below the new indicator level for 2023/24 which is 80% (up from 78%).

   ii. **'Percentage positive response to the Pulse Survey question: "My ideas and opinions are valued and are used to help shape the way we work and our future planning".** Like the KPI above, the result is the same as the previous survey at 74% but below the new indicator level of 75% (up from 73%) so its status changes from Green to Amber.

3. The three KPIs that have remained Amber are:

   i. **'Number of new Apprentice starters since the start of the financial year (excluding Schools)**.' The KPI was rated as Amber last quarter because the figure for Q1 (8) was below the normal level at this stage of the year (circa 14). This quarter the cumulative number of new apprentices has risen to 50. This compares to 52 at the same stage last year. There are circa 20 new apprentices planned to start in Q3. It is hoped that the implementation of the 'Apprenticeships First' agenda will positively impact on numbers of new apprenticeship starts as plans are implemented to advertise all job vacancies up to and including Grade 6 as apprenticeships (where a suitable apprenticeship qualification is available). All management vacancies with apprenticeship opportunities will also be advertised. This will take time to embed as this requires a cultural shift towards a 'grow our own' apprenticeship approach.

   ii. **'Staff induction completion rates**'. The figure for this KPI was 79% last quarter, and it has risen to 84% in Q2, but this is still below the indicator level of 91%. As mentioned last quarter, there was an unexpected change to a new learning and development IT system towards the end of the last financial year. Work has been undertaken to cleanse and update the legacy data. All new inductions have now started after the new system was implemented so confidence in the data is considerably higher than for the two previous quarters. Children, Young People and Leaning (CYPL) is above the 91% indicator level with a completion rate of 93%. Other areas are below the indicator level with Adults and Health at 86%; Place Services at 72%; Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) at 57%; and Directorates providing corporate services at 88%. It is important to highlight that some areas have a significantly lower number of people in the induction process and a relatively small number of employees not completing their induction can have a big impact on the percentage completion rate. For example, the 57% completion rate for FRS related to 7 employees in the induction process whereas there were 44 induction employees in Adults and Health.

   iii. The **'Rolling 12-month average number of calendar days lost due to sickness absence per FTE**'. The Q2 figure is 16.2 calendar days per FTE

which is 0.3 calendar days higher that last quarter. Further details on sickness absence, including a breakdown of sickness by Directorate, are provided later in this narrative.

4. The '**Employee declaration rate for diversity data**' figure has risen again this quarter to 53.2% from 52.7% in Q1. Although the KPI is just under eight percentage points below the new end of year indicator level, the KPI is rated as 'Green' due to the progress and upward trajectory over several previous quarters and improvement is expected to continue throughout the year.

5. This KPI combines four Protected Characteristics: Disability; Ethnicity; Sexual Orientation; and Religion/Belief. The KPI shows the percentage of the workforce who have provided their data across all four of these Protected Characteristics. A low declaration rate in one of these characteristics pulls down the combined declaration percentage. The declaration rate for the four individual Protected Characteristics is: 75% for Ethnic Origin; 64% for Disability; 62% for Sexual Orientation; and 55% for Religion/Belief (last quarter 75%, 63%, 62% and 54% respectively).

6. Five of the KPIs are related to **The Pulse Survey**. Since Q1 2022/23, the figures reported have related to the May 2022 survey; however, a new Pulse Survey was undertaken in September 2023 and the results of which are included within the latest KPI data reported. Detailed results will be shared with Directorates during Q3. As reported above, two of the Pulse Survey KPIs have changed from 'Green' to 'Amber' following the release of the latest results.

7. Of the other three Pulse Survey KPIs, whilst they all remain 'Green', there have been changes to the results compared to the previous survey. One KPI, "I have good opportunities to develop my skills and knowledge in line with my role and my aspirations", has an increased percentage positive response, rising from 71% to 75% (indicator 73%). One KPI, "I am part of a supportive team where we regularly reflect on our successes and challenges enabling us to continuously improve" has remained the same at 81% (indicator 80%). One KPI, "I am treated with dignity and respect by my work colleagues" has fallen from 91% to 90% (indicator 88%).

8. The results of the Pulse Survey will be shared with Senior Leadership teams and HR and Organisational Development staff will work with Directorates and Services to assess the impact of the results in their area, identifying any actions to address concerns or issues which have emerged and learning from, and celebrating successes.

9. **Employee Headcount** has increased from 6,137 in Q1 to 6,239, a rise of 102. This is the result of continued successful recruitment to vacant positions. Over the last nine months, the number of vacant positions has decreased, with the starter's headcount consistently higher than leavers for each month. This has resulted in a further reduction in agency spend for the second quarter in a row. A breakdown of Employed Headcount figures for Directorates, plus the main Services in the two biggest directorates (Adults and Health and Children, Young People and Learning) is provided in Table 1:

Table 1 – Employee Headcount by Directorate

Organisation Level	Employee Headcount	
	Q2 2023/24	Q1 2023/24
West Sussex County Council	**6,239**	**6,137**
Adult Services & Health	1,223	1,189
⤷ Adult Services	1,222	1,138
Children, Young People & Learning	2,128	1,947
⤷ Children & Family Services	1,388	1,376
Chief Executive's Office	26	26
Finance & Support Services	285	502
Fire & Rescue Service	637	639
HR & Organisational Development	188	175
Law & Assurance	164	154
Place Services	1,592	1,510

10. The significant change in the employee headcount for Finance and Support Services is due to 223 employees within Business Services being devolved to other Directorates. The Directorates receiving the highest number of staff are Children, Young People and Learning (144); Place Services (41); and Adults and Health (29).

11. Total **sickness absence** has increased from 19,738 calendar days in Q1 to 22,329, an increase of 2,591 calendar days. The increase has been in both short and long-term sickness absence. Short-term sickness absence (less than 21 days absence) has increased from 5,164 to 5,968 calendar days (+804) and long-term sickness has increased from 14,574 to 16,361 calendar days (+1,787). In comparison with the same quarter in 2022, the number of calendar days absence due to sickness is higher this year by 2,591 (19,738 in Q2 2022; 22,329 this quarter).

12. The top reason for short-term sickness absence was 'Anxiety, Stress, Depression, Mental Health' which is a change from Q1 where it was 'Respiratory, Cough, Cold, Flu'. For long-term sickness absence the top reason for sickness remains the same as last quarter 'Anxiety, Stress, Depression, Mental Health.'

13. Table 2 provides a breakdown of sickness absence for Directorates, plus the main Services in our two biggest Directorates. The KPI reported in Table 2 is the '**Rolling 12-month average number of calendar days lost due to sickness absence per FTE**'. This KPI has been selected because it provides an average per FTE which enables a direct comparison between organisational units which have considerably different headcounts/FTEs.

Table 2 - Rolling 12-month average number of calendar days lost due to sickness absence per FTE by Directorate

Organisation Level	Rolling 12-month average number of calendar days lost due to sickness absence per FTE	
	Q2 2023/24	Q1 2023/24
West Sussex County Council	**16.2**	**15.9**
Adult Services & Health	21.6	22.2
↳ Adult Services	21.7	22.2
Children, Young People & Learning	15.0	15.3
↳ Children & Family Services	17.9	18.2
Chief Executive's Office	7.0	5.5
Finance & Support Services	10.3	11.1
Fire & Rescue Service	16.6	13.1
HR & Organisational Development	5.7	5.8
Law & Assurance	8.2	7.3
Place Services	17.4	17.3

14. Table 3 shows a further breakdown of the sickness absence figures, along with the reason for sickness for Adult Services and Children and Family Services:

Table 3 – Q2 Breakdown of Rolling 12-month average number of calendar days lost due to sickness absence per FTE by Directorate and reason for absence

Service / Team	Average Total Sickness Absence per FTE*	Top Category Reason for Sickness Absence	Top Category Average Sickness Absence per FTE*	Second Category Reason for Sickness Absence	Second Category Average Sickness Absence per FTE*
Adult Services	21.65	Anxiety, Stress, Depression, Mental Health	6.63	Musculoskeletal, Fractures, Injury, Surgery	4.91
Adults Commissioning**	30.84	Anxiety, Stress, Depression, Mental Health	9.32	Musculoskeletal, Fractures, Injury, Surgery	8.45
Adults Safeguarding	23.45	Anxiety, Stress, Depression, Mental Health	7.5	Musculoskeletal, Fractures, Injury, Surgery	5.82
Area Operations	18.15	Anxiety, Stress, Depression, Mental Health	5.63	Musculoskeletal, Fractures, Injury, Surgery	3.47
Children & Family Services	17.85	Anxiety, Stress, Depression, Mental Health	6.42	Musculoskeletal, Fractures, Injury, Surgery	3.48
Children Social Care	15.02	Anxiety, Stress, Depression, Mental Health	5.93	Musculoskeletal, Fractures, Injury, Surgery	3.27
Children Social Care - Placements	22.86	Anxiety, Stress, Depression, Mental Health	7.35	Musculoskeletal, Fractures, Injury, Surgery	4.13

Footnotes:

* Rolling 12-month average number of calendar days lost due to sickness absence per FTE

** This organisational unit was 'Commissioning – People Services' until March 2023 when it changed to 'Adults Commissioning'.

15. At the previous Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee, Members were updated on the proposal to undertake a focused piece of work on sickness absence. Work has therefore commenced on the development of an action plan to increase attendance and reduce the impact of ill health and absence on service delivery. The approach will be to develop a programme of work through a Task and Finish Group (TFG) to be led by the Director of HR and Organisational Development.

16. Levels of absence arise from persistent short and long-term absence which may be driven by personal circumstances, underlying health conditions, and underlying work variables. It will therefore be important to ensure input from Leaders and Managers, and from employees and trade unions, as well as work with suppliers providing the Employee Assistance Programme and Occupational Health Services. Furthermore, in the current context of recruitment and retention challenges, our approach must be appropriately target focussed, while balancing the need to ensure that the organisation remains a place that people want to work for.

17. The TFG will consider individual matters and reactive actions as well as the potential for preventative measures. The approach will need to understand causes of absence, develop management capabilities, consider the work environment and work-related reasons for absence, workplace health promotion, and the provision of support for those coping with health conditions. The approach is expected to incorporate:

    i. Council wide initiatives.

    ii. Directorate and Service specific action planning.

    iii. Exploration of options for addressing thematic causes of absence.

    Options for the programme of work are expected by the end of November 2023.

18. The Director of HR and Organisational Development presented the **Recruitment and Retention report** to the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee in January 2023. This quarter, progress has been achieved in the following areas identified as action in the report:

    a. *International recruitment of social workers*: Children, Young People and Learning has welcomed 37 social workers as part of our overseas recruitment project and are working to bring in the remaining 13 as soon as their Social Work England registrations are finalised. This has helped bring the uncovered vacancy gap down in CYPL to 0.5FTE (0.1%). In Adult's Services, seven international Occupational Therapists, are in post, with the last one due to join in the coming weeks. Additionally, two international Social Workers have joined our Adults Services Teams with a further 19 due to join in the coming months.

    b. *Increasing capacity and skills in the Recruitment Team*: The external specialist project team, commissioned to provide additional short-term capacity working alongside the current resourcing team and which prioritised recruitment to the most challenging vacancies in Children's and Adults Services, has now ended. The work has successfully been

transitioned to the newly expanded recruitment team. The project team delivered on the business case to bring them in.

c. *Engaging with candidates in a different way*: The Recruitment Team continue to attend events and try new ways of attracting candidates. This includes signing up for STEM returners, an organisation which works to reconnect STEM returners with forward thinking STEM organisations, through creating paid short-term employment, allowing STEM professionals to return to work after a career break.

d. *Optimising the use of apprenticeships and career pathways to support staff to develop their skills*: The Task and Finish Group on careers and skills, has made four main recommendations:

    i. Maximise the Apprenticeship Levy by adopting an apprenticeship first approach, encouraging managers to recruit more apprentices externally.

    ii. Raise awareness and interest in WSCC as an employer of choice and enhance promotion of opportunity.

    iii. Attract more young people including care leavers.

    iv. Develop a longer-term approach to recruitment and retention through strategic workforce planning.

A working party has been brought together to help develop the action plan to underpin these recommendations.

e. *Development of leadership capability and embedding consistent people management and development*: The management development pathways are currently being rebuilt on the new Learning and Development Gateway and will be shortly relaunched under the banner 'Leadership Academy.' The Leadership Academy will bring together programmes for front line managers, operational/departmental managers, and senior leaders. In addition, a new programme is being developed for those looking to take their first step into a leadership role.

f. *Ensuring staff health and wellbeing*: Since the Wellbeing Hub launched in October 2022, there have been 4,065 visits to the homepage. The most viewed area of the Wellbeing Hub is the 'Emotional and Mental Health' section (794 visits). The top three visited pages are: Stress (231 visits); Menopause (208); and Anxiety (155).