

The Highland Council

Agenda Item	8.
Report No	RES/24/23

Committee:	Corporate Resources
Date:	6 September 2023
Report Title:	Performance and Governance Workforce Plan 2023-2026
Report By:	Interim Executive Chief Officer Performance & Governance

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report defines workforce planning and its purpose. The report also outlines the Performance and Governance (P&G) Workforce Plan and asks Members to agree the P&G Workforce Action Plan for 2023-2026.
- 1.2 **Appendix 1** – provides P&G workforce data; **Appendix 2** – sets out the P&G Workforce Action Plan.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
- i. Approve the Performance & Governance Workforce Action Plan at **Appendix 2**.

3. Implications

- 3.1 **Resource** A failure to manage workforce planning and change puts at risk the Council's capacity to make the most effective use of resources.
- 3.2 **Legal** Large scale and complex workforce change must be managed in line with current employment legislation and Highland Council policy.
- 3.3 **Community (Equality, Poverty, Rural and Island)** Initial equality impact screening revealed potential impacts in relation to Age, Gender, and Disability. A full Equality Impact Assessment will be carried out if Members approve the Workforce Action Plan.
- 3.4 **Climate Change / Carbon Clever** The hybrid working approach and more efficient use of technology and equipment will contribute to achieving carbon reduction targets.
- 3.5 **Risk** Workforce Planning is included as a risk in the Corporate Risk Register. There are also significant staffing resource challenges associated with budget constraints. This report outlines actions to mitigate risks in relation to current and future workforce challenges.
- 3.6 **Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people)** The ongoing rationalisation of office space and subsequent movement of staff,

including where staff are working between office and home, must be managed effectively to ensure their health, safety, and wellbeing. For example, Display Screen Equipment Assessments are required to be carried out and any specific requirements in relation to specialist kit and/or equipment understood.

3.7 **Gaelic** No implications.

4. Introduction to Workforce Planning

4.1 Workforce Planning ('WFP') is the process of analysing, forecasting, and managing workforce supply and demand; it assesses gaps in the workforce and determines the appropriate actions required; and helps ensure the organisation has the right people, with the right skills, in the right place at the right time and at the right cost, to ensure strategic objectives are met.

4.2 To enable effective WFP, it is essential that up-to-date HR data is available and service staff insights are sought, to understand:

- Current workforce characteristics, including the number of people employed to carry out different tasks and the different types of employment contracts.
- Workforce skills and any gaps.
- The number, level and skills of staff needed to deliver identified and anticipated future service demand and changing priorities.

4.3 Service specific WFP has been taken forward in line with the [Workforce Planning and Development Action Plan](#) approved by the Redesign Board 23 March 2021.

4.4 The Highland Council's [People Strategy](#), approved by Council on 27 October 2022, outlines the direction and related framework for the organisation over a 5-year period. The Strategy includes WFP as one of eight fundamental elements, alongside Staff Engagement; Health, Safety and Wellbeing; Reward and Conditions (including job design); Talent Management; People Development; People Data and Processes; and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

4.5 Effective WFP will support the P&G Service to:

- Deliver improved services.
- Review employee numbers and the type of contracts required.
- Manage employee budgets.
- Develop a robust service structure with appropriate management structures providing opportunity for progression and career development.
- Ensure sufficient and appropriate training and learning and development is provided.
- Cope with changes in supply and demand for various skills.
- Deploy/recruit staff effectively and efficiently.
- Increase retention and enable succession planning.

5. Background – P&G Workforce Planning

5.1 The P&G Service Workforce Plan has been developed using a 6-step model.

1. Context and Environmental Analysis
2. Future Workforce Profile
3. Current Workforce Profile
4. Workforce Implications/Gap Analysis
5. Action Plan
6. Review & Evaluate

The Workforce Plan covers a period of 4 years (2023–2026 inclusive) and will be monitored and reviewed annually by the P&G ECO in consultation with the Senior Management Team with support from the P&G HR Business Partner.

5.2 The P&G Extended Senior Management Team undertook focused workshops during June & July 2023 to work through the first 4 steps of the 6-step model. This enabled the formulation of the P&G Workforce Action Plan - **Appendix 2**. The workshops were facilitated by the P&G HR Business Partner.

5.3 Following the WFP Strategy Review Board's recommendation to take a broader approach to Service WFP, both the P&G Performance Business Partner and Project Officers from ICT (Digital Strategy) also attended the workshops.

5.4 The HR data analysed in the workshops is shown in **Appendix 1**.

6. Context and Environment (Step 1)

6.1 The context and environment analysis carried out recognised both the political and economic challenges the Highland Council, and therefore the P&G Service faces. Budget savings in P&G continue to prove challenging, not least because over 90% of the service budget relates to staffing.

6.2 The P&G Service recognises the need for a shared understanding of the difference between statutory powers and duties. In the case of statutory duties, it would also be helpful to explore what discretion is permissible in terms of how duties may be fulfilled.

6.3 The P&G Service understands the importance of "Growing our Own", especially given the challenge of recruiting to some posts and, will continue to engage with HR and the Modern Apprenticeship team to identify funding available to support this. Recently created trainee posts within the Legal and Internal Audit teams provide good working models and opportunities for replication in other teams will be explored as appropriate.

6.4 Staff are attuned to efficiency and the necessity to make budget savings with even small spends being questioned and alternatives sought. The P&G Service is invested in exploring ways to make better and more efficient use of technology but recognises the investment of time required to develop processes and upskill staff.

6.5 Legal and other factors likely to impact the level and profile of the P&G workforce include:

- National Care Service Bill - where responsibility for planning and commissioning of Adult and Children's services may transfer from the Council to a national service.
- National Gaelic Language Plan – which mandates the Council's Gaelic provision in line with national priorities over a 5-year period.

- The emerging national guidance around Short Term Lets legislation.
- Changing electoral rules, including the introduction of Voter ID and changes to how absent voting is dealt with.
- Data Protection legislation – this is constantly changing, and it is difficult to anticipate impact.
- Additional duties coming from new legislation in general, where there is insufficient funding for the level of resource needed.
- Governance Review – if area committees are reduced capacity within democratic services will increase.
- Verity House Agreement/Democracy Matters 2 – the Service is leading on coordinating the Council’s engagement with Cosla and the Scottish Government

6.6 The P&G Service has significantly reduced printing over recent years, particularly within Committee Services. This reduction has created a requirement for increased emphasis on appropriate and safe use of ICT, including the completion of Display Screen Equipment Assessments.

7. Future Workforce Profile (Step 2)

7.1 When considering its future workforce profile, the P&G Extended Management Team acknowledges that real term budget reductions will lead to staff reduction which will impact service delivery. It was also acknowledged that as a support service, a key driver for change to staffing is likely to be from service delivery changes within the other services of the Council. The P&G Service recognises the need to review its priorities in terms of duties and powers to ensure appropriate resource allocation.

7.2 Succession Planning and Building Flexibility To ensure sustainability of services it is vital that the P&G Service considers succession planning. Service managers are keen to build more flexibility in to job roles where appropriate, to enable mobilisation of staff to other functions and teams when required. The P&G Service will continue to explore opportunities to create Trainee or Destination type posts where there is no suitable qualification available on the MA framework to support a Modern Apprenticeship.

7.3 Skills/staff training and development There is an appetite for increased staff training and development, to equip staff with digital skills in order to explore how technology can enable more efficient service delivery. ‘Leading’, ‘Thinking’ and ‘Being’ Digital are the three key themes of the [Council’s Digital Strategy](#) which in turn forms part of the Council’s wider agenda for its organisational development.

7.4 The P&G Service survey results showed that only 30% of staff responding agreed that there were “opportunities to develop (their) career with Highland Council.” The P&G Service will continue to work with HR, People Development and the Modern Apprenticeship team to identify suitable opportunities for development, whether that be specific qualifications, face to face training or via e-learning modules. The P&G Service recognises the importance of capturing the skills of its staff, in particular for those in “single point of failure” posts and where succession planning needs to be prioritised.

7.5 Service Structure Managers within the P&G Service have varying spans of control and numbers of direct reports, which range from 1 to 24. The P&G Service appreciates the need to ensure that structures are aligned appropriately and are sufficient to meet anticipated changes to service delivery and ways of working. Structures should also support effective management of staff and offer routes for career development. It is also recognised that data held in relation to post to post reporting needs to be better

and this will be improved as the Payroll and HR System Project is rolled out. Attention will be paid to ensuring spans of control are appropriate to support both managers and their team members.

- 7.6 Staff Wellbeing and Performance Staff wellbeing and performance are essential elements for workforce planning. There are a range of factors that have a bearing on this including regular engagement between managers and their teams - including the delivery of Employee Review and Development meetings (ERDs); learning and development; strong health safety and wellbeing systems and processes; workload and workstyles; and the general working environment.
- 7.7 The P&G Service survey results showed that only 37% of staff agreed that they “regularly received an ERD to review Learning & Development needs with (their) line manager”. This will be addressed to ensure that all staff having an ERD every year and at least one review part way through the year. This will in turn inform a learning and development needs assessment to ensure staff have the training support they need to grow and develop in their role and to advance in the organisation; highlight and address any wellbeing issues; establish target setting and work style requirements alongside performance expectations.
- 7.8 Hybrid Working Service delivery needs will continue to dictate the home/office balance. Allowing staff to work in a way that works for them where this is consistent with the requirements of the Service, can improve wellbeing and support recruitment and retention. It also supports the Council’s Asset Rationalisation programme. However, it is equally important to acknowledge the benefits of staff coming together face to face in terms of team building, reduced isolation and improved performance. Individual monitoring of hybrid working will be carried out as part of ERDs. Team agreements will be accessible to all staff (usually via SharePoint) and will be kept under review. The P&G Service will also continue to work effectively with the Asset Management Team to expedite service zoning within HQ.

8. Current Workforce Profile, Implications, and gap Analysis (Steps 3 & 4)

- 8.1 The current P&G Service workforce consists of 122 staff (116.5 FTE). Staff turnover is low at 2.5%. The P&G Service survey results showed that 74% of staff responding agreed that they “want to stay working with Highland Council for at least the next 3 years”. This suggests positive employee satisfaction levels.
- 8.2 The P&G Service recognises the high level of expertise and knowledge in its staff who are highly motivated. P&G Service survey results showed that 90% of staff responding agreed that they “have the skills needed to do (their) job effectively”. Morale is good although it is acknowledged not yet back to the pre-Covid level.
- 8.3 It is recognised that a specialisation approach to job roles, specifically within Trading Standards and Legal, can lead to reduced resilience. This also leads to recruitment challenges.
- 8.4 P&G staff have embraced broader use of technology, in particular SharePoint and wider use of MS Teams for external meetings.
- 8.5 Covid caused an immediate shift from office based to home working and many P&G staff continue to work from home for the majority of the week. The P&G Service survey results showed 84% of respondents “can” work from home. Of the 47% of respondents who said they were working from home “most of the time”, 82% agreed that it had

generally been a positive experience. The three highest scoring benefits of working from home were Work/life balance (90%), Wellbeing (68%) and Saving money (63%). However, as already noted earlier in this report, it is important to acknowledge the benefits of staff coming together face to face for both inter-personal as well as service delivery benefits and also to note that, for 18% of the Service, working from home was not considered to be positive so the needs of these staff need to be supported. All of these factors will inform the development of the Service approach to hybrid working going forward.

- 8.6 The workforce is predominantly female (70%) and this is representative across all grades.
- 8.7 Age profile is a significant factor in P&G with 53% of the workforce being over 50yrs. Whilst there is no longer a default retirement age, it is anticipated that during the period of this workforce plan, most of the 11% of staff who are over 61years, are likely to retire. It will be essential that any single points of failure posts with this group are identified, and effective succession planning implemented.
- 8.9 11% of staff are below 31yrs. The P&G Service recognises the challenge of recruitment and retention of younger staff, especially to posts requiring specific skills and professional qualifications e.g., Solicitors. The P&G Service continues to support a number of Modern Apprenticeships which have proven beneficial in both supporting work delivery and providing a rich experience to the candidate. The P&G Service has also utilised Economic Prosperity Funding with graduate interns within the Policy and Trading Standards teams.
- 8.10 89% of staff have permanent contracts of employment, with the remaining 11% having fixed term contracts, including three Modern Apprentices. The P&G Service does not currently employ agency staff.
- 8.11 Levels of absence within the P&G Service are low. Where there are instances of long term or consistent short-term absence, this is managed with the support of the Attendance Support Officer where required.

9. Workforce Actions

- 9.1 The PG Service will develop an appropriate workforce by taking forward the P&G Workforce Action Plan - **Appendix 2**.

Designation: ECO Performance & Governance

Date: 25/08/2023

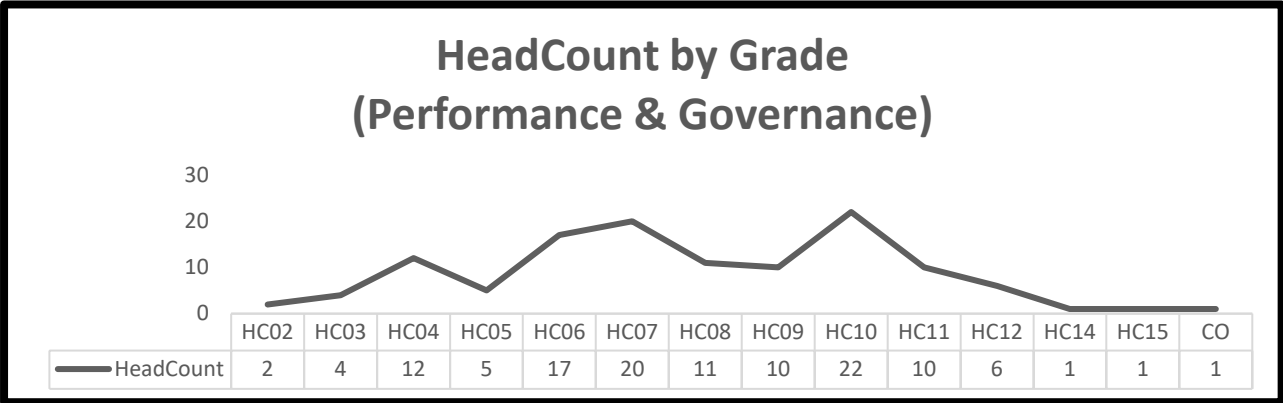
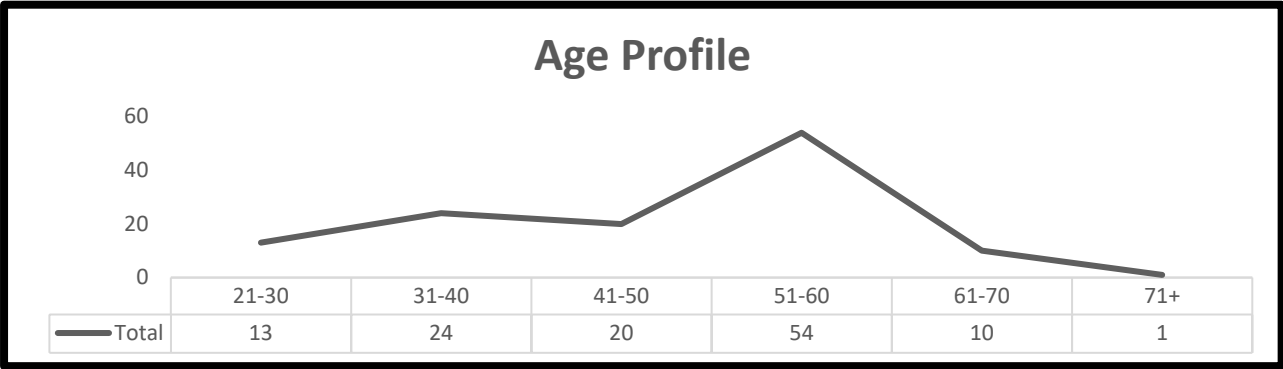
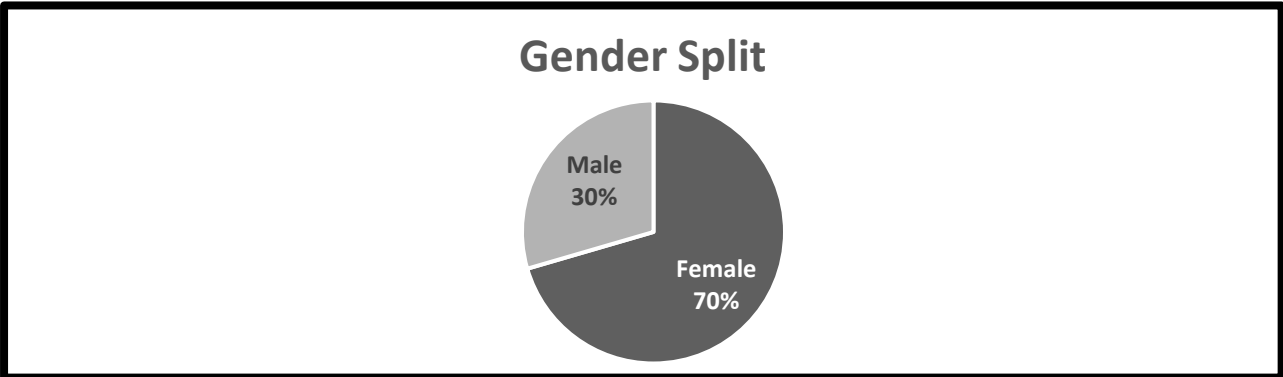
Author: Isabel McLellan

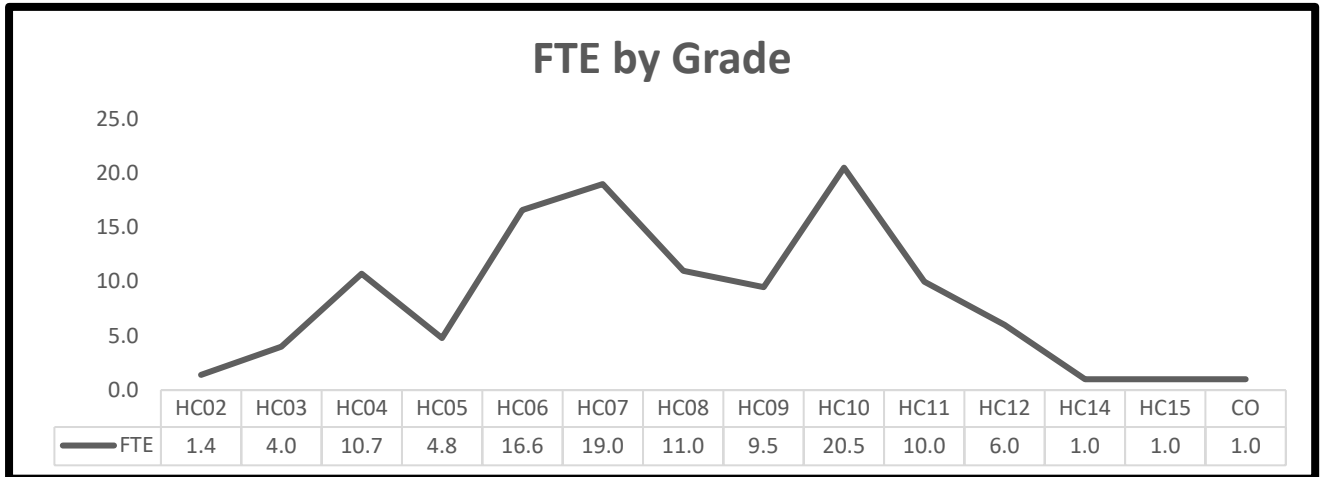
Background Papers:

Appendices:

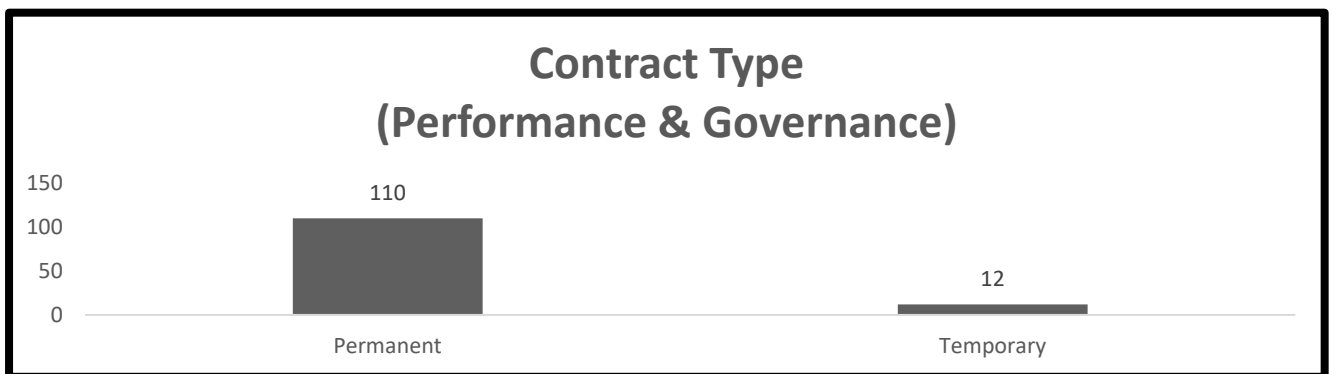
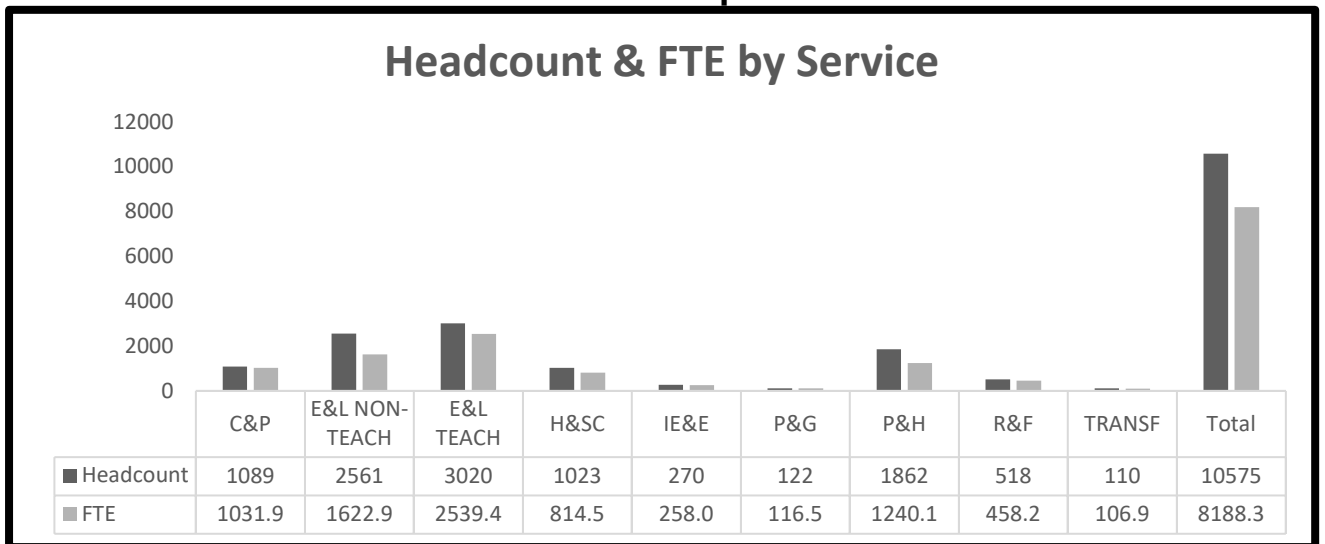
1. Service HR Data
2. Workforce Action Plan

Appendix 1 - Performance & Governance workforce data





All services Headcount & Grade for comparison:



Appendix 2 – Performance & Governance Workforce Action Plan

Action	Desired Outcome	Who	Target date
Succession Planning	Sufficient skills, knowledge, development opportunities and service establishment is maintained by the Service.		
1. Identify and continue to monitor “single point of failure” posts.	Live document on P&G SharePoint Site to support WFP.	SMT to identify posts and Service Secretary to create and maintain post list.	Dec 23 then Review quarterly
2. Explore (Police Scotland) model to match existing staff skills with those required in the “single points of failure” posts and/or ‘difficult to recruit’ posts.	Creation of a formal process to identify and manage workforce vulnerabilities.	SMT to explore model and agree & implement Council process if compatible.	Dec 24
3. Identify and continue to monitor posts held by staff over 61yrs and consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has a potential successor(s) been identified? • Does the potential successor require additional training/qualification to succeed to the target post? • Is it expedient to support up front training/qualifications? 	Live document on P&G SharePoint Site which identifies workforce vulnerabilities along with proposed solutions.	SMT to identify posts. Service Secretary to create and maintain post list.	Mar 24 then review quarterly

<p>4. Explore a mentoring role for those looking at phased retirement, supporting a successor over a phased introduction to the post.</p>	<p>Review completed identifying opportunities for mentoring to support succession planning.</p>		<p>Dec 24 Then review quarterly</p>
<p>5. Continue to engage with HR and the MA team to identify available funding for Modern/Graduate Apprentices and create Trainee posts where appropriate.</p>	<p>Provision of opportunities for temporary employment & experience within P&G</p>	<p>Service Managers with support of HR BP</p>	<p>Review quarterly</p>
<p>Building Flexibility/Difficult to Recruit posts</p>	<p>Right people in the right place at the right time, now and in the future</p>		
<p>6. Refresh current job descriptions & person specifications in line with standard template (as and when posts advertised), which outlines option to work flexibly and includes staff benefits package. Revise job descriptions to enable more flexible working across teams where appropriate and where possible.</p>	<p>All Service job descriptions updated & person specs held in P&G SharePoint Site</p>	<p>Service Managers to identify job descriptions already in standard template and move to SP site. Others to be revised (as and when advertised) and added to site</p>	<p>Feb 24 then updated on ongoing basis as post advertised</p>

7. Review the Modern/Graduate Apprenticeship Framework and create "Destination post" job descriptions where appropriate.	Creation of new MA/GA post job descriptions where appropriate.	Service Managers Supported by HR Business Partner	Review Mar 24
8. Develop Trainee posts where appropriate (where recruitment for fully qualified candidates has been unsuccessful). The existing models in internal Audit and Legal should inform a Service wide approach.	Additional Trainee posts created across the P&G Service.	Service Managers supported by HR Business Partner	Review Mar 24
9. Review longstanding vacancies to determine if posts still require to be on establishment.	Live document on P&G SharePoint site which identifies and maintains service vacancies.	Service SMT supported by HR BP	Review Mar & Sept annually

Staff training & development	Staff are equipped with the correct knowledge and skills		
10. Draft and implement a Service Learning and Development plan including areas identified from Skills Audit or similar and informed by staff ERDs	Service L&D plan held on P&G SP site	SMT & HR BP, supported by People Development	May 24
Service Structure	Service Structure is aligned with service delivery requirements		
11. "Clean up" the current establishment post to post reporting in MyView and obsolete old posts, to assist with the transfer to Tech One (new HR system)	Accurate post to post reporting showing in MyView for all service managers	Service managers with support from HR Resolver	Review April 24
12. Review current establishment and determine if the present structure and roles are sufficient to meet anticipated changes to service delivery and ways of working. The review to include a consideration of statutory powers and duties.	Structure review by function/service area identifying implications.	SMT to draft review plan for implementation.	Feb 24 Review Aug 24

Staff Wellbeing and Performance			
13. Continue to monitor absence stats at SMT and via quarterly reports to the Service Committee to support the consistency of good Attendance Management practice.	Absence stats monitored on a quarterly basis	SMT	Review quarterly

14. Managers to identify causes of absence and work closely with the Attendance Support Officer and Occupational Health to identify any trends and take proactive action required.

Substantive and timely support for staff will reduce staff absence, performance issues and improve overall staff wellbeing, ultimately resulting in reduction of cost and turn over.

SMT with support from HR and Performance BPs

Review in line with Perf reporting at Service Committee

<p>15. Ensure all staff have an up-to-date Employee Review and Development plan which also picks up on any wellbeing issues and provides opportunity to discuss future plans (to inform succession planning).</p>	<p>Service ERDs completed by end September each year, monitored via People Development reporting</p>	<p>Service SMT</p>	<p>Review in line with Perf reporting at Service Committee</p>
<p>16. Ensure all managers have completed the compulsory Mentally Healthy Workplace course.</p>	<p>100% training compliance</p>	<p>Service ECO</p>	<p>Monitor via quarterly training reports</p>
<p>Hybrid Working</p>	<p>Effective match between service delivery requirements being met and staff being able to work in a way that suits them. Effective service delivery and improved staff wellbeing</p>		

17. Review and update team agreements and use staff ERDs to monitor and review staff ways of working, ensuring DSE assessments are carried out where and when required.	Team agreements held in Performance & Governance SharePoint site.	Senior management with support from HR BP and NWOW team.	Mar 24 Review quarterly
18. Identify office space (where and what) required and ensure tie in with recent and planned moves as part of Asset Rationalisation.	Team agreements held in Performance & Governance SharePoint site.	Senior management with support from HR BP and NWOW team.	Review quarterly