

# The Highland Council

Agenda Item	11.
Report No	EDU/27/23

**Committee:** Education

**Date:** 23 November 2023

**Report Title:** Education & Learning Service Workforce Plan 2023-2026

**Report By:** Executive Chief Officer, Education & Learning

## 1. Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 This report sets out a summary of the Education and Learning Service Workforce Plan for the period 2023 – 2026.

## 2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

- i. **Note** the Education & Learning Service Workforce Plan 2023-2026

## 3. Implications

3.1 Resource - no other than those highlighted in the report.

3.2 Legal - no legal implications.

3.3 Community (Equality, Poverty, Rural and Island) - no implications

3.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever - no implications other than the New Ways of Working approach: better use of technology can reduce the need for travel.

3.5 Risk - this report mitigates the risk of insufficient current and future workforce.

3.6 Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people) – no implications.

3.7 Gaelic - there are no Gaelic implications, other than the reference to difficult to recruit Gaelic educational posts.

## 4. Background

- 4.1 Workforce planning is the process that organisations use to make sure they have the right people with the right skills in the right place at the right time. To manage their workforce effectively, organisations need to have up to date information on:
- The number of people they employ to carry out different tasks.
  - What skills the workforce has and where there are gaps.
  - What skills and staff will be needed to deliver future services and priorities.
- 4.2 Effective workforce planning will support the Education and Learning Service to:
- Deliver improved service.
  - Review and ensure the correct number of employees required.
  - Manage staffing budgets effectively.
  - Ensure sufficient and appropriate training is provided.
  - Cope with variations in supply of and demand for various skills
- 4.3 Service specific workforce planning has been taken forward in line with the agreed Workforce Planning & Development Action Plan that was approved at the Redesign Board on 23 March 2021.
- 4.4 The Highland Council's People Strategy approved at Full Council on 27 October 2022 outlines the direction and framework for the organisation over a 5-year period relating to our workforce. The Strategy provides an overview and our approach covering eight key staff elements: staff engagement; health, safety, and wellbeing; reward and conditions (including job design); talent management; people development; people data and processes; workforce planning; equality, diversity, and inclusion.
- 4.5 The Education and Learning Service Workforce plan has been prepared using the Highland Council six step model. The plan covers a period of four years (2023 – 2026) and is being monitored and reviewed annually by the Service directorate, supported by the HR Business Partner. This is the first Education and Learning Workforce plan; previous workforce analyses were done as part of the Care and Learning Service.
- 4.6 The six-step model:
1. Environmental and context analysis
  2. Future Workforce profile
  3. Current Workforce profile
  4. Workforce implications/Gap analysis
  5. Action plan
  6. Review and evaluation
- Please refer to **Appendix 1** for further details.
- 4.7 As part of the workforce planning exercise, the Education and Learning Service Extended Senior Management Team undertook a focused workshop facilitated by HR Business Partners to analyse the context and environment, the current and required workforce profile and actions needed to ensure that the workforce can meet future demands.
- 4.8 Following the recommendation from the Workforce Planning Strategy review board to take a broader approach to Service Workforce Planning, the session was joined by the Service Business Partners for Finance, Corporate Performance and Digital Transformation.

4.9 The Education and Learning workforce data was split in Teaching and non-teaching due to the fact that both staffing groups are on different Terms and Conditions.

## **5. Context and Drivers for Change**

5.1 The context and environment analysis recognises the financial challenges the Highland Council and therefore the Education and Learning Service faces.

5.2 Recruitment is a significant problem for the Service, especially Head Teachers in rural areas, STEM-subject teachers, and Gaelic speaking staff. It should be noted that STEM recruitment is a national issue and not specific to Highland.

5.3 The extended management team identified Staff Satisfaction as one of the main drivers for change. This corresponds with the outcome of the staff survey from 2022, see paragraph 6.6.

5.4 Other pressures are the changing demands from children and young people and their families post covid and the organisational pressures, mainly the current financial position the Highland Council is facing.

5.5 Operating in a large area with an ageing population, unseen rural deprivation and funding pressures present the Service with significant challenges. The Service will have to find a way of continuing to improve quality which has been a major priority against a backdrop of financial pressures.

5.6 The Highland Council's Digital Strategy and implementation plan was released in Autumn 2022. The strategy takes an informed approach to laying the foundations for a digital council and sets out achievable objectives for becoming a digital council.

'Leading,' 'Thinking' and 'Being' Digital are the three key themes of the Strategy which in turn forms part of the Councils wider agenda for its organisational development: growing the workforce for the future and ensuring no one is left behind. Self-serve learning materials will be available, plus accessible support from the Digital Champions Community, clear frameworks, and career pathways for digital, data and technology professions, for both recruiting talent and growing internal expertise.

Covid has shown how important digital is for teachers and pupils and it has become a significant part of service delivery. Education have led the way digitally across the council, this has been highlighted nationally by Education Scotland pre and post pandemic.

5.7 Performance management is a critical component to workforce planning. The process not only allows managers and staff to communicate expectations and outcomes, but more importantly, it provides information to management allowing them to make informed decisions regarding service delivery. Through an effective use of data, leaders can analyse the current situation, identify trends and gaps in workforce, and plan for the future by taking proactive and corrective actions through processes such as recruitment, training, and development. Performance management, including self-evaluation initiatives, can also help managers recognise areas for improvement and increase staff engagement. The Service is committed to implement a service-wide management information systems to generate timely and accurate data to inform performance improvement, supported by SEEMIS training for all users.

The Education and Learning Service provide a number of data clinics for all teaching and non-teaching staff to support performance and improvement analysis.

- 5.8 Customer requirements are changing. The diversity of the Highland population is increasing, with more different nationalities/cultures in our area. The staff will have to be prepared for this as it will impact on the needs of our service users. Initiatives to support Ukrainian and unaccompanied young refugees are very recent examples of these changes.

The Education and Learning Service has worked closely with a number of partners including High Life Highland to support our Ukrainian families both in school through the curriculum and formal recognition of qualifications and within the community through EAL (English as an Additional Language).

- 5.9 The Service strategy over the next four years will focus on our four key priorities:
- Continuing to raise attainment and achievement for all – especially our most vulnerable.
  - Embedding the Collaborative Improvement Framework
  - Leadership of Learning and Teaching.
  - Values based leadership.
- 5.10 The Service recognises the need for continued partnerships working with stakeholders in communities, Trade Unions, other Highland Council Services, NHS Highland, HLH, third sector organisations, Parents, Education Scotland, and the Regional Improvement Collaborative.
- 5.11 It has to be recognised that responsibility for national workforce planning for teaching staff in terms of the availability of university courses sits at a national level. However, Highland Council do engage in national forums to influence decisions in relation to this. E&L Service is involved on an annual basis in bidding for probationer teachers through the Teacher induction Scheme but ultimately has limited influence on the number of probationary teachers we receive each year.

## **6. Current Workforce Profile**

- 6.1 The Service has approximately 5600 employees and 4230 FTE. Specified:  
Teaching: 2798 employees and 2436.78 FTE  
Non-teaching: 2807 employees, 1790.29 FTE

This breakdown shows that non-teaching staff (mainly EYPs, PSAs and clericals) has more part-timers than the teaching staff.

- 6.2 78% of Highland Council teaching staff is female, 22% is male.  
94% of non-teaching staff in Highland Council is female, 6% is male.

Data from the Scottish Government (publishes December 2022) shows that 77% of teachers in Scotland are female and 23% male.

The female/male ratio for Highland Council non-teaching staff is also comparable with national data.

- 6.3 Age profile: Teaching staff is one of the most balanced staffing groups in Highland Council. There is a strong decrease in numbers from the age of 60, when most teachers retire. However, there is a reassuring number of teachers in the age groups 31-40 and 41-50.
- The non-teaching staff profile shows a more aging workforce, with 40% of all employees in the age group of 51 and over, including 12% (350 members of staff) over 61 years. It is reasonable to expect that the majority of at least the staff over 61 will retire in the next four years. Although most of the non-teaching staff can get qualified in a reasonably short time, there are less people available on the labour market. Combined with the fact that the service does not attract male applicants, and the size of Highland Council including rural areas, we can expect it to be difficult to recruit to posts in the next four years.
- This is in line with the national and even international trend. Compared with 5 years ago, in 2022 there were a higher proportion of workers in the age 50 to 54, 55 to 59 and 60 to 64 age bands. (Data published by Scottish Government).
- 6.4 The average days lost due to sickness absence within the Service is 2.59 days per employee in the Teaching staff group, and 1.71 days for non-teaching staff. The Highland Council average is 2.48 days per employee which shows that the teaching staff has a slightly higher absence than the Highland Council average.
- 6.5 Over 90% of teaching staff is employed on a permanent contract. The fixed term contracts exist mainly of probationary teachers and temporary cover for maternity leave and long-term sickness absence.
- 33% of non-teaching staff is employed on a fixed term contract. The main reason for this higher percentage is temporary funding, specifically PSAs on Pupil Equity Funding (PEF). In October 2023, a total of 167 (part-time) non-teaching staff were employed on the basis of temporary funding, including 133 PSAs: a total equivalent of 53.62 FTE. It has to be noted that it is not unusual for the temporary funding to continue after two years, giving the fixed term employees redundancy and deployment rights which could result in financial pressures for the Service.
- 6.6 The turnover rate for the Service is 10% for teaching staff and 18% for non-teaching staff. This is partly explained by the fact that the 10% includes probationer teachers on fixed term contracts. And as referred to in paragraph 6.5, there is a significant number of temporary contracts in non-teaching, partly due to temporary funding streams which will cause a higher turnover rate.
- 6.7 Employee engagement: the 2022 employee survey shows that 94% of the 2,754 respondents (47% of the Service) are interested in the work they do. 90% of the respondents feel that they have the skills to do their work effectively and the same number feel that they are trusted to their work effectively. The E&L employee satisfaction scored lower than the Highland Council average on 21% of the questions.

## **7. Future Workforce Profile**

- 7.1 When considering its Future Workforce Profile, the Education and Learning Service senior management team acknowledged the impact that budget outcomes could have on their future staffing resource. Saving targets on staffing costs will have an impact on Service delivery. However, pupil staff ratios are nationally set for both primary and secondary schools.

- 7.2 The E&L Service plan shows ambitious targets to continue to improve attainment, achievement and positive destinations for all children and young people across The Highland. An ambitious 3-year programme of leadership at all levels has been implemented by the service which includes the development of the Highland Council Education Leadership Academy, future reports will be brought back to Committee on this. The aim is to create high quality leadership at all levels, underpinned by quality professional review and learning development.
- 7.3 Succession planning. As stated previously, Head Teacher posts are hard to fill. Development of current teachers and depute head teachers can be part of the solution. This starts with knowing the skills, capabilities, and ambitions of our staff and this can be captured during annual Employee Profession Review and Development (PRD) meetings. The Service will use the revised guidance to improve the recording of PRDs and to identify development opportunities to support succession planning into difficult to recruit post.

The Senior Manager Leadership Development will lead a small working group supported by HR on career paths and leadership development for Head Teacher and other senior management roles.

- 7.4 Stress and Debility is the main reason for long- and short-time absence in most Highland Council Services, including the Education and Learning Service. The Senior Management Team recognises the workload pressures. On top of that, we are dealing with the cost-of-living crises which has a significant impact on pupils, families but also our own staff. Supporting our employees' mental health and wellbeing is therefore a priority and will be achieved by ensuring that all managers have completed the mentally safe workplace training, ERD, and PRD for all staff in place and promotion of the mental health and wellbeing toolkit.
- 7.5 Whilst there is an obvious focus on obtaining and maintaining statutory and mandatory qualifications and skills, a further strand of training will concentrate on the Service priority to improve quality of life and opportunities for all people in the Highland. In order to achieve this, all staff will have access to refreshed training, ensuring consistency of knowledge and skills within the services, particularly under the key themes relating to mental health, wellbeing, and children's rights.
- 7.6 New Ways of Working/Hybrid working is a main focus for Highland Council, but the vast majority of Education and Learning staff is school based and hybrid working does not apply. However, NWOW is more than our place of work. It is about working smarter, building on:
1. Leadership & Culture,
  2. Structure, Roles & Systems,
  - 3 Operating models & Agile Teams,
  4. Systems, Processes & Spaces.

This report shows links with all four pillars of smarter working and the Service will continue to engage on this and will work closely with our Corporate Performance Business Partner to self-assess these, using the Public Sector Improvement Framework.

## 8. Workforce Actions

8.1 The Education and Learning Service will aim to ensure they have the appropriate workforce going forward.

This will be achieved through the following actions:

- continue with the development of an affordable and sustainable workforce.
- identify synergies within the Service, between Services and with third parties.
- focus on support succession planning.
- support staff health and wellbeing
- Represent the Workforce requirements of Highland at national level.

Several actions identified through the workforce plan will be linked to work streams covered in the Corporate Workforce Strategy, such as improvement of management data, Talent strategy and business processes.

Designation: Executive Chief Officer, Education & Learning

Date: 10 October 2023

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Background Papers:

Appendices: **Appendix 1** – Workforce Planning Model

# Appendix 1

