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| Agenda Item | 8 |
| Report No | HSW-05-24 |

The Highland Council

Committee: Health, Social Care and Wellbeing

Date: 14th February 2024

Report Title: Service Workforce Plan Annual Progress Report

Report By: Executive Chief Officer Health and Social Care

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 On 9th February 2023, Members approved the Health and Social Care Workforce report 2022 – 2025. This report aims to provide more details on the Action Plan that has since been drafted and an update on the progress made so far.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

- i. Note the four-year Action Plan and progress report.

3. Implications

3.1 Resource – Workforce planning ensures that all reasonable actions are in place to help the correct staffing resource in place to deliver services safely and efficiently.

3.2 Legal - No arising issues

3.3 Community – no arising issues

3.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever – no arising issues

3.5 Risk – the Action Plan helps to mitigate the risks around insufficient staffing resources and skills.

3.6 Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people) – no arising issues, other than the reference to the Employee Survey.

3.7 Gaelic – no arising issues.

4. Introduction

- 4.1 On 9th February 2023, the Health and Social Care Committee approved the Health and Social Care Workforce Planning Report 2022-2025
- 4.2 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.
- 4.3 This is the first of the annual update reports Members will receive.

5. Action Plan

- 5.1 Attached as Appendix 1 is the Action Plan developed by the Health and Social Care management team, supported by the HR Business Partner. The last column informs Members of progress made to date.
- 5.2 An update on workforce strategy, specifically the challenges around recruitment, was provided to Committee on 16th November 2023.
- 5.3 It is important to note that it is not possible to provide end dates for most actions because workforce planning is an ongoing process.
- 5.4 Most Services have now completed their workforce plans. HR Business Partners have collated the information from the Service Plans into a Corporate Action Plan which will be presented at Corporate Resource Committee in March 2024.

6. Priorities

- 6.1 Priorities in the Health and Social Care Workforce Plan are recruitment and retention, mitigation of aging workforce, staff wellbeing and the development of an effective and sustainable staffing structure.

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| Designation: | Executive Chief Officer Health and Social Care |
| Date: | 8 January 2024 |
| Author: | Jannet Sikkema – HR Business Partner |
| Background Papers: | Workforce Report 9 February 2023 Workforce Strategy update report 16 November 2023 |
| Appendices: | Action Plan 2022 - 2025 |

WORKFORCE ACTION PLAN H&SC 2022 -2025

| WORKFORCE CHALLENGES PRIORITIES | ACTIONS REQUIRED | DESIRED OUTCOMES | WHO | Achieved by Jan24 |
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| Age profile | | | | |
| 41% of H&SC workforce is older than 50 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Succession planning - MA and trainee programme - Identify 'single points of failure' and mitigate - Implement measures for aging workforce to support continuing employment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sufficient staff numbers in the future - Prevent 'knowledge drain' by increased retirements | (Senior) management, Service Business manager, HR BP | Critical key posts have been identified for succession planning. The trainee programme has successfully delivered 6 newly qualified social workers. |
| Employment types | | | | |
| The service spends on average £1 mln on agency staff per year | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review use of agency staff and reduce as part of the Recruitment strategy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cost saving - Improved service delivery | Senior management, Talent management team, HR BP | The average agency cost is not reduced yet, but it is expected that successful recruitment will reduce the need for agency staff in the coming year. |
| Recruitment and Retention | | | | |
| Difficult to Recruit vacancies. This is a national problem enhanced in rural areas in HC, especially in the North and the West. Housing is a particular problem in the West. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop Recruitment Strategy - Grow our own - Rolling MA programme (supernumerary ?) - Review current recruitment process - Refresh current job descriptions - Develop career paths - Explore options with UHI to develop a high quality SW course to avoid future | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure right people at the right place at the right time, now and in the future | (Senior) management, Talent management Team, HR BP, Service Business Manager | The rolling Trainee programme is successful and a new post to support new starts and trainees has been created. The number of Social Work vacancies in the service has reduced from 41% to 34% |

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| <p>The Service has a turnover rate of 14.7% which is significant. A higher retention rate will decrease the number of (hard to fill) vacancies. It is not uncommon that recruited staff leave within their first year.</p> | <p>workforce moving away from the Highlands</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review longstanding vacancies and determine if work can be divided differently - Work with Housing and Property to explore housing options for staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use existing Exit Interview process to analyse reasons for leaving and resolve where possible - Review induction programme to improve support to new staff to increase the chances of long term employment | <p>Reduce reasons for staff to leave employment with HC, reduce turn over</p> <p>Reduce turnover</p> | <p>Talent management team, HR BP (senior) management</p> <p>Improvement and Performance manager, HR BP</p> | <p>Job descriptions of most difficult posts have been refreshed. A video has been recorded and is now used to support recruitment. More admin support has been created to relief Practice Leads and allow them to focus on Service delivery. Analysis of exit interviews has shown that lack of development opportunities is a main reason for people to leave. A working group to review the induction programme has been formed.</p> |
| <p>Staff development</p> | | | | |
| <p>The pandemic has had a negative impact on the development of staff: courses and training were not available. Up to date knowledge is a priority to enable staff to respond to changing needs and changes in policies, guidance and practice. The Service has a training budget of ca £150.000</p> | <p>Draft and implement a Service Learning and Development plan</p> | <p>Staff are well equipped and feel confident to undertake their duties</p> | <p>(senior) management, HR BP, People development service</p> | <p>The Service is in the process of completing the Employee Review and Development process for all staff. Outcomes will inform a Service Workforce development plan.</p> |

Structure and roles

The Service restructure has been ongoing for a long time. Reasons for redesign is a review of the family teams, decoupling from Education and Learning and the Corporate Redesign process. An additional reason is the planned shift in focus to Early Intervention and Prevention. The Service required a change in management structure (now implemented). Gaps are identified in the following roles: Support workers Admin staff, roles to support early intervention, Mentors in Health, Basic Band5 Staff and Data analysis.

Where is reduction in needs expected and where is increased staffing numbers required?

Review current establishment and determine if the present roles are sufficient to meet change in needs and practice. Project with focus on support roles started January 2023.

Establish a sustainable, cost effective structure that is fit for purpose and ensures safe service delivery.

Senior management, project manager, HR BP

A report on strengths, weaknesses and opportunities around support roles in the Service has been produced and recommendations will be taken forward in 2024.

Staff Wellbeing and Performance

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| <p>The number of days lost to sickness absence equates to almost 30 FTE absence annually. Absence management enables staff to return to work at the earliest opportunity which is not just good practice. It is cost effective and also avoids further absence by team members who absorb additional workload.</p> <p>Most days are lost to Depression and Stress. Improving wellbeing of staff is a priority.</p> | <p>Refresh management knowledge of absence management and performance management policy, guidance and processes.</p> <p>Work closely with the Attendance Support Officer and Occupational Health to identify trends and act proactively to reduce absence</p> <p>Ensure that all staff have an up-to-date Employee Review and Development plan which includes Staff wellbeing.</p> <p>Make staff aware of the Employee Assistance Programme and Mental Health First Aiders. Ensure that all managers have completed the compulsory Mentally Healthy Workplace course.</p> | <p>Substantive and timely support for staff will reduce staff absence, performance issues and improve overall staff wellbeing, ultimately resulting in reduction of cost and turnover.</p> | <p>(Senior) Management, HR BP, People development, Attendance Support Officer</p> | <p>In order to reduce sickness absence, an attendance management e-learning module for managers was launched at the end of 2023, to enable managers to provide employees with appropriate support. In addition, employees can access the employee assistance programme 24/7. Furthermore, the Attendance Support Officer continues to provide managers and employees with support and advice.</p> |
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Staff Survey 2022

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| <p>There are many positives to build on but there are matters to be addressed too.</p> | <p>Discuss outcomes in Senior Management Team and take to team meetings.</p> <p>Develop action plan to enhance positives and address areas of improvement.</p> <p>Draft a staff learning and development plan.</p> | <p>Building on the strengths and address areas of improvement will enhance staff wellbeing and performance.</p> | <p>Senior management, line management, HR BP</p> | <p>The outcomes of the staff survey have been shared with the teams and a corporate action plan will be drafted for Corporate Resources Committee in March 2024.</p> |
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New ways of working

The pandemic caused an immediate shift from working in an office to working from home. There is no 'one size fits all' going forward. A staff survey showed that 79% of staff prefers a blended way of working with a combination of working in an office environment and from home. There are staff members who prefer to work in an office environment full time, whilst others wish to work mainly from home. Considering staff wellbeing, we need to ensure that we allow staff to work in a way they prefer where possible. Service delivery has to meet the needs of clients. However, enabling staff to work in a way they prefer will improve their wellbeing and can support recruitment and retention.

Identify Service Requirements and how this can accommodate a blended way of working.

Identify office space (where and what) required

Work with teams to complete the team agreement documents about ways of working

Effective match between service requirements and staff preference to enhance service delivery and staff wellbeing.

(Senior) management, HR BP, NWOW Team

Team agreements have been drafted and will be matched with service delivery requirements and available office/work space.