



# **Workforce Plan 2017-2022**

## **RHONDDA CYNON TAF**



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## Preface from the Chief Executive

We are very fortunate to have loyal, committed and highly skilled staff in all parts of the Council who are dedicated to serving the community through many changes in local government.

I am pleased to say that our staff have responded to each challenge and demand placed upon them. Our trade unions have worked with us and I am confident that we will continue to work together to make Rhondda Cynon Taf Council a good place to work in which staff are developed to reach their full potential at all stages of their career.

The Council's Workforce Plan 2017 – 2022 sets out our key priorities for developing and enhancing our workforce to meet the needs of our residents. The plan highlights five key aims that, we believe, will enable us to have a flexible and engaged workforce that will help us to adapt and respond to a changing economic landscape whilst continuing to deliver high quality services.



**Chris Bradshaw**

Chief Executive

# Alignment with the Council Corporate Plan

The aim of the Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT) Workforce Plan is to enable the Council to achieve its priorities, as set out in the Council Corporate Plan (2016-20), 'The Way Ahead', by ensuring that the Council's workforce is developed and able to meet the current and future challenges the organisation faces, so that services for residents are the best they can be.

To do this, the Council must have the right people with the right skills in the right place at the right time.

The RCT Council Workforce Plan also embeds the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, to meet national well-being goals, particularly 'A prosperous Wales'.

## The Importance of Workforce Planning and Development

Workforce planning requires an organisation to look at where it is now and where it wants to be in the future and match this with its existing workforce and any known or expected pressures on the supply or replacement of staff through:

- identifying the link between business strategies and people plans
- identification of the future skills and competencies needed to deliver new and improved services
- analysis of the present workforce
- comparison between the present workforce and the requirements of the future and identification of any gaps
- strategies to address the gaps



# What we know about the Current Workforce

The Council provides important local services and facilities for residents. These include providing education services and schools, waste and recycling, leisure and recreation facilities including parks, highway maintenance, local planning, libraries, social services and environmental health.

The workforce reflects this diversity and we have a range of employment contracts including full-time, part-time, term time and casual. Some staff have more than one contract. Agency workers and consultants are used only when necessary, to ensure service delivery or to buy in expertise for project delivery. We also have services delivered through partnerships or commissioning arrangements.

**The figures below give an overview of staff composition (including schools) for 2016/17:**

- Headcount of 10,994 employees with a total FTE of 8,170.2 (excluding casual contracts and seasonal positions)
- 46% of our staff are employed in schools as teachers and support staff
- 75% of staff are female and 25% are male
- 55% of employees are part-time
- Most staff are aged between 45-54 (32.24%), only 4.19% of staff are aged 16-24
- On average, we use the full-time equivalent of 168 agency staff per month
- 532 of our posts are partly or wholly grant funded
- There were 903 new starters, most were aged 25 to 34
- We had 1,303 staff leave (544 of these left for voluntary reasons, 206 as it was the end of their contract and 144 due to voluntary redundancy). Most leavers were between 25-34 years of age. Most leavers had 6-10 years service
- 42.13% of appointments were internal
- 2.33% of staff disclosed that they had a disability, however staff equality data return rates for this question were low so this figure may be an underestimate
- 0.58% of staff are from a minority group, but again information return rates were low so this figure may not be a true reflection of the workforce
- 2.13% of all application forms were received from applicants from ethnic groups and this data was more reliable as information return rates were high
- 6.86% of staff speak fluent Welsh

We are also a main employer for the local area. Rhondda Cynon Taf is situated to the north of Cardiff, at the heart of South Wales. It consists of five valleys, the Rhondda Fawr and Fach, Cynon, Taf and Ely, some areas of which have high concentrations of multiple deprivation.

# Challenges and Opportunities Ahead

There are significant challenges and opportunities ahead for the Council and we need staff that can face these to ensure challenges are overcome and opportunities realised to maximise benefits for residents. Challenges and opportunities include:

- **Increasing pressure on services and changing demographics:**

Increasing demand on services is driven by a changing population. Rhondda Cynon Taf's population is relatively static but health and social services in particular are facing acute challenges due to the growth in older cohorts, as people are living for longer. This could also have an impact on the workforce as an ageing population could be reflected in the composition of staff, with people having extended working lives. This may result in a need for more flexibility in terms of working patterns and adjustments, career flexibility and retirement options.

- **Recruitment and retention:**

Due to the diversity of services the Council provides, people with specific skills need to be recruited for certain roles and it can be difficult to recruit to some posts due to shortages in the labour market. Retention of staff is also important to ensure continuity of service delivery.

- **Increasing public expectations:**

With residents expecting better services and more prompt responses. This means that the Council must plan for the fact that spending reductions will affect all parts of the public sector to the end of the decade and that increasing levels of demand will not be met from simply doing more of what it is currently doing.

- **Further spending cuts to come:**

As a result of reductions to public sector funding, Rhondda Cynon Taf Council has had to save over £100m from its revenue budget since 2011 and there is a current budget gap of £3.8m.

- **Collaboration:**

There will be more collaborative working and joined up approaches to service delivery. Therefore there will be new ways of working with other public bodies, sectors, organisations and residents to positively impact service delivery. Workforce skills can be developed and enhanced to ensure the Council maximises on these opportunities.

- **Technology:**

Advances in technology need to be identified and utilised to improve service delivery and customer service. This could involve new ways of working for staff.

- **Other considerations:**

The 2016 Council Service Self Evaluations highlighted that staff were working hard to deliver outcomes for residents. However, some areas needed to address workforce issues which included succession planning and skills gaps, along with recruitment and retention, created by experienced staff exiting the organisation and/or a need for new skills to deliver new services both now and in the future. Areas noted that there was a need for extra capacity to think strategically, to deliver new priorities and continue to deliver excellent services for the longer term, without compromising operations. Maximising attendance by reducing sickness absence was also a priority.



# The Workforce and Skills we need for the Future

As public services are changing, employees who can respond rapidly and innovatively to change, acquire new skills and competencies and proactively work towards positive outcomes are needed. Employees may need to undertake a variety of roles and careers may be built across sectors and services instead of people remaining in one area for the duration of their employment.

Citizen engagement to develop services is becoming more important and good communication skills, in addition to technical expertise, are required to achieve the necessary transformation in services. To ensure we live within our means, employees will also need to have more of a commercial perspective, without losing the public service ethos, as delivering quality services to our residents, some of whom are amongst the most vulnerable in Wales, is at the heart of everything we do.

Advances in technology will be utilised to deliver services and meet customer expectations. New skills may be required to harness the opportunities it can provide. Technology will also free up capacity and allow staff more time to think strategically and spend time on more complex work.

To bridge the skills gap that is emerging due to the unprecedented change there will also need to be a shift in behaviour and organisational culture to realise our goals. There will be more collaboration and joined up approaches to service delivery, both within the organisation and between other sectors.

Staff will need opportunities to learn and reflect on new skills, which may be through a variety of methods such as action learning, mentoring, coaching, job shadowing and secondments in addition to, or instead of, formal training. Corporate change programmes will also provide opportunities within the organisation to create new systems and processes for service delivery, but it will be the way staff work in the future that will determine if we are successful in delivering our ambitions.

## How to ensure we have the Workforce we need: Workforce Plan Delivery Aims

To ensure we have the workforce we need to achieve the best for our residents, we will be working towards the following Workforce Plan delivery aims:

- |          |  |   |
|----------|--|---|
| <b>1</b> | Developing a flexible and agile workforce that shares organisational knowledge |  |
| <b>2</b> | Recruiting and retaining the best talent to create a diverse workforce         |  |
| <b>3</b> | Leadership and management development  |  |
| <b>4</b> | Enabling a high performing, engaged and committed workforce                    |  |
| <b>5</b> | Supporting health and well-being to maximise attendance                        |  |

# 1 Developing a flexible and agile workforce that shares organisational knowledge

We aim to create a workforce that works together and shares organisational knowledge to respond to service change and customer demand to result in better services for residents.

Employees will be encouraged to work across the organisation in different teams, areas and even across the public sector so that they access development opportunities and gain experience they can use to improve service delivery. Working in this way will allow for the sharing of expertise and could result in the creation of strong talent partnerships and facilitate collaborative working.

Agile working and streamlined processes will also support this and free up staff time to focus on more complex tasks and think strategically for the long term.

## What is happening now:

- The link between employee engagement and higher performance has been well researched and well documented. Staff consultation has been a key approach to enhance employee engagement with bi-annual staff consultation exercises, the results of which result in key actions for improvement.
- In addition to improve staff consultation, there has been an enhanced focus on improving the flow of information through:
  - » Quarterly briefing sessions on key subjects with the Council's Cabinet, Chief Officers and senior managers
  - » Bi-annual briefings on key subjects for all staff with people management responsibilities
  - » Inform and RCT Source for information sharing and knowledge management
- The Council has a wide range of supportive policies in place that enable staff to balance work and life commitments which include, for example, flexible working arrangements and term time contracts.
- The Council has placed an increased focus on enabling staff to work more efficiently through the introduction of an improved ICT infrastructure and the introduction of more agile working practices to make the way in which we work more effective and efficient.
- The Council has effective partnerships and networks in place to ensure that the public sector works together effectively and efficiently by targeting and sharing resources.
- Development programmes such as the Mercury Middle Management Development and Transform Strategic Leaders programmes incorporate components of cross Council project working to encourage networking and a sharing of organisational knowledge.
- The Council's graduate scheme facilitates sharing of knowledge across the Council through a mixture of project working and movement of staff in order to enhance information and knowledge sharing across the Council. This is also extended to project working with other public sector organisations.

## What needs to be done:

Greater agility in the workforce and the sharing of organisational knowledge will support the responses to challenges faced by the Council and help build a more resilient and responsive organisation. To respond to the future challenges facing the Council, staff will be required to operate differently with a wider organisational knowledge to enhance decision making.

## In order to facilitate this more agile and flexible way of working we will:

- Further enhance the sharing of information and knowledge throughout the organisation by reviewing current approaches, focusing on the greater utilisation of existing communication channels and the introduction of new communication approaches where necessary.
- Explore mechanisms to develop staff further and increase mobility so that individuals can use their skills to work in different teams and service areas if required. Utilising opportunities for staff to work with new and existing collaborative networks and partnerships could improve service delivery and enhance communication and sharing of information.
- Develop the 'harder to reach' workforce, who may be part time and on lower incomes, by utilising findings from the RCT Council WAVE project (women adding value to the economy) to improve opportunities for development discussions and opportunities, methods of recruitment and contract arrangements.
- Continue to enhance the opportunities for staff to work in a more agile and flexible way through improved ICT approaches and ongoing review of employment practices.

## **2 Recruiting and retaining the best talent to create a diverse workforce**

We want to both attract and retain employees who have the skills we need for the future to create a talented, skilled and diverse workforce to deliver the best outcomes for residents both as an organisation and as active contributors to partnership and collaborative working.

### **What is happening now:**

- Our employment package helps the Council to attract and retain the right staff. It includes a competitive pension scheme and holiday provision, a variety of flexible working opportunities including flexi-time, part-time, term-time and compressed hours and an employee benefit scheme (with discounts, opportunity to purchase annual leave and a salary sacrifice scheme).
- The Council is a voluntary ‘living wage’ employer, which ensures employees are paid a wage which is enough to live on.
- The Council promotes equality by providing many flexible working opportunities and by ensuring its recruitment processes are free from unlawful discrimination. We are a “Disability Confident” committed employer, which guarantees a person with a disability an interview if they meet the essential criteria for the job. The Council has also been recognised in the Stonewall 2016 best 100 employers index, which demonstrates our commitment to ensuring an inclusive workplace.
- Through our approach to workforce planning the Council has invested in a range of programmes to address workforce deficits. The Council’s Apprenticeship Scheme commenced in September 2012. During the 5 years it has been running, 129 Apprentices have been employed in a wide variety of service areas. To date 100% of Apprentices completing the two year scheme have gained their qualification framework ranging from levels 2-5 and 89% have secured employment.

In 2016, the Council took on its largest cohort, employing 39 Apprentices. The scheme has been a huge success and we have been able to provide opportunities for Apprentices to learn a trade, develop skills and provide leaders for the future.

The Council’s Graduate programme commenced in 2004, in which 38 Graduates have undertaken the programme. The Graduate Scheme is very successful with 89% of Graduates sustaining employment at the end of the two years.

Each of the schemes offers a unique opportunity to learn new skills, develop professionally and start a career in community-based public service. Many graduates from previous years have gone into management positions after the programme including two who are currently working in Head of Service roles at the Council.

Step in the Right Direction is a two year paid traineeship programme for young people aged 16-21 living in and leaving care in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Each year, 6 trainees join the scheme and are given placement opportunities within a variety of Council departments and private employment settings. The young people have all the support needed to help them to gain the work experience and training needed to gain full time employment at the end of the programme. In the last 3 years, Step in the Right Direction has supported numerous young people to gain various professional qualifications and add to their work experience. This has resulted in 15 young people getting into full-time employment, many of whom continue to be employed by the local authority.

### **What needs to be done:**

The Council recognises that attracting, retaining and training people with the skills needed for the future is critical to its ongoing success. In order to address this we will:

- Review the processes for recruiting, selecting and on-boarding staff to ensure that the Council is seen as an employer of choice within the region and that we are able to attract people with the right skills and abilities to meet our workforce needs.
- Continue to refine current approaches, such as apprenticeship recruitment, and explore further opportunities for addressing workforce gaps through more targeting and innovative recruitment procedures.
- Continue to implement the actions from the RCT Council Welsh Language Skills Framework to maintain an overview of Welsh language skills, needs and resources with a view to recruiting and training staff in order to meet these objectives. We have a legal duty to plan, develop, implement and invest in a bilingual workforce in order to provide services in Welsh.

## 3 Leadership and management development

We recognise that the quality of our leaders and managers, as well as the relationship between line managers and their teams, is key to organisational effectiveness and success. We want to develop leadership capacity throughout the organisation and strengthen the skills of our leaders and managers, so that they are supported and developed to face the challenges ahead, to inspire commitment and manage performance amongst staff to achieve Council priorities.

### What is happening now:

- A range of leadership development programmes such as ILM, Mercury and senior management Transform are delivered on an on-going basis. The re-introduction of a revised Aspire management programme for middle managers is in development.
- The Council's Graduate programme aims to attract talent to the organisation with a focus on recruiting to fill potential skills deficits and develop future leaders and managers.
- Regular managers briefings and Cabinet and Chief Officer days are in place to share information and encourage informal networking to facilitate a joined up approach to service delivery.

### What needs to be done:

The Council recognises that effective leadership and management is key to maintaining a stable and responsive organisation. A continued focus on developing leadership capacity, flexibility and resilience will continue to be a significant priority. To facilitate this we will:

- Review and develop current approaches to leadership and management development in line with the needs of the organisation. This will include the review of the needs of the Chief Officer tier.
- Introduce a specific induction for managers to ensure that they have the knowledge and confidence to do their jobs well.
- Develop succession planning and career development strategies to ensure that future leaders and managers are developed to ensure excellent service delivery.
- Continue to refine and improve communication, information sharing and joint working across the Council by helping to facilitate the development of both formal and informal networking, particularly through the management tiers.

## 4 Enabling a high performing, engaged and committed workforce

To deliver the Council's priorities a high performing engaged and committed workforce will be essential. We intend to foster an environment where good work is recognised, staff are involved in decision making and can thrive, be authentic and achieve their full potential.

A culture of staff development and performance management aligned to Council priorities will be embedded throughout the organisation and employees with potential for growth will be developed to further improve service delivery.

Staff will be self motivated, their values aligned to the goals of the organisation and passionate about achieving the best for residents.

### What is happening now:

- A revised pilot performance review process linking individual performance to Council priorities for Grade 15 Officers up to Chief Officer grade was implemented in September 2016. The process focused on the dimensions of task performance, people management and personal development.
- We recognise the need to invest in the development of all staff to enhance their skills and performance to realise their potential. To meet this need, the Council has teams that provide a comprehensive range of development activities for employees ranging from short training courses to management qualifications.

The People Development Team focuses on responding to the Council's business needs and helping to improve performance. It provides Council wide development opportunities, particularly focusing on staff induction, leadership, management and team development, IT training and the provision of the Council's e-Learning platform, RCT Source.

In addition, there are teams dedicated to groups where there are specialist development requirements. The largest is the Cwm Taf Social Care Workforce Development Service which aims to improve the quality and management of social services provision through a planned approach to learning and development and to increase the take-up of learning, development and qualifications across the social care sector in Cwm Taf.

- An enhanced staff benefits package including salary sacrifice schemes to purchase green cars, technology and smart phones, additional annual leave and a discount card.
- Staff consultation processes are in place to ensure the employee voice is heard and employee feedback is used to shape and improve service delivery.
- Support is available across the Council to improve team performance through activities such as team building and development days aimed at fostering good working relationships.
- Targeted interventions delivered by trained staff such as mediation and conflict coaching for the early resolution of interpersonal workplace issues which could have a detrimental impact on the workplace.
- Good relationships with Trade Unions on all employment matters.

### What needs to be done:

Ensuring that a high performance culture is embedded within the organisation is an ongoing priority for the Council. Opportunities to enhance individual performance management and increase staff motivation can contribute to overall organisational effectiveness. To continue to enhance performance and motivation we will:

- Introduce the revised individual performance review process throughout the Council and create mechanisms to deliver targeted development by gathering relevant performance review information for a Council wide training needs analysis and to inform effective succession planning processes.
- Develop a centralised point for staff to access development information, which will enable staff to have a clearer understanding of what is available to them during their employment. Staff consultation feedback highlighted that staff were unsure of where to access information about learning and development opportunities.
- Undertake a training needs analysis within the Council to ensure that training is targeted to business needs. The Council will continue to invest in the training and development of staff through face-to-face and e-learning opportunities, including paying particular attention to the up-skilling of essential skills.
- Continue to use staff consultation as an on-going method to capture staff feedback around key topics in order to continue to inform organisational approaches to issues such as communication, staff development and involvement.
- Improve communication and consultation methods throughout the organisation, particularly for staff who do not have a Council email address.
- Explore opportunities to provide further staff benefits in line with HRMC approved schemes.

## 5 Supporting health and well-being to maximise attendance

This is the foundation to achieve the other aims, as well-being can be an enabler of staff engagement and productivity.

We need a healthy workforce, working in safe environments within a culture that encourages staff to manage their well-being to achieve their best at work. If our staff are well it will enhance service delivery and help to create a positive working environment where staff can thrive to encourage optimum organisational performance.

### What is happening now:

- A new Sickness Absence Policy was introduced in September 2016 with an emphasis on early intervention and good management of sickness absence to ensure staff have the support they need to attend work and achieve Council priorities.
- Compliance with the Sickness Absence Policy is monitored through the production, distribution and monitoring of data dashboards for the Senior Leadership Team and management teams.
- Over 600 managers have undertaken training to maximise attendance, with managing mental health and musculoskeletal disorders, the main reasons for absence, being key topics.
- We are encouraging a culture of openness whereby managers and employees are able to discuss their well-being and access suitable and timely support. Interventions to help reduce sickness absence include:
  - » Time to talk sessions to reduce stigma associated with mental health conditions by encouraging employees to have discussions about mental health in the workplace.
  - » Initiatives that support diagnosis such as fast tracking and ultrasound scanning.
  - » Targeted interventions designed to combat specific health issues identified within the Council service areas, for example injection therapy, trauma support and ear irrigation.
- An online management Occupational Health referral system designed to improve the communication process for referrals and to support the new policy changes such as the day 1 and day 14 referrals.
- Several initiatives such as case conferences, case reviews and education around best practice have been implemented to support the efficient and supportive management of cases so that they can be resolved as soon as practicably possible, as long term absence cases can become complex to manage. Each month, Human Resources also review every absence case over 28 days.
- The Council has in place regular health promotion activities such as influenza vaccines and blood pressure monitoring, which are offered to all staff, together with a regular 'Workwell' newsletter which promotes health and well-being. Benefits such as discounted Council leisure centre membership and the opportunity for employees to purchase additional leave are also in place.

### What needs to be done:

The Council recognises the importance of managing attendance to ensure that it is able to carry out its duties effectively and support staff who are experiencing periods of ill health. In order to continue to address absenteeism we will:

- Continue to review and revise the Sickness Absence Policy and associated procedures in light of operational experience and emerging employment law in order to maximise attendance further.
- Review the effectiveness of absence management systems, including the Council's Human Resources and Payroll system "Vision", to ensure it is responsive to the needs of the organisation for managing absence and for the production of effective and timely data for the purpose of managing absence.
- Provide additional training and support for managers, so that they can implement the Sickness Absence Policy and offer early, preventative and on-going support for staff.

## Workforce Plan Priorities

To ensure that work is responsive and relevant to the needs of the organisation, Group Directors were consulted to identify the following workforce planning priorities:

- To attract and retain staff in professional\technical roles through the utilisation of graduate and apprentice entrants, ongoing service review and exploration and implementation of suitable retention strategies
- Adequate succession planning to ensure that any gaps in terms of leadership capacity and skill to achieve Council priorities are identified and addressed through tailored support and development
- A proactive approach to develop existing staff to meet future service demand and changing strategic direction and priorities. This involves training but also a cultural shift
- Agility to share talent throughout the organisation to ensure that talent is developed and utilised effectively to deliver on Council priorities
- Support to ensure that work carried out on behalf of the Council, and in partnership, meets agreed standards of excellence and statutory requirements
- Attendance is maximised to ensure the workforce is utilised to its full potential.

Priority will be given to addressing the immediate workforce needs as highlighted above.

## Workforce Plan Risks and Dependencies

The success of the RCT Council Workforce Plan is dependent on the commitment from senior leaders, managers and staff. Changes in funding and priorities could impact the delivery of the Workforce Plan, therefore implementation will be prioritised according to Council priorities and resources available.

Initiatives to deliver the Workforce Plan must be appropriate and practicable in terms of having adequate resources to deliver them. Implementation must be considered and mechanisms and policies for delivery must be complimentary as many elements are interlinked.

Systems must also be able to support implementation in terms of recording and using organisational data. Monitoring must also be considered to assess the impact on organisational outcomes.

## Workforce Plan Responsibility

As the RCT Council Workforce Plan belongs to the whole Council, to succeed it needs to be embedded throughout the organisation, so responsibility in practice is distributed.

By its very nature, much of the Workforce Plan will form part of the Human Resources Delivery Plan, however, the aims that have been highlighted that focus on internal communication and ICT will be delivered through the respective service area and will form part of their Delivery Plans. Monitoring of progress against the strategic aims will be monitored through the Delivery Plan monitoring process and Corporate Assessment process.

## Conclusion

This ambitious RCT Council Workforce Plan will ensure we have the staff we need to deliver quality services for residents both now and in the future.

The Council aims to recruit and retain the best employees in the labour market and develop staff in order for the workforce to fulfil its potential by having the required skills, resilience and capability to meet future challenges and opportunities. This will be done through managing and developing people and their performance and ensuring that we have the right working environment and infrastructure to thrive. We will foster a culture of collaboration, innovation and sharing of knowledge, a proactive mindset to prevent problems and genuine employee and service user involvement.

We need to fully utilise the potential of the workforce and we need the right people with the right skills in the right place at the right time. We want to develop and retain a skilled, high performing, committed, resilient, healthy and agile workforce to deliver the best results for residents.

