

Warwickshire County Council

Interim Strategic Workforce Assessment

Focus on our workforce 2025

Warwickshire County Council, a great place to work where diverse and talented people are enabled to be their best.

**THIS IS
THE DIFFERENCE
WE MAKE**

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1. Executive summary

This document presents a strategic overview of the current workforce landscape, highlighting key strengths, emerging challenges, and areas of focus for the coming year.

- **A stable and committed workforce**

The workforce remains stable, with just under 5,100 employees delivering the equivalent of 4,375 full-time roles. With a vacancy rate of just over 6% (300 FTE), operating close to our establishment of 4,678 FTE.

- **Strong retention and engagement**

Retention remains high at 90%, meeting the upper end of the target range (88–90%). Engagement is also strong, with a 58% response rate to the latest YourSay survey and an impressive 80% engagement score. Notably, 84% of respondents expressed pride in working for Warwickshire County Council.

- **Pay equity on track**

Gender, ethnicity, and disability pay gap reporting shows all metrics are within the target range of $\pm 5\%$, indicating minimal systemic inequalities when it comes to pay.

- **Sickness absence: a key focus area**

While sickness absence remains above target, early signs of improvement are emerging as recent interventions begin to take effect. Continued focus and action will be essential to sustain progress.

- **Embedding workforce planning for the future**

The Council's workforce planning approach is being embedded across all services, ensuring the Council is well-positioned with the right people, in the right place, at the right time, with the right skills. This capability will be critical as the upcoming changes in local government are navigated.

- **Investing in talent and early careers**

Continuing to strengthen the talent pipeline through targeted early careers initiatives, including apprenticeships, graduate programmes, and internships, ensuring a sustainable and future-ready workforce, and develop the existing workforce through opportunities for learning and development.

- **Workforce Services transformation**

Following the recent restructure, Workforce Services has adopted new operating principles that enhance collaboration and service delivery, positioning the service to better support organisational priorities and workforce needs.

This assessment uses some professional and technical language that might not be familiar to everyone, to help more people engage with the key messages, a clear and simple summary has been produced.

[Simplified summary - strategic workforce assessment 2025.pdf](#)

2. Introduction

Welcome to the interim Strategic Workforce Assessment. This new assessment marks a significant step forward in how the Council understands and plans for its workforce. It offers a comprehensive analysis of current workforce data, helping identify strengths, gaps, and opportunities to better align the workforce with the Council's strategic goals.

Replacing the previous Annual Review documents, this interim assessment brings together insights from key areas including Engagement, Wellbeing, Inclusion and Health & Safety. It also introduces new perspectives to prepare for the full Strategic Workforce Assessment, to be published in 2026.

The insights gathered here form the evidence base for setting annual workforce strategy priorities, agreed each January for delivery from April to March. By understanding the workforce and the employee experience, the Council can ensure talent is aligned with the Council Delivery Plan, anticipate future needs, and shape services that truly make a difference.

A healthy, happy, and engaged workforce is essential—not only for the success of the Council but for the wellbeing of the workforce. It drives productivity, retention, innovation, and a strong organisational culture, ultimately enhancing the experience of customers and alignment with the Council's purpose.

This assessment approach also provides the opportunity to take a deeper dive into specific areas of interest or concern, enabling targeted action and more informed decision-making. These deeper insights will support Workforce Services, leaders and teams in responding to workforce challenges with confidence and clarity.

The analysis in this assessment will directly inform the workforce strategic priorities, to be agreed and published in early 2026.

3. Strategic challenges, key insight and next steps

This Strategic Workforce Assessment marks a shift from stand-alone annual reviews to a unified, forward-looking approach that reflects our strategic workforce opportunities and challenges, and the Council's vision and priorities.

Strategic workforce challenges:

- **Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)** will present a number of significant workforce challenges, including managing uncertainty, effective TUPE Transfer, organisational change and integrating diverse organisational cultures into one or two new councils. It will be imperative to ensure proactive engagement with employees and unions across the six legacy councils and manage change effectively.
- **Artificial intelligence and digital innovation**, as the Council adopts different ways of working using digital technologies, challenges will focus on digital skills gaps and workforce readiness to maximise the use of the technology. It is difficult for local authorities to compete for talent in this area and so support for the workforce to develop data literacy will be key to maximising the opportunities. Successful integration requires redesigning roles, fostering a culture of continuous learning, and ensuring transparent, accountable use of technology to maintain public trust. Workforce planning must align with digital transformation goals, balancing innovation with legal compliance, and service quality.
- **Financial constraints and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)** impact the ability to deliver services effectively. Budget pressures often lead to recruitment freezes, restructures, redundancies and increased reliance on temporary staff. It is important to balance immediate cost-saving measures with the need to invest in skills development, leadership capacity, and service transformation. Recruiting and retaining qualified financial professionals is key to maximising financial stability, however competition with the private sector can be challenging. Rising service demands, inflationary pressures, and statutory obligations further compound workforce decisions, making strategic workforce planning essential to maintain resilience and service quality.
- **Workforce wellbeing**, ensuring the workforce is well and in work, is imperative to delivering services and Council Plan ambitions. Nationally, absence rates remain high, with rising cases of stress and mental health concerns, while increasing demand on NHS services continues to contribute to longer waiting times. Challenges regarding Local Government Reorganisation, financial constraints and increasing demand can all have a detrimental impact on the wellbeing of the workforce and therefore ensuring appropriate strategies are in place to maximise wellbeing is key to organisational success.
- **Local government brand**, whilst the council is a diverse and complex organisation, providing a plethora of different career opportunities offering meaningful and satisfying work, nationally working for a local authority can often be perceived as unattractive, particularly among younger communities. In order to address this continued work across the sector is required to develop a compelling national brand that highlights the purpose-driven nature of local government work and improves communication about career development. This sits alongside marketing how proud the workforce is to work for Warwickshire, strengthening partnerships with schools and colleges to attract future talent and maximising apprenticeship, intern and graduate opportunities.

- **Increasing demand**, local authorities are facing mounting workforce challenges due to increasing demand for services, driven by population growth, ageing demographics, and rising complexity of needs, particularly in social care, housing, and public health. There are recruitment and retention challenges for critical roles such as social work, planning, and finance, balanced with financial constraints and limited capacity to invest in workforce development. Nationally the pressure to deliver more with less has led to wellbeing and sickness risks, reduced morale, and an unsustainable reliance on agency workers. Strategic workforce planning is key to building resilient teams capable of meeting future service needs. Addressing these challenges requires creative job design, investment in skills, and create a compelling workforce offer to attract and retain talent in a competitive labour market.
- **Skills shortages and development needs**, nationally there are acute skills gaps in several areas, including finance, digital, planning and legal within local authorities. This is driven by competition from each other and the private sector, an aging workforce and limited access to relevant training and career development pathways. It is therefore key to prioritise development opportunities, building the Council's employee brand and promoting early careers.

Strategic Workforce Opportunities:

Local Government Reorganisation will also present us with opportunities to:

- Develop a/two new organisational structure/s that fully align with future service models and priorities
- Establish a unified and compelling 'Local Government' employer brand across Warwickshire to attract and retain top talent.
- Use reorganisation as a catalyst for cultural transformation and future skills development, supporting the evolution of the modern public servant
- Strengthen leadership capability through holistic and innovative development programmes
- Redesign and right-size the workforce, embedding flexible work models to support organisational agility
- Enhance digital capabilities and literacy to maximise the benefits of technology and improve service efficiency
- Advance strategic workforce planning to ensure long-term sustainability and alignment with service priorities

Key insight and next steps

The People (Workforce) Strategy Plan for 2025/26 is currently in place, and planning for 2026/27 will begin in the coming months. This assessment has enabled a sharper focus, ensuring that future actions are targeted, evidence-led, and aligned with organisational priorities. Continuing to build on the areas outlined below to drive meaningful progress and deliver positive impact.

Work is increasingly shaped by employee feedback, strong data, and collaboration with national partners. With a focus on: -

- **Embedding strategic workforce planning**, through service level discussions, enabling data driven decisions and future focussed talent development.

- **Wellbeing and attendance** by addressing sickness levels through improved manager training, referral pathways, and refreshed governance to create a healthier, more supportive workplace culture.
- **Leadership and skills** by strengthening development pathways, especially for Tier 3/4a managers, and building a skills framework to support visibility, growth, retention, and innovation.
- **Recognition and engagement** by promoting everyday meaningful recognition and linking engagement data to targeted action to ensure we continue to listen and respond to feedback.
- **Early career opportunities** are central to our resourcing strategy, key will be expanding the Apprenticeship Academy and enabling greater socio-mobility, through inclusive recruitment practices.
- **Inclusion and staff networks** through empowering staff networks to shape culture and policy alongside inclusion initiatives to support colleagues with disabilities.
- **Data and benchmarking** by enhancing access to workforce data and using external benchmarks to define excellence and guide progress.

Together, these priorities will help build a resilient, inclusive, and future-ready workforce aligned with organisational and community needs.

4. Council Delivery Plan and (Our People) Workforce Strategy

Warwickshire County Council

Council Delivery Plan

2025 - 2027



No:	Our Key Deliverables for 2024-25 to 2025-26
8.1	Implement and embed an organisational approach to Strategic Workforce Planning to deliver against key workforce priorities including: • our employee offer; • talent acquisition and management, with a particular focus on children's and adults' social care, highways planners, legal and finance; and • developing a great, inclusive culture by developing our leadership capability, employee engagement and embedding social mobility within our workforce.



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4.1 Key workforce priorities – 2025/2026

As part of our (People) Workforce strategy we have identified the following key priorities for 2025/26 which support the ambition of being a great Council and Partner.

Strategic Workforce Planning

Ensuring the right people, in the right place, at the right time with the right skills

- Embed Strategic Workforce Planning

Employee Offer

Being a great employer

- Reward & recognition approach

Talent Acquisition & Development

Recruiting and retaining the best talent

- Approach to talent development & internal mobility toolkit
- Corporate skills framework
- Implemented resourcing Service improvements
- Attraction approach for the Early Careers offer and launch the Apprenticeship Academy

Leadership

Attracting, retaining & developing the best leaders

- Develop workforce dashboards
- Managers Workforce guide
- Leadership approach

Great Inclusive Culture

Creating a culture in which everyone can thrive

- Absence levels
- Employee experience for people with disabilities
- Creating Opportunities - Improve Social Mobility
- Culture of Health & Safety across organisation
- Work Life Balance Policies

Performance

Striving to maintain high standards in everything we do

- Approach to performance appraisals
- Health & Safety System modules
- Disciplinary and Probation Policies review

Workforce Services Improvement activities

- Embed New Structure and Service Offer and remove failure demand and resolve issues first time
- Deliver effective payroll system
- Effective Workforce Relations

4.2 Strategic Workforce Planning

Warwickshire County Council is a diverse and complex organisation, supporting the residents of Warwickshire through several differing services and career pathways, from social work to engineering and libraries to legal services,

Strategic Workforce Planning (SWP) enables the Council to have the right people, in the right place, at the right time, and at the right cost to deliver the Council Plan - now and into the future.

Our approach

SWP extends beyond immediate needs, looking ahead three to five years to anticipate the workforce required to meet evolving priorities. It is aligned with financial and service planning and is a continual, adaptive process that responds to changing demands.

A key element of SWP is identifying current and future skills gaps, which informs the approach to talent management and acquisition. This includes not only attracting new talent but also growing existing talent by developing internal capability through targeted learning, career pathways, and succession planning.

Leaders and managers are responsible for embedding SWP within their services, identifying key themes and challenges, and feeding these back to inform Council-wide planning.

The 6-step working planning model

1. Understand current business priorities and workforce baseline
2. Analyse supply and determine future demand
3. Identify gaps through gap analysis
4. Develop action plans to address gaps
5. Deliver plans and monitor progress
6. Review & adapt plans to reflect changes in business environment



Role of Leaders and Managers play a central role in embedding Strategic Workforce Planning by:	
Engaging proactively in planning and regularly reviewing workforce needs.	Extending planning horizons to look 3–5 years ahead.
Using the 6-Step Model to guide planning, assess risks, and shape solutions.	Collaborating creatively across services to identify shared opportunities.
Leveraging available tools (e.g. BI Dashboard, Your Say Survey).	Integrating SWP into financial and service planning.
Providing feedback to improve tools, resources, and the overall process.	
Role of Workforce Service enabling Strategic Workforce Planning by:	
Facilitating planning discussions and guiding leaders through the process.	Providing clear guidance and practical resources.
Coaching managers to develop creative, risk-assessed workforce solutions.	Connecting services with internal and external support and initiatives.
Encouraging collaboration and sharing of best practice across the Council.	Staying informed on workforce trends to support future planning.



Year in review: Key milestones and achievements

- Established directorate links to strengthen support for Strategic Workforce Planning (SWP).
- Refocused the HR Change Team to incorporate SWP activities into their core work.

- Held Executive Director meetings to explore workforce priorities across services.
- Reviewed leadership conversations to identify key workforce themes and areas of focus.
- Collaborated with Finance to embed SWP into the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.
- Launched the SWP app, providing high-level trend data to support planning conversations.
- Worked with Finance, Policy & Strategy to integrate SWP into wider strategic initiatives.
- Developed intranet resources, including tools, templates, and peer case studies to support SWP activity.



Performance snapshot: key data insights

- **85 senior leaders** attended the introductory SWP session at the Senior Leadership Forum.
- **15 Workforce Services team members** joined a webinar to refresh and build capability in SWP.
- **68 leaders and managers** participated in CIPD-facilitated sessions, covering services representing **60% of the workforce**.
- **Pilot programmes** were run with key services including Children & Families, Adult Social Care, SEND, Business Support, Fire & Rescue, Environment Services, Legal & Democratic services and ICT Delivery.
- **91% engagement** achieved at Head of Service level in SWP discussions and theming.

Key insights – themes

Through ongoing SWP discussions, several priority areas have emerged for building a resilient, future-ready workforce. These conversations have revealed opportunities to strengthen capability, enhance employee experience, and support long-term service delivery. The following themes represent where focused investment can most effectively shape a skilled, motivated, and agile workforce.

Key themes: -

- Professional qualifications and memberships
- Early Careers/Apprenticeship First and work experience
- Recruitment and resourcing
- Career pathways and progression
- Leadership and talent development



Looking ahead: strategic focus and priorities

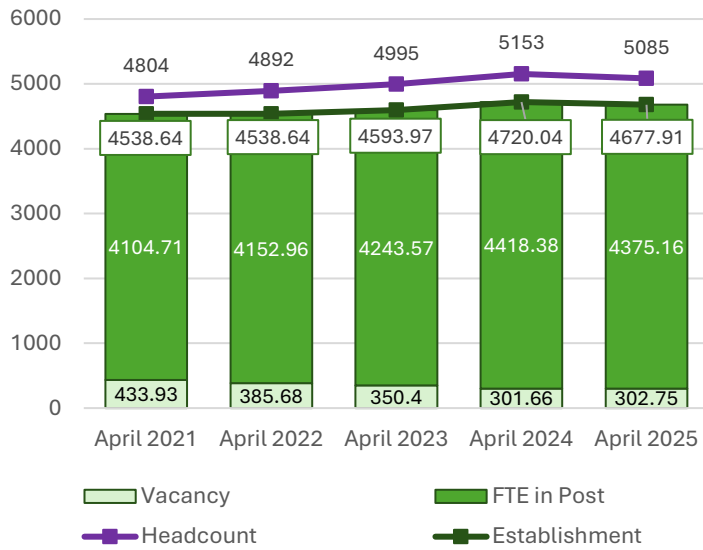
- **Launching the Strategic Workforce Assessment** to replace individual annual reviews and provide a more holistic view.
- **Strengthening benchmarking data and exploring the development of forecasting tools** to generate deeper employee insights, compare performance with peers, and ensure best practice informs service planning.
- **Collaborating across Workforce Services** to shape future workforce activities and priorities for the organisation.
- **Partnering with Workforce Development** to design a consistent approach for capturing and growing workforce skills.

What good looks like

Strategic Workforce Planning will be a key enabler of organisational success. Anticipating future workforce needs, aligning talent strategies with long-term priorities, and fostering collaboration to deliver practical, sustainable solutions. When done well, it will help to mitigate staffing risks, support strategic decision-making, and build a resilient, engaged workforce capable of delivering high-quality services now and in the future.

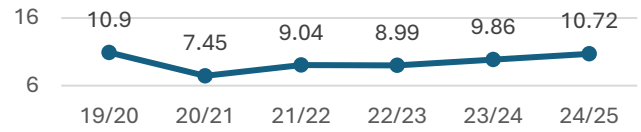
5. Key workforce metrics

Workforce Numbers

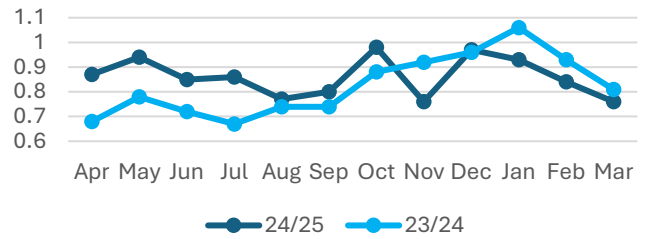


Workforce numbers fluctuate due to several reasons such as transformational change, TUPE transfers, temporary funding, project work and increasing demand.

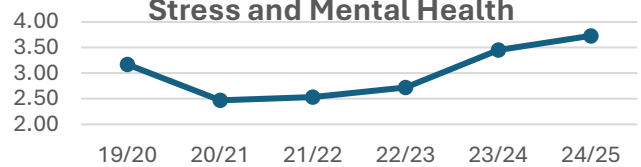
Annual Absence Trends Days per FTE



Monthly Absence Trends



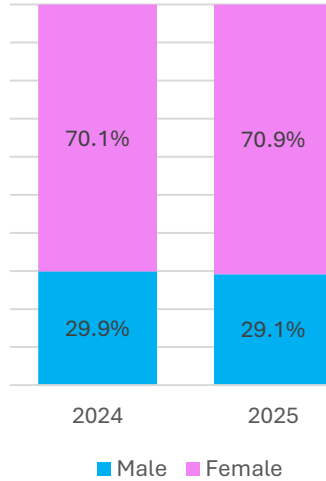
Stress and Mental Health



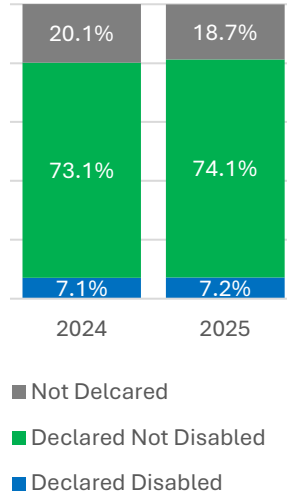
Age Profile



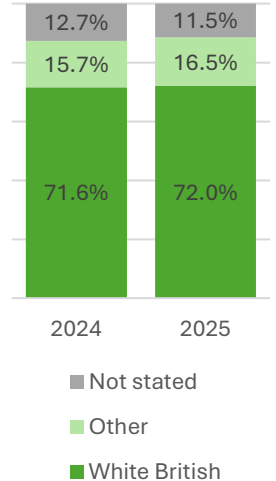
Gender



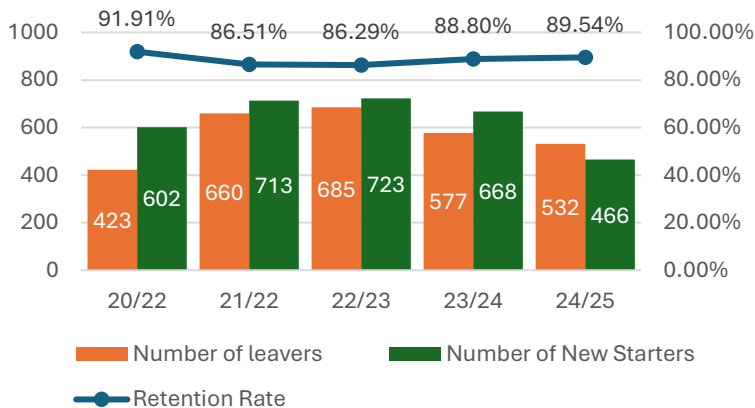
Disability



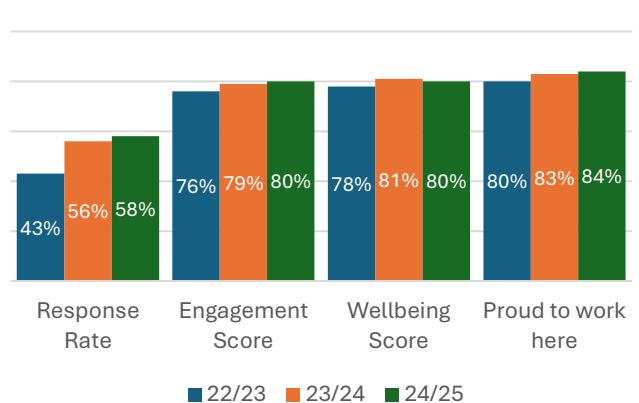
Ethnicity



Retention



Engagement



Payroll

392,410 payslip numbers
£538,000,000 paid through payroll
10,093 payroll tickets solved
29 payrolls
15 pay awards



Wellbeing and Inclusion

67 EQIA supported
33 inclusion training courses delivered
874 delegates attended inclusion training
12 staff networks supported
729 staff vaccinated for influenza



Resourcing

811 WCC jobs advertised
1,113 traded jobs advertised
508 new starters onboarded
8,757 DBS checks countersigned



Talent Development/ People Skills

26,412 delegates completed training
406 learning events delivered
90 new internal apprenticeship starts
18 new apprentices recruited externally



Organisational Development

2,887 Your Say responses
88 employees received Long Service Awards
18 team development sessions



Workforce Improvement

113 communications sent
86 FOI/SAR
337 intranet and EDM requests



Workforce Advisory Services

57 Health and Safety training programmes delivered
51 DSE assessments
125 Health and Safety inspections
320 Eye Test vouchers issued
1,753 Occupational Health referrals (9 months of data)
766 customer queries processed (9 months data due to going live in April)
64 posts graded
661 cases closed
1,010 school cases
95 change projects supported



6. Theme based reviews

6.1 We DEMONSTRATE our values and behaviours

6.1.1 Attendance and wellbeing

Keeping colleagues well and in work is a key workforce priority and from 1 July 2025 a team dedicated to supporting this priority was established. The team are tasked with encouraging and supporting managers to work proactively to help colleagues return to work or if that is not possible, come to a judgement about an exit.



Year in review: key milestones and achievements

As a result of increasing absence over the last year, Workforce Services has been supporting managers to stabilise and reduce sickness absence across the Council delivering on a focused action plan.

- **Leadership engagement**
 - Regular discussions on sickness absence with Senior Leadership Forum, Corporate Board, and Directorate Leadership Teams.
 - Bi-monthly case reviews with the Clinical Director of our Occupational Health provider.
- **Policy and practice enhancements**
 - Refreshed Attendance at Work Policy launched in September 2024.
 - Training delivered to circa.100 managers to support policy implementation.
 - Reasonable adjustments audit completed.
- **Health and wellbeing initiatives**
 - Achieved Silver Thrive at Work Accreditation in November 2024.
 - Successfully delivered the annual flu campaign, administering 613 onsite vaccinations across 10 locations and issuing 116 vouchers for use at Boots the Chemist.
 - Launched 'Our Approach to Suicide Prevention' with a dedicated intranet hub.
 - Introduced 'Our Approach to Domestic Abuse' with training and resources.
 - Reviewed and simplified Mental Health & Wellbeing intranet pages and developed new e-learning.
 - Reviewed Smoking Policy to improve signposting to cessation support.
 - Ongoing review of musculoskeletal-related absences.
- **Data-driven collaboration**
 - Quarterly contract meetings with providers to review referral data and identify targeted support.



Performance snapshot: key data insights

Full data insights on data can be found in Appendix 1

- **Absence levels** have stabilised around 10.7 days per FTE from July 2024. When data is removed relating to leavers this reduces to 8.78 days per FTE for our current workforce, which is more in line with target performance targets (8 days $\pm$ day)
- **Monthly absence** has reduced over the year from 0.81 to 0.76 days per FTE
- **44.8% of employees have had no absence** in the last 12 months and 80% of employees had fewer than 10 days' absence in the year.
- **70% of our absences are due to long-term sickness** (over 4 weeks) which has increased from 58% over the last 2 years. This equates to approximately 2% of the workforce (100 employees) at any given point in time.

- **Stress, mental health, and musculoskeletal disorders** are the main reasons for such absences which is in line with the national picture. **Stress and mental health-related absence** increased from 3.5 to 3.73 days per FTE.
- In terms of wellbeing support, the **wellbeing score** from the YourSay survey was 80%, a slight reduction from 81% in the previous year.



Benchmarking and comparative analysis

- The CIPD Health & Wellbeing Report 2023 highlights a significant rise in sickness absence compared to pre-pandemic levels, influenced by the lasting effects of Covid-19, economic pressures such as the cost of living, and growing demand and complexity in public services.
- Benchmarking across other local authorities, put Warwickshire County Council within the range of 7.3 to 10.9 days per FTE, but above the average of 9.4 days FTE, and in line with the CIPD average (2023/2024) or 10.6 days per FTE.
- Absence levels in Adult and Children's Social Care and Children and Families Services aligned with national trends.
- There is a national focus on reducing long-term sickness, especially stress and musculoskeletal issues.



Looking ahead: strategic focus and priorities

- Resolving and preventing long-term cases and supporting managers in how to support employees with these issues continues to be a key priority in 2025/26.
- Introduce 'Work Well' programme in partnership with Employability and Skills.
- Enhance training and guidance on managing absence and disability, stress, and mental health.
- Support timely referrals to Occupational Health and promote use of the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP).
- Develop reasonable adjustment guidance and wellbeing plans.
- Improve the ill-health retirement pathway.
- Provide clearer guidance on performance-related ill-health.
- Review family-friendly leave in line with the Employment Rights Bill.
- Refresh Leading Organisational Wellbeing Group membership and terms of reference.
- Review the impact of a dedicated Attendance & Wellbeing team within Workforce Advisory Services.



What good looks like

Attendance management and wellbeing form a key part of Strategic Workforce Planning, with the aim that colleagues are well and in work in order to support the delivery of the Council Plan. The aim is to reduce absence levels over the year and increase manager confidence in dealing with colleagues who are off sick and more complex issues such as mental health and reasonable adjustments. We also aim to maintain a high wellbeing score of above 70%

6.1.2 Strengthening our commitment to a safer workplace

The Council is committed to promoting Health and Safety and the safety of the workforce remains a top priority which supports colleagues to be their best at work. Maintaining this focus enables the Council to achieve and exceed its Health and Safety objectives. The Workforce Health & Safety team works in conjunction with leaders and managers throughout the Council to ensure everyone understands their roles and responsibilities. The team works closely with colleagues in Workforce Relations to support the attendance and wellbeing agenda.



Year in review: key milestones and achievements

During the year focus has been on developing the health and safety culture particularly focusing on strong leadership with clear roles and responsibilities.

- **Leadership in action** - all Directors have completed accredited health and safety leadership training. This strengthens the top-down commitment to safety and ensures leaders are equipped to promote a safe working environment.
- **Safer interactions: de-escalation training** - to address rising incidents of violence against staff, the team delivered enhanced de-escalation training to frontline teams - building confidence and practical skills to manage difficult situations safely.
- **Smarter reporting, better decisions** - redesigned the quarterly health and safety reports to be clearer and more impactful. These updates now provide leaders with better insights to support proactive, informed decisions.
- **Risk register refresh** - started updating the risk registers to improve the identification and management of hazards, which is key to building a more preventative and resilient safety culture.
- **'Don't Slip Up' Campaign** - an ongoing campaign to reduce slips, trips, and falls has led to a small but positive drop in incidents. Continued training and awareness will help maintain this momentum.



Performance snapshot: key data insights

Full data insights on data can be found in Appendix 2.

The total number of reported accidents and incidents rose from 1,327 to 1,686, including injuries, non-injury events, and near misses. This increase in reporting reflects a maturing safety culture and strategic focus on transparency. A digital reporting platform will be introduced in 2025–2026 to enable real-time reporting of incidents and near misses.

The number of reportable incidents (RIDDOR) increased from 12 to 15 with 11 involving school workforce employees. All incidents were investigated, and findings shared with relevant leadership teams.

Workforce Injuries		
Injured Person Work Status	2023-2024	2024-2025
School Workforce	484	659
Council Workers	183	209
Others (Those working on behalf of WCC)	49	63
School Workers (Others in Schools)	49	10
Total	765	941



Benchmarking and comparative analysis

There are no comparable benchmarks or data available in this area. The team works in conjunction with regional colleagues, and this matter is being considered within this forum.



Looking ahead: strategic focus and priorities

- **Mental health and stress absence reduction** - strengthening the approach to mental health and stress with four key priorities to improve wellbeing, reduce absence and create a healthy workplace:
 - **Awareness** – Encourage open conversations and reduce stigma.
 - **Support** – Promote access to counselling and wellbeing resources.
 - **Manager training** – Equip leaders to recognise and respond to stress.
 - **Healthy culture** – Support work-life balance and regular breaks.
- **Empowering health & safety steering groups** - to take on a greater role in shaping how colleagues are supported and build a safer, more resilient workplace.
- **Expanding health surveillance** - to detect issues early, enabling timely support and promoting long-term wellbeing.
- **Listening to the frontline** - by replacing traditional audits with open, structured focus groups across all services. This approach empowers frontline staff to shape safety practices, builds trust, and gives leaders real-world insights to drive meaningful improvements.
- **Launching safety campaign strategy:**
 - Musculoskeletal injury prevention: training, ergonomic improvements, and risk assessments.
 - Near miss reporting – “See It, Say It, Stop It”: simplified process and awareness campaign.



What good looks like

The Council’s aim is to build a proactive, inclusive health and safety culture with strong leadership and clear accountability through training, communication and wider engagement with the workforce. Leaders will be supported to reduce workplace injuries and absences by recognising the risks within services and focusing on continuous improvement in health and safety practice.

6.1.3 Engaging with our people

‘Your Say’ is the annual Employee Engagement Survey which measures engagement, identifies strengths and areas for improvement and understands what matters most to colleagues. Ultimately, the survey helps create a better workplace culture which increases performance and efficiency and helps to retain the workforce.



Year in review: key milestones and achievements

Continued to build a more inclusive, supportive, and engaged workplace. Progress is captured in the ‘You Said, We Did’ infographics (Appendix 3). Each team has its own priorities and focus aligned to the Council Plan, and leaders and managers are encouraged to take ownership of their priorities and drive meaningful change at a local level.

- **Communications and inclusion**

- Survey feedback informed a broader communications strategy review.
- Used QR codes and posters to improve access to learning opportunities and increase participation.
- Increased engagement with staff networks to shape workforce policy proposals, ensuring they are as inclusive and effective as possible in meeting the diverse needs of all colleagues.

Engagement and feedback

- Refined the ‘Your Say’ survey language and survey questions to improve consistency of responses and updated relevant intranet pages.
- Launched ‘Why Warwickshire Conversations’, focus groups to explore retention factors and what could improve employees’ experience.



Performance snapshot: key data insights

Full data insights on data can be found in Appendix 3.

The response rate for the Your Say survey **increased from 56% to a strong 58%** and the council is seeking to maintain this for 26/27. In recent years there has been a steady increase in the overall response rate, in part due to the use of easy access QR code posters displayed in buildings across the County and ensuring paper copies are available to community-based teams.

Year	2022	2023	2024	2025
% Responses	40%	43%	56%	58%

- **Increased engagement score** from 79% in 2024 to **80% in 2025**, this score is made up of 6 questions that ask how people feel about WCC, including whether colleagues are proud to work here, are committed to the organisation and would recommend WCC as a great place to work.
- **Wellbeing score** was 80%, a slight reduction from 81% in the previous year.
- **10 of the 30 questions scoring 80% or more**, this includes ‘committed to the organisation’ 85%, ‘I feel included within my Team’ 84%, ‘proud to work here’ 84% and ‘my line manager is visible’ at 87%.
- **‘I feel safe to speak up and express a different point of view’** had the **most significantly increase**, from 69% in 2024 to **77% in 2025**.
- **‘I am able to achieve a good balance between my work and home life’** had the most significant decrease, falling from 77% in 2024 to 72% this year.

- Some of the **lowest scores** for 2025 were linked to Senior Leadership questions around clarity of vision, visibility, confidence and consistency in decision making aligned to our priorities. These scores ranged from 58% to 63%, which is still well above the Local Authority Benchmark of between 43% and 49%.

Overall, this year the survey results indicate progress and positive trends within the organisation. The data shows an improvement in key performance indicators and measures including response rate, engagement score and 'proud to work here' scores.



Benchmarking and comparative analysis

20 of 30 Your Say Survey questions were benchmarked by an external company against local authority averages, of which one was at benchmark and 19 scored above (Appendix 3). For questions which saw a decrease in percentage agreement, scores remained above the local authority benchmark.



Looking ahead: strategic focus and priorities

Based on survey results and analysis of the qualitative data yielding from the survey, priorities for 2025/26 reflect three key themes:

- recognition;
- agile working (incorporating improvements to the office environment and cultural aspects such as work life balance); and
- leadership.

The action plan includes work with Communications to link *Your Say* feedback to workforce actions year-round, sharing good practice, and ensuring colleagues understand progress made through the “*You Say, We Did*” brand. Triangulating *Your Say* data with other workforce metrics, such as sickness absence will enable evidence-led support for teams. Continuing to engage with community colleagues to encourage greater participation and ensure their views are heard, strengthening inclusivity and representation across the workforce.



What good looks like

Maintain the high engagement rate, whilst maintaining or increasing the response rate. Whilst scores are positive against sector benchmarks, the aspiration is to increase the score around action being taken, leadership, agile working and recognition, with the ultimate aim of scoring over 70% for all questions.

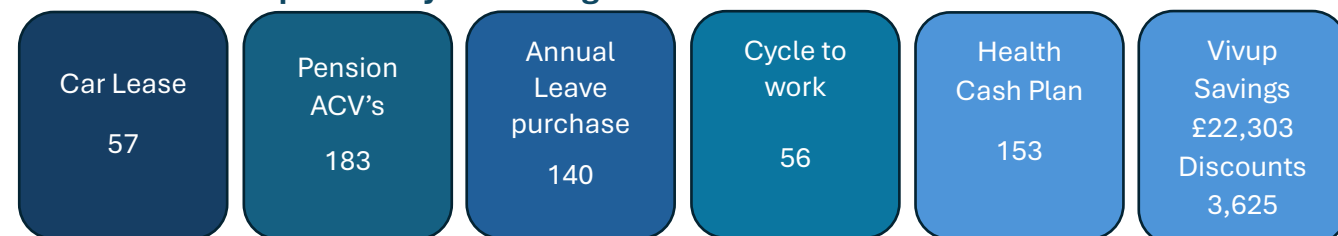
6.1.4 Recognising and rewarding our people

Recognition and reward reflect the Council's commitment to valuing the workforce. By celebrating contributions and offering meaningful benefits, the Council fosters a positive culture that supports engagement, retention, and wellbeing.

Year in review: key milestones and achievements

- **Benefits development** - in response to a strategic review of employee benefits, the council introduced three new benefits to support both attraction and retention of talent
 - Car lease scheme;
 - Shared Cost Additional Voluntary Contribution (AVC) Scheme for Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) members (AVCs); and
 - Additional Annual Leave Purchase Scheme (up to two weeks per year).
- **Review of our approach to recognition events** and planning a new approach for both Star Awards and Long Service Awards in 2025, which balances more personalised recognition and budget constraints.

Performance snapshot: key data insights



- The benefits team handled 916 actionable requests, with 91% related to the new offers. This highlights both the success and growing demand for employee benefits support.
- 70% of colleagues are satisfied with the employee benefits offered while working here and 68% of people feel recognised
- £211,746 net income achieved

Benchmarking and comparative analysis

Colleague satisfaction with the employee benefits offered is 8% above our internal benchmark (62%)

Looking ahead: strategic focus and priorities

- **Vivup platform and contract renewal**, including platform enhancements to include separate portals for the Council and schools, automatic onboarding and expansion of gym memberships.
- **Expanding recognition initiatives**, exploring low-level, everyday recognition approaches that are more meaningful.
- **Refreshing the Star Awards**, to enhance peer-to-peer recognition and ensuring alignment with leadership visibility and values.
- **Celebrating long service**, by reviewing and revitalising long service awards to ensure they feel personal and valued.

What good looks like

Aiming to maintain high satisfaction with the benefits offer whilst increasing recognition agreement to over 70%, by growing uptake of existing initiatives and developing new ones that reflect workforce needs. Benchmark the offer against other organisations and sector standards to ensure the approach remains competitive, relevant, and responsive to the external environment.

6.2 We DELIVER our Services

6.2.1 Strengthening workforce relations to deliver excellence

Workforce Relations ensures a positive, productive and legally compliant approach to employment relationships working in close collaboration with trade union colleagues to resolve collective and individual disputes and to support change and innovation within services.



Year in review: key milestones and achievements

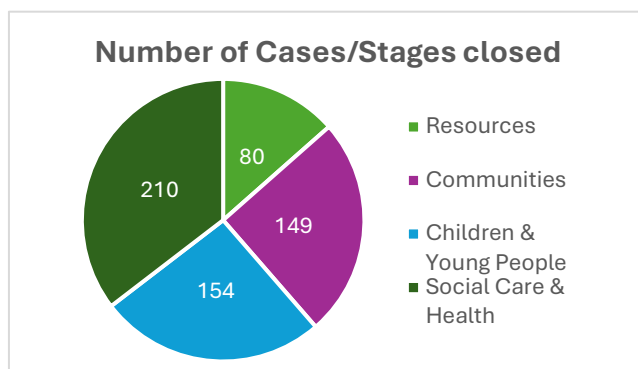
- **Legislative developments** include applying term time pay calculations in line with Harper v Brazel ruling and briefed on the implications of the proposed Employment Rights Bill.
- **Policy developments** include launching the performance improvement and working together with respect policies and refreshed the attendance at work policy. Reviewed the disciplinary, probation and work-life balance policies.
- **Industrial relations** with regular consultative meetings held with our three key groups of trade unions representing Firefighters, Teachers and Local Authority Officers



Performance snapshot: key data insights

This was the first year of formal reporting on case management across the Council and Schools

	Total Cases	Average period for resolution (calendar days)
Absence	394	136
Disciplinary	79	124
Grievance	50	92
Capability	47	194
Bullying & Harassment	5	82
Probation	35	95



Benchmarking and comparative analysis

As there is no regional or national comparative data available, work will take place with the regional employers' organisation to consider this moving forward.



Looking ahead: strategic focus and priorities

- Preparing for the impact of the Employment Rights Bill.
- Prioritising attendance management, including enhanced support for disabled employees;
- Finalising and publishing revised disciplinary, probation, and work-life balance policies.
- Aligning schools' policies with those used across Council directorates.
- Reviewing delivery of employment policy advice to ensure consistency and efficiency, including exploring artificial intelligence tools to streamline correspondence and reduce case resolution times.



What good looks like

Workforce policies and procedures are straightforward and simple, enabling managers to move through them in a timely and fair manner. Gain greater understanding about the employee relations landscape in terms of case type and time to resolve along with considering the application and impact of workforce policies on specific groups of the workforce.

6.2.2 Resourcing for impact - attracting, selecting & welcoming talent

The ability to attract and onboard the best people, is central to building a workforce that meets the evolving needs of the organisation through an inclusive, flexible and innovative approach. The Resourcing Service works closely with leaders and managers across the Council to ensure the right people, in the right roles, at the right time supporting both immediate service delivery and long-term workforce resilience.

Year in review: key milestones and achievements

Listening to feedback from recent hires and managers and taking steps to modernise the resourcing strategy, responding to evolving workforce needs and recruitment challenges. Key milestones include:

- **Mapped candidate & hiring manager journeys** to identify pain points and **tested new onboarding communications** for clarity and tone.
- **Piloted inclusive job advert templates** with feedback loops.
- **Reduction in Pertemps agency usage**, through robust spending controls.

Performance snapshot: key data insights

Despite financial controls introduced in 2024, recruitment activity remained robust:

	2023/2024	2024/2025
WCC jobs advertised	1,086	753
Total applications	7,937	8,592
Total applicants	6,177	6,660
Average applicants per vacancy	7	11
Different hiring managers	401	345
Pertemps Agency Staff	157	127

Top candidate attraction factors:

- Flexibility & work-life balance;
- Job clarity and alignment; and
- Employer branding.

Benchmarking and comparative analysis

Warwickshire's approach aligns with national insights from Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) and Local Government Association (LGA) in terms of the need for flexibility and the public sector challenges of skills shortage and competition with the private sector.

Looking ahead: strategic focus and priorities

- **Embedding flexible, inclusive recruitment practices** through a new selection toolkit;
- **Upskilling hiring managers** with targeted, accessible training formats;
- **Promoting job clarity and employer branding** via streamlined adverts and visual storytelling;
- **Strengthening early careers and apprenticeship pathways** to support workforce renewal;
- **More effectively connecting with under-represented groups** to promote social mobility and community representation within the workforce;
- Develop our reporting processes for **agency / contractor usage**; and
- **Analysing data and listening to feedback** to continuously refine recruitment processes

What good looks like

A high-performing resourcing strategy defined by clarity and accessibility in job adverts and application processes, ensuring candidates can easily understand and engage with opportunities. Selection methods will be inclusive and tailored to the diverse and unique needs of the services, giving hiring managers the confidence to apply flexible, role-relevant approaches. This modern, inclusive approach will position Warwickshire as a competitive and values-driven employer, attracting talent that enables exceptional service delivery.

6.3 We DEVELOP our People

6.3.1 Nurturing talent and developing skills for high performance.

Investing in the development of the workforce is crucial for building a resilient and high performing organisation, as well as boosting morale, job satisfaction and fostering a culture of continuous improvement. By prioritising growth, colleagues are empowered to gain the skills and knowledge needed to deliver for communities, develop their careers and demonstrate our values and behaviours.



Year in review: key milestones and achievements

- To support compliance with mandatory learning a new automated 'certification process' notifies employees when they are due to undertake refresher training and as a result uptake has increased.
- A strategic shift of content to digital learning to optimize the budget and expand access to learning and development. This included developing and launching five new e-learning modules:
 - Two modules to build awareness of the **Armed Forces Community Covenant**
 - **Bullying and harassment** module to support our updated "Working Together with Respect" policy.
 - **Slips, trips and falls** module to promote safety and reduce accidents in the workforce and community settings.
 - **Conflict management** module that successfully transitioned from a face-to-face course to an accessible e-learning format.
- Through the apprenticeship levy, existing employees have been able to access qualifications in HR, Finance, Legal, Project Management, Data Analytics and Engineering.



Performance snapshot: key data insights

- 26,412 **learning completions** and 406 **learning events** were commissioned and delivered;
- 90 colleagues commenced **career development internal apprenticeships**;
- 26 internal staff have enrolled to commence the **Social Work Degree Apprenticeship scheme**, 70 newly qualified social workers to complete their **Assessed and Supported Year in Employment** and 80 **social work degree students' placements** from local universities; and
- 91% of learners rated the **learning opportunities provided as good or excellent**.



Benchmarking and comparative analysis

65% of our workforce agree that they are able to **access development opportunities**, which marginally exceeds the comparator benchmark of 64%.



Looking ahead: strategic focus and priorities

- **Developing a new talent development approach** and a modern and curated learning offer.
- **Building a corporate skills framework** to measure and track employee knowledge and skills which will make it easier to identify gaps and project future skills development needs.
- **Enhancing internal mobility** by creating a toolkit designed to leverage our existing talent. This initiative will explore and implement programmes such as an internal work experience scheme, career conversation and change frameworks, job swaps, and internships.



What good looks like

The Council offers a variety of learning and development opportunities, encouraging career growth, nurturing talent and developing skills required now and in the future. The Talent Development team will proactively identify current and future skill requirements and design and deliver appropriate learning opportunities that meet these needs. This approach will be key to sustaining employee engagement, increasing retention, enabling internal career mobility and driving growth and innovation.



6.3.2 FOCUS on Leadership

Strong leadership is essential to delivering the Council's ambitions for Warwickshire. It shapes culture, builds trust, and ensures clarity of purpose. By investing in leadership development and promoting visible, values-led leadership, the Council is better equipped to support colleagues, lead change effectively, and deliver for our communities. Through targeted development programmes and consistent engagement, the Council is seeing encouraging signs of progress in leadership capability, alignment, and trust.



Year in review: key milestones and achievements

- **Manager engagement and insight gathering** - successfully held a series of focus groups to inform the development of the Managers Hub, ensuring it reflects the needs and priorities of leadership across the organisation.
- **Apprenticeship promotion and onboarding** - promoted and facilitated the onboarding of leadership apprenticeships at Levels 3, 5, 6, and 7, partnering with three educational establishments to broaden access and opportunity.
- **Coaching pool alignment and growth** - engaged with both internal and external coaching pools to align offerings and strengthen the overall coaching provision, with a strategic focus on increasing utilisation and impact.
- **Bespoke programme development** - designed and delivered a tailored programme for a specific service area to support and embed new managers following a significant change initiative, ensuring continuity and capability building.
- **Leadership programme review and localisation** - conducted a comprehensive review of leadership programmes, incorporating delegate feedback to refine content and delivery. Programmes were adapted to be more Warwickshire-focused, enhancing relevance and engagement.



Performance snapshot: key data insight

- **Leadership development & capability**
 - **188 leaders** completed the **Conscious Leadership Programme**, building skills to lead effectively.
 - **148 individuals** completed the **Step-Up to Management Programme**, strengthening our future leadership pipeline.
- **Leadership engagement**
 - **85%** feel their manager cares about their wellbeing — a strong signal of compassionate leadership.
 - **82%** feel supported to do their best work.
 - Confidence in decision-making is higher for direct managers (**78%**) than senior leaders (**60%**), highlighting a need to build trust and transparency at the senior level.
 - **73%** say direct managers have a clear team vision, compared to **63%** for senior leaders.
 - **87%** see direct managers as visible, versus **65%** for senior leaders.
 - **77%** believe direct managers act in line with priorities, compared to **58%** for senior leaders.

These results show strong frontline leadership, with opportunities to improve senior leader visibility and alignment.



Benchmarking and comparative analysis

The wellbeing and senior leader questions all score between 8% and 17% above our benchmark comparator.



Looking ahead: strategic focus and priorities

- **Senior leader engagement** – taking action to respond to the feedback regarding visibility, approachability, vision, decision making and consistency with priorities.

- **Enhancing management development:** continue to deliver leadership programmes for aspiring and current managers. These will be reviewed and refreshed to ensure alignment with organisational needs and the evolving external landscape.
- **Addressing development gaps:** explore and identify development opportunities for Tier3 and Tier 4a managers, ensuring a clear and supportive pathway for leadership growth at all levels.
- **Strengthening senior leadership engagement:** The Senior Leadership Forum will be coordinated to include interactive sessions focused on the Council's most pressing issues and strategic priorities, fostering collaboration and shared direction.
- **Embedding our leadership approach:** continue to embed *Our Approach to Leadership* across the organisation, reinforcing consistent leadership behaviours and expectations.
- **Refreshing manager resources:** The Managers' Hub, including the Managers' Guide/Handbook, will be reviewed and updated to provide accessible, practical support for people managers.



What good looks like

Maintain direct manager scores above 70% and increase senior leader scores to 70%, reflecting strong, visible leadership across all levels. To support this, the leadership development offer will be enhanced — ensuring we attract, grow, and retain exceptional leaders. Benchmarking leadership practices against other high-performing public sector organisations will ensure the approach remains competitive, evidence-based, and aligned with evolving workforce expectations.



6.3.3 FOCUS on early careers

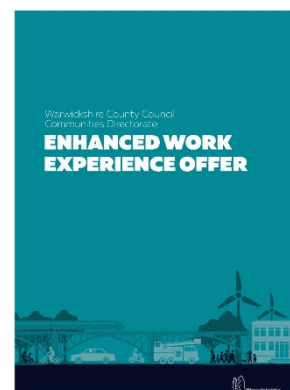
There are three strategic outcomes for our early careers approach; to develop future leaders, fill specific skills gaps, and support the creating opportunities agenda. The guiding principles include:

- Create an engaging and positive candidate experience from application to onboarding.
- Provide comprehensive training and development programmes.
- Engage with key stakeholders, including line managers and senior leaders, to ensure support for the early careers approach.
- Implement strategies to retain early career talent, including career progression and a positive work culture.
- Regularly collect feedback from participants and stakeholders to identify areas for improvement.
- Use data and analytics to measure the success of our approach and make any adjustments as needed.



Performance snapshot: current programmes

- Over **100 work experience** placements.
- **Supported internships** employability programme for young people aged 18-24, in partnership with Warwickshire College, where college students work with the Council for 3-4 days per week over a year, currently taking place across Business Support, Meet and Greet Reception and Heritage and Culture.
- **59 apprenticeships** – including 5 care-experienced young people placements.
- **Graduate schemes** – including participating in Impact, the Local Government Graduate Programme as well as schemes within civil engineering, finance, social work, legal and planning.



Looking ahead: strategic focus and priorities

- Ensure that the Early Career approach is promoted across the organisation. For example, Strategic Workforce Planning will reinforce the approach to ensure services are aware of and consider the options.
- Promote the Apprenticeship First principle and launch the Apprenticeship Academy in September and provide oversight and monitoring of take up.
- Develop a strong early careers brand that appeals to early career talent to help raise the Council's profile in the job market. Targeted marketing and outreach efforts will help attract a diverse range of candidates, with a particular focus on increasing social mobility. Partnering with educational institutions and using social media will help reach potential candidates. This work will also include reviewing selection approaches.
- Engage with Care Leavers to maximise opportunities for them to take advantage of the Council's Early Career Schemes.
- Engage with the Futures Network to test ideas and seek feedback on how to improve the Council's offer and positioning in the market for people starting their careers.



What good looks like

The Council is seen as an employer of choice, where young talent is able to get in and get on, increasing work experience placements and the number of apprenticeships and graduate opportunities, which in turn convert into permanent future workforce.

6.4 We foster DIVERSITY and Inclusion

6.4.1 Public Sector Equality Duty

In fulfilling the obligations of the Equality Act, and Public Sector Equality Duty, the Council is required to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment & victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- advance equality of opportunity (remove disadvantage, meet needs and encourage participation); and
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those that do not (tackle prejudice).



Year in review: key milestones and achievements

The key priorities have been to enhance the experience of disabled colleagues.

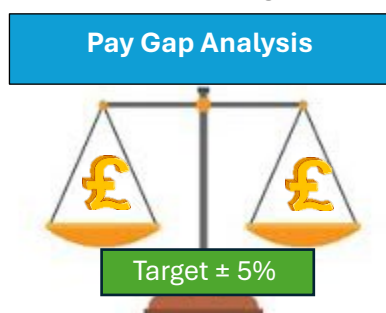
- Launched SignLive, a free BSL video call service for Deaf and hard of hearing customers.
- Collaboration with Physical Disability & Sensory Services and Customer Services.
- Focused on equitable access to council services.
- Added neurodiversity questions to Your HR portal for better data and support.
- Delivered 'Brains Built Differently – Neurodiversity Hour' training for leaders.
- Published guidance for managers on inclusive engagement with neurodiverse colleagues.



Performance snapshot: key data insights

Full data packs, which meet the requirement to publish data under the Public Sector Equality Duty can be found in Appendix 4.

- All pay gaps are within the target range.
- 82% feel comfortable to be themselves at work; and
- 71% of colleagues have a strong sense of belonging.



Gender



1.3% (national average 13.1%)

Disability



4.6% (national average 12.3%)

Ethnicity



1.2% (national average 9.6%)



Benchmarking and comparative analysis

Pay gap analysis sees all measures below the latest national average figures and colleagues' agreement in terms of a strong sense of belonging is 13% above the sector benchmark.



Looking ahead: strategic focus and priorities

- Deliver neurodiversity awareness training for all Level 4b managers.
- Working towards achieving Disability Confident Leader status by 2026, developing dedicated disability intranet pages and improving diversity data confidence and increase disclosure rates.
- Reviewing and enhancing Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs) for compliance and impact.
- Progress actions to increase social mobility and the Creating Opportunities agenda.



What good looks like

Pay gaps remain within target range of $\pm 5\%$ and below the national average figure and employee engagement index maintained above 70%.

6.4.2 Supporting each other (staff networks)

Staff networks provide a safe, supportive environments, which allow colleagues to share experiences, seek peer support and build connections with others. The staff networks are vital for creating a sense of belonging, and many of the staff networks provide a key support system that can help the workforce thrive at work. By regularly engaging with these networks, the organisation strengthens its commitment to listening to the workforce, ensuring their voices inform decision-making, and gaining deeper insight into the experiences and challenges faced by staff, particularly those who may be underrepresented.



Year in review: key milestones and achievements

- Introduced a staff networks action plan to support growth and visibility, published a statement of commitment to staff networks and integrated staff networks into induction materials and eLearning.
- Launched two new staff networks: Future Warwickshire Network (for employees under 35) and Care Experienced Employee Network, taking the total number of networks to 14.
- Engaged staff networks in policy and guidance development, including work-life balance, approach to neurodiversity and training and reasonable adjustments guidance, as well as engaging with them on the Why Warwickshire conversations.



Performance snapshot: key data insights

We currently have the following networks:

 Bereavement Network	 Cancer Support Network	 Care Experienced Employee Network	 Carers Network
 Christian Network	 Cultural Network	 Disability Network	 Future Warwickshire Network
 GEM (Global Ethnic Majority) Network	 LGBTQ+ Network	 Menopause Peer Support Group	 Muslim Network
 Neurodiversity (ND) Network	 Women's Network		



Benchmarking and comparative analysis

The CIPD Good Work Index 2023 indicates that providing avenues for employee voice has a significant impact on how team members view their work, bringing practical organisational benefits in terms of turnover, productivity and wellbeing.



Looking ahead: strategic focus and priorities

- Delivery and development of the Employee Network Action Plan will actively support the growth and consolidation of our employee networks as an integral part of staff engagement.
- Consider additional options to support the staff networks.



What good looks like

The staff networks are active partners in shaping strategies and policies that help people thrive at work. Aiming to strengthen their influence and visibility, ensuring they are embedded in our culture. By benchmarking our approach against other public sector organisations and national best practice, the networks will remain inclusive, impactful, and aligned with the evolving needs of the workforce and wider society.