



James Ellis
Head of Legal and Democratic
Services

MEETING : HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE
VENUE : COUNCIL CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD
DATE : TUESDAY 6 FEBRUARY 2024
TIME : 7.00 PM

PLEASE NOTE TIME AND VENUE

This meeting will be live streamed on the Council's Youtube page:
<https://www.youtube.com/user/EastHertsDistrict>

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Councillor Rachel Carter (Chairman)
Councillors M Butcher, M Connolly, T Deffley, D Hollebon, M Swainston
and D Willcocks

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- must not participate in any vote taken on the matter at the meeting;
- must disclose the interest to the meeting, whether registered or not, subject to the provisions of section 32 of the Localism Act 2011;
- if the interest is not registered and is not the subject of a pending notification, must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest within 28 days;
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AGENDA

1. Apologies

To receive apologies for absence.

2. Minutes - 13 September 2023 (Pages 5 - 14)

To receive the Minutes of the meeting held on 13 September 2023.

3. Declarations of Interest

To receive any Declarations of Interest.

4. Chairman's Announcements

5. Human Resources Management Report for Q3 (Pages 15 - 25)

6. Gender Pay Gap Report 2023 (Pages 26 - 39)

7. Urgent Business

To consider such other business as, in the opinion of the Chairman of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration and is not likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information.

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD IN
THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS,
HERTFORD ON WEDNESDAY 13
SEPTEMBER 2023, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor Rachel Carter (Chairman)
Councillors M Connolly, T Deffley,
D Hollebon, V Smith and M Swainston

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors J Dumont

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Michele Aves	- Democratic Services Officer
Emily Cordwell	- Trainee Human Resources Officer
Peter Dickinson	- Health and Safety Officer
Steven Linnett	- Head of Strategic Finance and Property
Peter Mannings	- Democratic Services Officer

135 APOLOGIES

There was an apology of absence from Councillor Willcocks.

136 MINUTES - 15 FEBRUARY 2023 AND 21 JUNE 2023

It was moved by Councillor Swainston and seconded by Councillor Smith that the minutes of the meetings of the Human Resources Committee held on 15 February 2023 and the 21 June 2023 be confirmed as correct records and signed by the Chairman. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meetings of the Human Resources Committee held on 15 February 2023 and the 21 June 2023 be confirmed as correct records and signed by the Chairman.

137 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

138 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting, she said that the Committee will have noted from the papers that the reports were in a new format, for which comments would be welcomed.

The Chairman said that an update on Marshgate Bridge, the recruitment of a new Human Resources Manager and the inclusion of Mental Health Statistics in the Quarterly Report would be addressed by officers.

139 SAFETY COMMITTEE MINUTES - 9 MAY 2023

The Health and Safety Officer said that there was nothing to report from the Safety Committee, only that a new Chairman would be in place for their next meeting.

The Health and Safety Officer gave Members an update on Marshgate Bridge as arising from the last meeting of the Committee. He said that despite numerous contact attempts by the Council to the Bridge's owner, Dicker Mill Investments, there had been no engagement. The Health and Safety Officer said that this included offers to carry out a survey of the bridge and make any repairs. He said that an offer by the Council to purchase the bridge had also been declined.

The Head of Strategic Finance and Property said that a similar situation concerning another bridge in Hertford had been concluded when the Council closed the approach road (which it owned) to it. He added that however, if such a closure didn't affect Dicker Mill Investments the road would just effectively remain closed.

The Health and Safety Officer said that that this unfortunately would not be a potential remedy the situation with Marshgate Bridge as the Council did not own the approach road, just half of the carpark situated on the bridge's far side. He said that the council's Property Department would once again contact Dicker Mill Investments in the hope of receiving a response.

Councillor Connelly asked if Marshgate Bridge would remain on a register for monitoring due to structural concerns.

The Health and Safety Officer said that as the Council had no responsibility for Marshgate Bridge it could only inform Dicker Mill Investments.

The Chairman thanked the Health and Safety Officer for the Health and Safety Minutes and his update.

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Health and Safety Committee held on 9 May 2023 be received.

140 HUMAN RESOURCES Q1 STATISTICS 23/24

The Human Resources Officer introduced the report, highlighting its new format and dashboard approach which continued to include all the main areas of interest. She said that she welcomed Members feedback on this new format.

The Human Resources Officer said that the council staff headcount was approximately 300, and so this was the figure which the percentages within the report were based upon.

The Human Resources Officer gave the Committee statistics for staff absences due to stress in Quarter 1;

- There were five long term staff absences which related to stress in the period. Of these five cases, three staff members had now returned to work,

one staff member had retired, and one staff member remained absent from work.

- There had been no staff members leave due to stress.
- There were three short term staff absences which related to stress for the period, it was not recorded if this was absence due to work related stress or 'other' stress.

The Chairman thanked the Human Resources Officer for her report and update and asked if the 300 headcount was full-time equivalent (FTE).

The Human Resources Officer said FTE was 275.07, with a staff headcount of 308.

Councillor Connolly said that she thought that the dashboard format was great and thanked the Human Resources Officer for her work. She asked if the sickness absence data contained within the report was based on full time days and requested that this be specified.

The Human Resources Officer confirmed that the sickness absence statistics within the report were based on full time days, and that this would be specified in future reports.

Councillor Connolly said that it was disappointing that there were no reported employee work related incidents and 'near misses' within the statistics. She said that such reporting should be encouraged as this

could stop incidents from escalating into accidents.

The Health and Safety Officer agreed with Councillor Connolly and said that the reporting of 'near misses' was a focus. He said that a staff member's reaction to a situation was individual, with many front-line staff not reporting abusive/ confrontational situations. He said that work would be done to reinforce that staff should report incidents.

Councillor Deffley said that he too thought that the new report format was great, and a step forward. He asked that an explanatory sentence be included under each of the bullet points. The Chairman agreed and said that it would be good to have the bullet points under categories.

The Human Resources Officer said that Learning and Development was not included in the report, and asked the Committee if they would like to see this in future reports.

The Chairman said that this should be included as the Committee wanted to be kept informed about the development of staff.

Councillor Swainston said that she really liked the dashboard format and asked if comparison data with other local authorities could be included going forward.

The Human Resources Officer said that such comparison data could be included.

Councillor Connolly referred to page 48 of the report and asked what was in place for staff as both the Occupational Health and Employee Assistance Programmes were out of contract.

The Human Resources Officer said that new contracts were being investigated, but that she could not give a timeframe at present for when this process would be concluded.

The Head of Strategic Finance and Property said that he was assisting Human Resources with the procurement of these new contracts and that the Employee Assistance Programme remained available to staff.

The Chairman referred to exemption reporting and asked that explanations be given in the report as well as figures. She said that it would also be beneficial to the Committee to have sight of an organisational chart.

The Human Resources Officer said that an organisational chart was part populated and would be available to the Committee when completed. She said that the chart's completion was dependent on the council obtaining a full licence from the software provider.

It was moved by Councillor Hollebon and seconded by Councillor Connolly that the recommendations, as detailed be approved. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that (A) the Human Resources

Management Statistics for Quarter 1 (April - June 2023) be considered.

B) that the move to a dashboard approach for Human Resources statistics, with exception reporting only be agreed.

C) that it be agreed that non-staff Health and Safety issues are reported through Safety Committee meeting with minutes being sent to the Human Resources Committee.

141 ANNUAL EQUALITIES REPORT

The Human Resources Officer introduced the report which had been written by her colleague, and explained how it outlined the difference between the population of East Herts compared to the council's staff.

Councillor Connolly referred to page 78 of the report and asked if the reference to the 'Human Resources Committee – June 2022' was a typo.

The Human Resources Officer said that this was an error, which she would correct this to read 'Human Resources Committee - June 2023'.

The Chairman referred to page 59 of the report, which detailed collaboration with the Shaw Trust to attract more disabled job applicants. She said that she encouraged this action to be carried out and that it would be useful for the Committee be able to see the progress of the Human Resources Department within

the Council's Transformation Programme.

It was agreed that the Committee would be provided with detail of the Transformation Programme objectives for staff within the Human Resources Department in the next quarterly report.

The Executive Member for Corporate Services said that collaboration with the Shaw Trust was a matter which had previously been raised by the Committee, and as this was still outstanding, he would push this forward.

Councillor Connolly referred to page 55 of the report and asked if the council's disabled employee profile was of a normal level compared to other organisations.

The Human Resources Officer said that comparison data would be added to the next report.

Councillor Smith referred to page 68 of the report which detailed protected characteristics data, and asked why data pertaining to transgender job applicants was not monitored.

The Human Resources Officer said that she would seek clarification from the report author and email Committee Members with a response to this question.

The Chairman thanked the officers that were present for their work and both officers and Members for their attendance.

It was moved by Councillor Swainston and seconded

by Councillor Smith that the recommendations, as detailed be approved. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that (A) the Annual Equalities Report 2022/23 be noted.

B) The recommendations set out in the 2023/24 action plan are considered and approved.

142 URGENT BUSINESS

There were no urgent items.

The meeting closed at 7.30 pm

Chairman
Date

East Herts Council Report

Human Resources Committee

Date of meeting: Tuesday 6 February 2024

Report by: Elly Starling, Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development

Report title: Human Resources Management Report for Q3

Ward(s) affected: N/A

Summary – For members to consider the Human Resources Management Report for Quarter 3 which covers October – December 23

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR Human Resources Committee

a) To consider the Human Resources Management report for Quarter 3 (October - December 2023) and provide any comments to the HR Officer/Head of HR and OD regarding the content or formatting of the report.

1.0 Proposal(s)

1.1 Members are invited to consider the Human Resources (HR) Management report for Quarter 3 (October - December 2023)

2.0 Background

2.1 This is the first report in this format following consultation with the Chairman of the Committee

3.0 Reason(s)

3.1 For members to consider the quarterly statistics on:

Sickness

Vacancies

Recruitment and Retention

Learning and Development

Health and Safety

4.0 Implications/Consultations

Community Safety

No

Data Protection

No

Equalities

The data shows that East Herts Council employs a diverse workforce with some areas of overrepresentation. A full analysis of Equalities data including action planning is undertaken in the Annual Equalities Report which will also reflect 2021 census data that is now available. This will be presented at the June '24 committee.

Environmental Sustainability

No

Financial

No

Health and Safety

No

Human Resources

This is a Human Resources report and implications are stated in the appendix.

Human Rights

No

Legal

No

Specific Wards

No

5.0 Background papers, appendices, and other relevant material

5.1 Appendix A – HR Management Report Quarter 3

Contact Member

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HR Committee Report for Q3 2023/24

Note: As of 31 December 2023, East Herts Council employed 271.33 fte and had an establishment of 357 posts

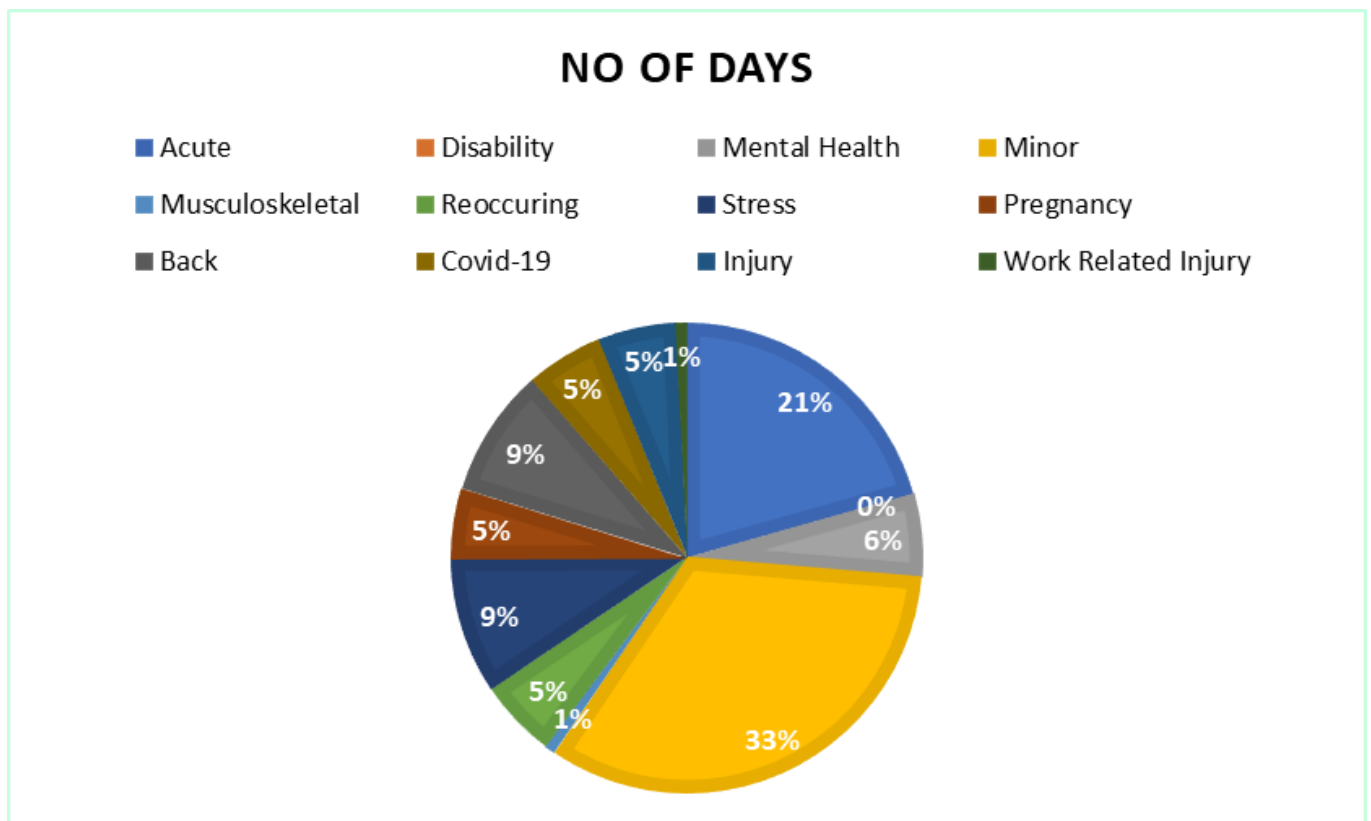
1.0 Sickness Absence

Sickness levels rose slightly in Q3 largely due to increase in seasonal illnesses, this is no different to what we have seen in previous years.

At the end of Quarter 3, the total number of sickness days taken was 447.78 full time equivalent (FTE) days. Of these, 259.23 FTE days (58%) were due to short term sickness and 188.55 FTE days (42%) were due to long term sickness. The percentage of time lost due to short term sickness is 1.5% and the percentage of time lost due to long term sickness is 1.1% which equates to a total percentage lost time of 2.6%.

At the end of Quarter 3, the number of FTE days absent per FTE was an average of 4.76 days.

Q3 is broken down as follows:



For reference:

Acute absence relates to cancer.

There was no reported Work-Related Stress, all stress absence was in relation to issues outside of work.

Work related injury is in relation to a vehicular collision which is being dealt with through our insurers.

Short term sickness

Absences of less than four weeks are considered to be short term sickness absence.

76 employees (25% of the total headcount) had short term sickness absence during Q3 totalling 259.23 FTE days.

At the end of Q3, the number of short-term FTE days absent per FTE was an average of 2.25 days.

Short term absences that meet out trigger points are handled through our Absence Management Policy processes.

Long term sickness

Absences in excess of 4 weeks / 28 consecutive calendar days are considered to be long term sickness absence.

7 employees (2.3% of the total headcount) had long term sickness absence during Q3 totalling 188.55 FTE days.

All long-term absence is being managed with HR staff supporting the employee and manager to help get the member of staff back to work. We use our Occupational Health Service and Employee Assistance Programme to support this process, they provide helpful guidance and recommendations to help us accommodate return to work for the member of staff.

At the end of Q3, the number of long-term FTE days absent per FTE was 2.51 days.

2.0 Recruitment and Retention

Recruitment

Our biggest recruitment challenge remains the recruitment of qualified Planners. East Herts geographical position does mean that qualified staff have a large number of employment options within easy reach and the new standard blended working offer means that their options are now even bigger. We have made some progress with the development of a recruitment landing page which has a video of Ben Crystall, the Council's Leader, The Head of Planning and a member of staff explaining the benefits of working for us. We have also developed a recruitment identity that we use in our advertising and advertorial pieces.

We have a Market Forces Supplement that is applied to hard to fill roles in Planning and this is reviewed annually to ensure it is still relevant. We also have a small agreement with LinkedIn to market our top 5 roles. We do rely on agency staff for some key roles but are actively trying to recruit to the roles permanently.

We continually review our offer for planners against the market and adapt what we can given our financial constraints.

Recruitment to posts in other service areas is generally more straightforward and successful first time.

With the exception of Planners all other recruitment requests must be accompanied by a business case and signed off by a panel consisting of Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive, Section 151 officer and Head of HR and OD. This ensures that we challenge ourselves to consider if we need to replace roles like for like, should we use the opportunity to reshape roles, do we really need the role etc.

There have been 12 new starters in quarter 3:

- 3 in Operations- Hertford Theatre
- 2 in Planning
- 1 in Communications, Strategy and Policy
- 1 in Revenue and Benefits
- 1 in HR
- 3 in Housing and Health
- 1 in Strategic Finance and Property

Vacancies

As of 31 December 2023, we had 41 posts unfilled for a variety of reasons, for the same quarter of 2022/3 it was 40. This represents 11.5% of posts

These are the main reasons posts are vacant:

- Being held for budget savings
- Being held as a service review pending
- To be deleted following service review
- In the process of being recruited to
- Recruitment successful, job offer out but new member of staff has not yet started.

It takes almost twice as long to recruit to a post as it takes for someone to resign and work their notice which often account for the high vacancy number. Business critical posts get covered by agency / interim staff or through acting up arrangements that also offer staff development opportunities.

Retention – Turnover

There were 11 leavers in Q3 giving a turnover rate for the quarter of 3.7%. Based on the leavers so far, it is estimated that the turnover rate for the annual period 2023/24 will be **15.6%**. This is slightly higher than our target of 14% but we have had additional turnover through ill health retirements and Transforming East Herts. This turnover rate is not unusual in local government, indeed the national average across all sectors is about 15% with a lot of councils reporting rates of over 20%. Churn in Planning services is even higher in most authorities largely due to the lack of qualified planners at a time when the planning targets are high, when agency work can seem more attractive.

Reasons for leaving in Q3 included: To achieve promotion, retirement, for personal reasons and end of fixed term contracts.

2 in Housing and Health
1 in Operations,

3 in Communications, Strategy and Policy
 4 in Revenue and Benefits
 1 in Planning.

Recruitment and retention related activity planned for Q4

- Investigate benefits and costs of using other types of recruitment to fill hard to fill posts
- Review of the end-to-end recruitment process including the Applicant Tracking System
- Review how we present features and benefits of employment
- Review / reprocur our neutral vendor contract (for agency staff) hopefully using the government procurement framework to save time).
- Further campaigns for planning staff

3.0 Learning and Development

The learning needed in our organisation is delivered by e-learning, one to one training or group-based learning remotely or in person.

HR is responsible for the corporate training budget, including professional training. We use training identified through annual employee reviews to scope the annual training plan.

Employee can request funding for training and development relevant to their role by completing a form outlining how the event will support their learning and individual objectives, all requests are considered but not all can be agreed. Where this is the case we will look to find an alternative solution.

We provide evaluation forms for all corporate training to collate staff feedback and measure the effectiveness of the sessions.

The annual mandatory e-learning training programme is currently being refreshed. Courses will be going live in March 2024 for employees to complete in line with their performance review. These courses include Data Protection, Health and Safety, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion and Safeguarding.

In addition to our mandatory programmes there are many other programmes that our staff can access to increase their knowledge and skills. In Q3 we also saw 1500 e-learning courses accessed by our staff.

Learning events held in Q3

Event/Course	No of Participants	Number of sessions
ModGov Training	13	1
Managers- Menopause awareness	30	1
Menopause Awareness	38	1
DSE, workstation and Chairs	20	1
Understanding Conflict Management	10	1
First Step – Bitesize session 2	6	1
Total	117	6

Learning and Development Planned for Q4

- Complete the First Step Programme for aspirant managers
- Run the final 2-day session for Service Managers (mandatory)
- Complete the development of a 2-day team leader programme and roll out (mandatory)
- Plan and begin roll out of Commercial Awareness and Political Awareness training events
- Develop a simple train the trainer workshop for subject matter experts to enable them to develop their colleagues

Organisational Development activity planned for Q4

- Review and relaunch staffing groups to support the Transformation Programme and minority groups
- Working with the LEP, develop proposals for workplace events for students over the summer
- Ensure all Service Manager Meetings and Staff Briefings have a developmental session for organisational learning
- Further work with Unison and staff on the Anti Racism Charter
- Further work on raising awareness of the menopause
- Co deliver workshops for staff around Co-Design of services
- Ongoing support to the transformation programme
- Review and relaunch the annual performance review process

NB We will also continue to review our staffing policies to ensure they are legally compliant and balanced in their approach and support ER processes; this is business as usual

4.0 Health and Safety

Accidents, Incidents and Near Misses

Background Information

Accidents are classified into two categories:

Non-Reportable Accidents

These are minor accidents such as cuts, minor contact injuries e.g., walking into the corner of a desk etc, slips, trips. Staff are encouraged to report these and can use the online self-service portal MyView or completing an accident report from the accident report pad. These are designated as BI510 accidents.

East Herts Council operates predominately back-office functions in a low-risk environment, the determination of low risk is based on the Health and Safety Executive's definition, therefore, a high rate of accidents is not expected to occur.

Reportable Accidents

The **Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013**, often known by the acronym **RIDDOR**, is a 2013 statutory instrument of the Parliament of the United Kingdom. It regulates the statutory obligation to report deaths, injuries, diseases and "dangerous occurrences".

Types of incidents that are reportable under RIDDOR?

- accidents resulting in the death of any person
- accidents resulting in an absence from work over 7 days (excluding the day of the accident) e.g., degloving injury
- Any injury from work in an enclosed space leading to hypothermia or heat-induced illness or requiring resuscitation or admittance to hospital for more than 24 hours
- non-fatal accidents requiring hospital treatment to non-workers. E.g., anyone not employed by the council
- dangerous occurrences e.g., collapse, overturning or failure of any load-creating part of lifting equipment, failure of any closed vessel or associated pipework forming part of pressure systems, collapse of scaffold this is not a definitive list
- Reportable diseases under RIDDOR are listed in regulations 8 and 9 of the regulations. Types of occupational diseases include occupational dermatitis, hand-arm vibration syndrome, occupational cancer etc
- Carpal tunnel syndrome from using percussive or vibrating tools
- Occupational dermatitis from exposure to unknown skin sensitisers or irritants
- Hand arm vibration syndrome (HAVS) from regular use of percussive or vibrating tools or materials

Any reportable accident, incident or near miss arising from construction work e.g., building sites, new builds, demolition work or developments fall under the purview of the Health and Safety Executive.

	Q3 22/23	Q3 23/24	Target 23/24	Predicted 23/24
H&S Employee Work Related Accidents (<u>Not</u> reportable to the HSE under RIDDOR 2013)	1	2	0	2
H&S Employee Work Related Accidents (Reportable to the HSE under RIDDOR 2013)	0	0	0	0
H&S Employee Work Related Incidents and Near Misses (No.)	0	0	0	0

Contract Management and Responsibility

The Council have outsourced a number of high-level services from waste collection and recycling, street cleansing, grounds maintenance and leisure services and employs contractors for capital projects.

However, health and safety responsibilities cannot be passed from one party to another by a contract. If something goes wrong the Council can and will be held accountable by the HSE and the Courts.

The Council therefore ensures that contractors have appropriate health and safety policies in place, monitor contractor performance and safety standards. In order to ensure that services are delivered safely the officers with contract oversight:

- Convene meetings to review performance.
- Monitor complaints received and undertake investigations.
- Undertake onsite inspections and reviews.

Heads of Service with responsibility for these functions are responsible for ensuring that effective management controls are implemented.

Safety Committee Update – Related to the minutes of Safety Committee 19 September 2023

Item 4 Related to the report from the shared waste services manager that there had been an increase in verbal abuse toward waste collection crews, in one instance a matter was reported to the Police seeking intervention due to the nature of an incident with a member of the public who was aggressive and had a history of mental health issues. The shared waste services manager explained that the contractor was addressing concerns with crews and taking steps to continue to monitor.

Item 6.2 The contractor appointed to carry out work appointed a separate division of the main company to carry out work as part of the wider project The Leisure, Parks and Development Manager discussed the issue involving the mini dump truck with the principal contractor overseeing the project and expressed disappointment that this had occurred and gave them a warning. The Health and Safety Executive concluded it's investigation having spoken to the Contractor issuing an advisory but taking no further action.

Item 7

- The incident occurred on the 17th of August 2023
- On the day the contractor, Cadman, had a number of deliveries coming in and out as they were approaching completion of the extension ready for Everyone Actives opening day in early September.
- 2 banksmen were deployed to control pedestrians and passing vehicles while they allowed deliveries in and out of the compound which was located in the leisure centres front car park.
- One of the banksmen saw the parents and their children approaching and called out for them to stop and stay where they were until given clearance to proceed.
- The parents heard the call and called out to the young girl to stop as well, unfortunately the young girl either ignored the call or didn't hear it and continued to walk out.
- A customer of the leisure centre was driving by, and it was the **customer** whose car clipped the young girl and not one of the contractors vehicles.
- Cadman reported that the parents were understanding and cooperative with the Cadman team.
- As a precaution Cadman called the Police and Ambulance services.
- Cadman's Health & Safety officer visited to review the risk assessment and safe systems of work, there were no issues noted and the safety measures in place were implemented and in line with the assessment. Regardless of that, Cadman decided to add another banksmen just to be extra sure that no further incidents would occur.
- This is less of an issue now as the current phase has Cadman located in the furthest part of the rear car park where interaction with customers is significantly decreased.

NB Safety Committee falls on 7 February 2024 so minutes will be shared at the next HRC.

Agenda Item 6

East Herts Council Report

Human Resources Committee

Date of meeting: Tuesday 6 February 2024

Report by: Elly Starling – Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development

Report title: Gender Pay Gap Report 2023

Ward(s) affected: N/A

Summary – For members to consider the Gender Pay Gap Report which is presented annually.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR Human Resources Committee

a) To consider the Gender Pay Gap report and provide any comments to the HR Officer/Head of HR and OD.

1.0 Proposal(s)

1.1 To present the Gender Pay Gap Report to members and receive any comments.

2.0 Background

2.1 In 2017 the government introduced legislation that made it statutory for organisations with 250 or more employees to report on their gender pay gap by 30 March 2018 and annually thereafter. East Herts Council published its first gender pay gap report in March 2018.

3.0 Reason(s)

- 3.1 As set out in paragraph 2.1 the Council is required to publish its gender pay gap report annually. The gender pay gap is a measure of the difference between men's and women's average earnings across an organisation. It is expressed as a percentage of men's earnings.
- 3.2 The data the Council is required to provide includes mean and median pay gaps; mean and median bonus gaps; the proportion of male and female employees who received bonuses; and the proportion of male and female employees in each pay quartile.
- 3.3 The gender pay gap is different from equal pay. Equal pay deals with the pay differences between men and women who carry out the same jobs, similar jobs or work of equal value. It is unlawful to pay people unequally because they are a man or a woman.
- 3.4 This is East Herts Council's report for the required snapshot date of 31 March 2023.
- 3.5 The figures set out in this report have been calculated using the standard methodologies used in the Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017.

4.0 Risks

- 4.1 Failure to publish the pay gap report may result in a breach of statutory requirements.

5.0 Implications/Consultations

Community Safety

No

Data Protection

No

Equalities

The data shows that East Herts Council employs a diverse workforce with some areas of overrepresentation. A full analysis of Equalities data including action planning is undertaken in the Annual Equalities Report which will also reflect 2021 census data that is now available. This will be presented at the June '24 committee.

Environmental Sustainability

No

Financial

No

Health and Safety

No

Human Resources

No

Human Rights

No

Legal

Yes The Council are required to publish this information.

Specific Wards

No

6.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material

6.1 Appendix A – Gender Pay Gap Report

Contact Member

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East Herts Council - Gender Pay Gap Report 2023

Published **date**



Introduction

In 2017 the government introduced legislation that made it statutory for organisations with 250 or more employees to report on their gender pay gap by 30 March 2018 and annually thereafter. East Herts Council published its first gender pay gap report in March 2018.

The gender pay gap is a measure of the difference between men's and women's average earnings across an organisation. It is expressed as a percentage of men's earnings.

The data the Council is required to provide includes mean and median pay gaps; mean and median bonus gaps; the proportion of male and female employees who received bonuses; and the proportion of male and female employees in each pay quartile.

The gender pay gap is different from equal pay. Equal pay deals with the pay differences between men and women who carry out the same jobs, similar jobs or work of equal value. It is unlawful to pay people unequally because they are a man or a woman.

This is East Herts Council's report for the required snapshot date of 31 March 2023.

The figures set out in this report have been calculated using the standard methodologies used in the Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017.

Review of action plan

We said we would:

- Continue to ensure that all staff complete the equality and diversity module as part of the mandatory annual e-learning training programme, which includes training on unconscious bias in recruitment.

Our progress:

- 92% of staff completed the equality and diversity module as part of the mandatory e-learning training programme in 2023. This training will be

refreshed and rolled out again in 2024 as part of the performance development review process.

We said we would:

- Offer further equalities-based training as identified by annual training needs analysis undertaken by the OD and HR Manager.

Our progress:

- There was no further equalities-based training in 2023 but the new HR and OD Service Manager who starts in January 2024 will undertake a full training needs analysis for the council (after PDRs are completed) and will arrange further equalities based training if it is identified as being required.

We said we would:

- Each interview panel chair to continue to consider the diversity of the interview panel and where possible try to ensure the panel is diverse. Where this is not possible try to ensure that other elements of the panel show staff diversity, for example 'meet the team' sessions to demonstrate the diversity at East Herts and to appear as welcoming as possible to applicants of all backgrounds.

Our progress:

- The HR team have been encouraging managers to try to ensure that interview panels are as diverse as possible and some 'meet the team' sessions have taken place. Ultimately some teams are limited in terms of how diverse they are so it is not always possible to demonstrate a full range of diversity in every recruitment process.

We said we would:

- Continue to investigate with the ATS provider how to name blind CVs without losing key data

Our progress:

- The ATS provider has procured a new system for name blinding applications. We have tested the system and the results look promising but we do not yet have an implementation date. If we move provider this will be in our specification.

We said we would:

- Continue to refresh case studies aimed at attracting both genders but especially men into lower quartile roles where this is possible

Our progress:

- We did not need to refresh the case studies in 2023 but will continue to keep them under review and update them as necessary.

We said we would:

- Once all managers have been trained in recruitment as part of the management development training in 2023, publish a list of all interview trained managers to encourage recruiting managers to select a mixed panel in terms of gender.

Our progress:

- Due to staff changes in 2023 this was not done. A review of recruitment is planned for the first quarter of 2024 (including methods of assessment) with training available immediately after. The list of trained managers will be published following this.

We said we would:

- Investigate using Plotr which is a Government supported website that connects young people (aged 11-24) to the world of work. Employers can add information about apprenticeships, work experience and entry level roles in order to try and attract young people to work for them. It is hoped that by encouraging more younger people into entry level roles there might be a better mix of males and females.

Our progress:

- Plotr has been dissolved. We are planning to work with the LEP Careers Hub Network to reach out to young people, initial contact has been made to begin this work.

We said we would:

- In addition to management training for current line managers, East Herts is also developing a 'First Step' Introduction to Management Course, the first will be a cohort of 10 who apply with their manager's support, and as well as training mentors will be provided. This scheme is also hoped to attract both genders but with women dominating East Herts especially at Q3 and Q4 it is expected that a number of female employees will apply and that this should support progression in the future.

Our progress:

- Cohort 1 is $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way through the year-long programme. They have received 3 days of leadership development plus mentoring. They will also be taking part in a corporate wide project during the first quarter of 2024. 7 out of the remaining 11 are female.

Gender Pay Gap Analysis

Mean and Median Gender Pay Gap Figures

Table 1.0 shows that the Council's mean gender pay gap is 16% and the median gender pay gap is 19%. Table 2.0 shows that there is no bonus pay gap as the Council does not make bonus payments.

Table 1.0 Gender pay gap

	Gender pay gap 2023	Gender pay gap 2022	+/- percentage points
Mean (Average)	16%	19%	-3%
Median (Middle)	19%	24%	-5%

The gender pay gap is a measure of the difference between men's and women's average earnings across an organisation. It is expressed as a percentage of men's earnings.

Table 2.0 Gender bonus gap

	Gender bonus gap 2021	Gender bonus gap 2020
Mean (Average)	0%	0%
Median (Middle)	0%	0%

Table 3.0 Proportion of employees receiving a bonus

Proportion of employees receiving a bonus	
Men	0%
Women	0%

Both the mean and median gender pay gaps at the council have reduced this year. The mean gender pay gap has dropped by 3 percentage points and the median gender pay gap reduced by 5 percentage points, when compared to 2022. The Council’s overall headcount has reduced by 9 since 31 March 2022 (from 307 headcount last year to 298 this year). The number of male employees has remained the same at 83 but the number of female employees has reduced by 9. However the distribution of males and females across the pay grades has changed; there is one less male in Q1, 5 less males in Q2 and 2 more female, 4 more males in Q3 and 6 less female, and 2 more males in Q4 and 5 less female. Having more males in the lower quartiles and having 2 more female and one less male in the upper quartiles has had the effect of reducing the mean pay gap.

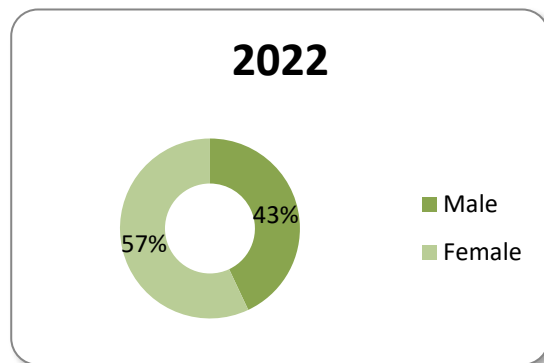
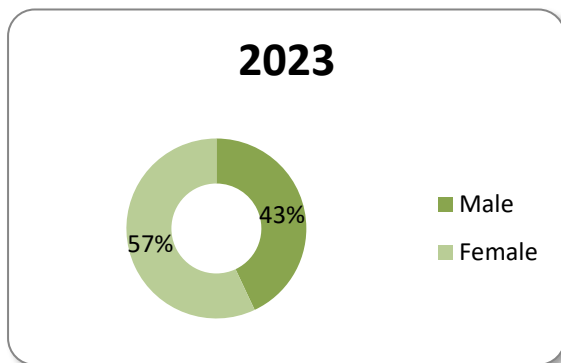
The median figure represents the ‘typical’ man or woman (i.e. the man/woman in the middle of the male/female pay range) and the gap is due to the greater proportion of men in the upper pay quartiles compared with lower pay quartiles, and a greater proportion of women in the lower pay quartiles compared with the upper pay quartiles. This year the gap has reduced because there are more men in the lower pay quartiles and more female in the higher quartiles than last year. This means the middle value for males has moved down and the middle value for females has moved up, thus reducing the gap.

The Council is committed to the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment for all employees. We have a clear policy of paying employees equally for the same or equivalent work, regardless of their sex (or any other protected characteristic). As such, we have a pay and grading structure agreed with Unison;

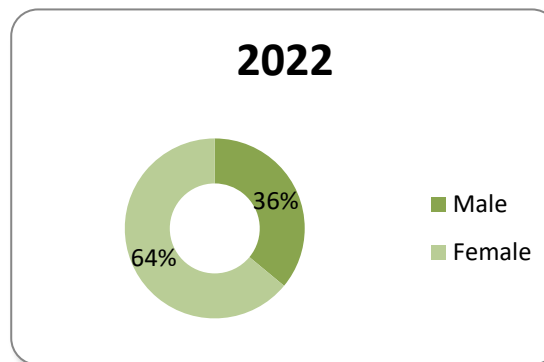
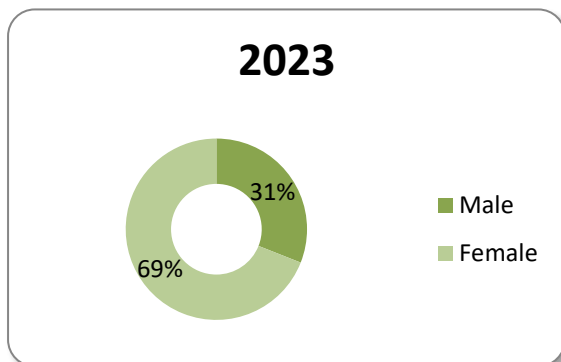
have a published pay policy statement and evaluate all jobs using the HAY job evaluation method. The Council is confident that its gender pay gap does not stem from paying men and women differently for the same or equivalent work.

Pay quartiles

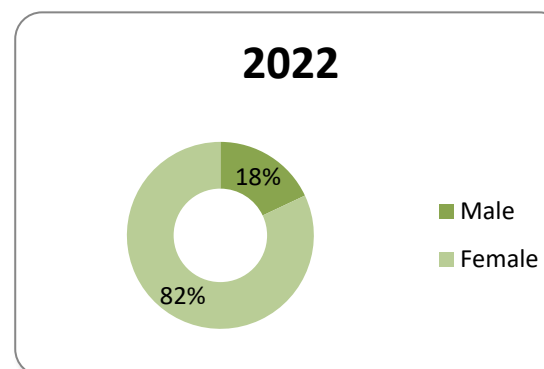
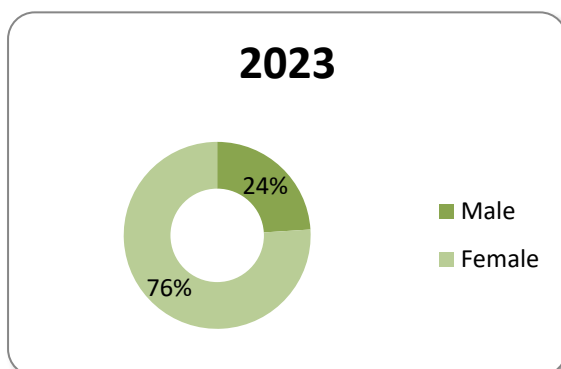
Quartile 1 (upper quartile)



Quartile 2 (upper middle quartile)



Quartile 3 (lower middle quartile)



Quartile 4 (lower quartile)

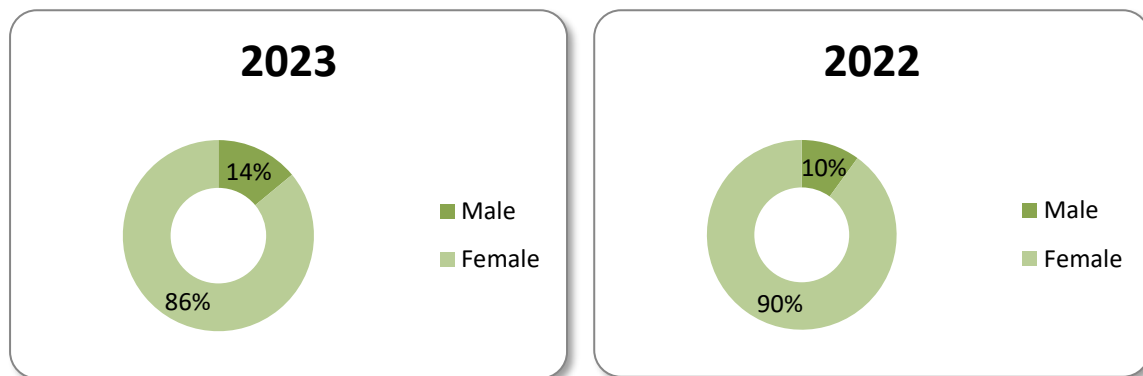


Figure 1.0 Pay quartiles by gender

Figure 1.0 above depicts pay quartiles by gender. This shows the Council's workforce divided into four equal-sized groups based on hourly pay rates, with Q1 including the highest-paid 25% of employees (the upper quartile) and Q4 covering the lowest-paid 25% (the lower quartile). In order for there to be no gender pay gap, there would need to be an equal ratio of men to women in each quartile.

The data shows that for Q1 the percentages of males and females have remained the same. For Q2 the percentage of males has dropped by 5 percentage points. In Q3 and Q4 the number of females has dropped by 6 and 5 percentage points respectively.

As discussed above, the gender pay gap has reduced this year because there are more men in the lower pay quartiles and more female in the higher quartiles than last year. In order to reduce the gender pay gap further there would need to be further increases in the proportion of men in Q3 and Q4. The types of roles typically found in the Council in these quartiles tend to be customer facing or administrative in nature and currently are occupied predominately by women. The Council has outsourced services such as IT, Waste and Grounds Maintenance which are predominately male dominated areas of work. If these services remained in-house the proportion of male and female employees in the lower pay quartiles would be much more even.

EHC has a good balance of male and females in senior positions compared to a lot of other organisations and are ambitious to do better across the board. We must be mindful of external factors that can impact this though and remain realistic about what we can achieve.

The Council is in an unusual position in that the gender pay gap is not due to fewer women working in more senior roles than men but because at the lower grades there is a much higher percentage of women than men. The Council remains committed to trying to reduce the gap but this is an ongoing challenge due to the gender dominance in certain occupation groups, as mentioned previously as well as the difficulty of trying to attract men into lower paid jobs to create more balance. The council will continue to promote diversity and continue to support flexible working in line with business needs, including 'blended working' which allows most staff to work 50% from home as well as continuing to support flexible working requests which can support caring responsibilities which makes opportunities more attractive to women, but as stated the main issue is attracting men into our lower quartiles.

We have already taken forward several actions since the Council's first gender pay gap report in 2017 and will continue to build on these. Rather than create new actions, the actions below have been taken from the general equalities action plan (published in September 2023) which already considered gender-based equality actions for the Council:

- Continue to ensure that all staff complete the equality and diversity module as part of the mandatory e-learning training programme. Offer further equalities-based training as identified by annual training needs analysis undertaken by the HR and OD Service Manager
- Each interview panel chair to continue to give consideration to the diversity of the interview panel and where possible try to ensure the panel is diverse. Where this is not possible try to ensure that other elements of the panel show staff diversity, for example 'meet the team' sessions to demonstrate the diversity at East Herts and to appear as welcoming as possible to applicants of all backgrounds.
- The question of blind CVs will be explored as we reprocure this service through our procurement framework

Statement

I, Richard Cassidy, Chief Executive of East Herts Council, confirm that the information in this statement is accurate.

Signed *Richard Cassidy*

Date

References

Office for National Statistics (ONS), 2018. *Understanding the pay gap in the UK* [online] Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/articles/understandingthegenderpaygapintheuk/2018-01-17>