



## ***PERSONNEL COMMITTEE***

***2.00 PM - MONDAY, 29 NOVEMBER 2021***

***VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS***

### **PART 1**

1. Welcome and Roll Call
2. Declarations of Interest
3. Minutes of the previous meeting - 20th September 2021 (*Pages 3 - 6*)
4. Forward Work Programme (*Pages 7 - 8*)

### **Report of the Head of Human Resources**

5. Christmas & New Holiday 2022 / 23 (*Pages 9 - 18*)
6. Monitoring Report on Agency Usage and Spend (*Pages 19 - 26*)
7. Frontline Employees Survey Feedback (*Pages 27 - 36*)
8. Time to Change Wales Employer Pledge Action Plan Update Report (*Pages 37 - 50*)
9. Removal of Recruitment Restrictions (*Pages 51 - 62*)
10. Urgent Items  
Any urgent items at the discretion of the Chairperson pursuant to Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972.
11. Access to meetings  
That pursuant to Section 100A(4) and (5) of the Local Government Act

1972, the public be excluded for the following items of business which involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 12 and 15 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the above Act.

## **PART 2**

### **Private Report of the Head of Human Resources**

12. National Pay Negotiations November 2021 (*Pages 63 - 70*)

**K.Jones**  
**Chief Executive**

**Civic Centre**  
**Port Talbot**

**Monday, 22 November 2021**

#### **Committee Membership:**

**Chairperson:** **Councillor D.Jones**

**Vice  
Chairperson:** **Councillor D.Cawsey**

**Members:** Councillors S.Bamsey, S.E.Freeguard, J.Hale,  
N.T.Hunt, J.Jones, S.A.Knoyle, E.V.Latham,  
S.Miller and A.J.Taylor

**Non-Voting  
Members:** Councillors C.Clement-Williams, M.Harvey,  
L.Jones, A.R.Lockyer, P.A.Rees, P.D.Richards  
and A.Wingrave

## PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

(Via Microsoft Teams)

**Members Present:**

**20 September 2021**

**Chairperson:** Councillor D.Jones

**Vice Chairperson:** Councillor D.Cawsey

**Councillors:** S.Bamsey, J.Hale, N.T.Hunt, J.Jones and A.J.Taylor

**Non Voting Members:** Councillors C.Clement-Williams, P.A.Rees and P.D.Richards

**Officers in Attendance:** A.Hutchings, C.Lewis and N.Jones

---

1. **Minutes of previous meetings (January, March and June 2021)**

That the minutes – January, March and June 2021 were noted.

2. **Forward Work Programme**

The Forward Work Programme was noted.

3. **Workforce Information Report Quarter 1**

The Committee received information on the Workforce Information Report Quarter 1 as detailed in the circulated report.

Members asked in relation to the 41% which was education related and what was the reason for that. Officers explained that the schools were still funding the school sickness task force which focused on sickness absence amongst the school workforce only. Covid19 had a big impact. The size of the education workforce is the largest workforce, which reflected on why the numbers were so high.

Members asked how reliable the national statistics for average days lost were. Officers stated that the local government data unit usually provided the data but this was not the case this year, therefore the HR Directors had shared the relevant information.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

4. **Fair Play Employer Scheme Report**

The Committee received information on the Fair Play Employer Scheme as detailed in the circulated report.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

5. **The Future of Work Report**

The Committee received information on the Future of Work as detailed in the circulated report.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

6. **Pension Discretions Report**

The Committee received information on the Pensions Discretions as detailed in the circulated report.

**RESOLVED:** That amendments to the Local Government Pension Scheme Discretions Policy, be approved.

7. **Voluntary Protocol for Recognising Continuous Service**

The Committee received information on the Voluntary Protocol for Recognising Continuous Service as detailed in the circulated report.

Members queried that the report did not mention civil service etc. and wanted to know if these were excluded or were not mentioned in the report. Officers said they would feedback with the correct information. Members referred to the financial impact, had there been any questionnaires completed or research undertaken by The Welsh Government. Officers stated that research should have been done within Welsh Government, they would get in touch with them and feedback to the committee. Members requested a written response from Welsh Government.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be approved.

8. **Access to Meetings**

That pursuant to Section 100A(4) and (5) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded for the following items of business which involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 12 and 15 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the above Act.

9. **National Pay Negotiations Update September 2021**

**RESOLVED:** That the National Pay Negotiations, as detailed within the private circulated report, be noted.

This page is intentionally left blank

## Personnel Committee

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Type	Comments	Contact Officer
20 September	Workforce Information Report	For Information		Sheenagh Rees / Cath Lewis
	National Pay Bargaining update Report	For Information		Sheenagh Rees
	Disability Confident Employer Status	For Information		Diane Hopkins
	FairPlay Employer Scheme Update Report	For Information		Amy Hutchings
	Future of Work Surveys – Feedback and Action	For Information		Sheenagh Rees
29 November	Workforce Information Report	For Information		Sheenagh Rees / Cath Lewis
	Christmas / New Year Office Closure Arrangements	For Decision		Diane Hopkins
	Time to Change Wales Employer Pledge Action Plan Update Report	For Information		Diane Hopkins
	Annual Agency Usage Report	For information		Cath Lewis

	Annual Equalities Report	For Information		Diane Hopkins
<b>21 Feb 2022</b>	Workforce Information Report	For Information		Sheenagh Rees / Cath Lewis
	KickStart Scheme Update	For Information		Lynne Doyle
<b>PRE ELECTION PERIOD STARTS MID MARCH</b>				
11 April 2022	Workforce Information Report	For Information		Sheenagh Rees / Cath Lewis
	Workforce Plan 2018 – 2022 Annual Report	For Information		Sheenagh Rees
25 May 2022	Workforce Information Report	For Information		Sheenagh Rees / Cath Lewis
	National Pay Bargaining update Report	For Information		Sheenagh Rees
	Workforce Plan 2022 – 2027	For Decision		Sheenagh Rees
	Gender Pay Gap Report	For Information		Diane Hopkins / Cath Lewis

## NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

29<sup>th</sup> November 2021

Head of Human & Organisational Development – Sheenagh Rees

#### Matter for Information

**Wards Affected:** all wards

#### Christmas and New Year Holiday Arrangements 2022/23

##### 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Member approval for the opening/closing arrangements for the main Civic Offices during the Christmas and New Year Holiday period 2022/2023.
- 1.2 An early decision is requested as a result of the implementation of the new HR/Payroll system in December 2021 which requires all holidays to be built into the system for each calendar year. As such, it is necessary, ahead of the implementation, to have in place the Christmas and New Year holiday arrangements for 2022/23.

##### 2. Background information

The prescribed bank holidays for the 2022 / 2023 festive period are as follows:

*Monday 26<sup>th</sup> December 2022 Christmas Day*

*Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> December 2022 Boxing Day*

*Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2023 New Year's Day*

- In addition to the above, Local Government Services employees are awarded an **Extra Statutory Holiday** during this period, the timing of which is to be determined by the Authority.
- Employees are also entitled to an **additional day of annual leave** which is allocated over the Christmas Holiday Period.
- It has also been past practice since the inception of the Authority to award a **½ day special leave** to employees on the afternoon of the last working day before Christmas.

### 3. Proposed Holiday Arrangements

- 3.1 Managers of all business critical services across the Council will ensure that all such services continue to be available on a 24 / 7 basis, where necessary, and that standby / callout arrangements are in place so that appropriate responses can be made to emergencies arising during the holiday period.
- 3.2 The proposal below is primarily concerned with working arrangements over the holiday period.
- 3.3 This proposal does not require employees to use any of their annual leave over the prescribed Christmas and New Year Holiday period.
- 3.4 The following allocation of days is proposed:

Friday	23 <sup>rd</sup> December 2022	AM – Normal working day PM - Half day special leave granted
Monday	26 <sup>th</sup> December 2022	Christmas Day Bank Holiday
Tuesday	27 <sup>th</sup> December 2022	Boxing Day Bank Holiday
Wednesday	28 <sup>th</sup> December 2022	Extra Statutory Day
Thursday	29 <sup>th</sup> December 2022	Additional Annual Leave Day (*)
Friday	30 <sup>th</sup> December 2022	New Year's Day Bank Holiday
Monday	2 <sup>nd</sup> January 2023	Normal Working Day
Tuesday	3 <sup>rd</sup> January 2023	Normal Working Day

- 3.5 (\*) During these dates, some services will require employees to work and employees will be able to take their annual leave on alternative dates, so that service delivery is not detrimentally affected. Where employees are required to work, the relevant Head of Service will notify employees as soon as possible and will ensure that necessary welfare facilities and management support is available.
- 3.6 The proposal was developed in consultation with Heads of Service, Corporate Directors and senior managers. Trade Unions have been consulted in relation to this proposal and support this option for 2022/23.

### 4. Implementation

In order to ensure that employees are aware of these arrangements, details will be placed on the HR Intranet, on employee news, an article will be placed 'In The Loop' and on Yammer and Heads of Service will be requested to cascade the information to managers and employees within their respective service areas.

## 5. Financial Impact

The decision has been made taking into account the impact on our citizens and employees during a time when there is a reduced requirement for our services and the majority of employees want to take their annual leave to spend time with family and friends.

## 6. Integrated impact assessment:

A first stage impact assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its legislative duties (under the Equality Act, the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016). The first stage assessment, attached at appendix 1 has indicated that a more in-depth assessment is not required. A summary is included below:

“A full impact is not required as there is no impact on any protected group. It also has no negative impact on bio-diversity or the Welsh Language”.

## 7. Valleys Communities Impacts:

No Implications

## 8. Workforce Impacts

This proposal will impact on all employees and arrangements will be made to ensure that employees are aware of their particular service arrangements.

## 9. Legal Impacts

There are no legal impacts associated with this proposal.

## 10. Risk Management

There are no risks associated with this report.

## 11. Consultation

There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item.

## 12. Recommendation

It is **RECOMMENDED** that members approve the proposal in relation to Christmas / New Year holiday arrangements for 2022/2023.

### **FOR DECISION**

## 12. Officer contact

Sheenagh Rees – Head of Human & Organisational Development

[s.rees5@npt.gov.uk](mailto:s.rees5@npt.gov.uk)

Tel: 01639 763315

**13. List of Background Papers**

None.

## Impact Assessment - First Stage

### 1. Details of the initiative

<b>Initiative description and summary: Christmas and New Year Holiday Arrangements 2022/23</b>
<b>Service Area:</b> All Council Employees other than those employed directly by School's operating under fully delegated powers
<b>Directorate:</b> All

### 2. Does the initiative affect:

	Yes	No
Service users		X
Staff	X	
Wider community		X
Internal administrative process only	X	

### 3. Does the initiative impact on people because of their:

	Yes	No	None/ Negligible	Don't Know	Impact H/M/L	Reasons for your decision (including evidence)/How might it impact?
Age		X				
Disability		X				
Gender Reassignment		X				
Marriage/Civil Partnership		X				
Pregnancy/Maternity		X				
Race		X				
Religion/Belief		X				
Sex		X				

Sexual orientation		X				
--------------------	--	---	--	--	--	--

**4. Does the initiative impact on:**

	Yes	No	None/ Negligible	Don't know	Impact H/M/L	Reasons for your decision (including evidence used) / How might it impact?
People's opportunities to use the Welsh language		X				
Treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English		X				

Page 14

**5. Does the initiative impact on biodiversity:**

	Yes	No	None/ Negligible	Don't know	Impact H/M/L	Reasons for your decision (including evidence) / How might it impact?
To maintain and enhance biodiversity		X				
To promote the resilience of ecosystems, i.e. supporting protection of the wider environment,		X				

such as air quality, flood alleviation, etc.						
--	--	--	--	--	--	--

**6. Does the initiative embrace the sustainable development principle (5 ways of working):**

	Yes	No	Details
<b>Long term</b> - how the initiative supports the long term well-being of people		x	N/A – internal policy
<b>Integration</b> - how the initiative impacts upon our wellbeing objectives		x	As above.
<b>Involvement</b> - how people have been involved in developing the initiative	x		Heads of Service and the trade unions were consulted on their views regarding this proposal and these were fully considered.
<b>Collaboration</b> - how we have worked with other services/organisations to find shared sustainable solutions		x	N/A – this is specific to Neath Port Talbot Council.
<b>Prevention</b> - how the initiative will prevent problems occurring or getting worse		x	N/A – internal policy

**7. Declaration - based on above assessment (tick as appropriate):**

A full impact assessment (second stage) <b>is not</b> required	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Reasons for this conclusion	
A full impact is not required as there is no impact on any protected group. It also has no negative impact on bio-diversity or the Welsh Language.	

A full impact assessment (second stage) <b>is</b> required	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reasons for this conclusion	

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
Completed by	<b>Diane Hopkins</b>	<b>Principal HR Manager</b>	D B Hopkins	<b>05/11/2021</b>
Signed off by	Sheenagh Rees	Head of Human & OD		16/11/21

This page is intentionally left blank



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot  
Neath Port Talbot Council

## **NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNCIL**

### **PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**

**29<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2021**

### **REPORT OF THE HEAD OF HUMAN AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT – SHEENAGH REES**

#### **Matter for information**

**Wards Affected: All wards**

#### **Monitoring Report on Agency Usage and Spend**

#### **Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on agency worker usage and spend across the Council (excluding schools).

#### **Executive Summary**

This report provides Members with information on the usage of agency workers for the previous financial year and for the period April 1<sup>st</sup> - August 31<sup>st</sup> of this year.

The information shows the highest usage of agency workers by service and by job type.

## Background

An official agreement was made on 30th January, 2020 between the Council and Matrix SCM Ltd (Matrix) for the Provision of a Managed Service for the Supply of Agency Staff. Matrix took over the management of the supply of agency workers in April 2020 and the contract will run until October 30<sup>th</sup> 2022 with the option to extend for 12 months.

Matrix engage with a number of suppliers on the Council's behalf to supply agency workers at the best rate possible. Matrix is not a staffing company and is entirely supplier-neutral.

## Agency Spend

The information has been provided by Matrix.

### 1.1 Agency Spend by Directorate

The tables below show the breakdown of agency spend by Directorate and information on the services and types of jobs that agency workers have been used for in the periods shown.

#### Spend from April 1<sup>ST</sup> 2020 – March 31<sup>st</sup> 2021 by Directorate:

<b>DIRECTORATE</b>	<b>SPEND</b>
ENVIRONMENT & REGENERATION	£876,347
SOCIAL SERVICES, HEALTH & HOUSING	£91,351
FINANCE & CORPORATE SERVICES	£10,802
CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S	£5,760
<b>TOTAL SPEND</b>	<b>£984,260</b>

#### Environment & Regeneration

The highest spend on agency workers is within the Environment & Regeneration Directorate which accounts for £876,347 of the total

spend across the council of £984,260. This represents 88% of agency worker spend.

Waste and Recycling services account for the highest spend where agency workers are used to cover the roles of refuse collectors/loaders and refuse/recycling drivers.

The rest of the spend in the Directorate has mainly been used on agency workers across the following services and job roles:

Environmental Health (Environmental Health Officer)  
Trading Standards ( Trading Standards Officer)  
South Wales Trunk Road Agency (Principal Engineer and Senior Electrical Engineer)  
South Wales Trunk Road Agency (Administrative support)  
South Wales Trunk Agency (Driving Skilled Operative)  
Highways and Drainage (Driving Skilled Operative)

### **Social Services, Health & Housing**

The second highest spend of £91,351 falls within Social Services, Health and Housing and represents 9% of total agency spend.

Agency workers contributing to this spend have mainly been used across the following services and job roles:

Community Occupational Team (Occupational Therapist)  
Social Workers across various teams  
Housing Renewals, Adaptations and Homelessness (Support and Resettlement Assistant)

NB During the pandemic, agency workers needed by SSHH were supplied via Prospero Health & Social Care Recruitment Agency in addition to those supplied via Matrix.

Consequently, an additional £67,000 was used on agency workers from Prospero of which £30,000 has been reclaimed from the Welsh Government to cover these covid-related figures.

### **Chief Executive's and Finance & Corporate Services**

The main usage in these two Directorates has been in administrative roles, along with Customer Services/CCTV and accounts for a total spend of £16,562.

### **Spend from April 1<sup>st</sup> - August 31<sup>st</sup> 2021 by Directorate:**

<b>DIRECTORATE</b>	<b>SPEND</b>
ENVIRONMENT & REGENERATION	£311, 519
SOCIAL SERVICES, HEALTH AND HOUSING	£77,867
FINANCE & CORPORATE SERVICES	£7,721
<b>TOTAL SPEND</b>	<b>£397,107</b>

### **Environment & Regeneration**

The highest usage of agency workers for this period is within the Environment & Regeneration Directorate spending £311,519 out of a total spend across the council of £397,107. This represents 78% of total agency spend.

Waste and Recycling show the highest spend using agency workers in the roles of refuse collectors/loaders and refuse/recycling drivers.

Agency workers have also been used in Environmental Health in the job role of Environmental Health Officer and in South Wales Trunk Road Agency in Engineering, Administrative and Skilled Driving Operative roles.

## **Social Services, Health & Housing**

The second highest usage is in Social Services, Health and Housing with a spend of £77,867 out of the total. This represents 20% of total agency spend.

The highest spend has been used in various qualified social worker roles and accounts for £50,342 of the £77,867 spend.

Housing Renewals, Adaptations and Homelessness also account for the agency worker spend used for the role of Support and Resettlement Assistant.

## **Finance & Corporate Services**

The main agency usage in this Directorate has been in administrative roles.

### **1.2 Agency Spend by Job Category/Job Role**

The following information shows the highest spend by job category and which job roles fall into these categories.

#### **Spend from April 1<sup>ST</sup> 2020 – March 31<sup>ST</sup> 2021 by Job Category/Role:**

Total spend for this period - £984,260

<b>JOB CATEGORY</b>	<b>JOB ROLE</b>	<b>SPEND</b>
Operational and Support	Refuse collectors/loaders Refuse/Recycling Drivers Driving Skilled Operatives	£678,189
Technical	Trading Standards Officer Principal Engineer Senior Electrical Engineer	£113,096

Professional	Environmental Health Officer Domestic Abuse Worker Support & Resettlement Assistant	£95,732
--------------	--	---------

**Spend from April 1<sup>ST</sup> 2021 – August 31<sup>st</sup> 2021 by Job Category/Role:**

Total spend for this period - £397,107

<b>JOB CATEGORY</b>	<b>JOB ROLE</b>	<b>SPEND</b>
Operational and Support	Refuse collectors/loaders Refuse/Recycling Drivers Driving Skilled Operatives	£263,953
Social Care (Qualified)	Social Workers (Adult Services and Children & Young People Services)	£50,342
Technical	Principal Engineer Senior Electrical Engineer	£47,329

**Summary**

Figures from previous years show that total expenditure on agency workers has steadily decreased across the Council from £1,516,699.09 in 2015/16 to £1,261,839.07 in 2016/17 and to £1,129,100.37 in 2017/18. This report shows expenditure continues to decrease.

In reference to an Internal Audit report produced 20<sup>th</sup> September 2021, it was reported that there were no issues found in the use of agency workers. Agency workers are used only when absolutely necessary to ensure continuity of service delivery and are used only as a short-term solution when there are unforeseen workforce shortages. Normal

recruitment processes are followed when vacancies arise and agency workers are not used as an alternative to filling vacant posts within services.

Any agency costs are monitored against budgets on a monthly basis as part of the budget monitoring exercise. If there are any concerns these are then discussed with the relevant Accountable Manager responsible for the service.

### **Financial Impacts**

The cost of agency workers is met by individual services engaging the agency workers.

### **Integrated impact assessment**

There is no requirement to undertake an Integrated Impact Assessment as this report is for monitoring / information purposes.

### **Valleys Communities Impacts**

No implications

### **Workforce Impacts**

There are no workforce impacts associated with this report

### **Legal Impacts**

Agency Worker Regulations give Agency workers are entitled to certain employment rights and equal treatment if the hirer uses the worker for 12 consecutive weeks in a given job.

### **Risk Management Impacts**

The delivery of front line services to the community could be disrupted if Agency workers are not used.

### **Consultation**

There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item.

**Recommendations**

It is recommended that Members note the information on agency usage and spend information rep

**FOR INFORMATION****Officer contact**

Sheenagh Rees, Head of Human & Organisational Development,  
Email: [s.rees5@npt.gov.uk](mailto:s.rees5@npt.gov.uk) or tel. 01639 763315

## NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

29<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2021

### REPORT OF THE HEAD OF HUMAN & ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT – S.REES

#### **Matter for Information**

**WARD(S) AFFECTED: All**

**Report Title:** Frontline Employee Survey Feedback and Action

#### **Purpose of Report**

To update Members on the Future of Work survey of the council's frontline workforce.

#### **Executive Summary**

The report provides Members with the background to the survey which was issued to office based employees in August 2021. 381 employees in this category responded and a summary of responses is set out in Appendix 1. The feedback has led to the development of a number of actions in response to the issues raised by employees.

#### **Background**

In May, we launched a survey for office based employees, to find out how home working has affected them over the last 14 months – what the challenges have been and what has worked well. Members received feedback from this survey at the September meeting of this committee.

In August we launched a survey specifically for our front line employees. This survey closed at the end of September.

## **The Future of Work Survey**

The survey launched on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> August by Mrs Karen Jones, Chief Executive, and closed on 31<sup>st</sup> September 2021. It was publicised in the weekly HR Sway, on the council's intranet, and emailed to employees identified as 'office workers'.

The survey aimed to establish the following information:

- Have you felt safe and protected from the Coronavirus at work?
- Do you think that the actions put in place to help control the spread of Coronavirus whilst at work have been enough to protect you?
- Do you feel that your work colleagues have followed all the actions put in place to help control the spread of Coronavirus at work?
- How would you describe your wellbeing at the moment?
- Are you aware of the resources that have been made available for health and wellbeing on the website?
- Have you had regular contact with your line manager?
- Have you had the opportunity to attend team meetings?

Employees were also asked questions relating to the 'Let's Talk Survey' and feedback in relation to those questions will be considered in the analysis for that survey.

318 employees responded to the questionnaire, a response rate of approximately 10%, which is on the low side. The responses are, however, proportionately spread across the frontline workforce, so it can be considered reasonably representative.

### **Responses and feedback**

Appendix 1 sets out the questions asked in the survey and the collated responses.

The survey also gave employees the opportunity to provide narrative feedback in their own words. The thousands of statements have been analysed and grouped into key themes, to enable us to respond and take action to address this important feedback.

## **Actions**

The Survey results have been shared and discussed with our recognised trade unions and to inform our joint working in relation to employment strategy, policy and process.

The Survey results were shared with Corporate Directors at a corporate level and also with Directorate Management Teams to consider service specific feedback and support the development of any necessary service specific actions.

The Communications & Marketing Team will put in place a Communications Action Plan to ensure that we feedback to our employees what the key survey outcomes were and actions that have been taken in response to the feedback we had from employees.

Headline feedback:

### **Have you felt safe and protected from the Coronavirus at work?**

Yes 76%

No 24%

### **Do you feel that your work colleagues have followed all the actions put in place to help control the spread of Coronavirus at work?**

Yes 85%

No 15%

### **How would you describe your wellbeing at the moment?**

Very good 19%

Good 33%

Average 35%

Poor 12%

Very poor 2%

As can be seen from the feedback, the responses were largely positive, with many employees commenting that leadership have done everything they could during the pandemic to keep employees safe whilst maintaining services. However, some themes have emerged in the responses regarding what further actions could have been put in place to protect our employees, which include:

- Better ventilation in buildings,
- Schools operating with smaller class sizes
- Employees and pupils wearing masks in more areas

In relation to these points, we will recommunicate the importance of the workplace risk assessments and ask that managers / head teachers share their risk assessments and discuss these with their teams in order to alleviate any employee concerns.

Some common themes could also be identified where employees believed others may not have been following the rules laid out which made them feel unsafe in some areas, these include:

- Some employees not wearing masks
- Some employees not social distancing appropriately
- Some employees not undertaking Lateral Flow Testing

In order to combat these issues, we will ask managers to share their risk assessments with their teams, and discuss what is expected of the employees when in the workplace. Whilst undertaking Lateral Flow Testing (LFT) is a voluntary activity, we will recommunicate the benefit of LFTs as an additional measure to combat the circulation of Covid 19.

Wellbeing was an important theme we wanted to gauge from the Front Line Services Questionnaire. The questions on this subject also provided a very mixed response, with many employees feeling that their wellbeing was as good as it could be, with others noting cause for concern. The following are examples of where employees have highlighted their concerns and comments:

- General worries about the Covid Virus and concern for selves/family members
- Employees have general health concerns not related to the workplace or Covid

In addition to these two themes, it is important to also highlight the theme of 'workplace'. Many employees commented on their workplace affecting their wellbeing but in different ways. Some employees felt that their ability to work from home had greatly improved their wellbeing, with some sighting that working from home had impacted on their wellbeing poorly. There are also some comments regarding perceived unfairness regarding some employees being able to work from home with others not being able to due to the nature of their roles.

It is anticipated that as part of the rollout of the 'Hybrid Working Framework', management will have discussions with their teams and through communication this will clarify and resolve some of these perceived issues and tackle wellbeing aspects associated with 'workplace'.

In addition, there are also comments noted in relation to employees workload, pay and working hours with a suggestion that changes and 'improvements' to these could improve wellbeing.

Work is currently ongoing in relation to options for a reward and recognition scheme with training taking place in relation to reward and recognition of employee achievement. There are also plans for a recognition event, to recognise the exceptional work of our teams in Neath Port Talbot.

## **Financial Appraisal**

The Surveys have been developed and managed internally by the council's HR and Communications and Marketing teams, at no additional cost to the council.

## **Integrated Impact Assessment**

As this is a matter for information, an Integrated Impact Assessment is not required.

## **Workforce Impact**

Employee voice, and ensuring that employees are able to provide us with feedback on their experience at work and how it can be improved is important for people's wellbeing and motivation.

## **Legal Impact**

There are no legal impacts associated with this report.

## **Risk Management**

The council has adopted a risk assessed approach to workforce arrangements throughout the pandemic, placing the health and safety of our employees as a paramount concern.

## **Consultation**

The trade unions were informally consulted with in relation to the survey and have been presented with the survey outcomes. This information will help inform more formal discussions in relation to workforce planning and strategy development.

## **Recommendations**

That members note the survey outcomes and associated actions and the update in relation to working practices.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – The Frontline Employee Questionnaire and Responses

## **List of Background Papers**

<https://gov.wales/covid-19-alert-levels>

## **Officer Contact**

Mrs Sheenagh Rees Head of Human and Organisational Development Tel: 01639 763315 or e-mail: [s.rees5@npt.gov.uk](mailto:s.rees5@npt.gov.uk)

## Frontline employees questionnaire

This report was generated on 25/10/21. Overall 381 respondents completed this questionnaire. The report has been filtered to show the responses for 'All Respondents'.

### How would you describe your work:

- Office based (31) 8%
- Non-office based (136) 36%
- School based (213) 56%

### What Directorate do you work for? (if more than 1 contract please tick all that apply)

- Chief Executive's (2) 1%
- Education, Leisure & Lifelong Learning (includes Schools) (220) 64%
- Environment (27) 8%
- Finance & Corporate Services (2) 1%
- Social Services (92) 27%

### Where are you based?

- SRC (6) 2%
- Tregelles Court (10) 3%
- Cimla Hospital (24) 7%
- In the Community (25) 7%
- Work from home (44) 13%
- In a school (209) 60%
- Other (28) 8%
  - Other – please specify: Neath Port Talbot Hospital; In the community and home (used to be based in Cimla Health and Social Care Centre pre-pandemic); Rhodes House; Rhodes House day centre, Port Talbot; Rhodes House; Rhodes house; Rhodes House; Ffwdwyllt House; Day Centre; Bspoked formerly VSC; day service; Community; Library HQ /ELRS, Briton Ferry; Civic and ffrwdwyllt house; Hillside secure unit; Margam park; Forge centre; Tir Morfa; Quays; Trem y mor; The Quays; Annex Neath; Baglan Education Training Centre; pendarvis contact centre; The quays; Home; Baglan Education and Training Centre; Libraries

### What is your Gender:

- male (82) 24%
- female (261) 75%
- transgender (-)
- prefer not to say (4) 1%
- other (-)

## Frontline employees questionnaire

### What is your age?

- 16-24 (5) 1%
- 25-29 (16) 5%
- 30-39 (60) 17%
- 40-49 (92) 26%
- 50-59 (133) 38%
- 60-69 (33) 10%
- 70-74 (-)
- 75-85 (2) 1%
- 86+ (-)
- prefer not to say (7) 2%

### Hours of work:

Do you work:-

- Full time (37 hours/ 27.5 for schools) (234) 67%
- Part time (Less than 37 hours / less than 27.5 for schools) (114) 33%

### Have you felt safe and protected from the Coronavirus at work?

- Yes (264) 76%
- No (82) 24%

### Do you think that the actions put in place to help control the spread of Coronavirus whilst at work have been enough to protect you?

- Yes (278) 80%
- No (69) 20%

### Do you feel that your work colleagues have followed all the actions put in place to help control the spread of Coronavirus at work?

- Yes (296) 85%
- No (52) 15%

### How would you describe your wellbeing at the moment?

- Very good (64) 19%
- Good (113) 33%
- Average (122) 35%
- Poor (41) 12%
- Very poor (6) 2%

### Are you aware of the resources that have been made available for health and wellbeing on the website?

- Yes (226) 66%
- No (119) 35%

## Frontline employees questionnaire

### **If yes, have you accessed these?**

- Yes (64) 22%
- No (230) 78%

### **Have you had regular contact with your line manager?**

- Yes (284) 82%
- No (62) 18%

### **Have you had the opportunity to attend team meetings?**

- Yes (246) 72%
- No (98) 29%

### **Where do you live?**

- Afan Valley (15) 4%
- Amman Valley (9) 3%
- Dulais Valley (8) 2%
- Neath (103) 29%
- Neath Valley (19) 5%
- Port Talbot (73) 20%
- Swansea Valley (22) 6%
- outside of Neath Port Talbot (112) 31%

This page is intentionally left blank

## NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

29<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2021

### REPORT OF THE HEAD OF HUMAN & ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT – SHEENAGH REES

#### **Matter for information**

**Wards Affected: All wards**

#### **Time to Change Wales Employer Pledge – Action Plan**

#### **Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is to update Members in relation to progress made on the Action Plan developed as part of the Time to Change Wales Employer Pledge, which the Council signed up to September 2019.

#### **Executive Summary:**

This report provides Members with an update in the relation to the actions which have been undertaken since the last update to this Committee in December 2019 to support the Council's commitment to the Time to Change Wales Employer Pledge.

#### **Background:**

#### **The Time to Change Wales Employer Pledge**

The Time to Change Wales Campaign's Employer Pledge provides a framework for employers to work within to support employees with their mental health. The Campaign provides support to employers including training and access to a range of resources. There are no financial costs to the scheme.

Following a report to Personnel Committee in May 2019, the Pledge was signed at Staff Council in September 2019.

#### **Project Team**

A project team has been established consisting of employees from across the HR division, the Council's communications team and both teaching trade unions and 'green book' trade unions.

## **Action Plan**

The action plan draws on the internal resources we already have in place as well as resources that will be made available by Time to Change Wales, including support to train a pool of 'Employee Champions' who will be instrumental in disseminating messages and information about mental health across the Council.

A copy of the Action Plan is provided in Appendix 1. Members will note that excellent progress has been made in delivering the Action Plan. Some of the actions have been rolled forward due to the pandemic, however, provided below are some of the key actions that have been delivered since the start of the pandemic. Some of which were part of the action plan, but some of which are over and above the action plan, but which were necessary to support our workforce during the pandemic. It is anticipated that during the winter, we will continue to concentrate on initiatives to support the wellbeing of our workforce.

Key actions:-

**Staff Health and Wellbeing website** - This was launched on 9<sup>th</sup> April 2020 via Gov Notify message from the Chief Executive. Accessible inside and outside the Council, via range of digital devices, including personal smartphones. Provides support on a range of topics – available to view [here](#)

**Occupational Health Unit Helpline for employees** - Monday to Friday, office hours provision providing advice and signposting to employees.

**Occupational Health Unit Referral Helpline** - A referral service for managers to deal with critical OH matters.

**Wellbeing Through Work** - The Council has been able to access this service, the mental health and wellbeing service provided to NHS employees. This provides a wide range of support on both physical and mental health well-being including referral to specialist support services. This onward referral includes Trauma Support for those who encounter traumatic experiences.

**School Counselling Service Helpline for School based staff** - Signposting advice and guidance in relation to the mental health and wellbeing of teaching and learning support assistants, as well as advisory support and guidance on how teachers and learning support assistants can support young people deal with issues arising from COVID-19.

**Communications focus on wellbeing** - Mental health and wellbeing feature regularly in employee communications, including the Intranet, HR SWAY, In the Loop and now Yammer.

**Virtual Working Guidance issued** - to support the workforce that continue to work from home as a result of Covid 19 mitigation measures, and this includes guidance and support for employees and managers on how to support their mental wellbeing whilst working from home.

**Hybrid Working Framework issued** - which is the stepping stone to our Future of Work Strategy, places employee mental health and well-being as a key consideration in working arrangements. Covid 19 Workplace Risk assessments and manager guidance refer to the emotional well-being impact of the return to workplaces, as well as the physical arrangements that are necessary.

**Online First Aid for Mental Health course** - The LT&D team have worked with Neath College to develop this into an online webinar, which is also certificated. This has now been completed by 77 employees.

**Mindfulness Course:** 38 employees completed a 5-week online course offered in partnership with UNISON and funded by WULF.

#### **Financial Impacts:**

There are no financial implications associated with this report as all actions are being carried out from existing resources and budgets.

#### **Integrated impact assessment:**

There is no requirement to undertake an Integrated Impact Assessment as this report is for monitoring / information purposes.

#### **Valleys Communities Impacts:**

No implications

**Workforce Impacts:**

The intention behind the Time to Change Wales campaign and our action plan is to have a positive impact on the workforce by reducing the stigma around mental health and discrimination faced by people with mental health problems within the workplace. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is even more important that we provide this mental health and wellbeing support to our workforce.

**Legal Impacts:**

No implications.

**Risk Management Impacts:**

Implementation this proposal is to support the Council's Strategic Equality Plan commitment.

**Consultation:**

There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item.

**Recommendations:**

It is recommended that Members note the update in relation to Time to Change Wales Action Plan and receive a further update in six months.

**FOR INFORMATION**

**Appendices:**

Appendix 1 – Time to Change Wales Action Plan

**Officer contact**

Sheenagh Rees, Head of Human & Organisational Development, Email: [s.rees5@npt.gov.uk](mailto:s.rees5@npt.gov.uk) or tel. 01639 763315



This page is intentionally left blank

let's end mental health discrimination

**time to change**

**Wales**

rhown ddiwedd ar wahaniaethu ar sail iechyd meddwl

**amser i newid**

**Cymru**

## Employer Pledge Action Plan

In order to continue with your request to sign the Time to Change Wales Employer Pledge, please complete this document and email it to: [pledge@timetochangewales.org.uk](mailto:pledge@timetochangewales.org.uk). We ask that you submit your plan a **minimum of four weeks** before the date of your pledge signing to allow us time to feedback on your plan and commission your pledge board.

It's not a problem if your action plan is still a draft at this stage. You can add to and develop your plan at any time as we encourage organisations to think about their action plan as a living document. While neither a quality mark nor endorsement, for a Pledge to have real value, it should lead to some practical action. Your action plan document will not be shared with anyone outside of Time to Change Wales but we need to see that you are serious about being active in the campaign to ensure the Time to Change Wales Employer Pledge maintains its value.

You should have received a full guide on how to fill out your action plan, along with an explanation of the seven key principles listed in the plan. If you have not received this, please email [pledge@timetochangewales.org.uk](mailto:pledge@timetochangewales.org.uk).

*This template is not prescriptive but offers a variety of suggested actions that may give ideas for writing your organisation's action plan. There are a number of suggested actions for each section but you should not feel that you are required to include as many actions in your plan. Neither should you be limited by these suggestions, in fact, we encourage you to identify actions that are relevant and achievable in your organisation.*

<b>Organisation:</b>	Neath Port Talbot Council	<b>Main contact:</b>	Diane Hopkins
<b>Twitter:</b>		<b>Job title:</b>	Principal HR Manager
<b>Facebook:</b>		<b>Email:</b>	d.b.hopkins@npt.gov.uk
<b>Instagram:</b>		<b>Phone:</b>	01639 763012



Funded by:



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government



let's end mental health discrimination

**time to change**

**Wales**

rhown ddiwedd ar wahaniaethu ar sail iechyd meddwl

**amser i newid**

**Cymru**

## Employer Pledge Action Plan Template

Action plan principle	Activity description	Internal lead(s)	Timescales	Performance measure(s)
<p><b>Demonstrate senior level buy-in</b></p> <p>How will you show that your senior leaders are committed to addressing mental health in the workplace?</p>	<p><i>List at least two tangible activities your organisation has planned to tackle mental health stigma and discrimination for each action plan principle.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senior management will attend the TtCW pledge signing.</li> <li>A senior member of staff to talk about the importance of tackling mental health stigma (e.g. at pledge signing and via an article In The Loop).</li> <li>A senior member of staff will share their own lived experience of mental ill-health.</li> <li>Mental health and wellbeing will be a standing agenda item on senior management team meeting agendas.</li> <li>The mental health and wellbeing of staff will be reviewed and discussed annually at Corporate Directors Group and Personnel Committee</li> <li>The TtCW pledge board will be displayed in a prominent place that can be viewed by staff and visitors.</li> </ul>	<p>Sheenagh Rees / Diane Hopkins</p>	<p>Report to Personnel Committee in May 2019 - Completed</p>	<p>Signing event</p> <p>Articles from In The Loop</p> <p>Agendas and reports in relation to mental health</p> <p>Pledge will be displayed</p>
<p><b>Demonstrate accountability and recruit Employee Champions</b></p> <p>How will you ensure that this action plan is</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A named member of staff will have responsibility and oversight for implementing the TtCW Action Plan.</li> <li>Progress on the TtCW Action Plan will be reviewed annually by the HR Team and Corporate Directors Group and this will be shared with trade unions at Staff Council.</li> <li>A written progress review on the TtCW Action Plan will be provided annually to elected Members at Personnel Committee</li> </ul>	<p>Diane Hopkins</p> <p>Diane Hopkins/ Sheenagh Rees</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>6 months from signing event and then annually – January 2020 December 2019</p>	<p>Reports provided</p>

<p>successfully implemented?</p> <p>How will you recruit Employee Champions to support your work?</p> <p><a href="#">More information on Employee Champions here.</a></p>	<p>celebrating successes and making recommendations for further actions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our performance appraisal system will include a section on wellbeing.</li> <li>• Our Return to Work interview template will include a section on wellbeing</li> <li>• We will publish a staff notice informing employees about TtCW and invite them to put themselves forward to become an Employee Champion.</li> </ul>	<p>Cath Lewis</p> <p>Tom Owen</p> <p>Rachelle McClaughlan</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p>	
<p><b>Raise awareness about mental health</b></p> <p>How will you get your employees talking about mental health?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will sign the TtCW pledge at an event attended by a large group of staff.</li> <li>• We will encourage our Employee Champions to arrange Activities to link with at least one annual mental health event – for 2019 we will aim to promote World Mental Health Day on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> October 2019 and will allocate them time to do this.</li> <li>• We will display posters and other literature promoting mental health and wellbeing throughout the workplace.</li> <li>• We will have mental health as an ongoing agenda item at manager-level meetings and we will encourage School Governing Bodies to consider doing the same..</li> <li>• We will add the 'Time to Change Wales Pledged Employer' digital stamp to our website and email signature.</li> <li>• We will promote our pledge commitment to mental health and wellbeing through our social media channels.</li> <li>• We will encourage behaviours that positively benefit mental health             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ We will provide 1:1 wellbeing sessions for employees</li> <li>○ We will provide a Men's mental health leaflet</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Diane Hopkins</p> <p>Rachelle McClaughlan</p> <p>Rachelle McClaughlan</p> <p>Heads of Service</p> <p>Anita James</p> <p>Anita James</p> <p>OHU</p> <p>OHU</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>December 2021</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>These initiatives are currently</p>	<p>We will measure the difference this makes by comparing the number of referrals in relation to employees mental health before these changes were made compared to after the changes are made. This will provide an indicator on whether employees feel more able to speak to their manager about their mental health.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ We will provide bereavement counselling for employees</li> <li>○ We will provide specialist baby loss counselling for employees</li> <li>○ We will run mindfulness sessions</li> <li>○ We will run health promotion sessions</li> <li>○ Our Health and Safety training includes a session on Mental Health in the Workplace</li> <li>● We will work in partnership with our trade union Union Learning Representatives network to run sessions and training courses which will raise awareness, signpost employees and support employees with mental health.</li> <li>● We will commission bespoke training on equalities for our Accountable Managers and Head teachers, which will include a dedicated section on reasonable adjustments</li> </ul>	<p>OHU OHU OHU Cath Roberts OHU</p> <p>UNISON/GMB</p>	<p>being run by OHU and will continue</p> <p>These initiatives are currently being run by OHU and will continue</p> <p>February 2022</p>	
<p><b>Update and implement policies to address mental health problems in the workplace</b></p> <p>How easy is it for an employee struggling with a mental health problem, or their line manager, to find out how your organisation will treat them?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● We will review our policies to ensure that they support both physical and mental health related illness e.g. Maximising Attendance at Work Policy</li> <li>● We will develop a Guidance Note on Reasonable Adjustments</li> <li>● Our HR team will provide advice and training to ensure managers and Head teachers understand our policies relating to mental health and stress risk assessments</li> <li>● We will amend our pre-placement medical questionnaire to include mental health</li> <li>● We will make mental health and wellbeing part of the induction programme for new employees to ensure they are able to look after their mental wellbeing, and that of colleagues, and are aware of where they can access advice and support if they experience a mental health issue.</li> </ul>	<p>Diane Hopkins/Katie Stephens Diane Hopkins/Katie Stephens</p> <p>Katie Stephens Cath Roberts</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p>	<p>We will measure our performance by comparing our sickness absence data annually, using the four quarters of 2018/19 as a benchmark.</p>

<p>How can you change your policies to encourage those with mental health problems to come forward?</p>				
<p><b>Ask your employees to share their personal experiences of mental health problems</b></p> <p>How will you get your employees to share their experience of mental health problems at an organisation-wide level? e.g. through intranet posts or newsletters</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will develop a corporate template for supervisions and 1:1s to include mental wellbeing to ensure that discussions are taking place on a regular basis between managers / Head teachers and employees so that staff feel they can discuss this privately.</li> <li>We will invite TtCW to offer free Employee Champions training for members of staff who feel confident enough to share their own experiences with colleagues.</li> <li>We will encourage staff to share through the staff newsletter/intranet examples of how they have been well supported when struggling with their mental health to make colleagues aware of the positive help available. This can be done anonymously if necessary.</li> </ul>	<p>Heads of Service</p> <p>Diane Hopkins</p> <p>HR/OHU</p>	<p>31<sup>st</sup> January 2022</p> <p>February 2022</p> <p>February 2022 and ongoing</p>	<p>We will measure this by comparing the numbers of employees who share their personal experiences on a quarterly basis.</p>
<p><b>Equip line managers to have conversations about mental health</b></p> <p>How will you ensure all of your line managers feel comfortable discussing mental health with their line reports?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will provide a website to enable line managers / Head teachers to support and signpost staff who have a concern about their personal mental health</li> <li>The website will also provide guidance for both managers / Head teachers and employees on signs and symptoms, looking after mental health, what to do if a team member discloses a mental health condition, and where to go for advice and support.</li> <li>We will equip line managers / Head teachers to appropriately support staff who are returning to work following absence due to mental ill-health.</li> </ul>	<p>Sheenagh Rees</p> <p>Sheenagh Rees</p> <p>Amy Hutchings</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>These actions are currently ongoing and will continue</p>	<p>We will monitor impact by the number of hits to the website. We will use this information to continue to enhance the content.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will equip managers to support staff manage workplace stress via our Stress at Work Policy and our OHU Referral Process</li> <li>Our HR team will give advice and support to line managers / Head teachers who are supporting a member of staff experiencing mental ill-health.</li> </ul>	<p>OHU</p> <p>Amy Hutchings</p>	<p>These actions are currently ongoing and will continue</p>	
<p><b>Provide information about mental health and signpost to support services</b></p> <p>How will you ensure your employees have easy access to information on mental health and where to find help?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Posters and other literature promoting mental health and wellbeing will be displayed throughout the workplace.</li> <li>We will include information about mental health and signpost to support services as part of our induction for new employees.</li> <li>We will ensure that all line-managers / Head teachers are aware of signposting routes to relevant mental health support services.</li> <li>We are currently researching training courses on Mental Health First Aid, with a view to training 2 employees per Directorate to provide additional support to our employees. We will offer guidance to any schools who wish to create their own Mental Health First Aiders.</li> </ul>	<p>Rachelle McClaughlan</p> <p>Cath Roberts</p> <p>Amy Hutchings via website</p> <p>Lynne Doyle / Amy Hutchings</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed and ongoing</p>	<p>If we decide to use Mental Health First Aiders, we will measure performance by the numbers of employees who use</p>

let's end mental health discrimination

**time to change**

**Wales**

rhown ddiwedd ar wahaniaethu ar sail iechyd meddwl

**amser i newid**

**Cymru**

				<p>this service. We will use this data to inform our decision on whether to increase the numbers of MHFA we support.</p>
--	--	--	--	--

Funded by:

let's end mental health discrimination

**time to change**

**Wales**

rhown ddiwedd ar wahaniaethu ar sail iechyd meddwl

**amser i newid**

**Cymru**

# Tell the world about your Employer Pledge commitment!

## Website summary

Please supply us with a summary of your pledge commitment and any activity you are planning on doing to accompany your logo. **Please note:** we may edit the text before it is published on our website.

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council is delighted to work with Time to Change Wales on its campaign to end the stigma and discrimination faced by people with mental health problems. As a Council, we value the commitment of our employees who help us to deliver high quality services to the communities we serve. In order to support our employees we are working to improve our knowledge and understanding of mental illness to reduce the stigma that surrounds it. We will provide interventions for our employees who are experiencing mental illness and thereby creating an organisation in which individuals feel valued, supported and able to talk about mental health.

Please send this Action Plan a **minimum of 4 weeks before** your intended pledge date to:

[pledge@timetochangewales.org.uk](mailto:pledge@timetochangewales.org.uk)

### Checklist:

- ✓ Fully completed the Action Plan
- ✓ Hi-res logo attached (300dpi if possible)





## **NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**

**29<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2021**

### **REPORT OF THE HEAD OF HUMAN & ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT – SHEENAGH REES**

#### **Matter for Information**

**Wards Affected: All wards**

#### **Removal of Recruitment Restrictions**

##### **1. Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is to seek Member approval to remove recruitment restrictions first implemented in April 2011, under the provisions of the Workforce Strategy Collective Agreement 2010 and subsequently amended in June 2021.

##### **2. Background**

The Head of Service Workforce Planning Group (formally known as the Head of Service VR Group) was established in 2011 with the aim of ensuring a consistent and joined up approach across the council. This included overseeing recruitment restrictions designed to avoid compulsory redundancies during the years of austerity and facilitating redeployment.

The Group helped develop recruitment restrictions. These were reviewed earlier this year:

- a) Vacancies will be advertised for a 2 week period, simultaneously to Prior Consider and Internal Only candidates.
- b) If vacancies cannot be appointed to following Prior Consideration / Internal Only advertising, recruiting managers can request external advertising via a business case to the Workforce planning Group.
- c) At any stage in the recruitment process, if a prior consideration application present him/herself s/he should be considered before any other applicant.
- d) Should there be a significant increase in numbers of employees 'at risk' the Head of Human and Organisational Development, in consultation with trade unions and the Workforce Planning Group will have the authority to re-instate the requirement to advertise to those 'at risk' prior to any other candidates.

### **3. Proposal to lift restrictions**

Since the Welsh Government moved to level zero in August, as well as seeing a sharp increase in Covid rates with all of the implications that has for our service delivery, the re-opening of the economy and society has also generated additional demand for services. The council is now busier in many services since the pandemic began.

Action is being taken to recruit additional people to work in those services under the most acute pressure as well as increasing our efforts to recruit to vacancies across all services. Additional posts have been established on a fixed term basis in the HR Team to support this effort, and the Principal HR Manager is in the process of recruiting to these posts.

Recruiting is not easy in the current climate as there are currently a lot of jobs available in the economy so the Chief Executive has set up a recruitment taskforce to explore all avenues to bring more people on board. Through the

years of austerity the council has not advertised many jobs externally as we were shrinking the size of our workforce. That has now changed and therefore it is proposed that we now lift all recruitment restrictions and revert to the council policy of advertising all jobs internally and externally at the same time.

Those employees entitled to Prior Consideration Status (**see below**) will continue to be considered ahead of all other candidates in every recruitment process – line managers will be asked to consider, interview and determine the appointment of prior consideration applicants before any other applicants are considered.

### **Tier One**

- Employees under notice of redundancy
- Employees at risk of redundancy
- Medical redeployees
- Employees at Stage 3 of the Capability Procedure
- Employees on a Temporary / Fixed Term Contract, who have been subject to two or more successive fixed terms contracts over a four year period or more

### **Tier Two**

- Employees on a Temporary / Fixed Term Contract with EITHER 12 months continuous service with the Council OR a contract of 12 months or more duration
- Employees in a pay protection situation

## **4. Financial Impacts:**

There are no financial impacts associated with this report.

## **5. Integrated impact assessment:**

A first stage impact assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its legislative duties (under the Equality Act, the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. The

first stage assessment, attached at appendix 1 has indicated that a more in-depth assessment is not required. A summary is included below:

“A full impact is not required as there is no impact on any protected group. It also has no negative impact on bio-diversity or the Welsh Language”.

## **6. Valleys Communities Impacts:**

No Implications

## **7. Workforce Impacts:**

The removal of recruitment restrictions should not adversely impact on prior consideration candidates. This will be monitored by the Head of Human & Organisational Development, to ensure that this remains the case.

## **8. Legal Impacts:**

No implications.

## **9. Risk Management Impacts:**

No implications.

## **10. Consultation:**

There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item. Consultation is taking place with the Trade Unions via the Local Government Services Forum and their feedback will be provided at Committee.

## **11. Recommendations:**

It is **RECOMMENDED** that Members **APPROVE:**

a) the removal of recruitment restrictions.

- b) Should there be a significant increase in numbers of employees 'at risk' the Head of Human and Organisational Development, in consultation with trade unions and the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Equalities will have the authority to re-instate restrictions.

## **FOR DECISION**

### **12. Officer Contact**

Sheenagh Rees, Head of Human & Organisational Development, Email: [s.rees5@npt.gov.uk](mailto:s.rees5@npt.gov.uk) or tel. 01639 763315.

This page is intentionally left blank

## Impact Assessment - First Stage

### 1. Details of the initiative

<b>Initiative description and summary:</b> Removal of recruitment restrictions
<b>Service Area:</b> All Council Employees and job applicants and
<b>Directorate:</b> All

### 2. Does the initiative affect:

	Yes	No
Service users		X
Staff	X	
Wider community	X	
Internal administrative process only		X

### 3. Does the initiative impact on people because of their:

	Yes	No	None/ Negligible	Don't Know	Impact H/M/L	Reasons for your decision (including evidence)/How might it impact?
Age		X				
Disability		X				
Gender Reassignment		X				
Marriage/Civil Partnership		X				
Pregnancy/Maternity		X				
Race		X				
Religion/Belief		X				
Sex		X				

Sexual orientation		X				
--------------------	--	---	--	--	--	--

**4. Does the initiative impact on:**

	Yes	No	None/ Negligible	Don't know	Impact H/M/L	Reasons for your decision (including evidence used) / How might it impact?
People's opportunities to use the Welsh language		X				
Treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English		X				

Page 58

**5. Does the initiative impact on biodiversity:**

	Yes	No	None/ Negligible	Don't know	Impact H/M/L	Reasons for your decision (including evidence) / How might it impact?
To maintain and enhance biodiversity		X				
To promote the resilience of ecosystems, i.e. supporting protection of the wider environment,		X				

such as air quality, flood alleviation, etc.						
--	--	--	--	--	--	--

**6. Does the initiative embrace the sustainable development principle (5 ways of working):**

	Yes	No	Details
<b>Long term</b> - how the initiative supports the long term well-being of people	x		The proposal reduces the length of time for advertising but it does not remove the advantage offered to those employees who are at risk of e.g. redundancy.
<b>Integration</b> - how the initiative impacts upon our wellbeing objectives	x		As above.
<b>Involvement</b> - how people have been involved in developing the initiative	x		The Council's Joint Trade Unions have also been consulted with.
<b>Collaboration</b> - how we have worked with other services/organisations to find shared sustainable solutions		x	N/A – this is a Neath Port Talbot Council Policy.
<b>Prevention</b> - how the initiative will prevent problems occurring or getting worse	x		The proposal reduces the length of time for advertising but it does not remove the advantage offered to those employees who are at risk of e.g. redundancy.

**7. Declaration - based on above assessment (tick as appropriate):**

A full impact assessment (second stage) <b>is not</b> required	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Reasons for this conclusion	
A full impact is not required as there is no impact on any protected group. It also has no negative impact on bio-diversity or the Welsh Language.	

A full impact assessment (second stage) <b>is</b> required	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reasons for this conclusion	

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
Completed by				
Signed off by	Sheenagh Rees	Head of HR & OD		19/11/21

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 12, 15 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 12, 15 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank