

Workforce Plan 2023-2028

RHONDDA CYNON TAF

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF

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Foreward from the Chief Executive

This Council’s greatest strength is its workforce. Our people play a vital role in delivering our vision; to make Rhondda Cynon Taf a great place to live, work and play.

Our communities have been profoundly affected by the devastating impacts of Covid and the 2020 floods. We are now proactively responding to the cost-of-living crisis; financial pressures and increasing demand for our services.

The response from our workforce has been exemplary and we continue to work tirelessly to serve our communities, support local businesses and protect the most vulnerable from harm.

Effective workforce planning is essential to ensure that our staff have the capability and capacity to deliver excellent services for our communities both now and in the future. It is also vitally important that we support well-being and enable the personal and professional development of our staff so they can reach their full potential.

The Council’s Workforce Plan 2023-28 sets out how we will continue to develop and support our workforce to meet the needs of our communities, building on our talented, resourceful, innovative, and flexible workforce. The plan has four key aims to ensure we have the workforce we need to continue to deliver high quality services in Rhondda Cynon Taf.



Paul Mee
Chief Executive

Introduction

Our people, or workforce, play a vital role in delivering our vision, to make Rhondda Cynon Taf a great place to live, work and play. Good workforce planning is essential to ensure that, through our workforce, we deliver our best for our communities both now and in the future. We need to ensure that we have the staff resources, skills and capacity to continue to maximise opportunities and overcome challenges.

The County Borough has experienced the devastating impacts of Covid and the 2020 floods, and future challenges are ahead such as the cost of living crisis, uncertainty about levels of funding and an increasing demand for our services.

Careful financial planning is key to our success, but alongside this, so are our staff as they deliver our vision and priorities. Our Workforce Plan will help ensure that we plan ahead to make the most of our workforce to achieve the best possible results for the County Borough.

Purpose of the Council's Workforce Plan

The Council's Workforce Plan will support the Council to achieve its priorities, as set out in the Council's Corporate Plan 2020-24, 'Making a Difference'. The Workforce Plan will ensure that the Council recruits, retains, develops and supports staff and managers to continue to deliver excellent services and meet current and future opportunities and challenges.

The Council's Workforce Plan also embeds the requirements of the Well-being of Future generations (Wales) Act 2015, to meet national well-being goals and the public services five Ways of Working.

What is Workforce Planning?

Workforce Planning requires an organisation to look at where it is now and where it needs to be in the future. This information is matched with its existing workforce and any known or expected pressures on the supply or replacement of staff through:

- Identifying the link between business strategies and people plans (as we are a Local Authority in Wales we also align with Welsh Government strategies and plans).
- Identification of the future skills and competencies needed to deliver new and improved services.
- Analysis of the present workforce.
- Comparison between present workforce and the requirements of the future and identification of any gaps.
- Strategies to address gaps.
- Setting objectives and actions to realise strategies and workforce planning goals.
- Monitoring, review and evaluation.

Information used to develop the Council's Workforce Plan

The following sources of information have been used to develop the Council's Workforce Plan 2023-28:

- Service Self Evaluation (SSE) documents 2021-22.
- Council workforce data and other relevant sources such as the Council's Corporate Plan 2020-24, 'Making a Difference' and our Tackling Climate Change Strategy 2022-25.
- Council Digital Strategy 2022-26.
- Staff survey and consultation data.
- Welsh Government information such as Future Trends 2021, Wellbeing of Wales 2021, Anti-racist Wales Action Plan and their LGBTQ+ Action Plan, Cymraeg 2050: A Million Welsh Speakers.
- Other relevant external workforce information and insights.

Our Workforce Plan and alignment to the Council's Corporate Plan and Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.








The aim of the Council's Workforce Plan is to enable the Council to deliver its vision and priorities, as set out in the Council Corporate Plan 2021-24, 'Making a Difference'.

The Council's Workforce Plan focuses on ensuring that the Council's workforce can meet current and future challenges whilst maximising opportunities to achieve the best possible outcomes. To achieve this, it aligns with key strategy such as the Council's Corporate Plan and Human Resources Strategy. Requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 to meet national well-being goals are also embedded in our Workforce Plan.

The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 requires public bodies in Wales to consider the long-term impact of their decisions, to work better with people, communities and each other, and to prevent persistent problems such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change.

The Act has seven well-being goals which public bodies must work to achieve:

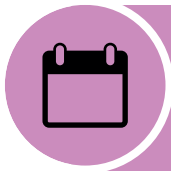
-  A GLOBALLY RESPONSIBLE WALES.
-  A PROSPEROUS WALES.
-  A RESILIENT WALES.
-  A HEALTHIER WALES.
-  A MORE EQUAL WALES.
-  A WALES OF COHESIVE COMMUNITIES.
-  A WALES OF VIBRANT CULTURE AND THRIVING WELSH LANGUAGE.

To work towards these, Sustainable Development is important to improve the way that we can achieve goals. The Act defines Sustainable Development in Wales as:

“The process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the well-being goals.”

It sets out five ways of working needed for Public Bodies to achieve the seven well-being goals which are outlined below.

The Five Ways of Working



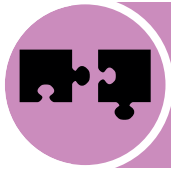
1. LONG TERM

The importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs.



2. PREVENTION

How acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help public bodies meet their objectives.



3. INTEGRATION

Considering how the public body's well-being objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals, on their objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies.



4. COLLABORATION

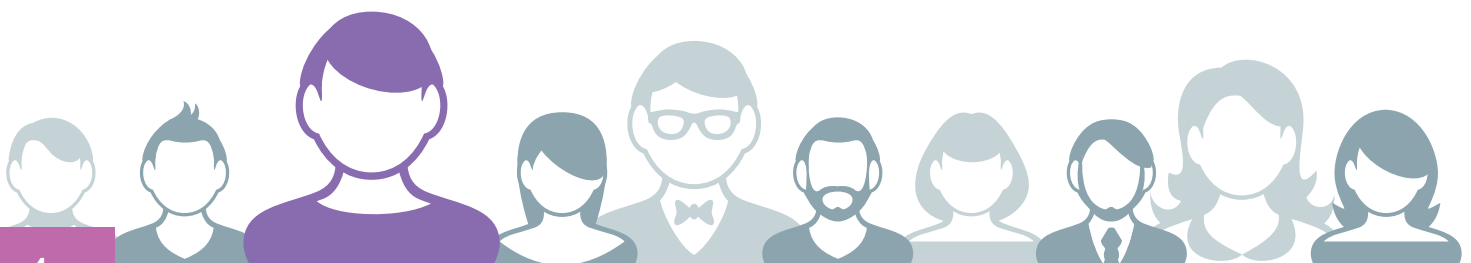
Acting in collaboration with any person (or different parts of the body itself) that could help the body to meet its well-being objectives.



5. INVOLVEMENT

The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves.

The Council's HR Strategy and Workforce Plan will take into account requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Five Ways of Working.



The Council's Corporate Plan

The Council's Workforce Plan also aligns with the Council's Corporate Plan 2021-24, 'Making a Difference', which outlines our vision and priorities.

The Council's vision is:

“For Rhondda Cynon Taf to be the best place in Wales to live, work and play, where people and businesses are independent, healthy and prosperous.”

The Council's purpose and the reason why it exists is:

“To provide strong community leadership and create the environment for people and businesses to be independent, healthy and prosperous.”

The Council's Corporate Plan takes account of the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and sets out three priorities which the Council has committed to delivering:

- Ensuring people are independent, healthy and successful
- Creating places where people are proud to live, work and play
- Enabling prosperity, creating the opportunity for people and businesses to be innovative, be entrepreneurial and fulfil their potential and prosper.

To achieve our vision, the Council has set out how we will intend to deliver these priorities:

- Live within our means
- Efficient and effective Council
- Maximising opportunities
- Shared responsibility

These themes will be reflected in workforce action plans related to the Council's Workforce Plan and HR Strategy.



Opportunities and challenges

The Council faces a number of challenges and opportunities in the present and into the future. Whilst current issues can be identified, it can be difficult to predict what lies ahead, although there are reports and information available that can help us to focus on what we may need to be working towards to help with workforce planning. Looking at what we need to currently address, as well as what we may need to overcome moving forward, helps us to plan and have the best chance possible of maximising opportunities and overcoming challenges to deliver the best services for the long term.

Some key challenges and opportunities which have been identified include:

- Increasing demand for services, which can be driven by a changing population. Rhondda Cynon Taf, like many areas, is facing a growth in older cohorts which adds demand to health and social care sectors. This demographic is also reflected in our workforce as people have extended working lives. This may result in a need for more flexibility in terms of working patterns, adjustments and career pathways. We also want our workforce to reflect the number of Welsh speakers in our communities and create opportunities to realise this in line with the aims of the Cymraeg 2050: A Million Welsh Speakers Strategy.
- There are also socioeconomic challenges which our residents and staff are facing. For example, the cost of living is increasing and we may need to consider the impact of this on the workforce and look to support staff, for example around financial well-being.
- We also want to support staff to reduce sickness absence and maximise attendance. As part of this, it is important to support staff throughout the challenges they may be facing, for example caring responsibilities and working for longer to support their retirement. We want to encourage a work life balance and good well-being so that work performance can be optimised and sustained for the long-term.
- There is a greater focus on advancing diversity, equality and inclusion in society and this is reflected in Welsh Government plans such the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan and reports which highlight issues such as poverty and health in Wales. We want to be proactive in our approach to tackle these important issues and this will be reflected in our workforce planning.
- Many organisations are facing challenges around recruitment, retention and skills gaps. Due to the diversity of services that the Council provides, we can experience skills gaps in certain sectors or in some technical skills we require. There can also be shortages of qualified candidates in the local labour market and we sometimes find that our grading system is not as competitive as other sectors in terms of salary, which can add to recruitment challenges. However, we do offer employees great support in terms of wellbeing, development opportunities and family friendly policies which can help with recruitment attraction and staff retention. There can also be increases in demand for services and a requirement for more staff to deliver services, for example a greater need for health and social care services and winter pressures. Therefore, we will look at improving our recruitment processes and provide opportunities to develop staff ourselves so that we have the right people with the right skills for service delivery. Retention of staff is also important to ensure continuity of service delivery. Part of this is creating and sustaining working environments for staff to thrive and good working patterns such as further developing hybrid working.

- Due to the diversity of our services and recruitment challenges we are facing in specific service areas, we will continue to offer bespoke support and interventions as required to ensure that we continue to recruit and retain the best staff to meet the ever increasing demands upon our key Council services. We will also continue with more inclusive approaches to Council wide recruitment initiatives. For example, in terms of supporting the armed forces community there are a range of supportive measures, in particular our guaranteed job interview scheme for service leavers, veterans and reservists who have demonstrated that they fulfil all essential criteria for the job they have applied for. Also, as an employer we are undertaking work around neurodiversity in the workforce and we are currently working towards becoming an Autism Aware certified organisation. The Human Resources and Digital Improvement Teams are already certified as Autism Aware and we are looking to rollout training to the whole Authority.
- Partnership work is becoming increasingly important to tackle the complex and multi-faceted challenges facing our communities and core services. This includes working with the police and health service for example, but also the emerging relationship we have with our communities where we work together for both residents and businesses to take a shared responsibility for themselves and the communities they live in.
- There are significant advances in digital technology and data management and it is important to exploit these transformational opportunities for positive impacts for residents, staff and service delivery.
- Leadership and management will be key to meeting challenges and maximising opportunities. We will support and develop our leaders and managers so that they can deliver the Council's vision and priorities.
- Like all Councils, we are continuing to face a difficult financial challenge as more people need our services. As there is uncertainty about the levels of funding in the future, we need to make decisions about where to prioritise and spend resources. We will be considered and innovative in our approach to design alternative and more efficient ways of working, to ensure high standards of service delivery are maintained.
- There are other significant challenges to consider. The war in Ukraine is a humanitarian crisis and is contributing to economic and political uncertainty. The economic impact of Brexit along with workforce, supply and distribution issues. Future waves of Covid could also impact us, for example, the economic impact and increased demand for our services. There is also the potential of labour shortages and supply and chain issues.
- There is also the challenge of climate change and the Council has committed to becoming a net-zero Green House Gas Council by 2030. The work around climate change will require changes to be made by both staff and residents.
- We also have a good working relationship with our trade union colleagues who help advance the interests of their members in the workplace. We have worked with trade unions around issues such as negotiating agreements on terms and conditions, change and the impact on staff, also member concerns on a more individual level. This relationship is important in realising our ambitions for the workforce and ensuring excellent service delivery. Staff are made aware of the benefits of membership at induction.

The Current Workforce

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

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

We are also a main employer for the local area and 80% of our staff live in Rhondda Cynon Taf. Rhondda Cynon Taf is situated to the north of Cardiff, at the heart of South Wales. It consists of five valleys, the Rhondda Fawr and Fach, Cynon, Taf and Ely, some areas of which have high concentrations of multiple deprivation.

The figures below give an overview of staff composition (including schools) for 2021/22:

- Headcount of 9957 employees with a total FTE of 8042 (excluding casual contracts and seasonal positions).
- 45% of our staff are employed in schools.
- 75% of staff are female and 25% are male.
- 46% of staff are part-time.
- Most staff are aged between the ages of 35-54 (54%).
- 529 of our posts are partly or wholly grant funded.
- There were 1010 leavers and 988 starters.
- In 2020-21, 15% of staff are fluent Welsh speakers, a slight increase over the last few years (figures could not be obtained for 2021-22).
- 2.8% of staff disclosed that they had a disability, however staff equality data return rates for this question were low so this figure may be an underestimate.
- Staff from minority groups make up 0.8% of the workforce, but again information return rates were low so this figure may not be a true reflection of the workforce. Job applications from ethnic groups are also increasing, from 2.5 in 2016 to 6% of all applications in 2021-22, this data was more reliable as information return rates for equalities information were high.

The workforce we need:

Workforce Plan delivery aims

To ensure that we have the workforce we need into the future, the Council's Workforce Plan aims to set out four delivery aims that will apply across the workforce. This plan, however, does not replace local workforce plans that are in place to address specific service needs.

The four delivery aims are:

1 Responsible, inclusive and sustainable leadership and management to deliver priorities

We recognise that the quality of our leaders and managers, along with the relationship between line managers and teams, is key to our success. We want to further develop leadership and management capacity throughout the Council. We want to strengthen the skills of our leaders and managers, so that they are supported and developed to face the challenges ahead. We want them to have the energy, drive, innovation, creativity and political acumen to lead change, whilst inspiring and supporting our staff to achieve the Council's vision and priorities.

We want their passion for public services to motivate them to work together and to actively contribute to collaborative and partnership work, finding responsible and sustainable solutions to priorities and service delivery.

We aim to foster responsible, inclusive and sustainable leadership and management to tackle the big issues facing the world and to ensure that we look to the long term and embrace the sustainable development principle from the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Leaders and managers will understand the organisational context and will look to deliver and enhance Corporate, Welsh Government and National Priorities.

Objectives:

The Council will continue to utilise and embed current mechanisms for manager communication, and developing leadership and management skills which include:-

Managers Briefings, Global Communications, Coaching and Mentoring Programmes, Accredited and non-accredited leadership and management programmes, improvement hours.

The Council will adapt its leadership and management programmes to deliver more flexible modular programmes with a focus on the concepts of responsible leadership. We will look to the long term and view challenges through a variety of lenses (to include for example, Diversity and Inclusion, wellbeing, Welsh language and climate change), to increase diversity and look to resolve problems early through early intervention.

The Council will continue to support its leaders and managers to embed and normalise the Welsh language within their service areas.

2 High performing, engaged and dedicated workforce

To deliver the Council's vision and priorities, a high performing engaged and dedicated workforce is needed. We will support and manage staff to achieve their best.

Staff will be aware of how what they deliver contributes to corporate priorities as performance management will be aligned to the Council's vision and priorities. Staff development, coaching and mentoring will be essential; staff with the potential for growth will be identified and developed further.

The work environment will also be key for staff to thrive and achieve the best possible outcomes. We want staff to work together and in partnership, contributing to achieving our vision.

Objectives:

The Council will continue to support staff learning and development through existing mechanisms including corporate induction, e-learning, improvement hours, service and role specific training and mandatory learning programmes.

To continue with the new standard staff consultation to allow for comparative data to be generated to review changes in staff views over time and identify areas for improvements. Supplementary pulse questionnaires will be used to gather staff views on topical themes as required.

We will foster a working environment where staff feel safe and can thrive to perform at their best, free from discrimination and harassment. To support this, we will raise awareness of existing mechanisms and monitor success. This includes our Dignity at Work and Grievance processes, along with well-being and staff network peer support.

To rollout the new corporate individual performance reviews to improve performance by ensuring that staff have feedback and support to enhance or maintain their overall performance.

The Council will look to augment learning and development opportunities for staff through accessing funded learning streams (for example through national programmes such as apprenticeship frameworks and personal learning accounts), in partnership with further and higher education partners.

The Council will explore methods of enhancing internal staff communication digitally via systems such as iTrent, together with focussing on new methods of communicating key messages via social media platforms such as Facebook.

We will continue to review and amend our policies and procedures to ensure that they meet legislative and organisational requirements and support staff well-being.

The Council will continue to invest in the development of its Members' and workforce, providing opportunities to increase their digital skills and literacy, enabling people to become more digitally confident. The Council's Digital Service will continue with its approach for digital support that includes staff induction, bitesize development sessions and tailored support to assist the adoption of new digital solutions, so that we can make the most of the opportunities that digital brings.

We will leverage our information to gain useful actionable insight from our rich data sources, ensuring that our workforce decision making is informed from robust data analysis and using data driven approaches.

The Council will continue to support its Welsh speaking staff, providing all the necessary tools for them to thrive and develop in their language of choice.

3 Recruiting and retaining staff for excellent service delivery

We want to both attract and retain a diverse workforce who have the skills and commitment to deliver the Council's vision and priorities and adapt to changing needs. We want to become an employer of choice and support staff throughout their employment with us to achieve great work outcomes. We recognise the role that the work environment and culture has in achieving this.

Objectives:

To continue to develop our employer brand and increase our social media and online presence to attract the right people to work for us.

To continue to work with departments to support with recruitment and retention and use tailored interventions where appropriate to meet needs.

To continue with our Graduate and Apprenticeship schemes to recruit to skills gaps and look to the longer-term needs of the organisation.

To continue to grow and develop our employability programmes; Access to Employment, Gateway to Employment and Care2Work, to support those furthest from the job market to experience real work opportunities within the Council. This includes supporting individuals with learning and physical disabilities and our Children Looked After.

To identify mechanisms through which the recruitment, selection and on-boarding of staff, particularly in hard to fill roles, can be expedited.

The Council will continue to challenge and strengthen its procedures regarding the recruitment, retention and training of Welsh speaking staff in order to support the relevant aims of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and any resulting national and local strategies.



4 Maximising attendance and supporting staff wellbeing

Maximising attendance and supporting staff well-being is essential for us to achieve our vision and priorities.

We will provide safe working environments within a culture that supports and encourages staff to manage their well-being and health to achieve their best at work, for both now and the long term. We will use mechanisms such as tailored interventions, good management and organisational support, policy and procedure to support staff throughout their employment and to encourage healthy habits and work life balance.

Objectives:

To finalise and implement the Council's 'Office Accommodation Strategy Workspace Plan: Fit for the Future' and continue to review hybrid working arrangements to ensure our workforce have the right digital tools for their role, that performance is maintained, and to safeguard the health, safety and wellbeing of staff.

Develop and implement a Well-being Strategy that supports a healthier and more resilient RCT Council workforce. Focus will be on mental, physical, social and financial well-being and take account of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. We want well-being to be integral to everything we do.

Continue with Occupational Health and Well-being Unit support and tailored interventions with a focus on reducing sickness absence. We aim to provide impactful support in line with our workforce profile and tailored to what people need.

In addition, Employee Relations will continue to work with and support services to manage absence. This includes the provision of up-to-date information and specialist advice to assist with resolution rates.

Responsibility

To ensure that we realise our ambitions to provide the best service to residents and the public sector both now and in the future, the Rhondda Cynon Taf Council Workforce Plan needs to be embedded throughout the organisation. It is recognised that departments will have their own specific workforce plans in place to meet their needs, however all plans will align to the Council's overarching Workforce Plan to ensure we have a cohesive approach to workforce issues to achieve our vision and priorities.

Council Workforce Plan Delivery and Monitoring

The Council Workforce Plan will be delivered through related plans and strategies such as the Council's Strategic Equality Plan, Digital Strategy, Office Accommodation Strategy and departmental Delivery and Workforce Plans. Some Delivery Plans will be more strongly associated with delivery, for example the Human Resources Delivery Plan.

Monitoring will be in the form of an annual position statement providing data regarding progress towards meeting Council Workforce Plan aims. In addition, the Workforce Plan aims will be reviewed and updated as required to ensure that they continue to be relevant in terms of achieving the Council's vision and priorities.