

EMPLOYMENT AND APPEALS COMMITTEE

8 February 2022

STAFF TURNOVER/RETENTION

Report of the Strategic Director Resources

Strategic Aim:	All	
Exempt Information	No	
Cabinet Member(s) Responsible:	Mr O Hemsley, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Policy, Strategy and Partnerships, Economy and Infrastructure	
Contact Officer(s):	Saverio Della Rocca, Strategic Director for Resources	01572 758159 sdrocca@rutland.gov.uk
	Carol Snell, Head of Human Resources	01572 720969 csnell@rutland.gov.uk
Ward Councillors		

DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:

1. Notes the data and information regarding the Council's turnover and the reasons why staff leave Rutland Council.

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The Committee was presented with a paper in October 2021 outlining how the Council 'manages recruitment, retention and turnover of staff to help mitigate the consequences and impact of losing skills and resource'.
- 1.2 Members have requested a more focussed paper on loss of staff/turnover and in particular, to understand more about reasons for leaving. The following provides some initial turnover data, followed by some Rutland commentary and further contextual information.
- 1.3 When considering issues relating to recruitment, retention and turnover, it is relevant to reflect on the last two years. Whilst we compare data year on year, the context and circumstances are very different – there have been different and increasing demands, not just pandemic related but for example, the Local Plan. Plus, personal pressures and challenges have been an ongoing feature and therefore choices people make may have more facets to them than before – some of these factors

have been beyond our 'control'. Nevertheless, it is our role as an employer and manager to 'manage' those pressures for others and ourselves.

2 STAFF TURNOVER

As previously reported, our overall/organisation wide turnover is relatively stable year on year.

2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
13.9%	13.9%	13.6%	11.0%

2.1 We now have some comparator data from the LGA for 2020/21 as follows:

Rutland	All England single tier and county	All England Authorities
11%	13%	13%

2.2 A further factor of our own data is the size of our directorates and service teams varies considerably and therefore small changes in small teams can present a disproportionate high percentage. Our monitoring is currently at Directorate level as follows:

	2019-20	2020-21
Resources	12.7%	9.3%
Places	11.2%	10.7%
People	15.5%	11.9%

For the first two quarters of 2021/22 our turnover was 6%.

2.3 We have further data available on 'leavers' as follows (*please note this data includes casuals and fixed term contracts*):

	2019-20	2020-21
Gender:		
Male	21%	20%
Female	79%	80%
Disability:		
Yes	12%	12%
No	71%	69%
Not provided	17%	19%
Ethnicity:		
White – English etc.	89%	73%
All other	3%	15%
Not disclosed	8%	12%
Age:		
16-25	5%	5%
26-39	24%	29%
40-64	67%	56%
64-80	4%	10%

Length of service:				
Less than 1 year	9%		27%	
1-2 years	24%		34%	
3 years	7%		10%	
4 years	12%		5%	
5 years plus	48%		24%	

Further analysis and work for 2022 will focus on leavers by ethnicity and length of service and take some deeper dives into service areas to identify trends and hot spots. Section 3 provides an overview of reasons for leaving so far in 2021-22.

3 REASONS FOR LEAVING

3.1 The vast majority of our leavers are through resignations – as below:

	2019-20	2020-21
End of casual post	4%	1.7%
End of fixed term contract	4%	3.4%
Other	1.4%	3.4%
Redundancy	6.7%	0
Resigned	77.3%	83%
Retired	4%	6.8%
Ill health retirement	1.3%	1.7%
Death in service	1.3%	0

3.2 Whilst all our leavers are requested to complete an 'Exit interview template' – very few take this opportunity and therefore any meaningful analysis is diminished. We are currently moving this onto an on-line system to provide an easier experience and hence encourage more participation. We will also target emerging hot spots to undertake verbal Exit interviews eg. those leaving with less than one year's service.

3.3 The following provides some specific information relating to reasons for leaving and destination for leavers since April 2021. This excludes the natural conclusion of casual and fixed term contracts, retirement, and redundancy:

	Number
Career development and progression; opportunity for a change	9
Change of career; opportunity to move into something different eg. teaching, nursing	8
Personal/health reasons	4
Family reasons/needing to work closer to home	2
To move to a full-time position	2
Personal/childcare arrangements	1
Moved away	1
For a role that provided 100% home working	1
Not happy with the direction of the service	1

Destinations:

Public sector/local government	9
Private sector	7
School/university	3
None	3
Not Known	3
NHS	2
Self employed	2

- 3.4 Of interest for us and where further exit information will be valuable, are the views expressed by leavers regarding Rutland as an employer and the factors that may have been contributory to their decision to leave. Were there other underlying issues eg. workload, relationships, lack of development, that prompted people to pursue roles elsewhere? Clearly it is important for us an organisation to have an ongoing understanding of staff's perceptions and experience, hence our Pulse Surveys, opportunities for feedback and dialogue at the All-Staff Briefings and our My Conversation/1-1 model. In addition, as expressed in para 1.3, there are likely to be factors 'beyond our control' that have contributed to decisions to move on.

4 RETAINING GOOD TALENT

- 4.1 Employees will come and go – whether for better pay, benefits, a new role, career progression, or simply the opportunity to try something new – sometimes that temptation is too strong. Intelligence tells us that everyone is feeling the squeeze and as identified in the previous paper, recruitment across a range of professions is becoming tougher.
- 4.2 There are points at which employee turnover starts to have a negative impact on an organisation and a service/team's performance. This depends on (a) the size of the team – just one loss in a small team can have a significant impact, and (b) the job market for that service and how easy it is to find and train a replacement quickly. The loss of experience, organisation knowledge and skill set can be difficult to cover in the short term whilst waiting for a new member of staff to start and be inducted. These are issues that teams manage on a local basis as and when they arrive but can often present an increased level of pressure.
- 4.3 It is incumbent on us as a good employer to look after our staff – the last year has been a challenging year on a personal level. Our role, and expectation, as an employer is to enable them to be the best they can be – show empathy and help them feel reassured. Feedback from the November survey identified that staff feel the organisation and their manager have supported their wellbeing
- 4.4 **Taking action** – how to help us address and manage the risks
- 4.4.1 Monitor and analyse our data to spot trends to enable us to make business related predictions. Where can we spot potential flight risks and what effect could this have on our services? This is about understanding where the problems may be and making contingency plans to make sure it has minimal effect.
- 4.4.2 What do our staff expect/need from their workplace – ask the question and listen. We will continue with our pulse surveys as we progress our Future Ways of Working

to obtain feedback and inform decision making – ensuring that our staff have a voice and feel they are shaping and contribution to our organisation as we change.

- 4.4.3 Look after our staff – continue with our Wellbeing Agenda as a key priority. If people are leaving because they are struggling, we should not ignore but do something about it as far as we can. This is also about some practical management actions – ensuring staff take regular breaks, take their annual leave, monitor workload. (*Note also Paper 12.2022 re Future Ways of Working and support for staff/managers*).
- 4.4.4 Provide development opportunities – many staff ‘stayed still’ during the pandemic because they wanted to retain security during such a challenging time – we are now seeing that some want to catch up. This presents a further risk on turnover. We need to encourage and support managers to talk ‘development’ with their team members, provide encouragement, support, and opportunities so they can see our commitment to ongoing investment. One advantage of smaller teams is that we are able to provide ‘breadth’ and exposure across a service area. Our ‘My Conversation’ model provides us with the framework for this.
- 4.4.5 Keep an eye on what others are doing – both to learn from others but also track what our ‘competitors’ might be up to in tempting our staff to move. Whilst in Local Government we have limitations on what other benefits we may be able to offer, we need to ensure we promote the good things about local government service and in particular, Rutland Council – both to attract, and retain. For example, when advertising for Community Support Workers we say what we mean and are honest about the role and our expectations.
- 4.4.6 Clarify our Future Ways of Working model – we know that offering flexible working is fundamental to ongoing recruitment and retention. We also need to ensure that our ongoing working environment supports both flexible working and provide a productive work environment for those who are unable to work remotely. It is important that we provide clarity around our model and ensure that our policies and practices reflect that position.
- 4.4.7 Consider our organisational structure and model – in any organisational structure, the aims are to have work being done at the right level, teams being resilient and appropriate support structures so that subject matter experts can flourish and focus. Getting this right can make a big difference to working lives. The search for savings alongside our experiences of working through the pandemic have raised questions about whether our existing model is fit for the future. This will be a key focus for our savings work.
- 4.5 When staff do leave, and it’s inevitable that they will, we need to be assured that we have done the best we can to help retain them and feel confident they will speak well of us as an employer.

5 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 None currently required in relation to this paper.

6 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 6.1 This paper is advisory and outlines some of the issues and risk regarding staff turnover.

7 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 None directly arising from this paper. However, staff turnover does present a potential financial pressure in terms of costs of replacement, potential overtime and cover.

8 LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 There are no legal and governance considerations to this paper.

9 DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 None.

10 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 10.1 None

11 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 None

12 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 None

13 ORGANISATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 Human Resource implications – turnover can have an impact on the Council's ability to deliver its services. Our Recruitment Policy and retention processes as outlined in the October paper and in this paper, are in place to help us manage the risks.

14 CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 14.1 Whilst some turnover is inevitable, it is important that we monitor and track exit data so that we are able to learn and change policy and practice that would enable and support staff to stay with Rutland.
- 14.2 Where recruitment challenges are increasing, and to avoid the loss of key skills and experience, it is also vital that we work hard to retain our existing talent.

15 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 15.1 No additional background papers.

16 APPENDICES

- 16.1 No appendices.

A Large Print or Braille Version of this Report is available upon request – Contact 01572 722577.

