

28 October 2026

To: Chair – Councillor Sally Ann Hart
Vice-Chair – Councillor Sunita Hansraj
Members of the Employment and Staffing Committee – Councillors
Anna Bradnam, Laura Macleod, Aisha Rashid, Natalie Warren-Green and
Heather Williams

Quorum: 3

Substitutes: Councillors Eileen Wilson, Richard Stobart, Ariel Cahn, Bridget Smith,
Peter Sandford and Dr. Richard Williams

Dear Councillor

You are invited to attend the next meeting of **Employment and Staffing Committee**, which will be held in **Council Chamber - South Cambs Hall** at South Cambridgeshire Hall on **Thursday, 5 November 2026 at 10.00 a.m.**

Yours faithfully
Liz Watts
Chief Executive

Agenda

	Pages
1. Apologies for Absence To receive Apologies for Absence from Committee members.	
2. Declarations of Interest	
3. Minutes of Previous Meeting	3 - 6
4. Public Questions If you would like to ask a question or make a statement, then please refer to the Document called Public Speaking Scheme (Physical Meetings) and contact Democratic Services by no later than 11.59pm three clear working days before the meeting.	
5. People Absence Data - 1st July 2026 to 30th September 2026 (Q2)	7 - 12
6. People Recruitment and Retention Data - 1st July 2026 to 30th September 2026 (Q2)	13 - 28

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[Link to further information for members of the public attending South Cambridgeshire District Council meetings.](#)

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[Link to the Public Speaking Scheme](#)

Further information for Councillors
[Declarations of Interest – Link to Declarations of Interest - Information for Councillors](#)

Councillors are reminded that Democratic Services must be advised of substitutions in advance of meetings. It is not possible to accept a substitute once the meeting has started.

Agenda Item 3

South Cambridgeshire District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Employment and Staffing Committee held on
Thursday, 10 September 2026 at 10.00 a.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Sally Ann Hart – Chair
Councillor Sunita Hansraj – Vice-Chair

Councillors: Anna Bradnam Laura Macleod
Aisha Rashid Natalie Warren-Green

Officers:	Jonathan Corbett	People Partner
	Helen Cornwell	People and HR Service Manager
	Natalie Gandy	Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny)

Cllr Heather Williams was in attendance remotely, by invitation.

1. Apologies for Absence

There were no Apologies for Absence.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 June 2026, were approved as an accurate record by affirmation.

4. Public Questions

There were no public questions.

5. Robertson Cooper - Colleague Wellbeing Survey 2026

The People and HR Service Manager presented the 2026 Robertson Cooper wellbeing survey report, it was noted that the survey had received 466 responses, representing a response rate of 59%.

It was remarked that overall, colleague wellbeing remained positive, with almost all measures meeting or exceeding the general working population benchmarks. Results remained stronger than the 2022 baseline, despite a small decline compared to the 2025 survey. The most significant reductions related to job security and organisational change, reflecting the uncertainty associated with local government reorganisation and the proposals for a development corporation.

The committee drew particular attention to the number of 'prefer not to say' results across characteristics of gender, sexuality and disability, noting that these respondents tended to have lower wellbeing scores and that this might indicate some reluctance to give candid feedback despite the survey being confidential. In response these results, it was commented that actions had been taken to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

board in August, including proposals to establish focus groups for colleagues with protected characteristics who might prefer to share their views with their peers.

The Committee queried what had been put in place to support staff that may be at threat of physical violence due to their role. Officers confirmed that tailored training was provided depending on the role, as well as lone worker devices to those visiting members of the public alone. It was further highlighted that body-worn cameras were available for situations considered high risk, as well as arranging for two people to visit rather than a single person.

Employment and Staffing Committee **noted** the report by affirmation.

6. Enhanced Family Leave Pay

The People Partner presented the report on enhanced family leave pay, it was explained that the current scheme provided no pay during the final 13 weeks of leave, and that colleague feedback indicated this created financial pressure and could influence decisions about when people returned to work.

Members were supportive of the proposal to provide occupational maternity and adoption pay at 25% of salary throughout the full leave period, alongside increasing the return-to-work requirement from three months to six months. It was commented that this would assist families and provide a competitive offering in the job market. It was also commented that the Council should lobby government to introduce national change in this area.

The committee asked about the application of the policy to families where it was the non-birth parent who took the primary leave, noting the variety of family arrangements that existed. Officers confirmed that a shared parental leave policy was already in place that allowed one partner to transfer leave entitlement to the other, and that this was reflected in the council's existing policy framework. The committee also commended the inclusion of enhanced adoption pay within the proposal, noting the importance of ensuring that the policy applied equally to all colleagues having children regardless of the route to parenthood.

Employment and Staffing Committee **agreed** to refer the report to the Lead Cabinet Member for approval by affirmation.

It was later determined that the report would need to go to a meeting of Cabinet for approval.

7. People Absence Data - 1st April 2026 - 30th June 2026 (Q1)

The People and HR Service Manager presented the quarter one absence data. In response to a previous request from the committee, musculoskeletal absence figures for the waste service had been included in the report.

It was noticed that the shared waste service had experienced a slight increase in sickness absence during the period. It was explained that this increase was driven primarily by a small number of long-term cases that were attributable to conditions unrelated to work activity, rather than an increase in day-to-day short-term absence within that service. Given the manual nature of the role, colleagues with these conditions were unable to return until they made a full recovery, it was explained that the service was focusing on early intervention and rehabilitation to minimise the impact on both the

individual and the service. Excluding the shared waste service, sickness absence across the wider organisation had decreased.

Employment and Staffing Committee **noted** the report by affirmation.

8. People Recruitment and Retention Data - 1st April 2026 to 30th June 2026 (Q1)

The People and HR Service Manager presented the quarter one recruitment and retention report. It was noted that post-induction survey responses were being received at a rate of 45%, and feedback remained generally positive, with respondents frequently highlighting supportive colleagues, managers and team relationships, flexible working arrangements and opportunities for learning and development, as well as a feeling of being valued throughout their employment.

Members asked about the process for communicating with applicants who were not progressed to interview, having heard from young people who felt demoralised by the experience of applying for jobs and receiving no response. Officers confirmed that the council did communicate with all applicants who were not taken forward.

The committee noted the difficulty in recruiting refuse drivers, which was also reflected nationally, members queried if the council was reviewing apprenticeship roles or training for HGV drivers to assist with this. Officers confirmed that conversations with the waste service about potential avenues were ongoing and that the council already operated a trainee driver programme through which loader roles could progress to driver roles as an internal development pathway. It was further explained that the council also advertised for these roles at petrol and HGV testing stations.

Employment and Staffing Committee **noted** the report by affirmation.

9. Summer Internship Scheme Review

The People and HR Service Manager presented a review of the council's second Summer Internship Scheme. It was noted that the report had been written by a member of the people team's 2026 cohort, who had completed their placement just before the report was due to be presented.

It was reported that interns made valuable contributions and provided additional capacity across their respective services. Feedback from both managers and interns had been overwhelmingly positive, with interns highlighting the meaningful nature of the work they were asked to undertake, the supportive culture, the flexibility available, and the opportunity to take genuine responsibility for defined projects. It was remarked that several interns had expressed interest in returning to the council or pursuing a career in local government as a result of their experience.

It was noted that the scheme had attracted 85 applicants for five roles, comparing favourably with similar schemes elsewhere. It was commented that the total investment of £43,627 had delivered 60 weeks of additional capacity across the organisation during the summer period, when staff numbers were typically reduced by annual leave. It was remarked that two areas for improvement had been identified through the evaluation, feedback on advertising and onboarding, and the potential to introduce cross-council projects giving interns a broader view of how the organisation operated.

The Employment and Staffing Committee **noted** the report, **agreed** to support the

continuation of the Summer Internship Scheme into 2027, and **agreed** to support the People team in implementing the improvements identified through feedback.

The Meeting ended at 11.30 a.m.



Report to:	Employment and Staffing Committee – 5 November 2026
Lead Cabinet Member:	Cllr Natalie Warren-Green
Lead Officer:	Jeff Mambery
Key Decision:	No

People Absence Data, 1st July 2026 – 30th September 2026

Executive Summary

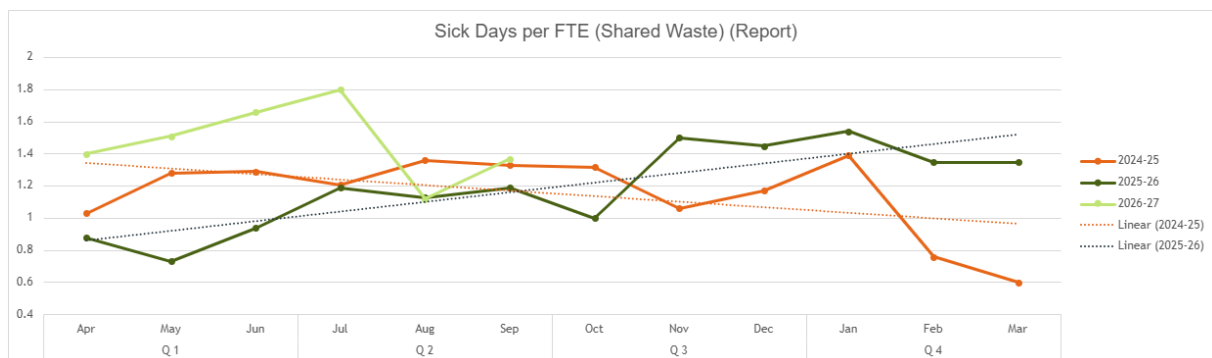
1. Monitoring absence levels supports the People Team's approach to colleague wellbeing. Regular review of absence data is essential to ensure the Council identifies potential risk areas, including impacts on resourcing and the delivery of public services. The People Partners have reviewed the information contained in this report to inform future policy development and to identify areas where early intervention may be required.

Recommendations

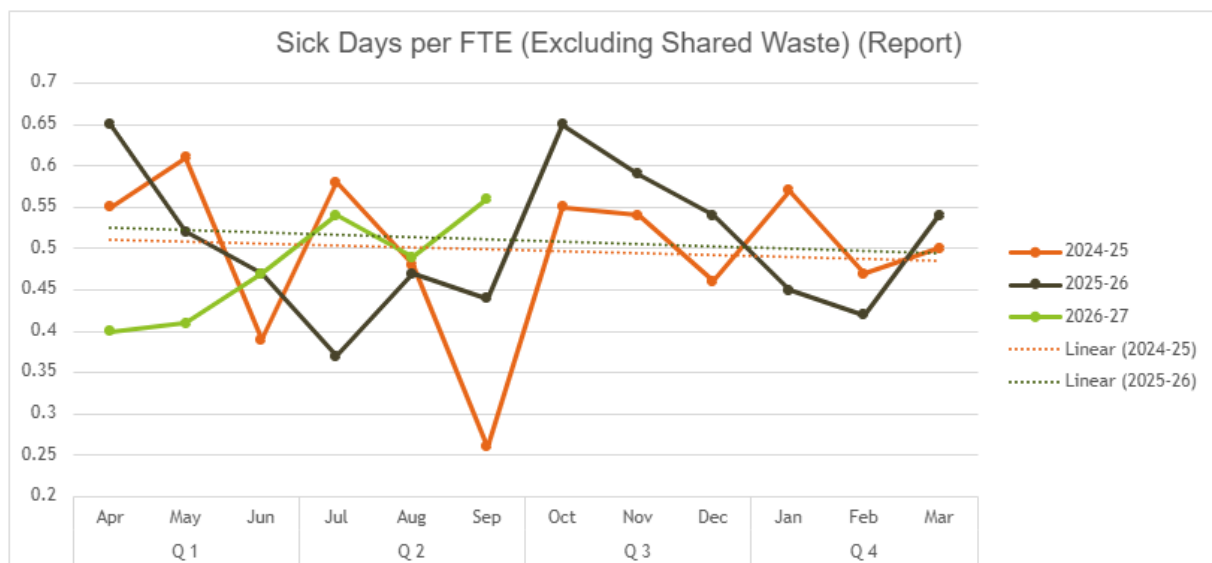
2. It is recommended that the committee note the report.

Details

Sickness Absence Data

Chart 1 – Sick days per FTE (Full-Time Equivalents) – Shared Waste

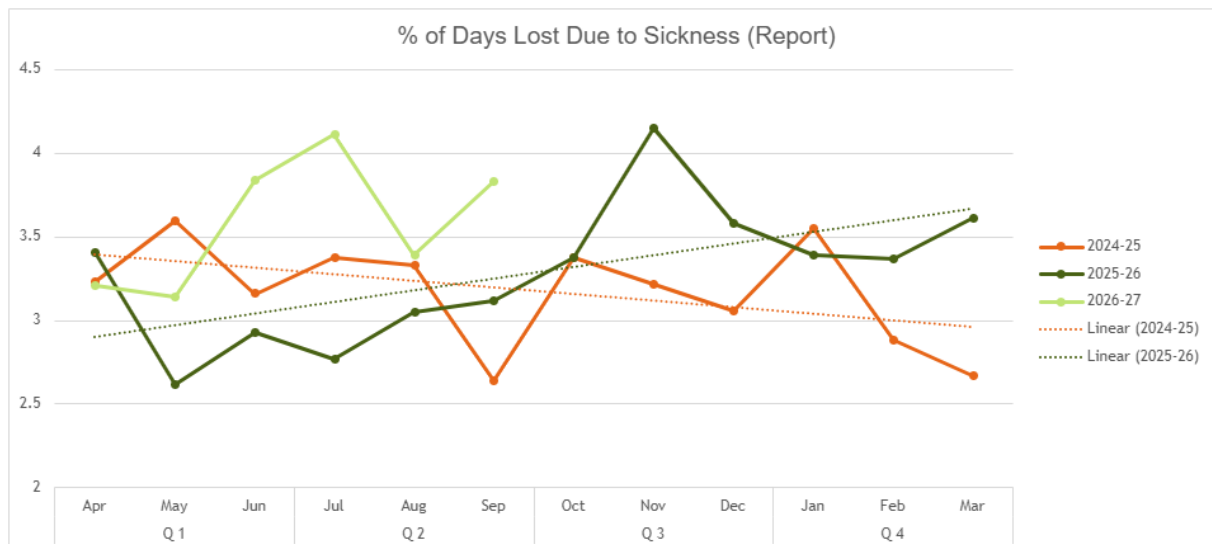
3. There has been a slight decrease overall in sickness absence per full time equivalent (FTE) within the Shared Waste Service since Q1 2026/7. The decrease is due to a reduction in long term sickness absence from 3.37 days per FTE in Q1 2026/27 to 2.89 days per FTE in Q2 2026/27. 11 out of 18 long-term absences ended during Q2 and so it is anticipated that long-term absence this will decline further in Q3. However, overall sickness absence is still higher compared to the same time in the previous year. In Q2 2025/26, total sick days per FTE was 3.51. This increased to 4.29 in Q2 2026/27.
4. Short term sickness absence has remained broadly similar over the same period. Excluding long term absence, short term sickness has decreased from 1.68 days per FTE in Q2 2025/26 to 1.39 in Q2 2026/27.
5. This indicates that the current high number of sick days per FTE is attributed to several long-term absence cases.

Chart 2 – Sick Days per FTE (Excluding Shared Waste)

6. Excluding the Shared Waste Service, sick days per full time equivalent (FTE) has increased slightly from 1.28 in Q2 2025/26 to 1.59 in Q2 2026/27. However, the figure of 1.59 in Q2 2026/7 is similar to the figure of 1.64 in Q1 2025/6 which suggests this is normal variation rather than part of a wider trend. The graph above

shows that the level of absence in Q2 2026/7 is comparable to the rates of absence in the last two years.

Chart 3 – Percentage of Days Lost due to Sickness



7. The percentage of days lost due to sickness absence increased in Q2 2026/27, rising from 10.19% in Q1 to 11.33% in Q2, an increase of 1.14 percentage points. This was largely driven by a rise in long-term absence within the Shared Waste service during July (reflected in Chart 1). Encouragingly, long-term absence levels reduced during August and September, and early October data indicates this downward trend is continuing.
8. The increase observed in September aligns with a rise in total sick days per FTE, suggesting a broader increase in absence activity across the Council. As we move into the winter period, there is a risk that absence levels may increase further due to seasonal illnesses such as colds, flu and other respiratory infections.
9. To support employee wellbeing and help mitigate the impact of seasonal illness, the organisation has distributed 210 flu vaccination vouchers to colleagues, encouraging uptake of the flu vaccine and supporting attendance during the winter months.

Wider Context and Action

10. The People Team continue to support line managers with sickness absence management. This includes proactive referrals for physiotherapy through our occupational health provider, Heales to reduce long-term sickness. Preventative measures include webinars on improving sleep quality, managing stress and a particular focus on signposting support for mental and financial wellbeing over the Christmas period. Annual flu vaccinations are offered to all staff, with a new system this year which provides employees the opportunity to book these in around their

schedules in various locations rather than having a set day for appointments on site.

11. We continue to roll out the strategies as part of our People Team strategy which support employee wellbeing holistically – including wellbeing, performance and reward, policy review as examples.
12. The People Partners continue to meet as a team on a regular basis to monitor ongoing absences and discuss areas of concern.
13. We advise managers to hold informal wellbeing catch-up meetings with employees who are long-term sick. We also attend cause for concern meetings as per the Sickness Absence policy to ensure improvement targets and support measures are put in place to improve attendance.

Reasons for Recommendations

14. It is important that members are aware of ongoing absence trends and data, and what actions the Council is taking to improve/support these.

Alignment with Council Priority Areas

Healthy and Supported Communities

Financially Secure and Fit for the Future

15. The regular review and analysis of sickness absence data enables the organisation to identify trends, target support measures and evaluate the effectiveness of attendance management practices. By reducing the impact of sickness absence, minimising lost working days and associated costs, and supporting employee wellbeing, this information helps the Council maintain service delivery, make informed resourcing decisions and contribute to its objective of being financially secure and fit for the future.

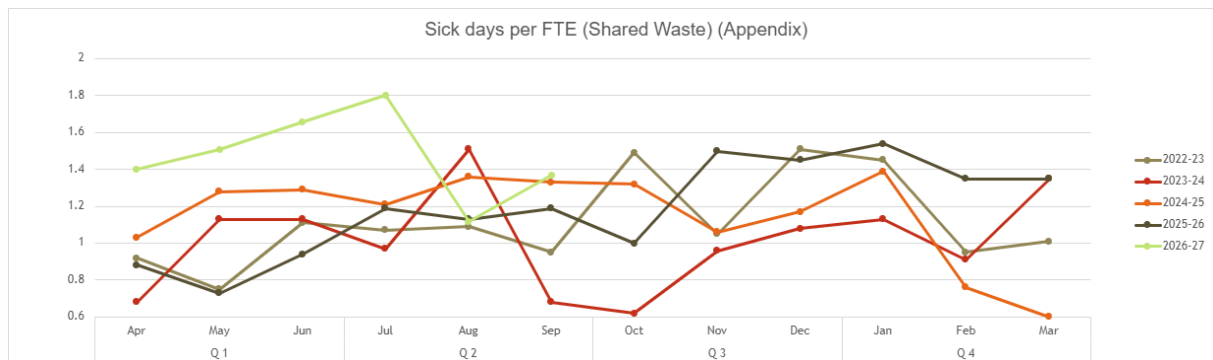
Background Papers

None

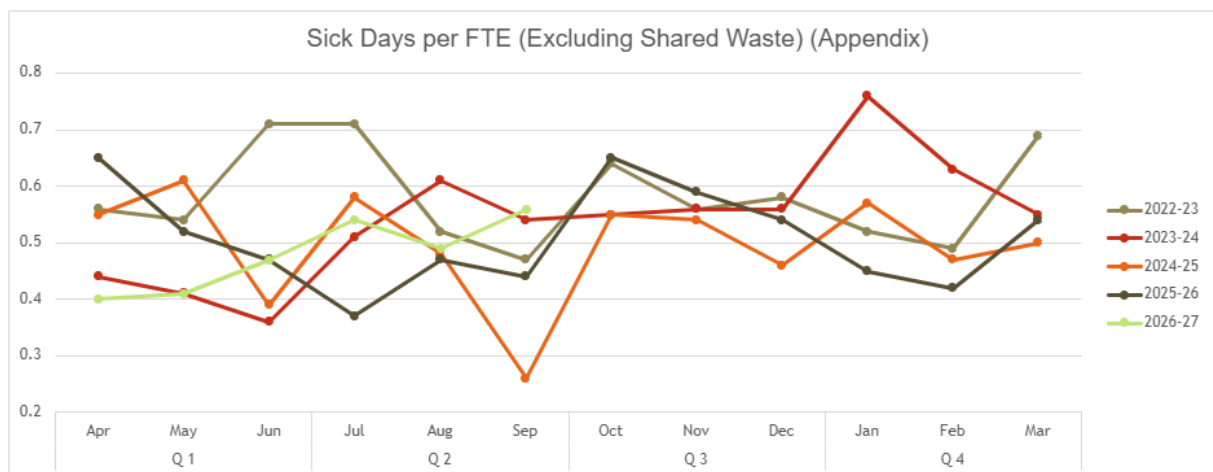
Appendices

16. When considering the data in the appendices, members should be aware that officers are working 13.5% fewer hours compared to when we worked 37 hours per week, so direct comparison of data is not possible. Sickness is reported as the number of days sickness per full-time equivalent (FTE).

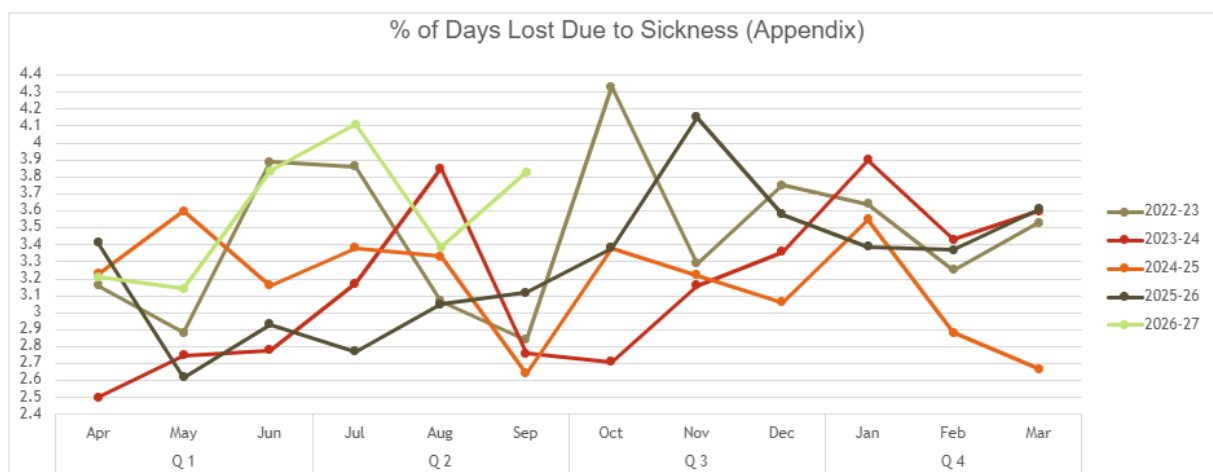
Appendix 1: Sick Days Per FTE (Shared Waste) – 2022-23 to 2026-27



Appendix 2: Sick Days per FTE (Excluding Shared Waste) – 2022-23 – 2026-27



Appendix 3: % of Days Lost Due to Sickness – 2022-23 – 2026-27



Report Author:
Jonathan Corbett – People Partner
Telephone: (01954) 713244

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Report to:	Employment and Staffing Committee – 5 November 2026
Lead Cabinet Member:	
Lead Officer:	Jeff Membery
Key Decision:	No

People Recruitment and Retention Data 1st July 2026 to 30th September 2026 (Q2)

Executive Summary

1. Monitoring recruitment and turnover is essential to ensuring the Council can continue to resource and deliver high-quality services to the public. Regular review enables the council to identify risk areas where vacancies or high churn might impact service delivery. The People Team review this data to inform future policies and highlight areas where targeted intervention may be needed.

Recommendations

2. It is recommended that the committee note the report.

Details

Recruitment Methodology

3. The recruitment metrics included within this report have been selected to provide meaningful insight into recruitment activity and performance. Internal only and restricted competition campaigns, including those arising from organisational restructures, are excluded from recruitment analysis where appropriate to provide a more meaningful comparison of external recruitment activity. Definitions of individual measures are provided alongside the relevant charts throughout this section.
4. Whilst application-to-interview ratios could be reported, they are not considered a meaningful measure of the quality of applications received. Recruiting managers will typically shortlist a manageable number of candidates for interview regardless of whether a campaign attracts 10 applications or 100. As a result, the proportion of applicants invited to interview is influenced by recruitment practice as well as the number of applications received and should not be interpreted as an indicator of the overall quality of the applicant pool. A more meaningful measure would be the shortlisting scores awarded against the essential criteria for each role. Although these scores are captured within the Council's HR system as part of the recruitment process, they cannot currently be extracted in a reportable format and are therefore not included within this report.
5. The Recruitment Guiding Principles recognise that candidates may use Artificial Intelligence (AI) to support the preparation of applications. However, applications are expected to accurately reflect a candidate's own skills, knowledge and experience. Recruiting managers are encouraged to use competency based, scenario based and probing follow up questions throughout the selection process to assess candidates' suitability for the role. Applications are not rejected solely because AI may have been used. The only exception is where multiple applications contain identical or substantially similar content, in which case appropriate action may be taken to ensure a fair recruitment process. The People Team does not currently monitor or report on the use of AI within recruitment, as it cannot be identified reliably or consistently.
6. The People Team monitors equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) information throughout the recruitment process to help ensure recruitment practices remain fair, inclusive and accessible. The information presented in this section covers all recruitment campaigns completed during the 12 month period from 1 October 2025 to 30 September 2026. A rolling 12 month reporting period has been used to provide a more representative dataset than would be possible using quarterly reporting. Applications are anonymised prior to shortlisting so that candidates are shortlisted based on their skills, experience and suitability for the role.

Recruitment Activity

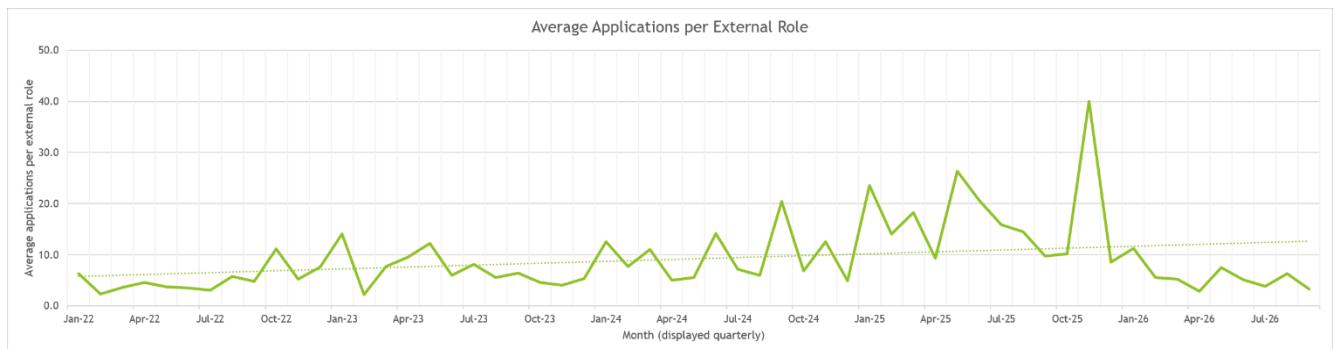
Recruitment activity – last 12 months

NB: Historical data can be found in Appendix

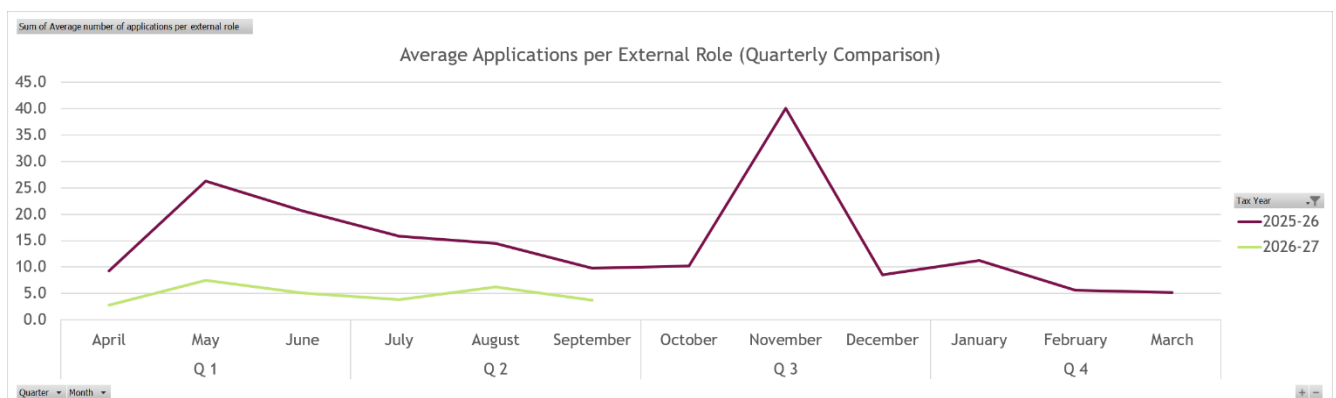
Chart 1 – Recruitment Activity							
Quarter	Month	Total no. of roles advertised	Total no. of roles advertised externally	No. of applications for roles advertised externally	Average no. of applications per external role	Range in no. of applicants (minimum – maximum)	Average Time to Offer - Working Days
Q3 25/26	Oct-25	23	20	204	10.2	1 - 64	43
	Nov-25	4	3	120	40.0	2 - 74	30
	Dec-25	11	7	60	8.6	1 - 34	27
Q4 25/26	Jan-26	37	35	394	11.3	1 - 79	40
	Feb-26	10	7	39	5.6	2 - 11	57
	Mar-26	16	12	63	5.3	1 - 16	35
Q1 26/27	Apr-26	29	27	76	2.8	1 - 40	35
	May-26	13	8	60	7.5	1 - 23	28
	Jun-26	25	21	108	5.1	1 - 36	24
Q2 26/27	Jul-26	20	11	42	3.8	1 - 18	26
	Aug-26	13	7	44	6.3	1 - 12	30
	Sep-26	21	18	59	3.3	1 - 19	22

Please note: Figures may differ from previous reports as recruitment data is drawn from the live recruitment tracker and can change where campaigns remain active after the reporting period.

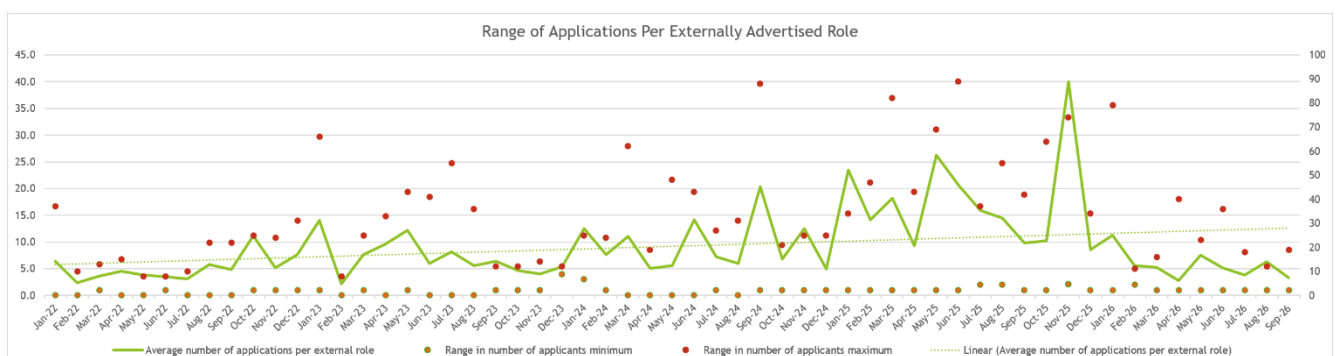
7. Column 3 of Chart 1 (total number of roles advertised) includes vacancies advertised through internal-only recruitment or restricted competition processes, including those arising from organisational restructures. These campaigns typically attract smaller applicant pools, often with a single applicant, as they are designed to support internal development and redeployment opportunities. Internal progression can subsequently create further recruitment activity where vacated posts require backfilling. To provide a more meaningful comparison of external recruitment trends, these vacancies have been excluded from the remaining recruitment analysis charts.
8. The average time to offer shown in column 8 of Chart 1 is calculated using the number of working days between a recruitment campaign being launched and a verbal offer being made to the successful candidate. The average time to offer was 26 working days in July, increasing to 30 in August before reducing to 22 in September. The figure represents the average across the vacancies for which offers were made during the reporting month. Recruitment timescales can vary depending on the nature and complexity of the campaign. Roles are normally advertised for a minimum of 2 weeks, followed by shortlisting and interview arrangements, with candidates generally provided at least 5 working days' notice before interview. Campaigns attracting larger applicant pools, specialist recruitment activity or additional assessment stages may therefore take longer. The People Team is developing a Recruitment Service Level Agreement to provide clearer expectations and support greater consistency in campaign delivery and recruitment timescales.

Chart 2 – Average Number of Applications per Externally Advertised Role

9. Chart 2 shows that the average number of applications per externally advertised role remained relatively low during Q2, ranging from 3.3 in September to 6.3 in August. August's higher average was influenced by campaigns including Revenues and Benefits Customer Resource Officer, Customer Contact Apprentice and Refuse Driver, which attracted between 9 and 12 applications. In July, the highest application numbers were recorded for Refuse Loader (18), People Apprentice (15) and Refuse Driver (9).

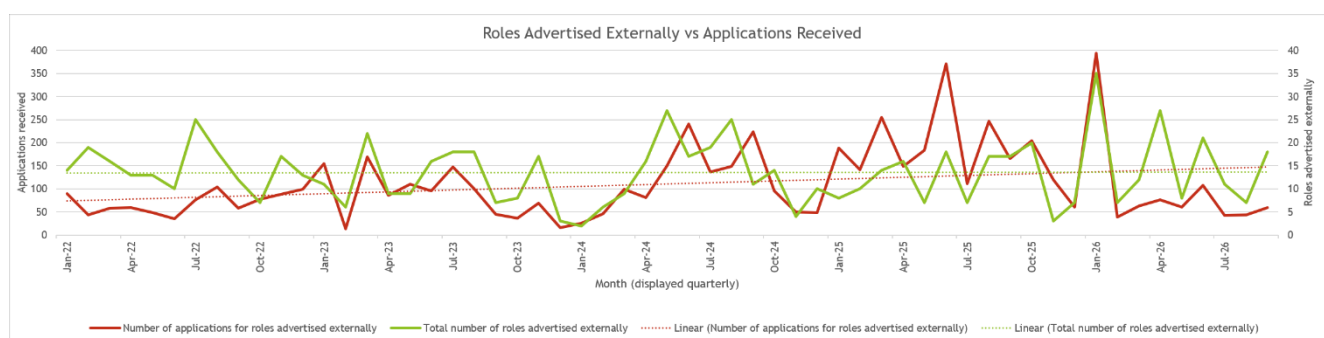
Chart 3 – Average Applications per External Role (Quarterly Comparison)

10. Chart 3 shows that the average number of applications per externally advertised role was 4.0 during Q2, slightly below Q1 (4.4) and considerably lower than the same quarter last year (12.8). However, application numbers varied considerably between vacancies, with some roles attracting significantly more interest than others. This suggests that recruitment challenges may be more pronounced for certain types of roles.

Chart 4 – Range of Applications per Externally Advertised Role by Month

11. Chart 4 shows that applications per externally advertised role ranged from 1 to 19 during Q2. The highest number of applications was received in September for the Planning/Senior Planning/Principal Planning Officer and Revenues and Benefits Customer Resource Officer campaigns, with 19 applications each. In contrast, the Mechanical and Electrical Surveyor vacancy attracted just 1 application in August, highlighting the variation in application numbers and the potential challenges of recruiting to specialist roles where specific qualifications and experience are required.

Chart 5 – Externally Advertised Role vs Number of Applications Received



12. Chart 5 shows that 36 roles were advertised externally during Q2, attracting 145 applications, compared with 56 roles and 244 applications in Q1. Although both the number of externally advertised roles and applications received reduced, the average number of applications per role remained relatively similar. September recorded the highest number of externally advertised roles (18) and applications (59), although August achieved the highest average applications per role, with fewer vacancies advertised.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Recruitment Monitoring

Chart 6 - Ethnicity Profile by Recruitment Stage (1 October 2025 to 30 September 2026)

Ethnicity	Applicant	First interview	Appointed
Asian (inc. Chinese)	14.44%	8.57%	4.22%
Black	9.37%	9.91%	6.63%
Mixed	1.35%	1.07%	0.60%
Not known	3.52%	3.48%	2.41%
Other	1.35%	1.20%	0.00%
White	69.98%	75.77%	86.14%

13. White applicants represented 70.0% of applications, increasing to 75.8% of candidates invited to interview and 86.1% of successful appointments. The proportion of White applicants remains below the South Cambridgeshire population figure of 89.0% recorded in the 2021 Census, indicating that applicants from other ethnic groups represent a higher proportion of applications than their representation in the district's overall population.¹ However, the reduction in representation from other ethnic groups through

¹ Office for National Statistics (2021), Census 2021, Ethnic group, South Cambridgeshire local authority. [View publication](#)

the recruitment stages remains evident and will continue to be monitored to identify any longer-term trends.

Chart 7 - Disability Profile by Recruitment Stage (1 October 2025 to 30 September 2026)

Disability declared	Applicant	First interview	Appointed
Yes	9.89%	11.11%	9.64%
No	90.11%	88.89%	90.36%

14. The proportion of candidates declaring a disability remained broadly consistent across recruitment stages, accounting for 9.9% of applications, 11.1% of candidates invited to interview and 9.6% of successful appointments.

Chart 8 - Gender Profile by Recruitment Stage (1 October 2025 to 30 September 2026)

Gender	Applicant	First interview	Appointed
Female	49.22%	36.01%	35.54%
Male	50.36%	63.59%	64.46%
Not known/Prefer not to say	0.41%	0.40%	0.00%

15. Female applicants accounted for just under half of all applications received (49.2%) but represented 36.0% of candidates invited to interview and 35.5% of successful appointments. Male applicants represented 50.4% of applications, increasing to 63.6% at interview and 64.5% of appointments. The proportion of female appointments was also below the 39.1% recorded in Q1. The greatest difference in female representation occurs between application and interview, rather than between interview and appointment. It is worth noting that the Council operates a blind shortlisting process, meaning recruiting managers do not have access to applicants' personal details when selecting candidates for interview. Further analysis by role could help establish whether the types of vacancies advertised are influencing these figures. Female representation will remain under review through future recruitment reporting.

Chart 9 – Sexual Orientation Profile by Recruitment Stage (1 October 2025 to 30 September 2026)

Sexual Orientation	Applicant	First interview	Appointed
Bisexual	3.01%	3.21%	2.85%
Gay or Lesbian	3.01%	2.14%	2.43%
Heterosexual	88.55%	85.68%	85.35%
Questioning	0.00%	0.40%	0.21%
Other sexual orientation	0.60%	1.20%	0.78%
Not provided/prefer not to say	4.82%	7.36%	8.39%

16. The distribution of applicants by sexual orientation remained broadly consistent throughout the recruitment process, although the proportion of candidates who preferred not to disclose this information increased from 4.8% of applicants to 8.4% of successful appointments.

Chart 10 - Age Profile by Recruitment Stage (1 October 2025 to 30 September 2026)

Age band	Applicant	First interview	Appointed
Under 21	5.80%	5.22%	6.02%
21 - 30	27.28%	26.37%	27.71%
31 - 40	26.09%	25.97%	20.48%
41 - 50	21.69%	21.15%	25.30%
51 - 60	15.58%	17.14%	14.46%
Over 60	3.47%	4.15%	6.02%
Not known/Prefer not to say	0.10%	0.00%	0.00%

17. Applicants aged 21–40 continued to account for the largest proportion of applications (53.4%) and successful appointments (48.2%). Candidates aged 41–50 represented a higher proportion of appointments (25.3%) than applications (21.7%), while appointments were made across all age groups.

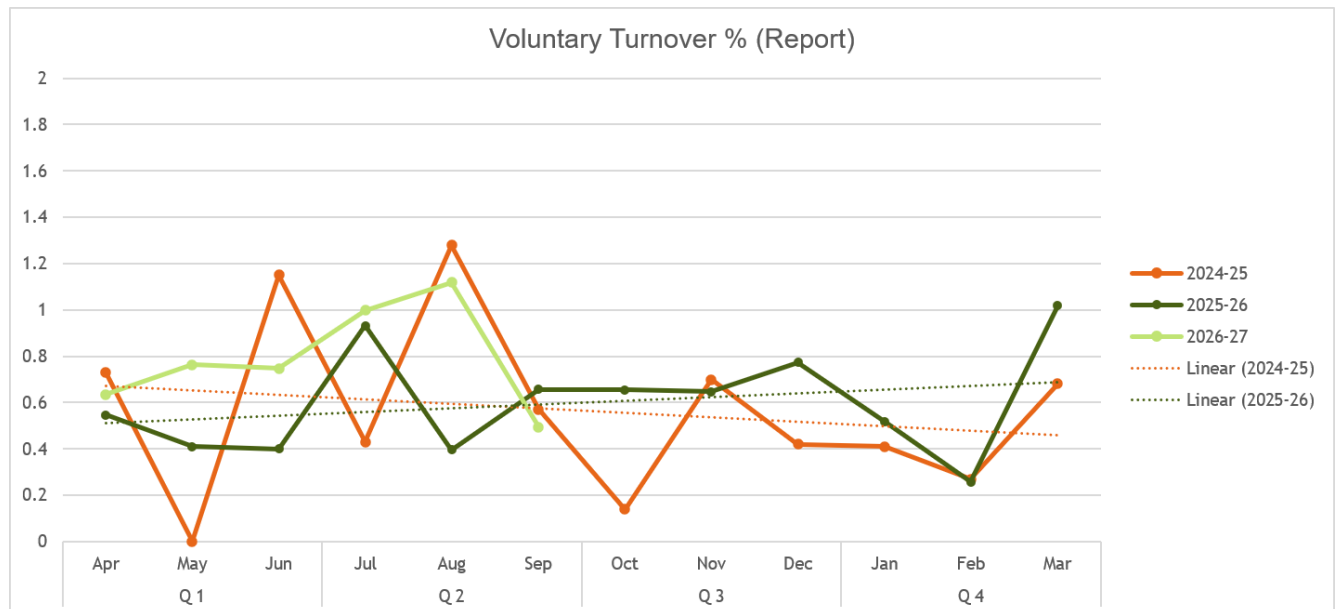
Three-Month Post-Induction Staff Survey

18. There were 19 responses to the Three-Month Post-Induction Staff Survey during the quarter, compared with 12 in Q1. Feedback remained largely positive, with 12 respondents rating their overall induction experience as “Excellent”, 5 as “Good” and 2 as “Fair/Average”. Positive comments highlighted supportive managers and colleagues, good communication and a welcoming working environment.
19. The four-day working week was an important factor for survey respondents, with 18 of the 19 stating that it influenced their decision to join the Council. 16 respondents also reported a positive impact on their experience as a new starter, particularly highlighting the benefits for work-life balance, flexibility, health and wellbeing and time to recover from physically demanding work.
20. Respondents also identified opportunities to improve the induction experience. Feedback included reducing repetition in mandatory eLearning, ensuring new starters are made aware of training requirements earlier, providing more job-specific information and reviewing the length and content of corporate induction. These themes will be considered as part of the People Team's ongoing review of the induction process.

Voluntary Turnover

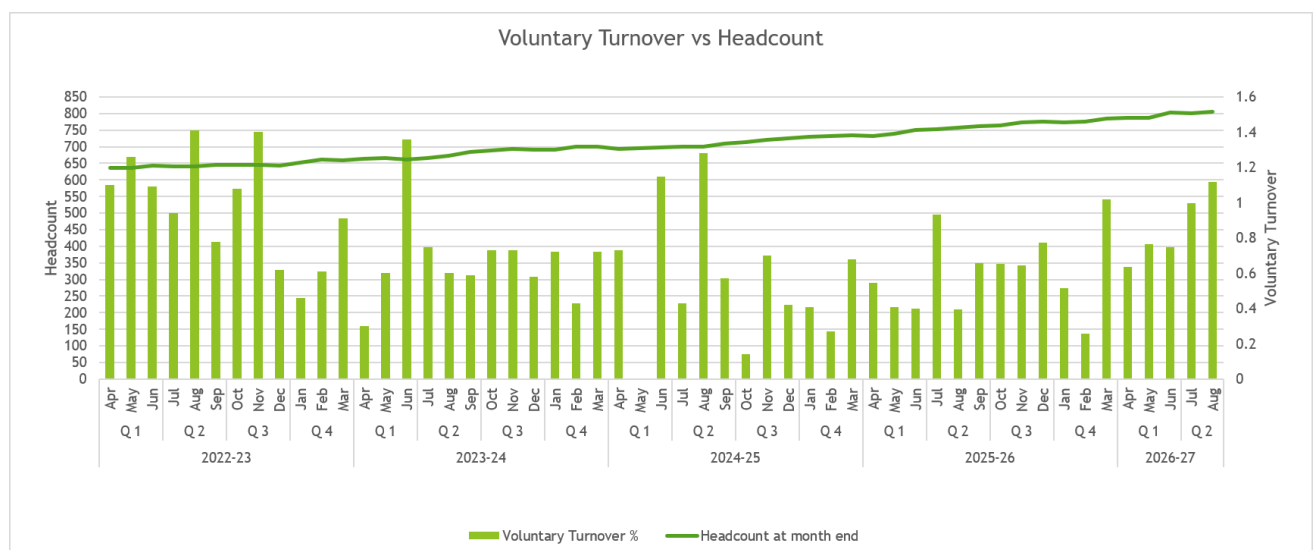
Chart 11 – Voluntary Turnover (%) – Annual Comparison

NB: Historical data can be found in the Appendix.



21. Voluntary turnover during Quarter 2 was 2.61%, compared with 1.98% during the same period in 2025/26 and 2.28% in 2024/25. This represents an increase on both previous years and is also higher than the 2.15% recorded in Quarter 1. A total of 21 voluntary leavers were recorded during the quarter, with August recording the highest monthly turnover (1.12%) before reducing to 0.49% in September. Voluntary turnover continues to fluctuate between quarters and should therefore be considered alongside longer-term trends rather than in isolation.

Chart 12 – Voluntary Turnover vs Headcount



22. Chart 12 shows that headcount has continued to increase over recent years, from 709 in September 2024 to 762 in September 2025 and 809 in September 2026. Despite this growth, voluntary turnover has remained relatively stable overall, with some fluctuations between quarters. This suggests that the increase in workforce size has not been accompanied by a sustained increase in the proportion of employees leaving voluntarily.

Exit Interview Themes and Insights

23. Exit interview feedback helps us better understand the reasons employees leave and identify opportunities to improve retention. Between January and September 2026, 26 responses were received. Reporting on the feedback cumulatively provides a broader picture of employees' reasons for leaving and their experiences of working for the Council. Given the relatively small number of responses, findings are reported at Council level rather than by corporate area to protect individual confidentiality.
24. During Quarter 2, 10 of the 22 leavers eligible for an exit interview completed one, giving a response rate of 45.5%. Employees for whom the process was not applicable, including casual workers, were excluded from this calculation. Where interviews were not completed, the most common reasons recorded were employees not responding to the invitation and insufficient notice of their leaving date, with 4 cases in each category. This highlights the importance of receiving leaver notifications promptly and continuing to encourage employees to provide feedback before they leave.
25. Retirement was the most frequently reported reason for leaving between January and September. Other reasons included career development opportunities, pay and benefits, personal circumstances and concerns about job security or organisational change. Employees could select more than one reason, with some identifying a combination of factors influencing their decision. While some departures, particularly retirement, may not be preventable, the feedback helps identify areas where the Council may be able to improve retention.
26. Feedback about working for the Council was generally positive. Of the 26 respondents, 21 agreed or strongly agreed that they felt respected and included at work, and 21 agreed or strongly agreed that their wellbeing had been supported. Management support was also viewed positively, with 25 respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that their manager cared about their wellbeing. However, 7 respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that leadership considered employee wellbeing when making decisions. Their qualitative feedback highlighted concerns about organisational change, workload pressures, communication and the impact of management decisions on employee wellbeing. Some respondents described positive experiences of support from their immediate managers alongside concerns about wider organisational decisions. These concerns should also be considered in the context of ongoing organisational change, including Local Government Reorganisation, where the ability to provide definitive answers may be limited while decisions remain outstanding.
27. Despite their reasons for leaving, 15 respondents said they would consider returning to the Council in the future, with a further 8 saying they might. This suggests that leaving does not necessarily reflect a negative overall experience of working for the Council. The People Team will continue to review exit interview feedback to identify recurring themes and consider where improvements could help address avoidable turnover.

Wider Context and Action

28. Recruitment of Refuse Drivers continues to be challenging. The targeted social media campaign reported in Quarter 1, which included a promotional video, has generated interest from approximately 270 people, including 80–90 expressing an interest in driver roles. However, relatively few have gone on to submit applications, with initial feedback suggesting that pay may be a factor. While the campaign has been successful in generating interest, converting this into applications remains a challenge.
29. Recruitment to some specialist technical roles also remains challenging, with the Mechanical and Electrical Surveyor vacancy attracting just 1 application during August. However, recruitment to other surveying positions was more successful during Quarter 1, indicating that application numbers can vary between individual specialist vacancies.
30. Wider pressures on specialist skills within local government have also been identified in research published by SCAPE in March 2026. Its *Delivering Through Change* report, which examined the challenges councils face in delivering housing, regeneration and infrastructure projects, found that 40% of respondents identified skills shortages as a major barrier to project delivery.² Although the research does not directly measure recruitment difficulties, it highlights wider pressures on councils' access to specialist expertise.
31. The People Team will continue to work with recruiting managers to review the effectiveness of recruitment campaigns and consider more targeted approaches where vacancies attract limited interest. This includes understanding whether difficulties relate to reaching suitable candidates, the availability of specialist skills or the competitiveness of the employment offer, so that recruitment activity can be tailored accordingly.
32. The Council is also progressing its Rolemapper project, which includes reviewing job descriptions to ensure they are clear, consistent and inclusive. This will help identify potentially exclusionary language and unnecessary requirements that could discourage suitable candidates from applying, supporting the Council's wider approach to attracting a diverse range of applicants.

Implications

33. This report provides data about recruitment which is directly relevant to staffing and the work of the Employment and Staffing Committee.

Alignment with Council Priority Areas

Financially Secure and Fit for the Future

34. The review and response to these statistics help us to inform policies and support measures for staff and to identify any improvement opportunities.

² SCAPE and Local Government Information Unit (2026), *Delivering Through Change*, 2 March 2026.
[View publication](#)

Background Papers

None

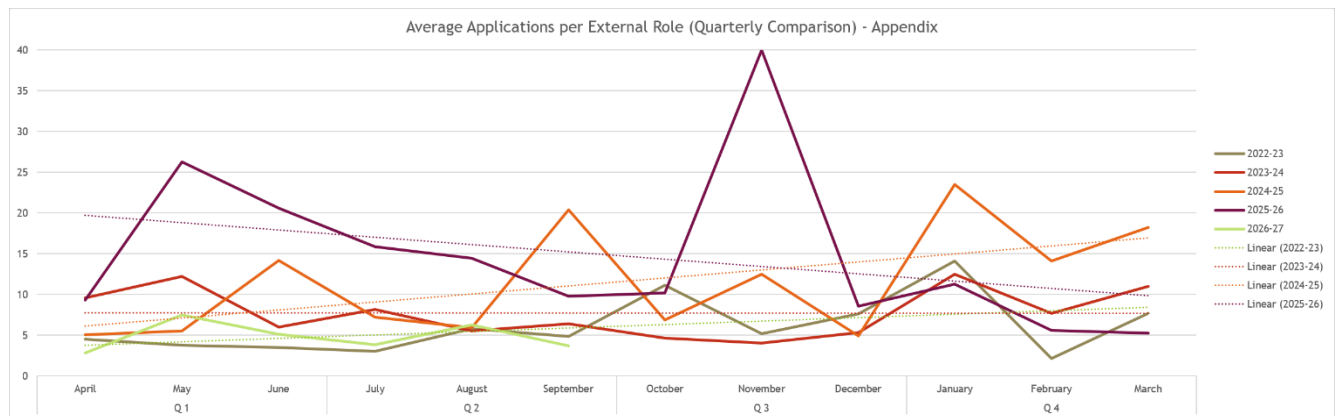
Appendices

Appendix 1 – Recruitment Activity (Historical Data)

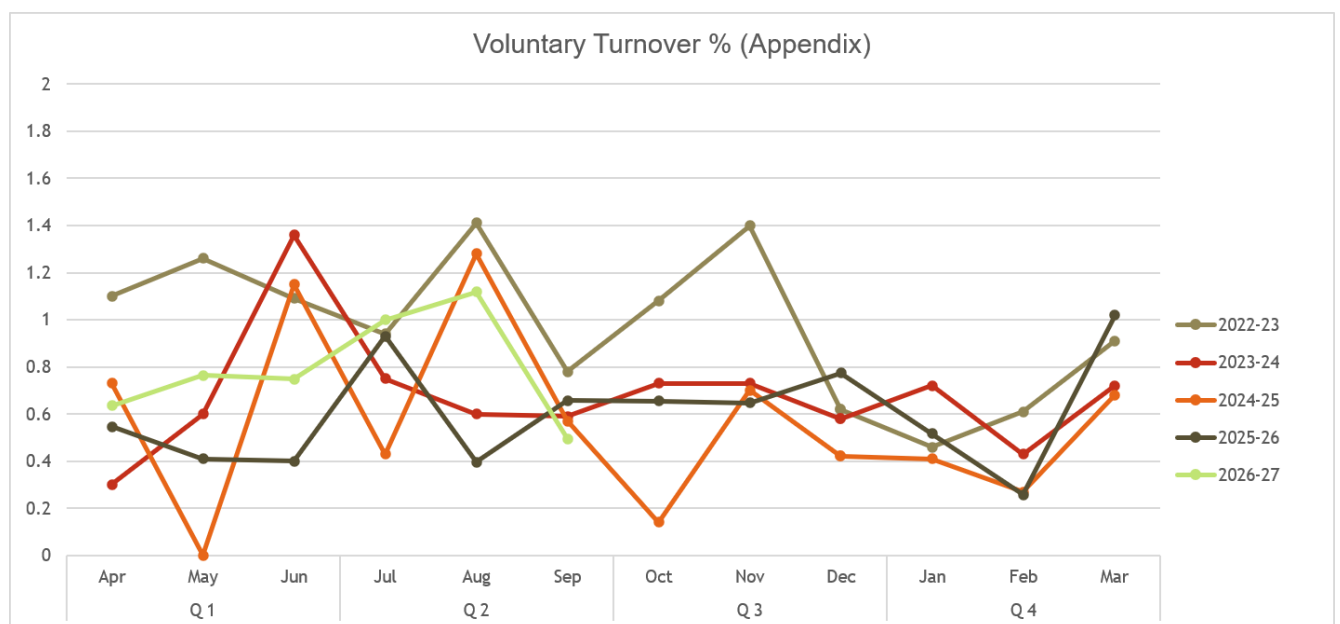
Chart 1a – Recruitment Activity							
Quarter	Month	Total number of roles advertised	Total number of roles advertised externally	Number of applications for roles advertised externally	Average number of applications per external role	Range in number of applicants (minimum – maximum)	Average Time to Offer - Working Days
Q4 24/25	Jan-25	11	8	188	23.5	1 - 34	34
	Feb-25	16	10	141	14.1	1 - 47	30
	Mar-25	19	14	255	18.2	1 - 82	31
Q1 25/26	Apr-25	21	16	149	9.3	1 - 43	36
	May-25	13	7	184	26.3	1 - 69	28
	Jun-25	19	18	371	20.6	1 - 89	29
Q2 25/26	Jul-25	12	7	111	15.9	2 - 37	28
	Aug-25	20	17	246	14.5	2 - 55	36
	Sep-25	19	17	166	9.8	1 - 42	38
Q3 25/26	Oct-25	23	20	204	10.2	1 - 64	43
	Nov-25	4	3	120	40.0	2 - 74	30
	Dec-25	11	7	60	8.6	1 - 34	27
Q4 25/26	Jan-26	37	35	394	11.3	1 - 79	40
	Feb-26	10	7	39	5.6	2 - 11	57
	Mar-26	16	12	63	5.3	1 - 16	35
Q1 26/27	Apr-26	29	27	76	2.8	1 - 40	35
	May-26	13	8	60	7.5	1 - 23	28
	Jun-26	25	21	108	5.1	1 - 36	24
Q2 26/27	Jul-26	20	11	42	3.8	1 - 18	26
	Aug-26	13	7	44	6.3	1 - 12	30
	Sep-26	21	18	59	3.3	1 - 19	22

Please note: figures may differ from previous reports as recruitment data is drawn from the live recruitment tracker and can change where campaigns remain active after the reporting period.

Appendix 2 – Average Applications per External Role (Quarterly Comparison)



Appendix 3 – Voluntary Turnover (%) – 2022/23 to 2026/27



Report Author:

Carley Bartley and Sarah Page – People Team

Telephone: 01954 713654

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Report to:	Employment & Staffing Committee 5 November 2026
Lead Cabinet Member:	Natalie Warren-Green
Lead Officer:	Jeff Membery – Head of Transformation, People and Corporate Services
Key Decision:	No

Voluntary Redundancy Policy

Recommendations

1. It is recommended that the Employment and Staffing Committee approve the introduction of the Voluntary Redundancy Policy (appendix A) with immediate effect. The proposed Voluntary Redundancy Policy provides the Council with a flexible and transparent mechanism for supporting organisational change while minimising compulsory redundancies where possible. Approval of the policy will strengthen the Council's approach to workforce change and employee wellbeing

Details

2. The Council is proposing to introduce a Voluntary Redundancy (VR) Policy, which aims to minimise compulsory redundancies and support fair, transparent organisational change processes. The introduction of a VR Policy will provide an additional workforce planning tool to support future service redesign, budget savings requirements and organisational change programmes
3. Introducing a VR Policy provides a consistent and structured approach to managing workforce reductions, in a way that can reduce stress for colleagues, and disruption to the organisation.
4. Currently, under our Organisational Change Policy, where a reduction in posts is needed all affected colleagues are put at risk of redundancy and must go through an assessment process to determine who will be made redundant. This assessment process is usually an application letter and an interview, and this can be a difficult process for colleagues and managers, as well as being quite time consuming.
5. However, in some circumstances there are colleagues who would be interested in applying for VR; this would allow us to streamline the change programme and greatly reduce the impact on other colleagues.

6. The VR Policy sets out that all applications for voluntary redundancy will be treated fairly and transparently, and that the Council retains the right to refuse an application if it is deemed that the cost of that redundancy, either financial or cost in loss of knowledge/abilities, is too high. The consultation manager will set out which roles are eligible to apply for VR, and what the assessment criteria for accepting an application will be. The assessment criteria will be set for each role, to ensure it is specific and protects the council from risks, such as losing valuable skills or knowledge. To summarise:
 - There is no automatic entitlement to VR.
 - Approval will be based on organisational need.
 - Decisions will be evidence-based and documented.
7. The policy aligns with ACAS best practice and ensures decisions are objective, documented and non-discriminatory.

Reasons for Recommendations

8. Introducing a VR policy will allow us to be more flexible in how we approach change programmes where a saving needs to be made. In situations where a colleague is interested in VR, this may eliminate the need for other colleagues to go through an assessment and interview process, allowing us to implement the new structure much sooner.
9. In situations where it doesn't eliminate the need for an assessment entirely, it may at least provide reassurance to remaining colleagues that there are more posts available, and to the managers that the colleagues remaining are engaged with the new structure and roles.
10. Reducing the stress for colleagues, and speeding up the implementation of new structures, allows the council to better support our customers and service delivery needs. Colleagues are less likely to be absent from work due to mental health reasons, and are more likely to be engaged with the organisation if they feel they are a valued and wanted colleague.

Options

11. The options available are to:
 - a. Agree the introduction of the Voluntary Redundancy Policy
 - b. Not agree the introduction of the Voluntary Redundancy Policy

Implications

12. In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk, equality and diversity, climate change, and any other key issues, the following implications have been considered:-

Financial and Fraud Impact

13. In a change programme where redundancy is needed, we do not use financial impact as a current assessment method for who to be made redundant. It is likely that those interested in VR may have longer service history and may be closer to the age of retirement. This means the financial impact of their VR may be higher than if other colleagues were made redundant. This may not always be the case, and high financial cost can be a reason to decline an application for VR.
14. However, by accepting a higher costing VR we may reduce the stress impact on other colleagues, which has other benefits including improved colleague engagement and reduced risk of colleague absence relating to stress.
15. Each application will be subject to an individual assessment, including consideration of redundancy costs, pension strain where applicable, and overall affordability.

Legal

16. The policy has been developed in accordance with employment legislation and ACAS guidance and is designed to reduce the risk of unfair or discriminatory decision-making through the use of transparent eligibility and assessment criteria.

Staffing

17. The proposed policy is aimed at supporting colleagues' wellbeing during a change programme. The Council will continue to always avoid redundancy situations where possible, but VR will allow us to conduct change programmes in a less impactful way.

Equality and Diversity

18. Some risks were identified within the EqIA, however all are mitigated by the policy. The People Team will work closely with the consultation manager to ensure the process is handed in a fair and transparent way, and in accordance with ACAS best practice.

Nature and Climate Change

19. Overall, the proposed voluntary redundancy policy is assessed as having a neutral to slightly positive impact on climate change and the natural environment.

Any environmental effects are expected to be indirect and limited in scale, with potential reductions in commuting, business travel and resource consumption likely to outweigh any minor adverse impacts associated with equipment disposal or organisational change

Health and Wellbeing

20. The policy is expected to have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of those affected by change programmes.

Alignment with Council Priority Areas

Financially Secure and Fit for the Future

21. All change programmes need to consider how to ensure the service will be fit for the future, and part of this is making sure we have the right colleagues, in the right roles, at the right time. The VR policy will help us deliver change programmes that support the Council's needs, by reducing the impact on colleagues and ensuring that those who remain at the Council are engaged with the new structure.

Appendices

Appendix A: Voluntary Redundancy Policy

Appendix B: Voluntary Redundancy EqIA

Report Author:

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Voluntary Redundancy Policy

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Introduction

This policy sets out the Council's approach to dealing with voluntary redundancies.

South Cambridgeshire District Council recognises the importance of creating a secure working environment for employees and will take steps to ensure continuity of employment through the planning of staffing levels for effective, economic and efficient provision of service.

It is the council's policy to avoid redundancies where possible, through alternative options such as redeployment. If redundancies cannot be avoided, the authority will take all measures to consult with employees and may offer voluntary redundancy as an option to limit compulsory redundancies.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the [Organisational Change Policy and Procedure](#).

Scope of the Policy

The Council is committed to ensuring that all voluntary redundancy decisions are made objectively, consistently and without unlawful discrimination.

This policy applies where:

- the Council is undertaking an approved organisational change programme, and voluntary redundancy has been identified as a potential option; or
- a voluntary redundancy request relating to an individual role has been approved by the Head of Paid Service outside a formal organisational change programme.

Only employees identified as being within the scope of an approved change proposal, or those covered by a specific Head of Paid Service approval, may apply for voluntary redundancy.

This policy does not apply where an employee wishes to resign or retire independently of a redundancy situation.

The Council will ensure that any voluntary redundancy situations are handled in an objective, fair, and non-discriminatory way. We will use a clear and consistent approach across all voluntary redundancy situations.

Process

At Phase 1; establishing the need for change, the consultation manager(s) should have a scoping meeting with a member of the People Team. If voluntary redundancy is a potential option, it needs to be supported by the Head of Service. As part of

Phase 2; making the case, a business case to Leadership Team (Appendix 2) should be made which:

The business case must:

- identify the posts or employee groups that may be eligible to apply for voluntary redundancy;
- set out the rationale for offering voluntary redundancy;
- include the proposed assessment criteria;
- outline anticipated costs and savings; and
- demonstrate how service delivery will be maintained.

At the launch of the Change Programme, employees in scope of the change programme will be told if voluntary redundancy is an option, and they will be supplied with the assessment criteria and proposed timeframes. If no requests for voluntary redundancy are submitted, the consultation will continue in line with the Organisational Change Policy, which may include employees being placed at risk of redundancy.

Requests for Voluntary Redundancy

Employees interested in applying for voluntary redundancy should submit their request by the stated deadline to the consultation manager and People Team (Appendix 3). Employees can use the redundancy calculator in Appendix 4 to generate their redundancy pay estimate.

The consultation manager, along with a member of the People team, will then assess all applications against the criteria, and will meet with employees to discuss.

The manager retains the right to:

- Not grant voluntary redundancy if they feel it goes against the needs or best interest of the business
- Decide the timing of the redundancy during the organisational change process
- Withdraw the opportunity for voluntary redundancy where circumstances change.

The organisational change process will continue until an application for voluntary redundancy has been formally agreed.

If no applications for voluntary redundancy are received the consultation manager may decide to apply voluntary redundancy to additional roles in the change programme. The availability of voluntary redundancy does not guarantee that applications will be accepted.

Criteria for Voluntary Redundancy

The council will outline the specific criteria for each voluntary redundancy situation, however these will be based on the following:

- The cost of the voluntary redundancy, including (if applicable) the pension cost to the organisation;
- How easy it would be to replace an employee's specialist knowledge or skills – some posts require specific knowledge or skills so cannot be made redundant;
- If accepting the application for voluntary redundancy would prevent compulsory redundancy;
- The impact on service delivery and organisational resilience; and
- The impact on the remaining workforce in the change programme.

The Council will also follow [ACAS best practice for fair assessment](#):

- Do not automatically accept all volunteers – assess against business needs.
- Use objective, measurable criteria – avoid bias or discrimination.
- Document decisions – for transparency and legal protection.
- Consult fairly – even in voluntary cases, consultation is required.
- Avoid discriminatory practices – e.g., rejecting based on age or disability

Once all applications have been assessed, the consultation manager will meet with employees individually to discuss their application, followed by a written decision letter. The letter will outline why the decision was reached, and what the next steps are for the employee.

Where an application has been accepted, the manager will also discuss timeframes with the employee and agree any handover actions that must be taken.

Support will be provided to affected employees, including career transition services, counselling, and reasonable paid time off for job interviews or training.

Once an application has been agreed, the proposed Change Programme will be updated to reflect this, and remaining employees in scope of the change will be notified if they are still at risk of redundancy.

Suitable Alternative Employment

If a suitable post becomes available before the termination date we may, where appropriate, offer it to the employee as suitable alternative employment. The role must meet the criteria of suitable alternative employment as detailed in the Organisational Change policy.

Appeal Process

An employee whose application for voluntary redundancy was rejected has the right to appeal that decision. Appeals must be submitted in writing to the People team within 10 days of them receiving the written outcome letter. The appeal will then be considered by a Head of Service who was not involved in the original decision.

An appeal can be submitted on one of the following grounds only:

- The employee feels there was an error in the procedure;
- The employee feels their application was not assessed fairly against the criteria;
- The employee feels we did not consider all relevant evidence.

The employee will be invited to an appeal meeting with the Head of Service to discuss their appeal before a decision is made.

The Organisational Change Process may be paused while the appeal is ongoing. This will be decided by the consultation manager in agreement with the People Team.

Voluntary Redundancy Pay

Employees are only eligible for redundancy pay if they have over 2 years continuous local government service.

The method of calculating an employees redundancy pay is set out in the Organisational Change policy, and at Appendix 1. Employees can also use the Redundancy Calculator at Appendix 3 to generate a redundancy pay estimate. An updated estimate will be provided by the People Team after a Voluntary Redundancy application has been submitted.

Equality Impact Assessment

An equality impact assessment has been completed and can be found on the Council's website.

Appendix 1

Redundancy Payments

The Council will make redundancy payments in accordance with the Council's policy and the Employee Relations Act 1996 as amended from time to time.

Redundancy compensation will be payable to employees who are dismissed by reason of redundancy in line with statutory redundancy payments. To be eligible for a redundancy payment the employee must have been continuously employed in local government for 2 years or more at the effective date of termination.

In the event of redundancy, whether voluntary or compulsory, it is necessary to determine the length of an individual's continuous service in order to establish whether they are entitled to a redundancy payment and the amount of redundancy payment. Service accrued via successive employment contracts, without a break of a statutory week with certain other employers covered by the Modification Order, counts in determining length of continuous service.

Where an individual is declared redundant, and is entitled to a redundancy payment, a statement will be prepared setting out details of the redundancy payments to which they are entitled.

Service to be taken into account - the amount of any statutory redundancy payment will be based on length of continuous (unbroken) service, with an organisation listed on the Modification Order at the date of redundancy, the employee's age and actual weekly pay*.

Weekly Pay* - Where an employee's actual weekly pay is less than the statutory redundancy weekly pay (check with the People Team for the current amount), then this amount will be used to calculate the redundancy figure.

The employee is entitled to receive:

- Half a week's pay for each year of employment in which the employee was aged 21 or under;
- One week's pay for each year of employment in which the employee was aged between 22 and 40; and
- One and a half weeks pay for each year of employment in which the employee was aged 41 or over.

The maximum number of years of employment that can be taken into account is 20.

Employees on a variable hours contract and therefore no mutual obligation established regarding offering or accepting work, will have entitlement calculated on an individual basis over a continuous twelve-week period and in line with the number of hours worked.

Modification Order: employees who are offered and accept employment with another organisation listed on the Modification Order before the date of redundancy, and where the start date for the new job commences within four weeks of the date of termination, will not be entitled to their redundancy payment. Their continuity of service will be preserved. Employees should check the relevant rules applicable to them if they are seeking or are offered such a job – the exact timescale involved will depend on the day of the week they are made redundant and when that offer is received.

Appendix 2

Business Case for Voluntary Redundancy

Service area:	
Line manager:	
Head of service:	
Date:	

This form must be completed by the line manager and authorised by head of service before submitting to leadership team for approval.

Details of the role(s) affected by change	
Affected team:	
Affected role(s):	
Number of roles in affected area:	
Target savings:	

Line Manager Justification:
Line manager to outline justification for offering voluntary redundancy For example: • To reduce impact on staff • To streamline process when there are time pressures <u>Click or tap here to enter justification.</u>

Proposed assessment criteria:

Line manager to outline the criteria that will be used to assess applications. Please ensure these criteria are in line with ACAS best practice and the policy

For example:

- Cost of the redundancy package
- How easy it would be to replace an employee's specialist knowledge or skills
- Impact of employee's loss on wider team/service area

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Benefits: Manager to consider benefits of voluntary redundancy being offered

For example:

- What are the benefits of someone applying for voluntary redundancy to the service area?
- What are the benefits of someone applying for voluntary redundancy to the health and well-being of affected staff?

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Risks: Manager to consider risks of voluntary redundancy being offered

For example:

- Impact on staff if application is approved/denied?
- Impact on health and well-being of affected staff?
- Time needed to review voluntary redundancy applications?

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Line Manager Approval	
Name:	Click or tap here to enter text.
Signature:	
Date:	Click or tap to enter a date.

Head of Service Approval	
Name:	Click or tap here to enter text.
Signature:	
Date:	Click or tap to enter a date.

People Team Approval	
Name:	Click or tap here to enter text.
Signature:	
Date:	Click or tap to enter a date.

Leadership Team Approval	
Date of LT meeting:	Click or tap to enter a date.
Outcome	Choose an item.

If approved please contact the People Team for support with process
PeopleTeam@scambs.gov.uk

Appendix 3

Voluntary Redundancy application form

Employee name:	
Job title:	
Employee number:	
Service area:	
Line manager:	

Reason for request for voluntary redundancy

Please briefly explain your reason for requesting voluntary redundancy, and the benefits of your application to the organisation

For example:

- Do multiple people do the same role as you?
- Do you have any unique skills or knowledge that would be hard to replace if your application were accepted?
- Would accepting your application positively or negatively affect your health and wellbeing?
- Are you looking for a career change or considering retirement?

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Signature:	
Date:	Click or tap to enter a date.