Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority Item 12

Finance and Resources Committee

20 May 2025

Annual HR Report

Purpose of the Report

1. To update Members on key HR activities and metrics for the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025, specifically covering:
   - Recruitment activity and equal opportunities;
   - Policy updates:
   - Gender pay gap data;
   - Training and development; and
   - Staff turnover and retention statistics.

Recommendation

2. That the report be noted.

Strategic Framework

3. The information and recommendation(s) contained in this report are consistent with the Authority's statutory purposes and support the strategic planning framework:

   - Corporate Plan Objective 31:
     Ensure that we have HR policies, procedures, terms and conditions to attract and support the right people with the right skills to deliver the Authority's work effectively, as evidenced by accreditation under the Investors in People standard.

Background

4. The HR team support staff and managers to ensure the Authority has the skills, experience and knowledge to deliver high quality and efficient services and to attract and retain people with these abilities. The aim is for the Authority to be a place where:
   - people aspire to work;
   - there is an opportunity to learn and develop;
   - achievements are acknowledged and recognised; and
   - the working environment is safe, healthy, inclusive and engaging.

Recruitment Activity

5. In the year from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025, 28 posts were advertised. This is lower than in 2023/24 when 38 posts were advertised.
6. Recruitment costs for 2024/25 (see table below) were significantly higher than in the previous year. This increase is primarily due to the advertisement of multiple Planning Officer roles, which typically require placement on specialist websites that incur higher fees. Additionally, following an unsuccessful internal recruitment campaign, a recruitment agency was commissioned to fill the Principal Planning Officer vacancy, resulting in a fee of £7,835.

Year	Recruitment Costs
2020/2021	£7,775
2021/2022	£9,982
2022/2023	£8,599
2023/2024	£6,235
2024/2025	£16,913

7. Advertising strategies are continually reviewed to ensure access to a broad and high-quality candidate pool.

8. On average, there was a strong level of interest in advertised vacancies throughout the year, with many roles receiving over 40 applications. A small number of positions attracted exceptionally high interest, with some receiving over 100 applications.

Equal Opportunities Monitoring - Applicants

9. The monitoring of applications for the purpose of equal opportunities is an important tool to enable the Authority to ascertain at an early stage whether or not there appear to be any areas of its work from which particular groups are excluded.

10. Completion of monitoring forms is not compulsory, and non-completion does not invalidate an application. Therefore, not all applicants complete all, or any, sections of the form. Using the information shared by candidates, statistics are available at **Appendix A**. The decrease in 'prefer not to say' responses may suggest growing candidate trust, although the reasons remain unclear.

11. With the intention of promoting inclusivity and continuing to improve the diversity of candidates, during 2024/25, we included the following statements in all job adverts:
    - We aspire to have a diverse and inclusive workplace and strongly encourage applicants from all backgrounds to apply and join us; and
    - We are a Disability Confident employer and guarantee to interview anyone with a disability whose application meets the essential criteria for the role.

12. Each year staff are invited to undertake a workforce data questionnaire and the data is published on the Authority's website, which can be accessed here https://www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/13/2024/11/202324-workforce-data.pdf. The 2025 data will be reviewed and reported within the Annual Equality Statement later in the year.

Policy Updates

13. HR policies undergo regular review. The following policies were updated and approved during 2024/25:
    - Paternity Leave Policy
    - Staff Code of Conduct
    - Anti-Harassment, Anti-Bullying and Anti-Victimisation Policy
    - Flexible Working Policy
    - Sickness Absence Policy
    - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Gender Pay Gap

14. The gender pay gap is one measure of women's position in the economy in comparison to men. It compares the difference in average hourly pay for women and men in the labour market.

15. The gender pay gap is not simply the result of women being paid less than men for the same job. It is the result of a combination of economic and social factors that come together to reduce the earning capacity of women across their lifetime. For example, the unequal division of caring responsibilities within the household means that more women, than men, work part time.

16. Paying men and women differently for the same or equivalent work has been unlawful for decades. Although it does still happen in some organisations, it is not considered a major factor in explaining the gender pay gap, and an employer that has completely eliminated unequal pay may still have a wide gender pay gap.

17. The gap can be measured in various ways, so it's important to understand how, in any specific context, the gap is being measured. A gender pay gap can be expressed as:
    - a positive measure, for example, a gap of 13.9% indicates the extent to which women earn, on average, less per hour than their male counterparts
    - a negative measure, for example, a gap of –9.2% indicates the extent to which women earn, on average, more per hour than their male counterparts.

18. There are regulations in place which apply to all private sector and voluntary sector employers with 250 or more staff, and require them to publish details of the gender pay gap for their organisation. The Authority does not employ 250+ staff and is therefore not required to publish details of its gender pay gap.

19. There are a number of different ways in which the pay gap is measured. For the purposes of this report, the mean gender pay gap has been calculated across all staff, both full-time and part-time.

20. The Authority's mean gender pay gap for 2024/25 was 6.8%, an improvement from 10.8% in 2023/24. Contributing factors include:
    - The Chief Executive (highest paid role) is male;
    - Female staff outnumber male staff 2:1; and
    - A higher proportion of females occupy lower pay band roles.

21. This remains below the national average (13.1%), demonstrating progress in gender pay equity within the Authority.

Training and Development

22. Training and development continues to be important to the Authority and priorities were identified through staff appraisals completed by May 2024. The Authority allocated a training budget of £60.1k, supporting both in-person and virtual sessions.

23. In 2024/25 HR facilitated and co-ordinated various corporate training courses that took place both in-person and virtually. A list of the courses delivered are available at **Appendix B**. In addition, the Authority has access to a shared e-learning portal (ELMS).

Staff turnover

24. Some degree of staff turnover is inevitable and it is also desirable to avoid stagnation in the organisation. The influx of new people can generate new ideas and fresh ways of thinking. This is particularly key for the Authority as it continues the cultural shift into a project focused organisation. Turnover also gives the Authority the room to develop career progression of existing staff, either through promotion or through a sideways move.

25. However, if labour turnover is too high, or key staff are leaving, this can damage organisational performance in a number of ways, including the financial cost of replacing leavers and the loss of corporate knowledge and skills.

26. During the period from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025, 23 staff left the Authority for the reasons detailed below:

Reason for Leaving	No. of staff	% of Leavers
Voluntary resignation	18	78%
End of Fixed Term Contract/Apprenticeship	5	22%
TOTAL	23	100%

27. The turnover rate in 2024/25 was 13.7%, a slight decrease from 16.3% in the previous year and below the UK average of 16% (CIPD, 2024).

Retention Periods

28. The length of service of the 28 people who left the Authority in 24/25 is shown below:

Length of Service	Number of leavers
<1 year	6
>1 year but < 2 years	2
>2 years but < 3 years	2
>3 years but < 4 years	1
>4 years but < 5 years	4
>5 years	8

Feedback from Leavers

29. During 2024/25, leavers questionnaires were issued when staff left due to a fixed term contract/apprenticeship ending or a voluntarily resignation, and are not compulsory.

30. Of the 23 staff who left voluntarily or after fixed-term roles, 6 provided feedback. Overall responses were positive, with constructive insights shared with relevant managers for follow-up.

Financial Implications

31. The HR services are delivered within the allocated budget.

Legal Implications

32. Employment law and legislation changes are applied to all of the HR policies and, processes and practices, to ensure the Authority is compliant.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Implications

33. Equality, diversity and inclusion are integral considerations across all HR practices. The Authority is committed to continuously exploring ways to enhance the diversity of its workforce and to attract a broad range of candidates. Providing and promoting a culture of respect, inclusion, and belonging remains a core priority in the development and implementation of HR policies and processes.

Conclusion

34. In conclusion, the HR team has delivered significant achievements over the past year, including the successful recruitment of hard-to-fill roles, enhancement of key policies, and the co-ordination of diverse training programmes. The ongoing focus remains on advising managers, supporting staff, strengthening diversity, and aligning HR practices with the Authority's vision for the future.

Vikki Thomas
Head of HR

Appendix A - Equal Opportunities Monitoring Statistics – Applicants

Age

	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21
Under 18 years	0.2%	0.3%	0.7%	1%	0%
18 – 25 years	30.5%	21%	26%	27%	21%
26 – 34 years	28.5%	24%	26%	32%	22%
35 – 44 years	17%	22%	20%	15%	20%
45 – 54 years	15%	19%	14%	13%	25%
55 – 64 years	8%	13%	11%	11%	10%
65 years and above	0.8%	0.7%	1.7%	1%	2%

Disability

	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21
Disability declared	12.5%	8.7%	8.8%	7%	6.5%

The Authority has a policy, which is consistent with Equality law, that all applicants who declare a disability will be shortlisted *if* they demonstrate that they meet the essential criteria within their application form.

Gender

	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21
Female	47%	49.8%	44.5%	60%	60%
Male	50%	47%	53.8%	40%	40%
Other	1%	1.1%	0.1%		
Prefer not to say	2%	2.1%	1.6%		

During 2023/24, the Authority introduced a question asking candidates if their gender identity matched their sex as registered at birth.

Gender identity the same as sex registered at birth

	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23
Yes	96%	97%	96.6%
No	1.7%	0.4%	1.1%
Prefer not to say	2.3%	2.6%	2.3%

Ethnic Origin

	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21
White	89%	91%	87.4%	91.4%	91%
Black	1.8%	0.8%	1.2%	1.7%	0.5%
Asian	3.5%	2.3%	4.9%	2.4%	4.5%
Mixed	2.3%	2%	2.2%	1.8%	3%
Other	1.1%	0.3%	1.1%	0.4%	
Prefer not to say	2.3%	3.6%	3.2%	2.3%	1%

Sexual Orientations

	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21
Heterosexual/straight	76%	80%	79.8%	83.4%	
Gay man	1.8%	1.7%	2.1%	1.4%	
Gay woman/lesbian	2.6%	0.9%	1.5%	3%	
Bisexual	8.7%	5.6%	6.7%	5%	
Other	2.1%	1.8%	1.5%	0.8%	
Prefer not to say	8.7%	10%	8.4%	6.4%	

Marital Status

	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21
Single	47%	31%	42.5%	53.2%	45%
Married	24%	35%	31.2%	28%	39%
Civil partnership	1.4%	1.7%	1.5%		
Co-habiting	16%	19%	16.7%	3.1%	
Divorced	3.7%	6%	2.6%	1.1%	
Widowed	0.7%	0%	0%	0.4%	
Separated	0.7%	1.5%	0.2%	0.3%	
Other	2.5%	0.2%	1%	9.6%	15%
Prefer not to say	4%	5.6%	4.3%	4.3%	1%

We currently don’t request or monitor the protected characteristic of ‘religion or belief’.

Appendix B - Training and Development Courses during 23/24

Health, Safety and Wellbeing

- CDM Regulations
- De-escalation and conflict management
- DSE Assessor
- Emergency First Aid at Work
- Fire Warden Training
- IOSH Managing Safely
- Practical Manual Handling
- Mental Health Awareness
- Mental Health First Aid
- Neurodiversity in the Workplace
- Outdoor First Aid
- Risk Assessment and Risk Management
- Working at Height

Management Training

- Business Continuity
- Coaching Skills for Leaders
- Courageous Conversations
- Emerging Managers
- Experienced Manager Bootcamp
- Leading Hybrid Teams
- Preventing Sexual Harassment at Work

Personal Skills and development

- Assertiveness Skills
- Individual Coaching Sessions
- Effective Communication Skills
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Workshop
- Microsoft Excel (Introduction, Intermediate, Advanced)
- Microsoft Forms
- Minute Taking
- Personal Resilience
- Presentation Skills
- Time Management and Managing Multiple Priorities

Other

- Apprentice and trainee group and networking days
- Planning for Retirement