Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority Item 9

Finance and Resources Committee

28 May 2024

Annual HR Report

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide Members with information on the following areas during the year April 2023 to March 2024:
   - recruitment activity and equal opportunities;
   - policy updates:
   - gender pay gap;
   - training and development; and
   - turnover and retention data.

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 33
  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, diverse and engaging.

Recruitment Activity

5. In the year from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, 38 posts were advertised. This is slightly lower than in 2022/23 when 40 posts were advertised.

6. Recruitment costs (see table, below) for 2023/24 were lower than the previous year. One of the reasons for this is that we have been placing vacancy adverts on our own website and promoting the roles via the Authority's social media platforms, which has no direct costs and results in a high level of applications. Advertising options are kept under continuous review, to ensure we're reaching a wide pool of quality and appointable candidates.

Year	Recruitment Costs
2019/2020	£12,721
2020/2021	£7,775
2021/2022	£9,982
2022/2023	£8,599
2023/2024	£6,235

7. Overall we have received a high level of interest and applications for advertised vacancies this year, with many roles attracting 40+ applications for consideration.

Equal Opportunities Monitoring - Applicants

8. 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. This monitoring provides evidence as to whether current recruitment practices are reaching the full spectrum of possible candidates (so that we can attract the best people) and helps us to reduce the risk of allegations of discriminatory practices.

9. 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**. It is noted that candidates selecting the 'prefer not to say' option has seen an increase during 23/24, although the reasoning for this is unknown. It is somewhat disappointing that despite best efforts, and adopting new approaches, we still struggle to attract candidates from some demographic groups.

10. With the intention of promoting inclusivity and continuing to improve the diversity of candidates, during 2023/24, we included the following statement 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.*

11. 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/13/2023/11/Workforce-Data-Report-2023.pdf. The 2024 data will be reviewed and reported within the Annual Equality Statement later in the year.

Policy Updates

12. The HR policies are included in a review cycle and below is a list of the policies that have been reviewed in the last 12-months and approved by this Committee or the Authority:
    - Market Rate Supplements Policy
    - Flexitime Scheme Policy
    - Vehicle use on Authority Business Policy
    - Home Working Policy
    - New Statutory Officers' Disciplinary Procedure

    In addition, and following some recent changes to legislation reported to this Committee in March, the Authority's paternity leave and flexible working policies have now been updated, to ensure they're complying with these latest changes. The updated policies are available here:
    - Paternity Leave Policy: https://www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/13/2024/05/Paternity-Leave-Policy-April-2024.docx
    - Flexible Working Policy: https://www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/13/2024/05/Flexible-Working-Policy-April-2024.docx

Gender Pay Gap

13. 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.

14. 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.

15. 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.

16. 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.

17. 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.

18. 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.

19. The Authority's mean gender pay gap for all (full and part-time) staff was 10.8% for 2022/23. This is an increase from 7.4% for 2021/22. Some of the reasons for the gender pay gap are:
    - the Chief Executive, and highest paid member of staff, is male;
    - the Authority employs twice as many females than males; and
    - 65 staff are employed on the bottom 2 pay bands (band F and band E), of which there are 19 (29%) males and 46 females (71%).

20. By way of comparison, in 2023 the UK's mean gender pay gap for all employees, full and part-time, was 14.3%, which was a reduction from 14.4% in 2022.

Training and Development

21. Training and development continues to be important to the Authority and its staff. Training plans were determined following the annual appraisals which were mostly completed by May 2023.

22. The training budget for 2023/2024 was £60.1k and it is the responsibility of the manager and staff member to agree their training and development needs for the forthcoming year, in line with role requirements and budget limitations.

23. In 2023/24 HR facilitated and co-ordinated various corporate training courses that took place both in-person and virtually. A list of the courses 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 2023 to 31 March 2024, 28 staff left the Authority for the reasons detailed below:

Reason for Leaving	**No. of staff**	**% of Leavers**
Voluntary resignation	19	68%
End of Fixed Term Contract/Apprenticeship	8	29%
Other (Redundancy)	1	3%
TOTAL	28	100%

27. The turnover rate for 2023/24 was 16.3% which is only slightly higher than 15.7% reported in 2022/23. XpertHR shared data at the end of 2023 which confirms a tight labour market with a high average turnover rate of 19.9% across all sectors within the UK. For the Public Services sector this figure was reported as 18.7%.

Retention Periods

28. The length of service of the 28 people who left the Authority in 23/24 is shown below:

Length of Service	Number of leavers
<1 year	6
>1 year but < 2 years	5
>2 years but < 3 years	2
>3 years but < 4 years	2
>4 years but < 5 years	1
>5 years	12

Feedback from Leavers

29. During 2023/24, 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 27 Officers who resigned voluntarily or left due to a fixed term contract/apprenticeship ending, 11 provided feedback. The majority of feedback was positive about working for the Authority. The responses are shared with the relevant Section Head for any necessary action.

Financial Implications

31. None. 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 implications are considered for all HR practices. Ways to improve the diverse profile of the workforce, as well as candidates applying for vacancies, is continuously being considered. Ensuring individuals are included and encouraging everyone to be their true selves at work is key.

Conclusion

34. In summary, the HR team have had a very busy but productive 12 months. Notable achievements have included the range of development opportunities facilitated for attendees, the recruitment and selection of the new Director of Park Services, positive policy changes and the level of support and guidance provided to staff and managers.

Vikki Thomas
Head of HR

Appendix A - Equal Opportunities Monitoring Statistics – Applicants 2022/23

Age

	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20
Under 18 years	0.3%	0.7%	1%	0%	4%
18 – 25 years	21%	26%	27%	21%	17%
26 – 34 years	24%	26%	32%	22%	21%
35 – 44 years	22%	20%	15%	20%	18%
45 – 54 years	19%	14%	13%	25%	29%
55 – 64 years	13%	11%	11%	10%	10%
65 years and above	0.7%	1.7%	1%	2%	1%

Disability

	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20
Disability declared	8.7%	8.8%	7%	6.5%	8%

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

	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20
Female	49%	49.8%	44.5%	60%	60%
Male	48%	47%	53.8%	40%	40%
Other	0.9%	1.1%	0.1%	[redacted]	[redacted]
Prefer not to say	2.1%	2.1%	1.6%	[redacted]	[redacted]

During 2022/23, 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

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

Ethnic Origin

	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20
White	91%	87.4%	91.4%	91%	96%
Black	0.8%	1.2%	1.7%	0.5%	1%
Asian	2.3%	4.9%	2.4%	4.5%	2%
Mixed	2%	2.2%	1.8%	3%	1%
Other	0.3%	1.1%	0.4%	[redacted]	[redacted]
Prefer not to say	3.6%	3.2%	2.3%	1%	[redacted]

Sexual Orientations

	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20
Heterosexual/straight	80%	79.8%	83.4%		
Gay man	1.7%	2.1%	1.4%		
Gay woman/lesbian	0.9%	1.5%	3%		
Bisexual	5.6%	6.7%	5%		
Other	1.8%	1.5%	0.8%		
Prefer not to say	10%	8.4%	6.4%		

Marital Status

	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20
Single	31%	42.5%	53.2%	45%	50%
Married	35%	31.2%	28%	39%	32%
Civil partnership	1.7%	1.5%			
Co-habiting	19%	16.7%	3.1%		
Divorced	6%	2.6%	1.1%		
Widowed	0%	0%	0.4%		
Separated	1.5%	0.2%	0.3%		
Other	0.2%	1%	9.6%	15%	18%
Prefer not to say	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
- Emergency First Aid at Work
- Fire Warden Training
- IOSH Leading Safely
- IOSH Managing Safely
- Manual Handling
- Mental Health Awareness
- Mental Health First Aid
- Neurodiversity in the Workplace
- Outdoor First Aid
- Risk Assessment and Management
- Working at Height

Management Training

- Action Learning Set Worksop
- Coaching Skills for Leaders
- Emerging Managers
- Emotional Intelligence for Managers
- Leading Hybrid Teams
- Managing Disciplinary and Grievance Cases
- Managing Mental Health at Work

Personal Skills and development

- Assertiveness Skills
- Individual Coaching Sessions
- Effective Communication Skills
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Workshop
- Excel
- How to Manage your Email Inbox
- Time Management and Managing Multiple Priorities

Other

- Apprentice and trainee group and networking day
- Understanding how to navigate the Vivup portal