

GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET

Report to a meeting of Gwynedd Council Cabinet

Date of Meeting:	12 December, 2017
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Mair Rowlands
Contact Officer:	Geraint Owen
Contact Telephone Number	32335
Title of Item:	Human Resources Annual Report

1 THE DECISION SOUGHT

Approval of the Annual Report.

2 THE REASON FOR THE NEED FOR A DECISION

In order to reflect and agree on the corporate strategy in this crucial field into the future.

3 INTRODUCTION

The intention of this report is to present an annual update of the details regarding the workforce and their employment together with outlining objectives for developing our employees and setting the direction for the future.

You are reminded that the Local Consultative Joint Committee (the joint forum between the recognised union representatives and Elected Members) receives an annual report on activity in the human resources field but that report focuses on the operational relationship between the employer and the workforce representatives.

1. The Council's Workforce

The numbers employed on a full-time and part-time basis within the Council for the last three years are noted here. Note that these numbers include staff who work in our schools but not those staff employed on a casual basis during holiday/sickness periods of the permanent workforce.

	31/3/15	31/3/16	31/3/17
Full Time	2,967	2,965	2,847
Part Time	3,318	3,029	2,981
Total	6,285	5,994	5,828

Contact:

01286 679868

01286 679490

cabinet@gwynedd.llyw.cymru



The details show a reduction of 457 in the number of individuals employed by the Council at the end of March this year compared with the same time in 2015 i.e. a reduction of 120 of full-time employment contracts (118 in 16/17) and 337 part-time (48 in 16/17). This reduction has been realised through a combination of redundancies, retirements and natural turnover.

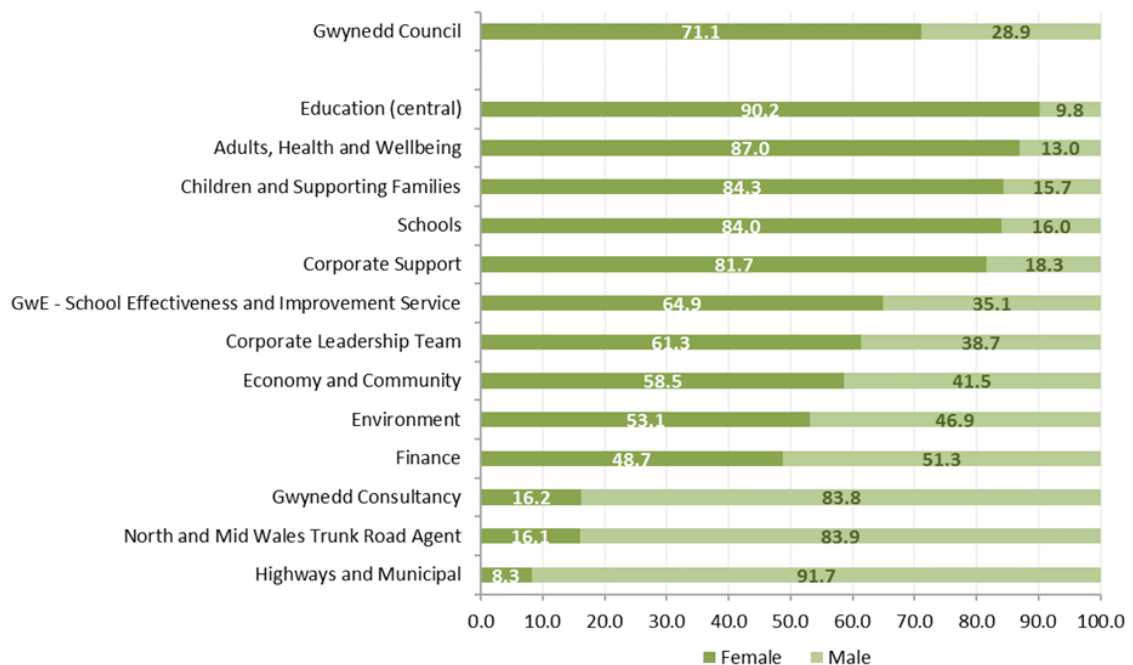
2. Workforce Split by Gender

A further analysis is seen here of the number of men and women employed on a full-time and part-time basis during the same period. The details show a reduction of 62 men (though there was an increase of 18 men in the last year due to a small increase in the number of men employed on a part-time basis) and a reduction of 395 women (108 full-time and 76 part-time in 2016/17).

		2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Full-time	Men	1,399	1,370	1,360
	Women	1,568	1,595	1,487
Part-time	Men	350	299	327
	Women	2,968	2,730	2,654
Total	Men	1,749	1,669	1,687
	Women	4,536	4,325	4,141
Total %	Men	27.8%	27.8%	28.9%
	Women	72.2%	72.2%	71.1%

Please see a further analysis of the split between men and women in the Council's departments as at March 31 2017.

Female / male split of Gwynedd Council staff by Department, 31 March 2017



Contact:

01286 679868

01286 679490

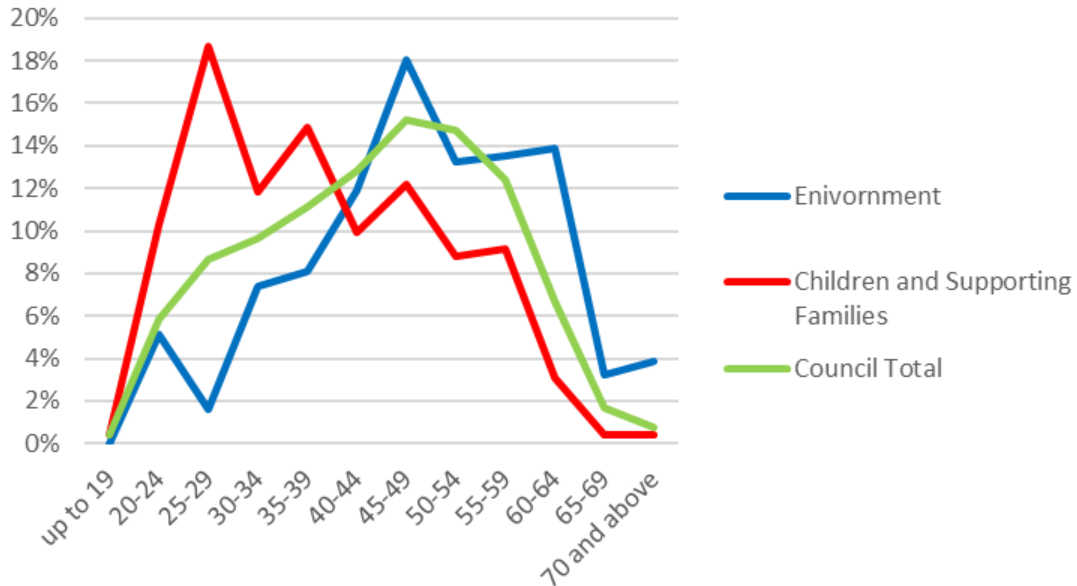
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3. Age profile of Council staff

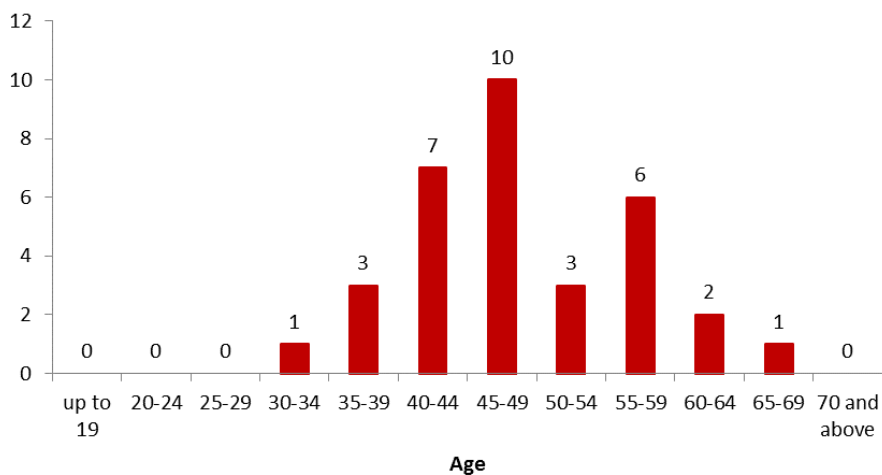
The age profile of Council staff as at 31 March 2017 is noted here. It shows that over 64% of the Council's existing workforce is older than 40 years old (63% in 2015/16) while 36% are older than 50 years old (34.5% in 2015/16).

Proportion of staff by age band, 31 March 2017



The following are two tables that provide a clear picture of the existing age profile of our senior managers and our Corporate Management Group (heads of departments, directors and Chief Executive). Please note that the following tables do not include school staff but they do include officers from the Trunk Road Agency and GwE.

**Number of Council Staff by age band, 31 March 2017:
Grade UR1-4
not including teachers**

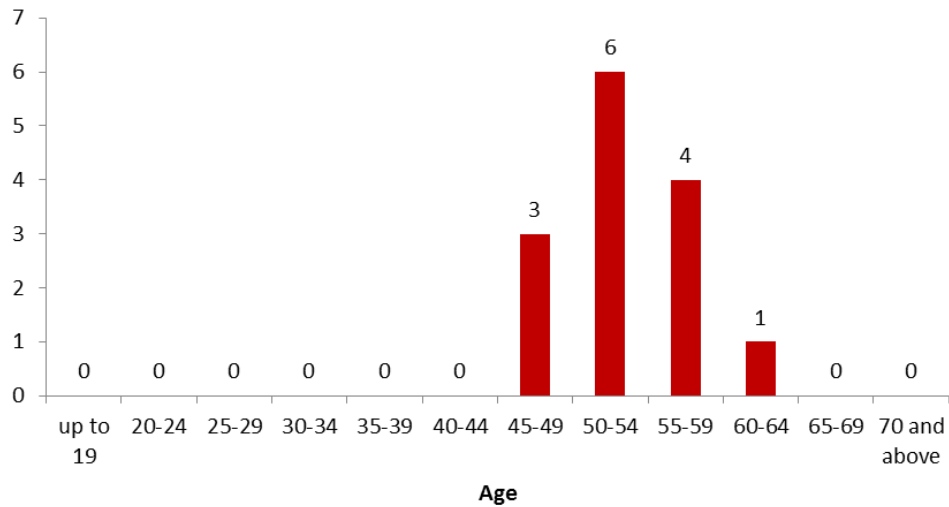


Contact:
01286 679868
01286 679490

cabinet@gwynedd.llyw.cymru



**Number of Council Staff by age band, 31 March 2017:
Grade Head of Service or above
*not including teachers***

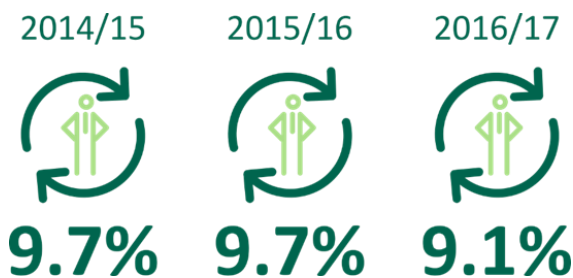


Keeping a record, analysing and sharing this information is crucial to enable managers to plan for the future and, in that sense, consider the steps which need to be taken pro-actively in order to ensure service continuity.

4. Staff Turnover

Historically, turnover within the Council has been comparatively stable but there has been a pattern of a small increase in recent years. However, the level of turnover dropped a little in 2016/17.

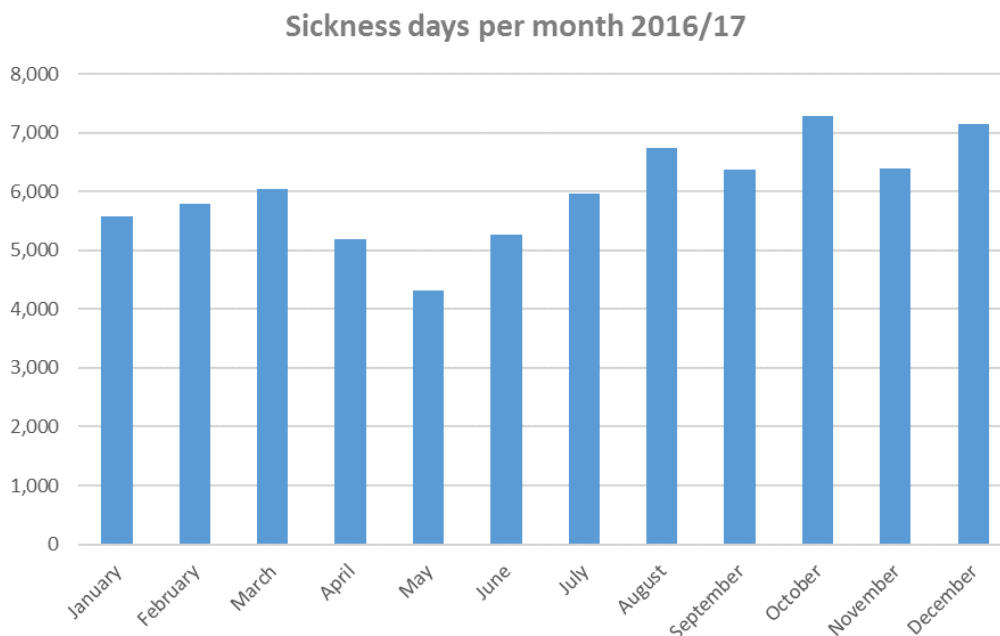
The largest turnover is seen within some of the Economy and Community Department's services (18.7%), Children and Families (11.7%) and Corporate Support (11.2%) while turnover is at its lowest within Gwynedd Consultancy (6.7%), Education Department (7.6%) and Environment (8.1%).



5. Sickness Absences

The number of days lost due to sickness across the Council increased to 9 days per head on average last year, which is the highest level since 2009/10 (8.44 days per head in 2015/16).

The table below shows the levels of sickness absences, month by month, during the year.

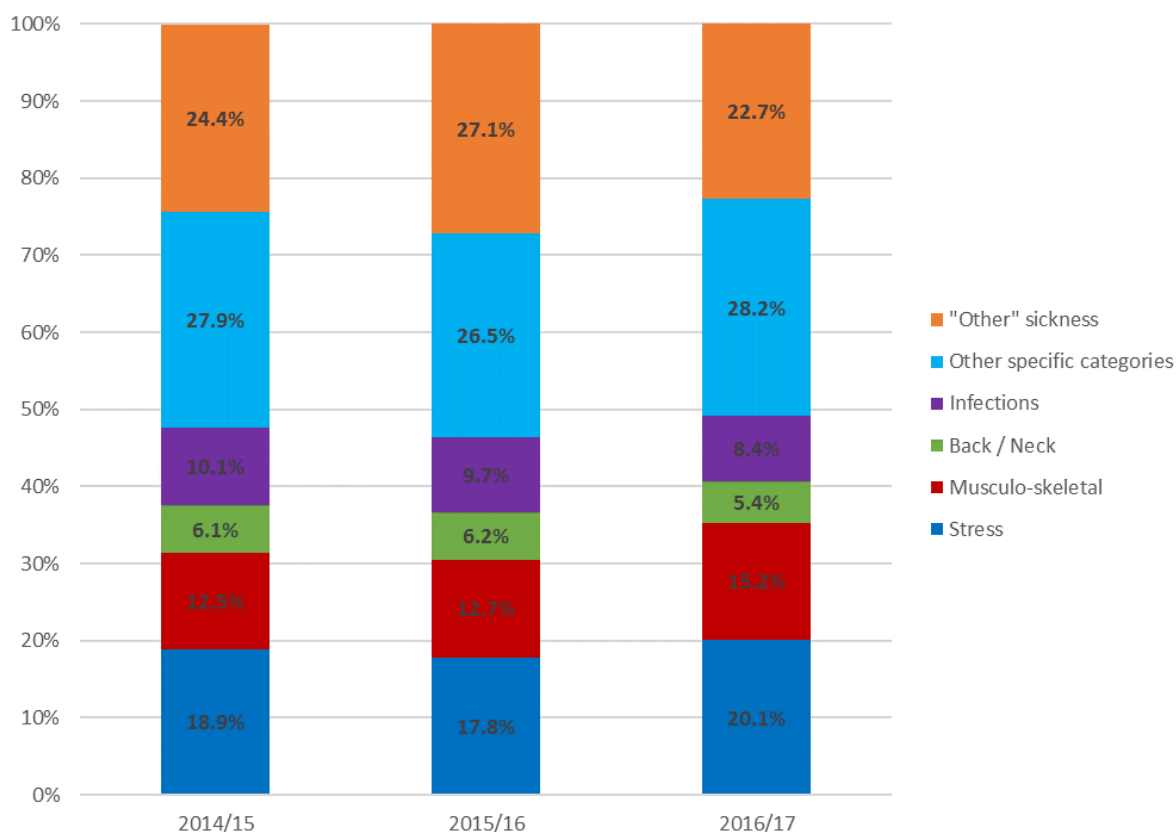


Sickness absence, in 2016/17, is at its highest within the Residential and Day Service (19.2 days), Cleaning Service - Environment (18.39 days) and the Education Cleaning and Catering Service (14.64 days) while sickness absence is at its lowest within Gwynedd Consultancy (6.16 days), Highways and Municipal Department (6.98 days) and the central Education Department (6.99 days). A working group of officers meet regularly to review individual cases of absence and naturally focus their efforts within those services where sickness levels are high.

It is important to note that 43.2% or 2,518 (2,301 in 2015/16) of Council staff were not absent at all due to sickness during the last year. The fact that this number is higher than last year, though the total number of days lost is also higher, partly explains the small increase in the percentage of days lost to long-term sickness during the last year i.e. 57% in 2016/17 compared with 56% in 2015/16

The table below gives a further analysis of the type of sickness that has been recorded for absences over the last three years. This information is used to steer the discussion when considering the content of the programme to promote health and well-being annually.

Gwynedd Council sickness absence as per category, 2014/15 to 2016/17



The fact that the percentage of sickness absences recorded as "Other Illness" is significant (and encouraging), even in a situation where absences are on the increase i.e. the likelihood of being able to offer the appropriate support for an individual is much higher when we are aware of the reason for the absence.

Reducing the number of sickness incidents recorded as "Other" was one of the objectives reported upon last year. It appears that many incidents of absence due to stress have been and (probably) are still hiding behind "Other". Consequently, the Health, Safety and Welfare Service is undertaking a specific scheme, within the Health and Welfare Promotion Programme, to address this area of work.

6. Learning and Development

The number of traditional training days provided by the corporate Learning and Development Service has reduced over the last three years (from 3,043 in 2013-14 to 915 in 2016/17). On the surface, and as reported last year, this would create concern that the opportunities for Council staff to learn and develop are reducing. However, what these figures reflect in reality is the fact that learning and development within the Council is being provided in several alternative ways by now. The number of e-learners (who used the resource) has increased from 928 in 2015/16 to 1,433 last year whilst there is a significant increase in the number of

staff undertaking "webinars" and taking advantage of the coaching and personal consultations provision. There is also a general increase in development sessions with individual teams.

Developing an Apprenticeship Scheme for the Council has been identified as a priority over the last year and the work programme within the People Plan needs to be updated to reflect this. One of the Learning and Development Service's officers has been seconded to focus on creating and implementing a specific Scheme for the Council.

The emphasis on the combination of learning through experience, learning socially (such as coaching, mentoring, receiving feedback) as well as traditional learning, is starting to be embedded within the Council. The ambition is that only 10% of all learning and development is provided via traditional training in future and this is because research and experience shows that learning through experience and socially is more effective in several situations.

7. Pay Structure and Equal Pay

The Pay Policy for 2017/18 was approved by the Council at its meeting on 1 March 2017. The National Joint-Committee for Local Government Workers reached a two-year agreement in 2016 which meant that there was a pay increase of 3.2% in 2017/18 for those workers who are on the lowest pay within the Council with every pay point up to point 13 receiving a pay increase higher than the 1% offered to the remaining staff. This means that point 8 (the Council's minimum pay) is £7.90 per hour (compared with the £8.45 per hour recognised as the Living Wage by the Living Wage Foundation) since 1 April this year.

There have been no changes to responsibilities on Head of Department and Corporate Director levels in 2016/17 and there was no new evaluation of those jobs in 2017/18. The current salaries of Chief Officers are based on either the lowest quartile or median of jobs of a comparative size within the National Public Sector Market, as at January 2012.

The work of trying to settle the equal pay claims submitted to the Tribunal back in 2008 has been completed to all intents and purposes and it can be stated that there will be no further costs to the Council arising from the applications submitted.

There was some delay in completing the independent review of the situation in relation to equal pay within the Council, but it is anticipated that it will be possible to share to findings of that work with the Cabinet in due course.

8. Leadership Development

It was decided to delay holding joint focus groups, between members of the Management Group and the Cabinet, as intended during 2016/17 and subsequently it was decided to focus on developing a number of individual members in both groups e.g. coaching sessions, training on service reviews.

Contact:

01286 679868

01286 679490

cabinet@gwynedd.llyw.cymru



Since the election in May this year, and following discussions with the Leader and Deputy Leader, an informal meeting was held with Cabinet Members in order to discuss their developmental needs. The discussion at that meeting has led to a number of work streams which will form an amended development programme for the Cabinet Members. It is anticipated that this is what will need to be focused on over the coming year.

9. Workforce Planning

One of the work streams that has been prioritised within the Council's People Plan is the support and encouragement given to managers to plan the future workforce. There is a demand for services to change quickly, which in turn can lead to challenges in terms of staffing those services. This work is an attempt to try to support the services as they prepare for such situations and also to support services which are currently facing staffing problems.

The initial focus has been on services which are at risk of failing to attract the sufficient number of staff who have the necessary skills to maintain the services. Work to date has focused on:

- Developing practical guidelines that may be helpful for managers to consider what are the needs of their workforce.
- Considering what data on workforce staff may be used and discussed with managers as a way of stimulating the discussion about the current profile of the workforce and the potential future needs.
- Nurturing a link with the project that is in the pipeline on developing a programme of apprenticeships within the Council.
- Considering how the potential profile that the Council has as an employer can be further developed, particularly among Gwynedd schools / further education institutions. There are steps in the pipeline to develop collaboration with Careers Wales in this respect.
- Developing options for offering unpaid work experience for school pupils / secondary students / higher education students etc.

10. Local Conditions of Employment

The work of reviewing and ensuring that staff's conditions of employment reflect the Council's culture is also one of the priorities within the People Plan. The Group which leads the project is consulting upon and reviewing the existing conditions, focusing on introducing local conditions of employment which promote a culture of trust, empowering and equipping staff.

There is a clear direction in terms of what needs to be achieved, and there is a lengthy list of conditions that need to be reviewed. The main priorities have been identified; work is in progress in respect of the sickness absences, annual leave and time off, working additional hours, grievance procedure and disciplinary procedure fields.

Contact:
01286 679868
01286 679490

cabinet@gwynedd.llyw.cymru



Discussions with the unions are continuing in order to try to change some of those local conditions of employment, with a view to securing a collective agreement, effective in April 2018.

11. Recruitment and Appointment

The following provides statistical details regarding the number of jobs advertised by the Council over the last four years together with the number of applications received and the number of vacancies which needed to be re-advertised. Analysing these details again contributes to our ability to identify fields in which the Council needs to focus its attentions in relation to developing expertise and planning the future workforce.

Year	Number of jobs advertised	Number of Applications	Number of jobs re-advertised	Number of Applications for the second advert
2013	462	2938	20	115
2014	433	2055	29	138
2015	442	2525	30	106
2016	472	2312	47	179

The work of designating linguistic levels that are in keeping with the WJEC (Welsh for Adults) language levels is nearly complete with the intention of using these new designations for recruiting and appointing from 1 November, 2017. Steps were taken to strengthen the resource for language training in anticipation of the fact that this development will lead to an increasing demand to refresh and teach Welsh to the appropriate level among Council staff.

12. People Plan

The Cabinet approved the People Plan for the Council at its meeting on 1 November last year. Reference has already been made to some of the work streams that have been prioritised for attention. It was noted in last year's report that "Ffordd Gwynedd" was a central driver for the ambition in the Plan and that the work programme was based on what needs to be done to reach the ambition.

Arrangements to extend on-line self-services for Council staff, together with introducing and implementing a system that uses human resources information and data to lead decisions, is being highlighted as another high priority over the coming years. Efforts in this field have already produced results but a substantial effort and investment of time will again be needed in order to reach the aim and facilitate the work of managers and staff.

It is important to stress again this year how crucial it is for every manager and leader to take ownership of that which it is sought to realise within the People Plan and that we should not consider the work streams as matters for the officers co-ordinating them alone, as the ambition is one for the Council in its entirety.

Contact:

01286 679868

01286 679490

cabinet@gwynedd.llyw.cymru



CONCLUSIONS

All the statistical information contained here, with careful analysis, is of assistance to managers and those officers who advise them, to plan services and identify in a timely manner those matters which need further research and action e.g. workforce planning.

Furthermore, the other details submitted regarding progress within the various fields prioritised in the People Plan determinate the steps which are being taken, not only to address existing requirements within the workforce, but also anticipated future requirements.

The Cabinet is asked to submit observations on the content of the report as well as approve the objectives noted for the future in the People Plan.

OPINION OF THE STATUTORY OFFICERS

Monitoring Officer:

Nothing to add from a propriety perspective.

Head of Finance Department:

Nothing to add to the report from a financial propriety perspective.

Contact:

01286 679868

01286 679490

cabinet@gwynedd.llyw.cymru

