

# **Kent County Council People Strategy 2022-27**

## **Annual Report 2024-25**

### **Introduction**

This report presents a review of the progress made from the second into the third year of Kent County Council's current 5 year People Strategy. The strategy is presented in terms of key themes which support the organisation to ensure it has a productive working environment for all staff to continue to meet the needs of the residents of Kent.

The themes are:

1. Maximising organisational capacity, capability and confidence
2. Creating an environment for people to thrive
3. Supporting our people as individuals
4. Attracting, retaining and maximising our talent

The strategy is divided into to these themes in order to give focus to the areas that need to be concentrated on in order to build on and develop the culture that will continue to ensure that Kent County Council is a place people want to work and can perform, exercise discretionary effort and achieve while they are here. However, the themes should not be looked at in isolation of each other as there is a significant degree of interconnectivity between them which influences progress towards the organisation's goal of building a workforce for the future, with career development opportunities and the skills required, whilst ensuring the people we employ are healthy, engaged, empowered to act and are able to be themselves at work so that they are in a position to perform their best at work to deliver services to the people of Kent.

The path to 2027 is not linear but there is an expectation that an overall improvement in the organisation's key indicators is seen and that these improvements influence how the organisation operates. As such, there have been a number of small fluctuations in the first couple of years of this strategy as KCC consolidates the improvements that the previous strategy delivered and builds to the future. The intent moving towards the culmination of the current iteration of the strategy is to use those foundations to move the dial more significantly on progress against the KPIs and to develop the organisation in a way that ensures we can continue to attract the right people and that we enhance the culture of the organisation in way that supports a high performance and continues to be a place that people want to continue working in while we challenge them to be their best.

The following report will review each of the strategic themes in the context of the key performance indicators for that section. The document will also show what activity has occurred that informs the delivery of the strategic themes. At the beginning of each subsection of the themes the headline aspirations will be presented and the corresponding KPIs shown. The changes from 2023/24 is shown in brackets (represented as a percentage point) alongside the figure for 2024/25.

## **1) Maximising organisational capacity, capability, and confidence**

**Our people are supported to be well at work**

**We will provide a safe, supportive and healthy working environment with wellbeing at the heart of change**

**KPI 1:** % of employees who believe that KCC cares about the wellbeing of its staff 62.9% (-0.2 p.p.)

**KPI 2:** Average days lost to staff sickness 8.18 (-0.06 p.p.)

*Both performance indicators have remained relatively static over the last year.*

*While the indicator regarding whether KCC cares about wellbeing has not moved significantly this can be seen amongst a set of other strong indicators from the staff survey in that employees told the Council that they feel they are able to be themselves at work and feel safe. They also felt able to raise issues with their managers and could discuss personal circumstances that might affect their work. The disconnect comes regarding their confidence in action being taken in relation to the matters that they raise.*

*In terms of sickness absence the top four reasons why people are absent from work have stayed the same, COVID related illnesses have been replaced by cancer. In the last year we have seen a slight increase in days lost to mental health but also a small decrease in musculoskeletal absences but these two reasons are still the main reasons for absence amongst the authority's employees. KCC aims to reduce the number of days lost per employee, however, the current figure is not out of sync with other public sector employers of an equivalent size.*

*Work has continued on supporting staff, directly, and to support managers in order to help people who are ill to return to work and also to raise awareness of various conditions so that people become more informed about the support they can get and how managers can support people at work. The Council also has a key focus on proactively influencing people's wellbeing to ensure that the impact of those elements KCC can directly influence is minimised and ensure people are signposted to support that can help stave off impacts on their wellbeing. This is focused on four pillars of mental, social, financial and physical wellbeing. The Authority is also conscious of what staff has told it about bullying and harassment they receive and this is being addressed.*

The activity undertaken throughout 2024/25 to progress the Authority's position included:

- Further work to drive down sickness absence across the organisation, including targeted work with both ASCH and CYPE directorates, to address their sickness absence levels, focusing on mental health, musculoskeletal and stress related absences.

- A focus on KCC's mental health wellbeing offer including a review, refresh and promotion of KNet resources, which has seen significant levels of views.
- Further utilisation and promotion of Maximus, who offer KCC staff fully funded, confidential, 1 to 1 support sessions for up to 9 months. Maximus ran staff and manager webinars to promote their offer, which were recorded to enable on demand staff access.
- Deep dive analysis of musculoskeletal absence via a new information dashboard, to inform a review of our current interventions and support.
- Continued focus on financial wellbeing, including promotion of Wave Community Bank (33% increase in usage) and the services offered by the Money and Pensions Service, who have both run staff webinars which have been recorded to enable on demand access. Working alongside My Money Matters on their rebrand from AVC Wise, promoting their expansion of offer to include financial wellbeing and education.
- Further promotion of Shared Cost AVCs to all staff and Kent Rewards to make money go further and support financial wellbeing.
- Broader wellbeing communications and engagement activity has continued across the organisation, focusing on our priority areas, including promotion of Public Health cardiovascular disease checks for eligible staff.
- Further work to support and increase usage of KCC's inclusion passport across the organisation.
- Review of menopause support and guidance, in liaison with Unison and the Menopause Café. Work to specifically promote KCC's inclusion passport for this group, including attendance at Menopause Café.
- Collation of Workplace Adjustments across the organisation to identify trends and inform further activity, identified a significant increase in adjustments on previous years
- Update to the Dignity and Respect at Work guidance to outline expectations for reporting incidents and build a sense of psychological safety at work

Further activity proposed for 2025/26 includes:

- Continued work to on mental health, musculoskeletal and stress related absences. This includes reinforcing expectations of managing attendance proactively and positively and ensuring employees understand the importance of attendance, working to a culture shift in this area. Further targeted work will be undertaken with the ASCH and CYPE senior managers to reduce absence in these areas.
- Review, refresh and promotion of our attendance management resources.
- Enhancement of our mental health wellbeing offer, including the learning offer, to ensure that it meets the needs of our managers and staff, strengthening links with Public Health colleagues to support our agenda. Ongoing utilisation and promotion of the offer, including the support available from Maximus. Additional emphasis on resilience, in light of future change associated with LGR.
- Specific work to reduce musculoskeletal absence further. Review of musculoskeletal support offer and interventions, working alongside Health and Safety colleagues to ensure it meets the needs of the organisation, using a deep dive analysis of sickness absence data to inform actions.

- Ongoing promotion of KCC's financial wellbeing offer, including Wave Community Bank, the services of the Money and Pensions Service, My Money Matters and Kent Rewards, ensuring that meets a broader financial education agenda.
- Integration of health and wellbeing into organisational design, with the aim to increase employee engagement, productivity and overall wellbeing, and minimise the risk of poorly designed jobs.
- Incorporating wellbeing into the planned KCC staff engagement roadshows, building learning from them into our wellbeing offer for staff and managers and using this to inform broader wellbeing communications and engagement activity across the organisation.

## **Our people are motivated and deliver well for the people of Kent**

### **We will create mechanisms to support effective self-leadership across our workforce, the tools and information to take action and the coaching support to enable growth and development**

**KPI 3:** % of employees who rate their engagement with KCC positively 61.4% (-0.9p.p.)

**KPI 5:** % of Internal Movement 10.3% (-0.4 p.p.)

**KPI 9:** % of employees who feel they are able to access the right learning and development opportunities to support their role 73.5% (-1.9 p.p.)

*The Council continued to face significant challenges over the last year and employees will have been aware of them and conscious of their potential impact. There have been a number of significant restructures, improvement plans for services, an increase in volumes of people requiring our services and not least the Council's budgetary position. In that context the relative maintenance of people's engagement with its employer is a testament to them and the leadership shown by their managers. This is recognised in the largely positive views of employees of their managers, demonstrated by the staff survey, and that staff turnover (11.7%) is at a level expected of an organisation the size of KCC.*

*Internal movement has dropped slightly in comparison to last year and is 1.4% lower than voluntary turnover. The Authority knows that managers need to do more to support people's career development but what it does show is the Council continues to strike a balance between supporting people to move internally but also bringing skills, experience and new perspectives from outside of the organisation. Also the percentage of employees seeing that there are opportunities to develop their careers within KCC fell by 2.9% in the staff survey (it is now below 50%). The Council continues to support its staff in engaging with its broad development offer, both in terms of professional specific development and a more general skills and knowledge offer. Engagement with that has gone up slightly over the last year.*

The activity undertaken throughout 2024/25 to sustain the endeavour to progress the Authority's position included:

- Integration of learning outcomes from reverse mentoring programme pilot into leadership development
- KCC celebration of employees through Moments that Matter on KNet, showcasing the work of teams in delivering positive outcomes for Kent residents

- Opportunity to place a spotlight on the work of individual teams and services across the organisation on KNet, this work will continue throughout 2025.
- Opportunities for professional development have been reviewed this year both for Managers and the wider workforce, with a comprehensive offer being delivered to support Skills for the Future, Change and its impact on our working and wellbeing.
- Pilot leadership programmes are currently being tested, with targeted support for management teams and a whole KCC programme to explore Systems Leadership, with a cohort of 17 officers participating, drawn from every Directorate. Once evaluated it is hoped a second cohort will be supported.

Further activity proposed for 2025/26 includes:

- In the autumn of 2025 we will review the data for the new joiners and leavers surveys. This will be triangulated with wider HR Management information to build a fuller picture of employee experience as they join and exit the organisation. We will then refine the engagement offer to tackle any issues that emerge.
- Targeted interventions will be explored to support leadership teams once their workforce planning has been completed, the evaluation of the leadership pilots will support our learning in this area to determine the approach we need to take.
- Learning from the employee roadshows and wider staff engagement will be used to shape what ongoing support, information and guidance is needed to support teams.
- We will continue to celebrate the success of the teams across the organisation with the launch of staff awards connected to the CEO and it is hoped the Chairman's office, to demonstrate the value we place on our workforce.

## **2) Creating an environment for people to thrive**

**Clear pathways to encourage young people into our organisation**

**We will mobilise and sustain opportunities for access to careers in KCC and with partner organisations for young people aged 16-25. This work will be supported through expert advice, guidance and supported development.**

**KPI 9:** % of employees who feel they are able to access the right learning and development opportunities to support their role: 73.5% (-1.9 p.p.)

**KPI 13f:** KCC workforce representation compared to Kent working population of 16-25 years old: 7.4% (-0.7p.p.)

*In terms of employees aged between 16 & 25 years the proportion of the overall workforce has fallen by 0.7p.p – this is a fall of 1.5% in the last 2 years. The figure of 7.4% is c.2% lower than the profile of Kent. However, approximately 15% of all new recruits are in this age group, however, turnover is still significantly higher than the KCC average. Employees from this age group were more positive than other age groups about their overall learning and development experience than*

*KCC as a whole and were the most positive of all the age groups with regards organisational culture, their manager and the support they receive from them. However, given we know that most of this age group can be found in roles up to KR9 they are more positive about pay and benefits than those grade groupings as a whole – although not as positive as we strive for.*

*In the context of this age group being positive about their experience not as many, as the Council would choose, are staying to develop their careers so we have continued to work on supporting young people in Kent find entry job opportunities with the Council and to stay engaged and continue on their careers in KCC. The positive is that many do stay but the Council is conscious it needs to do more through its managers to engage these employees in developing themselves in terms of experiential opportunities as part of their work and help them see career trajectories for the future.*

*Work continues across KCC to enhance support for Social Work recruitment and grow the entry points available for the profession.*

*The work has continued on the established routes for younger people to obtain employment with the Authority. These include the Graduate Scheme, T levels, apprenticeships and the supported internship programme.*

*The Workforce Development Team within HROD has also spent time in the last year on supporting the work experience programme.*

Activity undertaken throughout 2024/25 to sustain the endeavour to progress the Authority's position included:

- Supported Internship programme for 16-25 SEND students as a pathway into employment: 13 supported interns have undertaken a programme within KCC for the 2024-25 period.
- Four T Level placements have been supported, 1 within Kent Scientific Services and 3 in Business administration
- Graduate Scheme has seen 11 cohorts on the programme to date with 47 Graduates recruited since its inception. The KCC offer is unique in the marketplace as it offers the opportunity to develop professional learning pathways and offers a genuine role whilst training. Successful completion of the programme leads to a permanent role in the relevant professional area
- KCC is recognised as the top Charitable, Education and Public Sector organisation in the Top 100 employers for graduates to work for
- Apprenticeships starts increased by c.10% in 2024-25 to 175
- Support to staff groups, which includes Aspire the group for younger employees

**Our people are well managed, and their talent nurtured as they develop their careers at KCC**

**We will work together to retain our talent, offering opportunities for career development through succession planning and clearly identified talent management programmes**

**KPI 4:** % of higher TCP ratings N/A

**KPI 6:** % Voluntary Turnover 11.7% (+1.2 p.p.)

**KPI 5:** % Internal Movement 10.3% (-0.4 p.p.)

*Turnover increased over the last year but is at the low end of what we deem to be an organisationally sustainable level. While it has increased this hasn't resulted in a corresponding movement in internal movement to support career development. However the level of internal movement has been sustained so means the organisation continues to strike a balance between internal appointments and bringing people in externally. However, we do know that staff tell the Council that many of them do not see opportunities to develop professionally at KCC and that a significant number of them say that their managers do not help identify what they need to do to develop their career in KCC. This would suggest a push factor on turnover. However, this should be viewed in the context of reasonably tight external job market, although there will always be opportunities in job roles where supply is limited, and how other aspects of KCC's offer and work are attractive to our employees.*

In this context throughout 2024/25, to sustain the endeavour to progress the Authority's position. activity included using the data we have available, to strategically inform areas for new apprenticeship standards, improved career pathways and where we can, organisationally, use flexible deployment to make best use of our staff in supporting key service delivery. The Authority has also refreshed its management development offer, including mandating continuous development for managers who have previously completed it, which will support managers in developing a culture of continuous development, skills development and planning across their services for skills gaps and shortages. Throughout the coming year they will be supported in this via the HR&OD offer

**Kent County Council is an employer of choice**

**Our employer brand is clear, and we will be known for and celebrate the moments that matter to our residents delivered through the contribution of our people.**

**KPI 7:** % of employees who are satisfied with the total employment offer 57% (+1.3p.p.)

**KPI 13:** % KCC workforce representation compared to Kent working population

**Census 2021:**

- a. Gender: Female **49.0%**
- b. Ethnicity: Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic **11.4%**
- c. Disability: Disabled **7.7%**
- d. Religion: Faith **49.1%**
- e. Gender Reassignment: Transgender **0.5%** (16+ population)
- f. Age: 16 to 25 year olds **9.5%**
- g. Sexuality: LGBTQ+ **2.9%** (16+ population)

**KCC Workforce 2023-24 to 2024-25 (compared to Census):**

- a. 79.7% to 79.4% (-0.4p.p.) difference by +30.3p.p.
- b. 9.6% to 11.6% (+2.0p.p.) difference by +0.2p.p.
- c. 5.6% to 6.1% (+0.5p.p.) difference by -1.6p.p.
- d. 45.9% to 45.8% (-0.1p.p.) difference by -3.3p.p.
- e. 0.4% to 0.4% (0.0p.p.) difference by -0.1p.p.
- f. 8.1% to 7.4% (-0.7p.p.) difference by -2.1p.p.
- g. 3.6% to 4.0% (+0.4%) difference by +1.1p.p.

*In terms of the KCC employment offer and what staff tell the Authority the KPI figure is bolstered by how employees view wellbeing and accessing the right learning to do the job. The areas of significant issue are in relation to feeling adequately paid and people's perception of the total employment package, although via the staff survey people's view of this improved*

*As such KCC continues to work hard to develop and promote its overall employment package within the financial constraints that surround it. Staff's view on the total employment package has improved for the second year in a row.*

*In terms of pay the financial circumstances of the Council provide a challenge, however, the Authority understands the need to continue to provide reasonable pay increases year on year. That said in order to address a number of challenges that are causing pressure on our pay and grading structure and in order to address some design idiosyncrasies KCC has seen the culmination of a significant amount of work, and investment, in the delivery of Kent's new grading structure. The structure has a performance progression element to it, standardises grade lengths for groups of grades and shortens the lengths of grade. This provides a transparent view of how long it will take people to reach the rate for the job (top of the grade) and enable them to progress at a quicker pace than under TCP. Apart from addressing some of the design elements of the old system and the impact of bottom up grade inflation recruitment and retention of staff was also a key consideration in its development.*

*Also, in relation to pay, work has been done to analyse and determine if there are equal pay gaps for protected characteristics other than gender. The Authority also continues to analyse and report on any gender pay gap and work on what can be done to reduce it.*

*The Council's external employer branding has been modernised and the Authority continues to make a significant investment in the use of social media in order to attract a wider range of candidates to apply for roles in KCC. This applies equally to internal staff and external candidates. Social media is being used to celebrate new joiners to KCC and staff moving roles, thus highlighting the flexibility for development within KCC.*

In this context other activity undertaken throughout 2024/25 to sustain the endeavour to progress the Authority's position included:

- Continue to pay above the Foundation Living Wage hourly rate for KSA
- Apprenticeship pay – 3<sup>rd</sup> year of tracking National Minimum Wage for first 6 months with KCC, then move to KSA
- Development of pay gap reporting dashboard to monitor pay gaps
- Review of approach to employee recognition and introduction of platform to issue non-cash awards
- Employee offer communications campaign to raise awareness of the package available, and Pension Awareness Week
- Scoping work to reframe KCC's Employee Value Proposition, including a gap analysis
- Decision to proceed with launch of EV/green lease car scheme, following employee engagement exercise – 85.5% of respondents suggested they would be interested in the scheme.
- Update to Family leave policies to include neo-natal care, to ensure compliance with statutory changes, Gifts and Hospitality policy, and Whistleblowing policies
- Re-procurement of contract with Shared Cost AVC Scheme provider for further 3 years
- Communication activity to support the rebrand of AVC Wise to My Money Matters – we continue to see a steady incline in take up of the scheme.
- Promotion of financial wellbeing offer, including Shared Cost AVC Scheme and related webinars, Will writing service, Wave Community Bank and financial education such as budgeting tools and savings calculators
- Ongoing promotion of Kent Rewards and Smartspending app, through Kent Rewards Newsletter and corporate channels

#### Planned activity for 2025/26

- Reframe the EVP, changing the narrative and resetting psychological contract during times of change with a focus on recruitment and retention, organisational and employee resilience, career development and planning
- Continue to enhance component parts of EVP, including launch of EV/Green lease car scheme
- Monitor roll out of pay strategy and approach to recognition
- Support directorates in their workforce planning through the continued monitoring of recruitment and retention data around hard to recruit/keep roles and diversity

### **3) Supporting our people as individuals**

**Our leaders and managers are accountable and drive the effective delivery of services  
We will collaborate organisation wide to support leaders and managers with their roles and responsibilities targeting interventions to support growth in each area of these areas and ensure accountability is shared for the delivery of these aspirations**

**We will foster an inclusive culture where people are treated fairly and with respect through supported development and delivery of supported learning, knowledge sharing and engagement support**

**KPI 8:** % of employees who rated their manager positively 73.6% (+0.2 p.p.)

**KPI 10:** % of employees who rate the culture of KCC positively 70.7% (+0.2 p.p.)

**KPI 12:** % of employees who rate inclusion and fair treatment in KCC positively 82.1% (0.0 p.p.)

*The 2024 staff survey shows that staff continue to feel positive about inclusion and fair treatment at KCC although there continue to be some differences in experience for minority groups, notably disabled staff, who were less positive than non-disabled employees across 13 of the 14 themes of the survey. The greatest areas of difference for disabled staff were relating to pay and benefits (34% compared to 43%) and My Work (74% compared to 82%).*

*Minority ethnic staff continue to be less positive on the theme of pay and benefits (33% compared to 43%). Other indicators, such as turnover data, suggests there may be a retention issue amongst some groups – for example we know that turnover amongst disabled staff has increased from last year, as has LGBQ+, and while minority ethnic staff turnover hasn't significantly changed it is still running a number of percentage points higher than the average for KCC (as is disabled staff's). That said we are still recruiting and retaining a significant number of people with these protected characteristics which shows in the Authority's significant move towards its aim of the workforce mirroring the population that it serves.*

*In terms of sickness absence the percentage of sick days lost for disabled and minority ethnic staff has increased over the last year. In terms of disability they make up 6% of our workforce and account for 8.7% of days lost. While minority ethnic staff's proportion of days sick taken has increased to 9.8%, they make up 11.6% of our workforce.*

*Managers can have a profound impact on an individual's experience of the organisation. The 2024 staff survey shows there has been a slight increase in staff responses rating their manager positively, from 73.4% to 73.6%. However, insight from our engagement with managers and hearing experiences of staff still reveal that, in some cases, managers are more comfortable addressing some protected characteristics/staff groups than others, and focus their conversations on structures and processes to support diverse teams rather than a more nuanced approach with the individual employee which delivers more empathy and increased engagement.*

An extensive programme of activity continues to be delivered to support leaders, managers and staff to create a more inclusive culture, this included:

- Development and launch of Managing into the Future (incorporating continuing managerial development for our management population)
- Launch of Skills for the Future
- Developing a programme of 'Managing our People' Inclusion workshops to pilot from April 2025 onwards
- Expect Respect task and finish group to refresh external campaign on zero tolerance stance to incidents of bullying, harassment and abuse, to be reflected to staff internally across channels.
- CMT Open Door programme with Mental Health Support Network
- Implementation of Disability Inclusion action plan following Safe Space workshops with Level Playing Field
- Introduced mandatory inclusion objective and managing people objective as part of the revised managing and supporting performance framework and performance criteria
- Implementing changes to policies and guidance following new duty to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace under the Worker Protection Act 2023, including development of Dignity at Work hub on KNet to bring together resources.
- Working with Level Playing Field staff group to develop a pilot session about building confidence of disabled staff to have a more positive conversation on their workplace adjustments requests. The total number of workplace adjustments across the organisation has increased in 2024/25.
- Working with Staff Ethnic Diversity Forum to review racial inequality e-learning on DELTA
- Communication and engagement activity to include focus on CMT's commitment to disability inclusion and White Ribbon
- Communication of celebratory moments to include Race Equality Week, Time to Talk day, LGBTQ+ History month, International Women's Day, Faith awareness days, Black History Month etc.
- Evolving Building Inclusive Leadership development programme to incorporate self-assessment tool for use in teams to explore how to make a greater impact and effect change
- Renewal of Disability Confident employer status
- Working with Aspire on understanding personal and professional development needs to inform offer for young people
- Reviewing ethnicity and disability pay gap reporting
- Deep dive into HR case data for ethnic minority staff
- Repurposing Corporate Equality Group and introduction of Equality Maturity Matrix Self-Assessment to focus on priority activity across KCC and inform analysis for Annual Equality & Diversity reporting

Activity planned for 2025/26 includes:

- Launch new Expect Respect campaign externally and internally, along with updated Dignity and Respect at Work guidance and case studies to build understanding, focused on outlining expectations and consequences
- Roll out of mandatory Managing our People Inclusion workshop programme to all managers
- CMT Open Door with Staff Ethnic Diversity Forum and planning for further sessions with staff groups
- Deliver building improvement programme, working with AccessAble
- Systems development for collating Workplace Adjustments in Oracle Cloud

There are a number of key priorities for the coming year in terms of further supporting our managers and leaders to help them get the best levels of performance from their teams. The refreshed performance management framework, introduced as part of the new grading structure, provides a foundation for that with our development offer being at the vanguard of supporting managers to create a culture of high engagement and high performance in the organisation.

Also there are priorities in focus on staff retention by improving staff experience of the organisation and supporting people to help them deliver well. This will include supporting leaders and managers to manage staff through periods of change, and to ensure any incidents of bullying, harassment and abuse at work are reported and responded to effectively.

The focus on disability inclusion will continue. This is a recognition that we have people who have a disability when they join us but also, due to the age profile of our staff group, that people will develop long term health conditions while employed by us. Whilst there is work already underway to deliver the action plan, there is a need to make a step change to shift the dial by having a different conversation about disability to improve the experience of our employees.

#### **4) Attracting, retaining and maximising our talent**

**Our people have what they need to innovate and change**

**We will be future focused, reimagining what is possible within our organisation and across our sector capitalising on digital skills and technology**

**KPI 5:** % Internal movement 10.3% (-0.4p.p.)

**KPI 7:** % of employees who are satisfied with the total employment offer 57.3% (+1.3p.p.)

**KPI 9:** % of employees who feel they are able to access the right learning and development opportunities to support their role 73.5% (-1.9p.p.)

*KCC continues to provide and adapt its learning and development offer to staff to meet the workforce's changing needs but also to support differing ways of service delivery and the adaptive needs of residents. There is an extensive suite of professional development available as well as managerial development which ensures our managers stay ahead of what is required. The Authority has also embraced the changing focus on digital skills and the role it plays in service delivery and supporting staff to work more efficiently and productively. Learning and development forms part of the overall employment offer and returns a more positive outlook from staff than other aspects of the offer, such as pay.*

In order to ensure the continuous development of our workforce the following activities have been undertaken:

- Managing in KCC has been reviewed, tested with pilot programmes and launched in April 2035. The programme has been framed into units that provide the opportunity for Managers to explore the important issues for the organisation that will make certain we can support and sustain our workforce. These include:
  - The Wellbeing Manager
  - The Empowering Manager
  - The Inclusive Manager
  - The Resilient Manager
  - The Flexible Manager
  - The Culture Manager
  - The Performance Manager
  - Managing Uncertainty
- Competency framework for statutory responsibilities (Adult Social Services) – implemented a programme of mandatory development in the directorate graduated and targeted by accountability level
- Following analysis of the digital skills maturity index it is planned to engage with stakeholders to work on refocusing our offer to meet the needs identified by the gap analysis and ensure people can find the development they need

In addition, the communication and engagement activity we prioritise continues to provide the resources and support to ensure managers can bring focus to the good conversations that support team engagement and foster collaboration.

**Our people are recruited based on our values and their potential as much for their experience and knowledge**

**We will use a variety of recruitment approaches which will be modern, responsive, inclusive and enhance the candidate experience.**

**KPI 6:** Voluntary Turnover rate 10.3% (-0.4p.p.)

**KPI 11:** % of employees that see our values demonstrated in the way we operate 72.5% (+0.6p.p.)

*KCC continues to demonstrate a strong score in relation to its workforce reflecting the values that is expected from it. This is due to a combination of factors in terms of recruiting the right people, effective development and strong leadership from local managers. That said there are points of improvement, not least in how staff see the actions of senior managers reflecting those values. This latter point can be affected by a range of factors such as budget restraints, restructures and organisational wide changes. However, this is an area that continues to require future focus – not least at a time moving forward towards local government reorganisation. The Council has undertaken a wide range of activity to attract the right type of people, to ensure it is workforce is diverse and that it drives towards an inclusive culture as part of the Authority's key values to deliver performance from our employees that best service the residents of Kent.*

The activity undertaken throughout 2024/25 to sustain the endeavour to progress the Authority's position included:

- Used data from the recruitment candidate survey to understand the candidates experience and thereby improve our recruitment processes
- Increased use of social media to reach and attract more good quality candidates – include in this is a range of employer brand awareness posts on benefits of working for KCC and posts highlighting staff who have joined or obtained new roles
- Change of external recruitment support company – they provide market information around supply and information on good practice elsewhere and what is hot in the market
- Creation of a values quiz to help candidates understand the KCC Values and how they fit with those values
- Outreach activity with DWP Work Coaches on KCC as an inclusive employer
- Deep dive analysis into recruitment data for minority ethnic staff to understand the difference in applicants versus hires
- Review of KCC's jobs website content to enhance disability/reasonable adjustments information to attract diverse candidates
- Development of recruitment dashboard to support monitoring and analysis
- Update to Induction checklist to reflect outcomes from Level Playing Field Safe space workshop discussions

Activity planned for 2025/6 includes:

- Review strategic workforce planning data to inform talent management activity
- Review of all approaches to recruitment being adopted and used in the Council – end to end
- Review of new joiner survey data to inform the review of our recruitment approaches
- Review of the values-based question bank
- Review of use of AI in the recruitment process
- Review of recruitment and entry routes into KCC to support social mobility outcomes
- Collate socio-economic data as part of the recruitment process and as part of the Data Re-Ask internally to build a dataset to inform activity to meet outcomes
- Review of Induction and development offer to incorporate KCC's zero tolerance approach to discrimination, bullying and harassment
- Ongoing review of inclusive recruitment approaches, including support for neurodiverse applicants

The table below shows the changing profile of applicants and new hires:

### Recruitment Activity by Protected Characteristic

Disability Summary				
	2023-24		2024-25	
	Applications	Hired	Applied	Hired
Disabled	7.4%	8.4%	8.0%	9.1%
Not Disabled	90.2%	90.3%	87.2%	88.7%
Chose not to declare	2.5%	1.3%	4.9%	2.2%

Ethnicity Summary				
	2023-24		2024-25	
	Applied	Hired	Applied	Hired
Ethnic Minority	36.7%	18.3%	39.9%	22.1%
White	58.8%	76.1%	54.0%	72.3%
Chose not to declare	4.6%	5.6%	6.1%	5.6%

Gender Summary				
	2023-24		2024-25	
	Applied	Hired	Applied	Hired
Female	65.3%	76.3%	63.1%	74.2%
Male	32.0%	19.5%	33.0%	21.6%
Chose not to declare	2.6%	4.2%	4.0%	4.2%

Faith/Religion summary				
	2023-24		2024-25	
	Applied	Hired	Applied	Hired
Faith	56.0%	47.0%	56.1%	44.4%
No Faith	35.8%	43.1%	34.5%	44.4%
Chose not to declare	8.2%	9.9%	9.4%	11.2%

Sexual orientation summary				
	2023-24		2024-25	
	Applied	Hired	Applied	Hired
LGBQ+	6.3%	6.2%	6.6%	7.3%
Heterosexual	84.1%	83.3%	82.5%	81.0%
Chose not to declare	9.6%	10.5%	11.0%	11.7%

Age Summary				
	2023-24		2024-25	
	Applied	Hired	Applied	Hired
25 and under	18.6%	15.2%	20.1%	14.6%
26 - 35	30.8%	23.9%	31.3%	26.0%
36 - 45	24.6%	26.5%	23.3%	24.9%
46 - 55	15.3%	18.9%	13.6%	19.4%
56 - 65	6.0%	9.2%	5.7%	8.3%
over 65	0.5%	0.6%	0.4%	0.7%
Chose not to declare	4.4%	5.8%	5.7%	6.1%
Unknown				

Transgender				
	2023-24		2024-25	
	Applied	Hired	Applied	Hired
Transgender	0.5%	0.3%	0.6%	0.2%
Cisgender	95.5%	94.9%	94.0%	94.3%
Chose not to declare	1.4%	1.1%	1.5%	1.2%
Unknown	2.6%	3.7%	4.0%	4.2%