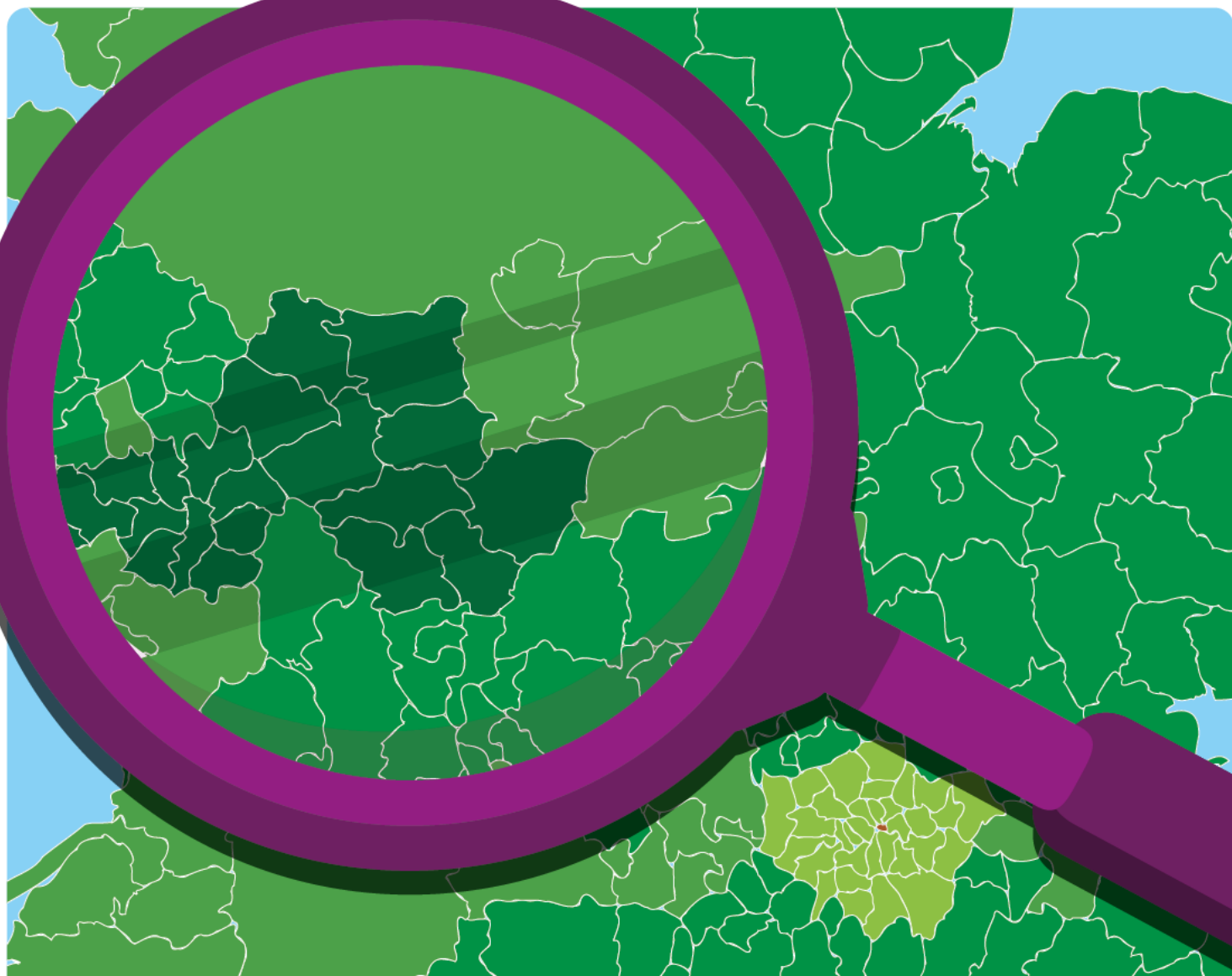


LG Workforce Strategy 2024

Survey of English councils



Research report

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Summary

Background

Between October and December 2024, the Local Government Association (LGA) conducted an online survey of all councils in England, asking them to share their views about key elements of the workforce, including recruitment and retention, pay rewards and wellbeing at work. The information provided will help to analyse and act on key workforce issues facing local government. The information collected is used to:

- Limit data requests from government departments direct to local authorities
- Enable authorities to compare themselves against others in relation to key metrics
- Identify best practice and inform policy development
- Inform our priorities for national action and central government engagement.

Key findings

- Almost all respondents (94 per cent) said they were currently experiencing at least one recruitment and retention difficulty.
- Four out of five councils (80 per cent) said they were experiencing difficulties recruiting and retaining children's social workers.
- In response to recruitment and retention difficulties, 81 per cent of all councils said they provided market supplements for some posts.
- A large percentage of councils (90 per cent) reported they had at least one grow your own scheme. Two-thirds of councils (67 per cent) had them in place for jobs in planning.

- A third of councils (33 per cent) said they already used total reward benefit statements and revised the standard working week as an element in their approach to rewards.
- On average councils recorded 49 cases of verbal abuse, 32 threats of violence, 65 physical assaults, and 32 other incidents committed against officers.
- A third of councils (32 per cent) reported sickness absence was due to stress, depression, anxiety, mental health and fatigue.
- Two-thirds of councils (65 per cent) of all councils directly employed staff on zero-hour contracts, 33 per cent do not.
- Two-fifths of councils (41 per cent) reported the number of HR staff in their authority has decreased over the last three years.

Introduction

From October to December 2024, the LGA conducted an online survey of all councils in England on key elements of the workforce. This included:

- Recruitment and retention
- Training and development
- Pay and rewards
- Leadership management
- Wellbeing at work
- Workforce policy.

The survey was carried out to inform government, the LGA, and regional employer organisations of key insights into the challenges facing the local government workforce both now and in the future. This report aims to assist councils in developing effective workforce plans, implement key actions, and help galvanise the sector to work more collaboratively.

Methodology

The survey was conducted by the LGA's Research and Information Team using an online questionnaire. An email containing a unique link was sent to all heads of HR (or equivalent position) at all councils in England (317 in total). Two councils responded on behalf of themselves and another council, which meant that the total number of potential respondents was 315. The survey was available to complete between October and December 2024, and the final overall response rate was 34 per cent (108 councils).

This level of response means that these respondents should not necessarily be taken to be widely representative of the views of all Heads of HR or equivalent. Rather, they are a snapshot of the views of this group of respondents.

To make the results of this survey more representative of heads of HR or equivalent, responses have been weighted to be more proportionate of councils overall.

For questions collecting numerical data from respondents, where possible (that is, where a sufficient quality and quantity of figures were provided by the respondents) the total for these figures was estimated across all councils in England using a process called hot deck imputation. This process aims to match each council which did not provide a numerical figure to the most similar council that did provide data, and to use that council's figure as an estimated placeholder. Where an insufficient amount of data was provided for this approach to be reliable, a simple average among the provided figures has been calculated instead. In such cases, these averages should be treated with caution and not be assumed to be representative of English councils overall.

In addition, the following should be considered when interpreting the findings of this survey:

- Where tables and figures report the base, the description refers to the group of people who were asked the question. The number provided refers to the unweighted number of respondents who answered each question. Please note that bases can vary throughout the survey.
- Numbers and percentages are provided for any questions where the base was less than 50. To calculate the number of respondents who provided a certain response for other questions, simply multiply the percentage provided by the base.
- Throughout the report, percentages may not appear to add up to exactly 100 per cent due to rounding.

Response rate breakdown

As Table 1 shows, the council type with the highest level of engagement was unitary authorities, at 49 per cent (31 councils). Thirty-nine per cent of metropolitan districts

(36 councils) responded. Thirty-one per cent of districts (51 councils) responded to the survey. The lowest level of response was from London boroughs (at 27 per cent, or nine councils) and counties (at 24 per cent, or five councils).

Regionally, as shown in Table 2, the highest level of engagement was from councils in the Yorkshire and Humber region, with a response rate of 60 per cent (9 councils). This was followed by the North East, with a response rate of 58 per cent, (7 councils), and the East of England region at 41 per cent (20 councils). Councils from the North West had a response rate of 39 per cent (14 councils), whilst 36 per cent (14 councils) from the East Midlands responded, and 35 per cent (24 councils) from the South East responded. Twenty-seven per cent of London Boroughs and councils in the West Midlands (nine councils each) responded. The lowest level of response was from councils in the South West, with a response rate of 14 per cent (four councils).

Table 1: Response rate by type of council

Type of council	Number of questionnaires	Number of responses	Response rate
District	162	51	31%
County	21	5	24%
London borough	33	9	27%
Metropolitan district	36	14	39%
Unitary	63	31	49%

Table 2: Response rate by region

Region	Number of questionnaires	Number of responses	Response rate
East of England	49	20	41%
East Midlands	39	14	36%
London	33	9	27%
North East	12	7	58%
North West	36	14	39%
South East	69	24	35%
South West	29	4	14%
West Midlands	33	9	27%
Yorkshire and Humber	15	9	60%

LG Workforce Strategy Survey

This section contains analysis of the full results from the survey.

Recruitment and retention

Recruitment and retention difficulties

Respondents were asked about any recruitment and retention difficulties their council was facing based on specific types of role. The roles that councils were asked about varied by council type, as certain types are responsible for specific service areas, whereas others are not. Almost all respondents (94 per cent) said they were currently experiencing at least one recruitment and/or retention difficulty.

Tables 3 to 10 show the results for recruitment difficulties for different groups of roles, whilst Tables 11 to 18 show the results for retention difficulties for these roles. Each table shows the percentage of respondents who indicated that they had recruitment or retention difficulties for each of the roles in question. As these tables show, the roles facing the greatest recruitment difficulties were:

- children's social workers (80 per cent)
- adult social workers (77 per cent)
- educational psychologists (73 per cent)
- legal professionals (68 per cent)
- mental health social workers (63 per cent).

The roles facing the greatest retention difficulties were:

- children's social workers (80 per cent)
- adult social workers (61 per cent)
- mental health social workers (52 per cent)

- educational psychologists (46 per cent)
- planning officers (45 per cent)

Respondents were able to specify other types of roles for which they had recruitment and/or retention difficulties. Common, additional types of roles mentioned included the following:

- drivers for heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) and other highway roles
- mechanic roles, including mechanical fitters and other operatives
- arborists, foresters and environmental services
- audit and finance roles
- property roles
- health and safety and public health roles.

Table 3: Extent of recruitment difficulties (central services)

	County	Single-tier	District	All councils
Legal professionals	40%	78%	59%	68%
ICT professionals	20%	47%	17%	33%
Finance officers (other than s151)	0%	25%	28%	25%
Section 151 officer	0%	4%	0%	14%
HR and industrial relations officers	20%	12%	11%	12%
Democratic service officers	0%	4%	20%	11%
Cleaners, domestics	0%	14%	7%	10%
ICT user support officers	0%	12%	9%	10%
Call centre agents/operators	20%	8%	7%	8%
Personal assistants and other secretaries	0%	6%	2%	4%
Administrative officers/assistants	0%	4%	0%	2%

Unweighted base: 102 (5 counties, 46 districts and 51 single-tier councils).

Table 4: Extent of recruitment difficulties (other roles at all council types)

	County	Single-tier	District	All councils
Planning officers	80%	53%	67%	62%
Chartered surveyors	40%	53%	39%	47%
Gardeners and grounds people	0%	2%	4%	35%
Engineering professionals	40%	31%	7%	21%
Civil enforcement officers	0%	24%	9%	16%
Heavy goods vehicle drivers	20%	18%	13%	16%
Economic development officers	0%	10%	0%	8%
Other front-line staff	0%	4%	7%	5%
Community drivers	0%	4%	0%	2%
Other (please specify below)	0%	14%	15%	14%

Unweighted base: 102 (5 counties, 46 districts and 51 single-tier councils).

Table 5: Extent of recruitment difficulties (adult social care)

	County	Single-tier	All councils
Adult social workers	80%	75%	77%
Mental health social workers	100%	57%	63%
Occupational therapists (adults)	80%	51%	54%
Adult care workers	80%	27%	34%
Adult care community support worker	40%	16%	18%
Adult residential care managers	20%	16%	18%
Home care workers	40%	14%	18%
Adult day care managers	20%	14%	16%
Adult day care workers	20%	14%	16%
Home care managers	20%	10%	13%

Unweighted base: 56 (5 counties and 51 single-tier councils).

Table 6: Extent of recruitment difficulties (children’s social care)

	County	Single-tier	All councils
Children's social workers	80%	78%	80%
Children's residential care workers	80%	39%	45%
Children's residential care managers	40%	27%	30%
Occupational therapists (children's)	20%	29%	29%
Early years specialists	0%	16%	14%
Family support workers	0%	10%	9%

Unweighted base: 56 (5 counties and 51 single-tier councils).

Table 7: Extent of recruitment difficulties (education)

	County	Single-tier	All councils
Educational psychologists	100%	69%	73%
School crossing patrol attendants	0%	10%	21%
Cooks	0%	16%	20%
Teachers	0%	6%	20%
Kitchen and catering assistants	0%	14%	16%
Teaching assistants	20%	20%	7%
Childcare/playgroup assistants	0%	4%	5%
Education welfare officers	0%	6%	5%
Nursery nurses	0%	6%	5%
School mid-day assistants	20%	18%	4%

Unweighted base: 56 (5 counties and 51 single-tier councils).

Table 8: Extent of recruitment difficulties (other single-tier and county roles)

	County	Single-tier	All councils
Trading standards officers	0%	8%	11%
Energy managers	0%	6%	7%
Librarians	0%	2%	2%
Library assistants/clerks	0%	2%	2%

Unweighted base: 56 (5 counties and 51 single-tier councils).

Table 9: Extent of recruitment difficulties (housing, planning and trades)

	District	Single-tier	All councils
Building control officers	35%	49%	43%
Housing officers	22%	16%	19%
Electricians, electrical fitters	9%	24%	16%
Plumbers, heating and ventilating	7%	12%	9%
Carpenters and joiners	2%	12%	7%
Bricklayers, masons	2%	10%	6%
Painters and decorators	2%	8%	5%
Plasterers	4%	6%	5%
Craftworkers	2%	6%	4%

Unweighted base: 97 (46 districts and 51 single-tier councils).

Table 10: Extent of recruitment difficulties (other single-tier and district roles)

	District	Single-tier	All councils
Environmental health officers	41%	37%	40%
Conservation and environmental protection officers	13%	20%	18%
Benefits and local taxation officers/assistants	11%	16%	13%
Refuse and salvage occupations	9%	8%	9%
Street scene operatives	0%	4%	9%
Electoral services officers	4%	8%	6%
Countryside and park ranger/warden	2%	4%	3%
Sports and leisure assistants	17%	12%	2%
Sports coaches, instructors and officials	0%	4%	2%

Unweighted base: 97 (46 districts and 51 single-tier councils).

Table 11: Extent of retention difficulties (central services)

	County	Single-tier	District	All councils
Legal professionals	40%	39%	34%	37%
ICT professionals	20%	27%	3%	17%
Finance officers (other than s151)	0%	17%	16%	15%
Section 151 officer	0%	5%	6%	5%
ICT user support officers	0%	10%	0%	5%
Call centre agents/operators	20%	5%	0%	4%
Cleaners, domestics	0%	7%	0%	4%
Democratic service officers	0%	0%	6%	3%
HR and industrial relations officers	0%	2%	0%	1%

Unweighted base: 78 (5 counties, 32 districts and 41 single-tier councils).

Table 12: Extent of retention difficulties (other services across all council types)

	County	Single-tier	District	All councils
Planning officers	60%	37%	53%	45%
Chartered surveyors	40%	29%	25%	28%
Engineering professionals	20%	22%	6%	15%
Civil enforcement officers	0%	15%	6%	10%
Heavy goods vehicle drivers	0%	0%	9%	4%
Economic development officers	0%	2%	6%	4%
Other front-line staff	0%	0%	6%	3%
Gardeners and grounds people	0%	2%	3%	3%
Other (please specify below)	0%	12%	9%	10%

Unweighted base: 78 (5 counties, 32 districts and 41 single-tier councils).

Table 13: Extent of retention difficulties (adult social care)

	County	Single-tier	All councils
Adult social workers	60%	61%	61%
Mental health social workers	60%	51%	52%
Occupational therapists (adults)	60%	32%	35%
Adult care workers	40%	22%	24%
Adult day care workers	20%	15%	15%
Adult residential care managers	20%	15%	15%
Adult care community support worker	20%	12%	13%
Home care workers	40%	10%	13%
Adult day care managers	20%	10%	11%
Home care managers	20%	7%	9%

Unweighted base: 46 (5 counties and 41 single-tier councils).

Table 14: Extent of retention difficulties (children’s social care)

	County	Single-tier	All
Children's social workers	80%	80%	80%
Children's residential care workers	60%	24%	28%
Occupational therapists (children's)	20%	24%	24%
Children's residential care managers	20%	15%	15%
Early years specialists	0%	10%	9%
Family support workers	0%	5%	4%

Unweighted base: 46 (5 counties and 41 single-tier councils).

Table 15: Extent of retention difficulties (education)

	County	Single-tier	All councils
Educational psychologists	100%	39%	46%
Teachers	20%	12%	13%
School crossing patrol attendants	0%	7%	7%
Cooks	0%	7%	7%
Education welfare officers	0%	5%	4%
Nursery nurses	0%	5%	4%
Teaching assistants	0%	5%	4%
Kitchen and catering assistants	0%	5%	4%
School mid-day assistants	0%	2%	2%

Unweighted base: 46 (5 counties and 41 single-tier councils).

Table 16: Extent of retention difficulties (other single-tier and county roles)

	County	Single-tier	All councils
Trading standards officers	0%	12%	11%

Unweighted base: 46 (5 counties and 41 single-tier councils).

Table 17: Extent of retention difficulties (housing, planning and trades)

	District	Single-tier	All councils
Building control officers	28%	37%	33%
Electricians, electrical fitters	6%	15%	11%
Housing officers	9%	7%	8%
Plumbers, heating and ventilating	3%	12%	8%
Bricklayers, masons	3%	7%	5%
Carpenters and joiners	3%	7%	5%
Craftworkers	3%	2%	3%
Painters and decorators	3%	2%	3%
Plasterers	3%	0%	1%

Unweighted base: 73 (32 districts and 41 single-tier councils).

Table 18: Extent of retention difficulties (other single-tier and district roles)

	District	Single-tier	All councils
Environmental health officers	28%	27%	27%
Conservation and environmental protection officers	6%	7%	7%
Benefits and local taxation officers/assistants	6%	5%	5%
Refuse and salvage occupations	6%	5%	5%
Electoral services officers	6%	0%	3%
Sports coaches, instructors and officials	0%	2%	1%
Sports and leisure assistants	0%	2%	1%
Street scene operatives	3%	0%	1%

Unweighted base: 73 (32 districts and 41 single-tier councils).

Market Supplements

Respondents were asked if they provided market supplements. A large majority (81 per cent) said that they did, whilst 16 per cent said that they did not, and 3 per cent did not know. Market supplements were notably more common among single-tier and county councils (94 per cent) than among districts (69 per cent). The results are shown in Table 19.

Table 19: Does your authority provide market supplements?

	Single-tier and counties	Districts	All councils
Yes	94%	69%	81%
No	4%	27%	16%
Don't know	2%	5%	3%

Unweighted base: 106

Respondents who said that they did provide market supplements were asked which occupations they provided these supplements for. Table 20, Table 21, and Table 22 below show the roles for which respondents said they provide market supplements for, broken down by the type of council that holds responsibility for those occupations.

As Table 20 shows, the roles common to all council types which most frequently received market supplements were planning officers (33 per cent), legal professionals (27 per cent), ICT professionals (21 per cent) and chartered surveyors (21 per cent). Half (50 per cent) of county councils provided it for engineering professionals.

Table 20: Please indicate which of the following occupations, if any, receive market supplements (counties, single-tier and district roles).

	Counties	Single-tier	Districts	All councils
Planning officers	25%	20%	53%	33%
Legal professionals	25%	24%	33%	27%
ICT professionals	0%	24%	19%	21%
Chartered surveyors	25%	20%	22%	21%
Finance officers (other than s151)	25%	10%	17%	13%
Engineering professionals	50%	14%	3%	11%
Section 151 officer	0%	4%	14%	8%
Economic development officers	0%	4%	8%	5%
Heavy goods vehicle drivers	0%	4%	6%	4%
Administrative officers/assistants	0%	4%	0%	2%
ICT user support officers	0%	2%	3%	2%
Other front-line staff	0%	4%	0%	2%
Democratic service officers	0%	0%	3%	1%
HR and industrial relations officers	0%	0%	3%	1%
Gardeners and grounds people	0%	0%	3%	1%
Other (please specify below)	50%	45%	31%	40%

Unweighted base: 91 (counties – 4, districts – 36 and single-tiers – 51)

Note: roles which received no market supplements from any respondents have been omitted from this table.

As Table 21 shows, the roles specific to single-tier and county councils which most frequently received market supplements were children's social workers (44 per cent), mental health social workers (29 per cent), and adult social workers (24 per cent). Half (50 per cent) of counties said they provided market supplements for both children's and adult's occupational therapists, mental health social workers, educational psychologists and children's social workers.

Table 21: Please indicate which of the following occupations, if any, receive market supplements (counties and single-tier roles).

	Counties	Single-tier	All councils
Children's social workers	50%	43%	44%
Mental health social workers	50%	27%	29%
Adult social workers	25%	24%	24%
Occupational therapists (adult's)	50%	12%	15%
Occupational therapists (children's)	50%	8%	11%
Educational psychologists	50%	6%	9%
Trading standards officers	0%	6%	5%
Children's residential care managers	0%	4%	4%
Early years specialists	0%	4%	4%
Adult care workers	0%	4%	4%
Children's residential care workers	0%	2%	2%
Teachers	0%	2%	2%
Adult day care managers	0%	2%	2%
Adult residential care managers	0%	2%	2%
Home care workers	0%	2%	2%

Unweighted base: 55 (counties – 4 and single-tiers – 51).

Note: roles which received no market supplements from any respondents have been omitted from this table.

As Table 22 shows, the roles specific to single-tier and district councils which most frequently received market supplements were building control officers (30 per cent), environmental health officers (13 per cent), electoral service officers, and electricians and electrical fitters (both 6 per cent).

Table 22: Please indicate which of the following occupations, if any, receive market supplements (single-tier and district roles).

	Districts	Single-tier	All councils
Building control officers	42%	22%	30%
Environmental health officers	11%	14%	13%
Electoral services officers	11%	2%	6%
Electricians, electrical fitters	6%	6%	6%
Housing officers	6%	4%	5%
Painters and decorators	6%	2%	3%
Plasterers	6%	2%	3%
Plumbers, heating and ventilating	3%	4%	3%
Sports coaches, instructors and officials	3%	4%	3%
Conservation and environmental protection officers	0%	4%	2%
Craftworkers	3%	2%	2%
Bricklayers and masons	3%	2%	2%
Carpenters and joiners	3%	2%	2%
Benefits and local taxation officers/assistants	0%	2%	1%
Refuse and salvage occupations	0%	2%	1%
Street scene operatives	3%	0%	1%

Unweighted base: 87 (districts – 36 and single-tiers – 51). Note: roles which received no market supplements from any respondents have been omitted from this table.

Training and development

Staff training expenditure

Respondents were asked to provide how much they had spent on training their employees in the 2023/24 financial year. As Table 23 shows, respondents spent an average (mean) of £417,500 on training for their employees. The minimum council expenditure was £13,000 and the maximum was £5,000,000. The median amount spent was £139,000 (the median is an average measure which, unlike the mean, is not skewed by very large upper values, and is thus more representative of a typical respondent). Due to the small number of respondents who provided data, it is important to read these figures as a broad estimate.

Table 23: For the 2023/24 financial year, what was your authority's expenditure on training for your employees?

	Net training expenditure
Mean	£417,500
Minimum	£13,000
Median	£139,000
Maximum	£5,000,000

Unweighted base: 74. Note: figures have been rounded to the nearest 100.

Respondents were asked if they had plans to increase, decrease or maintain their current levels of expenditure on training for staff. As Table 24 shows, 60 per cent of councils said that they planned to maintain current levels of expenditure on training for staff, whilst 13 per cent planned to increase training expenditure, 12 per cent planned to decrease this expenditure, and 14 per cent did not know what their council's plans were. When the data was broken down by type of council, 68 per cent of districts said they planned to maintain their expenditure, compared to 51 per cent of counties and single-tier councils. Single-tier and counties were notably more

likely to plan to decrease training expenditure compared to districts (at 23 per cent compared with 2 per cent).

Table 24. Do you have plans to increase, decrease or maintain current levels of expenditure on training for staff in real terms during 2023/2024?

	Single-tier and counties	Districts	All councils
We plan to increase current levels of expenditure on training for staff	9%	18%	13%
We plan to maintain current levels of expenditure on training for staff	51%	68%	60%
We plan to decrease current levels of expenditure on training for staff	23%	2%	12%
Don't know	17%	12%	14%

Unweighted base: 106

Respondents were asked to provide their expenditure on training specifically for member development in the 2023/24 financial year. As Table 25 shows, respondents spent an average (mean) of £5,900 on member development. The minimum council expenditure was £600, and the maximum was £14,800. The median amount spent was £5,000. Due to the small number of respondents who provided data, it is important to read these figures as a broad estimate.

Table 25. For the 2023/2024 financial year, what was the expenditure of your authority to provide training specifically for member development?

	Net training expenditure
Mean (average)	£5,900
Minimum	£600
Median	£5,000
Maximum	£14,800

Unweighted base: 45. Note: figures have been rounded to the nearest 100.

Councils were asked if they had plans to increase, decrease or maintain the current level of expenditure on training for members. As Table 26 shows, just under half (49 per cent) of councils said that they planned to maintain their current levels of member training expenditure, whilst 4 per cent said that they planned to increase this expenditure and 3 per cent said that they planned to decrease it. However, a large proportion (44 per cent) said they did not know. There were few appreciable distinctions between districts and single-tier and county councils.

Table 26. Do you have plans to increase, decrease or maintain current levels of expenditure on training for members in real terms during 2024/25?

	Single-tier and counties	Districts	All councils
We plan to increase current levels of expenditure on training for members	4%	3%	4%
We plan to maintain current levels of expenditure on training for members	47%	51%	49%
We plan to decrease current levels of expenditure on training for members	2%	4%	3%
Don't know	47%	41%	44%

Unweighted base: 108

Grow your own scheme

Respondents were asked which of a series of occupations, if any, had a 'grow your own' scheme in their council. This refers to any council-defined development programmes which identify and train existing employees to support their career progression. Table 27 displays the responses to this question, showing that 90 per cent of councils said they had at least one 'grow your own' scheme. The most common occupations to have such a scheme were planning (67 per cent), finance (49 per cent), legal, environmental health (both 46 per cent) and human resources (39 per cent). Planning was notably more common among districts than single-tier and county councils (77 per cent compared with 56 per cent). However health and safety roles (22 per cent compared with 9 per cent), and engineering roles (26 per cent compared with 5 per cent), had these schemes in a larger proportion of single-tier and county councils than among districts.

Table 27. Which of the following occupations, if any, have a grow your own scheme?

	Single-tier and counties	District	All councils
At least one 'grow your own' scheme	92%	89%	90%
Planning	56%	77%	67%
Finance	53%	46%	49%
Legal	56%	37%	46%
Environmental health	34%	58%	46%
Human resources	41%	37%	39%
Social Work	80%	N/A	38%
ICT	33%	29%	31%
Building Control	33%	22%	27%
Occupational Therapy	43%	N/A	21%
Health and safety	22%	9%	16%
Engineering	26%	5%	15%
Other	28%	23%	25%
No 'grow your own' scheme	7%	11%	9%
Don't know	10%	2%	6%

Unweighted base: 105

Pay and rewards

Respondents were asked whether their council had trade union learning representatives. As Table 28 shows, 21 per cent said that they did, whilst 62 per cent

said that they did not, and 17 per cent did not know. The percentage who had these representatives among single-tier and county councils was notably higher (36 per cent) than among districts (7 per cent).

Table 28. Does your council currently have Trade Union Learning representatives?

	Single-tier and counties	Districts	All councils
Yes	36%	7%	21%
No	42%	81%	62%
Don't know	22%	12%	17%

Unweighted base: 106

Respondents were asked which of a series of elements they were using, or planning to use, in their approach to rewards. Because significant proportions of respondents answered that they did not know, the percentages for each element were calculated both including, and excluding, those respondents. As Table 29 shows, approximately a third of respondents (33 per cent), excluding those who did not know, were already using total reward benefit statements, and the same proportion were already using a revised standard working week. Almost all respondents (93 per cent) were already using other flexible benefits, including salary sacrifice schemes. Those specifying 'other flexible benefits' mentioned a range of schemes, including:

- leave buying and selling schemes
- additional voluntary contributions (AVCs)
- salary sacrifice
- car schemes (including electric vehicles)
- cycle to work
- childcare support schemes

- discounts (gym, retail, tech)
- health cover
- benefit portals
- flexible working
- credit unions
- wellbeing support
- learning opportunities.

Additional benefits included season tickets, parking, volunteering, internal job referrals, and rental or utility support.

Table 29. Which, if any, of the following elements do you use, or are you planning to use, in your approach to rewards? (All councils)

	Already in use	Implementing in the next financial year	Planning to implement soon	Don't know
Total reward benefit statements	16%	4%	29%	51%
Total reward benefit statements (excluding don't know)	33%	8%	59%	N/A
Revising standard working week	8%	1%	15%	76%
Revising standard working week (excluding don't know)	33%	4%	63%	N/A
Other flexible benefits (including salary sacrifice schemes)	80%	1%	5%	13%
Other flexible benefits (including salary sacrifice schemes) (excluding don't know)	93%	1%	6%	N/A

Unweighted base: total reward benefit statements (98), revising the standard working week (97) and other flexible benefits (100)

As shown in Table 30, 93 per cent of district councils said they already use other flexible benefits (including salary sacrifice schemes), when you exclude those who answered 'don't know'. Forty-four per cent are revising the standard working week,

whilst 56 per cent that said they were planning to implement it soon (both excluding those who answered 'don't know'). Forty per cent use total reward benefit statements, however, 53 per cent said they were planning to implement it soon, again both excluding those who answered 'don't know'.

Table 30. Which, if any, of the following elements do you use, or are you planning to use, in your approach to rewards? (District councils only)

	Already in use	Implementing in the next financial year	Planning to implement soon	Don't know
Total reward benefit statements	21%	4%	28%	48%
Total reward benefit statements (excluding don't know)	40%	8%	53%	N/A
Revising standard working week	11%	0%	14%	75%
Revising standard working week (excluding don't know)	44%	0%	56%	N/A
Other flexible benefits (including salary sacrifice schemes)	74%	2%	4%	20%
Other flexible benefits (including salary sacrifice schemes) (excluding don't know)	93%	3%	5%	N/A

Unweighted base: total reward benefit statements (53), revising the standard working week (53) and other flexible benefits (52)

Table 31 shows the following elements used or planning to be used in approach to awards for single-tier and counties. Other flexible benefits (including salary sacrifice schemes) are already in use by 92 per cent of single-tier and county councils, with 7 per cent saying they will implement it soon, when you exclude those who answered 'don't know'. A quarter (24 per cent) responded that they already have revised the standard working week, compared to almost three quarters (71 per cent) saying they planned to implement it soon. Twenty-two per cent of single-tier and counties said they already used total benefit statements, with 69 per cent saying they were planning to implement it soon.

Table 31. Which, if any, of the following elements do you use, or are you planning to use, in your approach to rewards? (Single-tier and county councils only)

	Already in use	Implementing in the next financial year	Planning to implement soon	Don't know
Total reward benefit statements	10%	4%	31%	55%
Total reward benefit statements (excluding don't know)	22%	9%	69%	N/A
Revising standard working week	5%	1%	15%	78%
Revising standard working week (excluding don't know)	24%	5%	71%	N/A
Other flexible benefits (including salary sacrifice schemes)	87%	1%	7%	5%
Other flexible benefits (including salary sacrifice schemes) (excluding don't know)	92%	1%	7%	N/A

Unweighted base: total reward benefit statements (45), revising the standard working week (45) and other flexible benefits (48)

Respondents were asked which job evaluation scheme they use in their authority for most staff. As shown in Table 32, 46 per cent of councils used Local Government Services - NJC. There was a slightly higher proportion of districts using this scheme (51 per cent) compared with single-tier and county councils (40 per cent). Twenty-one per cent of councils used Hay/Kornferry, 20 per cent of respondents used GLPC, whilst 4 per cent used PE – Inbucon.

Respondents who selected ‘Other’ job evaluation schemes reported:

- Variants of NJC (including Gauge and Job Families), mostly for lower grades
- Hay, typically combined with other schemes and used for senior roles
- Mixed approaches using NJC for lower grades and Hay for higher ones

Other individual mentions included JESS and a local job evaluation scheme.

Table 32. Which job evaluation scheme do you use in your authority for the majority of staff?

	Single-tier and counties	Districts	All councils
Local Government Services – NJC	40%	51%	46%
Hay / Kornferry	22%	19%	21%
GLPC	24%	17%	20%
PE – Inbucon	0%	8%	4%
Other	13%	5%	9%

Unweighted base: 106

Leadership and diversity

Table 33 shows the diversity of the top 5 per cent of earners in councils as of 31 March 2024, based on gender, ethnicity, and disability status. As outlined in the

methodology, the data presented has been estimated using a process called hot deck imputation. On average (mean), 51 per cent of top earners were women, with a slightly higher median of 53 per cent. Representation of individuals from BAME backgrounds among top earners had a mean of 11 per cent, while those identifying as having a disability had a mean of 9 per cent. However, both BAME and disability representation had median values of 0 per cent. The maximum reported figures were significantly higher: 83 per cent for women and 64 per cent for both BAME and disability. Lower quartile values were 45 per cent for women and just 1 per cent for both BAME and disability, while upper quartile values were 61 per cent for women, 13 per cent for BAME, and 9 per cent for disability.

Table 33. As of the 31st March 2024, what percentage of your top 5 per cent of earners identify as female, Black, Asian or minority ethnic (BAME) and/or having a disability?

	Women	BAME	Disability
Mean (average)	51%	11%	9%
Minimum	0%	0%	0%
Median	53%	0%	0%
Maximum	83%	64%	64%
Lower quartile	45%	1%	1%
Upper quartile	61%	13%	9%

Unweighted base: 109

Wellbeing at work

Respondents were asked whether councils record incidents of harassment and abuse experienced by councillors and officers. Over half of the respondents (57 per cent) reported recording such incidents involving councillors, while 14 per cent did

not, and 29 per cent were unsure. Recording practices were more consistent for officers, with 78 per cent of respondents indicating their authority keep records of such incidents, only 6 per cent stating they did not, and 16 per cent stating they were unsure. The results are shown in Table 34.

Table 34. Does your authority record incidents of harassment and abuse experienced by councillors and officers? (All councils)

	Yes	No	Don't know
Councillors	57%	14%	29%
Officers	78%	6%	16%

Unweighted base: 106

Table 35 focuses specifically on district councils and whether they record incidents of harassment and abuse experienced by councillors and officers. Among districts, 57 per cent of respondents reported recording such incidents involving councillors, while 9 per cent said they did not, and 34 per cent were unsure. For officers, 80 per cent of respondents indicated they record incidents, 6 per cent did not, and 14 per cent did not know.

Table 35. Does your authority record incidents of harassment and abuse experienced by councillors and officers? (Districts)

	Yes	No	Don't know
Councillors	57%	9%	34%
Officers	80%	6%	14%

Unweighted base: 55

Table 36 presents the responses from single-tier and county councils about whether they record incidents of harassment and abuse experienced by councillors and officers. For councillors, 57 per cent of these councils reported keeping records of such incidents, 20 per cent did not, and 22 per cent didn't know. In relation to officers, 75 per cent of councils stated they record incidents, 7 per cent said they did not, and 19 per cent didn't know.

Table 36. Does your authority record incidents of harassment and abuse experienced by councillors and officers? (Single-tier and county councils)

	Yes	No	Don't know
Councillors	57%	20%	22%
Officers	75%	7%	19%

Unweighted base: 51

Table 37 shows reported incidents of external unacceptable behaviour toward councillors between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024. On average (mean), councils recorded seven cases of verbal abuse, two threats of violence, 11 physical assaults, and six other incidents committed against councillors. The median values were notably lower, with two for verbal abuse, one for threats of violence, and zero for

both physical assaults and other incidents. The maximum reported figures were considerably higher: 49 for verbal abuse, five for threats, 101 for physical assaults, and 38 for other incidents. These figures should be interpreted with caution, as they reflect a broad range of experiences across councils.

Table 37: The number of incidences of external unacceptable behaviour that occurred between 1st April 2023 and 31st March 2024 - councillors

	Verbal abuse	Threats of violence	Physical assault	Other
Mean (average)	7	2	11	6
Minimum	0	0	0	0
Median	2	1	0	0
Maximum	49	5	101	38

Unweighted base: 10

Table 38 details reported incidents of external unacceptable behaviour towards officers between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024. On average (mean), councils recorded 49 cases of verbal abuse, 32 threats of violence, 65 physical assaults, and 34 other incidents committed against officers. The median values were lower—42 for verbal abuse, 2 for threats, 18 for physical assaults, and 6 for other incidents—highlighting a wide variation in experiences across councils. These figures suggest that while some councils experienced high volumes of incidents, others reported far fewer, and the data should be read as a broad estimate of the overall situation. Other incidents of abuse reported can be seen below:

- abusive phone calls and emails
- hate incidents, racial abuse, and other abuse linked to protected characteristics
- damage to property and belongings, including theft

- sexual abuse and inappropriate behaviour, including via phone
- internal harassment and near misses, such as cautionary contact reports
- incidents involving no intent to harm, often linked to individuals with behavioural difficulties or SEND.

Some respondents noted limitations in reporting systems or categorisation differences, such as grouping all assaults under physical abuse or not separating incidents involving councillors from those involving officers.

Table 38: The number of incidences of external unacceptable behaviour that occurred between 1st April 2023 and 31st March 2024 – officer

	Verbal abuse	Threats of violence	Physical assault	Other
Mean (average)	49	32	65	34
Minimum	0	0	0	0
Median	42	2	18	6
Maximum	234	498	627	357

Unweighted base: 45

Sickness absence

Respondents were asked to provide the percentage of sickness absence days lost per headcount and per FTE, this is shown in Tables 42 and 43.

Table 39 shows reported sickness absence per employee (based on headcount) for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024. On average (mean), councils reported five days of sickness absence per employee, with a minimum of one day and a maximum of twelve days. The median number of days lost per employee was four. On average, councils recorded two days per employee for short-term absence and three days for long-term absence. The median values were two days for short-term and three days for long-term absence.

Table 39: Days lost for short-term, long-term and overall sickness absence in the financial year from 1 April 2023 - 31 March 2024 - headcount

	Short-term	Long-term	Total
Mean (average)	2	3	5
Minimum	1	1	1
Median	2	3	4
Maximum	4	8	12

Unweighted base: 68

Table 40 presents data on overall sickness absence per full-time equivalent (FTE) employee between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024. On average (mean), councils reported 10 days of sickness absence per FTE. The lowest reported figure was two days, while the highest was sixteen. The median number of days lost was also ten. On average, councils recorded four days per FTE for short-term absence and six days for long-term absence. The median values were slightly lower, with three days for short-term absence and five days for long-term absence.

Table 40: Days lost and the sickness absence rate for short-term, long-term and overall sickness absence in the financial year from 1 April 2023 - 31 March 2024 – FTE

	Short-term	Long-term	Total
Mean (average)	4	6	10
Minimum	1	1	2
Median	3	5	10
Maximum	8	12	16

Unweighted base: 77

Respondents were asked to provide the reasons for sickness absences. Table 41 shows that almost a third (32 per cent) of councils reported that sickness absence was due to stress, depression, anxiety, mental health or fatigue. ‘Other Musculo-skeletal problems’ were reported by 12 per cent of councils as being the reason for sickness absence, followed by infections (7 per cent) and stomach, liver, kidney, and digestion issues (6 per cent). Eighteen per cent of councils said sickness absence was due to ‘other’ reasons.

Table 41: Reported reasons for sickness absences

	Per cent
Stress, depression, anxiety, mental health and fatigue	32%
Other musculo-skeletal problem	12%
Infections	7%
Stomach, liver, kidney and digestion	6%
Chest and respiratory	5%
Neurological; headaches and migraines	4%
Back and neck problems	4%
Eye, ear, nose & mouth/dental and sinusitis	3%
Heart, blood pressure, and circulation	3%
Genito-urinary and/or menstrual problems	2%
Pregnancy related	1%
Long COVID	1%
Other	18%
Unknown	1%

Unweighted base: 74

Workforce policy

Respondents were asked if their council employs staff on zero hours or zero hour type contracts. Table 42 shows that 65 per cent of all councils directly employ staff on zero-hour contracts, compared to 33 per cent who do not. Nine per cent of all councils employed agency staff on zero hour contracts, however, 76 per cent did not.

Table 42. Does your council employ staff on zero hours / zero hours type contracts? (All councils)

	Yes	No	Don't know
We directly employ staff on zero hours contracts	65%	33%	3%
We employ agency staff on zero hours contracts	9%	76%	15%

Unweighted base: 102

In district councils, as can be seen in Table 43, 61 per cent of respondents said they directly employ staff on zero hour contracts, whilst 39 per cent do not. Three per cent of respondents employ agency staff on zero hour contracts, compared with 88 per cent that do not.

Table 43: Does your council employ staff on zero hours / zero hours type contracts? (District councils)

	Yes	No	Don't know
We directly employ staff on zero hours contracts	61%	39%	0%
We employ agency staff on zero hours contracts	3%	88%	10%

Unweighted base: 52

In single-tier and county councils, 68 per cent of respondents directly employed staff on zero hour contracts, whilst 27 per cent did not. Fifteen per cent of respondents employed agency staff on zero hour contracts, however, 64 per cent did not, as can be seen in Table 44.

Table 44: Does your council employ staff on zero hours / zero hours type contracts? (Single-tier and county councils)

	Yes	No	Don't know
We directly employ staff on zero hours contracts	68%	27%	5%
We employ agency staff on zero hours contracts	15%	64%	21%

Unweighted base: 50

Respondents that had employed staff on zero hours contracts were asked how many they employed as of 31 August 2024. As shown in Table 45, the average (mean) number of staff directly employed on zero hours contracts was 246, while the median number of staff was 143. The number of directly employed staff on these contracts ranged from 1 to 1,744. For agency staff on zero hours contracts, councils reported an average (mean) of 17, but the median was zero. The number of agency staff employed ranged from zero to a maximum of 416.

Table 45. How many staff does your council employ on zero hours / zero hours type contracts?

	Directly employed by the council - Head count as of 31st August 2024	Employed via agency as of 31st August 2024
Mean (average)	246	17
Minimum	1	0
Median	143	0
Maximum	1744	416

Unweighted base: 64

Respondents were asked whether councils had used ‘fire and rehire’ policies at any point in the past five years. Overall, 4 per cent of councils reported having used such policies, with 5 per cent of single-tier and county councils and 2 per cent of district councils saying they used ‘fire and rehire’ policies. In comparison, 92 per cent of councils stated they had not used fire and rehire policies, including 87 per cent of single-tier and county councils and 96 per cent of districts. The full results are shown in Table 46.

Table 46. Has your council used ‘fire and rehire policies’ at any point in the past five years?

	Single-tier and counties	Districts	All councils
Yes	5%	2%	4%
No	87%	96%	92%
Don't know	8%	2%	5%

Unweighted base: 100

If respondents said their council had used ‘fire and rehire policies’ at any point in the past five years, they had the opportunity to specify why it was used. This question received a few comments, with some of the reasons stated below:

- implement a new pay and grading structure and terms and conditions to ensure equal pay in accordance with the Green Book Single Status agreement
- varying terms and conditions of employment
- re-organisations and variations to contracts.

As part of the Employment Rights Bill, the government would be repealing much of the Trade Union Act 2016. This would mean the provisions in the 2016 Act on ballot

thresholds for strike action will be repealed and the government was consulting on what, (if any), thresholds should be in place going forward.

Respondents were asked in their view what should the ballot threshold for strike action be following the repeal of that part of the 2016 Act. The current threshold is generally 50% and it is assumed any new threshold would be below that. Responses from councils were grouped into the following themes:

- Eighteen respondents supported lowering the threshold, with most suggesting a threshold between 25-49 per cent.
- Forty-four respondents preferred keeping the threshold at 50 per cent, viewing it as a fair reflection of member views.
- Two respondents supported raising the threshold.
- Some councils raised concerns that a lower threshold could allow a small minority to trigger strikes, reducing employer confidence.

Additional comments included:

- Mixed views on participation, with concerns about reduced engagement.
- Worries about more frequent strikes and disruption to public services and the wider economy.
- Some respondents declined to comment or were still consulting.

Although the Employment Right Bill retains the current six-nine month (or nine-months if agreed) validity period of a strike ballot mandate, the government was consulting on whether to extend this period to twelve months. Respondents were asked to report how long a typical industrial relations dispute lasts within their council. As shown in Table 47, the average (mean) duration of such disputes was two days. However, the median duration was zero days, indicating that at least half of councils experienced no disputes during the reporting period. The maximum duration reported by any council was 10 days.

Table 47. How long do typical industrial relations disputes last in your council?

Number of days	
Mean (average)	2
Minimum	0
Median	0
Maximum	10

Unweighted base: 64

Councils were asked whether they agree with the proposal to extend the legal mandate for industrial action from 6 to 12 months. Table 48 shows, overall, 39 per cent of councils disagreed with the proposal, with opposition stronger among single-tier and county councils (51 per cent) compared with districts (26 per cent). Only 5 per cent of councils agreed with the proposal, while over half of respondents (57 per cent) said they had no preference.

Table 48. Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to extend the standard expiration date of a trade union’s legal mandate for industrial action from 6 to 12 months?

	Single-tier and counties	Districts	All councils
Agree	10%	0%	5%
Disagree	51%	26%	39%
Don't have a preference	39%	74%	57%

Unweighted base: 100

Supporting care leavers into work as an employer

A council's role as a major local employer means many councils are supportive and active in helping local people into work. To help understand the level and support councils provide for care leavers in accessing employment and training opportunities to enter the councils workforce, respondents were asked whether their council provided support to help care leavers into council employment or training.

Table 49 shows, overall, 64 per cent of councils reported that they do offer such support, although this was significantly higher for single-tier and county councils at 90 per cent, than the 39 per cent of district councils. Twenty-five per cent of councils said they do not provide this support, with 5 per cent of single-tier and county councils and 44 per cent of districts responding no. Eleven per cent of councils were unsure, with 5 per cent of single-tier and county councils and 16 per cent of districts selecting don't know.

Table 49. Does your council provide support to help care leavers into council employment/training?

	Single-tier and counties	Districts	All councils
Yes	90%	39%	64%
No	5%	44%	25%
Don't know	5%	16%	11%

Unweighted base: 100

Councils that did provide support to help care leavers into council employment or training were asked what they offered to support care leavers. The most common support across all councils was a guaranteed interview if the care leaver meets the job criteria, which was offered by 59 per cent of all councils, although this was significantly higher amongst single-tier and county councils (69 per cent) compared with districts (36 per cent). Apprenticeship schemes were provided by 35 per cent of

single-tier and county councils, compared with 11 per cent of districts. Notably, 44 per cent of districts reported offering 'other' forms of support, compared to 19 per cent of single-tier and county councils, and some of these are listed below. Offers such as paid work experience (10 per cent), internships (7 per cent) and paid internships (6 per cent) were less common. The results can be seen in Table 50.

Respondents that mentioned their council providing other forms of support to help care leavers into council employment/training, had the opportunity to specify further what these forms of support were. Responses included:

- comments around work experience and virtual work experience and allowing that flexibility
- having support and training in place,
- job application and interview support
- work placement schemes
- access to referrals to apprenticeships, and there was also an additional comment around pre-apprenticeship support.

Table 50. What does your council offer to care leavers?

	Single-tier and counties	Districts	All councils
Guaranteed interview if care leaver meets job criteria	69%	36%	59%
Care Leavers Apprenticeship scheme	35	11%	28%
Guaranteed Work experience	19%	6%	15%
Paid Work experience	10%	11%	10%
Internships	7%	9%	7%
Paid internships	3%	13%	6%
Other	19%	44%	27%
Don't know	6%	10%	7%

Unweighted base: 65

Councils were then asked if they had plans to support care leavers into council employment or training in the next 12 months. Table 51 shows, overall, only one council reported having such plans, with 14 councils saying they do not.

Table 51. Do you have plans to support care leavers into council employment/training in the next 12 months?

	Single-tier and counties	Districts	All councils
Yes	1	0	1
No	0	14	14
Don't know	1	9	10

Unweighted base: 25

The council that planned to support care leavers into council employment or training in the next 12 months was asked what they intended to do to enable this. They responded that they were going to implement guaranteed interviews if care leavers met job criteria and offer paid internships.

HR team capacity, systems and professional standards

Over recent years council HR teams have been reporting on an ad hoc basis that their resources (staff and operating budgets) have been reducing and that it is having a negative impact on their ability to enable good people management in their councils. To get a better understanding of the challenges faced by HR teams in councils, and to see how they can be supported, the following set of questions were asked.

Councils were asked to report how many full-time equivalent (FTE) HR staff they employ, excluding HR administrative and payroll staff. As outlined in the methodology, the data in Table 52 has been estimated using a process called hot deck imputation. On average (mean), councils employed 23 FTE HR staff, while the

median was significantly lower at 10. The number of FTE HR staff reported ranged from zero to a maximum of 280.

Table 52. How many FTE HR staff do you employ at the council (not including HR admin or payroll staff)?

	FTE
Mean (average)	23
Minimum	0
Median	10
Maximum	280
Lower quartile	5
Upper quartile	34

Unweighted base: 98

Councils were then asked whether the number of FTE HR staff they employed had changed over the past three years. Table 53 shows that 41 per cent of councils reported a decrease in the number of FTE HR staff, with more single-tier and county councils (45 per cent) reporting a decrease compared with district councils (36 per cent). Around a quarter (26 per cent) of councils saw an increase, whilst 32 per cent said staffing levels had stayed the same.

Table 53. Has this increased or decreased over the last three years?

	Single-tier and counties	Districts	All councils
Increased	32%	20%	26%
Stayed the same	21%	43%	32%
Decreased	45%	36%	41%
Don't know	1%	0%	1%

Unweighted base: 100

Respondents were asked whether they have the level of resources needed to provide an effective HR service in 2024/2025. Overall, 72 per cent of councils felt they had sufficient resources to a great or moderate extent, as can be seen in Table 54. A higher proportion of districts (77 per cent) reported this compared to single-tier and county councils (65 per cent). However, of the 72 per cent who answered to a great or moderate extent, only 6 per cent of councils felt they had the necessary resources to a great extent. A further 20 per cent said they had the resources to a small extent whilst 4 per cent said they did not have the resources at all.

Table 54. To what extent, if at all, do you have the level of resources you need to provide an effective HR service to help enable people management at your council in 2024/2025?

	Single-tier and counties	Districts	All councils
To a great or moderate extent	65%	77%	72%
To a great extent	9%	2%	6%
To a moderate extent	56%	75%	66%
To a small extent	24%	16%	20%
Not at all	4%	4%	4%
Don't know	7%	3%	5%

Unweighted base: 100

Councils were asked if they required their HR staff to be qualified to Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) standards. As seen in Table 55, 41 per cent of councils said CIPD qualification is an essential requirement for all HR professional staff, although this was more common among districts (57 per cent) than single-tier and county councils (24 per cent). Half of the respondents (51 per cent) said it is a preferred qualification for their staff, with 60 per cent of single-tier and county councils saying this compared to 43 per cent of district councils. Seven per cent of councils reported no requirement for their HR staff to have a CIPD qualification, whilst 1 per cent were unsure.

Table 55. Do you require your HR staff to be qualified to Chartered Institute Personnel and Development (CIPD) standards?

	Single-tier and counties	Districts	All councils
Yes, it's an essential requirement for all our HR professional staff to be CIPD qualified	24%	57%	41%
It is only a preferred option for our staff to be CIPD qualified	60%	43%	51%
No, we don't require our HR professional staff to be CIPD qualified	13%	0%	7%
Don't know	3%	0%	1%

Unweighted base: 100

Councils were asked what HR system (or HR Information System HRIS) they used. Table 56 shows, overall, Midland HR (iTrent) was the most used system by 51 per cent of all respondents, with a higher percentage usage amongst district councils (62 per cent), compared to single-tier and county councils (39 per cent). Seventeen per cent of all councils used Oracle whilst 9 per cent of councils used Frontier software, 8 per cent used SAP, 4 per cent used Agresso and 2 percent used NorthgateArinso.

Respondents who indicated other HR systems they used, included the below:

- Zellis Resourcelink
- Civica HR
- Unit4
- People HR

- People XD
- Talentlink
- PwC Job Evaluation
- Mod Gov
- Talos
- ERP

Table 56. What HR system (or HR Information System HRIS) do you use? Please select all that you use

	Single-tier and counties	Districts	All councils
Midland HR (iTrent)	39%	62%	51%
Oracle	28%	6%	17%
Frontier Software	0%	18%	9%
SAP	17%	0%	8%
Agresso	9%	0%	4%
NorthgateArinso	4%	0%	2%
Other	0%	16%	14%
Don't know	1%	3%	2%

Unweighted base: 100 Note: Systems which no respondents mentioned using have been omitted.

Respondents were asked whether they had data analytics specialists to support HR /people analytics reporting, with Table 57 showing the full results. Overall, 47 per cent of councils said they do, with a significant difference between council types. Seventy-three per cent of single-tier and county councils reported having data analytics specialists to support HR/people analytics reporting, compared with 20 per

cent of districts. Just over half (51 per cent) of all councils said they do not have this support.

Table 57. Do you have data analytics specialists to support you in your reporting of HR / people analytics?

	Single-tier and counties	Districts	All councils
Yes	73%	20%	47%
No	27%	74%	51%
Don't know	0%	5%	3%

Unweighted base: 100

Councils were asked whether their council used AI in any of their provision of their HR services. The results are shown in Table 58. Six per cent of councils currently use AI, with a slightly higher usage among single-tier and county councils (11 per cent) compared to districts (2 per cent). A further 27 per cent reported that they are developing AI in their provision of their HR services. Most councils (63 per cent) said they do not use AI in this area, whilst 4 per cent were unsure.

Table 58. Does your council use AI in your provision of any of your HR services?

	Single-tier and counties	Districts	All councils
Yes	11%	2%	6%
In development	29%	25%	27%
No	54%	71%	63%
Don't know	6%	2%	4%

Unweighted base: 100

Respondents were asked whether their council has a staff policy on the use of AI. Table 59 shows that 9 per cent of councils reported having a policy in place, with single-tier and county councils more likely to have one (15 per cent) than districts (4 per cent). Just over a third (36 per cent) said a policy is in development. Over half of councils (51 per cent) said they do not have a policy, whilst 4 per cent were unsure.

Table 59. Does your council have a staff policy on the use of AI?

	Single-tier and counties	Districts	All councils
Yes	15%	4%	9%
In development	35%	37%	36%
No	45%	57%	51%
Don't know	6%	2%	4%

Unweighted base: 100

Annex A: Questionnaire

LGA Workforce Strategy Survey 2024

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. You can navigate through the questions using the buttons at the bottom of each page. Use the 'previous' button at the bottom of the page if you wish to amend your response to an earlier question.

If you stop before completing the return, you can come back to this page using the link supplied in the email and you will be able to continue where you left off. To ensure your answers have been saved, click on the 'next' button at the bottom of the page that you were working on before exiting.

All responses will be treated confidentially. Information will be aggregated, and no individual or authority will be identified in any publications without your consent. Identifiable information may be used internally within the LGA but will only be held and processed in accordance with our [privacy statement](#). We are undertaking this survey to aid the legitimate interests of the LGA in supporting and representing authorities.

This is the bi-annual local government workforce survey. This survey aims to provide a national workforce report for English councils to inform both governments, the LGA and regional employer organisations with key insights into the challenges facing the local government workforce both now and in the future. This national workforce report aims to better inform local councils so they can develop effective workforce plans, key actions and help galvanize the sector to work more collaboratively on solutions.

This survey asks key questions under the following headings:

Recruitment and retention

- Recruitment or retention difficulties
- Market supplements

Training & Development

- Training expenditure – employees and members
- Career Grades / Frameworks / Grow your own schemes
- Trade union learning representatives

Pay and reward

- Council approach to pay & rewards
- Job evaluation scheme used
- Equal pay audit done/when

Leadership and management

- Leadership diversity

Wellbeing at work

• Does your authority record incidents of harassment and abuse experienced by councillors and officers

- Sickness absence questions

Workforce Policy

- Employment Bill feedback
- Supporting your local community into work as an employer

Workforce Policy

- HR capacity and level of resources
- CIPD standards

- Use of systems, analytics and AI

Please amend the details we have on record if necessary.

If you are responding on behalf of more than one authority, please note this in the 'authority' box below, but please check with us first whether a separate return is needed for each authority.

- Name
- Authority
- Job title
- Email address

Recruitment and Retention

Please indicate for which of the following occupations, if any, your authority is experiencing recruitment or retention difficulties

Column headings

- Recruitment difficulties
- Retention difficulties

Row headings

- Childcare/playgroup assistants
- Children's residential care managers
- Children's residential care workers
- Children's social workers
- Early years specialists
- Education welfare officers
- Educational psychologists
- Family support workers

- Nursery nurses
- Occupational therapists (children's)
- Playworkers
- Teachers
- Teaching assistants
- School crossing patrol attendants
- School mid-day assistants
- Adult care community support worker
- Adult care workers
- Adult day care managers
- Adult day care workers
- Adult residential care managers
- Adult social workers
- Home care managers
- Home care workers
- Mental health social workers
- Occupational therapists (adults)
- Administrative officers/assistants
- Benefits and local taxation officers/assistants
- Call centre agents/operators
- Democratic service officers
- Electoral services officers
- Section 151 officer
- Finance officers (other than s151)

- HR and industrial relations officers
- ICT professionals
- ICT user support officers
- Legal professionals
- Personal assistants and other secretaries
- Building control officers
- Chartered surveyors
- Conservation and environmental protection officers
- Countryside and park ranger/warden
- Economic development officers
- Energy managers
- Engineering professionals
- Environmental health officers
- Housing officers
- Librarians
- Library assistants/clerks
- Planning officers
- Craftworkers
- Bricklayers, masons
- Carpenters and joiners
- Electricians, electrical fitters
- Gardeners and grounds people
- Painters and decorators
- Plasterers

- Plumbers, heating and ventilating
- Civil enforcement officers
- Cleaners, domestics
- Community drivers
- Heavy goods vehicle drivers
- Cooks
- Kitchen and catering assistants
- Refuse and salvage occupations
- Sports coaches, instructors and officials
- Sports and leisure assistants
- Street scene operatives
- Other front line staff
- Other

Does your authority provide market supplements?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Please indicate which of the following occupations, if any, receive market supplements.

Column heading

- Market supplement

Row headings

- Childcare/playgroup assistants
- Children's residential care managers
- Children's residential care workers
- Children's social workers
- Early years specialists
- Education welfare officers
- Educational psychologists
- Family support workers
- Nursery nurses
- Occupational therapists (children's)
- Playworkers
- Teachers
- Teaching assistants
- School crossing patrol attendants
- School mid-day assistants

- Adult care community support worker
- Adult care workers
- Adult day care managers
- Adult day care workers
- Adult residential care managers
- Adult social workers
- Home care managers
- Home care workers
- Mental health social workers
- Occupational therapists (adults)
- Administrative officers/assistants
- Benefits and local taxation officers/assistants
- Call centre agents/operators
- Democratic service officers
- Electoral services officers
- Section 151 officer
- Finance officers (other than s151)
- HR and industrial relations officers
- ICT professionals
- ICT user support officers
- Legal professionals
- Personal assistants and other secretaries
- Building control officers
- Chartered surveyors

- Conservation and environmental protection officers
- Countryside and park ranger/warden
- Economic development officers
- Energy managers
- Engineering professionals
- Environmental health officers
- Housing officers
- Librarians
- Library assistants/clerks
- Planning officers
- Craftworkers
- Bricklayers, masons
- Carpenters and joiners
- Electricians, electrical fitters
- Gardeners and grounds people
- Painters and decorators
- Plasterers
- Plumbers, heating and ventilating
- Civil enforcement officers
- Cleaners, domestics
- Community drivers
- Heavy goods vehicle drivers
- Cooks
- Kitchen and catering assistants

- Refuse and salvage occupations
- Sports coaches, instructors and officials
- Sports and leisure assistants
- Street scene operatives
- Other front line staff
- Other

Training and Development

Staff training expenditure

For the 2023/2024 financial year what were the gross and net levels of expenditure of your authority to provide training for your employees?

The figures entered here should exclude any sums related to the apprenticeship levy.

Please write the amount of money in full, for example two thousand would be written as 2000. Please round to the nearest whole pound. Please do not include commas. If you don't know, please tick don't know.

Please exclude teachers and fire employees.

Guidance notes

Gross training expenditure: the total of all employee training-related expenditure'. This will include fees paid to external providers, revenue and overheads costs of 'in-house' training facilities, fees paid for external training facilities/venues etc., training subscriptions and levies, e-learning provision, other direct training related expenditure (including the cost of providing cover for staff attending training). It does not include the cost of wages or salaries for employees whilst undergoing training.

Government training subsidies: any financial assistance received specifically for training related activities.

Training grants: payments received from Local Learning and Skills Councils (and former National Training Organisations) etc. to finance training activities. It is

recognised that training budgets may be augmented by other funds, but this survey is asking authorities to concentrate on dedicated training budgets.

Column headings

- Amount £
- Don't know tick

Row headings

- Gross training expenditure
- Government training subsidies and/or grants
- Net training expenditure

Do you have plans to increase, decrease or maintain current levels of expenditure on training for **staff** in real terms during 2023/2024?

- We plan to increase current levels of expenditure on training for staff
- We plan to maintain current levels of expenditure on training for staff
- We plan to decrease current levels of expenditure on training for staff
- Don't know

Member training expenditure

For the 2023/2024 financial year what were the gross and net levels of expenditure of your authority to provide training specifically for member development?

Please write the amount of money in full, for example two thousand would be written as 2000. Please round to the nearest whole pound. Please do not include commas.

If you don't know, please tick don't know.

Column headings

- Amount £
- Don't know tick

Row headings

- Gross training member development
- External grants and subsidies
- Net expenditure on member development

Increased training expenditure for members

Do you have plans to increase, decrease or maintain current levels of expenditure on training for **members** in real terms during 2023/24?

- We plan to increase current levels of expenditure on training for members
- We plan to maintain current levels of expenditure on training for members
- We plan to decrease current levels of expenditure on training for members
- Don't know

Career Grades / Grow your own scheme

This section helps to inform our policy and share practice on career frameworks/grades and grow your own scheme which councils have asked us to consider.

Which of the following occupations, if any, have a grow your own scheme?

Grow your own scheme is any council defined development programme which identifies and trains existing employees to develop skills and knowledge to enable progression, this can include career graded schemes, apprenticeship schemes, professional development schemes

Column heading

- Grow your own scheme

Row heading

- Planning
- Social Work
- Legal
- ICT

- Building Control
- Occupational Therapy
- Finance
- Human resources
- Health and safety
- Environmental Health
- Other (please specify below)
- Don't know
- No grow your own scheme

Does your council currently have Trade Union Learning representatives?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Pay and Rewards

Which, if any, of the following elements do you use, or are you planning to use in your approach to rewards?

Column heading

- Already in use
- Implementing in the next financial year
- Not currently using – planning to implement soon
- Don't know

Row heading

- Total reward benefit statements
- Revising standard working week

- Other flexible benefits (including salary sacrifice schemes) (please specify below)

Which job evaluation scheme do you use in your authority for the majority of staff?

- Local Government Services - NJC
- Hay / Kornferry
- GLPC
- PE - Inbucon
- Other (please specify below)

Has your council ever undertaken an equal pay audit?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Display this question if your council has ever undertaken an equal pay audit

When did your council undertake an equal pay audit?

- Within the last year
- 1-3 years ago
- 3-5 years ago
- More than 5 years ago
- Don't know

Display this question if your council has not undertaken an equal pay audit

When did your council undertake an equal pay audit in the coming year?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Leadership diversity

We are seeking to identify the level of representation of the following groups within senior management grades at your council. As of the 31st of March 2024, what percentage of your top 5 per cent earners identify as Female, Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic, Having a disability

Column heading

- Please enter percentage
- Please tick if unknown

Row heading

- Female
- Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic
- Having a disability

Wellbeing at work

Does your authority record incidents of harassment and abuse experienced by councillors and officers?

Abuse – words and/or behaviour that constitute abuse or mistreatment can include, but is not limited to, physical abuse, bullying, emotional abuse, unsolicited abusive communication, and harassment. It may be one-off or repeated.

Intimidation – words and/or behaviour intended or likely to block, influence, or deter participation in public debate or causing alarm or distress, which could lead to an individual wanting to withdraw from public life. It may be one-off or repeated behaviour.

Column heading

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Row heading

- Councillors
- Officers

Display this question if your authority record incidents of harassment and abuse experienced by councillors or officers

If you are able to break down the number of incidences of external unacceptable behaviour that occurred between 1st April 2023 and 31st March 2024 into verbal abuse, threats of violence and actual physical violence, please do so in the table below.

If none, please write '0'. If figure is not known, please tick don't know.

Display this question if your authority record incidents of harassment and abuse experienced by councillors

Councillors

Column heading

- Number of incidents
- Don't know

Row heading

- Verbal abuse
- Threats of violence
- Physical assault
- Other (please specify below)

Display this question if your authority record incidents of harassment and abuse experienced by officers

Officers

Column heading

- Number of incidents
- Don't know

Row heading

- Verbal abuse
- Threats of violence
- Physical assault
- Other (please specify below)

Sickness absence

Please complete the following table and provide percentage of days lost and the sickness absence rate for short-term, long-term and overall sickness absence in the financial year from 1 April 2023 - 31 March 2024. If don't know, please leave blank

Column heading

- Percentage of sickness absence days - % (headcount)
- Sickness absence days lost per FTE - Days

Row heading

- Short-term
- Long-term
- Total

Sickness absence by reason

Please complete the table below with a breakdown of the total number (full-time equivalent) of days lost through sickness absence in the financial year 2023/24 by different reasons for sickness absence.

We would prefer a partial response to no response at all. If the answer is zero, please write 0. If you do not know the answer, please tick don't know.

Short-term absence - up to and including 20 days/one calendar month (in working

days). Long-term absence - over 20 days/more than one calendar month (in working days).

For definitions, please refer to the guidance below: Other musculo-skeletal problems include legs or feet and arms or hands. Also include joint problems such as arthritis. Include mental illnesses such as anxiety, nervous debility/disorder and chronic fatigue. Viral infections include influenza, cold, cough and throat infections. Exclude maternity leave. Stomach, liver, kidney, digestion include diarrhoea, vomiting and other gastro-intestinal illnesses.

Column heading

- Total FTE – Days
- Don't know - tick

Row heading

- Back and neck problems
- Other Musculo-skeletal problems
- Stress, depression, anxiety, mental health and fatigue
- Infections
- Neurological; headaches and migraines
- Long COVID
- Eye, ear, nose & mouth/dental; sinusitis
- Genito-urinary; menstrual problems
- Pregnancy related
- Stomach, liver, kidney, digestion
- Heart, blood pressure, circulation
- Chest, respiratory
- Other

- Unknown

Workforce policy

Does your council employ staff on zero hours / zero hours type contracts?

Zero-hours contracts are also known as casual contracts. Zero-hours contracts are usually for 'piece work' or 'on call' work.

This means:

- *they are on call to work when you need them*
- *you do not have to give them work*
- *they do not have to do work when asked*

Column heading

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Row heading

- We directly employ staff on zero hours contracts
- We employ agency staff on zero hours contracts

Display this question if your council employ staff on zero hours / zero type contracts

How many staff does your council employ on zero hours (zero hours type) contracts?

Open end text box

- Directly employed by the council Head account as of 31st August 2024
- Employed via agency as of 31st August 2024

Q27 Has your council used 'fire and rehire policies' at any point in the past five years?

- Yes

- No
- Don't know

Display this question if your council has used 'fire and rehire policies' at any point in the past five years'

For what reason did you use fire and rehire?

As part of its Employment Rights Bill, the government will be repealing much of the Trade Union Act 2016. This means the provisions in the 2016 Act on ballot thresholds for strike action will be repealed and the government is consulting on what (if any) threshold(s) should be put in place going forward

In your view, what should the ballot threshold for strike action be following the repeal of that part of the 2016 Act? (The current threshold is generally 50% and it is assumed any new threshold would be below that)

Although the Employment Rights Bill retains the current six- month (or nine-months if agreed) validity period of a strike ballot mandate, the government is consulting on whether to extend this period to twelve months.

How long do typical industrial relations disputes last in your council?

Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to extend the standard expiration date of a trade union's legal mandate for industrial action from 6 to 12 months?

- Agree
- Disagree
- Don't have a preference

Supporting care leavers into work as an employer

A council's role as a major local employer means many councils are supportive and active in helping local people into work. In this survey we are aiming to understand the level and support councils provide for care leavers in accessing employment and training opportunities to enter the council's workforce.

Does your council provide support to help care leavers into council employment/training?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Display this question if supporting care leavers into work as an employer, a council's role as a major employer means yes

What does your council offer to care leavers?

Tick all that apply

- Guaranteed Work experience
- Paid Work experience
- Care Leavers Apprenticeship scheme
- Guaranteed interview if care leaver meets job criteria
- Internships
- Paid internships
- Other (please specify below
_____)
- Don't know

Display this question if supporting care leavers into work as an employer, a councils role as a major employer means no

Do you have plans to support care leavers into council employment/training in the next 12 months?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Display this question if you have plans to support care leavers into employment/training in the next 12 months

Do you have plans to support care leavers into council employment/training in the next 12 months?

Tick all that apply

- Guaranteed Work experience
- Paid Work experience
- Care Leavers Apprenticeship scheme
- Guaranteed interview if care leaver meets job criteria
- Internships
- Paid internships
- Other (please specify below)

Over recent years council HR teams have been reporting on an adhoc basis that their resources (staff and operating budgets) have been reducing and that is having a negative impact on their ability to enable good people

management in their councils. The following questions are aimed at better understanding the challenges faced by HR teams in councils to see how this can be supported.

Open text

How many FTE HR staff do you employ at the council (not including HR admin or payroll staff)? _____

Has this increased or decreased over the last three years?

- Increased
- Stayed the same
- Decreased
- Don't know

To what extent, if at all, do you have the level of resources you need to provide an effective HR service to help enable people management at your council in 2024/2025?

- To a great extent
- To a moderate extent
- To a small extent
- Not at all
- Don't know

Do you require your HR staff to be qualified to Chartered Institute Personnel and Development (CIPD) standards?

- Yes, it's an essential requirement for all our HR professional staff to be CIPD qualified
- It is only a preferred option for our staff to be CIPD qualified
- No, we don't require our HR professional to be CIPD qualified
- Don't know

What HR system (or HR Information System HRIS) do you use? Please select all that you use

- ADP
- Agresso
- Aquire
- Bond TeamSpirit
- Carval Computing
- Cascade
- Ceridian
- Cezanne HR
- COA Solutions
- Crown Computing
- Frontier Software
- Midland HR (iTrent)
- NorthgateArinso
- Oracle
- plusHR
- Pyramid HR
- Sage HR & Payroll
- SAP
- Simply Personnel
- StepStone
- Other _____
- Don't know

Do you have data analytics specialists to support you in your reporting of HR / people analytics?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Does your council use AI in your provision of any of your HR services?

- Yes
- In development
- No
- Don't know

Does your council have a staff policy on the use of AI?

- Yes
- In development
- No
- Don't know



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