

**REPORT FOR: EMPLOYEES'
CONSULTATIVE FORUM**

Date of Meeting: 31 January 2013

Subject: **INFORMATION REPORT –
Employment of 16 to 24 year
olds**

Key Decision N/A

Responsible Officer: Jon Turner – Divisional Director Human
Resources and Development and
Shared Services

Exempt: No

**Decision Subject to
call-in** N/A

Enclosures: None

Section 1 – Summary

This report provides comparative figures from other authorities on the employment of 16 to 24 year olds, information on career grade posts, and analysis on the barriers to recruitment and employment of 16 to 24 year olds.

FOR INFORMATION

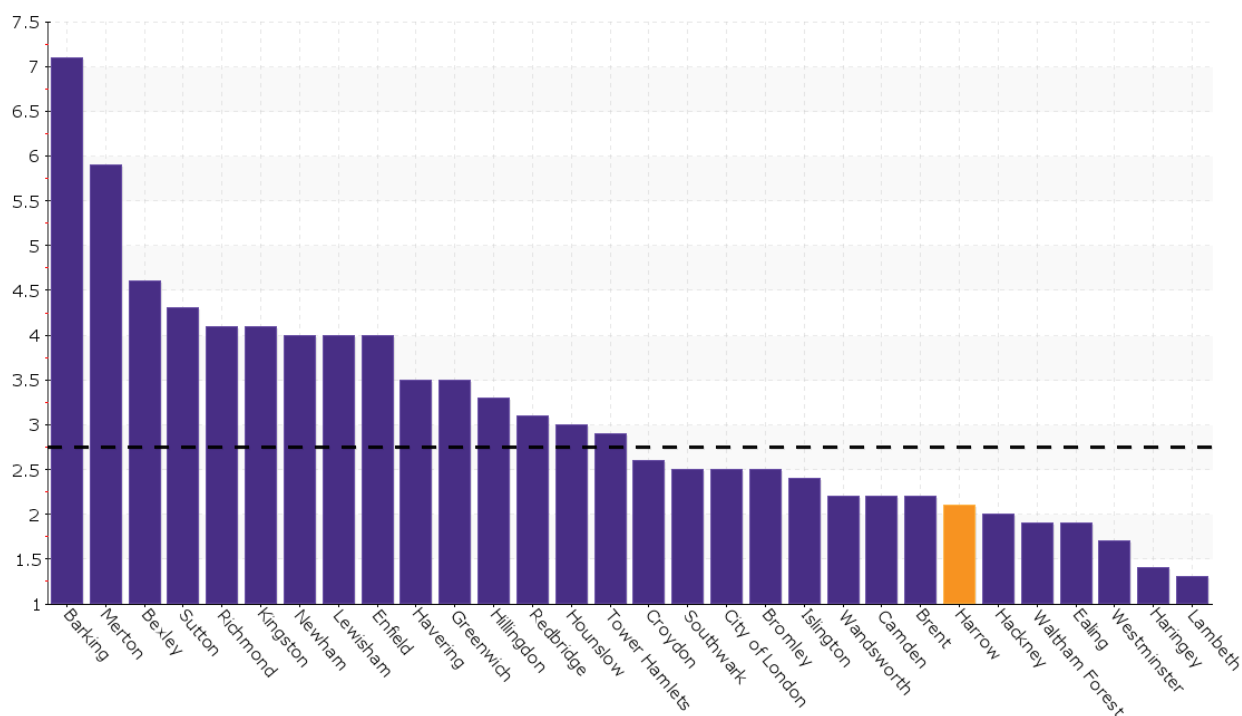
Section 2 – Report

Introduction

- 2.1. At its meeting on 15 October July 2012, the Employees' Consultative Forum received a report on Annual Equality in Employment Monitoring from 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2012. Having considered the report Members noted with concern the low proportion of staff aged between 16 and 24 years and requested a further report with comparative figures across other authorities, information on career grade posts, and analysis on the barriers to recruitment and employment, be brought to the next meeting of the Forum.

Representation of 16-24 Year olds

- 2.2 The table below shows London Councils HR Metrics data on the percentage of employees aged 16 to 24 as at 31 March 2012. The analysis excludes Councils that had not submitted data for this metric, ie: Barnet, Hammersmith and Fulham, Kensington and Chelsea.



Harrow's percentage of employees aged 16 to 24 of 2.1% falls in the first quartile of all the London Boroughs, and the first quartile for outer London.

Harrow's percentage of employees aged 16 to 24 has risen since the last survey in 31st March 2011, when it was 2%, a rise of 5.0%. This compares with a median average change of -19.1% for all London

Boroughs and a median average change of -9.6% for outer London since March 2011.

Harrow's percentage of employees aged 16 to 24 excluding schools was 2.21%

- 2.3 The table below benchmarks Harrow's percentage of employees aged 16 to 24 against a more recent survey of 13 London Boroughs carried out in October 2012

Council	Headcount	Total 16-24 Year Olds	% of Workforce
Lambeth	2888	47	1.63%
Hackney	3247	67	2.06%
Brent	2536	54	2.13%
Royal Greenwich	9361	245	2.62%
Harrow	5061	152	3.00%
Hammersmith & Fulham	5447	173	3.18%
Hillingdon	3012	100	3.32%
Islington	3987	148	3.71%
Enfield	3981	179	4.50%
City of London	2666	126	4.73%
Bexley	1845	101	5.47%
Camden	6200	340	5.48%
Barking & Dagenham	3610	271	7.51%

Harrow's percentage of employees aged 16 to 24 of 2.1% has risen to 3.00% but it remains lower than the average of 3.8%.

The majority of the other Borough's reported that 16 – 24 year olds were employed in a variety of roles ranging from waste/street cleaning, administrative, leisure attendants and a high proportion were based in schools e.g. lunchtime supervisors, classroom assistants, Early Years/Play Workers.

- 2.4 The proportion of Harrow employees aged 16 to 24 has risen and this trend appears to be continuing. However, this positive trend needs to be considered within the wider context of workforce changes including reductions through voluntary severance, redundancy and early retirement, which will also have been a factor.

Career Grade posts within Harrow Council

- 2.5 Harrow's workforce profile as at 31 March 2012 shows 66 employees in Career Grade posts. These are shown by Directorate in the table below:

Directorate	Career Grade Posts
Adults & Housing	4
Chief Executive's	19
Children's	17
Community & Environment	13
Corporate Finance	3
Legal & Governance	1
Place Shaping	9
Total	66

Only 1 employee on a Career Grade is aged 16 - 24 years and of the 66 career grade posts, 92.5% are graded above H5.

- 2.6 There are relatively few staff in career graded posts and although previous years data is not available, anecdotally there has been a decline in recent years. There are a number of potential factors that have affected this:

Turnover and age of workforce

Harrow has relatively low voluntary turnover. This together with the current age profile is likely to mean that many employees in career grades will have progressed to the highest grade. In these circumstances continued operation of career grade schemes is not likely to be seen as useful and some schemes have been abandoned.

Workforce Reductions

As the Council's workforce has reduced the number of posts which previously operated as career grades has reduced e.g. the IT career grade posts transferred to Capita.

Workforce reductions may also reduce the Council's capacity to accommodate posts at the lower grades where employees may not be fully qualified / competent.

Restructures and de-layering

Reducing organisational layers increases the gap between roles at different levels. This increased gap results in bigger grade differences making it more difficult to design and operate career grade schemes.

Barriers to Recruitment of Staff aged between 16 and 24 Years

Legislation

- 2.7 The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 requires that 'Every appointment of a person to a paid office or employment under—
- (a) a local authority or parish or community council in England and Wales, or
 - (b) a local authority in Scotland,
- shall be made on merit.'

Most authorities demonstrate they comply with this by appointing the applicant who best meets the requirements of the job description and person specification for a role.

- 2.8 The Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful for an employer to directly or indirectly discriminate because of a person's age.

This means that it is unlawful to set an age requirement for a job. However, unlike the other protected characteristics under the Equality Act, direct discrimination because of age can be justified if it is objectively justifiable that is, 'a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim'. It is unclear how this legal test will be applied by the Courts; however this could include addressing disproportion in the workforce or more widely amongst job seekers in the community (see 2.9 below).

There is therefore risk for any employer in setting an age requirement or restriction in recruitment.

The Equality Act also makes it unlawful to impose a retirement age for employees unless objectively justifiable. As a consequence, employees can work beyond their 'normal retirement age', reducing turnover and the number of opportunities for employment.

Economy & Labour Market

- 2.9 The current national and local economic conditions have resulted in job losses and the labour market has grown. This means there are more people seeking employment with fewer jobs in both the private and public sectors.

This impacts directly on younger job seekers as there are fewer job opportunities available and those that are available are likely to receive increased numbers of applicants with potentially greater job related knowledge skills and experience. It also impacts indirectly, as in times of uncertainty people are more reluctant to change jobs and hence job opportunities become scarcer.

By the very nature of their age, the challenge faced by young people is the lack of work experience. In this they are disproportionately affected as whilst older workers may have other disadvantages, they do not necessarily lack work experience.

In June 2012 Harrow had 182 young people (aged 16-18 years) Not in Employment Education or Training (NEET). Proportionately Harrow had the lowest NEET figure with 96% in Employment, Education or Training compared to the national average of 81.4% and average of 87.3% in London.

At the same time Harrow had 880 18-24 year olds¹ claiming Jobseeker Allowance, which equated to 21.6% of the total number of claimants.

Government Employment Schemes

- 2.10 The Government has funded schemes to support the employment of young people. Harrow previously provided 28 young people with paid work placements through the Future Job Fund, where the wages were funded by DWP. However, this scheme has ceased and Government schemes providing wage subsidies and grants to employers who recruit young people are aimed at small and medium sized enterprises and not local authorities.

Harrow has successfully bid and secured funding from Jobcentreplus' Flexible Support Fund. This funding supported the successful Xcite "Gradplan" project providing unemployed graduates with work experience in the council and the voluntary sector. A report on the project features elsewhere on this agenda.

Council Job Opportunities

- 2.11 The factors described above also mean that there are generally fewer job opportunities within Harrow Council and that those that are available are less likely to be filled by people between 16 and 24 years.

Over the last decade some local government roles have become increasingly 'professionalised' e.g. social workers and therefore recruitment tends to be at graduate level. Some professional services e.g. HR have also developed 'intern' schemes offering work placements for undergraduates on 'sandwich' courses. At the same time there has been a decline in those local government roles which traditionally offered apprenticeships e.g. building trades.

Despite the development of 'modern apprenticeships' there has been little traction in encouraging Directorates to employ apprentices. The notable exception is Housing who have employed 2 apprentice caretakers. Procurement and Economic Development have also provided apprenticeship opportunities and this is hosted by a third party employer the London Apprenticeship Company, which is another option.

¹ Note 16 and 17 year olds do not claim JSA

Corporate Equality Group

2.12 The concerns expressed by Members of the Employees' Consultative Forum were reported, together with relevant data, to the Corporate Equalities Group (CEG). The CEG discussed potential action that could be taken to address the comparatively low proportion of 16 – 24 year olds and agreed to consider introducing targets on age for employment so that performance on employing individuals at the various age ranges e.g. 16-24 year olds can be assessed

The work of the Corporate Equalities Group, including any action to improve the proportion of employees aged 16 - 24 years, will be reported to a future meeting of the Forum

Section 3 – Further Information

None.

Section 4 – Financial Implications

There are no financial implications relating to this specific report.

Section 5 - Equalities implications

This information report relates to information previously reported on equalities in employment.

Section 6 – Corporate Priorities

The report relates to employment for Council employees and as such supports delivery of all corporate priorities.

Name: Steve Tingle

On behalf of the Chief
Financial Officer

Date: 21 January 2013

Section 7 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Jon Turner, Divisional Director Human Resources and Development and Shared Services, 020 8424 1225

Background Papers: Agenda, Reports and Minutes of the Employees' Consultative Forum – 15 October 2012.