



Positive Direction of Travel

Areas of Focus/Potential Concern

Long-Term Challenges

Timeliness of Subject Access Request Responses

Appraisal Discussions

Funding for Future Financial Years

Recruitment and Retention



71%

While the proportion of Subject Access Requests (SARs) released within the quarter remains below the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) recommended target of 90%, performance improved for the third quarter, from 44% in Quarter 1 to 72%. Improvement can be attributed to close management oversight particularly in relation to backlog requests which have reduced from 21 to 6.



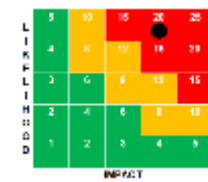
71%

While there was improvement compared with last quarter, performance remains worse than target (90%). Appraisal discussions have been an area of focus this quarter, with Adults recording 88.9% completion, and Corporate Resources achieving 94.4%. Community Safety (46.9%) and Children's Services (41.6%) had the lowest level of PDR completion.



High 20

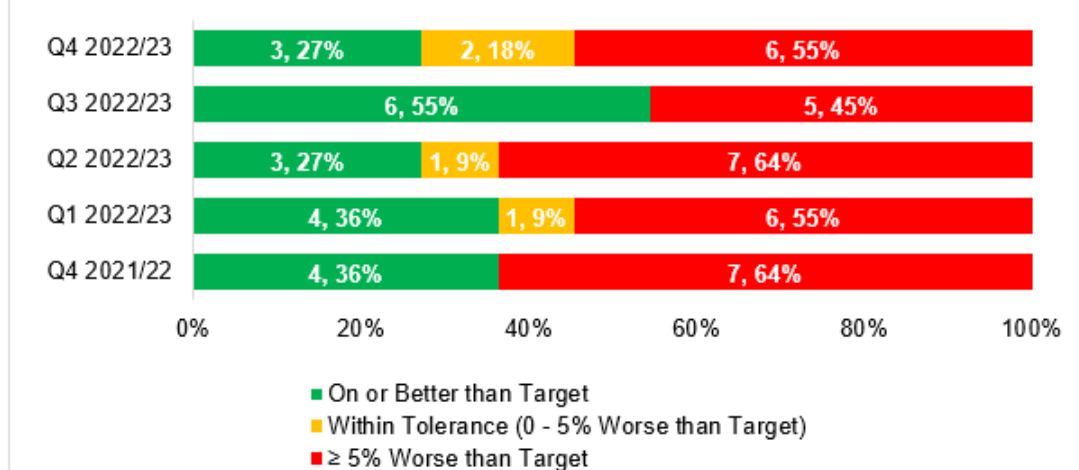
The risk level relating to reductions and changes to funding for future financial years and its potential to impact Core Services remains from High (20). There continues to be a considerable amount of uncertainty regarding future funding levels beyond March 2024, although the recent Funding Policy Statement (issued 12th December 2022) provided high level funding assumptions for the following year.



High 20

While Turnover levels decreased slightly within the quarter, challenges relating to recruitment, the job market and the cost-of-living crisis persist. Competition for qualified staff is particularly fierce and the Council continues to make a range of market related additional pay awards. Reliance on consultancy and agency staff remains high in some areas, as do vacancies for some services. We are introducing an employer brand to favourably promote the Council in the marketplace.

**Delivering Our Ambitions - Good Management of Service
Percentage of Corporate Performance Measures On/Ahead,
Within Tolerance or Behind Target**



Workforce

- Overall sickness levels across GCC (excluding schools) have decreased, from 2.12 days lost per FtE to 1.85 days, and performance is within tolerance of target (1.80 per FtE). Sickness levels during Quarter 4 are lower than the same period last year (2.86), and decreases are evident within 3 of the 5 directorates. Covid, infections, colds and flu made up one-fifth of days lost to sickness in Quarter 4 (20.3%), this is in line with seasonal trends.

During 2022/23, GCC staff have lost 8.62 working days per FTE to sickness. Performance is worse than comparators over a 12-month period (7.38 days lost per FtE, Public Services People Managers Association (PPMA) 2020/21).

Measure	Days Lost to Sickness per FtE	Days Lost to Long Term Sickness per FtE	Days Lost to Stress per FtE
GCC	1.85	1.13	0.65
Adults & PWC	2.68	1.31	0.73
Childrens	1.62	0.79	0.65
EE&I	1.54	0.75	0.57
Community Safety	3.38	2.66	0.78
Corporate Resources	1.23	0.66	0.39

Days lost to long term sickness decreased this quarter (1.13 days per FtE down from 1.19), however 4 of the 5 directorates remain worse than target. Note: Long term sickness accounts for periods of sickness absence lasting 20 days for more.

Absence due to stress increased slightly from 0.52 days lost per FtE to 0.65. In Quarter 4, Stress and Depression accounted for the highest proportion of sickness absence (31.9%), which is marginally above regional comparators (28.1%). However, stress/depression accounted for 41.7% of sickness absence within EE&I in 2022/23. HR and Occupational Health continue to work with teams reporting high levels of stress related absence.

- Across GCC, 71.1% of staff had had an appraisal with their manager during 2022/23. While performance remains below target (90%), Quarter 4 saw the highest levels of PDR completion in the last 5 years. Directorates have focused efforts on appraisal completion, with Adults attaining a completion rate of 88.9% and Corporate Resources achieving 94.4%. Community Safety (46.9%) and Children's Services (41.6%) had the lowest level of PDR completion. The PDR process is intended to provide a clear link between the work of individuals to their business plans and the Council Strategy.

It also supports the review of learning and development needed to ensure that GCC's workforce has the current skills and knowledge required to deliver its objectives. Of the 2,899 completed/exempt PDRs, the majority were rated as meeting (2,600, 89.7%) or exceeding (279, 9.6%) expectations.

Measure	Staff Appraisals Completed
GCC	71.1%
Adults & PWC	88.9%
Childrens	41.6%
EE&I	86.7%
Community Safety	46.9%
Corporate Resources	94.4%

3. Turnover levels decreased marginally in the 12 months to the end of Quarter 4 compared to the 12 months to the end of last quarter (13.8% to 12.7%) and are the lowest recorded since Quarter 3 2021/22. However, challenges relating to recruitment, the job market and the cost-of-living crisis persist. The risk pertaining to the *difficulty recruiting and retaining staff* remains **(High 20)**. National and regional labour markets continue to be highly competitive and wage settlement trends show that the public sector is still being considerably outstretched by the private sector. Competition for qualified staff is particularly fierce and the Council continues to make a range of market related additional pay awards. Reliance on consultancy and agency staff remains high in some areas. There are internal challenges regarding the lack of detailed information on turnover and improvement work is ongoing to develop this. In addition, we are introducing an employer brand to favourably promote the Council in the marketplace, utilising social media to target and attract candidates.

Measure	Staff Turnover
GCC	12.7%
Adults & PWC	13.7%
Childrens	12.7%
EE&I	10.4%
Community Safety	11.7%
Corporate Resources	13.7%

ICT

4. There were four Priority 1 (P1) incidents in Quarter 4 (Note: this is an organisation-wide issue, an issue causing an outage or one preventing a large volume of GCC staff from working). Despite the ongoing improvement activity, performance is below target (3), however, all incidents related to third party services. Significant change activities have been undertaken to modernise/stabilise critical infrastructure, focused on a journey towards cloud technologies and both the network infrastructure and remote access solution are due to be refreshed/replaced as part of the agreed Transformation Programme. The risk relating to *failure to ensure technology managed by ICT (including communications abilities) is fit for purpose* remains **High (15)**
5. One security breach occurred within Quarter 4. The risk rating relating to *failure to protect the council's key information and data from Cyber Attack* remains **unchanged at High (15)**. A programme of ICT replacement and cyber improvement is underway. Independent assessments of back-up solutions have found implementations fit for purpose and the organisation recently received a Public Services Network accreditation. Technological controls and measures against cyber-attack are in place, such as ensuring devices are fully patched and reviewing backup service.

Agile

6. The number of staff working from a GCC office has gradually decreased over the quarter. Shire Hall's occupancy rates averaged at 38% in Quarter 4, compared with 40% in Quarter 3. Some areas recorded 88% occupancy within the quarter. This figure may be affected by recent refurbishment efforts, whereby the number of desks were reduced in some offices. The buildings and workspaces aspects of the Agile programme continues to make headway, supporting the wider cultural transformation. The programme of refurbishment works has been divided into phases, of which Phase One is near completion. The refurbishments meet the Council's requirement for modern, flexible, and collaborative spaces, with the introduction of new equipment, quiet booths, and informal breakout areas.
7. A new Lone Working Policy has been drafted and is due to be presented to the Corporate Leadership Team shortly. Additional training, tools and guidance has been rolled out to support colleagues on agile arrangements, identifying stress signals and encouraging a good work/life balance. Efforts to promote the Health and Safety Executive's good practice in relation to home working are underway and first aider and fire procedures are under review.

Finance

8. The risk level relating to *reductions and changes to funding for future financial years and its potential to impact Core Services* **remains High (20)**. There continues to be a considerable amount of uncertainty regarding future funding levels beyond March 2024, although the recent Funding Policy Statement (issued 12th December 2022) provided high level funding assumptions for the following year. The Fair Funding Review and Business Rates Review may take place in 2025/26, which could result in significant changes to future funding.

Governance

9. Four decisions were upheld by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) within the quarter. Performance has been worse than target for two of the four quarters of the year, with 12 complaints upheld during 2022/23 against a target of 8. Of the four occurring during Quarter 4, three related to assessment and provision of services to children with an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP); the majority of decisions upheld in the previous two quarters also related to SEND and EHCPs. This reflects a growing national trend both locally and nationally, and while this remains a concern, the rate of complaints upheld against Gloucestershire appears similar to that of other Councils. It is anticipated this trend will continue as more than half of complaints referred to the Ombudsman in Quarter 4 relate to SEND services (56%, 14 out of 25). All cases upheld by the Ombudsman are reviewed by the Directorate Senior Leadership Team to ensure that lessons are learnt.

Gloucestershire Data Insights

10. While progress has been made with the development of Power BI dashboards within the Gloucestershire Data Insights (GDI) programme, technical obstacles continue to delay the deployment of dashboards. Nevertheless, solutions are being implemented and are expected to have resolved the issue within the next few months. The first phase of dashboards released are for Adult Social Care. Five have been released to the senior management team, once the outstanding concerns have been resolved, these will be disseminated to the wider service. In the meantime, Power BI user training has been rolled out to Adult Social Care (ASC) Managers

Information Management

11. There has been a 47% increase in the number of FOI and EIR requests in the quarter (386 up from 262 last quarter). As a result, there has been a slight decline in FOI/EIR responses released within timescales (88% down from 90% last quarter). A contributing factor was that some requests in one service area were identified late, by which time it was not possible to respond within timescales. There is now a process in place to prevent this issue from reoccurring.

12. While the proportion of Subject Access Requests (SARs) released within the quarter remains below the Information Commissioners Office's (ICO) recommended target of 90%, performance has continued on an upward trajectory and has improved by 2% points (71%, up from 44% at the end of Quarter 1). The number of requests closed has continued to increase each quarter, and the backlog of requests has reduced from 21 last quarter to 6. Remaining cases involve either a large volume of files and/or are extremely complex in nature.