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MA/PGDip in Strategic People Management

Resourcing and Talent Management

The New Talent Economy

1.0 An Executive Summary

This report is an evaluation of the external and internal factors that affecting talent management in the organization and a critical analysis of the HR systems processes and practices in the organization to determine if they can meet the challenges of the future of work.

Four recommendations have been provided, which the author believes could have the biggest positive impact on Porth Gofal meeting future challenges. The recommendations are to prioritise the exit interview pilot and ensure that evaluation and implementation of any recommendation takes place, to continue lobbying for a national set of terms and conditions for social workers, to review the recruitment process in the light of changes enforced to it and investigate the possibility of creating a partnership with Higher Education providers to create a graduate scheme.

Although numerous sources were read reviewed as part of this report, none of them had been written based on Porth Gofal alone. Due to this, the conclusions and recommendations have been drawn to the best of the information provided.

Care was taken to use sources as up to date as possible, and sources based on the sector in Wales, although comparisons have been made with the equivalent Sector in England.

Word count limited the in-depth evaluation and analysis of the topic.

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3. Introduction

This report critically evaluates the external and internal factors affecting talent management within the *Porth Gofal* service of Ceredigion County Council (CCC) the Human Resources (HR) systems processes and practices. In addition, a critical analysis of the HR systems processes and practices within the organization to determine if they can meet the challenges of the future of work.

Recommendations are made for how *Porth Gofal* can improve their talent management approach to account for the changes in the way people view work/jobs.

I have chosen to focus on one of twelve Services within the Council which is *Porth Gofal*. *Porth Gofal* (PG) is a new concept and part of a wider Through Age Wellbeing model that is currently being implemented within CCC. The purpose of the new model is to provide a cohesive and through age approach to care by bringing specialist teams together to provide support for all regardless of age, moving from Children and Adult support provisions being separate. This approach provides greater stability and continuity for service users, ensuring that the same people can support them across the transition from children to adults.

PG's purpose is to promote the independence of the Service users who tend to be the most vulnerable individuals and families within Society. PG works with individuals

to understand their strengths, needs and wishes and coordinate support with CCC teams and external partners. Encompassed within the Service are the Emergency Duty Team, Integrated Community Equipment Stores, Housing Services, Fostering Services, Porth Ceredigion Intake and Triage Team, Targeted Intervention Services and the Residential and Day Care Services totalling 459 staff members.

Section 4 evaluates the internal and external business factors affecting talent management in the organisation. There are PESTLE and SWOT analyses in appendix 1, 2 and 3 which inform this evaluation. Section 5 provides Critical analysis of the HR systems, processes and practices to determine if they can meet the challenges of future work with elements of the different strands that make up a talent management strategy. Conclusions are drawn in section 6 and recommendations are given in section 7.

4. Internal and external business factors

Please find the PESTLE and SWOT analyses of internal and external business factors affecting talent management in Appendix 1,2 and 3. An evaluation of the key factors follows. Factors should be viewed as a whole, rather than individual sections, as they all connected. A PESTLE analysis can only ever be a snapshot in time. (Farnham, 2010).

4.3 Attraction

The UK's decision in 2016 to leave the EU Union has had an impact on the number of migrants leaving the UK, with net migration falling since 2016 before beginning to stabilize in 2018 according to the ONS (ONS, Migration Statistics Quarterly Report: August 2020) which in turn has affected the number available to work in the United

Kingdom. Certain care roles have been added to the Shortage Occupation List (UK Visas and Immigration, 2021) to expand the pool of possible recruits and to try and tempt overseas workers to return.

Hutcheson, L; Ormston, R (2019)'s report for Welsh Government says that "An estimated 6.4% of staff within registered social care settings and 4.5% of staff within registered childcare services in Wales are non-UK EU nationals." Limitation – WG figures for percentage of EU nationals working in care and childcare settings only included those registered with Care Inspectorate Wales.

The current tight labour market and increased competition for staff leads to increased benefits and golden handshakes offered to draw staff "Generous relocation package up to £8,000 for eligible roles" Pembrokeshire County Council (2021). The target recruitment pool for *PG* is also reduced due to the need to provide Welsh language provision as outlined in the Welsh Government's Strategic Framework for the Welsh Language in Health and Social Care, ('More than just words', 2019). Golden handshakes and increased benefits are not sustainable in the long run, there is a need for a national set of terms and conditions so that parity is provided for employers and fairness and equality for employees.

"Some politicians believe a national care system is the only way the social care sector can ensure parity of terms and conditions, and esteem, with its NHS partners. This may be the best solution but is likely to take several years to come to fruition, as further resources would be needed, and legislation would need to be enacted." (Evans 2020 para.13)

There have been numerous high-profile cases over the past 25 years criticising social care services and highlighting failures in the care provided to service users

such as the cases of Victoria Climbié, Baby P and Daniel Pelka. The Guardian reported that there were sixty missed chances to save a baby (Jones, 2008) as a response to the treatment of Baby P. There is also negative press regarding the support that Social Workers receive as noted by Galpin (2015) who argues that the system is failing social workers rather than the other way around. The all-round negativity would affect the appeal of a career in the Social Care profession for potential applicants.

CCC has been criticized widely for its tough stance on COVID precautions (BBCa, 2021), however the largest public outcry was in September when the Chief Executive's Pay rise made national headlines (BBCb, 2021). Local press negativity like so has a direct effect on attraction as noted by O'Connor in (Howlett 2021) that the brand and reputation will be a key consideration for potential candidates.

4.4 Recruitment

"Recruitment is a challenge within social care and childcare, with 58% of registered social care respondents ...saying they found it difficult to recruit within the last year." (Hutcheson, L; Ormston, R 2019). England also face difficulty with recruitment with (Skills for Care, 2021) estimating that on average, 6.8% of roles in the adult social care sector were vacant across England in 2020/21.

Manpower group (2018) note that large firms have twice as much difficulty filling roles with 67% report hiring challenges. According to a CCC report the average number of applicants for PG posts have dropped from 7.3 in 2019 to 4.94. in 2021. The figure for 2022 thus far is 3. (Internal recruitment report, unpublished) This compares with an average of 7.14 applicants for a role in the other 11 Council Services in 2021.

Requisition 103250, CCC's generic social worker pool has been running for several months during which it's only had one applicant who was recruited by another local authority (Hutton, 2021).

In its manifesto for the Senedd election, Welsh Labour said it would "pursue a sustainable UK solution so that care is free for all at the point of need" (Welsh Labour, p.18 2021). The Welsh Government draft budget proposals for 2022-2023 does outline an increase in funding for Health and Social Care and for Local Government, the final figures will be confirmed in March 2022 (Williams, 2021).

4.5 Development

During a survey to employees appointed to CCC during the COVID-19 pandemic 85.18% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the induction provided by their manager was good (Roberts, 2021).

There is a need to upskill and develop the staff we have in post in order to be able to look at succession planning but there are several factors that are hampering this.

Employees are firefighting high-pressure workloads and have less time to dedicate to their own and staff member's development. Employee wellbeing is being affected by workload and additional unpaid hours are being worked putting meaning there is a negative work-life balance. A significant number of inexperienced staff promoted around the same time. High turnover of staff including Assistant Social Worker who have left the profession all-together. (Hutton, 2022)

Gold Command, the body delegated to run CCC during the emergency of COVID have instructed all CCC staff, including PG, to work from home where possible and

to keep any contact with Service users to a minimum. This decision has led numerous employees to consider their positions.

4.6 Retention

In 2019, 940 left the Social Care workforce in Wales and 1,070 joined, representing a turnover rate of just under 8% (Social Care Wales, 2019).

The verbal feedback given to Managers from employees who have left *PG* during the pandemic has had the recurring topic of working from home being the main consideration on why they are leaving. Numerous *PG* employees were unhappy with having to work from home and left for roles with other authorities where face to face contact with service users was allowed. The stance on working from home in *PG* is contrary to how most staff feel within CCC, where 80% of those working from home would like to continue doing so (Health and wellbeing Survey, 2022).

There are some roles within *PG* where the flexibility of working from home or indeed hybrid working can't be offered i.e., care homes. The employees in *PG* do however have access to other flexible working options. Only 37% of *PG* employees are full time (Middleton, 2021), therefore most of the service have flexibility on hours worked.

(Skills for Care, 2021) has reported "Levels of staff sickness have nearly doubled in the over the course of the pandemic. In total, around six million extra days were lost to sickness than in the year before." The flexibility offered may help combat absence rates however the effects of COVID, both as an absence reason and as added pressure can't be underestimated.

5. Critical analysis of the HR systems, processes and practices to determine if they can meet the challenges of future work

5.1 Filling the gaps

“Developing the right blend of people, skills, processes and technology is the only way to execute your business strategy, create value and improve people’s lives” (ManpowerGroup, 2018).

Middleton (2022) notes that *PG* has 73 vacant positions on the 22/01/2022. *PG* vacancies are advertised on the CCC careers website, and they get further exposure on CCC’s Jobs Social Media Platforms. Current practice aligns with the CIPD (2020) report which notes 77% of respondents found companies own corporate website to be the most effective method of attracting candidate applications. ManpowerGroup (2018) advises that the employers need to view potential candidates as consumers by utilising targeted marketing engage the best talent.

Applications are required to be presented via the online system, but paper forms are accepted if necessity compels. The application form varies dependent on the role it is required for and two forms are in use for roles within *PG*. The application form for care workers was simplified and following feedback that the usual form was too long and off-putting. Interviews are currently held over Teams or Zoom; however, some Care Home roles are interviewed via telephone. 91.24% of employees agreed or strongly agreed that the experience of a virtual interview was positive (Roberts, 2021).

43.07% agreed they would prefer a virtual interview rather than a face-to-face interview in future and only 18.25% disagreed with this (Roberts, 2021). Limitation as the survey is based on all CCC services, not specifically *PG*.

PG can't rely on future employees self-referring themselves to the company, there must be a process in place so that the brightest talent can be attracted and recruited. The classic trio of application, interview, references is out-dated and trial placements may provide a better indication of suitability and ability in the current and future workplace. (Taylor, 2019)

Taylor (2019) notes that competency-based interviewing now appears to be the most used selection method in the UK. Although it's popularity, competency-based interviews do have drawback including the ability of the interviewee to prepare their answers to the stock questions based on the job description and person specification. With strength-based interviews, candidates have less opportunity to prepare and rehearse their answers, meaning that interview questions are more likely to bring out the genuine interest, motivation and aptitude of interviewees. (Lancaster University, 2022) Also, as people are usually more passionate about their interests, it makes for a more enjoyable interview experience for all involved (Swain, 2021).

Biodata, Ability testing, Verbal and Numerical reasoning, Analytical ability, Personality testing, Assessment centres, are various areas that can be trialled. Outcomes will need to be evaluated to see what may be best fit *PG*. (Taylor, 2019)

5.2 Keeping the ship steady

Not all employee turnover is bad and there will never be a simple and effective retention policy' (Allen, Bryant and Vaardman, 2010). A good talent management strategy needs to retain those who are the right fit for the business and let go of those who aren't.

Retention needs to be improved and the first question (CIPD, 2021) recommends asking is why employees are leaving?

Currently there are no formal exit interviews held within CCC or *PG*, although most managers talk briefly to their soon to be departing staff member to ask the basics i.e., who the new employer is and why they are leaving as recommended in (Taylor, 2019, p. 325) as a minimum. (Howlett, 2021) notes that "It should be a given that companies are doing proper exit interviews and understanding some of the data that is coming out of that to change processes and use that feedback to provide a better employee experience." CCC will be conducting an Exit interview pilot during February and *PG* will be taking part as it is the area where CCC have the highest turnover of staff (Hutton, 2021).

Taylor (2019) notes that Exit interviews need to be treated with caution and that they can have unreliable information. They do provide the opportunity to gather important information that can help direct retention and highlight areas to investigate further, helping *PG* to save costs long term.

CIPD (2021) recommends holding regular staff surveys which may highlight potential retention issues prior to people making the decision to leave along with and help to minimising the effects of turnover.

Exit interviews may also help with the rehires or boomerangs – which are increasing in numbers and many companies are factoring this on to their recruitment plans and strategies (Howlett, 2021). Those employees who noted they were leaving *PG* due to the need to work remotely may consider coming back if they were happy with most other aspects of work.

Given the current skills shortage it may be pertinent to engage with schools and universities to develop the curriculum so that they produce candidates that are ready for the workplace. There are two Higher Education establishments in the County that could help facilitate this.

Graduates seems to be an underused source of talent for *PG* and to attract the best graduates the expectations of Generation Z must be addressed. Given the tight labour market it is integral to attract the brightest talent so that the highest service provision can be maintained. There is a high demand for graduate recruitment in the market and according to (Taylor, 2019) there is a greater competition for those who have genuine long-term potential.

With several different generations working alongside each other; it is hard to balance the requirements and demands as it varies by generation. Millennials are said to be tech savvy, need work life balance, look for ethical behaviour, have a global perspective and dislike bureaucracy. (Taylor, 2019). Millennials and future generations of workers expect institutions like businesses and governments to do more to help bring about their vision of a better future. (Deloitte, 2021) Generation Z saw positive environmental and societal contribution as important in their career choice (Watkins, 2021) which may bode well for *PG* and CCC in the future.

Generation Z graduates who had concerns about their 'work readiness' (Watkins, 2021) could use targeted learning and development opportunities which would support their integration into the workplace. Deloitte (2021) reports that millennials in senior positions prioritized ...development through training and mentors, and creating a diverse and inclusive working environment.

Candidates can be choosy in a tight labour market and are more likely to look for motivating roles for example those which have autonomy, mastery and purpose (Pink, 2011). Due to the regular supervision of employee's performance coupled with strict regulations, processes and policies, this could impact autonomy and stifle the flexibility craved by the under 40's (Sloan, 2019).

Flexibility was on the radar of millenials beofre the pandemic (Deloitte, 2019).

Enforced home working due to COVID has not been popular within *PG* as mentioned earlier, however flexibility of hours is popular within the Service with 63% working part time (Middleton, 2021) and the utilisation of CCC's Flexitime scheme is high and the availability to request annialised or compressed hours should appeal to a broad range of candidates

ManpowerGroup (2018) notes that in the current tight labour market, employers must provide a strong employee value proposition, clear purpose and attractive culture or they will need to be prepared to pay a premium with benefits, wages or other perks. *PG* and CCC in turn rely on Welsh Government for its finances and Sion et al 2020 highlight the challenge facing the public sector in Wales regarding fair remuneration for staff.

6. Conclusion

In this section, the report highlights what can make the biggest impact on *PG*'s future talent management approach to account for changes in the way people view work/jobs.

In this business report, the common themes which link most of the highlighted factors together are the importance of retaining the talent, skills and knowledge that *PG* has within its ranks.

Exit interviews or a similar diagnostic tool is required to collect data on why employees are leaving the Service. The completion and evaluation of the exit interview pilot will be key to putting processes in place to measure feedback. Alongside the exit interviews, holding regular employee surveys will help raise awareness of retention issues before they arrive.

The challenge of recruiting in a tight labour market means that the recruitment process, specifically the methods utilized for recruitment need to be reviewed in order to attract the best and brightest talents along with targeting new streams of talent that have previously not been targeted by CCC and *PG*.

7. Recommendations

Exit interviews pilot to be a priority, and better recording of why people leave so workforce planning can be done properly. HR and *PG* should draft a detailed action plan, informed by key metrics, to address how retention can be improved. The plan should include details of who needs to do what, when and how. This would incur minimal costs, but the costs that are accrued from the exercise will be repaid by attracting and retaining the best people for the business; therefore, ultimately *PG* and CCC will profit.

Lobbying for a set of national terms and conditions for social workers like those of teachers. This is not a quick fix, and this recommendation will probably take the longest time to realize as it calls for national cooperation. The implementation of national terms would allow a level field for employers in terms of pay and ensure fairness and equality for staff. With pay-parity, *PG* would then be able to compete with other Authorities for the services of these staff.

Review the recruitment process and see if it would benefit from a change in methods utilized during the interview process. It is good practice to review processes regularly but given the current climate with COVID and the change in practices that were forced in order to adapt *PG*'s ways of working, it would be pertinent to see if improvements can be made.

Investigate the possibility of graduate schemes and working with local Higher Education providers to see if a stream of applicants can be found. This should be scoped out in the next few months, if possible, in order to see if any fruition can be gained this academic year. The discussions would incur minimal costs and if successfully set up then the costs would be negligible ongoing. If successful, it would provide *PG* with guaranteed applicants for positions which have struggled to be filled.

The limitations of this report have not allowed for the detailed action plans to be produced within; each recommendation will require another report of similar length in order to progress. This report has been a briefing identifying what can make the biggest impact on *PG*'s future talent management approach to account for changes in the way people view work/jobs.

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Appendix 1

	External	Importance to organization
Political	The decision of the UK Government to leave the EU means that a proportion of EU migrants have gone home instead of going through the settled status.	Medium
	Future reforms of the Social Care Act in Wales	Medium – no date given by
	Incoming changes to registration and regulation. Specifically, the registration of adult residential staff. And the need to register a new children's home which we expect to receive 'Not In My Back Yard' public feedback.	Medium
	Early discussions about Welsh terms and conditions for Social Workers.	High - because Ceredigion CC currently pay less than neighboring authorities and are struggling to recruit to these roles.
Economic	Cost of living is increasing – wages can be low	Low

	High house prices and low stocks of affordable rental property meaning that people are moving	Low
Social	Reduced flexibility as service is required 24/7 Aging population meaning more people requiring care and reduction in numbers of people of working age Pandemic causing pressures on families due to high cost of living/ home schooling etc. Negative national press for high profile children's cases. Locally negative press aimed at the Council's leadership.	Medium Medium – plan and look at demographics Medium High
Technology	Recruitment online – broadband still patchy in Ceredigion Digital skills may be poor for some age-ranges. These people have the skills we need for roles e.g., care homes. Working from home/ hybrid	Low Medium High

	working. Ceredigion is losing social work staff to employers who are more office based.	
Legal	Possible future revision of the need for vaccination for Care staff in Wales in line with England.	Low
Environmental	Current pandemic/new variants	Medium
	Future pandemic	Low
	Cost of transport	Low

Appendix 2

	Internal factors	Importance to organization
Political	Elections every 4-5 years which may lead to change in priorities and or vision for the Council	Medium
Economic	Restrictive budget	High
Social	Communication with staff and clients challenging during the pandemic with little face to face contact.	Medium – plan and look at demographics
Technology	Improving the recruitment process	High
		High

	Improving all systems and processes. Upskilling staff. Encouraging service users to access the Councils services online.	High Medium
Legal	Wage rates, National minimum wage and cost of living wage Litigation	Medium Medium
Environmental	Self-imposed limits on how many sites staff can work due to COVID Availability of public transport	Medium – difficult to accommodate but decisions are under constant review Low

Appendix 3

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
People, skills & capabilities	People, skills & capabilities	People, skills & capabilities	People, skills & capabilities
Staff development has restarted, and all staff are receiving training	Staff morale is low due to pressures of pandemic	People relocating to Ceredigion	Aging population, less workforce
Communication has remained strong within Porth Gofal	Continuing pressures due to COVID 19 i.e., illness, self-solation	Workforce Planning needs to be reviewed	High turnover of staff
Engagement levels particularly during the pandemic, managers encouraged to keep in touch	Tight basic budget but increased spending due to COVID	Reviewing the Structure and looking for reorganization opportunities	Future pandemics

HR Strategy	Employee turnover always higher in this sector but has increased dramatically	Reviewing to see if further flexible employment is available a la the Gig Economy	Welsh language requirements
Knowledge and expertise		Expanding current programs i.e., apprenticeships	New registration requirements coming in
Benefits		Industry trends	Very tight labour markets
Succession plans		Technology developments	Increasing market demands
Culture, philosophy and values		Target markets	PESTLE factors
		Expansion and growth	Innovations in technology
		Partnerships with Schools & Further Education providers in the area	Lack of flexibility in role
Resources, assets	Resources, assets	Resources, assets	Resources, assets
Properties, locations	Core activities	New children's home to address commissioning problems.	Democratic process. CIW.
Equipment	Reliability		
Technology	Dated technology/equipment		
Competitive advantage			
Innovation – the creation and implementation of the Through Age Working Model			

Task 2 – Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8lMygQuwnkA>

Private but link shares to ainger.scanlon@uwtsd.ac.uk

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