



2025 - 2028

Contents

Introduction.....	3
Our People.....	4
What we need our people to deliver	6
Progress made in the last three years	7
What we plan to do over the next three years.....	11
How we will measure our progress.....	14
Resourcing our people strategy	16
Document Control Details.....	17

Introduction

Our People Strategy forms part of South Yorkshire Pensions Authority's corporate planning framework, which is updated every three years in line with the triennial cycle of our funding valuations and investment strategy reviews. This People Strategy updates and replaces the HR Strategy 2022 to 2025, reflecting on the progress made against our objectives since then and setting out our ambitions for the next three years to 2028 in relation to how we'll develop our people to deliver the goals set out in our corporate plans.

Our people are central to our success as an organisation. This strategy reflects our recognition of this and our aims to build on the achievements of the last three years to make SYPA an employer of choice and to provide a working environment that supports people to build a career with us, supported by a culture of development and continuous improvement.

The plans in this strategy focus on how we will:

- ◆ Recruit and retain a workforce fit to meet the needs of the organisation now and in the future.
- ◆ Invest in and support the development of our people in line with our core values to be Professional, Progressive and Empowering.
- ◆ Ensure that the leadership and management at all levels of the organisation is the best that it can be.
- ◆ Embed our culture of a positive, forward-thinking, supportive and collaborative workplace where people feel valued, motivated and engaged.

Our People

South Yorkshire Pensions Authority is responsible for the administration of an £11 billion pension fund, serving a scheme membership of around 180,000 individuals. Our mission as an organisation is to deliver for our members and employers, doing so with high levels of customer service. This a big task and yet our workforce size is relatively small, at 130 full-time equivalents – so we strive to ensure that the impact we achieve collectively is greater than the sum of our parts.

Our workforce is made up as follows – figures presented are at 31 March 2024 with comparators at 2023 shown in brackets.

Proportion of Staff

Female

66.4% (67.3%)



Male

33.6% (32.7%)



Proportion of Staff with a disability

14.7% (10.6%)

Compared to South Yorkshire
(2021 Census)

20.5% (20.5%)



Proportion of non-white Staff

2.6% (3.8%)

Compared to South Yorkshire
(2021 Census)

12.3% (12.3%)



Average length of service



10.8
(11.5)

Average age of a member of Staff



41
(42)

Proportion of top 25% of earners by gender

Female

51.7% (53.8%)



Male

48.3% (46.2%)



Days lost through sickness per FTE member of Staff

8.24 (8.47)

Number of Staff with no sickness absence

43 (42)

In the last three years, we have undertaken a significant amount of work on reviewing and assessing the resourcing requirements to ensure the organisation is resilient and well equipped to deliver on our corporate objectives and to meet increasing demands. This has resulted in growth in our staffing establishment as well as some changes to how we structure our teams in order to work in the most effective way to deliver our services.

The establishment as at 1 April 2024 is shown below.

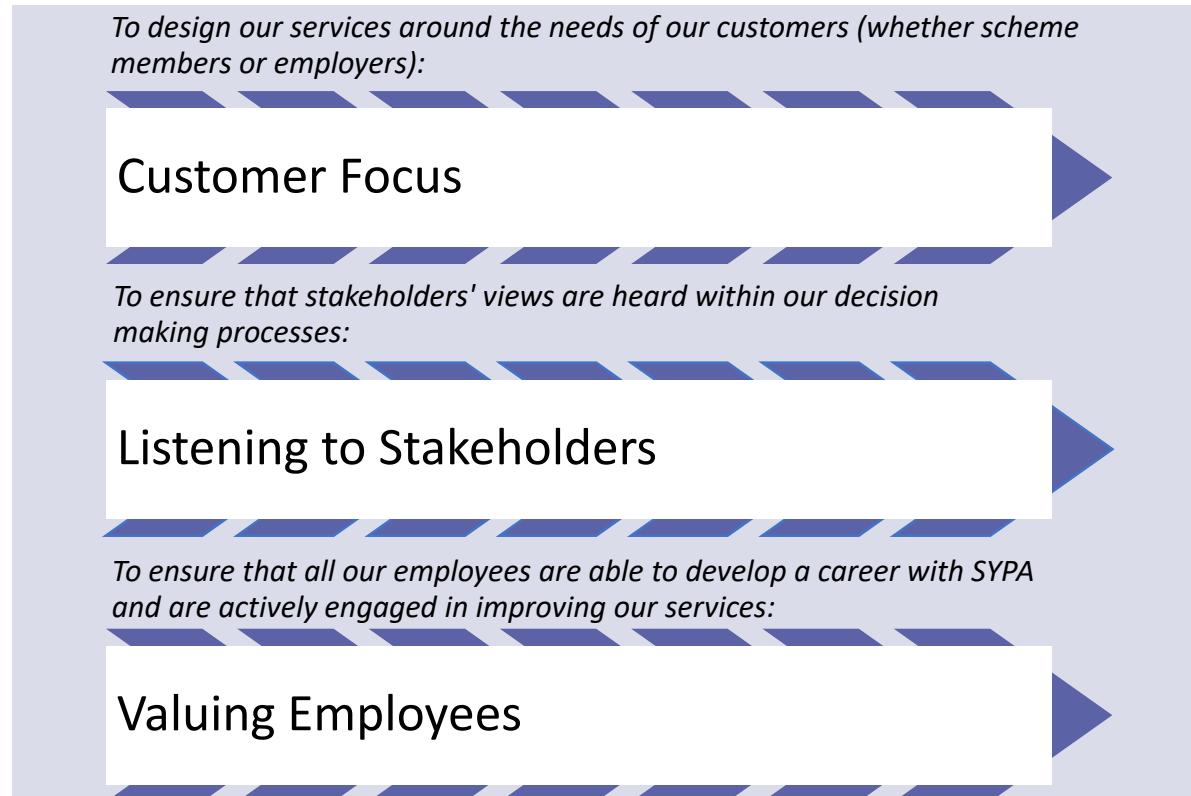
	FTE
Senior Management Team	4.0
Investment Strategy	3.0
Pensions Administration	
Benefits Team	42.6
Customer Services	14.0
Employer Services	12.4
Technical Support & Training	7.7
	76.7
Resources	
Finance & Performance	16.2
Governance & Corporate Services	8.0
Human Resources	2.8
ICT and Operations Management	19.3
	46.3
Total Establishment	130.0

What we need our people to deliver

The Authority's Corporate Strategy sets out our objectives for the next three years and forms an ambitious and challenging agenda that can only be achieved through the success of our people. Therefore, the overall aim of this strategy is:

To provide the organisation with a sustainable and resilient workforce made up of people who will be suitably developed, supported and led to succeed in delivering the objectives set out in the Corporate Strategy.

The work of our people clearly has an impact across all of the Authority's corporate objectives, although this strategy supports the following ones in particular.



Progress made in the last three years

Achievements against the aims of the 2022 – 2025 Strategy

Developing the current workforce to meet the needs of the organisation

The plan to procure and implement a new HR Information and Staff Payroll System was not delivered to the timescale that we aimed for in the last strategy due to lack of capacity and the need to concentrate resources on other corporate priorities. However, the work on this is now under way with market engagement and it is anticipated that the new system will be procured by April 2025 with implementation taking place over a period of approximately 3 months from then.

We have embedded the LinkedIn Learning platform across the organisation and have dedicated resources to ensuring that the majority of our training activity is driven from this central source so that we can record and monitor learning and development by individuals, teams and the organisation. We have created our own learning pathways on the platform for employee induction, technical development and to support our wellbeing agenda.

In order to ensure the skills and knowledge of our people meet our organisational needs, we have strengthened our arrangements for planning and delivery of learning and development opportunities, including creating a new post in the HR team specifically to support this and providing dedicated budgets to resource a wide range of activity including professional qualifications.

Since 2024 we have introduced a corporate training plan which identifies those areas of learning and development that are required across the organisation and all activity identified for 2024/25 has been delivered.

We have delivered briefing sessions and produced manager guides to support the annual process of conducting appraisals and learning and development plans.

During 2024 we commissioned the delivery of a specialised and bespoke 6-month development programme for new and aspiring managers. The programme's aims were to provide the participants with an understanding of our expectations of the 'SYPA Manager' in line with our values and behaviours and to equip them with a range of practical management skills including engaging and motivating people, managing performance, managing teams, personal effectiveness and consideration of DEI issues. This was delivered in two cohorts, with appropriate tailoring to each, for new managers – including those who had been recently promoted to a management role and more experienced managers who were new to SYPA – and for aspiring managers, targeted at our senior practitioners who are aiming to develop their skills and readiness for a management role in future.

Recruiting a workforce for the future

We have continued to develop our approach to recruitment, using a specialist provider to ensure we access a wider range of platforms in which to reach potential applicants. Supported by our communications team, we have also maximised our use of social media channels and developed the 'Work for Us' area of our website to promote SYPA as an employer of choice and to publicise our career opportunities.

Our customer services team continues to offer an apprenticeship route into the organisation – with several individuals coming through this route and being successful in obtaining permanent roles in different services following completion of their apprenticeship.

We have ensured that our expected management behaviours are fully incorporated into role profiles for all roles with people management responsibilities. There are plans to take this further by developing a set of management standards as one of the outcomes from the management development programme delivered in 2024/25.

We have forged a successful partnership with a local authority provider of executive recruitment consultancy, which has been used to great success in recruiting to key management roles at leadership team and senior management team levels – ensuring a robust and values-based process that is focussed not just on technical abilities but also on managerial skills and behaviours that align with SYPA’s approach.

Retaining a high-quality workforce

We have made significant progress over the last three years and continue to do so in relation to adopting modern HR policies and practices. We regularly review and update our policies to ensure they are compliant with legislative changes and best practice.

Our Hybrid working policy was reviewed and updated during 2023/24 – conducted collaboratively through staff and management groups to encompass a wide range of views and suggestions from across the organisation. As a result of this, the updated policy is now supplemented with a ‘Hybrid Working and Our Culture’ guide to provide additional guidance on how we will apply hybrid working arrangements to support and balance the flexibility offered and to optimise the benefits of both office and home working for individuals, teams and the organisation as a whole.

We have ensured our staff are healthy and safe in the workplace by formalising all our arrangements for managing workplace health and safety and have refreshed the associated policies.

We continue to promote health and wellbeing activities and training opportunities and have now secured our own contracts for counselling and occupational health services – that were previously provided indirectly through access to contracts of Barnsley MBC.

During 2022 and 2023, we undertook a major project to firstly review and benchmark our pay and benefits offering, with support from external consultants to bring independent expertise, and then to develop a package of proposals based on the findings. The proposals arising from this piece of work were approved by the Authority's Staffing Committee in October 2023 and implemented thereafter. The range of enhancements introduced were carefully planned to achieve the aim of improving retention and increasing our attractiveness in the wider employment market, whilst supporting flexibility and family-friendly policies. The key improvements introduced were:

- Fully revised grading structure – resulting in incremental pay rises for the majority of staff
- Reduction of weekly working hours from 37 to 35
- Family leave policy enhancements – full pay for 26 weeks' on maternity / adoption leave, and 6 weeks' paternity leave on full pay
- New Loyal Service Scheme providing recognition and financial rewards for service of 10, 20, 30 and 40 years' service
- New Employer Supported Volunteering Scheme providing up to 3 days' leave per year for volunteering in the community
- Salary Sacrifice Schemes for Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVCs) to pensions, Car lease scheme for electric and ultra-low emission vehicles, and Cycle to Work scheme.

We have developed a wider range of channels of communication with our employees to enable them to raise any issues, concerns, make suggestions and ask questions. These include bi-annual SMT Question Time events, a 'Have your Say' page on our intranet site and surveys. All channels have the option to raise issues anonymously.

We have held two highly successful all staff 'Away Days' – in July 2022 and September 2023 and will continue to hold these once every two years in future.

We continue to place a high value on the involvement and contribution of our recognised trade union and hold monthly Trade Union liaison meetings where employee relations matters are discussed in an open and transparent way, and we continue to build on the positive partnership we have engendered with trade union colleagues.

We conducted our Staff Survey in late 2023 – the results of which provided evidence of the successful progress being made on our HR strategy objectives in that the overall engagement index – the 'Net Promoter Score' – had improved from -10 in 2020 to a positive score of 7 in 2023. The survey results also showed marked improvements across all four measures of engagement over that period.

What we plan to do over the next three years

The above section illustrates that an enormous amount of progress has been achieved over the last three years in providing the Authority with a workforce capable of ensuring the delivery of the corporate strategic objectives.

The plans for the next three years are focussed on building out from this strong foundation, and 'raising the bar' for ourselves to drive further strong improvement in developing and supporting our people to succeed. The plans are organised around the following four themes.

- 1. Recruit and retain a workforce fit to meet the needs of the organisation now and in the future.**
- 2. Invest in and support the development of our people in line with our core values to be Professional, Progressive and Empowering.**
- 3. Ensure that the leadership and management at all levels of the organisation is the best that it can be.**
- 4. Embed our culture of a positive, forward-thinking, supportive and collaborative workplace where people feel valued, motivated and engaged.**

Ref	Strategic Action	Timescale	
		From	To
1. Recruit and retain a workforce fit to meet the needs of the organisation now and in the future.			
RR1	Develop and implement a workforce plan.	April 2025	September 2026
RR2	Provide recruitment and selection training to all managers and others involved in making recruitment decisions.	February 2025	July 2025
RR3	Ensure recruitment practices and procedures are updated to use a broad range of advertising methods and to ensure the process is inclusive to attract a diverse pool of potential candidates.	April 2025	December 2025
RR4	Provide a welcoming, positive and well administered on-boarding experience for all those starting their employment journey with SYPA.	Ongoing throughout the strategy period.	
RR5	Undertake regular benchmarking of our pay and benefits (once every 3 years) to ensure we remain aware of our position within the employment market.	October 2026	June 2027
2. Invest in and support the development of our people.			
PD1	Develop and deliver a Learning and Development Strategy – that will set out how we’ll provide career paths for people, including apprenticeships, a career progression scheme applied to various roles across SYPA, and strategic planning of training to equip individuals with the knowledge and skills needed to achieve our goals.	April 2025	April 2026 and ongoing
PD2	Review and update the existing annual appraisal process to ensure it is fit for purpose in providing the framework in which to set objectives, reflect on performance and support personal and professional development goals.	July 2025	December 2025

Ref	Strategic Action	Timescale	
		From	To
3. Ensure that leadership and management at all levels of the organisation is the best that it can be.			
LM1	Develop a framework of skills and expected standards of the “SYPA Manager” supported by appropriate training and development.	July 2025	June 2026
LM2	Develop and implement a new manager induction programme.	July 2025	June 2026
LM3	Explore the possibility of introducing a mentoring scheme for those in or aspiring to a management role.	During the 2025/26 financial year.	
LM4	Introduce a 360-degree feedback process to be incorporated into the annual appraisal of all employees with line management responsibilities.	To be phased in over the period covered by this strategy.	
4. Embed our culture of a positive, forward-thinking, supportive and collaborative workplace where people feel valued, motivated and engaged.			
PC1	Develop and implement a Health and Wellbeing Strategy.	April 2025	February 2026
PC2	Undertake a project to define and promote our ‘Employee Value Proposition’.	September 2025	September 2026
PC3	Continue to build on and further develop the range of internal communication and engagement routes for all our people – including biennial away days, SMT Question Time, Have Your Say, and others.	Ongoing throughout the strategy period.	

How we will measure our progress

The following section sets out the different measures and sources of evidence that will be used to monitor and report back on progress against the objectives and actions planned.

1. Recruit and retain a workforce fit to meet the needs of the organisation now and in the future.

Success in this area will be measured and evidenced through:

- ◆ Workforce Plan in place.
- ◆ Training on Recruitment and Selection delivered.
- ◆ Data on overall application numbers for recruitment exercises, including diversity statistics where available.
- ◆ Feedback from new joiners on their experience of on-boarding and induction.
- ◆ Benchmarking review results.
- ◆ Employee turnover rates.
- ◆ Employee diversity statistics.
- ◆ Vacancy levels.
- ◆ Exit survey and exit interview data.

2. Invest in and support the development of our people.

The indicators that will be used to measure progress against this objective include:

- ◆ Learning and Development Strategy in place.
- ◆ New process for annual appraisal and development reviews implemented.
- ◆ Number of employees with professional qualifications and numbers being supported by SYPA to achieve them.
- ◆ Data on successful apprenticeship completions and career paths followed.

- ◆ Data on training and development activities delivered annually.
- ◆ Feedback from training course evaluation surveys.

3. Ensure that leadership and management at all levels of the organisation is the best that it can be.

Success in this area will be illustrated by:

- ◆ Framework of SYPA Management Standards and Expectations in place.
- ◆ New Manager induction programme implemented.
- ◆ 360 degree feedback process being used as part of annual reviews for all managers.
- ◆ Outcomes from biennial staff surveys.
- ◆ Results of corporate assurance / internal audit reviews of HR policy and procedures application.

4. Embed our culture of a positive, forward-thinking, supportive and collaborative workplace where people feel valued, motivated and engaged.

The indicators that will be used to measure progress against this objective include:

- ◆ Health and Wellbeing Strategy in place.
- ◆ Employee sickness absence monitoring.
- ◆ Employee Value Proposition defined and communicated.
- ◆ Outcomes from biennial staff surveys.
- ◆ Feedback from a wide range of employee engagement channels – including SMT Question Time events, internal communication surveys, staff away days.
- ◆ Data from exit surveys and interviews.

Resourcing our people strategy

The resources planned within the medium term financial strategy to support delivery of this People Strategy are as follows.

Planned Budgets	2025/26 £	2026/27 £	2027/28 £
Human Resources Team (including SLA with BMBC for HR Business Partner)	145,980	150,360	154,870
Recruitment	10,500	10,710	10,930
Training and Development	134,560	137,250	140,000
Health, Safety and Wellbeing (including Occupational Health)	21,650	22,100	22,530
Total	312,690	320,420	328,330

The resources available represent the continuing investment in our people, with the training and development budgets available representing over 2% of the total employee costs budget.

Document Control Details

Publication	People Strategy
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