

2026 Progress Update



2025 - 2028

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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. The 2025-2028 People Strategy was approved in February 2025 and is published on the Authority's website at: [Corporate Plans](#).

This document sets out an update on progress made on the planned actions during 2025/26, the first year of the strategy period.

Action Plan and Progress Update 2026

The plans set out in the 2025 to 2028 strategy 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.**

The following table provides a progress update on each of the planned actions.

In summary, the updates show that progress is being made across a number of areas, although it has been necessary to defer some of the originally planned timescales. This has largely been a knock-on effect of the timing and workload impact of the separate project to procure and implement a new HR and Staff Payroll software system. A system was procured during 2025 and is being configured and implemented from January 2026 with an aim to go live in July 2026. The work involved means that there is very little capacity in the small HR team for other projects during this period. However, the efficiencies and the functionality that the new system will deliver once successfully embedded, will enable much improved capacity to focus on key strategic themes and plans going forward.

Additionally, as part of planning for resilience and succession within the team, work is under way on development of a new role to bring into the HR team during the coming year and this will further strengthen the resourcing to meet work demands that have increased in line with the growth in the staffing establishment that has taken place over the last two years.

The results of the 2025 employee engagement survey, reported to the Authority in December, showed an extremely impressive increase in our net promoter score from +7 in 2023 to +43 this time. The results also showed strong improvements across all four measures of engagement covered in the survey: My Role, Leadership & Management, Professional Development and Working Environment. This provides assurance that our aims in relation to people are being effectively delivered in overall terms.

Ref	Strategic Action	Timescale		Progress 2025/26
		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 Revised to Sept 2026	Sept 2026 Revised to June 2027	Delayed. The development of the workforce plan is dependent on the implementation of the new HR System. This is now in progress with a target live date of July 2026 – therefore the timescale for the workforce plan has been revised accordingly.
RR2	Provide recruitment and selection training to all managers and others involved in making recruitment decisions.	February 2025	July 2025	Completed.
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	Dec 2025 Revised to Dec 2026	In Progress. Guidance on procedures and unconscious bias training delivered to recruiting managers in 2025. A recruitment service is used that places advertisements across a wide range of platforms. Further development of the policy for recruitment and selection will take place during 2026 to build on the progress made.
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.		Being delivered effectively as evidenced from feedback from new starters in the period and their line managers.
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	Due to commence during 2026/27.

Ref	Strategic Action	Timescale		Progress 2025/26
		From	To	
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	<p>In progress. A corporate career grade scheme document in the process of being drafted to set out procedures and assessment criteria for progressing through the different stages of career-graded roles.</p> <p>For 2025/26 a central training and development plan for the year was created and delivered based on analysis of appraisal outcomes and this will be repeated in 2026/27. Pensions administration staff are being supported to undertake LGPS professional qualifications.</p> <p>The next stage will be to develop an overarching Learning & Development Strategy for the organisation – the timescale for this will follow after the HR system implementation and aligned with workforce planning.</p>
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 Revised to Oct 2026	December 2025 Revised to Mar 2027	<p>Delayed. The timescale for this action has been deferred due to the delay in the HR System implementation. The plan is for the process to be reviewed and updated as part of incorporating the process, workflows and documents into the new HR System, which will be done as part of developing the system following its initial ‘go live’.</p>
3. Ensure that leadership and management at all levels of the organisation is the best that it can be.				

Ref	Strategic Action	Timescale		Progress 2025/26
		From	To	
LM1	Develop a framework of skills and expected standards of the “SYPA Manager” supported by appropriate training and development.	July 2025	June 2026	On track. A second ‘Manager Development Programme’ is being delivered from Oct 2025 to Mar 2026 for two cohorts of New Managers and Aspiring Managers. The professional trainer will be working with the participants and using feedback from the previous programme in order to start drafting a framework that will then be further developed working with HR, senior managers and the leadership team.
LM2	Develop and implement a new manager induction programme.	July 2025	June 2026 Revised to June 2027	<p>Delayed. The aim is to develop a targeted set of materials and training that will include an online learning path specifically for those newly appointed to a manager role at SYPA, alongside planned core training delivered on a rolling programme basis.</p> <p>Whilst the work on these has been delayed due to other workload priorities, specific training for new managers is being delivered – recruitment and selection training in 2025, the new manager cohort of the development programme currently in progress and support and advice available from the HR team.</p>

Ref	Strategic Action	Timescale		Progress 2025/26
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LM3	Explore the possibility of introducing a mentoring scheme for those in or aspiring to a management role.	During the 2025/26 financial year. Further progress required in 2026/27.		Started. One mentoring relationship for a service manager has been introduced as a semi-informal trial exercise. The next step will be to identify options to commission support from an external learning & development specialist to assist in exploring and developing further. The aim is to progress this during the next 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.		In progress. A process for 360-degree feedback is in place for the members of the Senior Management Team and used annually since 2024. The next phase will be to pilot a process for Service Managers and Heads of who report directly to the Assistant Directors. The timing for this may be affected by the other HR team priorities in 2026 but will target the 2027 annual appraisal round.

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 Revised to March 2027	Delivery of a wide range of health and wellbeing support and initiatives is well embedded and during 2025/26 has included continued monthly 'morning mix' events for employees on topics encompassing physical, emotional, mental and financial wellbeing. A series of Stress Awareness sessions were delivered for all staff in November, including dedicated sessions for managers with additional content on supporting their team
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Ref	Strategic Action	Timescale		Progress 2025/26
		From	To	
				<p>members. An enhanced version of our Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is being introduced in February 2026 to add further support for employees including face-to-face as well as telephone counselling, access to life and leadership coaching, and a targeted menopause support programme using CBT. (Cognitive behaviour therapy).</p> <p>However, the production of a documented Health & Wellbeing Strategy has been delayed to the next financial year.</p>
PC2	Undertake a project to define and promote our 'Employee Value Proposition'.	Sept 2025 Revised to Apr 2027	Sept 2026 Revised to Sept 2027	Delayed. The original target for this was overly ambitious in the context of other plans and priorities.
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.		Being delivered effectively. All staff away day held in September 2025 with very positive feedback, SMT question time held in April and September, additional Director briefing and Q&A held in January 2026. Employee engagement survey in October 2025 showed excellent net promoter score of 43 and improvements across all measures of engagement.

Document Control Details

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