

Annual Report 2024-2025

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OVERVIEW

2024 was a major step change for Hoople when we purchased a building, Auxilium House. This brought together our services and gave us a professional presence in Herefordshire to grow. The Building enables us to bring teams together, encourage joint working and allow our culture to grow while still allowing our employees to work flexibly with all the benefits to wellbeing this creates.

During the course of the year we embedded new services to Hoople, welcoming catering employees to run the Orchard Café at Herefordshire Council, and the expertise of a centre manager at the Cyber Quarter in Herefordshire. Our commercial services have grown as we welcome new customers to our training courses, recruitment services and introduced a Health and Safety advisory offer.

Working with our shareholders, our strategic partnership has strengthened through a number of joint procurements delivering value for money, resilience, and economies of scale.

Our employees are our greatest asset, this year we held our first Wellbeing week, introduced mental health first aiders at work, developed safeguarding principles across the organisation and trained our senior management team on IOSH Leading Safely.





I just wanted to say to you both how much you have meant to me over the years. It's been amazing to be able to have open conversations and advice and to be able to talk things through before coming to a decision.

I honestly could not have done nearly 15 years as a HT without you! You have been so helpful in so many tricky situations and decisions. I know that you have a thankless task in many ways but you really are essential in offering a calm head when things get difficult. Thank you both so much.

Regarding the Schools HR Team, from
Ledbury Primary School



OUR ORGANISATION

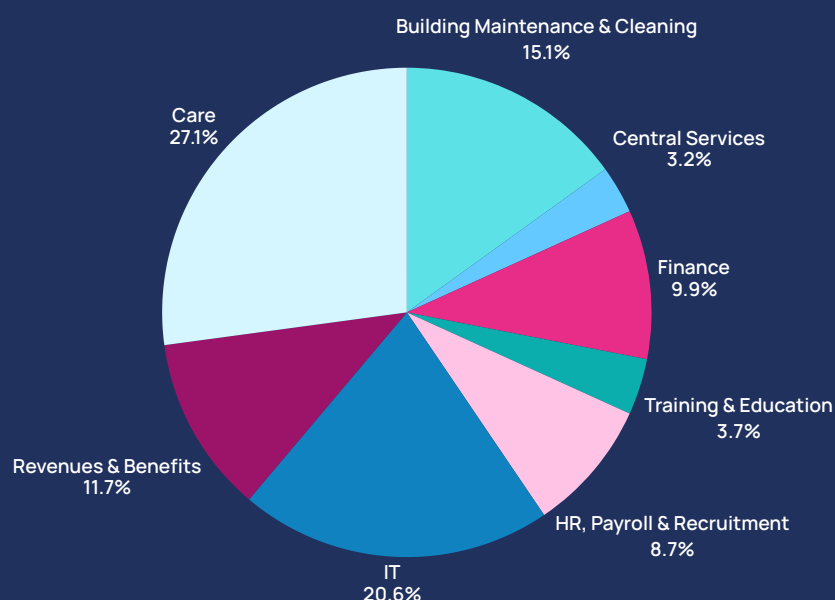
Our employees are at the heart of our success as a company. It is important that all employees feel engaged with the overarching company aims and equally, feel fulfilled and recognised for their efforts.

This year we hosted our first wellbeing event where employees were able to enjoy sessions on yoga, reducing stress and anxiety, mindfulness, gut health, desk yoga, menopause awareness and mental health first aid. The Wellbeing Market place offered more ideas on good self-care and Taurus Healthcare checked on our physical health.

Key Stats

Gender Pay Gap decreased by
2.03% (Mean) **1.46%** (Median)

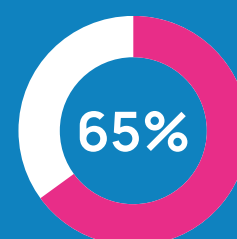
Headcount by service area



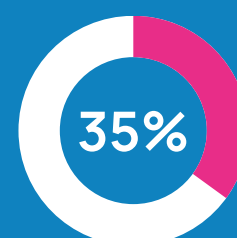
538 Employees



Male Employee



Female Employee



OUR HIGHLIGHTS

18

employees on an
apprenticeship programme

Moved into Auxilium House,
bringing more teams together
to work collaboratively



Won 2 awards
at the Hereford Times Care
Awards

Gender Pay Gap lowered by

2%

Launched the new
**Annual Review
Cycle**

Became Strategic Members
of the Herefordshire and
Worcestershire Chamber of
Commerce



Signed the Care Leavers
Covenant

ILM
training centre approval

Hosted **18**
corporate and employee
events including
networking, breakfast
briefings, a shareholder
conference and wellbeing
week



I just wanted to congratulate your team on the whole start to finish of the piece of work they have done for me around Pre app for the planning team.

From the early concept and advice meetings, through to the team taking my needs and expanding on what could be accomplished from their knowledge of the technology, the whole process has been great. We have streamlined, automated and cut back on large amounts of waste, creating a far superior product.

They were able to vastly improve what I wanted to do, and the result is honestly great. The expertise provided to ensure the web content works for the public, and the fine tuning of the service when we did go live to ensure no negative impact to the customer has been hugely appreciated.

The expertise to take what I wanted and deliver can't be commended enough, the team does you all great credit and I couldn't have done any of the work without them.



IT SERVICES

Another busy year in IT Services has seen most of our customer and shareholder partners engaging in operational transformation. This has been supported by the growth and development of digital systems and processes. New compliance obligations have arrived, with government changes to Procurement and Cyber Security arrangements in particular. Practically, we have seen a shift into the Microsoft 365 ecosystem, with a programme of mass-rebuilding of computers and mobile devices, with many thousands of new and updated devices issued.

New colleagues were welcomed into our digital and web teams, helping us to build both public-facing digital services and back-office process automation.

The potential of Artificial Intelligence [AI] has sparked the imagination in many organisations, and our role of sober feedback for appropriate use and application has been critical. Several AI trials have been supported in healthcare and office administration; governance and ethics boards have been stood up. Checks and balances have been worthwhile as some vendors re-branded existing services with the AI moniker, allowing us to persuade suppliers to enable benefits to be realised without further investment.

The contracts and procurement team have supported the compliant joint procurement of a number of shared supplier contracts between shareholders, exceeding £7M in value. These have enabled a reduction in operating costs of up to 33%, saving several millions from previous positions, without reduction in service levels.

We now deliver services into five counties to support the delivery of regional health and care services in particular.

70, 267

Requests managed by Service Desk

9.75/10

Average service satisfaction rating

Joint procurements for Shareholder customers exceeding

£7m



TRAINING AND EDUCATION

In academic year 23/24, the Education Team welcomed a record 63 learners onto the Study Programme. Designed for 16 - 19-year-olds who face challenges in mainstream education, including many with special educational needs or learning difficulties, the programme continues to deliver strong outcomes. Over the past two years, qualification rates have improved by 8% in literacy and an impressive 42% in numeracy. Among students who completed the programme over the summer, 65% progressed into employment and 27% moved on to further education. These outcomes reflect the dedication and hard work of both staff and students.

Hoople Training secured £120,568 through a successful bid to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to deliver high-quality skills programmes aimed at supporting workforce development in Herefordshire. As a result, 41 local employers were able to upskill a total of 315 employees across 16 distinct training courses and qualifications.

In addition to our team achievements, we were proud to celebrate individual success as Sarah Ellis was named Care Trainer of the Year at the Hereford Times Health and Social Care Awards 2024. This well-deserved recognition highlights her outstanding passion and dedication to improving standards within the care sector.

We were approved by City & Guilds to deliver the prestigious range of Institute of Leadership & Management (ILM) courses. ILM is the UK's leading provider of specialist leadership qualifications, helping managers to thrive and transform workplaces.

482

First Aiders trained in critical lifesaving skills

97.5%

Delegates scored us 10/10

12

New courses added to our portfolio



FINANCE, REVENUES AND BENEFITS

Our management accountants offer a robust financial challenge to 66 budget holders at Herefordshire Council, and form part of the team that won the CIPFA award for Excellence in Governance, Reporting and Assurance this year. The transactional finance team process transactions and cash for Herefordshire Council and Schools, with a focus on streamlining processes. This year, the team supported Herefordshire Council's project with Oxygen Finance, adjusting payment terms and adding daily payment runs.

The Revenues and Benefits team worked with an increasing number of residents, 90,509 properties and 8,409 businesses across Herefordshire in 24/25. The review of single person discounts in 24/25 successfully identified discounts that could be removed. The debtors team raised sales invoices to the value of £101m with specific projects on clearing aged debt, and supported Herefordshire Council in their focus on detecting fraud. The drive in Revenues and Benefits is to continuously improve the customer experience through online services through the "my account", digital improvements and to reduce the environmental impact through paperless billing.

£17m

Of Nursery Entitlement Funding distributed

112,467

Invoices processed by creditors

166, 819

Customer enquiries dealt with by
Revenues & Benefits

HR, PAYROLL AND RECRUITMENT

The Recruitment team, working with procurement colleagues, established a Preferred Supplier List to give Hoople access to better technical, functional and specialist applicants. This is driving down agency spend and marketing Hoople across a broader talent pool.

The Jobs Fair held in June was so successful that the Department for Work & Pensions approached the team to partner with them on a second event in October. The October event attracted over 30 local employers and some 350 job seekers.

The team have secured a number of significant new contracts this year; an academy representing 100 people and a multi academies trust, consisting of 8 schools and 230 employees. The team have on-boarded 11 new academy schools who will be using services from HR, Payroll and Recruitment.

HR & Payroll teams have collaborated with IT Services to achieve a successful integration to a new web application for the Schools Portal platform.

Over 400

New recruits appointed for our customers

98,842

Payslips administered

4,888

DBS checks completed



BUILDING MAINTENANCE AND CLEANING

This year the team have secured new work including the maintenance of 40 properties for Herefordshire Council's Housing & Temporary Accommodation Team and new property work for Aspire and Railway Housing. The Cleaning Team have also taken on a number of new sites.

The team have also been working with IT Services on the successful implementation of a new job management system which has enabled them to plan and manage reactive and cyclical building maintenance works, and capture costs for invoicing all in one place.

During the re-tendering process for the lease of the service vehicles, we took the opportunity to look for improvements to the service and reduce the impact on the environment. We looked at how and where our vehicles operate and changed the specification, replacing three small diesel vans with hybrid car-based vans. This change brought a carbon reduction of around 5.5 Tonnes of CO₂ per year, which is the equivalent of running two family cars per year.

4,089

Reactive maintenance jobs completed

31,228

Hours of cleaning completed

2,173

Statutory compliance visits



HOOPLE CARE

This year, Hoople Care have developed a number of policies and procedures, which has been assisted by a new electronic system. These systems enable services to ensure policies are fully compliant, and align with the Key Lines of Enquiry. The systems also improve the accessibility of policies, enabling the team to access them via mobile devices, as well as providing accurate and timely performance data. As such, data collection from Care services has improved, aiding the reporting of KPI's and outputs to support operational management, oversight and governance of our services ensuring they are safe, compliant and well led.

The appointment of a Quality Manager also supports our ambition for the service to be rated Good with CQC at the next assessment. The Quality Manager is responsible for providing improved oversight, governance and reporting.

All Registered Managers have gained formal registration with CQC, and the service was recognised for its dedication to care when the team collected the award for Healthcare Employer of the Year at the Hereford Times Health & Social Care Awards.

43,685

Hours of care delivered

822

Individuals supported

932

Compliments received





I am thrilled to share our positive experience working with Hoople over the past five years. As an organisation, we have relied on Hoople for temporary placements multiple times, and each time we have been thoroughly impressed with the calibre of candidates they provided.

The team at Hoople has always been incredibly helpful, promptly filling our temporary vacancies with suitable individuals who have seamlessly integrated into our team. We highly recommend Hoople for their outstanding services and look forward to continuing our partnership with them in the future.



Regarding the Recruitment Team, from
Ledbury Town Council

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

We achieve social value, and assist our customers in achieving social value through our four social impact themes which are aligned to our Hoople Values.



Community Engagement

We have an active role in the community, sponsoring local grass roots sports teams and supporting our employees to carry out voluntary work. Our Events Committee run charity fundraising events, and this year we have supported many employees in their personal fundraising efforts.



Skills, Employment and Education

With our Training team receiving their ILM accreditation, the team have been able to upskill and train many Hoople employees to enable them to take the next step in their career. Our Study Programme has seen another large cohort, with 57 students enrolled in September 2024. The Recruitment and Maylords Orchard teams organised a successful jobs fair, with over 30 local employers and over 350 job seekers attending.



Environmental Sustainability

Our Revenues and Benefits team have been driving customers to go paperless (STAT)

During the works at Auxilium House, we ensured materials were recycled wherever possible and LED lighting was installed to improve the building's energy efficiency.



Inclusion and Wellbeing

May 2024 saw a Wellbeing Week for employees, with yoga, financial webinars, mindfulness, massages and other wellbeing events taking place throughout the week. The Annual Review Cycle was introduced, putting emphasis on progression opportunities and framing natural wellbeing conversations between employees and their managers.

EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM



Audrey Clements
Chief Executive Officer



Daley Jones
Head of Learning
and Business Development



Simon Mortimore
Head of Information
Technology



Stephen Weller
Head of Hoople Care



Lisa Yates
Head of HR and
Organisational Development



Mark Aldsworth
Head of Building Operations



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