

People Strategy 2025-2029

Introduction

Overview

The People Strategy sets out Broxtowe Borough Council's approach to selecting, supporting and developing its employees; identifying its future workforce and skills needs; developing its approach to leadership in employee equality and diversity and supporting the wellbeing of the workforce. to ensure we continue to deliver excellent, value for money services to the Borough. The People Strategy focuses on four themes that identifies key areas of the organisation which align with the Corporate Plan and vision, including our 'GREAT' values:

- **Going the extra mile** - a strong, caring focus on the needs of all communities
- **Ready for change** - innovation and readiness for change
- **Employees** - valuing employees and enabling the active involvement of everyone
- **Always improving** - continuous improvement and delivering value for money
- **Transparent** - integrity and professional competence

Consultation

Heads of Service, Trade Unions, Senior Officers and Front-line employees have been consulted and results of the annual employee survey have been considered.

The majority of feedback received indicated the following:

- Greater transparency of decision-making
- More communication at section level
- Better support to employee carers
- Review of long service rewards
- Improve bereavement support
- Greater visibility of senior managers – e.g. more roadshows
- More training and development opportunities
- The strategies should be condensed into one central strategy
- The strategy should be jargon-free and in an easy-to-read format
- Increased use of more modern passive communication technology methods (TVs/Monitors on walls etc.) and smartphone/tablet systems to shorten lines of communication between employees/managers/support employees and add value through capability
- Focus groups for neurodiversity and addressing retention issues
- Reviewing recruitment methods – e.g. CVs rather than application forms
- Consider a 'notice board' of training opportunities
- Identifying grievance patterns and areas of concern and addressing the causes, including organisational culture

- Open two-way communication between Managers and front-line employees to encourage employees to feel consulted and engaged

Achievements

Since the previous strategies, the Council has achieved a number of significant goals which will shape the People Strategy going forward:

Mindful Employer Charter

The Council renewed its commitment to the Mindful Employer Charter following a 10-year review, it is in place until May 2025.

Disability Confident Leader

The Council successfully gained 'Leader' status under the DWP's Disability Confident Scheme, following external review in 2022, for a period of three years.

Armed Forces Covenant Employer Recognition Scheme

In 2023, the Council attained Silver Award status under the Armed Forces Covenant Employer Recognition scheme, as a result of introducing additional support to employees serving in the Reserve Forces.

E-Learning

A total of 5,186 courses were completed in 2022/23 and 5,281 were completed in 2023/24 Financial Year with 10 new courses being introduced.

Apprenticeships

As of September 2024, the Council has 17 apprenticeships, with a further four in the pipeline. A total of 42 apprenticeship courses have been undertaken since the inception of the Apprenticeship Levy in 2018.

Work Experience

Since 2022/23 Financial Year, 28 work experience placements have been provided by the Council, including a four-month placement working in partnership with a disability support agency.

Employee Benefits

The Council continues to provide a comprehensive employee benefits scheme, offering access to Tax-free bicycles to work, discounts at supermarkets and high street/online retailers. The Council also added an Ultra-Low Emissions Lease Car Scheme including electric vehicles.

Employee Assistance Programme

Care First continued to provide the Council's employees with free counselling, and this was made available 24/7/365, including telephone support and face to face sessions.

Hardship Fund

In response to the cost of living-, a Hardship Fund was created in 2022 to support employees with grants and zero interest loans assisting 40 employees.

Mental Health First Aiders

The Mental Health Employees Champions became qualified Mental Health First Aiders in 2022 to support employees in each department and signpost to the appropriate support when and where needed.

Wellbeing Passport

A new wellbeing initiative was launched in 2024, formalising support arrangements for employees requiring reasonable adjustments in the workplace due to disabilities or neurodiverse conditions.

Coaching and Mentoring

Since March 2022, the Council's HR Manager has delivered coaching and mentoring programmes to Senior Managers and aspiring Managers, focusing on career development. Six Heads of Service and four Senior Managers have received coaching and mentoring so far.

Institute of Leadership of Management (ILM)

The Council has provided ILM Level 3, Level 5 and Level 7 training to employees in the subjects of Leadership and Management, and Coaching and Mentoring. A total of 43 employees have gained ILM qualifications since 2022.

Awards

The Council won a Diversity and Inclusion Award at the Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Apprenticeship Awards in 2023, along with being nominated for Large Employer of the Year. In 2024, Broxtowe won the Social Justice Employer of the Year award at the National Apprenticeship and Skills Awards.

The Strategy

The Council has identified four key themes that underpin the purpose and goals of the People Strategy:

- Training and Development
- Equality and Diversity
- Wellbeing
- Organisational Development

Each of these areas focus on practical support from the Council to ensure that our people are at the heart of what the Council's Corporate Plan is aiming to achieve and will effectively promote a 'GREAT' culture.

Training and development

- Identify and deliver training and development opportunities for all
- Improve leadership/management quality
- Improve management and employee communication skills
- Improve customer service skills at all levels
- Improve management of Change and Transformation
- Further develop the excellence of our Apprenticeships programme.

We will achieve this by:

- Developing a rolling two-year learning and development action plan for the workforce to address personal and organisational skills needs
- Fully utilising Apprenticeship Levy funds and pursuing excellence in recruiting, retaining and developing apprentices to grow our own workforce of outstanding talent
- Providing management training in key areas including guidance handbooks for new Managers
- Developing and delivering a curriculum of management training programmes for all Managers, including new ones.
- Providing coaching and mentoring programmes for leaders
- Provide regular customer service training for all employees
- Delivering 'tool-box' sessions for front-line services such as the Depot including feedback talks by front line employees to managers
- Developing communication and change management skills.

Our progress will be monitored by:

- Number of training and development opportunities delivered
- Number of internal promotions
- Number of performance appraisals undertaken
- Number of coaching and mentoring hours delivered
- Number of apprenticeship opportunities offered
- Number of apprenticeships gaining permanent employment
- Feedback received from training and 'tool-box' talks
- Improvements in employee perception scores in annual employee surveys.

Equality and Diversity:

- Increase the number of employees from black and minority ethnic backgrounds to reflect the population of 15.52%
- Build on achieving excellence in becoming a disability confident leader
- Pursue equality in relation to pay reporting and workforce progression
- Further reduce the gender pay gap
- Improve understanding of diverse perspectives, and the quality of equality impact assessments.

We will achieve this by:

- Exploring partnership opportunities with ethnic minority jobsites
- Identifying job vacancies where people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds may be underrepresented and advertise accordingly
- Reduce the gender pay gap by continually reviewing and updating our equal pay systems as jobs change
- Report pay broken down in pay bands to increase transparency in respect of ethnicity characteristics and progression of people from minority ethnic groups.
- Reviewing and maintaining our Disability Confident Leader status with peer validation
- Providing training courses to increase awareness of equality and diversity in the workplace
- Provide new training for employees who conduct equality and diversity equality impact assessments.

Our progress will be monitored by:

- Number of applications received from black and minority ethnic backgrounds
- Number of shortlisted applicants from black and minority ethnic backgrounds
- Number of appointments from black and minority ethnic backgrounds

- Percentage of the workforce represented by black and minority ethnic backgrounds
- Progression of employees from minority ethnic communities
- Gender pay gap information
- Ethnic pay gap information
- Number of equality impact assessments undertaken
- Number of equality and diversity training courses delivered (including e-learning).

Wellbeing

- Support employees' mental health, resilience and wellbeing
- Continue to improve our management of work related stress and anxiety
- Review support for employees going through bereavement
- Increase our understanding of how to support and manage employees with neurodiverse conditions
- Consider measures to support employees to achieve good physical health, for example active lifestyles, smoking cessation, weight management
- Ensure our workforce are trauma informed
- Support employees who have caring responsibilities or who are foster parents.

We will achieve this by:

- Continuing to provide an Employee Assistance Programme to employees
- Delivering training courses to Managers and employees on stress in the workplace
- Provide occupational health services
- Providing annual flu jabs free of charge
- Rolling out the Wellbeing Passport initiative
- Offering annual well-person checks
- Undertaking health surveillance checks for safety-critical roles
- Providing regular training on neurodiversity in the workplace
- Providing comprehensive bereavement support including compassionate leave and career breaks
- Bereavement training for Managers to improve support for employees and customers experiencing bereavement
- Identify and address areas of high turnover and difficulties in recruiting speciality skills exploring management focus groups for neurodiversity
- Providing stress risk assessments for employees
- Exploring partnership initiatives with L Leisure and the Communities Team on Lifestyle support
- Delivering trauma training for employees including Managers
- Review policies and implement changes to policies to improve support for carers and foster parents.

Our progress will be monitored by:

- Number of employees absent with mental health, including stress or bereavement
- Number of occupational health referrals
- Number of health surveillance checks undertaken
- Number of training courses delivered on mental health, stress, bereavement, trauma, and neurodiversity
- Number of career breaks
- Number of stress risk assessments undertaken
- Number of employees utilising cycle to work salary sacrifice scheme
- Number of employees utilising L Leisure memberships
- Number of Wellbeing Passports completed
- Employee satisfaction with wellbeing support.

Organisational Development

- Improve retention and career progression especially in skill shortage areas
- Review the appraisal system
- Review rewards for long service
- Consider introducing “career grades” to enable longer term career progression
- Develop more succession planning approaches
- Improve the productivity of our workforce
- Continually review organisational design to ensure the Council responds quickly to changing resident needs, and changing legislation.

We will achieve this by:

- Utilising market supplements to retain key employees and skills
- Identifying skills gaps within departments and providing training to address skill gaps
- Reviewing the recruitment methods used and their effectiveness, including search mechanisms
- Identifying vacant roles that can utilise career grades to attract and retain talent
- Explore opportunities with Learning Pool to improve the Appraisal System
- Increasing long service awards with personalised letters
- GMT recognising long service leavers
- Identifying issues underpinning grievance submissions and disciplinary action, reporting quarterly to GMT and committees as appropriate
- Ensure our Productivity Plan includes a strong people development element.

Our progress will be monitored by:

- Reducing employee turnover to 10% or below
- Number of annual appraisals undertaken
- Number of internal promotions
- Number of applications per vacancy
- Number of employees retained through market supplements or career grades
- Career progression opportunities for Apprentices
- Customer satisfaction levels
- Employee satisfaction levels.