



Mid Devon District Council

HR STRATEGY
Managing our
people
2018-2021

Introduction

At the core of our HR Strategy is how we manage our most valuable asset, our people. This is an ever evolving document and will be updated as we deliver different elements of the strategy. New ideas and initiatives will develop but our immediate focus will be on the following areas:

- ACAS 7 levels of productivity
- Developing workforce skills and capacity
- Managing performance
- Succession planning and talent management
- Attraction, recruitment and retention
- Absence management
- Workforce demographics
- Health and wellbeing
- Reward and recognition
- Community enablement
- Partnership working

Increase in Productivity ACAS 7 levels

We will use the ACAS 7 levels to ensure increased productivity; these are:-

1. **Well-designed work:** jobs and work organised in a way that increase efficiency and make the most of people's skills
2. **Skilled managers:** Managers with the confidence and training to manage and lead effectively
3. **Managing conflict effectively:** systems in place to reduce the likelihood of problems arising and to deal with problems at every stage
4. **Clarity about rights and responsibilities:** a working environment where everyone understands their rights and responsibilities
5. **Fairness:** employees who feel valued and treated fairly
6. **Strong employee voice:** informed employees who can contribute and are listened to
7. **High trust:** relationships based on trust, with employers sharing information at the earliest opportunity

Developing Workforce Skills and Capacity

Any organisation is only as good as its people. The workforce for the future will need to know exactly what 'excellent service' looks like and will need the skills and the tools to deliver it. A new approach to learning and development has been developed that allows for widespread learning opportunities and employee self-development. Learning will be central to the organisational culture to help our staff to successfully deliver services in new and innovative ways.

Giving people the skills and knowledge they need to perform at their best will be a priority and we work with staff and managers to understand what skills and learning they need. New ways of delivering learning and training will be needed in order to reach as many people as possible.

Our pledge is to... Offer our employees the learning and development they need and want, in order to be even better at what they do. We will find out who is good at what and who has knowledge that could be shared by **conducting a new corporate skills audit by 31st January 2019** which will help us identify where skills we need currently are and what skills gaps there may be. This will support the progress for talent management across the Council, giving all staff the opportunity to use the skills they have by matching talent to work.

Our expectation is that managers and staff alike will engage in the opportunity to learn new skills, refine those they have and encourage their colleagues to do the same. There will also be the expectation that where work ceases in one area of the Council we will look to redeploy where possible into other areas and support individuals with training and development.

Managing performance

To truly develop as a workforce and as an organisation, performance monitoring and management is essential. 'Acceptable performance' cannot be the target; 'excellent performance' is the aim. Improving the quality of what we do and how we work together, even in small ways, will have an impact. It is about managing for high performance by challenging the norm and celebrating and rewarding exceptional performance. Managing individual performance and team performance is the way to improve overall organisational performance and should be considered as a positive step in personal /collaborative growth. By actively managing people, including setting clear goals and measuring performance, this will produce growth and change across the organisation.

Managers should manage daily, review weekly, feedback regularly and record improvement annually through appraisal. In 2017 the **Staff Charter** was rolled out across the Council reinforcing the necessity for annual appraisals, ongoing 1-1's and team meetings. The charter was discussed with every team throughout the Council and a copy of the charter is given to all new members of staff.

Our pledge is to.....ensure that every employee has the opportunity to receive feedback regularly and a full appraisal annually. We will monitor the level of appraisal across the Council and remind managers that appraisals are outstanding. We will develop performance management through coaching and mentoring and we will challenge our staff to be even better.

Our expectation is that managers and staff will ensure that meaningful appraisal happens annually and that management happens continually. Managers should encourage their staff to tell them what they need to support great performance.

To assist with this there will be roll out of training opportunities aimed at the various levels of management. Information from the skills audit will allow us to find the gaps in skills and knowledge to enable us to find the right level of support for each individual manager. We will be continuing to provide a **management development programme** for all new managers. In 2017 all managers, who may well have been in post for some time but have never had formal support and even those who had, were put through this programme which was supported by the Leadership Team of the Council . In this way EVERY manager has and will have the opportunity to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to manage a team. We will hold **six monthly Q and A sessions, with all staff able to attend and speak directly to the Leadership Team.**

Succession Planning and Talent Management

Planning for the future and identifying tomorrow's managers and leaders from inside the organisation will be really important to us. We need ways to identify and develop those people who want to grow their career with the Council. Talent management and knowledge sharing will help us continue to grow and maintain the highest standards of service delivery. Planning for both short term and for the longer term through employee development will be part of our workforce objective. We will utilise the systems and tools we have to identify skills, abilities and knowledge and aim to share these across the organisation. In 2017 an **Aspiring Managers Programme** was introduced to give development to staff who had an ambition to become a manager. Two of the twelve staff on the initial programme have subsequently gained promotion within the Council.

Our pledge is to.....put into place real and achievable strategies such as providing opportunities for experiential learning and project working. We will do this by identifying the talent pool we need for the future and making sure we give them the chance to attain the skills we need to deliver excellence.

Everyone will be given the opportunity to maximise their talent and contribute to the success of the Council in the future, in whatever way is most appropriate. Where skills and talents can be developed to their maximum level we will support individual and team growth.

We will find ways for best practice to be shared and for knowledge and skill to be passed across services. We will encourage employees with experience, professional talent and skill to share this with the organisation and their colleagues. We will encourage all employees to consider their future development and expect our leaders and managers to support this, creating a learning organisation for tomorrow.

In 2018 the Aspiring Managers Programme will be run again. Through the Apprenticeship route and the more conventional routes, we will ensure that all staff have the opportunity to gain recognised qualifications.

Attraction, Recruitment and Retention

Occasionally, it will be necessary to attract talented people into posts from outside the organisation. The process of attracting new talent to revitalise the workforce over a period of time will require modern strategies, i.e. different ways of working such as homeworking and more agile working to be in place that will improve and expedite the attraction and recruitment of the best people. In order to attract, recruit and retain the best people into Mid Devon District Council, such processes will need to be both efficient and effective in order to make the Council competitive. Keeping the skill and

talent we have, working for our community, will always be important. Where we can, we will grow and develop talent internally, as well as attract and recruit new talent from outside the Council when we have to.

Our pledge is to.....adopt modern and effective talent attraction and management tools. This means looking at new ways of working and more flexibility. We will seek to explore the internal and external resource market and make best use of both, promoting from within where we can and encouraging new talent when we need to.

We will seek to attract tomorrow's workforce by building the image of public sector work to today's school and college leavers. We will widen our support of this through programmes of work experience, pre-apprenticeships and full apprenticeships at all levels.

We will develop links with local schools and colleges, inviting young people to become involved, directly or indirectly, by working with us. We will be active in supporting our younger residents into working within the public sector.

Working with our external partners to support the attraction of great people, we will expect our managers to recognise when we need to attract new talent, or develop our existing people, in order to give us the strongest possible workforce.

We will offer places to 10 to 12 apprenticeships each year.

Absence management

Absence from work due to sickness is a continual issue for employers and Mid Devon District Council is no different. Reducing this will continue to be a key objective for all managers in the Council. Managers must manage and understand the rates of sickness absence in their areas and this will be monitored through regular management conversations. Reducing the number of days lost to sickness absence can have a significant effect on the costs of running the Council.

Health and Wellbeing

More and more, organisations are turning to matters of health and wellbeing to minimise the amount of sickness. Mid Devon District Council will, by using health and wellbeing initiatives, promote healthy living and will proactively provide information to help our staff gain opportunities to learn.

Our pledge is to.....lighten the burden on Council staff and Council funds by more proactively managing absence from work through applying a robust monitoring and return to work system.

Helping our staff keep fit and healthy will continue to be important to us. We will find new ways to promote and support the wellbeing of our staff, including preventative initiatives and real opportunities for staff to improve their health. This may include health awareness sessions offering opportunities to manage particular areas such as high blood pressure. We will treat genuine sickness absence with the same care and respect as always but will manage high levels of sickness absence through support, making changes to people's working environment and conditions where appropriate and, ultimately, through closer monitoring of sickness rates and the reasons for sickness absence.

We will underline the managers' responsibility for managing and, where necessary, challenging sickness absence among their staff. We will expect our staff to help us manage this process of reducing sickness absence by working with us to minimise it through health and wellbeing initiatives.

We will do this by management training and regular health awareness sessions run across the Council. We will also strengthen the return to work interview process to ensure that any issues can be supported quickly in order to help reduce further sickness absence.

Workforce demographic

As a local authority, it is important to us to make every effort to recruit in such a way so as to represent the community we support. Whilst this is not always easy to achieve, we should aim to attract people from all backgrounds, abilities, ages and ethnicities. Understanding the breakdown of our workforce means we will be able to plan attraction and recruitments policies designed to support closer alignment with the community. This includes recording and monitoring our current diversity and updating our records regularly to give us a clear picture of how our workforce is made up.

Our pledge is to..... closely monitor and report on the variances between our workforce and the general population in terms of ethnicity, age, ability and background.

In particular, we will aim to reflect the society we serve where possible. **Each year we report on the demographic makeup of the Council in respect of representation of the community through equalities reporting.**

Reward and recognition

All managers have a responsibility to ensure that their staff have done a good job, as well as when they need to develop or improve. Recognising good performance is everyone's responsibility: colleagues recognising colleagues, managers recognising their staff and the Council recognising excellence in service delivery.

Our pledge is to.....focus on excellence and dedication. We will ask staff managers to support the recognition of service excellence and nominate their colleagues where they believe it is deserved. Recognition in the form of a thank you in the 'Link' will be made to those that have been put forward; these could include presentations made by the Chairman of the Council.

Managers will identify those members of staff who have reached the 25 year service milestone and ensure that they are recognised by the Council.

We will maintain a fair and transparent job evaluation scheme to provide an objective and measurable method of determining staff pay. This will recognise the variety of skills, knowledge and attributes that staff bring to their respective roles. **We will have an electronic job evaluation scheme in place by the end of October 2018.**

Community Enablement

This strategy aims to consider our wider community as well as our staff. We will work with internal and external partners in developing strategies for community engagement, community employment and community development. By providing support where it is needed we will be a model for community engagement and enablement.

Our pledge is to.....increase our impact on the community of Mid Devon by providing opportunities for engagement and collaborative joint working with the Council.

Where it is possible to actively involve and work with communities, we will do so. We will encourage engagement from schools, colleges, young people, volunteers and the residents of Mid Devon, to help us shape, build and develop services for the future. We will learn lessons from best practice in community engagement and involvement from our public sector partners. Engaging with people means all people, employees and public.

Our expectation will be that all employees engage with our customers in a proactive and positive way and that they think of the residents of Mid Devon as not only users of services but contributors too. **We will look to run at least three events per year which will include offering training to town and parishes and job fair events at local schools.**

We will also offer all staff the opportunity to undertake a paid volunteering day per year. This scheme will be rolled out across the Council from April 2019. The work undertaken must be of benefit to the local community of Mid Devon.

Partnership Working

With limited resources all local authorities are now looking at new and innovative ways to work with partner organisations and other local authorities.

Our pledge is to....support Mid Devon District Council in working with other local authorities to achieve the best result for the community of Mid Devon. **We will also look for opportunities and connect with colleagues in other local authorities to ensure that these opportunities are explored and, if appropriate, acted upon.**