



Westmorland
& Furness
Council

People Plan

April 2024



**‘A confident,
empowered and
inclusive workforce’**



Introduction

It's such a privilege and honour to be Westmorland and Furness' new Leader and Chief Executive in the development of our very first People Plan as a new organisation. Our vision for Westmorland and Furness is to be 'A great place to live, work and thrive' and our ultimate goal is to enable our communities to thrive and empower them through the services we offer.

We are in a unique position to create a fresh and new way of working with our communities and residents and to work with our employees, elected members, trade unions and partners to deliver that vision.

Our Council Plan and Council Plan Delivery Framework (2023-2029) sets out our vision, values and priorities. They will guide us through the transition from four councils into one and through a period of change and transformation. There are six priorities, and our People Plan provides an overview on one specifically; to have a 'confident, empowered and inclusive workforce'.

Our People Plan describes how our workforce will achieve the vision and priorities for Westmorland and Furness Council, it acknowledges how our employees are the driving force behind our services, and as a 'live document' it will be reviewed annually to ensure it reflects our priorities, values and our changing world of work.

We value the contribution of each and every one of our employees to be innovative, engaged and customer focused, working with elected members, trade unions and partners, to deliver our priorities.

We are committed to supporting our employees' wellbeing, nurturing talent, and creating a healthy working environment that enables colleagues to fulfil their potential and be a place where all are focused on delivering great services.

To create this plan, we have engaged with various groups to understand what is important to our employees. We have listened when creating our ambitions and would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the development of this plan. This plan belongs to our employees and is something we all own and are responsible for.

We are committed to living and breathing our values: ambitious, inclusive, collaborative, outcomes focused, responsible, needs-led and ecologically aware. Being a Caring Council is one of the golden threads that will run through everything we do and strongly highlights why we hold our values so dearly.

To each and every employee, thank you for your contribution.

Cllr Jonathan Brook

Leader

Westmorland and Furness Council



Sam Plum

Chief Executive

Westmorland and Furness Council





People Plan

Our employees are at the heart of the delivery of services to our residents and the communities we serve and our People Plan provides an overview of how together we will achieve the vision and priorities for Westmorland and Furness Council.

A motivated, caring and considerate workforce goes a long way to ensuring both our internal and external customers are treated with respect and are at the heart of everything we do. The People Plan will support the development of a workforce that operates in a customer focused way, embedding the values of the council.

The People Plan is a key strategy that will support the delivery of the Council's vision and priorities as detailed in the Council Plan and Council Plan Delivery Framework.



The Council's Customer Strategy and ICT Strategy, together with the People Plan will support the development of a workforce that operates in a customer focused way. These combined strategies will reflect the importance of developing a digitally skilled and confident workforce, with the ability to meet the expectations for effective and easy access to services. These strategies will enable us to put in place the right training, tools, technology, systems and processes to enable our people to provide a great customer experience.

To create this strategy, we have drawn on best practice from the public and private sector, and insight and feedback gained from staff, elected members and trade union.

The Council has a public sector equalities duty, therefore this strategy has sought to understand the needs of people with protected characteristics and an Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and will inform delivery of the strategy.



Practice from the public and private sectors and from insight and feedback gained from staff, trade union colleagues and elected members.

Our vision

The vision for our workforce has been shaped by the Westmorland and Furness Council Plan, Council Plan Delivery Framework and Target Operating Model.

Confident, empowered and inclusive workforce.

**Our vision for Westmorland and Furness is to be:
“A great place to live, work and thrive.”**

Our priorities:

For people

Supporting active, healthy happy lives for young and old.
Supporting people in need and reducing inequality.

For the climate

Providing leadership in the drive to become carbon net zero.

For communities

Confident, empowered, resilient communities.

For the economy and culture

Sustainable, inclusive, economic growth.

For our customers

At the heart of everything we do.

For our workforce

Confident, empowered and inclusive workforce.

We have a motivated workforce who are happy with their work and feel fulfilled.

We have a planned approach to utilising our skilled and committed workforce, to deliver our council priorities within our means.

Internal processes and functions are designed to support a seamless end-to-end experience. Improvement and change is supported by key enabling functions including HR, Legal etc. working closely with service delivery teams.

Making our vision real

Where we are now

As a starting point we need to understand our workforce and some of the current operating challenges and opportunities that we face as a local government employer.

Key facts about our workforce:



Westmorland and Furness Council came into existence on 1 April 2023, following Local Government Reorganisation, where **four councils** have been brought together into **one**.



We have approximately **3250** employees, plus approximately 2500 school-based employees.



Our gender split is approximately **70%** female and **30%** male.



54% of our workforce works part-time hours; **46%** of the workforce works full time.

46+

We have a multi-generational workforce, with the largest percentage of our workforce aged **46+**.

Work is in progress to better understand the makeup of our workforce including their protected characteristics. Going forward we want to encourage employees to share their data to enable further analysis and understanding. This would help identify opportunities for positive action, which in turn, could lead us to becoming an even more inclusive employer.

The challenges we face include:

- An ageing workforce.
- The ability to attract and retain talent, especially in a geographic area where the working age population is declining.
- The ability to attract new employees with the right skills - within Cumbria there are fewer people with qualifications above level 4, compared to the national average.
- High expectations and demands from prospective employees about access to flexible and agile working arrangements.
- Our ability to attract people from diverse or disadvantaged groups.

Our recent staff survey identified that **30%** of respondents have caring responsibilities outside of work and **19%** have a long-term condition and/or disability.



Our values

What we want to achieve

At Westmorland and Furness Council, our Values are not just words; they underpin everything we do. They guide us in delivering our vision in the Westmorland and Furness Way.

Being a caring council is the golden thread that will run through everything we do, and our Values will help us achieve this.

We are committed to our Values and want employees and elected members to show their commitment too.

We are a caring council that cares about all employees and elected members and creating a healthy working environment that enables everyone to fulfil their potential.



Ambitious

We are ambitious for everyone. We will focus on identifying and delivering the outcomes that our communities want to see. We will support our workforce to innovatively transform services for the better, enabling residents and visitors to have healthy, happy lives.



Inclusive

We will be an inclusive council and will work collectively with partners to challenge each other to improve diversity and eliminate all forms of discrimination in our organisations and through local leadership increase participation in local decision making within under represented communities.



Collaborative

We will work with partners, communities, and residents to deliver the best outcomes for all.



Outcome focused

We are outcome focused and we will focus on identifying and leading the delivery of the changes that our communities want to see.



Responsible

We are responsible, socially, environmentally, and financially. Providing leadership in the drive to become carbon neutral and delivering value for money in everything we do. We will make the best and most efficient use of our resources, while making sustainable decisions and striving to deliver on our promises to you.



Needs-led

We will intervene early to prevent harm, act in an equitable way leaving no-one behind, and enable all to ask for help in order to gain access to the right service, in the right place at the right time.



Ecologically aware

We will provide leadership in the drive to become carbon net zero and sustainable.

The delivery of our vision and Council Plan priorities can only be achieved if we are able to recruit and retain the right people, with the right skills, values and attitudes to help us innovate and work together to deliver transformation of our services.

We want to be an employer of choice, not one of necessity, with a focus on improving health, safety and wellbeing, trust and inclusivity. We recognise our strength as an organisation is as a result of our employees, who have achieved so much to date, as we have come together to form a new unitary council.

We want to create a positive and inclusive workplace culture, where our employees have a sense of belonging and feel valued, can reach their full potential and actively contribute to the Council's priorities.





As a relatively new council, we recognise that we have a lot to achieve and that we need to move away from the legacy of our previous organisations and continue to think and act as the new Westmorland and Furness Council. Therefore, this is an ambitious People Plan, which will be underpinned by a programme of work to be delivered over the course of the next few years.

Over the duration of our People Plan, we want to create a positive, supportive and inclusive culture that celebrates and cares for our people, valuing the contribution they make to the communities we serve and together making Westmorland and Furness a great place to live, work and thrive.

As an employee, we want you to:

- Be part of a highly skilled and effective workforce, enabling change and supporting improvements.
- Be accountable, fulfil your potential and deliver a great service.
- Be proud to work at Westmorland and Furness Council and take pride in all that you do.
- Be motivated and happy with your work.

We will:

- Be a Caring Council, look after the wellbeing of our employees and elected members and together champion a workplace culture that is welcoming and kind.
- Listen to you, supporting you to be innovative and adaptable, we will put in place the right training, tools and technology, systems and processes, so we can transform our services together for the better.
- Value each of you as individuals.
- Provide a learning environment, investing in your development, so you can grow and develop.
- Build together a diverse and inclusive workforce, reflective of the communities we serve.

How we will get there

Our People Plan describes how our workforce will achieve the vision and priorities for Westmorland and Furness Council and acknowledges how our employees are the driving force behind our services. Our People Plan, together with our Customer and ICT strategies, are the critical building blocks in supporting the development of a workforce that operates in a customer focused way.

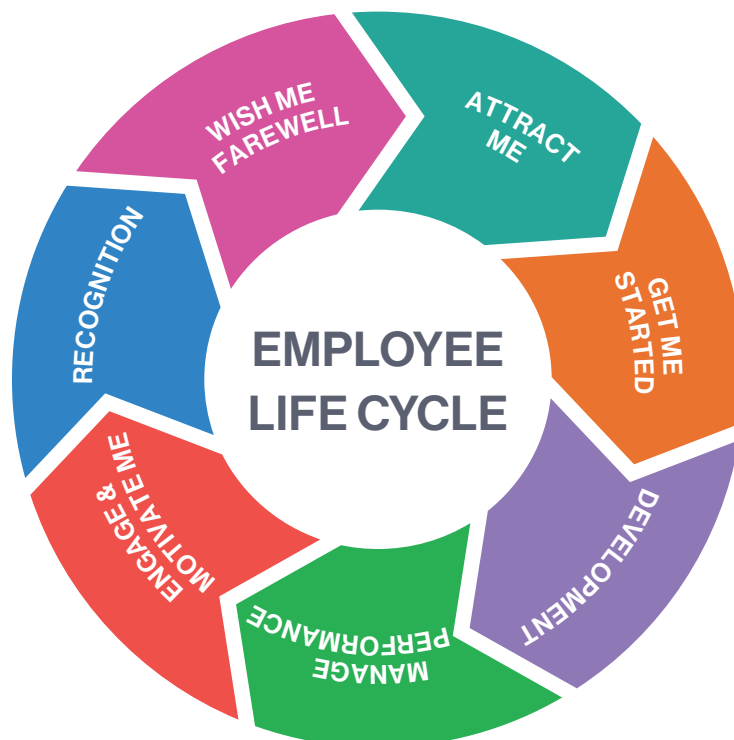
In developing our People Plan we have engaged with various groups, focusing on the core elements of the employee life cycle, as shown on Figure 3.

We have engaged on all areas shown in the employee life cycle, including how we want to attract and retain our employees, how we want to engage and motivate our employees and how we will develop our workforce for the future.

This has helped us identify our key priorities to focus upon.

To achieve our ambition to be a high performing and inclusive council we need to get the basics right as well as being innovative and ambitious. This includes understanding and really listening to our employees. Providing opportunities for employees to share their views and ideas and help shape our council for the future.

In helping us get there we will be setting out our approach 'Doing it the Westmorland and Furness way', which will ensure fairness, transparency and clear management expectations, and thinking about our employees as individuals. This will help create an environment where employees feel valued and comfortable to share their views and ideas and can play a key role in transforming services working with the customers we serve.



Our People Plan Priorities

Attract and retain a talented workforce.



We want all:

To be inspired to join and be part of W&F delivering great outcomes for our communities.

Together we will:

Attract and retain the right people through a strong employer brand and reputation as a caring, modern and innovative council.

Develop and implement recruitment and retention strategies for recruiting into 'hard to fill' roles and retaining our talented workforce.

Develop a robust process for workforce planning, talent management and succession planning.

Continue to develop person centred flexible working policies and practices that provide the basis of meeting the needs of our customers, balanced with the wellbeing needs of our employees.

Develop a fair pay, reward and recognition framework.

Provide the right onboarding and 'Your Welcome' induction process for all our new employees.

Simplify our recruitment processes and encourage candidates from diverse backgrounds and those who may be furthest from employment.

Build a diverse and inclusive workforce.



Create a culture of engagement and wellbeing.



We want all:

To have a voice and be empowered to develop and grow yourself and our organisation for the future. We want you to feel supported and encouraged to look after your own health and wellbeing.

Together we will:

Prioritise the health, safety, wellbeing and happiness of our people by developing a comprehensive employee wellbeing programme, including a review of people policies and practices that support workplace wellbeing.

Continue our commitment to developing strong working relationships with our recognised Trade Unions, to help shape our culture.

Develop our leaders to grow their knowledge and skills to manage wellbeing issues in the workplace by being fair to all and understanding of individual needs.

Develop a robust process for workforce planning, talent management and succession planning.

Undertake regular, valuable, two-way engagement through a range of internal communication channels that encourages employees to feel trusted, valued, empowered and able to speak out on things that matter to them most.

Create opportunities to work collaboratively with others, sharing ideas and being accountable for making things happen.



Developing our people and achieving great outcomes.



We want all:

To develop skills and competencies so that you can fulfil your potential. Be more innovative and creative, so that together we can help shape and prepare our organisation for our ever-changing needs and achieve great outcomes for our organisation and the communities we serve.

Together we will:

Cultivate a positive culture of continuous improvement, learning and development, inspiring our workforce through the promotion of and access to career development opportunities.

Develop a dedicated programme of learning to help us provide great customer experiences.

Develop leaders who lead well, with positive impact and who are compassionate, collaborative and clear in the achievement of our vision and how we will get there.

Create an environment where we can encourage innovation, continually learning from what we do and working collaboratively with partners and communities to get the best results.

Utilise technology to enable people to work more effectively and deliver a better customer experience.

Maximise the use of apprenticeship levy to develop our existing employees and attract our employees of the future.

Develop a mentoring and coaching culture.

Create a positive culture that promotes ideas that drive efficiencies and better ways of doing things to help the council be financially sustainable.



What success looks like

We need to know that our People Plan is making a difference, so it is important that we measure and evaluate our success. There are several ways in which we will monitor and measure how well we are doing, and whether we are achieving our aims and objectives.

As a new organisation, we accept we have much to develop, which will take time to implement. Our measures, together with our priorities, will need to be reviewed and may need to be adapted and developed on an annual basis to ensure we are measuring our achievements in the best way that we can.

Key success measures and impact

We will be successful by focusing on:

- Ensuring health, safety and wellbeing as a top priority.
- Increasing the opportunities for employee engagement and feedback and participation in employee surveys increasing.
- Ensuring everyone has an annual and ongoing Let's Talk conversation and professional supervision where applicable.
- Aim to fill the majority of our vacancies first time, with people with the right skills, from a diverse pool of candidates.
- Developing a long-lasting constructive industrial relations climate and reducing employee relations cases.



- An increasing number of employees choosing to provide diversity data.
- Simplify, streamline and strengthen our people policies and practices, ensuring they are inclusive of all.
- Supporting everyone to have access to relevant learning and development.
- Ensuring everyone completes core essential training.
- Developing well-led leaders who are compassionate, collaborative, confident and clear, especially in the way they support and motivate our diverse workforce.
- Increasing the number of talented and hard-working employees being recognised, promoted, rewarded and retained.
- Increasing opportunities for school leavers and early careers.
- Maximising and supporting attendance.

As a living document, our People Plan, together with our more detailed People Plan Delivery Plan will be reviewed annually, in line with other key strategies to ensure it continues to reflect our direction of travel and our relevant priorities for the council, the changing world of work and our workforce.



If you have any questions, or feedback about our People Plan, please contact us at:

learninganddevelopment@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk



Westmorland
& Furness
Council

Translation Services

If you require this document in another format (e.g. CD, Braille or large type) or in another language, please telephone: **0300 373 3300**.

للوصول إلى هذه المعلومات بلغتك، يرجى الاتصال 0300 373 3300

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Together, we will make
Westmorland and Furness:
“A great place to live,
work and thrive”.

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