



# WELCOME

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Every day, Dumfries and Galloway Council provides a diverse range of essential services to the communities of Dumfries and Galloway. The quality and effectiveness of these services rely on the commitment and ability of our workforce, who on a daily basis make a difference to the lives of our citizens.

We feel privileged to lead a workforce with such a diverse range of skills and experience who deliver such important services to Dumfries and Galloway citizens every day.

Developing our people and our organisation is an integral part of our strategic approach, particularly at a time of increasing demand for our services. This has also been a time where the impact of recent years on the community has been significantly challenging for many, we need to be regarded as an employer that offers interesting and worthwhile work, that respects, develops its workforce and supports the health and wellbeing of our workforce and their wider family.

Our Council wants to provide a positive employee experience and through this attracting, retaining and developing talented people is essential to achieving it. This People Strategy sets out our strategic outcomes for achieving this aim, at all levels - organisationally, team and individually.

Given how fast our environment is changing, we have to be agile and ambitious as we look to transform the way we work. Part of this includes attracting and retaining a more diverse workforce to help us do this.

We are taking into account all elements of equality, diversity & inclusion in all of our decision making and practice.

Dumfries and Galloway Council is a great place to work, where our staff really do make a difference every day. Whether you are an existing member of staff or thinking of joining us, thank you for taking the time to consider our People Strategy.

Dawn Roberts  
**Chief Executive**

Gail MacGregor  
**Leader**

Cllr Malcolm Johnstone  
**Depute Leader**

# INTRODUCTION

Our People Strategy is aligned to the Council Plan, with the same ambition for equal opportunity for our staff as we have for our communities. We recognise that the greatest asset we have to deliver these services is our people, and we are proud to work alongside our communities with a diverse range of staff who reflect the Dumfries and Galloway communities we serve. It is important that, operating in an ever-changing and often challenging environment, our People Strategy articulates the ambition of how we want to engage and develop our staff, outlining the key priorities and drivers for our workforce from 2021 and beyond.

## VISION

Our ambition is to be a successful region, with a growing economy, based on fairness, opportunity and quality public services, where all citizens prosper. Working in partnership, with connected, healthy and sustainable communities. The region will be the natural place to live, work, visit and invest.

We want to strive for excellence now, and in the future, and we can only do this with the right people on this journey with us. That is why we set out to create our People Strategy. The way our people work and behave is fundamental to how our communities, and others view Dumfries and Galloway Council. It has a direct impact on the services we provide, both to our external customers and to ourselves as internal customers.

The People Strategy sets out our commitments to enable our vision as a Council.

## PRINCIPLES

Our principles are what we do to achieve the strategic outcomes of our themes to allow our communities to thrive and succeed:

- Safeguard our future
- Support our citizens
- Support our communities
- Be a responsive Council



Our People Strategy sets out our ambition to be a great employer, where we can do our jobs well and make a difference to the people of Dumfries and Galloway. We have engaged and listened to understand what being a great employer means to us, and this is what we have heard:

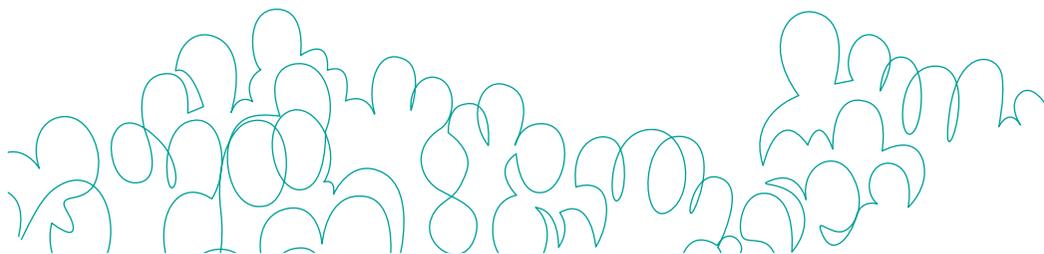
## OUR CORE BEHAVIOURS

Through our **SUPPORT** we will work together so we all thrive and flourish:

- **Strengthen - our Communities**
- **Understand - our children's needs**
- **Protect – our vulnerable people**
- **Promote – equality and diversity**
- **Open and transparent – at all times**
- **Respect – our environment**
- **Treat – each other with kindness**

## OUR PARTNERSHIPS

Working in partnership with our local employers in the public, voluntary and business sectors is a considerable strength for us in Dumfries and Galloway. Our Council, our services and partners are embarking on a period of unprecedented change due to learning from recent years, new models of working and reduced public sector spending. It is therefore important that we continue to collaborate with our partners to build multi- agency capacity, share ideas and promote learning across organisations to deliver excellent outcomes. We work closely with our local colleges and universities who are major employers and who are also key to developing future education, skills and knowledge of our combined workforce in Dumfries and Galloway.



## OUR COMMUNITIES

Our people are, and will continue to be, our most important assets. Throughout recent years, we've worked together to maintain vital services in the most challenging of circumstances, embracing different ways of working and demonstrating real pride in the Council and our region. We learned to communicate better with our communities, through Covid-19, and learned to navigate new technology and built a new culture around working at the frontline and from home. We also learned the value of delivering services from within communities, close to where people live and work.

Our new People Strategy is essential in making sure we can deliver our Council Plan and strategic outcomes of our themes. In addition, other internal and external factors have also influenced this new People Strategy:

- Despite continued financial pressures, we must focus on our workforce and maintain the organisational capacity and resilience to respond to change. Workloads remain a challenge and we want to ensure that we've done everything we can to help colleagues to manage this.
- We don't yet know the full impact of recent years on the economy, but already it has had a significant impact on both the national and local job market. There is more that we can and must do to support both our colleagues and citizens to ensure they remain safe and well.
- The changing expectations of what a multi-generational workforce needs from their place of work and how we can support them with their wellbeing, work-life balance and feeling a part of our organisation from day one and during their employment with us.
- We are working in partnership with other organisations, including the Health and Social Care Partnership and other organisations whose expertise will support the delivery of the strategic outcomes of our themes.

# PEOPLE STRATEGY OUTCOMES

1. Providing a positive experience
2. Developing our people
3. Engaging our people
4. Supporting our people
5. Recognising good performance
6. Creating a positive one team culture

We want the Council to be a place where we:

- recognise that our colleagues are the organisation's greatest asset
- find our work rewarding and can see the difference we make to the lives of communities
- are supported to develop ourselves, enhance our skills and increase our knowledge
- value diverse backgrounds, skills and personalities
- treat each other as equals with respect
- develop a positive working culture that is flexible, responsive and enhances the health and wellbeing of our employees
- work as one team to achieve our shared goals



# 1. PROVIDING A POSITIVE EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE

As the largest employer in Dumfries and Galloway, we want our employees to want to work with us because we provide a positive employee experience, not necessity.

We need to take time to understand our employee journey, how we attract people, have a recruitment a process that works for all and develop our individual and team strengths. When we do say goodbye, we do it well, understanding how we can continue to make improvements.

Our positive employee experience commitments are:

- develop an inspiring approach to make sure that everyone receives the resources and support they need to perform well
- proactively work towards enabling a diverse and healthy workforce across all levels of our organisation, acting as a role model for all Dumfries and Galloway region employers
- develop a clear Dumfries and Galloway Council brand that communicates our vision and aids successful recruitment
- make sure all employees can work efficiently and productively as possible, equipped with the digital skills to use modern technology and become digital champions in the workplace and community
- review and modernise our approaches to recruitment and retention, to make sure that we attract and retain valued employees and can deliver on our digital ambition
- make sure the organisation has terms and conditions that reflect business need and the ambitions of a modern organisation
- develop a workforce plan that enables us to forecast what roles we need to recruit to, where we need to address skills shortages and where our challenges are



## 2. DEVELOPING OUR PEOPLE

We want to develop the organisation, the team and the individual , we want to make sure that we offer learning and development in a blended approach to give our people the confidence so they are empowered to take an active role in their development.

Our learning and development commitments are:

- maximise the use of the apprenticeship levy to develop our existing employees, and attracting our employees of the future
- develop a dedicated programme of learning to help us to provide great experiences. We will also implement a strength based approach – focus on what is strong not wrong
- embed coaching and mentoring into our culture
- create leadership development programmes to create the environment that allows our people to flourish and excel
- understand the skills and capabilities we need to become a digital Council, equipping people to work together to design and continuously improve service provision, and embrace new technology such as robotics and artificial intelligence
- work to take learning and development to our employees' through either virtually or face to face, provide accessible learning and development opportunities for all
- encourage learning and development to be part of the way we work, through dedicated learning days, on the job training or through coaching



### 3. ENGAGING OUR PEOPLE

We want our employees to be engaged; they are our most important resource and we value them. Engaged employees are more likely to be highly motivated and more productive.

In a large and diverse organisation like Dumfries and Galloway Council, we need to put ways in place to encourage feedback so that our employees have a voice and can help to shape how we work together now, and in the future.

Our commitments to engaging our people are:

- facilitate meaningful 'supportive conversations' through our employee engagement, which is open to all employees of Dumfries and Galloway Council
- continue our commitment to developing strong working relationships with recognised trade unions, to help us shape our culture together based on best practice and compliance with negotiated agreements
- establish a leadership forum, to bring together our people leaders on a regular basis
- undertake regular, valuable, two-way engagement, through a range of internal communications channels
- seek feedback on a regular basis, evaluating it and sharing this back to the organisation in a timely manner, with clear messaging about how we are using this feedback to make improvements
- engage employees in how we spend our learning and development budget



## 4. SUPPORTING OUR PEOPLE

We want to create an environment where employees can maintain good health and resilience and develop a positive work / home life balance. A healthy, productive and motivated workforce benefits the experience of the people we are here for, our customers, residents and communities.

Our commitments to supporting our people are:

- work with our people and partners through our Strategic Health and Wellbeing Group, incorporating our DGTogether programme
- revisit policies to ensure practice is supporting workplace wellbeing
- ensure safety is prioritised in the workplace, risks to employees are managed effectively and all relevant information is shared make sure employees can access a range of initiatives and services aimed at maintaining good physical and mental health, helping them remain in work and achieve their potential
- develop opportunities for our leaders to grow knowledge and skills to manage and promote wellbeing in the workplace
- build understanding and reduce stigma of mental health conditions



## 5. RECOGNISING GOOD PERFORMANCE

We are committed to our SUPPORT behaviours and our organisational culture. These help us to provide a consistent shared approach to how we work, and a set of organisational standards we expect to see when we are working with each other, and our citizens.

It's important that we celebrate when things are going well, and it's also important that we provide a safe environment to have respectful conversations when things aren't working as we would like. We want to create an environment where we work on solutions together. Recognising when our behaviours are demonstrated and delivered consistently which will help our employees to feel valued and motivated. This is an important factor in recruiting and retaining the right people for Dumfries and Galloway Council, as well as providing the best possible services for our communities.

Our commitments in recognising good performance are:

- launch and develop an Employment Experience with employees, which enables a personal and flexible approach to employee benefits
- develop a strategic approach to identify and develop those who are performing well with through an organisational talent management and succession programme
- provide more ways for employees who are working towards promoted roles, to develop the skills and experience they need to succeed in the future
- review our approach to performance management, moving towards regular developmental and strength based conversations, being focused on outcomes rather than process
- implement a revised performance management framework including an online digital appraisal



## 6. CREATING A POSITIVE Dumfries and Galloway Council 'ONE TEAM CULTURE'

We believe that 'the way we do things around here' impacts on how well we work together. We are committed to empowering our employees at all levels within the organisation to be innovative and develop our services together. To do this well, we need to provide an environment which enables us to perform at our best.

Our commitments to creating a positive workplace culture are:

- work together to embed a 'one Council one vision' programme which will promote who we are as an organisation and understand how we can be at our best
- develop an organisational approach to how we work and make the best use of our resources to enable innovation, collaboration and flexibility
- create a positive place to work encouraging innovation, continually learning from what we do and collaborate with others to get the best results
- embed our SUPPORT behaviours into our policies, processes and everything we do
- undertake regular culture snapshots through our surveys, acting on areas which prohibit a healthy and positive workplace culture
- share success stories across our Council, recognise and celebrate what we do well and share that learning across the organisation



## SUCCESS MEASURES

- employees feel our Council provides a positive employee experience
- improved job performance, as indicated by a range of key performance indicators
- positive impact on line management relationships
- increased sense of trust and fairness in our Council
- proportion of employees who leave their current roles, are doing so because they have been promoted internally or externally
- increased number of apprenticeships, graduates and a higher engagement of other learning opportunities
- increased coaching and mentoring opportunities initiated within our Council
- reduced skills gaps, in particular digital skills
- employees feel that the Council recognises and values the importance of their wellbeing
- the Council provides a range of flexible working options to encourage a healthy work/home life balance
- there is higher two way engagement on important initiatives
- reduction in absence levels
- proportion of recruitment that is successful
- positive culture through strength-based conversations
- employees are able to access a range of learning and development opportunities





# Council Plan on a Page

**VISION:** Our ambition is to be a **successful region**, with a **growing economy**, based on **fairness, opportunity** and **quality public services**, where all citizens prosper. Working in partnership, with **connected, healthy** and **sustainable communities**.

The region will be **the natural place to live, work, visit and invest**.

## Principles

### Safeguard our future

- Address the climate emergency
- Protect our natural capital

### Support our citizens

- Put customers at the heart of services
- Support the most vulnerable and in need
- Address inequalities
- Offer digital services

### Support our communities

- Empowering communities and individuals
- Work in partnership
- Focus on local and place
- Invest to enable change

### Be a responsive Council

- Communicate openly
- Maintain high standards
- Maintain sustainable finances
- Make best use of resources
- Be organised to deliver

## Themes and Strategic Outcomes

### Economy

- There is a diversified and growing local economy that benefits all
- Our workforce and their skills base are growing
- Rural communities and places are vibrant and thriving
- Enhancing the region's natural capital benefits local communities and businesses
- Businesses are supported to start and grow
- Investment in the region benefits communities and the local economy

### Travel, Connectivity and Infrastructure

- Roads, paths, cycling and walking networks in the region are improved
- Communities are protected from the impact of floods
- Sustainable travel in the region contributes to net zero<sup>2</sup>
- The Council is a low carbon organisation
- People have access to services that are modern, efficient and responsive
- Digital connectivity supports thriving rural communities

### Education and learning

- Places of learning are inclusive, sustainable and meet the needs of local communities
- We get it right for every child
- Children, young people and adults transition successfully through all life stages
- Young people and adults succeed in what they want to achieve
- Participation in creativity and play is part of early and lifelong learning experiences
- Local people can build their skills and confidence

### Health and Wellbeing

- Prevention and early intervention assist people to have independent lives
- Access to personal support and care helps keep people safe
- People are active, resilient and improving their health and wellbeing
- Help is provided to tackle the causes and effects of poverty, inequality and increased cost of living
- People have access to high quality, affordable housing that supports their independence, prosperity and wellbeing

## Action Plan

Outcome	Action	Timeline	Responsible Person	Success Measure
1. Providing a positive experience	1. Develop a communication and marketing plan on our Dumfries and Galloway Council Brand, values and behaviours	1. December 2022	1. OD Manager/HR Manager	1. Increased sense of trust and fairness in our Council
	2. Review and modernise our approaches to recruitment	2. April 2023	2. HR Manager/OD Manager	2. Higher levels of successful recruitment
	3. Review and modernise our approaches to upskilling our workforce	3. December 2023	3. OD Manager/HR Manager	3. Reduced skills gap
	4. Review and develop innovative HR policies using the Council's HR Policy Framework	4. December 21 – March 26	4. HR Manager/OD Manager	4. Comprehensive suite of HR policies which are modern, innovative, and relevant
2. Developing our people	1. Provide learning opportunities through a blended approach of face to face and virtual	1. December 2022	1. OD Manager	1. Increased satisfaction with the range of Learning and Development
	2. Develop and implement a coaching and mentoring programme	2. December 2023	2. HR Manager/OD Manager	2. Increased coaching and mentoring opportunities initiated
3. Engaging our people	1. Implement the Supportive Conversation Engagement programme	1. April 2022	1. OD Manager	1. Higher levels of two way engagement
	2. Develop and implement a staff survey programme	2. June 2023	2. OD Manager	

## Action Plan

Outcome	Action	Timeline	Responsible Person	Success Measure
4. Supporting our people	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue our strategic approach to Health and Wellbeing</li> <li>Implement a revised Health and Safety delivery model</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May 2022</li> <li>Nov 21 – March 26</li> <li>May 22</li> <li>Dec 21</li> <li>March 23</li> <li>June 23</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HR Manager</li> <li>HR Manager</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain the Healthy Working Lives Gold Standard</li> <li>Delivery of a programme of activities across physical, mental, and financial wellbeing themes.</li> <li>Design and implement a comprehensive Occupational Health service</li> <li>A new Council health and safety service is in place</li> <li>A programme to support the development of Trade Union safety representation across the Council</li> <li>A new health and safety policy, plan and performance measures in place</li> </ol>
5. Recognising good performance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and launch an Employment Experience framework</li> <li>Develop and Implement an Organisational Talent Framework</li> <li>Agree a revised performance management framework including digital appraisal</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>December 2023</li> <li>December 2024</li> <li>April 2023</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HR Manager/OD Manager</li> <li>HR Manager/OD Manager</li> <li>HR Manager/OD Manager</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved job performance</li> <li>Positive impact on line management relationships</li> </ol>
6. Creating a positive one team culture	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and launch a 'one Council one vision' programme</li> <li>Embed our SUPPORT behaviours into our policies and processes</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>December 2024</li> <li>April 2023</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HR Manager/OD Manager</li> <li>HR Manager/OD Manager</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Positive culture</li> </ol>