

An approach to Workforce Development – Our ambitions for our people 2022/25

Herefordshire Council’s Children and Young People’s Directorate

Message from Darryl Freeman

Introduction

This document describes our Ambitions for our People 2022 - 2025 that will support the Children’s Services Transformation Plans. This is where we aim to be in 2025 and will be accompanied by a “Strategy into Action” plan that is refreshed annually but monitored monthly.

Through you, our workforce, we aim to develop our Children’s and Young People’s Services to consistently good over the next 3 years.

We can only achieve our goals through a skilled, engaged and flexible workforce who can respond quickly and positively to changing demands. We are committed to providing you with all the support and development that you need and supporting a workplace culture that is compassionate, respectful and positive for everyone.

By delivering these ambitions together, we can ensure that our children and young people receive the best possible services from us and that we are seen to be a great employer and a successful organisation.

Our success is through our workforce

As part of our improvement journey and transformation we need to consider:

- where we need to strengthen our workforce
- what skills shortages are we facing now and in the future
- the types of knowledge and skills we will need now, and in the future
- how we recruit and retain the best workforce
- what the local challenges are, e.g. demand are for services, geography etc.
- what are or might be the nationally challenges we face e.g. Ofsted judgements

Our workforce is not just restricted to those directly employed, it should and does include those who work with us through temporary arrangements and through contracts.

Our children and young people deserve the best possible service whenever they need it.

Supporting you to be the best you can be

We want you to feel engaged with us, skilled enough to do your job well and flexible and responsive to change.

Effective and easy to use systems and processes within a culture of equality, diversity and inclusion will support all part so our strategy and will positively impact on our effectiveness as an organisation, with your help, we aim to:

- Ensure that there is clarity about our operating model, ways of working, leadership, your role and what is expected of you
- Develop a culture where every individual knows and takes their responsibilities seriously and clearly understands the consequences of non-delivery
- Have clear and meaningful objectives that are cascaded through the organisation from senior leaders, in a clear and timely manner
- Learn from our mistakes, creating great solutions, and sharing our experiences and knowledge to improve
- Minimise bureaucracy making it easier for you to support and help to your clients
- Communicate with you in an honest and timely way
- Develop channels for you offer views and thoughts and get a response
- Develop a supportive, cohesive and positive culture where we all live and work by our values
- Make efficiency improvements that are based on reliable data and measure their success

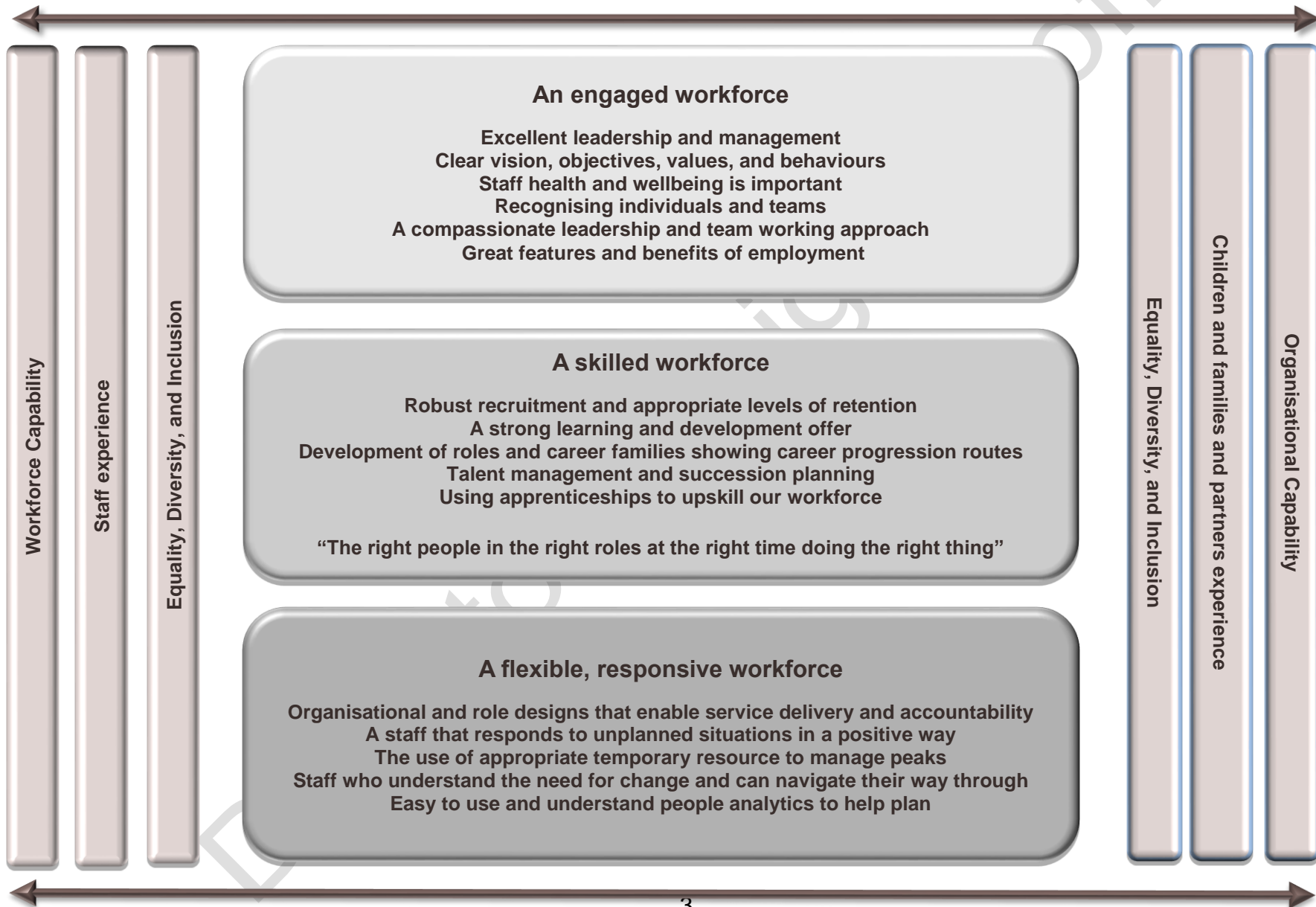
Our vision for you, our workforce

We want you to feel fulfilled, fairly treated and valued, whatever role you undertake for us. We also want you to feel able to offer feedback and contribute to the development of service and of a great working environment.

Great leaders and managers are fundamental in delivering these ambitions, we want to attract, develop and retain the best staff, and we can only do that if they feel part of a team and know they make a positive contribution.

Whether you have career ambitions or are content to remain in a job that you enjoy, we want you to feel part of a great organisation and be a motivated colleague.

Our ambitions for our workforce on a page



Our Values

In addition to the PEOPLE values adopted by the wider council we have some service specific ones that we developed about how we will work with Herefordshire's Children, Young People, and Families.

"Doing our very best for Herefordshire's children, young people, and their families" means that:

- ✎ We will try our very best to make sure that children and young people get the right help at the right time
- ✎ We will keep our working relationships with children, young people and families at the heart of everything we do.
- ✎ We will work together with families' wider network of support and our partner agencies
- ✎ We will support parents and carers to make sure children and young people are safe at home if at all possible, and nurtured by others if not.
- ✎ We will make sure we take into account the diverse backgrounds and needs of children, young people and families
- ✎ We will keep written information about children and young people in a way that recognises that the information belongs to them and will best enable them to fully understand their
- ✎ We will work hard to have positive endings when we move on
- ✎ We will create a supportive working culture
- ✎ We will keep a focus on making a difference to improving outcomes for children and young people.

Full details of what this means for you and your service users can be found [here](#)

As Leaders

We will be connected as leaders, through connected, compassionate and competent leadership we will earn your trust, respect, and confidence by communicating clearly and treating people fairly.

To support our values, we will have career families in Children's Services that build on normal job descriptions to describe roles in more detail, including the positive behaviours we will see when the accountabilities are delivered well.

Our commitment to Equality, diversity, and inclusion (ED&I)

This is at the heart of who we are and critical for us to embrace. The impact of positive ED&I can be directly linked to quality and a positive customer experience, this in turn leads to a good staff experience for you. This approach is equally applicable between managers and their staff, from colleague to colleague and from worker to client:

- We aim to have a culture that values and embraces diversity and inclusion in service delivery, learning and employment; we all need to be a part of that
- We aim to have a workforce that reflects the diversity in our communities
- We want a workforce that is culturally competent and sensitive to the diverse needs of our customers
- We want a workforce that can recognise disability and mental health issues and respond appropriately
- Our staff have the behaviours and skills to effectively support individual needs
- We appropriately and effectively challenge stigma, discrimination, and isolation

We will deliver this by:

- Making ED&I a core, mandatory learning module in every role
- Using the annual performance conversations to set realistic and ambitious objectives to improve all aspects of equality, diversity, and inclusion; how we behave, take responsibility and lead others
- On a voluntary basis, encourage Diversity Advocates across all operational services who can support the work of BAME group to develop a culture of inclusion, diversity, and anti-discrimination
- Continually review all learning materials to ensure its fit for purpose and set learning objectives and outcomes

Your wellbeing

We will support your wellbeing by:

- championing mental health first aider training to ensure managers are equipped with the knowledge and tools to support you when you need it
- ensuring that you receive the health, safety and wellbeing training they need to keep you, your colleagues and your service users safe
- having an Occupational Health scheme that can provide a helpful insight into longer term sickness absence so that we can work together to get you back to work
- encouraging you to talk to us if you're unhappy with work; we value you and how you are feeling.
- providing an Employee Assistance Programme for you to access if you need someone to talk to about how you're feeling
- Having a counselling line manned by Clinical Psychologists to support Social Workers and others who work directly with families in crisis.
- making sure our managers and leaders are compassionate and connected to you
- having a robust and joined up approach to lone working to keep you safe

A workforce that's engaged

Every part of this strategy is important but if we don't get staff engagement right, we cannot achieve it. Our sense of belonging, commitment, and enthusiasm for what we do and alignment to the organisation's visions and values will support excellent service delivery and continuous improvement. The more engaged you are, the better the outcomes for our children, young people and their families and for your own well-being. If we are all 'signed up' to our vision and values, we can better collaborate and work as one organisation.

Our aim is that you will all:

- be proud to work for our Children's Services and be an advocate for the services we provide to our children and families and partner agencies
- embrace our values and live them day to day
- feel gratified and valued in your role and that your contribution is recognised by us and the those you provide services for
- feel that you are treated fairly and have equal access to opportunities to develop and grow
- feel empowered to be part of positively shaping and developing our services to be good and then to outstanding

We will deliver this by:

Developing a culture of leadership and management capability that is compassionate, quality focussed, supportive and accountable, so:

- the Directorate Leadership Team will set a direction of travel and an overarching business plan
- the Service Directors and their leadership teams will develop service plans that will be shared with all staff for comments and understanding through regular forums such as the Staff Reference Group and team meetings.
- your managers will encourage you to contribute in your team meetings and during your one to one sessions
- you will set your objectives with your manager, they will help you to identify what they need to be; some will be directly related to service objectives and others about your personal development
- we will develop great leaders and managers who communicate well and take the workforce with them
- we will develop a coaching culture; equipping managers to be great coaches and encouraging everyone to use a coaching approach to giving feedback across our directorate
- supervisors, managers, and leaders will receive the development they need to meet the standards expected of them in Herefordshire Council and its Children's Service
- we will have a monthly manager forum once a quarter to discuss company performance and provide development opportunities
- have a fully developed communications strategy that staff can input in to

We will also:

- welcome constructive feedback and encourage you to help us develop the service to improve staff motivation and customer satisfaction
- be clear about standards of work, “what does ‘good’ look like?”
- ensure that you have a voice; developing the current staff forums we will discuss how the service is running, our employment offer and what actions need to be taken
- engage unions, as appropriate, in our discussions regarding our employment offer
- make sure that our policies and processes will reflect our values, including values-based recruitment
- encourage you to become involved in things you are interested in such as development of digital skills, supporting recruitment activity
- learn from what we do; identifying what went well to do more of and what didn’t go quite so well to learn from, understand and do differently

A workforce that’s skilled

Having a workforce that is competent in their role in terms of knowledge, skills, and behaviours; the ‘how’ you do your role is as important as the ‘what’ you do. A workforce that learns from each other, shares best practice and has access to high quality learning and development opportunities. Our aim is:

- to have an excellent training offer to deliver high quality development to you
- to share knowledge and best practice across our services; helping each other to be the best we can be
- for you all to be experts in your field, whatever role you undertake
- to have a blended approach to learning so that you can learn individually or as a team
- to nurture talent for the future and have a succession plan in place

This means that:

- we will have a well-defined, transparent, and efficient recruitment process to ensure we recruit the right people for our organisation, whether internal or external (see Retention and Recruitment Framework)
- we will review why people leave us and, as appropriate, if there are themes, where we can make changes, we will
- we will invest in you and would like you to invest in us
- You will have access to learning opportunities to help you do your job well (see Learning and Development Strategy)
- We will develop Career Families that are based around accountability, knowledge, skills and behaviours and not tasks.
- If you have ambition, we will work with you to identify career progression opportunities to increase your knowledge and skills for future roles
- We will help you to identify opportunities to broaden your knowledge and skills
- We will develop apprenticeship roles where it is the best thing for our business

A workforce that's flexible and can react quickly

Our aim is to have a wide range of generalist and a specialist skills across Children's Services so, through the annual skills audit, we will understand all the expertise you bring to the organisation.

We want you to be able to work together and with partners to create a flexible service that can provide the right support at the right time to the children and families you work with leading to positive outcomes for them.

We will:

- be transparent about all the work we do and why we are doing it
- develop collaborative partnerships to build trust and allow for better joint working
- continually review how we do things to make efficiencies in the way we work; cutting out unnecessary processes and red tape to help you, your colleagues and our service users
- where appropriate, work towards having multi skilled staff that have transferrable skills so can work more flexibly to support services when they have peaks of work or in times of emergency
- work with our regional colleagues develop a more responsive and cost-effective approach to the resourcing of high quality, temporary staff
- develop family friendly policies and flexible contracts

With a system(s) led approach we aim to:

- have effective Human Resources Management systems which will enable you to see and amend your own personal details, as well as making holiday requests and seeing your learning records
- have easily accessible accurate management information regarding staff and budgets to enable managers to plan and monitor their resources and work collaboratively to address any issues
- have good, easy to use, intuitive technology and systems available for staff to help them reduce their reliance on manual processes
- work with our colleagues in the council to maximise the benefits of all our systems and technologies within the context of our service which has a large mobile staff group.

And finally

This strategy is not just for frontline staff, is applicable to all members of the Children and Young People's workforce.

Anyone who works in our directorate either here either delivers or supports safe, relationship based and restorative services to children, young people and their families.

You should be able to see the golden thread between your work and the delivery of great services which lead to positive outcomes, the chart on the next page will help you.

How it fits together

Our Mission
To be judged as good by Ofsted and improve services to Children and Young People



Our Vision
"To be a child centred county"



Our values and behaviours



Our improvement plans



Strategies to support the plan
People strategy, R & R Strategy, Learning Strategy, ICT Strategy, Building Strategy etc.



Departmental and Team Service plans
(Developed annually to deliver service and improvement plans)



Your Objectives
(Individual to you, owned by you, unambiguous and clearly aligned to deliver the vision)