



### INTRODUCTION

Our People Strategy sets out Huddersfield New College's aim to ensure the recruitment, retention and development of a skilled and motivated workforce, in order to fulfil the College's vision, mission and strategic objectives.

The People Strategy has been developed taking into consideration the following:

- Huddersfield New College's vision, mission, values and strategic objectives
- Employment legislation and best practice in Human Resources
- The national landscape in terms of Further Education
- Local challenges in terms of demographics and competition from other providers of Further Education

The People Strategy is structured around the following key themes:

1. Recruitment, retention and succession planning
2. Reward and recognition
3. Organisational development, incorporating leadership and management
4. Continuous professional development
5. Employee wellbeing and engagement
6. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
7. Performance management
8. Values and behaviours
9. Employment framework

The College aims to ensure that these themes and underpinning aims support and complement each other to maximise the positive impact of the People Strategy.

The People Strategy is closely related to 'Risk 5' of the College's Board Assurance Framework, which is:

'Failure to appoint, develop, maintain and motivate effective staff to help lead the College's improving standards agenda.'

### 1. Recruitment, retention and succession planning

#### **Aim**

*To attract, retain and develop a highly-skilled, committed and motivated workforce that will ensure the College remains an excellent provider of post-16 education, with an outstanding reputation in terms of student achievement and progression, and as an employer of choice.*

To achieve this aim we will:

- Review the recruitment and selection policy.
- Advertise vacant positions as widely as possible, using appropriate media and applicant data to inform advertising decisions.

- Review the employee benefits package, including reward and recognition schemes, to ensure that Huddersfield New College has in place effective mechanisms to be able to recruit and retain high calibre staff.
- Report annually on the effectiveness of recruitment and retention initiatives.
- Work with external agencies (e.g. Promoting Excellence, Pennine Partnership) to identify and support staff to develop leadership and other skills, to enable them to progress to higher-level positions and/or enhance performance within an existing role.
- Monitor employee turnover, also collating and analysing 'exit' data, including equality information, to inform approaches to recruitment, retention and succession planning on an ongoing basis.
- Work with the Staff Voice Group, professional associations, teams, and individual members of staff to understand what motivates them to stay at Huddersfield New College and how we can collectively contribute to making the College a great place to work.

## 2. Reward and recognition

### **Aim**

*To recognise and reward staff for personal and professional achievements, and other noteworthy celebrations, also ensuring that as a College we offer a range of employee benefits to reflect that we are a caring and supportive employer with our employees' best interests at heart.*

To achieve this aim we will:

- Recognise individual 'extra mile activity' through mentions in Staff News, 'Thank You' cards etc.
- Publicise staff achievements in the 'Star Box' in Staff News on a weekly basis and/or with an appropriate gift.
- Send flowers or other token to employees on long-term sickness leave (defined as 20 days' continuous leave, or longer).
- Recognise important birthdays (e.g. 30, 40, 50, 60) and anniversaries with an appropriate gift (e.g. bottle of champagne, flowers etc.).
- Recognise the birth/adoption of a child by sending flowers or other appropriate gift.
- Review our employee benefits package to ensure this is comprehensive and represents value for money, where external costs are involved (e.g. in relation to occupational health services, the staff discounted shopping scheme etc.).
- Promote the employee benefits package when advertising job vacancies, and when inducting new staff, also ensuring an up-to-date 'staff benefits' poster is displayed in each staff work room in the College.
- Promote the Childcare Voucher Scheme, Cycle to Work scheme and other such schemes that will benefit staff.
- Formally recognise outstanding practice following the annual self-assessment process.

### **3. Organisational development, incorporating leadership and management**

#### **Aim**

*To continuously develop the College's ability to effectively deliver its mission, core values and strategic aims, through quality improvement processes, a positive and flexible environment in which staff contribution is valued, and through the development of leadership and management capabilities across the College.*

To achieve this aim we will:

- Self-assess all areas of provision annually and ensure that subsequent quality improvement planning effectively addresses identified areas for improvement.
- Closely monitor and manage the College's budgets to ensure that staff utilisation is at a premium and that the staffing structure represents best value for money, from both quality and financial perspectives.
- Support leaders and managers, and aspiring leaders and managers, to develop those skills necessary for effective fulfilment of a current role, and/or to facilitate progression to a more senior role when opportunities occur. Such support may include, but is not limited to, professional coaching/mentoring arrangements, professional training and development opportunities, visits to other colleges to share best practice, and annual in-house development activities.
- Build the capability of leaders and managers, and management teams, to lead and manage change as required, by equipping leaders and managers with skills in personal resilience and change management, to prepare them to manage and deliver change as required.
- Develop a programme of training for new managers to incorporate: recruitment and selection (including safer recruitment training); employee wellbeing and absence management; performance management (including conducting probationary and performance reviews); timetabling (as relevant to role); safeguarding; equality and diversity; and, other themes as relevant to role.
- Build on our achievement of Investors in People accreditation (Silver) by working towards the Gold standard.

### **4. Continuous professional development**

#### **Aim**

*To support staff to continuously develop their skills in relation to their current role(s) and future career aspirations, thereby encouraging both personal and professional growth and development.*

To achieve this aim we will:

- Ensure all new staff (new to the College and those appointed to a new role) receive support throughout their probationary period (6 or 12 months in duration depending on role).
- Ensure all staff are able to discuss their training and development needs at least annually, through the probationary process and/or the performance appraisal framework.
- Monitor internal and external developments that may impact on job roles and the skills required therein, and ensure staff have opportunities to upskill and/or refresh their skills as necessary.
- Schedule staff INSET days on an annual basis to cover training on relevant themes, to groups of staff and/or the whole college.

- Evaluate continuous professional development initiatives and the impact of training and development, on an annual basis and as a sub-section of the annual Staffing report that is produced for Governors.
- Provide financial support as applicable to staff undertaking professional qualifications (e.g. Masters Degree, PGCE etc.).
- Support staff with requests for changes to hours of work e.g. part-time hours, sabbatical leave, and teaching hours (as necessary in connection with a course of study).

## 5. Employee wellbeing and engagement

### Aim

*To provide a healthy and safe working environment in which employee health and wellbeing are valued and supported.*

To achieve this aim we will:

- Consider, on an ongoing basis, what strategies can be implemented to support and improve the work/life balance of the College's hardworking employees.
- Work within best practice frameworks for the management of employee health and wellbeing, including the standards of the Mindful Employer Charter (which reflects the College's commitment to supporting employees with their mental health and wellbeing), and the Better Health at Work Workplace Wellbeing Charter.
- Work with Occupational Health providers in order to refer employees for medical assessments and to access other forms of support (e.g. acupuncture, physiotherapy) as required. The College's main, but not exclusive, provider of occupational health support will be Kirklees Employee Healthcare.
- Refer employees for confidential counselling in accordance with their needs.
- Take all reasonable steps to support applicants and employees with a disability, including learning difficulties, and make reasonable adjustments in the workplace as far as possible.
- Arrange workplace assessments for individual employees with an identified health and wellbeing need (e.g. back pain, repetitive strain injury etc.).
- Provide specialist furniture and/or equipment (e.g. chairs, computer mic, wrist supports, foot rests etc.) as required and within reasonable financial parameters to support employees with health and wellbeing needs.
- Grant all staff an annual 'wellbeing' day.
- Maintain free access to the onsite gym facilities.
- Schedule and advertise a range of exercise/fitness classes at little or no cost to employees.
- Obtain and respond to staff views on what would benefit their health and wellbeing at work.
- Maintain an open door policy within the Senior Leadership Team and Human Resources team to ensure employees have access to qualified/senior staff for support with health and wellbeing.
- Monitor and manage cases of sickness absence, both short-term and long-term, in accordance with the College's Employee Health, Wellbeing and Absence Policy and Procedure.

- Schedule regular meetings of the Wellbeing Group to ensure that those representatives in the group continue to lead the College's employee health and wellbeing initiatives and agenda.
- Promote the College's inclusive mission and values, which support a culture in which all are respected, valued, treated fairly and not subjected to discrimination or unfair treatment.
- Promote the use of mediation as a tool for resolving workplace tensions/disputes.
- Make arrangements to survey staff on an annual basis on a range of matters pertaining to their employment including, but not limited to, leadership, management, organisational development initiatives and general staff satisfaction.

## 6. Equality, diversity and inclusion

### Aim

*To maintain and develop the College's inclusive nature, ensuring equality of opportunity for all is at the heart of everything we do, and that the diversity of our students and staff is valued and celebrated at every opportunity.*

To achieve this aim we will:

- Ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010, and any subsequent amendments to this legislation, by promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in everything that we do and by liaising with individuals to understand and meet their personal needs in relation to work and/or study.
- Ensure compliance with Part 5, Chapter 3, of the Equality Act 2010, which specifically relates to gender pay equality in that where women and men are doing equal work they receive the same rewards for it (pay and terms and conditions of employment).
- Ensure that recruitment and selection procedures take account of equality and diversity, at all stages, and that any reasonable adjustments required to enable applicants to present themselves fully at application and interview stage are made as far as practicable.
- Continue to recruit with integrity to vacant positions, with the aim of developing a diverse workforce reflective of the local community and student body.
- Provide an induction to the College's approach to equality, diversity and inclusion for all new staff.
- Develop and maintain a range of 'Equality and Diversity Pocket Guides', for a range of stakeholders including staff, Governors and students.
- Retain the Positive About Disabled People (two ticks) accreditation.
- Retain Leaders in Diversity status following successful achievement of this prestigious award in December 2014.
- Ensure that we are compliant with the Equal Pay Act
- Explore other equality and diversity frameworks that lead to official recognition of good practice, as a means of developing and continually improving the College's approach to embedding equality, diversity and inclusion (examples of external awards include the BIG Award, which the College achieved in 2013, the Stonewall Diversity Champions Programme, the Mindful Employer Charter etc.).

- Provide all staff with training on equality and diversity, on an on-going basis, and taking into account changes in legislation and the national political landscape (e.g. PREVENT/radicalisation/extremism etc.).
- Ensure the College's Diversity Group is proactive in arranging events and activities that enable all members of the College's community are aware of the different ways in which we promote equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Produce an annual Equality and Diversity Summary Report focusing on developments since the last period of review, key achievements, and relevant analysis of equality monitoring information relating to applicants for vacant positions, the staff and student profile, and student achievement.
- Develop the equality, diversity and inclusion information available on the College's VLE (Moodle).

## 7. Performance management

### Aim

*To support staff to fulfil their roles to a high standard, by ensuring that the expected standards are clearly communicated at the point of recruitment, through the new staff induction and probationary review process, and through ongoing appraisal/performance review meetings.*

To achieve this aim we will:

- Ensure all employees are inducted into the College and their role therein.
- Inform newly appointed employees of the arrangements for probationary reviews at the time of being offered a position with the College.
- Provide line managers with training in how to conduct performance appraisals and manage performance of individuals and teams.
- Review the Performance Management framework as necessary to reflect national developments (e.g. Teachers' pay reform, which relates to performance-related incremental salary progression), and best practice in the sector.
- Audit completion of performance appraisals (including probationary reviews), and the quality of these, and follow up with line managers as necessary.
- Address any concerns regarding work performance in a timely, fair, consistent and sensitive manner, taking informal routes where appropriate in the first instance, and ensuring individuals have access to relevant support (e.g. training, health intervention, peer support etc.) as necessary.
- Adhere to the College's policy and procedure for managing Capability (which reflects ACAS good practice guidelines) in cases of perceived under-performance, as necessary in relation to individual situations.
- Consult with the professional associations in relation to policy review and development, also liaising with professional associations in relation to casework, as necessary.

## 8. Values and behaviours

### Aim

*To give all employees ownership of the College's core values and associated professional behaviours by involving them in the review of these, in line with reviews of the College's strategic aims.*

To achieve this aim we will:

- Ensure all new employees sign and return a copy of the Staff Code of Conduct as part of the appointment process.
- Communicate the College's mission, values and strategic objectives to all staff, on a regular basis and particularly following any review of these.
- Use staff INSET sessions to engage employees in reviews of the College's mission and values, to ensure buy-in to these.
- Use staff INSET sessions to engage employees in reviews of expectations relating to standards of professional behaviour, and how these are translated into the Staff Code of Conduct.
- Receive and respond to feedback received from employees via the Staff Voice Group, professional associations, and directly, as appropriate where such feedback relates to professional behaviour and its correlation with the College's mission and values.
- All employees, whatever their role in the College, will be required in their annual appraisal conversation to demonstrate how they put the College values and associated behaviours into practice in their daily working life.

## 9. Employment framework

### **Aim**

*To provide an effective framework that fosters good employee and industrial relations, and supports managers to manage individuals and teams.*

To achieve this aim we will:

- Continuously review and update policies and procedures to reflect College requirements, through consultation with the professional associations as applicable, and through the established policy approval route.
- Continue to work closely with the professional associations on policy and individual matters.
- Have regular (one per half term) LJC meetings with the professional associations in line with an agreed Voluntary Agreement for the conduct of these LJC meetings, to promote good communication between the Senior Leadership Team and the professional associations, to ensure that we work together for the benefit of staff.
- Ensure we operate within established frameworks incorporating employment legislation and ACAS guidance.
- Utilise HR management information to inform decision-making.
- Continue to develop the computerised HR system to its full capacity and in line with changing college requirements.
- Ensure self-assessment and quality improvement processes incorporate reviews of HR service provision and the effectiveness of the College's leadership and management.
- Produce an annual staffing report for Governors, to summarise key points relating to the management of staff (to include data on sickness absence, HR casework, exit data etc.).
- Work with the College's legal advisors, as necessary, on matters relating to policy review, casework and other aspects of people management.

- Manage any reviews of staffing, which may result in staffing reductions, in consultation with all relevant parties and in accordance with the College's procedure for handling redundancy and associated employment legislation.