

# Workforce Strategy 2024-26

London Borough of Newham

April 2024



# Foreword

## Building a High-Performing Workforce for a Fairer Newham

I'm excited about the future of Newham Council but I know that to get the best out of our exceptional workforce we need to be open, honest and clear about how we support colleagues to develop and thrive. Launching our Workforce Strategy, something we have been lacking for too long, is a crucial step in our ongoing journey to create a learning, listening, and high-performing organisation at Newham Council. Our colleagues are the backbone of everything we achieve, and their well-being and development are paramount.

This strategy is the culmination of extensive consultations with our incredible workforce, as well as addressing other identified organisational needs. Your voices have been heard through colleagues conferences, surveys, leadership events, we have listened to colleagues from across the council that have helped shape the five key "people" priorities outlined here.

Building on the strong foundations, this strategy sets out a clear path for the next three years. It plays a central role in supporting the Council's "Building a Fairer Newham" plan and its vital objectives. Our commitment goes beyond simply delivering services; we aim to create a thriving and supportive environment where everyone feels valued, empowered, and equipped to succeed.

I believe that providing the right tools and resources, having a clear sense of purpose, and fostering collaboration, are essential to our success. As an organisation we are setting ourselves a high benchmark; achieving our vision requires a workforce that is clear on its contributions, performs at its best, and works together with support and appreciation. This strategy outlines a roadmap to achieve this, and ultimately, create a great place to work for all our talented colleagues. We are committed to developing a strong succession plan, fostering teamwork, and ensuring everyone has the opportunity to hone their skills, propelling us collectively towards achieving a fairer Newham for all.

I am proud of what we have already done, the progress we are continuing to make and excited about what we will achieve together, working as one Newham.



**Abi Gbago**

Chief Executive  
London Borough of Newham

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## Purpose

To develop the culture, skills, processes and management capability to support a productive, engaged and high performing workforce so together we achieve our ambition to Build a Fairer Newham.

# Our values

**HONESTY**

- We act with integrity
- We communicate openly and transparently
- We take responsibility if things go wrong

**EQUALITY**

- We treat people fairly and consistently
- We include everyone in our diverse community
- We stand up to injustice and discrimination

**TOGETHER**

- We are One Council, One Team
- We collaborate and coproduce to achieve results
- We trust appreciate and constructively challenge each other

**AMBITION**

- We work hard to make Newham better for everyone
- We think creatively to find new solutions
- We are committed to learning and improving

**RESPECT**

- We treat people with courtesy and compassion
- We welcome other people's ideas and perspectives
- We consider how our behaviour impacts on others

# Our workforce

We have a workforce of  
**5,181 people**



**53%**  
are women



**49%**  
are from Black, Asian and other  
ethnically diverse backgrounds



**2.4%**  
identify as Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual



**6.7%**  
are disabled



**2.4%**  
are apprentices



**36%**  
are Newham residents



## Some key measures

Our annual rate of  
turnover is  
**10.2%**



Our gender pay gap is  
**-10.7%**



Our ethnicity pay gap is  
**7.4%**



**100%**  
of our employees are paid at or  
above the London Living Wage



# Introduction

The workforce strategy outlines activities for the next three years and builds on the foundations now in place, whilst playing a central role in supporting the Building a Fairer Newham Plan and its priorities.

Our workforce is key to our success, so providing the right 'tools' for the job, being clear on purpose, being fit for purpose, clear on our performance and contribution, working collaboratively, with support and appreciation is the benchmark we are setting ourselves. The five identified 'people' priorities reflect the feedback from consultation undertaken with our colleagues through colleague conferences, surveys, leadership events, stakeholders (including residents, partners and members) as well as the identified organisational needs.

Our colleagues are essential to the delivery of Council priorities, we want as part of our plan to develop our talented workforce through effective succession with teams working together to best develop and utilise skills that will ensure we achieve our vision and provide a great place to work.



# Our overall aims

- Continue to work towards being a more diverse and inclusive employer, reflecting our community in the colleague profile
- Support recruitment and retention challenges in key skills areas
- Be more effective at workforce planning, and the delivery of people analytics
- Take our talent management and workforce planning forward with a clear action plan we have developed understanding our current position
- Have strong colleague engagement throughout the Council
- Continue to improve the mental and physical health and wellbeing of the workforce
- Grow managers' confidence to become effective people managers
- Provide learning opportunities for the future including having a digitally-enabled workforce
- Continue to develop an open and fair culture
- Continue to review our policies and procedures to ensure they are fit for purpose
- Reward and recognition. An effective strategy and competitive package to attract and retain
- Prioritise the physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing of our colleagues by promoting a healthy workplace environment, and offering access to resources that support overall wellbeing.
- Build a workforce that is adaptable and resilient to change by encouraging a growth mind-set, fostering innovation and creativity, and providing the support needed for colleagues to navigate challenges and uncertainties effectively.
- Foster a culture of continuous learning and development by providing development opportunities, mentoring programmes, and career development resources.
- Encourage feedback from colleagues and create opportunities for two-way communication to build trust and engagement.
- Invest in developing strong leaders who can inspire, motivate, and support their teams, providing access to leadership development, coaching, and mentorship opportunities to cultivate effective leaders at all levels of the organisation.



# Principles for our Workforce Strategy



## Consistency

How we interact with our workforce leads to consistent experience and improved understanding



## Empowerment

Our workforce will be respected, valued, informed and well managed to be happy, healthy and productive at work



## Inclusive workforce

We will have a positive workplace where colleagues can work together, learn together and be curious and enthusiastic about new ways of doing their work



## Resident and partner centric

We will have agile and responsive ways of working that are built around our residents and encourage us to work with partners to meet our challenges



## Confident

Our leaders and managers will lead by example and demonstrate good behaviours and be confident and prompt in developing them amongst colleagues



## Human

Change needs to be well managed with the right policies and approaches that are aligned to our values. Changes are delivered with empathy and respect for those who are part of the change process



## Employer of Choice

We will benchmark our offer and offer the best we can responding to what we understand is important to our current and future colleagues

# We have five priority areas



# Implementation timeline

2024	2025	2026
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviewing our ways of working to keep the flexibility that is valued with a focus on collaboration and connection with more face to face working</li> <li>• Introducing our new discretionary rewards offer and platform</li> <li>• Updating recruitment marketing and application process to maintain relevancy in the marketplace and attract the most diverse range of candidates</li> <li>• Increasing our diversity profile reporting</li> <li>• Increasing the completion rate of mandatory development and identify critical digital capability plans required</li> <li>• Support and development of our wellbeing strategy with focus on supporting productivity, inclusion and mental and physical good health</li> <li>• Continue with our workforce planning action with managers to agree succession, skills building and resourcing needs</li> <li>• Supporting the overall transformation plan for the Council which addresses the peer review action plan and enables our future operating model</li> <li>• Review our values and behaviours and link these to our people processes, performance and recognition processes</li> <li>• Development of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy</li> <li>• Collective leadership and coaching development plan identified and commenced at all levels</li> <li>• Improve key high demand people processes such as recruitment, restructure and change, performance and absence management</li> <li>• Further develop colleague forums and relationships with partners and unions and achieve higher participation supporting key calendar events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completing the review of all policies and procedures including supporting materials and development</li> <li>• Early Talent Plan in place to increase the number of under 25s employed by the Newham, including offering local graduate and apprenticeship programmes.</li> <li>• Comprehensive review of total reward and development of total reward strategy</li> <li>• Values toolkit launched to support embedding our values and behaviours in practice</li> <li>• Career pathing for key job families in place such as planning, care, maintenance trades</li> <li>• New career and jobs website in place and employer brand</li> <li>• Maximise our use of Artificial Intelligence in key people processes to improve our service delivery such as job evaluation and case management</li> <li>• An Equality, Diversity and Inclusion action plan for each protected characteristic in place</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investment In all HR&amp;L&amp;OD systems and processes to improve user experience and efficiency with supporting policy suite and guidance</li> <li>• New appraisal and talent processes in place to enable us to action plan differentiated performance outcomes such as performance, reward, improvement, development and progressing potential</li> <li>• Management system in place that can support succession and performance and potential analysis and inform skills. learning and development requirements</li> <li>• Complete and achieve Great Place to Work certification</li> <li>• Managers self service metric dashboard in place to support management and progression of people issues and plans</li> </ul>

# Plan – We are Newham – Our Culture and Values



Actions	Timescales	Outcomes
Engagement action planning	April 24 ongoing	Increase in engagement and action plans in place for all directorates. Particular focus on front line workers
Inclusion Framework and supporting strategy	April 24 ongoing EDI plan for each protected characteristic FY 25 by second quarter	In place with clear agreed codesigned measures and associated policies
Total reward strategy including wellbeing, recognition and benefits ( discretionary and contractual)	Ready for FY25/26	Clear total reward plan that scores high in engagement survey and is attractive to prospective candidates. Clear benchmarking in place with actions taken to attract scarce skills/job families  Take up on employee benefits scheme
Policies that support our culture – review and introduction of new ones	Policy review complete by April 25	Modernised policy suite in place
Learning for all – Learning Experience Platform (LXP)	Dev plan process part of end of year end Mar 25	Everyone has a development plan and mandatory development completed by all
Colleague forums, Trade Unions, communications channels allow employee voice	Revised Terms of reference – part of inclusion framework All colleague conferences, Chief Executive and Leadership interaction	Terms of reference and events calendar in place. Feedback on comms effectiveness
Values and Behaviours -refreshed and hardwired framework	April 24 behaviours and further development for launch FY24/25	New set in place and hardwired into people processes
Career website developed	For April 25	New site ready to launch
Performance management	April 24 ongoing	Completion at 90%, focus on HOW as well as what  Review of process to embed a performance culture that enables a feedback culture to develop
Ways of working review including where and how we work together	April 24 ongoing	Clarity on ways of working, how we work with each other and how we do our work

# Plan – Collective Leadership – One Newham



Actions	Timescales	Outcomes
Leadership Development programmes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transition to Leadership (new to leadership)</li> <li>• Building High Performing Teams (middle managers)</li> <li>• Outcomes based performance</li> <li>• Leading hybrid teams</li> </ul>	All in plan for FY24/25	Programmes and metrics around succession, retention and engagement  Highly capable leaders with improved decision-making, communication, and overall performance
Developing Diverse Leaders programme cohort 2	Evaluation end November 23 and programme launch FY 24/25	Diverse leadership and ethnicity pay metrics
CLB and Cabinet Development (working with Local Government Association)  Corporate Leadership Board	For FY 24/25	Ways of working and leadership feedback. Addresses peer review feedback
Coaching culture – all managers to have some coaching development and coaching model agreed	From September 24	Feedback on psychological safety, number of grievances, feedback on open and honest communication and leadership and manager metrics on engagement survey  Open communication, feedback, and continuous improvement, enhancing employee engagement and motivation.  Promotion of a growth mindset and a culture of continuous learning and development within the organisation

# Plan – One Newham – Organisation Design, Workforce, Skills and Change



Actions	Timescales	Outcomes
Development Needs Analysis cross Council Skills mapping and development for our future needs	September 24	Skills development plan per directorate
Job Families in place to encourage career paths	From June 24 onwards	Identified pilot job families and HR Business Partners to identify action plans to address attraction, retention challenges with Talent Team
Managing Change skills development for senior manager grades	By end September 24	Change plan and process and coaching for change programme  Feedback in engagement survey that capability has increased
Target Operating Model	To support Chief Executive and transformation team from April 24	Plan delivered and to metrics agreed
Workforce planning strategy launched and actions agreed	Jan – March 24 launched Actions May 24 ongoing	Workforce plan with agreed target/actions in place. effective planning for future skill needs and developing internal talent, reducing costs associated with external recruitment, on-boarding, and development of new recruits
Mandatory development	April 24	Mandatory development is completed at 90%
Digital inclusion priority skills needs	April 24	Learning and Organisational Development to work with Chief Digital Officer to agree what skills and capability is required and launch plan to address by Sept 24 working with Head of Talent to utilise apprenticeships

# Plan – Employee Experience and Connection



Actions	Timescales	Outcomes
<p>Revised Induction and corporate welcome</p> <p>Revised probation process</p>	<p>Was launched March 24</p>	<p>Corporate welcome creates understanding of Newham plan, and start objective setting</p> <p>Feedback from new starters and their managers</p>
<p>Career discussion and career planning in place</p>	<p>FY 25 – 26 by 2nd quarter</p>	<p>Employees provided with targeted development opportunities to grow in their careers</p>
<p>Mentoring programme and opportunities</p>	<p>June 24</p>	<p>Mentoring scheme available to support development and personal growth and progression and to give senior colleagues an opportunity to mentor others and develop their skills in the process</p>
<p>Collaborative learning activities – Peer-to-peer learning, learning roulette, develop a managers network (new), connect and collaborate programme of events on specific topics (e.g. creativity and innovation, growth mind-set etc.</p>	<p>Workforce/succession started Nov 23 and complete summary and action plan for start FY24/25</p>	<p>Workforce plan with identified opportunities and needs for development to meet future resourcing and retention needs. clear progression plans within the organisation</p> <p>Learning and networking events in calendar on monthly basis</p>

# Plan – Employee Experience Talent



Actions	Timescales	Outcomes
Succession Planning	Starts Nov 23	A robust approach to talent management and succession planning ensuring that Newham’s talent strategy is aligned with the council’s corporate plan, leading to better results. Performance and Potential Analysis
Workforce plan	Feb 24 onwards	Succession and Retention Plan
Key pipeline planning Early Talent Key skills areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planners</li> <li>• Social Workers and Social Care</li> <li>• Co Design</li> <li>• Customer service transformation</li> </ul>	Critical populations FY24/25 first quarter  For all by FY25/26	Workforce plan  Skills and job family plan in place; Clear career pathways and opportunities for skills development enhancing employee motivation and engagement
Secondment opportunities/experience shadowing	From June 2024	Feedback from engagement survey about opportunities to learn, develop and progress
Achieving Great Place to Work Accreditation	Complete preparation for application FY26/27	External reinforcement and benchmarking of our practice and strategy



# Plan – Getting the Basics Right



Actions	Timescales	Outcomes
Policies and Processes Probation	Working through policies and processes from March 24 onwards	Revised polices and processes with positive stakeholder feedback, contributing to increased employee satisfaction
Recruitment	From June 24 onwards	To improve the self service recruitment guidance and to make the process leaner and easier for managers to use. To improve the candidate experience when completing an application using more easy to apply technology and ensure that checks for disability confident are clear
Performance and capability including our approach to performance reviews – review of systems and user experience	FY26 for systems review From April 24 onwards	Codesign new performance review process to ensure it is focused on quality conversations and is quarterly in approach to be more dynamic and includes the behaviours as well as the task delivery and a conversation on development and career. to consider how we engage our teams who work together in the community or directly with residents to have team objectives that are aligned to resident outcomes like a cleaner and safe borough
Resolution	From June 24 onwards	To work towards the majority of our grievances being informally resolved and developing managers to build a culture in their teams of trust with open and honest communication measured by our engagement surveys and number of cases both directly and to Tell Jane
People Management Development, drop in sessions and masterclasses on ER issues and people management skills building	Commenced March 24	Feedback from managers, more efficient case management, fewer grievances and higher engagement scores. Improved use of data and insights to inform our action plans and leading targets for improvement
Manager self service metrics portal	FY26	Managers can review their own people metrics and take appropriate actions , greater efficiency in service

# Manager and Leader Framework – Our Standards

## Leading and inspiring your team

- You embed an aspirational way of working to support our aim to be a best in class local government
- You maintain a good working relationship with your team and act as a positive role model, in line with our HEART values
- You work in a way that inspires confidence and trust within your team
- You hold regular team meetings which should be on at least a monthly basis.
- You agree on the ways-of-working for your team that best suits your service delivery, whilst being flexible and taking account of any individual specific needs
- You set direction and are accountable for your team
- You adapt and embrace change

## Inclusion and equity

- You treat all colleagues, residents and customers with respect at all times
- You act as a role model, calling out discriminatory behaviour and being actively anti-racist
- You deal with complaints of unfair treatment robustly, through appropriate channels
- You foster an environment where your team feel comfortable discussing any forms of discrimination

## Looking after your team

- You are accountable for your team's health and safety
- You ensure that your team members complete the appropriate mandatory health and safety learning
- You carry out the appropriate risk assessments when required
- You show empathy and support the wellbeing of your team members
- You deal with conflict in a fair and timely manner

## Performance management & development

- You ensure your team complete their mandatory development
- You communicate performance expectations clearly to your team, setting realistic but challenging objectives which are clearly linked back to service delivery plans and the corporate plan
- You support opportunities for team members to help them to achieve their work and development objectives
- You consider secondment and acting up opportunities before you consider external recruitment
- You provide regular feedback as part of the continuous performance management cycle (e.g. through 1 to 1s)
- You complete fair performance appraisals when they are due, submitting the required records through Fusion
- You robustly and constructively manage underperformance and capability
- You recognise individuals who excel in their work

# Manager and Leader Framework – Our Standards

## Delivering a high performing service

- You use data and systems thinking to continuously improve and provide a streamlined, resident-focused service and get things right the first time
- You work collaboratively with other services and partners to ensure a joined up way of working, and consider how your work can impact on others
- You regularly brief stakeholders (e.g. Line Manager, Senior Responsible Officer or Cabinet Members) on progress, key issues and challenges
- You plan your work in line with our corporate priorities, and participate in service planning if appropriate

## Systems & process

- You ensure your establishment is correct on Fusion
- You deal with absence in line with the Council's policies
- You respond to Freedom of Information and Subject Access Requests within the statutory timeframes
- You respond to complaints and Member enquiries within the agreed timeframes
- You manage disciplinary matters through the appropriate procedures
- You undertake any recruitment in line with our agreed policies
- You undertake a full induction and probation processes for any new starters
- You follow all other People Policies

## If relevant






### Budget management

- You maintain a balanced budget and alert Finance colleagues of any potential variances in good time
- You maintain all financial records in Fusion
- You comply with our Financial Regulations at all times

### Procurement and Contract Management

- You procure works, goods or services in line with our procurement procedures and Contract Standing Orders
- You undertake robust contract management, ensuring the Council receives 'best value' from the provider
- You do your part to ensure payments are processed in a timely manner and in accordance with our Financial Regulations and payments procedure

# Progress we have made in 2023-2024

 <p><b>Recognition, Reward and Wellbeing</b></p>	 <p><b>Collective Leadership – one Newham</b></p>	 <p><b>Our culture and values</b></p>	 <p><b>Employee experience and connection</b></p>	 <p><b>Getting the basics right</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HEART awards and Long Service celebration</li> <li>• Wellbeing offer that recognises the whole person</li> <li>• Our policies on buying leave, and flexible working options</li> <li>• We celebrate our success through face to face events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organisational, team and individual development opportunities</li> <li>• Our performance objectives are aligned and connected to our corporate plan outcomes</li> <li>• Our managers are offered people management masterclasses to build their confidence and ensure we manage our teams well</li> <li>• Our people offer will be aligned to our corporate plan priorities such as our residents, our finances and our digital strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our colleague forums further development and support</li> <li>• Engagement survey action planning</li> <li>• Continued development of our Tackling Racism, Inequality and Disproportionality programme to include all characteristics</li> <li>• Inclusion framework across all characteristics to be launched and further developed into our EDI strategy</li> <li>• Continued Developing Diverse Leadership programme</li> <li>• We continue to develop our informal resolution processes and our support for colleagues where issues need to be dealt with such as Tell Jane</li> <li>• We ensure we stay connected to our community and offer employment opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our new corporate welcome is an opportunity for colleagues to connect and learn about our borough and residents</li> <li>• We have launched a workforce planning process which will support our talent strategy and approach, understand skills we need to develop and opportunities we can offer</li> <li>• Talent toolkit in place</li> <li>• We will have succession plans in place</li> <li>• Our engagement survey will support us to understand what steps we need to take to improve our offer and environment</li> <li>• We will continue to have all colleague events and further develop opportunities for interaction</li> <li>• We will embed our inclusion framework and policy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving our high demand processes such as recruitment, induction, probation, managing change and a clear action plan is progressing</li> <li>• We will act on feedback on our service and prioritise our service offering where it is needed to address skills shortages, resourcing challenges and culture improvement plans</li> <li>• We will look to take advantage of digital technology to improve our people processes and have already started to address this in our case management and job evaluation</li> <li>• Understanding how together we can create a great working environment that is motivating, safe and people have the tools they need</li> </ul>

# How will we know we have succeeded?

We will work hard to deliver everything we have set out to do – on time and to a high standard.  
But how will we know if what we are doing is working?

We'll know...

.. by analysing our employee data – looking for positive changes in the areas we're most determined to improve to promote fairness and high performance.

... because we will have achieved all the targets that we are measured against.

... because you'll tell us – through colleagues surveys, at colleagues events and through our communication channels.

... because we will see and feel the difference.

... because our residents will tell us that as an organisation we're getting things right.

