

Job Description

Strategic Partner - People and Culture

Reference: PC030

Date: November 2025

Job Family: People & Culture/People Operations
Level: 4
Band: 12
Career Track: Senior Managerial

Job Purpose

To act as a trusted strategic advisor to senior leaders, enabling the delivery of organisational objectives through effective people strategies. The role drives workforce transformation, cultural change, and leadership development, ensuring that people solutions are aligned with corporate priorities, values and behaviors. By leveraging data, insight, and strong partnerships, the role will support the creation of an inclusive, high-performing, and future-ready workforce.

This role is both strategic and hands-on, requiring a deep understanding of organisational dynamics and a passion for creating inclusive, high-performing environments.

Service Purpose

Northumberland County Council's People and Culture service exists to create the conditions for a confident, capable and engaged workforce by fostering a positive, inclusive and values-driven culture; enabling strong and compassionate leadership; delivering modern, efficient and people-centered services across the employee lifecycle; and using insight, innovation and best practice to support a high-performing, future-ready organisation that delivers excellent outcomes for the people and communities of Northumberland.

Duties and Responsibilities

Leadership, Coaching and Capability Building

- Coach and mentor senior Leaders across the relevant directorates on effective leadership practices, employee engagement, and performance management techniques.
- Facilitate leadership development programmes, aligned with business need.
- Act as a thought partner to leaders, helping them navigate people challenges.

Strategic Alignment

- Act as a trusted advisor to senior leaders, ensuring People and Culture strategies align with directorate and corporate priorities.
- Translate Directorate/Services priorities into people strategy interventions.
- Facilitate and contribute to Directorate/Service planning discussions, providing insights on workforce trends, risks and opportunities.

Workforce Planning and Talent Strategy

- Facilitate strategic workforce planning sessions to assess future talent needs and develop workforce plans.
- Drive succession planning and leadership pipeline development.
- Partner with managers to identify skills gaps and create development strategies.
- Shape organisational design and restructuring initiatives.

Talent Acquisition

- Partner with Talent Acquisition team to design recruitment strategies that attract high calibre candidates with the right capabilities and values.
- Influence how the council is positioned in the talent market, ensuring alignment with organisation values and culture.
- Ensure talent acquisition activity is consistent with establishment levels and adequately meets service needs.

Culture and Engagement

- Partner with Organisational Development and Culture team to shape and influence workplace culture to align with organisation values and strategic priorities.
- Lead initiatives to improve employee experience, engagement, retention and performance.

Change Leadership

- Partner with leadership to manage organisational change and transformation
- Develop change management strategies and plans
- Support managers in building resilience and adaptability across teams.

Employee Relations and Compliance

- Build manager capability in handling complex employee relations issues
- Act as a Mediator for complex employee relations issues, balancing employee need and organisation needs.
- Ensure People Policies are applied consistently and support business strategy while complying with legal requirements.

Workforce Insights

- Use People analytics and workforce metrics to inform decision making, identify trends and guide interventions.
- Provide insights on workforce trends to help leaders make informed choices.

Performance and Rewards

- Support design and implementation of performance management frameworks and ensure pay, recognition and incentive programs align to strategic priorities.

Stakeholder Management

- Collaborate with other Strategic People Partners and Strategic Business Partners (or roles performing that function) across other enabling services, such as Digital and Finance.
- Build and maintain strong relationships with stakeholders across the council and external partners, including senior management, operational teams, and external partners.

Professional and Technical Requirements

Qualifications

- CIPD Level 7 qualification or equivalent knowledge/experience.

Knowledge, Experience and Skills

- Extensive experience in a senior People/OD Partner role within a large organisation, ideally local government,
- Proven track record of success in identifying the need for and delivering People strategies, initiatives and interventions within a large and complex organisation.
- Deep understanding of employment law and HR best practices,
- Experience of working with a diverse range of stakeholders, including senior managers, frontline staff, and external agencies.
- Experience of managing complex employee relations cases, including grievances, disciplinary procedures, and conflict resolution.
- Experience of leading and managing change within a large and complex organisation.
- Experience of developing and implementing talent management strategies, including succession planning and leadership development.
- Familiarity with People Analytics, Digital People tools and data driven decision making.
- Experience of developing and delivering training programs tailored to specific audiences and needs.
- Understanding of budgetary processes and resource allocation within a People context.
- Strong analytical and problem-solving skills, with the ability to interpret complex workforce data.
- Proficiency in Microsoft Office Suite and other relevant software.
- Ability to coach and mentor managers and staff on effective People practices.
- Ability to proactively identify and mitigate People risks.
- Ability to interpret and apply relevant legislation and regulations.
- Ability to manage confidential information with discretion and professionalism.

Core Competency Requirements

- **Communication:** Shapes messaging to support service delivery and stakeholder engagement. Influences decisions and builds shared understanding in complex environments.
- **Collaboration:** Develops strategic partnerships with public, private, voluntary, and community sectors to deliver council priorities.
- **Service Delivery:** Oversees service delivery aligned to council priorities. Leads transformation, manages risk, and applies strategic thinking to maximise outcomes and ensure cost effectiveness.
- **Decision-Making:** Applies strategic judgement to optimise resources and deliver meaningful outcomes.
- **Digital & Data Literacy:** Uses data for strategic planning and innovation. Applies digital solutions to improve services and manage risk. Interprets complex datasets to inform service design and policy.
- **Adaptability:** Anticipates future trends and prepares services for change. Embeds continuous improvement practices and supports teams to adapt and innovate.
- **Problem-Solving:** Solves complex service delivery challenges using evidence and insight to redesign ways of working and drive innovation.
- **Community & Customer Focus:** Aligns services with community priorities and customer expectations, ensuring representation and accessibility.

- **Leadership:** Coaches and delegates to drive performance and service delivery. Leads programmes and actively plans for succession and talent development.

Strengths

Strategic - You look at the big picture. You consider the wider factors and long-term implications of decisions.

Influence - You influence others, you articulate the rationale to gain their agreement.

Networker – You create and maintain positive, professional and trusting working relationships. These can be with a wide range of people within and outside your organisation, you identify connections and reach out to bring people together

Change Agent - You are positive and inspirational in leading and supporting others through change.

Service Focussed - You look for ways to serve customers putting their needs at the heart of everything you do.

Desirable

Change Management certification

Professional certifications in coaching, facilitation, or psychometrics