

Appendix 1:

Dumfries  
and Galloway



# People Strategy 2026–2031

*One Council delivering for Dumfries and Galloway*





# Introduction

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The People Strategy is a strategic enabler across all services and within the employee experience, we will create a more connected, skilled, and empowered workforce. All projects will be joined up, scalable, and designed to enhance the everyday working experience of employees, while improving service delivery for our communities. This approach ensures that organisational change is not simply an ambition, but a people centred experience aligned fully with the Council's vision of One Council delivering for Dumfries and Galloway.

To be successful, it is crucial that our people experience framework continues to be informed by the employee voice and shaped by what employees working across Dumfries and Galloway Council think 'success' looks like in the context of improving the employee experience, including wellbeing.

In order to ensure that we can evidence continuous improvement we will gather both quantitative and qualitative information to provide a complete account of the data with lived and living experience.



# Policy Context

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The Dumfries and Galloway Council is shaped by a dynamic policy landscape that places people, culture, and digital capability at the heart of organisational change. This refreshed People Strategy 2026–2031, which sets out our ambition to be a great employer and ensures all employees are equipped, supported, and empowered to deliver high quality services for the region. The People Strategy emphasises modern, flexible, and digitally enabled ways of working; meaningful engagement; strong organisational culture; and a commitment to developing confident, skilled employees who can make a difference across Dumfries and Galloway.

Nationally, Scotland’s digital and public service reform agenda continues to champion inclusive access, building capability and supporting wellbeing. These ambitions are strongly echoed

in our People Strategy’s focus on digital literacy, customer centred service, and strengthening organisational capability through modernised policies, digital skills development, and leadership grounded in our SUPPORT behaviours ([see page 6](#)).

Locally, the Council Plan 2023–2028 reinforces the need for a skilled, resilient, and adaptable workforce able to harness digital innovation to deliver positive outcomes for communities. Recent People Strategy engagement activity, spanning staff networks, focus groups, Joint Trade Unions, elected members, and wellbeing champions, has highlighted the importance of integrated workforce, customer, and digital planning to deliver consistent, modern public services.

**This refreshed People Strategy reflects the need to:**



# Policy Context

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- Embed digital skills, capability, and confidence across all employees, ensuring colleagues can use modern tools and champion digital inclusion in our communities.
- Strengthen employee engagement and support two way communication through accessible digital platforms, aligned with the People Strategy objective of Engaging Our People.
- Modernise policies, processes, and systems to support flexible, customer focused, and digitally enabled ways of working, ensuring our employees experience a modern and positive working environment.
- Support wellbeing, resilience, and readiness for change, recognising that sustainable organisational change depends on a healthy, supported, and empowered workforce.

Building on the Council's previous People Strategy (2021–2026), this refresh aligns our ambitions with the People Strategy's six core objectives: enabling positive employee experience, developing our people, engaging our people, supporting our people, recognising good performance and a one council approach.

The integration through a joint delivery plan of digital, customer, and workforce planning, already underway through joint development workshops and strategic meeting, ensures a holistic, people centred approach to organisational change.



# Vision

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Our People Strategy sets out our ambition to be a great employer through supporting employee wellbeing, development and engagement, where we can do our jobs well and make a difference to the people of Dumfries and Galloway.

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# Core Behaviours (SUPPORT)

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- Strengthen our communities
- Understand our young people needs
- Protect our vulnerable people
- Promote equality and diversity
- Open and transparent at all times
- Respect our environment
- Treat each other with kindness



# Objectives

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## 1. Enabling a Positive Employee Experience

- Builds a culture that supports people to thrive.
- Make our council an employer of choice.
- Enable employees to be digitally upskilled.
- Review and create policies and frameworks to support wellbeing holistically.

## 2. Developing Our People

- A focus on “grow your own” schemes to develop and upskill existing employees and create new opportunities.
- Embed a culture of coaching, mentoring, and leadership development.
- Provide accessible learning and development opportunities for all.
- Encourage innovation and continuous improvement.
- Developing our enabling manager agenda.

## 3. Engaging Our People

- Foster two-way engagement with all employees.
- Ensure a feedback loop through “you said, we did/we didn’t do”.
- Understand and increase leadership visibility.
- Provide varied engagement opportunities.

## 4. Supporting Our People

- Enable services to support overall employee experience including wellbeing, employee voice and recognition
- Provide access to wellbeing resources and training.
- Develop leaders’ skills to manage and promote wellbeing.
- Increase wellbeing champions and promotion of wellbeing days
- Employees have access to resources to do their job safely.

## 5. Recognising Good Performance

- Ensure all employees have regular “Check-ins”.
- Celebrate and share success.
- Enable effective performance management

## 6. Creating a Positive One Team Culture

- Promote a one council approach.
- Foster innovation and collaboration.
- Empower colleagues to develop our services together.

# Principles

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- **Employee Experience** — create a workplace where colleagues feel valued, welcomed, and proud to contribute
- **Culture** — We will build a unified, collaborative environment where everyone contributes to shared goals.
- **Wellbeing** — We will foster a resilient and healthy workforce through wellbeing and flexibility
- **Internal Communication and Engagement** — We will listen to and involve our colleagues in shaping the future of our organisation.
- **Readiness for Change** — We will empower our colleagues through continuous learning and leadership development.

# Delivery Enablers

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- **Skills & Capability** — Build customer and digital service skills for all colleagues and citizens.
- **Governance** — Maintain accountability through the People Experience Framework, with clear metrics for customer experience and digital progress.
- **Leadership & Culture** — Foster a customer-first mindset and a supportive, trauma-informed, and digitally confident culture.
- **Partnerships & Collaboration** — Work with communities, partners, and technology providers to co-create solutions.
- **Technology & Tools** — Invest in digital infrastructure, automation, and data to improve customer experience and decision-making.



# Success Measures

Our People Experience Framework will allow us to measure our success and progress towards our objectives which have been identified within a variety of strategic documents including:

- People Strategy
- Council Workforce Plan
- Employee Engagement Framework and People Survey Action Plan
- Customer Strategy
- Digital Strategy

The framework documents emphasise continued embedding of SUPPORT behaviours through leadership practice, policies, and everyday interactions. This includes ensuring they are visible in development conversations, check ins, and service planning to support the required improvement:

- Improved customer satisfaction and feedback
- Increased capability skills and confidence across the workforce
- Higher engagement in learning and feedback platforms
- Reduced digital skills gap
- Positive health, wellbeing, and enabled workforce
- Increased recognition of digital and customer service excellence
- Positive culture and collaboration across services



# People: Key Facts & Figures

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## Flexible Working That Works for Our People

- 5,070 colleagues now benefit from flexible working arrangements — a major milestone that supports work-life balance, inclusion and overall wellbeing.

## Supporting Financial Choice

- 352 employees used the Annual Leave Purchase Scheme, giving colleagues more autonomy over how they shape their time off and wellbeing.

## Growing Careers and Internal Mobility

- With 1,211 internal job movements, colleagues are increasingly seizing opportunities to step into new roles, grow their skills and develop their careers within the organisation.

## Health & Wellbeing at the Heart of Our Organisation

- Over 50 meaningful wellbeing conversations were held by our trained volunteer Wellbeing Champions, giving colleagues a safe and supportive space.
- Our champion community continues to thrive with over 97 active volunteers, and more colleagues waiting to begin training.

- We hosted our first-ever “You Said, We Did” Wellbeing Champion Conference, building connection, confidence and shared purpose.
- The launch of the DGTogether Wellbeing Newsletter has helped colleagues stay informed and inspired.

## Connecting Through Local Pop Ups

- Wellbeing pop ups in Dumfries and Stranraer welcomed around 70 colleagues, offering direct access to advice and support.

These sessions led to an uplift in LGPS pension enquiries and financial wellbeing referrals, helping colleagues make confident, informed decisions about their future.

## Empowering Our Staff Networks

- We now have 228 colleagues involved across vibrant staff networks, creating safe spaces for connection, shared identity and inclusion.
- These networks continue to strengthen colleague voice and build a deeper sense of belonging across the organisation.

