

Our People Strategy 2025 – 2028

Changing Norfolk through learning

Foreword

Our People Strategy is the culmination of consultations with our workforce and results from our staff surveys. The scope of the strategy is wide-ranging and provides a framework for action in relation to behaviours and culture change; performance, leadership and management, workforce planning, learning and development, engagement, reward and wellbeing.

Our strategy aims to support a thriving and supportive environment where everyone feels valued, empowered, and equipped to succeed. We want to be recognised as a modern and fit for purpose employer of choice where our recruitment, career development and reward and recognition structure align with workforce plans and employee satisfaction levels, leading to the number of people wanting to come and work for us increasing. Our strategy outlines our commitment to attract and develop an inclusive workforce and explains how we will create an environment where colleagues feel strongly connected to the college. Our goal is to have a more resilient, flexible and sustainable workforce, facilitating high quality education and a positive student experience.



Providing the right tools and resources, having a clear sense of purpose, and fostering creativity and collaboration are essential to our success. 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 sets out a clear path for the next three years, helping to ensure that we have the right people with the right skills to achieve the priorities of our strategic plan. It lays out what colleagues should expect from the college as your employer and what the college expects from you. This includes our ways of working and our people commitments. We will closely monitor our progress and ensure that this document evolves as we deliver upon our actions and to accommodate flexibility as needed.

Our people are at the heart of everything we do and are critical to achieving our vision - “Changing Norfolk through learning”. By developing the culture, skills, processes and leadership capability we can develop a productive, engaged and high performing workforce, enabling us to make the positive difference to the lives of students and apprentices we all seek.

Jerry White, Principal and Chief Executive Officer

Our People Strategy 2025 – 2028

Changing Norfolk through learning

Pillar 1

Recruitment and Retention



Pillar 2

Belonging



Leadership and Management

Pillar 3



Learning, Skills and Performance

Pillar 4

Our guiding principles:

Engagement

Inclusion

Sustainability

Our challenges

As with many colleges, the college is challenged to recruit and retain staff across all functions due to pay rates in Further Education and therefore needs to maximise the effectiveness of recruitment processes and approaches. A greater understanding of our establishment is required— a single version of truth in order to support effective workforce planning. Staff satisfaction as recorded by surveys has been lower than desirable for a number of years, with staff wellbeing being an area where staff consider we could support more. There is a need to have a greater focus on staff recognition and rewards. Staff report challenges with workloads and there is a rising short term sickness absence. Staff engagement with “staff voice” opportunities is limited and at times hinders the college moving key issues forward. There is also a need to explore leadership and staff development and opportunities for professional development and career progression. The college needs to be ready to deliver in an emerging digital era, harnessing the benefits of new technologies and the flexibility presented from new ways of working. Seizing these opportunities, for example in Artificial Intelligence, can provide the key to unlocking the solutions to workforce challenges as well as addressing new challenges we are yet to identify.

Our people commitments

In order to achieve our vision of ‘Changing Norfolk through learning’, we need to ensure that throughout the time that people spend at the college, across all stages of their journey within the organisation; from recruitment, to onboarding, to how they perform and develop in their roles, that our culture is based on a positive and engaging experience through;

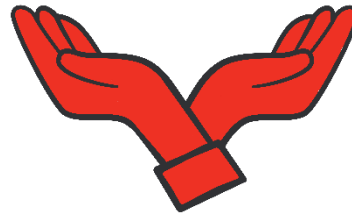
- **Trusting** each other and **empowering** people to do their roles
- **All taking responsibility** for what we do
- **Having a voice** about our work and workplaces
- **Working together** and **supporting** each other

These commitments align to two key statements of our institutional values - our “Ways of Working” and our “fundamentals”. Our Ways of Working describe the values that underpin how we work with each other.

Our Ways of Working



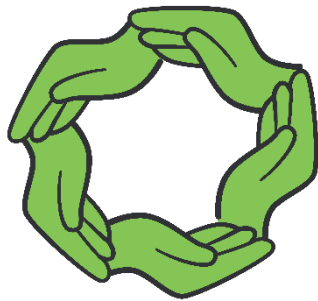
Kind and Curious



Open and Informative



Respectful and Fair



Collaborative and Inclusive



Consistent and Responsible

The fundamentals make clear the expectations we have of each person within the organisation to “do their part” to support colleagues and make sure our college functions effectively.

Understanding our workforce *(August 2023 to July 2024)*

Total number of staff:

1146

7% have a declared disability

4% are ethnic minority

63% are female

CCN yearly **staff turnover:**

18.4%



Average weeks from **request to advertise**, to **hire**:

11.3 weeks



Number of staff completing **apprenticeships** since 2017

29



Number of staff enrolled on our **medical cashback plan:**

755

The Birmingham Hospital Saturday Fund (BHSF) includes a 24/7 GP helpline

Staff enrolled on **reward gateway:**

973



This is an increase of **10%** from the previous year

Just under 50%

of staff completed their appraisal



Mandatory training compliance:

95%



Average Sickness:

4.56%

mental health related absences were one of the highest reasons for absence. This figure has risen by **10%** from the previous year)

Average **days lost per employee:**

8.7 days



The People Strategy has been developed in parallel with the overall college strategic plan, recognising the interplay with the curriculum, finance, estates and ICT. Our strategy will remain a live document so that it can reflect emerging themes, drivers, and best practice.

Our guiding principles

There are three overarching principles that run across all aspects of our people strategy.

Inclusion

We need to consider new ways of influencing culture change across the organisation, cultivating diversity and inclusion and creating a workforce where difference is respected and valued. We recognise that a diverse workforce, with a diverse set of experiences, perspectives, understanding and background will support the development of new ideas and be responsive to changing aspirations and expectations of people, employers and communities. Valuing differences plays a key role in attracting and retaining talent and is an important component of a successful organisation. We are committed to providing equality of opportunity, creating a culture where diversity is valued and encouraged.

The college is currently working towards Investors in Diversity accreditation, as well as embedding FREDIE principles into the college to support our commitment to being an inclusive employer. FREDIE stands for Fairness, Respect, Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Engagement which is the foundation of an inclusive culture.

Engagement

Every organisation's success is built upon its people. The latest staff survey results (summer 2024) showed that a very high percentage of staff feel that the work the college does is really important, but we recognise that people want to feel more engaged and listened to.

Employee engagement is the emotional commitment the employee has to the organisation and its goals. Engaged employees will have a positive attitude about work, display creativity, use their initiative and are accountable for their actions.

Engagement is about building trust, involvement and a sense of common purpose and identity where staff are actively encouraged to maximise opportunities to influence and contribute to the college's success. All staff have an ability and responsibility to help contribute to the success of the college and the expectation is that staff will take up opportunities to contribute through staff engagement.

High-quality two-way dialogue throughout the college is essential for our staff to be engaged in achieving our objectives, to ensure that they can contribute and feel their contribution is valued.

Engagement Ambitions

- To create a **safe environment** for staff to raise their views and provide time to listen, reflect and learn from employee's experiences
- To **raise the confidence** across staff that **action will be taken** in response to people's concerns and to improve how involved people feel in decisions that affect them
- To be **passionate about the health and wellbeing** of our staff with a strong support offer
- To **maximise opportunities for reward** and recognition
- To **harness creativity and innovation** across our teams to explore ways we can improve

The role of managers in supporting these ambitions is especially important given the clear association between engagement, job satisfaction and performance. Managers play a crucial part in ensuring that staff understand how their role contributes to the overall objectives of the college and in creating an effective two-way communication. Organisationally, we will continue to hold regular staff surveys and extend these to other forms of internal consultation and communication, reviewing the effectiveness of these over time and broadening the current engagement tools through a staff engagement plan.

Sustainability

This People Strategy plays a vital role in embedding environmental and sustainability goals into the college culture. This includes promoting continuous learning around sustainability, empowering employees to become sustainability champions and implementing green workplace initiatives that reduce the organisation's environmental footprint. By integrating sustainability principles into HR practices, we can equip employees with the knowledge, skills and mindset needed to thrive in a rapidly changing world. This ranges from recruitment, by focusing on attracting individuals who are committed to sustainability, to promoting energy-efficient office practices, to supporting corporate responsibility through areas such as training and workshops, to reward and recognition programmes as well as looking at volunteering opportunities as part of our staff wellbeing programme.

Our People Strategy Pillars



1) Recruitment and retention

To develop an effective response to our recruitment and retention challenges and to continue to work towards being a more diverse and inclusive employer. This includes implementing a more effective response to workforce planning to ensure we have the right people, with the right skills, in the right places at the right time to help achieve our strategic objectives in support of the financial strategy.

2) Belonging

To improve engagement across the college, encouraging feedback from colleagues and creating opportunities for two-way communication to build trust and engagement. This includes, developing and promoting our reward schemes and prioritising the physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing of our colleagues by promoting a healthy workplace environment, and offering access to resources that support overall wellbeing.



3) Leadership and management

To invest in developing strong leaders who are empowered to inspire, motivate, and support their teams by providing access to leadership development, coaching, and mentoring opportunities. This includes developing leadership behaviours, a leadership development programme and developing our approach to succession planning.

4) Learning, skills and performance

To develop an adaptable and resilient workforce, supporting colleagues to embrace change through innovation and creativity, fostering a culture of continuous learning and development. To develop new ways of working and embrace the ever-increasing role that technology will play in driving change and supporting the delivery of our services.



Delivering our plan – our actions

2025

Recruitment and retention

- Develop and introduce a new approach to workforce planning including undertaking a supply and demand analysis with all teams to identify skills gaps and support the development of career pathways and succession planning. This includes ensuring we make best use of apprenticeships through the apprenticeship levy
- Undertake a review of teaching roles and contracts
- Undertake a review of our establishment and develop processes to better manage this more dynamically, including driving improvements through our HR system
- Develop a recruitment action plan including;
 - Updating recruitment marketing and the application process to help to attract the most diverse range of candidates and develop and promote our corporate brand as an employer of choice
 - Developing an onboarding process for new starters, which enables processes to be completed online from application to offer
 - Reviewing our leaver rate and exit interview data to look at ways to improve

Belonging

- Develop and implement a sickness reduction action plan
- Review our wellbeing offer and support systems/networks for staff
- Increase our diversity profile reporting
- Development of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (FREDIE)
- To complete and attain the Investors in Diversity accreditation including development of neurodiversity guidance for staff and toolkits for managers and appoint a governor as an EDI champion
- Establish a staff forum or equivalent mechanism for staff engagement
- Support the Armed Forces Covenant

- Establish staff networks and promote mental health and wellbeing champions
- Roll out the staff engagement plan

Leadership and management

- Review our approach to and management of probations
- To develop an induction process for new managers that signposts managers to toolkits and guidance to managing people and processes
- Develop team charters
- Developing people performance dashboards at both corporate and team level
- Develop an action plan to staff survey findings / incorporate into the wider HR business planning process

Learning, skills and performance

- Increase/maintain a high completion rate of mandatory training
- Undertake a review of core skills and training requirements across teams to inform our core training budget
- Review and relaunch corporate appraisals, personal development plans and one-to-one meetings ensuring that these are linked to workforce planning, career development and succession planning
- Continue to develop our in-person corporate induction
- Undertake a systemic review of our teaching workforce, including reviewing contracts, staff utilisation, recruitment, career structures and continuous professional development

2026

Recruitment and retention

- Review of our pay line to establish job families for benchmarking and job evaluation

Belonging

- Support peer networks to create a culture of engagement by encouraging employees to have a voice that is listened to and explore how we can extend this to underrepresented groups

- Review and re-brand our rewards offer, staff awards and reward platform
- Roll out the staff engagement plan

Leadership and management

- Build on the managers' network to develop a leadership development plan and deliver a suite of compulsory training for managers, supervisors and team leaders (exploring areas such as creativity and innovation, coaching skills and quality appraisals)
- Develop mentors for new leaders and a new leaders support network
- Develop our leadership behaviours and an aspiring leaders development programme

Learning, skills and performance

- Develop and launch an agile working framework in support of the changing digital infrastructure provision across the college
- Develop a network of coaches/mentors and develop a coaching plan at all levels across the college
- Explore and maximise our use of Artificial Intelligence in key people processes to improve our service delivery such as job evaluation and case management
- Build upon our staff development days across the college
- Undertake a deep dive review of learning and development and link this into the appraisal process and staff development pathways
- Explore opportunities for job shadowing across the college to break down silos and raise awareness of roles

2027 / 2028

Recruitment and retention

- Develop and implement robust service-level business plans containing longer-term detailed workforce plans

Belonging

- Explore the development of a staff alumni to develop networks and stay connected
- Roll out the staff engagement plan

Leadership and management

- Seek to develop a managers' self-service metric dashboard to support management and progression of people issues and plans

Learning, skills and performance

- Investment in all HR and learning and development systems and processes to improve user experience and efficiency with supporting policy suite and guidance
- Management/ICT system in place that can support all HR processes and requirements

Delivering our strategy together

All staff have an ability and responsibility to help contribute to the success of the college and our People Strategy and the expectation is that staff will take up opportunities to contribute through staff engagement opportunities. Support from our leaders is also vital to embed this plan.

The college will;

- Involve you in setting strategy, goals and objectives and help you understand how your role contributes to achieving this
- Provide constructive and effective performance and development frameworks
- Celebrate inclusion, listen to all views without repercussion and recognise your achievements
- Actively promote health, wellbeing and safety initiatives, and provide access to information and support
- Ensure workloads are achievable, and create varied opportunities for learning and development for all staff



Role of the People team

The People team will lead and work closely with managers to deliver the strategic outcomes through effective and efficient strategic business partnering;

- We will understand and respond to the needs of our leaders, managers and frontline colleagues
- We will engage with colleagues and representative bodies, proactively contributing to the delivery of the complex, ever changing needs and future aspirations of the college
- We will regularly assess our progress in delivering the outcomes of the people strategy
- We will review key HR policies, procedures, systems and management support to facilitate organisational change
- We will continually review and improve our service delivery across the college, providing advice and guidance to empower our colleagues to deliver and to develop our leaders and managers



Whilst the People Team will provide extensive support around the delivery of the strategy, a key part of any successful strategy execution is ensuring everyone has a part to play in translating this strategy into reality.

All people managers will;

- Ensure all staff understand and know how their work contributes to our objectives
- Foster an inclusive team, where people are recruited for attitude and trained for skill
- Adopt a 'one team culture' where staff are willing to try new ideas, identify shared problems and develop shared solutions

- Support each other, and celebrate successes and development opportunities together
- Continue to learn and adapt, and embrace flexible deployment and agile working
- Focus on engaging and communicating with staff, and building positive relationships with stakeholders and governors

All staff will;

- Keep talking and sharing ideas, and proactively seek out ways to change and improve the organisation for the better
- Take personal responsibility for how they work and their performance
- Utilise training and development opportunities to increase their understanding of inclusivity, and proactively address any discrimination in and outside the workplace
- Keep themselves updated on matters relating to their role, and ask for (and expect) help when you need it
- Look after themselves and their teams; put wellbeing at the heart of all they do



Monitoring

To support the delivery of this strategy and to monitor progress against our people pillars, a dashboard of HR performance metrics, at both a corporate and team level needs to be developed. By empowering staff to use available data to help make informed decisions alongside focusing on our ways of working, we will help to ensure that we are productive, efficient and responsive.