



People Plan

Progress Summary 2025-26

Our People Plan

We recognise that our people are our most important asset, without them, we will not deliver our vision where 'everyone in Cumbria is enjoying an active lifestyle'. For the purposes of this Plan 'our people' are defined as the individuals who make up our Staff Team and our Advisory Board.

Our People Plan sets out how we will ensure we recognise the importance and value of our people across the organisation. We understand that any successful organisation takes time to understand and develop the diversity, skills, behaviours, and cultures of its workforce.

To support this, we have collectively developed the following four headline priorities, which can be viewed in full within the People Plan, these being: -

1. **Attract** - so that 'our people' are more reflective of the population of Cumbria and the communities we serve.
2. **Retain** - so that 'our people' continue to feel supported, listened to, and valued, knowing that their health, safety, and wellbeing is a top priority,
3. **Develop** - so that 'our people' continue to thrive whilst delivering the best outcomes for each other, our communities, stakeholders, and partners,
4. **Grow** - so that 'our people' are safe, supported with opportunities for personal development, and are empowered to lead in a collaborative, compassionate, clear, and confident way.

Alignment with Cumberland Council Policies and Procedures

As the host authority, Cumberland Council are the employing body for all Active Cumbria staff, and as such, the aims and ambitions of this plan align with the overarching People Plan of the Council. The relevant Policies and Procedures of the Council are used to enable Active Cumbria to carry out its work.

Alignment with other Active Cumbria Plans

Our People Plan aligns with other key Active Cumbria Plans and as such should be viewed alongside: -

- Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) ([here](#))
- Business Continuity Plan ([here](#))
- Succession Plan ([here](#))

Monitoring & Sharing Progress

Progress against the People Plan is monitored on an on-going basis by Active Cumbria Leadership Team and formally reviewed annually by our Advisory Board. People and Culture is now a standing item on all Leadership Team agendas, with discussions taking place at each meeting.

During 2025-26 Active Cumbria conducted a full restructuring of the Staff Team. This led to a change in leadership structure, moving away from the two senior managers, which had been in place for some 14 years, to a single senior manager role, supported by four functional team managers. This process was undertaken during the Summer 2025 period, and the new structure was implemented as from 1 September 2025.

This process has seen significant changes to many roles in the team. The four managers were all recruited from the existing team, providing an opportunity for direct progression. In total seven team members have benefitted from an increase in accountabilities or have been able to move from fixed term contract to a permanent contract through this process.

However, it is also the case that these change processes can and do provide uncertainty for staff, and this situation is no different. The results of the Staff Survey, highlighted in this document, which was undertaken some 3 months into the new structure in November 2025, reflect this uncertainty, and have identified several areas for the new Leadership Team to focus on as we move into 2026 and beyond.

The main areas of focus for the Leadership Team during the period post-restructure have included: -

- Establishing consistent approaches to supporting the wellbeing of staff across the team, ensuring everyone feels supported and valued.
- Establishing consistent approaches to leadership practices across the new management structure.
- Developing our internal planning and learning connections through new whole team and sub-team meeting processes.
- Providing a range of on-going whole team and individual staff training and development opportunities.

A number of key indicators, data and evidence sources identified in our People Plan are used to help monitor our progress. These have been updated for the period 2025-26 and, where available, the previous year's values are also included in brackets at the end of each statement. These are detailed below: -

- **All Staff and Advisory Board vacancies are recruited to first time, with a high quality and diverse pool of applicants.**
 - 5 staff vacancies recruited to internally as part of restructuring process
 - 7 staff vacancies recruited to externally
 - Average of 41 applicants per externally recruited staff vacancy
 - 12 staff vacancies recruited to first time
 - 2 Advisory Board vacancies
 - Average of 3 applicants per Advisory Board vacancy
 - 2 Advisory Board vacancies recruited to first time
- **The timely recruitment to key positions in line with the Succession Plan.**
 - 100% of roles recruited to in line with the Succession Plan
- **Staff and Advisory Board retention, identifying any trends or concerns as they arise.**
 - 2 members of staff leaving during the period through redundancy
 - 0 staff leaving during the period due to Fixed Term contract ending
 - 2 members of staff leaving during the period for other reasons
 - 0 Advisory Board members leaving during the period due to term of office ending
 - 1 Advisory Board member leaving during the period due to other reasons
- **Feedback from the annual Staff Survey, ensuring that Staff feel valued, supported, developed, and well led, and that any issues are resolved quickly.**
 - 63% of staff completed the survey (100%)
 - 84% of staff feel they are paid fairly (68%)
 - 75% feel the work environment is conducive to doing the job well (89%)
 - 67% of staff clear on how their role contributes to organisational goals (100%)
 - 58% of staff feel the environment is prioritised in every decision (69%)
 - 58% of staff feel that teamwork, supportiveness and collaboration is embedded (79%)
 - 50% of staff have confidence in the skills and behaviours of ACLT (90%)
 - 58% of staff feel they are given feedback to improve (47%)
 - 75% of staff would recommend Active Cumbria (95%)
- **Feedback from the annual Stakeholder Survey, focussing on the quality of support provided and the helpfulness and professionalism of the Staff Team.**
 - 73 partners completed the survey
 - Net Promoter Score 84.3% (85.5%)
 - 82.3% Very satisfied with the quality of support and advice given (71%)
 - 87.1% Very satisfied with the professionalism and helpfulness of staff (90%)
 - 65.7% Working together has a very positive impact on their organisation (74%)
- **The findings of the annual Advisory Board Skills Audit and Performance Review, implementing change as required.**
 - Annual Performance Review was held in March 2026, with the main findings: -

- Thematic Champion Roles are felt to be working well, increasing the connection between Advisory Board members and staff, also providing Advisory Board members to add value to the work.
- A priority for 2026-27 will be to continue to monitor engagement opportunities to ensure a strong connection between the Advisory Board and the staff team.
- The skills of the Advisory Board are felt to be strong at the current time across a range of areas. However, it was noted that the current Chair and Senior Independent Member would both reach the end of their second and final four-year term of office over the next 12-month period.
- **HR data, including attendance, ensuring that work related stressors are minimised.**
 - 75% of staff are happy at work (79%)
 - 50% of staff feel their wellbeing matters to the organisation (84%)
 - 75% of staff meet the Chief Medical Officers activity guidelines (53%)
 - 50% of staff had felt uncomfortable or unsafe with a colleague or other (N/A)
 - 50 working days lost to staff illness during the 12-month period (0.4% sickness rate based on 25 staff including leavers)

Progress and Areas for Further Development

There have been many other areas of progress and areas for further development identified during the period across the four themes of the People Plan. These include: -

Attract

- ED&I monitoring for all Advisory Board vacancies is undertaken, with a breakdown of the make-up of the Advisory Board updated at regular intervals. Whilst it is not currently possible to monitor the ED&I breakdown of applicants to staff vacancies, an exercise to review the ED&I breakdown of the staff team will be undertaken in 2026-27.
- All Leadership Team members have undertaken appropriate recruitment and selection training in line with Cumberland Council's policies and procedures.

Retain

- A significant focus of the Leadership Team has been to support staff wellbeing since the restructure. This will continue to be a priority as we move into 2026-27.
- Induction processes have been reviewed to ensure new staff settle into role quickly. This has seen a focus on a mix of technical skills and supportive measures, including the provision of a buddy from within the team for all new starters.
- The introduction of a monthly documented 1:1 for all staff with their line manager is working well. These meetings focus on wellbeing, capacity, what is working well, what is challenging, and identifies upcoming priorities and support needs.

- 50% of staff reported feeling uncomfortable with a colleague or other during the period. Whilst the specific reasons for this feeling have not been disclosed, all staff have now received 'Stand by Me – Active Bystander' training which seeks to equip everyone with the courage and skills to call out bad behaviours when they see these in the workplace. This will continue to be a focus across the team into 2026-27.
- The recent addition of a Barrow Office, or South Hub has provided the opportunity for staff located in the South of Cumbria with an opportunity to work together and connect more frequently. This facility also provides a base for staff from across the County when working in Barrow, further increasing connections and relationships across the team.

Develop

- All staff now benefit from a documented monthly 1:1 supervision meeting with their line manager. These confidential meetings also provide an opportunity for conversations regarding on-going training and CPD requirements.
- All staff receive an annual Appraisal meeting, focussing on reviewing the previous period and setting priorities for the coming year. The Appraisal also identifies individual CPD requirements and future career development opportunities.
- The Leadership Team will be receiving additional support through Sport England's Leading the Movement programme, focussing on the development of sustainable leadership behaviours and approaches through a series of facilitated coaching sessions during the early part of 2026-27.
- Members of the Leadership Team will also be able to benefit from individual Coaching and Mentoring opportunities through Leading the Movement. This opportunity will be rolled out further across the team in due course.
- Several Team Building activities have been identified such as informal walks at team meetings, walking meetings, bake-offs, with more formal activities planned into 2026-27, such as a Wild Workday in May 2026.
- During the period following September 2025, a number of whole team training activities have taken place including Poverty Awareness training, Race Equity workshops through APNO, and Ripple Effect Mapping workshops. Further events are planned for 2026-27 including Menopause Awareness in April, Suicide Awareness in June, and Presentation Skills in July 2026.

Grow

- The new structure now allows for more opportunities for progression and has a clear pathway through the various Assistant and Officer roles through to Management positions.
- All staff are invited to be part of or lead various thematic groups bringing together team members focussing on specific cross-cutting issues. These include

Safeguarding, ED&I, and Environmental Sustainability. Thematic Champions from the Advisory Board are also identified to support the Staff Team on each thematic group.

- Where appropriate, staff and Advisory Board members are invited to sit on interview panels to add value to the process and to support personal development.
- All Team meetings focus time on celebrating successes from across the team, as well as providing opportunities for regular reflective practice and shared learning.
- Where appropriate, staff can gain relevant formal qualifications through Cumberland Council's Apprenticeship Programme. We currently have 1 member of staff completing a Level 5 Operations Manager qualification.
- All staff are encouraged to attend relevant Sport England, Active Partnership Network, and other conferences, communities of practice, network events and other informal spaces to ensure they are learning from other organisations and making new connections.

Priorities for 2026-27

Our priorities for 2026-27 will continue to build on the foundations laid following the restructuring in Autumn 2025, ensuring our initial priorities and areas of focus are embedded and refined based on feedback from the staff team. These include: -

- Embedding consistent approaches to supporting the wellbeing of staff across the team, learning from the good practice established during the Spring period 2026.
- Continuing to refine our approach to planning and learning connections through whole team and sub-team meeting processes.
- Continuing to provide a range of on-going whole team and individual staff training opportunities, ensuring these are tailored to both technical and soft skill development as required.
- Following the delivery of the dedicated leadership support package, ensure effective and consistent leadership practices are embedded within the leadership team and across the whole team.



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