



South Staffordshire Council

Workforce Development Strategy 2022-2025

‘South Staffordshire: A great place to live and work.’



‘The workforce and wellbeing support is excellent. Flexible working arrangements are really appreciated’.

Nurturing working environment
Genuinely care **Flexible**
Supportive
Wellbeing **Caring** **Friendly**
Positive culture
Genuinely care **Cares about wellbeing**
Positive working environment
Flexible Friendly Supportive
Caring **Positive culture**

‘The support on offer is amazing - and, listening to friends and family, such a strong focus on wellbeing isn’t a priority in other workplaces. I am really proud to work for such a supportive organisation.’

87% of staff in our recent staff survey said they were **satisfied, very satisfied, or extremely satisfied** with workforce support and flexibility.

92% of residents in a recent survey **recommended South Staffs as a place to live.**



www.sstaffs.gov.uk



Foreword

Our workforce vision



Covid-19 has impacted on services, businesses, communities as well as personally affecting many of our staff and their families. Unlike other crises local government has had to respond to, there really is no 'going back to normal'; we will still be responding to the direct and indirect impacts of the pandemic for many years.

I am extremely proud though that the pandemic brought out the best in us. Not only did we rise to the challenge of taking on new and additional responsibilities to support our residents, but as an organisation we also chose to be innovative and find new approaches to deliver our services; working differently in what was an unprecedented public health environment. We continued to take this learning with us as we emerged from the pandemic to focus on business recovery and develop our new hybrid working model, which includes combining virtual working and collaborating with each other in our new Community Hub.

Developing a workforce that feels connected to - and can meet - the current and future needs of our residents has never been more important as we now turn our attention to ensuring we deliver the ambitious outcomes that we want to achieve for South Staffordshire. Our approach of being intelligence led, using data to plan our services and workforce and building on the excellent work of our Locality+ model will be essential in helping us take things to the next level. As an organisation, we value learning - and are continuing to evolve and refine what we do to continually improve.

This strategy sets out how we are going to continue developing the skills of our staff, ensuring everyone has the right tools to support our communities over the next three years; while also enabling staff to develop their career with us at the same time.

We will be refreshing our ways of working values later this year to consider learning from the pandemic, hybrid working, our Locality+ model and how we have progressed our culture and relationships with our partners. The values will continue to serve us well as we build on the excellent working environment and relationships we have created to date.

My final point is to say how extremely proud I was for South Staffordshire Council to be described as 'world class' and win UK Council of the Year 2022 in the iESE Public Sector Transformation Awards. I want to thank each and everyone of you for your hard work and dedication; without which we would not have achieved this great accolade.

Dave Heywood

Chief Executive

South Staffordshire Council





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Introduction


South Staffordshire Council needs a suitably-skilled, motivated, and engaged workforce that meets the changing needs of residents as we continue to work through challenging times.

Recruiting and retaining the right staff has never been more challenging. We know that the jobs market has been influenced by the UK's departure from the EU, the pandemic, changing technology, ways of working, and shifts in age profiles - resulting in communities and a workforce made up of generations with different needs and expectations.

Whilst there are clearly challenges, the achievements from our last workforce strategy (2019) - and the revisions to our people development and ways of working during the last two years - provides an excellent platform for us to build on. This journey has progressed our people-development plans significantly. The diagram below demonstrates our successes to date, plus the many achievements that we have progressed over the last three years.



Our vision as an employer



We want to continue to build an organisation where employees feel valued, inspired, and empowered to provide the best services possible for our residents.

To do this, we are committed to providing:

- An inclusive working environment.
- Working practices based on trust.
- Opportunities to develop new skills, experience, and confidence.

This is to ensure we work to the highest standards and continually achieve great outcomes for our communities.

Our workforce deal

We have high expectations of what we can achieve ‘together’ for our Community. Set out below is what we expect from employees and, in turn, what they can expect from us.

We will ...

- Provide positive leadership based on integrity and our ways of working values.
- Provide a working environment and culture based on trust.
- Respect and listen to our employees, ensuring they are treated fairly in the workplace - including challenging any discrimination or behaviour that is contrary to our ways of working values.
- Provide good working conditions.
- Offer opportunities for all employees to access training and to develop and progress their careers.
- We take your health, wellbeing and worklife balance seriously, and help you enhance them.

You will ...

- Be committed to achieving the council's priorities, by delivering well and going the extra mile.
- Actively demonstrate positive relationship skills with colleagues, partners, and residents.
- Be accountable for delivering tasks diligently and to a high standard, providing great results for your team and our communities.
- Respect each other and work proactively to create an inclusive environment and culture, based on trust and where differences are celebrated.
- Be proactive in managing your own wellbeing using the resources provided by the council.
- Take responsibility for keeping your knowledge and training up-to-date, using the opportunities provided by the council.

Our ways of working values in practice

Our ways of working values were introduced in 2017 and are just as valid today.

Working for South Staffordshire Council means making a practical and meaningful difference to the lives of people living and working in our district. Whilst performance and results are vitally important and influence how we do things, it's our employees and how we relate to others that makes all the difference.

Good working relationships and positivity have a huge impact on customer service, productivity, and job satisfaction - as well as our health and well-being.

These values provide the core of how we work. Together we are reshaping these to reflect our learning and progress to date. Drawing on our experience of the pandemic, hybrid working and our Locality+ model.

TRUST

We are honest and respectful towards our customers and colleagues and consider how our actions and behaviours impact on others.

TRANSPARENCY

We will always act in an open and honest way, ensuring we have a reputation for professionalism and honesty.

LISTENING TO PEOPLE

We will listen to others and respect their views, ensuring our responses and decisions are considered and informed.

PRIDE

Through our actions and behaviours, we will make sure South Staffordshire is a positive, enjoyable, and thriving place to live, work, and conduct business.

POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

We will act with integrity and strive to engage in positive, respectful, constructive conversations and be fair and considerate in our dealings with colleagues, customers, and partners.

The link to the full Ways of Working Values document is **here**
Please note we will be refreshing this document during 2022/23

Our people

A smiling woman with blonde hair and pink highlights, wearing a denim shirt, is the central figure. A white text box with a purple border is overlaid on the lower left of the image. The background is a blurred indoor setting with warm lighting.

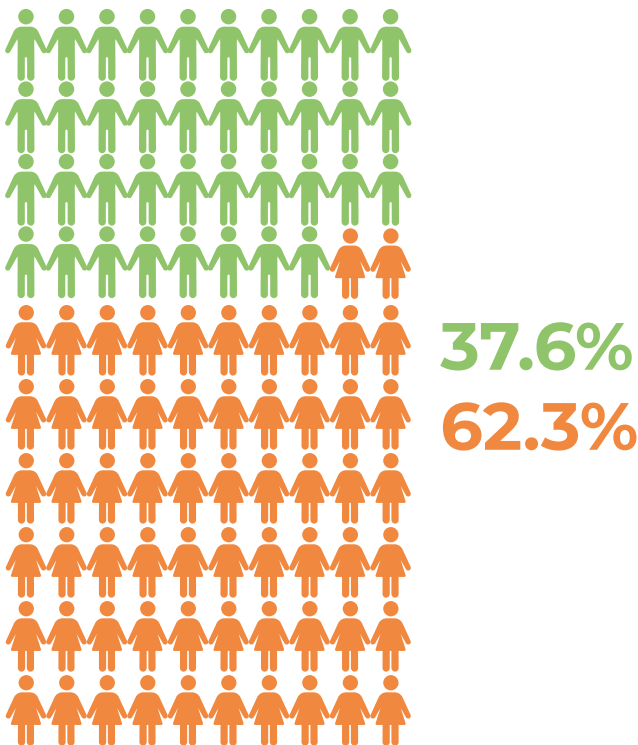
Our aspiration is for our workforce to be reflective of our communities - and go beyond this where possible - so we have a workforce that is rich in diversity, experiences, and talent.

Our people

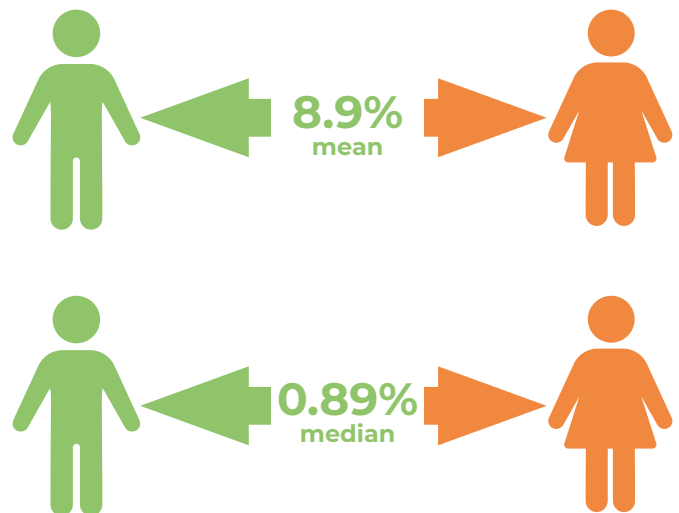
We are proud of our workforce. We value each other's differences and the contribution everyone has made to the council, making the authority what it is today. Equality and inclusion are important to us and go to the heart of our values.

We know our equalities data is not as good as it could be in places. As part of this strategy, we are asking employees to help us by updating their personal equalities information, which will provide a deeper insight into our workforce across all equality strands. We also know we need a more systematic approach to our equality training. These points are picked up in our action plan.

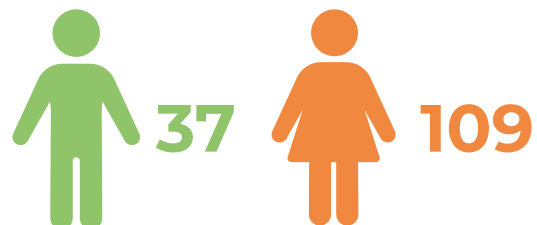
Gender



Pay gap analysis



Part-time employment



Gender by senior roles



Our people

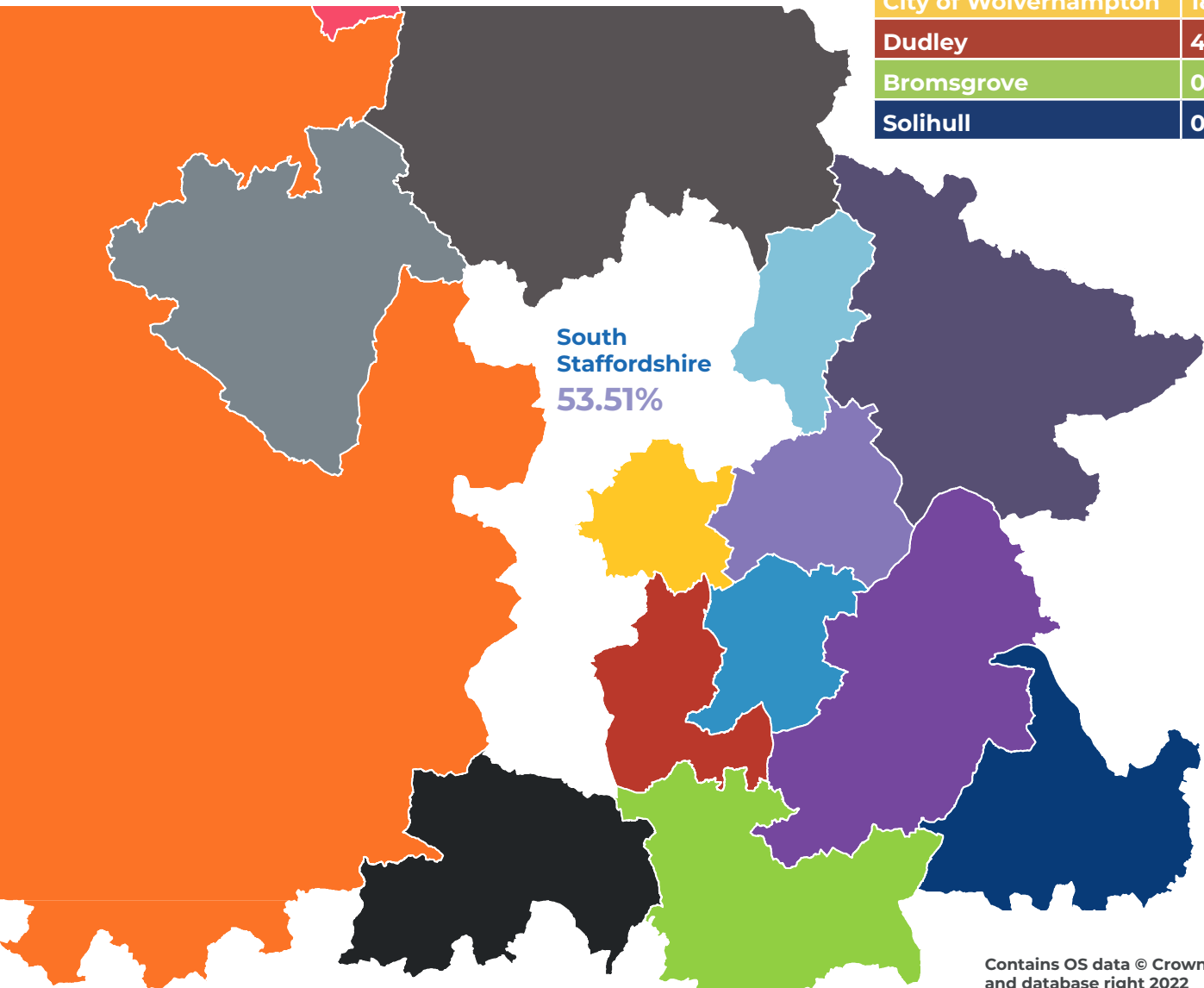
Workforce



53.51%
of our
workforce
live in the
district

Where do our workforce live?

Shropshire	4.5%
Stafford	3.06%
Newcastle-under-Lyme	0.36%
Telford and Wrekin	3.24%
Wyre Forest	0.54%
Cannock Chase	5.77%
Lichfield	0.54%
Walsall	3.42%
Birmingham	0.36%
Sandwell	0%
City of Wolverhampton	18.36%
Dudley	4.68%
Bromsgrove	0.36%
Solihull	0.18%



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This illustration sets out the percentage of our employees by location. The data set is representative of our entire workforce, including casual staff.

Our people

Ethnicity



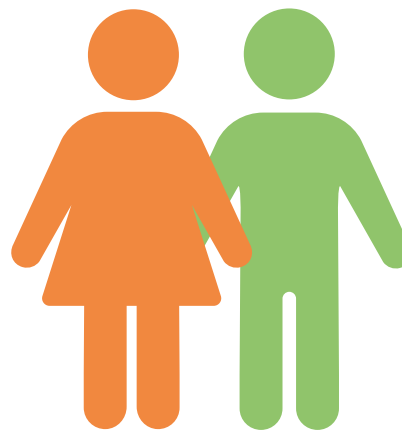
93%
have
declared
themselves
as white
British

Disability



9
employees
have declared
themselves as
disabled.
However, we
consider this
number to be
underreported.

Age



26%
of our
workforce
are aged
under
36 years

24%
of our
workforce are
aged between
36 - 45

22%
of our
workforce are
aged between
46-55



8
individuals
are
undertaking
an apprentice
programme

31 members of staff
participated in ASPIRE, our talent
management programme

1/3 of the above, progressed in
career advancement or educational
achievement

Challenges and influences

It is important to understand our workforce and the challenges we face, both locally and nationally, to help us understand the bigger picture and the drivers that affect our council.





Planning for the future

We already have established, annual arrangements where we publish workforce data and dashboards at a corporate and service level to support us with workforce planning. However, we know an unsophisticated use of employee data will hinder our ability to plan the future shape of the council, succession plan and nurture talent - particularly amongst some of our key equalities' groups. We know there is more to do!

However, we have some exciting plans in place. This includes investment in a new online recruitment system this year (2022) which will enable us to speed up and modernise how we select candidates and fill our vacancies. Importantly, the system will enable us to enhance our data regarding recruitment success rates by protected characteristic.

We will also be promoting the importance of the workforce sharing their data with us; particularly on under-reported categories, such as disability. It is also our intention to introduce a new data category to identify the number of employees we have who are carers. This data will help us plan and support the diversity and wellbeing of our current and future workforce. Combined with our Locality+ model, this will help us to really raise our game and enable us to more accurately profile how representative we are as a workforce against the local working population.

However, it does not stop there. We know the pace of transformation and digital change affecting our ways of working has been significant over the last two years. We therefore need to ensure that we continue to be proactive

and develop our intelligence to assess our technical skills and know-how. This year, we conducted a council-wide ICT skills audit - and we plan to use the findings to develop a base-line digital skills course for all virtual workers, as well as offering tailored digital courses to make the most of our council's systems and technology.

We also conducted a workforce strategy survey on key recruitment, retention and skills issues - which included ideas to help the council remain competitive as an employer of choice, while keeping up-to-date with training needs, ensuring our workforce has the skills we need for both now and the future.

We will continue to build on our culture of being 'a learning organisation' and have adopted an approach of using data and intelligence to inform our services and workforce plans.

We also recognise the need to take action to ensure that we attract and grow the next generation of leaders to steer the organisation forward. This year sees the introduction of an exciting partnership with West Midlands Employers as we take forward our new senior executive coaching programme for our Corporate Leadership Team, Assistant Directors, and Team Managers.

Our action plans to support the strategy are set out in the next section.



ACTION PLAN

1. Values-based leadership

Leadership style based on trust. Managers will role model our values, working collaboratively in setting and communicating our vision, developing a culture of inclusion, performance, learning and wellbeing.



**Our
aspirations**

Positive and effective leadership based on trust creates a shared purpose and helps people to be engaged, perform at their best, and go the extra mile to achieve great results. However, we know it is crucial that we continue to work hard to ensure our leadership and culture is consistent across the whole organisation.

**Why
this
matters**



**We
already
have**

- ✓ A 'one team, one council' culture and established ways of working values.
- ✓ Regular, engaging Extended Leadership sessions and Today and Tomorrow events to ensure everyone is regularly updated and involved in shaping our plans.
- ✓ Senior leaders as mentors, wellbeing champions and equality leads.
- ✓ Training to support good self-awareness and collaboration skills.
- ✓ A wellbeing strategy and online wellbeing resources.
- ✓ My Review - our performance discussion scheme based on quality conversations.
- ✓ Strong staff communication and engagement.

**Our
plans**

- Provide senior executive coaching to our leaders to further strengthen our inclusive style and enhance how we continue to role model our vision, values, and develop a high-performance culture.
- Implement our new recruitment toolkit and integrate our values as part of our recruitment, to ensure we recruit leaders with the right skillset and mindset.
- Improve our workforce and recruitment data and re-energise our equality groups, to make sure we get better at identifying need and embedding equality in our service and business activities.
- Continue to measure employee engagement and wellbeing using regular surveys.
- Refresh our Ways of Working values.



ACTION PLAN

2. Attracting and retaining the best talent

To attract and keep the best talent, providing us with a bright, skilled, motivated, and diverse workforce that shares our values.



**Our
aspirations**

Recruitment is a competitive business. We need to ensure we are an employer of choice for the best candidates if we are to do the best for our communities.

We also understand how important it is to continue to invest in our staff to ensure we recruit and retain the brightest talent.

**Why
this
matters**



**We
already
have**

- ✓ Good workforce planning data to support RPP and service workforce planning.
- ✓ A market supplement policy and budget provision for market supplements.
- ✓ A good track record in innovative job design and marketing that has resulted in a number of recruitment successes of hard-to-recruit posts.
- ✓ Promoted our apprentice and graduate programme and met our apprenticeship target.
- ✓ Developed a new recruitment toolkit to help managers promote their vacancies and the council as an employer of choice.
- ✓ Reviewed our recruitment promotional material on our website.
- ✓ Guaranteed interviews for disabled candidates who meet the essential criteria.
- ✓ Consulted with our new starters to improve our induction programme.

**Our
plans**



- Continue to pay model and work with our regional and national partners to prepare for a new pay spine, as part of the proposed increases to the National Living Wage.
- Continue to pay benchmark against business-critical roles and develop our reward and employer of choice offerings.
- Implement a new recruitment platform that modernises the candidate experience and streamlines recruitment, so we can select candidates and fill posts more quickly.
- Implement our recently improved induction programme.
- Deliver a new 'inclusive recruitment practices' workshop.
- Work with WME regional and local partners to develop new talent pools and employer of choice initiatives.
- Implement the findings of our recent workforce strategy survey.
- Promote careers with the council through job fairs, schools and businesses in the local area.
- Launch a new employee benefits scheme that supports financial wellbeing.
- Implement a new volunteer scheme.

ACTION PLAN

3. Continuing our ways of working journey

To ensure we have a workforce that is adaptable and resilient to change, enabling us to embrace opportunities at pace.



**Our
aspirations**

Change enables us to move forward as one organisation and improve our culture, processes, and manage risk - but often the pace of change is imposed on us by external factors. The pandemic has taught us that we can listen and involve people, but progress change more efficiently. This means we can reap the benefits more quickly.

**Why
this
matters**



**We
already
have**

- ✓ Established an Issues and Risks Group to ensure we identify and respond to any service risks; deploying resources at pace, in a targeted way across the council, where needed.
- ✓ Adapted our policies and procedures to streamline and improve our working arrangements based on what we learned during the pandemic.
- ✓ Developed our Ways of Working guide to help us navigate our new modern hybrid working comprising of collaboration in our new Community Hub alongside virtual and agile working.
- ✓ Deployed new technology to support the council's digital and transformation plans and allow for virtual working.
- ✓ Changed our flexible working scheme to support seven-day working to maximise customer service and flexibility for our workforce, to support recruitment and retention.
- ✓ Conducted a council-wide Digital Skills Survey to inform a new digital course for all virtual workers, plus customised digital software courses to help our employees maximise systems and technology.
- ✓ Piloted 'trust based' time and attendance options.



**Our
plans**

- Implement the findings of our Digital Skills Survey.
- Produce a new training programme for 2022/23 to support the council's new evolution programme and feedback received from the workforce strategy survey.
- Implement a systematic training programme to support our equality plans.
- Continue to provide virtual webinars as well as in-person events to provide flexibility and efficiency.
- Implement our new time and attendance approach.
- Explore the feasibility of a digital platform for a new employee benefits package.
- Refresh ASPIRE, the council's talent management programme, ensuring synergy with our transformation journey.
- Continue to learn, improve, and get better in everything we do.

Measuring success



This is a living and evolving strategy that will be refreshed during its three-year period, to ensure we keep pace with the council’s transformation journey and respond to new challenges and opportunities.

We will review the strategy on a regular basis and report our progress to Corporate Leadership Team and our elected members.

We will work hard to deliver on everything we have set out to do - but how will we know when we have succeeded?

Actions	You	Relationships	Residents	Data
We will have achieved all the actions.	Will tell us how we are doing through employee engagement surveys and events.	We will see and notice the difference in our interactions, as our culture evolves and gets even better.	Will tell us what we are getting right through our customer comments, consultation events, and surveys.	By analysing data, we will find positive trends in areas we are trying to progress and improve.

