

**REPORT OF SERVICE DIRECTOR - CUSTOMERS, GOVERNANCE AND  
EMPLOYEES****UPDATE ON PROGRESS TOWARDS DISABILITY CONFIDENT  
ACCREDITATION****Purpose of the Report**

1. To advise Members of the outcome of the Council's application to move from the status of Disability Committed to that of Disability Confident Employer and to seek approval for ongoing work to raise awareness through further actions and communication that Nottinghamshire County Council is now formally accredited under the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) "Disability Confident" employer standard.

**Information**

2. Members of Personnel Committee have previously agreed in March 2018 that the Council would undertake the self-assessment process to identify required actions to become an accredited Disability Confident employer. The Disability Confident scheme replaces the former "Two Ticks" Positive About Disabled People government employer scheme.
3. A further report advising of progress was brought to Committee in October 2018. It is considered important to demonstrate active commitment to becoming a recognised Disability Confident employer providing a focus for the further development of the existing range of activities, procedures, provisions and guidance available to support the Council's managers to recruit, develop and retain people with disabilities.
4. Members restated their ongoing commitment to becoming a Disability Confident Employer and this was reflected in the self assessment. Members also agreed to receive a further report once the outcome of our submission was known and to determine whether we wanted to progress to the next level of accreditation to become a Disability Confident - Leader by the time of the next assessment in April 2021.
5. It is important for our commitment to be recognised and understood by prospective employees so that they feel comfortable in applying for jobs with Nottinghamshire County Council in the knowledge that we aim to be an inclusive employer, seeking to support and enable people to access work opportunities. The Council acknowledges and celebrates the positive contribution that people with physical and/or mental disabilities make to its overall talent pool, it seeks to welcome them into its workforce and aims to be an exemplar employer by modelling good practice and promoting these benefits to other local employers.

6. There are three progressive Disability Confident levels – Disability Committed, Disability Confident and finally Disability Confident Leader. As reported back in March, the Council was able to register as Disability Committed on the basis of current employment practices in relation to recruitment, available support at interview, willingness to make reasonable adjustments, and support for existing employees who acquire a disability to remain in work.
7. The Council aims to go beyond the minimum statutory requirements set out in the Equality Act 2010 and has undertaken the following actions to support it to move to Disability Confident status:
  - Reviewed how employees share information around their disability (disabilities) and any required adjustments/adaptations with a view to streamlining how information is conveyed. This work is currently badged as the “disability passport” but will eventually be included in a wider piece of work around how employees’ personal information is collected and stored to comply with new data protection requirements. A joint workshop with the trades unions was held in August 2018 to determine how this work would be developed and has subsequently been the subject of a presentation to Central Joint Consultative and Negotiating Panel (CJCNP) to the recognised trades unions
  - As mentioned in the Workforce Profile report, we encourage employees to disclose any protected characteristic they may have including disability. The Council aims to foster a climate of inclusiveness and trust where employees feel comfortable about sharing this personal and intimate information. We continue to work with the Council’s self managed support groups to improve our disclosure rates
  - We engaged in work with Healthy Working Futures in a bid for funding from the Work and Health Unit Challenge Fund to undertake further research using a holistic Bio-Psycho-Social model but were unfortunately unsuccessful in the work
  - However we have engaged with Public Health colleagues to work on an evidence based analysis of reasons for absence including those related to disability and long term medical conditions. Ongoing engagement with smoking cessation and obesity programmes will aim to reduce the number of people who potentially will become disabled over the course of their employment
  - We have reviewed the procedures and associated guidance for employees and managers to ensure their currency and legal compliance. This provided the opportunity to review their application across the whole workforce including any employee with a disability
  - We have refreshed management guidance on a range of subject areas including supporting employees with mental health issues, terminal illness and dyslexia. Our management guidance on supporting employees with a terminal illness has been recognised as an example of best practice nationally
  - Promoted the Council to new graduates through our work with the Leonard Cheshire Change 100 Internship Programme, in our apprenticeship offer and graduate programme. Employability is a new core programme of work led by the Corporate Director ASCH to underpin the commitments made in the refreshed Council Plan and Departmental Strategies and this will have a focus on supporting people with disabilities to become work ready and ultimately into employment.
8. The Council has received confirmation from the Department of Work and Pensions that the Council is a Disability Confident Employer (copy of certificate provided at Appendix 1) and can

use the logo on our stationery, website and correspondence. Further details of the use of the branding will be published on the Council's intranet.

### **Other Options Considered**

9. The Disability Confident standard is a nationally recognised accreditation which allows employers to demonstrate their commitment to becoming fully inclusive and go beyond the basic statutory requirements of the Equality Act 2010. As such, no other options were considered. We want to demonstrate to our current and future workforce our achievement of the Disability Confident standard and ensure we continue to undertake meaningful actions to remove any barriers to employment with the Council.

### **Reasons for Recommendations**

10. The achievement of the Disability Confident standard demonstrates real commitment to our workforce in attracting and retaining talented individuals from all areas of the community and highlights the Council's community leadership role as being an exemplar employer in relation to the employment of people with disabilities.

### **Statutory and Policy Implications**

11. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

### **Data Protection and Information Governance**

12. The report contains no personal information to ensure privacy of individuals. The new requirements under GDPR will inform and underpin the work required toward accreditation and that already being undertaken around the "disability passport".

### **Financial Implications**

13. Participation in the Disability Confident scheme is free of charge. The retention of talented employees with a disability may reduce recruitment costs and positively impact on turnover over time.

### **Human Resources Implications**

14. The Human Resources implications are contained within the body of the report. It is important for the Council to be an employer of choice and to act as a community leader in this respect. It is however crucial that there is real commitment and action attributed to the Council to maintain Disability Confident accreditation to demonstrate genuine inclusivity and a willingness to be flexible in how work is undertaken and to develop our programme of work to becoming a Disability Confident Leader within the next two years.

## **Public Sector Equality Duty implications**

15. The achievement of the Disability Confident accreditation demonstrates our ongoing commitment to meeting and wherever possible exceeding the statutory requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Members agree:

- 1) Ongoing actions and the creation of a wide ranging communications plan to promote the Council as an employer of choice and to encourage more people with a disability to apply for our advertised roles as we become more inclusive.
- 2) That the Council delivers a programme of activity with the aim of becoming a Disability Confident Leader by the time of the next assessment in April 2021.

**Marjorie Toward**

**Service Director, Customers, Governance and Employees  
Chief Executive's Department**

**For any enquiries about this report please contact:**

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### **Constitutional Comments (KK 02/05/19)**

16. The proposals in this report are within the remit of the Personnel Committee.

### **Financial Comments (RWK 08/05/19)**

17. There are no specific financial implications arising directly from this report. Any ongoing actions and communications to promote the council as an employer of choice in relation to employing people with a disability will be met from within existing revenue budget allocations.

### **HR Comments (JP 07/05/19)**

18. The Council has certain legal duties towards employees with disabilities. However in seeking to attract and retain the most talented candidates from the widest recruitment pool, it is important to translate our ongoing commitment into meaningful actions. The Council recognises the contribution of all its employees and recognises the ongoing benefits to service users, stakeholders and employees of recruiting and maintaining a diverse and inclusive workforce.

### **Background Papers and Published Documents**

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- None

### **Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected**

- All