



**REPORT OF SERVICE DIRECTOR - CUSTOMERS, GOVERNANCE AND
EMPLOYEES**

REPORT ON PROGRESS ON DISABILITY CONFIDENT ACCREDITATION

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek approval for ongoing work towards Nottinghamshire County Council's formal accreditation to the national Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) "Disability Confident" employer standard.

Information

2. It was agreed by Members of Personnel Committee on 7 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. 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 procedures, provisions and guidance available to support the Council's managers to recruit, develop and retain people with disabilities.
4. It is important for this 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.
5. The Council has identified certain skills gaps in its workforce and aims to maximise attraction rates from the widest recruitment pool alongside retaining existing talented employees with disabilities.
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 in preparation for the completion of the self assessment has undertaken the following actions:
- Reviewed how employees share information around their disability (disabilities) and any required adjustments/adaptations with a view to streamlining how information is conveyed. This 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
 - As mentioned in the Workforce Profile report, we are encouraging 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.
 - The Council is working with Healthy Working Futures in making a bid for funding from the Work and Health Unit Challenge Fund to undertake further research using a holistic Bio-Psycho-Social model.
 - A review of all the major employment procedures was undertaken and published earlier this year. 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.
 - Promote the Council to new graduates through our work with the Leonard Cheshire Change 100 Internship Programme, in our apprenticeship offer and graduate programme
8. It was initially suggested that a report be brought back after the self assessment was submitted, however it was considered important to have Members’ support to be included as part of the assessment process as further evidence of our ongoing commitment to the scheme.

Other Options Considered

9. The Council already aims to be legally compliant with its statutory obligations towards people with disabilities as required by the Equality Act 2010. However we are seeking to build on our existing commitments and aim to be a fully inclusive employer so that if we achieve the Disability Confident standard it will have genuine meaning for our existing and future workforce.

Reasons for Recommendations

10. The achievement of the Disability Confident standard will demonstrate 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 seen as 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 seeking Disability Confident accreditation to demonstrate genuine inclusivity and a willingness to be flexible in how work is undertaken to maximise the opportunities for anyone with a disability.

Public Sector Equality Duty implications

15. The proposals in this report would reaffirm the Council’s existing commitment to meeting and wherever possible exceeding the statutory requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 1) Agree to their commitment to becoming an accredited Disability Confident employer being included in the self-assessment process
- 2) Receive a further report early in the New Year on the outcome of self assessment and the action plan to determine whether we continue at that level of accreditation or the Council aims to become a Disability Confident Leader by the time of the next assessment

Marjorie Toward

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

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

Gill Elder, HR, Workforce and Organisational Development Group Manager on 0115 9773867 or email gill.elder@nottscc.gov.uk

Constitutional Comments (KK 12/09/18)

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

Financial Comments (SES 12/09/18)

17. There are no specific financial implications arising directly from this report.

HR Comments (BC 17/09/18)

18. The Human Resources implications are contained within the body of the report. It is important for the Council to be seen as 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 seeking Disability Confident accreditation to demonstrate genuine inclusivity and a willingness to be flexible in how work is undertaken to maximise the opportunities for anyone with a disability.

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