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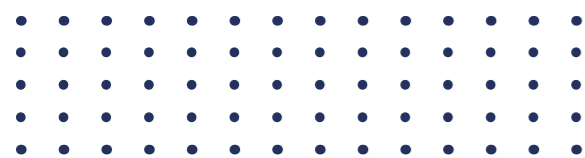
Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent

PEOPLE PLAN

Together Active People Plan

The vision of Together Active's People plan is to:

'Create a great place to work where employees feel valued, engaged, productive, and continue to thrive'.

People are the foundation of Together Active's success.

The role each of each of our managers is to help people be more effective and to grow and develop.

We have great people who want to do well, are capable of doing great things, and want to come to work to achieve what they are able to do.

We know great people flourish in an environment that is built on trust, respect, support and empowerment.

This means giving people the tools, information and coaching they need to succeed. It means a continuous effort to develop peoples skills and developing an understanding of each individuals unique career goals and life choices.

We must ensure we are a fair and open organisation with opportunities for everyone and will take a People First approach to everything within this People Plan.

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where employees feel valued, engaged, productive, and continue to thrive

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Our Values

Our Values are clearly defined and we need to enthuse all our team to keep them live:

• We are focused. Everything we do will help people to be more active.

• We are inclusive. We leave nobody behind: we do not accept that characteristics such as age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, ethnicity, or income should determine your access to physical activity

• We are engaged. We will listen first; we always seek to understand.

• We are relentless. We are passionate about the importance of sport and physical activity.

• We are collaborative. We never go it alone; we work to develop collaborations that are capable of sparking change.

• We are effective. We will demonstrate the impact of our work using clinical, economic and social measures and support our partners in doing the same.

Without taking a People First approach we will not live up to the Values we have defined and therefore our coming year priorities will focus on three key Workstreams: Health and Wellbeing, Social Inclusion, Powerful Communities.

Understanding our workforce

Our Commitments

- To operate fair, transparent and inclusive recruitment procedures
- To ensure our people have the support and tools they need to do their role
- To put training and development at the heart of our organisation, with a genuine commitment to helping people succeed.

Understanding our Workforce

Our People Plan is focused on firstly our staff and our Board. We will then widen this out to the communities we engage with, the suppliers we use, and so on.

Initially, we need to gain an understanding of the skills and experience we have in the organisation and this will be a two-stage approach.

Stage One will be to have clear Outcome Descriptions and Person Profiles for every role in the charity. By doing this we will understand exactly what it is we are trying to deliver and therefore the skills and experience we require.

Stage Two will involve a Skills and Behaviour Audit where we will assess each team and Board member against the skills and behaviours required at Together Active. This will allow us to identify any gaps in knowledge or experience and then we can create a plan to fill those gaps.

Together Active has a skills and behaviours matrix which we will complete for all staff and Board members – both groups will have a separate Matrix. This is a key driver in not only identifying the skills and experience of our current team, but also gives us a roadmap to ensure we can deliver our future strategy. It also future proofs us and will help with succession as we can develop people towards other roles and will aid recruitment as we will know exactly what skills we will need to replace if anyone leaves. We also need to understand the diversity of our workforce and are working towards collecting the data to allow us to do this.

Diversity and Inclusion

Diversity and Inclusion is hugely important to us, and provides the following benefits:

- Reaching a more extensive and inclusive talent pool;
- Fostering a greater sense of belonging for employees through inclusivity;
- Experiencing higher employee retention and lower turnover;
- Establishing a diverse workplace climate that encourages innovation;
- Improving business decision making through inclusion;
- Tackling workplace burnout with equality and inclusion;
- Creating a competitive business advantage; and
- Protecting company culture with EDI. Staff will attend mandatory induction training on EDI education and ongoing training will be provided on a yearly basis to ensure our workforce fully comprehends equality diversity and inclusion and how we can and tackling bias in the workplace.
- The senior leadership team, any member of staff involved in recruitment and the Board will also receive enhanced training on understanding and tackling bias within the workplace and in recruitment processes.

We collect equality monitoring data for protected characteristic and other relevant diversity characteristics, as identified as appropriate by our Board.

We collect this so we can reveal and tackle discrimination, and commit to honing any subsequent rounds of recruitment based on the information we receive, to ensure we reach a diverse range of applicants.

Job applicants and employees will be asked to select from a fixed question set with a list of potential responses for each question. Potential responses always include a 'prefer not to say' option. The response options are deliberately generic, and mirror the national census, allowing us to easily compare, contrast and identify potential issues or gaps.

With Social Inclusion being at the core of our key priorities we will also monitor the social background of our employees, Board members and new applicants to ensure we fairly represent the groups who are at the heart of our organisational goals, with lived experience an important factor in any recruitment process.

The following are key points that we consider important in our approach to data around diversity:

- As far as possible, we attempt to match how job applicants and employees self-identify. With this we also need to balance providing options and keeping the response list fairly succinct to assist with analysis. An "other" category, with space for free text, is included for employees and applicants who do not feel the options provided adequately reflect their identities.

- At all times, we are very aware that we do not unnecessarily invade the individual's privacy.
- We only ask for date that we believe are relevant to the individual's employment or potential employment.
- It is key that the above points help us to collect data that is easily analysed. Although we use them as they can help provide clarification, free form boxes are be kept to a minimum.
- Where possible we generate information that is compatible with other data sources for comparison purposes, such as census results.

Due to the size of the organisation, we will provide monitoring questions to applicants and employees by paper or electronically. We are also aware that the way people self-identify can change over time and as a result, employees are encouraged to periodically review and update their personal information.
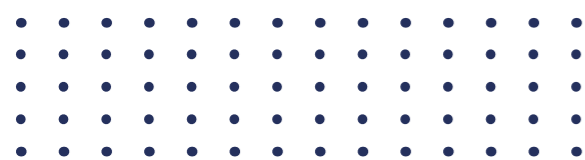
Recruitment and Selection

Getting the right people – with a focus on tackling inequalities

We have a separately defined Recruitment and Selection process.

We ensure that those who make employment selection decisions are trained on equality issues to a greater depth than the rest of the workforce – although training for all staff is important, there are certain focuses that are unique to recruitment which is listed below. Team members need to understand how to assess candidates without unconscious bias creeping into their decision-making process. Those conducting application sifts need to understand that any individual characteristic, e.g., gender or race, is not a lawful criterion for choosing between candidates.

The selection process: Sometimes it is possible to tell the race of a person from their name or nationality. If possible, this information is kept separate from the information needed by those making selection decisions while allowing administrators to write to the person and for you to check the applicant's right to work in the UK. Those recruiting and interviewing should not be involved in any right to work checks, as this will reveal details about the race of any candidate.

Other than for these reasons, direct questions about race should not be necessary for the recruitment process, hence handling them separately. Of course, later in the process, when the interviewer meets the candidates, race may be obvious, but we believe in making as many selection decisions as possible without race information. Team members involved in recruitment not only receive training on what is illegal, but they also be trained to understand their own attitudes and other characteristic stereotyping influences.

The role outcomes description: When writing our role outcome descriptions and composing adverts, we are always aware of what we want the person to do or the behaviours we want from them. When describing the job, we choose our words carefully and we focus on the outcomes we want to be achieved rather than simply use the existing job holder as the model, which can lead to unconscious bias. We place more value on experience and skills than on qualifications and believe that a degree should not be used as a defining factor for any role in the organisation.

The person profile: This outlines the skills, abilities, relevant experience, and qualifications that are required to conduct the tasks of the job. These criteria are always related directly to the duties outlined in the job description. A well-written person specification can help avoid discrimination by staying away from requirements that could be seen as discriminatory, for example tasks that favour one gender over another.

Language: At Together Active, we understand that some words are directly discriminatory. Other language may imply the race or gender for example, of the person we are trying to recruit. With this in mind we ensure that the language we use does not alienate people from a particular racial background, gender or other characteristic. We do all this to ensure that we are unnecessarily limiting our talent pool.

Advertisement design: The design and imagery of an advert can convey the wrong message. Location and advertising media could be sending characteristics-linked messages or signals to prospective employees and we are very keen to ensure this does not happen. Whilst there is no legal requirement for us to advertise in lots of places, we are aware that if we only buy space on a platform not read by, for example, underrepresented ethnic groups, it is unlikely that we will get a lot of applicants from this demographic applying.

Recruitment agencies: When we use an agency either to select and place workers or to supply temporary or contract workers to work within our business, we need to ensure that they understand the importance of diversity and inclusion in all their practices. An agency might work in the way they believe to be the most efficient and this could involve making assumptions about the type of candidate they target to reduce the time spent filling our position. There may also be claims of instructions to discriminate levelled at us if we are careless in how we manage and brief suppliers. By having a formal contract with our preferred agencies to ensure they can provide evidence of race neutral practice in recruitment and selection we can ensure we avoid any bias via our agency's activities – after all, good agencies will be aware of race discrimination laws and will understand our concerns.

The application process and forms: Together Active consider what information we request at the application stage to ensure that our approach cannot be deemed discriminatory. The use of a bias free application form we believe will minimise the risk of characteristics being used within recruitment selection process.

CVs: Where possible we anonymise CVs during a recruitment process if they are used, but the preferred method of application will be via application form which we will ensure is an accessible format.

Equal opportunity monitoring: We conduct monitoring of equal opportunity data to ensure that we are considering candidates from all backgrounds. We monitor this data on a regular basis and report it to the Board for their information and input following a recruitment process. We collect this type of data so we can reveal and tackle discrimination, and commit to honing any subsequent rounds of recruitment based on the information we receive, to ensure we reach a diverse range of applicants, and work to mitigate bias should this be revealed.

Interviews: We ensure that we have trained managers conducting all interviews with the intention that at least one panel member has received NSPCC Safer Recruitment Training. Where a panel is used, then some attempt at diversity for participants should be made. We ask that interviewers use a standard set of questions when possible, and results are noted on a standard score sheet. It is essential that we keep accurate records of interviews and these are archived for at least 12 months. Finally, we do not make assumptions about the ideal characteristics of a manager or team member. Whatever their own characteristics, managers need to be trained and supported in managing people from all characteristics.

Looking after and developing our people

We believe there needs to be a clear focus on learning and development with support from the Board. Elements such as a dedicated training budget, a strategy and commitment from senior leadership and a clearly defined training and development plan, all show that we are serious about learning and development. We also need to have a clear process to support the Talent Management approach to our teams.

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) defines the "setting of learning and development priorities" as follows:

"Organisations need to decide how evolving organisational team and individual learning needs are analysed against performance gaps. From this analysis, priorities will emerge for the plan to address these gaps. These priorities are often set out in a learning policy which explains how the strategy will be implemented. Typically, an L&D policy covers:

- Responsibilities for learning and development.
- Personal Development Plans.
- The range of methods used to facilitate learning and development.
- Access to a range of learning opportunities and resources (both formal and informal).
- Equality of opportunity in learning and development.
- Internal and external provision.
- Booking formal training and enrolling on qualifications.
- Travel, subsistence and hotels if the learning involves face-to-face interventions carried out elsewhere.
- Cancellation issues.
- Evaluation and monitoring of learning and development.

To cover each of the elements identified by the CIPD:

Responsibilities for learning and development.

In the absence of a dedicated learning and development team, we believe there are three elements to this:

1. The individual – show a strong commitment to their own development, be fully present at learning events/opportunities

2. Senior Leadership – support the learning and development process with financial and strategic support as well as allowing team members time to prepare for and attend any courses or development activities.

3. Line Management – allow the development of their teams by ensuring time is given for pre course work, the course itself and any post course work required. They are also expected to be involved in the identification of the correct course or development activity.

Each of these groups has their own part to play in ensuring that we have a strong approach to learning and development. Without commitment from any of these groups the offering will not succeed which will affect our Talent Management process, staff retention and attraction.

Personal Development Plans.

We ensure that the performance review process covers all of the following areas of the employee life cycle – recruitment, induction, probation, review processes – ensuring that all elements are linked and nothing falls through gaps between each intervention. An employee's PDP links directly with the year end pay review process, allowing information to be gathered from a full year's performance to fully inform the pay review procedure. The PDP also identifies a set of inclusive behaviours that we expect staff to display and adhere to in all situations.

All elements of the PDP ultimately link to individual and team role outcomes. We use SAGE HR to manage and track goals for an individuals role, in addition to HR tasks such as employee sickness absence, leave management, monthly one to ones, and integrated task tracking to ensure statutory role requirements are met such as DSE assessments.

From the very beginning, we at Together Active work to identify any gaps in knowledge including during recruitment processes. Too often organisations wait until someone has passed their probation before really starting to look at gaps in their knowledge and we are keenly aware that everyone we recruit is immediate assessed against our skills matrix to identify any gaps.

The range of methods used to facilitate learning and development.

As an organisation, we are open to using various options for learning and believe our managers are supportive of this process. They understand the importance of allowing time for learning and development opportunities as well as the need for post course review and continual learning.

At Together Active we also appreciate that not every learning opportunity is in a classroom. There are many other elements of formal and informal learning opportunities that are available. For example, we believe in allowing team members to choose their own fields of interest and to identify the areas they want to work on – this may be via self-study, reading relevant books or having a mentor they can go to. We hope this approach to involving elements of informal learning will also shown that team members can develop each other, recommending books, or even just a short section or idea, within a particular book, to those colleagues who have raised development concerns.

Looking after and developing our people

Access to a range of learning opportunities and resources (both formal and informal).

There are many elements of our learning and development process, including (but not limited to):

- Internal training
- External training
- Coaching
- Mentoring
- Buddying
- Shadowing
- Seminars, podcast, conferences, literature
- Research
- Project opportunities
- Other learning environments

We also need to ensure we constantly evaluate any offerings to ensure that they are not only valuable but also that the learning has been embedded. Post course reviews of both the individual and the course are important tools in this process.

Equality of opportunity in learning and development.

We also have created a learning and development offering that is equally available for all staff, regardless of personal characteristics or background. The hours they are available, requirements to stay away, work outside of the normal working day, etc. will all disadvantage certain groups. We also commit to monitoring who attends courses to ensure that there is no bias, either unconscious or otherwise in which members of the team are selected for certain opportunities.

Internal and external provision.

Similar to recruitment partners, we work to ensure we have the correct approved external suppliers as well as working out what we are happy providing internally. The internal provision shouldn't be driven by what we can deliver but instead what we want to deliver. Our internal teams may have courses available but they may not be the best learning opportunity for all staff so a blended approach to the offering we make is crucial.

Booking formal training and enrolling on qualifications.

At Together Active we ensure that all training is captured and that any available qualifications are relevant and valued. We also ensure that we are in control of the booking process, managing the planning of courses, for example where there are multiple attendees to ensure we can still deliver the services required by our service users.

Cancellation issues and training agreements.

As well as any issues with cancellation/rearrangement we cover off training agreements and any recovery of cost if the individual is the reason for the cancellation. Together Active then monitor anyone who leaves within any claw back period and ensure we recover any costs that are due. We are aware that a training agreement on its own may deter team members from training activities so this is only included on courses where we believe there is a significant benefit to the team member if they left and where we have made a significant investment in time or money or both. All training courses above £100 in value need to be discussed and approved with an employee's line manager before proceeding.

HR Processes

To ensure that our HR processes are fit for purpose, we have an external HR provision to support our team and Board. As part of the engagement with the HR provider, we ensure that we regularly review and update any policies and procedures, ensuring they are both compliant in law and are supportive to our team members.

Workforce Satisfaction

As part of approach to ensuring an engaged and happy workforce we have always will hold one to ones with staff on a regular basis to find out how they are feeling and what we can do to deal with any issues. Together Active commit to holding 'stay' interviews once a year, with every employee to help build working relationships and with the ultimate goal of retaining our valued staff, alongside temperature checks in the PDP process to ensure how people feel throughout the year about their role and Together Active is captured and any issues addressed.

Stay interview feedback will be collated and evaluated anonymously each year to gain a broader view of how the organisation is performing. Mini surveys and feedback tools will also be used to gauge team satisfaction.

Workplace Wellbeing

We provide the following additional benefits to all team members:

- Three concessionary days leave over Xmas and New Year (pro rata for part time staff).
- Generous annual leave allowance: 27.5 days upon commencement of employment rising by an additional 1 day of leave per year after 2 years of continuous employment, up to an additional 5 days leave in total. (Pro rata for part time staff).
- Wellbeing Grant - £50 voucher per year to spend on health and wellbeing (see wellbeing voucher policy for terms).
- Volunteer day to spend either as a team or individual helping out with an organisation or cause you select.
- Competitive workplace pension
- Reimbursement of the cost of a standard eye test as a user of visual display equipment.
- Life insurance scheme up to the value of three times actual salary.
- Access to Cyclescheme

- Annual CPD courses offered by Staffordshire University *
- Skills training platform. A platform for employees to use to broaden their professional and personal development with a variety of online courses*
- Together Active is committed to helping its workforce become more active, a scheme to assist employees to do this is in development.

Succession Planning

Together Active has a separately defined succession planning policy which aims to plan for the future growth and stability of our organisation, as well as ensuring that employees have room to grow and develop outside and alongside their role. Where employees are unable to progress beyond their role due to the size or nature of the organisation, we commit to ensuring that opportunities are available for employees to expand their knowledge and experience on a lateral career path.

Led and offered by Staffordshire University as Together Active holds an office as part of the Stoke-on-Trent campus, at dates determined by the University

Courses designed for personal development to be taken in the employees own time*

Developing Leadership

Our approach to developing our leaders is similar to our approach, described above, in developing all our team members. We use the following tools:

- An unbiased and transparent recruitment processes

- An approach to talent that starts during our recruitment process, flows into the onboarding process and then into the regular interactions with our team members

- Our skills matrix identifies not only those individuals who should particular skills in leadership (it is a separate category on our matrix) but also identifies the existing skills of current leaders, giving a clear road may for what an individual needs to learn in order to progress

- Our documented approach to learning and development is available for all team members, be they in a leadership position or not.

- Our approach to diversity and inclusion allows for everyone to have opportunities to progress, regardless of their own characteristic or background.

At Together Active, we are committed to empowering every employee to realise their full potential. We prioritise the continuous nurturing of a work environment where our staff feel deeply appreciated, invested in, and supported in their personal and professional growth at their own pace and direction. Our People Plan is designed to actualise this commitment by fostering a diverse workforce and an inclusive culture. We aim to achieve this by crafting personalised development pathways that enable our team members to constantly learn and progress while placing paramount importance on supporting the overall wellbeing of our employees. We firmly believe that nurturing a workforce characterised by curiosity, empathy, and a sense of value will significantly contribute to our overarching goal of designing out inactivity in Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent.

www.togetheractive.org

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We commit to ensuring that opportunities are available for employees

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Designing out inactivity
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