



Think people



Hackney Council Human Resources Strategy 2014-2018



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Statement from the Chief Executive

Hackney provides and commissions some of the most important services to the people of the borough. It also aims to work closely with a range of other public and private organisations in ensuring that public services are delivered to high standards in a cost effective way.

The Council is a large employer with over 5000 people employed involved in the provision of its services (including Hackney Learning Trust and Hackney Homes). As a people intensive business, to be confident of continuous improvement we need to pay particular attention to the workforce we employ to deliver excellent services. Approximately 25% of employees also live in Hackney and either use or are affected by the services they help provide. This is a very powerful tool by which the organisation can develop and improve its services.

This strategy demonstrates our commitment to investing in our workforce and how we depend upon employees' knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviour. This resource is our most valuable asset and we need to build on and improve each and every employee's capacity to contribute in this way. We also need to ensure that we remain an attractive employer and we place significant emphasis on flexible working and benefits to ensure that all members of our community are able to succeed as employees of Hackney Council. The greatest challenge will be to make the most of skills and talents of people to deliver services in a challenging environment. At all levels staff will be empowered to take increasing responsibility to respond to the changes required – with a real focus on achieving outcomes – not just managing processes. We want to engage everyone in Hackney in meeting these challenges by providing new solutions. We want to encourage new ideas, new ways of working. This is a time for everyone to have their say.

People management is a core competence for all managers and needs to be a cornerstone of our approach to management development. The role of managers at all levels in leading the workforce through this period of tremendous change will be pivotal. The Council continues to successfully manage the challenge of continuing to provide good quality frontline services in a time of rapidly reducing resources. This inevitably puts strain on our employees, and we employ less people now than in the past, which places even more emphasis on the need to ensure that our employees understand what is expected of them and have access to the tools, training and development opportunities to enable them to fulfil their roles and their potential. A clear strategic framework for our people management activity across the whole organisation is therefore vital to our future success if we are to recruit, retain, develop and motivate our employees to achieve our key priorities.

The Think People Strategy 2014-18 sets out a clear framework and set of objectives to match the needs of our workforce with the corporate priorities of the Council. This is not, however, a strategy for our Human Resources professionals. It is instead a strategy that is owned collectively by the Council, from front-line service delivery employees to the Councillors, albeit that each person has a different role to play in its execution.

The next few years present real challenges and opportunities for Hackney. The Think People Strategy sets out our commitment to ensuring our key resource, our employees, are equipped to meet these challenges and take advantage of the opportunities.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tim Shields". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Tim Shields
Chief Executive



Introduction from Gifty Edila

I am pleased to present the Council's 'Think People HR and OD strategy' which sets out what the HR and OD service's aims and objectives are for 2015-18, along with how they will achieve it.

Staff are our greatest assets in delivering Council services. The strategy sets out a new way of working for HR and OD as well as our managers, and we know it will take time to embed new ways of working. However we are confident that we have the people, tools and skills to make it a success.

Hackney is a great place to work and maintaining this is at the heart of the strategy. We want to be effective, make continuous improvements and listen to our workforce.

HR and OD will continue to provide an expert and professional service to managers. We will support and enable them to be the best they can be, and help them work with their teams in an effective way which allows staff to flourish and reach their full potential.

I'm proud of the work the HR and OD team do to support the organisation and the staff who provide outstanding services within Hackney. Let's work together to show Hackney is a great place to work.



Gifty Edila
Corporate Director, HR, Legal and Regulatory Services



Postcard from an employee in 2018



Hackney has achieved much over the past decade and is recognised as one of the best Councils in London. We have also successfully managed the delivery of services during the current public spending cuts. However, these cuts place further pressure on the public sector, especially local government. The medium term financial position of the Council is therefore difficult and will require further significant budgetary savings of an additional £42m up until 2016/17, with more savings likely to be required in the future.

The Council employs around 3500 people directly, with Hackney Learning Trust employing around 2800 and Hackney Homes a further 800. Additional support is provided through an agency and temporary workforce, which varies in size. Approximately 25 % of its employees live in the borough and the fact that these employees are also citizens provides a unique opportunity to harness their knowledge, skills and commitment to help deliver improved and more cost effective services to their local communities. To achieve the sort of organisation the Council aspires to be it will need to transform so that employees are:

- **organised differently**
- **prepared to think differently**
- **supported to be able to work differently**

The Think People Strategy sets out the Council’s vision, values and ambitions in relation to key “Think People” issues over the next four years. In the future, we need employees who take personal accountability for their actions and results and who take calculated risks, who can work in partnership and provide excellent customer service whilst valuing and motivating their teams. The financial context is difficult, so we need innovators who can find new ways of doing things and who are focussed on performance improvement and cost reduction. The latest employee survey (2013) reported that the Council has an engaged and motivated workforce that speaks highly of Hackney as an employer and service provider. We therefore have a strong base on which to build.



Introduction

The strategy is structured under five key themes:

1

Service delivery and improvement

This is concerned with ensuring that we have a modern, flexible and responsive workforce that is set up to deliver the aims of the Council. It is also about ensuring that we have managers who are confident and capable in managing their workforce to deliver services.

2

Organisational and individual development and new ways of working

This theme is about ensuring that the organisations and individuals have the skills and training necessary for personal organisational success and that organisational and individual aims are well aligned.

3

Reward and recognition

This is about ensuring that we have pay and grading structures that are modern and appropriate as well as ensuring the Council provides flexibility in the benefits package available to employees.

4

Equality and diversity

This theme is concerned with ensuring that there is fairness and equity in all stages of the employment relationship and that we strive to have an employee base that is representative of the communities the Council serves.

5

Safe and healthy workforce

This area is about ensuring that our Health and Safety responsibilities towards our workforce are at the core of everything we do and that we focus on workplace health and a healthy workforce. We will proactively manage issues such as sickness absence, promote healthy lifestyles and ensure that we have appropriate arrangements in place to ensure health and safety compliance.

This strategy will be underpinned by action plans to ensure that the themes deliver outcomes. One of which is the HR and OD action plan, although other departments will also need to ensure that action plans are in place to deliver the aims and ambitions of the Strategy. Think People has been developed through consultation with a wide range of stakeholders including Members, the Hackney Management Team and Trade Unions. Whilst it covers a four year period, it will be reviewed and amended to reflect any ongoing changes and developments.



Local

Hackney is a diverse borough, with a population that is growing fast. Hackney is somewhere that many people want to work because of local amenities and quality of life, even if they cannot afford to live in the borough following surging house prices. Transport links are much improved and will improve even more with Cross Rail 1 and 2 and upgrades to Hackney Central and Hackney Downs stations. Links to the London Underground network are provided via the Overground station at Hackney Central and Hackney Downs provides connections to Liverpool Street as well as Essex and East Anglia. Facts and figures on the Hackney population can be found here:

<http://www.hackney.gov.uk/Assets/Documents/Hackney-Profile.pdf>

This provides the context for some of the workforce issues we face in terms of recruitment, retention and local employment. Whilst we strive to be amongst the best local government employers in London, our employees have choices and there are many public and private sector employers in very close proximity. This means **we need to continually look at what we offer, and what others offer, to maximise employee retention**. We also need to recognise that whilst a relatively high number (by London standards) of our employees live locally, most new entrants to the area are unlikely to be able to afford to live in Hackney and therefore we need to consider what benefits are attractive to commuters – such as season ticket loans.

In terms of the Council and partners, there has been much local change which needs to be considered in the context of the workforce, such as the separate management agreement with Hackney Learning Trust. Further, the consultation on bringing Hackney Homes, the ALMO, back into the Council may bring significant workforce implications.

Think People provides an overarching framework for a number of separate but related plans and strategies including the HR and OD work plan and specific work in relation to appraisals, as well as corporate groups such as consultative committees with trade unions and the corporate health and safety committee. Much of the work is also influenced by developments at National and regional level including the Local Government Employers and London Councils. Directorates within the Council also have specific workforce development strategies and training plans for employees and this Strategy works alongside and complements these.

National

The Council cannot operate in isolation from the world it operates within. The pace of change in the modern world is fast and the Council must constantly adapt to make the most of the challenges this presents.

The most obvious national context is central Government policies, priorities and the impact of the public spending cuts. Our communities and businesses are going to continue to be affected which will significantly increase the challenges associated with “narrowing the gap” and reducing disadvantage. The local government workforce is reducing and is likely to continue to reduce over the coming years which will impact upon the services that can be provided and the resilience of local government organisations. The outcome of the forthcoming General Election in 2015 represents another driver in shaping the future approach of the Council.

The principal challenge for local government is to provide community leadership and improved services within controlled budgets. The context is ever changing and our community expects greater choice. Working in partnership with statutory, independent voluntary and community partners will bring increased opportunities and increased challenge in equal measure and it is essential that we work with our partners to deliver on significant national government priorities. These priorities strengthen the incentives for closer partnership working to deliver joined-up outcomes e.g. the implementation of integrated Social Care and Children’s services, the Care Act, Universal Credit and welfare reform, the review of the probation service and a patient-led NHS, along with the recent transfer of Public Health back to local government.



Our priorities

Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2018

Hackney's Sustainable Community Strategy is our shared vision for the local area for the next 10 years. It sets out our vision, our priorities and a set of outcomes around which all partners will be organising their business plans in the coming years. The Strategy is not a static document, it is a means by which we achieve our ends. This includes focusing on the six priorities in our work, learning more about how we address them and inviting residents and organisations to engage in the decisions that affect the area.

Our Sustainable Community Strategy Priorities are:

1. Reduce poverty by supporting residents into sustainable employment, and promoting employment opportunities.
2. Help residents to become better qualified and raise educational aspirations.
3. Promote health and wellbeing for all, and support independent living.
4. Make the borough safer, and help people to feel safe in Hackney.
5. Promote mixed communities in well-designed neighbourhoods, where people can access high quality, affordable housing.
6. Be a sustainable community, where all citizens take pride in and take care of Hackney and its environment for future generations.

In 2012 we reviewed progress against these priorities and adopted the following areas of focus for 2012-2015:

1. Take an integrated and strategic approach to manage growth and change in the borough
2. Work proactively as a partnership to identify and maximise employment opportunities arising from key growth areas in Hackney and neighbouring borough in East London and across the city for Hackney residents who are ready to work
3. Ensure senior leadership and co-ordination of efforts by partners to help the long term unemployed move closer to employment
4. Ensure senior leadership to support the implementation of the Child Poverty and Family Wellbeing Action Plan and that there is cross-cutting coordination to ensure we implement and monitor progress against key outcomes
5. Review how we approach Community Engagement and build community cohesion, ensuring that in future we have a range of effective channels and trusted means for excellent two way dialogue between local people and local decision makers and public services

The overall medium term aims of the Council as articulated in the Corporate Plan are:



1. Helping and protecting those residents who most need support, and working with them to improve their lives and capacity for independence.
2. Keeping Hackney clean and safe, and promoting the quality of life and wellbeing of all our residents.
3. Bringing investment and jobs into Hackney, creating opportunity and prosperity, and ensuring our residents have the education, skills and support to benefit.

Think People will be a key enabler of delivery as it is only through our employees that these priorities will be delivered.

Our employees

Critical to future success will be our employees. Overall, the period 2014-2018 will be a period of intense challenges for the local government workforce. Numbers are likely to be reducing whilst skill requirements will change and we will be asking our employees to do more, and different, jobs. **Services are likely to need to change and restructure regularly in order to meet the financial and service delivery challenges and it is important throughout that we continue to support our employees through the change process.** At the same time, as the largest employer in the Borough and a public organisation, others look to us to provide a “standard” that they can follow in terms of workforce management, and this ethos is one that is important to the Council to maintain.

The increasing level and complexity of partnership working with other organisations to deliver the overall Community Strategy objectives for our citizens means that we need to develop closer linkages and/or join up work with partners. There is a particular focus on the NHS as part of the Government’s Health and Social Care reforms, and it is important that our employees are flexible and have the ability to work across organisational boundaries in a matrix fashion to deliver outcomes.

The strategy reflects a challenging agenda for the Council as a whole, but particularly for our workforce. Fundamentally, it is about achieving a modern, efficient and fully effective council that can flexibly deploy and keep its talented people to enable them to deliver services in an increasingly locally-tailored and citizen-focused manner within the financial constraints placed upon us. This requires a strong ethos of transformation, innovation, performance management and continuous improvement with an overarching requirement for high quality outputs from all. We will need to recruit and retain the best staff in order to deliver.

We need a step change in not only what we do, but the way we do things. **We want to introduce a culture that is permissive, empowers staff and, allows calculated risk taking to achieve innovation.** Our approach is to reduce bureaucracy and eliminate unnecessary processes. We like to describe this as “freedoms within a framework”. What we are looking for in our employees is reflective of the 7 principles of public life:

1) Serving the public

2) Political neutrality

3) Honesty and integrity

4) Respect for others

5) Accountability

6) Representing the Council

7) Management and leadership

More detail on all of these can be found in the Code of Conduct, available at this link:

http://staffroom.hackney.gov.uk/code_of_conduct_policy_bookley.pdf



Service delivery and service improvement

Aim:

To support the organisation to deliver services through its employees and to provide policies and processes that enable that to happen.

The medium term financial position for the new Council is extremely challenging with in the region of an additional £42m revenue savings being needed over the period to 2016/17, with the likelihood of further savings in the future. In a service led organisation such as the Council, people are the most important resource. It therefore is essential that this strategy is clearly linked with the Financial Strategy and the Council's aims and aspirations. HR issues feature heavily in any programme of change. A particular aim of the Administration is to ensure that the Council has appropriate flexible and mobile working policies, and partnerships with organisations such as Timewise, to ensure that all sections of the community are able to work for the Council and this will form part of the action plan. In terms of overall delivery and improvement of services, moving forward residents will expect more flexible, personally tailored and responsive services. Whilst it is a core aim to retain services in-house where efficient and effective to do so, some services may be run in partnership with other providers, such as the NHS and the local community and voluntary sector.

The financial challenge also requires us to look at how we are organised in terms of service delivery. In the future, there will be fewer managers and fewer layers – management spans of control will be wider and structures flatter. Managers will be required to have new skills in, for instance, people and financial management as support in these areas moves to an advice based approach.

We know that parents and carers often need to match working hours with childcare and/or caring responsibilities; through our partnership with organisations such as Timewise we will work to become an employer that offers flexible working and supports parents and carers to enter the workforce and progress in their careers. Other specific actions under this theme will include a review of HR policies and procedures alongside the introduction of a new business partner approach in the way managers are supported with people management. The move to a business partner approach, whilst necessary in the current financial climate, will be a significant challenge for managers. A 12 month transition period will be used to introduce the necessary training, development and systems required to support the change. Alongside this, a piece of work will be undertaken on processes to ensure that, in all areas, we operate to the “freedoms within a framework” philosophy and reduce unnecessary processes and control systems, enabling our employees to be innovative in the way services are delivered and giving managers the flexibility to operate within the financial constraints that we face. Where processes do need to be retained, a key element will be to e-enable them, essential in an era of reducing resources.

**IN A SERVICE LED ORGANISATION
SUCH AS THE COUNCIL, PEOPLE
ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT
RESOURCE**



Organisational and individual development and new ways of working

Aim:

To develop employees who deliver excellent services and reach their full potential

The Council must ensure it has the organisational culture and capacity to deliver its ambitious plans, by aligning not only task completion but also skills and behaviours of employees with the overall strategy of the Council. The small corporate OD team will support the organisation by a combination of working with commissioned specialists and delivering a range of direct projects. Close attention will also be paid to improving and aligning existing OD processes and systems to ensure that they are flexible and adaptable to the workforce that the Council needs to deliver services. The Corporate OD team will produce a detailed plan of activity in relation to both Organisational Development and Individual Development which will assist in achieving the aim of this theme, structured around two interlinking elements:

- a) **Organisational Development and New Ways of Working** – focusing on organisational culture, attitudes and behaviours
- b) **Individual Development and New Ways of Working** – focusing on expectations of performance, individual responsibility and attitudes, and using learning and development as part of a culture change

The engagement of all employees, individually and also through trade unions, is central to achieving culture and change. The involvement of employees on matters such as work methods, service planning and budget setting, and employee opinion on organisational health will be regularly sought and acted upon, which is work that will be undertaken in conjunction with the internal communications team. The employee survey is highly regarded and has recently produced enviable results. Departments receive figures broken down by area and produce specific action plans to address issues and build upon success. This will be continued and built upon in the future. Further, an innovation network, Innovation Works, supported by an ideas website will be launched.

The OD team will also focus on educating and devolving OD understanding and practices into the organisation's line-management, which will include promoting the Council's approach to qualification sponsorship and supporting training so that those with the potential and the willingness to develop and progress have access to opportunities to develop their learning and skills to prepare them for future roles within Hackney. There will be a substantial enhancement to e-learning capacity to make sure training and learning opportunities are flexible, appropriate and efficient for a modern workforce.

There will be a significant shift towards more flexible appraisal systems in line with what we need from our employees in the future, with e-enabled systems to support the mobile and flexible working agenda. There will be investment in training for managers in terms of managing performance and undertaking appraisals. A specific part of this will be training for managers on identifying and dealing with underperformance quickly as well as valuing and recognising high performers. Focus will be placed on developing a corporate induction process and investigating a management development programme to enable the Council to "grow our own" managers and develop succession plans for key roles. There will also be work on learning pathways for roles, to ensure that there is career progression.

The organisation is committed to apprenticeships and graduate entry schemes, and resources will be allocated to coordinating such work. The Council has an ambition to employ as many people locally as is possible and we will expand Ways into Work, our employment, training and skills service for Hackney's jobseekers, bringing together Council services, training providers and employers as well as work with the borough's schools to ensure that our young people have the right skills for future employment. We will also promote and secure apprenticeships for young people by working with local businesses, developers, and through our own regeneration projects, to deliver training alongside jobs and we will seek the creation of local employment and apprenticeships through the Council's contracting and its procurement of goods and services. Further, employees will be supported through appropriate professional qualifications. There will be a significant extension of e-learning methods in order to increase accessibility and access to learning and reduce delivery costs. Finally work will be undertaken to put in place support for employees leaving the Council, such as with outplacement and training services.



Reward and recognition

Aim:

To ensure we have a fair, equitable and modern approach to pay and conditions that motivates employees to achieve high performance.

The Council employs a large and diverse workforce across a wide range of jobs and the Council wishes to maintain an attractive set of terms and conditions, recognising that as a large public sector employer it sets a benchmark for others. External pressures such as the National Single Status Agreement and multiple equal pay claims in the past posed the single greatest risk to the Council in terms of cost, employee relations and recruitment and retention. These have largely been resolved, but it is only through clear and defined job evaluation processes that the ongoing risk can be managed.

We need to consider how we will recruit and retain the best talent, and reward and recognition is part of this picture. The current single status job evaluation pay and grading structure has been in place for over 10 years and will require review, as will the Chief Officer pay and grading structure and job evaluation scheme. Terms and conditions should also be reviewed to ensure that they are fair, consistent and in line with the Council's aims and objectives, including consideration of the issues surrounding time-based increments and performance related pay as well as considering particular recruitment and retention pressure points and introducing mechanisms and policies to ensure that we can address this, such as a comprehensive and equality proofed market supplement policy. Further specific actions include the completion of an equal pay audit as recommended the European Human Rights Commission, and maximising the use of flexible benefits as part of being an employee of Hackney, including indirect benefits that the Council can provide, such as employee discounts; and the non-financial benefits of working for us.

The Council has recently committed to paying the London Living Wage to direct employees and those employed through contractors – one of the first Authorities to do so. This is a significant commitment and one of which the Council is rightly proud. We will extend our work in this area by campaigning for all the borough's employers to pay at least the London Living Wage. There are also a number of important non-financial mechanisms in place to recognise and reward employees such as Hackney Stars, the Big Thank You and long service awards.

WE NEED TO CONSIDER HOW WE WILL RECRUIT & RETAIN & REWARD THE BEST TALENT



Equality and diversity in employment

Aim:

To promote and develop fair and consistent employment policies and practices and to work to ensure that our workforce is representative of our community.

Prejudice and discrimination in all its forms is unacceptable and will be challenged. Hackney Council is proud of its diverse communities and workforce and is committed to capitalising on the differences and improvements to services that this opportunity provides. Every employee will be treated with dignity and respect at every stage of their employment with the Council and equality of opportunity will be promoted in the delivery of all services and employment practices – and we will make sure our policies reflect this commitment. We will work to retain our equalities standards such as the double tick symbol and stonewall accreditation, and enhance them where appropriate. We will work towards the achievement of a workforce that reflects the community that we serve.

The Council has a wide range of policies and practices which successfully promote equality and diversity in all stages of the employment relationship. All current policies will be reviewed to ensure they meet current best practice and statutory duties. Equality Impact Assessments are carried out as a matter of course on all new and revised policies and a Single Equality Scheme is in place. Equality and diversity issues underpin a number of other plans and initiatives shown elsewhere in the strategy, as well as plans and initiatives throughout the Council. We will work to ensure that we have appropriate flexible and mobile working options in place to enable all sections of the community to apply for work with Hackney Council as well as partnering with organisations such as Timewise.

Hackney reviewed and updated our Equality and Cohesion Policy in June 2013. This explains what we mean by equality, diversity and cohesion and the main strategies which are in place to advance equality and promote cohesion for staff and residents.

We are committed to supporting and harnessing a diverse workforce for the benefit of service users. We should refine the way we collect information about our workforce, analyse the information and make best use of our workforce data so that we can gauge whether we are meeting our objectives for a diverse workforce. This also helps us meet a specific Equality Duty to share equality information about our workforce.

Equality Framework for Local Government

In June 2013 Hackney was rated Excellent in a peer led review on the Equality Framework for Local Government and this included a consideration of workforce. This highlighted excellence in terms of workforce diversity, motivation and morale as well as praising the Council's proactive programmes to create routes into employment for those further from the labour market. The review highlighted the following areas for development:

- **Strengthening the mechanisms that ensure consistent behaviour and management standards**
- **Support and build staff resilience in the face of budget cuts**
- **Roll out the training for Customer Services so that more staff from across the workforce can access it**
- **Regularly revisit and challenge workforce targets.**

These actions will be taken forward as part of the implementation of this strategy.



Disability review

Earlier this year the Council conducted an internal review on disability. The aim of the review was to improve equality of access to Hackney's services and Hackney as a workplace for disabled residents, staff and elected representatives. One of the recommendations was to promote a shared understanding of disability equality in the workforce through guidance, information and training. The specific actions arising from this review, which should inform our People Strategy are:

- **Promoting a consistent approach to disability equality through workforce development**
- **Strengthening our corporate approach to supporting a workforce with changing needs (e.g. age related or illness related impairment and mental health)**
- **Identify opportunities to raise awareness more generally about flexible working to promote a diverse workforce.**

Safe and healthy workforce

Aim:

To provide healthy workplaces and safe systems of work and to promote and enhance the health and wellbeing of employees.

It is a core of the employer's responsibilities to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all staff and it is everyone's responsibility from the Chief Executive downwards to safeguard themselves and others. The Council has specialist Health and Safety advisors in HR and OD, as well as further health and safety expertise across the Council. Occupational Health is provided on a contract basis. These services help and advise managers and staff as well as developing and monitoring health and safety performance.

The strategy for ongoing health and safety training must reflect the high standards expected within large exemplar organisations. Key personnel, particularly managers, will need to be aware of the health and safety roles and responsibilities associated with their post. The increasingly complex world of partnership and joint working often throws up difficult health and safety issues. It is essential the roles and responsibilities are clearly defined within these relationships to ensure the Council's core responsibility as client, commissioner and/or provider of services is fulfilled. A review will be commissioned of the Council's overall approach to health and safety which will look at roles, responsibilities and structure and will provide recommendations for the future

A Corporate Health and Safety Committee with trade unions provides corporate leadership on health and safety, and health and safety should feature as an agenda item at team meetings. The remit of the Committee and health and safety groups is to:

- **promote relevant corporate objectives and policies**
- **monitor the incidence of accidents and ill health**
- **promote actions and initiatives which are intended to reduce accidents and promote the well being of all staff.**



Alongside health and safety, workforce health more generally is a priority for the Council. 25% of our employees live in the borough and with the recent move of Public Health from the NHS into local government, we have an opportunity to ensure that public health interventions are linked to employee health and are publicised and taken up by staff. There is a public health consultant with specific responsibility for workplace health, and public health are working on initiatives for employees such as courses on mental health first aid and health fairs, as well as working with HR to tailor the occupational health website to highlight relevant public health campaigns in Hackney. In the future, this work will continue and be broadened. We will extend work with Health Matters, our occupational health provider, to provide information on health and wellbeing issues and developments to employees and will highlight those in communications to employees.

Specifically, the management of sickness absence, both short and long term, remains a continuing priority for the Council. In particular, the Council is keen to reduce the incidence of work related stress; this also reflects the current national concern with regard to this subject. There is also a focus on supporting those with terminal illness. There will be robust contract management processes put into place for the new occupational health contract.

25%
**OF OUR EMPLOYEES
LIVE IN THE
BOROUGH**

