

REPORT TO: Cabinet

6 February 2019

LEAD CABINET MEMBER: Lead Cabinet Member for Finance

LEAD OFFICER: Susan Gardner-Craig – Head of People and Organisational Development

Disability Confident scheme

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to present to Cabinet information in respect of the Government's Disability Confident scheme.

Recommendations

2. It is recommended that Cabinet:
 - a) that that the council signs up the Disability Confident scheme and commits to achieving Level 1
 - b) establishes a Member Task and Finish group to take forward a programme of work to enable the Council to achieve the requirements of the Disability Confident scheme.

Reasons for Recommendations

3. The Council, at its meeting on 19 July 2018, considered a Motion from Councillor Peter McDonald which requested the Employment and Staffing Committee to review the Council's activity to promote equality and diversity amongst its workforce and in particular, actively seeks ways to make South Cambridgeshire District Council an Employer of Choice for people with disabilities.
4. A commitment by the council to sign up to the Disability Confident scheme would result in agreeing a set of actions and activities which would ensure that the council meets the requirements of the scheme. It is recommended that a Member Task and Finish group, supported by officers, is established to consider and take forward a work programme.

Background

5. The Two Ticks – positive about disabled people scheme, was widely known recognition given by Job Centre Plus to employers based in Great Britain who had agreed to take positive action to meet five commitments regarding employment, training, retention and career development of disabled employees. In 2016, the Department for Work and Pensions launched Disability Confident which replaced the Two Ticks Scheme.
6. In August 2018 the Minister for Disabled People, Health & Work, Sarah Newton MP, wrote to public sector employers about the scheme to raise the profile and encourage participation. The Employer campaign document is attached at Appendix 1.

7. The Disability Confident scheme supports employers to improve how they attract, recruit and retain disabled workers. The scheme has three levels which are designed to demonstrate different levels of commitment and support for people with disabilities. There are resources for employers such as on-line materials and self-assessment tools. Employers must complete each level before moving onto the next. The first step involves formal sign up the Government scheme, this demonstrates the organisations commitment to achieving Level 1.
8. There is no cost to signing up however, there may be future costs should the council need to make building, facilities or desk space modifications to improve accessibility. The council does have a facilities management budget which would cover small works. If the work was significant (removal of walls or additional toilet/changing facilities) the facilities team would submit a budget bid for council consideration.
9. To be recognised as Disability Confident Committed the organisation will need to agree to the Disability Confident commitments and identify at least one action that you'll carry out to make a difference for disabled people. See Appendix 2 and 3 for details.
10. Following sign up, the organisation will receive:
 - a certificate in recognition of achievement
 - a badge for the website and other materials for 12 months
 - a self-assessment to help the organisation to continue the journey to becoming a Disability Confident Employer (Level 2)
11. Once an organisation has signed up for level 1 it can progress to level 2, a Disability Confident Employer, by self-assessing the organisation around 2 themes:
 - getting the right people for your business
 - keeping and developing your people

Disability Confident Employers are recognised as going the extra mile to make sure disabled people get a fair chance.
12. The organisation, having confirmed the completion of the online self-assessment, will be registered as a Disability Confident Employer for 2 years. The organisation will receive:
 - a certificate in recognition of your achievement
 - a badge for your website and other materials for 2 years
 - information on how to become a Disability Confident Leader (Level 3)
13. Level 3: Disability Confident Leader is aimed at organisations who wish to act as a champion within your local and business communities.

To reach this level organisations need to:

- have the self-assessment validated from outside the business
- show what has been done as a Disability Confident Leader

Once recognised as a Disability Confident Leader, the organisation will receive:

- a certificate in recognition of your achievement
- a badge for your website and other materials for 3 years

Options

14. There are two options:

Option 1

The council could commit to signing up to the Disability Confident scheme which would provide a recognised framework in terms of meeting the council's ambition to make South Cambridgeshire District Council an Employer of Choice for people with disabilities. It is recommended that Cabinet endorse this approach.

15. If Cabinet indicate a that this is the preferred option, it is also recommended that a Member Task and Finish group is established to:
- Recognise the role of Members in terms of being community leaders for the scheme
 - Consider the requirements of the Disability Confident Scheme in relation to the council
 - Identify the current measures undertaken by the council in relation to disabled people and,
 - Scope and take forward a work programme to meet the requirements of the scheme
16. Option 2
Alternatively, the council could propose a work programme which would be underpinned by the ambition and commitment made set out by Council in July. However this would not carry the national recognition.
17. There are no other national schemes which recognise and support employer commitments for people with disabilities.

Implications

18. In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk management, equality and diversity, climate change, community safety and any other key issues, the following implications have been considered: -

Financial

19. There is no cost associated with signing up to the Disability Confident scheme as such and the support materials are available on-line and free of charge. However, there is a potential for additional costs should the council need to make building or facilities alterations to improve accessibility generally.
20. Specific assistance for an individual employee such as equipment, furniture, assistance or travel to and from work may be funded through the Access to Work scheme. This scheme has been used for current employees in order to provide a range of adjustments and aids.

Staffing

21. There is full council commitment to making South Cambridgeshire District Council a great place to work and this includes people with disabilities. The council is in an area of high employment and is competing for

Equality and Diversity

22. The council is committed to ensuring fairness and equality of access to employment and services.

Consultations (including from the Youth Council)

23. Employment Committee considered the Disability Confident Scheme at its meeting on 17 January 2019. The committee indicated full support.

Background Papers

- a) ACAS guidance and relevant employment legislation
- b) Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
- c) Government website <https://disabilityconfident.campaign.gov.uk/>

Where [the Local Authorities \(Executive Arrangements\) \(Meetings and Access to Information\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#) require documents to be open to inspection by members of the public, they must be available for inspection: -

- (a) at all reasonable hours at the offices of South Cambridgeshire District Council;
- (b) on the Council's website; and
- (c) in the case of documents to be available for inspection pursuant to regulation 15, on payment of a reasonable fee required by the Council by the person seeking to inspect the documents at the offices of South Cambridgeshire District Council.

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