



Report to:	Employment and Staffing Committee – 9 June 2022
Lead Cabinet Member:	John Williams
Lead Officer:	Jeff Membery/Lindsey Smith

Disability Confident Task and Finish Group

Executive Summary

1. This report is in response to an email received by the Employment and Staffing Committee from Councillor Sarah Cheung-Johnson, Lead of the Disability Confident Task & Finish Group. Councillor Cheung-Johnson questioned whether the task and finish group needed to continue now that Disability Confident Level 2 had been reached.
2. The Council achieved Disability Confident Level 1 on April 2019 and was accredited Level 2 in April 2021 which is valid for 3 years. As a Disability Confident Employer we are committed to:
 - recruiting the right people for our organisation.
 - retaining and developing our staff.
3. Since achieving Level 2 accreditation in April 2021, the Council has undertaken a number of actions to fulfil our duty as a Disability Confident employer, however further work needs to be done to consolidate the Council's Level 2 status before considering moving towards level 3.

Key Decision

2. No.

Recommendations

4. It is recommended that the Employment and Staffing Committee considers this report and decides whether the Task and Finish Group needs to continue now that Level 2 has been achieved.

Reasons for Recommendations

5. A decision is needed whether the Task and Finish Group needs to continue so a response can be provided to Councillor Cheung-Johnson.

Details

6. The Disability Task and Finish group was set up in 2019, as the Council wished to obtain Disability Confident accreditation. Disability Confident is a government scheme designed to encourage employers to recruit and retain disabled people and those with health conditions. It has replaced the previous Two Ticks Positive About Disabled People scheme. It is voluntary and has been developed by employers and disabled people's representatives.
7. The lead member of the Task and Finish group is Councillor Sarah Cheung-Johnson and other members are Councillor Mark Howell, Councillor Jose Hales, Councillor Eileen Wilson, Councillor Alex Malyon. The group was supported by Susan Gardner-Craig, Head of HR and Lindsey Smith, HR Business Partner.
8. The scheme has 3 levels and you must complete each level before moving on to the next.
 - Disability Confident Committed employer (Level 1)
 - Disability Confident Employer (Level 2)
 - Disability Confident Leader (Level 3)
9. The Council achieved Level 1 status in April 2019 and was accredited Level 2 in April 2021 which is valid for 3 years. As a Disability Confident Employer we are committed to:
 - recruiting the right people for our organisation.
 - retaining and developing our staff.
10. The Scheme links with the Council's Equality Strategy and we have undertaken a number of actions to fulfil our duty as a Disability Confident Level 2 employer including:
 - inclusive and accessible recruitment.
 - raising awareness of us as a Disability Confident Employer through our branding.
 - engaging with Job Centre Plus and Papworth Trust to consider how we can encourage disabled applicants to apply for our vacancies.
 - supporting managers with recruiting candidates who have declared a disability.
 - offering an interview to disabled people who meet the minimum criteria
 - providing reasonable adjustments for applicants to attend interview/undertake tests.

- supporting existing employees through providing reasonable adjustments following advice from our Occupational Health provider.
- delivering disability awareness training for all existing staff, and new staff as part of the Council's induction process.
- introduced the Reasonable Adjustment Disability Passport to support disabled employees.
- Promoting Disability History month.

11. During 2022/23 we plan to deliver inclusive recruitment training for all recruiting managers and disability awareness training is to be offered to Members as part of their training programme.

12. Due to the pandemic and working from home arrangements, we haven't been able to fulfil all our actions under level 2, including offering work experience placements or conducting a disability assessment of the building. However, there are a number of further actions planned as we return to the office and move to hybrid working.

13. To achieve Level 3 Disability Confident Leader status, the Council would continue to complete all activities under Level 2 as well as undertaking the following 3 additional steps:

14. **Challenge** – the self-assessment which was completed for level 2 needs to be independently validated. This involves the validators looking at each of the criteria and evidence recorded on the self-assessment and being assured that we:

- are delivering against all of the core actions and are employing disabled people
- can provide evidence for each of the activities we are undertaking to recruit the right people and retain and develop our employees.

The independent validation can be completed by at least one of the following groups:

- recognised accreditation organisations whose accreditation covers the components of the Disability Confident Employer self-assessment
- existing Disability Confident Leaders
- disabled employees or customers/clients
- internal diversity and inclusions groups/forums
- disabled stakeholder groups or forums
- national disability network groups
- local disability organisations, Work and Health Programme providers, network groups
- disabled people's user led organisations (DPULOs)
- national disability organisations

15. Leadership – provide a narrative of the activities we are or will be doing to demonstrate our commitment as a Disability Confident Leader. This may include:

- using social media to promote and share good practice on Disability Confident.
- networking with other employers in our industry.
- being a mentor, coach, buddy or providing peer support to others.
- engaging with other local employers to share good practice.
- celebrating success, for example being nominated for or the winner of a recognised award.
- being nominated for and/or winning local, regional and national awards for the employment of disabled people.
- sponsoring or hosting Disability Confident inspired events.
- providing validation of self-assessment(s) to other employers.
- using contracting to drive positive change, with supply chain providers encouraged to become Disability Confident.

16. Reporting on disability, mental health and wellbeing - publicly report information on disability, mental health and well-being on the Voluntary Reporting Framework. This can be done through an annual report and published on our website. The report needs to cover the following:

- explain the activities in our organisation in relation to the recruitment and retention of disabled people.
- where possible report the percentage of individuals within our organisation who consider themselves to be disabled or have a long term physical or mental health condition.
- explain the activities in our organisation in relation to supporting the health and wellbeing of our employees.
- report the output of staff surveys that provide measures of employee wellbeing.

17. Once all the actions and activities to be a Disability Confident Leader have been completed, we would need to request to become a Disability Confident Leader by submitting the relevant form on the Government website.

18. Once approved, the Disability Confident Leader status is valid for 3 years.

Options

1. The Task and Finish Group ends as we continue to complete further actions under level 2.
2. The Task and Finish Group continues as we complete more actions under level 2 and undertake further actions to move to level 3.

Implications

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

Financial

20. There are financial implications in terms of costs of delivering training on equality, disability and inclusion training to staff and members as well as inclusive recruitment training to recruiting managers.

Legal

21. Under the Equality Act 2010 the Council has a duty to provide reasonable adjustments for applicants and employees with a disability.

Staffing

22. Officers are required to implement the actions under the Disability Confident scheme.

Risks/Opportunities

23. The Council will seek to mitigate and eliminate risks associated with employment relations matters for example by making reasonable adjustments for applicants and employees with a disability.

Equality and Diversity

24. Through providing reasonable adjustments for applicants and employees with a disability, we are ensuring individuals from this protected group are not disadvantaged.

Alignment with Council Priority Areas

A modern and caring Council

25. By being a Disability Confident Employer, we are demonstrating our commitment to recruiting and retaining disabled people in a safe environment.

Report Author:

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