WEST SUSSEX VIBE

Values, Behaviours and Expectations

What we expect of our staff, managers, and leaders

*"People will forget what you said,
people will forget what you did,
but people will never forget how you made
them feel"*
Maya Angelou

Introduction

Our success is achieved not just by '**what we do**' but also '**how we do it**'. Our behaviours can contribute positively to creating a productive, inclusive, and harmonious environment in which we can each be inspired and achieve our full potential. It can build confidence and competence in colleagues who, in turn can be proud of what we achieve and how we achieve it. Our behaviour standards provide all of us with a common language for **how** we go about our daily work alongside **what** we do; helping us to manage and improve our performance to build a more effective organisation and achieve the priority outcomes for our communities.

Our values are at the heart of these behaviour standards:

- **Listen and Act Upon** – we listen to each other and act on what is said. We also keep people informed of changes and progress.
- **Honest and Realistic** – we are honest and realistic about what we can achieve and what is possible, but we also see potential and support development.
- **Genuinely Valued** – all of our employees are genuinely valued. Valued for their experience, their skills, attitude and knowledge and also their ideas and innovation.
- **Trust and Support** – we trust people to do their jobs and we support them to grow, develop and meet future challenges.

- **Customer Centred** – we put our customers at the centre of all we do, engaging with them, consulting with them and asking for feedback to enable us to see things from their perspective.

Our values and behaviours show up in the life cycle of an employee, for example in recruiting, induction, learning and development, performance management and in our policies.

This document in three parts, section 1 applies to all of us. Building on this, section 2 covers our expectations of what it means to be a West Sussex County Council Manager; and building on this further, section 3 applies to heads of service and above.

Support

Performance conversations between colleagues and line managers, should regularly focus on development as well as two-way feedback. Feedback, be that motivational, developmental or 360º, sits at the heart of two of our values, Trust and Support and Genuinely Valued. Feedback maybe recognising a job well done or supporting one another to be the best that we can be. Development and support can take many forms, such as reflective practice, buddying, shadowing, mentoring, and training. For further ideas and support visit the Learning Development and Apprenticeships tile on the point.

Section1. Leading yourself: this is about you and how you behave daily at work

This section is designed to help you understand what our expectations are for all our employees

Expectations that apply to all staff – the "what"

1. Performance Management
Our approach to Performance Management is based on a regular ongoing cycle of performance conversations – which follow a 12:4:2 model (12, conversations spread across the year, 4 of which are focused on development and 2 of which are team business plan focused). All these conversations should promote a culture of continuous improvement and include:

- A strengths-based approach (i.e. draws upon an individual's strengths and assets), in reflective practice and learning
- Two-way feedback and recognition
- Clarity of performance expectations and evaluation
- Discussion of any Concerns and challenges
- And sharing views and ideas in relation to service improvement

These conversations will also provide a forum to regularly discuss wellbeing and professional development.

Our expectation is all employees will participate in regular performance conversations and take responsibility for performance and continued professional development, promptly alerting your manager when issues arise

2. Looking after our health, safety, mental and physical wellbeing

We all have a duty to keep not only ourselves safe at work, but also our colleagues and members of the public. Employee wellbeing is an important priority for us as an organisation. If we are not mentally and physically well it has an enormous impact on our home life and our ability to provide a great service to our customers. Wellbeing should regularly be discussed, in order that the appropriate support can be put in place.

Our expectation is that all employees will take responsibility for the health, safety and wellbeing and ask for help when necessary.

3. Developing our skills, knowledge, and practice

It is vital that we all have the skills, knowledge and development opportunities required for us to do a great job, maintain our professional competence, progress with our career aspirations and to enable continuous improvement. To support this we have a diverse and high quality Learning and Development offer available to all of our employees.

Our expectation is that all employees will complete all mandatory training in a timely manner, for example induction and regular refresher training and work in accordance with the professional practice/quality standards for their service

4. The high Standards of Conduct expected of us as Public Servants

Working in Local Government we answer to the residents of West Sussex for the way we conduct our business. As employees of the Council, we are expected to act honestly and fairly and meet high standards of behaviour, which are detailed in our [Standards of Conduct](#) and [Guidance](#).

Our expectation is that all employees will carry out their role in line with the West Sussex County Council [Standards of Conduct](#) and [Guidance](#) and report any major concerns about the conduct of officers, or others working on behalf of the County Council via the [Whistleblowing Policy](#)

5. Use of Systems and Acceptable use of IT

We have a legal obligation to protect information and data and to make sure we use the Council's investment in IT properly. How we do this is set out in the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP).

Our expectation is that all employees will use all IT responsibly, adhering to [acceptable use](#), information security and data protection policies ensure appropriate systems and processes, for example booking training courses or annual leave.

6. Our approach to sustainability

As an organisation we see tackling climate change as one of our key priorities and it is important for each of us to take responsibility and do all we can to reduce our carbon foot print by living, working, and travelling in a more sustainable way.

Our expectation is that all employees will work in a way that is sustainable, making best use of technology to not waste energy or resources.

7. Our Adults and Children's Safeguarding responsibilities

As employees of the council we all have a responsibility to support, both Adults with care and support needs, and Children to be safe. This is known as Safeguarding and anyone can raise a safeguarding concern. If you know or suspect that a child is being harmed, abused or neglected, or that an Adult is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect, the best way to report your concern is to visit the 'Raise a Concern' page on the West Sussex County Council Website.

Our expectation is that all employees respond appropriately to any Adult and Children's safeguarding concerns.

Behaviours that apply to all staff – the "How"

Value	Expected Behaviours
Customer Centred - we put our customers at the centre of all we do, engaging with them, consulting with them and asking for feedback to enable us to see things from their perspective.	• Make sure customers find their solutions in a timely manner • Continually look for service improvement and bring forward ideas • Know that I am making a difference because I am working in line with the council plan. • Take responsibility for customer enquiries and ensure their enquiry is resolved by redirecting the query to the appropriate service • Be open to, and positively engage with, new ways of working
Genuinely Valued – we recognise each other's achievements openly and genuinely value all contributions made. We treat everyone in the way that we would like to be treated. Our skills and expertise are appreciated and developed.	• Treat everyone as unique individuals and include them in my area of work • Show my appreciation to colleagues, encouraging and valuing any contributions and their ideas • Respect other people's time and use it effectively • Use my positive attitude to create a harmonious and inclusive environment • Manage my own well-being and look out for the well-being of others • Treat my colleagues, customers, partners and stakeholders with dignity and respect, showing integrity and consideration for them.
Trust and Support - we trust people to do their jobs and we support them to grow, develop and meet future challenges.	• Ask for feedback from others about how my behaviours and actions are impacting them • Be accountable for the quality of my own work including meeting deadlines • Be an active member of my team, offering support wherever necessary to deliver team outcomes • Build and maintain good working relationships • Question inappropriate behaviour and support others to improve
Listen and Act Upon - we listen to each other and act on what is said. We keep people informed of changed and progress.	• Encourage open communication and actively listen to others and value their contributions • Look out for behaviours that are out of character in others and offer my support • Respond to developmental feedback and develop my skills and behaviours • Openly admit to any genuine mistakes on my part and learn from it
Honest & Realistic - we are honest and realistic about what we can achieve and what is possible, but we also see potential and support development	• Give constructive feedback to colleagues with positive intent • Plan and prioritise my work, managing my time effectively and ask for help if I am unable to deliver within deadlines • Make decisions based on supporting evidence, risk, and my prior knowledge of good practice • Speak out promptly if I see or hear of a safety or organisational risk • Be aware of what is an achievable workload for me and make this clear to my manager, so it does not impact on my wellbeing

Section2. Leading others: in addition to leading yourself, this is about how you lead and manage people

This section is designed to help you understand what our expectations are of all our people managers and what it means to be a West Sussex County Council Manager

Expectations that apply to all people managers– the "what"

1. **Performance management**
- Ensure that all team members have monthly performance conversations (one to ones/supervision) and value adding performance meetings which are based around wellbeing, support, constructive feedback, performance and learning and development needs
- Meet with team twice a year to involve them in developing the team business plan and their role in delivering that plan
- Monitor service performance using relevant key performance indicators
- Support and challenge for high performance and manage underperformance at the first opportunity
- Ensure that all new starters and internal promotions receive an effective induction, and actively manage probation periods
- Take responsibility the quality of work for the team and be accountable for any decisions made

2. **Health, safety, and wellbeing**
- Manage people's workloads, particularly front-line staff, to ensure no-one is working long, unhealthy, and non-sustainable hours.
- Role model healthy ways of working, challenge /enable others to do the same.
- Check in frequently and thoughtfully, make it common practice to ask, listen and talk about wellbeing – including mental health.
- Work with individuals to identify what flexible working looks like in individual service areas

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3. Managing Continuous Improvement and Change

- Engage with team to develop and implement improvement opportunities for the service
- Support and lead team through organisational change

4. Managing risk and finances

- Identify and act on any potential risks to achieving Service outcomes, escalating any problems in a timely manner when required
- Manage budget in line with financial regulations, keeping within budget and escalating any exceptions in a timely manner

5. Recruiting, nurturing, recognising, and developing our talent

- Recruit talent aligned to our organisational values
- Ensure team has the knowledge, skills, and support to do their roles effectively
- Celebrate the collective and individual achievements of team members
- Drawing on the diversity of skills, backgrounds, and knowledge of people to achieve results

6. Communication and engagement

- Cascade key corporate messages to the team, making the information relevant for the service area and ensuring all staff know how their role contributes to our Council Plan

Behaviours that apply to all Managers - the "How" and which we expect to be role modelled by all Managers

Customer Centred - Putting the customer at the centre of what we do and driving continual improvement

Supervisor/Team Leader	Service /Departmental Manager
Achieving Results • Seek assurance that teams have clarity on priorities, expectations, and performance standards • Regularly connects with others to improve systems and processes. • Advocates for continuous learning and development of individuals. • Supports business planning and engages everyone to get involved • Manages individual and team performance • Adapts leadership style to the individual	**Achieving Results** • Uses professional standards and performance management frameworks to support continuous individual development and best practice. • Is learning continuously and shows its application in the service. • Always practices outcomes-based leadership • Sets challenging goals for step change improvements • Shares the positive impact of the service and colleagues with peers.
Vision and Communication • Interprets the organisational priorities and how it connects to the team • Involves staff in service planning and development • Engages regularly with the team to share learning, best practice, and team performance progress • Seek assurance that others feel clear about the vision and shared purpose for the team. • Places importance on regular one to one conversations and informally checking in	**Vision and Communication** • Communicates a compelling and credible vision so teams can clearly see how they fit into that vision • Uses stories and examples to bring the vision to life • Involves people to shape the vision • Uses a positive manner to initiate conversations with individuals • Makes time for informal conversations with others • Explains the rationale for the vision adopting various communication styles

Genuinely Valued - Proactively supports continual reflection, learning and innovative practices

Supervisor/Team Leader	Service /Departmental Manager
Empowering and Accountable • Delegates and enables individuals to deliver by removing barriers • Holds people to account to deliver, monitors performance and outcomes • Sets clear expectations and gives high support and high stretch. • Provides clarity on the decisions that are within their team's remit • Practices reflection to learn from mistakes with the team • Openly shares service successes	**Empowering and Accountable** • Enables team leaders to deliver outcomes • Uses the strength-based approach to develop individuals • Delegates responsibilities appropriately • Openly admits to mistakes and the learning from it • Openly recognises good work, attitudes, and service delivery • Uses coaching approaches to help people find a solution • Involves others for ideas and suggestions before deciding.

Trust and Support - Works collaboratively to achieve goals together

Supervisor/Team Leader	Service /Departmental Manager
Resilience • Has a positive attitude and manages own wellbeing and workload • Supports others to maintain their wellbeing • Applies Learning from setbacks and feedback • Manages expectations of others	**Resilience** • Advocates a work-life balance culture • Applies Learning from previous problems and challenges • Openly shares their wellbeing techniques with others • Confidently takes decisions in uncertain and ambiguous situations • Anticipates stressful or pressure situations and applies coping plans
Collaborating & influencing • Finds out what others do and influences them to contribute • Builds productive relationships • Engages respectfully and constructively with others • Finds out about the implications that their actions can have on others • Trusts others to deliver	**Collaborating & influencing** • Pro-actively collaborates across service boundaries to achieve outcomes • Actively seeks views and opinions of others for solutions • Can see others perspective to compromise for win-win solutions • Uses their understanding of others to tailor and choose the most impactful approach to influencing

Listens and Acts Upon – Involves and engages

Supervisor/Team Leader	Service /Departmental Manager
Inclusivity & Trust Building • Creates an environment where others feel safe to share their thoughts and feelings • Draws on the diversity of skills, backgrounds and knowledge of people to achieve results • Fosters an inclusive culture • Involves colleagues who may be impacted by new initiatives.	**Inclusivity & Trust Building** • Builds trust through integrity, reliability, and understanding • Is approachable, empathetic, and supportive • Resolves own mistakes with humility • Uses the strengths of individuals within the team to support continuous improvement and change • Creates an environment where people are comfortable to speak up & learn from mistakes • Actively promotes diversity, dignity and respect of individuals
Problem Solving and Decision Making • Identifies internal and external key stakeholders for problem solving • Actively involves others to overcome problems that deliver results • Values others contribution and involves them in decision making • Shows how risk is being mitigated	**Problem Solving and Decision Making** • Considers the political environment in assessing options • Involves team/individual in solving problems and consults them on issues that affect them • Uses advice and evidence before making decisions • Takes ownership of the problems and with others, uses creative techniques to generate solutions • Openly gives the rationale behind the decision

Honest and Realistic - Is confident and self-aware uses emotional intelligence to build trust

Supervisor/Team Leader	Service /Departmental Manager
Emotional Intelligence • Uses own Emotional Intelligence self-awareness to build relationships • Can relate to others • Can gauge the Emotional Intelligence of others and responds in a cordial manner • Asks for feedback for personal development • uses a growth mindset for applying learning	**Emotional Intelligence** • Understands how own emotions and behaviour impacts on others and adapts behaviour appropriately • Takes responsibility for their own emotions and prejudices and their impact on judgment and behaviour • Reflects on mistakes using them as opportunities for learning • Can pick up on emotional cues from others and responds compassionately • Manages their reactions to stress or difficult situations effectively
Authentic • Is genuine, admits to mistakes, takes responsibility for their actions • Is open and honest in conversations • Makes clear what is set in stone and what can be influenced • Acknowledges and gives credit to others for their input	**Authentic** • Manages complex ethical and professional dilemmas including being prepared to take appropriate action • Reflects on mistakes, challenges, and problems, using them as opportunities for learning and sharing • Manages expectations

Section3. Leading the service: this is about leading and supporting corporate improvement and change

This section is designed to help you understand what our expectations are of our senior leaders and what it means to be a Head of Service, Assistant Director or Director at West Sussex County Council

Additional expectations that apply to Heads of Service and above – the "what"

1. Strategic Management
- Set a clear, strategic vision and performance indicators derived from Our Council Reset Plan and Climate Change Strategy to ensure that intended outcomes for the residents and communities of West Sussex are achieved through rigorous management against these strategic performance indicators
- Have a future focussed workforce plan which details workforce capacity and capability requirements
- Set clear professional direction based on best practice

2. Corporate, Collaborative and Collective Leadership
- Lead the development of strategic relationships for the Council with a broad range of external organisations to enable the development and delivery of effective outcomes through collaborative, joined-up working
- Take a broad view of the Council, putting the needs of the organisation ahead of individual service needs

3. Political Management
- Act as a strategic leader building strong, visible, and collective leadership between Cabinet, senior officers, and partners
- Provide strategic advice, guidance, support and challenge to Cabinet and Members in the setting of political objectives and priorities of West Sussex and in developing appropriate strategies for achieving them

Behaviours that apply to all heads of service and above - the "How"

Customer Centred - Putting the customer at the centre of what we do and driving continual improvement

Achieving Results

- Takes a strategic perspective and delegates appropriately
- Works corporately to prioritise and deliver outcomes
- Keeps abreast with new trends, best practice, spots opportunities and brings innovative solutions for peers
- Makes best use of resources and data to improve results by analysing the outcomes and benefits against costs and risk when planning and making decisions
- Creates clear strategic direction for themselves and others
- Maintains focus over the long term and delivers even in the face of significant challenges

Vision and Communication

- Helps others to see the vision and involves them to shape the journey
- Advocates for the corporate vision and generates excitement about long term aims
- Has ongoing conversations with others to deal with the more complex, controversial and difficult issues
- Engages team in translating the vision into plans to deliver customer outcomes
- Describes future changes in a way that inspires hope, and reassures staff, stakeholders, and residents

Genuinely Valued - Proactively supports continual reflection, learning and innovative practices

Empowering and Accountable

- Regularly and openly recognises skills and talents at all levels
- Uses coaching or mentoring to develop others
- Creates opportunities to involve stakeholders in service improvements
- Regularly engages and empowers their teams
- Enables team leads to be self-managing
- Practices outcome based and inclusive leadership
- Makes considered decisions at pace

Listens and Acts Upon – Involves and engages

Inclusivity & Trust Building
- Takes the time to get to know others and their perspective formally and informally
- Listens to and engages with employees, customers, and partners to understand the impact that decisions will have/have had on them
- Is approachable and invites conversation, discussion and sharing of ideas and opinions across the organisation with partners, customers, and other external bodies
- Challenges peers, partners, and Members constructively and appropriately to model the agreed values and behaviours

Problem Solving and Decision Making
- Actively participates in problem solving corporate dilemmas
- Takes account of a comprehensive range of strategic issues in advance of reaching a decision
- Leads the development and implementation of corporate policy at a strategic level
- Tackles issues head on, inspiring confidence they can be resolved

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Trust and Support - Works collaboratively to achieve goals together

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Resilience
- Leads well in ambiguous situations
- Calmly tackles issues head on inspiring confidence they can be resolved, and objectives can be delivered
- Manages their reactions to stress or difficult situations effectively, maintaining a sense of perspective
- Explores unchartered or new territory even when this may be uncomfortable or unpopular
- Manages their energy, stays composed and positive under highly stressful or highly pressurised situations over time
- Uses interpersonal understanding to help peers to develop tactics for overcoming difficulties and maintaining their energy

Collaborating & Influencing
- Builds support and engagement around an issue with peers and others
- Manages relationships, creates collective commitment with peers and partners for the long term
- Helps others to understand the common ground and create joined up solutions

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Honest and Realistic - Is confident and self-aware uses emotional intelligence to build trust

Emotional Intelligence
• Understands the impact of 'office politics' and uses the knowledge to develop positive relationships • Has a deep understanding of own strengths and areas for development creating a plan for improvement. • Tackles conflict constructively and openly and finds win/win solutions • Maintains a sense of perspective • Shares stories to help others in developing coping mechanisms and maintaining their energy
Authentic
• Invites feedback to challenge own thinking and adapt • Demonstrates how the response to feedback is applied • Openly tells stories about own reflective practice, learning and application • Questions inappropriate behaviours from peers • Remains open, confident, and willing to speak out even in the face of unpopular or high-risk situations • Shows integrity and consistency