



Bridgewater Housing Association Strategy

Policy name	People Strategy 2023-2026
Policy category	Corporate (Governance/HR)
Policy number	CS32
Date adopted	6 December 2023
Last review	n/a
This review	28 February 2024
Next review	February 2026
Equalities impact assessment required	Yes
Links to other documents	All HR Policies, Equalities, Diversity & Inclusion Policy. Business Plan 2023 to 2028
Consultation	Yes - Staff
Need for Procedure	No
Policy Owner	Head of Corporate Services / CEO

This document can also be provided in large print, braille,
audio, or other non-written format and in a variety of languages,
on request.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 At Bridgewater Housing Association (BHA) we believe our people are the key to our success. As well as ensuring that our people practices are fair, consistent, and robust, we will put mechanisms in place to ensure we have the people resources to achieve our business plans and continue our journey towards being an employer of choice. The Head of Corporate Services is responsible for the implementation of this strategy and HR policies.

The People Strategy offers the association a framework that promotes staff in the organisation, linking them to the business plan and outlines learning and development opportunities. It provides a consistency of approach across all aspects of the recruiting, managing, training, promoting and leadership of the association and ensures that staff feel engaged with the work of the Association and empowered in their jobs. This should lead to higher levels of job satisfaction and clear avenues to improvement and change management.

The Strategy is linked to the following Strategic Objectives contained in our Business Plan:

Strategic Objective 3

- Deliver a quality, value for money, customer service experience, in partnership with our customers.

Strategic Objective 4:

- Invest in our people

Strategic Objective 5:

- Promote innovation and collaboration for improvement and growth.

Strategic Objective 6:

- Demonstrate strong, strategic governance and financial control.

1.2 People Strategy Vision

To create a high-performing, talented, diverse, and inclusive workforce that is committed to delivering exceptional affordable housing and services to our tenants, owners? and communities.

1.3 People Strategy Mission

To attract, retain, and develop the best people by creating a supportive, rewarding, and empowering work environment where everyone can thrive and contribute to our success.

1.4 People Strategy Aims

This strategy is designed to deliver the following outcomes:

- Aim for BHA to be seen as an employer of choice by our own people and by those in the communities and sectors we operate in and to aid and facilitate recruitment, retention, and succession planning.
- Develop a workforce that has the skills, knowledge, and motivation to deliver BHA's goals now and in the future.
- Ensure our people feel valued, listened to, and treated fairly.
- Achieve relevant customer service and people assessment accreditation (Investors in People, Customer Service Excellence, Best Companies or similar)
- Achieve Remarkable (Investors in Young People) or similar accreditation.
- Reduce levels of absence, discipline, grievance, and employment litigation.
- Develop a comprehensive recruitment and selection process that aligns with our values and culture.
- Create a competitive employee value proposition that includes competitive salaries, benefits, and development opportunities.
- Develop exceptional talented people and people leaders.
- Provide comprehensive training and development programs that empower employees to reach their full potential.
- Invest in leadership development to create a group of high-performing managers who can inspire and motivate their teams.
- Foster a culture of continuous learning, development, and improvement where employees are encouraged to pursue new skills and knowledge.
- Value diversity and promote wellbeing and inclusion.
- Cultivate a workplace that is welcoming and inclusive for all employees, regardless of their background or identity.
- Provide resources and support to promote employee wellbeing and mental health.
- Invest in a healthy culture.
- Foster a culture of collaboration, trust, and mutual respect.
- Encourage open communication and feedback at all levels of the organisation.
- Recognise and reward employee contributions and achievements.
- Enable great performance and delivery.
- Empower employees to make decisions and take ownership of their work.
- Celebrate successes and learn from challenges to continuously improve performance.

2. Where are we now?

- 2.1 BHA has recently completed a full review of all its teams and departments – this has been on-going since 2022. Previous challenges included high staff turnover, absence rates and high regulatory engagement primarily around performance. We are now entering a period of consolidation and stability as we work towards delivering improved customer satisfaction (building on the 93% overall satisfaction with the service from our 2022 Tenant Satisfaction Survey) and excellent customer service, achieving greater value for money and increased employee engagement.
- 2.2 During 2024-2026, we want to continue our improvement journey, becoming more streamlined and agile, developing systems and processes that support our people to be the very best they can be.
- 2.3 BHA provides a very good environment for staff to thrive and get the most of their time while working at Bridgewater. We provide excellent Terms & Conditions negotiated through EVH and the Unite Union. We offer a Pension Scheme. Staff Training and development is promoted to staff through staff appraisals, internal training and through individual requests.
- 2.4 We have a suite of effective policy and procedures dealing with Human Resource issues and these are backed up by standards of performance set out in our Business Plans, Organisational Action Plans, KPI's, Staff Appraisal Goals and Customer Service Standards.
- 2.5 Staff welfare is a priority. As members of EVH we have adopted the EVH Health & Safety Manual. Our housing and property services staff ensure compliance with all elements of health and safety for our tenants and to assist us with this we retain membership of the Social Housing Safety Network Scotland.
- 2.6 Employee Engagement Surveys are carried out every 2 years with staff teambuilding events carried out in alternate years.
- 2.7 Having just moved to a new state of the art office setting, the working environment for staff is bright, modern, and comfortable. Two kitchens are provided, and the building provides a restaurant and communal area that staff can use. However, we will need to consider developing our own area to provide for a staff room, allowing staff to mingle in an informal atmosphere to encourage more social interaction.
- 2.8 The Association encourages engagement with staff and involves staff at every level of the organisation in working groups.
- 2.9 Staff and Board members have access to the Glasgow and West of Scotland Forum mentoring programme, forms and leaflets are available of the GWSF website; participation will be encouraged through staff meetings which are held bi-monthly.

3. Working with Young People.

As part of our commitment to our people, BHA has set itself a goal of maximising its ability to work with Young People across a variety of platforms, separate from employing young people in the normal way through recruitment.

3.1 Modern Apprenticeships

We are committed to having at least one Modern Apprentice (MA) employed with BHA at any one time from 2024. This is in addition to the potential Graduate Apprentice. To fulfil this commitment, we will:

- have a job description for each post.
- offer a 2-year contract.
- use the MA frameworks to choose the right qualification for the job.
- assign a supervisor from the department to monitor work.
- assign a mentor from outwith the Department to help the young person in career and personal development.
- provide a logbook setting out key milestones.
- provide internal induction and training including shadowing of staff.

3.2 Graduate Apprenticeship

We have committed to the appointment of a Graduate Apprentice from 2024/2025 in Corporate Services, Governance and HR who is likely to be with us until 2029/2030. To fulfil our commitment to this post, we will provide:

- a contract the same length of the degree or longer, if we take the GA before the start of the degree.
- an assigned supervisor in the department and a mentor from outwith the department.
- a budget for books, exams, out of pocket expenses for the course.
- an appraisal that allows the job to develop as the course develops.

3.3 Working with schools

As part of our commitment to developing young people, Bridgewater will work with Schools in a variety of methods, promoting social housing as a career and helping them to develop work-based skills. We hope to offer local schools the opportunity to engage with:

- Work placements
- Shadowing opportunities
- Career workshops

We are open to any project that we consider relevant and intend to participate in Renfrewshire Council's careers programme where appropriate this may be developed in partnership with our FLAIR partners.

3.4 Working in our communities

We are committed to strengthening the ties between our staff and the communities we serve. That's why we're excited to announce our new volunteering policy, which will encourage and support our employees to give back to the community we serve.

Under this policy, all staff will be eligible for up to one paid day off per year to volunteer for a cause they care about in the area we serve. We will also provide a list of volunteer opportunities in the community, and we will offer training and support to help our employees find and secure meaningful volunteer experiences.

We believe that volunteering is a valuable way for our staff to give back to the community, develop new skills, and make a positive impact on the world. We are also confident that our volunteering policy will help us to attract and retain top talent, as many employees are looking for companies that are committed to social responsibility. We will encourage all of our staff to take advantage of this new opportunity to make a difference in their communities.

4. Budgets & Constraints

- 4.1 An annual budget is set every year for training and professional development. This includes money for a Graduate Apprentice degree and at least one Modern Apprentice.
- 4.2 Protecting BHA, its business and its reputation will be paramount with any risks being identified, considered, and mitigated in the implementation of this strategy. Where possible, both time and cost efficiencies will be sought and, where that is not possible, costs will be minimised and only incurred where it is believed there will be an acceptable return on investment. The employment terms and conditions we offer must balance attracting and retaining quality people with providing good value for money and meeting the expectations of our tenants and customers.
- 4.3 Employment initiatives and projects should be cost-neutral where possible and, in any case, costs should be minimised with a demonstrable return on investment and/or increased efficiencies.

5. Monitoring the Strategy

- 5.1 On a day-to-day basis, the Strategy will be actioned and monitored by the Head of Corporate Services and the CEO. The Finance & Corporate Services Sub-Committee will ensure the actions are achieved and will receive an update on

an annual basis. The Action Plan for the Strategy will be presented to the sub-committee on an annual basis as a minimum.

6. Action Plan

6.1 The Action Plan is based around the Business Plan Strategic Outcomes and highlights what we are currently doing followed by the actions we plan to take over the next three years.

Action	Due date	Person responsible
Equalities Training	31/01/2024 Ongoing – first tranche January 2024	HOCS
Redesign the Staff Appraisal form and Process taking cognisance of feedback from staff in first year of use in 2023	31/03/2024	HOCS/CEO
Review our employee communication channels to make them more inclusive and effective	31/03/2024 Then Ongoing	HOCS / ICTM
Volunteering Policy to be developed and approved	31/05/2024	HOCS
Develop a list of volunteer opportunities in the community to secure meaningful volunteer experiences	31/07/2024	LT
Employee team building event	31/08/2024 31/08/2026	CEO / HOCS / Working Group to be established
Reviewing and modernising our recruitment and selection techniques to be more competitive in the recruitment market	31/08/2024	HOCS/CEO
Continue to drive forward our Health & Wellbeing agenda with a view to making it “business as usual” in BHA.	31/10/2024 Then ongoing	HOCS
Conduct a full review of the benefits we afford our people to ensure we are rewarding them in ways they value.	30/11/2024	HOF / HOCS / CEO
Review Staff Intranet	31/12/2024	ITCM / HOCS
Modern/Graduate Apprenticeship Recruitment	31/03/2025 During 2024/25	HOCS / LT
Develop improved HR management information which will show trends and projections to allow departments to make informed decisions on people resources	31/03/2025	HOCS / HOF
We will develop a programme and links with local schools so that we can participate in careers events and other housing related	31/03/2025	HOHS / HOCS

Action	Due date	Person responsible
information sessions within schools for young people		
Replace the Healthy Working Lives Scheme with a scheme to promote healthy eating, healthy activities, and campaigns.	31/07/2025	HOCS
Employee Engagement Survey every 2 years	30/09/2025	CEO / Working Group to be established
Review BHA flexible working approach and the best possible package to attract talent to the organisation	31/10/2025	HOCS
Implement post training feedback process	31/03/2026	HOCS
Consider PATH Trainee recruitment	30/04/2026	HOCS
Work to develop a growth mindset amongst BHA's people and supporting tools and frameworks in which we balance robust governance and control with innovation and empowerment	31/07/2026	LT
Undertake a full review of our recruitment and selection policy, processes, practices, and documentation to ensure we are encouraging applications from as diverse and talented people as possible.	31/10/2026	HOCS
Carry out review of new staff structure (effectiveness)	31/12/2026	LT

7. How we will measure success

7.1 We will monitor our progress and measure our success by:

- Reviewing this strategy action plan on an annual basis
- Continuing to assess employee engagement bi-annually
- Analysing and acting on feedback from exit interviews
- Considering feedback success of recruitment exercises to ensure the Association is an attractive proposition
- Reporting the following key HR indicators quarterly:
 - Sickness absence levels
 - Turnover
- Seeking feedback from employees and stakeholders on the effectiveness of the strategy.
- Adjust the strategy as needed to reflect changing circumstances and priorities.

8. Resources

- 8.1 To achieve the goals of our Strategy, staff and Board will ensure that sufficient time is set aside to consider the issues, data collection and Goals. Each year, budgets will be set in accordance with the Action Plan to ensure we can achieve our targets, these are likely to be mainly to do with training and development, however we will consider others each year.

9. Strategy Availability

- 9.1 This document can also be provided in large print, braille, audio, or other non-written format and in a variety of languages, on request.

10. Monitoring And Review

- 10.1 We will review and update this strategy every three years. More regular reviews will be considered where, for example, there is a need to respond to new legislation or regulatory guidance. The action plan will be reviewed at least annually by the Finance and Corporate Services Sub-Committee.