

The project brief:

Cheshire East Council would like a review of the culture within the council with particular regard to an ongoing perception that there are significant issues relating to bullying and harassment. The review will not be an inspection but rather will be part of a commitment to learning and improvement within the council in the context of its strong desire to ensure that Cheshire East Council is a supportive, respectful and productive place for people to work and that consequently bullying and harassment will not be tolerated. The review will be independent of the council to provide assurance and will identify, describe and make recommendations of changes that the council may wish to consider as well as highlighting aspects of the organisational culture that are positive and should be built upon.

Methodology

- To conduct structured one to one interviews with the Chief Executive, Head of Strategic HR and potentially other HR colleagues
- To conduct structured one to one interviews with the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member for Corporate Policy and Legal Services and Chair of the Staffing Committee
- To facilitate up to 4 focus groups with staff
- To facilitate a focus group with senior managers
- To facilitate a focus group with trade union representatives
- To facilitate a focus group with up to 8 members (cross party)
- To conduct desk research of relevant HR policies, staff survey results, recent staff focus groups, reassurance project, reports of wellbeing, external media articles relating to CEC culture, comms re wellbeing/culture/staff engagement, grievance /whistle-blowing – exit interview stats and any other documentation provided by the council

The review will be conducted by Sarah Messenger from the LGA. Until recently, Sarah was Head of Workforce for the LGA before moving into a new part-time role focused on workforce consultancy for the organisation. Sarah has a wealth of experience in strategic HR and OD, employee relations and organisational culture as well as many years of working in the local government sector. During her career she has also worked as a national trade union official and a consultant for an equalities organisation and has experience of developing bullying and harassment policies as well as presenting cases at Employment Tribunals.

Timescales:

Estimated to take 6-8 days of work. This will include:

- Reviewing current policies and relevant information from the Council
- Conducting one to one interviews and focus groups
- Writing a report describing the review findings and making recommendations for potential changes which will help the council to ensure bullying and harassment are not part of the organisational culture, whether perceived or real.
- Presenting findings and recommendations to Cheshire East Council.

Outcome:

- A report which describes whether there is evidence of a culture of bullying and harassment within Cheshire East Council, as well as positive elements of the organisational culture that should be highlighted and built upon
- The report will provide assurance and include recommendations for the council to consider based on findings from the review and will include an action plan with timescales to help with planning actions that may arise from the review. This report and subsequent action plan will form a key piece of evidence within the Annual Governance Statement.
- A facilitated session with Cheshire East Council to explore the findings and potential actions in more detail.

LGA Consultancy Service

We are experienced and skilled in providing advice, support and best/innovative practice on a wide range of HR/OD and management issues to the local government sector. We are of the sector, for the sector.

Cost:

Our daily rate for this would be £700 a day plus vat, travelling and other reasonable expenses.