



Delivering on our promises

People Strategy 2022 – 2025

1. PURPOSE

This strategy sets out our approach and ambition to, not only attract and retain high quality staff, but to foster a positive working environment where people are driven and can thrive. We truly believe that doing this will directly and positively impact the success of ccha achieving its mission.

Our mission “We enable staff and partners to deliver excellent services for our residents and provide more quality homes for our community”.

The 3-year strategy is designed to inspire companywide alignment on goals that concern our most important asset: our people.

2. CCHA VALUES

ccha’s values are key to all activities undertaken across the organisation.

- **Care** - We care about our customers, staff, and our wider environment
- **Adapt** - We adapt and embrace change to achieve our goals
- **Resilient** - We are resilient and effective in challenging times
- **Everyone** - Our strength is in our unity with everyone playing their part

This strategy ensures that we are embracing these values. ccha have our customers and staff at the heart of what we do and in challenging, ever-changing times we come together to deliver and achieve.

3. CCHA BUSINESS PLAN

ccha’s business plan is all about “delivering on our promises”. The plan takes us up to 2025 and has 5 core objectives all designed to improve housing standards, digital channels and customer care.

1 – Resident Standards

We will have a service that is shaped by our residents for our residents.

2 – Staff & Partner Engagement

We will be an employer and partner of choice.

3 – Safety & Security Responsibility

We will have an exemplary record for safety.

4 – More Affordable Homes Pledge

We will be resourceful and innovative to deliver an increased programme of genuinely affordable quality homes.

5 – Value for Money Offer

We will deliver a high quality service with no increased costs.

Objective 2 focuses on our people and is about creating an exciting and supportive work environment and valuing our staff and partners. We want to have long lasting relationships with people we work with and build a reputation for being a 'go to' organisation.

4. BACKGROUND (where we are now?)

We currently have 44 employees (*permanent and temporary, June 2022*) in a variety of roles from back-office support staff in Finance, IT and HR to front line, resident facing staff doing tenancy, lease and property management. Each and every person is playing a key part in ccha achieving its goals.

The fundamental challenges facing the housing sector today are for the most part the same as they always were, providing safe, affordable homes to meet housing need and good customer service, and doing this all on a limited budget.

Currently adding further challenge is the impact of Brexit which is yet to play out and the rising cost of living, as well as addressing the social housing White Paper, including continuous building health and safety change post Grenfell and meeting increasing demands from regulators. ccha prides itself on being an organisation that adapts and responds well to change, despite our size and financial turnover. We are an aspirational organisation, always striving to grow and improve by embracing change and opportunity.

Over the last two years, we have strengthened all of the team structures to cope with the changes in the housing sector. Most notably, we have split the role of Director of Operations into a Director of Homes and Director of Customers to allow them to focus on their specialist areas our existing and new homes and our residents respectively. Most recently we have split the role of the finance manager and created the role of a business and reporting manager within the finance team to allow for more emphasis on financial reporting and management of budgets. We have also increased the property services team and separated our repairs service from our compliance services which would include but is not limited to landlord health and safety compliance.

Whilst we are now satisfied that the structures which we have put into place should deliver on our the objectives of our five year business plan ccha2025 and beyond, we are struggling to recruit to key posts in all areas of the business and our staff turnover in the last year had doubled. We are aware that this is a common problem in the housing sector at the moment and is particularly challenging for smaller associations but this is not a sustainable longer term. This People strategy hopes to tackle the problem of attracting good new staff and retaining existing staff and make ccha a great place to work. This is going to be a challenge in the new normal following on from the pandemic where flexible working has given us all a lot more options.

In 2020 the global Coronavirus pandemic caused disruption internationally. Governmental interventions included lockdowns and ccha had to switch to remote working almost overnight, adapting front line services continuously. ccha were able to function successfully and in the main, continued to run core services to our customers. Our robust IT framework meant staff could successfully work at home and communicate internally and externally with ease. Cou-

pled with our staff being extremely hard working and resilient through difficult and unprecedented times, it is something we are extremely proud of now that we have come out the other side.

The organisation continually struck a difficult balance between health and wellbeing of staff with risk and service delivery. Physical and mental health of employees was a priority – we introduced a number of new workplace policies to help support our staff as well as offering things like counselling and stress workshops to employees.

Despite managing the pandemic with great success, there are multiple challenges we face as a result of the turmoil of the last 2 years. The main one being continuing to support and engage a hybrid workforce and creating a ‘new normal’ for our people.

ccha are a compliant, stable, financially sound organisation. We have core values and strengths which we can build on and have a committed Board and leadership team who will drive improvements and change. Most importantly, we have concrete knowledge about where we are, which means we can make meaningful change and begin to create our ‘new normal’.

In September 2021 ccha did an external staff engagement survey using Best Companies. The survey has given us valuable and honest feedback and great insight into our employee engagement, helping us to truly acknowledge where we are - our areas for improvement as well as where we excel. We know that happy and engaged staff directly correlates to having satisfied customers and we want to make a positive difference to both.

The outcomes of the survey have indicated that we need our workplace culture to evolve and reflect our new ways of working. Therefore, a three year cultural change plan (2022-2025) has been developed. Combined with the affects (positives and negatives) of the pandemic, ccha have recognised the need to make positive change to support us to achieve our mission and our business plan up to 2025 and beyond. We know that culture must be a priority to set the foundation for successful growth and delivery.

5. AIMS & OBJECTIVES (where we want to be?)

What is culture? Culture is “*a collection of attitudes, beliefs and behaviours that make up the regular atmosphere in a work environment*”. For ccha we believe this is split into two key areas: behaviours and mindset, and systems and process. Both of these things are ultimately what result in delivery.

The key aim of the People Strategy is to deliver a three-year cultural change plan, focussing on five clear goals. These goals have been developed based on the staff feedback. We aren’t by any means failing in these areas, but they are all areas for improvement and ones where we can strive to be better in.

CULTURAL CHANGE PLAN GOALS

- **Values** – Our staff embody and demonstrate ccha’s CARE values.
- **Trust** – ccha have a trusting and empowering work environment.
- **Direction** – ccha’s purpose and direction is an active part of communications.

- **Performance** - *Our staff support optimum organisational performance by learning and growing together.*
- **Technology** – *ccha have imbedded information systems and staff who embrace and exploit them to effectively support delivery.*

**subject to minor change following staff consultation*

In order for us to achieve our overall aim and these goals by the end of the plan in 2025, there is a detailed implementation plan. Some of the key deliverables covered in the plan are listed below. Each of these link to some or all the above goals:

Productivity, Performance and Workplace Wellbeing programme

ccha are using external consultants to run a bespoke 2 year programme. The programme will support ccha to build a 'new normal' and will challenge our post covid culture and working practices. The programme aims to support ccha to work smarter, work happier and work effectively in tandem with wellbeing.

The programme has been designed to support our desire to embed long-term shifts in the underlying culture and behaviours at ccha. It starts with some diagnostic and introductory sessions to really grasp where we are, and then mixes both practical, day to day challenges, such as workload, stress, email and meeting management etc with behaviours like accountability and finally focusses on imbedding change and habit building. This programme and any related action learning will be made a priority to ensure the culture change is a long term success for ccha.

Recruitment, Retention & Induction

Within the housing sector overall there are several areas where organisations are struggling to attract suitably qualified staff. There are many reasons for this, one of which is what is being referred to as the 'home working revolution'. Company location is no longer such a big factor and individuals aren't so restricted with employment choices. Whilst this is of benefit to us in terms of a wider pool of candidates, it means we are competing across sectors and locations for the best people. Competing particularly on salary has, and continues to be a challenge.

Other economists referred to the pandemic as 'The Great Resignation' highlighting that the 2+ years gave people perspective and a chance to prioritise, encouraging them to go for a dream job, take a career change, be a stay at home parent etc,

Our Pay & Reward Policy dictates a fair and transparent pay system, using independent pay consultants and market based salary benchmarking. Under normal circumstances, we opt to pay the market median on all salaries but we are in an ever changing market and reserve the right to consider options outside of this as long as it remains fair and transparent. We will continue to work with our consultants to ensure we strike the difficult balance between affordability and recruitment and retention whilst remaining competitive and keeping up with fluctuating markets. We will also continue to review and monitor our benefit package to ensure we can successfully compete both with financial and non financial benefit and reward.

ccha's staff compliment (% of permanent employees) target for 2021/2022 was 90% and the year-end figure was 84.6% - a reflection of our increasing staff turnover and current recruitment challenges. We are finding that skills are scarce in some areas and recruitment is costly and time consuming

ccha need to offset the emerging continued threat of recruitment difficulties by comprehensively reviewing policies and practices as well as terms and conditions. As part of the change plan we will improve our recruitment and retention strategies, including greater utilisation of recruitment technology and investment in new starters. We will also be reviewing our internal induction programme, ensuring that virtual working does not become a barrier to building fundamental working relationships and that new employees are given the time and space to be trained and crucially to emerge themselves into our culture.

Performance Management

ccha will look at how we manage performance. This will include processes such as one to ones and appraisals as well as reviews of reward and retention mechanisms. It is critical that we reflect the internal and external workforce changes to ensure staff feel valued and motivated to not only achieve business objectives but to be a part of the cultural change.

Imbedded into the cultural change programme are suggestions which have come directly from staff following the staff survey in September 2021. We will improve consistency of management across the organisation, improve communication within and across teams and will ensure teams and individuals are rewarded for making a difference.

Communication

We are going to evaluate all internal communications, as ultimately this will underpin the cultural change plan and will be critical in its success. ccha's communication needs to be aligned with our business objectives but also with the current needs of our hybrid workforce. We need to optimise communication channels and frequency in order to maximise efficiency.

Hybrid working means that we now need to carefully re-consider internal communications. Overuse of email for example is an issue we will tackle. Do we use verbal, non verbal, written and visual communications in order to disseminate messages to our staff? A particular focus in the first year of the strategy will be around utilisation of the internal intranet, our HUB.

Office Move

ccha will be moving offices at the end of 2022. Although coincidental, the timing of this is perfectly aligned to support the change. The physical office will now be a place for collaboration, a place where employees can come and meet in person, connect with colleagues and come away from the blurred boundaries of working at home. This will mark the cultural change and ccha's 'new normal'. The plan is to constantly reinforce the messages of the new culture change programme throughout the office.

7. MEASURING & MONITORING

The cultural change plan has some annual targets built into it, to ensure that we can measure the success and adapt to support the change.

TARGETS – YEAR 1

- **Staff Satisfaction** – *We aim to ensure each pulse survey in year 1 sees continuous improvement, engagement, and performance.*
- **Customer Satisfaction** – *We aim to improve customer satisfaction, striving for 80% by the end of March 2023.*
- **Staff Turnover** – *We aim to reduce voluntary staff turnover, sustaining 10% by the end of March 2023.*

**subject to minor change following staff consultation*

Staff Satisfaction

ccha will be using an external survey platform to undergo short and regular staff surveys so that we can measure how staff are feeling. We will use the cultural plan's goals to design these questions and ensure we can track progress and focus our time, energy and resource in the right places. These will be done every other month so that we can monitor staff engagement closely.

Customer Satisfaction

ccha measure customer satisfaction through surveying. More information on this can be found in ccha's Customer Strategy (2021-2025). We are aware that customer satisfaction in housing overall has dropped over recent years. Externally, Housemark noted a clear drop in overall resident satisfaction of 7% through the pandemic and that housing organisations in the London area have satisfaction levels on average 10% less than the rest of the country. In terms of our peers, our 71% satisfaction at the end of 2020/21 was the median average, this dropped further in 2021/2022 to a 66% average. We also know that staff engagement and satisfaction has a direct impact on customer service, therefore the work we do under this People Strategy will directly and positively impact here.

We already measure this and track it closely as a KPI, so will simply align staff and customer satisfaction. The two are proven to correlate, although we must continue to consider external factors outside of our control.

Staff Turnover

Staff turnover is the rate at which staff leave an organisation. There is a need for healthy turnover which ccha considers to be 10%. Our target for 2021/2022 was 10.5%. However, at year end (March 2022) our turnover figure was 20.22%. We had 9 leavers in the year, 2 were involuntary and 7 were voluntary.

There are several external reasons for this high turnover, most of which are as a result of the pandemic, such as a changing labour market. We can also see that internally, pressure, workload and staffing issues have impacted. In 2020/2021 our turnover was low, at 7.32%, again down to the uncertainties around the pandemic people did not want to change jobs.

As well as staff surveys and other formal and informal opportunity for feedback, we will be reviewing exit procedures to try and understand further the reasons behind our high turnover.

We are implementing changes to our recruitment and retention policy and procedure as well as making overall improvements to culture. This should result in a steady improvement which we can track closely via our KPI's monthly.

8. RISK

Staff recruitment and retention is on ccha's risk register and is currently a medium risk #12 (risk score 6) with Probability and Impact both scoring 3.

The main risk in the delivery of the overall People Strategy is staff buy in. A critical part of delivering cultural change is that the staff believe in it, are engaged and therefore contribute to its delivery.

If we fail, staff satisfaction and engagement may decline. This in turn would directly and indirectly impact customer satisfaction rates. Ultimately the success of the organisation relates to meeting key targets and standards and if we don't our reputation and the lives of our residents are negatively affected. We will also see the effect of its failure in areas such as turnover, staff absence and customer service.

Therefore:

- We will ensure there are multiple mechanisms in place for regular formal and informal feedback.
- We will ensure there is a regular and formal review process to track progress and allow necessary amendments to the plan.
- We will have a clear communication plan throughout the life of the strategy, using a variety of methods, ensuring we engage effectively.
- We will employ the support of external consultants to ensure we have the expertise and advise necessary to execute the cultural change.

In addition, to support the delivery of the Strategy and ensure we have a robust and effective HR function, we have recently increased our HR resource.

9. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

As part of ccha's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy (approved 2021), we will ensure everyone is treated fairly and without discrimination, regardless of their race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion or belief, gender re-assignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership and age. We will promote inclusion, challenge discrimination, and seek to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that everyone can access our internal and external services and that no one is excluded inappropriately from any services or activities provided by us.

In addition to this, as part of our Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy, we will be revisiting the information we hold about our staff. We hope to improve our knowledge about our employees or potential employees in order to improve our approach to areas such as recruitment and selection, creating efficiencies and ultimately creating a workforce that reflects the local community and our customer base.

10. DATA PROTECTION

Under the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Human Rights Act 1998, all personal and sensitive organisational information, however received, is treated as confidential. We are required to collect and hold certain types of data on staff to carry out our business requirements and fulfil our service obligations.

For the purposes of this strategy and how we manage the information that we hold about individuals as part of its delivery, ccha will comply with its obligations under GDPR including ensuring that the appropriate data sharing agreements are in place with all the partnering organisations we look to work with. ccha's Employee Data Privacy Notice explains that we have 'legitimate interest' and 'consent' when managing employee information. A Data Protection Impact Assessment has been undertaken as part of the development of this strategy.