

Values-Based Recruitment

Guidance & Questions for Recruiting Managers

What is Values-Based Recruitment?

Values-based recruitment is the approach we use to recruit employees on the basis that their individual values and behaviours align with our values and behaviours.

Our goal is to ensure that we recruit the right people not only with the right skills and in the right numbers, but with the right values to support our council mission.

This should take place as part of the existing recruitment process which assesses candidates' aptitude and skills.

When does it apply?

Our values-based approach to recruitment applies to all management posts regardless of the job grade.

If you're recruiting for a post that has responsibility for managing people, you must include a values-based interview as part of your candidate assessment.

What you need to do:

Recruiting for Management posts Grade 17 and below

As part of your interview with a candidate for a management post, you should check their alignment with the council's values by making sure at least 25% of your interview (or a minimum of 3 questions) are questions from the values-based list at the end of this document.

You should consider whether and to what level their answer demonstrates the council's value in action and record their score on the interview scoring matrix against the relevant value.

The value-based interview questions should be scored equally to all other questions in the process. If the overall score does not meet the interview score benchmark, the candidate should be deemed not appointable.

Recruiting for Management posts Grade 18 and above

As part of your interview with a candidate for a senior management post, you should check their alignment with the council's values by asking them enough questions from the values-based list at the end of this document to make sure the values questions make up at least 50% of the interview.

You should consider whether and to what level their answer demonstrates the council's value in action and record their score on the interview scoring matrix against the relevant value.

The value based interview questions should be scored equally to all other questions in the process. If the candidate does not display alignment to the council's values, they should be deemed not appointable.

What are our values?

Values are motivational goals that influence behaviour. Values primarily affect the goals that individuals choose to pursue (goal content) while personality traits primarily affect the amount of effort that individuals exhibit in pursuit of those goals (goal striving).

In everything we do we aim to:



Be compassionate



Be innovative



Be empowering



Be ambitious



Be collaborative

What our values mean

The following provides a framework of behaviours to support Cumberland Council managers to understand the meaning of the values in action.

We are *ambitious* by



- Proactively improving and changing the way we do things.
- Embracing and driving forward change, taking account of the impact on self and others.
- Utilising the energy, skills and resources of the team to deliver the best results for our customers.

We are *compassionate*



- Creating a safe environment for people to learn and thrive in their role.
- Adopting a culture of transparency, fairness and respect for all.
- Considering the wellbeing of self and team when making decisions.

We are *collaborative*



- Connecting with individuals, teams and other stakeholders to build relationships based on trust to achieve our common goals.
- Understanding the needs of our local communities/internal customers to co-design and deliver services and solutions at the earliest opportunity, with a focus on health and wellbeing.

We are *empowering*



- Understanding the skills, talents and diversity of people in order to develop and support them effectively.
- Delegating appropriate responsibility to team members allowing time, space and support to deliver.
- Holding constructive, strength-based conversations to motivate and increase performance.

We are *innovative* by



- Being curious about different viewpoints.
- Using coaching techniques to encourage problem-solving.
- Encouraging a culture of continuous learning and improvement.

Values-based Recruitment - Interview Questions

These are the questions you should ask in your values-based interview(s). There are up to 4 possible questions per value. Choose the values relevant to the role and ask one question for each value you choose.

- **Interviewing Grade 18 Manager or above** – Values questions must make up 50% of your interview.
- **Interviewing Grade 17 Manager or below** – Values questions must make up 25% of your interview or a minimum of 3.

Where possible, look for relevance of the example to the role being interviewed for. You can add wording to the questions where appropriate to enable this – e.g. Open the question with the phrase “With relevance to this role...”

Be Ambitious

- Describe a specific, ambitious goal you set for yourself in a previous role. How did you approach achieving it, and what was the outcome?
- Can you tell me about a time you identified an opportunity to improve a process or system? How did you advocate for your ideas, and what was the impact?
- Imagine you're leading a project with a challenging deadline. How would you approach managing your time and workload to ensure success?
- Looking five years ahead, what are your professional aspirations? How do you see this role fitting into your long-term career goals?

Be Compassionate

- Tell me about a time you observed a colleague struggling. How did you demonstrate compassion and offer support?
- Describe a situation where you had to deliver difficult feedback to a teammate. How did you ensure your approach was both constructive and compassionate?
- Imagine you're interacting with a service user who is frustrated or upset. How would you approach the situation to show compassion and effectively resolve the issue?
- To build connected relationships people need to feel they are in a safe space, where they are heard and valued – how do you create this environment for your associates to thrive?

Be Collaborative

- Tell me about a time you had to successfully collaborate with someone who had a very different working style than yours. How did you adapt your approach to achieve a common goal?
- Imagine you're working on a team project where someone isn't pulling their weight. How would you address the situation and ensure everyone contributes effectively?
- Can you describe a situation where you identified a colleague's strength that complemented your own? How did you leverage their expertise to achieve a better outcome?
- To deliver a sustainable business – partnership working is essential, explain how you maintain and foster effective, collaborative relationships where everyone feels accepted and valued regardless of their status or sector.

Be Empowering

- Describe a situation where you delegated a challenging task to a team member. How did you set them up for success and what was the outcome?
- Can you give an example of a time you encouraged a team member to share a new idea, even if it seemed unconventional? How did you support their initiative?
- Imagine you're leading a team that's hesitant to take ownership of a project. How would you approach this situation and empower them to take charge?
- Tell me about a time you mentored or coached a colleague. How did you identify their strengths and help them develop their skills?

Be Innovative

- Describe a situation where you identified a problem with a common process or system. How did you approach it creatively, and what was the outcome of your innovation?
- Can you tell me about a time you had to think outside the box to overcome a specific obstacle? What was your approach, and what did you learn from the experience?
- Imagine you're tasked with leading a workshop focused on identifying ways to improve a council service. What steps would you take to encourage creative participation from the team?
- Can you share an example of a time you championed an innovative idea that was initially met with resistance? How did you navigate this situation and ultimately gain buy-in?

Values-based Recruitment - Interview Scoring

What We're Looking For

For each of your chosen values, listen to the answers your candidate gives for your questions and look for evidence of both positive and negative traits.

Be Ambitious

Positive Traits	Negative Traits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows willingness to learn new things and develop their skills Resilient against setbacks Pro-actively takes the initiative Shows a desire to achieve their goals through setting targets and working to achieve them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unwilling to learn or develop Gives up easily Waits for opportunities to come to them Fails to take actionable steps to achieve their goals or set any goals at all.

Be Compassionate

Positive Traits	Negative Traits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Displays empathy to see things from another person's perspective and understand their emotions Displays kindness – e.g. offering emotional support or help with a challenging task Creates a safe space for people – a place where people feel they matter Treats others with respect and dignity Actively listens to colleagues and reacts accordingly Displays awareness of their own emotions and the emotions of others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Doesn't seek to understand other person's perspective or emotions Doesn't recognise signs of distress in others Doesn't offer any sort of help to the individual Doesn't treat others with respect and dignity Does not listen to others needs or alter approach in turn Unaware of emotions in given situation

Be Collaborative

Positive Traits	Negative Traits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understands the success of a project often relies on the combined efforts Communicates effectively by listening, sharing information and expressing ideas clearly. Shows ability to have healthy disagreements and compromise by considering different perspectives Creates a shared sense or purpose and goal Creates a supportive environment where others feel comfortable to be involved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fails to understand the success of a project often relies on the combined efforts or instead relies on individual efforts Doesn't communicate effectively or establish clarity Shows inability to compromise or respectfully disagree on a course of action Fails to create a shared sense of purpose or goal Fosters a negative environment where others don't feel comfortable contributing

Be Empowering

Positive Traits	Negative Traits
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shows ability to delegate tasks and responsibilities and trust their employees to deliver on them.• Affords freedom with a sense of ownership and accountability• Provides the resources and support their team needs to be successful – training, mentorship, access to information etc• Recognizes and celebrates achievements as well as giving constructive criticism when necessary.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inability to delegate to employees or show trust and belief their team can deliver success• Does not follow up with staff on work progress• Restricts employees' access to support and resources• Fails to celebrate achievements or give valuable constructive criticism.

Be Innovative

Positive Traits	Negative Traits
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understands the importance of taking calculated risks and has the courage to explore opportunities• Understands the learning opportunities available when things don't go to plan• Shows comfort with change and can adjust their approach based on new information or circumstances• Shows a willingness to consider new ideas and perspectives and capture feedback• Able to identify problems and develop creative solutions• Able to think outside the box and come up with new and original solutions that might be different from the status quo	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Afraid to take risks and try something new• Afraid of making mistakes and ignorant of the learning opportunity they offer• Uncomfortable with change and struggles to adapt• Unwilling to consider new ideas or garner feedback• Unable to identify problems and potential solutions• Stuck to current and engrained methods and thinking

Consideration for Neurodivergent Candidates

To meet our commitments to diversity and inclusion, it's important to give particular consideration to how an individual with a neurodivergent condition may display our values in action.

These types of individuals may display different positive indicators from above due to how their neurodiversity affects their perception of their surroundings or their understanding of the question.

Here are some examples of what to look for:

Be Ambitious	
How they might show it	A person with strong focus (common in Autism and ADHD) might set highly ambitious personal goals that end up benefiting the entire team. Their unwavering dedication can inspire others to push their own limits.
Example (Autism)	An autistic software developer might become fixated on a groundbreaking new feature, dedicating extra hours to research and development. Their ambition pushes the boundaries of what's considered achievable.

Be Compassionate	
How they might show it	People with heightened sensitivity (common in Autism) might be incredibly attuned to the needs of others, offering quiet support or unexpected acts of kindness.
Example (ADHD)	Someone with ADHD might struggle to focus on meetings but surprise colleagues with thoughtful gestures, remembering birthdays or offering help with personal errands.

Be Collaborative	
How they might show it	Individuals with strong communication skills (often a strength in Dyslexia) can excel at explaining complex ideas and facilitating discussions. People with organizational skills (common in Dyspraxia) can ensure projects stay on track.
Example (Dyslexia & Dyspraxia)	A team with a dyslexic individual who excels at verbal communication and a dyspraxic individual who thrives on organization might become a powerhouse duo, ensuring projects are well-understood and efficiently completed.

Be Empowering

How they might show it	People with a strong sense of fairness (common in Autism) might advocate for their colleagues, ensuring everyone has a chance to contribute and receive credit for their work.
Example (Autism)	An autistic team member might notice a quieter colleague with a brilliant idea and ensure their voice is heard during discussions, empowering them to contribute their expertise.

Be Innovative

How they might show it	People with unique perspectives (common in all neurodivergent conditions) can approach problems from unexpected angles, leading to creative solutions. Individuals with a strong focus on detail (common in Autism) might identify minor inconsistencies that spark major breakthroughs.
Example (Dyslexia & Autism)	A dyslexic individual might struggle with traditional data analysis but excel at identifying patterns through visual representations. Partnered with an autistic colleague who is meticulous with details, they might discover a hidden trend that leads to a groundbreaking innovation.

When it comes to neurodiversity, it's important to bear in mind that every individual is unique. The key is to appreciate their answers may differ from what you might consider as 'the norm' and to value the strengths that people with neurodivergent disabilities appear to offer.

Our goal is to offer an inclusive interview environment where everyone feels comfortable expressing themselves and showcasing their talents and where positive consideration is given to differences in the answers to the questions you ask.

Scoring Candidate Answers

Interview panel members should score each candidate's answer to the values-based questions on a scale of 1-5 on the following basis:

Score	Justification	Notes
1	No answer/poor performance	Answer was not relevant to the question, inadequate or lacks any positive traits.
2	Insufficient answer	Response had some relevance to the question but demonstrated more negative traits than positive indicators.
3	Adequate answer	Response was relevant to the question and demonstrated an equal mix of positive and negative traits.
4	Good answer	Response was relevant to the question and demonstrated mostly positive traits with some negative indicators.
5	Excellent Answer	Response was relevant to the question and demonstrated all positive traits