Values-Based Recruitment
Guidance & Questions for Recruiting Managers
January 2025

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 posts regardless of the job grade.

If you're recruiting for any post, you must include a values-based interview as part of your candidate assessment.

What you need to do:

As part of your candidate interview, you and your interview panel need to ask and score the appropriate values-based questions based on whether:

- The post you're recruiting for has line management responsibility or not
- The post you're recruiting for is Grade 17 and below or Grade 18 and above.

	Grade 17 and below	Grade 18 and above
No line management responsibility	Ask the candidate 3 questions from the **Roles With No Line Management Responsibility Questions** – choose 3 values and ask one question per each chosen value.	Ask the candidate 5 questions from the **Roles With No Line Management Responsibility Questions** – one question per each value.
Has line management responsibility	Ask the candidate 3 questions from the **Roles With Line Management Responsibility Questions** – choose 3 values and ask one question per each chosen value.	Ask the candidate 5 questions from the **Roles With Line Management Responsibility Questions** – one question per each value.

Recruiting for posts Grade 17 and below

As part of your interview with a candidate for a post that's corporate grade 17 or lower, you should check their alignment with the council's values by asking at least 3 questions from our values-based list.

While we have 5 values, and the choice of 4 questions per value, you only need to choose the 3 most appropriate values for the role and ask one question for each of your chosen values.

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.

The values questions should have a 50% weighting with the rest of the interview and any skills test/presentation having a joint 50% weighting on the overall score.

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 post that's corporate grade 18 or high, you should check their alignment with the council's values by asking at least 5 questions from our values-based list – one question for each council value.

We have 5 values, and the choice of 4 questions per value. You need to ask one question for each council value.

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.

The values questions should have a 60% weighting with the rest of the interview and any skills test/presentation having a joint 40% weighting on the overall score.

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.

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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 desirable traits and areas to explore further.

Be Ambitious	
Desirable Traits	**Areas to Explore Further**
• 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.	• 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	
Desirable Traits	**Areas to Explore Further**
• Displays empathy to see things from another person's perspective • Displays kindness – e.g. offering appropriate 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 • Shows ability to self-reflect	• Doesn't seek to understand other person's perspective • 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 • Doesn't show ability to self reflect

Be Collaborative	
Desirable Traits	**Areas to Explore Further**
• 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	• 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

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Be Empowering	
Desirable Traits	**Areas to Explore Further**
• 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.	• 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	
Desirable Traits	**Areas to Explore Further**
• 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	• 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 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.

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.

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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

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Values-based Questions

To interview roles with
line management responsibility

These are the questions you should ask candidates to assess their alignment with the council's values.

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 or your team 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, your team and the workload to ensure success? • What's the biggest thing you think you could change about your team or your service to achieve better results? How would you approach changing it, how would you get people on board, how would evaluate it and in what ways would you quantify success?

Be Compassionate
• Tell me about a time you observed a member of your team or another team struggling. How did you demonstrate compassion and offer support? • Describe a situation where you had to deliver difficult feedback. How did you ensure your approach was both constructive and compassionate? • Imagine you're interacting with a service user who is frustrated or upset at the level of service or outcomes your team has provided. 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 team 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 leading a project and you've received feedback that someone in your team 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.

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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 where staff are 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 and make sure innovative ideas are captured and progressed?

- 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?

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Values-based Questions

To interview roles with
no line management responsibility

These are the questions you should ask candidates to assess their alignment with the council's values.

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?
• Can you describe a time when you took on a task or responsibility that was new or challenging for you? How did you handle the situation, and what did you learn from it?
• What are your professional aspirations? How do you see this role fitting into your career goals?

Be Compassionate
• Can you describe a time when you noticed someone in need of support and how you offered help, even if it wasn't directly your responsibility?
• Describe a situation where you had to deliver difficult feedback. 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?
• Can you describe a time when you went out of your way to assist a colleague, even when it wasn't part of your job or responsibility? What motivated you to help, and how did it impact the team?"

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 and you feel that a colleague in the team isn't pulling their weight. How would you address the situation?
• Tell me about a time when you feel like your communication skills made a difference in a group setting?
• How would you define effective teamwork, and why is it essential in achieving Organisational success?

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Be Empowering

- Can you share an example of a time when you supported or helped a colleague feel more confident in their skills or work? How did you empower them, and what was the result?

- Can you give an example of a time you encouraged a colleague to share a new idea, even if it seemed unconventional? How did you support their initiative?

- Can you share an example of a time when you were part of a team, and you helped a colleague gain more responsibility? How did you support them, and what was the outcome?

- Can you describe a time when you were given a task or responsibility and had to learn or figure something out on your own? How did you approach the challenge, and how did it help you grow or empower you in your role?

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?

- Can you describe a time when you introduced a new idea or approach to a task, even if it was outside your usual way of doing things? How did you implement it, and what was the result?

- Can you share an example of a time when you approached a task or project in a different way to improve the outcome? What inspired you to try this new approach, and what was the result?