

# Our People & Culture plan for sustainable and transformative change



In May 2021, the University launched its Strategic Plan 2021-2026, a plan for sustainable and transformative change. The Strategic Plan recognises that the Higher Education context is changing and, in order to succeed in an environment that will be more competitive and resource-constrained, we must be sharply focused on our goals and values-led in our execution.

We cannot stand still as the world adapts around us and essentially, change only happens through people so this People & Culture plan, with its deliberate focus on our organisational culture, outlines the journey that we will go on, together, to support the achievement of the Strategic Plan.

Here at Lancaster, we celebrate the characteristics that make us distinctive, including our strong tradition of interdisciplinary research founded upon strong subject areas, our commitment to excellence and inclusivity, our status as a pioneer institution and our desire to act as a force for good, committed to creating a better world.

As of 2022, we employ around 3,500 people, of which approximately 1,500 are Academics or Researchers and 2,000 are Professional Services. This includes staff working in our partnership operations and international campuses where appropriate. In addition, we have a variable number of colleagues who work on engagement / event contracts operating on a sessional basis.

This number can vary from month to month. In January 2022, there were just over 1,000 appointments contributing to the delivery of Lancaster University activity in this way.

We work together to advance knowledge, wisdom and understanding through the excellence of our teaching and research. Further details on our workforce and student profiles can be found on the data section on our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) website and in our EDI annual reports.

### ***There is no doubt that Lancaster University is an inspiring place to be***

We are an organisation that brings together communities to engage, inform and transform. We educate and equip our c16,700 students for a fulfilling life, and we seek to build economic growth and wellbeing in the region. We know that to continue our success, we must be as explicit about our commitment to be a prominent people- and values-led employer.

## Values

Our Values are:

- ***We build strong communities by working effectively together in a supportive way***
- ***We respect each other by being open and fair and promoting diversity***
- ***We create positive change by being ambitious in our learning, expertise and action***

Our values help to determine the behaviours and actions considered important to success, which in turn, contribute to our organisational culture. The behaviours and actions captured in this plan may already match the current experience for some.

For others, there may still be a gap.

## Purpose of the People & Culture Plan

**Our people shape what the University is able to achieve. Our People & Culture plan will continue to focus on attracting, developing and retaining the best staff to work with us and drawing on their strengths, achieve even more.**

We will proactively seek to ensure our workforce represents and acts in accordance with our values and the communities which we work alongside.

We will build on our recent work to create the conditions and structures that enable our staff to be truly excellent and fulfil their career ambitions in an environment that supports their personal and professional development. We will work to support workplace wellbeing and resilience as we embrace new ways of working.

Fundamentally, our People & Culture plan is about ensuring, collectively, we have the right people, in the right place with the right culture to ensure the success of the University's Strategic Plan.

## Our People & Culture Plan in practice

Under each value, we have determined three key aims to guide us on our journey. These will be enacted through a range of local and institutional implementation plans, which will create meaning and application of the plan for each member of staff, their role and their community.

We expect to use a cultural survey/diagnostic to help us measure our journey. Completed in year 1, this will be the mechanism for establishing the baseline and lead measures required to help deliver the plan.

All members of the University's community of colleagues, their line managers and leaders have a stake in and responsibility for the People & Culture plan. Faculties, Departments and Divisions will develop and deliver supporting action at the local level that will contribute to the direction and achievement of the overall plan. Values-led, this bottom-up approach purposefully enables local action and empowers local leaders.

For this reason, the People & Culture plan starts with a focus on building strong communities and the role of leaders at all levels and across the University in modelling behaviours and enabling change.

### Our People & Culture plan aims

We **build strong communities** by working effectively together in a supportive way

We aim to:

- Lead engaged, effective and flexible teams
- Thrive in our collaborative team spirit
- Be connected locally, nationally and globally

We **respect each other** by being open and fair and promoting diversity

We aim to:

- Be a more diverse and inclusive community
- Excel in our inclusive culture
- Value feedback and staff voice

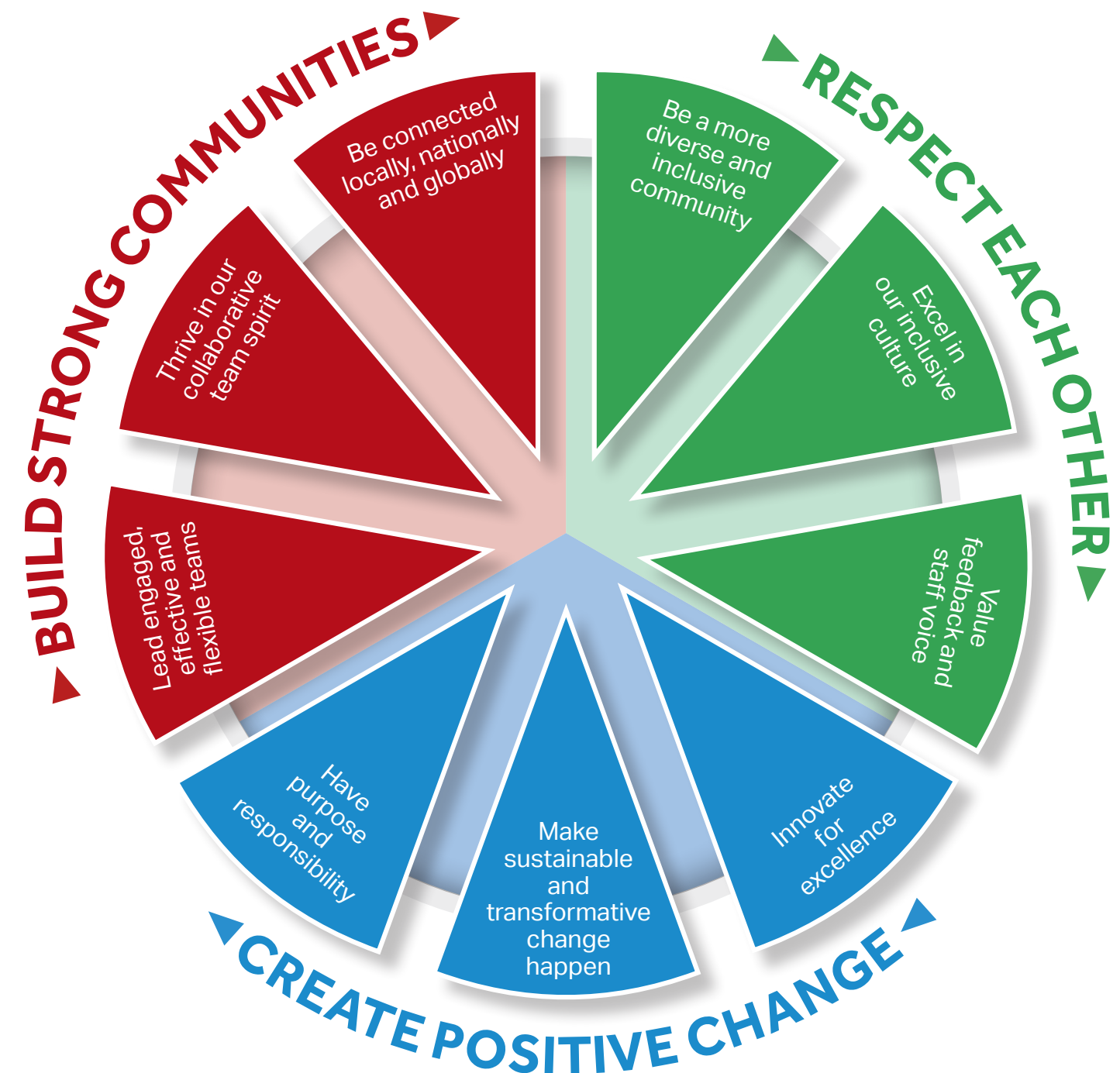
We **create positive change** by being ambitious in our learning, expertise and action

We aim to:

- Have purpose and responsibility
- Make sustainable and transformative change happen
- Innovate for excellence

To ensure organisational ownership and support, the University Leadership Group (ULG) will provide a platform for confirmation and challenge. ULG, as the largest single pan-institution leadership group, will have a key role in influencing and implementing the expectations of the People & Culture Plan and in providing feedback on impact and progress. If not represented via ULG, similar discussions will take place with those with leadership responsibilities for our areas of work beyond Bailrigg (such as our international campuses) to ensure mutually beneficial outcomes.

The University's Executive Boards will maintain overall ownership for the plan and will formally monitor progress against the aims through a range of qualitative measures (such as staff feedback and aspects of the cultural diagnostic) and quantitative measures (such as workforce data, KPIs) and provide, at least annually, progress reports to Senate and Council (and their sub Committees).





# 1 We build strong communities by working effectively together in a supportive way

Working effectively together and increasing our connectivity locally, nationally and globally will contribute to our vision of being globally significant. Broadening ways in which we build strong communities; increasing leadership and collaboration at every level; and empowering people to harness their collective potential enables our whole community to thrive.

*We aim to...*

## 1.1 Lead engaged, effective and flexible teams by:

- Enabling leaders and managers at Lancaster University to develop and respond effectively to the future and growing expectations placed upon them
- Supporting each other to connect; - enabling and forging connections, forming agile and adaptable teams, adopting values-led behaviours and appreciation between team members and between teams
- Increasing the importance of a consistently strong employee experience

### EXAMPLE FOR INITIAL ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Recruiting the best people is one of the most important activities that a leader will undertake and recruiting well takes dedicated time and attention. As one of the key lifecycle points, we will facilitate a programme of reviews of each step within recruitment and selection campaigns, through both an EDI and applicant lens.

From there, the aim will be to identify current good practice and identify where changes to processes or practices are required. Embedding our values (and EDI best practice) into recruitment would mean we engage individuals whose values are in alignment with the institution's values, which, in turn, should lead to engaged, effective and flexible teams.

## 1.2 Thrive in our collaborative, team spirit by:

- Creating sustainable and engaging workforce planning strategies to guide us in developing our thriving Lancaster community
- Evolving and promoting opportunities for people to come together to develop and achieve common objectives
- Building high performing teams that achieve ambitious results

### EXAMPLE FOR INITIAL ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

If we can improve the way in which we anticipate changes in the university's staff population and also the external context, we can be more proactive in how we anticipate and manage the change. In Professional Services (PS), job vacancies are being periodically grouped together so that a strategic campaign, targeting communities that are under-represented in our workforce, can be launched and we can better support these communities in considering and accessing our job vacancies. This brings PS Divisions together for a common cause, attracts a more diverse pool of applicants and should enable groups of staff to be recruited and inducted in cohorts, engendering a collaborative team spirit from the beginning of employment.

## 1.3 Be connected locally, nationally and globally by:

- Evolving and promoting opportunities for people to be connected as part of the Lancaster community wherever they are
- Fostering a global outlook in attracting, retaining and developing the talent required to ensure sustainable success in our international and local ambitious projects
- Championing a strong culture of engagement and support for all of our staff, students and alumni

### EXAMPLE FOR INITIAL ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Any of our new international and local projects will require talented staff to achieve the ambitious and defined outcomes. The expectations of the projects mean the way in which we attract, engage and reward people will have to be assessed on a project-by-project basis.

Staff will join the projects from a whole range of disciplines and professions and Lancaster will need to be flexible in its employment practices to ensure that the right people are engaged on the right contracts so that the projects are successful.

This will need to include working with business and enterprise partners to understand skills pathways, local education providers to understand apprenticeship and skills options and working with the world's leading universities to develop and attract the best staff, PhD students and collaborative research.

## Measuring the Journey

We will measure our journey on leading engaging, effective and flexible teams, that thrive in our collaborative environment with a true sense of team spirit, connected locally, nationally and globally by:

- 1a. Qualitative feedback from leaders and employees on their leadership / employee experience coupled with quantitative analysis on workforce data trends
- 1b. The breadth and quality of our multi / interdisciplinary work
- 1c. The impact / progress against our workforce planning strategies

## 2 We respect each other by being open and fair and promoting diversity

Respect is the foundation of behaviour and action at Lancaster University. Openness and fairness build feelings of trust, safety and responsibility, which establishes the platform needed to bring about sustainable and transformative change. We will continue to promote diversity in our workforce and value different perspectives so that everyone has the opportunity to increase their contribution to the overall success of the University.

*We aim to...*

### 2.1 Be a more diverse and inclusive community by:

- Investing in our understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion through a range of conversations, listening to and acting on lived experiences, awareness raising and learning and development activities
- Ensuring we have a culture of celebrating difference, where different perspectives are valued and are discussed in an open and fair way
- Routinely collecting and analysing high quality, consistent workforce data, including intersectionality, to identify gaps and drive strategic and local campaigns to attract, retain and develop an increasingly diverse and inclusive workforce

#### EXAMPLE FOR INITIAL ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The EDI calendar of events will provide a useful starting point to increase awareness of differences within the existing student and staff profile.

Such regularity of events, with cross-institutional reach, will provide a framework to purposefully have open discussions, increase awareness, support confidence, and normalise the need to talk about difference within daily conversations. This will contribute to us becoming a more inclusive community.

### 2.2 Excel in our inclusive cultures by:

- Developing and implementing sector leading systems and policies, and embed associated behaviours, that provide opportunities for all to strive to achieve their goals
- Provide the conditions and embed the necessary behaviours so that every individual is empowered to excel in the changing context of Higher Education
- Building on existing measures and creating new ones that define, recognise and reward high performance openly and transparently

#### EXAMPLE FOR INITIAL ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Our approach to reward and recognition, aligned to the University's strategic plan will be reviewed. This will provide an opportunity for open and transparent dialogue to take place regarding: how high performance, within an inclusive culture, is defined; how high performance translates into deliverable actions and behaviours, aligned with the University's values; how staff can be supported and enabled to achieve high performance; and how staff are then rewarded accordingly. A very specific example of this would be to review the performance of all professors, not just those who apply for promotion/increments.

### 2.3 Value feedback and staff voice by:

- Making it easier for staff to provide feedback through more dynamic and energetic approaches to engaging with and listening to staff throughout their lifecycle with us, and take visible and timely action
- Advancing the opportunities for open dialogue and deep listening with recognised staff networks and representative bodies
- Creating safe and empowering environments so that everyone feels able to communicate respectfully, openly and transparently (such an environment underpins our strong communities and teams)

#### EXAMPLE FOR INITIAL ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

2021/22, the University is piloting a new approach to gathering staff feedback through a series of pulse surveys. This pilot will inform future ways of gathering staff sentiment, directly from staff.

The subsequent area of focus will be to improve ways in which the range of feedback received, directly and indirectly from staff, is joined together in a valuable and comprehensive way to improve the overall employee lifecycle experience for all.

### Measuring the Journey

We will measure our journey on being a more diverse and inclusive community that excels in our inclusive cultures and values feedback and staff voice by:

- 2a. The way in which we adapt and modify our policies and procedures, aligned to the principles of equality chartermarks, to make Lancaster a fairer and more inclusive University
- 2b. Tracking action taken on staff confidence in giving feedback and actual feedback received
- 2c. Assessing our workforce data for evidence of impact from our diversity-focused campaigns, with a view to always learning and continually challenging ourselves for any future campaigns/activities.
- 2d. Staff and student diversity measures as determined via the EDI Committee
- 2e. The transparency of equality considerations in decision-making
- 2f. Assessing how the behavioural framework and the behaviours of every individual contributes to the journey of our organisational culture of the University (as measured through a cultural diagnostic model)

### 3 We create positive change by being ambitious in our learning, expertise and action

As a sector leader and innovator, using our collective intellectual and wider leadership capabilities as a force for good will enable us to create positive economic, cultural, societal and environmental change. This applies both within Lancaster University and beyond. An unwavering commitment to excellence, innovation and technology, and an openness in mindset to change and transform, underpins our individual and collective behaviours and positively impacts on our organisational culture.

*We aim to...*

#### 3.1 Have purpose and responsibility by:

- Embracing the values, and associated behaviours, of the University throughout our working lives
- Embedding our commitment to the climate emergency throughout new ways of working and our employee experience
- Acting with social responsibility to increase the impact that Lancaster University's people make locally, nationally and globally

#### EXAMPLE FOR INITIAL ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Underpinning the University's People & Culture Plan are the University's Values. These were approved by Council as part of the 2021-26 Strategic Plan. They have already been well-received and have gained some traction in application. However, there is a significant piece of work to clearly articulate how the values make a positive difference to systems, processes and behaviours, including PDRs, recruitment processes and development interventions. A behavioural framework will also be developed for all supported by a set of leadership and management expectations to support the embedding of the values.

#### 3.2 Make sustainable and transformative change happen by:

- Proactively evolving structures and processes, and associated behaviours, to increase our organisational agility and resilience in order to be future-fit
- Improving organisational capability around strategic and operational change
- Thinking and acting digitally, embracing digital technology in all our activities across our global organisation

#### EXAMPLE FOR INITIAL ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

With the global pandemic having changed the way in which we have all be used to working, a key initiative here is to undertake a Futures Thinking exercise in respect of the Future of Work. The Work Foundation is ideally placed to support us to embrace the opportunities that the changing labour market will bring and ensure the changes we make are sustainable and fit for the future.

#### 3.3 Innovate for excellence by:

- Embracing new ideas, learning new skills, increasing our knowledge, developing through experience and continuously improving
- Being a source and a driver of new thinking and practice that improves communities, culture, society and the economy
- Delivering excellent and innovative services that consolidate our position amongst the UK's leading research-intensives

#### EXAMPLE FOR INITIAL ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The rollout of the University's People & Culture Plan is framed around innovation for excellence. Each Faculty, Department and Division will need to consider the extent to which its policies, operating practices and behaviours align with the expectations of the People & Culture Plan and develop new ways to create positive change through people. This is the University's first People & Culture Plan and we recognise that we do not already have all the answers.

This provides an opportunity for areas to consciously question established practices and to take different approaches in order to make a positive difference. Recognising and rewarding examples of excellence and innovation in embedding the People & Culture plan will be an important aspect of our shared journey.

#### Measuring the Journey

We will measure our journey on having purpose and responsibility, making sustainable and transformative change happen and innovating for excellence by:

- 3a. Assessing how the behavioural framework and the behaviours of every individual contributes to the journey of our organisational culture of the University (as measured through a cultural diagnostic model)
- 3b. Staff members clearly being able to articulate their contribution and comfortable in calling out poor behaviour and recognising exemplary behaviour to the achievement of the University's goals
- 3c. Having made significant progress on our journey to carbon neutrality through our people and cultural plan activities
- 3d. External recognition and impact