

# People Strategy

2021-2024

Making a Difference



## Foreword

from Lisa Wallis, Corporate Director of People and Learning

Our People Strategy outlines whg's commitment to deliver on our Corporate Plan aim, 'be an exceptional place to work that attracts, develops and retains talent'.

The Strategy is built around the three key themes of this aim and it will help us to realise our ambition by 2024. Working in collaboration with our colleagues across the business, we will strive for excellence in each of these areas to meet our success measures:

- **Attract** – recruiting the best people for the job
- **Develop** – investing in learning and development and supporting colleagues to perform to the best of their ability
- **Retain** – engaging colleagues and maintaining a positive culture.

At whg we are extremely fortunate to have great colleagues working with us who are highly skilled, dedicated, and hardworking.

Through this Strategy we will take every opportunity to embed our people brand, **making a difference**, and our values. We know that these drive our colleagues to give the best possible service to our customers, communities and to each other.

We will continue to develop a culture that allows colleagues to thrive in their roles, providing the support, opportunities and environment to perform to the best of their ability and develop their careers.

This Strategy will build on the excellent progress we have made in our journey to be an outstanding employer. I am looking forward to seeing colleagues across the organisation embracing it and working together to make it a success.



**Lisa Wallis**  
Corporate Director of  
People and Learning



**Victoria Roden**  
Head of Human Resources

## What does success look like?

**By 2024 we will have achieved the following people success measures as outlined in our Corporate Plan 2020 - 2024:**

- At least 90% of colleagues will recommend whg as a great place to work
- Create an employer brand that has inclusion at its heart and promotes our flexible approach and working environment
- At least 25 trainees, apprentice and graduate posts will work in our business each year
- Boost all colleagues' physical and mental wellbeing through the "Be A Better You" programme of health and wellbeing initiatives
- Deliver a range of programmes to promote positive behaviour and respect
- Strengthen our culture of health and safety through improved systems, training and external accreditation
- Half of our managers will be home grown and promoted from within our business.

## We will **make a difference** through our positive culture and proactive colleague engagement

We will support and develop wider channels of two-way communication with colleagues so that they can share their views and influence matters that affect them.

- We will know if we are **making a difference** through feedback from regular pulse surveys, ensuring that we listen to our colleagues' views by regularly gathering data and measuring engagement levels
- We will implement our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan, developing a range of targeted interventions, which will see us benefit from a more diverse workforce at all levels and across all role types
- We will operate and promote a no blame culture, where every incident should provide an opportunity to learn and prevent recurrence, and where legal and moral obligations come first
- We will support all colleagues to value the importance of making a difference by promoting a positive health and safety culture which ensures all colleagues do the right thing whilst contributing to a safe working environment
- We will launch a behavioural campaign to further embed our values and the behaviours that underpin them.



**Benjamin Bailey**  
Community Housing Apprentice



**Itayi Makande**  
Housing Advisor

## We will make a difference through strong performance management

All colleagues will have access to the operational plan for their service area. Colleagues will understand how they contribute individually and as a team to the success of the Corporate Plan.

- We will support whg's investment in digital technology to improve the customer experience, and will redesign job roles where appropriate to increase efficiency and support job satisfaction
- We will strengthen our approach to performance management through our culture of managing performance and pursuing excellence
- We will **make a difference** to personal and team performance, supporting managers to provide a more consistent way of recording and monitoring individual objectives
- We will support all services in adopting a housing professional approach; our colleagues work in a position of trust in relation to our customers, who rely on them to make professional judgements.

## We will make a difference to colleagues through learning and development

We are serious about the individual and business benefits of providing effective learning and development and will continue to financially invest in our people.

We will support all colleagues to access appropriate and relevant learning and development opportunities to fulfil their roles and inspire their career aspirations and ambition for the future.

- Technology will be used across the business to drive down cost, eliminate waste and improve the customer experience. We will assist digital and change management projects, ensuring our colleagues are supported
- We will ensure that all managers take responsibility for supporting and driving talent management; learning and development will not be a HR initiative
- We will offer a range of leadership development programmes which enhance people management skills for a more modern, agile workforce.



Lisa Lawrence  
Personal Assistant



**Ravi Chonk**  
Assistant Manager (Tenancy Services)

- We will ensure line managers support colleagues throughout their learning journey through regular check-ins which support personal growth and career development
- We will make a difference by listening and supporting development through our coaching and mentoring programmes
- We will encourage and support lateral career moves enabling colleagues to expand their experience
- Our colleagues will play a vital role in learning and development. We will utilise the skills, knowledge and experience of existing colleagues to help other colleagues grow and develop by introducing initiatives such as Train-the-Trainer
- We will review our induction process ensuring new colleagues can fully integrate into whg life and settle into their role
- We will expand our community housing offer and complement this with an intensive learning and development programme for colleagues.



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OUR PEOPLE STRATEGY

# We will **make a difference** to the health, safety and wellbeing of all colleagues

We will support our colleagues to adopt a positive health and safety culture.

- We will help embed a health and safety culture in which managers understand the vital role they play so that they can **make a difference** in a culture that cares
- We will **make a difference** to the health, safety and wellbeing of our colleagues, by providing a range of initiatives through a blended approach of virtual and face-to-face programmes.



**James Durbar**  
Multi Skilled Operative (Bricklayer)



**Myton Thomas**  
Neighbourhood Impact Officer

# Our three key themes: Attract, develop, retain

## Attract

We want the best people to work for us, people who are talented, committed and who share our vision, values and ambitions. It is also important to us that we have a diverse workforce, representative of the communities we serve.

We attract high calibre applicants from a variety of sectors who see whg as an organisation that **makes a difference**, has strong values and an exciting future ahead. We will continue to have competitive salaries and generous terms and conditions, and benefits, which are valued by our colleagues.

Our recruitment campaigns and selection processes will become more innovative, resulting in an increase in applicants and appointments from underrepresented groups.

In our Corporate Plan we state that by 2024, half of our managers will be home grown. We are on track to achieve this target, with over 40% of our managers having been promoted internally. To achieve our 50% target, we must ensure that colleagues have every opportunity to develop, and that we are able to retain them.

## Develop

We value all our colleagues and want to **make a difference** to their personal and professional development by offering a range of formal and informal learning opportunities. These opportunities may support a colleague growing within their current role or support their career progression within the organisation.

In order to perform to the best of their ability, all colleagues need to be clear about what is expected from them and supported to achieve their individual and team objectives. Every colleague should receive regular and constructive feedback on their performance, taking every opportunity to also celebrate great work.

Learning and development has traditionally been viewed as a process that is owned and delivered by support service functions. Through our approach to learning and development, we want to see everyone taking responsibility for their role in the success of our business.

Managers will be supported to guide and develop colleagues through their personal career journey, playing a vital role in colleague development.

We know everyone is different and our colleagues learn and develop in their own unique way; a one size fits all approach won't always be appropriate to build the talent whg needs. Therefore, we offer a blended approach, open to all, with the opportunity to access learning in a variety of ways.

Our investment in learning and development is further demonstrated through our commitment to have at least 25 trainees, apprentice and graduate posts each year.



**Jo Harrison**  
Maintenance Operative



**Amy Trentham**  
Learning and Development Advisor

## Retain

We are a great employer that **makes a difference** by recognising and rewarding excellence. Colleagues benefit from flexible working practices and working in a diverse, vibrant and forward-thinking environment.

Past surveys have confirmed high levels of colleague engagement, which demonstrate that the effort that goes into maintaining a positive culture is having an impact on how colleagues feel about being part of our team.

We will utilise our existing talent by developing a Train-the-Trainer framework, enabling our colleagues to train other colleagues whilst developing themselves.

We will have a clear career planning process, empowering colleagues to plan and prepare for their chosen career path by defining how they can accomplish their chosen route, building knowledge progressively.

We will continue to develop a contemporary and competitive employment offer, whilst remaining true to our values, backed by a commitment to grow our own talent.

Colleagues who work for whg tell us that it is a warm, friendly, supportive and fun place to work. We aim to capture this by creating an employer brand that has inclusion at its heart and promotes our flexible approach and working environment.



## Health, safety and wellbeing

We believe that encouraging colleagues to look after their physical and mental wellbeing makes good business sense. Over the last few years we have seen our 'Be a Better You' programme create opportunities for colleagues to come together, have fun and improve their health and wellbeing.

We know that work-life balance is an important factor in wellbeing and this has been brought into sharp focus during the COVID-19 pandemic. We will continue to support requests for flexible working arrangements where possible and will create an environment where work outputs and outcomes are more important than where and when work is carried out.

While some colleagues thrive remotely, others need the structure of a set routine and connection that a physical workspace brings. Both the mental and physical aspects of the new world of flexible working will need to be balanced.

Making a difference by contributing to a safe working environment is important to our colleagues. This strategy supports a positive health and safety culture, ensuring that all colleagues value the importance of embedded health and safety principles, staying safe, looking out for each other and doing the right thing.



**Jaswant Sembhi**  
Partnership Coordinator



**Cheresse Randall**  
Community Housing Apprentice

# Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI)

All colleagues should have a positive experience of working at whg. Protected characteristics such as age, disability, race, gender, and sexual orientation should not be connected to accessing benefits, development and career progression opportunities. We believe in EDI in the broadest terms, we do not believe it should be a tick box exercise.

However, we acknowledge that we still have work to do. We are committed to reducing our gender and ethnicity pay gaps and ensuring that we have greater ethnic diversity in senior roles. We are equally passionate about creating a truly inclusive culture.

Our **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan 2020 – 2024** clearly sets out our approach. By the time we have delivered this plan we aim to have embedded our approach to EDI in everything we do.

## The Colleague Voice

We know that we can achieve great things by working together, as one team. We have worked hard to develop a strong, positive culture and have good levels of colleague engagement. In order to take this to the next level we need to ensure that we have effective mechanisms in place for senior leaders to listen to a diverse range of views from across the business.

In order to achieve this, we have recently launched a new colleague consultation forum, the Colleague Voice. We are committed to supporting the Colleague Voice to help us improve as both an employer and service provider and grow over the next four years.

Our People Strategy is underpinned by our values.

For each of the values, we have a set of behaviours that we expect all colleagues to display.

## Accountable

### Taking responsibility

- I understand that I am accountable for my actions and the impact they have on others
- I am dedicated to doing the right thing, acting morally and exercising good judgement.

## Courageous

### Trying new things

- I will try new things, accepting that mistakes may happen and that they can provide valuable learning and development, supporting a no blame culture
- I am not afraid to have a difficult conversation, give honest and constructive feedback that identifies where support is needed, and to share the lessons that have been learnt.



**Becky Saunders**  
Performance and Service  
Improvement Advisor



**Deyal Samra**  
Trainee Gas Engineer

## Trustworthy

### Being honest in everything we do

- I am committed to making a difference by acting honestly, morally and with integrity
- I care about the impact of my behaviour

## One Team

### Achieving great things by working together

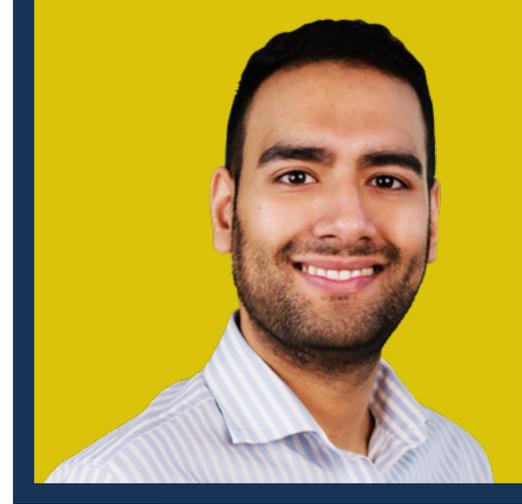
- I support collaboration and cohesion and the opportunities this creates
- I treat everyone with care and respect regardless of their differences

## Excellence

### Striving to be the best

- I look for opportunities to celebrate and communicate our values and our inclusive and diverse culture
- I acknowledge behaviours, both good and bad and set high standards for myself and others





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