New Forest DISTRICT COUNCIL | A place for you

Grounds Maintenance Operative

Candidate pack



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Welcome from our Chief Executive

A warm welcome to new and potential employees from our Chief Executive, Kate Ryan.

One of the largest district council areas in the country, New Forest combines the beautiful and varied natural environment of a national park and coastline with thriving market towns. It's consistently ranked among the most desirable places to live in the country with the park at its heart and the majority of its 170,000 residents located on the periphery.

There's no escaping Hampshire's programme of Local Government Reorganisation, but along with our elected members and partners we are custodians of a unique and beautiful place, and our role for the next few years is to continue to create thriving and safe communities and a strong economy, providing homes, and supporting the most vulnerable, responding to the climate and nature impacts, and delivering excellent services that lead transitions in to a new authority.

The district will see major changes over the coming years. We also have the Solent Freeport, Totton Town Centre regeneration and a Strategic Asset Management Plan to deliver. We also deliver homes as a Council and work hard to meet the housing challenges in the area. We recognise that not all our communities are the same and work with our 37 town and parish councils and local partners to better understand and meet the needs of all our residents, including the most vulnerable.

At the heart of delivering our priorities is our staff. We are well on our way to meeting our aims of being an employer of choice and I firmly believe that having the best staff, who are well-supported, is key to delivering the best outcomes for our residents. Building on this, our transformation programme invests in our staff, develops the skills and technological infrastructure we need to modernise our services at pace to place our residents and staff in the best possible place for the future.

We are looking to recruit people passionate about making a difference to our unique place. We also want you to be inspired by our values. We provide a supportive environment to develop and deliver and we work hard to earn the respect and trust of our residents. 78% tell us they are satisfied with the way we run things, so if you would like to join a council with a reputation for innovation and proactive working to deliver even better outcomes to strengthen our local communities, we encourage you to learn more about our roles on our website, **newforest.gov.uk/jobs**.







About us

With our main office based in Lyndhurst in the heart of the stunning New Forest National Park, New Forest District Council (NFDC) is an excellent place to work and thrive. We work together and with partners to provide a wide range of highly valued services to our community.

We believe that all our employees make a valuable contribution to the work of the council, and encourage a trusting and open culture where each employee is supported and respected, where ideas are actively sought, and self-development promoted.

93% of our residents think the New Forest is a great place to live. It really does have it all. It combines a stunning natural environment with thriving market towns whilst also including some of the south coast's biggest new developments. There are excellent schools and colleges as well as Bournemouth, Salisbury, and Southampton close by. The New Forest is a fascinating place that we will be delighted to introduce you to if you don't already know it.

About the forest

New Forest district really does have it all. It's one of the largest district council areas in the country, and combines a stunning natural environment with thriving market towns whilst also including some of the south coast's biggest new developments.

How to apply

To apply for this role, please see **newforest.gov.uk/jobs**. You'll be asked a few basic questions and then you'll be able to upload your CV and covering letter. Please remember to link your application to the job description at the end of this pack.





Getting to us at Hardley Depot

Address:

Hardley Depot

Hardley Industrial Estate

Hardley

Hampshire

SO45 3AE

Parking:

There is limited parking on-site at the depot and there is on-road parking available as well. When on-site, please safely make your way to the office.

Your interview:

If you are invited to interview and there is anything we can reasonably adjust to make your experience more beneficial or constructive, please let us know at **hr.admin@nfdc.gov.uk**.

NFDC is committed to safe and fair recruitment, safeguarding and protecting those we serve. We make sure all our staff are vetted, selected, trained, and supervised fairly and to a high standard so that they can provide safe, effective, services to our communities.

Our commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion

We're committed to our policies encompassing equal opportunities for the whole workforce, through training and our inclusive culture at NFDC. We remove discrimination against any employee in their access to employment, training, working conditions, promotion, or dismissal.

Equality objectives

Our external equality objectives are:

- to develop and provide services using data and insight to ensure that we meet the needs of our diverse communities

Our internal equality objectives are:

- to encourage diversity and champion equality within our workplace. We will develop and support an inclusive working environment where all staff are respected with zero tolerance of bullying and harassment

We are a member of the Disability Confident employer scheme. This means that we:

- seek to implement best practice in all ongoing and future work
- remove discrimination against any employee or applicant in their access to employment, training, working conditions, promotion or dismissal
- ensure our recruitment process is inclusive and accessible
- communicate and promote our vacancies in methods accessible for all
- offer interviews to any disabled person who meets the essential criteria for the role
- anticipate and make reasonable adjustments for staff and candidates, as required
- support existing employees who acquire a disability or long-term health condition

Find out more about the scheme at **gov.uk/government/collections/disability-confident-campaign**







Our benefits

Flexible hybrid working (role dependant)

For the majority of our roles we're adopting a hybrid way of working, mixing both home and office working to help you balance your work and home life.

This will vary depending on individual job roles and there will be some roles which can offer more flexibility than others. You are welcome to discuss what options might be available at interview.

In addition, we have family friendly policies and (role dependant) there could be flexibility around the hours that you work.

Annual leave holiday entitlement

We offer a generous annual leave entitlement which includes:

- 28 days a year depending on the job you do, plus bank holidays and an extra day at Christmas
- an additional 5 days after 5 years of continuous local government service
- family friendly leave including maternity, paternity, adoption and parental leave - you could get up to a year off and that we pay more than the statutory minimum

Pay

Our roles are graded on salary bands, and subject to good performance, employees have the opportunity to progress through the pay band.

Salaries are paid on 20th of each month for the whole of that month by credit transfer to your bank account. Where the 20th is a weekend or bank holiday the credit transfer will occur on the previous working day. Annual pay awards are determined under the national pay bargaining arrangements.

Cycle to work scheme

This offers you a cost-effective way to purchase new cycling equipment.

The scheme is run by a salary sacrifice, which means that you won't need to pay tax or national insurance on the cost of your new bike and accessories, saving you between 33.25% to 43.25% on the total cost.

This reduced cost is simply deducted from your pay over 12 to 18 months.

Visit **www.cycle2work.info** for more information.

Pension

The local government pension scheme is an excellent benefit.

At NFDC, we make it simple, and auto-enrol all our colleagues into the scheme.

Employees pay a percentage based on their salary (between 5.5% and 10.5%). Did you know that the council contribute 18.4% of your pensionable pay each month? This amounts to thousands of pounds annually!

As a member of the scheme, you contribute to the scheme funds which enables you to build up a Defined Benefit (DB) pension pot. That means the Scheme will give you an income at your normal pension age linked to inflation which is guaranteed for life.

The benefits of the scheme are:

- an annual pension on retirement, based on the pension you build up
- a choice of tax-free lump sum when you retire
- payable from your normal pension age (usually liked to State Pension Age)
- voluntary retirement from age 55, normally reduced as it's being paid earlier
- an ill health pension from any age (subject to qualifying service)

A death in service lump sum of 3 times your pensionable pay, and a spouse, civil partner or cohabiting partner's pension, and eligible children's pension in the event of death

There's also a 50/50 section of the LGPS as an alternative to opting out. It is intended to be a temporary measure to assist members who may be suffering from financial hardship but still want their pension to grow. It allows you to remain in the scheme but pay half your normal contributions and build up half the normal pension. As a member of the 50/50 section you benefit from full life assurance cover, full ill health retirement cover, full survivor's benefits in the event of your death.

As a member of the scheme, you contribute to the scheme funds which enables you to build up a Defined Benefit (DB) pension pot. That means the Scheme will give you an income at your normal pension age linked to inflation which is guaranteed for life.

We have partnered with AVC Wise to offer you Shared Cost AVCs which are additional voluntary contributions you can make to your pension.

Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVCs) are a tax-efficient way to save for retirement. They provide an opportunity to supplement your Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) and build up an additional retirement fund.

Employee discounts

You will have access to a variety of employee discounts including:

- national discounts from many high street retailers including supermarkets, stores, restaurants and many more
- discounted membership at Freedom Leisure’s New Forest centres

Unions

We are committed to actively supporting good employee relations and have in place collective arrangements for employee consultation and bargaining.

At present, we formally recognise 3 trade unions; UNITE, GMB and UNISON.

Employee voice

At New Forest District Council, our employees are at the heart of what we do. We know that when people feel included and are heard, they perform better and are happier at work. We therefore support several employee networks, conduct regular employee satisfaction surveys, and offer multiple ways to make a suggestion or ask a question at any time.

Employee networks

Employee forum

Our employee forum is the coordinating group, chaired by our chief executive. The forum includes representation from every network as well as wider staff groups and corporate support functions.

Wider employee networks

Our employee network groups include EDI (Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion), LGBT+, Early Careers, Women's Network, and a Social Group. These are all employee led, offering a safe place for open discussion and an opportunity to raise any suggestions or concerns, with our values and behaviours embedded within the way they work.

We encourage participation from people with different backgrounds and perspectives, representing different personal characteristics as well as departments, roles, and grades.

Our employee networks are an important way for people to connect. These all link directly to our chief executive through the employee forum, ensuring senior leadership are visible and well informed.

Employee involvement

We organise a full employee satisfaction survey every 2 years (latest survey completed in 2024). We also run smaller pulse surveys and focus groups when needed to gather ideas or feedback on specific topics.

Any employee can ask a question, make a suggestion, or raise a concern at any time by emailing our staff questions email address, submitting an online form, or using the staff suggestion box at each of our depots. All suggestions are considered by our senior leadership team at their monthly meetings.

Employee wellbeing

We are an inclusive and supportive work environment that enables everyone to do their job to the best of their ability.

We have an assistance programme including an employee portal and telephone line which offers free, instant access to financial, legal, and emotional support. This includes up to 6 counselling sessions a year.

We pride ourselves by ensuring the wellbeing of all our employees is paramount, we have a selection of tools available for our employees, these include having qualifies mental first aiders, our wellbeing champions. Offer of our employee support line, which is free and confidential to all of our employees.

Wellbeing walks, these are set up by one of our wellbeing champions and invites anyone to join for a lunch time walk around the forest, an opportunity to meet people you don't usually work with. We have an away space available, this is open to all employees and is currently being used for those returning from maternity leave to allow them to express milk, a space for anyone to use as prayer and also a space to reflect and have calm.

We will make workplace adjustments where necessary for health reasons.

Our culture

We continuously strive to help people do their best by valuing their contributions and listening to what they've got to say about the work they do and by providing a healthy work environment with positive management support and encouragement for all our 780 employees.

We have an inclusive culture, everyone is welcome and diversity is celebrated.

Our people strategy



Our people strategy provides the direction to guide the organisation in how we engage and invest in our people and create the conditions to enable change.

We're passionate about delivering its aims to address key challenges and to be an employer of choice. The people strategy includes 4 themes:

1) Strong roots: building and aligning our culture, wellbeing and policies.

2) Connect: giving opportunities to build and strengthen working relationships across the organisation and with our partners

3) Grow: building our opportunities to learn and develop.

4) Empower: opportunities to find our own solutions unlocking potential and maximising performance.

Behaviours commitment

Our behaviours commitment builds through the strong roots theme and throughout all that we do. It defines how we go about our work, ensuring fair and consistent treatment, brings out the best in us all, giving opportunities to celebrate and improve towards better outcomes for people and performance and our commitment to being an employer of choice. It also helps to ensure the way we work together is fit for local government reorganisation and beyond. We have tools and practices in place so that we can each develop towards the behaviours and recognise and celebrate our successes.

Our values

Our corporate values are collective known as 'LEAF'. They underpin the culture and behaviours we are aiming for to achieve our commitment to becoming an employer of choice.

Learning

We learn from what we and others do well and where we need to improve, we support staff development and organisational growth

Empathy

We show kindness, actively looking to understand people's different needs, and ensure our services are responsive.

Ambition

We are ambitious for our people and our place, embracing innovation and best practice.

Fairness

We act fairly, honestly, and openly in all we do.

Our behaviours commitment

Our values	How we work	Behaviours we aim for	Examples of what good looks like	Examples of what we don't expect to see
Learning	Positive	Engages positively in team meetings and other organisational and learning activities. Proactively shares own learning, experience and best practice with others. Looks for opportunities and creates time to reflect and learn, develop skills and knowledge, and keep up to date. Influences peers in a positive way.	• Responds positively to reasonable requests. • Shares learning from a course with wider team. • Uses initiative to research best practice and brings ideas. • Identifies own skills and knowledge gaps, and finds solutions to address them.	• Spreads negativity. • Overloads others with information or learning. • Doesn't apply learning to real work situations.
Empathy	Open and honest	Raises concerns. Tells the truth. Knows own strengths and weaknesses and asks for support or help when needed. Acknowledges and learns from mistakes. Gives constructive feedback to others. Sets realistic expectations for self and others.	• Tells a colleague or manager when something doesn't feel right. • Owns up to a mistake as soon as realised. • Gives a customer a clear timeline for replying to them and takes action accordingly.	• Hides information or mistakes. • Ignores issues/concerns. • Blames others. • Communicates unclear/ unrealistic expectations. • Does not meet agreed timelines.
Ambition	Adaptable	Is flexible and shifts priorities to meet the needs of the service. Communicates in a way that helps others understand. Recognises own and others emotional responses to situations and adapts as needed. Creates change and supports others through change. Takes well considered risks & opportunities. Acts upon feedback from others. Looks for solutions to problems.	• Uses 1:1s or appraisals to reflect on how work could be done differently. • Identifies a problem and talks to others about possible solutions before taking it to a manager. • Tries doing something differently. • Steps out of comfort zone.	• Ignores feedback. • Makes no effort to adapt communication style to others needs. • Consistently presents problems without solutions.
	Work together	Works effectively with others inside and outside the organisation. Makes connections and proactively seeks opportunities for joint working outside of team. Shares information with others to help them do their job. Helps others to resolve conflict & build trust. Understands other's experiences are different. Uses words of encouragement.	• Finds out what other's objectives are on a joint project and helps meet them together. • Involves colleagues or customers in opportunities to shape services. • Supports and encourages colleagues to discuss challenges.	• Ignores key stakeholders. • Avoids uncomfortable conversations. • Presents other people's ideas as own. • Doesn't work co-operatively with others.
	Take pride	Celebrates own and others success. Communicates the importance and purpose of own work. Takes responsibility for own actions. Consistently strives for high standard of work. Challenges existing ways of working. Role models our values and behaviours. Is an advocate for NFDC and own profession.	• Follows up with a customer to ensure they are kept informed. • Makes an effort to say thank you. • Tells others when someone has gone above and beyond.	• Speaks about the organisation in a negative way. • Does the bare minimum required. • Doesn't complete agreed actions or communicate changed outcome.
Fairness	Respectful	Acts with kindness first. Seeks to understand the impact of actions and behaviours on others. Listens to others to understand different viewpoints. Anticipates & recognises the needs of others. Challenges inappropriate, offensive or discriminative behaviour. Shows respect to all colleagues and communities no matter who they are.	• Stands up for a colleague who is subjected to unkindness. • Ensures everyone in a meeting can contribute. • Actively seeks and listens to professional expertise from other teams.	• Treats people unfairly. • Makes others feel unable to contribute. • Doesn't speak up about inappropriate or offensive comments. • Sends rude or critical e-mails.



Our corporate plan

Our corporate plan plays a principal role in the strategic framework for the council. It is the overarching document that sets out our vision, values, priorities and commitments.

The plan focuses on the challenges we face, and all that we can do as an organisation to address them.

The plan builds on the foundations already laid out, maintaining our commitment to financial sustainability and excellence in service delivery.

Our corporate plan for 2024-2028 is a comprehensive roadmap outlining the vision, values, and priorities for the next four years.

It reflects a commitment to serving residents, improving communities, and safeguarding the unique environment of the New Forest.

Under the leadership of Cllr Jill Cleary, and Chief Executive Kate Ryan, the council aims to address key challenges and seize opportunities while prioritising people, place, and prosperity.

Our vision

To secure a better future by supporting opportunities for the people and communities we serve, protecting our unique and special place, and securing a vibrant and prosperous New Forest.

Our priorities

People

The council is dedicated to supporting vulnerable residents, addressing financial hardships, and ensuring access to affordable housing. Community engagement, homelessness prevention, and improving housing quality are central to this priority.

Place

Recognising the significance of the district's natural environment, the council aims to balance growth with conservation efforts. Strategies include sustainable development, climate resilience, and enhancing community spaces.

Prosperity

The plan seeks to foster economic growth while ensuring inclusivity and sustainability. Initiatives include promoting the Solent Freeport, supporting local businesses, and championing skills development and employment opportunities.

Future New Forest

Our vision for change is investing in our people and services to meet customer needs, protecting our finances and embedding sustainability to preserve our unique place by transforming tomorrow, together



Personal development

A key foundation to our people strategy is building our 'strong roots'; our culture, and developing as a learning organisation.

We're committed to invest in our people to ensure we have the skills and experience to deliver for our communities, and that we are best placed for the future, as individuals and as an organisation.

We've moved from formal appraisals and separate 1:1's, to regular growth and goals conversations to aid continuous improvement, engagement and to ensure we are aligned to dynamic changing goals. These supportive and meaningful conversations can cover whatever is important at the time of the conversation, such as:

- health, wellbeing and personal resilience
- performance and results - reflecting back and focussing forwards
- behaviour commitments
- growth and development

In terms of growth and development, this could take a range of forms, such as seminars and training courses, eLearning, buddying, coaching, project work, apprenticeships, professional memberships, as well as access to a directory of excellent free development resources designed to help you thrive.

2024

Employee survey results

86%
feel they can discuss concerns with their manager

84%
say they have help and support within their teams

89%
have a good awareness of our values and behaviours

85%
have a positive relationship with their line manager

88%
have a strong sense that their work makes a difference

73%
believe NFDC delivers a good service to its residents and communities

81%
enjoy working for NFDC

77%
feel they have a good work and home balance

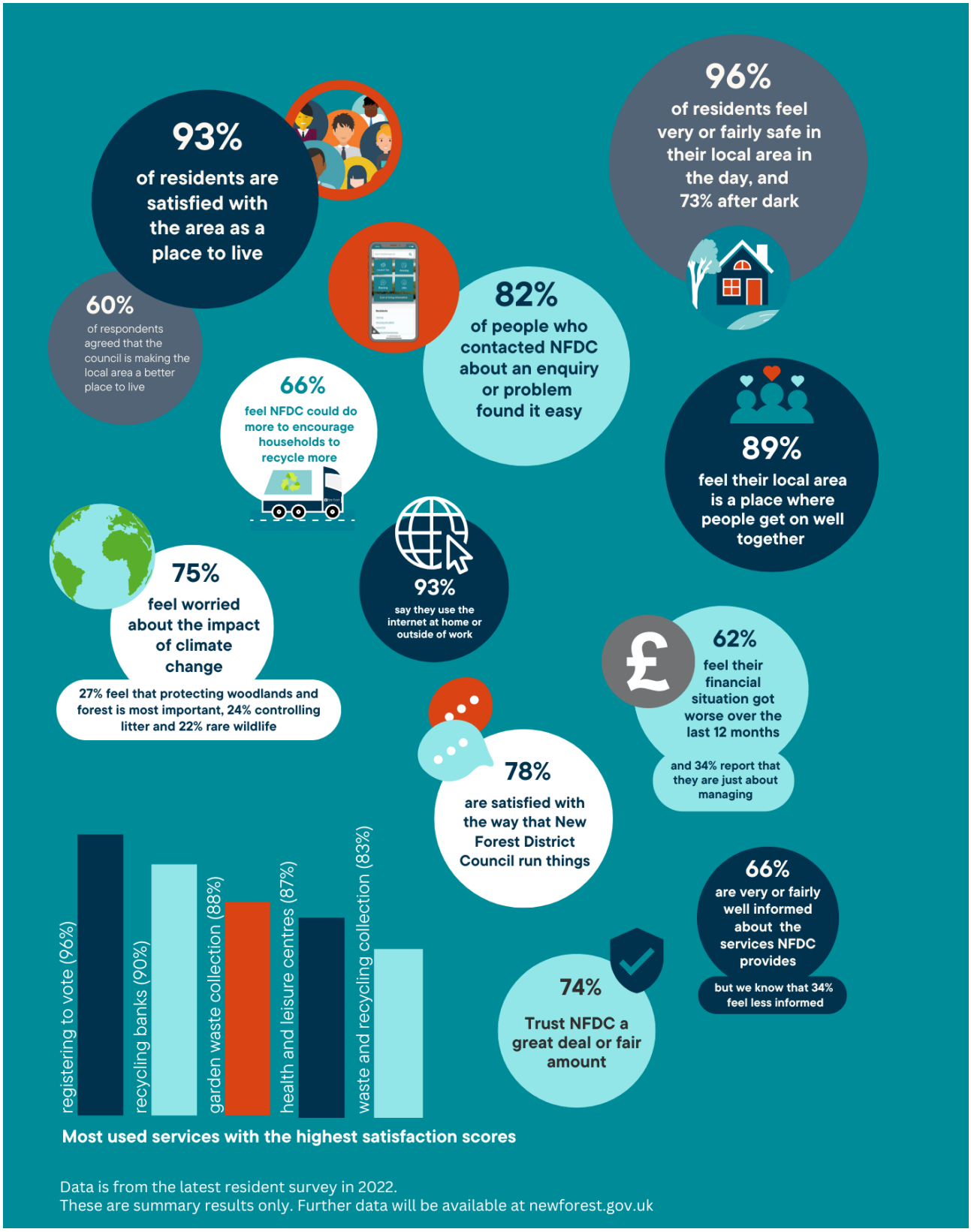
76%
would recommend NFDC as a workplace.
That's up 14 percentage points from last year's survey.

Employee response rate to this survey was up 16 percentage points from the last survey.

Most common words used by staff:

Inclusive, friendly, flexible, supportive, fair diverse, caring, welcoming.

Most recent resident insight survey results



Job Description

Job Title:	**Grounds Maintenance Operative (Career Grade)**
Name:	
Department:	**Place, Operations and Sustainability**
Service:	**Open Spaces**
Band:	**2/3/4**
Current Base:	**As Required**
Post No:	**P01752**
Politically Restricted:	**No**
Essential Car User:	**No**

2. Main Purpose:

To provide either individually or as a team member, duties associated with providing a grounds maintenance service for the council which will include grass cutting, shrub bed maintenance, hedge cutting, cemetery maintenance and burials and other associated horticultural and arboricultural operations.

3. Position Within Organisation:

Post Holder responsible to: Grounds Maintenance Supervisor
Post Holder responsible for: Nil
Post Holder indirectly responsible for: Nil
Post Holder responsible for budgets: **No**

4. Main Duties:

The post holder will operate a full range of machinery in carrying out basic grounds maintenance operations such as grass cutting, shrub bed maintenance, hedge cutting on numerous sites both inside and outside of the district boundaries. The post holder will carry out general landscaping works as required.

Use and champion our values and behaviors to support how you deliver your everyday work.

Progression criteria Level 1

To have some experience as a team leader and oversee a small team of employees on a daily basis, to ensure that the team complete paperwork in relation to the work undertaken for example herbicide application and mowing records.

To carry out site specific risk assessments for each job allocated and ensure the team are working in a safe and efficient manner.

Ensuring the work programme and route list issued by Supervisor is adhered to on a daily basis

Or

That the employee has specific knowledge either through training, ie. NVQ, or through experience, to influence others in carrying out horticultural operations, cemetery operations and fine turf.

To operate specific machinery such as tractor and attachments, side arm flails, chippers and mechanical diggers including digging of graves.

All employees are required to support the Council's safeguarding policy and undergo any associated training to ensure its functions are delivered having regard for the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk.

5. Skills, Knowledge & Experience:

Essential:

Previous experience in Grounds Maintenance.
Full driving licence with trailer entitlement
Ability to work alone or as a member of a team.

Desirable:

PA1 & PA6 herbicide certification*
Basic Risk assessment training*

*Both of these must be obtained within 3 months

Progression criteria Level 1:

2 years' experience in Grounds Maintenance operations

And at least two further operational qualifications:

- Amenity horticulture level NVQ 2,
- COTTS cemetery operations certification
- 360 digger competency certification
- M01 Tractor Certification
- Chainsaw certification
- NTPC Power fed chipper certification

Progression criteria Level 2:

At least 3 years' experience in Grounds Maintenance
At least 2 years' experience of leading a small team
Ability to complete computer based tasks using Microsoft Office
A team leader qualification such as NVQ 2 in Team Leading

Progression to this level reflects a post holder skilled and able to carry out virtually all aspects of Grounds Maintenance work and guide others in doing so; therefore the post holder must have at least three of the operational qualifications detailed in level 1 above.

6. Problem Solving:

The postholder is required to follow simple schedules and instructions and resolve minor on-site problems and refer all other issues to the team leader or Supervisor.

Progression criteria Level 1:

Problems relating to this level of post are minor as standard operating procedures are in place for all operations. However, the postholder will use previous experience and qualifications to solve a range of technical problems and advise and assist colleagues, whilst referring to the team leader or supervisor for more complex problems.

Progression criteria Level 2:

Have both the technical breadth of knowledge and day to day responsibility for the small team, and ability to solve wider associated problems with more complex problems being referred to the Supervisor.

7. Decision Making:

Decisions made at this level are basic operational ones, such as being able to assess ground conditions and make minor decisions on purely operational issues. All other matters should be referred to the team leader or Supervisor.

Progression criteria Level 1:

Decisions made at this level are still operational but could affect other team members. Procedures are in place and any decision made would be within those procedures taking into account the individuals experience and technical knowledge. Anything outside of procedure should be referred to the supervisor.

Progression criteria Level 2:

Knowledge and experience will be used in association with written procedures and individual judgement in making operational decisions. More complex decisions will be referred to Supervisor.

8. Operational Responsibility:

To carry out basic grounds maintenance operations such as grass cutting, shrub bed maintenance, hedge cutting, cemetery maintenance and burials in a safe manner, with each individual making sure that the specified standards for each task and met. All grounds maintenance equipment and vehicles are kept in a safe and satisfactory manner.

Progression criteria Level 1:

The work programme will be set by the Supervisor; however the postholder will either:

Oversee daily work for a team of up to three operators, ensuring the correct equipment is available; and that it is carried out efficiently and to requirement on site.

Or

Be responsible for providing specialist technical operational knowledge to ensure works are carried out as required.

Progression criteria Level 2:

Assisting the Supervisor with planning of work programmes across teams and to undertake some duties in their absence, referring to the Senior Supervisor as required. Approximately 5% of time will be spent on work in the office including use of Microsoft Office packages.

9. Communication:

Most day to day communication and interaction will be with the team leaders or Supervisors, there is a requirement on some sites such as sheltered housing and cemeteries to discuss operational maintenance requirements with members of the public.
Internal 80%
External 20%

Progression criteria Level 1:

The ability to talk to and explain issues to, team members, and the Supervisor. The majority of work will require internal contact, however, there will be a small amount of external contact on site; therefore, the ability to discuss and explain straightforward issues to members of the public will be required at times.

Internal 80%
External 20%

Progression criteria Level 2:

Ability to communicate and motivate staff on site, and the ability to communicate and liaise with other Council Officers, the public and outside client representatives slightly more often, sometimes on sensitive issues. Complex or particularly sensitive issues should be escalated to the Supervisor.

Internal 75%
External 25%

10. Working Conditions:

A degree of physical effort is required to operate ride on mowers, herbicide applicators and operation of hand held machinery and vehicles including mowers, strimmers, shredders, chain saws and tractors which require risk assessment, safe operating procedures and PPE to operate safely on the highway and in public areas. Work will be varied between duties and will often continue in inclement weather where appropriate PPE is provided. Staff at risk will undergo health surveillance for noise, vibration or chemical usage. Staff will also be fully trained in the use of equipment.

11. Special Features:

To meet operational requirements and emergency works over time may be required appropriate rates apply.

Requirement to work from any operational depot.

12. Signatures:

Job Holder:……....Manager:……..

Date:……Date:……..