

Public Sector HRD of the year

This award submission from Plymouth City Council (PCC) will demonstrate how Dawn Auger, our Interim Director for Transformation and Change delivers outstanding leadership for the Council.

Dawn Auger joined Plymouth City Council as Assistant Director for HR & OD in November 2015. At that time the service had been without a permanent Assistant Director for two years and the service was not represented at a strategic level. We had therefore lost direction and had no strategic vision.

Dawn joined the team and immediately supported the service through a restructure, transforming our service to follow the principals of the Ulrich model; introducing Business Partnering, HR Specialist Services, OD Services and HR Business (transactional) Services. Health, Safety and Wellbeing was moved into HROD in September 2016 to create a holistic service proposition. Our new operating model enabled us to deliver HR services more cost effectively, saving £310k from our budget (total budget now £3.1m, supporting a 2500 headcount workforce plus external clients). She launched a 15 month HROD transformation programme called 'Agile HR' in January 2016 comprising 19 work-streams to fast track our goal of adding business value whilst helping managers to manage. We have exceeded our income target this year by £25k, bringing in a total income of £441k.

The Ulrich model was new for most of the team and Dawn encouraged us to learn from other Councils who had undergone similar transformational change. She gave us freedom to interpret the model to fit our service needs and invested in the professional development of HROD staff with specialist Consulting skills training for HR managers, CIPD accreditation and upgrades for specialist staff. Coaching skills for Employee Relations staff was provided in order to support managers differently and transfer knowledge, enabling managers to have the confidence and capability to deal with basic HR issues themselves without HR intervention (an example would be that managers are increasingly chairing straightforward capability meetings without HR support).

To encourage open dialogue within our department, Dawn set up new communication channels, both formal and informal. Formal communications included regular management one to ones and team away days for strategic planning. Informal communications introduced regular whole department HR Huddles. The huddles encouraged interaction with staff across the HR teams and gave everyone an opportunity to have a voice.

Dawn has excellent networking and communication skills and set about building the reputation of the service to both the Senior Management Team and Councillors. She set clear objectives for the service and empowered the HR

Management Team to determine how to deliver against their objectives. Within a few months we had a new strategy called Agile HR, which had a challenging list of 19 work streams. We worked with our corporate Transformation Team to deliver these objectives driving through service improvements over the last 15 months.

Dawn has been promoting the delivering of strategic workforce planning and improved HR Metrics so we can make data driven decisions. The OD team have been honing their skills to work with strategic managers creating strategic workforce plans which will feed back into HR and support the alignment of HR services to customer needs.

Dawn has implemented new cost controls over our Agency spend, and we now have a weekly Recruitment Panel chaired by the Leader and Chief Executive, who invest time each week auditing all recruitment requests and challenging where savings could be made. We also operate a Temporary Agency Appointments Panel which audits temporary workers placement requests and this has brought the monthly spend down from a high of 12.4% of the wage bill to 6.9%.

Externally we are represented by Dawn as she is excellent at networking and regularly attends events promoting Plymouth City Council and the professionalism of our service. She links with other Councils to find new ways of working, recently linking with Cornwall Council to support the delivery of our Health, Safety and Wellbeing service. We had identified a short term risk and the team needed some external professional support. Dawn was able to resolve the risk through her network of contacts and the high regard in which she is held.

Dawn works across the wider system and region to support the Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) for Wider Devon which is considering new models of service delivery including leading a strategic options review of the future of back office services.

Plymouth has a joint leadership arrangement between Conservative and UKIP and Dawn has worked hard consulting with all parties presenting information at Scrutiny and bringing in change for the benefit of the Council.

She is passionate about self-development and encourages everyone to push their boundaries. Dawn recently gave a presentation at the International Women's day supporting and encouraging the leaders of tomorrow.

Late last year of the Head of Transformation Portfolio resigned and Dawn took on temporary responsibility for both Assistant Director of HR&OD and Interim Head of Transformation Portfolio.

More recently our Director of Transformation and Change left and Dawn, along with our Assistant Director for Finance, were jointly appointed as interim Strategic Director for Transformation and Change for a 12 month period.

They will be operating the directorate as one, with shared responsibility for the development and implementation of the vision and business plan for corporate services, ensuring the directorate budgets are effectively managed and that there is effective directorate communications and engagement.

Chief Executive Tracey Lee said: "I'm really pleased that Dawn and Andrew are going to be taken on their new roles. By making this interim appointment for the next 12 months, we are able to ensure stability for the directorate and the opportunity to continue the transformation work already in progress towards our strategic objectives. As Dawn and Andrew have been working closely on these projects we know they are in the best position to continue the excellent work we have undertaken so far."

Dawn started her new role in January 2017 and continues with responsibility for HR&OD, Transformation Portfolio and Legal.

This is a massive achievement for someone with just over 12 months service.