



PPMA EXCELLENCE IN PEOPLE MANAGEMENT AWARDS

2026

Information Pack

The Hilton Metropole NEC Birmingham



The PPMA Awards give us an opportunity to celebrate and share the fantastic work taking place every day in your organisations.

Working in Public Service is increasingly demanding and challenging, but the work of HR & OD colleagues ensures that organisations continue to succeed in delivering excellent services to all of our citizens. It is work that is both vital and highly rewarding.

The PPMA Awards are an inspiring occasion for people to come together, share their amazing achievements, and take the time to applaud the hard work that has made a real difference.

**Celebrate you and your team's
achievements by entering the Awards now!**



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Who can enter?

The **PPMA Excellence in People Management Awards 2026** is open to all **public sector organisations, voluntary sector organisations, charities, private sector partners, individuals, and academic institutions** with a place of business, registered office, or home address in the UK.

You can:

- Enter into one or more Award Categories (a separate entry form is required for each submission).
- Submit work or projects that took place **between May 2024 and December 2025** (in full or in part).

You cannot:

- Enter more than one award within the same category.
- Submit an entry on behalf of another organisation without their permission.

Please note:

Entries from PPMA Board member organisations or sponsors *are permitted*. However, the relevant Board member or sponsor will not take part in the judging of these submissions.

Entry Fees:

FREE for PPMA Members

£100 + VAT per submission for Non-Members

(This fee applies to entering an award in any category.)



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Why should you enter?

The Awards offer a national platform for your organisation's work to be recognised by supportive colleagues, the wider media, Public Service leaders, Chief Executives, and other highly influential figures who participate in the judging process. (Details of all our judges can be found in the Judges Pack.)

By sharing your work, you're not only showcasing excellence, you're also helping to shape and inspire good practice across the whole of Public Services. Taking part is both a valuable development opportunity and a chance to contribute to positive change.

How do I submit an entry?

You must complete a separate submission form for each entry you wish to submit. Please follow the instructions carefully, and if you have any questions, email admin@ppma.org.uk

Entries submitted **after the closing date will not be accepted.** Submissions are limited to **1,200 words** and may include **one attachment of up to 5MB.**

Entries that exceed these limits will not be accepted.

ENTRY FORM 2026



Award Categories



1. Best Creative Concept Recruitment Campaign
2. Best Candidate Experience
3. Best Employer Brand
4. Public Sector HR & OD Team of the Year
5. Best Organisation Development Programme
6. Best use of Technology or Data
7. Best Workforce Transformation/ Change Initiative
8. Best Health & Wellbeing Initiative
9. NEW: Innovation Rewards, Benefits & Recognition Award
10. Best Employer & TU/Employee Partnership
11. Best Learning & Development Award
12. Best Talent Programme
13. Best Inclusion & Diversity Programme / Initiative
14. Best Partnership / Collaboration
15. Gold Award



Best Creative Concept Recruitment Campaign

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Description

This award recognises the best creative concept for a recruitment campaign that has delivered a successful outcome. Entries may include print, digital, events, or other formats, but should represent a complete campaign supported by clear evidence of impact.

Judging Criteria

Judges will be looking for an original and innovative approach to a recruitment campaign that has delivered a successful recruitment outcome.

Entries should include:

- **A description of the approach used**, the rationale behind it, and a clear understanding of the issues addressed.
- **Evidence of strong visual communication and design skills.**
- **Evidence of impact and measurable results achieved.**
- **Visual examples**, which must be included as attachments to the entry.

Campaigns can utilise any form of media, including TV, radio, digital, live events, print, or a combination of channels.

[View previous entries here](#)

Description

This award recognises the importance and impact of an innovative and inclusive approach to recruitment and selection, benefiting both candidates and the organisation. Entries may focus on a specific recruitment campaign or highlight the organisation's overall approach.

Judging Criteria

Judges will be looking for an organisational approach or recruitment campaign that demonstrates:

- **Innovation and inclusion**
- **Attracting and supporting new talent** into the organisation
- **Maximising employer branding**
- **Evidence of impact and measurable results**
- **Feedback from candidates**

[View previous entries here](#)

Description

This award recognises the importance and impact of employer branding within an organisation. Employer branding goes beyond addressing skill shortages or competing for scarce talent. Entries should demonstrate how the organisation has leveraged its employer brand to compete effectively in the labour market and to drive employee loyalty through successful recruitment, engagement, and retention practices.

Judging Criteria

Judges will be looking for evidence of:

- How the employer brand shapes the organisation's approach to people management (e.g., recruitment, induction, performance management, reward, internal communications, leadership behaviours, and exit processes)
- Baseline metrics prior to the implementation of the employer brand
- The impact on recruitment, engagement, and retention following implementation
- Feedback demonstrating how the employer brand aligns with the reality of employee experience
- Feedback from candidates

Public Sector HR & OD Team of the Year

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Description

This award recognises the public sector HR & OD team that has gone above and beyond the day-to-day work of HR & OD colleagues. The winning team will be seen as a national role model for excellence in practice.

Judging Criteria

Judges will be looking for the HR/OD team that demonstrates the most effective work within their function and successful business partnering with other parts of the organisation. Entries can highlight specific projects while also showcasing the team's collaborative approach to improving the organisation and their ability to attract and develop excellence in the HR profession.

Entries should clearly describe:

- **A clear narrative** demonstrating how the team impacts other functions and the wider business
- **An innovative approach to people management**, addressing challenges facing the sector
- **Team size and service provision**. Context is important—please include the level of resources/budget available and the business environment, such as the number of employees supported by the team or project
- **Evidence of success**, showing how the team has strengthened the organisation through metrics, anecdotes, and case studies

Judges will also value entries that demonstrate:

- **Feedback from customers or service users**, and how this is collected and tracked over time
- **Application of feedback**—how positive and constructive insights have driven service improvements
- **Positive equality, diversity, and inclusion outcomes**, with additional recognition for innovative approaches

Description

This award provides an opportunity for public service organisations to showcase an OD programme that has improved services for customers and communities through a continuous cycle of improvement—from strategy and implementation to outcomes, evaluation, and further change.

Judging Criteria

For this award, organisations will need to provide evidence clearly demonstrating an OD programme that places people at the heart of change, promotes creativity and innovation, and positively impacts services for customers and communities.

Judges will be looking for evidence of:

- **Clear links to the organisation's strategic objectives**, including metrics that demonstrate outcomes and impact
- **Effective stakeholder engagement and change management**
- **Embedding and sustaining behavioural and cultural change**
- **Increased organisational effectiveness**
- **Positive equality, diversity, and inclusion outcomes**
- **A continuous cycle of improvement**

[View previous entries here](#)

Description

This award provides an opportunity for public service organisations to showcase how they have used data or technology to improve service delivery and/or workforce performance.

This could include the implementation of a new IT system or technology, or the use of data to drive improvements in services or workforce outcomes.

Judging Criteria

For this award, organisations will need to provide evidence of how they effectively utilise technology or data to improve service.

Judges will be looking for evidence of:

- **A clear description** of how the technology or use of data improves service, including metrics that demonstrate outcomes and impact
- **Training and staff engagement** undertaken to ensure the system or process delivers effectively
- **Increased organisational effectiveness**

Best Workforce Transformation/ Change Initiative

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Description

This award provides an excellent opportunity for public service organisations to showcase their achievements, demonstrating how they have engaged and managed their workforces through major service transformation. It recognises organisations that have delivered unique and improved services for customers and local communities while simultaneously providing a richer work experience for employees.

Judging Criteria

For this award, organisations will need to demonstrate that they have led the field in workforce transformation. Entries should show how they have built a productive workplace through employee engagement and mitigated the negative impacts of disengagement on organisational performance.

Judges will be looking for evidence of:

- **A unique and flexible approach to workforce transformation**, resulting in a transformed and productive workforce
- **Employee engagement and involvement**, including employees and Trade Unions, through change and beyond
- **Joined-up ways of working** across the organisation
- **Positive equality, diversity, and inclusion outcomes**, with additional recognition for innovative approaches
- **Clear links to organisational objectives**, including metrics demonstrating results and impact, such as increased productivity or improved customer service
- **Embedding engagement in behavioural and cultural change**

[View previous entries here](#)

Description

Entrants for this award should provide evidence of a health, safety, and/or wellbeing initiative that has had a significant impact on workforce engagement, commitment, and overall wellbeing, achieved through creative and innovative interventions.

Judging Criteria

Judges will be looking for initiatives that have clearly enhanced organisational awareness of wellbeing in the workplace and significantly improved the lives of employees living and working with mental health conditions.

Entries should clearly describe:

- **The purpose of the initiative** – why it was developed
- **Implementation** – how it was carried out and why this approach was considered appropriate
- **Impact on awareness** – how it has enhanced understanding of mental health or wellbeing in the workplace
- **Evidence of success** – how it has improved the lives of employees living and working with mental health conditions, including metrics, anecdotes, and testimonials from employees, Trade Unions, or leaders
- **Positive equality, diversity, and inclusion outcomes**, with additional recognition for innovative approaches
- **Cost and return on investment** – the financial investment and the results achieved

[View previous entries here](#)

NEW: Innovation Rewards, Benefits & Recognition Award

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Description

This award celebrates public service organisations that have implemented a reward, benefits and/or recognition strategy which has delivered measurable improvements in workforce productivity or generated significant organisational savings.

Entries should provide clear, tangible evidence of impact.

Initiatives suitable for this category may include, but are not limited to the introduction of an innovative benefits approach, a new employee or team recognition programme, notable progress in reducing a gender pay gap, or the rollout of a new pay structure that has demonstrably improved productivity, attraction and/or retention.

Judging Criteria

Entries must demonstrate how the strategy has had a direct and positive impact on employees and, in turn, on the organisation's outputs, outcomes and/or budget. As this award focuses on measurable results, initiatives will typically have been in place for at least 12 months.

Judges will be looking for evidence of:

- **A clear narrative** outlining the strategy's aims, development, and implementation.
- **Demonstrated benefits to employees**, showing how the strategy improved their experience, performance, or wellbeing.
- **Evidence of success**, including return on investment and how the initiative has strengthened the organisation, supported by metrics, qualitative data, case studies, and anecdotes.
- **Impact on key workforce measures**, such as engagement, retention, productivity, and any other relevant outcomes.

Description

This award recognises the importance of effective and respectful partnerships with trade unions and employee groups across the public sector. It provides an opportunity to demonstrate how such partnerships can deliver sustained improvements for the workforce, the organisation, and the communities they serve.

Judging Criteria

Working with and through recognised trade unions and employee groups is an essential skill for effective HR professionals. This award recognises the organisation that can clearly demonstrate effective and meaningful engagement with trade unions and/or employee groups in driving successful change across the organisation or service.

Entries should clearly describe:

- **How trade unions and/or employee groups work effectively with the organisation**
- **Specific programmes of work** that illustrate the effectiveness of the partnership
- **The changes achieved** through the partnership
- **Positive equality, diversity, and inclusion outcomes**, with additional recognition for innovative approaches
- **Endorsements** from both organisational leaders and trade union/employee group representatives supporting the entry

Description

This award recognises the importance of learning and development and its contribution to service delivery, as well as its role in enhancing the skills, experience, and capabilities of individuals, teams, and the wider workforce.

Judging Criteria

Entries should include evidence of:

- **A clear developmental offer, programme, or initiative** that has enhanced the skills, experience, and approach of individuals, teams, or services within your workforce
- **Inclusion and diversity** considerations
- **The investment, impact, and sustainability** of the offer, programme, or initiative
- **Improvements in service delivery** resulting from the offer, programme, or initiative
- **Positive equality, diversity, and inclusion outcomes**, with additional recognition for innovative approaches
- **A continuous learning environment**

[View previous entries here](#)

Description

Skills shortages are a concern across the public sector and at the highest levels of government. With the exit from the EU, it has become more important than ever for organisations to identify and develop their talent, enhancing internal mobility and organisational capability.

This award recognises employers who are addressing this challenge by implementing future-fit, evidence-based, and ethical talent management strategies to meet the current and future needs of their organisation.

Judging Criteria

Judges will be looking for:

- **The range of evidence and information** used to inform decisions. What was the driver for the programme/initiative, and how does it align with the organisation's strategic objectives?
- **Impact on the organisation and its people**, including measurable outcomes such as financial metrics (e.g., revenue, ROI, productivity), customer engagement/satisfaction, people-related indicators (e.g., absence, retention, engagement), as well as less tangible outcomes, such as the credibility and integrity of the HR/OD function within the organisation.
- **Use of talent management initiatives** to develop and upskill employees, including identifying and supporting high-potential talent.
- **Positive equality, diversity, and inclusion outcomes**, with additional recognition for innovative approaches
- **Evidence of inclusive talent management practices** that value and promote diversity

Description

This award is open to an organisation or partnership presenting evidence of a diverse, equitable, and inclusive culture that permeates the workforce and/or the broader local area.

Submissions could demonstrate the organisation's efforts to foster a more diverse and inclusive workplace for all employees and members, highlighting how this supports the attraction and retention of talent.

Entries may include internal initiatives to promote a wide range of careers and appeal to different groups of people. Alternatively, submissions could focus on the broader local area, showcasing initiatives that foster diversity and facilitate inclusion within the community.

Entries may also describe how the organisation has collaborated with other businesses or organisations to improve opportunities or participation, and could include examples of engagement with the wider community.

Judging Criteria

Judges will be looking for evidence of:

- **Positive leadership** and the promotion of role models within and beyond the organisation
- **Staff engagement and training**, demonstrating efforts to create a culture that fosters change internally and externally
- **Positive outcomes** from specific initiatives promoting diversity, equality, and inclusion
- **Creation of more open employment opportunities** and the avoidance of exclusion through recruitment processes
- **Setting and progressing towards benchmarks** for equality, diversity, and inclusion
- **Integration of equality, diversity, and inclusion** into all aspects of the organisation's work, including partnerships and engagement with service users

[View previous entries here](#)

Description

This award is open to two or more public sector or public/private sector organisations working together. As public services strive to deliver more seamless, efficient, and integrated services, and demonstrate systemic leadership, collaboration across traditional organisational boundaries has become increasingly important.

This award recognises partnerships that focus on the joint work of two or more public/private sector organisations, or the collaborative efforts of several organisations working together.

Judging Criteria

Entries should demonstrate that the partnership has delivered service improvements and/or increased efficiency.

Submissions should focus on:

- **The organisations involved** in the partnership and the services covered
- **The scale of the partnership**, including the number of people involved and the value of the work undertaken
- **The objectives of the partnership**
- **Evidence of how these objectives have been achieved**
- **Evidence of the partnership's success**, particularly measurable improvements to services, cost reductions, and positive impact on local communities

Award entries will be judged on:

- **Evidence of sustainability**, showing that the partnership is structured to endure and adapt to challenges
- **Impact on services and costs**, demonstrating improvements and efficiencies
- **Value added for local communities**, highlighting tangible outcomes
- **Innovation**, both in the partnership itself and in the work it is delivering

[View previous entries here](#)

Description

The Gold Award is the highest honour, recognising the best overall winner across all award categories. This prestigious accolade celebrates an organisation or team that has demonstrated outstanding innovation, impact, and excellence in their work. The winner of the Gold Award exemplifies the very best of public service, setting a benchmark for others to aspire to.

In addition to the **Gold Award, Silver and Bronze Awards** are presented to runners-up who have also demonstrated exceptional achievements in their category. These awards recognise organisations and teams that have made a significant impact, delivered innovative solutions, and contributed to positive change for employees, organisations, and the communities they serve.



Award showcase webinars



Every autumn following the PPMA Excellence in People Management Awards, we host our Awards Showcase Webinars. These sessions highlight some of the standout shortlisted entries from that year's awards.

The webinars provide PPMA members with the opportunity to explore exceptional entries in more detail and engage directly with the organisations involved through live Q&As. They also give the participating organisations a platform to showcase their work, share insights, and highlight the impact of their initiatives in greater depth.

You can watch previous years' webinars below.

[2025](#)

[2024](#)



PPMA People Management Awards

An Unforgettable Evening

23rd April 2026



Our awards ceremony is an unforgettable evening of celebration, camaraderie, and recognition. The People Management Awards honour excellence in the field of people management, highlighting the outstanding achievements of our industry peers.

Each year, we make the event even more memorable with a unique theme. Past themes have included Gold, A Night at the Circus, Rock the Kasbar, Night at the Movies, and All That Jazz. The 2026 theme promises to be just as exciting, stay tuned for the announcement closer to the event!

The evening also offers an opportunity to give back, with a charity raffle supporting some truly worthwhile causes.

The **2026 Awards Ceremony** will be held on **Thursday 23rd April 2026** at **The Hilton Metropole, NEC Birmingham**.

Explore previous years' awards galleries below.

[2025](#)

[2024](#)



ENTER NOW



Download the awards entry form below:

[ENTRY FORM 2026](#)

There are a few **key dates to keep in mind** for our Awards, which are detailed below.

KEY DATES

CLOSING DATE 19TH JAN 2026

SHORTLIST ANNOUNCED 12TH FEB 2026

AWARDS EVENING 23RD APRIL 2026

Tickets for the Awards Evening and our **annual conference**, which takes place at the same venue over **two days, Thursday 23rd – Friday 24th April 2026**, will go on sale later this month. Full details of the annual conference can be found below.

[ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2026](#)

