


# PPMA EXCELLENCE IN PEOPLE MANAGEMENT AWARDS 2027

Celebrating excellence, innovation and impact in public sector people management.

## 2027 Awards Information Pack

## Celebrating Excellence in People Management

The PPMA Excellence in People Management Awards 2027 provide an opportunity to recognise and celebrate the outstanding work taking place across public sector HR and Organisational Development.

At a time when public services continue to navigate significant challenges and change, the contribution of HR and OD professionals has never been more important. From developing talent and transforming workforces to championing inclusion and embracing innovation, their work is central to building stronger organisations and delivering better outcomes for the communities they serve.

Our Awards bring together individuals, teams and organisations from across the sector to celebrate achievements, share best practice and recognise the people making a real difference.

Whether you've delivered an innovative new initiative, transformed the way your organisation works or achieved lasting improvements for your workforce, we want to hear your story.

**Celebrate your achievements. Recognise your team. Share your success.**

**Enter the PPMA Awards 2027.**

# Who Can Enter?

The PPMA Excellence in People Management Awards 2027 are open to 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 one or more award categories, with a separate entry form required for each submission.
- Submit work or projects undertaken during the eligible entry period: May 2025 and December 2026.

**You cannot:**

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

**Please note**

Entries from organisations represented on the PPMA Board, or from PPMA sponsors, are permitted. However, the relevant Board member or sponsor will not participate in the judging of those submissions.

# Why Enter the PPMA Awards?

The PPMA Excellence in People Management Awards offer a national platform to recognise the achievements of public sector HR and OD professionals, teams and organisations.

Entering the Awards is more than an opportunity to win. It's a chance to celebrate your team's hard work, showcase the difference you've made and inspire others across the sector.

**Gain national recognition**
Showcase your achievements to public service leaders, senior HR and OD professionals, Chief Executives and influential figures from across the sector.

**Celebrate your people**
Recognise the dedication, creativity and commitment of the individuals and teams behind your organisation's success.

**Share best practice**
Help other organisations learn from your experiences, approaches and achievements, contributing to positive change across public services.

**Inspire future innovation**
Highlight what's possible when people management is at the heart of organisational success and encourage others to build on your work.

**Your achievements deserve to be recognised. Enter the PPMA Awards 2027.**

# PPMA Awards 2027 - Award Categories

The PPMA Excellence in People Management Awards 2027 recognise outstanding achievements across public sector HR and Organisational Development.

Explore our 2027 award categories and discover where your organisation's achievements could be recognised.

## 2027 Award Categories

1. **Best Candidate Experience**
2. **Best Resourcing** - New Category
3. **Best Organisation Development Programme**
4. **Best use of Digital and AI Innovation** - New Category
5. **Best Workforce Transformation/ Change Initiative**
6. **Best Health & Wellbeing Initiative**
7. **Best Sustained Employee Engagement** - New Category
8. **Best Learning & Development**
9. **Best Leadership Development** - New Category
10. **Best Talent Programme**
11. **Best Equity and Belonging Initiative** - New Category
12. **Best Partnership / Collaboration**
13. **Best Employee Experience** - New Category
14. **Public Sector HR & OD Team of the Year**
15. **Gold Award**

# Best Candidate Experience

## 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**

# **Best Resourcing** - New Category

### Description

In a public sector environment defined by complexity and competing priorities, ensuring the workforce is shaped to deliver strategic objectives efficiently, fairly and in a way that strengthens organisational capacity, capability and culture has never been more critical.

This award celebrates the most effective resourcing strategy — one that has achieved clear, measurable results through workforce planning and recruitment, talent acquisition, succession planning or workforce development, and successfully meets both the current and future needs of the organisation.

### Judging Criteria

**Entries should demonstrate:**

- **A clear explanation of the approach taken, including the reasoning behind it and the issues or challenges it was designed to address.**
- **Effective use of data, insight and analysis to inform the resourcing strategy and its implementation.**
- **Inclusive resourcing and development practices that promote diversity and equal opportunities.**
- **Measurable outcomes and impact for the organisation, its services and the communities it serves.**

# Best Organisation Development Programme

## 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**

# **Best Use of Digital & AI Innovation Initiative** - New Category

### Description

This award recognises public service organisations that have used digital technology, artificial intelligence and/or data in innovative ways to improve workforce effectiveness and service delivery.

Entries may include digital systems or HR services, AI-assisted processes, workforce analytics or digital tools that help employees work more effectively. Innovation may involve a new solution or the imaginative application of existing technology to address an organisational challenge.

### Judging Criteria

Entries should demonstrate practical implementation and clear benefits. Organisations do not need to have used AI to enter.

### Judges will be looking for evidence of:

- **The workforce or organisational challenge addressed and how the innovation supports organisational priorities.**
- **How it improves on previous ways of working.**
- **Evidence of improved employee experience, service quality, productivity or decision-making, supported by relevant output/outcome measures.**
- **The resources invested, benefits achieved, lessons learned and potential to sustain or extend the approach.**

# Best Workforce Transformation/Change Initiative

## 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**

# Best Health & Wellbeing Initiative

## 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**

# Best Sustained Employee Engagement - New Category

## Description

This award recognises public service organisations that demonstrate meaningful and sustained engagement with their workforce that strengthens trust and influence, leading to improvements for the workforce and the organisation.

Entries may demonstrate an organisation-wide approach or sustained engagement through trade union partnerships, staff forums, employee networks or other employee groups. Examples could include menopause support networks, LGBTQ+ networks, disability networks, race equality networks, etc.

The emphasis is on continuing involvement and influence which lead to improvement.

## Judging Criteria

### Judges will be looking for evidence of:

- **A clear explanation of the engagement approach, why it was developed and how it has been maintained over time.**
- **How different employee voices are represented.**
- **How employees, trade unions and/or employee groups help shape decisions and working practices or policies.**
- **How leaders and managers support engagement.**
- **Evidence from feedback or relevant measures of improvements in trust, belonging, employee experience or organisational effectiveness.**

# Best Learning & Development

## 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**

# **Best Leadership and Development** - New Category

**Description**

This award recognises an outstanding leadership development programme that has demonstrably strengthened leadership capability, improved organisational performance and supported the development of effective, inclusive and future-ready leaders. It celebrates organisations that recognise the critical role of leadership in delivering high-quality public services, promoting positive workplace cultures and enabling people and organisations to thrive.

Entries should demonstrate a strategic and evidence-informed approach to developing leadership at all levels, from emerging and aspiring leaders through to senior executives. This may include developing leadership behaviours, building management capability, strengthening succession pipelines, supporting collaborative and system leadership, or equipping leaders to navigate complexity, transformation and change.

The award recognises programmes that go beyond traditional leadership training to deliver lasting improvements in leadership effectiveness, organisational culture, colleague experience and public service outcomes.

**Judging Criteria**

**Entries should include evidence of:**

- **A clear understanding of the organisation's current and future leadership challenges, together with strong alignment between the programme, organisational priorities and public service ambitions.**
- **A compelling vision for leadership development, including the leadership capabilities, values and behaviours required for future success.**
- **Inventive design and delivery, incorporating the effective use of different development approaches, such as experiential learning, coaching, mentoring, action learning and peer networks.**
- **Demonstrable development of inclusive, compassionate, collaborative and empowering leadership behaviours, and measurable evidence that these are translated into everyday leadership practice.**
- **Improvements in areas such as employee engagement, retention, wellbeing, team/service performance, effectiveness or organisational culture and, where relevant, positive outcomes for the communities served.**
- **A commitment to evaluating, refining and improving the programme.**
- **Evidence of sustained benefits and impact beyond the initial learning experience.**
- **Potential for the approach to be shared and adopted across the wider public service sector.**

# Best Talent Programme

## Description

Skills shortages are a concern across the public sector and at the highest levels of government, and 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.**

# **Best Equity and Belonging Initiative** - New Category

## Description

This award recognises an outstanding initiative that has made a meaningful and measurable impact in creating a more equitable, inclusive and belonging-focused workplace. It celebrates public service organisations that have successfully challenged barriers, addressed inequalities and created environments in which people feel valued, respected, included and able to thrive.

Entries should demonstrate how the initiative has moved beyond policy and good intentions to deliver tangible improvements in people's experiences, opportunities and outcomes. This might include addressing structural inequalities, improving representation, tackling discrimination, strengthening inclusive leadership, amplifying underrepresented voices or embedding equity and belonging into organisational culture and everyday practice.

Equally, the award could be for a community-focused organisational development programme that has created quality employment opportunities and promotes social mobility for residents and communities from the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods in the area.

Judges will be looking for innovative and sustainable approaches that demonstrate a genuine commitment to fairness, inclusion and ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to reach their potential.

## Judging Criteria

**Judges will be looking for:**

- **A clear understanding of the challenge, inequality or barrier being addressed, and alignment with organisational objectives and wider public service objectives.**
- **A clear vision for improving equity, inclusion and belonging.**
- **An approach that goes beyond compliance and established practice, and that demonstrates meaningful cultural change.**
- **Evidence of co-production and engagement with colleague networks, employee representatives and/or the community served.**
- **Evidence of tangible improvements in equity, inclusion and employees' sense of belonging, supported by qualitative and quantitative evidence.**
- **Visible commitment and accountability from senior leaders.**
- **Potential for the initiative to be sustained, developed and replicated.**
- **Contribution to sharing learning and improving equity and belonging across the wider public service sector..**

# Best Partnership/ Collaboration

### 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**

# Best Employee Experience - New Category

## Description

Employee Experience reflects the quality of every interaction, emotion and touchpoint an employee encounters throughout their journey with the organisation. It is intentionally shaped to enable people to thrive and therefore enable the organisation to succeed.

This award recognises organisations that create working environments where people enjoy positive, meaningful experiences that help them flourish while enabling the organisation to achieve its goals.

It goes beyond standalone initiatives or benefits - focusing instead on how work feels day to day and how consistently the organisation creates the conditions for people to thrive.

## Judging Criteria

### Judges will be looking for evidence of:

- **An intentionally designed employee experience, demonstrating how the organisation has shaped its approach to support employees throughout their journey.**
- **Consistently positive day-to-day experiences, showing how the working environment and workplace conditions enable employees to thrive.**
- **A clear connection between employee experience and organisational success, demonstrating how positive employee experiences contribute to achieving organisational goals.**
- **Measurable impact on organisational culture, capability and performance, supported by relevant evidence and outcomes.**

# Public Sector HR & OD Team of the Year

## 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

**View previous entries here**

# Gold Award

## 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.

# Awards Showcase Webinars

### Celebrating and Sharing Excellence

The PPMA Awards Showcase Webinar Series provides an opportunity to celebrate outstanding achievements in public sector people management and share best practice across our professional community.
Each year, the series brings together award-winning, highly commended and shortlisted organisations to share the initiatives, approaches and experiences behind their entries.

Through these webinars, attendees can hear directly from the teams involved, explore the challenges they faced, discover the impact of their work and take away practical ideas to apply within their own organisations.

### Watch Previous Awards Showcase Webinars

Looking for inspiration for your 2027 entry?

Explore our 2026 Awards Showcase Webinar Series to discover examples of innovation, collaboration and excellence from organisations across the public sector.

Watch previous years' webinars below.

2026

2025

# Awards Evening

### Celebrating Excellence in People Management

**The PPMA Excellence in People Management Awards 2027 will take place on Thursday 29th April 2027, at The Midland Hotel, Manchester, as part of the PPMA Annual Conference.**

The awards evening is a celebration of the outstanding achievements, innovation and dedication of HR and OD professionals working across the public sector.

Bringing together colleagues, finalists, partners and sponsors from across the country, the evening provides an opportunity to recognise the organisations and teams making a real difference to their people, workplaces and communities.

From the announcement of category winners to the presentation of the prestigious Gold Award, the ceremony celebrates the very best in public sector people management.

Take a Look at Previous Awards Evenings

Get a feel for the celebrations by exploring photographs and highlights from previous PPMA Awards ceremonies.

VIEW 2026 AWARDS GALLERIES

# Enter Now

Download the awards entry form below:

**ENTRY FORM 2027**

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

## Key Dates

Closing Date - 21st January 2027

Shortlist Announced – 12th February 2027

Awards Evening - 29th April 2027

Tickets for the Awards Evening and our Annual Conference, taking place at The Midland Hotel, Manchester, from Wednesday 28th - Friday 30th April 2027, will go on sale on Tuesday 1st December 2026.

Further details about the Annual Conference, including ticket information and the programme, will be available on the PPMA website.