

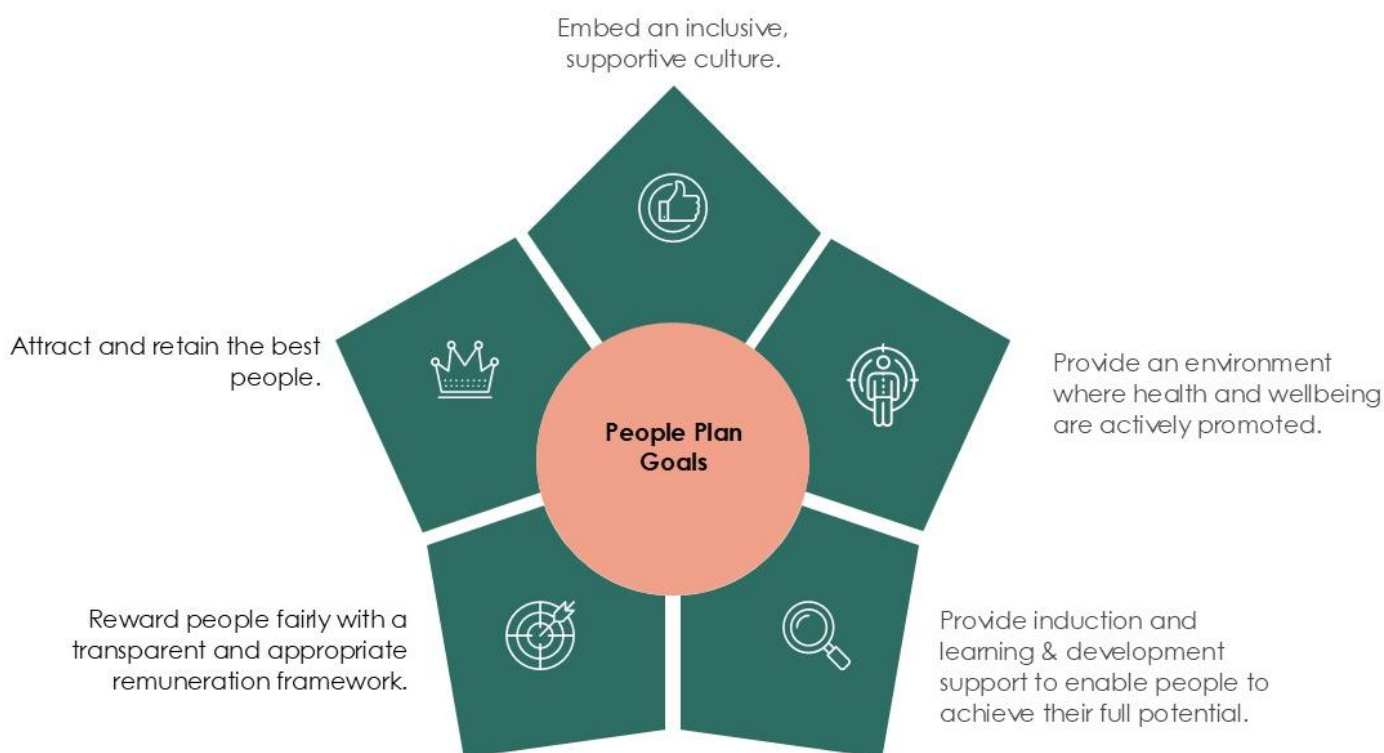
## **Rise People Plan 2025-2026**

We prioritise being a great company to work for. To us this means a place where we all grow, lead, learn, and thrive together.

Acknowledging that our people are our greatest asset, we invest in our workforce, so they can be their natural best, and be motivated and empowered to reach their full potential. We need to ensure that the systems, policies and processes in place to support our people are attuned to their needs and aligned with our strategy.

How we approach the recruitment, induction, development, remuneration and wellbeing of our team will all combine to impact whether or not we are providing them with an environment within which they can thrive.

This People Plan sets out how we intend to ensure that we are a great place to work. The goals of this People Plan are therefore to:



## Our People Plan Goals

### **1. Reward people fairly with a transparent and appropriate remuneration framework**

- a. Rise is committed to offering a total remuneration package to team members that is equitable, fair, and appropriately reflects our position as a local, North East charity, primarily funded using public funds. We are, and remain committed to being, an accredited Real Living Wage employer with the Living Wage Foundation.
- b. We see our benefits package as a great tool for attracting and retaining talent, fostering a positive working environment and showcasing our commitment to employee wellbeing. Our employee benefits include:
  - i. Annual Leave – entitlement to 28 days, plus Bank Holidays (pro-rata for part time employees).
  - ii. Four Day Working Week – we currently gift employees a day off per week, meaning they work 80% of their hours for 100% of their pay, whilst maintaining 100% of their productivity. This comes with a 20% reduction in annual leave allowance.
  - iii. Pension Scheme – we offer a 6% employer contribution into a group pension scheme, alongside a death in service benefit.
  - iv. Access to an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP).
  - v. Flexibility to Work Remotely.
  - vi. Family Friendly Policies.
  - vii. Cycle to Work and Electric Vehicle Salary Sacrifice Schemes.
- c. In terms of our approach to pay and benefits, all members of the team will be given equal treatment and considered fairly. When reviewing individual salaries and rewards, this will be free from bias in relation to age, ethnic

origin, gender, gender reassignment, disability, religious belief, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy or bias on any other grounds. Part-time team members, those on family-friendly leave, and those on fixed-term contracts will not be treated any differently from other team members.

- d. Under the umbrella of this overarching People Plan, our Principles of Pay & Recognition Policy addresses our approach to salaries (including benchmarking, contributions to cost of living increases, progression-based awards, non-consolidated spot-bonuses and pension contributions). The Principles of Pay & Recognition Policy is reviewed annually.

## **2. Provide an environment where health and wellbeing are actively promoted**

It is obvious that people cannot operate at their natural best unless they are healthy and well, both physically and psychologically. To support the physical and mental wellbeing of our whole team, we will:

- a. Continue to embed the principles of good health in the workplace following the achievement of the Continuing Excellence level of the Better Health at Work framework in late 2024. This accreditation has now been transferred to the North East Combined Authority's new SHINE programme, with Health Advocates within the team supported to ensure that activities and approaches are available to the team throughout the year, and including access to our Rise Workplace Wellbeing e-learning;
- b. Maintain membership of an employee assistance programme (EAP) to confidentially support employees with any issues they may be facing;
- c. Ensure that each member of the team has a Wellness Action Plan, using the model from MIND, which supports them to have conversations with their line managers about their mental health;
- d. Maintain and action:
  - i. the Workplace Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy, to enable the creation and maintenance of a workplace culture that promotes and supports the mental health and wellbeing of all team members;
  - ii. the Menopause Policy, to support those members of the team impacted by the menopause and perimenopause;
  - iii. the regular surveying of staff (Go Vox Monthly Pulse Check and Quarterly Staff Survey) to obtain regular feedback to guide actions and seek to offer a psychologically safe environment;
  - iv. other fit for purpose policies and procedures that can impact on mental health and wellbeing, such as our Dignity in the Workplace Policy etc.;
- e. Ensure that the Health and Safety Policy that covers health and safety at work is regularly reviewed and discussed, with aspects such as DSE workplace assessments and free eye tests available to all colleagues; and

- f. Support our team to maintain good physical health through initiatives including, inter alia:
  - i. Free flu vaccinations
  - ii. Our cycle to work scheme
  - iii. Access to annual health checks
  - iv. Reasonable time off for medical appointments;
- g. Keep team wellbeing under regular review via monthly pulse checks, and take appropriate action where we recognise that there are wellbeing issues that we can address; and
- h. Maintain the offer of a four-day working week (with no loss in pay) with an annual review cycle, to support staff wellbeing and productivity.

**3. *Provide induction and learning and development support to enable people to achieve their full potential***

- a. It is critical to ensure that every new member of the team is taken through a clear and informative induction process to help them to become accustomed to Rise's systems, ways of working and their own individual role specifics. This process will include, inter alia, our:
  - i. organisational structure
  - ii. values
  - iii. internal communications structures
  - iv. office access protocols
  - v. staff handbook
  - vi. key policies and procedures
  - vii. IT systems
  - viii. colleague introductions
  - ix. Insights Discovery Profile completion.
- b. We will utilise a well-structured probation process during the first six months of all new employees' contracts, as well as for all team members who take up new roles, to ensure that they are able to understand the role and demonstrate that they are suitable to be confirmed in their appointment. The Probation Policy & Procedure sets out the details that sit behind this, and will be reviewed periodically.
- c. Our Performance & Learning Framework is a guidance document which recognises that we aim to be continually expanding our capacity to learn if we are going to transform lives, communities and places through the power of movement. It also recognises that learning is active and experiential, it is not just training; it is not just an event. Therefore, the Performance and Learning Framework is intended to highlight the main structures and tools that we endeavour to use to support the team to learn and to perform. This includes:
  - i. Personal development plans (PDPs), which are refreshed regularly
  - ii. Access to proportionate and role-relevant training and development opportunities linked to areas identified in PDPs;

- iii. A supportive culture that allows the team to prioritise learning and development in a proportionate way;
  - iv. A process of developing and sharing objectives and key results (OKRs) and encouragement to undertake ongoing conversations, feedback and recognition activities.
- d. Rise will periodically undertake training needs assessments across the organisation and provide whole-team training opportunities for those topics which are relevant to all and which are achievable in terms of time and budget commitments. Individual budgets are also available for bespoke learning and development support for each team member.

#### **4. Embed an inclusive, supportive culture**

- a. We are fully committed to supporting the principles and practice of equality of opportunity, treating everyone according to their needs and being as diverse and inclusive as we can possibly be in order to benefit from diversity of thought at all levels of the organisation. We are constantly learning as we go on our EDI journey, and welcome input from the whole team to support us on our way.
- b. Our 2025-2026 Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) Identifies the following aspirations linked to people:
  - i. Ensure we are moving towards having a staff team that is more reflective of the local Northumberland, Tyne & Wear and County Durham community across a range of demographic statistics;
  - ii. Ensure we capture, understand and react to employee experience and voice;
  - iii. Keep our EDI Policy and Commitment Statement up to date and relevant;
  - iv. Ensure governance structures and processes prioritise the importance of EDI;
  - v. Give all staff the tools to understand EDI and feel confident around the topic; and
  - vi. Be part of the local and regional movement to be anti-racist.

#### **5. Attract and retain the best people**

- a. In addition to all the points above, we recognise that attracting and retaining the best people is also influenced by various other elements, including:
  - i. Recruitment and selection procedures: our policies and procedures direct how we should ensure transparent recruitment processes, which are undertaken 'blind' where possible to remove/reduce potential bias. All trustee vacancies are also openly advertised to ensure that we reach new people from diverse backgrounds;
  - ii. Our approach to hybrid working: we are pleased to be able to offer a hybrid working approach to all members of the team from their very

first day with us. Flexible working requests can also be made to make contractual changes to working arrangements;

- iii. Family-friendly policies: in addition to hybrid and flexible working, Rise offers a variety of family-friendly policies and will keep abreast of all legislation and best practice in relation to ensuring that we are a great place to work for people who may have family caring responsibilities. Our current suite of such policies includes our:
  - 1. Adoption Policy;
  - 2. Leave in Special Circumstances Policy;
  - 3. Maternity, Paternity, Parental Leave and Shared Parental Leave Policies;
  - 4. Parental Bereavement Leave Policy; and
  - 5. Flexible Working Arrangements Policy;
- iv. Wider organisational policies and approaches: we take our responsibility to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment very seriously, as detailed in our Dignity at Work Policy. Our Whistleblowing Policy also provides opportunities for staff to report anything that they feel they cannot report to the organisation's senior leadership;
- v. Responding to our climate emergency: one supporting theme of our Rise Together strategy is 'Climate'; this includes how Rise functions and operates as a company, and how we are striving to reach net zero. We are working to deliver on our Future Net Zero commitments as well as maintain Investors in the Environment 'Green' accreditation (the highest level in the IIE Framework), supporting all team members to play their part in helping to reduce carbon emissions; and
- vi. Understanding our workforce: gaining workforce insight is a continuous process within Rise. We conduct Quarterly Staff Surveys and monthly 'pulse checks', both of which inform senior management action, and key metrics of which are reported to the Rise Board of Trustees.

## **Succession**

We have a Succession Plan to strategically manage the transition of key personnel within the organisation in the event of planned or unplanned departures, which focuses on our key leadership positions and Trustees on our Board. Key elements of this include:

- 1) Horizon scanning and forward planning, which are integral components of our Senior Management Team meetings and Nominations and Remuneration Subcommittee meetings;
- 2) Utilising a Trustee review tool to closely monitor the tenure of each trustee, supporting planning for future vacancies.
- 3) Annual trustee reviews being conducted by our Chair and Senior Independent Director, to acquire insight into each Trustee's future plans; and

- 4) Sustaining an up-to-date Board skills matrix, which allows us to stay prepared, promptly identifying and preparing suitable individuals for vacant positions or recruitment processes.

### **Review & Publication**

We will review this People Plan with our Board on an annual basis, or more frequently if required, ensuring that it remains fit for purpose. We will also incorporate any aspects of feedback gained from our frequent staff surveys and pulse checks into any updates. We are committed to feeding back the outcomes of these surveys and reviews to the whole Rise team.

Our Nominations and Remuneration Subcommittee, who are responsible for our people, will endorse and oversee the People Plan. The main Board will receive a copy and be given the opportunity to provide feedback and contribute to its ongoing development. Ensuring transparency and to foster accountability, trust, and a clear understanding of our strategies for our workforce, we commit to openly sharing our People Plan to all staff and stakeholders. Therefore, the plan will be made public via our website.

Date of last review: Sept 2025