



INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE | London



INVESTORS IN PEOPLE REVIEW REPORT

Ducane Housing Association

Written by Anne Williams
Investors in People Assessor
On behalf of Capital Quality Limited

(October 2009)



IMPROVING PERFORMANCE THROUGH PEOPLE



INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE | London

T: 020 7492 5901 F: 020 7492 5999 E: info@cqlgroup.co.uk W: www.cqlgroup.co.uk

Contents	Page No.
■ Introduction	2
■ Executive Summary	2
■ Review Findings Against Focus Areas	3
■ Summary of Recommended Actions	7
■ Recommendation and next steps	8
■ Options for your next Review	9
■ Annex A: Evidence Summary	10
■ Annex B: Outcome table	12

■ Introduction

This report presents the findings from the Investors in People review of Ducane Housing Association, which was carried out on 20th October 2009. 10 people were interviewed face-to-face on the day and the Chair of the Board was interviewed over the 'phone on the previous day, in accordance with the review plan. The findings of the review are based primarily on people's feedback at interview and on information from key documents provided by the organisation, including the annual business plan and learning and development plan, appraisal documentation, KPI monitoring statistics and the pre- and post-training evaluation form.

The assessor would like to thank all those involved in the interviews for their open and honest feedback and would like to thank the Chief Executive, Mike Wilkins, for arranging the review and particularly Laura Clarke, for organising the interview schedule and facilitating the on-site visit.

■ Executive Summary

The review found that Ducane Housing Association was continuing to meet the Investors in People Standard and also met some of the evidence requirements from the wider Investors in People framework. Particular organisation strengths were two-way communication, involvement and empowerment of staff, and on-the-job development. Measurable and clearly communicated Key Performance Indicators and organisation objectives enabled people to understand what the organisation was trying to achieve, how they contributed towards that and the standards expected of them. People were regularly involved in decision-making, felt that their suggestions were encouraged and listened to, and so believed that they could make a difference to success of organisation. There were good examples of people being given responsibility, such as the self-management on the maintenance team, which made people feel trusted and motivated. People appreciated the managers' open door policy and responsiveness.

Sound people management and development processes complemented the positive organisation culture. The learning and development plan was clearly linked to the business plan, and had allowed investment in learning and development to be targeted to achieve performance improvements. There was a good mix of on-the-job learning and coaching and more formal training, including opportunities to gain external qualifications. There was particular good practice on the maintenance team, with a focus on learning from each other, with the result that expertise and the capacity to carry out work in-house had increased. Managers worked closely with staff, and so were able to observe at first hand the performance improvements brought about by developing skills and knowledge, and to see how this translated into improved performance for the organisation.

To further develop the Association's people management and development processes, consideration could be given to developing the reward and recognition strategy, with a focus on individual feedback and recognition for everyone to a consistently high standard.



Commercial in Confidence

The Association could also consider taking forward the review of the Management Charter, to ensure that leadership and management continue to facilitate improvements throughout the modernisation programme. Some evaluation activities could also be tightened up, but on the whole, there was good evidence in all areas of the Investors in People Standard. The Association could look further to the wider Investors in People framework to continue developing its people management and development processes.



IMPROVING PERFORMANCE THROUGH PEOPLE



INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE | London

■ Review Findings against Focus Areas

At the planning stage, three key focus areas for the review were agreed with the Chief Executive. The findings of the review are presented against these focus areas:

Business Objective: To maintain standards throughout the modernisation programme

Discussions with managers and staff showed that communication was working effectively to keep people informed of the progress of the modernisation programme and people were well aware of how they contributed towards its success. As a result, everyone seemed fully on board with and committed to the implementation of the programme. The learning and development plan was clearly linked to the business plan and the training that had taken place in preparation for the modernisation programme had already brought tangible benefits. Feedback was as follows:

Managers spoke about the importance of two-way communication with staff, to inform them of the organisation's objectives and discuss their role in that, and to gain their input into implementing plans. It was clear that they were putting this in to practice, as people said that regular team and staff meetings were helpful in informing them about the modernisation programme. They confirmed that staff were regularly consulted and had been involved in decisions about refurbishment and specifications of the new flats.

Appropriate learning and development had been identified for the planning stage of the modernisation programme, particularly in relation to business planning and financial modelling, and this had been effective in enabling clear presentation of information to secure funding for the programme.

Managers commented that previous project management training had been put to good use in risk mapping and enabling them to act as an 'intelligent customer' to the external contractors involved in the modernisation programme.

Business Objective: Continuous Improvement in Service Delivery

As with the previous business objective, effective communication had evidently been key to making clear to people the standards of service delivery that Ducane aspired to and what their role was in achieving that. Again, involvement and empowerment were organisation strengths, with managers and staff describing how meetings were used to ask people for their ideas of what could be improved, and how they were encouraged to take responsibility for implementing improvements. Learning and development had been identified to support service delivery improvement and people acknowledged the improvements that had resulted from the learning and development that had taken place. Managers and staff gave the following feedback:

Ducane had a clear set of KPIs, which were regularly monitored and reported to staff and the Board. People knew what they needed to do to achieve the KPIs which applied

Commercial in Confidence

to them and there was a high level of achievement, in spite of a reduction in the number of staff in the maintenance team.

People gave examples of planned and past training, which linked to improving service delivery, such as on running tenant focus groups and project management. A number of people commented positively on the encouragement given to them to attend training and to develop their skills and knowledge. They believed that this was open equally to all staff, with several people mentioning that all staff had been offered the opportunity to gain the ITQ, as an example of the organisation's commitment to providing equal opportunities for learning and development.

There was good practice in sharing expertise and learning from each other on the maintenance team. Team members explained how their skills in, for example, tiling and installing baths had increased. There had been observed benefits from this of greater flexibility on team to cover leave and sick absence, thereby ensuring service levels and response times were maintained and cost savings achieved from an increase of work done in-house.

People had been given responsibility to implement projects aimed at improving service delivery, such as the installation of key meters to resolve issues related to electricity charges.

Managers described how they sought to acknowledge people's contribution towards improving service delivery in one-to-ones and by positive feedback about meeting KPIs at meetings. Most people said that the thanks and praise that they received made them feel that their work was valued and the recent bonus payment had also been well received. However, a few people commented that this was an area that the organisation could improve:

'We get 'well done' as a team, but more individual appreciation would be good.'

'There's not enough praise and thanks.'

Please also see comments under 'Developing a Reward and Recognition Strategy' below.

Staff Feedback on Service Delivery and Possible Improvements

It was agreed that the review would be used to ask staff about their views of service delivery and what improvements they thought could be made. Responses were as follows:

Several people said that, compared to the service tenants might expect from a local authority or other housing association, the service that Ducane provided was excellent. They clearly took pride in providing a high standard of service. Comments were:

'The team works well, we can sort out problems quickly and we get good feedback from tenants.'

'Tenants get 24-hour call-out and a 2 hour response time and we even change light bulbs for them. They can't ask for more.'



IMPROVING PERFORMANCE THROUGH PEOPLE



London

Commercial in Confidence

The following suggestions for improvement were made:

Although people generally thought that the current arrangement with no supervisor on the maintenance team was working, some people suggested that service delivery could be more effective and efficient if there were someone on the team with official supervisory responsibility. People made the following comments:

'Things have worked better without the supervisor – there's a better atmosphere and things get done on time - but we could do with one person being in charge full-time, rather than whoever's on call that week. Service delivery could be improved if someone was in charge, like improving preparing voids. I don't feel I can pull people off jobs and get everyone to pile in and get the void turned round.'

'It works well with no supervisor; we've had to work more as a team. The supervisor rota wasn't really done, because some people aren't happy telling others what to do.'

'There have been some hiccups and it works better if there's a rota with someone in charge for a month.'

One person said that service to the outside properties was not as good as that for Ducane Road properties, because there was a possibility that the properties might be sold. They suggested that it would be helpful for the Association to make definite decision about the sale one way or another, to clarify the level of service that was appropriate.

Developing a Reward and Recognition Strategy

As the Association was considering a pay review, its reward and recognition strategy was taken as a focus area for the Investors in People review, and people were asked whether they thought that it was fair and whether they were motivated by it. In terms of non-pay based recognition, managers acknowledged the importance of and implemented some of the key components of an effective recognition strategy, such as regular positive comments on people's work at individual and team meetings, and involvement and empowerment of staff. As already mentioned in the previous section, people confirmed that they received recognition for their work through day-to-day thanks and positive feedback at one-to-ones and meetings, and that there were other rewards in the form of team days and meals out. People clearly prized recognition from senior managers, including the Board, and some suggested that there could be more of this. People had appreciated the recent bonus payment as a reward for hard work and expressed a hope that it would be repeated.

Most people were reasonably satisfied with their rate of pay and understood that Ducane tried to make it comparable with other housing associations. However, some people commented that comparisons might not always be accurate, as the scope of seemingly comparable jobs in other organisations was less than that for similar jobs in Ducane. A few people felt that pay levels had not kept pace with the increase in responsibilities within the organisation. For a few people, this was a contentious issue, with the potential for de-motivating them.



IMPROVING PERFORMANCE THROUGH PEOPLE



INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE | London

There were a couple of suggestions that the Association could consider other kinds of rewards, such as giving people a day off from time to time, or could look again at an 'employee of the month/year' award.

■ Summary of Recommended Actions

The following are areas that Ducane could consider developing and are suggested in the spirit of continuous improvement. Further recognition as an Investor in People is not dependent on implementing any suggestions in these areas:

1. Reward and Recognition

The extent to which people believed that their work was rewarded and recognised was somewhat variable. As people's motivation levels will be vital to the Association achieving its objectives of maintaining standards during the modernisation programme and striving for continuous improvement in service delivery, it is recommended that the Association consider how it could improve its reward and recognition strategy. There could be several strands to this: ensuring that salaries keep pace with increased responsibilities; implementing a planned bonus payment to incentivise improvement in service delivery (as opposed to a retrospective bonus); celebrating successes and achievements with non-pay rewards; and ensuring direct communication from senior management, including the Board. It will obviously be important to continue the current practice of expressing praise, thanks and positive feedback at one-to-ones, appraisals and meetings, to give recognition for individual and team achievement. The Association might like to use the reward and recognition evidence requirements from the wider Investors in People framework as guidelines.

2. Defining Management Capabilities

The Management Charter provided a good basis for defining the management ethos and behaviours expected in the Association. It may be helpful to expand this further, so that it states more specifically the knowledge, skills and behaviours required of managers. It could then be used more precisely to appraise managers, identify their learning and development needs and plan learning and development, and to recruit managers, when appropriate. To build on current effective management practice, the organisation might like to consider how it could further establish a coaching culture.

3. Evaluation of Learning and Development

The current learning and development plan stated the desired outcomes for learning and development and it would be helpful to specify clearer evaluation measures. For example, if the learning outcome is 'better time management', what should better time management enable the person to achieve? Greater clarity on the outcome of learning

Commercial in Confidence

and development would also help to choose the most appropriate learning and development activity.

There was central collection of pre- and post-training forms, which helped to monitor the costs and time invested in learning and development. The organisation might like to consider keeping track of the time invested in on-the-job learning more closely, to ensure that on-the-job learning is focused on areas most relevant to organisation priorities.

Recommendation and Next Steps

Having carried out the assessment process in accordance with the guidelines provided for assessors by Investors in People UK, the assessor is totally satisfied that Ducane Housing Association meets the requirements of the Investors in People National Standard.

Investors in People recognition is granted indefinitely, with a proviso that reviews take place no more than 3 years apart. Reviews can be undertaken at any time and the organisation should discuss the timing of the first review with their assessor and adviser, using the Improvement Planning Meeting to agree the best strategy for future use of the Investors in People framework

Anne Williams

October 2009

Tel: 0208 546 2122

E: anne@worklifebalancesolutions.com



IMPROVING PERFORMANCE THROUGH PEOPLE



INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE | London

■ Options for your next Review

Investors in People Rolling Review

Rolling Review is a popular model for ongoing assessment which builds evidence over a three year timeframe, rather than all at once every three years. An annual visit can be focussed on the parts of the framework most relevant to you at the time, reflect changing business priorities and focus on different parts of your organisation at different stages.

Internal Review

Internal Review is a flexible review option available to all Investor in People organisations. It was introduced because recognised organisations identified that they wanted more involvement and ownership of their post recognition reviews. Internal Review works on selected principles of quality assured self-assessment and must be conducted with the full involvement of Capital Quality Limited. We develop your people to a nationally approved standard, providing you with an internal resource to enable you to monitor your own performance, target your resources appropriately and participate more fully in the review process.

Investors in People Interactive

This free online support tool is designed to guide you through development activities and help you maintain the benefits of using Investors in People as an organisational development tool. Obtain an on-going understanding of your organisation's current strengths and development areas by using the tool's diagnostic function which is built around 5 management practices which relate directly to the Investors in People indicators

You can also review and update your progress within the tool and access a wide range of downloads, good practice tips, templates and other resources to inspire and inform - no matter where you are on your Investors in People journey

www.investorsinpeople.co.uk/interactive

Promoting continuous improvement

CQL offers an integrated advice and assessment support service, as well as workshops, surgeries and networking events to promote continuous improvement and maximize the benefits of working with the Standard. Details of the support available to you can be found on: -

Internet: 

Telephone: 

Email: 

www.cqlgroup.co.uk

020 7492 5901

info@cqlgroup.co.uk



IMPROVING PERFORMANCE THROUGH PEOPLE



INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE | London

■ **Annex A**

Evidence Summary

Plan

- The Association had a clear purpose and focus, as set out in the business plan, with objectives that had been communicated effectively to staff via regular meetings.
- The business plan contained measurable performance objectives, and Key Performance Indicators also provided clear measures for service delivery and improvement, which were well understood by staff.
- The learning and development plan linked learning and development needs to business objectives. It may be helpful to include more specific learning outcomes and evaluation measures in the plan.
- Regular one-to-ones and appraisals enabled managers to identify and agree learning and development needs and plans with people in the context of individual and organisation objectives.
- Identification of learning and development needs individually and as part of business planning enabled the Association to ensure equality of opportunity for development and people confirmed that learning opportunities, such as the ITQ and trade skills training, were offered to people on an equal basis.
- Meetings and appraisals were used to ask people for their ideas for improving performance and people were encouraged to make suggestions, as they knew their opinions would be listened to and acted on.
- The Management Charter set out expectations of managers in leading, managing and developing people. Managers and staff shared a common understanding of the kind of communication, feedback and empowerment that was expected and of the policy for regular one-to-ones, appraisals and meetings, and for management support for learning and development. Further review and amplification of the Management Charter may be helpful to make it a more comprehensive document for appraising managers and for identifying their learning and development needs.

Do

- There were good examples of effective management and development of people, such as coaching and continual guidance to develop skills and people's ability to take on increasing responsibility on the finance and housing teams. The maintenance team reported that they received excellent communication and support from the Housing Manager and the Office Manager.
- People confirmed that they received regular, constructive feedback at one-to-ones and appraisals, although in some instances, more frequent individual feedback would help a few people to feel that their work was more fully appreciated.
- Most people believed that their work was valued due to the thanks and positive comments that they received, and due to the recent bonus. A few people

Commercial in Confidence

suggested that more frequent recognition from senior managers would be welcome.

- The organisation drew effectively on people's expertise to involve them in making decisions, for example about the specification of flats for the modernisation programme. People confirmed that they were able to use their initiative in their work and had been given responsibility for implementing projects. The self-management of the maintenance team was a good example of this.
- Everybody said that their learning and development needs were met effectively by the organisation's provision of learning and development and a good mix of training and on-the-job coaching and development was used.
- New staff and people who had taken on new responsibilities reported that they had received appropriate training and, particularly, effective guidance and support from their manager for their new role.

Review

- Regular performance review against objectives at one-to-ones and appraisals, and regular monitoring against KPIs, enabled managers to evaluate the impact of learning and development on improving performance. A range of improvements had been noted by both managers and people, such as improved project planning and management and securing of funding, time savings and better client service in the finance department and increased expertise on the maintenance team, which had brought cost savings and helped response times.
- Central co-ordination of booking training and collection of training evaluation forms allowed the monitoring of the costs and time invested in learning and development against a designated training budget. It may be helpful to monitor the time invested in on-the-job learning and development more closely, to ensure that time is focused on areas relevant to performance improvements.
- There was good evidence that the Association sought to continually improve its people management and development processes. In the past year, people had been given a bonus payment for the first time, a staff handbook had been produced, consideration was being given to reviewing pay and the Management Charter, and people mentioned improvements in communication.



IMPROVING PERFORMANCE THROUGH PEOPLE



INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE | London

Annex B
Outcomes Table

Evidence Requirements Framework Matrix

Core Standard										
	Indicators									
ERs	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10
1	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
2	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
3	n/a	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
4	√	√	√		√				√	
5	n/a		√						√	
6	√									

Wider Framework										
	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10
4	Core	Core	Core		Core	x			Core	
5	Core		Core						Core	
6	Core									
7										
8										
9	√									
10						√				
11										
12										
13										
14										
15										
16						x				
17										
18										
19										
20										
21	√									
22										
23										
24										
25										
26										
27										
28										
29										

√ = evidence requirement was met
x = evidence requirement was not met



IMPROVING PERFORMANCE THROUGH PEOPLE

