

Maximising Internal Redeployment



Sunderland City Council like the majority of the UK's local authorities is facing significant budget pressures across all services.

Pressures are on overall staffing and service provision with expected funding shortfalls of more than 15% per annum for the next three fiscal years.

With staffing in excess of 13,000, they are seeking to reduce their headcount by around 1,500 over the next three years.

Solution

- As the largest local employer and service provider, Sunderland City Council has publicly announced it will not make compulsory redundancies.
- They are planning to use a series of HR tactics to reduce the headcount over the coming years - these include natural attrition, retirement, recruitment freeze and an overall reduction in the use of temporary staff.
- In addition to these tactics, Sunderland City Council has created an internal HR talent pool, named SWITCH to be launched in November 2010.
- Under the SWITCH initiative, they are grouping all employees who are active in seeking either an alternative role within the council, due to their contract finishing, or actively looking externally to other opportunities, whether this is in work, career change, self-employment or even relocation.

Career Sage

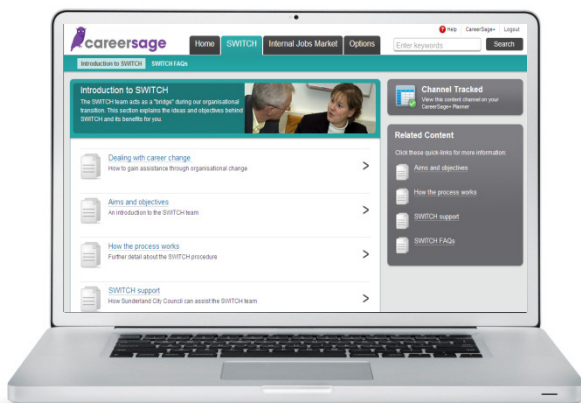
- Our online career management service, Career Sage, is being utilised to support more than 500 in this first year of SWITCH.
- We are working closely with the HR team at the council to effect a rapid deployment of Career Sage in line with this internal initiative.
- Our input will help many to consider a range of options and assist with decision making and moving to alternative employment or training within the North East.

Partnership Approach

- The Career Sage service being implemented at Sunderland is being heavily tailored and bespoke to the requirements of the council to include council policies and procedures, local links to employment, training and learning organisations.
- As requested by the in-house HR team, the externally hosted site will feature dual-branded references to Sunderland City Council and Career Sage
- This reflects the flexibility of the service and our desire to work in partnership with our clients – the site can be white-labelled for internal use or branded entirely as Career Sage, and presented as an external solution.
- In any of these scenarios, Career Sage will always be hosted externally on a secure, scalable platform so that minimal IT / ICT intervention is required.

Outcomes

- The overall objective is to reduce headcount by 500 in the next 12 months through the methods outlined above.
- Career Sage is being used in this instance to support workers currently in the Council's employment and to help each to properly consider and seek alternatives.



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Like every local council, Sunderland City Council faces enormous financial challenges. Whereas we accept the need for change, we aim do this without resorting to mass redundancies.

We want to retain the workforce which has delivered our success in the past but to adapt, re-deploy and retrain. By putting into place an intelligent, external recruitment freeze and developing our Internal Jobs Market we will be able to utilise our staff turnover, whilst helping people to move into new roles and careers.

Our Switch Team (Staff Working in Transition & Change) was created to manage the change process, where employees who are not part of the new structure would have the opportunity to support the business transformation by working on temporary projects across the Council, while we look to recruit them into permanent roles.

Switch staff will work on a variety of projects and in turn develop new skills, explore their potential and find a future that is right for them through our Internal Jobs Market.

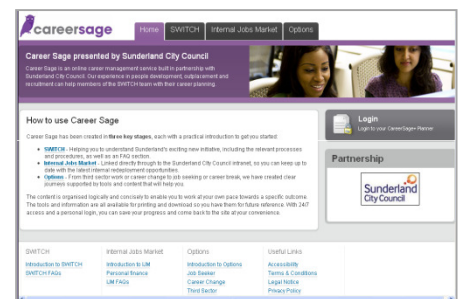
We realise that our employees need support during this time of change and have developed a support package made up of flexible working, mentoring & coaching, training and careers guidance.

Career Sage is an excellent careers resource which incorporates advice & guidance about career change, a CV Builder and links to some fantastic career focused facilities. It helps individuals think differently about their future and consider careers, which would have not previously been on their radar. We have been able to adapt the site to meet our specific and, with the help of the team from 4me Ventures, the site looks and feels personal to our staff here in Sunderland.

A useful feature is that the support staff within the Switch Team are able to use Career Sage to deliver quality career planning and guidance in both workshops and one to one situations. The feedback has been excellent and ideas are flowing in on how we can use Career Sage to its maximum potential.

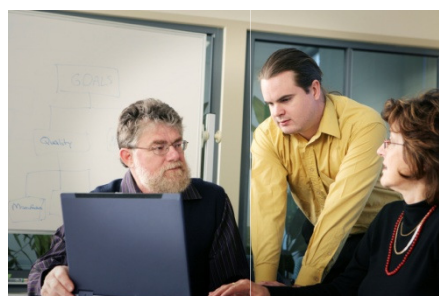
Being able to control content is important to us to react to our changing situation. 4me Ventures have taken this into consideration and provided simple instruction & training on how we can keep information up to date and relevant.

Overall, we believe that Career Sage supports our employees through a difficult time by offering the realistic advice and facilities they need to face this challenge. At the same time it adds real value to our change process.



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