

CASE STUDY



INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE

Background

Size: 9,500 employees

Sector: Local Authority

Location: Brighton

Status: Recognised since 2009

The Organisation

Brighton & Hove City Council is a leading South East local authority which, as well as being an Investor in People, also has Beacon Authority status and is rated a four star authority by the Audit Commission.

The Council employs 9,500 staff who provide a wide range of services, from waste, finance and HR, to children's services, social care and cultural and business support..

Brighton & Hove City Council was recognised as an Investor in People in January 2009.



Rising to the Challenge

Running a vibrant city that never sleeps and which plays host to festivals and thousands of tourists throughout the year, while offering care for its own diverse community and historic buildings, offers challenges which Brighton & Hove City Council rises to on a daily basis.

The Sussex seaside city council has recently achieved three notable milestones: being awarded Investors in People; gaining Beacon Authority status for the way it runs the city after dark, and being rated a four star authority by the independent Audit Commission.

Investors in People is a flexible and easy to use framework which helps organisations transform their business performance. This practical, flexible and easy to use approach allows thousands of different employers of every sector and size to improve their



Investors in People has given us a core strength to ensure the talents of our staff are focused on the things that matter most, encouraging innovation and learning as part of our improving services.

ALEX BAILEY
BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL



organisations in a range of different ways, including improved productivity, sharpened competitive edge and increased employee engagement.

An 'excellent' authority

The Audit Commission, an independent body that assesses the performance of councils, recently rated Brighton & Hove City Council an 'excellent' rated authority, thanks in part to its recognition as an Investor in People. The council had previously achieved three star status from the Audit Commission, but now has attained the highest level status, with four stars awarded.

The council, with other local partners, have together won government Beacon Status for managing the city's night-time economy. Innovative steps have included football style red and yellow warning cards for troublemakers, including using street performers dressed as lollipop patrols at taxi ranks. The city also hosted its first all-night White Night festival with alternative attractions to bars open all night.

Riding the storm

Brighton & Hove City Council faces several challenges over the next couple of years. It will have to cope with the after effects of the recession, cuts in public spending and meet the needs of an ageing population. In a culture where its customers expect a high quality service and where every aspect of the authority's work is open to public scrutiny, the organisation wants to be prepared for the future.

Caroline Bottrell, Head of Learning

and Development, Strategy and Governance, said: "We have difficult times ahead and we must be prepared to face that. But working with Investors in People gives your organisation a framework so if you have to make changes and adapt you can.

"Any organisation who says that they are going through difficult times and can't find time for Investors in People, should almost certainly go for it as that is precisely the perfect opportunity to put in place systems and communication to support you through the hard times."

People: the greatest asset

The council opted to work with Investors in People in order to ensure a consistent approach for every one of its diverse workforce. It realised that its employees needed to feel they were part of a supportive and celebratory culture, even in challenging economic times.

Caroline Bottrell said: "We employ 9,500 staff who provide a wide range of services, from waste, finance and HR, to children's services, social care and cultural and business support. While we knew that the authority had pockets of good practice we wanted to extend that right across the board.

"We wanted to ensure that the workforce understood the organisation's priorities and felt that they contributed to them as individuals. Some departments of the council, such as adult social care and finance, already had Investors in People and the aim was to bring the rest of the authority into step with that.

"Investors in People was something we all worked on together and has had a significant impact in many areas. We realise that our human resource is our greatest asset and we wanted to be sure our staff have the right skills to deliver for the future."

Investors in People Assessor Roger Newman said of Brighton & Hove City Council: "I met a number of extraordinary people doing extraordinary things that they think of as ordinary. What they do as day-to-day and consider normal is of a very high standard, often exemplary practice.

"They are generally very successful in delivering a high level of service to the citizens of Brighton and Hove."

As a result of Investors in People every directorate within Brighton & Hove City Council now develops an annual workforce learning and development plan which supports the achievement of their business plan. And the measurement of the impact of the investment in learning has been prioritised.

Acting Chief Executive at Brighton & Hove City Council at the time of the assessment, Alex Bailey, said: "With challenging times ahead Investors in People has given us a core strength to ensure the talents of our staff are focused on the things that matter most, encouraging innovation and learning as part of our improving services."