# People & Change Approach

**Why are we introducing a People & Change Approach at the University of Leeds?**

The approach supports our aspiration for people to be fully engaged in the process of change. It seeks to align to the University values and ultimately help us as a University to be better positioned to [Make a Global Impact](https://forstaff.leeds.ac.uk/download/downloads/id/1605/making_a_global_impact_draft_vision_and_strategy_2020-30.pdf).

ThePeople & Change Approach aims to ensure:

* **consistency** of approach to change throughout the University; underpinned by core principles directly linked to our values; which engages people in the process of change and those leading change are confident and supported;
* the implementation of any change process is **fair and inclusive**; with all stakeholders engaged and represented in the process from the outset;
* the process is **efficient and effective**;makinggood use of resources and time to achieve the best possible outcomes for the University, students, and staff.

**What is the People & Change Approach?**

It is an approach to change that prioritises people and positions them at the heart of the process. The approach positions change as a process; moving through a series of phases over time designed to maximise the effectiveness and efficiencies of the process.

The approach draws on both change leadership and change management, rather than project management. This recognises the iterative and complex nature of change as well as the social-cultural nature.

The approach recognises that change is a necessary and routine part of everyday operations in higher education and an underpinning aspect of continual improvement. Having a common language and approach to change will help position and prepare the University as it seeks to ensure it is sustainable and maximise its impact.

**Why is a People & Change Approachimportant now*?***

The University of Leeds has an ambitious strategy to [Make a Global Impact](https://forstaff.leeds.ac.uk/download/downloads/id/1605/making_a_global_impact_draft_vision_and_strategy_2020-30.pdf) over the course of the next five years and beyond. Throughout the strategic consultation paper, further advancements in teaching and research capability are proposed, in responding to changing legislation and student needs, and in answering the challenges posed by the global climate crisis.

Given the strategic ambitions outlined in the consultation paper and the challenge faced by the University to manage the impact of the coronavirus pandemic and move into a post-lockdown world, the need for all employees to be supported in facilitating change is as strong as ever.

We aim for all staff to understand the importance of change and have a role in the process of change. This isn’t the case at the moment - only 60% of approximately 3,000 colleagues who responded to the 2019 Staff Engagement Survey indicated that they felt their manager helped them to understand how changes would affect them personally, provided the opportunity to make suggestions and clearly communicated why the change was needed.

**How will the People & Change Approach benefit the University?**

The expected benefits of adopting thePeople & Change Approach are wide-ranging and will affect each individual member of staff differently. From a strategic perspective, the approach seeks to help the University of Leeds to become more change “able”; increasing levels of engagement with staff and enhancing leaders’ confidence to direct change processes that are values-led and thus more collaborative, inclusive and efficient. It is aimed that the approach will help build capacity, cohesion and community so change processes can be more effective, successful and sustainable. In time it may derive benefits in terms of improvements in staff engagement levels and organisational performance, helping retain talent and build on our sense of community, as the University works towards achieving its goals and ambitions.

Importantly the approach supports our aspiration for colleagues at all levels to have a voice in the change process and be supported consistently and fairly by those instigating the change. It promotes the engagement and contribution of all stakeholders to develop the process, understanding the need for, and outcomes of, the changes.

**What principles underpin the People & Change Approachand how do these align with the University values?**

The People & Change Approach is a values-led approach and aligns with the following [values of the University](https://hr.leeds.ac.uk/info/60/strategy_values_and_standards/229/the_university_strategy_values_and_standards): Integrity, Inclusiveness, Community and Professionalism in the achievement of academic excellence.

The following principles underpin the People & Change Approach and its application.

**Community**

* Collaborative: the intention is to engage all stakeholders in the process. By working together, more can be achieved. The process and outcomes of the change should be shared and co-designed wherever possible.
* Cohesive: the change process should clearly contribute to the University’s Strategy. Where the change being made has implications for other operational functions beyond the locus of the change, connections and alignments should be made explicit and all relevant stakeholder groups engaged. Interconnections should also be made with any wider change going on across the University to promote integration.
* Supportive: mechanisms should be in place to ensure that all those impacted by change, and those responsible for leading the change, have access to appropriate support and guidance.

**Integrity**

* The process should be conducted with integrity and respect. Leaders of change should aim to build trust, respect confidentiality, be honest, non-judgemental and open to differences of opinion and approaches. There should be a commitment to transparency and openness with information and ideas.

**Inclusiveness**

* Ensuring that all stakeholders are represented and engaged in the process of change, and that their perspectives and ideas are treated with respect and equity, recognising the different strengths that individuals bring to the process.

**Professionalism**

* Evidence-informed: the process should be informed by evidence of need. Having good evidence can provide a benchmark from which to demonstrate the added value. Monitoring and evaluation should be embedded into the process (where possible) and be continual and iterative (rather than retrospective).
* Governance: appropriate governance arrangements should be in place to provide assurance and support timely decision making.
* Quality: Ensuring an effective, efficient and consistent approach to any change process across the University

**Who is the People & Change Approachfor*?***

This is an approach to provide support to colleagues. It can be used by those leading change or involved in making change happen to guide the process used, or by those affected by change to guide what to expect in the process. It desires for those with a stake in the change to be part of the process rather than be recipients of change.

**How is the People & Change Approach structured?**

There are five phases to the People & Change Approach, each building upon the previous phase and feeding forward into the next. The phases cover different stages of a change process. They are phased to acknowledge the iterative, dynamic and cyclical nature of change.

These phases are underpinned by two key elements that run across the whole change process – that of two-way communication and engagement and managing the impact of change.

The approach promotes continual dialogue between those affected by, delivering and leading change. By working collaboratively, and proactively engaging with their stakeholders, leaders of change can gain a level of assurance that they understand different stakeholder perspectives and ideas and that the stakeholders understand what is required from the proposed change and why it is being proposed.

It also recommends a period of reflection and learning throughout the change process to understand the nature of the impact of any change on people. It promotes monitoring and evaluation being built into the process of change from the outset, focused on the outcomes for individuals and people collectively, as well as for the University’s performance and/or the community more broadly.

**What kind of change does the People & Change Approach apply to?**

It is designed to apply to all change processes regardless of their size or scope, including strategic, tactical, and operational change. It applies to any change processes conducted at the University where people will be impacted by the change. Change involving people is cultural change and therefore should be led and managed in a consistent, fair and effective way.

**How has People & Change Approachbeen developed?**

ThePeople & Change Approach has been 12 months in development, led by HR in collaboration with a cross-functional team of colleagues from Business Change, OD & PL, Internal Communications, IT and with advice from external change consultants. It has also been shared with the three campus trade unions at various stages of its development and has been informed by those discussions.

ThePeople & Change Approach draws upon best practice from a range of sources from within the University, the wider HE sector and other sectors. It draws on the ADKAR model of change management (Awareness, Desire, Knowledge, Ability, Reinforcement) and Kotter’s (1995; 1996[[1]](#footnote-1)) 8 step model of change covering ‘creating a climate for change’, ‘engaging and enabling the whole organisation’ and ‘implementing and sustaining change’.

**What does the** **People & Change Approachalignwith*?***

ThePeople & Change Approach has been designed to complement existing delivery methodologies including Delivering Results, and the 5-Ds. It also takes inspiration from, and aligns with [the Leadership Excellence Behaviours](https://www.sdduonline.leeds.ac.uk/behaviours/the-framework/) and the [Principles for Delivering Change](https://deliveringresults.leeds.ac.uk/principles-for-delivering-change/).

The approach seeks to recognise and build on the expertise across the University community as well as build the capability to ensure that support offered around change is sustainable. We will continue to collaborate with colleagues to integrate and embed the approach, making further developments in response to feedback and review.

**What support is available to help leaders apply the People & Change Approach?**

The team who have developed the People & Change Approach are now working to ensure that there is appropriate support in place for the different stakeholders involved in change across the University. This includes reviewing and building upon the support already available. This offer will develop over the coming months and will be tailored as we gather further feedback.

1. Kotter, J (1995). Leading Change: Why Transformation Efforts Fail. Harvard Business Review; Kotter, J (1996). Leading Change. Harvard Business school Press, Boston. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)