



The National Body for Neurodiversity

The Donaldson Way

Our Values and Attributes



The Donaldson Way

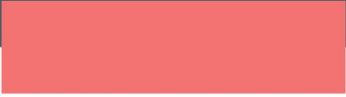
The Donaldson Way is the way we do things here. It's the unique blend of values, attributes and ways of seeing the world that makes us "us".

Our Values

Our values are the core principles and beliefs that guide our organisational culture, decision-making and our actions. They define what we stand for and influence how we interact with each other, the people we support, our partners and other stakeholders.

We refreshed these in 2024 to ensure they truly reflect who we are and what we aim to achieve.

By living and breathing our values every day we will be able to deliver our strategy and help create a society in which neurodivergent people are understood, accepted, treated fairly and valued.



We share what we know

We share our knowledge so that more neurodivergent people can thrive.



We connect people

We build partnerships and collaborations to increase opportunity and inclusion for neurodivergent individuals. We achieve more together.



We remove barriers

We work together to look for win-win solutions. We make it easier for neurodivergent people to feel accepted, valued and that their voice is heard.

Our Attributes

We have identified five attributes that colleagues at The Donaldson Trust should aspire to, no matter where they work and what role they have.

These attributes demonstrate how we bring our values to life through the characteristics we display to the world: our actions, behaviours and attitudes at work.

Our five attributes set clear expectations, create common standards and support equitable treatment. They can support discussions about how we “show up at work”, and are a helpful tool for personal development planning and preparing for your quarterly conversations.



Professional

Delivering a high standard of work and handling ourselves appropriately.



Dependable

Consistency, reliability, trustworthiness and optimism.



Collaborative

Working effectively together to deliver excellent results.



Curious

Showing the energy to continually acquire new knowledge and skills.



Adaptable

Showing willingness to change and adjust how we do things.

Our Attributes in detail

Our five attributes are explained in the following pages, including what we mean by each of these attributes, and some examples of what they look like in practice.

 Professional	Being professional involves setting high personal standards for our work. It means we display appropriate levels of sensitivity and confidentiality in both our actions and our communications. Being professional requires us to always present our 'best self' and remember that we are the public face of The Donaldson Trust.
 Dependable	Being dependable means that our colleagues can rely on us to do our job. We're consistent and trustworthy; we don't give up when things get tough. Dependability also implies that we're positive and optimistic as we go about our work because a predictable working environment is important to our wellbeing.
 Collaborative	Being collaborative means working together and it implies that the outcome of the work will be better because of the teamwork it entailed. Collaboration captures the phrase 'the whole is greater than the sum of its parts'. For us, collaboration involves being respectful and considerate towards others and ensuring that, once a decision has been taken, we honour it and work to make it happen, irrespective of personal views.
 Curious	Being curious starts with a willingness to think about things, rather than just accept them. It involves showing an interest in the Trust as a whole and seeking to understand the wider context it operates in. It involves asking questions, seeking out information and being keen to learn new things and to develop our expertise.
 Adaptable	Being adaptable means being both able and willing to learn and change to meet new conditions and ways of doing things. It also means that we learn how to accept and bounce back quickly from any setbacks or challenges, not allowing past difficulties to define our future.

Why is it important?

When colleagues take their work seriously and focus on delivering excellent results, everyone benefits – the people we support, colleagues and the wider community. Collectively, this attitude lets us all be proud of The Donaldson Trust and the contribution we make to society. Similarly, by moderating our behaviour during times of stress or pressure, we show our maturity and make the workplace a happier, less stressful place for everyone.

What does it look like?

- We are self-motivated and work autonomously within our policies, guidelines and role requirements.
- We take responsibility for ourselves and our work and approach things with optimism and positivity.
- We use our knowledge to weigh options to get the best overall outcome in any given situation and collaborate with colleagues to achieve that.
- We are principled and always try to do the right thing; the end never justifies the means.
- Every day, we do our level best, no matter the circumstances.

What we shouldn't see:

- An unwillingness to speak up about mistakes or problems.
- An unwillingness to work with other colleagues to get a job done, iron out problems or find solutions.
- A lack of accountability when things go wrong; an 'it's not my problem' mentality or passing the buck.
- Acting without thinking about the wider impact.
- Waiting to be told to do things that are part of our role.

People Managers must also:

- Co-operate with other teams and managers to make life smoother for everyone.
- Model the attributes we want to see, never forgetting that to be a leader is to be a role model. If we behave in ways that are inconsistent with 'The Donaldson Way' we will breed cynicism and trash our values.
- Ensure we have the right information when things are not going to plan so we can address it and help fix the problem.
- Handle confidential information with care and the responsibility it demands.
- We help our teams to work effectively – the right tools, equipment, training.

Why is it important?

We're all accountable for playing our part at work and for contributing to a pleasant working environment. We want people to feel they can be themselves, while at the same time being mindful of their impact on others and respectful of their needs. When we can rely on our colleagues to do their job well and to have a helpful attitude towards one another, Donaldsons feels like a great place to work. When we can't, the workload becomes unfairly spread, tensions creep into working relationships and the working atmosphere goes sour.

What does it look like?

- We always do what we say we'll do. If we can't, we raise the matter and help find an alternative solution.
- We stay focussed and committed, even when it's tough – we show 'stickability'.
- We apply the same high standards across the board and strive to be consistent in our decision making.
- We play by the rules and try our best to live out 'The Donaldson Way', always conscious that we are role models for others, both internally and externally.

What we shouldn't see:

- Not doing things to the required standard or being inconsistent in the standard of our work.
- Cutting corners or leaving things to other team members when we could reasonably do them ourselves.
- Consistent negativity or frequent moodiness.
- Saying one thing and doing another.

People Managers must also:

- Consider their own actions and make sure they are consistent. Leaders are role models.
- Be approachable and treat everyone fairly, applying the same standards to everyone.
- Get to know the team members well and understand what's involved in their jobs.
- Ensure the procedures the team follow are clear and understood by everyone.
- Follow up on things and provide regular feedback so everyone can be on the same page.
- Recognise when standards are excellent and give credit where it's due.

Why is it important?

As the National Body for Neurodiversity, our role involves an increasing level of partnership working with organisations across Scotland. That work is informed by our practice, so it depends on us working collaboratively with our colleagues. By doing this, we will be able to grow our overall pool of knowledge and share it with one another and with our partners. Collaboration involves making a real effort to get along with one another and open in sharing our expertise. It means treating one another with respect and having the reputation of being a great colleague to work with.

What does it look like?

- We proactively think about how we can share what we know, and who we can team up with to get a better overall result.
- We treat our colleagues well, both internally and externally. We're respectful and supportive and take the view that, together, we can do more.
- We work hard at being inclusive and are neither selfish nor standoffish. We put 'we' before 'me'.
- We pull our weight; we're quick to show our thanks and give credit where it's due.
- We choose our words and actions carefully and gently correct any slip-ups or misinterpretations.

What we shouldn't see:

- Putting our own interests before those of our colleagues, and our personal or team interests before the overall good of the organisation.
- Forcing our views and opinions on other people; rejecting or dismissing their views and opinions or acting as though we're right and everyone else is wrong.
- Apathy or an unwillingness to cooperate with other colleagues, 'lone wolf' behaviour or a failure to respect team norms.
- People being left out or excluded, or colleagues being left to struggle when we could reasonably offer help.
- Finger pointing or a blame culture. Gossiping, tolerating cliques, creating scapegoats or fanning the flames.

People Managers must also:

- Maintain constructive relationships with all team members, peers and managers
- Take responsibility for establishing a team culture where everyone is encouraged to make a positive contribution and show mutual respect
- Give regular, constructive feedback designed to help the team member develop
- Address lack of collaboration or consideration for colleagues swiftly and fairly, and deal with difficult issues in private
- Recognise good work, our people's efforts and we appreciate a good shift or success

Why is it important?

Curiosity keeps us open to new things and respectful questioning of the status quo can lead us to better ways of doing things. It's also a great default position when disagreements arise because being curious means we don't rush straight to judgement; instead we ask questions to understand the other person's position. Often, curiosity leads to creativity – we apply new learning to old ways and see improvements as a result.

What does it look like?

- We show initiative, resourcefulness and appropriate creativity in our work.
- We are proactive in our own learning and development and are always willing to learn.
- We have the confidence to share our ideas and suggestions and we ask for help or advice when we need it.
- We think carefully about our work and ask questions designed to improve things.
- We build awareness of our resources and think about ways in which we might make them stretch further.
- We listen openly and we respond or challenge respectfully. When people say things we disagree with, we don't judge, we get curious.

What we shouldn't see:

- Not giving colleagues the opportunity to contribute or share ideas.
- Dismissing ideas without taking them seriously and evaluating them.
- Accepting things that we know aren't great; taking the easy way out instead of speaking up.
- Focussing on problems and difficulties, or finding fault instead of actively working to finding a better solution.
- Using resources or spending money in a careless or unconsidered manner.

People Managers must also:

- Encourage open two-way communication where everyone feels comfortable to contribute.
- Collaborate with our teams, other departments and peers to understand one another's contribution and work better together.
- Look to solve recurrent problems and adopt a 'lessons learned' approach.
- Help team members to make informed judgements about the best use of our resources so that these are managed wisely.
- Take the time to provide a regular overview of what is happening in our team and across teams.
- Make sure we don't dismiss ideas, or people will stop coming up with them!

Why is it important?

The Donaldson Trust is on a journey; it's an exciting one and a big one! To succeed and meet our dream of levelling the playing field for neurodivergent people and to be the authoritative voice for neurodiversity in Scotland, we all need to be able and willing to respond to changing needs and circumstances. Where people are rigid and inflexible, they slow progress and create stress and tension for themselves and others.

What does it look like?

- We show willing and get actively involved in efforts to try new things and to adapt our habits and ways of working.
- We honour our legacy but don't let it get in the way of our focus on the future. Where we're going is more important than where we came from.
- We show confidence in ourselves and our colleagues and are optimistic that, together, if there's a better way, we can find it.
- We are open minded but at the same time we put the needs of our service users and external customers at the front and centre of our decision making.
- We take personal responsibility for being part of the solution, no matter how big or small. We refuse to become part of the problem.

What we shouldn't see:

- We thwart new procedures or processes because we don't like or agree with them, or just for the sake of it.
- We have a backward focus and are wedded to how it's always been done or what happened in the past.
- We adopt a critical attitude and pick holes in things – success comes from everyone.
- We don't commit to trying something new which the organisation is trying to adopt for good reason.
- Allowing past experiences to determine what we are willing to consider today, especially when this amounts to a brake on our progress.

People Managers must also:

- Create an environment where people and teams are encouraged to share ideas and try new things.
- Show our team what flexibility looks like in practice by role-modelling it and adopting a positive attitude towards proposed change.
- Foster open, two-way communication and we actively listen, especially when team members are expressing concerns about change.
- Explain the benefits, potential or rationale for new processes or procedures.
- Actively encourage collaboration, cross-team working and partnerships as a means of solving issues or improving processes.
- Make sure relevant communication flows well – not getting stuck on blockages within – or across – teams.
- Ask the right questions to get to the root of issues or problems, and collaborate with others who can help us resolve the issue.



The National Body for Neurodiversity

For further support or advice
about The Donaldson Way,
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