

# Agenda

## Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Date: **Thursday 13 June 2024**

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Time: **2.00 pm**

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Place: **Conference Room 1 - Herefordshire Council, Plough Lane Offices, Hereford, HR4 0LE**

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Notes: Please note the time, date and venue of the meeting.

For any further information please contact:

**Simon Cann, Democratic Services Officer**

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If you would like help to understand this document, or would like it in another format, please call Simon Cann, Democratic Services Officer on 01432 260667 or e-mail [simon.cann@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:simon.cann@herefordshire.gov.uk) in advance of the meeting.

# Agenda for the meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

## Membership

**Chairperson** Councillor Toni Fagan  
**Vice-chairperson** Councillor Liz Harvey

Councillor Clare Davies  
Councillor Robert Highfield  
Councillor Ben Proctor  
Councillor Rob Williams

## Co-opted Members

Sylvia Cockcroft  
Jan Frances  
Stuart Mitchell  
Sam Pratley

Archdiocese of Cardiff  
Families' Representative  
Parent Governor (Secondary)  
Hereford Diocese

## Agenda

### Pages

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

To receive apologies for absence.

**2. NAMED SUBSTITUTES**

To receive details of members nominated to attend the meeting in place of a member of the committee.

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

To receive declarations of interests from members of the committee in respect of items on the agenda.

**4. MINUTES**

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 7 May 2024.

[Papers to follow]

**HOW TO SUBMIT QUESTIONS**

The deadline for the submission of questions for this meeting is 5pm on Friday 7 June 2024.

Questions must be submitted to [councillorservices@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:councillorservices@herefordshire.gov.uk). Questions sent to any other address may not be accepted.

Accepted questions and the responses will be published as a supplement to the agenda papers prior to the meeting. Further information and guidance is available at [www.herefordshire.gov.uk/getinvolved](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/getinvolved)

**5. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

To receive any written questions from members of the public.

**6. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**

To receive any written questions from members of the council.

**7. WORKFORCE CHALLENGES IN CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

The purpose of this report is to update the committee on the workforce challenges in children's services and to outline the work being undertaken to address those challenges.

**8. WORK PROGRAMME**

To consider the work programme for the committee.

**9. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 30 July 2024, 2pm

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## The public's rights to information and attendance at meetings

In view of the continued prevalence of Covid, we have introduced changes to our usual procedures for accessing public meetings. These will help to keep our councillors, staff and members of the public safe.

Please take time to read the latest guidance on the council website by following the link at [www.herefordshire.gov.uk/meetings](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/meetings) and support us in promoting a safe environment for everyone. If you have any queries please contact the governance support team on 01432 261699 or at [governancesupportteam@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:governancesupportteam@herefordshire.gov.uk)

We will review and update this guidance in line with Government advice and restrictions.

Thank you for your help in keeping Herefordshire Council meetings safe.

### You have a right to:

- Attend all council, cabinet, committee and sub-committee meetings unless the business to be transacted would disclose 'confidential' or 'exempt' information.
- Inspect agenda and public reports at least five clear days before the date of the meeting. Agenda and reports (relating to items to be considered in public) are available at [www.herefordshire.gov.uk/meetings](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/meetings)
- Inspect minutes of the council and all committees and sub-committees and written statements of decisions taken by the cabinet or individual cabinet members for up to six years following a meeting.
- Inspect background papers used in the preparation of public reports for a period of up to four years from the date of the meeting (a list of the background papers to a report is given at the end of each report). A background paper is a document on which the officer has relied in writing the report and which otherwise is not available to the public.
- Access to a public register stating the names, addresses and wards of all councillors with details of the membership of cabinet and of all committees and sub-committees. Information about councillors is available at [www.herefordshire.gov.uk/councillors](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/councillors)
- Have access to a list specifying those powers on which the council have delegated decision making to their officers identifying the officers concerned by title. The council's constitution is available at [www.herefordshire.gov.uk/constitution](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/constitution)
- Access to this summary of your rights as members of the public to attend meetings of the council, cabinet, committees and sub-committees and to inspect documents.

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The reporting of meetings is subject to the law and it is the responsibility of those doing the reporting to ensure that they comply.

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## **Public transport links**

The Herefordshire Council office at Plough Lane is located off Whitecross Road in Hereford, approximately 1 kilometre from the City Bus Station.

The location of the office and details of city bus services can be viewed at:  
[www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/1597/hereford-city-bus-map-local-services-](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/1597/hereford-city-bus-map-local-services-)

## **The seven principles of public life**

### **(Nolan Principles)**

#### **1. Selflessness**

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

#### **2. Integrity**

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

#### **3. Objectivity**

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

#### **4. Accountability**

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

#### **5. Openness**

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

#### **6. Honesty**

Holders of public office should be truthful.

#### **7. Leadership**

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour and treat others with respect. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.







## **Title of report: Workforce Challenges in Children's Services**

**Meeting:** Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

**Meeting date:** 13 June 2024

**Report by:** Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development

### **Classification**

Open

### **Decision type**

This is not an executive decision

### **Wards affected**

(All Wards);

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of this report is to update the committee on the workforce challenges in children's services and to outline the work being undertaken to address those challenges.

### **Recommendation(s)**

1. That the committee reviews the report and determines any recommendations it wishes to make.

### **Alternative options**

2. The committee could choose not to review the report. This option is not recommended because the report is provided to ensure the committee is sighted on key workforce issues.

### **Key considerations**

#### **The workforce challenge**

3. Herefordshire Council, like every local authority across the country, has seen significant challenges in the recruitment and retention of staff in children's services. The national shortage of social workers is well reported as organisations compete to fill vacancies.

4. Prior to 2021, the council was already experiencing difficulties in recruiting permanent social workers and work was underway to increase permanency. At that stage the council was working on a permanent to agency ratio in social work posts of approximately 80:20. One of the key factors in causing recruitment difficulties at that time was understood to be Herefordshire's geography and transport infrastructure and work to address the recruitment problem focused on attracting new recruits to the county.
5. From April 2021, the adverse court judgments, Ofsted judgment and government intervention compounded the difficulties in Herefordshire and severely impacted our reputation. These events made it almost impossible to recruit new permanent employees to the council and over a period of time, every senior manager in children's social care left the council. Children's services then struggled to fill vacant posts with agency workers, which up until this point it could reliably do. This inability to fill vacancies with agency workers and a high turnover in management, placed enormous strain on our current workforce and it led to poor staff retention, high turnover and even higher caseloads.

### **Reliance on agency workers**

6. Agency workers are a valued and essential part of our workforce. When we are not able to recruit good agency workers it has a serious detrimental effect on our permanent workforce. The fact that the council wishes to drive down our reliance on agency workers does not in any way diminish the important contribution agency workers make and any workforce modelling undertaken assumes that agency workers will form part of our workforce for the foreseeable future.
7. That said, in most circumstances the council would prefer to make a permanent appointment because it provides greater stability for the council and for children and families and it is almost always more economical to do so.
8. A summary table setting out the proportion of permanent and agency workers by role since January 2023 can be found in Appendix A.
9. The table shows that the proportion of agency workers is too high and has been increasing. This is due in part to the considerable investment in children's services which has increased the number of social worker posts overall. The immediate effect of this investment is to increase the number of posts that need to be filled and initially these posts are filled by agency workers. This means that although the council has recruited 71 social workers since February 2023 and retention is now good, the total number of permanent social workers still needed has increased.
10. The Children and Young People Directorate spent £12 million on agency staff in 2023/24. The ambition is to develop a stable and resilient workforce to make a positive and sustained difference to the lives of children, young people and families in Herefordshire. There will be a continued focus on the conversion of high cost agency staff to permanent posts and this is represented by a £1.006million savings target for 2024/25, with a target to convert 30 social workers from agency staff to permanent by the end of June 2024. Activity is underway to deliver this target by the end of quarter 1 in 2024/25. In addition, the reduction of the number of children in care will mean a reduction in the overall number of social workers.

## Strategies for addressing the challenges

11. The council aims to reduce the proportion of agency workers by:

- appointing more permanent social workers into posts that are filled by agency workers and
- reducing the overall number of posts that we have in the establishment.

12. These two aims are underpinned by detailed plans and strategies which include:

- the children's improvement plan which has a strong workforce element and has its progress monitored at the Children's Improvement Board
- a Workforce Delivery Board which reports into the Improvement Board and has a programme of work to deliver against the improvement plan.
- A new corporate workforce strategy
- A new workforce strategy for children's services. A draft of which is included in Appendix B
- 3 year financial plan for children's services.

13. The plans and strategies cover a number of areas where we have made good progress. Areas where we have done well include:

- Team manager recruitment which was highlighted as a priority by the DfE's Commissioner. At the time of writing we have moved from an almost entirely agency team manager workforce to one where 24 out of 25 posts in social care will be recruited to on a permanent basis when new recruits join us in July.
- Senior manager recruitment where all posts have been appointed to on a permanent basis and we have secured a fixed term contract for the incoming Corporate Director, Children and Young People in July
- Developing our 'Spirit of Herefordshire' microsite and branding
- Procuring a new recruitment portal
- Growing a dedicated recruitment team within children's services to support managers who are recruiting
- Developing a suite of recruitment materials to better articulate our offer to applicants
- Simplifying the process for agency workers to convert to permanent.
- Ensuring or pay is competitive
- Making sure our wider employment offer is good including increasing annual leave for new starters from 25 to 31 days, removing unpaid leave days and having a strong wellbeing and benefits offer.
- Increasing our welcome payment to £5,000
- Reimbursing 'Social Work England' professional fees for social workers.
- Introducing a retention payment scheme which is payable annually
- Introducing a clear development and career progression scheme
- Creation of employee networks to develop a sense of belonging
- Creation of forums such as the staff reference group and aiming high group so that employee voices can be heard
- Reducing case loads
- Significantly reducing our turnover rates for permanent staff, making our workforce more stable which is good for children, families and our workforce.

14. There are also some areas where we have yet to make a significant impact and these areas include:

- Telling our story better about what has changed and why we are now a positive place for social workers to come and develop their careers in a supportive working environment.
- Making recruitment personal, rather than just a process
- Thinking about the workforce more holistically and not just in terms of social workers
- Making a significant impact into the number of agency social workers we engage
- Reducing the rates we pay for agency workers by returning to the rates set as part of a regional memorandum of understanding (referred to as The M.O.U.).
- Having sufficient capacity to respond to the high demand for social work apprenticeship places.
- Maintaining a robust local process to capture exit intelligence from leavers.

### **Social Work Pipeline**

15. The council recognises the importance of having a good and consistent pipeline of newly qualified social workers and has a number of partner arrangements in place with higher education institutions to support the career pipeline into social work. At the time of writing, the council's academy is supporting 15 apprentices at different stages of their apprenticeship journey.
16. The council is partnered with Coventry University and the University of Kent to deliver a 3 year social work apprenticeship programme, where one cohort completed earlier this year and a second cohort is due to finish their 3 year course in September 2024. Plans are in place for all successful apprentices to join the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) programme in 2024.
17. The council also has traditional social work students on placement from the University of Gloucester, University of Birmingham and Worcester University. We attend development sessions at Worcestershire and Gloucestershire University to address and recruit students onto our ASYE programme. Strong links with Birmingham University have also been established via the step up to social work programme.
18. To support more students and trainees we need to develop the number of practice educators and a number of staff members have attended the Practice Leadership programme provided by the University of Worcester. Social workers are also undertaking their Practice Educator One awards and Practice Educator Two awards at Worcester University.
19. Moving forwards, links with the Heart of Worcestershire University are being developed and work is planned with our Leeds partners to develop ideas around using our University colleagues to deliver master classes.

### **Being a good employer**

20. When we talk to social workers about what matters most to them, we are told that a supportive environment where they can practice safely, with good supervision and an opportunity for development is key. This together with competitive pay, being valued and having positive relationships with their manager are all important. It's not a big ask, but for the last few years, an almost entirely agency leadership team within children's services has not been able to routinely meet all of these needs. Despite this, many workers did stay with the council during this time and the council is incredibly grateful to those who have remained with us in the last 3 years.

21. We've worked hard to improve the lived experience of social workers who work for us and we have improved our employment offer in a number of way, some of which we have set out in paragraph 13 above. Improvements take time to embed and now we have a more permanent leadership team, there are strong signs that our culture is improving, but getting under the skin of what it's really like to work here can be challenging.
22. Managers play a key role in listening to employee voices on a day to day basis and more formal groups such as the staff reference group and aiming high group are useful for some workers who thrive in speaking up in a structured environment.
23. Not everyone has a manager who they feel they can talk to and not everyone feels confident to say what they think in front of others. To give all employees the chance to be heard, the council undertakes an anonymous employee survey every two years and this does provide a totally safe space for employee feedback about what it's like to work for the council. The most recent survey was carried out in 2022 which was before many of the improvements we have made had been embedded long enough to have significant effect. The summary data for children's services from that survey is included in Appendix C.
24. The next employee survey will be launched on 12 June 2024 and The Committee may want to scrutinise the outcome of that survey in the autumn. The Committee may also decide that talking to front line workers, to validate the data would be beneficial.
25. In addition to the employee survey and any other formal or informal feedback mechanisms we have, we also have a set of metrics which give us some information about what it's like to work here. Some of these are summarised in the table below:

Metric	Children and Young People Directorate	Council
Absence rates (number of days lost annually per fte)	8.3	9.2
Turnover rate (the council figure is temporarily inflated by MERS)	12.4	15.9
Employee engagement score (taken from employee survey)	70%	71%
Employee survey 2022 response rate	44%	56%
Employee Survey 'Check in' 2023 response rate	36%	46 %
Mandatory training completion rates		
Information Governance –	93%	96.1%
Information Security –	93.3 %	96.4%
Fraud Awareness –	92.8%	96.2%
Prevent -	92.8%	96%

The data tells us that currently the children and young people directorate is performing close to or better than the corporate average in most areas. This is a marked improvement on previous years where compliance with mandatory training, turnover rates and engagement all performed worse than the council average.

## **Community Impact**

26. A skilled and stable workforce in children's services will ensure delivery of key community objectives set out in Herefordshire Council's Plan and delivery of the children's improvement plan. Having the right workforce in place will enable us to ensure all children are healthy, safe and inspired to achieve and that care experienced children and young people are well supported to make good life choices.

## **Environmental Impact**

27. Whilst this report will have minimal environmental impacts, consideration has been made to minimise waste and resource use in line with the council's environmental policy.

## **Equality duty**

28. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to –

- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

29. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services.

30. The council's human resources policies pay full regard to the council's responsibilities as set out in the public sector equality duty.

## **Resource implications**

31. There are no direct resource implications arising from this report.

## **Legal implications**

32. There are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

## **Risk management**

33. There are no specific risk arising from this report.

## Consultees

34. Not applicable

## Appendices

- A - Agency and permanent profile by role and key
- B – Children and Young People Workforce Strategy
- C - Employee Survey Outcomes for Children and Young People 2022

## Background papers

None identified

**Please note this section must be completed before the report can be published**

Governance	Simon Cann	Date 04/06/2024
Finance	Click or tap here to enter text.	Date Click or tap to enter a date.
Legal	Click or tap here to enter text.	Date Click or tap to enter a date.
Communications	Michala Lee	Date 31/05/2024
Equality Duty	Harriet Yellin	Date 31/05/2024
Procurement	Click or tap here to enter text.	Date Click or tap to enter a date.
Risk	Click or tap here to enter text.	Date Click or tap to enter a date.

Approved by Click or tap here to enter text. Date Click or tap to enter a date.

## Glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report.

### **ASYE** - Assessed and Supported Year in Employment

A 12 month programme of support and assessment, in the workplace, for newly qualified social workers

### **MERS** – Mutual Early Resignation Scheme

A programme the council has in place to reduce the size of the headcount on a voluntary basis.

### **MOU** - Memorandum of Understanding.

An agreement between all local authorities in the West Midlands region to cap the rates of pay for agency workers, so that we do not compete with each other.

### **Practice Educator**

Someone who has responsibility for teaching, supervising and assessing social worker students on placements in the workplace.





## APPENDIX A

### Agency and permanent staff numbers, by role, since January 2023

Date	Social Worker*		Team Manager*		NQSW		Support Worker		Family Support Worker		Service Manager		Heads of Service		Other*	
	Perm	Agency	Perm	Agency	Perm	Agency	Perm	Agency	Perm	Agency	Perm	Agency	Perm	Agency	Perm	Agency
09/01/2023	49	77	17	17	6	0	4	0	31	0	3	5	2	3	23	6
09/02/2023	44	75	18	14	6	0	4	0	32	0	3	5	2	4	26	2
01/03/2023	41	70	19	14	6	0	4	0	34	0	3	6	3	3	27	3
03/04/2023	46	73	20	12	5	0	4	0	33	0	3	7	4	2	30	1
02/05/2023	47	76	18	15	11	0	4	0	33	0	3	6	4	2	30	1
01/06/2023	49	81	18	15	10	0	4	0	33	0	4	6	4	2	30	0
03/07/2023	47	84	19	14	12	0	4	0	34	0	4	6	4	2	31	1
01/08/2023	46	81	19	13	12	0	4	0	35	0	4	6	4	2	30	2
01/09/2023	46	80	19	13	12	0	4	0	35	0	4	6	4	2	30	2
02/10/2023	45	81	19	13	12	0	4	0	36	0	4	5	4	2	32	2
01/11/2023	46	81	20	13	12	0	4	0	36	0	4	6	4	2	33	2
01/12/2023	46	75	20	14	12	0	4	0	37	0	5	5	4	2	34	2
02/01/2024	49	70	22	13	12	0	4	0	37	0	6	5	4	2	40	2
02/02/2024	50	74	24	11	12	0	4	0	37	0	6	5	3	3	41	2
01/03/2024	55	75	26	10	13	0	4	0	34	0	7	3	4	2	40	2
02/04/2024	58	73	27	10	13	0	3	0	33	0	6	4	4	2	40	2
02/05/2024	61	70	32	9	13	0	2	0	34	0	8	3	4	2	37	1

- Please see key

## APPENDIX A - KEY

### **Social Worker' Job Roles Include:**

Adoption Family Finding Social Worker  
Advanced Practitioner  
Children's Social Work Manager  
Children's Social Work Academy Manager  
Managing Practitioner  
Principal Social Worker  
SAFE Senior Practitioner  
Senior Practitioner  
SLP Social Worker  
Social Work Manager  
Social Work Volunteer  
Social Worker  
Team Manager

### **Team Manager Job Roles Include:**

SEN Senior Officer and Team Manager  
Admissions & 14-19 Curriculum Manager  
Business Intel Educational Analysis Officer  
CHAT Team Manager  
STEPS Team Leader  
SEMH Inclusion Service Leader  
Children's Social Work Manager  
Children's Social Work Academy Manager  
EAL Team Leader and Manager  
Early Help Coordinator Team Manager  
Early Years SEND Lead and Manager  
Early Years Lead Improvement Advisor  
Family Support and Links Team Manager  
Head of Education & Capital  
Head of Learning & Achievement  
Lead for Inclusion and Safeguarding  
Home Finding Manager  
LAC Support Team Manager  
Permanence Team Manager  
Post 16 Senior Advisor  
Principal Educational Psychologist  
Safeguarding & Review Manager  
Safeguarding Partnerships Bus. Manager  
Virtual Head Teacher for Vulnerable Children  
Temporary Fostering Development Manager

### **Other Job Roles Include:**

Case Progression Officer  
Child & Adolescent Therapist  
Child Protection Conference Chair  
  
Clinical Psychologist  
CSE SAFE Senior  
Foster Carer's Training Officer  
Fostering Independent Reviewing Officer  
Fostering Panel Advisor  
Marketing Officer  
Principal Casework Manager CWD  
Project Manager  
QA Coordinator  
QA Practitioner  
Fostering Recruitment Officer  
SAFE Young Person Worker  
Short Breaks Coordinator  
Specialist Housing PA  
Systemic Family Therapist



# WORKFORCE STRATEGY - OUR AMBITIONS FOR OUR PEOPLE 2024/28

HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL'S  
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S DIRECTORATE



# A MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTORATE LEADERSHIP TEAM

Herefordshire is a lovely place to live and to work and our children's services are ambitious and hardworking, determined to be judged good and outstanding in the future, confident that in everything we do we make a positive difference in children's lives. Our workforce are a vital part of our improvement journey and we encourage each of our colleagues to have a genuine impact and to help improve services and protect the children and young people in our county.

Building an ethos of working successfully together with families, partners and our workforce has been key to our improvement journey so far, as well as being able to step back and listen to the experiences and concerns of families and our colleagues.

As a leadership team we are constantly learning from the people we work with, and one thing we've learnt from recent experience is to never stop listening and to never stop having those conversations – that way, we remain connected to their experiences.

Herefordshire's improvement plan is testament to that. It has been prepared with input from our workforce, children, young people, parents and carers, and multi-agency and cross-sector partners, and responds to improvement areas identified by the service and by Ofsted.

Having a workforce that is energised, enthused and solution focussed to take on these challenges is a major contributing factor to our improvement journey.

It is important as the Leadership Team for Children and Young People for Herefordshire we set out our ambitions for our workforce and what each and every one of you can expect working for our directorate.

We are excited and confident about our future and the developments and opportunities set out in this document. We have already made progress and this has been evidenced through conversations with you, our workforce and through the feedback received from Ofsted monitoring visits. We still have a lot to do and a long journey ahead of us and by implementing our ambitions will enable you to feel you contribute and are fulfilled in your roles whilst ultimately delivering a great service to children, young people and their families.

# INTRODUCTION

This document describes our ambitions for our People 2024 - 2028 that will support the Children's Services Improvement Plans and supporting all colleagues to be the best they can be. This is where we aim to be in 2028 and will be accompanied by a Workforce Improvement plan that is refreshed periodically but monitored through our Workforce Delivery Board and overall Improvement Board together with our improvement partner Leeds City Council.

This strategy is specific for the Children and Young People Directorate and is aligned to the Councils Corporate Workforce Strategy 2024-2028 and corporate plan.

Through you, our workforce, we aim to develop our Children's and Young People's Services to consistently good over the next 4 years.

This document is not just for frontline staff, is applicable to all members of the Children and Young People's workforce.

We can only achieve our goals through a skilled, engaged and flexible workforce who can respond quickly and positively to changing demands. We are committed to providing you with all the support and development that you need and supporting a workplace culture that is compassionate, respectful and positive for everyone.

By delivering these ambitions together, we can ensure that our children and young people receive the best possible services from us and that we are seen to be a great employer and a successful organisation.



# OUR SUCCESS IS THROUGH OUR WORKFORCE

As part of our improvement journey and transformation we need to consider:

- Where we need to strengthen our workforce
- What skills shortages we are facing
- The types of knowledge and skills we will need now, and in the future
- How we recruit and retain the best workforce against a backdrop of national challenges in recruitment and retention
- What the local challenges are, e.g. demand for services, geography etc.
- What are or might be the nationally challenges we face e.g. Ofsted judgements, commissioners report, recruitment and retention of key roles and skills

Our workforce is not just restricted to those directly employed, it should and does include those who work with us through temporary arrangements, corporate support and partnerships who will contribute greatly to our success together with our permanent workforce.

Our children and young people deserve the best possible service whenever they need it.



# SUPPORTING YOU TO BE THE BEST YOU CAN BE

We want you to feel engaged with us, skilled enough to do your job well and flexible and responsive to change.

Effective and easy to use systems and processes within a culture of equality, diversity and inclusion will support all parts so our approach will positively impact on our effectiveness as an organisation, with your help, we aim to:

- Ensure that there is clarity about our ways of working, leadership, your role and what is expected of you
- Develop a learning culture where every individual knows and takes their responsibilities seriously and clearly understands the consequences of non-delivery
- Have clear and meaningful objectives that are cascaded through the organisation from senior leaders, in a clear and timely manner
- Learn from our mistakes, creating great solutions, and sharing our experiences and knowledge to improve
- Minimise bureaucracy making it easier for you to support and help young people and families
- Communicate with you in an honest and timely way
- Develop channels for you to offer views and thoughts and get a solution focussed timely response
- Develop a safe, supportive, cohesive and positive culture where we all live and work by our values
- Make efficiency improvements that are based on reliable data and measure their success



# OUR VISION FOR YOU, OUR WORKFORCE



**01.**

We want you to feel fulfilled, fairly treated and valued, whatever role you undertake for us. We also want you to feel able to offer feedback and contribute to the development of service and of a great working environment.

**02.**

Great leaders and managers are fundamental in delivering these ambitions, we want to attract, develop and retain the best people, and we can only do that if they feel part of a team and know they make a positive contribution.

**03.**

Whether you have career ambitions or are content to remain in a job that you enjoy, we want you to feel part of a great organisation and be a motivated colleague.





# OUR VALUES

In addition to the corporate values adopted by the wider council (available on the Councils intranet pages) we have some service specific ones that we developed about how we will work with Herefordshire's Children, Young People, and Families.

**“DOING OUR VERY BEST FOR HEREFORDSHIRE'S CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE, AND THEIR FAMILIES” MEANS THAT:**

**WE WILL DO OUR VERY BEST TO MAKE SURE THAT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE GET THE RIGHT HELP AT THE RIGHT TIME**

**WE WILL KEEP OUR WORKING RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES AT THE HEART OF EVERYTHING WE DO**

**WE WILL WORK TOGETHER WITH FAMILIES' WIDER NETWORK OF SUPPORT AND OUR PARTNER AGENCIES**

**WE WILL WORK HARD TO HAVE POSITIVE ENDINGS WHEN WE MOVE ON**

**WE WILL KEEP A FOCUS ON MAKING A DIFFERENCE TO IMPROVING OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE.**

**WE WILL SUPPORT PARENTS AND CARERS TO MAKE SURE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ARE SAFE AT HOME IF AT ALL POSSIBLE, AND NURTURED BY OTHERS IF NOT**

**WE WILL MAKE SURE WE TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS AND NEEDS OF CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES**

**WE WILL KEEP WRITTEN INFORMATION ABOUT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN A WAY THAT RECOGNISES THAT THE INFORMATION BELONGS TO THEM AND WILL BEST ENABLE THEM TO FULLY UNDERSTAND THEIR JOURNEY**

**WE WILL CREATE A SUPPORTIVE WORKING CULTURE**

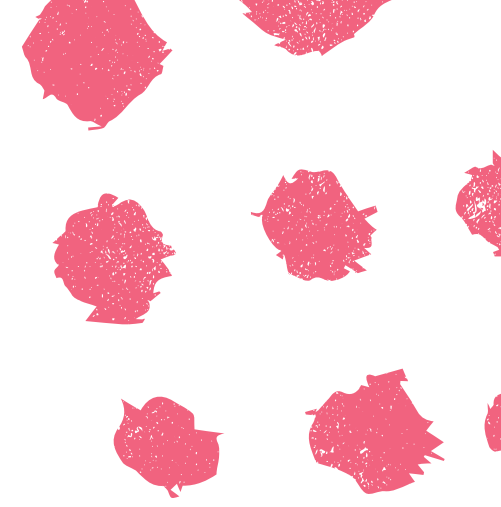


# AS LEADERS

We will have a one team ethos as leaders and through being connected as a team, listening to our workforce, children and families, being compassionate and competent leaders we will nurture trust, respect, and confidence by communicating clearly and treating people with respect and fairly.

Through collective leadership we will deliver this plan by developing a culture of leadership and management capability that is compassionate, quality focused, supportive and accountable.

To support our values, we will have career pathways in Children's Services that build on normal job descriptions to describe roles in more detail, including the positive behaviours we will see when the accountabilities are delivered well.



# OUR COMMITMENT TO EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION (ED&I)



This is at the heart of who we are and critical for us to embrace. The impact of positive ED&I can be directly linked to quality and a positive experiences for children, young people and families. This in turn leads to a good experience for you. This approach is equally applicable between managers and their teams, from colleague to colleague and from worker to families.

27

## We aim to:

- Have a culture that values and embraces diversity and inclusion in service delivery, learning and employment; we all need to be a part of that.
- Have a workforce that reflects the diversity in our communities.
- Have a workforce that is culturally competent and sensitive to the diverse needs of our children, young people and families.
- Recognise disability and mental health issues and respond appropriately.
- Have the behaviours and skills to effectively support individual needs.
- Appropriately and effectively challenge stigma, discrimination, and isolation.

## We will deliver this by:

- Making ED&I a core, mandatory learning module in every role.
- Using the annual performance discussion My Conversation to set realistic and ambitious objectives to improve all aspects of equality, diversity, and inclusion; how we behave, take responsibility and lead others.
- On a voluntary basis, encourage advocates across all operational services who can support the work of the Black and Asian and other workforce networks to develop a culture of inclusion, diversity, anti-discrimination and ultimately belonging.
- Continually review all learning materials to ensure they are fit for purpose and set learning objectives and outcomes.

# YOUR WELLBEING

## We will support your wellbeing by:

- Championing mental health first aider training to ensure managers and colleagues are equipped with the knowledge and tools to support you when you need it.
- Ensuring that you receive the health, safety and wellbeing training needed to keep you, your colleagues and the children, young people and families you work with safe.
- Having an Occupational Health scheme that can provide a helpful insight into longer term sickness absence so that we can work together to get you back to work.
- Encouraging you to talk to us if you're unhappy with work; we value you and how you are feeling.
- Providing an Employee Assistance Programme for you to access if you need someone to talk to about how you're feeling.
- Having a counselling service of Clinical Psychologists to support all colleagues who work directly with families in crisis.
- Making sure our managers and leaders are compassionate and connected to you.
- Having a robust and joined up approach to lone working to keep you safe.

## We will deliver this by:

- Welcome constructive feedback and encourage you to help us develop the service to improve workforce motivation and customer satisfaction.
- Be clear about standards of work, “what does ‘good’ look like?”
- Ensure that you have a voice; developing the current forums we will discuss how the service is running, our employment offer and what actions need to be taken to improve.
- Having a focus on retention to ensure we value our workforce
- Analysing exit and stay data to understand changes required
- Make sure that our policies and processes reflect our values and are streamlined to take out unnecessary workloads.

# A WORKFORCE THAT'S ENGAGED

Every part of this document is important but if we don't get engagement right, we cannot achieve it. Our sense of belonging, commitment, and enthusiasm for what we do and alignment to the organisation's visions and values will support excellent service delivery and continuous improvement. The more engaged you are, the better the outcomes for our children, young people and their families and for your own well-being. If we are all 'signed up' to our vision and values, we can better collaborate and work as one organisation.

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## Our aim is that you will all:

- Be proud to work for our Children's Services and be an advocate for the services we provide to our children and families and partner agencies.
- Embrace our values and live them day to day.
- Feel gratified and valued in your role and that your contribution is recognised by us and those you provide services for.
- Feel that you are treated fairly and have equal access to opportunities to develop and grow.
- Feel empowered to be part of positively shaping and developing our services to be good and then to outstanding.

## We will deliver this by:

- Setting a united direction of travel and an overarching improvement plan.
- Service Directors and their leadership teams will develop delivery plans that will be shared with all colleagues through regular forums such as the Staff Reference Group, Aiming High group and team meetings.
- Your managers will encourage you to contribute in your team meetings and during your one to one sessions.
- Objectives will be jointly set by you and your line manager. They will help you identify what they need to be; some will be directly related to service objectives and others to your personal development and career aspirations.
- We will have manager forums and all staff briefings to discuss the service, our improvement journey and provide opportunities for two-way communication and development opportunities.
- Having a fully developed communications strategy that staff can input in to.

# A WORKFORCE THAT'S AGILE AND ADAPTABLE

Our aim is to have a wide range of generalist and specialist skills across Children's Services so, through skills audits, we can understand all the expertise you bring to the organisation. We want you to be able to work together and with partners to create a flexible service that can provide the right support at the right time to the children and families you work with leading to positive outcomes for them.

## We will:

- Be transparent about all the work we do and why we are doing it.
- Develop collaborative partnerships to build trust and allow for better joint working.
- Continually review how we do things to make efficiencies in the way we work; cutting out unnecessary processes to help you, your colleagues and our children and families.
- Where appropriate, work towards having multi skilled staff that have transferable skills so we can work more flexibly to support services when they have peaks of work or in times of emergency.
- Work with our regional colleagues to develop a more responsive and cost-effective approach to the resourcing of high quality, temporary staff when required.
- Develop family friendly policies and flexible contracts.

## With a system(s) led approach we aim to:

- Have effective Human Resources Management systems which will enable you to see and amend your own personal details, as well as making holiday requests and seeing your learning records.
- Have easily accessible accurate management information through a dedicated data analyst in the service regarding establishment and budgets to enable managers to plan and monitor their resources and work collaboratively to address any issues.
- Have good, easy to use, intuitive technology and systems available for our workforce to help them reduce their reliance on manual processes.
- Work with our colleagues in the council to maximise the benefits of all our systems and technologies within the context of our service.

# A WORKFORCE THAT'S SKILLED

Having a workforce that is competent in their role in terms of knowledge, skills, and behaviours; the 'how' you do your role is as important as the 'what' you do. A workforce that learns from each other, shares best practice and has access to high quality learning and development opportunities.

Our aim is:

- To have an excellent training offer to deliver high quality development to you.
- To share knowledge and best practice across our services; helping each other to be the best we can be.
- For you all to be experts in your field, whatever role you undertake.
- To have a blended approach to learning so that you can learn individually or as a team.
- To nurture talent for the future and have a succession plan in place through career pathways, management and leadership development and apprenticeships.
- Learn from what we do; identifying what went well to do more of and what didn't go quite so well to learn from, understand and do differently next time.

**This means that:**

- We will have a well-defined, transparent, and efficient recruitment process to ensure we recruit the right people for our organisation, whether internal or external utilising safer recruitment principles.
- We will review why people leave us and, as appropriate, if there are themes, where we can make changes.
- We will invest in you through development and would like you to invest in us by being the best you can in your role.
- You will have access to learning opportunities to help you do your job well.
- We will use a range retention approaches to retain our workforce
- We will further develop career pathways across a variety of roles that are based around accountability, knowledge, skills and behaviours and not tasks.
- If you have ambition, we will work with you to identify career progression opportunities to increase your knowledge and skills for future roles.
- We will help you to identify opportunities to broaden your knowledge and skills.

# LEADERSHIP

## Our aim is:

- Managers and leaders will receive the development they need to meet the standards expected of them in Herefordshire Council and its Children's Service.
- Managers and leaders will role model the desired behaviours within the service
- Managers and leaders will take responsibility and accountability for showcasing and embracing a culture of one team where mistakes are used to learn from, complaints handled timely and professionally and success is celebrated

## This means that:

- We will develop great leaders and managers who communicate well and take the workforce with them.
- We will develop a coaching culture; equipping managers to be great coaches and encouraging everyone to use a coaching approach to giving feedback across our directorate.





# OUR PLAN - WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT



**Work volumes and our approach to work with children, young people and families** - we will set out our benchmark to achieve and maintain manageable workloads across roles in the directorate so colleagues have time to develop meaningful relationships that improve outcomes with children, young people, parents/carers and families/relevant others.

**Our Working Model** - promote the importance of relationships and restorative ways of working that acknowledge family strengths and resources, provide support to develop skills and build resilience.

**Management** - invest in attracting, developing and supporting effective line managers to provide clear management oversight and the necessary duty of care to the workforce to deliver safe, supportive and consistently good quality services

**Performance Management** - prioritise regular, reflective and good quality 1 to 1, My Conversation discussions and team meetings which consistently addresses professional discussions and focuses on the needs and priorities of the workforce and children and families.

**Career pathways** - to provide career opportunities to develop all roles within the services including dedicated microsite, our retention offer, career progression pathways, as well as supporting our 'rising stars' through succession planning, coaching and mentoring, shadowing, secondments, sector led initiatives.







# OUR PLAN - WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT

**Training, qualifications, learning & development** - for the Academy to showcase its offer to “grow our own“ into social work training and qualification (step up students, traditional students, Apprentices and our Return to Social Work programme). To provide continuing professional development to inspire practitioners and managers across the workforce to be the best they can be by offering a robust ASYE offer, learning partnerships with local universities, in-house/partnership and externally commissioned core and additional training/learning and development plus management and leadership opportunities (the Staff college BALI and Aspirant DCS/HOS programmes). To explore further career pathways and development opportunities for all other roles across the directorate.

**Leadership** - to have visible, approachable and high calibre leaders who capture the ‘hearts and minds’ of the workforce through honest, open and authentic communication and decision making to improve and transform services with/for children, young people and their families plus the workforce who support, protect and care for them.



**Our offer** - to have and enhance our package of reward and benefits in order to attract, retain and support all roles across the directorate and in particular those roles that are hard to recruit and retain. To benchmark our offer against other local authorities. Utilising flexible working arrangements such as a nine-day fortnight, part-time working and other flexible contract arrangements. Enhancing our salary sacrifice benefits. Reviewing other existing policies for welcome, retention, market forces supplements and relocation.





## AND FINALLY ...

With a one team approach across all the workforce in Children and Young People, any individual who works in our directorate to deliver or supports services that are safe, relationship based and restorative practice based for children, young people and their families are key to the success of our services.

You should be able to see the golden thread between your work, your development and support of leaders and colleagues which will ensure the delivery of great services which will lead to positive outcomes for all.





2022

# EMPLOYEE SURVEY

Headline Report

37



Children and Young People

 Herefordshire  
Council



# 1. Survey completion rate

**26%**

97  
responses  
in 2019

**44%**

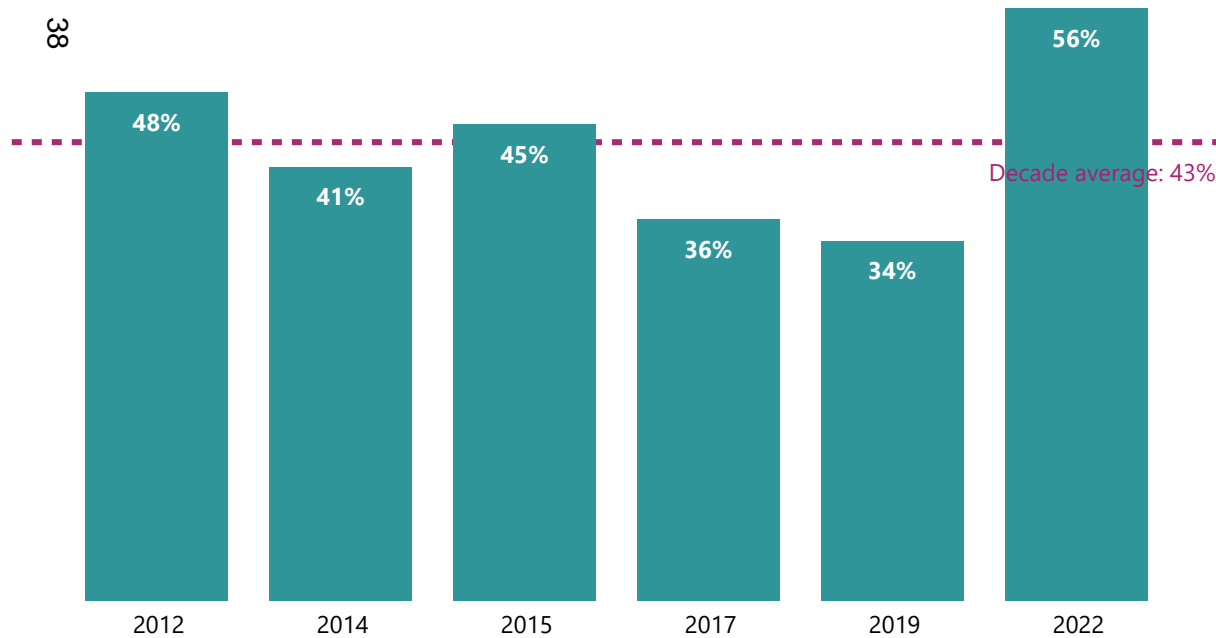
218  
responses  
in 2022



**68%**

on previous survey

Employee survey completion rate trend for previous decade  
(Whole council)



2022 % Response by Directorate





# 2. Employee survey headlines

**Employee Engagement score 3.53 out of 5**

## Things that are working well \*

**Top 5**

## Things that need improvement \*\*

39



\* Result based on the percentage of those who answered "Agree" or "Strongly agree"

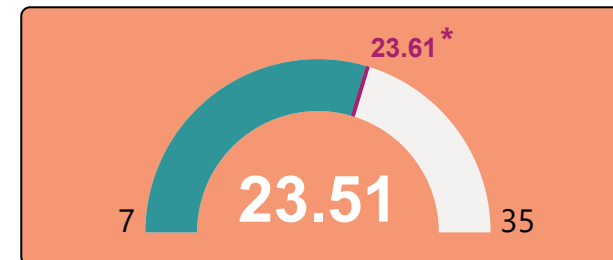
\*\* Result based on the percentage of those who answered "Disagree" or "Strongly disagree"

### My Conversation is an improvement over the previous PDP

● Agreement ● Neutral ● Disagreement



## SWEMWBS Wellbeing score



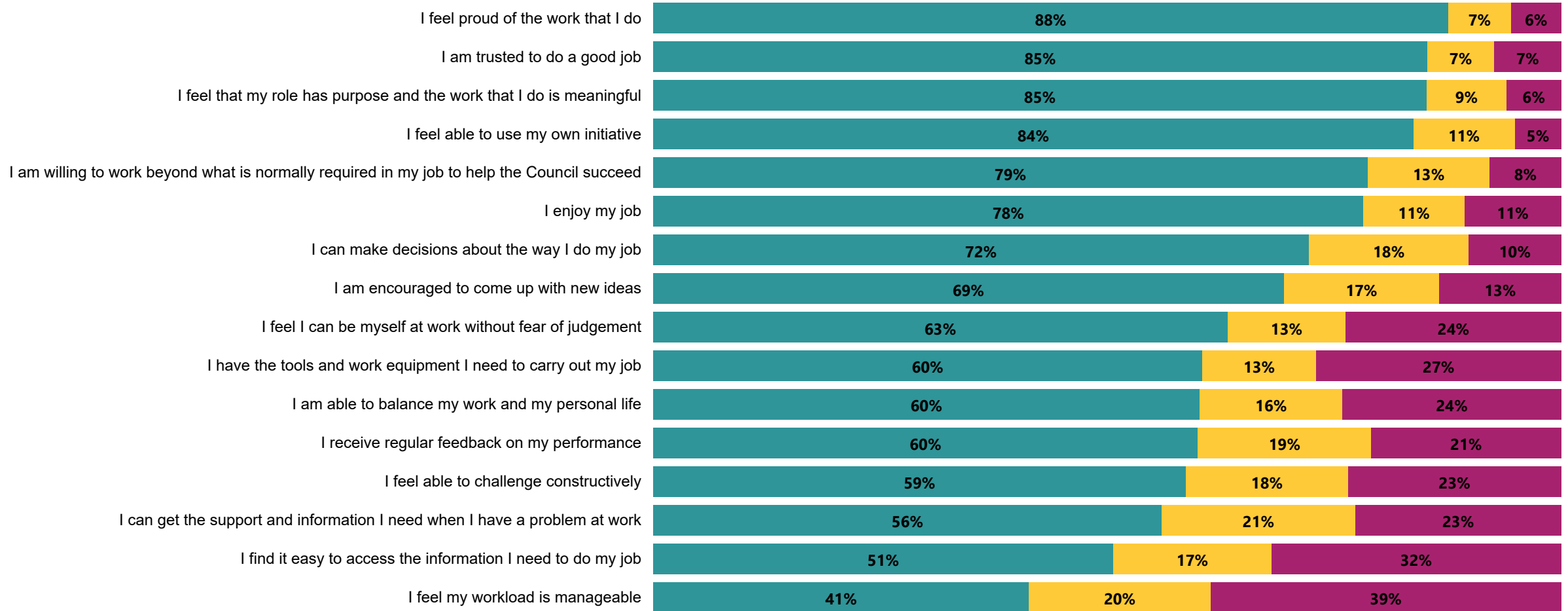
\* Target is the Mean of SWEMWBS Population Norms in Health Survey for England data 2011

# 3. You and your job



**Net Response** ● Agreement ● Neutral ● Disagreement

40



Figures are presented as Net Response aggregations, where 'Strongly agree' and 'Agree' become 'Agreement' and 'Strongly disagree' and 'Disagree' become 'Disagreement'. 'Neither disagree nor agree' becomes 'Neutral'. Results exclude any instance where the question was left blank.

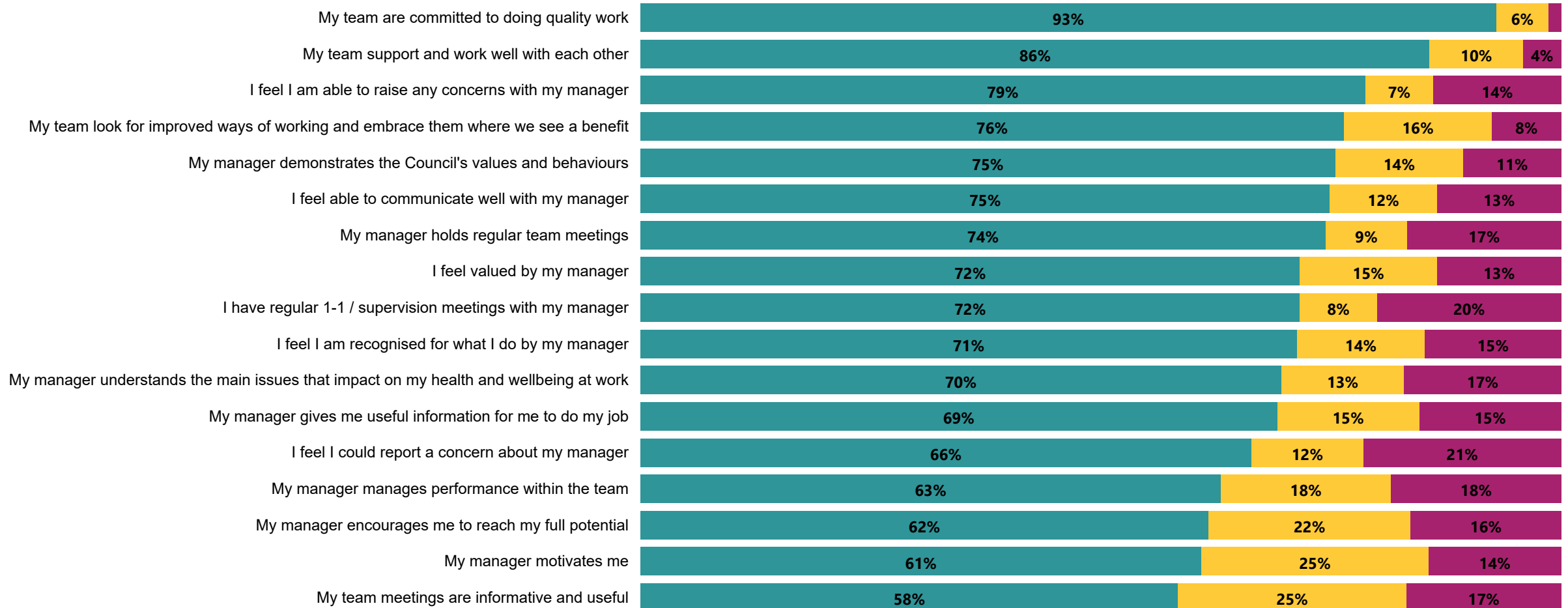


# 4. Your team and your line manager



**Net Response** ● Agreement ● Neutral ● Disagreement

41

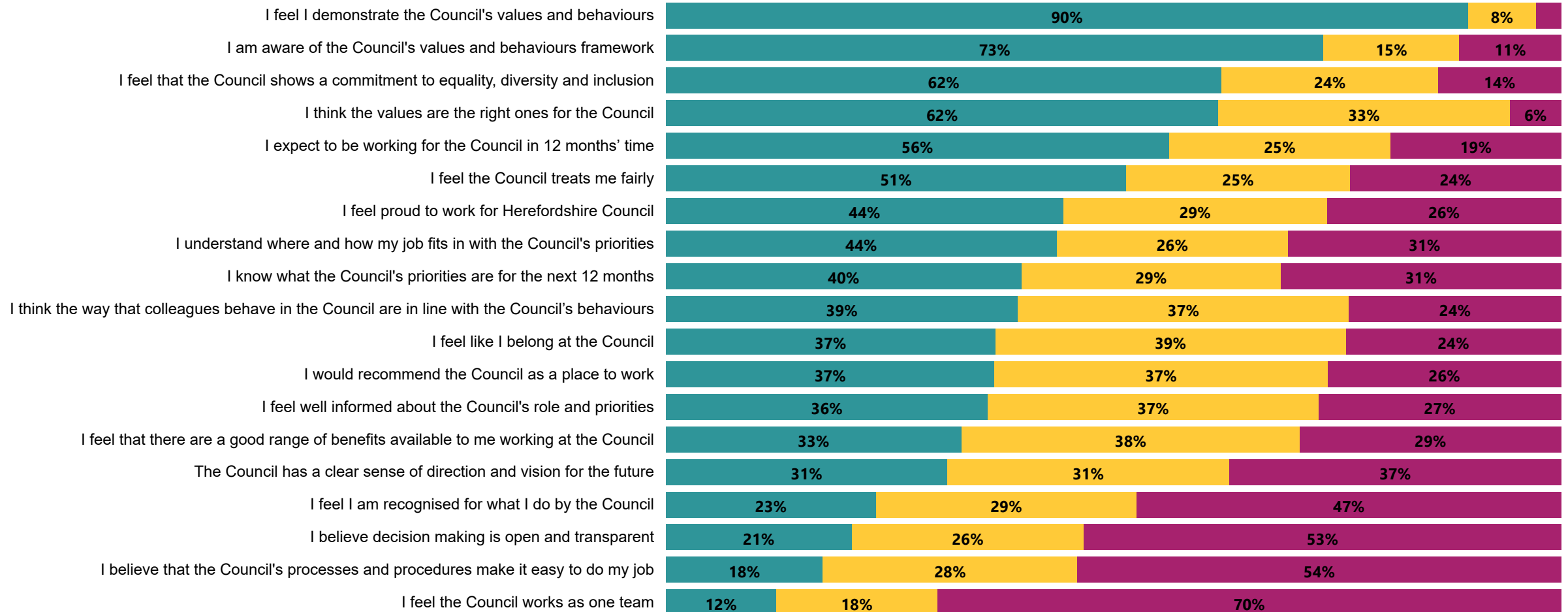


*Figures are presented as Net Response aggregations, where 'Strongly agree' and 'Agree' become 'Agreement' and 'Strongly disagree' and 'Disagree' become 'Disagreement'. 'Neither disagree nor agree' becomes 'Neutral'. Results exclude any instance where the question was left blank.*

# 5. Council culture



**Net Response** ● Agreement ● Neutral ● Disagreement

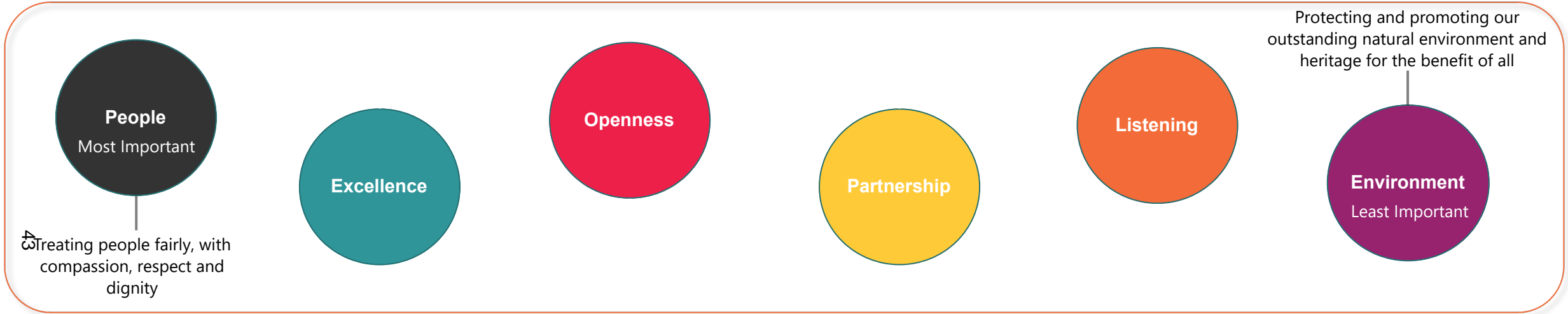


Figures are presented as Net Response aggregations, where 'Strongly agree' and 'Agree' become 'Agreement' and 'Strongly disagree' and 'Disagree' become 'Disagreement'. 'Neither disagree nor agree' becomes 'Neutral'. Results exclude any instance where the question was left blank.

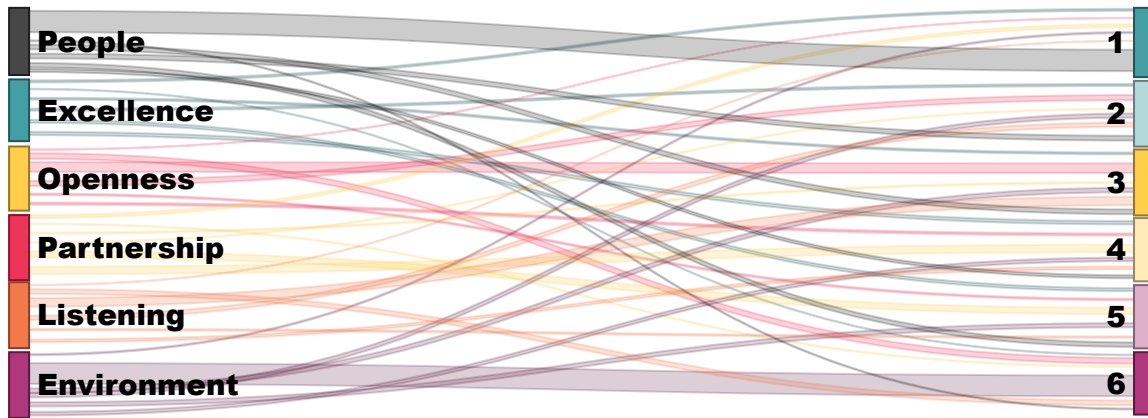
# 6. PEOPLE values



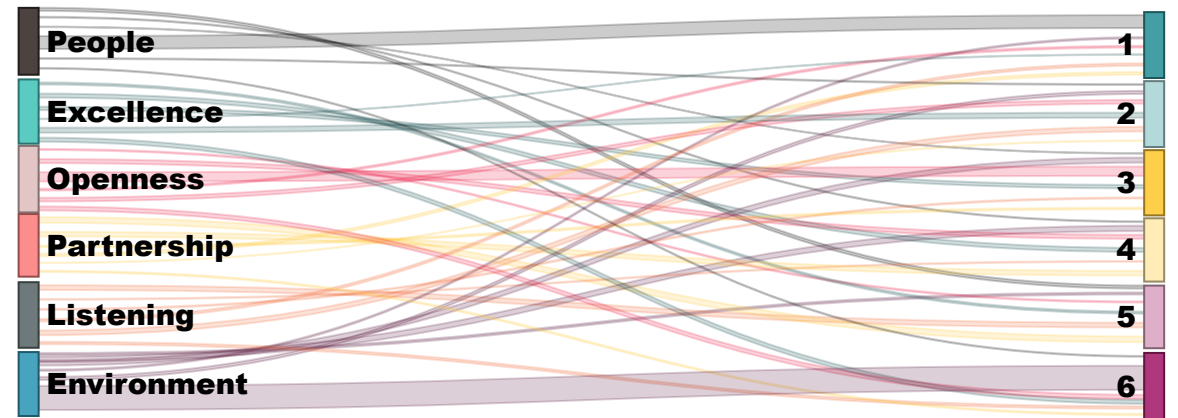
## Your most important and least important PEOPLE values



### Your Values



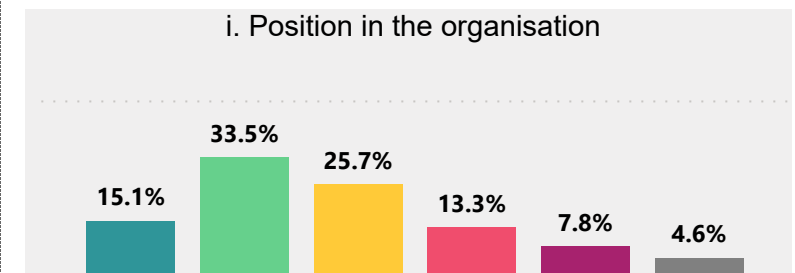
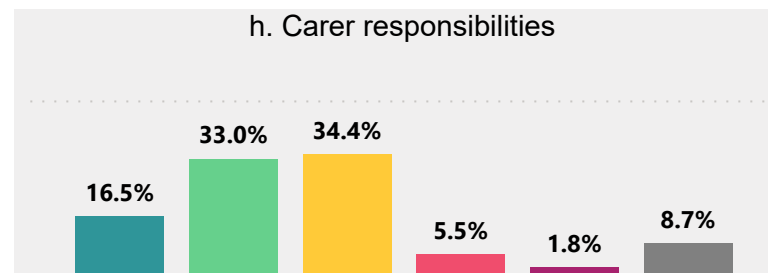
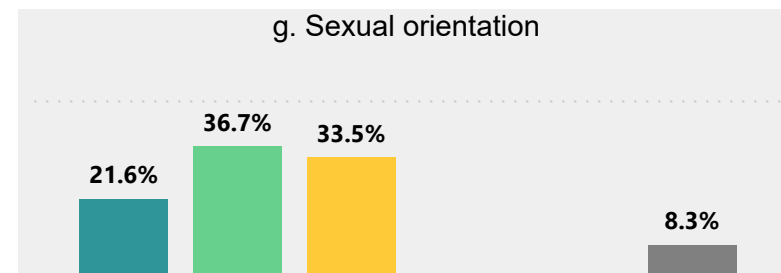
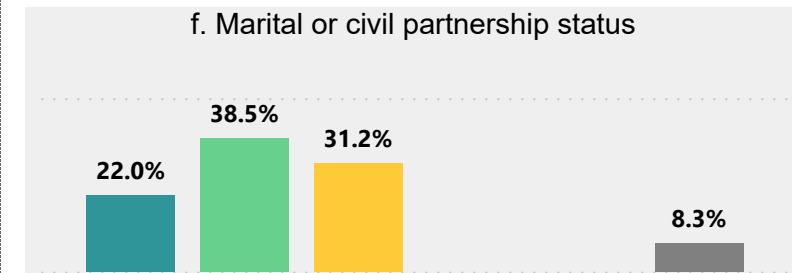
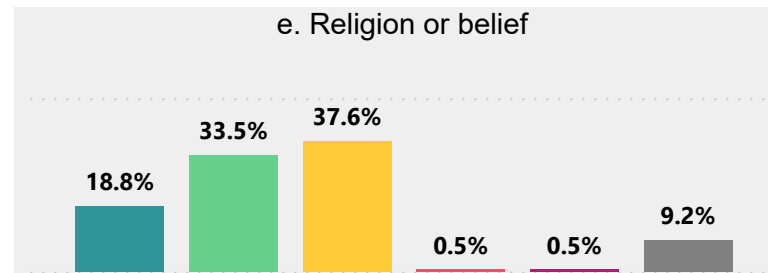
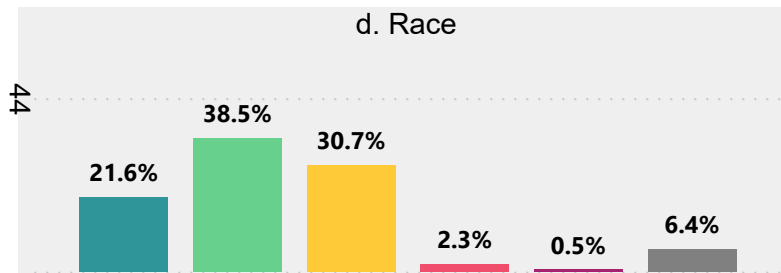
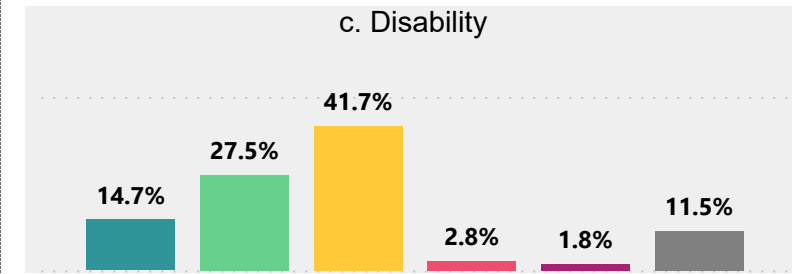
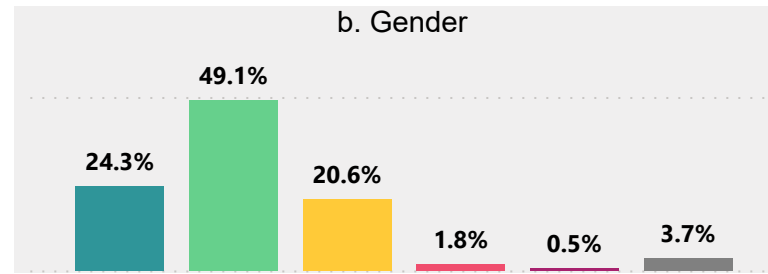
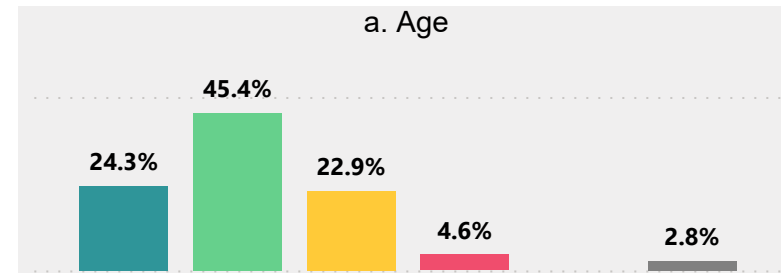
### Values demonstrated by your line manager



Rank is 1 - 6 where 1 is the most important and 6 the least important. Responses that were blank have been excluded.

The thickness of the connecting line shows the proportionality between Value and rank, i.e. the thicker the line the more staff connected the Value to the associated rank.

# 7. Treated fairly by characteristic



Strongly agree    Agree    Neither disagree nor agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    No Response

Strongly agree    Agree    Neither disagree nor agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    No Response

Strongly agree    Agree    Neither disagree nor agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    No Response

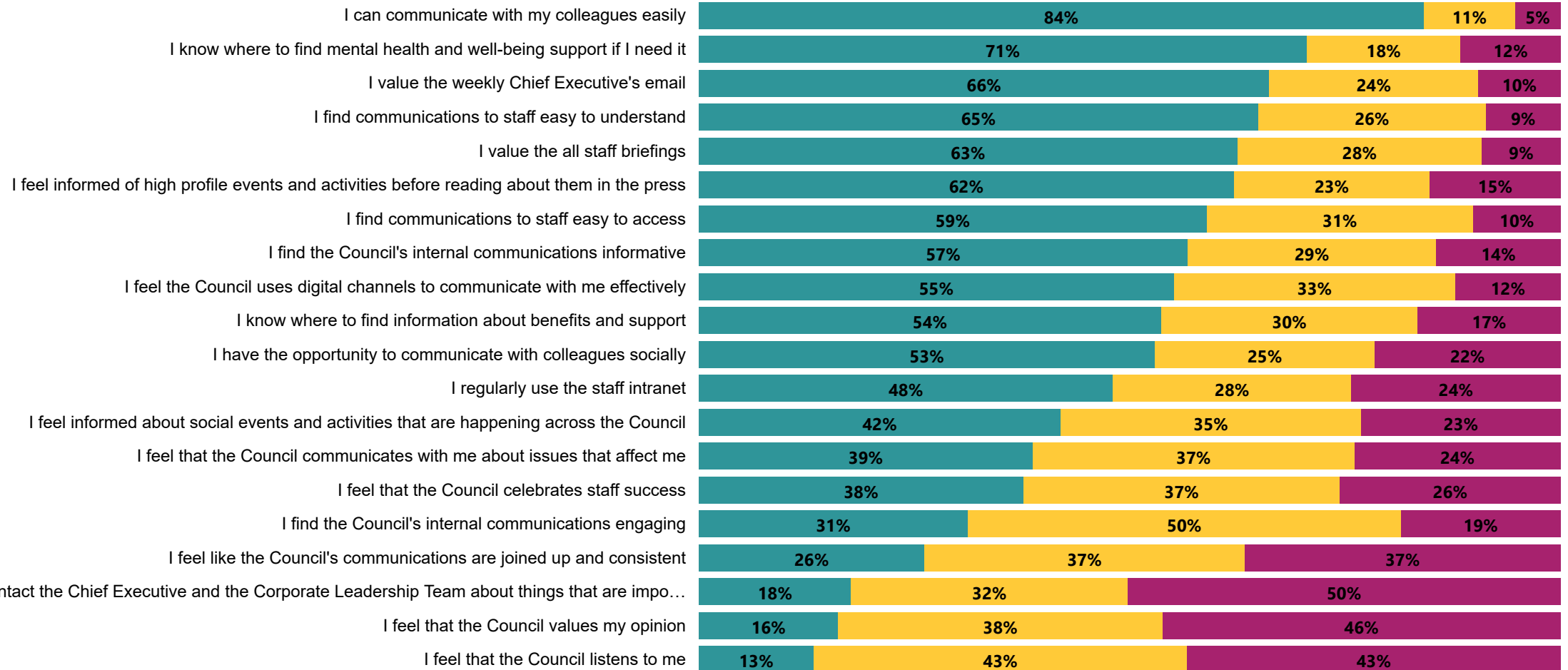
44

# 8. Information and communication



45

**Net Response** ● Agreement ● Neutral ● Disagreement



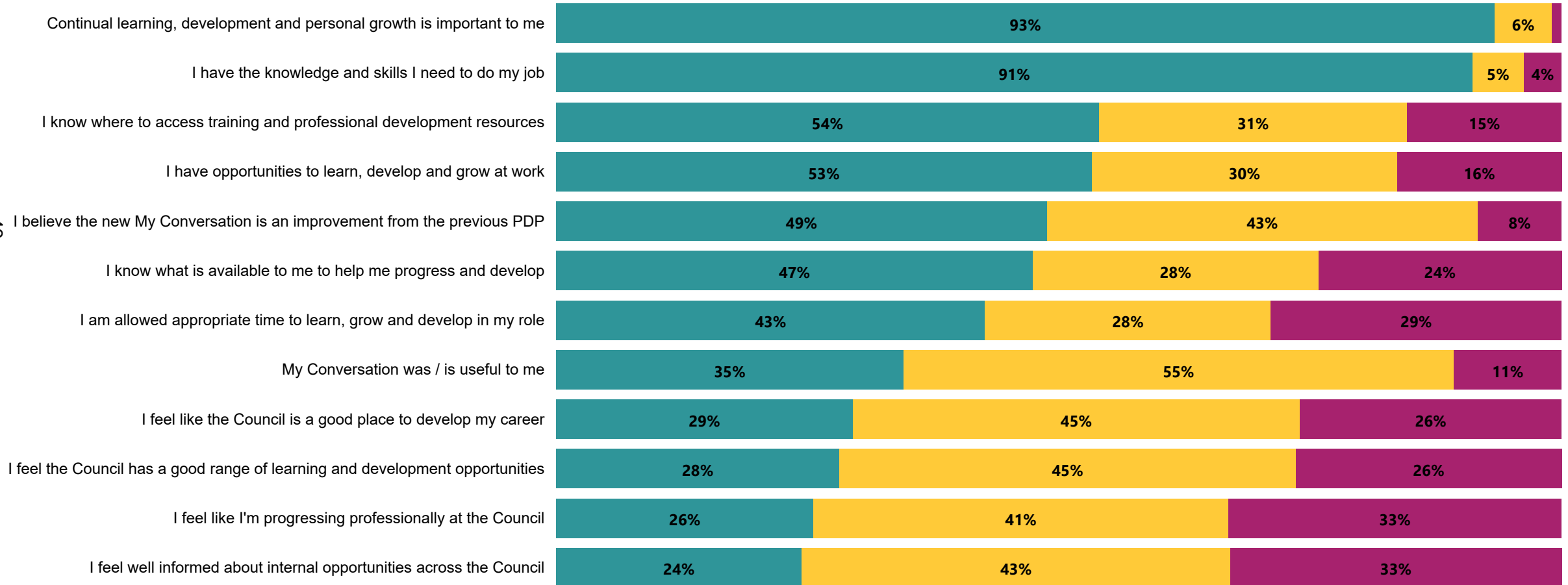
Figures are presented as Net Response aggregations, where 'Strongly agree' and 'Agree' become 'Agreement' and 'Strongly disagree' and 'Disagree' become 'Disagreement'. 'Neither disagree nor agree' becomes 'Neutral'. Results exclude any instance where the question was left blank.

# 9. Your learning, career and development



46

**Net Response** ● Agreement ● Neutral ● Disagreement



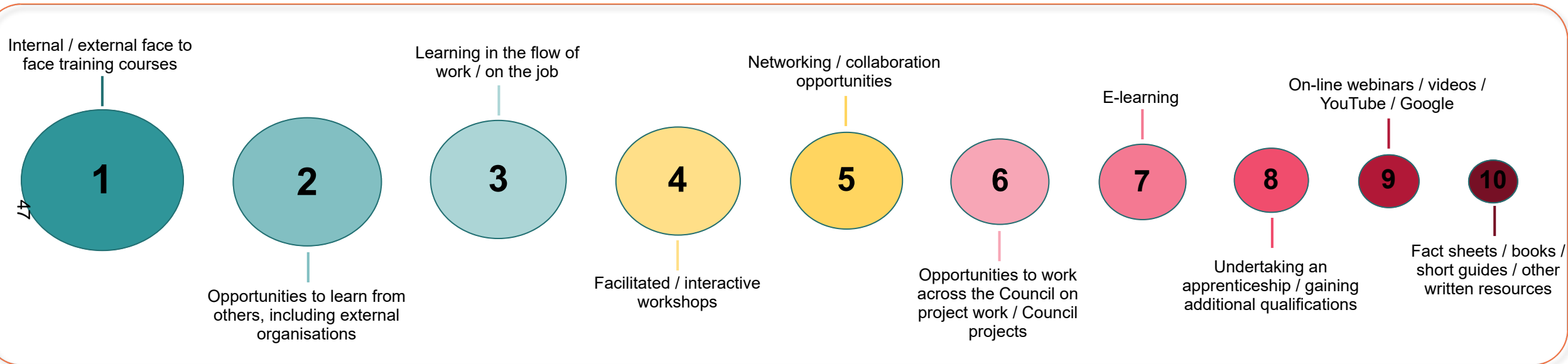
Figures are presented as Net Response aggregations, where 'Strongly agree' and 'Agree' become 'Agreement' and 'Strongly disagree' and 'Disagree' become 'Disagreement'. 'Neither disagree nor agree' becomes 'Neutral'. Results exclude any instance where the question was left blank.

# 10. Preferred learning type and areas of development

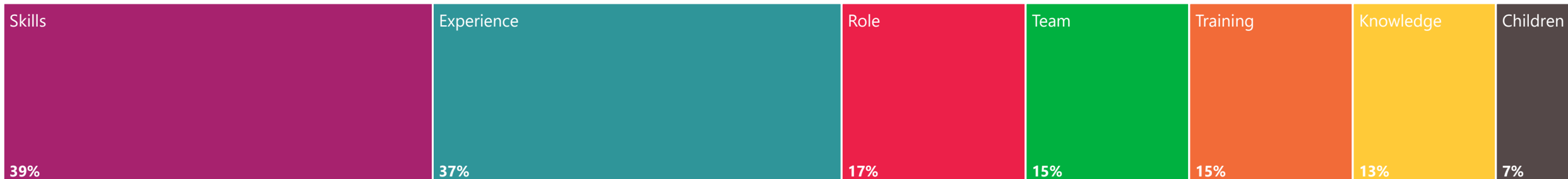


## Learning and Development preference

from 1 (most preferred) to 10 (least preferred)



## Areas of development for next 12 months (by % of staff who mention area)



Further analysis to be undertaken on the dataset

# 11. My Conversation



**72%**

of staff who responded to the Employee Survey were aware of the new My Conversation framework

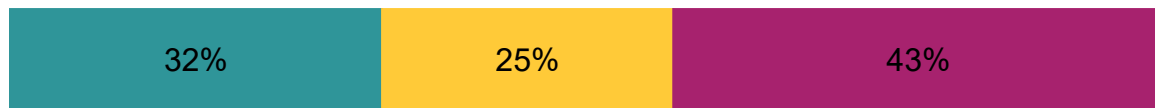
My Conversation is an improvement over the previous PDP

● Agreement ● Neutral ● Disagreement

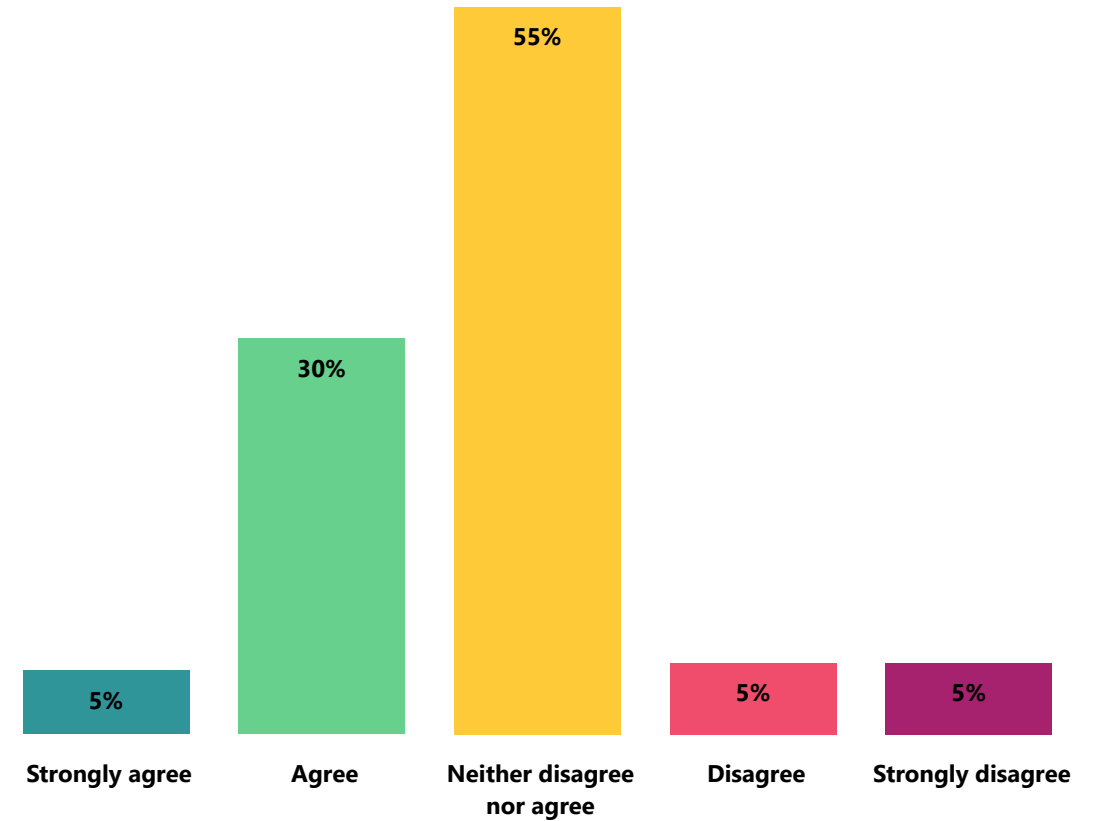


Had a 2022 My Conversation with their line manager

● Yes ● Planned ● No



My Conversation was useful to me



% of staff responses



# 12. Your health and wellbeing



The questions in this section were from the the nationally benchmarked Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (SWEMWBS). This scale enables the monitoring of mental wellbeing by the calculation of a wellbeing score from the combined answers to 7 statements about feelings and thoughts.

**217**

responses  
(4 or more questions)

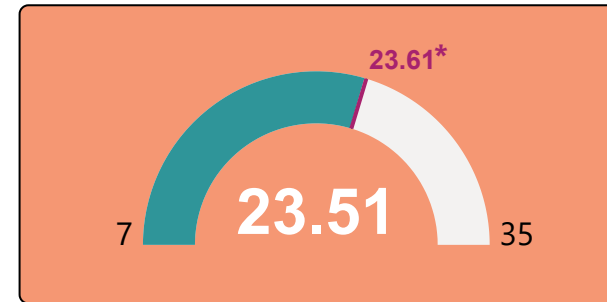
**100%**

answer rate

## Emergent Themes

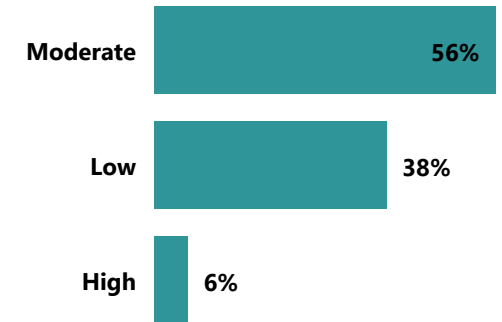
- 1 Review of pay, mileage, car parking and working from home costs
- 2 More benefits and development opportunities
- 3 Improved line manager support and encouragement
- 4 Positive feedback on what's working well
- 5 Cultural, process and policy improvements
- 6 Concerns about capacity and workload
- 7 Flexible futures opportunities for team to work together and move to different ways of working
- 8 Flexible working and work-life balance
- 9 Workforce engagement, listening, appreciation and recognition
- 10 Resources, digital and system improvement

## SWEMWBS Wellbeing score



\* Target is the Mean of SWEMWBS Population Norms in Health Survey for England data 2011

## Level of Wellbeing



## Wellbeing Wordcloud



Further analysis to be undertaken on the dataset

## What more can we do

"To be consistent in what is said and done."

"I have had nothing but positivity from the council to support my wellbeing. This includes opportunity to develop my career, support to achieve, support with flexibility surrounding Child Care and address family sickness/loss."

"Just regular meetings with managers."

"When we tell managers that we have too much work on we are listened to. When we state we feel under pressure we mean it!"

"I think you provide a good range of resources."

"I think managers need to be ensuring staff members are ok. Some of the time there are things going on at home that managers don't take the time to understand and this can make staff feel not valued."

# 13. The Spirit of Herefordshire, a place to thrive



19%

of staff are aware of  
The Spirit of  
Herefordshire

19%

of staff understand  
what this means

## Top 10 Interpretations of The Spirit of Herefordshire

50

1. Community - a sense of "togetherness"

2. A great place to live, work and visit

3. Pride in the County - it's natural environment and landscape, it's vibrant towns and rich heritage

4. Being proud to work for Herefordshire Council - passionate and committed workforce who want the best for Herefordshire

5. One Council - working together in a professional, inclusive and friendly environment to achieve the same goals

6. Council culture - a sense of belonging to a caring and inclusive employer including the way we do things

7. A great employer - a place where you can bring yourself to work and are supported, enabled, empowered in doing your job to achieve your potential

8. Thriving economy - economic and social growth where people living, working and visiting are enjoying and contributing to all that Herefordshire has to offer

9. The love of being from and living in Herefordshire

10. Progression and future focused - for the Council and the County

## Employee quotes

*"A forward-looking, progressive county rich in biodiversity, that values its whole community - human and beyond"*

*"Being proud of Hereford and working hard for everyone who lives here or visits here"*

*"Creating an environment where people choose to stay, they see career progression, they feel valued and can work flexibly"*

*"Hereford as a place of opportunity, culture, inclusivity and beautiful countryside"*

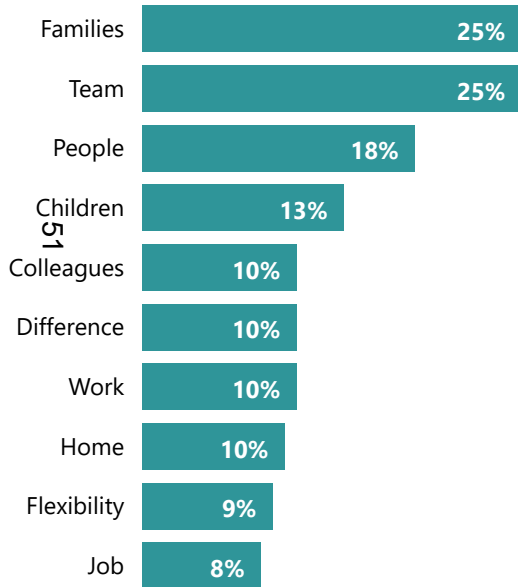
*"It means to explore and bring out the best of what we have available in Herefordshire in order to support our community and be a fantastic place to live and work"*

# 14. Working for the council

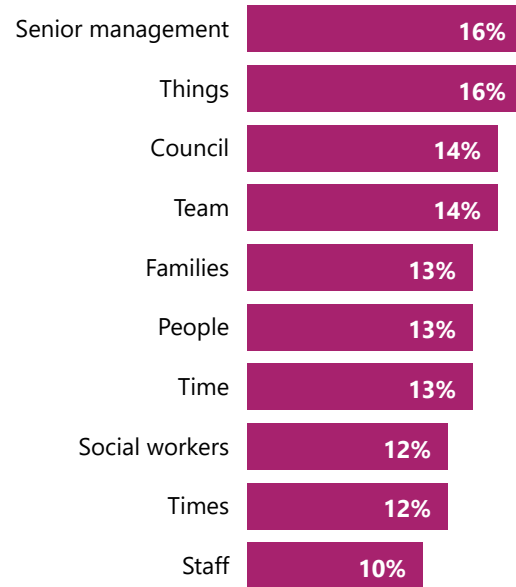


## How you feel about working for the Council (Top 10 Themes by % staff who mentioned the theme)

Most enjoy



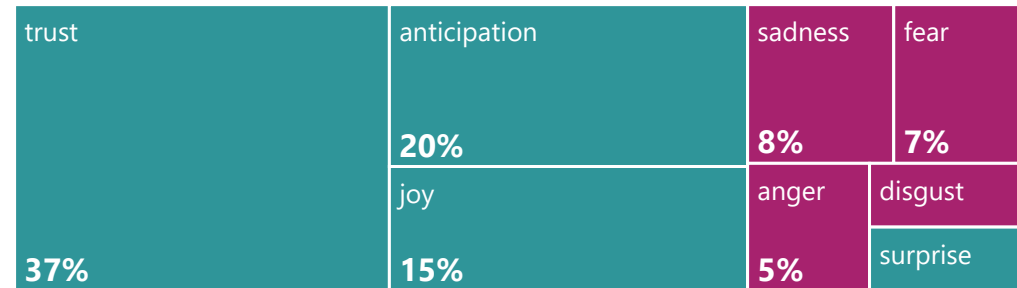
Least enjoy



## Working for the Council is...



## Working for the council word-emotion association



Association of words with eight emotions

(anger, fear, anticipation, trust, surprise, sadness, joy, and disgust)

## What you enjoy

"I enjoy being part of a strong team, who support each other, and who make a difference to the lives of families."

"I'm trusted to do my role and allowed to get on with it."

"Flexible working and the opportunity to work from home."

"The face to face work, the challenge this brings and privilege to be in a position to support the public."

## What you least enjoy

"I don't like that as a new starter trying to find out how to do things which longer serving staff find simple."

"In reality, the council is very segregated and there is very little transparency and understanding between departments."

"Decisions being made without the opinions of those who are doing the work."

"Feeling unappreciated for the job that I do and not feeling as though we matter at the current time due to other ongoing issues that are being improved."

# 15. Service area and other response rates



## Children and Young People

Service Area	No. of Staff	No. of Responses	% Respondents
Education, Skills and Learning	99	55	56%
Safeguarding and Family Support	150	146	97%
Safeguarding, Quality Assurance and Improvement	246	9	4%
Unknown	0	8	0%

## Community Wellbeing

Service Area	No. of Staff	No. of Responses	% Respondents

## Economy and Environment

Service Area	No. of Staff	No. of Responses	% Respondents

## Corporate Services

Service Area	No. of Staff	No. of Responses	% Respondents

## Contract Type

Contract	No. of Responses	% Respondents
Agency / Locum worker	12	1%
Fixed Term Contract	15	2%
No Response	5	1%
Permanent	185	21%
Temporary Contract	1	0%

% Line Managers who completed survey

**16%**