Employee wellbeing survey June 2020

Corporate survey results

Introduction

Welcome to the results report for the 2020 staff wellbeing survey. We would like to say a big thank you to every member of staff who took the time to tell us about their experiences and challenges during this unprecedented time of COVID-19 outbreak.

This survey was carried out in response to the global pandemic which required the council to make quick decisions about ways that we work, including changing work locations, supplying equipment and following government advice to protect and support our workforce. We understand this may have had an impact on wellbeing, so it is important for us as an organisation to understand what we can do to support staff. The results of this survey will be a key source for measuring how we can support wellbeing and what areas we should focus on, as well as informing the decisions which will define what our 'new normal' will look like.

- ✓ The first section summarises responses including response rate, respondent type and the percentage of employees who are either working from home or in different locations.
- ✓ The second section gives a detailed breakdown of data using infographics to represent responses around aspects such as challenges to working from home, how well employees understand what is expected in their role and the impact the effects of COVID-19 have had on wellbeing.
- ✓ The third section shows a summary of the key themes identified through staff responses and comments captured in the survey.

Survey Overview

The total number of responses across the council was 2,726, representing around 60% of the workforce. This scale of response is similar to that of the 2018 employee engagement survey, validating the results and providing a significant indication of staff wellbeing during these challenging times.
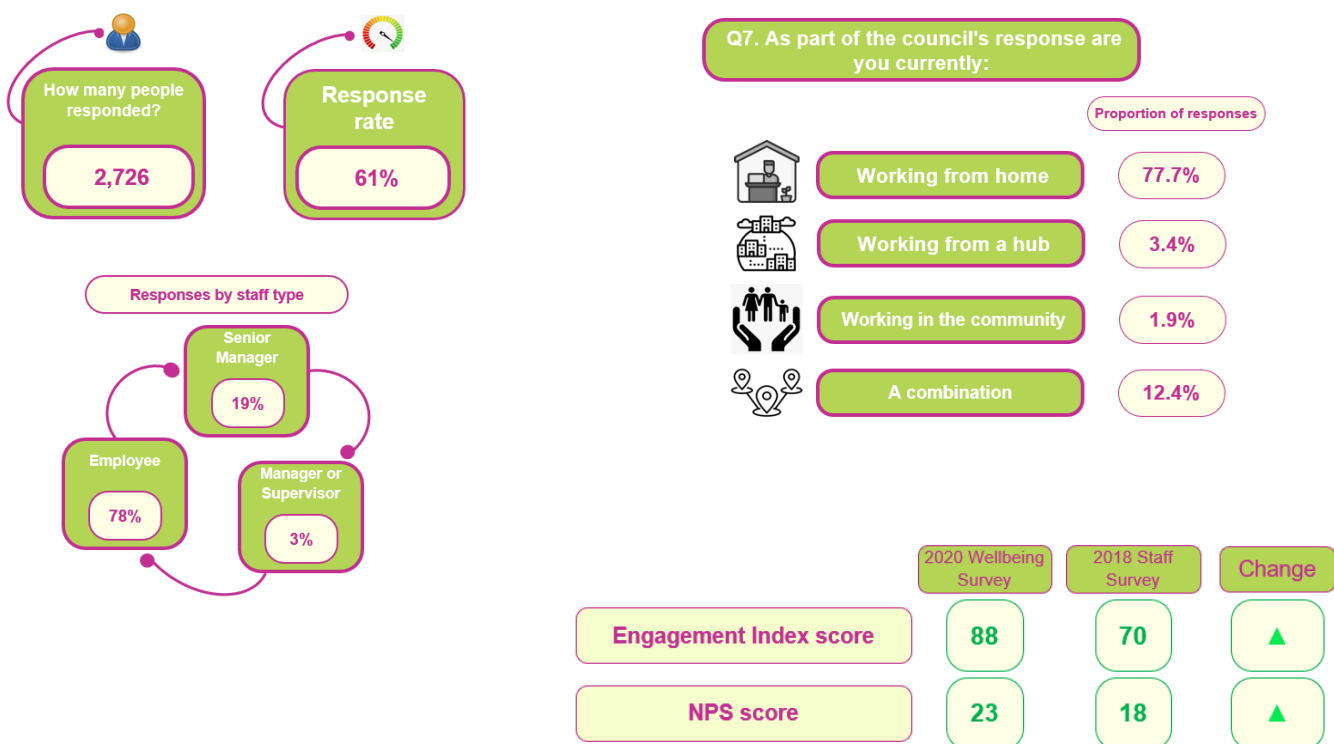
The council's response to these challenges has seen a significant and rapid shift in our usual ways of working. For the majority of staff this shift has resulted in a change of workplace, with the survey results showing that 77.7% of respondents are now working from home. The experience of employees in adapting to this major change to working arrangements has varied, with around a third of staff corporately

indicating they had 'no significant challenges' to working from home; however, this process has not been without challenge for other staff, with social isolation, distractions in the home and lack of equipment being the major areas of concern.

It is anticipated that significant levels of home working are likely to stay in place for some time for many employees. It is therefore important that we develop an awareness of how this may affect the ongoing wellbeing of staff. Several factors may influence this, including the effects of the pandemic on mental and physical health, feeling part of the organisation and the degree to which employees feel they can remain effective in their roles under the current circumstances.

Results – summary for Wiltshire Council

The first section of results below summarises the responses received from staff, including a breakdown of responses by respondent type, current working location and other factors including engagement index score and net promoter score (NPS). The survey results show that the engagement index score has significantly increased from the 2018 employee engagement survey from 70 to 88, with nearly all service areas improving on their previous score.

How many people responded?

2,726

Response rate

61%

Responses by staff type

Senior Manager: 19%

Employee: 78%

Manager or Supervisor: 3%

Q7. As part of the council's response are you currently:

Proportion of responses

	Proportion of responses
Working from home	77.7%
Working from a hub	3.4%
Working in the community	1.9%
A combination	12.4%

	2020 Wellbeing Survey	2018 Staff Survey	Change
Engagement Index score	88	70	▲
NPS score	23	18	▲

Important notes:

✓ Staff engagement figures and Index are based on responses to six control questions in the survey.

✓ The Engagement Index figure is based on positive responses to the control questions; the average of these responses is calculated to give your service engagement index.

✓ NPS score shows the net difference between whether staff would recommend (promoters) or deter others (detractors) from working for Wiltshire Council. The scale for this runs from -100 (all detractors) to +100 (all promoters), therefore any score greater than 0 means there are more promoters than detractors.

Results – Wellbeing

The survey also gave staff an opportunity to tell us how they were feeling around the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, how we could support them more effectively to continue to work under their new working arrangements and identify any work-related concerns arising from the current situation. The detailed results in the section below use infographics to show how staff responded to these questions and will help us to easily identify any areas which require further attention.

Q10. 3 biggest challenges to working at home?

Number of responses

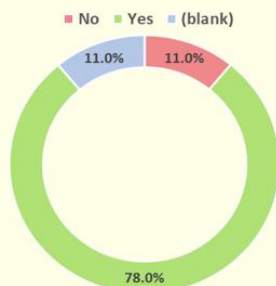| Challenge	Number of responses
1. Social Isolation	706
2. Distractions in the home	577
3. Lack of a physical workspace	552

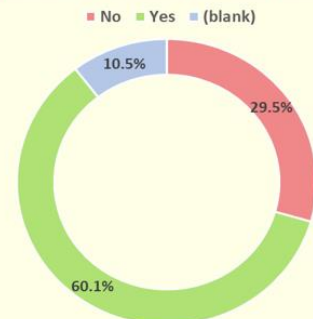**However overriding response was 'no significant challenges' (831 responses)**

Q8. Do you have all the equipment you need to be able to work from home effectively?

No Yes (blank)

- 11.0% (blank)
- 11.0% No
- 78.0% Yes

Q9. Do you have a dedicated workspace at home?

No Yes (blank)

- 10.5% (blank)
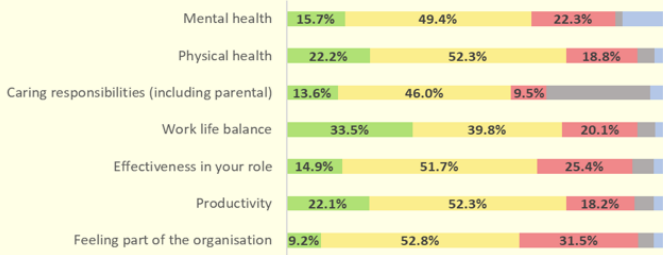- 29.5% No
- 60.1% Yes

When asked about working from home, 30% of staff said they had no significant challenges in doing so. This shows that many staff can carry out their job role from a remote location successfully. However, significant numbers did identify that their three biggest challenges to working from home were social isolation, distractions at home and lack of physical workspace. These issues are being closely monitored, and actions will be identified to help reduce the negative impact they have on wellbeing.

Important notes:

✓ Free text responses have been reviewed and categorised into key themes or areas; the word clouds below provide a powerful view of what themes are most important to our staff, based on their own direct feedback. In these word clouds, the larger the word the more times that theme was referenced in the comments.

Q11. Should working from home continue for you, what would the implications be for your:

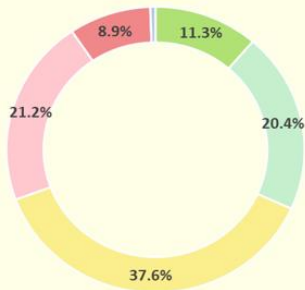Legend: ■ Positive ■ No change ■ Negative ■ N/A ■ (blank)

Category	Positive	No change	Negative
Mental health	15.7%	49.4%	22.3%
Physical health	22.2%	52.3%	18.8%
Caring responsibilities (including parental)	13.6%	46.0%	9.5%
Work life balance	33.5%	39.8%	20.1%
Effectiveness in your role	14.9%	51.7%	25.4%
Productivity	22.1%	52.3%	18.2%
Feeling part of the organisation	9.2%	52.8%	31.5%

Q12. What steps could we take to help you work more effectively from home?

Work/life balance
Nothing
Workload
Future Clarity
Systems & Equipment
Training & Guidance   Finances
Return to the office
Leadership
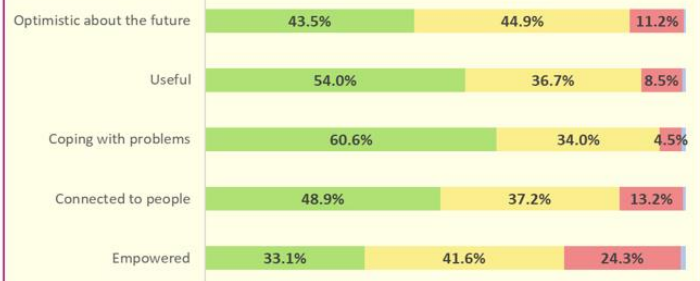Communications
Wellbeing
Childcare

Q14. How worried are you about the impact of coronavirus on you personally? (where 1 is not worried and 5 is very worried)
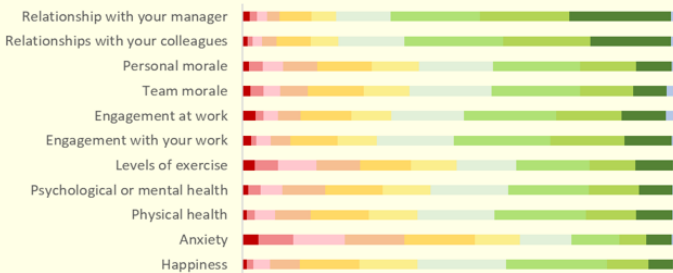
Legend: ■ 1 ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5 ■ (blank)

- 11.3%
- 20.4%
- 37.6%
- 21.2%
- 8.9%

Q15. How are you feeling?

Legend: ■ Positive ■ Neutral ■ Negative ■ (blank)

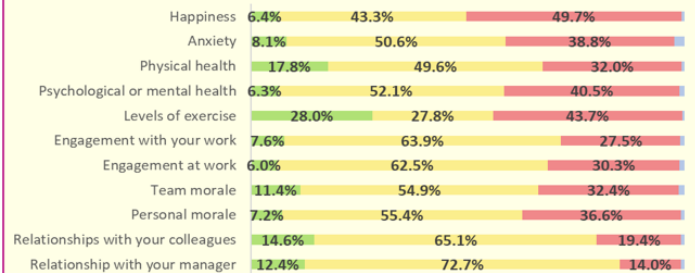| Category	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Optimistic about the future	43.5%	44.9%	11.2%
Useful	54.0%	36.7%	8.5%
Coping with problems	60.6%	34.0%	4.5%
Connected to people	48.9%	37.2%	13.2%
Empowered	33.1%	41.6%	24.3%

Q16. How would you rate your levels of the following, where 10 is good and 1 is not good:

Legend: ■ 1 ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5 ■ 6 ■ 7 ■ 8 ■ 9 ■ 10 ■ (blank)

- Relationship with your manager
- Relationships with your colleagues
- Personal morale
- Team morale
- Engagement at work
- Engagement with your work
- Levels of exercise
- Psychological or mental health
- Physical health
- Anxiety
- Happiness

Q17. Compared to the previous three months, what effect has the COVID-19 situation had on your:

Legend: ■ Improved ■ Not changed ■ Reduced ■ (blank)

Category	Improved	Not changed	Reduced
Happiness	6.4%	43.3%	49.7%
Anxiety	8.1%	50.6%	38.8%
Physical health	17.8%	49.6%	32.0%
Psychological or mental health	6.3%	52.1%	40.5%
Levels of exercise	28.0%	27.8%	43.7%
Engagement with your work	7.6%	63.9%	27.5%
Engagement at work	6.0%	62.5%	30.3%
Team morale	11.4%	54.9%	32.4%
Personal morale	7.2%	55.4%	36.6%
Relationships with your colleagues	14.6%	65.1%	19.4%
Relationship with your manager	12.4%	72.7%	14.0%

Q18. What is your single greatest work-related concern right now?

Wellbeing/Isolation
Budget & Finances
Training & Development
Systems & Equipment
Engagment
Leadership & Management   Childcare
Job Security
Flexible Working   Communication
Workload
Customer impact
Workplace Safety

Q19. Is there anything about this situation which has been positive for you?

Family time
Work/life balance
Saving Money
WFH   Leadership
Wellbeing
Sense of community   IT
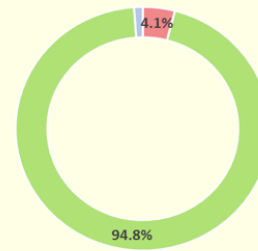Communication
Workload
Less commute

Q21. I feel a sense of belonging to my team

■ No ■ Yes ■ (blank)

7.7%

91.7%
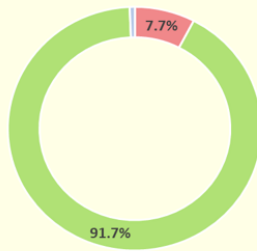
Q26. I understand what's expected of me in my role

■ No ■ Yes ■ (blank)

4.1%

94.8%

Key themes and observations

The wellbeing of staff can be influenced by many factors that may not just be work related. As an organisation it is important to understand what we have done well and areas in which we can help to improve the wellbeing of staff. The results of this survey will influence the next steps we take as an organisation. This will include informing the return to workplace plan and working with management teams to agree improvements and identify what has worked well.

Work/life balance

Question 11 shows a clear split between work life balance improving for some people as well as reducing for others, with responses to questions 12, 18 and 19 citing work/life balance and flexible working as key themes.

There are a number of reasons that employees might have a reduced work/life balance when working from home:

Lack of physical workspace, as identified as one of the biggest challenges, means that home and work life is blurred, with some employees potentially finding it difficult to switch between the two. Responses to question 19 indicate that, just as some staff are using the reduction in commute time for exercise and family time, conversely others may be using it to complete work tasks and therefore may be doing longer hours. Question 17 confirms that where 28% of employees have increased exercise levels, 43.7% have seen theirs reduced.

With government advice currently drastically limiting travel it is likely that staff may have cancelled annual leave. It is important for employees to ensure they do not exceed their contracted hours and are encouraged to still take annual leave, to ensure that work life balance does not cause stress and wellbeing issues.

Mental wellbeing

It is understandable that the global pandemic has had an effect on employee wellbeing. Responses to question 17 show that COVID-19 has had a significant impact on staff happiness, with almost half of respondents identifying that during the past three months their happiness levels have reduced to some degree. However, question 16 offers some reassurance that happiness levels by rating score have not dropped significantly overall.

The biggest challenge that employees identified while working from home is social isolation. It should be noted that the past three months have seen tight government restrictions on aspects such as social distancing and travel. We will continue to monitor this and compare results when the next survey is carried out, as it is likely that some restrictions around social distancing will be relaxed.

Systems and equipment

78% of staff said that they currently have the equipment needed to carry out their role. This was contrasted however, by a prominent theme from response to question 12 which identified that the main steps we could take to enable staff to work more effectively at home was systems and equipment. Our analysis of the free text comments included in survey responses indicated that staff interpreted the main theme of systems and equipment as including things like their own home working environment, local WIFI issues and access to specific software, which may not specifically relate to a lack of IT equipment. Employees should speak to their managers if they feel that they do not have the correct equipment to carry out their job.

Empowerment

With empowerment being one of our EPIC values, responses to question 15 suggest that staff feel less empowered under current circumstances. There are many factors that may influence this, with a quarter of respondents saying they would be less effective in their role if working from home were to continue. The return to workplace plan will ensure that staff requiring access to office space and equipment to carry out their role effectively will be able to return when it is safe to do so. Additionally, 31.5% of people indicated that continued working from home would impact how much they felt they belonged to the organisation. HR business partners will be working with service leads to consider ways to address this.

Next steps

In order to make sure we monitor staff wellbeing and are able to quickly identify any emerging trends or significant causes for concerns as the council recovers from recent events, we will be conducting further wellbeing and engagement surveys throughout the remainder of the year. This will give us the opportunity to highlight where any actions in response to the results in this report have been effective. The focus of these surveys may change depending on the outcomes we identify; however, we will continue to monitor some common factors such as the engagement index to give a consistent point of reference.

Our anticipated timeline for these future surveys is as follows:

May 2020
Wellbeing survey released

September 2020
Wellbeing survey will be repeated

December 2020
Staff engagement survey release