Wiltshire Council

AGENDA

Meeting: **Staffing Policy Committee**

Place: [Access the online meeting here](#)

Date: **Wednesday 26 August 2020**

Time: **1.30 pm**

Please direct any enquiries on this Agenda to Kevin Fielding, of Democratic Services, County Hall, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge, direct line 01249 706612 or email kevin.fielding@wiltshire.gov.uk

Press enquiries to Communications on direct lines (01225) 713114/713115

This Agenda and all the documents referred to within it are available on the Council's website at www.wiltshire.gov.uk

Membership:

Cllr Stuart Wheeler (Chairman)
Cllr Tony Jackson (Vice-Chairman)
Cllr Richard Clewer
Cllr Mike Hewitt
Cllr Hayley Illman

Cllr Carole King
Cllr Ricky Rogers
Cllr John Smale
Cllr Philip Whitehead

Substitutes:

Cllr Fleur de Rhé-Philipe MBE
Cllr Peter Evans
Cllr David Halik
Cllr Bob Jones MBE

Cllr Gordon King
Cllr Ian McLennan
Cllr Jo Trigg
Cllr Tony Trotman

Public Participation

During the ongoing Covid-19 situation the Council is operating revised procedures for public participation. Members of the public can view the meeting online as detailed below.

[Public guidance for accessing meetings online is available here](#)

Statements

Members of the public who wish to submit a statement in relation to an item on this agenda should submit it to the officer named on this agenda no later than 5pm on Friday 21 August 2020.

Statements should:

· State whom the statement is from (including if representing another person or organisation)

· State clearly the key points

· If read aloud, be readable in approximately 3 minutes

Statements in accordance with the Constitution will be included in an agenda supplement.

Questions

Those wishing to ask questions in relation to an item on this agenda are required to give notice of any such questions in writing to the officer named on the front of this agenda no later than 5pm Wednesday 19 August 2020 in order to be guaranteed of a written response. In order to receive a verbal response questions must be submitted no later than 5pm Friday 21 August 2020. Please contact the officer named on the front of this agenda for further advice.

Details of any questions received will be circulated to Committee members prior to the meeting and made available at the meeting and on the Council's website.

AGENDA

PART I

Items to be considered while the meeting is open to the public

1   **Apologies for absence**

2   **Minutes of Previous Meeting** *(Pages 5 - 14)*

    To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on the 3 June 2020 (Copy attached)

3   **Declarations of Interest**

    To receive any declarations of disclosable interests or dispensations granted by the Standards Committee

4   **Chairman's Announcements**

5   **Public Participation**

    The Council welcomes contributions from members of the public

    Questions & Statements
    To receive any questions & statements from members of the public or members of the Council received in accordance with the constitution.

    Those wishing to ask questions are required to give notice of any such questions in writing to the officer named on the front of this agenda no later than 5pm on Wednesday 19 August in order to be guaranteed of a written response

    In order to receive a verbal response questions must be submitted no later than 5pm on Friday 21 August. Please contact the officer named on the front of this agenda for further advice. Questions may be asked without notice if the Chairman decides that the matter is urgent.

    Details of any questions received will be circulated to Committee members prior to the meeting and made available at the meeting and on the Council's website

6   **Organisation Recovery Programme Overview**

7   **Covid Response Update**

8   **Quarterly Workforce Report April - June 2020** *(Pages 15 - 26)*

PART II

**Items during whose consideration it is recommended that the public
should be excluded because of the likelihood that exempt
information would be disclosed**

None

Staffing Policy Committee

MINUTES OF THE STAFFING POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 3 JUNE 2020 – ONLINE MEETING

Present:

Cllr Stuart Wheeler (Chairman), Cllr Tony Jackson (Vice-Chairman),
Cllr Richard Clewer, Cllr Mike Hewitt, Cllr Carole King, Cllr John Smale and
Cllr Philip Whitehead

Also Present:
Kevin Fielding (Democratic Services Officer), Stuart Honeyball (HR Systems & Insight Manager), Paula Marsh (HR & OD Strategic Delivery Manager), Jo Pitt (Director – HR & OD), Lisa Pullin (Democratic Services Officer), and Helen Strong (Associate Business Partner)

15   **Apologies for absence**

No apologies were received.

16   **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

Resolved:

To confirm and sign the minutes of the last meeting held on 8 January 2020.

17   **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

18   **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman invited Paula Marsh (HR & OD Strategic Delivery Manager) to provide verbal updates on the following:

Salary Finance Employee Benefit

This is an employee benefit we have been looking at for some time, but it has now been accelerated due to the current situation and the potential for there to be significant economic impacts which may result in some staff facing financial difficulties.

Salary Finance is a company focused on helping middle and lower income earners to become debt-free and to save for their future. Their focus is on employee financial wellbeing.

The company have received widespread independent recognition for innovation and social impact including "Responsible Business of the Year 2018 from Prince Charles' Business in the Community (BITC), for work in financial wellbeing.

A large number of private and public sector organisations have already launched Salary Finance to around 1 million employees. Clients include Tesco and Sainsburys as well as a large number of Local Authorities including Hampshire County Council, North Somerset Council; West Sussex County Council; Newport City Council; Portsmouth City Council; Hackney Council; Haringey Council; Barnet Council; Somerset County Council; Horsham District Council; Milton Keynes Council; Croydon Council and most recently Essex County Council.

The Local Government Association has used two of Salary Finance's clients to highlight best practice in their Workforce Wellbeing data bank.

Employees can access the Salary Finance online platform via the council intranet or directly on their personal devices to

● Access a broad range of financial education resources.

● Make regular savings directly from their salary into a bank account provided by partner Yorkshire Building Society.

● Set up a Help to Save account. By saving just £50 a month, employees can earn up to £1,200 in tax-free bonuses from HMRC over four years (this product is provided in partnership with HMRC).

● Apply for a salary-deducted loan. This can replace/consolidate any existing high cost debt employees have (like payday loans or credit cards) into a single low-cost loan, with repayments collected via salary deduction each month. It can also be used for emergencies.

● Set-up a pay advance for early access to earnings already accrued, if an employee has an unexpected expense mid pay period and no savings to cover it.

It has been agreed to implement this employee benefit (Officer decision) which they are looking to roll out in July 2020 to support the current wellbeing offer.

Officer decisions undertaken re: COVID-19 – Staffing impacts

Policies and guidance

A new **COVID-19 policy** was partially launched on 17 March 2020, and fully implemented on 24 March to support the council in putting in place emergency arrangements to ensure we could provide effective essential services for the residents and communities of Wiltshire during this event.

This has temporarily superseded some existing policies, including working arrangements; allocation of staff to roles; attendance at work, temporary working arrangements, holidays and some pay arrangements.

This policy was developed with the involvement of Trade Unions representatives, recognising that successful application of this policy would only possible through the goodwill, flexibility and commitment of our staff.

As part of the roll out of the policy some of the main variations we have made to normal working practices are

- asking staff to work from home wherever possible – and putting place ways for them to access ICT and office equipment to support with this

- our approach to 7 day working rotas and bank holiday working – to promote the use of TOIL to enable staff to take time back rather than claim for overtime to protect the council's financial position

- communicating a requirement for staff who are not working to use 1/12 of their annual leave each month to prevent a buildup that needs to be taken on their return

- the option to roll forward additional annual leave if necessary for operational reasons - although still promoting that staff should take leave wherever possible for their own wellbeing and to enable BAU on return

- The option to postpone purchased annual leave for up to 2 years

- Providing guidance to managers on how to submit pay claim for casual and variable hours staff who are no longer working or who have reduced work – we have continued to pay these staff based on either planned working patterns or a reference period

We have also provided guidance and FAQs on other aspects of employment including

- vulnerable groups (working closely with PH) social distancing and PPE for staff continuing to attend at workplaces
- guidance for managers on supporting staff with caring responsibilities
- guidance on critical workers and template letters to send to these staff to enable them to access childcare
- guidance on use of volunteers
- guidance on call up of military reservists
- bereavement guidance

Initially we said that we would review this and other guidance after 12 weeks. However, as a number of national restrictions remain in place (e.g. in relation to staff working from home where possible and some services remaining closed), we have confirmed with the unions that the current temporary arrangements will remain in place for now. We will continue to review the need for these in line with national approaches to the easing of restrictions.

As we move from "temporary" towards a "new normal" we will engage with unions to look at any longer-term changes to working practices, policies and guidance which may be needed to support recovery longer term and bring these through Staffing Policy Committee for agreement.

Furlough

A significant area that decisions have had to be taken on has been the decision over whether to furlough staff.

Since the initial guidance about the Coronavirus Job Retention scheme was published on 26 March a working group from HR, legal and finance have been reviewing which groups of staff we may be able to make a claim for under this scheme.

There were a clear group of staff from with City Hall and Leisure operation which fully met the criteria for the scheme as these services are fully income funded and all income stopped with effect from 20 March. We have carefully reviewed and evidenced that these staff all meet the scheme criteria.

Following an officer decision by the CEOs, and consultation with the Trade Unions the first group of these staff were sent furlough letters on 14 May backdated to the date they stopped working.

In this first group there were 244 people covering 307 posts. A press release was prepared however so far there have been no media enquiries. This first group of staff were those who could be easily identified as not working from the date the leisure centres and City Hall closed.

There was a second group of staff working in these services where further work was required to determine furlough dates and to ensure that they met all of the scheme criteria.

This work has now been completed and the CEOS have agreed a further list of posts to be furloughed in leisure operations and City Hall - this covers an additional 280 people covering 458 posts. This will bring the total to 524 staff across 765 posts.

We have maintained these staff on 100% contractual pay for the whole period of furlough. We are able to claim 80% of their salary costs back through the scheme until the end of July – we are awaiting further guidance on how the scheme will operate for the period between August and October.

The estimated claim through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme for all staff now identified for furlough across both services is £245k per month (so around £1m potential claim up to end of July).

This will not cover the costs to the council of paying staff who have not been working but will mitigate some of this cost.

We are also supporting Wiltshire schools to make claims for furloughed staff from before and after school clubs and catering posts.

The CEOs also confirmed a local decision to make claims for staff who have been furloughed in one contract but not in another - this had to be a local decision as no national guidance has been forthcoming. We will ensure we have a clear record of the claims that we have submitted which fall into this group in case any future guidance indicates that we would need to repay these claims. This does however enable us to now include claims for school staff - most of who have multiple contracts. We will confirm to schools this approach in our next update to them.

The CEOs also confirmed that they do want us to now also look at other income funded services to identify any other posts which could be included in a furlough claim - we are working with finance to identify the relevant services and will update you in due course about this phase.

We are working closely with unions to ensure all furloughing decisions are consulted on and communicated effectively to staff.

Committee members asked the following questions:

What is the furlough position for People for Places staff and self-employed instructors?

David Redfern (Head of Leisure Operations) has been working closely Places for People and they have furloughed all of their staff. I am not sure what they have done with their instructors and what types of contract they have and there are other Government schemes that self-employed people can access. The furlough scheme is only for those who are directly employed, and we will follow this up with David Redfern to check on the position of those staff.

I am aware of some people partly going back to work who have been furloughed – is this the case for any of our employees?

As the scheme stands at the moment, staff have to be fully furloughed and would not be able to carry out any work for us at all if we are making a claim through the HMRC scheme. The indication is that from July the scheme will change to allow employers to bring people back partially, but that guidance is not due to come out until 12 June 2020. It is also envisaged that the amount employers can claim through the scheme will also reduce.

Return to workplace approach

Our approach is still to encourage staff to work at home wherever possible, and we are looking at bringing staff back to workplaces in a phased way - starting with those for whom it is essential to deliver services.

We asked all Directors and Heads of Service to complete checklists for their staffing groups to identify which staff fall into which groups within their services:

a)   Services/teams/roles who are **already attending the workplace** as previously identified as essential services

b)   Services/teams/roles that are **urgently required to return to their workplace** as they need to undertake roles which cannot continue to be carried out at home

c)   Services/ teams/roles who can continue to work from home but where it may be **beneficial to bring them back into the workplace** as this would add value to service delivery (i.e. enable a better service to customers, enable staff to work more efficiently or effectively or enable a higher level of income generation for the service).

d)   Services/teams/roles that **can continue to work from home** for the foreseeable future, with no impact to service delivery

By workplaces we mean:

- Respite centres, resource centres
- Council depots
- Council owned hubs, buildings, sites or other settings
- Places that they visit as part of their role within the community (e.g. home visits)

Initially we are focused on ensuring that those already in workplaces and those for whom it is essential to return are safe and following national guidance.
We have created a toolkit for managers which takes them through a step by step process for considering all aspects of a safe return to the workplace (e.g. social distancing, working practices, site operations, building checks, communication to staff and identification of vulnerable groups).

We have also implemented measures within our hub building to ensure these are COVID Secure in line with national guidance and will support managers working in other locations to carry out risk assessments to put relevant measures in place before staff return. This has included reducing the number of desks staff can use, reducing meeting room capacity, changing cleaning regimes etc. I attach the draft risk assessment for our hub buildings for your information - a final version will be confirmed next week.

The CEOs are reviewing all of the requests for an urgent return to the workplace and, as they approve these, we will be working with managers of these teams to complete the toolkit and bring these teams back in safely.

We will also be asking managers of teams already in the workplace to review the toolkit and to apply any elements that are not already in place. Once this stage is complete we will move on to consider the next phase of enabling staff in those teams where it would be beneficial for them to have access to workplaces to start to return. However, this will be carefully managed, taking into account the local COVID-19 situation and national guidance on the easing of restrictions.

We will be discussing the return to workplace toolkit and approach at the Equality Impact Analysis panel on 9 June 2020.

A Panel Member commented that he could see that lot of effort had been put into recognising the importance of our staff and we must thank the co-operation from the staff who been great, through all this uncertainty. Although some staff that he had spoken to were concerned about what is going on with the pandemic they are still committed to working and they appreciate the support and guidance that has been put in place around this.

A Committee member asked if there was any resistance/reluctance from staff to return to work? Paula Marsh reported that whilst there were some staff that were understandably anxious, she would be giving further details in her next part of the update about the plans for vulnerable groups.

Risk assessment for vulnerable groups

We have been carefully reviewing the national picture and guidance in relation to vulnerable groups, in particular Black and Minority Ethnic groups.

Our approach has been to wait for and follow national guidance, however as this has still not been published we have now agreed to adopt a risk assessment that was initially developed by the Great Western Hospital - the intention is that this can be used to support managers to have discussions with staff, or for individual staff to use to help them to identify if they are in a higher risk group in order to flag and discuss this with their manager.

This risk assessment has been developed by Public Health and HR with the support of the BME Staff Network and the unions and will be updated if additional evidence or national guidance becomes available.

Communications have gone out to managers today and will shortly go out as a global message to all staff.

Committee Members were in support of what work was being done to identify vulnerable staff but wanted there to be an awareness that for some staff coming into work is a huge part of their life and for others working from home will not be easy for all due to space restrictions and if there are others at home also using

the space. Some staff may fall behind at work as their home surroundings are not ideal and so the Council will need to consider different aspects of vulnerability to our thoughts moving forward. There was some concern that some members of staff now have a lot of responsibility that has been thrust upon them and wanted to be reassured that managers are doing what they can to support them.

Jo Pitt – (Director – HR & OD) reported to Members that following the recent staff wellbeing and engagement survey which related to the current working arrangements she was pleased to report that the overall engagement score was higher now than it was in 2018 (the score then was high), it was currently 88. However, the survey did indicate that there were some areas that needed to be looked at and obviously some staff are finding working at home quite isolating and don't have a dedicated work space which is difficult.

Managers would be drilling down into service level to inform their working arrangements going forward and HR would talk to them about their service areas and the results of the survey. They would look into how many staff have accessed the counselling service and there was lots of additional wellbeing support and advice being shared to staff.

Resolved:

That the Committee note the verbal updates.

19   **Public Participation**

There were no members of the public present or statements submitted.

20   **Quarterly Workforce Report January-March 2020**

The Committee received a workforce report, for the quarter ended 31 March 2020.

The Committee noted that the report was another new format which had been designed to show the information and data in an easier and more interesting way. Officers asked for Members to let them know of any feedback or comments or if the wished for any additional metrics or measures to be included in future reports.

Key areas to note were that the increase in head count had started to level off as anticipated and numbers were back as they were in 2016. There had been an increase in demand for some of our services – particularly social care areas and following the targeted and focussed recruitment campaigns the staffing levels in these areas had risen. In the areas that had shown a reduction in staffing numbers these were areas of recent restructure planned to consolidate teams and align with other services.

The new infographics in the report had been included to focus on areas of most value and now included visuals on disability and ethnicity as percentages. The

top 5 reasons for sickness were the usual causes and did not include Covid-19. The impact of staff being off sick with coronavirus had been very low with an almost negligible impact. The long-term sickness when looked at by directorate level you will see that this comes mainly from the adult care/access and re-enablement teams. We had previously been asked to look at plans that could be put in place to reduce sickness, particularly in these areas and recent events had overtaken this but these plans would be presented at a future meeting.

Looking at staff turnover, one of the top three reasons was retirement and although not the highest the work on succession planning should smooth this level out a bit. Whilst there had been 8 new advisory cases in the quarter relating to improving work performance – when we looked further into these we saw that they were spread across directorates and service areas, and so can reassure that there are not significant problems or cause for concern in the same areas.

Incidental costs had not been included e.g. business travel, but they could be added to future reports if of interest to the Committee.

The Committee thanked officers for the ongoing work on reducing staff absence and wanted to reiterate that the aim is not to punish staff for being sick but providing support to get them back to work. A Member asked for details of the numbers of people in the long-term absence category as only the percentage was given in the report. This figure would be passed onto the Member following the meeting.

A Member asked about the numbers of leavers who had been in post less than a year, they appeared to be higher– were there any particular reasons for this. Officers reported that split was even across a number of reasons for leaving and it does depend on the time of year etc, and whilst it had gone it is was within the normal range and was a spread across the reasons.

Resolved:

To note the Quarterly Workforce report for the period ended 31 March 2020.

21   **Code of Conduct**

The Committee received a report by the Director, Human Resources & Organisational Development which outlined proposed amendments to the council's code of conduct policy following the agreed changes to the behaviour framework.

The Committee were reminded that EPIC is the Council's employee brand standing for innovation, collaboration and empowering people and it is the golden thread of the employees' journey. A review of the current behaviour's framework was recommended to ensure that it continued to be an effective tool

in promoting a positive culture and to support the council in delivering its priorities and aligned to the employee promise.

Focus groups and staff feedback formed the basis of the development of EPIC values. Staff supported in identifying what values resonated with them. It was felt behaviours held negative connotations and ratings should be removed to ensure the tool was viewed in a positive way also resulting in the removal of what a value does not look like.

The Joint Consultative Committee had been updated about the changes to the behaviour's framework. EPIC Values has also been presented to team EPIC and at the manager forum. All providing positive feedback, specifically highlighting the simplicity of the framework.

This was due to come to Staffing Policy Committee in March, but as the meeting was cancelled it was given approval through Officer decisions in order to progress with this and the code of conduct. The Committee were shown a draft version of the document at the meeting for which branding was still being finalised.

Committee members were happy with the EPIC values standards and the way it was clearly presented.

They reviewed the changes to the Code of Conduct policy which were required to be made alongside the introduction of the new EPIC values document.

Resolved:

That the Committee approve the changes to the Code of Conduct policy.

(Duration of meeting: 2.00 - 3.15 pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Lisa Pullin of Democratic Services, direct line 01225 713035, e-mail committee@wiltshire.gov.uk

Press enquiries to Communications, direct line (01225) 713114/713115

Wiltshire Council

Quarterly Workforce Report

April - June 2020

Observations and exceptions

The last three months covered by this report has seen exceptional circumstances due to the COVID-19 pandemic. There have been significant changes to the way we work with staff working from home, being redeployed or furloughed. Through the many challenges there has been a willingness from staff, both frontline and back office, to be flexible and able to adapt to new ways of working which has resulted in the council being able to continue providing services and guidance to the community over this period.

In line with government guidance the Council has been required to cease a number of services.To support these areas the council has used the Corona Virus Job Retention scheme (CJRS) to claim back up to 80% of salary costs (including employers National Insurance and pension contributions) for staff who were furloughed, i.e. unable to undertake their normal work duties or could not be redeployed. Use of the scheme has allowed the council to claim back approximately £1m for the period March to June 2020; the councils claim to HMRC made in June under the CJRS included 631 individuals split across a number of services as follows. Given the financial impact of COVID on the council, the money reclaimed through CJRS is a significant factor in supporting the budgets of the affected service areas.

Service Area	*Employees claimed under CJRS*
Leisure Operations	449
Wiltshire Schools	120
Libraries	42
City Hall	9
Community Development	6
Facilities Management	2
LEC	2
Public Protection	1
Grand Total	*631*

As part of the furloughing process under CJRS the council has been monitoring remaining staff capacity levels within services through daily 'sit reps', to identify and understand all of the different circumstances which may be affecting our ability to provide those services still permitted or able to operate. Areas of concern were highlighted to the HR business partners and the services to investigate if this was a significant risk to service delivery and how they could be supported.

The Council has been fortunate that we have only 37 people recorded by managers in SAP as having taken sickness absence due to suspected/confirmed cases of COVID-19, which amounts to 252.5 FTE days. This equates to just 4.2% of all sickness taken in this quarter. The low number of cases confirmed in the council workforce has meant that capacity to deliver services was not significantly affected as a direct result of COVID related absences.

Our staffing capacity monitoring confirmed this, identifying that in mid April (during the height of lockdown) the council was running at around 86% workforce capacity (FTE), once those services that were closed and in which the majority of staff were furloughed were discounted. Further analysis as of the week ending 30th June, showed very little change, with the council's non-furloughed workforce still working at around 86% capacity. As indicated in the graph below 81% of staff not working were due to conventional reasons, such as annual leave, non-COVID sickness and maternity. Nearly all (18%) of the remaining 19% loss that was COVID related was made up of staff self-isolating and caring for relatives; the final 1% relates to the 37 actual staff cases mentioned above.
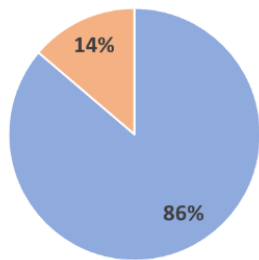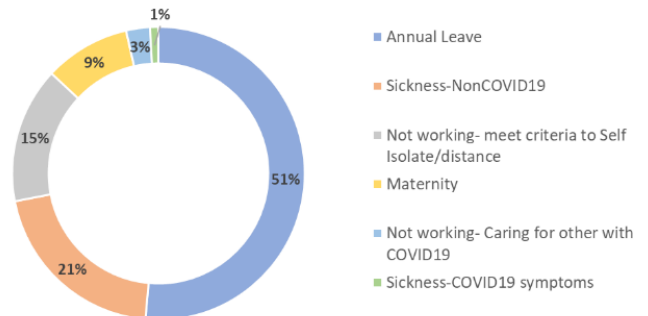
Around 135 staff have been redeployed between services to help deliver additional capacity within those services responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes staffing critical services to help those most vulnerable in the community, including the wellbeing hub, the food distribution hub and supporting the community to claim the necessary government grants for residents and local businesses.

HR has successfully supported the mobilisation of services with very little disruption or delay, utilising staff in services where demand has reduced or roles that are significantly limited by working from home to provide additional capacity in areas experiencing increased demand. This helped deliver:

- The claim of over £1.6m by local businesses in discretionary grants
- Receiving over 5,000 phone calls and 2,650 emails and over 16,000 calls made to our most vulnerable residents
- The delivery of over 1,200 food parcels

During this time, the wellbeing of our workforce is paramount. A wellbeing survey was distributed to our staff in May, with over 2,700 responses received (a 61% response rate); a very positive and representative response. During this unprecedented time it is important to note that the council witnessed increased employee engagement scores. The overriding response from staff were that there were not any significant challenges to working from home, some even cited the time gained from a lack of commute and the ability to spend more time with their family as positive to their wellbeing, and felt that, on the whole, the technology that has been implemented has worked.

However, that's not to say all responses were wholly positive; some of the challenges to working at home that staff cited were; social isolation, distractions in the home and a lack of physical workspace. 30% of all staff that were working from home did not have a dedicated workspace. Occupational Health have been providing IT equipment such as monitors, docking stations, and peripherals to try and create a more recognisable workstation at home. A copy of the wellbeing survey results can be found at Appendix 1.

To help with wellbeing, staff Q&A sessions are being held on-line to answer any questions/concerns from the staff, supported by webinars with the Chief Executive. A follow up well being survey is due to take place in September, this will enable us to gauge how the staff are now coping and whether this has changed. The next staff engagement survey is planned to take place in December.

Comparing the general level of sickness absence from the same quarter last year there has been a marked decrease in short/medium term absence of 30% (which also resulted in a reduction in sickness costs of £282k):
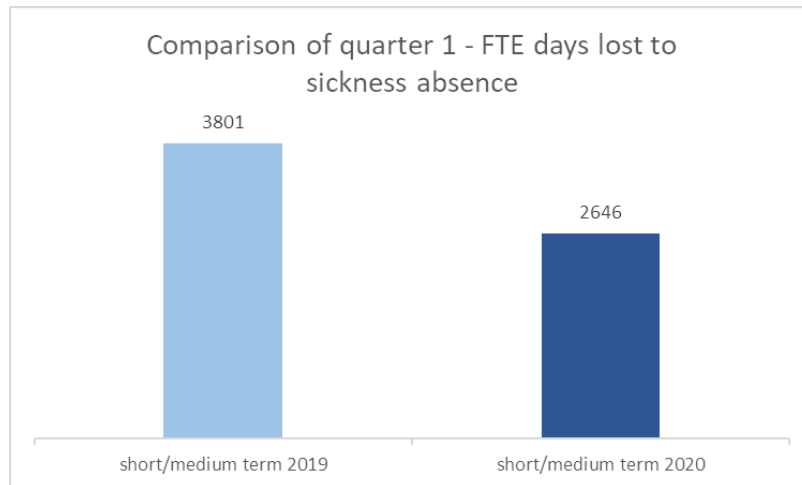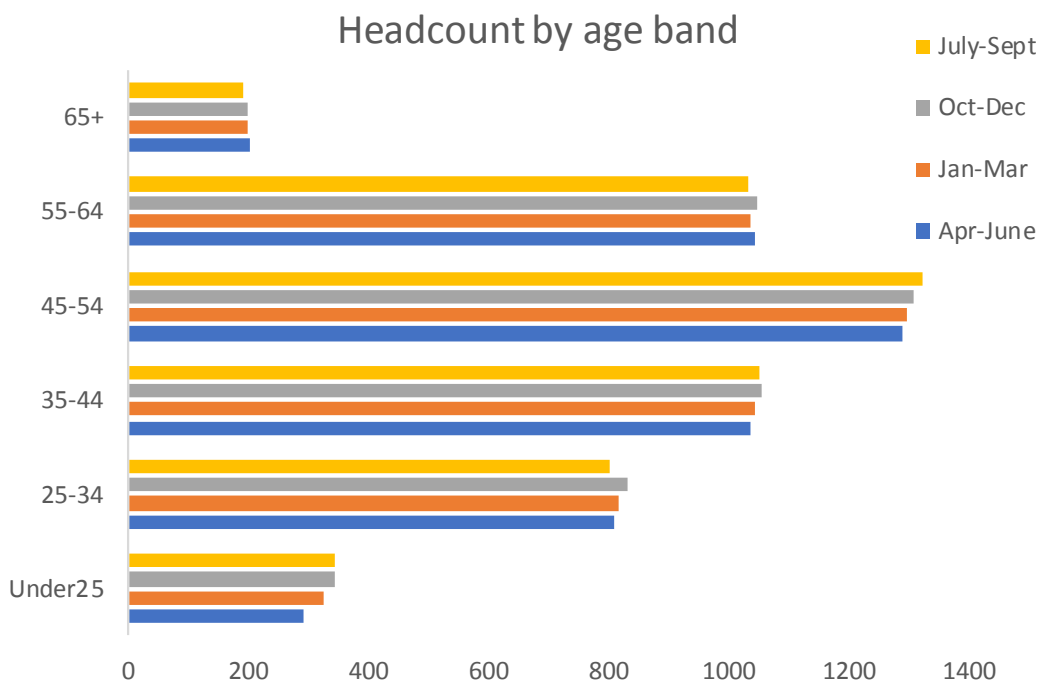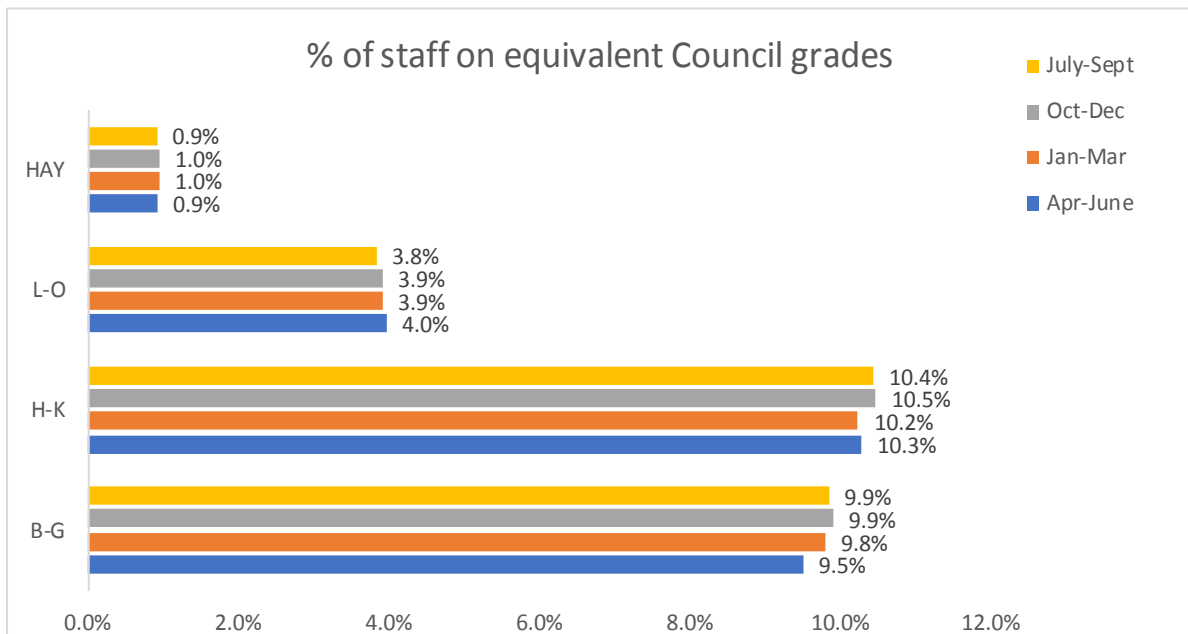

The recent staff wellbeing survey responses indicated that 77.7% of council staff were working from home and socially isolating; it is therefore likely that this has a significant contribution to the reduction in short/medium term absences through reduced opportunities for the transmission of other viruses such as coughs/colds, and less manual labour meaning we saw a reduction in muscular/skeletal related absences. Previous analysis has also shown that staff working from home are less likely to take sickness absence for minor illness (presenteeism).

As the Corona virus job retention scheme winds down between now and October, and if the relaxing of social distancing restrictions seen in this quarter continues, many of those staff currently furloughed will begin to return to work. Monitoring of both sickness rates as well as workforce and workplace capacities will continue through the recovery phase. Current advice to staff is to continue to work at home wherever possible and only to attend hubs and council premises where this is essential to work or wellbeing; HR and Facilities Management are working together to regularly monitor how council hubs are being accessed and used to ensure staff wellbeing is maintained and risks are minimised. This analysis will also contribute to work around the effective utilisation of our buildings including highlighting any commercial or consolidation opportunities.

Workforce Demographics

Headcount			FTE			Disability			Ethnicity (BME)		
	Current quarter	4680		Current quarter	3545.7		Current quarter	8.1%		Current quarter	3.0%
	Jan-Mar	4723		Jan-Mar	3560.8		Jan-Mar	8.2%		Jan-Mar	3.0%
	Oct-Dec	4787		Oct-Dec	3571.5		Oct-Dec	8.5%		Oct-Dec	2.9%
	Jul-Sept	4747		Jul-Sept	3506.7		Jul-Sept	7.1%		Jul-Sept	2.8%

% of staff on equivalent Council grades

Legend: July-Sept, Oct-Dec, Jan-Mar, Apr-June

Grade	July-Sept	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-June
HAY	0.9%	1.0%	1.0%	0.9%
L-O	3.8%	3.9%	3.9%	4.0%
H-K	10.4%	10.5%	10.2%	10.3%
B-G	9.9%	9.9%	9.8%	9.5%

Headcount by age band

Legend: July-Sept, Oct-Dec, Jan-Mar, Apr-June

Age bands: 65+, 55-64, 45-54, 35-44, 25-34, Under25

Sickness Absence

Top 5 sickness absence reasons by FTE days lost

Legend: July-Sept, Oct-Dec, Jan-Mar, Apr-June

Categories (x-axis): Stress/Depression/Mental…, Cold/flu and other infections, Other muscular/skeletal, Back and neck, Other internal organ

Sickness absence breakdown April - June 2020

- Short: 16%
- Medium: 24%
- Long: 60%

Long term absence = 20 calendar working days or more in the quarter
Medium term absence = more than 5 days (less than 20)
Short term absence = 5 or less
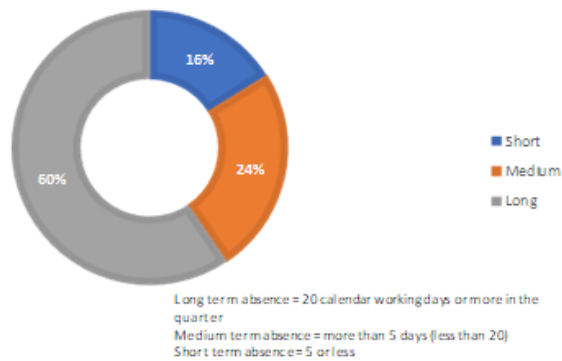
Turnover

Leavers 'under 25 years old'		
	Current quarter	13
	Jan-Mar	15
	Oct-Dec	11
	Jul-Sept	20

Leavers with less than 1 years		
	Current quarter	14
	Jan-Mar	22
	Oct-Dec	17
	Jul-Sept	29

Top 3 Voluntary leaver reasons

Legend: July-Sept, Oct-Dec, Jan-Mar, Apr-June

Reason	July-Sept	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-June
Resig. Alt. Emp. Not LA	50	35	22	14
Resig. Family Commit/Dom Res	23	11	11	18
Resig. No Reason Given	22	25	22	17
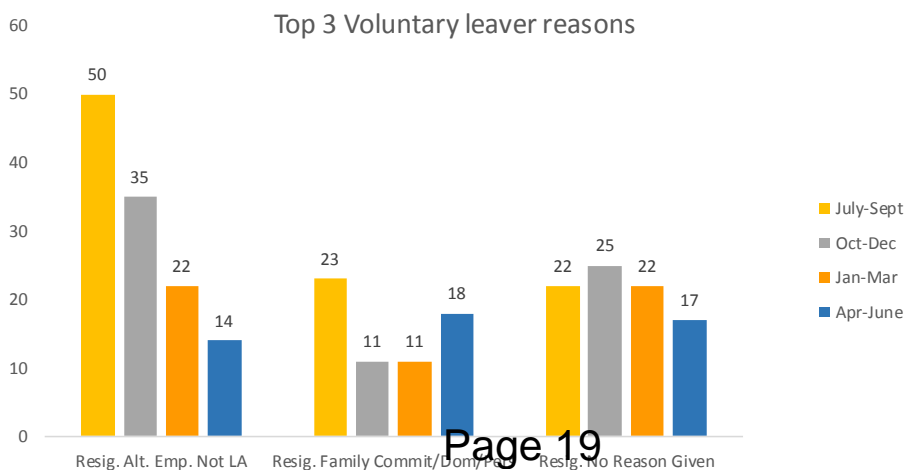
Employee costs

Permanent employee salary costs

£27,223,548 £27,879,441 £27,755,120 £27,662,530

- July-Sept
- Oct-Dec
- Jan-Mar
- Apr-June

Sickness Absence Costs

£662,229 £933,707 £872,478 £588,262
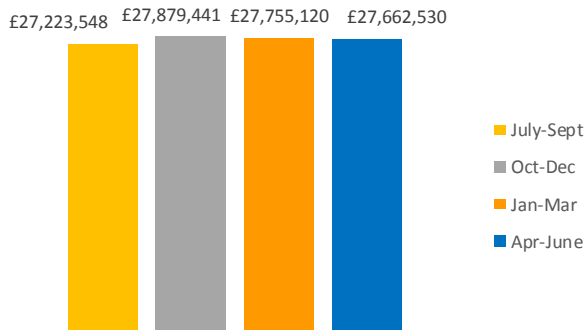
- July-Sept
- Oct-Dec
- Jan-Mar
- Apr - June
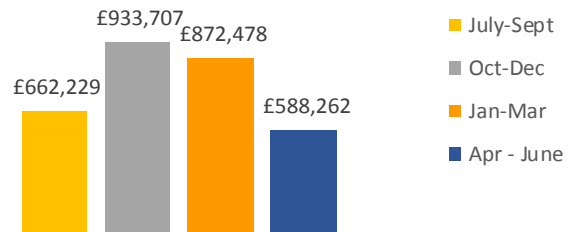
Casual employee salary costs

£579,651 £513,440 £433,895 £387,733

- July-Sept
- Oct-Dec
- Jan-Mar
- Apr-June

Agency Costs

£2,208,364 £1,938,694 £1,799,784 £1,539,442
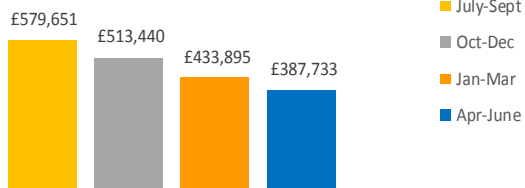
- July-Sept
- Oct-Dec
- Jan-Mar
- Apr-June
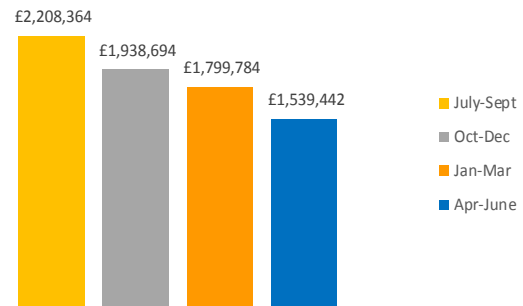
Advisory Cases

Disciplinaries

	new cases this quarter	Variance from previous quarter
July-Sept	23	
Oct-Dec	15	-8
Jan-Mar	10	-5
Current Quarter	12	2

Absence & Health

	new cases this quarter	Variance from previous quarter
July-Sept	156	
Oct-Dec	175	19
Jan-Mar	170	-5
Current Quarter	94	-76

Grievances

	new cases this quarter	Variance from previous quarter
July-Sept	5	
Oct-Dec	6	1
Jan-Mar	6	0
Current Quarter	2	-4

Improving work Performance

	new cases this quarter	Variance from previous quarter
July-Sept	4	
Oct-Dec	4	0
Jan-Mar	8	4
Current Quarter	2	-6

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.

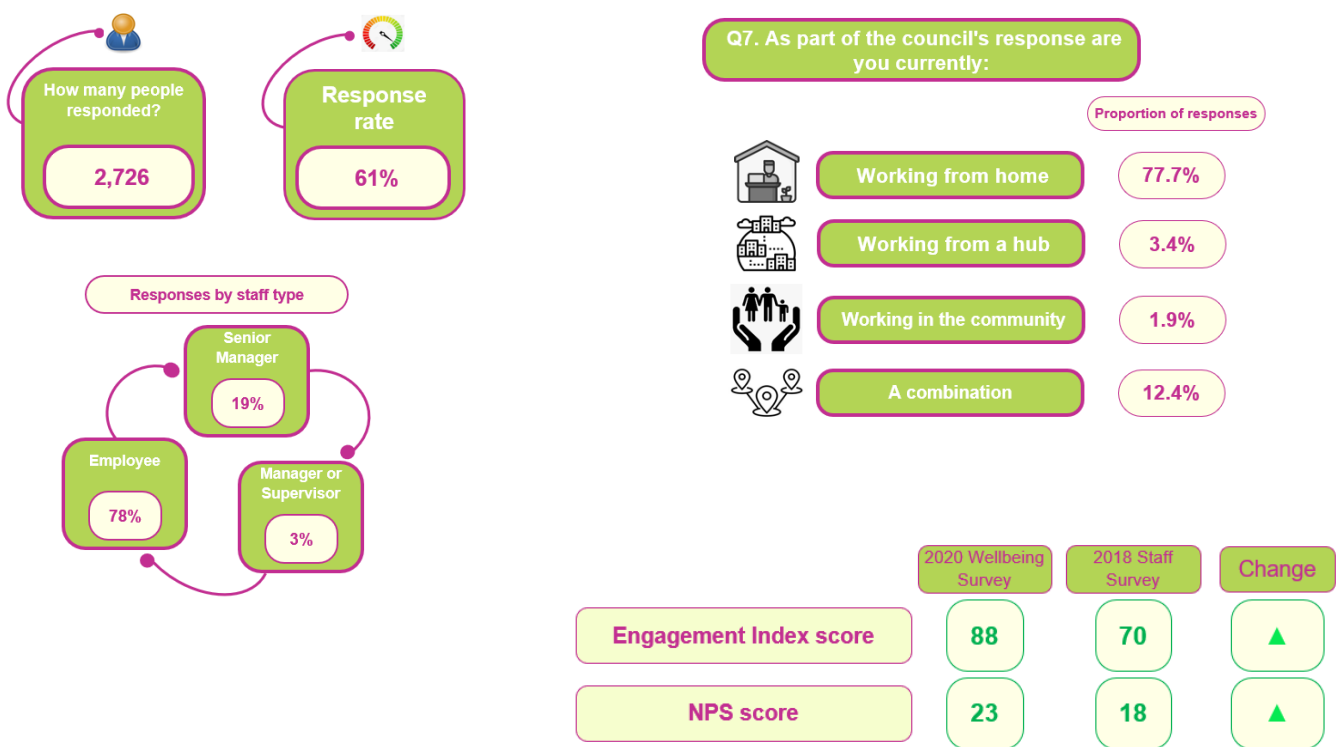The council's response to these challenges has seen a significant and rapid shift in our usual ways of working. For the majority of staff this shift has resulted in a change of workplace, with the survey results showing that 77.7% of respondents are now working from home. The experience of employees 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

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

1. Social Isolation	706
2. Distractions in the home	577
3. Lack of a physical workspace	552
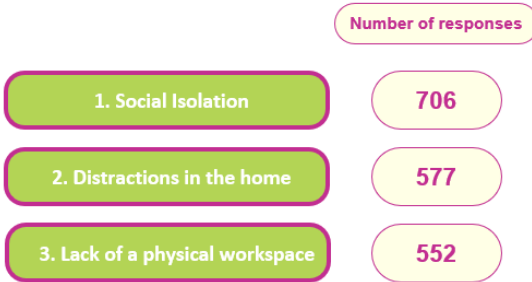
However overriding response was 'no significant challenges' (831 responses)

Q8. Do you have all the equipment you need to be able to work from home effectively?
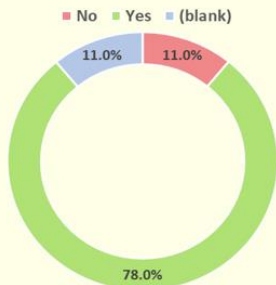
■ No ■ Yes ■ (blank)

11.0% 11.0% 78.0%

Q9. Do you have a dedicated workspace at home?

■ No ■ Yes ■ (blank)

10.5% 29.5% 60.1%
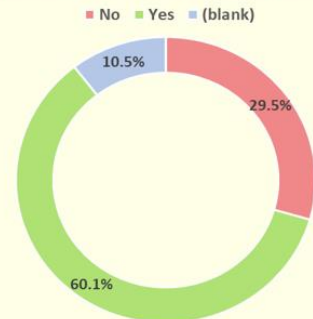
When asked about working from home, 30% of staff said they had no significant challenges in doing so. This shows that many staff can carry out their job role from a remote location successfully. However, significant numbers did identify that their three biggest challenges to working from home were social 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)

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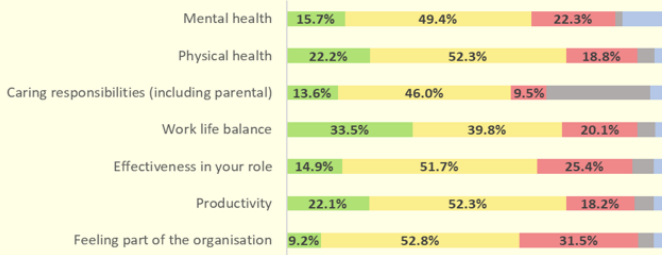
Q12. What steps could we take to help you work more effectively from home?

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

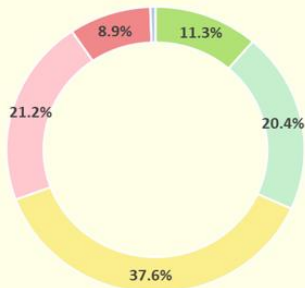## Q14. How worried are you about the impact of coronavirus on you personally? (where 1 is not worried and 5 is very worried)
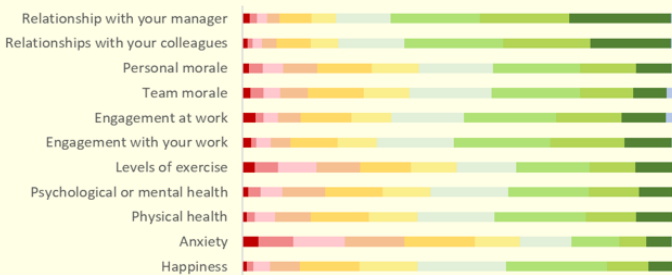
Legend: ■ 1 ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5 ■ (blank)

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

Q15. How are you feeling?

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

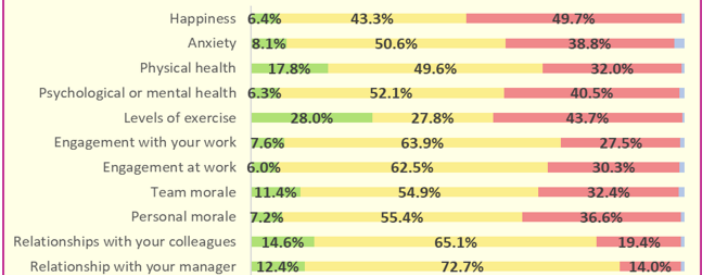|	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Optimistic about the future	43.5%	44.9%	11.2%
Useful	54.0%	36.7%	8.5%
Coping with problems	60.6%	34.0%	4.5%
Connected to people	48.9%	37.2%	13.2%
Empowered	33.1%	41.6%	24.3%

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)

	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%
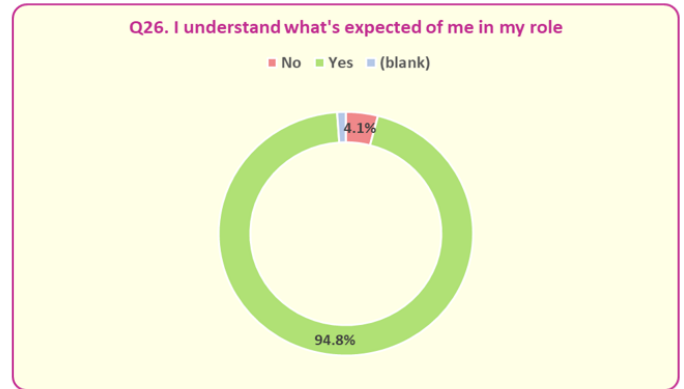
Key themes and observations

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.

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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