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**Report to: Council**

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**Date of Meeting: 22 April 2021**

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**Subject: Workforce Programme – Staff Survey 2020**

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**Report by: Stuart Crickmar: Strategic Director – Partnership & Performance**

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### **1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1. To provide Council with details of the 2020 Staff Survey, highlighting the key themes and actions arising from the report supplied by our independent researchers - Craigforth.

### **2.0 Recommendations**

Council are asked to

- 2.1. **Comment** and **challenge** on the paper as appropriate; and
- 2.2. **Note** the contents of the staff survey report, and acknowledge proposed work to address identified areas of development.

### **3.0 Considerations**

- 3.1. Clackmannanshire Council undertook its most recent staff survey in November to December 2020.
- 3.2. Over this period, 712 responses were received, giving a council wide response rate of 27%. Whilst the response rate is lower than that of 2019 (43%) our independent researchers confirm that this remains a strong response, producing statistically valid results.
- 3.3. The reduction in response rate across the Council may be linked to the challenges which the Coronavirus pandemic has created within the organisation. This includes challenges with promoting engagement with the survey, in distributing and arranging paper surveys where staff members, in the main, were home working or experiencing significant changes to their usual working patterns, or where competing priorities reduced staff ability to complete the survey.

- 3.4. Despite these challenges, in preparation for the survey Council Officers undertook a significant amount of preparatory work. Managers at all levels were provided with frequently asked question documents, toolbox talk scripts, and a promotional materials pack for their individual areas. Additionally, regular reminders about the survey were issued via management cascade, all staff emails and the [clacks.gov.uk/staff](https://clacks.gov.uk/staff) site, in addition to c600 paper surveys being issued directly to staff home addresses (where these otherwise would have been distributed directly via managers).
- 3.5. The survey report (attached at **Annex A**), provides detail on the engagement levels of our employees, both at an organisational and directorate level. Direct comparisons are made to both the 2019 survey results (in terms of staff engagement), and those of the 2020 COVID wellbeing survey undertaken in May of that year. This provides a useful baseline both in terms of wider engagement, and the more specific impacts of the pandemic on our workforce.
- 3.6. As such, the survey report for 2020 concentrates on three themes - wellbeing, communication and homeworking (rather than the usual five engagement themes of previous years<sup>1</sup>). However, it should be noted that in order to provide a continuum to previous years, overall engagement indicators have been retained.
- 3.7. For 2020, the overall staff engagement level for the organisation is 69.9%, which is a 12% improvement from our initial staff survey of 2018.
- 3.8. Feedback from staff is most positive on feeling a sense of achievement for the work they are undertaking, being treated with dignity and respect, making decisions, and receiving support from managers (with at least three quarters of staff responding to the survey having a positive view on these areas).
- 3.9. The survey report notes improvement as being needed with regards to staff feeling supported by the Council as an employer (distinct from s3.8 which refers to individual managers), information sharing, and mental wellbeing (whilst 50% of respondents noted good mental health, a similar amount described their wellbeing as 'fair' or 'poor').
- 3.10. A range of comments were also received which focus on how the Council could support working from home, as well as more generally in relation to such topics as access to technology, communication, and improving wellbeing. These anonymous comments will be addressed via a short life survey working group (See s4.2) with outputs feeding into the Council's ongoing Workforce Programme.

#### **4.0 Next steps**

- 4.1. The results outlined at **Annex A** of this report will be pivotal in supporting the ongoing work with the Council's Workforce Programme. Most notably, this will include work to support the physical and psychological wellbeing of our staff,

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<sup>1</sup> Council wide staff surveys since 2018 have focussed on employee voice, engaging managers, health and wellbeing, integrity and leaders.

revised internal communications techniques, workforce planning, and wider workforce development initiatives.

- 4.2. However, in making best use of the information presented to us it is considered essential to seek the wider views of both staff and trade unions. As such, a short life working group will be convened to look at the staff survey results in more detail (specifically including anonymised comments) with the outputs being included as both enablers to directorate workforce planning, and in the progression of projects sitting under the workforce programme (such as staff induction, communications for hard to reach staff, and wider staff wellbeing).
- 4.3. Additionally, work will also be undertaken with colleagues in the Council's communication team to ensure a comprehensive communication plan which highlights survey results, and how the contributions made by staff to this process are so critical in developing the Council's 'Be the Future' vision.

## 5.0 Sustainability Implications

- 5.1. None.

## 6.0 Resource Implications

### 6.1. *Financial Details*

- 6.2. The full financial implications of the recommendations are set out in the report. This includes a reference to full life cycle costs where appropriate.

Yes

- 6.3. Finance have been consulted and have agreed the financial implications as set out in the report.

Yes

### 6.4. *Staffing*

- 6.5. None.

## 7.0 Exempt Reports

- 7.1. Is this report exempt? Yes  (please detail the reasons for exemption below) No

## 7.0 Declarations

The recommendations contained within this report support or implement our Corporate Priorities and Council Policies.

- (1) **Our Priorities** (Please double click on the check box )

Clackmannanshire will be attractive to businesses & people and ensure fair opportunities for all  
Our families; children and young people will have the best possible

- start in life
- Women and girls will be confident and aspirational, and achieve their full potential
- Our communities will be resilient and empowered so that they can thrive and flourish

(2) **Council Policies** (Please detail)

None.

**8.0 Equalities Impact**

8.1 Have you undertaken the required equalities impact assessment to ensure that no groups are adversely affected by the recommendations?

Yes  No

**9.0 Legality**

9.1 It has been confirmed that in adopting the recommendations contained in this report, the Council is acting within its legal powers. Yes

**10.0 Appendices**

10.1 Please list any appendices attached to this report. If there are no appendices, please state "none".

ANNEX A: 2020 Staff Survey report

**11.0 Background Papers**

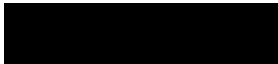
11.1 Have you used other documents to compile your report? (All documents must be kept available by the author for public inspection for four years from the date of meeting at which the report is considered)

Yes  (please list the documents below) No

**Author(s)**

| NAME          | DESIGNATION                                    | TEL NO / EXTENSION |
|---------------|--|--------------------|
| Alastair Hair | Team Leader – Workforce Development & Learning | 2045               |

**Approved by**

| NAME            | DESIGNATION                                    | SIGNATURE   |
|-----------------|--|---|
| Stuart Crickmar | Strategic Director – Partnership & Performance |  |

Clackmannanshire Council

# **Staff Experience Survey 2020**

Lead author: Chris Thornton  
February 2021



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# Clackmannanshire Council

## Staff Survey 2020

Employee views are positive across most aspects of their working lives, and show improvement on the 2019 survey for some key indicators.

Feedback is most positive on feeling a sense of achievement in their work, being treated with dignity and respect, making decisions, and support from managers

Views are less positive about support from the Council as an employer, information sharing and mental wellbeing

Employee engagement continues to improve, and is strongest for People and HSCP directorates.

This report presents results from a survey of all Clackmannanshire Council employees. Results are based on 712 responses, a 27% response rate.

### Survey Themes

Employees are positive across most aspects of their engagement with the Council as an employer. Views are most positive about having a sense of achievement, being treated with dignity and respect, contributing to the Council's goals and making decisions about their role. At least three quarters have a positive view on these aspects of their work.

Views are more mixed on employee mental wellbeing. While 50% reported good mental wellbeing, a similar proportion described their mental wellbeing as 'fair' or 'poor', and a fifth do not feel supported by the Council to undertake their work effectively.

Nearly three quarters (72%) feel supported by their manager, most (71%) feel they have enough contact with their manager, and most (58%) feel they are kept up to date with information from around the Council. However, all of these measures show a poorer result than reported earlier in 2020.

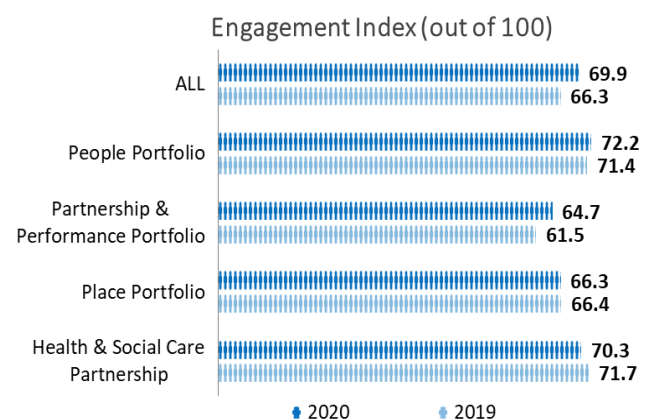
Employees generally feel that they have the tools they need to work effectively from home, and feel that homeworking has not had a negative impact on their productivity. However, more than

a quarter (27%) feel they do not have the tools they need, and nearly a fifth (18%) that they are less productive when working from home.

Employees offer a range of suggestions about how they could be supported to work more effectively from home - primarily focused on access to technology or software, and communication with managers and colleagues. There is also a perceived need to address these and other issues to improve employee wellbeing in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic.

### Employee Engagement

A score of 69.9 (out of 100) represents a 12% improvement since 2018 in employee engagement with the Council as an employer. Engagement is particularly strong for People and HSCP employees. Ensuring employees feel valued and get the support they need to work effectively would have the most positive impact on employee engagement.



## INTRODUCTION

1. This report presents results from a survey of Clackmannanshire Council employees conducted in late 2020.

### Survey approach

2. This is the third Council-wide employee survey since the Council refreshed its engagement survey approach in 2018 (with previous surveys conducted in 2013, 2012, 2011, 2010).
3. Survey content was revised from the 2019 survey, maintaining a core of comparable questions from the 2018 and 2019 surveys alongside new questions reflecting the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Council's workforce and working arrangements. Specifically, the survey asked employees to indicate their views on a series of statements relating to their engagement with the Council as an employer, on their mental health and wellbeing, on communication and support from their manager, and on homeworking.
4. The survey was administered through a combined web-based and postal survey approach. Craigforth distributed all postal survey packs and web survey invites in early November 2019, with the survey closing on 18 December 2020. All survey responses were returned direct to Craigforth to maintain confidentiality, using reply-paid envelopes for direct return of postal surveys and Craigforth's survey platform for web responses. Survey materials made clear that the Council did not have sight of any individual responses, nor information on which employees had or had not responded to the survey, and that reporting would avoid disclosure of any individual's views.
5. Survey fieldwork was designed to maximise accessibility. All employees had the option to respond via the websurvey or request a hard copy questionnaire, or to complete the survey by phone with a member of Craigforth's research team. Survey resurvey response was also supported by communication from the Council to employees emphasising the importance of the survey in assessing employee experience.

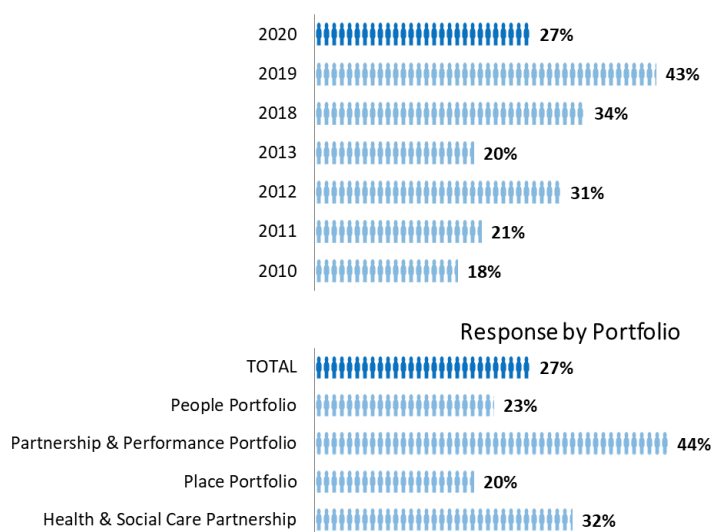
### Survey response and robustness

6. Against the 2,629 survey packs issued to Council employees, a total of 712 responses were received - equivalent to an overall response rate of 27%. This represents a 16-point fall from the response achieved by the 2019 survey. A fall in survey response is perhaps unsurprising given the change in working arrangements across many Council services as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, and the increased pressure on employees. Moreover, 27% remains a strong response for a survey of this kind, and is broadly in line with that achieved by Council staff surveys prior to 2019.



7. As Figure 1 shows, survey response rates varied across Council directorates. Response was strongest for Partnership & Performance directorate staff with a response rate of 44%, and was lowest for Place staff at 20%. This variation in survey response is not unusual for employee surveys, and is likely to reflect in part the impact of varying working environments. For example, the lower Place directorate response is primarily due to a lower response from Property and Environment employees who are less likely to have a dedicated office working space. Survey responses were weighted against the profile of all Clackmannanshire Council employees prior to analysis to minimise the impact of response bias.

**Figure 1: Survey response**



8. As a result of the response rate, the volume of survey responses is sufficient to produce robust survey results. Confidence intervals are the standard means of expressing the extent to which survey results are representative of the wider population (in this case all Council employees). The overall confidence interval for the survey is  $\pm 3.7\%$ . As an example, this means that if 50% of respondents feel valued for the work they do, we can be 95% confident that the true value is between 46.3% and 53.7%.
9. Figure 2 presents an overview of the profile of survey respondents in terms of directorate, working environment and length of employment (based on respondents' self-reporting). This is broadly in line with that reported by the 2019 survey, although it is notable that more than a quarter of respondents (27%) indicated that they are currently working from home. For the great majority of these respondents, this has been the result of a change in working arrangements due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

**Figure 2: Profile of survey respondents (n=712)**

| Directorate                           | Number       |     | %              |     |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|-----|----------------|-----|
| People Directorate                    | 369          |     | 52%            |     |
| Partnership & Performance Directorate | 75           |     | 11%            |     |
| Place Directorate                     | 119          |     | 17%            |     |
| Health & Social Care Partnership      | 74           |     | 10%            |     |
| Prefer not to say/no response         | 75           |     | 11%            |     |
| Working environment                   | Current      |     | Pre-Covid 19   |     |
| Working from home                     | 190          | 27% | 12             | 2%  |
| An office                             | 98           | 14% | 277            | 39% |
| A school                              | 271          | 38% | 261            | 37% |
| A depot or facility                   | 20           | 3%  | 29             | 4%  |
| Outdoors or a vehicle                 | 28           | 4%  | 26             | 4%  |
| Visiting people's homes               | 17           | 2%  | 20             | 3%  |
| Prefer not to say                     | 88           | 12% | 87             | 12% |
| Time...                               | with Council |     | in current job |     |
| Less than 1 year                      | 45           | 6%  | 68             | 10% |
| 1-4 years                             | 108          | 15% | 181            | 25% |
| 5-9 years                             | 106          | 15% | 131            | 18% |
| 10-19 years                           | 196          | 28% | 143            | 20% |
| 20+ years                             | 164          | 23% | 53             | 7%  |
| Prefer not to say/No response         | 93           | 13% | 136            | 19% |

## This report

10. The remainder of this report sets out key findings across the main survey themes. This includes comparison with previous surveys where relevant – including the 2018 and 2019 staff surveys, and a Covid-19 focused survey conducted in summer 2020. All questions have been cross tabulated across a range of respondent subgroups, including directorate and working environment. We highlight significant variation where relevant, based on 95% confidence intervals.
11. We have also used five statements from the first survey question to produce an 'Engagement Index' score for each employee, to reflect their level of engagement and commitment to the Council as an employer. These scores are discussed later in this report under 'Engagement Index'.
12. We round percentages up or down to the nearest whole number. For some questions this means that percentages may not sum to 100%. Similarly, aggregate figures presented in the text such as the combined percentage of 'strongly agree' and 'agree' responses may not sum to results presented in figures and tables due to rounding.

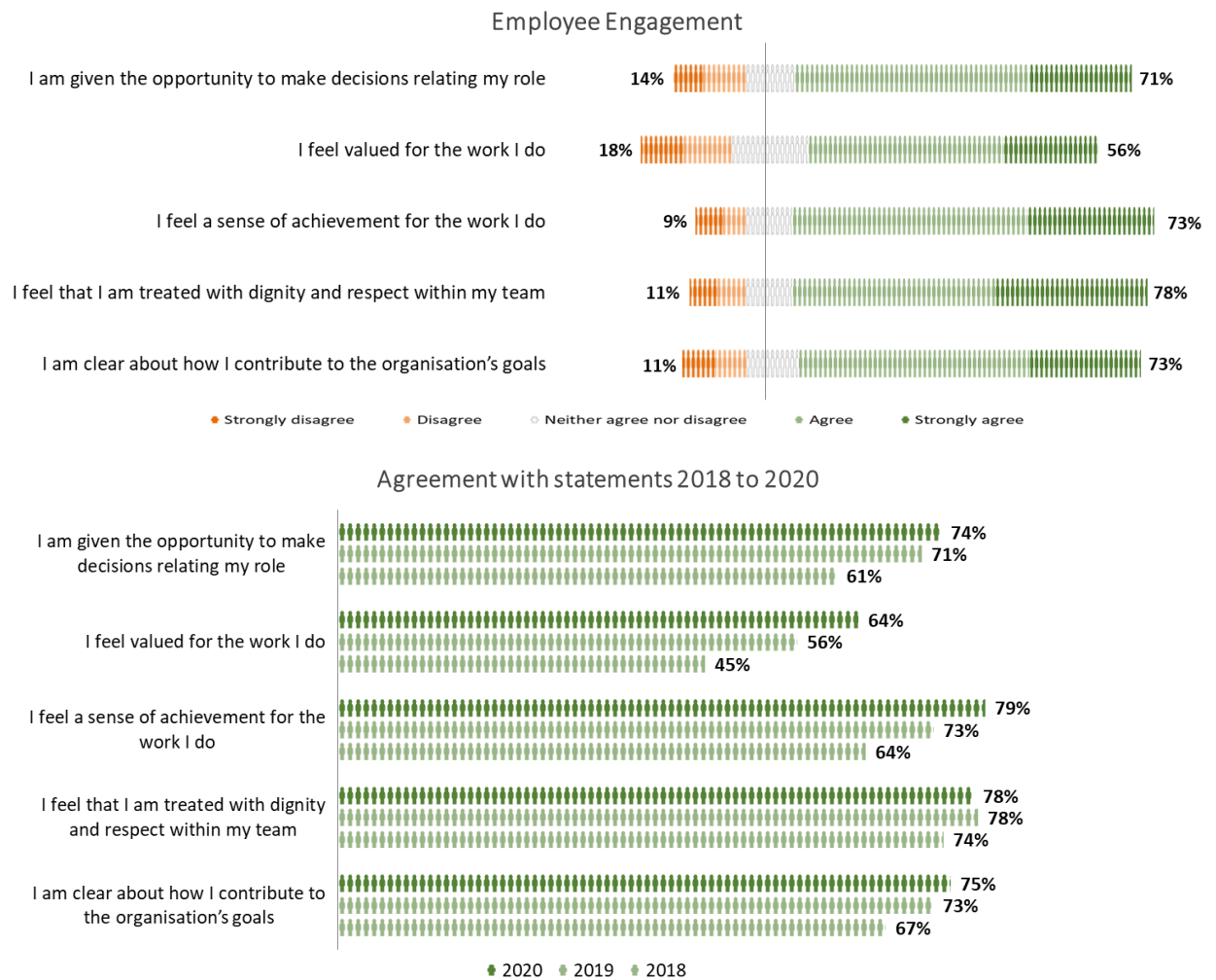
## SURVEY THEMES

13. The survey asked employees to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with a series of statements across five themes. This section sets out key findings in relation to each of the following themes:
- ❖ Employee engagement;
  - ❖ Mental health and wellbeing;
  - ❖ Communication;
  - ❖ Homeworking; and
  - ❖ Council vision and values.

### Employee engagement

14. The survey first asked employees to consider a series of five statements under the theme of ‘Employee engagement’. As Figure 3 over the page shows, employees are positive in their views on most aspects of this theme, with a majority of employees agreeing with each of the statements.
15. Views are most positive in relation to employees feeling a sense of achievement for the work they do, and feeling that they are treated with dignity and respect:
- ❖ “I feel a sense of achievement for the work I do” - 79% agree.
  - ❖ “I feel that I am treated with dignity and respect within my team” - 78% agree.
16. Employees are also positive about how they contribute to the organisation’s goals, and being given the opportunity to make decisions:
- ❖ “I am clear about how I contribute to the organisation’s goals” - 75% agree.
  - ❖ “I am given the opportunity to make decisions relating my role” - 74% agree.
17. Views are somewhat more divided on whether staff feel valued for the work they do. The majority of respondents (64%) are positive on this measure, but nearly a fifth or respondents (18%) do not feel valued for their work. However, it should be noted that this is the only one of the five employee engagement measures to show a significant improvement in employee views since the 2019 survey: an 8-point improvement.
18. Survey results show relatively little variation in employee engagement results across the four directorates. The only significant variation is in how clear staff are about their contribution to the organisation’s goals; People staff are most positive on this, and Place staff the least positive.

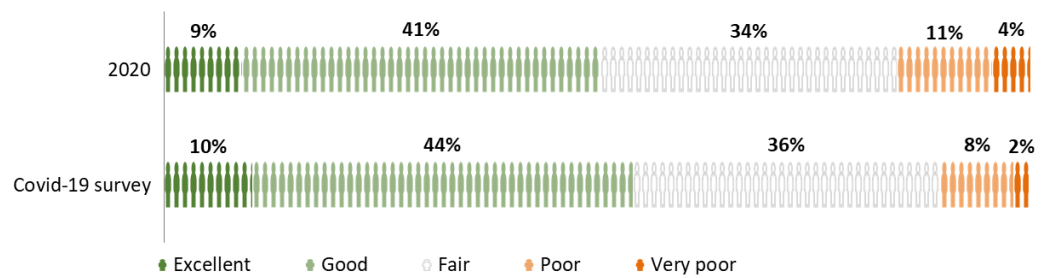
**Figure 3: Employee engagement staff views**



## Mental health and wellbeing

19. The survey asked employees a series of questions relating to their mental health and wellbeing at present, and support from the Council around their wellbeing.
20. As Figure 4 over the page shows, employees are somewhat mixed in relation to their mental wellbeing at present. While half of respondents (50%) described their mental wellbeing as ‘excellent’ or ‘good’, around a third (34%) described their mental wellbeing as only ‘fair’ and 15% described their mental wellbeing as ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’.
21. These ratings are broadly similar across key respondent groups, with survey results showing no significant variations. Results are also similar to those reported by the Covid-19 survey conducted in summer 2020, where a little more than half of respondents (54%) described their mental wellbeing positively.

**Figure 4: Rating of mental wellbeing right now**



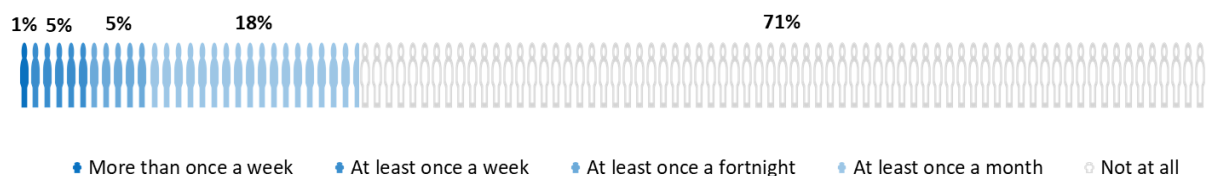
22. Around half of employees (51%) feel supported by the Council to undertake your work effectively (Figure 5), and around a fifth (19%) do not feel supported. This balance was broadly consistent across key respondent groups. However, these findings indicate a significant 13-point fall from the 2019 staff survey, where 64% of respondents indicated that “I get the support I need to do my job well”.

**Figure 5: Whether feel supported by the Council to undertake work effectively**

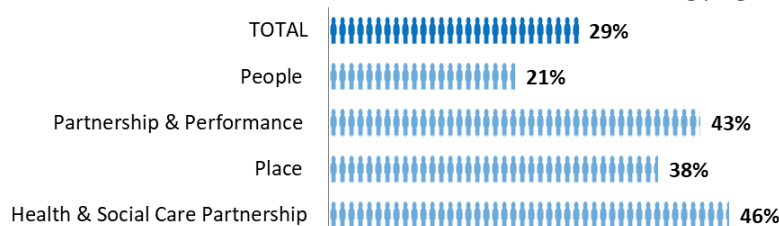


23. The Council provide information to support staff wellbeing through the Council website. As Figure 6 shows, around 3 in 10 employees (29%) have accessed these webpages. This includes around a tenth (11%) who accessed these webpages at least once a fortnight. Survey results show some significant variation in these findings across key respondent groups. In particular, HSCP and Partnership & Performance employees, and those who currently work from home are most likely to have accessed the Council’s wellbeing pages. In contrast, People employees, those working in schools and those working outdoors, in a vehicle or visiting people’s homes are least likely to have accessed this information.

**Figure 6: Whether have accessed the staff wellbeing pages on the Council website**



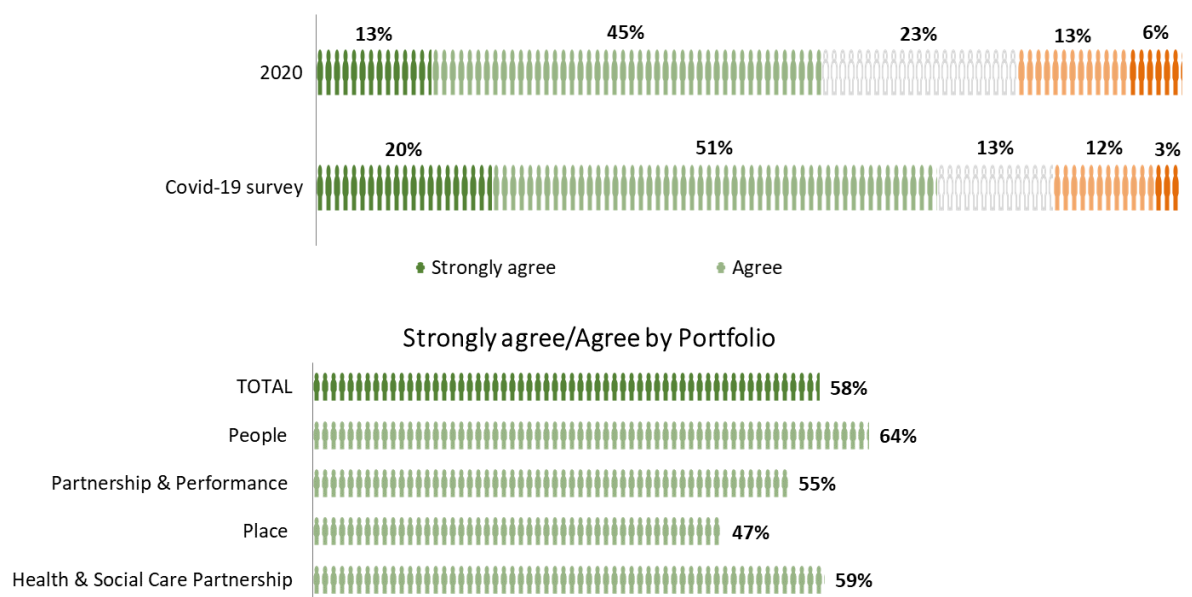
**Whether have accessed wellbeing pages by Portfolio**



## Communication

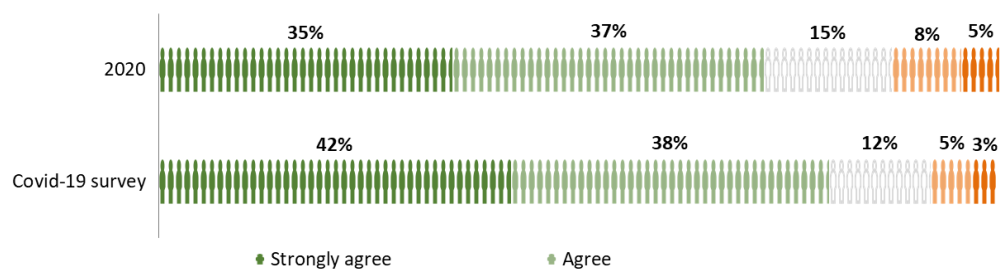
- 24. The survey also asked a series of questions around communication between employees and their manager, supervisor and/or the organisation more widely.
- 25. As Figure 7 shows, the majority of employees (58%) agree that they are kept up to date with the latest information from around the Council. This finding varied across key respondent groups; People and HSCP employees are most positive, and Place employees are least positive about being kept up to date. These results also represent a significant decrease over the last year in employees who feel kept up to date by the Council, a reduction of 13 points since the Covid-19 survey.

**Figure 7: Whether feel kept up to date with latest information from around the organisation**



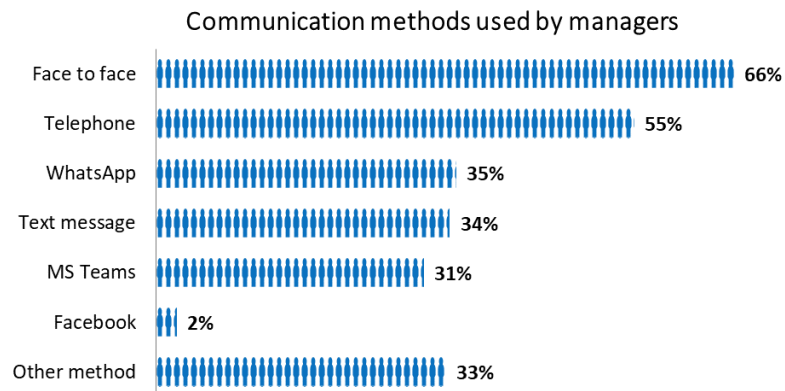
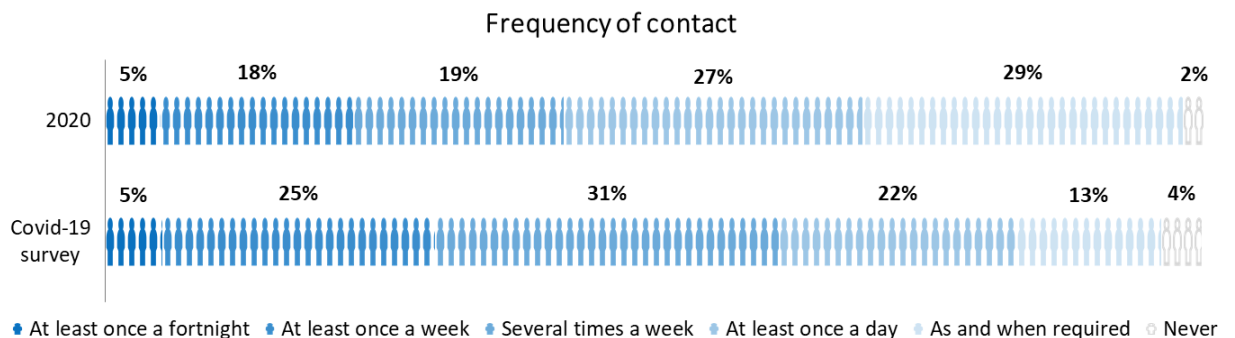
- 26. Employees are generally more positive about support from their manager or supervisor. As Figure 8 shows, nearly three quarters of employees (72%) feel supported by their manager or supervisor, with only 13% disagreeing with this. This finding is broadly consistent across key respondent groups but represents an 8-point reduction since the Covid-19 survey.

**Figure 8: Whether feel supported by manager/supervisor**



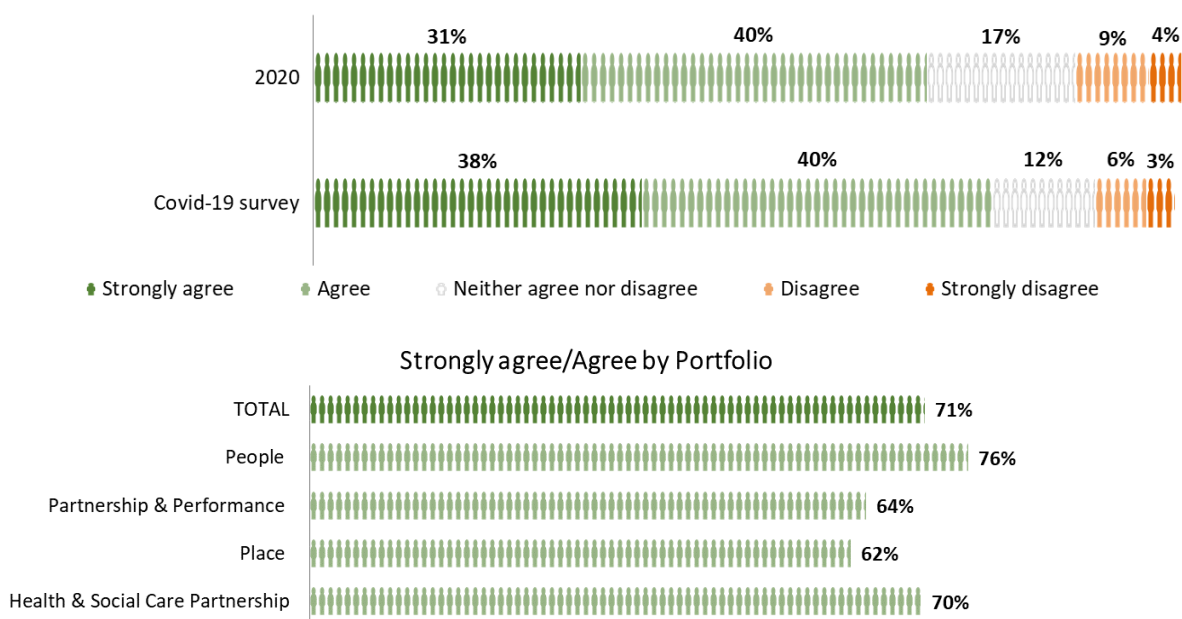
27. The frequency and nature of contact between employees and their managers has been significantly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, and in particular the proportion of employees across some services who continue to work from home. The survey asked a series of questions around how managers keep in contact with employees (Figure 9), and the extent to which employees feel they have had enough contact with their manager (Figure 10).
28. Survey findings indicate that the majority of employees (64%) are contacted by their manager at least once a week, including nearly half (46%) who receive contact at least several times a week and a quarter (27%) who receive daily contact. This represents a 14-point reduction since the Covid-19 survey in the proportion of employees who have weekly contact with their manager, and a 7-point reduction in those who have contact at least several times a week. Survey results also show some variation across key respondent groups, with those working outdoors, in a vehicle or visiting people’s homes generally having less frequent contact with their manager. However, survey results show no significant variation in frequency of contact between those working from home, in an office or in a school.
29. In terms of how managers keep in contact with employees, this is most commonly face to face (mentioned by 66% of employees) or by telephone (55%). Digital options such as WhatsApp, SMS or MS Teams are each used for around a third of employees. Survey results again show some variation in these findings dependent on employees’ working environment. For example, face to face contact is more common for those working in a school or an office, while telephone and MS Teams are more common for those working from home.

**Figure 9: Contact with manager**



- 30. As Figure 10 shows, the majority of employees (71%) feel they have enough contact with their manager, and only 13% disagree. However, this represents an 8-point reduction since the Covid-19 survey.
- 31. Survey results also show some variation across key respondent groups, with People employees most positive about their level of contact with their manager, and Place employees least positive. This shows some correlation with employees’ frequency of contact with their manager; Place employees generally reported less frequent contact with their manager. However, it is notable that employees’ working environment does not appear to have a significant impact for views on their level of contact with their manager.

**Figure 10: Whether feel have enough contact with manager**

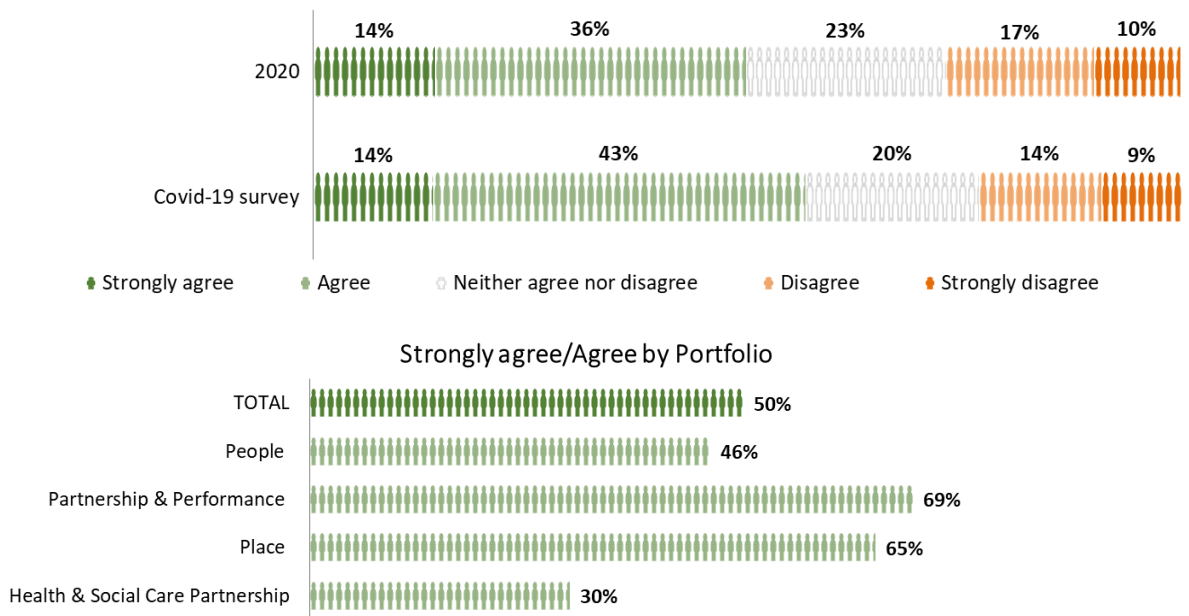


## Homeworking

- 32. As noted in the introduction to this report, survey findings show a significant increase in the proportion of employees working from home at present, primarily as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. The survey asked a series of questions around employees’ experience of homeworking.
- 33. Employees generally feel that they have the tools they need to work effectively from home, with half (50%) agreeing that this is the case (see Figure 11 over the page). However, more than a quarter (27%) do not feel that they have the tools they need for homeworking, and this is broadly consistent with findings of the Covid-19 survey (23% felt they did not have the tools they needed to work from home).
- 34. There is some variation in views across key respondent groups, with HSCP and People employees least positive about having the tools they need to work from home. It is also notable that around a fifth (19%) of those who currently work from home feel that they do not have the tools that they need.

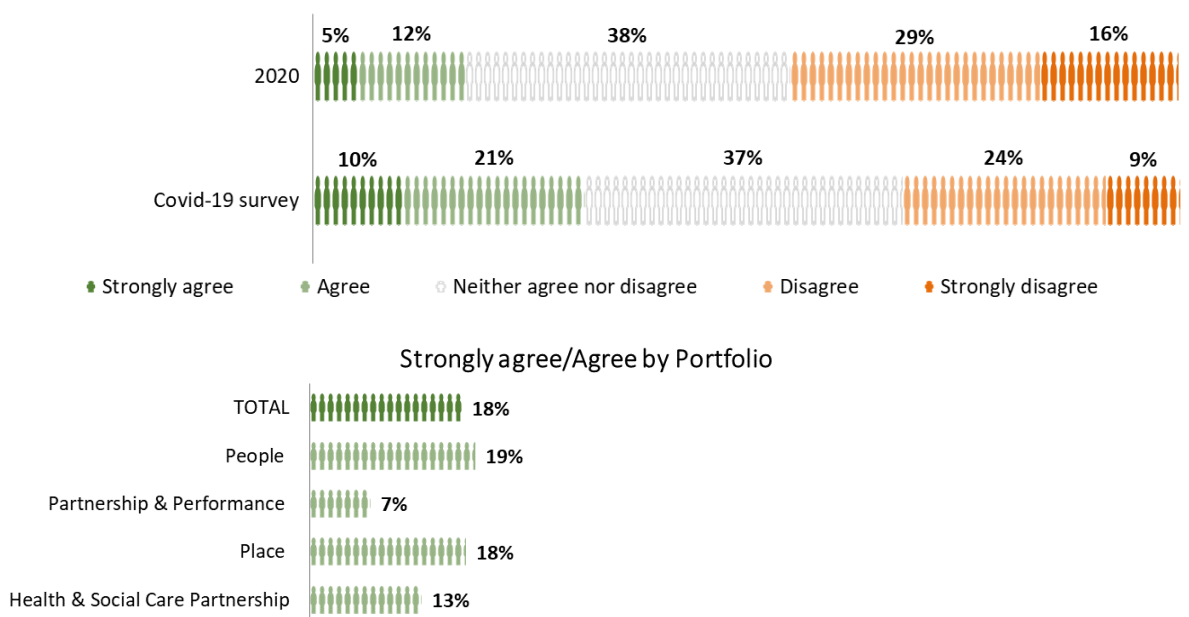


**Figure 11: Whether feel have the tools needed to work effectively from home**



35. As Figure 12 shows, employees generally feel that homeworking has not negatively affected their productivity; 45% feel their productivity has not been negatively affected, while 18% feel there has been some adverse impact. This represents an improvement from the Covid-19 survey, which showed that 32% of employees felt homeworking had negatively affected their productivity. Survey findings also indicate that Partnership & Performance employees are most positive about their experience of homeworking. It is also notable that only around 1 in 10 (11%) of those who are currently working from home feel that this has negatively affected their productivity.

**Figure 12: Whether feel homeworking has negatively affected your productivity**



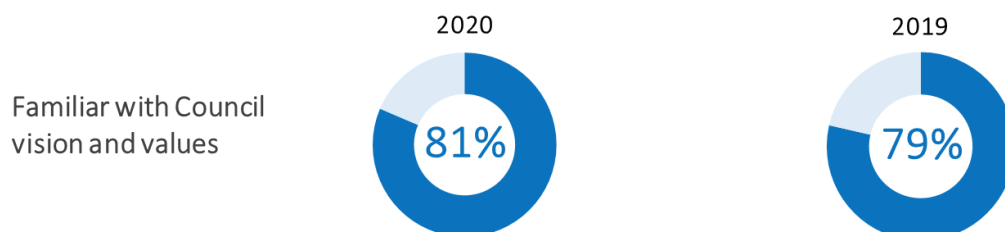
36. The survey also gave employees the opportunity to add written comments regarding any changes that could help them to be more productive when working from home. Around 40% of respondents provided comments here. Some of used the opportunity to comment positively on their experience of homeworking, suggesting that they felt more productive at home than had been the case in their previous working environment. This included some who noted that they had previously worked from home for a proportion of their working week, and therefore had well-tested working arrangements at home.
37. However, most of those providing written comment saw at least some areas where changes could improve their productivity while working from home. Below we summarise the key points raised.
- ❖ **Access to technology and software.** The most common issue raised by those having difficulty working from home, this includes delays for staff in gaining access to the technology and software that they needed. However, issues most commonly concern ongoing issues such as a perceived need for more powerful or up to date technology (including access to a more powerful laptop, larger or more computer screens, access to printing facilities and a webcam). Some also wish to see wider access to mobile phones for work purposes, having made extensive use of their personal phone for work purposes during the pandemic. A lack of access to software and systems, and/or a lack of training to use specific software, are also issues for some - including reference to MS Teams, intranet, Seemis, Staff Share and Google Classroom. Some also feel that easier access to technical support is needed where they encounter problems with software or technology at home. A number of respondents have had to enter the workspace more often due to a lack of necessary technology or software, and see this as an unnecessary health risk.
  - ❖ **Workspace and/or wider working environment at home.** Issues for employees include a need for a larger workspace (including larger desk and multiple screens) and better/more ergonomic workspace. The latter includes particular reference to the quality of desk chairs being used by homeworkers, and to difficulties having to rely on a relatively small laptop rather than larger monitor and separate keyboard/mouse.
  - ❖ **Contact with managers/supervisors and work planning.** Some feel that the quality of their access to managers has been affected by their homeworking, and are of the view that insufficient priority is given to line management of staff alongside managers' other pressures. Some feel they would benefit from a clearer checklist of work requirements, on a daily or weekly basis. A number of employees are also of the view that more could be done to adapt working practices to the realities of working from home, for example by reducing requirements for hard signatures, and recognising more limited access to printing facilities for homeworkers. Reference was also made to difficulties maintaining a separation between working and non-working hours, particularly where employees may receive work communication by SMS or other means outwith normal working hours.

- ❖ **Communication.** Some employees have been frustrated by difficulties contacting colleagues and other Council staff, for example due to extensions having not been diverted or difficulties using 'soft phones'. There is also a perceived need for better access to admin support and other services such as legal and procurement.

## Council vision and values

38. The survey asked employees whether they were familiar with the Council's vision and values. As Figure 13 shows, a large majority (81%) of employees are aware of the Council's vision and values, while 19% feel they are not familiar with these. This finding is consistent with that reported in 2019, and is broadly similar across key respondent groups.

**Figure 13: Employee awareness of the Council's vision and values**



## Variation in views by directorate

39. Over the preceding pages we have highlighted statistically significant differences in survey findings across key respondent groups, including across the four directorate areas. Figure 14 over the page provides an overview of significant variation in survey results across the four directorates.
40. This suggests that there is not a consistent pattern of more positive or negative views within specific directorates. Place employees are generally less positive than others (in relation to 4 of the 14 indicators), but this is primarily in relation to employee views on communication - Place employees are similar to others in relation to employee engagement and mental wellbeing. People employees are also mixed in their views; more positive than others on 4 indicators (primarily relating to communication) but less positive than others on 3 indicators (primarily on homeworking).
41. Partnership & Performance is the only directorate not to report more negative views than others against any of the indicators, and are more positive than others in relation to 3 of the 14 indicators (primarily on homeworking). Health & Social Care Partnership (HSCP) employees are more positive than others in relation to 2 indicators and less positive than others on 1 indicator, with no clear positive or negative themes.

Figure 14: Significant differences in employee views by directorate

|   | People | Partnership & Performance | Place | HSCP |
|---|--------|---------------------------|-------|------|
| <b>Employee engagement</b>  |        |                           |       |      |
| I am given the opportunity to make decisions relating my role                 | 76%    | 71%                       | 70%   | 76%  |
| I feel valued for the work I do   | 68%    | 63%                       | 58%   | 62%  |
| I feel a sense of achievement for the work I do                               | 81%    | 68%                       | 76%   | 83%  |
| I feel that I am treated with dignity and respect within my team              | 80%    | 72%                       | 73%   | 79%  |
| I am clear about how I contribute to the organisation's goals                 | 79%    | 71%                       | 65%   | 77%  |
| <b>Mental health and wellbeing</b>  |        |                           |       |      |
| I have excellent/good mental wellbeing right now                              | 49%    | 48%                       | 54%   | 58%  |
| I feel supported by the Council to undertake work effectively                 | 52%    | 55%                       | 50%   | 55%  |
| I have accessed Council staff wellbeing webpages                              | 21%    | 43%                       | 38%   | 46%  |
| <b>Communication</b>  |        |                           |       |      |
| I am kept up to date with the latest information from around the organisation | 64%    | 55%                       | 47%   | 59%  |
| I feel supported by manager / supervisor                                      | 77%    | 72%                       | 66%   | 69%  |
| I am contacted by my manager at least once a week                             | 74%    | 63%                       | 59%   | 78%  |
| I have enough contact with manager  | 76%    | 64%                       | 62%   | 70%  |
| <b>Homeworking</b>  |        |                           |       |      |
| I have the tools needed to work effectively from home                         | 46%    | 69%                       | 65%   | 30%  |
| Working from home has negatively affected my productivity                     | 19%    | 7%                        | 18%   | 13%  |

**Green** Significantly more likely to agree with statement

**Red** Significantly less likely to agree with statement

## Other comments

42. The survey also gave employees the opportunity to add any further written comments regarding their wellbeing, communication, or homeworking.
43. Around a third of survey respondents provided written comments here. A number of respondents used the opportunity to comment positively on their experience over the last year, particularly in relation to homeworking – “I do enjoy working from home, feel my work/life balance is better”. Indeed, some expressed concerns regarding how they will adapt to returning to their ‘normal’ workplace after lockdown ends. Respondents also noted the particular challenges experienced at outset of the Covid-19 pandemic, and recognised the effort put in to address these. Some noted that their experience of homeworking had improved as these initial issues were resolved – “homeworking has been challenging...however the Council as an organisation have been hugely supportive and understanding”.
44. However, most of those providing written comment suggested changes to address issues or concerns, including from some who noted that they generally enjoyed working from home. Below we summarise the key points raised.
  - ❖ The most common focus for comments was around employees’ **wellbeing**, particularly in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic and increased homeworking. Specific issues and suggestions included:
    - A range of employees suggested that more limited communication with work colleagues had contributed to their feeling isolated and demotivated. For some this was primarily due to a lack of social contact with colleagues, but others suggested that a lack of communication was limiting their capacity to fulfill their role. For some, this has been compounded by a change in the focus of their work resulting in reduced job satisfaction. Several respondents were of the view that “morale is at an all time low”.
    - Safety from Covid-19 in the workplace was a significant concern for some, and particularly for education employees. This included concerns regarding safety standards for employees in the workplace, a perceived lack of clarity around how and where specific standards are applied, and the extent to which agreed protocols are being compromised to maintain productivity. Reference was also made to employees feeling at risk due to the perceived poor standard of cleaning in the workplace – again this was a particular concern in schools.
    - Employees expressed concern regarding the ‘manner’ of some managers, and suggested this has had a negative impact on their wellbeing and mental health. This included particular reference to some male managers who were perceived to be excessively ‘confrontational’ in their communication with staff. Some also saw a need for better understanding from senior management of the realities of increased workload and pressure on employees during the pandemic.

- Some suggested that absence management procedures have been particularly important during the Covid-19 pandemic, in the context of increased rates of illness and a wider increase in pressure and stress for some employees. Some felt that implementation of absence management procedures had lacked sensitivity in some instances, and there was a perceived need to ensure proper implementation of action plans agreed to enable staff to return from absence.
  - A small number of employees referred to bullying and harassment of employees by colleagues, managers and others, and felt that a culture change is required across some teams
  - It was suggested that a ‘mental health and wellbeing team’ is required, to take a more proactive role in monitoring employees’ wellbeing and identifying need for support or guidance.
- ❖ Comments also referred to ongoing pressure on **resources and staffing**, and what was seen as **excessive workload** for some employees. This included a particular focus on the impact of Covid-19 on workload and pressures on employees. Specific issues included:
  - There was a perception that the Covid-19 pandemic has increased pressure across all parts of the Council. This included some who felt that they were expected to “keep doing everything” despite the impact of the pandemic, rather than prioritising key services and activities.
  - Some were of the view that a lack of staffing resources was placing further pressure on employees across the Council, and that this had been detrimental to their wellbeing. A number of respondents noted that staff are working hard to deal with the increased pressure and workload, but some felt that “[we are] fighting a losing battle covering the gaps in service”. Some employees also noted that they had been required to change their working arrangements several times during the Covid-19 pandemic, and highlighted the potential impact of this in terms of employees feeling anxious and unsettled.
- ❖ Comments around **communication** included several respondents who highlighted the particular importance of communication for homeworkers – “good communication is key to [our] wellbeing and practice”. Specific concerns raised in relation to communication included:
  - Concerns were raised that communication within teams is not being maintained, and would benefit from regular minuted team meetings. Some indicated that this lack of communication left them feeling that they “had been left to get on with it”.
  - Some suggested that communication from senior management has also been poor, and felt that they were not being given the information they needed to work effectively from home.

- ❖ Comments around **homeworking** reflected some of the themes highlighted earlier in this section (see para 36). This included a range of employees noting the benefits of homeworking for their productivity, and wider benefits such as better management of health/mobility conditions, better work/life balance and protection for at risk household members. Specific issues and suggestions raised in relation to homeworking included:
  - Some wished the Council would allow homeworking to continue after the Covid-19 pandemic, and/or for greater flexibility in working arrangements more widely.
  - Some highlighted challenges which have hindered their ability to carry out their role. These included a lack of access to printing facilities at home, and an inability to send or receive confidential information (e.g. where employees are using their personal laptop for homeworking). More widely, limited access to equipment and software was seen as having limited the ability of some employees to work effectively from home. It was suggested that access to laptops and other equipment could have been better prioritised to ensure employees are not significantly hindered in their work.
  - Some homeworkers reiterated issues noted above associated with more limited communication within and between teams, including loneliness and demotivation. Some indicated that they had reached the point of wishing to leave the Council.
  - Some were concerned that homeworking has disadvantaged some employees, particularly those with excessive workload who may struggle to take up their leave entitlement to provide support to family etc during the pandemic.

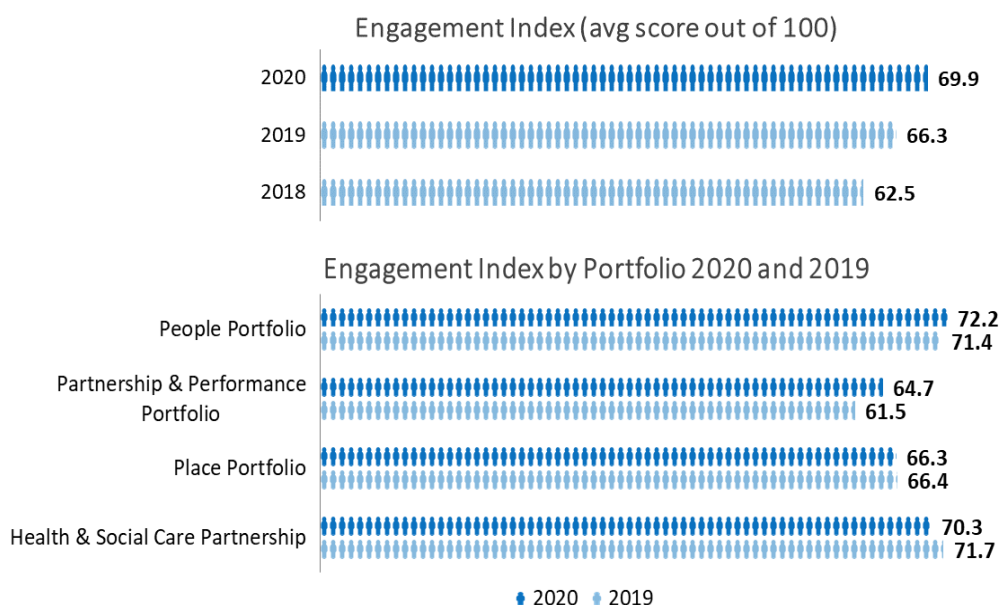
## ENGAGEMENT INDEX

45. The previous section considered employees' views across a range of themes relating to their working lives. This included a series of statements relating to employee engagement with the Council. Survey analysis used responses to these statements to calculate an aggregate 'Engagement Score' for each respondent, as an indication of individuals' level of engagement and commitment to the Council as an employer. The Engagement Score is out of 100, and is based on responses to the following five statements:<sup>1</sup>

- ❖ "I am given the opportunity to make decisions relating to my role".
- ❖ "I feel valued for the work I do".
- ❖ "I feel a sense of achievement for the work I do".
- ❖ "I feel that I am treated with dignity and respect within my team"
- ❖ "I am clear about how I contribute to the organisation's goals".

46. As figure 15 shows, the average Engagement Score across the Council as a whole is 69.9 out of 100. This is a positive overall finding, but the score is most useful as an indication of variation in employee attitudes over time or across employee groups. In this context, the overall average represents a continuing improvement since the 2018 survey (of 5% since 2019 and 12% since 2018). It is also notable that employee engagement appears strongest for People and HSCP employees (averages of 72.2 and 70.3 respectively) and are lowest for Partnership & Performance employees (average of 64.7). This is consistent with the profile of employee engagement scores in 2019.

**Figure 15: Engagement Score by directorate**



<sup>1</sup> The calculation is structured such that an individual scores 0 if they strongly disagree with all five statements, and scores 100 where they strongly agree with all statements.



## Key drivers of engagement

47. While there is some variation in employee engagement scores across directorate, survey data indicates that engagement is more likely to be linked to an employee's views on specific aspects of their work rather than, for example, the directorate they work in, current working environment or length of employment with the Council. Specifically, survey analysis indicates that the following appear to have a particularly significant impact on employee engagement:
- ❖ Being treated with **dignity and respect** and feeling **valued**;
  - ❖ Feeling a **sense of achievement** for their work;
  - ❖ Being **clear on their objectives** and how they contribute to the Council's goals;
  - ❖ Having the opportunity to **make decisions**; and
  - ❖ Getting the **support** they need to do their job well.
48. By combining the above analysis with employee views on specific statements, we can identify those aspects of employees' work where there is scope for improvement, and where this would have the greatest impact on employee engagement. Specifically, the table below identifies the areas currently having the most positive impact on employee engagement, and those where improvement would have the most positive impact on engagement.

**Figure 16: Aspects of employees' work having the greatest impact on engagement**

|  |
|--|
| <b>Currently having a positive impact – areas to maintain performance</b><br>Strong correlation with employee engagement, and positive employee views              |
| I feel that I am treated with dignity and respect within my team   |
| I feel a sense of achievement for the work I do  |
| I am clear about how I contribute to the organisation's goals  |
| I am given the opportunity to make decisions relating my role  |
| I feel supported by my manager / supervisor  |
| <b>Currently having a less positive impact – potential improvement priorities</b><br>Strong correlation with employee engagement, but less positive employee views |
| I feel valued for the work I do  |
| I feel supported by the Council to undertake work effectively  |

## ANNEX: TABULAR RESULTS

### Employee Engagement

|  | AGREE | DISAGREE | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree | Base |
|--|-------|----------|----------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|-------------------|------|
| I am given the opportunity to make decisions relating my role    | 74%   | 14%      | 22%            | 51%   | 13%                        | 9%       | 4%                | 710  |
| I feel valued for the work I do                                  | 64%   | 18%      | 21%            | 43%   | 19%                        | 11%      | 7%                | 706  |
| I feel a sense of achievement for the work I do                  | 79%   | 9%       | 28%            | 51%   | 12%                        | 5%       | 4%                | 702  |
| I feel that I am treated with dignity and respect within my team | 78%   | 11%      | 33%            | 44%   | 12%                        | 6%       | 4%                | 707  |
| I am clear about how I contribute to the organisation's goals    | 75%   | 11%      | 24%            | 50%   | 15%                        | 7%       | 4%                | 704  |

### Mental health and wellbeing

|   | EXCELLENT/<br>GOOD | VERY POOR/<br>POOR | Excellent | Good | Fair | Poor | Very poor | Base |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|-----------|------|------|------|-----------|------|
| How would you rate your mental wellbeing right now? | 50%                | 15%                | 9%        | 41%  | 34%  | 11%  | 4%        | 703  |

|  | AGREE | DISAGREE | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree | Base |
|--|-------|----------|----------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|-------------------|------|
| Do you feel supported by the Council to undertake your work effectively? | 51%   | 19%      | 8%             | 43%   | 30%                        | 13%      | 7%                | 701  |

|  | AT LEAST ONCE<br>A FORTNIGHT | HAVE<br>ACCESSED | More than<br>once a week | At least<br>once a<br>week | At least once a<br>fortnight | At least<br>once a<br>month | Not at all | Base |
|--|------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|------|
| How often do you access the wellbeing page on <a href="http://www.clacks.gov.uk/staff?">www.clacks.gov.uk/staff?</a> | 11%                          | 29%              | 1%                       | 5%                         | 5%                           | 18%                         | 71%        | 703  |

### Communication

|  | AGREE | DISAGREE | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree | Base |
|--|-------|----------|----------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|-------------------|------|
| To what extent do you feel you are being kept up to date with the latest information from around the organisation? | 58%   | 19%      | 13%            | 45%   | 23%                        | 13%      | 6%                | 696  |

|   | AGREE                | DISAGREE                  | Strongly agree       | Agree                | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree             | Strongly disagree | Base |
|---|----------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------|
| Do you feel supported by your manager / supervisor?   | <b>72%</b>           | <b>13%</b>                | 35%                  | 37%                  | 15%                        | 8%                   | 5%                | 694  |
|   | AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK | At least once a fortnight | At least once a week | Several times a week | At least once a day        | As and when required | Never             | Base |
| How often does your manager keep in contact with you?   | <b>64%</b>           | 5%                        | 18%                  | 19%                  | 27%                        | 29%                  | 2%                | 691  |
|   | Face to face         | MS Teams                  | Facebook             | WhatsApp             | Text message               | Telephone            | Other method      | Base |
| What communication options does your manager use to keep in touch with you? Select ALL that apply | 66%                  | 31%                       | 2%                   | 35%                  | 34%                        | 55%                  | 33%               | 686  |
|   | AGREE                | DISAGREE                  | Strongly agree       | Agree                | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree             | Strongly disagree | Base |
| To what extent do you agree or disagree that you have enough contact with your manager?           | <b>71%</b>           | <b>12%</b>                | 31%                  | 40%                  | 17%                        | 9%                   | 4%                | 694  |

## Homeworking

|   | AGREE      | DISAGREE   | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree | Base |
|---|------------|------------|----------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|-------------------|------|
| To what extent do you agree or disagree that you have the tools you need to work effectively from home? | <b>50%</b> | <b>27%</b> | 14%            | 36%   | 23%                        | 17%      | 10%               | 642  |
|   | AGREE      | DISAGREE   | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree | Base |
| Do you feel that working from home has negatively affected your productivity?                           | <b>18%</b> | <b>45%</b> | 5%             | 12%   | 38%                        | 29%      | 16%               | 630  |

## Council values

|  | Yes | No  | Base |
|--|-----|-----|------|
| Are you familiar with the Council's vision and values? | 81% | 19% | 665  |

