

**Report of the Executive Director of Core Services to the
Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC)
on 6th June 2023**

Barnsley Council Employee Survey 2022

1.0 Introduction

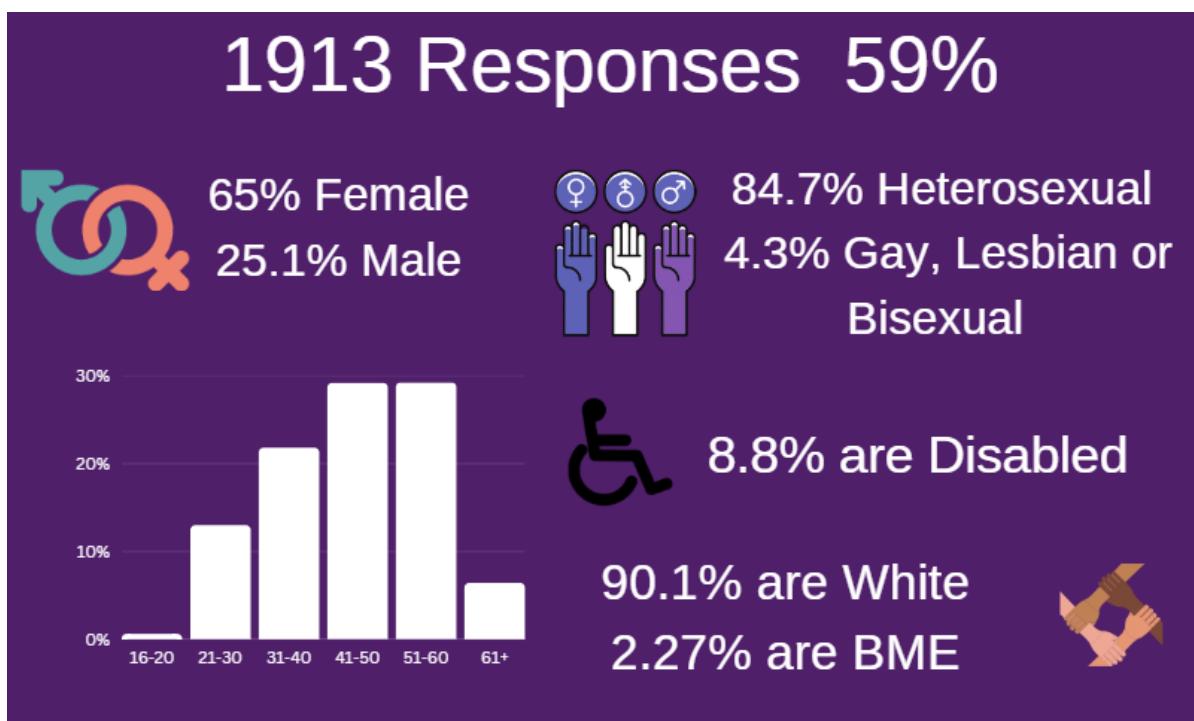
- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in relation to the Employee Survey Results from 2022 and the plans to address responses raised by staff.
- 1.2 The survey ran throughout September 2022 and closed in the first week of October. Provision was made for non-networked employees to have an opportunity to complete the survey. The questions were focused on the three themes in our people strategy (Leadership, Values & Culture, Maximising Capacity and Capability and Employee Experience).
- 1.3 There were 1,913 responses in total, a response rate of 59%, which is very good and is just slightly below the previous rates for our full surveys (2019 64%, 2017 61%). Core Directorate had the highest response rate of 70.7%, followed by Public Health and Communities (56%), Place Health & ASC (55.5%), Children's (53.3%) and Growth and Sustainability (45.3%).

2.0 Survey Findings

Demographics

- 2.1 Figure 1 (below) shows the demographic breakdown of respondents. 65% were female and 25% were male. The majority of respondents were between 40 and 60 years of age (almost 60%). 8.8% of respondents declared a disability, this is lower than the Barnsley disability estimate of 22% (Source: Census 2021). The demographic profile of respondents remains broadly similar to the 2017 survey showing that the workforce demographic has not changed significantly.

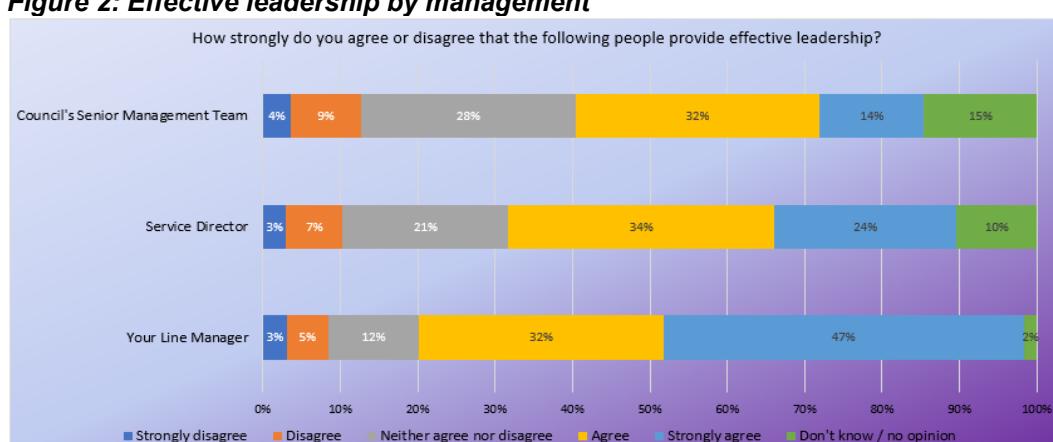
Figure 1 – Employee Survey demographic data of respondents



Leadership, Values and Culture

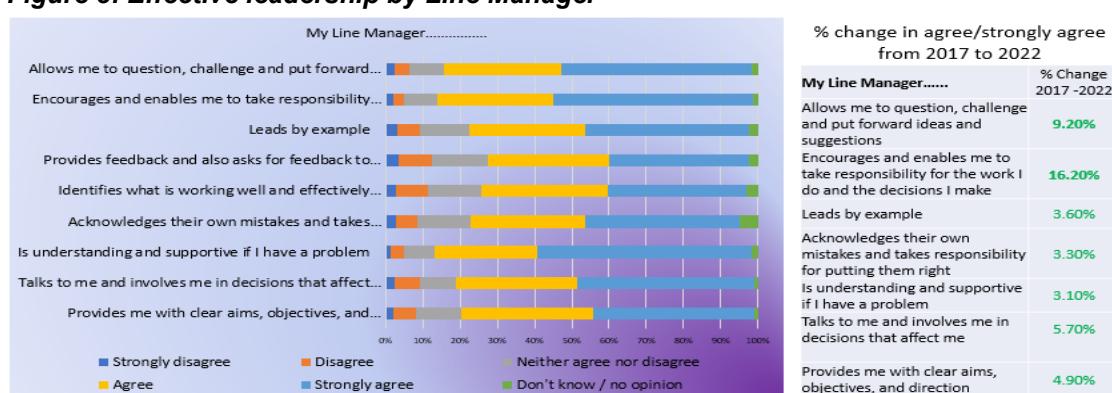
- 2.2 Figure 2 (below) shows responses from employees who were asked about effective leadership and levels of management. 45.1% of employees agree or strongly agree that the Senior Management Team (SMT) provide effective leadership (12.7% disagree / strongly disagree), interestingly 27.7% neither agree nor disagree.
- 2.3 57.8% of people agree or strongly agree that their Service Director provides effective leadership (10.3% disagree / strongly disagree). 78.1% of people agree or strongly agree that their line manager provides effective leadership (8.4% disagree / strongly disagree).

Figure 2: Effective leadership by management



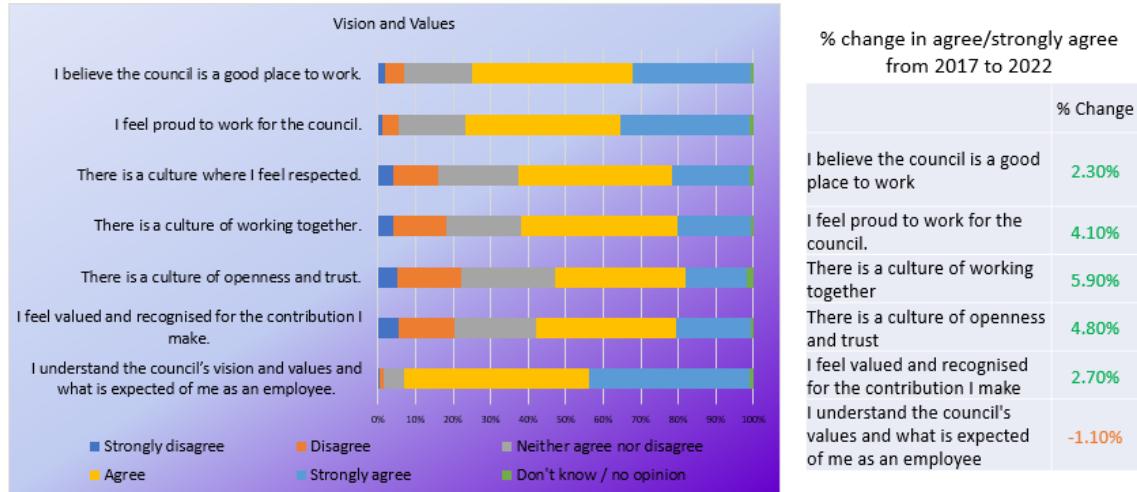
- 2.4 Figure 3 (below) shows responses from employees when asked about their direct line management. There was some positive feedback from staff in relation to their direct line manager. Particular highlights include:
- 85% of people feel that their manager is understanding and supportive if they have a problem
 - 84.8% feel that their line manager encourages and enables them to take responsibility for the work they do and the decisions they make
 - 82.6% feel that their line manager allows them to question, challenge and put forward ideas and suggestions
- 2.5 All areas have shown a positive shift compared to 2017. However, there are some real improvements in encouragement to take responsibility and decisions (+16.2%) and allowing them to question and challenge (+9.2%).

Figure 3: Effective leadership by Line Manager



- 2.6 Figure 4 (below) shows the results of the questions around understanding of the council's vision and values. 75.8% of people feel proud to work for the council, and 74.2% believe the council is a good place to work. 51.1% of people feel that there is a culture of openness and trust, but 22.3% do not. 57.2% feel valued and recognised for the contribution they make, however 20.3% do not. 92.1% understand the vision and values and what is expected of them. These are mostly positive shifts compared to 2017, except a very slight decrease around understanding the vision and values.

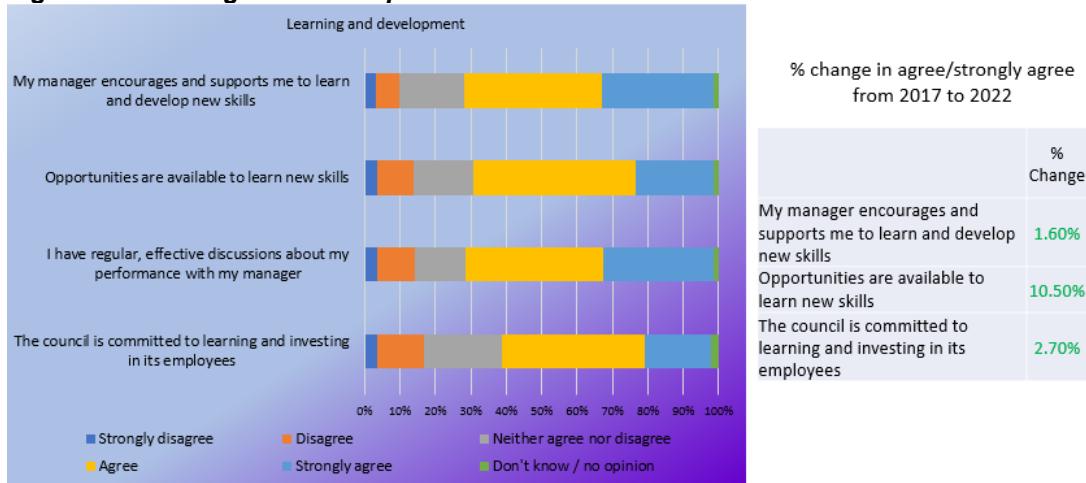
Figure 4: Vision and Values



Maximising Capacity and Capability

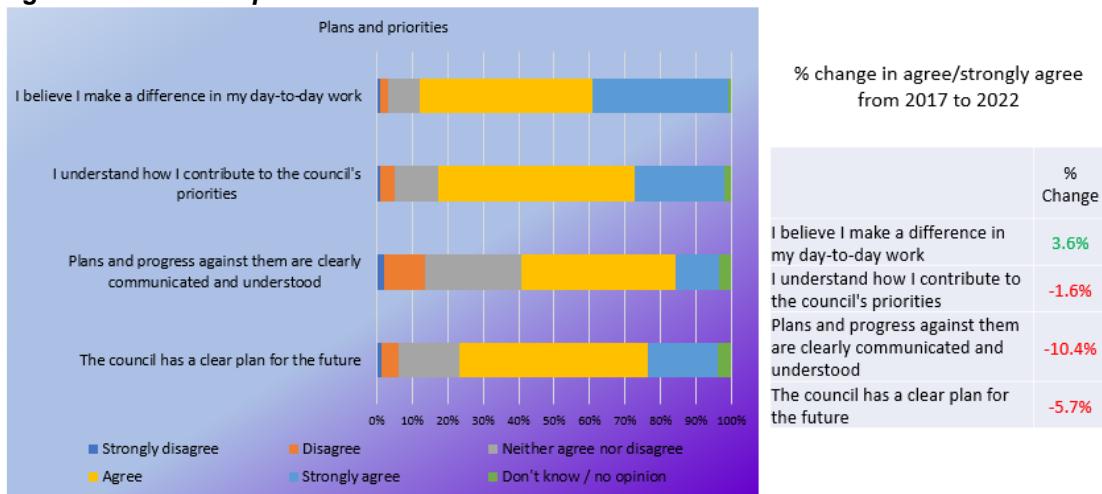
- 2.7 Figure 5 (below) outlines responses in relation to employee Learning and development. 70.2% of employees feel encouraged and supported by their manager to develop new skills. 65.8% of employees feel that there are opportunities to learn new skills. 70.1% of people have regular, effective discussions with their manager about their performance. 56.4% of people think that the council is committed to learning and investing in its employees, however 16.6% disagree / strongly disagree with this. Positive shifts from 2017 on all comparable questions were observed, but particularly in relation to available opportunities to learn new skills (+10.5%).

Figure 5: Learning and development



- 2.8 The figure below (figure 6) shows the results of questions around contributing and plans and priorities. 87.2% of people believe they make a difference in their day-to-day work. 80.8% of staff understand how they contribute to our priorities 55.7% of staff think that plans and progress against them are clearly communicated and understood, interestingly over 30% have no opinion 73.1% of employees think that the council has a plan for the future.
- 2.9 There were mostly negative shifts from 2017, particularly in relation to plans and progress being clearly communicated (-10.4% compared to 2017). Positive shift (3.6%) in making a difference.

Figure 6: Plans and priorities



- 2.10 Employees were asked about job satisfaction and retention. 70.1% of staff are satisfied with their current job, with 17.4% being either fairly or very dissatisfied. 13.7% are seeking alternative employment within the next 12 months, and 30.3% may seek alternative employment. People are considering this for a combination of reasons, but the highest single reason is pay (22.2%).

Employee Experience

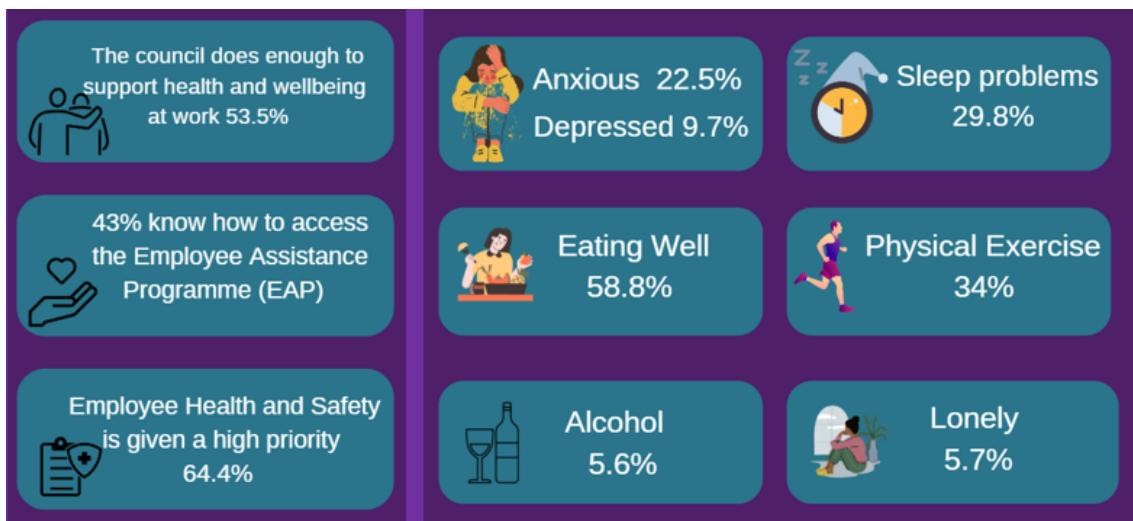
- 2.11 Employees were asked what is the single best thing about working for the council. This was a free text field. There were almost 1,450 responses to this question. These were coded from their raw form into emerging themes.

- 31.72% say the single best thing is the team. Comments range from co-workers to managers to leaders.
- Almost 25% said that flexibility was the best thing, this was mainly in relation to flexible working (term time etc) to the flexi time scheme and working from home.
- 19.1% said that serving their community and making a difference to residents was the best thing about working for the council.
- 13.1% said that employee benefits, pensions, leave entitlements, rates of pay and sick pay were cited.
- Culture, staff development and location were also cited, however to a much lesser extent.

- 2.12 Employees were asked about their health and wellbeing (figure 7 below). The key findings were 53.5% of people feel that the council does enough to support health and wellbeing at work, and 16.7% of people disagree or strongly disagree with this. This is a negative shift (- 10% compared to 2017).

- 2.13 64.4% of employees feel that employee health & safety is given a high priority, this is a small negative shift from 2017 (-3%). 90% of employees know what they need to do in their role to minimise health and safety risks (this was 92.4% in 2017). 43% of employees know that we have an employee assistance programme (EAP) and how to access it, a further 18% know it exists, but not how to access it and 38.7% did not know that the EAP existed.

Figure 7: Health and wellbeing



2.14 Employees were asked their opinion on hybrid working, the key findings (figure 8 below) were:

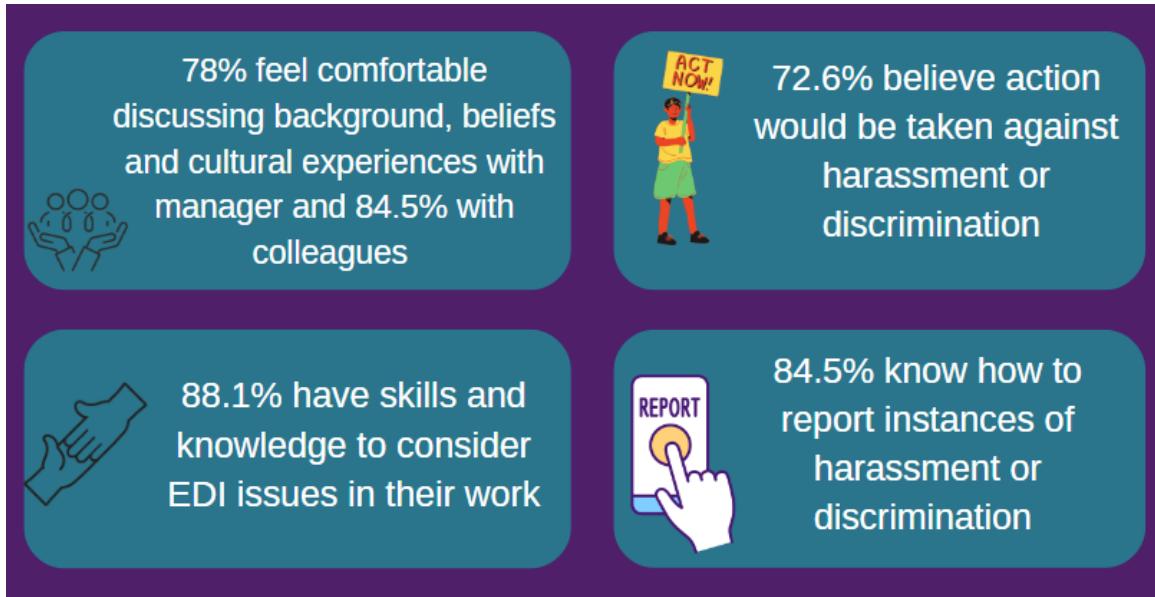
- 74.4% feel that we are providing the best service to our customers
- 72.6 % feel connected to their team, however 11.3% do not
- 49.7% are satisfied with the balance of time spent in the office and working from home and 30.8% are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied
- 58.2% are happy with the equipment and resources and 20.8% are either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied
- 45.2% are happy with the new office environment, but 24.8 are either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

Figure 8: Hybrid Working



2.15 There was a section in the report around inclusivity figure 9 (below) outlines the key findings in relation to this. A number of themes emerged when we asked what we could do to improve inclusivity, the top three themes were training, staff networks and recruitment, which all form part of our action plan.

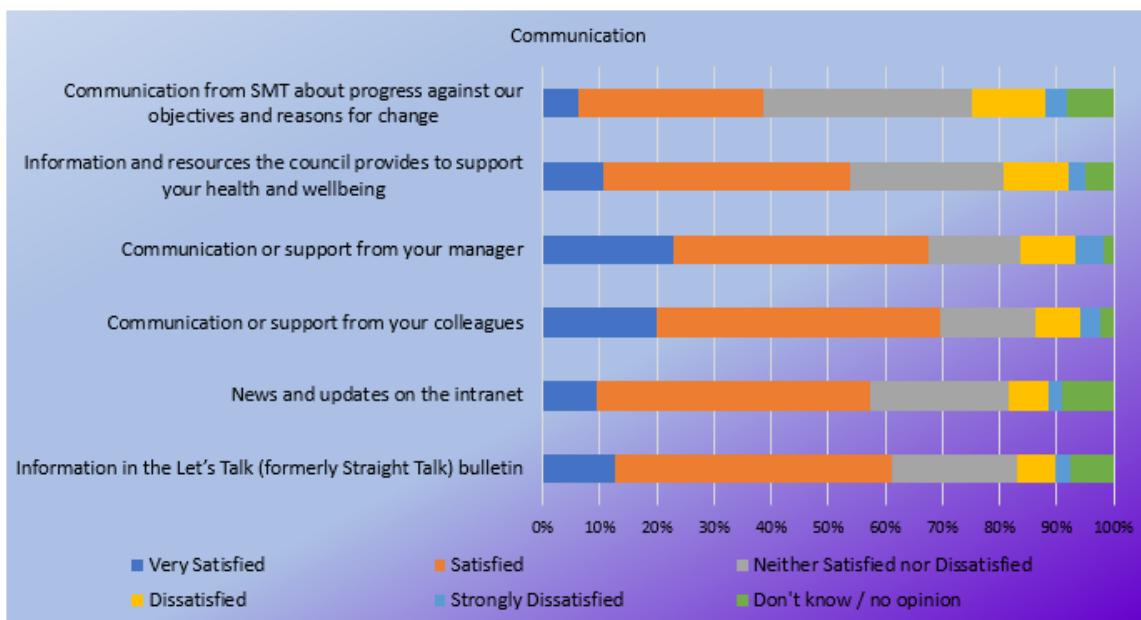
Figure 9: Inclusivity



2.16 Some of the key findings from the questions asked around communication (figure 10) were:

- 38.7% of employees are satisfied or very satisfied with communication from SMT about progress against our objectives and reasons for change, 16.9% are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied
- 53.9% are happy with the information and resources the council provides to support health and wellbeing, and 14% are not
- 67.5% are happy with communication from managers, and 14.6% are not.
- 67.5% are happy with their communication with colleagues
- 57.4% are satisfied with the information in Let's Talk and 61.2% are satisfied with the news and updates on the intranet

Figure 10: Communication

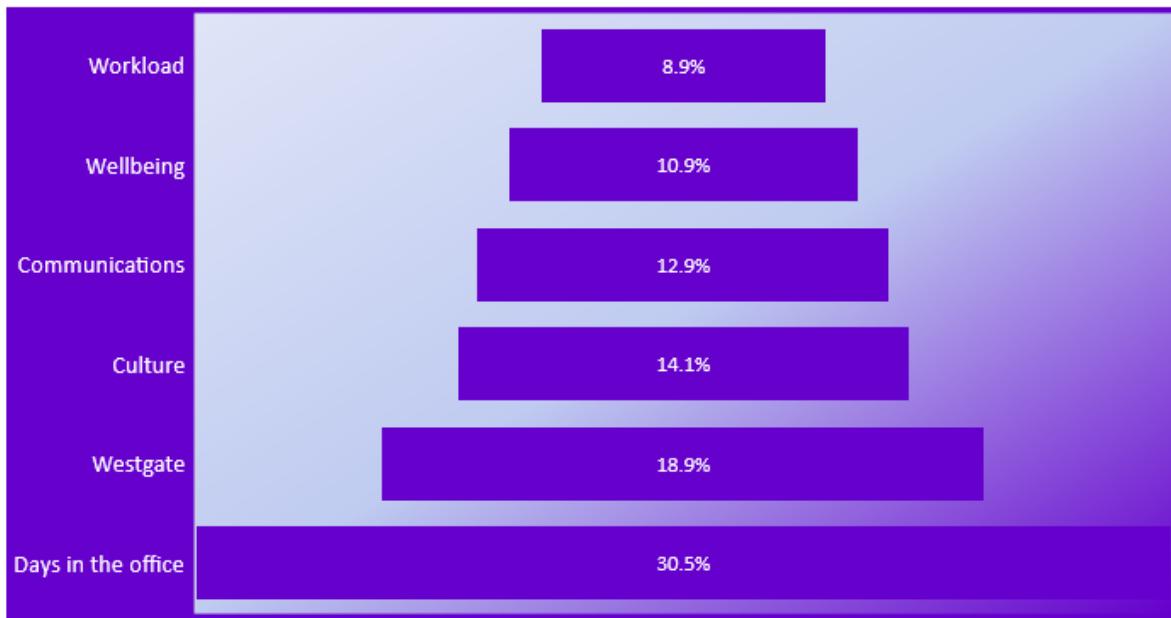


2.17 At the end of the survey, an additional question which allowed staff to provide free text comments was included. 404 Free text comments were received and they were coded based on themes (figure 11). One comment may have mentioned more than one theme. The “top 3” emerging themes are:

- 123 comments were received specifically about the three days in the office approach, most expressing a preference for two days to a few wishing to be fully remote.
- 76 comments were received in relation to Westgate. The focus of these comments was noise levels, office layout, lack of private spaces and issues with equipment (screens, mice, and keyboards).

- 57 comments were made in respect of the culture of the organisation. Comments were made in relation to lack of respect, blame culture and inconsistency in approach across teams.

Figure 11: Coded free text comments



3.0 Responding to the Survey

- 3.1 In January the full survey response details were shared with the Barnsley Leadership Team (BLT) and then all business units (BU's). In February 2023 a dashboard of the full survey results was made available to all employees. This is the first time that full transparency of the results has been provided, enabling anyone to view the results of any area across the council. This has been an important improvement in our ongoing work around employee engagement, demonstrating our values of Trust and Excellence, and allowing colleagues to compare the results in their area with those of other services, business units and the wider council.
- 3.2 The BLT session in January resulted in an agreement for service leads in each business unit to analyse the results in their area and engage with their people to produce a business unit action plan. The action plans should focus on what is going well (positive results), to include how successes and good practice can be built on and shared more widely across the council, as well as reviewing the key areas with lower scores where ideas could be collated to help improve understanding and practice. Business units were encouraged to involve their people in this activity, enabling them to dig beneath the surface of the results to really understand what was going well and what areas could be improved.
- 3.3 All business unit action plans were created by April 2023 and submitted centrally to the HR & OD team for review. Business units are currently working with their Senior HR / OD Partners to complete the actions detailed in their individual action plans, working with their people to do this in the most effective way.
- 3.4 In order to assist with the compilation of a council action plan, employees were also asked to volunteer to join an Employee Experience Group. The group comprises volunteers representing all areas of the council to champion engagement activities and address key themes highlighted in employee surveys. The group is focussing on ways to improve the employee experience by considering key topics including change, health and wellbeing, work-life balance and communications.
- 3.5 After reviewing the data from each of the 11 business unit action plans, some consistent themes have been identified and examples of actions already underway, as well as further actions being planned and are included in figure 12 below.

Figure 12 Examples of actions from Business Unit Plans

Theme	Number of action plans including theme	Example actions already taken	Further actions planned
Learning and development	10	Launching practice standards within Social Care (good practice).	Increase and encourage opportunities for employees to learn new skills through the one to ones, PDR processes and individual/team development plans.
		Celebration of development through a suite of events delivered during Learning at Work Week (May 2023).	Produce a comprehensive learning and development offer for Children's Services.
			Produce a development matrix to assist with career development and succession planning.
PDR usage and development	9	Engaging with people who are indicating they wish to leave the council to better understand why and work to improve workforce retention, culture and environment.	Ensure all development identified through PDR's is fed into team and service development plans.
			Continue to monitor data on PDR's ensuring they are completed in a timely manner.
Team meetings/development days	8	Undertaking leadership development sessions on a monthly basis, focussing on improving the culture of the directorate.	Undertake whole service events focussing on 'getting to know each other and our services'.
		Clear and open communications with employees both formally through team meetings and development days and informally through regular one to ones.	Include a wellbeing section during development days/ team sessions to share the variety of services available, including our Employee Assistance Programme.
		Some teams are holding team development events, including Children's World Café event.	Promotion of benefits of team development events and provision of guidance on effective one to ones (HR&OD)

Comms.	8	The service has worked to create a service specific vision and guiding principles for Children's Services.	Continue developing a communications and engagement strategy.
		Adapted and implemented quarterly team sessions with Service Directors.	Service Directors to draft and communicate blogs to share key messages, including successes identified from the employee survey.
		Encourage people to allocate 30 mins to one hour a week in calendar to catch up on corporate messages.	Create more frequent BU briefings / communications to share the council priorities and progress made.
Health and Wellbeing Support	8	Including signposting to wellbeing support as part of regular one to ones.	Raise further awareness of health and wellbeing information through the directorate newsletter and whole service events.
		Fact finding to understand how employees have been recently exposed and affected by a traumatic work-related incident and how they could have been supported in the initial stages. It is also necessary to determine what improvements could have been made in the first instance. This may result in OHU/EAP referral or signposting	Consider delivery of a series of webinars to promote health and wellbeing e.g., mindfulness, getting a good night's sleep sessions
Supervision / one to ones	7		Ensure that effective professional supervision takes place using the corporate supervision template which promotes both providing and requesting feedback to help improvements.
			Ensure that one to ones are consistent across the BU in terms of frequency, quality and subjects covered.
Line manager competency	5	Review of key HR policies, e.g., Managing Attendance, with mandatory briefings and workshops planned for all line managers (HR working with services)	Ongoing programme of management basics training being planned for 2023/24 (HR working with services).
			Change management training being developed to assist leaders in delivering Transformation (Transformation team and HR).

Recognition of work	5	Continue to build and support a positive culture, recognising contributions, saying 'thank you' and seeking out ways to make employees feel more valued.	Seek feedback from employees via team meetings and supervision meetings on what feedback would be most valued and use the council processes to highlight achievement.
			Explore 'Praise' function on teams.
Visibility of SMT	4	Executive Directors attending service meetings during the year to engage with employees	Encourage leaders at all levels of the team to be more visible in all working locations across the borough.
			SMT / BLT to be more visible i.e. at cross directorate meetings.
			Instigate floorplate stand ups at Westgate

4.0 Next Steps

- 4.1 As a result of the shared Business Unit (BU) action plans the HR and Organisation Development service will:
- Continue to monitor the ongoing developments within business unit action plans seeking updates from services and reporting progress to the People Board
 - Support services in achieving their actions by providing signposting, support, advice and guidance
 - Create a council action plan based on the key themes identified and continue to share good practice improvements with our people
 - Continue development of management basics training to support our people including the creation and implementation of a council coaching and mentoring scheme
 - Review, launch and roll out the Workforce Development Toolkit to enable career development and succession planning
 - Provide further guidance to help embed and enhance our PDR process.

5.0 Invited Witnesses

- 5.1 The following witnesses have been invited to today's meeting to answer questions from the OSC:-
- Sarah Norman - Chief Executive, BMBC
 - Wendy Popplewell - Executive Director, Core Services, BMBC
 - Michael Potter - Service Director, Business Intelligence, Human Resources & Communications, BMBC
 - Phil Quinn - Head of Service, Human Resources and Organisational Development, BMBC
 - Cllr Robin Franklin - Cabinet Spokesperson, Core Services

6.0 Possible Areas for Investigation

- 6.1 Members may wish to ask questions around the following areas:-
- Overall, which areas are you most pleased with and which would you like to have done better?

- What analysis has been done to determine which specific sections of the workforce are unrepresented in the survey responses?
- What do you think is the cause for the gender difference in the survey response rate and how do you plan to encourage more male employees to take part?
- How would you describe the culture of the organisation and how do you think this compares to how employees would describe it? What is being done to change practices and perceptions?
- Are there any specific teams within the organisation whose scores may indicate poor management practices? If so, what targeted support is being offered to employees in these areas?
- Why do you think that the satisfaction rate with the effectiveness of management decreases as it moves up through the levels of the organisation? What options are being explored to improve this?
- What benchmarking is being done to see how well the organisation compares to other authorities?
- How does the number of employees looking for, or considering, alternative employment, compare with the industry standard, and what impact would a higher than expected turnover of staff have on the organisation?
- What is the primary driver for the organisation and how do you know whether it is focussing on the right priorities at the right time?
- How can we ensure employees are aware of services like the Employee Assistance Programme and how to access them, and what analysis has been done to determine the impact of the EAP on those who have used it?
- What analysis has been done to determine how effective the current hybrid working arrangements are?
- What outcomes did you hope to achieve with the redevelopment of Westgate and to what extent have these been realised?
- What more needs to be done to enable employees to work more effectively and to instil a stronger feeling of job satisfaction?
- How are business unit action plans being quality assured and how will you know whether they have been successful in improving outcomes for employees and the organisation as a whole?
- How was the Employee Experience Group promoted and what was the take-up? Is the group proportionately representative of the organisation as a whole?
- What can elected members do to support the work?

7.0 Glossary

BLT	Barnsley Leadership Team
BU	Business Unit
EAP	Employee Assistance Programme
HR/OD	Human Resources/Organisational Development
PDR	Performance Development Review
SMT	Senior Management Team

8.0 Officer Contact

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22 May 2023