

Agenda Item	11
Report No	HC/14/20

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: The Highland Council

Date: 30 July 2020

Report Title: Employee Engagement Wellbeing Survey

Report By: Executive Chief Officer - Resources and Finance

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 Highland Council is committed to the health, safety and wellbeing of our workforce. During this period of unprecedented challenge, it is even more important that we listen to our employees' views on how we have managed through the pandemic, and that we continue to involve them as we work through recovery and build a Council for the future.
- 1.2 Our employees' exemplary response to the challenges of the past 3 months has been reflected in their response to the recent Wellbeing Survey. A response rate of 44% for a survey of this type at this difficult and busy time is remarkable and significantly higher than previous surveys.
- 1.3 Headline messages from the survey responses highlight many areas where the Council have managed the response to the pandemic well as well as key learning points that will inform our recovery and future action plans.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
 - i. note the headline messages from the Employee Engagement Wellbeing Survey;
 - ii. note proposed engagement strategy; and
 - iii. agree to report action plans to the next Full Council meeting.

3. Implications

- 3.1 **Resources** – no implications

- 3.2 **Legal** - There are requirements around managing the health, safety and wellbeing of our workforce as contained within current employment legislation.
- 3.3 **Community Impact** (Equality, Poverty, Rural) - A Community Impact Assessment will be undertaken of any new or revised policies as a result of this survey.
- 3.4 **Sustainability / Climate Change** – no implications
- 3.5 **Risk** - A failure to effectively manage the health, safety and wellbeing of our workforce risk legal penalties, loss of employee engagement, adverse publicity and loss of reputation as an employer of choice.
- 3.6 **Gaelic** – no implications

4. **Background**

- 4.1 The first objective of our Workforce Planning Strategy 2017-23 is to *'Position engagement at the heart of everything we do; cultivate our excellent long-standing partnerships with Trade Unions, listen to our employees, communicate regularly and consult meaningfully with Community Planning Partners'*.
- 4.2 During this period of unprecedented challenge caused by the C19 Pandemic, it is even more important that we listen to our employees' views on how we have managed through the pandemic and that we continue to involve them as we work through recovery and build a Council for the future.
- 4.3 Our employees' exemplary response to the challenges of the past 3 months has been reflected in their response to the recent Employee Survey. A response rate of 44% for a survey of this type at this difficult and busy time is remarkable and significantly higher than previous surveys.
- 4.4 The Survey was designed with a number of objectives in mind:
- Welfare check of all employees
 - Check effectiveness of corporate communication
 - Check levels of confidence in our leadership approach
 - Understand barriers to effective home working
 - Capture lessons both positive/negative
- 4.5 This is intended to be a standalone survey and forms part of a wider engagement strategy designed to involve the workforce and our trade union partners in every aspect of our recovery (See **Appendix 1**). Future surveys, developed in consultation with our trade union partners, will focus on:
1. **Volunteering Survey:** Targeted survey to engage and consult stakeholders on their experiences of volunteering before and during the C19 pandemic and their appetite for continuing or increasing this on an ongoing basis.
 2. **Leadership and Culture Survey:** All employee/Member/volunteer surveys to engage with stakeholders to review the effectiveness of leadership during the period of the C19 pandemic including their views on planning, decision making, communication, and support provided. To engage with stakeholders on the effect that the pandemic has had on the culture of the Council; how to build on the positive changes and address the negative changes.

3. **Aftercare Survey:** All employee/Member/volunteer surveys to engage on the aftercare requirements of stakeholders who have been directly affected by the C19 pandemic either through being ill themselves and having residual health problems, have been affected by their role in the delivery of services to others, have been bereaved as a consequence of the pandemic or have other residual needs that can be addressed by the Council
4. **Delivering Improvement Survey:** All employee/Member/volunteer surveys to engage with stakeholders and consult on the measures that the Council can take to drive improvement as we recover from the C19 Pandemic. Views would be sought around the 11 key priorities of the Recovery Board

5. Key Messages from Wellbeing survey

5.1 A number of key messages reflect how well the Council has managed through the pandemic:

- i. 74% of employees agree or strongly agree that they have been kept up to date and feel well informed regarding the Council's response.
- ii. 64% of employees agree or strongly agree that they know where to find updated information on their working arrangements.
- iii. 80% of employees agree or strongly agree that they know who to talk to if they need support.
- iv. 94% of employees agree or strongly agree that they know what they need to do to keep safe and healthy during COVID-19.
- v. 90% of employees know where to access advice on mental health issues.
- vi. Employees were most pleased with how colleagues had responded:
 - Flexibility in the way we get the job done
 - Showing caring towards me and others

5.2 When asked "What recent experiences / ways of working do you think we should capture and ensure we retain for the future", typical feedback included:

- Ability / option of remote working
- Greater flexibility to working hours
- Online training and Continued Professional Development
- Online learning/teaching
- Virtual meetings – use of MS Teams & enhanced ICT connectivity
- Respecting personal space and good hygiene

5.3 As we would expect there are also a number of challenges that we need to deal with going forward:

- i. 13% of employees disagree or strongly disagree that they are coping well so far during the pandemic
- ii. 12% of employees require further support to aid their mental health

iii. 27% of employees are not able to work effectively at the moment

5.4 When asked about overcoming barriers for those who are experiencing difficulties working effectively, typical feedback from employee's included:

- Schools and some workplaces remain closed and staff keen to get back to workplace where they can access what they need
- Childcare – balancing working from home while caring for children/home-schooling
- Lack of direct contact and personal interaction with pupils/clients
- Lack of pupil/parent engagement (with online learning)
- Lack of ICT connectivity
- Lack of ICT skills – this applied to many teachers finding themselves having to deliver lessons online
- Lack of ICT equipment needed to work from home – many using their own laptops and phones

5.5 Officers are currently working with employees and the trade unions to better understand and address these challenges. Section 6 proposes how this work should be taken to Members for scrutiny.

5.6 Detailed survey data is contained in **Appendix 2**.

6. Proposals

6.1 It is proposed that a full analysis of the survey and resulting action plan is reported back to the next Full Council meeting for Member scrutiny.

Designation: Executive Chief Officer - Resources and Finance

Date: 17 July 2020

Authors: Murdo MacDonald, HR Manager
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Appendix 1

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

C19 Recovery – Stakeholder Survey Strategy Overview

Phase 1 - 3

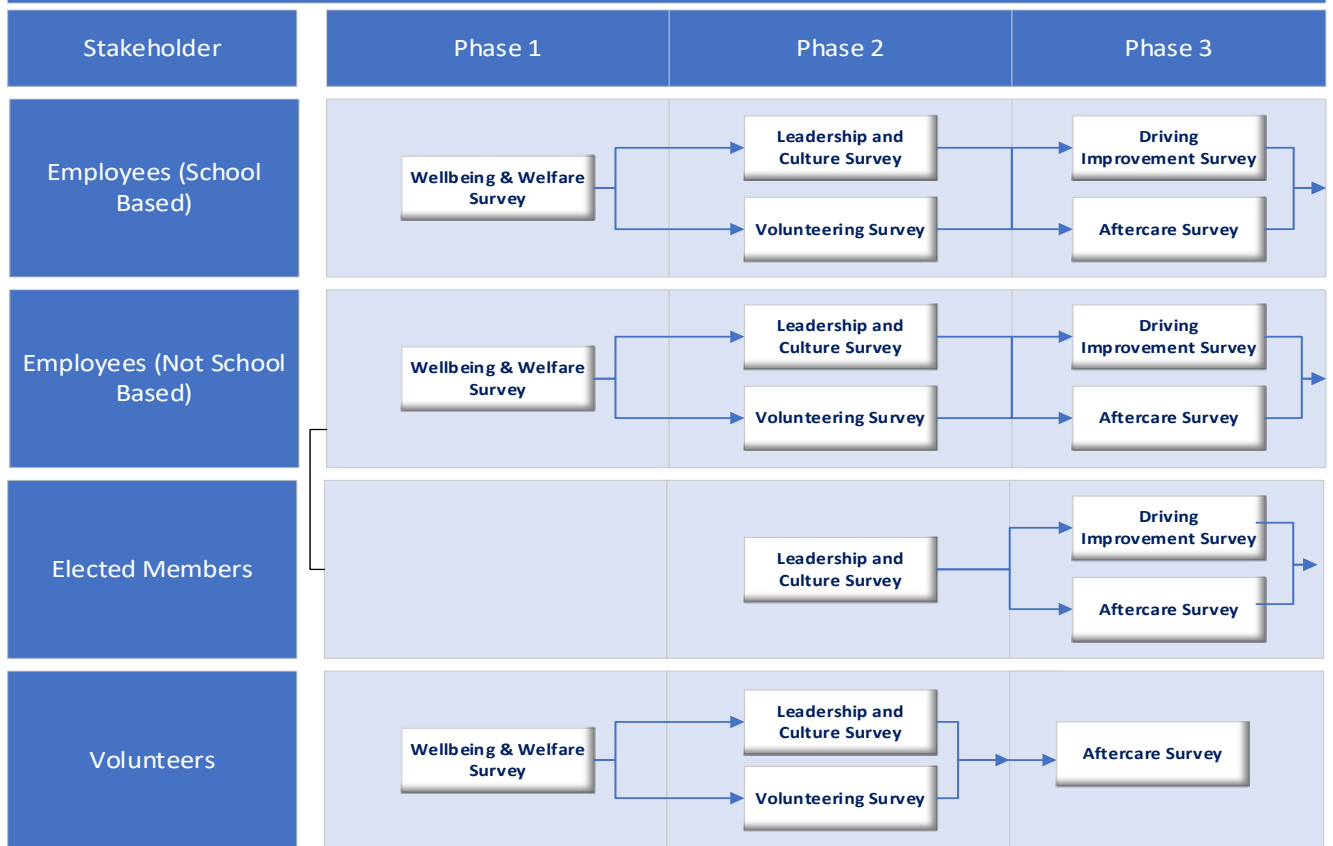
Stakeholders

- Employees (schools based)
- Employees (not schools based)
- Elected Members
- Volunteers

Survey/Engagement

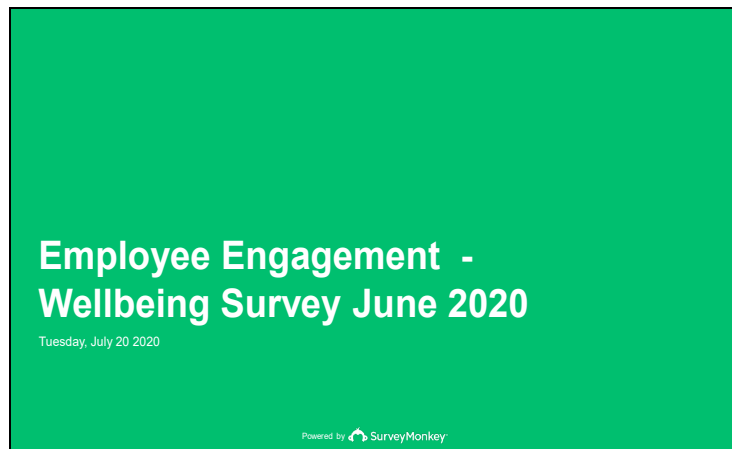
1. **Return to Work (Schools) engagement:** Managers to engage and consult with stakeholder on key topics relating to the return to work in school-based settings
2. **Return to Work (Non-Schools) engagement:** Managers to engage and consult with stakeholder on key topics relating to the return to work in non-school settings
3. **Shielding engagement:** Managers to engage and consult with stakeholders who are shielding on issues relevant to their employment.
4. **Wellbeing and Welfare Survey:** All employee survey to engage and consult with stakeholders on the impact that the C19 pandemic has had on their wellbeing and welfare including; financial, mental and physical health and wellbeing, bereavement, addictive behaviours, domestic abuse. To consult on support that can be provided and services that can be accessed.
5. **Volunteering Survey:** Targeted survey to engage and consult stakeholders on their experiences of volunteering before and during the C19 pandemic and their appetite for continuing or increasing this on an ongoing basis.
6. **Leadership and Culture Survey:** All employee/Member/volunteer surveys to engage with stakeholders to review the effectiveness of leadership during the period of the C19 pandemic including their views on planning, decision making, communication, and support provided. To engage with stakeholders on the effect that the pandemic has had on the culture of the Council; how to build on the positive changes and address the negative changes.
7. **Aftercare Survey:** All employee/Member/volunteer surveys to engage on the aftercare requirements of stakeholders who have been directly affected by the C19 pandemic either through being ill themselves and having residual health problems, have been affected by their role in the delivery of services to others, have been bereaved as a consequence of the pandemic or have other residual needs that can be addressed by the Council.
8. **Delivering Improvement Survey:** All employee/Member/volunteers surveys to engage with stakeholders and consult on the measures that the Council can take to drive improvement as we recover from the C19 Pandemic. Views would be sought around the 11 key priorities of the Recovery Board.

C19 Recovery – Stakeholder Survey Strategy Overview



Appendix 2 – Survey presentation

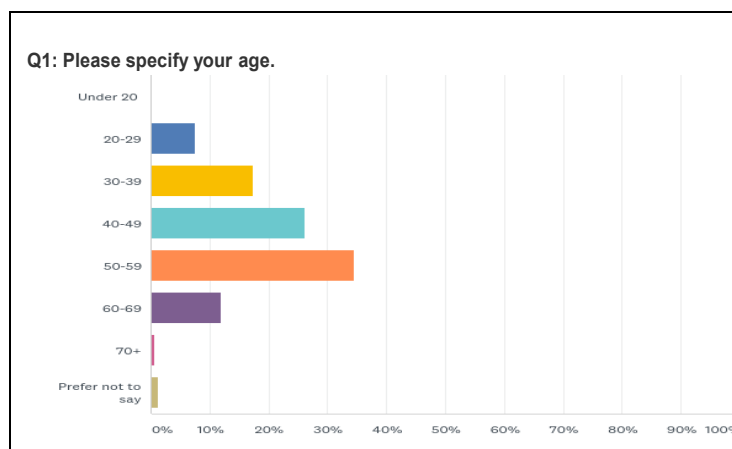
Slide 1



Slide 2



Slide 3

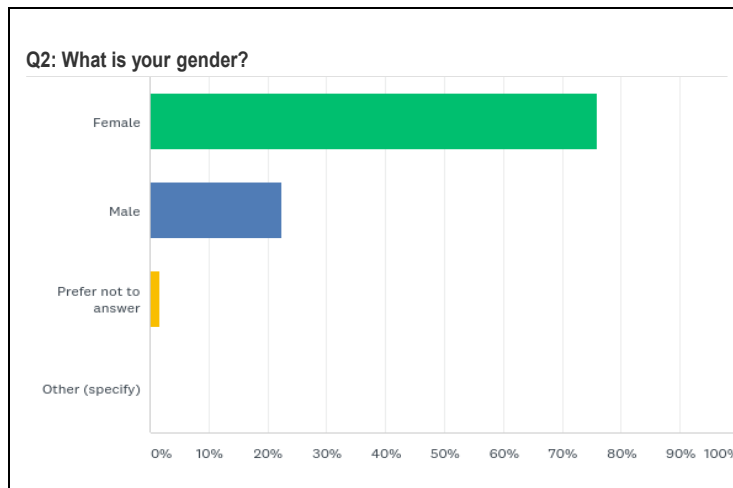


Slide 4

Q1: Please specify your age.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Under 20	0.30%	13
20-29	7.53%	331
30-39	17.35%	763
40-49	26.15%	1,150
50-59	34.61%	1,522
60-69	12.01%	528
70+	0.73%	32
Prefer not to say	1.34%	59
TOTAL		4,398

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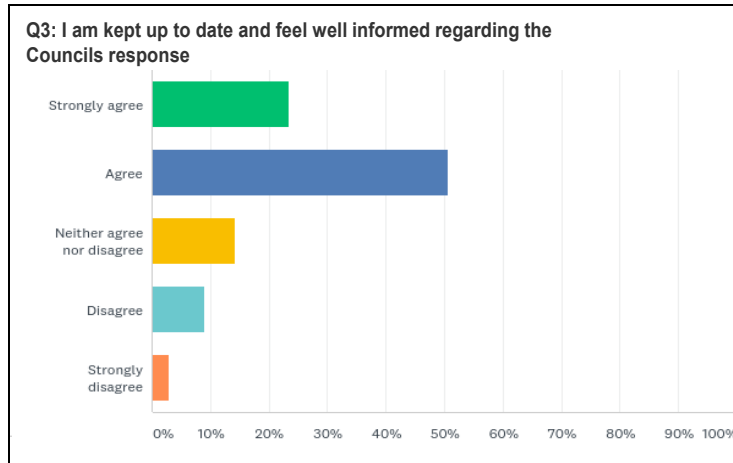


Slide 6

Q2: What is your gender?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Female	75.94%	3,340
Male	22.35%	983
Prefer not to answer	1.61%	71
Other (specify)	0.09%	4
TOTAL		4,398

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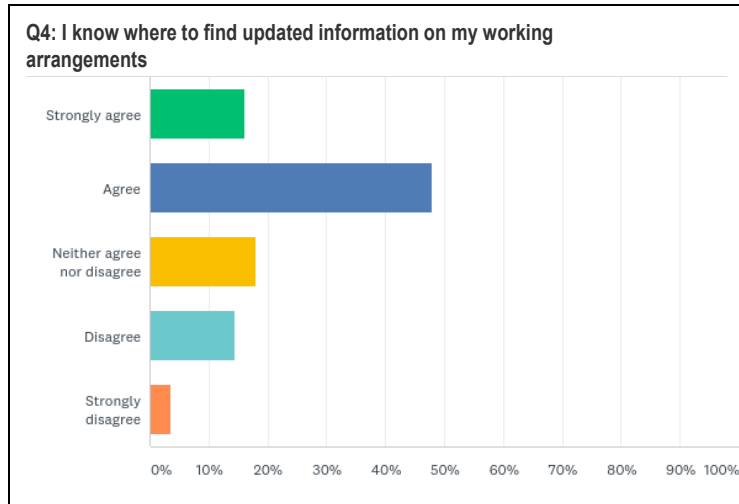


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Q3: I am kept up to date and feel well informed regarding the Councils response

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	23.33%	995
Agree	50.53%	2,155
Neither agree nor disagree	14.14%	603
Disagree	9.05%	386
Strongly disagree	2.95%	126
TOTAL		4,265

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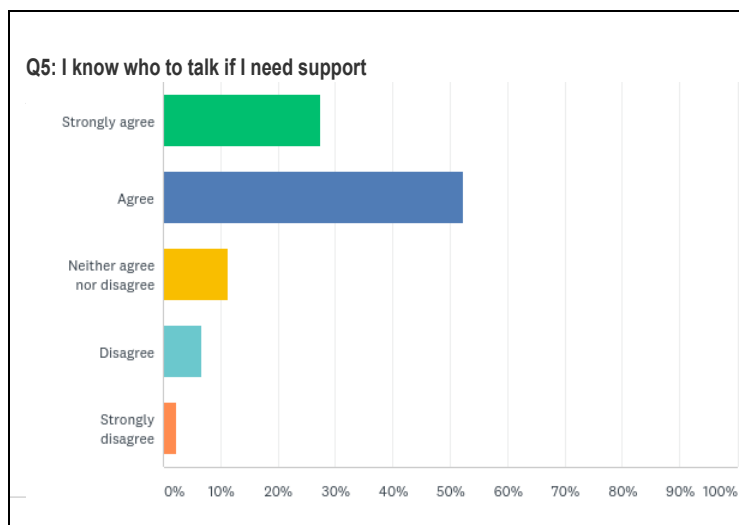


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Q4: I know where to find updated information on my working arrangements

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Strongly agree	16.11% 687
Agree	47.97% 2,046
Neither agree nor disagree	18.08% 771
Disagree	14.37% 613
Strongly disagree	3.47% 148
TOTAL	4,265

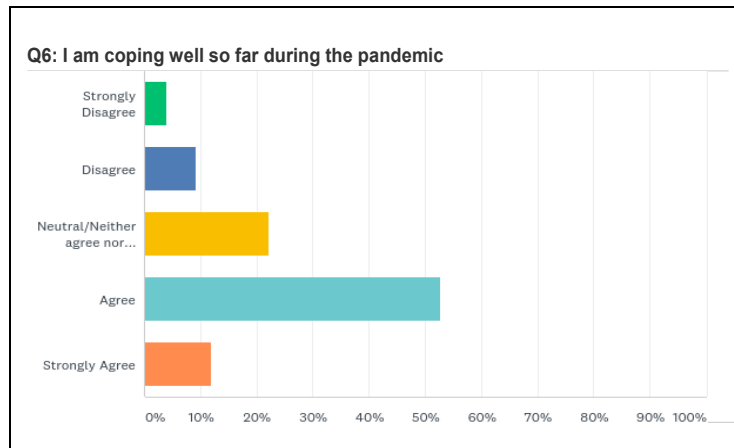
Slide 11



Slide 12

Q5: I know who to talk if I need support		
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	27.50%	1,173
Agree	52.29%	2,230
Neither agree nor disagree	11.32%	483
Disagree	6.66%	284
Strongly disagree	2.23%	95
TOTAL		4,265

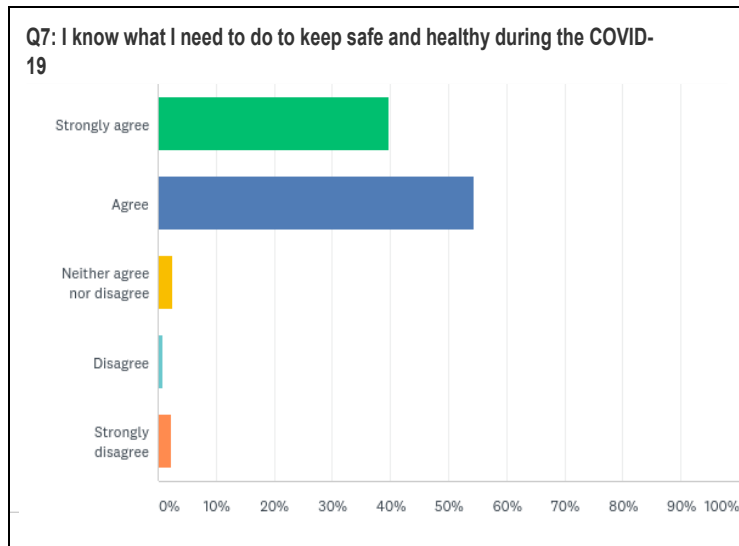
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Q6: I am coping well so far during the pandemic		
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Disagree	4.04%	170
Disagree	9.16%	386
Neutral/Neither agree nor disagree	22.20%	935
Agree	52.71%	2,220
Strongly Agree	11.89%	501
TOTAL		4,212

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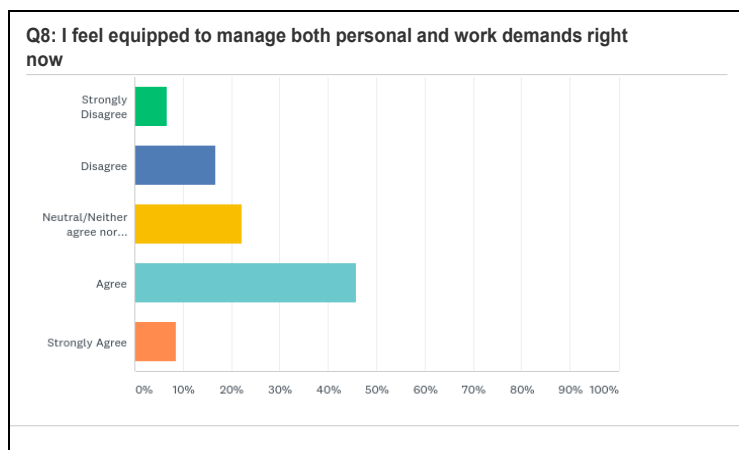


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Q7: I know what I need to do to keep safe and healthy during the COVID-19

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	39.65%	1,670
Agree	54.42%	2,292
Neither agree nor disagree	2.61%	110
Disagree	0.93%	39
Strongly disagree	2.40%	101
TOTAL		4,212

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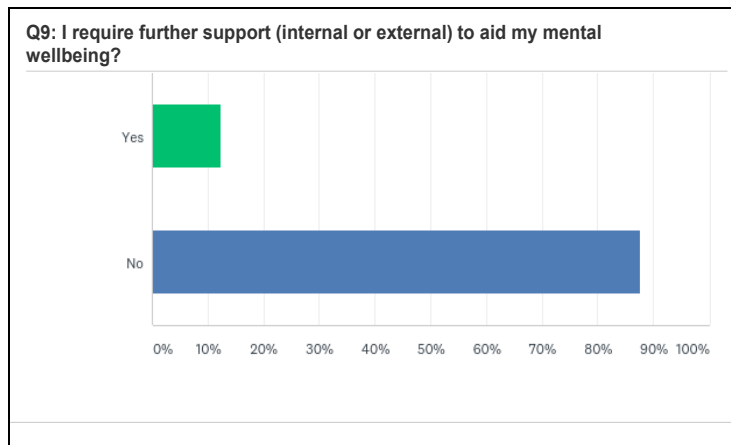


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Q8: I feel equipped to manage both personal and work demands right now

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Disagree	6.72%	283
Disagree	16.81%	708
Neutral/Neither agree nor disagree	22.25%	937
Agree	45.73%	1,926
Strongly Agree	8.50%	358
TOTAL		4,212

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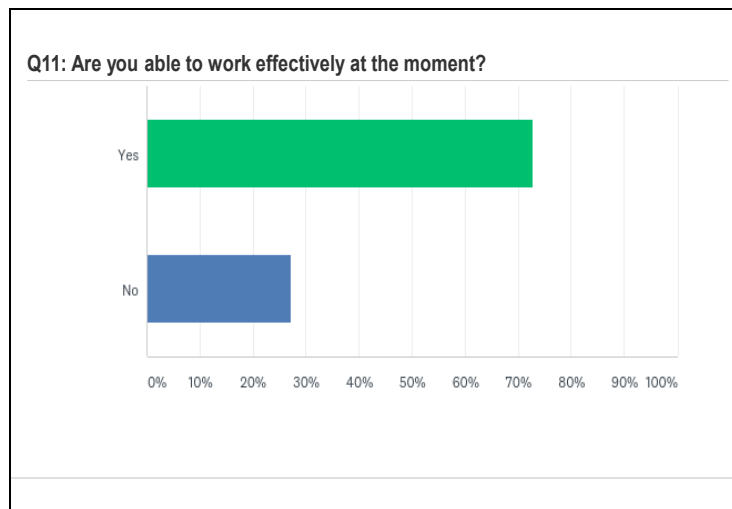


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Q9: I require further support (internal or external) to aid my mental wellbeing?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	12.30%	518
No	87.70%	3,694
TOTAL		4,212

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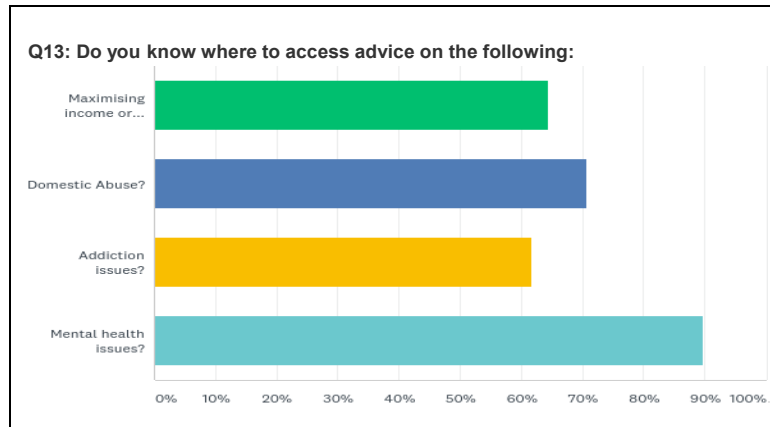


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Q11: Are you able to work effectively at the moment?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	72.80%	3,029
No	27.20%	1,132
TOTAL		4,161

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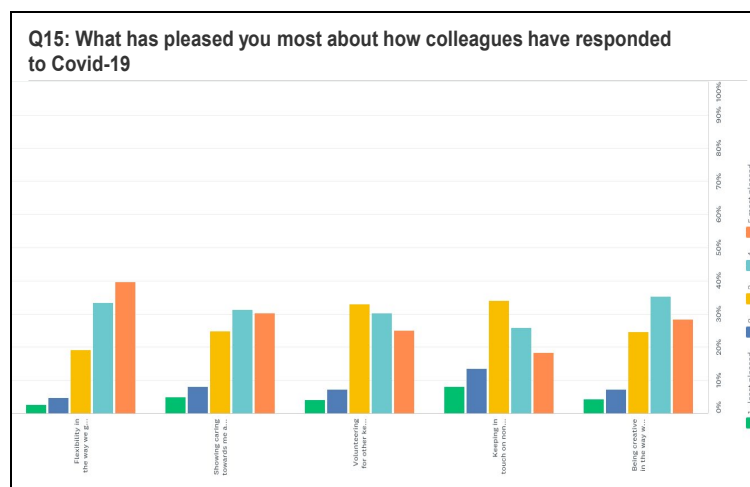


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Q13: Do you know where to access advice on the following:

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Maximising income or benefits?	64.48%	1,970
Domestic Abuse?	70.74%	2,161
Addiction issues?	61.77%	1,887
Mental health issues?	89.82%	2,744
Total Respondents: 3,055		

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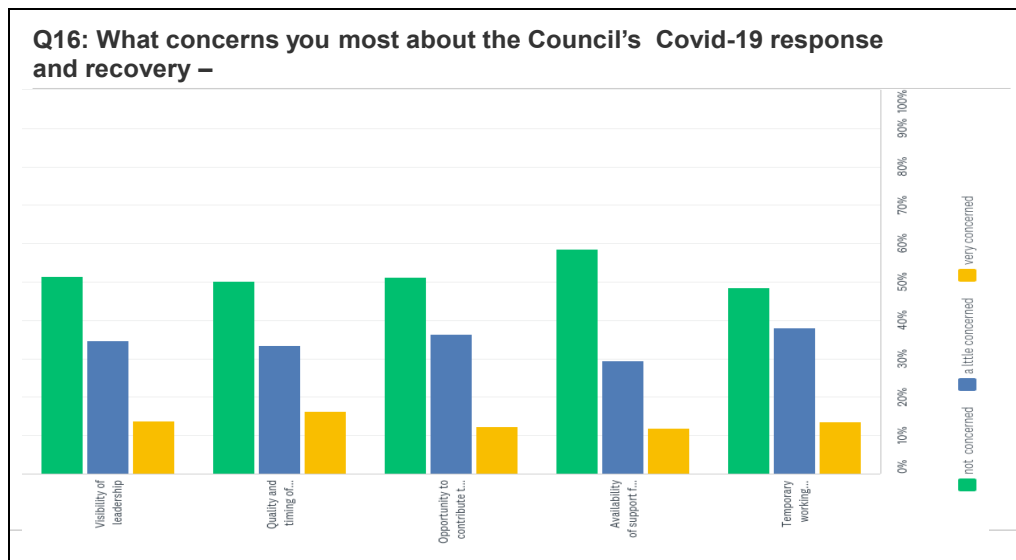


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Q15: What has pleased you most about how colleagues have responded to Covid-19

	1 - LEAST PLEASSED	2	3	4	5 MOST PLEASSED	TOTAL
Flexibility in the way we get the job done	2.66% 96	4.72% 170	19.31% 696	33.55% 1,209	39.76% 1,433	3,604
Showing caring towards me and others	5.06% 182	8.24% 296	24.99% 898	31.44% 1,130	30.27% 1,088	3,594
Volunteering for other key Services or in the community	4.24% 148	7.30% 255	33.11% 1,157	30.34% 1,060	25.01% 874	3,494
Keeping in touch on non work issues	8.13% 291	13.56% 485	34.01% 1,217	25.96% 929	18.33% 656	3,578
Being creative in the way we work together	4.30% 154	7.26% 260	24.62% 882	35.33% 1,266	28.50% 1,021	3,583

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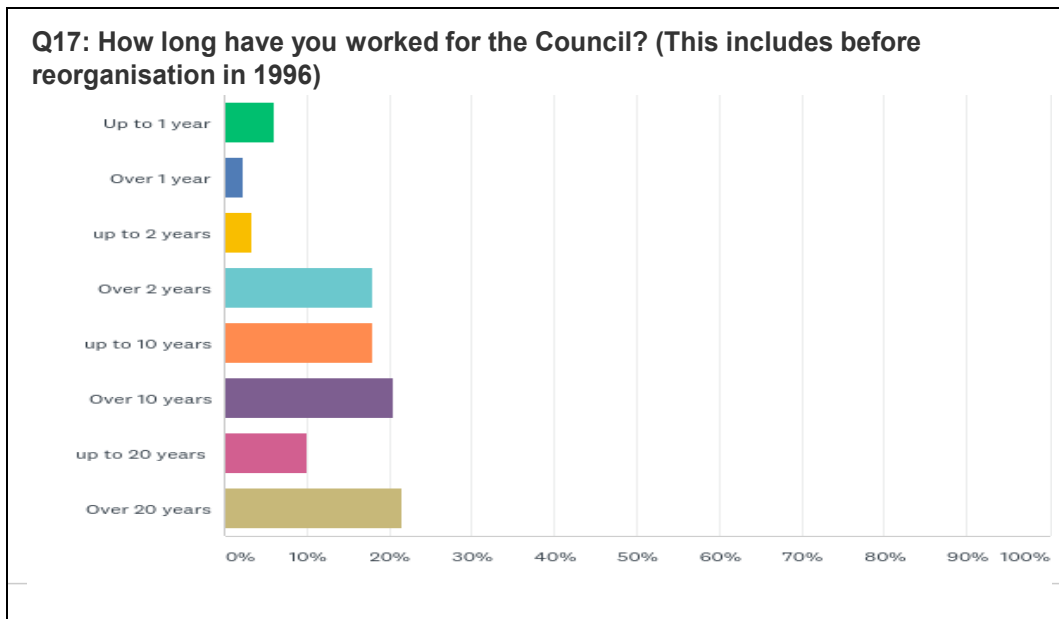


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Q16: What concerns you most about the Council's Covid-19 response and recovery –

	NOT CONCERNED	A LITTLE CONCERNED	VERY CONCERNED	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Visibility of leadership	51.51% 1,855	34.74% 1,251	13.75% 495	3,601	1.62
Quality and timing of communication	50.22% 1,813	33.38% 1,205	16.40% 592	3,610	1.66
Opportunity to contribute to response and recovery	51.19% 1,832	36.46% 1,305	12.35% 442	3,579	1.61
Availability of support from managers	58.51% 2,111	29.55% 1,066	11.95% 431	3,608	1.53
Temporary working condition	48.49% 1,745	37.98% 1,367	13.53% 487	3,599	1.65

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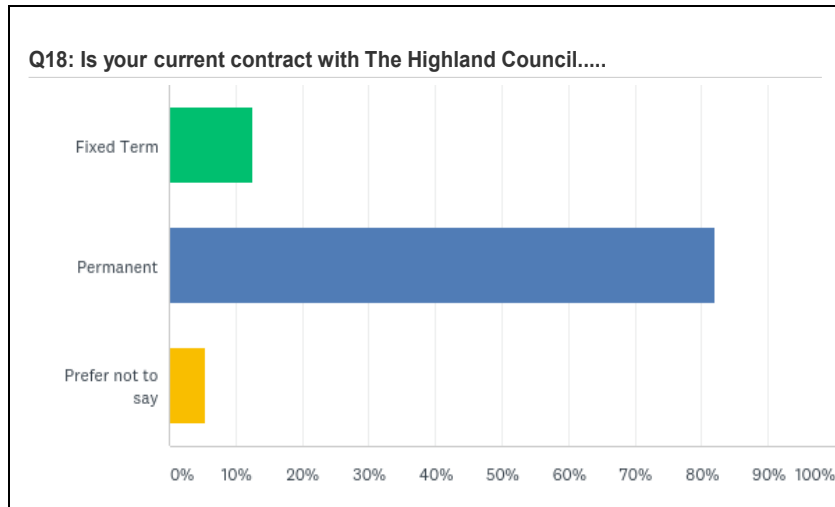


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Q17: How long have you worked for the Council? (This includes before reorganisation in 1996)

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Up to 1 year	6.12%	217
Over 1 year	2.40%	85
up to 2 years	3.30%	117
Over 2 years	17.99%	638
up to 10 years	17.96%	637
Over 10 years	20.55%	729
up to 20 years	10.12%	359
Over 20 years	21.57%	765
TOTAL		3,547

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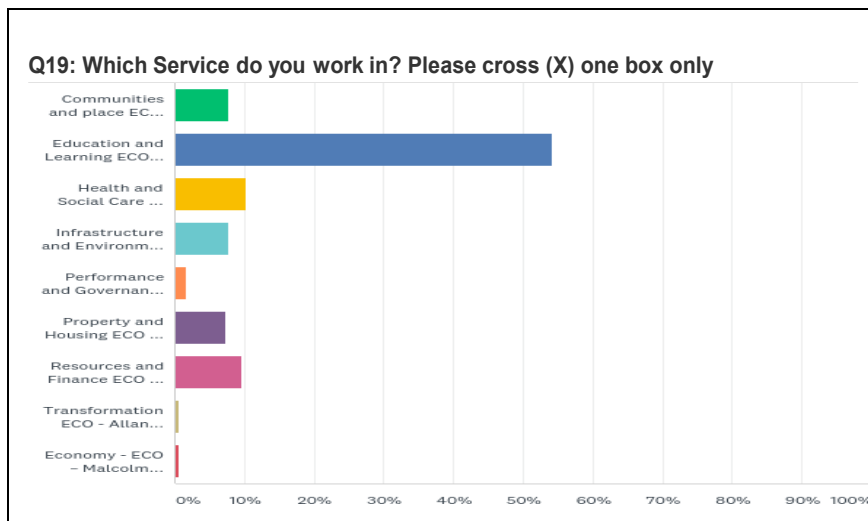


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Q18: Is your current contract with The Highland Council.....

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Fixed Term	12.60%	447
Permanent	81.98%	2,908
Prefer not to say	5.41%	192
TOTAL		3,547

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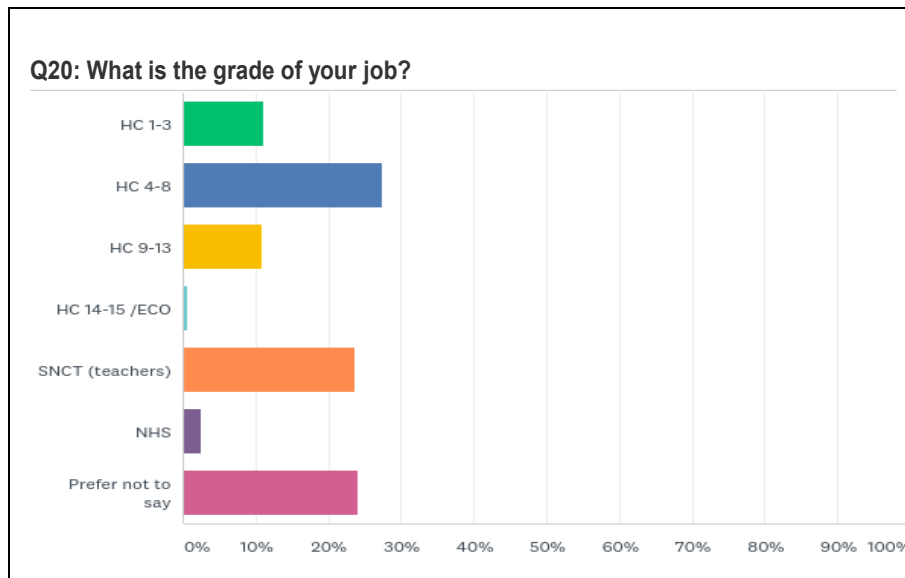


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Q19: Which Service do you work in? Please cross (X) one box only

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Communities and place ECO - Carron McDiarmid	7.84%	278
Education and Learning ECO - Paul Senior	54.24%	1,924
Health and Social Care ECO - Lesley Webber	10.32%	366
Infrastructure and Environment ECO - Malcolm MacLeod	7.64%	271
Performance and Governance ECO - Kate Lackie	1.78%	63
Property and Housing ECO - Mark Rogers	7.41%	263
Resources and Finance ECO - Liz Denovan	9.56%	339
Transformation ECO - Allan Gunn	0.54%	19
Economy - ECO - Malcolm MacLeod	0.68%	24
TOTAL		3,547

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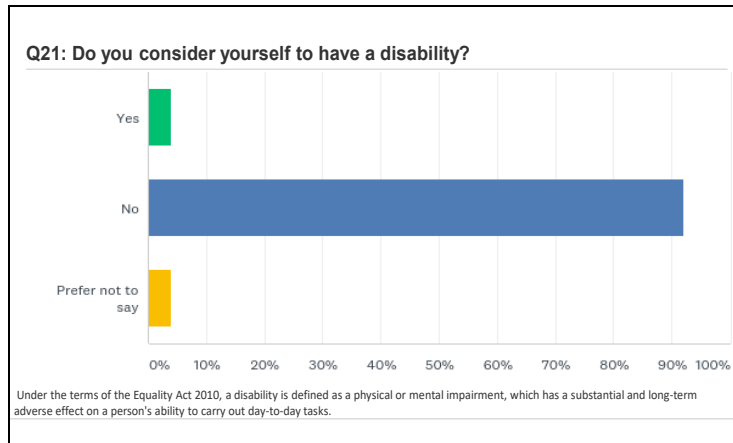


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Q20: What is the grade of your job?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
HC 1-3	11.00%	390
HC 4-8	27.35%	970
HC 9-13	10.83%	384
HC 14-15 /ECO	0.54%	19
SNCT (teachers)	23.68%	840
NHS	2.57%	91
Prefer not to say	24.05%	853
TOTAL		3,547

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Q21: Do you consider yourself to have a disability

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	4.00%	142
No	92.08%	3,266
Prefer not to say	3.92%	139
TOTAL		3,547

Under the terms of the Equality Act 2010, a disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out day-to-day tasks.