

Agenda Item	12
Report No	HC/45/23

The Highland Council

Committee: The Highland Council

Date: 26 October 2023

Report Title: Staff Survey

Report By: Interim Depute Chief Executive

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 A survey of staff of Highland Council was conducted in between May – June 2022. The results are presented in this paper and in **Appendix 1** to this report.
- 1.2 The survey was completed by 5,002 staff, making up 47% of the workforce, meaning that it encompasses a significant cohort of employees and contains a rich source of evidence for what needs to happen to improve the operations of the Council in future.
- 1.3 In the past few months, there has been a structured approach taken to engaging with staff on the results of the survey, with action plans being established across all teams based on feedback.
- 1.4 As our most valuable asset, the views of staff are crucially important to Highland Council and incorporating the views expressed into future planning is of critical importance. Doing so is a recipe for improved attendance, retention and productivity, greater client satisfaction and for increasing the ability of the organisation as a whole to solve its future challenges through designing creative solutions.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
 - i. note the Survey results attached at **Appendix 1**;
 - ii. note the engagement with staff that has taken place in recent months; and
 - iii. agree the next steps at section 8, including the commitment to further investment in developing positive employee engagement.

3. Implications

3.1 Resource

Staff are our key resource, the survey and the actions arising from it are critical to maximising our use of staff resources in future. If progressed, the introduction of an accreditation scheme for employee engagement will have staff and financial resource implications. Options will be researched with further information brought to Corporate Resources Committee in December.

3.2 Legal

There are no specific legal implications arising from the report.

3.3 Community (Equality, Poverty, Rural and Island)

3.3.1 As staff are deployed across all geographical areas of the Highlands, and all services depend on their success, the report and the action plans which come from it are critical to enabling Highland Council to meet the various statutory obligations it has in relation to the stated community groups.

3.3.2 A survey profile of responders provides equalities data in terms of the following protected characteristics: age; disability; sex; sexual orientation; identify as transgender; marital status; religion and ethnicity. It also provides data on staff who identify with caring responsibilities. This data can be taken into account when developing the action plans for the survey outcomes along with developments of other staff policies.

3.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever

Maximising the potential of staff in terms of service delivery and enabling relevant change programmes is essential to the success of our future net zero strategy.

3.5 Risk

There are a number of areas of recruitment and retention of staff which are of risk to services and the Council as a whole, such as staff wellbeing, affecting delivery and performance. Therefore, making the most of the process of reviewing the results of this survey is critical to managing such risks, primarily by sending a message to staff that their views are valued and listened to.

3.6 Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people)

There are no specific health and safety implications emerging from the report.

3.7 Gaelic

There are no specific implications emerging from the report.

4. Background

4.1 Between 2000 - 2015, the Highland Council conducted an Employee Survey approximately every 2 ½ years. These were undertaken by an independent survey provider who issued the surveys, received the responses, analysed the results and provided independent reports. The last survey of this type was conducted in 2015.

4.2 The 2022 Survey was redesigned in conjunction with industry experts and our Trade Union partners. The use of an external organisation (BMG) facilitated the opportunity to benchmark against a recognised engagement index.

5. Survey Design and Delivery

- 5.1 The 8th Highland Council Employee Survey conducted learned lessons from a previous staff survey undertaken in 2015. Since many questions were reworked, not many questions are comparable with the previous report, and therefore limited comparison can be made.
- 5.2 Staff received the survey via an email invitation and a generic link was available for staff who did not have a Council log on. Staff were also able to phone or email the HR Helpline or BMG direct for assistance to complete the Survey.
- 5.3 The survey was conducted through BMG, a leading independent provider of market research services to the UK who were engaged through a procurement exercise early 2022. They have worked with our People Service to deliver the survey, with survey data being submitted direct to BMG for analysis. Where possible, results are benchmarked against other local authorities.
- 5.4 The survey questions were structured so that staff were asked to assess the extent to which they agreed, disagreed or were neutral about statements regarding a wide range of subjects relating to work. This included: staff perceptions of their own work; resource available to them and workload; organisational objectives; relationships with colleagues, including line managers; learning and development; fair treatment at work; pay and benefits; leadership and managing change; engagement and organisational culture; and communication.

6. Headline Messages

- 6.1 Given that this is the first survey of this type in seven years, the results are best viewed as a place to build from for the future.
- 6.2 The level of response to the survey means that there was a high-level engagement with the process, with 47% of staff completing the survey, showing an increase of 11% compared to response in 2015 and 7% higher than the Local Government benchmark. 70% of staff who completed the survey made it clear in their responses that they are committed to working for Highland Council over the long term – seeing their future with the Council as an employer. Only 5% of staff want to leave the Council as soon as possible.
- 6.3 Staff gave high scores in terms of their interest and engagement in their own work, as well as the sense of challenge it provides for them. There were similarly high scores for the sense in which they are treated fairly and respected at work, and for the extent to which they are trusted.
- 6.4 Staff were more neutral when it came to working environment and the overall culture of Highland Council as a whole. In response to the statement, 'I am proud to work for Highland Council' 36% of staff said they were and 47% were neither agreed nor disagreed with that statement. This shows that more can be done to address the perception of staff of their employer. This is a feature of on-going work across Council teams.
- 6.5 The lowest scores were given by staff in relation to the leadership and management of Highland Council as a whole. These scores reflected areas such as decision making, engagement, change management and their ability to challenge how things are done.

- 6.6 The youngest and oldest staff groups reported the highest levels of engagement with the Council.
- 6.7 The areas of highest priority for staff were resource and workload; better salary conditions; better leadership and management; better communication; and greater job security.
- 6.8 Staff also raised a number of specific issues relating to communication and organisational objectives. These included:
- what is happening in the Council as a whole;
 - communication reaching through the organisation;
 - connection between leaders and staff on the ground;
 - understanding national objectives; and
 - senior manager visibility.
- 6.9 In summary, the key themes emerging across all services and therefore considered to be areas for priority action are:
- employee engagement and communication;
 - senior leader visibility; and
 - managing change.

7. Staff Engagement and Lessons Learned

- 7.1 The most helpful thing about surveys such as these is the extent to which they enable change to take place. This survey has clarified a number of key drivers for future action, which are being worked on by all Services and incorporating all managers: listening to staff; sharing organisational understanding; enabling effective decision making; taking appropriate action to follow through on decisions to manage change; communication effectively and embracing staff views and appropriate challenge.
- 7.2 Since March, there has been an on-going process of engagement relating to the results of the survey. Over March and April this year there was engagement with the Executive Chief Officer (ECO) Team on the results of the survey and also with the Council's Union representatives. As part of this, a programme of staff engagement was developed which has taken place over the summer and was supported by the Council's People Service. These have been in a variety of formats including face to face Service-specific workshops; service management team discussion and cascade; online sessions; and opportunities for staff to discuss as part of wider service engagement activities. There was also a presentation on the high-level survey results and next steps at the Interim Chief Executive's online staff forum in August, which was held live but also recorded and made available on the Staff Connections site. Over 800 staff attended briefings by the new Chief Executive in September.
- 7.3 There are still a number of online catch-up sessions for staff who have not otherwise been able to attend any of the earlier sessions, and also for those who want to be further involved in action planning. These will be concluded in the next few weeks.

7.4 The purpose of all these sessions has been twofold – to communicate the results of the survey at a corporate and a service level in an interactive way to as many staff groups as possible; and for staff to be directly involved in considering the actions needed to address areas requiring improvement.

8. Next Steps

8.1 Each ECO is working with their HR Business Partner to capture the themes and actions arising from their staff engagement sessions. Where there is commonality across Services, this will be captured and the actions sitting under these themes will be compiled into a corporate action plan for inclusion in the Council's Corporate Plan. The intention is to bring this to Council in December.

8.2 Actions that are more Service-specific, where possible and appropriate, will simply be acted on and implemented straight away. Where this is not possible, they will be captured in Directorate Service Plans and considered at Strategic Committees as part of the quarterly performance monitoring process.

8.3 The Council will also look to engage with an accredited provider – such as Investors in People – to undertake a further diagnostic to measure current levels of engagement and develop and align future strategic activity with the actions that our staff have said matter to them. In this way, we will be able to develop our employee engagement, communication, organisational culture and work practices to deliver optimum staff satisfaction, retention and productivity. At a time of significant change, especially in the context of the Council's budget challenges, this is an important investment in our workforce for the future.

Designation: Interim Depute Chief Executive

Date: 16 October 2023

Author: Elaine Barrie, Head of People

Appendices: MBG Research survey results report



2163 Highland Council Staff Survey – Overall results report

Prepared for: Highland Council

Prepared by: BMG Research

2163 Highland Council Staff Survey – Results report

Prepared for: Highland Council

Prepared by: BMG Research

Date: August 2022



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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

In 2022, the Highland Council commissioned BMG Research to undertake an organisation-wide survey of employees. The last survey was also carried out by BMG Research in 2015. The Council and BMG collaborated to redesign the survey to meet the current and future needs of the organisation. Given the time that has lapsed between these 2 surveys, emphasis is given to this year's results and not compared to previous results which has provided us with a baseline from which the Council can continue to develop.

The following report provides a summary of the key findings derived from the survey undertaken during May/ June 2022.

1.2 Methodology

The survey was carried out exclusively online using a mixture of corporate and personal email addresses and a generic link. Several reminders were circulated over the course of the survey supported by internal communication.

Over 10,000 staff were targeted and the Council achieved a response rate of 47% (5,002 responses). This is an excellent response rate for a local authority the size of Highland Council and is 11% higher than 2015. Due to the detrimental environmental impact of paper surveys, a decision was taken to move to a digital format. The significant number of responses ensures robust analysis of the data across the Council.

10,700

Surveys Issued

5,002

Responders

47%

Response Rate

Education & Learning staff represent over 50% of the Council and therefore have a significant impact on the overall results. For that reason, we have separated out Education & Learning from the remaining corporate services to facilitate appropriate analysis and action planning.

Table 1: Responses by services

Service	Number Invited	Number Completes	Response rate
Communities & Place	636	403	63%
Education & Learning	5824	2754	47%
Health & Social Care	1024	487	48%
Infrastructure, Environment & Economy	629	368	59%
Performance & Governance	261	164	63%
Property & Housing	1842	491	27%
Resource & Finance	484	335	69%

1.3 Data in the Report

The data used in this report is rounded up or down to the nearest whole percentage point. It is for this reason that, on occasions, tables or charts may add up to 99% or 101%. Where tables and graphics do not match exactly to the text in the report this occurs due to the way in which figures are rounded up (or down) when responses are combined. Results that differ in this way should not have a variance that is any larger than 1%.

All data used within this report is based on valid responses. This means that if an employee answered don't know to a particular question, this is excluded from the figures.

Groups smaller than 10 people will not be reported on as communicated to staff prior to them partaking in the survey. This is to protect the anonymity of individuals so they cannot be easily identified. Smaller groups have been merged together where appropriate.

2. Key Findings

2.1 Where the Council is doing well

The questions with the highest agree score in the survey are: “I am interested in my work” at 92%, “I am trusted to carry out my job effectively” at 90% and “I have the skills to do my job” with an agree score of 89%. All these questions relate to staff being invested and confident in their ability to carry out their jobs, showing a commitment to the work staff do.

Figure 1: Top 5 standard questions based on highest %agree

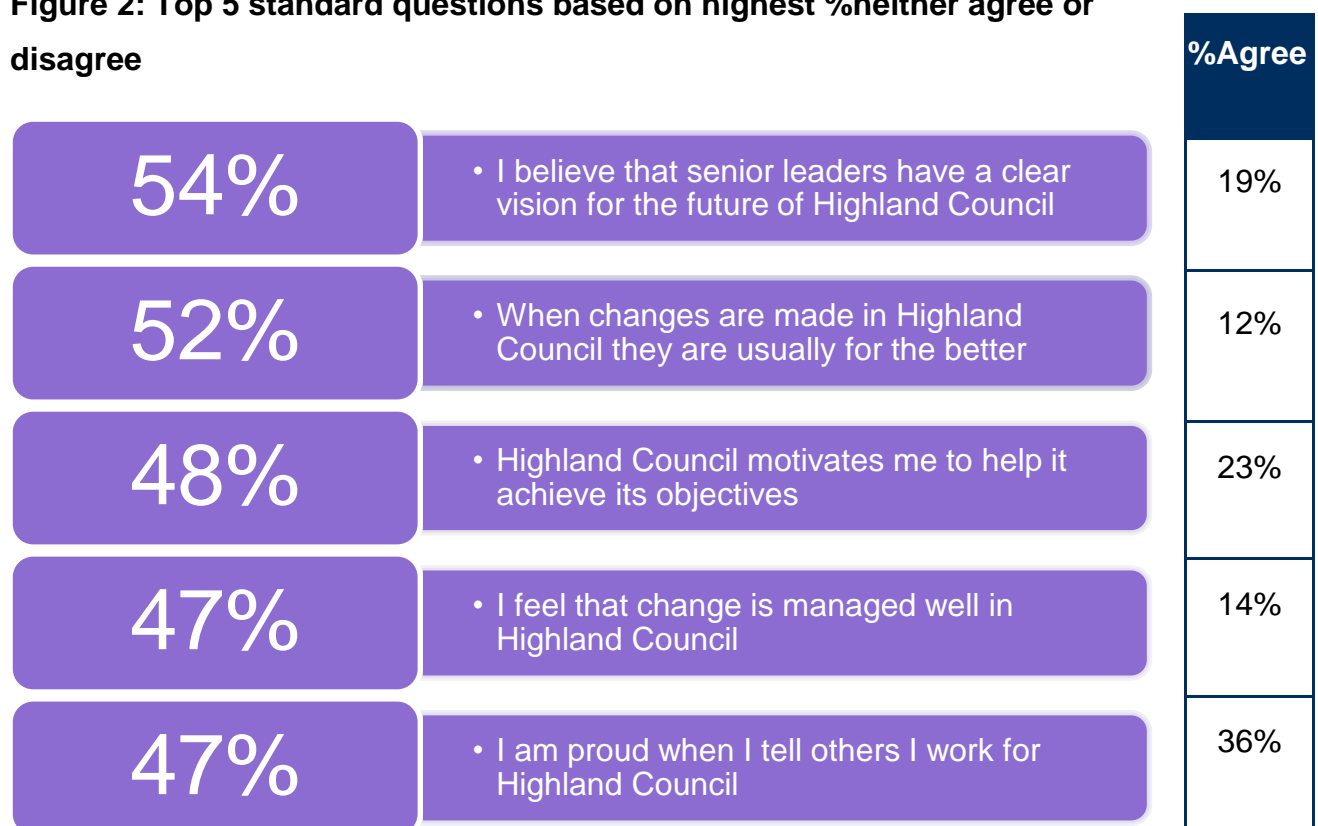


2.2 Where the Council could perform better

However, there are areas where the Council could improve upon. Many questions in the survey have a high % of “neither” scores, suggesting there is a lot of neutrality regarding how staff feel about the Council. Areas of high neutrality are often some of the best areas to target given it is easier to improve areas employees are neutral about versus areas they actively disagree on.

Leadership and Managing change, alongside Employee Engagement are the areas with the highest neutral scores. 54% of staff neither agree nor disagree about “Senior leaders have a clear vision for the future of the Council”, while 52% do not feel particularly strongly that “When changes are made in Highland Council they are usually for the better”. This neutrality around leaders creating a clear vision and lack of confidence in change management is reflected in a similarly high neutral score for “Highland Council motivating staff to help achieve its objectives”, a very outcome related question with 48% of staff neither agreeing or disagreeing.

Figure 2: Top 5 standard questions based on highest %neither agree or disagree



The questions with the lowest % agree scores below indicate there is a clear theme around leadership and especially managing change. 10% of staff “feel they are able to challenge the way things are done at the Council” and 12% believe that “When changes are made it is usually for the better”. 17% of staff have confidence in Senior Leaders.

Figure 3: Top 5 standard questions based on lowest %agree



2.3 Thematic Overview

Overall thematic scores are calculated by averaging all the positive scores for standard questions (questions using the 5 points strongly agree to strongly disagree scale) in each theme. My Work (70%), Organisational Culture (70%), Inclusion and Fair Treatment (69%) and My Team (67%) all score well demonstrating that staff are invested in their work and are satisfied with the general work culture and atmosphere. By contrast the lower scoring themes include Leadership and Managing Change (18%), Communication (30%), Employee Engagement (31%), and Organisational Objectives (42%).

Table 2: Thematic Overview by Service

Theme	Overall	Communities & Place	Education & Learning	Health & Social Care	Infrastructure, Environment & Economy	Performance & Governance	Property & Housing	Resource & Finance
Sample Base	5,002	403	2,754	487	368	164	491	335
My Work	70 %	63 %	69 %	77 %	74 %	75 %	72 %	69 %
Resource and Workload	64 %	63 %	62 %	64 %	65 %	73 %	68 %	71 %
Organisational Objectives	43 %	44 %	36 %	48 %	50 %	60 %	54 %	58 %
My Line Manager	61 %	54 %	60 %	68 %	62 %	67 %	61 %	64 %
My Team	67 %	52 %	69 %	72 %	63 %	72 %	63 %	68 %
Learning and Development	39 %	27 %	41 %	45 %	36 %	37 %	36 %	33 %
Inclusion and fair treatment	69 %	59 %	69 %	72 %	70 %	73 %	73 %	71 %
Pay and Benefits	42 %	40 %	37 %	54 %	47 %	61 %	46 %	54 %
Leadership and Managing Change	18 %	19 %	14 %	18 %	22 %	30 %	20 %	25 %
Engagement	31 %	38 %	25 %	31 %	39 %	44 %	43 %	41 %
Organisational Culture	70 %	62 %	71 %	73 %	73 %	72 %	73 %	69 %
Communication	30 %	31 %	27 %	35 %	33 %	44 %	37 %	31 %

Table 3: Thematic Overview Non-Education & Learning and Education & Learning

Theme	Overall	All Services excl. Education & Learning			Education & Learning		
		Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Sample Base	5,002	2,248			2,754		
My Work	70 %	71 %	16 %	13 %	69 %	15 %	16 %
Resource and Workload	64 %	67 %	16 %	17 %	62 %	16 %	23 %
Organisational Objectives	43 %	51 %	30 %	18 %	36 %	35 %	28 %
My Line Manager	61 %	62 %	22 %	16 %	60 %	24 %	16 %
My Team	67 %	65 %	21 %	15 %	69 %	19 %	12 %
Learning and Development	39 %	36 %	36 %	28 %	41 %	35 %	24 %
Inclusion and fair treatment	69 %	69 %	20 %	10 %	69 %	21 %	10 %
Pay and Benefits	42 %	49 %	24 %	27 %	37 %	28 %	35 %
Leadership and Managing Change	18 %	21 %	43 %	36 %	14 %	43 %	42 %
Engagement	31 %	39 %	42 %	19 %	25 %	48 %	26 %
Organisational Culture	70 %	70 %	17 %	12 %	71 %	18 %	12 %
Communication	30 %	34 %	36 %	30 %	27 %	42 %	31 %

3. Employee Engagement

3.1 Why Employee Engagement is important

Employee engagement has been a live issue in the management and HR world for over 30 years, and the positive impact an engaged workforce can have on organisational success is undeniable.

David Smith (Chair of the Institute for Employment) states that “it has always seemed obvious that the way a workforce feels about their place of work will materially affect the performance of that organisation”. He also goes on to say that “wise CEOs should question their change providers carefully and ensure that what they build into change programmes around engagement is well founded and sustainable in the long term”.

Peter Cheese (Chief Executive at the Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (CIPD)) highlights that “the MacLeod report and the Engage for Success movement has further raised the visibility...with a bevy of top business leaders...all saying how important engagement was.”

Indeed, higher levels of employee engagement can have a substantial impact on a variety of business metrics such as growth, absenteeism and retention. For example, the top quartile (in terms of engagement) of M&S stores reported 25% lower absence compared with the bottom quartile.

Figure 4: Why Employee Engagement Matters

Employee engagement: Engaged employees (i.e. employees that are emotionally committed to their company and its success) have a huge impact on an organisation’s success. Most importantly, engaged employees often tend to be happier, both at work and in their own lives. However, increasing staff engagement brings a number of other benefits to organisations, including ...



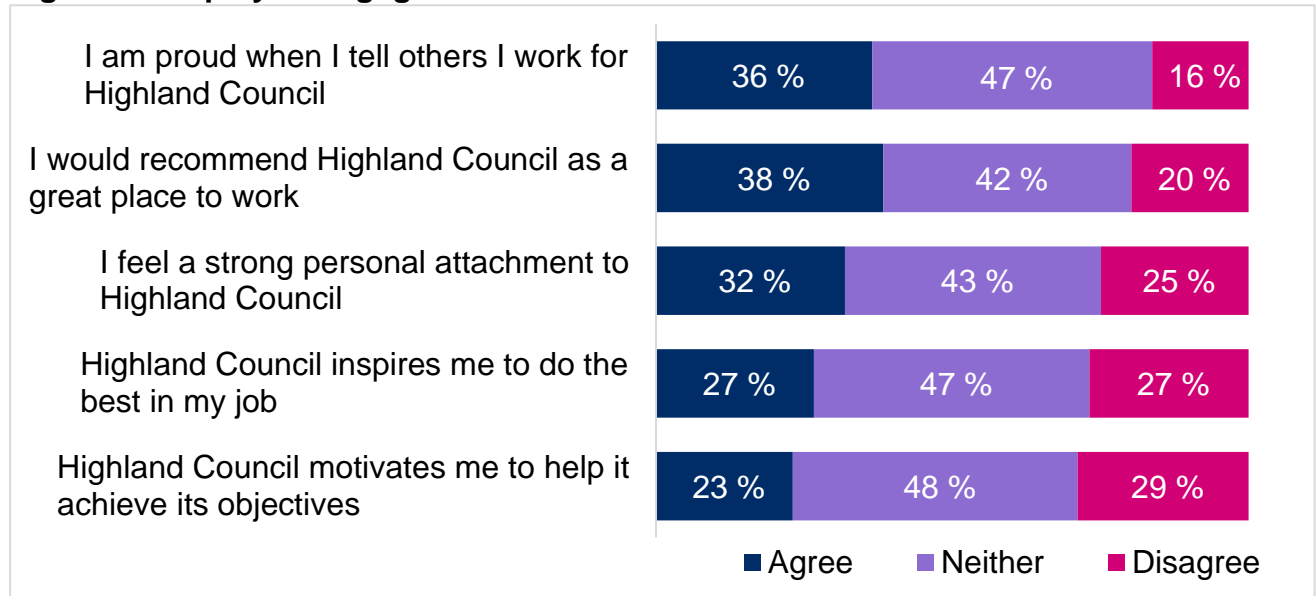
3.2 Employee Engagement Index

The Employee Engagement Index score is an outcome measure based on the average sum of 5 key engagement questions which measures advocacy of the organisation, attachment to the Council and how much the Council inspires them to be better workers. The overall Engagement score for the Council is 31% which is noticeably below the average Local Authority Benchmark.

There are notably high neutral responses in each of the individual Engagement questions with all 5 questions having over a 40% neither agree nor disagree rate. This suggests that many members of staff are fairly indifferent when it comes to interacting with the Council at large, “Highland Council motivates me to help it achieve its objectives” in particular having a 23% agree and 48% neither agree nor disagree score highlights this.

Figure 5: Employee Engagement Figure



Figure 6: Employee Engagement Breakdown

3.3 Employee Engagement by Service

Education & Learning and Health & Social Care appear to be less engaged than other groups with an engagement score of 25% and 31% respectively. Education & Learning have a large impact on the overall data with the organisation's engagement score increasing by 8% (to 39%) if Education & Learning were to be excluded. When we review other key demographic groups, we do not see a notable difference out with the Teachers and Promoted Teacher Job Families with 21% and 22% engagement scores.

Figure 7: Employee Engagement Index by Service

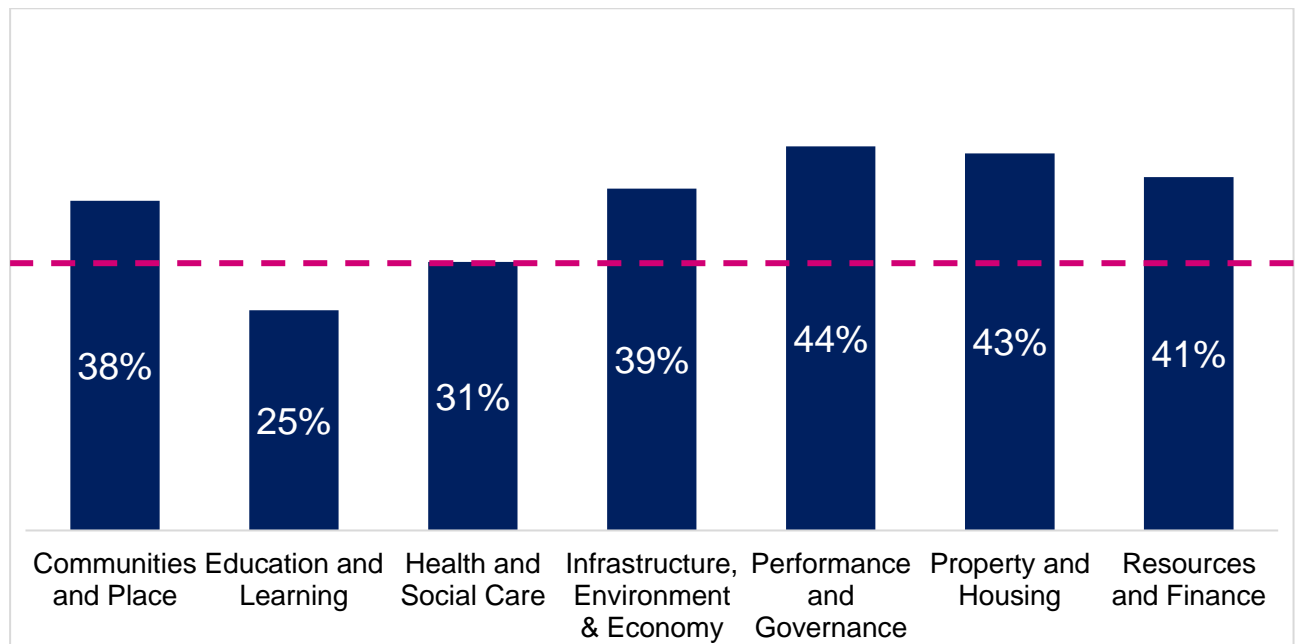


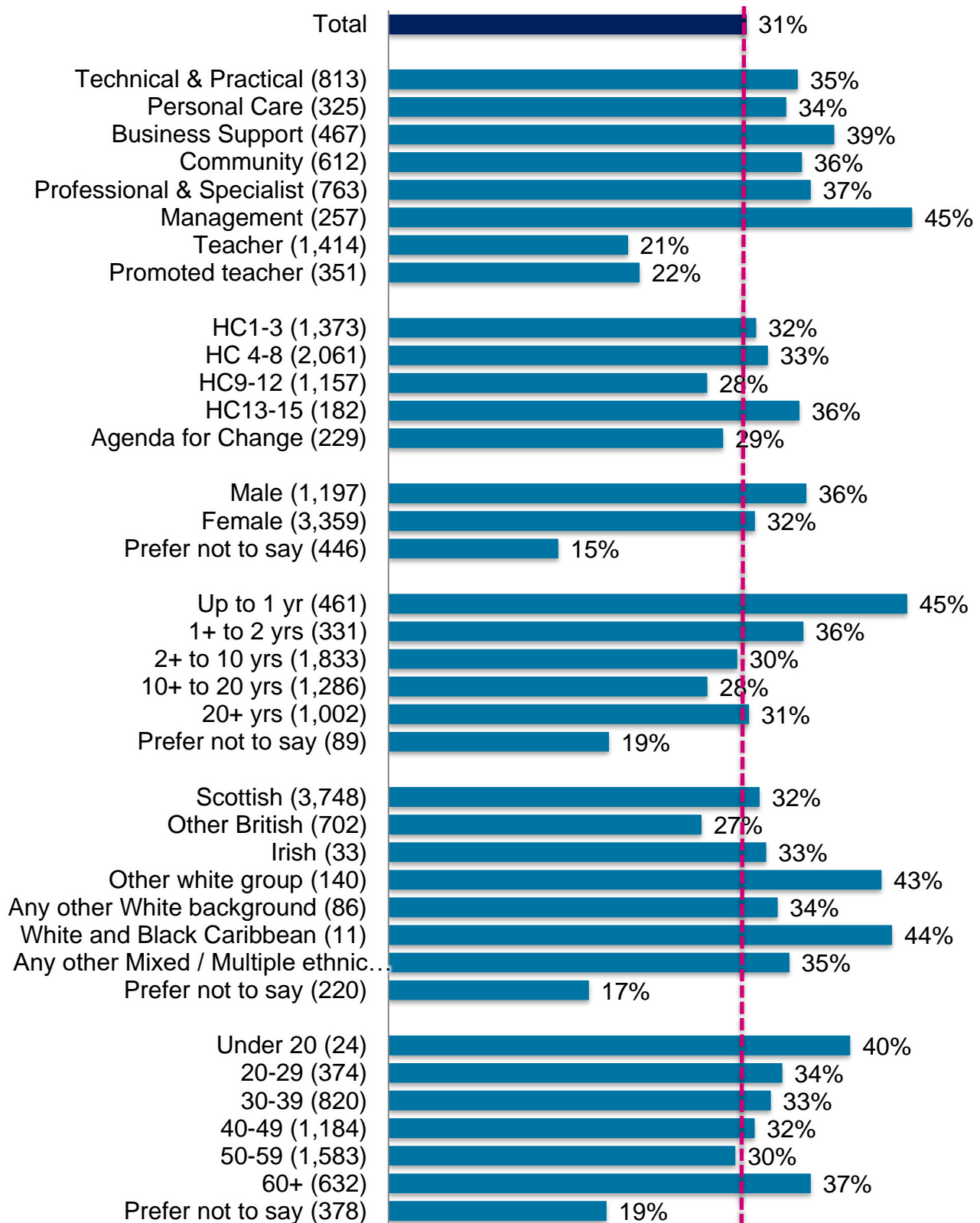
Table 4: Engagement questions by Service

Theme	Overall	Communities & Place	Education & Learning	Health & Social Care	Infrastructure, Environment & Economy	Performance & Governance	Property & Housing	Resource & Finance
Sample Base	5,002	403	2,754	487	368	164	491	335
I am proud when I tell others I work for Highland Council	36 %	42 %	33 %	35 %	39 %	42 %	48 %	39 %
I would recommend Highland Council as a great place to work	38 %	45 %	31 %	38 %	46 %	53 %	54 %	49 %
I feel a strong personal attachment to Highland Council	32 %	39 %	26 %	30 %	42 %	50 %	43 %	41 %

Highland Council Staff Survey – Overall report

Highland Council inspires me to do the best in my job	27 %	34 %	20 %	27 %	37 %	39 %	39 %	39 %
Highland Council motivates me to help it achieve its objectives	23 %	29 %	17 %	24 %	32 %	37 %	33 %	35 %

Figure 8: Employee Engagement Index by key demographic groups



4. Key Driver Analysis

4.1 What is Key Driver Analysis:

Key Driver Analysis (KDA) was conducted to determine the questions most closely correlated with overall Employee Engagement on the basis that this can be improved by concentrating efforts on the questions most closely associated with it. This analysis recognises that organisations have limited resources and should therefore focus on the areas that are likely to have the most significant impact. In order to help organisations prioritise, our recommendation is to focus on 2 or 3 key areas for improvement and aim to do them well.

The principle of the method used is based on assessing the statistical correlation between employees' ratings on each of the possible questions within the survey and their engagement score. If the correlation is high (close to 1), then the question will be "important" in maintaining a high level of engagement. If it is low (close to 0), it will imply that the question is less important. The rationale for this is that a high level of correlation implies that improving perceptions on this question will in turn improve engagement scores. If there is little or no correlation, this offers no evidence that improving the factor might have any impact on improving engagement.



4.2 Top Key Drivers

The table below shows the top 5 key drivers for the Council. Interestingly, the top 5 key drivers are directly related to the Leadership and Managing Change theme. The top 2 questions are around the confidence in leadership decision making and leaders taking actions from the results of the survey. These are key for driving Employee Engagement.

Table 5: Top 5 Key Drivers of Engagement

Question	Overall Rank (5,002)	Excl. Education & Learning Rank (2,248)	Education & Learning Rank (2,754)
Q10.3. Overall, I have confidence in the decisions made by Highland Council's senior leaders	1	2	1
Q10.9. I believe that senior leaders in Highland Council will take action on the results from this survey	2	4	3
Q10.4. I feel that change is managed well in Highland Council	3	7	2
Q10.5. When changes are made in Highland Council, they are usually for the better	4	16	4
Q10.8. I feel I am able to challenge the way things are done in Highland Council	5	23	5
Q8.3. I feel valued for the work I do	17	1	23
Q8.4. I think that Highland Council respects individual differences	10	3	12
Q12.2. I believe I would be supported if I try a new idea, even if it may not work	25	5	29

This focus on Leadership is in large being driven by Education & Learning. When we look at the top 5 key drivers without this service included, having confidence in leadership still has a

strong correlation with engagement. Fairness and Inclusion questions such as “Feeling valued” and “Highland Council respecting individual differences” are also key drivers of engagement here.

Table 6: Top 5 Key Drivers with Education & Learning split out

Rank	Question	Correlation Score	%Agree
1	Q10.3. Overall, I have confidence in the decisions made by Highland Council's senior leaders	0.669	17%
2	Q10.9. I believe that senior leaders in Highland Council will take action on the results from this survey	0.635	17%
3	Q10.4. I feel that change is managed well in Highland Council	0.629	14%
4	Q10.5. When changes are made in Highland Council, they are usually for the better	0.619	12%
5	Q10.8. I feel I am able to challenge the way things are done in Highland Council	0.603	10%

4.3 Key driver Summary

Having confidence in the actions and decisions of senior leadership is the most important factor for driving employee engagement. Senior leadership having a more active role, making staff more aware of, and confident in their decisions, will be key to leading improvements in the Council.

For Education & Learning, change management is also an important driver for Employee Engagement.

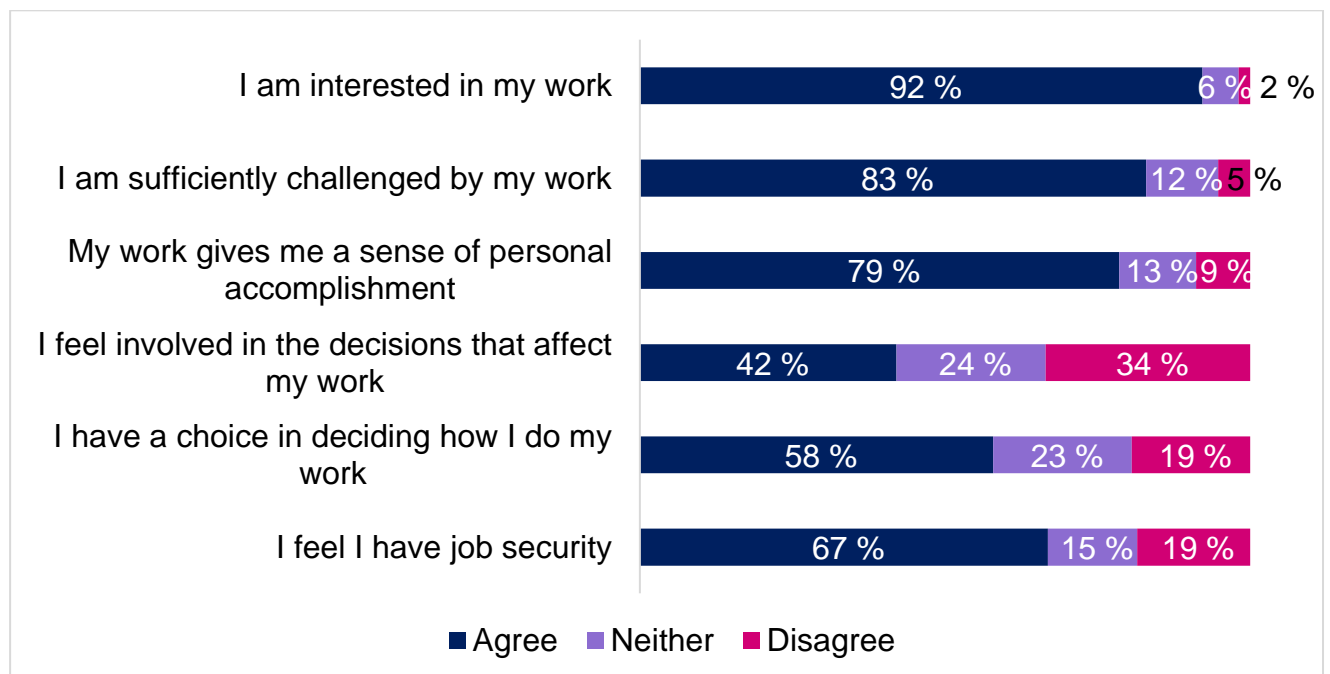
For the remaining services within the organisation, there is a stronger focus on fairness and inclusion. Staff having their views respected and valued is an area the Council is currently doing well in and should look to maintain their approach with this to help drive Employee Engagement amongst these groups.

5. My Work

5.1 My Work Summary

“My Work” is one of the stronger performing themes in the survey. The first 3 questions in particular score well with 92% being “interested in their work” and 83% “being sufficiently challenged by their work”. This suggests staff enjoy their work and are engaged in what they do. However, 42% “feel involved in the decisions that affect their work” and 58% feel they “have a choice in deciding how they work”.

Figure 9: Q1 to what extent do you agree with the following statements around My Work at Highland Council. Base: all respondents



5.2 My Work by key groups

Looking at “My Work” questions within the corporate services, Communities & Place do not feel as engaged as other services about their work, whilst Health & Social Care responded particularly strongly with 97% being “interested in their work”.

Table 7: “My Work” questions by Service

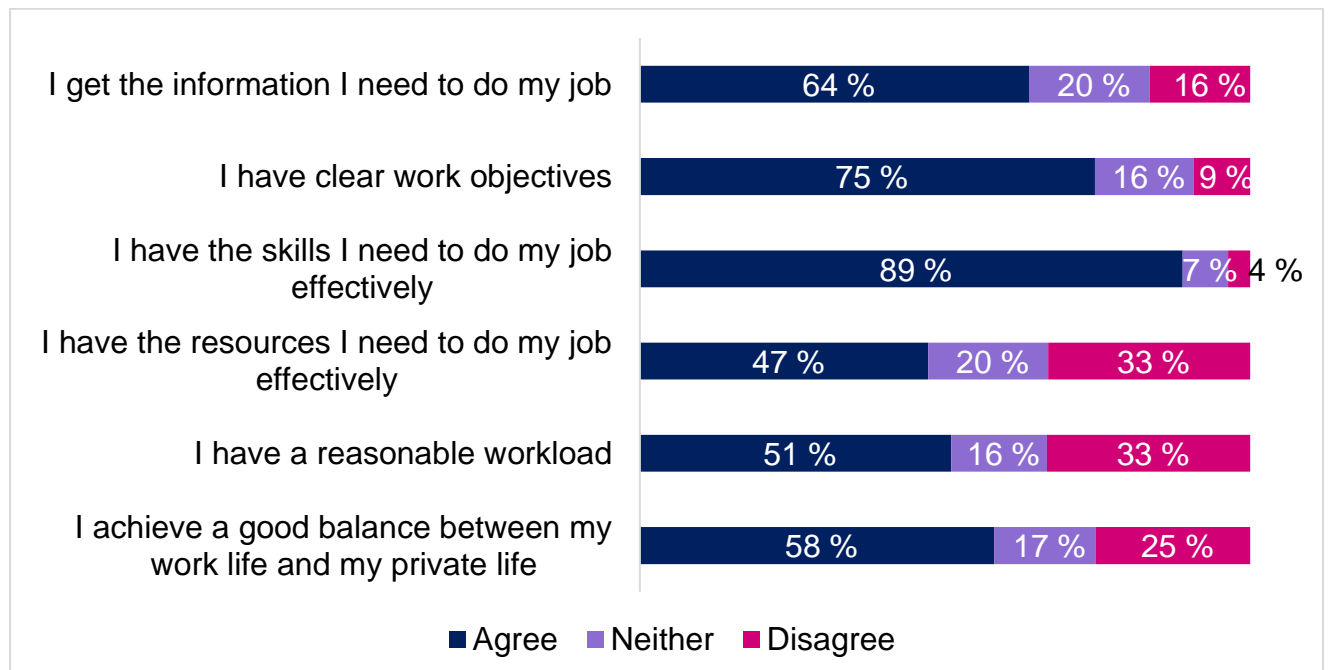
Theme	Overall	Communities & Place	Education & Learning	Health & Social Care	Infrastructure, Environment & Economy	Performance & Governance	Property & Housing	Resource & Finance
Sample Base	5,002	403	2,754	487	368	164	491	335
I am interested in my work	92 %	85 %	94 %	97 %	89 %	88 %	90 %	85 %
I am sufficiently challenged by my work	83 %	70 %	85 %	90 %	81 %	80 %	79 %	79 %
My work gives me a sense of personal accomplishment	79 %	67 %	82 %	82 %	74 %	78 %	76 %	71 %
I feel involved in the decisions that affect my work	42 %	37 %	40 %	46 %	54 %	50 %	43 %	44 %
I have a choice in deciding how I do my work	58 %	52 %	52 %	70 %	70 %	77 %	65 %	65 %
I feel I have job security	67 %	66 %	61 %	77 %	76 %	78 %	77 %	68 %

6. Resource and Workload

6.1 Resource and Workload Summary:

For Resource and Workload, roughly 9 out of 10 staff have the knowledge and skill to effectively carry out their jobs and 3 in 4 are clear in what they are expected to do. This aligns with the previous section and reiterates that staff are invested in the work they do for the Council. However, there are challenges in relation to the equipment and resources to enable staff to carry out their jobs efficiently. Less than half (47%) agree that they “have the resources to carry out their job effectively” and 51% think they have “a reasonable workload”.

Figure 10: Q2 to what extent do you agree with the following statements around Resource and Workload at Highland Council. Base: all respondents



6.2 Resource and Workload by key groups:

The challenges with resourcing are most notable within Education & Learning. In particular, Promoted Teachers feel under pressure due to resources and workload, with 16% believing they have a “reasonable workload” and 23% being able to “achieve a balance between their work and private life”.

There are communication challenges for front line service staff (60%). 93% of Managers “have the skills to do their jobs”, however 42% believe they “have a reasonable workload”.

Table 8: “Resource and Workload” questions by Service

Theme	Overall	Communities & Place	Education & Learning	Health & Social Care	Infrastructure, Environment & Economy	Performance & Governance	Property & Housing	Resource & Finance
Sample Base	5,002	403	2,754	487	368	164	491	335
I get the information I need to do my job	64 %	58 %	63 %	67 %	69 %	70 %	60 %	70 %
I have clear work objectives	75 %	68 %	74 %	78 %	76 %	76 %	74 %	79 %
I have the skills I need to do my job effectively	89 %	86 %	90 %	87 %	84 %	90 %	91 %	90 %
I have the resources I need to do my job effectively	47 %	48 %	44 %	43 %	46 %	64 %	52 %	66 %
I have a reasonable workload	51 %	55 %	46 %	55 %	55 %	62 %	60 %	59 %
I achieve a good balance between my work life and my private life	58 %	61 %	53 %	57 %	63 %	77 %	70 %	65 %

Table 9: “Resource and Workload” questions by Job Family

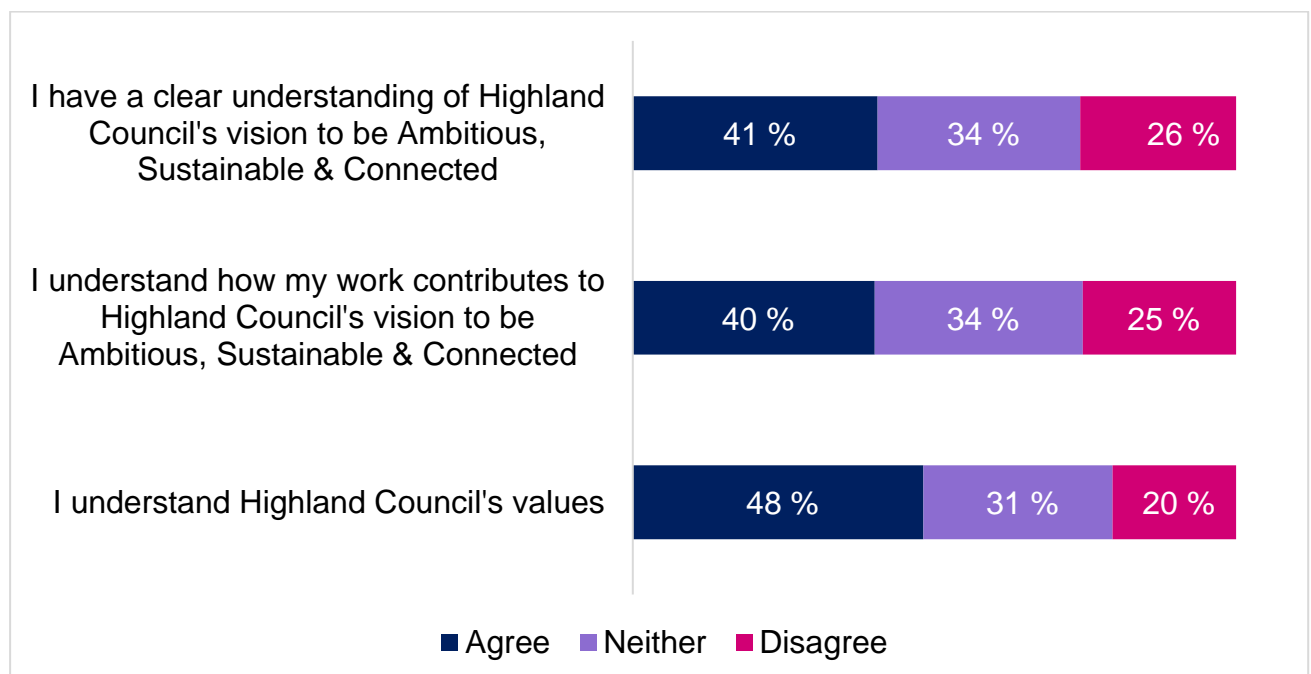
Theme	Overall	Technical & Practical	Personal Care	Business Support	Community	Professional & Specialist	Management	Teacher	Promoted teacher
Sample Base	5,002	813	325	467	612	763	257	1 414	351
I get the information I need to do my job	64 %	62 %	60 %	73 %	60 %	64 %	68 %	63 %	68 %
I have clear work objectives	75 %	71 %	67 %	80 %	71 %	76 %	76 %	75 %	82 %
I have the skills I need to do my job effectively	89 %	86 %	85 %	91 %	88 %	89 %	93 %	90 %	90 %
I have the resources I need to do my job effectively	47 %	53 %	48 %	73 %	50 %	48 %	43 %	40 %	26 %
I have a reasonable workload	51 %	63 %	69 %	68 %	62 %	50 %	42 %	40 %	16 %
I achieve a good balance between my work life and my private life	58 %	72 %	74 %	75 %	66 %	60 %	49 %	47 %	23 %

7. Organisational Objectives

7.1 Organisational Objectives Summary:

Organisational Objectives is a theme with significant disagree and neutral responses. Although 41% of staff agree to having a “clear understanding of Highland Council’s vision”, 34% are neutral. This would suggest that many staff are unclear about Highland Council’s objectives. Communicating a clear message about the Council’s vision to be Ambitious, Sustainable and Connected will help increase awareness and provide employees with a greater understanding on how their work can support this.

Figure 11: Q3 to what extent do you agree with the following statements around Highland Council’s Organisational Objectives. Base: all respondents



7.2 Organisational Objectives by key groups

The Performance & Governance service has the greatest understanding of the organisation objectives and across the council, Managers are the group most aware of the Council’s vision and objectives. In Education & Learning 35% of staff have clear understanding of the Council’s vision.

Table 10: “Organisational Objectives” questions by Service

Theme	Overall	Communities & Place	Education & Learning	Health & Social Care	Infrastructure, Environment & Economy	Performance & Governance	Property & Housing	Resource & Finance
Sample Base	5,002	403	2,754	487	368	164	491	335
I have a clear understanding of Highland Council's vision to be Ambitious, Sustainable & Connected	41 %	39 %	35 %	44 %	46 %	60 %	51 %	55 %
I understand how my work contributes to Highland Council's vision to be Ambitious, Sustainable & Connected	40 %	43 %	33 %	42 %	50 %	58 %	51 %	53 %
I understand Highland Council's values	48 %	51 %	41 %	58 %	53 %	61 %	60 %	64 %

Table 11: “Organisational Objectives” questions by Job Family

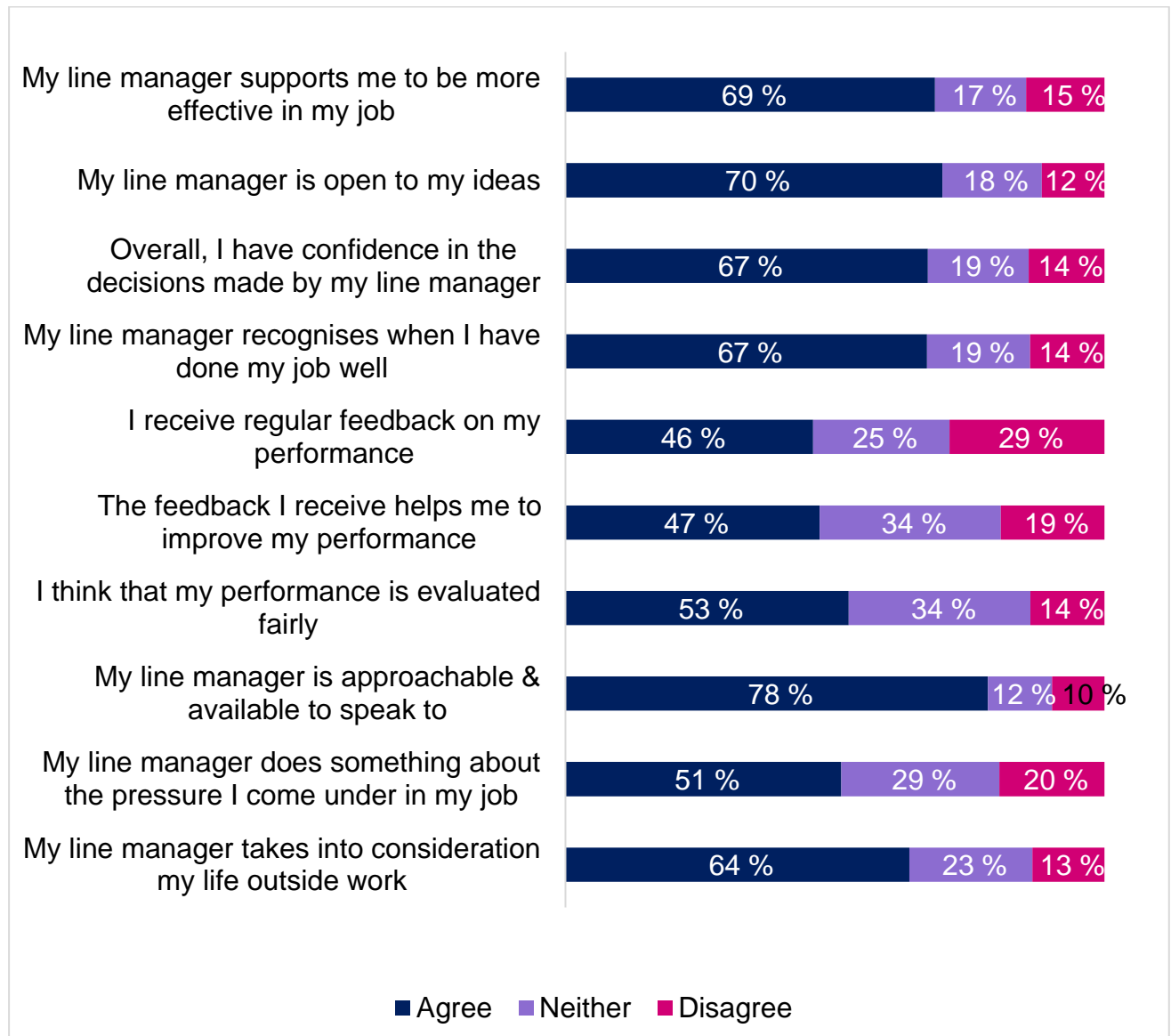
Theme	Overall	Technical & Practical	Personal Care	Business Support	Community	Professional & Specialist	Management	Teacher	Promoted teacher
Sample Base	5,002	813	325	467	612	763	257	1 414	351
I have a clear understanding of Highland Council's vision to be Ambitious, Sustainable & Connected	41 %	41 %	35 %	49 %	43 %	48 %	63 %	29 %	41 %
I understand how my work contributes to Highland Council's vision to be Ambitious, Sustainable & Connected	40 %	42 %	34 %	46 %	45 %	46 %	60 %	29 %	41 %
I understand Highland Council's values	48 %	50 %	49 %	57 %	54 %	57 %	69 %	34 %	45 %

8. My Line Manager

8.1 My Line Manager summary

There are mixed views on line management across the Council. 78% of staff find their line manager “approachable and easy to speak to” and 70% view their “line managers being open to their ideas”. This shows that line managers at Highland Council are accessible, easy to talk to and listen to ideas and concerns. However, there are opportunities to improve the feedback from line managers as 46% of employees report “receiving regular feedback on their performance” and 53% thinking that their “performance is evaluated fairly”.

Figure 12: Q4 to what extent do you agree with the following statements around My Line Manager at Highland Council. Base: all respondents



8.2 My Line Manager by key groups

When comparing the responses relating to line management by Service, there is no notable difference with the exception of Communities & Place who are 5-10% lower than the overall score, highlighting this as an area for improvement.

Table 12: “Line Manager” questions by Service

Theme	Overall	Communities & Place	Education & Learning	Health & Social Care	Infrastructure, Environment & Economy	Performance & Governance	Property & Housing	Resource & Finance
Sample Base	5,002	403	2,754	487	368	164	491	335
My line manager supports me to be more effective in my job	69 %	64 %	68 %	72 %	68 %	71 %	68 %	71 %
My line manager is open to my ideas	70 %	61 %	70 %	75 %	73 %	72 %	69 %	71 %
Overall, I have confidence in the decisions made by my line manager	67 %	61 %	67 %	70 %	70 %	70 %	68 %	69 %
My line manager recognises when I have done my job well	67 %	60 %	67 %	71 %	68 %	73 %	66 %	70 %
I receive regular feedback on my performance	46 %	39 %	44 %	58 %	46 %	57 %	46 %	47 %
The feedback I receive helps me to improve my performance	47 %	40 %	45 %	58 %	48 %	57 %	45 %	51 %
I think that my performance is evaluated fairly	53 %	44 %	51 %	62 %	54 %	60 %	53 %	54 %
My line manager is approachable & available to speak to	78 %	73 %	77 %	82 %	80 %	82 %	81 %	82 %

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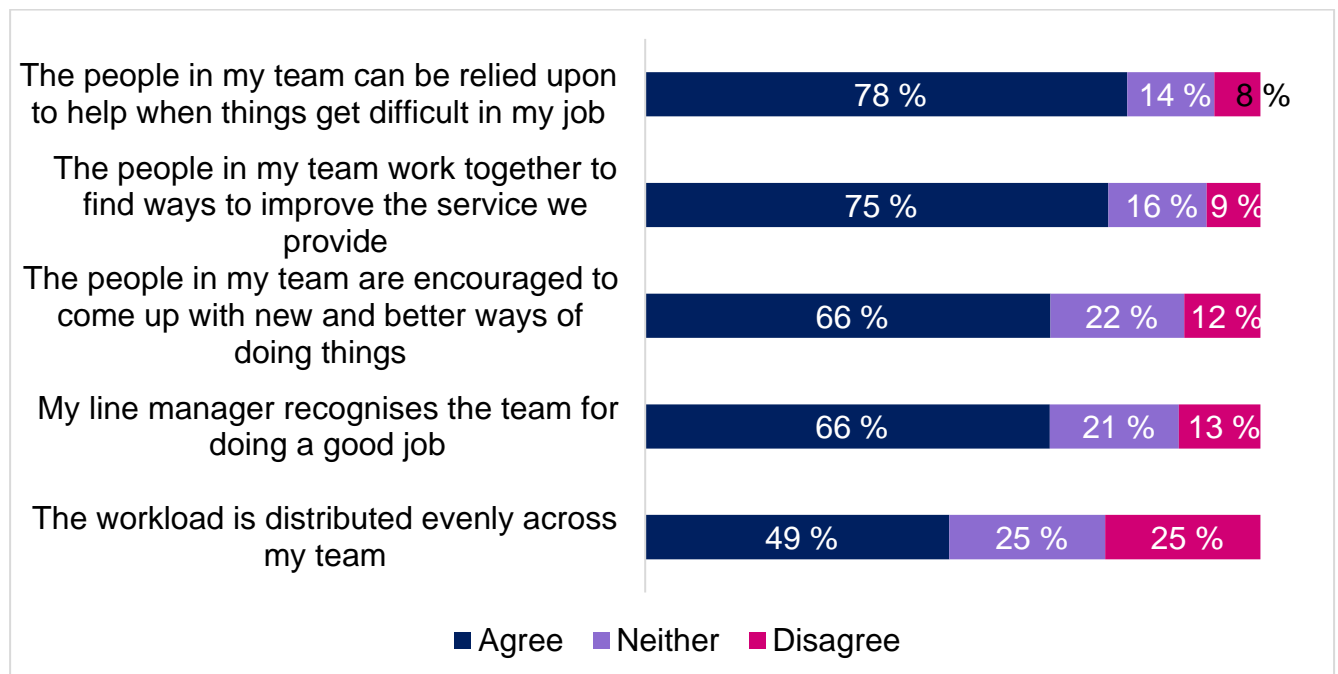
My line manager does something about the pressure I come under in my job	51 %	47 %	49 %	60 %	54 %	58 %	53 %	54 %
My line manager takes into consideration my life outside work	64 %	55 %	63 %	71 %	63 %	70 %	63 %	68 %

9. My Team

9.1 My Team summary

Employees at the Council on the whole work well with the people in their team with 78% of staff agreeing that “the people in their team can be relied on to help when things get difficult in their job”. This is supported by the 75% who agree “the people in their team work together to find ways to improve the service they provide”. There are some concerns in relation to “workload being distributed evenly across teams” as a 49% agree score reiterates workload concerns highlighted in Section 6: Resource and Workload.

Figure 13: Q5 to what extent do you agree with the following statements around My Team at Highland Council. Base: all respondents



9.2 My Team by key groups

Performance & Governance and Health & Social Care both score well within the questions around My Team. 81% of Education & Learning staff believe “the people in their team can be relied on to help when things get difficult in their job”. There are some concerns around the workload distribution in teams within Communities & Place as 36% agree.

Table 13: “My Team” questions by Service

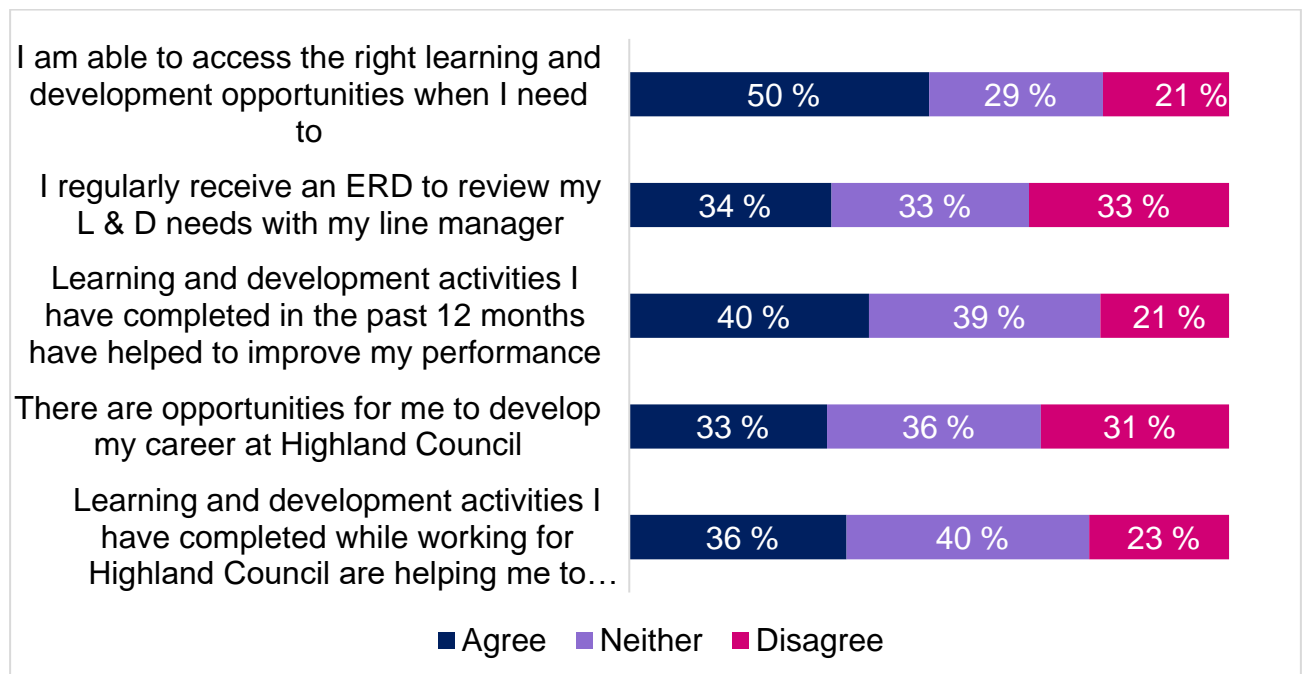
Theme	Overall	Communities & Place	Education & Learning	Health & Social Care	Infrastructure, Environment & Economy	Performance & Governance	Property & Housing	Resource & Finance
Sample Base	5,002	403	2,754	487	368	164	491	335
The people in my team can be relied upon to help when things get difficult in my job	78 %	61 %	81 %	84 %	72 %	79 %	77 %	80 %
The people in my team work together to find ways to improve the service we provide	75 %	57 %	78 %	84 %	68 %	77 %	70 %	75 %
The people in my team are encouraged to come up with new and better ways of doing things	66 %	48 %	69 %	71 %	62 %	69 %	58 %	66 %
My line manager recognises the team for doing a good job	66 %	57 %	66 %	72 %	66 %	73 %	62 %	68 %
The workload is distributed evenly across my team	49 %	36 %	50 %	52 %	48 %	61 %	49 %	49 %

10. Learning and Development

10.1 Learning and Development Summary

Learning and Development is another theme with high levels of neutrality where most questions have neither agree or disagree scores being equal or greater than the agree score. a third (33%) of staff believe they have opportunities to “develop their career at Highland Council” and 50% of staff believe they have “access to the right learning and development opportunities when they need to”. These highlight Learning and Development is an area for improvement.

Figure 14: Q6 to what extent do you agree with the following statements around Learning and Development at Highland Council. Base: all respondents



10.2 Learning and Development by key groups

There are mixed perceptions around Learning and Development within Performance & Governance. Whilst 57% of staff are “able to access learning and development opportunities” 30% believe “there are enough opportunities to develop their career at Highland Council”.

Table 14: Learning and Development” questions by Service

Theme	Overall	Communities & Place	Education & Learning	Health & Social Care	Infrastructure, Environment & Economy	Performance & Governance	Property & Housing	Resource & Finance
Sample Base	5,002	403	2,754	487	368	164	491	335
I am able to access the right learning and development opportunities when I need to	50 %	36 %	51 %	54 %	46 %	57 %	52 %	50 %
I regularly receive an ERD to review my L & D needs with my line manager	34 %	25 %	35 %	40 %	27 %	37 %	29 %	34 %
Learning and development activities I have completed in the past 12 months have helped to improve my performance	40 %	21 %	47 %	54 %	30 %	32 %	25 %	19 %
There are opportunities for me to develop my career at Highland Council	33 %	26 %	32 %	34 %	39 %	30 %	39 %	32 %
Learning and development activities I have completed while working for Highland Council are helping me to develop my career	36 %	25 %	38 %	45 %	38 %	32 %	32 %	28 %

11. Working Environment

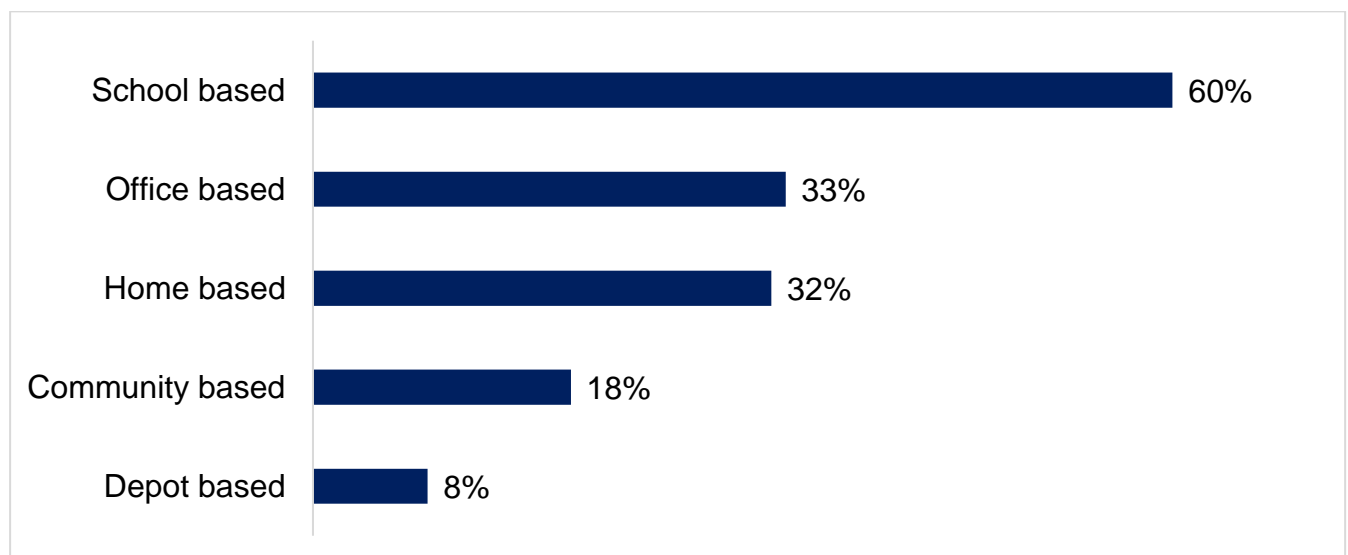
11.1 Where staff work:

Working Environment is an area of interest due to the increases in hybrid and home working which have emerged as a consequence of the pandemic.

It is important to note that 60% of respondents are school based with little opportunity for flexible/hybrid working.

There is a balance between office and home working at 33% and 32% of the remaining respondents. 18% of staff are community based and 8% are based in a depot.

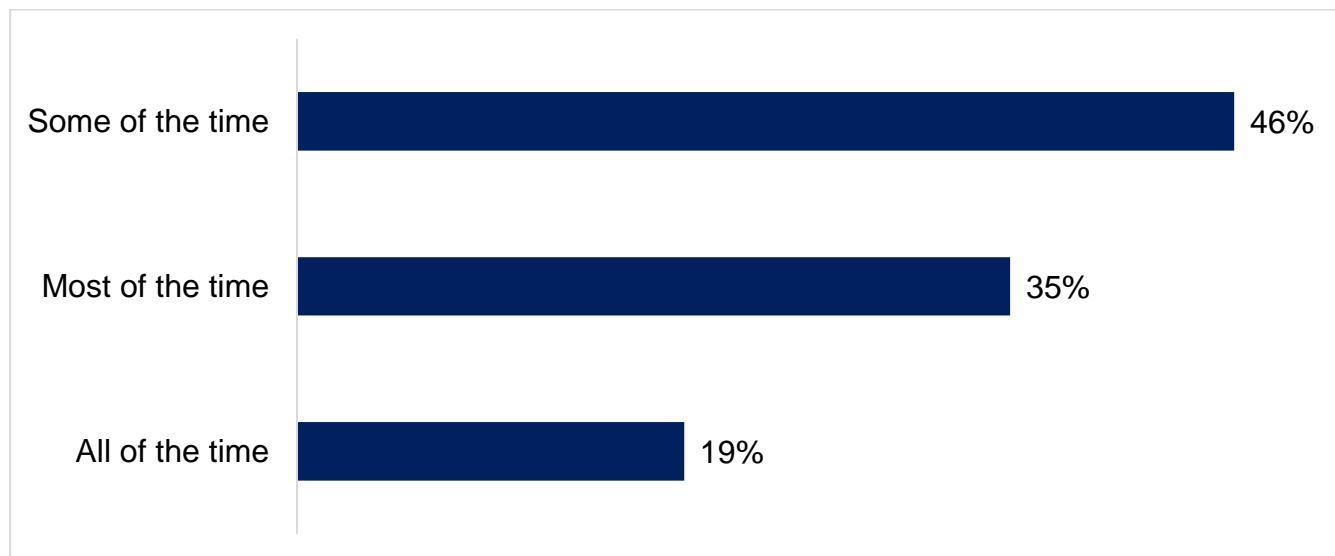
Figure 15: Q7.1 Where staff are based at work. Base: all respondents



11.2 Working from home

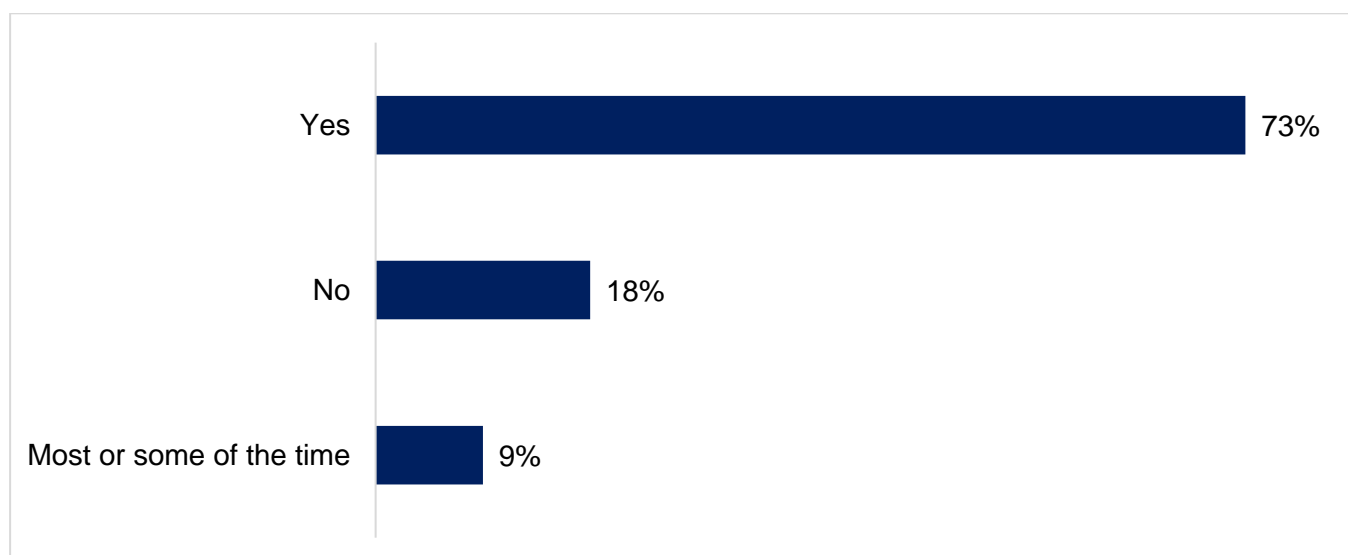
Accepting that over half of our respondents are either school, depot or community based the remainder are working flexibly either home based “Some of the time” (46%) or “Most of the time” (35%). 19% of staff are based at home “All of the time”.

Figure 16: Q7.2 How often are staff currently based at home. Base: Q7.1= Home Based



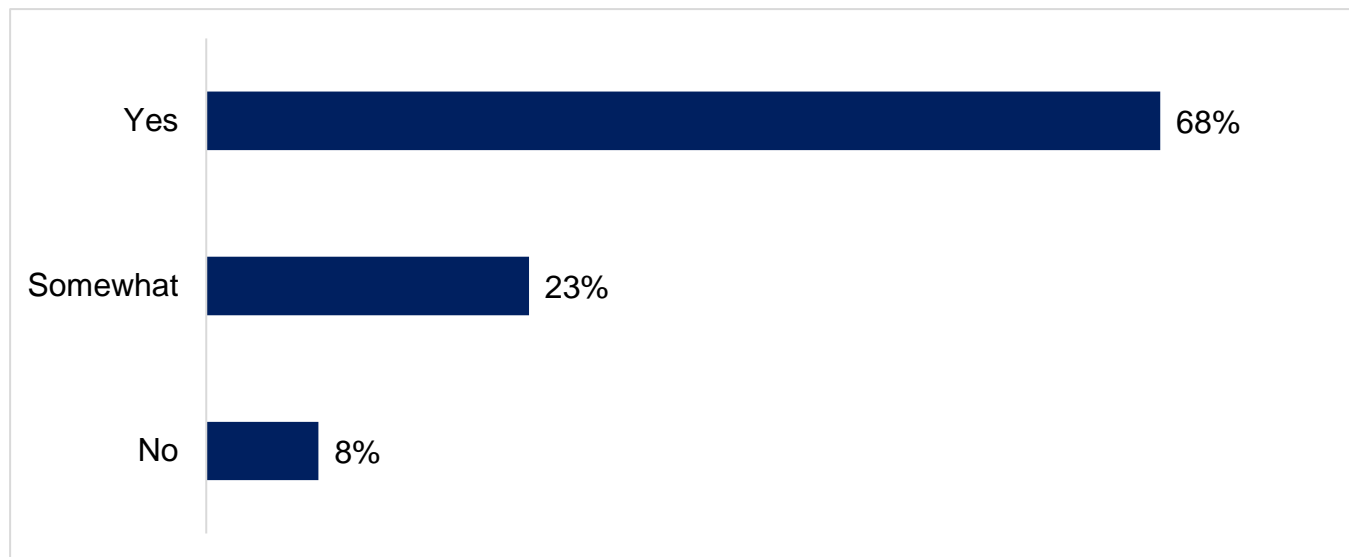
Of these staff, 73% have a dedicated workspace at home, showing that staff generally have an appropriate home working environment. 18% of staff report not having a dedicated home workspace.

Figure 17: Q7.3 Do you have a dedicated workspace at home. Base: Q7.1= Home Based



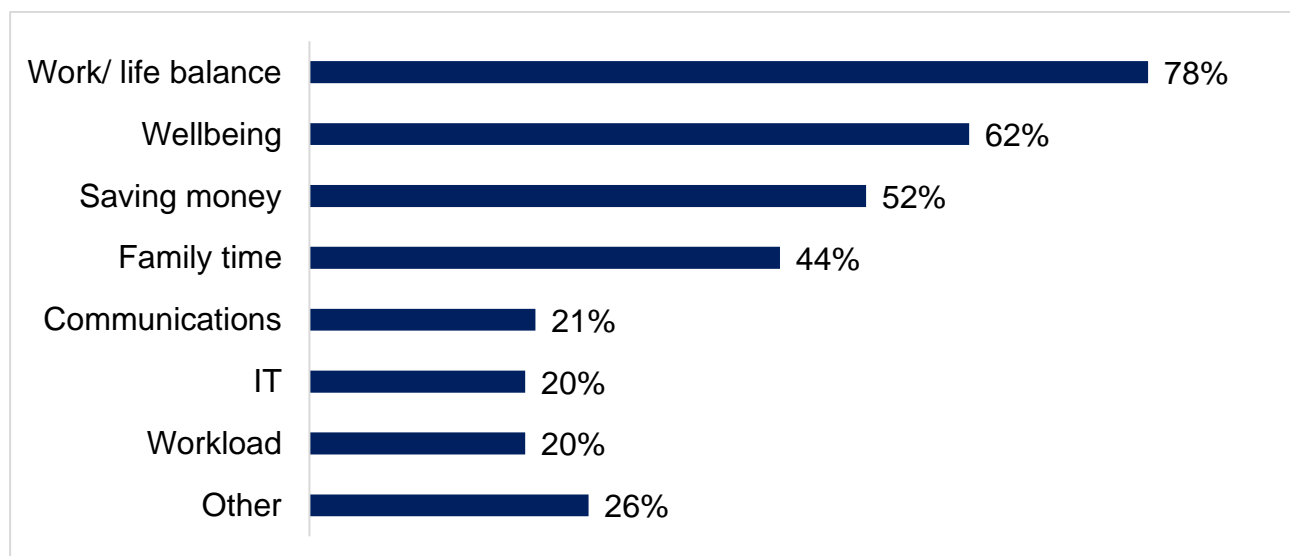
Additionally, 68% have had a positive experience of working from home with 8% of staff having a negative experience of home working. As a result, home working has typically been a positive experience for staff at Highland Council.

Figure 18: Q7.4 Has working from home been a generally positive experience for you. Base: Q7.1= Home Based



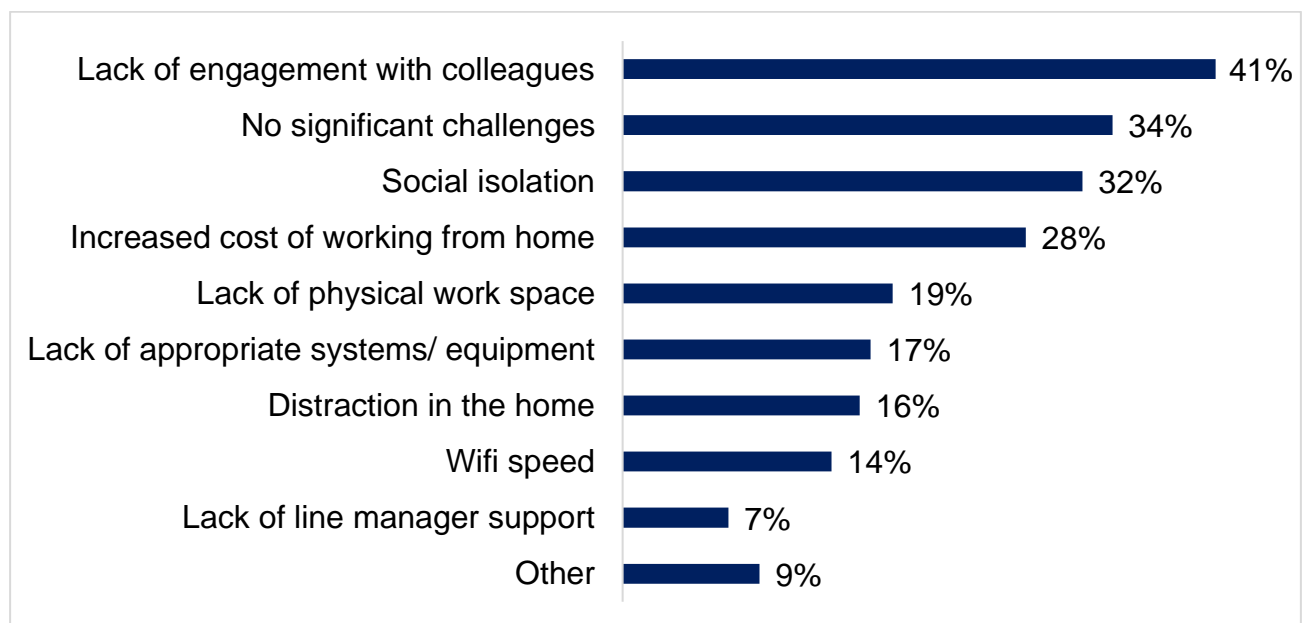
The main positives staff felt from home working was the improved Work/ Life balance (78%) and Wellbeing (62%) demonstrating the health and wellness benefits home working provides to staff.

Figure 19: Q7.5 What are the positives of working from home. Base: Q7.3= Yes OR Somewhat



An issue encountered with home working for staff is the “lack of engagement with colleagues” (41%). This is a common theme found in other surveys. Increased social events for staff organised by the Council could help address this, particularly as activities have opened up again after the pandemic. It is however, reassuring that 34% of staff encountered “no significant challenges”, the 2nd most selected option for this question.

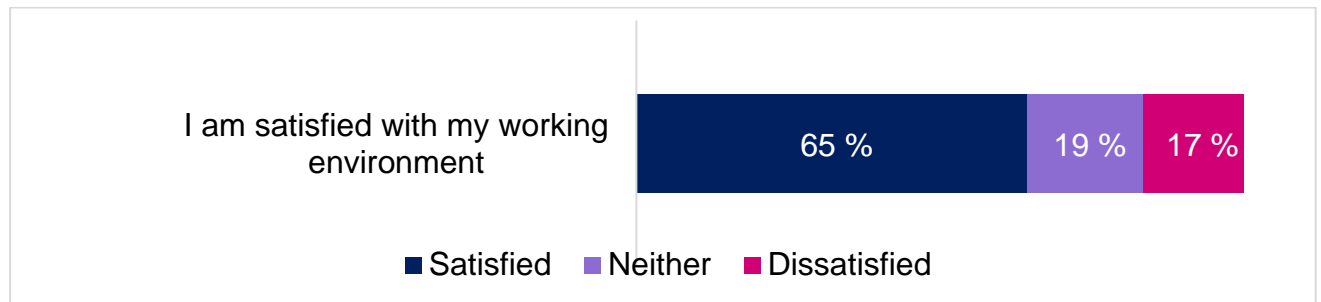
Figure 20: Q7.6 What are the biggest challenges working from home. Base: Q7.1= Home Based



11.3 Satisfaction with work environment

At the end of this section staff were asked about their overall satisfaction with their work environment. Although this has been a challenging area for many Councils due to the pandemic, Highland is performing well here (65% agree), scoring marginally above the Local Authority Benchmark (+2%). This score is slightly lower than it was in 2015, however, this is within expectation and consistent with trends BMG has seen amongst organisations over the pandemic.

Figure 21: Q7.7 How satisfied are staff with their work environment. Base: all respondents



11.4 Satisfaction with work environment by key groups

Education & Learning and Communities & Place responses indicate that staff are less satisfied with their work environment at 58% and 61% respectively. By contrast, 85% of staff in Performance & Governance are satisfied with their work environment.

Table 15: Satisfaction with work Environment by Service

Theme	Overall	Communities & Place	Education & Learning	Health & Social Care	Infrastructure, Environment & Economy	Performance & Governance	Property & Housing	Resource & Finance
Sample Base	5,002	403	2,754	487	368	164	491	335
I am satisfied with my working environment	65 %	58 %	61 %	65 %	67 %	85 %	74 %	74 %

12. Inclusion and Fair Treatment

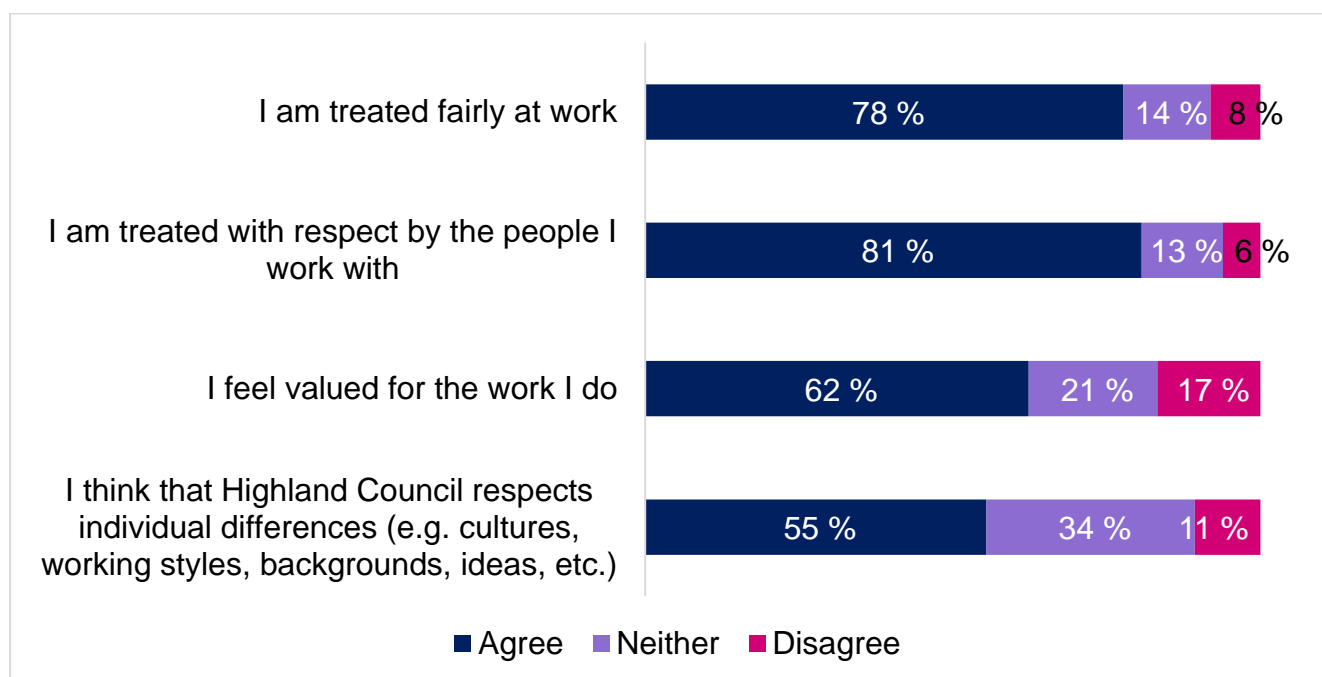
12.1 Inclusion and Fair Treatment Summary

Inclusion and Fair Treatment is an area the Council is performing very well in. Over three quarters (78%) of staff believe they are “treated fairly at work” whilst 81% are “respected by the people they work with”.

“Feeling valued for the work staff do” is a key driver question for non-education-based staff and although encouraging to see, there is still room for improvement.

“Respecting individual differences” was a key driver for the whole Council (excluding Education & Learning) with 55% of staff agreeing to this question. This presents an opportunity for improvement

Figure 22: Q8 to what extent do you agree with the following statements around Learning and Development at Highland Council. Base: all respondents



12.2 Inclusion and Fair Treatment by key groups

Table 16: “Fairness and Inclusion” questions by Service

Theme	Overall	Communities & Place	Education & Learning	Health & Social Care	Infrastructure, Environment & Economy	Performance & Governance	Property & Housing	Resource & Finance
Sample Base	5,002	403	2,754	487	368	164	491	335
I am treated fairly at work	78 %	67 %	78 %	79 %	77 %	78 %	81 %	79 %
I am treated with respect by the people I work with	81 %	69 %	82 %	85 %	79 %	82 %	82 %	80 %
I feel valued for the work I do	62 %	50 %	63 %	66 %	62 %	66 %	64 %	63 %
I think that Highland Council respects individual differences (e.g. cultures, working styles, backgrounds, ideas, etc.)	55 %	50 %	52 %	58 %	62 %	65 %	64 %	63 %

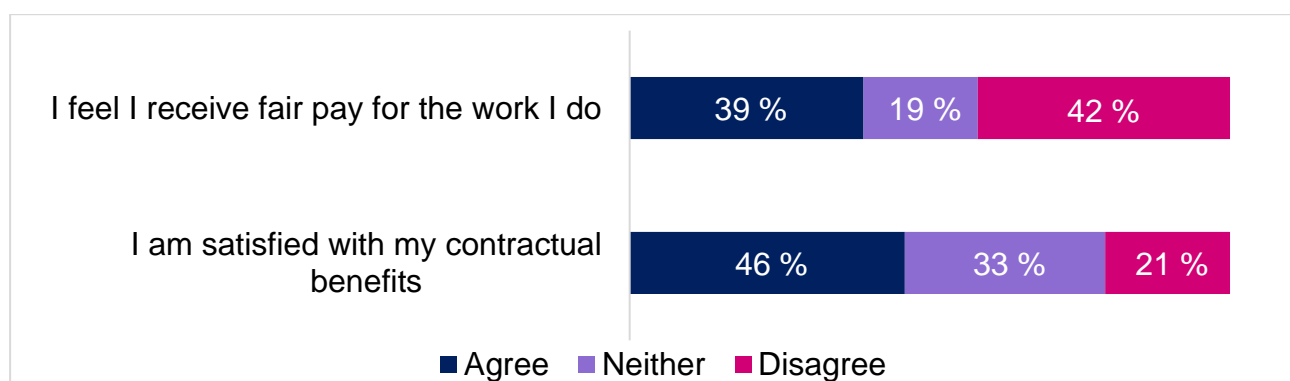
13. Pay and Benefits

13.1 Pay and Benefits Summary

Pay and Benefits is always a controversial topic and an area of particular interest by staff when asked about what changes they would like to see at Highland Council. It is worth noting that this theme always has high levels of disagreement in almost every survey BMG conducts.

Staff will always appreciate more pay however it is not typically a key driver question for Employee Engagement. It is worth reiterating that this is an area organisations particular Public Sector and Councils find challenging. Highland Council performs above the benchmark in comparison to other organisations.

Figure 23: Q9 to what extent do you agree with the following statements around Pay and Benefits at Highland Council. Base: all respondents



13.2 Pay and Benefits by key groups

Education & Learning staff (particularly teachers) appear to be less pleased with their contractual benefits. 35% of teachers agree to being satisfied.

33% of Grade HC 1-3 and 36% HC 4-8 agree to “receiving fair pay for the work they do”

Table 17: “Pay and Benefits” questions by Service

Theme	Overall	Communities & Place	Education & Learning	Health & Social Care	Infrastructure, Environment & Economy	Performance & Governance	Property & Housing	Resource & Finance
Sample Base	5,002	403	2,754	487	368	164	491	335

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I feel I receive fair pay for the work I do	39 %	34 %	37 %	52 %	39 %	54 %	36 %	41 %
I am satisfied with my contractual benefits	46 %	46 %	37 %	56 %	54 %	69 %	55 %	67 %

Table 18: “Pay and Benefits” questions by Job Family

Theme	Overall	Technical & Practical	Personal Care	Business Support	Community	Professional & Specialist	Management	Teacher	Promoted teacher
Sample Base	5,002	813	325	467	612	763	257	1 414	351
I feel I receive fair pay for the work I do	39 %	32 %	36 %	37 %	36 %	45 %	53 %	37 %	50 %
I am satisfied with my contractual benefits	46 %	45 %	39 %	55 %	48 %	56 %	67 %	35 %	44 %

Table 19: “Pay and Benefits” questions by Grade

Theme	Overall	HC1-3	HC 4-8	HC9-12	HC13-15	Agenda for Change
Sample Base	5,002	1 373	2 061	1 157	182	229
I feel I receive fair pay for the work I do	39 %	33 %	36 %	48 %	57 %	41 %
I am satisfied with my contractual benefits	46 %	38 %	47 %	52 %	54 %	45 %

14. Leadership and Managing Change

14.1 Leadership and Managing Change Summary

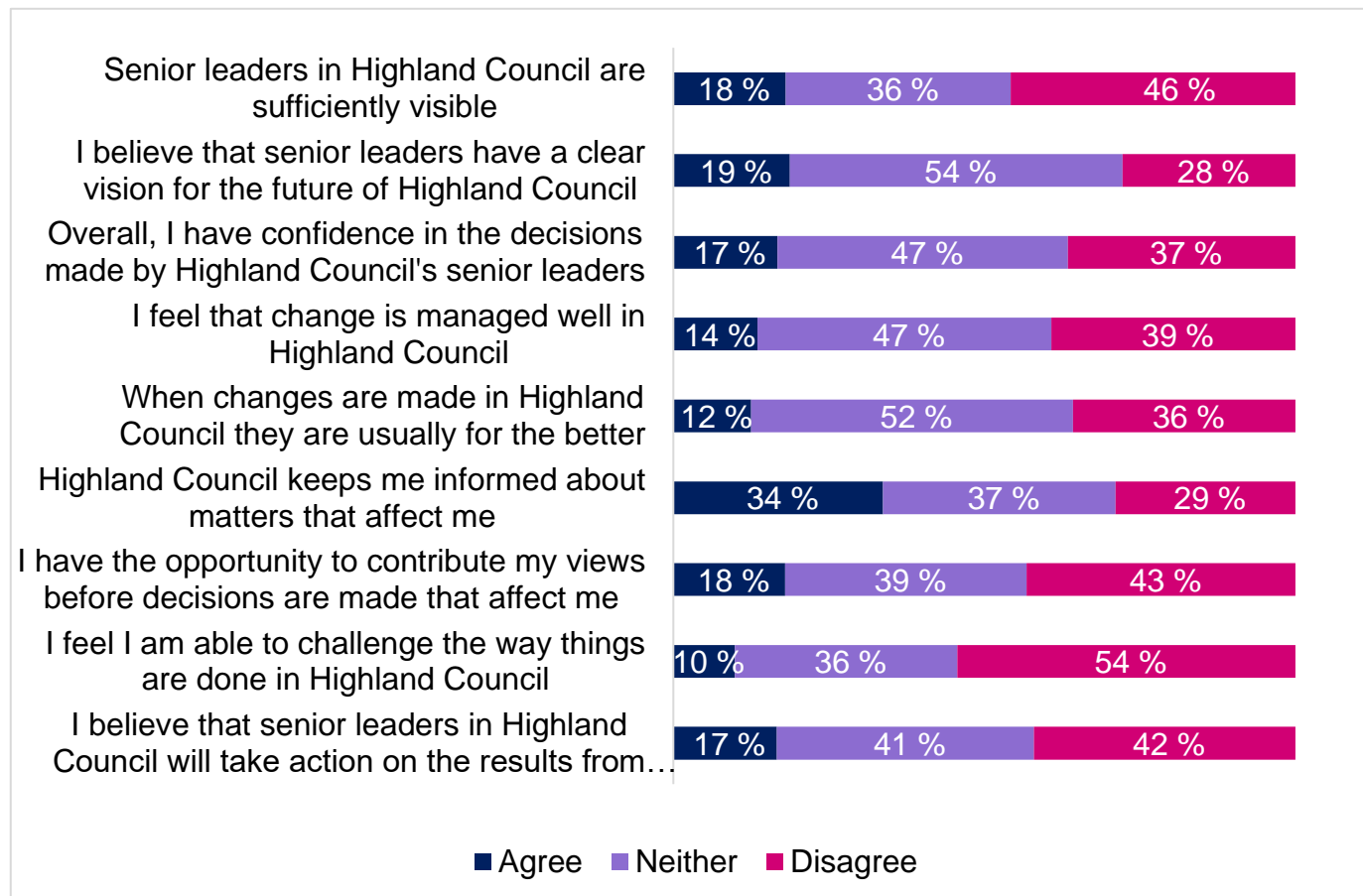
One of the key areas of focus presented by the survey is Leadership and Managing change. The responses confirm high levels of neutrality and disagree scoring - with the majority of responses having less than 20% agreement.

Many questions in this theme (in Section 4) are considered to be key drivers of Employee Engagement making this an important area for action.

The key action areas to consider are where responses have high neutrality. It is easier to engage with staff who are undecided rather than those who actively disagree. “When changes are made in the Council they are usually made for the better” (52%), “Feeling change is managed well” (47%), “Having confidence in decisions made by Highland Council Senior Leaders” (47%) all have high levels of neutrality.

All of the above questions revolve around leadership and being active and visible in implementing changes that matter to staff. It is really important for Highland Council to take action on these areas. This will directly positively impact staff confidence levels as 17% believe action will be taken from the results of the survey.

Figure 24: Q10 to what extent do you agree with the following statements around Leadership and Managing Change at Highland Council. Base: all respondents



14.2 Leadership and Managing Change by key groups

Looking at these questions by service we can see that Education & Learning are generally less positive than other services, particularly when it comes to the questions around change management. 8% of Teachers believe “change is managed well at Highland Council” and 5% feel they are able to “challenge the way things are done”. Business support workers appear to have a more positive outlook on leadership with 45% agreeing “Highland Council keeps them informed about matters that affect them”.

Table 20: “Leadership and Managing Change” questions by Service

Theme	Overall	Communities & Place	Education & Learning	Health & Social Care	Infrastructure, Environment & Economy	Performance & Governance	Property & Housing	Resource & Finance
Sample Base	5,002	403	2,754	487	368	164	491	335
Senior leaders in Highland Council are sufficiently visible	18 %	22 %	15 %	20 %	24 %	36 %	19 %	24 %
I believe that senior leaders have a clear vision for the future of Highland Council	19 %	20 %	16 %	19 %	23 %	32 %	20 %	26 %
Overall, I have confidence in the decisions made by Highland Council's senior leaders	17 %	20 %	13 %	15 %	23 %	34 %	18 %	28 %
I feel that change is managed well in Highland Council	14 %	15 %	11 %	13 %	17 %	22 %	15 %	23 %
When changes are made in Highland Council they are usually for the better	12 %	14 %	10 %	11 %	15 %	24 %	15 %	20 %
Highland Council keeps me informed about matters that affect me	34 %	32 %	30 %	38 %	38 %	46 %	41 %	42 %
I have the opportunity to contribute my views before	18 %	19 %	15 %	22 %	22 %	27 %	22 %	22 %

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decisions are made that affect me								
I feel I am able to challenge the way things are done in Highland Council	10 %	13 %	7 %	11 %	16 %	21 %	13 %	14 %
I believe that senior leaders in Highland Council will take action on the results from this survey	17 %	19 %	14 %	17 %	19 %	26 %	19 %	24 %

Table 21: “Leadership and Managing Change” questions by Job Family

Theme	Overall	Technical & Practical	Personal Care	Business Support	Community	Professional & Specialist	Management	Teacher	Promoted teacher
Sample Base	5,002	813	325	467	612	763	257	1 414	351
Senior leaders in Highland Council are sufficiently visible	18 %	17 %	16 %	27 %	19 %	22 %	29 %	11 %	19 %
I believe that senior leaders have a clear vision for the future of Highland Council	19 %	19 %	18 %	27 %	19 %	21 %	23 %	12 %	24 %
Overall, I have confidence in the decisions made by Highland Council's senior leaders	17 %	18 %	16 %	28 %	19 %	19 %	20 %	10 %	16 %
I feel that change is managed well	14 %	16 %	13 %	24 %	17 %	15 %	11 %	8 %	9 %

Highland Council Staff Survey – Overall report

in Highland Council									
When changes are made in Highland Council, they are usually for the better	12 %	15 %	11 %	21 %	13 %	13 %	15 %	8 %	11 %
Highland Council keeps me informed about matters that affect me	34 %	38 %	28 %	45 %	33 %	37 %	39 %	27 %	32 %
I have the opportunity to contribute my views before decisions are made that affect me	18 %	18 %	13 %	23 %	17 %	21 %	29 %	14 %	17 %
I feel I am able to challenge the way things are done in Highland Council	10 %	11 %	8 %	12 %	9 %	15 %	21 %	5 %	9 %
I believe that senior leaders in Highland Council will take action on the results from this survey	17 %	18 %	13 %	22 %	18 %	20 %	22 %	12 %	15 %

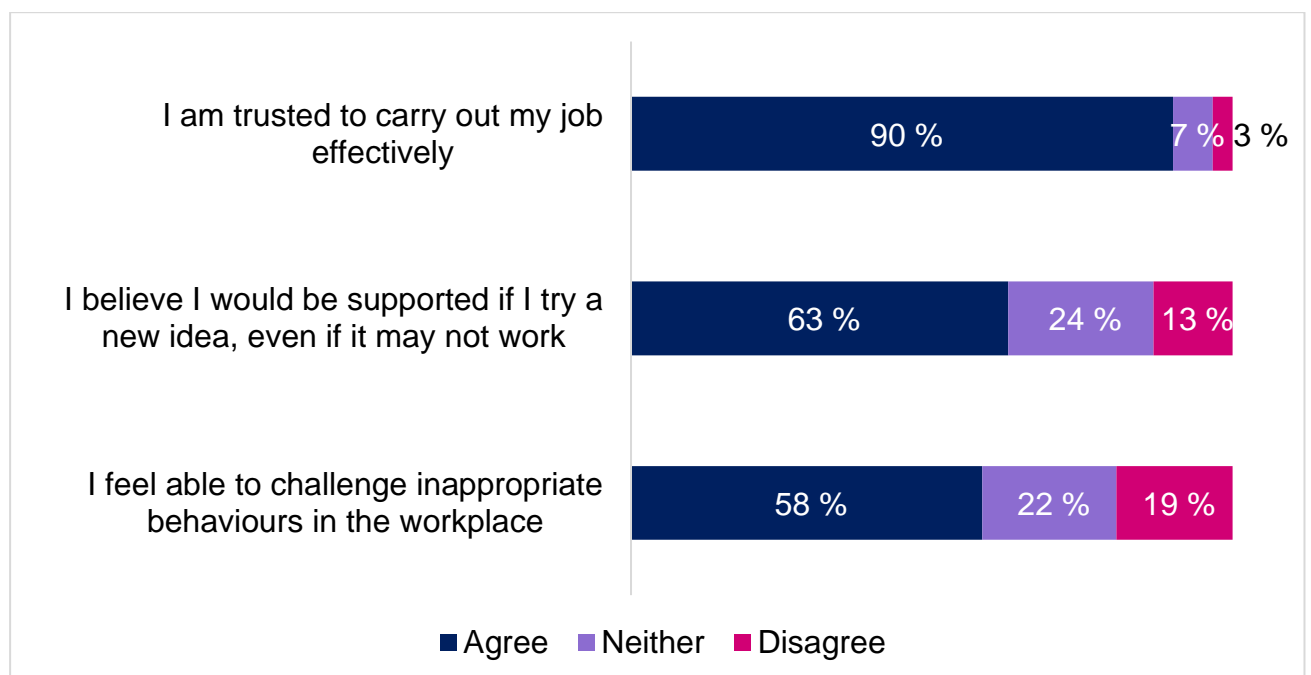
15. Organisational Culture

15.1 Organisational Culture Summary

It is encouraging to see that 90% of staff feel they “are trusted to carry out their job effectively” and reinforces findings within Sections 5 and 6 where staff feel invested in the work they do.

Creating an environment where staff feel supported to address this question would positively impact on the current scoring of 55% of staff “Being able to challenge inappropriate behaviours in the workplace”. Inappropriate behaviour is looked at in more detail in Section 18: Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination.

Figure 25: Q12 to what extent do you agree with the following statements around Organisational Culture at Highland Council. Base: all respondents



15.2 Organisational Culture by key groups:

Table 22: “Organisational Culture” questions by Service

Theme	Overall	Communities & Place	Education & Learning	Health & Social Care	Infrastructure, Environment & Economy	Performance & Governance	Property & Housing	Resource & Finance
Sample Base	5,002	403	2,754	487	368	164	491	335
I am trusted to carry out my job effectively	90 %	85 %	90 %	91 %	92 %	93 %	92 %	92 %
I believe I would be supported if I try a new idea, even if it may not work	63 %	48 %	65 %	62 %	65 %	63 %	60 %	60 %
I feel able to challenge inappropriate behaviours in the workplace	58 %	52 %	56 %	66 %	63 %	61 %	65 %	56 %

16. Communication

Communication responses present an opportunity for improvement for the Council. Improved communication will also help facilitate other areas for improvement within the Council such as leadership visibility and staff feeling able to contribute their views upwards.

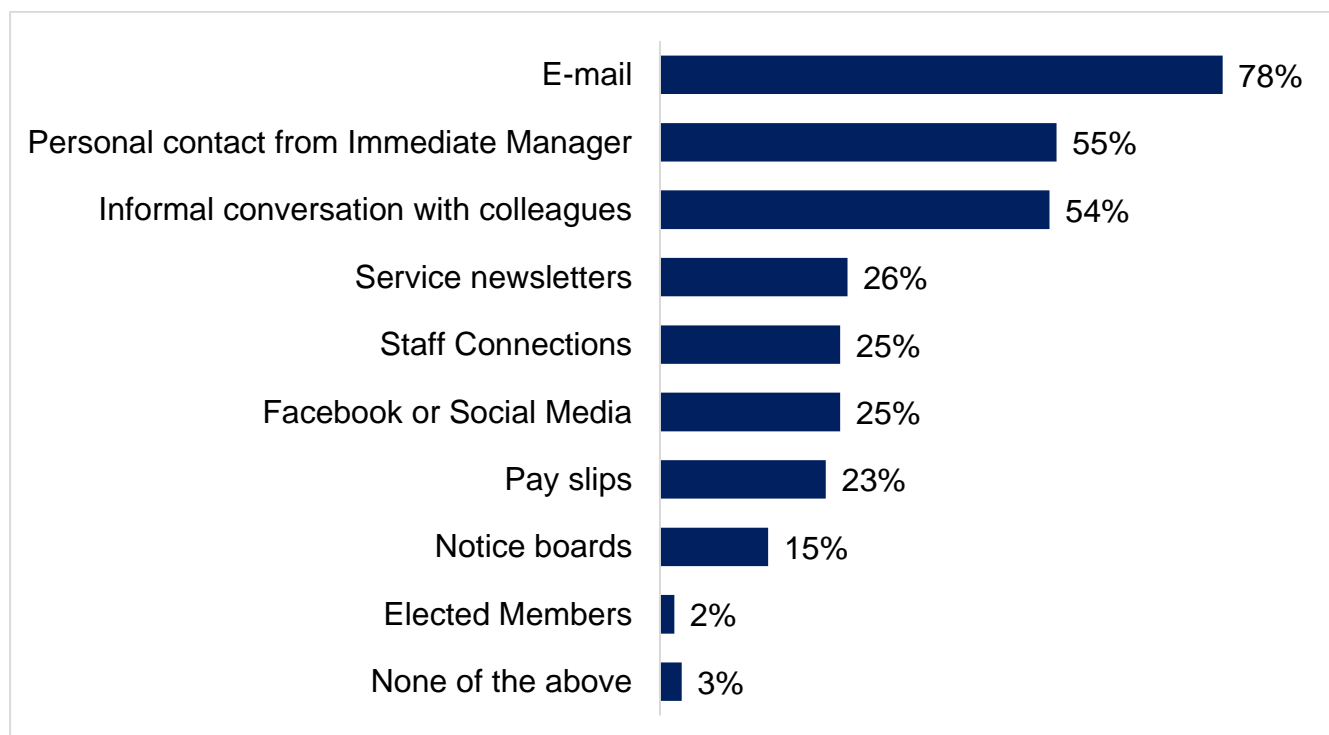
16.1 How Staff Receive Communication

Over three quarters of staff (78%) receive email communications which is encouraging to see in an organisation as geographically challenging as Highland Council.

Over half of staff receive communications from immediate managers/ supervisors (55%) and informal communications with colleagues (54%). This identifies another area where improvement within immediate teams within Highland Council can contribute to the overall satisfaction with this theme.

a quarter of staff (26%) rely on service newsletters, Staff connections or social media. A relatively small proportion of staff (15%) rely on notice boards for communications.

Figure 26: Q13.1 Which of these sources do you use to find information about Highland Council. Base: all respondents

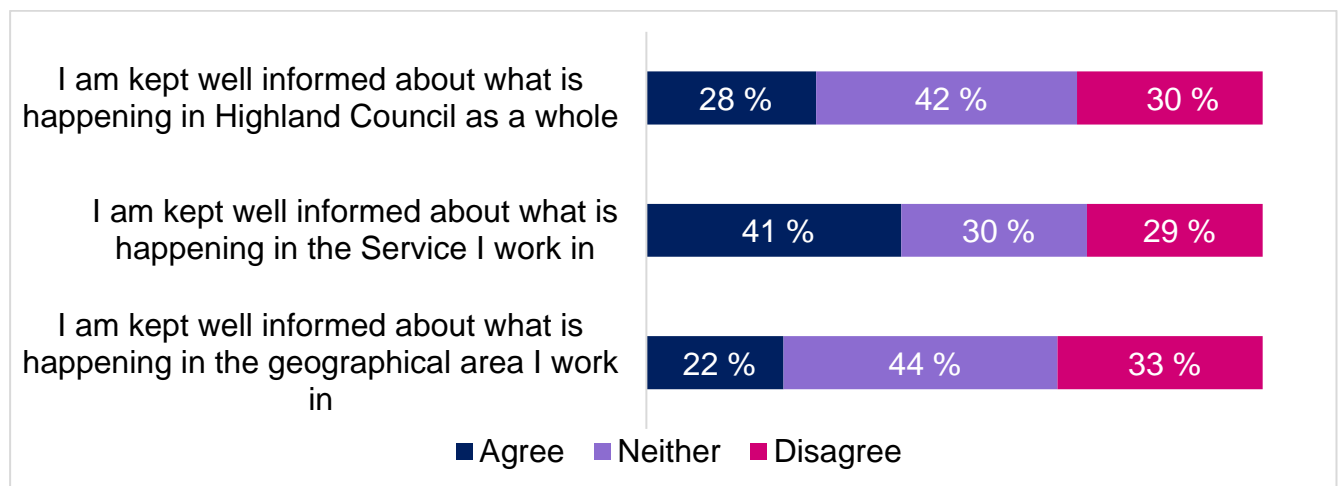


16.2 How well are staff informed

Communication is a key area where opportunity exists for the Highland Council to focus on facilitating change. Comparable to leadership, we see very high levels of neutrality and disagree scores around the effectiveness of communication. 28% of staff agree that “Kept informed about what is happening in Highland as a whole”, whilst 42% of staff are neutral. Communication at a service level is stronger with 41% of staff agreeing that they are “kept well informed about the service I work in”. Communication at a service level is stronger with 41% of staff agreeing that they are “kept well informed about the service I work in”.

More effective communication around the Council as a whole will enable more employees to understand and live the Council’s values which will lead to greater engagement with the organisation.

Figure 27: Q13.2-4 to what extent do you agree with the following statements around Communication at Highland Council. Base: all respondents



16.3 Communication by key groups

Across all services, communication appears to be particularly challenging.

Table 23: “Communication” questions by Service

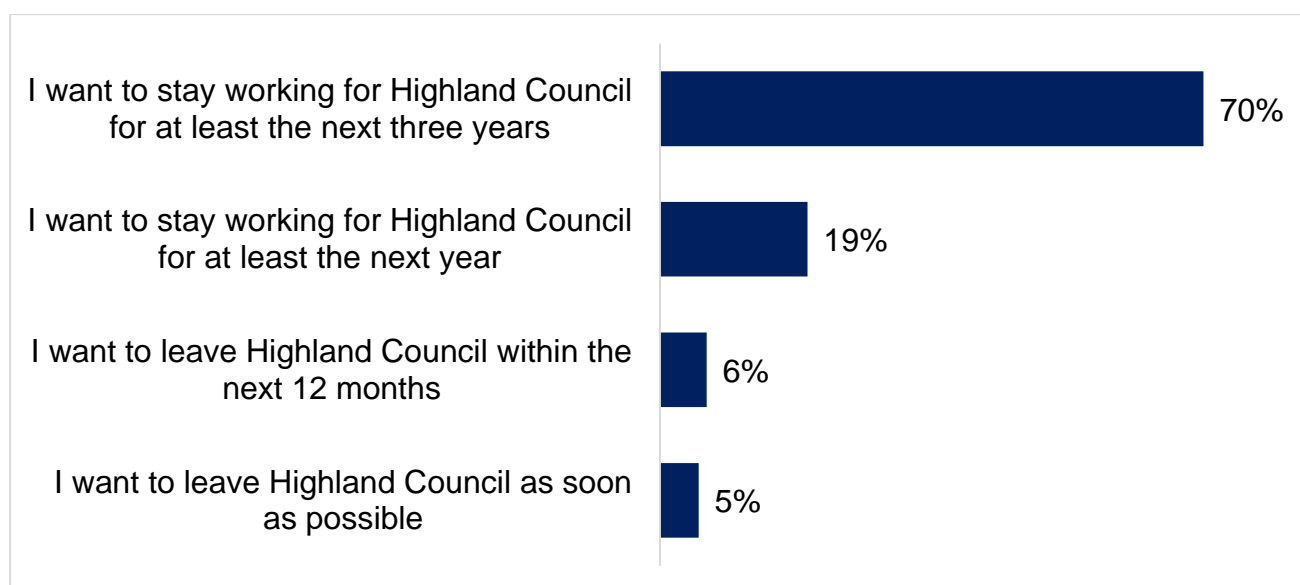
Theme	Overall	Communities & Place	Education & Learning	Health & Social Care	Infrastructure, Environment & Economy	Performance & Governance	Property & Housing	Resource & Finance
Sample Base	5,002	403	2,754	487	368	164	491	335
I am kept well informed about what is happening in Highland Council as a whole	28 %	27 %	23 %	33 %	33 %	41 %	34 %	36 %
I am kept well informed about what is happening in the Service I work in	41 %	41 %	39 %	48 %	42 %	59 %	48 %	36 %
I am kept well informed about what is happening in the geographical area I work in	22 %	25 %	20 %	23 %	24 %	33 %	28 %	21 %

17. Looking to the future at Highland Council

17.1 Staff's intentions

An overwhelming majority of staff are wanting to stay working at Highland Council for the mid / long term. “Wanting to stay working for Highland Council for at least the next 3 years” this is significantly higher (22%) than the local authority benchmark. This aligns with earlier findings where staff confirm being committed to the work they do for the Council.

Figure 28: Q14 Which of the following statements most reflects your current thoughts about working for Highland Council? Base: all respondents



17.2 What changes would staff like to see at Highland Council

Staff were subsequently asked what changes they would like to see at the Council.

Education and Learning would like to see more resource and funding to meet ever increasing workloads, this was by far the largest response at 26% of all comments.

Other areas highlighted include Pay/Salary (19% of comments), Leadership (15% of comments), and Communication (12% of comments). All of these topics have been discussed in prior sections confirming these are clear areas to focus upon. Comments around Communication emphasis there is a need to improve the gap between senior management and employees.

Table 29: Q15 What changes would you most like Highland Council to make in the next 12 months? Base: all respondents (comment themes with >3% representation)

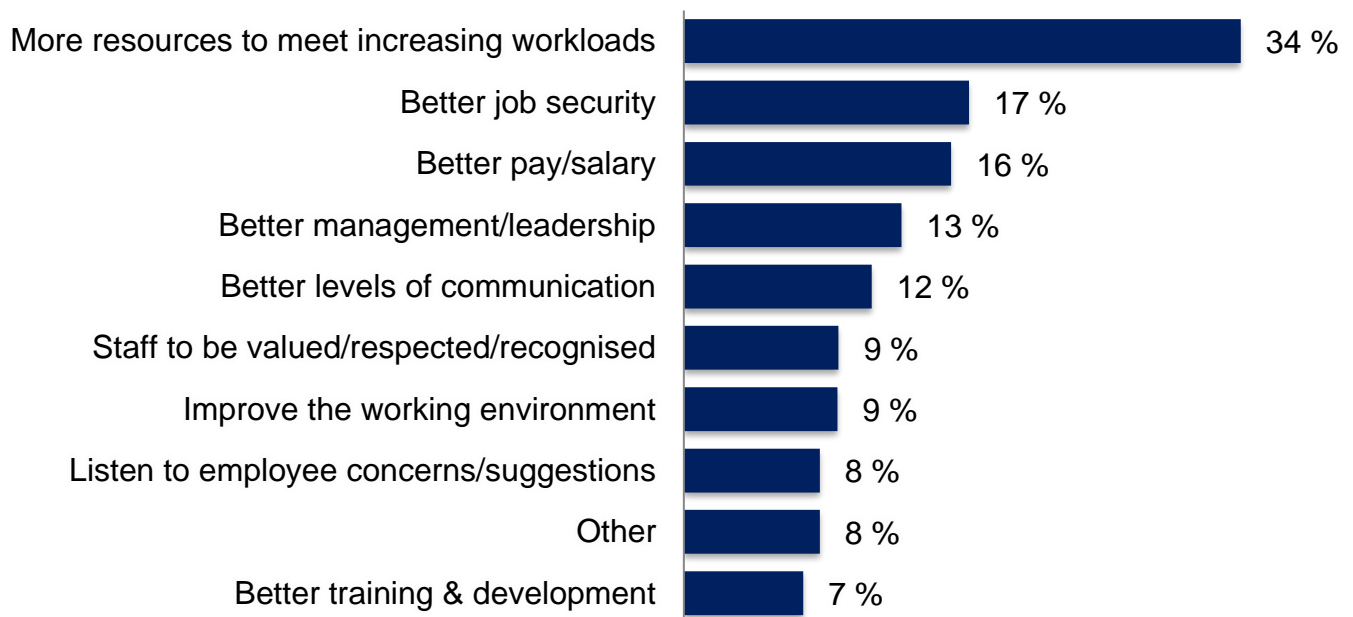
Comment Theme	Percentage % of comments	Number of comments
More staff/resources to meet increasing workloads incl. more funding	26 %	703
Better pay/salary	19 %	515
Better management/leadership	15 %	397
Better levels of communication	12 %	317
Better job security/offering permanent contracts	11 %	280
Staff to be valued/respected/recognised/rewarded	9 %	229
Listen to employee concerns/suggestions	9 %	228
Improve the working environment	8 %	206
Better training & development opportunities	7 %	195
Better change management/less re-structuring	6 %	151
More emphasis on service delivery e.g. roads, housing, community	5 %	145
Flexible/hybrid working/work from home	5 %	130
Better equality/inclusivity/diversity	5 %	121
Better provision of IT/technology	4 %	112
More focus on health & well-being	4 %	107
Better clarity of information/policy/procedures	4 %	98
Streamlining/more efficient processes	3 %	92
Better staff benefits incl. discounts, more holidays	3 %	88
Clear strategic direction/vision/goals	3 %	82

Concerns around resourcing, as well as job security are more so prominent amongst Education & Learning staff making up 34% and 17% of comments for that service. For non-Education & Learning staff workload and resources is slightly less of a concern at 17%. Amongst these groups, better pay and salary is the key talking point at 23% of comments.

Figure 29: Q15 What changes would you most like Highland Council to make in the next 12 months? Base: Non-Education & Learning Staff (Top 10 comment themes)



Figure 30: Q15 What changes would you most like Highland Council to make in the next 12 months? Base: Education & Learning Staff (Top 10 comment themes)



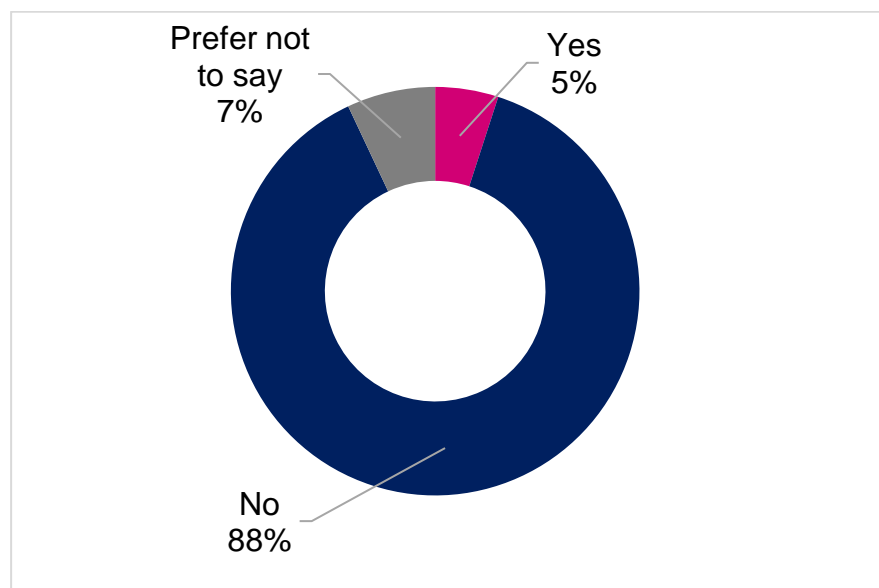
18. Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination

18.1 Discrimination summary

Staff were asked a number of questions around discrimination and bullying. 5% of staff reported that they had experienced discrimination - 3% lower than the LA Benchmark.

Figure 31: Q16.1 Have you been discriminated against at work in the past 12 months?

Base: all respondents



The Highland Council "Yes" response rate: 5%

Local Authority "Yes" response rate: 8%

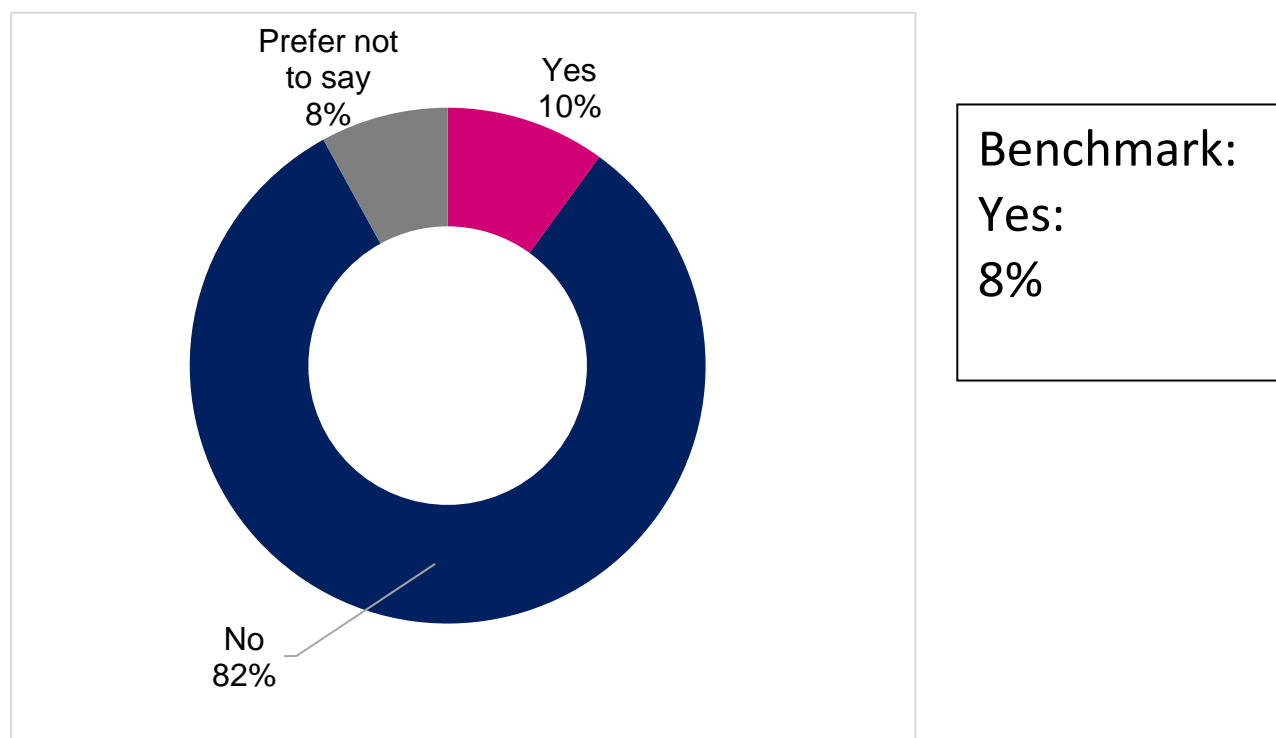
Staff who answered "yes" to experiencing discrimination then answered some follow-up questions to provide more detail about their experience.

Table 25: Further Discrimination Questions

Question	Number out of 5002 responses
Q16.2 On the basis of which of the following protected characteristics do you feel you were discriminated against?	
Age	34
Disability (long term physical or mental condition)	53
Gender reassignment or gender identity	8
Pregnancy or maternity	16
Marriage or civil partnership	1
Race or ethnic background	15
Religion or belief	3
Sex	27
Sexual orientation	7
Caring responsibilities	20
Social or educational background	14
Main spoken/ written language or language ability	10
Other	57
Prefer not to say	49

18.2 Bullying and Harassment

Bullying and harassment is reported to be around 10% (2% higher than the benchmark). It is however worth noting that the benchmark score is based on pandemic levels. Pre pandemic the benchmark score was 10% which is in line with the Highland Council current score. Highland Council should continue to monitor this.

Figure 32: Q17.1 Have you been bullied or harassed at work, in the past 12 months?**Base: all respondents**

Staff who said “yes” to this question were subsequently asked to further elaborate on their experience.

Intimidation, verbal aggression as well as negative micromanagement were reported as causes of bullying and harassment.

This group was also asked to mention who carried out the bullying/ harassment. A large proportion of these staff mentioned a “colleague in their team, section or service area”. This is a typical finding in staff surveys.

Table 26: Further Bullying and Harassment Questions

Question	Number
Q17.2 How would you describe the nature of the bullying and/or harassment you experienced?	
Comments about my personal appearance or accent	49
Sexual harassment (e.g. sexual comments or jokes, unwelcome sexual advances, touching or assault)	5
Offensive Jokes	41
Spreading gossip or making false accusations about me	141
Intimidation, or verbal or written aggression (e.g. shouting, making threats, sending aggressive emails)	238
Physical assault (e.g. object thrown at me, pushed, hit)	25
Humiliated in front of team or others	191
Negative Micromanagement (e.g. excessive control; made to feel incompetent)	218
Removal of job responsibilities, unconstructive criticism, or changing expectations	116
Ignored, excluded, marginalised, treated less favourably to others	204
Undermining or taking credit for my work	128
Denied time off for family or caring responsibilities	28
Disclosure of personal / sensitive information to colleagues without my consent	64
Unhelpful comments about my mental health or being off sick	99
Something else not listed here	63
Prefer not to say	18
Q17.3 Was any of the harassment on the basis of your?	

Age	32
Disability (long term physical or mental condition)	38
Gender reassignment or gender identity	4
Race or ethnic background	11
Religion or belief	9
Sex	26
Sexual orientation	6
Prefer not to say	395
Q17.4 Who bullied and/or harassed you?	
A colleague in my team or section or service area	206
A colleague in a different team or section or service area	47
My line manager	178
Another senior member of staff in Highland Council	67
Someone I manage	24
A contractor	3
A service user (e.g. customer, claimant, offender)	44
A member of the public	31
An elected member	13
Someone else not listed here	36
Prefer not to say	38

18.3 Reporting Bullying and Harassment

240 of the staff who experienced bullying / harassment reported their experience. This score is 9% higher than the LA benchmark which shows a greater willingness for THC staff to report bullying and harassment than in other Councils.

For those who did not report their bullying and harassment incident, a belief that no corrective action would be taken was the most common reason

Table 27: Reporting Bullying and Harassment Questions

Question	Number
Q17.5 Did you report your experience of bullying or harassment?	
Yes	240
No	190
Prefer not to say	65
Q17.7 Why did you not report your experience?	
I felt I might jeopardise my job	34
I did not want to be seen as a troublemaker	26
I did not believe that corrective action would be taken	85
I did not know how to report it or who to speak to	13
The behaviour stopped before I could report it	1
Q17.8 Was appropriate action taken to address the behaviour you experienced?	
Yes	67
No	173
Q17.9 Has the bullying and harassment stopped	
Yes	98
No	76
Prefer not to say	66
Q17.10 Does the culture where you work allow this kind of behaviour to continue?	

Yes	63
No	19
Prefer not to say	18
Q17.11 Did you feel like you were punished for reporting the incident?	
Yes	75
No	134
Prefer not to say	31

19. Survey Profile

The following table presents the demographic profile of the sample. Note that any groups with a number smaller than 10 are not reported on.

Table 28: Profile of the Sample. Sample base: all respondents

	Number	Percentage
Length of Service		
Up to 1 yr	461	9%
1+ to 2 yrs	331	7%
2+ to 10 yrs	1833	37%
10+ to 20 yrs	1286	26%
20+ yrs	1002	20%
Prefer not to say	89	2%
Contract Status		
Temporary	657	13%
Permanent	4172	83%
Prefer not to say	173	3%
Service		
Communities & Place	403	8%
Education & Learning	2754	55%
Health & Social Care	487	10%
Infrastructure Environment & Economy	368	7%
Performance & Governance	164	3%
Property & Housing	491	10%
Resources and Finance	335	7%
Section		

Waste Management	113	2.3%
Environmental Health	52	1.0%
Community Support & Ward Management	46	0.9%
Customer Services & Registrars	53	1.1%
Amenity Services & Public conveniences	68	1.4%
Fleet, Stores & Travel desk	33	0.7%
Education - Primary	1 410	28.2%
Education - Secondary	915	18.3%
Education- Nursery	219	4.4%
Special Schools	92	1.8%
Resources	38	0.8%
Central Teams	80	1.6%
Children's Services	362	7.2%
Adult Services	32	0.6%
Health	59	1.2%
Social Care	31	0.6%
Economic Development & Regeneration	39	0.8%
Business Management (I, E&E)	10	0.2%
Environment & Building Standards	47	0.9%
Parking, Transport & Active Travel	17	0.3%
Planning & Development plans	58	1.2%
Infrastructure, Transport Planning & Ferries	73	1.5%
Lighting	12	0.2%
Roads & Winter Maintenance	101	2.0%
P & G small Teams including Communications & Resilience, FOI, Data Protection, Business	37	0.7%

Management (P & G), Policy (P & G), Gaelic, Climate Change and Energy		
Corporate Governance	56	1.1%
Corporate Audit and Performance	17	0.3%
ICT and Digital Transformation	43	0.9%
Transformation and Programme Management	11	0.2%
Property and Facilities Management	273	5.5%
Housing and Building Maintenance	218	4.4%
Corporate Finance	73	1.5%
HR	39	0.8%
Business Support	138	2.8%
Revenues and Welfare	85	1.7%
Job Family		
Technical & Practical	813	16%
Personal Care	325	6%
Business Support	467	9%
Community	612	12%
Professional & Specialist	763	15%
Management	257	5%
Teacher	1414	28%
Promoted teacher	351	7%
Grade		
HC1-3	1373	27%
HC 4-8	2061	41%
HC9-12	1157	23%

HC13-15	182	4%
Agenda for Change	229	5%
Area		
Inverness	1850	37%
Caithness	444	9%
Sutherland	246	5%
Badenoch & Strathspey	181	4%
Nairn	132	3%
Lochaber	403	8%
Easter Ross	348	7%
Isle of Skye	186	4%
Raasay & Wester Ross	93	2%
Black Isle, Dingwall & Seaforth	321	6%
North Area	54	1%
Mid Area	188	4%
South Area	83	2%
West Area	109	2%
Not Applicable	364	7%
Age		
Under 20	24	0%
20-29	374	7%
30-39	820	16%
40-49	1184	24%
50-59	1583	32%
60+	632	13%

Prefer not to say	378	8%
Disability		
Yes	350	7%
No	4394	88%
Prefer not to say	258	5%
Caring responsibility		
Yes	2391	48%
No	2367	47%
Prefer not to say	244	5%
Caring for someone with long term health problem/ disability		
Yes	666	13%
No	4074	81%
Prefer not to say	262	5%
Sex		
Male	1197	24%
Female	3359	67%
Prefer not to say	446	9%
Do they consider themselves trans		
No	4751	95%
Prefer not to say	246	5%
Sexual orientation		
Straight or heterosexual	4344	87%
Gay or Lesbian	59	1%
Bisexual	49	1%
Other	20	0%

Prefer not to say	530	11%
Marital Status		
Never married and never registered in a civil partnership	1033	21%
Married	2739	55%
In a registered civil partnership	39	1%
Separated but still legally in a civil partnership	71	1%
Divorced	360	7%
Widowed	83	2%
Prefer not to say	668	13%
Religion		
None	2291	46%
Church of Scotland	1145	23%
Roman Catholic	279	6%
Other Christian	454	9%
Muslim	11	0%
Buddhist	16	0%
Pagan	18	0%
Humanist	58	1%
Other religion or belief	68	1%
Prefer not to say	653	13%
Ethnicity		
Scottish	3748	75%
Other British	702	14%
Irish	33	1%

Other white group	140	3%
Any other White background	86	2%
White and Black Caribbean	11	0%
Any other Mixed / Multiple ethnic background	19	0%
Prefer not to say	220	4%

Appendix A: Questionnaire

Appendix: Statement of Terms

Compliance with International Standards

BMG complies with the International Standard for Quality Management Systems requirements (ISO 9001:2015) and the International Standard for Market, opinion and social research service requirements (ISO 20252:2012) and The International Standard for Information Security Management (ISO 27001:2013).

Interpretation and publication of results

The interpretation of the results as reported in this document pertain to the research problem and are supported by the empirical findings of this research project and, where applicable, by other data. These interpretations and recommendations are based on empirical findings and are distinguishable from personal views and opinions.

BMG will not publish any part of these results without the written and informed consent of the client.

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BMG promotes ethical practice in research: We conduct our work responsibly and in light of the legal and moral codes of society.

We have a responsibility to maintain high scientific standards in the methods employed in the collection and dissemination of data, in the impartial assessment and dissemination of findings and in the maintenance of standards commensurate with professional integrity.

We recognise we have a duty of care to all those undertaking and participating in research and strive to protect subjects from undue harm arising as a consequence of their participation in research. This requires that subjects' participation should be as fully informed as possible and no group should be disadvantaged by routinely being excluded from consideration. All adequate steps shall be taken by both agency and client to ensure that the identity of each respondent participating in the research is protected.

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