

To: Councillor McEwan (Chair)  
Councillors Brock, Lovelock, Page and  
Skeats

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7 July 2021

Your contact is: **Julie Quarmby - Committee Services**

### NOTICE OF MEETING - PERSONNEL COMMITTEE 15 JULY 2021

A meeting of the Personnel Committee will be held on Thursday, 15 July 2021 at 6.30 pm in the Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Reading. The Agenda for the meeting is set out below.

Please note that, because of Covid 19, there will be a very limited number of socially distanced seats available for the public in the Council Chamber.

	<u>WARDS AFFECTED</u>	<u>Page No</u>
1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST		
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3. REVIEW OF THE THE COUNCIL'S EMPLOYMENT POLICIES	BOROUGHWIDE	9 - 62
4. STAFF SURVEY	BOROUGHWIDE	63 - 82
5. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC		

At this point, the following motion will be moved by the Chair:

“That, pursuant to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) members of the press and public be excluded during consideration of the following item on the agenda, as it is likely that there would be disclosure of exempt information as defined in the relevant Paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) of that Act”

- |    |  |             |         |
|----|--|-------------|---------|
| 6. | REDUNDANCY AND EARLY RETIREMENT COSTS - 1<br>OCTOBER 2020 TO 31 MARCH 2021 | BOROUGHWIDE | 83 - 86 |
| 7. | FLEXIBLE RETIREMENT REQUEST  | BOROUGHWIDE | 87 - 92 |

**Present:** Councillor Emberson (Chair);  
Councillors Brock, Lovelock, Page and Skeats.

**Also Present:** Teresa Kaine and Shella Smith; Alison McNamara and Miriam Palfrey and Kieran Magee.

### 9. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings held on 19 November 2020 and 27 January 2021 were confirmed as a correct record.

### 10. PROCEEDINGS OF THE LOCAL JOINT FORUM

The Chief Executive submitted the proceedings of the Local Joint Forum meeting held on 25 February 2021.

**Resolved - That the proceedings of the Local Joint Forum meeting be received.**

### 11. REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

Further to Minute 3 of the meeting held on 19 November 2020, the Assistant Director of HR and Organisational Development submitted a report, presenting the Committee with twelve Employment Policies which had been reviewed jointly and agreed with the Joint Trade Unions. The following documents were attached to the report:

Appendix A	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
Appendix B	Flexible Retirement Policy
Appendix C	Learning and Development Policy
Appendix D	Probation Scheme Policy
Appendix E	Reimbursement of Expenses Policy
Appendix F	Bullying and Harassment Policy
Appendix G	Disciplinary Policy
Appendix H	Managing Poor Performance Policy
Appendix I	Managing Sickness Absence Policy
Appendix J	Social Media Policy
Appendix K	Flexible Working Policy
Appendix L	Grey Fleet Policy
Appendix M	Equality Impact Assessment

The Assistant Director of HR and Organisational Development requested that, following a discussion with Trades Union colleagues at the Joint Trade Union Committee held on 17 March 2021, the Grey Fleet Policy (Appendix L), be removed from the list for approval. This would allow time for further work to agree the Policy with Trades Union colleague to reflect feedback about how the policy would operate at a practical level.

The report explained that all employment policies would be reviewed by the Assistant Director of HR and Organisational Development and submitted to the Committee for approval in July 2021, following consultation and negotiation with the Joint Trade Unions. The policies had been reviewed because they did not reflect current best

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practice or were out of date and hence put the Council at risk, were due to be reviewed in line with the two-year review schedule and had been updated with current job titles and gender-neutral language. The remaining new and residual policies which required review would be brought forward for approval in July 2021.

The report set out the principles that had been in mind when they had been written and stated that in future, all employment policies would be reviewed every two years or sooner if legislation required it.

The report also included a table which set out in summary terms for each of the revised policies the issues which had been addressed together with additional key changes that had been agreed with the Joint Trades Unions. Once the policy review had been completed, hyperlinks would be added to the policies where they were cross referenced with other policies. The process for agreeing the policies with the Joint Trade Unions was set out in a table and a communications plan had been put in place to communicate the revised policies to managers and employees.

### **Resolved:**

(1) That the following revised/new HR policies, as set out in in Appendices A to K attached to the report, be approved:

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy;
- Flexible Retirement Policy;
- Learning and Development Policy;
- Probation Scheme Policy;
- Reimbursement of Expenses Policy;
- Bullying and Harassment Policy;
- Disciplinary Policy;
- Managing Poor Performance Policy;
- Managing Sickness Absence Policy;
- Social Media Policy;
- Flexible Working Policy;
- Grey Fleet Policy;

(2) That Appendix L, the Grey Fleet Policy, be amended, and following further consultation with Trades Unions, re-submitted to the Committee for approval at a later date.

## **12. PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2021/22**

The Assistant Director of HR and Organisational Development submitted a report providing the Committee with a Pay Policy Statement for 2021/22, for approval by Council on 23 March 2021. A copy of the Pay Policy Statement 2021/22 was attached to the report at Appendix 1. The report stated that Local Authorities were required under Section 38(1) of the Localism Act 2011 (the Act) to prepare a Pay Policy Statement that articulated the Council's policy towards the pay of the workforce, particularly senior staff and the lowest paid employees.

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The Pay Policy Statement for 2021/22 had been updated as follows:

- To show the updated pay multiples in section 8;
- To reflect changes agreed by Council regarding the senior management structure of the Council (as set out in Article 12 of the Constitution);
- Annex B had been reduced and provided references as to where relevant information on the governance arrangements for pay and conditions of service for Council officers could be found in the Constitution (rather than including extracts lifted from the Constitution);
- Annex D (Council employees in salary bands) had been updated with data for 1 April 2020 and paragraph 10 (Pay Profile) had been updated to reflect this.

The report stated that further updates might be required to the Pay Policy Statement and delegated authority was sought for the Assistant Director of HR and Organisational Development, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Corporate and Consumer Services, to make these updates.

The report also provided an update on the Restrictions of Public Sector Exit Payments Regulations 2020 which had taken effect on 4 November 2020 as it would have been necessary to reflect the new Regulations in the Pay Policy Statement.

The report explained that each local authority was an individual employer in its own right and had the autonomy to make decisions on pay that were appropriate to local circumstances and which delivered value for money for local taxpayers. Section 40 of the Act required authorities, in developing their Pay Policy Statement, to have regard to any guidance that had been published by the Secretary of State. This included Communities and Local Government guidance on Openness and Accountability in Local Pay and the Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency (as amended). The Act required Councils to produce a Pay Policy Statement annually that was accessible for council tax payers to be able to take an informed view of whether local decisions on all aspects of remuneration were fair.

**Resolved - That the draft Pay Policy 2021/22 be recommended to Council on 23 March 2021 for approval.**

### **13. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION UPDATE**

The Assistant Director of HR and Organisational Development submitted a report, presenting the Committee with an update on the work that was being done to advance Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at the Council. The report also presented the Council's Gender pay Gap Report for 2020 and, for the first time, an Ethnicity Pay Gap Report which was also for 2020. The following documents were attached to the report:

- Appendix 1 Gender Pay Gap Report for 2020
- Appendix 2 Ethnicity Pay Gap Report for 2020.

The report explained that on 19 November 2020 the Committee had received a report on the Council's Equality Audit for 2019/20 (Minute 4 refers) and on progress that had been made towards meeting the requirements set out in the Tackling Employment

## PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MINUTES - 17 MARCH 2021

Inequality Motion that had been moved at the meeting of Council on 20 October 2020. Since that time, the following action had been completed to advance Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at the Council:

- Promotion of the Equality Audit for 2019/20;
- The Race at Work Charter;
- Equality, Diversity and inclusion Audit;
- Cultural Unity, Diversity and Inclusion Network;
- Healthy and Ethical Workplace - Support for the Directorate of Social Care and Health.

The report explained that the gender pay gap was calculated as the difference between average hourly earnings (excluding overtime) of men and women as a proportion of average hourly earnings (excluding overtime) of men's earnings. Nationally, the gender pay gap had been declining slowly in recent years. In April 2020 for full-time employees only, it was 7.4%, down from 9.0% in April 2019 and among all employees the gap had fallen from 17.4% in 2019 to 15.5% in 2020. The gender pay gap was higher for all employees because women filled more part time jobs which had lower hourly median pay than full-time jobs and were more likely to be in lower paid occupations. The report set out the regulations an employer had to comply with in any year where they had a 'headcount' of 250 or more employees on the 'snapshot date', which for local authorities was 31 March each year.

The report set out the Council's mean and median pay gap for 2020, which showed an improvement since 2019. The report also noted that these figures compared favourably with the both the national figures for all employees and the 2019 figures for Local Authorities that had been produced by the Local Government Association, as set out below:

Gender Pay Gap	April 2019		April 2020	
	Mean	Median	Mean	Median
Reading Borough Council	4.99%	5.05%	4.71%	2.53%
National		17.3%		15.90%
All Local Authorities*	6.1%	4.00%	n/a	n/a
Unitary Authorities*		6.5%	n/a	n/a

\* Collated by the Local Government Association

The report stated that unlike the gender pay gap, large organisations were not yet legally required to publish their ethnicity pay gap. However, the Council believed it was important to be transparent so it had been decided to voluntarily publish data for the first time. The ethnicity pay gap was the percentage difference in the average hourly rate of pay of white and BAME employees and had been calculated using the same methodology set out in the Government regulations for calculating the gender pay gap. However, unlike gender the Council's ethnicity disclosure rate was not 100% and currently stood at 93.5%; any individual with undisclosed ethnicities had been excluded from the calculations in line with the Government regulations for gender pay. The pay gap report had been based on data at the snapshot date of 31 March 2020 when

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the mean ethnicity pay gap was 6.88% and the median was 0.28%. Nationally, in 2019 the median hourly pay for those in White ethnic groups was £12,40 per hour, compared with those in ethnic minority group at £12.11 per hour; a pay gap of 2.3%, its narrowest since 2012. The majority of employees at the Council (79.6%) were white and the proportion of BAME employees was 13.8%. There were more white employees than BAME employees at every pay quartile, with the highest proportion (16%) in the lower quartile. Pay grade RG10 had the greatest proportion of BAME employees (23.08%), which was higher than the overall proportion of BAME employees at the Council. However, the proportion of BAME employees at senior management level grades was low at only 3.13%.

The report explained that a Team Reading Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan would be created to enable more effective monitoring of progress towards increasing equality, diversity and inclusion at the Council and better reporting to management and Personnel Committee. It would be created using insights from the BITC Equality, Diversity and Inclusion audit findings, as well as the Equality Audit 2019/20 findings and the Gender and Ethnicity Pay Gap reports. BITC's findings and recommendations were expected in April 2021.

### **Resolved -**

- (1) That the progress made to advance Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at the Council be noted;**
- (2) That the Gender Pay Gap and Ethnicity Pay Gap Reports for 2020 be noted.**

(The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and closed at 6.47 pm).

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## READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

### REPORT BY ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF HR AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

TO:	PERSONNEL COMMITTEE		
DATE:	15 July 2021	AGENDA ITEM:	3
TITLE:	REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S EMPLOYMENT POLICIES		
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#### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 A review of the Council's employment policy framework is underway which aims to ensure that all employment policies are clear, easy to understand, up to date and reviewed regularly. This report presents five policies, all of which have been reviewed jointly and agreed with the Joint Trade Unions.

1.2 The report includes the following appendices:

- Appendix A: Additional Payments Policy
- Appendix B: Grievance Policy
- Appendix C: Market Supplements Policy
- Appendix D: Grey Fleet Policy
- Appendix E: Volunteer Engagement Policy
- Appendix F: Equality Impact Assessment

#### 2. DECISION

2.1 That the following revised/new HR policies (detailed in Appendices A to E of this report) be approved:

- Additional Payments Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Market Supplements Policy
- Grey Fleet Policy
- Volunteer Engagement Policy

### **3. POLICY CONTEXT**

- 3.1 Good employment policies should support a culture based on trust, fairness and inclusion. They can also speed the decision-making process by ensuring that clear guidance is readily available to cover a range of employment issues. Further, they can assist in avoiding involvement with employment tribunal claims by providing guidance for managers that reflects accurately current employment law and good practice. It is therefore important that employment policies are clear, easy to understand, up to date and reviewed regularly.
- 3.2 Of the five policies covered in this report, the majority have extended beyond their normal review date and have been updated to reflect changes in employment law and the latest Codes of Practice and guidance issued by the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS).
- 3.3 ACAS Codes of Practice give authoritative advice in key areas of employment practice. A failure to follow the Code does not, in itself, make a person or organisation liable to proceedings. However, employment tribunals will take the Code into account when considering relevant cases. Tribunals will also be able to adjust any awards made in relevant cases by up to 25% for unreasonable failure to comply with any provision of the Code (by an employer or an employee).

### **4. POLICIES COVERED UNDER THIS REVIEW**

- 4.1 All employment policies will be reviewed by the HR and Organisational Development team before end of November 2021 and presented for approval to Personnel Committee, following consultation and negotiation with the Joint Trade Unions. The policies listed below have been prioritised because they do not reflect current best practice or are out of date and hence put the Council at risk. A Grey Fleet Policy and a Volunteering Engagement Policy were missing from the current policy framework. This has been addressed and new policies covering these areas have now been included. The policies included in this report are:

- Additional Payments Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Market Supplements Policy
- Grey Fleet Policy
- Volunteer Engagement Policy

- 4.2 The remaining new and residual policies which require review will be brought forward for approval by end of November 2021.

#### **4.3 Principles used for conducting this review**

- 4.3.1 The policies have been written with the following principles in mind:

1. They must reflect current employment law and the ACAS Codes of Practice and/or guidance where relevant.
2. They must be easy to understand and written in plain English

3. They should be concise. Any information which is not germane to the operation of the policy has been removed. For example, management guidance notes are not included in the policies, but available separately.
  4. There should be a consistency of approach across related policies (e.g. same period of notice given to employees to attend formal meetings where relevant)
  5. They should use gender neutral language
- 4.4 In future, all employment policies will be reviewed every two years or sooner if legislation requires it.

## 5. KEY ISSUES AND CHANGES PROPOSED

- 5.1 The table below sets out in summary terms for each of the revised policies the issues which have been addressed. Once the policy review is complete, hyperlinks will be added to the policies where they are cross-referenced with other policies.

### Revised Policies

Issues to be addressed
<b>Additional Payments Policy - Appendix A</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simplified and concise wording, making the application process easier for users to follow</li> <li>• Formatted to standard Council HR policies</li> </ul>
<b>Grievance Policy - Appendix B</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review and update of language and content to simplify and make clearer for users</li> </ul>
<b>Market Supplements Policy - Appendix C</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review and update of language and content to simplify and make clearer for users</li> </ul>

### New Policies

#### 5.2 Grey Fleet Policy (Appendix D)

This policy sets out the Council's approach to management of the Grey Fleet and how it should be used.

#### 5.3 Volunteer Engagement Policy (Appendix E)

This policy sets out the Council's approach to the recruitment and management of volunteers.

## 6. PROCESS FOR AGREEING THE NEW AND REVISED POLICIES

- 6.1 The process for agreeing the policies with the Joint Trade Unions has been as follows:

21 June 2021	The 5 draft policies (A-E) were uploaded to a SharePoint site that trade union representatives have access to, requesting initial feedback on the policies in advance of a meeting scheduled for 1 July 2021.
1 July 2021	First meeting with trade unions, HR Services Manager and Senior HR Advisers to review feedback from the trade unions and incorporate changes.
5 July 2021	Second meeting with trade unions, HR Services Manager and Senior HR Advisers to agree final amendments.
6 July 2021	Issued revised policies to the trade unions. The trade unions have confirmed their agreement by email to the final versions of the five policies and a record of their agreement will be formally noted at the Joint Trade Union Committee meeting on 14 July.

6.2 A communications plan is in place to communicate the revised policies to managers and employees. This will include:

- News items on the intranet and iTrent Employee Self Service (the HR system used by all staff to book leave, submit mileage claims etc) to highlight the revised policies and who to speak to about any queries (i.e. their line manager or HR)
- Being highlighted in the Chief Executive’s weekly email to all staff
- Strategic HR and OD Business Partners/HR Advisers will highlight the revised policies and their implications (for staff and managers) when they attend department management team meetings and 1-1 meetings with managers.
- An email from HR to all line managers to highlight the new policies and explain the changes, and to ask that they discuss them with their staff in team meetings, tool-box talks, 1-1s etc.

## 7. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

7.1 The new and revised HR policies help to ensure that the Council can meet its Corporate Plan priority, specifically ensuring that the Council is fit for the future.

## 8. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no environmental or climate change implications.

## 9. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

9.1 The Joint Trade Unions have been consulted on the revised policies. All the changes they proposed which have been incorporated into the final versions.

## **10. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

10.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

10.2 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been carried out (see Appendix F) and has found no differential impact on any groups with protected characteristics.

## **11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 Certain employment policies and procedures are specifically needed to comply with legal requirements, for example, a written health and safety policy. Even where a policy or procedure is not specifically required by law, employers often find it helpful to have a policy in place to provide clear guidance that reflects the legal framework for handling the issue in question and it also helps employees to be clear about the organisation's stance on a particular subject. The proposed policies presented in this review reflect current employment law and ACAS Codes of Practice and/or guidance where relevant.

11.2 The Council's Constitution confirms that Personnel Committee is responsible for determining the terms and conditions on which staff hold office. The proposed policies will therefore be presented to Personnel Committee for approval, following consultation and negotiation with the trade unions.

## **12. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

12.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

## **13. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

13.1 None

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# Additional Payments Policy

July 2021

Agreed by TUs



<b>Document History</b>	
Version	1.1 (see below)
Status	Reviewed and agreed by Trade Unions
Date	July 2021
Target audience	All employees of Reading Borough Council with the exception of Schools-based staff for whom alternative procedures apply
Ratification	None
Author	HR Advisory Team

<b>Version control</b>	<b>Reviewers</b>
Version 1.0	Initial draft – May 2021
Version 1.1	Reviewed and agreed by Trade Unions – July 2021

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# 1. Objectives and scope

- 1.1. This policy sets out the circumstances under which staff may receive additional payment for work that they undertake and the conditions for the approval of these payments. These are set out in Section 4 below.
- 1.2. This policy applies to all staff employed by the Council with the exception of school-based staff who will be covered by a separate model agreement for schools.
- 1.3. This policy has been approved by the Council's Personnel Committee and agreed with local trades unions. It is a disciplinary offence to attempt to deliberately circumvent this policy.

# 2. Background

- 2.1. Additional payments are made to staff for the following reasons:
  - 2.1.1. To compensate staff for undertaking all or some additional duties of another post ('acting up' - see [APPENDIX A](#));
  - 2.1.2. As a recognition of where the undertaking of additional duties has been particularly onerous;
  - 2.1.3. To recognise a particular piece of work or contribution above and beyond the scope of an employee's normal duties.
- 2.2. Honorarium payments normally continue to be made for the duration of the additional duties but can also be a single payment to recognise a discrete contribution.

# 3. Equal opportunity and equal pay considerations

- 3.1. Additional payments are included as part of the pay comparison undertaken in equal pay claims. Difficulties can arise where additional payments are made disproportionately to men rather than women for example, for which there is no 'objective justification' (ie there is no evidence of a linkage to criteria for calculation of such payments as set out in Council Policies). Under these circumstances such payments may be directly or indirectly discriminatory as there is no material defence to justify them.
- 3.2. A defence against claims for unequal pay (or discriminatory practice generally) can be mounted where:

- 3.2.1. There is an objective justification for a payment (i.e. a clear and logical rationale).
- 3.2.2. The rationale for the payment is consistently applied and monitored.
- 3.2.3. The payments are equally applied in respect of assessment and application.

## **4. Definitions and Scope for additional payments**

### **4.1. Acting up payments**

- 4.1.1. Acting up payments are made when an employee is required to cover a higher graded post, in part or in their entirety, for a temporary period.
- 4.1.2. The value of the payment is determined in accordance with the Council's 'Acting Up' arrangements (see [Appendix A](#)).
- 4.1.3. The employee will receive payment for the acting up responsibilities from the first day that these are undertaken.

### **4.2. Honorarium payments**

- 4.2.1. Honorarium payments are made when an employee is undertaking work on a project or discrete piece of work which would fall outside of the normal range of duties expected for their post. The payment will last for the duration of the project.
- 4.2.2. The level of payment made should be determined with regard to the level of responsibilities being undertaken and this should be determined through the Council's Job Evaluation Scheme. The employee will be paid an amount appropriate to the proportion of their time being spent working at this higher level on a monthly basis for the duration of the project / programme.

### **4.3. Other forms of additional payment**

- 4.3.1. Where an employee has undertaken specific work which is within the expected range of their role, but the work has involved additional travel or hours worked, then providing prior approval is sought, normal overtime payments should be made. Alternatively, the employee may agree with their line manager to take time off in lieu (TOIL).
- 4.3.2. The range of payments that staff are eligible to receive for additional hours working can be found in the Council's overtime, working and standby / callout policies as applicable.

- 4.3.3. Where an employee is paid at RG5 or above, they will not normally be eligible for overtime payments (unless it is planned overtime - see Overtime Policy). Such staff will, on occasion, be asked to undertake work outside of their normal role (eg providing emergency support or assistance to the Council or its services etc) which is outside of normal acting up arrangements. Staff in these pay grades may be eligible for an honorarium payment (para. 4.2) consisting of a notional level of overtime calculated as 'x hours at scp 34'. This payment is not intended to compensate staff at this level for the hours actually spent on the work in question, but in recognition of the additional effort involved. The total amount of such notional payments shall be determined by the Assistant Director of HR & Organisational Development on a case by case basis and payment will be administered by the HR Payroll Team.

## **5. Making an application**

- 5.1. Requests for additional payments should be made using the change to existing position form via DASH (Firmstep) on the intranet.
- 5.2. Approvals for acting up or honoraria payments will go through the HR Controls process and must be signed off by the Assistant Director of HR and Organisational Development.
- 5.3. This process should be underway before acting up or project work begins.

## **6. Monitoring and evaluation**

- 6.1. Additional payments will be monitored and evaluated by HR to ensure consistent application.
- 6.2. These monitoring arrangements will be underpinned by audit reports and spot checks carried out by the Council's Audit Team.

**RBC ACTING UP ARRANGEMENTS**

1. Acting up arrangements can provide employee development opportunities and support the delivery of other objectives such as workforce planning, reshaping services or to maintain service delivery through providing cover for other staff who may be absent or temporarily diverted to other duties or roles.
2. The process of identifying staff to 'act up' must be open and transparent., consistent with the need to protect personal sensitive information. Acting up opportunities wherever possible should be made available internally in the first instance.
3. Managers must ensure that they are not directly or indirectly disadvantaging or excluding a member of staff from an acting up opportunity on the basis of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion, or sex or any other protected characteristic.
4. If an acting up opportunity is identified or created, then the opportunity must be taken to consider all interested staff in the relevant service area with the requisite skills or aptitude.
5. The employee will either receive the 'rate for the job' that they are covering if they are undertaking the full range of duties and responsibilities. As a minimum, this means that they will be paid at the first spinal column point of the grade of the post that they are acting up into (but see 4.1 above)
6. If the employee is not undertaking the full range of duties of a higher graded post, then an acting up allowance will be paid. The rate of the allowance will be calculated on the basis of the percentage difference between the first point on the grade of the higher graded post and the employee's current salary equivalent to the percentage proportion of higher responsibility being undertaken. For example, if an employee undertakes 50% of the duties of a higher graded post for a period of 6 consecutive weeks, then they will receive 50% of the difference between their current pay and the bottom of the higher grade for that period.

# Grievance Policy

Agreed by TUs



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<b>Document History</b>	
Version	2.1 (see below for previous versions)
Status	Reviewed and agreed by Trade Unions
Date	July 2021
Target audience	All employees of Reading Borough Council with the exception Schools-based staff
Ratification	None
Author	HR Employment Services Team

<b>Version control</b>	<b>Reviewers</b>
Version 1.1	Initial draft – January 2018
Version 1.2	Draft incorporating HR professionals' feedback – March 2018
Version 1.3	Second draft incorporating Head of HR and Organisational Development's comments – July 2018
Version 1.4	Final version agreed with Joint Trade Unions in December 2018 (Next review is due December 2020 or sooner if required by legislation)
Version 2.0	Reviewed by HR
Version 2.1	Reviewed and agreed by Trade Unions

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## Additional Guidance

- Guidance for employees on what to include in a grievance letter

(The additional guidance is not part of the policy but is available to assist those involved in the policy. It can be found on the intranet or by clicking on the links above)

## 1. Objectives and scope

- 1.1. Reading Borough Council (the 'Council') is committed to providing a working environment where everyone is treated with fairness, consistency, dignity and respect. This policy provides a framework for assisting employees and managers in seeking to resolve disputes and/or differences arising from employment within the Council. These matters will be resolved fairly and without undue delay, either informally or formally.
- 1.2. Grievances may be concerned with a wide range of issues, including but not limited to the allocation of work, working environment or conditions, the opportunities that have been given for career development or the way in which an employee has been managed.
- 1.3. Line managers must respond to issues raised in a timely way. In most cases grievances can be resolved informally by the manager and individual concerned.
- 1.4. The Council encourages all the parties to a grievance to look proactively for a positive resolution.
- 1.5. This policy has been agreed with the Joint Trade Unions as the most effective means of resolving a grievance or collective dispute.
- 1.6. No employee will be made to feel disadvantaged in any way because they have raised or pursued a grievance in good faith.
- 1.7. If two or more employees have identical grievances and wish them to be addressed in the same grievance process, they can raise a collective grievance. Collective grievances will be dealt with under this policy, with reference to the provisions in [section 5](#) below.
- 1.8. The formal policy is for use in situations where it is not possible to resolve issues informally or through the use of mediation. The Council expects all such cases to be dealt with fairly, consistently and without undue delay.
- 1.9. This policy applies to all employees of Reading Borough Council, including those on permanent, temporary or part-time contracts, job sharers, and employees on non-standard terms of employment.
- 1.10. This policy does not apply to:
  - The Chief Executive, for whom the provisions of the JNC for Local Authority Chief Executives Conditions of Service Handbook would apply
  - Agency workers or interims
  - Schools based staff for whom separate procedures may apply
- 1.11. The Council may choose to investigate concerns raised by former employees on a case by case basis.

- 1.12. Issues that are the subject of collective negotiation or consultation with the recognised trade unions will not be considered under the Grievance Policy, unless it relates to a failure to engage in collective negotiation or consultation.

## 2. Relationship to other Council policies

- 2.1 This policy is not intended to add another layer to Council decision making or to challenge actions and/or decisions taken under other policies or procedures. The Grievance Policy will not apply where there is an alternative mechanism for concern(s) to be addressed. These include:
- Job Evaluation Appeals
  - Recruitment decisions
  - Disciplinary, Sickness and Capability Procedure outcomes
  - Application of pension scheme rules
  - Probation
  - Service restructures resulting in redundancy
- 2.2 The Council's [Bullying and Harassment Policy](#) provides for a complaint of bullying or harassment to be registered as a formal grievance under this policy. Allegations of bullying or harassment often need to be handled quite differently and further guidance is available within the [Bullying and Harassment Policy](#).
- 2.3 The Council has a [Whistleblowing Policy](#) for raising concerns about any alleged wrongdoing in the workplace such as fraud or corruption, unlawful acts or dangers to health and safety. Matters raised under the Whistleblowing Policy may more appropriately be dealt with as a grievance (and potentially vice versa). Whether allegations are more appropriately dealt with under the Whistleblowing or Grievance Policy is a management decision. The key point is that the concerns will be dealt with seriously and progressed.
- 2.4 A grievance raised by an employee in response to an investigation and/or management action into his or her apparent misconduct, underperformance or absence may be addressed in a number of ways, depending on the nature and timing of the grievance. This could include:
- Commissioning an independent investigation
  - Hearing both issues at the same time in a single hearing
  - Pausing formal management action while the grievance is considered.
- 2.5 Where a grievance relates to working conditions, the 'status quo' will be maintained until all formal stages of this policy have been exhausted. The status quo is defined as the working conditions prior to the raising of the grievance. Status quo will not apply where there would be a detrimental impact on service provision or where there are over-riding statutory obligations.

## 3. Informal resolution and mediation

- 3.1 The Council encourages informal resolution of grievances in the first instance and the use of mediation where appropriate as an alternative to formal grievance meetings. Informal resolution can allow problems to be dealt with quickly and often without the need for detailed investigations to happen first.
- 3.2 Mediation is a collaborative process which can help repair the relationship of the parties involved and in doing so restore a healthier work environment. It can be suggested by an employee at any stage of this policy. Mediation is an entirely voluntary and confidential process where the mediator helps two or more people in dispute to attempt to reach an agreement. Any agreement comes from those in dispute, not from the mediator. The mediator is not there to judge, to say one person is right and the other wrong, or to tell those involved in the mediation what they should do. The mediator facilitates the process of seeking to resolve the problem but not the outcome.
- 3.3 Mediation may also be appropriate at any time during the Grievance Policy (by halting proceedings, by mutual consent) or at the end, if working relationships need to be repaired.
- 3.4 Mediation is not suitable for everyone. If any party to the grievance decides to decline an offer of mediation then this will not influence the outcome of the grievance.

## **4. Formal action**

- 4.1 The first stage is for the employee to put their complaint in writing to their line manager. If the grievance is about the employee's line manager the grievance should be submitted to the line manager's manager or to HR. Receipt of the grievance will be acknowledged within five working days.
- 4.2 Any grievance must be lodged within three calendar months of the date of the act complained of. Extension of this time limit will only be agreed where the manager designated to chair the grievance meeting accepts that it was not reasonably practicable for the employee to lodge the grievance in time. Historic cases of sexual harassment may be an example of where this time limit may be extended – see the [Bullying and Harassment Policy](#) for more information.
- 4.3 The written grievance will form the basis of the subsequent meeting and any investigations, so it is important that it sets out clearly the nature of the grievance and the outcome being sought. If the grievance is unclear, it may be necessary to seek further clarification from the employee before any meeting takes place. Guidance for employees on what to include in a grievance letter is available on the intranet.
- 4.4 Before proceeding to a grievance meeting, it may be necessary to carry out investigations of any allegations made, although the confidentiality of the grievance process will be respected, wherever possible. If any evidence is gathered in the course of these investigations, the employee will be given a copy at least three working days before the meeting so that he/she can consider their response. In exceptional circumstances, the evidence given by individuals may have to remain

confidential. Where confidentiality is necessary, this will be explained to the employee and an appropriate summary of the evidence gathered will be provided to them.

- 4.5 Normally a manager from within the employee's service area will be designated to investigate the grievance and chair the grievance meeting. Exceptions to this will be considered on a case by case basis. The nature of the grievance will determine the most appropriate way to establish the facts and the manager may seek to appoint an investigating officer to undertake the investigation.

### **The right to be accompanied**

- 4.6 Employees have a statutory right to be accompanied to a formal grievance meeting. The chosen companion may be a fellow worker, a trade union representative, or an official employed by a trade union. The employee must tell the manager chairing the meeting who they have chosen as their companion at least three working days before the meeting. Reasonable adjustments will be made where needed if the employee has a disability. This could include, for example, the provision of a support worker or advocate with knowledge of the disability and its effect, in addition to the right to be accompanied by a fellow worker or a trade union representative.
- 4.7 The meeting can be rearranged if the employee or their companion cannot attend the scheduled meeting for a reason not foreseeable at the time. The employee or their representative must propose an alternative date that is within five working days of the original date of the meeting. The Council is obliged to rearrange the meeting only once; however, if an alternative date is proposed by the employee, it will not be unreasonably refused.
- 4.8 The Council considers it is good practice to allow the chosen companion to participate as fully as possible in the meeting, including putting questions to any witnesses who may be asked to attend if appropriate. However the companion will not answer questions on the employee's behalf, or address the meeting if the employee does not wish it.
- 4.9 If the employee is not accompanied, the manager will check the employee understands that they have the right to be. If they decline to be accompanied, a note will be made to that effect.

### **The grievance meeting**

- 4.10 The meeting will be held as soon as is reasonably practicable by the manager designated to chair the grievance meeting ("the Chair") subject to any need to carry out prior investigations. The employee will be invited to attend a meeting to discuss the grievance, once the Chair has had a reasonable opportunity to consider how best to investigate the grievance. The Council will give the employee a minimum of five working days' advance notice of the meeting in writing, and the letter will include the date, time and location of the meeting and their right to be accompanied by a Trade Union representative or fellow worker. The manager chairing the meeting will be advised by an HR professional and a note taker will also be present.

- 4.11 The intention of the grievance meeting is that it should be an opportunity for discussion and dialogue, with the objective of seeking to fully understand the nature of the grievance and then to find a resolution.
- 4.12 There is no set format for this meeting. The Chair may choose to meet with the employee on more than one occasion and consider any supporting information provided. This may include the opportunity to meet together with the employee and the person the grievance is against, at the same time if the Chair considers it appropriate, after taking account of each individual's circumstances. They may need to adjourn the meeting if they need to investigate further, including interviewing potential witnesses and exploring alternative possibilities for resolution of the grievance.
- 4.13 While the employee will be given every opportunity to explain their case fully, they should confine their explanation to matters that are directly relevant to their complaint. The manager conducting the meeting will intervene if he/she thinks that the discussion is straying too far from the key issue, or to ensure that the meeting can be completed within a reasonable timeframe, depending on the nature and complexity of the complaint.
- 4.14 After due consideration, the Chair may dismiss or uphold the grievance or elements of the grievance. They may also, if evidence indicates a breach of the Council's [Code of Conduct](#) or other Council policies, decide that it may be more appropriate to deal with the issue(s) under the Council's [Disciplinary Policy](#).
- 4.15 Where possible, the Chair will meet the employee, and where appropriate the individual the grievance is against, either separately or together, to inform them of the decision and if applicable, outline any proposed action(s) that will be taken. Mediation may be appropriate at this stage ([see above](#)).
- 4.16 The Chair will confirm their decision in writing, within three working days. This letter will also confirm the employee's right to appeal if they remain dissatisfied with the outcome.

## **Grievance appeal**

- 4.17 If the employee remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the grievance meeting, they can appeal in writing to the manager who conducted the initial grievance meeting, within five working days of receiving the written outcome. They should clearly state the grounds of the appeal, i.e. the basis on which they say that the result of the grievance was wrong or that the action taken as a result was inappropriate.
- 4.18 The chair of the appeal meeting should be more senior to the manager who heard the grievance and will have had no prior involvement. Normally this would be a Service Head or Director. The chair will be advised by an HR professional and a note taker will also be present.
- 4.19 The chair of the appeal meeting will make arrangements for a meeting to be convened as soon as reasonably practical. They will write to the employee confirming arrangements for the meeting, giving a minimum of five working days' notice,

including details of the date, time and location of the meeting and the employee's right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague.

- 4.20 The employee should ensure that they attend the meeting at the specified time. If the employee is unable to attend because of circumstances beyond their control, they should inform the chair of the appeal meeting of this as soon as possible. If the employee fails to attend without explanation, or if it appears that they have not made sufficient attempts to attend, the meeting may take place in their absence.
- 4.21 The purpose of the appeal is to consider the grounds of appeal; this could for example be to determine if the previous decision was sound, to consider any new facts that have come to light since the meeting and/or to judge reasonableness of the process, such as the thoroughness of the investigation.
- 4.22 The decision at the appeal stage will be confirmed in writing to the employee within three working days of the meeting. It may also be appropriate to consider mediation at this stage ([see above](#)).
- 4.23 The outcome of the appeal is final. There is no further right of appeal.

## 5. Collective grievances

- 5.1 All colleagues raising a collective grievance must agree (without any pressure being exerted on staff members to join the collective process) to deal with the concern as a collective grievance. All participating colleagues will be entitled to only one grievance meeting and (if applicable) one appeal meeting. All participating colleagues will be notified individually of the outcome at each stage of the process. If all the colleagues do not entirely voluntarily agree to this arrangement, or if their grievances are not identical, the Council will arrange to hear their grievances on an individual basis.
- 5.2 If the participating colleagues are all members of the same trade union, the trade union representative can (if all colleagues wish him or her to do so) raise the grievance on their behalf. Alternatively, the participating colleagues can agree to nominate one of them to act on behalf of everyone. If there is no one nominated representative, the participating colleagues will be entitled to address concerns individually at the grievance meeting, but they will have no additional right to be accompanied beyond having their participating colleagues present. If the colleagues wish to be represented by their trade union representatives on an individual basis, the Council will arrange to hear their grievances individually.
- 5.3 When submitting a collective grievance, the written complaint should be headed "Formal collective grievance". Guidance for employees on what to include in a collective grievance letter is available on the intranet. The grievance can be submitted on one document, but it must:
- identify each colleague who wishes to raise the grievance;
  - identify any nominated trade union representative or colleague who represents everyone;
  - confirm that all employees have voluntarily consented to have the grievance considered collectively; and

- confirm that everyone understands that the grievance will give each colleague the right to only one collective grievance meeting, one identical outcome and (if applicable), one appeal meeting and one identical appeal outcome.

5.4 The grievance meeting and the grievance appeal meeting (if there is one) will be conducted in the same way as for an individual grievance meeting, with the exception of arrangements for representation (as detailed in paragraph 5.2).

## **6. Data protection and retention of employee records**

6.1 The Council processes personal data collected during informal complaints and the formal Grievance Policy in accordance with its data protection policy. Such data is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of responding to the complaints or conducting the Grievance Policy. It will be held on an individual's personal record file which is retained for seven years after their data of leaving the Council. Inappropriate access or disclosure of employee data constitutes a data breach and should be reported in accordance with the data protection policy immediately. It may also constitute a disciplinary offence, which will be dealt with under the Council's [Disciplinary Policy](#).

# Market Supplements

July 2021

Agreed by TUs



<b>Document History</b>	
Version	1.1 (see below)
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Author	HR Advisory Team

<b>Version control</b>	<b>Reviewers</b>
Version 1.0	Initial draft – May 2021
Version 1.1	Reviewed and agreed by Trade Unions

## Table of Contents

1. Objectives and Scope
2. Criteria for Introducing Market Supplements
3. Process for Introducing Market Supplements
4. Review Process

## 1. Objectives and scope

- 1.1. Market supplements should only be paid where there is evidence that there is a genuine market justification (either the market salary for the job is higher or there is a scarcity of qualified people). They should be reviewed on a regular basis.
- 1.2. All such payments will be called market supplements and may be applied to improve recruitment or retention.
- 1.3. The process for introducing or reviewing a market supplement is set out below and must be followed in every case.
- 1.4. The determination of market salaries will be based on local, regional and national data (depending on the source recruitment area), and on comparisons between similar level jobs. HR will be responsible for sourcing appropriate market data so that assessments can be carried out.

## 2. Criteria for introducing market supplements

- 2.1. Problems with recruitment and retention may result from a number of factors, internal and external, one of which could be the rates for similar jobs paid in the external job market. It is important to identify any internal factors which may be affecting recruitment and retention and deal with those first before deciding on the addition of a market supplement.
- 2.2. Where there is clear evidence of recruitment and retention difficulties, a market supplement may be considered. In order to request the consideration of such a supplement, the Assistant Director must demonstrate that the following criteria are met and well evidenced:
  - There is a proven recruitment and/or retention problem with a particular post. Evidence should include unsuccessful attempts to fill the post over the past 12 months, or
  - There is a proven retention problem within that post over no less than the previous 12 months. Evidence should include staff turnover rates, stability indices, exit interview information, labour market information about skill shortages, and key worker information etc.
  - There is a mismatch between pay at the evaluated rate and pay for comparable jobs in the local employment market.
  - There is a strong and clear evidence-based argument for paying a market supplement based on research in comparable authorities. This evidence will be checked against relevant benchmarking data (including NJC salary survey results).
  - Evidence that Equal Pay legislation has been addressed in making the proposal.
  - The cost of any supplements can be met from within existing budgets.

- 2.3. Market supplements must be calculated and applied consistently between directorates. It must take the form of a cash sum and not a percentage rate.
- 2.4. The supplement will be reconsidered at least every two years or if the post becomes vacant, following an objective review of the market rates.
- 2.5. The employee's contract of employment and statement of main terms and conditions of employment should include a statement to this effect, ensuring that they are aware that the supplement may be removed or altered depending on the review of the market.

### **3. Process for introducing market supplements**

- 3.1. The Assistant Director should calculate the level of the proposed supplement, depending on the evidence they have found from the above criteria. They should consult their Strategic HR & OD Business Partner with the details and confirmation that the criteria have been followed.
- 3.2. It is for the Assistant Director to produce the documentary evidence. The Strategic HR & OD Business Partner will test the proposal against corporate data. The role of the Assistant Director of HR & OD is to ensure that the criteria for market supplements are applied consistently across the authority.
- 3.3. When the above criteria have been tested, the documentary evidence produced and the proposal verified against corporate data, this should be submitted to the Executive Director. If the Executive Director supports the request, it should be presented through the HR Controls process for consideration and assessment for corporate consistency. The final decision rests with the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Assistant Director of HR & OD.
- 3.4. The decision will need to be recorded and documentation through the HR Controls process, retained by HR for the personal file. HR will also ensure that the manager has made the appropriate changes through completion of a Firmstep form to get the supplement paid.
- 3.5. The supplement should also be applied to existing employees in the same post.

### **4. Review process**

- 4.1. It is important that market supplements are reviewed in order to ensure they are still applicable. Each market supplement will be reviewed every two years or when a post becomes vacant as follows:

- Strategic HR & OD Business Partners will work with Assistant Directors to monitor each market supplement and confirm review dates and decisions. Normally, the review date will be on the anniversary of the supplement's introduction.
- If the supplement is still applicable, it will be retained
- If the supplement appears to be no longer appropriate, the Executive Director will be informed and further research will be carried out to confirm the situation
- If further research confirms that a supplement is no longer appropriate, the employee will be given 3 months' notice that the supplement will be removed
- The Assistant Director of HR & OD must be informed of any change or deletion of market supplements.

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# Grey Fleet Policy

July 2021

Agreed by TUs



<b>Document History</b>	
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Version 1.2	Reviewed and agreed with Trade Unions – July 2021

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. This policy sets out Reading Borough Council's approach to management of the Grey Fleet and how it should be used.

## **2. Scope**

- 2.1. The Grey Fleet Policy covers vehicles that are used by an employee for making a work-related journey (not vehicles owned, hired, or leased by the Council). In most cases this will be a privately-owned vehicle that is used on Council business (not travel to and from normal place of work); however, it could also include a vehicle that an employee has privately hired/borrowed and uses on Council business.
- 2.2. The 'Driving at work/managing work related road safety' guidelines, published by the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) in 2014, makes it clear that the Council has the same Duty of Care towards all its employees making work-related journeys regardless of vehicle ownership, so the grey fleet needs to be managed in exactly the same way as Council owned or leased fleet. It is an offence for the Council to allow staff to drive their own vehicle on Council business without the appropriate entitlement.
- 2.3. This policy must be read and complied with before any grey fleet use is considered with and, as highlighted in Section 3 Travel Hierarchy, grey fleet use should be used as the last resort. Failure to follow this policy could result in disciplinary action being taken.

## **3. Business Travel**

- 3.1. The Council is responsible for meeting the cost of travel by its employees on official business. Official travelling means necessary travel for the purpose of:
- attendance at meetings in pursuit of official Council's business
  - attendance at training courses
  - journeys made on work related business
- 3.2. Official travelling does not include travel from home to normal place of work and the return journey.

- 3.3. It is necessary for the Council to review its spending on employee travel and this means reviewing the cost of travel and promoting the most cost-effective method of transport for employees in the first instance as well as highlighting both safety and duty of care issues.
- 3.4. The Council is committed to reducing the impact on the environment from its business travel and the cost of this travel. The Government's vision is for a sustainable Public Sector and includes a target to reduce carbon emissions from road vehicles used for Public Sector operations by 15%. In addition, one of the Council's service priorities in the Corporate Plan is to keep the town clean, safe, green and active, and the Council's Local Transport Plan has the objective of reducing carbon emissions from transport and improving air quality. This means looking at ways to reduce miles travelled and identifying the most efficient methods of transport with lower carbon emissions per mile.
- 3.5. As part of the overall health and safety policy, the Council is also committed to managing the risks that employees encounter when driving for work and all employees are required to fully engage with this,.

## **4. Necessity of Travel**

- 4.1. Employees will only be reimbursed for expenses, which they incur in the course of official travel in line with documented reimbursement rates.
- 4.2. The following considerations must be made prior to every journey, by the employee and their manager, before approval is given for an employee to use their private vehicle for work purposes and to submit mileage a claim. (Section 3.2 – Reimbursement of Expenses Policy)
- Is the meeting/visit absolutely necessary? E.g. can it be done on the telephone or Teams instead?
  - Is 'active travel' possible as an alternative to using own car, e.g. walking, cycling etc (there is a cycle mileage rate of 37p per mile as an incentive for staff to use their own bicycle for work purposes)
  - Staff must use public transport or a pool car instead of their own vehicle wherever possible. Safety and practicality must be considered.

## **5. Transport Hierarchy of Decision Making**

- 5.1. Authorisation will be required by the Line Manager in advance of all journeys.
- 5.2. The following order of priority should be adhered to when travelling on official business (Also see Section 3 – Reimbursement of Expenses Policy):
  - Public transport
  - Pool vehicle
  - Private vehicle
- 5.3. For round trips expected to exceed 50 miles, employees should book a pool vehicle on-line rather than use their own vehicle.
- 5.4. In exceptional cases (e.g. where there is a medical condition or disability or other reason) a journey in an employee-owned vehicle may exceed 50 miles. In these cases, authorisation will be required in advance of the journey from the Line Manager.

## 6. Using a Private Vehicle

- 6.1. Payments may be made to allow employees to use their own vehicles for journeys less than 50 miles, provided this is on Council businesses.
- 6.2. Employees driving for work in their own vehicle must ensure that it always complies with the law, is in a safe and roadworthy condition and is suitable for its purpose. (See [Licence & Vehicle Checks – Guide for Employees](#))
- 6.3. The employee must ensure that:
  - the vehicle meets the minimum safety specifications required by the Council.
  - the vehicle is taxed and, where appropriate, has a valid MOT certificate
  - the motor insurance policy includes business use cover for the amount and type of mileage undertaken and, if necessary, also covers business passengers.
  - possession of a valid licence to drive the vehicle being used
  - no medical reasons prevent the driver using the vehicle

- the vehicle is not used inappropriately, e.g. unsecured load carrying or off-road access.

6.4. When claiming mileage in a private vehicle, the employee must enter the details on to I-Trent and certify the following declaration:

“I certify that the claim is to reimburse expenditure actually and necessarily incurred by me on behalf of Reading Borough Council and that I am aware of and have followed both the grey fleet policy and the travel hierarchy”.

## **7. Ongoing Governance of Private Vehicle Use**

7.1. It is the responsibility of the Line Manager to:

- Ensure employees understand their responsibilities to ensure vehicles are legal, safe and well-maintained.
- Check vehicle documents in advance of first use of vehicle for business purposes and at least annually thereafter.
- Follow monitoring, authorisation and reporting procedures to help manage transport usage.

7.2. It is the responsibility of employees using their own vehicles for business to:

- Present the vehicle’s MOT certificate, insurance policy and service schedule for inspection in advance of first driving for work and thereafter on an annual basis or at other times when requested by Line Manager
- Present their driving licence for inspection in advance of first driving for work and thereafter on an annual basis or at other times when requested by the Council.
- Notify Line Manager of any changes imposed on their licence, restrictions on ability to drive, material changes to insurance provision and vehicle related issues
- Cooperate with monitoring, authorisation and reporting procedures.

## **8. Insurance of Private Vehicles**

- 8.1. Motor Mileage Allowance will only be paid where the employee holds an insurance policy that covers the driver and vehicle for business use.
- 8.2. It is the responsibility of the Line Manager to verify the insurance status of their employees, via either the original insurance document or a cover note. Any material changes to the employee's insurance provision must be notified to the Line Manager.

## **9. Conditions of Use for Private Vehicles**

- 9.1. At those times when an employee-owned vehicle is being used for business purposes, the driver shall not carry any non-Council passengers that is not related to the Councils business requirements.
- 9.2. At these times, the driver shall complete their journey from starting point to destination without undertaking any personal activities.

## **10. Mileage Claiming Process**

- 10.1. Mileage claims shall be paid to employees only when the relevant document and licence checks have been carried out and reported in the correct manner.
- 10.2. All staff must ensure their vehicle; MOT and insurance information is updated when changes occur.
- 10.3. All staff must keep their personal details updated and make the appropriate changes where needed
- 10.4. All mileage claims must be completed and submitted by the end of the following month of the date of the claim, any claims made after this date will be rejected. If this is not practical, written approval for any extension will be required from line managers. The Council reserves the right to withhold any payment where written approval has not been sought. (Also see Section 2 – Reimbursement of Expenses Policy)

## **11. Managing Occupational Road Risk**

- 11.1. When opting to drive on Reading Borough Council business it is important to remember and apply the following health and safety best practice:

- Ensure that you familiarise yourself with the controls of any vehicle be it your own vehicle or a pool car/hire car and before setting off you should complete your vehicle roadworthy checks.
- Never use a mobile phone or use other mobile devices whilst driving to avoid possible distraction.
- Always observe speed limits and never drive faster than road or driving conditions safely allow.
- Plan ahead allowing time at the start of any journey for delays end-route: congestion, hold-ups and bad weather.
- Do not undertake a journey if you are under the influence of alcohol /drugs or feel tired or unwell.
- Plan your journey to take enough breaks: a minimum break of at least 15 minutes after every two hours of driving is recommended.
- You must be able to read a new style number plate from 20 metres (66 feet). If you need to wear glasses or contact lenses for driving, you must always wear them whilst driving.

**Tool box guides for licence and vehicle checks are on the intranet under iTrent Guides, please see the link <https://intranet.reading.gov.uk/manual/grey-fleet-policy/licence-vehicle-checks-guide-employees>**

# Volunteer Engagement Policy

July 2021

Agreed by TUs



<b>Document History</b>	
Version	1.1
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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. People choose to volunteer for a variety of reasons. For some it offers the chance to give something back to the community or make a difference to the people around them. For others it provides an opportunity to develop new skills or build on existing experience and knowledge as a pathway into employment. Regardless of the motivation, what unites them all is that they find it both challenging and rewarding.
- 1.2. Volunteers bring a range of expertise to particular tasks or projects. Their expertise should complement and add value to the skills of staff. In many instances, volunteers can develop a range of support to service users that cannot be provided solely by paid staff, and the Council welcomes volunteers in all service areas. The Council is committed to engaging with volunteers in a way that complements and expands service delivery.

## **2. What is volunteering?**

- 2.1. The Council regards volunteering as an unpaid activity where someone freely gives their time to help an organisation or an individual who they are not related to. Volunteers are not paid staff and do not have a legally binding contractual relationship with the Council.

## **3. Planning for volunteer engagement**

- 3.1. The Council identifies roles for volunteers which extend the work of the organisation. Volunteers are involved at appropriate levels of the organisation in roles which complement, but never substitute, the work of paid staff.
- 3.2. A written role description, outlining the purpose, tasks and main expectations of their role should be agreed before any volunteer is sought. This role is then subject to review at least annually with the volunteer's supervisor.
- 3.3. Volunteers must not be used in times of industrial action to do the work of paid staff. They may continue with their regular tasks but will not be asked to undertake additional duties.

## **4. Equal opportunities**

- 4.1. The Council is fully committed to our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and will proactively offer volunteering opportunities to people from different backgrounds as a contribution to developing and maintaining an organisation where differing ideas, abilities, backgrounds and needs are fostered and valued and where those with diverse backgrounds and experiences are able to participate and contribute.

## **5. Recruitment and Selection of Volunteers**

- 5.1. The Council implements a fair, effective and open system in the recruitment and selection of volunteers and treats all information collected in this process confidentially. Where applicable the Council's Safer Recruitment Guidance should be applied.
- 5.2. Volunteering opportunities are advertised on the Council's website and through partner organisations. All potential volunteers participate in a recruitment and selection process that is appropriate to the role offered. The Council uses application forms, references and meets the volunteers for a discussion about their suitability.
- 5.3. The process should only be conducted by appropriately briefed/trained staff and aims to allow both parties to give and receive enough information to assess whether the volunteer opportunities available match the potential volunteer's skills, qualities and needs.
- 5.4. If successful, individuals will be provided with a copy of the Volunteer Agreement, details of the role and starting arrangements.
- 5.5. If unsuccessful, individuals will be offered an opportunity to discuss the outcome and identify possible alternatives outside of the Council.

## **6. Safeguarding**

- 6.1. Where the role requires it, all supervisors must ensure that volunteers are aware of, and have received appropriate training in the Council's Safeguarding Policy on Children and Adults.
- 6.2. Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks will be carried out on any volunteer who in the course of their activity has regular, unsupervised, contact with the same group of children or young people. A DBS check will also need to be carried out on volunteers who care for or deal with the personal affairs of any adult. Further guidance can be found in the Council's safeguarding policies and procedures.

## **7. Risk Assessment**

- 7.1. A specific risk assessment for the volunteer must be carried out prior to the volunteer commencing their placement. The assessment should consider:
- The exact duties that will be undertaken including any equipment or substances that the volunteer could be using or coming in contact with.
  - The work environment – any risks from other related or unrelated activities that the volunteer may come into contact with.
  - The volunteer's experience and abilities
- 7.2. Robust controls must be put in place to remove the risk of injury. Copies of the risk assessment should be sent to the organisation that is placing the volunteer and to the Health and Safety team.
- 7.3. The risk assessment must be updated if, during the placement, the activities change and new risks need to be controlled or existing risks altered. However, this process must not be seen as prohibitive – controls need only be proportionate to the risk and may be changed, where appropriate.

## **8. Induction, training and ongoing support**

- 8.1. The Council will provide all volunteers with an introduction to the organisation as well as induction and training tailored to the volunteering opportunity. The following mandatory e-learning courses should be completed by all volunteers in addition to training required by the role undertaken.
- Data Protection & IT Security
  - Health & Safety Level 1
  - Equality and Diversity
  - Customer Care
  - Introduction to Safeguarding
- 8.2. During the induction period volunteers will be provided with written information on relevant legislation, organisational policies and codes of

practice and will be given the opportunity to discuss any of the issues with their supervisor.

- 8.3. All volunteers will receive appropriate support and supervision in their activity. The level of supervision will match the nature of the role and the experience of the volunteer. All volunteers will have a nominated supervisor, someone they can have regular access to if problems arise or when help and support is needed.
- 8.4. It may be necessary to obtain a written consent from a parent or guardian of volunteers aged 16-18.

## **9. Expenses**

- 9.1. The Council is committed to paying reasonable 'out of pocket' expenses ensuring that potential volunteers are not excluded due to financial reasons.
- 9.2. This is usually limited to travel.
- 9.3. These need to be agreed with relevant managers or volunteer supervisors before the volunteer commences their activity. Where expenses are not agreed, volunteers must be made aware of this at the first opportunity in the recruitment process.

## **10. Volunteers in receipt of benefits**

- 10.1. It is the responsibility of the volunteer to establish whether volunteering is going to affect their entitlement to any social security benefits. Further advice should be obtained by the volunteer from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), Job Centre Plus, or Citizens Advice.

## **11. Insurance**

- 11.1. Volunteers with the Council are protected by the organisation's public liability and personal accident insurance.
- 11.2. However, where volunteers drive as part of their voluntary activity, and use their own vehicle, they must ensure they possess insurance that covers them for business use. Further guidance should be sought from the volunteer's own insurance company. Supervisors must check and record this documentation if required.

## **12. Complaints**

- 12.1. As volunteers are not employees, they are unable to use the Council's Grievance Policy. However, they are entitled to use the Council's Complaints Procedure if they have any concerns over their treatment by the organisation.
- 12.2. Complaints by volunteers should be raised in the first instance with their supervisor and dealt with informally where possible. Where appropriate, the complaint will be investigated fully by their supervisor, or if the complaint is against their own supervisor, by another council officer.
- 12.3. If a complaint is brought against a volunteer, HR advice should be sought immediately.
- 12.4. Complaint will normally be investigated by the relevant volunteer supervisor or the supervisor's manager. Every attempt will be made to resolve the matter as quickly and informally as possible. If the issue cannot be satisfactorily resolved, then the volunteer may be told their services are no longer required with immediate effect.

## **13. Moving On**

- 13.1. The Council welcomes feedback and encourages volunteers to offer ideas for improvements. Volunteers who choose to stop volunteering at any time will also be invited to provide feedback before they move on.
- 13.2. Volunteers who are leaving the Council and who have made a regular commitment to it should be offered an exit interview, reference and/or statement of their achievements to ensure that their services are properly and formally appreciated.

## **14. Termination of Activity**

- 14.1. Where appropriate, the role and placement of the volunteer may be terminated by the supervisor at one week's notice, or immediately where inappropriate behaviour has occurred or where a health and safety risk has been identified. In all cases, the volunteer will be entitled to an explanation of the decision and action taken.

## **Volunteer Agreement**

Volunteers are an important and valued part of Reading Borough Council. We hope that you enjoy and benefit from volunteering with us. This agreement states what to expect from us, and what we hope from you. We aim to be flexible, so please let us know if you would like to make any changes and we will do our best to accommodate them.

This agreement is within the framework of Reading Borough Council's Volunteer Policy.

We, Reading Borough Council, will do our best to:

To introduce you to how the organisation works

- Agree and clarify your role during your time with us
- Review your developmental / training needs and meet them where appropriate and possible
- Provide a supervisor through whom you can give and receive feedback
- Respect your skills, dignity and individual wishes and to do our best to meet them
- Consult with you and keep you informed of possible changes
- Provide a safe workplace
- Apply our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Apply our complaints procedure if there is any problem

I, the volunteer, agree to do my best:

- To work reliably to the best of my ability, and to give as much warning as possible whenever I cannot work when expected
- To follow Reading Borough Council's policies and procedures, including Health and Safety, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and ICT policies along with other policies which are relevant to the role that I am doing.

Note: this agreement is in honour only and not a legally binding contract of employment.



On behalf of Reading Borough Council:	
Supervisor name:	
Supervisor signature:	
Date:	

Volunteer Name:	
Volunteer Signature:	
Date:	

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Provide basic details

**Policies**

**Directorate:** Resources

**Service:** HR and Organisational Development

**Name and job title of person doing the assessment**

**Name:** Teresa Kaine

**Job Title:** HR Services Manager

**Date of assessment:** July 2021

Scope your proposal

**What is the aim of your policy or new service/what changes are you proposing?**

Review/introduce new employment policies covering:

- Additional Payments
- Grievance
- Market Supplements
- Grey Fleet
- Volunteer Engagement

Most the above are existing policies which have been reviewed and amended. The Grey Fleet Policy and Volunteer Engagement Policy are new.

**Who will benefit from this proposal and how?**

All employees of the Council and the Council itself because employment policies will be clearly set out. They will also be based on current employment legislation and ACAS codes of practice and/or guidance where available.

**What outcomes does the change aim to achieve and for whom?**

Setting out clear employment policies can help in supporting a culture based on trust, fairness and inclusion. They can also speed the decision-making process by ensuring that clear guidance is readily available to cover a range of issues.

Furthermore, they can assist in avoiding involvement with employment tribunal claims by providing guidance for managers and staff that reflects accurately current employment law and good practice. It is therefore important that HR policies are clear, easy to understand, up to date and reviewed regularly.

**Who are the main stakeholders and what do they want?**

All employees covered by the policy and the Council.

**Assess whether an EqlA is Relevant**

How does your proposal relate to eliminating discrimination; promoting equality of opportunity; promoting good community relations?

Do you have evidence or reason to believe that some (racial, disability, gender, sexuality, age and religious belief) groups may be affected differently than others? (Think about your monitoring information, research, national data/reports etc.)

**No. The Council has a legal duty to ensure that the terms and conditions of employment for its employees are clearly set out. The policies that are the subject of this review help to achieve this.**

Is there already public concern about potentially discriminatory practices/impact or could there be? Think about your complaints, consultation, and feedback.

**No**

If the answer is **Yes** to any of the above, you need to do an Equality Impact Assessment.

If **No** you **MUST** complete this statement

An Equality Impact Assessment is not relevant because:

There is no evidence or reason to believe that some (racial, disability, gender, sexuality, age and religious belief) groups may be affected differently than others by the proposed policies. Nor is there already public concern about potentially discriminatory practices/impact for the issues covered in these policies.

Signed (completing officer) Teresa Kaine

Date 06/07/2021

Signed (Lead Officer) Shella Smith

Date 06/07/2021

### Assess the Impact of the Proposal

Your assessment must include:

- **Consultation**
- **Collection and Assessment of Data**
- **Judgement about whether the impact is negative or positive**

Think about who does and doesn't use the service? Is the take up representative of the community? What do different minority groups think? (You might think your policy, project or service is accessible and addressing the needs of these groups, but asking them might give you a totally different view). Does it really meet their varied needs? Are some groups less likely to get a good service?

How do your proposals relate to other services - will your proposals have knock on effects on other services elsewhere? Are there proposals being made for other services that relate to yours and could lead to a cumulative impact?

**Example:** A local authority takes separate decisions to limit the eligibility criteria for community care services; increase charges for respite services; scale back its accessible housing programme; and cut concessionary travel.

Each separate decision may have a significant effect on the lives of disabled residents, and the cumulative impact of these decisions may be considerable.

This combined impact would not be apparent if decisions are considered in isolation.

**Consultation**

How have you consulted with or do you plan to consult with relevant groups and experts. If you haven't already completed a Consultation form do it now. The checklist helps you make sure you follow good consultation practice.

[My Home > Info Pods > Community Involvement Pod - Inside Reading Borough Council](#)

<b>Relevant groups/experts</b>	<b>How were/will the views of these groups be obtained</b>	<b>Date when contacted</b>
Trade unions	Through a series of email communications and meetings with trade union colleagues	21 June 2021 1 July 2021 5 July 2021 6 July 2021

**Collect and Assess your Data**

Using information from Census, residents survey data, service monitoring data, satisfaction or complaints, feedback, consultation, research, your knowledge and the knowledge of people in your team, staff groups etc. describe how the proposal could impact on each group. Include both positive and negative impacts.

(Please delete relevant ticks)

**Describe how this proposal could impact on Racial groups**

Is there a negative impact?      Yes                  No                  ~~Not sure~~

**Describe how this proposal could impact on Gender/transgender (cover pregnancy and maternity, marriage)**

Is there a negative impact?      Yes                  No                  ~~Not sure~~

**Describe how this proposal could impact on Disability**

Is there a negative impact?      Yes                  No                  ~~Not sure~~

**Describe how this proposal could impact on Sexual orientation (cover civil partnership)**

Is there a negative impact?      Yes                  No                  ~~Not sure~~

**Describe how this proposal could impact on Age**

Is there a negative impact?      Yes                  No                  ~~Not sure~~

**Describe how this proposal could impact on Religious belief?**

Is there a negative impact?      Yes                  No                  ~~Not sure~~

Make a Decision

If the impact is negative then you must consider whether you can legally justify it. If not you must set out how you will reduce or eliminate the impact. If you are not sure what the impact will be you MUST assume that there could be a negative impact. You may have to do further consultation or test out your proposal and monitor the impact before full implementation.

Tick which applies (Please delete relevant ticks)

1. **No negative impact identified**

2. ~~**Negative impact identified but there is a justifiable reason**~~

You must give due regard or weight but this does not necessarily mean that the equality duty overrides other clearly conflicting statutory duties that you must comply with.

**Reason**

3. ~~**Negative impact identified or uncertain**~~

**What action will you take to eliminate or reduce the impact? Set out your actions and timescale?**

**How will you monitor for adverse impact in the future?**

An annual equality audit is carried out and reported to Personnel Committee which monitors whether there is any adverse impact on employees with protected characteristics, for example, the proportion of female, BAME and disabled employees involved in Council policies that are the subject of this review, compared to male, white and non-disabled employees. The most recent report looks at data for the last 2 financial years and does not indicate that procedures were applied and / or accessed disproportionately by any particular protected characteristic group

Signed (completing officer) Teresa Kaine

Date 06/07/2021

Signed (Lead Officer) Shella Smith

Date 06/07/2021

## READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

### REPORT BY ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOR HR AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

<b>TO:</b>	PERSONNEL COMMITTEE		
<b>DATE:</b>	15 JULY 2021		
<b>TITLE:</b>	STAFF SURVEY 2021		
<b>LEAD COUNCILLOR:</b>	CLLR RUTH MCEWAN	<b>PORTFOLIO:</b>	CORPORATE AND CONSUMER SERVICES
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	SHELLA SMITH	<b>TEL:</b>	0118 937 4697
<b>JOB TITLE:</b>	ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF HR AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT	<b>E-MAIL:</b>	Shella.smith@reading.gov.uk

#### 1. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY OF REPORT

1.1. To present Personnel Committee with the results of the Staff Survey 2021. There is much to celebrate from the survey with many positive results and improvements compared to the last survey in 2019. There are also some areas where improvements are needed which cut across the whole organisation. This report outlines four areas that will be focused on at a corporate level for improvement over the next year.

#### 1.2 Appendices

Appendix 1 - Staff Survey 2021 results

#### 2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

2.1. That the results of the Staff Survey 2021 in Appendix 1 and the four areas of corporate focus for the next year be noted.

### 3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 The staff survey was open for four weeks from 29 March to 30 April 2021. It consisted of 45 questions grouped under seven areas, plus optional questions about the respondent (e.g. directorate, ethnicity, age range etc).
- 3.2 There were 1004 responses which represents 58% of the Council's workforce of approximately 1720 staff (excluding schools). This is an increase from the 2019 survey which achieved a response rate of 51%.
- 3.3 Appendix 1<sup>1</sup> shows the responses to each question for all staff.
- 3.4 There are 21 questions where the results are very positive with more than 80% of staff strongly agreeing or agreeing. A few examples of these are:

Question	% who agree or strongly agree in 2021	% who agree or strongly agree in 2019 (if same question asked)
I make a valuable contribution to the success of the Council by doing my job	95%	93%
My line manager shows genuine interest in my wellbeing	89%	86%
I enjoy my job	87%	87%
I would still like to be working at the Council in a year's time	84%	78%
I know what the organisational values of Team Reading are	81%	69%

- 3.5 There are only four questions where 60% or less staff agree or strongly agree:

Question	% who agree or strongly agree in 2021	% who agree or strongly agree in 2019 (if same question asked)
I believe action will be taken as a result of this survey	60%	48%
I think my pay is fair given the responsibilities of my job	55%	56%

<sup>1</sup> In Appendix 1, at the top of page 4, the first five questions are repeated which also appear on the bottom of page 3. This is due to a technical issue when downloading the results from the system used to analyse the results into PDF format.

Reading Borough Council works as one, where teams collaborate for the benefit of our customers	51%	Different question asked in 2019
I have experienced or seen bullying or harassment at work	34%	Different question asked in 2019

3.6 There were two supplementary questions for people who had raised bullying and harassment at work in the last two years:

I felt listened to and my concerns were taken seriously	Yes - 7%	No - 12%	Not answered - 81%
I felt sufficient action was taken	Yes - 5%	No - 13 %	Not answered - 82%

3.7 In addition to the quantitative results, there were three areas where staff could add ‘free text’ comments - about their job, their line management and overall comments. There were 966 comments made by 520 respondents which have been sorted into key themes and differentiated by whether the comment was negative (65% of all the comments were negative), positive (21%) or neutral (14%). A summary of the top ten positive and negative themes is included in Appendix 1. There is also a ‘word cloud’ of the themes which illustrates how frequently they were mentioned by respondents.

3.8 The topic most frequently mentioned in the comments was workload, followed by ICT and salary. There were also comments about appreciation and rewards and benefits which were broadly similar to the comments about salary. The table below shows a summary of the number of comments that were made about these areas, to illustrate how frequently they were mentioned. The Council has a zero-tolerance approach to bullying and harassment, so the number of comments on this has also been included in the table.

Issue/recommended focus area	Negative	Neutral	Positive	Total
Workload	142	27	4	173
ICT	132	22	2	156
Salary	97	20	3	120
Appreciation	48	34	10	92
Rewards & Benefits	22	8	0	30
Bullying & Harassment	25	0	0	25

3.9 The table below shows the success measures that were agreed by CMT following the 2019 staff survey, the outturn from the 2021 results and whether the trend is positive or negative:

Success measure agreed in 2019	2021 outturn	Trend
Increase response rate from 51% to 75% and less paper copies for staff with IT access as part of their work	58% response rate  3% of the surveys were paper copies compared to 25% in 2019.	
100% of respondents agreeing “I believe action will be taken as a result of this survey” (2019: 48%)	60.2%  This is an improvement compared to 2019 but not at the 100% target	
Higher levels of work information provided by respondents. In 2019: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 12.8% did not state their directorate</li> <li>• 25% preferred not to say their gender or did not answer</li> <li>• 21.2% preferred not to say whether they consider themselves to have a disability or did not answer</li> <li>• 25.5% preferred not to say their ethnic group or did not answer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7.3% did not state their directorate</li> <li>• 14.3% preferred not to say their gender or did not answer</li> <li>• 15.4% preferred not to say whether they consider themselves to have a disability or did not answer</li> <li>• 18.3% preferred not to say their ethnic group or did not answer</li> </ul>	
23 questions (53%) have 70%+ agree or strongly agree - aim to maintain or increase this.	33 questions (73%) where 70%+ agree or strongly agree	
6 questions (14%) have 50% or less agree or strongly agree - aim to raise this so all answers are 50%+	1 question (2%) where 50% or less agree or strongly agree	
Improve scores for CMT leadership and visibility. 2019 scores: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I have confidence in CMT to lead the organisation - 45.3%</li> <li>• Leadership by the CMT is positive and supportive - 42.8%</li> <li>• I see enough of the Chief Exec - 32.9%</li> <li>• I see enough of the Exec Directors - 51%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I have confidence in the leadership skills of Senior Leaders to lead my directorate - 62.2%</li> <li>• Leadership by the Senior Leaders is positive and supportive - 61.1%</li> <li>• I feel I receive sufficient communication to carry out my work</li> </ul>	Direct comparison not possible for the first two questions this year as they asked about Senior Leaders which is a broader group than CMT

	<p>effectively from the Chief Exec - 75.3%</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I feel I receive sufficient communication to carry out my work effectively from the Exec Directors - 62%</li> </ul>	
Reduce number of people feeling bullied or harassed to zero.	<p>34% said they have experienced or seen bullying or harassment at work in 2021</p> <p>12% said they were subject to bullying or harassment at work in 2019</p>	Direct comparison not possible as we asked a different question in 2019 “I am not subject to bullying or harassment at work”

#### 4. PROPOSED CORPORATE THEMES TO BE PRIORITISED FROM THE 2021 RESULTS

4.1 As outlined above there is much to celebrate from the 2021 Staff Survey with many positive results and improvements compared to 2019. There are also some areas where improvements are needed which cut across the whole organisation. Looking at both the quantitative results and comments together, the Corporate Management Team (CMT) have agreed the following four areas of focus for the next 12 months:

- Workload and priorities
- ICT issues
- Behaviours
- Recognition<sup>2</sup>

4.2 Whilst action plans are still being worked up for each area, the following provides an indication of some of the activity which will be undertaken corporately in response to the survey:

##### Workload and priorities

- The new corporate plan will be used to give clarity on priorities.
- The Council’s performance management process is being redesigned as part of the Team Reading Delivery Plan. This specifically includes incorporating behaviours and a quality assurance process into the appraisal process and upskilling managers in carrying out appraisals and 1:1 meetings, where workload and priorities are discussed with staff.
- There is an ongoing focus on staff wellbeing as part of the Team Reading Delivery Plan. This includes for example a monthly Wellbeing Newsletter

<sup>2</sup> The theme of ‘recognition’ has been created by merging the comments about salary, appreciation and rewards and benefits into one priority area. See paragraph 3.8.

which is sent to all staff, practical tips on wellbeing and links to support services, including the Employee Assistant Programme (EAP) which is a confidential, independent service available 24/7 that provides a range of support, including counselling, for all staff.

#### ICT issues

- Performance data in relation to the new IT support contracts is being monitored and reviewed by the Digital Futures Board which has Assistant Director representatives from all Directorates and Brighter Futures for Children and is sponsored by the Deputy Chief Executive.
- The ICT team invited all staff to an online briefing and question and answer session on 30 June 2021 when they shared the latest updates and addressed staff comments and questions. About 250 staff attended the briefing.
- We have set up a new iTrent User Group with representatives from each directorate, to address the concerns raised about iTrent specifically.
- The ICT work programme will address a number of digital enabling issues as well as issues with legacy systems.

#### Behaviours

- The Council recently worked with Business in the Community (BITC) to audit our policies and practices around equality and inclusion in the workplace, which included five staff focus groups. The result is a report and recommendations which we are turning into an action plan. Many of these align with the issues raised around bullying and harassment in the staff survey, and we will integrate the issues raised in the staff survey into this action plan. The BITC report and action plan will be presented to Personnel Committee in November 2021.

#### Recognition

- Recognition is a workstream in the Team Reading Programme for 2021/22 and the comments from the survey will be used to build on this. It includes for example a proposal to hold a Team Reading Staff Awards ceremony to celebrate staff who have role-modelled the Team Reading values.

4.3 The Staff Survey will be repeated in April 2022 so that we can monitor trends and ensure that improvements in the four priority areas have been made.

### **5. COMMUNICATING THE RESULTS WITH STAFF**

5.1 The results were shared with the Joint Trade Unions and discussed at the monthly Joint Trade Union Committee (JTUC) meeting on 16 June 2021, before they were shared with staff more widely. It was agreed that we would jointly review the four priority areas at the next four JTUC meetings to consider any further improvements that can be made in these areas. The next meeting is on 14 July 2021 when we will review behaviours and the results around bullying and harassment.

5.2 The results were shared with staff in an All Staff Information email on 18 June 2021 and are available to view on the intranet. They were also published in the Staff Newsletter which is sent in hard copy to staff in Environmental and Commercial

Services. In addition, the Chief Executive and the Assistant Director of HR and OD presented the results to staff in an online briefing on 2 July, followed by a question and answer session. The event was recorded for staff who were unable to attend on the day.

5.3 The results for each directorate and service area have been shared with Assistant Directors for with the expectation that they will share them with their team and address any service-level actions which may be needed in their area, such as further training for staff, restructures etc, as well as supporting the roll out of corporate initiatives under the four themes.

5.4 We have invited staff to give ideas and suggestions on how we can improve in the four priority areas by emailing the Team Reading inbox or asking their manager to do so on their behalf.

## **6. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS**

6.1 The Council's [People Strategy](#) aims to create an organisational culture that puts customers at the heart of service design and delivery, where we celebrate high performance, empower and enable people, and create an environment that promotes diversity and inclusion, continual improvement and greater collaboration across the Council. This helps to ensure a Council that is fit for the future.

## **7. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 Staff were encouraged to complete the survey online and were provided with support and assistance to do so where needed. This resulted in only 3% using a paper survey compared to 25% in 2019.

## **8. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION**

8.1 Not required for this report.

## **9. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

9.1 Not required for this report.

## **10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 None.

## **11. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 None related directly to this report. There may be financial implication arising from actions to improve in the four areas (e.g. further training for staff) which will be met from within existing budgets.

## **12. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

[People Strategy](#)

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# Staff Survey 2021 - Breakdown of Responses

Directorate

All

Service Area

All

Location

All

Age Group

All

Gender

All

Disability

All

Ethnicity

All

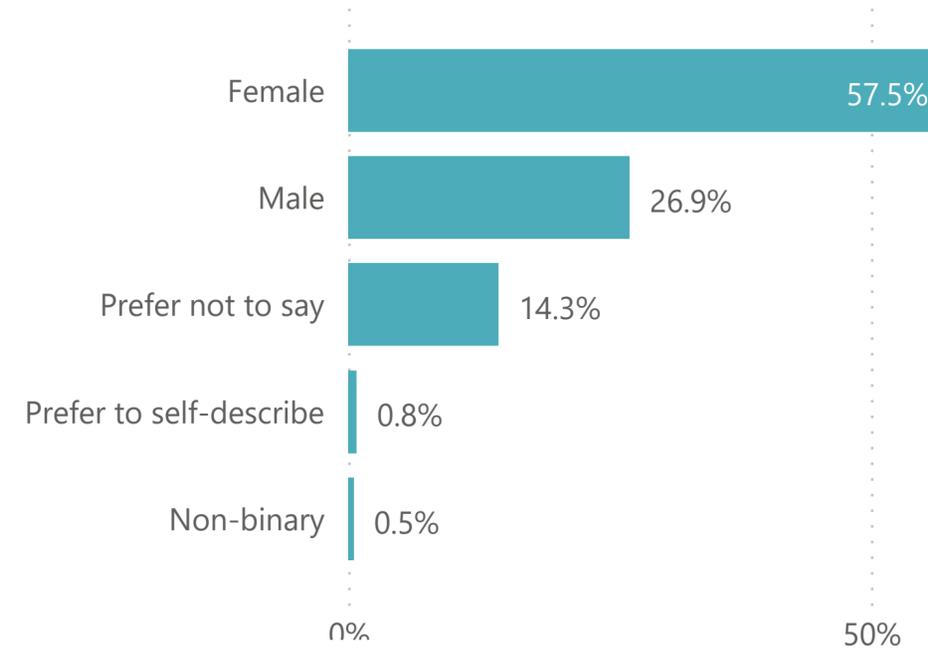
Manage Staff

All

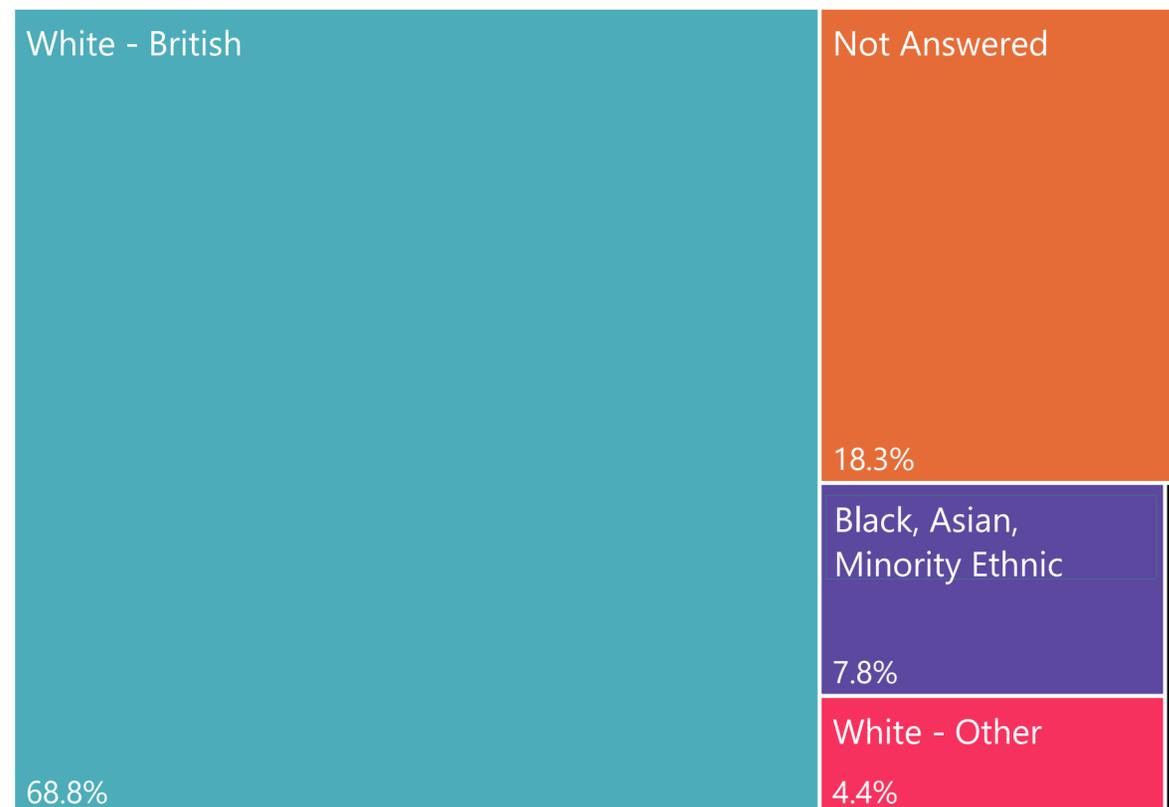
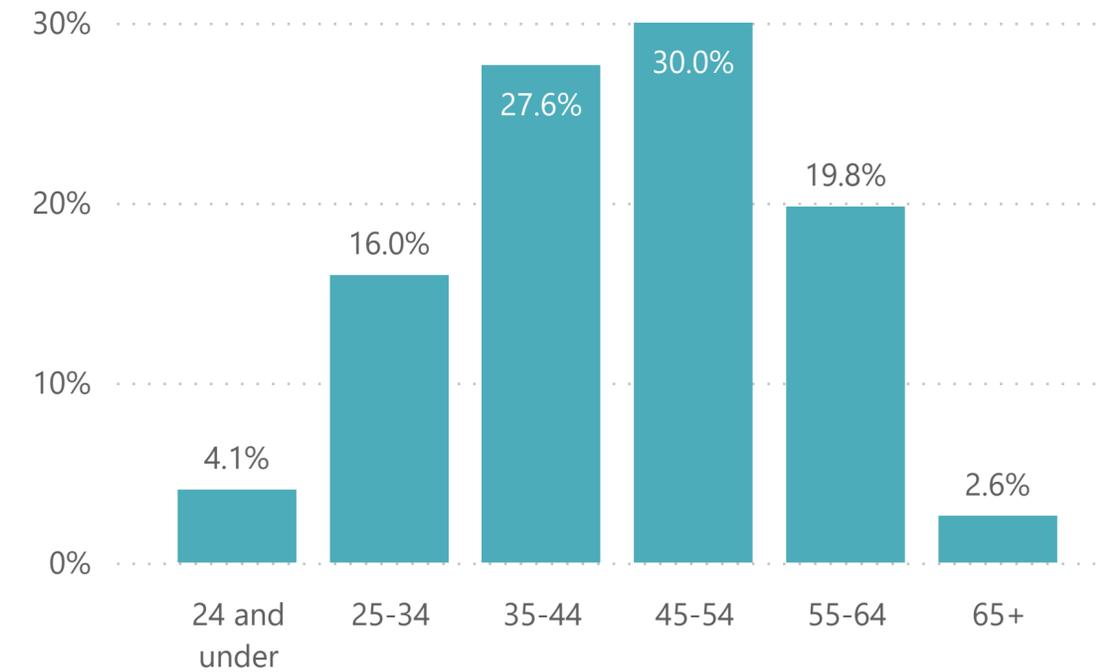
**1720**  
Number of Employees

**1,004**  
100.00%  
Number of Responses

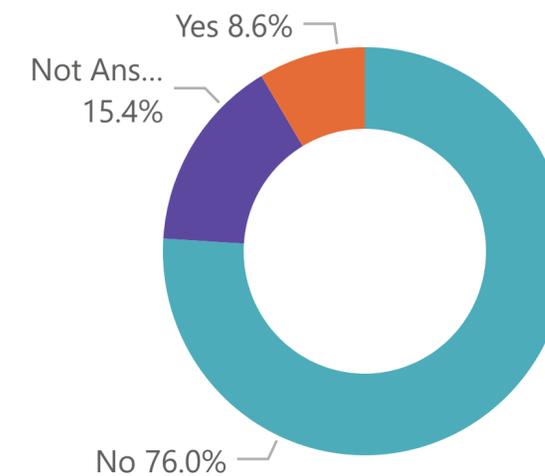
Respondents by Gender



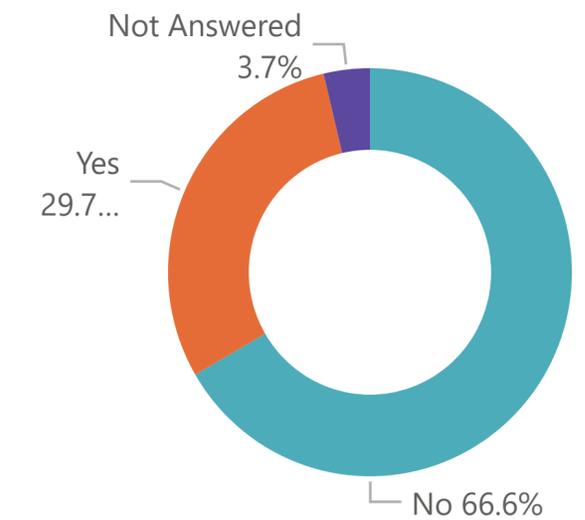
Respondents by Age Group



Disability



Manage Staff







# Staff Survey 2021 - Questions Summary (1)

Directorate  
All

Service Area  
All

Location  
All

Age Group  
All

Gender  
All

Disability  
All

Ethnicity  
All

Manage Staff  
All

Theme	Question	Agree	Disagree
My job	I make a valuable contribution to the success of the council by doing my job	95%	4%
My line management	My line manager is approachable and supportive	89%	9%
My job	I am clear about what I am expected to achieve in my job	89%	10%
My job	My team works well together and supports each other to do their jobs	88%	11%
My wellbeing	I feel that I can discuss my workload with my line manager	87%	12%
My job	I enjoy my job	87%	12%
Leadership	leadership support - My Line Manager	87%	11%
My line management	My line manager demonstrates the Team Reading values	87%	11%
Healthy and ethical workplace	I understand how my role supports the overall council objectives	86%	11%
My line management	My line manager keeps me informed about changes at work and how they may affect me	85%	13%
My wellbeing	My line manager shows genuine interest in my wellbeing	85%	14%
My line management	My line manager gives me clear feedback on my work	84%	15%
Overall	I would still like to be working at the council in a year's time	84%	13%
My line management	I have confidence in my line manager's leadership skills	82%	16%
My line management	My line manager sets clear priorities and objectives for me	81%	17%
Leadership	I know what the organisational values of Team Reading are	81%	12%
My wellbeing	I can access support if and when I need it	80%	18%
My line management	My manager supports me to fulfil my potential	80%	18%
Overall	I feel proud to work for this organisation	80%	16%
Healthy and ethical workplace	My team live the Team Reading values in their work	80%	14%
Healthy and ethical workplace	There are opportunities for me to contribute my ideas	80%	17%
My line management	I have regular 1:1s and annual appraisals	78%	21%
Leadership	leadership support - The Chief Executive	75%	21%
My wellbeing	I feel respected, appreciated and valued for what I do at work	75%	24%
Healthy and ethical workplace	Harassment and bullying - I feel confident to raise issues of bullying and harassment	74%	21%
Overall	The Team Reading values are lived at Reading Borough Council	73%	24%

\* Agree - Agree, Strongly Agree, Yes | Disagree - Disagree, Strongly Disagree, No | Not Answered/ Missing not included



# Staff Survey 2021 - Questions Summary (2)

Directorate

All

Service Area

All

Location

All

Page Group

All

Gender

All

Disability

All

Ethnicity

All

Manage Staff

All

Theme	Question	Agree	Disagree
Healthy and ethical workplace	There are opportunities for me to contribute my ideas	80%	17%
My line management	I have regular 1:1s and annual appraisals	78%	21%
Leadership	leadership support - The Chief Executive	75%	21%
My wellbeing	I feel respected, appreciated and valued for what I do at work	75%	24%
Healthy and ethical workplace	Harassment and bullying - I feel confident to raise issues of bullying and harassment	74%	21%
Overall	The Team Reading values are lived at Reading Borough Council	73%	24%
My wellbeing	The organisation supports me to have a healthy work/life balance	73%	26%
My learning and development	I feel confident using the Council's ICT system	72%	26%
My line management	My 1:1s and appraisals are effective	72%	26%
My learning and development	I have learning opportunities to develop and grow in my role	72%	27%
Overall	When making decisions and designing services at RBC, we fully consider the customers' perspective	72%	25%
My job	I would recommend the Council to my family and friends as a great place to work	71%	28%
Leadership	leadership support - My Service Manager, Assistant Director or Deputy Director (Senior Leaders)	70%	26%
My learning and development	I would benefit from training to get the most from our ICT systems and new technology	69%	29%
My wellbeing	I feel the pressure of work is manageable	67%	31%
Healthy and ethical workplace	I am confident that my ideas are taken seriously and heard at the right level	63%	31%
My job	I think the rewards and benefits are fair in my job	63%	35%
Leadership	I have confidence in the leadership skills of Senior Leaders to lead my directorate	62%	23%
Leadership	leadership support - The Executive Directors	62%	33%
My job	I have the ICT resources and equipment to do my job well	61%	38%
Leadership	Leadership by the Senior Leaders is positive and supportive	61%	23%
Overall	I believe action will be taken as a result of this survey	60%	36%
My job	I think my pay is fair given the responsibilities in my job	55%	44%
Healthy and ethical workplace	Reading Borough Council works as one, where teams collaborate for the benefit of our customers	51%	43%
Healthy and ethical workplace	Harassment and bullying - I have experienced or seen bullying or harassment at work.	34%	49%
Healthy and ethical workplace	Harassment and bullying - I felt listened to and my concerns were taken seriously	7%	12%
Healthy and ethical workplace	Harassment and bullying - I felt sufficient action was taken	5%	13%

\* Agree - Agree, Strongly Agree, Yes | Disagree - Disagree, Strongly Disagree, No | Not Answered/ Missing not included



# Staff Survey 2021 - My Job

Directorate  
All

Service Area  
All

Location  
All

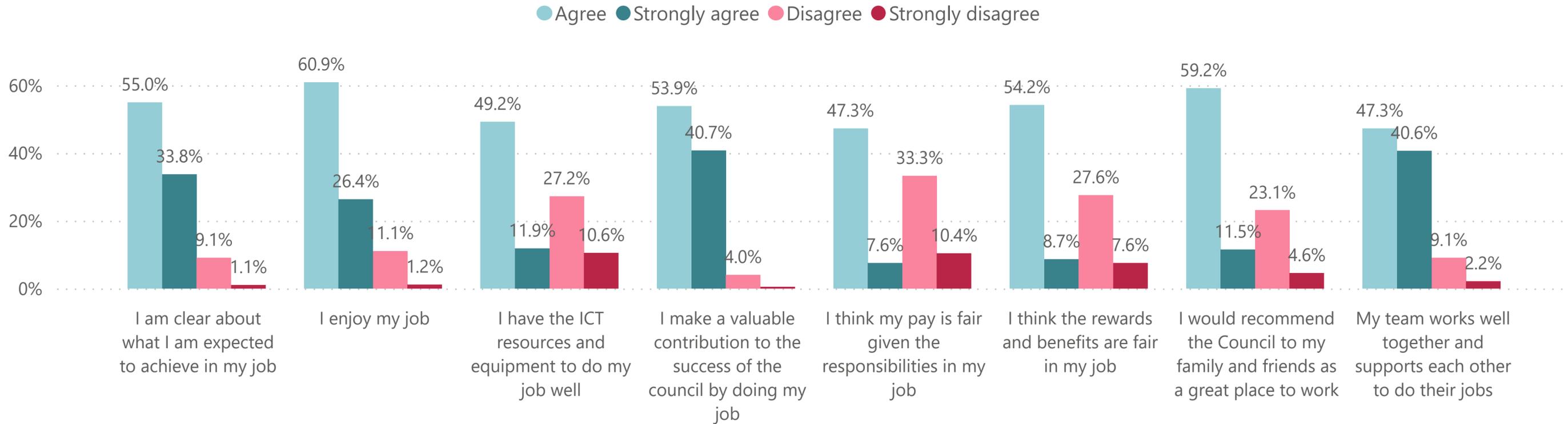
Age Group  
All

Gender  
All

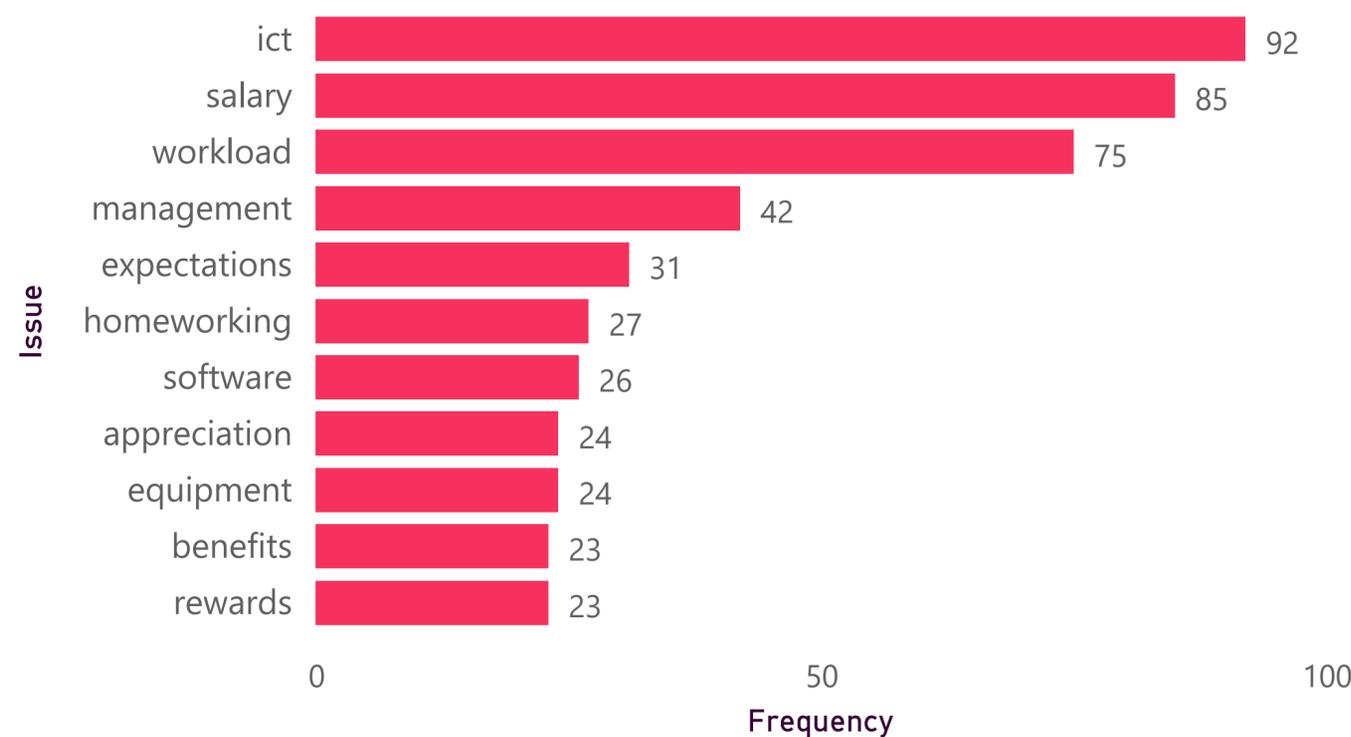
Disability  
All

Ethnicity  
All

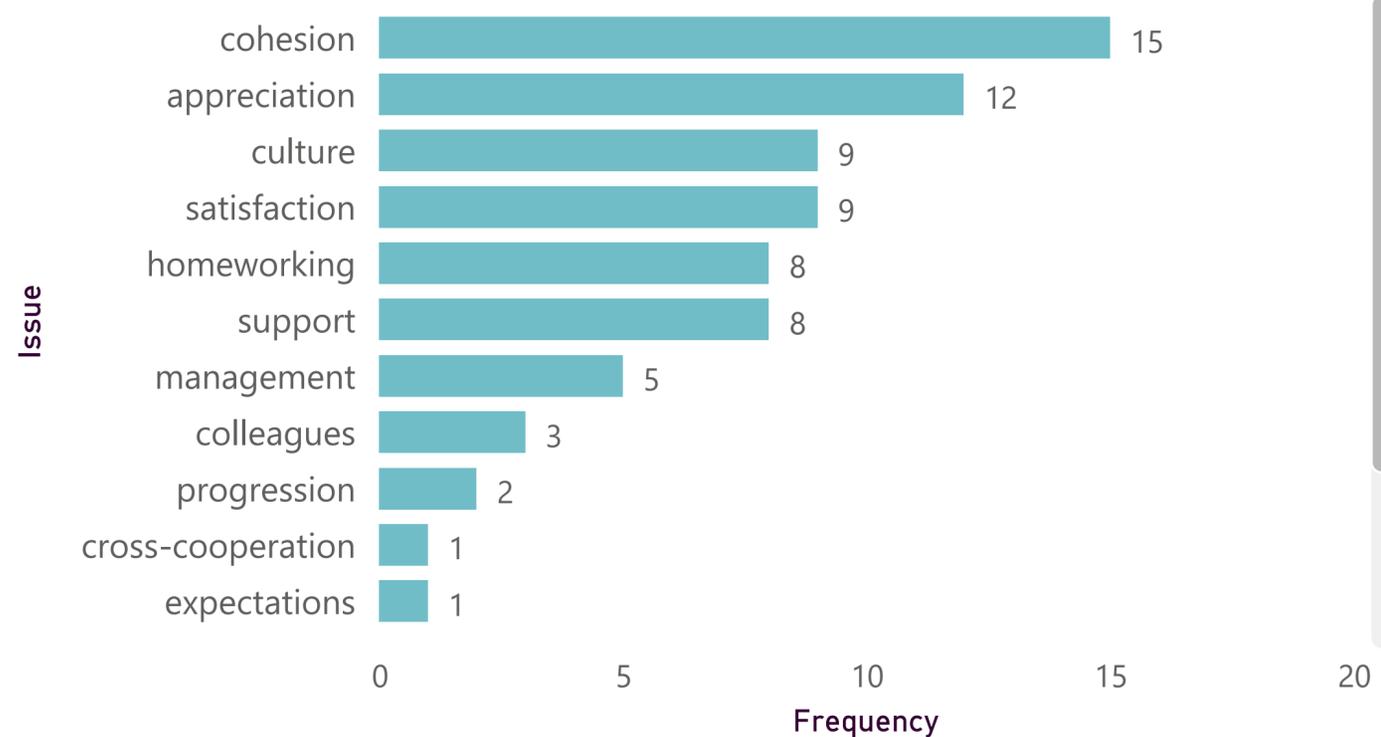
Manage Staff  
All



Comments analysis - Top 10 Negative Issues



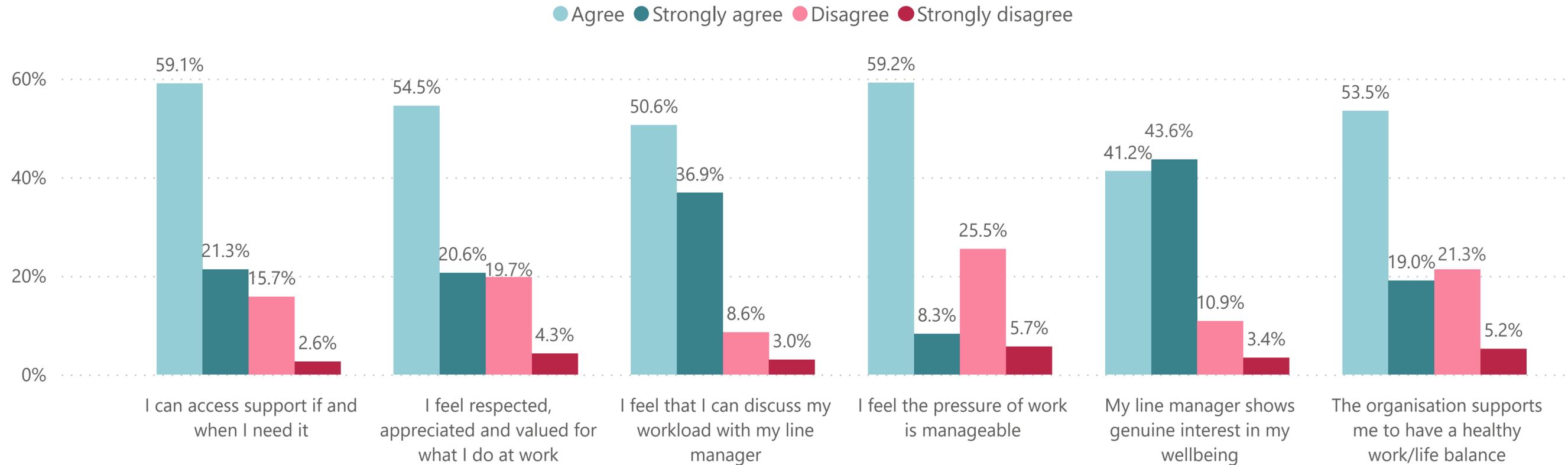
Comments analysis - Top 10 Positive Issues





# Staff Survey 2021 - My Wellbeing

- Directorate  
All
- Service Area  
All
- Location  
All
- Age Group  
All
- Gender  
All
- Disability  
All
- Ethnicity  
All
- Manage Staff  
All



"I feel the pressure of work is manageable" by Age Group

Answer	24 and under	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
Strongly agree	18.2%	13.1%	8.9%	7.0%	5.6%	33.3%
Agree	69.7%	64.6%	64.9%	57.8%	62.1%	47.6%
Disagree	12.1%	17.7%	20.4%	29.1%	28.6%	19.0%
Strongly disagree		4.6%	5.3%	4.1%	2.5%	

"The organisation supports me to have a healthy work/life balance" by Managing Staff

Answer	Managing	Not Managing
Strongly agree	15.4%	21.1%
Agree	47.7%	56.7%
Disagree	29.9%	17.0%
Strongly disagree	6.7%	4.5%



# Staff Survey 2021 - Healthy and Ethical Workplace

Directorate  
All

Service Area  
All

Location  
All

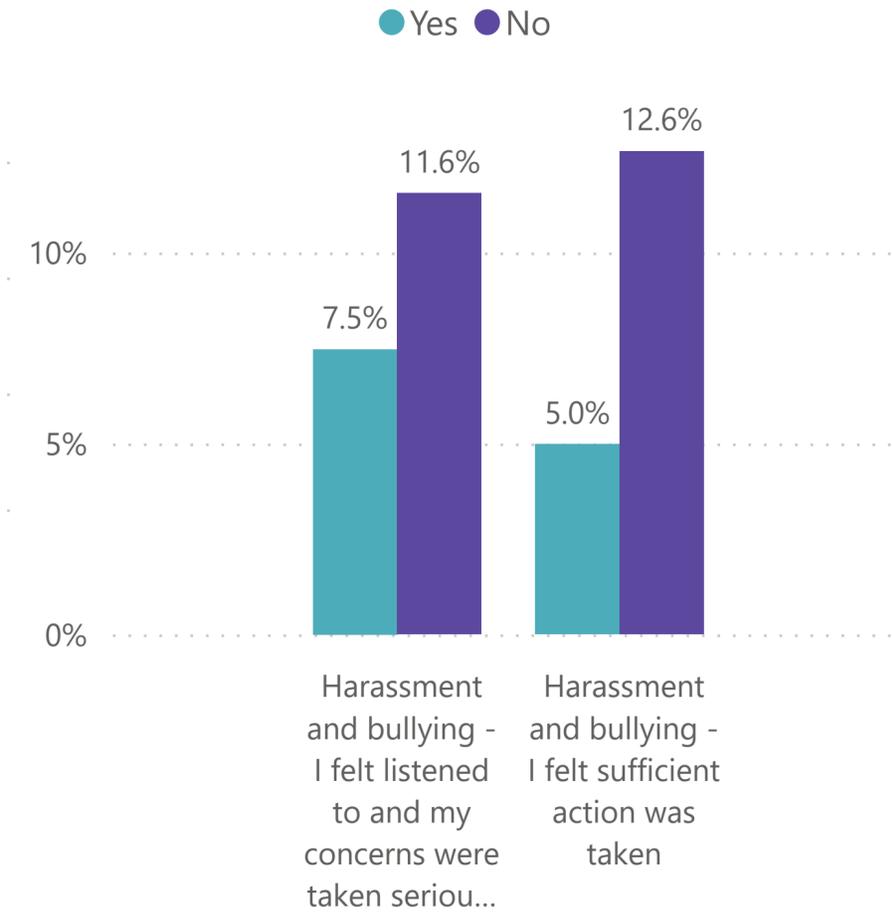
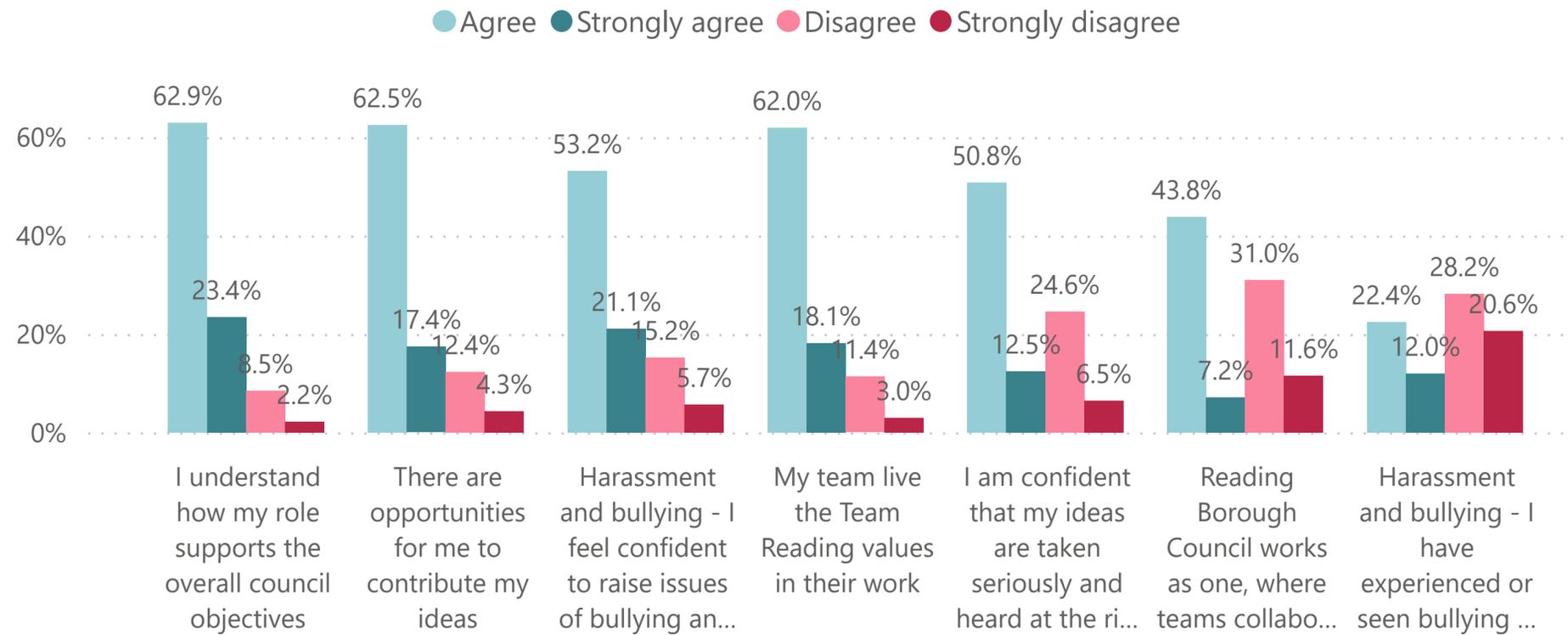
Age Group  
All

Gender  
All

Disability  
All

Ethnicity  
All

Manage Staff  
All



## Reading Borough Council works as one, where teams collaborate for the benefit of our customers - Top 4 Negative Service Areas

Service Area	Disagree
Commissioning and Improvement	66.67%
Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services	60.71%
Housing and Community Services	57.14%
Customer Services and Corporate Improvement	54.41%

## Top 4 Positive Service Areas

Service Area	Agree
Climate Strategy	80.00%
Business Support Team	77.78%
Regeneration and Assets	76.47%
Procurement and Contracts	75.00%

## Harassment and bullying - I have experienced or seen bullying or harassment at work.

Gender	Bullied or Harrased	Responders	% of Responders
Female	182	577	31.5%
Male	83	270	30.7%
Non-binary	4	5	80.0%
Prefer not to say	69	144	47.9%
Prefer to self-describe	7	8	87.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>345</b>		<b>34.4%</b>



# Staff Survey 2021 - My Line Manager

Directorate

All

Service Area

All

Location

All

Age Group

All

Gender

All

Disability

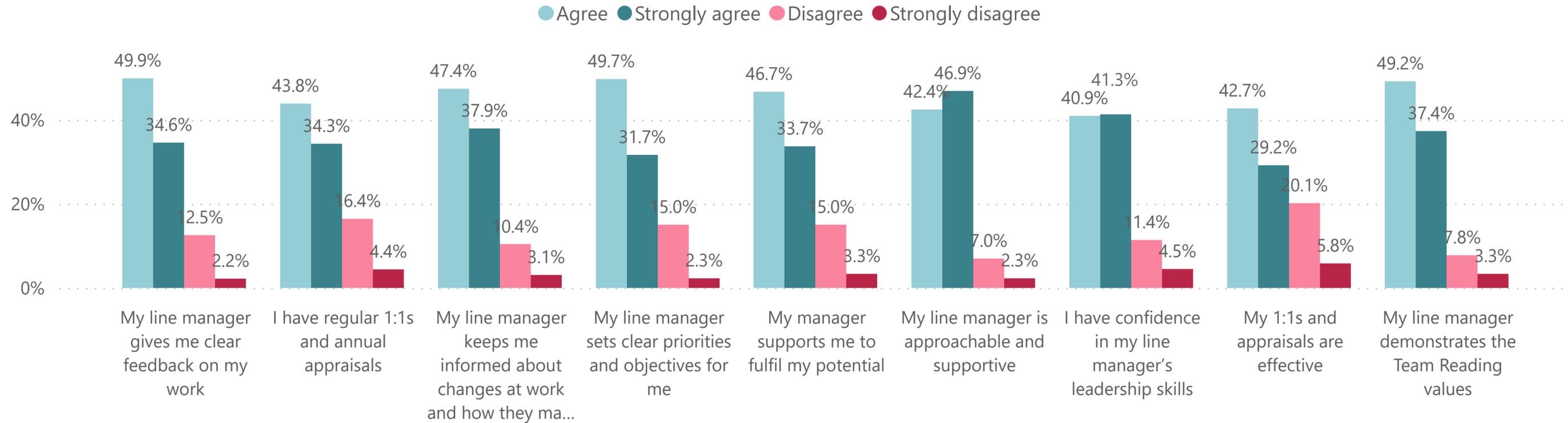
All

Ethnicity

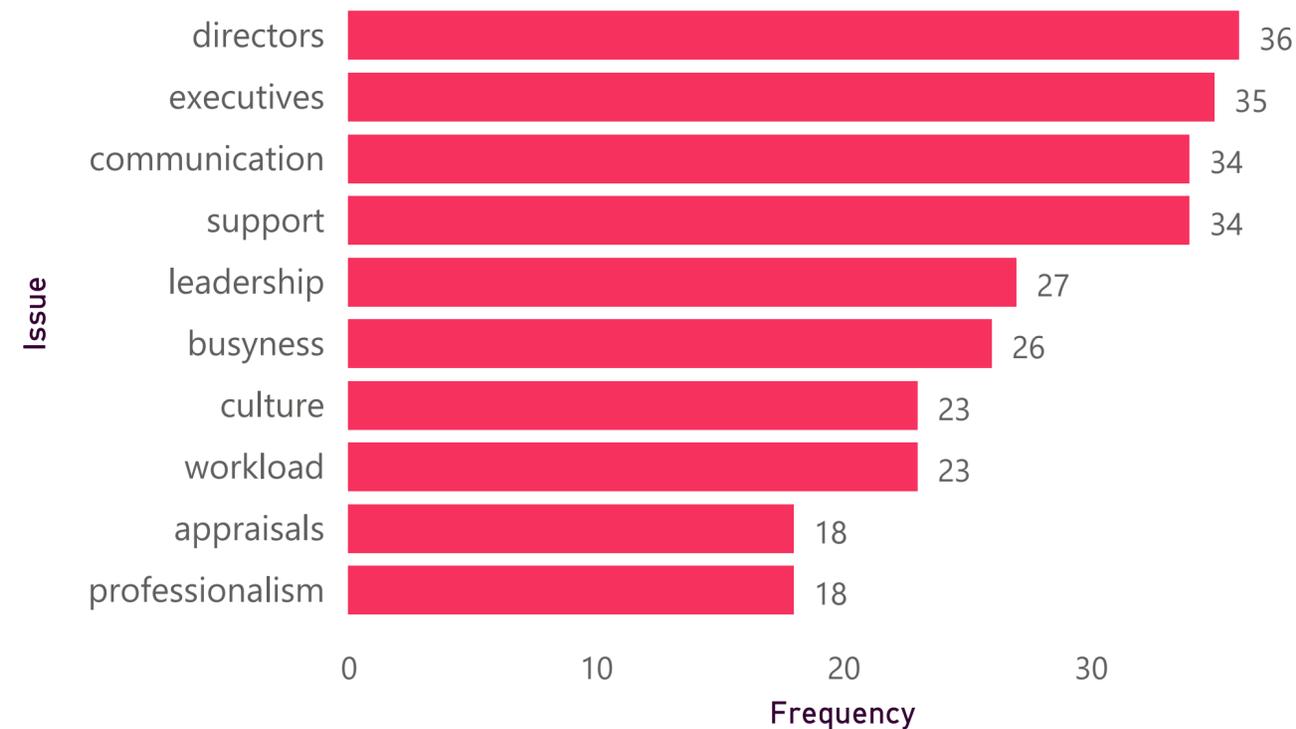
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Manage Staff

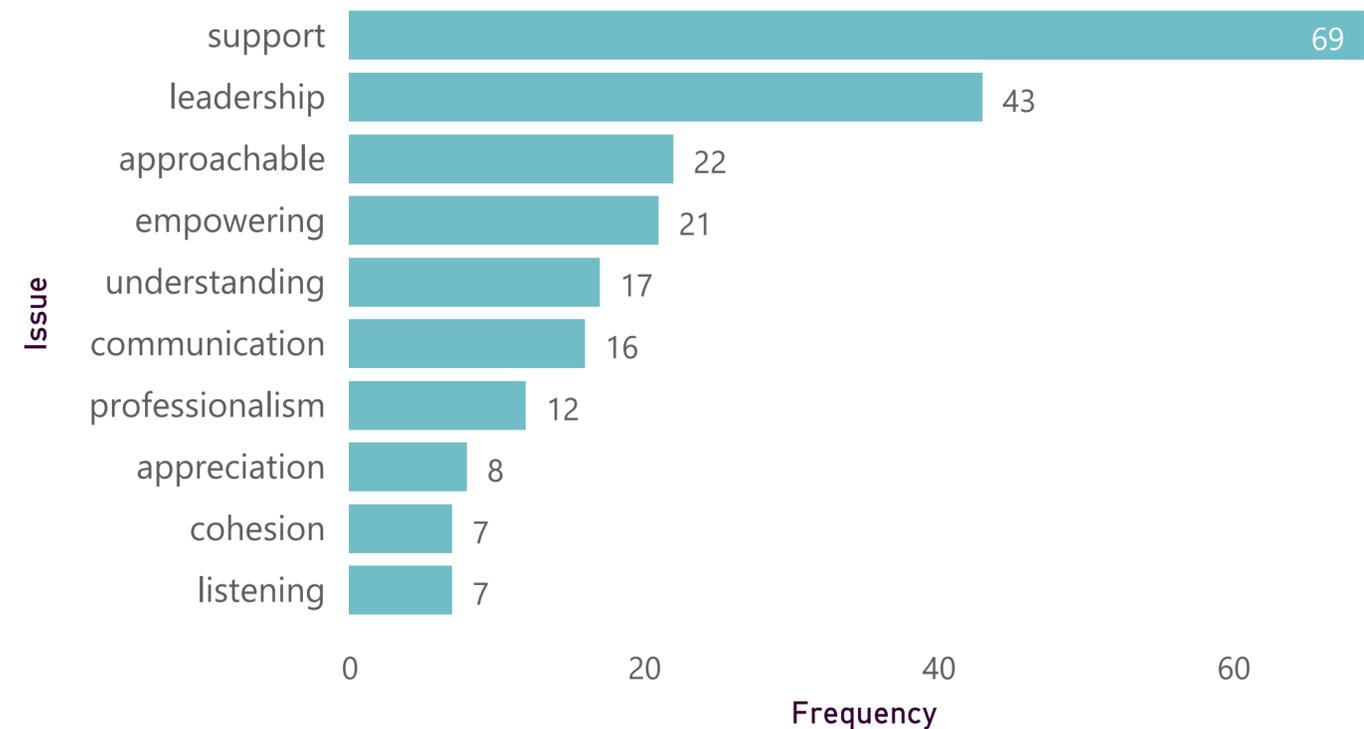
All



Comments analysis - Top 10 Negative Issues



Comments analysis - Top 10 Positive Issues





# Staff Survey 2021 - Leadership

Directorate  
All

Service Area  
All

Location  
All

Age Group  
All

Gender  
All

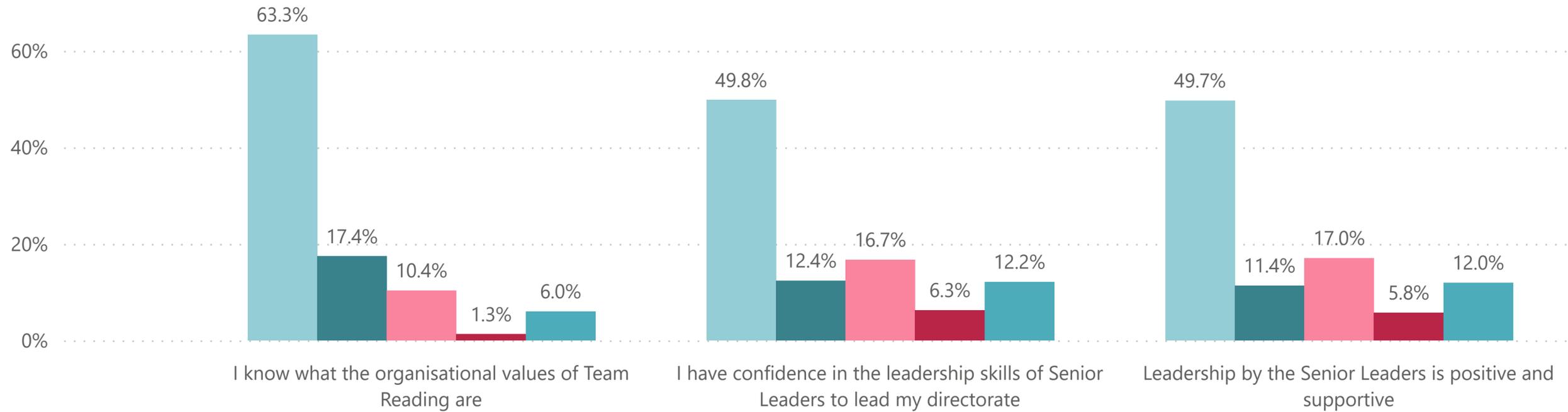
Disability  
All

Ethnicity  
All

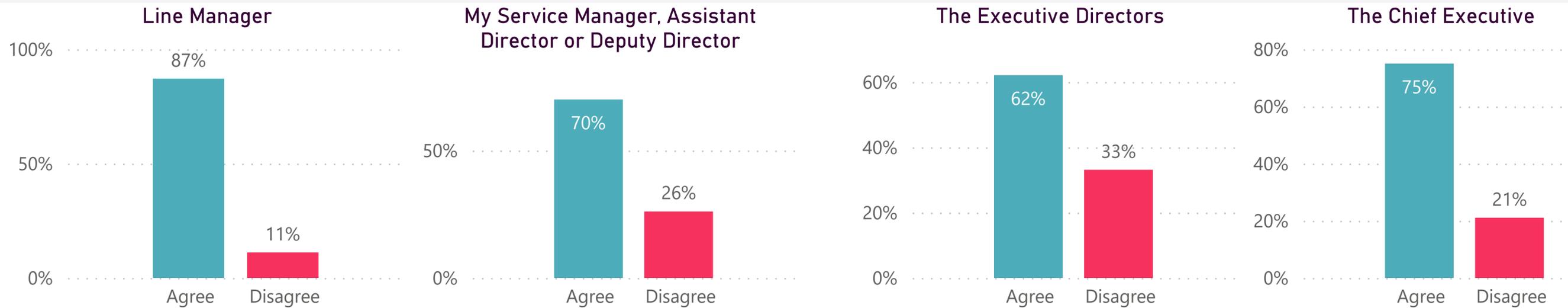
Manage Staff  
All

Page 79

● Agree ● Strongly agree ● Disagree ● Strongly disagree ● Don't know



## Support



\* Agree - Agree, Strongly Agree, Yes | Disagree - Disagree, Strongly Disagree, No | Not Answered/ Missing not included



# Staff Survey 2021 - L&D

Directorate  
All

Service Area  
All

Location  
All

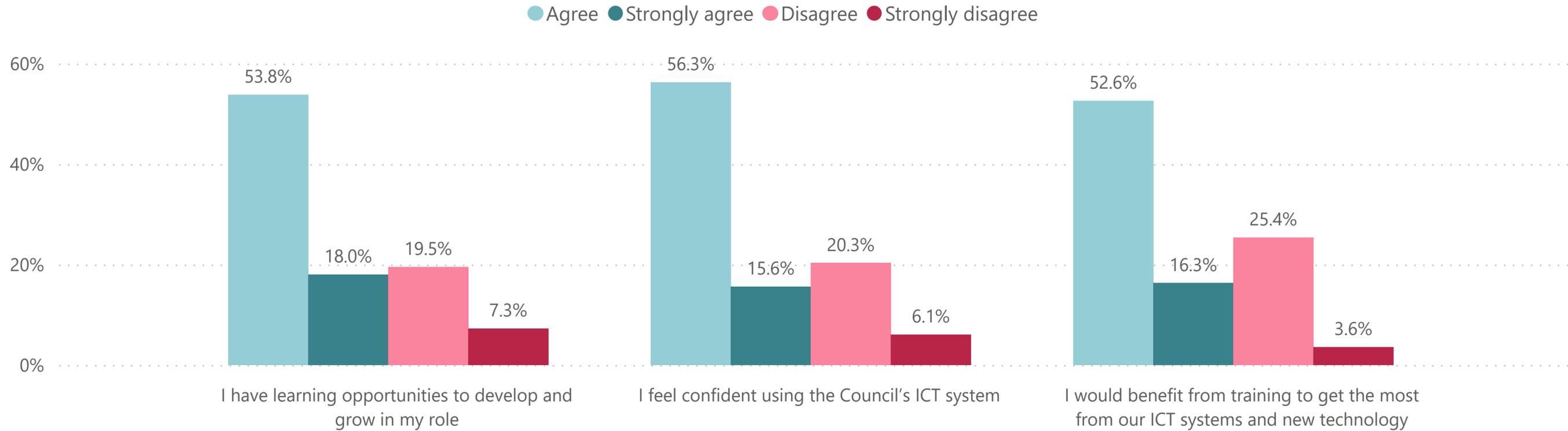
Age Group  
All

Gender  
All

Disability  
All

Ethnicity  
All

Manage Staff  
All



## Apprenticeship - Impacts

**29.0%**

Time

**20.9%**

Knowledge of apprenticeship courses available to me

**16.7%**

Information on how apprenticeships can support longer term career/development goals

**6.2%**

Other



# Staff Survey 2021 - Overall

Directorate

All

Service Area

All

Location

All

Age Group

All

Gender

All

Disability

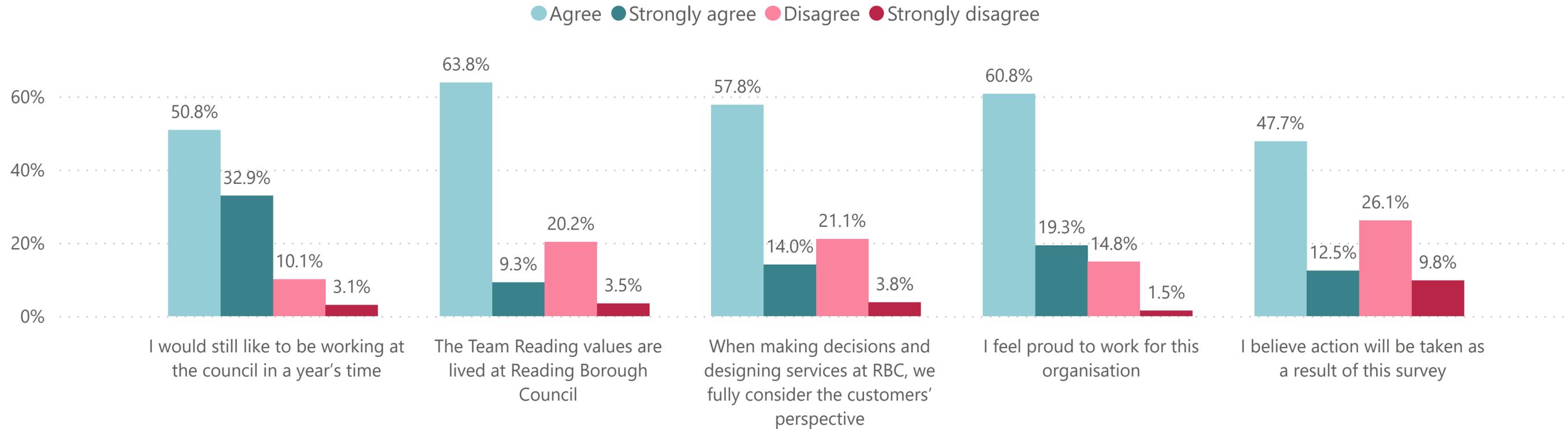
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Ethnicity

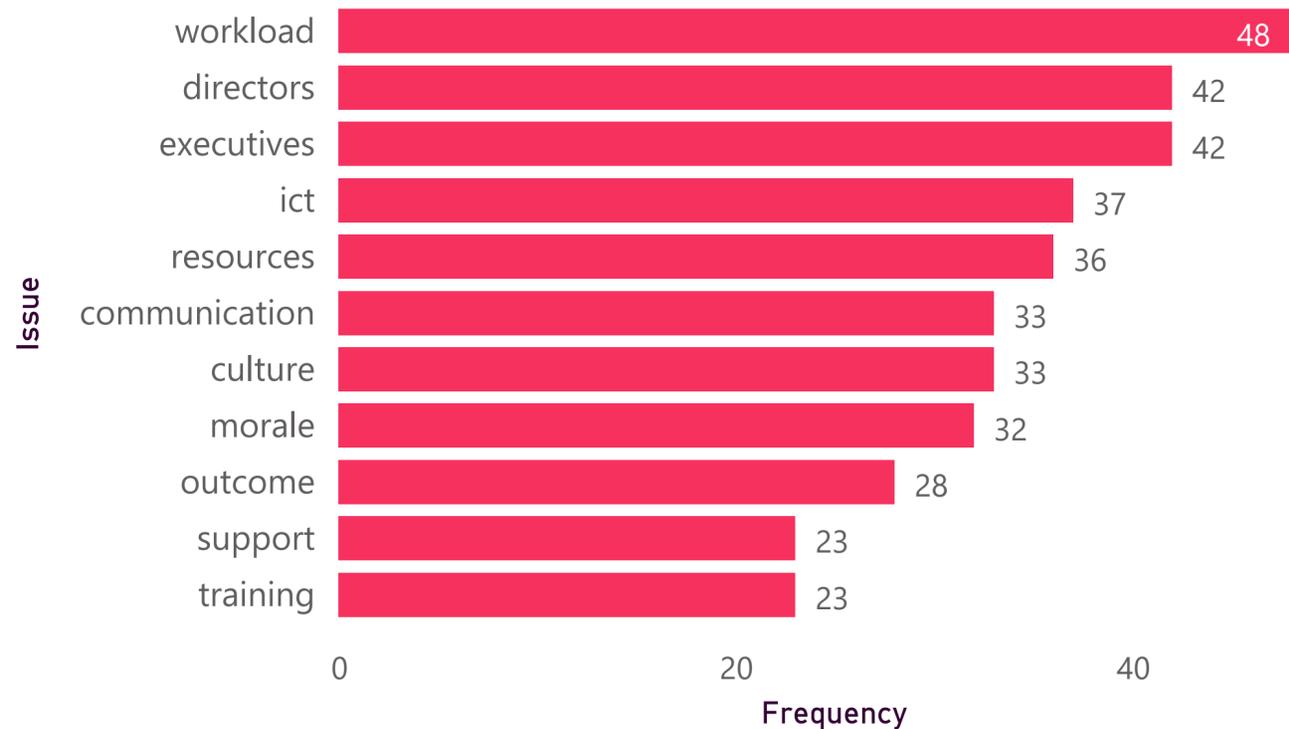
All

Manage Staff

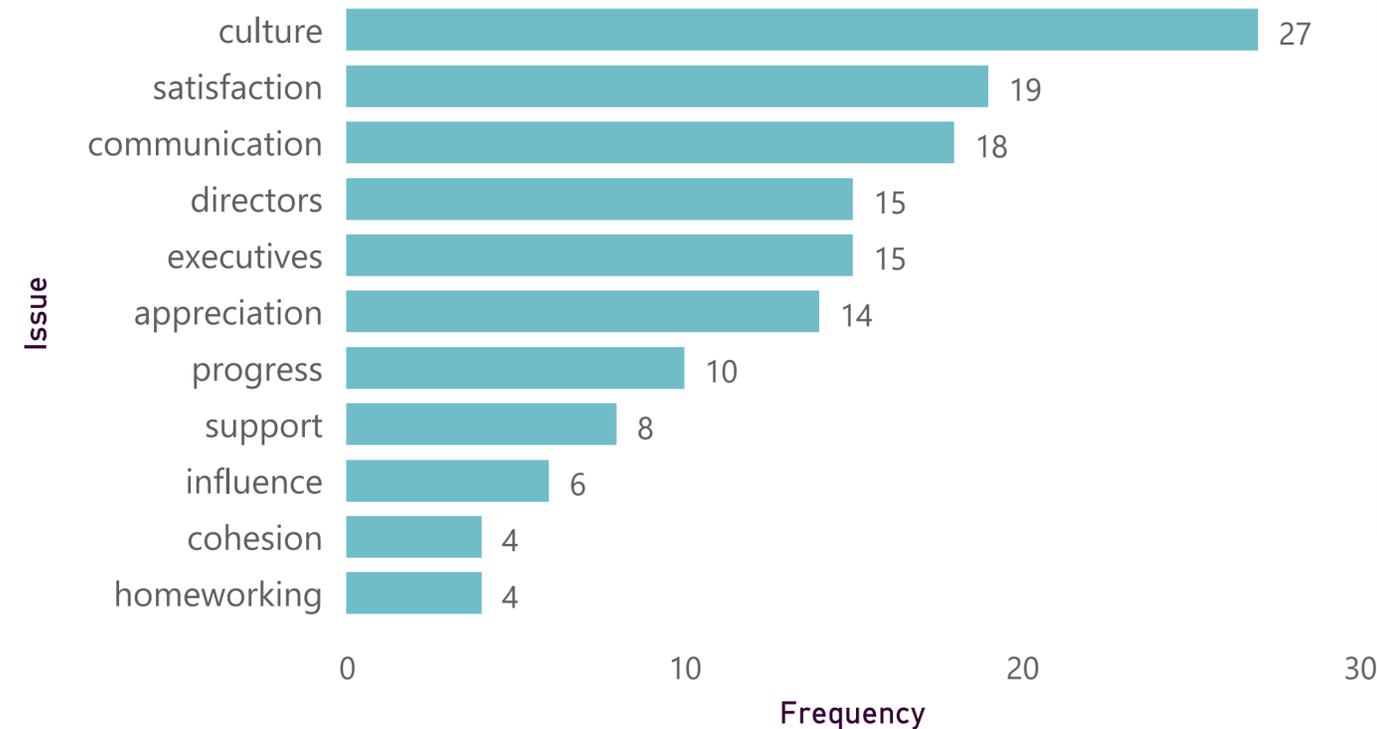
All



Comments analysis - Top 10 Negative Issues



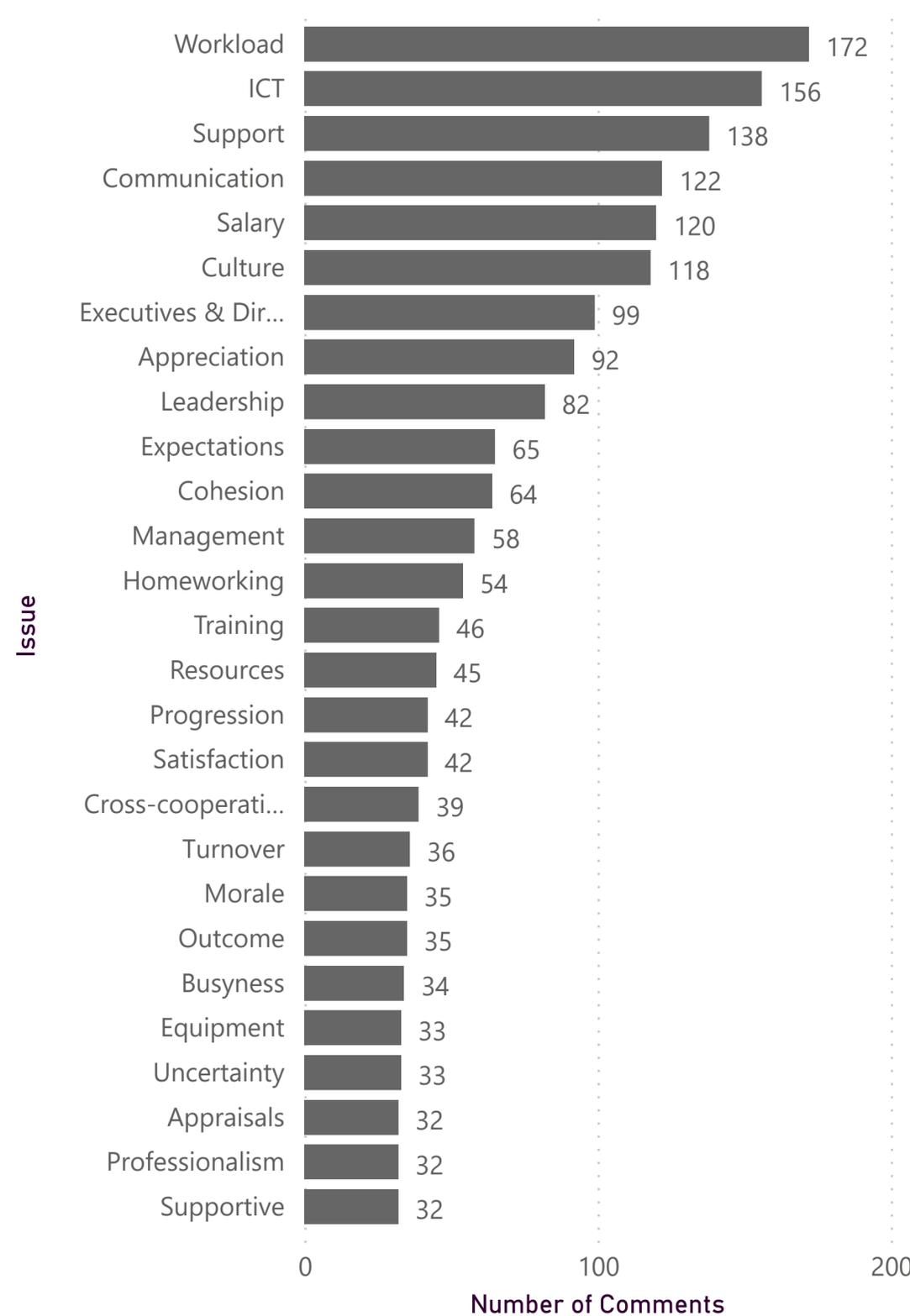
Comments analysis - Top 10 Positive Issues



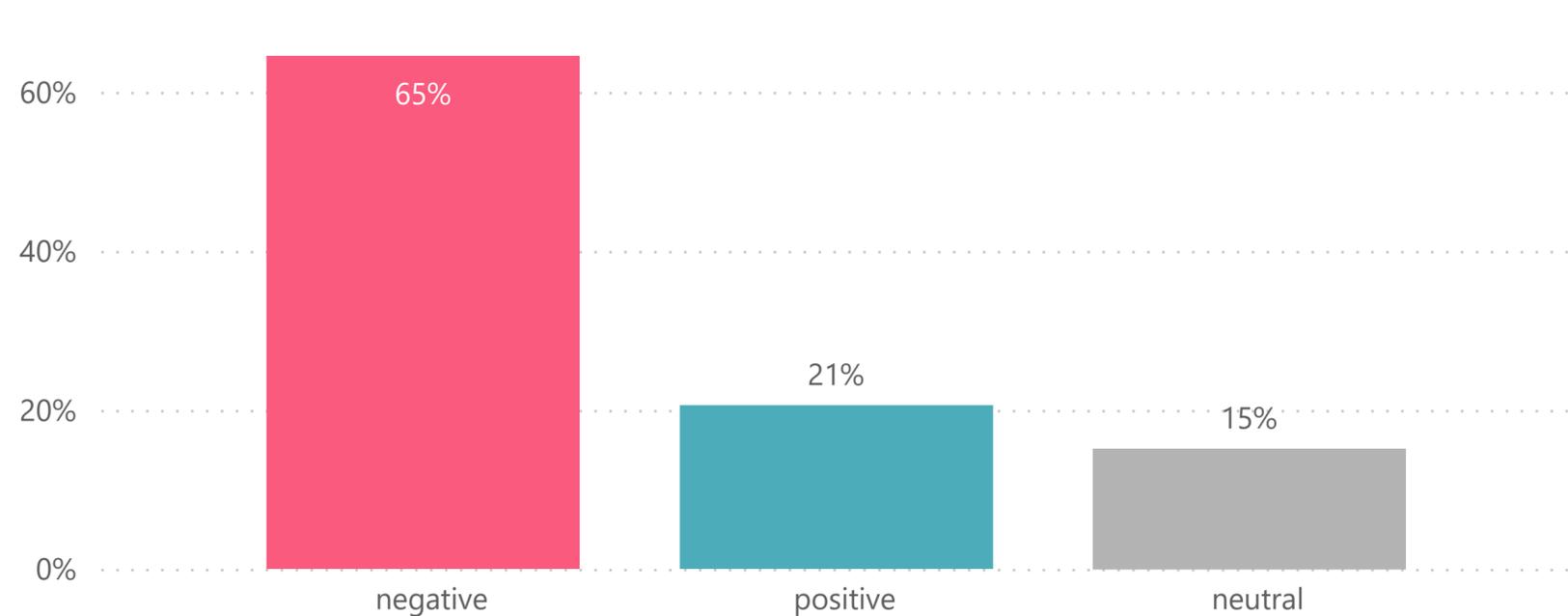


# Comments - Total (all sections combined)

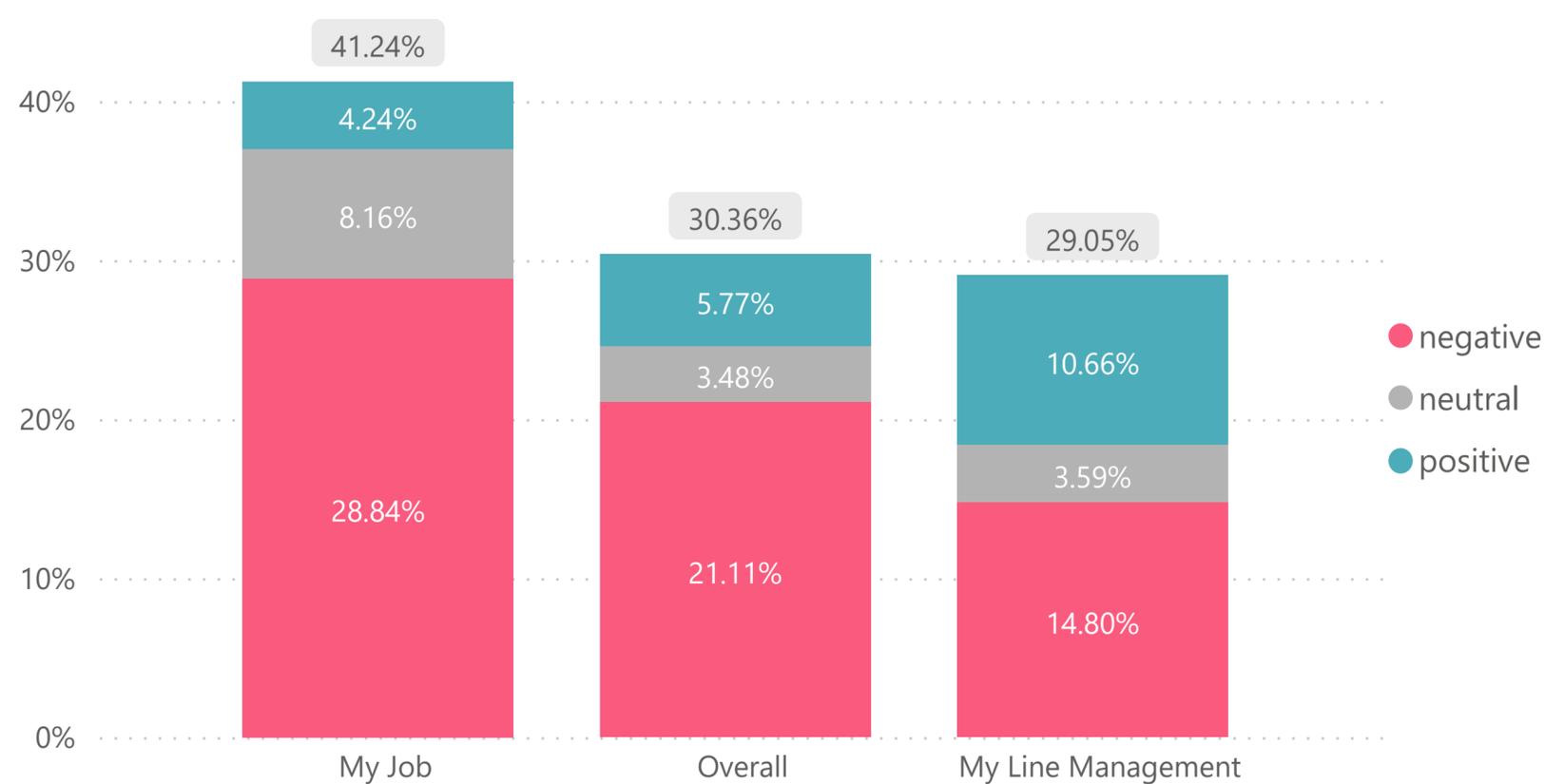
Number of Comments by Issue



Number of Comments by Category in %



% of Comments as Part of Total of Combined Comments



- Question**
- My Job
  - My Line Management
  - Overall

- Category**
- negative
  - neutral
  - positive

- Issue**
- Admin
  - Appraisals
  - Appreciation
  - Apprenticeship
  - Approachable
  - Bullying
  - Busyness
  - Career progresson
  - Cohesion
  - Colleagues
  - Communication
  - Community
  - Confidence
  - Consultants
  - Cross-cooperation
  - Culture
  - Customer-focused
  - Diversity
  - Empowering
  - Fairnment

# Agenda Item 6

By virtue of paragraph(s) 1, 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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