
Healthy Workplace Survey

Overview Select Committee

Date of Meeting: 09/09/2026

Lead director/officer: Andrew Shilliam, Director of Corporate
Services

Useful information

Ward(s) affected: Not applicable

Report author: Vicky Deacon, Assistant Director of People & Corporate Services

Report version number: v1.0

1. Summary

- 1.1. The Healthy Workplace Survey (HWPS) is the Council's periodic workforce engagement and wellbeing survey, undertaken to understand employee experience, identify workplace stressors and provide an evidence base for actions that improve organisational health, inclusion, management practice and service resilience.
- 1.2. The survey comprises organisation-wide feedback across multiple services, teams and working practices.
- 1.3. The survey captures employee sentiment at the time of completion and uses the HSE's toolkit climate questions to provide insight into work related stressors felt at the time of completion as defined by the HSE. Context is therefore key when interpreting results.
- 1.4. For wider analysis on engagement, the survey also groups responses into MAGIC indicators, Meaning, Autonomy, Growth, Impact and Connection.
- 1.5. By incorporating workforce sentiment, risk factors relating to physical and mental health and including MAGIC engagement indicators allows a more comprehensive analysis of workforce health. It provides a valuable evidence base from which to drive action to support future workforce stability.
- 1.6. In 2026 an additional question set designed to elicit employee sentiment around ways of working was introduced.
- 1.7. The 2026 HWPS findings (see Section 3) indicate that the organisation retains a solid overall engagement position, with most employees falling within the engaged or highly engaged categories.
- 1.8. 35% of the workforce completed the survey which ran for 4 weeks in March 2026, an increase from 26% who completed the previous survey in 2022.
- 1.9. Employees consistently highlighted the desire for visible leadership, clear communication, meaningful consultation and visible follow through. Future engagement activity should therefore include collaborative improvement planning with managers and staff at service level rather than a cascaded corporate response in isolation.
- 1.10. The findings provide a strong evidence base for workforce action planning.

2. Recommendations to Overview Select Committee

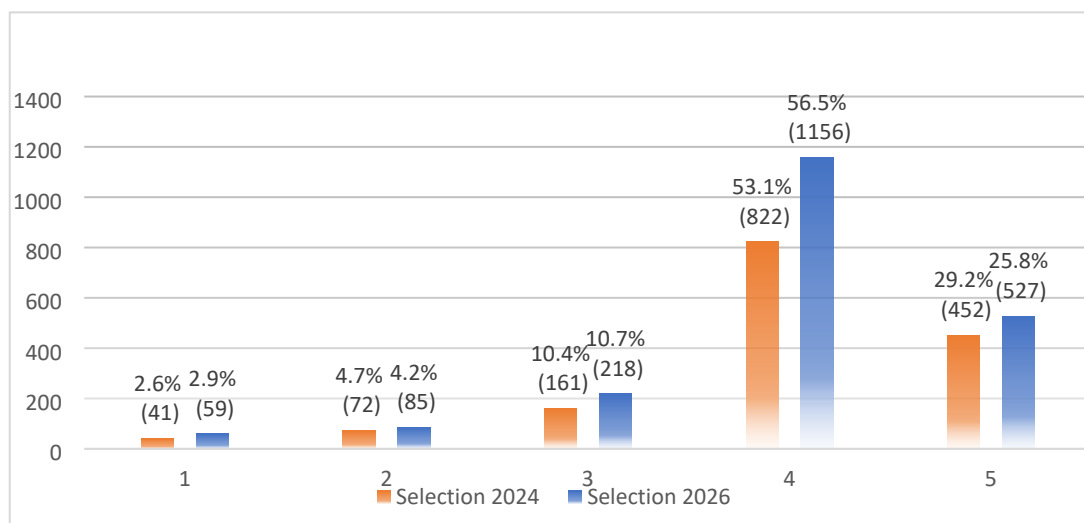
- 2.1. Note and comment on the findings of the HWPS 2026, and the MAGIC framework as the primary organisational model for interpreting findings and workforce risk.
- 2.2. Note that divisional perspectives can be provided to the relevant Scrutiny Commissions for further review as required.

3. Healthy Workplace Survey Findings

3.1. The HWPS uses a heatmap to support divisional and service action planning with 5.0 the highest possible score. 4.0 and above is rated as excellent performance with 1.0 rated as poor equivalent to highly disengaged. In the 2026 survey the corporate engagement score was **82.3%**.

3.2. As a percentage this translates to:

- 80 - 100% Highly engaged
- 60 - 80 % Engaged
- 40 - 60% Almost engaged
- 20 - 40% Disengaged
- 10 - 20% Highly disengaged



- 3.3. This overall engagement position remains static, with both 2024 and 2026 scoring at 82.3%. With 2026 recording an increase of 3.4% in the engaged category and a decrease of the same amount from the highly engaged category.
- 3.4. The HWPS incorporates the HSE's Health and Wellbeing Climate Toolkit as a direct employee voice mechanism to surface potential workplace stressors.
- 3.5. Like all periodic engagement surveys the responses are often influenced by factors impacting employee sentiment at the time the survey was conducted. Therefore,

context is important when analysing the responses and determining actions in response to the feedback.

- 3.6. Employee climate tools remain a useful means of surfacing issues early, assessing risk and taking the opportunity to identify and communicate meaningful action back to employees, increasing trust and improving employee relations.
- 3.7. Strong engagement is widely regarded as directly correlating to higher performance. With low engagement having the reverse effect. This remains however context specific.

Worker Wellbeing & Workplace Stressors

- 3.8. The HSE identify 6 workplace stressors that could, if left uncontrolled result in stress and psychological ill health. These 6 stressors are Demand, Control, Relationships, Support, Role and Change.
- 3.9. The HWPS directly asks the HSEs own questions to support assessment of risk associated with these factors at Leicester City Council and records positive responses as a percentage. For example, 83% of survey respondents answered positively to a question.
- 3.10. **Role:**
 - 94% of employees responded positively to say they understood how their work contributed to team performance and 92% said they knew how to get their job done.
 - 64% of employees responded positively to having the tools and resources needed to do their job well – the lowest scoring indicator relating to role which had an overall positivity score of 86%
 - Despite a strong score of 88% there was a 6% decrease in employees reporting they understood how their role fits into the overall aim of the organisation.
- 3.11. **Relationships & Support:**
 - When answering questions on relationships, peer support and teamwork, employees were 83% positive overall.
 - 86% answered positively to colleagues being willing to listen to work related problems increasing by 4.1%.
 - 85% were positive about colleagues offering support and help when needed. also increasing by 4%.
 - 13% indicated that relationships at work were strained increasing by 0.5% and 75% were positive about colleagues taking responsibility for their work, an increase of 2.8%.
- 3.12. **Demand & Control:**
 - When answering questions relating to workload and pressure, most respondents were positive about being able to decide when to take a break at 78%, remaining static when compared to 2024.
 - 75% of respondents consider themselves to have flexibility to choose how best to perform their work, decreasing by 2.8%

- Working time being flexible, at 71%, showed a decrease of 1% compared to 2022.
- 8% of respondents felt pressured to work long hours, and 11% felt they had unachievable deadlines and that having to work fast negatively impacted their wellbeing.
- 62% of respondents reported their stress levels felt manageable, which is an increase of 1%.
- On average 78% of responses were positive relating to demand and control the same score as 2024.

3.13. **Change:**

- Scores relating to change varied by less than 1% both positive or negative since the previous survey.
- Respondents were the least positive overall when asked about how they experienced change when working at the council with 57% of responses being positive.
- 44% of respondents were positive when asked if staff felt consulted about change.
- 57% thought they had the opportunity to contribute to change and understand how change would work in practice.
- 66% felt well informed about change a slight increase of 0.7%

Indicators of Psychological Safety

3.14. **Management and Leadership:**

- 83% of respondents felt positively about management and leadership.
- Staff found managers approachable and easy to talk to an increase of 3% at 89%, and that their manager treated them with fairness and respect, at 89% an increase of 1.3%.
- Respondents were least positive about being supported through emotionally demanding work, at 75% and being set clear objectives at 80% both of which still saw an increase of 1% and 2% respectively.

3.15. **Development and Growth:**

- 70% of respondents answered positively to questions around their development and growth.
- 72% felt they received positive feedback from their managers and 89% felt able to learn from mistakes.
- 51% answered positively to their being opportunities to advance their careers at the council.
- Whilst there was a slight increase across all questions of 1 or 2%, this remains an area for development and focus.

3.16. **Harassment, bullying and discrimination:**

- Most responses relating to harassment, bullying and discrimination were positive, with 86% of respondents answering positively.
- 4.8% of respondents reported they were subject to bullying at work, and 6% reporting they were subject to unkind words or behaviour.

- 78% of respondents responded positively when asked if the concerns were raised about harassment and bullying, they were confident the council would address the concern. An increase of 5%
- 74.7% of respondents responded positively when asked if concerns were raised about discrimination, they were confident the council would address their concern. A similar score to the 2024 survey of 74.3%.

3.17. **Working at the Council:**

- 80% of respondents answered positively to say everyone was welcome at the council and treated equally regardless of protected characteristics. The same score as 2024.
- 73% felt they could be themselves at the council again the same score.
- There was an increase of 1% compared to 2024 of employees feeling a sense of belonging at the council at 65.5%
- Respondents were less positive about remaining at the council if a job with similar benefits was available elsewhere 61% and only 59% of employees thought their wellbeing was important to the council.
- 68% of respondents would recommend working for the council an increase of 1.8%.
- Working for the council had an overall positivity response of 68%.

4.18 **Ways of Working**

- 79.5% of respondents felt their outputs were measured by work completed rather than being present in the office.
- 71% were positive about ways of working supporting wellbeing, team connection and as well as the organisation.
- 44.6% felt working in the office made it easier to learn from others through day-to-day conversations.
- 38% thought having access to other LCC buildings across the city would help them be more efficient and productive.

4. **MAGIC Engagement Framework**

- 4.1. The responses have also been analysed through the MAGIC framework lens supporting a talent management approach aligned to 5 key engagement indicators: Meaning, Autonomy, Growth, Impact and Connection.
- 4.2. This model, developed by Decisionwise, is relevant to local government because it looks beyond headline sentiment at the point in time the survey was undertaken to assess whether underlying and supporting conditions exist for people to do their best work.
- 4.3. It predicts the ability of Leicester's workforce to sustain performance through change and maintain service delivery within the context of continued financial pressure, increasing demand, political instability and local government reorganisation.

4.4. **Meaning:**

- Meaning is an indicator of motivation over and above the financial e.g. public service, social purpose.
- Staff continue report a strong sense of contribution and positive connection to public service.
- Meaning, stable at 77%, remains an organisational strength and showed a marginal increase of 1%.
- Risks affecting Meaning are if workload, repeated change and limited recognition make individuals feel less valued or if the work starts to feel increasingly procedural over purposeful.

4.5. **Autonomy:**

- Employees in some roles report flexibility, trust and the confidence to exercise professional judgement, but this is not consistent across the organisation.
- Scoring 64% overall, autonomy showed a decrease of 2% and is the lowest indicator within MAGIC.
- In some areas, staff report limited influence over change, low consultation and input into decision making.
- In MAGIC terms, this creates risk of procedural compliance impeding ownership and accountability, innovation and confident professional practice.
- If decisions are consistently escalated upwards the risk is that personal accountability reduces.
- In teams that employ skilled technical or professional roles that are recruited for their expertise, low scoring in autonomy could be a predictor of retention risk.

4.6. **Growth:**

- Growth is also a weaker indicator at 70%, despite a slight increase of 1%, and therefore a clear corporate priority.
- Employees describe limited career pathways, unclear progression routes, insufficient development opportunities and inconsistent access to growth between services and grades.
- This has both retention implications and fairness implications, particularly where employees perceive that progression is not equally available to all.
- Growth is an indicator of employer investment in their workforce and monitors succession pipelines.
- Growth scores are the highest reliable predictor of retention in specialist roles, considered more reliable than pay satisfaction.

4.7. **Impact:**

- Impact is overwhelmingly positive at 91%, although a marginal decrease from 93% in 2024, and is consistent across divisions and services.
- Employees understand how their work contributes to their team and to wider organisational objectives, particularly in frontline, housing, social care, finance and service areas with a clear public outcome.
- Risks occur where people cannot see the outcome of their effort, resulting in weaker motivation and work feel transactional.

- High meaning scores should translate to high impact in healthy organisations as employees know the work matters and can see the results fuelling motivation.
- Effort without impact is a predictor of burnout.

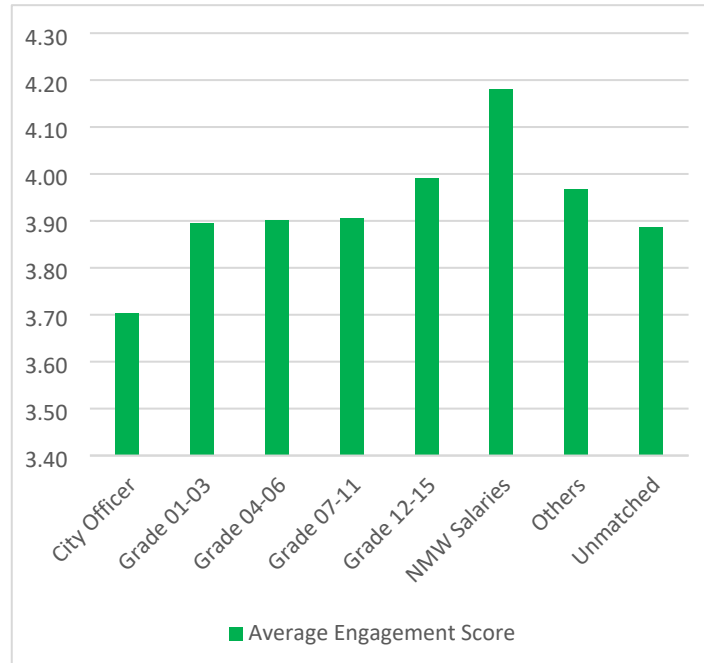
4.8. **Connection:**

- At 77%, connection at team level is one of the strongest features of the survey increasing by 2%.
 - Within the MAGIC framework connection is described as 'social glue' that binds workers to an organisation reducing flight risk and helping teams recover quickly from change.
 - At Leicester colleagues describe supportive relationships with peers and approachable line management that support and communicate with them in a timely manner.
- 4.9. The larger organisational challenge and area for opportunity is connection beyond immediate teams.
- 4.10. Hybrid and flexible working patterns have reduced opportunities for informal connections and informal learning, weakened connections across teams in some areas, and increased the need for greater, more intentional leadership visibility supported by stronger communication strategies can support greater connection.
- 4.11. When employees find Connection, they act with the organisation's best interests in mind, generate ideas, solve problems together, and become ambassadors externally.
- 4.12. Decisionwise categorise engagement within MAGIC as follows benchmarking strong organisations as having less than 5% of the workforce fully disengaged.
- 4.13. **Strongly disengaged** - psychologically quit but physically remaining often undermining culture, a small group with disproportionate negative impact. Morale can only be improved through performance management. Target <5%
- 4.14. **Almost engaged** – work is just a job, delivering basic results with pay being primary retention driver. The right intervention can shift them. Target 18- 22% of the workforce.
- 4.15. **Engaged** – key contributors, strong, steady, reliable performers – the backbone of delivery. Highest return on investment if this group can be converted to fully engaged. Target 50-55% of the workforce.
- 4.16. **Fully engaged** – Organisational ambassadors, invested hearts and minds, energising others. Love their jobs. Seek to retain them. Target >20%
- 4.17. The survey found 2.9% of respondents fell into the highly disengaged category at the time of the survey. 15% fell into almost engaged group, and 25% fell into the highly or fully engaged group. The remaining 56.5% being within the engaged group.

Engagement by Employee Demographics

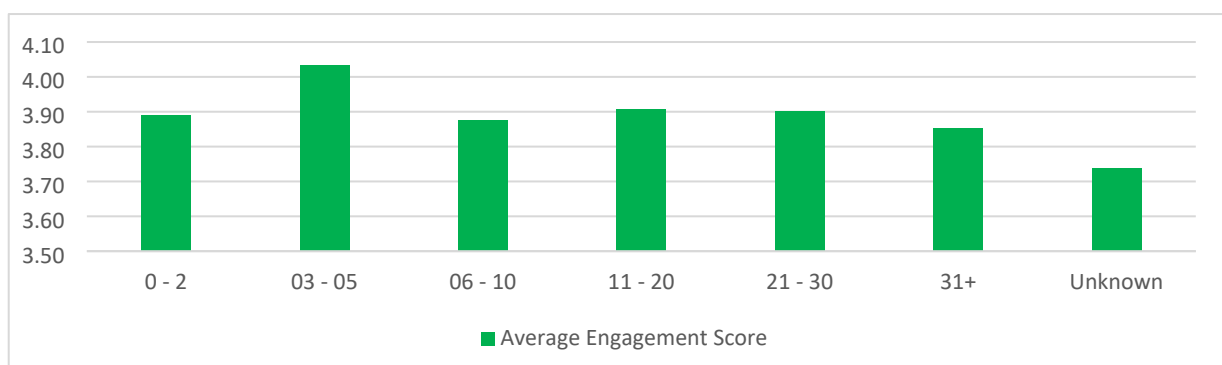
Grade:

- 4.18. Those on National Minimum Wage salaries were the most positive about working for the council. The other groups scoring consistently between 3.9 and 4.0 indicating solid engagement across the grades.



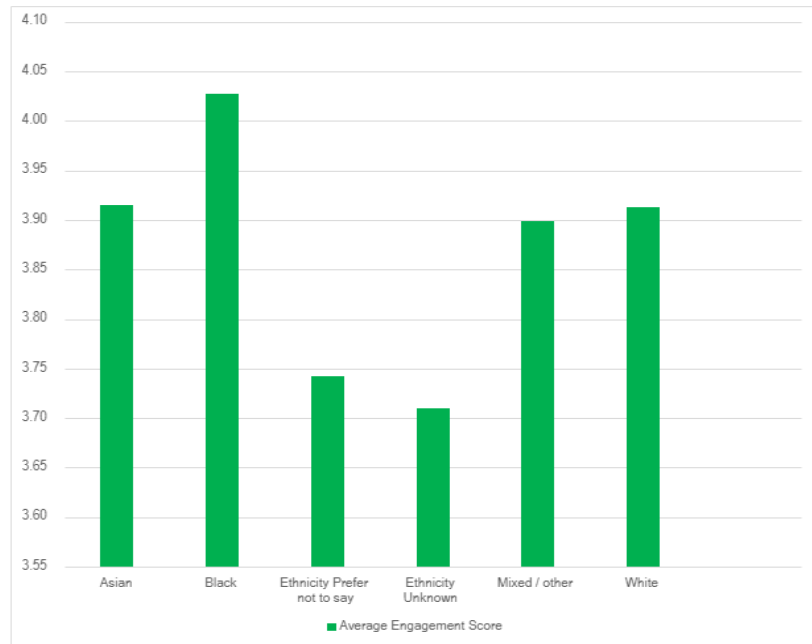
Length of Service:

- 4.19. Highest engagement was felt amongst those who had been working for the council between 3-5 years with a drop then seen from 6 years onwards broadly in line with those who were new to working at the council.



Ethnicity:

- 4.20. Black employees were the most engaged group, with Asian, White and Mixed-race employees all strongly engaged at around 3.9. Employees where ethnicity is not recorded or preferred not to disclose were the least engaged.
- 4.21. Younger employees were more engaged at 4.1 with older employees aged 60-69 the least engaged with the second least engaged group aged 30-39.

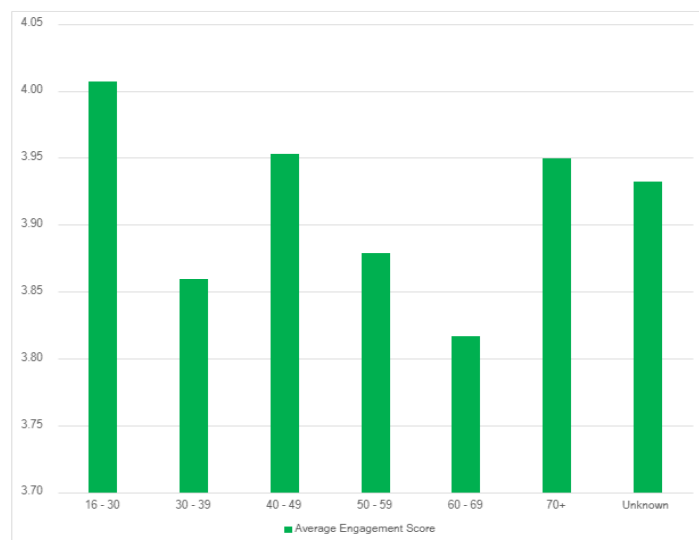


Disability:

- 4.22. Non-disabled colleagues reported higher levels of engagement than disabled colleagues at 3.92 compared to 3.87.

Age:

- 4.23. Colleagues aged 16-30 reported the highest levels of engagement at 4.1 dropping to 3.86 for those aged 30-39 but rising again to 3.87 for staff aged 40-49.



Risks and Opportunities:

- 4.24. The most significant corporate risks emerging from the survey are workload pressure, management of change particularly in relation to communication, inconsistent management practice across services, reduced connection within hybrid working, and fairness concerns in relation to career progression and development opportunities.

4.25. Context differs depending on division, It is important that the survey is analysed through each operational lens. Each division and service have their own survey results and findings require service specific actions to address themes at local level.

4.26. Corporately themes emerging from the survey are:

Wellbeing & Resilience: An area for focus highlighting increasing pressure due to workload, pace of work and emotional demand to be addressed at local service level both from a service design perspective but also support for individuals.

Management: line manager support remains one of the strongest drivers of positive experience, but inconsistency between teams is evident. This is being addressed through a refreshed corporate manager training and support offer led by HR, aligning actions with other direct and indirect employee voice.

Communication: local communication is generally reported to be stronger than corporate communication, especially relating to organisational change. A refreshed corporate internal communications strategy is in place with a dedicated change management strand.

Inclusion: peer relationships are generally positive, but fairness in progression and access to opportunity is perceived less strongly across the board.

Growth: career progression and development remain the weakest organisational theme suggesting a retention risk if not addressed.

Autonomy: stronger in some more professional/ technical areas, weaker where tasks are more process driven.

Impact and Connection: both remain comparatively positive, particularly where teams feel supported and can see the difference their work makes. The council needs to continue to build and nurture strong teams.

4.27. Organisation wide strengths:

- Strong team support and good relationships.
- Positive line manager approachability and respect in many areas.
- Pride in work and visible commitment to public service.
- Stable overall engagement levels despite sustained pressure and change.
- Positive impact is felt where staff can clearly see service outcomes.

4.28. Organisation wide areas of focus:

- Limited career progression and weak developmental pathways could affect retention.
- Low confidence in change consultation and organisational communication.
- Workload, intensity and pressure affecting wellbeing.
- Inconsistent management practice between teams.
- Reduced organisational connection in hybrid and dispersed working environments.

- Ongoing inclusion and fairness perceived to be related to progression and employee experience.

5. Corporate Action Plan

- 5.1. A corporate People Plan is being drafted that takes these findings into account. Actions incorporated into the people plan that relate to healthy workplace survey include:

Management capability

Implement mandatory development for line managers focused on closing the translation gap between policy and practice, and enhancing communication, recognition, inclusive leadership, coaching, psychological safety and change leadership.

Wellbeing and workload management

Introduce a corporate wellbeing programme focused on workload, resilience, and psychological safety. Use local workforce data to identify high-risk teams and implement targeted support.

Career growth and talent pathways

Create clearer career pathways, visible progression routes and stronger access to mentoring, coaching, secondments, apprenticeships and stretch opportunities.

Communication and change readiness

Strengthen two-way communication during organisational change and improve employee voice mechanisms so employees can contribute to decisions that affect their work.

Recognition

Expand recognition activity linked to values and create a visible “You Said, We Did” reporting loop so employees can see action flowing from their feedback.

Inclusion and fairness

Undertake targeted equality and progression analysis, using workforce data to identify any disparities in development access, belonging or confidence in fair treatment.

Governance and accountability

Monitor progress quarterly through People Board and Corporate Management Team reporting, with Directorate accountability for local actions and outcomes.

6. Financial, legal, equalities, climate emergency and other implications

6.1 Financial implications

There are no direct financial implications associated with this report.
Stuart McAvoy – Head of Finance

20th August 2026

6.2 Legal implications

There are no direct employment legal implications arising out of the recommendations in this report.

Julia Slipper, Principal Solicitor (Employment & Education)
24th August 2026

6.3 Equalities implications

Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities have a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which means that, in carrying out their functions, they have a statutory duty to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act, to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.

Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The report presents the findings of the 2026 Healthy Workplace Survey and seeks to use these findings to inform the People Plan and future workforce monitoring.

The survey identifies positive experiences in relation to inclusion, belonging, management support and workplace relationships. However, it also highlights areas requiring further consideration, including differences in engagement between demographic groups, lower engagement among disabled employees, perceived fairness in career progression and development, workload pressures, and confidence in communication and consultation during organisational change.

The proposed People Plan actions have the potential to support positive equality outcomes by strengthening inclusive management practice, improving access to development and progression, addressing harassment, bullying and discrimination, supporting employee wellbeing, and improving employee voice and accountability through a 'You said, we did' feedback loop.

Further equality analysis should be undertaken as the People Plan is developed, including consideration of outcomes by protected characteristic where data and sample sizes allow. Employee networks, trade unions and workforce representatives should be involved where appropriate. Any future changes to working arrangements or employment practices arising from the survey should be subject to proportionate equality consideration. Overall, the

report is expected to have a positive equality impact if actions are evidence-based, inclusive and appropriately monitored.

Equalities Officer, Surinder Singh, Ext 37 4148

6.4 Climate Emergency implications

There are no direct climate emergency implications associated with this report.

Duncan Bell, Change Manager (Climate Emergency). Ext 37 2249
24th August 2026

6.5 Other implications (You will need to have considered other implications in preparing this report. Please indicate which ones apply?)

N/A

7. Background information and other papers:

8. Summary of appendices: