

# OUR PEOPLE

## Focus on Engaging with Our People

Annual Review 2023/2024

*At Warwickshire we will listen, learn and act to create an inclusive organisation*



# Our People Strategy

## Warwickshire's Story



### **Message from Monica Fogarty, Chief Executive**

Listening and responding to our people, remains a priority for Warwickshire. It is crucial that we do so in order to support our vision that Warwickshire is a great place to work, where diverse and talented people are enabled to be their best. We understand that everyone has their own experiences, their own stories, and it's important that we take the time to listen to these to help create the best possible experience for our colleagues.

It is also really important that we do more than listen. We must also take action in response to what we are told, and therefore a key focus in the year ahead will be to target action where it is most needed. We need to show the action we've taken and see more of our people feeling that action has resulted from their feedback.

This year we have also heard that workload is a particular concern for many of our people. To understand the challenges better our Assistant Directors held a series of Big Conversations, where workload was a key focus. Since then, we have seen an improvement in feedback that workloads are manageable, but we know that this is not for everyone. So, we will continue these discussions into next year and find ways to support our people to maintain a healthy work-life balance.

We were delighted to see an improvement in the response rates to our engagement activity. But we want to hear the voices of as many people as possible, and so over the next year we will be exploring with teams, particularly those that are customer facing, the barriers to completing the survey in order to encourage greater participation in future.

We want all of our people to feel that their experiences are listened to and understood and that all of our leaders are enabled and supported to make positive changes.

Please do make your voice heard.



# At a glance

- We launched our refreshed approach to Your Say, including our bank of survey questions, with three touch points throughout the year, including two surveys and 13 interactive 'BIG Conversations' hosted individually by our Assistant Directors.

**Response rates** Increased to 40% in July and 43% in February. 12% of colleagues attended one of our BIG Conversations.

**Key Measures**  
Our KBM and KBI statements remained consistent, with between a +5% and -8% change and all encouragingly scoring over 75%.

**Employee engagement**  
Improvement of 2% from the previous year to 76%, which aligns with our 2020 measure, and our highest score in recent years.

- We extended our YourSay results down to fourth tier managers, so that teams and managers can see their results, discuss and take action.
- Our focus for 2022/2023 has been workload with 77% of colleagues agreeing that they are able to achieve a good balance between work and personal life and an in year increase from 62% to 64% of colleagues agreeing that they have a manageable workload. This will remain a focus for 2023/24.
- Our highest scoring statement was 'I am able to take responsibility for my own performance' which resulted in 92% agreement.
- Our lowest scoring statement was 'I believe action will be taken as a result of the Your Say Survey', generating 50% and 42% agreement in July and February respectively. This statement scored 25% in 2019 and 47% in 2021.
- We have asked a new set of questions regarding equality, diversity and inclusion, and our people's understanding of why we collect diversity data saw agreement from 68% of colleagues. There is still progress to make but this is a really positive step change and thanks to the success of the Data Confidence Campaign, which will continue in 2023. However our lowest engaged colleagues do not answer or select 'Prefer not to say' on the protected characteristic statements which is an area that we will continue to target.
- Our BIG Conversations were focussed on workload and drew out a number of themes that have been explored by Senior Leaders and we have learnt that positive wellbeing and effective use of technology are vital to managing workload.
- We will continue our refreshed approach to engagement, which supports the Say, Stay, Thrive model and will continue to see touch points throughout the year using our channels of engagement.
- The priority for 2023/2024 will be to maintain participation in Your Say activity, gain health insight to support our wellbeing offer and to focus on workload, as well as supporting teams to take action locally and encouraging regular and open conversations.
- Separately, a project is being undertaken for our community based and 'offline' colleagues, to increase their representations and participation in the Your Say

## Outcome for 2023/2024

*The experiences of our people are listened to and understood across the whole organisation and leaders are enabled and supported to make positive changes...*

# Focus on Our People Strategy



Through the later end of 2020, the council refreshed its Our People Strategy, to drive through the vision of Warwickshire County Council, a great place to work where diverse and talented people are enabled to be their best.

**Embodying our Values and Behaviours, the Our People Strategy is built on 6 building blocks:**

### Our behaviours

Our behaviours were first introduced in 2016 and these haven't changed. Our behaviours frame how we should behave at work. They help us to understand how we should go about our work and the way we should interact with each other and our customers.

- do what we say.
- move with purpose and energy.
- focus on solutions.
- help people and communities to find their own solutions.
- build strong working relationships.
- be the best we can be.

## Our values - the Warwickshire DNA

To support the achievement of our vision, five key organisational values have been identified:



High performing



Collaborative



Customer focused



Accountable

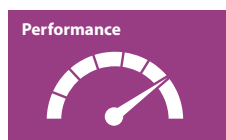


Trustworthy

## Our People Strategy building blocks

The building blocks provide the foundation for the delivery of Our People Strategy vision. We have identified six key building blocks.

For each building block we have a clear set of outcomes we need to achieve so that we can fulfill our vision and transform as an organisation in a way which is sustainable.



# Looking Back - Focus for 2022/2023

Employee engagement continues to be a priority under Our People Strategy and the focus on work has included:

- **Continued regular focused check ins:**
  - **Summer**– Your Say Survey - engagement, wellbeing EDI and workload
  - **Autumn** – Big Conversations - workload
  - **Winter**– Engagement Survey - leadership, internal comms and workload
- **Increasing participation rates**
- **Fostering trust**
- **Providing results at fourth tier management team level**
- **Celebrating action taken in response to the results**

## Measuring Success

For 2022/2023 the following Key Business Measures and Indicators are taken from the survey:

76%  
Employee  
Engagement

81% Leaders &  
managers driving a  
high- performance  
culture

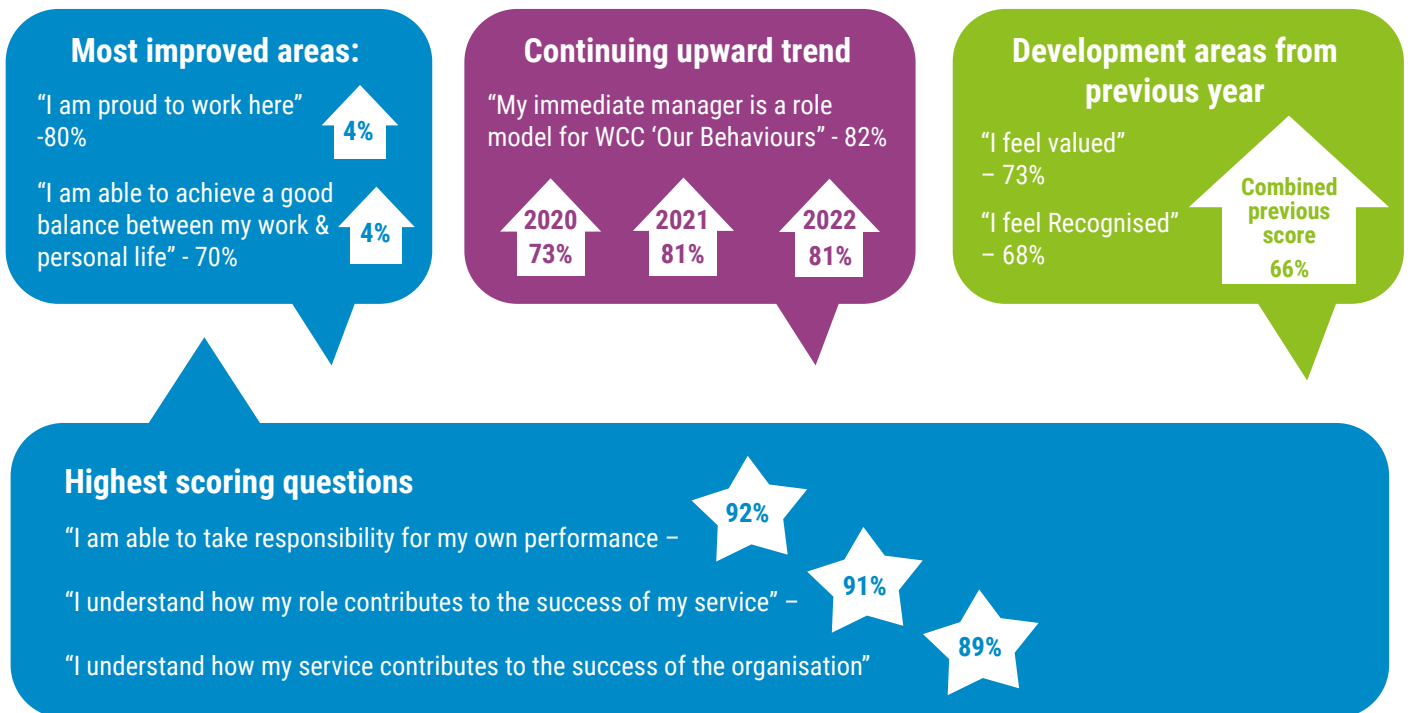
78%  
agree with  
wellbeing  
indicators

80%  
'Proud to  
work for WCC'

79% Internal  
communications  
keep me updated  
on what is  
happening

79%  
'Safe to be  
authentic self'

- The refocussed approach to engagement was launched in June including a new approach to the questions we ask. As a result for this year, we do not have trend data for all the questions.
- Our dashboards provide all our people with access to the results down to Tier 4A team level, so colleagues and teams are able to discuss and agree actions on the results.
- Our Key Business Measures all achieved over 75% agreement.
- Having refreshed our approach to engagement, many of our statements are new, so we have been setting the benchmark for future years, however where we are able to measure against previous year's results we found:



### As a result of the feedback received the following actions have been taken:

- SLF sessions exploring the BIG Conversation data and equipping leaders to take action in their area.
- Commissioned sessions for colleagues to improve workload with 270 colleagues / 5% attendance across organisation.
- Further developed the Agile Working Approach to enable our people to work in a way that enables them to be their best.

### Our BIG Conversations provided an opportunity for Assistant Directors to have facilitated discussions regarding workload and:

- Drew out the following themes: The way we work, including technology; recruitment and retention; setting priorities & realistic timescales; leadership; doing more with less, including processes & governance; managing increasing demand without increasing costs or workloads.
- We have learnt what is vital to managing workload is positive wellbeing and effective use of technology, both proactively and reactively.
- Themes on high workload root causes are related to increasing demand on services, our ability to recruit, our resources and our behaviour and culture organisationally and locally in teams.

- **The following actions are planned to take place over the coming months:**
  - Support areas with low engagement scores to look at ways of increasing engagement, through designing and delivering bespoke team development solutions.
  - Understand best practice through listening groups to support all teams.
  - Develop a team toolkit on workload to support ongoing conversations.
  - Review areas with high engagement scores to understand and share best practice.
- Managers and leaders are also expected to take action as a result of the surveys and are provided with tools and resources to support them in doing so.
- Gaining our Silver Inclusive Employers award demonstrates our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.



## Areas for development

- Whilst the response rate has increased from 30% to 43% since last year, there are still more than half of our workforce who do not complete the survey, and we wish to continue to strive to hear the voice of as many people as possible.
- Again many of our questions were new, and therefore comparison to previous years is not available, however for the questions that remained the same, the following questions saw:

### Largest decline

"Our internal communications keep me updated on what's 8% happening" – 79%



"I believe that action will be taken as a result of the 6% Your Say activity" – 44%



### Lowest scoring questions

I believe that action will be taken as a result of the check in survey" (50% in July, 47% in 2021)

44%

"I have a manageable workload" (62% in July)

64%

I believe the actions from senior leaders are consistent with our priorities" (new question)

63%

"I am able to prioritise my wellbeing" (new question)

63%



## Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

Our EDI vision, **'Warwickshire County Council, a place where everyone feels valued, included, safe, supported and welcome'**, places our approach to inclusivity at the heart of everything we do. As part of measuring our success, there are a number of EDI specific questions that we now ask as part of the Your Say survey, for which this year we have set the benchmark for comparison in future years.



Alongside our YourSay questions, we also asked for diversity data, which allows us to compare our findings against protected characteristic categories. What we have found is that, across all statements, the percentage of agreement ('Agree' or 'Strongly Agree') is lowest for respondents stating, 'prefer not to say' or 'not answered'. This is the same finding we saw from the 20/21 Your Say activity. An example of this is in terms of gender.

### Characteristic

Characteristic	Agreement Score
Other (including non-binary and genderfluid identities)	
Male	86%
Female	79%
Not Answered	78%
Prefer not to say	62%
<b>Total</b>	<b>54%</b>
'Other' is under 1% of total respondents.	75%

### The Council's EDI group has reviewed the results and concluded, with actions being progressed within the EDI action plan:

- The results indicate that recruitment and promotion is something we should look at in terms of disability and age. The Hidden Disabilities membership and its promotion is a priority for 2023.
- There is a high level of agreement for fitting in and feeling supported across all demographics.
- 68% of colleagues who completed the survey said that they understand why we collect diversity data; this is a huge change from 2020 when people refused to complete the Check In surveys because of this. This is thanks to the success of the Data Confidence Campaign, and this will continue in 2023/24.
- People declaring Prefer Not to Say again scored lower for all wellbeing questions, suggesting a lack of trust in the organisation is linked to lower wellbeing. Our staff networks to widen their reach, to involve colleagues who are not currently engaged with the work of the network.



# Looking Forward - Focus for 2023/2024

- **Continue our focus for 2023/2024 on workload management**
- **Seek improvements by gaining greater understanding and taking action against the following priority areas**
  - People believing that action will be taken as a result of the feedback received.
  - People feeling recognised.
  - People feel that actions by senior leaders are consistent with our priorities
- **Continue to undertake work to increase our response rate, actions will include:**
  - Working with our community teams, and developing creative ways for their voice to be heard.
  - Target teams whose response rate is below 50% and discuss way to encourage completion.
  - Continue to reinforce that we are listening and taking action.
  - Ensure that leaders are looking at response and engagement results as part of the performance framework, to target action and increase participation.
- **Understand the health needs of the organisation and put actions in place to support the wellbeing of our people, as we prepare to apply for Thrive at Work Silver Accreditation.**
- **Provide data insight into our Key Business Measures and Indicators, through our Your Say activity.**

## Conclusions

- It has been a successful year in terms of listening to the voice of our people and our engagement surveys have shown that in the main our people who complete the surveys are positive about working for Warwickshire, which is particularly pleasing when we consider the wider national context, particularly with economic and public sector recruitment and retention challenges.
- The key business measures that are measured through the colleague surveys have all scored above 75%.
- We have successfully launched our new Your Say engagement approach down to Tier 4A teams, with new branding, communication and intranet resources while gathering new benchmark data that will allow us to better track performance moving forward and is aligned to Our People Strategy.
- **Our work is now focussed on:**
  - Workload and wellbeing
  - Seeking improvements to priority areas
  - Maintaining and increasing response rates, to ensure we hear the voices of all our people

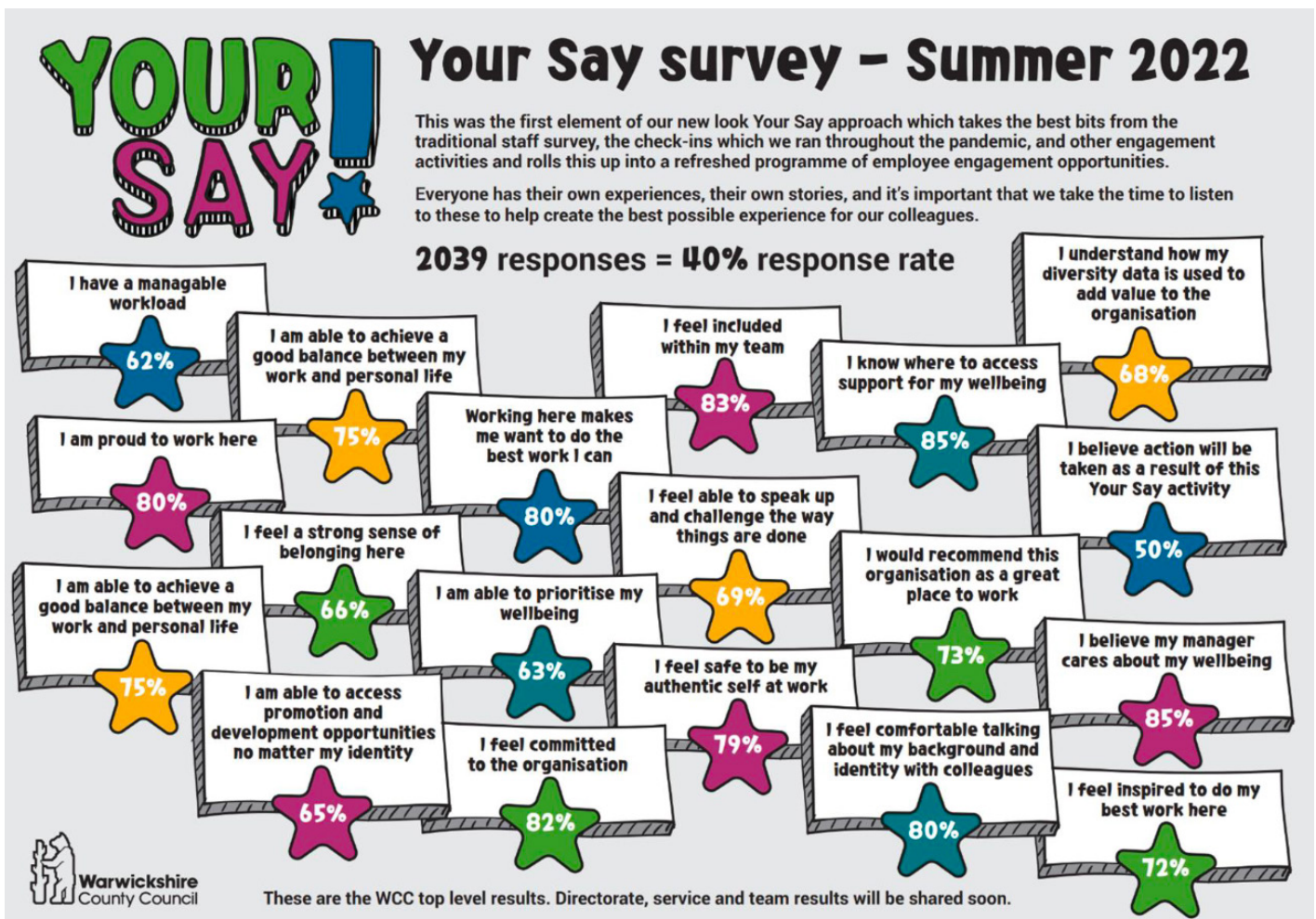
## Further information

Links to further information and resources supporting our employee engagement approach.

WCC results can be found on the [dashboard](#) for both July and February Your Say surveys.

A full report and analysis on the BIG Conversations can be [found here](#).

Further resources and information can be found on our dedicated [intranet page](#).



# "YOUR BIG CONVERSATION"

Hosted by our Assistant Directors Your Big Conversations form part of our Your Say approach and took place during October and November 2022. The focus of these sessions was workload.

**Thank you to everyone who attended and participated.**

- 13** Sessions
- 787** Places booked
- 598** Attended
- 517** Menti participants
- 20** Hours of conversation

## What you told us

### What is taking your time?

1. Meetings
2. Responding to emails
3. Unable to contact colleagues/chasing replies
4. Managing people
5. Identifying information and data quality

### What might make my workload more manageable?

1. Efficient processes
2. Realistic timescales
3. Demand management
4. Supportive leadership
5. Stronger organisation skills

### What really matters to your customers?

1. Timely delivery
2. Feeling listened to/respected professionally
3. Honesty and reliability
4. Quality service delivery and support
5. Reporting accurately and accountability

### What gets in the way of doing the things that matter to your customers?

1. Demand management/workload
2. Lack of resources/staffing
3. Unclear processes, lack of direction and decision making
4. Time and capacity
5. Bureaucracy and governance

### What could leaders do to create a manageable workload in this environment?

1. Consider impact of resource and more staff
2. Clear priorities and vision
3. Managing workload
4. Consider redesign of systems and processes
5. Improve engagement and communication

### What's next?

- Discussion of workload themes at Senior Leadership Forum
- Continuing communication around employee engagement
- Your Say survey in early 2023



# YOUR SAY

## Your Say survey – Winter 2023

The winter survey was final element of our Your Say approach for 2022/23.

Our Your Say approach takes the best bits from the colleague staff survey, the check ins we ran throughout the pandemic, our Big Conversation sessions and rolls this up into a programme of employee engagement activities.

Everyone has their own experiences, their own stories, and it's important that we take the time to listen to these to help create the best possible experience for our colleagues.

**2181 responses = 43% response rate**



These are the WCC top level results. Directorate, service and team results will be shared soon.

