

# People Strategy

## Action Plan Year One Progress



Cabinet- October 2024

# Governance

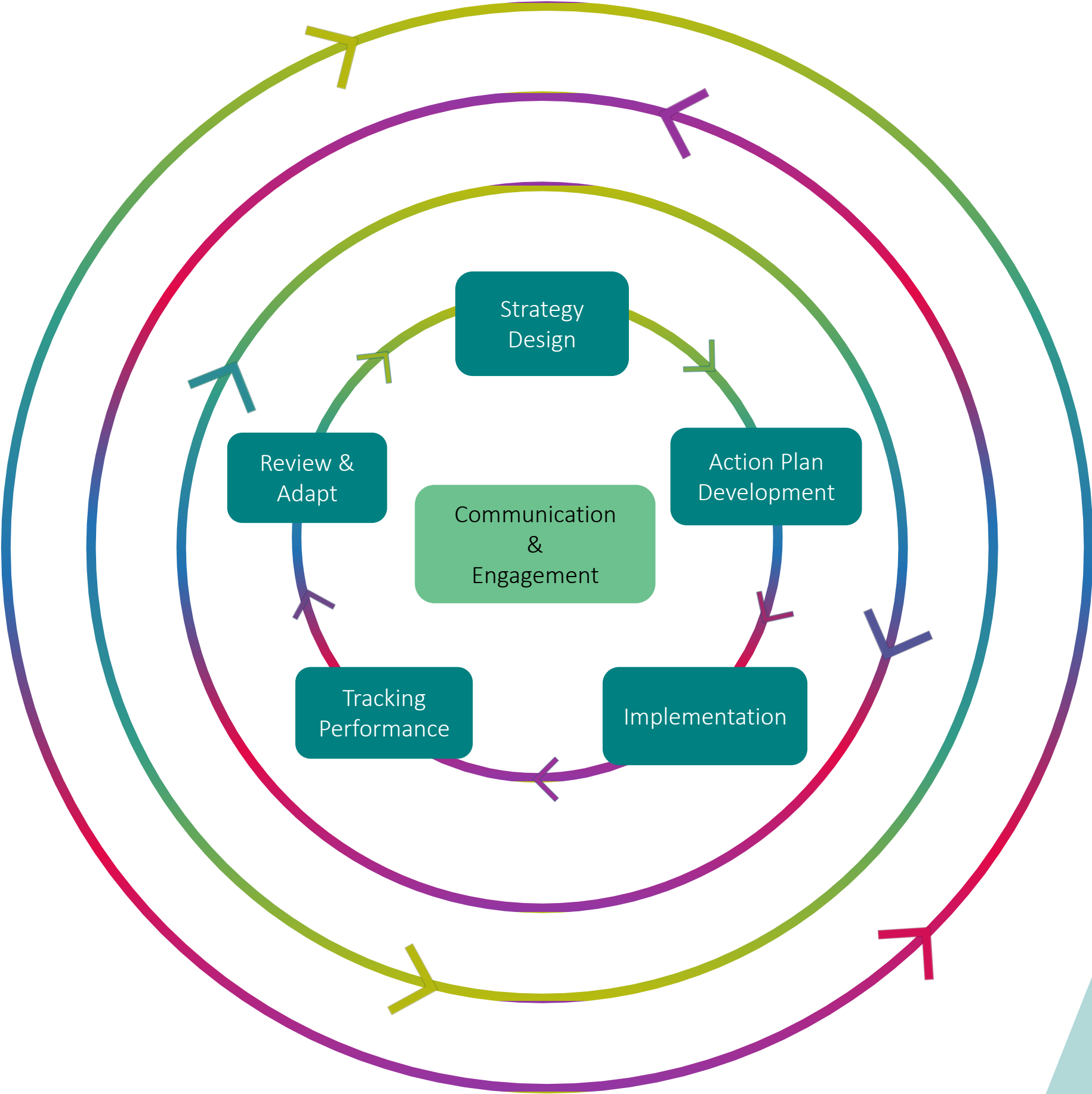
## Supporting

g

Support and Challenge Group

Senior Leadership Team Sponsors

People & Culture Leadership Team



## Reporting

g

Cabinet: 6 Monthly

Senior Leadership Team: 6 monthly

People & Culture Leadership Team: Monthly





# People Strategy Actions

## Year One – September 2023 –September 2024

### Voice

Develop and implement a communication and engagement strategy to deliver a one council approach. Transparent communication about organisational change and updates, and being clear when we are informing, consulting, or co-creating.

Completed

Use a structured approach to engagement and co-creation to maximise the value achieved from hearing our peoples' voice. Identify one council approaches and be clear on how and where professional or service specific needs fit within the framework.

Completed

Creation of a safe and shared space for achievements, success, kindness, and general feedback.

Completed

Provide a range of opportunities to enable the workforce to provide multidirectional feedback and take part in cross organisational communication.

Completed

### Recruitment

Incorporate learning from an 'outward mindsets' approach and other cultural models into our organisational frameworks.

*March 24 –  
September 25*

Design a recruitment strategy to deliver a balance between internal movement and external recruitment, to include reviewing our image and make us the employer of choice. [\(related to Corporate Risk\)](#)

Ongoing

Complete a cycle of workforce planning to identify workforce needs and ensure alignment to current organisational priorities.

*June 24- February  
25*

In response to the identified needs within the workforce planning cycle, take action to address specific recruitment challenges.

*February 25  
onwards*



# People Strategy Actions

## Year One - 2024 September 2023 –September 2024

### Wellbeing

Review and update the 121 and appraisal conversations, ensuring wellbeing, learning and organisational objectives are included.

Procurement of an Employee Assistance Programme ensuring it delivers best value, is effective and meets the needs of the organisation.

Procurement of an Occupational Health service ensuring it delivers best value, is effective and meets the needs of the organisation.

Design and implement a preventative approach to reducing sickness absence and proactively managing cases of ill health to keep individuals at work or facilitate a timelier return. ([related to Corporate Risk](#))

Review, update and promote current wellbeing resources and support to include our networks, training and communication channels.

Achieving safety for our people through our HR policies and practices.

Completed

Completed

October 24

September 24  
start

Ongoing

Ongoing

### Learning

Design and deliver a corporate learning strategy that is aligned to our priorities, supports our people to understand our council and develops professional learning

Develop a programme to roll out an 'outward mindsets' approach to support the foundations of a trusted, inclusive and innovative council

Using the outcomes of the workforce planning cycle, work alongside service areas to design career pathways that meet service and generational needs and consider the impact of changing internal and external context

Agree the key skills that will enable us to become an agile organisation and conduct a skills audit to understand where these skills exist within our current workforce to support this

October 24

Ongoing

February 25  
start

Ongoing



# People Strategy Actions

## Year One – September 2023 – September 2024

### Reward

Deliver a benefits platform to broaden the benefits we can offer to our people.

Develop and deliver a framework to celebrate achievements in informal ways, creating a one council approach

Develop and deliver a framework to celebrate achievements in formal ways, creating a one council approach

Modernising our Terms and conditions to ensure they are fit for purpose, provides best value and are equitable and transparent (related to Corporate Risk)

Wider review of pay and grading scheme and where necessary and appropriate, redesign, negotiate and agree changes to the grading structure

Updating our policies to ensure they are fit for purpose, equitable and transparent

Completed

Completed

November 24

Ongoing

On hold

Ongoing

### Belonging

Support the Corporate Equality Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan to include:

- Improving organisational understanding of EDI through updated mandatory learning modules
- Improved availability and analysis of data to identify and inform strategic action

Use learning and evidence from engagement activities, such as staff surveys and exit interview feedback, to help better understand what makes our people feel safe and belong.

Policies are reviewed to consider the impact of lived experience

Completed

Completed

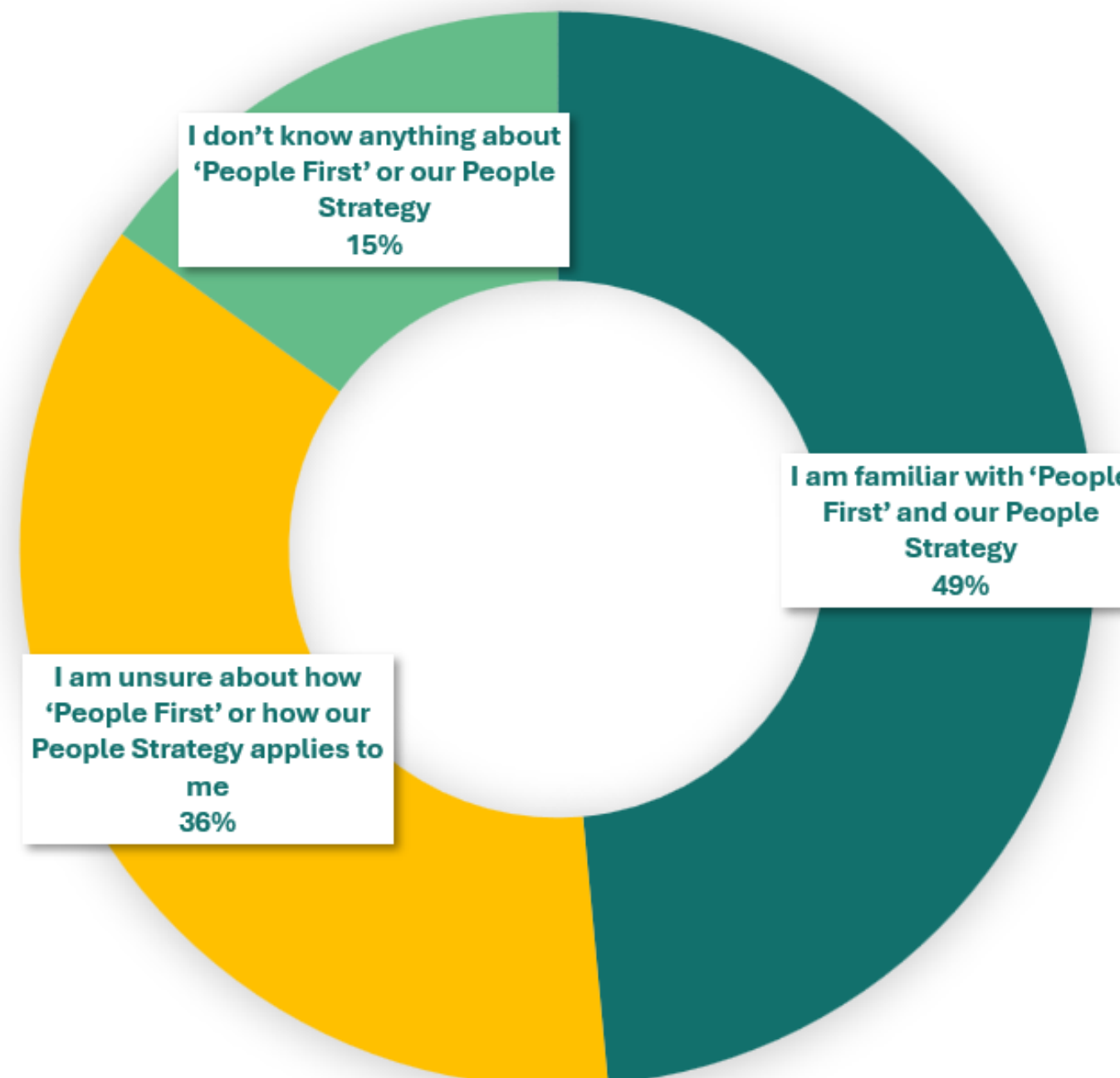
Completed

Ongoing

# Measuring Impact

## Familiarity with the People First Approach

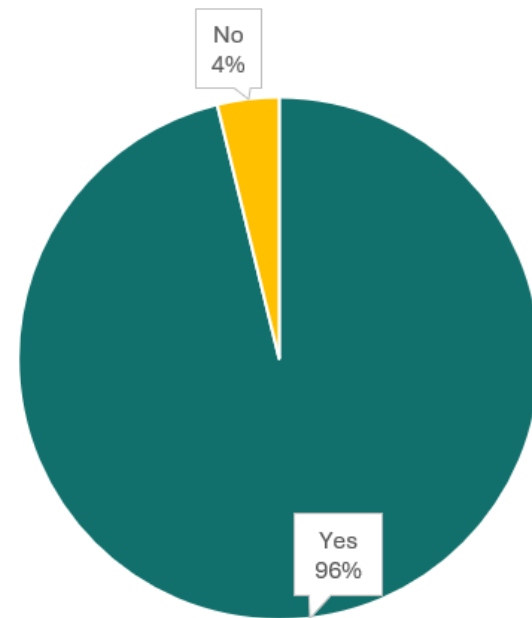
Which of these statements best describes how you feel about the 'People First' approach?



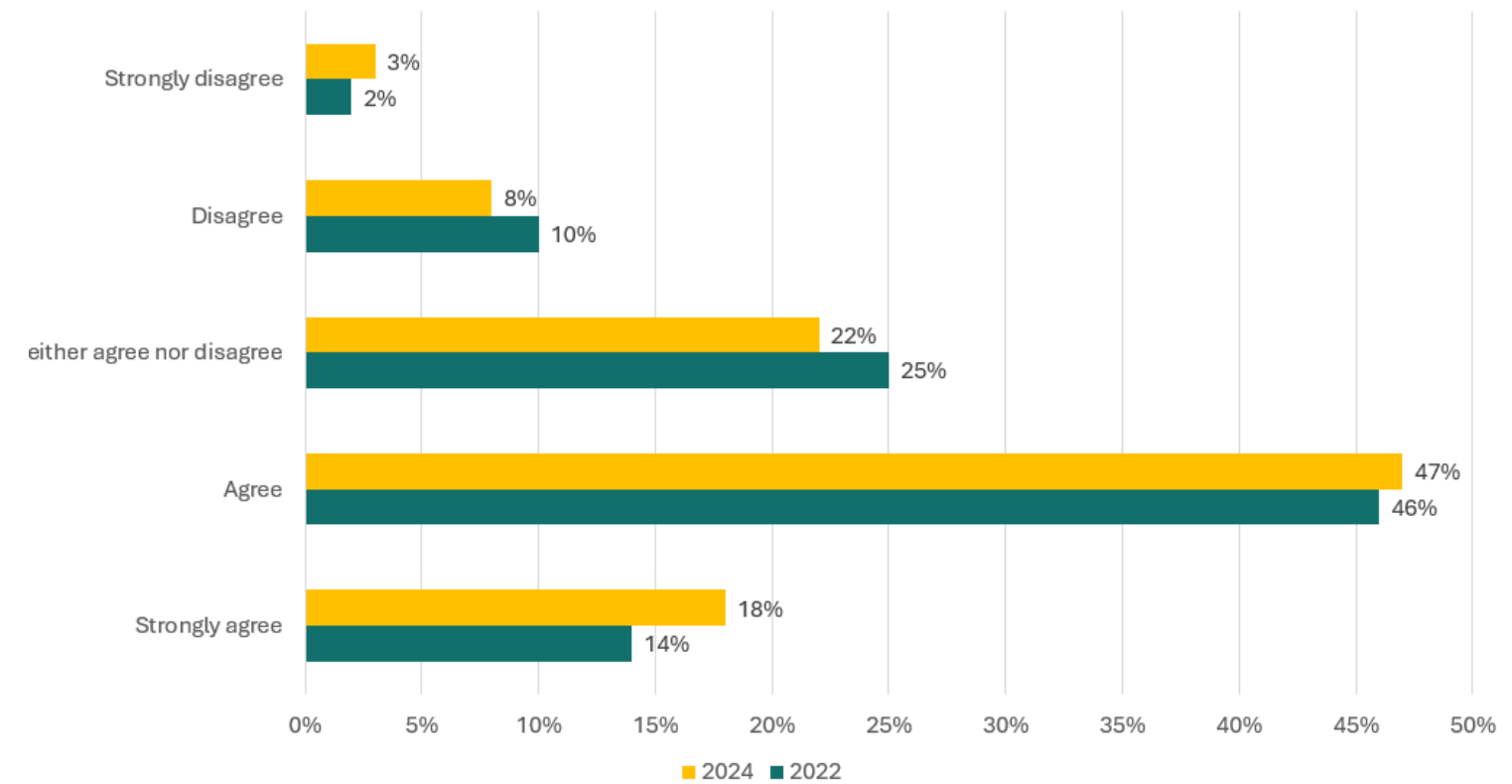
# Measuring Impact

## Belonging

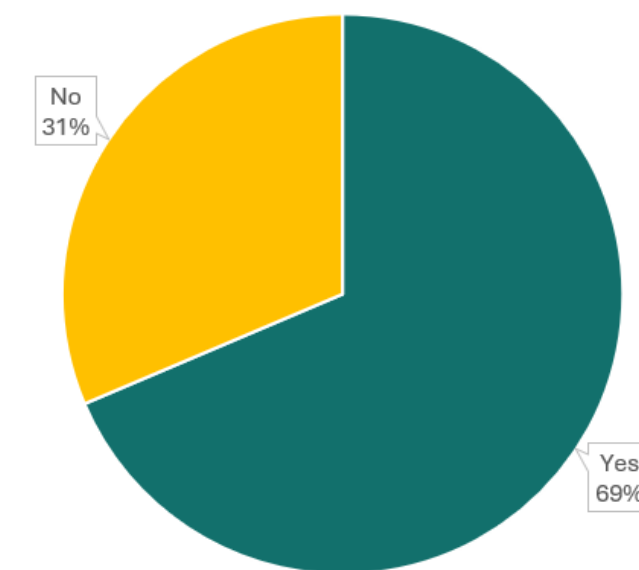
Have you experienced kindness in your team?



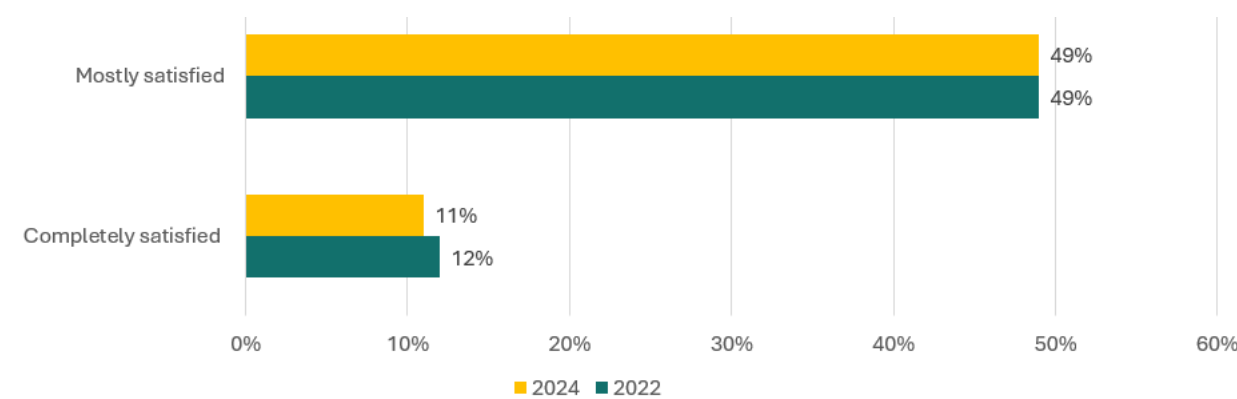
I would recommend Devon County Council as a good place to work



Do you feel valued and recognised at work?



Overall, how satisfied have you been with your job at DCC in the last three months?

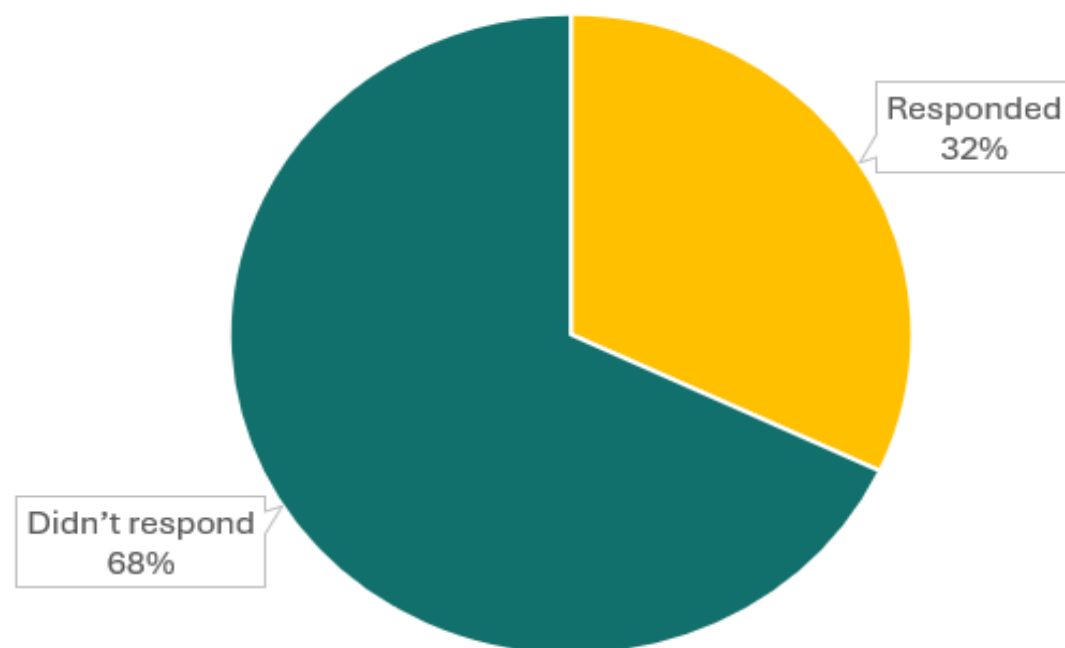


# Measuring Impact

## Voice

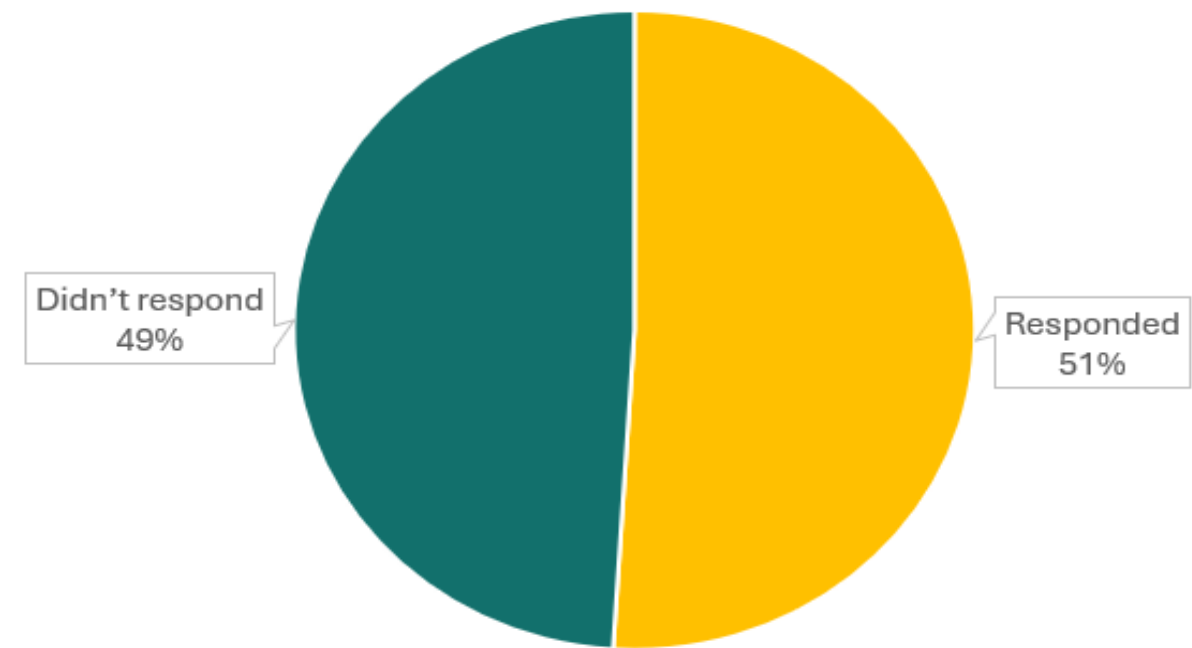
- Through a structured approach to engagement and consistent involvement of SLT the response rates for the people survey are improved by almost one fifth representing 817 additional responses

Response rate 2022



Workforce total: 5846  
Response total : 1857

Response rate 2024



Workforce total: 5239  
Response total : 2674



# Measuring Impact – Belonging/Voice

96% of our workforce report experiencing kindness in their teams

Our workforce report an improvement in usage and familiarity of our Core Principles and Behaviours (increase of 7% since 2022)

Our workforce report an improved percentage in whether they would recommend DCC as a good place to work (increase of 5% since 2022)

There is stability in the workforce in terms of their future career plans - these scores have remained the same since 2022 despite the pace of change within the organisation

Through a structured approach to engagement and consistent involvement of SLT, the response rates for the people survey are improved by 19% from 2022. This saw an increase of over 800 responses

**68%** of our workforce report feeling valued and recognised

# Measuring Impact – Wellbeing/Reward

A steady improvement in absence rates for the organisation.  
In 21/22 the average was 9.6 days lost per employee and in 23/24 it has **reduced to 8.9 days**

In support of their financial wellbeing, we are supporting 488 employees to plan for their retirement investing **£176k** a month into retirement savings

The introduction of the benefits platform has enabled employees to purchase discounted gift cards leading to a **saving of £32k** in the period April to June 24

**7918** applications have been made to salary sacrifice schemes enabling employees to purchase at discount and spread the cost (with no interest applied) of home and electronic items

148 employees have increased their annual leave allowances through purchasing additional leave. This has generated a **saving of c£150k** for the first purchase window

**75%** of gift cards purchased have been for use in supermarkets which delivers a direct benefit to mitigate against the cost-of-living concerns employees raised in 2022

Through the mid-life MOT programme, we have supported 244 employees to consider their work, wealth and wellbeing

# Measuring Impact – Recruitment/Learning

Focussed work in CYPF to create a more stable workforce by increasing the number of permanent staff. This includes our 'grow our own' approach which has led to a record high of **28 ASYE's joining in Sept/ Dec 2024.**

We have been successful in agreeing terms with 13 agency colleagues who have or are imminently joining the service on a permanent contract

A revised career progression route for Social Workers is now in place to attract a wider breadth of Social Workers by introducing a step between ASYEs and Experienced Social Workers which is more reflective of their level of experience

**104** employees have undertaken Insights training to date

In response to feedback from the workforce a revised EDI mandatory training programme has been launched in the Autumn

# Care Leavers Commitments

The following actions outline an update on significant action completed within the first year of the People Strategy. Many of these form part of the activities within the ongoing improvement programme in the Children & Young People's Futures Service.

Further information is reported and discussed within the Corporate Parenting Strategy Board and subgroup meetings.

Timescales for delivery can be found in the LG Advisor Review Action Log.

[Stand Up Speak Up Action Plan](#)

The aims for each of the six themes relating to Care leaver can be found on our Inside Devon pages.

[People First - Our commitment to children in care and care leavers - Inside Devon](#)





# People Strategy Actions – Care Leavers

Year One - September 2023 – September 2024

## Voice

Opportunities for the Stand Up Speak Up (SUSU) Council to share ideas, support reviews and develop new practice

Young Corporate Parenting Lead appointed (reviewing LifeLong Links, developing feedback loops and focus groups)

Council tax exemption agreed with all District Councils for care leavers up until 26<sup>th</sup> birthday

Reviewing the Local Offer and Guarantee with district councils in Devon to continually give progression in collective parenting responsibilities

Development of Power BI to align data for the Corporate Parenting Strategy Board and sub-groups, ensuring shared understanding of those in need of support, consistency of approach and recognition of mutual work across sub-groups

Discussions with Torbay Council on sharing practice and a possible Memorandum of Agreement on the employment offer

Development of specific complaints and compliments guidance

Continuing the roll-out of Total Respect training delivered by Devon care leavers

## Recruitment

Creation of a DCC Family Business Offer (opportunities through suppliers, procurement and partnership with district councils and key stakeholders)

Development of a DCC Talent Bank capturing care leaver aspirations and matching with employers' skills needs also captured on the Talent Bank

Updating recruitment and employment guidance for DCC managers and care leavers for apprenticeships and into employment

Creating a Pathway to Employment into DCC, giving care leavers stepping stones to apprenticeships and employment (including an extended work experience of up to 12 weeks)

First PACE programme cohort completed, increasing awareness for employers and encouraging offers of work experience and employment

Continuing to benchmark the training and employment offers (via PPMA EDI Shires Group, district councils in Devon and other local authorities) to gain learning, ensure best practice and adherence to the locally agreed protected characteristic for care leavers

Working to a "favoured approach" in terms of recruitment (agreement to ring fence DCC apprenticeships and entry level roles which align with care leaver aspirations; enhanced support through the recruitment process)



# People Strategy Actions - Care Leavers

## Year One – September 2023 – September 2024

### Reward

Annual 'Youth Voice', Lifelong Links fun day, annual Achievements Awards, plus events between Apr-Jun which thirty-five care leavers attended

Access to the new Benefits Platform (via VivUp) for Care Leavers, Foster Carers and Special Guardianship Carers from April 2024

Continuing to recognise and celebrate the work of those contributing to the 'Stand Up Speak Up' website, events and development of initiatives

Development of an Induction module for care leavers to deliver to new DCC senior leaders and Members, increasing their understanding of corporate parenting responsibilities and of the support needed by care leavers

A proposal awaiting a decision on providing an additional financial incentive (£500) towards equipment and clothes when starting a DCC apprenticeship or DCC employment

Reviewing additional benefits in the community (leisure offers, free public transport, "Exeter Reads", CAB benefits and finance health check)

Planting of a "Positivitree" to mark the progress being made on the Local Offer for Care Leavers

### Belonging

Youth Hub provision increased to five locations from June 2024 plus a pilot hub (in conjunction with Young Devon) in place for 3 days a week in Exeter

Submitted an outline programme for DCC for the Care Leavers Covenant

Identifying the "life story" for individual care leavers and developing support to raise awareness for colleagues in DCC of this impact on care leavers

Understanding the supported accommodation provision in Devon with councils and landlords, to ensure young people are not homeless and placed in un-regulated accommodation

Delivery of in-person tenancy training across Devon locations, by Learn Devon, for those age 16+ (additional on-line modules)

Introducing mentoring programmes aligned with communities the care leaver may already have connections within the community

Benchmarking Good and Outstanding local authorities to create a new assessment document

Identifying improvements to ensure individual care leavers have confidence their belongings are identified, respected, stored and easily accessible

Developing responses to those seeking asylum and support available from within communities, with clear plans to mitigate community-based risks

Protocol agreements across the housing and care system (16+17-year-old) Joint Homeless Protocol between Childrens Services and Housing Services in Devon (agreed), Devon Joint Care Experienced Young People Housing Protocol (Districts agreement and awaiting DCC approval)



# People Strategy Actions – Care Leavers

## Year One - September 2023 – September 2024

### Wellbeing

Needs Analysis Dashboard link added to the Corporate Parenting SharePoint site to better understand physical, emotional and mental health needs and supporting action plan developments

Access to EAP (via VivUp) for Care Leavers, Foster Carers and Special Guardianship Carers

NHS Devon and NHS Dentistry Service have identified funding to support with accessing dental care

Scoping options for a mentoring programme for access to independent, quality and safe mentoring to guide and inform a care leaver's decisions

Development of an evaluation framework for the Therapeutic and "Ask Jan" projects

Data compiled for NHS validation for free NHS prescriptions (strategic briefing paper to NHS Devon Executive to identify budget and decision)

Therapeutic Wellbeing Practitioners for Care Experienced Young People (2 x 37 hrs plus 1 x 22 hrs)

200 "Ask Jan" licenses purchased with 50 being utilised to-date

Addressing other health services (dental backlog and assessments and supporting eye care up to age 25)

Scoping key actions to support vulnerable parents who are pregnant and parenting

### Learning

Enabling care leavers to complete functional levels for Maths and English alongside an apprenticeship or employment

Under the University Civic agreement, Exeter University will be offering a social worker a supported/funded apprenticeship from 2025 with priority status for care leavers

Enable care leavers to access bespoke apprenticeships with Exeter College (part of the PACE Programme)

Working with Learn Devon to address the current levels of Maths and English achieved at Year 12 and 13, and the consideration of increased use of the functional levels

Developing a welcome pack for asylum seekers with those with lived experience

Virtual School and Economy, Enterprise & Skills Teams developing an age 16-18 hopes & aspirations strategy/action plan that will feed into the Talent Bank