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Staff Survey 2023

Date: 18th September 2023

Report of: Director of Strategy and Resources

Report to: Resources and Strategy Scrutiny Board

Will the decision be open for call in?   ☐ Yes ☒ No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?   ☐ Yes ☒ No

Brief summary

The Council conducted its latest Staff Survey in Spring 2023. In total, 14729 staff were sent the survey and 7647 completed it – an overall response rate of 52%.

This report outlines the survey approach and response rates, the results and analysis, and how council teams are responding to the feedback.

The Staff Survey offers valuable feedback to help the Council gauge progress against it's Best Place to Work ambitions, and provides an important measure relating to the Organisation Plan and People Strategy outcomes.

The Survey offers a voice to all colleagues at the council, and provides an insight into how staff feel about their job, their team, their workplace and employer.

It helps the Council to identify what is working well, and what needs improvement. The feedback is used to direct our employment and people agenda and actions. It gives us a good sense of how well our values are embedded in everyday work.

In the 2023 Survey, colleagues gave an overall satisfaction score for their jobs at Leeds City Council as 7.4 out of 10.

Recommendations

Resources and Strategy Scrutiny Board are asked to:

a) Note the contents of this report, including the survey results, analysis and response plans

b) Receive further updates and reports as this important work progresses, making links to the current and future scrutiny work programme as appropriate.

What is this report about?

The survey approach and response rates

1.1 This latest Staff Survey took place between April and May in 2023. This was the first time that staff survey had been conducted since 2019 because of disruption due to Covid-19. Between 2020 and 2022, the council conducted 5 Wellbeing Pulse Surveys, and the results and actions from these were regularly shared with Scrutiny Board.

1.2 All council colleagues were asked to complete the 2023 Staff Survey. 14729 staff were sent the survey and 7647 completed it – an overall response rate of 52%. Staff were asked to feedback on 21 agree/disagree statements, plus the wellbeing questions from the Pulse Survey. Free text comments, both positive and negative, were also captured.

1.3 One of the 21 questions is an overall satisfaction score/promoter question which is '"Overall, if a friend asked you to give a score out of 10 for your job at LCC, what would it be?". This can be benchmarked against other organisations.

1.4 A range of different methods were used to encourage the best possible return, including options for colleagues who do and those that don't have regular IT access at work (e.g. site visits, poster campaigns, and a QR option on our paper survey forms). Response rates were higher than in 2019, increasing by 4% in 2023. There were higher returns from both online colleagues, and those that don't have IT access through work.

1.5 Confidentiality and participant anonymity are taken extremely seriously. This is important to individual staff members and their trust in the process. Only aggregated data is ever shared and there are strict rules around access to data so that we protect anonymity at all times.

1.6 Response rates varied from service to service and group to group. 64% of online colleagues responded compared to 32% of those without IT access through work. Directorate level responses ranged from 43% to 55%. Individual team response rates ranged from 12% to 96%.

1.7 Confidence in the data is high, and the results can be trusted as a valid and representative view for teams in the majority of cases. Where data confidence is low due to smaller returns, these results are treated with caution.

The results and analysis

2.1 A summary of the results from the 2023 Survey can be seen in Appendix 1. At council level, colleagues gave an overall satisfaction score for their jobs at LCC as 7.4 out of 10.

2.2 76% of all council colleagues who responded gave an overall satisfaction score of 7 out of 10 and above.

2.3 8% of all colleagues who responded, gave an overall satisfaction score less than 5 out of 10.

2.4 A council level analysis of question responses is shown in the diagram below, along with comparisons to 2019 results where this can be made. All statements received a majority positive rating (i.e. more than half of all colleagues agree)

2.5 Higher levels of agreement (75% and up) where seen in relation to the following:

I know what is expected of me at work

My team supports equality and preventing discrimination

I get help and support from colleagues

I enjoy my job

I am well supervised/line managed

I am able to speak up around concerns

I am treated fairly at work

2.6 Lower levels of agreement were seen around the following:

There are opportunities to progress my career

I have good quality tools, IT equipment and systems

I feel well prepared and supported through change

My workload is manageable

Our team meetings work well

2.7 A Manager Dashboard has been developed, which gives a service-by-service picture of the results. This has been shared with all teams. Results vary from team to team, and the dashboard allows better local understanding, benchmarking and more relevant action planning.

2.8 A full demographic analysis of the staff survey results is underway, to analyse the data and feedback around the following groups: Sex and gender, Ethnicity, Disability, Carer, Sexual Orientation, Age, Religion, Pay Scale, Length of Service, Working Hours.

2.9 Early observations from the demographic analysis show the following variations in feedback from different groups. Further analysis is underway to fully understand this, so we can be sure there is a secure evidence base for action. The table below shows the groups which stood out as scoring noticeably higher or lower. Where groups do not appear in the table e.g. LGBT+, this is because the results from these staff groups were in line with the average scores for all council staff.

More likely to score noticeably higher	More likely to score noticeably lower
Recent appointees	Longer serving
Offline women compared to online	Disabled colleagues
Asian/Asian British	Carers
Black/Black British	Men (especially over 30)
Grades A-C	White British

Director grades	Religion other than Christianity
Part time	Offline
Online (apart from workloads)	

2.10 Initial benchmarking has been undertaken – comparing the Council's staff survey results against other large local authorities nationally, and health partners in the city. This shows that the council is performing well in many areas and shares similar workforce challenges to other public sector partners. There is opportunity for learning too, in relation to areas where others are performing more strongly.

2.11 The responses to the wellbeing questions in the 2023 staff survey, gives a comparison to feedback from previous wellbeing pulse surveys, the most recent of which was conducted in March 2022. This time around, 69% of colleagues stated they were happy with the support they received at work, and 10% said they were not.
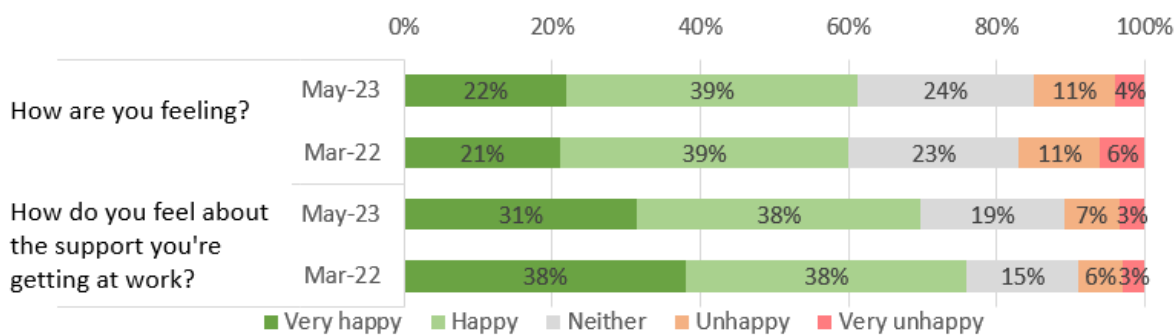
2.12 A lot of time has been spent analysing the free text comments, which are very much valued (both positive and negative comments). Key and common themes have been captured, with the most frequently recurring being:

Negative comments	Positive comments
Workload pressures (34%)	Job enjoyment (25%)
Management support (19%)	Great team and colleagues (12%)
I love my job, but (14%)	Supportive environment (10%)
Low Pay (13%)	Praise for line manager (8%)
Together these account for 80% of all negative comments	Together these account for 55% of all positive comments

How council teams are responding

3.1 The feedback from the Staff Survey is being used to direct our employment and people agenda and actions. It complements and sits alongside other workforce intelligence we have.

3.2 The key issues and action areas from the Staff Survey 2023 are listed below.

Career progression opportunities

Quality tools IT equipment and systems

Support around change

Workloads

Team Meetings

Feeling Valued

3.3 Feeling Valued has been added to the 5 previously mentioned lower scoring statement areas because our analysis shows that it has a significant impact on how staff feel about work overall, and their overall satisfaction score. It is an important driver and factor.

3.4 Action will be expected and needed at various levels. All managers and teams will play a crucial role, responding locally and working with their teams to develop their specific response plans. Some of the solutions will sit at corporate, council wide level, and be delivered as part of our Organisational Plan. All employees can make a contribution by making suggestions and changes and by living council values and behaviours day to day. This collective approach is captured in Appendix 3.

3.5 A set of suggested actions have been agreed by Directors and will be incorporated into response planning taking place in their services. This will help address the key issues from the staff survey and ensure that there is collective action across all teams. These are shown in Appendix 4.

3.6 Strategic, council wide activities will take place as part of the response plan. Many are already in motion, and new and refreshed actions will be added over the coming months. Corporate action will cover a broad spectrum of areas such as:

Core Business Transformation programme, to modernise our systems

Staffing levels and workload pressures

How we allocate and prioritise work

Developing inclusive recruitment, flexible deployment and career paths

Investment in and access to staff development

A refresh of our Disability and Carers action plan

Further investment in manager development through our Be Your Best programme

Policy review to streamline our approaches

Digital investment and skills development

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion action planning

Best Place to Work pledge to all staff – improving the work environment

Communications and engagement frameworks

Governance arrangements

Be Well – our staff wellbeing support

Recognition

3.7 Extra support will also be provided to identified service areas. This will ensure that the necessary corporate support is offered to those teams in need of most support. It will help us to target available resource and expertise, to supplement cross council activity. Discussions are currently taking place with Directors to identity which teams would benefit most from this type of support, and around which issues. The service-by-service results and analysis is being used to help in this exercise.

3.8 Work is already underway with those services who returned the lowest response rates for the staff survey, to help us understand the reasons for this, and what actions we can take to improve this in the future.

3.9 Further to the early benchmarking already undertaken, ongoing sharing and learning with other partners in the city and the sector will take place.

What impact will this proposal have?

4   The Staff Survey offers valuable feedback to help the Council gauge progress against its Best Place to Work ambitions and provides an important measure relating to the Organisation Plan and People Strategy outcomes. A happy, motivated and valued workforce has a positive impact on service delivery and customer service.

How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?

⊠ Health and Wellbeing   ⊠ Inclusive Growth   ⊠ Zero Carbon

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected:
Have ward members been consulted?   ☐ Yes   ⊠ No

5   Members, Trade Unions and Staff Networks have been engaged throughout each stage of the staff survey project – initial design and development, delivery and response planning. All teams and managers are actively involved.

What are the resource implications?

6.1 Resource implications around the delivery of the council's response plan will be assessed by Directors.

6.2 A key issue to address is around workloads, staffing pressures and affordability, particularly given the financial challenges that the council is facing.

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

7.1 Ensuring that there is visible and tangible action, via a 'You Said, We Did' type approach is key to successful delivery of improvements based on the feedback colleagues have offered. All colleagues will want to see demonstrable change and improvement.

7.3 An important first step is to make sure that all colleagues receive communication about the survey results, main findings and proposed next steps – this is currently taking place.

7.4 Engaging with those that did not complete the survey is also important, to understand why and to check that their voice is being represented.

7.5 The success of the council response depends on the collective effort of all colleagues to make a difference, and concerted effort continues to engage all managers and teams in action planning.

7.6 The current financial situation may affect investment in response planning, and Directors will give this careful consideration.

What are the legal implications?

8 There are no specific legal implications associated with this report.

Options, timescales and measuring success

What other options were considered?

9 The Staff Survey returned this year for the first time since 2019, after a number of shorter wellbeing pulse surveys were conducted as an alternative throughout the Covid-19 period.

How will success be measured?

10 Our People Strategy 2020-25 sets out our ambition to be the Best Place to Work with a clear focus on creating a great all round employee experience for all staff, with the support of their leaders and managers working in a positive organisational culture, driven by our council values. We have a range of key performance indicators that capture how efficient, enterprising and healthy the organisation is, and the overall employee experience for staff.

What is the timetable and who will be responsible for implementation?

11.1 Directors will lead the response planning with their services. Corporate support services will play a key role and all managers will be expected to deliver improvement action plans for their teams. Staff Networks and Trade Unions will be active partners, alongside elected members.

11.2 Response planning is now taking place, with implementation to continue throughout the remainder of 2023/24.

11.3 Regular monitoring and reporting to Directors, Executive Members and Scrutiny Board over the next 6 to 12 months.
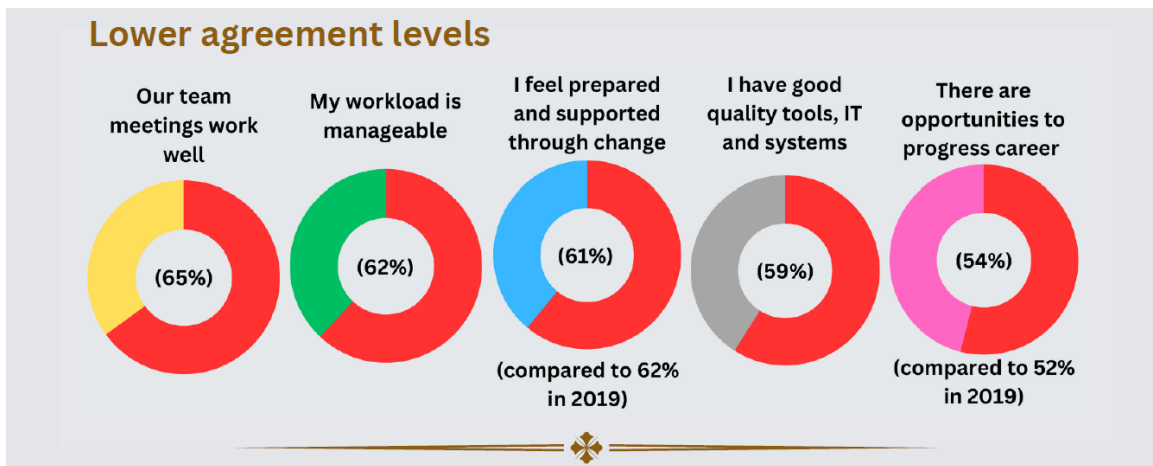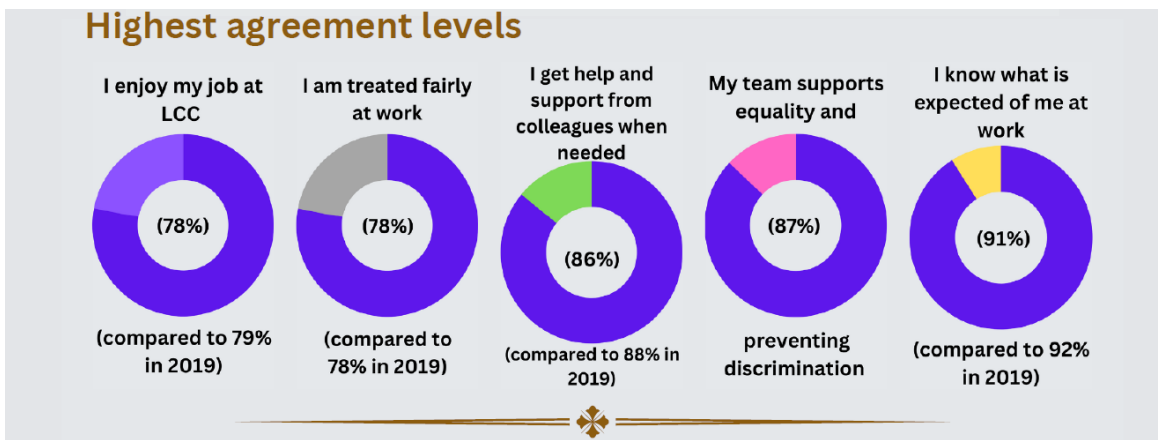
Appendices

- Appendix 1- A summary of results from the 2023 Staff Survey
- Appendix 2- A council level analysis of question responses from the 2023 Staff Survey
- Appendix 3- The collective approach to response planning
- Appendix 4- A set of suggested actions that will be incorporated into team planning
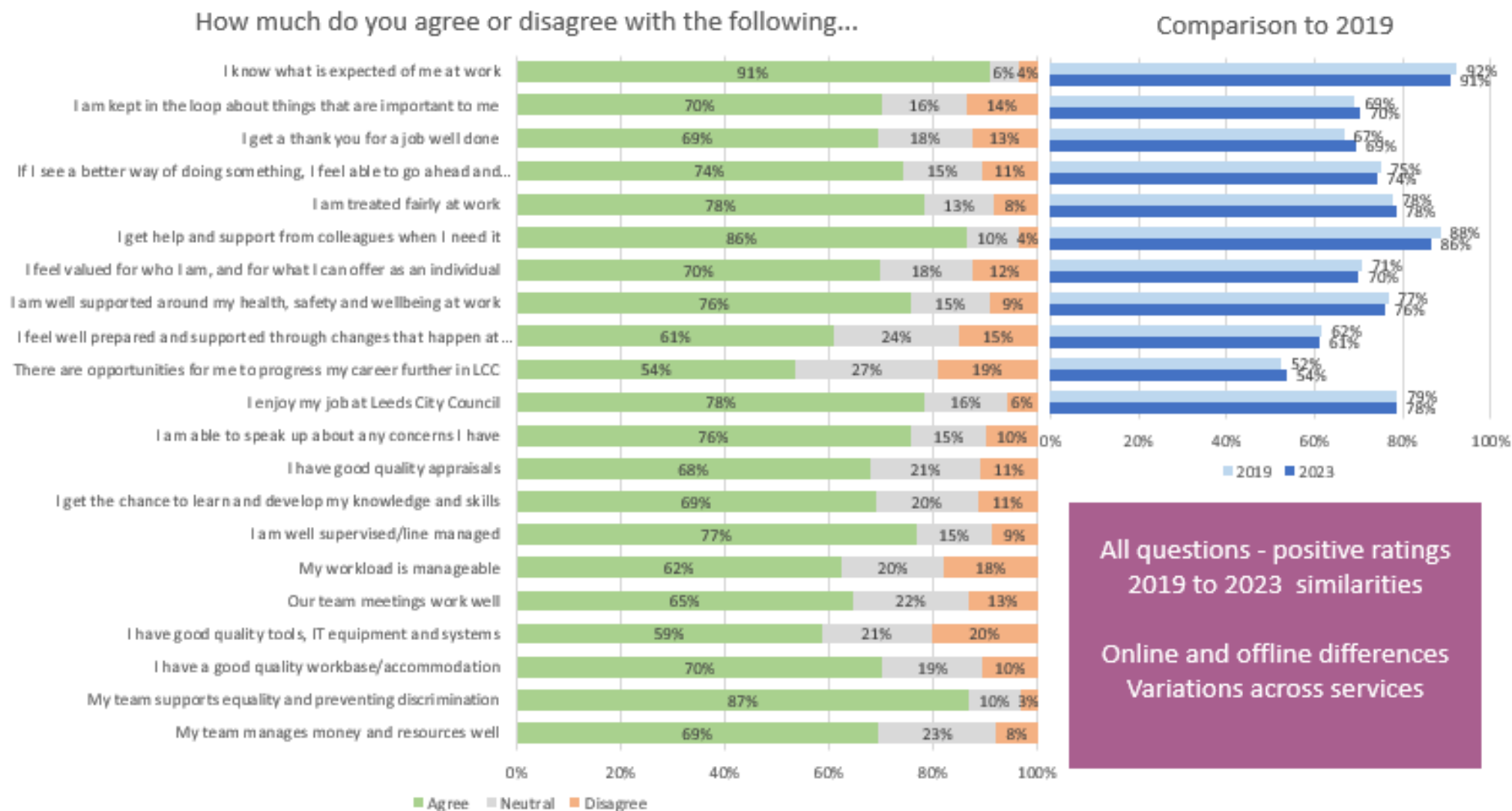
Background papers

- None

Appendix 1 - A summary of results from the 2023 Staff Survey

Staff Survey 2023
Results

7.4 OUT OF 10

52% of 14,729 staff took part (compared to 48% in 2019)

Overall recommender score (compared to 7.5 in 2019)

Staff wellbeing questions indicate staff are feeling much the same as 2022, with 61% happy or very happy

TEAM LEEDS

Highest agreement levels

I enjoy my job at LCC
(78%)
(compared to 79% in 2019)

I am treated fairly at work
(78%)
(compared to 78% in 2019)

I get help and support from colleagues when needed
(86%)
(compared to 88% in 2019)

My team supports equality and
(87%)
preventing discrimination

I know what is expected of me at work
(91%)
(compared to 92% in 2019)

Lower agreement levels

Our team meetings work well
(65%)

My workload is manageable
(62%)

I feel prepared and supported through change
(61%)
(compared to 62% in 2019)

I have good quality tools, IT and systems
(59%)

There are opportunities to progress career
(54%)
(compared to 52% in 2019)

Appendix 2 - A council level analysis of question responses from the 2023 Staff Survey

How much do you agree or disagree with the following...

Question	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
I know what is expected of me at work	91%	6%	4%
I am kept in the loop about things that are important to me	70%	16%	14%
I get a thank you for a job well done	69%	18%	13%
If I see a better way of doing something, I feel able to go ahead and...	74%	15%	11%
I am treated fairly at work	78%	13%	8%
I get help and support from colleagues when I need it	86%	10%	4%
I feel valued for who I am, and for what I can offer as an individual	70%	18%	12%
I am well supported around my health, safety and wellbeing at work	76%	15%	9%
I feel well prepared and supported through changes that happen at...	61%	24%	15%
There are opportunities for me to progress my career further in LCC	54%	27%	19%
I enjoy my job at Leeds City Council	78%	16%	6%
I am able to speak up about any concerns I have	76%	15%	10%
I have good quality appraisals	68%	21%	11%
I get the chance to learn and develop my knowledge and skills	69%	20%	11%
I am well supervised/line managed	77%	15%	9%
My workload is manageable	62%	20%	18%
Our team meetings work well	65%	22%	13%
I have good quality tools, IT equipment and systems	59%	21%	20%
I have a good quality workbase/accommodation	70%	19%	10%
My team supports equality and preventing discrimination	87%	10%	3%
My team manages money and resources well	69%	23%	8%

■ Agree ■ Neutral ■ Disagree

Comparison to 2019

Question	2019	2023
I know what is expected of me at work	92%	91%
I am kept in the loop about things that are important to me	69%	70%
I get a thank you for a job well done	67%	69%
If I see a better way of doing something...	75%	74%
I am treated fairly at work	78%	78%
I get help and support from colleagues when I need it	88%	86%
I feel valued for who I am...	71%	70%
I am well supported around my health, safety and wellbeing at work	77%	76%
I feel well prepared and supported through changes...	62%	61%
There are opportunities for me to progress my career further in LCC	52%	54%
I enjoy my job at Leeds City Council	79%	78%

■ 2019 ■ 2023

All questions - positive ratings
2019 to 2023 similarities

Online and offline differences
Variations across services

Appendix 3 – The collective approach to response planning

ME
Everyone

WE
Appraising managers and teams

US
Corporate actions

Appendix 4 - A set of suggested actions that will be incorporated into team planning

BEING OUR BEST

To all managers and teams

Here are council-wide issues that came up through our 2023 Staff Survey, with some suggested actions for you to build into your local response and plans.

Career progression opportunities	The quality of personal development plans in appraisals Coaching and mentoring opportunities Uptake on Be Your Best and other development Career ambitions conversations in appraisals
Quality tools, IT equipment and systems	Doing a stock take on what tools and equipment people have and need Issuing all required kit promptly to new starters Understanding which IT systems are causing most frustration and why Supporting and regularly reviewing reasonable adjustments
Support around change	Involving colleagues in forthcoming changes Communicating well Regular wellbeing checks Supporting disabled colleagues Understanding the needs of older colleagues and carers
Workloads	How work is prioritised and allocated How we are managing staffing gaps and pressures Helping each other to get through busier and more challenging times Escalating if you are concerned about delivery
Team meetings	Reviewing all meetings Checking purpose, duration and attendance Asking team members for ideas to improve meetings Make sure that all meeting time, is time well spent
Feeling valued	Saying thank you often Celebrating good work and success Listening to those who are feeling undervalued Delivering Our Step 4 EDI plans