

**AGENDA ITEM**

**REPORT TO CABINET**

**18 March 2021**

**REPORT OF  
CORPORATE  
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

**CABINET INFORMATION ITEM**

**Leader of the Council – Councillor Bob Cook**

**EMPLOYEE SURVEY AND INVESTOR IN PEOPLE REASSESSMENT UPDATE**

**Summary**

This report provides Cabinet with the headline results of the Covid-19 Employee Survey. The survey was carried out in order to assess the impact of the pandemic on employees and to gather information to inform the measures we can continue to develop to help and support the workforce to ensure that they can continue to work safely and effectively. The report also provides an update on the Investors in People accreditation following the recent re-assessment visit. The scheduled reassessment visit also provided a useful opportunity to gain an external perspective and independent assessment of the impact of the pandemic on the workforce and of the revised working and support arrangements that have been put in place.

**Recommendations**

Cabinet is asked to note the report.

**Detail**

1. The last Employee Survey was carried out in October 2018 and it was decided that the scheduled biennial survey in 2020 should focus exclusively on Covid-19 and the impact on the workforce.
2. The scheduled Employee Survey provided a good opportunity to assess the effectiveness of the measures that have been put in place to adapt working practices, to provide support and advice to employees and to provide information and feedback to inform future policy developments and working adaptations. Since the start of the pandemic working life has changed significantly for the workforce:
  - a. We moved urgently in 2020 to establish safe working practices and establish Covid-Secure status for the organisation. Our organisation-wide risk assessment sets out how we are delivering this <https://www.stockton.gov.uk/our-people/coronavirus-covid-19/covid-19-secure-workplace/>. This overall risk assessment is supported by over 200 service-specific risk assessments including PPE guidance, 8 building risk and an online checking-in process to monitor the number and location of staff who are working in offices for track and trace and maximum safe building occupancy levels.

- b. An individual Risk Assessment process for all Clinically Vulnerable and Clinically Extremely Vulnerable employees to complete before they are able to work outside their home has been implemented.
- c. All risk assessments are kept under constant review and updated for new guidance. Reviews of the highest risk areas are undertaken by the Health and Safety and Public Health teams this will continue as long as required.
- d. An additional workforce tracking and monitoring process to support the ongoing effective deployment of employees throughout the pandemic has been established and this shows the impact of the pandemic on working arrangements. The system ensure that, as far as possible, all staff can continue to work though the changing restrictions, can cover for isolation absences and deliver new Covid-19 services through redeployment. The latest weekly report to Feb shows:

Working as normal	1,238
Working from home/adapted/redeployed/or combination	1,266
Working at home with caring responsibilities	202
Self-isolating and working	84
Not working	44*
Self-isolating not working	90
Sickness absence	113
Other absence – maternity leave/holidays/flexitime etc	138
<b>Total SBC Employees</b>	<b>3,175</b>

\*This equates to 16 FTEs as most posts are very few hours per week – eg. STEPS supported employment roles and catering staff where school site is closed

- e. An HR policy covering Covid-19 employment issues has been developed and agreed with Trade Unions and is kept under constant review for the changing situation.
  - f. We have developed comprehensive guidance for employees who are home working. This will be developed for the remainder of the pandemic period and will also form the basis for longer term planning for future working arrangements.
  - g. We will also continue to develop the comprehensive range of health and wellbeing advice and support for employees who are working at home because of the pandemic. To support this we have converted many employee engagement activities to a virtual platform such as the Corporate Induction and the Setting the Scene sessions.
  - h. We supported delivery of vaccinations for our priority employees, meeting the 12 February deadline for offering all 1,411 priority employees.
  - i. However the pandemic has also had a significant direct impact on employees. We have 294 confirmed case amongst the workforce to date and Covid-related illness accounts for 15% of absences year to date. Covid-related illness is a concern for the future as we are potentially beginning to see signs of “long-Covid” cases with 31 cases over 30 days absence.
3. The 2020 Employee survey was therefore developed to look at Covid-19 impact. It was carried out over a period of 5 weeks beginning in November 2020. The survey included both an online and printed questionnaire circulated to all employees with total responses of 1,504 or 48% of the workforce. A copy of the survey is attached as **Appendix 1**.
4. The survey was anonymous, although employee profiling questions were included to assist with the interpretation of the results.

5. The results are extremely positive with employees identifying “**Operating as normal**” and “**Supporting our Customers**” as their top two achievements during the pandemic. The desire to continue delivering services for the people of the Borough is clearly evident. A summary of the results is attached as **Appendix 2**.
6. Employees also report feeling well supported, which suggests that the measures put in place to assist the workforce with the new working arrangements have broadly met their needs:



7. However employees also reported a significant impact on their working lives. With the top concerns whilst working during the pandemic being
  - a. Anxiety and worry about Covid-19
  - b. The Impact of Covid-19 on my work / the Council
  - c. Loss of contact with co-workers
  - d. Isolation
  - e. Potential to spread virus to my co-workers
  - f. Cost of heating and electricity when working from home
8. The impact of the pandemic on the workforce was also the focus of the enquiries for the scheduled reassessment visit from the Investors In People accreditation team which took place in January 2021. The virtual visit provided a good opportunity to provide an independent check of the employee survey results. The assessment noted positive progress. A copy of the assessment report is attached as Appendix 3. The quote used in the report to capture the tone of the feedback is:

*“I got to see my colleagues at their best. Everyone was really kind to each other.” “This has been Stockton at its finest.” “I am really proud of the Council.” “I am proud to work for a Council that really stepped up.” “People really felt they were contributing and will remember this.”*

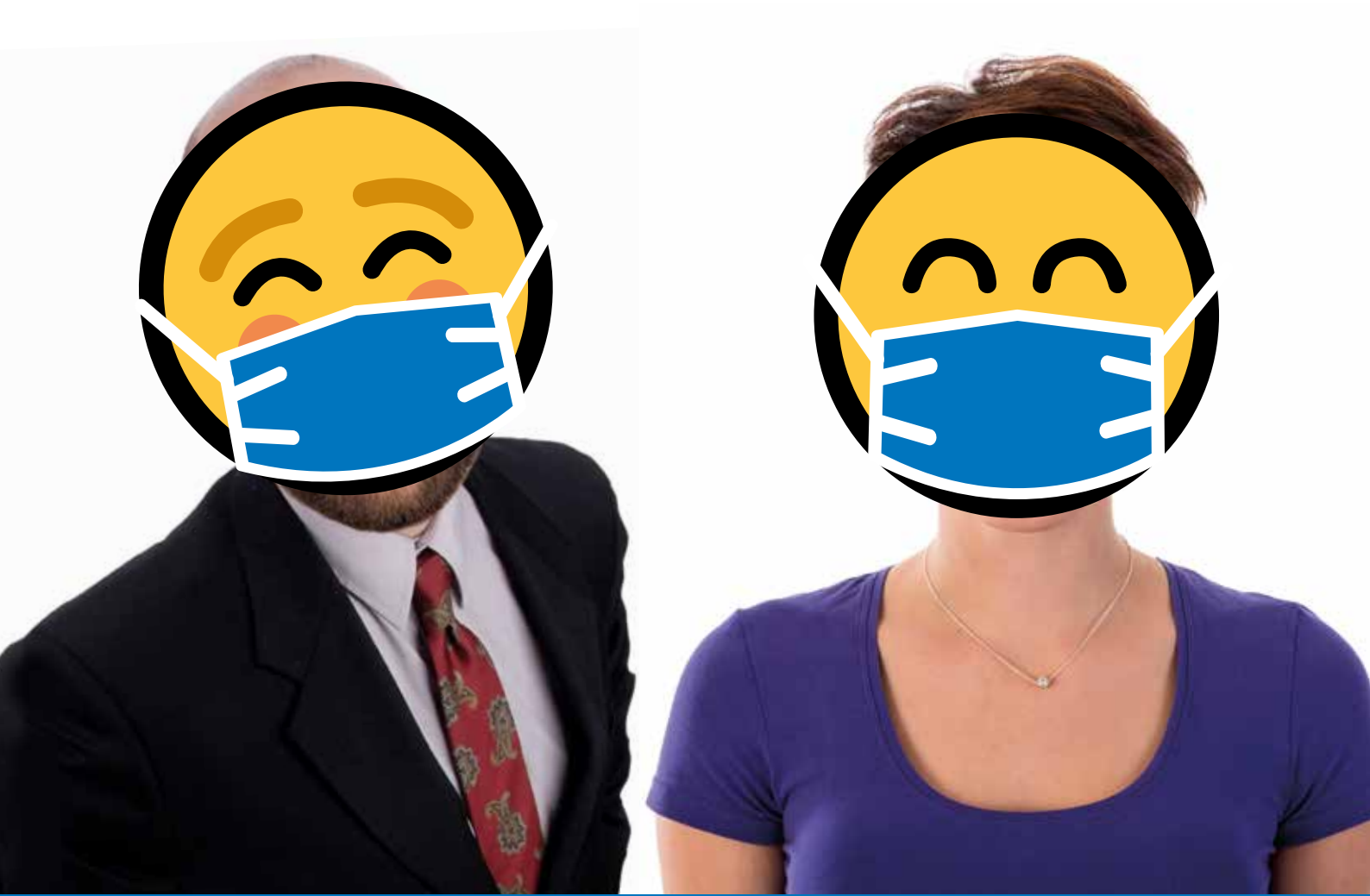
### Next Steps

9. We will use a detailed analysis of these results to inform the ongoing development of Covid-19 employee policies and support in 2021.
10. Detailed results have been shared which each Directorate to ensure that analysis for different areas of the workforce can be carried out and individual Directorate action plans can be developed.
11. Results have also been shared with employees through a series of articles in KYIT and with the staff forums and Shaping a Brighter Future workstreams.

12. The results of the survey will also be used to inform the work that is proposed as a specific Council Plan priority for 2021/22 – “Review our office accommodation and exploit digital technologies to ensure maximum cost effectiveness and accessibility, including learning from the arrangements put in place in response to COVID-19”
13. We have adapted the annual Customer Service awards to include 2 new categories to recognise the contribution of staff during the pandemic.
  - a. The Caring Colleague or Team (during the Covid pandemic) will recognise an outstanding example of an SBC colleague or team who has provided guidance, practical or emotional support to other colleagues through the Covid crisis.
  - b. The Outstanding Contribution Award (during the Covid pandemic) will be made to Individuals or Teams who have made an outstanding contribution to Covid response work beyond the expectations of their day job and have demonstrated examples of all the positive cultural behaviours through the Covid crisis.

Judging is taking place for the awards and planning for a presentation event is underway.

**Name of Contact Officer: Beccy Brown**  
**Post Title: Director HR, Legal and Communications**  
**Telephone No. 01642 527003**  
**Email Address: [beccy.brown@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:beccy.brown@stockton.gov.uk)**



**Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council**

# **COVID Employee Survey 2020**

# Hello and welcome to the COVID-19 Employee Survey 2020

In these unprecedented times it probably won't surprise you to see that the employee survey is a little different this year. After much consideration we feel that any survey this year should just concentrate on the impact of COVID-19 on you as an employee.

Many of us are currently working from home and even if we are in the office or out on site our working arrangements are very different from how they were before the pandemic. These working arrangements are temporary at the moment and are being kept under review. We know we will need to continue to be flexible to respond to any further local or national COVID-19 guidance or restrictions and we also want to know how it feels for you. We are looking at how we can continue to work safely and comfortably into next year and this survey will be a useful way for you to tell us what you think.

So thank you for taking the time to complete it will help us to develop our working arrangements to meet your needs.

My thanks to you all for your ongoing commitment and support.



*Julie*

**Julie Danks**  
**Managing Director**

# Directorate

From the list below, please tell us which Directorate and team you work in.

\*We've identified the teams in each Directorate where there are more than 10 employees. We haven't identified smaller teams in order to protect your anonymity. If you can't see your team, please tick 'other' under your relevant Directorate.

**Administration, Democratic & Electoral Services - (Asst Director: Margaret Waggott)**

- Corporate Administration .....
- Licensing, Democratic & Electoral Services - Other .....

**Adults & Health - (Director: Ann Workman)**

- Adult Social Care Financial Services .....
- Affective Disorder Assessment Team .....
- Carers Service .....
- Allensway Day Centre .....
- Halcyon Day Centre .....
- Community Based Options .....
- Operational - Assessment & Support Planning ...
- Lanark Close .....
- Safeguarding and Review Team .....
- Learning Disabilities .....
- Adult Social Care Ops & Sensory Support Team .
- Oak Road .....
- ART and MDS Team .....
- Older Peoples Mental Health Services .....
- Occupational Therapy .....
- STEPS .....
- Reablement Team .....
- Environmental Health .....
- Rosedale Centre .....
- Public Health Team .....
- Early Intervention & Prevention - Other .....
- Other .....

**Children's Services - (Director: Martin Gray)**

- Early Help - Family Support (N&S) .....
- Tilery House .....
- Early Help Assessment Team .....
- Looked After Children - Resources Other .....
- Family Hubs .....
- Complex Needs Social Work Team .....
- Youth Direction .....
- Leaving Care Service .....
- Education Improvement Service .....
- Permanence Team 1&2 .....
- Tees Valley Music Service .....
- Emergency Duty Team .....
- Family Group Conference (FGC) .....
- Independent Review Unit .....
- Fieldwork North 1-3 .....
- Workforce Development .....
- Assessment Team .....
- Information & Improvement Services .....
- Fieldwork South 1-3 .....
- Early Support Nursery .....
- Child Placement Team .....
- SEN Support and Advisory Team .....
- Oak View .....
- SEN Team .....
- Hartburn Lodge .....
- Other .....
- Our Place .....

**Community Services and Transport - (Director: Jamie McCann)**

- |   |                       |  |                       |
|---|-----------------------|--|-----------------------|
| Building Cleaning Services .....                          | <input type="radio"/> | Street Cleansing .....                           | <input type="radio"/> |
| Catering Services .....                                   | <input type="radio"/> | Waste & Recycling Collection .....               | <input type="radio"/> |
| Business Support .....                                    | <input type="radio"/> | Building and HVE Services .....                  | <input type="radio"/> |
| Cemeteries & Crematorium Unit .....                       | <input type="radio"/> | Construction and Facility Services - Other ..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| Civic Enforcement .....                                   | <input type="radio"/> | Fleet Services .....                             | <input type="radio"/> |
| Community Services - Other .....                          | <input type="radio"/> | Highways and Street Lighting .....               | <input type="radio"/> |
| Community Transport .....                                 | <input type="radio"/> | Design Services .....                            | <input type="radio"/> |
| Grounds Maintenance & Arboriculture .....                 | <input type="radio"/> | Highway Network Flood Risk Management .....      | <input type="radio"/> |
| OneCall Service .....                                     | <input type="radio"/> | Transport Strategy and Road Safety Team .....    | <input type="radio"/> |
| Security & Surveillance Service .....                     | <input type="radio"/> | Other .....                                      | <input type="radio"/> |
| Strat Waste, Com Trans & Reg &<br>Berev Svs - Other ..... | <input type="radio"/> |  |                       |

**Finance, Development & Business Services - (Director: Garry Cummings)**

- |  |                       |                                      |                       |
|--|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Collection & Business Rates .....            | <input type="radio"/> | Inclusive Growth & Development ..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| Council Tax & Benefits Processing Team ..... | <input type="radio"/> | Strategic Governance .....           | <input type="radio"/> |
| Revenues and Benefits - Cashiers .....       | <input type="radio"/> | Strategic Procurement .....          | <input type="radio"/> |
| Systems & Service Development .....          | <input type="radio"/> | Housing Services .....               | <input type="radio"/> |
| Welfare Support Team .....                   | <input type="radio"/> |                                      |                       |
| Finance Services .....                       | <input type="radio"/> |                                      |                       |

**HR, Legal & Communications - (Director: Beccy Brown)**

- |  |                       |                      |                       |
|--|-----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Consultation, Comms & Engagement/<br>Media Relations ..... | <input type="radio"/> | Legal Services ..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| Human Resources .....                                      | <input type="radio"/> |                      |                       |

**The Environment, Culture, Leisure & Events - (Director: Reuben Kench)**

- |  |                       |  |                       |
|--|-----------------------|--|-----------------------|
| Adult Learning & Skills .....                    | <input type="radio"/> | Preston Park Museum and Grounds .....            | <input type="radio"/> |
| Digital Transformation & Customer Services ..... | <input type="radio"/> | Environment Leisure & Green Infrastructure ..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| Events Service .....                             | <input type="radio"/> |  |                       |
| Libraries & Heritage .....                       | <input type="radio"/> |  |                       |

**Xentrall Shared Services - (Asst Director: Ian Miles)**

- |                                    |                       |  |                       |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|--|-----------------------|
| Design & Print .....               | <input type="radio"/> | HR Transactional Services & Schools Team ..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| Finance Operational Services ..... | <input type="radio"/> | ICT Services .....                             | <input type="radio"/> |

**Town Centres Development - (Director Richard McGuckin)**



**2. Please tell us a little about how you've worked during the COVID-19 pandemic – if you've worked in more than one way, please select the answer that covers the longest period.**

During the COVID-19 pandemic I have:

*(please select one answer)*

- Attended work as usual – *go to question 2a*
- Able to work from home/away from normal place of work – *go to question 2b*
- Been unable to work due to service being stood down and/or health reasons (shielding, isolating, sickness) – *go to question 2c*
- Prefer not to say – *go to question 2c*

**a.** (Only answer if you have attended work as usual during the COVID-19 pandemic.)

**To what extent would you agree with each of the following statements?**

*(please select one answer for each question)*

	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
I have felt supported by the Council during the COVID-19 pandemic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I know where to access support regarding my health, safety and wellbeing at work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am receiving the right amount of communication about measures taken in response to COVID-19	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I understand the steps taken to ensure my health and wellbeing at work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel supported by my manager/supervisor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel the new working arrangements have been successful in allowing me to perform my job	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

b. (Only answer if you have been able to work from home/away from normal place of work during the COVID-19 pandemic.)

**To what extent would you agree with each of the following statements?**

*(please select one answer for each question)*

	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
I have felt supported by the Council during the COVID-19 pandemic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I know where to access support regarding my health, safety and wellbeing at work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am receiving the right amount of communication about measures taken in response to COVID-19	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I understand the steps taken to ensure my health and wellbeing at work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have what I need to perform my job when working from home	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My manager/supervisor keeps in regular contact with me when I'm working from home	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am able to strike the right balance between my work and home life	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Post-COVID, I'd like to continue to work from home more often than pre-COVID	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- c. (Only answer if you have been unable to work due to service being stood down and/or health reasons during the COVID-19 pandemic and/or answered 'Prefer not to say' to question 2.)

**To what extent would you agree with each of the following statements?**

*(please select one answer for each question)*

	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
I have felt supported by the Council during the COVID-19 pandemic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I know where to access support regarding my health, safety and wellbeing at work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am receiving the right amount of communication about measures taken in response to COVID-19	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel supported by my manager/supervisor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- 3. During the early lockdown period, were you involved in work outside your usual role for some or all of the time - for example working on the newly established Community Hub?**

- Yes
- No – go to question 4

- a. Focussing on this work, to what extent would you agree with each of the following statements?**

*(please select one answer for each question)*

	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
I enjoyed this work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt valued and trusted to succeed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt like I made a difference in our local response to COVID-19	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I'd be happy to do this work again in the future if needed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**4. Which of these would you consider to be your top three achievements whilst working during the COVID-19 pandemic?**

*(Please pick up to 3 boxes)*

- Overall response to COVID-19
- Operating as normal
- Introducing new processes and procedures
- Introducing new services to support residents
- Supporting our customers
- Working whilst providing care/support for others
- Increased productivity and motivation
- Maintaining communication with co-workers
- Technology
- Easy access to tools and information required to do my job
- Flexible working
- Improved work-life balance
- Saving time/money on commuting and other daily expenses
- Environmentally friendly
- Other, please specify: .....
- .....
- .....

**5. Is there anything else you want to tell us that will help you with your new working arrangements?**

.....

.....

.....

**6. To what extent would you agree with each of the following statements?**

*(please select one answer for each question)*

	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
The Council cares about employees' welfare and wellbeing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel the Council supports me to balance my work and caring responsibilities effectively	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am worried about the impact of coronavirus on me and my friends/family	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My personal circumstances have changed as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic – for example; changes in financial, health, caring, living arrangements etc	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**7. Which of these would you consider to be your top three concerns at the moment?**

*(Please pick up to 3 boxes)*

- Anxiety and worry about COVID
- Not being able to work for health reasons
- Impact of COVID on my work/the Council
- Potential to spread virus to my colleagues
- Childcare and caring responsibilities
- Winter approaching and bad weather
- Isolation
- Lack of a physical workspace
- Keeping a regular schedule and time management
- Distractions in the home
- Internet connectivity and reliability
- Cost of heating and electricity whilst working from home
- Contact with co-workers
- Other, please specify:

.....  
.....

**8. Please use this space to briefly tell us anything else that is on your mind which you haven't been able to say elsewhere in this survey. You might also want to expand on some of your answers here.**

.....  
.....  
.....

## PLEASE ANSWER EACH OF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS, CHOOSING THE MOST APPROPRIATE OPTION IN EACH QUESTION.

The Public Sector Equality Duty and s.149 of the Equality Act 2010 require us to gather this information about our workforce.

Collecting this information as part of the Employee Survey also helps us understand, for the organisation as a whole, what different groups of employees feel about working here.

Before answering these questions, you might like to note that:

All responses are anonymous.

Employee Survey results are ONLY EVER reported when there are more than 10 answers received against each question.

Please help us to make the best use of the survey results by providing the following information:

### 9. Do you currently have caring responsibility for any of the following?

(please select all that apply)

- Child/Children
- Foster child
- Disabled person
- Elderly person
- Other
- None of these
- Prefer not to say

### 10. Do you consider yourself to be a person with a disability as described in the Equality Act of 2010?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

### 11. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say

**12. What is your ethnicity?**

- White
- BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic)
- Prefer not to say

**13. What age group are you in?**

- 16 - 19
- 20 - 29
- 30 - 39
- 40 - 49
- 50 - 59
- 60 - 64
- 65+
- Prefer not to say

**14. What is your job grade?**

- Grade F and below
- Grades G - J
- Grade K - N
- Grade O and above
- Prefer not to say

**15. On what basis are you employed by the Council? Are you ...?**

- Full time
- Part time

**16. Are you ...?**

- Permanent
- Temporary



## Employee Survey Privacy Statement

The information you have provided will help us to understand the impact of COVID on you and how we can continue to help and support our employees.

The data you have provided in this survey will be managed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018. It will only be used for the purpose for which it has been collected. It will be shared with a third party, Change and Transformation Ltd, for analysis. Data is anonymous and will be aggregated for reporting purposes. Data will be retained for a period of two years and then destroyed securely.

For more information on about your information [www.stockton.gov.uk/dataprivacy](http://www.stockton.gov.uk/dataprivacy)

I agree to the above statement







# COVID-19 Employee Survey

## Headline findings



Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council

# COVID Employee Survey 2020

# Headline summary

## COVID-19 Employee Survey

### Introduction

After much consideration this year's Employee Survey concentrated on the impact of Covid-19 on our employees. The survey opened in November and was available between 6<sup>th</sup> November and 11<sup>th</sup> December for responses.

The survey involved an online questionnaire available to all via the internet and a printed questionnaire circulated to employees without intranet access and email. All responses were added together, giving a final total sample size of 1,504.

### Responses

See below breakdown by directorate:

	Total responses	% response	Total number of employees
Administration, Democratic & Electoral Services	87	77%	113
Adults & Health	260	46%	560
Children's Services	345	56%	618
Community Services and Transport	306	29%	1068
Finance, Development & Business Services	207	70%	297
HR, Legal & Communications	70	80%	87
The Environment, Culture, Leisure & Events	106	45%	235
Town Centres Development	18	100%	18
Xentrall Shared Services	104	66%	157
No response	1		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1504</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>3153</b>

This summary report presents early results from the COVID Employee Survey, giving headline findings for the Council ahead of more detailed analysis by directorate and team.

## Working arrangements

The majority of responses to the survey came from employees who are ‘working from home/away from normal place of work’ at 1,059 and all categories were represented in the survey.

Working arrangements	Count
Attended work as usual	337
Able to work from home/away from normal place of work	1059
Been unable to work due to service being stood down and/or health reasons (shielding, isolating, sickness)	82
Prefer not to say	24
No response	2
TOTAL	1504

Specific aspects of employees working arrangements attracted the following ratings:

### Work – overall (1,504 responses)

- I have felt supported by the Council during the COVID-19 pandemic – **82% positive**
- I know where to access support regarding my health, safety and wellbeing at work – **89% positive**
- I am receiving the right amount of communication about measures taken in response to COVID-19 – **87% positive**
- I feel supported by my manager / supervisor – **85% positive**

### Work – attended work as usual (337 responses)

- I have felt supported by the Council during the COVID 19 pandemic – **70% positive**
- I know where to access support regarding my health, safety and wellbeing at work – **82% positive**
- I am receiving the right amount of communication about measures taken in response to COVID 19 – **76% positive**
- I understand the steps taken to ensure my health and wellbeing at work – **80% positive**
- I feel supported by my manager / supervisor – **75% positive**
- I feel the new working arrangements have been successful in allowing me to perform my job – **73% positive**

### **Work – able to work from home/away from normal place of work (1059 responses)**

- I have felt supported by the Council during the COVID 19 pandemic – **87% positive**
- I know where to access support regarding my health, safety and wellbeing at work – **92% positive**
- I am receiving the right amount of communication about measures taken in response to COVID 19 – **91% positive**
- I understand the steps taken to ensure my health and wellbeing at work – **91% positive**
- I have what I need to perform my job when working from home – **82% positive**
- My manager / supervisor keeps in regular contact with me when I'm working from home – **90% positive**
- I am able to strike the right balance between my work and home life – **69% positive**
- Post-COVID, I'd like to continue to work from home more often than pre-COVID – **77% positive**

### **Work – been unable to work due to service being stood down and/or health reasons (82 responses)**

- I have felt supported by the Council during the COVID 19 pandemic – **76% positive**
- I know where to access support regarding my health, safety and wellbeing at work – **84% positive**
- I am receiving the right amount of communication about measures taken in response to COVID-19 – **77% positive**
- I feel supported by my manager / supervisor – **76% positive**

### **Work – prefer not to say (24 responses)**

- I have felt supported by the Council during the COVID 19 pandemic – **75% positive**
- I know where to access support regarding my health, safety and wellbeing at work – **83% positive**
- I am receiving the right amount of communication about measures taken in response to COVID-19 – **96% positive**
- I feel supported by my manager / supervisor – **67% positive**

### **Lockdown work (313 responses)**

313 employees (21%) were involved in work outside their usual role for some or all of the time. This attracted the following ratings:

- I enjoyed this work – **80% positive**
- I felt valued and trusted to succeed – **86% positive**
- I felt like I made a difference in our local response to COVID 19 – **89% positive**
- I'd be happy to do this work again in the future if needed – **81% positive**



## Achievements

When employees were asked to consider their top achievements whilst working during the COVID 19 pandemic, 'operating as normal' and 'supporting our customers' were ranked the highest:

Achievement	Count	% answer
Operating as normal	587	13%
Supporting our customers	551	13%
Overall response to COVID 19	443	10%
Introducing new processes and procedures	433	10%
Maintaining communication with co-workers	423	10%
Flexible working	341	8%
Working whilst providing care/support for others	331	8%
Saving time/money on commuting and other daily expenses	331	8%
Improved work-life balance	294	7%
Technology	184	4%
Increased productivity and motivation	154	4%
Introducing new services to support residents	107	2%
Environmentally friendly	83	2%
Easy access to tools and information required to do my job	73	2%
No response	33	1%
Other	28	1%

## Health and Wellbeing – overall (1504 responses)

Specific aspects of employees health and wellbeing attracted the following ratings:

- The Council cares about employees' welfare and wellbeing – **82% positive**
- I feel the Council supports me to balance my work and caring responsibilities effectively – **74% positive**
- I am worried about the impact of coronavirus on me and my friends/family – **77% positive**
- My personal circumstances have changed as a direct result of the COVID 19 pandemic – **39% positive**

## Concerns

When employees were asked to consider their top concerns at the moment, 'anxiety and worry about COVID' and 'impact of COVID on my work / the Council' were ranked the highest:

Concern	Count	% answer
Anxiety and worry about COVID	589	14%
Impact of COVID on my work / the Council	589	14%
Contact with co-workers	466	11%
Isolation	386	9%
Potential to spread virus to my colleagues	346	8%
Cost of heating and electricity whilst working from home	333	8%
Winter approaching and bad weather	275	7%
Internet connectivity and reliability	275	7%
Childcare and caring responsibilities	260	6%
Lack of a physical workspace	147	4%
Keeping a regular schedule and time management	142	3%
Distractions in the home	103	2%
Not being able to work for health reasons	100	2%
Other	84	2%
No response	34	1%

## Employee profile

### Caring responsibility

The table below summarises employees caring responsibilities, with the majority of people having no caring responsibilities or are caring for a child/children:

Caring responsibility	Count	%
None of these	579	35%
Child/Children	546	33%
Elderly person	288	17%
Prefer not to say	78	5%
Other	71	4%
Disabled person	70	4%
No response	31	2%
Foster child	3	0%

## Age

All age categories were represented in the survey, with those aged 50-59 accounting for over a quarter of responses.

Age category	Count	%
16 - 19	6	0%
20 - 29	104	7%
30 - 39	252	17%
40 - 49	340	23%
50 - 59	439	29%
60 - 64	132	9%
65+	55	4%
Prefer not to say	157	10%
No response	19	1%

## Other Audience Profiles

- **67%** of responses were from female, **27%** from male and **6%** 'prefer not to say'.
- **93%** of the responses were from 'White British'.
- **6%** of the responses were from an employee who considered themselves to have a disability.

## Employment

- **70%** of responses were from 'full time' employees.
- **89%** of responses were from 'permanent' employees.

Job Grade	Count	%
Grade F and below	302	20%
Grades G - J	415	28%
Grade K - N	324	22%
Grade O and above	70	5%
Prefer not to say	344	23%
No response	49	3%

# INVESTORS IN PEOPLE™

We invest in people



24 months + on...

Stockton Borough Council

Project number: NOR-20-01331

Practitioner name: Sheila Warren

Investors in People North of England

Suite 3a, The Exchange

Station Parade

Harrogate

HG1 1TS

**0844 4068008**

The Investors in People brand, trademarks, methodology, products and logo are owned by Investors in People and is protected by copyright and trademark law.

The Investors in People identity is strong, simple, powerful and instantly recognisable. It is therefore important that only organisations that are accredited as Investors in People can use our mark.

©2019 The contents of this document should be considered commercial in confidence.

# It's been a while!

**In July 2018 we finished our assessment and awarded you Standard level.**

We discussed your progress 12 months on and discussed your actions for the following year.

It's been another 19 months since then, and we checked in with you recently to find out how you've got on during recent months.

It was agreed that asking people to give feedback on their experiences during the pandemic would be useful. Sheila Warren (Investors in People Practitioner) held meetings through Teams with Julie Danks, Managing Director of Stockton Borough Council, and 8 other team members. Thanks are due to everyone for their contribution.

## When we assessed you back in 2018, we found that:

- **Shaping a Brighter Future had unleashed real energy across the organisation**
- **Your people experienced strong and supportive leadership**
- **There were multiple effective channels of communication**
- **Innovation, creativity and challenge were encouraged**
- **There were high levels of engagement, empowerment and mutual trust**
- **Your people felt valued**
- **There was a strong commitment to building capacity through developing people**
- **Your people demonstrated a strong commitment to the borough and its residents**
- **Your people had a good understanding of stakeholders, including partner organisations**
- **It was likely that you were working beyond the Standard level of accreditation**

## What's changed since then?

- **Responding to the pandemic whilst delivering on objectives**

The challenge during 2020 and the early weeks of 2021 has been to respond effectively to the pandemic whilst maintaining focus on strategic objectives. Despite the continuing demands of the pandemic response, which include major changes to working practices, 60% of objectives remain on track and the 'business as usual' responsibilities of a Local Authority continue.

## Your people's experiences

The pandemic has obviously dominated organisational life over the last eleven months. Feedback from the interviews confirms that your people have had strong support and have put their heart and soul into supporting local communities. Many of the positive features identified at the 2018 Assessment have helped to sustain your people during this difficult time, and some people commented that the organisational culture which has been created through Shaping a Brighter Future has enabled the organisation to rise to the challenge. *“We have very much supported the culture and ethos of the organisation.”*

Your people were asked: “From an employee’s perspective, what could Stockton Borough Council have done differently or better?” and most were unable to make any suggestions, confirming that the Council’s leaders had provided strong support. The only suggestion for improvement related to visibility of senior leadership: this was an isolated comment, and other people spoke positively about visibility.

- **The Council has responded quickly and effectively to support its residents**

The Council’s clear and effective communication channels, combined with its open and transparent culture, has ensured that your people understand the Council’s responsibilities, and what is expected from them. The scale of the Council’s responsibilities can’t be under-estimated, and your people have had to respond to changing guidance from central Government. Several of the participants in this Investors in People Review had been directly involved in setting up and running the Community Support Hub, which provided a range of support services to residents. As some services such as libraries and museums had to close, people were redeployed into providing support where it was needed. *“We felt we had a real sense of purpose at a time when nobody knew what they were doing.”*

- **Your people have been well supported by their managers and colleagues**

There were good examples of people being supported, reflecting a genuine understanding by senior leaders that people have different responsibilities and challenges in their personal lives. As an example, it is recognised that some people are parents and have home-schooling and childcare responsibilities during normal working hours. Your people have enjoyed strong support from their managers and colleagues, for example through regular check-ins and informal conversations about how things were going and how people were feeling. Mental health is firmly on the organisation’s agenda. *“I have a good support network. There is support above and around me. Our team has become increasingly close.”*

- **Communication has been effective**

Where roles allow, your people moved quickly to working from home. They have used a range of approaches to internal communication, including Teams, phone, email and WhatsApp groups. People have been kept well informed about what’s happening, including by regular briefings from the Managing Director. People have been encouraged to participate in virtual social events, including wreath making at Christmas and weekly catch-up chats, for some light relief and interaction. *“The Council has been really good with communications, communicating regularly about the changes.”*

Your people have also been asked to provide feedback on their experiences through a COVID-19 survey. This produced very positive results, which reflect the findings of this Investors in People Review. As an example, 89% of people said that they know where to access support regarding their health, safety and wellbeing at work.

- **Collaboration, creativity and development have been important**

People who were interviewed explained that they had worked very closely with colleagues and there was a real sense of common purpose and making a difference, which was very motivational. There were many cases of people starting from scratch (for example with the Community Support Hub work) or re-thinking how services could be delivered, and progress made in a very different working environment. People are now thinking about how the experiences of the last 11 months could inform how they work in the future. *“We’ve been forced to look at things differently. I think we work smarter, and people have got used to the fast pace.”*

Your people have also had development opportunities through their involvement in new areas of work (indeed, areas of work which did not exist 12 months ago). There was a great example of a colleague who had decided that they wanted to come out of their “comfort zone” and had moved into a new role which gave them their first experience of managing people in the Council. *“The last few months has done me the world of good, especially when working across the authority.”*

It was also great to hear about the Council’s ambitions, for example in relation to the town centre. A multi-disciplinary Town Centre team has been set up. Other services have been reviewed, despite the pandemic. Key projects are going well and there is growing interest in economic development. The next phase of strategic planning will focus on what recovery looks like. Work on inequalities continues, including health inequalities.

- **Your people are mindful of the impact on residents**

Previous Investors in People Assessment reports have highlighted the strength of commitment of your people to Stockton-on-Tees and the people who live and work there. This has been put to the test during the last 11 months, when your people were supporting citizens in very difficult circumstances. The involvement of people who usually wouldn’t be customer-facing was mentioned during the interviews. It was suggested that some colleagues had “an eye opener” as they hadn’t previously seen the challenges facing some residents, in poorer parts of the community, at first hand.

- **A general comment on employee wellbeing**

All the interviews were very positive, and your people are clearly highly motivated by their work and by the achievements of the last 11 months. It emerged in some conversations that the individuals had experienced heavy workloads for an extended period; and that holiday entitlement had not been taken. It is understood that the Council’s senior leaders and HR team are aware of this issue and are encouraging people to take a break, even though going on holiday isn’t an option at the moment.

- **Some additional quotes from your people**

*“I got to see my colleagues at their best. Everyone was really kind to each other.” “This has been Stockton at its finest.” “I am really proud of the Council.” “I am proud to work for a Council that really stepped up.” “People really felt they were contributing and will remember this.”*

- **Looking ahead...**

Stockton Borough Council’s Investors in People accreditation is valid until July 2021 and it is suggested that an early conversation takes place to discuss the way forward. As noted during earlier assessments, it’s very apparent that the Council’s people management and development practices would be likely to achieve a higher level of accreditation if a comprehensive “Insights” assessment took place.



**INVESTORS<sup>TM</sup>  
IN PEOPLE**

Want to get in touch?

[enquiries@ipnorth.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@ipnorth.co.uk)