



# Employee Engagement Survey 2023

Cherie Cuthbertson, Director of Workforce and Organisational Development  
Karen Hopwood, Head of Organisational Development



# Why survey?

Employee engagement surveys are a great **first step** to measure, understand, and drive employee success. Continually and consistently listening to employees will not only help guide engagement initiatives, but help build employee trust, empower managers, and improve the workplace culture.

Employee surveys offer several benefits that include:

- Improving morale.
- Opening lines of communication.
- Providing new ideas that can improve the business.
- Encouraging honest feedback that can help managers make decisions and be more aware of problems.

Employee surveys show that a company values employee input and gives them a positive outlet to air frustrations and grievances. It can make employees feel like they are being heard.

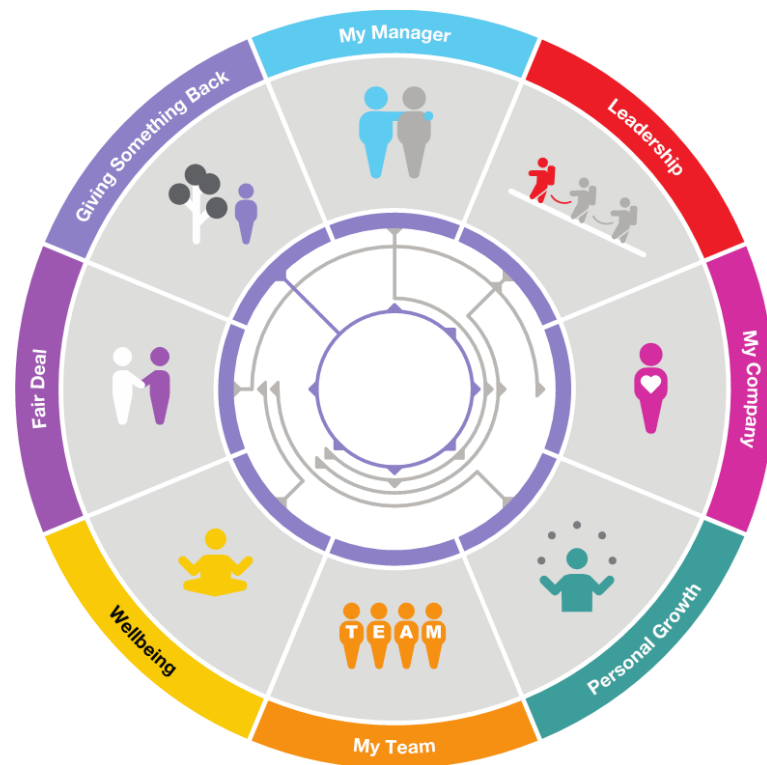
Employee involvement makes employees feel a part of the organisation. When this happens, they become more responsible about their work and push themselves to find better results. This enhances the possibilities of innovative thinking and ideas to tackle problems in the workplace.

An employee engagement survey is only one channel for engagement and provides an organisation with baseline data and an indication of progress. Results will often be a springboard for further questions and deeper engagement activities such as focus groups.



# External Provider

- Best Companies chosen as external delivery provider
  - Results can be benchmarked against other companies
  - Based on simple 8 factor model
  - Flexibility of question choice including organisational specific questions
  - Simple ranking scale 1-7 (disagree – agree)
  - Detailed analysis of results (free text comments and scores)
  - Ability to assess against equality and diversity data
  - Anonymity of responses
  - Accreditation and national league table





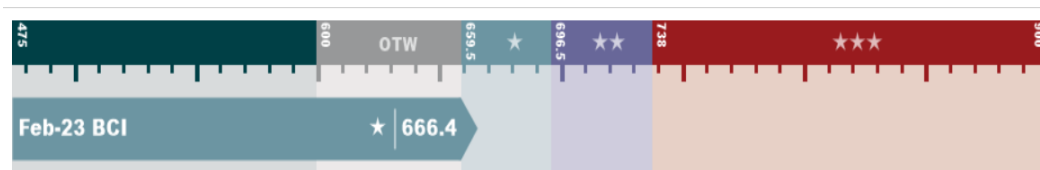
## Implementation

- Survey open 21 Feb – 17 Mar 2023
- 58 statement included in the survey plus EDI data
- 5579 employees surveyed (including casuals and agency employees)
- 400+ “hard to reach” employees contacted by post to encourage completion of the survey
- Daily “scorecard” of responses provided to SLT
- Response rate 54.51%



# Engagement Scores & Response Rate

The Best Companies Index (BCI) score for OCC and how it relates to Best Companies' Accreditation standard. The BCI is a score between 0 and 900 and is directly comparable between surveys.



Ratings breakdown:

- OTW is Good
- ★ is Very Good
- ★★ is Outstanding
- ★★★ is World Class

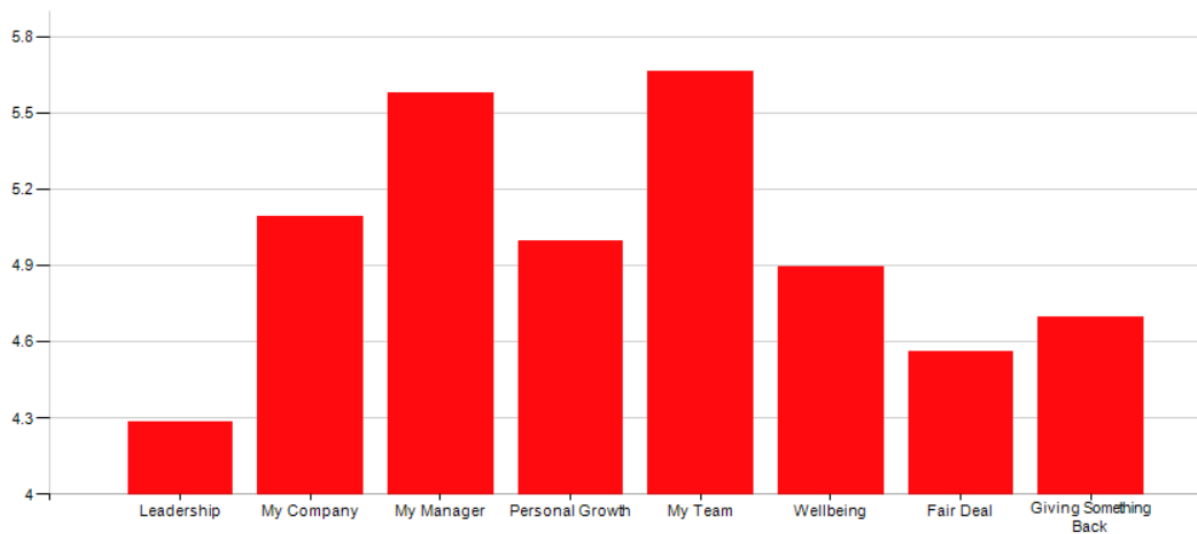
Survey	No. of Responses
<b>Oxfordshire County Council Feb-23</b>	<b>54.51% (3041/5579)</b>
Big Companies Average, All Sectors 2022	64.18%

Job Role	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Team Member (Agency Staff/Contractor/Casual Staff/Team Member)	2150/4401	49%
Manager/Supervisor	781/1048	75%
Senior Managers	110/130	85%



# Scores by factor

How OCC has scored within each of the Factors. The scale is based on the Best Companies scale from 1-7, with 1 being strongly negative and 7 being strongly positive. 4 is a neutral response.





# What makes this a great place to work?

*Summary of received comments*

Employees enjoy working for an organisation where they genuinely feel they are **'able to make a difference'** to the people within the local community. Employees believe the organisation has the **'right attitude'** and everyone is working towards a **'common goal to improve the lives of the community across Oxfordshire'**. Oxfordshire County Council is said to have a **'positive culture'** with **'strong values'** that are encouraged and promoted throughout the organisation.

Some note how **'supportive'** and **'approachable'** their direct line managers are. Having a manager that **'takes time to listen'** provides many with the reassurance that they **'do look to do the best for their staff where possible'**, as one employee suggests.

Employees also comment on training and personal development opportunities at the Council. Some note how there are **'ample' opportunities for growth and development**, with one individual suggesting there are 'hundreds' of E-Learning courses available that employees can choose from. There are some employees who comment on being **'supported' to do additional training and qualifications** for personal development where appropriate.

For many employees, the colleagues they work with in their immediate team are what makes the Council a great place to work. Teams are said to be an **'excellent source of support'**. Team members **'genuinely care'** about the communities they are **supporting** and being **'passionate'** and **'committed'** in the work that they do makes working with colleagues easy.

**Hybrid working has made 'a great deal of difference'** for many of those that have a role that supports working this way. Employees note how this has given them a **'spot on' work-life balance**, with added benefits including no longer needing to 'commute most days'. One employee comments: **'There is a growing recognition of employees health and wellbeing'** at the organisation, which is welcomed by employees.



# What could make this a better place to work?

*Summary of received comments*

## Leadership

Employees understand that just like themselves, Senior Leadership are **'also under pressure for results'**, however some feel that a **'strong presence' is lacking from the group**, with a consensus that **more time should be spent at the coal face**. Employees believe it would be good to 'see' the group more, **with 'clearer messaging'** about what the future looks like for the Council provided by the team.

## Communication

Better communication is asked a number of times by employees, who feel this could be improved 'throughout the organisation'. **'Clear and consistent' messages** and **improved 'understanding' of how different areas of the organisation are 'working together'** to deliver the organisation's vision would also help make the Council a better place to work.

## Personal development

Although many are happy with the training and personal growth opportunities available at the organisation, some take the time to suggest more could be done. For some, it is easy to feel 'stuck' in the current role with calls for **'clearer development opportunities'**. Other pressures impact some, with comments suggesting 'due to ever increasing workloads' **allotted time to spend on personal growth is lost**.

## Team working

Although employees highlight advantages they have seen with working from home where the job allows, there are some who note how **hard it is to 'get to know' colleagues** when working remotely. Encouraging teams to **meet in person** once a week 'minimum' where possible is suggested with others asking for **'more team building'** to improve relationships between colleagues.

## Wellbeing

Resourcing issues are having a negative impact on some employees, who note this in their responses. The 'stresses and strains' some teams are going through each day needs to be 'understood', with one employee believing there to be a **'culture of over working'**. 'Under-resourced' teams is resulting in **'really high' workplace stress**, leaving some to feel **'undervalued'**.





# What can your organisation do to support you at this time?

*Summary of received comments*

Some employees point out that they **'feel well supported'** by the Council already and know that **'whatever help is needed' is there 'if you ask'**. Employees ask that leaders **'continue to listen to our needs'** and provide **'strong but caring management'**.

Managers **improving 'visibility'** and providing **more 'check ins'** in some areas is asked, to ensure employees have the opportunities to talk about 'workloads' and 'staff welfare'. Many do note the **'great support' provided** from their manager, with others commenting that 'nothing' further can be done by them.

Ensuring employees have the **time to commit to personal growth** is asked by some, who have struggled to find the time to 'complete learning development'. Clarity on what is available is asked by others who feel that **training is 'limited' for some roles**.

Making sure **workloads are 'more balanced'** would be welcomed in some areas who have struggled for resources and a greater sense of work-life balance. **Recognising the 'enormous effort'** put in everyday for the local community is also asked.



## 3 areas of focus

Following analysis of factor and individual question scores plus thematic comments from respondents, 3 initial areas of focus were identified for improvement

- **How leaders set the direction of travel, so employees have clarity about where the organisation is going**
- **How managers help employees to feel satisfied with their roles and work**
- **How managers support employees' wellbeing and help manage pressure at work**





# Action planning – Listening Sessions

6 listening sessions were hosted by members of the Strategic Leadership Team.  
189 participants attended the workshops.

Attendees were asked to consider 3 statements

- Leadership: I'm excited about where this organisation is going
- Management: My manager cares about how satisfied I am in my job
- Wellbeing: I'm under too much pressure to perform well

And share thoughts on

- What do we need to start doing?
- What do we need to stop doing?
- What's going well?
- What should we continue doing (do more of and less of)?

**600+ comments and ideas were received**

Each directorate held similar sessions based on local results to inform directorate specific plans



# Action plans

Following the listening sessions a detailed organisational action plan was developed aligned to **5 objectives**

1. Improve colleague satisfaction around visibility of senior leaders and consistency of messaging
2. Improve colleague understanding of and engagement with the organisation direction of travel and the impact their role has on the success of the organisation
3. Improve colleague satisfaction with being able to feedback to senior leaders and managers and feel that their ideas are heard
4. The mental and physical wellbeing of our employees is a priority. Attitudes and behaviours to support this are embedded into our culture
5. New ways of working are understood and embedded across the organisation



# Measuring impact

Best Companies survey every spring.

- Feb 2024 – A short concise survey focussed on the 8 factors and key strategic themes
  - To assess impact of action plans against overall Best Companies Index engagement score (currently 666.5) and the 8 factor scores
- Feb 2025 – A full survey based on 58 statements from 2023
  - To fully assess impact of all actions aligned to the workforce strategy

Develop a dashboard of actions and measures for transparent reporting on progress

Currently investigating opportunities to pulse survey via polls on the intranet

EDI data currently being assessed; further actions to be taken to the EDI steering group

Align the survey statements and results with the Workforce Strategy action plan to assess impact of wider activities planned across the organisation