# RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL
# REPORT TO PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.   6

meeting date:       WEDNESDAY, 25 OCTOBER 2017
title:                     STAFF SURVEY 2017
submitted by:       JANE PEARSON – DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES
principal author:   MICHELLE SMITH – HEAD OF HR

1       PURPOSE

1.1     To report on the Employee Survey 2017.

1.2     Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:

- Community Objectives – }

- Corporate Priorities –      }

- Other Considerations –    }

Well informed, trained, happy, healthy, well managed and motivated employees are essential to the Council achieving its priorities.

2       BACKGROUND

2.1     We carry out a staff survey every two years and it is an important part of our staff engagement strategy.  The purpose of the survey is to establish an overall picture of how staff feel about working for the Council and to compare results with previous years so that we can identify any trends.  We want to know what staff think, what is important to them and how we can all work together to make the Council a good place to work and an organisation that delivers the best service it can to the residents of the borough.

2.2     UNISON are consulted on the design and delivery of the survey and are supportive of the exercise.  The survey built upon previous surveys conducted in 2015, 2012, 2010, 2008 and 2006.  The Action Plan from the last survey in 2015 is attached at Appendix A.

2.3     Following concerns in the past regarding response rates and anonymity, it was agreed once again to conduct the survey with the help of **'in:fusion'** - a research company based within Blackpool Council.  We have worked with them for a number of years on the design, delivery and analysis of surveys.

2.4     A self-completion questionnaire methodology was used in this research, with Snap survey software being utilised.  The survey was made available to complete online and those employees who did not have access to a PC, or who were on leave when the survey was launched, were given access to a paper version of the questionnaire.

2.5     The survey was launched on 17 July 2017 with regular reminders sent before the survey closed on 25 August 2017.  A copy of the survey is attached at Appendix B. The survey was also publicised in the staff newsletter – Backchat.

2.6     The key issues explored in the research were:

- Communication - communication issues such as formal communications, the Intranet and staff newsletters;

- Customer Focus;

- The Council as an Employer - examining issues such as pay, organisational pride and job satisfaction;

- Management Style - both line management and the relationship of employees with senior managers;

- Training and Development;

- Workloads and Wellbeing – including exploring the causes of work-related stress and levels of physical health; and

- Suggestions for Improvement.

3    AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

3.1    The research has several important strategic applications within our organisation and provides:

- contextual information to be used in the continual development of managers and Heads of Service;

- intelligence on the culture of our organisation that can be measured against previous surveys to show change over time;

- information on the effectiveness of particular schemes such as flexible working hours and our communication methods; and

- an opportunity for employees to feedback to Corporate Management Team (CMT) and Heads of Service on key organisational issues that impact on their working environment.

4    RESPONSE RATES

4.1    The overall response rate was 46% - which is a decrease on the 54% response rate achieved in 2015.

|  | 2017 | 2015 | 2012 | 2010 | 2008 | 2006 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Council | **46%** | **54%** | **49%** | **47%** | **38%** | **52%** |
| Chief Executives | 40% | 36% | 47% | 30% | 68% | 51% |
| Community Services | 24% | 24% | 20% | 25% | 17% | 39% |
| Development | * | * | * | 26% | 33% | 53% |
| Resources | 38% | 31% | 48% | 46% | 36% | 54% |

*Note the development directorate was removed from the establishment following an organisational restructure in 2012.

5    ISSUES

5.1    A summary analysis is provided at Appendix C.

5.2 This analysis was presented to CMT on 11 October 2017. Having reviewed the results, CMT have asked **'in:fusion'** to carry out further analysis of areas where a more pronounced downward trend has been identified, with a view to then creating a further survey to explore the factors behind the trend. This will then enable us to develop and shape an action plan based on improvements that could be made. I will report back on the final Action Plan and any actions taken at a future meeting.

5.3 We will update staff on the outcomes of the survey at future Staff briefings and in Backchat.

6 RISK ASSESSMENT

6.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications:

- Resources – There may be some small resource implications depending upon steps taken in the Staff Survey Action plan.

- Technical, Environmental and Legal – None.

- Political – None.

- Reputation – Taking account of staff views and acting upon where possible/appropriate will serve to enhance our reputation as a good employer.

- Equality & Diversity – It is important that all staff have the opportunity to express their views/opinions via a fair and simple process that affords them anonymity and ensures that their views are given serious consideration by CMT, Heads of Service and Members.

7 **CONCLUSION**

7.1 That Committee note the report.


MICHELLE SMITH                                          JANE PEARSON
HEAD OF HR                                               DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

For further information please ask for Michelle Smith, extension 4402

REF: MS/CMS/PERSONNEL/251017

# Time to have your say!

Welcome to our seventh Employee Survey.  The purpose of the survey is to establish an overall picture of how employees feel about working for the Council.  Your views are important and, as far as possible, what you say will make a difference. The questionnaire is strictly confidential.

## Communication

**Q1** **We want to know what you think of the communication within the Council and if you feel that you are sufficiently well informed. It will help us focus on the best ways of keeping you up to date.**

| | Strongly Agree | Agree | Sometimes | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Don't know / not applicable |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I am given sufficient information to do my job properly | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| I am aware of what the Council is striving to achieve for the borough (its priorities and objectives) | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| I am aware of my service's priorities and objectives | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Working away from the main council offices leaves me feeling isolated and ill informed | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Different services communicate well with each other | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| I hear things first through 'rumours' | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Over the past three years I feel that communications (eg team meetings and staff meetings) have improved | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

**Q2** **How often do you...?**

| | Every day | Few times a week | At least once a week | Every few weeks | Less frequently | Never |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Browse the Council website (www.ribblevalley.gov.uk) | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Use the Intranet | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

**Q3** **How often do you... ?**

| | Every time | Most of the time | Some of the time | Rarely | Never | Don't know/ not applicable |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Attend departmental staff briefings | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Attend team meetings | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Read Backchat | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

**Q4** **Do you agree or disagree that the following are useful sources of information?**

| | Strongly Agree | Agree | Sometimes | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Don't know/ not applicable |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The Council website (www.ribblevalley.gov.uk) | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Departmental staff briefings | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Backchat - staff newsletter | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Team meetings | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Staff noticeboards | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| The staff intranet | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

## The Council as an Employer

**Q5** **We want to know if you think the Council is a good employer.**

| | Strongly Agree | Agree | Sometimes | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Don't know/ not applicable |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The Council provides a safe and healthy work environment | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| My Head of Service/manager explains risk assessments to keep me safe at work | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Employees at different levels, and across departments, help each other | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| The Council is a good organisation to work for | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| I feel proud to work for the Council | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| I feel valued by the Council | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| The pay I receive is fair for the job I do | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| I feel that the Councillors value the work of council staff | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| The Council needs to change in order to improve | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| The Council has kept me fully informed about the financial budgets | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| The Council is dealing well with the recession and its impact on the Council | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Overall I am satisfied with my job | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

**Q6** **How worried are you currently about further budget cuts, changes to the Council, and any impact on your employment?**

☐ Very worried  ☐ Worried  ☐ A little bit worried  ☐ Not very worried  ☐ Not worried at all

# Customer Focus

**Q7**  **The relationship between employees and customers should be at the core of what we do. We want to measure how effective you think we are in meeting the needs of our local community.**

|  | Strongly Agree | Agree | Sometimes | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Don't know/ not applicable |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The quality of the Council's services is good | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Employees show a good attitude towards customers | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| I am able to respond flexibly to meet customer needs | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| I am aware of our customer complaints policy | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

# Management Style

**Q8**  **We want to know how well you feel supported by your <u>immediate</u> manager (Supervisor or Head of Service).  So thinking about your manager does he/she ...**

|  | Strongly Agree | Agree | Sometimes | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Don't know/ not applicable |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Keep you and your section focused on objectives and targets (through Performance Appraisals) | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Let you know how you are performing | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Encourage you at work | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Say thank you for a job well done | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Have the ability to communicate with all staff and keep you well informed | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Show you respect and consideration | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Provide support and guidance | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Motivate you and is an effective team leader | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Overall, I am happy with the way in which I am managed | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

# Training and Development

**Q9** **We would like to know if we are providing employees with effective training and development opportunities.**

| | Strongly Agree | Agree | Sometimes | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Don't Know/ Not applicable |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I receive the training I need to do my job well | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| The Council invests in training and development | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| My Head of Service/manager encourages my training and development | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| My personal development is discussed as part of my appraisal | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| I have had a performance appraisal in the last 12 months | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

# Workloads and Wellbeing

**Q10** **To what extent do you consider that you are under stress?**

| | Completely stress-free | Small amount of stress | Moderate amount of stress | Large amount of stress | Don't know/ prefer not to say |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| At home | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| At work | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

**Q11** **We are keen to promote good health and wellbeing both in and outside work.**

| | Strongly agree | Agree | Sometimes | Disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know/ not applicable |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I have a choice in deciding how I do my work | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Different groups at work demand things from me that are hard to combine | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| My deadlines are realistic and achievable | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| I have too many different tasks to do | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| I am pressured to work long hours | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| I am subject to personal harrassment in the form of unkind words or behaviour | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Work problems are solved efficiently in my service | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Relationships at work are strained | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| I am clear what is expected of me at work | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| My working time can be flexible | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| I think morale is good in my service area | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

# Improvement

**Q12** **Do you have any comments to make, changes you'd like to make, or perhaps some suggestions for improvements in internal communications, training and development, or customer service etc...?**

**Q13** **Do you think this survey gives you the opportunity to have your views heard?**

☐ Strongly agree   ☐ Agree   ☐ Neither agree nor disagree   ☐ Disagree   ☐ Strongly disagree   ☐ Don't know/ not applicable

**Do you have any comments to make about this?**

# About You

We are committed to ensuring that all our employees are treated fairly.  The following set of questions will enable us to gain a better understanding of whether there any views which are common to specific areas.

You <u>do not have</u> to answer the questions in this section - you may prefer to tick '*Do not wish to answer*'.

**Q14** **In which Department of the Council do you currently work?**

☐ Community Services   ☐ Resources   ☐ Chief Executives   ☐ Do not wish to answer

**Q15** **Which council building do you mainly work from?**

☐ Council Offices, Church Walk   ☐ Other Council buildings   ☐ Do not wish to answer

**Q16** **What is your current grade?**

☐ Manual/ Craft Grade   ☐ Senior Officer (SO)   ☐ Do not wish to answer
☐ Scale 1 - 6   ☐ Principal Officer (PO)

**Q17** **What is your age?**

☐ Under 20   ☐ 40-49 years   ☐ Do not wish to answer
☐ 20-29 years   ☐ 50-59 years
☐ 30-39 years   ☐ 60+

**Q18** **Are you?**

☐ Male   ☐ Female   ☐ Do not wish to answer

Thank you for completing this survey. Please return using the freereply envelope provided.

# Ribble Valley Borough Council

## Employee Survey 2017
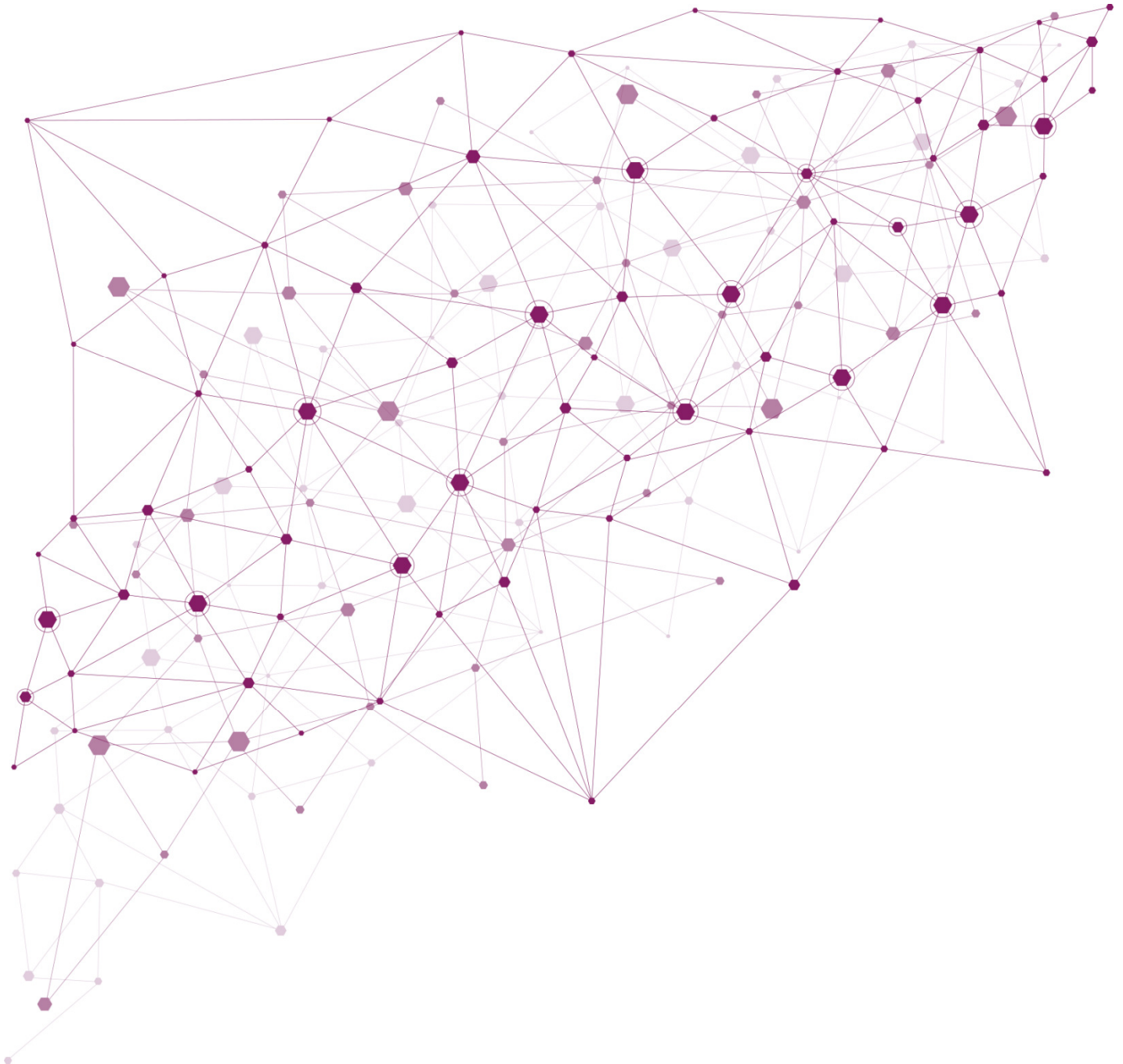


IN:fusion

Ribble Valley
Borough Council

www.ribblevalley.gov.uk

# Contents

# 1 Executive Summary

**108 employees** responded to the 2017 Employee Survey, a **response rate of 46%** (down from 54% in 2015).

Across 52 statements relating to working at the council which have been asked in previous surveys, 6 have seen a positive movement or 5 percentage points or more, 19 have seen less than a 5 point change and 27 have seen a negative movement of 5 or more points.

| | Up | No Change | Down | Biggest Decline |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Communication | 1 | 1 | 5 | I am aware of what the Council is striving to achieve for the borough (its priorities and objectives) |
| Information | 0 | 1 | 5 | Use of Backchat - staff newsletter |
| Council as an employer | 3 | 2 | 6 | The Council has kept me fully informed of the impact of further potential budget cuts |
| Customer focus | 0 | 3 | 1 | The quality of the Council's services is good |
| Management | 0 | 4 | 5 | Have the ability to communicate with all staff and keeps you well informed |
| Training and development | 0 | 2 | 3 | I receive the training I need to do my job well |
| Workload and wellbeing | 2 | 6 | 2 | I am subject to personal harassment in the form of unkind words or behaviour |
| **Total** | **6** | **19** | **27** | |

- Overall job satisfaction dropped from 53% in 2015 to 46%, and this is still below other councils in the county where satisfaction levels range from 55% to 78%.

- Findings show that **stress levels** have remained stable over the last 2 years, with no substantial changes being identified.

# 2 Background and Methodology

Following previous years, the 2017 Employee Survey was available to complete both online and through paper copies. Paper copies of the survey were distributed to manual staff, those on leave, and any staff member who requested a paper copy.

Both electronic responses and paper copies were sent directly to Infusion Research based at Blackpool Council. This ensured that individual responses would not be seen by management or human resources and enabled staff to feel confident in providing honest answers. Utilising the services of Infusion also ensures that any potential bias in the analysis and interpretation would be substantially reduced.

The survey went live online and postal surveys were distributed on Monday 17th July 2017, with regular reminders sent before the survey closed on Friday 25th August.

## 2.1 Response to the Survey

In total the survey received **108 responses** from 236 employees, down from 126 responses in 2015. This equates to a response rate of 46%. The following responses were received from the different departments within the Council:

- Chief Executive's = 20 responses (40%)
- Community Services = 30 responses (28%)
- Resources = 24 responses (38%)
- Unknown = 32 responses

The response rate of 46% is lower than the 2015 employee survey but higher than the three surveys undertaken at Ribble Valley previous to 2015. 32 of the 108 respondents did not identify a department.

**Figure 2.1: Response rates over time**

|  | 2017 | 2015 | 2012 | 2010 | 2008 | 2006 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Council** | **46%** | **54%** | **49%** | **47%** | **38%** | **52%** |
| Chief Executive's | 40% | 36% | 47% | 30% | 68% | 51% |
| Community Services | 24% | 24% | 20% | 25% | 17% | 39% |
| Resources | 38% | 48% | 48% | 46% | 36% | 54% |

The staff survey response rate at Ribble Valley Council is lower than surveys delivered for other authorities across Lancashire.

**Figure 2.3: Response rate by district**

| Authority | Response Rate |
|---|---|
| Ribble Valley 2017 | 46% |
| Burnley 2017 | 62% |
| Wyre 2016 | 68% |
| Rossendale 2016 | 60% |
| Burnley 2015 | 66% |
| Pendle 2015 | 76% |
| South Ribble 2015 | 81% |
| Ribble Valley 2015 | 54% |
| Lancaster 2014 | 38% |

Percentages reported in tables within this report, unless stated otherwise, relate to those employees who selected 'strongly agree' or 'agree' for a particular statement or question. Moreover, 'don't know' selections have not been removed from the analysis unless stated otherwise, as these are considered a valid response and reflection of opinion. Analysis of the direction of travel of survey statements over time utilises a 5% or higher margin either way to represent change.

If the wording of a question or statement has changed compared to previous years then this is referenced. Even subtle changes of wording can have a significant impact on the validity and reliability of any comparison.

This report is split into the sections contained within the employee survey and where possible comparisons will be made with previous results and other councils. Please note that due to the reduced nature of the survey any sweeping comparisons of whole sections have been avoided as the statements within each are different to both previous Ribble Valley surveys and other employee surveys undertaken across the county.

# 3 Who Responded?

Similar to the 2015 employee survey, a large portion of employees did not wish to answer a range of 'about you' questions such as the department they work in or the grade of their position. As such there will be minimal cross-tabulation analysis, with the exception of Council department where differences appear significant. However, any departmental analysis should be treated with caution given the low counts and likelihood of selection bias.

**Figure 3.1: About you information**

| | 2017 | | 2015 (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Count** | **%** | |
| **Department** | | | |
| Community Services | 30 | 28% | 23% |
| Resources | 24 | 28% | 25% |
| Chief Executive's | 20 | 19% | 14% |
| Do not wish to answer | 32 | 30% | 38% |
| **Building** | | | |
| Council offices | 72 | 67% | 60% |
| Other Council buildings | 12 | 11% | 8% |
| Do not wish to answer | 23 | 21% | 32% |
| **Grade** | | | |
| Manual/ craft | 8 | 7% | 1% |
| Scale 1-6 | 37 | 34% | 31% |
| Senior Officer (SO) | 1 | 1% | 5% |
| Principal Officer (PO) | 10 | 9% | 8% |
| Do not wish to answer | 52 | 48% | 56% |
| **Age** | | | |
| Under 20 | 0 | 0% | 0% |
| 20-29 years | 2 | 2% | 4% |
| 30-39 years | 10 | 9% | 8% |
| 40-49 years | 18 | 17% | 21% |
| 50-59 years | 21 | 19% | 13% |
| 60+ years | 6 | 6% | 6% |

| Do not wish to answer | 51 | 47% | 48% |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | | | |
| Male | 28 | 26% | 24% |
| Female | 33 | 31% | 37% |
| Do not wish to answer | 46 | 43% | 39% |

# Communication

Since 2015, one of the seven statements within the Communication section of the survey has seen a positive direction of travel, two have remained at a similar level, and four statements have shown a negative direction of travel.

The number of staff who feel isolated and ill-informed due to working away from the main council offices has decreased from 18% in 2015 to 13% in 2017, with this area making a positive direction of travel.

The number of staff who feel that they are given sufficient information to do their job properly has marginally decreased, with 62% agreeing in 2015 compared to 54% in 2017.

The most significant decline is seen in respondents' awareness of what the Council is striving to achieve for the borough, with agreement for this statement decreasing by 20% since 2015.

Agreement has remained at a similar level in both staff awareness of their service's priorities (64%) and staff opinion on if different services communicate well with each other (19%).

**Figure 4.1: Level of agreement with communication statements (% agree)**

| | 2017 | 2015 | Change |
|---|---|---|---|
| I am given sufficient information to do my job properly | 54% | 62% | ☟ |
| I am aware of what the Council is striving to achieve for the borough (its priorities and objectives) | 38% | 58% | ☟ |
| I am aware of my service's priorities and objectives | 64% | 69% | ☟ |
| Working away from the main council offices leaves me feeling isolated and ill-informed | 13% | 18% | ☝ |
| Different services communicate well with each other | 19% | 21% | ➲ |
| I hear things first through 'rumours' | 42% | 34% | ☟ |
| Over the past three years I feel that communications (e.g. team meetings and staff meetings) have improved | 23% | 30% | ☟ |

The source of information that employees appear to use the most often is the Council newsletter Backchat, with 78% of respondents reading the newsletter every time/most of the time. Employees within the Chief Executive's department use this information source the most (90%).

**Figure 4.2: How often respondents use Council communication channels (every day and few times a week)**

## 2017
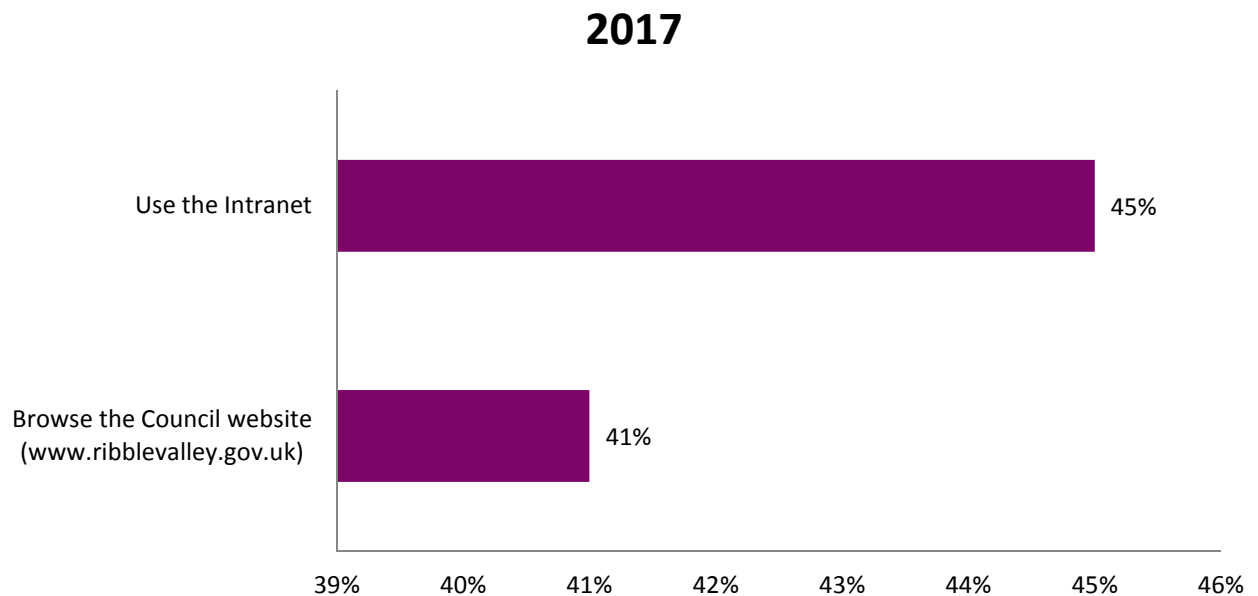


**Figure 4.3: How often respondents attend Council meetings and briefings (every time and most of the time)**
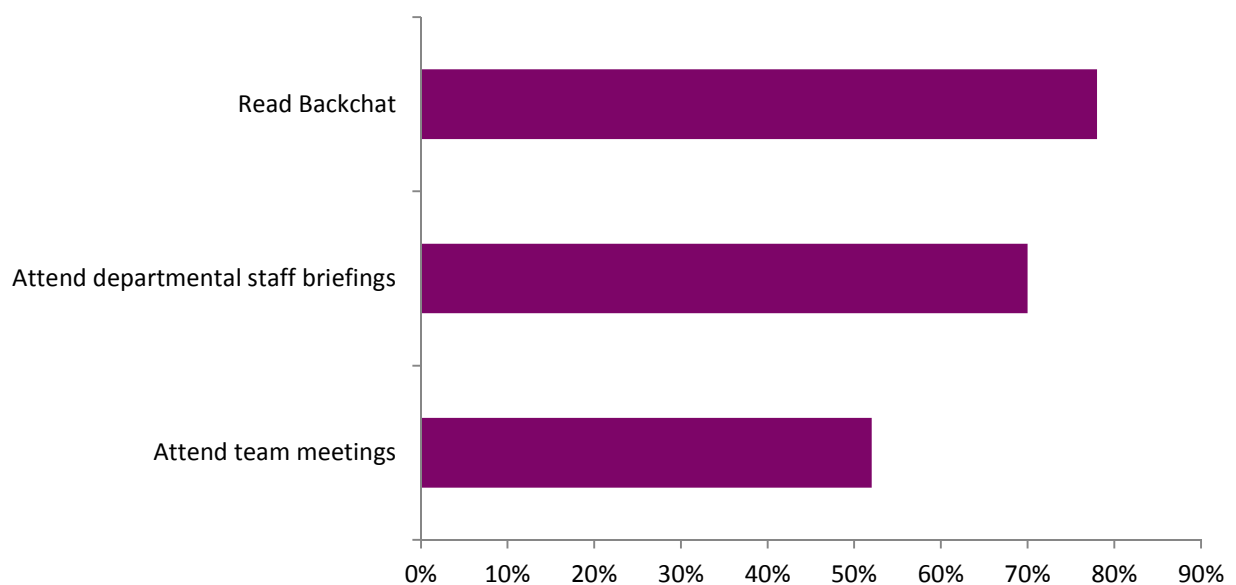
The Communication section also asked employees whether they find a range of information sources available to them to be useful. Since 2015 there appears to be a general decline in how useful staff find Council information sources, with 5 out of 6 sources decreasing in agreement. The most significant changes in Council communication channels has occurred in staff finding Backchat and the staff intranet less useful. Despite the newsletter being read more often, staff now appear to find it less useful, with agreement decreasing from 61% in 2015 to 49% in 2017.

Team meetings have remained on a similar agreement level (48%) as in 2015.

**Figure 4.4: Level of agreement with useful sources of information (% agree)**

| Useful Sources of Information | 2017 | 2015 | Change |
|---|---|---|---|
| Browse the Council website (www.ribblevalley.gov.uk) | 65% | 74% | �ይ |
| Departmental staff briefings | 44% | 54% | ☢ |
| Backchat - staff newsletter | 49% | 61% | ☢ |
| Team meetings | 48% | 49% | ⮎ |
| Staff notice boards | 43% | 50% | ☢ |
| Staff intranet | 39% | 49% | ☢ |

# Council as an Employer

Overall, agreement levels within the Council as an employer section are mixed, with 6 statements showing a negative direction of travel, 3 statements making a positive direction of travel, and 2 statements showing no change.

The most significant change in staff opinion concerns the Council keeping staff fully informed of the impact of further potential budget cuts, with agreement for this statement decreasing from 75% in 2015 to 50% in 2017. Correspondingly, agreement for the statement 'The Council is dealing well with the recession and its impact on the Council' has also declined from 79% in 2015 to 59% in 2017.

On the other hand, staff agreement that their Head of Service/ manager explains risk assessments to keep them safe at work has increased from 39% in 2015 to 48% in 2017. Alongside this, more staff now also agree that employees at different levels and across departments help each other, rising from 39% to 44%.

Staff agreement for the Council providing a safe and healthy work environment and feeling valued by the Council has remained at a similar level since 2015.

When analysed by department, 100% of staff in the Resources department agree that the Council provides a safe and healthy work environment compared to 35% of those working in Community Services. Correspondingly, 75% of employees in both the Resources and Chief Executive's departments agree that their Head of Service/ manager explains risk assessments to them, compared to 23% of staff in Community Services.

Following this pattern, 65% of staff in the Chief Executive's department and 63% of staff in the Resources department agree that overall they are satisfied with their job, compared to 27% of staff in Community Services.

**Figure 6.1: Level of agreement with Council employer statements (% agree)**

| | 2017 | 2015 | Change |
|---|---|---|---|
| The Council provides a safe and healthy work environment | 70% | 69% | ➲ |
| My Head of Service/manager explains risk assessments to keep me safe at work | 48% | 39% | ⋒ |
| Employees at different levels, and across departments, help each other | 44% | 39% | ⋒ |
| The Council is a good organisation to work for | 52% | 59% | ⋓ |
| I feel proud to work for the Council | 44% | 58% | ⋓ |
| I feel valued by the Council | 28% | 29% | ➲ |
| The pay I receive is fair for the job I do | 23% | 36% | ⋓ |
| I feel that the Councillors value the work of council staff | 17% | n/a | n/a |
| The Council needs to change in order to improve | 72% | 57% | ⋒ |
| The Council has kept me fully informed of the impact of further potential budget cuts | 50% | 75% | ⋓ |
| The Council is dealing well with the recession and its impact on the Council | 59% | 79% | ⋓ |
| Overall I am satisfied with my job | 46% | 53% | ⋓ |

35% of employees are very worried or worried about further budget cuts, a small change from 30% in 2015. 29% of employees are now not very worried or not worried at all about further budget cuts, again showing no substantial change from 30% two years ago.

When looking across the different departments at the Council, employees within the Resources department are most worried about the prospect of further budget cuts, changes to the Council, and any impact on their employment, with 37% of staff stating they are worried or very worried. A similar number of staff in Community Services (36%) stated that they were worried or very worried about this, with staff in the Chief Executive's department being the least worried (25%). 30% of respondents to this question did not state their department.

**Figure 6.2: How worried employees are about further budget cuts**
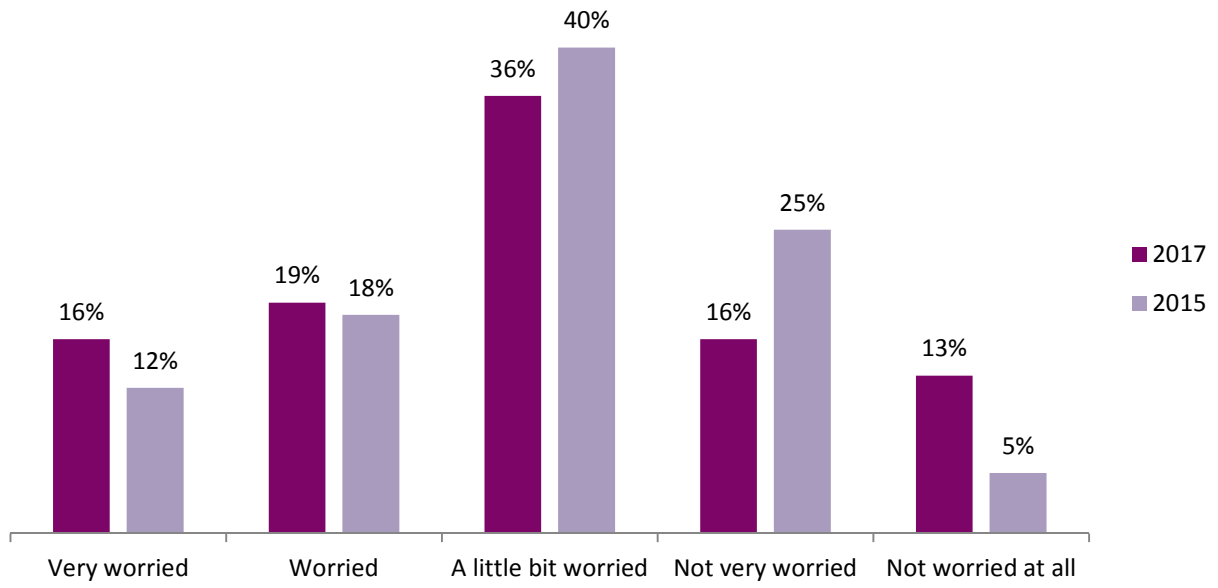
# Customer Focus

On average, the current agreement levels relating to customer focus have remained similar to those found in 2015, with 3 out of 4 statements showing no change. However, staff agreement that the quality of the Council's services is good has dropped from 80% in 2015 to 68% in 2017.

When analysed by department, 85% of employees in the Chief Executive's department agree that the quality of the Council's services is good. This compares to only 44% of respondents working in Community Services.

92% of staff in the Resources department are aware of the customer complaints policy compared to 43% of staff in Community Services.

**Figure 5.1: Level of agreement with customer focus statements (% agree)**

|  | 2017 | 2015 | Change |
|---|---|---|---|
| The quality of the Council's services is good | 68% | 80% | ☝ |
| Employees show a good attitude towards customers | 81% | 82% | ➲ |
| I am able to respond flexibly to meet customer needs | 72% | 75% | ➲ |
| I am aware of our customer complaints policy | 73% | 77% | ➲ |

# Management

Of the nine management statements, 5 statements have declined in staff agreement and 4 statements have remained at a similar level.

The most significant change in staff opinion on management concerns both encouraging staff at work and the ability of managers to communicate with all staff and keep them well informed, with staff agreement in these areas falling by 8% since 2015.

When looking at these statements by department, 80% of staff within the Resources department agree that their manager encourages them at work compared to only 28% of those working in Community Services. Similarly, 76% of staff within the Resources department agree that their manager is able to communicate with staff and keep them well informed compared to only 30% of Community Services employees.

Levels of agreement remain highest for managers showing staff respect and consideration, at 66%. This is highest in the Resources department (88%) and lowest in Community Services (54%).

**Figure 7.1: Level of agreement with management statements (% agree)**

| Thinking about your manager does he/she... | 2017 | 2015 | Change |
|---|---|---|---|
| Keeps you and your section focused on objectives and targets (through Performance Appraisals) | 43% | 49% | ◑ |
| Let you know how you are performing | 43% | 48% | ◑ |
| Encourage you at work | 47% | 55% | ◑ |
| Says thank you for a job well done | 46% | 52% | ◑ |
| Have the ability to communicate with all staff and keeps you well informed | 43% | 51% | ◑ |
| Show you respect and consideration | 66% | 70% | ➲ |
| Provide support and guidance | 56% | 57% | ➲ |
| Motivate you and is an effective team leader | 43% | 43% | ➲ |
| Overall, I am happy with the way in which I am managed | 51% | 55% | ➲ |

# Training and Development

Of the five training and development statements, 3 statements have shown a negative direction of travel since 2015 and 2 statements have remained on a similar level.

45% of employees agree that they receive the training they need to do their job well, down from 52% in 2015.

The proportion of employees agreeing that they have had a performance appraisal in the last 12 months has decreased from 48% to 43% over the last two years. Staff in the Resources department were the most likely to have had a performance appraisal in the last 12 months (50%), with employees in the Chief Executive's department being the least likely (40%).

Agreement for both the encouragement of training and development by Heads of Service/ managers and having personal development discussed during appraisals showed no substantial change since 2015.

**Figure 8.1: Level of agreement with training and development statements (% agree)**

| Training and Development | 2017 | 2015 | Change |
|---|---|---|---|
| I receive the training I need to do my job well | 45% | 52% | ● |
| The Council invests in training and development | 30% | 36% | ● |
| My Head of Service/manager encourages my training and development | 42% | 43% | ● |
| My personal development is discussed as part of my appraisal | 53% | 54% | ● |
| I have had a performance appraisal in the last 12 months | 43% | 48% | ● |

# Workloads and Wellbeing

22% of employees consider themselves to be under a large amount of stress at work, compared to 23% in 2015. The findings suggest that Community Services is the most stressful department to work in with 73% of staff in this department feeling a moderate or large amount of stress.

Overall stress levels at home have also stayed around the same as those reported two years ago, with 24% of staff stating they feel a moderate or large amount of stress at home in 2017 compared to 22% in 2015. Employees working within the Chief Executive's department appear to feel the most stress when working from home, with 37% stating this compared to 10% of Community services staff.

**Figure 9.1: Level of stress at work and at home**
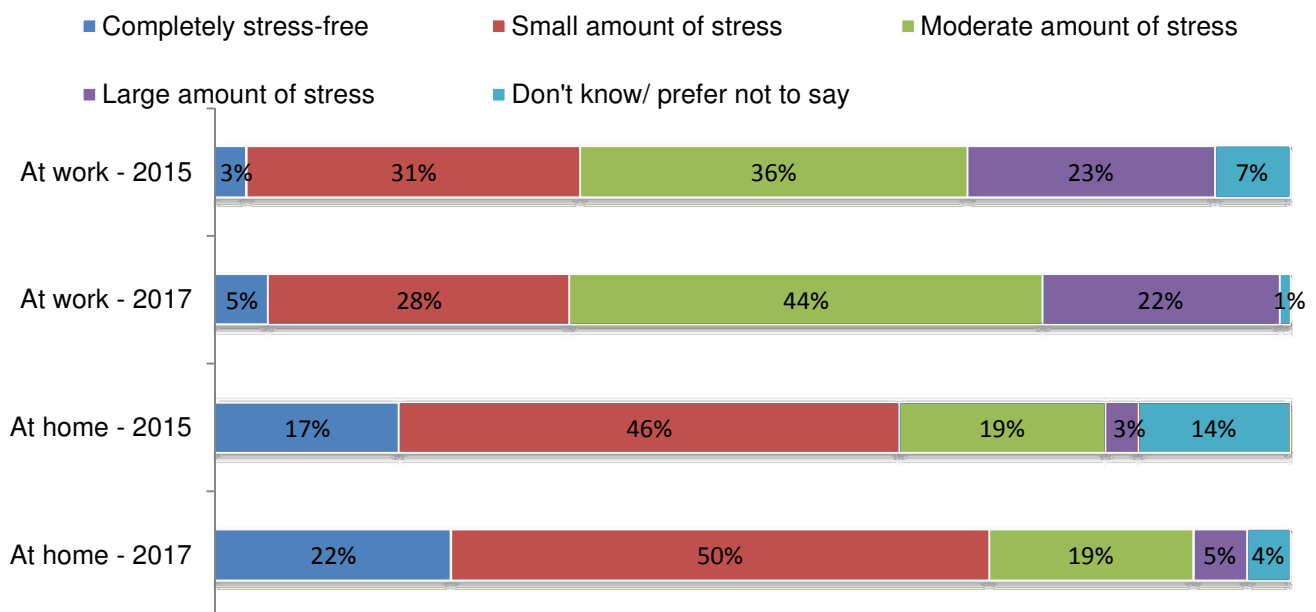


Of the 11 statements relating to health and wellbeing, 7 remain at a similar level, 2 have shown improvement, and 1 statement has shown a negative direction of travel.

Staff agreement for having too many different tasks to do has decreased by 6% since 2015. Additionally, more staff now feel that work problems are solved efficiently in their service, rising from 38% in 2015 to 41% in 2017.

However, more staff also agree that they are subject to personal harassment in the form of unkind words or behaviour at work, with this increasing from 10% in 2015 to 15% in 2017.

In regards to whether deadlines are realistic and achievable, 83% of staff in the Resources department agree compared to 33% of those working in Community Services.

96% of employees in the Resources department also agree that they are clear on what is expected of them at work compared to 54% of employees in Community Services.

**Figure 9.2: Level of agreement with health and wellbeing statements (% agree)**

|  | 2017 | 2015 | Change |
|---|---|---|---|
| I have a choice in deciding how I do my work | 65% | 62% | ➲ |
| Different groups at work demand things from me that are hard to combine | 26% | 28% | ➲ |
| My deadlines are realistic and achievable | 56% | * | n/a |
| I have too many different tasks to do | 20% | 26% | ⋂ |
| I am pressured to work long hours | 8% | 12% | ➲ |
| I am subject to personal harassment in the form of unkind words or behaviour | 15% | 10% | ⋃ |
| Work problems are solved efficiently in my service | 41% | 38% | ⋂ |
| Relationships at work are strained | 21% | 17% | ➲ |
| I am clear what is expected of me at work | 72% | 74% | ➲ |
| My working time can be flexible | 60% | 56% | ➲ |
| I think morale is good in my service area | 35% | 41% | ⋃ |

*In 2015, this statement was phrased 'I have unachievable deadlines' and received 16% agreement.

# Improvement

**Q12 Do you have any comments to make, changes you'd like to make, or perhaps some suggestions for improvements in internal communications, training and development, or customer service etc...?**

Respondents were given the opportunity to make comments on any changes or improvements they would like to see in the Council. Comments received covered CMT minutes, more team meetings/ appraisals, training and development, Flexi-time/ TRS, information-sharing, and miscellaneous.

## CMT minutes

> "Blue minutes from CMT tell very little. Service manager conveys little information about projects and meetings they attend"

## More team meetings/ appraisals

> "More team meetings and 1-2-1 appraisals. Improvements in communication between departments and teams"

## Training and development

> "Training seems to be offered to some members of staff and not others, in some cases is irrelevant to the post they are in which causes issues with other staff members who are doing the job which another person is receiving training for"

## Flexi-time/ TRS

> "Use the time recording system fully and remove the need to waste time filling out cards and then chasing up whether these have been put on the system. Would save money in the costs of printing the cards and employee time in processing" them.

**Information-sharing**

"Be good to share successes in each dept and more of the positives in our work place"

**Other**

"Still finding my feet in the job so cannot make too many well informed comments at this stage"

**Q13 Do you think this survey gives you the opportunity to have your views heard?**

Respondents were then asked if the survey allowed them to have their views heard. Comments received included questions to how the survey will be used and the impact it will have, requests for feedback of survey results and assessment of outcomes, claims that the survey is unbalanced, and miscellaneous comments.

**How the survey will be used**

"Whilst views are stated using these surveys, I am not sure as to how much of impact/ difference they make"

**Feedback of survey results**

"Some feedback on whether changes have been implemented as a result of issues raised in this survey would be helpful"

**Survey is unbalanced**

"Too focused on communications and not enough about morale and motivation"

**Other**

"Possibly should be given only to employees who have completed their probation period"