



South Tyneside Council

Employee Survey Summary and Action Plan

This document has been classified as: **Not
protectively marked**

Jade Puntin, Organisational Development Advisor
People and Organisational Development Committee,
29 July 2026

Report to People and Organisational Development Committee

Cabinet Portfolio/Lead Member: Cllr Susan Sybenga, Lead Member for Finance & Resources

Report of Jade Puntin, Organisational Development Advisor

Subject: Employee Survey Summary and Action Plan

Date: 29 July 2026

Wards affected: N/A

Council ambitions: Healthy and Well and Connected to jobs, skills and learning.

Does the report and any appendices contain information which has been identified as confidential or exempt?

- No, this report does not contain information identified as confidential or exempt.

For Executive Decisions only:

Is the decision a Key Decision? N/A

Is it included in the Forward Plan? N/A

If not in the Forward Plan is the report: N/A

Relevant Scrutiny Chair: N/A

Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny? No

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the People and Organisational Development Committee with a summary of our 2025 Employee Survey results. In addition, this report will share an update on the action plan created from the responses and how we're going to address what has been raised in the employee survey.

Background Information

2. The 2025 Employee Survey was open for responses for a 6-week period from 6th October 2025 to 14th November 2026.
3. The 2025 survey saw our highest response rate of 55%. This was a 14%-point increase compared to 2023 (1,110 returned in 2023 v. 1,885 returned in 2025). We also had a 450% increase in paper survey completions compared to 2023.
4. The overall response to the employee survey was positive. There were 42 questions in total, and the table below shows the split of questions:

New questions	37% (15 questions)
Improved in positivity	50% (21 questions)
Remained the same in positivity	11% (5 questions)
Declined in positivity	2% (1 question)

5. Our top scoring questions (98% positivity) were that employees feel trusted to do their job and they know what is expected of them at work. Our lowest scoring questions were that employees can see a clear path for career progression in their current role (62% positivity) and they are satisfied with the rewards and benefits they receive for the work they do (73%).
6. Management feedback was strong, with all 6 questions increasing in positivity from the previous survey, and two new questions scoring high as well.
7. From the free text comments, clear themes emerged in terms of work-related concerns and issues from employees. These included:
 - Career progression and development opportunities
 - Concerns over budget and job security
 - Concerns over staffing and capacity
 - Communication
 - Wellbeing support, rewards and benefits
 - Environment and equipment
 - Improving processes or policies
 - Workload

Main issues and Options to be Considered

8. The 2025 survey highlighted an engaged workforce with strong relationships between employees and managers. Employees reported high levels of trust, support and belonging. The Council also is viewed positively as an employer, with a high number of employees (91%) feeling proud to work for the Council. Flexible and hybrid working, wellbeing support and positive culture were identified as key strengths.
9. The above highlights are from the Council Overall Employee Survey results. Directorate, Service and Team (where applicable) level results have been sent to the relevant managers.
10. The results have been shared Council-wide via email, the intranet and the Chief Executive Q&A.
11. Alongside the results being shared, key areas of focus were also shared. This has led to the creation of the Employee Survey Action Plan (appendix 1).
12. The main area for improvement is career progression, with only 62% of employees able to see a clear path for progression within their current role. Communication was also identified as a key theme, particularly around organisational change and the desire for more direct communication from managers.
13. Employees also highlighted concerns about workload (noted on the last three surveys), staffing capacity, budget pressures, job security, and ICT systems and equipment. Further opportunities exist to improve the consistency of 1-2-1's and annual reviews, increase awareness of wellbeing support and promoting the employee networks.
14. The action plan focuses on addressing these areas through improved communication, enhanced development opportunities, workforce planning, wellbeing initiatives and increased employee engagement.
15. The action plan has 10 areas of improvement, with actions that sit within each area. A summary of this is below:

Area of Improvement	Action
Communication and Engagement around Organisational Change and Updates	• Develop an intranet page for the Council's Transformation Programme • Continue with internal communications approach around key updates to all employees • Review current internal communication channels • Development of the Culture and Engagement Board and work programme

More direct communication from managers	• Continue with monthly communication toolkits and briefing materials • Managers encouraged to hold drop-in sessions via teams and regular team meetings
Career progression	• OD to provide support for opportunities including career pathways, apprenticeships, coaching and internal development opportunities • Managers to understand the motivators per age group and hold progression and development conversations at 1-2-1's and Annual Reviews • Raise awareness of coaching offer available
Learning and progression opportunities	• 2026 Learning and Development Programme to focus on workforce skills • Employees to be given opportunity to say what they would like included on next L&D programme
Ensuring all employees receive regular 1-2-1s and annual reviews	• Directors to reinforce expectations and receive quarterly updates • Continue to deliver annual review training for both managers and employees • Launch expectations in the Good Manager Guide
Concerns around staffing, workload and capacity	• Reinforce workforce planning as part of the people strategy and service planning process • Introduce new workload and wellbeing 15-minute bitesize sessions • Apply for co-pilot premium licence to improve individual and team processes/improve productivity
Environment, equipment and ICT systems identified as a concern	• Introduction of new systems such as iTrent and TechOne, helping to reduce ICT concerns around Oracle system • Continue to promote the M365 Academy and Modern Workplace Champions to support colleagues using digital tools
Wellbeing support and initiatives	• Invite more employees to join the Employee Wellbeing Group • Continue with yearly calendar of wellbeing campaigns • Achieve and raise awareness of our Foundation SHINE accreditation • Raise awareness of Counselling service

	• Increase visibility and promotion of employee networks and ensure staff are given time to engage
Reward and benefit satisfaction	• Improve promotion (QR code postcards) and employee awareness of the full reward and benefits offer, including wellbeing support, leave provisions, pension and discount schemes. • Continue to work with Pledge partners to increase our benefit offering. • Include on recruitment materials and recruitment microsite

16. In 2026, we will also update three key strategies which will have a strong focus on stakeholder engagement:

- Our Council Strategy
- People Strategy
- Employee Wellbeing Strategy

17. Individual service action plans have been created as well as employee networks and enabling services responding to feedback in their areas.

18. For next steps, we will:

- Engage with the workforce and share the Employee Survey Action Plan
- Continuously monitor progress and share progress updates throughout the year and until the next Employee Survey.

Implications - Financial and Resources

19. None of the actions within the employee survey have any financial implications.

Implications - Legal and Governance

20. There are no significant legal or governance implications arising from the proposed recommendations in this report.

Risk

21. A risk of not completing the actions within this report is that the Council could fail to make staff feel valued, listened to and cared for in the workplace.

Equality and Diversity and Community

22. All employees were asked to complete the employee survey.
23. Question in the employee survey included protected characteristic questions such as age, gender, disability etc. This allowed for each employee network to receive their own breakdown of the employee survey questions for each protected characteristic.
24. Actions within this report show a commitment to continue to improve the experience of all employees within South Tyneside Council, with a focus on EDIB and ensuring staff feel listened to and belong in an inclusive environment.
25. There are no significant equality, diversity, community and integration implications arising from the proposed recommendations in this report.

Environmental and Sustainability

26. There are no significant environmental and sustainability implications arising from the proposed recommendations in this report.

Council Ambitions, Policies, Strategies and Plans

27. The report supports the Council ambitions, policies, strategies and plans.

Consultation and Engagement

28. To be able to create the action plan, consultation and engagement was carried out to the whole workforce to encourage completion of the Employee Survey. Results have been shared with the workforce, along with a brief area of focus which has then created the action plan.

Recommendations

29. People and Organisational Development Committee is recommended to note the contents of this report.

Reasons for Recommendations

30. To ensure that People and Organisational Development Committee are informed on the progress to date and the work undertaken as a result of the 2025 Employee Survey feedback.

List of Appendices

Appendix 1 – Our Council Employee Survey Action Plan 2026 v1

Employee Survey Summary and Action Plan

The following is a list of the background papers (excluding exempt papers) relied upon in the preparation of the above report:

Background Paper	File Ref:	File Location
Employee Survey – Our Council	Employee Survey 2025 results	Employee Survey - South Tyneside Council Intranet

Employee Survey Action Plan

Employee Survey 2025 – Summary

Key Strengths

The 2025 survey highlighted a highly engaged workforce with strong relationships between employees and managers. Employees reported high levels of trust, support and belonging, with management scoring particularly well across areas such as wellbeing, communication, feedback and living the Council's PROUD values.

The Council also continues to be viewed positively as an employer, with 91% saying it is a great place to work, 91% feeling proud to work for the Council and 93% intending to stay over the next 12 months. Flexible and hybrid working, wellbeing support and the positive culture were identified as key strengths.

Areas for Development

The main area for improvement is career progression, with only 62% of employees able to see a clear path for progression within their current role. Communication was also identified as a key theme, particularly around organisational change and the desire for more direct communication from managers.

Employees highlighted concerns about workload (noted on the last three surveys), staffing capacity, budget pressures, job security, and ICT systems and equipment. Further opportunities exist to improve the consistency of 1-2-1s and annual reviews, increase awareness of wellbeing support, rewards and benefits, and promoting employee networks.

Action Plan

This action plan focuses on addressing these areas through improved communication, enhanced development opportunities, workforce planning, wellbeing initiatives and increased employee engagement.

Area of Improvement	Action	Timescale	Who is responsible?
Communication and Engagement around Organisational Change Awareness of Council ambitions and the Council's Transformation Programme remained at 83%	Develop an intranet page for the Council's Transformation Programme and build communications plan to raise awareness with staff and stakeholders	September 2026	Corporate Programme Manager
	Continue with internal communications approach around key updates to all employees including: • Weekly Staff Info emails • Singular emails sent for key updates • Monthly reflection email and video from CEX Continue with Our Council updates via: • CEX Q&A sessions	Immediate start, continue until next survey to monitor improvements.	Communications team
	Review all staff internal communication channels		
	Development of the Culture and Engagement Board and work programme	August 2026	Assistant Director of People and Organisational Change

Employees want more direct communication from managers	Continue to provide managers with monthly communication toolkits and briefing materials to support local conversations and team discussions. Managers encouraged to hold drop-in sessions via teams and regular team meetings.	Now	Communications team to produce monthly communication toolkit. Managers to distribute information to employees.
Career progression remains the lowest scoring area (62% reported they can see a clear path for career progression in their role)	Focus of career progression and progression opportunities support via OD team including career pathways, apprenticeships, coaching and internal development opportunities e.g. shadowing or internal programme (Aspiring Leaders, Leadership Development). Managers to understand the motivators per age group and hold progression and development conversations via 1-2-1 and Annual Review conversations to help employees get more experience and develop skills via delegation or exposure to networks / meetings. Raise awareness of the coaching offer available to staff.	Ongoing Ongoing Summer 2026	Organisational Development team for promoting internal opportunities Managers to promote, encourage and have conversations with staff. OD team to raise awareness of coaching offer

Learning and progression opportunities	2026 Learning and Development Programme to focus on workforce skills e.g. coaching, and leadership development. MS Form to be included on 7th July Training Tuesday email to see if anything is missing from the current L&D programme	By September	Organisational Development team
Ensuring all employees receive regular 1-1s and an annual review	Directors to reinforce expectations for regular check-ins and annual reviews and to receive quarterly updates. Continue to deliver “Annual Review Training” for both managers and employees to support quality of conversations if required. Continue to publish completions by directorate in Managers Monthly update. Launch expectations in the Good Manager Guide	6-12 months Launch date of GMG	Directors to encourage and promote completion Managers to schedule annual reviews and 1-1 sessions with employees OD team
Concerns around staffing, workload and capacity	Reinforce workforce planning as part of the People Strategy and Service Planning	6-12 months	People and Organisational Change Service

	process to ensure services identify workforce risks early. Trial of Workload and Wellbeing 15-minute bite-size sessions for services. Managers to speak to their teams to understand how they can help in terms of workload e.g. what are the pinch points, how can things work better, what can they do differently etc. Apply for a co-pilot premium licence to improve individual and team processes/improve productivity		OD Team Managers
Budget and job security concerns	Continue transparency and communication around financial planning, organisational priorities and change processes to reduce uncertainty. Continue to update intranet with support such as financial support and stress in workplace. Continue to share information through staff channels such as Q&A, Managers Monthly Toolkit, team meetings	Ongoing	Directors / Managers / Communications team

Environment, equipment and ICT systems identified as major concern	Work with Digital and ICT services to share concerns raised via the employee survey to help identify issues and prioritise support. Introduction of new systems such as iTrent (People and Payroll system) and TechOne (finance system) will help reduce ICT concerns around Oracle system. Continue to promote the M365 Academy and Modern Workplace Champions to support colleagues using digital tools.	Ongoing	Digital and ICT Service People and Organisational Change Service
Wellbeing support and initiatives requested by employees	Creation of 2026 Wellbeing Strategy focused on proactive wellbeing support, mental health, financial wellbeing, workload management and healthy workplace. Invite employees to join our Employee Wellbeing Group. Continue with yearly calendar of wellbeing campaigns. Achieve and raise awareness of our Foundation SHINE accreditation to show our work towards employee wellbeing.	6-12 months	Organisational Development Team

	Achieve Better Health at Work Award – Maintaining Excellence Raise awareness of Counselling service Increase visibility and promotion of employee networks through induction, internal communications and leadership sponsorship. Ensure staff are given time and encouragement to engage.		Occupational Health Service Employee Networks
Reward and benefits satisfaction is lower than other areas within the survey (73%)	Improve promotion (QR code postcards) and employee awareness of the full reward and benefits offer, including wellbeing support, leave provisions, pension and discount schemes. Continue to work with Pledge partners to increase our benefit offering. Include on recruitment materials and recruitment microsite	Ongoing Microsite to launch late summer	Organisational Development and Communication teams

In 2026, we will also update three key strategies which will have a strong focus on stakeholder engagement:

- Our Council Strategy
- People Strategy
- Employee Wellbeing Strategy

Individual service action plans have been created as well as employee networks and enabling services responding to feedback in their areas.

We will continuously monitor progress and share progress updates throughout the year.