

Team Caerphilly
Better Together

Employee Wellbeing Strategy 21-24



GWASANAETHAU POBL
PEOPLE SERVICES



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Foreword



Christina Harrhy
Chief Executive
Caerphilly County Borough Council

I'm pleased to present the Council's new *Employee Wellbeing Strategy*, which has been developed in order to support all our brilliant employees who are at the heart of Team Caerphilly.

We employ over 8,000 hard-working colleagues, who provide a huge range of services direct to our communities and it goes without saying that our workforce is our most valuable asset.

We are in unprecedented times and it is clear that the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on employee health and wellbeing has been significant. However, we have responded amazingly and shown incredible resilience and character in the face of such adversity to repurpose and reshape our services, ensuring our citizens continue to receive the services they need on a day-to-day basis.

Working across the council, with our communities and with our partners we have united together as one team and it makes me very proud to be a part of Team Caerphilly.

As we move forward, through the uncharted waters of Covid recovery, we will continue to work alongside our communities, businesses and partners to ensure we consolidate, reshape and refocus wherever necessary. It is therefore more important than ever that we have in place a robust *Employee Wellbeing Strategy* to support and nurture the people we have within the organisation during these critical times.

We have fantastic work life balance policies and a wide range of procedures, schemes and initiatives in place already to support our employees' physical and mental health and wellbeing. Our aim now is to strengthen and build upon these solid foundations.

I look forward to seeing this strategy embed within the organisation and I'm sure staff at all levels will benefit from the principles and priorities contained within it.

Foreword



Cllr. Philippa Marsden

Leader

Caerphilly County Borough Council

The Cabinet, along with all other elected members, recognise the importance of promoting and protecting employee wellbeing.

The Council is a large and diverse organisation, so it is vital that staff at all levels are able to access appropriate levels of support and resources when and if they need it, particularly at this time as we continue to navigate our way through a global pandemic.

It is no surprise that good workplace wellbeing has mutual benefits for employees, organisations, economies and communities, so it is vitally important that we have the right strategy in place to achieve this.

The wellbeing of our employees must continue to be at the very forefront of everything we do, embedded in our culture, day-to-day operations, leadership and management.

We are fully committed to ensuring we have a healthy organisation, where each and every one of our employee feels valued, protected and supported. This strategy will provide the blueprint for this commitment and I would like to thank all those involved in its preparation and delivery.

Introduction

“Fostering employee wellbeing is good for people and the organisation. Promoting wellbeing can help prevent stress and create positive working environments where individuals and organisations can thrive.”

CIPD: Wellbeing at Work 2020

The importance of employee health and wellbeing has become more widely recognised over the past decade. In particular there is increasing concern about mental health, and the growing pressures people face living and working in today's world.

Employee wellbeing is critical for business performance. A healthy workplace, that promotes a state of contentment, benefits both employees and the organisation.

The workplace can be an effective place to improve the wellbeing of individuals, families and communities. It can offer financial security, social connections and a sense of belonging, meaning and purpose. Our employees spend a significant amount of time in work so we have a critical role to play in the wellbeing of our workforce.

Our absolute priority at Caerphilly County Borough Council is to work with our employees to promote and facilitate good health and wellbeing, and to provide excellent services to those who need our support.

The Covid-19 Pandemic

In a time of national, indeed global crisis, the Covid-19 pandemic changed how we operated overnight. Our services were rapidly repurposed and large numbers of our workforce were thrust into remote working. We responded incredibly

well, enabling our services to function effectively whilst keeping our employees safe. By embracing agile and home working, in accordance with service provision, we enabled our employees to flex their working patterns to support their varying and complex needs, provide care for family members and home school their children.

However, the Covid-19 pandemic created significant additional health and wellbeing concerns for our employees. There is a serious risk to health from contracting the virus and living with long-Covid, and our employees have also faced psychological stress such as isolation, grief through the loss of loved ones, fear of infection, fear of loss of work, managing additional caring responsibilities and rapid changes to service delivery.

As we recover from the pandemic and continue our journey of transformation and review our services to meet future demands, we must ensure we have a holistic framework in place to support our employees' health and wellbeing needs. The wellbeing of our employees must continue to be at the heart of everything we do.

This strategy will detail how we achieve our vision: ***'Working together to fully support our employees' health and wellbeing.'***

The Strategic Context

Wellbeing drives and shapes our strategies and planning. Our Corporate Plan 2018-2023 is influenced by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The Act adopts a sustainable development principle with a view to improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales; and defines seven well-being goals, three of which focus on resilience, health and equality.

Our Corporate Plan details six locally determined wellbeing objectives. These include the development of healthier lifestyles and the improvement of wellbeing within our communities and the workplace. To support delivery, the Corporate Plan outlines seven Cabinet Commitments, the third commitment is ensuring we have an engaged and motivated workforce.

These commitments, together with the six wellbeing objectives set out in the Corporate Plan, shaped the transformation strategy *#Team Caerphilly - Better Together*. Creating the right culture and developing a workforce that is fit for the future are key objectives within the strategy. Underpinned by our core values and behaviours, it details our commitment to developing and supporting our workforce, changing relationships between managers and employees and creating a nurturing environment that enables our people to work effectively.

Our Sport and Active Recreation Strategy 2019-2029 has an important role to play in our ability to achieve our corporate wellbeing objectives and has a clear vision 'to encourage healthy lifestyles and support our residents to be more active, more often'. The strategy details the actions required to meet our wellbeing goals and also recognises that future approaches demand that people take greater responsibility for their own health and levels of activity.

The Green Infrastructure Strategy 2020 outlines our vision to ensure Caerphilly is a green and healthy place to live, with a specific aim to ensure our green infrastructure provides enjoyment, relaxation,



CIPD: Wellbeing at Work 2020

inspiration and wellbeing for local people, visitors and by extension our employees, many of which reside within the borough.

The Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024 identifies the need to create a workplace which is safe and inclusive; and promotes a positive working environment (Equality Objective 6 Inclusive, Diverse and Equal Workforce).

The Workforce Development Strategy 2021-2024 outlines our commitment to value our people, and sets out a number of priority actions which include the development of the Wellbeing Strategy.

The Council has a duty to safeguard and protect children, young people and vulnerable adults who may be at risk of harm and this is reflected in our robust policies and procedures. Safeguarding means protecting the health, wellbeing and human rights of individuals and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect. Guided by our Corporate Safeguarding Policy and working proactively with partners, we will take action to ensure that our employees and everyone living within the County Borough is safe and protected and that our statutory responsibilities to safeguard and protect children, young people and vulnerable adults are effectively met.

In policy and in practice, we will seek to ensure the links between our corporate strategies and planning are well established and effective.

Wellbeing lies at the core of how the Council fulfils its strategic aims, conducts operations and delivers excellent services to our communities.

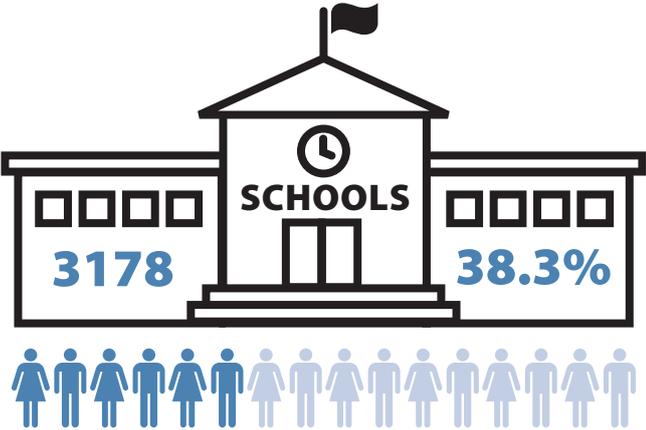
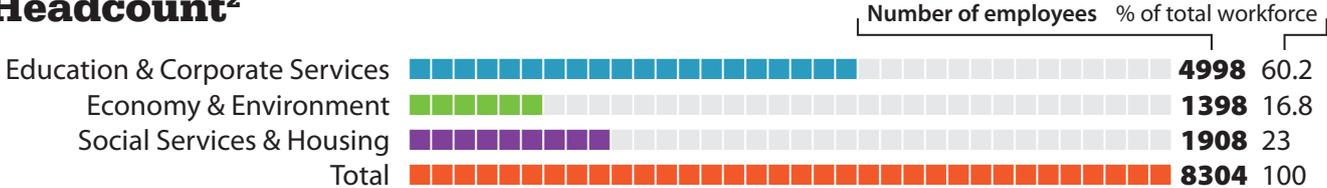
Our Employee Data

We are the largest employer within the borough, directly employing over 8000 employees (including schools)¹,

providing our communities with a wide range of essential and non-essential public services.

Employee Profile

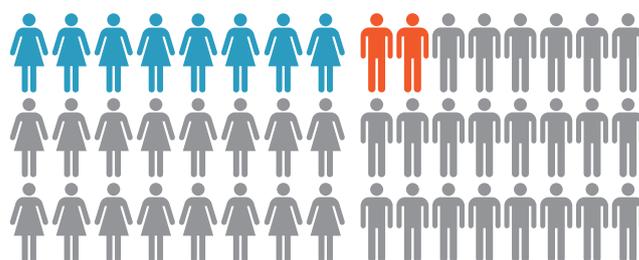
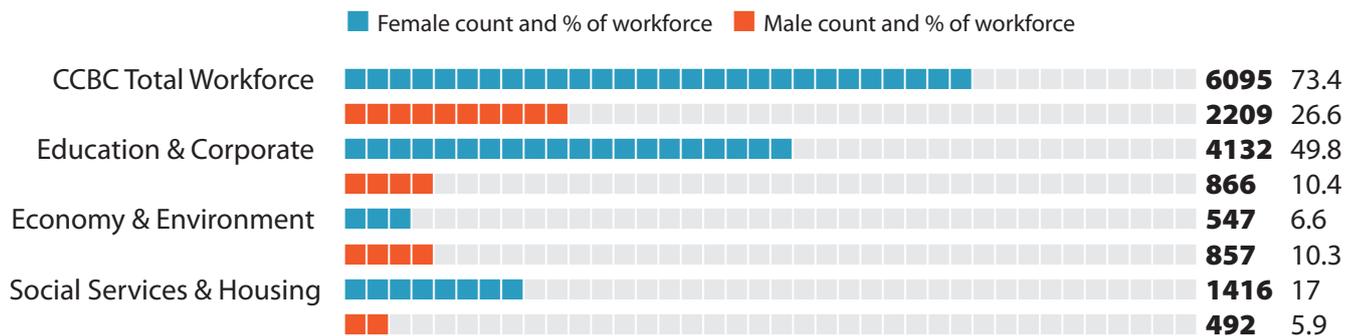
Headcount²



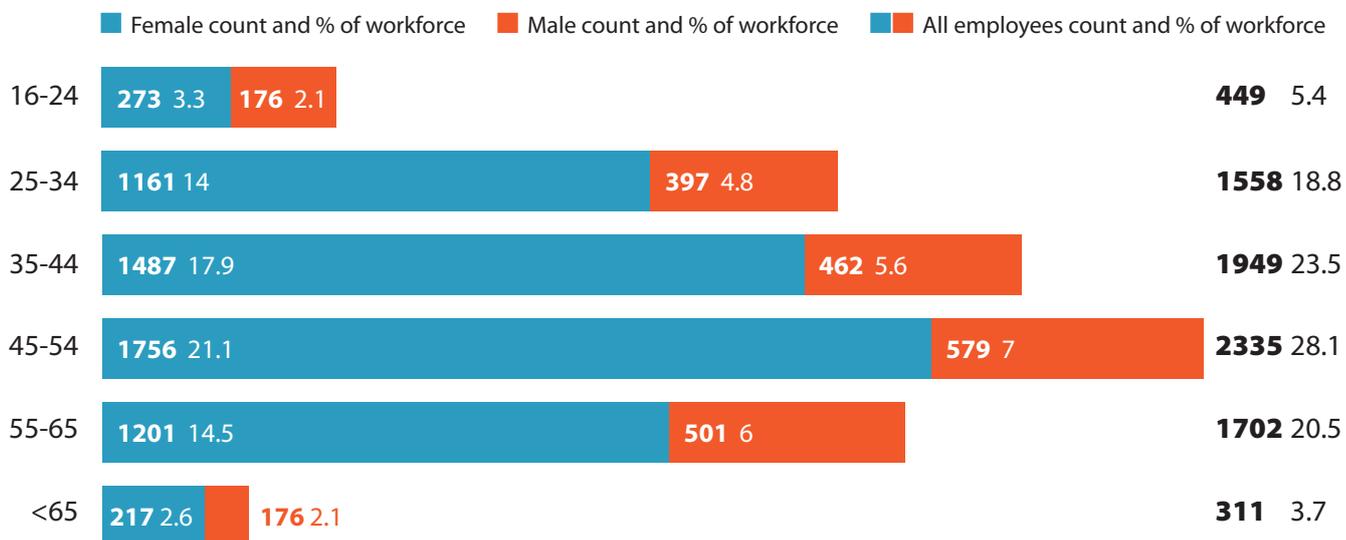
Education and Corporate Services account for nearly two thirds of our workforce, with nearly 40% in our schools provision alone.

¹ Workforce Intelligence Analysis - July 2020
² Where employees have multiple posts, the post holding the most contractual hours will be considered the substantive role and has been used for statistical analysis.

Gender



Age profile



Disability



Staff survey summary

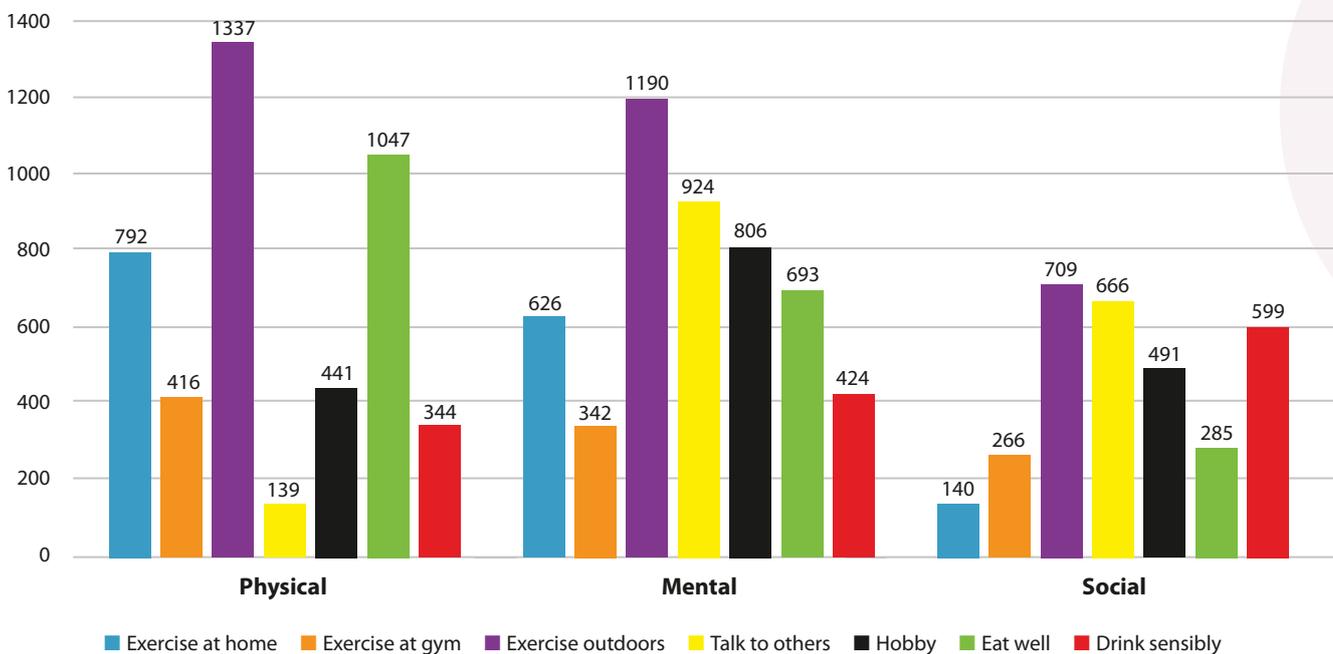
In our recent Staff Survey (May 2021)³ one of the key themes was employee wellbeing. We received a total of 1596 completed surveys (approximately one third of the workforce polled) with a good distribution from across each directorate and service area. Of those who responded, 73% (1070 staff) were female, which is reflective of the current gender profile for the Council.

The key findings were as follows.

Managing and maintaining our health and wellbeing

The survey asked employees to list what activities they did to support their physical, mental and social health and wellbeing.

Activities enjoyed that support physical, mental and social wellbeing (number of responses)



“Exercising outdoors” ranked highest in all three categories (physical, mental and social wellbeing), and “Talk to others” was ranked second highest by our employees for supporting their mental and social health, suggesting strong relationships are a key component for their wellbeing. “Eating well” is also an important lifestyle choice for our employees.

³ All non-school staff.

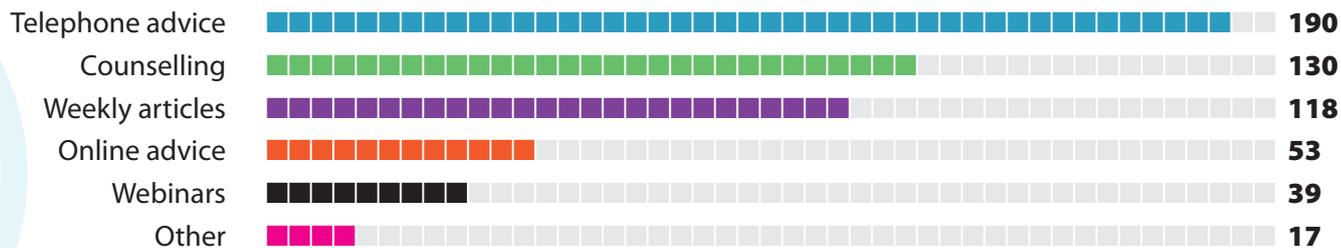
Care First - our Employee Assistance Programme

92% of employees indicated that they were aware of Care First and 22% of these confirmed that they have used Care First services. The majority of employees (81%) that have used the service have found it useful or very useful.

The findings show that there are high levels of awareness and satisfaction with Care First Services.

Care First services used

Responses by number



Work life balance

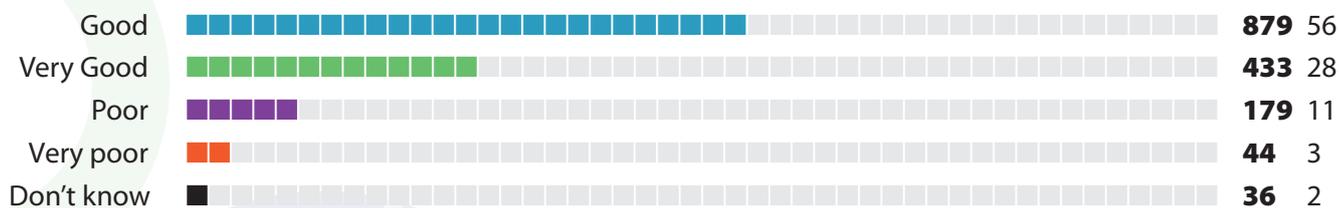
84% of employees felt their work life balance was good or very good.

One of the key reasons given as a contributing factor to good work life balance was agile working. Employees commented that agile working has meant they can spend more time with family, work flexibly around personal needs, improve their productivity, feel more trusted and support their caring responsibilities. This is particularly relevant given approximately two thirds of the employees who responded to the survey have caring responsibilities (40% being child care).

Conversely for some employees working from home has negatively impacted their work life balance; employees commented that it is hard to separate work from home life, they have no space to work in and some feel isolated.

Employees also reported that increased workloads and an absence of flexible working are contributing factors to poor work life balance.

Responses by number and %



Staff Networks

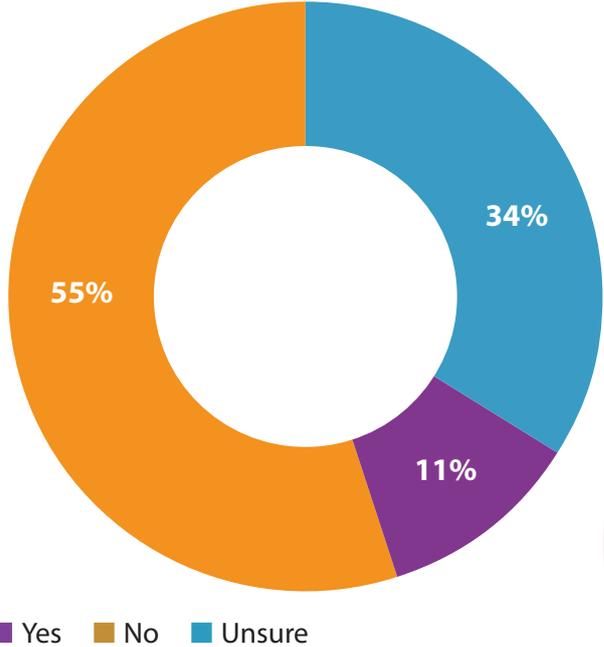
Staff networks can help support the mental health and wellbeing of staff who are struggling or feel alone and isolated, they can offer peer-to-peer support, help raise awareness of issues and give staff a channel to feed back their views on strategies and policies that might affect them.

Are you interested in joining a Staff Network?

11% indicated that they would be interested in a staff network group with 34% being unsure.

The groups most staff indicated they would be interested in getting involved with were mental health and menopause.

There was also interest in groups for young people, LGBTQ+ and Black and Minority Ethnic groups but in smaller numbers.

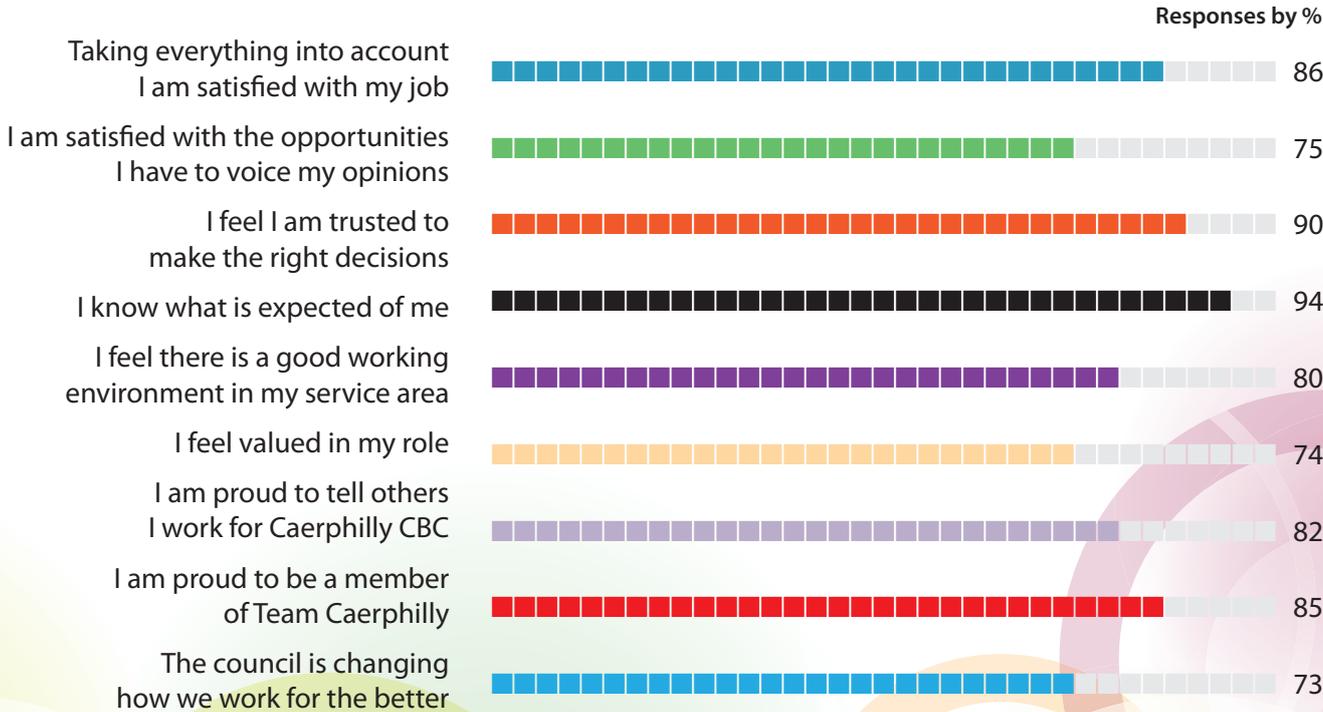


These results are really positive, with 86% of employees satisfied in their roles, and is evidence that we are moving in the right direction. Our challenge is to continue to engage our employees to understand why some are unsatisfied.

Team Caerphilly

One of the key principles of Team Caerphilly is further supporting our workforce to feel proud

and trusted, which are important elements of employee wellbeing.



Sickness absence summary

To better understand our challenges and the actions we can prioritise to address them, it is

important we analyse our sickness absence data to identify patterns, trends and areas of concern.

Sickness absence percentages⁴

Directorate	Year April 18 - March 19	Year April 19 - March 20	Year April 20 - March 21
Economy & Environment	5%	6.11%	4.61%
Education & Corporate Services	3.62%	3.76%	2.75%
Social Services & Housing	5.89%	5.92%	6.84%
Authority Total	4.38%	4.63%	4.03%

The Council's percentage absence rate, although fluctuating, has decreased from 4.38% to 4.03% over the three year period. However, there is a

notable increase in our Directorate of Social Service and Housing, from 5.89% to 6.84%, over the same period.

Top 10 reasons for absence

Top 10 reasons for absence	Rank Order		
	Year April 18 - March 19	Year April 19 - March 20	Year April 20 - March 21
Stress (non-work related), depression, anxiety, neurasthenia, mental health, fatigue	1	1	1
Other musculo-skeletal problems	2	2	2
Stomach, liver, kidney and digestion including gastroenteritis	3	3	4
Infections including colds and flu	4	4	8
Back and neck problems	5	6	6
Injury	6	5	5
Chest and respiratory including chest infections	7	7	9
Work related stress	8	8	7
Neurological including headaches and migraines	9	9	N/A
Heart, blood pressure and circulation	10	N/A	10
Eye, ear, nose and mouth/dental including sinusitis	N/A	10	N/A
Coronavirus	N/A	N/A	3

⁴ Figures include short term and long term absences

Mental ill health (including non-work related stress) and musculoskeletal problems have for some time been the highest ranked reasons for absence within the Council. In the year from the 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021, mental ill-health and work related stress (which we record separately) accounted for 38.7% of all Full Time Equivalent (FTE) days lost. Musculoskeletal absences accounted for 9.9% of FTE days lost.

Our data broadly reflects the national picture. In a recent survey conducted by the CIPD⁵ it was reported that mental ill health, musculoskeletal injuries and stress were the top three causes of long term sickness absence in UK work places. Two-fifths of the respondents reported an increase in stress-related absence over the last year and the two main causes were workloads and management style.

Recent changes in the world of work mean that people now face wider organisational and environmental pressures. Intense and stressful working conditions are reported by as many as one in four workers. Many employees will also be under stress as a result of their personal circumstances. Such stressors have given rise to significant increases in mental health issues and absence and these patterns are evident in our data.

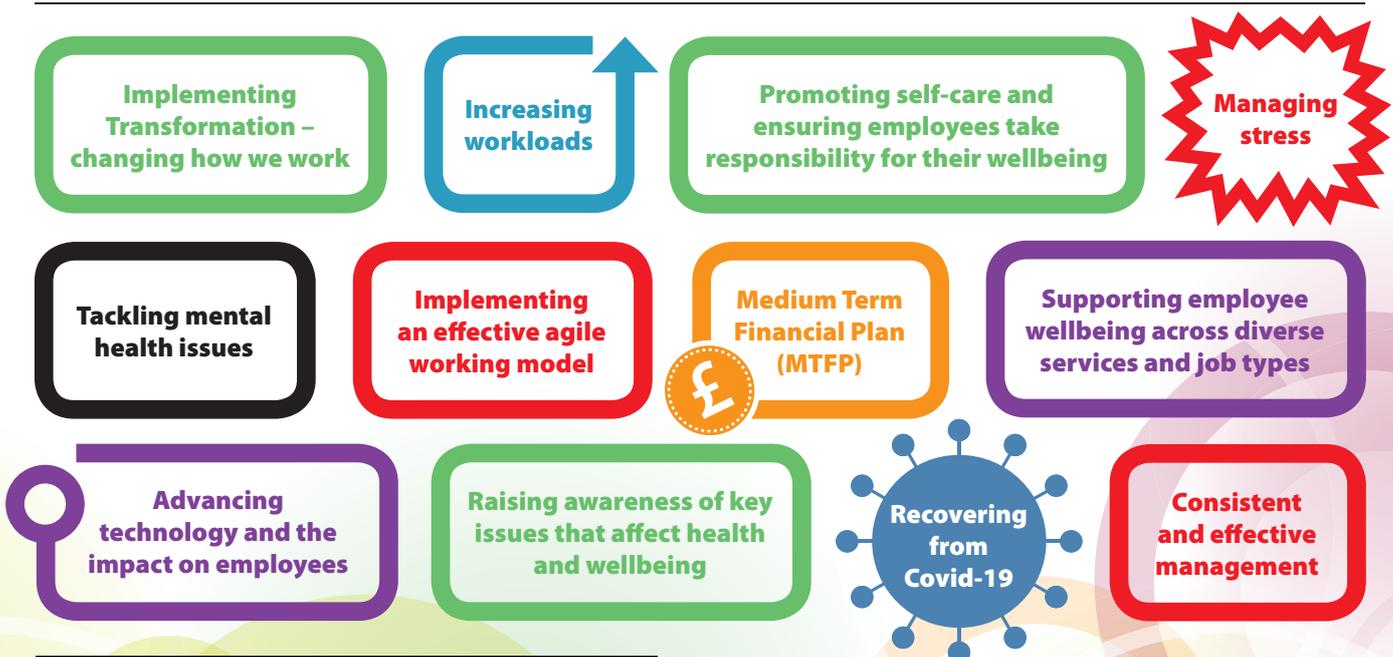
However, it should also be noted, that studies have shown that the right amount of positive stress can actually be beneficial and is a major factor in our development. It can increase our ability to cope and be motivated, improve our performance, productivity and creativity and increase energy levels whilst reducing boredom and keeping us engaged.

The Impact of Covid-19

Notably, in the year from the 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021, Coronavirus has become the third highest cause of absence for the Council behind mental ill health and musculoskeletal injuries, highlighting the significant impact the pandemic is having on employee health and wellbeing in the Council. What is difficult to measure is the impact of the virus on mental health related absence, which has no doubt been effected through this period.

The CIPD⁶ found that the impact of COVID-19 on UK working lives shows a range of worsening mental health effects on many people, particularly those with an existing mental health condition. In November 2020, mental health charity Mind revealed that more people had experienced a mental health crisis during the COVID-19 pandemic than ever previously recorded.

Our Challenges



⁵ Health and Well-being at Work Survey Report March 2021 - CIPD

⁶ Health and Well-being at Work Survey Report March 2021 - CIPD

Our Approach

Most employers now recognise the importance of wellbeing and improving employee wellness to effect positive changes. As an employer we must continue to put wellbeing at the very heart of everything we do, and our employees must recognise their responsibility to effectively manage their own health and wellbeing.

Investing in employee wellbeing can lead to increased resilience, higher performance and productivity and reduced sickness absence. However, wellbeing initiatives often fall short of their potential because they stand alone, isolated

from the everyday business. To gain real benefit, our strategy must be focused on creating a culture and environment that supports the mental and physical health and wellbeing of our employees.

We understand that wellbeing is not a “one size fits all” and the support needed for one person may differ considerably from the next person. We must therefore ensure our strategy is holistic and wide reaching.

To achieve our aim, the Wellbeing Strategy will focus on five key areas of wellbeing:



1. Health and Lifestyle

How we support the mental and physical health of our employees and facilitate healthy lifestyle choices.



2. Environment

How we provide a safe and healthy work environment that meets the needs of our employees and supports them to be effective.



3. Culture and Values

How we build a culture of trust, strong core values, equality and strong collective leadership.



4. Personal Development

How we support personal growth and development.



5. Financial Wellbeing

How we support and contribute to employee financial wellbeing.

In each area we will review what we do and identify priority actions to strengthen that area.

1. Health and lifestyle

What we do

People Services

Our People Services Section incorporating Human Resources, Health & Safety and Communications teams work collaboratively together to provide specialist advice, guidance and support to managers and employees as outlined below.

Occupational Health Service

Our in-house service provides health and wellbeing advice to staff and managers in relation to fitness to work and health surveillance. The team supports staff to take care of their own physical and mental health to maximise their work attendance. The service is provided by Occupational Health Physicians, Physiotherapists and Nurses.

Sickness Absence Management Support

HR, incorporating a dedicated Managing Attendance Team, offer advice, guidance and support to staff in relation to their wellbeing and to managers to assist them to effectively and equitably manage their staff including health issues.

Policies, Procedures and Guidance

Our policies and procedures support the wellbeing of our employees when they are at work or absent due to sickness and ill health.

We have developed specific policies and guidance to address health issues, raise awareness and guide our managers on how to provide relevant and appropriate support including the No Smoking Policy, Menopause in the Workplace factsheet, Managing Cancer in the Workplace – Guidance for Managers and the Substance Misuse Policy.

Our Domestic Abuse, Gender-based Violence and Sexual Violence Policy provides support and guidance for our managers to deal with difficult and sensitive issues. In accordance with the National Training Framework on violence against

women, domestic abuse and sexual violence, all staff are expected to undertake training according to their role. The minimum requirement being Group 1 training providing basic awareness of what violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence is, how to recognise domestic abuse and sexual violence, and to know the help available to victims.

Cycle to Work Scheme

The Cycle to Work Scheme is a salary sacrifice initiative that encourages alternative commute/travel to improve health and fitness and reduce carbon emissions and environmental impact. We have recently widened the scope of the initiative to include electric bikes up to the value of £5000.

Corporate Eyecare Voucher Scheme

Employees who are regular users of display screen equipment or who require prescription safety glasses can apply for the vouchers which entitle the user to a free eye and eyesight test, a choice of glasses from a selected range (subject to eligibility) or a 15 per cent discount off glasses in store.

People Services Digital and online support

Health Wall

Features links to organisations that provide expert information and advice for a number of health related issues.

Wellbeing@work: Covid 19 Webpage

Provides information, resources and links to support our employees' wellbeing.

Wellbeing@work Bulletin

Our monthly bulletin contains information, advice and links to digital resources to support employee wellbeing.

Wellbeing@work: Monthly Themes

Focused on promoting healthy lifestyle choices and raising awareness on topics that impact physical and mental health.

Employee Assistance Programme

We work with Care first, who provide a completely independent and strictly confidential service for our employees which includes:

Counselling Service

Care First Counsellors, who are members of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP), are available 24/7 to help with work-related issues such as feeling pressure, work-load, changes at work, bullying or harassment. Care first also advise on personal problems such as family matters, stress and loss or bereavement.

Information and Advice Service

Highly trained, professional information specialists can provide comprehensive answers and assistance on a wide range of issues which affect daily life including advice on financial issues and debt management.

Management Support

Provide managers with support in their management role.

Care first Lifestyle

A comprehensive online information, support and wellness resource, where employees and managers can access information, advice, webinars and online counselling to address problems occurring as part of every-day life, not just work related issues.

Care first Zest

An interactive health management online portal designed to help individuals pro-actively manage and improve all aspects of their mental and physical health - including stress management and resilience, weight management, diet and nutrition, and fitness and personal training.

Wellbeing Group

The Health and Wellbeing Group was established in 2010 to support the improved health of employees. The group has representatives from across the Council including Trade Union partners.

Health Awareness

Initiatives, events and promotion

We run a series of initiatives and promotions throughout the calendar year to raise awareness of topics that impact physical and mental health. For example lunchtime walks, free lunchtime bike hire and the Team Steps Challenge.

Sports and Active Recreation

Sports & Leisure Service

The service actively promote sport and active recreation and operate a wide range of active recreation activities, sites and venues. Sports development initiatives and partnerships include the free swimming programme, the Caerphilly 10k and National Exercise Referral Scheme.

Workplace Initiatives

Recognising the need for employees to take responsibility for their health, we promote a range of healthy lifestyle initiatives in the workplace, encouraging employees to engage in activities during the working day. For example lunchtime walks, free lunchtime bike hire and the Team Steps Challenge.

Corporate Membership Scheme

Our employees enjoy a 20% discounted rate for leisure centre membership throughout the county borough.

Trade Unions

Our recognised Trade Union partners provide advice and support to their members on a wide range of employment matters, including wellbeing.

No.	Priority Actions	Measure of Success
1.1	Update our HR policies and procedures.	All relevant policies and procedures are reviewed to ensure they remain inclusive, fit-for-purpose and reflective of our values.
1.2	Engage and support employees to volunteer as Mental Health Champions and explore opportunities to train employees as Mental Health First Aiders.	Mental Health Champions establish effective channels of communication and are trained to provide appropriate support to employees who seek out their support.
1.3	Undertake a review of the Wellbeing Group and repurpose the terms of reference to align to the principles of the Wellbeing Strategy.	Terms of Reference are agreed. Meetings are regularly held supported by an Agenda and minutes taken.
1.4	Develop our wellbeing digital platforms and communications.	Raised employee awareness of the digital resources available to support their own wellbeing and improve their lifestyle choices.
1.5	Review our Corporate Membership Scheme	Enhanced offer and improved levels of membership across our workforce.
1.6	Promote healthy work habits and explore new opportunities to engage our employees in exercise.	Employees proactively engage in healthy work habits and exercise to support their wellbeing.



2. Environment

What we do

Physical Environment

Health & Safety

Our Health and Safety team provide managers and employees with comprehensive advice, support and resources to ensure that the working environment and work practices are safe and contribute to employees' safety, health and wellbeing. We deliver a comprehensive portfolio of health and safety related training courses to impart information, encourage learning and to support our positive safety culture.

Facilities

A number of support services work collaboratively and cohesively to ensure that our work places are designed, equipped and maintained to be ergonomic, healthy and safe. In addition to promoting a safe place of work this approach ensures the provision of comfortable spaces for rest and socialisation.

Work Environment

Agile Working

Wide scale agile working practices have been implemented in accordance with Welsh Government guidance, enabling our employees to work flexibly to support their work life balance, whilst continuing to deliver excellent services to our people during the Covid-19 pandemic. The principles of agile working, developed in response to the Covid-19 crisis, will form the foundation for long term sustainable agile working, enabling new ways of working, focused on what we do and not where we do it.

Policies and Schemes

Our employees have the opportunity to take advantage of excellent family-friendly work-life balance policies and schemes which include (but are not limited to) a generous Flexible Working Scheme, Child Care Voucher Scheme, Career Break Scheme, Carers' Policy, Home Working Scheme, Leave of Absence Policy, Adoption Leave Policy, Job-Share Policy, Reservists Policy and Parental/ Shared Parental Leave Schemes.

Effective Management

Within our strategies and practices our focus is very much on effective and supportive management. Individual management style will vary from manager to manager, but our expectation is that our managers nurture effective team working and healthy, productive relationships with employees built on mutual respect and trust. Through our *My Time* and *My Time Extra* programme, managers can have effective two-way discussions where employees can discuss their wellbeing and personal development needs.



No.	Priority Actions	Measure of Success
2.1	Repurpose and modernise Ty Penallta and other offices to facilitate agile working.	Workspaces will be reconfigured, modernised and furnished with appropriate equipment to facilitate agile working. Workspaces will support employee wellbeing, encouraging healthy lifestyle choices and socialisation enabling working relationships to flourish.
2.2	Implement a sustainable model of flexible/agile working for the Council.	Supported by the modernised workplace, flexible and family friendly working policies are fit for purpose and in place to support the agile workforce.
2.3	Expand the scope and provision of training to further upskill our managers to support employee health and wellbeing.	Management training has been implemented and evident in practice.
2.4	Update our H&S policies and procedures.	All relevant policies and procedures are reviewed to ensure they remain fit-for-purpose and reflective of our values and objectives.



3. Culture and Values

What we do

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Equality underpins our strategies, policies and planning and we are committed to creating a workplace which is safe and inclusive, where our employees feel valued and empowered to be themselves.

Strategic Equality Plan (2020-2024)

Our Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024 outlines our corporate strategic objectives.

Equalities Team

Our Equalities Team drive the agenda locally, championing diversity and inclusion and facilitating equalities and welsh language training.

Celebrating Diversity

We recognise important issues and celebrate diversity through the promotion of national awareness events. For example LGBTQ+ History Month and Black Lives Matter. Caerphilly County Borough Council is once again joining the Proud Council partners to support and promote equality for LGBTQ+ communities and we are working with Stonewall Cymru to re-establish our membership and position in the Workplace Diversity Champions Index.

Charters, Campaigns and Commitments

We were the first local authority in Wales to adopt the Unity Over Division Charter, joining with our Trade Union partners, Unison, GMB and Unite to work toward a shared goal of inclusivity and equality in the workplace.

We have signed up to the Dying To Work Charter, which sets out an agreed way that our employees will be supported, protected and guided throughout their employment, following a terminal diagnosis.

We are the first council in the UK to sign up to the Pledge to Be Seen Campaign, and we are committed to ensuring equal representation for people with disfigurements across Wales and better representing people with a visible difference in our communications.

We have demonstrated our ongoing support of the Armed Forces community by signed the Armed Forces Covenant (AFC), and are committed to ensuring that those who serve or have served in the armed forces, and their families, are treated fairly.

Disability Confident Employer

We are proud to be a Disability Confident Employer, committed to supporting the recruitment, retention and development of disabled people who support our services to achieve success.

Leadership and Strategy

Team Caerphilly

#Team Caerphilly - Better Together is our operating model. The strategy outlines our mission and details our objectives and priority actions for transformational change. It provides clarity of purpose for the organisation, our services and our employees. The message is clear that our employees are at the heart of everything we do. Underpinned by our core values (Trusted, Open and Transparent, United and Connected, Innovative, Resilient), the strategy outlines how we will fully support our employees to be 'brave, bold and brilliant'.

Corporate Volunteering

We are developing a Corporate Volunteering Policy and exploring how we overcome barriers to enable our employees to volunteer within the local community.

Employee Engagement

We listen and respond to views and opinions through staff surveys, engagement events and via collective consultation with our Trade Union partners through agreed processes. Our Communications and Engagement Strategy 2019-2022 and Consultation and Engagement Framework 2020-2025 outline actions to improve employee engagement and create greater opportunities to develop stronger links with our communities.

Support for Charities

We support vulnerable people both within our communities and nationally, not only through the excellent work of our front line services, but

through charitable events and initiatives including Operation Santa, the Mayor's Charity, Children in Need, Comic Relief and Sports Relief. As we move into a more agile model of service delivery, we will ensure our employees can continue to engage in charitable events and initiatives.

Foundation Living Wage Employer

We're incredibly proud to be accredited by the Living Wage Foundation and our commitment to voluntarily pay our employees a wage that reflects what we believe to be the true cost of living.



No.	Priority Actions	Measure of Success
3.1	Deliver the key workforce objectives of the Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024.	Objectives are delivered in line with agreed timeframes.
3.2	Working with the Trade Unions, continue to raise awareness of all forms of discrimination and the requirement to effectively challenge prejudice at source.	Embed a proactive approach to building a more inclusive workplace, fulfilling our commitments to the 5 core principles of the Unity Over Division Charter.
3.3	Upgrade our membership of the Disability Confident Scheme.	Membership upgraded from Employer to Leader.
3.4	Re-establish our membership of Stonewall Cymru.	Join Stonewall Cymru's Diversity Champions Programme and assess our progress using the Workplace Equality Index.
3.5	Publish the Neurodiversity Factsheet and work with the Trade Unions to organise neurodiversity training.	Employees and managers can access the Neurodiversity Factsheet online and improve their understanding with training.
3.6	Develop the Staff Recognition Awards initiative.	We better evidence how we value our employees' contributions by recognising achievement.
3.7	Develop and implement diversity and inclusivity training for our Members.	Members receive current and timely diversity and inclusivity training.
3.8	Conduct regular pulse surveys to support our more comprehensive staff surveys.	Data and analytics used to inform decision making and assess progress against targets in key areas.

4. Personal Development

What we do

Workforce Development Strategy

Our Workforce Development Strategy outlines our strategic approach and priority actions required to support the personal growth and development of our employees, creating a resilient workforce that is fit for the future.

Workforce Planning

To support our broader workforce development goals and initiatives, workforce planning will become embedded as an essential business process. A Workforce Planning Framework is being developed to help translate strategy into practice and equip our managers with a tool to proactively organise the workforce, effectively plan for succession and identify personal development needs and skills gaps.

Learning and Development

We organise and facilitate a range of learning and development opportunities via corporate initiatives, service specific training, Health & Safety training, accredited programmes and courses delivered via training providers or higher education and our Joint Workforce Development Team (a collaborative service with Blaenau Gwent which specialises in delivering social care training for both authorities).

MeUs

We have joined forces with Gwent Police to launch an innovative joint leadership programme aimed at developing a new generation of bold and innovative leaders.

The 12 month leadership programme will be delivered by the University of South Wales and the initial cohort will be instrumental in helping to shape the direction and content of the course for participants in future.

Coaching

We are fully invested in developing a strong coaching culture and establishing a network of coaches across our services.

Career Development

We have established development pathways in a number of service areas, affording employees the opportunity to gain professional qualifications and/or training to support their current roles and further their progression within their chosen fields.

My Time/My Time Extra

Our *My Time/My Time Extra* programme facilitates positive conversations between employees and line managers. With a focus on development, it provides a mechanism for employees to take responsibility of their own personal development.

First Aid, AED and Fire Wardens

We support our employees to volunteer as workplace first aiders and fire wardens, providing funded training and a financial incentive, in line with service needs and requirements. We also facilitate Automated External Defibrillation (AED) training for all employees in support of recent campaigns.



No.	Priority Actions	Measure of Success
4.1	Implement the Workforce Development Strategy 2021-2024.	Agreed strategy in place that outlines our strategic approach and priority actions.
4.2	Deliver the Priority Actions outlined in the Workforce Development Strategy 2021.	Priority actions are delivered in accordance with the action plan and achieve the desired outcomes and benefits for the Council.
4.3	Implement Workforce Planning.	Workforce planning will be undertaken on a regular and scheduled basis facilitating more proactive people resourcing, succession analysis and identification of priority learning and development needs.
4.4	Embed the <i>My Time/My Time Extra</i> programme and train our managers to deliver effective conversations.	Employees receive regular <i>My Time</i> conversations and an annual <i>My Time Extra</i> conversation where personal and professional development needs are discussed and planned.



5. Financial Wellbeing

What we do

Fair Pay

We continue to review and monitor our grading protocols with the Trade Unions and ensure all jobs across the Council are remunerated fairly and equitably in line with our agreed grading procedures. Additional benefits also include (but are not limited to) a generous employer pension contribution, annual leave entitlement and paid sickness absence. We are also committed to paying the Foundation Living Wage minimum rate of pay, meaning our employees occupying our lower graded posts enjoy an enhanced rate of pay for their work which we believe better reflects the true cost of living.

Contracts

We provide varying types of contracts of employment across our services to meet our business needs. Our Flexible Working Policies enables employees, where appropriate, to flex their contractual arrangements to meet their personal circumstances.

Policies and Procedures

We have generous leave of absence policies and schemes which provide our employees with paid leave for various types of absence which include (but are not limited to) sickness, bereavement, maternity and shared parental leave.

Retirement Planning

We support our employees through this significant undertaking by providing advice and guidance,

through our Flexible and Early Retirement Schemes and by running pre-retirement courses.

Care First

Our employee assistance programme provides 24 hour support to our employees, including advice on financial issues and debt management.

Trade Unions

Our recognised Trade Union partners are on hand to support their members, providing advice on issues such as benefits and debt management, signposting to the appropriate organisations for expert help or through the facilitation of financial assistance schemes.

Credit Unions

We facilitate Credit Union payments for our employees through our payroll system. Credit unions offer an alternative to borrowing from, or saving with national banks. Owned and democratically controlled by its members, they offer a range of financial services including loans and savings accounts.

Employee Benefits

There are a number of initiatives available to our employees which have financial benefits (as well as other wellbeing benefits). These include our Child Care Voucher, Cycle to Work and Green Car salary sacrifice schemes, Corporate Eyecare Voucher Scheme and discounted leisure centre membership.

No.	Priority Actions	Measure of Success
5.1	Undertake a Non-Guaranteed Hours Arrangement (NGHA) review.	Work with managers and Trade Unions to review and monitor our contractual arrangements to ensure they are fit-for-purpose and provide secure employment.
5.2	Periodically promote the financial advice provided by Care First.	Raised awareness of the support available to our employees through Care First.
5.3	Review our processes for recording and analysing retirement feedback and data.	Consultation, feedback and data will be used to inform and shape our pre-retirement support and training.
5.4	Review our employee benefits packages	Employees continue to enjoy excellent benefits and schemes that help support their financial wellbeing.

Our Responsibilities

Cabinet/Council

- To endorse the strategy and review progress against agreed actions.

Corporate Management Team and Leadership Team

- Provide senior level commitment and support for the strategy.
- Promote wellbeing across the organisation, nurturing a culture and environment where employees are given the support, opportunity and resources to grow and perform at an optimal level.
- Working within the financial constraints of the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP), ensure appropriate resources are available within the agreed budget.
- Lead by example and champion our values. Ensure fairness, equality and inclusivity is instilled across the organisation and driven from the top.

HR Strategy Group

- Responsible for the implementation of the strategy and the review of progress against targets.

Health and Safety Committee

- Responsible for reviewing the measures taken to ensure health and safety at work which includes mental health and wellbeing.

Management Network/Operational Management

- Think more strategically about the workforce and the demands placed upon individuals. Use the Workforce Planning Framework to develop detailed workforce plans and strategies to mitigate risks and plug skills gaps.
- Proactively manage employee wellbeing, creating a positive work environment and identifying concerns early.

- Promote the importance of self-care and encourage employees to take ownership of their health and wellbeing.
- Work with HR to proactively manage employee health, seeking early interventions to mitigate absence.
- Hold regular *My Time* conversations with employees, where employees can discuss their wellbeing and personal development needs.
- Nurture effective team working and healthy, productive relationships with employees.
- Promote an inclusive team environment which champions equality, diversity and fairness and address any form of discrimination.
- Ensure that health and safety risks are managed by effective risk assessments, safe working practices, training and employee engagement on all matters relating to their health, safety and wellbeing.

People Services

- Responsible for the implementation of the strategy and delivery of the priority actions.
- HR will continue to proactively advise and support our managers in respect of sickness absence policy and procedure, supporting employee attendance through our Occupational Health provision.
- Review HR and Health & Safety policies and procedures with the Trade Unions to support the wellbeing agenda.
- Work closely with our recognised Trade Unions to achieve positive outcomes for our employees.
- Work in collaboration with our partners across the Council, and externally, to provide wellbeing training and initiatives.

The Wellbeing Group

- Continue to support and promote the improved health and wellbeing of employees via representatives across the Council and Trade Unions.

All Employees

- Effectively manage personal wellbeing, make good lifestyle choices and utilise the resources available to maintain physical and mental health.
- Take early action to seek help and support to help prevent issues escalating into serious health concerns.
- Ensure regular *My Time* conversations are undertaken, prepare for them and constructively develop targeted personal development plans with managers.
- Live by our values of equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace and challenge all forms of discrimination and bias.
- Actively participate in employee engagement initiatives which provide an opportunity to voice opinion and influence decision making.

Trade Unions

- Work in partnership with the Council, striving for positive outcomes for the workforce.
- Cultivate an effective partnership with officers to help develop wellbeing training and initiatives.
- Work proactively with the Council in the development and implementation of new and updated policies and procedures.



Delivery, Monitoring and Governance

The Strategy has been developed by People Services and approved by Cabinet. The HR Strategy Group will be responsible for the implementation

of the strategy. Progress against targets and objectives will be monitored and reviewed as follows:

Group/Body	Format	Timeframe
HR Strategy	Briefing	6 Monthly
CMT	Report	6 Monthly
P&R Scrutiny Committee	Report	Annually
Cabinet	Report	Annually

Our trade union partners will be fully consulted in the delivery of this strategy with six monthly briefings at Corporate JCC.



Appendix

Employee Wellbeing Strategic Action Plan

	PRIORITY ACTIONS	METHOD OF DELIVERY / PROJECT	LEAD OFFICER	PROJECT GOVERNANCE	TIMESCALE
1.1	Update our HR policies and procedures.	HR and H&S Policy Review Project	Head of People Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● HR Strategy Group ● Health & Safety Committee 	2022
1.2	Engage and support employees to volunteer as Mental Health Champions and explore opportunities to train employees as Mental Health First Aiders.	Corporate Review: Workforce Development (Workstream – Wellbeing)	Head of People Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● HR Strategy Group ● Health & Safety Committee 	2022
1.3	Undertake a review of the Wellbeing Group and repurpose the terms of reference to align to the principles of the Wellbeing Strategy.	Corporate Review: Workforce Development (Workstream – Wellbeing)	Head of People Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● HR Strategy Group ● Health & Safety Committee 	Quarter 4 2021-2022
1.4	Develop our wellbeing digital platforms and communications.	Corporate Review: Workforce Development (Workstream - Wellbeing)	Head of People Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● HR Strategy Group 	2022
1.5	Review our Corporate Membership Scheme	Corporate Review: Workforce Development (Workstream – Wellbeing)	Leisure Services Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Corporate Management Team 	Quarter 3 2021 - 2022
1.6	Promote healthy work habits and explore new opportunities to engage our employees in exercise.	Corporate Review: Workforce Development (Workstream - Wellbeing)	Leisure Services Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● HR Strategy Group 	2022
2.1	Repurpose and modernise Ty Penallta and other offices to facilitate agile working.	Corporate Review: Flexible Working	Head of People Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Team Caerphilly Programme Board 	Quarter 4 2021 - 2022
2.2	Implement a sustainable model of flexible/agile working for the Council.	Corporate Review: Flexible Working	Head of Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Team Caerphilly Programme Board 	2022
2.3	Expand the scope and provision of training to further upskill our managers to support employee health and wellbeing.	Corporate Review: Workforce Development (Workstream - Management Training)	Head of People Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Team Caerphilly Programme Board ● HR Strategy Group 	Quarter 4 2022 - 2023
2.4	Update our H&S policies and procedures.	HR and H&S Policy Review Project	Head of People Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● HR Strategy Group ● Health & Safety Committee 	2022
3.1	Deliver the key workforce objectives of the Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024.	Strategic Equality Plan (2020-2024)	Head of Transformation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Corporate Management Team 	All actions delivered by 2024
3.2	Working with the Trade Unions, continue to raise awareness of all forms of discrimination and the requirement to effectively challenge prejudice at source.	HR and H&S Policy Review Project	Head of People Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Corporate JCC 	Quarter 4 2021-22

	PRIORITY ACTIONS	METHOD OF DELIVERY / PROJECT	LEAD OFFICER	PROJECT GOVERNANCE	TIMESCALE
3.3	Upgrade our membership of the Disability Confident Scheme.	Corporate Review: Workforce Development (Workstream – Wellbeing)	Head of People Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Corporate Management Team ● HR Strategy Group 	2022
3.4	Re-establish our membership of Stonewall Cymru.	Corporate Review: Workforce Development (Workstream - Wellbeing)	Head of People Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Corporate Management Team ● HR Strategy Group 	2022
3.5	Publish the Neurodiversity Factsheet and work with the Trade Unions to organise neurodiversity training.	HR and H&S Policy Review Project	Head of People Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● HR Strategy Group 	Quarter 3 2021 - 2022
3.6	Develop the Staff Recognition Awards initiative.	Corporate Communications & Engagement Strategy 2019-2023.	Head of Transformation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Team Caerphilly Programme Board 	Quarter 4 2021-2022
3.7	Develop and implement diversity and inclusivity training for our Members.	Strategic Equality Plan (2020-2024)	Head of Legal Services & Monitoring Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Team Caerphilly Programme Board 	2022
3.8	Conduct regular pulse surveys to support our more comprehensive staff surveys.	Corporate Review: Workforce Development (Workstream - Wellbeing)	Head of People Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Team Caerphilly Programme Board 	2024
4.1	Implement the Workforce Development Strategy 2021-2024.	Corporate Review: Workforce Development (Workstream - Workforce Development Strategy)	Head of People Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Team Caerphilly Programme Board ● Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee ● Cabinet 	Quarter 3 2021-2022
4.2	Deliver the Priority Actions outlined in the Workforce Development Strategy 2021-2024.	Corporate Review: Workforce Development (Workstream - Workforce Development Strategy)	Head of People Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● HR Strategy Group ● Corporate Management Team ● Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee ● Cabinet 	All actions delivered by 2024
4.3	Implement Workforce Planning	Corporate Review: Workforce Development (Workstream - Workforce Planning Framework and Manager Toolkit)	Head of People Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Team Caerphilly Programme Board ● HR Strategy Group 	2022
4.4	Embed the My Time/My Time Extra programme and train our managers to deliver effective conversations.	Corporate Review: Workforce Development (Workstream - Management Training)	Head of People Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Team Caerphilly Programme Board ● HR Strategy Group 	Quarter 3 2021-2022
5.1	Undertake a Non-Guaranteed Hours Arrangement (NGHA) review.	Contract Review Project	Head of People Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● HR Strategy ● Corporate Management Team 	Quarter 4 2021-2022
5.2	Periodically promote the financial advice provided by Care First.	Corporate Review: Workforce Development (Workstream - Wellbeing)	Head of People Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● HR Strategy Group 	Quarter 3 2021-2022
5.3	Review our processes for recording and analysing retirement feedback and data.	Corporate Review: Workforce Development (Workstream - Wellbeing)	Head of People Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● HR Strategy ● Corporate Management Team 	2022
5.4	Review our employee benefits packages	HR and H&S Policy Review Project	Head of People Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● HR Strategy Group ● Health & Safety Committee 	2022

