

Research Report



Employee Survey 2015

Prepared for: The Highland Council

Prepared by: BMG Research

Employee Survey 2015

Prepared for: The Highland Council

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

In March 2012, The Highland Council commissioned BMG Research to undertake an organisation-wide survey of employees. Further to this, BMG were commissioned again to undertake the survey in March 2015. The survey was carried out by means of a self-completion questionnaire, administered either electronically or via a paper questionnaire, with the objective to measure current employee views and attitudes, whilst tracking against previous survey results.

The following report provides a summary of the key findings derived from the survey undertaken during April and May 2015, including where possible tracking of changes since the 2000 survey.

1.2 Methodology

All 10,747 employees (including teaching staff) within the organisation were given the opportunity to complete a survey, either via a paper questionnaire or electronically. An electronic survey was made available to 7,023 employees via an emailed hyperlink sent to work email accounts and a paper questionnaire was distributed internally at the workplace to a total of 3,724 employees.

A total of 3,831 responses were received, giving an overall response rate of 36%, which is an increase of 3% points since the survey in 2012. There were 3,140 responses from those who completed the survey online, with a response rate of 45%, and 691 postal returns, with a response rate of 19%. Particular effort was made in optimising the response rate, including the implementation of the following:

- Updates three times per week on responses at Service level to ensure encouragement was targeted where most needed;
- Three reminders were sent electronically to those that had not responded within a set period of time during fieldwork; and
- The questionnaire was designed in plain English and kept to a minimum length.

The sample is subject to a maximum standard error of +/-1.27% at the 95% confidence level on an observed statistic of 50% (adjusted). Therefore, we can be 95% confident that responses are representative of those that would be given by all employees, had each completed a questionnaire, to within +/-1.27% of the percentages reported. For example, if a satisfaction score of 50% is given for a particular question, we can be 95% confident that if we had actually gained a response from every employee at the council, the score would lie between 48.73% and 51.27%. This is a very robust dataset.

The following table displays the response rates achieved by the two different distribution methods and by Service:

Table 1: Returns and response rate by Directorate

Service	Sent		Returned		Response rate %
	Online	Paper	Online	Paper	Total
Care & Learning	5176	2844	1870	474	29.2
Chief Executives Office	53	1	41	1	77.7
Community Services	515	812	350	153	37.9
Corporate Development	261	25	184	3	65.4
Development & Infrastructure	412	12	305	3	72.6
Finance	606	22	390	7	63.2
Unknown/Not provided		8		50	
Total	7023	3724	3140	691	35.6

The following table presents the number of responses received by Service, with the associated standard error. The profile of the sample is further presented in Section 11.

Table 2: Returns and standard error by Service

Service	Total Returns	Standard error (+/-)
Care & Learning	2344	1.70%
Chief Executives Office	42	7.13%
Community Services	503	3.44%
Corporate Development	187	4.22%
Development & Infrastructure	308	2.92%
Finance	397	2.98%
Unknown/Not provided	50	-
Total	3831	

1.3 The report

The data used in this report is rounded up or down to the nearest whole percentage point. It is for this reason that, on occasions, tables or charts may add up to 99% or 101%. Where tables and graphics do not match exactly to the text in the report this occurs due to the way in which figures are rounded up (or down) when responses are combined. Results that differ in this way should not have a variance that is any larger than 1%.

To ensure the anonymity of data and provide reassurance to employees regarding confidentiality, at no point will results of subgroups of less than 10 respondents be reported upon throughout these findings.

Significance testing has been used to look for statistical differences in the responses between groups of employees. In this case, the T-Test has been used. Where there is said to be a statistically significant difference between two or more variables, this is based on a 95% confidence level. All differences noted in this report are statistically significant (unless stated).

The following symbols will be found throughout this report:

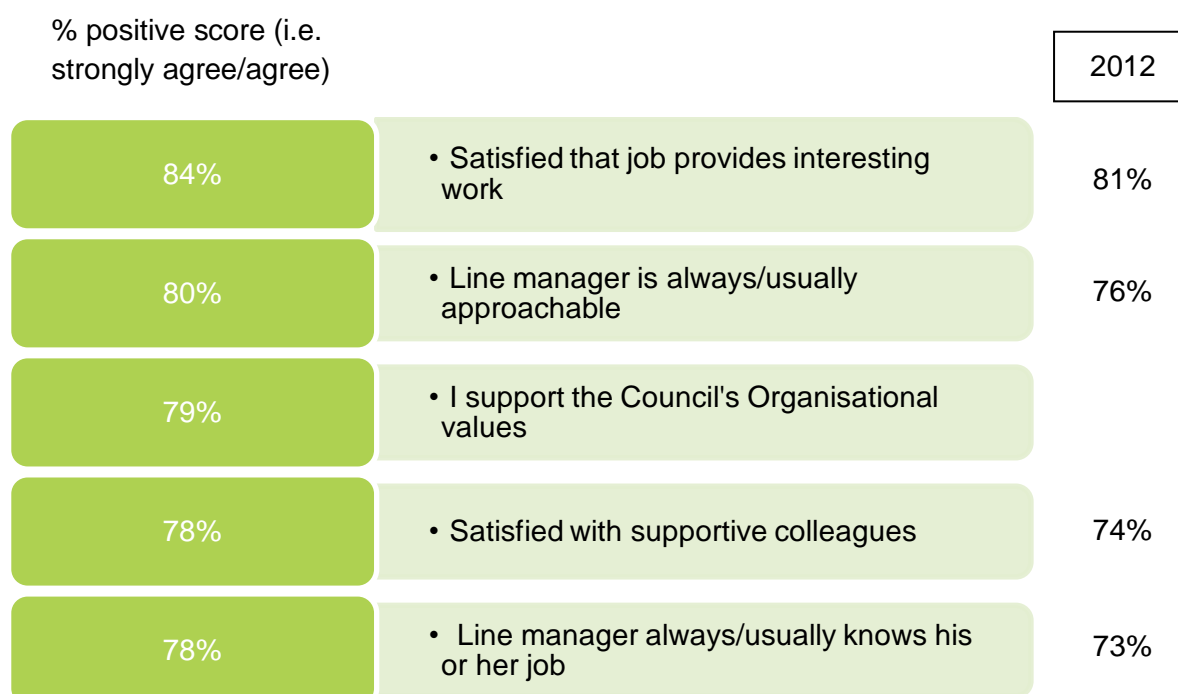
*%	Denotes where the figure is less than 0.5%
cf.	Denotes the term 'confer', which is to compare. This is used where two or more figures are compared against each other

2 Key findings

This section presents the summary council-wide results, highlighting what Highland is doing well and what could be improved.

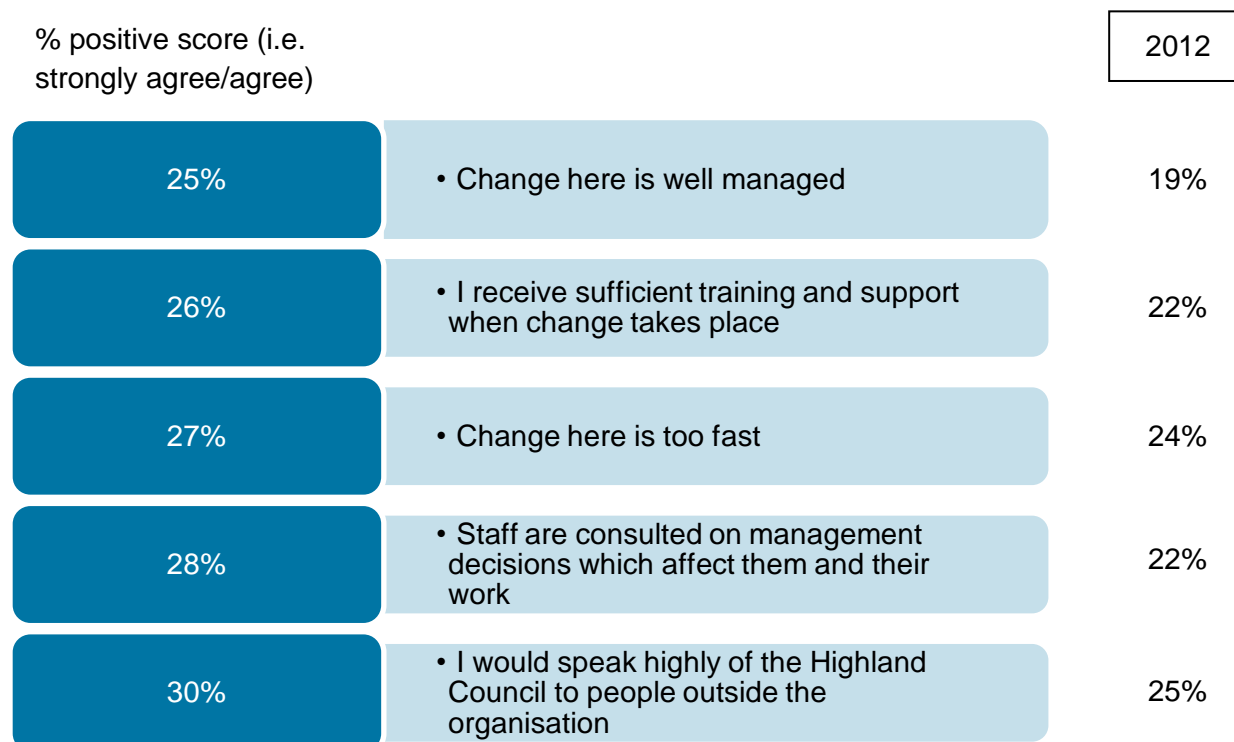
2.1 What is Highland Council doing well?

The following chart presents the measures scoring most positively in the employee survey. It is encouraging to see that over eight in ten employees across the council are satisfied that their job provides interesting work (84%). This is consistent with the top performing measure in 2012, however agreement has increased by 3% points. In fact, all of the below measures that were asked in 2012 were also amongst the top performing and have increased since 2012.

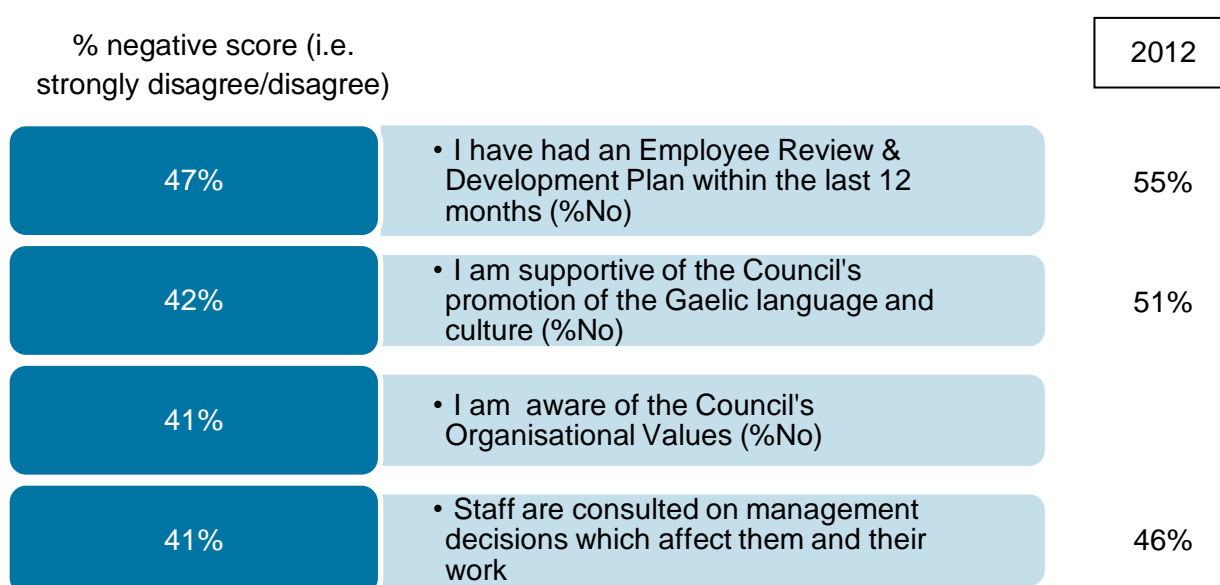


2.2 What could Highland Council be doing better?

The following chart now presents the measures that scored the least positively in the employee survey. It is immediately apparent that the lowest scoring measures are in relation to change within the Council and how it is managed. However it is positive to note that these measures have all improved slightly since 2012. Most notably, more employees now believe change is well managed (+6% points). Furthermore, there are only three in ten employees who would speak highly of the Council to people outside of the organisation (30%); nevertheless this has increased by 5% points since 2012.



Whilst the chart on the previous page shows the areas scoring the least positively, it is also very useful to explore which areas are scoring the most negatively (for example, receiving the highest number of employees actively disagreeing with a statement). Nearly half of the employees at the Council have not had an Employee Review and Development Plan within the last 12 months (47%). Furthermore around two fifths of employees actively disagree that they are supportive of the Council's promotion of the Gaelic language and culture (42%) and are aware of the Council's Organisational Values (41%). As seen above, only three in ten employees agree that they are consulted on management decisions which affect them, and in fact four in ten employees actively disagree with this (41%). However, it is encouraging that the proportion of employees that are negative has decreased significantly since 2012 (by 5% points).



2.3 Changes since 2012

Much of the results collected in 2015 can be directly compared with previous surveys conducted biennially since 2000. The following tables provide a summary of the measures seeing the largest positive change since the last survey in 2012 and the largest negative change.

There are noticeably positive shifts across many of the measures since 2012. In particular, in terms of the Fairer Highland culture (+13% points), line managers appreciating the pressures employees come under (+9% points) and line managers acting on employee's ideas/suggestions (+9% points).

Table 3: The largest positive changes since 2012

Indicator	2012	2015	% change since 2012
There is a culture in the Council where you are treated with dignity and respect	44%	57%	+13%
My line manager appreciates the pressure I come under in my job	57%	66%	+9%
My line manager acts on my ideas/suggestions	43%	52%	+9%
Current source of information: Service newsletters	35%	44%	+9%
I understand the need for change	69%	77%	+8%
I support the need for change	48%	56%	+8%
Senior managers in my Service keep employees informed of their views and decisions	37%	45%	+8%
I have confidence in the Senior managers in my Service	35%	43%	+8%
Current source of information: E-mail	64%	72%	+8%
Current source of information: Team briefings (face to face)	34%	42%	+8%
I am satisfied with my job security	58%	65%	+7%
My line manager listens to my ideas /suggestions	61%	68%	+7%
I am satisfied with the feedback I get on my performance	42%	49%	+7%
I am satisfied that I am working for a successful organisation	43%	50%	+7%
I am satisfied that I am feeling valued and recognised	44%	51%	+7%
I receive the right amount of training to do my job well	45%	52%	+7%
Current source of information: Pay slips	31%	38%	+7%
I am satisfied that I am receiving guidance and support at work	49%	55%	+6%
Staff are consulted on management decisions which affect them and their work	22%	28%	+6%
I am satisfied with the morale in your workplace	40%	46%	+6%
I am satisfied that I am receiving praise for good work	44%	50%	+6%
My line manager does something about the pressure I come under in my job	42%	48%	+6%
I receive training that is relevant to my future career development	31%	37%	+6%
Change here is well managed	19%	25%	+6%
My line manager is committed to the Council	64%	70%	+6%
Keeps you informed about the Service you work in	55%	61%	+6%

The largest declines since 2012 are in relation to pay being an important job aspect, currently receiving information via Trade Unions, and dealing with aggressive members of the public and general nature of the job causing stress (all -4% points).

Table 4: The largest declines since 2012

Indicator	2012	2015	% change since 2012
Pay (as most important job factor)	62%	58%	-4%
Current source of information: Trade Union	23%	19%	-4%
Dealing with aggressive members of the Public causes me stress	15%	11%	-4%
General nature of the job causes me stress	38%	35%	-3%
Preferred source of information: In Brief (Council newsletter)*	12%	9%	-3%
Current source of information: Press/External media	43%	40%	-3%

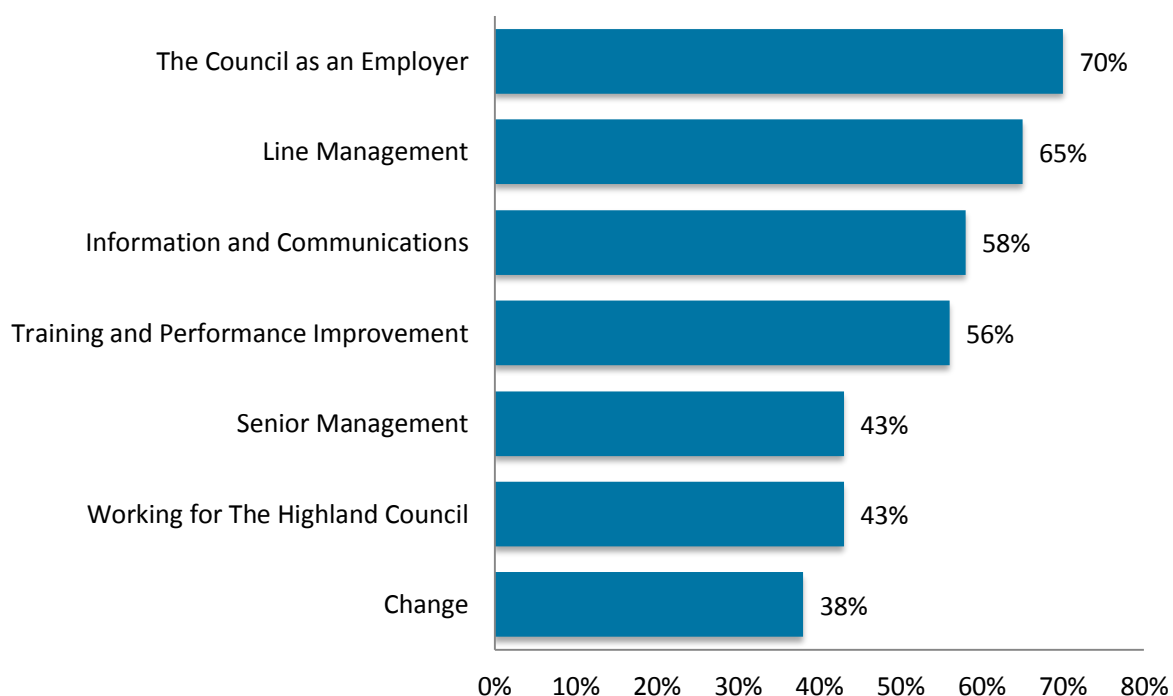
* Prior to 2015 "In Brief" was "Big Picture"

2.4 Summary of themes

An effective method of summarising the variations in employee's views is to develop an index score for each broad theme covered by the survey. The following chart presents the index scores for each theme, with the index calculated by taking the average % positive score (i.e. agreement / satisfaction) for each of the statements included within that particular theme.

Views of the Council as an employer comes out on top, and this is made up purely of employee's overall job satisfaction (70%). As is often the case, views of line managers are positive, with high levels of average positive scores (65%). Conversely, change receives the least positive responses (38%), which was shown earlier when highlighting the least positive responses across the survey.

Figure 1: Index scores per survey theme



2.5 Employee engagement Index

Over the past few years there has been growing interest in the concept of employee engagement and the impact this can have on organisational success. An important and influential report into this concept was published in 2009 titled: *‘Engaging for Success: Enhancing performance through employee engagement’* (David MacLeod and Nita Clarke)¹.

There is further significant and compelling evidence regarding how the relative levels of employee engagement within an organisation can have on a range of organisational outcomes and business metrics. The *Employee Engagement Task Force Evidence* suggested that employee engagement impacts on profitability and service outcomes as well as performance and productivity. Employee engagement also impacts positively on levels of absenteeism, retention, innovation, customer service, the public and employee’s advocacy of an organisation.

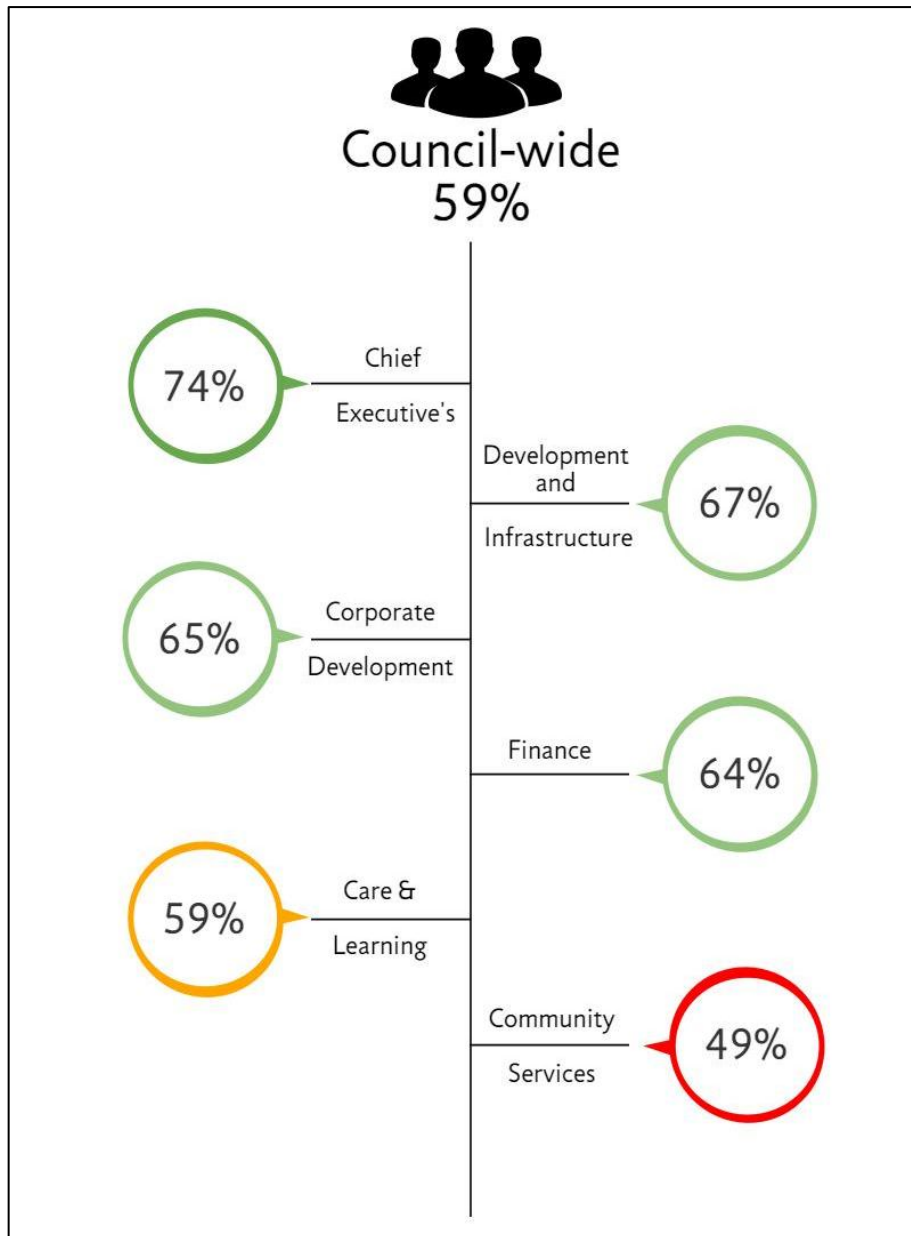
In light of this, Highland Council has developed a set of metrics that can be used to quantify levels of employee engagement at the Council. An engagement index score can be calculated by combining a number of measures included within the questionnaire. The positive result for each measure is used for the calculation, with the index calculated as the mean average positive score. The measures that make up the index are shown in the table below.

¹ See: www.berr.gov.uk/files/file52215.pdf

Table 5: Measures included in the engagement model

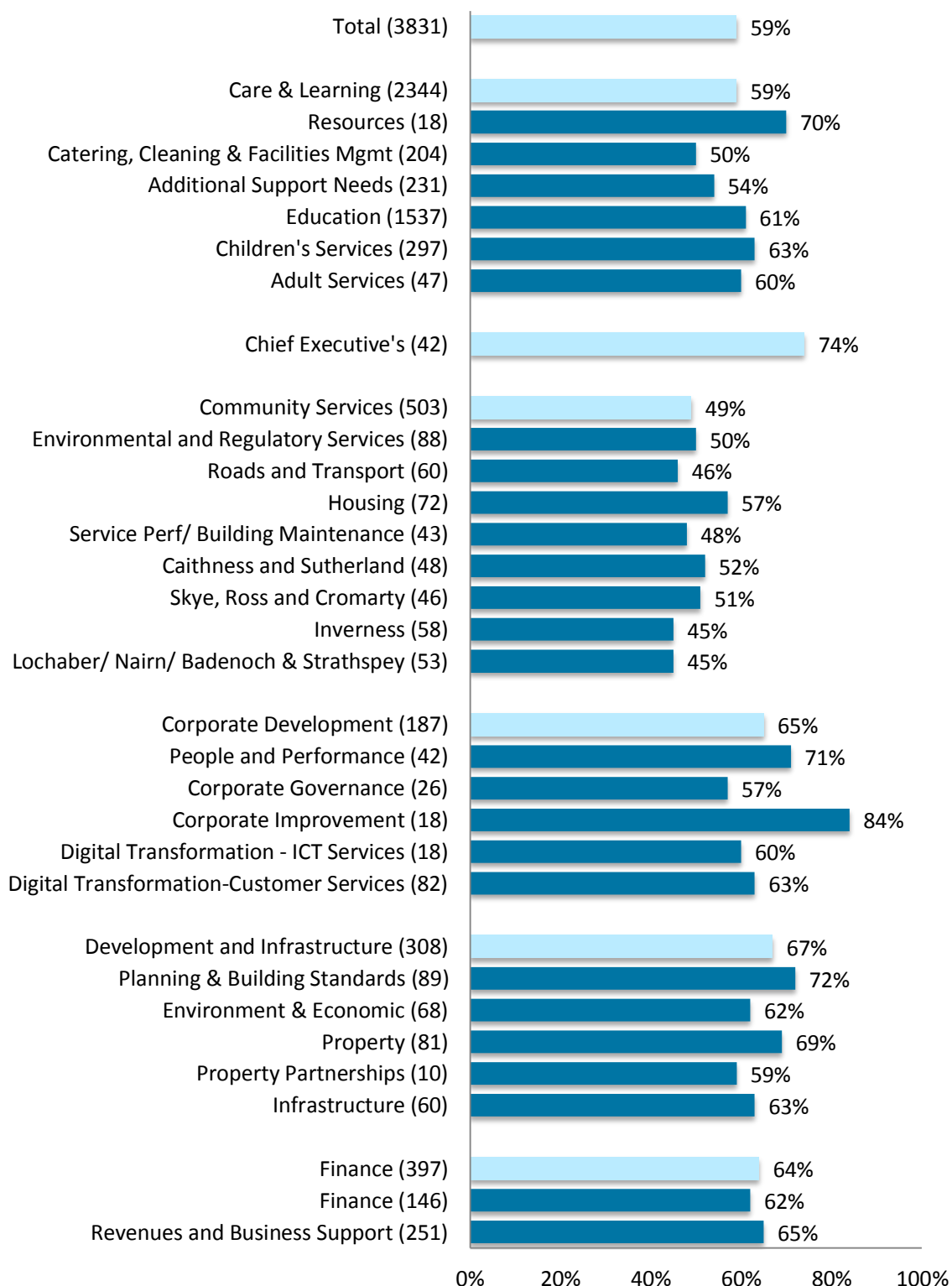
Q no.	Indicator
Q1	How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your present job?
Q2a/A	Interesting work
Q2a/J	Making the best use of your skills and abilities
Q2a/L	Feeling you have accomplished something worthwhile at work
Q2a/R	Working as part of a team
Q2a/V	Feeling valued and recognised for the work I do
Q7/11	My line manager/ supervisor: Acts on my ideas/suggestions
Q7/3	My line manager/ supervisor: Consults me on matters where I can contribute
Q7/7	My line manager/ supervisor: Is approachable
Q7/9	My line manager/ supervisor: Keeps me in touch with what is going on
Q7/1	My line manager/ supervisor: Listens to my ideas and suggestions
Q7/15	My line manager/ supervisor: Is available to speak to when I need to
Q7/18	My line manager/ supervisor: Explains to me why tasks are undertaken
Q10/1	Keeps us fully/ fairly well informed: the Highland Council as a whole
Q10/2	Keeps us fully/ fairly well informed: the Service you work in
Q10/3	Keeps us fully/ fairly well informed: the Area you work in
Q12/1	I have had an Employee Review & Development Plan
Q12/2	I have had an Employee Review & Development Plan within the last 12 months
Q12/3	I am aware of the Council's Organisational Values
Q12/4	I support the Council's Organisational values
Q13	To what extent do you agree or disagree that there is a culture in the Council where you are treated with dignity and respect?
Q14/4	The reasons for change are well communicated to me
Q14/6	Change here is well managed
Q14/8	Staff are consulted about management decisions which affect them and their work

The graphic below shows the index score across the Council as a whole (59%). The strongest performing Service is the Chief Executive's (74%), but on the other hand employees in Community Services are the lowest performing Service in terms of engagement (49%).



The Figure below shows the engagement Index score split out across the Sections.

Figure 2: Employee Engagement Index score by Service and Section (All responses)



Sample bases in brackets

2.6 Health and Wellbeing Index

Well-being plays a central role in creating flourishing societies. Focussing on well-being at work can benefit societies by helping working individuals to feel happy, competent and satisfied in their roles. The evidence shows that people who achieve good standards of well-being at work are likely to be more creative, more loyal, more productive and provide better customer satisfaction than those with poor levels of well-being at work.

For decades, organisations have tried to foster these qualities through employee engagement strategies but engaging employees is just one part of the story. Improving well-being at work requires a more rounded approach that focuses on helping employees to:

- Strengthen their personal resources.
- Flourish and take pride in their roles within the organisational system.
- Function to the best of their abilities, both as individuals and in collaboration with their colleagues.
- Have a positive overall experience of work.²

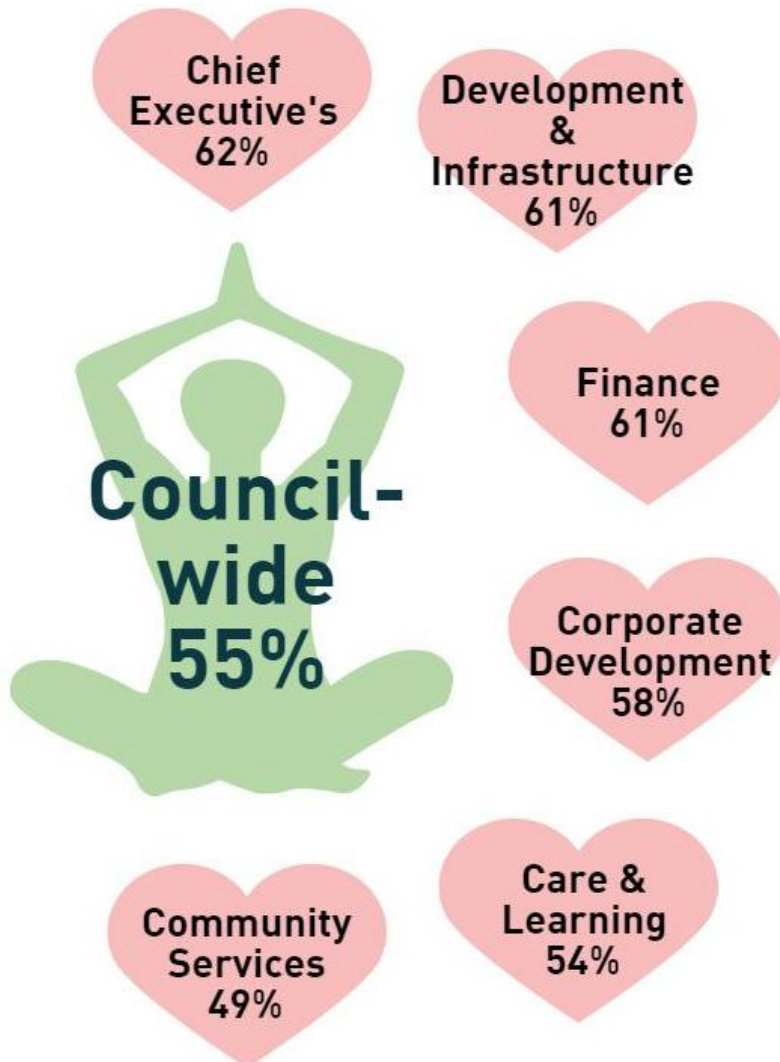
Highland Council has developed a set of metrics that can be used to form a health and wellbeing index score combining a number of measures included within the questionnaire. The positive result for each measure is used for the calculation, with the index calculated as the mean average positive score. The measures that make up the index are shown in the table below.

Table 6: Measures included in the Health and Wellbeing Index

Q no.	Indicator
Q2a/C	Good employment benefits (e.g. leave, pensions, flexible working)
Q2a/F	Working hours
Q2a/G	Working environment (e.g. health & safety, security)
Q2a/H	Sufficient resources (finance, equipment, computers, staff) to do your job
Q2a/U	Personal safety at work
Q4	How do you feel about the amount of work you do in your normal working week?
Q5	How do you feel about the amount of work you do in your normal working week?
Q6/19	Which of the following, if any, are causes of stress for you?
Q7/2	My line manager/ supervisor: Appreciates the pressure I come under in my job
Q7/4	My line manager/ supervisor: Discusses my training and development needs
Q7/12	My line manager/ supervisor: Makes it clear what is expected of me
Q7/19	My line manager/ supervisor: Does something about the pressure I come under in my job
Q7/20	My line manager/ supervisor: Is consistent in applying personnel policy
Q7/21	My line manager/ supervisor: Manages attendance in the team

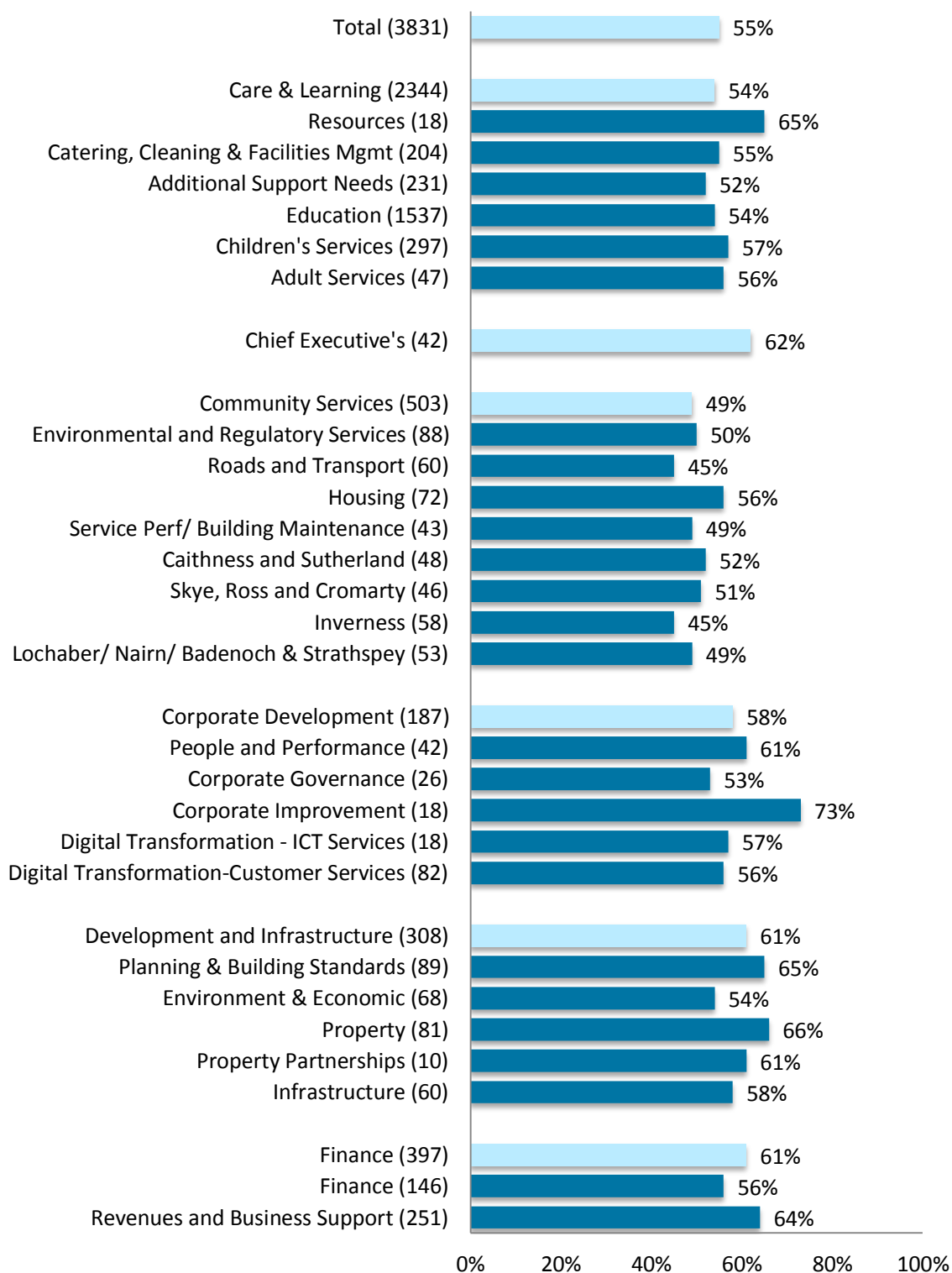
² <http://www.neweconomics.org/publications/entry/well-being-at-work>

The graphic below shows the index score across the Council as a whole (55%). Employees in the Chief Executive's Service have the highest index score (62%), whilst employees in Community Services continue to be the weakest (49%).



The Figure below shows the Health and Wellbeing Index score split out across the Sections.

Figure 3: Health and Wellbeing Index score by Service and Section (All responses)



Sample bases in brackets

3 Benchmarking

BMG Research maintains a database of results from organisations they have worked with over a number of years. The database used to benchmark with the Highland Council results is based on approximately 50 organisations, including local authorities, housing associations, police forces, central government departments, and publicly funded bodies.

The highlighting in the table denotes where the Highland score is significantly more positive (green), more negative (red), or there is no significant difference (white) to the benchmark.

Table 7: Benchmarking with the public sector norm

	Highland	Public sector benchmark	% difference
Overall job satisfaction	70%	68%	+2%
Satisfied with feeling valued and recognised for the work I do	51%	49%	+2%
Satisfied with morale in your workplace	46%	39%	+7%
My line manager is approachable	80%	83%	-3%
Senior managers in my Service are not interested in listening to staff opinion	40%	40% (disagree)	=
I have confidence in the Senior managers in my Service	43%	44%	-1%
Keeps us informed – Council as a whole	54%	51%	+3%
Keeps us informed – Service	61%	59%	+2%
Keeps us informed – Area	60%	72%	-12%
I have had an Employee Review & Development Plan within the last 12 months	52%	74%	-22%
I understand the need for change	77%	80%	-3%
The reasons for change are well communicated to me	32%	44%	-12%
I support the need for change	56%	71%	-15%
Change here is well managed	25%	30%	-5%

4 The Council as an Employer

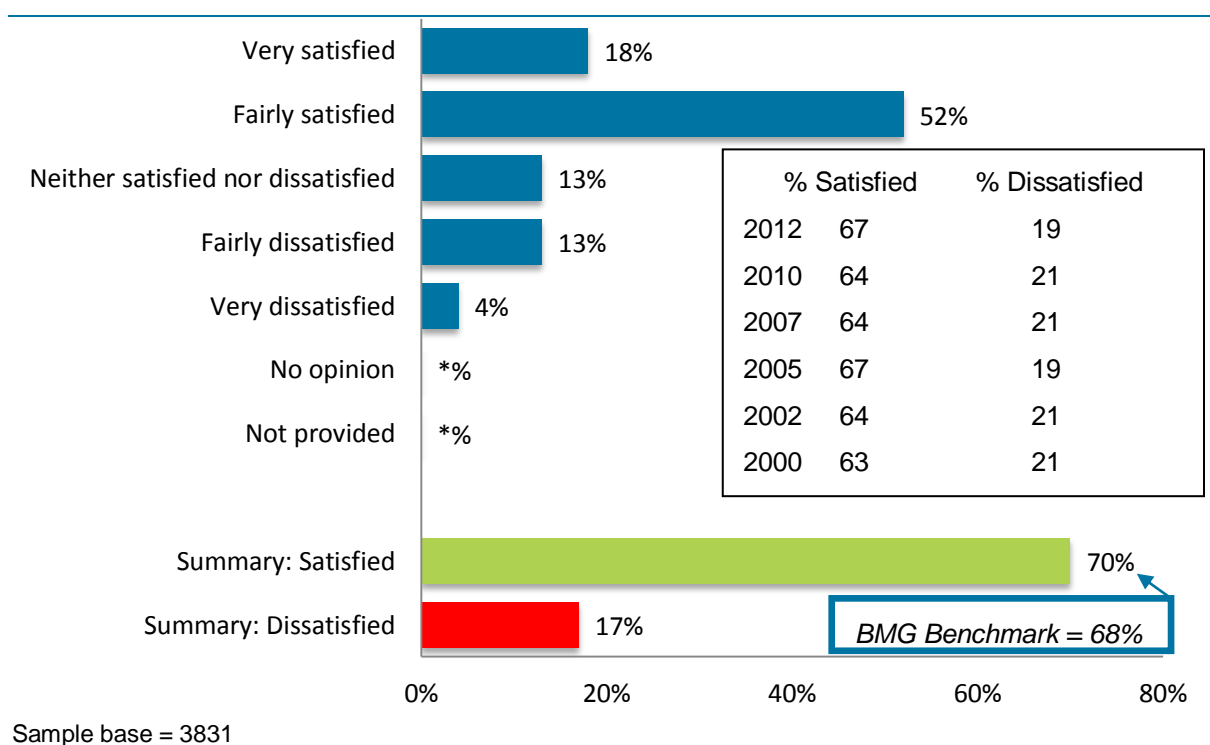
4.1 Introduction

This section explores employee views of the Council as an employer, including their overall level of satisfaction with their job and the key drivers of this.

4.2 Overall satisfaction with present job

All employees were asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they are with their present job. An encouraging 70% of the workforce is satisfied, with nearly one in five (18%) saying they are very satisfied. Levels of satisfaction slightly exceed the BMG public sector benchmark³ of 68%, which is an achievement as we know the greater the size of an organisation, the lower we expect satisfaction figures to be. The Spring 2015 CIPD Employee Outlook⁴ survey presents job satisfaction as a net balance score⁵ of +47%, and split down as +41% for public sector staff specifically. This compares to the net balance score for Highland of +53%, emphasising further how well Highland are performing here. To further highlight this, levels of satisfaction have increased by 3% points since 2012.

Figure 4: How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your present job? (All responses)



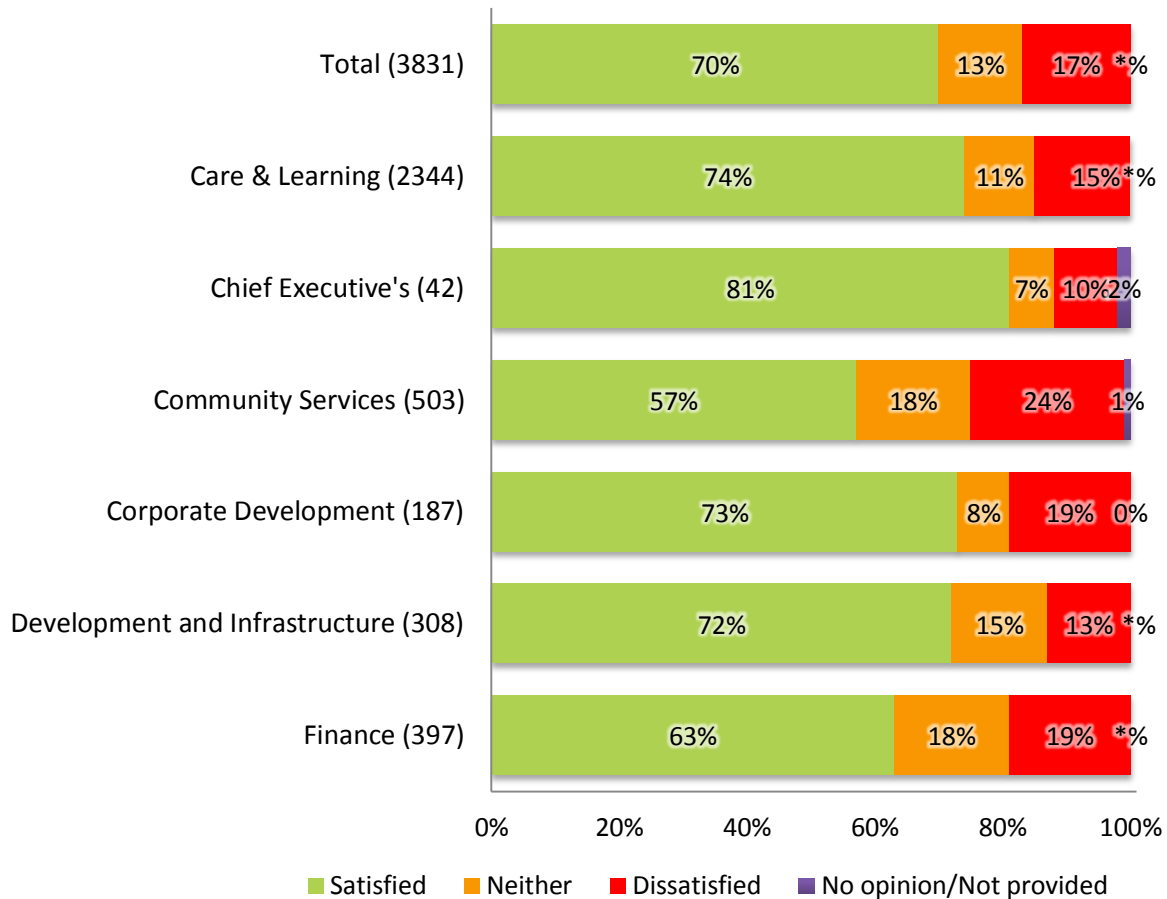
³ BMG Research’s benchmark database is made up of over 50 public sector organisations, including local authorities, housing associations, police forces, central government departments, publicly funded bodies etc.

⁴ The CIPD Spring 2015 Employee Outlook survey was conducted among 2,226 UK employees

⁵ Net scores refer to the proportion of people agreeing with a statement minus those disagreeing.

The chart below presents the levels of job satisfaction and dissatisfaction by Service. It is clear that employees in the Chief Executive’s Service are the most satisfied (81%), with only 10% who state they are dissatisfied. Conversely, it is employees in Community Services that have the lowest levels of satisfaction (57%) and also the highest levels of dissatisfaction (24%).

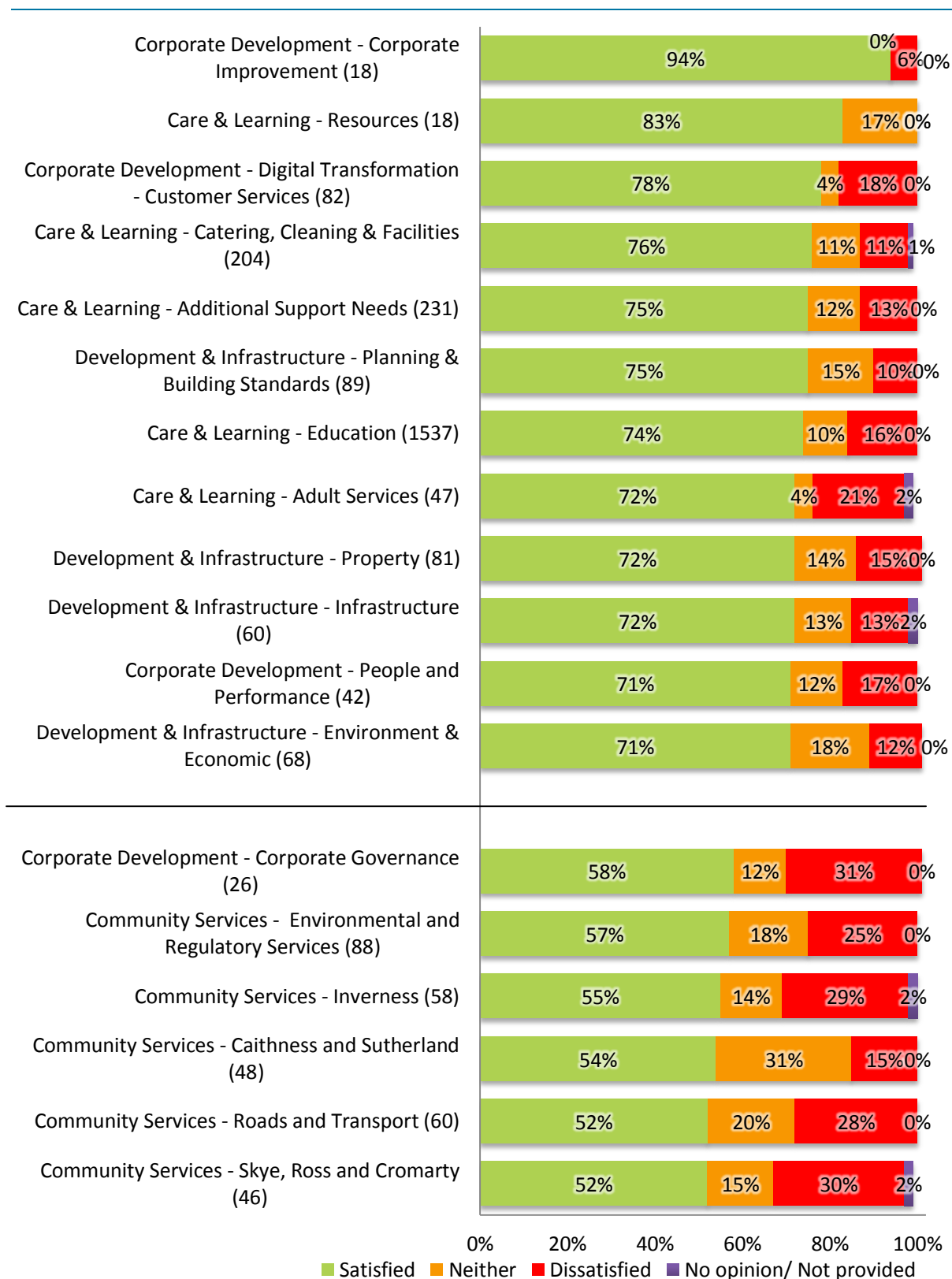
Figure 5: How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your present job? By Service (All responses)



Unweighted sample bases vary

To explore this further, the figure overleaf presents the top and bottom scoring Sections in terms of job satisfaction. At this lower level, the variation increases markedly, ranging from 94% job satisfaction at the highest, down to 52% at the lowest. Job satisfaction is highest amongst employees in the Corporate Improvement Section of Corporate Development (94%), whilst four fifths are satisfied in the Resources Section of Care & Learning (83%). On the opposite end of the scale, however, just 52% of employees in Skye, Ross and Cromarty and Roads and Transport (both Community Services) are satisfied, with 30% and 28% also saying they are dissatisfied.

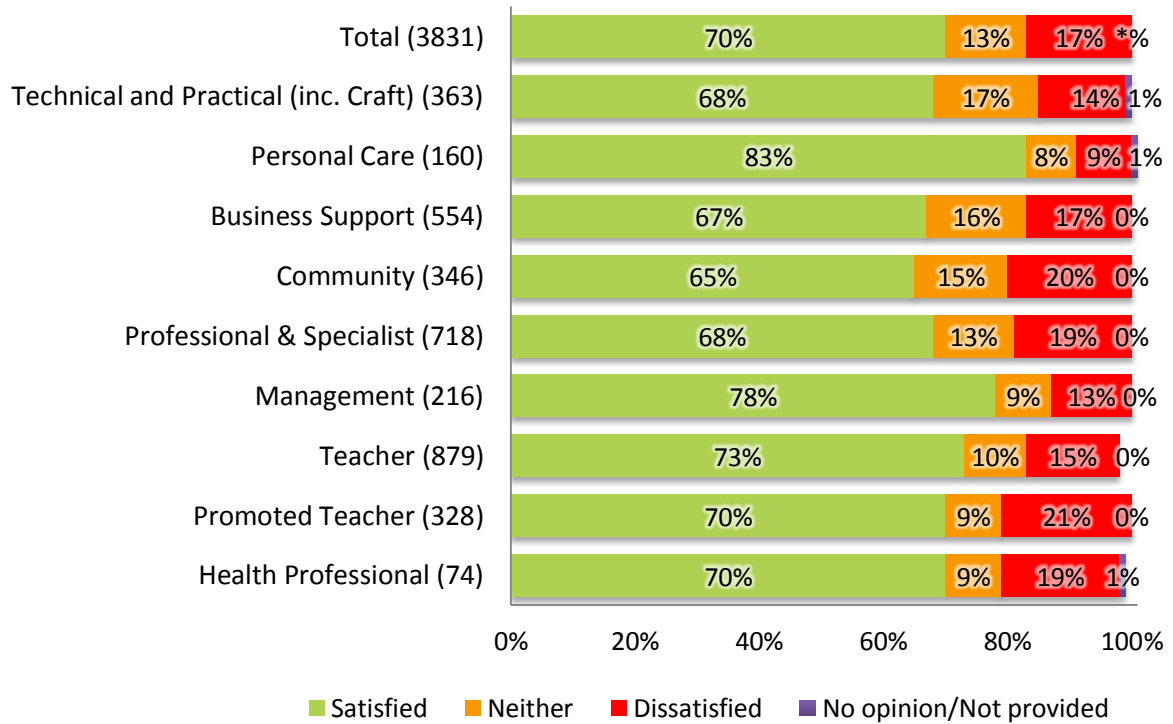
Figure 6: Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your present job? Top and bottom scoring Sections (All responses)



Unweighted sample bases vary

Employees could also be defined into a number of job categories, depending on their grade and job family. Levels of satisfaction do not differ hugely by job category, although 83% of Personal Care employees say they are satisfied. This is closely followed by Management, where 78% are satisfied. All other job categories have a similar level of satisfaction as compared to the Council average.

Figure 7: How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your present job? By Job Family (All responses)



Unweighted sample bases vary

There is a clear inter relationship between how satisfied employees are and their views and experiences in the workplace. This demonstrates the strength of focusing attention on particular factors as a means of driving up satisfaction levels. In particular, levels of satisfaction increase significantly amongst employees that...

- ...feel valued and recognised - 91% cf. 37% that do not
- ...are treated with dignity and respect - 84% cf. 36% that are not
- ...have confidence in senior management - 86% cf. 46% that do not

In addition to this, employees that have worked at the Council for less time have a higher level of job satisfaction compared to employees who have been at the Council for longer (Up to 1 year: 84% cf. Over 10 years: 66% and Over 20 years: 66%).

It is also interesting to highlight that there is a correlation between the level of stress employees experience and how satisfied they are with their job. Job satisfaction reaches a high of 90% amongst employees who claim to have no stress at work, whilst it is as low as 46% amongst employees who have high stress levels.

Further to this there is an interesting pattern when looking at the amount of work employees have and their level of job satisfaction. Employees who have a heavy workload, but can cope and have the right amount of work to do have strong levels of job satisfaction (78% and 79% respectively). In contrast, employees who have too much work to do and could do more work without too much effort have weaker levels of job satisfaction (55% and 59% respectively).

4.3 Key driver analysis

4.3.1 Introduction

To supplement the analysis of the employee survey data, the application of Key Driver Analysis (KDA) has been applied. KDA seeks to determine the factors most closely correlated with overall satisfaction (Q1); the assumption being that satisfaction levels can be ‘driven’ up by concentrating efforts to improve those factors most correlated or associated with it.

This section is designed as a ‘practical toolkit’ to enable practitioners to make informed decisions about policies and communication strategies. We have kept the text deliberately punchy in order to get to the main messages quickly and effectively.

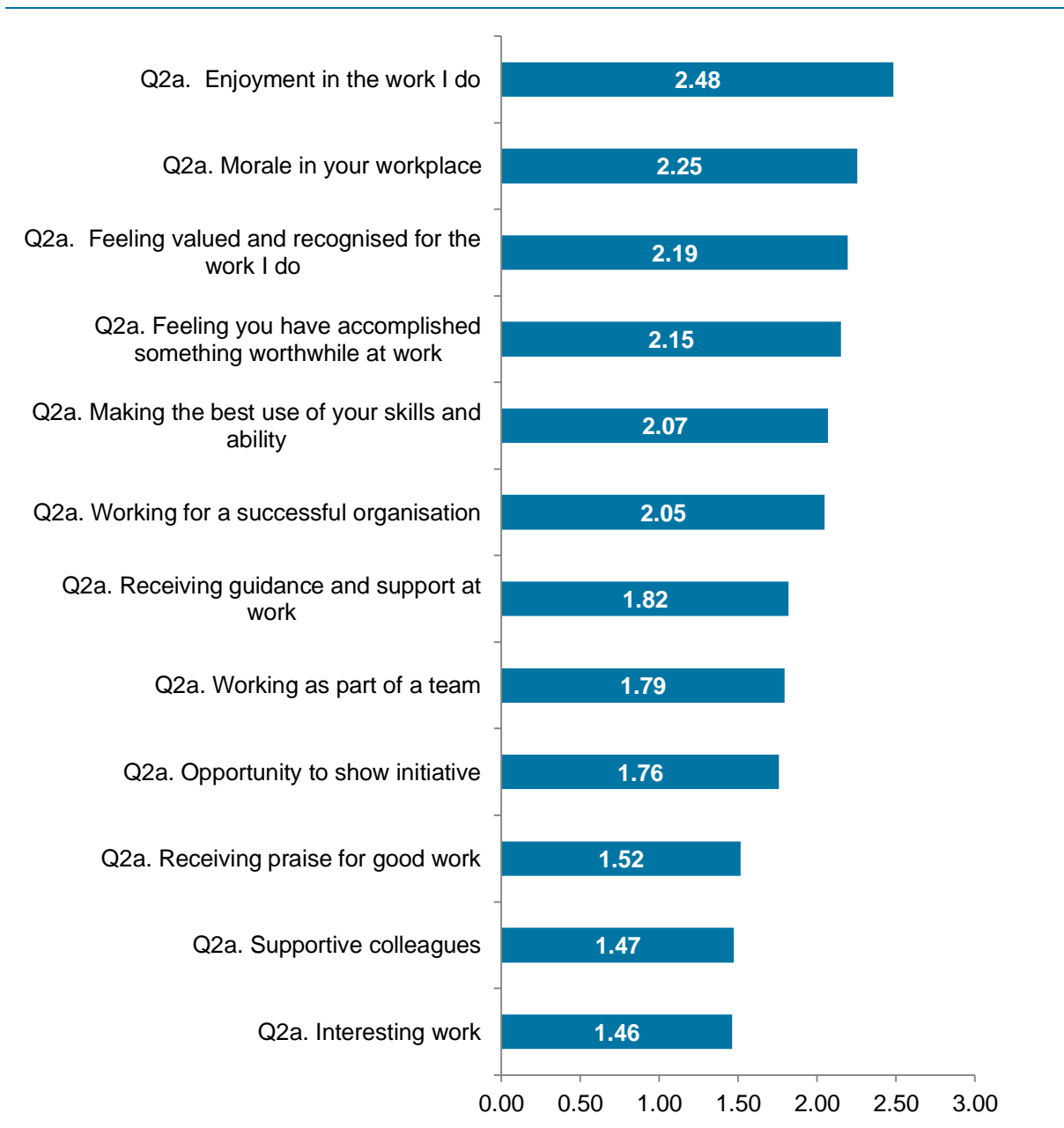
4.3.2 Method of Assessing Key Driver Importance

The principle of the method we used is based on assessing the statistical correlation between employees’ ratings on each of the 60 possible “key drivers” within the questionnaire, in turn, and their ratings of overall satisfaction with their present job. This correlation is based on the proportion of variation in overall satisfaction that could statistically be “accounted for” or “explained” by related variation in satisfaction with individual factors. If the correlation is high, then the factor will be “important” in the sense of the analysis. If it is low, it will imply that the factor is less important. The rationale for this is that a high level of correlation implies a likelihood that improving perceptions for the individual factor will in turn improve overall an employee’s satisfaction with their job. If there is little or no correlation, this offers no evidence that improving the factor might have any impact on overall satisfaction.

We reflect the importance as an index value in which 1.0 is equal to the average importance across all factors. A level of 2.0 implies that the factor in question is twice as important as the average. “Key Drivers” are factors that have high importance.

The chart below presents the top 12 'drivers' of job satisfaction. In summary, an employee's own enjoyment of the work they do is most closely correlated with job satisfaction. As is consistently found in employee surveys, morale and value are also key drivers of job satisfaction. Similarly, if an employee feels they have accomplished something worthwhile, they are more likely to have job satisfaction.

Figure 8: Key drivers of satisfaction with jobs

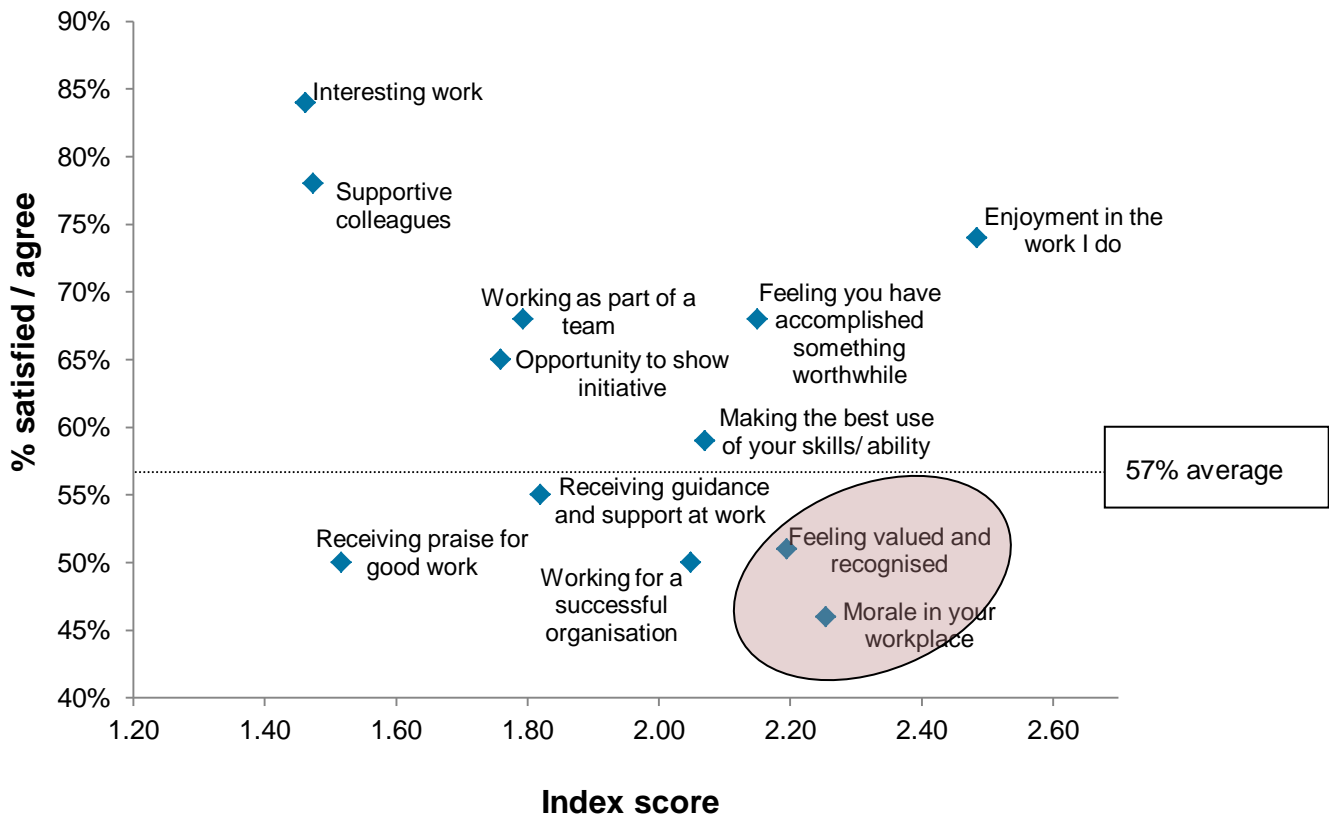


Another useful way to present the key driver analysis results is to build a prioritisation matrix based on the level of importance as a driver versus the extent to which its current standing in the survey is positive or negative. The following figure takes the same top 12 'key drivers' of overall satisfaction with the job and plots the key driver index score against the level of agreement or satisfaction (positive %) gained in the survey. Those measures, therefore, that have a high index score (high in terms of importance as a driver of satisfaction), but may not be performing well relative to other measures are those that require the greatest attention and prioritisation.

The figure shows the priorities for Highland Council moving forwards are:

- To ensure employees feel valued and recognised for the work they do
- Explore ways to increase employee morale

Figure 9: The prioritisation of factors that impact on overall satisfaction with the job



5 Working for The Highland Council

5.1 Introduction

This section explores employee's views of working for the Council, as well as how they would speak about the Council to others and the amount of work and stress employees have.

5.2 Satisfaction with aspects of the job

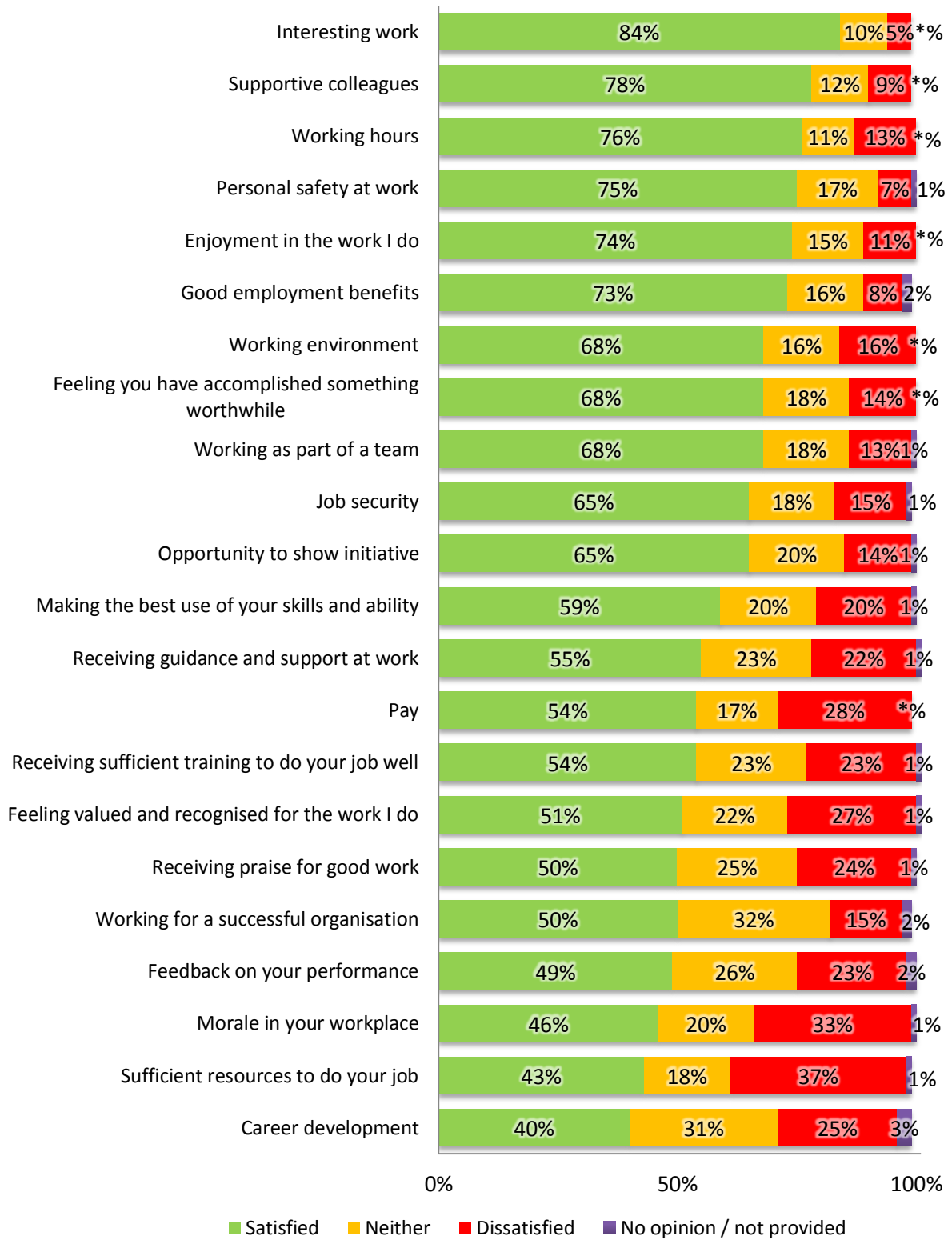
Figure 10 presents employee levels of satisfaction for a range of aspects of their job. It is clear that views are mixed. Positively, 84% of employees are satisfied that they have interesting work, whilst over seven in ten are satisfied they have supportive colleagues (78%), with their working hours (76%), with their personal safety at work (75%), with their enjoyment in the work they do (74%) and good employment benefits (73%).

Although only half of the employees are satisfied that they feel valued and recognised for the work they do (51%), this is in line with the BMG benchmark of 49%. However, given this is one of the key drivers of job satisfaction, it is an area for further consideration.

There are clearly areas seen less positively. A relatively lower proportion of employees are satisfied with career development (40%). In fact, this measure is quite polarising, with 31% stating they are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and 25% who are dissatisfied. It is employees in Community Services that have the lowest level of satisfaction with career development (28%), yet it is employees in Chief Executive's that have the highest level of dissatisfaction (40%). Additionally, there is also a high proportion of employees who state that they are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied that they are working for a successful organisation (32%), suggesting that some employees are not sure of the success of the Council.

Furthermore, dissatisfaction is highest when considering if employees have sufficient resources to do their job (37%) and also morale in the workplace (33%). In the case of the former, dissatisfaction is highest amongst employees in Care & Learning (42%) and particularly high amongst employees in the Education Section (46%). Although dissatisfaction is disproportionately high, the proportion who agrees they are satisfied with morale in the workplace is 7% points higher than the BMG benchmark (46% cf. 39%). However as shown previously morale is highly important to employees at the Council, so it is imperative that further investigation is undertaken to find the source of this dissatisfaction with morale in the workplace. To note, it is employees in Community Services that have the highest proportion of employees who are dissatisfied (50%) and is notably high amongst employees in Road and Transport (58%), Caithness and Sutherland (58%) and Skye, Ross and Cromarty (57%).

Figure 10: How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with each of these factors in your job? (All respondents)



Unweighted base: 3831

The table below shows how satisfaction with each of the aspects has changed over time. The highlighting denotes if the changes have been significant (green = positive, red = negative and white = neutral) and is the same throughout the report. There have been many significant increases since 2012 and no decreases. The most notable increases from 2012 in satisfaction are for job security, feeling valued and recognised, working for a successful organisation and receiving feedback on their performance (all +7% points).

Table 8: Below is a list of things that your job may offer. Firstly, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with each of these factors in your job? % satisfied over time (All respondents)

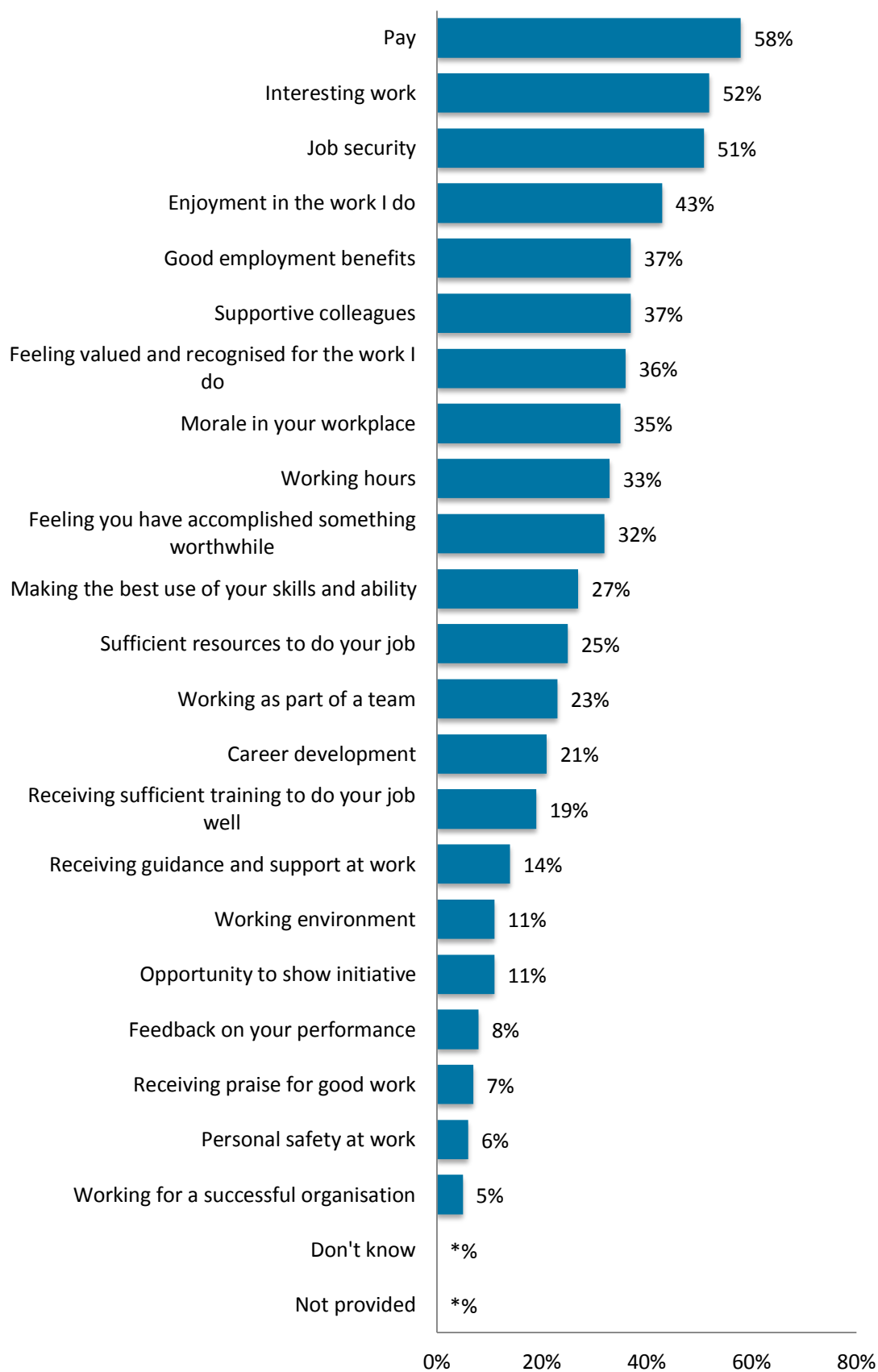
	2000	2002	2005	2007	2010	2012	2015
Interesting work	76%	78%	80%	80%	80%	81%	84%
Supportive colleagues	70%	72%	73%	72%	72%	74%	78%
Working hours	70%	71%	75%	74%	77%	76%	76%
Personal safety at work	65%	67%	68%	68%	71%	71%	75%
Enjoyment in the work I do	68%	70%	71%	70%	71%	70%	74%
Good employment benefits (e.g. leave, pensions, flexible working)	67%	70%	69%	68%	71%	69%	73%
Working environment (e.g. health & safety, security)	56%	58%	58%	60%	64%	66%	68%
Feeling you have accomplished something worthwhile at work	61%	64%	64%	67%	68%	64%	68%
Working as part of a team	58%	60%	62%	62%	63%	64%	68%
Job security	62%	62%	70%	59%	54%	58%	65%
Opportunity to show initiative	53%	56%	56%	58%	61%	60%	65%
Making the best use of your skills and ability	50%	50%	54%	52%	54%	55%	59%
Receiving guidance and support at work	N/A	N/A	44%	47%	48%	49%	55%
Pay	42%	48%	49%	43%	51%	49%	54%
Receiving sufficient training to do your job well	37%	40%	47%	48%	51%	50%	54%
Feeling valued and recognised for the work I do	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	44%	51%
Receiving praise for good work	37%	39%	42%	42%	45%	44%	50%
Working for a successful organisation	34%	37%	41%	39%	39%	43%	50%
Feedback on your performance	32%	35%	39%	39%	42%	42%	49%
Morale in your workplace	38%	41%	43%	42%	42%	40%	46%
Sufficient resources (finance, equipment, computers, staff) to do your job	33%	34%	41%	40%	42%	43%	43%
Career development	28%	28%	34%	33%	36%	36%	40%

5.3 Importance of aspects of the job

Employees were then asked to re-visit the same list of aspects of their job and to select up to six that they feel are most important to them. Figure 11 overleaf shows that the highest proportion of employees feel pay is the most important to them (58%), followed by interesting work (52%) and job security (51%). These are the same priorities stated in 2012 (62%, 50% and 50% respectively).

Further investigation highlights that the most important job aspects differ across the Services. Employees in Chief Executive's (74%), Corporate Development (63%) and Development and Infrastructure (70%) all believe that having interesting work is the most important to them, rather than pay.

Figure 11: Now looking at the same list again, which six are the most important to you? (All responses)



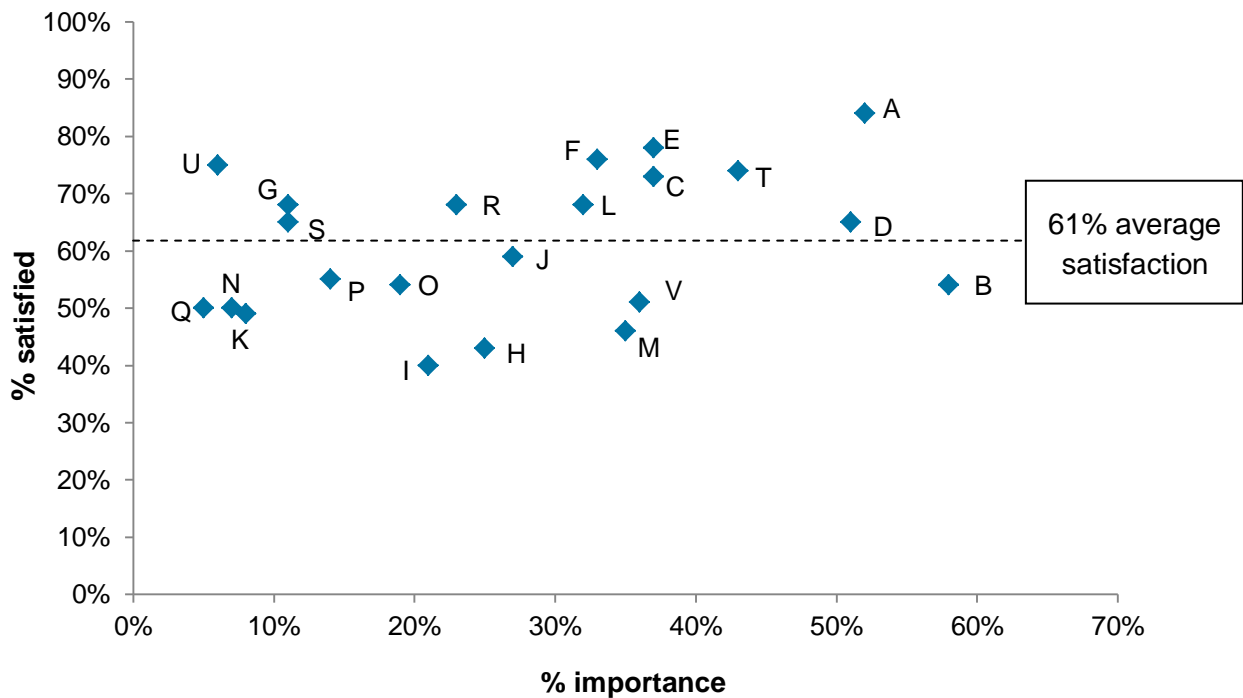
Sample base: 3831

5.4 Prioritising action – importance versus satisfaction

It is possible to plot each of the aspects of the job on a chart to reflect its current performance (% satisfied) against how important it is to employees. This provides a method of prioritising where action is required; where priorities are those aspects deemed to be of high importance but not performing as well (lower satisfaction). These aspects sit towards the bottom right hand side of chart.

The priorities look to be pay, morale and feeling valued and recognised, the same as in 2012.

Figure 12: Satisfaction versus importance – prioritising action

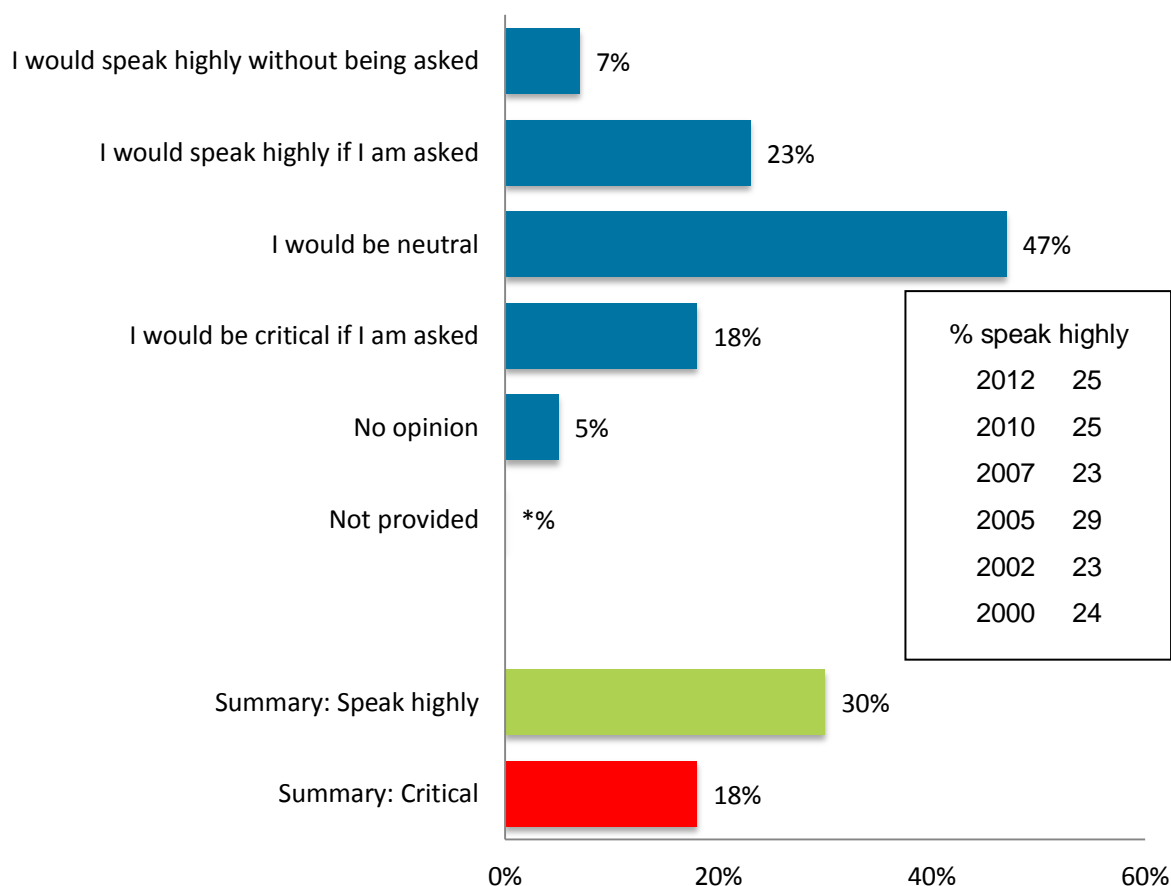


A	Interesting work	L	Feeling you have accomplished something worthwhile at work
B	Pay	M	Morale in your workplace
C	Good employment benefits (e.g. leave, pensions, flexible working)	N	Receiving praise for good work
D	Job security	O	Receiving sufficient training to do your job well
E	Supportive colleagues	P	Receiving guidance and support at work
F	Working hours	Q	Working for a successful organisation
G	Working environment (e.g. health & safety, security)	R	Working as part of a team
H	Sufficient resources (finance, equipment, computers, staff) to do your job	S	Opportunity to show initiative
I	Career development	T	Enjoyment in the work I do
J	Making the best use of your skills and ability	U	Personal safety at work
K	Feedback on your performance	V	Feeling valued and recognised for the work I do

5.5 Employee advocacy

The way employees speak of their employer is known to be a good indicator of their engagement with the organisation, and likewise an engaged workforce is believed to lead to organisational success (MacLeod, 2010). Three in ten (30%) employees say they would speak highly of the Council as an employer, whilst fewer would speak critically (18%). The largest proportion would be neutral (47%). Moreover, the proportion of employees who would speak highly of the Council has significantly increased since 2012 (+5% points).

Figure 13: Which of these phrases best describes the way you would speak of The Highland Council to people outside the organisation regarding the Council as an employer? (All responses)

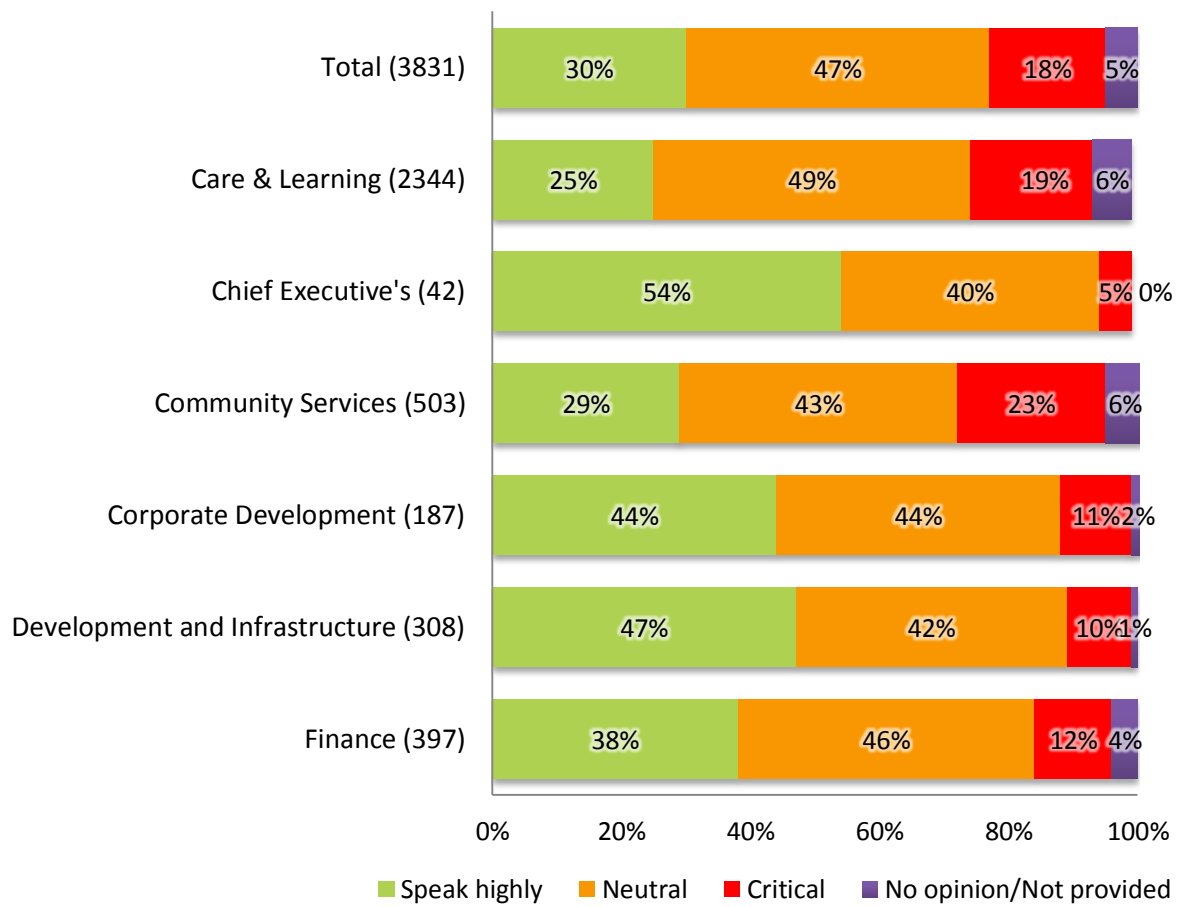


Sample base = 3831

In addition, employees who have worked at the Council for less time are more likely to speak highly compared to those who have worked at the Council for longer (Up to 1 year: 49% and Over 10 years: 26%).

The figure overleaf illustrates the variations by Service. Employees in the Chief Executive’s Service are more likely to speak highly (54%), especially compared to employees in Community Services (29%) and Care and Learning (25%). Indeed, it is also these two Services that have the highest levels who would speak critically (23% and 19% respectively).

Figure 14: Which of these phrases best describes the way you would speak of The Highland Council to people outside the organisation regarding the Council as an employer? By Service (All responses)



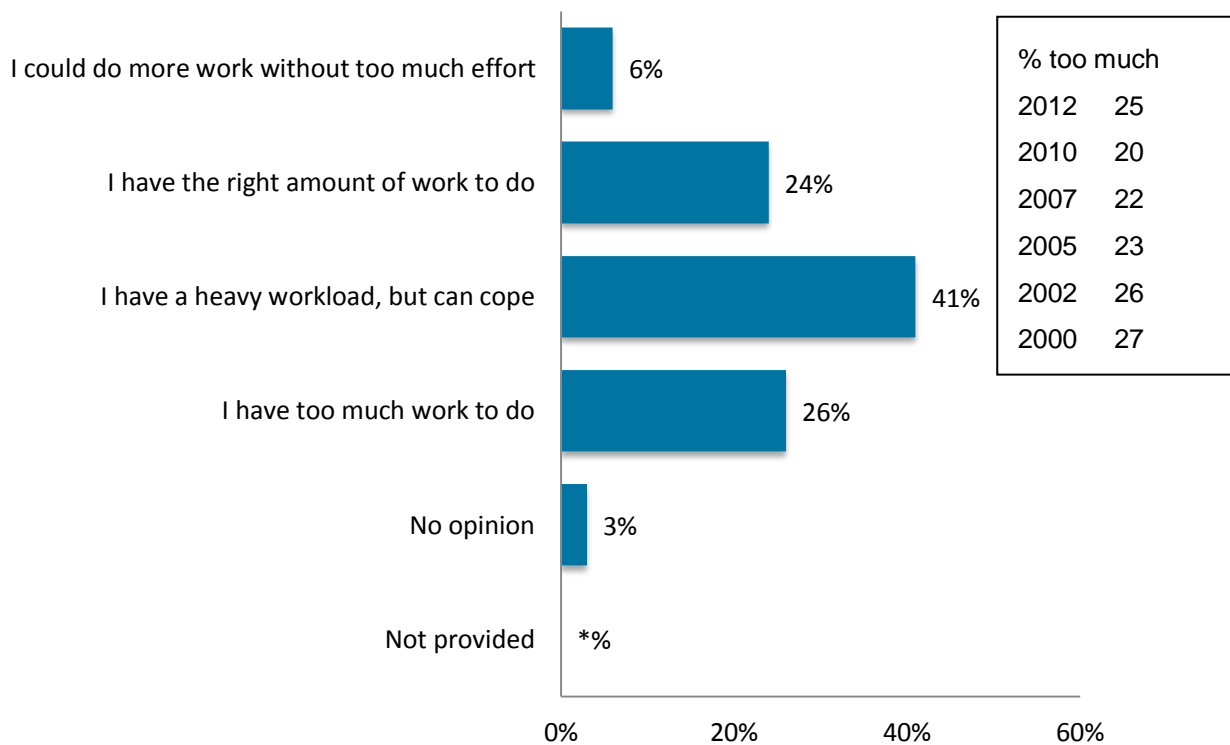
Unweighted sample bases vary

5.6 Workloads and stress

A number of questions were included in the survey exploring workloads and the level of stress experienced during work.

Looking firstly at the amount of work done in a normal week, a quarter (26%) say they have too much work to do. This is in line with results from 2012 (25%) and reverts back to levels experienced in 2002. The largest proportion state they have a heavy workload but they can cope with it (41%), and a further quarter (24%) believes they have the right amount of work to do. These are very similar to levels from 2012.

Figure 15: Generally speaking, how do you feel about the amount of work you do in your normal working week? (All responses)

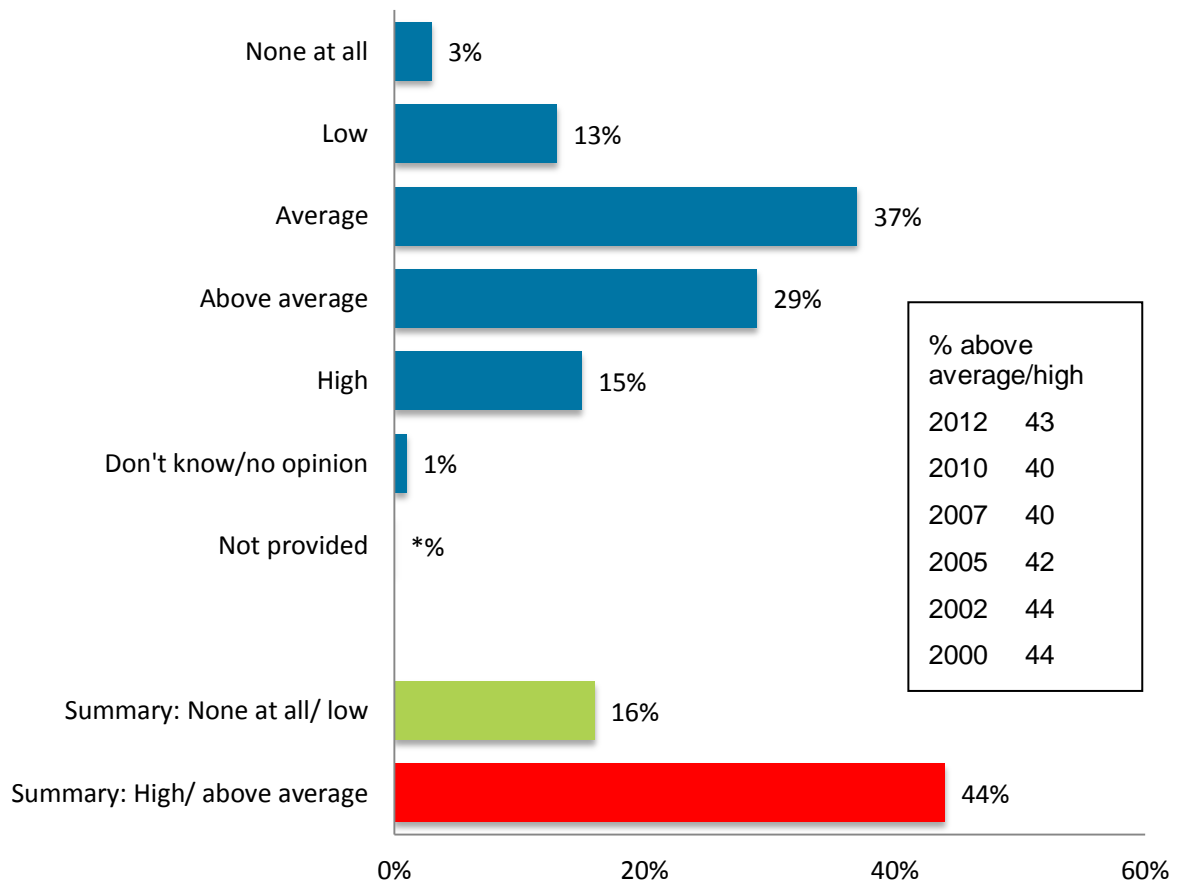


Sample base = 3831

When looking at a Service level, it is employees in Care and Learning that feel they have too much work to do (31%), particularly compared to employees in Corporate Development (11%), Finance (14%) and Chief Executive's (14%). Further analysis shows that employees who are on a permanent contract have a greater proportion that state they have too much work to do compared to employees who are on a temporary contract (27% cf. 12%). There is also a further trend when looking by length of service. The longer an employee has been at the Council, the higher the proportion who believe they have too much work to do (Over 20 years: 33% cf. Up to 1 year: 11%). This is also the case when looking by grade (HC 14-15: 32% cf. HC 1-3: 13%).

Following on from this, employees were asked what level of stress they experience at work. Over two fifths of employees believe they experience above average/ high levels of stress (44%). This is aligned with results from 2012 (43%). Approximately one in six employees say they have low or no stress at all (16%), this is 2% points lower than in 2012.

Figure 16: Generally, what level of stress, if at all, would you say you experience at work? (All responses)



Sample base = 3831

Looking at both the amount of work and levels of stress side by side, it is apparent that employees in Care and Learning are most likely to feel they have too much workload (31%) but also have the highest levels of stress (50%). Employees in the Chief Executive's Service have less work (14%) but still have relatively high levels of stress (47%).

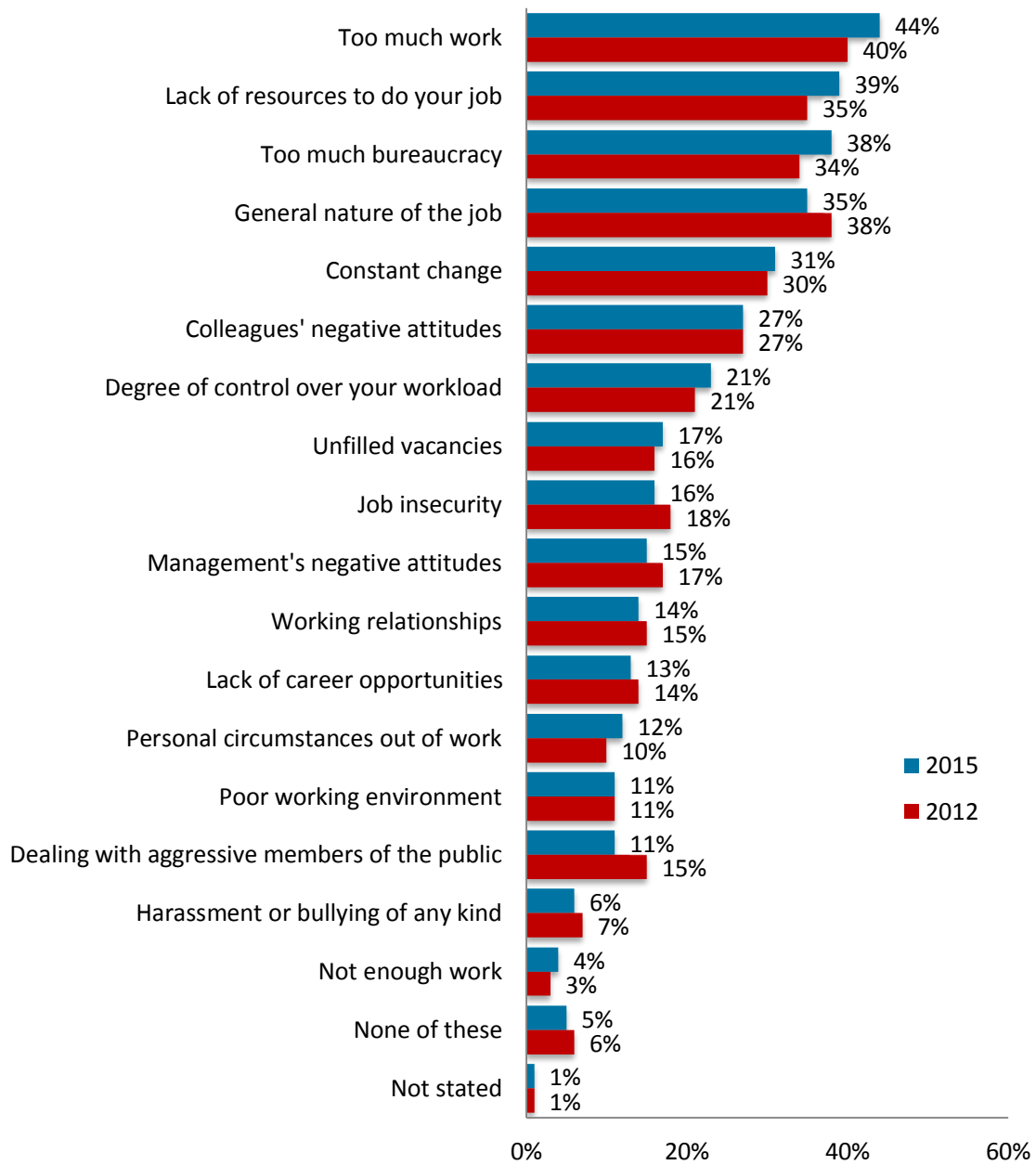
Table 9: Generally speaking, how do you feel about the amount of work you do in your normal working week? And Generally, what level of stress, if at all, would you say you experience at work? By Service (All respondents)

Service	Too much workload	Above average / high stress
Total	26%	44%
Care & Learning	31%	50%
Chief Executive's	14%	47%
Community Services	22%	41%
Corporate Development	11%	34%
Development and Infrastructure	20%	40%
Finance	14%	36%

To explore this topic in more detail, all employees were asked to select from a list of aspects that cause them stress at work. The Figure overleaf shows that too much work is the most common reason (44%), followed by the lack of resources to do the job (39%) and too much bureaucracy (38%). These top three reasons for stress have all increased since 2012 (all +4% points).

When looking at a Service level, most believe that having too much work is the highest cause of stress. However, employees in Corporate Development believe that the general nature of the job is the greatest cause of stress for them (35%). It is also interesting to highlight that employees in Community Services have a far greater proportion of employees who feel that colleagues' negative attitudes is a cause of stress for them (38% cf. Council-wide 27%).

Figure 17: Which of the following, if any, are causes of stress for you? (All responses)



Sample base = 3831

6 Management Style

6.1 Introduction

This section explores views of the management of the Council, including line managers/ supervisors and management of the Services (Defined as: Directors, Heads of Service, Corporate Manager, Area Service Managers and Head Teachers).

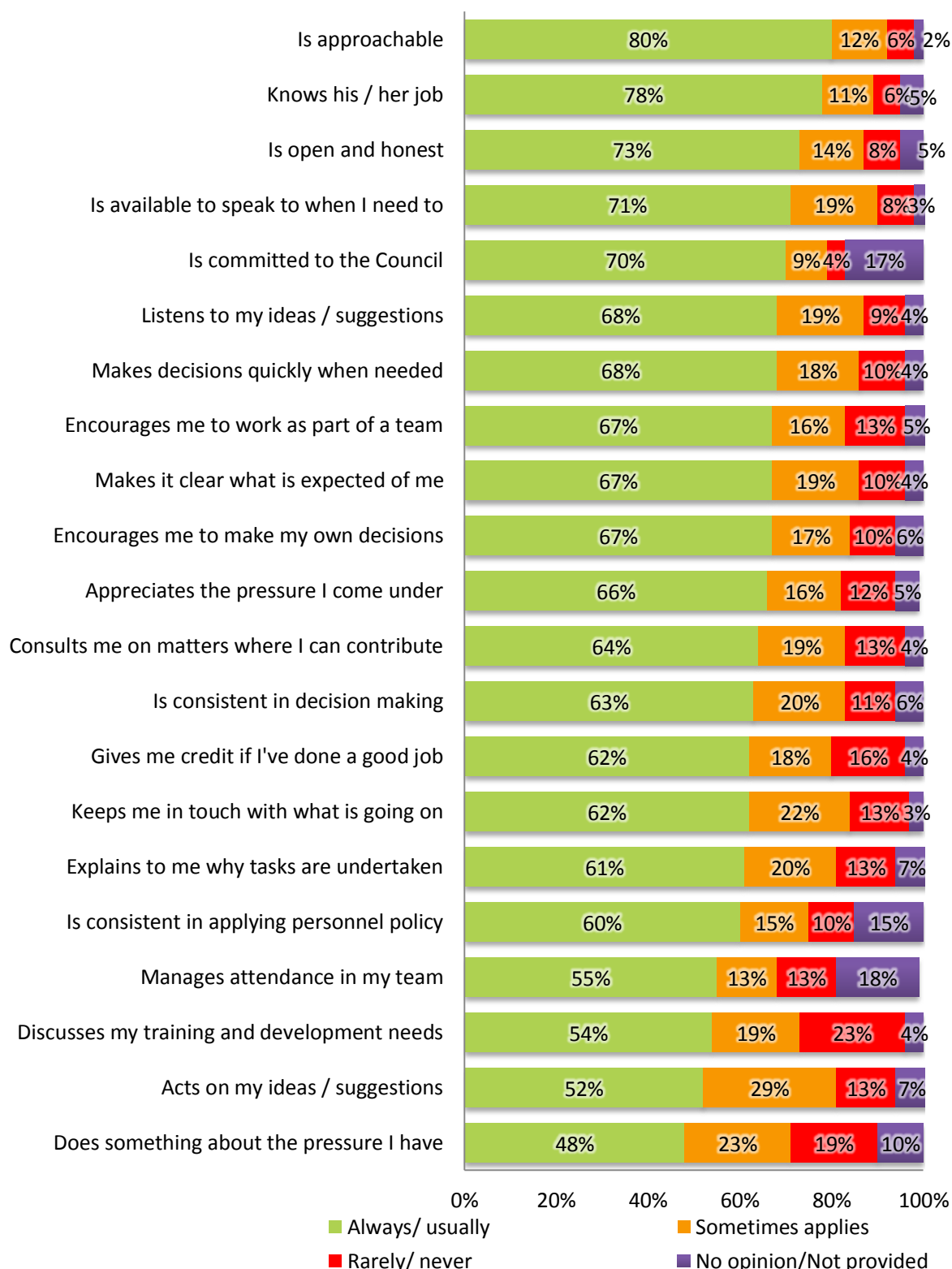
6.2 Attitudes towards line managers

Figure 18 overleaf shows a predominantly positive picture of managers, supporting the earlier finding regarding the theme of managers being one of the highest scoring of all the survey themes. Four in five employees believe that their manager always/usually is approachable (80%). However, this is 3% points lower than the BMG benchmark of 83%.

The proportion of employees who believe that their manager does something about the pressure they come under always/usually is much lower at 48%. In fact, 23% believe their line manager does this sometimes and 19% believe they do it rarely/never. Furthermore, nearly a quarter of employees think that their line manager rarely/never discusses training and development with them (23%), which is the highest level of negativity in relation to line managers.

When looking at a Service level, generally employees in the Chief Executive's Service are more positive with an average index of all statements of 74%. This compares to an index of only 54% amongst employees in Community Services, with scores notably lower in this Service.

Figure 18: Listed below are a number of statements that could be used to describe your immediate line manager or supervisor, i.e. the person to whom you report on a day to day basis. Please indicate the extent to which these apply if at all. (All responses)



Sample base: 3831

As shown in the table below, the majority of measures in relation to line managers have significantly improved since 2012 and there have been no decreases in positivity.

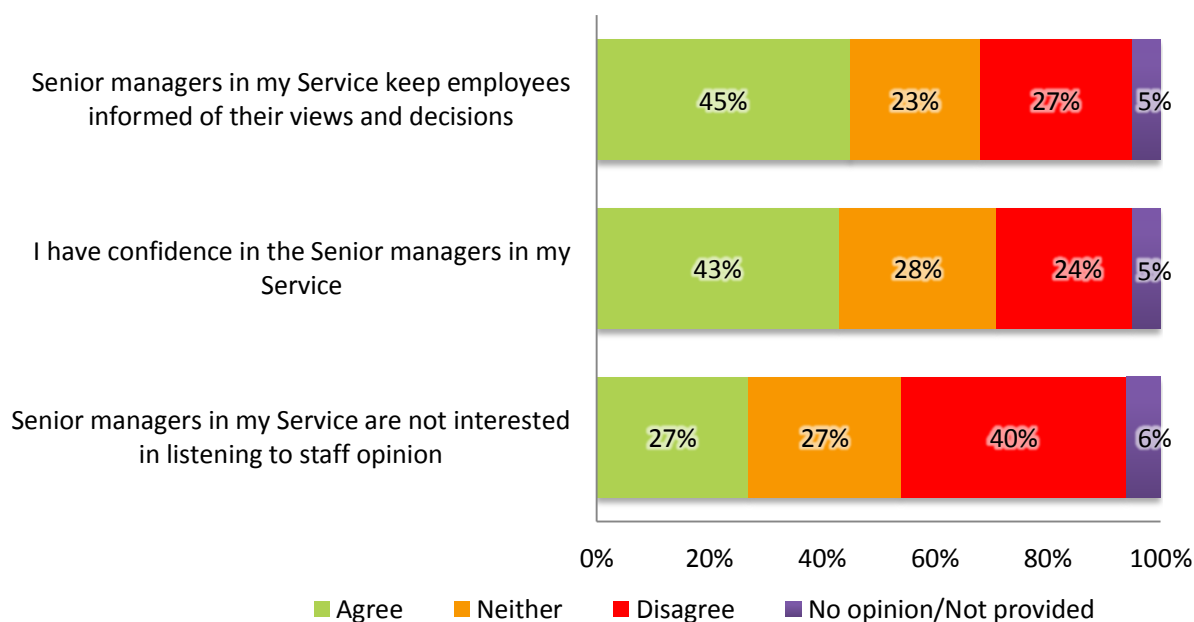
Table 10: Listed below are a number of statements that could be used to describe your immediate line manager or supervisor, i.e. the person to whom you report on a day to day basis. Please indicate the extent to which these apply if at all. % always / usually over time (All responses)

	2000	2002	2005	2007	2010	2012	2015
Is approachable	76%	76%	76%	76%	76%	76%	80%
Knows his/ her job	72%	72%	72%	73%	73%	73%	78%
Is open and honest	66%	67%	67%	69%	68%	70%	73%
Is available to speak to when I need to	64%	66%	66%	68%	69%	68%	71%
Is committed to the Council	54%	58%	61%	63%	65%	64%	70%
Listens to my ideas/ suggestions	56%	57%	58%	60%	60%	61%	68%
Makes decisions quickly when needed	61%	63%	63%	65%	65%	65%	68%
Encourages me to work as part of a team	53%	55%	57%	59%	61%	64%	67%
Makes it clear what is expected of me	60%	61%	60%	63%	64%	65%	67%
Encourages me to make my own decisions	55%	57%	58%	61%	62%	63%	67%
Appreciates the pressure I come under in my job	51%	54%	54%	55%	56%	57%	66%
Consults me on matters where I can contribute	56%	58%	58%	59%	59%	61%	64%
Is consistent in decision making	54%	57%	56%	58%	58%	59%	63%
Gives me credit if I've done a good job	50%	52%	54%	55%	56%	58%	62%
Keeps me in touch with what is going on	52%	54%	54%	57%	56%	60%	62%
Explains to me why tasks are undertaken	49%	51%	52%	55%	57%	56%	61%
Is consistent in applying personnel policy	N/A	N/A	52%	54%	56%	55%	60%
Manages attendance in my team	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	51%	55%
Discusses my training and development needs	35%	39%	44%	46%	49%	50%	54%
Acts on my ideas/ suggestions	35%	38%	40%	43%	42%	43%	52%
Does something about the pressure I come under in my job	30%	34%	37%	40%	41%	42%	48%
Unweighted base	5758	5043	4588	5056	4416	3534	3831

6.3 Senior management

Employees were asked their level of agreement with a number of statements concerning the management of the Services. The figure below shows the proportion that agree with the statements are lower than across previous measures, particularly against views of line managers. Fewer than half of the employees believe that senior managers keep them informed of their views and decisions (45%) and that they have confidence in the senior managers (43%). However, in the case of the latter, this compares favourably (+19%) to the CIPD benchmark of +10% as a balance score. It is also encouraging that two fifths of employees disagree that senior managers are **not** interested in listening to staff opinion (40%).

Figure 19: Here are a number of statements about the management of your Service. By management we mean Directors, Heads of Service, Corporate Manager, Area Service Managers, Head Teachers. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each. (All responses)



Sample base: 3831

It may not be surprising to discover that employees in the Chief Executive’s Service are the most positive in relation to senior management, however the opposite can be said for employees in Community Services.

Encouragingly, there are noticeable positive shifts since 2012, and in fact these scores are at an all time high since the survey began.

Table 11: Here are a number of statements about the management of your Service. By management we mean Directors, Heads of Service, Corporate Manager, Area Service Managers, Head Teachers. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each. % agree over time (All responses)

	2000	2002	2005	2007	2010	2012	2015
Senior managers in my Service keep employees informed of their views and decisions	31%	31%	30%	29%	31%	37%	45%
I have confidence in the Senior managers in my Service	26%	30%	31%	30%	31%	35%	43%
Senior managers in my Service are not interested in listening to staff opinion	31%	32%	30%	29%	29%	29%	27%
Unweighted base	5758	5043	4588	5056	4416	3534	3831

7 Information and Communication

7.1 Introduction

This section explores a number of measures of communication and information sharing across the organisation. It looks at how informed employees feel about what is going on and what sources of information are used and preferred to keep them up to date.

7.2 Sources of information

All employees were asked to consider which methods they currently use as sources of information and which they would prefer to use to find out what is going on in the Council. The Figure overleaf shows that e-mail is by far the most preferred option to receive information (53%) and is also the option that is currently used most to receive information (72%). Two thirds of employees state that they currently use informal conversation with colleagues (65%) as a source of information, however only 8% state that this is one of their preferred options.

E-mail is the option currently most used to receive information across all Services in the Council. Employees in Corporate Development (78%), Development and Infrastructure (76%) and Finance (79%) currently use the Intranet more compared to the other Services (Care & Learning and Community Services both 51%).

Figure 20: Listed below are a number of ways in which you may receive information about the Council. (a) Which are currently sources of information that you use and (b) which would you prefer to receive your information about the Council? (All responses)

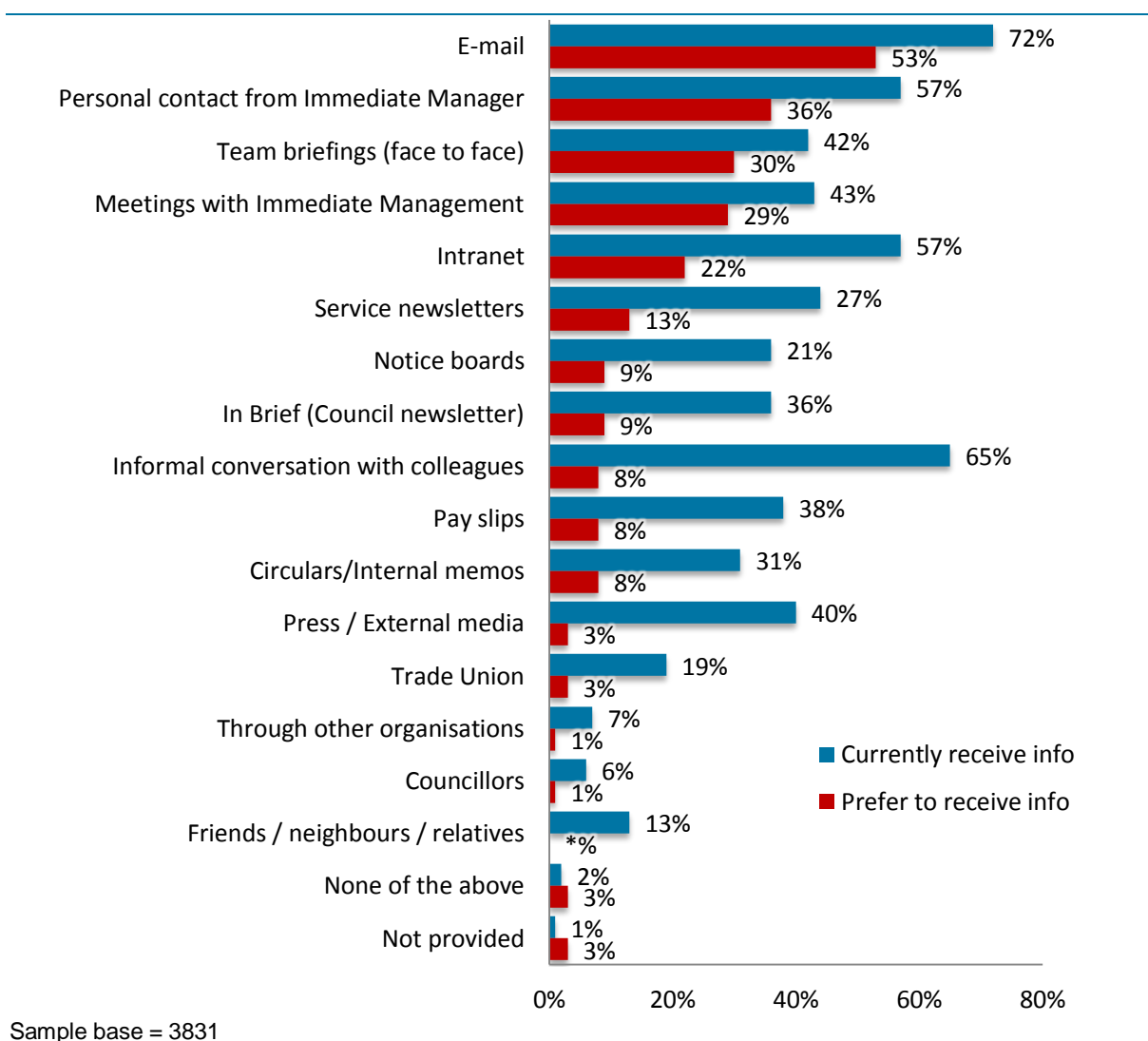


Table 12 presents how employees currently receive information and what are their preferences to receive information, over time. Use of e-mail remains the most used and in fact usage has increased since 2012 (+8% points). Usage has also increased across many of the methods, bar Press/External media (-3% points) and Trade Unions (-4% points). As with current usage, preference for the use of e-mails is still the most popular and this has significantly increased by 3% points since 2012. Preference of the use of personal contact from immediate managers/ supervisors and informal conversations with colleagues has also significantly increased since 2012 (+4% points).

Table 12: Listed below are a number of ways in which you may receive information about the Council. (a) Which are currently sources of information that you use and (b) which would you prefer to receive your information about the Council? % over time (All responses)

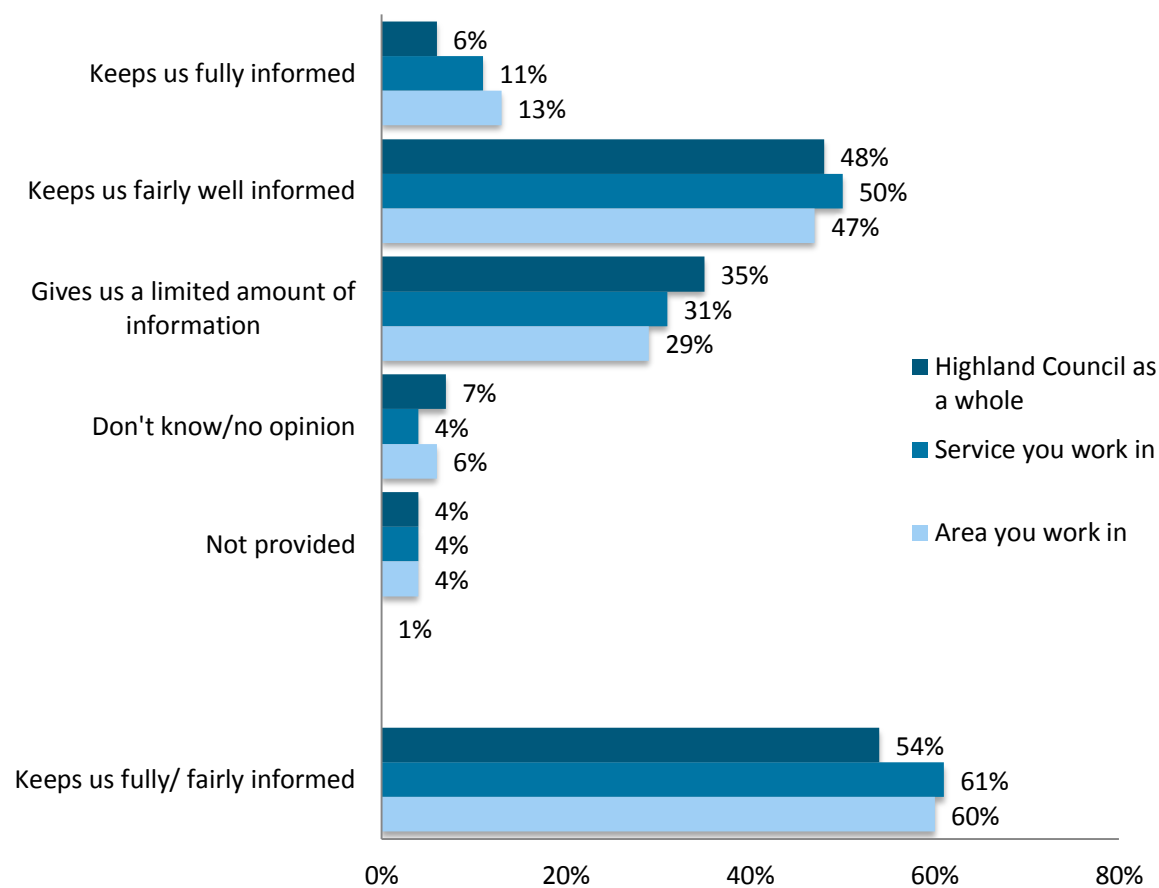
	Currently receive info			Prefer to receive info		
	2012	2015	% change	2012	2015	% change
E mail	64%	72%	+8%	50%	53%	+3%
Personal contact from Immediate Manager/Supervisor	56%	57%	+1%	32%	36%	+4%
Team briefings (face to face)	34%	42%	+8%	28%	30%	+2%
Meetings with Immediate Management	40%	43%	+3%	30%	29%	-1%
Intranet	56%	57%	+1%	24%	22%	-2%
Service newsletters	35%	44%	+9%	14%	13%	-1%
Notice boards	35%	36%	+1%	9%	9%	=
In Brief (Council newsletter)*	38%	36%	-2%	12%	9%	-3%
Informal conversation with colleagues	62%	65%	+3%	4%	8%	+4%
Pay slips	31%	38%	+7%	8%	8%	=
Circulars/Internal memos	28%	31%	+3%	9%	8%	-1%
Press/External media	43%	40%	-3%	3%	3%	=
Trade Union	23%	19%	-4%	3%	3%	=
Through other organisations	5%	7%	+2%	*%	1%	+0.5%
Councillors	6%	6%	=	1%	1%	=
Friends/neighbours/ relatives	12%	13%	+1%	*%	*%	=
Unweighted base	3534	3831		3534	3831	

* Prior to 2015 "In Brief" was "Big Picture"

7.3 Communication across the Council

Over half of employees say they feel fully or fairly well informed about what is going on in the Council as a whole (54%). Moreover, three fifths of employees feel fully or fairly well informed about what is going on in their Service (61%) and the Area they work in (60%). Encouragingly, feeling informed about the Council as a whole (+3% points) and the Service (+2% points) are above the benchmarks held at BMG, however feeling informed about their Area is significantly below (-12% points).

Figure 21: Keeping employees informed about issues affecting the whole of the Council and Service issues is very important. Which of the following phrases would you say best applies to...? (All responses)



Sample base = 3831

Further analysis shows that employees who have had an Employee Review and Development Plan (ERDP) in the last 12 months feel more informed in general compared to those who have not had a ERDP in the last 12 months;

- Highland Council as a whole – 61% cf. 48% (fully/fairly informed)
- Service – 69% cf. 52%
- Area – 69% cf. 51%.

The table below illustrates the variances at a Service level. It is clear that employees in the Chief Executive's Service feel much more informed in general when considering their Service and their Area (86% and 84%), as do employees in Development and Infrastructure (73% and 70%). When looking by Sections within Development and Infrastructure, it is employees in Planning and Building Standards (78%) and Property (76%) that feel more informed with the Area they work in. On the flip side, employees in the Community Service Section are less likely to feel informed across the whole Council (48%), their Service (48%) and their Area (46%). It is the Sections; Lochaber, Nairn and Badenoch & Strathspey (38%), Inverness (39%), Service Performance and Building Maintenance (40%) and Roads and Transport (41%) that are less likely to feel informed about what is going on in their Area.

Table 13: Keeping employees informed about issues affecting the whole of the Council and Service issues is very important. Which of the following phrases would you say best applies to...? % Fully/fairly informed By Service (All responses)

Service	Highland Council as a whole	Service you work in	Area you work in
Total	54%	61%	60%
Care & Learning	50%	61%	60%
Chief Executive's	85%	86%	84%
Community Services	48%	48%	46%
Corporate Development	68%	64%	69%
Development and Infrastructure	69%	73%	70%
Finance	64%	66%	68%

Encouragingly, the proportion of employees who feel informed about what goes on across the Council, in their Service and their Area has increased since 2012, the latter two increasing significantly. These levels are also at an all time high since the start of the study back in 2000.

Table 14: Keeping employees informed about issues affecting the whole of the Council and Service issues is very important. Which of the following phrases would you say best applies to...? % Fully/fairly informed over time (All responses)

	2000	2002	2005	2007	2010	2012	2015
Highland Council as a whole	38%	48%	52%	41%	53%	52%	54%
Service you work in	46%	51%	52%	51%	56%	55%	61%
Area you work in	N/A	49%	52%	51%	56%	56%	60%
Unweighted base	5758	5043	4588	5056	4416	3534	3831

8 Training and Performance Improvement

8.1 Introduction

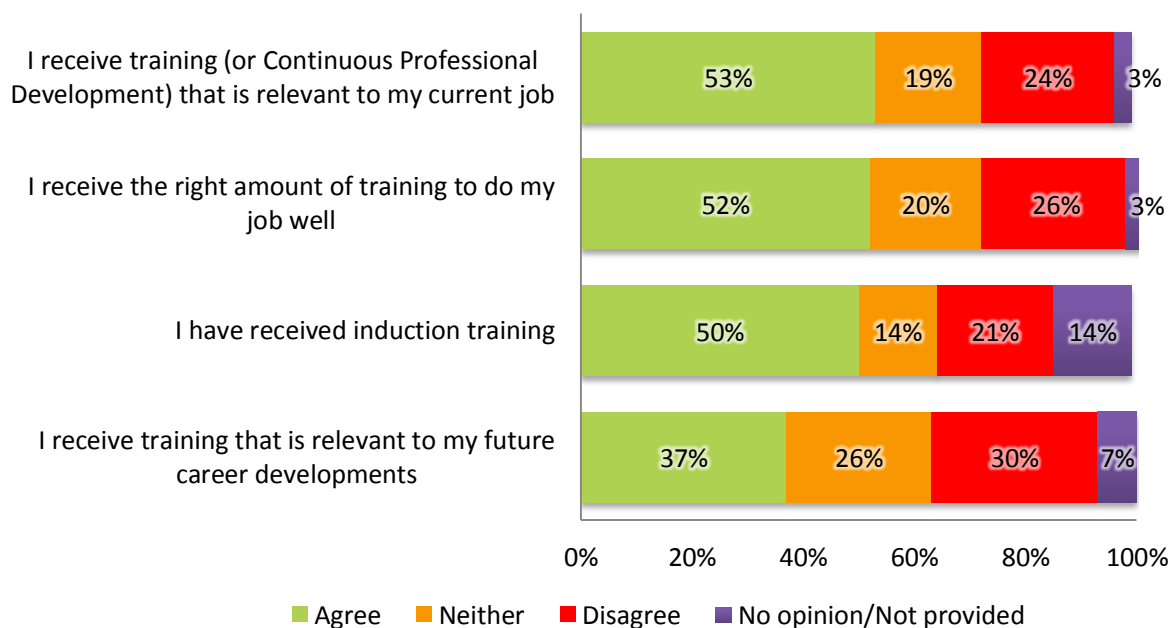
This section explores in detail how employees view training at the Council as well as views on policies and initiatives, including if employees have had an Employee Review and Development Plan.

8.2 Attitudes towards training and performance improvement

There are mixed responses concerning training and performance improvement. Around half of employees say they receive training that is relevant to their current job (53%), receive the right amount of training (52%) and have received induction training (50%). However around a quarter still actively disagree with these (24%, 26% and 21% respectively).

Approaching two fifths of employees agree that they receive training that is relevant to their future career developments (37%), whilst three in ten actively disagree (30%) and a quarter neither agree nor disagree (26%). This suggests an element of polarisation across the Council in regards to this measure. This is particularly apparent amongst employees in the Chief Executive’s Service where 48% agree but 38% also disagree (caution low base: 42). Employees in Development and Infrastructure are more positive in relation to this measure (45%), however agreement levels drop to 26% amongst employees in Community Services.

Figure 22: Here are some statements about training in the Council. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each? (All responses)



Sample base: 3831

Significantly more employees in 2015 compared to 2012 agree that they receive training that is relevant to their current job (+5% points), receive the right amount of training (+7% points) and receive training that is relevant to future career development (+6% points). Positively, for the latter two measures these are the highest agreement levels since the start of the study in 2000.

Table 15: Here are some statements about training in the Council. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each? % agree over time (All responses)

	2000	2002	2005	2007	2010	2012	2015
I receive training (or Continuous Professional Development) that is relevant to my current job	52%	50%	56%	47%	50%	48%	53%
I receive the right amount of training to do my job well	31%	33%	38%	40%	45%	45%	52%
I have received induction training	N/A	N/A	46%	51%	55%	50%	50%
I receive training that is relevant to my future career development	22%	24%	27%	30%	32%	31%	37%
Unweighted base	5758	5043	4588	5056	4416	3534	3831

8.3 Council’s policies and initiatives

Employees were asked if a list of statements regarding the Council’s policies and initiatives applied to them. Four fifths of residents support the Council’s Organisational values (79%), however only three fifths are aware of the values (57%). This suggests that communication of the values should be increased across the Council to raise awareness.

Over six in ten employees have had an Employee Review & Development Plan (ERDP) (62%), however only 52% have had one in the last 12 months. The proportion who have had an ERDP in the last 12 months is also significantly lower than the BMG benchmark of 74% (-22% points).

Figure 23: Here are some statements about the Council's policies and initiatives. Do each of them apply to you, or not? % Yes (All responses)



Sample base = 3831

Further analysis highlights that employees who are older are less likely to have had an ERDP in the last 12 months and in fact the proportion that have had one decreases as an employee’s age increases:

- 16-29 – 59%
- 30-39 – 55%
- 40-49 – 54%
- 50-59 – 49%
- 60+ – 40%

The table below illustrates the variations at a Service level. Employees in the Chief Executive’s Service, Corporate Development, Development and Infrastructure and Finance are all generally more positive in relation to policies and initiatives. On the other hand, it is employees in Community Services that are less positive, particularly in terms of having an ERDP (47%) and having had an ERDP in the last 12 months (34%).

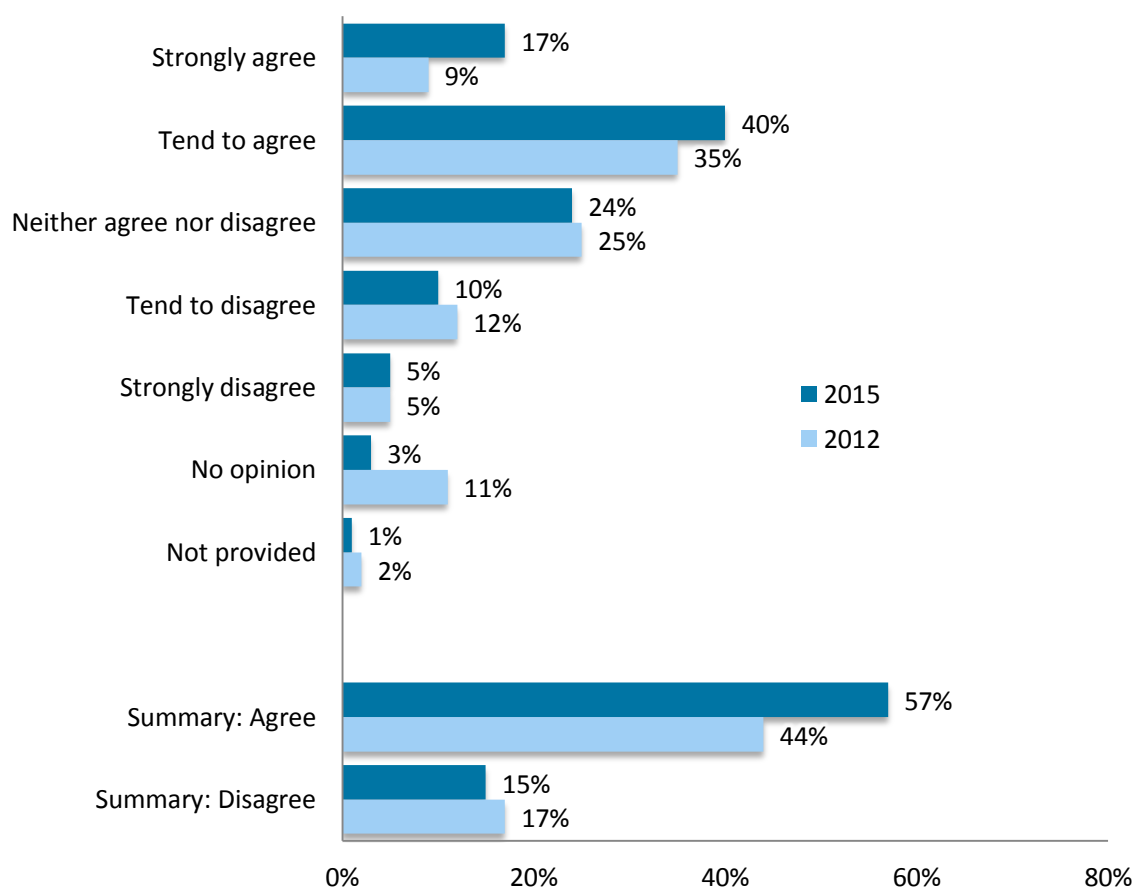
Table 16: Here are some statements about the Council's policies and initiatives. Do each of them apply to you, or not? % Yes by Service (All responses)

	Total	Care & Learning	Chief Exec	Community Services	Corporate Development	Development & Infrastructure	Finance
I support the Council's Organisational values	79%	77%	93%	71%	88%	94%	90%
I have had an Employee Review & Development Plan	62%	57%	71%	47%	75%	82%	90%
I am aware of the Council's Organisational Values	57%	47%	88%	56%	88%	84%	84%
I am supportive of the Council's promotion of the Gaelic language and culture	56%	59%	71%	47%	49%	61%	55%
I have had an Employee Review & Development Plan within the last 12 months	52%	46%	50%	34%	65%	76%	85%

8.4 Fairer Highland

The Highland Council has an overarching aim to ensure that employees feel there is an organisational culture where everyone is treated with dignity and respect. Employees were asked to what level they agree that the Council has this culture. Approaching three fifths of employees agree that there is a culture where you are treated with dignity and respect (57%) and only 15% actively disagree with this. Positively the proportion of employees who agree with this has significantly increased since 2012 (+13% points). The level of agreement increases to 86% amongst employees in the Chief Executive’s Service, but falls to 46% amongst employees in Community Services.

Figure 24: In the Fairer Highland Plan, the Council has agreed an outcome that staff feel there is an organisational culture where everyone is treated with dignity and respect. To what extent do you agree or disagree that there is a culture in the Council where you are treated with dignity and respect? (All responses)



Sample base = 3831

Furthermore, employees who have been at the Council for a shorter amount of time are more likely to agree that there is a culture of dignity and respect compared to employees who have been at the Council for longer (Up to 1 year: 76% cf. Over 20 years: 54%).

8.5 Fairer Highland Index

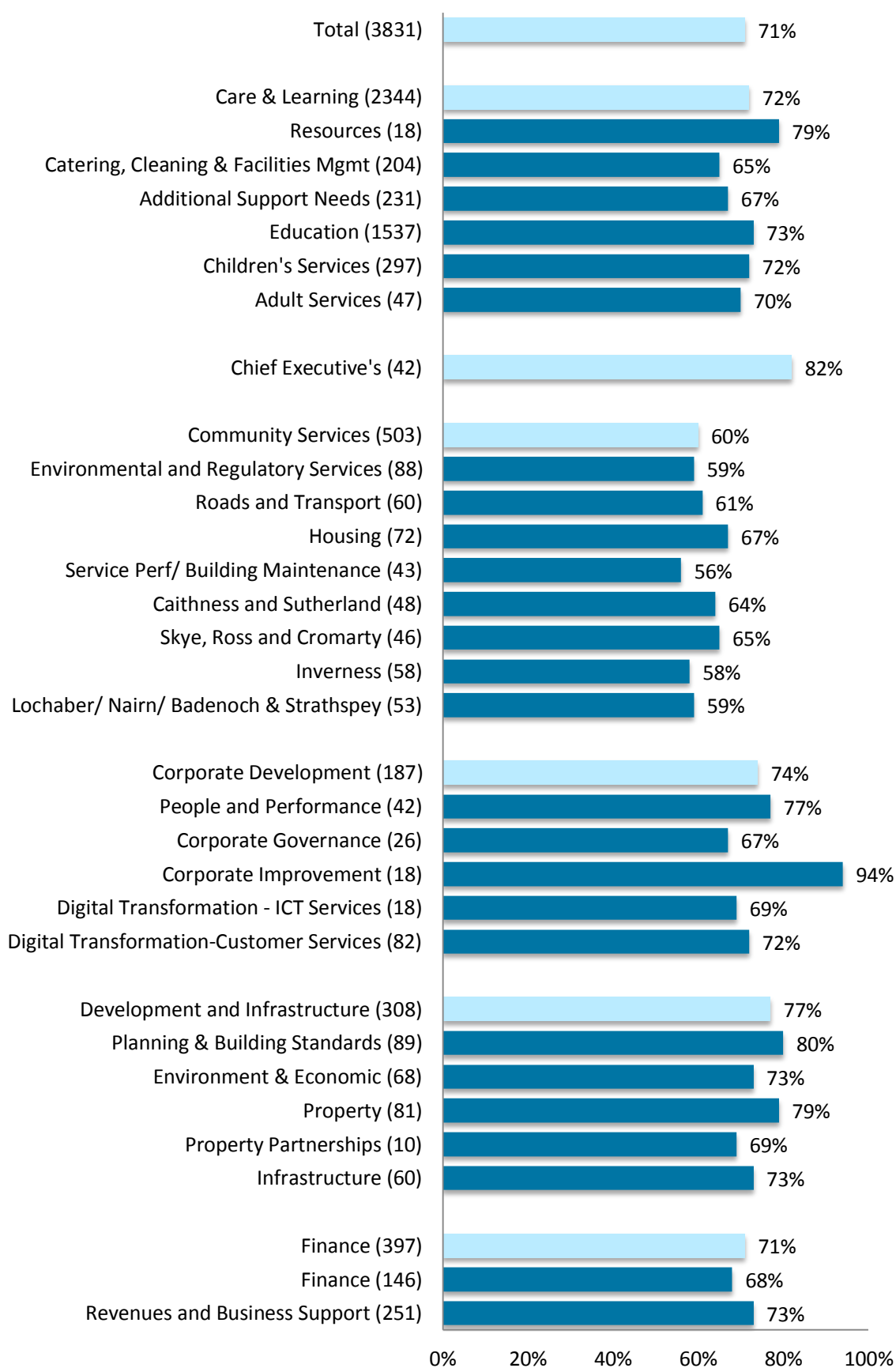
It has been possible to develop an index score (The Fairer Highland Outcome) combining a number of measures included within the questionnaire. The positive result for each measure is used for the calculation, with the index calculated as the mean average score. The measures that make up the Outcome are shown in the table below.

Table 17: Measures included in the Fairer Highland Index

Q no.	Indicator
Q2a/K	Feedback on your performance
Q2a/N	Receiving praise for good work
Q2a/S	Opportunity to show initiative
Q2a/V	Feeling valued and recognised for the work I do
Q6/9	Cause of stress: Colleague's negative attitudes
Q6/15	Cause of stress: Management's negative attitudes
Q6/14	Cause of stress: Dealing with aggressive members of the public
Q6/16	Cause of stress: Harassment or bullying of any kind within the Council
Q7/11	My line manager / supervisor: Acts on my ideas/suggestions
Q7/8	My line manager / supervisor: Is open and honest
Q7/17	My line manager / supervisor: Encourages me to make my own decisions
Q13	To what extent do you agree or disagree that there is a culture in the Council where you are treated with dignity and respect?

The chart overleaf presents The Fairer Highland Outcome (index score). The total Council-wide score is shown (71%), as well as the scores across the Services and Sections. At a Service level it is clear that the index score is lower for employees in Community Services (60%), particularly so for the Service Performance and Building Maintenance Section (56%). In contrast, employees in the Chief Executive's Service have the highest index score (82%).

Figure 25: Fairer Highland Index (All responses)



Sample bases in brackets

9 Change

9.1 Attitudes towards change

There are mixed views when employees were asked to think about change management in the Council and this has been highlighted earlier as the weakest performing area across the survey. Positively, approaching four fifths of employees understand the need for change (77%), although this is 3% points lower than the BMG benchmark of 80%. There is also a higher degree of employees who state they neither agree nor disagree when considering if change is too fast (44%), which suggests that some employees may be unsure of the speed of some change. Additionally, there are some measures where the level of disagreement outweighs the level of agreement giving it a net negative balance score⁶:

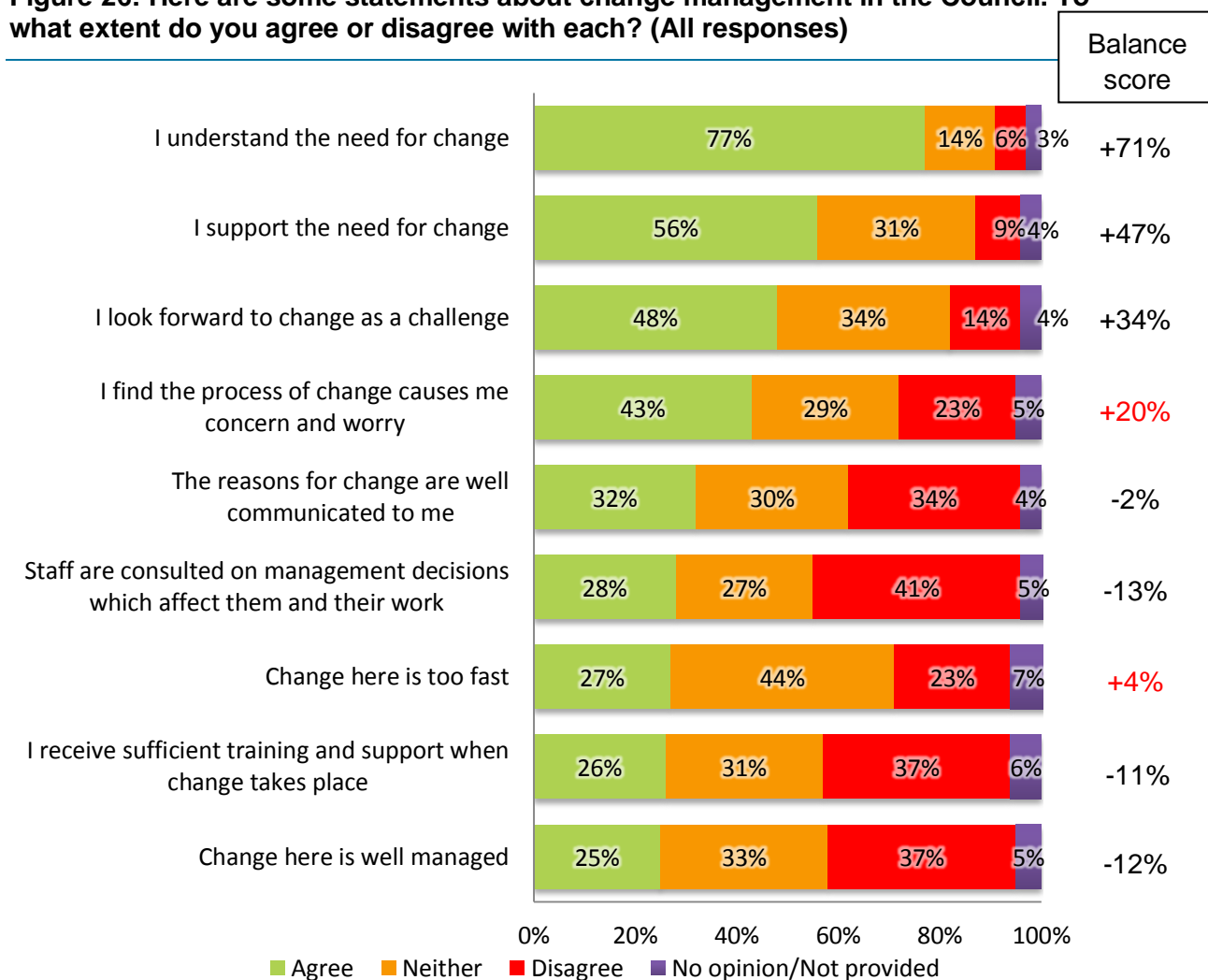
- The reasons for change are well communicated to me (-2% point net balance score)
- Staff are consulted on management decisions which affect them and their work (-13%)
- I receive sufficient training and support when change takes place (-11%)
- Change here is well managed (-12%).

Although the balance score is +20% when considering if employees find the process of change causes them concern and worry, this is in fact negative as more employees agree (43%) with this than disagree (23%). More investigation should be undertaken to find out the causes of the concern and worry.

Further analysis illustrates that agreement levels when considering if reasons for change are well communicated to employees (-12% points) and employees support the need for change (-15% points) are significantly below BMG benchmarks.

⁶ Net scores refer to the proportion of people agreeing with a statement minus those disagreeing

Figure 26: Here are some statements about change management in the Council. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each? (All responses)



Sample base: 3831

Although some of the results may not be as positive as we might like, it is encouraging that many have significantly improved since the survey in 2012. The most notable increases are in regards to understanding the need for change (+8% points) and supporting the need for change (+8% points).

Table 18: Here are some statements about change management in the Council. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each? % agree over time (All responses)

	2000	2002	2005	2007	2010	2012	2015
I understand the need for change	60%	58%	64%	62%	70%	69%	77%
I support the need for change	43%	41%	43%	42%	49%	48%	56%
I look forward to change as a challenge	41%	39%	44%	43%	46%	45%	48%
I find the process of change causes me concern and worry	42%	42%	34%	44%	47%	45%	43%
The reasons for change are well communicated to me	15%	17%	20%	21%	28%	27%	32%
Staff are consulted on management decisions which affect them and their work	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	28%
Change here is too fast	27%	25%	21%	22%	21%	24%	27%
I receive sufficient training and support when change takes place	16%	16%	20%	20%	23%	22%	26%
Change here is well managed	15%	16%	18%	18%	19%	19%	25%
Unweighted base	5758	5043	4588	5056	4416	3534	3831

Employees who are in the Chief Executive's Service and Corporate Development tend to be the most positive in terms of change management, but on the other hand it is employees in Community Services that are less positive.

Table 19: Here are some statements about change management in the Council. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each? % by Service (All responses)

	Total	Care & Learning	Chief Exec	Community Services	Corporate Development	Development & Infrastructure	Finance
I understand the need for change	77%	76%	93%	77%	87%	81%	82%
I support the need for change	56%	54%	83%	53%	70%	60%	64%
I look forward to change as a challenge	48%	47%	64%	42%	60%	47%	56%
I find the process of change causes me concern and worry	43%	44%	29%	51%	34%	38%	40%
The reasons for change are well communicated to me	32%	28%	55%	32%	48%	31%	44%
Staff are consulted on management decisions which affect them and their work	28%	28%	43%	20%	28%	25%	30%
Change here is too fast	27%	32%	19%	23%	18%	19%	21%
I receive sufficient training and support when change takes place	26%	24%	36%	20%	33%	31%	35%
Change here is well managed	25%	26%	33%	17%	28%	24%	29%

10 How to improve working at Highland Council

10.1 Improving Highland Council

At the end of the questionnaire all employees were given the opportunity to state in their own words one suggestion they could make to improve The Highland Council as an employer. These verbatim comments have been coded into common themes and presented in Figure 27 overleaf and all comments are included in the separate Comments Report.

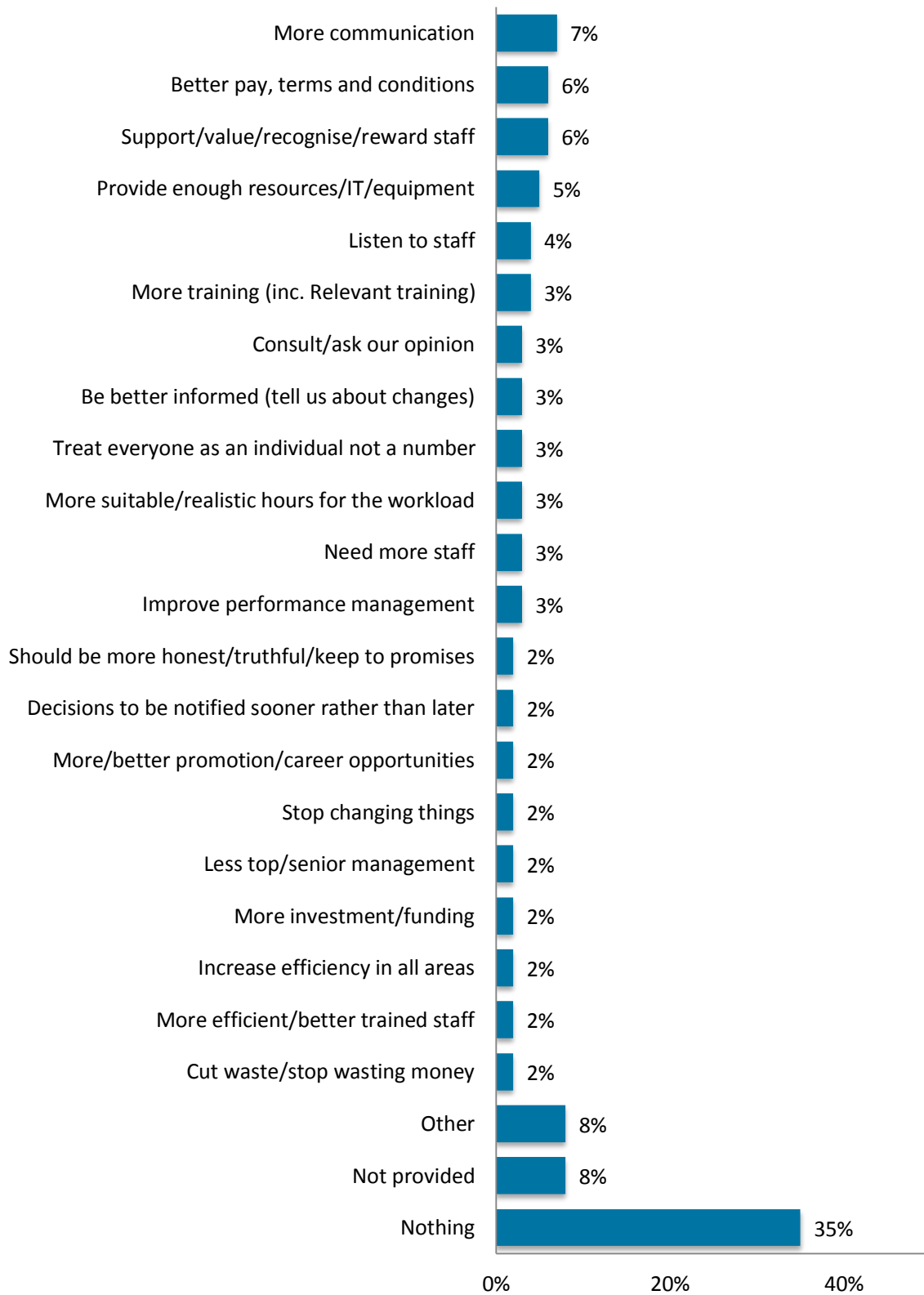
The largest proportion of employees feels that communication needs to be improved across the Council (7%) and this was also the finding in 2012. Some example quotes are as follows:

“At the moment the Council operates like a series of businesses (the different departments). We need better joined up working within the Council. We need to recognise that we're all on the same team. We need to communicate better, share information more easily and better understand what our colleagues in other departments do and how our work affects them and vice versa.”

“Communication before things happen. I don't think the press should have things before the employees.”

“That there should be much more communication between HQ and schools which often seem to be treated as if they are a separate entity to HQ staff”

Figure 27: Finally, if you could make one suggestion to improve The Highland Council as an employer, what would it be? (All responses)



Sample base = 3831

11 Profile of the sample

The following table presents the demographic profile of the sample.

Table 20: Profile of the sample (n=3831)

	Number	%
Gender		
Male	1062	27.7
Female	2543	66.4
Prefer not to say	211	5.5
Not provided	15	.4
Age		
Aged up to 20	18	0.5
Age 20 to 29	309	8.1
Age 30 to 39	596	15.6
Age 40 to 49	1076	28.1
Age 50 to 59	1244	32.5
Aged 60+	362	9.4
Prefer not to say	210	5.5
Not provided	16	0.4
Disability status		
Disability	125	3.3
No disability	3520	91.9
Prefer not to say	170	4.4
Not provided	16	0.4
Ethnicity		
White British	3601	93.9
Black Minority Ethnic (BME)	95	2.5
Prefer not to say	114	3.0
Not provided	21	0.5
Sexual orientation		
Heterosexual	3372	88.0
Gay man/Lesbian /Bisexual	67	1.7
Prefer not to say	358	9.3
Not provided	34	0.9
Religion		
Christian	1860	48.5
Other religions	182	4.8
No religion	1327	34.6
Prefer not to say	443	11.6
Not provided	19	0.5

Length of service		
Up to 1 year	266	6.9
Over 1 year, up to 2 years	260	6.8
Over 2 years, up to 10 years	1291	33.7
Over 10 years, up to 20 years	1098	28.7
Over 20 years	901	23.5
Not provided	15	0.4

Appendix: Statement of Terms

Compliance with International Standards

BMG complies with the International Standard for Quality Management Systems requirements (ISO 9001:2008) and the International Standard for Market, opinion and social research service requirements (ISO 20252:2012) and The International Standard for Information Security Management (ISO 27001:2005).

Interpretation and publication of results

The interpretation of the results as reported in this document pertain to the research problem and are supported by the empirical findings of this research project and, where applicable, by other data. These interpretations and recommendations are based on empirical findings and are distinguishable from personal views and opinions.

BMG will not be publish any part of these results without the written and informed consent of the client.

Ethical practice

BMG promotes ethical practice in research: We conduct our work responsibly and in light of the legal and moral codes of society.

We have a responsibility to maintain high scientific standards in the methods employed in the collection and dissemination of data, in the impartial assessment and dissemination of findings and in the maintenance of standards commensurate with professional integrity.

We recognise we have a duty of care to all those undertaking and participating in research and strive to protect subjects from undue harm arising as a consequence of their participation in research. This requires that subjects' participation should be as fully informed as possible and no group should be disadvantaged by routinely being excluded from consideration. All adequate steps shall be taken by both agency and client to ensure that the identity of each respondent participating in the research is protected.

With more than 25 years' experience, BMG Research has established a strong reputation for delivering high quality research and consultancy.

BMG serves both the public and the private sector, providing market and customer insight which is vital in the development of plans, the support of campaigns and the evaluation of performance.

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