

Employment Committee



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Wednesday, 12 November 2025 at 10.00 am
Council Chamber - South Kesteven House, St. Peter's Hill,
Grantham. NG31 6PZ

Committee Councillor Anna Kelly, Vice-Chairman of the Council (Chairman)
Members: Councillor Gloria Johnson (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Rhys Baker, Councillor Ashley Baxter, Councillor Harrish Bisnauthsing,
Councillor Gareth Knight, Councillor Susan Sandall, Councillor Ian Stokes and
Councillor Paul Stokes

Agenda

This meeting can be watched as a live stream, or at a later date, [via the SKDC Public-1 Channel](#)

- 1. Apologies for absence**
- 2. Disclosure of interests**
Members are asked to disclose any interests in matters for consideration at the meeting.
- 3. Minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2025** (Pages 3 - 4)
- 4. Pay Policy Statement 2026/27**
It is a requirement of the Localism Act 2011 that the Council produces an Annual Pay Policy Statement. This summarises current policies and arrangements in place relating to pay. The Pay Policy Statement is presented to Council as part of the budget setting and approval process
- 5. Gender Pay Gap** (Pages 19 - 28)
To inform the Employment Committee regarding the Gender Pay Gap position as of 31 March 2025.
- 6. Employee Engagement Survey Results 2025** (Pages 29 - 54)
The purpose of this report is to present the employee engagement survey results following the 2025 survey and outline actions to be undertaken following the survey.

7. **Human Resources Policy and Handbook Review** (Pages 55 - 99)
To seek approval for the implementation of two updated Human Resources (HR) policies and an Employee Handbook. These policies have been reviewed to ensure clarity, legal compliance and improved accessibility for employees and managers.
8. **HR Dashboard** (To Follow)
To present the HR metrics for the full year period from April to September 2025
9. **Work Programme 2025 - 2026** (Pages 101 - 102)
10. **Any other business, which the Chairman, by reason of special circumstances, decides is urgent**

Meeting of the Employment Committee

Tuesday, 16 September 2025, 10.00 am



**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

Committee Members present	Cabinet Members present
Councillor Anna Kelly (Chairman)	Councillor Philip Knowles
Councillor Gloria Johnson (Vice-Chairman)	
Councillor Ashley Baxter	
Councillor Harrish Bisnauthsing	
Councillor Gareth Knight	
Councillor Susan Sandall	
Councillor Ian Stokes	
Councillor Paul Stokes	
Councillor Virginia Moran	
Officers	
Karen Bradford, Chief Executive	
Jane Jenkinson, Senior HR Officer	
Sam Fitt, Senior HR/Corporate Project Officer	
Joshua Mann, Democratic Services Officer	

11. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Rhys Baker, substituted by Councillor Virginia Moran.

12. Disclosure of interests

There were none.

13. Minutes of the meeting held on 9 July 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 July 2025 were proposed, seconded, and AGREED as an accurate record.

14. Updates from the previous meeting

The Chairman noted that the outstanding action had been completed.

15. Work Programme 2025 - 2026

It was proposed, seconded, and AGREED to address the Work Programme 2025-26 and Any Other Business prior to the remainder of the agenda.

The Work Programme 2025-26 was noted by the Committee.

16. Any other business, which the Chairman, by reason of special circumstances, decides is urgent

There was none.

17. Exclusion of the Press and Public

A Member queried why items (formerly) five and six were exempt. It was confirmed this was because item five contained information relating to the terms and conditions in staff member contracts, and item six contained information relating to individual staff member's circumstances.

Following this explanation it was proposed, seconded, and AGREED to exclude the press and public for the remaining items because of the likelihood that information that was exempt under paragraphs 1 and 2 of Schedule 12A of the Local government Act 1972 (as amended) would be disclosed to them.

18. SKDC v National Green Book Terms and Conditions of Employment

The SKDC v National Green Book Terms and Conditions of Employment report was noted by the Committee.

19. Updates on Speeding and Alcohol & Drug Testing

The Updates on Speeding and Alcohol & Drug Testing report was noted by the Committee.

Councillor Tim Harrison left the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 10.57am.

20. Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer

The meeting resumed at 11.30am.

It was AGREED to recommend to Full Council that the candidate be appointed to the post of Director of Law and Governance and appointed as the Council's Monitoring Officer.

The meeting concluded at 12.35pm.



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Employment Committee

Wednesday, 12 November 2025

Report of Councillor Ashley Baxter,
Leader of the Council and Cabinet
Member for Finance, HR and Economic
Development

Pay Policy Statement 2026/27

Report Author

Sam Fitt, Senior HR Officer

✉ sam.fitt@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

The Localism Act 2011 requires the Council produces an Annual Pay Policy Statement to summarise current policies and arrangements relating to pay. The Pay Policy Statement is part of the budget setting and approval process which will be presented to Council.

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to recommend the Pay Policy Statement 2026/27 to Full Council for approval.

Decision Information

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication? No

What are the relevant corporate priorities? Effective council

Which wards are impacted? (All Wards);

1. Implications

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

Finance and Procurement

- 1.1 The financial considerations of the Pay Policy Statement will be presented to Council for approval on 29 January 2025 and will be incorporated into the budget setting proposals for 2026/27. Employee costs are the largest financial element of the budget, and it is important that salary budgets and staffing resourcing requirements are kept under regular review.

Completed by: David Scott – Assistant Director of Finance and Deputy s151 Officer.

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 Article 11 of the Council's Constitution, which sets out the remit of the Employment Committee, states one of its functions is the review of the annual Pay Policy Statement and recommending it to Council for approval. The Council is required to produce and publish a Pay Policy Statement each financial year under Sections 38-39 of the Localism Act 2011. The Council must have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State under Section 40 of the Localism Act 2011.

Completed by: James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 The Council's Pay Policy Statement is reviewed annually to ensure that it accurately reflects the Council's position and is aligned with the outcomes and objectives of the Council's Corporate Plan. The 2025/26 Pay Policy Statement was presented to Full Council on 30 January 2025.
- 2.2 A review of the Pay Policy Statement has been carried out to ensure compliance with the Localism Act 2011.
- 2.3 The key changes include the updating of the posts in scope under the definition of officers covered by the Pay Policy Statement (paragraph 3).

- 2.4 The Pay Policy Statement refers to the collective agreement that the Council has in place for local cost of living pay awards and the fact that these pay awards are determined locally, for all staff, based on this agreement.
- 2.5 The Pay Policy Statement details:
 - The Council's decision to adopt the Real Living Wage in March 2021.
 - The pay increase arrangements for our lowest grade and a number of other lower grades which are impacted by the Real Living Wage increase.
 - These pay increases are an alternative (and not in addition to) to the annual cost of living pay award.
- 2.6 A review of pay and reward arrangements was completed during the year 2023/24. This included:
 - The development of a career development policy
 - Implementation of the 2024 real living wage rate for all eligible employees as part of our commitment to fair compensation.
 - The development of a revised job evaluation procedure and market supplement procedure
- 2.7 A standby and call out policy was implemented during 2023/24. This policy sets out a separation of 'on-call' and 'standby' to recognise the difference and ensure a clearly defined compensation structure.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1 It is a legal requirement that the Council publishes an annual Pay Policy Statement and no other options have been considered

4. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 4.1 The reason for the recommendation is to satisfy a legislative requirement.
- 4.2 Alternative approaches to the content of the pay policy have been considered but this version is deemed most suitable because it aligns to the Council's pay structure, local agreements and regulatory standards.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 Consultation has taken place with the Trade Union

6. Background Papers

- 6.1 Pay Policy Statement 2025-26

[Pay Policy Statement 2025_26.pdf](#)

7. Appendices

7.1. Appendix A – Pay Policy Statement 2026-2027

PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2026/27



**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

1. INTRODUCTION AND POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1 South Kesteven District Council (SKDC) aims to ensure that its remuneration packages are fair, equitable and transparent, leading to the employment of professional staff who have appropriate skills and experience to provide high quality services to its residents and visitors.
- 1.2 SKDC recognises that remuneration at all levels needs to enable the Council to attract and retain high quality employees dedicated to the service of the public.
- 1.3 Under Section 112 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council has the “power to appoint officers on such reasonable terms and conditions as the authority thinks fit”. This Pay Policy Statement (the ‘statement’) sets out the Council’s approach to pay policy in accordance with the requirements of Section 38 of the Localism Act 2011.
- 1.4 It is important that local authorities are able to determine their own pay structures in order to address their strategic aims and to compete in the local and national market.
- 1.5 Once approved by Full Council, this policy statement will immediately take effect, superseding the 2025/2026 Pay Policy Statement, and will be subject to review in accordance with the relevant legislation prevailing at that time, currently annually.
- 1.6 The Council may amend the Pay Policy Statement at any point during the year.

2. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

- 2.1 In determining the pay and remuneration of all of its employees, the Council will comply with all relevant employment legislation. This includes:
 - Equality Act 2010,
 - Part Time Employment (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000,
 - Agency Workers Regulations 2010, and
 - Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006.
- 2.2 With regard to the equal pay requirements contained within the Equality Act, the Council ensures there is no pay discrimination in its pay structures and that all pay differentials are objectively justified through the use of a job evaluation mechanism, which directly relates salaries to the requirements, demands and responsibilities of the role.

3. SCOPE

- 3.1. This Pay Policy Statement includes policies regarding:

- The level and elements of remuneration for the Chief Executive
- The remuneration of the lowest paid employee
- The relationship between the remuneration of Chief Officers¹ and other officers
- Other specific aspects of Chief Officer remuneration including fees, charges and other discretionary payments.

3.2. Remuneration in this context is defined widely to include not only pay but also charges, fees, allowances, benefits in kind, increases in enhancements of pension entitlements and termination payments.

3.3 The definition of officers covered by this policy are detailed in Appendix A to the Pay Policy Statement. For SKDC the following posts are covered:

- Head of the Paid Service, which in this authority is the post of *Chief Executive*

Statutory Chief Officers, which in this authority are the posts of:

- *Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer*
- *Director Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer*

Non-statutory Chief Officers (those who report directly to the Head of the Paid Service) which in this authority are the posts of:

- *Director of Housing and Projects (Deputy Monitoring Officer)*
- *Assistant Director (Planning and Growth)*
- *Assistant Director (Leisure, Culture and Place)*
- *Head of Service (Human Resources and Organisational Development)*

Deputy Chief Officers, (those who report directly to a non-statutory or statutory Chief Officer) which in this authority are the posts of:

- *Assistant Director Finance (Deputy Section 151 Officer)*
- *Head of Service (Revenues, Benefits, Customer Services)*
- *Head of Service (Corporate Projects, Performance and Climate Change)*
- *Head of Service (Public Protection)*
- *Head of Service (Waste Management and Market Services)*
- *Head of Service (Housing)*
- *Head of Service (Housing Technical Services)*
- *Head of Service (Property and IT)*
- *Head of Service (Health, Safety, Compliance and Emergency Planning)*
- *Economic Development and Inward Investment Manager*
- *East Midlands Building Control Manager*
- *Electoral Services Manager*
- *Democratic Services Manager*
- *Development Management & Enforcement Manager*
- *Planning Policy Manager*
- *Communications Manager*
- *Arts and Cultural Services Manager*
- *Leisure, Parks and Open Spaces Team Leader*

- *Street Scene Manager*
- *Community Engagement Manager*
- *Governance Support Team Leader*

3.4 The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require councils to publish the number of employees who are paid over £50,000 by job title using salary bands. Historically at SKDC these bands are published in the Pay Policy Statement using a minimum range bracket of £5,000 which is based on the Local Government Transparency Code 2015.

3.5 Pay details for posts graded Service Manager or above are shown in Table 1. These will also be published on the Council's website.

Table 1

Job Title	FTE	Salary Band
Chief Executive	1.0	£150,000 - £160,000
Deputy Chief Executive	1.0	£110,000 - £120,000
Directors	2.0	£100,000 - £110,000
Assistant Directors	3.0	£85,000 - £95,000
Heads of Service	9.0	£65,000 - £75,000
Service Managers	12.0	£44,000 - £58,000

4. CHIEF EXECUTIVE PAY

4.1. The SKDC Chief Executive discharges the responsibilities of Head of Paid Service – a statutory role defined by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. The Council's Employment Committee determines the level of pay for the Chief Executive. The Committee and its remit are detailed in the Council's Constitution.

4.2. The SKDC Chief Executive has been appointed as Returning Officer. The Returning Officer is an officer of the Council appointed under the Representation of the People Act 1983. Whilst appointed by the Council, the role of Returning Officer involves and incurs personal responsibility and accountability and is statutorily separate from their duties as an employee of the Council.

4.3. Special fees are paid for Returning Officer duties which are not part of the post holder's substantive role. These fees are payable as required

and can be made to any senior officer appointed to fulfil the statutory duties of this role. The fees are set by Central Government for General Elections and across Lincolnshire for Local Elections.

5. CHIEF OFFICER PAY DETERMINATION

5.1. The Localism Act refers to Chief Officers. The following posts are Chief Officers at SKDC:

- The Chief Executive who is Head of Paid Service }
• Deputy Chief Executive and Section151 Officer } "Statutory Officers"
• Monitoring Officer }
• Directors }

5.2 The Council does not have a separate pay policy in relation to Chief Officers.

5.3 The remuneration package defined in employment contracts for the Chief Executive and Chief Officers is the same as all staff. It includes a spot rate salary or salary band, the same sick pay arrangements and the same pension scheme arrangements.

5.4 The Council publishes senior management salary rates and gender pay details on its website in line with the requirements of the Government's transparency agenda.

6. LOWEST PAID EMPLOYEES

6.1. The lowest paid staff within the Council's pay structure are on Grade 2. Consequently, we have chosen staff employed on Grade 2 as our definition of the 'lowest paid' for the purposes of this policy. Grade 2 for 2025/2026 is £24,453 per annum.

6.2. The terms and conditions of employment for Grade 2 staff are in accordance with collective agreements negotiated, from time to time, by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services, as set out in the Scheme of Conditions of Service (commonly known as 'Green Book'). These are supplemented by local collective agreements reached with the Trade Union(s) recognised by the council and by the rules of the council.

7. PAY DETERMINATION ARRANGEMENTS

7.1. The Council employs all staff on local terms and conditions. It has a collective agreement in place for local cost of living pay awards based upon pay reviews by the National Joint Council and Local Government Services (NJC).

7.2. The Council makes its own determination of cost of living pay awards for all staff in accordance with this local agreement, taking account of the rate of inflation (current and Bank of England forecast), labour market conditions, the level of previous years' cost of living awards and any specific budgetary constraints.

- 7.3. Where salary bands are used, appointment within these will be based on an assessment against the levels of competency required for the role.
- 7.4. The salary for newly appointed staff is determined on appointment in relation to the job evaluation score for the post. The job evaluation score assumes full competence at the job. Where a new appointee for the job has some development needs, the Council may choose to place the employee on a salary progression until full competence has been confirmed or qualifications have been completed.
- 7.5. In April 2021 the Council adopted the Real Living Wage to ensure wage rates relate to what people need to live. It is calculated based on rising actual living costs.
- 7.6. The Real Living Wage for 2025 was £12.60 per hour. The Real Living Wage for 2026 is £13.45 per hour. It is expected that the Real Living Wage increase will be implemented by May 2026.
- 7.7. Pay grades which receive the Real Living Wage increase may not also receive the annual cost of living pay award agreed by the Council, but they will receive the difference in the two amounts if the cost of living payment is higher.
- 7.8. The Council's current pay and reward arrangements have been designed to ensure consistency through the job evaluation process and with reference to the external market.
- 7.9. The Council has an approved job evaluation procedure which provides guidance on its application and also includes the use of job evaluation panels to review and moderate evaluations.
- 7.10. The Council will monitor pay locally and nationally, as required, and will undertake market reviews in relation to specific posts. Where a post is hard to recruit at any level, particularly where there are supply pressures, the Council has a process in place to consider applying market supplements, and/or to offer recruitment incentives. Market supplements will be reviewed annually and may be withdrawn if market conditions change.
- 7.11. Local government elections and neighbourhood planning referendums are a separate statutory responsibility and rates of pay for local elections are set in accordance with a Lincolnshire wide election scale of fees and charges. These rates differ according to the size of the ward contested.

8. ALLOWANCES

- 8.1. The Council will pay job related allowances to staff where it is a requirement of the job to do so. Staff who are required to respond to emergencies outside normal working hours are also currently in receipt of standby and call out allowances, depending on the nature of the work.
- 8.2. A policy on standby and call out arrangements was introduced which details the relevant pay allowances.

8.3 Overtime is payable at a flat rate and can only be undertaken with the prior approval of the line manager. There may be circumstances where overtime is paid at enhanced rates. Chief Officers and managers may be required to work evenings and weekends to meet the requirements of the job and this does not attract overtime.

8.4 The Council does not pay essential car allowances or provide cars to any individual member of staff but operates a pool car system available to all employees. Where the Chief Executive, Chief Officers or staff use their own cars for Council business they are reimbursed at a flat rate of 45p per mile in line with the HMRC guidelines. This practice will be reviewed as part of the overall review of pay and reward.

8.5 Honoraria and acting up payments may be paid to staff who have taken up additional responsibilities for a defined period of time to cover absence, or additional duties. Where possible such payments will be based on the job evaluated rates of pay for those responsibilities. Each case will be considered on its own merits and a fair recompense will be calculated.

8.6 Temporary short-term appointments of staff will be paid in line with the job evaluated rate for the job and the prevailing market rate for such short term appointments.

8.7 Remuneration for staff on secondment will be in line with the Council's Secondment Policy

9. APPRENTICES

9.1 The Council actively supports the employment of apprentices. The salary paid to all newly recruited apprentices is based on the National Living Wage (for those aged 21 and over) or the National Minimum Wage (for those up to the age of 20) and is increased in line with Government recommendations.

9.2 Current National Minimum Wage/National Living Wage rates for employees are as follows:

April 2025		21+	18-20	Under 18
		£12.21	£10.00	£7.55

April 2026		21+	18-20	Under 18
		Not known at the time	Not known at the time of	Not known at the time of

		of report publication	report publication	report publication
--	--	-----------------------	--------------------	--------------------

National Minimum Wage and National Living Wage rates are reviewed annually by the Government and any increases take effect from 1st April each year. The Pay Policy Statement will be updated once the National Minimum Wage figures for 2026 have been released by Central Government.

9.3 In accordance with the Apprentice Levy any existing employees can be signed up to an appropriate apprenticeship in line with identified professional development needs. These employees receive the job evaluated salary for the post that they are employed in.

10. LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME

10.1 All staff who are members of the Local Government Pension Scheme make individual contributions to the scheme depending on their salary. Contribution rates for 2026- 2027 range from 5.5% to 12.5% (employees need to be earning £203,001 or more for the higher rate).

10.2 The Council makes employer's contributions into the scheme, which are reviewed by the actuary. The current employer contribution rate is 24.8%

11. PAY MULTIPLIERS

11.1 Whilst job evaluation and the market determine the relationship between the highest and lowest paid employees, an analysis of pay multiples has been undertaken in the light of the requirements of the Localism Act 2011.

11.2 The Council defines its lowest paid employees in relation to their grade. This definition has been selected to enable fair comparison on a Full Time Equivalent basis.

11.3 The Ratio of the highest paid employee to mean salary per Full Time Equivalent (FTE) is 1 : 4.2 (based on actual salary paid).

11.4 The Council has no policy about the maximum or minimum levels of such ratio statistics.

12. TERMINATION PAYMENTS

12.1 The Council recognises that staff leave the Council for a range of reasons including: retirement, redundancy, career move, moving location, voluntary resignation, or employment termination. Where a termination payment may apply, each case will be treated on its own merit and will comply with Council policies and the law.

12.2 The Council reserves the right to make any appropriate payments to protect the reputation of the Council and manage risk of litigation. This will be in line with legislation and with reference to best value.

- 12.3 The Council does not have any specific termination payments built into any employee's employment contract. It reserves the right to do so should such a need arise in the interests of the efficiency of the service.
- 12.4 The Council has a redundancy policy in place in accordance with current legislation which applies equally to all staff. Where redundancy payments are made to any employee the Council reserves the right to recover the redundancy severance payment.
- 12.5 Termination payments should be kept to a minimum and it must be demonstrated that they are in the best interests of the Council. The purpose of this would be to ensure a clear process and to demonstrate that the Council always works to ensure residents receive the best value for money.

13. RE-ENGAGEMENT OF EMPLOYEES

- 13.1 Employees who are offered another post with any organisation covered by the Modification Order Act, prior to their redundancy leaving date and commence within 4 weeks of leaving, are not eligible to receive any redundancy payment.
- 13.2 Employees who have been made redundant are eligible to apply for vacancies which may arise after they have left the Council's employment. Any such applications will be considered together with those from other candidates and the best person will be appointed to the post. Any necessary adjustment to pension would be made in accordance with the scheme regulations.

14. GENDER PAY GAP REPORTING

- 14.1 The Government introduced a requirement for mandatory Gender Pay Gap reporting for public sector employers with 250 or more employees. The deadline for publishing the data is 31 March each year. The Council publishes the relevant data in accordance with the regulations and these are reported to Employment Committee with supporting commentary.

43 Interpretation

(2) In this Chapter "chief officer", in relation to a relevant authority, means each of the following—

- (a) the head of its paid service designated under section 4(1) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989;
- (b) its monitoring officer designated under section 5(1) of that Act;
- (c) a statutory chief officer mentioned in section 2(6) of that Act;
- (d) a non-statutory chief officer mentioned in section 2(7) of that Act; (e) a deputy chief officer mentioned in section 2(8) of that Act.

Local Government and Housing Act 1989 – Section 2

6) In this section "the statutory chief officers" relevant to SKDC means—

- (a) the officer having responsibility, for the purposes of section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972, section 73 of the Local Government Act 1985, section 112 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988[, section 127(2) of the Greater London Authority Act 1999] or section 6 below or for the purposes of section 95 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, for the administration of the authority's financial affairs.

(7) In this section "non-statutory chief officer" means, subject to the following provisions of this section—

- (a) a person for whom the head of the authority's paid service is directly responsible;
- (b) a person who, as respects all or most of the duties of his post, is required to report directly or is directly accountable to the head of the authority's paid service; and
- (c) any person who, as respects all or most of the duties of his post, is required to report directly or is directly accountable to the local authority themselves or any committee or sub-committee of the authority.

(8) In this section "deputy chief officer" means, subject to the following provisions of this section, a person who, as respects all or most of the duties of his post, is required to report directly or is directly accountable to one or more of the statutory or non-statutory chief officers.

(9) A person whose duties are solely secretarial or clerical or are otherwise in the nature of support services shall not be regarded as a non-statutory chief officer or a deputy chief officer for the purposes of this Part.



Employment Committee

Wednesday, 12 November 2025

Report of: Councillor Ashley Baxter,
Leader of the Council and
Cabinet Member for Finance, HR and
Economic Development

Gender Pay Gap

Report Author

Leila Foster, Human Resources Officer

leila.foster@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

To advise the Committee of the Gender Pay Gap position as of 31 March 2025.

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note the report.

Decision Information

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication? No

What are the relevant corporate priorities? Effective council

Which wards are impacted? All Wards

1. Implications

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing, and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

Finance and Procurement

- 1.1 There are no specific financial implications arising from this report. The financial considerations of the Council's employment arrangements are included in the budget framework.

Completed by: David Scott – Assistant Director of Finance and Deputy s151 Officer

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 The report facilitates the publication of data relating to the Council's gender pay gap position, which is a statutory requirement. There are no significant legal or governance implications arising from the report, which the Committee is invited to note.

Completed by: James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 1.3 Gender pay gap reporting is a legal requirement in the UK for employers with 250 or more employees, under the Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017. Employers within both the public and private sector must annually report and publish their gender pay gap data within 12 months of a specified "snapshot date" each year.

Completed by: Carol Drury, Community Engagement Manager

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 Under the Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017, all employers with 250 or more employees in England, Wales and Scotland have been legally required to report annually on the gender pay gap within their organisation. This includes South Kesteven District Council (SKDC).
- 2.2 The gender pay gap is the difference between men's and women's median hourly earnings as a proportion of men's earnings, reflecting disparities across all types of jobs, not just those with the same job title. It is essential to distinguish between 'the gender pay gap' and 'unequal pay'; the latter relates to paying men and women differently for performing the same (or similar) work.

- 2.3. The information contained within this report relates to the ‘snapshot’ date of 31 March 2025 (as per the regulations).

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1 The Council’s **mean gender pay gap** remains a ‘negative’ measure. At the end of March 2025, it was **-4.93%** (in March 2024 it was **-4.83%**). This means that for every £1 a woman earns, a man earns 95p.
- 3.2 The **mean hourly rate for women** was **£17.66**, and the **mean hourly rate for men** was **£16.83**.
- 3.3 At the end of March 2025, the Council’s **median gender pay gap** was **-4.08%** (in March 2024 it was **0.80%**).
- 3.4 The **median hourly rate for women** was **£16.81**, and the **median hourly rate for men** was **£16.15**.
- 3.5 The quartile information shown in Appendix 1 is calculated by listing all salaries from highest to lowest and then splitting that information into four equal quarters to determine the percentage of male/female employees in each quartile.
- 3.6 The government’s Gender Pay Gap website provides details of all organisations that have submitted their information for benchmarking purposes. This shows that the Council’s gender pay gap compares favourably with others, including other public sector organisations.
- 3.7 The gender pay gap for median gross hourly earnings for the whole economy decreased to **13.1%** in **April 2024** (down from **14.2%** in **April 2023**). At **-4.08%**, the Council’s median gender pay gap is significantly lower. The Office for National Statistics should release 2025 data for the whole economy later in the year. The reporting deadline is 31 March 2026.
- 3.8 All the figures have been calculated using the standard methodologies used in the Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017.
- 3.9 The Council is committed to the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment for all employees. It has a clear policy of paying employees equally for the same or equivalent work, regardless of their sex (or any other protected characteristic as set out in the Equality Act 2010). Job roles and pay grades are evaluated as necessary to ensure a fair structure.
- 3.10 The Council is therefore confident that its ‘negative’ gender pay gap does not result from paying men and women differently for the same or equivalent work.
- 3.11 Although the Council continues to have a ‘negative’ gender pay gap, it is recognised that changes to the workforce will cause fluctuations in the data each year. As such, the Council will continue to implement actions to ensure equality, including:

Pay and Grading:

Ensuring that grades continue to be determined through objective analysis and job evaluation to maintain the integrity of the pay and grading system.

Recruitment:

The Council aims to recruit from the largest possible talent pool by advertising job vacancies widely, ensuring gender-neutral language in job advertisements, and the use of competency-based selection techniques to guard against unconscious bias in recruitment processes.

The Council will continue to promote several family-friendly policies available for colleagues to take advantage of, including flexible working, a menopause-friendly workplace, support for carers, and hybrid working measures.

The Carer's Leave Act 2023 came into force on 6th April 2024. The Council has actively launched a Carers' Network, has held several Carers Workshops, and has supported the Carers' Rights Day.

The Council will continue to support and train managers with recruitment processes to ensure opportunities and processes are fair.

Monitoring:

The Council will monitor shifts in the gender pay gap data each year to identify any trends and analyse underlying causes. The Council will continue to implement measures to maintain its current position on the gender pay gap.

4. Appendices

4.1 Appendix 1 – Summary Presentation Document

Gender Pay Gap Report

(as of 31 March 2025)



Background to the report:

In 2017, the government introduced legislation requiring all organisations with more than 250 employees to publish their gender pay gap each year. The gender pay gap is the difference between men's and women's median hourly earnings as a proportion of men's earnings, and it reflects disparities across all types of jobs, not just those with the same job title. This differs from equal pay, which considers the difference in pay of men and women in roles of equal value.

The information contained within this report is for the snapshot date of 31 March 2025 (as per the regulations).

Gender Pay Gap at SKDC:

For the year ending March 2025, SKDC's mean gender pay gap remains a negative measure of -4.93%. This has increased marginally from last year (31 March 2024 was -4.83%). A negative percentage shows that men have lower pay than women in the Council; however, it is only a slight difference, with women's mean hourly rate being £17.66 compared to men's mean hourly rate of £16.83.

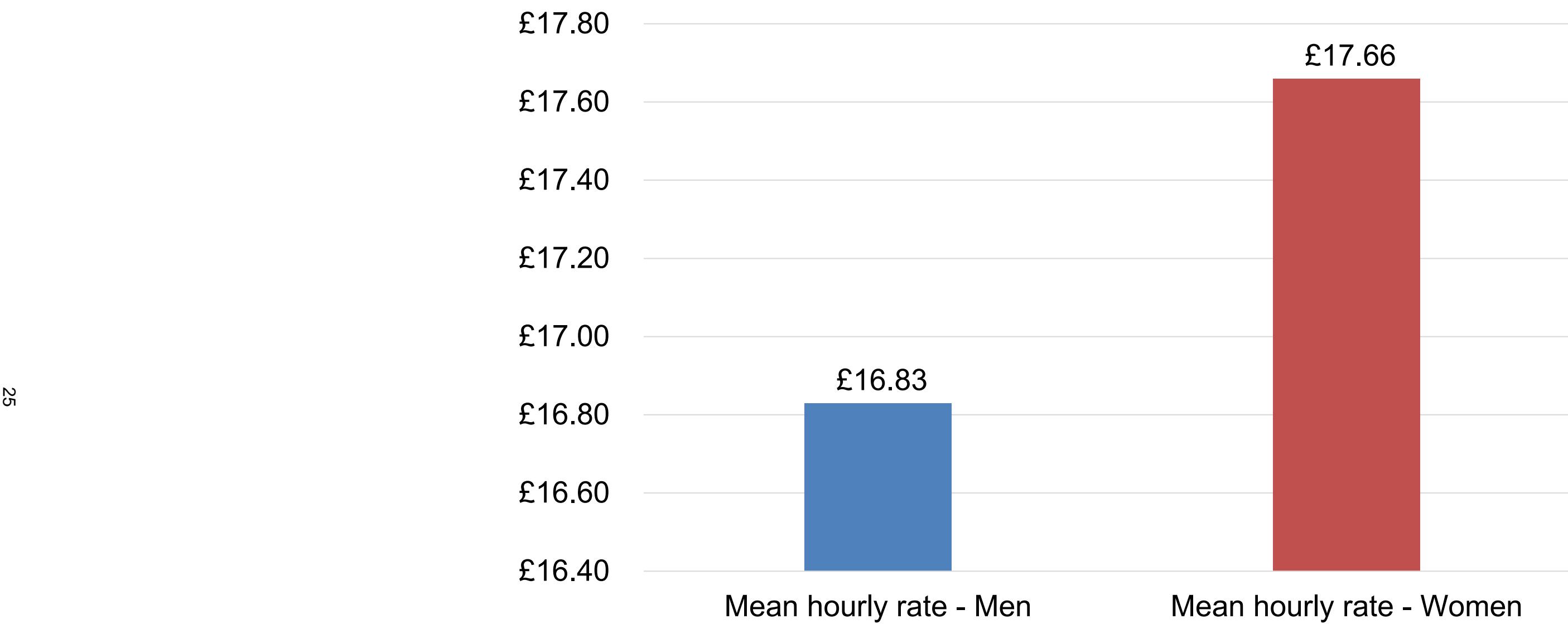
At SKDC, women are paid 4.08% more than men when comparing median hourly pay (the median gender pay gap for 31 March 2024 was 0.80%). This means for every £1 a woman earns at SKDC, a man earns 95p. The median hourly rate for women is £16.81, and the median hourly rate for men is £16.15.

The UK's 2025 Gender Pay Gap Report, covering the 2024/25 reporting period, shows the mean hourly pay gap fell to 11.2% and the median hourly pay gap fell to 8.6%, marking a new low and one of the biggest year-on-year improvements since mandatory reporting began in 2017. While this indicates progress, the pace of change suggests it will still take decades to close the gap entirely, with a significant proportion of companies making no progress since 2017.



Mean (average) gender pay gap for hourly pay

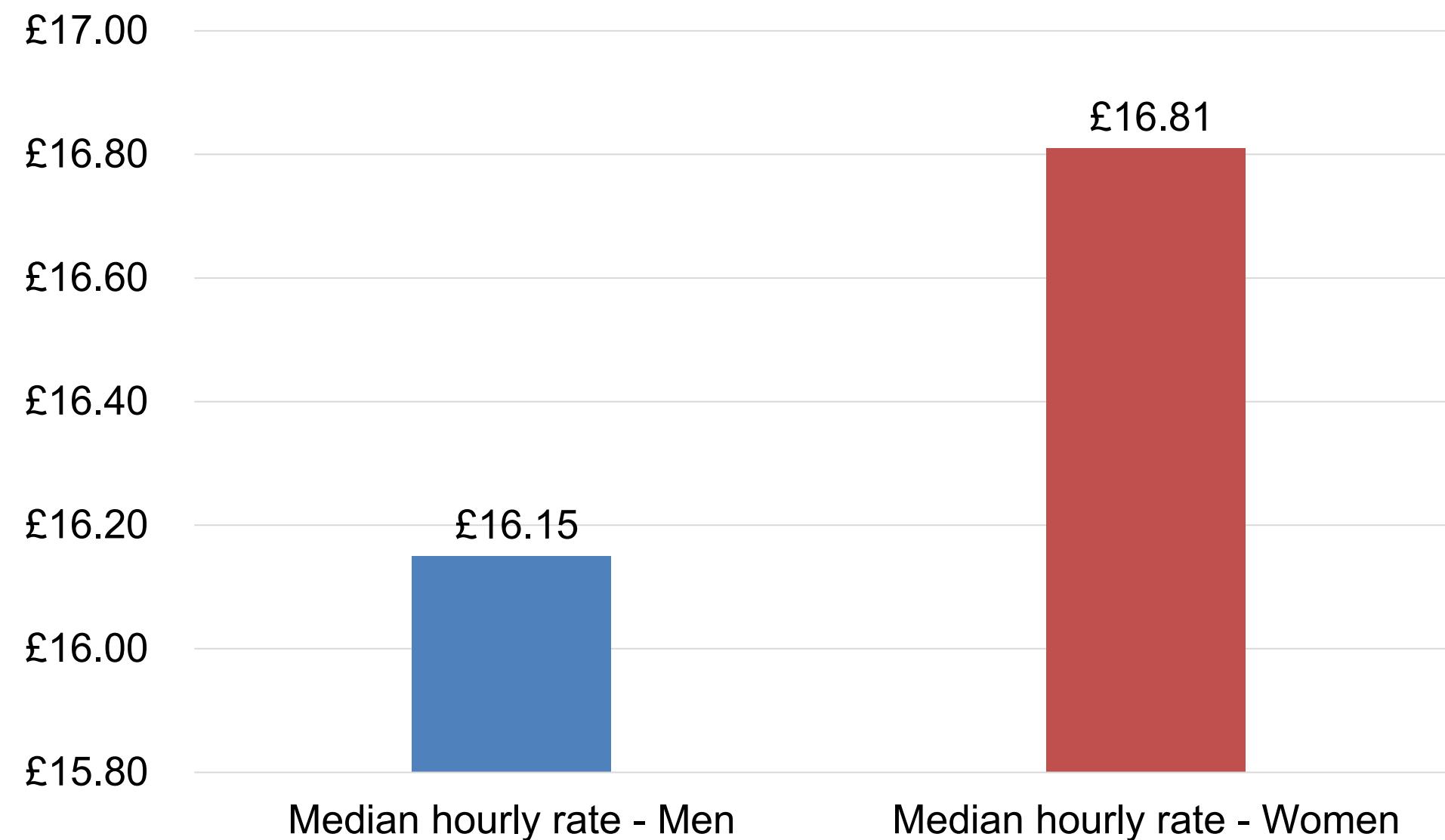
The mean average gender pay gap is a negative measure of -4.93%. This means that, using the mean (average), women at SKDC are paid 4.93% more than men. For every £1 a woman earns at SKDC, a man earns 95p.



Median gender pay gap for hourly pay

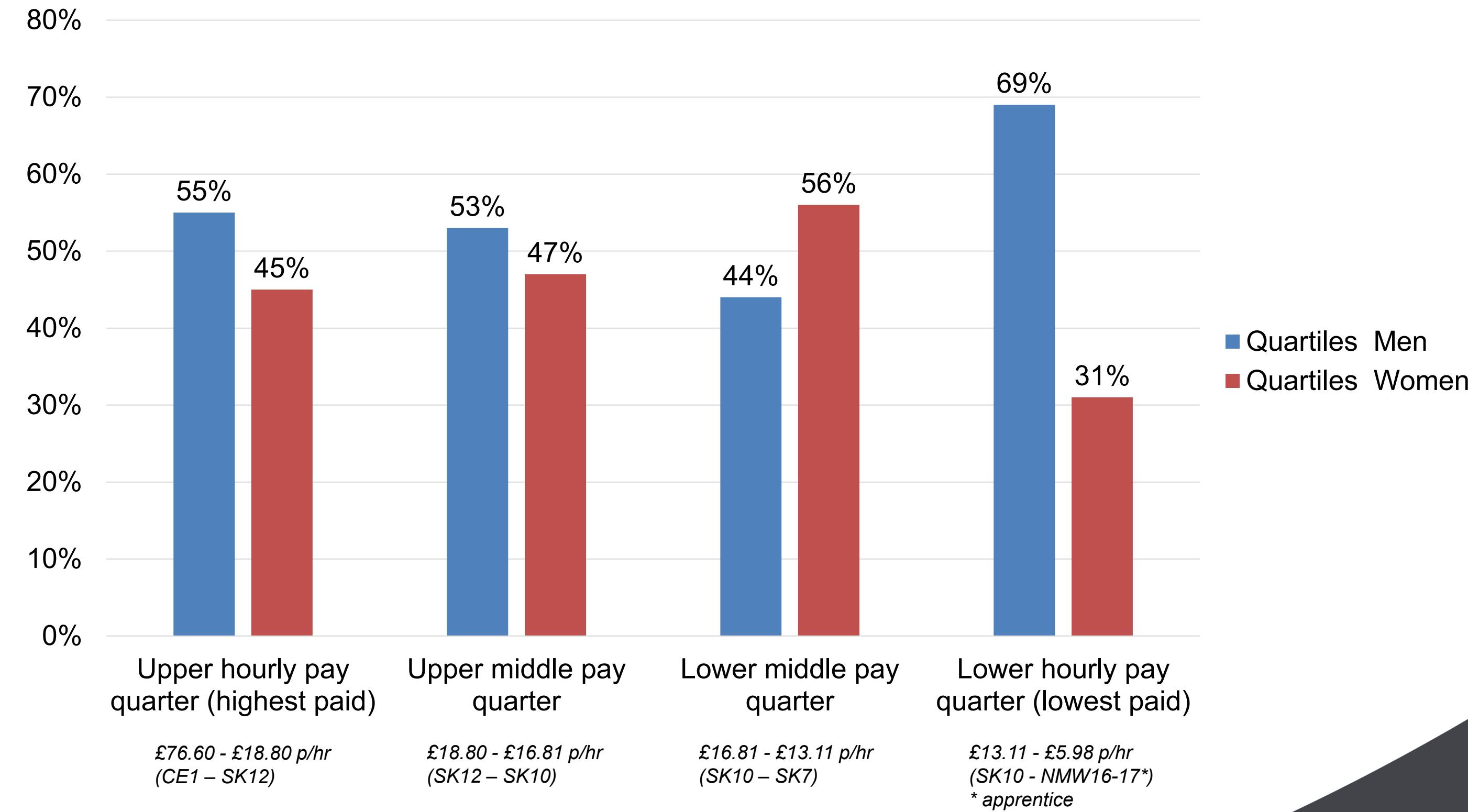
The median gender pay gap is a negative measure of -4.08%. This means that women at SKDC are paid 4.08% more than men. For every £1 a woman earns at SKDC, a man earns 95p.

26

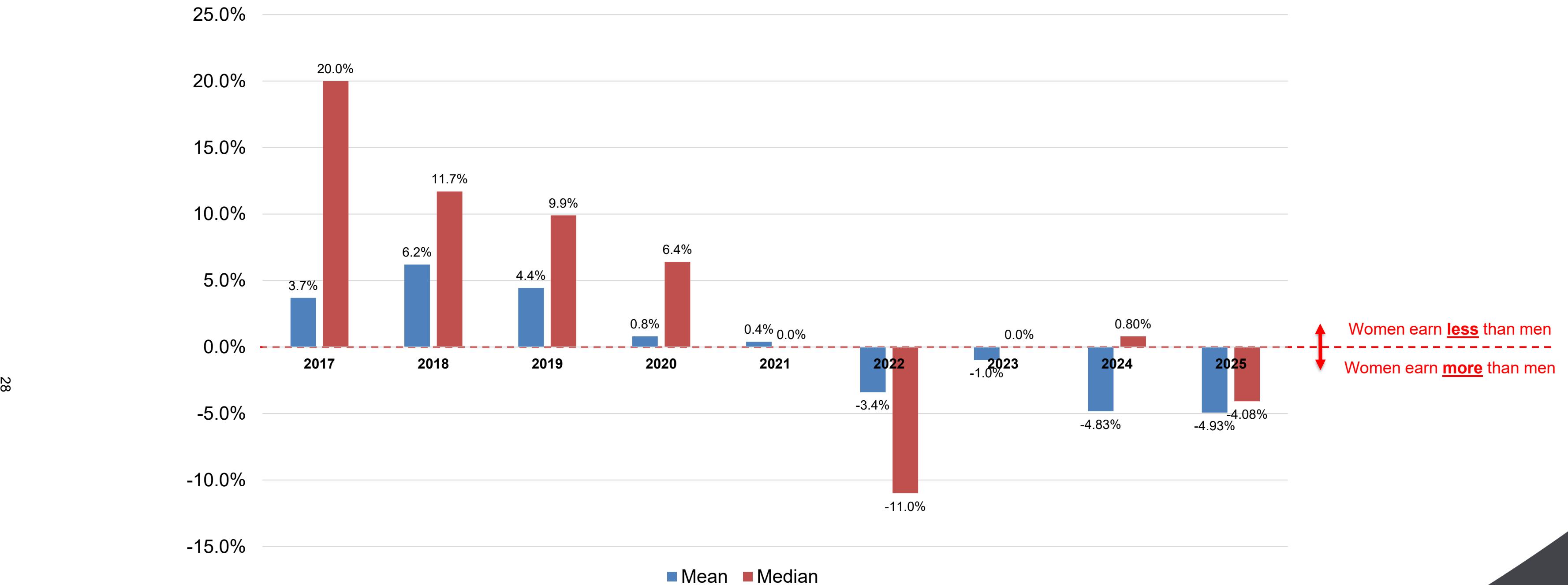


Percentage of women and men in each pay quarter

At SKDC, women occupy 45% of the highest-paid jobs and 31% of the lowest-paid jobs



The gender pay gap at SKDC since 2017





SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Employment Committee

Wednesday, 12 November 2025

Report of Councillor Ashley Baxter,
Leader of the Council and Cabinet
Member for Finance, HR and Economic
Development

Employee Engagement Survey Results 2025

Report Author

Sam Fitt, Senior HR Officer

sam.fitt@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to present the employee engagement survey results following the 2025 survey and outline actions to be undertaken following the survey.

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to note the findings of the engagement survey

Decision Information

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication? No

What are the relevant corporate priorities? Effective council

Which wards are impacted? (All Wards);

1. Implications

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

Finance and Procurement

- 1.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Completed by: David Scott – Assistant Director of Finance and Deputy s151 Officer

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 This report and presentation is for information only. There are no governance concerns associated with this report.

Completed by: James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager

Human Resources

- 1.3 The annual engagement surveys gives the Council a clear indication on the positives of working for SKDC and identifies where elements can be improved in order to maintain the TeamSK culture that has been embedded in the Council.

Completed by: Sam Fitt, Senior Human Resources Officer

Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing

- 1.4 Given the Council's priority of supporting mental health and wellbeing, this year's survey continues to include wellbeing related questions asking about the wellbeing provision at the Council and specific questions about the respondents own wellbeing. This produces a 'wellbeing index' which can be measured against last year's survey and compared across teams, which can direct future wellbeing actions and provide a benchmark.

Completed by: Sam Fitt, Senior Human Resources Officer

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1. In July 2025, South Kesteven District Council undertook the annual employee engagement survey and invited all employees to participate. The survey was open from 7th July 2025 until 31st July 2025.
- 2.2. Colleagues were asked to rate 41 statements on a scale from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. There were a further 10 questions with opportunities to add comments to provide suggestions, feedback and explanations to how they have rated the statements.
- 2.3. As with previous years, topics included: Teamwork; Line Management; Working Environment; Innovation; Wellbeing; Engagement and Trust; Leadership; Change Management; Communication; Learning and Development; Reward and Recognition.

3. Survey Results and Key Considerations

- 3.1. 539 out of a possible 620 employees completed the survey (including casual workers). This resulted in an 87% response rate, which is an increase from last year's survey, which received an 85% response rate. The response rate in 2022 was 42%, so response rates have more than doubled in 3 years.
- 3.2. The Engagement Index increased to the highest levels seen in recent years. The Engagement Index in this year's survey is 75, compared to 72 in 2024, 70 in 2023 and 63 in 2022.
- 3.3. The Engagement Index is a measure of employee engagement. It is based on the following 6 survey questions:
 - I would recommend working for SKDC
 - I am proud to be working for SKDC
 - I am happy with my current job at SKDC
 - I find the work I do interesting
 - My job makes good use of my talents, skills and experiences
 - Morale at SKDC is generally good
- 3.4. For further details of the survey results, please refer to Appendix 1 which outlines: Response (%) to each question; Engagement levels broken down by key demographics; Wellbeing Index consisting of 4 wellbeing questions; Comments and common themes.

4. Consultation

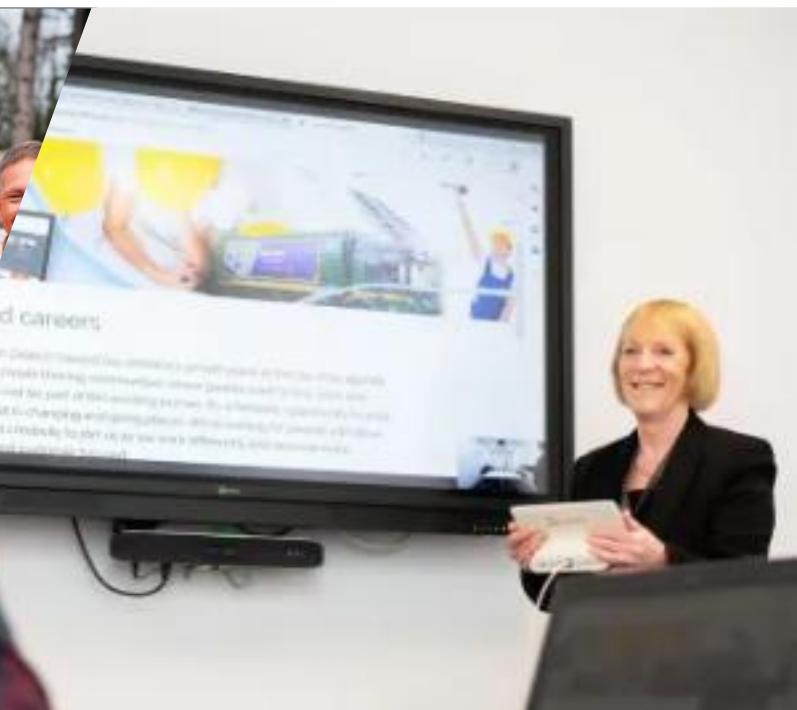
- 4.1. Results have been shared and discussed with the Trade Union Representatives.
- 4.2. Results have been shared with Corporate and Senior Management Teams
- 4.3. Results have been shared with SKDCs People Panel Representatives.

5. Appendices

- 5.1. Appendix 1 – Engagement Survey Results Presentation

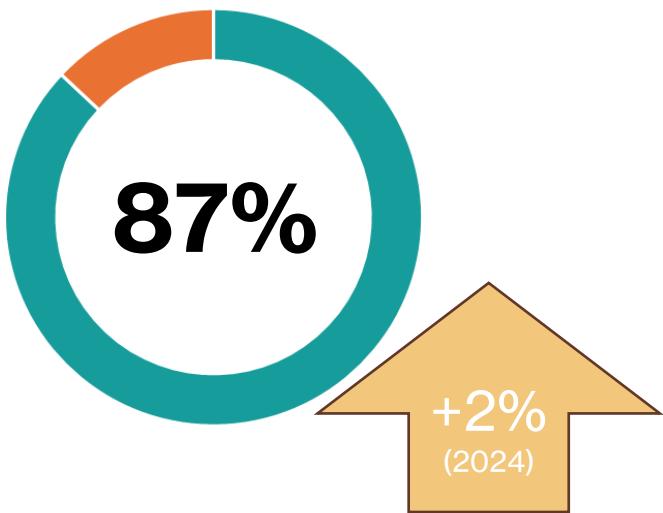
2025 Engagement Survey Results

33



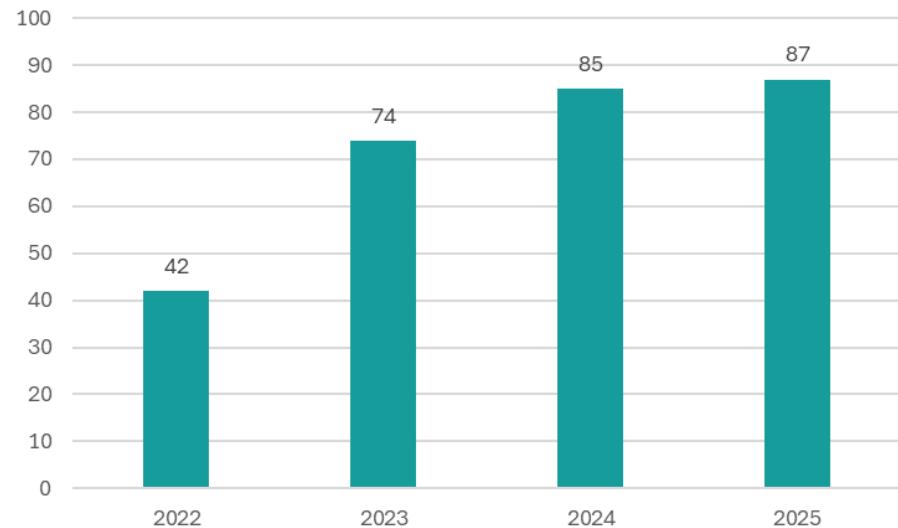
Response Rate

2025 Response Rate

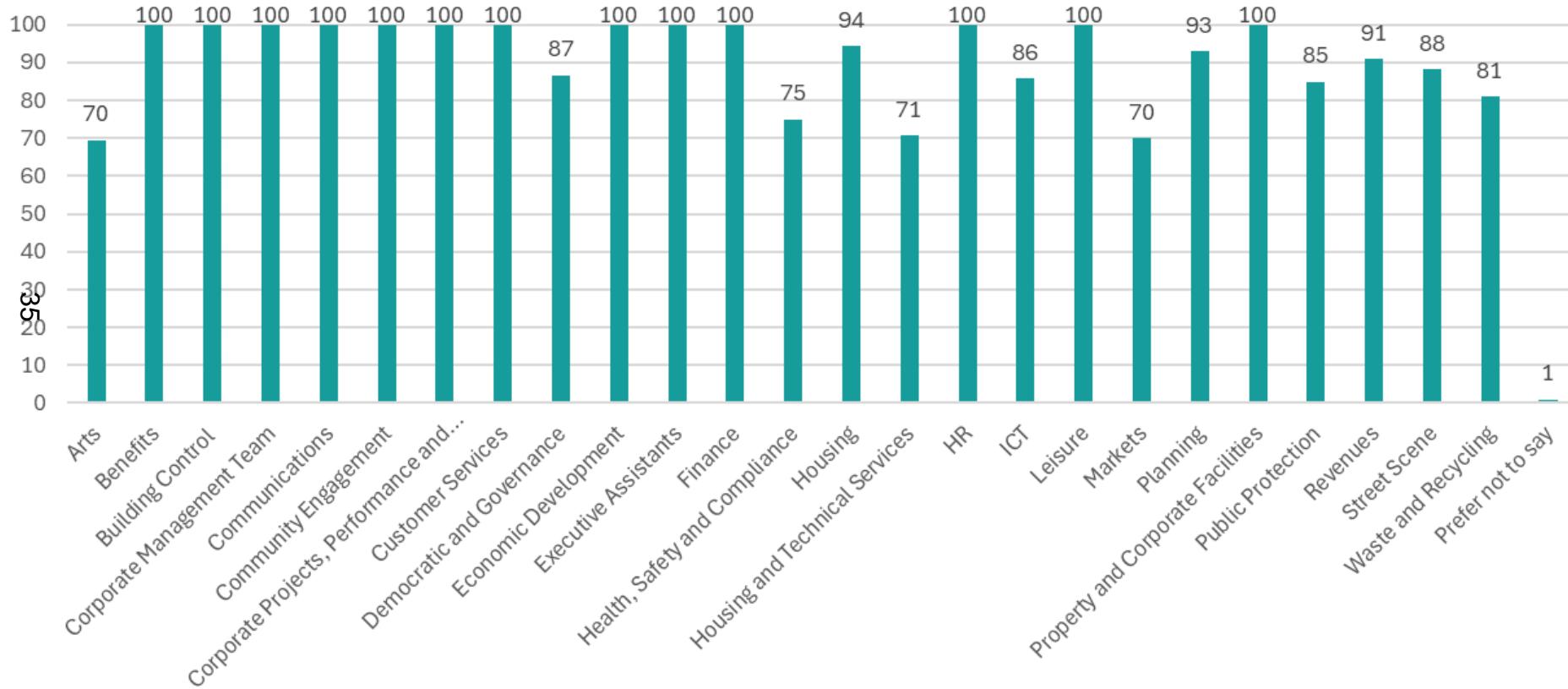


Of our 620 employees (inc Casuals), 539 completed the survey

Previous years response rates (%)



Team Response Rate (%)



In the 2024 Survey the bottom three departments in terms of response rates were:

Housing – 73% (now 94%)

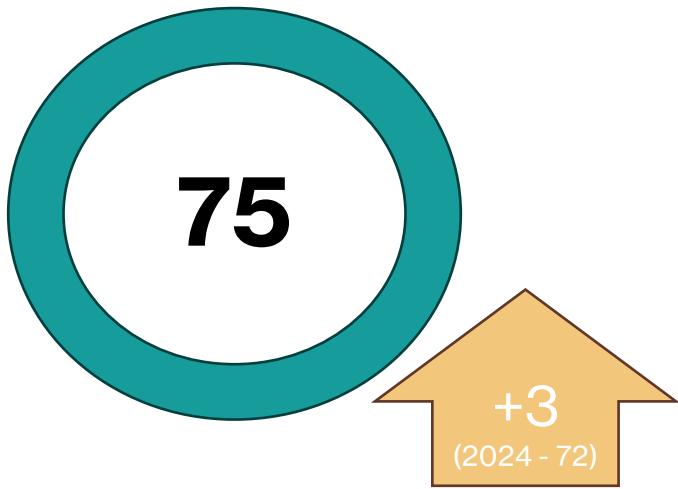
Benefits – 67% (now 100%)

Markets – 29% (now 70%)

Engagement Index

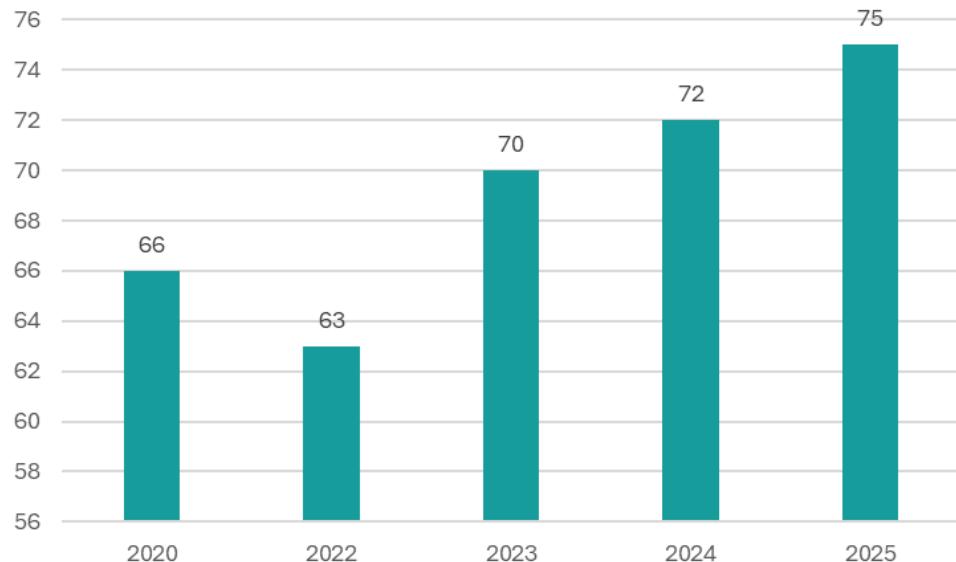
2025 Engagement Index

36



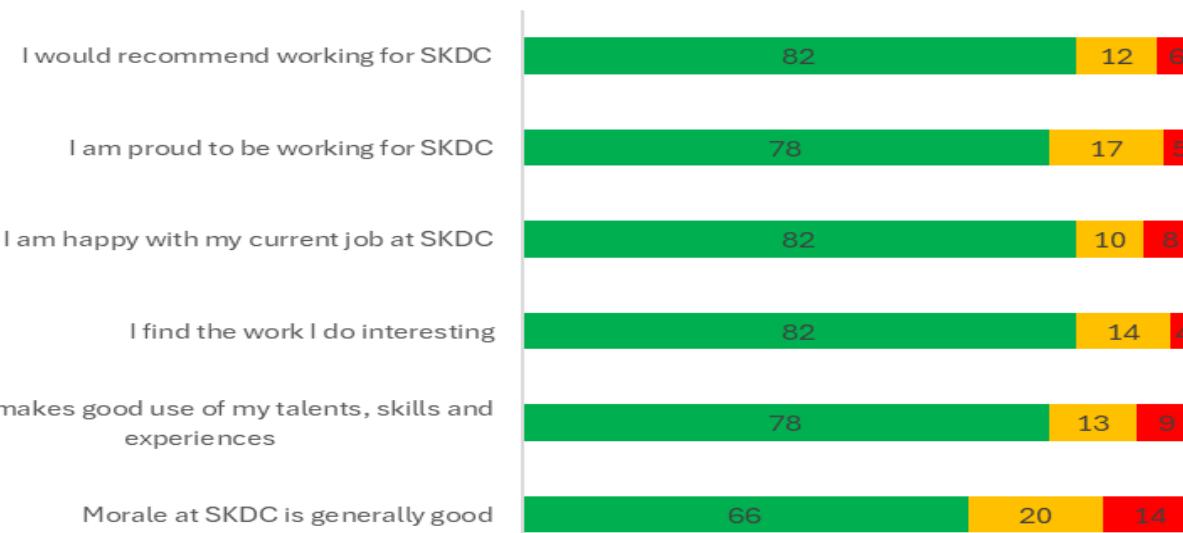
The Engagement Index is a combined calculation of 6 questions that have the biggest impact on overall engagement.

Previous years Engagement Index

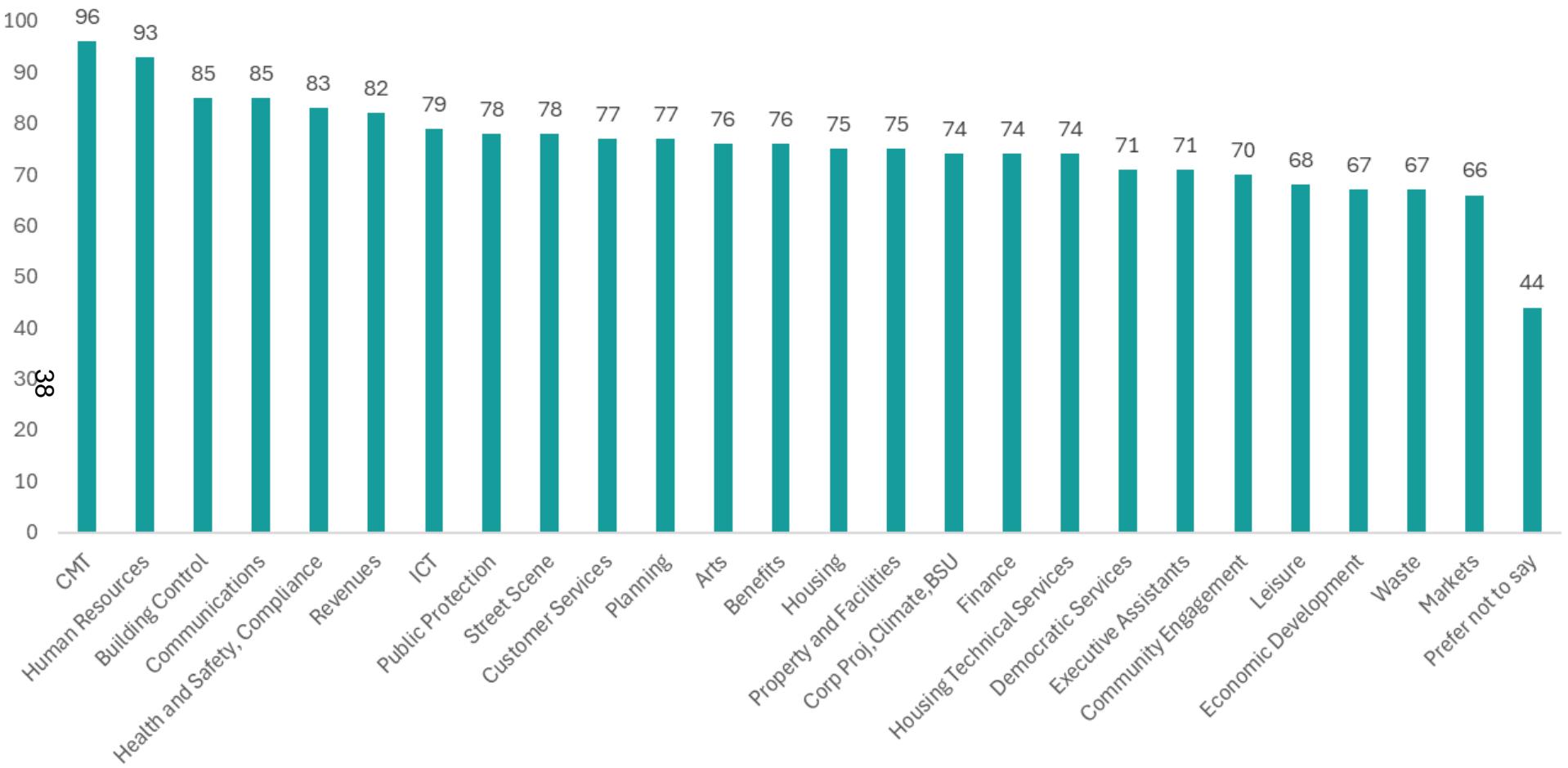


Engagement Index

	% who either agreed or strongly agreed to the statements.			
	2023	2024	2025	Diff 2024 - 2025
I would recommend working for SKDC	72%	78%	82%	+4%
I am proud to be working for SKDC	70%	72%	78%	+6%
I am happy with my current job at SKDC	75%	80%	82%	+2%
I find the work I do interesting	84%	80%	82%	+2%
My job makes good use of my talents, skills and experiences	76%	76%	78%	+2%
Morale at SKDC is generally good	47%	58%	66%	+8%



Engagement Index per Team



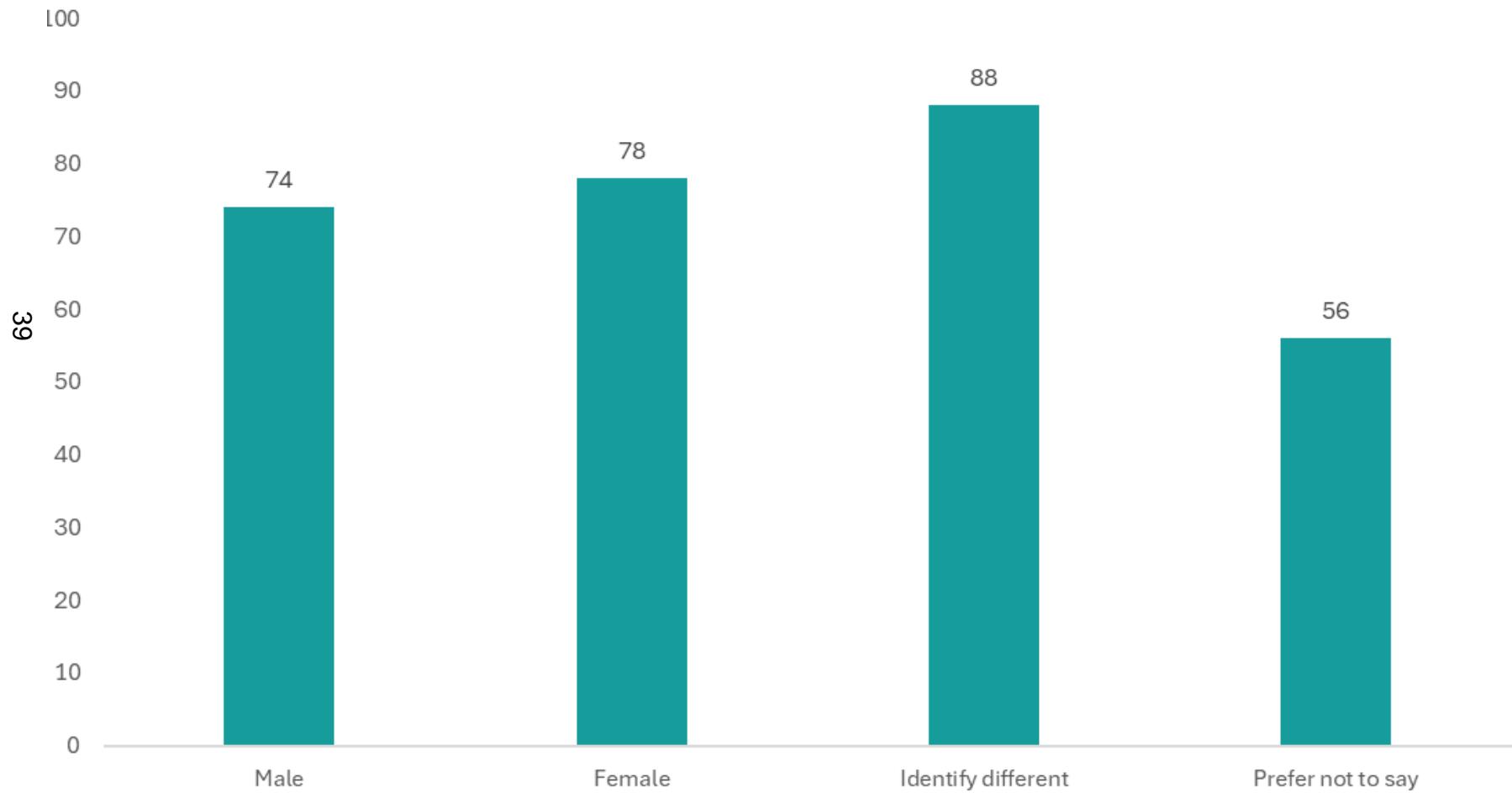
In the 2024 Survey the bottom three departments in terms of Engagement Index were:

Waste – 67 (now 67)

ICT – 60 (now 79)

Finance – 59 (now 74)

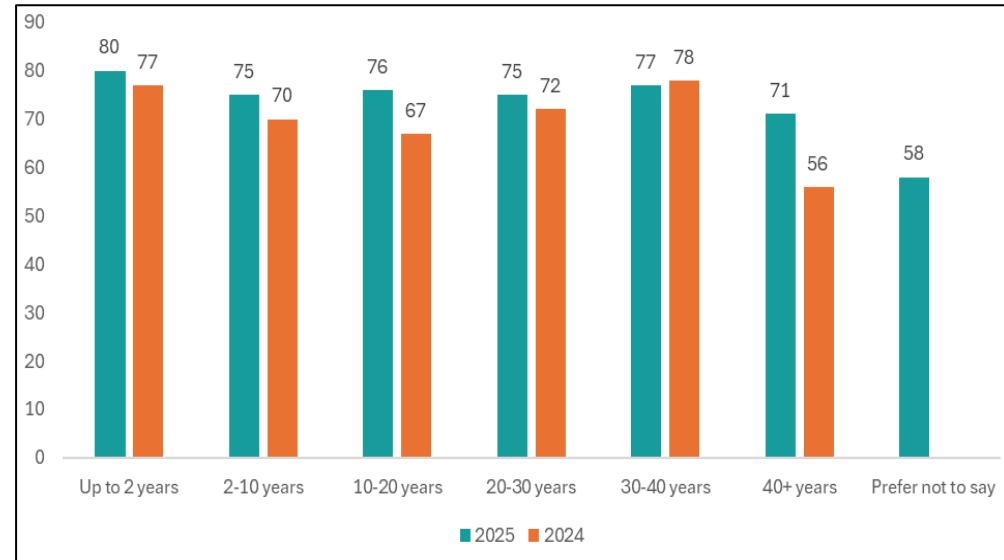
Engagement Index per Gender



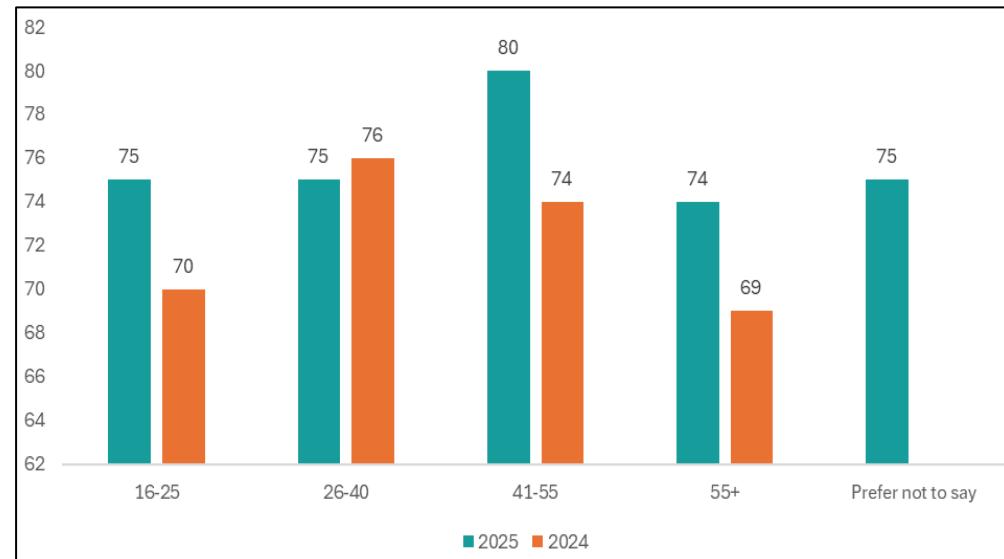
Engagement Index per LOS / Age

Length of Service vs EI

4



Age vs EI

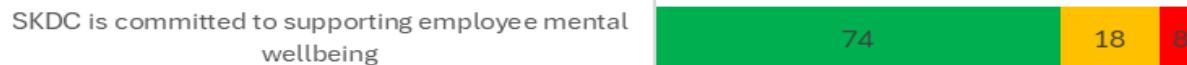


Wellbeing Index

73

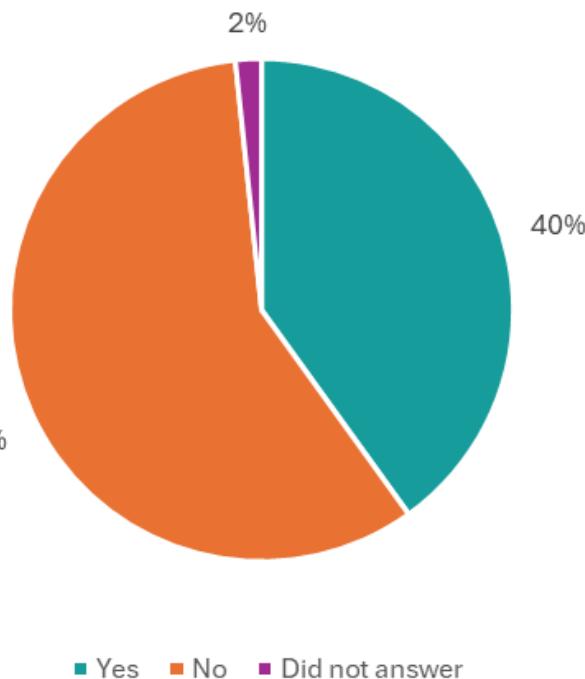
+5

	% who either agreed or strongly agreed to the statements.		
	2024	2025	Diff 2024 - 2025
I am able to achieve a good work and home life balance	78%	86%	+8%
SKDC is committed to supporting employee mental wellbeing	66%	74%	+8%
My workload is manageable	67%	74%	+7%
I generally feel good about my physical and mental health	70%	72%	+2%



Wellbeing Events

Have you engaged with any wellbeing initiatives over the past year such as the SK awards evening/party, mental health week sessions etc.



If you answered no, please specify why

Timing/Availability Conflicts	103
Lack of Awareness/Communication	51
Location Issues	19
New Employees/Short Time in Role	18
Not Interested/Doesn't Appeal	40
Prefer to Manage Wellbeing Independently	17
Personal Commitments	28
Health (Physical or Mental)	15
Activities Not Relevant/Useful	21
No Invitation/Access Issues	14
Want to Attend but Haven't Had Chance	6

Wellbeing

We value your feedback on SKDC's wellbeing programme and initiatives. Please share your thoughts on the current wellbeing offerings provided by the Council.

Good variety and range of offerings

Make it more accessible and inclusive

Valuable and improves employee morale

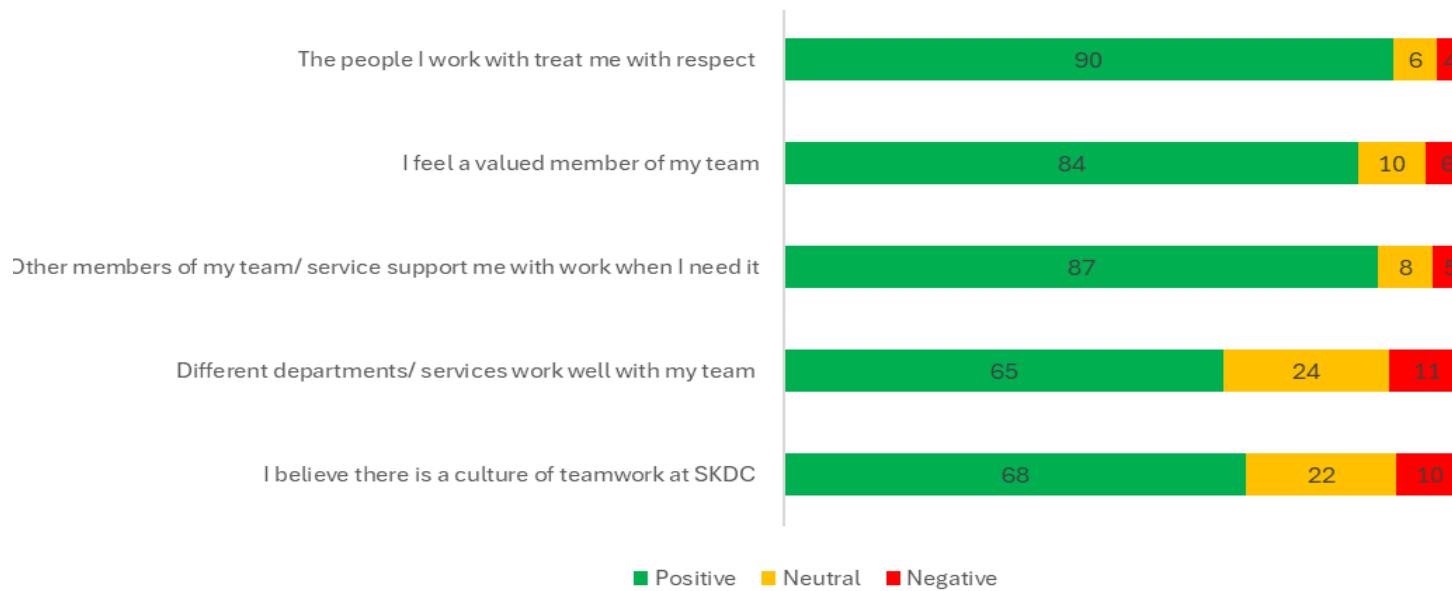
Feel more connected to colleagues through the activities

Inconsistency in how time off is granted for wellbeing activities depending on line managers

More availability at a wider variety of venues

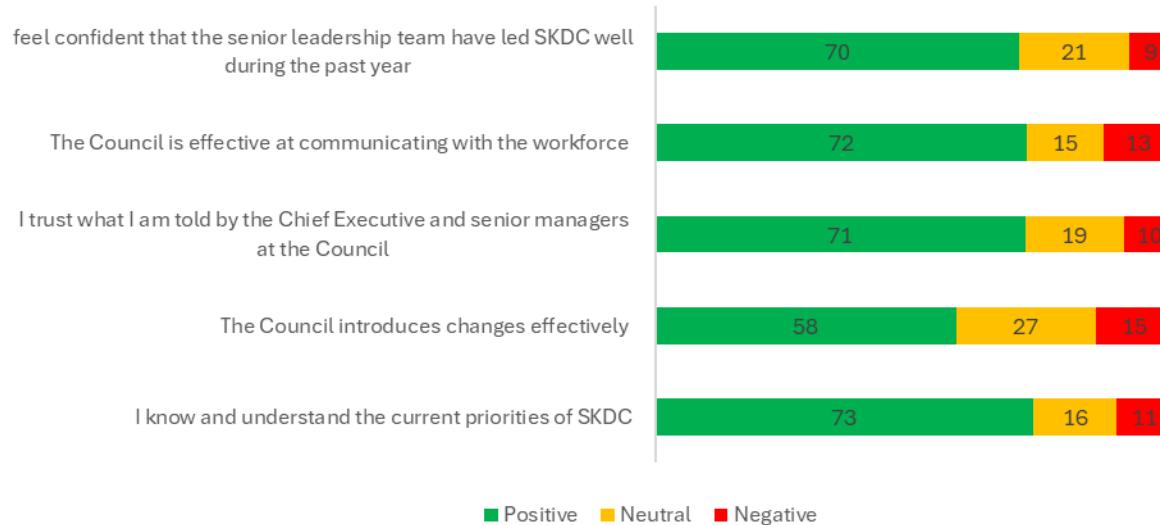
Teamwork

	% who either agreed or strongly agreed to the statements.		
	2024	2025	Diff 2024 - 2025
The people I work with treat me with respect	88%	90%	+2%
I feel a valued member of my team	85%	84%	-1%
Other members of my team/ service support me with work when I need it	86%	87%	+1%
Different departments/ services work well with my team	65%	65%	-
I believe there is a culture of teamwork at SKDC	63%	68%	+5%



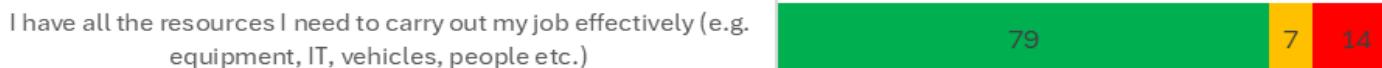
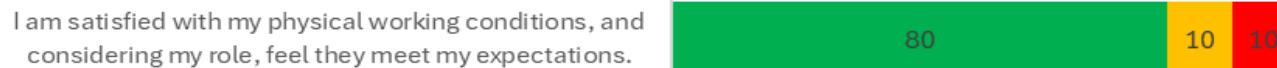
Leadership

	% who either agreed or strongly agreed to the statements.		
	2024	2025	Diff 2024 - 2025
I feel confident that the senior leadership team have led SKDC well during the past year	59%	70%	+11%
The Council is effective at communicating with the workforce	64%	72%	+8%
I trust what I am told by the Chief Executive and senior managers at the Council	67%	71%	+4%
The Council introduces changes effectively	49%	58%	+9%
I know and understand the current priorities of SKDC	70%	73%	+3%



Working Environment

	% who either agreed or strongly agreed to the statements.		
	2024	2025	Diff 2024 - 2025
I am satisfied with my physical working conditions, and considering my role, feel they meet my expectations.	81%	80%	-1%
I have all the resources I need to carry out my job effectively (e.g. equipment, IT, vehicles, people etc.)	77%	79%	+2%
I feel safe when I am at work	86%	85%	-1%



■ Positive ■ Neutral ■ Negative

Line Manager

	% who either agreed or strongly agreed to the statements.		
	2024	2025	Diff 2024 - 2025
My line manager regularly says what is expected of me	79%	79%	-
My line manager regularly gives me constructive feedback on how I am doing	76%	76%	-
My line manager and I have regular 1-1 meetings	68%	71%	+3%
I have sufficient authority to make decisions in my day to day job	83%	82%	-1%
I find it easy to report or raise issues about things that affect me, my team, or the Council	82%	79%	-3%
My line manager treats people fairly	83%	81%	-2%



Development & Progression

	% who either agreed or strongly agreed to the statements.		
	2024	2025	Diff 2024 - 2025
I believe there are opportunities for my career to develop at SKDC	57%	61%	+4%
I have been offered some training or development over the last 12 months – either formally, or on the job development/ coaching	68%	73%	+5%

†

I believe there are opportunities for my career to develop at SKDC



I have been offered some training or development over the last 12 months – either formally, or on the job development/ coaching



■ Positive ■ Neutral ■ Negative

Innovation

	% who either agreed or strongly agreed to the statements.		
	2024	2025	Diff 2024 - 2025
The managers I deal with at SKDC encourage staff to explore new ways of thinking and looking at problems	63%	68%	+5%
I believe if I made a suggestion for improvement, it would be treated seriously and if possible, implemented	68%	70%	+2%

64

The managers I deal with at SKDC encourage staff to explore new ways of thinking and looking at problems



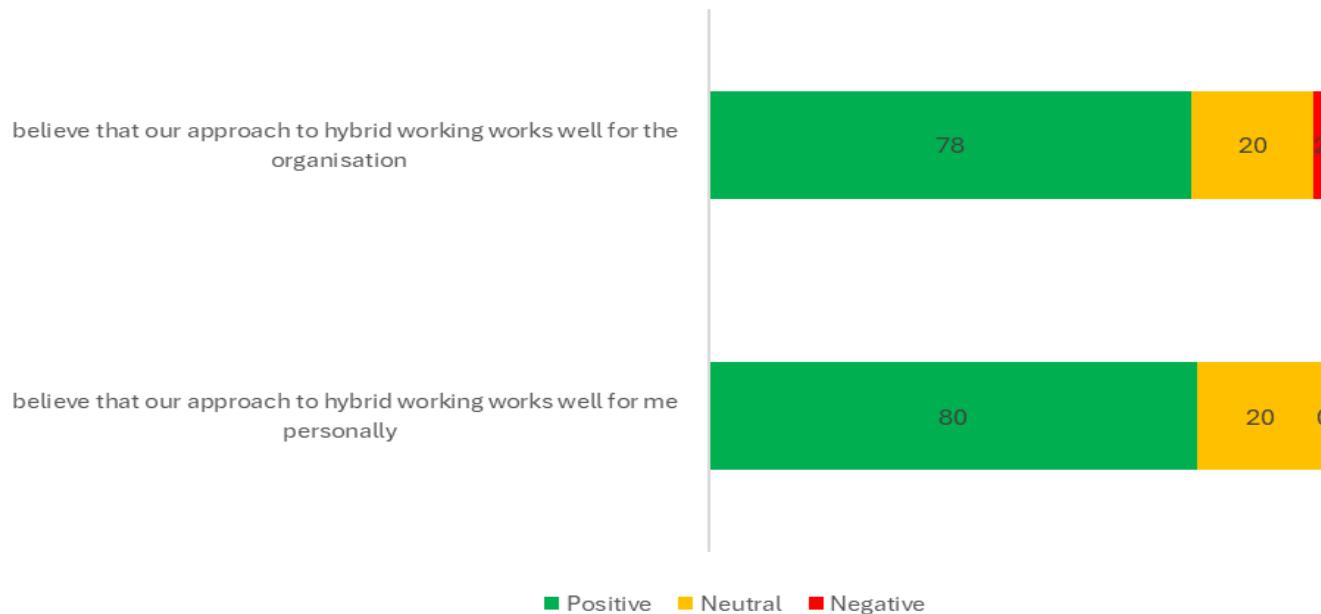
I believe if I made a suggestion for improvement, it would be treated seriously and if possible, implemented



Hybrid Working

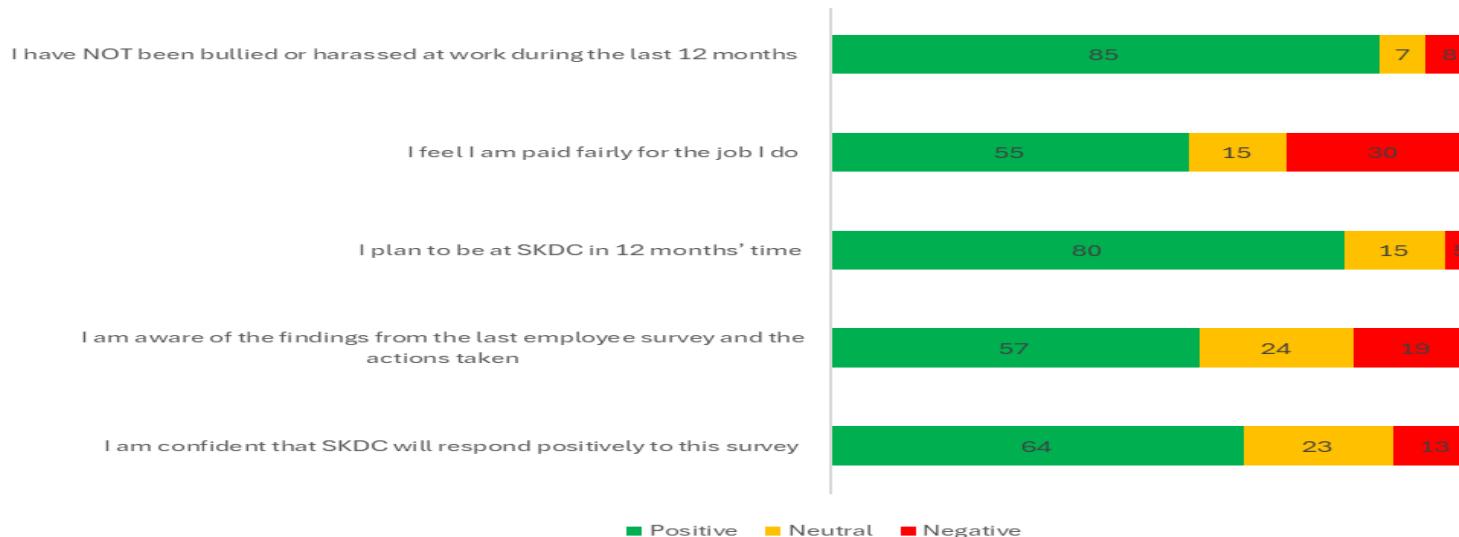
	% who either agreed or strongly agreed to the statements.		
	2024	2025	Diff 2024 - 2025
I believe that our approach to hybrid working works well for the organisation	75%	78%	+3%
I believe that our approach to hybrid working works well for me personally	76%	80%	+4%

5



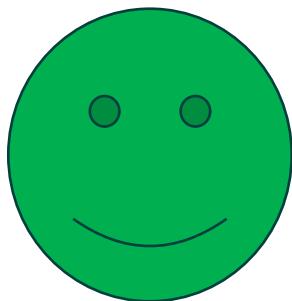
Other Questions

	% who either agreed or strongly agreed to the statements.		
	2024	2025	Diff 2024 - 2025
I have NOT been bullied or harassed at work during the last 12 months	87%	85%	-2%
I feel I am paid fairly for the job I do	53%	55%	+2%
I plan to be at SKDC in 12 months' time	79%	80%	+1%
I am aware of the findings from the last employee survey and the actions taken	56%	57%	+1%
I am confident that SKDC will respond positively to this survey	61%	64%	+3%

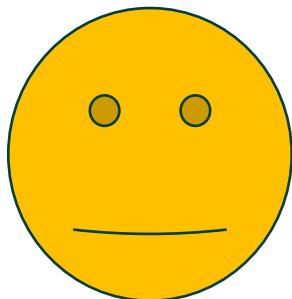


Comments Summary

Where given an opportunity, in total employees made
1041 free text comments in the survey



485 (47%) comments were positive, with main areas being appreciation for staff, teamwork and wellbeing initiatives



473 (45%) comments were neutral



83 comments (8%) were negative, with main areas being working conditions, pay levels and career progression

5 Themes from the Survey to make SK a better place to work

Communication and Collaboration

- Identify new effective ways to communicate between departments, management, and employees.
- Ensure we listen to front line teams when improving procedures.
- Develop opportunities for greater communication.
- Suggestions for improving cross-departmental collaboration.

Employee Wellbeing and Support

- Continue to focus on wellbeing programs, mental health support, and work-life balance.
- Addressing issues like air conditioning and the working environment.
- Ensure flexible approach is fair across the organisation
- Continue positive staff recognition and feedback.

Pay, Recognition, and Resources

- Suggestions for pay reviews
- Better equipment, tools, and resources (e.g., modern IT, vehicles, uniforms).
- Explore further initiatives to recognise employee contributions and successes

Training, Development, and Progression

- Continue to focus on career development, succession planning, and training opportunities.
- Desire for more opportunities for advancement, including internal promotions.
- Suggestions for clear career paths, training for new managers, and development for all staff.

Office Environment and Facilities

- Feedback about the physical working environment, such as temperature, desks, and overall comfort.
- Issues like the need for better office equipment, and more facilities (e.g., bathrooms, quiet spaces).
- Continue to make sure that offices are inclusive.

Thank you

Any Questions?



Employment Committee

Wednesday, 12 November 2025

Report of Councillor Ashley Baxter the
Leader of the Council and
Cabinet Member for Finance, HR and
Economic Development

Human Resources Policy and Handbook Review

Report Author

Fran Beckitt, Head of Service – Human Resources and Organisational Development

✉ fran.beckitt@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

To seek approval for the implementation of two updated Human Resources (HR) policies and an Employee Handbook. These policies have been reviewed to ensure clarity, legal compliance and improved accessibility for employees and managers.

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

1. Approve the revised Employee Handbook.
2. Approve the following HR policies:
 - Adoption and Surrogacy Policy
 - Shared Parental Leave Policy
3. Approve the delegation of authority for minor amendments to HR policies and the Employee Handbook to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for HR.

Decision Information

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication? No

What are the relevant corporate priorities? Effective council

Which wards are impacted? All Wards;

1. Implications

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

Finance and Procurement

- 1.1 Effective implementation of HR policies reduces risk of expensive legal challenges.
- 1.2 From a financial perspective, there is no additional budgetary impact by the adoption of these 2 new policies and Employee Handbook.

Completed by: David Scott (Assistant Director of Finance and Deputy S151 Officer)

Legal and Governance

- 1.3 All refreshed policies have been reviewed for compliance with current employment legislation including equality, health and safety and family leave regulations. Employment Committee's approval ensures appropriate governance and consistency across the organisation.

Completed by: Alison Hall-Wright (Deputy Monitoring Officer)

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 As part of an ongoing review, the HR team has refreshed some key people management policies. The aim is to make them more accessible to managers and employees; aligned with best practice and employment legislation.
- 2.2 A key change in approach is the replacement of a single HR handbook with standalone, topic-specific policies.
- 2.3 All policies and supporting documents are hosted on the newly launched HR Hub – a central resource for staff guidance, templates and policy access.
- 2.4 The policy review principles are as follows:

(1) Succinct policies, in a user-friendly layout.

(2) Focus on informal resolutions.
(3) Where relevant, go beyond statutory requirements to push the boundaries and enhance the culture of SKDC.
(4) Provide clear guidance and support for managers and employees on the application of policies.
(5) Ensure policies are clear, transparent and accessible
(6) Ensure consistency and fairness across all HR policies and procedures.
(7) Align policies with TeamSK values.
(8) Involve stakeholders in the policy development and review process through Union Representatives, the People Panel, CMT and Employment Committee.
(9) Update policies in line with the changing legal, regulatory and best practice frameworks (ACAS).
(10) Regularly monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of policies.

3. Summary of Key Policy Changes

3.1. Employee Handbook (Appendix 1)

- A refreshed draft of the Employee Handbook has been developed in consultation with the Trade Union, management and staff feedback.
- Signposting policies with links to the HR Hub, rather than embedding full policy text, is designed to be more user-friendly allowing colleagues to find the information they need quickly.
- Outdated content has been replaced and new sections have been added relating to wellbeing, employee voice and inclusion, reflecting our commitment to colleague experience and engagement.

3.2 Adoption and Surrogacy Policy (Appendix 2)

- The Council recognises that adopting a child or having a baby through surrogacy is a significant life event and is committed to providing clear, supportive arrangements for colleagues.
- The refreshed Adoption and Surrogacy Policy brings these provisions together in one place, ensuring consistency with our maternity, paternity and shared parental leave policies.
- The policy sets out employee's entitlements to up to 52 weeks' adoption leave, alongside time off for adoption and surrogacy-related appointments.
- The Council provides Enhanced Adoption Pay in line with its approach to maternity pay, offering more than the statutory minimum for eligible employees. Other provisions within the policy are in line with legal requirements, including 'Keeping in Touch' (KIT) days and the timeframes of leave.
- This new policy is the same in principle to the previous version in the old Employee Handbook with no changes to entitlements, timeframes etc.

3.3 Shared Parental Leave Policy (Appendix 3)

- The policy sets out employees' entitlements to up to 50 weeks of shared parental leave and up to 37 weeks of statutory shared parental pay, allowing flexibility for parents to share care responsibilities.
- Leave may be taken by either parent, at the same time or separately, and can be requested in either continuous or discontinuous blocks, giving families flexibility to manage their arrangements.
- This is fully aligned to statutory provisions, including eligibility requirements.
- The approach reflects the Council's commitment to supporting employees with family responsibilities and aligns with related policies on maternity, paternity and adoption/surrogacy leave.
- This new policy is the same in principle to the previous version in the old Employee Handbook with no changes to entitlements, timeframes etc.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 Retaining the existing HR policies in the Employee Handbook without updates. This would risk non-compliance with current legislation and best practice.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1. Developing refreshed policies ensures alignment with the Council's values and supports a fair, modern and supportive workplace culture.

6. Consultation

- 6.1 The Trade Union are consulted throughout the development of HR policies and handbook, with feedback incorporated at various stages. Their input helps ensure the approach is fair, consistent and supports both employee and organisational needs.
- 6.2 The policy refresh has been discussed with the People Panel for their feedback and ideas.

7. Appendices

- 7.1. Appendix 1 – Employee Handbook
Appendix 2 – Adoption and Surrogacy Policy
Appendix 3 – Shared Parental Leave

This page is intentionally left blank



EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Contents

Welcome to your handbook	03
Who we are	04
What we do	05
Our Locations	06
Our Values	07
Corporate Plan	09
Elected Members	10
The Basics	11

New starters	13
Policies	14
Your benefits	18
Learning & Development	20
Wellbeing	21
Ending employment	23
Contacts	24





Welcome to your handbook

This handbook has been designed to provide #TeamSK colleagues with practical information about working here including signposting the policies and procedures that guide our Council and the support available to you throughout your employment.

Whether you are new to the Council or have been with us for some time, this resource brings together key information in one place and makes it easier to find the guidance you need.

If you have any questions about the content of this handbook or need further advice, please contact the HR team who will be happy to help: hr@southkesteven.gov.uk



Karen Bradford
Chief Executive of the Council

“

Our people are at the heart of everything we do and this handbook is just one of the ways we aim to make sure you feel informed, supported and valued in your role.

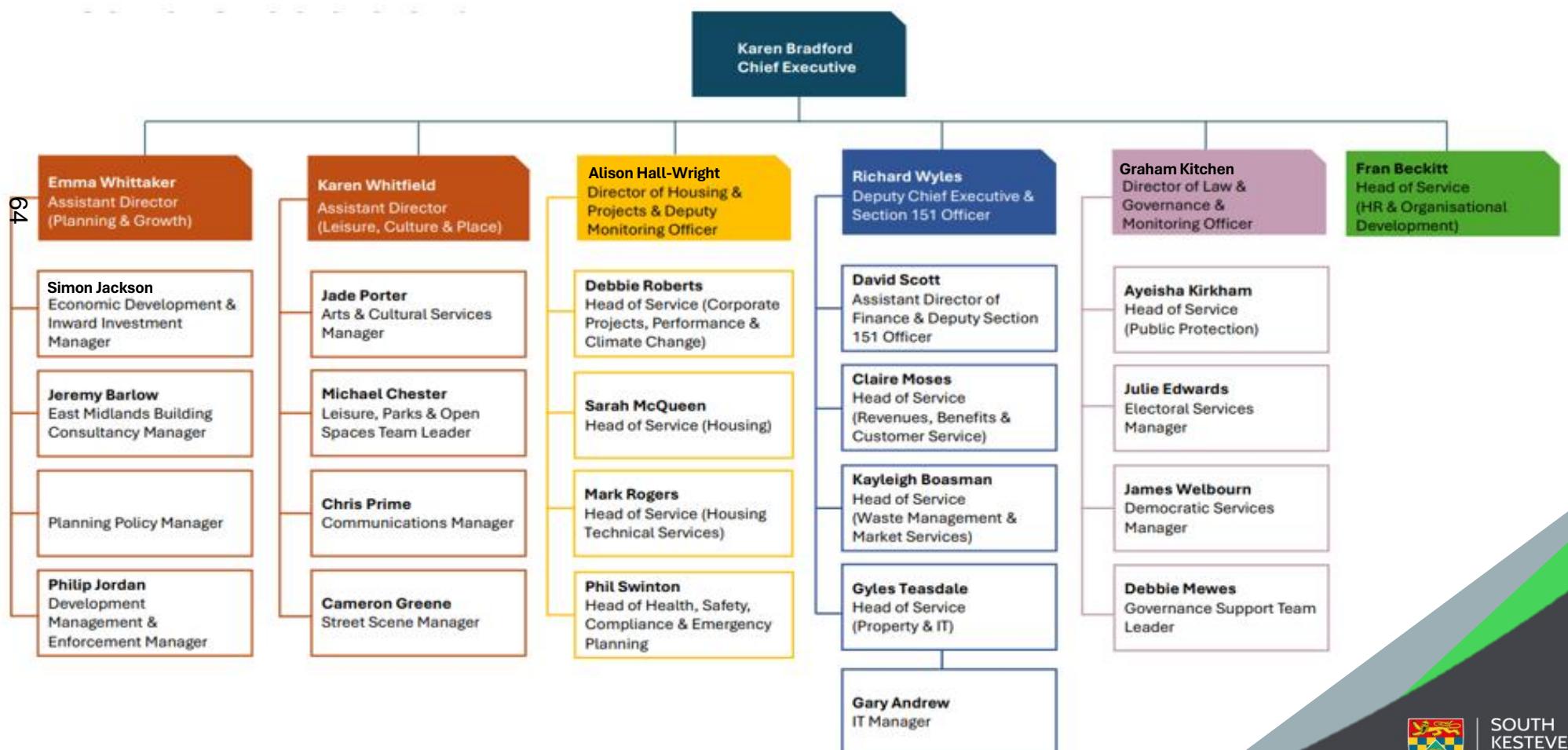
”



**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

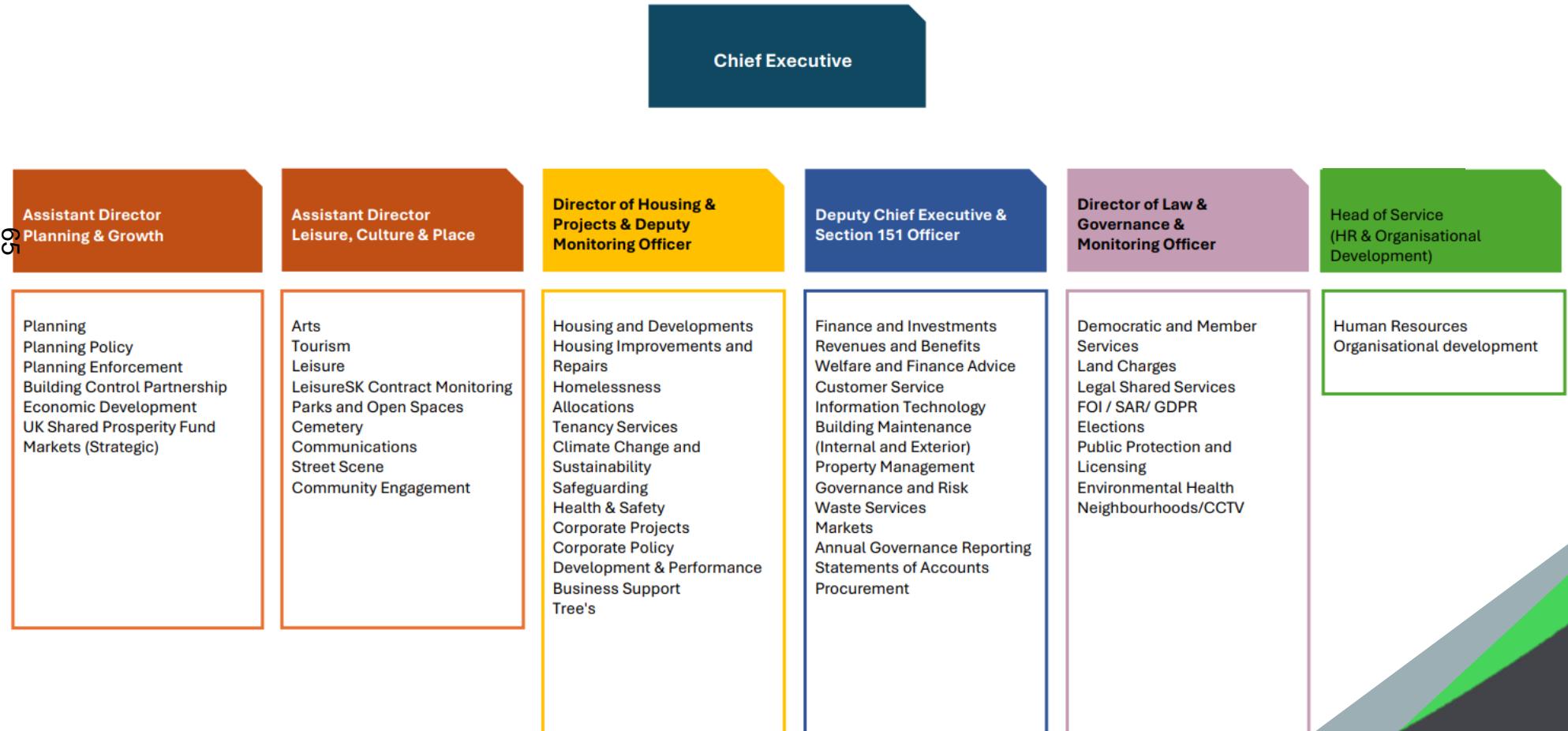
Who we are

Our senior leadership team is responsible for ensuring we deliver on our priorities for South Kesteven's residents and communities. The chart below shows the current senior team, including names and roles, so you can see who is leading each area of the Council.



What we do

The diagram below shows all the main services delivered under each Director and Assistant Director, giving a quick overview of how responsibilities are structured across the Council.



Our Locations

6
Grantham Main Office
The Picture House
St Catherine's Road
Grantham
Lincolnshire
NG31 6TT



South Kesteven Access Point
3 Abbey Road
Bourne
Lincolnshire
PE10 9EF



SKDC CCTV
Grantham Police Station
Swingbridge Road
Grantham
NG31 7XT



Waste, Recycling & Street Scene
Turnpike Close
Grantham
NG31 7XU



Guildhall Arts Centre
St Peters Hill
Grantham
Lincolnshire
NG31 6PY



Stamford Arts Centre
27 St Mary's Street
Stamford
Lincolnshire
PE9 2DL



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Our Values



In 2024, we refreshed our corporate values through a series of workshops with colleagues and Elected Members from across the Council. Together, we explored what makes people proud to work at SKDC, what matters most to us as an organisation, and the strengths that define our culture. These conversations also highlighted what our people value in their day-to-day work and what they need to feel supported and engaged.

These workshops led to the development of our '#TeamSK Core Values'. The next couple of pages summarises the feedback from the sessions highlighting why these values are important to our people.



TRUST TRUST

EMPOWERMENT
EMPOWERMENT
EMPOWERMENT
EMPOWERMENT
EMPOWERMENT
EMPOWERMENT
EMPOWERMENT
EMPOWERMENT
EMPOWERMENT

ACCOUNTABILITY
ACCOUNTABILITY

MAKING A DIFFERENCE
MAKING A DIFFERENCE

- “Trust is an important guiding principle in the Council’s work and decision-making processes.”
- “Trust needs to be in every relationship – between employees, trust with management, trust between Officers and Members, and our residents trusting us.”

- “Having Empowerment” as a corporate value means SK is committed to creating an environment where employees are encouraged and supported to take initiative and contribute.”
 - “This includes skills development, training and continuous learning so people are empowered to excel in their roles.”
 - “Being inclusive is relevant here too – being a Council that values diverse perspectives.”

- “Accountability is about being transparent in our actions and decisions and recognising the impact we have.”
- “Providing clear information about the Council’s activities, policies and outcomes to residents.”
- “This implies taking ownership and ensuring that tasks are completed in a timely and effective manner.”

- “Reflecting that the Council is driven by a purpose to create a positive impact.”
- “Service excellence.”
- “Setting goals and measuring the impact our initiatives have. This is about working together too.”



Our Values

- “Putting the residents at the heart of everything we do.”
- “Being an inclusive Council with an inclusive culture that embraces and celebrates diversity.”
- “Having an environment where everyone feels respected, valued and supported.”

- “Empathy and understanding of others.”
- “Actively listening to residents and employees to understand their perspectives, needs and concerns.”
- “Treating everyone with respect.”
- “Going the extra mile to help individuals.”
- “Positive and constructive communication.”





The Corporate Plan

Priority Area

Connecting Communities

SKDC's Corporate Plan 2024 - 2027 sets out the Council's vision, priorities and ambitions for our district. It explains what we want to achieve for our residents, businesses and communities, and how we will work together to deliver services that make a real difference.

Sustainable South Kesteven

Built around five key priorities and underpinned by our #TeamSK values, the plan provides a clear roadmap for how we will shape South Kesteven into a thriving place to live, work and visit, both now and in the future.

Housing

Each team has Key Performance Indicators relating to the plan which help us measure progress and demonstrate the difference we are making.

Effective Council

[Click here](#) to view the Corporate Plan.

"A thriving District to live in, work and visit."



Connecting
Communities



Sustainable
South Kesteven



Enabling
Economic
Opportunity

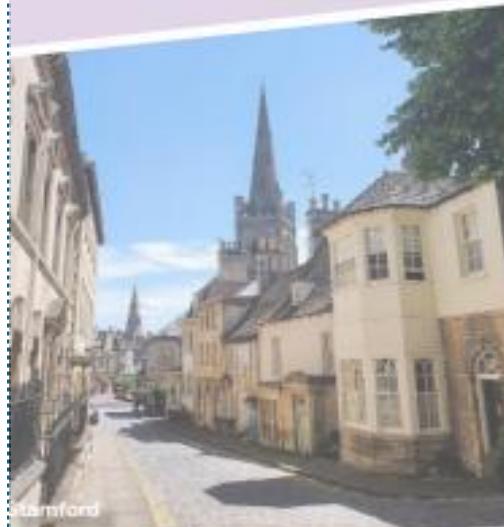


Housing



Effective Council

Corporate Plan 2024-27



Stamford



Bourne



The Deepings



Grantham

Elected Members

South Kesteven District Council is a democratically elected organisation, with Councillors (or 'Elected Members') chosen by local residents to represent their communities and make decisions on behalf of them. Councillors set the overall direction of the Council, agree budgets and policies and ensure services meet the needs of the district.

Officers (employees) and Members work in partnership: Members provide leadership and set priorities, while officers deliver the day-to-day services and professional advice needed to achieve these aims. This balance ensures accountability, transparency and effective service delivery.



You may work with Councillors through committee meetings, community events or project work.

SKDC Committees

- Alcohol, Entertainment & Late Night Refreshment
- Budget - Joint Overview and Scrutiny
 - Cabinet
 - Council
- Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee
 - Employment Committee
 - Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Governance and Audit Committee
- Hearing Review Panel
- Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Licensing Committee
- Planning Committee
- Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Standards Committee
- UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund Board.

The Leader of South Kesteven District Council is Cllr Ashley Baxter who provides the political leadership and direction for the Council and works closely with the Chief Executive and Senior Leadership Team to ensure services and priorities meet the needs of the local residents.

The Leader appoints a Cabinet, made up of Elected Members who each hold a portfolio of responsibilities, such as finance or housing. Together, the Leader and Cabinet make key decisions on the Council's strategy, policies and services, while being accountable to Full Council and the communities they represent.

Cabinet Member:	Portfolio:
Cllr Ashley Baxter	Finance, HR and Economic Development
Cllr Rhys Baker	Waste and Environment
Cllr Richard Cleaver	Property and Public Engagement
Cllr Phil Dilks	Planning
Cllr Phil Knowles	Corporate Governance and Licencing
Cllr Virginia Moran	Housing



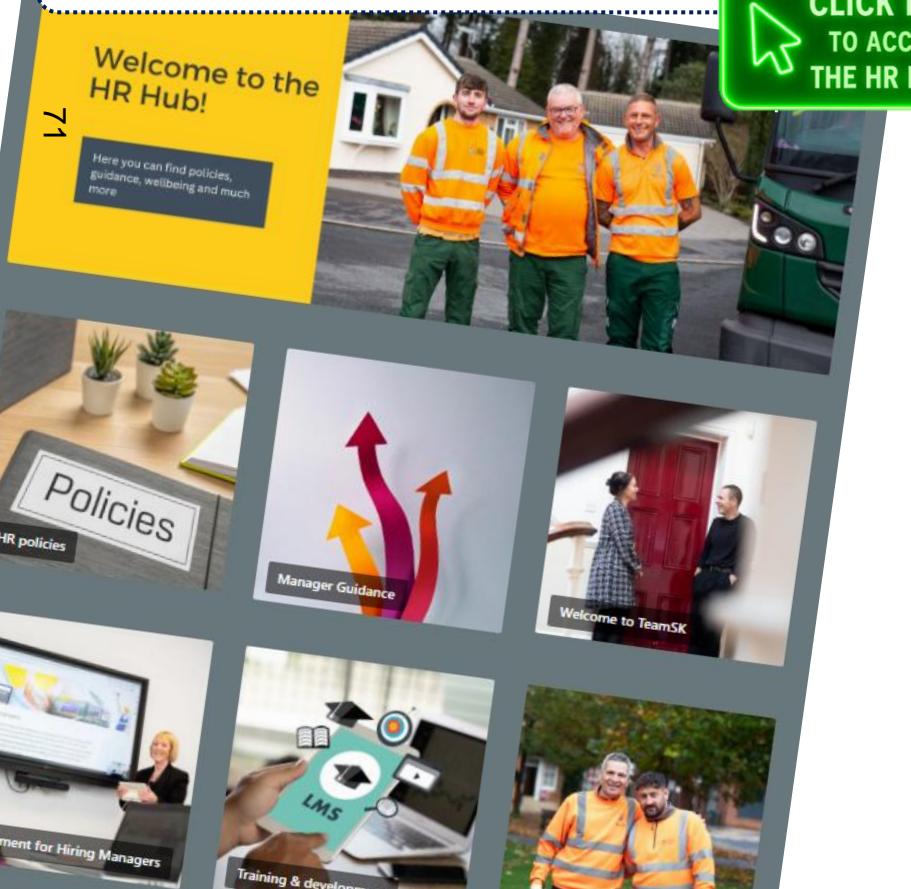
For a full list of SKDC's Elected Members, visit:
[Your Councillors | South Kesteven District Council](#)

The Basics

HR Hub

The HR Hub is your go-to place for HR policies, guidance, forms and support so you can quickly find the information that matters to you. You can access the HR Hub at any time from a work device by clicking on the green icon below or visiting the intranet homepage.

**CLICK HERE
TO ACCESS
THE HR HUB**



Pay

The Council operates a monthly payroll for all employees, with payments made on the **18th** of each month, covering the entire calendar month. Where the 18th falls on a weekend or bank holiday, payments will be made on the closest working day before this. Your salary will be transferred directly into your nominated bank account.

All employees have access to the secure iTrent Employee Self-Service system, where you can view your payslips and update personal details such as bank account information. Access to the ESS system is managed by the HR team, who will provide you with your login details.

Further payroll information can be found on the Payroll & Pensions intranet page. You can also contact the Payroll Team at payroll@southkesteven.gov.uk with any queries.

Ways of Working

In January 2023, SKDC moved into modern, open-plan offices in the heart of Grantham. We operate a hybrid working model, for roles where this is suitable, with full details available in our '[New Ways of Working](#)' protocol. Arrangements vary by team, individual and business need, but most office colleagues typically spend time working in the office and from home during their week.

When working in the office, desks must be booked in advance and all colleagues are required to sign in. The easiest way to do both is by downloading the free '[Sign In App](#)' from your phone's app store.

Full guidance on desk booking and signing in can be found in the '[New Ways of Working](#)' document.



The Basics

Flexi-time at SKDC

Flexi-time is designed to help colleagues balance variations in their working day or week. Because teams across the Council provide a wide range of services, the level of flexibility available may differ. Each team has arrangements in place that reflect the needs of their service, so while flexi-time is not applied in the same way everywhere, there will be consistency within your team. Speak to your line manager to understand how flexi-time works for your role. We have a policy on flexi-time accessible on the HR Hub, along with timesheet templates and guidance.

7

Representative Bodies

SKDC committed to ensuring colleagues have a strong voice and access to support when they need it. We have a **People Panel**, made up of employee representatives from across the Council, who meet regularly to share feedback, raise ideas and help shape improvements for the whole workforce. The People Panel provides a valuable way for colleagues to be heard and involved in decision-making.

In addition, **UNISON** is formally recognised by the Council to represent and support its members. UNISON can provide advice, guidance and representation on a wide range of workplace matters and representatives attend a monthly meeting with the Chief Executive and HR. If you would like more information about joining or accessing support, you can contact UNISON directly.

There are other Unions colleagues may wish to join and the Council will recognise these for individual representation in meetings such as disciplinaries or grievances.

Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging

We are committed to creating a workplace where everyone feels valued, respected and able to be themselves. We want all colleagues to feel a strong sense of belonging and to have equal access to opportunities, support and progression. Our approach goes beyond our legal obligations – it's about building a culture of fairness, kindness and inclusion across #TeamSK.

Each year we publish an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) annual position statement, which shares the progress we are making and sets out our priorities for the year ahead.

We also have Networks, such as Menopause Café and Carers' Forum, alongside a programme of awareness and support initiatives throughout the year.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Annual Position Statement



You can read the latest statement here:

[Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Position Statement 2023-24.pdf](#)



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

New Starters

Welcome Journey

Welcome!

Your line manager will provide you with an induction plan for your first few weeks, which may include visits to other departments, team meetings and introductions to colleagues.



Corporate Induction

Corporate Inductions are held every three months to welcome all new starters from that period. These sessions provide the chance to meet the Corporate Management Team, learn about South Kesteven and connect with colleagues who have also recently joined the Council.



Your buddy

As part of our induction support at SKDC, we offer a buddy network to help new starters settle in during their first few months. Your buddy will be a friendly point of contact for everyday queries, offering guidance and sharing their knowledge, and your line manager will let you know who this will be.

Meet with HR

HR will be in touch to schedule a meeting with you. This will be a short meeting to introduce the HR team, check-in with how your induction is going, check you know where to access key information and answer any questions you may have.



Policies

Our policies and Code of Conduct work hand in hand to guide how we work together. The policies set out the procedures you need to follow in specific situations, such as leave or use of IT, ensuring clarity and legal compliance.

Our Code of Conduct provides a broader framework, outlining the values and behaviours expected of everyone, such as respect, professionalism and integrity. Together, they ensure we have both clear guidance for day-to-day processes and a shared standard of behaviour that reflects our culture and values.

Full details of all policies, along with supporting documentation, can be accessed on the HR Hub.

 CLICK HERE
FOR THE
CODE OF CONDUCT

 CLICK HERE
TO ACCESS
THE HR HUB



Working Arrangements and Attendance

Click on the boxes below to view the policy on the HR Hub.

Attendance

The purpose of this policy is to manage the attendance of employees in line with the values and culture of the Council and our commitment to providing the highest standards of service.

Flexible Working

Provides guidance for managers and colleagues on options for flexible working and finding mutually acceptable arrangements wherever possible.

Flexi-time

Our flexi-time policy aims to provide colleagues with a framework for the operation and monitoring of the flexi-time scheme.

New Ways of Working

This protocol explains how we balance office and home working, as well as how we manage practical arrangements such as desk booking and signing in.

Standby and On-Call

Outlines when standby and on-call payments apply and the expectations for providing cover outside normal working hours.



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Performance, Development & Behaviour

Disciplinary

This is designed to encourage all employees to maintain standards of conduct and outlines the approach that will be taken if the expected standards are not met.

Grievance

Our Grievance Policy aims to provide a fair and transparent process for addressing and resolving workplace concerns promptly and effectively.

Supporting Performance Improvement

This policy provides a supportive and consistent framework that helps colleagues improve their performance when the required standards are not being achieved.

Probation

This policy details the probationary period at SKDC which ensures a fair and support process for new starters to the Council.

Employment Lifecycle

Recruitment

This policy provides an overview of our approach to recruitment and selection.

DBS

Provides a framework to assess criminal records of current and potential employees.

Redundancy

Our Redundancy Policy outlines the fair and transparent process we follow if roles are at risk, ensuring employees are treated with dignity, supported throughout and consulted fully.

Pay and Recognition

Pay

The Council produces an annual pay policy statement which summarises current policies and arrangement in place relating to pay.

Long service

Our recognition strategy recognises and rewards the commitment of colleagues who have dedicated many years to working at SKDC.



Leave & Family Friendly Policies



Health, Safety & Wellbeing

Drugs and Alcohol

Practical guidance for management and employees concerning managing alcohol and drug issues in the workplace.

Health & Safety

Outlines how SKDC wishes to conduct its business operations in such a way that it provides a safe and healthy environment for all its employees.

Operational Driving

To ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, the health and safety of all employees while at work and to safeguard others who may be put at risk from work-related driving activities

Ill Health Capability

Our approach to supporting employees whose ability to carry out their role is affected by ill health.

Leave

Outlines different types of leave available to employees, including annual leave, special leave and other entitlements.

Maternity

Outlines the support, leave and pay available to employees who are expecting a baby, ensuring time to prepare for and care for your child.

Paternity

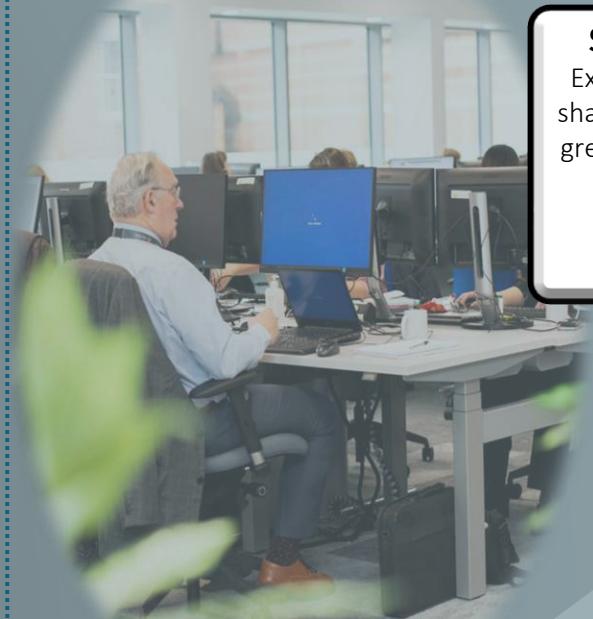
Supporting colleagues in balancing work and family commitments through our paternity leave policy.

Adoption & Surrogacy

Sets out your rights to leave, pay and support when welcoming a child into your family through adoption, fostering to adopt or a surrogacy arrangement.

Shared Parental Leave

Explains how eligible parents can share leave and pay, giving families greater flexibility in caring for their child during the first year.



Conduct and Standards



Whistleblowing

Explains how to raise a concern, the types of activity you should report, the protection we can provide, confidentiality, our response and how you can take matters further, if necessary.

Zero Tolerance Policy

This policy makes clear that bullying, harassment, discrimination and any form of unacceptable behaviour will not be tolerated, helping us maintain a safe, respectful and inclusive workplace for everyone.

Modern Slavery & Trafficking

Sets out SKDCs commitment to preventing exploitation, protecting vulnerable people and ensuring our supply chains are free from modern slavery.

Acceptable Use

Sets out how all users of SKDC information systems must use them responsibly, ensuring access is legitimate, protecting confidentiality and complying with relevant laws.

Anti-Corruption/Bribery

This policy makes clear that all employees must act with integrity, avoid bribery, report any suspicions and comply with laws and Council procedures to prevent corruption in all its forms.



Your benefits

This section sets out the range of benefits available to you and where to find further information on these.

Pension

The Council are part of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). This is a Defined Benefit scheme available to all eligible employees.

Eligible employees on a salaried contract will be automatically enrolled to the scheme via our pension provider, the West Yorkshire Pension Fund, from their start date. Contributions are based on your annual salary. Employees may elect to opt of the scheme at any time.

For further information:
[West Yorkshire Pension Fund website](#).
Email: pensions@wypf.org.uk
Tel: 01274 434 999

Free parking

Colleagues can park for free in certain carparks whilst they are at work Monday to Friday. This includes Welham Street multi-storey near the Picture House.

For further information:
Contact Carolyn Baker (Corporate Facilities Lead) –
carolyn.baker@southkesteven.gov.uk

Hybrid Working

Where the nature of the role allows, SKDC supports hybrid working to give colleagues greater flexibility and balance. Exact arrangements may vary depending on the requirements of the role, the needs of the service and discussions with your line manager.

For further information:
[New Ways of Working Protocol](#)

Discounted Gym Memberships and Leisure Facilities

Colleagues can enjoy a reduced rate at LeisureSK sites including Grantham Meres, Stamford Leisure Pool and Bourne Leisure Centre.

Belton Woods Health Club offers membership and hotel discounts with proof of employment at sign up.

Corporate discounts are also provided at Choices and through CSSC.

For further information:
[Welcome to Leisure SK | Leisure SK Employee Benefits on the HR Hub](#)



Your benefits

Long Service

We value the commitment and dedication of our employees and celebrate the long service of our people through:

- An extra 5 days annual leave after 5 years continuous service.
- Long service awards celebrating milestones with gifts of the following values:

Length of Service/Gift Value
10 years - £50
20 years - £150
30 years - £200
40 years - £250
50 years - £350

For further information:
[Long service awards guidance on the HR Hub](#)

Tech Scheme

The tech scheme allows you to buy IT equipment at a reduced cost directly via your salary.

To utilize this scheme, [register for an account](#) or [log in](#) to the 'BHN Extra's portal' using the code: fa9bd5

For a full list of employee benefits

CLICK HERE
TO ACCESS
THE HR HUB



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Learning and Development

At SKDC, we take a holistic approach to learning and development, recognising that people grow in different ways and everyone is at different stages in their careers.

We provide a wide range of opportunities to support your professional and personal development, from formal training, apprenticeships and our online learning system, to more hands-on experiences such as shadowing, projects and mentoring or coaching.

 If you'd like a discussion about your personal development and relevant learning opportunities, please speak to your line manager and HR.

For further information:
[Training and Development](#) on the HR Hub



Some learning and development opportunities in the Council...

Apprenticeships

Training

Projects

Mentor/Coach

New experiences

Development cohorts

Learning System

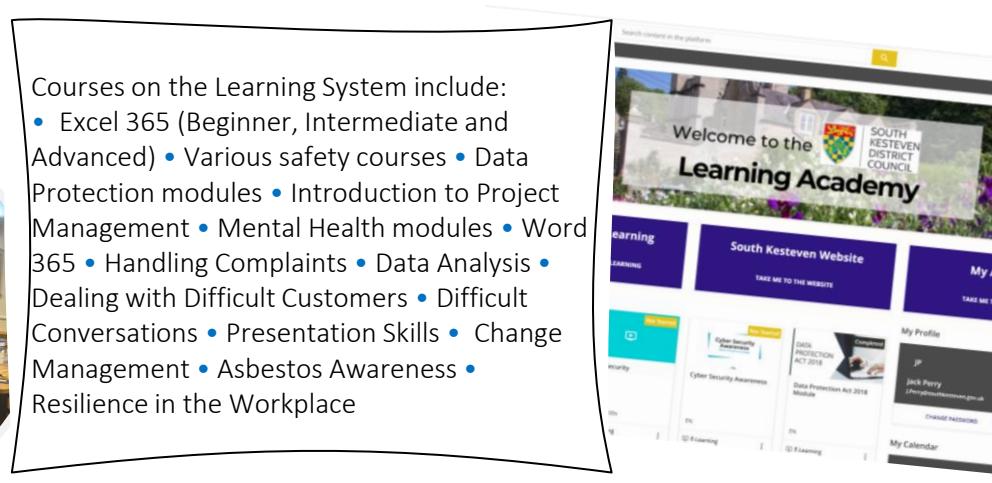
Shadowing

Internal workshops

Internal work experience

Courses on the Learning System include:

- Excel 365 (Beginner, Intermediate and Advanced)
- Various safety courses
- Data Protection modules
- Introduction to Project Management
- Mental Health modules
- Word 365
- Handling Complaints
- Data Analysis
- Dealing with Difficult Customers
- Difficult Conversations
- Presentation Skills
- Change Management
- Asbestos Awareness
- Resilience in the Workplace



Wellbeing

Employee Assistance Programme...

We have an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) available to all our staff. It can be accessed 24/7 by calling 0800 028 0199 or logging onto the portal with the username and password as SKDC - HealthAssuredEap.co.uk

8

The EAP includes:

- A free counselling service – you can book blocks of counselling with the same Counsellor or phone up for one-off support
- CBT
- Webinars on a range of wellbeing topics
- Health checks
- Support on managing the wellbeing of others
- Downloadable 4 week programmes
- Lots of advice, information and signposting on topics such as anxiety, exercise, sleep and lots more.



[Home | Health Assured](http://www.healthassuredeap.co.uk)
(healthassuredeap.co.uk)



0800 028 0199



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Wellbeing

SKDCs Employee Wellbeing Plan is designed to support our people across all areas of their wellbeing. It includes practical wellbeing resources, mental health support, development and ensuring a healthy working environment. This all revolves around 5 priority areas:

- Connecting with colleagues
- Keeping active
- Raising awareness and seeking support
- Keeping learning
- Giving to others

88

We have a Wellbeing Team who plan and deliver a varied programme of activities for staff. If you'd like to contact them, email wellbeing@southkesteven.gov.uk

You can read #TeamSK's Employee Wellbeing Plan here:

[#TeamSK Wellbeing Strategy Pd - 1](#)



#TeamSK Employee Wellbeing Plan

2025 - 2028



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL



Enter





Ending Employment

Submit your notice in writing to your line manager, including your last day of service (accounting for your notice period which can be found in your contract).

Meet with your manager to discuss any outstanding holiday or flexi-time and handovers/work being completed prior to leaving.

You will be offered a confidential exit interview with HR.

Arrange with your line manager to ensure all SKDC property is returned. This may include:

- IT equipment e.g. laptop, screen, keyboard, mobile
- ID badge
- Keys to Council property

Good Luck!
😊

Contacts...

If you have any questions or need further guidance, here are some useful contacts:



Human Resources
hr@southkesteven.gov.uk
Or call a [member of the HR Team](#) on MS Teams.



Access the HR Hub for policies, guidance, templates and support on all aspects of your employment.

[West Yorkshire Pension Fund website.](#)
pensions@wypf.org.uk
Tel: 01274 434 999

Unison
Contact a Union Rep
unison@southkesteven.gov.uk

Employee Assistance Programme
Healthassuredeap.co.uk
Tel: 0800 028 0199



“ *Thank you for being part of #TeamSK and for the difference you make.* ”





Adoption & Surrogacy Policy

We understand that adopting a child or having a baby through surrogacy is a significant and joyful experience. SKDC is committed to supporting employees through this journey.

Contents

1.0	Policy Statement	2
2.0	Scope	2
3.0	Guiding principles.....	2
4.0	Adoption Leave and Pay	2
5.0	Notice period	4
6.0	Proof of adoption/surrogacy.....	5
7.0	Time off for adoption appointments	5
8.0	Keeping in Touch (KIT) days	6
9.0	Annual leave	6
10.0	Returning to work after adoption leave	6

Relevant forms and letters:

- [Adoption leave form](#)
- [KIT day record form](#)

Related policies:

- [Paternity Leave Policy](#)
- [Shared Parental Leave Policy](#)
- [Maternity Leave Policy](#)

If you have any questions about this policy or require any further support, please contact the HR team by emailing hr@southkesteven.gov.uk

For independent support, our Employee Assistant Support service offer a completely confidential helpline for employees. Call 0800 716 017 to receive support for mental health, legal signposting, practical help, manager coaching and much more.

1.0 Policy Statement

This policy sets out employees' entitlements to Adoption Leave, pay, and time off to attend appointments.

We understand that for colleagues adopting a child or having a baby through surrogacy can be an emotional and challenging, but exciting time. We are committed to supporting employees and encourage them to be open with their manager about what they are experiencing and the support they need.

2.0 Scope

This policy applies to all employees of South Kesteven District Council, regardless of length of service. Employees on fixed-term or temporary contracts are covered by this policy for the duration of their contract. The policy does not apply to casual workers or agency staff.

This policy is supported by similar guidance:

- Paternity Leave Policy
- Shared Parental Leave Policy
- Maternity Leave Policy

3.0 Guiding principles

This policy is based on the following guiding principles:

- SKDC aims to support the holistic wellbeing of our employees and acknowledge the significance of family life
- We recognise and value the diversity of our workforce and the different family structures and needs of our employees
- We aim to facilitate a smooth transition for our employees who return to work after adoption leave and to provide them with the necessary support and resources
- Managers and HR will ensure confidentiality and provide advice and guidance throughout the process

4.0 Adoption Leave and Pay

Employees might be eligible for adoption leave and adoption pay if they are:

- adopting a child
- fostering a child permanently and becoming their legal parent ('fostering to adopt')
- having a child through surrogacy

Having a child through surrogacy

Employees must apply to become the legal parent within 6 months of the child's birth.

Employees must apply for:

- a parental order – if one intended parent is genetically related to the child

- an adoption order – if the intended parents are not genetically related to the child

Please see here for further details on surrogacy and legal rights: [Become the child's legal parent.](#)

Adopting as a couple

For employees adopting or entering into a surrogacy arrangement jointly with their partner, only one person in the couple can get adoption leave and pay (the Primary Adopter). The other partner might be able to get paternity leave and pay.

Subject to eligibility requirements, employees can end their Adoption Leave early and take Shared Parental Leave instead. This allows them to share their Adoption Leave entitlement with their partner during the first year of adoption/surrogacy birth. Both the employee and their partner need to be eligible – see SKDC's Shared Parental Leave Policy for more details.

4.1 Adoption Leave

Employees can take up to 52 weeks of adoption leave, regardless of their length of service or number of contracted hours. This includes:

- employees who are the Primary Adopter, and a child has been placed with them for adoption
- employees who are adopting through fostering for adoption/concurrent planning
- employees who are having a baby through a surrogacy arrangement

Adoptions must take place through a UK or overseas adoption agency; private adoptions, special guardian or kinship orders and adoption of a stepchild or family member do not qualify.

Eligibility for adoption leave

To be eligible for adoption leave, employees must:

- be legally classed as an employee
- tell their employer and give them the correct notice
- give proof they are adopting or fostering to adopt
- have been matched with a child through an adoption agency
- give proof they are having a baby through surrogacy

Starting and ending Adoption Leave

Adoption leave can start:

- up to 14 days before the date the child starts living with the employee (UK adoptions)
- when the child arrives in the UK or within 28 days of this date (overseas adoptions)
- the day the child is born or the day after (if the employee has used a surrogate to have a child)

4.2 Adoption Pay

The Council offers Enhanced Adoption Pay (EAP) for employees who qualify for Statutory Adoption Pay (SAP). To read the eligibility for SAP, please see the Government guidance [HERE](#).

Employees in surrogacy arrangements must have been continuously employed by the Council for at least 26 weeks in the 15th week before the baby is due.

The following table outlines the level of Enhanced Adoption Pay (EAP) an employee is entitled to receive:

Weeks 1 - 6	Weeks 7 - 18	Weeks 19 - 39	Weeks 40 - 52
90% of average weekly earnings	Half pay, in addition to SAP	SAP or 90% of average weekly earnings (whichever is lower)	These weeks will be unpaid

Employees will be required to repay the enhanced adoption pay if they do not return to work after adoption leave, or if they give notice to leave within the first three months of their return to work (this requirement may be varied at the discretion of the Council in extenuating circumstances).

Periods of holiday or parental leave which are “tagged on” to the end of a period of adoption leave will not count towards the return-to-work period.

5.0 Notice period

Statutory Adoption Pay

Employees must give the Council 28 days' notice before they want to be paid Statutory Adoption Pay, unless the time between the child being matched and placed is less than that.

Statutory Adoption Leave

Within 7 days of being matched with a child, employees must tell the Council:

- how much leave they want
- their leave start date
- the 'date of placement' – the expected or actual date the child is placed with them

The Council will write to the employee to confirm the start and end dates of their leave.

Leave for employees adopting a child from overseas

Within 28 days of getting their 'official notification', employees adopting from overseas must tell the Council the date of the notification and when they expect the child to arrive in the UK.

Employees must also tell the Council:

- the actual date the child arrives in the UK - within 28 days of this date
- how much leave they want and when they want it to start - giving 28 days' notice

The Council will write to the employee to confirm the start and end dates of their leave.

Leave for employees in surrogacy arrangements.

At least 15 weeks before the due date, employees in surrogacy arrangements must tell the Council when the baby is due and when they want to start their leave. They must also notify the Council of the actual date of birth as soon as is reasonably practicable after birth.

The Council will write to the employee to confirm the start and end dates of their leave.

Changes to leave dates

Employees must tell the Council about changes to leave dates at least 28 days before their original start date or the new start date - whichever is earlier. During adoption leave, employees must give 8 weeks' notice if they want to change the date they return to work.

The Council will write to the employee to confirm the amended dates.

6.0 Proof of adoption/surrogacy

Proof of adoption

Employees must give proof of adoption to qualify for Statutory Adoption Pay. The proof must show:

- name and address of the agency and employee
- date the child was matched, for example, the matching certificate
- expected or actual date of placement, for example, a letter from the agency
- relevant UK authority's 'official notification' confirming the parent is allowed to adopt (overseas adoptions only)
- date the child arrived in the UK, for example, a plane ticket (overseas adoptions only)

The Council will make copies of the evidence provided.

Surrogacy arrangements

Employees must provide a written statement ('statutory declaration') to confirm that they:

- intend to apply for a [parental order](#) in the 6 months after the baby's birth
- expect the order to be granted (for example, because they do not have any convictions involving children, and the birth mother or father agrees to the arrangement)

7.0 Time off for adoption appointments

Employees are entitled to paid time off work for 5 adoption appointments after they've been matched with a child. This right is only for appointments that the adoption agency has arranged or asked for. Only the person who is taking adoption leave has the right to paid time off.

Employees are entitled to take up to 6.5 hours for each appointment. This time includes travel to and from the appointment.

Employees need to show their employer an appointment card or other proof of the appointment.

The partner who is not taking adoption leave has the right to unpaid time off work for 2 adoption appointments. If they wish to attend more appointments, they should speak to their line manager, who will consider the request at their discretion.

Employees having a baby using a surrogate and applying for a parental order can take unpaid time off work to go to two antenatal appointments with the surrogate. These include medical appointments, relaxation and parentcraft classes which have been recommended or made on the advice of a GP, midwife, or nurse.

8.0 Keeping in Touch (KIT) days

Employees can work for up to 10 days during their adoption leave period without losing statutory payments for that week or ending their entitlement to leave.

Any work carried out on any day, even just an hour's work, is deemed to constitute "a day's work". Any days' work done under this provision will not have the effect of extending the total duration of the adoption leave period.

You will be paid at your normal rate of pay for a KIT day.

It is beneficial for the employee to maintain contact during Adoption Leave. The Council will aim to keep the employee informed of any significant updates or changes that may be relevant while they are away from work. The most appropriate method and frequency of communication should be agreed upon between the employee and their manager in advance.

Employees are entitled to take up to 10 Keeping in Touch (KIT) days during their adoption leave. These days allow the employee to carry out work without affecting their entitlement to adoption pay. KIT days must be mutually agreed in advance with the manager and can be used for any normal work activity, including attending training or team meetings. KIT days can be taken at any point during adoption leave. There is no obligation for the employee to take KIT days, and the Council will not require them to do so.

On a KIT day, the employee will receive their normal contractual rate of pay for the hours worked. If the employee is receiving Statutory Adoption Pay (SAP) at the time, this will be topped up to their usual hourly rate, ensuring the total payment does not exceed their standard daily pay. Please note that even if the employee works only part of a day, it will still count as one of the 10 allowable KIT days.

9.0 Annual leave

The employee's holiday entitlement will continue to accrue while they are on adoption leave. The employee will also receive days in lieu of any bank holidays that fall during their adoption leave.

Employees should talk to their manager before they start their Adoption Leave about taking their holidays either before or at the end of their leave and agree on dates. Employees who return to work too close to the end of the holiday year to take all their holidays should speak to their manager about carrying forward any remaining days.

10.0 Returning to work after adoption leave

Employees will normally return to the same role and on the same terms and conditions of employment that applied before the adoption leave. However, if there's a reorganisation affecting this, the Council will consult with the employee about any potential impact.

The employee's manager will make contact before the employee is due to return to work to discuss arrangements for the return. The employee may wish to arrange a Keeping in Touch (KIT) day in advance, providing an opportunity to attend the workplace and have a conversation with their manager about the return to work.



Shared Parental Leave Policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide information and resources about shared parental leave arrangements.

Contents

1.0	Policy Statement.....	2
2.0	Scope	2
3.0	Guiding principles	2
4.0	Essential features of Shared Parental Leave	3
5.0	Overview of Benefits.....	3
6.0	Types of Shared Parental Leave.....	3
7.0	Eligibility requirements for Shared Parental Leave	4
8.0	Amount and timing of Shared Parental Leave.....	4
9.0	Statutory Shared Parental Pay.....	5
10.0	Notification requirements.....	5
11.0	Confirmation of SPL and ShPP	6
12.0	Contact during Shared Parental Leave.....	8
13.0	Terms and conditions during SPL.....	8
14.0	Returning to work after Shared Parental Leave.....	8

Relevant forms and information:

- [F090 Shared Parental Leave Partner Declaration Form](#)
- [F089 Notification of Entitlement and Intention to Take SPL Form](#)

Related policies:

- [Maternity Policy](#)
- [Paternity Policy](#)
- [Adoption Policy](#)

If you have any questions about this policy or require any further support, please contact the HR team by emailing hr@southkesteven.gov.uk

For independent support, our Employee Assistant Support service offer a completely confidential helpline for employees. Call 0800 716 017 to receive support for mental health, legal signposting, practical help, manager coaching and much more.

1.0 Policy Statement

This policy sets out the Council's stance on employee entitlement to take shared parental leave (SPL), an explanation of the available entitlements and the procedures employees should follow in order to take leave. SPL may be taken in the case of both births and adoptions. This policy uses the word "parent" to describe employees in both birth and adoption circumstances.

2.0 Scope

Shared parental leave (SPL) is a legal entitlement for eligible parents of babies due, or children placed for adoption. It provides parents with the opportunity to consider the best arrangement to care for their child during the child's first year.

Eligible parents will be able to share a maximum of 50 weeks' shared parental leave (SPL) and 37 weeks of statutory shared parental pay (ShPP), for the purpose of caring for a child within the first year of the child's life or in the year after the child is placed for adoption.

To take advantage of SPL and ShPP a mother or primary adopter has to reduce their entitlement to maternity or adoption leave by returning to work before the full entitlement of 52 weeks has been taken. This is done by "curtailing" their maternity or adoption leave.

This policy applies to eligible employees of South Kesteven District Council. Employees on fixed-term or temporary contracts, if eligible, are covered by this policy for the duration of their contract. The policy does not apply to casual workers or agency staff.

This policy is supported by similar guidance:

- Paternity Leave Policy
- Adoption & Surrogacy Policy
- Maternity Leave Policy

3.0 Guiding principles

The council's shared parental leave policy is based on the following guiding principles:

- SKDC aim to support the holistic well-being of our employees and acknowledge the significance of family life.
- Employees who apply for shared parental leave will be supported and not subjected to a disadvantage or unfair treatment.
- We recognise and value the diversity of our workforce and the different family structures and needs of our employees.
- We aim to facilitate a smooth transition for our employees who return to work after shared parental leave, and to provide them with the necessary support and resources.

4.0 Essential features of Shared Parental Leave

Any employee wishing to take SPL should inform their line manager and HR at the earliest possible opportunity so that their entitlement can be explained to them. Due to the flexibility of the SPL system, it is essential that employees understand the procedural requirements involved in taking such leave.

The essential features of SPL are:

- eligible employees will be able to bring maternity/adoption leave to an early end and share the remaining leave entitlement
- eligible employees will have a certain amount of flexibility to decide which parent takes leave and when, including being on leave at the same time
- the maximum amount of leave to be shared is 50 weeks
- leave may be taken in minimum blocks of one week
- eligible employees may make up to three requests for leave, including any changes to previously booked leave
- a request for a continuous period of leave becomes fixed
- a request for discontinuous leave is subject to agreement with SKDC.

In addition to shared parental leave, eligible employees who are responsible for a baby born on or after 6 April 2025 who requires neonatal care are entitled to neonatal care leave. For details on your entitlement to time off, pay during leave and support available, you should refer to SKDC's Neonatal Care Leave Policy.

5.0 Overview of Benefits

You will be able to share a maximum of 50 weeks of SPL and 37 weeks of ShPP with your partner if you are both eligible.

- You must give a minimum eight weeks of notice to take SPL either all in one go (continuous leave) without requiring SKDC's approval or you can request a number of weeks with breaks between SPL where you return to work (discontinuous leave), subject to the agreement of SKDC
- You and your partner can take SPL at different times, or both at the same time.
- You may each take up to a maximum of 20 "shared parental leave in touch days" (SPLIT days), subject to the agreement of SKDC

Please note that only three notifications to book SPL are allowed, including any amendments you may wish to make.

6.0 Types of Shared Parental Leave

Continuous leave

Assuming you meet the eligibility criteria, you have the right to take a continuous block of leave notified in a single notification, so long as it does not exceed the total number of weeks of SPL available to you and your partner and you have given SKDC at least eight weeks of notice. A notification for a period of continuous leave means a set number of weeks taken in a single unbroken period of leave (e.g. six weeks in a row).

Discontinuous leave

Assuming you meet the eligibility criteria, you may request to take discontinuous blocks of leave, so long as it does not exceed the total number of weeks of SPL available to you and your partner and you have given SKDC at least eight weeks of notice. This notification may be in a single notification or up to three notifications, including any changes.

Discontinuous leave means asking for a set number of weeks of leave over a period of time, with breaks between SPL where you return to work.

SKDC must consider a discontinuous leave notification but has the right to refuse it. If the leave pattern is refused, you can either withdraw it within 15 days of submitting it or take SPL in a single continuous block starting from the first start date of discontinuous leave you have submitted.

7.0 Eligibility requirements for Shared Parental Leave

In order to take SPL, both the employee and their partner must meet certain eligibility criteria. You must:

- be the mother, father, or main adopter of the child, or the partner of the mother or main adopter
- have 26 weeks' service at the end of the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth (EWC) or at the week in which the main adopter was notified of having been matched for adoption with the child (known as the "relevant week")
- have a partner who meets the employment and earnings test (see below)
- share the primary responsibility for the child with the other parent at the time of the birth/adoption
- have made the required notifications in respect of their entitlement and have provided the necessary declarations and evidence
- be working for SKDC until the week before any leave is taken.

Employment and earnings test

Your partner must have, in the 66 weeks before the EWC, worked for at least 26 weeks and earned on average at least £30 a week in any 13 weeks.

8.0 Amount and timing of Shared Parental Leave

Parents cannot take more than 52 weeks of leave in total made up of maternity or adoption leave and SPL but excluding paternity leave which is a standalone entitlement. This includes the minimum of two weeks' leave that must be taken after the birth of the baby, known as 'compulsory maternity leave'.

Partners (i.e. the baby's father or the mother's husband/civil partner/partner, etc) are still entitled to take two weeks' paternity leave, subject to qualifying conditions.

If the mother is entitled to statutory maternity/adoption pay/maternity allowance but not maternity/adoption leave, the maximum number of weeks of SPL to be taken is the remainder of 52 weeks minus the number of weeks' pay received.

Mothers are not able to share compulsory maternity leave entitlement of two weeks (or four weeks if the mother works in a factory environment). This is a statutory requirement enabling the employee to recover from the birth and is to be taken exclusively by her. Correspondingly, adopters may share a maximum of 50 weeks' leave.

SPL can only be taken in minimum blocks of one week; it is not possible to take a day's SPL. The minimum amount that can be taken is one week.

9.0 Statutory Shared Parental Pay

Eligible employees may be entitled to up to 37 weeks of Shared Parental Pay (ShPP) whilst taking SPL. The number of weeks will depend on the amount by which the mother or primary adopter reduces their maternity or adoption pay period or maternity allowance period.

ShPP may be payable during some or all of SPL, depending on the length and timing of the leave.

In addition to meeting the eligibility requirements for SPL, an employee wishing to claim ShPP must meet the following criteria:

- the mother or primary adopter must be/have been entitled to statutory maternity or adoption pay or maternity allowance and must have curtailed their maternity/adoption pay period or maternity allowance period
- you must have average weekly earnings for the period of eight weeks leading up to and including the 15th week before the child's expected due date/matching date of not less than the lower earnings limit in force for national insurance contributions
- you and your partner must remain in continuous employment until the first week of ShPP has begun
- you must give proper notification

Where you are entitled to receive ShPP you must give your line manager at least eight weeks' written notice advising of your entitlement to ShPP before receiving any ShPP. This may be done by indicating this on the F089 Notification of Entitlement and Intention to take Shared Parental Leave Form.

10.0 Notification requirements

Notice of entitlement and intention to take leave and pay

At least eight weeks before any leave is to be taken, employees must provide notice of their entitlement and intention to take shared parental leave. F089 Notification of Entitlement and Intention to take Shared Parental Leave Form.

Curtailment notice

Maternity/adoption leave must be curtailed (ended early) if SPL is to be taken. The mother/main adopter must inform HR that maternity/adoption leave will be brought to an end by providing a curtailment notice at the same time as the notice of entitlement is provided. The curtailment notice will give eight weeks' notice of leave (or pay in the event that the employee is not entitled to leave) being brought to an early end.

A notice of curtailment can only be revoked in the following specific circumstances:

- where it is discovered in the eight weeks following the notice that neither the mother/adopter nor their partner has any entitlement to SPL or pay
- in the event of the death of the partner
- if the notice was given before the birth, and the mother revokes her maternity leave curtailment notice in the six weeks following the birth.

Notice of curtailment must be provided to Jobcentre Plus if the mother is not entitled to maternity pay but instead received maternity allowance.

Notice to take a specific period of SPL and ShPP

Although an indication of leave dates will have been given in previous notices, a period of leave is not fixed (unless stated to the contrary) until a period of leave notice is submitted. A maximum of three period of leave notices are permitted, which will include any notices to amend a period of leave already booked. A period of leave notice gives eight weeks' notice to the Organisation that you intend to take leave on the specified dates. The date that leave will start should be given unless the period of leave notice is given before the birth of a child, in which case the start date may be expressed as, e.g. "two weeks" after the birth, to last for "four weeks".

You should also indicate in this notice whether you intend to allocate ShPP to the period of leave.

There may be circumstances where SKDC permits more than three period of leave notices to be submitted, e.g. where SKDC asks you to change a period of leave already booked.

It is important that all of the relevant information is provided according to the set timelines. If it is not, the SKDC cannot guarantee that the leave will be granted.

11.0 Confirmation of SPL and ShPP

If you request one continuous block of leave in a period of leave notice, you are entitled to take this period of leave, and we will confirm the dates to you in writing.

However, if you request more than one period of leave, i.e. discontinuous blocks of leave in one period of leave notice, SKDC will make a decision on whether this can be accommodated. A meeting will be

arranged with you to discuss the request with you. The outcome of the request will be one of the following:

- agreement to the request
- proposal of alternative leave dates
- refusal of the request.

If no agreement can be reached within two weeks of the period of leave notice being submitted, the default provisions will apply which means you are able to withdraw the request any time up to the 15th day after it was made.

If the request is not withdrawn, you can take the leave in one continuous block to start on the first date of leave specified in the notice. Alternatively, the leave can be taken in one block on a new date notified by you within 19 days of the original request.

Varying a period of leave

Once a period of leave notice has been submitted, you may change the dates on which leave is to be taken by submitting a request to vary a period of leave giving eight weeks' notice. These notice provisions are waived in the event of an early birth and your leave will start the same length of time after the birth as it would have started had the baby not come early. In this case, notice should be given as soon as reasonably practicable. In all other cases, the following applies:

- in this case notice to vary the start date should be given as soon as reasonably practicable after the birth of the child
- in order to change the start date of leave, you must give eight weeks' notice counted back from the earlier of either the original date or the new date
- to change the duration of a period of leave, you must give eight weeks' notice of the original start date.

You may also request that a continuous period of leave is separated into a discontinuous period, or that a discontinuous period is consolidated into a continuous period.

Submitting a variation notice will count towards your maximum three notices unless it is made as a result of the child being born earlier or later than the expected week of childbirth.

If you are submitting a variation notice subsequent to a request to do so by SKDC, it will not count as one of the maximum three notices.

Evidence requirements

In order for us to verify the information you have provided, you may be required to produce:

- a copy of the child's birth certificate
- the name and address of the other parent's employer.

If the other parent is not employed, a declaration must be signed to this effect.

Within 14 days of our receipt of your notice of entitlement in relation to an adoption, you may be required to produce documents from the adoption agency which show the following:

- the adoption agency's name and address
- the date you were notified of being matched with the child
- the expected date of placement.

Where requested, the information above must be provided within 14 days. Where you are unable to provide a birth certificate because it has not yet been issued, you will be required to sign a declaration to that effect which also includes the date and location of the child's birth.

12.0 Contact during Shared Parental Leave

You may request up to 20 shared parental leave in touch (SPLIT) days subject to the agreement of SKDC without bringing your period of SPL to an end or impacting your right to claim statutory ShPP for the week. Any work carried out on a day or part day shall constitute a SPLIT day for these purposes.

Your partner is also eligible for up to 20 SPLIT days subject to the agreement of their employer. The mother or primary adopter is still eligible to use up to ten "KIT" days during their period of maternity or adoption leave taken prior to starting SPL, subject to the agreement of their employer.

SKDC reserves the right to maintain reasonable contact with you from time to time during your SPL. This may be to discuss your plans to return to work, to discuss any special arrangements to be made or training to be given to ease your return to work or simply to update you on developments at work during your absence.

13.0 Terms and conditions during SPL

You will continue to receive all contractual benefits (with the exception of salary) during SPL. For clarity, your holiday entitlement will continue to accrue during SPL in the same way as if you were not absent. Prior to taking your leave, a discussion will take place between you and your line manager regarding arrangements on taking annual leave around your SPL.

14.0 Returning to work after Shared Parental Leave

You will have been formally advised in writing by SKDC of the end date of any period of SPL. You are expected to return on the next working day after this date, unless you notify SKDC otherwise. If you are unable to attend work due to sickness or injury, SKDC's normal arrangements for sickness absence will apply. In any other case, late return without prior authorisation will be treated as unauthorised unpaid absence.

If you wish to return to work earlier than the expected return date, you may provide a written notice to vary the leave and must give SKDC at least eight weeks of notice of your date of return. This will count as one of your notifications. If you have already used three notifications to book and/or vary leave, then SKDC does not have to accept the notice to return early but may do if it is considered to be reasonably practicable to do so.

After SPL, provided the total amount of leave taken by you (including maternity or adoption leave) does not exceed 26 weeks, you are entitled to return to the same job, or equivalent, on the same terms and conditions of employment as if you had not been absent.

For further information about this policy, please contact the HR Team at hr@southkesteven.gov.uk.

- This policy applies to all employees within South Kesteven District Council unless stated otherwise within the policy.
- This policy does not form part of contracts of employment.
- The Council reserves the right to amend this policy from time to time.

This page is intentionally left blank

Employment Committee Work Programme 2025 – 2026

Chairman: Councillor Anna Kelly

Vice-Chairman: Councillor Gloria Johnson

Subject	Purpose	Outcome sought
10.00, 12th November 2025		
Pay Policy Statement	Annual report of the pay policy statement (November 2025)	The Committee to recommend the Pay Policy Statement to Full Council.
Gender Pay Gap	Annual reporting of the Gender pay gap position	The Committee to note the Gender Pay Gap position.
Engagement Survey Results	Report on the findings of the 2025 Engagement Survey	The Committee to note the finds on the 2025 Engagement Survey
Revised HR Policies Update	Adoption Policy Shared Parental Leave Policy	The Committee to approve these policies
HR Dashboard Update	HR Dashboard Half Yearly Report	The Committee to note the HR Dashboard Half Year position
14.45, 12th November 2025		
Interim Monitoring Officer Interviews	To interview prospective candidates for the position of interim Monitoring Officer	To recommend a candidate to Full Council for approval
25th March 2026		
Chief Executive Appraisal	Annual Appraisal	The Committee to note the Chief Executives Annual Appraisal

Items to be allocated in 2025-2026

Practicality of the provision of Employee Health Insurance	(9 July 2025)	
Local Government Reorganisation Updates	Updates to be provided to the Committee regularly as new information becomes available.	The Committee to note the update.
Update on the Implementation of the Volunteer Policy	The Committee is to be presented with an update of the Volunteer Policy	To review and approve the policy.
Chief Executive Appraisal	Annual Appraisal	The Committee to note the Chief Executives Annual Appraisal
Director Appraisal	Annual Appraisals	The Committee to note the Director's Annual Appraisal