



Executive Advisory Body

Date of Meeting	17 June 2025
Subject	People Survey update
Paper No.	6.1
Prepared By	Organisational Development
Purpose	Discuss
Sponsor	Ally MacPhail

1. Background

- 1.1. Each year we take part in the Cabinet Office run People Survey. As well as overall engagement, the survey tracks colleagues' attitudes towards topics such as leadership, change, pay and workload.
- 1.2. In January we updated the group with our results. Whilst there were declines in several areas, they remain largely positive. This paper summarises some of the improvement activity that is underway. It also outlines planned changes in the way in which the People Survey will be run.

2. Key Points

- 2.1. We have once again chosen not to have a single, corporate, People Survey Action Plan. Instead, we have asked each business area to incorporate People Survey insights into their divisional action plans and people plans.
- 2.2. However, work has also been happening across the organisation to make improvements in the six key areas previously discussed: IT Systems & SPM, Employee Voice & Choice, Leadership, Learning & Development, Change, and Communications. This paper outlines some of this work.
- 2.3. The improvement activity detailed in this paper arguably supports all our strategic goals in our Corporate Plan. More directly, it underpins our Business Plan objective of Investing in our People.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1 We welcome Executive Advisory Body's view on the progress we have made; the approach we have taken; and any observations about the proposed changes in the People Survey.



2024 People Survey – Progress Report

Divisional and Team level activity

There is a significant amount of work happening in response to the People Survey in teams across Social Security Scotland, supported by our HR Business Partners. We believe this 'local-first' strategy is the right approach, as the issues affecting teams vary and many can be resolved best at the local level.

This year we have also asked each of our five divisions to incorporate insights from their People Survey results into their Divisional Business Plans and People Plans. All our divisions are making good progress with their Divisional Business Plans and have agreed their own people priorities, informed by their People Survey results. One example of the many activities is the introduction of an Innovation Group to crowd source ideas from colleagues in the Health and Social Care Team.

Our People Plan

Launched in December, our People Plan sets out how we will support colleagues to deliver for the organisation. The plan was directly shaped by colleagues. We held workshops to help us identify colleague priorities, and used insights including the results of the People Survey. Stakeholders, trade unions and our Executive Advisory Body sponsors also had the opportunity to input. This has helped to make the People Plan as representative as possible.

Although it runs for three years, progress has already been made in several key areas:

- We have published our Health and Wellbeing Plan
- We recently launched our Mainstreaming Inclusive Communication and Equality guidance
- Our Strategic Workforce Forum has been up and running since the start of the year

By the end of the year, we will also have conducted our line manager review and launched our Environmental Plan.

Priority Areas from the People Survey

As discussed previously, our analysis identified six themes that were common across the organisation and serious enough to warrant a corporate response. We set out each of the six themes below, alongside a flavour of some of the work that is happening to address each.

Change



Our Change Management Team are undertaking a number of activities to support managers and colleagues. This includes:

- Creating Change Management modules for our leadership programmes and management training;
- Delivering sessions at Learning at Work Week on how change impacts people;
- Updating the Change Management resources available to colleagues;
- Working with People Advice to review their Change and Resilience Workshop.

Communication

The Strategic Communications Team have made a number of improvements, based partly on the People Survey results and following their own audit of communication channels. These include:

- Shortening and tightening the line manager cascade and making the content visible on our intranet;
- Encouraging more people to self-post on Viva Engage. This has seen that community grow with more topics being covered;
- Reinforcing the expectations of our senior leaders and line managers.

IT Systems / SPM

There have been numerous systems improvements over the last 12 months, influenced and informed by colleague feedback. These include:

- Increased automation in the reviews space, such as automatically calculating a client's scheduled review. These changes have been positively received, with operational colleagues stating: "The new work queues are working well and providing good visibility".
- Child Disability Payment straight through processing automation.
- Community Health Index lookup automation.
- Continuous improvement for Adult Disability Payment and Child Disability Payment straight through processing.
- Scottish Child Payment automation improvements with restart functionality.
- Adult Disability Payment bereavements automation.
- Future proofing the Funeral Support Payment service to accommodate a new funeral type that is expected to become available in Scotland called alkaline hydrolysis.



Employee Voice and Choice

We have been in discussions with Strathclyde University around how we can better support our colleagues to make their views heard via various employee voice channels and how we as an employer can better utilise these insights. The first output from these conversations has seen us act as a case study in a research project they are conducting on behalf of the Productivity Institute. We have also recently started a series of Question Time sessions with our Executive Team.

Leadership

We are currently refreshing our various leadership programmes, for leaders at different grades across the organisation. This includes Leadership Essentials for frontline managers; our Emerging Leaders Programme, for those aspiring to become senior managers; and our Senior Leadership Offer for existing senior managers.

Over the last 12 months we have completely revised our suite of management learning, to make it more relevant, engaging and aligned to the new Civil Service line management standards. The modules will be delivered to line managers at the point of need.

We are also implementing a new behaviours framework, which supports the role out of our Approach to Performance interventions. Labelled the 'Three Cs', we are reminding colleagues of how their care, curiosity and contribution is so important.

Learning and Development

In May 2025 we held our largest ever Learning at Work Week. The contents of the programme were heavily influenced by themes from the People Survey; as well as conversations with colleagues across the business to understand their needs. We delivered over 80 unique learning events, in Glasgow, Dundee, and virtually, with over 1,200 colleagues attending at least one session. A detailed evaluation report is being prepared, but the overall evaluation score is 4.7 out of 5.

The content of the programme demonstrates the interconnectedness between these theoretically distinct themes. Learning events on managing change, meeting our leaders, and understanding the importance of communication give an indication of the many overlaps between these topics.

Conclusion

In summary, there has been a tremendous amount of improvement activity happening across the organisation, at all levels. Whilst this is not always badged as People Survey actions, it is clearly informed by insights we've gathered from colleagues.



Annex – Slide Deck

Slide 1



Social Security Scotland
Tèarainteachd Shòisealta Alba

People Survey 2024

Executive Advisory Body

17 June 2025

Dignity, fairness, respect.



Slide 2

Our Approach

The Traditional Approach

- “You said, we did”
- People Survey action plan
- Separate themes
- Centralised plan
- Monitoring and reporting
- Leaders own the plan

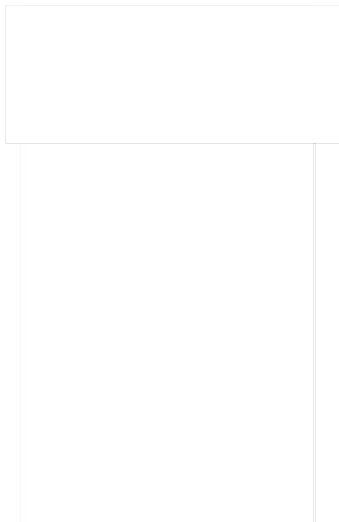
Our Approach

- Using insights
- Inform our divisional business plans and people plans
- Overlapping and co-dependent themes
- Local first
- Trust and empowerment
- Collective ownership



Slide 3

Our 6 Themes



Slide 3 text (interactive slide)

Change

- Modules created for the management and leadership learning
- Learning at Work Week sessions
- Updating resources
- Refreshing the Change and Resilience Workshop

Communications

- Intranet updates for all colleagues
- Growing our community on Viva Engage
- Reinforcing leadership expectations

IT Systems / SPM

There have been numerous systems improvements over the last 12 months, influenced and informed by colleague feedback. These include:

- Increased automation and straight through processing
- Continuous improvement
- Future proofing

Employee voice and choice



- Executive Team Question Time
- Strathclyde University employee voice research

Leadership

- Revised Leadership programmes
- Refreshed Management learning
- Behaviours Framework – the Three Cs

Learning and Development

- Learning at Work Week
 - Designed using People Survey insights
 - 80 unique sessions
 - Over 4,000 sessions booked

Slide 4

How the People Survey is changing

- Significantly reducing and changing the question set in the annual Civil Service People Survey
- Introduction of timely and co-ordinated pulse surveys for more frequent, lighter touch data collection
- Targeted surveys at key moments in people's career journeys
- Celebrating innovation in the system and sharing best practice between departments on implementation and action planning to deliver change
- Enhanced digital tools and use of artificial intelligence in data collection and processing
- 2025 will be a 'transition' year, with more changes in 2026

