

People Strategy 2017-2022 Evaluation

Outcome 1: People understand and use all of the aspects within the employment offer in a way which works best for them and the organisation. Delivering increased engagement and improved performance through TCP assessments

Progress:

The **employment offer** helps KCC to distinguish itself in the employment market and ensures that employee's engagement with the business is maximised, with the intention that service delivery is enhanced. A work environment that is attractive to both current and potential employees is an important part of the employment offer. The offer is vast and varied and includes but is not limited to; flexible benefits, an extensive learning and development offer, fair and equitable employment practices and health and wellbeing support.

KCC's **leadership traits, cultural attributes, and values and behaviours** that underpin ways of working have evolved over the period of the strategy and have recently been refreshed to reflect the lived experience of employees and the kind of employer we want to be, as outlined in outcome 6. These new values can be clearly seen in the organisation's response to the Covid-19 pandemic in the new organisation design principles following the strategic reset.

An attractive range of **flexible benefits** that meets individual needs of staff has been an important part of the offer:

- **Kent Rewards:** benefits available on the Kent Rewards portal have been promoted in a themed way, e.g. Health & Wellbeing and Financial Wellbeing. The number of registered users, which includes schools, has **increased by 26%** over the 4-year period of the strategy (19,330 to 24,409). Since the start of the current contract in 2015, **£45.3m** has been spent through national providers to date.
- **AVC's:** introduction of salary sacrifice AVC's has provided enhanced flexibility for financial planning.

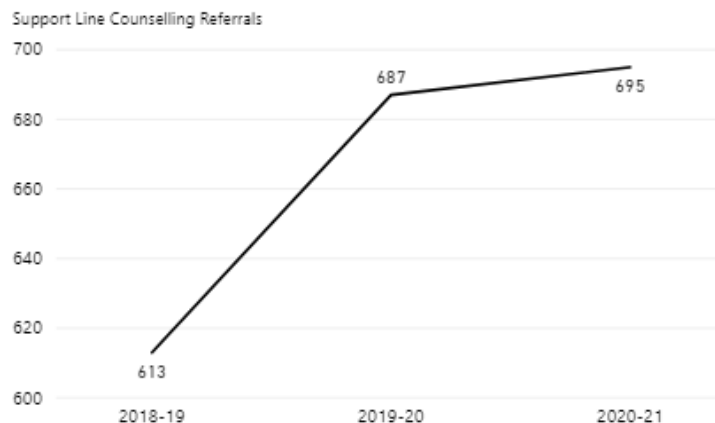
An employment proposition that promotes **diversity and inclusion** supports the achievement of our workforce equality objectives. This has included:

- An **inclusive policy framework**, which has recently been reviewed in light of Covid-19 to ensure policies and terms and conditions are fit for purpose
- Ensuring **fair and equitable employment practices** through reviews such as the provisions for staff on Term Time Only and Zero Hours contracts, and arrangements for holiday pay and sleep ins
- The **Demographic Risk Assessment** to encourage conversations with staff around risk factors and what mitigation/support is needed
- **Staff communications and engagement** focused on raising awareness through celebration days, staff group activities and sharing lived experiences to enhance employee engagement

- Building accessibility audits and **digital accessibility**, including the provision of BSL signers at live organisation events for the first time, improving the accessibility of these sessions
- The annual collation of **workplace adjustments** has been a positive way to understand what support has been provided for staff as a result of effective line management conversations
- The ongoing **monitoring of equalities** data to identify new initiatives and opportunities for improvement

Specific strategies have been designed to provide holistic **health and wellbeing support** to employees to ensure their physical, mental, social and financial wellbeing and this is promoted as part of the offer to current staff through integrated engagement plans. This has included:

- Delivery of the **Time to Change plan** with the formation of the Mental Health Support Network, and more recently the **transition to the Mental Health at Work Commitment**.
- An **enhanced wellbeing offer** in response to particular health trends exacerbated by Covid-19 such as MSK guidance for managers, refreshed stress management policy, H&S, wellness action plans and wellbeing webinars focused on mental wellbeing and resilience. Engagement with these offers has been high with **almost 2,000 mindfulness and wellbeing webinar attendees** in the last financial year alone. Engagement with Support Line has continued to increase, however plans to enhance the financial wellbeing offer have been delayed.



- KCC has recently achieved the **Kent & Medway Healthy Workplaces Award** in recognition of our approach to workplace wellbeing and will form part of how we position ourselves as an employer for both the current and potential workforce.

To establish an authentic **KCC 'brand'** as a way of promoting the Employment Offer, staff focus groups took place to understand what it is like to work for the council and several themes emerged, one of which was feeling that they can make a difference.

This led to an employer brand based on 'Moments that matter', placing their experiences at the centre.

Impact:

Successive **staff surveys** show KCC is a more positive place to work where people are treated well, they feel valued, respected and recognised for their contribution as individuals, and feel listened to and supported by management.

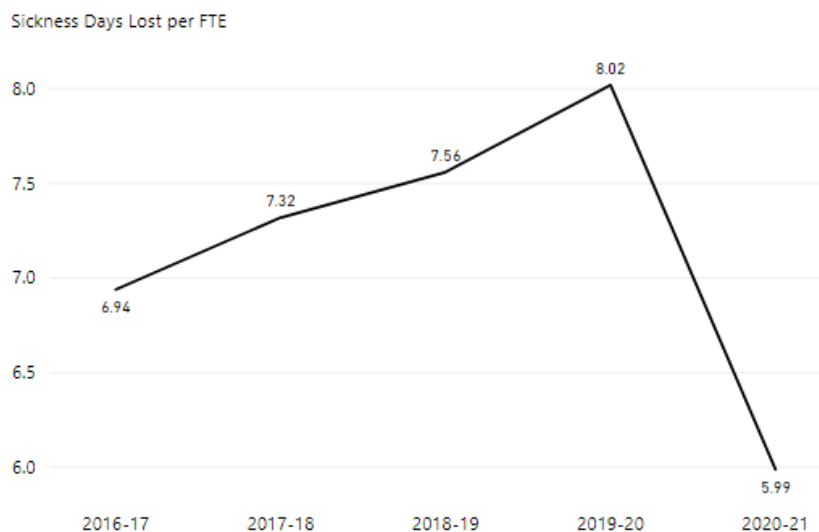
Staff Survey	2018	2019
I would recommend KCC as a great place to work	56.4%	61.4%
I am treated with respect by the people that I work with	83.2%	86.5%

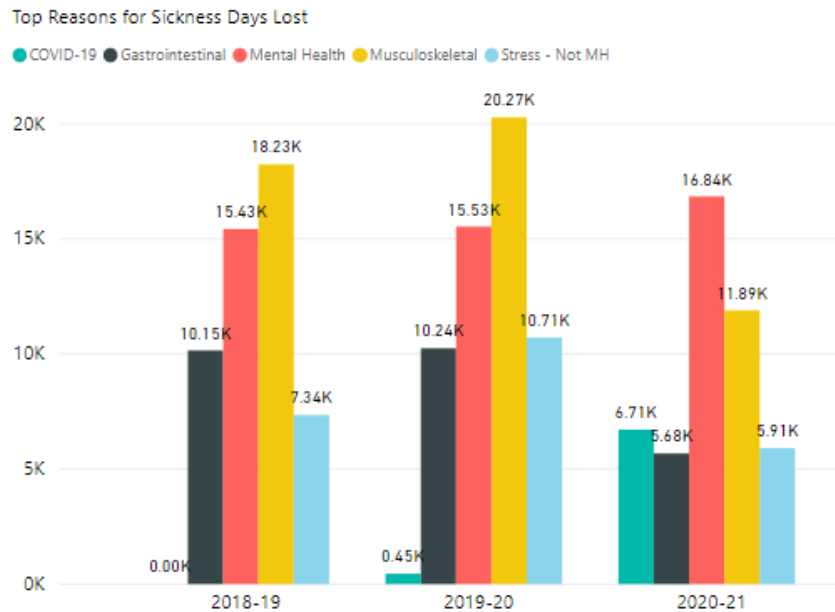
However, the experience of those with a **protected characteristic** has not been as positive, particularly those staff with a disability. In the last year, we have also had anecdotal feedback from BAME staff that their experience of the workplace in response to 'Black Lives Matter' and Covid-19 has been less than positive.

Staff Survey 2019	Disabled	Non-Disabled
Overall: Inclusion	77%	85%
Overall: Engagement	59%	67%

Staff survey data indicates the **financial reward** and support available is having an impact on levels of engagement, which correlates with higher TCP ratings, see outcome 2 and staff survey responses.

Levels of engagement with the **wellbeing offer**, initiatives and support available has been positively received, with employees feeling that KCC cares about the wellbeing of its staff, seeing a rise of positive responses **by 8.9%** (59.6% in 2018 to 65.1% in 2019). However, there has not been a reduction in overall levels of sickness absence over the period of the People Strategy.

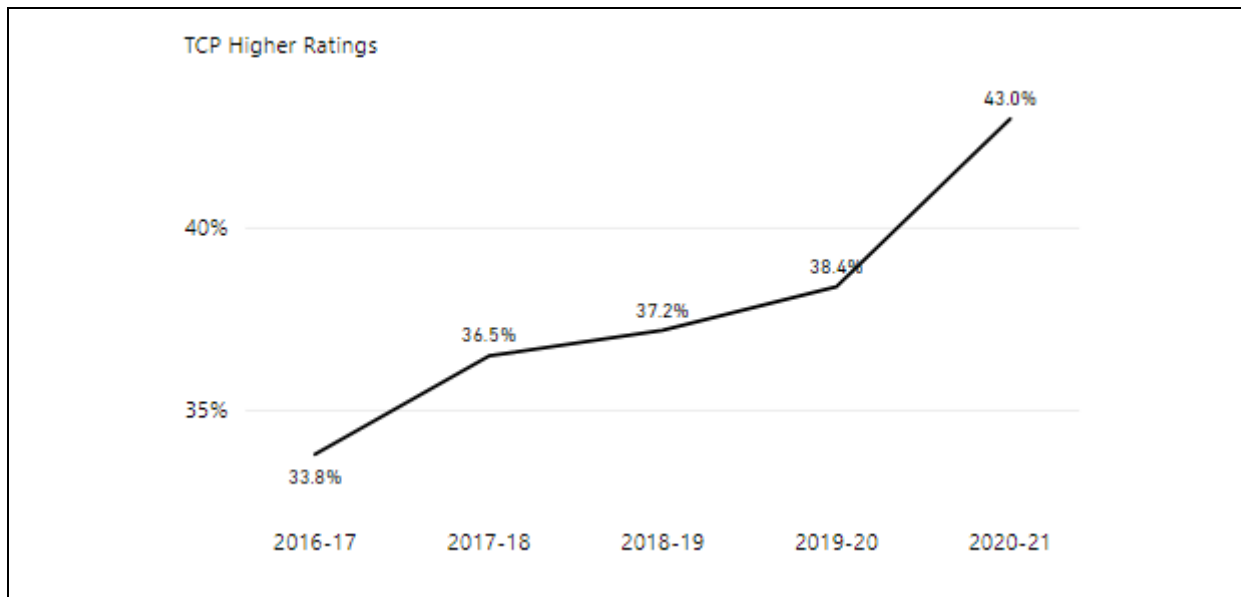




Time to Change has helped to support the increase in employee engagement with the wellbeing offer. The number of **workplace adjustments** to support mental health, number of referrals to **Staff Care Services** and to **Support Line counselling** have all increased, which suggests managers are supporting mental health at a local level. Although this is with a backdrop of an **increase in days lost due to mental health**, it appears to be consistent with the national picture. When comparing KCC's top three sickness reasons to other local authorities they appear to be similar, with the majority having a form of Mental Health or Stress related illness as their top sickness reason.

It is too soon to understand the impact of the employer positioning work on meeting the intended outcomes. The **New Joiners Survey** is being resurrected to provide data on whether the adoption of the employer brand guidelines is having an impact on expectations of working at KCC matching reality.

The **enhanced employment offer** has had a positive impact the achievement of the outcomes. **Levels of employee engagement amongst the current staff have increased by 4.65%** (62.3% in 2018 and 65.2% in 2019), and there has been improved performance over time, as evidenced by a higher proportion of staff achieving higher TCP ratings. However, there was no link to pay during this period as a general increase was awarded, as a result of Covid-19.



Equalities monitoring data has led to a focus on increasing representation in senior leadership roles across KCC, and to improve declaration rates particularly in terms of disability although it is too early to understand the impact of this work.

Next Steps:

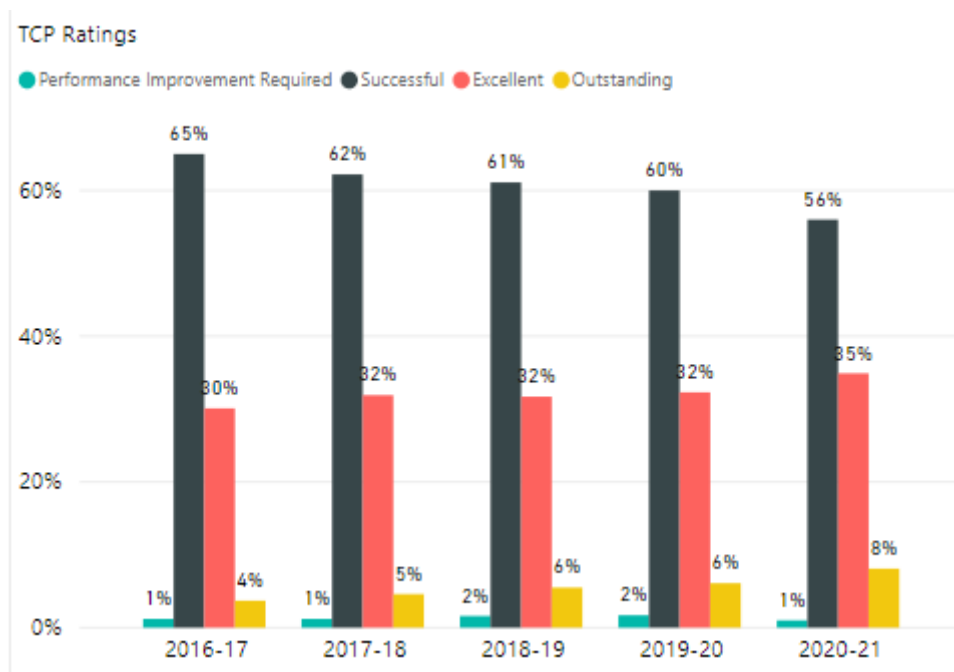
- The approach to **performance management** will be reviewed during 2022. Discussions are already underway with Trade Unions as part of the pay bargaining process to look at improvements to TCP/performance.
- Continue with work to **bring values to life** within directorates and translating the learning from action learning sets into practice to drive the required leadership traits, behaviours and culture. This will be reinforced through an integrated engagement approach to enable challenging conversations around diversity and inclusion, with a focus on race and disability inclusion.
- Deliver the **Race Equality Matters and Disability Inclusion** plans to address inequity in the workplace, with a focus on gaining traction on the ground with managers to improve the experience of minority groups.
- Enhance wellbeing support through the launch of the **financial wellbeing support** product, and promotion of the broader offer to include AVC's to drive up engagement levels.
- Ongoing development of sickness data to inform further targeted intervention activity with those teams experiencing high absence levels, and evaluation of impact.
- Continue to **embed the employer positioning approach** for both current and potential employees, developing a more informative, dynamic and engaging 'front end' to the organisation and pull this approach through to the current workforce too. Promote KCC's employment offer in a realistic and authentic way aims to attract a more diverse workforce, including leadership roles.
- **Continuous improvement of the employment offer** to ensure our policies and practices remain legally compliant, achieve our workforce objectives, align to the strategic direction of the organisation and remain fit for purpose in

the context within which we are operating. Although there are no specific data sets which can measure the impact of this activity, it remains valued and integral to the People Strategy element of the Strategic Reset programme.

Outcome 2: People are rewarded and recognised for what they do and how they do it in a way that is effective for both KCC and staff. Delivering increased engagement through appropriate use of recognition tools

Progress:

Managing performance and the link to pay is the primary way that an individual's delivery is recognised and rewarded annually. The overall assessment is determined by the manager and is based on the cumulative outcome of the conversations which have taken place during the year. The approach has also proved to be flexible as there was a need to adapt it this year, in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. This was to mitigate the impact of a different relationship between individuals and their manager, whereby a standard award of 2% was given to all. TCP ratings were, however, still recorded. Since the introduction of the People Strategy, the TCP rating profile has shown a positive trend towards higher performance ratings.

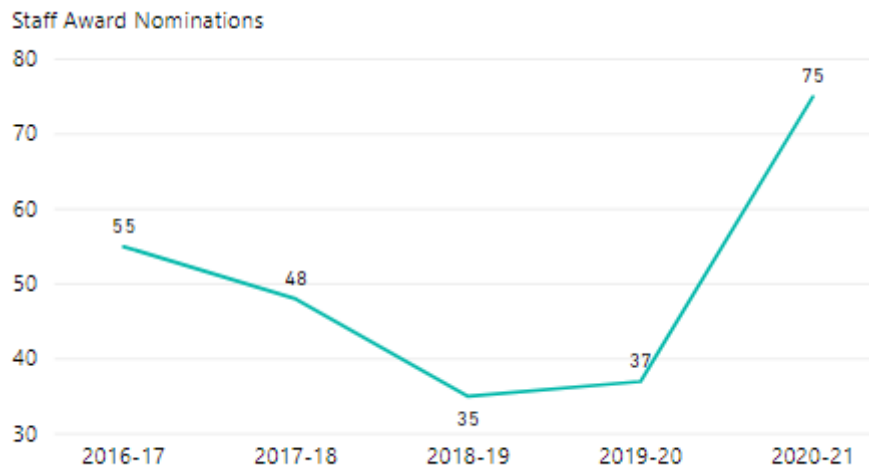


In particular, the outcome of 2020/21 has resulted in joint working to **assess the efficacy of our approach to pay**. This is broken down into principles of pay scale design, impact on recruitment and retention, TCP and the link to pay and pay scales and differentiation. Job evaluation is part of this and the relationship to the associated pay and grading structure. These link to other aspects such as being internally fair and externally competitive which in turn link to D&I and engagement.

KCC has the ability to recognise people's market value, should the pay scale be shown not to do this adequately. Outside of the **market premia** for social workers, the number of people receiving a payment is a very small proportion of KCC employees and the use of this approach is accepted as proportionate and pragmatic by Personnel Committee as business cases are required for these payments to be made.

The **conversational practice tool** is regularly promoted with reminders to managers about the importance of using this both in terms of performance management and also the wider aspects of engaging with direct reports on an individual basis.

One of the **recognition tools** available to staff is Because of You, with the criteria for awards being linked to our values. There has been a sharp increase in staff award nominations over the last year, which may be due to recognising efforts during the Covid-19 pandemic.



Our approach also means that the **TCP outcomes** are monitored each year, amendments are made to the systems, processes and guidance as part of continuous improvement of design and delivery.

Staff Survey	2018	2019
I feel appropriately paid for the job that I do	38.7%	41.6%
I am satisfied with the total employee package	53.9%	53.5%
My performance is reviewed and rewarded appropriately through TCP	53.3%	52.6%

When asked about package overall staff are broadly satisfied, when ask specifically about pay, positive scores dip which indicates it may be an area of lower satisfaction.

Impact:

The number of appraisal ratings recorded shows that managers are willing and able to assess individuals even during a year of turmoil and when there is no link to pay. This implies that the **approach to managing performance** is integrated into normal business activity. Indeed, the profile of the appraisal rating was similar to that of recent previous years which indicates that the results are robust and valid. Although compliance appears to be high there is a ‘heart and mind’ question about underlying sentiment.

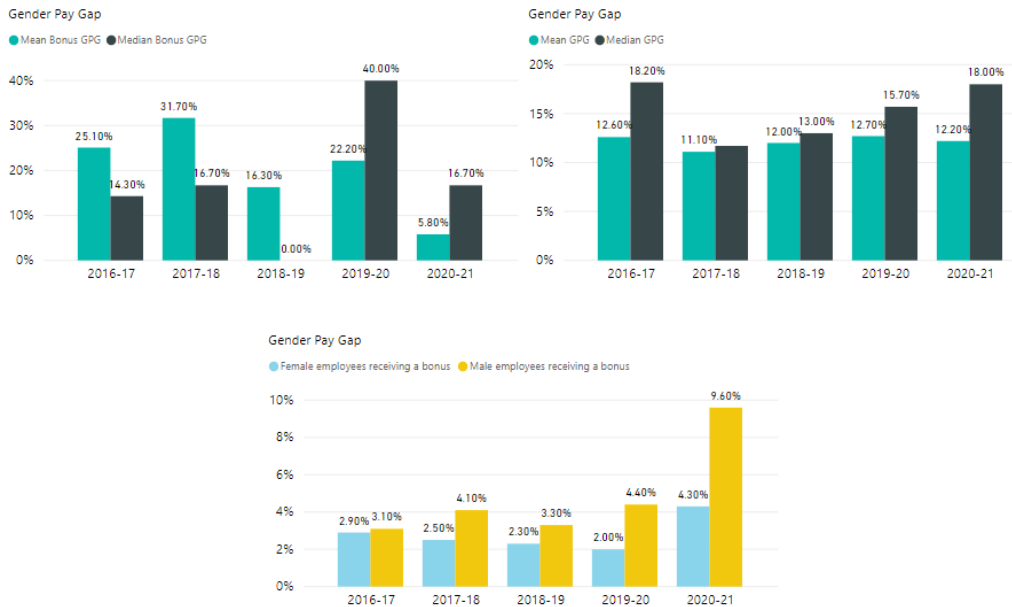
The outcome of the annual **Local Pay Bargaining process** helps identify aspects of pay or terms and conditions which can be improved. This has included:

- Exceeding the Voluntary Living Wage
- Enhancing and rationalisation of annual leave provision

The work with the TUs may help probe this further and recommend amendments or alternative approaches which can be put to the organisation for consultation and implementation as appropriate.

One aspect which remains consistently stubborn to improve is the reduced likelihood if part-time staff and people on lower grades receiving a higher appraisal rating. This remains the case following this issue being discussed at senior management levels across the organisation, updated communications, training and guidance along with real time reporting being available as appraisal results are entered.

The mean **Gender Pay Gap** figure has increased from 11.1% in 2018 to 12.7% in 2020. Furthermore, whilst the mean bonus pay gap decreased from 31.7% in 2018 to 22.2% in 2020 it remains high, with the percentage of males receiving a bonus payment (4.4%) continues to be higher than females (2.0%).



Although the number awarded and value increased in 2020-21, as a result of the changed approach to the pay award, the use of **cash awards** is not particularly high across the organisation. In the 4 previous years, there was an average of c.280 people receiving an award annually equating to around 3% of employees. This means that managers are potentially not using all the opportunities available to them to recognise individual delivery. There is also a cultural aspect whereby some parts of the organisation may be less well disposed to their use or have less funds available to be deployed in this way. Although there was an increase in the number of payments made in 2020-21, this will have been in part to compensate for the removal of performance related pay progression.



The opportunity to work closely and productively with our recognised TUs offers opportunities in other areas such as job evaluation which links to pay, fairness and equity.

The rollout of a flexible **approach to working** should help people deliver in a way which is better balanced for them as well as the organisation. In turn, this helps people to feel that they are trusted and can be rewarded for the outcomes rather than output they deliver. Monitoring this in the context of reward, recognition and engagement would therefore be worthwhile.

Next Steps:

- Conclude the outcome of the one-off **LPB Pay review** – devise and put proposals to the organisation and deliver agreed changes. This includes areas such as managing performance, pay, pay progression, our approach to job evaluation and how this links to pay structure and grading.
- Use this to inform the ongoing annual **local pay bargaining process** and developments.
- Assess the difficulties in and **opportunities for using cash awards** consistently across the organisation.
- **TCP equality issues** to be addressed - part-time and lower graded staff as well as other protected characteristics.
- Devise a more **integrated approach for equal pay and gender pay gap reporting**
- Consider modification or revision of our **approach to performance management** which capitalises on the gains made and provides a business relevant approach for the next 5 years.

**Outcome 3: Resourcing issues are responded to quickly and effectively.
Reduced recruitment and time taken to recruit**

Progress:

Significant work has been undertaken to develop a **toolkit for recruiting managers** covering information such as:-

- Planning recruitment activity
- Options for the use of Apprenticeships, graduates and Kickstart
- Advertising and advert writing
- Media and selection methods

It provides a 'one-stop-shop' for understanding the recruitment process, tools and options in order to maximise the likelihood of appointing the best candidate. It references other ways to recruit such as apprenticeships and graduates and in turn gives managers more options to deliver a successful recruitment campaign outcome.

We have piloted approaches to better explore the opportunities offered using **social media and recruitment platforms** such as LinkedIn and Indeed. We want the candidate journey to be a positive experience. This can start from the passive candidate understanding more about KCC and becoming interested in what we do. A joint project with External Communications has given us the opportunity to consider how KCC can use social media opportunities better and in a more proactive way. Research has been undertaken to inform what we need as an organisation and the Employer Positioning work is informing what our new recruitment site will look like. This capitalises on the new functionality offered through the TribePad recruitment system which is also intended to improve both the candidate and recruiting manager experience.

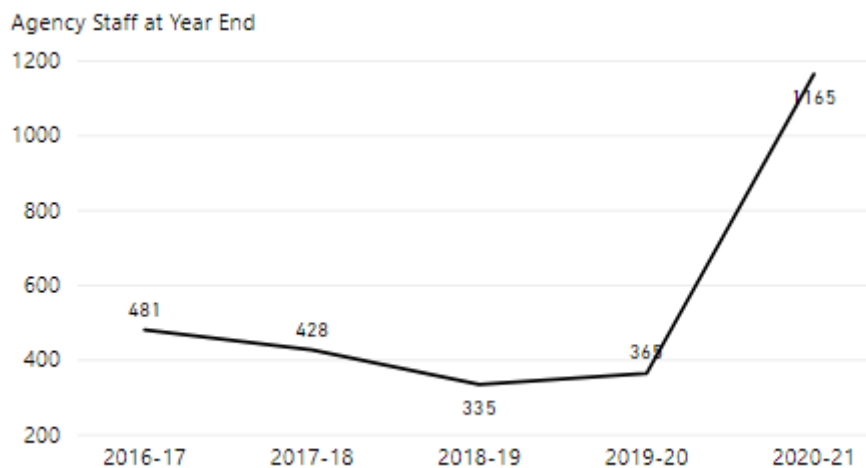
There is ongoing work to **refine the use of metrics** as a way of identifying improvements in recruitment. This incorporates the aspects of equality, diversity and inclusion. The goal is to agree the key data which needs to be collated, mechanisms are in place to achieve this and a robust reporting process is in place in order to monitor trends. The PC Business Performance Team are waiting to gain access to the TribePad recruitment system which will allow for a more holistic approach to viewing overall progress and delivery.

Procurement have been approached both to extend the TMP contract and to put in place a new contract when the current arrangement ends. They are aware that in the longer term, we would ideally have more flexibility around **accessing recruitment agency providers** and need to balance this with the relatively small spend. The invite to tender has resulted in a new provider being appointed as Penna will be taking over from TMP.

There is now planned activity for **recruitment communications** which includes story telling through shared experiences, values collateral, reframing manager communications to support better recruitment campaign outcomes.

To support flexibility in resourcing, our **approach to agile deployment** is being developed. This has included mapping hard to recruit roles across the organisation and learning from the crisis response to Covid-19. There has been ongoing engagement with staff in grades KR3-8 about future skills required and follow up feedback sessions with CMT are planned on key themes and values. This is being supported with communications around flexible working, and development of new collateral and supporting information to support the way we work.

Agency staff numbers and in-year spend show a downward trend over the first four years, however the numbers increased sharply in 2020-21.



This is because the figures include 800 people contracted through C2K to staff the Covid19 testing centres. There is no concomitant rise in expenditure as separate funding arrangements were made for this.

Additional interventions include the new graduate scheme, apprenticeship programmes as well as the Kickstart programme which as well as enable KCC to address resourcing needs, build capability and capacity within the workforce as outlined in Outcome 4.

Impact:

Average time to hire has fallen from **65 days in 2019/20** to **40 days in 2020/21**. This may be due to a variety of reasons, including the introduction of the new TribePad recruitment system, resulting in more streamlined processes and better guidance for managers. Staff turnover has also been lower due to Covid-19.

As well as the toolkit for recruiting managers, progress has been made to update the values based interviewing guidance and the management capabilities and Leadership traits which assists with **selecting the right people**, not just based on skills or education. Managers are helped to consider other recruitment options such as the use of Apprenticeships and graduates. Guidance has been modified to allow managers to interview once a suitable number of quality candidates have applied rather than having to wait for a particular date therefore **speeding up the appointment process**.

The **New Joiners Survey** has been amended to take into account the current requirements as well as have enhanced Diversity and Inclusion reporting included.

The change in **recruitment agency provider** is intended to bring greater creativity and innovation to the recruitment outcome as well as cost reduction.

Our **workforce profile** indicates we are under-represented at a senior leadership level in terms of ethnicity (6% BAME compared to 7.8% in KCC overall), and the percentage of disabled staff across KCC is significantly lower than the community we serve (3.95%) compared to the Kent population according to the Census 2011 (17.6%). An analysis of our recruitment data for minority groups also suggests there could be an issue with candidates either finding KCC an attractive place to work or being successful at interview. Highlights from the recruitment data include:

- The number of **disabled candidates** applying for roles in KCC has increased by 26% since falling in 2018/19, However the number of disabled candidates being hired during the same period has fallen by 12.5%.
- The number of **BAME candidates** applying for roles in KCC has decreased by 26% since its highest point in 2016/17. The number of BAME candidates being hired has also fallen by 54%.

There is therefore a need to continue to improve the metrics to better understand the impact of recruitment practices on minority groups and adjust our approach accordingly.

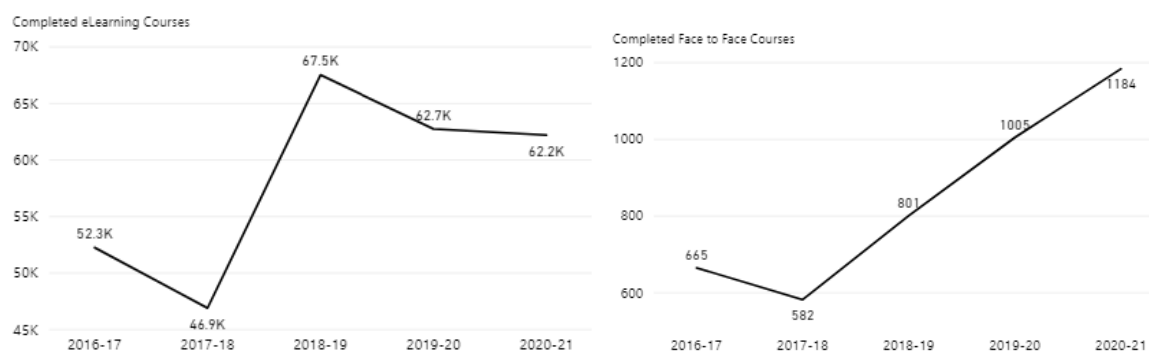
Next Steps:

- Use the principles of **continuous improvement** to update the recruiting manager toolkit.
- Consider options to develop and then agree a strategic direction for the **use of social media**
- Rollout the **new recruitment website** integrating employer positioning, Tribe Pad and candidate experience informed by New Joiner Survey results
- Work in conjunction with Procurement to implement the **new recruitment agency** contract arrangement as we transition from TMP to Penna provided services.
- Deliver internal and external **recruitment communications**
- Assess and act on the information returned through the **New Joiners Survey**.
- Review the **recruitment data** available within TribePad when access becomes available and plan how we can use it to best effect.
- **Explore positive action in recruitment** to drive up representation rates of minority groups
- Implement an **ICT solution to support agile deployment** and ongoing communications and engagement to change mindsets about using this approach to support talent management.
- There are plans to use the new **workforce planning tool** across the organisation to allow for more proactive identification of current and future resourcing problems and mitigation of risk associated with these.

Outcome 4: We have developed staff to meet predicted future requirements. There will be reduced skills gaps, effective use of the staff development investment and higher levels of performance

Progress:

Learning and Development is a key component of the employment offer. The core development offer is available on the training platform DELTA (introduced in 2017), it includes a wide range of opportunities, such as classroom-based courses, eLearning, videos and quick guides. Engagement with the core learning and development offer has increased throughout the length of the people strategy.



There are **opportunities** for personal development, professional development, and qualifications as well as talent management programmes, such as the Future Manager programme. The equalities profile for individuals who had accessed the development offer in 2020-21 is comparable to KCC's equalities profile for the same period, the offer and access to training is therefore seen to be inclusive to all staff groups within KCC.

Future skill requirements are predicted using evidence from engagement with services across the organisation, the strategic direction of the organisation as well as our own professional judgement. Developmental programmes are designed and delivered to reduce skill gaps and so the learning and development offer is extensive and varied.

- **Apprenticeship programmes** have been established to support professional development both for current roles and future progression. Cohort programmes utilising Apprenticeship training are designed and being delivered to enable us to take a 'grow our own' approach. Examples of this include; Social workers, Occupational therapists, Procurement & supply. We have also shared **£650K** with **75 other Kent employers** to support Apprenticeship training for **171 employees**.
- New **Kent Graduate** programme launched in 2019 – based on professional streams and **15 graduates** are currently in post
- **The future manager programme** ensures that we have the management capability required for future. Across the last 3 years, the future manager programme has been accessed by **280 members of staff** and continues to provide a valuable and effective development pathway for staff. The

programme now also includes an apprenticeship standard (CMI), ensuring interventions are joined up to maximise impact.

- The **Kent Academy** for Children’s and Adults’ workforce has been launched and the portal is now being accessed for staff across the Adults and Children’s directorates for all their core and practice development needs. A Kent Academy Strategic Board is now place with members from both directorates, Chaired by OD Service Lead to explore the strategic requirements around social care development.
- **The digital champions programme** has been developed to build digital capability to maximise the use of technology. There are currently nearly **300** digital champions across the organisations who are being digitally upskilled and conduits in upskilling colleagues in a relevant and meaningful way. Specialist skills are also developed (example, Power BI), based on the predicted needs for the future.

Impact:

The staff survey has shown that staff are increasingly more positive about the **Learning and Development** offer.

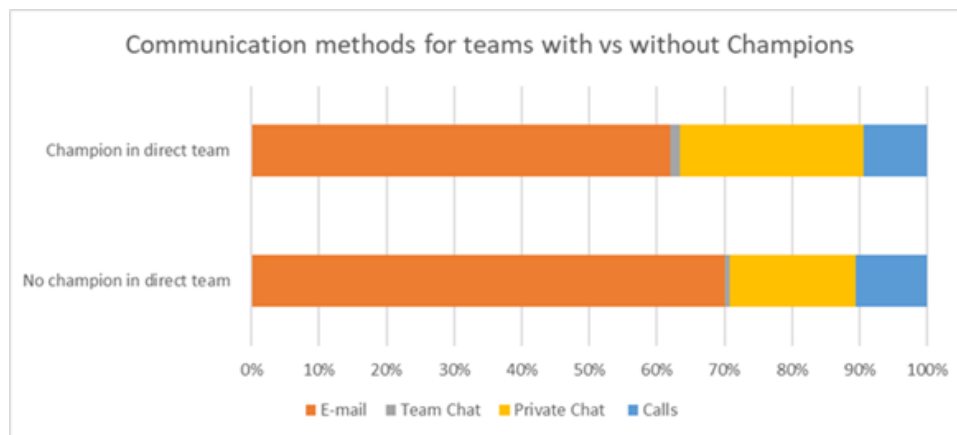
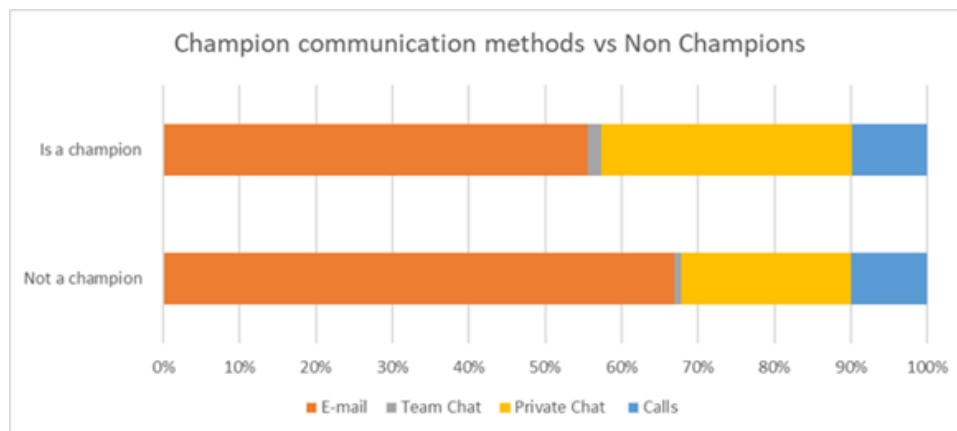
Staff Survey	2018	2019
Learning and development	58.5%	62.1%
I am able to access the right work-related learning and development opportunities to support my role	67.8%	70.4%
There are opportunities for me to develop my career within KCC	50.1%	54.6%

Whilst staff are more positive about their **career development** within KCC, this is still lower than what we would expect and demonstrates that there is further activity needed. One example of this is the new **workforce planning tool** (currently being piloted) which holistically considers development and we would expect that this will result in more robust succession planning and strategic interventions to support internal career development.

KCC’s apprenticeship public sector target was achieved in 2019/2010 but not since due to school’s underperformance. Over **1,000 KCC staff** have accessed training under the levy, increasing opportunities for professional development for staff as well as reducing reliance on the training budget. The sharing of the levy with other Kent employers has also enabled wider Kent employees access to apprenticeship training that they would otherwise not have had access to.

Tangible return on investment has been delivered from the graduate programme projects (add example – ask Michelle) and KCC was the winner of ‘the Job crowd’ best graduate employer for the public sector. The retention of graduate talent has been positive.

The digital champion programme has been successful in, evidenced through the digital behaviour of champions themselves (e.g. they use Teams more) and more importantly, the impact champions have on their teams digital behaviour.



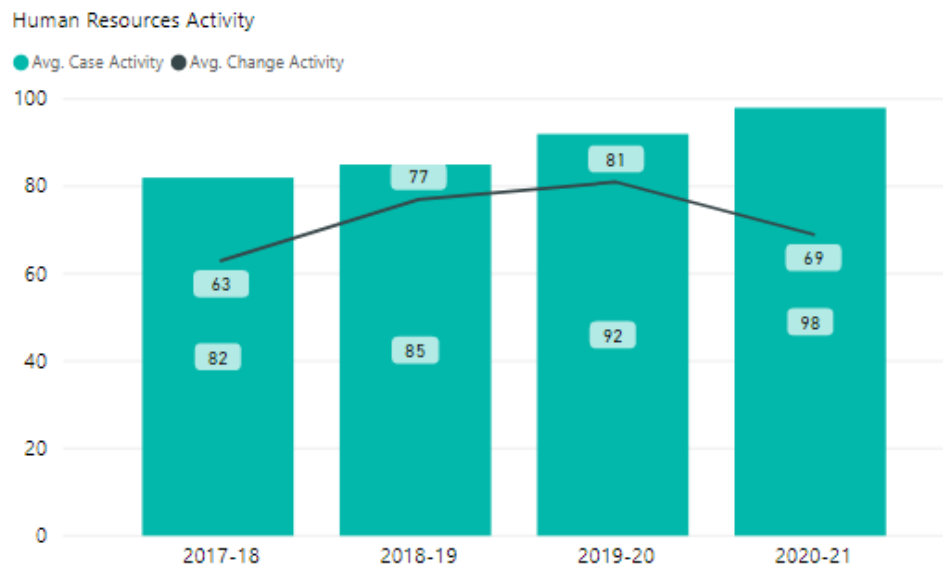
Next Steps:

- **Continue to develop staff** to meet predicted future requirements (and minimise skills gaps) by effectively using staff development investment, including the apprenticeship levy.
- Review developmental programmes to **incorporate apprenticeship qualifications** where possible. This will allow us to both; enhance the offer for staff and maximise the use of the apprenticeship levy.
- Continue to identify and implement any further opportunities for development of staff, wider Kent employees and care leavers, for example, via the **Kickstart programme**.
- A recent programme of work has focused on **workforce planning** as a mechanism to predicting future workforce requirements. A new workforce planning tool has been developed and is currently being piloted across the organisation with initial findings being positive. There are plans to use this tool across the organisation to allow for better workforce development predictions to be made.
- Economic wellbeing project to support NEETs.....

**Outcome 5: We take a pragmatic approach to risk in people management.
Reduced process, empowered managers, quicker decision making**

Progress:

KCC managers are empowered to take accountability for people management processes and decisions. HR continue to provide FAQ's, webinars, presentations and advice to managers, with an average number of 69 HR change activities at any time during 2020/21 and an average of 98 employee relations cases being supported at any time during 2020/21.



People management approaches have evolved over time in response to the changing context. Highlights include:

- **the Organisation Design toolkit** and approach has been developed to support and inform change. This includes Decision Making Accountability (DMA) levels, and Spans and Layers to ensure that decisions are made at the right level, with a view to quicker decision making.
- the Grievance procedure was replaced by **the Resolution procedure**, with an emphasis on informal resolution of issues, including the use of mediation to reduce the need for formal processes
- a devolved approach to **job evaluation**, with 135 assessments taking place outside of a restructure process between 2018/19 to 2020/21.
- **System and process improvements** such as the removing the requirement to upload business cases on the Recruitment system, and the enhancement of Manager Self-Service to speed up processes
- **building people management capability** through management development, during 2018/19 to 2020/21 the Kent Manager programme has been delivered to and undertaken by **585 managers**. A suite of HR Essentials modules, the HR liaison role, the Good Conversation tool and through engagement opportunities such as T200, Challenger.

- the **refresh of KCC Values and Culture** Boost sessions to understand the future skills required, which include accountability and managing risk.
- organisationally, a risk managed approach was taken to address inherent issues in the way holiday pay is calculated for those on **Term Time Only contracts**
- supporting the **flexible deployment** of resources in response to COVID-19 pandemic to meet emerging business needs
- enhanced **risk assessments** e.g. demographic risk assessments, reviewed stress risk assessment

Impact:

There is evidence to suggest managers are taking a more risk-measured approach with people management processes appropriate to the circumstances. However, the support required by managers with case activity has typically become more complex and multi-faceted, which makes it more difficult for managers to be empowered. They are aware of the risks and prepared to take a pragmatic approach but take HR advice to ensure they are doing the right thing. At Employment Tribunals, expectations on KCC as an employer to make reasonable adjustments appear to be increasing, which arguably has an impact on how risk averse the organisation becomes.

There was an **increase in case activity** between 2018/19 to 2020/21 with a dip in 2020/21, whilst the number of appeals including dismissal appeals reduced. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic plays out in the case data, which could be explained by the pause put on hearings during 20/21:

- There has been a marked increase in Early Conciliation cases, but the number being heard at Employment Tribunal has decreased, either having been settled or cases dropped.
- The time taken to complete cases typically increased across all types of cases between 18/19 and 19/20, with the exception of cases due to Performance & Capability - poor performance, whilst during 20/21 there was a general downward trend in the average number of working days to conclude a case.
- Both the number of settlement agreements and settlement payments made to staff have fluctuated. All settlement agreements are risk assessed based on whether there is potential for a case at Employment Tribunal.

There has also been an overall **increase in the number of HR change activities** supported from 2017/18 to 2020/21, with a peak in 2019/20:

- Process redesign activity has been supported across the organisation. Projects such as the service wide Governance & Law Process Review 2019 had a positive impact by resulting in more efficient and streamlined internal and customer processes which in turn inform quicker decision making.

- The target for spans and layers across the organisation is 6 layers made up of 5 managerial/supervisory layers plus 1 layer of front-line staff, and an average span of control of 7fte. Monitoring of the spans and layers shows this has not been achieved since 2016/17 and has not been as closely enforced in recent months.

With a devolved approach, it is not surprising that activity has increased as managers are being more pragmatic with their approach to risk. We are operating in the context of increased litigation, and whilst informal processes may be happening, staff do not have anything to lose by pursuing formal complaints.

Staff survey data between 2018 and 2019 shows an improvement in managers keeping staff informed, and staff feeling empowered to do their jobs, which may contribute to quicker decision making. 90.7% of staff feel trusted to carry out their job effectively, which suggests managers are creating a culture of trust.

Staff Survey	2018	2019
My manager keeps me informed	73.5%	76.6%
I feel empowered by my manager to do my job	65.8%	70.8%
I am trusted to carry out my job effectively	90.5%	90.7%

Next Steps:

- Use the 360 evaluations to draw conclusions on the impact of management development on people management processes.
- Roll out of the new **Managing in KCC programme** to ensure managers are equipped to undertake their roles and embed the new KCC values and culture into management practice.
- Consider how we **assess the impact of organisation design** approaches, given that spans and layers are no longer routinely monitored
- Continue to support an expected rise in case activity, as a result of lasting impact of Covid-19 pandemic
- Review the investigation element of case management to speed up process and provide more support to internal investigating managers.
- Continue with prevention activity, targeted sickness interventions and upskilling managers with case management
- Roll out **Workforce Planning tool** designed to enable managers to think about people issues, role design, and identifying risk factors.
- Capitalise on the opportunities that **agile deployment** brings as part of our ongoing resourcing strategy to drive a more flexible workforce, to support career development and to potentially fill hard to recruit roles. Explore a new technological solution to support this.

Outcome 6: Conversations with managers are taking place with a demonstrable focus on outcomes, as will be evidenced from staff surveys

Progress:

Our approach to **managing and supporting performance** changed in April 2018, with a renewed focus on managing and supporting staff to help them be the best they can be by having regular, well-rounded conversations. Since then, conversational practice has been a regular feature of communication and engagement activity, including the promotion of the good conversation tool and the drive for managers to support individual staff needs.

The **“Managing in KCC” programme** (previously Kent Manager) has been redefined and redesigned aligned with our design principles and new management capabilities. The programme emphasises the importance of managing by outcomes and empowering staff. The programme is mandatory for new managers; however, existing managers have been developed against our new management capabilities through a series of facilitated workshops in July and August 2021. In addition to this programme, we have delivered “Supporting our managers” workshops to **over 250 managers** across KCC, recognising their efforts and providing space to share, reflect and learn from their COVID-19 experiences

Our **organisational design principles** have been redefined alongside our aspirational culture attributes and supporting values and leadership traits. The new principles set out what we stand for and what our focus will be going forward. CMT blogs on each of the values have set the tone from the top and set clear expectations for managers and staff what values look like in delivery. Culture boost sessions were held for staff to enable them to help shape these activities. Culture audits and action learning sets are taking place in to embed the new values and behaviours within directorates.

Impact:

The staff survey shows that since the renewed approach to managing and supporting performance was introduced there has been a positive change in the way conversations with managers are taking place as shown in the below table.

Staff Survey	2018	2019
My manager helps me to understand how I contribute to KCC's objectives	63.4%	65.4%
I feel empowered by my manager to do my job	65.8%	70.8%
I am trusted to carry out my job effectively	90.5%	90.7%

Additionally, the activity outlined appears to be impacting positively on performance as higher ratings in Total Contribution Pay (TCP) have been increasing throughout the length of the strategy, albeit without a link to personal performance as an outcome of the 2020/21 review.

Gradually and deliberately **our culture and identity are being intentionally shaped** to realise our cultural ambitions through the many different activities across the HR/OD function, Senior Leadership Round Tables, Manager and Staff development, CMT blogs, Values based recruitment, embedding our culture and values across our people policies and procedures and ensuring our Reward and Recognition schemes are used to recognise the right behaviours. The impact cannot be quantified yet, but this will be built into future activity as the impact of such activity is longitudinal.

Next Steps:

- **Ongoing communication and engagement** around the culture and values we aspire to and reinforcement of the need for a demonstrable focus on outcomes as part of good conversation will continue to be vital and a key enabler to KCC's flexible working objective. We will share stories from staff as well as practical examples of our values in actions.
- Identify and **remove organisational barriers to change**, continue to embed our culture and values in key organisational and people processes and equip managers with the capabilities to enable our culture
- Begin to **measure our progress** through defining and agreeing a set of measures/balance scorecard that are outcomes focused as a monitoring tool.

Outcome 7: Managers appreciate and undertake their full people management responsibilities

Progress:

KNet offers a range of guidance to support managers in appreciating and understanding their full management responsibilities. There is a manager's area on KNet including a manager's calendar to highlight specific activities that need to be conducted as well as a range of toolkits. Managers are increasingly aware of their responsibilities, including cascading information through innovative functionality such as the newly introduced Staff Communication 'postcards' on Teams which highlights particularly important information.

Each year in our staff survey, staff say that they value regular conversations and support from their managers, trusting the information, advice and guidance that they give over and above any other sources. Maintaining regular and supportive conversations is central to managing performance and engaging staff. The **good conversation tool** specifically helps managers to have these high-quality conversations with staff and invest time in supporting individual staff needs through investing time to find out what is working well and what could be better, remove barriers and makes the most of opportunities.

In addition to the guidance, the **management development** offer also includes development for alumni Kent Managers through "Supporting our managers" sessions. These sessions ensure that there is a consistent understanding of management responsibilities as well as the expected values and behaviours and supports managers to identify areas in which they may need to undertake further development. In addition, the **HR liaison role** ensures that management teams have support when they need it as well as being prompted to have regular people conversations.

As well as the core offer, **specific interventions** have also been put in place to support managers when a particular risk is identified. For example, a targeted sickness intervention pilot is underway working managers of teams with high levels of sickness absence to carry out a wellbeing diagnostic assessment, which seeks to identify causes of absence and prevention measures, resulting in an action plan. The pilot has commenced with two teams in ASCH, and further work is planned with GET and in CY as part of their directorate mental health plan.

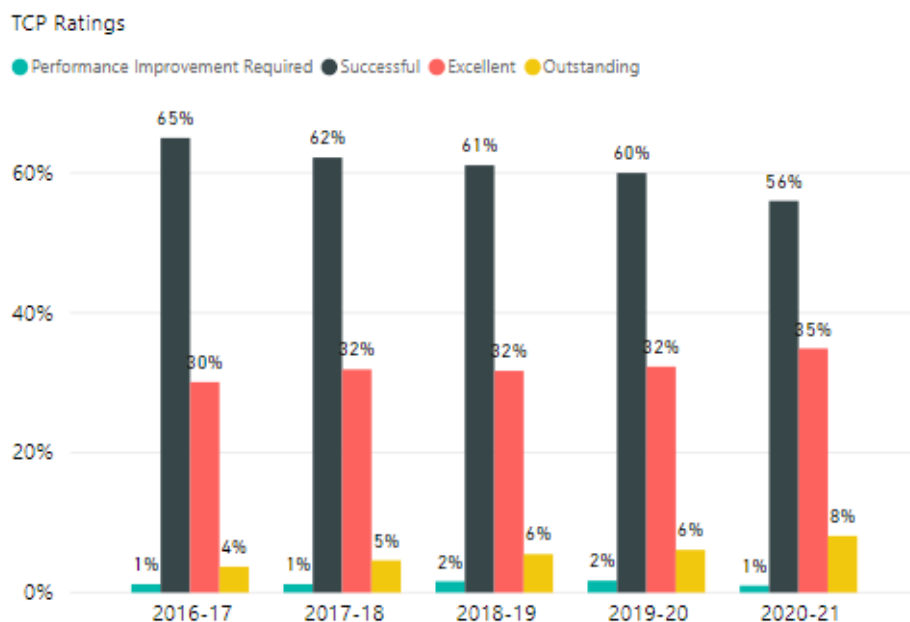
Impact:

Through the staff survey it is evident that the majority of staff have the opportunity to discuss things with their managers as often as they need to and encouragingly the number of staff who say this is increasing.

Staff Survey	2018	2019
I have opportunities to discuss things with my manager as often as I need to	78.4%	81.3%

However, there has been anecdotal feedback from staff groups that managers may be avoiding conversations/conversations are not consistently taking place with certain staff groups, particularly around wellbeing of BME and disabled staff as a result of Black Lives Matter and Covid-19.

The management development offer combined with the availability and promotion of management guidance and tools seems to have correlated with improved staff performance over the period of this People Strategy. **Total Contribution Pay** awards reflect that 'Performance Improvement Required' has decreased, suggesting that managers may be having more effective conversations with staff before performance becomes a concern. But PIR was going up before the new/exceptional arrangement for 2020/21



Simultaneously, higher Total Contribution Pay ratings have increased suggesting that performance generally is increasing. This also correlates with Staff survey feedback which shows that staff are increasingly receiving regular feedback about their performance at work and that this feedback helps them improve their performance.

Staff Survey	2018	2019
I receive regular feedback on my performance at work	67.1%	70.3%
The feedback I receive from my manager helps me to improve my performance	67.5%	71.8%

It is too early to understand the impact on absence levels from the targeted

intervention activity, but conversations will continue with managers to prevent further absence, being mindful of issues such as presenteeism in a hybrid working model.

Next Steps:

- Continue to use **Manager communication** such as Manager k-mail and calendar as these remain effective.
- Ensure the manager guidance and toolkits provided for KNet are regularly reviewed and any updates provided in a timely way for publication.
- **Management development** remains a priority and we will be....
- Roll out the new **workforce planning tool** across the organisation to support managers to think holistically and systematically about people management and their full management responsibilities both at a personal managerial level as well as service management teams.

Outcome 8: Managers engage with people as individuals to capitalise on the specific strengths, skills and capabilities they bring. Delivering increased engagement and improved performance through TCP assessments

Progress:

Being an inclusive employer is one of our workforce equality objectives with a focus on enabling staff to be themselves at work, including supporting managers in the way in which they engage with their staff. An inclusivity model and indicator has been developed to increase understanding of what we mean by inclusion and how staff experience the organisation. A key element of this model is psychological safety, and the role leaders and managers play in creating a work environment based on trust.

We continue to work with and support staff groups to influence our approach and are committed to promoting employee voice and organisational listening. This has included sessions with staff groups to understand perspectives and to shape our engagement approach.

The annual staff survey has evolved and is now conducted in house and includes the whole organisation. It allows us to **measure engagement levels** through informed questions supported by face-to-face engagement sessions, and traction has been gained through the inclusion of free-text boxes in the work and wellbeing pulse surveys. There has been a slight improvement in response rates from 51% (4130 respondents) in 2018, to 52% (4400 respondents) in 2019.

Health and wellbeing has been consistently highlighted in staff communications and engagement, with CMT messages regularly reinforcing the importance of wellbeing and taking an individual approach to understanding and supporting needs through management dialogues and performance management conversations. To supplement the good conversation tool, Wellness Action Plans and the Demographic Risk Assessment have been introduced in response to emerging issues from Covid-19.

The good conversation approach has been a key feature of **performance management** at KCC. Managers are encouraged to consider individual circumstances in terms of their ability to deliver.

An accessible **development offer** has been continually enhanced to address gaps in individuals' skills and capabilities. This has included remote working webinars to equip managers to manage a distributed, remote workforce, and the future manager programme, the new Kent Manager and inclusive leadership development.

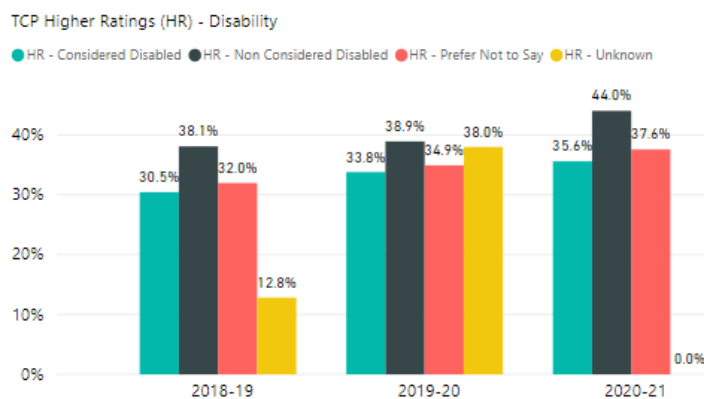
Impact:

Creating an **inclusive culture** where managers have the tools and frameworks to be able to effectively manage staff has had a positive impact on levels of engagement.

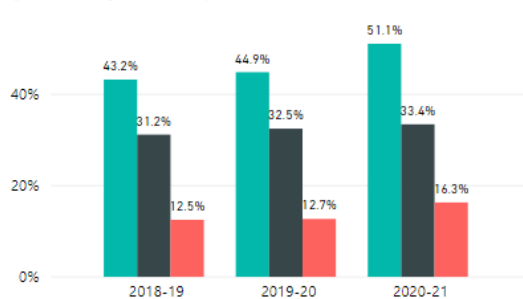
Staff Survey	2018	2019
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My manager takes an interest in me as a person rather than just my work	74.4%	77.4%
I think that KCC staff respect individual differences (e.g. cultures, working styles, backgrounds, ideas etc.)	78.6%	80.1%
I feel valued for the work I do	65.9%	70.3%

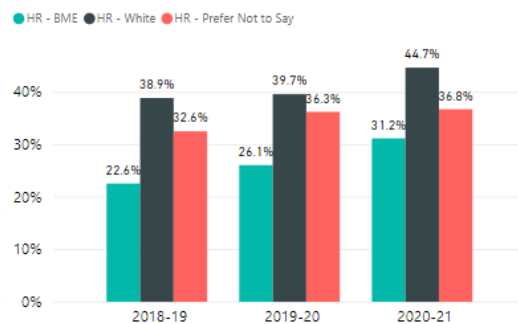
Whilst there has generally been a positive impact on performance, the TCP profile suggests there is an ongoing issue with managers not recognising individual differences in staff, particularly for part time workers who are typically women, for black and minority ethnic staff and staff with disabilities where inequalities appear to exist in achievement of higher TCP ratings. A higher proportion of PIR ratings were awarded to BAME and disabled staff.



TCP Higher Ratings (HR) - Full/Part Time



TCP Higher Ratings (HR) - Ethnicity



This is reinforced through the **Inclusivity Indicator**, which not only shows marked differences in the TCP ratings of those staff with a disability or from a black, ethnic minority group, but differences in levels of turnover, sickness and engagement. It also shows that sickness levels for females are typically higher than for males and the gender pay gap has not narrowed.

Extensive analysis of access to the **Learning and Development offer** has found that the equalities profile for individuals who had accessed either Face2Face or eLearning in 2020-21 (and were still in post as at the 31 March 2021) is comparable KCC's equalities profile for the same period and therefore the Learning and Development offer and access to training is inclusive to all staff groups within Kent County Council.

Next Steps:

- Address the **TCP equalities profile** to recognise the contribution of all staff, regardless of their background or circumstance. Discussions have been had at CMT and CEG on ways to address this within directorates.
- Review the approach to **performance management**
- Delivery of action plans to improve **race equality and disability inclusion**. These include the development of an Inclusion passport and increasing the diversity both at a senior leadership level, and those accessing talent management programmes such as apprenticeships, graduates and the future manager programme.
- Develop a directorate version of the **inclusivity indicator** to monitor and embed inclusion at a local level.
- Input and support to **WRES** within Social Care
- **Ongoing communication and engagement** to drive a more inclusive workplace, to support the education and context, and to embed good management practice.