2020/21 Staff Survey
Feedback Report

Survey background and purpose

- We are committed to running a staff survey **annually** and this is our seventh annual survey. In 2019/20 in response to the Covid-19 pandemic we focused our surveying on staff wellbeing and lockdown working arrangements which we carried out in May and July 2020.

- Our surveys help us to regularly monitor engagement levels, benchmark against internal and external comparators and work towards continuous improvement of our people management practices.

- The annual staff survey provides a regular, formal opportunity for people to **express their views anonymously** on a range of working and HR practices over and above other established methods of feedback that are part of our everyday work such as one to ones, team meetings, performance reviews and through working groups and consultations.

  - The staff survey sits alongside our commitment to maintaining **our Investors In People (IIP) status**, and the questions asked in the survey have been chosen to mirror those asked through the formal IIP questionnaire process. We also ask some questions on staff engagement related particular areas of our work, culture and environment.

  - Both our survey and the IIP accreditation process provide us with key information on **engagement and satisfaction** in the office and we use the feedback to drive continuous improvement and form the basis of an **action plan to target areas for improvement**.

  - This report sets out the findings of the 2020/21 survey along with a benchmark against our last survey and publicly available surveys from other relevant organisations.

Setting the scene – Approach and methodology

- As with previous surveys, an **online questionnaire approach** was used, **using the same questions** we have asked before in order to be able to benchmark responses.

- There were **11 survey themes** consisting of 104 statements on which people are asked to provide their responses.

- Some changes to the survey this year included:

  - some new questions relating to Covid-19 under Internal Relations and Leadership and we moved some existing questions out of health and wellbeing and into Your Job;
  - a revised section on Health and Wellbeing including some questions from Scottish Government, World Health Organisation and Office for National Statistics surveys;
  - a specific new section relating to staff experiences of the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on health, wellbeing, personal circumstances, work relationships and performance which were used in the Scottish Government People Survey 2020.

- The majority of statements continued to offer **six different rating options based on a Likert scale** (strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, strongly disagree, not applicable). Some of the new questions offered five semantic scale response options (e.g. a scale of excellent to poor, never to always, significantly positive to significantly negative and not applicable options).

- We included some new questions that asked for **simple responses** (yes/no) or a **multiple choice** selection.

- As with previous surveys, staff were able to add free text comments under each theme.

Setting the scene – Survey analysis

- Like we've done in previous surveys, the nominal cut off has been applied to any **scores below 70%** positive as areas to consider for improvement. Any **scores below 50%** positive identify high priority issues. As with previous surveys, these nominal cut off points are setting a high standard for improvements.

- Again, in line with our approach to **additional comments** in previous years, these have been analysed and summarised in order to identify key themes as well as maintain privacy and ensure that comments could not be attributed to specific individuals.

- The results have been analysed and **presented against the 2018/19 and 2017/18 results** to identify significant shifts in scores, in particular for those categories falling below the 70% positive benchmark.

- Results have also been **externally benchmarked** against the Scottish Government People Survey 2020, that covers all SG staff and Non Departmental Government Body organisations for a Scottish comparator as well as against 1 other ombudsman surveys where we have been able to analyse publically available survey data.

- The full breakdown of survey responses accompany this report (Annex1).
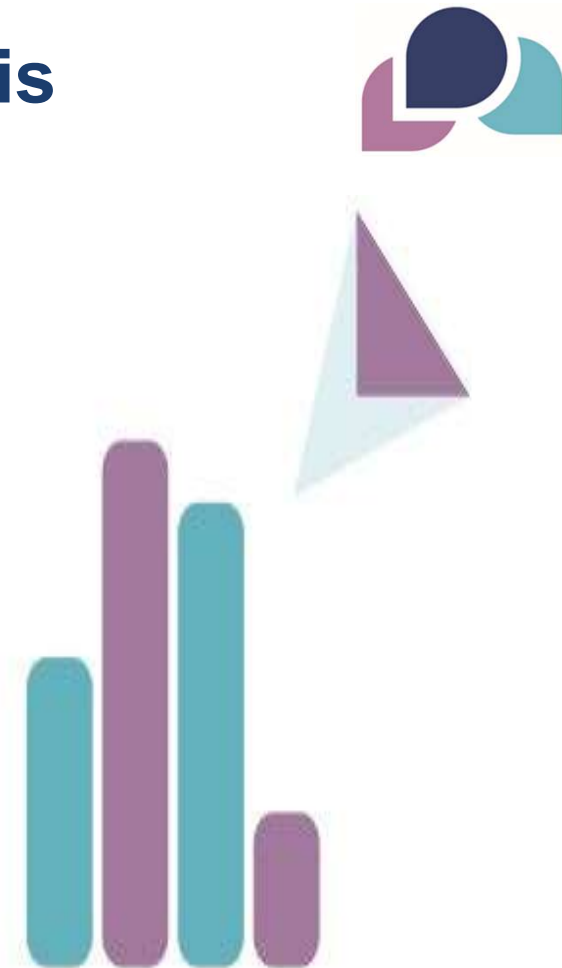
Setting the scene – Response rates

- 88% of staff responded to the survey. This includes 83% who fully completed and 5% who partially completed the survey.

- This was an improvement on the response rate for 2018/19 (84%) but not quite as high as 2017/18 (93%).

Response Rate by Team
(Full and Partial Completion)

Team	Response Rate
A&G	100%
CS	88%
Inv 1	90%
Inv 2	75%
INWO	80%
ISE	100%
Managers	90%
SWF	83%
SPSO	88%

Note: The survey was sent to all SPSO staff (including those on parental leave) apart from those involved in survey design, analysis and action planning (Leadership Team, HR).

Headline results – Survey Themes

	2020/21	2018/19	2017/18
Your Job	81%	75%	81%
Internal Relations	82%	72%	79%
External Customers	75%	74%	87%
Management	86%	86%	84%
Leadership	84%	54%	77%
Learning and Development	75%	75%	81%
Equal Opportunities and Diversity	79%	80%	88%
Perceptions of SPSO	79%	70%	78%
Corporate Social Responsibility	69%	76%	N/A
Health and Wellbeing	89%	76%	N/A

Note: This table shows the average levels of engagement for each survey theme. This year the average is based on a broader range of questions because we added some new ones into some of the sections

- Health and wellbeing was the theme that people were most engaged in this year which is a significant achievement given the challenges that people have faced over the last year.

- Engagement in Leadership saw the biggest increase in positive responses with a 30% increase compared to 2018/19 and a 7% increase compared to 2017/18.

- On average, we have scored over 70% positive in all but one area (csr) of the survey this year. This was also the theme that had the highest average of neutral responses which represented 21% of responses.

- The results show an increase or no change in engagement in all but 2 areas where there was a slight drop compared to the last survey in 2018/19 (equal opportunities and csr).

- The feedback in 2017/18 was overwhelmingly positive but this year's results were on average at the same level of positivity (81%) and we can see that we have reached and exceeded the average engagement scores compared to 2017/18 (your job, internal relations, management, leadership, perceptions of spso).

- The average percentage of negative responses didn't exceed 9% in any of the survey themes.

Headline Results – Areas where we scored well

A note on the figures shown in this chart For ease of reading, results have been rounded to the nearest whole number. As such, in some instances, trend figures presented in this report do not match the rounded figures of the scores that are being compared.	2020/21	2018/19	Trend	2017/18	Trend
People help and support each other at SPSO	98%	94%	↑ 4%	N/A	N/A
I understand the performance standards and what I am expected to achieve in my job	97%	79%	↑ 18%	90%	↑ 7%
The leadership team have kept me well informed and updated as the position has changed with regards to Covid and lockdown and how this impacts on the SPSO	97%	NA	NA	NA	NA
I am aware of the health and wellbeing initiatives available to me	95%	85%	↑ 10%	N/A	N/A
I am kept well informed about what the organisation is doing	94%	60%	↑ 34%	78%	↑ 16%
My manager supports me in my health and wellbeing	94%	91%	↑ 3%	N/A	N/A
Working for an organisation with similar ethical views to my own is important to me	94%	92%	↑ 1%	N/A	N/A
SPSO's success is reliant on all of us achieving our individual objectives	93%	86%	↑ 6%	90%	↑ 3%
As an organisation we are communicating well with each other while working remotely	92%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
I have good working relationships with my colleagues	92%	90%	↑ 3%	95%	↓ 3%

Wellbeing, performance standards, leadership communications during the pandemic, internal relations and identifying with SPSO's ethical views score within the top 10 areas of satisfaction this year. The **supportive culture** at SPSO was the highest scoring area.

Headline Results – Areas where we didn't score as well

A note on the figures shown in this chart For ease of reading, results have been rounded to the nearest whole number. As such, in some instances, trend figures presented in this report do not match the rounded figures of the scores that are being compared.	2020/21	2018/19	Trend	2017/18	Trend
At the SPSO we have the people resources we need to complete our work effectively	38%	19%	↑ 19%	38%	No change
I have dedicated time at work to contribute to SPSO's CSR initiatives	42%	51%	↓ 9%	N/A	N/A
Our physical environment is structured to enable us to work well together	47%	72%	↓ 25%	N/A	N/A
Participating in CSR activities allows me to grow and develop professionally	52%	58%	↓ 7%	N/A	N/A
Our roles are structured to enable us to work well together	61%	53%	↑ 7%	45%	↑ 16%
There are sufficient opportunities for me to receive learning and development to improve my skills	62%	71%	↓ 10%	73%	↓ 11%
My targets are ambitious but realistic	62%	55%	↑ 7%	58%	↑ 3%
Access to opportunities for development and support is fairly managed	64%	68%	↓ 4%	75%	↓ 10%
At the SPSO we have the physical resources we need to complete our work effectively	66%	47%	↑ 18%	59%	↑ 7%
We act on the feedback we receive from external stakeholders	66%	67%	↓ 1%	88%	↓ 22%

People and physical resources, awareness of CSR, access to and opportunities to undertake CSR and L&D, ambitious targets, acting on customer feedback, structure of roles to enable team-working were at a lower level of engagement and this is **attributed to a high proportion of neutral responses** (between 15-35% neutral). There were more negative responses (15%) about the **physical environment**.

Headline Results – Most improved

Survey Theme	Question	2020/21	Increase since last year	2018/19	2017/18
Leadership	The leadership team communicate effectively, keeping me informed about decisions and progress	92%	↑ 39%	54%	78%
Internal Relations	I am kept well informed about what the organisation is doing	94%	↑ 34%	60%	78%
Leadership	The leadership team provide consistent and effective leadership	83%	↑ 33%	50%	76%
Leadership	The leadership team communicates the organisation's vision and objectives clearly	88%	↑ 32%	55%	78%
Leadership	The leadership team are open and responsive	92%	↑ 32%	61%	76%
Perceptions of SPSO	At SPSO we embrace change to create a sustainable future	91%	↑ 25%	66%	83%
Leadership	I trust and respect the leadership team at the SPSO	83%	↑ 24%	59%	83%
Leadership	I feel motivated by our leadership team	72%	↑ 24%	48%	66%
Health and Wellbeing	Health and wellbeing is part of our culture	86%	↑ 23%	63%	N/A
Health and Wellbeing	Health and wellbeing is effectively promoted	91%	↑ 22%	69%	N/A

The theme of leadership shows the most improvement on the last survey. We can see that people feel more engaged in leadership approaches, that there has been consistent and effective leadership and LT have been open and responsive during a challenging year. We can also see that improvements have been made to how we communicate, despite working from home during the pandemic and Health and Wellbeing is ingrained in SPSO's culture and is promoted effectively. This is contextualised by positive feedback in the survey comments in these areas.

Headline Results – Insight from comments

150 comments were made in the survey (30 more than 2018/19). 18 comments were in the new section about Covid-19. Comments were broad and covered a range of topics with the following themes most commented on:

22% Covid-19 (the organisation's response and challenges of working during the pandemic)

18% workload, resources, capacity

16% management style, approach, support

13% communications (technology, style)

11% flexible working arrangements and work-life balance

9% performance, standards, targets

9% teamworking

7% learning and development

7% physical resources (equipment, hardware, software)

A closer look at each theme – Your job

81%

- People feel **secure** in their jobs, understand **what is expected** and they recognise how their own performance translates into the **success of the organisation**. Overall they enjoy the level of **autonomy** they have, they are **empowered** to make decisions and take initiative, work is **interesting** and they feel **valued** for what they contribute.
- Three areas scored below 70% - **targets, accessibility of information** and **workload**.

* Indicates an area of focus for improvements	2020/21	2018/19	2017/18
My work gives me a feeling of personal accomplishment	84%	83%	92%
My work is interesting and makes the best use of my skills and capabilities	85%	88%	88%
I feel empowered to make decisions and act on them	87%	79%	83%
I am encouraged to take initiative in my role	81%	84%	87%
I understand the performance standards and what I am expected to achieve in my job	97%	79%	90%
SPSO's success is reliant on all of us achieving our individual objectives	93%	86%	90%
I feel that my contribution to the success of the SPSO is valued	85%	74%	83%
My targets are ambitious but realistic	*62%	55%	58%
I am able to find information when I need it	*66%	57%	N/A
I am comfortable with the amount of work I am expected to do	*66%	54%	66%
I am supported in balancing my work and personal life	82%	89%	N/A
I feel my job is secure	90%	72%	70%

> I don't think there is undue pressure in respect of the amount of work people are expected to do. However, the numbers of outstanding complaints - and the number of complaints in individual worktrays - can add pressure and make it more difficult to get through work.

> I don't feel that our target reflects the actual volume of work we do. The target for each member of my team is lower than what we realistically do each month.

- This year the results largely improved on feedback from 2018/19 and were broadly similar to 2017/18.
- In comparable questions, we scored higher than our external benchmark, apart from one area relating to work being interesting and making the best use of skills and capabilities which was less than 10% lower than the comparator organisation

↑ 6% difference from 2018/19	↑ 1% difference from 2017/18

A closer look at each theme – Internal relations

82%

- People are well **informed**, confident **expressing views, challenging decisions** and **contributing** to how things are done. Feedback was very positive about the **balance and range of communication methods** and the **technology** and **equipment** enabling this while we work at home.

* Indicates an area of focus for improvements

	2020/21	2018/19	2017/18
I am kept well informed about what the organisation is doing	94%	60%	78%
I can express my views and question any decisions that affect my work	91%	76%	85%
I have the opportunity to contribute to how things are done at the SPSO	88%	69%	82%
I feel comfortable communicating information to colleagues across the organisation	80%	88%	92%
I have good working relationships with my colleagues	92%	90%	95%
There is a good balance of verbal, written and email communication used in the SPSO	82%	67%	75%
Our roles are structured to enable us to work well together	***61%**	53%	45%
Our physical environment is structured to enable us to work well together	***47%**	72%	N/A
As an organisation we are communicating well with each other while working remotely	92%	N/A	N/A
There are a good range of communication methods to keep me informed while working remotely	91%	N/A	N/A
I feel connected to colleagues across the organisation while working remotely	***68%**	N/A	N/A
My team is good at keeping up with informal connections while working remotely	89%	N/A	N/A
I have the technology and equipment I need to be able work remotely	88%	N/A	N/A

- Three areas scored below 70% (one of these was below 50%) – **connections** with colleagues, the **structure of our roles and the physical environment** to enable team-working**.**

> The huge transformation to home working has been extremely well managed under the difficult circumstances

> I feel well connected to my team … because of shared platforms set up for daily discussion, and regular team meetings. I don't feel connected to colleagues in the rest of the office. I hope the introduction of Teams Channels will go some way to remedying this.

- This year the results were largely an improvement on 2018/19 and 2017/18 apart from our **physical environment** where there was a 15% increase in negative responses. Communication with colleagues saw an 11% decrease compared to 2017/18.
- We scored higher than our external comparators in equivalent questions.

↑ 10% difference from 2018/19	↑ 3% difference from 2017/18

A closer look at each theme – External customers

75%

- People feel positively that we **listen** to our customers, and that there is effective support to **communicate difficult or sensitive information** and to deal with **challenging customers** and the **opportunity to debrief** after a difficult call.
- One area scored below 70% – **how we act on feedback** from external stakeholders. 22% responded neutrally to this statement and some of the comments suggest that people feel that we sometimes act too quickly to the feedback we receive from external stakeholders.
- This theme had the highest number of people indicating that these questions are **not applicable** to their roles (an average of around 11%).
- Although the responses in this theme were lower than in 2017/18, they were at broadly the same levels as 2018/19 and there was a 13% increase in positivity about the effective support mechanisms for dealing with difficult customers.

* Indicates an area of focus for improvements	2020/21	2018/19	2017/18
We listen to our customers rather than just telling them what they need	77%	76%	90%
We act on the feedback we receive from external stakeholders	*66%	67%	88%
I feel there are effective support mechanisms in place for me to deal with difficult customers	82%	69%	N/A
I have the opportunity to debrief following difficult conversations	74%	81%	83%
I feel well supported when I am communicating difficult or sensitive issues	78%	76%	85%

- These questions are relatively difficult to compare as they are unique to SPSO's staff survey, however one external organisation provided similar feedback showing that we score higher in relation to support for difficult interactions but 15% lower relating to listening to customers.

> We have a strong internal support network which has been very valued during lock down. It is difficult not being physically with each other to benefit from each other's phrases and terms during difficult phone calls but I do feel my team colleagues support me well particularly in relation to difficult customers.

> We can be too quick to act on external feedback at times - e.g. tweaking processes to respond to a single survey comment without testing this further.

> I always have the full support of my Manager in dealing with difficult customers which is very much appreciated. [They are] very hands on and therefore completely understands the pressures and challenges we face. I always know I can ask for help if required.

↑ 2% difference from 2018/19   ↓ 11% difference from 2017/18

A closer look at each theme – Management

86%

- Managers **communicate** well with their teams, they provide effective support for individual **health and wellbeing** and they strive to make **improvements**. People have **confidence** in their line managers – they are **consistent** and have **integrity**, the are **motivational**, encourage **teamwork** and **collaboration** and they **recognise** the efforts of the team.
- Approaches to **performance management**, **setting objectives**, and encouraging **high levels of performance** were also viewed positively.
- There were no areas scoring below 70% - this was the second highest scoring theme.

* Indicates an area of focus for improvements	2020/21	2018/19	2017/18
I feel motivated by my line manager	85%	88%	78%
My line manager behaves consistently with integrity	89%	89%	86%
My line manager communicates effectively with me	92%	88%	83%
My manager supports me in my health and wellbeing	94%	91%	N/A
My line manager encourages teamwork	89%	95%	88%
My line manager encourages collaboration with other teams	78%	86%	73%
My line manager strives to support and deliver better ways of working	92%	93%	92%
I/my team are consistently recognised when we exceed expectations	83%	75%	73%
Performance is managed in my team	74%	67%	78%
I set my objectives with my line manager	86%	88%	92%
My performance is reviewed regularly	88%	91%	93%
I am encouraged to achieve high performance	86%	84%	88%

> Our manager has done an excellent job of bringing together [our] team in the challenging conditions of lockdown. I particularly value [their] flexible approach, and always feel supported in my role.

> I recognise that the background to this staff survey is unlike any we have ever had … and that for many teams there have been significant changes to the way they interact with their manager and colleagues and that a number of adjustments are needed to accommodate the different needs in the team. I have struggled to feel motivated at various times during the pandemic with respect to my role.

- This year the results were broadly the same as 2018/19 with no more or less than an 8% variation in scores. Compared to 2017/18 most scores improved by up to 10% with some of the questions about performance dropping by no more than 6%.
- In external benchmarking, we scored broadly the same or higher apart from one area relating to recognition of good performance

No change from 2018/19	↑ 2% difference from 2017/18

A closer look at each theme – Leadership

84%

- This theme saw the **most improvement** (30%) compared to the last survey
- People feel they have been kept **informed** and that LT clearly communicate the **vision, objectives, progress and direction** of the organisation, especially during the pandemic.
- Overall feedback about LT has been very positive, they are **open, responsive and motivational** and provide **consistent and effective** leadership. There is also confidence that the LT have a **clear plan for the success of the organisation**.
- There was only one area scoring below 70% - people feel neutrally (22%) about the **strategic direction** of the organisation.

* Indicates an area of focus for improvements	2020/21	2018/19	2017/18
SPSO has a clear plan for the future to ensure our continued success	77%	57%	78%
The leadership team communicates the organisation's vision and objectives clearly	88%	55%	78%
I feel comfortable with the progress and direction of the organisation at the present time	*69%	48%	78%
The leadership team communicate effectively, keeping me informed about decisions and progress	92%	54%	78%
The leadership team are open and responsive	92%	61%	76%
The leadership team have kept me well informed and updated as the position has changed with regards to Covid and lockdown and how this impacts on the SPSO	97%	NA	NA
The leadership team provide consistent and effective leadership	83%	50%	76%
I trust and respect the leadership team at the SPSO	83%	59%	83%
I feel motivated by our leadership team	72%	48%	66%

> I feel the LT value my team's work and have been very visible throughout lockdown.

> This has been an unprecedented period and the general approach of the Leadership team has been very welcome…however…the aspirations expressed about staff looking after themselves are impossible to reconcile with the approach currently being taken to home working.

> I am uncomfortable about the direction of the organisation as I feel the waiting time for complaint allocation is exceptionally high.

- This year the results were a significant improvement on 2018/19, scoring between 20-39% higher than the last survey. Overall there were improvements to the feedback from 2017/18 as well with only the scores for strategic direction dropping slightly (less than 10% variation).
- It was difficult to find comparator questions from external benchmarks but we were able to gain some insight which suggests that SPSO staff feel much more positively about the future success of the organisation.

↑ 30% difference from 2018/19	↑ 7% difference from 2017/18

A closer look at each theme – Learning and Development

75%

- People generally feel that SPSO is **committed** to and **invests** in developing staff and that there is good **support to apply learning** in their roles. **Regular, constructive feedback** also received positive feedback.
- There were two areas scoring below 70% - the **appropriateness** of L&D activities and **opportunity** to undertake L&D. The comments provided further insight into these areas (see next page).
- The majority of questions under this theme returned between 10-22% neutral responses. The most negative number of responses (17%) related to the opportunity to take up L&D.

* Indicates an area of focus for improvements	2020/21	2018/19	2017/18
The learning and development I receive is appropriate and relevant to my job	*69%	70%	83%
There are sufficient opportunities for me to receive learning and development to improve my skills	*62%	71%	73%
I believe that the SPSO are committed to developing me	72%	70%	78%
SPSO invests in its people	72%	73%	80%
I receive regular, timely feedback on my performance	88%	86%	85%
The feedback I receive helps me to improve my performance	80%	77%	86%
I am supported to apply any learning to my day to day work	80%	79%	81%

> I think learning and development is good but still needs to improve, with dedicated planning on learning delivery.   Learning should not be based strictly on current job description, with consideration for future development being encouraged and supported by management.

> I think that the SPSO are open to providing learning and development opportunities, particularly through information sessions. Sometimes I am unsure if there is sufficient funding for external training options…there could potentially be more focus on shared learning opportunities across teams.

- This year the results were broadly the same as 2018/19 with no more or less than an 10% variation in scores.
- Compared to 2017/18 scores were lower, generally within a 10% variation. The two areas scoring under 70% saw the biggest drop in engagement compared to 2017/18 (up to 14%).
- We compare broadly the same as external comparator organisations in this theme with a couple of questions scoring higher – relevance of l&d opportunities and regular, timely feedback being provided.

No change from 2018/19	↓ 6% difference from 2017/18

A closer look at each theme – Equal Opportunities and Diversity

79%
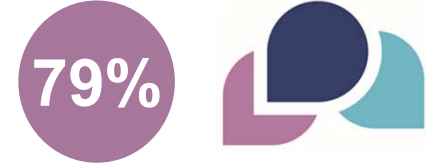
- People generally feel that SPSO is an **inclusive** and **respectful** workplace with **robust policies** to deal with any concerns and that **the workplace is free from bullying and harassment**. The comments provided further context to this feedback (see next page)
- 78% of staff feel that the workplace is free from bullying and harassment and there has been an increase in the number of people responding 'not applicable' to this question.
- 5% do not feel that SPSO is free from bullying and harassment – we ask people to explain this in more detail and comments give some insight into particular examples or general feedback which is reviewed confidentially by HR and incorporated into improvement planning.
- There were two areas scoring below 70% - **access to opportunities for development and support** and **fair and consistent decisions about flexible working**. However, there were a high proportion of neutral responses to these questions and negative responses are less than 5%.

* Indicates an area of focus for improvements	2020/21	2018/19	2017/18
I think the SPSO respects individual differences (for example, cultures, working styles, backgrounds, ideas)	89%	84%	92%
I know how to seek support for concerns relating to bullying and harassment	88%	88%	95%
I feel confident that the SPSO would act on any reports of bullying and harassment	84%	79%	88%
Access to opportunities for development and support is fairly managed	*64%	68%	75%
I believe managers deal with applications for flexible working fairly and consistently	*69%	76%	86%
My work environment is free from bullying and harassment	78%	86%	90%

> I came from a workplace that had a lot of bullying. SPSO is the complete opposite. I have never experienced bullying or harassment at the SPSO. I feel incredibly lucky to have such supportive colleagues and leadership.

> While I think that as an organisation we respect diversity we are not a diverse workforce and would benefit greatly from a wider range of ethnic backgrounds, disabilities and even beliefs.

- Scores in this theme were broadly the same compared to 2018/19. Compared to 2017/18 and the biggest drops in engagement were seen in the two areas scoring below 70% and in relation to bulling and harassment in the workplace.
- We score broadly the same or higher than externally benchmarked organisations under this theme.

↓ 1% difference from 2018/19   ↓ 9% difference from 2017/18

A closer look at each theme – Perceptions of SPSO

79%

- People continue to feel a strong sense of **commitment** to SPSO, our goals and our values. Perceptions are that this is an organisation that regularly tries to find ways to **improve** and **embrace change**.
- There were three areas scoring below 70% - **holding people to account for their behaviour** and the **physical and people resources**.

* Indicates an area of focus for improvements	2020/21	2018/19	2017/18
I am proud to work for the SPSO	84%	85%	95%
I would tell people that this is a good place to work	83%	68%	90%
I feel a strong sense of belonging and purpose at the SPSO	81%	68%	78%
I feel committed to the SPSO's goals	81%	79%	98%
I share the SPSO's values	92%	91%	N/A
My day-to-day behaviour reflects SPSO's values	91%	89%	N/A
SPSO's values guide the way we work and make decisions	84%	81%	N/A
We challenge behaviours that are not in line with our values	*67%	64%	N/A
At the SPSO we have the physical resources we need to complete our work effectively	*66%	47%	59%
At the SPSO we have the people resources we need to complete our work effectively	*38%	19%	38%
At the SPSO we regularly look for ways to improve	92%	85%	88%
At SPSO we embrace change to create a sustainable future	91%	66%	83%

> As always, more people resources would be the number one priority in an ideal world. This would help reduce the significant backlog of cases that we have at the moment. It would also allow for a lot more cross-cutting work for staff who would welcome that…Overall, there is a very strong business case for more people resources and a few more staff would allow us to become a much more effective, dynamic and useful organisation.

> While the values are more explicit now, I don't think that corporatising them has made much difference to the way we work - SPSO has always been values driven, but that is something embedded in the culture and people, regardless of how we reflect it on paperwork, websites etc.

- .People resources was the lowest scoring question in the survey but this was a 19% improvement on 2018/19.
- Scores in this theme were an improvement on 2018/19 and broadly the same as 2017/18.
- Compared to externally benchmarked organisations, we score higher in equivalent questions, particularly relating to our people's sense of belonging and commitment to organisational goals which are around 25% higher at SPSO.

↑ 9% difference from 2018/19	↑ 1% difference from 2017/18

A closer look at each theme – Corporate Social Responsibility

69%

- This was the **lowest scoring theme** of the survey
- Overall, scores suggest that people feel that SPSO's CSR activities are **important** and that we are **contributing responsibly** to a number of initiatives and that we are making positive steps to **minimise our environmental impact**.
- There were three areas scoring below 70% - initiatives that promote **social wellbeing**, **dedicated time** at work to contribute and the **opportunity to professionally develop** through participating in CSR activities.
- This theme had the highest number of neutral responses (21% on average). Comments provided a bit more context to this feedback (see next page).

* Indicates an area of focus for improvements

	2020/21	2018/19	2017/18
Working for an organisation with similar ethical views to my own is important to me	94%	92%	N/A
I have dedicated time at work to contribute to SPSO's CSR initiatives	*42%	51%	N/A
Participating in CSR activities allows me to grow and develop professionally	*52%	58%	N/A
SPSO contributes to campaigns and projects that promote the wellbeing of society	*69%	77%	N/A
At SPSO we implement initiatives that minimise our impact on the environment	89%	87%	N/A
We are encouraged to suggest ways that SPSO could support community causes and/or charities	70%	89%	N/A

- Scores in this theme were broadly the same as 2018/19 but the biggest drop was around encouragement to suggest causes or charities and this was because there was a 13% increase in neutral responses to this question.
- These questions are unique to SPSO's staff survey and there are therefore no directly comparable questions from external benchmarks

> I don't think the Corporate Social Responsibility strand has really been followed up in a concrete way. There was a bit of confusion about what individual staff members' roles were in this…I think most PSC staff are going to struggle to feel like they can dedicate much time to this kind of thing with the current office caseload is so high. Securing further people resources would allow staff to feel like they could contribute more in this regard.

> The way we run our business is consistent with CSR (green, supporting equal employment initiatives and social enterprises for catering etc.). I don't think we donate employee time or SPSO money to CSR causes, nor would this be an appropriate use of taxpayers money.

↓ 7% difference from 2018/19	No comparative data for 2017/18

A closer look at each theme – Health and Wellbeing

89%

- This was the **highest scoring theme** of the survey
- People feel that health and wellbeing is part of our **culture**, it is **promoted** well in the organisation and there is a very good **awareness** of the initiatives available. The feedback shows that is a workplace where **we are committed to wellbeing** and we **support each other** to achieve positive health and wellbeing.
- There were no areas scoring below 70%.

* Indicates an area of focus for improvements	2020/21	2018/19	2017/18
Health and wellbeing is effectively promoted	91%	69%	N/A
Health and wellbeing is part of our culture	86%	63%	N/A
The SPSO is committed to supporting my health and wellbeing	77%	69%	N/A
People help and support each other at SPSO	98%	94%	N/A
I am supported in my health and wellbeing	84%	NA	N/A
I am aware of the health and wellbeing initiatives available to me	95%	85%	N/A

- Scores in this theme improved compared to 2018/19.
- There was no comparative data for 2017/18 because this was a new section introduced in 2018/19.
- These questions are unique to SPSO's staff survey and there are therefore no equivalent questions from externally benchmarked organisations to compare feedback.

> I have enjoyed working from home as it has allowed me to work more flexibly. I feel I have been productive and would like to do this in the future.

> I have found life in general more stressful as a result of the pandemic - work stress has contributed to this but has not been the only stress.

> I do enjoy homeworking - although I would say it is difficult to take absence for sickness when you know you would otherwise be watching TV or lying down. You are more inclined to work to at least achieve something in the day even though you feel terrible and if you had to travel to the office you would have likely taken an absence.

> Despite excellent support from immediate manager, pressure of work is significant

↑ 13% difference from 2018/19 | No comparative data for 2017/18

A closer look at each theme – Most useful initiatives for wellbeing

81% flexi-time policy

53% flexible working arrangements

34% Lockdown HR and wellbeing FAQs

31% Information, resources, emails

27% Mental health awareness week events

25% Wellbeing Wednesday

23% Employee assistance programme

14% Thrive training and support

A closer look at each theme – Health and Wellbeing (supplementary questions)

- **63%** responded **positively** about their current mental health
- **25%** of people rated their mental health as **fair**
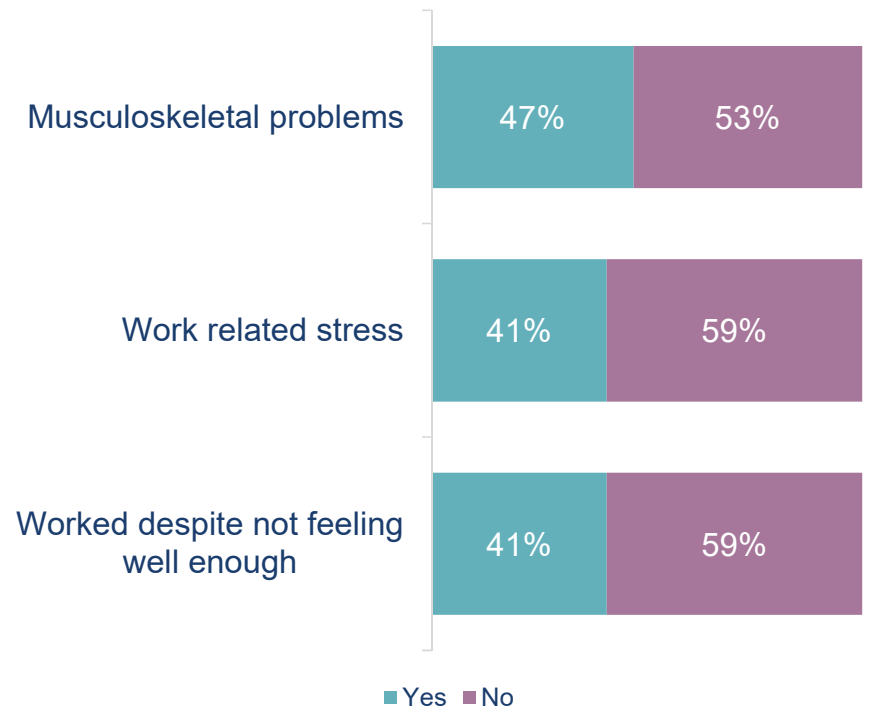- **13%** rated their mental health as currently **poor**

- **45%** said they **never** or **hardly ever** feel lonely
- **52%** said they **occasionally** or **some of the time** feel lonely
- **3%** said they **often** or **always** feel lonely

- **63%** responded **positively** about their current physical health
- **33%** of people rated their physical health as **fair**
- **5%** rated their current physical health as **poor**

In the last 12 months, people have reported experiencing...

	Yes	No
Musculoskeletal problems	47%	53%
Work related stress	41%	59%
Worked despite not feeling well enough	41%	59%

■ Yes ■ No

Feedback is broadly in line with feedback reported by external comparators apart from 1 area – SPSO staff report higher instances of musculoskeletal problems
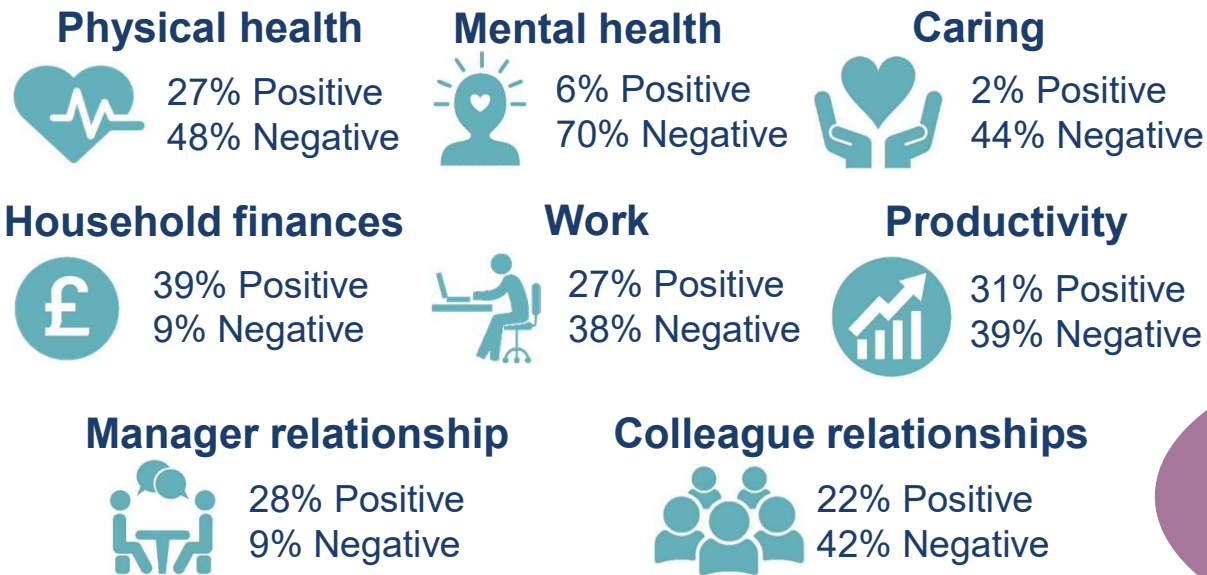
A closer look at each theme – Covid-19 impacts
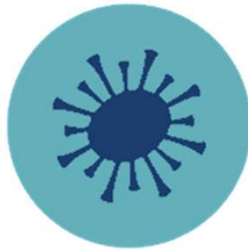
SPSO staff have reported being unable to work because...

- **19%** experienced other issues/disruption due to Covid-19
- **16%** had caring responsibilities due to Covid-19
- **13%** had to quarantine/self-isolate for Covid-19
- **8%** had symptoms of Covid-19
- **30%** for a reason not related to Covid-19
- **47%** not applicable

I am very grateful for the support my manager has given me both professionally and personally during the COVID 19 pandemic.

The impact that Covid-19 has had on people has been far-reaching:

Physical health
27% Positive
48% Negative

Mental health
6% Positive
70% Negative

Caring
2% Positive
44% Negative

I have ticked fairly negative for some of these answers - however, I would like to caveat that to say the impact for the majority of 2020 was negative but it has improved towards the end of 2020 and my work and productivity in particular is fairly positive now that we, as an office, have almost completely adapted to the change.

Household finances
39% Positive
9% Negative

Work
27% Positive
38% Negative

Productivity
31% Positive
39% Negative

Manager relationship
28% Positive
9% Negative

Colleague relationships
22% Positive
42% Negative

I have missed the day-to-day incidental communication with colleagues that aids thinking and efficiency, and adds to the work-life experience. This has been balanced by the uninterrupted work day when WFH, which has helped in other ways, particularly when producing written work. A balance between the two will be appreciated.

Feedback is broadly in line with feedback reported by external comparators

Conclusions

- Engagement levels have increased by 7% on average compared to the last survey, and they are roughly at the same level as they were in 2017/18 (average 81%) when we received exceptionally positive feedback.

- We can see that there are a number of areas that have improved compared to the last survey. Feedback shows that people are particularly engaged in **leadership style and approach**, **manager support**, **internal communications** and support for **health and wellbeing**. These results are particularly encouraging given the challenges of the last year.

- Some areas have particularly caused dissatisfaction, namely **work volumes** and the impact it has on people's ability to take up **opportunities for csr and l&d**, **people**. Other areas of dissatisfaction relate to **physical resources**, the **challenges of home working**, particularly the impact that this has on our **work relationships**, **targets and standards, accessibility of information, l&d offerings, awareness of csr** and how we **act on feedback** from external stakeholders.

- We have also seen that people's health and wellbeing in the last year along with people's experiences of the pandemic have been broadly similar to the experiences of external comparators.

Your

Voice

Matters

Improvement planning and next steps

- Of those areas identified for improvements, the key areas to address as part of our improvement planning process will include:
  - addressing the challenges of **work volumes** (which impact on morale, health and wellbeing, ability to participate in CSR, L&D activities), the approach to dealing with a backlog of work, maintaining **performance standards,** particularly as we continue to work remotely and how we can improve on the **physical and people resources** available to us;
  - how we continue to overcome the **challenges of home working** like **keeping people connected** and building relationships across the office; continuing to **improve the accessibility of information**, particularly as we continue to work in isolation from each other;
  - how we **act on feedback** from our stakeholders, identify business improvements and implement changes;
  - continuing to **identify individual skills development needs** through the performance development planning process while also linking to wider team training needs and ensuring **workloads allow people to take-up of L&D activities** (L&D);
  - improving **organisational diversity** (Equal opportunities and diversity);
  - Raising awareness, engagement with and investing more time in our **contributions to CSR initiatives to support professional development**.
- This feedback will be combined with feedback and recommendations from the IIP review (mid-2021) to create a detailed improvement plan.
- Linking improvement planning in to the Fair Work First principles and framework to provide effective voice, fulfilment, opportunity, respect and security to SPSO staff.
- With this combined feedback, we'd like to invite representatives from each of the teams to help us to design our improvement plans.

Technical Guidance

Please bear in mind when reading this report:

- **Rounding |** Results are presented as whole numbers for ease of reading, with rounding performed at the last stage of calculation for maximum accuracy. Therefore, in some instances, the differences presented in this report will not match the rounded figures of the scores being compared. For example, where a figure of 69.64% has been returned in the raw data, in this report it will appear as 70% and this will be identified as an area for improvement.

- **Theme scores |** Scores for each individual theme are arrived at by calculating the average percentage of positive responses to the theme's constituent questions.

- **Comparison to historical results |** This year we created 23 questions which were not comparable to previous survey results. For tables that include data for historical survey results, 'N/A' indicates that a comparable question was not included in the survey.

- **Percentages |** Unless otherwise stated, question score percentages shown in this report relate to the proportion of employees providing a positive response.

- **Anonymity |** We have maintained anonymity of the feedback by removing any references to individuals and teams due to the small numbers in some teams which could identify individuals.

SCOTTISH PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN

People Centred | Improvement Focused