



**PUBLIC SERVICE IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK (PSIF) - PEOPLE**

Report by Chief Executive

**PURPOSE OF REPORT** To update the Comhairle on the progress of the programme of self-assessment using PSIF and seek approval of the recommendations following the completion of the self-assessment of People.

**COMPETENCE**

1.1 There are no legal, financial, equalities or other constraints to the recommendation being implemented.

**SUMMARY**

2.1 The Service Change and Improvement Sub Committee approved the 2018/19 programme of self-assessment using the Public Services Improvement Framework (PSIF) in April 2018. The self-assessment on People has now been completed.

2.2 The People self-assessment reviews the effectiveness of people management in relation to the development of individual's work-life balances and the provision of a safe working environment.

2.3 Evidence demonstrates that a range of policies and practices are in place to enable employees to pursue more balanced life and provide a safe working environment. The results of the 2018 Employee Engagement Survey highlight that 59% of respondents feel the health and safety of employees is given a high priority. Furthermore the results show that there is a positive level of awareness of the available employee support mechanisms across the organisation.

2.4 It is also recognised that feedback gained from the employee survey highlights that there are areas where improvements can be supported including communication, continuing to promote of family friendly policies and stress management support and training.

2.5 Based on the information received through this self-assessment exercise the recommendations being made aim to further develop, strengthen and promote current policies and practices.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**3.1 It is recommended that the Comhairle note the completion of the PSIF Self-assessment of People and approve the outcomes detailed in Paragraph 7.1 of the Report.**





Contact Officer: Carmen Macdonald, OD Officer  
Appendix: PSIF Self-Assessment Progress Report  
Background Papers: Nil

## BACKGROUND







- 4.1 Work-life balance is the concept that supports employees to split their time and energy between work and the other important aspects of their lives.
- 4.2 Demographic change appears to be bringing about a shift in how individuals live, work, care and feel. It is widely documented that an increasing number of employees are likely to have caring responsibilities and that many of these employees may be juggling multiple caring roles. Individuals are combining looking after young children with caring for older or disabled loved ones. This is sometimes called ‘sandwich caring’ or ‘dual caring’.
- 4.3 It is reported that the provision of flexible working arrangements can help support employees with caring responsibilities and improve the overall health and well-being of employees. Flexible working arrangements may also positively contribute to a reduction in absenteeism, increasing productivity, and enhancing employee engagement and loyalty. It is also acknowledged that supported, motivated and informed employees can provide a higher quality of service on a more consistent basis.
- 4.4 It is recognised that workplaces can have a significant impact on people’s health and well-being. Organisations have a ‘duty of care’ to provide employees with a safe working environment. Basic things an employer is required to consider include the provision of a healthy and properly maintained working environment, adequate facilities and employee’s mental health, including workplace stress.

## KEY FINDINGS

- 5.1 This self-assessment focused on the Comhairles current provisions, and their effectiveness, to support employees in relation to work-life balances and having a safe working environment.
- 5.2 The Comhairles 2018 Employee Engagement Survey specifically asked employees if they had caring responsibilities, 150 employees reported that they cared for children under 18 and 69 employees reported that they had other caring responsibilities as shown below in figure 1.

<b>Figure 1</b>				
<b>Do you have caring responsibilities?</b>			<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Total</b>
1	Yes (children under 18)		28.36%	150
2	Yes, other		13.04%	69
3	No		49.91%	264
4	Prefer not to answer		8.70%	46

- 5.3 The survey also asked employees if they felt the Comhairles gave the health and safety of employees a high priority, 388 employees, 59% of respondents, agreed that the health and safety of employees is given a high priority. The results are shown below in figure 2.

<b>Figure 2</b>				
<b>The health and safety of employees is given a high priority</b>			<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Total</b>
1	Strongly Agree		19.5%	132
2	Tend to Agree		39.3%	266
3	Neither Agree nor Disagree		23.3%	158
4	Tend to Disagree		10.3%	70
5	Strongly Disagree		7.1%	48
6	Prefer not to answer		0.4%	3

- 5.4 The self-assessment focused on four areas; awareness of the options available to achieve a positive work-life balance, equal opportunities to request changes to working patterns/practices, judging the suitability of work-life balance options for employees and demonstrating a commitment to promoting health awareness. The findings are detailed below under the relevant sub headings.

Awareness of the options available to achieve a positive work-life balance

- 5.5 From a corporate perspective all new employees are provided with an introductory booklet and invited to attend a corporate induction. Employees are directed to the intranet and the employee handbook which contains the full range of employee related policies and procedures. It could therefore be summarised that the information is available but not readily promoted on an on-going basis.
- 5.6 Employee appraisals and supervision sessions do provide employees a formal opportunity to discuss their work-life balance and opportunities available to them. It also provides managers with an opportunity to highlight a range of options open to employees to support them achieving a positive work life balance. Members of the Human Resources team are also able to provide support and information.
- 5.7 The recent Employee Engagement Survey undertaken in 2018 specifically asked employees about their awareness of available support mechanisms in place, the results are detailed in figure 3.

<b>Figure 3</b>				
<b>ARE YOU AWARE OF, OR HAVE YOU USED, THE FOLLOWING SUPPORT MECHANISMS?</b>	<b>Aware of the policy/facility</b>	<b>Have used the policy/facility</b>	<b>Not aware of the policy/facility</b>	<b>Response Total</b>
Right to Request Flexible Working	65.0% (288)	13.3% (59)	21.7% (96)	443
Special Leave – Escorting (Paid)	64.8% (316)	16.2% (79)	19.1% (93)	488
Special Leave – Time off for	73.6% (356)	9.3% (45)	17.1% (83)	484

<b>Figure 3</b>				
<b>ARE YOU AWARE OF, OR HAVE YOU USED, THE FOLLOWING SUPPORT MECHANISMS?</b>	<b>Aware of the policy/facility</b>	<b>Have used the policy/facility</b>	<b>Not aware of the policy/facility</b>	<b>Response Total</b>
Dependants (unpaid)				
Special Leave – Emergency Domestic Situations (unpaid)	71.6% (335)	3.2% (15)	25.2% (118)	468
Special Leave – Unpaid Leave	76.7% (373)	13.4% (65)	9.9% (48)	486
Flexi Time	51.8% (263)	33.1% (168)	15.2% (77)	508
Scheme for Job Sharing	63.0% (291)	3.0% (14)	34.0% (157)	462
Parental Leave	70.2% (322)	3.7% (17)	26.1% (120)	459
Remote Working	50.4% (232)	3.0% (14)	46.5% (214)	460
Career Break	45.3% (209)	1.7% (8)	52.9% (244)	461
Occupations Health Support	63.3% (303)	10.2% (49)	26.5% (127)	479
Access to counselling	57.2% (269)	2.1% (10)	40.6% (191)	470
Workplace health checks	53.0% (250)	6.8% (32)	40.3% (190)	472
Information/sign posting to other support services	48.3% (219)	0.4% (2)	51.2% (232)	453

5.8 This evidences a positive level of awareness across the key support mechanisms but also highlights that the promotion of policies has the potential to increase awareness levels further.

Equal opportunities to request changes to working patterns/practices







5.9 With effect from 30 June 2014 employers have a legal duty to consider applications for flexible working from all employees who have worked for a continuous period of 26 weeks. The Human Resources Section monitors and records applications for flexible working.

5.10 Many employees also work within the Flexible Working Hours Scheme which allows hours to be adjusted to suit personal needs out with set core working times. Other options open to all employees includes a provision to apply for special leave. Requests for special leave are also recorded corporately and reported annually.

- 5.11 It is acknowledged that although that a range of provisions exists that due to the nature of some roles it can be more difficult, for business reasons, to accommodate some requests. All requests are considered on an individual basis in line with the relevant policy.

Judging the suitability of work-life balance options for employees

- 5.12 The recent Employee Engagement Survey undertaken in 2018 specifically asked employees about their work-life balance and 63% of respondents reported that they were satisfied with their work-life balance as shown in figure 4.

Figure 4				
My work life balance			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Very Satisfied		20.6%	140
2	Fairly Satisfied		42.5%	289
3	Neither Satisfied or Dissatisfied		14.0%	95
4	Fairly Dissatisfied		14.3%	97
5	Very Dissatisfied		7.9%	54
6	Prefer not to answer		0.7%	5
			answered	680

- 5.13 Employee appraisals and supervision sessions allow the suitability of work-life balance options to be discussed on a one-to-one basis.
- 5.14 Feedback is can also be gained from staff turnover rates and completed exit surveys. The number of grievance can also provide an insight into levels of employee satisfaction.

Demonstrating a commitment to promoting health awareness

- 5.15 The Comhairle have an internal Occupational Health section which offers impartial advice to employees. Appointments can be made with the Occupational Health Doctor and/or Nurse and they are able to support employees in a number of ways. The service also can advise managers on health conditions in the workplace, including mental health problems and alcohol or substance abuse problems. Health surveillance is also undertaken for groups of employees. The Occupational Health section can assist managers in undertaking risk assessments, either generically or for a particular workplace operation or for a specific employee with a disability or health condition.
- 5.16 Various schemes such as Cycle to Work and Healthy Working Lives are supported by the Comhairle. E-mails are commonly used to communicate and promote health related topics. Posting on the web and prominent displays are also used as a means to share information with employees.
- 5.17 There are a few examples of some successful promotional activities such as the steps challenge in which employees forms team and competed to see how many steps each team could accumulate over a set time period.

## ADDITIONAL FINDINGS

### Safe working environment

- 6.1 All employers have a common-law duty of care to their employees. Every employer has a duty to ensure that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of employees are protected. They must also conduct a risk assessment to identify the measures necessary to comply with the Act and other regulations.
- 6.2 All employers with five or more employees must have a written health and safety policy, which must be brought to the notice of all employees.
- 6.3 Each department with in the Comhairle has a number of safety representatives on departmental or sectional committees. The Comhairle also recognises and works with several trade unions including Unison and Unite. Minutes of each meeting held are reported to the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC).

### Stress

- 6.4 As part of the Employee Engagement Survey 2019 employees were asked questions relating to work and personal stress. Figure 5 and 6 below show that over 30% of respondents feel that stress at work affects their personal life while just over 27% of respondent's report that stress at work affects their performance at work. Regardless of the source of stress it is evident that this is an area that employees may benefit from additional support.

Figure 5 I feel that stress at work is affecting me in my personal life			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly Agree		10.8%	73
2	Tend to Agree		23.1%	156
3	Neither Agree nor Disagree		21.3%	144
4	Tend to Disagree		22.6%	153
5	Strongly Disagree		20.3%	137
6	Prefer not to answer		1.9%	13

Figure 6 I feel that stress at work is affecting my performance at work			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly Agree		5.6%	38
2	Tend to Agree		21.9%	149
3	Neither Agree nor Disagree		24.4%	166
4	Tend to Disagree		25.4%	173
5	Strongly Disagree		21.4%	146
6	Prefer not to answer		1.3%	9

## **CONCLUSIONS**

- 7.1 The information collected throughout this review demonstrates that a range of policies and practices are in place to enable employees to pursue a more balanced life and provide a safe working environment. Feedback gained from the employee survey highlights that there are areas for improvement particularly around communication and continuing to raising awareness. Following the review of effectiveness of people management in relation to the development of individual's work-life balances and the provision of a safe working environment it is proposed to:
- Consider introducing an overarching Employee Health and Wellbeing Strategy to allow a more holistic approach to overall employee wellbeing;
  - Signpost employees to sources of external information including support on caring, childcare and stress management; and
  - Work towards achieving Carer Positive status in order to further support employees and encourage carers to identify themselves and come forward for support if required.

## PSIF SELF-ASSESSMENT PROGRESS REPORT

Assessment	Reporting Year	Section	Criterion (sub) Theme	Progress	Next Report Due
1	2015/16	Customer Results	6(a) Customer Perceptions 6(b) Internal Measures	<p>The first self-assessment using PSIF addressed the cross cutting theme of 'customer services' and concluded with a recommendation to the Continuous Improvement Sub Committee 24 February 2016 to approve that departments use the Scottish Government's consultation approach of "<a href="#">We Asked, You Said, We Did</a>" to inform the business planning processes and evidence improvement planning. To ensure corporate improvement, at its meeting on <a href="#">29 March 2016</a> the Audit and Scrutiny Committee recommended that the Comhairle agree to adopt this approach. <a href="#">Approved 30 March 2016</a>.</p> <p>Nine consultations were identified in 2016/17, the outcomes of which were made available to the public on the Comhairle's new website: <a href="https://www.cne-siar.gov.uk/have-your-say/consultations/">https://www.cne-siar.gov.uk/have-your-say/consultations/</a>. Thereafter, Services will be responsible for ensuring that the outcomes of their respective consultations are uploaded to the Comhairle's new website to inform the community accordingly.</p>	Complete
2	2016/17	Partnerships & Resources	4(b)2 Managing Financial Resources	<p>The second self-assessment addressed the cross cutting theme of 'managing financial resources' and concluded with a recommendation to approve the development of Interplan's risk management module to incorporate departmental operational risk registers for improved monitoring and reporting. To ensure corporate improvement, at its meeting on <a href="#">26 September 2016</a> the Audit and Scrutiny Committee agreed to recommend that the Comhairle note this recommendation. <a href="#">Approved 5 October 2016</a>.</p> <p>An Interplan Risk Manager Working Group was established to deliver this recommendation and consider the most efficient and effective way to get IRM fully functional. The Group concluded that in order to embed continuous improvement with regards to risk, the reporting on of operational risk and actions will be merged with the published quarterly progress reports on service business plans; a process that will also establish links with the Performance Monitoring Group.</p>	Complete



Assessment	Reporting Year	Section	Criterion (sub) Theme	Progress	Next Report Due
3	2016/17	People	3(b)2 Developing People	<p>The cross cutting theme of 'developing people' was approved as the second self-assessment to be undertaken in 2016/17. It is closely related to the themes explored by the Accounts Commission and the Scottish Government's <a href="#">the 3-Step Improvement Framework for Scotland's Public Services</a>. The assessment concluded with a recommendation to approve a review of the Comhairle's Exit Interview Policy that was issued in 2009 to enhance the gathering of management information and subsequent use in strategic planning. To ensure corporate improvement, at its meeting on <a href="#">7 March 2017</a> the Audit and Scrutiny Committee agreed to recommend that there be a review of the Comhairle's Exit Interview Policy. Approved <a href="#">8 March 2017</a>.</p> <p>The Comhairle approved a revised procedure for Exit Interviews in September 2017 which requires to be implemented. The Comhairle will prepare and implement the revised procedure and will monitor and report feedback to the relevant Comhairle Committee. However, the emphasis will be on 'feedback received' and employee participation will be voluntary.</p>	Complete
4	2017/18	Service Planning	2(b)2 Engagement and Consultation with Stakeholders	<p>At its meeting of <a href="#">8 March 2017</a>, the Comhairle approved the next phase of PSIF self-assessments. The first of the three self-assessments approved is C2(b)2: 'Engagement and Consultation with Stakeholders'. The assessment recommended two key areas of improvement, as follows: (1) to include an equalities monitoring form with all consultations to monitor participation rates, including those across the protected characteristics; and (2) that all consultations to be hyperlinked from one Corporate Consultations web page that includes a "We Asked, You Said, We Did" Consultations Outcomes section to communicate back to participants and the wider community. Approved <a href="#">21 June 2017</a></p> <p>(1) An <a href="#">Equalities Monitoring Form for Consultations and Surveys</a> was developed and made available to Departments within the Comhairle's Equality and Diversity webpage. The form is also available to include in consultations for completion online, at: <a href="http://www.surveymoz.com/s/57MZJ/">http://www.surveymoz.com/s/57MZJ/</a>. The information gathered will be used to inform the Comhairle's equality outcomes.</p> <p>(2) Progress update as per Assessment 1.</p>	Complete

Assessment	Reporting Year	Section	Criterion (sub) Theme	Progress	Next Report Due
5	2017/18		2(a)4 Strategy and Plans	<p>At its meeting of <a href="#">8 March 2017</a>, the Comhairle approved the next phase of PSIF self-assessments. The second of the three self-assessments approved is 2(a)4 'Strategy and Plans'. The <a href="#">PSIF review</a> clearly identified how services have considered, developed and implemented both strategic and operational plans with consideration to current and future environmental factors, both internal and external. A key area of work highlighted to be undertaken once the new Corporate Strategy 2017-21 is approved is Service Prioritisation. To demonstrate the link between planned activities and proposed outcomes a metadata form was designed to capture the relevant information to measure and report annually the progress of the Corporate Strategy 2017-21.</p> <p>To ensure corporate improvement, at its meeting on <a href="#">12 December 2017</a> the Audit and Scrutiny Committee recommended that the Comhairle consider the use of the Corporate Strategy 2017-21 Measuring and Reporting Outcomes Metadata Form to support evaluation and reporting on the strategic objectives pertaining to Comhairle services. <a href="#">Approved 13 December 2017.</a></p>	Complete
6	2017/18		2(c)1 Performance Management	<p>The last of the three self-assessments approved by the Comhairle at its meeting of <a href="#">8 March 2017</a> is C2(c)1 Performance Management. The PSIF review evidenced that performance management is effectively developed, scrutinised and challenged within the Comhairle.</p> <p>To ensure corporate improvement, at its meeting on <a href="#">4 April 2018</a> the Service Change and Improvement Sub-Committee agreed to note that consideration would be given to a change to the end of year quality assurance of data to include the requirement for services to evidence what action was proposed to address under performance of KPIs reported in the year-end (Q4) report, which the Audit and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting <a href="#">1 May 2018</a> recommended to the Comhairle for approval. <a href="#">Approved 2 May 2018.</a></p>	Complete

Assessment	Reporting Year	Section	Criterion (sub) Theme	Progress	Next Report Due
7	2018/19	Leadership	<p><u>Criterion 1a</u> Planning for the Future</p> <p><u>Statement 1a5</u> Leaders drive and support improvement and transformational change, maximising the use of tools and opportunities as part of their approach</p>	<p>At its meeting on <a href="#">4 April 2018</a> the Service Change and Improvement Sub-Committee approved the 2018/19 programme of self-assessments.</p> <p>Evidence showed that self-assessment and improvement activities are undertaken in various forms and to various degrees across the organisation and that formal structures ensure that improvement activities are approved and monitored accordingly so there is an on-going level of accountability.</p> <p>Based on the information received through this self-assessment exercise the recommendations being made aim to build on existing levels of communication and to improve two-way dialogue and collaboration with employees and to continue to support and develop managers in response to our changing working environment.</p>	Approval Pending
8	2018/19	People	<p><u>Criterion 3e</u> Recognising and caring for People</p> <p><u>Statement 3e2</u> The service promotes and encourages a work-life balance and provides a safe working environment</p>	<p>At its meeting on <a href="#">4 April 2018</a> the Service Change and Improvement Sub-Committee approved the 2018/19 programme of self-assessments.</p> <p>Members of the PMG group were e-mailed on 11 October 2018 with a request that departmental information be submitted by 1 November 2018.</p> <p>Evidence demonstrates that a range of policies and practices are in place to enable employees to pursue more balanced life and provide a safe working environment. The results of the 2018 Employee Engagement Survey highlight that 59% of respondents feel the health and safety of employees is given a high priority. Furthermore the results show that there is a positive level of awareness of the available employee support mechanisms across the organisation.</p> <p>It is also recognised that feedback gained from the employee survey highlights that there are areas where improvements can be supported including communication, continuing to promote of family friendly policies and stress management support and training.</p> <p>Based on the information received through this self-assessment exercise the recommendations being made aim to further develop, strengthen and promote current policies and practices.</p>	Approval Pending

Assessment	Reporting Year	Section	Criterion (sub) Theme	Progress	Next Report Due
9	2018/19	Processes and Services	<p><u>Criterion 5b</u> Developing Services Around Customer Needs</p> <p><u>Statement 5b2</u> The service analyses the way that customers use and access services and uses this information to make improvements</p>	At its meeting on <a href="#">4 April 2018</a> the Service Change and Improvement Sub-Committee approved the 2018/19 programme of self-assessments.	June 2019