

# INVESTORS IN PEOPLE®

We invest in people



## Feedback

### The Growth Company

Project number: CEN-22-00311

Practitioners: Bob Morrison and Howard Jones

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# You did it!

## INVESTORS IN PEOPLE™

We invest in people Gold

You're at the Gold level of our We invest in people accreditation. This is a significant improvement on your last assessment in 2019 when you achieved Silver.

### Detailed feedback and recommendations inside...

- What to be proud of
- What to work on
- Our recommendations
- What's next

## Key dates

Accreditation date	12-month meeting	24-month meeting	Accreditation expiry
29/7/22	28/6/23	28/6/24	28/6/25

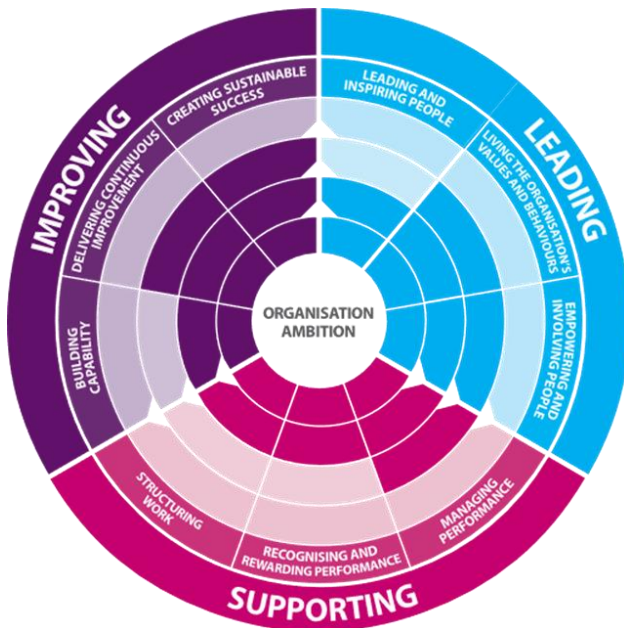
## Thank-you!

We would like to thank everyone that we met for their warm hospitality and candour during the assessment. We especially thank Virginie Ghaznavi and her colleagues for making the arrangements for the survey and interviews which went so smoothly.

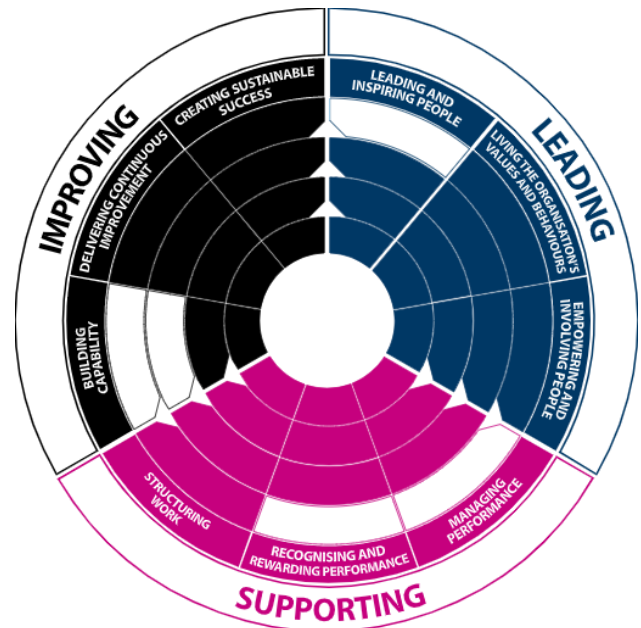
*Bob Morrison and Howard Jones*  
Investors in People Practitioners

# At a glance

2019 Final Heatmap



2022 Final Heatmap



Since the last assessment in 2019, you have made significant improvements seven of the nine indicators of performance resulting in your accreditation moving from Silver to Gold. These have been achieved through continuous improvement, a strengthening of consistency in management practices, and the raising the level of engagement with people across all locations.

Your improvements are more remarkable because they were sustained and, in some ways, enhanced by how you traversed the challenges of the pandemic with resilience. People feel trusted and empowered to take individual and collective responsibility for performance and achieving your outcomes. Managers are more effective and consistent in promoting and enabling a high-performance culture based on your ambition and values.

One of the most notable improvements since 2019 has been the way people proudly identify themselves with The Growth Company instead of its constituent divisions. They are stronger together and share a passion for supporting the communities you work within.

Clear communication of your priorities and the context of your services, combined with improved access to performance information and internal communications. ensures people can make timely, informed decisions to meet the changing needs of your clients whilst remaining compliant and focused on high standards. Your people management strategies are more cohesive and focused on your outcomes. The development of wellbeing and EDI policies and practices have enabled a deeper understanding of human behaviour and motivation that enriches your values and ability to appreciate different capabilities and needs.

Good access to learning and development opportunities and a more dynamic and robust performance review process are ensuring you make the most of your talents and developing capabilities for the future.

You have many strengths and are well on your journey to establish and sustain a high-performance culture that could achieve Platinum at the next full review due in 2025.

We have made a number of recommendations that include reflecting on your leadership culture, refreshing your reward and recognition strategy, developing succession planning tools, enabling more continuous improvement, revising the role of the ECC and raising the profile of sustainability. Other recommendations are in line with your own plans for improvements.

Interim reviews of your progress will take place in the summers of 2023 and 2024.

# Congratulations on achieving Gold

**You care** about your people, and we know you're ambitious to do even more for them.

Our feedback focuses on what you need to do to keep improving.

## What to be proud of

You have a number of strengths that your people suggested or we identified that set you apart from other employers.

- **Clear organisational vision and purpose** - that is understood and engaging almost everyone. People in all teams are focussed on your priorities and outcomes for success.
- **Pride in the brand and your purpose** - People talked with passion and pride about working with the Growth Company and - A notable shift from only identifying with the constituent Divisions. Many described The Growth Company as a great place to work.
- **Inspirational and reassuring leadership** that is modelled consistently across senior leadership now perceived to be cohesive and focussed on a shared vision. There is a high level of trust in both the Board and SMT.
- **Supportive line management** - Most people feel their line managers are supportive, accessible, and responsive when required. They receive honest feedback and encouragement to perform to the best of their abilities. Line managers are clear about their responsibilities for managing colleagues in line with your values.
- **Trust and empowerment** - People feel they are trusted by managers to drive their own performance, achieve outcomes, and make improvements without seeking permission. Many are encouraged to lead on projects and initiatives regardless of their job role. Your approach to agile working and giving people responsibility on how they plan their day and dress for the occasion have strengthened your culture of trust.
- **Your core values** - have matured and inform your working culture including decision making. Stronger together was frequently highlighted as a value that has encouraged collaboration and pride in the organisation.
- **Performance review** - Your KIT and the new PAL processes have facilitated more dynamic and focussed discussions about performance, setting of stretching objectives and ensure learning and support is being provided in a way that is tailored to needs. People take greater ownership of monitoring their own performance and you can monitor compliance so no-one is left out.
- **Access to a range of effective learning solutions** - Improvements to your learning platform, the range of activities and greater involvement by managers in developing and focussing provision ensures that people have access to a rich blend of good quality learning events and qualifications. Coaching and mentoring is becoming more prevalent and part of blended learning plans.

- **Collaboration** - Aided by greater use of MS Teams and improved communications, people are both encouraged and enabled to network and work across teams to resolve problems, plan for new contracts, and improve processes in pursuit of your aims and reflecting your values. You increasingly consult on key issues and involve people in developing solutions.
- **Change and continuous improvement** - People are actively encouraged to embrace change, be innovative and look for opportunities to improve. They understand the need to evolve and adapt to changing markets, expectations, and opportunities to maintain your reputation and ambition.
- **Performance data** - Most people have access to timely information on performance data and feedback with several reporting improvements on how this is analysed and presented in graphical format. Some would like more access and you are responding by improving your MI systems and IT infrastructure.
- **Understanding your impact on society** - Your business updates and internal communications include information on your key outcomes and how these are having a positive impact on the individuals, businesses, and communities that you support. People know they are making a difference. You are also improving how you report on sustainability and diversity.



# Our key recommendations

We've considered **who you are** and **where you are** as an organisation. Our recommendations are designed to get you **where you want to be based on your ambition**.

## Define and embed High Performance Leadership culture that is fit for the future.

You have successfully developed a leadership culture that encourages greater trust and empowerment in teams and inspires many to go the extra mile. Your ambition is to fully embed and sustain a high-performance culture. There remain some inconsistent and dissonant management practices which need to be addressed. These are more noticeable by staff due to the wealth of good practice in many parts of the business.

This would be an opportune time to reflect on and refine the leadership capabilities you need to achieve your ambition at strategic tactical and operational levels. These could be used to inform the identification and development of potential leaders of the future, the on-boarding of new leaders and managers, developing behavioural toolkits, encouraging peer mentoring groups and reflective practice, expanding 360- and 180-degree feedback.

You could also take a more robust approach to dealing with dissonant management practices

## Leadership visibility

The pandemic restricted the ability of leaders to physically visit locations although virtual briefings enabled more people to experience and engage with some senior leaders. Whilst it is challenging to visit all locations, many in more remote offices and centres indicated that senior leaders could be more visible and take time to listen to staff when attending meetings or visiting sites.

## Continue to improve internal communications

As you recover from the pandemic restrictions and evolve hybrid working practices, you will need to adjust your use of internal communications. People reported receiving high levels of emails that were not relevant to them, too lengthy or where key messages were lost. Despite your efforts to reduce the amount and frequency of MS Teams meetings there are reports of too many happening for them all to be effective.

Consider undertaking a review of your communications channels, guidance and toolkits. Encourage teams to explore what they need to know from other parts of the organisation including their purpose and services.

Planned improvements to IT systems will also help to enhance internal communications.

## Re-engage with social cohesion

The pandemic displaced opportunities for people to physically meet, exchange ideas, and celebrate their successes. Some teams have started to restart social activities, awaydays and charitable work such as volunteering as a team. Encourage more teams to think about their social wellbeing and cohesion and enable managers to plan social events and awaydays.

## Reward and Recognition Strategy

There are mixed and confusing messages about the range of rewards and benefits you provide and perceptions that pay, reward or access to a bonus is not equitable. Some of these are due to a lack of communication or managing expectations about the limitations of some contracts on providing incentives or rewards. The current economic climate and costs of living crisis is fuelling anxiety about levels of remuneration, although people recognise the efforts of the leadership to mitigate the impact where possible.

Consider involving people in reviewing and refreshing your reward strategy and how it is communicated. There were suggestions that the Star awards could be refreshed and include Team awards. Explore the potential of providing total rewards statements and/or highlighting the value of your additional benefits. Ensure that line managers manage expectations and address any concerns.

## Resource management and succession planning

Whilst many people have successfully progressed their careers, there were indications that some managers struggle to find the right capabilities to quickly fill vacancies or new contracts for critical or unique roles. Some teams feel they are under-resourced although this is in part due to the current challenges in recruiting people. There were also examples of people feeling they were unable to secure roles despite being told they have the ability. Some managers felt that succession planning had moved to the back burner during the pandemic.

Consider reviewing your succession and talent management strategies and develop toolkits and guidance that enable more structured review of future resource needs, provide career pathway guidance, and help to manage expectations of those with ambition to progress.

## Revisit staff consultation and the role of the ECC

Greater transparency, increased empowerment, and ability to communicate more widely and swiftly through technology, has enabled leaders to seek and receive views more directly so there is less of a need for representative groups such as the ECC to be consulted on some issues. Several staff were unaware of who their representative is or the outcomes of their meetings.

Consider involving the ECC in revisiting their role, remit, and responsibilities. Seek input from staff and refresh the terms of reference and role description of representatives.

## **Continue to develop and support your Hybrid working model**

There remains some misunderstanding and inconsistencies about how hybrid and flexible working operates in areas across the company and how it relates to the different operational needs of teams and locations. This is causing some resentment where there are fewer opportunities, or where colleagues in other parts of the Group do not appreciate the differences. Some new recruits were attracted to your flexible model and have been put in roles that require them to work every day in their workplace.

Ensure managers address these concerns and are consistent in how they enable flexibilities. Check that policies and procedures are aligned with hybrid working practices.

## **Develop continuous improvement tools and procedures**

There are opportunities to further improve processes and explore innovation that would help address some resource issues and delays in procedures.

Consider developing improvement toolkits borrowing from the principles of good project management, agile and lean process development, and evidence-based analysis.

## **Raise the profile of sustainability**

You have clear targets regarding the carbon footprint and policies to support sustainability but few were aware of your progress and several mentioned that this was an area of increasing importance to current and future employees alongside EDI.

Consider how you can more actively promote your policies and progress with sustainability targets. Seek out potential champions to help you explore other ways to develop your sustainability policies.

## **Continue to enhance access to specialist learning opportunities.**

Whilst there were several examples where specialist training and qualifications have been arranged and resourced there were a number of people with similar needs who were told there was no budget or procedure to support anything outside the core offering. A small number of these people were considering leaving the company for other employers offering access to qualifications and accreditations. Some were also unsure of where to go for advice on additional learning, despite guidance being available online and through HR/OD specialists.

Ensure all line managers are aware of your policies on accessing specialist learning and that resourcing adapts to critical needs.

## **Make sure that you monitor the impact of your people strategy on performance**

If your ambition is to achieve Platinum at the next assessment and sustain a high-performance culture, make sure that you continue to monitor and evaluate the impact of your people management and development processes on the performance of the organisation.

Consider developing a regular impact report of progress with your People Strategy showing trends over time and linked to your KPIs, Values and ambition.

# What's next?

When you've had a chance to read this report, we'll explain your results in our **feedback meeting**.

## WHO?

The meeting will include senior leaders, members of your People team, Bob Morrison and Howard Jones.

## WHEN?

The feedback meeting is scheduled for **26<sup>th</sup> September 2022**

## WHERE?

We'll meet via MS Teams

## WHAT?

Together, we'll...

- **discuss your result** and our recommendations in detail.
- brainstorm how to turn our recommendations into **tangible activities**.
- develop an **action plan**, which we'll be able to review one and two years on.

# To keep your accreditation, you need to:

- keep meeting (or exceed!) the **requirements** of your award.
- meet us **12 and 24 months** down the line. We won't be assessing you again, but it'll give us the chance to **chat through your progress** against your action plan.
- be **reassessed** no more than three years on from this assessment.

# Don't forget to celebrate!

**Let your people know** how you did. **Reward them** for their hard work and **include them** in the journey you're on.

# Assessment results

## Your results by indicator

Compared to your last assessment, you've moved up one level for six indicators and two levels on one indicator. Nearly all themes have improved and those that have not been met are either due to inconsistencies or that they have not embedded and matured sufficiently. Your own assessment was close to the final outcome and suggests that you have a good understanding of where improvements could be made.

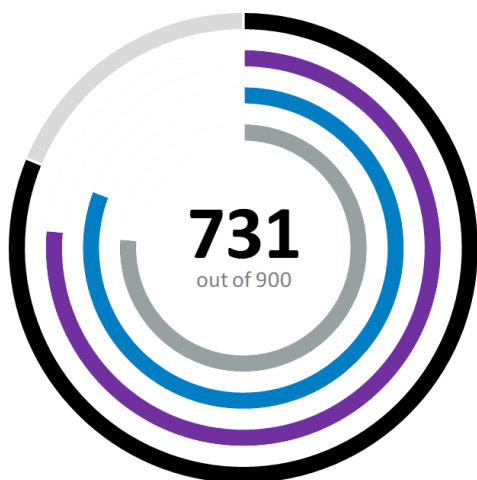
Final outcome against 27 themes		Developed	Established	Advanced	High Performing
Note: Lowest theme level dictates final indicator outcome					
Indicator	Theme	Developed	Established	Advanced	High Performing
1 Leading and inspiring people	Creating transparency and trust	Developed	Established	Advanced	High Performing
	Motivating people to deliver the organisation's objectives	Developed	Established	Advanced	High Performing
	Developing leadership capability	Developed	Established	Advanced	High Performing
2 Living the organisation's values and behaviours	Operating in line with the values	Developed	Established	Advanced	High Performing
	Adopting the values	Developed	Established	Advanced	High Performing
	Living the values	Developed	Established	Advanced	High Performing
3 Empowering and involving people	Empowering people	Developed	Established	Advanced	High Performing
	Participating and collaborating	Developed	Established	Advanced	High Performing
	Making decisions	Developed	Established	Advanced	High Performing
4 Managing performance	Setting objectives	Developed	Established	Advanced	High Performing
	Encouraging high performance	Developed	Established	Advanced	High Performing
	Measuring and assessing performance	Developed	Established	Advanced	High Performing
5 Recognising and rewarding high performance	Designing an approach to recognition and reward	Developed	Established	Advanced	High Performing
	Adopting a culture of recognition	Developed	Established	Advanced	High Performing
	Recognising and rewarding people	Developed	Established	Advanced	High Performing
6 Structuring work	Designing roles	Developed	Established	Advanced	High Performing
	Creating autonomy in roles	Developed	Established	Advanced	High Performing
	Enabling collaborative working	Developed	Established	Advanced	High Performing
7 Building capability	Understanding people's potential	Developed	Established	Advanced	High Performing
	Supporting learning and development	Developed	Established	Advanced	High Performing
	Deploying the right people at the right time	Developed	Established	Advanced	High Performing
8 Delivering continuous improvement	Improving through internal and external sources	Developed	Established	Advanced	High Performing
	Creating a culture of continuous improvement	Developed	Established	Advanced	High Performing
	Encouraging innovation	Developed	Established	Advanced	High Performing
9 Creating sustainable success	Focusing on the future	Developed	Established	Advanced	High Performing
	Embracing change	Developed	Established	Advanced	High Performing
	Understanding the external context	Developed	Established	Advanced	High Performing

# Survey highlights

Your overall benchmark is informed by the core questions in the survey and collated into a total of 900 points (100 points for each indicator).

Your score is good and just above the Investors in People average and well above the sector average. There has been a marked improvement on the 2019 outcome having gained 43 points. The typical range for Gold accredited organisations is currently between 720 and 793.

## Your overall survey benchmark score



The Growth Company Benchmark 2022

● **731**

The Growth Company Benchmark 2019

● **688**

Average IIP Benchmark

● **727**

Average Benchmark for Public Administration and Defence

● **686**

## Who took the survey?

The response rate is above the minimum we require for the results to be valid and representative. The rate has improved on the response of 47% in 2019.

Team	Responses	Headcount	% Response	100%
B2B	23	26	88%	
BSBF	213	404	53%	
Corporate Services	92	141	65%	
Ekosgen	8	12	67%	
Employment	433	749	58%	
Marketing Manchester	29	34	85%	
Skills	228	285	80%	
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>1026</b>	<b>1651</b>	<b>62%</b>	

# Your survey results by indicator

Each indicator is informed by four or five questions. The results are collated into a benchmark on a scale from 1 to 7. A score of 7 would be achieved if 100% gave a score of *Strongly agree*. Whilst three indicators scored just below the Investors in People averages, all indicators scored above the sector and your scores for 2019

## Indicator summary

								Ave	IIP	Sector	2019
	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Average Indicator Score	Difference from IIP Average	Industry	Previous surveys
INDICATOR 1 Leading and inspiring people	24.4%	40.0%	15.7%	9.9%	4.4%	3.4%	2.1%	5.5	-0.1	+0.4	+0.4
INDICATOR 2 Living the organisation's values and behaviours	41.1%	40.2%	10.4%	4.9%	1.6%	1.0%	0.8%	6.1	+0.2	+0.5	+0.3
INDICATOR 3 Empowering and involving people	31.3%	38.4%	15.5%	4.6%	4.7%	3.1%	2.3%	5.7	-0.1	+0.3	+0.3
INDICATOR 4 Managing performance	38.1%	39.1%	9.9%	5.6%	2.7%	2.8%	1.9%	5.9	+0.1	+0.4	+0.2
INDICATOR 5 Recognising and rewarding high performance	19.5%	32.6%	18.3%	11.8%	7.3%	6.1%	4.4%	5.1	-0.0	+0.4	+0.7
INDICATOR 6 Structuring work	31.7%	42.2%	14.0%	6.2%	2.8%	1.7%	1.4%	5.8	-0.1	+0.2	+0.3
INDICATOR 7 Building capability	23.0%	38.9%	18.9%	9.4%	3.9%	3.2%	2.6%	5.5	-0.1	+0.3	+0.4
INDICATOR 8 Delivering continuous improvement	25.4%	43.6%	17.0%	8.7%	2.0%	1.9%	1.3%	5.7	+0.1	+0.4	+0.3
INDICATOR 9 Creating sustainable success	35.3%	38.7%	13.1%	8.1%	1.9%	1.7%	1.1%	5.9	+0.1	+0.4	+0.2

# Your survey results by theme

Each of the nine indicator is made up of three themes creating a total of 27. These are the top and bottom five scoring indicators.

## Themes (Highs and lows)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Average Score	Difference from IIP Average
<b>Highs</b>									
<b>Adopting the values</b> <small>INDICATOR 2: Living the organisation's values and behaviours</small>	48.9%	40.5%	6.5%	2.2%	0.6%	0.6%	0.7%	6.3	+0.2
<b>Understanding the external context</b> <small>INDICATOR 9: Creating sustainable success</small>	46.0%	36.7%	9.8%	5.5%	0.5%	1.1%	0.4%	6.2	+0.3
<b>Measuring and assessing performance</b> <small>INDICATOR 4: Managing performance</small>	44.5%	39.5%	6.7%	3.8%	1.2%	2.5%	1.8%	6.1	+0.4
<b>Enabling collaborative working</b> <small>INDICATOR 6: Structuring work</small>	38.1%	43.9%	10.4%	4.3%	1.6%	0.6%	1.2%	6.1	+0.1
<b>Living the values</b> <small>INDICATOR 2: Living the organisation's values and behaviours</small>	39.9%	39.9%	10.8%	6.9%	1.2%	0.9%	0.4%	6.1	+0.2
<b>Lows</b>									
<b>Participating and collaborating</b> <small>INDICATOR 3: Empowering and involving people</small>	23.4%	32.7%	20.3%	7.9%	6.6%	5.3%	3.8%	5.3	-0.2
<b>Deploying the right people at the right time</b> <small>INDICATOR 7: Building capability</small>	17.4%	39.4%	16.3%	13.4%	5.7%	2.9%	5.0%	5.2	-0.1
<b>Recognising and rewarding people</b> <small>INDICATOR 5: Recognising and rewarding high performance</small>	19.5%	33.2%	18.3%	12.5%	7.0%	5.3%	4.1%	5.1	+0.1
<b>Developing leadership capability</b> <small>INDICATOR 1: Leading and inspiring people</small>	12.1%	36.9%	21.2%	16.3%	6.7%	3.9%	2.8%	5.1	-0.1
<b>Designing an approach to recognition and reward</b> <small>INDICATOR 5: Recognising and rewarding high performance</small>	13.9%	28.0%	19.1%	15.0%	9.6%	8.9%	5.5%	4.7	-0.2



# What your people told us

## Leading

*“We had regular updates from Mark throughout Covid and have an overview of the mission and priorities that relate to our division as well as the main thrust of other parts of The Growth Company.”*

*“I think they (senior leaders) share a lot more about the strategy, the changes in the markets and reasons for the areas we are prioritising. Much more transparent than before.”*

*“The SMT seems to be working together really well - they collaborate more, and this is role modelling the approach for other managers like me.”*

*“Communications have improved - much more information, more focussed on what I need to know and .....much more listening.”*

*“Although we have so many different services and teams, we now work as one organisation with shared goals and values. I think that is clearly communicated by the leadership and in our mission and plans. Much better than a few years ago when we worked in silos.”*

*“If anything, there is too much information now, but at least it is there if we need it. Group emails could be shorter and have a clear indication at the top of the content and who they are intended for.”*

*“My manager’s fine - she trusts me to get on with my work - I’m left alone but I know I can go to her for advice.”*

*“There’s a real inconsistency in the way I’ve been managed this year - my current manager’s been sarcastic and negative. I wouldn’t recommend friends to work here.”*

*“Despite the challenges of COVID, the SLT is more visible now than in my 20 years here - even if it is online.”*

*“As a new manager, it is clear that they want you to focus on getting the best out of your team by involving them and trusting them to get on with the task.”*

*“I’m not 100% sure what they expect of me as a manager - I just get the job done”*

*“I have seen the senior team on video but it would be good to meet them in person at our offices. But I guess it would be too far for them to make the trip worthwhile.”*

*“Growth Company’s values were very important to me in making my decision to join. My interviews were very focused on them - particularly doing the right thing”*

*“The values are challenging, but they align with my own, so I do my best to live by them”*

*“Making a Difference is the value that means the most to me. We work with young people and are focused on helping them achieve their potential”*

*“The scenarios used at my interview were about seeing how I would fit with the team and teasing out my own values.”*

*“The values were uppermost in our minds when we needed to consult with people about potential redundancies. We did everything we could to work together and were able to help everyone get a job.”*

*“Our values are what brings us all together as one organisation. Whichever business you are in, wherever you work, and no matter who you deal with, we all have a shared purpose that is covered by the values.”*

*“There are times when I think we could do better by our values such as when more dealing sensitively with people at the end of contracts.”*

*“Communications here are effective - they’re open and transparent about sharing information about everything.”*

*“The introduction of Power BI is having a positive impact on the data and intelligence we have available to us.”*

*“I’ve had the chance to lead on a course and to work with the wider team, outside my department.”*

*“I am trusted to get on with my job and make decisions without checking in. I know where the limits are who to go to for more guidance. There is trust both ways.”*

*“We control our own diaries and are trusted to manage our time as long as we achieve our outputs.”*

*“I think there needs to be more transparency regarding funding in particular.”*

*“Our manager’s approach is to allow us to decide where we need to be and when, to get the job done.”*

*“I think they could do more consultation when they’re looking to change systems.”*

*“They do consult on a lot of decisions but I am not sure everyone spots the emails inviting comments amongst the mass we all get or there is not enough time to respond.”*

*“The silos of the past have mostly gone. Partly because covid made us work differently, partly because managers are less controlling and partly because there is a clear message from the top about working as one organisation to make a difference. Our customers do not care about which team we are in so why should we?”*

*“We are asked for our input on all sorts of decisions and changes. It is much better than a few years back when we were just told and had to take it and lump it.”*

*“Teamwork and collaboration are really good here. We work well together I can ask anyone for help and get a quick response with willing hands from people I have never met before.”*

# LEADING AND INSPIRING PEOPLE

## 1: Leading and inspiring people

		Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Management communicates the organisation's ambition	2022	26%	45%	16%	6%	3%	3%	2%
	2019	17%	47%	22%	6%	4%	2%	1%
	Diff	9%	-3%	-6%	0%	-1%	0%	1%
I trust the leaders of my organisation	2022	24%	43%	14%	10%	4%	4%	1%
	2019	14%	37%	23%	11%	7%	5%	3%
	Diff	11%	6%	-9%	-2%	-3%	-1%	-2%
My manager motivates me to achieve my best	2022	35%	35%	12%	7%	4%	4%	3%
	2019	29%	32%	15%	10%	5%	4%	5%
	Diff	6%	3%	-3%	-3%	-1%	-1%	-2%
My organisation develops great leaders	2022	12%	37%	21%	16%	7%	4%	3%
	2019	7%	21%	25%	22%	10%	11%	4%
	Diff	6%	16%	-4%	-5%	-3%	-7%	-2%

### People understand your ambition and objectives

86% in the survey confirmed that management communicates the ambition. This was the same result as 2019 but the strength of agreement improved with 26% now strongly agreeing. Everyone interviewed understood your vision, purpose and aims.

Feedback confirms senior management are effectively sharing key overarching objectives and updating progress via regular news updates, coffee sessions with SMT, team meetings, briefings and digital updates.

Leaders are passionate about delivering your objectives and are increasingly motivating people to achieve them.

Nearly everyone understands the Growth Company's overarching objectives and the links to their own division and team so they were confident that they know how they contribute to their achievement. Most managers translate the relevant Group objectives into ones the team can relate.

A minority of managers do not convey any enthusiasm to deliver objectives, provide access to plans and information or take time to reinforce key messages from senior leaders.

### Communications have improved and effective for nearly everyone

Most people confirmed that internal communications have improved since 2019 and have continued to adapt during the pandemic to facilitate new communications, make better use of technology channels and enable hybrid working.

People believe the tone of communications from senior leaders has improved and is more positive and "emotionally intelligent" than the past with more opportunities to listen and

respond positively to contributions.

Nearly everyone felt that the range of communications and blend of meetings at individual, team and divisional levels were well managed and appropriate for their needs with opportunities for constructive dialogue and clarification of messages.

Many felt that the communications worked well in a hybrid working model. But there were some notable exceptions with infrequent team and individual meetings and a tendency for negative or no response from a minority of line managers.

Several people suggested that the volume and length of emails was too great to be effective. In some cases, the intended audience was not clear, key points were buried in the content or they were sent to all when only relevant to one team. There were some good examples of shorter emails with succinct messaging and signposting key information available on the intranet or knowledge databases.

### **Leaders are more visible online creating more trust**

Although there have been few opportunities for people to meet SMT during the pandemic, the increased use of video technology and more frequent updates has improved visibility. Alongside more personal messages about wellbeing and shared experience of the pandemic, leaders have improved levels of transparency and trust. Our survey indicates that trust in leadership has increased from 74% in 2019 to 82% with 24% strongly agreeing.

There were a number that felt there could now be more visibility of leaders in person with greater effort placed on increasing face-to-face dialogue and visiting different locations and teams. People in more remote locations did not think senior leaders would be interested in visiting them. There were also missed opportunities where senior managers attending a meeting in a location could have spent some time in talking with staff.

Whilst there continues to be a high level of trust of senior managers, there are a minority of managers acting inappropriately and unchecked. This is undermining people's trust in them, and to some extent, the efforts made by senior leaders.

### **Managers understand their role in leading and supporting people**

Line managers are generally clear about how they are expected to effectively manage and develop their people. They understand how the corporate values should guide their behaviours and each has a job description which clarifies their responsibilities for recruiting, inducting, performance managing and developing colleagues.

Most believed there was a common approach to leadership that enables people to be trusted and take ownership for their performance. They had not been introduced to the approach in their own training or onboarding of managers but their understanding was informed by the approach modelled by senior leaders, their own preferences and the guidance provided in policies and processes such as recruitment and performance review. A few could recall discussions about leadership behaviour in sessions on coaching.

Most managers have had some form of onboarding to their role but there were some who have not had any introduction except to complete an on-line introduction to policies.

### **Most people believe they are well managed**

Overall, people are confident that leaders and managers are capable and will enable the organisation to achieve its aims and objectives.

People understand what their managers should be doing and are often given the opportunity to provide informal feedback on how well they are led and developed. This happens at KIT meetings, performance reviews and during team meetings. The staff engagement survey also provides feedback that is discussed with teams and in management meetings.

Some line managers of managers seek feedback from teams or use their observations to inform feedback during performance reviews. Some have used 360-degree tools as part of management development programmes.

In our survey, 82% believed that their line manager motivates them to do achieve their best with over a third strongly agreeing. This is a marked improvement on 2019 (76%) during a period when hybrid working has been adopted and more people are working remotely on different days.

Unfortunately, amongst a wealth of good practice, there were some examples of poor practice. These included managers checking people are online at the start and end of the day, not communicating to remote workers, micro-managing decisions, cancelling successive one-to-one meetings and displaying negative behaviour that did not reflect your values.

### You have plans for developing your leadership culture

New leadership and management capabilities have been drafted but not rolled out yet. Senior leaders have undertaken development in reflective practices, coaching and mentoring that could be developed further with other levels of leadership.

There is an appetite for further leadership development despite concerns about time commitments, but some felt there was a need to ensure all managers participate in development activities and place greater emphasis on team feedback being a part of performance review.

## LIVING THE ORGANISATION'S VALUES AND BEHAVIOURS

### 2: Living the organisations values and behaviours

		Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I challenge behaviours which don't match the organisation's values	2022	27%	40%	17%	12%	2%	2%	1%
	2019	18%	40%	20%	15%	4%	4%	0%
	Diff	9%	0%	-2%	-3%	-2%	-2%	0%
My organisation has clear values	2022	50%	39%	7%	2%	1%	1%	1%
	2019	39%	45%	10%	2%	2%	1%	1%
	Diff	11%	-6%	-3%	0%	-2%	-1%	0%
I share my organisation's values	2022	48%	42%	6%	2%	1%	1%	0%
	2019	40%	46%	8%	3%	1%	0%	1%
	Diff	8%	-4%	-2%	-1%	-1%	0%	0%
My behaviour reflects the organisation's values	2022	53%	40%	4%	2%	0%	0%	0%
	2019	45%	45%	6%	4%	0%	0%	0%
	Diff	8%	-5%	-2%	-2%	0%	0%	0%
The values at my organisation guide the way we work	2022	28%	40%	17%	6%	4%	2%	2%
	2019	13%	35%	29%	10%	5%	6%	2%
	Diff	16%	5%	-12%	-4%	-1%	-4%	0%

### You have clear values that are understood by everyone

The values were introduced after wide consultation some years ago and have continued to be promoted and matured through a variety of communications including posters, the intranet, recruitment media and within corporate plans, performance management and induction processes. Managers reference the values in team and KIT meetings. Senior managers mention them in corporate briefings and during induction coffee meetings.

In our survey, a remarkable 96% believed you have clear values with 50% strongly agreeing. This is marginally above the 2019 figure of 94% when only 39% strongly agreed. Everyone in the interviews confirmed they were actively promoted and several recent recruits stated that your values were a positive factor in choosing The Growth Company as a potential employer.

People know and understand the values. The ones which resonate most are *Stronger Together* and *Making a Difference*.

### People are managed in line with the values

Leaders and most managers nurture a culture of openness and trust based on your values which has been accelerated and strengthened by the introduction of hybrid working.

Managers understood the importance of acting in line with the values and promoting them in their meetings with teams and individuals. They gave examples of how they considered how

best to deal with performance issues, structuring teams, celebrating success, and encouraging collaboration in line with the values.

People feel they are led and managed in line with your values. Those who were with the company during the pandemic felt leaders and managers communicated effectively and demonstrated concern for their safety and wellbeing. Supporting and paying for those on furlough were seen as examples of '*Stronger Together*' in practice.

### People share your values with a high degree of passion

Those interviewed agree the values continue to be the right ones for the business and that they provide a framework which enables them to monitor their own behaviours as well as challenge and regulate that of their colleagues and partners. People are highly motivated to behave in line with them, often with a degree of passion.

In our survey, 97% said that they share the values and that they are reflected in the way they behave. They are regarded as a strength of the organisation and the glue that bonds everyone together as one organisation of many parts.

### People live your values

When interviewed, staff at all levels across the organisation could explain how they need to behave when dealing with clients, colleagues and other stakeholders. Examples were shared of not taking contracts with organisations and individuals with very different values to those of the Growth Company.

In the survey, 84% indicated that they challenge inappropriate behaviour and there were examples of how people have reminded colleagues of the values in meetings and politely challenged others including their own managers when the values are being compromised.

People are encouraged informally by colleagues to demonstrate the values. Your performance reviews, KIT meetings and Star Awards provide more formal ways to explore how the values and behaviours are being lived.

### They motivate people go the extra mile

Several people gave examples of how they or their colleagues have gone beyond expectations to deliver high standards or positive outcomes despite challenges and the opportunity to take an easier route.

These included developing relationships with partner organisations and suppliers to provide the best outcome for service users, choosing to work evenings or weekends to ensure services were delivered on time, volunteering to help colleagues on events, instinctively collaborating with other teams to resolve problems and researching alternative sources of information so they can be signposted to clients.

### You make key decisions based on values

Your values inform decision making at the highest-level including Board decisions with senior leaders giving examples of how they stop and reflect to check if key decisions resonate with your values including recent restructuring, managing furlough, deciding on pay reward, major communications events and resourcing.

Other examples included how decisions are made about bidding for contracts, seeking partners and commissioning sub-contracted work.

## EMPOWERING AND INVOLVING PEOPLE

### 3. Empowering and involving people

		Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I am trusted to make decisions in my role	2022	39%	41%	11%	3%	3%	2%	2%
	2019	29%	41%	16%	4%	5%	4%	1%
	Diff	10%	0%	-6%	0%	-2%	-2%	0%
I have a say in decisions that affect my role	2022	23%	33%	20%	8%	7%	5%	4%
	2019	15%	33%	20%	10%	8%	8%	6%
	Diff	8%	0%	1%	-2%	-2%	-3%	-2%
I am encouraged to use initiative in my role	2022	42%	38%	11%	3%	3%	2%	2%
	2019	36%	41%	12%	5%	3%	3%	1%
	Diff	6%	-3%	-1%	-2%	-1%	-1%	1%
I have all the information I need to do my job well	2022	21%	42%	20%	4%	7%	4%	2%
	2019	10%	37%	28%	5%	10%	7%	3%
	Diff	11%	5%	-8%	-1%	-3%	-4%	-1%
<b>Optional Question</b>								
I feel supported by my manager	2022	48%	31%	9%	4%	3%	2%	3%
	Question not asked in 2019							
I understand how my role contributes to the organisation	2022	42%	43%	9%	3%	1%	1%	1%
	Question not asked in 2019							

### People can access the information they need

Most people agree they have all the information they need to do their jobs with improved access to online systems for policies, processes, guidance, and contacts so they can access them wherever they are working. In the survey, 84% indicated that they had all the information they need to do a good job, up from 75% in 2019.

They can also access knowledge databases on shared files and make use of Teams, Yammer and WhatsApp groups to access information about developing projects and lessons gained from past projects. Improvements have been made to business information systems to give access to real time performance data in most areas with plans for further improvement.

The introduction of Microsoft Power BI tools and increased expertise in data analysis established within some teams has enabled people to quickly respond to changes and focus on outcomes.

However, a number of people felt that the IT systems were slow and unreliable, especially when accessing remotely or working in some office locations and training centres away from Lee House.



Most managers share detailed information related to performance, external and internal changes and their anticipated impact on the service or team. Some information is “buried” in long emails or there is so much data, it is difficult to see what to focus on but there were some excellent examples of more focussed and graphical data reports being developed.

People are keen to get back to having more face-to-face meetings and team conferences alongside the virtual interactions that have been a feature during the pandemic.

### People are trusted to manage and improve the way they work.

Nine out of ten (91%) in the survey believe they are trusted to make decisions with 39% strongly agreeing which is 10% more than in 2019, 91% also confirmed that they are encouraged to use their initiative in their role.

“Trust” was a word that many used to describe what it was like to work within The Growth Company. People feel increasingly trusted. Remote working, where it can happen, is helping people feel they are able to make decisions about how they work.

Those interviewed feel empowered to improve the way they work and to take the initiative to ensure they can achieve objectives, make changes to processes within their control and choose the best way to manage their day including where they work from. They are focussed on outcomes rather than process or “traditional” ways of working.

A few felt that there could be more flexibility depending upon their role.

Many are encouraged to take the lead or to get involved in initiatives, projects, and focus groups to research better ways of working or streamline processes. These often form part of their development plans or a particular topic they feel passionate about.

Team meetings often include an invitation for others to get involved in projects or to pick up an issue where performance could be improved. Examples included developing data dashboards, transferring paper-based systems to a digital format. Developing social media campaigns and revising study/assessment guides.

Managers routinely review the levels of decision making with individuals in one-to-one discussions as both confidence and competence develops.

### You encourage collaboration and consultation across teams

According to interviewees there are far more opportunities and greater encouragement to collaborate across teams than three years ago. Many of these opportunities have been made easier through the use of virtual teams, more information about the work of others and invitations to get involved with improving processes that impact on different teams.

SLT members sponsor consultative groups such as your Wellbeing and Diversity groups that enable volunteers and nominees from across the organisation to contribute their ideas and experience whilst developing your policies, practices, and communications.

The Wellbeing Group meets monthly and is developing a comprehensive calendar of activities and reviewing your exit interview process.

### You are listening to feedback

Virtually everyone interviewed felt they are consulted when operational change is planned, and key decisions made. They feel they are asked for their input, managers listen, and their contributions are valued and acted on where practical. Greater effort is made to respond to

feedback from surveys and questions asked via emails or following management briefings. People gave examples of changes to how meetings are managed, procedures adapted and projects extended as a result of their contributions or concerns.

But there were a minority that feel that any comments or suggestions that are escalated by their managers did not get any response or were lost in transit. This was reflected in the survey results where 76% indicated that they have a say in decisions that affect their role whilst 16% did not.

### **The role and responsibilities of the ECC may need refreshing**

You have an active Employee Consultative Committee (ECC) that enjoys constructive and open discussions with senior managers on a range of key issues including hybrid working, reward, HR policies and workplace changes.

But many people are unaware of the role of the ECC and are uncertain about how well their views are represented to senior managers.

Several were unaware of who their local representative is or how to make contact despite information being available on-line. Feedback suggests that the outcomes are not communicated to some teams as well as others.

Some felt there was no need for a consultative body because the organisation was so transparent and managers were accessible whilst others felt there could be better representation from more remote locations.

# Supporting

*“The PAL system’s great - it brings everything together in one place - the HR team has done a great job.”*

*“My objectives are linked to our team and service objectives which are linked all the way up to the corporate plan so everyone is focussed on our mission.”*

*“We have clear measurable targets around arrears - we review progress regularly.”*

*“We have a weekly update so I can keep on track, and I’ve had one formal PDR since I joined The Growth Company - it was very useful.”*

*“We have a very open approach to agreeing priorities.”*

*“The PAL system has massive benefits - it links everything together”*

*“I have lots of opportunities to talk about performance with my line manager. We have regular one-to-one or KIT meetings and then there are the bigger reviews every six months.”*

*“I am mainly responsible for deciding the objectives and keeping an eye on progress. My manager is there to help me and to suggest ones that I had not thought about.”*

*“During my probation, I had regular reviews. Since then, I’m having KIT meetings every month with my manager.”*

*“Our team and individual plans are aligned with the corporate strategy in relation to diversification.”*

*“I think we are far more open about discussing performance than before. I do not feel uncomfortable talking about my mistakes and where I could improve.”*

*“Since we’ve had a new director, there’s much more emphasis on attendance and punctuality which is a good thing.”*

*“I’m happy with the money here and the private healthcare and pension - they’re always flexible if I’ve had to deal with any personal issues.”*

*“The flexibility’s a key benefit for me - I love working at home.”*

*“Our package is good, and our manager often congratulates the team and people individually.”*

*“We have a clear bonus structure in Employment - I get extra money when I achieve target and if I bring on new employers to the Programme.”*

*“I know we cannot have bonuses like other parts of the Growth Company but I think more could be done to recognise our successes.”*

*“Our manager’s great at recognising good performance - she’s very team-oriented - it’s fantastic - I’m happy to stay late if I need to.”*

*“I still think there’s work to do around salary banding and terms and conditions. Some things don’t seem fair and not all managers deal with them the same way.”*

*“Some of our terms are outdated and not competitive. The colleges give better mileage*

*rates and with the cost of fuel, I will probably leave but I will miss working for the company.”*

*“People in the team are rewarded when they behave in line with the values.”*

*“The benefits package is better than other companies doing the same thing.”*

*“We are getting more appreciation from top managers. They are well informed about any achievements or when we have gone the extra mile and take time to send a ‘thank-you’ or ‘well done’ message.”*

*“Our IT systems aren’t the easiest to use - we need to keep investing in them.”*

*“We have a much clearer understanding of our own roles and of other teams we work with. Makes collaboration easier.”*

*“We’re working much more closely with other teams operating in Salford - it’s a good thing.”*

*“I feel we’re under-resourced since COVID - we don’t have enough time to work with individual learners.”*

*“Collaboration’s definitely improving. We’re sharing experiences, making sure we know what other areas are up to and making referrals to other services.”*

*“I can see the opportunities I have to progress and am being encouraged to develop the experience I need.”*

*“I’m acting up and covering the Ops Manager role as part of my development.”*

*“Teams and video have been a great move to help during Covid but the work has been less rewarding because we had to stop the personal contacts. It is beginning to improve.”*

*“We were doing more positive things to help businesses before lockdown. It will be good to get back to making a difference rather than survival.”*

*“We were so fortunate to improve our IT systems before we had to face the pandemic. Or was it good planning? We still need to improve them some more if we are to be as flexible and resilient as we need for the future.”*

*“We have policies and procedures for everything - Easy to access online, easy to read and kept up to date. Covid made us look at them all and make sure they are still relevant.”*

## MANAGING PERFORMANCE

### 4. Managing Performance

		Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
My manager helps me improve my performance	2022	33%	37%	13%	8%	3%	4%	2%
	2019	24%	35%	17%	11%	5%	5%	3%
	Diff	9%	2%	-5%	-3%	-2%	-1%	-2%
I have agreed my objectives with my line manager within the last 12 months	2022	37%	41%	8%	6%	2%	3%	3%
	2019	34%	44%	6%	9%	2%	2%	2%
	Diff	3%	-3%	2%	-3%	0%	0%	1%
I feel encouraged to perform to the best of my abilities	2022	37%	39%	12%	4%	4%	2%	2%
	2019	25%	40%	17%	8%	5%	3%	3%
	Diff	12%	-1%	-4%	-3%	-1%	-1%	-1%
I have discussed my performance with my manager in the last 6 months	2022	45%	40%	7%	4%	1%	3%	2%
	2019	41%	42%	7%	4%	2%	3%	2%
	Diff	4%	-3%	0%	0%	-1%	0%	0%
<b>Optional Question</b>								
My manager provides me with feedback	2022	41%	39%	10%	5%	3%	3%	1%
	Question not asked in 2020							
I take responsibility for monitoring my performance against objectives	2022	44%	44%	6%	4%	1%	1%	1%
	Question not asked in 2020							

### People know what is expected of them and what high performance looks like

Everyone interviewed knew what's expected of them in terms of their responsibilities, standards of performance and the priorities that related to their role. Managers outline and clarify the expectations at induction, throughout probation and when agreeing objectives during Performance and Learning (PAL) reviews. These are revised during the regular one-to-ones and KIT meetings if changes occur or there is a need to refocus performance and standards.

Most people were confident that they understood how they could demonstrate high performance in their role. They gave examples of service levels that go beyond that of competitors, how they could potentially outperform their objectives or improve existing processes and services.

## Most people take responsibility for setting objectives and monitoring their own performance

People are increasingly taking responsibility for monitoring their own performance as access to data and metrics are becoming more available to them. 94% of people in the survey agreed that they took responsibility for monitoring their own performance against their objectives. This level of ownership was reflected in the interviews with nearly everyone describing how they had decided on their own objectives with the support of their manager. A few managers tend to set blanket objectives for the team without discussion or an opportunity to develop tailored objectives.

The quality and focus of objective setting have improved since 2019. Some objectives were common with other team members but these were often blended with tailored objectives aimed at personal development, addressing gaps in skills and knowledge, or following up on an area of interest that would improve efficiency. Several of the objectives were aimed at stretching or broadening capabilities.

## You have made it easier for people to manage their own performance.

Several mentioned that the performance review process had improved. The PAL system has been well received - people find it useful and practical that everything is accessible in the same place and that they can refer to it over time.

Performance review is more dynamic. People do not wait until the end of the year to discuss progress or make changes to objectives. The process and discussions enable people to think about their own performance priorities, how they demonstrate the values and the learning, the support, and resources they need to do a good job and develop their talent.

Regular 121s, informal dialogue, KIT meetings and the formal reviews ensure almost everyone gets feedback on how they're doing regularly. The survey indicated that 89% have received feedback from their manager.

## Compliance levels are good and improving

According to the survey, 86% have agreed objectives within the last 12 months although 91% have discussed their performance in the last 12 months. There were a small number of interviewees that were still waiting for a review although most had a planned date agreed with their manager. These tended to be where new managers have been appointed or role have changed. You are able to monitor compliance through the PAL system so that any delays or gaps can be addressed quickly.

## Managers take time to support people in managing their performance

Most managers described their role as facilitators, coaches and encouragers of performance when asked about how they undertake performance reviews. Managers are investing time in managing performance both formally and informally.

People confirmed that most managers have open and honest conversations about performance including behaviour and expectations where improvement is needed. They were also confident they could go to their manager if they had made mistakes or were struggling to deliver outcomes.

Examples were shared of managers dealing positively and quickly with underperformance in a firm but fair way that encouraged individuals to think about the impact of their efforts, how

they could improve and the support they needed. There were also examples of managers supporting high performers to develop their career opportunities, share their experience as champions or taking on more challenging tasks.

### **You are building the capacity to capture performance data.**

Greater use of engagement and pulse survey data combined with the introduction of PAL will enable you to gather more granular data on performance including aspects of behaviour.

Some managers are using feedback and performance data alongside HR data on attendance and turnover to inform decisions about improving how they manage people. Examples included exploring improvements in outcomes after introducing hybrid working, how well teams behave with respect for each other and enhancing the training available.

Your leadership and management programmes are being evolved in response to performance data analysis.

## RECOGNISING AND REWARDING HIGH PERFORMANCE

### 5. Recognising and rewarding high performance

		Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I am rewarded in ways that match my motivations	2022	14%	28%	19%	15%	10%	9%	6%
	2019	6%	15%	21%	19%	11%	17%	12%
	Diff	8%	13%	-2%	-4%	-1%	-8%	-6%
I feel appreciated for the work I do	2022	25%	36%	17%	7%	6%	5%	4%
	2019	17%	33%	21%	8%	6%	9%	7%
	Diff	9%	3%	-4%	0%	0%	-4%	-3%
I get appropriate recognition for the work I do	2022	19%	35%	18%	11%	8%	5%	4%
	2019	11%	25%	22%	13%	9%	12%	8%
	Diff	8%	10%	-4%	-1%	-2%	-7%	-4%
I am consistently recognised when I exceed expectations	2022	20%	32%	19%	14%	6%	5%	4%
	2019	10%	25%	19%	16%	9%	13%	8%
	Diff	10%	7%	-1%	-3%	-3%	-7%	-4%

### You have a clear approach to recognition and reward

Your approach includes a blend of pay reward, benefits, employee awards and fostering a culture of appreciation. You recognise the value of enabling greater flexibility, encouraging inclusion, fostering wellbeing and creating a great place to work as part of your reward strategy that is informed by feedback and consultation.

Managers have a good understanding of the range of rewards available and the importance of recognising significant achievements and additional effort made by teams and individuals. More senior managers are informed of significant achievements and try to recognise these personally with emails, phone calls and personal visits.

Most people understand how they are rewarded and recognised. The criteria, and the rationale have been communicated effectively and consistently and most people appreciate why the Growth Company is unable to match the packages offered by the private sector or that some contracts and services have limitations to awarding bonuses compared to other parts of the group.

### But there are some that believe there could be improvements

Most of the anomalies regarding salaries noted in the last assessment (2019) appear to have been addressed although there are some people believing their salaries are out of line with others in similar roles in Growth Company that may need to be explored with line managers. Others felt that your bonus systems were inequitable and more could be done to reward high performance and additional effort in divisions and team where bonuses are not contractually possible.



## People feel valued by their colleagues and managers

79% of people in the survey felt appreciated for the work they do with a quarter strongly agreeing. This is an improvement on 2019 when 71% agreed and only 17% strongly agreed. In fact, all of the questions have improved in terms of positive responses and the strength of feeling.

Nearly everyone interviewed felt that they were valued by their clients, their colleagues, and most line managers. Increasingly, people feel that more senior managers are making an effort to show their appreciation in briefings, newsletters, on the intranet and personally.

Several people mentioned that the culture was far more positive than before and any legacy of a blame culture that existed previously had been displaced. The positive messages of appreciation issued during the pandemic, the constructive way pay was managed during furlough and the cost-of-living bonus were key contributors to a feeling of being valued.

Making a difference to your clients and communities is an important motivational factor that compensates for lower pay than may be available in the private sector. Improved communications about the impact you make have helped enhance this aspect of feeling valued.

## Managers tailor their approach to recognition

Managers are increasingly making efforts to tailor the way they acknowledge performance and achievements so they match what motivates individuals and highlights good practice. In our survey, nearly two-thirds (61%) believe they are rewarded in ways that match their motivation which is a marked improvement on the 2019 score of only 41%. Some managers send personalised cards or issue token gifts of appreciation such as vouchers, flowers, chocolates iced buns and bacon rolls. Other have used their discretion to allow extra time off to spend with family. However, the practice is not universal with some managers suggested that there could be some discretionary budget for such tokens of appreciation.

Team awaydays are regarded as a positive benefit that the whole team can enjoy or used to praise colleagues. Several have appreciated the return of these events that had ceased during the pandemic.

## You review your approach

You appreciate that perceptions of reward change over time and across the diversity of your workforce. Senior leaders described how you have increased the frequency of pay reviews and improved benchmarking activity to look at the impact of the economy on existing staff and your potential to recruit and retain the right talent.

Your reviews are informed by feedback from targeted pulse surveys and informal feedback from colleagues whilst keeping an eye on best practice in other organisations

In response to the recovery from the pandemic and the current economic pressures on the costs of living and travelling, you are increasing the frequency of reviews and benchmarking with other organisations. The improvements to benefits and the £500 cost of living payment are examples that have been well received.

You are currently reviewing your Star awards. Feedback from interviews suggests this a timely development with some people unsure if they are continuing or if they apply to their team. There were good examples of localised awards being operated that were tailored to the work and spirit of the team.

## Some are unaware of your benefits

A significant minority of interviewees were unaware of the range of benefits you provide. This included some managers. Those that were most aware tended to be those that have been recently appointed and often indicated the range of benefits including flexibility and support for wellbeing to be better than other employers.

## STRUCTURING WORK

### 6. Structuring work

		Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I am able to develop the skills I need to progress	2022	19%	33%	17%	14%	5%	7%	6%
	2019	14%	33%	22%	13%	9%	6%	4%
	Diff	5%	0%	-5%	1%	-4%	1%	2%
My work is interesting	2022	29%	37%	15%	11%	2%	4%	2%
	2019	32%	45%	13%	6%	2%	3%	0%
	Diff	-3%	-7%	2%	5%	0%	1%	2%
I have the right level of responsibility to do my job effectively	2022	23%	42%	14%	12%	4%	3%	2%
	2019	22%	40%	17%	8%	5%	5%	2%
	Diff	1%	1%	-3%	3%	-1%	-2%	0%
My role enables me to work well with others	2022	31%	45%	12%	10%	1%	1%	1%
	2019	30%	50%	10%	6%	2%	2%	0%
	Diff	1%	-5%	2%	4%	-2%	-1%	1%

### People understand each other's roles and responsibilities

Roles are clearly defined, and are often reviewed during performance reviews, as part of recruitment and in response to major changes in services or contracts. Capabilities are defined for each role and emphasis is placed on values and behaviours. There were lots of examples shared of people accessing job descriptions of roles they may aspire to progress towards within the group including lateral moves to other divisions or roles on a similar pay scale.

### Roles are interesting and enjoyable

Everyone believed their work was interesting and rewarding. This was mostly due to the nature of the service and be able to help clients and make a difference. But they also enjoyed the variety of challenges they face and the autonomy they have in making decisions. Roles define clear decision-making authorities which are reviewed and adjusted in discussions with line managers. So, people are clear about the decisions they can make. Many feel they have greater autonomy as a result of hybrid working. 88% believe they have the right level of responsibility for their role.

However, there were some indications that a few feel frustrated by the limitations on their work caused by the pandemic such as face -to face contact, stalled projects, loss of clients and a move from progressive activity to response and recovery. This was reflected in the survey scores with a drop from 89% in 2019 to 81% of positive scores when asked if their work was interesting.

A few felt that the workload in some areas was affecting motivation where there have been difficulties in recruiting new staff to vacancies. Most believed this would improve as you move on from the pandemic restrictions.

## You are improving your policies and procedures.

Those who have worked at the company for some time feel policies and processes are being streamlined and simplified with several giving examples of how they have been involved with making improvements. Most policies are reviewed when there are changes to contracts and services or when feedback suggests where there is confusion or a need to speed up decision making.

Managers invite teams to suggest improvements and increasingly people are working with other teams and stakeholders to improve processes. The move to hybrid working and adjustments for the pandemic have stimulated more improvements to procedures including the removal of paper-based forms.

There remain a few that feel frustrated by the policies and forms required by your stakeholder partners and contracts but they accept this is difficult to influence.

However, many of those that are new to the organisation comment on how cumbersome and complicated some of your policies and procedures are compared to previous employers.

## IT systems and infrastructure need further development

Most people appreciate the significant investment in IT systems and equipment that has taken place over recent years and applauded how well the organisation responded to the pandemic enabling all to quickly adapt to working remotely.

There were several comments about the limitations and reliability of the current IT infrastructure and software tools. In many ways, expectations have heightened as a result of experiences of working through the pandemic and there is greater reliability on digital systems for information, communication and administering contracts.

Senior leaders are aware of this need and there are plans in place to improve reliability and capacity but only a few people were aware of these and how they will impact on them.

## Collaboration has improved across teams and divisions

People are increasingly encouraged and able to work together to achieve the Growth Company's objectives. This aspect of organisational performance has improved significantly since the last Investors in People assessment.

The survey results indicate a very marginal drop in perceptions of 2% from 90% in 2019 when asked if their role enables people to work well with others. Feedback suggests that this probably reflected the limitations on face-to-face contact or that teams were too busy to fully engage with other colleagues. Some teams have managed to arrange awaydays and workshops with other colleagues that have been well received.

Examples were shared of people in a range of divisions working together to consider and develop bids as well as working more closely to identify opportunities for cross referrals and marketing or sharing good practice and knowledge.

Everyone feels encouraged to work across the business and to develop formal and informal networks. The use of Teams, Zoom and WhatsApp have helped to enhanced collaboration opportunities between people and departments.

Notably, very positive feedback was shared in relation to the support provided by central services with comments made about greater appreciation of the needs of different teams and locations.

# Improving

*“Development opportunities are always shared - we’re encouraged to look for opportunities to progress and develop.”*

*“My induction included GDPR, health and safety and mental health - it was very insightful.”*

*“I don’t think they covered The Growth Company and the other parts in enough depth at my induction.”*

*“I think the training for EEC’s could be improved - it feels like it’s been designed for EA’s, rather than for us.”*

*“Learning is our business and a key part of our working culture. We really are a learning organisation.”*

*“The learning offer is really good but I am not sure what happens if I need something that is not on the system. My manager does not know either.”*

*“My apprenticeship’s going very well. I’ve had great support - they’re always there for me.”*

*“I was promoted to manager last year - although I can access the management portal and have had informal coaching, I don’t think I’ve been given enough training to handle things like recruitment and discipline issues.”*

*“I’ve never seen development like it! People have development plans, they’re given formal training, exposed to new experiences, and supported to take on extra responsibilities so they can grow.”*

*“I think we could do more around succession planning - we’re quite reactive when key people leave.”*

*“Training here’s really good - the team’s very knowledgeable - we help each other learn and keep on top of changes.”*

*“I’ve been supported to achieve IOSHH and am doing the Chartered Management Degree at the moment.”*

*“I’m asked for my ideas - they’re receptive to them and have made changes as a result”*

*“As a team, we’re always bouncing ideas around and looking for better ways to do things.”*

*“It’s come a long way - there’s been massive improvement since I started working here”*

*“We see ESF audits as a way to identify opportunities for improvement.”*

*“They definitely listened to my ideas regarding the equipment we need.”*

*“I am given the freedom to make changes within the limits of the contract and our values.”*

*“They do a lot more listening to our ideas and concerns. And they act if it will improve the service.”*

*“There is far more appetite to try new things because there is nothing left of the blame game when things went wrong.”*

*“When something goes wrong, we work together to find a better way - even if that involves other teams further up or down stream of the process. That never happened a few years back.”*

*“I have learned about Lean Management in a previous place. I think we could do a lot more to improve our processes.”*

*“It is no longer fail, blame and scapegoat. It all about success and learning from any mistakes or problems.”*

*“When I came here, it was a good place to work. Now it is a great place and I hope it will be my forever place.”*

*“Mark has kept us well informed about our future challenges and our opportunities with honesty and clarity. It might not always be flowers but it gives me confidence that I know where we stand and we have a future.”*

*“I can’t think of anything they can do better. If there was, I think they would do something about it or tell me why they can’t.”*

*“I’m loving my job - the culture’s great and I’m getting so much support.”*

*“We’re much better at evaluating change and we’re prepared to learn lessons.”*

*“It’s an overwhelmingly positive place to work.”*

*“I like the fact that our priorities are centred around making a difference in the North. It makes me proud of what we do for people in my own community.”*

*“They care about my wellbeing and are friendly and professional.”*

*“The effort they put into inclusion, wellbeing, flexibility and giving us ownership says a lot about how much they value people. Ten times better than anywhere I have worked.”*

*“We need to ensure all departments are focused on sustainability and on our environmental impact. It is one of our priorities for the future”*

*“We are not just staff - we are one big family!”*

# BUILDING CAPABILITY

## 7 Building Capability

		Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I make use of my organisation's learning and development	2022	20%	35%	24%	12%	5%	4%	1%
	2019	10%	29%	24%	19%	7%	10%	3%
	Diff	10%	6%	0%	-7%	-2%	-6%	-2%
I have opportunities to learn at work	2022	25%	40%	20%	6%	3%	3%	3%
	2019	16%	40%	21%	9%	6%	4%	3%
	Diff	9%	1%	-2%	-3%	-3%	-1%	-1%
I know how my organisation invests in learning & development	2022	25%	39%	20%	6%	4%	4%	2%
	2019	14%	37%	25%	8%	7%	6%	3%
	Diff	11%	3%	-5%	-2%	-3%	-3%	-1%
My manager thinks it is important that I develop my skills	2022	28%	41%	16%	9%	3%	2%	2%
	2019	20%	38%	17%	15%	5%	3%	2%
	Diff	7%	3%	-2%	-6%	-2%	0%	0%
People are selected for roles based on their skills and abilities	2022	17%	39%	16%	13%	6%	3%	5%
	2019	10%	34%	18%	16%	10%	7%	5%
	Diff	8%	5%	-2%	-3%	-5%	-4%	0%
<b>Optional Question</b>								
I believe the recruitment and selection process is fair	2022	22%	40%	13%	15%	4%	2%	4%
		Question not asked in 2019						

## Everyone has an opportunity to discuss their development needs and aspirations

Most managers make time to explore learning needs for both the current role and potential progression. Formal and informal dialogue takes place to discuss and identify learning and development needs and preferences for how they can be supported. Nearly everyone believed they could approach their manager at any time to arrange additional learning or get guidance on career progression. 84% believe that their manager thinks it is important that they develop their skills. This was a marked improvement on 2019 scores of 76%.

## There are good opportunities to develop

People feel there's an improvement in the range of learning opportunities available through your learning platform and an increased investment in formal courses and professional or technical qualifications.

A range of mandatory and generic opportunities are provided through a blend of courses and e-learning. These are accessible by everyone interviewed and are viewed as interesting, of good quality and relevant.

Increased use of coaching and mentoring alongside more shadowing opportunities as you exit

from the pandemic restrictions has helped establish a richer and ever-present learning culture that encourages more people to develop their talents and take greater ownership of their learning and development.

85% believe they have opportunities to learn at work compared to 77% in 2019 and 78% say they make use of the opportunities - up from 63% in 2019. Feedback suggests that those that do not make use of the opportunities are too busy to take them up or felt that there was nothing available to meet their needs.

### **You enable people to plan and embed their learning**

Development advice is available via the intranet, HR team, learning specialists, managers and experienced colleagues. This included guidance on finding appropriate qualifications, specialist training, career development and alternative ways of learning. Everyone was confident they know where to access information and support when they need it. HR and learning specialist were quoted as being highly responsive and supportive.

There were several examples of teams discussing collective learning needs and sharing guidance with customised learning programmes and events being organised.

Most managers are diligent in quickly following up on learning events, discussing the outcomes, and encouraging colleagues to put new knowledge and skills into practice so they can be embedded. They arrange additional coaching, temporary assignments, shadowing and presenting knowledge to others.

Those with leadership aspirations have been given opportunities to act up in meetings or temporarily lead on an aspect of service provision and improvements.

Immediate evaluation takes place with participants having the opportunity to feedback on the quality and relevance of the activity. A number of online programmes include tests to validate learning. Whole team development activities and programmes often conclude with an evaluation of the effectiveness and in some cases, the impact on performance.

### **Learning is part of your culture**

Most people indicated that your approach to learning has improved with more accessible opportunities, better and wider provision, and more resourcing of specialist needs.

The increase in learning, guidance and support for EDI, wellbeing and communications has enhanced awareness of behavioural aspects of performance and learning alongside a more positive culture when responding to mistakes and underperformance have improved everyone's confidence in exploring their own performance needs regardless of their experience and level of responsibility.

Senior leaders are seen to be good role models for continuous learning having shared their own experiences and actively engaging in learning programmes.

There were some areas where access to specialist training and qualifications was perceived to be unavailable due to resourcing restrictions or uncertainty about how to arrange anything that was not on the core offering. This contrasted with several examples of people being supported with costs or time or a both.

### **You aim to recruit the right people with the right skills and behaviours.**

Recruitment and selection processes are regarded as transparent, fair, and effective. A range of assessment techniques are used to confirm candidate capabilities and ambition. They include competence-based questions, exploring synergy with your values and appropriate tests



based on the role requirements. Managers involved with recruitment are aware of their responsibilities for fair recruitment practices including awareness of unconscious bias. They are supported by HR colleagues where needed.

Roles are advertised internally although some interviewees were unaware of the vacancies available outside of their team or service. Internal applicants were required to demonstrate their abilities in the same way as external candidates. Guidance was given to internal candidates on the process and most received feedback if they were unsuccessful.

Successful applicants felt the process was well managed often providing opportunity to ask questions, tour premises and meet others before making a decision. Some felt the process could be quicker in a market where competition for jobs is strong.

## You plan for the people and capabilities you need

In most areas there are occasional meetings of managers to review and plan the resources needed for now and the future. Typically, new contracts and services include a resource plan for structure, headcount, and capabilities.

Examples of company and team resource planning were shared although managers were unclear as to whether the company has an overall resourcing strategy and plan for the future. The current competition for skills has required more frequent discussions about resourcing and some restructuring including multiskilling individuals to cover other roles.

The Restart contract involved an extensive recruitment programme. Those recruited and oriented as part of it feel it's been managed well despite challenges understanding exactly what was required at the start.

Whilst there was evidence of succession planning in operational areas and there is a general trend to develop leadership capacity, there was mostly anecdotal evidence of succession planning and talent management at a group-wide level and for tactical and strategic roles. Some teams felt that more could be done to develop future talents to cover succession to critical roles before people retire or leave for other employers.

Existing plans to develop succession planning have been delayed whilst responding to the pandemic.

## DELIVERING CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

### 8. Delivering Continuous improvement

		Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I look for improvement ideas from my colleagues	2022	31%	46%	15%	6%	1%	1%	1%
	2019	26%	48%	16%	6%	2%	2%	0%
	Diff	5%	-2%	-1%	-1%	-1%	-1%	0%
I am trusted to try new approaches in the way I work	2022	27%	44%	15%	8%	3%	2%	2%
	2019	21%	39%	19%	11%	4%	4%	2%
	Diff	6%	5%	-5%	-2%	-1%	-3%	0%
I am responsible for improving the way we do things	2022	21%	38%	23%	12%	2%	3%	2%
	2019	15%	31%	30%	11%	6%	5%	2%
	Diff	6%	7%	-7%	1%	-4%	-1%	-1%
I am encouraged to improve the way I do things	2022	23%	47%	16%	9%	2%	2%	1%
	2019	19%	39%	23%	11%	4%	2%	2%
	Diff	4%	8%	-7%	-1%	-2%	-1%	-1%

### You promote and encourage continuous improvement and innovation

Although many of your contracts and services are prescribed by partners and stakeholders, you encourage teams to find better and more innovative ways to work and deliver outcomes. Several people indicated that your partners regard you as an organisation that is innovative and does not rest on tradition or routine.

86% of people in the survey believe that you encourage improvement and this resonated with feedback from interviewees confirming that they are frequently asked for ideas on how to improve. Articles in newsletters and online highlight aspects of improvement and innovation and senior leaders often encourage people to come up with better ways to deliver services, work and be an employer of choice.

### You look for ideas from within and outside the organisation.

Leaders, managers, and staff are actively involved in a range of networks and professional organisations which ensures they are constantly bringing in new ideas to improve performance. These include your existing stakeholder networks, professional bodies and participating in regional, national and international conferences to explore emerging innovations, look at best practice and benchmark.

Several people are involved with representing The Growth Company in networks of providers and working groups. Prior to the pandemic there were examples of people visiting other organizations to share ideas and explore alternative ways of working.

Some learning activities include webinars, vlogs and articles about changes in employment trends, workforce expectations, diversity, sustainability, emerging technologies and leadership practices.

Many interviewees explained how they personally explore alternative or better ways of working including understanding the needs of your clients and communities. Some volunteering choices are aimed at improving understanding of these changes.

81% of people indicated they take responsibility for making improvements and 92% look for ideas from colleagues.

### **You are improving how you use evidence to make improvements**

You have a good foundation in evidence-based improvement with Deep Dives into operational performance, compliance and maintaining efficiencies. You also carry out audits and use the outcomes alongside external audits and inspections such as Ofsted, Matrix, Investors in People, EDI benchmarks and Employment Charters to make informed decisions about improvements.

People have a very positive attitude toward these audits and inspections as opportunities to confirm what works well, benchmark performance and focus on improvements that will make a difference.

You are improving the use of data to evidence your instincts for areas to improve and to ensure there is a return on time and resources spent on making changes. HR and engagement data is being used more effectively to target changes in people management. The recent developments of online tools for performance review will enable greater analysis of the impact of people on performance.

In most areas, data collection and analysis has become more granular and reports are timelier and more accessible as technology evolves and improves.

### **People can experiment and take reasonable risks to improve**

All feel they can take reasonable risks to try to improve how they and their colleagues' work. Hybrid working has led to positive changes to work practices. It has acted as a catalyst for improvement in teams, particularly in relation to reducing travel time and enhancing efficiency although some are still experiencing too many back-to-back video meetings.

Some longer serving colleagues noted that the attitude to innovation has changed in some areas where a blame culture had existed previously and people were risk adverse in case they ran into a problem. They believed that this has changed significantly to a point where they are confident they can take risks, try new ways of working and contribute opinions. They pointed to improvements in morale, speed of decision making and several marginal improvements that have contributed to better outcomes.

There is a greater appetite and confidence in alerting other teams to problems caused by their processes and working collaboratively to find solutions without wasting time escalating up and down the silos of management that existed previously.

### **You could improve how you manage and explore continuous improvement.**

People recognise the importance of innovation but could still benefit from additional training around techniques they and their colleagues might use to develop and share new ideas. A number of people that are new to the organisation and some colleagues involved in supporting businesses suggested that you could develop a range of process improvement tools and training workshops based on principles of lean management and good project management. You could also expand on existing best practice in tasking individuals and teams to peer review processes and policies.

## CREATING SUSTAINABLE SUCCESS

### 9 Creating sustainable success

		Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
My organisation embraces change	2022	31%	40%	14%	9%	2%	2%	1%
	2019	23%	37%	20%	10%	5%	3%	2%
	Diff	9%	3%	-6%	-1%	-3%	-1%	0%
My organisation has a plan for the future	2022	33%	42%	13%	10%	1%	1%	1%
	2019	26%	44%	20%	8%	1%	1%	0%
	Diff	7%	-2%	-7%	2%	0%	0%	1%
My organisation is a great place to work	2022	31%	37%	16%	9%	3%	2%	2%
	2019	18%	36%	24%	11%	4%	4%	2%
	Diff	13%	1%	-8%	-3%	-1%	-2%	0%
My organisation has a positive impact on society	2022	46%	37%	10%	6%	1%	1%	0%
	2019	44%	36%	12%	7%	1%	0%	0%
	Diff	2%	1%	-2%	-2%	-1%	1%	0%

### People know where you are heading in the future

Future priorities are set out in several strategic publications and are consistently reinforced during senior team briefings, newsletters, via the intranet and in team meetings and briefings. A staff version of the Corporate Strategy outlines the priorities and outcomes for each area. These have been revised in response to major changes in the markets and economy, especially the impact of the Pandemic and Brexit.

There were frequent updates on the changes that were well communicated by senior leaders and reinforced in team meetings and online briefings. These have ensured everyone has confidence in the future of the organisation and were aware of the impact of contracts that were ending

Consequently, there is a universal understanding of the strategic aims across the business along with emerging priorities and critical external factors influencing the success of the organisation. People could often explain the political, economic and social landscape that they operated within and the priorities for delivering the outcomes relevant to their role.

87% believe that you have a plan for the future which is marginally below the figure for 2019 (90%) but the strength of opinion is higher with nearly a third (31%) strongly agreeing. This may reflect that people are aware that a new strategy is waiting in the wings.

### You involve people in planning

Your three-year strategy ends this year. Senior Leaders are currently evaluating past achievements and future opportunities whilst discussing key corporate priorities with strategic partners for the next three years. Their deliberations are informed by contributions from teams and some areas have sought further input as the strategic priorities are constructed.

People are engaged in operational planning. Most managers are involving people in planning activities and problem solving which is helping ensure individual and team ownership of the plans to achieve them.

Several teams have awayday events to review past performance and develop plans for the next year ensuring these are aligned to the corporate strategy and your values. When new contracts are secured, the operational implementation and long-term planning involves teams where possible. In some examples, teams have not been recruited and plans are adjusted downstream in team meetings.

## **People believe The Growth Company is a great place to work**

In our survey, 84% indicated that The Growth Company is a great place to work with 31% strongly agreeing. Overall, this is 6 percentage points above the 2019 result but the strength of opinion is far greater with 18% strongly agreeing previously.

Almost all those interviewed feel GC is a great place to work and are committed to its success. Many commented that if they weren't, they would have moved on to earn more money in other sectors. They believe in the company's purpose and the positive impact it has on the communities it operates in. They also appreciate the high degree of trust they enjoy, the teamwork and the levels of support and development they can access.

Many talked about their work with a degree of positive passion. There is a far stronger sense of pride in the collective brand than in previous assessments with most identifying with The Growth Company as one organisation rather than the separate divisions or teams.

## **Change is a key part of your DNA**

85% believe that you embrace change with 31% strongly agreeing. People acknowledge that you need to keep evolving and changing to meet the needs of your partners, clients, and community. Change is embraced by most and seen as one of the factors that motivate them and sets you apart from some other employers. Change continues to be viewed as 'business as usual'. People are expecting even more turbulence as European funding ends next year.

Change is communicated openly and effectively. The rationale is explained, and people feel supported to deal with it. Most managers are actively engaging people in the change management process, enabling them to understand and contribute to the delivery and focus on the outcomes. A few felt that there could be better co-ordination of changes that impact on their team but they also said this had improved over recent years with better communication and consultation.

Examples were shared of people being given opportunities to lead and contribute to change initiatives. These included health and wellbeing, the introduction of new software and IT systems, governance, diversity, and quality. There were several examples of champions being established to lead and support change.

## **People have a good understanding of the communities and markets you work within**

People have a good understanding of the current and future context of your purpose and priorities. Board members, leaders, managers, and people have developed a wide range of external networks which ensures they understand the needs and drivers of your stakeholders, markets, and communities.

People believe you have established a strong reputation for delivering outcomes, responding quickly, and influencing others to work collaboratively on major projects affecting the

economy and social wellbeing of the communities you support. In several networks you are effectively leading on developments and seen as experts in the field.

Strategic documents outline the political, social, and economic drivers affecting your operations combined with analysis of threats and opportunities that are available to everyone. Updates and briefings, combined with ongoing research and feedback ensure any trends are quickly communicated and understood.

## People believe you make a difference

More than nine out of ten people (93%) believe that The Growth Company has a positive impact on society with 46% strongly agreeing. Most people in the interviews could give examples of how their work has improved the lives of individual clients or the success of businesses.

Those in support roles also believed that the company makes a difference having heard stories shared by colleagues, seen case studies and cameos of success within newsletters, online and in briefings from senior leaders.

The Business Plan and updates include a review of the previous year highlighting the key outputs such as creating 10,429 jobs, helping to create 8,411 new businesses, winning 24 Foreign Direct investment projects and investing £33M in existing businesses. The Divisions cascade the most relevant impact measure through to teams with acknowledgement for success.

Performance reporting in most areas include progress in KPIs and anecdotal reports of positive impact such as clients gaining qualifications and jobs or businesses growing and winning contracts. Marketing teams celebrate the success of events in terms of impact on generating interest or leads for business.

You are also reporting on aspects of sustainability and diversity but a number of people felt you could do more to explore and communicate the impact of your policies on the environment, and how you are making a difference to all members of the diverse communities that you support.

The business plan reports you are on track to achieve net zero carbon emissions but there were several that expressed an interest in sustainability that were not aware of your progress.

**Diversity**

		Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
My organisation is committed to recruiting a diverse workforce	2022	39%	40%	11%	6%	2%	1%	1%
		Question not asked in 2019						
The staff at my organisation reflect the communities and markets we serve	2022	27%	41%	16%	10%	4%	2%	1%
		Question not asked in 2019						
My organisation has a positive impact on the community	2022	42%	40%	11%	6%	1%	1%	1%
		Question not asked in 2019						
My organisation values and respects individual differences	2022	39%	39%	11%	7%	2%	1%	1%
		Question not asked in 2019						
Leaders at my organisation champion diversity	2022	34%	40%	12%	8%	3%	2%	1%
		Question not asked in 2019						

**Important Note:** these questions were selected as options and do not contribute to the overall benchmark score but Diversity is a component in the last indicator: *Creating sustainable success*.

**You have clear policies on promoting and supporting diversity and inclusion**

People believe you are committed to being an inclusive and more diverse organisation where individuals are respected and valued for their differences. (89% positive). Senior leaders actively promote inclusion and their personal commitment to improve the diversity of the company overall.

There are clear policies in place that include guidance and the benefits of being inclusive for both staff and the communities you work within. Nine out of ten believe you are committed to recruiting a diverse workforce.

People are actively encouraged to be aware of diversity events and participate in celebrations and observances.

**Most people feel that you respect others without bias**

89% believe that the organisation respects individual differences with 4% disagreeing. Nearly everyone believed that they were respected by their colleagues regardless of their age, gender identity, race, sexuality, or disability.

There were two or three that felt that there was some bias in decision making about their

capabilities that was either unconscious or due to a lack of understanding of diversity

### **Most people feel comfortable about discussing diversity**

Most people that identify themselves (or their relatives and friends) with diverse constituencies said that they felt respected and comfortable about discussing any aspect of their lifestyle or experience of inclusion and that this had improved in recent years with the more active promotion of diversity.

There were some very personal examples of individuals feeling comfortable about discuss their sexuality, religious beliefs, and relationships with colleagues after several years of service.

Some people would welcome more opportunities to understand the preferences, needs and experiences of the various constituencies that exist within the group.

### **You are actively working on improving diversity**

Work is continuing to increase the diversity of the workforce with targets to match the demographics of the communities in which the company operates.

An active EDI group has been established which has developed an ambitious action plan and is gaining momentum in terms of engagement of all staff and reviewing existing policies and procedures to ensure they are inclusive. Several people welcomed the enhanced focus on EDI and were aware of the work of the EDI group.

Internal communications include both guidance and invitations to engage with more dialogue about inclusion and understanding diversity. Management development and guidance on recruitment includes awareness of unconscious bias and considering how to make sure that opportunities are more accessible.

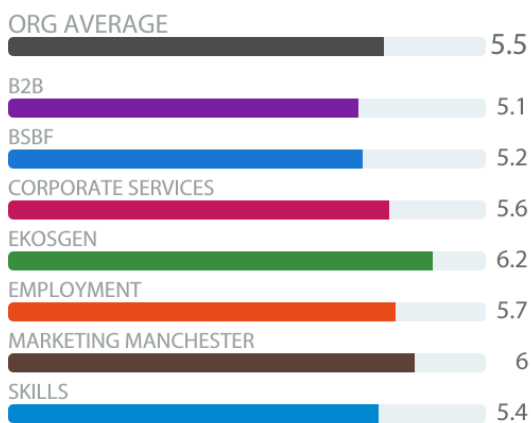


# Your teams

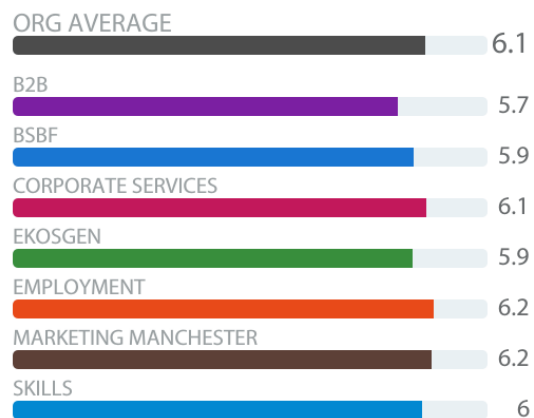
## How each team scored each indicator

The following charts show how each of the teams in the organisation scored in each indicator. Each indicator is informed by four or five questions and these are collated into a benchmark score out of a maximum of 7.

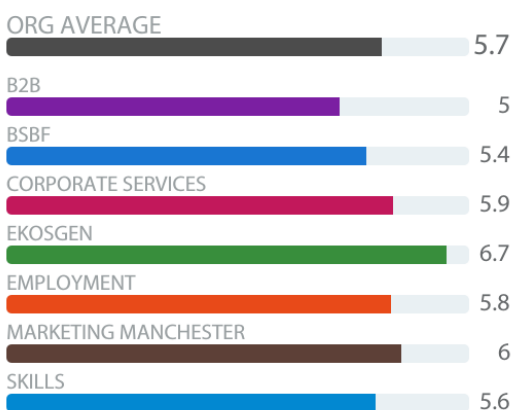
### Indicator 1: Leading and inspiring people



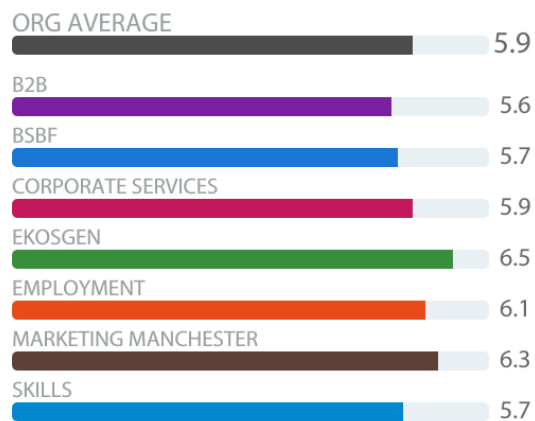
### Indicator 2: Living the organisation's values and behaviours



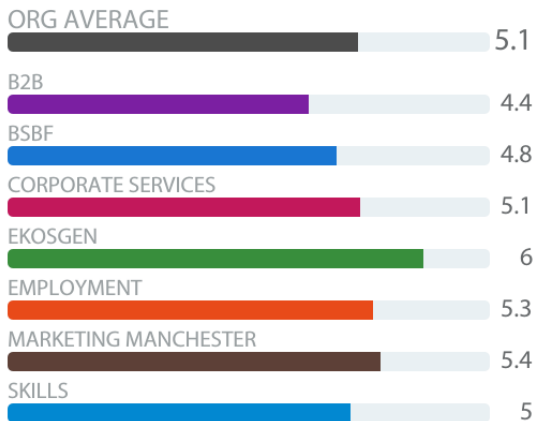
### Indicator 3: Empowering and involving people



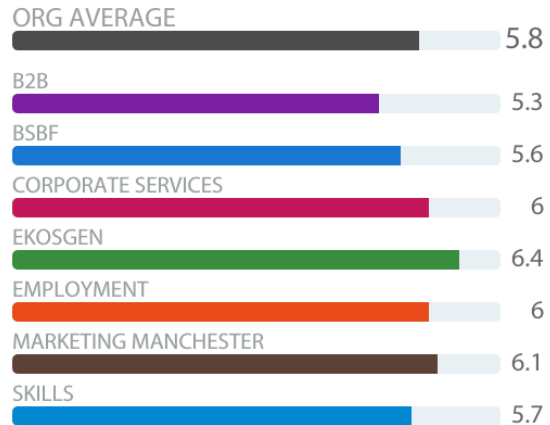
### Indicator 4: Managing performance



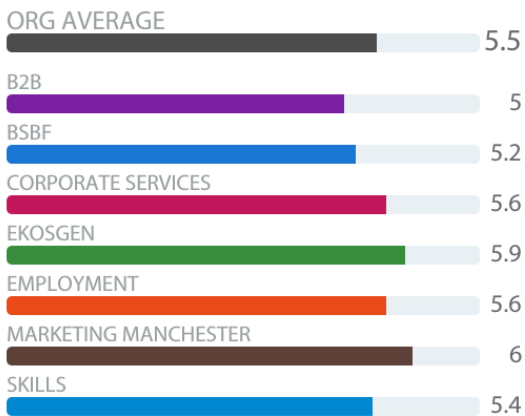
### Indicator 5: Recognising and rewarding high performance



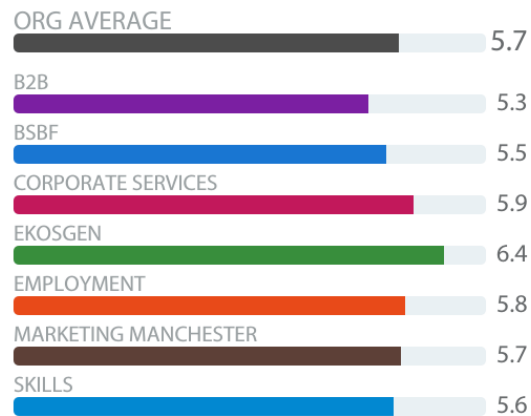
### Indicator 6: Structuring work



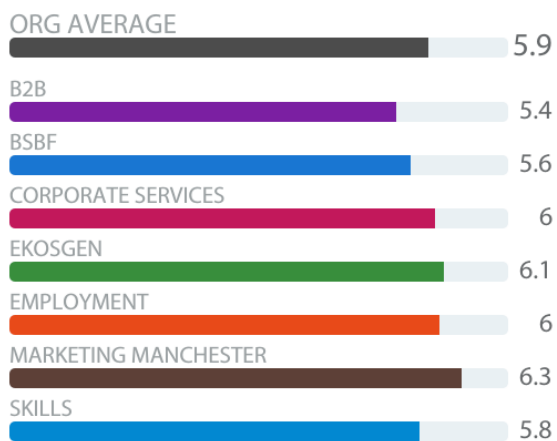
### Indicator 7: Building capability



### Indicator 8: Delivering continuous improvement



### Indicator 9: Creating sustainable success



# Your teams and demographics

## Our key insights

- People aged over 65 were the most positive followed by those aged 16-24 but marginal differences across all age groups
- People who've been with the company for 6-12 months were most positive but there were only marginal differences across all lengths of service
- Females (64% of responses) were more positive than males by 0.1 to 0.4 points out of 7
- Typically, people identifying as senior managers (55) are marginally more positive than managers (195) who are more positive than non-managers by about 0.3 - 0.4 points out of 7.
- Ekosgen joined the Group since the last assessment and were previously accredited as Investors in People in their own right. They consistently score highest in all indicators except for living the values.
- B2B consistently scored the lowest in all indicators.



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