



## **Staff Survey 2014**

### **Extract of full Report for September JSCC**

**The full Staff Survey report is available on the intranet**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2014 Staff Survey gave staff the opportunity to have their say on various issues concerning working at NHDC. The survey has been administered in-house since 2012 but 2014 is the first year it has been distributed via Survey Monkey.

In total, 238 staff completed the Survey. This is a response rate of 65% (based on a sample of 365 staff, which takes into account those who were unable to complete it – e.g. due to long-term sick leave or maternity leave). This is an increase of 4% since 2012.

### Key findings

#### General

- The results overall are encouraging, with staff responding positively to many questions. Some questions identified areas for improvement and these results will feed into the action plan that follows this report.
- There was an overall increase in dissatisfaction with job factors compared with previous results. As in 2012, staff are concerned about opportunities for career progression and office accommodation.
- In light of the upcoming refurbishment project commencing at the council offices, the 2014 Staff Survey gave staff the opportunity to comment on and suggest areas for improvement on office accommodation. This question yielded over 60 open responses with many staff offering their suggestions and opinions.

#### Working at NHDC

- NHDC was rated as one of the best/above average as a place to work by 62% of staff (a 7% increase on 2012's result).
- Across 14 statements relating to working at NHDC, such as "*I feel valued and recognised for the work I do*", there was a decrease in levels of agreement.

#### Satisfaction with job factors

- Since 2012, satisfaction levels for 5 job factors increased, 9 factors decreased and 3 remained unchanged.
- The factors that staff were most satisfied with remained as 'friendly colleagues' (90%), 'working hours' (88%) and 'interesting work' (83%).
- The greatest change in satisfaction level was a 17% increase in satisfaction with job security, which in 2012 had the largest decrease in satisfaction of all the job factors.
- Dissatisfaction levels are down since 2012, with a large increase in staff feeling "Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied" about job factors.

### **Satisfaction with the Council's benefits package**

- Satisfaction has increased for 12 of the Council's staff benefits, while 8 benefits saw a decrease.
- Of the 23 benefits listed, the three that staff were most satisfied with were 'Free parking' (86%), 'Additional holiday after 5 years' (84%) and 'Flexi-time' (77%).
- There was a significant increase in satisfaction with Parental Leave benefits, which covers Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Leave.
- There was a significant decrease (7%) in satisfaction with the Car Allowance benefit.
- However, dissatisfaction levels were low across all benefits (0% to 5%)
- Respondents from Planning, Housing & Enterprise were least satisfied with the benefits package; those from Finance, Policy & Governance were the most satisfied.

### **Training and Development**

- Across all questions asked about training & development there was either an increase in agreement level or no change.
- Respondents from Customer Services agreed more strongly than the other directorates that the Council's training and development is appropriate for their role and responsibilities.
- The 2014 survey was the first to ask staff about the coaching & mentoring programme at NHDC. The responses to these questions were very positive, with over 80% of staff involved with coaching stating that it met their expectations and requirements.

### **Information provision**

- The number of respondents who felt that NHDC keeps staff informed rose by 3% on 2012's results.
- Across 4 questions related to the provision of information, such as "I have confidence in the information given to me", 3 saw an increase in agreement levels.
- Staff rated team meetings and the Intranet as the sources they receive the most information from.

### **Communications**

- Compared with 2012, 5 out of 8 statements saw an increase in satisfaction levels.
- satisfaction with communications within teams and directorates was generally good, however communications between directorates still remains an issue for staff.
- The Customer Services directorate had the highest agreement level with questions on communication, whilst Finance, Policy & Governance had the lowest.
- Overall, respondents were more satisfied than in 2012 with the methods of corporate communication. However there was a substantial decrease in satisfaction levels for Hot Topics and the Intranet Message Board.

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## **Management**

### *Line Management*

- Whilst there are high levels of positive responses to questions on Line Management, there is an overall decrease in positive responses from 2012
- The highest decrease was seen in response to the statement 'My manager makes clear what is expected of me'.

### *Senior Management / organisational change*

- Agreement with statements about senior management has increased almost unanimously, with the highest rise being in agreement with Senior Management being interested in staff opinion (an increase of 10%).
- There was no change in the opinion on Senior Management's planning and consultation on Organisational change.

## **Office accommodation**

- In a continuing trend since the major relocation to the Gernon Road offices in 2010, satisfaction with office accommodation has decreased, with some differences in opinion seen between directorates. For example, satisfaction with opportunities for home working is significantly lower in Customer Services than in the other directorates. Planning, Housing and Enterprise are least satisfied with the appearance and cleanliness of the offices.
- The 2014 survey gave staff the chance to offer their comments and suggestions on the current office accommodation refurbishment project. A total of 61 responses were received which will feed into the on-going Council Offices refurbishment project.

## **Customer service**

- As in 2012, responses remained largely positive, with some areas seeing a small increase in agreement level.

## **Overall satisfaction**

- Whilst staff satisfaction with their current job saw a slight decrease (-3%), the overall level of staff satisfaction remained high at 78%. The level of staff dissatisfied with their job also dropped (-2%).

## BACKGROUND & METHODOLOGY

The 2014 Staff Survey gave staff the opportunity to have their say on issues such as working conditions, benefits, management, training and development opportunities and how they feel about working at NHDC. It also enabled staff to suggest improvements the council could make.

The results will be used to identify potential improvements, from which a corporate action plan and individual service area action plans will be created.

### Methodology

In 2012 the survey was trialled in-house for the first time using SNAP survey software. This trial was successful with no significant change in response rate; prior to this the survey was administered externally, in partnership with another local authority. For 2014, it was decided that SurveyMonkey, online based survey software, would be used to administer the survey.

An online questionnaire was created on the SurveyMonkey website. Staff were sent a global email and the survey was promoted on the Intranet and in Team Talk. As with previous staff surveys, the majority of questions have been kept the same or similar, to provide comparable data. New questions were included around coaching at the Council and additional office accommodation questions to assist with the ongoing refurbishment project.

The survey went live on 6 March and closed on 4 April. To maximise the response rate, the opportunity to win John Lewis gift vouchers was used as an incentive.

In total, 238 staff completed the Survey. This is a response rate of 65% which is based on a sample of 366 staff and accounts for staff unable to complete the survey due to illness or maternity leave.

### Reporting of data

This report shows the key results from the 2014 Survey and sets out how the overall results compare with 2012. For some results, data from 2010 is also shown.

The 2014 findings are also presented split by directorate. These have been colour coded:

- blue means the percentage is higher than the 2012 council-wide figure
- red means the percentage is lower
- significant differences between the directorates are also highlighted in grey

Agreement ratings and satisfaction ratings have been worked out by adding the percentages for the two positive indicators – e.g. strongly agree and tend to agree; always applies and usually applies; or very satisfied and fairly satisfied.

Results tables/charts included in the main report do not always show every response category, as some have been condensed to highlight key points (table and chart numbers correspond to the question numbers used in the Survey). Full results tables – overall and split by directorate – have been included in the appendix and are hyperlinked in the main report.

Please note that, due to rounding, figures may not always add up to 100% – where percentages are low, they have been rounded to one decimal place. No replies have been omitted prior to calculating percentages – however, for some questions, ‘not applicable’ answers were removed before percentages were calculated to make it a more accurate representation. Furthermore, Democratic Services results have been removed when comparing across directorates

Service level results will be produced for the following service areas. Service level results are only provided where there are 10 or more responses:

- Leisure & Environmental Services
- Cultural Services
- Customer Services Centre
- Human Resources
- Development & Building Control / Strategic Planning and Enterprise
- Housing & Public Protection (inc Careline)
- Finance, Performance & Asset Management
- Revenues, Benefits & IT (inc MSU)
- Policy & Community Services

This data will be passed to the relevant Head of Service or corporate manager so that any areas of concern at service area level can be investigated and action plans produced.

Due to having responses of less than 10, the following service areas will not receive service level results to protect anonymity of answers:

- Corporate Legal Services
- Democratic Services
- Other Customer Services (e.g. Project Support / Communications / Document Centre)

## **Abbreviations**

**CS** Customer Services Directorate

**FPG** Finance, Policy and Governance

**PHE** Planning, Housing and Enterprise

**Pos Ind** the percentage change is a positive indicator

## WORKING AT NHDC

62% of respondents rated NHDC as one of the best / above average as a place to work. This is an increase of 6.7% since 2012. Only 4.5% of respondents said NHDC was one of the worst / below average as a place to work.

*NHDC as a place to work compared to others (overall)*

	2012	2014	% point change since 2012
One of the best	12.9%	12.5%	-0.4%
Above average	42.4%	49.5%	7.1%
Average	41.1%	31.7%	-9.4%
Below average	2.2%	4.5%	+2.3%
One of the worst	0.0%	0.0%	-
No opinion	1.3%	1.8%	0.5%
One of the best / above average	55.3%	62.0%	6.7%
Below average / one of the worst	2.2%	4.5%	+2.3% (negative indicator)

*NHDC as a place to work compared to others, 2014 results by directorate*

	Overall 2014	CS	FPG	PHE
One of the best / above average	62.0%	65.0%	55.7%	72.0%
Below average / one of the worst	4.5%	4.0%	5.0%	3.3%

The final question in the Staff Survey invited respondents to comment on working at NHDC. These comments are shown below:

*"I enjoy working at NHDC, it's a well run organisation with a culture of saving money".*

*"Managed well particularly during a time of financial restraint. An inclusive employer with a genuine culture of looking after employees"*

*"The work I do has become very stressful and more and more is being put onto the team with no further staff to assist"*

*"Due to no progression and a low basic salary I am a little deflated, however the job itself is enjoyable most of the time"*

*"Recent apprenticeships have added much needed resources"*

## CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

The results of the 2014 staff survey overall are encouraging with high levels of satisfaction on a range of job factors including a 17% increase in satisfaction with job security and NHDC being rated as one of the best/above average as a place to work by 62% of staff. Overall satisfaction with current jobs remained high at 78%.

The survey did highlight some areas for further consideration. Specifically, satisfaction with office accommodation standards has dropped, however issues identified should be picked up by the Future Refurbishment and Modernisation Programme. The results of this survey including open comments made about future office accommodation will be fed back to the office accommodation project team to help inform their consultation process.

As in 2012, satisfaction with opportunities for career progression was low at 34%.

The section of questions new to 2014 on coaching and mentoring showed a positive response from those staff who had benefited from it, however the results on 'why' people hadn't received coaching or mentoring, showed a lack of understanding among some as to what it was and also a reluctance to ask for help among others.

The communications results also identified a specific issue that only 24% of staff felt that communications was good between directorates.

Agreement levels dropped for all of the statements about line-managers and satisfaction with the 1:1 process also dropped slightly, although the actual agreement levels are still generally quite high.

It should be noted that the individual comments that have been included are a selection taken from comments provided by staff *who were dissatisfied (apart from the office accommodation question and final overall comments question)*. Whilst they raise various issues that should be considered, they should not be seen as representative of staff views as a whole.

### **Next Steps**

This report will be made available to all staff on the intranet and an article with key findings produced in the staff newsletter, NHDC News.

To tackle the issues and areas of concern raised by this survey, a corporate action plan will be produced and publicised. Significant differences between directorates will also be considered.

Heads of Service will receive results for their service areas where 10 or more staff responded and each service area will complete their own Staff Survey Action Plan.



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