

JSCC discussion - Employee Engagement in a Hybrid Working Environment

Employee engagement is the emotional and professional connection employees feel toward their organisation, colleagues, and work. High engagement leads to increased job satisfaction, performance, employee retention and is a reflection of a positive overall employee experience.

“When people are emotionally invested, they want to contribute.”

Simon Sinek (Leadership Development Writer)

There are several versions of a 5cs concept that attempts to describe the elements of Employee Engagement such as:

- Care
- Connection
- Coaching
- Contribute
- Congratulate

We can also relate Employee Engagement principles to our values:

- **Together** – Working collaboratively and engaging within and across teams to create a collective sense of team contribution.
- **Listening** – By definition, engagement requires listening by all parties regardless of role and hierarchy.
- **Learning** – Finding new ways of working and engaging with our workforce that reflect what we learn from our experiences and collective listening. Valuing everybody’s contribution to collective learning.
- **Adaptable** – Being agile in the way we address the challenges of hybrid working whilst not forgetting the positive impact of face to face employee engagement.
- **Inclusive** – The collective outcome of all the above.

The Challenges Created by Hybrid Working

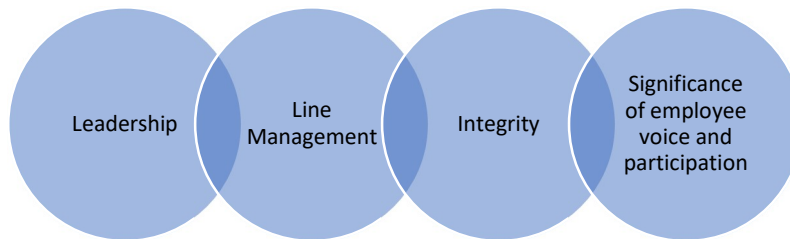
Many of our employees work in a hybrid way, splitting their working time between the office and home. When employees are not in the office environment all the time, the informal engagement can be more difficult and regular ‘corridor or kitchen’ engagement is less likely.

Our managers and teams have found ways of achieving effective engagement through other methods:

- Regular online or hybrid meetings both for business and informal team or 1-1 wellbeing catch ups
- Hybrid Staff Consultation Forum meetings, inclusion group meetings and staff briefings
- Teams chat function
- Staff social events outside of work
- Online 1 – 1 meetings
- Hybrid ‘work together’ sessions for groups/ teams
- Reverse mentoring (Learning Together)

Creating an Engaged Culture

The MacLeaod Review 2009 identified 4 key enablers of engagement



In practice this will mean:

- Visible leadership that maintains and communicates a vision of the future and a drive to reach it
- Line management that cares about and is equipped with the skills of engagement
- Maintaining integrity and upholding NHC values as a norm
- Ensuring that our mechanisms for employee participation are significant and genuinely result in everybody being listened to and having a voice.

Opportunities for the future

Whilst we should not underestimate the power of established ways of leading and engaging face to face, benefits of working away from the office are significant and existing and future technology presents organisations with a variety of other tools to support engagement in a hybrid environment.

The Council are developing the use of SharePoint as an internal communications platform and planning pulse and full staff surveys in the coming months.

There is a balance required between face to face and virtual engagement and the challenge is about making the appropriate choice of communication or engagement medium for the people and circumstances.