YOUR VOICE MATTERS SURVEY 2021

Summary of Evidence and Insights
from Scottish Police Authority respondents

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October 2021

This summary report is intended as a basis for discussion. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the material contained within, the authors will not be liable for any loss or damage incurred through the use of this report.

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1   INTRODUCTION

Police Scotland, the Scottish Police Authority, and Durham University Business School have agreed to collaborate on a research project to investigate the state of the workforce.

The study has been conducted by independent researchers from Durham University Business School, in accordance with Durham University ethical guidelines for research. Participation in the survey was voluntary, and anonymity and confidentiality for all participants is assured.

We would like to thank the individuals who gave up their valuable time to provide the data for this research.

2 METHODOLOGY

The survey was designed using proven academic scales for each of the measures[1] and circulated online to serving police officers, police staff, special constables, and volunteers across Scotland.

Responses were collected over a four-week completion period in March 2021.[2]

In total, after data cleaning, the survey received 43 responses (81.1% response rate) from individuals working within the Scottish Police Authority.

For ease of interpretation and comparison, the average scores reported across the key measures are discussed against a nine-point classification ranging from *extremely low* to *extremely high.*[3]

To assist in understanding the findings, the main measures studied in this collaborative research project are discussed within the glossary presented in Section 4, below.

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[1] The measures have either been developed by the research team or are based on, or adapted from, peer reviewed academic scales which have been selected and tested in this context.

[2] The 2021 Your Voice Matters Survey was conducted within the period of the COVID-19 pandemic.

[3] For example, for a 1 to 7 scale measure, the average converted descriptions would be 1.00 to 1.67 *Extremely Low*, 1.68 to 2.33 *Very Low*, 2.34 to 3.00 *Low*, 3.01 to 3.67 *Moderately Low*, 3.68 to 4.33 *Moderate*, 4.34 to 5.00 *Moderately High*, 5.01 to 5.67 *High*, 5.68 to 6.33 *Very High*, and 6.34 to 7.00 *Extremely High*.

3   KEY FINDINGS

3.1   The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic

The 2021 Your Voice Matters Survey was conducted within the period of the COVID-19 pandemic. The average scores for the measures relating specifically to working during the pandemic are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Average Scores for Measures relating to the COVID-19 Pandemic

Measure	Average
Felt Change in Performance during the Pandemic (1-5 scale)	3.37
Current Work Effectiveness	5.53

<u>Note</u>: Unless stated, all measures used a 1 to 7 scale.

Respondents who indicated they work within the Scottish Police Authority reported a high average level for the extent to which they currently feel effective at work.

14.0% of respondents reported feeling that their work performance had declined during the pandemic. However, a positive finding is that 41.9% indicated that they felt their performance was relatively unchanged and at a similar level to before the pandemic, while 44.2% indicated they felt their performance had improved during this time.[4]

The proportions of where respondents were currently working at the time of the survey, and whether this was different from their working arrangements prior to the pandemic, are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Main work location during COVID-19 pandemic

Location changed due to pandemic	At home	Office in an SPA location	Other location
Yes	72.1% (31)	2.3% (1)	2.3% (1)
No	2.3% (1)	16.3% (7)	4.7% (2)

<u>Note</u>: The number of respondents is shown in brackets.

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[4] Due to the small sample size for SPA respondents, these results should be considered as indicative only.

As can be seen, the majority of respondents indicated they were newly working from home due to the pandemic at the time of the survey.

Of the respondents working from home, 65.6% indicated they had a dedicated study or separate workspace within their home, while 34.4% indicated they were working within a shared living space.

3.2   Main Findings for Key Measures

The descriptive statistics for measures for all respondents are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Average Scores for Key Measures, <u>All Respondents</u>

Measure	Average
Public Service Motivation	5.88
Meaningfulness of Work	5.98
Commitment to the Public	5.51
Job Satisfaction	5.43
Life Satisfaction (1-10 scale)	7.33
Work Engagement	5.89
Self-Efficacy (Confidence in Job Skills)	6.10
Fear of Making Mistakes	2.83
Emotional Energy	4.46
Physical Wellbeing (1-5 scale)	3.28
Fatigue	4.12
Psychological Needs Satisfaction - Autonomy	5.37
Psychological Needs Satisfaction - Competence	5.52
Psychological Needs Satisfaction - Relatedness	4.46
Challenge Stressors (1-5 scale)	3.82
Hindrance Stressors (1-5 scale)	2.72
Psychological Detachment from Work	4.06
Taking Care of Self (1-6 scale)	3.89
Disturbed Sleep	3.99
Insufficient Sleep	3.93
Vision Clarity	4.73
Perceived Organisational Support	5.08
Procedural Justice (Fairness)	4.67
Supportive Leadership	4.88
Authoritarian Leadership	2.94
High Performance Expectations from Supervisors	5.31
Integrity Identity	6.32
Inclusive Leadership	5.59
Team Inclusion in Decision-Making	5.63
Experienced Workplace Incivility (1-6 scale)	1.88

<u>Note</u>: Unless stated, all measures used a 1 to 7 scale.

Motivation and Engagement

Work engagement, referring to the extent to which individuals within the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) feel enthusiasm in their jobs and invest their emotional, cognitive, and physical energies into their roles, was reported at a very high average level. Respondents also, on average, reported very high scores for the extent to which they find their work important and personally meaningful. A further positive finding is that respondents, on average, reported high levels of both job and life satisfaction.

Public service motivation, seen as a unique attribute of public-sector employees that provides them with a desire to serve the wider community, was reported at a very high average level. Furthermore, commitment to the public was reported at a high average level. This suggests that individuals within the SPA are, in general, highly motivated to provide meaningful public service and are personally committed to serving the wider community.

Average scores for self-efficacy were very high; this measure reflects the extent to which individuals believe in their capability to perform well at work and their confidence in their ability to respond and deal with unexpected challenges and events when performing work tasks. Fear of making mistakes was reported at a low average level.

Wellbeing

In this collaborative study, we measured emotional energy as a key indicator of individuals' wellbeing overall. Emotional energy refers to the amount of emotional and mental energy individuals have available to them to meet the daily demands and challenges they face in their roles; low levels of emotional energy are manifested by both physical fatigue and a sense of feeling 'drained' at work.

Emotional energy was reported at a moderately high average level across the organisation.

A further indicator of wellbeing measured within this survey was general fatigue. Fatigue arises through engaging in demanding activities and can be thought of as an overwhelming sense of being tired, lacking energy and feeling exhausted. Whilst fatigue is closely related to emotional exhaustion, it differs in that it can be relieved by the use of compensation mechanisms such as working more slowly or taking adequate rest and gaining sufficient sleep. Prior research has shown that fatigue is associated with a reduced capability to cope with work demands and

stress, increased absence, reduction in communication skills and decision-making ability, and increased likelihood of receiving complaints from the public.[5]

39.5% of SPA respondents (*n* = 17) indicated that they had experienced high levels of fatigue in the previous two weeks before completing the survey. Of concern is that 20.9% (*n* = 9) indicated that they experienced very high levels of fatigue.[6]

The average score for physical wellbeing, where respondents were asked to rate their general physical health over the three-month period prior to the survey, was moderately high.

Prior research has suggested that people have three psychological needs of *autonomy*, *competence*, and *relatedness*, which need to be satisfied to maintain their optimal wellbeing and performance.[7] We asked individuals the extent to which each of these psychological needs were met, in general, whilst at work over the past three months. Average reported scores were moderately high for relatedness need satisfaction. Competence and autonomy needs satisfaction were reported at high average levels.

Work demands and stressful situations draw on individuals' personal resources and can act to reduce their wellbeing. Two key categories of workplace stressors were considered in this study. Challenge stressors reflect individuals' perceptions of work-related demands, such as workload and responsibility; although these can be stressful and potentially detrimental to wellbeing if sustained at particularly high levels for prolonged periods of time without adequate opportunities for recovery, they can also be viewed as an opportunity for personal development or the achievement of important outcomes. Hindrance stressors, on the other hand, refer to work-related demands that are seen as constraints that hinder performance, such as unclear work tasks and unnecessary bureaucracy, and have been found to negatively impact individuals' wellbeing to a greater extent.

Frequency of experiencing challenge stressors was reported at a high average level, while hindrance stressors were reported at a moderately low average level.

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[5] See, for example, Zohar, Tzischinsky, Epstein and Lavie (2005); Caldwell, Caldwell, Thompson and Lieberman (2019); and Riedy, Dawson and Vila (2019).

[6] Due to the small sample size for SPA respondents, these results should be considered as indicative only.

[7] Ryan, R. & Deci, E. (2017). Self-Determination Theory: Basic Psychological Needs in Motivation, Development and Wellness. New York: Guilford Publications.

Recovery from workplace stress is a key component for wellbeing and performance; recovery experiences such as psychological detachment from work during non-work hours and receiving adequate sleep quality and quantity have been identified as key factors in maintaining individuals' levels of emotional energy and their long-term wellbeing. Such recovery experiences help employees replenish cognitive resources lost due to work demands, which further increases their psychological health and decreases the negative impacts from stressors on individuals' wellbeing and performance.

Psychological detachment from work refers to an individual's state of mind when they are not working and demonstrates an individual's ability to switch off and distance themselves from their job, not only physically but also mentally. The average score for psychological detachment was at a moderate level for SPA respondents.

The importance of sleep for recovery from work stress and for restorative daily functioning is well-recognised. Furthermore, when reduced sleep quality occurs, sensitivity to stressful situations increases, which can exacerbate the impact of stressors on individual wellbeing. In this study, we measured two characteristics of poor sleep: disturbed and insufficient sleep.

20.9% of SPA respondents (n = 9) indicated that they experienced disturbed sleep '*often*' or more frequently during the three months prior to the survey, including 7.0% (n = 3) who indicated very high levels of disturbed sleep ('*very often*' or '*all of the time*').

For insufficient sleep, referring to how frequently individuals had less than six hours of sleep per day during the three months prior to the survey, 37.2% (n = 16) indicated that they experienced this '*often*' or more frequently, including 23.3% (n = 10) who indicated very high frequencies of insufficient sleep ('*very often*' or '*all of the time*').

Taking care of self was reported at a moderately high average level. While people are often kind and compassionate to others when they face difficult times, they are often harsher towards themselves and do not recognise the need to take care of themselves and focus on their own wellbeing. A growing body of research suggests that when individuals recognise the importance of taking time to focus on their own wellbeing this is associated with improved psychological health. Through the adoption of an attitude involving increased self-kindness, and through working to reduce feelings of isolation and over-identification with problems, individuals become more able to understand and deal with difficult situations they face.

Ethical and Inclusive Climates

Integrity identity, which relates to the extent to which individuals see acting with integrity and maintaining ethical principles as a core part of their self-identity, was reported at a very high average level.

A further positive finding is that the average score for inclusive supervisory leadership was high. This suggests that respondents generally see their direct supervisor as someone who appreciates, respects and values differences between individuals.

Related to this finding, team inclusivity in decision making was reported at a high average level. This suggests that respondents generally feel their work teams value hearing different perspectives, actively and authentically seek ideas, thoughts and perspectives from all team members and judge ideas based on their quality rather than who expresses them.

Workplace incivility can be thought of as a generalised form of low-intensity, subtle, harmful behaviour directed towards others, which can be verbal (being rude or disrespectful) or non-verbal (excluding or ignoring someone). It can be regarded as a subtle low-intensity form of aggression with consequences that are often not immediately obvious. This makes it difficult for occurrences to be detected and dealt with. It is often described by perpetrators as *'just banter'* or *'being direct with feedback'*. In this research we asked respondents to report the frequency they had experienced being put down or treated in a condescending manner by someone in the organisation in the past twelve months. Prior research has highlighted the detrimental impact experiencing workplace incivility can have on individuals' wellbeing, work engagement, and job satisfaction. The reported frequencies of experiencing incivility at work are shown in Table 4, below.

Table 4: Frequency of Experienced Workplace Incivility

Response	SPA Respondents	
	%	*n*
Never	32.6%	14
Once or twice	53.5%	23
Monthly or a few times a month	11.6%	5
Weekly or more frequently	2.3%	1

<u>Note</u>: Individuals were asked to indicate their experiences of general workplace incivility by someone in their organisation over the past twelve months.

Organisational Tone

Treating people fairly signals to them that they are respected and valued. When people feel valued and fairly treated, they identify with their organisation and are more likely to be personally engaged with their work. Moreover, when individuals work in an environment with a positive organisational tone, they are more likely to feel valued and respected and will reciprocate with higher levels of discretionary effort and commitment.

Procedural justice, or fairness perceptions, was reported at a moderately high average level by respondents within the SPA.

Closely related to fairness perceptions, perceived organisational support refers to individuals' beliefs regarding the degree to which the organisation values their contributions and cares about their wellbeing. It also refers to a feeling of assurance that the organisation will provide support when individuals face particularly difficult or challenging circumstances when carrying out their duties.

The average score for the extent to which respondents within the SPA view their organisation as supportive was found to be at a high average level.

Vision clarity, which refers to how clear and easy to understand individuals think the organisation's vision and objectives are, was reported at a moderately high average level.

Supervisory Leadership

Supportive leadership stresses the importance of personal integrity and competence, serving others such as employees and the public, and the development of people to their fullest potential. Supportive leaders serve as role models who build trust, understand each person's different characteristics, strengths and interests, and provide feedback and resources to their people.

Authoritarian leaders, on the other hand, behave in a commanding fashion, exert high levels of discipline over their people, and direct most if not all decisions with little meaningful team input. They emphasise the need for 'best' performance, and express displeasure and sanction their people when they do not achieve this.

Individuals were asked to consider the leadership behaviours displayed by their immediate supervisor or direct line manager. Average reported levels of supportive leadership were moderately high. Positively, authoritarian leadership was reported at a low average level.

Supportive leaders play a key role in creating a psychologically safe workplace environment, reducing workplace hindrances for their people, and encouraging a culture of learning from mistakes. Furthermore, prior research has demonstrated that supportive leadership is positively associated with work engagement and the extent to which individuals find their work personally meaningful and satisfying. In contrast, when supervisors demonstrate a predominantly authoritarian leadership style, this has been found to be associated with increased fear and reduced willingness to engage in discretionary effort.

Individuals were also asked whether they view their direct supervisor as maintaining clear standards and demonstrating high expectations for work performance; the average score for this measure was high.

4 GLOSSARY OF KEY MEASURES

Authoritarian Leadership

Authoritarian leadership is when the leader behaves in a commanding fashion and exerts high levels of discipline over people. The supervisor makes the decisions and expects their people to follow their instructions, and otherwise sanctions them. They emphasise the need for 'best' performance, and express displeasure with their people when they do not achieve this.

Challenge and Hindrance Stressors

Challenge stressors reflect individuals' perceptions of work-related demands, such as workload, time pressures, and levels of responsibility. Individuals who experience challenge stressors, although they may find them stressful, will view them as an opportunity for personal gain, such as growth and personal development or achievement of important outcomes.

Hindrance stressors also refer to work-related demands; however, individuals view these demands as constraints that hinder their performance and achievements at work. This impacts strongly on their wellbeing and reduces their engagement in discretionary behaviours. Examples of such constraints include role ambiguity, red tape and workplace politics, which do not provide opportunity for personal gain and prevent the achievement of valued goals.

Commitment to the Public

Commitment refers to the volitional psychological bond of dedication and responsibility that an individual feels towards a target. In this study, we measure individuals' commitment directed towards the public they serve.

Disturbed and Insufficient Sleep

The importance of sleep for restorative daily functioning is well-recognised. Exposure to emotionally stressful situations has been shown to be related to reduced sleep quality and higher levels of sleep disturbance. Moreover, when reduced sleep quality occurs, sensitivity to emotional and other stressful situations may increase, which can exacerbate the impact of stressors on individual emotional energy and wellbeing. Experiencing work stressors not only has a direct negative impact on emotional energy and wellbeing, but also reduces individuals' ability to recover through negative effects on sleep quality and quantity. A lack of recovery can

have serious impacts on individuals' health, wellbeing and performance. In this study, we asked individuals how often they had less than six hours of sleep, and how frequently they had experienced sleep disturbance, for example in the form of restlessness, difficulty falling asleep, or unintentional early waking.

Emotional Energy

Emotional energy is central to individuals' wellbeing and can be considered as the amount of emotional and mental energy individuals have available to them to meet the daily demands and challenges they face in their roles. Low levels of emotional energy are manifested by both physical fatigue and a sense of feeling psychologically and emotionally 'drained' at work. Prior research has found that low emotional energy levels are related to reduced organisational commitment, lower productivity and performance, reduced engagement, ill-health, decreased physical and mental wellbeing, increased absenteeism and turnover intentions, and lower levels of persistence in the face of difficulties.

Fatigue

Fatigue can be thought of as an overwhelming sense of being tired, lacking energy and feeling exhausted. Fatigue arises through engaging in demanding activities. General fatigue and mental fatigue arise from different conditions and are associated with different outcomes for individuals. While fatigue is related to emotional exhaustion, it differs in that it can be relieved by the use of compensation mechanisms such as working more slowly or taking adequate rest and gaining sufficient sleep. Prior research has shown that fatigue is associated with reduced communication skills, reduced ability to handle stress, increased risk taking, reduced decision-making ability, increased errors of judgment and likelihood to have an accident, an inability to recall details, a lack of attention and vigilance, reduced performance, and increased absence from work. A lower score on this measure is more desirable.

Fear of Making Mistakes

This measure refers to the feelings an individual may experience when making decisions at work. It addresses concerns over the potential to make mistakes, the consequences that might arise from mistakes, and how these mistakes might be regarded by others in the organisation.

High Performance Expectations from Supervisors

This measure refers to whether individuals see their immediate supervisor as demonstrating clear standards of work performance for their people. High performance expectations capture the extent to which supervisors address issues of poor performance within their teams, and demonstrate an expectation that people will perform at the highest level they can and maintain high quality standards.

Impact of COVID-19 on Work Effectiveness

We asked respondents specifically about the impact of Covid-19, with a few questions on whether they feel their performance has changed during this period and how effective they feel at work at the moment.

Incivility

Workplace incivility can be thought of as a generalised form of low-intensity, subtle, harmful behaviour directed towards others, which can be *verbal* (being rude or disrespectful) or *non-verbal* (excluding or ignoring someone). It can include not being listened to, being interrupted while speaking, and having their judgement doubted on matters over which they have responsibility or expertise. In this study, individuals were asked how frequently they had experienced being treated in a condescending manner by someone in their organisation while at work over the past twelve months.

Inclusive Leadership

Inclusive leaders appreciate, respect and value the differences between individuals in their team by creating a non-threatening environment in which people can reveal their "true" selves without suffering adverse consequences and by encouraging team members to resolve misunderstandings or personal conflicts that occur at work.

Integrity Identity

Research suggests that people act in a consistent way to how they see themselves. When individuals view themselves as having a high integrity identity, they tend to see ethical principles as part of their self-identity which results in them being more likely to behave with integrity and feel uncomfortable if they behave with a lack of integrity in their work. In particular, they will be more likely to resist taking advantage of opportunities that may deviate from ethical principles.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is simply defined as how content an individual is with their job. We measured a single dimension of affective job satisfaction to represent an overall emotional feeling that individuals have about their job as a whole.

Life Satisfaction

An individual's judgement of their life satisfaction is dependent on their assessment and views of their personal circumstances. This judgment takes place against an internal standard which they have set for themselves. It can be considered as a measure of an individual's subjective wellbeing and a comment on their feeling of overall satisfaction with life.

Meaningfulness of Work

We asked individuals whether they perceive their work and job activities as important and personally meaningful to them.

Perceived Organisational Support

Perceived organisational support refers to individuals' beliefs regarding the degree to which the organisation values their contributions and cares about their wellbeing. It also refers to a feeling of assurance that the organisation will provide support when individuals face particularly difficult or challenging circumstances when carrying out their duties. When individuals feel valued, their socioemotional needs of respect, being cared for and receiving approval will be met, and they will reciprocate with higher levels of discretionary effort and felt obligation. Perceived organisational support is more strongly related to social exchange rather than economic exchange because it is most affected by discretionary actions by the organisation rather than external constraints such as government regulations. Perceptions of positive support from the organisation affect an individual's relationship with the organisation and have an important impact on individuals' wellbeing and commitment towards the organisation.

Physical Wellbeing

Physical wellbeing refers to the overall condition and functioning of the body. Physical wellbeing has been linked to disease management, nutrition and physical exercise. Respondents rated their general physical health over a three-month period.

Procedural Justice (Fairness)

Procedural justice concerns the fairness of the ways and processes used to determine the distribution of outcomes among individuals. We can think of it as individuals' perceptions of the procedural fairness of decisions made across the organisation. Procedural justice plays a key role in determining whether individuals link their social identity to an organisation, which in turn impacts whether individuals engage in discretionary effort for the organisation.

Psychological Detachment from Work

Psychological detachment from work refers to an individual's state of mind when they are not working, and their ability to distance themselves from job-related issues, problems or opportunities (such as receiving job-related phone calls at home). It demonstrates an individual's ability to switch off and distance themselves from their job, not only physically but also mentally. There is strong research evidence for the importance of psychological detachment in the recovery from work stress. Such recovery experiences help employees replenish cognitive resources lost due to work demands, which further increases their psychological health and life satisfaction, and decreases the negative impacts from stressors on employees' wellbeing and performance.

Psychological Need Satisfaction

Research has suggested that people have three universal psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness, which need to be satisfied to maintain optimal performance and wellbeing. *Autonomy* relates to feeling able to act and make choices that reflect one's personal beliefs and values. *Competence* relates to a need to feel skilful, effective, and able to make a contribution. *Relatedness* refers to an individual's feelings of a sense of belonging and being part of a team where they feel respected and valued. We asked individuals the extent to which each of the psychological needs are met, in general, whilst at work over the past three months.

Public Service Motivation

Interest in public service motivation (PSM) has arisen from the observation that employees in the public sector behave differently from their private sector counterparts. PSM is seen as a unique attribute of public-sector employees that provides them with a desire to serve the wider

community. PSM has been defined as "the motivational force that induces individuals to perform meaningful . . . public, community and social service."[8]

The measure comprises four key dimensions: self-sacrifice, attraction to public policy-making, commitment to the public interest or civic duty, and compassion. PSM is considered a useful basis for understanding public-sector employee motivation and can be thought of as an attitude that motivates public-sector workers to display altruistic or prosocial behaviours.

Self-Efficacy (Confidence in Job Skills)

Self-efficacy reflects a type of task motivation; it encapsulates the extent to which individuals believe in their capability to perform work activities with skill and are confident in their ability to respond and deal with unexpected events when performing work tasks.

Supportive Leadership

Supportive leadership stresses the importance of personal integrity and serving others, such as employees and communities. It focuses on the development of people to their fullest potential through an understanding of each person's different characteristics, strengths and interests. Supportive leaders serve as role-models, build trust and provide feedback and resources to their people. It is argued that supportive leadership is important for wellbeing, and combats negative outcomes associated with the promotion of self-interest that underlies many incidents of unethical behaviour.

Taking Care of Self

While people are often kind and compassionate to others when they face difficult times, they are often harsher towards themselves and do not recognise the need to take care of themselves. Through the adoption of an attitude involving increased self-kindness and through working to reduce feelings of isolation and over-identification with problems individuals become more able to understand and deal with difficult situations they face. A growing body of research suggests that self-compassion is associated with psychological health such as reduced anxiety and depression and increased optimism and positive emotional states.

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[8] Brewer and Selden (1998: 417)

Team Inclusion in Decision-Making

Inclusive organisations adopt a belief that people's diverse backgrounds act as a source of learning and knowledge that should be utilised to improve organisational functioning. *Team inclusion in decision-making* refers to the extent to which an individual feels that perspectives from diverse groups are actively and authentically sought and integrated into decision-making procedures within their work team, and whether they feel ideas are judged based on their quality rather than who expresses them. In inclusive climates, perspectives that might upset the status quo are not viewed as a threat, but rather as a valuable source of information.

Vision Clarity

Individuals were asked their opinions on how clear the organisation's vision is to them, whether it has defined objectives and whether it is easy to understand.

Work Engagement

Engagement is a measure of an individual's personal expression of their self-in-role. Someone is engaged in their work when they are able to express their authentic self and are willing to invest their personal emotional, cognitive and physical energies into their work and job roles. To do this requires them to feel that the work has meaning, that they feel safe and that they have the required resources. Improved engagement can lead to higher individual performance, enhanced wellbeing and reduced staff turnover.