

Employee Engagement Results into Action:



Manager's Toolkit

This toolkit is designed for managers across Warwickshire County Council to support engagement action planning using the Your Say survey results.

In the toolkit, we will cover the following;

- ✓ Some key principles for how we will turn employee feedback into action
- ✓ 4 simple steps to get from survey results to action
- ✓ Materials, guidance and tips to support you through this process




Navigating your Manager's Toolkit




What is employee engagement?

Understanding more about employee engagement, why it matters and our strategy at WCC




Your role as a manager in influencing engagement

How you play a key role as a manager in building engagement in your team



Principles for turning employee feedback into action

Identifying the common barriers to action and how to overcome them



A 4-stage process for successful action planning

A simple 4 step approach to help you get from survey results to sustainable action



Summary and next steps

What is employee engagement, and why is it important?

What is employee engagement?

Employee engagement is a workplace approach designed to ensure that employees are committed to their organisation's goals and values, motivated to contribute to organisational success and are able, at the same time, to enhance their own sense of well-being. Engagement is therefore a tool for organisational success

Measuring employee engagement

At Warwickshire County Council, employee engagement is measured through the following questions in the Your Say Survey;

I am proud to work for WCC

I believe I have the opportunity for personal development and growth whilst at work in the CC

Overall I am satisfied working for WCC

The County Council is a good employer

My immediate manager encourages me to propose new ideas and to improve the quality of our services to our customers

I think it is safe to speak up and challenge the way things are done at work

Employee engagement has been shown to be linked with organisational performance* ...



18% higher in terms of productivity



2.5 times greater revenue growth



12% higher customer satisfaction



Twice the net annual growth



40% lower employee turnover



59% of engaged employees said their job brings out their most creative ideas, compared to just 3% of less engaged



Bottom quartile recorded 62% more accidents than top

* Engage for Success



Want to find out more? The Engage for Success website has lots of useful resources about measuring and improving employee engagement <http://engageforsuccess.org/>

Your role in influencing employee engagement

“Listening to employees is important, but taking action on their feedback is even more important”



Leaders and managers influence engagement

In ORC International’s recent analysis of Key Drivers of Engagement, it was found that employee’s perceptions of Leadership and Management was having the biggest impact on their levels of engagement. Therefore as a manager, you have a key role in improving the engagement of your teams.

These findings are mirrored in the MacLeod report which identified a common set of Enablers of engagement, including having ‘Engaging Managers’. According to MacLeod, an Engaging Manager is one who coaches and stretched their people and treats them as individuals.

Your role in improving engagement

As a manager, you play a key role in helping us to make WCC a more engaging and productive place to work

Through collaborating with your employees, taking the feedback they have given us, we’d like you to create **meaningful actions** based on the evidence.

It’s important to keep your action plan on the agenda, and continue to progress the actions.

In addition to your plans, organisation wide plans will be built to address some of the things that can’t be directly resolved locally.



Principles for successful action planning

“I don’t have the time to focus on this”

“It’s just not communicated”

“Actions not a priority”

“Can’t see the link to the survey...”

“Don’t know how to do it”

“No accountability”

Understanding the common barriers to taking action

Through understanding some of the reasons why action planning doesn’t work, we’ve identified some key principles that will lead to successful action. The key objective is that turning employee feedback into action is part of business as usual, and is embedded into how we work at WCC.

Overcoming the barriers to successful action

- Taking actions to improve engagement should become part of business as usual
- The Your Say Survey is a rich source of feedback, but it is the start of a conversation and is not the only opportunity to get feedback
- Turning feedback into action is everyone’s responsibility
- The most effective action plans are simple, focussed and aligned with our wider business objectives
- Managers should see taking action as part of their role and an integral tool for improving the performance of their team



You’re not alone!

Remember there are many managers in WCC, so reach out to each other to share ideas and experiences as you deliver your actions.

A 4-stage approach for successful action



1. Understand

- Look through the results
- What are the key findings?
- Who do we need to involve in action planning?
- What are our parameters?



2. Get together

- Involve teams!
- Gather a deeper understanding of the results
- Define your key areas of focus
- Brainstorm ideas for action



3. Agree our plans

- Prioritise ideas for action based on impact
- Choose your courageous goal
- Build a SMART action plan to get there
- Gather buy-in required to make it a success
- Consider building your actions into existing action plans



4. Keep it alive

- Keep revisiting your plan
- Communicate, communicate, communicate!
- Share best practise as well as lessons learned

Keep it simple.



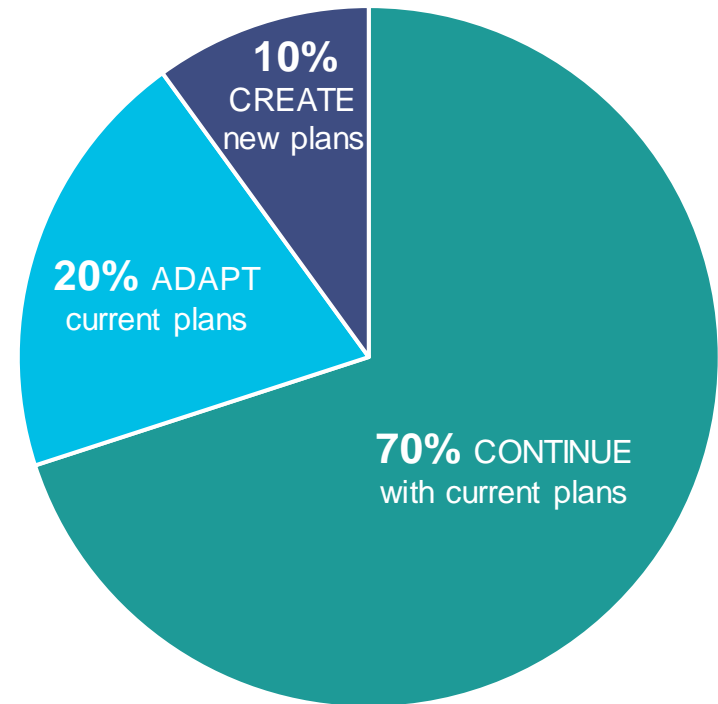
There's no need to re-invent the wheel!

As a rule of thumb, effort required for an organisation to drive the required change follows a 70/20/10 principle:

70% continuation of current practices

20% adaptation or refinement of current practices

10% creating new initiatives



Our brains make approximately **35,000 decisions** everyday.

Remember not to over-complicate action planning, and focus on the issues that will have the biggest impact and are aligned with wider priorities.



1. Understand

Prior to your meeting with your team, take the time to review your results and identify some key findings.

Navigating your team's feedback

Take the time to follow these steps when reviewing your team's feedback from the Your Say Survey. This approach should enable you to identify some initial areas for focus, including what you might want to celebrate. These areas will then form the basis of a discussion you facilitate with your team to identify where you need to take action. You want to present this data without putting your own spin on it as the input of the team is key.



Consider the context...

What was happening in the lead up to the Your Say Survey? What were your action plans from last time?



Make use of the comparisons

Where are the biggest variances from the last survey? How are we comparing to the benchmark? Note that since the last Staff Survey there may have been changes to your team structure which means that there is no longer a valid trend comparison.



Look for connections

Having gone through the previous steps, are the questions that you're pulling out related to a certain theme?

2 1 3

Look through the headline scores

What's the level of engagement?
What are the top 5 and bottom 5 positive scores?



Identify areas for focus...

What are you going to celebrate, focus on improving and needing to investigate further?



Identify the key drivers of engagement

The key driver analysis is a statistical technique that enables us to identify the questions that are having the biggest impact on employee engagement. It's important to consider these questions as areas for focus for action to help you to improve engagement over time. How are the key driver questions performing in your team?

Celebrate!	<input type="text"/>
Opportunities to improve	<input type="text"/>
Investigate further	<input type="text"/>

Look through the headline scores



What are your highest 5 scoring and lowest 5 scoring questions? Look at your % positive scores (where respondees have answered “agree” or “strongly agree”)

Highest scoring questions	2014 score	2016 score	Difference to 2014	ORC median difference

Lowest scoring questions	2014 score	2016 score	Difference to 2014	ORC median difference

Finding your focus areas as a team



Printable
handout

Celebrate!

Where are we doing well, what are our strengths?
What are our biggest improvements?
Where are we ahead of the internal and external benchmarks?

Opportunities to improve

What's not going so well?
Where are we falling behind compared to 2014, and to benchmarks?

Investigate further

Are there any areas which were not what we were expecting, that we need to explore further?
What are we most neutral about (rather as “neither agree or disagree” on team level results), can we try to understand why?

Avoiding the common pitfalls in understanding results

Taking the time to review your team's feedback will enable you to facilitate better conversations with your team, and work together to formulate actions that are going to have an impact.

Utilising the approach outlined here in reviewing your team's results will ensure that you avoid some of the common pitfalls that managers can find themselves falling into.

Focussing only on the lowest scoring questions

Often, the lowest scoring questions are not driving engagement, and can be difficult to action.

Only considering positive scores

Positive scores are a great place to start, but identifying your highest negative scores will demonstrate where your team are feeling most frustrated. The highest neutral scores (rated as "neither agree or disagree") also present an important opportunity to shift opinion through better communication and clarity.

Forgetting to celebrate our strengths

Whilst action planning should be concerned with identifying how we can continue to improve, it's important to celebrate, share and maintain what we're doing well.

Seeing the results as the end of the conversation

The Your Say Survey provides a wealth of useful feedback from your team. However, it won't provide you with all the answers you need. Utilise the feedback to generate a constructive plan of where you need to make improvements

Looking at the results in isolation

Starting to make connections between the feedback from your team to the context will make for more powerful conversations during your team session.

Not focussing on what is going to improve engagement

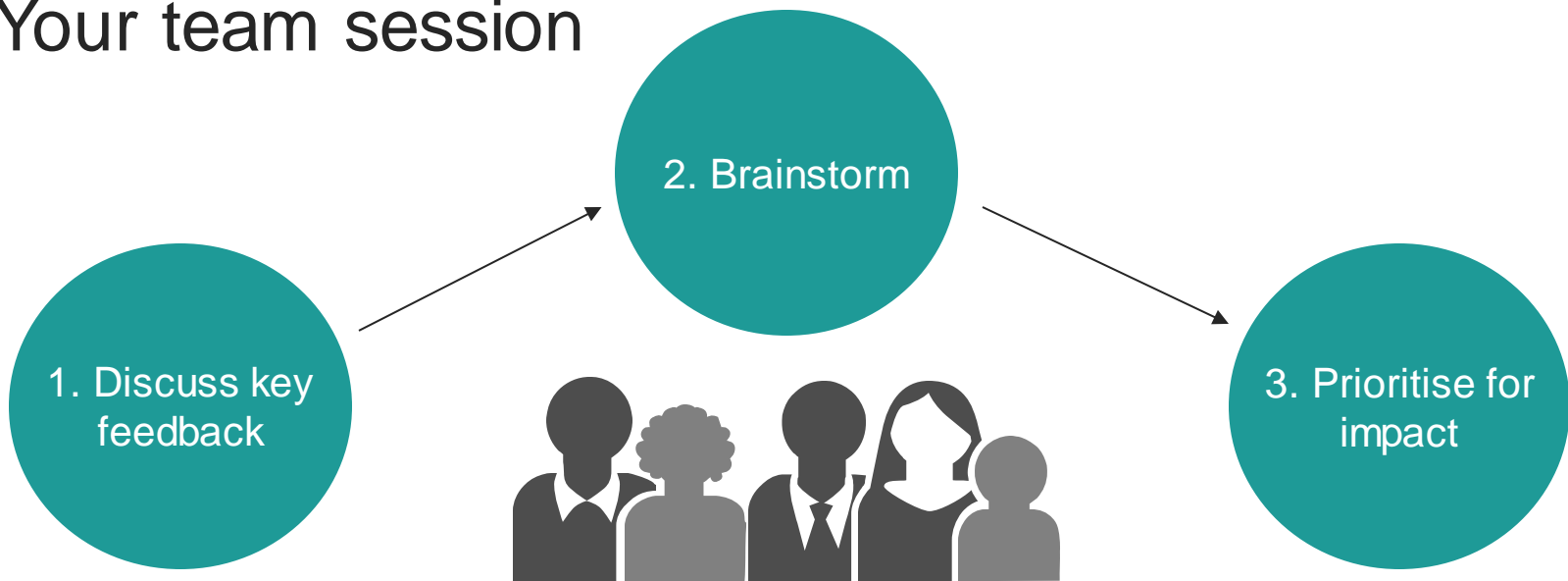
Similarly to focussing only on the lowest scoring questions, it is important to try and understand what is driving engagement in your team or within WCC to help steer where you focus your attention.



2. Get Together

Now you've identified some initial findings from the results, organise a meeting with your team to discuss them and identify solutions.

Your team session



Preparing for your team session

- **Set aside at least 30 minutes** for the meeting if possible
- **Give people as much notice as possible**, especially if you want them to review the results and think about ideas ahead of time
- **Set an agenda with clear outcomes** so people know what is expected by the end of the session, e.g. using POST (Purpose, Outcomes, Structure, Timing)
- **Consider the setup of the room** so that it's easy for people to interact and communicate with each other (e.g. everyone around a table rather than sitting in classroom rows)
- **Develop your follow up plan**, what will you be sharing with the team after the session, and how will you share that?
- **Reassure people about the confidentiality of the session**, and that you value their honest feedback
- You could **split this over 2 team sessions**; 1) to review the data and 2) to complete the action planning to allow time to reflect

Tips for a successful session

Example agenda for 30-60 minutes

Your Say Survey Action Planning Meeting

- Meeting objectives
- Overview of the results; engagement, and what you've identified should be celebrated, investigated further, improved
- What are we most proud of?
- What do we most need to improve? Discuss the root causes
- Brainstorm ideas for action – spend quality time on this before moving on too soon
- Prioritise those that will have the biggest impact
- Close and next steps

Tips for facilitating constructive conversations

Do:

- ✓ Look interested; use supportive gestures, such as nods and open body language
- ✓ Take notes; jot down key points so you can use these for summarising or further questions later. You may wish to use post its etc. to capture ideas
- ✓ Try not to let one or two participants control the conversation - Encourage different views. For example, “what do others think? Is this everyone’s experience?”
- ✓ Stay relaxed and calm, remembering that this is an opportunity for you to learn a lot about how you can help to improve things for you and your team

Don't:

- ✗ Try not to modify the discussion to suit your own view
- ✗ Make your mind up too quickly without hearing the whole story
- ✗ Think too much about the prior knowledge you have about the people in the room, try and make the discussion open for everyone to have their say

1. Discuss key feedback

Identifying your key areas for focus as a team

Start the session by going through the results, calling out what you felt were some of the key findings under the below headings of 'Celebrate', 'Investigate further' and 'Opportunities to improve'. Make sure you're using this as an opportunity to sense-check whether you have identified the right areas for focus. Also utilise this time with your team to gather context around each focus area, through focussed questions to gather examples and details which will help you to build actions that are going to have an impact.

Celebrate!

Where are we doing well, what are our strengths?
What are our biggest improvements?
Where are we ahead of the internal and external benchmarks?

Opportunities to improve

What's not going so well?
Where are we falling behind compared to 2014, and to benchmarks?

Investigate further

Are there any areas which were not what we were expecting, that we need to explore further? What are we most neutral about, can we try to understand why?



3 is the magic number!

At the end of the discussion, try to have gathered a maximum of 3 areas for improvement or further investigation.

2. Brainstorm



Breaking the habit!

Around 45% of choices we make every day are based on habits, rather than decisions. Through being aware of what drives our behaviours, biases and assumptions, we can start to break them and really make a change.

Try the 'Yes, and...' exercise

As a group, go around the room generating ideas for actions to tackle the 'Opportunities to improve' focus areas.

Everyone has to start their response with 'yes, and...' building on the previous person's response. Make sure someone is taking notes!

Utilise this for each of your 'improve' focus areas and you'll be amazed how many ideas you can generate, and quickly.

Ban the idea killers!

Yes, but... It already exists! Our customers won't like that!
WE DON'T HAVE TIME... **NO!** It's not possible...
It's too expensive! Let's be realistic... *That's not logical...*
We need to do more research... THERE'S NO BUDGET...
I'm not creative... We don't want to make mistakes...
The management won't agree... **GET REAL...**
It's not my responsibility... It's too difficult to master...
THAT'S TOO BIG A CHANGE...
The market is not ready yet... *Let's keep it under consideration...*
It is just like... The older generation will not use it...
WE ARE TOO SMALL FOR THAT...
It might work in other places but not here...
SINCE WHEN ARE YOU THE EXPERT?... That's for the future...
There are no staff members available... **IT IS NOT SUITABLE FOR OUR CLIENTS...**

3. Prioritise for impact

Prioritise your ideas as a team

Brainstorming ideas on how to take action on your areas for improvement will have produced lots of different ideas and options for action. However, in order to make sure action planning is successful, we need to keep things simple and focussed. A great exercise to do with your team is to get them to plot the ideas that were generated against this chart, mapping them against effort (e.g. resources, time, sphere of influence) vs impact (predicted impact on the key focus areas we've identified).



The objective

At the end of this exercise, we are looking to have narrowed down our actions to a targeted list that we take forward.

High Impact, Easy to Implement; The majority of actions taken forward should be within this quadrant.

High Impact, Hard to Implement/Low Impact, Easy to Implement; Including an action from one of these quadrants can help to either maintain momentum or tackle a long term objective.

Low Impact, Hard to Implement; These are actions you should not be taking forward.



3. Agree our plans

Following your team meeting, utilise all the feedback and ideas you gathered to finalise and refine your action plan.

Creating courageous goals



Being courageous with our goals for action

Courageous goals tap into the right side of the brain, the imaginative side, and generate goals that engender excitement, inspiration and imagination.

Building a courageous goal for your actions will enable you to build a clear vision for success, than isn't affected by organisational change.

Typical action objectives

Improve communications by having a 15 min buzz every day

My goal is to be promoted to the next level of this organisation within two years

Our goal is to achieve a 95% response rate and an Employee Engagement Index of 80% in the survey

Courageous goals

Keep the team fully informed of all relevant issues in order that everyone feels in the loop

Utilise all available avenues to progress within the organisation

Our goal is to create a workplace where we look forward to coming to work each day

Underpinned with a SMART framework for action

Creating a structured SMART action plan for your team

When consolidating the feedback and ideas from your team meeting, ensure you create a structured action plan that sets out exactly how you're going to achieve your courageous goal. The SMART framework is a tried and tested method for action planning, and provides a clear structure for implementing actions and improvements.

S_{pecific}

What are you trying to address? How do you want employees to feel about this? What's our specific goal?

M_{easurable}

How are we going to measure progress against our goal? How often do we need to track progress?

A_{ttainable}

How can we ensure our action is achievable and is going to be able to be a part of 'business as usual'? Can we connect the action with other work that is going on or is planned? Can I involve team members in delivering these improvements?

R_{elevant}

Are we sure that this action is going to be relevant to what we're trying to achieve more widely? If so, what does this action link with?

T_{ime-bound}

What's our target date for this action? How can we ensure this is sustained following the target date?

Avoiding the common pitfalls in creating action plans

The key principle for these stages of the approach for successful action planning is to involve your teams. They will often have the best ideas for action, and involving them in the creation of your team action plans means that they will feel they have greater ownership over making WCC a great place to work.

Another key principle is to keep things simple, and not to try and deliver too many actions. Focussing on a few key areas only means that you are more likely to be successful in achieving these actions.

Too many actions

Setting out to implement too many actions often means setting yourself up to fail. It is more impactful to achieve 1-3 actions, than it is to attempt to achieve more than not have the time/resources to complete them.

Not involving employees

Your employees have taken the time to give their feedback in the Your Say Survey and will value the opportunity to be involved in shaping the actions. Through involving your teams, you may also find some willing volunteers to help with achieving your action plan!

Taking a short term view

Whilst it is always beneficial to develop a proportion of actions that can be implemented quickly, to help maintain momentum after the survey, don't shy away from longer term objectives. Just be realistic with your goals!

Not aligning action to Business As Usual and other objectives

Consider what the priorities for WCC are, and which actions align with these. Focussing on actions that are linked to the priorities of the Council means they are more likely to remain a focus.

Unrealistic target setting

Consider your sphere of influence when setting your targets or measures of success. Whilst it can be useful to track progress, setting targets that are not realistic and then are not met can reduce morale.

Action planning in isolation

Creating an action plan for your team in isolation without their input can leave the team feeling disengaged and that their views don't count.



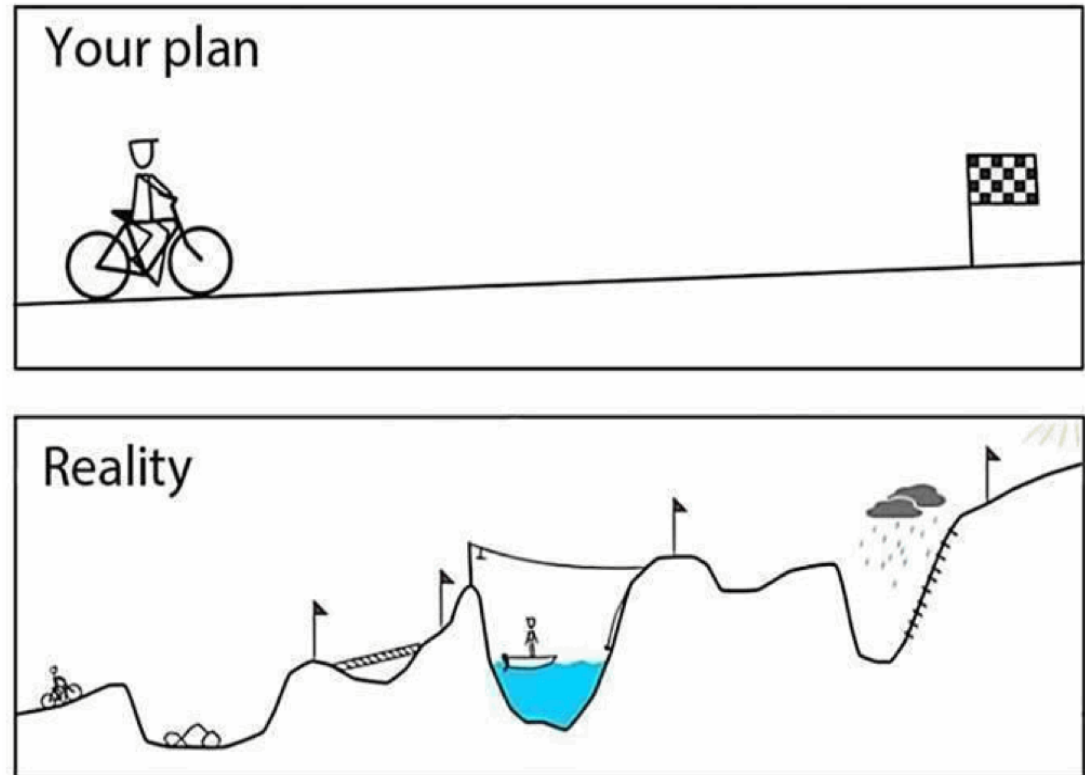
4. Keep it alive

Consider how you will keep engagement and your plans for improvement on the agenda and front of mind.

Keep your action plan on the agenda

Keep adapting and evolving

When you create your action plan, it will be based on the context at that time. However, with organisational change being so much the norm, in reality there will be many changes and potential obstacles that could affect your action plan. Therefore try to use team meetings to discuss how you're progressing on the action plan with your team, and whether you need to make any adjustments. Having a strong courageous goal will help to stay focussed against the context of change.



The communication loop

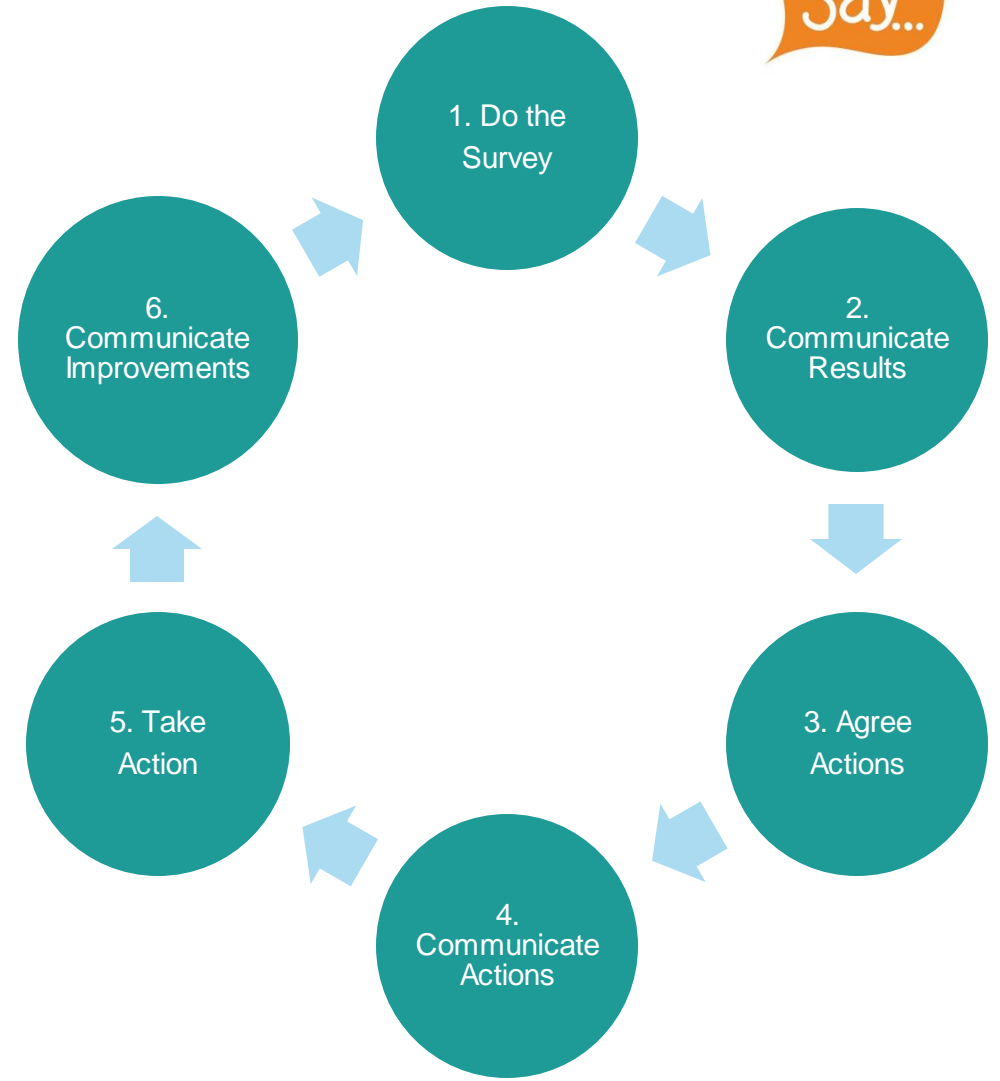


Communicate, communicate, communicate!

Communication is key to successful action planning, and helps to build employee's belief that the feedback they provide in the Your Say Survey will lead to positive change.

Consider the different channels you have available to communicate updates as to how you're progressing with employees, e.g. team meetings, newsletters, employee forums etc. Use a "You Said, We Did" style of communications to be explicit about what action has been taken and how it relates to the Your Say results

When an action has been implemented, it's really important to remember to share this with employees, and make the connection back to the feedback that they provided in the Your Say Survey.



Support available

Further support is available including:

- **WILMa**
 - [WFW DP068 Managing Difficult Conversations](#)
 - [WFW DP127 Giving and Receiving Feedback eLearning](#)

- **Mindtools** – [online development tool](#)

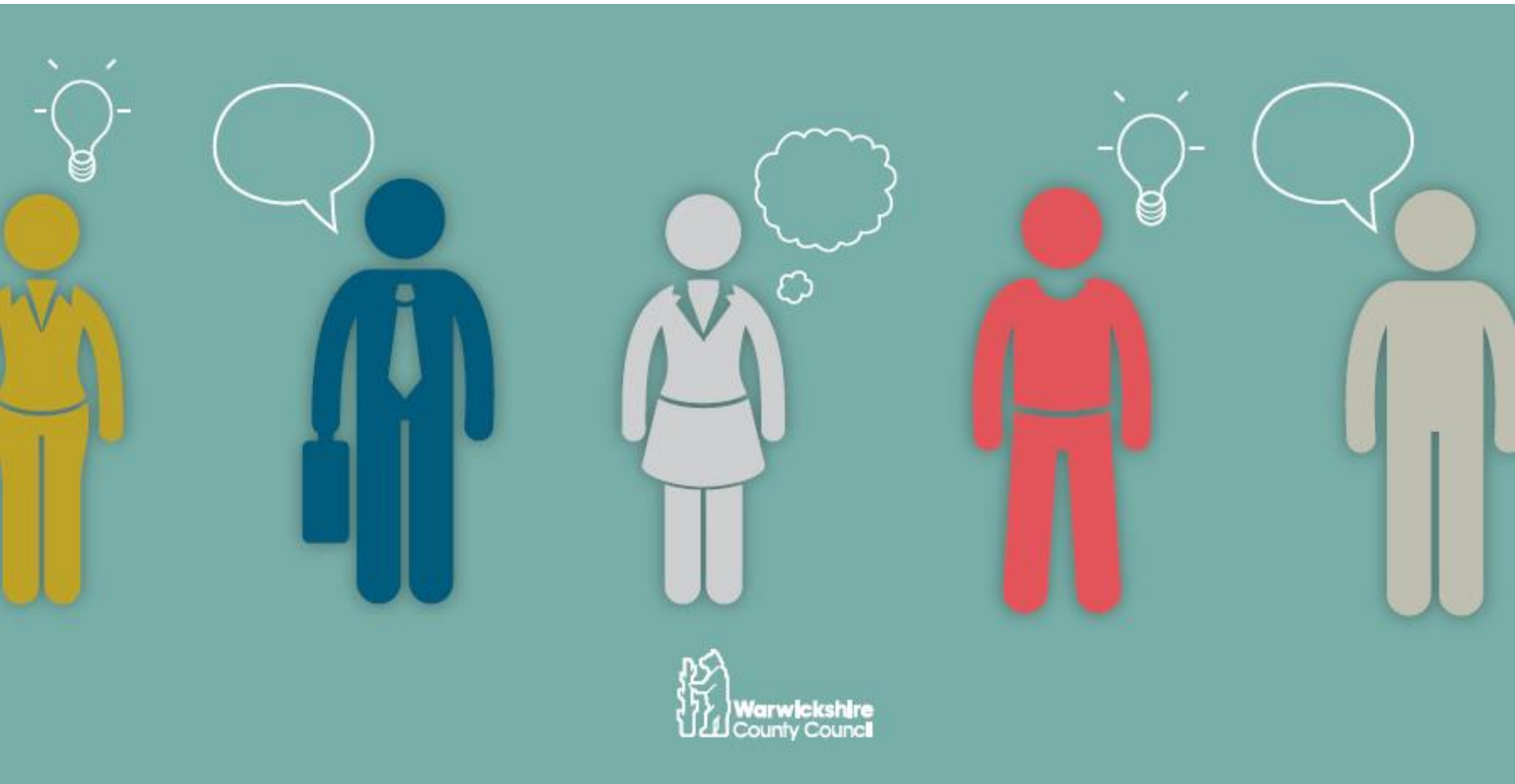
- **OD team / HR Business Partner** – support with gaining insight from your results, [personalised team and individual development](#) including coaching, facilitating listening groups, etc. Contact organisationaldevelopment@warwickshire.gov.uk

- **Elearning modules** on WILMa (from November) –
 1. Employee Engagement – for all staff
 2. Employee Engagement: Your Say results into action - for managers (based on this toolkit)

In summary...



- ✓ Employee engagement is **measurable**, is **linked with performance** and productivity, and is something **we can all influence**
- ✓ **Leaders and Line Managers play a key role** in achieving the WCC Employee Engagement Strategy, and in making the Council a great place to work
- ✓ Listening to employees is important, but **taking action** on their feedback is even more important
- ✓ Taking a **consistent but simple approach** to action planning is key to building engagement at WCC
- ✓ **Utilise all the information** and insights you receive from the Your Say Survey, **facilitate a discussion** with your team, and create a **compelling but structured action plan**
- ✓ Consider how you are going to **communicate and provide ongoing updates** on progress, as well as gather feedback and ideas from your team



Further information and contact:

organisationaldevelopment@warwickshire.gov.uk