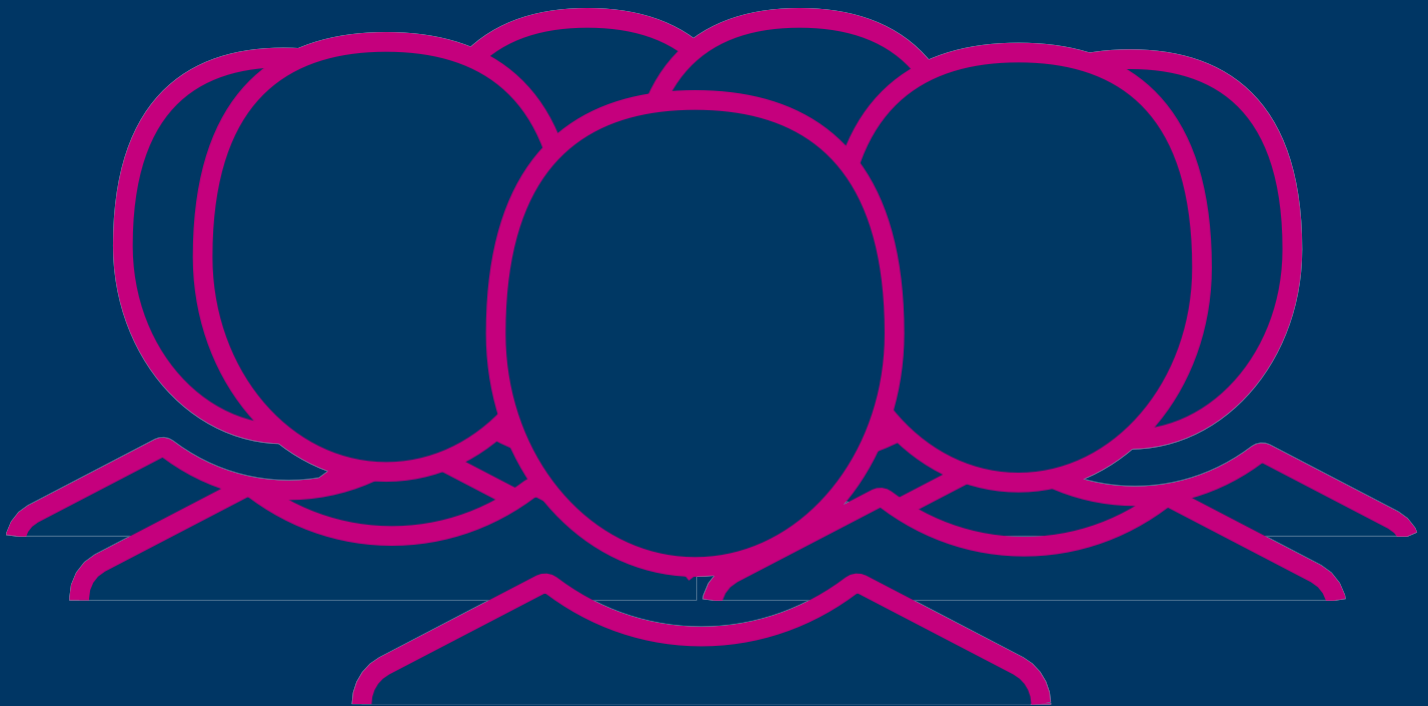


# INVESTORS IN PEOPLE®

We invest in people



## Feedback

### Western Lettings Ltd

Project number: SCO-22-00140  
Specialist: Christopher Cox  
Date: OCT 2022



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The Investors in People identity is strong, simple, powerful and instantly recognisable. It is therefore important that only organisations that are accredited as Investors in People can use our mark.

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# You did it!



You've achieved the Platinum level of our We invest in people accreditation.

## 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
25 OCT 2022	OCT 2023	OCT 2024	25 OCT 2025

# At a glance

## Result of the assessment

Investors in People is a widely recognized framework that helps organisations improve their performance by focusing on the development and engagement of their workforce. This report is an assessment of your organisation's adherence to the We Invest in People Standard and highlights your achievements as an accredited organisation.

It provides an examination of your practices and processes, and recognises your commitment to creating a positive and productive working environment for your employees. Through this report, we hope to demonstrate your dedication to continuous improvement and the value you place on your people.

The outcome of this assessment is that you have met the standard at the highest level of Platinum. The table below summarises this, showing that all nine indicators are at High Performing. This is an excellent achievement and you should all be very proud of what the organisation is doing.

Whilst you have achieved the highest level of accreditation, I am sure that we will continue to work together to progress and improve.

<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Themes</i>	<b>Developed</b> <i>In place and understood</i>	<b>Established</b> <i>Engaging and activating</i>	<b>Advanced</b> <i>Creating positive outcomes</i>	<b>High Performing</b> <i>Embedded and always improving</i>
1. Leading and inspiring people	Creating Transparency and trust				
	Motivating people to deliver the organisation's objectives				
	Developing leadership capability				
2. Living the organisation's values and behaviours	Operating in line with the values				
	Adopting the values				
	Living the values				
3. Empowering and involving people	Empowering people				
	Participating and collaborating				
	Making decisions				
4. Managing performance	Setting objectives				
	Encouraging high performance				
	Measuring and assessing performance				
5. Recognising and rewarding high performance	Designing an approach to recognition and reward				
	Adopting a culture of recognition				
	Recognising and rewarding people				
6. Structuring work	Designing roles				
	Creating autonomy in roles				
	Enabling collaborative working				
7. Building capability	Understanding people's potential				
	Supporting learning and development				
	Deploying the right people at the right time				
8. Delivering continuous improvement	Improving through internal and external sources				
	Creating a culture of continuous improvement				
	Encouraging innovation				
9. Creating sustainable success	Focusing on the future				
	Embracing change				
	Understanding the external context				

# Survey highlights

The online survey was not used this year, having been run in 2021 with a 100% response rate, but for completeness the results are included in this report. The benchmark score of 842 is very high, and indicative of an organisation operating at the Platinum level. It is significantly above the 728 average of all IIP organisations that have completed the survey.



- YOUR BENCHMARK
    - **842**
  - AVERAGE IIP BENCHMARK ⓘ
    - **728**
  - AVERAGE INDUSTRY BENCHMARK
    - **727**
- Showing results for Activities of Extraterritorial Organisations and Bodies*

All indicators scored above the IIP average, with Indicator 5, Recognising and Rewarding High Performance, significantly above average.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Average Indicator Score ⓘ	Difference from IIP Average ⓘ
INDICATOR 1 Leading and inspiring people	75.0%	20.5%	0.0%	2.3%	0.0%	0.0%	2.3%	6.6	+1.0 ⓘ
INDICATOR 2 Living the organisation's values and behaviours	63.6%	25.5%	10.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	6.5	+0.6 ⓘ
INDICATOR 3 Empowering and involving people	65.9%	31.8%	2.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	6.6	+0.8 ⓘ
INDICATOR 4 Managing performance	77.3%	13.6%	6.8%	0.0%	0.0%	2.3%	0.0%	6.6	+0.9 ⓘ
INDICATOR 5 Recognising and rewarding high performance	50.0%	47.7%	0.0%	2.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	6.5	+1.3 ⓘ
INDICATOR 6 Structuring work	63.6%	29.5%	6.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	6.6	+0.7 ⓘ
INDICATOR 7 Building capability	52.7%	41.8%	5.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	6.5	+0.9 ⓘ
INDICATOR 8 Delivering continuous improvement	61.4%	27.3%	4.5%	4.5%	0.0%	2.3%	0.0%	6.4	+0.7 ⓘ
INDICATOR 9 Creating sustainable success	77.3%	20.5%	0.0%	0.0%	2.3%	0.0%	0.0%	6.7	+0.9 ⓘ

There was very little active disagreement with any of the statements in the survey, and this positive attitude to the organisation's people processes and policies was reflected in conversations with staff last year, and even more so this year.

# What to be proud of

- Making Renting Better is not just a slogan - it motivates and inspires people to do their best for landlords, tenants, and the organisation
- People respect leaders and have confidence in the way that they are managed, and how the organisation is run
- Jack, Sandra, Catherine, and Caroline all lead by example and are active role models, trusted by people in the organisation
- The organisation's values are truly at the heart of everything it does. Leaders embody the values, and all team members believe in them
- There has been considerable progress over this assessment cycle in ensuring that everybody is encouraged to use their initiative and take ownership of delivering the organisation's objectives. This contrasts strongly with three years ago when, as people say, Jack did everything
- The approach to performance management is established, effective, frequent, and light touch, and allows people to take the lead in setting their objectives
- Over the last couple of years the transition from Jack doing everyone's catch ups, to Sandra and Catherine doing them has made the organisation more resilient
- The survey scores for Indicator 5 are 25% above the IIP average
- The introduction of two days Moving Leave has been popular and is a great example of how Jack and Caroline are committed to supporting staff at different stages of their lives. Other examples are the introduction of more generous sick pay, maternity pay, and an allowance of 20 volunteering days
- Property manager roles are specifically designed so that people have autonomy and authority
- People talk about learning all the time at work, as well as sharing knowledge with colleagues
- Your culture embodies continuous improvement. People constantly question if things can be done better, and leaders actively look outside the organisation, and collaborate widely, to improve business performance and employee engagement
- There is unanimous agreement that this organisation is a great place to work, and there is strong commitment to making a positive impact on society

# What to work on

These are our suggested priorities to improve how your people are led, supported and developed:

- Monthly trending of pulse surveys has led leaders to the realisation that satisfaction and engagement levels are directly correlated to workload. This has resulted in a decision to try to speed up recruiting so that staff numbers remain ahead of the workload curve
- Whilst people feel that they are well rewarded, and increases in pay have been frequent in the last year or so, it may be a good idea to have a set annual pay review date

## Summary of our recommendations

- As length of service increases, it may be worth looking at increasing holiday allowances after five and ten years, and also potentially allowing people to sell or carry over a few days holiday, or even buy more holiday, so that the holiday year end is less of a cliff-edge deadline
- Recruitment is a priority, and it would be good to build a bank of applicants who are part way through the system, so that they can be started quickly as required
- Be aware of the possibility that recruiting ahead of the curve could lead to excess capacity, and people not feeling challenged. The important thing is balance, and having an efficient recruitment system
- Be aware of the possibility of change fatigue. As the organisation grows, it will become more important that everybody is able to understand process changes
- Consider Diversity and Inclusion training for staff
- Consider Disability Confident employer accreditation

# What we did

You have held Investors in People accreditation since 2019, and this would have been the third annual assessment for 2022 accreditation following on from your successful Gold accreditation in 2019. Due to the change from Remarkable to the IIP CIC, we decided to run a full assessment this year to try and gain the maximum amount of evidence towards your ambition of achieving Platinum.

You are committed to your ambition of achieving Platinum accreditation, and have been working towards this throughout the three year cycle. In 2022 you were successfully assessed against the We Invest in Wellbeing standard, achieving accreditation at the higher level of Gold.

Leaders are strong advocates of the IIP ethos, demonstrated by Jack's answer to the question *What advice would you give someone wanting to work in the industry?* in an interview in The Scotsman:

*Try to find a company who are set up to support broad-based learning. Many companies break up the workload with an assembly line mentality, which means that your job quickly becomes boring and repetitive. You won't learn much about the lettings business by spending five years doing viewings. It's a good sign if an employer supports professional development and talks about it in the job specification. Try picking a company who have an Investors in People accreditation.*

This assessment was conducted in person, and as in my previous visits I really enjoyed meeting all of your staff who made me feel so welcome. It was good to be back in your office to be able to see some of the physical changes, such as the smart key boards, and get a flavour of what a calm and confident attitude the office and staff project.

I'm very grateful to everyone for giving up their time to talk to me. Please pass on my thanks for their open and helpful feedback.

Planning for this assessment was carried out with Jack and Caroline. I again spoke to all of your staff, which is well above the number required by Investors in People (35%) for an organisation of your size.

The focus of this assessment was on providing you with feedback on areas of strength and recommendations to support you in your aims of making renting better and maintaining a nice place to work, as well as progress towards achieving High Performing in all indicators on the WIIP framework.

The online survey was not used this year, having achieved excellent results in 2021.

On Thu 23 OCT I spoke to all of your employees, confidentially, one to one, for between 30 and 50 minutes each.

Initial feedback was given to Jack and Caroline at the end of the day.

This report will celebrate some of the good things going on, and look at opportunities to progress.



# What your people told us

## Leading

### 1. LEADING AND INSPIRING PEOPLE - High Performing

*Making Renting Better – we all believe in it*

*We all share the same goal*

*The Morning Meet is really useful*

*The Morning Meet means everyone knows what's going on. We check we're all on the same page then it's, "Let's go!"*

*It's great talking to Jack and hearing what his plans are and where the business is*

*Jack talks about where the company is going, a lot*

*Jack gives a lot of background information as well as what he's trying to achieve with the business*

*Jack is a role model and has time for everyone*

*Jack is so approachable*

*Jack is very supportive*

*Catherine is a role model*

*The owners are so nice and everyone is welcoming*

*I admire Catherine's work ethic*

#### Indicator 1: Leading and inspiring people



### The Good Practice

- People respect leaders and have confidence in the way that they are managed, and how the organisation is run
- The meeting structure - Quarterly All Staff Meeting, BD Meeting, and Morning Meet - ensures that decision making and communication are transparent

- The Morning Meet ensures that there is consistency of effort and that everyone understands what is happening, and is working towards the organisation’s ambition. It keeps everyone in touch with business performance and direction
- The democratic and inclusive nature of the Morning Meet means that the organisation is not run on command and control
- Making Renting Better is not just a slogan - it motivates and inspires people to do their best for landlords, tenants, and the organisation
- Jack, Sandra, Catherine, and Caroline all lead by example and are active role models, trusted by people in the organisation
- The last year or so has seen a strong focus on enhancing leadership capabilities and devolving responsibilities to Sandra and Catherine
- Catherine’s maternity leave is being used as a way to identify future leadership capabilities, and include everyone in experiencing leadership challenges

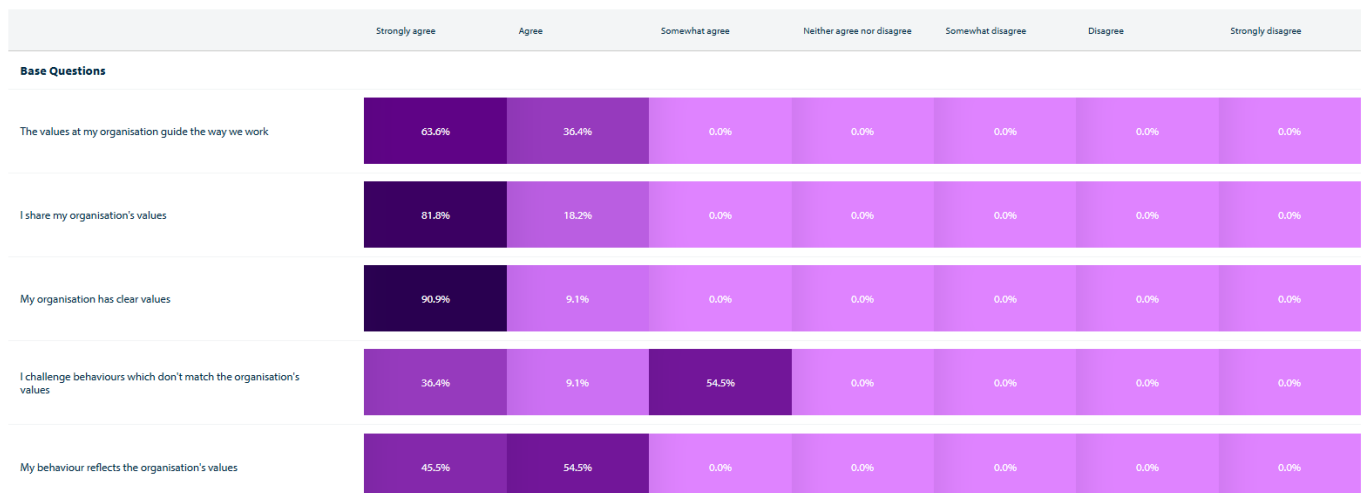
## 2. LIVING THE ORGANISATION’S VALUES AND BEHAVIOURS - High Performing

*I can deal with landlords and tenants however I see fit, within the company’s values*

*Transparency – we all stick to it. We’re very honest about things*

*When it came to light, we never even discussed not doing the right thing*

Indicator 2: Living the organisation’s values and behaviours



### The Good Practice

- The organisation’s values are truly at the heart of everything it does. Leaders embody the values, and all team members believe in them, using them to confirm, shape, and encourage behaviour
- The values’ compatibility with the organisation’s core purpose and long-term goal contributes to people’s autonomy, ensuring consistent behaviour whilst giving

staff freedom to choose how to respond to situations

- The values give property managers freedom to deal with landlords and tenants however they think best
- People challenge inappropriate behaviour on the rare occasions when it might surface, but the 55% somewhat agree score on the survey is likely to be caused by the low frequency of behaviour which is not in line with the values
- The commitment to continuous improvement is seen under Indicator 8, and it is clear that this is a core value lived by the organisation
- Building trusting teams is clearly demonstrated by the organisation’s collaborative approach and commitment to staff wellbeing, as well as the inclusive and values-led approach to recruitment
- It’s always a pleasure to come to your office as the team make visitors feel incredibly welcome

### 3. EMPOWERING AND INVOLVING PEOPLE - High Performing

*We’re relaxed about decision making and everyone’s involved*

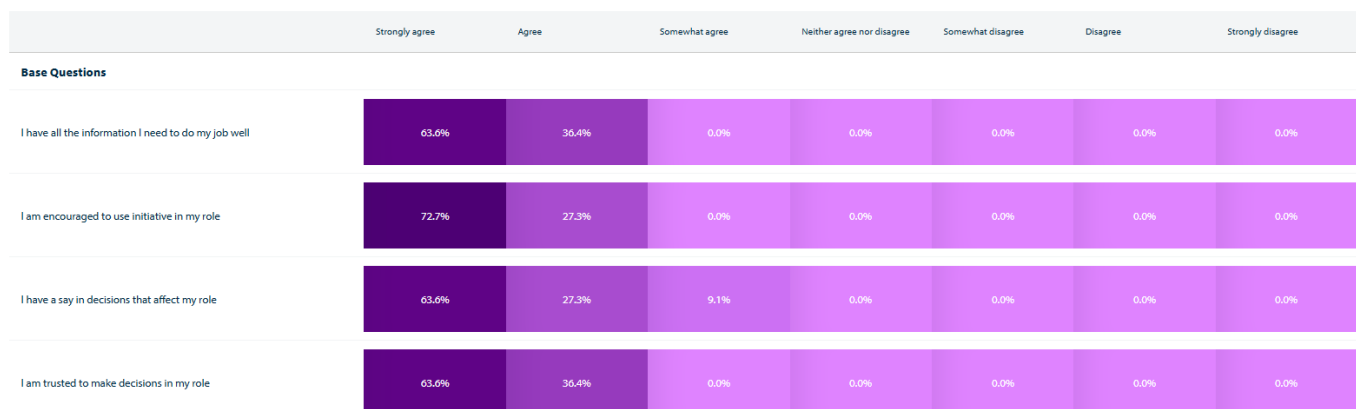
*People talk about problems and we discuss it*

*It’s a great team*

*I made the decision and then told Sandra*

*Jack will sack clients if necessary*

#### Indicator 3: Empowering and involving people



### The Good Practice

- There has been considerable progress over this assessment cycle in ensuring that everybody is encouraged to use their initiative and take ownership of delivering the organisation’s objectives. This can take the form of people being encouraged to lead the Morning Meet, or contribute in other ways to staff meetings. This contrasts strongly with three years ago when, as people say, Jack did everything
- Every member of staff becomes ARLA qualified and is able to manage their own

portfolio of properties. They have complete ownership over how they do this, supported by the clear processes, procedures, and technology that the organisation continues to develop

- People enthusiastically support each other, and the Back Up process, for when people are off, has been developed and improved so that work continues seamlessly, without anyone becoming overloaded
- Everyone knows that they are empowered and expected to question how things are done and suggest improvements. The success of this approach is clear from the way that ideas are rapidly implemented, reviewed, and improved

# Supporting

## 4. MANAGING PERFORMANCE - High Performing

*If you have a work problem, Jack helps you get to the solution. He asks for the background and thinks logically. It's like teaching or coaching*

*They're like, "Let us know what you want to do"*

### Indicator 4: Managing performance



## The Good Practice

- The approach to performance management is established, effective, frequent, and light touch, and allows people to take the lead in setting their objectives, knowing that they have access to support from Sandra or Catherine, and Jack
- Over the last couple of years the transition from Jack doing everyone's catch up over lunch, to Sandra and Catherine doing them has made the organisation more resilient, and allowed Sandra and Catherine to develop their skills and experience
- Catch ups cover competencies, but also how comfortable people are, and their progression and development, through Personal Development Plans
- The collaborative nature of the working environment means that informal feedback and coaching are an intrinsic part of daily working
- Targets are well understood, and drive performance

## 5. RECOGNISING AND REWARDING HIGH PERFORMANCE - High Performing

*They really do care*

*Moving Leave is a real morale booster*

*I missed out on Moving Leave, because I'd already moved, but I was given two days extra anyway*

*This company is miles ahead in every sense and we really do things differently so that everyone feels valued*

*Jack, as your boss, really makes the difference*

*Jack, Sandra, and Catherine treat us well*

*They're interested in who I am as a person and what my motivation is*

**Indicator 5: Recognising and rewarding high performance**



## The Good Practice

- The survey scores for Indicator 5 are 25% above the IIP average
- The organisation is an accredited Scottish Living Wage employer
- There has been an imaginative approach to reward and recognition beyond ensuring that people are simply sufficiently well-remunerated to meet the cost of living crisis, although there have been cost of living and performance bonuses in the last year
- Performance drives both recognition and reward, including through performance bonuses
- People are regularly consulted about the organisation's approach to reward and recognition, and involved in how the policies are developed. This means that the approach is popular and matches people's motivation
- Monthly pulse surveys are trended to measure changes in overall levels of engagement
- The introduction of two days Moving Leave, when people move house, has been popular and is a great example of how Jack and Caroline are committed to supporting staff at different stages of their lives
- Other examples are the introduction of more generous sick pay, maternity pay, and an allowance of 20 volunteering days
- All staff are also entitled to a day off on their birthday, and a Christmas shopping day
- The Golden Envelope scheme and Feel Good Friday, have a great effect on people's motivation and feeling of being appreciated
- Staff are offered the opportunity to have a branded EV, with considerable potential savings for them. Four staff have opted to do this so far. Other benefits include health insurance and gym membership

- It is clear that staff are motivated by the personal and caring approach to reward and recognition, and the importance attached to people’s physical, social, psychological, and financial wellbeing

## Areas to Improve

- Whilst people feel that they are well rewarded, and increases in pay have been frequent in the last year or so, it may be a good idea to have a set annual pay review date

## Recommendations

- As length of service increases, it may be worth looking at increasing holiday allowances after five and ten years, and also potentially allowing people to sell or carry over a few days holiday, or even buy more holiday, so that that the holiday year end is less of a cliff-edge deadline

## 6. STRUCTURING WORK - Advanced

*I feel confident making decisions*

*Ever since the pandemic started, it’s been all about the staff’s wellbeing and choices*

*Everyone asked about coming back to the office, and everyone wanted to come back in and be a team*

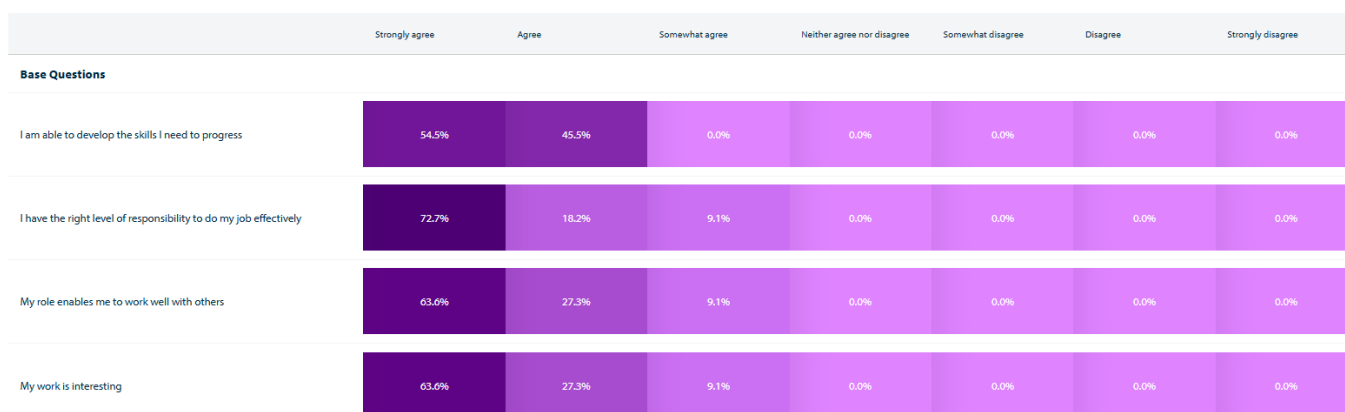
*Everybody wanted to come back to the office, but we would be flexible if someone wanted to work from home*

*For the next five weeks I’ll be working every Monday at home, and we’re just as productive at home*

*We had the choice and so I was able to be in the office. That’s important for a new starter*

*Jack 100% believes in collaboration*

### Indicator 6: Structuring work



## The Good Practice

- The organisation’s working pattern during and since the pandemic has been driven by a pragmatic combination of what was allowed and what people wanted, with the needs of the organisation a lower priority. This was possible, partly because what people wanted aligned very closely with what was best for the business. This meant an early return to full office working, but with the ability to work at home when required

- People enjoy the collaboration and sense of team that being together in the office brings
- Property manager roles are specifically designed so that people have autonomy and authority, and so that each person is responsible for the whole process, rather than being focussed on one particular aspect with an assembly line mentality
- Working methods and meeting structures ensure that procedures, systems, and policies are constantly under review, with the understanding that the more things change, the more the need to change becomes obvious. There is a built in review process to validate and improve (or reject) changes to ensure forward momentum
- Quarterly, monthly, and daily meetings provide structure, and support people in their work. Asana drives work, ensuring that tasks are not missed, whilst promoting autonomy and giving staff control over how they work
- The office is a bright, people-friendly space which promotes calm working. The Red Room provides a quiet/confidential environment

## Areas to Improve

- Monthly trending of pulse surveys has led leaders to the realisation that satisfaction and engagement levels are directly correlated to workload. This has resulted in a decision to try to speed up recruiting so that staff numbers remain ahead of the workload curve

## Recommendations

- Be aware of the possibility that recruiting ahead of the curve could lead to excess capacity, and people not feeling challenged. The important thing is balance, and having an efficient recruitment system



# Improving

## 7. BUILDING CAPABILITY - High Performing

*The company has my loyalty. It's got my best interests at heart and it's done so much for me – my learning, my progression*

*From where I started to now, progression is amazing*

*It's all going in the right direction*

*It's very important to find people who fit into the team and we have a say in that*

*The buddy system means people aren't thrown in at the deep end*

*We've improved so much – training has improved so much*

*For the first two years I was constantly learning, but then I felt I was stagnating so I spoke to Jack and Sandra and am now doing finance training*

*I want to be constantly learning*

*We're encouraged to always learn*

*We're trusted and supported to learn at our own speed*

### Indicator 7: Building capability



### The Good Practice

- Every employee is supported and encouraged (including a financial incentive) to achieve ARLA qualifications at whatever speed is appropriate for them
- People are encouraged to find and participate in other development opportunities that would benefit them, and professional learning and CPD are supported
- People talk about learning all the time at work, as well as sharing knowledge with colleagues
- Leaders constantly look at future developments, particularly in IT, and ensure

that people have the capabilities they will need for the business to succeed

- Leaders are actively looking at and encouraging collaboration with other organisations where this is mutually beneficial
- There is an understanding from leaders that people need to be challenged and continually progress. Consequently they are looking at new opportunities for company growth
- The Back Up system to cover absence is a great way of identifying potential for progression. Catherine’s maternity cover is doing a similar thing
- There is now an extremely effective induction programme with an associated buddy system, which has improved the experience of new starters

### Areas to Improve

- Clarity of career progression can be difficult in a small organisation.

### Recommendations

- Recruitment is a priority, and it would be good to build a bank of applicants who are part way through the system, so that they can be started quickly as required

## 8. DELIVERING CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT - High Performing

*We change processes a lot in Asana – it’s a lot slicker*

*We turned the process on its head, and I much prefer it this way*

*It’s always changing and always has since I started*

*A lot of processes have changed for the better*

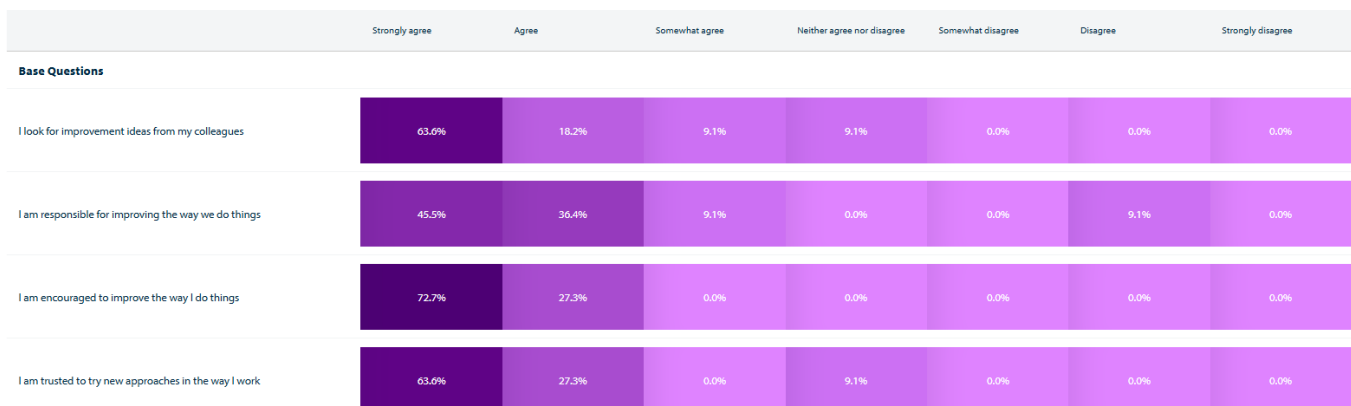
*They listen and act quickly*

*We’re all about continuous improvement and moving forward*

*Work is more manageable now and we’re ahead of the curve on recruitment*

*The speed of change is exciting*

#### Indicator 8: Delivering continuous improvement



## The Good Practice

- Continuous improvement is part of the culture. Almost everyone in the company is constantly questioning if things can be done better, and leaders actively look outside the organisation, and collaborate widely, to bring knowledge and change that improves business performance and employee engagement
- Change is implemented quickly and efficiently, and communicated at the Morning Meet. This means that the high rate of change doesn't leave people behind
- Staff are open to new ideas and embrace improvements. They are also able to speak out when changes aren't having the desired results
- The Note of Interest system has turned the way that properties are let on its head, making the process far more efficient. This is a great example of creative thinking and the iterative approach to change

## Recommendations

- Be aware of the possibility of change fatigue. As the organisation grows, it will become more important that everybody is able to understand process changes

## 9. CREATING SUSTAINABLE SUCCESS - High Performing

*I love working here*

*I enjoy the team and atmosphere*

*We were restricted to the type of volunteering we could do, but now you can do whatever you're interested in*

*I've wanted to be a member of the Children's Panel for ages and Jack's delighted I've applied*

*Things have changed massively over three years*

*It's exciting to see how far we've come in recent years*

*If I make a mistake, Sandra treats it as a learning opportunity*

*Awards are a boost for the team, good for morale, and it's a night out*

*I've got a good team around me – a team that wants to be the best at what it's doing*

*Compared to my last job, it's a totally different office environment – stress free, and the team comes together. I've never seen anything like it. It's lovely to be part of*

## Indicator 9: Creating sustainable success



## The Good Practice

- There is unanimous agreement that this organisation is a great place to work, and people are treated as individuals. This comes through strongly when meeting members of staff and seeing them interact with each other in the office
- Leaders actively find ways to improve the organisation and employees' experience, engaging with partners and taking advice
- The approach to volunteering exemplifies the way in which the organisation reacts. Seeing that volunteering days were not being used because the limited number of days meant that it was proving difficult for people to find opportunities, leaders increased volunteering days to 20 per employee per year
- Staff have a positive attitude to making a difference, as demonstrated by informal charity initiatives supporting Ukraine and foodbanks
- The organisation is committed to reducing its environmental impact, and plans to start measuring this

## Recommendations

- Consider Diversity and Inclusion training for staff
- Consider Disability Confident employer accreditation

# What's next?

Your Platinum accreditation is now in place until 2025. Once you have had a chance to digest this report, we will meet to discuss it and your plans for the future. As part of your continuing accreditation for this and We Invest in Wellbeing, we will remain in touch each year between now and 2025.

If you have any questions before we meet again, please let me know.

# Don't forget to share!

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

**INVESTORS<sup>®</sup>  
IN PEOPLE**

Want to get in touch?

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