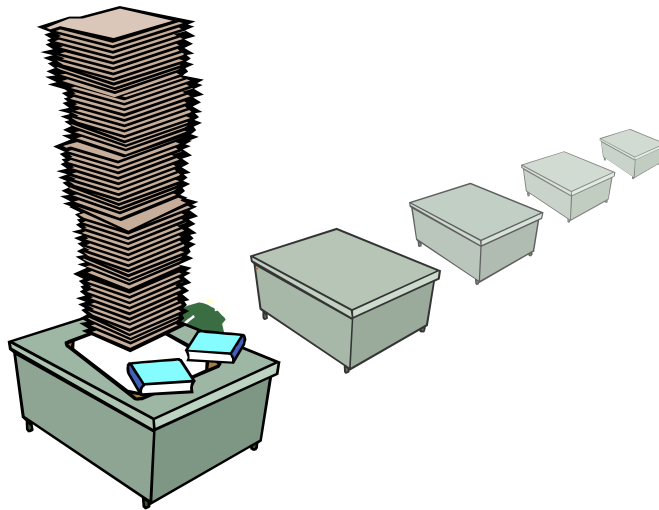


CHARTERED MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

DIPLOMA IN MANAGEMENT

Project

The Management of Staff Sickness
Absence in the Swindon
Youth Offending Team



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- SBC, HR
- South West Region Yot Managers
- National Audit Office

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Executive Summary

Swindon Youth Offending Team is responsible to the Local Authority for its performance and is managed by a multi-agency partnership. The Local Authority, Swindon Borough Council, has become aware that staff sickness and absence rates have been increasing in the Borough and are now above the national average of 11 days for Public Sector and 9.1 days for the Private Sector. Traditionally Swindon Yot had enjoyed relatively low sickness absence rates. However, in recent years the rate has increased to a level that is now one of the highest in the SBC. The rate is currently 16 days per person per year average.

In an effort to tackle this problem SBC made 50 promises to the residents of Swindon one of which was that they would actively work towards achieving a level of no more than 7.5 days sickness per member of staff, per year by 2010 (Promise number 7). (The national average is 7.8 days for LAs). Swindon Yot is expected to play its part in achieving that target.

Swindon Yot has produced a management 'Action Plan' to reduce levels of 'sickness'. However, this was not based on sound research or consultation with staff. Understanding the reasons and finding solutions will bring measurable benefits to the Yot staff, service users, SBC and the local tax paying population.

Staff took part in an anonymous survey, which significantly contributed to the findings. Care was needed when analysing data not to identify individuals as the team is small with easily identifiable groups of workers in specific teams or roles.

The main conclusions were that long-term sickness of a small number of staff can have a significant impact on sickness data and sickness has a significant impact on the levels of work and stress for other staff covering sickness. Staff were happy with the management of sickness generally, but felt it could be managed more fairly and firmly.

The main recommendations are that there is training for managers on managing sickness monitoring and referrals to occupational health and an increased knowledge of policy and procedures. Training on time/ work management and stress management would have a significant impact on success rates.

Benefits of Managing Sickness Absence and Return to Work

According to Workplace Health Connect (HSE).com, these are the main benefits:

Employers

- Retain valued and experienced staff.
- Avoid unnecessary recruitment and training costs.
- Reduce sick pay costs.

- Keep business productive.
- Reduce temporary staff costs covering sickness.
- Meet legal duties and avoid discrimination.
- Reduce pressure on other staff.
- Reduced management time dealing with sickness.
- Considered as an employer of choice.

Workers

- Improved health and well being.
- Well-managed return to work is better than being at home feeling worse.
- More pay.
- Reduced risk of isolation, work exclusion or loss of job.

According to CBI, Absence and Labour Turnover, 2005:

- 168 million days were lost in 2004 at a cost of £12.2 billion.
- On average 6.8 working days per employee are lost per year.
- Larger companies employing 5000 staff or more lose 8.3 days, whereas companies with less than 50 staff lose an average of 4.5 days.
- The most significant cause of sickness in non-manual workers is the flu.
- The second most significant factor is stress.
- 20% of such employees account for 80% of a firm's health costs.
- People in poor health are 20% less productive.
- When senior managers take charge of absence, instead of line managers, 2-3 fewer days are lost per employee.

Cost

Employee absence is estimated to cost Local Authorities £900 million every year. On average short and long term absence is higher in the Public Sector (Cabinet Office, 2004). The CIPD Absence Management Survey 2006 put the cost per employee per year at £713. For the Yot in the year 2005/06 the cost is not easy to calculate. There are 40 staff, some employed, some seconded, some part-time. However, it can be seen that the costs are considerable.

Terms of Reference

Aim:

The aim of this project is to investigate the possibility of reducing staff sickness and absenteeism at the Yot in order to achieve the SBC promise of no more than 7.5 days absence through sickness per employee per year, by 2010. To find solutions that are mutually reinforcing, sustainable and based on external good practice.

Objectives:

This will be achieved by

- Completion of a literature review to identify best practice.
- Making comparisons between current systems and practices and best practice findings.
- Drawing conclusions about current practice.
- Making specific and realistic recommendations that will improve our practice and procedures in order to make a reduction in sickness and absence in Yot staff leading to service improvements.
- Swindon Yot remains a great place to work.

Introduction

Youth Offending Team

In 1996 an Audit Commission Report 'Misspent Youth' identified shortcomings in the Youth Justice System and made recommendations for radical change. In 1998 major new legislation contained in the Crime and Disorder Act required that Local Authorities form new multi-agency Youth Offending Teams.

Swindon Youth Offending Team (Yot) began in June 1999, starting with five main contributory partners, Social Services, Police, Probation, Health and Education. I was one of the 'founders' of our team when I was seconded from the Police to the team at its inception. The aim of the team is to 'prevent offending and re-offending by children and young people'.

Over time the team has grown to 40 staff and 60 volunteers. My role now is 'Head of Service', my main responsibilities are: -

- Line manage 4 operational managers
- Foresee and respond to strategic developments
- Prepare strategic plans and develop new services
- Negotiate budget and resources and deliver services on budget
- Analyse and evaluate performance and data management
- Collaborate with partners at a senior level for joint working
- Promote the service through effective public relations
- Motivate staff to fulfil their potential and improve services

SBC Staff and Seconded Staff

Over time, the expansion of the team has meant that there is an increase in non-seconded staff. Many staff are now permanent or on short term funded contracts. These staff are generally employed through SBC (Currently approximately 22 staff). Sickness rates amongst these staff are significantly higher than seconded staff.

Sickness and Absence Issues

- Sickness rates are too high.
- There are considerable cost implications to the service.
- Yot staff have a key role to play in managing young offenders and risks they pose. This becomes difficult when there are staff shortages.
- There is considerable variation of sickness rates between seconded and non-seconded staff.
- The reasons for the high rate of sickness are not known, better information would help us to reduce the rate.

- Covering for sickness puts considerable pressure on other Yot staff.
- Performance is directly affected by sickness.

Key Activities In Place

Key Activities are:

- SBC Sickness Action Plan (Yot Plan feeds into this).
- Monthly monitoring through league tables and local data.
- Communication monthly through line managers on trends.
- Policy and practice review.
- Performance KPI established for Yot and Children Services.
- Case analysis of long-term sickness.
- Senior management attendance at 'Improvement Clinics'.
- Automatic referrals to Occupational Health.

Part A – Literature Review

Introduction

To achieve my aim of meeting the SBC sickness target by 2010 I have conducted a review of literature that is the most relevant to SBC and the Yot in the search for up to date guidance and best practice.

According to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) 'Sickness absence costs UK PLC over £12 billion a year, or £495 a year direct costs for every worker employed (CBI 2005).

The CBI/ PPP conducted a survey in 2000 that found that the average number of days absence per employee per year was 7.8, with a total cost to UK employers of £10.5 billion (CMI checklist 058).

SBC sickness rates are currently running at 11.2 days per (Full-time employee), for Children and Families it is 9.52 days and at the Yot it is 15.84.

Sickness rates and costs have not been surveyed for Yots. However, the National Audit Office conducted a survey of the National Probation Service in 2005/06. This service manages adult offenders, so is similar to Yots in many ways. This audit put the cost to the Probation Service at over £32 million in 2004-05; with further costs of £2 million in overtime cover payments.

The CMI defines 'sickness absence, as generally all employee absences where the employee pleads illness'. It goes on to conclude that most people believe that the

majority of absence is through genuine illness. However, other factors do pay a significant part, all of which can be better managed.

- Poor management
- Lack of motivation
- Domestic difficulties
- Low priority given to absence control by employer

The HSE build upon the above definition, identifying **4 key issues**.

Issue 1 It is not just a matter of ill health, it is also a combination of personal and work factors.

Issue 2 Early Intervention is key.

Issue 3 Working in a well-managed environment is in itself a treatment recovering from sickness absence. Returning early provides both mental and physical recovery.

Issue 4 Workers can return to work before they are 100% recovered by means of simple adjustments.

Why Have An Absence Control Policy?

There are very few disadvantages to having a policy. If the policy is over vigorous or punitive then this could affect genuine illness occasions and lead to a culture of mistrust and blame, so it is important that staff and trade unions are consulted in the draft of any new policy.

Writing a policy is relatively straight forward as there are a number freely available on the web.

The CMI identifies **8 advantages** in having an absence control policy.

1. Reduction in absence
2. Minimises disruption to workflow and production
3. Saves costs
4. Better motivated workforce
5. Reduction in stress and pressure on other workers
6. Absence is tackled fairly and consistently
7. Removes managerial subjectivity, sets standards
8. Reduce expectation for 'extra - annual leave'

The SBC policy states 'effective mechanisms that monitor and manage sickness enable absence issues to be addressed promptly and efficiently'. It goes on to say 'absence will not be casually accepted and it will be monitored, reviewed and challenged where appropriate'.

How Do I Know If I Am Monitoring, Reviewing And Challenging Properly?

Guidance is readily available in the form of checklists from Probation, SBC, CMI and HSE. Working through these checklists and applying them to Yot practice and procedure is a good way of reviewing our practices and ensuring best practice.

Know the Law

There are many complex laws relating to people and employment, a summary is contained at **Appendix A**.

It is important that line managers have a general understanding, but always consider the following.

- Seek advice from an expert e.g. HR or Occupational Health.
- Treat each case as an individual, especially for staff who are often sick – each situation is different.
- Be sympathetic not punitive.
- Thoroughly investigate with employee and Doctor following procedures.
- Discuss persistent, intermittent and unconnected illnesses with the employee.
- Give opportunities to improve.
- Give warnings if considering disciplinary procedures.

What Is An Unacceptable Level Of Absence?

- No absence should be accepted without an explanation. Managers should set good examples to staff.
- Set trigger points for referrals to Occupational Health for absence. SBC triggers; 20 working days of continuous absence, 4 separate periods of absence in any 12 month period, 7 days of self-certified absence, any pattern of absence emerging.
- Consider referrals after long periods of illness or hospitalisation for OH assessment.

Record Keeping

When everyone is aware that absence is being recorded it has been proven that rates reduce.

- Document absences, gather data regularly.
- Analyse pattern
 - Short term absence
 - Age / grade
 - Consider 'special attention'
 - Trends in type of illness

- Feed findings back to line managers to action.
- Compile comparisons between departments for managers and possibly staff to raise awareness.
- Present information in an easy to understand format such as days lost or as a percentage.

Establish Formal Reporting Procedures

It needs to be clear to all staff that they need to inform their employer that they are ill.

- Employees telephone personally daily by 10:00am
- Employee confers with line manager or other manager
- Self-certification forms and Doctor's forms are required

Return to Work Interviews

This is not going to concern staff with genuine illness or absence, it can be used as a good way of welcoming staff back and bring them up to date with any changes since they have been off work.

- Always conduct face-to-face RTW interviews
- Refer to OH or Doctor if concerns
- Update staff
- Discuss possible underlying causes of absenteeism

Train Line Managers

At the end of the day, any sickness policy will succeed or fail depending on the commitment and skills of the line manager.

- Train line managers in -
 - Sickness monitoring
 - Referring to OH
 - Sickness policy and procedures

Recruitment

When recruiting it is important to take up references and double-check them. At this point managers should take extra care not to employ someone who is not fit for work.

- Check references
- Make use of available legislation
- Do not make negative assumptions, especially for those with disabilities

A Safe and Healthy Workplace

It is proven that a caring and healthy workplace is likely to have lower rates of sickness absence.

- Comply with Health and Safety law
- Encourage healthy eating, sports, and breaks
- Monitor overwork where staff do not take holidays, lunch breaks and work late
- Consult employees in health promotion
- Consider private health insurance

Motivation and Commitment

Research has proven that a well-motivated and committed workforce is less likely to have high sickness absenteeism rates. Staff should be consulted on what their motivation is and efforts made to motivate staff where they want it.

- Consult staff – what do they want?
- Look at incentives and benefits
- Consider flexible working hours
- Review child care arrangements and support

Incentives and Benefits

This is an area that needs extra careful consideration, small financial benefits may not be what motivates staff. Monetary benefits can be difficult to manage fairly amongst staff of different ages, experience and grade. In the public Sector there is not normally scope to do so.

How Absence is Measured

According to the Work Foundation, employers should:

- Illustrate the patterns of short-term and long-term absence.
- Allow analysis of absence patterns.
- Hold line managers accountable for the absence of their staff.
- Make appropriate use of IT to record staff absence with sanctions or incentives for line managers to keep records up to date.

Most methods show the percentage of time available and that which has been lost from all cases in a given period.

$$\frac{\text{Total absence (hours or days) in the period}}{\text{Possible total (Hours or days) available in the period}} \times 100 = \text{Lost time rate}$$

In small teams such as the Yot percentages of total time lost can be misleading, especially when just a few staff are off, but for a long time.

Measuring 'frequency' may show how widespread a problem is. This is calculated by showing the average number of spells of absence per worker (Expressed as a percentage) irrespective of the length of each spell.

$$\frac{\text{Number of spells of absence in a period}}{\text{Number of workers in the period}} \times 100 = \text{Frequency rate}$$

This calculation can be used for individuals or for 'All'.

The Bradford Factor, developed by Bradford University, highlights repeated short term absence by giving extra weight to the number of absences:

$$\text{Index (1)} = S \times S \times H, \text{ where } S = \text{The number of absences} \\ H = \text{Total hours absent in any given period}$$

Data should be analysed across relevant subgroups

- Individuals
- Teams or workgroups
- Departments or functions
- Specific locations
- The organisation as a whole

Benchmarking

External benchmarking may help understand if levels are 'reasonable'. Compare against:

- Comparator organisations (such as Probation)
- Other local employers (SBC)
- Similar organisations (Other Yots)

The results from benchmarking inform on highlighting areas for improvement and help set performance standards

- Care should be taken with percentages and sample sizes
- Data can be distorted by poor input and recording
- Do not strive to match the 'average', aim for higher objectives.

Checking patterns of absence - What to look for:

- Long-term absence
- Short-term absence
- Recurrent absence
- How widespread across the workforce?
- Specific areas of work or departments or teams
- Timing – Mondays and Fridays. Month end.

Exploring possible causes

Statistics are an important part of the picture, but they need to be verified and are only part of the picture. This quantitative data should be supplemented with qualitative information.

- Interviews with managers and team leaders
- Interviews with staff (good for small organisations)
- Questions incorporated in a staff survey
- Form focus groups from a cross section of workers

Conducting a Survey

Surveys should, wherever possible, be anonymous so that respondents are encouraged to express their views fully and openly. There is a fine balance to find between the need to be specific and the desire for anonymity.

Key points to consider:

- If possible include basic demographic data so that the findings can be meaningful.
- Explain to participants why this information is needed.
- Invite a response on the potential causes of absence (Based on factual data already known).
- Use tick boxes as scales e.g. 1 to 6 where 6 is highest etc.
- Give opportunities for adding comments.
- Give opportunities for suggesting solutions.
- If there have been focus groups where issues were identified, focus on these for solutions.
- Do not be over ambitious on the size and scope of the questionnaire e.g. stick to;
 - 5 key themes
 - Inform the questionnaire with relevant data.
 - Check that it is clear, unambiguous and easy to complete.

- Beware that managers involved in sickness monitoring might presume a higher level of understanding of the subject and issues than staff actually have.

Work Related Stress

Work related stress assessments should be conducted as part of supervision and appraisal. However, surveys have repeatedly shown that it is a major contributory factor in absence. (Probation survey shows 1/3 of all cases relate to stress). Therefore any survey should take into consideration the major contributory factors relating to stress and absenteeism.

HSE defines stress as 'the adverse reaction an individual has to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them'.

HSE STANDARDS FOR STRESS MANAGEMENT	
DEMANDS ✓	Workload, work patterns and work environment.
CONTROL ✓	How much say a person has in what they do at work.
SUPPORT ✓	Line management support and encouragement. Backing and resourcing by managers and colleagues.
ROLES ✓	Understanding their role and where it fits in. Whether the organisation ensures that the person does not have conflicting job roles.
RELATIONSHIPS ✓	Promotion of positive working to avoid conflict and bullying at work.
CHANGE ✓	How organisational change is managed and communicated and the extent employees are engaged in the process.

Following stress risk assessments, an Action Plan should be put in place as it is in legislation that employers must tackle stress.









The Causes of Absence

Statistical data can be obtained from completing return to work interviews. This quantitative data should be checked out as part of the survey.

The 3 main causes of absence, according to the HSE.

1. Role and organisational factors

2. Medical factors
3. External and social factors

WHAT INFLUENCES AN INCREASE IN ABSENCE?	
FACTOR	AGGRAVATING FACTORS
WORK AND ROLE DESIGN 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boring work • Unsatisfying work • Role creep • Role unclear • Additional responsibility added gradually
WORKLOAD AND STRESS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workload is excessive • Lack of control over activities or conditions • Job insecurity
ORGANISATION AND TEAM SIZE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large organisation • Large team or workgroup • Ability to become anonymous • Individual absence has little impact
OCCUPATIONAL SICK PAY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sick pay is too generous • Sick pay not suited to the needs of the business
ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE OR CLIMATE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aggressive management style • Uncaring managers
MEDICAL FACTORS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Injuries at work • Work related accidents • No health and safety culture • No return to work flexibility
LIFESTYLE FACTORS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No employee domestics are brought into work • Substance misuse • Over-indulgence spilling over into work time
PERSISTENT OR RECURRENT CONDITIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genuine ill health • Reluctance to seek health support
EXTERNAL AND SOCIAL FACTORS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family, carer or other domestic commitments that require some work flexibility to manage
TRAVEL DIFFICULTIES 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workplace difficult to access by a variety of transport modes • Long distances to travel

Key =  a tick denotes that this has been considered in the survey.

Absence Related Dismissal

It is very important that the correct description is given to the termination. In the past poor attendance has been labelled as a conduct issue and sickness a capability issue. Neither is wholly satisfactory. The Employment Tribunal have ruled that persistent absence because of genuine sickness may amount to 'Some other substantial reason (SOSR) to justify dismissal. This is a difficult area to manage and should be considered in consultation with HR wherever possible.

Best Practice

The Cabinet Office Sickness and Absence Report (2007) identified key initiatives that have been introduced by other Local Authorities that have good rates of absence. I have compared the above headings suggested by the HSE and what is available to the Yot in regards to health promotion and absence management.

The majority of the initiatives were in place or due to be, with one exception, which was to invite local universities to carry out in-depth research into the reasons for absence.

Part B – Methodology

Introduction

In order to gather information for the preparation of this report I have used a variety of methods.

Data Review

I have collated quantitative data from.

- SBC HR sickness management and recording
- Yot sickness monitoring systems – Swindon
- Yot sickness monitoring systems – South West
- National statistics and approaches to absence management
- Desk based research of best practice in other Local Authorities and Private Sector

Staff Survey

A staff survey (Appendix B) was drafted based on the findings from the Literature Review. The model used was based on a recent (2006) Probation Service Staff

Sickness and Absence Survey conducted by the National Audit Office. I used this as there are many similarities in our roles and there were none available from SBC or the YJB that were relevant.

A number of questions were removed and substituted with more relevant questions taking into account findings from the Literature Review and local sensibilities.

Management Survey

The same survey tool was used for managers as their opinions are equally relevant to this project.

Staff were requested personally to complete the questionnaires anonymously and return them direct to me in order to preserve confidentiality.

The majority were completed at a whole team meeting where there was a 'captive audience' and it was possible to properly explain the reasons why there was a survey and address any individual and group concerns.

The reasons for conducting a survey were:

- To assess objectively staff attitudes towards, and actions in relation to, the management of sickness absence.
- To gain a deeper understanding of staff views on what it is like to work at the Yot and how this impacts on sickness
- A survey is quick for staff to complete, is anonymous and is an efficient way of gathering a lot of information

Systems Review

I have reviewed the process and systems currently in place at the Yot for:

- Sickness reporting
- Monitoring and contact
- Return to work interviews

This has enabled me to see weaknesses in the Yot process and cross-reference them with the findings from the staff survey.

Analysis

From completing the above exercise I have been able to analyse all the information collated and make comparisons against other organisations, and check conformity with best practice and procedures.

Conclusion and Recommendation

These are based on the findings above.

Part C – Data Collection and Analysis

National Data

- Public sector average is 11 days per FTE (CIPD 2006)
- Private sector average is 9.1 days per FTE (CBI/ AXA 2006)

Local Authorities

SBC is compared with other similar Local Authorities annually (Audit Commission) and given a best value performance indicator (BVPI).

SBC PERFORMANCE					
	BVP Target	Swindon days lost to FTE	Bath	N. Somerset	Windsor & Maidenhead
2004/05	10.30	10.20	8.84	8.48	7.49
2005/06	8.90	11.15			
2006/07	10.24	9.08			
2005/06 LA average for all LAs is 11 days					

SBC Directorates

There are 24 directorates in SBC. Sickness is monitored quarterly. Children and Families is normally ranked 18th or 19th with an average of 3.00 days per FTE per quarter. Top is the Chief Executive's Office with 0.00 and bottom is Adult Social Care with 4.4 days per FTE per quarter.

Other Yots

Yots in the South West were canvassed for comparable data. Some Yots did not collate data or monitor sickness, some Yots did not respond. Those that did showed similarities to Swindon. E.g. Plymouth showing an average of 11.17 days per FTE. However, removing 3 long-term sickness staff from the data showed a healthy 4.54 days per FTE.

Yot Sickness Trend

The Yot has staff who are employed by SBC, such as Social Workers, Education and Yot Supervisors. Seconded staff are Police, Probation and Health etc. The tables below show SBC and then combined staff.

SBC

Staff employed on SBC conditions of service

	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May
Days possible	395.1	408.3	395.1	408.3	408.3	395.1	408.3	395.1	408.3	408.3	368.8	408.3	395.1	408.3
Absence per FTE cumulative	0.95	1.37	1.63	1.84	3.11	4.79	7.00	8.32	9.47	12.79	14.84	15.84	16.05	16.53
No. of Incidents	2	4	2	3	3	6	5	2	3	13	7	4	3	5

Combined

All Yot staff including multi-agency staff

	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May
Days possible	561.5	580.2	561.5	580.2	580.2	561.5	580.2	561.5	580.2	580.2	524.0	580.2	561.5	580.2
Absence per FTE cumulative	1.30	1.63	1.81	2.52	4.26	5.48	7.07	8.00	8.85	11.44	12.89	13.59	13.78	14.11
No. of Incidents	5	5	2	4	3	7	6	2	4	15	7	4	4	5

Staff Survey

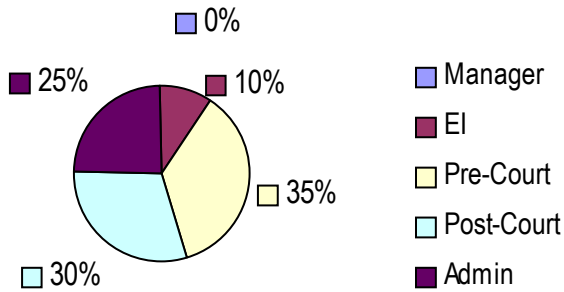
The survey was completed by staff attending a team training day – 22 staff completed the survey. Staff were a mix of SBC, non SBC, seconded, full-time and part-time. Both operational managers and staff completed the survey. One person declined to take part. Staff not attending the team training day were offered the opportunity to complete the survey. None were completed and returned.

Data from the completed questionnaires was transferred to a spreadsheet for analysis, having ensured that it remained anonymous. The full data can be seen at appendix C. The survey was conducted in line with the best practice guidance.

Survey Data Summary

ABOUT YOU

1) In which of the following job categories do you work?

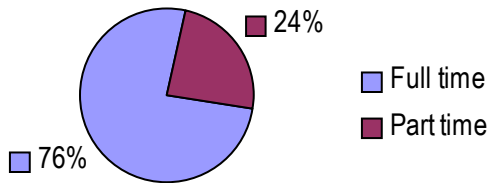


(20 completed)

Although three managers took part, none chose to tick 'Manager'

The percentages reflect a good cross section of the team and are reflective of the areas of work or teams within the team.

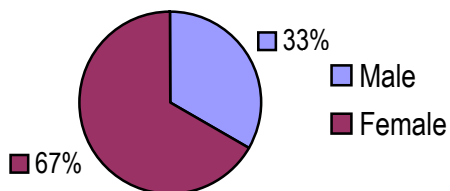
2) Do you work full or part time?



(21 completed)

This is an accurate representation of the make up of the team.

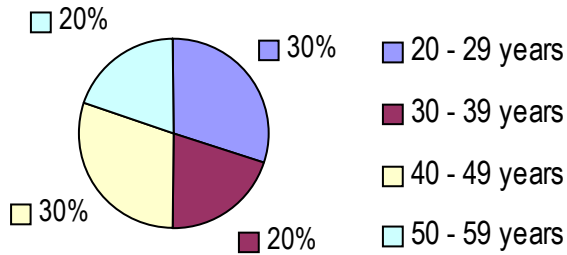
3) Are you Male or Female?



(21 completed)

This is proportional to the make up of the whole team.

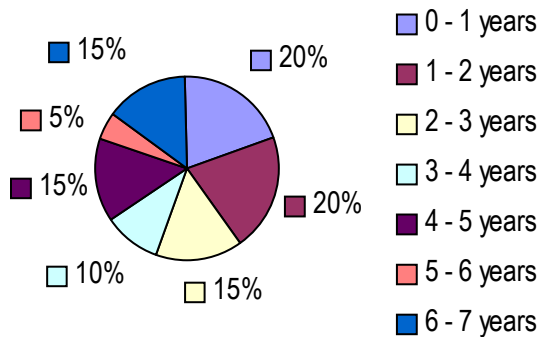
4) Age range



(20 completed)

Staff are evenly spread between 20 and 60 years of age.

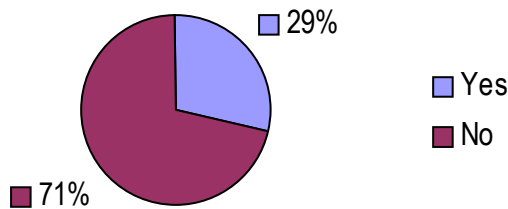
5) How long have you worked at the Yot?



(20 completed)

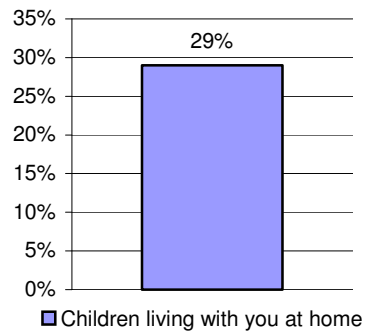
There is an even spread of experience in working at the Yot.

6) Do you have any day-to-day caring responsibilities where you are the main, or sole carer outside of work?



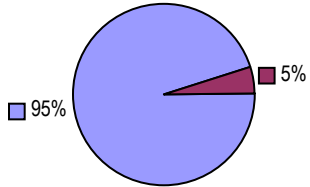
7) If yes, who do you care for?

(21 completed)



YOUR JOB

8) How satisfied are you with your job?



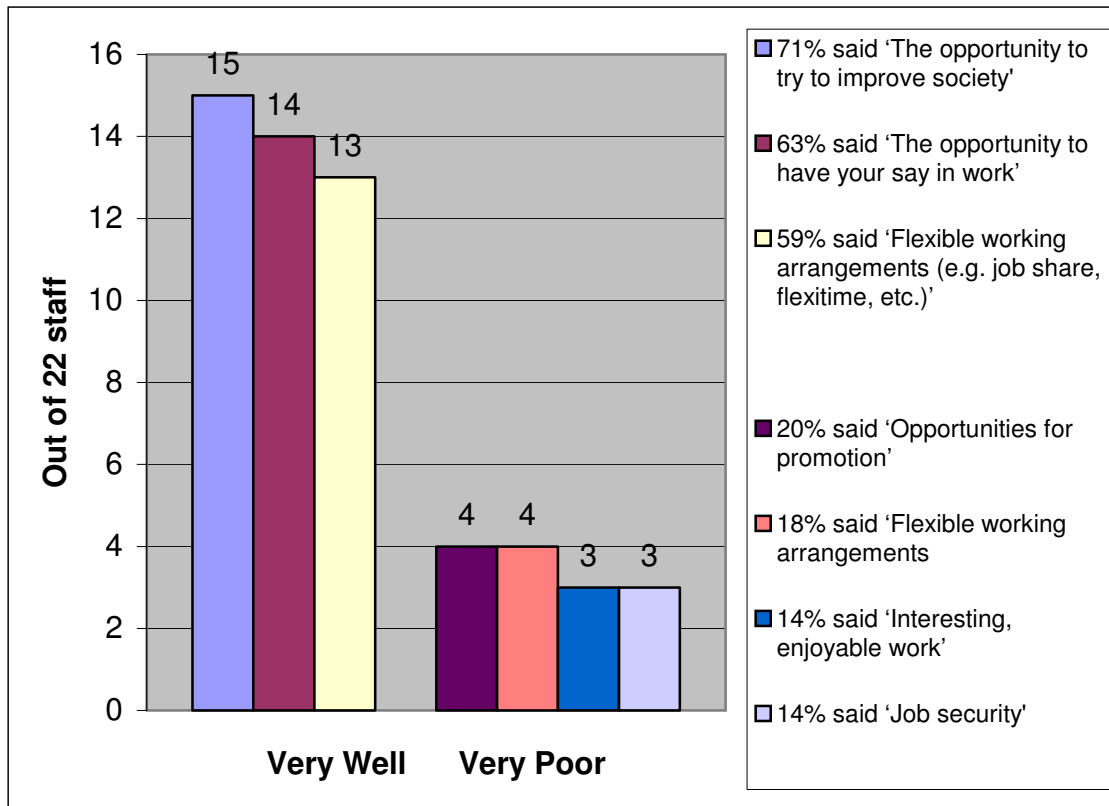
(21 completed)

95% were either very satisfied or fairly satisfied.

5% were fairly dissatisfied.

None were dissatisfied.

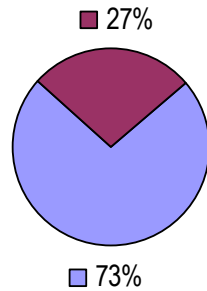
9) On a scale of 1 to 4, where 1 is 'very well' and 4 is 'very badly' how well does your current job provide you with the following? (This question had 18 statements about what your job provides. The top 3 and bottom 3 are shown. The majority were answered by all 22 staff taking part).



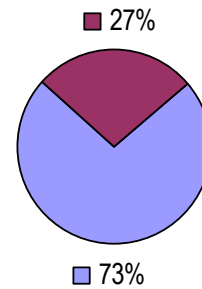
YOUR WORK

**10) My work involves:
Face to face contact with offenders.**

Frequent telephone contact with offenders

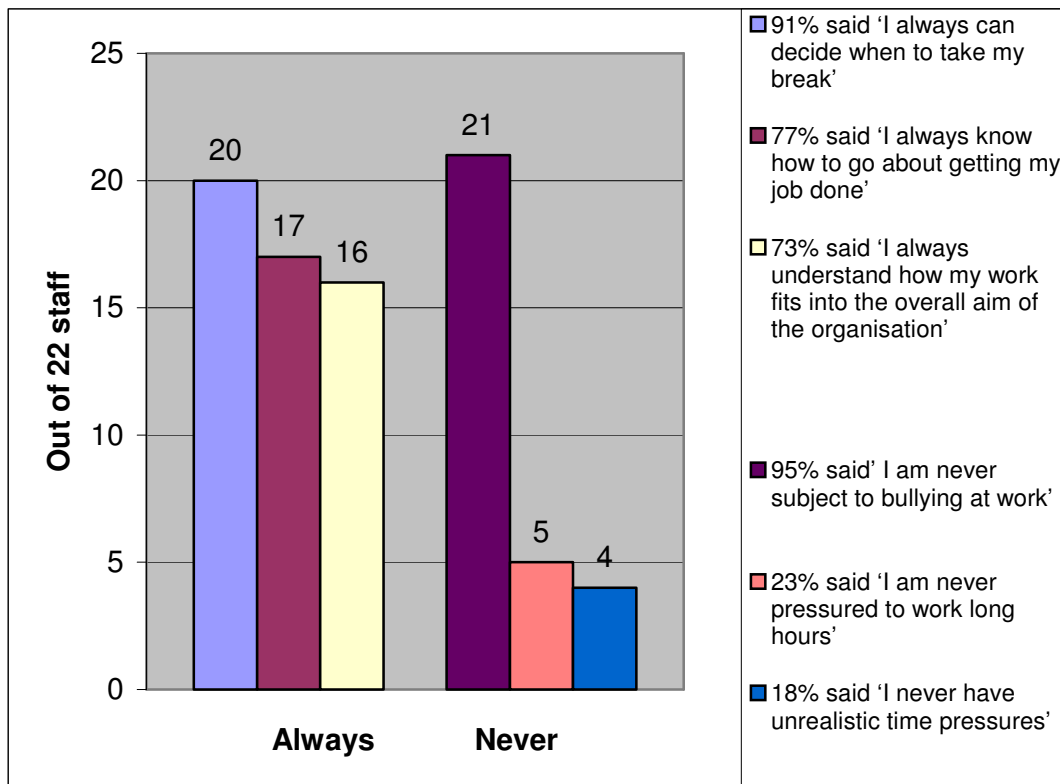


■ YES
■ NO



■ YES
■ NO

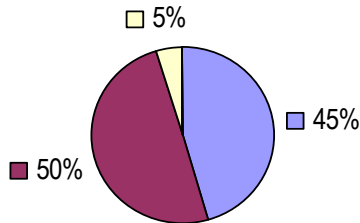
11) Please indicate on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is 'always' and 5 is 'never', how do you feel about the statements relating to your work. (The question gave 21 statements. All were answered by all 22 participants. The top and bottom 3 are shown here).



COMMUNICATION

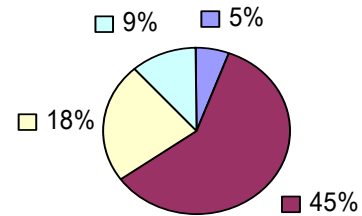
12) How informed are you about the things that affect you, in the Yot / Parent agency / SBC?

Yot



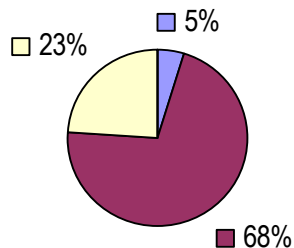
50% 'Fairly well informed'
45% 'Fully informed'
5% 'Receive limited information';

Parent Agency



45% 'Fairly well informed'
18% 'Receive limited information'
9% 'Don't receive much information at all'
5% 'Fully informed'

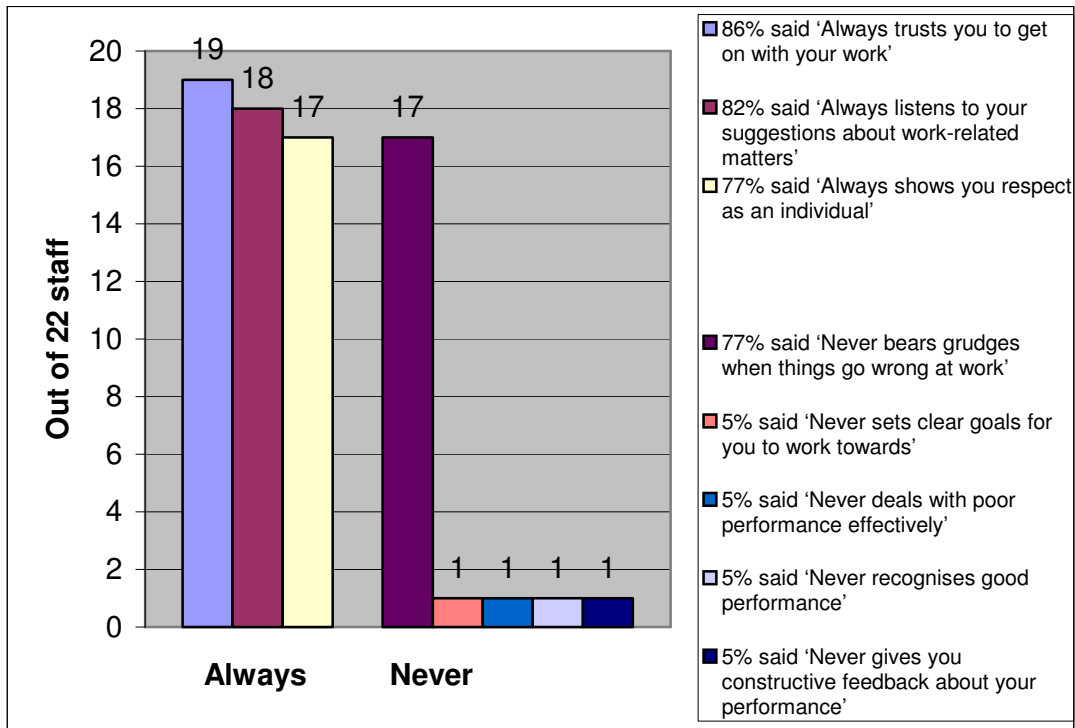
SBC



68% 'Fairly well informed'
23% 'Received limited information'
5% 'Fully informed'

MANAGEMENT

13) Please indicate on a scale of 1 to 4 where 1 is 'always' and 4 is 'never', how often your immediate supervisor or manager carries out the actions listed? (There were 16 statements relating to management all were answered by all 22 participants. The top and bottom 3 are shown).



14) These questions relate specifically to the impact which management has on your ability to do your job. Please give positive and negative examples and include any suggestion you have for improving things

Please list any comments or suggestions you have about:

a) **The management of your area of work e.g. EI, Pre-Court, Post-Court, Admin**

Top 3 positive answers:

- Support re: personal issues.
- Open door policy with all managers.
- Good trusting relationship.

Top 3 negative answers:

- Flexible working needs to be considered.
- Value and praise occasionally go unnoticed.
- Lack of clinical management.

b) **The management of the Yot as a whole:**

Top 3 positive answers:

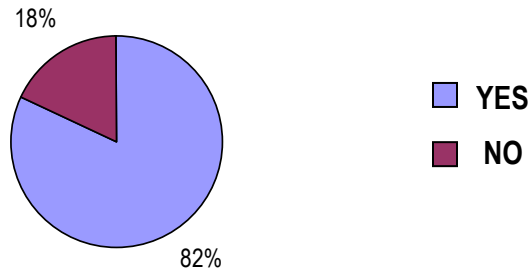
- Accessibility and willingness of managers – support – concerns – crisis.
- All managers will try and assist with issues – work and personal.
- All managers are approachable.

Top 3 negative answers:

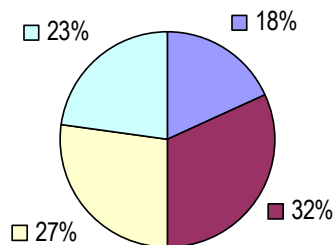
- Workload and pressures seem varied amongst Yot officers.
- Yot management should be firmer/more consistent.
- Lacks decision making with regard to poor performance/sickness.

SICKNESS ABSENCE

15) Have you seen either the Sickness Absence Policy, or a summary of it, for the Yot, SBC, or your Parent agency?



16) Which of the following best describes your knowledge of the policy and procedures relating to sickness absence?



(22 completed)

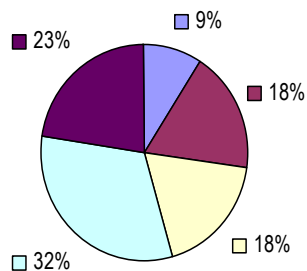
32% said 'Good knowledge'

27% said 'Basic knowledge'

23% said 'Limited knowledge'

18% said 'Full knowledge'

17) How aware are you of the procedures and services which the Yot has in place to help staff manage stress?



(22 completed)

32% said 'Vaguely aware'

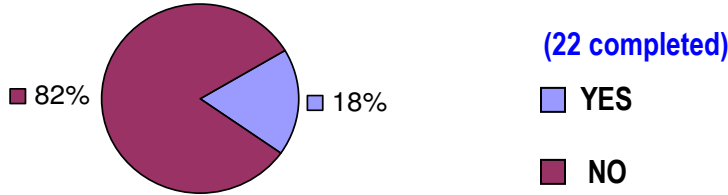
23% said 'Unaware'

18% said 'Broadly aware'

18% said 'Aware'

9% said 'Fully aware'

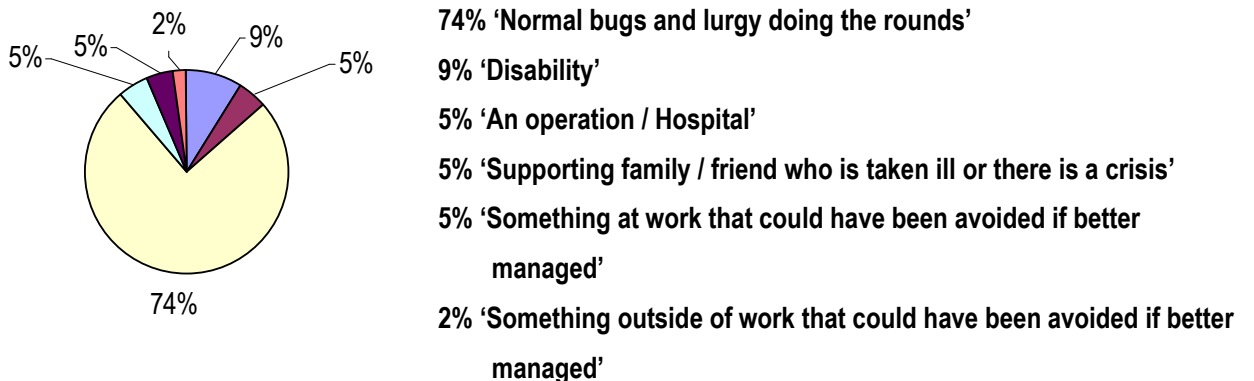
18) Have you been provided with stress awareness training?



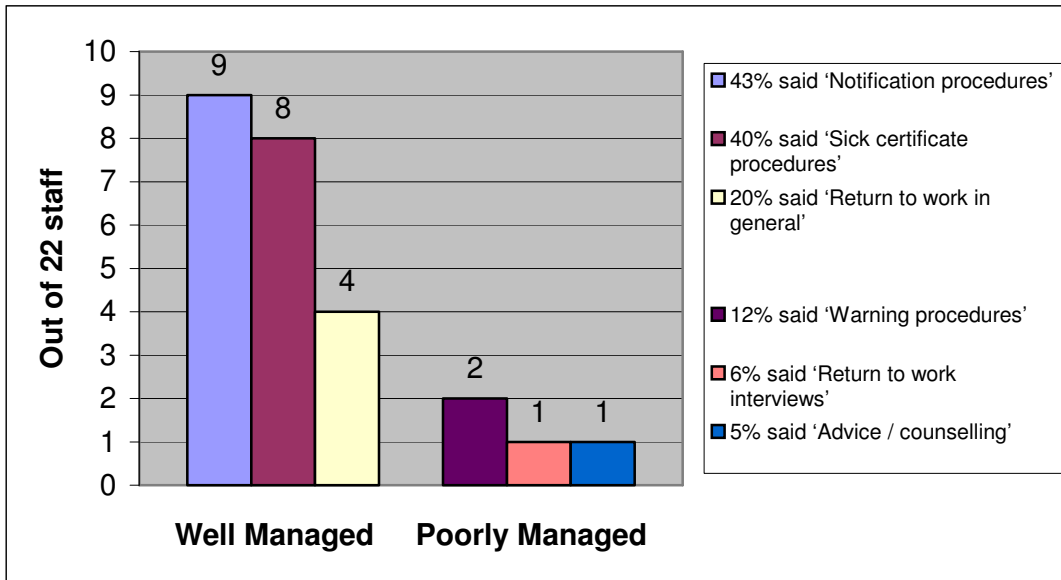
19a) How much (approximate) time have you taken off sick in the last 12 months?



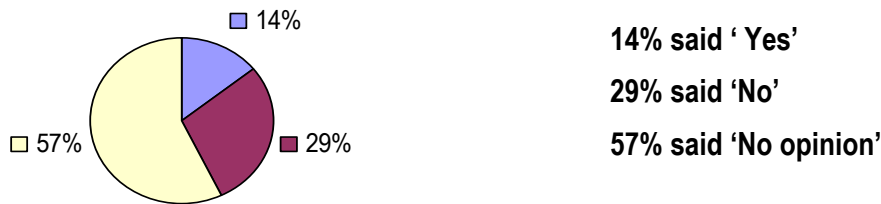
19b) Individual reasons for taking time off for sickness are recorded on the return to work forms that we all fill in. This data will be collectively analysed (Not individually or personally) as part of this exercise. However, you may wish to comment further to clarify your answer at 'a)' above.



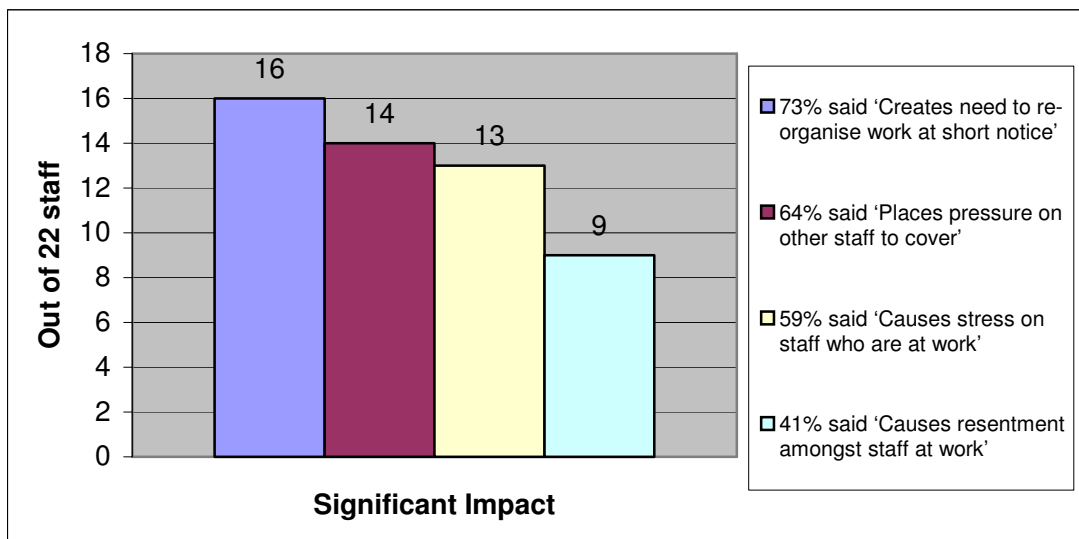
20) In your experience, how do you think the following issues are handled? (Between 17 and 21 staff chose to answer a combination of 9 question relating to sickness procedures).



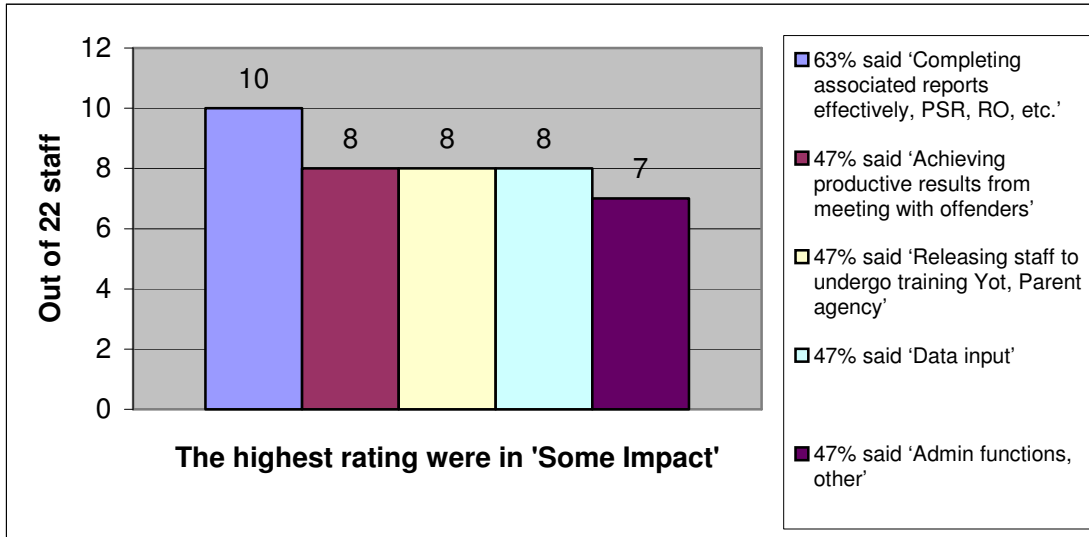
21) The policy and procedures are designed to be 'firm but fair'. Do you consider this has been achieved?



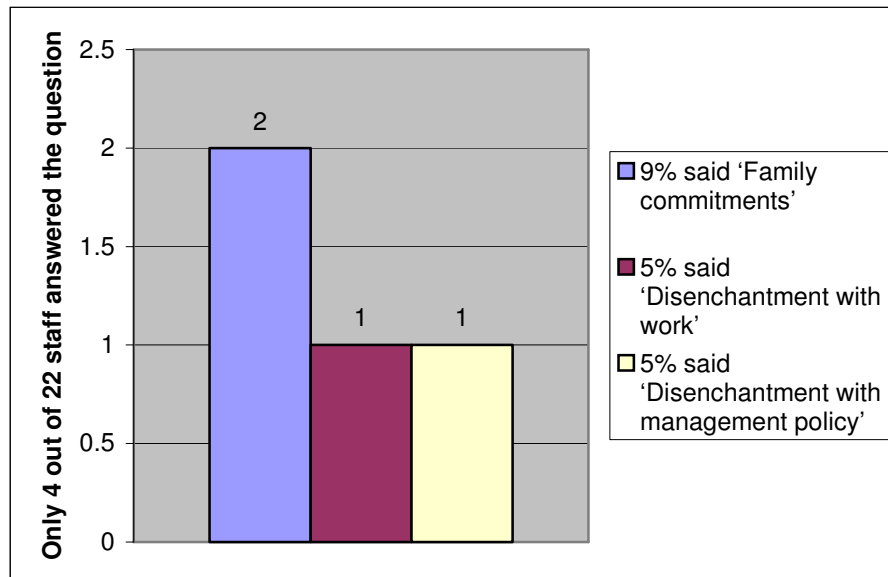
22) Does sickness absence amongst colleagues at times have any of the following impacts on a scale of 1 to 4 where 1 is 'significant impact' and 4 is 'no impact' (There were 4 statements to be scored, all 22 staff answered all 4 questions).



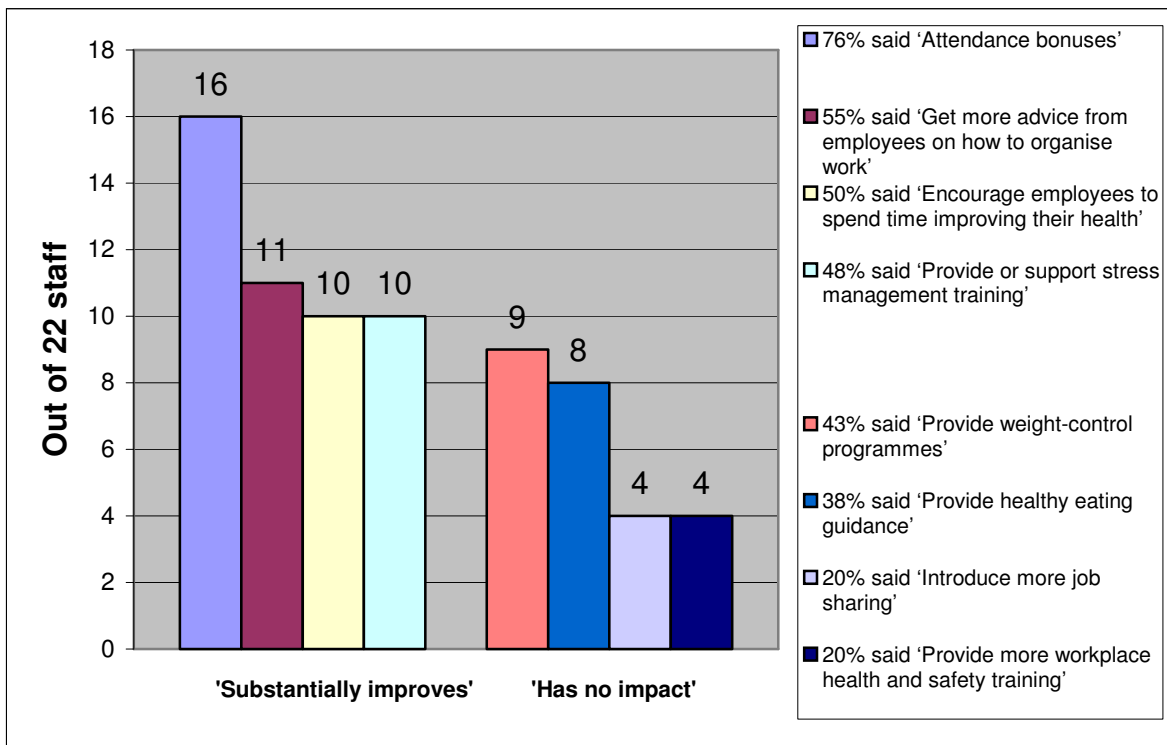
23) Do you consider sickness absence affects the team's work in any of the following fields on a scale of 1 to 4 where 1 is 'significant impact' and 4 is 'no impact'? (There were 9 statements between 15 and 17 staff chose to rate a combination of statements).



24) Have you in the last two years called in sick for any of the following reasons?



25) To what extent do you think any of the following actions would help improve attendance generally on a scale of 1 to 4 where 1 is 'substantially improves attendance' and 4 is 'no impact on attendance'?



It was possible to break the staff survey data down into areas of work, age, gender etc. It quickly became apparent that individual staff could then be identified. The teams within the Yot only have a few staff in each and each team may have a very different role and workload/ caseload. Comparing one team with another was considered but not completed having considered individual sensitivities.

Individual staff sickness is monitored. This data includes

- The reasons
- Incidents in previous 12 months
- Shifts lost

From this data it was found that 80% of the reasons given on the return to work were (incidents)

- Ent, eyes, dental – **16%**
- Gastro, liver, kidney infections - **20%**
- Infections, colds – **40%**

Part D – Data Discussion

National Context

Sickness absence rates in the public sector are significantly higher than in the private sector. Nationally the costs to the Local Authorities totals £900 million every year. There is significant government pressure on Local Authorities to improve;

- Better commitment from senior managers.
- Improve recording of sickness absence.
- Improve leadership and support for line managers (Ministered task force review the management of absence in the public sector 2004, Cabinet Office 2004).

Future challenges are predicted to be

- Increasingly older workforce
- More diverse workforce
- Growth in long-term illness (Including injury)
- Increase in stress related illness

Local Context

When compared with the other 10 Local authorities in our ‘family’ (Similar LAs), Swindon is seen as performing poorly (8th out of 11), with Redcar & Cleaveland, Halton, and Warrington doing marginally worse. The best being Medway which is achieving 7.44 days average. Locally the SBC sickness rate has fluctuated from year to year, but has remained significantly higher than the majority of Local Authorities in our family.

Data Analysis of the Directories in SBC

Worst Performing:	Best Performing:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Children and Families○ Housing○ Transport○ Environment and health○ Adult Social Care, provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Chief Executive○ Economic development○ Procurement○ Partnership performance & policy○ Revenues and benefits

Significant factors to consider are

- Size of directorate.
- Role of workforce e.g. office based or frontline service delivery to the public.
- Type of public contact; service, children's welfare, adult welfare.
- Likelihood of recruitment and retention issues.

The SBC staff sickness survey 2007 showed that

- The majority of staff had a good understanding of their personal responsibility in relation to sickness.
- Over 70% thought the high levels of sickness were unacceptable.
- Over 90% said they would come into work, even if they were not feeling 100%.
- 25% neither agreed nor disagreed that their line manager conducted return to work interviews.
- 30% neither agreed nor disagreed that their line manager took responsibility for managing sickness.

Yot

Of the 40 staff working at the Yot, 22 are SBC employees, the others are seconded from partner organisations. Sickness absence rates are significantly higher from SBC employees.

As with other Yots questioned, Swindon Yot is relatively small in number. One or two staff absent on long-term sickness significantly impact on the figures for the whole team.

Comparison to CMI Significant Factors

1. 'The majority of sickness is through genuine illness'.

- 45% of Yot staff had taken no time off sick in the past 12 months.
- 74% had taken time off for normal bugs/ flu etc.
- Only 7% had taken time off for reasons that could have been avoided if they had been better managed.

2. 'Poor Management'

The Staff survey showed

- High levels of trust
- High levels of communication and listening

- Respect for the individual
- No blame culture
- Effective open door policy – accessibility
- Good personal support in times of need

Criticisms were in

- Recognising good performance
- Flexible working
- Lack of clinical management
- Managers should be firmer / more consistent

3. 'Lack of Motivation'

Staff reported a high level of motivation, firstly in their reasons for working at the Yot where they felt they really could make a significant difference, having 'the opportunity to try and improve society'. Secondly, there was a very low rate of absence due to dissatisfaction in their role. 95% of staff said they were either very satisfied or fairly satisfied with their job.

Demotivating factors were;

- Limited opportunities for promotion
- Limited flexible working hours
- Limited interest in some jobs
- Issues around job security

4. 'Domestic Difficulties'

This can mean childcare/ caring, relationships, health of self/ family member, transport etc.







- 29% of staff had children living at home
- Staff were satisfied with the levels of support offered by their line managers and the management team as a whole. Some staff felt that the management of 'domestic' difficulties could be firmer and fairer.








5. 'Low priority given to absence control by employer'.


- 82% of staff had seen either their parent agency, or the Yot/ SBC Sickness and Absence Policy.
- About 70% of staff had some working knowledge of the policy, with 18% saying they had 'full knowledge'.
- About 50% of staff had little awareness of the procedures and services available to help staff manage stress. 9% were 'fully aware'.
- 82% had not been provided with stress awareness training.
- 43% of staff thought the notification procedure was well managed.

- A small number of staff identified areas of poor management in warning procedures and return to work interviews (12 and 6%).

Comparison to Probation, SBC, CMI and HSE checklists that ensure I am reviewing and challenging properly.

CHECK GOOD PRACTICE	YOT POLICY OR PRACTICE	RAG
Know the law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Good working relationship with HR. ○ Legislation referenced in the SBC Policy. ○ Staff are treated individually. ○ Resorting to warning is a last resort that is very infrequently used. 	
What is an acceptable level of absence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Managers set good examples. ○ Trigger points are used in all but exceptional cases. ○ HR and OH work with long-term sickness or issues. (With excellent feedback from staff). 	
Record keeping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Absence is documented. ○ Monthly monitoring and analysis of patterns/trends by management team. ○ Data is not formatted to show departmental comparisons as they are too small and complete different tasks with different agencies making up the staff. 	
Establish formal reporting procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Staff policy states what the formal procedure is. ○ High percentage of staff unaware of expectations e.g. to phone in before 10:00am to line manager. ○ Staff do not consistently adhere to the policy. E.g. cause another person to call in and leave a message avoiding their line manager. ○ Self-certification is not universally adhered to. 	
Return to work interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ RTW interviews are not always required, so are not always completed. ○ Guidance suggests they should always be completed, managers are not aware of this good practice advice. ○ Referrals to OH are always made when levels are reached. ○ Management concern/ unease with discussing underlying causes of absence. 	
Train line managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No line managers have had any formal training on sickness monitoring, referral to OH and sickness policy and procedures. ○ Managers support each other in procedures based on experience. ○ OH and HR are supportive. 	

Recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Recruitment is handled by contractors to SBC. This limits our ability to vet/ check references. ○ Manager have limited experience of using legislation relating to recruitment. ○ HR is supportive. ○ CRB system can be useful. 	
A safe and healthy workplace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Good track record on health and safety. ○ Staff encouraged to be healthy, take breaks etc. ○ Very good peer support and depth of knowledge re health. 	
Motivation and commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Staff are highly motivated and passionate about their work. ○ Consultation is good. ○ Support for domestic issues is good, but flexible hours for some staff has been highlighted. ○ Phased return to work was positively working. 	
Incentives and benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Limited incentives and benefits that relate to monetary reward (Public sector). ○ Various awards schemes do identify outstanding work. ○ Feedback from service users and stakeholders is shared and good work celebrated whenever possible. 	
How absence is measured	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Absence is measured on an individual and team basis. ○ Managers do monitor patterns and take responsibility for their staff. ○ Yot data contributes to Children Services and SBC data. 	
Benchmarking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Comparisons against other Yots is limited, as no two Yots are the same. ○ No standard formula for collection of Yot data for benchmarking. ○ Yot benchmarks against other Children Services teams and against other SBC directorates. ○ Patterns are analysed for short, medium and long-term absence and for recurrence. ○ Patterns do not show timings e.g. day of the week, month end etc. Systems are not set up for this. 	
Exploring possible causes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Previous to this exercise there has been no formal gathering of qualitative data. ○ Managers are not interviewed for qualitative information. ○ Staff are not interviewed other than as part of 6 weekly supervision. ○ There has not been a Yot specific survey in 	

	<p>the past 7 years.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ There have been no focus groups. 	
Work related stress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Self-analysis shows management believe they adhere to the 6 HSE standards for stress management. ○ The staff survey confirms this view. ○ Staff have experienced limited training on stress management. ○ Managers have limited or no training on managing staff in regards to stress management. ○ There is no stress management action plan in place. 	

Part E – Conclusion

Completion of the literature review revealed what is considered as best practice. These findings were applied to the data analysis drawn from the staff survey.

The data discussion highlighted where we are working in line with recommended practice and where we can do better. These are my conclusions;

- Sickness absence management is a nationwide issue which has attracted a number of reviews, studies and action plans commissioned by government and industry.
- Sickness rates are significantly higher in the public sector.
- Local Authorities are compared and measured for sickness absence rates. Swindon Borough Council performance is poor in comparison to similar Local Authorities and has conducted a comprehensive cabinet review and action plan in 2006/07, of which Yot is a part.
- Yots are small organisations with complex staff and management relationships. This is due to the unique multi-agency make up of the team. Staff are employed or seconded on a variety of conditions, with different cultural expectations and sickness reporting systems that can lead to misunderstandings, resentment and friction between individuals or agencies.
- Long-term absence by a small number of staff can significantly impact on sickness data because the team is small, percentages can be misleading. Service performance is significantly affected by the absence of individuals who often have key roles in the team.
- Swindon Yot sickness is high in comparison to other SBC directorates, particularly with SBC staff when compared to partner agency seconded staff.
- The staff survey was representative of the whole team, was conducted in line with recommendations and was anonymous, giving a valuable insight into individual opinions and attitudes towards sickness.
- Staff numbers are too low to break data down to teams, age, gender etc: as this would quickly identify individuals to other team members. No significant patterns were noted as part of this exercise, that have not become apparent from feedback later in the survey.
- The majority of staff were satisfied with their job working at the Yot. This was because they derived real value and worth from being given the opportunity to try and improve society, they had a say in what they do and enjoyed flexible working arrangements. Some staff posts were restrictive in regards to promotion opportunities, flexibility and interest.
- Job security was highlighted as an upcoming issue for some staff. This was particularly true in the Early Interventions Team, who are aware that there are upcoming funding issues that may directly affect them.
- Staff enjoyed being allowed to manage their own time, knew how to get on with managing their work and could see how what they did fits into achieving the Yot's goals.

- There is not a bullying culture in the team and the majority feel communication was good.
- There was high praise for management in developing a culture of openness, trust and respect. Recognition of good work and offering constructive feedback were concerns for some staff that felt it should happen more.
- Whilst managers were considered accessible, approachable and willing, there was also a feeling that at times they could be firmer and more consistent with some members of staff when dealing with performance or sickness issues, as some felt that some staff were taking advantage.
- A high number of staff were aware that there is a sickness absence policy, but then acknowledged that they knew little of its content because they had not read it, or had not been sick so had no need to be aware.
- Stress management awareness and training was limited. Both staff and managers had received no training at all. This could be significantly contributing to sickness levels that relate to stress.
- Over 80% of staff had taken either none, or 5 days or less, off in the past 12 months. Those that had taken time off, in the majority had been for genuine sickness reasons – mostly colds and flu. This shows a very positive commitment to the work of the team.
- The majority of staff thought the notification and self-certification procedures were well managed, but working procedures, return to work interviews and counselling were poorly managed in a small number of cases.
- The impact on staff covering for others who were sick was significant, creating the need to re-organise their work at short notice, stress and some resentment.
- Staff do not call in for other reasons, claiming sickness, in any significant numbers. This confirms that the majority of sickness is genuine sickness.
- Not surprisingly a high incentive identified by staff was 'attendance bonuses'. Staff also believed that advice on work organisation, time management, improving health and stress management would help improve attendance. Being rewarded or feeling better about yourself is an area only lightly touched upon in the team up to now.
- Advice on weight control or healthy eating was not considered relevant to improving attendance. Staff felt strongly that it was not the role of the Yot to offer such advice.

Part F – Recommendations

Based on my conclusions, I make the following recommendations:

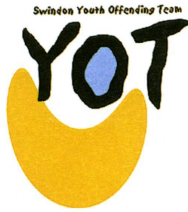
- Inclusion of these findings in the current Yot Action Plan, based on these recommendations, in SMART format.
- Senior management should plan for the future challenges of an older workforce.
- Yot management consider the recommendations made by SBC following cabinet review in 2007, (See Appendix D).
- Staff and managers acknowledge that the majority of staff (over 80%) take little or no time off sick and, if they do, it is for genuine reasons e.g. colds and flu. Management review and strengthen reporting procedures.
- Return to work interviews should be completed in all cases, not just those that exceed the policy threshold. Managers should seek to determine the underlying causes of absence when there are issues.
- Provide training to line managers on sickness monitoring, referral to occupational health, and sickness policy and procedures. Cascade to teams and individual staff.
- Closer working relations are forged between Yot and HR recruitment contractors to ensure robust vetting and checking of references.
- Analysis of patterns of sickness as part of benchmarking are regularly conducted.
- Training given to managers and staff on stress management.
- The issue of job security is managed, taking into consideration the feelings of staff concerned.
- Managers agree methods that ensure a 'fair but firm' culture in dealing with performance or sickness issues.
- Staff and manager continue to enjoy good, healthy respectful working relationships.

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LAWS RELATING TO PEOPLES RIGHTS AND EMPLOYMENT

- 1. Human Rights Act 1998**
Sets out a number of principles (articles or protocols) that affect large areas of our life, our rights and freedoms, which are guaranteed under the European Convention on Human Rights.
- 2. Access to Medical Reports Act 1998**
This ensures that employers seek consent before applying to a Doctor for information.
- 3. Health And Safety At Work Act 1974**
Primary legislation which makes provision for securing health, safety and welfare of persons at work, others against risk, substances and emissions, and other medical advisory services.
- 4. Safety Representatives And Safety Committee Regulations 1977**
Gives trade unions the right to appoint safety representatives and consult/ be consulted by the employer.
- 5. The European 6 Pack introduced 1993**
These relate to the HSAW Act 1974 in more specific detail.
- 6. Disability Discrimination Act 1995**
May need to be considered by an employer when contacting GPs. Requires employers to make reasonable adjustments to the workplace, conditions or arrangements in order to treat people fairly.
- 7. Criminal Justice And Courts Service Act 2000**
This relates to rehabilitation periods.
- 8. Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA)**
This relates to the care needed when collecting, storing and using personal information.
- 9. Employment Rights Act 1996**
Adopt fair procedures before dismissing employees on grounds of sickness absence.
- 10. Employment Act 2002 (Dispute Regulations) 2004**
Adopt statutory minimum dismissal, disciplinary and grievance procedures.



SICKNESS ABSENCE STUDY WITHIN THE SWINDON YOT

STAFF OPINION SURVEY

2007

INTRODUCTION

Sickness and absence rates are too high in the Yot. As part of the SBC 50 promises, we have to reduce sickness rates to below 7.5 days average per year by 2010. This study looks at sickness absence, including its causes, its management, its effect on staff and its impact on each of us in the Yot and the service we provide to young people.

To gain a picture of opinions within the Yot on the subject, this questionnaire is being issued to all staff. Your opinions are valued, and I would be most grateful if you would complete it constructively and honestly. The questionnaire is largely, but not exclusively, in a simple, tick box format, and will take relatively little time to complete.

CONFIDENTIALITY

For this survey I am looking collectively for your thoughts and feelings. I will personally collect the data contained in these completed forms. I do not wish to relate any of the information to any particular member of staff. That is not the point of this exercise. Once I have transferred the data onto a spreadsheet, these forms will be ripped up and put in the bin! Neither your line manager or your colleagues will see these forms – in fact you do not even have to put your name on the form. If you feel strongly that a question should not have been asked – say so on the forms and that opinion will go into my final report.

Do not answer what you do not want to.

ANY QUESTIONS

Should you have any questions relating to the process or the questionnaire, speak to me or note it on the form.

COMPLETED RETURNS

Please put your completed questionnaire in the envelope provided.

ABOUT YOU

1. In which of the following job categories do you work?

Manager	<input type="checkbox"/>
EI	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pre-Court	<input type="checkbox"/>
Post-Court	<input type="checkbox"/>
Admin.	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Do you work?

Full-time	<input type="checkbox"/>	Part-time	<input type="checkbox"/>
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3. Are you?

Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
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4. In which age range do you fall?

Under 20	<input type="checkbox"/>	40 - 49	<input type="checkbox"/>
20 - 29	<input type="checkbox"/>	50 - 59	<input type="checkbox"/>
30 - 39	<input type="checkbox"/>	60 and over	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. How long have you worked in the Yot?

0 - 1 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	1 - 2 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	2 - 3 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	3 - 4 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 - 5 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	5 - 6 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	6 - 7 years	<input type="checkbox"/>		

6. Do you have any day-to-day caring responsibilities where you are the main or sole carer outside of work?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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7. If yes, do you care for?

Children living with you at home	<input type="checkbox"/>
Person with disability living with you at home	<input type="checkbox"/>
Someone in a care home	<input type="checkbox"/>
Older person living with you at home	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify by typing or writing below)	<input type="checkbox"/>

N.B. In completing the rest of the questionnaire, you are being asked for your opinions as a member of staff, even if you have management responsibilities. I am interested in your views about working at the Yot, although in some cases questions ask for your views on SBC or the bigger picture.

YOUR JOB

8. How satisfied are you with your current job?

Very satisfied	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fairly satisfied	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fairly dissatisfied	<input type="checkbox"/>
Very dissatisfied	<input type="checkbox"/>
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. On a scale of 1 to 4, where 1 is 'very well', and 4 is 'very badly', how well does your current job provide you with the following?

A good physical working environment	
Safe working practices	
Team-working opportunities	
Enough time to do your job	
Interesting, enjoyable work	
Fair pay and conditions	
The opportunity to have a say in your work	
Flexible working arrangements (e.g. job share, flexitime, etc.)	
The feeling of being valued as an individual	
A friendly atmosphere at work	
The chance to make full use of your abilities and skills	
Job security	
Opportunities for development	
Appropriate training	
Opportunities for promotion	
The ability to deliver a public service	
The opportunity to try to improve society	
Support in your wider life (e.g. health care advice, etc.)	

YOUR WORK

10. My work involves:

* Frequent face-to-face contact with offenders

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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* Frequent telephone contact with offenders

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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YOUR WORK (Cont/d)

11. Please indicate on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is 'always' and 5 is 'never', how you feel about the statements relating to your work.

I am clear what is expected of me at work	
I can decide when to take a break	
I know how to go about getting my job done	
If work gets difficult, my colleagues will help me	
I am given honest and supportive feedback on the work I do	
I have a say in my own work speed	
I have to neglect some tasks because I have too much to do	
I am clear about my goals and objectives	
I find that IT creates frustration at work	
There is friction or anger between colleagues	
I have a choice in deciding how to do my work	
I understand how my work fits into the overall aim of the organisation	
I am pressured to work long hours	
I am subject to bullying at work	
I have unrealistic time pressures	
I get help and support I need from colleagues	
I receive the respect at work I deserve from colleagues	
My working time can be flexible	
When changes are made at work, I am clear how they will work out in practice	
I am supported through emotionally demanding work	
I feel I have to work to unrealistic targets	

COMMUNICATION

12. How informed are you about the things that affect you, in the Yot/ Parent agency/ SBC?

	Yot	Parent agency	SBC
Fully informed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fairly well informed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Receive limited information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't receive much information at all	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

MANAGEMENT

13. Please indicate on a scale of 1 to 4 where 1 is 'always' and 4 is 'never', how often your immediate supervisor or manager carries out the actions listed?

Involves you when making decisions which affect your work	
Keeps you well informed about things which affect your work	
Gives you constructive feedback about your performance	
Listens to your suggestions about work-related matters	
Listens and responds to your concerns about work	
Is approachable and supportive	
Treats all staff fairly and consistently	
Makes you feel valued	
Trusts you to get on with your work	
Shows you respect as an individual	
Recognises good performance	
Deals with poor performance effectively	
Appraises your performance fairly	
Recognises your training and developments needs	
Bears grudges when things go wrong at work	
Sets clear goals for you to work towards	

14. These questions relate specifically to the impact which management has on your ability to do your job. Please give positive and negative examples and include any suggestions you have for improving things.

Please list any comments or suggestions you have about:

a) The management of your area of work e.g. EI, Pre-Court, Post-Court, Admin:

b) The management of the Yot as a whole:

SICKNESS ABSENCE

15. Have you seen either the Sickness Absence Policy, or a summary of it, for the Yot, SBC, your Parent agency?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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16. Which of the following best describes your knowledge of the policy and procedures relating to sickness absence?

Full knowledge	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good knowledge	<input type="checkbox"/>
Basic knowledge	<input type="checkbox"/>
Limited knowledge	<input type="checkbox"/>
No knowledge	<input type="checkbox"/>

17. How aware are you of the procedures and services which the Yot has in place to help staff manage stress?

Fully aware	<input type="checkbox"/>
Broadly aware	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aware	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vaguely aware	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unaware	<input type="checkbox"/>

18. Have you been provided with stress awareness training?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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19. a) How much (approximate) time have you taken off sick in the last 12 months?

None	<input type="checkbox"/>	11 - 20 days	<input type="checkbox"/>	6 months plus	<input type="checkbox"/>
Up to 5 days	<input type="checkbox"/>	21 days - 3 months	<input type="checkbox"/>		
6 - 10 days	<input type="checkbox"/>	3 months - 6 months	<input type="checkbox"/>		

b) Individual reasons for taking time off for sickness are recorded on the return to work forms that we all fill in. This data will be collectively analysed (Not individually or personally) as part of this exercise. However, you may wish to comment further to clarify your answer at 'a)' above.

Of the above time off work what percentage was due to

1. Disability	<input type="text"/> %	2. An operation/ Hospital	<input type="text"/> %
3. Normal bugs and lurgy doing the rounds	<input type="text"/> %	4. Supporting family/ friend who is taken ill or there is a crisis	<input type="text"/> %
5. Something at work that could have been avoided if better managed	<input type="text"/> %	6. Something outside work that could have been avoided if better managed	<input type="text"/> %

SICKNESS ABSENCE (Cont/d)

20. In your experience, how do you think the following issues are handled?

	Well Managed	Inconsistently Managed	Poorly Managed	Procedures Not Followed	No Opinion
Notification procedures	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sick certificate procedures	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Home visits	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Return to work interviews	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Return to work in general	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Referrals to occupational health (or other)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advice/counselling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pay deductions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Warning procedures	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

21. The policy and procedures are designed to be 'firm but fair'. Do you consider this has been achieved?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	No Opinion	<input type="checkbox"/>
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22. Does sickness absence amongst colleagues at times have any of the following impacts on a scale of 1 to 4 where 1 is 'significant impact' and 4 is 'no impact'?

Creates need to re-organise work at short notice	
Places pressure on other staff to cover	
Causes stress on staff who are at work	
Causes resentment amongst staff at work	

23. Do you consider sickness absence affects the team's work in any of the following fields on a scale of 1 to 4 where 1 is 'significant impact' and 4 is 'no impact'?

Giving the full allocated time to offender interviews, Asset	
Achieving productive results from meetings with offenders	
Completing associated reports effectively, PSR, R.O., etc	
Staffing community reparation sessions and RJ, etc	
Running offender programmes, DOGP, Cog skills, etc	
Releasing staff to undergo training Yot, Parent agency	
Data input	
Admin functions, other	
Other, please specify by typing or writing in box(es) below.	

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SICKNESS ABSENCE (Cont/d)

24. Have you in the last two years called in sick for any of the following reasons?

Family commitments	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disenchantment with work	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disenchantment with management policy	<input type="checkbox"/>
To supplement annual leave entitlement	<input type="checkbox"/>
Loss of commitment	<input type="checkbox"/>
View it as entitlement	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other personal reasons	<input type="checkbox"/>

25. To what extent do you think any of the following actions would help to improve attendance generally on a scale of 1 to 4 where 1 is 'substantially improves attendance' and 4 is 'no impact on attendance'?

Encourage employees to spend time improving their health	
Introduce more job sharing	
Provide more workplace health and safety training	
Communicate more openly with employees	
Provide counselling on personal, financial or other problems	
Provide workplace recreational or other facilities	
Provide weight-control programmes	
Provide or support stress management training	
Provide healthy eating guidance	
Get more advice from employees on how to organise work	
Improved contact with your manager.	
Improve workload measurement	
Introduce more flexible working hours	
Train supervisors/team leaders to be more sensitive to employees' concerns	
Provide better quality information about changes in the organisation	
Provide help with the cost of child care provision	
Help with the cost of exercise facilities outside work	
Provide help to stop smoking	
Provide health screening for staff	
Attendance bonuses	

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THE QUESTIONNAIRE

STAFF OPINION SURVEY

ABOUT YOU			
1 In which of the following job categories do you work			Total
Managers	0	0%	20
EI	2	10%	
Pre court	7	35%	
Post court	6	30%	
Admin	5	25%	

2 Do you work?			Total
Full time	16	76%	21
Part time	5	24%	

3 Are you?			Total
Male	7	33%	21
Female	14	67%	

4 In which age group do you fall?						Total
Under 20	0	0%	40 – 49	6	30%	20
20 - 29	6	30%	50 – 59	4	20%	
30 – 39	4	20%	60 and over	0	0%	

5 How long have you worked in the Yot?										Total		
0 – 1 years	4	20%	1 – 2 years	4	20%	2 - 3 years	3	15%	3 - 4 years	2	10%	20
4 – 5 years	3	15%	5 - 6 years	1	5%	6 - 7 years	3	15%				

6 Do you have any day-to-day caring responsibilities where you are the main or sole carer outside of work?							Total
Yes	6	29%	No	15	71%		21

7 If yes, do you care for?						Total
Children living with you at home	6	29%				21
Person with disability living with you at home	0	0%				
Someone in a care home	0	0%				
Older person living with you at home	0	0%				
Other (please specify by typing or writing below)	0	0%				

YOUR JOB			
8 How satisfied are you with your current job?			Total
Very satisfied	7	33%	21
Fairly satisfied	13	62%	
Fairly dissatisfied	1	5%	
Very dissatisfied	0	0%	
Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	0	0%	

9 On a scale of 1 to 4, where 1 is 'very well' and 4 is 'very badly' how well does your current job provide you with the following?										Total
	1		2		3		4			
A good physical working environment	7	32%	11	50%	4	18%	0	0%	22	
Safe working practices	8	36%	10	45%	4	18%	0	0%	22	
Team-working opportunities	8	36%	11	50%	1	5%	2	9%	22	
Enough time to do your job	6	27%	8	36%	6	27%	2	9%	22	
Interesting, enjoyable work	12	55%	6	27%	1	5%	3	14%	22	
Fair pay and conditions	9	43%	6	29%	4	19%	2	10%	21	
The opportunity to have a say in your work	14	64%	5	23%	3	14%	0	0%	22	
Flexible working arrangements (e.g. job share,	13	59%	3	14%	2	9%	4	18%	22	

flexitime, etc.)									
The feeling of being valued as an individual	7	32%	11	50%	2	9%	2	9%	22
A friendly atmosphere at work	10	48%	4	19%	5	24%	2	10%	21
The chance to make full use of your abilities and skills	9	41%	8	36%	5	23%	0	0%	22
Job security	9	43%	5	24%	4	19%	3	14%	21
Opportunities for development	7	32%	9	41%	4	18%	2	9%	22
Appropriate training	7	32%	11	50%	2	9%	2	9%	22
Opportunities for promotion	3	15%	5	25%	8	40%	4	20%	20
The ability to deliver a public service	12	55%	8	36%	1	5%	1	5%	22
The opportunity to try to improve society	15	71%	5	24%	1	5%	0	0%	21
Support in your wider life (e.g. health care advice, etc.)	7	35%	8	40%	5	25%	0	0%	20

YOUR WORK

10	My work involves:								Total
	Frequent face-to-face contact with offenders	Yes	16	73%	No	6	27%		22
	Frequent telephone contact with offenders	Yes	16	73%	No	6	27%		

11	Please indicate on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is 'always' and 5 is 'never', how do you feel about the statements relating to your work										Total	
		1		2		3		4		5		
	I am clear what is expected of me at work	12	55%	8	36%	2	9%	0	0%	0	0%	22
	I can decide when to take my break	20	91%	2	9%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	22
	I know how to go about getting my job done	17	77%	5	23%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	22
	If work gets too difficult, my colleagues will help me	8	30%	7	32%	5	23%	2	9%	0	0%	22
	I am given honest and supportive feedback on the work I do	7	32%	10	45%	3	14%	2	9%	0	0%	22
	I have a say in my own work speed	9	41%	12	55%	1	5%	0	0%	0	0%	22
	I have to neglect some tasks because I have too much to do	2	9%	11	50%	5	23%	2	9%	2	9%	22
	I am clear about my goals and objectives	14	64%	5	23%	3	14%	0	0%	0	0%	22
	I find that IT creates frustration at work	1	5%	11	50%	4	18%	4	18%	2	9%	22
	There is friction or anger between colleagues	2	9%	9	41%	6	27%	3	14%	2	9%	22
	I have a choice in deciding how to do my work	10	45%	11	50%	1	5%	0	0%	0	0%	22
	I understand how my work fits into the overall aim of the organisation	16	73%	6	27%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	22
	I am pressured to work long hours	0	0%	5	23%	7	32%	5	23%	5	23%	22
	I am subject to bullying at work	0	0%	0	0%	1	5%	0	0%	21	95%	22
	I have unrealistic time pressures	0	0%	7	32%	7	32%	4	18%	4	18%	22
	I get help and support I need from colleagues	7	33%	10	48%	3	14%	1	5%	0	0%	21
	I receive the respect at work I deserve from colleagues	9	41%	11	50%	2	9%	0	0%	0	0%	22
	My working time can be flexible	14	64%	4	18%	2	9%	2	9%	0	0%	22
	When changes are made at work, I am clear how they will work out in practice	4	18%	9	41%	7	32%	2	9%	0	0%	22
	I am supported through emotionally demanding work	6	27%	10	45%	3	14%	3	14%	0	0%	22
	I feel I have to work to unrealistic targets	1	5%	6	27%	6	27%	5	23%	4	18%	22

COMMUNICATION

12	How informed are you about the things that affect you, in the Yot / Parent agency / SBC?						Total	
		Yot		Parent agency		SBC		
	Fully informed	10	45%	1	5%	1	5%	22
	Fairly well informed	11	50%	10	45%	15	68%	
	Receive limited information	1	5%	4	18%	5	23%	
	Don't receive much information at all	0	0%	2	9%	0	0%	

MANAGEMENT									
13	Please indicate on a scale of 1 to 4 where 1 is 'always' and 4 is 'never', how often your immediate supervisor or manager carries out the actions listed?								Total
	1	2	3	4					
Involves you when making decisions which affect your work	11	50%	8	36%	3	14%	0	0%	22
Keep you well informed about things which affect your work	11	50%	9	41%	2	9%	0	0%	22
Gives you constructive feedback about your performance	10	45%	9	41%	2	9%	1	5%	22
Listens to your suggestions about work-related matters	18	82%	3	14%	1	5%	0	0%	22
Listens and responds to your concerns about work	12	55%	8	36%	2	9%	0	0%	22
Is approachable and supportive	13	59%	7	32%	2	9%	0	0%	22
Treats all staff fairly and consistently	10	48%	7	33%	4	19%	0	0%	21
Makes you feel valued	11	50%	7	32%	4	18%	0	0%	22
Trusts you to get on with your work	19	86%	3	14%	0	0%	0	0%	22
Shows you respect as an individual	17	77%	5	23%	0	0%	0	0%	22
Recognises good performance	13	59%	5	23%	3	14%	1	5%	22
Deals with poor performance effectively	9	41%	4	18%	8	36%	1	5%	22
Appraises your performance fairly	13	59%	9	41%	0	0%	0	0%	22
Recognises your training and development needs	11	50%	6	27%	5	23%	0	0%	22
Bears grudges when things go wrong at work	3	14%	0	0%	2	9%	17	77%	22
Sets clear goals for you to work towards	13	59%	6	27%	2	9%	1	5%	22

14	These questions relate specifically to the impact which management has on your ability to do your job. Please give positive and negative examples and include any suggestion you have for improving things.
Please list any comments or suggestions you have about:	
a)	The management of your area of work e.g. EI, Pre-Court, Post-Court, Admin
b)	The management of the Yot as a whole:

SICKNESS ABSENCE						
15	Have you seen either the Sickness Absence Policy, or a summary of it, for the Yot, SBC, your Parent agency?				Total	
Yes	18	82%	No	4	18%	22

16	Which of the following best describes your knowledge of the policy and procedures relating to sickness absence?		Total
Full knowledge	4	18%	22
Good knowledge	7	32%	
Basic knowledge	6	27%	
Limited knowledge	5	23%	
No knowledge	0	0%	

17	How aware are you of the procedures and services which the Yot has in place to help staff manage stress?		Total
Fully aware	2	9%	22
Broadly aware	4	18%	
Aware	4	18%	
Vaguely aware	7	32%	
Unaware	5	23%	

18	Have you been provided with stress awareness training?				Total	
Yes	4	18%	No	18	82%	22

19a	How much (approximate) time have you taken off sick in the last 12 months?						Total		
None	10	45%	11 - 20 days	0	0%	6 months plus	0	0%	22

Up to 5 days	9	41%	21 days - 3 months	0	0%			
6 - 10 days	3	14%	3 months - 6 months	0	0%			

b Individual reasons for taking time off for sickness are recorded on the return to work forms that we all fill in. This data will be collectively analysed (Not individually or personally) as part of this exercise. However, you may wish to comment further to clarify your answer at 'a)' above. **Total**

Of the above time off work what percentage was due to:

1 Disability	9%	2 An operation / Hospital	5%	22
3 Normal bugs and lurgy doing the rounds	74%	4 Supporting family / friend who is taken ill or there is a crisis	5%	
5 Something at work that could have been avoided if better managed	5%	6 Something outside of work that could have been avoided if better managed	2%	

20 In your experience, how do you think the following issues are handled? **Total**

	Well managed		Inconsistently managed		Poorly managed		Procedures not followed		No opinion		
Notification procedures	9	43%	4	19%	1	5%	1	5%	6	29%	21
Sick certificate procedures	8	40%	2	10%	0	0%	1	5%	9	45%	20
Home visits	0	0%	2	12%	0	0%	1	6%	14	82%	17
Return to work interviews	3	17%	3	17%	1	6%	1	6%	10	56%	18
Return to work in general	4	20%	6	30%	0	0%	0	0%	10	50%	20
Referral to occupational health (or other)	2	11%	2	11%	0	0%	0	0%	14	78%	18
Advice / counselling	2	11%	2	11%	1	5%	0	0%	14	74%	19
Pay deductions	3	17%	0	0%	0	0%	1	6%	14	78%	18
Warning procedures	2	12%	1	6%	2	12%	1	6%	11	65%	17

21 The policy and procedures are designed to be 'firm but fair'. Do you consider this has been achieved? **Total**

Yes	3	14%	No	6	29%	No opinion	12	57%	21
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22 Does sickness absence amongst colleagues at times have any of the following impacts on a scale of 1 to 4 where 1 is 'significant impact' and 4 is 'no impact'? **Total**

	1 Significant impact		2		3		4 No impact		
Creates need to re-organise work at short notice	16	73%	3	14%	1	5%	2	9%	22
Places pressure on other staff to cover	14	64%	7	32%	0	0%	1	5%	
Causes stress on staff who are at work	13	59%	7	32%	1	5%	1	5%	
Causes resentment amongst staff at work	9	41%	6	27%	5	23%	2	9%	

23 Do you consider sickness absence affects the team's work in any of the following fields on a scale of 1 to 4 where 1 is 'significant impact' and 4 is 'no impact'? **Total**

	1 Significant impact		2		3		4 No impact		
Giving the full allocated time to offender interviews, Asset	3	19%	5	31%	7	44%	1	6%	16
Achieving productive results from meeting with offenders	4	24%	8	47%	4	24%	1	6%	17
Completing associated reports effectively, PSR, RO, etc.	3	19%	10	63%	2	13%	1	6%	16
Staffing community reparation sessions and RJ etc.	1	7%	6	40%	4	27%	4	27%	15
Running offender programmes, DOGP, Cog skills, etc.	3	19%	6	38%	6	38%	1	6%	16
Releasing staff to undergo training Yot, Parent agency	1	6%	8	47%	8	47%	0	0%	17
Data input	5	29%	8	47%	4	24%	0	0%	17
Admin functions, other	1	7%	7	47%	7	47%	0	0%	15
Other please specify by typing or writing in box(es) below			2		1				3

24	Have you in the last two years called in sick for any of the following reasons?			Total
	Family commitments	2	9%	22
	Disenchantment with work	1	5%	
	Disenchantment with management policy	1	5%	
	To supplement annual leave entitlement	0	0%	
	Loss of commitment	0	0%	
	View it as entitlement	0	0%	
	Other personal reasons	0	0%	

25	To what extent do you think any of the following actions would help improve attendance generally on a scale of 1 to 4 where 1 is 'substantially improves attendance' and 4 is 'no impact on attendance'?								Total
	1 Significant impact		2		3		4 No impact		
Encourage employees to spend time improving their health	10	50%	3	15%	6	30%	1	5%	20
Introduce more job sharing	3	15%	8	40%	5	25%	4	20%	20
Provide more workplace health and safety training		0%	8	40%	8	40%	4	20%	20
Communicate more openly with employees	6	29%	13	62%	2	10%		0%	21
Provide counselling on personal, financial or other problems	7	33%	11	52%	3	14%		0%	21
Provide workplace recreational or other facilities	4	20%	8	40%	5	25%	3	15%	20
Provide weight-control programmes		0%	2	10%	10	48%	9	43%	21
Provide or support stress management training	10	48%	7	33%	4	19%		0%	21
Provide healthy eating guidance	2	10%	8	38%	3	14%	8	38%	21
Get more advice from employees on how to organise work	11	55%	7	35%	2	10%		0%	20
Improve contact with your manager	6	30%	9	45%	3	15%	2	10%	20
Improve workload measurement	7	33%	13	62%		0%	1	5%	21
Introduce more flexible working hours	7	33%	11	52%	2	10%	1	5%	21
Train supervisors / team leaders to be more sensitive to employee's concerns	4	20%	14	70%	2	10%		0%	20
Provide better quality information about changes in the organisation	1	5%	8	40%	11	55%		0%	20
Provide help with the cost of child care provision	1	6%	5	28%	9	50%	3	17%	18
Help with the cost of exercise facilities outside work	5	26%	6	32%	6	32%	2	11%	19
Provide help to stop smoking	5	24%	6	29%	8	38%	2	10%	21
Provide health screening for staff	8	40%	4	20%	4	20%	4	20%	20
Attendance bonuses	16	76%	2	10%	1	5%	2	10%	21

SBC CABINET REVIEW 2007 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Better commitment from managers (Senior and line).
- Improved recording of sickness absence.
- Improved leadership and support for line managers.
- Stress management.
- Culture of prevention and early intervention in partnership with staff and managers.
- Reports provided by OC are discussed by the member of staff and line manager and this is recorded.
- Health promotion initiatives – Holistic approach.
- Articles in staff publications.