

Department of Paediatrics – Staff Survey

Background

In October 2014, following the first staff survey in August 2012, a survey was carried out of all members of staff and students in the Department of Paediatrics to acquire essential information needed to support our application for an Athena SWAN Award.

The ethos of the Athena SWAN awards is not necessarily to have everything perfect instantly, but to undertake critical self-assessment and develop an appropriate action plan to improve. The survey represented one of the first steps along that path. The anonymised data have been analysed and are presented below.

Whilst the Athena SWAN awards are focused primarily on progression of women in academia many of the issues raised are relevant to everyone in the Department, and we are interested in optimising the working conditions for all members of the Department to enable everyone to reach maximum potential, hence the desire to canvas views from all constituencies.

Results

77% of the department responded to the survey (up from 75% in 2012).

Respondents	Number	Respondents	Number
Female	64	Staff	85
Male	25	Students	4
Total	89	Total	89

Due to the small numbers of responses in each category, response numbers with a tendency to disagree were summed together to create one 'Tends to Disagree' category, as were response numbers with a tendency to agree. The results are separated into topics for discussion below. *Results in italics are particularly important to discuss.*

Key issues

- Poor working environment
- Travel & parking
- Departmental Management & cohesiveness

Overview of the Results

Working Environment

- *37% of respondents are unhappy with their working environment (same as 2012)*
- *37% of respondents do not feel their working environment enables them to produce their highest standard of work (increase in 10% from 2012)*
- *52% of respondents do not feel that their working environment allowed them to concentrate fully on their work (increase in 14% from 2012)*
 - *-14% of the respondents strongly disagree that the work environment allows them to concentrate fully*
- Further comments included: there aren't enough desks, cramped working conditions, temperature and noise in the offices, having to work across two sites and not having a desk space

Your role

- 95% of respondents have a clear understanding of their role (same as 2012)
- 77% of respondents have the resources they need to fulfil the requirements of their role (*down 8% since 2012*)
- 79% of respondents have all the information they need to carry out their role effectively.
- 83% of respondents feel valued for the work they do (same as 2012)
- 99% of respondents understand the standards of work expected of them.
- *37% feel that their workload is unreasonable (up 22% since 2012)*

Benefits & policies

- 27% of respondents disagreed that the length of their contract provided sufficient opportunity to have a family (*down 17% from 2012*)
 - 89% agreed that the department has clear policies on maternity leave.
 - 72% of respondents are satisfied with the benefits they receive.
 - *38% of respondents were not aware of the benefits available to them.*
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Work/ life balance

- 78% of respondents feel the department's policies on flexible working are transparent and clear.
- 78% of respondents feel that the workplace supports them have an adequate work/life balance.
- 92% of respondents felt that they were able to book annual leave when they needed it.

Career Development

- 96% of respondents have regular formal meetings with their line manager to review performance and career development (up 41% since 2012)
 - 59% of respondents feel their annual appraisal was productive and worthwhile
 - 55% of respondents felt their career plan was sufficiently discussed at their probation review
 - 71% of respondents felt that a mentoring scheme would be beneficial to them
 - 71% of respondents feel the department provides them with clear information about training and development.
 - 86% understand their training and development needs.
 - *39% did not have sufficient time to attend training and development courses.(up 4% since 2012)*
 - *53% of respondents did not feel the appointment and promotion processes were clear in the department.(up 7% since 2012)*
 - 69% of respondents felt that the department encourages and supports its staff to apply for internal posts
 - *50% of respondents were not clear about the process for re-grading.*
 - Comments regarding the advantages to a career in Paediatrics included: good people to work with, sense of usefulness in the world, common purpose amongst colleagues, doing a worthwhile job
 - Comments regarding the disadvantages to a career in paediatrics included: lack of career progression, location, insecurity of grant funded posts, unfamiliarity with other departmental groups.
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The Department

- *46% of respondents do not feel that the department has clear and transparent policies for management and decision-making. (increased 10% since 2012)*
- *54% did not feel that information and knowledge are shared openly within the department (increased 10% since 2012)*
- *54% of respondents do not feel that the department consults employees on decisions likely to affect them. (increased 19% since 2012)*
- 58% of respondents feel they have a voice about things that affect them.
- 50% of respondents feel that they have adequate representation on departmental committees.
- 83% feel they are part of a team working towards the same goal.
- *55% feel there is a strong feeling of teamwork in the department (down 16% since 2012)*
- 72% would recommend working in the Department of Paediatrics to a friend or colleague.
- The majority of respondents felt that staff were treated fairly and equally in the department, regardless of; Gender, Ethnicity or race, Disability, Age, Sexual Orientation, Role, Working hours and Caring responsibilities
- Comments regarding Departmental Management included:
I don't think as a department I feel valued, I have an excellent manager but they are overworked, a better relationship needs to develop between the administration team and research staff/ managers, there is a feeling of us and them, I don't understand what the department management do and what the goals are

Travel

- *78% of respondents feel that parking provision is inadequate.*
 - *61% of respondents feel that public transport to/from the department is inadequate.*
 - *72% of respondents feel that the public transport provided is not good value for money.*
 - Comments regarding travel included: finding a place to park is the worst aspect of my job, expensive and unreliable transport prohibits me from attending career enhancing talks in Oxford, it is difficult to get a parking permit, park and ride schemes are expensive and not reliable, there are no facilities to change if you cycle, getting to work and parking makes me consider leaving my role
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Suggestions for areas to improve

- Raise travel issues with the Oxford University trust & Division
- Create better working environments, larger office space for some areas and improved working areas for others (e.g. suitable desks, less clutter, re-decorating)
- Communication on: benefits available to staff, career options
- Clearer policies/ communication on: re-grading, appointment & promotion processes, inductions
- Introduce a mentoring scheme or encourage involvement in the Divisional mentoring scheme, due to the size of the department.
- Improve the openness of the management team with regards to decision making processes, management team strategy, information sharing
- Improved cohesiveness in the Department

Focus groups will be held to look at key areas that have arisen in the staff survey; this may produce further understanding of issues and how to improve the environment in the department.
